

Roles & Responsibilities For Agile Teams

Below is a description of *the most common* responsibilities of the roles on an iterative team. While there are specific responsibilities that accompany each role, the team should be seen as one self-organizing, unified group working towards the same goal. The goal however, is for team members to become Generalizing Specialists who master their own specialty skills but can also play other roles as needed.

The list below is simply a guide; feel free to add, remove and customize it to fit your own organization expectations.

This is a list of the core team roles, other more specialized roles exists and are incorporated into the projects as needed.

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Product Owner

- ✚ 1 Person who **owns the backlog** of stories. (*List of small valuable business deliverables*). Only one who can approve adding, removing or reprioritizing stories.
- ✚ Trusted by the organization to make sure the project investment is producing ROI.
- ✚ Drives the team to deliver the highest business value stories first.
- ✚ Most likely from the business. Has the most to lose/gain from project outcome. They must be **Knowledgeable** about the subject area, **Empowered** to make decisions, **Engaged** with the team.
- ✚ Accepts or rejects work completed each iteration. Helps identify the definition of “Done” for each story or assigns the appropriate SMEs to help define user acceptance tests.
- ✚ The Captain of the Ship! Can stop the project if no ROI is being delivered.
- ✚ Assigns the appropriate business SMEs to help answer team questions, identify acceptance tests and perform testing during each iteration.
- ✚ Accountable for stakeholder management which includes identifying the right stakeholders, gathering their input/feedback, engaging them in the Sprint Review/Demo meetings and managing conflicting priorities.
- ✚ Manages new scope changes and understands and communicates impact to project timeline and cost.
- ✚ Provides positive and constructive feedback to the team each iteration. Leads and motivates the team to delivering actual value (points) each iteration.
- ✚ During each iteration, the Product Owner makes themselves available to answer team questions, attend daily scrums when feasible and direct them towards the value path.
- ✚ Committed to the final goal. Leads the team towards the final vision. Communicates and collaborates with other Stakeholders to solidify this vision. Communicates any changes.

Business SMEs/User Testers

- ✚ User Testers **own the testing and validation of acceptance tests**. Business SMEs own providing business rules and their expertise to the team.
- ✚ They are active members of the project team who engage daily in providing answers, identifying user acceptance tests and performing user testing.
- ✚ Provide input and recommendations to Product Owner on acceptance and rejection of work completed.
- ✚ They perform testing and document the results of their tests using the team’s standard processes and artifacts.

ScrumMaster:

- ✦ **Owner of the “Process”.** Knowledgeable on the effective process steps needed to execute a project successfully and deliver business value early.
- ✦ Has strong leadership, facilitation, team building and communication skills. Has strong knowledge of project planning, execution and control principles.
- ✦ **Initiates** and plans projects successfully by setting up the required meetings, involving the right SMEs, allocating resources, developing the project release plan and producing the desired deliverables during that phase.
- ✦ **Executes** projects effectively by coaching the team on iterative delivery of high quality valuable stories. Sets up and facilitates the core iteration planning, daily scrum, demo and retrospective meetings.
- ✦ **Manages progress** by keeping track daily of team’s performance. Identifies daily impediments/issues and takes ownership of issue resolution so team can perform. Possesses a high sense of urgency towards impediment removal. Uses visual task boards for tracking daily progress and keeping the iteration big picture in front of everyone on the team.
- ✦ **Builds a culture of high performance** by creating motivated self organizing, highly collaborative and results driven teams that aim to deliver high quality valuable software each iteration. Uses the Servant Leadership style instead of Command and Control leadership. Create an atmosphere that is collaborative, fun, challenging yet rewarding.
- ✦ **Reports and communicates** current status and progress to management and stakeholders. Produces reports such as earned value burn up charts, project release plans, financial reports and others to the business and stakeholders.
- ✦ **Escalates impediments** and issues professionally and holds owners responsible for removing them quickly.
- ✦ **Maintains project plans** in Primavera and makes sure the project is conforming to the necessary quality control standards.
- ✦ Monitors and **coaches** each team member on playing their role effectively including the Product Owner. Identifies any resources performance issues and collaborates with resource managers to resolve issues in addition to communicating positive role performance.
- ✦ **Controls** and manages the project scope, cost, schedule and resource changes by tracking each one, addressing changes and getting appropriate approvals as necessary.
- ✦ **Partners with the Product Owner** to understand the business value that needs to be delivered from the project and help drive the team towards this vision and project goal.

Team Member: Developer

- ✚ Is the **owner of producing high quality software** that is delivered in small testable chunks. Based on their role (ETL, Java, EDW) their core role is to high quality solutions based on company standards.
- ✚ Focuses on developing software using a Test Driven Development approach which means the user tests defined upfront drive the development of the software. Keeps this list of acceptance tests cases front and center during development.
- ✚ Collaborates with the team and business users to ask questions, get clarification, provide input, share progress, provide timeline commitments and bring visibility to any daily impediments or issues that are standing in the way of performance.
- ✚ Uses frequent check-ins to deliver small chunks of working test cases with each daily build when possible. Aims to provide testable chunks early in each iteration instead of as one large chunk at the end.
- ✚ Collaborates closely with the test engineers and user testers to validate the software and fix any iteration level defects as they come up. Aims to get each story “Done”.
- ✚ Develops high quality solutions that follows:
 - ❖ Good coding standards and best practices as guided by Company’s technical architecture guidelines.
 - ❖ Good analysis, design and code review each iteration.
 - ❖ Developing quality unit tests written to satisfy the test cases specified for each story.
 - ❖ Develops maintainable code by providing good comments, producing clear designs and documentation for future maintenance.
- ✚ Engages and collaborates with the team. Provides input and suggestions or asks questions during meetings. Helps improve the overall process.
- ✚ Provides input into estimates at the story complexity level and for daily tasks. Provides task level ETA commitments and aims to deliver on that commitment.
- ✚ Helps identify story dependency, risks and possible issues. Collaborates on ideas to address these risks early.
- ✚ Tracks code changes using standard company tools and uses appropriate tagging to provide tractability for code changes back to stories affected.

Technical Lead (Lead Software Engineer)

In addition to the Developer role above, the technical lead will :

- ✚ Advises Architecture of technical feasibility and implementation options
- ✚ Consultation on tasking / skill set development
- ✚ Technical coaching & mentoring of staff
- ✚ Coordinate the technical solution
- ✚ Code standard enforcement / code coaching (code review)
- ✚ Solution Design & High Level Development

Team Member: Test Engineer

- ✚ **Owns the verification of quality** of the product by insuring the software produced has no defects. This is done iteratively instead of in a big testing phase at the end of the project.
- ✚ Works closely with the product owner and business analyst as part of requirements gathering. Invited to pre-planning sessions where acceptance tests are identified one iteration ahead.
- ✚ Works closely with developers to know when stories are ready for testing. They perform testing, log and track issues and provide feedback to developers.
- ✚ Works during each iteration to perform testing on the acceptance tests in addition to any additional system tests they identify.
- ✚ Collaborates with the team and the business to help identify any testing setup work or data that needs to be done early to achieve testing success during the iteration.
- ✚ Creates daily emails to report on testing progress, which tests have passed and general iteration progress for each story.
- ✚ Utilizes test automation and setup regression suites when feasible for each story.
- ✚ Performs regression testing during each iteration on key stories to confirm the health and stability of the system.
- ✚ Develops automated user testing scripts for each story.
- ✚ Runs daily or nightly automated regression testing scripts to ensure the overall health of the system is stable.
- ✚ Performs ‘Smoke Testing’ for key stories to ensure all is well when automated regression testing is not feasible.
- ✚ Works ahead of the next iteration to setup test data.

Team Member: Business Analyst

- ✚ **The BA/SA is the owner of requirements documentation and elicitation.** Instead of being the ‘laison’ between the team the product owner, they are now the

- ‘glue’ that brings them together.

 - ✚ Their key role is to help facilitate requirements gathering sessions, break epics into small valuable stories and identify clear and concise user acceptance tests and business rules for each story.
 - ✚ The BA may also manage the backlog of stories by adding, removing, updating stories there (after Product Owner approval) and keeping it up to date as part of backlog ‘grooming’.
 - ✚ They may schedule and facilitate requirements elicitation sessions and make sure the right SMEs are invited.
 - ✚ The BA could make sure that all scope changes have been appropriately captured and documented on the backlog.
 - ✚ During the iteration, the BA works on making sure the stories, test cases and business rules are clear, accessible and understood by developers for all stories.
 - ✚ They work ahead with the Product Owner to define stories and test cases for the next iteration and provide a clear definition of “Done” for each one.
 - ✚ They organize all requirements artifacts in an easy structure and link any additional artifacts such as process diagrams, UI Prototypes so they are accessible from one location for the team.
 - ✚ They work closely with the business testers to track testing progress for each story.
 - ✚ A strong BA is usually the “glue” and Project Manager’s right hand person and their backup. They may facilitate daily scrum meetings, help keep the team’s progress burn up charts updated and help setup the team’s iteration task board.

Team Member: Architect

- ✚ **The architect owns the solution “Design” of the system.** They aim to understand the underlying business need and craft a solution that meets these needs within the boundaries of the budget, existing assets or technology direction. Balance delivering business value with extravagant solutions.
 - ✚ During project initiation, the **Architect may develop Enterprise, Software, Data and Integration Models** (based on their role) that guides the team throughout the project. They keep these models updated throughout as new changes emerge.
 - ✚ They also attempt to **identify early any architectural risks** for the project and identify proof of concept stories that will need to be completed in early iterations of the project.
 - ✚ They are responsible for **communicating their technical decisions** and architecture direction - making sure that everyone understands it by making the designs visible and consumable.

- ✚ The architect will also **assess how the project affects the larger enterprise assets**, what systems/databases are affected and develop a plan for managing/documenting these enterprise changes.
- ✚ During the iteration, the architect needs to make sure the **team has a good idea of the technical designs and approach** to be used. They engage in design sessions and code review. They insure the **team is adopting daily practices that align with organization goals**.
- ✚ **Collaborate with the team.** Be available, answer questions, provide guidance and direction during the iteration. Remove any technical impediments.
- ✚ **Plans ahead for each iteration.** Tries to identify possible future dependencies, issues, and proactively develops solutions that address these in advance.
- ✚ **Educate the team and provide technical leadership**, be their coach, help them understand the technical vision so they can apply these principles each day. Aim to duplicate their knowledge within the team.

Team Member: Business Process Engineer

- ✚ **The BPE owns the documentation of the “Business Process”.** Their core role is to develop the process flow diagrams that reflect the current as-is and to-be business operations.
- ✚ They help define the roles and responsibilities within the business process.
- ✚ They work closely with the Product Owner to identify any process change management activities and work to implement necessary changes (new or revised) by setting up training, identifying operating procedures, marketing and communication ..etc.
- ✚ A BPE is also the expert at process optimization and waste reduction by identifying non value adds components and looking for ways to automate and cut process waste.