

Table of Contents

What Tips Do You Have for a Scrum Master?	3
Want to Know More?	4

What Tips Do You Have for a Scrum Master?

Here are some tips and tricks to help you become a successful Scrum Master:

- Really understand the the values and principles behind Lean and Agile. Leverage this understanding to help the Team address the issues they are facing. Lead by example by using the values and principles in both your own work (“personal agility”) and when helping the work of others.
- Making and meeting commitments: One basic of a Lean-Agile implementation is to ensure that the Team is making and meeting their commitments. This is how the Team develops trust with the business. When you have trust discussions about what is possible for the Team to do, trade-offs, etc. all become possible.
- Establish the good use of metrics: The good use of metrics is the use of metrics by the Team to improve (as opposed to the bad use of metrics which is about trying to figure out who to blame when there is a problem). Lean-Agile approaches are, above all, empirical approaches. Use information such a burn-down charts, velocity and throughput history, cumulative flow diagrams, lead and cycle time, defect counts, Team satisfaction, customer delight, etc. to really establish what is happening and whether the Team is improving.
- Establish transparency: Work to help the Team be transparent about their work and issues they are having. Use big visible information radiators to help tell a story for the business. Ensure information about what the Team is doing is available to all. Again this helps establish that the Team is able to be trusted and also reduces interruptions on the Team.
- Develop and leverage feedback loops: Metrics are one form of feedback but there are other (e.g. demonstrations, telemetry in delivered applications, etc.). Scrum Masters should help the Team to establish rapid feedback loops, and then act on what these feedback loops are telling you, even if that means a drastic change in plan.
- Always be learning: Not only is this needed in general, but in the case of the Scrum Master it is particularly important. As you observe problems that are happening with your Teams you will need to go out and research ideas on how these issues might be addressed and then work with the Team to see what experiments you might want to try. A Scrum Master always has a pocketful of ideas that can be applied in various situations.
- Facilitation: Learn excellent facilitation skills. Prepare for sessions that you facilitate. Work hard to understand the tools available to help groups of people be creative while converging on a result (e.g. see [Liberating Structures](#)). Establish approaches to work conflicts and disagreements (e.g. see [How to Work Personality Issues Without Sounding Like a Marriage Guidance Counsellor?](#)). Leverage time-boxes to ensure discussions continue to be productive. And so on.
- Understand the way value is delivered by your Team. Leverage Value Stream Mapping to help the Team focus on how they take an idea and turn that into a release to the customer.
- Help the Team focus on their quality practice. Make sure your Team has an overarching approach to testing based on Agile approaches, leveraging TDD, BDD, session based testing, etc.
- Leverage Team assessments (such as [Spotify Health Check](#) or [SAFe's Team Assessment](#)) to help you understand the state of your Team. Don't underestimate the power of assessing Team happiness: a happy Team is an engaged Team.
- Understand the skill make up of your Team: Establish a learning plan for the Team based on the understanding of both current and future needs. Facilitation techniques such as [Skills Bingo](#) will help.

Want to Know More?

- [Liberating Structures](#)
- [How to Work Personality Issues Without Sounding Like a Marriage Guidance Counsellor?](#)
- [Spotify Health Check](#)
- [SAFe's Team Assessment\)](#)
- [How Do We Establish Skills Development in the Team?](#)

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