



Empowered Scrum Teams: why it matters

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September 14, 2023

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**What does it mean
to empower teams
in Scrum?**

EMPOWERING SCRUM TEAMS

- What is Empowerment in Scrum?
- Benefits and Challenges of Empowering Scrum Teams
- Strategies for Empowering Scrum Teams
- Key Takeaways



What is Empowerment in Scrum?

A balance of freedom and guidance.

- **Autonomy:** Team members have the autonomy to decide how to complete their tasks and achieve Sprint goals.
- **Responsibility:** Team members are responsible for delivering the work they commit to during Sprint Planning.
- **Ownership:** Empowered teams take ownership of their work and are deeply committed to the project's success.
- **Decision-Making:** Team members have the authority to make decisions collectively regarding task execution, problem-solving, and process optimization.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Empowered teams actively engage in continuous improvement through events like Sprint Retrospectives.



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Benefits and Challenges of Empowering Scrum Teams

Benefits

- Increased Motivation and Engagement
- Improved Productivity
- Enhanced Problem-Solving
- Faster Decision-Making
- Higher Quality Deliverables
- Greater Adaptability

Challenges

- Resistance to Change
- Lack of Trust
- Micromanagement Habits
- Unclear Roles and Responsibilities
- Fear of Failure
- Organizational Culture

What does Empowerment look like?

- Task Assignment and prioritization within the sprint
- Daily standup
- Sprint planning, goal and commitment
- Problem solving and continuous improvement
- Technical decision
- Team structure self-organization

In the Real World

POOR INCREMENTAL DELIVERY

Challenge: Team was consistently missing sprint goals and became over reliant on the PO, SM and leadership to guide them through improvements.

What did they do?

1. Made time for training, support, and space to solve this problem
2. Empowered the SM beyond current authority
3. Cleared obstacles
4. Emphasized self-selection of tasks in planning based on skillset and interest
5. Doubled down on learning in retrospectives using design thinking and liberating structures

Outcomes: Value delivered improved and became consistent

- **Team took ownership of the problem and the solution**
- **Consistently sized and delivered an increment each sprint**
- **Learned to adapt quickly to change by leaning on daily standups**
- **Deepened skillsets and reduced dependencies by becoming more cross-functional**
- **Morale improved – increase in team sentiment and engagement**

Strategies to Improve Empowerment on Scrum Teams

01

Clearly define roles and responsibilities.

02

Set boundaries or guardrails that the team can work within.

03

Build trust. With your team, your leaders and your stakeholders.

04

Make sure there is clear and universal understanding of your customer and your product vision/goals.

05

Create clear and consistent feedback loops

06

Strive for transparency.

Key Takeaways

1. Empowered teams take ownership.
2. Empowered teams deliver the best value to your customers.
3. Empowered teams adapt to change better.
4. Empowered teams have higher morale.
5. Empowered teams are innovative.



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