



Mixing Roles in Scrum: the Good, the Bad & the Ugly

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About Mitch Lacey

- Mitch Lacey
 - 12+ years of project management experience
 - Managed numerous plan driven and Agile projects over his career. Mitch honed his Agile skills while at Microsoft Corporation where he successfully released large backend core services for Windows Live.
 - From this, he transitioned roles from Program Manager to Agile Coach, where he worked hand in hand with other groups throughout their transition to Agile practices
 - Project Management Professional (PMP)
 - Certified Scrum Trainer (CST)

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Mixing Roles: Is it OK?

- Show of hands if you are using Scrum
- Show of hands if you are mixing roles in Scrum
 - Discuss: problems?
- Show of hands if you are NOT mixing roles in Scrum?
 - Discuss: problems?



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3

Mixing Roles: Stories

- The Good (sort of): Team member & ScrumMaster
- The Bad: ScrumMaster & Product Owner
- The Ugly: ScrumMaster, Product Owner and Team Member (aka the trifecta of project failure)

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4

The Good – Sort Of – Team Member & ScrumMaster

- Positives
 - Is able to do work and balance the health of the team
 - Person (maybe) can work on more than one project
 - Gives management the perception of “efficiency”
- Negatives
 - Team members are generally not comfortable raising issues to the ScrumMaster about project contribution – there is no comfort blanket
 - ScrumMaster work will go unfinished.
 - Project work may be sacrificed

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5

The Bad – ScrumMaster & Product Owner

- Positives
 - Perceived central “management” role
 - Easily maps to existing company roles
 - Gives customers (if external) the satisfaction of “saving money”
- Negatives
 - Both jobs are full time resulting in both of them done poorly
 - Person in the role must decide his primary role, which will cause pain to the customer or the team
 - The team or the customer will be sacrificed

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6

The Ugly – ScrumMaster, Product Owner & Team Member

- Positives
 - None
- Negatives
 - “to do two things at once is to do nothing” and to do three is to screw everything up
 - The team or the customer/stakeholders, or both, will be sacrificed
 - The team will not learn and grow
 - Trust will degrade
 - Blocking issues will go unaddressed
 - Personal well being will be thrown out
 - The project will likely fail

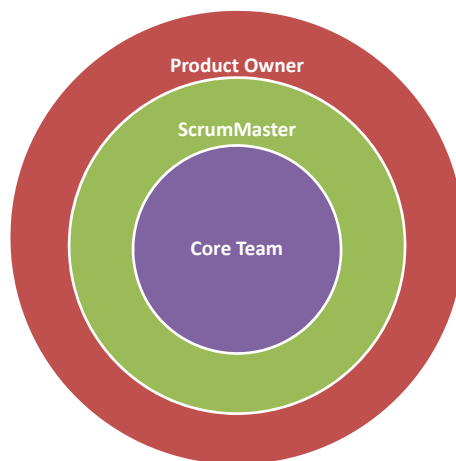
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7

The Scrum Team



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8

Roles in Scrum: ScrumMaster



- **Goal:** Maintain a Healthy Team
- **Responsibilities**
 - Manages Daily Scrum
 - Protects the team from randomization
 - Clears blocking issues
 - Coordinates Team time requests (e.g. Product Owner meeting requests)
 - Enacts Scrum values and principles
 - Defines and reports on Team productivity



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9

Roles in Scrum: Product Owner



- **Goal:** Business & Customer Advocacy and Product (or service) Guidance
- **Responsibilities**
 - Represents and Manages Stakeholder interests
 - Owns the Product Backlog (requirements list)
 - Establishes, nurtures and communicates the product vision
 - Monitors the project against its ROI goals and investment vision
 - Makes decisions about when to create an official release



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10

Roles in Scrum: The Team



- **Goal:** Execute on the Vision and Product Backlog
- **Responsibilities**
 - Self Managing / Organizing
 - Makes its own commitments
 - Manages its own work
 - Manages itself to its commitments
 - Cross functional
 - Develops the highest-priority features on the Product Backlog
- **Note:** Membership can only change between sprints



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11

In Summary

- Mixing roles in Scrum is bad
- Mixing roles will
 - likely degrade trust
 - Impact team morale
 - Decrease customer satisfaction
 - Reduce team growth / remove continuous improvement
 - Increase project ambiguity
 - Reduce effective communication
- Be like Master Chief
 - Stand strong in the face of adversity
 - Have courage
 - Keep trust high



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12

Scrum Resources

- Visit my Website
 - <http://www.mitchlacey.com>
- Books: Ken Schwaber
 - *Agile Software Development with Scrum*, 2001
 - *Agile Project Management with Scrum*, 2004
 - *The Enterprise and Scrum*, 2007
- Mountain Goat Software
 - <http://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/scrum>
- Scrum Alliance
 - <http://www.scrumalliance.org>
- Agile Alliance
 - <http://www.agilealliance.org>
- Scrum Development Yahoo Group Search for “scrumdevelopment”
 - <http://www.yahogroups.com>

