**What Is a Scrum Master (and How Do I Become One)?**

*A Scrum Master is a professional who leads a team using Agile project management through the course of a project.*

A Scrum Master facilitates all the communication and collaboration between leadership and team players to ensure a successful outcome.

**What does a Scrum Master do?**

Scrum is an Agile framework for developing complex projects, most often software. The Agile project management methodology uses short development cycles, called sprints, that result in the continuous improvement of a product or service. There are many Agile frameworks, and Scrum is a popular option for fast-moving projects. The methodology is highly collaborative and requires efficient processes, and the results of the process depend upon the expertise of the Scrum Master.

Agile methodologies may have started in tech companies, but Scrum Master jobs can be found in all kinds of industries and for all kinds of companies around the globe.

***Scrum Master vs. project manager?*** *The fundamental difference between a Scrum Master and a project manager is in their focus. Project managers focus primarily on project outcome, including budget, timeline, resources, and communication between teams. Where a project manager focuses on the project, a Scrum Master focuses on the team, taking steps to ensure the team and individual team members achieve success.*

**Tasks and responsibilities of a Scrum Master**

The role of a Scrum Master is to use Agile project management to champion a project, teams, and team members. Since Scrum Masters can work in many settings, your tasks and responsibilities may vary. Depending on where you work, you may find yourself taking on the role of a facilitator, coach, or project manager. Your duties will often vary from day to day but might include:

* Leading daily stand-up meetings, reviews, demos, and other project-related meetings
* Supporting team members in their tasks
* Coaching the team on Scrum principles and best practices
* Facilitating open discussion and conflict resolution
* Proactively identify and resolve issues
* Updating activities in a project management tracking tool

**Scrum Master skills**

Effective Scrum Masters often have a set of workplace skills in common. Whether you’re just getting started or advancing within your career, building these skills will empower you to lead your team to the best of your ability.

* **Problem-solving** skills help you navigate complex projects.
* **Adaptability** enables you to make changes as necessary to achieve the best possible outcome.
* **Motivational skills** empower you to bring out the best in your team to improve productivity.
* **Communication skills** allow you to collaborate effectively with team members and stakeholders.
* **Organization** **skills** help you manage multiple tasks, meetings, resources, and priorities.

As a Scrum Master, it’s also important to be proficient in specific technical skills related to Agile management and software development.

* With the **Agile project management methodology**, you can ensure that your teams follow specific processes to complete and release projects and products in stages for customer input at every step.
* Software development and management skills are necessary when working on software projects and products. You’ll need to know the goals, structure, and expectations, processes, requirements, planning, and monitoring that goes into producing better software.
* **Business analysis** skills help you focus on how to continuously improve a product to meet customer, stakeholder, and company needs.

**Why pursue a career as a Scrum Master?**

As a Scrum Master, you can play an integral role in a company’s success. You may also have the opportunity to develop products that positively impact the world around you by making people’s lives better. On a more granular level, you’ll have the opportunity to foster a positive working environment for team members in a company and ensure the most successful outcome of a product or project.

**Scrum Master salary and job outlook**

As of June 2022, Glassdoor reports that Scrum Masters in the US make an estimated $108,369, and LinkedIn has over 154,000 US Scrum Master job listings. LinkedIn’s Most Promising Jobs of 2019 report showed that there is ample opportunity for career advancement in this field. New job openings have seen substantial year-over-year growth.

**How to become a Scrum Master**

**Educational requirements**

While not strictly required, most companies prefer candidates with a bachelor’s degree in IT, business administration, or a related field. Earning a college degree can also open up opportunities to gain on-the-job experience, another requirement that often shows up on Scrum Master job listings.

**Scrum Certification**

Earning an industry credential is another excellent way to validate your knowledge of the Scrum framework to potential employers. Among the most popular options for Scrum Masters is the Certified Scrum Master (CSM) from the Scrum Alliance. As you prepare for the certification exam, you can begin to build practical skills to help you successfully lead teams.

**Scrum Master career path**

Becoming a Scrum Master will open up doors to numerous careers, companies, and industries. Many people who start as Scrum masters advance to become Scrum coaches, product owners, or project managers.