DASA DEVOPS PRODUCT OWNER

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DASA

® DEVOPS AGILE
SKILLS ASSOCIATION

Arjan Woertman is the Chairman of the DASA Editorial Board. The editorial board is responsible for the portfolio strategy for DASA, and manages updates and translations to existing qualification programs. Arjan operates as the COO for ITpreneurs, one of the DASA Authorized Courseware Partners.

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A COMPELLING JOURNEY FOR PRODUCT OWNERS

The DevOps Agile Skills Association (DASA) was founded in 2016 to support organizations in their transformational journey to DevOps. DASA advocates a team-based approach to DevOps and offers a set of principles, a competency model and certification scheme designed to support high performing teams.

Many of the roots of DevOps come from Agile. The principles, values, and methods practiced within Agile are core to DASA's approach for generating business value rapidly for organizations. In the original Agile / Scrum approach, there are three roles defined for a Scrum team, the Product Owner, the Scrum Master, and Team members. As organizations adopt DASA DevOps, the scope of responsibilities for their teams expand and includes a broader set of responsibilities, a different set of stakeholders and a more wholesome perspective on the lifecycle of a product or service.

This white paper will discuss how the role of the Product Owner expands and evolves. We will delve into the expanding role and responsibilities of the Product Owners as well as explaining the exciting career path that's available to them with DASA DevOps.

DASA'S APPROACH TO BUILDING HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

Two years after forming the DevOps Agile Skills Association the term DevOps is no longer ignored in the IT landscape. Organizations are realizing strategic benefits from IT and are delivering capabilities faster and cheaper. Today, Enterprises are capitalizing on Digital Business models as a crucial differentiator for driving business value and increasing customer satisfaction.

DASA was founded in 2016 to answer critical questions that enterprises were facing: "What does DevOps mean for my IT organization, my IT people?", "How do I prepare them to work in a DevOps way?". In essence, their real question was what are the benefits to my organization, and my customers and how do I do it?

To answer these question, DASA started by looking at the people who make IT work, the IT professionals. Despite all the technology used, IT is a people business, and improving IT services and designing the capabilities to succeed with DevOps requires the creativity and abilities of skilled IT professionals.

DASA believes in multi-skilled team members who are working together to get the job done. We provide a competence model with 12 capabilities (8 knowledge areas and 4 skills areas). These are capabilities required to design, develop, deploy, and maintain IT services, ranging from Programming, Business Analysis, to Teambuilding. The DASA competence model provides a rating from (1) Novice to (2) Competent, (3) Proficient, (4) Expert, and the (5) Master level.

Together, the team needs to master all 12 capabilities, which will provide a mixture of skills for each of the 'Expert' levels. Not everyone is required to be at the 'Expert' level for every individual capability, but a combination of team members with their unique skills should ensure they reach the Expert level.

The DASA Qualification Program validates mastery of the DevOps competence areas. We provide certification exams and certify individuals who master the exam criteria defined for the exams.

1. Novice / 2. Competent / 3. Proficient / 4. Expert / 5. Master

DASA DevOps Fundamentals tests professionals to be at (2), or 'competent' for all 12 capabilities. Following the Fundamentals, three Professional programs lead to the DASA DevOps Certified Professional designation. Create and Deliver, Enable and Scale, and Specify and Verify. Every one of these three programs covers four capabilities at level 3, Proficient. The competence model and the supporting certification scheme provide the ingredients that allow DevOps teams to become successful.

DASA does not offer programs at Level 4, Expert, or 5, Master. We believe team members are able to achieve these levels through experience, or by partaking in other specialized training programs.

THE MYTHICAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY FOR IT PROFESSIONALS

Great, now that expectations are clear for DevOps teams, and a certification program is in place to check whether teams possess the relevant capabilities. The question that now needs answering...

How do development and operations professionals transition to DevOps?

LAUNCHING AGILE PROFESSIONALS INTO DEVOPS

BUILDING AGILE MINDED DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

Agile Software Development has its roots in Toyota Production Systems (more generically known as Lean Production) that transformed the automobile industry starting in the 1950's. It provided a rapid development method as an alternative to the traditional waterfall development which became popular in the 1990s. A result of this movement resulted in the creation of the Agile Manifesto in 2001. Unlike Waterfall, Agile emphasizes iterative development or building software in smaller chunks. Teams work

in short cycles, referred to as Sprints in Scrum, one of the most popular forms of Agile adopted today.

It took the automobile industry a few decades to fully adjust and adapt to Lean Production. The software industry only started with an Agile development approach (based on Lean principles), at the beginning of this century, and has a long way to go.

The most used application of Agile in software development is Scrum. Scrum provides a framework that allows organizations to deal with complex challenges in a simple way. It focuses on collaboration in an iterative development process.

The Scrum team comprises a Scrum Master, Product Owner, and the Development Team. These teams are cross-functional and organize their work. Teams have all the competencies relevant to managing the development of the software development process and are not dependent on others for this. Scrum teams have a lot in common with the DevOps teams as described above, and the steps from Agile Scrum to DevOps is not very large.

DevOps is an evolution of the application of Lean and Agile. Besides making software development teams faster, the purpose of DevOps is to make software developers agiler while also making operations more responsive to customer demand. To achieve this is you must have a strong focus on automation and by creating fully autonomous cross-functional and responsible teams that include all relevant skills required to design, develop and deploy services.

Let's have a look at the various roles in an Agile team, how they relate to DevOps, as well as what a career path looks like for Agile professionals.

THE PRODUCT OWNER

The Product Owner is responsible for maximizing the value of the product resulting from the work of the Development Team. The Product Owner is the sole person responsible for managing the product backlog (one of the Scrum Artifacts). The Product Owner needs to develop a vision of what the product is all about, and they do this by breaking it into logical chunks (backlog items).

The Product Owner prioritizes the backlog and motivates the team with the definite and concise goals they need to achieve. The Product Owner is typically a person with a business background or a key system user. Core traits of a Product Owner are communication and business savviness. The Product Owner is not a team or a committee, but it is a single person, and the development team respects the decisions made by the Product Owner.

The Product Owner is the sole person responsible for managing the product backlog.

PROFILE OF A PRODUCT OWNER

NAME

James

ROLE

Product Owner

EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree

EXPERIENCE

– 3–5 years in product management, or business analysis
– Experience working at the intersection between business and IT
– Understanding of the Software Development Lifecycle

CORE SKILLS

– Ability to prioritize
– Influence others
– Demonstrate leadership
– Strong communication skills
– Business savvy
– Able to articulate well
– Analytical
– Has the mandate from the business
– Slightly impatient

CAREER TRACK FOR A PRODUCT OWNER

1. BUILDING STRONG PRODUCT LEADERS: THE DASA DEVOPS PRODUCT OWNER CERTIFICATION

Product Owners typically have a business background, where they are operating as a business analyst, or in a product management role. They usually have 3–5 years of experience; product owners could also have a certification in Business Analysis, Project Management, or Requirements Engineering before they entered into the role of a Product Owner in an Agile team.

A product owner typically follows a dedicated Product Owner training program to understand how to manage the process around user story creation, prioritization, and creation of the product vision.

When a Scrum team expands its scope to cover the full lifecycle of a product, this clearly impacts the role of the Product Owner. The end-to-end responsibility for a product or service means that the responsibility does not end at the shipping dock, but it spans across the entire lifecycle of a product. The term 'Product Lifecycle Manager' was coined to clarify the scope better.
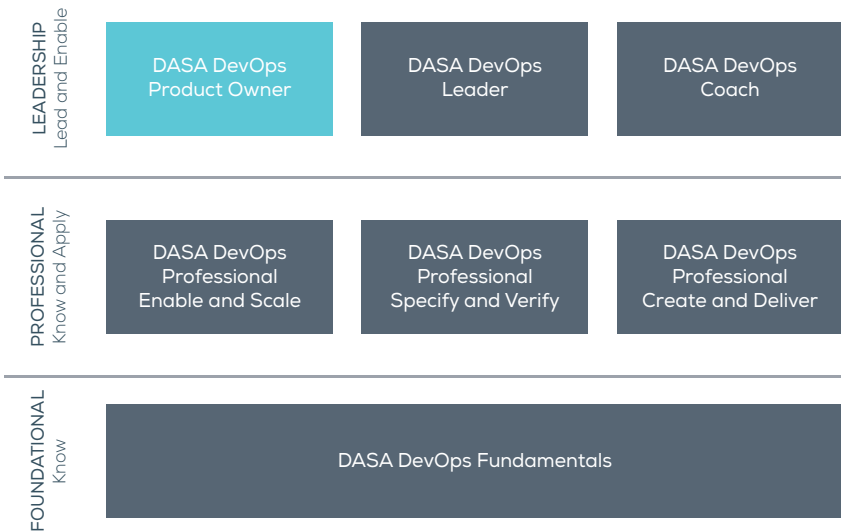
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Well, the Product Owner is not just responsible for prioritizing the development backlog anymore. All of a sudden, incidents and managing the performance of the product in production get added to the mix. The Product Owner does not just need to understand the market well, he or she also needs to now continuously engage with users to know if the product is performing well.

HOW THE PRODUCT OWNER ROLE IS EXPANDING

- The Product Owner now has a systemic responsibility for the entire lifecycle of the product
- The Product Owner has to deal with a mixed set of requirements - ranging from features for future releases as well as incidents on the current version.
- Has to engage with a larger group of stakeholders, and keep them all motivated in building the right things.

These altered dynamics, and therefore the changing role of the Product Owner is why DASA has introduced the DASA DevOps Product Owner certification. This Leadership program is targeted at helping the product owner perform the key activities that belong to the product owner role. This program does not go into detail about the specific activities and tasks that the product owner needs to perform but provides tools and guidance for managing the job within the DevOps team.

LEADERSHIP Lead and Enable	DASA DevOps Product Owner	DASA DevOps Leader	DASA DevOps Coach
PROFESSIONAL Know and Apply	DASA DevOps Professional Enable and Scale	DASA DevOps Professional Specify and Verify	DASA DevOps Professional Create and Deliver
FOUNDATIONAL Know	DASA DevOps Fundamentals		

This program extends traditional Product Owner programs. It covers the broader scope of the Product Owner role in a team. For certified Product Owners, the DASA DevOps Product Owner includes a lot of overlap, as the complete software development life cycle is discussed, but it may still be beneficial, as it deepens Product Owners' knowledge. The program is a strong refresher that covers the essential components of the Scrum process, but it extends it now and explains how the role evolves through DevOps.

For new Product Owners, the program introduces the core concepts of a Product Owner at large, which makes a traditional Product Owner certification redundant.

DASA DevOps Fundamentals is a recommended prerequisite for Product Owners as it addresses the core concepts of DASA DevOps and the team-based approach to DevOps, but it is not a requirement.

2. THE JOURNEY TO BECOME A PRODUCT OWNER: DASA DEVOPS PROFESSIONAL SPECIFY AND VERIFY

The DASA DevOps Product Owner is a leadership program, that talks about the process and the effective management of activities. The Product Owner works with his/her team of DevOps Professionals to deliver business value.

The DASA DevOps Professional (Specify and Verify) program is an ideal program for aspiring leaders and those who are keen to take on the Product Owner role in the team. In DASA's approach to DevOps, team members are multiskilled engineers. The three DASA DevOps Professional programs help professionals to develop themselves in one of three significant capacities.

The Professional program with specialization (Specify and Verify) builds the capabilities to become Proficient in the following four DASA Knowledge Areas: Business Value Optimization, Business Analysis, Architecture & Design, and Test Specification.

We see that these areas are focused on ensuring that the requirements of the customers are fully understood and translated into the team so that these requirements are integrated into the IT service. The fundamental responsibility of a DevOps Professional in the Specify and Verify domain is ultimately ensuring that the design of the service is 'future-proof,' both technologically and functionally. And that the ability to test any new functionality is optimally facilitated by test specification that takes both the customer usage of the system and need for speed into account.

Once the Professional masters these capabilities and chooses to become a Product Owner, he or she benefits from DASA's Product Owner program to learn to manage the process and use the relevant tools to do this.

IN CONCLUSION

Agile has been around for years, and many professionals have been trained and certified according to various Agile or Scrum certification programs. DASA recognizes and appreciates it, and this white paper is designed to establish a direct connection to that heritage.

Besides building a career path, and connection to the most relevant certification programs in the market today DASA is proud to offer the DASA DevOps Product Owner certifications as part of its certification program. This certification has been designed for Product Owners and is essential for those interested in becoming a member of a DevOps team. Our focus on the DASA DevOps Competence model ensures that Product Owners will have a career path and the knowledge and skill sets required to succeed in organizations moving to DevOps.

JOIN OUR GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Do you or your organization want to join other leading IT thought leaders from industry, software, training and consulting organizations working cooperatively to build the most open, comprehensive platform available in the market for DevOps and Agile Skills Development? If so, you can become a DASA Forerunner, Training or Courseware Partner.

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