

# Praveen Kothapally

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## Professional Summary

Senior Program Manager, Scrum Master, and Release Manager with 22+ years of experience leading global, cross-functional teams through enterprise delivery, release governance, and operating model transformation across insurance and financial services. Track record includes managing multi-million-dollar technology portfolios, delivering zero-defect releases for core banking platforms, and driving 20% productivity gains with \$150K–\$250K cost savings per initiative. Expert in full release lifecycles from sprint readiness through production validation, DevOps and automation engineering (70% manual effort reduction), and audit/compliance management across ISO 27001, ICIF, PCI, and third-party risk frameworks. Hands-on AI practitioner building production-ready prototypes including UnderwriterAI, TestMaster, and JiraFieldMaster. Certified PMP, SAFe 6 Agilist, and Scrum Master.

## Work Experience

### Traveler Insurance - Zurich-CoverMore Group, Remote, MN

#### Program Manager / Scrum Master - Release, Governance, and Compliance

Dec 2023 - Present

- Own end-to-end release governance: sprint readiness, release planning, deployment coordination, production validation, and retrospective follow-up using Jira and Confluence.
- Lead production deployment calls, manage order of operations, and drive real-time issue resolution across Dev, QA, BA, and Infrastructure teams.
- Create and maintain release Confluence pages, deployment runbooks, production validation documents, release calendars, and communication artifacts used by Dev, QA, BA, and Infrastructure teams.
- Run release planning meetings to confirm development and QA readiness, ticket sequencing, deployment timing, order of operations, rollback awareness, and cross-team dependencies.
- Track day-plus-one validation and release closure, ensuring issues are logged, ownership is clear, and residual actions are followed through before the next sprint begins.
- Coordinate audit and compliance activities across ISO 27001, ICIF, PCI, and internal controls; maintain evidence repositories and control traceability.
- Built and maintain centralized evidence repositories in Confluence and SharePoint, improving documentation quality, accessibility, and audit response efficiency.
- Develop control traceability across RACE, Zurich control frameworks, and internal implementation activities to improve clarity of ownership and coverage.
- Coordinate evidence collection, action-item follow-up, and meeting preparation for audit, risk, and compliance reviews across technology and business stakeholders.
- Manage sanction screening governance including rollout support, production monitoring, file cadence oversight, and phase-two readiness coordination.
- Spearheaded Third-Party Risk Management (TPRM) process implementation with cross-functional stakeholders.
- Built UnderwriterAI, a multi-agent AI platform concept for underwriting automation, and applied generative AI to accelerate documentation, control mapping, and stakeholder reporting.
- Coach three delivery teams in self-management, Agile methodologies, and Scrum ceremonies to improve execution discipline and predictability.

### Bank of The West - BNP Paribas, Omaha, NE

## **Vice President, Technology Manager and Scrum Master - Global Retail Banking**

Oct 2018 - Dec 2023

- Led enterprise quality, delivery, and release initiatives for retail banking programs; served as trusted technology implementation SME.
- Managed vendor relationships, software risk management, and delivery governance for highly visible banking initiatives.
- Spearheaded Agile transformation achieving 20% productivity increase and 40% time savings (\$150,000 cost savings) in data center relocation.
- Established automation engineering and DevOps practices improving test coverage and reducing manual testing effort by 70%.
- Created project delivery and maturity roadmaps across UI, API, and database layers aligned with strategic business objectives.
- Delivered zero-defect releases for core banking projects using Jira, Confluence, XRAY, and CI/CD pipelines.
- Led and coordinated scrum ceremonies and followed both Scrum and Kanban methodologies for different project needs using various Agile tools like JIRA, Confluence, XRAY.
- Utilized a variety of testing tools and methodologies, including Postman, JMeter, Robot Framework, and Ready API.

## **Bank of The West - BNP Paribas, Omaha, NE**

### **Associate Vice President - Senior Lead Quality Assurance**

Dec 2017 - Oct 2018

- Led 15-member geographically distributed team supporting critical core banking initiatives.
- Developed CI/CD-based automation frameworks for cross-browser, API, and mainframe legacy applications.
- Delivered zero-defect releases saving \$200,000; designed automation solutions saving 200+ hours.
- Promoted BDD and TDD best practices across delivery teams.
- Used various Agile practices like Daily Stand-ups, Sprint/Iteration Planning, Prioritized backlogs, Retrospectives, and MVPs.

## **Bank of The West - BNP Paribas, San Ramon, CA**

### **Senior QA Consultant, Global Banking CRM, Solutions Delivery**

Dec 2015 - Dec 2017

- Served as Scrum Master and Senior QA consultant on core banking and CRM transformation projects.
- Single-handedly designed and managed critical automation initiative contributing to zero-defect releases with \$250,000 savings.
- Used PL/SQL, HP UFT, HP ALM, Jira, Confluence, and Xray to strengthen quality engineering.
- Led Scrum Ceremonies and maintained velocity for the projects.
- Delivered a project and showed a savings of quarter million dollars; was instrumental in successful release of zero-defect releases for core banking application.

## **First Tech Federal Credit Union, Portland, OR**

### **Scrum Master and Senior QA Consultant, Global Banking and Salesforce CRM**

Sep 2014 - Dec 2015

- Served as Senior Test Analyst and Scrum Master on two large engagements; worked on core credit-union and banking-related domains on time-sensitive heavy implementations; managed the user stories for sprint with product owner.
- Implemented Kanban approach in leading enterprise-solutions team and managing team's ceremonies.
- Improved program capability by collaborating with engineering and transition teams to address production issue fixes requested by Business and Product owners.
- Communicated effectively with business and product owners throughout product development, testing, and implementation.

## **American Express, Salt Lake City, UT**

## **Scrum Master and Test Manager, Global Banking**

Feb 2014 - Sep 2014

- Served as Test Manager and Scrum Master for data service and reporting project in global banking technology portfolio.
- Established fast-paced agile process and streamlined testing workflows for engagement.
- Implemented tools contributing to Agile Project management and issue track, Confluence for collaborations, Jenkins for Continuous build and development.
- Coordinated ETL validation using PL-SQL and SQL on source files using client server architecture.

## **Apple, Cupertino, CA**

### **Process Implementation Manager / Scrum Master / QA Lead, Sales CRM**

Dec 2010 - Feb 2014

- Worked on Sales Systems portfolio as Process Manager and QA Lead by implementing processes across different projects in portfolio and led QA for internal sales application using Selenium with Java automation.
- Managed QA teams at both onsite and offshore to deliver large releases with boundary teams.
- Established QA gating processes and implemented Agile methodologies across projects in sales CRM engagement.
- Demonstrated ownership by identifying and developing automation scripts incrementally, considering execution time and the amount of maintenance to achieve improvement in productivity and reduction in test maintenance efforts in a CI/CD environment.
- Decreased test time by 20%, collaborating with Test Automation to plan effort for each release.

## **Infosys, Accenture, Alamy, Informa Technologies, India**

### **Technical Test Lead, Senior Software Test Engineer, Test Engineer**

May 2002 - Dec 2010

- Led test automation and QA delivery for enterprise clients across insurance, banking, and media domains.
- Developed automation frameworks using Selenium, HP UFT, and custom scripting tools.
- Managed onsite-offshore delivery models and coordinated multi-team releases.

## **AI Projects & Hackathon**

### **AgentVerse AI Hackathon Initiative (2025)**

- Participated in Zurich/Cover-More agentic AI innovation efforts; shaped business use cases for underwriting support, claims/service acceleration, and operational productivity.
- Created AI product concepts, pitch narratives, landing-page content, and reusable frameworks using AI agents, prompt engineering, and product strategy for insurance and audit/compliance workflows.

### **UnderwriterAI (2025)**

- Built a GitHub-hosted TypeScript multi-agent AI platform concept designed to automate routine underwriting decisions, provide real-time broker support, and surface actionable intelligence from policy and underwriting data.

### **TestMaster, JiraFieldMaster, Agent Assist & Automation Tools (2024 - 2026)**

- Developed prototypes using Python, JavaScript, TypeScript, Flask, SQLite, and Jira APIs for test management, field governance, reporting, and AI-assisted team workflows.
- Built test management capabilities covering test suites, test cases, test plans, test runs, execution evidence, reporting, dashboard analytics, and Jira integration concepts.

## **Skills**

**Leadership:** Project Management, Program Management, Release Governance, Audit & Compliance, Risk Management, Stakeholder Management, Vendor Management, Operating Model Design

**Tools & Platforms:** Jira, Confluence, SharePoint, XRAY, Rally, ALM, MS Project, Jenkins, Splunk, Dynatrace, GitHub, GitLab

**AI & Automation:** Generative AI, Prompt Engineering, AI Agents, AI-assisted SDLC, Robot Framework, Selenium, UFT, Cucumber, Postman, ReadyAPI

**Technology:** Python, TypeScript, JavaScript, Java, SQL, PL/SQL, Oracle, SQL Server, Salesforce CRM, REST APIs, SOAP, CI/CD

**Methods:** Agile, Scrum, Kanban, SAFe, SDLC, BDD, TDD, Continuous Improvement

## Education

**Bangalore University**, Bangalore, India

B.E. in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, 1998 - 2001

## Licenses & Certifications

- **Project Management Professional (PMP)** — Project Management Institute (Credential ID 3302123, Aug 2022 - Aug 2028)
- **Certified SAFe 6 Agilist (SA)** — Scaled Agile Inc (Credential ID 89778697-1890, Dec 2023 - Mar 2027)
- **Scrum Master Accredited Certification** — International Scrum Institute (Certificate Number 27392127347644)