The Ideal Scrum Master (Part 1)

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**Reading time:** 3 minutes

At the agile unconference in Zürich on November 4th Peter Stevens and myself hosted a session where we exchanged on what is the Ideal Scrum Master.

First question : What unfair advantage would a team with a great scrum master have ?
Second question : What could be learned from sports coaches ? (I will cover this is Part 2 of this article)
We have identified following key aspects of our ideal scrum master :
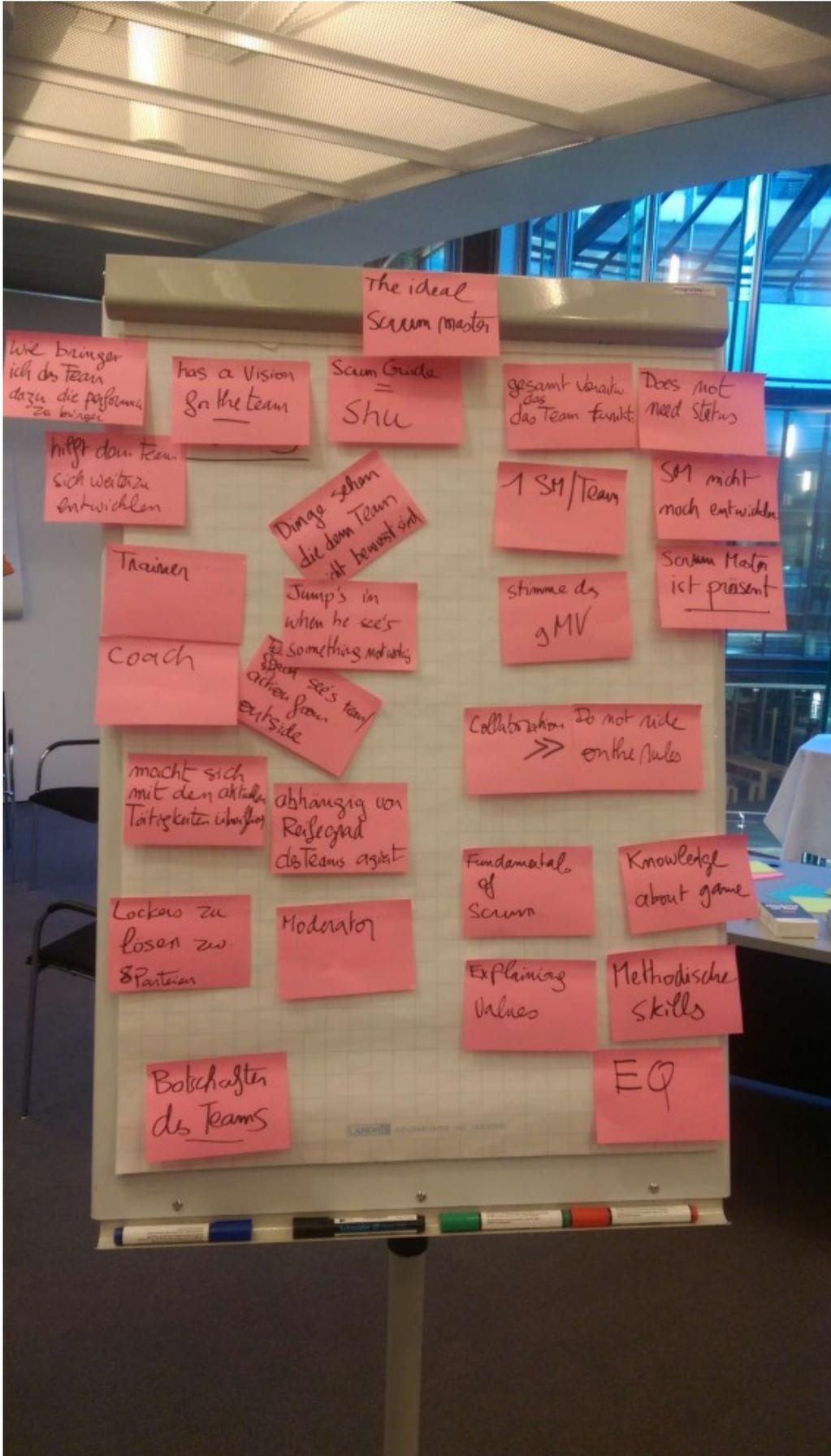
- **the mission is to make the team perform and develop continuously**
- they don't need status. They are respected based on their experience and behaviour
- they are always present in order to observe what is going on and how things evolve. As such they need to be **dedicated** to one team and to their role.
- they will know from **experience** what to do next to create the conditions for the team to succeed and when to try something else.
- the scrum master does not need to understand the technical details of what the team does in order to recognize that something is not going in the right direction as this requires mostly **empathy** and **observation** of behaviors and communication patterns.
- the scrum master accompanies the team on their road from "Shu" to "Ri" by focusing on **collaboration** and more and more ignoring the rules that become DNA.
- they are the **guardian of the values of scrum** (courage, respect, openness, trust, commitment to which I add self-discipline and passion), they will refer to them as the navigation guides and reflection points.
  To round up this picture of navigator, coach, trainer and moderator we added the role of team **ambassador** towards the outside world, this involves a lot of communication, selling and again coaching skill to shape the ecosystem.
  I would like to finish by adding a few personal thought on the scrum master's role :

- I see them as a **catalyst** in the sense that they trigger reactions and enhance their intended effects on the team
- they are like a **gardener** that takes care of the environment and provide the conditions for the team to deliver and flourish
- they are **un-managers** in that they foster smooth collaboration which eliminates the need for processes and bureaucracy.
  If you are serious about your team performance you need full time coaches instead of part time secretaries.
  In the second part of this article I will presents some insights from the sports world your scrum masters can learn from on their way from good to great.

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