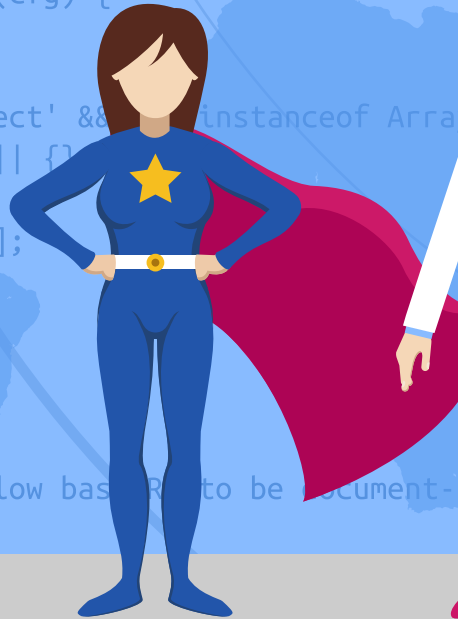
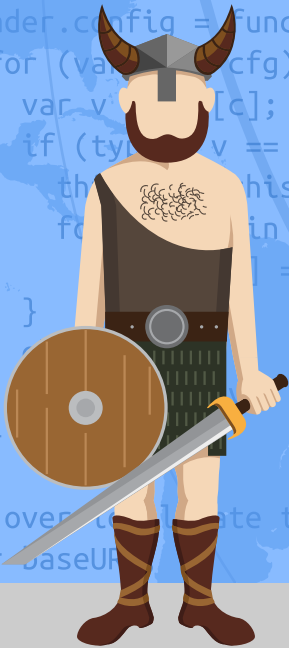


# 2017

# SCRUM MASTER SALARY REPORT

Age of Product's comprehensive report on worldwide scrum master **demographics, educations, and salaries**



the **FIRST**  
and **only** report to  
reveal worldwide  
earnings!



**AGE of PRODUCT**

INVENT FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS



2017

# SCRUM MASTER SALARY REPORT

Researched, written, and compiled by  
**Stefan Wolpers** and **Sumit Mehta**

This booklet has been formatted to be viewed electronically.

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# One of the most lucrative career paths in tech unraveled

Every now and then, the position of scrum master is revealed as one of the top paying jobs in the United States<sup>1</sup>. However, few have ventured to investigate the state of this profession on a global scale.

Toward the beginning of 2017 we endeavored to unravel the career paths leading to and the financial rewards of this lucrative profession, globally, by polling thousands of scrum masters and agile coaches around the world for the three months ending May 1st, 2017. This included conducting the first ever salary survey of scrum masters. 33 questions were distributed online via Age of Product's 'Food for Agile Thought' newsletter, the top ten [LinkedIn](#) groups for agile topics, blogs like [DZone](#) and [Medium](#), and the Twitter accounts [@AgeofProduct](#) and [@StefanW](#). The questions addressed the educational background and working experience of the scrum masters or agile coaches, and the industries and organizational details of the

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1. E.g. [LinkedIn Data Reveals the Most Promising Jobs of 2017](#)

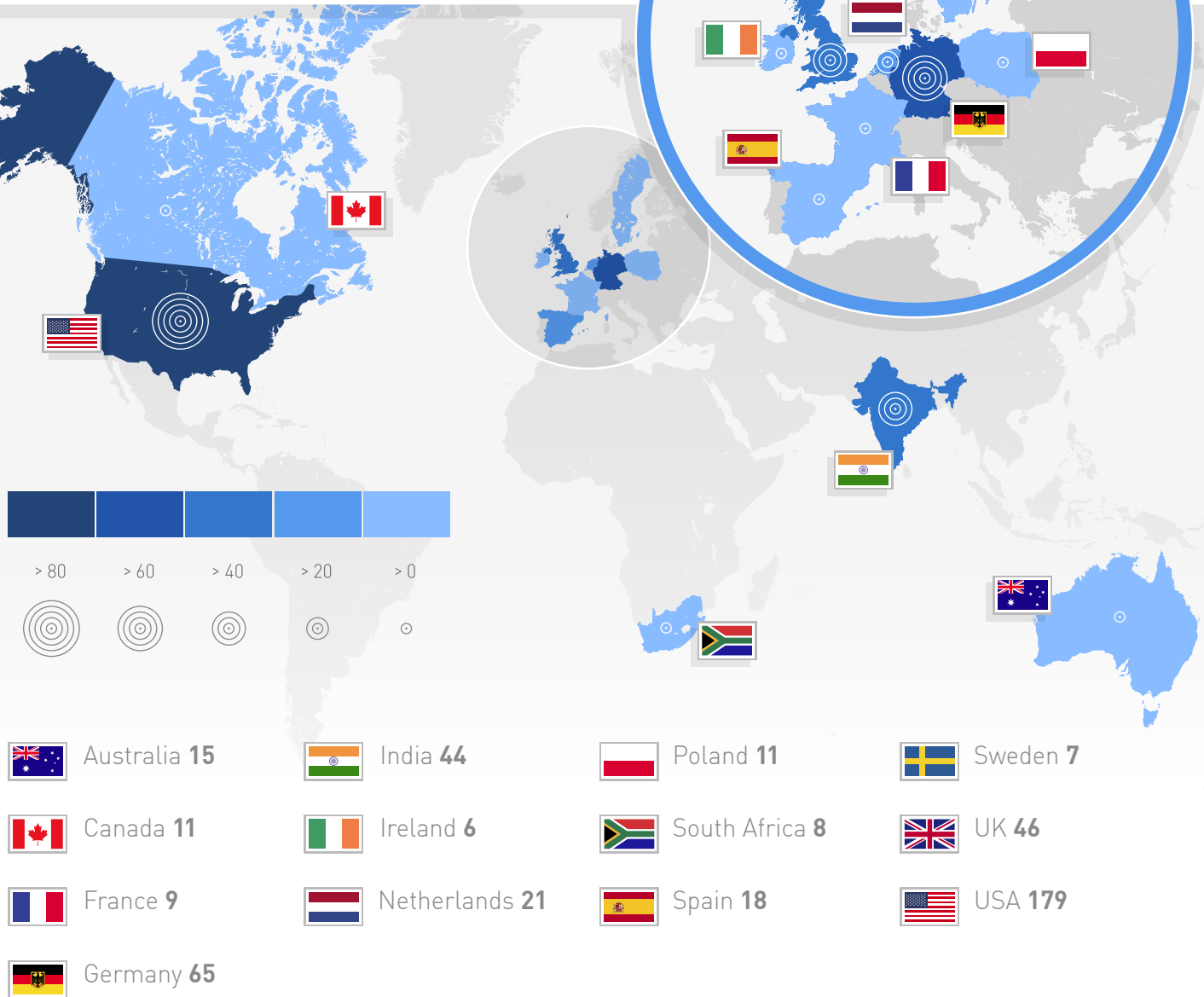
companies the respondents were working for. Our objective was to identify common career patterns among successful scrum masters and to link those patterns with their financial remuneration, thus providing aspiring scrum masters with an idea of how to plan for a career in the profession.

The overwhelming response to our poll — more than 523 individuals, from Australia to the United States — led to this conclusive report. Within, you'll find facts and statistics not readily available anywhere else — including clarity on a number of issues likely to be of concern to new entrants to the profession:

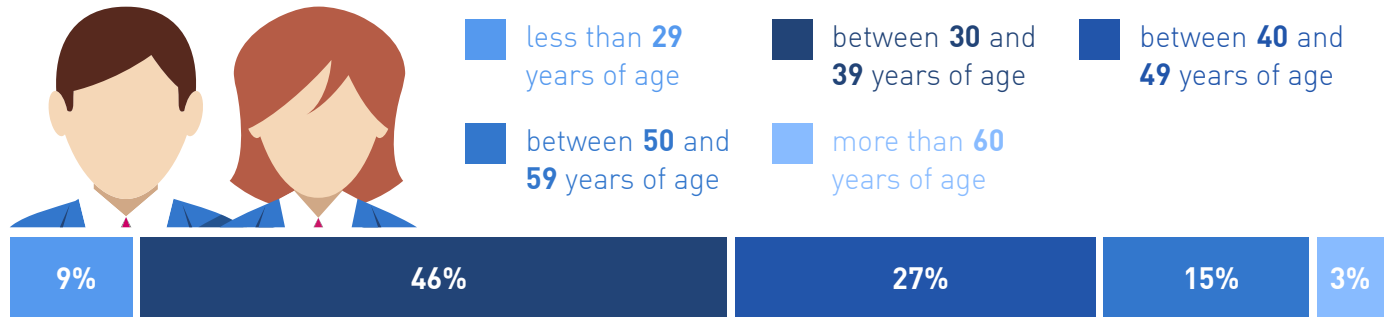
- Women in the profession enjoy equal opportunity and salary potential.
- Scrum masters in the United States are paid more than in any other country. Scrum masters in India are paid the least.
- Without some form of certification, getting into a career as a scrum master is almost impossible.
- Additional or greater education has no effect on salary.
- Some form of previous experience is often a prerequisite.

# Survey participants

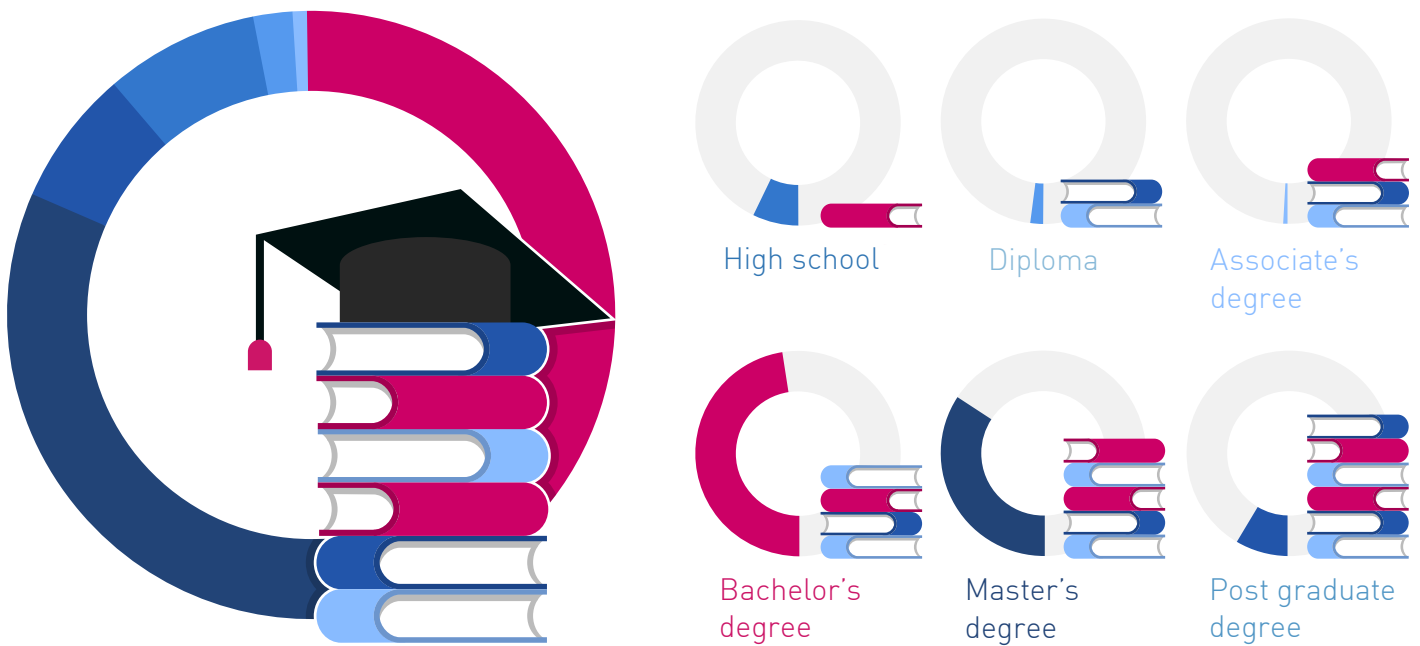
## Participants by country



### Participants by age



### Participants by education



# What we learned about scrum masters

There's almost no gender gap

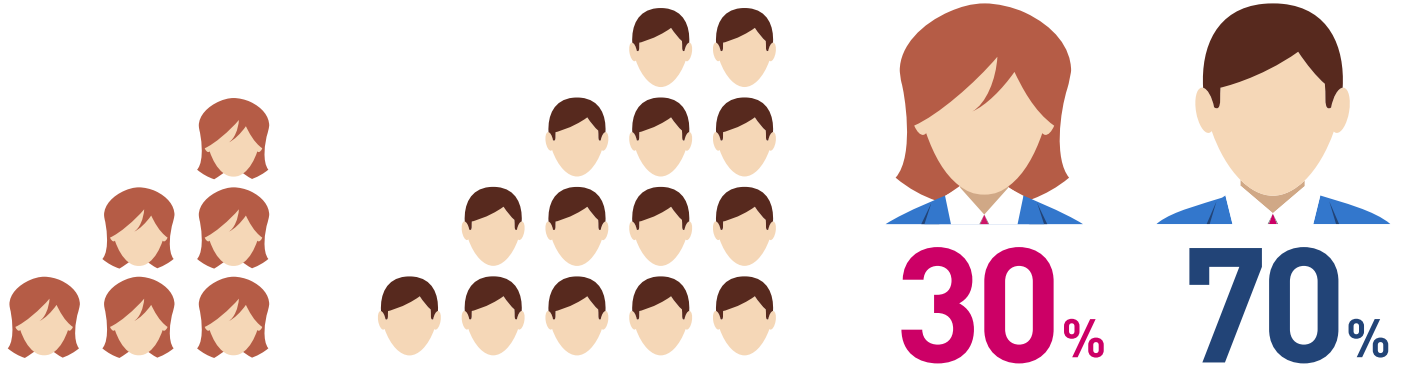
Among the most astonishing findings about scrum masters was that the wage gap between men and women is almost nonexistent. The percentage of women in the role, albeit at a meager 30%, is on par with women in leadership roles in many countries around the world<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the likelihood of a woman who works as a scrum master coming from a business instead of a technical background is almost double that of their male counterparts.

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2. As compared to the percentages listed in the post [Women in Management](#) by Catalyst, Inc. (February 7, 2017)



### Ratio of women versus men working as scrum masters



What does this show? The opportunities for women and their ability to enter a servant leadership<sup>3</sup> role in what is normally considered a male dominated sector is undeniable.

Furthermore, a background in business (which is more common among women than a background in tech) is considered an asset for the scrum master role. The position is suitably and often filled by those with business or project management expertise.

3. Servant leadership is a management style and philosophy that seeks to achieve synergistic versus controlling relationships between management and personnel. [Read more about servant leadership at Investopedia.](#)

Women working as scrum masters, by education



**55%**  
technical and  
engineering

**9%**  
social sciences

**4%**  
natural sciences  
and mathematics

**22%**  
business, finance,  
and economics

**9%**  
other sciences

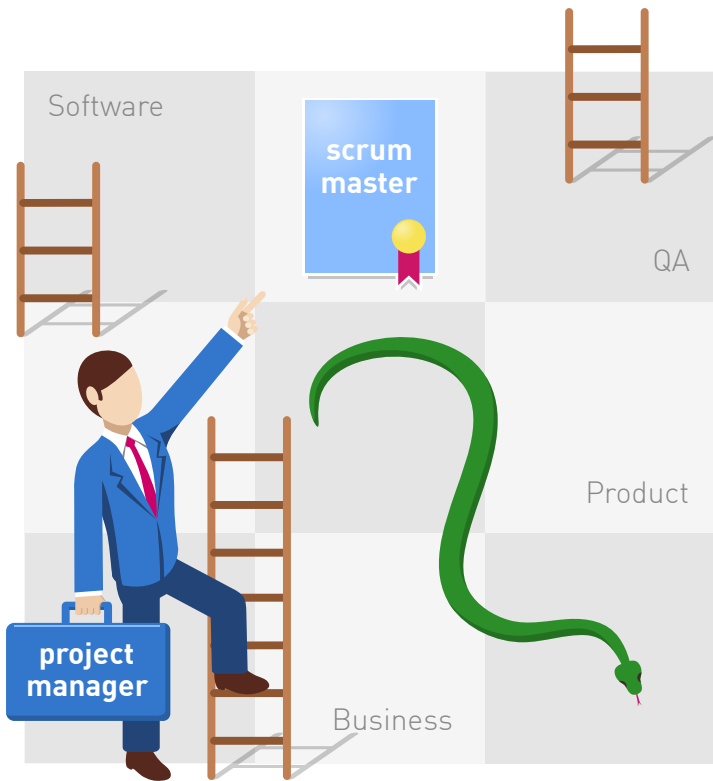
**1%**  
medicine and  
psychology

The chosen area of career education is another interesting finding from our survey. We see a strong influx of people from business and project management backgrounds entering the field.

Perhaps a strong background of soft skills and organizational capabilities contributes to making an ideal scrum master candidate. Nonetheless, 65% of respondents have studied a specialization within technology or engineering.

Respondents with business degrees (a lowly 14%) represent the second largest group. Worth noting is that regardless of earlier education, including in technology, many respondents had training and experience in project management before becoming scrum masters. As a matter of fact, former project managers (at 40%) make up the largest share of our respondents.

### Project managers choose scrum



Despite the fact that project management is frequently considered a business role, it's clear that project managers can transfer their skills to the lucrative technology sector.

# Optimistic transitions

Optimism, not pessimism, rules on the job

The Scrum Master is a servant-leader for the Scrum Team. The Scrum Master helps those outside the Scrum Team understand which of their interactions with the Scrum Team are helpful and which aren't. The Scrum Master helps everyone change these interactions to maximize the value created by the Scrum Team.<sup>4</sup>

Many of our respondents are noticeably optimistic about an ongoing agile transformation at their organization. Nearly 70% of our respondents have participated in an agile transition before, and they are confident that their current transformation is going in the right direction.

One aspect that may play a part in this optimism is the fact that around 50% of respondents have previously worked on more than 10 projects. Scrum masters already have a great deal of experience, which may translate into more trust from management and teammates. We will venture further into the part that professional

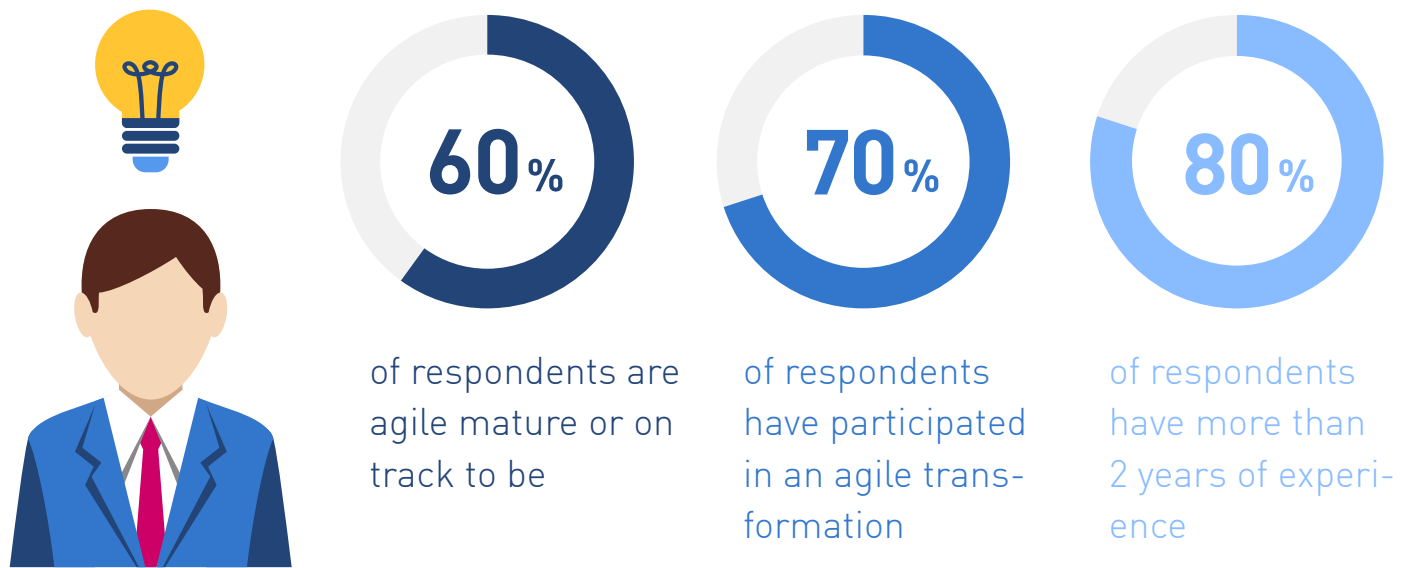
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4. [The Scrum Guide](#), retrieved July 13, 2017.

experience plays, but we do now recognize that it is vital for the optimism seen in our respondents.

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**Previous experience with agile**



# The role of the project management office

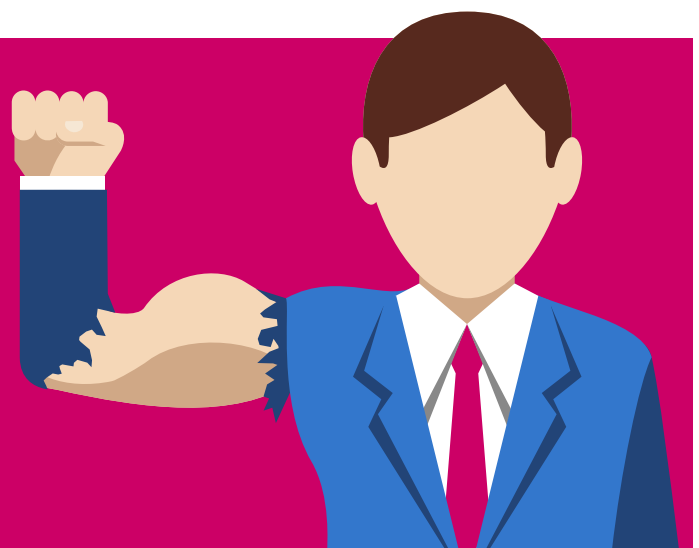
We think tech, but business often has a hand to play

When we talk about Agile, our first assumption would be that it fits under a tech umbrella. True to this theory 75% of the time, agile still remains under the direction of a project management office (PMO) a staggering 15% of the time. For those scrum masters, the PMO is their true overlord, and their development team is at least an arm's length away.

## Project management FTW!

# 40%

of scrum masters have a project management background



This may come as no surprise for the 40% of scrum masters who come from project management experience. Some may argue that a scrum master is just a coach, but actual change comes at an organization level. One quick Google search and you will find numerous scrum masters asking where exactly they should sit in their firm.

No evidence can be found indicating that a PMO governs or should govern the scrum master. Organizations of different sizes across industries have the scrum master as part of the PMO. We do not see this arrangement influencing statistics in other areas.

What we have noticed is that organizations with more than a thousand employees are almost twice as likely to have a PMO governing the agile process. Considering the fact that large firms are often starting or are in the midst of an agile transition, this is not surprising.

# Rarely alone as the scrum master

Organizations often establish an agile community

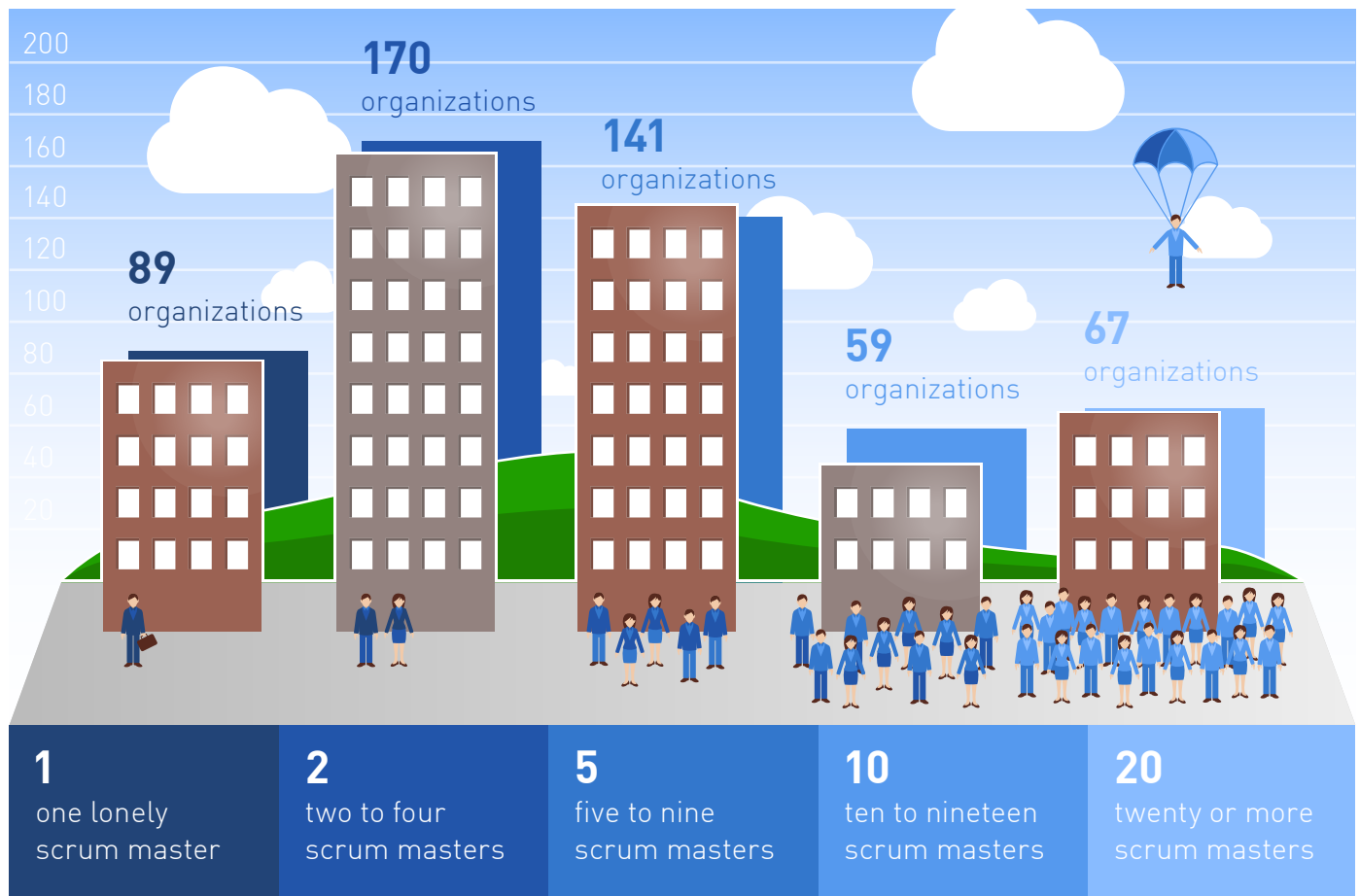
Scrum masters do not exclusively work alone. In fact, we see around 5–10 scrum masters per organization (on average) based on this survey. This holds true for the largest organizations, which is where most of our respondents came from.

We note that organizations with less than 50 employees usually have only one scrum master. Organizations with more than 50 employees tend to have up to 10, but we do not see any higher number after that level. That is, presumably, until we talk about large multinational organizations with more than 10,000 employees.

Such large tech teams would need to form a community practice of their own, especially when such teams cross floors, borders and seas. The structure of it should allow knowledge sharing at the company level, reaching a great deal of effectiveness in learning from each other, and sharing experiences made alongside the agile transition.



Most organizations employ more than two scrum masters



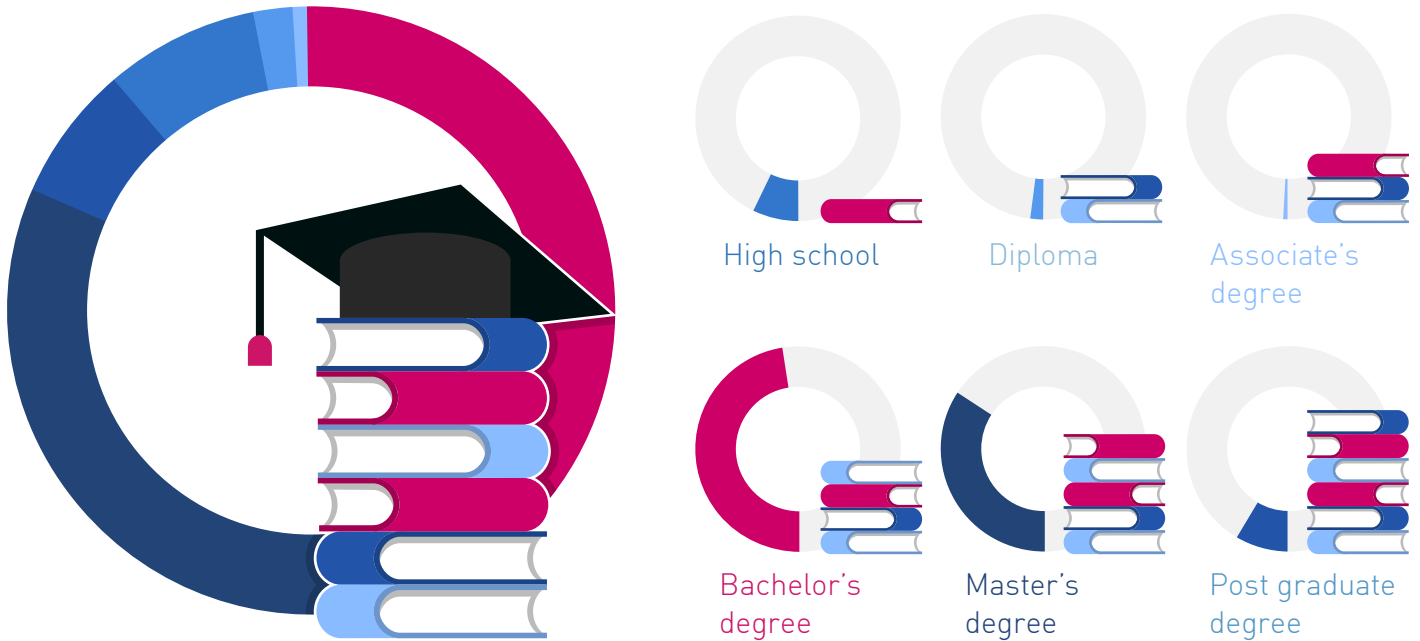
# High earners, low barriers

Experience, not education, reigns

## Education

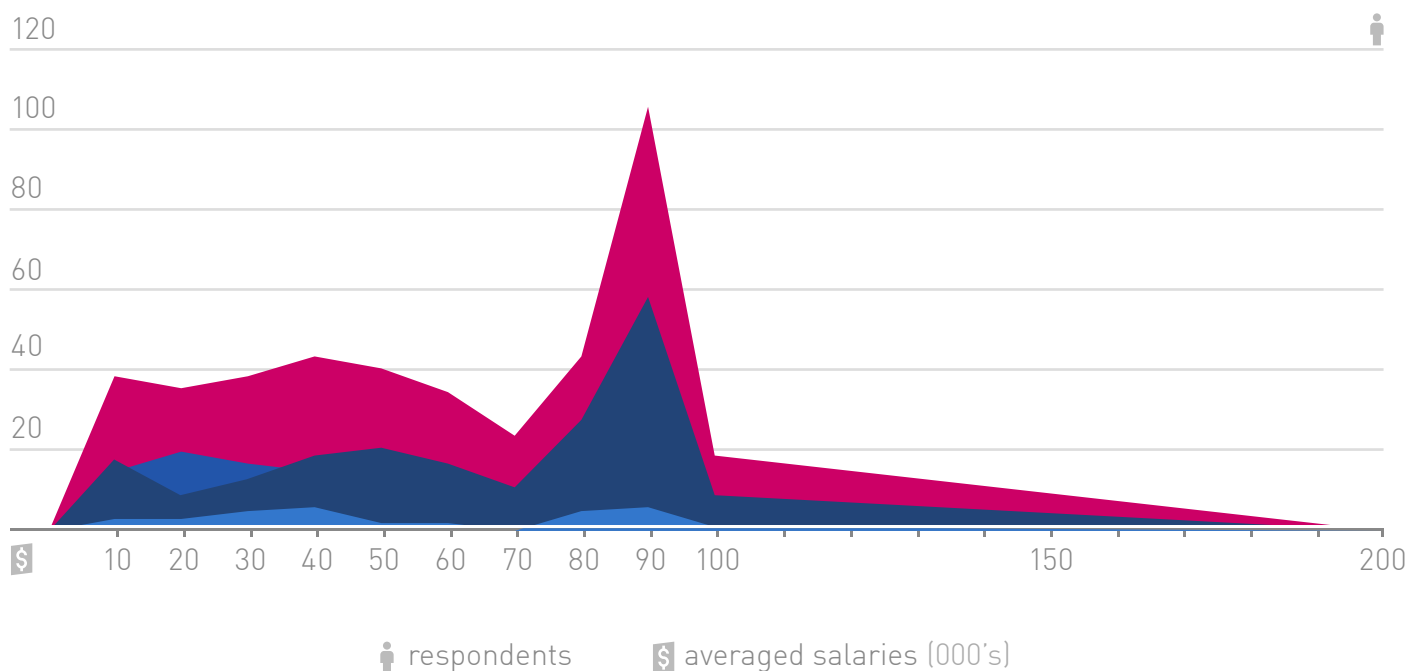
The standard “get a master’s degree” mantra implies that the more you invest in your education, the higher your income will be. There are countless exceptions to this rule, and for the role of scrum master the exception could not be truer. Indeed, 34% of scrum masters who hold a master’s degree could not be more wrong.

### The education of a scrum master



The highest paid scrum masters (those who earn more than \$90,000 USD) hold bachelor's degrees. Those holding master's degrees are mostly at the lower end of the earnings spectrum, being paid between \$20,000 and \$70,000 USD. In fact, a scrum master without a master's degree is almost twice as likely to be earning more than \$90,000 USD.

Scrum master salaries by educational attainment



Given that 45% of the respondents from India hold a master's degree or MBA, their naturally lower salaries certainly contribute to this finding. Also, the range is further influenced by Germany where 63% of respondents hold a master's degree or MBA — why German scrum masters are paid less could be explained by the fact that local startups often require that scrum masters hold a master's degree, but are regardless unable to offer satisfying remuneration.

## Certifications

An advanced agile certification (for example, Scrum Alliance's Certified Scrum Professional) plays no role in higher salary, although the attainment of a first certification level is noticeably standard to enter the field.

## Experience

Rather than education and certification, the greatest influences on wage are experience and location. In terms of experience, scrum masters invariably have not begun their professional careers in this position.

Most respondents have previously worked in technology or project management, so even if they were new to the role, they would already have considerable experience in the general field of software development or managing projects.

## Seniority

Where we do see a strong correlation is salary with seniority. Scrum masters who have at least four years of experience earn ten times more than those who are new to the profession. Senior scrum masters report salaries of between \$100,000 and \$125,000 USD annually, versus individuals new to the profession reporting salaries of between \$10,000 and \$40,000 USD annually.



We find that senior scrum masters tend to move towards freelancing. Most of the freelancers who responded have been working for more than four years in the field. Nonetheless, freelancers on average earn double than their employed counterparts — even those who are junior.

As experience increases, wage increases



No experience  
(beginning of  
career)



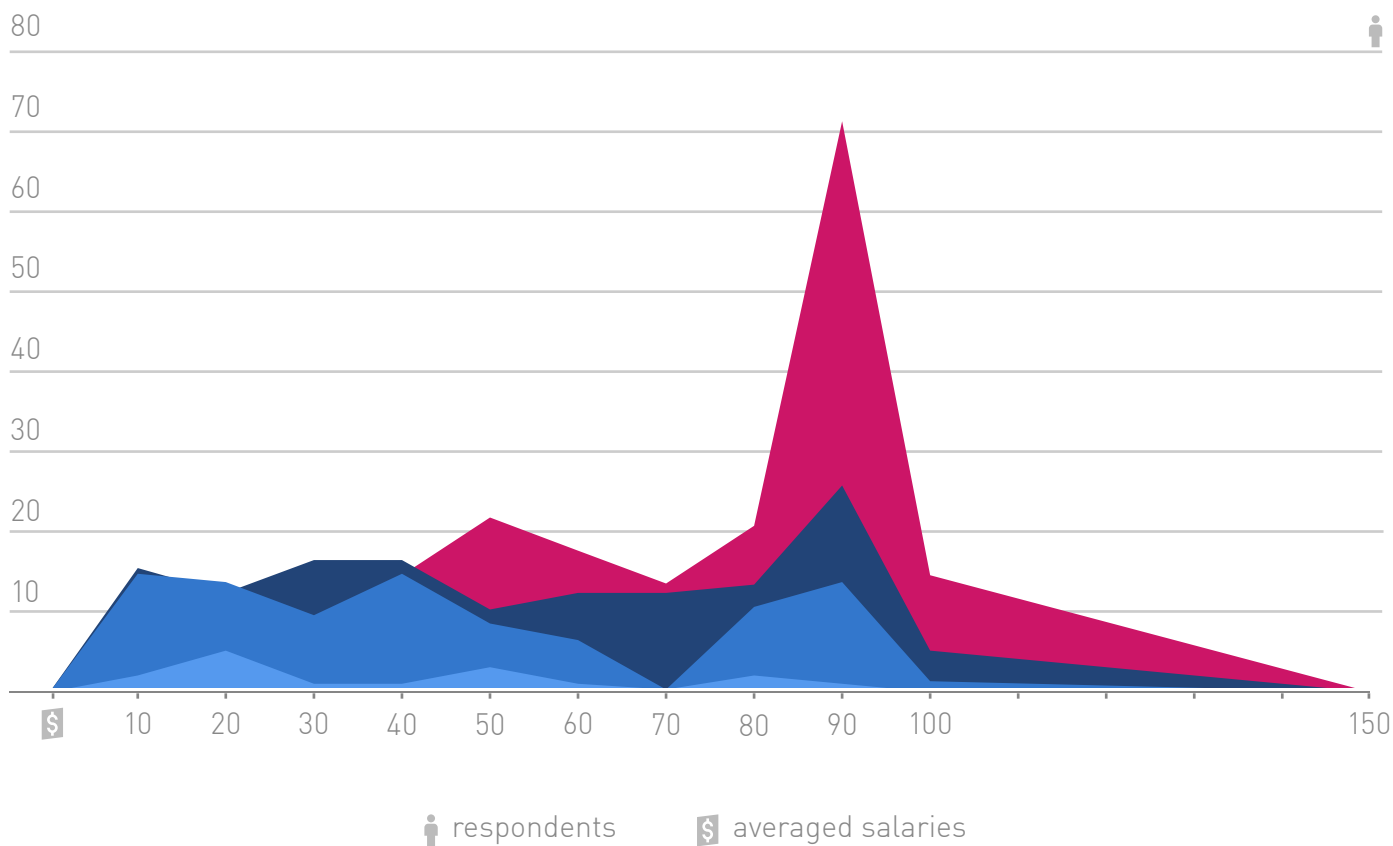
Junior  
(less than  
2 years)



Intermediate  
(2 through  
4 years)



Senior  
(more than  
4 years)



# Location, location, location

Not just an adage for real estate

An age old axiom states “There are three things that matter in property: location, location, location.” and this phrase rings true as well for the role value in that of a scrum master. The striking pay imbalances due to location may even warrant a topic of its own at a later point in time, but what is clear now is that even with a statistically relevant number of responses, many scrum masters work for a fraction of what their global colleagues earn.

Agile leaders in India are paid five times less than their North American counterparts. With most respondents from India earning between \$20,000 and \$30,000 USD annually, the comparison appears shocking. However, this level of income is considerable when compared to India’s cost of living. Tied to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) statistics as reported by the World Bank, it equates to an average of approximately \$93,000 USD.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, even with PPP, those scrum masters in countries with less global salary parity will continue to find the kind of lifestyle

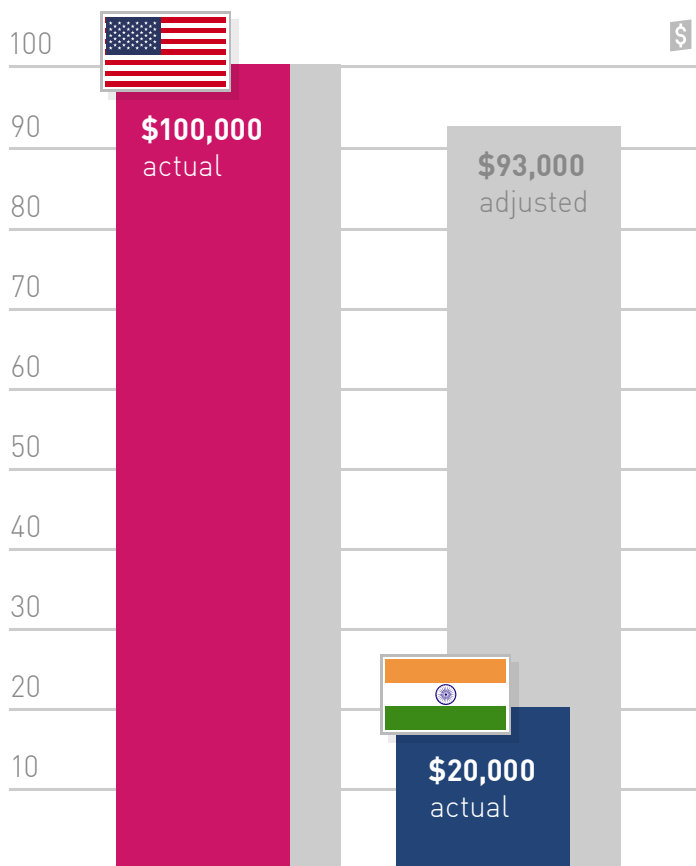
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5. [World Bank, International Comparison Program database, PPP conversion factor](#) (accessed June 9, 2017).



enjoyed by a scrum master in North America as out of reach. The hard reality is that, regardless of PPP, scrum masters from these countries are at a huge disadvantage when abroad.

### Earnings in India versus the United States



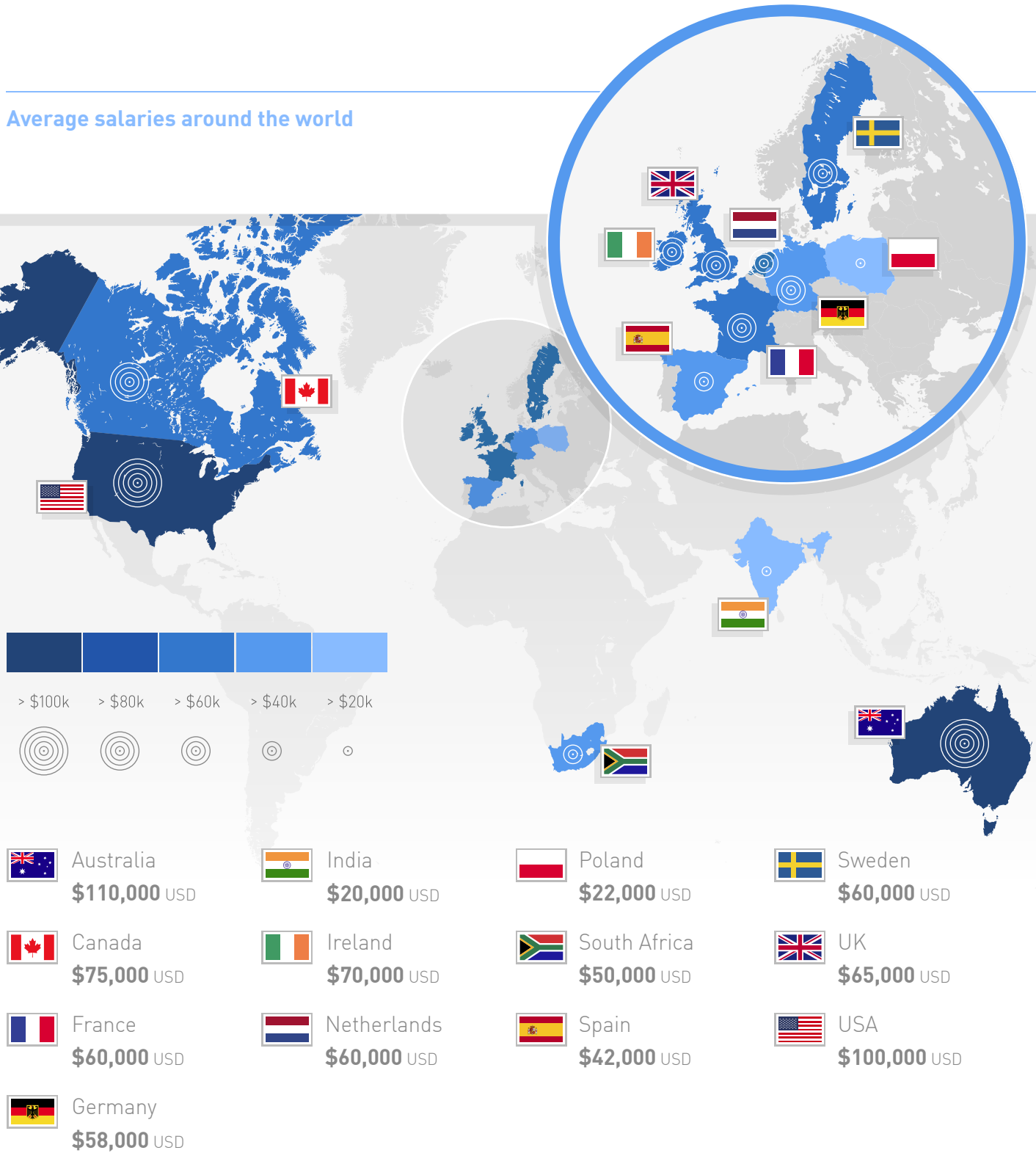
In the United States, scrum masters earn upwards of \$100,000 USD annually, on average. In India, averaged actual earnings are nearer \$20,000 USD annually. Although the average Indian salary is equivalent to \$93,000 USD when adjusted for purchasing power parity, this doesn't help Indian scrum masters when travelling abroad.

The United States sits at the top of the pack with most scrum masters earning annual salaries between \$100,000 and \$125,000 USD. The first assumption is that these salaries are coming from California's Silicon Valley where the cost of living is considered extremely high. Surprisingly, this is not true. Americans have responded from across the United States, and this salary range is not tied to any particular location.

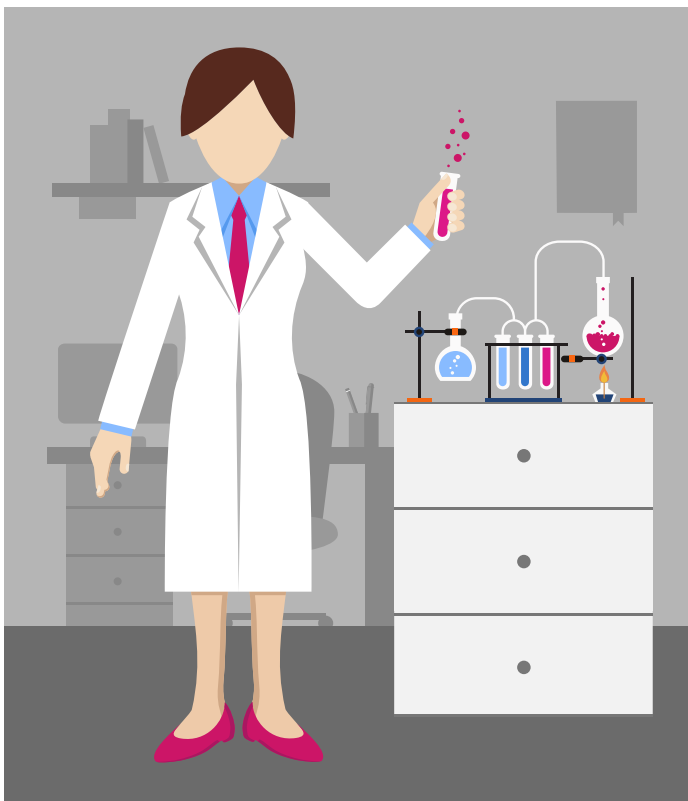
Regardless of location, the survey verified that scrum masters are considered high income earners in the United States. The overwhelming response to our survey — from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Seattle, Washington — showed no negative correlation between salary and city. If scrum certifications

worldwide are considered equal, a position as scrum master in the United States would be a financial preference.

Average salaries around the world



# The different types of scrum master



## Startup genius

- Has senior experience and almost always works alone
- Normally launches an agile transition
- Most likely holds an MBA or master's degree
- Earns between \$50,000 and \$60,000 USD



## Rising star

- Frequently works for medium-sized companies
- Might have another scrum master
- Agile transition planned
- Earns up to \$70,000 USD



## Corporate warrior

- Typically works in traditional industries such as Finance or Insurance
- Frequently located in the United States, India, the United Kingdom, and Germany
- Agile process begun but experiences continued struggle
- Earns between \$90,000 and \$125,000 USD



## Freelancer

- Has senior experience and is usually 40 years of age or older
- Often found working at Fortune 500 companies
- Many years of experience
- Earns more than \$100,000 USD (some more than \$150,000)

# Survey results

Data was polled by means of a survey distributed only in English for three months. This may have created some bias. Regardless, we've interpreted and made assumptions based upon only the best of the data collected. For instance, from Ireland we had only six responses and therefore cannot easily guarantee the strength of that data. Nonetheless, based upon the data received we assume that the greater the response, the truer the result.

## Respondents and salary levels by country<sup>6</sup>

In which country are you working? What is your salary or annual income as a scrum master?

	Respondents	Men	Women	Most frequently reported salary (USD)
<b>Australia</b>	15	11	4	\$ 100,001–125,000
<b>Canada *</b>	11	6	5	\$ 70,001–80,000
<b>France *</b>	9	7	2	\$ 50,001–60,000
<b>Germany</b>	65	45	20	\$ 50,001–60,000
<b>India</b>	44	34	10	\$ 20,001–30,000
<b>Ireland *</b>	6	5	1	\$ 70,001–80,000
<b>Netherlands</b>	21	14	7	\$ 50,001–60,000

6. Only those countries with more than five respondents are included.

	Respondents	Men	Women	Most frequently reported salary (USD)
<b>Poland</b> *	11	5	6	\$ 10,001–20,000
<b>South Africa</b> *	8	5	3	\$ 50,001–60,000
<b>Spain</b>	18	15	3	\$ 40,001–50,000
<b>Sweden</b> *	7	5	2	\$ 60,001–70,000
<b>United Kingdom</b>	46	34	12	\$ 60,001–70,000
<b>United States</b>	179	121	58	\$ 100,001–125,000
<b>All other countries</b>	64	50	14	\$ 30,001–40,000

\* We consider these countries to have had too few respondents for salary data to be meaningful.



## Respondents by gender

What is your gender?

	Respondents
<b>Male</b>	365
<b>Female</b>	150
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	6

## Respondents by age

What is your age?

	Respondents
<b>Younger than 29 years of age</b>	46

	Respondents
<b>30 to 39 years of age</b>	243
<b>40 to 49 years of age</b>	141
<b>50 to 59 years of age</b>	78
<b>Older than 60 years of age</b>	13

## Respondents by educational background

What is your educational background?

	Respondents
<b>Art, design</b>	10
<b>Business, finance, economics</b>	75
<b>Law</b>	2

	Respondents
<b>Medicine, psychology</b>	4
<b>Natural science, mathematics</b>	17
<b>Other sciences</b>	17
<b>Social sciences</b>	29
<b>Technical, engineering</b>	340

## Respondents by educational achievement

What is your education level?

	Respondents
<b>Associate's degree</b>	2
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	246

	Respondents
<b>Diploma</b>	2
<b>High school</b>	42
<b>Master's degree</b>	177
<b>Post graduate degree (MBA, PhD)</b>	37

## Industry sector of current organization

What is the industry sector of your organization?

	Respondents
<b>Consulting, professional services</b>	46
<b>Energy (oil, gas, electricity)</b>	12
<b>Engineering, technology</b>	31

	Respondents
<b>Finance, insurance</b>	58
<b>Health</b>	27
<b>Media, news</b>	14
<b>Software, internet</b>	230
<b>Telecommunications</b>	14
<b>Transportation (aerospace, automotive)</b>	14
<b>Other</b>	11

## Experience as a scrum master

What professional experience as scrum master or agile coach do you have?

	Respondents
<b>None (at beginning of career)</b>	20
<b>Junior (less than 2 years)</b>	103
<b>Intermediate (from 2 to 4 years)</b>	160
<b>Senior (more than 4 years)</b>	233

## Previous job

What professional experience did you have before your role as a scrum master or agile coach?

	Respondents
<b>Business analyst</b>	34
<b>Engineer (QA)</b>	45
<b>Engineer (software)</b>	149
<b>Product manager</b>	23
<b>Project manager</b>	165

# Salary tables

Salaries by size of organization and years of experience

In order to maintain anonymity, the salaries reported are rounded to represent an average. Unusual salary patterns may indicate that organizations of a certain size exclusively hire experienced scrum masters; anomalies in the data reflect this. All salaries reported in United States Dollars (USD)

## Organizations of less than 250 people

	Less than 2 years of experience	2 to 4 years of experience	More than 4 years of experience
<b>Germany</b>	\$ 41,100	\$ 63,300	\$ 71,250
<b>United Kingdom</b>	\$ 45,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 81,600
<b>United States</b>	\$ 75,500	\$ 111,400	\$ 119,000



	Less than 2 years of experience	2 to 4 years of experience	More than 4 years of experience
<b>India</b>	\$ 20,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 48,300
<b>Netherlands</b>	\$ 45,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 55,000
<b>Poland</b>	\$ 20,000	\$ 25,000	No data

## Organizations of between 250 and 1,000 people

	Less than 2 years of experience	2 to 4 years of experience	More than 4 years of experience
<b>Germany</b>	\$ 65,000	\$ 59,000	\$ 77,000
<b>United Kingdom</b>	\$ 35,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 88,300
<b>United States</b>	\$ 103,700	\$ 95,000	\$ 136,700
<b>India</b>	\$ 25,000	\$ 51,600	No data
<b>Netherlands</b>	\$ 35,000	No data	\$ 70,000

## Organizations of between 1,000 and 10,000 people

	Less than 2 years of experience	2 to 4 years of experience	More than 4 years of experience
<b>Germany</b>	\$ 50,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 70,000
<b>United Kingdom</b>	\$ 35,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 75,000
<b>United States</b>	\$ 95,000	\$ 104,000	\$ 121,000
<b>India</b>	\$ 18,300	\$ 21,000	\$ 35,000
<b>Netherlands</b>	No data	\$ 60,000	\$ 58,300
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	\$ 25,000	No data	\$ 55,000
<b>Spain</b>	No data	\$ 55,000	\$ 45,000

## Organizations of more than 10,000 people

	Less than 2 years of experience	2 to 4 years of experience	More than 4 years of experience
<b>Germany</b>	\$ 95,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 91,600
<b>United Kingdom</b>	No data	\$ 81,600	\$ 82,500
<b>United States</b>	\$ 75,000	\$ 111,300	\$ 120,300
<b>India</b>	\$ 27,000	\$ 39,200	\$ 43,500
<b>Netherlands</b>	\$ 65,000	\$ 85,000	No data

# About the authors



## Stefan Wolpers

Author

Stefan has worked many years as a product manager, product owner, and agile coach (Scrum, LeSS<sup>7</sup>, Lean Startup, Lean Change). He's founded multiple companies, and has led the development of B2C and B2B software for, primarily, startups, but also for other organizations — including a former Google subsidiary.



@stefanw



/in/stefanwolpers



stefan@age-of-product.com

Despite originally studying chemistry Stefan has never worked in a laboratory, and instead continued his education in business administration and law. Following school he discovered a passion for software and, in 1996, launched the first online ecommerce platform to feature SAP R/3 connectivity — only to learn that the early

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7. LeSS ([Large-Scale Scrum](#)) is a product development framework that extends scrum with scaling rules and guidelines.

bird does not necessarily catch the worm. After moving from his home town of Hamburg to Berlin, Germany, he created Susuh GmbH, a marketplace for local services. Other ventures followed, and in 2011 he founded [Startup Camp Berlin](#) — one of the largest German startup conferences today.

Stefan's latest project, [Age of Product](#), focuses on the exchange of knowledge between the people involved in product development: product managers, product owners, scrum masters, designers, and developers. The goal is to help those involved in product development with lessons learned and best practices for continuous agile product discovery and delivery.

Read more about Stefan at [LeSS Works](#) or [Scrum Alliance](#), and connect with him via [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or privately via [email](#).



 [/in/sumitsmehta](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sumitsmehta)

## Sumit Mehta

Contributor

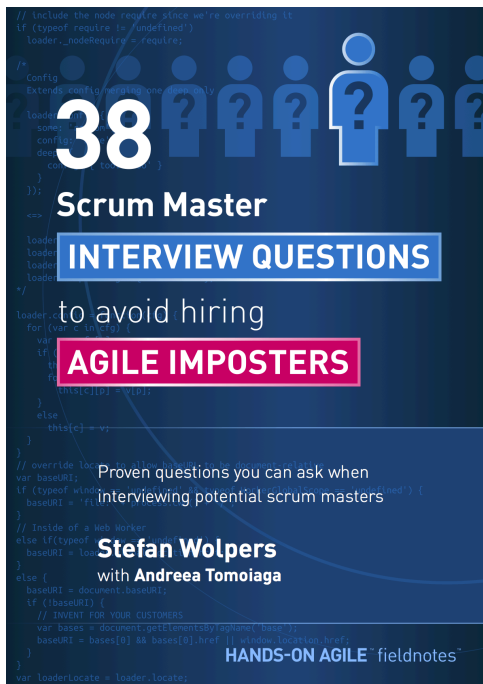
Sumit is an entrepreneur and avid product manager who focuses on international expansions and integrations. His skillsets lie in partner compliance, management, and process optimization. He is keen to implement agile techniques into the operational hemisphere of technology companies.

From United States to Taiwan, Sumit has considerable experience working on international projects around the world. The core of his experience has been technology in the food industry, which he has tackled with strong analytical and logistical experience in markets including the United Kingdom, Northern Europe, India, and Hong Kong. By managing team expectations, he has often independently turned projects around.

Sumit is one of the founding partners of [Level Nutrition](#). He is also an avid traveler, and likes to write about his experiences on [his travel blog](#).

Connect with Sumit via [LinkedIn](#).

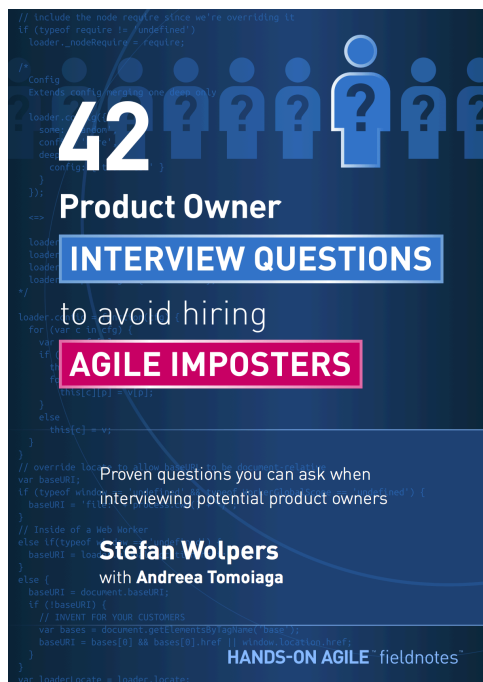
# Other publications



## 38 Scrum Master Interview Questions to Avoid Hiring Agile Imposters

The first publication in our Hands-on Agile Fieldnotes series, **38 Scrum Master Interview Questions to Avoid Hiring Agile Imposters** provides the interview questions you need to identify the right candidate for the role of scrum master in your organization.

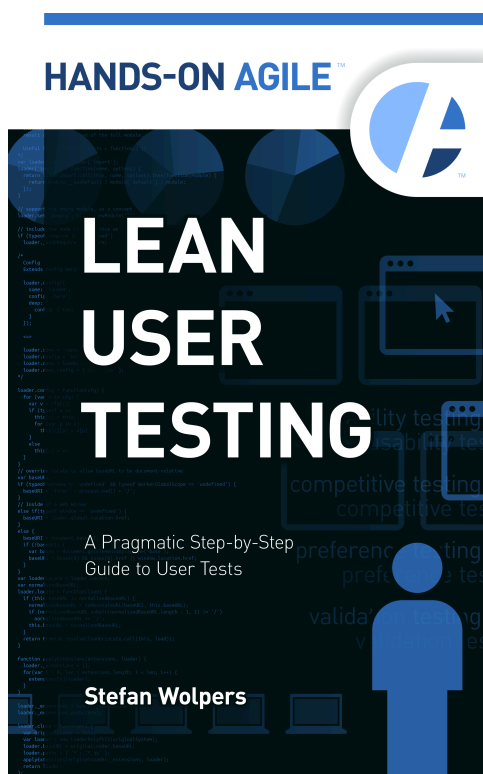
[Download the 52 page ebook for free](#)



## 42 Product Owner Interview Questions to Avoid Hiring Agile Imposters

The latest publication in our Hands-on Agile Fieldnotes series, **42 Product Owner Interview Questions to Avoid Hiring Agile Imposters** provides the interview questions you need to identify the right candidate for the role of product owner in your organization.

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## 2017 Scrum Master Salary Report

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## Berlin Product People GmbH

Borsigstrasse 8  
10115 Berlin  
Germany

Registered at: AG Charlottenburg (HRB 160341 B)  
Managing Director: Kral Wolpers  
VAT identification number: DE227895748

[info@berlin-product-people.com](mailto:info@berlin-product-people.com)



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