

Assignment 14 – Challenging Cases

Case 1

“Can I skip the Daily Scrum?”

One of the members in your Scrum Team is consistently not showing up for the Daily Scrum. For her, it's just a waste of time and she prefers to just keep focused on her work. This bothers others in the Development Team, but they also recognize how much work she gets done in 'focus mode'. You, and others in the team, have had conversations about this with her. But she has been unwilling to change her behavior.

How do you deal with a situation like this? What can you make transparent? How do the Scrum Values inform your behavior? And what would servant leadership look like for you, in this case?

Solution:

If any team member consistently fails to show up for the daily Scrum, I would reach out to them to understand their reservations about joining the meeting. I would encourage her to join the discussion. I would recommend that it is necessary to join these meetings for a healthy and functioning team. If there's something that she needs to be adjusted about the scrum meetings, the team can discuss and adapt to accommodate everyone's suggestions.

A smooth operation and a healthy Scrum require transparency, openness, and honesty. They should voice their opinions and suggestions to make a better team that works well together.

A successful Scrum team has these five values: Courage, Focus, Commitment, Respect, and Openness (Scrum.org). She falls short on three of these five values of Scrum. Courage to do the right thing and join the daily meetings. With respect to other team members and the Scrum process. She is open to discussing the work in a relaxed environment and taking feedback from her team members.

A servant leader encourages people to act through persuasion rather than authority (Gay, 2021). The Scrum Master empowers the team to self-organize, self-manage and self-deliver. The Scrum Master's role is not to intervene in the team's dynamic but to look at the overall process.

Case 2

Scrum Master is responsible for performance reviews

The organization you work for implemented Scrum a couple of years ago. By using Scrum, many things have changed: new roles, events, and processes. Something that has stayed the same, are the annual performance reviews, for all the employees.

To respect the Scrum Team's autonomy, they have asked you to conduct these reviews. This means it's up to you to discuss the individual performance with each team member. Did they achieve their personal goals? Do they deserve an increase in salary? It's your call.

You're expected to have the individual performance reviews next Sprint.

If you would conduct the performance reviews, how would this impact your relationship with the Scrum Team? How would it change your role as a Scrum Master? How would it impact the Scrum values?

What would be an alternative approach?

Solution:

Scrum teams are supposed to be self-organize, self-manage, and self-deliver. In the retrospective, the team discusses: what went well during the sprint cycle? What went wrong during the sprint cycle? And what could we do differently to improve? (Tech at GSA, n.d.)

If the Scrum Master involves themselves in this process, the next sprint would be catered towards serving the servant leader rather than working on the team to improve for the next iteration. Disturbing this scrum process will have a lasting impact on the team and team's dynamic with the Scrum Master. It violates all five scrum values.

It would be better if the product owner handled this review process as an alternative. Or let the team go through their retrospective, and based on this outcome, the management team or the senior staff can come to a consensus on the promotion and pay hike.

Case 3

Product Owner without a mandate

During Sprint #12, you're approached by the Product Owner of your Scrum Team. You can see she's angry. During the conversation she tells you that, once again, her decision to release the product this Sprint was overruled by a group of stakeholders. Also, they approached the Development Team directly and told them to release next month and to include a different feature. The Product Owner learned about it this morning from a team member.

This isn't the first time this has happened.

Personally, you (and the Development Team) have a good relationship with the Product Owner. Also, you're convinced that she is a great Product Owner. She's got all the necessary skills & capabilities, but she's struggling with organizational politics and power play by management.

You just wrapped up your conversation with the Product Owner. Something must change, but what? How would you approach this situation? What is something you would definitely do or not do? How does this situation impact the empirical process of Scrum, and what are the arguments you could raise with management?

Solution:

Regardless of the mature relationship with the product owner or the stakeholders. The agile process has a simple set of rules. The rules say that the backlog items and priorities are decided by the product owner, stakeholders, team, and the scrum master at the sprint planning phase of the project. User stories in the priority queue can be revisited at the end of each iteration for reprioritization or adding/removing new items on the queue.

The team can advise the stakeholders to reach out to them in an official capacity. If the stakeholders persist in meeting the teams for adding items on the backlog, the teams can involve the scrum master and the product owner. If the stakeholders continue to have a meeting with the team members, the team can log the work items the stakeholders want to work on but not prioritize them.

The Scrum process is based on reacting to changes in the requirements. But there are some rules to it. The Scrum process accommodates the difference at the end of each iteration cycle. Suppose the stakeholders are asking for changes in the existing backlog items. The management team can discuss with the stakeholders about delivering the right product for the stakeholders in a way that can best the competition. Deliver the agreed-upon product at the agreed-upon time.

Bibliography

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