

# COMPETENCIES OF A **SCRUM MASTER**

By Agile Cockpit

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# INTRODUCTION

A Scrum Master acts as a Servant Leader for the Scrum Team and the organization. They are responsible for coaching and guiding the Scrum Team in becoming self-organizing and cross-functional. They have to proactively identify and remove the impediments for the Scrum Team to deliver high value products. A Scrum Master needs to ensure that all the Agile and Scrum theories, rules, practices and values are understood well and followed by the Scrum Team and the organization at all times. They strive to identify opportunities to ensure continuous improvement of the Scrum Team and the organization, and also to ensure effective product development. A Scrum Master must have a specific set of competencies in order to be successful in their role and be a Scrum Master, par excellence.

## What is Agile Cockpit's Scrum Master Competency Framework?

Our Scrum Master Competency Framework strives to articulate the expected behaviors and the desired competencies to be successful in the role of a Scrum Master. It will further help in assessing Scrum Masters based on 8 Agilities and 19 competencies. This enables data driven insights into the journey towards Agile transformation of the Scrum Masters.



# OVERVIEW OF THE COMPETENCIES

## Personal Agility

The ability to be self-aware and have a realistic view of one's own strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement.

## People Agility

The ability to understand and relate to other people and collaboratively work with them in dynamic situations to harness and multiply collective performance.

## Stakeholder Agility

The ability to leverage data to understand and validate stakeholder's/customer's assumptions and hypotheses and ensure complete stakeholder/ customer satisfaction.

## Results Agility

The ability to deliver valuable results in short iterations by inspiring teams and enabling the organization to execute long-range strategic plans.

## Mental Agility

The ability to think critically to deal with complex problems and expand possibilities.

## Change Agility

The ability to identify and seize opportunities in a consistently changing environment and enabling teams to contribute to change.

## Innovation Agility

The ability to focus on untested hypotheses and validate their relevance through continuous experimentation to trigger creative discovery and innovation.

## Systems Agility

The ability to embrace, encourage and follow systems thinking, Agile values, principles and practices.



# COMPETENCIES AND SUB-COMPETENCIES

## Personal Agility

- ▶ Emotional Intelligence
- ▶ Active Listening

## People Agility

- ▶ Servant Leadership Style
- ▶ Coaching
- ▶ Facilitation
- ▶ Teaching
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Conflict Management

## Stakeholder Agility

- ▶ Collaboration

## Results Agility

- ▶ Process Improvement

## Value Maximization

- ▶ Mental Agility
- ▶ Lean Thinking
- ▶ Problem Solving

## Change Agility

- ▶ Leading and Facilitating Change
- ▶ Adaptation to Change

## Innovation Agility

- ▶ . Creativity

## Systems Agility

- ▶ Planning and Organization Skills
- ▶ Systems Thinking
- ▶ Agile Principles and Scrum Values





# PERSONAL AGILITY

## Emotional Intelligence

Definition:

The Scrum Master is aware of, reflects upon and validates one's own emotions and perceptions, and its impact on the Scrum Team in a consistently changing environment. The Scrum Master understands others' feelings and emotional patterns and manages conflict within the Scrum Team in an iterative discovery while learning from experiences.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Aware of, reflects upon and validates one's own emotions and perceptions, and its impact on the Scrum Team in a consistently changing environment.
- ▶ Manages conflict in an iterative discovery while continuously learning from experiences.
- ▶ Understands others' feelings and emotional patterns.

## Active Listening

Definition:

The Scrum Master is considerate and attentive while communicating with the Scrum Team and other employees for creating a cohesive spirit. It involves using verbal and non-verbal cues, being empathetic towards them, understanding their requirements and concerns. This leads to open and free flow of ideas and information while providing effective feedback.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Is considerate and attentive while communicating with the Scrum Team and other employees for creating a cohesive spirit.
- ▶ Uses verbal and non-verbal cues, empathetically understands the Scrum Team and the organization, their requirements and concerns.
- ▶ Ensures open and free flow of ideas and information while providing effective feedback.



# PEOPLE AGILITY

## Servant Leadership Style

Definition: The Scrum Master acts as a Servant Leader for the Scrum Team and the organization. It involves prioritizing and ensuring personal and professional growth of the Scrum Team and the organization through iterative discovery and learning from experiences. The Scrum Master helps the Development Team in becoming self-organizing, and cross-functional during and after each Sprint. It also involves identifying and removing all impediments that may hinder the development of a releasable working product.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Prioritizes and ensures personal and professional growth of the Scrum Team and the organization through iterative discovery and learning from experiences.
- ▶ Helps the Development Team in becoming self-organizing, and cross-functional during and after each Sprint.
- ▶ Identifies and removes all impediments that may hinder the development of a releasable working product.

## Coaching

Definition: The Scrum Master is adept in Agile and Scrum and uses the knowledge and learnings to ensure ongoing growth of the Development Team. It involves transfer of Agile knowledge, expertise and support to help the Development Team in becoming self-organizing, cross-functional and multidisciplinary. It also includes helping the Scrum Team improve their performance through iterative retrospection, discovery and learning from experiences in short iterations. The Scrum Master coaches the Product Owner and the organization about Agile and Scrum practices.



Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Is adept in Agile and Scrum and uses the knowledge and learnings to ensure ongoing growth of the Development Team.
- ▶ Transfers Agile knowledge, expertise and support to help the Development Team in becoming self-organizing, cross-functional and multidisciplinary.
- ▶ Helps the Scrum Team improve their performance through iterative retrospection, discovery and learning from experiences in short iterations. .
- ▶ Coaches the Product Owner and the organization about Agile and Scrum practices.

## Facilitation

Definition: The Scrum Master helps the Scrum Team and the organization in adopting, understanding and practicing the Agile and Scrum processes. It involves supporting and assisting the Development Team to think in their optimal capacity to iteratively discover and learn from experiences. The Scrum Master remains neutral and does not take any stand in the discussions. The Scrum Master also enables the Development Team by constantly removing impediments and resolving conflicts within the team to facilitate and ensure frequent delivery of a working product in each Sprint. The Scrum Master facilitates the regular Scrum events and Scrum implementation at an organization level as requested or needed.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Helps the Scrum Team and the organization in adopting, understanding and practicing the Agile and Scrum processes.
- ▶ Supports and assists the Development Team to think in their optimal capacity to iteratively discover and learn from experiences.
- ▶ Remains neutral and does not take any stand in the discussions.
- ▶ Enables the Development Team by constantly removing impediments and resolving conflicts within the team.
- ▶ Facilitates the regular Scrum events and Scrum implementation at an organization level as requested or needed.





## Teaching

Definition: The Scrum Master imparts knowledge and skills, and helps everyone in the Scrum Team and the organization understand about Agile processes, Scrum theory, practices, rules and values. It involves teaching how to work more effectively in Sprints. The Scrum Master helps the Product Owner understand how to arrange Product Backlog items to maximize value and about product planning in an empirical environment. It also involves helping the employees and the stakeholders enact Scrum and empirical product development.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Imparts knowledge and skills, and helps everyone in the Scrum Team and the organization understand about Agile processes and Scrum theory, practices, rules and values.
- ▶ Teaches everyone how to work more effectively in Sprints.
- ▶ Helps the Product Owner understand how to arrange Product Backlog items to maximize value and about product planning in an empirical environment.
- ▶ Helps the employees and the stakeholders enact Scrum and empirical product development.

## Communication

Definition: The Scrum Master ensures effective two-way communication with the Scrum Team and the organization. It involves ensuring transparency and high frequency interaction with the Development Team to understand the work flow of the team, and about any impediments that they may be facing. The Scrum Master regularly interacts with the Product Owner and the organization. The Scrum Master gives constructive feedback to the Scrum Team for them to empirically and iteratively discover, learn and grow in their roles.



Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Ensures effective two-way communication with the Scrum Team and the organization.
- ▶ Ensures transparency and high frequency interaction with the Development Team to understand the work flow of the team, and about any impediments that they may be facing.
- ▶ Regularly interacts with the Product Owner and the organization.
- ▶ Gives constructive feedback to the Scrum Team for them to empirically and iteratively discover, learn and grow in their roles.

## Conflict Management

Definition: The Scrum Master identifies and manages conflicts among the Scrum Team. It involves creating an open and transparent environment based on learnings from experience through iterative discovery. The Scrum Master helps the Scrum Team in self-organizing and learning how to resolve and manage their conflicts on their own. The Scrum Master ensures productive conversations and resolution of conflicts.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Identifies and manages conflicts among the Scrum Team.
- ▶ Creates an open and transparent environment based on learnings from experience through iterative discovery.
- ▶ Helps the Scrum Team in self-organizing and learning how to resolve and manage their conflicts on their own.
- ▶ Ensures productive conversations and resolution of conflicts.



# STAKEHOLDER AGILITY\*

## Collaboration

Definition: Stakeholders here means everyone except the Scrum Team. The Scrum Master leads and coaches the organization in adoption of Scrum. The Scrum Master helps the organization in planning Scrum implementation within the organization. The Scrum Master works with the employees and the stakeholders and helps them understand and enact Scrum. The Scrum Master also works with the other Scrum Masters of the organization to ensure effective application of Scrum in the organization.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Leads and coaches the organization in adoption of Scrum.
- ▶ Helps the organization in planning Scrum implementation within the organization.
- ▶ Works with the employees and the stakeholders and helps them understand and enact Scrum.
- ▶ Works with the other Scrum Masters of the organization to ensure effective application of Scrum in the organization.

\*Stakeholders here means everyone except the Scrum Team.



# RESULTS AGILITY

## Process Improvement

Definition: The Scrum Master keeps a constant track and identifies opportunities to improve the Agile processes and the performance of the Scrum Team. It involves using their Agile and Scrum expertise to ensure that the morale and the productivity of the Scrum Team remains high by constantly and iteratively introducing changes.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Keeps a constant track and identifies opportunities to improve the Agile processes and the performance of the Scrum Team.
- ▶ Uses their Agile and Scrum expertise to ensure that the morale and the productivity of the Scrum Team remains high by constantly and iteratively introducing changes.

## Value Maximization

Definition: The Scrum Master maximizes the value by helping the Product Owner understand how to effectively manage the Product Backlog items. It involves helping the Development Team to create high-value products by coaching them in self-organization and consistently removing impediments. The Scrum Master helps in causing the change that increases the productivity of the Scrum Team by proactively identifying and acting upon the opportunities to do so.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Maximizes the value by helping the Product Owner understand how to effectively manage the Product Backlog items.
- ▶ Helps the Development Team to create high-value products by coaching them in self-organization and consistently removing impediments.
- ▶ Helps in causing the change that increases the productivity of the Scrum Team.
- ▶ Proactively identifies and acts upon the opportunities to cause productive change.



# MENTAL AGILITY

## Lean Thinking

Definition: The Scrum Master works towards reducing activities that do not add any value to the work done by the Development Team. It involves ensuring effective utilization of the capacity and time by the Development Team to incrementally deliver a working product. The Scrum Master focuses on continuous improvement by simplifying the processes in a dynamic environment. It involves encouraging the Scrum Team to manage the work done by continuously visualizing and controlling the flow of the work.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Works towards reducing activities that do not add any value to the work done by the Development Team.
- ▶ Ensures effective utilization of the capacity and time by the Development Team to incrementally deliver a working product.
- ▶ Focuses on continuous improvement by simplifying the processes in a dynamic environment.
- ▶ Encourages the Scrum Team to manage the work done by continuously visualizing and controlling the flow of the work.

## Problem Solving

Definition: The Scrum Master has an analytical mindset to solve the problems coming their way with respect to promoting and supporting Scrum as defined in the Scrum Guide. It involves solving problems that may thwart the Development Team in becoming self-organized and cross-functional. The Scrum Master proactively identifies and resolves the challenges of being a servant leader to the Scrum Team and coaching the organization in Scrum adoption.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Has an analytical mindset to solve the problems coming their way with respect to promoting and supporting Scrum as defined in the Scrum Guide.
- ▶ Solves problems that may thwart the Development Team in becoming self-organized and cross-functional.
- ▶ Proactively identifies and resolves the challenges of being a servant leader to the Scrum Team and coaching the organization in Scrum adoption.





# CHANGE AGILITY

## Leading and Facilitating Change

Definition: The Scrum Master leads the Scrum Team and the organization towards continuous improvement. It involves coaching and motivating them to iteratively learn from experiences and believing in and practicing the Agile mindset. It also involves facilitating consistent change in the processes and practices followed by the Scrum Team and organization to ensure their continuous improvement and development.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Leads the Scrum Team and the organization towards continuous improvement by coaching and motivating them to iteratively learn from experiences and believing in/enacting the Agile mindset.
- ▶ Facilitates consistent change in the processes and practices followed by the Scrum Team and organization to ensure continuous improvement and development.

## Adaptation to Change

Definition: The Scrum Master helps the Scrum Team and the organization adapt to the consistent changes through iterative discovery. It involves helping and coaching the Product Owner to effectively manage and reorder the Product Backlog in a dynamic environment by adapting to the changes. The Scrum Master helps and coaches the Development Team to inspect and adapt by learning through experience in each Sprint for continuous improvement. The Scrum Master also helps the organization in becoming Agile and adapting the Agile mindset.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Helps the Scrum Team and the organization adapt to the consistent changes through iterative discovery.
- ▶ Helps and coaches the Product Owner to effectively manage and reorder the Product Backlog in a dynamic environment by adapting to the changes.
- ▶ Helps and coaches the Development Team to inspect and adapt by learning through experience in each Sprint for continuous improvement.
- ▶ Helps the organization in becoming Agile and adapting the Agile mindset.



# INNOVATION AGILITY

## Creativity

Definition: The Scrum Master has an experimental mindset with a focus on innovation and creativity to ensure continuous improvement and learning in each Sprint. The Scrum Master empowers the Scrum Team to be creative in their ways to maximize the value of the product. It involves constantly removing impediments and bringing ideas for change. The Scrum Master also helps the Scrum Team to creatively experiment with assumptions and hypotheses for effective product development.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Has an experimental mindset with a focus on innovation and creativity.
- ▶ Ensures continuous improvement and learning in each Sprint.
- ▶ Empowers the Scrum Team to be creative in their ways to maximize the value of the product.
- ▶ Removes impediments and brings ideas for change for the Scrum Team.
- ▶ Helps the Scrum Team to creatively experiment with assumptions and hypotheses for effective product development.



# SYSTEMS AGILITY

## Planning and Organization Skills

Definition: The Scrum Master ensures that the Scrum events happen regularly as scheduled and decided by the Development Team and in a “time-boxed” manner. It involves planning how to implement Agile and Scrum adoption at the organization level and the steps to be taken to help the Scrum Team and the organization to continuously learn and grow.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Ensures that the Scrum events happen regularly as scheduled and decided by the Development Team and in a “time-boxed” manner.
- ▶ Plans how to implement Agile and Scrum adoption at the organization level.
- ▶ Plans the steps to be taken to help the Scrum Team and the organization to continuously learn and grow.

## Systems Thinking

Definition: The Scrum Master understands the cause and effect of any situation impacting the Scrum Team and the organization. The Scrum Master focuses on the whole rather than the parts to ensure continuous incremental delivery of a working product by the Development Team.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Understands the cause and effect of any situation impacting the Scrum Team and the organization.
- ▶ Focuses on the whole rather than the parts to ensure continuous incremental delivery of a working product by the Development Team.



## Agile Principles & Scrum Values

Definition: The Scrum Master strongly believes in and follows the Agile Principles as mentioned in the Agile Manifesto and Scrum values as mentioned in the Scrum Guide. It involves instilling Agile Principles and Scrum values in their day to day behavior by consciously putting an effort towards the same. The Scrum Master also helps and educates the Scrum Team and the organization to inculcate and develop their professional behavior on the basis of the Agile Principles and Scrum values.

Behavioral Indicators:

- ▶ Strongly believes in and follows the Agile Principles as mentioned in the Agile Manifesto and Scrum values as mentioned in the Scrum Guide.
- ▶ Instils Agile Principles and Scrum values in their day to day behavior by consciously putting an effort towards the same.
- ▶ Helps and educates the Scrum Team and the organization to inculcate and develop their professional behavior on the basis of the Agile Principles and Scrum values.



## ABOUT US

Agile Cockpit is a Dutch Software & Consulting firm with its offices in the Netherlands, UK, US and India and provides its services across the globe. Our mission is to create high performing digital enterprises and to achieve this, we offer - Software, Consulting and Training services. Discover our global data-driven experience and increase the impact of your Agile journey today!

For questions or more information you can contact us at [info@agilecockpit.com](mailto:info@agilecockpit.com)

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# AGILE cockpit

**New York (US)**  
14 Wall Street  
20th Floor, Unit 2021  
New York City, NY 10005  
United States  
+1646 220 3377  
[www.agilecockpit.com](http://www.agilecockpit.com)  
[info@agilecockpit.com](mailto:info@agilecockpit.com)

**Delft (NL)**  
Brassersplein 1  
2612 CT, Delft  
The Netherlands  
+31 15 241 18 00  
[www.agilecockpit.com](http://www.agilecockpit.com)  
[info@agilecockpit.com](mailto:info@agilecockpit.com)

**London (UK)**  
30 Finsbury Square  
EC2A 1AG, London  
United Kingdom  
+44 74019 15157  
[info@agilecockpit.com](mailto:info@agilecockpit.com)  
[www.agilecockpit.com](http://www.agilecockpit.com)

**Bangalore (IN)**  
Building 2A-West Tower,  
Embassy Tech Village  
Outer Ring Road, Deverabeesanahalli  
Village, Bangalore - 560087, Karnataka,  
India  
+91 (0)80 - 6729 8000  
[www.agilecockpit.com](http://www.agilecockpit.com)  
[info@agilecockpit.com](mailto:info@agilecockpit.com)

**Gurgaon (IN)**  
15th Floor  
Ocus Quantum, Sector 51  
Haryana 122003  
Gurgaon, India  
[info@agilecockpit.com](mailto:info@agilecockpit.com)  
[www.agilecockpit.com](http://www.agilecockpit.com)