PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

Primary Responsibilities

💡 The Product Owner is typically a customer representative who is not from the Supplier or Vendor organization.

- The primary responsibilities of Product Owner are as follows:
    - Creating Product Vision
    - Backlog Grooming
    - Release Planning
    - Ensuring Business Stakeholder's involvement
    - Managing Project Budget
    - Assessing readiness for Product launch and subsequently launching the Product
    - Attending Scrum ceremonies and collaborating with the team

Desirable Characteristics of Product Owner

Product Visionary

Leader and Team Player

Communicator and Negotiator

Empowered and Committed

Available and Qualified

PRODUCT VISIONARY

Product Vision is how the product would evolve over the time. A Product Owner must be able to visualize how the Product evolves over a period. The Product Owner must ensure that this vision becomes a reality when the Project is completed. The Product Owner envisages the Product Vision by:

- Describing the requirements; that is, the scope of the Product over a period of time
- Closely collaborating with the team; that is, providing the team with the required clarifications and guidance on Project Scope
- Testing and accepting work results and rejecting deliverables that don't meet the agreed acceptance criteria
- Directing and steering the Project as it progresses; that is, tracking and assessing progress toward getting the Product Vision realization

LEADER AND TEAM PLAYER

Typically, in an enterprise or an organization, the Projects are cross-functional. This means that there would be multiple departments and/or business functions with often competing requirements and constraints such as Time, Quality, and Scope.

The Product Owner is the leader who collaborates with these different business units providing guidance and direction—**as a leader.** At the same time, the Product Owner works with multiple teams (may be from both customer and multiple vendors or suppliers) **as a team player** or as "first among the peers" with respect to product or project scope.

COMMUNICATOR AND NEGOTIATOR

In a project, you would find different stakeholders involved such as customers, users, development, engineering, research, sales and marketing, service delivery, operations, and management. The Product Owner must be an effective communicator and negotiator to work with these multiple stakeholders. When there are competing requirements from competing stakeholders with varying degrees of influence on the Project, the Product Owner must negotiate and arrive at a win-win situation.

EMPOWERED AND COMMITTED

Product Vision is across the enterprise. Therefore, it is important for the Product Owner to have enough authority across the enterprise. The Product Owner also requires management (or leadership) support and sponsorship to align multiple stakeholders and project development teams. The Product Owner must have enough decision-making authority.

Example	A global Automobile Manufacturing company wants to standardize the packaging materials used in packing service parts. The manufacturing plants in different

countries were using different packaging materials as they wished. This caused multiple issues:

- No standardization on packaging, leading to multiple specifications of packaging materials such as cardboard, bubble wraps, etc.
- At global level, the business was not able to leverage the packaging volumes with packaging suppliers for better pricing and volume discounts

In this situation, the customer nominated the Vice President of Global Packaging as its Product Owner. The Vice President comes with enough authority, seniority, and subject matter expertise, and was fully empowered and committed.

Imagine there was another person or role as the Product Owner. Let us say the packaging manager for a particular region (remember, the client is a global manufacturer) such as Europe was selected as the Product Owner. Other regions such as North America or Asia Pacific might not agree to this Product Owner from Europe, leading to multiple conflicts and misalignments.

AVAILABLE AND QUALIFIED

The Product Owner is a full time job on the project. The Product Owner must be available throughout the project duration. The Product Owner must also be qualified to carry out the required role. For example, if the Product Owner is underqualified, the final deliverable might not meet the customer expectations.