**How Do You Address Scrum Blockages?**

What are your most frequent Scrum impediments and how do you resolve them? Do you have a person on your team who can do those things for you? Do you have to funnel requests through an amorphous support team? If you could have it your way, which would you choose?

I have spent much of my career working in a software development organization that uses Agile and the Scrum framework. I have had a wide range of responsibilities, centered on addressing tasks that would detract from developers’ efforts to produce code. The position is hands-on, and requires working closely with the development team and the Scrum Master.

Responsibilities include application installs and configuration, software build management, QA environment management and troubleshooting, infrastructure requests (access to and explanation of software tools, servers, Active Directory, server maintenance, IIS configuration), issue verification, software packaging and distribution, server provisioning and configuration, and process documentation.

In some organizations, a portion of the above may already be automated and as much as possible should be automated. This only adds to productivity and calls out potential issues early in the process. For other organizations, the activities require manual intervention. In all cases, the activities are not a productive use of a software developer’s time.

Has your company reached a size where routine requests involve opening tickets and waiting for the resolution? Do those delays slow development time and the completion of stories? Could many of those tasks be internalized to the team and reduce delays from days to minutes?

By definition the Scrum Master has the responsibility for making sure impediments or blockages are addressed. Do they also have the necessary knowledge of your company’s infrastructure and the contacts to make sure that impediments are removed? Should the Scrum Master spend his or her time doing them or making sure that they get done? What if the Scrum Master only needed one contact to address many of the blockages?

The advantages of having somebody on the team who can directly address blockages and the resulting effect on productivity is obvious. The person who can resolve these issues can add tremendous strength and value to the team.

If you cannot afford to have such a person dedicated to one team, an alternative is to share the person across Scrum teams, associated with a larger project. They could triage the issues and many could be resolved quickly. For more complicated issues, priority could be determined in the Scrum of Scrums.

Give it some thought and decide what works best for you. You owe it to your team.