

What is your role in the organization and with respect to your XFT?

I'm the Scrum Master of an XFT team.

What are your key responsibilities and tasks you are concerned with?

You mean as a Scrum Master or...

You personally. As far as we figure you share your time as a developer and a Scrum Master.

Oh you mean in that sense. I'm hired as a developer, but then I more or less try to get the other way; I try to be a Scrum Master or more project oriented and perhaps I'm expected to be that.

Have you been employed here before the transformation towards agile?

Not as an Ericsson employee, but I have been a consultant at Sony Ericsson and then I have been working when it was not XFTs, not Scrum-based at all and you had all organization instead.

What kind of responsibilities are added towards you being a Scrum Master from being a developer?

It's hard to say actually. Since I am ... I think it's fun to try be a part of program planning and project planning and such things. I have always been striving in that direction, even when I was just a developer. But of course when I'm a Scrum Master I get more attention from... more people are asking me questions because I am a single point of contact in some way for the team. In that sense I am involved in different kind of things all over the organization.

Is it clearly defined what is included in your responsibilities in your current position?

No, I would say not. Actually, if I compare myself to other Scrum Masters there is a huge difference how you define a Scrum Master role. Some of my colleagues they are just — I shouldn't say just — they more or less just having stand up meetings and having those regular meetings. As I said, I strive to take it one step further and actually use my position as a Scrum Master to get things changed and give input to other ongoing projects within the organization.

Do you think that would help other teams as well, having a more vocal Scrum leader who takes up more responsibilities?

No, I think it is dependent on both the team and also the person. I think you need to have both of them within the organization, so if everyone was like me I don't think it would be good either, because then we shouldn't have done anything more or less. Then perhaps everyone would try to just talk about, try to make other plans.

So the rather vague formalization of responsibilities is also kind of good because

people can just perform duties the way they want...

Yes, I think so. Exactly, I think it's good for the organization to have it like that. The only thing that is a bit formalized I think is that it should be I think it's 10% or 20% of my time should be as a Scrum Master. But that's not applicable I would say since some Scrum Masters almost don't spend any time at all on their tasks and I definitely spend more than 20% on Scrum Master more or less work. But, as I said, I think it is good to have both, it doesn't matter that much really.

What are the roles you normally communicate with during your work? If you were to pick 3-5 most frequent and intense.

OPO, of course, and our product owner — that is not the same, even if it is almost the same name, they are different persons — and then of course my section manager. I'd say that, and then I also speak quite a lot with the Scrum Masters of the other APC teams. We are a small product with just 3 teams, we have a lot in common.

What are the different issues you communicate about with these roles?

With the OPO we discuss typically the ongoing work and the upcoming work, more or less everything that happens during daily basis. With the product owner... if there are some urgent situations or so then typically PO gets informed about that and then she contacts one of us to help us to solve it, give input or so. With SM it could be almost anything. Right now, since we have a new SM we have quite a lot of communication about how our team is working and how we are handling stuff and such things, because he is not aware of the product and he is not aware of this department at all, so he's been asking a lot of questions about that.

How in general do you share the information about your XFT's work to those different roles? For example, to the OPO, PO, SM...

At sprint reviews mainly. All three of them attend when we have sprint reviews, so that's the normal way. Of course I talk to them on a daily basis as well, but I try to not bring up small things every day. Of course the OPO is always interested in the ongoing work, but, for example, what kind of stories we have finished and so on — that has to wait until we have a proper sprint review.

Do you communicate with other teams during your work?

Yes, as I said, the other APC teams — these are mainly the teams we are talking about.

Do you think that your communication is sufficient and efficient? The channels you have, are they always available?

Yes, I must say that works pretty good.

Do you think it helps that it's three teams — which is a rather small amount I think — working on the same kind of field? All sitting together and not being spread all over the place?

Yes it definitely is, because it's quite often that I am sitting in my corner and hear something that they are talking about on the other side of the room, and perhaps I have some answer to their question that they are talking about, or TR, or whatever, then I immediately walk over and say «I have good knowledge about this». So that's definitely helps. Then of course, on the other hand, it could be that you listen too much also, something that disturbs your daily work instead. I think it is also different by what kind of person it is. I talk about myself, I have quite hard not talking during the day and I would like to have an open...the possibility to talk to almost anyone anytime, and it doesn't matter to me, I think I do almost the same good work if I had done if I haven't spoken to anyone.

Do you have to talk to there teams at times or is it only those 3?

I would say only those 3 teams, but then I am also involved with this MOM work that we have in our interface, our upper layer of the...that always has our customer's... where they are monitoring how the RBS system [??] is working. In that work I communicate with quite a lot different teams because there is one MOM responsible in different areas so I need to communicate with them sometimes. So in that sense I come across different teams as well, but more or less in regular work I only speak to these 2 teams.

How do you get information normally? From different roles as well.

Mostly by email, except for the OPO, he always walks over and have a quick chat.

When you have work for your sprint, do you discuss it with your OPO or do you just get a list of stories that you have to do and that's it?

Oh you mean before the sprint? More or less we decide what we should do. Of course the OPO has some issues, some stories sometimes we have the possibility to choose from. Of course we can by ourselves decide which kind of stories, if we are working with a feature then we can decide what we should do within that feature, that we decide ourselves. But on the overall scope, the OPO more or less says what we should do. Right now we are working on a feature that we have been working for at least 3 months and we know more or less what we are going to do when the feature is finished as well. But I would say that we have quite good possibilities to have impact on what we should do in every sprint.

How about the vision for the whole product you are working with, is it sufficient? Like you know what you are going to do, for example, in the next 3 months...

Yeah, in the next 3 months we know what we are going to do, but in the long term we right now have quite a bad situation I think because we don't have that picture. We have actually been asking for that, but we haven't got any feedback yet. Of course we have the backlog with features that they want us to develop for the next upcoming release, that release will be just before Christmas this year, but after that we would like to see also something with some more... "We would like the APC to be in every car" or whatever, I mean more of a huge picture, that we are lacking right now actually.

How would it change the way you work if you had this vision?

I think it would be more fun, because then we could actually have more input on the product, because then we would have some general vision on what we are about to develop in the future, so then I think it could be...It's hard to say we would do better work but in some sense a better work, because I know that we should develop A in the future and because of that I actually put effort into creating this AB thing also. Like that.

Do you know who has this vision?

Yes, I know, it's the PO. Not the OPO, the PO.

Why doesn't he communicate the vision? If he has it, it seems fairly easy for him to just tell you.

Actually I think — it's a she actually — I don't think she has any. I think the problem is that she is not...If I should speak for myself, I don't think she is that interested in the APC, to have that vision for APC. That's the main problem. So she is some kind of working on daily basis what we should do and relying on other, putting workload on APC.

Just for us know, what's her name?

It's Eva Cullman, she is sitting next to our OPO Jonas. On the same spot as my spot but on the other side of the room.

Have you ever been in contact with an APO and further up in the PO chain?

Yes, a couple of times, yes. We have tried to get it down and so on[??] and speak about their vision about things and features especially. And also the last feature that we have created was typically...There were some areas that were quite...It wasn't really decided how the customer wanted it to have and then we had quite a huge conversation to get their input since you can't read everything from the document. In that sense we had communication, yes.

Do you think it is sufficient or would you like to have more of this communication in your normal work.

Yes, I think it is very good. We try to do the best, all of us. Of course if we can do better work by getting better information and on the other hand as well, they can see that we are actually developing what they want. I think it's very good.

When you have tasks in your new stories and you need some more input on it's implementation, do you always know who to contact?

Yes, from the story point of view, yes. Then there could be stories when we don't really know how to solve and then the first part of the story is to actually find out who to speak with. In most of the cases we know how to handle it.

What can cause the impediments during your sprints?

TRs, extra work, and unexpected stories, that didn't work out that well as you expected. It could be some delivery that is delayed or something like that. That was I guess the most... And also we have quite a lot, especially at Ericsson, we have lots of other meetings that show up suddenly, some pre-study that starts and we really need to attend that one because we going to work with that in 2 months or something like that. That could definitely be something that stops us.

Do you feel like these meetings you have to attend is something unnatural in agile context?

Probably could be better to say no, but sometimes if we don't attend these meetings then we have more work in the future just because we didn't give the input from the beginning. So it's hard to say. Perhaps I would say that 50% we could say "no" to and it wouldn't be noticed at all. But in some cases yes, it is definitely important that we answer a mail or attend the meeting, whatever it would be.

Do you think there are parts in the organization that are not compatible with agile?

Yes, there definitely it.

Which are these?

Or you mean that they can't be transferred to agile? No-no, I think the most of the work could be done in agile way. More or less you could use the same kind of work for all different, even if you work with hardware or software or whatever, then I actually think you could use the agile way of working, that you have to be more open-minded in a sense of how long is the sprint and so on. But if you just look at the Scrum for itself then I definitely think it is applicable for all areas, definitely all areas I have been involved with.

And if not areas are at the same kind of stage in agile, which are kind of behind a little bit?

Hardware I know, they have been behind just because they have those long, they need to order hardware themselves for such a long time before they can really see the hardware and so on. Actually, right now I don't know how long they have come, because they are going to be agile as well in the future, I just know we have had some issues that they have been doing the process with the old waterfall and we have been agile, that way we have had some clashes.

So when I asked and you said "no" you were thinking about this or?

Yes, I was thinking about that, but I definitely think they can be agile as well. Mostly it's the mindset I think.

Do you think there is lack of support towards the transformation somewhere?

Not that I've heard of. Especially our new manager talked about this -- he didn't talk about that

especially -- but I was a bit surprised that they have been working quite a lot with this that I wasn't aware of, so the transformation is actually ongoing more than I am aware of.

Why do you think the hardware sector, for example, is stuck in a bit of waterfallish process?

I think it has to do with historical reasons definitely... I've been working with the hardware as well some years ago and it actually is a problem that you don't have this short loops all the time, sometimes you need to order something and it could take 3 months before you have the feedback on what you actually have done during that time so. So it's different kind of challenges than you have in software developing, because in software in general you can just write the lines, extra source code lines, and then it's finished for that day, you can see the effect more or less immediately.

Lets go back to your sprint work. When you have these TRs coming, who puts them in your sprint, where are they coming from in the organization?

They come from the TR1 or TR2[???], it's actually our support organization, and it could also be that they come from one of our sister products within Ericsson. Sometimes TR show up at another place and then we realize it's actually APC's fault. We have a common, all TRs that come to the APC come to the same place and then from that place we divide it between teams. So if we are lucky then we will have no TRs, we divide it by mod 3 so if we are lucky then we have no TRs at all.

Can you think of a sprint that was really unproductive and what were the causes of this unproductivity?

We had once sprint, it was in some way unpredicted, because there is general sports vacation we have in Sweden in February when everyone is free for one week, that was predicted. At the same time we also had temporal parental leave, Magnus got sick with his children, I was sick with my children and so on. I think we counted that we were only 3 team members for the whole sprint in total. That was the reason, there wasn't much to say, we didn't have the resources that we needed to fulfill what we were expected.

And if you have the resources, what could otherwise impact the sprint to be unproductive?

Then it could be TR work for example. Most of our TRs that show up are not that important, those could be taken next sprint or we can plan for them later. Sometimes we have those with a red alert sprints and we had one, I don't remember, 1 year ago, something like that, that started up as a small TR that someone started to work on and the suddenly it got really, red alert on it, so everything within Ericsson was almost stopped because this TR must be solved. And then of course, at least 2 of the teams were involved at the same time and it took 1 week to solve it. So that could of course happen.

On the contrast, can you think of a sprint that was really good and you burned all

the stories? What were the characteristics of the sprint?

We didn't manage to solve all the stories but we had really good progress — I think it was 1 or 2 sprints ago — we did very much work. And the reason, I think, we had several small stories so we could work in parallel with several small stories. Many of our stories are actually that we should book a meeting, we should have that meeting in the week or something like that and we need to do some preparation sometimes, but if you have several of those then you can actually more or less work with them in parallel and sometimes even compare them when it's necessary. For example, have 2 issues at the same meeting or something like that.

So if you were to describe the perfect setup for the sprint, what would it be?

Of course the small stories, but also stories that are suitable for all team members. Since we have one that is good at testing and one that is good in designing and one that is good in documenting and so on, then of course it would be good to have...6 team members, it would be good to have 6 different areas and 2-5 point stories within those areas, then it could be really good.

Do you think that's possible to achieve that for every sprint, smaller stories that suit team members better?

In some way yes, but then of course we have...For example, we don't always have test work to do, we don't always have documentation work to do, but we actually try to take stories or decide about, when we have our sprint planning we definitely think about this, even if in Scrum you shouldn't say that this story should be handled by that person and so on, but we have that in our head anyway so if we see... If we have some possibility to choose about stories to add to the sprint then if we have no testing stories and there is one testing story left, then perhaps we take that in just because then we up, we have something for you as well, because of course it's good that all the team members try to learn all areas, but I also think it is important that you have your comfort zone in some way. Personally I think it's really good for me anyway, if I wouldn't... For me it's good to have a small design story and then some documentation stories at the same time, because I really would like to do some programming but at the same time I am very fond of learning other stuff as well and that is good. It's the same if you are a tester I think, if you have a testing story, then you know "This I can do fast" and then you also have the time to dig into new areas.

The WPs you get, do they differ significantly in domain and the area of work?

Not that much, but some stories are connected to hardware, directly to hardware, and some stories are just software related. In that sense it differs a bit, but since our source code is not that huge so more or less, I think, most of the stories affect all the parts...even if you are not developing the hardware, but at least almost from the hardware to the top interface the customer sees.

Do you think it helps if you have this narrow scope of work? Not the narrow, but there are borders and you know where your responsibility ends?

I think that's more up to each and every person. Personally, I really prefer to have a broad vision on what I'm doing and then I know some people are actually fond of working on the algorithm quite

long and just want to have that the WP will only be an algorithm or something.

We showed you the network we drew from the survey week and we saw lots of external structures you communicate with as a team, does it somehow affect your work, that you have to talk to so many different roles?

Yes of course it does. Because I don't have that much time to spend on the stories actually. Yes, definitely does.

Would you like it to be different in any way?

No think it's fun actually. Sometimes it's a bit too much, but I also think that myself sometimes to say "no" also. I have a tendency to think it's sometimes I think it's so fun to speak to new persons that I immediately answer that mail and so on instead of actually continue working on what I actually should do. I try to focus sometimes, but.

As far as we know, for you as a Scrum Master it is your responsibility to take out the impediments for the team out. Do you know where your responsibility ends and when you have to delegate it to the LM?

I would say yes. If I'm not sure then I ask my SM and we come up with a proper solution.

We know that you didn't have one recently, did it change anything?

Yes, we have solved all our problems actually. Ok, we still have some impediments that are not solved but so far we have seen progress on them.

Your SM's manager, department manager, at that level, do you know what is their responsibility and how it differs between your SM and his manager?

In some way yes, but I don't really have a full picture of what my manager's manager is actually doing during the day.

So you would say that you don't have any communication with them?

I have communication with him as well, but not that much. Most of the times I take it with my SM and then he forwards it. Actually, just in the beginning of this week, I had a conversation about a TR that was really important and then I was having that discussion with Anders (that is the manager's manager), so he was involved in this, so this was on the higher level, it was actually quite high up above that they wanted us to solve this. So then I was responding to this mail and had a conversation with him as well.

Do you think it slows the process, if you have to talk to your SM first and then he has to take it further and then that guy has to take it even further, and then it has to go back?

Yes, in some sense it could do it. But I also think it's good that you have this kind of...so you don't

bother everyone about every small issue. If I talk for myself, I don't have any problem if I'm feeling that something is very urgent and I already know that my SM will not handle this then I have no problem calling the next manager in the line and so on.

How about your program manager, do you communicate with him and what about?

I don't know who is the program manager...

Johan, he sits over there.

Yes, I don't have that much to him. He is doing some presentations about upcoming dates and so on, but I don't regularly have that much to do with him. I know that APO is taking mostly of that work.

Team as a whole, do you think you have too many responsibilities or too little?

I think we have too much actually.

In what regard?

For example, testing. We are supposed to do too much testing that we don't have any knowledge about actually. Of course it's no problem, we have learned it during when we needed but it also takes time from other stuff instead. So yes. I really think it's good, this XFT way of working, I think we should have this way of working, but anyway, we should have a border somewhere, this is actually something we need help with when we step out of, for example, testing. Definitely we should handle feature testing so to say, but when this feature is entered into the complete system and so on, then I'm more questioning if we should have that responsibility, because it takes so much time just to get to know the systems, how they are testing and so on. The same goes for designing as well, because we know our code base, but sometimes we need to have code in another area, for example, WVCDDMA [???], something like that, and then we spend days just on getting to know their code and so on, because it's said that we should do all development, but... Yes, we could do it, but it takes several days more than if we just ask someone who knows this from the beginning.

Do you have any idea on how you can improve on that? Like take away the testing part or...

Yes, in some sense we should go back to the old, where we actually had our areas as well, because we had a testing organization before and we had a design organization before. So I think that we have gone a bit too far about splitting everything up, we should still have a testing organization. But then I think it's really good that the testing organization also have designer competence and as the same for us as we had testing competence, that's really good. Because then we actually know our different areas but at the same time it's good that they are good at their systems and we are good at our developing systems, so we can help them with what they need.

And about the code base, where you get code from other teams. other departments, would you rather contact them and ask them about how it works instead of finding it out yourself?

Yes, at least when it comes to the tricky parts. I think it's good that we can go in to other code base and actually see what's happening and perhaps give a proposal on a solution and so on. But when it comes to those time consuming things, for example deliveries and their [?????] kind of testing, then it's very good to hand it over to someone who is familiar with this area instead. We have actually done that in a couple of cases, both me and the guy that I'm talking to realized that "Yes, I do this, I have done the solution, can you have a look at it? You will solve it, you can get it into the code base in 5 minutes" and then they agreed "Yes, it looks good. I have those opinions, I'll fix that for you".

Do you have any way of spreading information about your work as an XFT? So that every team that could possibly need your code can easily access it?

No, not really. We have a wiki page, but otherwise I don't know if we have any special. Of course it's visible for more or less everyone, but I know for myself that if I enter another area, it's really tricky to find if I don't have any clues about where to start searching.

This might be a long question, but too me it seems like you are quite a nice island to work in, you seem to have a very nice environment and you seem to know who to talk to, but if you take a step back, do you feel that there is anything within the organization where information could be flowing better or where there are problems with it? If you don't even look at your own team, but just by experience?

It could definitely be better. Almost the last question you said, about knowing each other's areas. Because it's very hard to find... First of all, it's very hard to find those wikis that are available all over the Ericsson. There is no common url or common start page or whatsoever. Sometimes you just come across it by accident or you have someone who can send you a link to a wiki or something like that. That's something that could be much better, so to have some kind of common starting point. I can't remember what is it more you said?

Just if you take a really far step out and you look at maybe the whole department and maybe not just your island, or even several departments. If there is anything where you see like, why isn't it working this way or why is it so complicated?

It's hard to say. I don't have any good examples right now, but in general we are quite bad at Ericsson about talking to each other. I think we are quite good in talking within small areas, at department level we are on average level, but when it comes to talking to the guys up or down on the next floor, then we are really bad at knowing what they are doing here actually. I know that when I was working in Lund before, I did my MSc thesis in Lund actually at Ericsson, and then since I was doing my master thesis I was more or less talking to everyone on every floor and I came to the knowledge that at least at 3 floors they were doing exactly the same thing but they weren't aware of each other. When I talked to some about this, then you realize "Ok, that is quite stupid, we

should have talked to each other instead" and the same goes for here. As I said, my new manager, they have been working...No matter, one floor up or whatever, and he has no idea at all what we are doing and I don't have a slightest idea about what his department was doing. So that is definitely something we should be better in, because I think that we could have much more...We have more in common than we think and we could make better products definitely if we know a bit more about each other, we can have better understanding. It's not just the radio interfaces also it actually should go the other way around but... up in the net on the other side, but we are not aware of that.

Do you think there is a way of spreading this kind of information? We heard about team exhibition, but that is probably inside the department.

Yes, the team exhibition, yes, but perhaps on a higher level. The team exhibition is a bit too small so to say. In some way perhaps there should be a regularly forum or something like that. For example, we have those all employee meetings and those could definitely be better, because I don't know how many — what do you call it — big departments we have within Ericsson, but I would say it's not more than 10 anyway. So, for example, one of those meetings every half a year could just have a brief description about "Now we have bought this company or we have invented this big product" or whatever.

Is there anything else that concerns you about the information spreading?

Not really, can't think about.

How well do you think the COPs work? Are they used, appreciated?

In my experience sometimes they are very good and sometimes they are not good at all. I try to attend this the Team or the Scrum Master COP and I try to follow it actually, because sometimes you need to actually be there for quite some time to get the understanding and so on. I think it's good to go there sometimes, but I don't really see that I'm missing something on the other hand. I think that one thing we should be better in is to actually have a good agenda for all of the COPs. Because sometimes I try to read those different COPs, what they are about to handle, and sometimes I go there because I know that we have a good subject or something like that. In those cases they have been really good and perhaps that's how it should work as well, I don't know. But on a regular basis I'd say it's not working, it's more time-consuming in some way. But of course it's up to the people who are attending the COP.

You mentioned testing, do have anything else that you think was working better before the agile?

Before the transformation? Yes, it definitely worked better since then it was, as I said, we had people that were good at testing, they could ask questions about the testing that I didn't come up with. I know that when I worked at WCDMA, when we had for every feature that we should develop we had a meeting with the IOV, the testing organization, and there we got the same, we accepted the same documents and we wrote our test cases and they wrote their test cases, and then we had

a meeting where we come to an agreement about what we should test and what they should test and so on. And it was always like this, that they had a... it's was very different points of view and that one is something that we are missing right now, because I as a designer would really like...When I think I've tested everything then I also could have... Anyway I want someone to test what I have done as well that has not seen the code, that is not being the part of the things that I am doing, I am developing. Someone who has another point of view, for example, knows about the hardware or whatever. That I think was better.

And besides testing, was there something else?

No, otherwise I think it's...I've been working with Scrum for so long, since 2006 or something like that. Except for this one, the VWCDMA[???], they have not transferred at that time. Otherwise Scrum is something I think is really good, and in Scrum it's actually the morning meetings, that was actually the first thing I started to like with this new way of working, because you have this 15 min when you can actually bring up your issues and several times you realize that the other team members may have the same issue, but you weren't aware of it.