The importance of being a Product Owner

Agile Digital Services

As companies attempt to increase business agility, the emphasis of digital delivery is moving from projects to products, directed by the interests of customers rather than IT departments. This change is not always easy, but there are key factors that can help smooth the path and one of these is the appointment of the right Product Owner (PO).

A successful transition to Agile practice requires an assessment of maturity and the development of skills in key roles. The PO carries a significant responsibility, to ensure the right product is built, development is properly prioritised and quality standards are met.

1

Capabilities

Obvious perhaps, but all too often overlooked. A PO ensures that a delivered product will provide value. A mix of knowledge, reflection, consultation and analysis should be backed by a talent for research, review and evaluation.

2

Capacity

Many POs already have another job, restricting the time they have to define work with creativity and innovation, evaluate delivery effectively and forecast accurately. A true product vision needs to be maintained by timely, evidenced interventions, often made at pace.

3

Authority

Whether selecting or removing tasks, the PO's decisions need to carry the respect of the team. An Agile team needs a single authority, who can take a holistic view across stakeholder and business demands, and keep the workflow goal-focused.

When selecting a PO, consider it as a role, not a secondary responsibility, and recruit accordingly. The most successful POs have experience across several relevant disciplines to draw on, so check for the following experience:

Product manager

Understands the product, its customer needs and place in the market. Knows how to shape user stories and communicate clear product requirements for the development team.

Subject Matter Expert

Knows the sector inside out and is able to bring relevant industry and business insights to provide a referential frame and inform development decisions.

Business Analyst

Experienced in business transformation, capturing requirements from internal stakeholders and analysing impacts of change on the business.

Defining a PO's role clearly will give your Agile framework real clarity in return. Your PO helps define the culture of your Agile team, so take time to ensure the best possible fit for each product. It's a crucial step in meeting your goals and delivering value for your customers.

Get in touch today to find out how our Agile coaching service can help you select the right PO, while our experts can augment, supplement and coach your in-house teams via our experienced Agile squads.

About Agile Digital Services

CGI Agile Digital Services supports organisations who need to up their Agile game in order to realise their digital transformation ambitions. We deploy our world-class talent, processes and tools, to supply the skills and capacity you need to rapidly deliver higher quality outcomes. With this support, you can increase the pace of transformation and reduce the time to market.

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We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments. Across 21 industry sectors in 400 locations worldwide, our 90,000 professionals provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

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