



Agile Scrum Recruitment: A Guide



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Introduction



Thanks for downloading
this free ebook.



This is a complete guide to recruitment for Agile Scrum teams. Inside, you'll find a wealth of information to help you understand the world of Agile Scrum and the steps you can take to improve your recruitment processes, attract the best talent and build productive cross-functional teams.

We hope you find it to be useful and helpful in improving your agile scrum recruitment process.

About Digitalent

Digitalent is a recruitment agency specialising in technology and creative. We connect exciting candidates with forward-thinking organisations looking to hire the best tech and creative talent in the world. Our mission is to give our customers (both companies and candidates) the best recruitment experience possible.

We do that by living our values:



Communicate Openly

Transparency is key to a good relationship. We're invested in people, sharing honest feedback and information regardless of the outcome.



Collaboration Over Competition

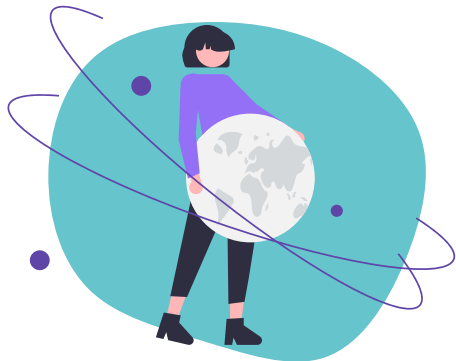
Teamwork makes the dream work, as they say. We communicate openly on roles, candidates and information, unlike other recruitment agencies where recruiters often work in isolation.



Play as a Team

We love the satisfaction of getting the job done. We provide solutions rather than problems, constantly working as a team to achieve our goals.

About Digitalent



Recruit From Anywhere

Our people flourish in an environment that's their own. Trust underpins everything, allowing us to do what we do best without restrictions.



Focus On The Customer

Our customers are both our clients and our candidates and they are at the heart of everything we do. We don't do what's best for us, we do what's best for you.



Do The Right Thing

We surround ourselves with people who have the integrity to do the right thing even when no-one's watching. We choose the hard right over the easy wrong.

1. What is an Agile Scrum Team?

An Agile Scrum team is a cross-functional group of individuals who work together to develop and improve a product. The team is self-organising and self-managing, meaning they are responsible for their own progress and success.

They work in sprints, which are typically 2-4 week intervals, with the goal of delivering a working product at the end of each sprint. The Scrum framework, which is commonly used in software development, is based on Agile methodology principles and includes specific roles such as the Scrum Master, Product Owner/Product Manager, and Development Team.

Scrum is a widely used Agile method that allows teams to deliver working software in a flexible and responsive manner while also promoting continuous improvement and adaptability to change.

What are the Benefits of a Cross-Functional Team?

Scrum teams offer a variety of advantages that can greatly benefit an organisation.

Efficiency: By having team members with different skills and expertise, a cross-functional team can handle a wide range of tasks, resulting in increased efficiency.

Communication: With different perspectives and experiences, a cross-functional team can improve communication and collaboration.

Employee engagement: Cross-functional teams allow employees to take on different roles and responsibilities, which can lead to increased engagement and job satisfaction.

Innovation: The diverse perspectives and skills of a cross-functional team can lead to more creative and innovative solutions.

These are just a few of the many benefits of Scrum teams, and organisations that invest in them can experience significant improvements in productivity, efficiency and innovation.

2. Scrum Team Roles and Responsibilities

There are three core roles within a cross-functional team. These are outlined below.

Scrum Master

The Scrum Master is the person responsible for managing the processes and ensuring that the team is working together effectively. They act as a coach, mentor, and facilitator to help the team achieve their goals.

Responsibilities of a Scrum Master

- Facilitating meetings and communication within the team
- Ensuring that the team follows the Scrum framework and processes
- Identifying and removing obstacles that may impede the team's progress
- Acting as a liaison between the team and other stakeholders

Product Manager

A Product Manager is responsible for the overall success of a product. They will set the product strategy and vision, conduct market research, define product requirements and work with cross-functional teams to bring the product to market.

Responsibilities of a Product Manager

- Work with external stakeholders
- Monitor product performance
- Make data-driven decisions to improve the product

Development Team

The Development Team is responsible for the actual development of the product. They are the ones who take the product backlog and turn it into a working product.

Responsibilities of a Dev Team

- Developing the product according to the product backlog
- Communicating with the Scrum Master and Product owner
- Identifying and addressing any technical issues
- Continuously improving the product and processes

3. Why do Businesses Choose the Agile Approach?

Scrum and Agile working have become (and continue to be) popular in progressive businesses. That's because the approach offers several benefits to organisations.

Greater Flexibility

One of the main reasons businesses choose to use the Agile approach is because of its flexibility. Agile methodology allows teams to adapt to changes in project requirements and priorities, making it easier to respond to new information and customer feedback. The ability to make changes throughout the project life cycle means that the final product is more likely to meet the needs of the customer, resulting in increased satisfaction and customer retention.

Speed and Time-Saving Benefits

Another key benefit of the Agile approach is its ability to save time. By breaking down a project into smaller, manageable chunks, teams can work on and deliver small parts of the project more quickly. This allows for faster development cycles, which ultimately leads to a faster time-to-market for the final product. Additionally, the regular meetings and feedback loops built into the Agile process help teams to identify and address issues early on, preventing delays and roadblocks.

Better Cost Control

The Agile approach can also help businesses save money. By delivering working software at the end of each sprint, teams can get feedback from customers and stakeholders early on in the process. This allows for adjustments to be made before a significant amount of resources have been invested in the project. Also, by working in smaller chunks, teams can focus on delivering only the most essential features, reducing unnecessary development costs.

Candidate Quality

The Agile approach also helps in improving the quality of the candidates. Agile development allows team members to work closely together, encouraging open communication, collaboration and teamwork. This creates a positive and productive environment that attracts and retains highly skilled, motivated and engaged team members.

4. The Difficulties With Recruitment for Agile Teams

Recruiting for Agile teams can be a challenging task, as traditional recruitment methods are often at odds with the principles of the Agile methodology.

One of the main difficulties is the mismatch between the timeframes of traditional recruitment and the fast-paced nature of Agile development. Agile teams operate in short sprints, with a focus on delivering working software quickly. This requires a high degree of flexibility, adaptability, and a willingness to learn on the part of team members. Traditional recruitment methods, on the other hand, can take a long time to complete, with lengthy application and interview processes, background checks and reference checks, making it difficult to fill positions quickly.

Another issue with traditional recruitment is that it often results in a lower candidate quality. Agile teams require a high degree of collaboration and teamwork and therefore require team members with strong interpersonal and communication skills. Traditional recruitment methods, such as relying on resumes and interviews, do not always provide a good indicator of a candidate's ability to work well in a team. Traditional recruitment methods often focus on a candidate's experience and qualifications, rather than their potential and willingness to learn, which can be important for an Agile team.

Traditional recruitment methods are often focused on finding the best fit for a specific role, rather than a match for the team as a whole. Agile teams require a diverse set of skills and perspectives to be successful, and therefore need team members who complement one another, rather than those who are identical in terms of skills and experience.

Agile teams, therefore, require a more holistic approach to recruitment, which focuses on the team as a whole and considers a candidate's potential, interpersonal and communication skills, character attributes and willingness to learn.

5. Tips For Better Cross-Functional Team Recruitment

Building an Agile team that functions well together can be a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be.

Audit your Team for Gaps

One of the first things you should do when building a cross-functional Scrum team is to audit your current team for gaps. This means looking at the skills and experience of your current team members and identifying areas where there may be a lack of knowledge or expertise.

By identifying these gaps, you can ensure that you are recruiting for the right skills and experience to improve your team further.

When conducting an audit, it's important to consider the following:

- The skills and experience of your current team members
- The role each team member plays within the team and if they are being utilised to their full potential
- The current processes and procedures within the team and if they are effective or if there are any areas that need improvement
- The overall performance of the team and if there are any areas where the team is struggling or underperforming.

To conduct an audit, you can use a variety of methods such as employee surveys, one-on-one interviews, or team meetings. Once you have identified the gaps, you can use this information to create job descriptions and recruitment strategies that will target the specific skills and experience needed to fill those gaps. This will ensure that your recruitment efforts are targeted and effective, and you'll be able to build a cross-functional Scrum team that will help you achieve your goals.

Get the Right Scrum Master

The Scrum Master is an essential role within a cross-functional Scrum team and plays a critical part in the team's success. They are responsible for managing the processes, facilitating communication, and ensuring that the team is working together effectively. They act as a coach, mentor, and facilitator to help the team achieve their goals.

When recruiting for a Scrum Master, it's crucial to find the right person for the role. The ideal candidate should have a strong understanding of Scrum and Agile methodologies, as well as experience leading and facilitating teams. They should also have excellent communication and problem-solving skills and be able to adapt to changing circumstances.

It's also important to consider the personality and attitude of the candidate. A Scrum Master should be a team player, have a positive attitude, and be able to motivate and inspire others. They should be able to build trust and create a positive team dynamic. When it comes to interviewing candidates, it's essential to ask the right questions that will give you an understanding of their skills, experience, and attitude. You can ask about their understanding of Scrum and Agile methodologies, their experience leading and facilitating teams, and their approach to problem-solving and communication.

Scrum Masters should be resilient and creative to encourage collaboration, so explore their creativity in bringing new ideas to the team, and ask about things that have worked or have not worked. Also, ask how their career developed to the point that they became a Scrum Master.

For more information on how to hire a skilled Scrum Master, check out our article on the subject. It includes tips and best practices for recruiting the right person for the role and ensuring that your cross-functional Scrum team is led by someone who will help them achieve their goals.

Build a Team With T-shaped Employees

When building a cross-functional Scrum team, it's essential to have employees with a broad skill set. These employees are known as T-shaped employees, and they are crucial for building a team that can handle a wide range of tasks. T-shaped employees have a broad set of skills and knowledge, but also have a deep specialisation in one area. This allows them to be versatile and work on various tasks while also being experts in their field.

When recruiting for T-shaped employees, it's important to look for candidates with a diverse set of skills and experiences. This can include experience in different industries, exposure to different technologies, or expertise in various areas of business. It's also important to look for candidates who have a passion for learning and expanding their knowledge and skills.

When it comes to the interview process, it's important to ask questions that will give you an understanding of the candidate's skills, experience, and willingness to learn. You can ask about their previous experiences, the skills they have acquired, and their approach to learning new technologies or processes. You can also discuss their character attributes because this reveals who they are as a person and will highlight all the areas of their character that a business cannot train.

Understand What Your Candidates are Looking For

When recruiting for a cross-functional Scrum team, it's essential to understand what your candidates are looking for in an employer. This means going beyond the basic qualifications and skills listed in the job posting and understanding what motivates them and what they value in a workplace. This can include things like a good work-life balance, opportunities for growth, and a positive company culture. By understanding what your candidates are looking for, you can tailor your recruitment process to attract the best candidates and offer them the right incentives to join your team.

One way to understand what your candidates are looking for is to ask them directly. During the interview process, ask them about their career goals and what they're looking for in the workplace. You can also conduct surveys or gather feedback from current employees to get a better understanding of what candidates are looking for. By taking the time to understand what your candidates are looking for, you can create a recruitment process that will attract the best candidates and help you build a cross-functional Scrum team that will take your company to the next level.

Get Your Recruitment Process Right

Having a solid recruitment process in place is crucial when building a cross-functional Scrum team. This includes creating detailed job descriptions, placing ads in the right places, and having a streamlined interview process that allows candidates to move quickly through the process. By getting your recruitment process right, you can ensure that you are attracting the right candidates for your team.

Creating detailed job descriptions is the first step in getting your recruitment process right. These descriptions should include a clear overview of the role and responsibilities within the Scrum team, the required skills and qualifications, and the company culture and values. Having a detailed job description will help attract the right candidates and ensure that they are a good fit for the team.

Placing ads in the right places is also crucial. This means advertising on job boards and social media platforms that are specific to your industry. Additionally, you should also reach out to professional organisations and universities to find suitable candidates. By advertising in the right places, you'll be able to reach a larger pool of potential candidates and increase your chances of finding the right person for the role.

Having a structured interview process is also important. This includes creating a list of standard questions that will be asked to all candidates. This ensures that you are treating all candidates fairly and objectively. It's also essential to have a clear understanding of the candidate's qualifications and skills, as well as their attitude and cultural fit. This can be done by conducting multiple rounds of interviews with different team members, as well as conducting background checks and references.

Scrum Master is a people-based role, so also use the interview as an opportunity to assess how your new Scrum Master will complement your current team.

By getting your recruitment process right, you can ensure that you are attracting the right candidates for your team and increase the chances of building a cross-functional Scrum team that will help you achieve your goals.

You can also enlist the help of a specialist recruiter to help support the process and ensure you're able to attract the right talent.

6. Initiatives to Improve Recruitment Efficiency

Recruitment can be a time-consuming and resource-intensive process, particularly in the technology and creative industries. However, there are some ways that organisations can streamline processes and improve recruitment for Agile teams.

- **Use valid and up-to-date job descriptions:** Job descriptions should be accurate and reflect the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications of the role. By providing clear and accurate job descriptions, you can attract the right candidates and save time during the recruitment process. Write the job spec to appeal to the candidate, including information about;
 - The company.
 - The role and requirements.
 - The team (include information about what their team would look like and who they'd be working with).
 - The products they'll be working on.
- **Offer realistic salaries:** Offering competitive salaries will help attract the right candidates and reduce the time it takes to fill a role.
- **Additional perks and benefits:** Offering additional perks and benefits such as remote work, flexible hours, health insurance, generous holiday allowances, etc. can help attract the right candidates.
- **Remote interviews:** Remote interviews can save time and resources, and also can increase the pool of candidates.
- **Improve initial screening:** By using tools such as pre-employment testing, you can quickly identify the best candidates for the role and speed up the recruitment process.
- **Better use of technology:** Using technology such as applicant tracking systems (ATS) and recruitment software can help streamline the recruitment process and save time.
- **Referral programs:** Encouraging current employees to refer potential candidates can lead to a faster recruitment process and a higher success rate.

By implementing these initiatives, businesses can improve recruitment efficiency and reduce the time to offer and placement.

7. How Using a Recruitment Agency Can Help to Streamline the Process

Using an agency to help streamline the recruitment process for Agile Scrum teams can be incredibly beneficial for organisations. Here are just a few of the ways a trusted recruitment agency can help:

- **Access to a wider pool of candidates:** Agencies have a vast network of candidates and can quickly identify the best fit for a role. This can save organisations time and resources in their recruitment efforts.
- **Expertise in recruiting for specific roles:** Agencies have a deep understanding of the job market and the specific skills and qualifications required for different roles. They can help organisations identify the right candidates for the role and ensure that they have the right skills and experience.
- **Speed up the recruitment process:** Agencies can help organisations fill roles faster by identifying and shortlisting the best candidates quickly.
- **Save resources:** By outsourcing recruitment efforts to an agency, organisations can save on recruitment costs and the time it takes to fill a role.
- **Access to a wide range of recruitment tools and techniques:** Agencies have access to a variety of recruitment tools and techniques such as applicant tracking systems, pre-employment testing, and recruitment software. These tools can help to streamline the recruitment process and save time.
- **Provide support throughout the process:** Agencies can provide support throughout the recruitment process, from creating job descriptions to conducting interviews and making job offers.
- **Provide an unbiased view:** Agencies provide a more unbiased view of the candidates, as they are not directly invested in the recruitment process and tend to be more objective when assessing candidates.



Digitalent's Synergy Package is the perfect solution to those arduous and long-winded recruitment processes.

With Synergy, we do all the hard stuff for you, including:

- Surveying the market and sourcing potential candidates.
- Taking over first-stage interviews (saving you time) and recording the whole meeting using our innovative video interview platform.
- Providing a showcase so you can evaluate the talent for yourself.
- Once you've selected your ideal candidate, we'll take care of the salary negotiations, offer management and reference requests.
- On average, our clients save 20 hours in each hiring process and go from role qualification to offer acceptance in just two weeks.

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“ As a hiring manager, by using Digitalent I have removed all pain points from the recruitment process and can now focus on what matters most: meeting great candidates. I know that everyone Digitalent has spoken to will be screened, have an understanding of the role itself, and are aware of our business and culture before they meet me. This makes interviews much more productive, and I find the conversion rate better than with any other agency I have used. ”



Adam Thomas - Head of Continuous Delivery for PA Media Group



Get Expert Recruitment Support

If you're in the market for talent for your Agile Scrum team, it can be difficult to narrow down the talent pool and find the perfect candidate in an efficient way.

By following the tips outlined in this guide, and partnering with a specialist recruitment agency, you can drastically reduce timeframes and costs when it comes to recruiting. What was once a headache can quickly become a frictionless aspect of your business growth.

If you're in need of some expert advice or recruitment support, get in touch with us today; we'll be delighted to help.

UK

One St Peter's Square
WeWork
Manchester
M2 3DE

+44 (0)161 818 9141
manchester@digitalent.agency
digitalent.agency

Australia

48 Kelso Street
Cremorne
Victoria
3121

+61 (0)3 9028 7047
melbourne@digitalent.agency
digitalent.agency

USA

524 Broadway
New York
NY
10012

+1 646 4815942
newyork@digitalent.agency
digitalent.agency