PLAYERS AND ACCOUNTABILITIES IN THE GAME OF SCRUM

(AN AUDIO EXCERPT FROM "SCRUM - A POCKET GUIDE")

by Gunther Verheyen

independent Scrum Caretaker

"I call myself a **Scrum Caretaker.**

Scrum.
Period

Players and accountabilities in the game of Scrum

An audio excerpt from the 2nd edition of "Scrum - A Pocket Guide (A Smart Travel Companion)"

Scrum, as a *framework* for Agile development, was designed to optimize and control the creation of *valuable* products in turbulent enterprise, organizational, business and market circumstances.

Scrum requires much discipline from its players, while leaving plenty of room for personal creativity and context-specific tactics. The rules of the game are based upon respect for the people-players through a subtle and balanced distribution of accountability. Respecting the rules of the game, not taking shortcuts on rules and roles, nor short-circuiting the empirical grounds of the game, delivers the most joys and greatest benefits for the players as well as in terms of results.

Players and accountabilities

Agile methods are driven by a sense of business opportunism. The time-management technique of time-boxing all work allows the players to quickly respond to new opportunities and adapt to any changes and evolutions.

Scrum organizes its players around three peer accountabilities, each complementing the other ones, thereby turning collaboration into the key to success:

❖ Product Owner;

❖ Development Team;

❖ Scrum Master.

Product Owner is a one-person player role injecting the business perspective of the product into the delivery process. A Product Owner represents all stakeholders, internal and external, to the *Development Team*, a multi-person player role. Although a Product Owner may have strategic product management tasks beyond the Scrum Team, it is important that the Product Owner actively engages with the other players of the team regularly and repeatedly.

The Product Owner assures with the Development Team that a *Product Backlog* exists. The Product Owner manages the Product Backlog based on the product vision as a long-term view of the road ahead. A Product vision captures *why* the product exists.

The Product Backlog shows all of the work actually envisioned for the product that's being created and sustained. This work may comprise functional and non-functional expectations, enhancements, fixes, patches, ideas, updates and other requirements. If anybody wants to know what work is identified and planned for the product they only have to look at the Product Backlog.

The Product Owner expresses the business expectations and ideas captured in the Product Backlog to the team and orders the items in the Product Backlog to optimize the value delivered. The Product Owner manages the game budget to optimize the balance of value, effort and time for the represented stakeholders.

The *Development Team* self-organizes to perform all end-to-end development activities required to turn items from the Product Backlog, expressed and ordered by the Product Owner, into releasable versions of product. 'Development' applies to all work undertaken by the Development Team within a Sprint. Depending on the context it might include the creation of test cases, testing activities, programming, documentation, integration, release activities, etc. It covers all work necessary to guarantee that the *Increment* of product is in a usable state no later than by the end of

a Sprint, and that it technically can be released to the users and consumers of the product or service. That state of the Increment is called "Done". The qualities and criteria that need to be met to reach that state, also driving the development work to be undertaken by the Development Team, are captured in a 'definition of Done'.

The Development Team has a set of 'Development Standards' to describe how the implementation is being performed. This is required to guarantee the level of quality needed to release regularly. And it provides the right transparency to the way the game is being played.

The Development Team sets the cost or effort indication on Product Backlog items. The Development Team selects the amount of work it assumes it can handle in a Sprint at the start of that particular Sprint. The evolving effort indications on Product Backlog can be compared with proven experience to make a *forecast* of Product Backlog for a Sprint.

Scrum Master is a one-person player role to facilitate the Product Owner and the Development Team, within the organization, during the game. A Scrum Master teaches, coaches and mentors the team and the organization, in understanding, respecting and knowing how to play the game of Scrum. The Scrum Master makes sure the rules of the game are well understood and that any elements that hinder or block the team in its progress are removed. Such elements are called *Impediments* in Scrum.
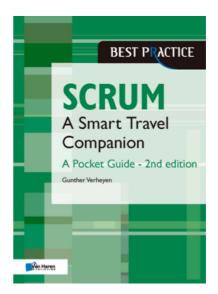
The Scrum Master induces the continual desire to become better players. The Scrum Master implements Scrum by helping others make better use of Scrum.

Thank you

This is an audio excerpt from the 2nd edition of "Scrum - A Pocket Guide", published in 2019, by Gunther Verheyen.

Gunther is a longtime Scrum practitioner. After a career as a consultant, he became partner to Ken Schwaber (co-creator of Scrum) and he became Director of the Professional series at Scrum.org.

Gunther nowadays happily engages with people and organizations as an independent Scrum Caretaker.

BEST PRACTICE

SCRUM
A Smart Travel Companion

A Pocket Guide - 2nd edition

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Van Haren

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Gunther ventured into IT and software development after graduating in 1992. His Agile journey started with eXtreme Programming and Scrum in 2003. Years of dedication followed, years of employing Scrum in diverse circumstances. As from 2010 Gunther became the inspiring force behind some large-scale enterprise transformations. In 2011 he became a Professional Scrum Trainer.

Gunther left consulting in 2013 to found Ullizee-Inc and partner exclusively with Ken Schwaber, Scrum co-creator. He represented Ken and his organization Scrum.org in Europe, shepherded the 'Professional Scrum' series and guided Scrum.org's global network of Professional Scrum Trainers. Gunther is co-creator to Agility Path, EBMgt™ (Evidence-Based Managing of Software) and the Nexus framework for Scaled Professional Scrum.

Since 2016 Gunther continues his journey as an independent Scrum Caretaker; a connector, writer, speaker, humanizer. His services build on 15+ years of experience, ideas, beliefs and observations of Scrum, expressed in re.vers.ify, an act of people re-imagining their Scrum to re-emerge their organization.

Gunther created the acclaimed book "Scrum – A Pocket Guide" in 2013, with a second edition published in 2019. Ken Schwaber recommends his book as '*the best description of Scrum available*' and '*extraordinarily competent*'. In 2016 the Dutch translation was published as "Scrum Wegwijzer". The German translation as "Scrum Taschenbuch" was released in 2017. More translations are planned for 2019.

When not travelling for Scrum and humanizing the workplace, Gunther lives and works in Antwerp (Belgium).

More at https://guntherverheyen.com/about/.