Scrum is changing the way of work. Are you ready?

Q: I get using agile to do product work, but what about my other day job work? (i.e. support, maintenance)

A: All of the work that is being asked of the team should be represented in the product backlog under Scrum regardless of whether it is support, maintenance, or new feature development. Having all of the work present in the product backlog allows the product owner to order (aka prioritize) that work appropriately.

Q: Would it be fair to say that a ScrumMaster is similar to an advisor? Are ScrumMasters working on many products/projects at the same time?

A: One of the ScrumMaster’s responsibilities is to serve as coach to the team. While this role is similar to that of an advisor by definition, it is more involved. The ScrumMaster actively facilitates the team through each of the Scrum events (aka ceremonies), while consistently asking the team to progressively deliver higher quality products with each sprint. In order to truly fulfill this role, the ScrumMaster must be dedicated to the team on a full-time basis.

Q: We struggle with time spent for grooming because the development team members are also included in those sessions. What approaches would you recommend to manage product grooming?

A: Refining the product backlog is absolutely essential to the development team being able to produce potentially shippable product increment with each sprint. In order to ensure that it is efficient and effective, I recommend setting and maintaining a timebox and regular cadence. Also, the team and the product owner can establish a "definition of ready". This definition will help determine when a product backlog item is ready to be consumed by the team and help govern the depth at which each Item needs to be reviewed in a product backlog refinement session.

Q: What are the factors we check when a new member is joining the scrum team? How do we train them quickly?

A: Scrum teams are highly collaborative in nature. As such, I recommend looking at potential team member's soft skills - their ability to listen, collaboratively problem-solve and work with others. Once they are selected, the use of "pairing" - a concept from Extreme Programming is a useful method of getting them up to speed on the team's process and product.

Q: Product development includes more than just tech development, Have you seen a 'complete' product development process use this approach - including marketing material, support processes, pricing, and contract development?

A: Yes, Scrum is a management framework that can be used to manage any complex problem from start to finish. A unique example of Scrum being applied outside the software development is Wikispeed - they used Scrum to build a car. For more information, please see [www.wikispeed.org](http://www.wikispeed.org)
Q: What books and other resources can you recommend to aspiring business analysts for a basic introduction to Scrum?

A: While there are a number of books in the space, Ken Rubin’s *Essential Scrum* is a great reference for anyone looking to learn more about the Framework.

Q: Can you describe a day in the life of a ScrumMaster other than impediment resolution especially when a sprint in progress? Since they are not developing or doing user stories what is the SM doing since formal ceremonies are few?

A: There are a number of items that a ScrumMaster should be checking and working on with the team beyond barrier removal and event facilitation. These items are detailed in Michael James’ ScrumMaster Checklist which can be found at: [http://www.scrummasterchecklist.org](http://www.scrummasterchecklist.org)