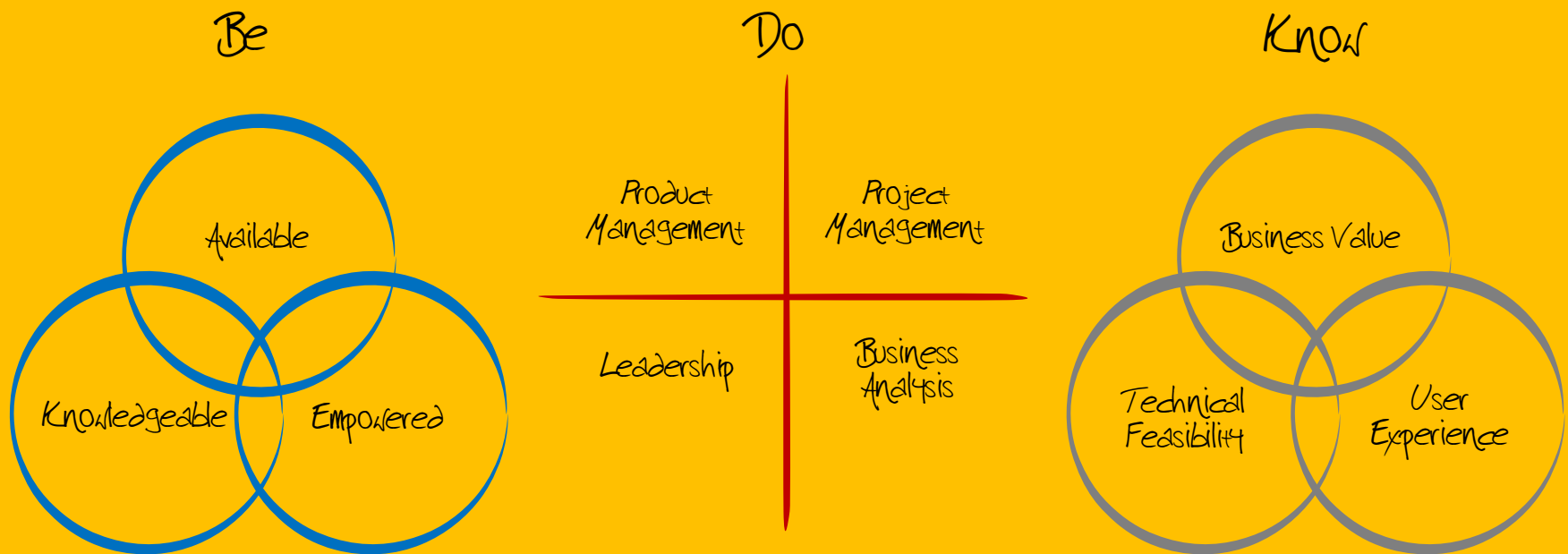


# What a Product Owner Should Be, Do, and Know



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# What is a Product Owner?

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*The Product Owner is responsible for maximizing the value of the product and the work of the Development Team.*

- *The Scrum Guide*  
*ScrumGuides.org*

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A Product Owner (PO) is an individual on a Scrum team who acts as the voice of the customer and is accountable for managing the Product Backlog so as to maximize value.

How this is done may vary across teams and organizations and depends on the individual's skills, knowledge, and experience.

While the tools and techniques may vary person to person, the underlying goal is the same; to maximize return on investment (ROI) and create a shared understanding within the team.

A good Product Owner will use their network to understand the customer needs and business landscape with the goal of optimizing the Product Backlog to deliver the highest value first.

A great Product Owner works towards minimizing outputs and maximizing positive business outcomes. They do this by:

- Establishing a clear and compelling vision of the product
- Talking to customers to better understand what's valuable
- Communicating with the Development Team to create a shared understanding
- Managing the Product Backlog to maximize value with an eye towards technical feasibility
- Providing feedback to the Development Team on the work product so they can adapt

The Product Owner is the single point of truth for the Scrum Team and as such, they need strong communication and leadership skills to be successful.



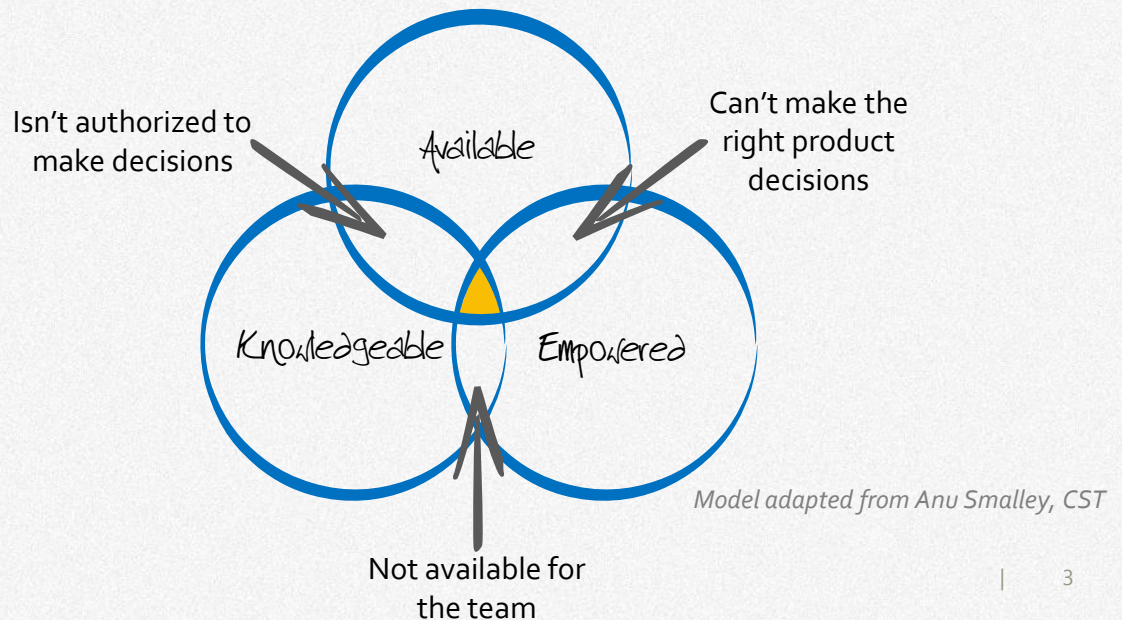
# A Product Owner Should Be . . .

*Without availability, product knowledge, and empowerment, the Development Team doesn't get the information they need to build the right things.*

A Product Owner should be **AVAILABLE** to the team. If the Product Owner is absent, decisions critical to the success of the team are delayed. Questions go unanswered and often there is no feedback that the team can use to adapt what they produce.

A Product Owner should be **KNOWLEDGEABLE** about the product and what customers consider to be valuable. Without that knowledge, Product Owners can't make the right decisions to maximize value.

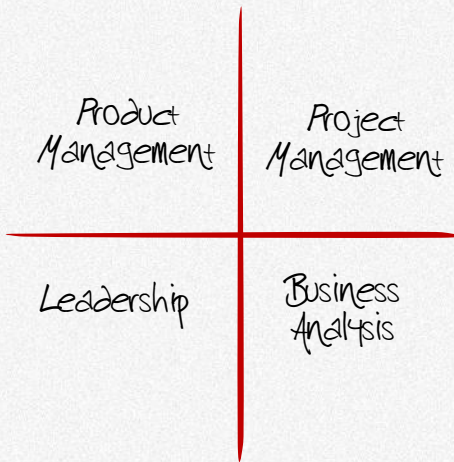
A Product Owner should be **EMPOWERED** to make decisions. A Product Owner that is not empowered will be unable to make decisions without consulting someone else. This leads to delays in getting answers need by the Scrum team.





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# A Product Owner Should Do . . .



*Model adapted from Bob Galen*

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## Tip:

If you aren't skilled in all of these areas (very few people are), partner with others within or outside of your team to leverage each other's strengths.

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The role of a Product Owner is made up of four skill areas: Product Management, Project Management, Business Analysis, and Leadership.

A Product Owner needs to understand Product Management. This includes understanding customer needs, the business landscape, market conditions, and business value. This gives the Product Owner the ability to make appropriate decisions about prioritization of features and product capabilities to deliver the highest value features first.

Project Management skills allow a Product Owner to understand risks and dependencies, which helps them to properly adjust the order of the backlog. It also helps them to get a better sense for when features can be delivered to customers.

Business Analysis skills allow Product Owners to decompose backlog items (often User Stories) into small, valuable pieces. Additionally, Product Owners need the ability to facilitate meetings related to refinement of the Product Backlog and create a shared understanding of the backlog items with the team.

Leadership skills are critical. Without strong leadership, the team won't have a compelling vision of the future (or the product) and may not be motivated to deliver with high quality.



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# A Product Owner Should Know . . .

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## Example:

You are the Product Owner of a website. One day, someone offers you one million dollars to put several ads on your website.

Is it valuable? Yes (\$1,000,000)

Is it technically feasible? Yes; ads are easy

Is it a good user experience: No

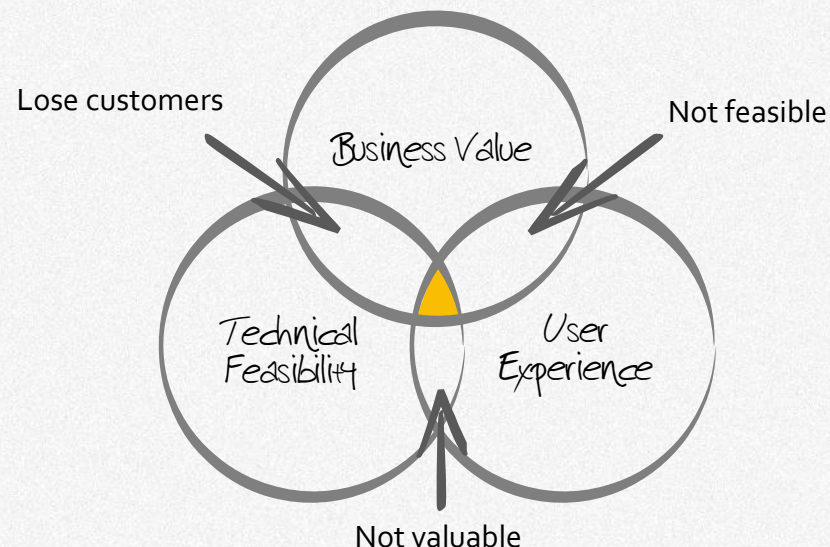
Because this would create a bad user experience, you will likely lose customers. As a result, you will lose revenue generated from your website and will likely lose ad revenue long term.

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A Product Owner needs to understand three perspectives: the business, the technology, and the user experience. They use the balance of these three perspectives to build something that's valuable, technically feasible, and a great user experience.

Something that is valuable and a great user experience but isn't technically feasible can't be done (at least not without a lot of time and money). Something valuable and technically feasible but that creates a poor user experience will result in the loss of customers. Something technically feasible and a great user experience but without value to the business may result in lost income and a poor return on investment.

Good Product Owners often partner with architects, business analysts, UX designers, and others to get input on these three perspectives.





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# Product Owner

## Resources: Podcast Episodes

The Product Owner/Business Analyst Relationship (Bob Galen):  
<http://masteringbusinessanalysis.com/episode46>



Transitioning to a Product Owner Role (Angela Wick):  
<http://masteringbusinessanalysis.com/episode64>

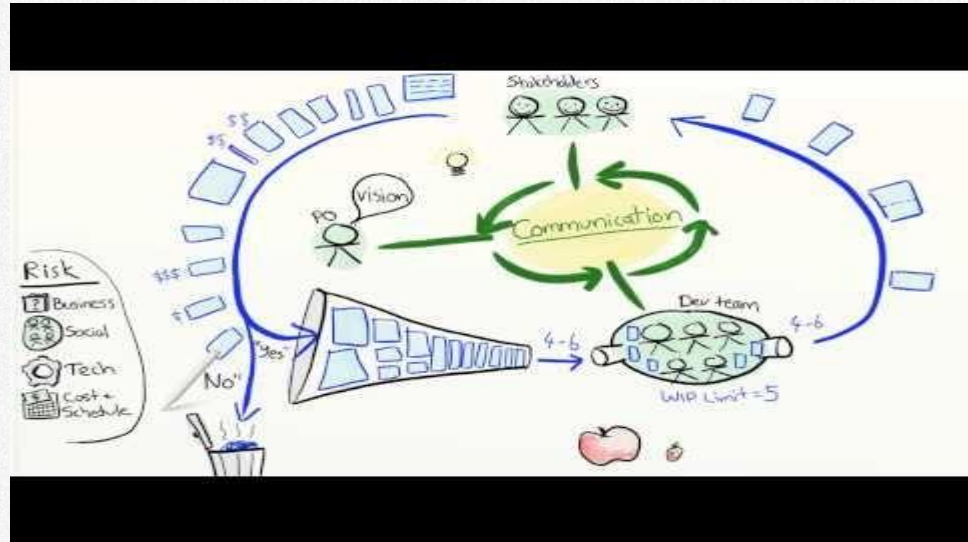


The Realities of Being a Product Owner (Kent McDonald):  
<http://masteringbusinessanalysis.com/episode68>



# Product Owner Resources: Videos

Product Ownership in a Nutshell: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5o2ILHjX9EE>



How Great Leaders Serve Others: [https://youtu.be/OqmdLcyES\\_Q](https://youtu.be/OqmdLcyES_Q)





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# Product Owner Resources: **Books** and **Blogs**

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## **Blog: Roman Pichler – Expert in Product Management**

Contains articles and free tools to help you with leadership, road mapping, and user stories. <http://www.romanpichler.com/>

## **Book: *Agile Product Management with Scrum* by Roman Pichler**

This book is the definitive guide to agile product management with Scrum.  
Read more <http://www.romanpichler.com/blog/books/>

## **Book: *Scrum Product Ownership: Balancing Value from the Inside Out* by Bob Galen**

This book provides practical advice and a framework to help Product Owners and their teams deliver value.  
Read more at <http://rgalen.com/agile-software-development-scrum/>