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PRODUKTMANAGEMENT



**VORSICHT
BAUSTELLE!**

- Version für die Studygroup -

BEGEISTERN SIE IHRE KUNDEN MIT
IHRER SOFTWARE

ÜBERSETZT AUS DEM ENGLISCHEN
VON KATJA BETHKE

Produktmanagement

Begeistern Sie Ihre Kunden mit Ihrer Software

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Produktmanager oder Produkt Owner?

Produktmanager oder ::Produkt Owner::? Welchen Begriff sollten wir nutzen? Sind das zwei verschiedene Rollen? Ergänzen sie sich? Überlappen sie sich? Ist es besser, wenn jede Rolle durch eine eigene Person eingenommen wird? Oder sollten beide Rollen von einer Person wahrgenommen werden?

Definitionen

Zuallererst, lassen Sie uns ein paar weitere Konzepte anschauen.

“Der **Produkt Owner** ist dafür verantwortlich, den Wert des Produkts und die Arbeit des Entwicklungsteams zu maximieren.” heißt es im Scrum Guide ¹ und weiter: “Der Produkt Owner ist eine Person, kein Komitee. Der Produkt Owner kann die Wünsche eines Komitee im Produktbacklog repräsentieren, aber wer auch immer die Priorität eines Produktbacklogeintrags ändern möchte, muss dies an den Produkt Owner adressieren.”

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“The **product owner** represents the ::stakeholders:: and the voice of the customer,” says the Wikipedia ². “who is accountable for ensuring that the team delivers value to the business. The product owner writes (or has the team write) customer-centric items (typically user stories), ranks and prioritizes them, and adds them to the product backlog. “

By the definitions displayed, it is clear the product owner's focus on:

- Managing backlog priorities based on inputs from stakeholders and clients; and
- Maximizing the deliveries from development team.

On the other hand, in the chapter [ref-label what-is-product-management], I've defined software product management as being:

Software product management is the function responsible for **all aspects of a software product**, during **all lifecycle of the product**, from its conception to the end of its life.

It is the function responsible for connecting the **company's strategy** and the **problems and needs of clients** using the software product, which must help, at the same time, (1) the company to accomplish its strategic goals, and (2) solve the problems and needs of clients.

In other words, the **product managers** need to know very well their business and what are the goals they intends to reach with it, as well as who is going to use the software and what are the goals their users intends to reach by doing so. Based on it, the product managers define how their software is going to be.

¹The Scrum Guide <http://www.scrumguides.org/docs/scrumguide/v1/scrum-guide-us.pdf>

²Product owner, according to Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrum_\(software_development\)#Product_Owner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrum_(software_development)#Product_Owner)

On one hand, the definitions of **product owner** are strongly focused on the process, meaning they prioritize the backlog and maximize the production of the development team; while the definition of **product management** is strongly focused on results, meaning they prioritize the software goals for its business and for its users.

The definitions of **product owner** focus on the process, for all agile methodologies focus on the software development process. The Agile Manifesto itself (<http://agilemanifesto.org/>) states that 'We are discovering better ways to build software'. Notice that the concern is about discovering better ways of building it, and not discovering ways of building better software. Is a subtle but important difference from the grammar's point of view.

While 'discovering better ways of building software' is focused on the process of developing software, when we talk about 'discovering ways of building better software' we immediately focus on the results of software development: the software! That's why my definition of **product management** focuses on the software and the goals of its business and its users, while the definitions of **product owner** focus how to improve the software development process.

So they are different roles?

Shorts answer: NO. Although they have distinct focus, it is valid to say that they are two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other. In other words, we can't focus on improving the process of software development without thinking of improving the software that is being built; the same way that is not possible to think of improving it without investing on improving the process of software development.

I've interviewed dozens of IT directors, and asked them how they design their software development organization. The results: there are **product owners** who are a part of the software development team, and responsible for managing the backlog and detailing the items of this backlog; and there are the **product managers**, who are part of the development team, and are responsible for the software business view and give to the team great epics which will be detailed by a **product owner**.

At Locaweb³, we chose for using the terms **product manager** and **product owner** as synonyms, because, as said earlier, for us they are two sides of the same coin. You can't prioritize the backlog and maximize the deliveries of the development team if you don't have a profound knowledge on the goals of the business and the users of the software. In addition, to build the software that meets both the goals of the business and of the users, you must prioritize the backlog and optimize the development process.

Joca Torres, the book author, has been working at Locaweb since 2000. The company has provided him an amazing place for his learning about product management. Founded in 1998, Locaweb is a pioneer and leader in IT hosting services in Brazil. The company has over 200.000 clients and 500.000 hosted domains, in addition to partnerships with more than 14.000 developers. Locaweb services are designed for everyone from the common user to major corporations through three business verticals: INTERNET, which offers the services of website hosting, domain registration, hosting reseller, e-mail services and e-mail marketing, e-commerce and infrastructure for audio and video streaming; DATA CENTER, offers Cloud Computing corporate solutions, dedicated servers and vault room, in addition to specialized IT outsourcing services. The area has over 3,500 clients, including companies of all sizes; COMMUNICATION, directed at the VoIP telephone service offer through Virtual PABX and Virtual Call Center services, currently with over 3,000 extensions installed.

³Locaweb official site, <http://www.locaweb.com.br/>

One side of the coin is the development team's *what* and the other side is the *how*. One doesn't exist without the other.

So, if you're in a company where the product manager and the product owner roles are divided in two distinct people, you must keep on reading. The next session explores your situation.

What to do if your company has product managers and product owners?

I know some companies that operate with this role division between two distinct individuals and that, by reading this book you're now thinking you have staff to spare. :-O

Please don't. Very likely, some other role is missing in your software product development team. My recommendation in such cases:

- **Don't go radical:** don't go on firing people thinking that there are overlapping roles. It is necessary a more careful look because other roles might be missing in your organization.
- **Product marketing:** probably there is a lack of people taking care of the product marketing, someone who has complimentary goals but different from the product manager. In the chapter [ref-label product-marketing], I'll write about the difference between product manager and product marketing manager.
- **Analyze what is being done today:** it is probable that your product manager, sometimes called business manager, is doing more stuff than a product marketing manager. In this case, it is interesting that this person starts to work as an actual product marketer and leave the product manager activities for the product owner eventually. This one, thus, can take care of the product management.
- **Use a new product to experiment the new role division:** another way to experiment this new role division and responsibilities is to use them only in a new product. When you start to develop a new product, experiment this new role division and see how it goes. If it works, you can unroll it to other existent products.

Now that we understand a little bit more about what is a software product manager, let's see which are the main characteristics of this role.