

Five Reasons Why Batman Would Be a Great Scrum Master

by Mike Cohn • 21 Comments

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I realized today that the perfect Scrum Master has been right in front of me for many years: Batman. I'm not sure he wants to quit his crime-fighting ways and take the job of being a Scrum Master. But if he's willing, I think there are five reasons why Batman would be the ideal Scrum Master.

1. Batman Is Humble

Batman doesn't do what he does for his own glory. He does it out deep love for his city, Gotham, and its citizens. If Bruce Wayne were in it for his own glory, he'd fight crime under his own name rather than as Batman. Batman's humility also shows through in his willingness to continue learning. Batman is an expert acrobat; skilled martial artist; has mastered ventriloquism and hypnotism; and is a highly proficient athlete at sports as diverse as polo, surfing and skiing. Batman's willingness to improve himself through continued learning would be an inspiration to any team lucky enough to have him as their Scrum Master.

2. Batman Excels at Protection

If Batman can protect Gotham from evil criminal masterminds like the Joker, Riddler, and the Penguin then certainly he's capable of protecting your team from the Re-Prioritizer, the Interrupter, and Mr. Unavailable. These devious stakeholders or product owners are no match for Batman the Scrum Master.

3. Batman Has No Super Powers

Unlike most other superheroes, Batman didn't gain powers through radioactivity, alien parents, genetic mutations, or science experiments gone wrong. Batman had to earn his authority--just like other Scrum Masters.

Batman didn't just show up at the Gotham police station one day and tell Commissioner Gordon, "Flash this Bat Signal whenever the city needs my help."

First, Batman solved crimes and proved he was essential. Once he had done that, Commissioner Gordon was eager for Batman's help in removing criminal impediments.

4. Batman Never Gives Up

Batman is persistent. He never gives up. He can be tied to a saw and about to be cut in half yet he remains confident he'll find a solution.

Who wouldn't want a Scrum Master with similar confidence (and the knowledge and skills to back it up)? Facing an impossible deadline with the Joker ready to detonate bombs all over the city if your team doesn't deliver? I'll take Batman as my Scrum Master in that situation every time.

5. Batman Lives by a Moral Code

Batman has a unique moral code. Having seen his parents murdered when he was young, Batman values life and so refuses to kill anyone. This makes Batman's behavior and responses to situations more predictable and consistent.

As a team member, I'd value that. Not just that my Scrum Master won't kill me. (I've never been fearful of that.) But I'd appreciate that my Scrum Master treated everyone equally, fairly and predictably.

Like Batman, Scrum Masters live by a moral code. Ours is defined by the Scrum values and the Agile Manifesto, but it provides a consistency to a Scrum Master's behavior that team members can rely on.

Batman Would Be the Perfect Scrum Master

For these five reasons, and probably more, Batman would be a perfect Scrum Master. I don't think he's looking for a new job right now. But I'm going to flash the Bat Signal and at least see if he responds.

What Do You Think?

What do you think of Batman as a Scrum Master? Are there any reasons he wouldn't be good? Or would you prefer Spider-Man? Superman? Wonder Woman? Black Panther? Thor? Captain America or Marvel? Iron Man? The Hulk seems more like a disappointed stakeholder so we'll leave him out of consideration. Please share your thoughts in the comments below.

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