

Chief Technology Office

The Agile Product Owner: Beyond the Books & Classrooms

GSA Tech Talks
June 6, 2017

Who is Representing the Business?

If an Agile organization is practicing Scrum and focused on delivering business value, why is there such a deficit of Product Owner representation?

Source: [The 2015 State of Scrum Report](#)

2. What is your role in your organization?

Respondents represent a diverse set of roles, with a preponderance of project managers and ScrumMasters.

ROLES



Topics



Understand the **Value & Roles** of the Product Owner



Real-world Application of Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO) Training



Ideas for **Positively Influencing** Team Members



Suggestions for **Continuous Improvement & Maturity** as a Product Owner

Adapted from: [Presented at the Fall 2016 Techwell: Agile Dev East / Better Software East Conference](#)

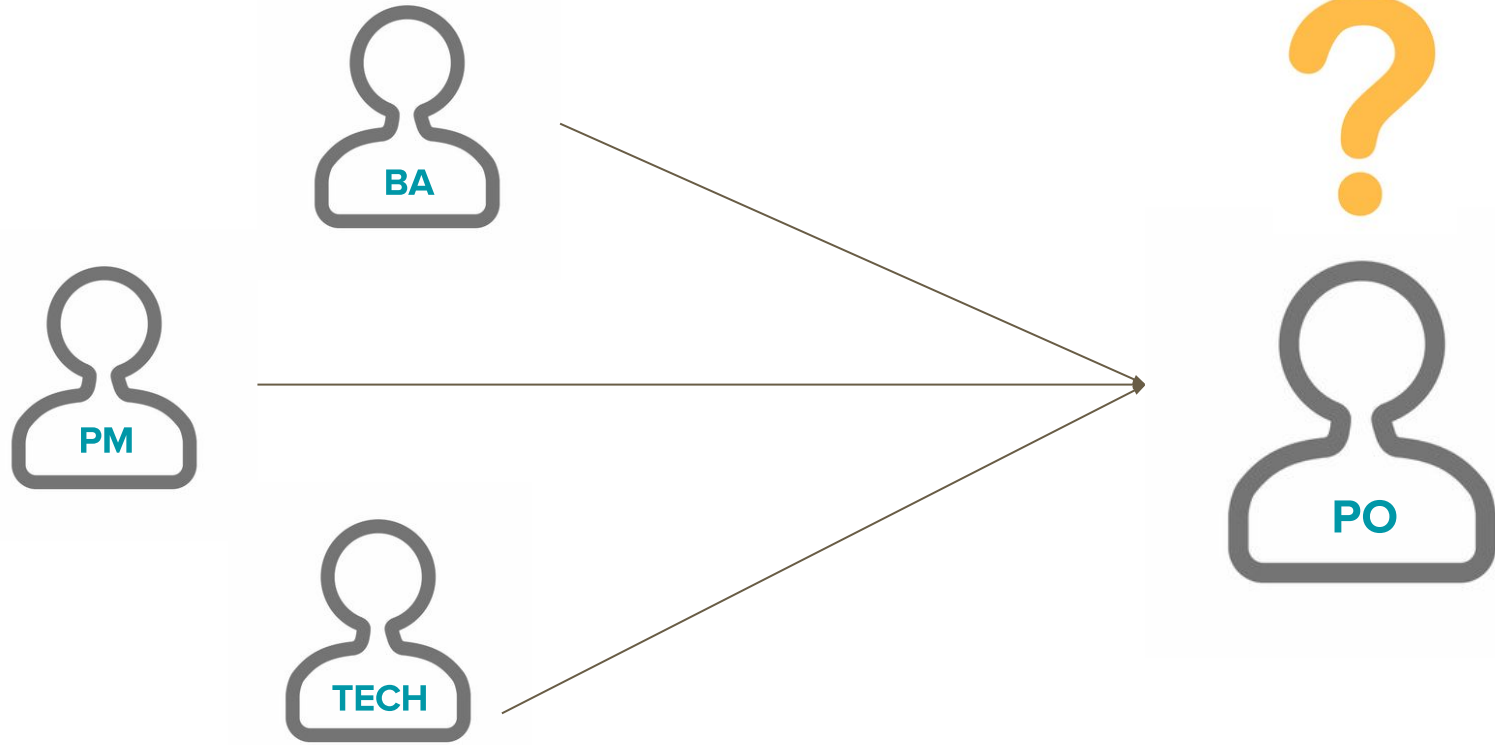
What is a Product Owner?

One of the roles in a CROSS-FUNCTIONAL, SELF-ORGANIZING SCRUM TEAM:

- Responsible for communicating **PRODUCT VISION**
- **PRIORITIZE** the Product Backlog & **CLARIFY** requirements for the Team
- **ONE PERSON**, NOT a committee.
- The entire organization must respect his or her decisions (i.e. **EMPOWERED AUTONOMY**)
- Change in Product Backlog item's priority **MUST ADDRESS THE PRODUCT OWNER**
- **ACCEPT OR REJECT** each product increment & determine whether or not it is “shippable”

Source: [ScrumAlliance](#) & [TECH.GSA.GOV](#)

Who Should Be a Product Owner?



Differences in Approach

Focus on **5-Phase Planning**

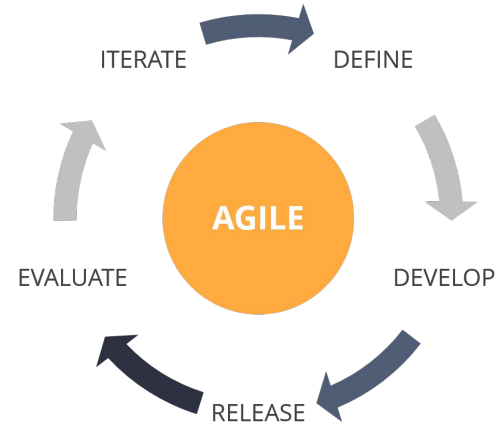
Manage the Project & **Lead** the Team

Adhere to the **PMBOK** Methodology

Communicate **Project Status**

Usually Depend on the **Requirements Gathering**
of Others

WATERFALL



Gather Information **Iteratively**

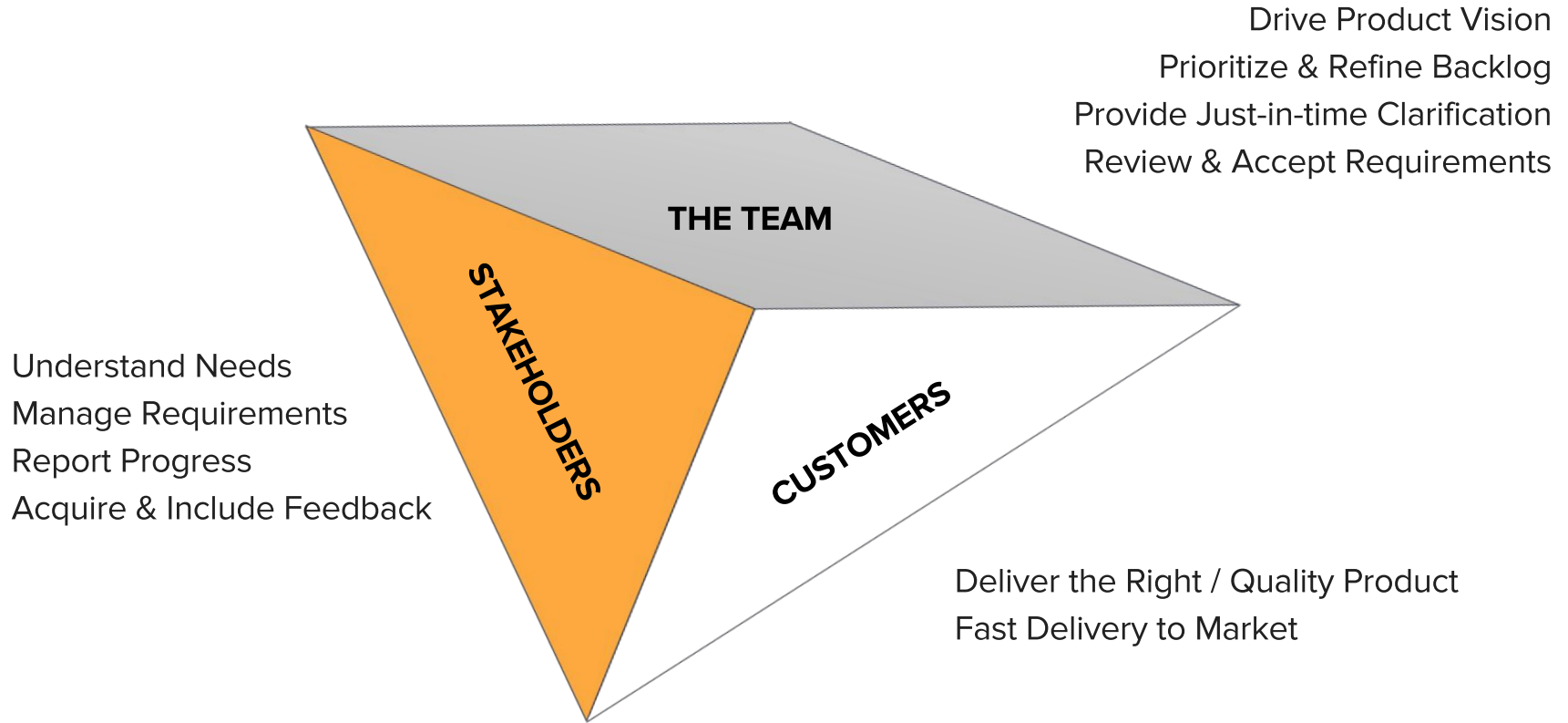
Facilitate the Project & **Develop** the Team

Typically, Business Analyst (By Title)

Communicate the **Product Vision**

Manage **Requirements Elicitation Lifecycle**

So, in the Real World...



So...

How Do We Continue to Develop?



"You don't herd ducks by chasing them."

~ Mercedes Lackey & James Mallory ~

A Product Owner Should...



**KNOW YOUR
VALUE**

VALUE



**ENSURE YOUR
TEAM GETS THE
VISION**

VISION



**BUILD TRUST
WITH YOUR
TEAM**

TRUST



**MANAGE
STAKEHOLDER
REQUIREMENTS**

MANAGE



**FIND THE BEST
APPROACH**

SUPPORT

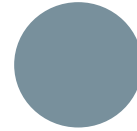


Know Your Value

To Management

"Managing bottom-up change is its own art."

~ Kevin Kelly ~



Keep **COMMUNICATION** lines open



Identify **WHAT INFORMATION IS
NEEDED** for tracking & reporting -
then display in an **AGILE FORMAT!!**



Always **PROTECT THE VISION -
NEGOTIATE - ENSURE VISIBILITY**



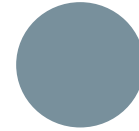
Know Your Value

To the Team



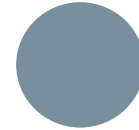
PROTECT THE TEAM

Make “side projects” **visible!**



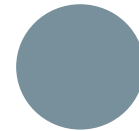
RELEASE CONTROL

Facilitate, DON'T dictate!



MAKE CONNECTIONS

Break down silos!



OWN RELATIONSHIPS

Communicate & **Keep it Positive!**



Ensure Your Team Gets the Vision

Connect the Dots



EXPLAIN THE “BIG PICTURE”

Relate the work to **strategic priority!**



BE AVAILABLE

ONE Product Owner, **75%+** dedication



CLARIFY, CLARIFY, CLARIFY

Don't assume, **ask the customer!**



PARTNER WITH THE TEAM

Let the Team **give you options!**



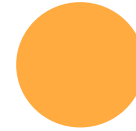
Build Trust With Your Team

“Circle of Trust”



UNDERSTAND

Be supportive of the **Team's** needs!



RELIABLE

Be **consistent** & **knowledgeable**!



BLOCK

Re-route interruptions!



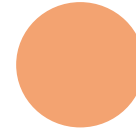
ENCOURAGE

Negotiation & **self-organization** are key!



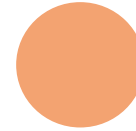
Manage Stakeholder Requirements

Owning the
Requirements
Elicitation Lifecycle



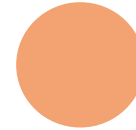
CUSTOMERS

Consider **every possible impact!**



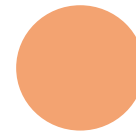
THE TEAM

It's always a **negotiation** - & that's okay!



STAKEHOLDERS

Know the **direct & indirect influencers!**



MANAGEMENT

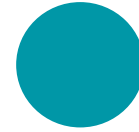
Push back against external pressure!



Find the Best Approach

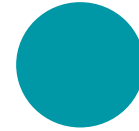
*“Be solution-oriented, not problem-oriented.
Focus on what you can **DO** right now, rather
than how much things suck.”*

~ Dr. John Berardi via David Chilcott ~



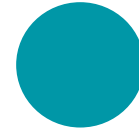
WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO DO “IT?”

It depends. Create a new standard!



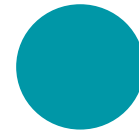
REMEMBER...

Building a Team **takes time!**



PRACTICE MAKES...

Better! Don't “do” Agile, **BE Agile!**



FOCUS ON...

...the “**HOW.**” Identify the best WIP.

A Product Owner Should...



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VALUE



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**FIND THE BEST
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SUPPORT

Continuously Improving... Be a Conductor!

...But “conducting is more difficult than playing a single instrument,” claims Boulez. “You have to know the culture, to know the score, and to project what you want to hear.”

~ Pierre Boulez ~

Conductors...

- Beat Time
- Convey an Interpretation
- Listen
- Lead
- Be a Conduit
- Put in the Hours
- Get the Glory
- Be a Figurehead
- Immortalize a Performance

Source: [What Does a Conductor Actually Do?](#)



Thank You!

For more on Product Owner training and resources, check out the following:
[TECH.GSA.GOV/Guides](https://tech.gsa.gov/guides), ScrumAlliance.org, & Scrum.org