

The Clerk



As a first attempt of implementing the Scrum Master role, organizations often start with one of the members of the development team (maybe he used to be the 'team leader'). Since he has proven to be good in organizing stuff, we think that this guy can easily pick up some extra tasks ('how hard can it be to be a Scrum Master, right?'). While his main responsibility is operational work on the Sprint Backlog, being a Scrum Master is something he does in spare time.

On a day to day basis the Clerk typically removes a lot of administrative duties from the Development Team (like updating the Sprint Backlog, burndown graphs, preparing the Sprint Planning, etc).

A Clerk has limited benefits, since he is mostly focussed on himself & the inferior values of the Agile manifesto (tools, processes, documentation, etc).

The Puppet Master



Once the Clerk realizes he is focussed on the wrong values of the Agile Manifesto, he typically makes a next step. He is now aware of the Scrum values: commitment, focus, openness, respect & courage.

The Puppet Master tries to pull different strings to make team members move into the right direction. Implementing the Scrum values in his team feels the same. This often results in a very mechanical Scrum implementation, where people do all the events, roles & artifacts in Scrum, but not really live them. Why use strings, when they could do it themselves?

Since he still supports the team in doing technical work, a Puppet Master often does not have the time to focus on anything but his own Development Team.

The Organizer



Compared to the Clerk and the Puppet Master, the Organizer has managed to make his team aware of the Scrum Values. He has realized that by doing all the complex technical work himself, he is in the way of this team to learn (there is no need for other heroes when you already have Superman).

So instead of being Superman, he steps aside and facilitates that the team can do it themselves. The newborn Organizer is now focussed on making sure that all Scrum events have an optimal result. He suddenly realizes that he doesn't need strings to make people move.

His operational involvement goes down. As a result he can focus on teaching people about Scrum and making sure they live the values. The Organizer has time to provide data, so people can start acting on facts instead of gut feeling.

Although the Organizer himself acts with the Scrum Values in mind, his team is still learning.

The Coach



A Coach is able to make people connect to their passion and helps them take action towards this passion. He helps people to find new viewpoints and evolve. The Coach has created enough room in his role to also focus not only on the development team but also the Product Owner and the environment around the team (stakeholders, management).

While the Organizer already knew a lot himself, the Coach is able to impact others with his knowledge. Through the Coach, others become knowledgeable. The Coach doesn't only listen to his own voice. He is able to empathically listen to others. Besides using data to take decisions, the Coach starts to listen to his intuition.

A Development team that works with a Coach is able to run Scrum themselves. Sometimes still a little mechanical, but most of the times they really start living the values.

The focus of a Coach gradually shifts from the team towards the rest of the organization. However, he still struggles to find solid ground with management and other parts of the organization (marketing, sales, operations, you name it...)

The Advisor



The Advisor has acted as a Coach for more teams in the past. He succeeded in creating and enabling empowered Scrum teams. As a result of that his focus has now shifted towards the organisation. He fixes impediments on the organizational level. He uses data, but he mostly acts on intuition.

The Advisor helps new Scrum Masters with a lower evolution level to grow. He is often asked by managers to help them fix difficult issues.

In an organization with complex, large products, the Advisor is typically the Scrum Master for a number of scaled Scrum teams (in a Nexus he might also be the Scrum Master for the integration team).

While he learns a lot about the organizational dynamics the Advisor still struggles in making organizations more responsive as a whole.

The Expert



The Expert Scrum Master is highly competent & committed. He uses his unconscious competence and intuition to advise\coach others on making decisions. The Expert has a connection with all parts of the organization. He gives advice to managers, HR professionals and leads the organization towards more Agility. The Expert helps creating new rules & standards.

Some of the Experts are still part of a Scrum team, because they love the atmosphere around there. These teams are often high performing, skilled and an example for the other teams in the organization.

Experts in an Agile organization often call themselves 'Agile coach'. They show up at events and are often respectable members in a community of experts.

Unfortunately, many organizations do not recognize these Experts or don't understand how to keep them motivated. If they eventually leave it will be a hard job to fill the vacuum.

Yes, we do Scrum. And our Scrum Master is a ...

