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Tips on How to Get Your First Scrum Position

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Introduction

Being a Scrum professional can be a fun, exciting, and very rewarding career. Being able to look back on a successful project and think, “Look at what I helped the team create” is very satisfying. But, how do you get a first job as a Scrum Master if you don’t yet have experience?

[This guide is part of the Scrum Career Compass \(Turning Vision into a Fulfilling Scrum Career\)](#)

In this guide, I will choose a Scrum Master as an example and I’ll share seven tips that can help you get that first Scrum Master position even if you don’t have any previous experience.

Highlight any Relevant Experience

Even if you don’t have formal Scrum Master experience, there may still be opportunities to highlight relevant Scrum or Agile-related skills on your resume or LinkedIn profile. Employers value transferable skills, so think creatively about how your past experiences align with the principles of Scrum and Agile.

Think Beyond Titles

Scrum isn’t just about certifications or titles—it’s about mindset and behaviors. Reflect on your previous roles: Did you participate in processes that resemble Agile practices? For instance:

- Were you part of a team that held regular check-ins, even without calling them "daily standups"?
- Did you collaborate closely with cross-functional teams to deliver results iteratively?
- Did you ever use visual tools like whiteboards, sticky notes, or task lists to track progress?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you likely already possess foundational Agile habits that can strengthen your candidacy as a Scrum Master.

A Real-Life Example

Early in my career, I worked as a project manager leading a highly traditional, waterfall-style project. The deadline was aggressive, and we knew success depended on flawless execution over the final month. To stay aligned and ensure nothing slipped through the cracks, my team decided to meet daily outside the boss's office.

We started using sticky notes to list tasks and track their status—essentially creating a rudimentary version of what we now know as a Scrum board or Kanban board. While this approach wasn't labeled "Agile" at the time (and predated modern frameworks like Scrum), it embodied key Agile principles such as transparency, collaboration, and adaptability.

Fast-forward to today, if I were applying for my first Scrum Master role based on that experience, I'd confidently include something like this on my resume:

"Facilitated daily standup meetings for a high-stakes project, utilizing visual task-tracking methods akin to modern Scrum boards to enhance team coordination and meet tight deadlines."

The key here is framing your experience in terms of outcomes and alignment with Agile values. Even though we didn't call our meetings "scrums," they served the same purpose: fostering communication, identifying blockers, and keeping the team focused on shared goals. Highlighting this kind of initiative demonstrates resourcefulness, leadership, and a natural inclination toward Agile ways of working.

Be Honest but Strategic

It should go without saying that honesty is non-negotiable when crafting your resume or profile. Never fabricate details or claim expertise you don't have. However, don't underestimate the power of reframing your existing experience. If you've practiced behaviors consistent with Scrum or Agile—even unintentionally—you're already ahead of the curve.

For example:

- If you led retrospectives informally after completing major milestones, frame it as "Conducted post-project reviews to identify lessons learned and improve future performance."
- If you facilitated discussions between stakeholders and developers, describe it as

“Bridged communication gaps between technical teams and business stakeholders to ensure alignment on priorities.”

- If you helped prioritize work during crunch times, mention “Collaborated with teams to prioritize tasks based on urgency and impact, ensuring timely delivery of critical objectives.”

Showcase Soft Skills

In addition to technical experience, emphasize soft skills that are crucial for a Scrum Master:

- Have you ever guided a group discussion or resolved conflicts within a team? (demonstrates facilitation skills)
- Can you provide examples of adjusting plans mid-course to respond to changing circumstances? (demonstrates adaptability)
- Have you supported teammates by understanding their challenges and helping them overcome obstacles? (demonstrates empathy)

These qualities are essential for effective Scrum Masters, and showcasing them will help paint a picture of someone ready to step into the role.

Leverage Transferable Tools and Techniques

If you’ve used project management tools like Trello, Asana, Jira, or Monday.com—even in non-Agile contexts—highlight those too. Familiarity with collaborative platforms shows you’re comfortable managing workflows visually, which is a cornerstone of Scrum.

For instance:

- Instead of saying “Used Trello to organize tasks,” say “Utilized Trello to create transparent workflows, enabling real-time updates and fostering team accountability.”

If you feel your current resume lacks direct Scrum experience, take proactive steps to build credibility:

- Update your LinkedIn headline to reflect your interest in Scrum (e.g., “Aspiring Scrum Master | Passionate About Agile Transformation”).
- Write a brief summary highlighting your understanding of Scrum principles and your eagerness to apply them.

By thoughtfully reframing your past experiences and strategically positioning yourself, you’ll demonstrate not only your potential but also your readiness to excel as a Scrum Master.

Let’s continue...

Look for Opportunities with Your Current Employer First

One of the most effective ways to begin your journey into Agile and Scrum practices is by exploring opportunities within your current workplace. Even if your organization isn’t fully ready to adopt

Agile methodologies or isn't interested in a large-scale transformation, you can still introduce small, incremental changes that align with Agile principles. These changes not only benefit your projects but also allow you to gain hands-on experience that you can highlight on your resume and LinkedIn profile.

Why Start with Your Current Employer?

- **Low Risk, High Reward:** Experimenting with Agile practices in your current role minimizes risk because you're working within a familiar environment. You already understand the culture, processes, and team dynamics, which makes it easier to implement small changes.
- **Build Credibility:** Demonstrating success with Agile techniques—even on a small scale—can establish you as someone who brings value and innovation to the organization.
- **Gain Real-World Experience:** Employers value practical experience over theoretical knowledge. By practicing Agile methods in real projects, you'll develop skills that are directly transferable to future roles.

Practical Steps to Introduce Agility

Here are some simple yet impactful ways to incorporate Agile practices into your current projects:

Introduce Iterations or Sprints:

Break down work into smaller, time-boxed cycles (iterations or sprints). This helps teams focus on delivering specific outcomes within a set timeframe, improving productivity and accountability. For example:

- Instead of waiting until the end of a project to deliver everything, aim to complete and showcase smaller portions of work every 1-2 weeks.

Begin Conducting Daily Scrums:

Suggest holding short, daily standup meetings where team members share updates on what they accomplished yesterday, what they plan to do today, and any blockers they're facing.

- Tip: Frame these meetings as a way to improve communication and reduce misunderstandings—not as an additional burden.

Periodically Demonstrate Finished Functionality to Stakeholders

Schedule regular check-ins with stakeholders to present completed work. This ensures alignment with their expectations and allows for early feedback, reducing rework later.

- Example: After each sprint, host a "demo day" where the team showcases new features or progress made.

Conduct Retrospectives to Improve Collaboration

At the end of each iteration (sprint), hold a retrospective meeting to discuss what went well, what didn't, and how the team can improve moving forward.

- Benefit: This fosters a culture of continuous improvement and strengthens teamwork.

Add a Kanban Board (Task Board)

Create a visual representation of tasks using a physical board, sticky notes, or digital tools like Trello or Jira. This provides transparency into the workflow and helps identify bottlenecks.

- **Pro Tip:** Start simple—use categories like “To Do,” “In Progress,” and “Done.”

Report Progress Using Agile Metrics

Use Agile reporting tools such as burndown charts to track progress toward goals. These visuals make it easy to communicate status updates to both the team and stakeholders.

- **Why It Works:** Visual metrics are intuitive and help keep everyone focused on priorities.

Benefits Beyond the Project

Implementing even small Agile practices can have a ripple effect:

- **Improved Team Dynamics:** Regular communication and collaboration foster trust and camaraderie among team members.
- **Increased Efficiency:** Breaking work into manageable chunks reduces overwhelm and keeps momentum high.
- **Enhanced Visibility:** Transparent workflows and periodic demos ensure that everyone—from team members to stakeholders—is on the same page.

Showcase Your Efforts

Once you’ve successfully introduced Agile practices, don’t forget to document these experiences:

- On your resume, describe how you implemented Agile techniques and the positive impact they had on the project. For example:
 - “Introduced daily scrum meetings and a Kanban board to enhance team collaboration, resulting in a 20% increase in task completion rates.”
- On your LinkedIn profile, write a post or update your headline to reflect your growing expertise in Agile methodologies. Share examples of how your initiatives improved outcomes.

Overcoming Resistance

It’s possible that not everyone will immediately embrace these ideas. Here’s how to handle resistance:

- **Start Small:** Focus on one practice at a time to avoid overwhelming the team.
- **Frame It Positively:** Emphasize how these changes will save time, reduce stress, or improve results—not add extra work.
- **Lead by Example:** Be the first to adopt and champion these practices. When others see the benefits, they’ll be more likely to follow suit.

A Stepping Stone to Bigger Opportunities

By taking these steps, you’re not only adding value to your current role but also building a

foundation for future career growth. Whether you're aiming to become a Scrum Master, Product Owner, or Agile Coach, these experiences will serve as tangible proof of your ability to drive change and lead teams effectively.

Every great transformation starts with a single step so introduce one or more of these practices in your current workplace, and will position yourself as a proactive problem-solver and a leader in Agile adoption—a combination that's highly attractive to employers.

Look for Volunteer Opportunities

If you can't find opportunities to introduce small bits of agility within your current employer, consider looking for volunteer opportunities to do so.

This could be a regional, national, or international non-profit whose cause you care about. Or it could be as close by as a child's school, youth sports team, or your church.

Get creative and find ways to gain experience anywhere in any way you can. I know of at least a handful of people who struggled to get that first position sought out volunteer opportunities and then leveraged that experience into a full-time Scrum Master position.

Get Certified

While I do teach [Scrum courses](#), I don't consider those certifications to be proof of any great ability to do the job of Scrum Master.

But earning a credential that is recognized does indicate two things: a certain base level of knowledge and, more importantly, a willingness to learn and invest in oneself. As an employer, I'd weigh that heavily.

In pursuing a Scrum certification, get yours from one of the credible Scrum training organizations—either the Scrum Alliance (CSM) or Scrum.org (PSM). Those organizations have been around the longest and have certified the most people.

Be careful of other certifying bodies—many could actually harm your chances of getting a job. A resume claiming a certification from the agile equivalent of a diploma mill could be a red flag to many employers, as it could indicate a lack of judgment on the part of the applicant.

Know that Most Resumes Are Computer Screened First

To find a job as a Scrum Master, you need to make sure your resume gets read. Most employers these days will use software to screen applications. To get past those filters, you want to use all reasonable variations of words and phrases.

For example, if you are applying for a "Scrum Master" position be sure your resume uses the phrases "Scrum Master" but also "ScrumMaster," both with and without a space so you maximize chances of clearing a computer screening that includes only one of those words.

Perhaps your prospective employer will be screening for experience running daily scrums. Be sure to refer to those as daily scrums, daily stand ups, and daily standups on your resume.

Similarly use both sprint and iteration, burndown and burn down.

Good writing would normally call for consistency. And many years ago I would have looked at a resume that used both Scrum Master and ScrumMaster as being a bit sloppy and in need of better proofreading. But when I see that today, I think, “Aha, here’s someone who’s on the ball. They know the trick.”

Network Even More than Normal

It’s often said that most jobs are found through one’s personal networking. And certainly, part of a successful job searches (especially when changing into a new field) requires a good dose of luck— being in the right place at the right time.

If networking is necessary when searching for a job like the one you already have, it’s even more important when changing into a completely new role like that of a Scrum Master.

Be sure all your friends and former colleagues know the type of position you’re looking for. But also, do as much networking as you can in local interest or user groups.

You definitely want to participate in local agile groups. But, just as importantly, attend meetings of any other groups whose members may work at the type of company you want to join. For example, that could include interest groups in Java, Python, or any other programming language. It could also include product development or project management groups.

Go Out of Your Way to Highlight Your Other Relevant Experience

If everything else is equal, an employer seeking to fill a Scrum Master role will prefer to hire someone with experience as a Scrum Master. Since you don’t have that experience, you need to call out whatever else you can in your background that makes you a good fit for the position.

If you are applying for a Scrum Master job in the financial services industry, for example, do whatever you can to highlight and demonstrate your experience in that industry. Your cover letter and resume should be peppered with vocabulary from that domain.

Without the desirable attribute of prior Scrum experience, you need to do something to make yourself stand out. If you have prior experience in the industry, be sure to call it out. Even if you don’t have experience, demonstrate that you’ve done your research on the industry and company by using the vocabulary in your cover letter.

Be Patient

I want to give you one parting word of advice when following these tips: Be patient. Shifting your career in a new direction will probably take longer than finding your same position in another organization. So, be persistent. It may take time.

But, by following the advice of the seven tips in this guide you’ll definitely improve your chances

of finding your first Scrum Master position.

What's helped you land a position as a Scrum Master? Please share your thoughts in our [Facebook group](#), especially if you were once an inexperienced Scrum Master seeking a first position.

Thank you for reading this.

To Your Continued Success

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