Becoming A Scrum Master
The 8 Step Guide

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Message from The Agile Coach Faculty

You've probably found your way to this eBook from our website, or maybe a friend passed it along to you. Either way, we are happy you're here.

We created The Agile Coach to break down the barriers to becoming a Scrum Master and an Agile Coach, and this free eBook is a result of that.

We will walk you through the agile mindset and principles, Scrum and Kanban framework and how to apply these frameworks to your current project so that you can gather some knowledge, experience, and confidence to start your journey to becoming a Scrum Master.

The end goal is to get you into that interview seat where your skills and personality can land you the job.

To all of our students, followers, and friends out there, thank you for the gift of your support. Here's to your continued success!

The Agile Coach Team
www.theagilecoach.com

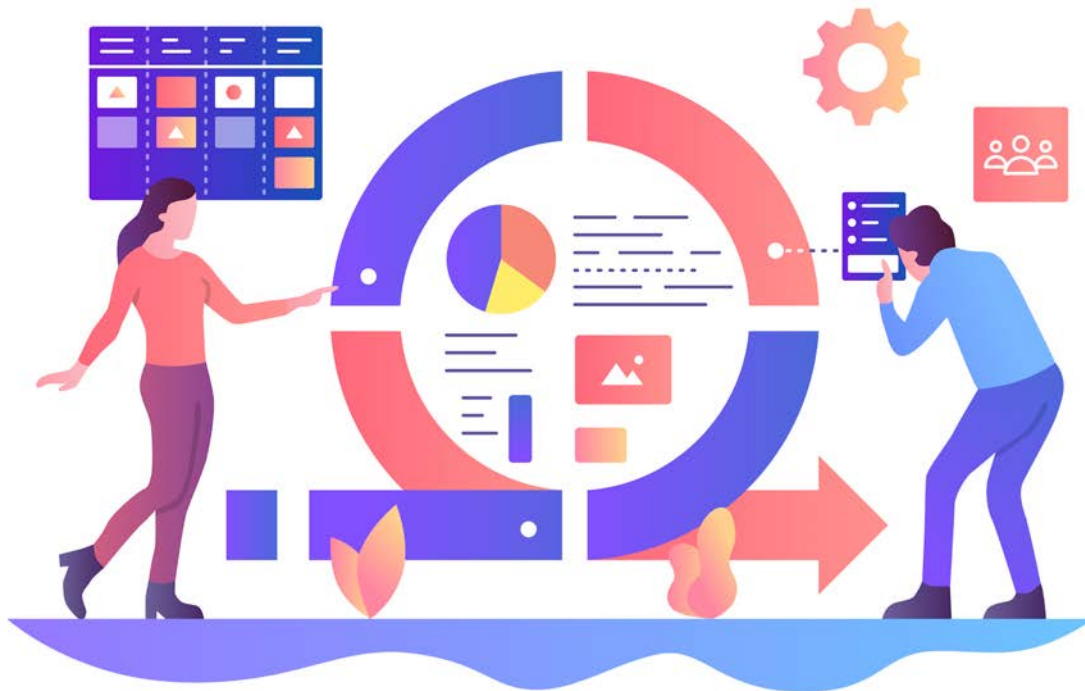# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

So you're interested in becoming a Scrum Master?

By downloading this eBook, you've taken the first step in starting an exciting new career in Scrum. Congratulations!

In this eBook, we'll walk you through each step you need to take to become a Scrum Master.

Before we begin, let's get a better understanding of what a Scrum Master is.

Scrum is a lightweight framework that allows a team to stay focused on prioritized work and remain flexible. The Scrum Master is responsible for teaching and coaching the organization to adopt Scrum, and ensuring that the team abides by the Scrum principles.

While the Scrum framework is primarily intended for software development teams, it can be applied to a variety of projects and industries.

While having a software development background helps, it's not required for a Scrum Master role. Anyone, regardless of experience or education, can learn how to become a Scrum Master.

Despite not requiring technical knowledge, Scrum Masters can rake in a pretty decent salary. According to Salary.com, as of January 2019, a Scrum Master's salary ranges from $77,300 to $104,300, with the average base salary of $89,200. Not bad, huh?

Before investing time and money in training to become a Scrum Master, it's crucial that you get a solid understanding of the Scrum framework and the Scrum Master role. After reading this eBook, you'll walk away with a knowledge of the Scrum role, actionable steps to apply Scrum principles to real-life projects, and the concrete steps that are necessary for landing your first Scrum Master role.

Step One

Learn the fundamentals of Agile (Mindset)

AGILE IS A MINDSET

Agile is a mindset, described by the 4 values, defined by 12 principles and manifested through hundreds of practices.

AGILE IS A MINDSET	DESCRIBED BY 4 VALUES	DEFINED BY 12 PRINCIPLES	MANIFESTED THROUGH UNLIMITED NUMBER OF PRACTICES

SCRUM   XP   CUSTOM

Mindset   Values   Principles   Practices
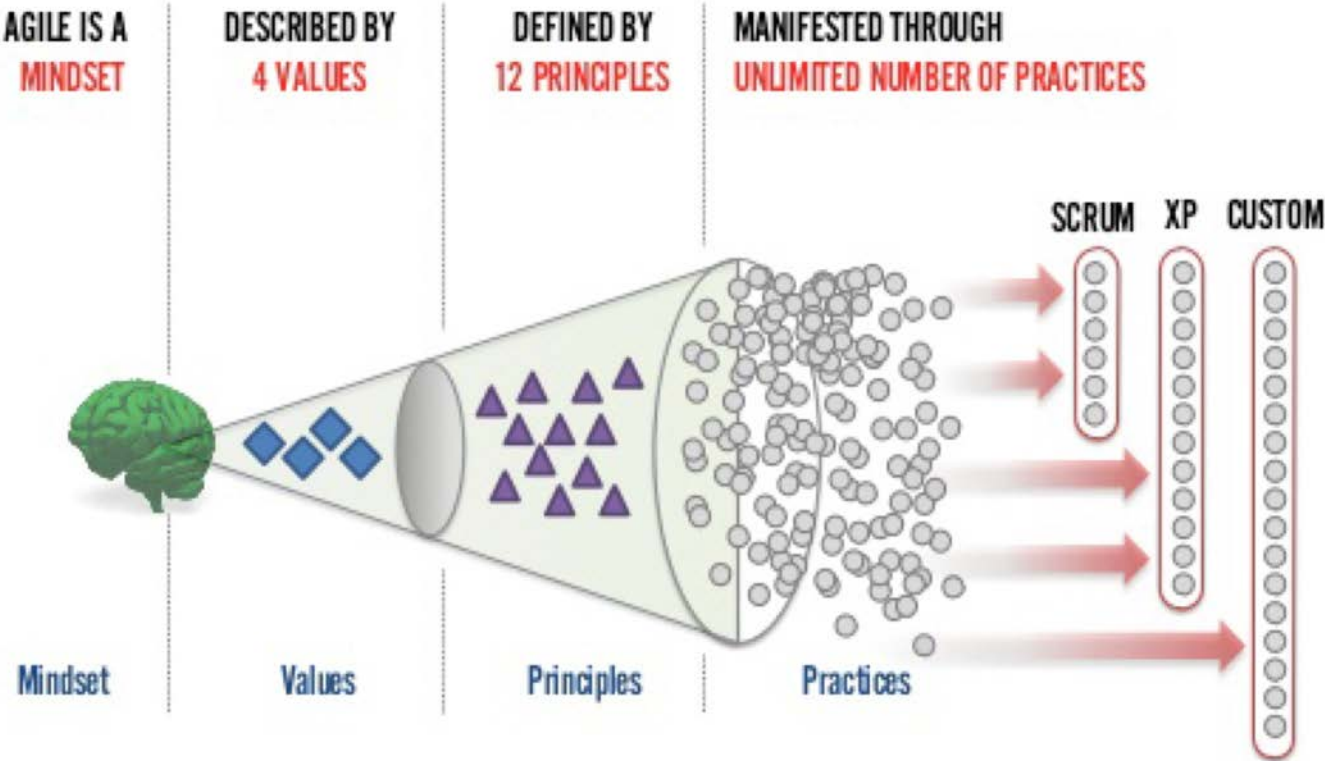
Source: Ahmad Sikdy from www.ICAgile.org

Agile Manifesto

You want to understand why this manifesto was written & what kind of problem they wanted to address

Understand and memorize this manifesto. Know what it means and how this applies in real life

Apply these manifesto items on your work and see how it is.

Manifesto for Agile Software Development

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
Working software over comprehensive documentation
Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
Responding to change over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

The Manifesto was developed by a group of fourteen thought leaders in the software industry, and is a compilation of the insights they gained from working in software development.

Watch this video to learn more about the Manifesto:
https://youtu.be/WgkeK2c6u7Y

Source: www.AgileManifesto.org

AGILE PRINCIPLES

1. Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.

2. Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage

3. Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.

4. Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.

https://youtu.be/oFQuk1LVky4

AGILE PRINCIPLES

5. Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.

6. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.

7. Working software is the primary measure of progress. Agile processes promote sustainable development.

8. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.

9. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.
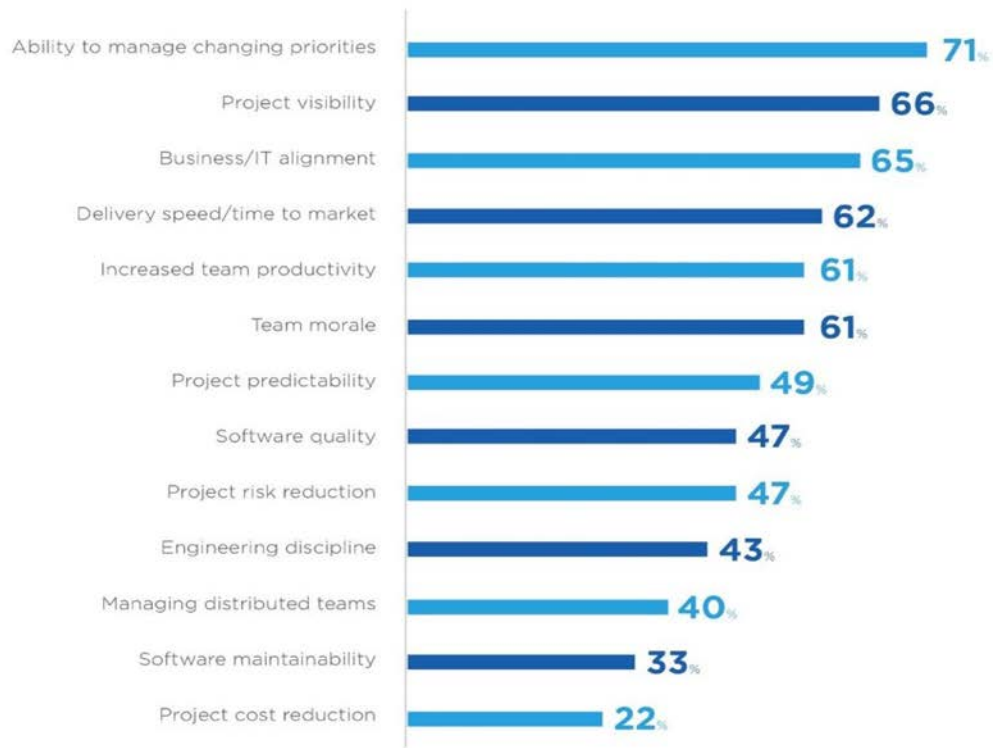
10. Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential.

11. The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.

12. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

Benefits of Agile Adoption

By implementing agile, respondents cited seeing improvements in the following areas:

Area	%
Ability to manage changing priorities	71%
Project visibility	66%
Business/IT alignment	65%
Delivery speed/time to market	62%
Increased team productivity	61%
Team morale	61%
Project predictability	49%
Software quality	47%
Project risk reduction	47%
Engineering discipline	43%
Managing distributed teams	40%
Software maintainability	33%
Project cost reduction	22%

Benefits for the team

- Increased productivity

- Improved product quality

- Higher customer satisfaction

- Reduced or stable project costs

- Increased employee motivation and satisfaction

AGILE METHODS AND PRACTICES

1% Spotify model
1% Lean Startup
1% Extreme Programming (XP)
3% Iterative Development
5% Kanban

6% Other (please specify)

6% Scrum/XP hybrid

8% ScrumBan

14% Hybrid (multiple methodologies)

56% Scrum

Agile Methodologies Used

Scrum, ScrumBan and Scrum/XP Hybrid (70%) continue to be the most common agile methodologies used by respondents' organizations.
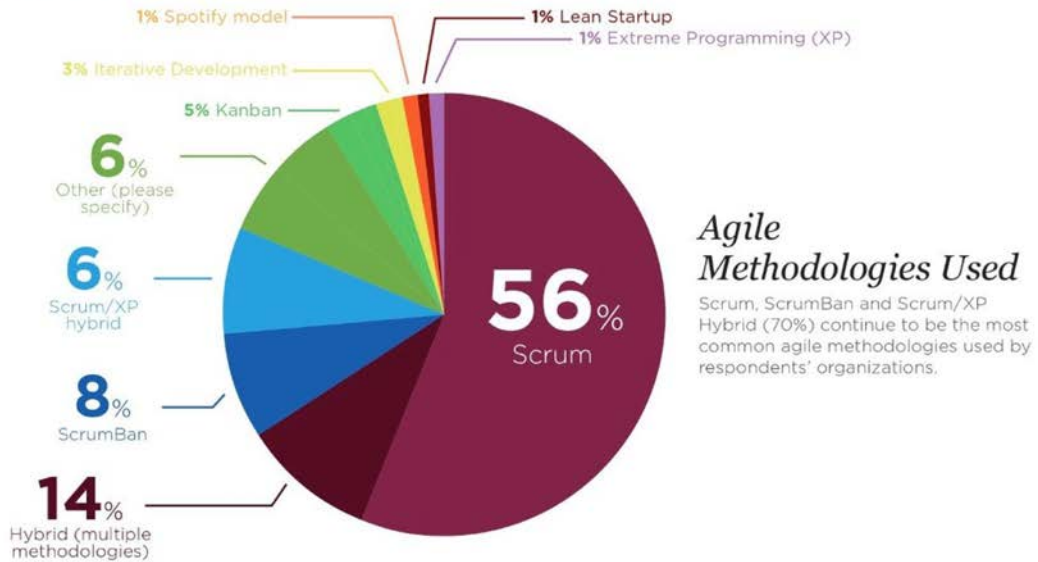
Agile Techniques Employed

From 2016 to 2017, the use of Kanban grew from 50% to 65%; product roadmapping increased from 38% to 46% and portfolio planning went from 25% to 35%.

TOP 5 AGILE TECHNIQUES

90% DAILY STANDUP

88% SPRINT/ITERATION PLANNING

85% RETROSPECTIVES

80% SPRINT/ITERATION REVIEW

69% SHORT ITERATIONS

Technique	%
Daily standup	90%
Sprint/iteration planning	88%
Retrospectives	85%
Sprint/iteration review	80%
Short iterations	69%
Release planning	67%
Planning poker/team estimation	65%
Kanban	65%
Dedicated customer/Product owner	63%
Single team (integrated dev and test)	52%
Frequent releases	51%
Common work area	47%
Product roadmapping	46%
Story mapping	44%
Agile portfolio planning	35%
Agile/Lean UX	30%

*Respondents were able to make multiple selections.

Step Two

Learn the Scrum and Kanban framework

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Introduction to Scrum

Scrum is a specific framework under the Agile umbrella. Scrum allows teams to work collaboratively and remain open to change and evaluation to produce the best possible deliverable.
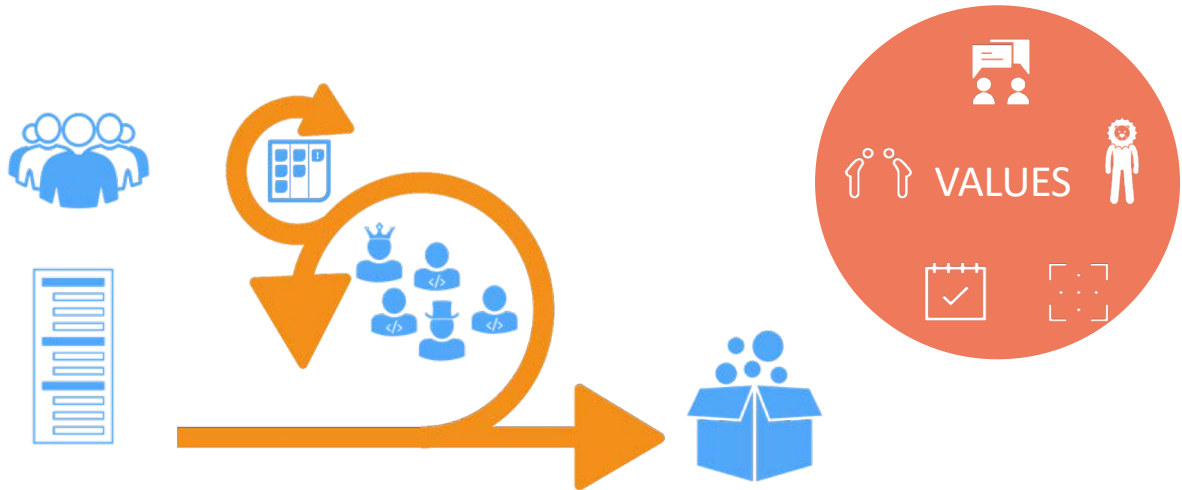
The Scrum Roles: The Scrum Team is composed of three parties (roles):

The Development Team: while some definitions limit the team to just developers, the team can also include Quality Analysts, Business Analysts, and other members of the organization who turn Product Backlog into releasable Increments of "Done" product.

The Product Owner (PO): this person represents the business, customers, or other stakeholders, and is responsible for managing the Product Backlog.

The Scrum Master: this person is responsible for overseeing the entire development process during the sprint.

The Scrum Master serves the PO by making sure that the goals, scope, and product domain are clear to everyone on the team. They help the team implement Scrum techniques to manage the product backlog effectively.

The Scrum Master's presence is crucial to the adaptation and implementation of Scrum framework so that team can acquire the agile mindset.

Scrum Ceremonies or Events

Daily Scrum   **Sprint Planning**   **Sprint Review**   **Sprint Retrospective**

The Daily Scrum Overview

Daily Scum is a 15-minute time-boxed event for the Development Team. It is held at the same time and places each day to reduce complexity. The Development Team uses the Daily Scrum to inspect progress toward the Sprint Goal and to inspect how pace is trending toward completing the work in the Sprint Backlog.

Sprint Planning Overview

The work to be performed in the Sprint is planned at the Sprint Planning. Sprint Planning is time-boxed to a maximum of eight hours for a one-month Sprint. For shorter Sprints, the event is usually shorter. The Scrum Master ensures that the event takes place and that attendants understand its purpose. The Scrum Master teaches the Scrum Team to keep it within the time-box.
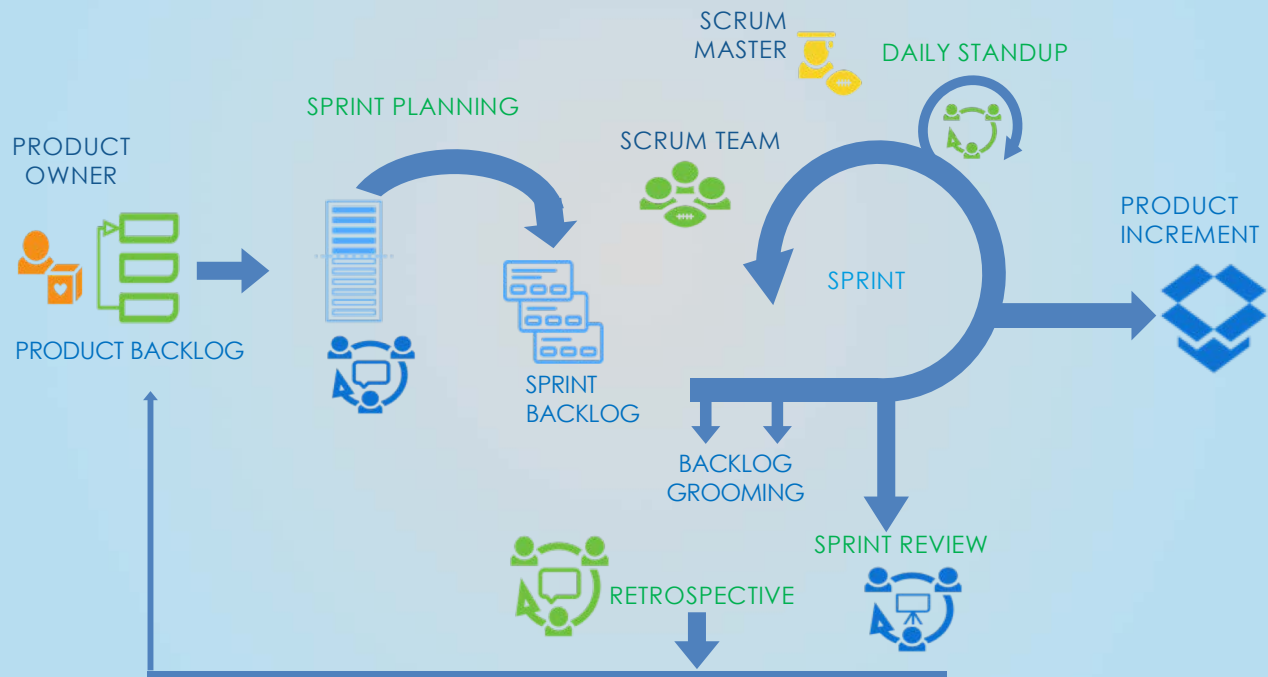
Sprint Review Overview

Sprint Review is a meeting for the team to review the work done in the sprint and Inspect and Adapt on the Product (Increment). Everyone in the team and key stakeholders attend this meeting. This happens before the Retrospective meeting (end of the sprint). Time-box for Sprint review is 4 hours for 30 days (1 hour for 1 week sprint or 2 hours for 2 week sprint)

Sprint Retrospective Overview

Sprint Retrospective meeting is an Inspect and adapt session that happens at the end of every sprint between the Scrum Master, Product Owner, and the Development Team. The goal of the meeting is to "Inspect the Process, not the People." The team usually reviews what went well, what didn't go well and what could be improved. It's up to the team to prioritize improvements needed, and Scrum Master facilitates this session. The team chooses top 1-3 items and takes them on as their action item.

Scrum Framework

SCRUM MASTER

SPRINT PLANNING

DAILY STANDUP

SCRUM TEAM

PRODUCT OWNER

PRODUCT INCREMENT

PRODUCT BACKLOG

SPRINT

SPRINT BACKLOG

BACKLOG GROOMING

SPRINT REVIEW

RETROSPECTIVE

Scrum Artifacts

Product Backlog
Product backlog is a list of features or summary of features that are always growing and changing. This also captures the teams best understanding about the product. As an example; a productivity app product backlog might have things like Being able to send an email reminder, Locate my family and Automatically sync.

Sprint Backlogs
Sprint backlog is the list of stories for the sprint the team commits to complete the sprint backlog before the end of the iteration or sprint. Another thing to keep in mind, Sprint Backlog is determined by the team in a Sprint Planning based on velocity or available capacity.

Burn-down Charts
Burn-down Charts are graphical representations of progress.

Introduction to Kanban

Kanban (看板) A Japanese manufacturing system in which the supply of components is regulated through the use of a card displaying a sequence of specifications and instructions, sent along the production line.

Kanban is another essential framework within the agile umbrella. Although a Scrum Master operates based on Scrum principles, it's still necessary for him/her to understand the Kanban methodology.

Kanban is a non-iterative methodology that values visualizing the work, limiting the work in progress and creating Flow by continuously delivering value to customers.

Kanban recommends having a prioritized backlog on a Kanban Board in columns separated by the status of each item that's being worked on.

Unlike Scrum, Kanban doesn't define a set timeframe for when items need to be done.

Kanban Core Principles, Fundamentals & Values

KANBAN CORE PRINCIPLES

Visualize Workflow | Make the current workflow and items transparent to all

Limit Work In Progress | Move every bit of work efficiently from beginning to end with as little waste as possible. This requires limiting the amount of work in the pipeline. Moves from one column to next by developer one at a time, so work is never pushed forward. Bottleneck is avoided.

Focus on Flow | Work feels freely and feels easy as the first two principles are in place.

Continuous improvement | Kanban isn't something that is ever "finished." It requires constant monitoring and analyzing ways to improve.

KANBAN FUNDAMENTALS

Change Management model states you start with what you know, agree to pursue evolutionary improvement and encourage leadership at the team level.

Service Delivery model states that we understand the customer, manage work, let people self-organize and evolve policies as a team.
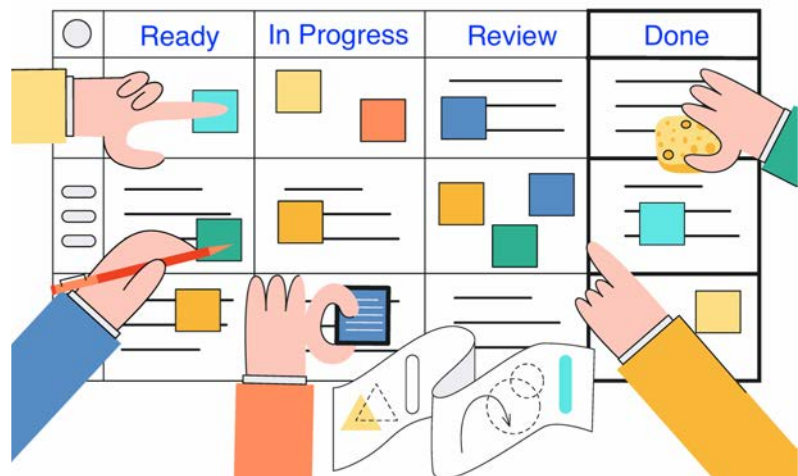
KANBAN VALUES

Understanding	Leadership	Transparency
Agreement	Flow	Balance
Respect	Customer Focus	

Step Three

Deep Dive into the Scrum Master ROLE

Role of a Scrum Master

To be an effective Scrum Master, it's crucial to adopt the agile mindset and live the Scrum values. Although the Scrum Master plays a vital role on a development team, their primary goal isn't to just produce a product.

Instead, the Scrum Master must have a "servant leader" mindset: they must be able to facilitate the team's processes, without taking it upon themselves to resolve each obstacle that comes along. This allows the team to be self-organized and cross-functional.

Attributes of a good Scrum Master

Scrum methodology breaks down the development cycle into time-limited project periods called sprints. Sprints usually last from 1- 4 weeks and should result in a "Done," useable, and potentially releasable Increment.

Sprints consist of several Scrum events: Sprint Planning, Daily Scrums, the development work, the Sprint Review, and the Sprint Retrospective.

Each Sprint is implemented with the purpose of working towards a larger goal.

Sprints : The Heart of Scrum

A sprint is a short, time-boxed period (or timeframe) when a team works to complete a set amount of work. Sprints are at the very heart of scrum and most iterative methodologies. Sprints help the team to break a big project into doable list of items and produce working software. In addition, the team learns on how they should build the product in the future based on customer's feedback.

Sprints consist of Sprint Planning, Daily Scrums, the development work, the Sprint Review, and the Sprint Retrospective.


Empirical Process Control
One of the most important roles of a Scrum Master is to help the team inspect and adapt via an empirical process (inspecting and adapting at regular intervals).

Note: Empirical process control is derived from or guided by experience or experiment.

Transparency: keep everything visible

**Inspection**: review the product and the process continuously
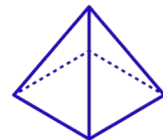
Adaptation: continuously improve the product and the process

Role of a Scrum Master

Below are the meetings, or events, that take place in a Scrum setting and how Scrum Master facilities these meetings:

DAILY SCRUM
The daily scrum meeting, as the name implies, happens on a daily basis. The time and place of the meeting should stay consistent. This meeting is not a project status meeting. Instead, it is a quick 15-minute meeting is for the team to sync up and answer what the team member is working on, if they have any impediments they are facing and if they are on track to meet the sprint goal. The Scrum Master's role in this meeting is to facilitate this meeting, identify any impediments and help the team to resolve any impediments.
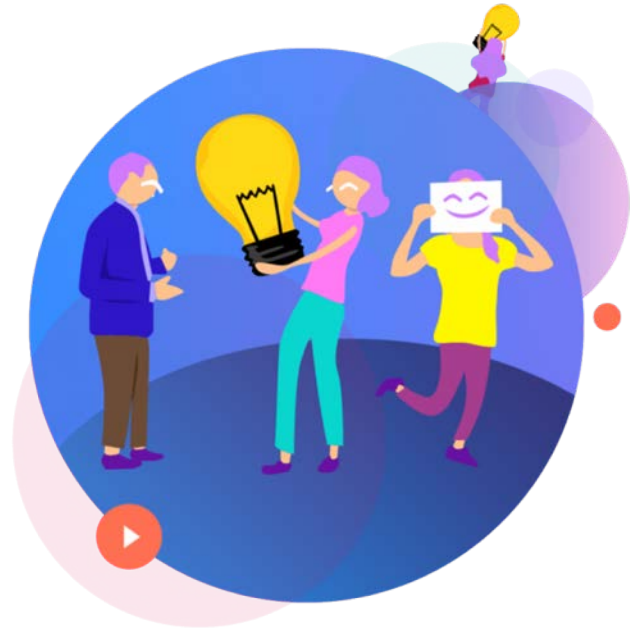
Tips on how Scrum Master can add value to the Daily Scrum Meeting
- Have the meeting at the same time and place every day
- Ensure that only the Team speaks at this meeting
- Use a ball to pass around to ensure participation and only one person talks at a time.

SPRINT PLANNING
The sprint planning meeting is to discuss, elaborate and commit the work for the upcoming sprint. First, the Product Owner outlines the highest priority items being tracked on the product backlog. It is then up to the development team to narrow down the higher-level user story of the product backlog into more detailed tasks.

At the end of sprint planning, the team should have an idea of the goal for the upcoming sprint, as well as a sprint backlog, or list of product features to be delivered and the steps to make that happen.

Tips on how Scrum Master can add value to the Sprint Planning
- Ask the team if they have a Sprint goal
- Ask the team if everyone in the team feels good about committing to the sprint goal
- Ensuring the team has a shared understanding of Definition of Done

Role of a Scrum Master

SPRINT REVIEW

The sprint review gives the team an opportunity to discuss the product that was produced at the end of a sprint. The team would demo the product, and evaluate it based on the goals that were established at the outset of the sprint.

Tips on how Scrum Master can add value to the Sprint Review
Set up the Sprint Review as a recurring meeting so that stakeholders will have this on their calendars in advance

• Have a remote meeting set up for remote attendees, and record for those who aren't able to attend

• Partner with the Customer to facilitate the meeting, since he/she is probably closer to the Stakeholders

• Make sure the features that are Being reviewed are in an integrated environment (and not developers laptop) to instill trust among the stakeholders
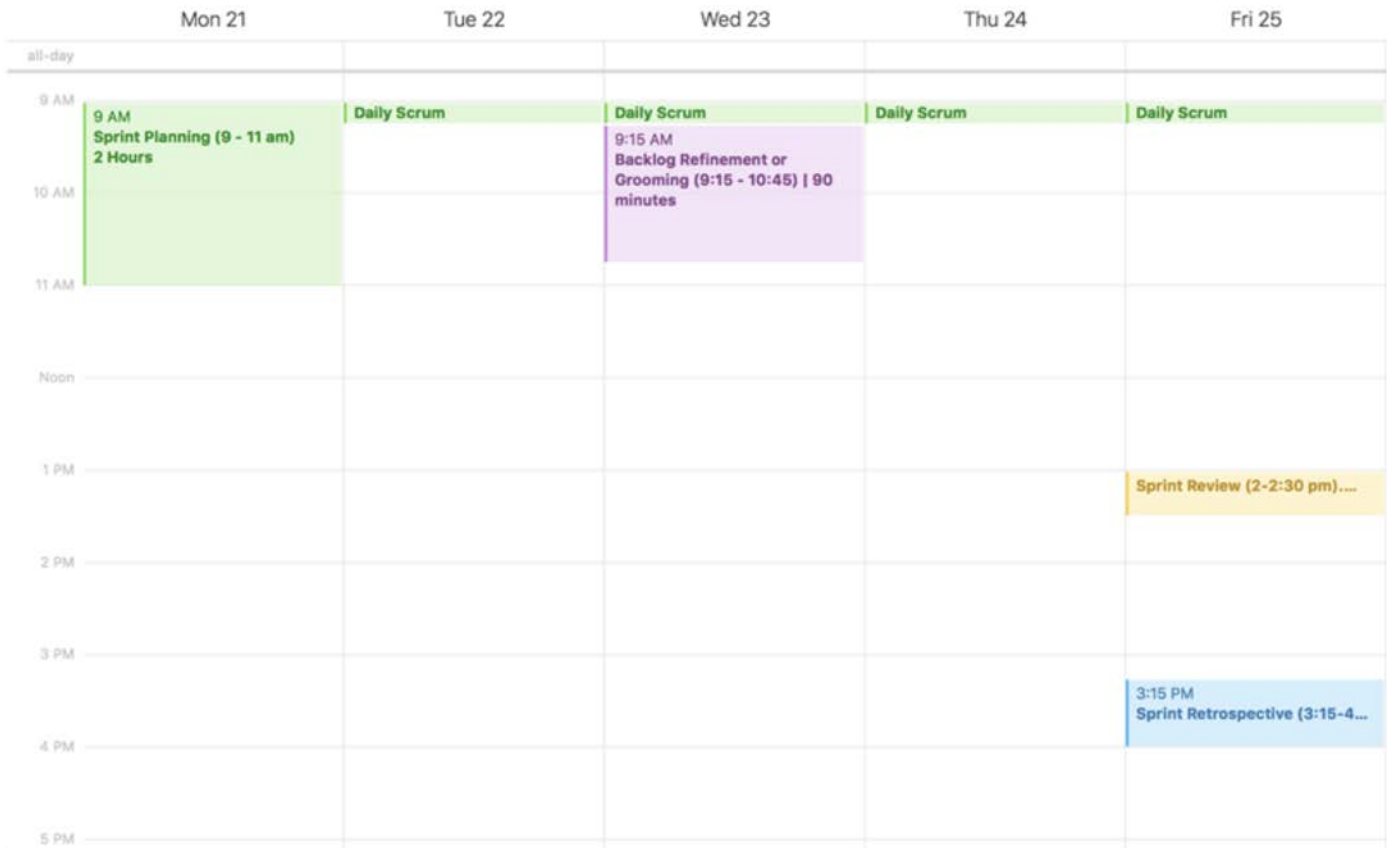
SPRINT RETROSPECTIVE

The Sprint retrospective is typically the last part of the sprint meeting, and usually takes about an hour. The purpose of the meeting is to identify what is and isn't working and to implement the changes in the upcoming sprint. The Scrum Master plays a critical role during the sprint retrospective, establishing the structure of the meeting and facilitating the communication.

Tips on how Scrum Master can add value to the Sprint Retrospective
• Set the stage where everyone in the team knows that this is a psychological safe space for everyone.
• Encourage team members to be open and candid
• Use a visual and interactive method of a retrospective like a Sail Boat or 3 monkeys retro with dot voting
• Help team decide on 2-3 action/improvement items they want to implement on the next sprint

Scrum Master's Week Calendar

Here's an example of what a one-week Sprint looks like:

	Mon 21	Tue 22	Wed 23	Thu 24	Fri 25
all-day					
9 AM	9 AM Sprint Planning (9 - 11 am) 2 Hours	Daily Scrum	Daily Scrum	Daily Scrum	Daily Scrum
10 AM			9:15 AM Backlog Refinement or Grooming (9:15 - 10:45) | 90 minutes		
11 AM					
Noon					
1 PM					
2 PM					Sprint Review (2-2:30 pm)....
3 PM					
4 PM					3:15 PM Sprint Retrospective (3:15-4...
5 PM					

During Spring events, it is the Scrum Master's role to clear obstacles or impediments by partnering the team. Scrum Master also help establish an environment where the team can be effective and improve team dynamics. In addition, Scrum Master also ensure a good relationship between the team and Product Owner as well as others outside the team.

The Scrum Master plays a crucial role not only within the scrum team, but also in the organization as a whole. If the Scrum Master is the first that the organization has ever had, it is their responsibility to help the company understand, adapt, and implement the Scrum framework. This includes removing impediments and setting processes for communication amongst team members and stakeholders. This may involve working with other Scrum Masters to improve the application of Scrum in the organization.

Step Four

Take a self guided Agile Fundamentals video Course

From what you've read so far, does being a Scrum Master sound like something you'd like to do? If so, then you're ready to enroll in a course to prepare you for the Scrum Master certification. When choosing a Scrum and Kanban course, you should look for the following things to be covered:

- Agile principles
- Scrum Methodology (Overview, Values, Roles, Scrum, Artifacts, and Terms)
- Kanban Methodology
- BONUS: Scrumban Methodology

Additionally, it is helpful if the course covers aspects beyond Agile and Scrum theory, and assigns you ways to apply Scrum in real life and land a Scrum role. At The Agile Coach, we recommend a combination of theory and practice with our Agile Master Class and Interview Preparation for Scrum Masters. The Master Class will dive deep into agile and scrum principles so you can understand the role, and the Interview Preparation will give you all the tools you need to interview for and land a Scrum Master position.

Best Course that covers the fundamentals of Agile along with the scrum and Kanban framework

Andrew L

Step Five

# Apply Scrum or Kanban framework in one of your work or personal projects

Apply Scrum in your personal project

Now you know what a Scrum Master does in theory. But how do you know if you'd be any good at it? The best way to find out is to test the framework out for yourself.

Let's start with applying the Scrum and Kanban framework to a personal project. As an example, let's say your goal is to plant a garden by the end of the summer. You would first set up a backlog, or a prioritized list of things you need to accomplish.

For the garden, your backlog may look like this:

- Buy planting materials (seeds, soil, pots)
- Weed your yard
- Lay the soil
- Plant the seeds
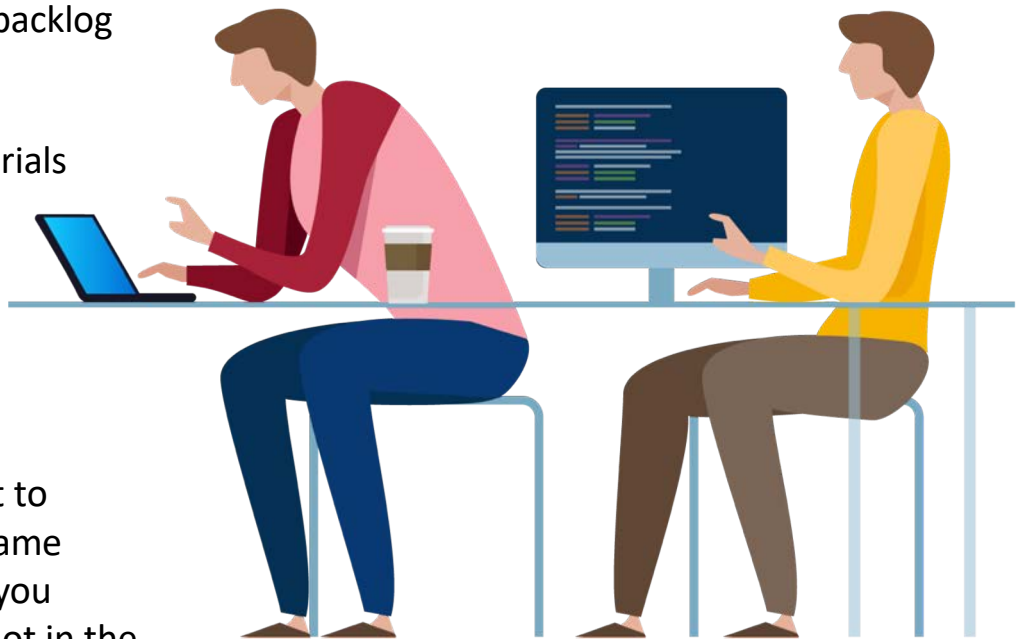
Next, you would want to determine the timeframe for the sprints. Since you know that you'll get hot in the sun if you garden all day, you decide to dedicate 2 hours a day, 3 times a week to grow and maintain your garden. That means your sprint timebox is two hours.

When you're ready for your first sprint, you first need to conduct Sprint Planning. Your first priority in the backlog is "buy planting materials." You determine that it'll take about two hours, or one sprint, to research the materials, go to home depot, and come home.

Apply Scrum in your personal project

You may hop on the computer and take about 30 minutes to research the materials that you need to start a garden. You end up taking about 45 minutes though, and you're running behind schedule. You drive to Home Depot, and look for the materials. Once you get there though, you realize that you forgot what type of flower you wanted to buy. You talk to a store representative, and they try to help you remember what the name of the flower was. Because you don't want to buy the wrong plant, you decide to only buy the other materials.

You come home with most of the materials you were looking for, and your sprint is done! It took 2 hours and 15 minutes. Next it's time for the Retrospective.
A good way to evaluate your project is to list things that you would start, stop, and continue doing.

Here's an example of what your Retrospective may look like:

Start doing: making a list of things to buy, so you don't forget when you get to the store

Stop doing: taking too long to research

Continue doing: going to Home Depot, since they have a wide selection of gardening materials

Apply Kanban Principles to manage your work

Kanban is another popular framework used to implement agile software development. Kanban is a pull-based model or just in time delivery method where there are no iterations unlike Scrum, and the method is based on visualizing the work, limiting the work in progress (WIP) limit and creating a nice flow of the value to the business.

BACKLOG	Ready	Doing	Review	Done

Bottleneck
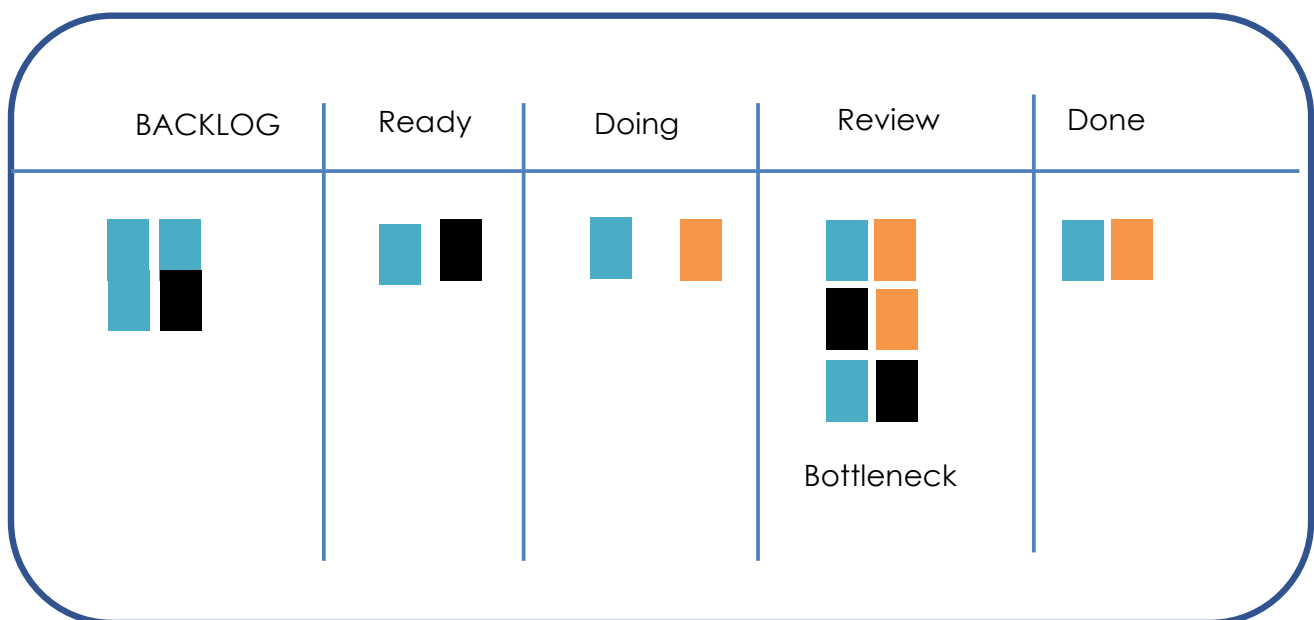
You can simulate kanban electronically on Trello, or use sticky notes on a big piece of paper or board.

To practice the kanban method, divide your project into stages, and organize them side-by-side on a board. Then write down each task that's necessary to accomplish the goal on a sticky note or card, and place it in the corresponding stage. The left-most side is the "to-do" list, and so each sticky note should progress over to the right-hand, or "done" side.

Main thing you want to learn and understand the why behind Kanban's practices, principles and values.

Apply Kanban Principles to manage your work

We would highly encourage you to use the Kanban practices and gain first-hand experience even if it is a personal project. For example, we have a Kanban board job application and interview preparations that was created using trello.
https://trello.com
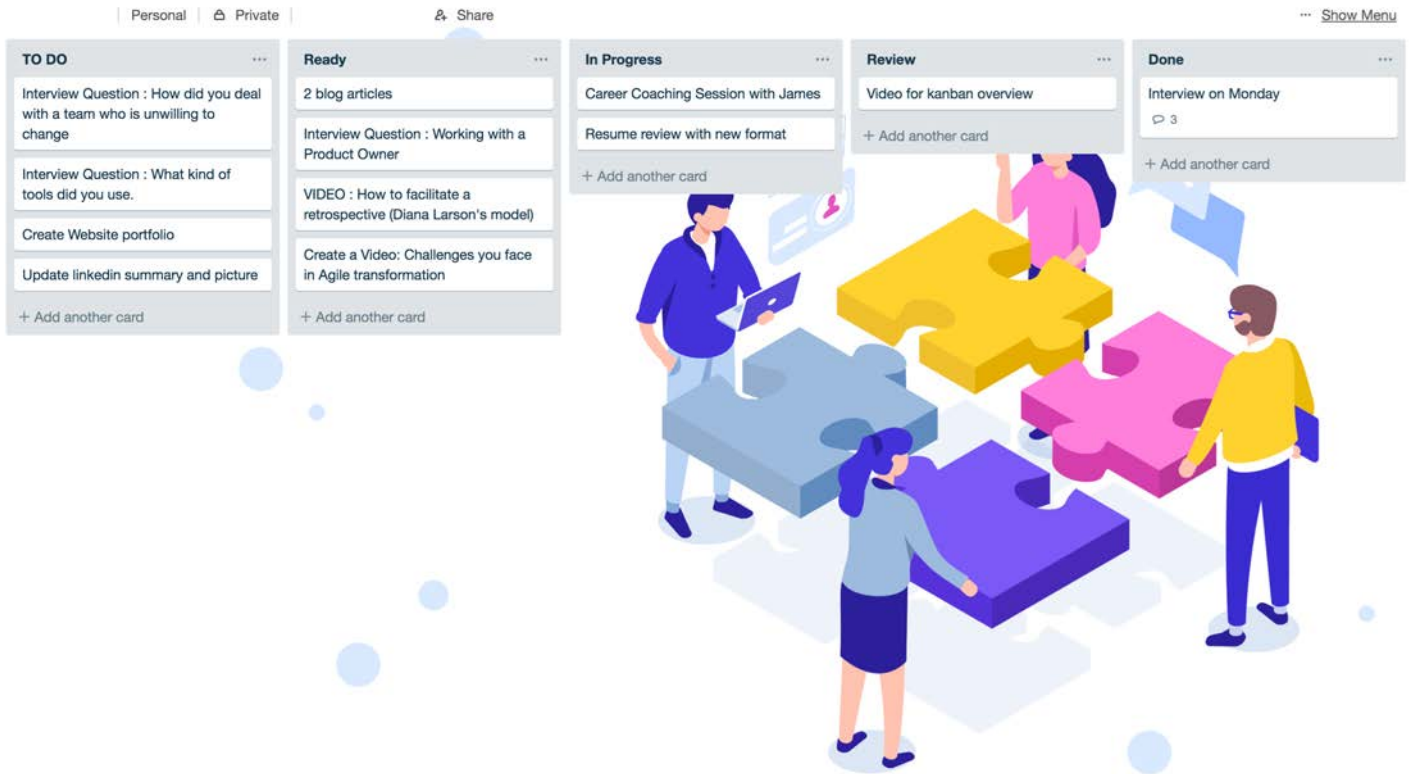
Visualizing the work can really help. Another important principle to keep in mind is to limit your work in progress minimizes context switching and actually increases overall productivity and throughput. This can help you become productive in completing a task that is the most important.

The other thing you could implement is visualizing you impediments or bottlenecks. Lastly, Once you've broken your project into smaller tasks, get with a friend, co-worker or a mentor to do a retrospective to capture lesson learned and to get better.

Step Six

Get a pro-bono Servant Leadership role

Apply Kanban Principles to manage your work

After you've applied the Scrum and Kanban framework to a personal project, you may still want to take it a step further and practice in a real work setting.

Many professionals, regardless of the industry, will tell you that a valuable step in their career was a learning experience that they didn't get paid for. When a writer builds their portfolio, they may produce some samples pro-bono, to gain experience and credibility for future paid projects. Similarly, a great way to get Scrum experience is to perform it for free.

One way you could do this is to get in contact with a Scrum Master who works at a company that interests you, and ask if you can shadow them for a day or two. You can propose it as an unpaid internship. The company will be glad to get free labor, and you'll be getting hands-on Scrum Master experience (not to mention valuable contacts that could lead to a real job later on). It's a win-win!

How do you get in touch with that kind Scrum Master at a company you potentially want to work for? The best way we'd recommend to do this is to use LinkedIn to find someone with the Scrum Master title at a company near you. You can either reach out to them directly on LinkedIn, or ask for an introduction to that Scrum Master from someone already in your network.

Having this experience in hand will not only teach you valuable Scrum Master skills, but also impress employers down the line by showing your dedication to improving your craft.

We have a few startup companies who are willing to use ad-hoc facilitation for their planning and retrospective meeting. Reach out to us at hello@theagilecoach.com if you feel like you have built competency to facilitate a retrospective session and we can have you as a facilitator on one of our retrospective meeting.

Step Seven
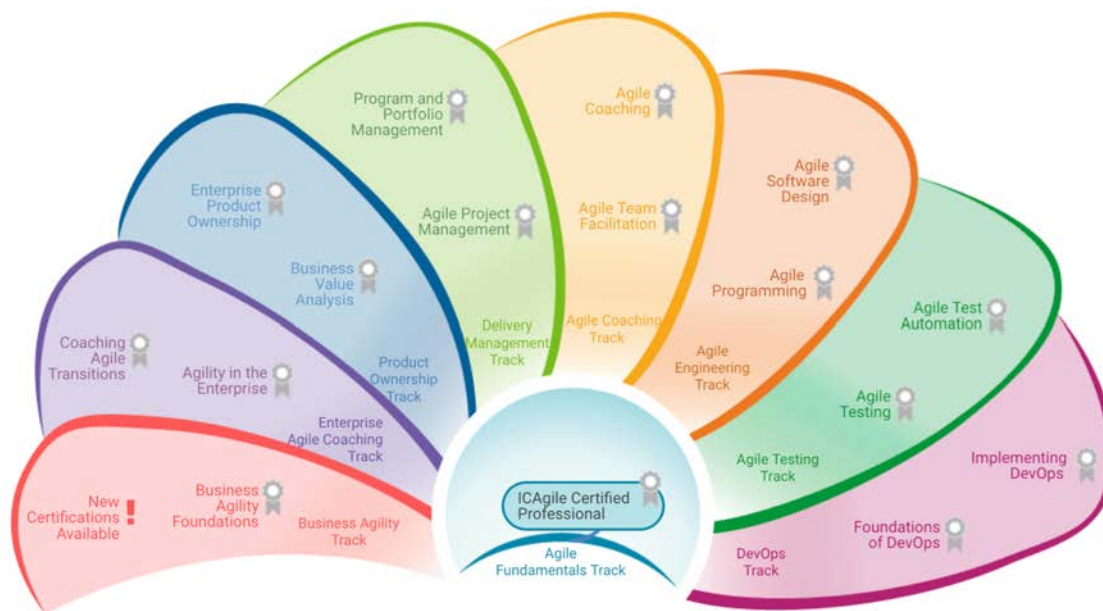
Get a Scrum Master Certification

Apply Kanban Principles to manage your work

Certifications can help you gain a deeper understanding of Agile, and prove to employers that you have the knowledge to become a successful Scrum Master. In order to get Scrum Master credentials, you can become certified through one of the accredited Scrum certification providers: ICAgile, Scrum.org, and Scrum Alliance.

ICAgile - ICAgile Certified Professional (ICP)
ICAgile offers the most holistic agile certification program. Participants will learn the fundamentals of Agile, so they can be prepared to jump into any agile profession. You can get an ICAgile ICP certification that's tailored toward developing new Scrum Masters.

Scrum.org Professional Scrum Master (PSM) certification
The PSM certification is complex and targets Scrum fundamentals specifically. In order to pass the course, you need to get an 85% score on the test.

Scrum Alliance Certified Scrum Master (CSM) certification

The CSM certification is less complex than the PSM, and consists of a two-day course that costs anywhere between $800 and $1,600. In order to pass the course, you need to get a 68% on the exam.

Apply for a Scrum Master role

Apply Kanban Principles to manage your work

Once you've taken a Scrum course and gotten certified, you're ready to apply to Scrum Master jobs.

If the thought of interviewing for a position that you have no experience in scares you, don't worry. Many Scrum Masters get started entry-level, with no software development or team leadership experience. If you've followed steps one through seven and demonstrated your interest in becoming a Scrum Master, there isn't anything that can stop you from achieving it.

While you can, of course, send your resume to companies for a Scrum Master role, there's no guarantee that they'll give you an interview. That's where additional coaching comes in.

At The Agile Coach, we not only offer a 12-week Scrum Master Bootcamp with 10 Q&A coaching calls, but also guide you through the job application and interviewing process once you complete the course. We also help you enhance your resume and LinkedIn profile, offering you full-service support to help you land a Scrum Master role.

You're now equipped with all of the knowledge you need to go out there and start a new and exciting career as a Scrum Master.

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