

A Guidebook for Technical Communicators in Agile Scrum Environments

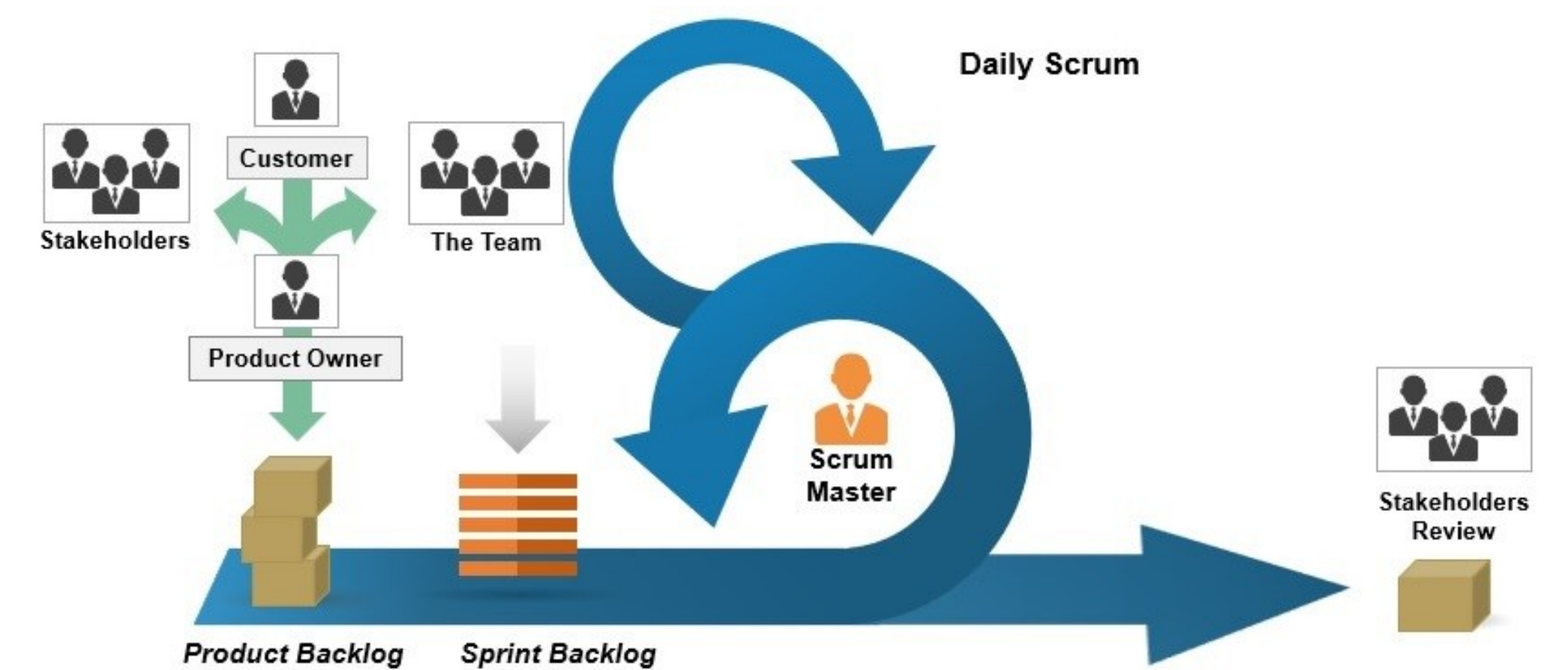
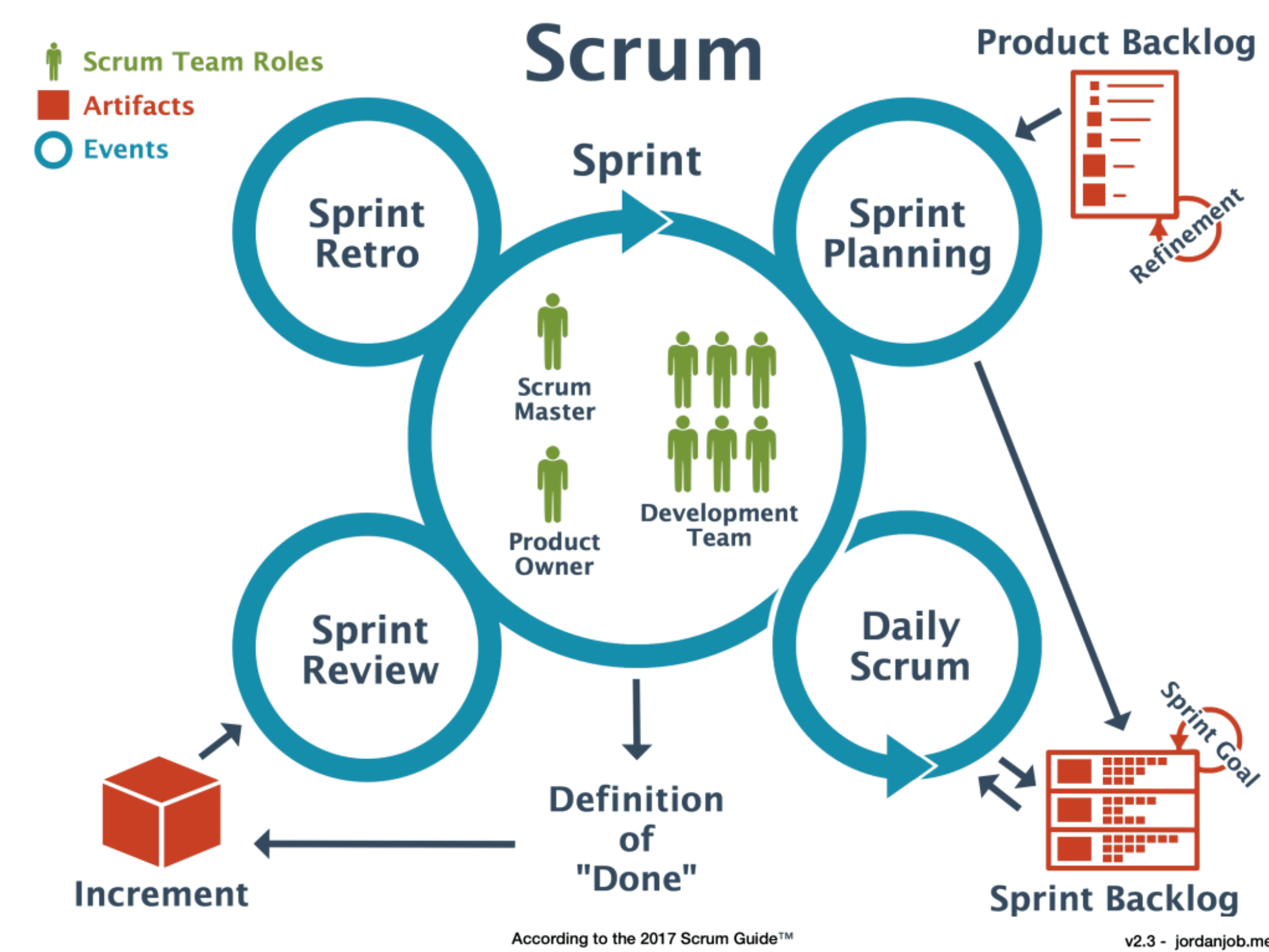
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Research Problem:
The lack of understanding and industry consensus on the role of technical communicators in the agile scrum environment.

Agile Scrum

These graphics explaining the agile scrum sprint cycle fail to include technical writers or communicators as part of the process.



Methodology

- Completed a literature review of the agile scrum framework and a technical writer's current challenges working within it.
- Conducted interviews with 10 employees at Sovos, a computer software company utilizing agile scrum. Participants were either technical writers, or have a role in which they directly interact with technical writers in the agile scrum environment (product owners or software developers).
- Coded responses to determine how technical writers currently work within agile scrum, what is working well, and what isn't.

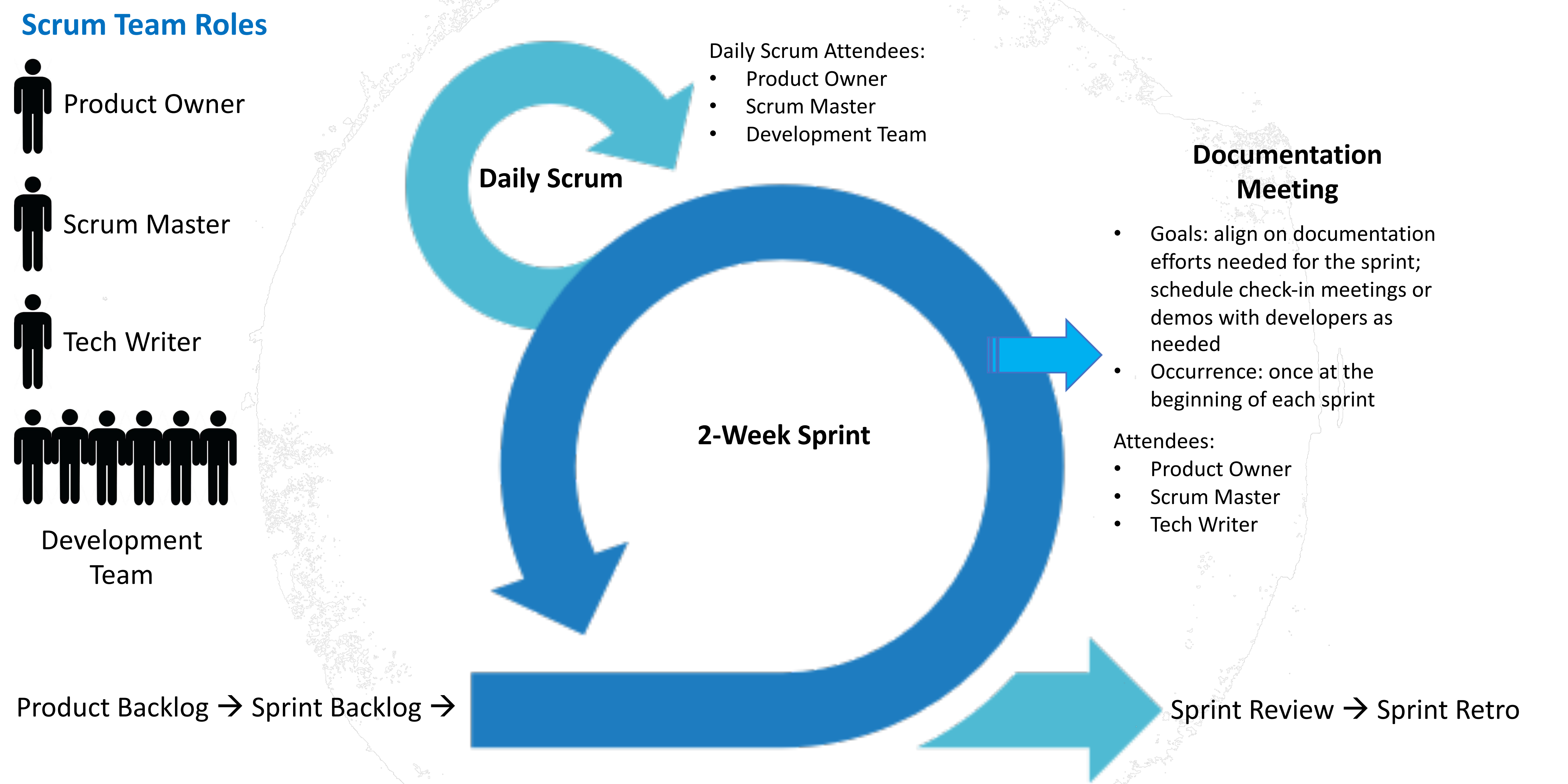
Themes

- Room for Improvement** – Whether because of a lack of consensus around creating tasks or scrum team members not making time to answer tech writer's questions, there is room for improvement in the process.
- Need for Effective Meetings** – Documentation-focused meetings will allow everyone to get on the same page about the work that needs to be done and answer any questions that the tech writer might have. Previously, tech writers were invited to daily scrum meetings but were unsure about when to attend as most meetings did not involve the work they were doing.
- Importance of Review** – While most participants had not had any major issues with tech writer's work, there was some confusion about who's approvals were needed for what work and they thought it would be beneficial to establish some set guidelines.

Recommendations

Scrum Team Roles

- Product Owner
- Scrum Master
- Tech Writer
- Development Team



Do

- Schedule specific documentation meetings at the beginning of each sprint. You, the product owner, and some software developers will use these meetings to align on the documentation efforts that are needed for that sprint and schedule other check-ins or demos as needed.
- Review other tech writer's work and have tech writers and scrum team members review your work before publishing the final version. Getting different eyes on the documentation will allow for the most accurate work possible.

Don't

- Attend every sprint meeting. Most of these will not discuss documentation and will be a waste of your time. Focus your efforts on productive documentation meetings, completing your work, and reviewing others work as needed.
- Create your own Jira tickets. Scrum team members should be responsible for notifying you when something they are working on requires documentation. Track these tickets as you complete work to keep team members updated on your progress.