# **Does the scrum team really exists?**

For couple years right now Scrum is the major direction in which all companies would like to go. This is trendy, and whole IT says that implementing Scrum approach will result in better software, more happiness and all other good things which could happen in IT.

I was also part of the project in the big company during which we tried to implement pure scrum according to the book. Company hired ones of the best Scrum consultant in our country and allow us to make all necessary changes, also not looking at the deadlines. Our main goal was to become Scrum team. We ended as in other companies – after 1 year of trying we were scrum alike team which needed to make some compromises to make it work.

Scrum introduces some ceremonies practices and others stuff. I would like to focus only how I understood the team organization and comment if it is really working.

In scrum we have two major roles and one additional which should disappear when team will be mature enough. Those are:

* Product owner – person responsible for the product, have all information about functionality, have the ability to decide what we are doing next, and how it should work. Often needs help from team members to understood complexity of functionality, but still he is the one who can answer any question. He or she can work in two different modes. He can be fully working with the team, or just give tasks and check if assignments to the team were done correctly. He is on the same level as other team members, but as he is deciding and requesting for functionality in our hierarchical minds he is a little bit above the team
* Team member – team member should be like swiss knife - multifunctional. If application have frontend and backend, team member should be full stack and after finishing coding, he should write documentation, write test conditions, test functionality, and finally deploy software on production.
* Scrum master – advisory role. Person should guide team how to work in scrum and resolve all impediments which they have. What is impediment? It is soft matter, like difficulty in communication, lack of work visualization. He is not adviser about technical issues nor managing the employees. When team will learn how to work and are excellent in communication and delivering, this role is not so much needed. In this moment scrum master could said that his job in this team is done as they now are fully independent team.

## Scrum simplification in complex world

On the paper Scrum assumptions seems valid and rational, in reality unfortunately usually they don’t.

### Product owners

In nowadays complex solutions, it is super difficult to point single product owner. Applications or part of them doesn’t have one person which are responsible for it, nor have full knowledge about it. So companies are trying to fit in some way to the methodology choosing group of people and saying that this is the “product owner body” and they together will decide. This break whole concept as if we have two people in charge, than most of the decisions needs to be validated with both. Each person has different knowledge and often different opinion.

In scrum we should also have one product owner assigned to a team, but this is rarely possible. Nowadays we have more demand for developers than supply. So it is very common that every year in the IT/Business department special event is organized during which major projects are chosen and only those will be done during next months. This IT manpower assignment, results in changing product owner for the team. So developers are more like contractors which are working on one business area this year and on different next year.

### Team members

Full stack employee is very rarely person. Usually it even cannot be real full stack because of organization structure. Worldwide trend is to make every application as web solution. Big companies are resigning from desktop applications and moving all functionality into websites. This results in specialization of the team members. Usually we have employees focused only on the backend which is in usually written in .NET or Java and other group of frontenders writing in React, Angular or Vue.js. Very often those people don’t want to learn how to write the other (usually treated as worse) part. They more likely would like to learn how to improve skills which they already good in. So backenders learn DDD, TDD, databases and others. Frontenders on the other hand, are trying to keep up to date with changes in framework, implement typescript, and propose neat architecture for their solutions.

### Deployment

Team member in the Scrum should also be able to push software on production, but this is usually done by different team in the organization. It have of course rationales behind this. Managing the servers, high availability, disaster recovery it is different knowledge that development and nowadays devops or infrastructure team needs hours of learning to know how it should be configured.

### Team Leader

Scrum is also assuming that all team members are equal and those group of people doesn’t need any team leader. This approach missing couple points. First no team leader structure can work only in small organization. When IT consists of more development teams, we need to have structure in which each team will be represented by particular person during general meetings. Missing team leader also means that we won’t have anyone responsible for people development, no one will look for the team and try to motivate them, give them feedback and push to learn new technology or frameworks. And last point which is also important. Team without team leader works very good only as long as developers are fully committed to their work. So they really feel responsible for the product, for their work and generally success of the company. This could happen if we hire very good people, but often we are not in the comfort of having so mature developers and some lead which will show people right direction and remind about basic rules helps a lot.

# Summary

Scrum is great framework I read books that it had worked in couple great companies which have the best people in the market. I tried to implement Scrum team organization already tree times and each company have their own restrictions which doesn’t allow to make it pure. Still Scrum had other great parts like ceremonies and working principles which are very good and in my opinion just the team is difficult to setup according to the rules.