Roles – The Product Owner

Let us introduce the role of **Product Owner** within the *roles* distribution in Lean Product Management (LPM). This role represents the client who commissions the project. It is responsible to ensure that the final result of the work performed by the *team* meets the client's expectations.

Ideally, this individual should belong to the client, but normally he belongs to the team, as the required dedication time is considerable. The Product Owner role is **essential**. Having it covered **is a must.**

The most important responsibilities for this role are:
- Define the product or service functionality.
- Decide timing and contents of the different project phases (*sprints* and *releases*)
- Adapt functionalities and priorities as the project progresses.
- Approve the scope modifications or accept alternatives vs. the original objectives.

All the above always from the client perspective!

From a traditional Project Management perspective, this role is equivalent to the client (a logical expectation, isn't it?) who defines the needs to fulfill and often also the product or service functionalities required. It is he who validates that the team moves in the right direction and the modifications implemented. She stays involved throughout the project, participating in the different meetings that are scheduled, taking place normally every three to four weeks.

This "distance" means that the client lives the Project as a passive observer most of the times, far from the daily dynamics experienced by the team, while at the same time he feels responsible to his management for the result. This dual role places the client in a stressful situation between the different players involved – let's avoid talking about panic at times.

On the other side, in LPM it is required that the **Product Owner participates closely in the progress of the project,** attendance obliged to the *daily meetings* (express meetings of daily frequency) and the other less frequent meetings. He is also required to help prepare the *product* and *sprint backlogs* (prioritization of tasks to perform in each step).

Summing up, the **Product Owner has a privileged overview of how the project is making progress,** of the roadblocks that are showing up, the task difficulties, etc. He always has the last word on the decisions taken, a key point in innovation projects, as the uncertainty included makes informed and closely involved interventions by the client necessary.

You will understand that this role is like an anxiolytic for the project *team*. As already said, an essential role! …