Product Owner

Basic information

Band: 2.2
Job family: DDaT
Terms: Permanent
Location: Cheltenham

Reports to: Lead Product Owner
Direct Reports: None
Team: Product Engineering
Business unit: Digital & Data
Created/Reviewed date: July 2020

Job purpose:

The Product Owner (PO) is a member of the agile delivery team. They are assigned to one/two products and are responsible for defining stories and prioritising the team backlog to streamline the execution of priorities while maintaining the conceptual and technical integrity of the features or components for the product.

The Product Owner has a significant role in maximizing the value produced by the team and by ensuring that stories meet the user's needs and comply with the 'Definition of Done'.

This role has significant relationships and responsibilities outside the local team, including working with Product Management, Architecture, Customers, Service Owners and other key stakeholders.

Key accountabilities:

- Work with the Lead Product Manager to prepare for Program Increment (PI) planning, updating the team backlog and reviewing this against the program vision, roadmap and prepare content and presentations.
- During PI planning facilitate the defining of stories and provide the clarifications necessary to assist the agile delivery team with their estimates and sequencing, help them to determine team PI objectives for the upcoming PI.
- Working with the Solution Architect, be primarily responsible for building, editing and maintaining the team backlog. Prioritise backlog items based on their user value, time and other team dependencies determined in the PI planning meeting and refine these during the PI, coordinating any dependencies across other POs.
- Elaborate backlog items into user stories for implementation and support others in the agile delivery team to do this, ensuring proper flow.

- Collaborate with the agile delivery team to detail stories with acceptance criteria and examples in the form of acceptance tests.
- Work with the agile delivery team to agree on accepted story completion, including validating them against the acceptance criteria, is appropriately tested and complies with the Definition of Done.
- Work with the Release Train Engineer define metrics and measurements to manage delivery against and to provide high-quality reporting, ensuring that this is appropriate, and provides timely, transparent progress against the plan.
- Be responsible for the quality of the product, focussing primarily on its fitness for use.
- Work with the Technical Team Leads to identify areas of strength and weakness across the agile delivery team, to help promote opportunities for improvement and development.
- Collaborate with the Solution Architect to understand the scope and challenges of upcoming enabler work and assist in decision making and sequencing of the critical technology infrastructures that will host new business functionality.
- Bring together the agile delivery team with other stakeholders to provide team demos (show and tell). Participate in iteration retrospectives, assisting the team in gathering insight and feedback to improve their processes, and be an active member in Agile Release Train (ART) workshops.
- Work with the product management team to collectively understand the customer by leveraging design tools such as personas, empathy maps, customer journey map, story maps and other tools that support customer exploration.

Skills, Qualifications & Experience:

- Significant experience of working in agile (Lean-Agile Frameworks) including scaled agile framework (SAFe) to deliver high quality digital products on time.
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the product vision and goals and can communicate these to development teams. Is able to make links and bridge gaps to ensure that the business has a complete solution when developing and continuously improving its products.
- Has sufficient technical awareness to understand proposed designs and technical approaches, as outlined by technology professionals, to make informed decisions and be relatable and credible to them.
- Has strong communication skills and is able to manage the expectations of a range of customers, stakeholders and influences their decision making.
- Is able to translate technical language/terminology and make this relatable to wider audiences.
- Demonstrates customer focus and creates clarity to enable others to make decisions.
- Has experience in the development of product/market strategies.
- Understands and draws upon business analysis and project management techniques to drive continuous improvement throughout UCAS' services, using well informed market intelligence and research.
- Is proactive in managing risks and blockers to ensure product development delivers within scope and in a timely way.
- Demonstrates agility and thinks creatively when managing product delivery. Combines resources to investigate and analyse insight to find solutions for product teams.
- Experience of working with third-party, offshore/onshore technical delivery team resource is desirable.
- Champions diversity and inclusion, celebrate differences and ensures that the team appreciates the value of individual contribution
Demonstrates proactiveness in keeping relevant industry and technical knowledge up to date.

This role profile sets out the scope and main duties of the post at the date when it was drawn up. Such details may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the level of the post. All UCAS employees are expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities attached to their role and may be asked to perform other duties, which reasonably correspond to the general character of their role and their level of responsibility.

Our values in action:
Customer-focused – We understand what our customers want, and we act on their changing needs.
Collaborative – We collectively create an engaging and positive work environment.
Accountable – We take ownership of our individual and organisational performance.
Service excellence – We realise, grow, and maximise our potential.
Trusted – Individuals are trusted to make informed decisions and take appropriate risks.