



GLOBAL SCRUM GATHERING<sup>SM</sup>

# VIENNA

28-30 OCTOBER 2019

 **Scrum**  
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GLOBAL SCRUM GATHERING<sup>SM</sup>

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**Making Product Ownership Explicit –  
Improve transparency of empowerment to foster Environmental Safety**



# Let's start with a story !



# A pretty common story



This is Julia...



She has been working for her new company, as **Chief Product Officer (CPO)** for several months now.

Her company is a **leading media group**  
- in the middle of its “digital transformation”.





# A pretty common story

Every day...

Julia notices that the  
**Product Owners** and the  
whole Scrum teams **work hard**  
to strive for **company's success**.



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# A pretty common story



Over time...

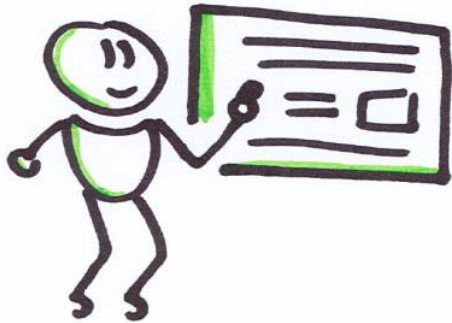
Julia notices that her Product Owners are seeking conversation about very operational product questions more and more frequently.

...and they want Julia to take these decisions.



# A pretty common story

But Julia has a lot of experience as agile product leader. So she sees the responsibility to make this kind of product decisions in the Scrum teams.

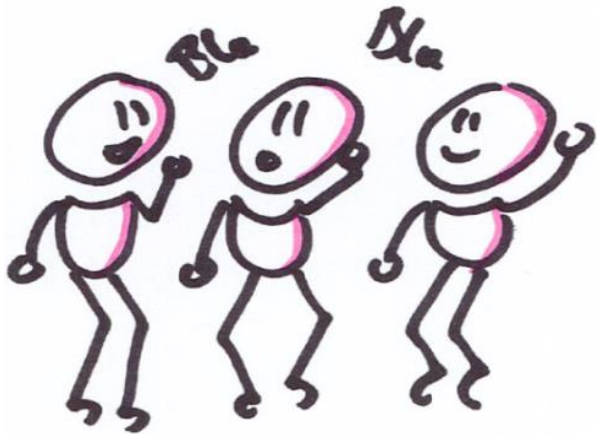


So she tries to explain to them again and again that as **product owners** they have to **take such decisions** together with their Scrum teams.



# A pretty common story

Nevertheless, the **behavior** of the product owners is **not changing** in the coming weeks.



They complain to their managers that they **feel unsafe** to take these product decisions and see this responsibility more at Julia.

They prefer to **focus on delivering output** by developing solutions with the Scrum teams.





# A pretty common story



As Julia doesn't know how to help herself any other way, **she makes the product decisions** after all.

Hence, the teams' **courage and commitment** to take ownership for the success of the products is more and more suffering.

Finally, Julia becomes aware:  
**My teams don't take  
Product Ownership!**



# Our Understanding of...

## Product Ownership

*Taking **responsibility** for the product  
in your own **context**.*

*And to **know** and **decide** at all times,  
which is the most **valuable** thing,  
on which we work with **focus**.*



# But how to get there?



# Will the Scrum Guide help?



Julia is asking herself if the **Scrum Guide** would help.

Does it say anything specific about the following questions:

- ... who should make **product decisions**?
- ... **product responsibility** in general?
- ... or even a definition of **product ownership**?





# Will the Scrum Guide help?



The term “ownership” does not even appear in the Scrum Guide!

...only little is said about the Product Owner:

“...is responsible for **maximizing the value of the product** resulting from work of the Development Team.”

“... is the sole person responsible for **managing the Product Backlog**.  
(...) may do the above work, or **have the Development Team do it.**”

**“For the Product Owner to succeed,  
the entire organization must  
respect his or her decisions.”**



# Will the Scrum Guide help?



So, **product ownership** and further specific areas of **product decisions** are **not explicitly defined** in the Scrum Guide.

**But that's ok!**

... cause it's just a **framework**  
... organizational implementation  
must be **context-related**

**So let's take a look how product ownership  
is usually lived in organizations.**



# Context-related issues we saw



Situations we've experienced	Product Ownership	...has impact on:	
		Outcome	Scrum values
CEO made product decisions for the teams	was <u>not</u> clarified →	Simple decision mechanism for complex problems: bottleneck	<i>Courage</i> of the teams suffered
PO's did not feel in charge for roadmap decisions	was <u>not</u> clarified →	Slow decision making processes in product org	No real <i>commitment</i> of PO's for product strategy
Large number of Epics were tried to be develop in parallel; little was finished	after it has been clarified →	Improved flow efficiency & reduced time-to-market	Shift to <i>focus</i> on the most valuable features
Collaboration between int. PO and ext. develop. team	after it has been clarified →	Better product decisions due to more product ownership by the development team	increased <i>openness</i> & <i>courage</i> in the ext. team

# So is it clarified in organizations?

From our experience: it is **NOT!**

Usually the responsibility for **Product Ownership** is **not explicitly agreed** and therefore **not transparent**

... leads to **uncertainty**

... poorly defined collaboration between the different roles leads to **misunderstandings**



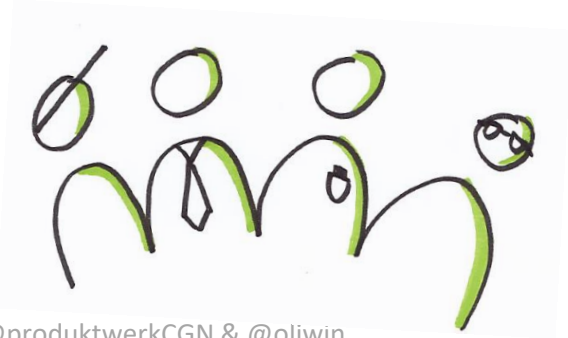
**We got curious: Why is it never talked about? How to handle that problem?**





# Our basic Thesis

**Product Ownership  
is the responsibility  
of the entire Scrum team!**



@produktwerkCGN & @oliwin



# Our Assumption



**Decision-making responsibility  
must be made explicit  
between all actors in the  
specific organizational context.**



**This transparency of empowerment  
fosters environmental safety.**



# Our Solution

We have created a **model** that triggers valuable communication for **clarifying product ownership**:

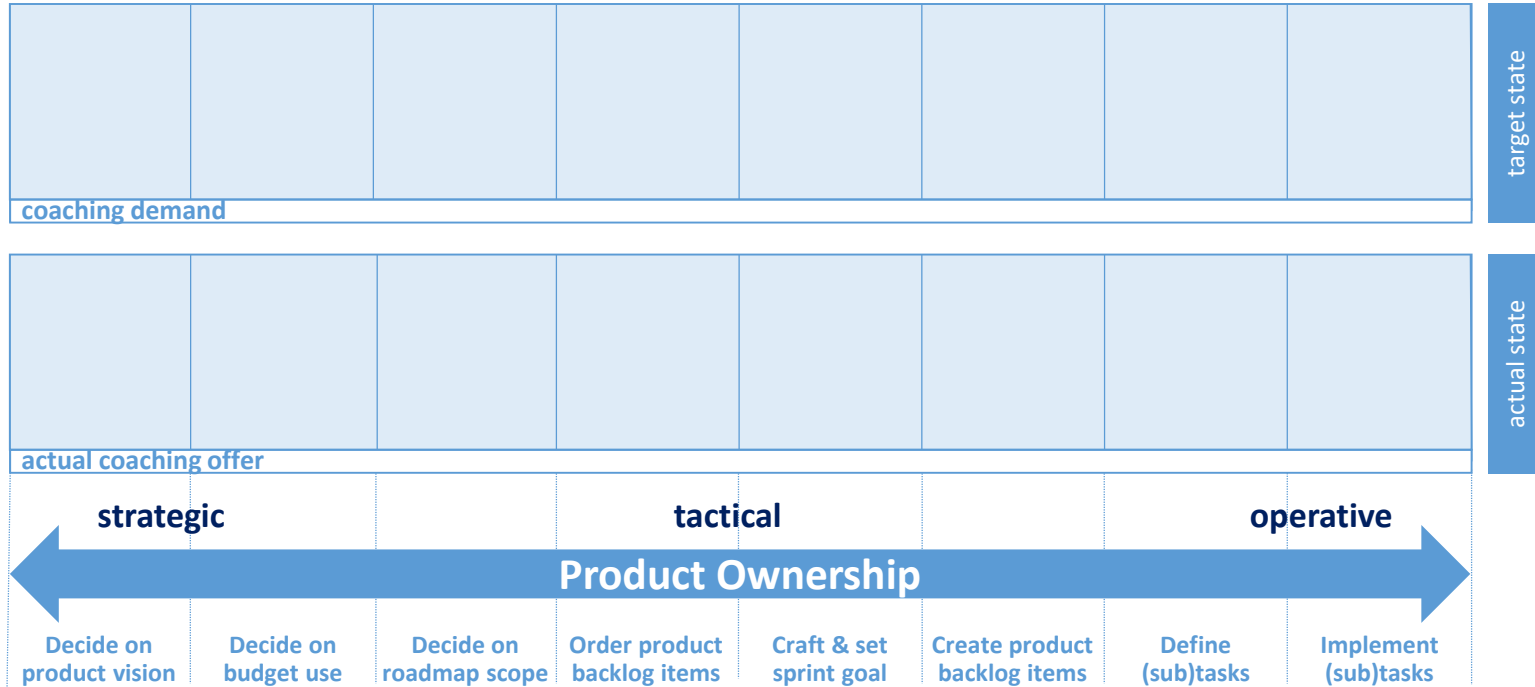
## POEM – Product Ownership Evolution Model

### POEM

- ... makes Product Ownership **explicit**
- ... improves **transparency** of authorization
- ... fosters **psychological safety**



# Product Ownership Evolution Model (POEM)



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# Apply POEM in team session



After getting to know POEM at **SGVIE19** ;-), Julia immediately calls her product owners together.

Everyone fill in their views of the **current situation** in POEM - as well as their individual expectations for a desired **future state** of decision responsibilities.

The **comparison** of their assessments immediately uncovers **misunderstandings** and a great **conversation** starts...



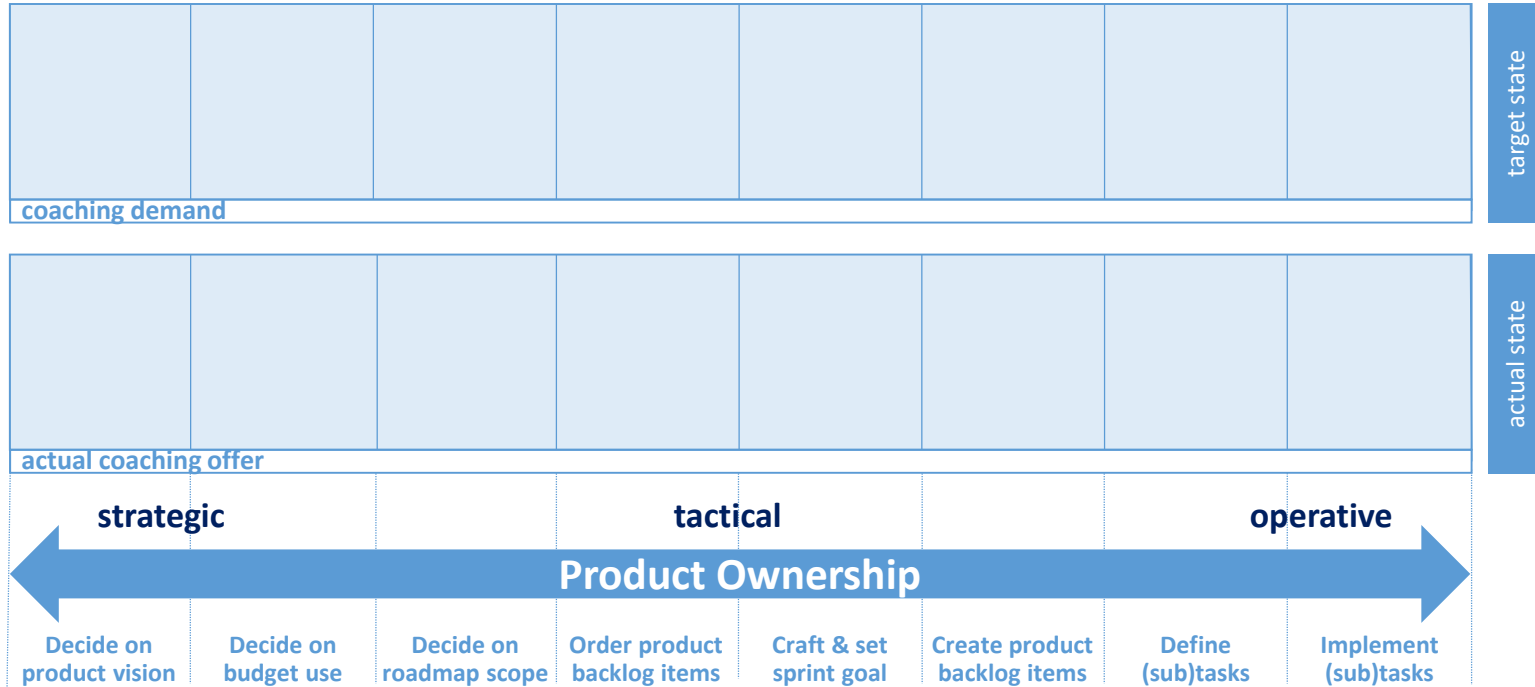
# POEM in detail



**But how POEM  
works exactly?**



# Product Ownership Evolution Model (POEM)

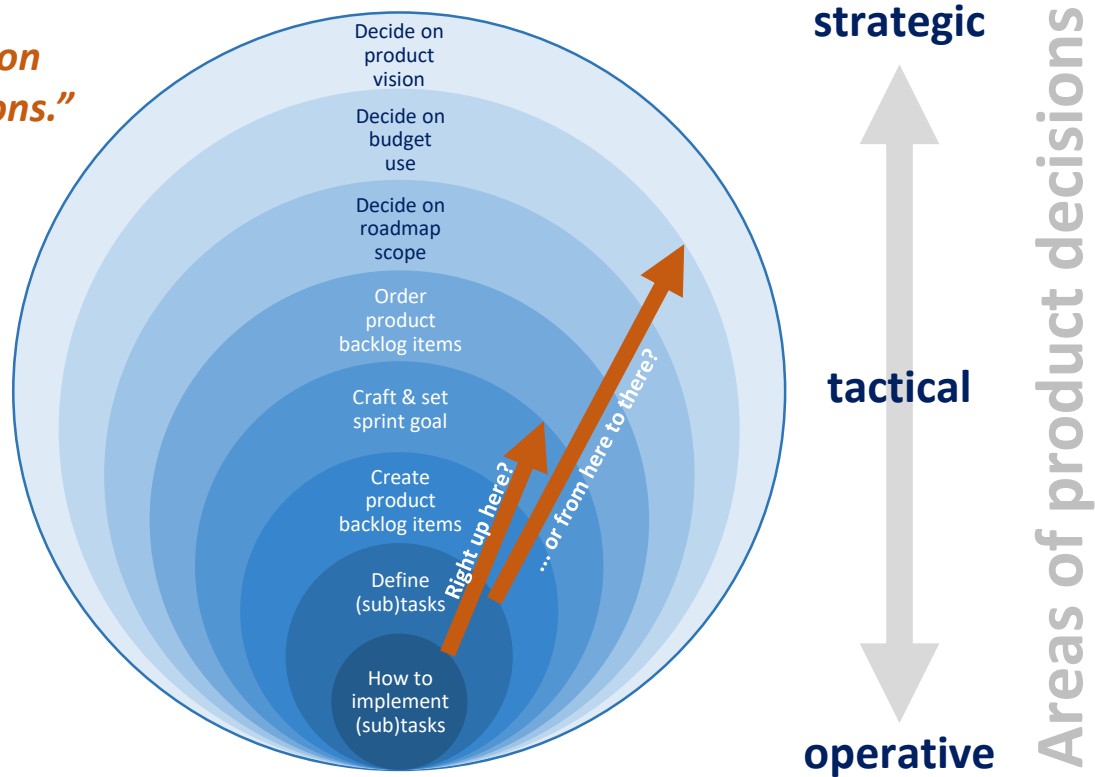


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# Which tasks can the different roles finally decide on?

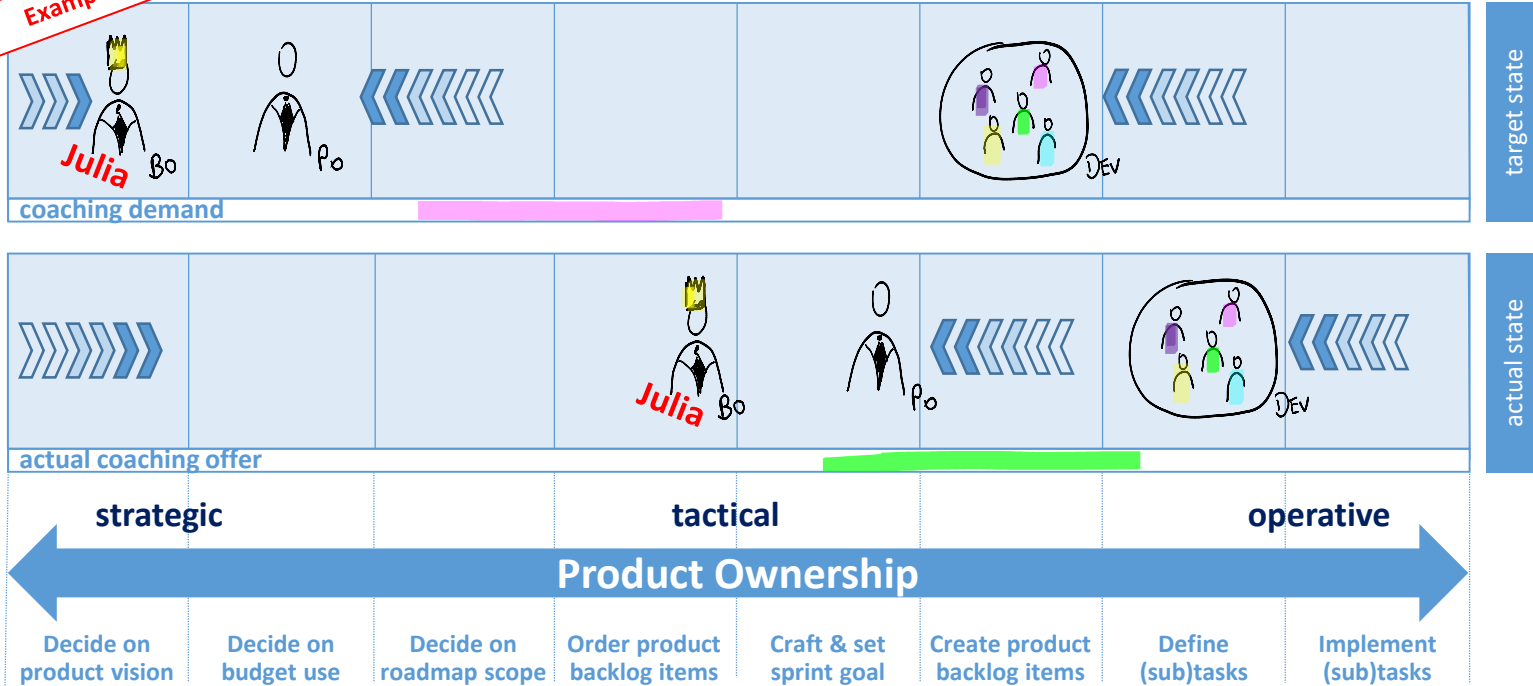
*“For the Product Owner to succeed, the entire organization must respect his or her decisions.”*





# Product Ownership Evolution Model (POEM)

Example



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# How to facilitate POEM

1. You should **explain** the POEM template only very **briefly**.  
Don't allow deeper questions about the levels (may create bias).
2. Let **everyone fill out** POEM template in silence (actual & target state)
3. Now hang all results next to each other:



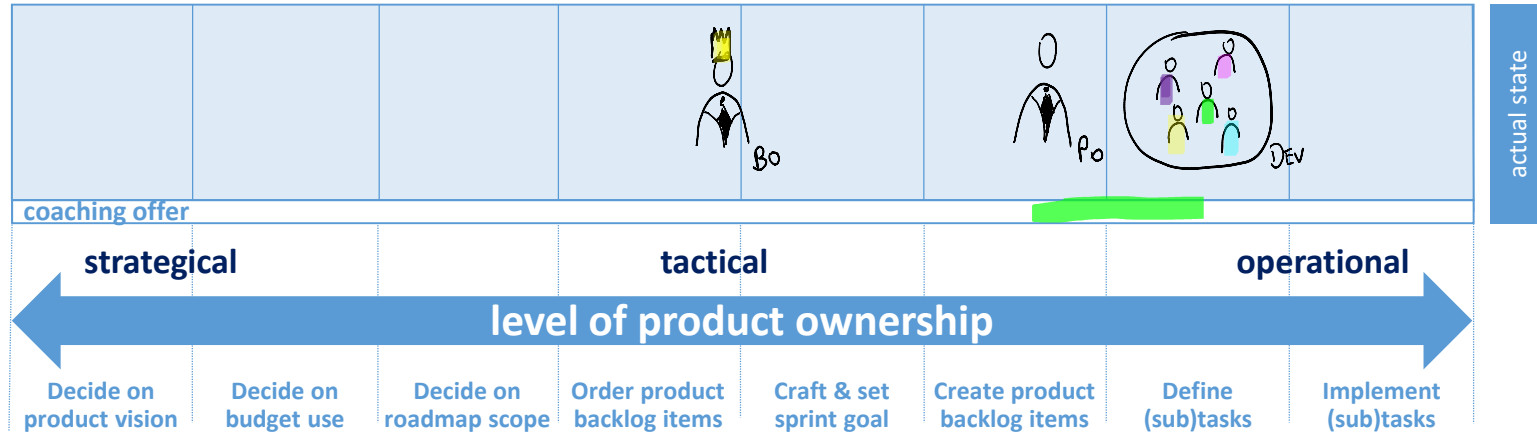
4. Let them **all explain their individual sheet** (one after the other).
5. ...misunderstandings become obvious and  
**a wonderful discussion is kicked off!**

# Our Learnings

**Some of  
our observations...**



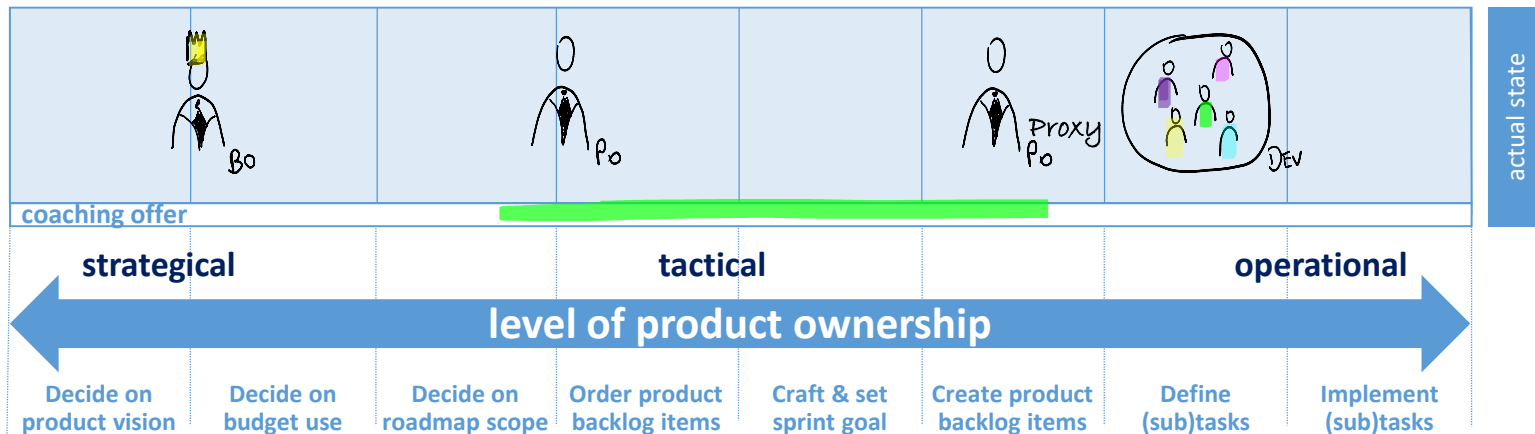
# Typical pattern A: Who is Product Owner here?



## Reflection:

*"Isn't the business owner the true product owner here?"*

# Typical pattern B: Product Owner proxy

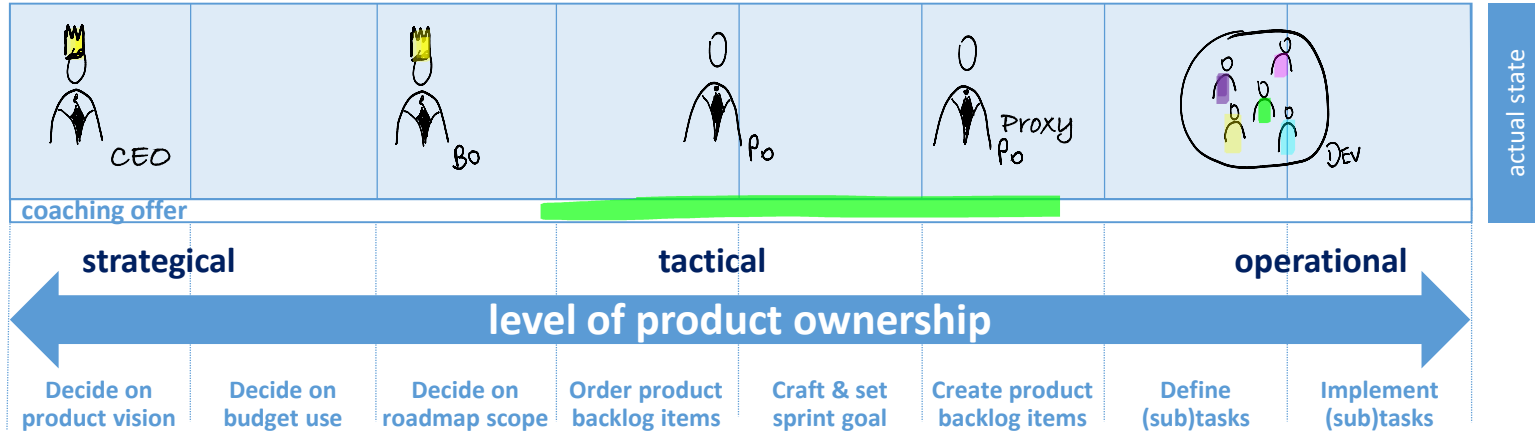


## Reflection:

*"Why not integrate the proxy PO into the cross-functional team?"*



# Typical pattern C: Kind of waterfall...



## Reflection:

*"Flow efficiency and understanding of requirements suffering?"*

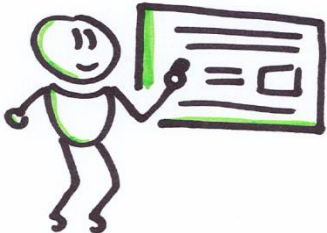
# POEM application scenarios

**Self-Assessment** of your Scrum implementation

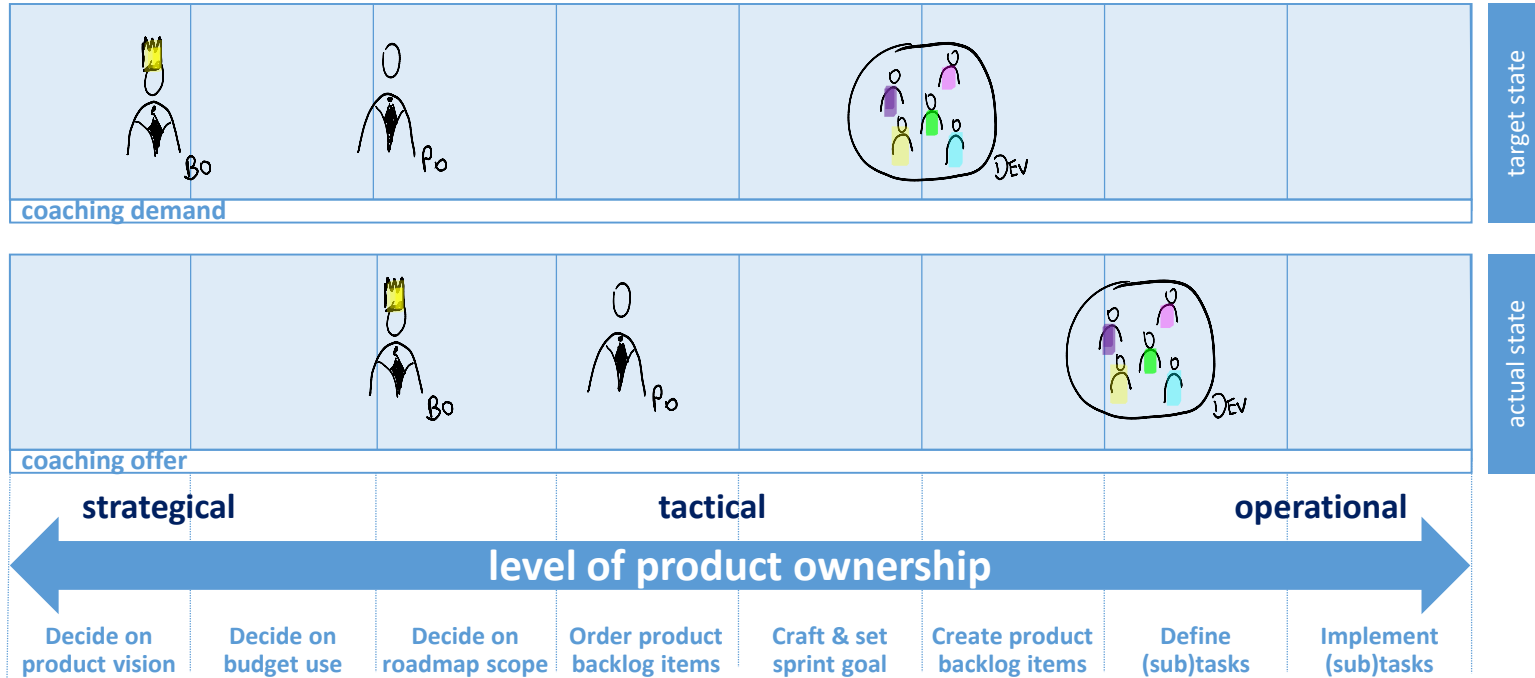
**Recruiting** for the Product Owner role

**Development dialog** with Product Owners

**Reorganization** / Scaling / Restructuring



# Self-assessment of PO's from our survey



\* Data basis: own survey in the context of workshops & conferences / period July 2017 to March 2018 in Germany

# We think that



## **Additional roles**

(in addition to PO, development team, BO)

**are symptoms of lower agility**  
and increased classic organizational  
understanding.



# We think that

Many companies make large  
**“organizational debts”**  
when they introduce Scrum.



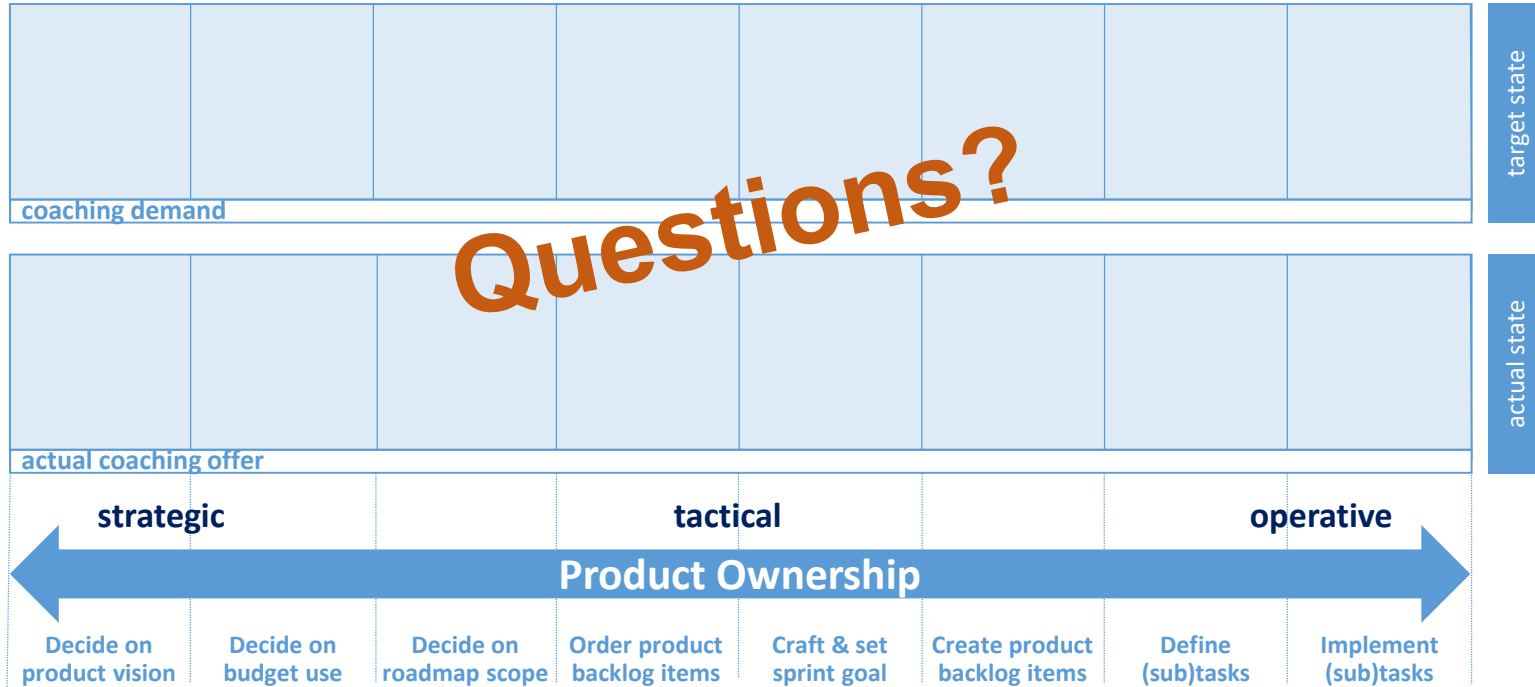


# We think that

**Development Team has to  
move first to get the Product  
Owner moving.**



# Product Ownership Evolution Model (POEM)



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# Download → Use → Feedback!



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Feedback welcome to improve the model

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Die  
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# Questions?

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