Introduction ↘

A **Scrum of Scrums (SoS)** is a scaled agile practice used to coordinate multiple Scrum teams working on the same project or product. It essentially involves a regular meeting where representatives from different Scrum teams (usually Scrum Masters or team leads) come together to discuss their progress, dependencies, and any obstacles they may be facing. This meeting allows for greater transparency, alignment, and collaboration across teams, ensuring that the work done by individual Scrum teams is harmonized towards a common goal.

The Scrum of Scrums is similar to the daily Scrum or stand-up meeting, but on a broader level, and it typically involves discussing:

- **Progress**: Updates on what has been accomplished since the last Scrum of Scrums.

- **Plans**: What the teams will work on in the upcoming days.

- **Impediments**: Any issues, blockers, or risks that need to be addressed, especially those that impact multiple teams.

A Scrum of Scrums is usually conducted on a regular cadence (such as daily or a few times a week) and is an excellent way to scale Agile practices across a larger, multi-team development environment.

Benefits of a Scrum of Scrums in a ServiceNow Development Environment with No Central Administration Across Multiple Geolocations ↘

In a ServiceNow development environment, particularly one where there is **no central administration** and multiple teams are distributed across **various geolocations**, a **Scrum of Scrums** can provide several advantages, fostering better coordination, collaboration, and overall efficiency. Here's how it can benefit such an environment:

1. Improved Coordination Across Teams

When working on ServiceNow implementations or customizations, teams may be dealing with various modules like **Incident Management, Change Management**, or **Service Catalog**, and each team will have its own specific scope of work. In a geographically distributed environment, it's easy for teams to become siloed and lose track of what others are doing. A Scrum of Scrums provides a structured way for teams to synchronize and ensure their efforts are aligned, reducing the risk of duplication of work or conflicting configurations in ServiceNow.

For example, if one team is building a **custom workflow** while another team is handling the integration with an external tool, they can bring up any dependencies or conflicts in the Scrum of Scrums meeting, ensuring that both teams are aligned and working towards a common goal.

2. Real-Time Issue Resolution Across Locations

In a ServiceNow development environment with teams spread across different time zones, it's often difficult to communicate and resolve issues quickly. A Scrum of Scrums allows for a **faster feedback loop**, where blockers and impediments can be raised, discussed, and resolved in real time or through

quick follow-ups. This ensures that progress is continuous and any issues affecting multiple teams or geolocations are swiftly addressed, minimizing delays.

For instance, if one team encounters a **dependency issue** with a custom app on another team's side, they can raise it during the Scrum of Scrums, ensuring that it gets resolved before it causes significant delays for other teams working on related ServiceNow features.

3. Increased Transparency and Cross-Team Visibility

A Scrum of Scrums gives stakeholders (such as ServiceNow architects or business stakeholders) visibility into the work being done across all Scrum teams, even when they are based in different locations. This helps in understanding how the teams are progressing toward the overall goal, what tasks are on track, and where there may be gaps in deliverables.

By having regular updates in the Scrum of Scrums, it becomes easier for leadership and team members to identify **risks, resource shortages**, or **technical debt** early in the process. This is particularly useful in large, complex ServiceNow projects where multiple teams may be working on different components (like automation, integration, and user interface) simultaneously, and it's critical to have a bird's-eye view of the entire project.

4. Easier Management of Dependencies and Integration Challenges

ServiceNow projects often require **integrations with external systems** or other internal systems. These integrations often require close coordination between teams working on different modules. A Scrum of Scrums helps teams surface **inter-team dependencies** and potential integration issues before they become blockers.

For example, if one team is working on creating custom **REST API endpoints** and another is building a **dashboard** that consumes these APIs, the Scrum of Scrums will serve as a checkpoint to ensure both teams are aligned in terms of timing, API structures, and data requirements, reducing integration surprises later in the project.

5. Alignment Across Distributed Teams and Time Zones

With teams in multiple geolocations, having an effective coordination mechanism can be challenging. The Scrum of Scrums brings all the geographically distributed teams into alignment, despite the distance and time zone differences. This approach fosters a sense of **collaboration and shared responsibility**, even when teams are physically distant.

To make this work efficient in a multi-location environment, organizations can ensure that the Scrum of Scrums is scheduled at a time that accommodates all time zones or use asynchronous collaboration tools (such as **Slack** or **Microsoft Teams**) to facilitate the conversation.

6. Faster Adaptation to Changes and Evolving Requirements

ServiceNow projects are often agile and iterative, with requirements that evolve over time based on business needs. A Scrum of Scrums helps teams quickly adapt to **changes in scope, new features**, or **shifting priorities**. For example, if a business stakeholder requests a change in the **Service Catalog** after a user testing session, the Scrum of Scrums helps teams assess how this change impacts the overall

work, allowing them to adjust priorities, reallocate resources, and keep the development process moving forward.

7. Shared Knowledge and Best Practices

A Scrum of Scrums provides a platform for **cross-pollination of ideas and knowledge sharing**. Developers, Scrum Masters, and other stakeholders across geolocations can discuss challenges, share solutions, and best practices, leading to more efficient problem-solving. For example, one team might have encountered a **performance issue** while working on integration, and the Scrum of Scrums is an ideal place for them to share their solution with other teams who may be facing similar challenges.

Additionally, cross-team knowledge sharing can help avoid mistakes or inefficiencies in areas like **code standards**, **naming conventions**, or **customization best practices** that can affect the long-term maintainability of the ServiceNow platform.

Best Practices for Scrum of Scrums in a ServiceNow Development Environment ↘

To maximize the benefits of the Scrum of Scrums for ServiceNow development, organizations should follow a few best practices:

1. **Establish Clear Roles**: Define the roles for representatives attending the Scrum of Scrums, typically Scrum Masters or team leads from each Scrum team, and ensure they understand their responsibilities in reporting and escalating issues.

2. **Standardize Tools and Processes**: Ensure all teams use standardized tools (like JIRA, Confluence, or ServiceNow itself) for tracking progress, reporting blockers, and managing dependencies to streamline communication and collaboration.

3. **Foster Cross-Functional Collaboration**: Encourage communication and cooperation between teams with diverse skill sets (e.g., ServiceNow developers, business analysts, and architects) to address multi-disciplinary issues early.

4. **Use Agile Metrics**: Utilize common agile metrics such as **velocity**, **burn-down charts**, or **blocked time** to track progress and identify potential bottlenecks during the Scrum of Scrums.

5. **Set a Regular Schedule**: Ensure the Scrum of Scrums meetings occur regularly (daily or every few days), maintaining momentum and ensuring that teams stay aligned.

Conclusion ↘

The Scrum of Scrums is an effective agile practice for coordinating multiple teams across different geolocations in a **ServiceNow development environment**. It ensures better alignment, improved collaboration, and quicker issue resolution, all of which are critical when working on large-scale, complex projects involving various teams, modules, and integrations. By adopting a Scrum of Scrums approach, organizations can enhance the productivity of their distributed teams and achieve greater success in delivering ServiceNow projects on time and within scope.

About Mana'o Pili ↘

Scaled Agile: ServiceNow and Scrum of Scrums (SoS)

'ike (knowledge) level: Novice

Mana'o Pili is a Hawai'i based technology consulting firm specializing in business automation through ServiceNow. Mana'o Pili provides its customers with individualized solutions. We reject the notion of one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, we partner with you to craft a tailored plan that aligns with your unique needs, budget, and objectives. Our approach focuses on optimizing your existing platform while minimizing customization and reducing technical debt.

Here at Mana'o Pili, we treat our customers as 'ohana (family), listen closely to your challenges and deliver tailored attention with exceptional service.