

Functional Silos in a Cross-functional Scrum Team: A Study on How to Kill the Silo Mindset and Achieve a Fully Cross Functional Team for Excellence in Agile Project Delivery

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Abstract : Scrum framework is built upon emphasises on self-management and cross-functionality around which the framework is built upon. However, in reality, many organisations that adapt scrum are having functional structures and hierarchy. In such cases, the scrum teams are built with a mixture of people from different functionalities to deliver specific products and projects. For instance, every scrum team would be having a designer, developer or tester, etc.; who will make their own contribution to an increment. This results in people centric dependencies for delivering an increment and thus creating bottlenecks at certain times. This paper presents in detail how functional silos are a challenge to the scrum teams and hinder the incremental deliver of value to customers. The study has been conducted with 14 individuals from the software industry from different functional departments, and the findings summarize that functional silos are naturally formed due to the organizational dynamics and hierarchy and the mindset of being confined within the silos is detrimental to the fundamental values of agile and scrum. The paper also sheds light on what the individuals propose to overcome the silo mindset within the scrum team and focus on continuous improvement in delivery excellence.

Keywords : agile, scrum, cross-functional, functional silos

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