EXIN Agile Scrum Master

Lesson 4—Scrum Roles

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the roles and commitments of the Scrum Master.

- Explain the tools and techniques used by the Scrum Master to coach the team and resolve conflicts.

- Define the Product Owner role.

- Define the Developer role in a Scrum Team.

- Explain the essential attributes of being a Scrum Master, Product Owner, or a Developer in a Scrum Team.

The Scrum roles are an important feature of Scrum. Scrum defines three roles:

Scrum Master

Accountable to the team to remove impediments that will prevent them from achieving the goals of the Product Owner

Product Owner

Responsible for the project's success by defining the project vision, requirements, and priorities

The Team

Team comprises 5–9 people, with a mix of roles, and self-organizes to determine how to best meet the goals of the Product Owner

Scrum Roles

Topic 1—Scrum Master

Scrum Master: Roles and Commitments

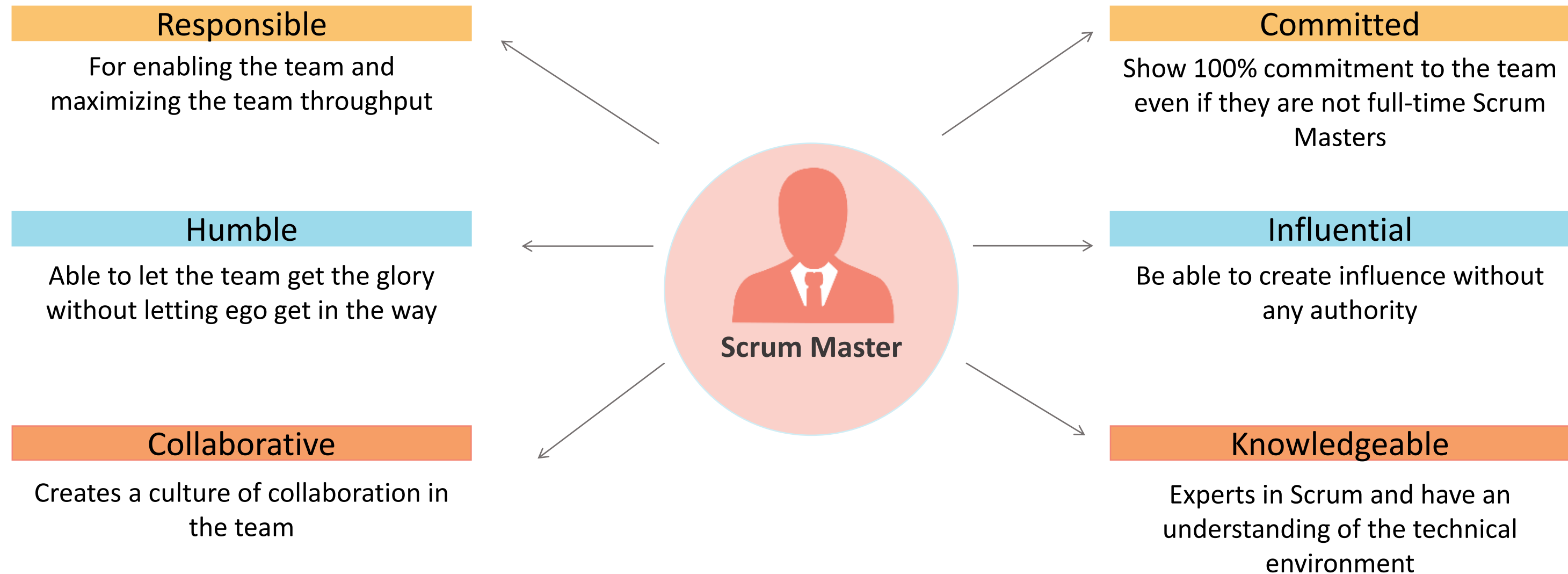Do's and Don'ts of being a Scrum Master:

A Scrum Master is:

- A "servant leader"
- A facilitator of Scrum events
- An impediment remover
- A process "coach"

A Scrum Master is not:

- A "line" manager
- A task master
- A technical or design authority
- A decision maker

Attributes of a Scrum Master

Scrum Masters should ideally have the following attributes:

Responsible

For enabling the team and maximizing the team throughput

Committed

Show 100% commitment to the team even if they are not full-time Scrum Masters

Humble

Able to let the team get the glory without letting ego get in the way

Influential

Be able to create influence without any authority

Scrum Master

Collaborative

Creates a culture of collaboration in the team

Knowledgeable

Experts in Scrum and have an understanding of the technical environment

The tasks for Scrum Master are listed below:

1

Serves the Team

- Sets up and facilitates the Scrum rituals
- Ensures that the team is collaborating and removes any roadblocks in communication
- Removes the issues blocking the team's progress

2

Protects the Team

- Shields the team from external interference and disturbance
- Keeps the team away from unnecessary pressure and unreasonable expectations
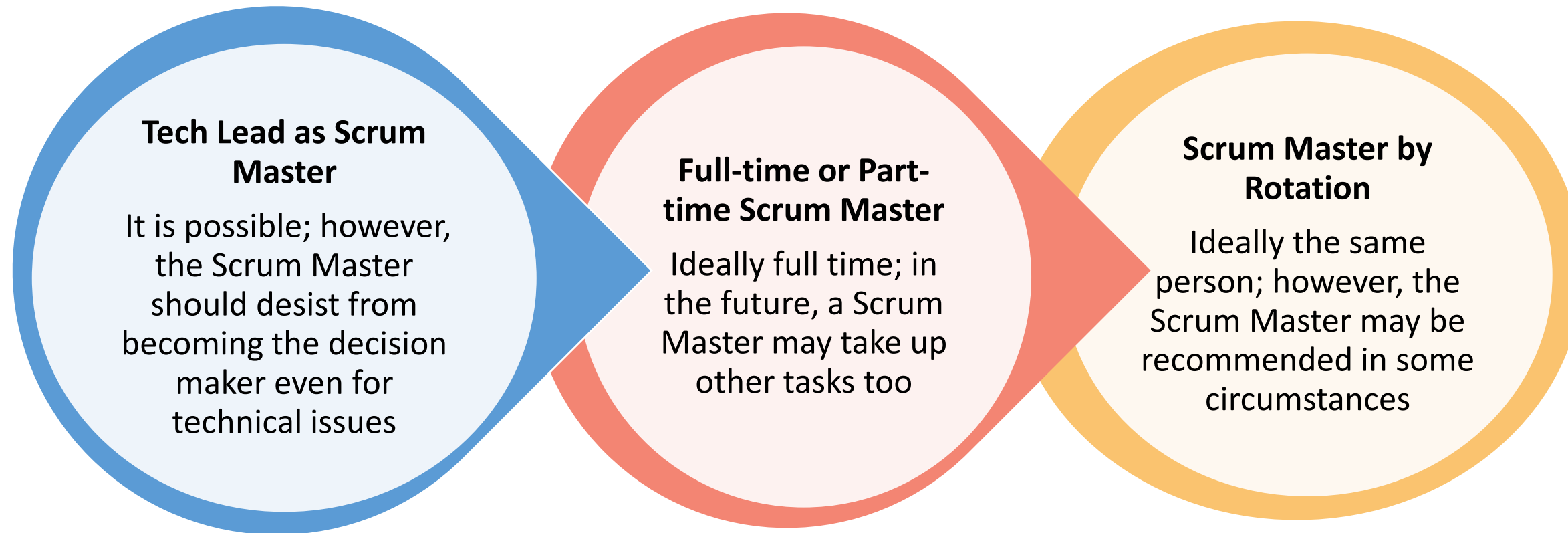- Resolves and manages conflict within the team
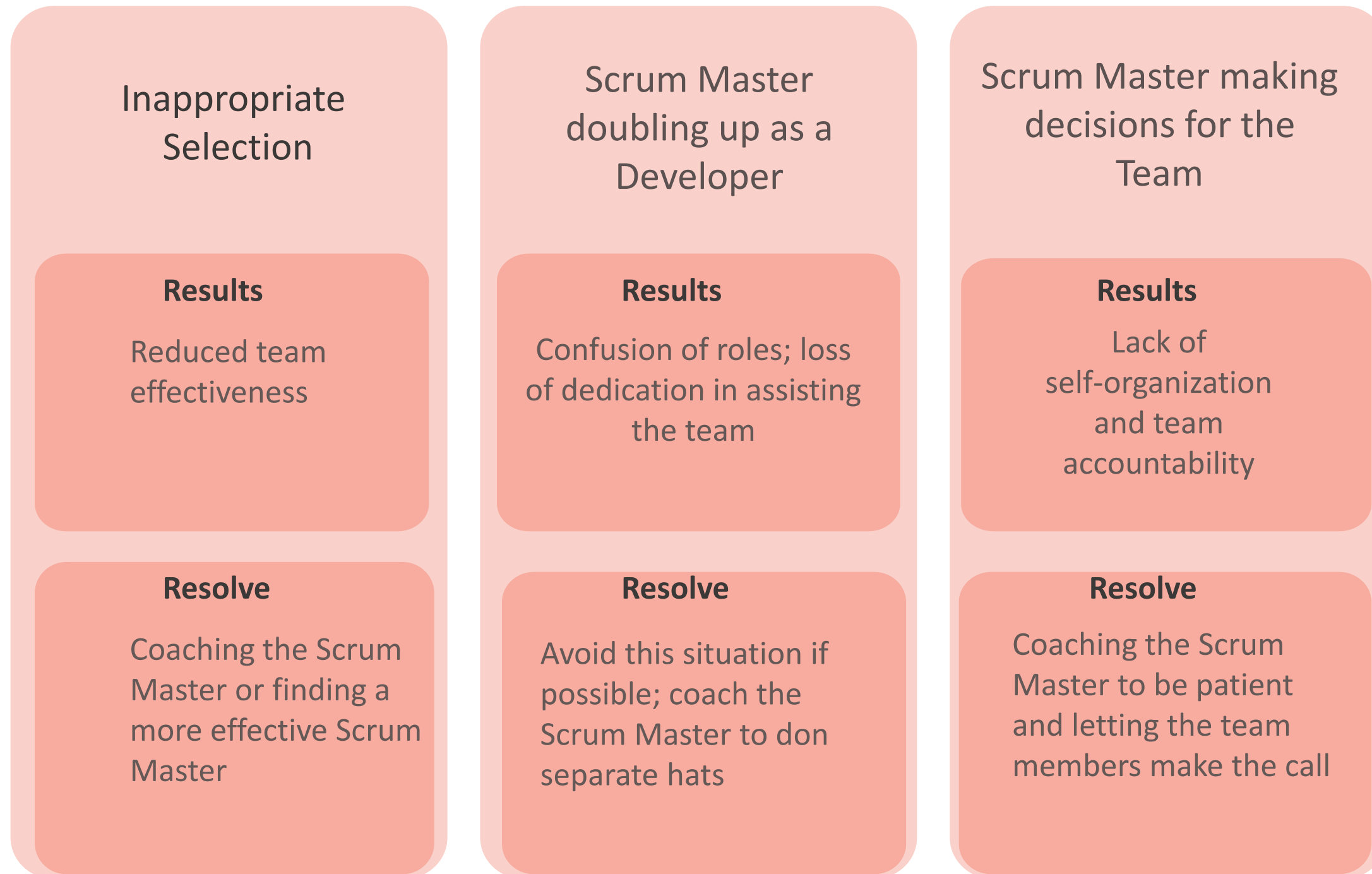
3

Coaches the Team

- Trains them on the Scrum methodology
- Ensures that the team stays true to the spirit of Agile development
- Reminds the team about the Agile Principles

Selecting the Scrum Master

Here are some common scenarios in appointing a Scrum Master for the team:

Tech Lead as Scrum Master

It is possible; however, the Scrum Master should desist from becoming the decision maker even for technical issues

Full-time or Part-time Scrum Master

Ideally full time; in the future, a Scrum Master may take up other tasks too

Scrum Master by Rotation

Ideally the same person; however, the Scrum Master may be recommended in some circumstances

Common Failure Modes for the Scrum Master Position

Some scenarios where the Scrum Master position may not work as expected are as follows:

Inappropriate Selection	Scrum Master doubling up as a Developer	Scrum Master making decisions for the Team
Results Reduced team effectiveness	**Results** Confusion of roles; loss of dedication in assisting the team	**Results** Lack of self-organization and team accountability
Resolve Coaching the Scrum Master or finding a more effective Scrum Master	**Resolve** Avoid this situation if possible; coach the Scrum Master to don separate hats	**Resolve** Coaching the Scrum Master to be patient and letting the team members make the call

Scrum Roles

Topic 2—Product Owner

Product Owner: Roles and Commitments

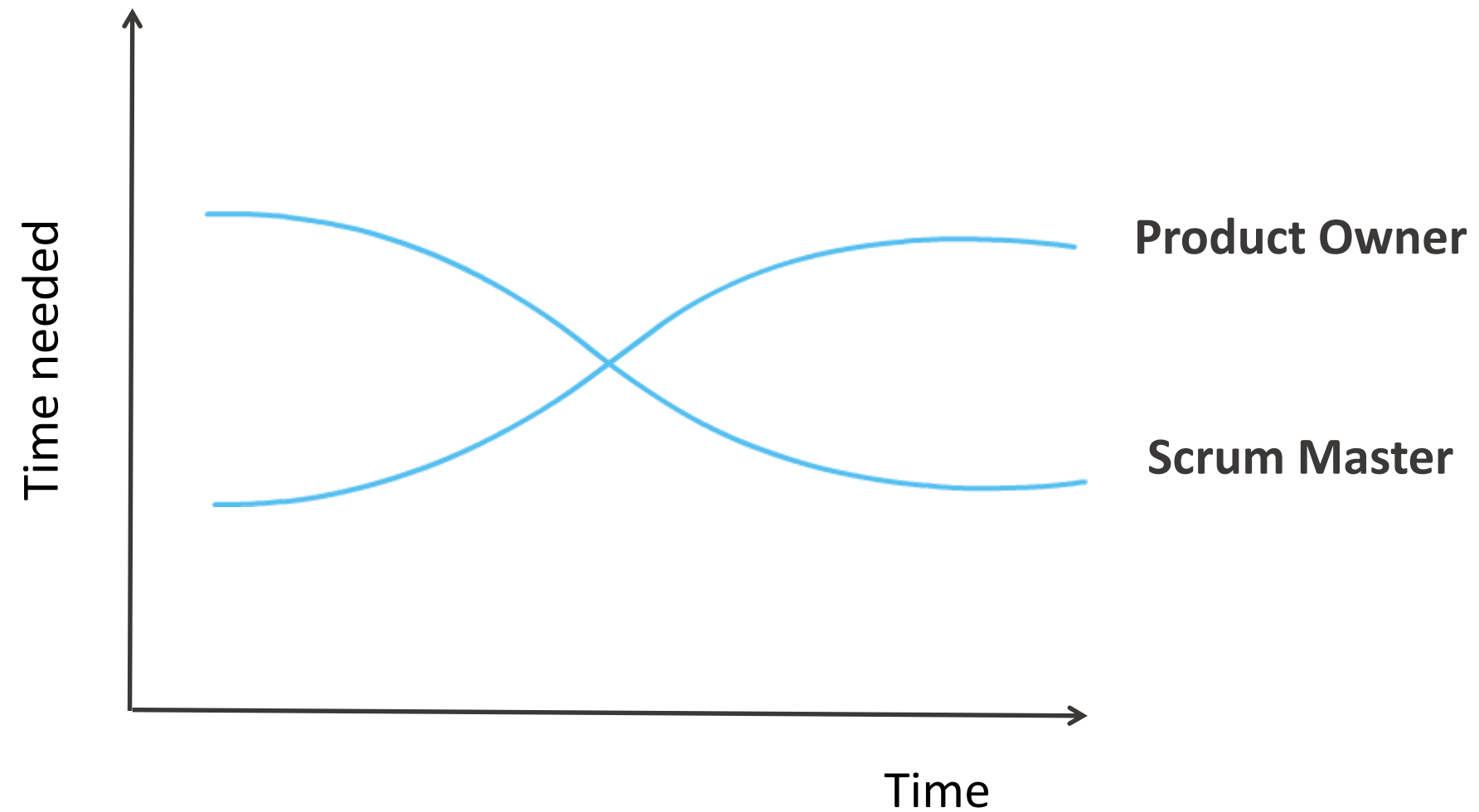Broadly, the Product Owner provides both vision and direction to the team.

Vision Provider

- Establish and provide a compelling product vision
- Share the vision and gain consensus
- Ensure the creation of the product backlog
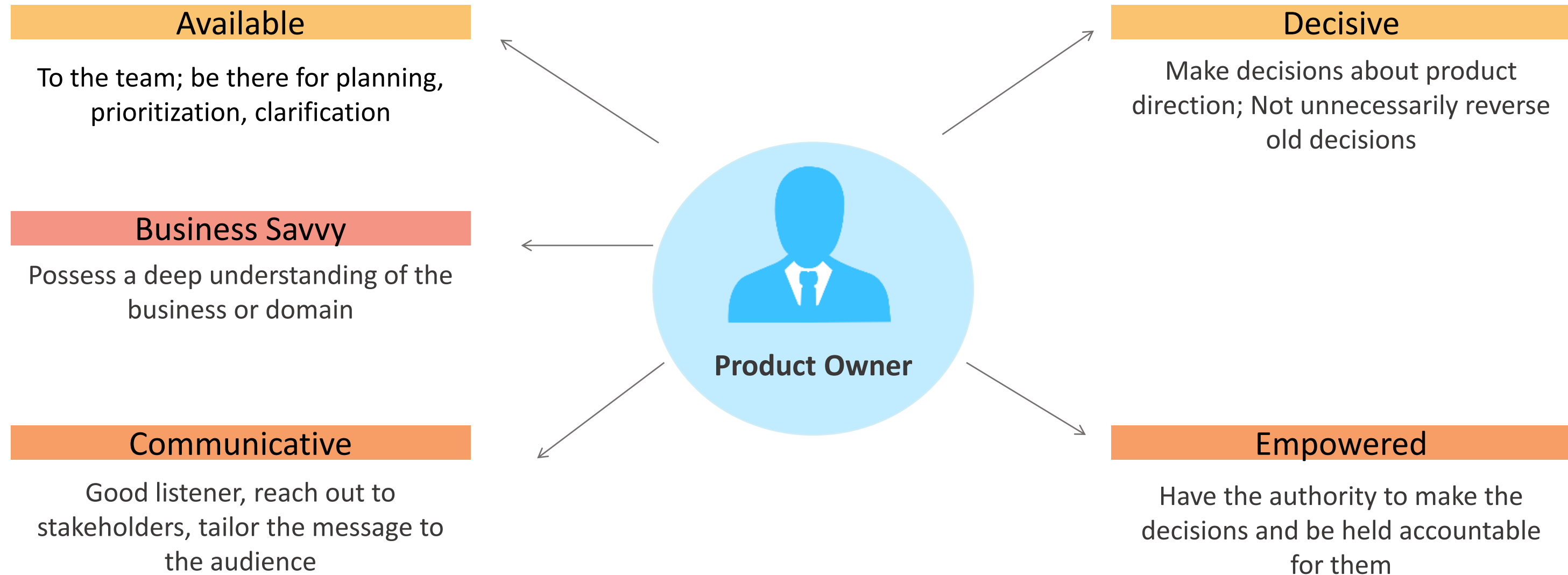- Add details and clarify the backlog

Boundary Provider

- Define success parameters like market window and desired timeline for the product
- Define the minimally viable product
- Define expectations around non-functional criteria
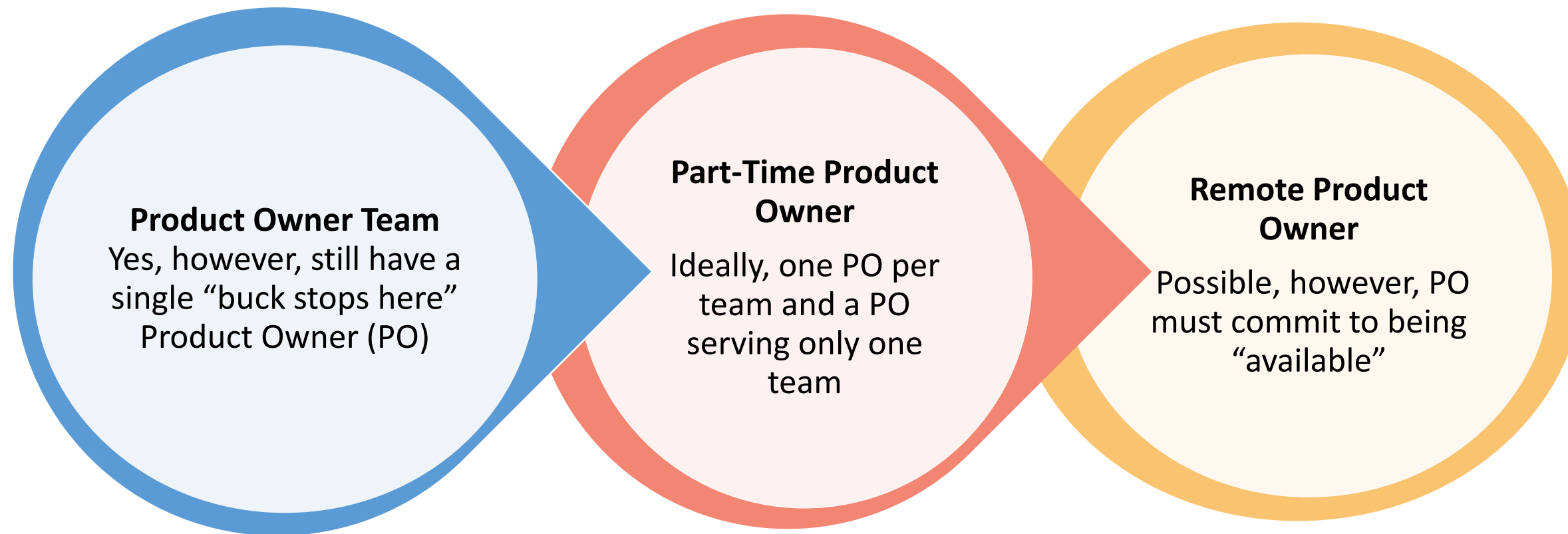- Provide acceptance criteria

This is how the team's requirement of time from the Product Owner and Scrum Master evolves over time.

Attributes of a Product Owner

A Product Owner should ideally have the following attributes:

Available

To the team; be there for planning, prioritization, clarification

Business Savvy

Possess a deep understanding of the business or domain

Communicative

Good listener, reach out to stakeholders, tailor the message to the audience

Product Owner

Decisive

Make decisions about product direction; Not unnecessarily reverse old decisions

Empowered

Have the authority to make the decisions and be held accountable for them

Here are some common scenarios in appointing a Product Owner for the team:

Product Owner Team
Yes, however, still have a single "buck stops here" Product Owner (PO)

Part-Time Product Owner
Ideally, one PO per team and a PO serving only one team

Remote Product Owner
Possible, however, PO must commit to being "available"

Common Failure Modes for the Product Owner Position

Some scenarios where the Product Owner position may not work as expected are as follows.

Ineffective delegation for decision making by the PO	PO pushing the team too hard	PO who wants to cut quality
Results Confusion within the team	**Results** Burnout of the team; compromises team self-organization	**Results** Eventual product failures; decreased team velocity
Resolve Avoid second guessing and wait till the end of the Sprint to reverse decisions	**Resolve** Scrum Master pushing back on behalf of the team; negotiate goals	**Resolve** Scrum Master pushing back; providing data about consequences of bad quality

Scrum Roles

Topic 3—Scrum Teams

Attributes of a Scrum Team

Following are some desirable characteristics of a Scrum Team:

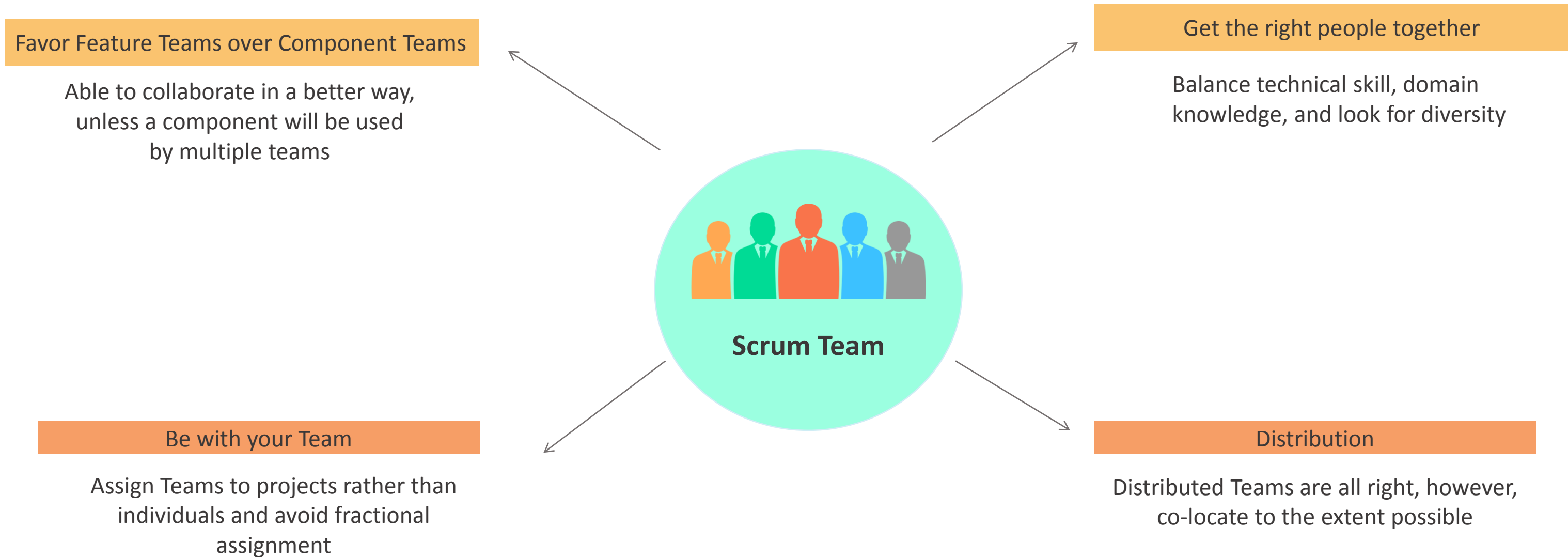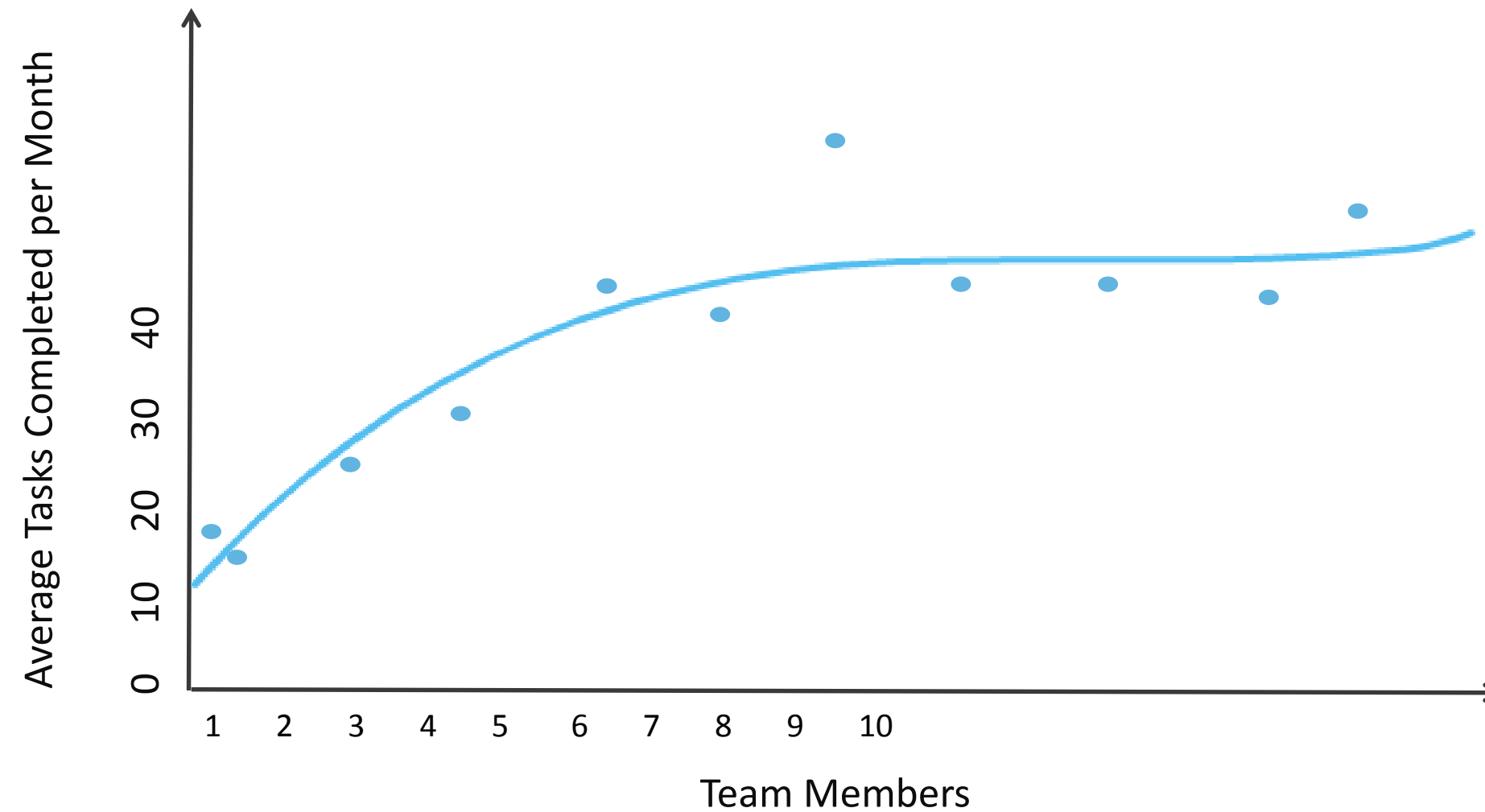|	
Small and Nimble	• Ideally three to nine developers • Avoid complexity and "social loafing," which reduces productivity
Self-sufficient and Cross-functional	• Able to produce a "complete" product increment • Preferably generalists who possess some specialized knowledge • Favor "Feature Team" over "Component Team"
Autonomous and Self-organizing	• Ideally no sub-teams, no separate roles • Decide how to deliver what is expected

Scrum Teams

Common decision points in Scrum Team selection:

Favor Feature Teams over Component Teams

Able to collaborate in a better way, unless a component will be used by multiple teams

Get the right people together

Balance technical skill, domain knowledge, and look for diversity

Scrum Team

Be with your Team

Assign Teams to projects rather than individuals and avoid fractional assignment

Distribution

Distributed Teams are all right, however, co-locate to the extent possible

This is how the overall productivity of the team varies with the team size:

The common themes are Work incrementally, iteratively, and beyond your specialty.

| Project Manager | — | Scrum Master |

- Avoid being decision makers
- Embrace servant leadership
- Learn about Scrum

| Architect/ UED/ Tester | — | Programmer |

- Avoid sitting in ivory towers
- Dedicate to the team cause

| Analyst/ Product Manager | — | Product Owner |
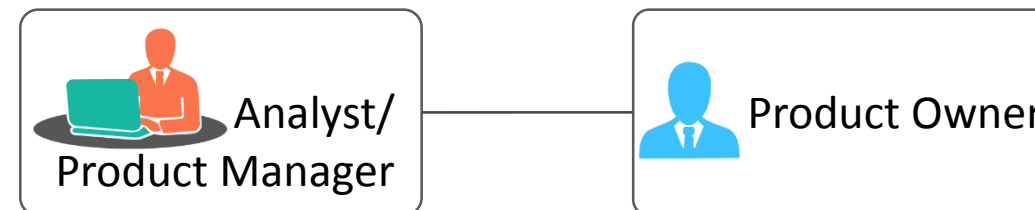
Provide direction, but is not the sole interpreter of customer's requirements

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Scrum Roles

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

Let us summarize the topics covered in this lesson:

- The Scrum Master is a process coach of the team and facilitates the team's success by being the servant leader.

- The Product Owner provides the vision and boundaries for the product and the projects.

- A Scrum Team should be small, cross-functional, and self-organizing.

- There is reason for choosing different names for Scrum roles; it is important to evolve and shift out of the existing role to make Scrum successful.

? Quiz

QUIZ 1

The Product Owner (PO) wants a feature urgently, and the team's estimate for the feature was three Sprints. What is the best course of action for the Scrum Master?

a. Take a step back and wait for the PO and the team to resolve the matter

b. Request the team members if they can stretch their time to reduce the time estimate

c. Tell the PO that the estimates of the team must be respected

d. Organize a meeting to explore options of meeting the requirement in time

| QUIZ 2 | The best way to divide a large Project Team into smaller Scrum Teams is _____. |

a. into Developers, Testers, User Interface Designers, and Data experts

b. according to components based on the product architecture

c. around features that need to be developed

d. by ensuring a mix of Senior and Junior Developers in each team

QUIZ 3

Why is diversity a desirable attribute for a Scrum Team?

a. To encourage different view points and healthy debate to emerge

b. To enable proper succession planning for each role

c. To comply with Federal and State Regulations

d. To help build cultural sensitivity

QUIZ 4	A part-time Scrum Master was working on a critical development activity when another team member asked for help. What should the Scrum Master do?

a. Ask the team member to raise the issue at the next Standup meeting

b. Explore the best way to help the team member

c. Assist the team member as soon as the critical activity is finished

d. Assign somebody else to assist the team member

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This concludes "Scrum Roles."

The next lesson is "Agile Estimating, Planning, Monitoring, and Control."