IIT AGILE
Transformation Office

WRITING GOOD USER STORIES

EDGAR C. WORTS, III

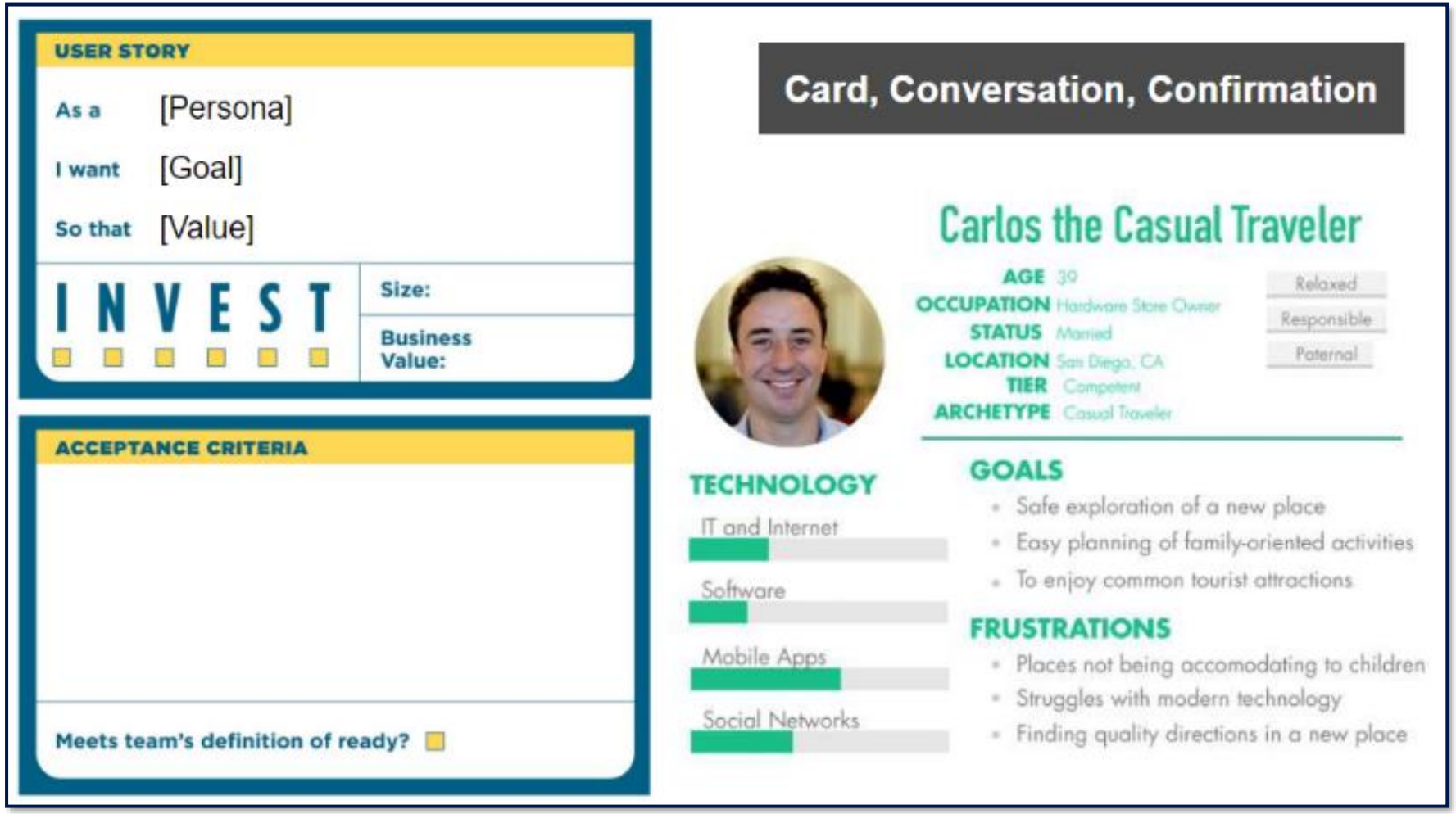
AGENDA

1. What, Why, and Who
2. Characteristics of a User Story
3. Product Backlog Refinement
    1. Epics vs Features vs User Stories
    2. Acceptance Criteria
    3. Agile Estimation
4. Sprint Planning: Task Breakdown
5. Bad and Good Examples
6. Definition of Ready
7. Open Space

WHAT, WHY, WHO

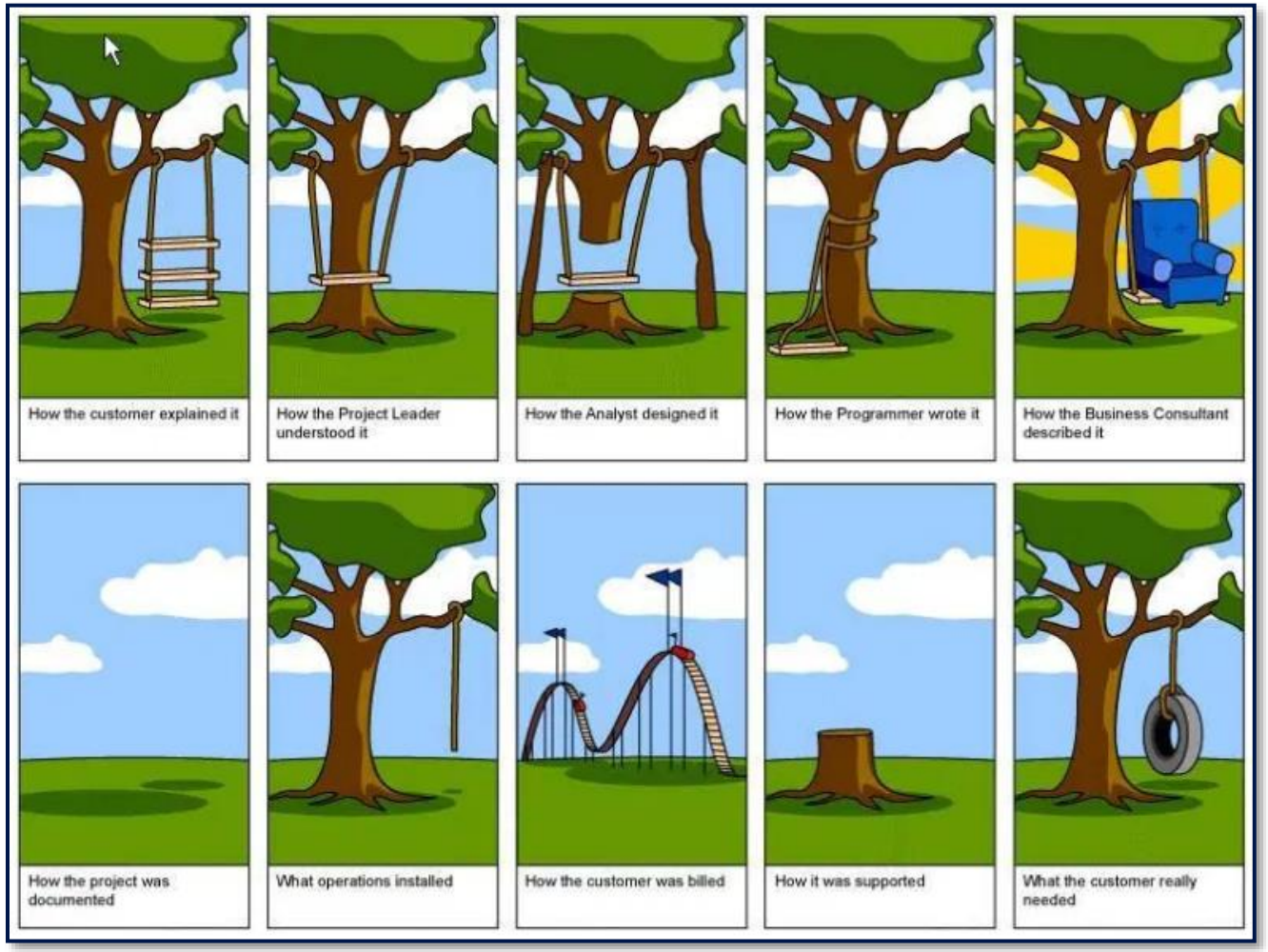
USER STORIES: WHAT

- A user story represents a small piece of business value that a team can deliver in an iteration.



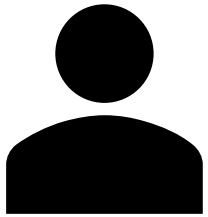
USER STORIES: THE REAL WHY

- Because all stakeholders should be able to understand what a system must do to deliver the desired value to their customers and because we want to promote conversation and clarification.



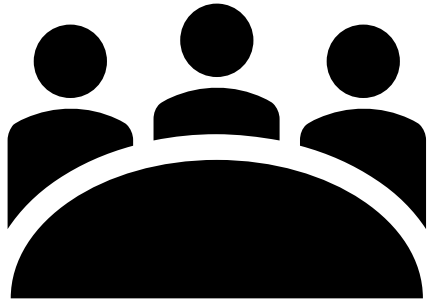
USER STORIES: WHO

Product Owner (P.O.)



- Gathers Feedback
- Makes Business Decisions
- Voice of the Customer
- Owns Value
- Owns the Product Backlog

Scrum Team



Anyone can write user stories. Who writes a user story is far less important than who is involved in the discussions of it.

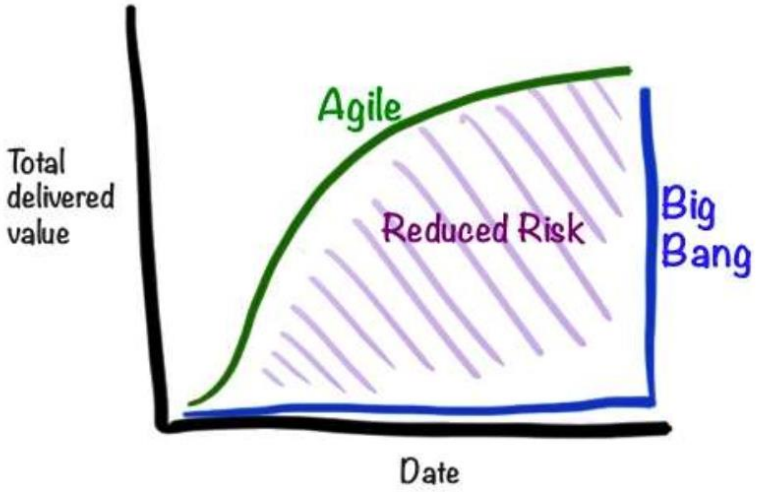
CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD USER STORY

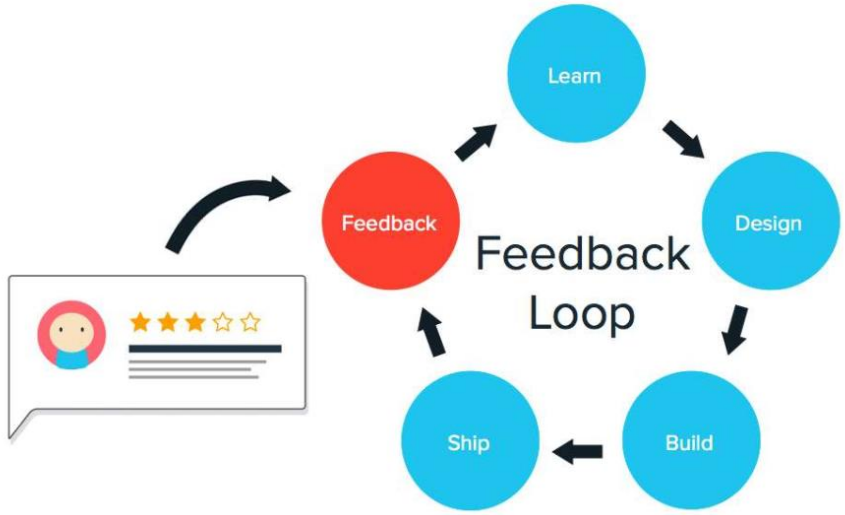
USER STORIES: INVEST

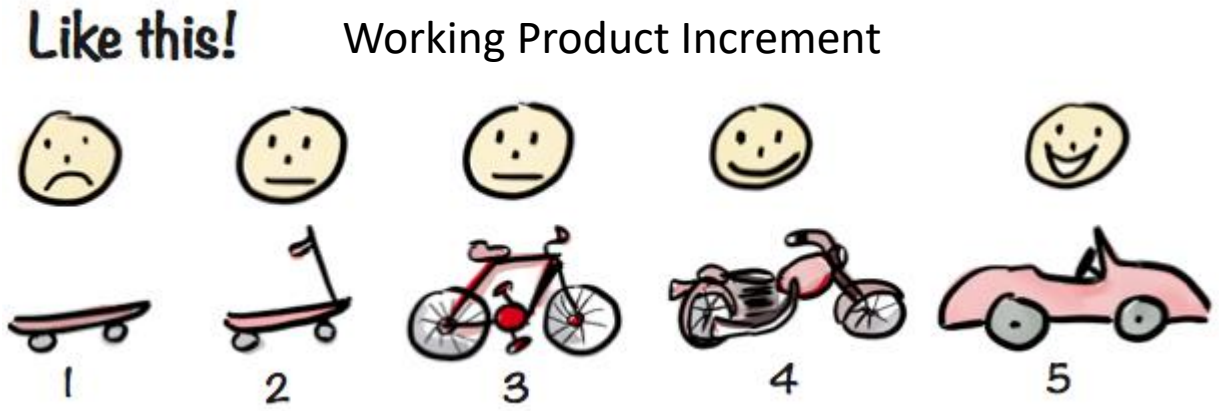
- If Product Owners and their teams work together to INVEST in good user stories the learning curve of working together will be much shorter.
- Characteristics of a Good Story

Independent	It should be self-contained.
Negotiable	Not carved in stone and should leave space for discussion.
Valuable	It must deliver value to the identified persona.
Estimable	It is possible to estimate its size.
Small	It must fit within an iteration.
Testable	It must provide the necessary information to be tested.

USER STORIES: VALUE

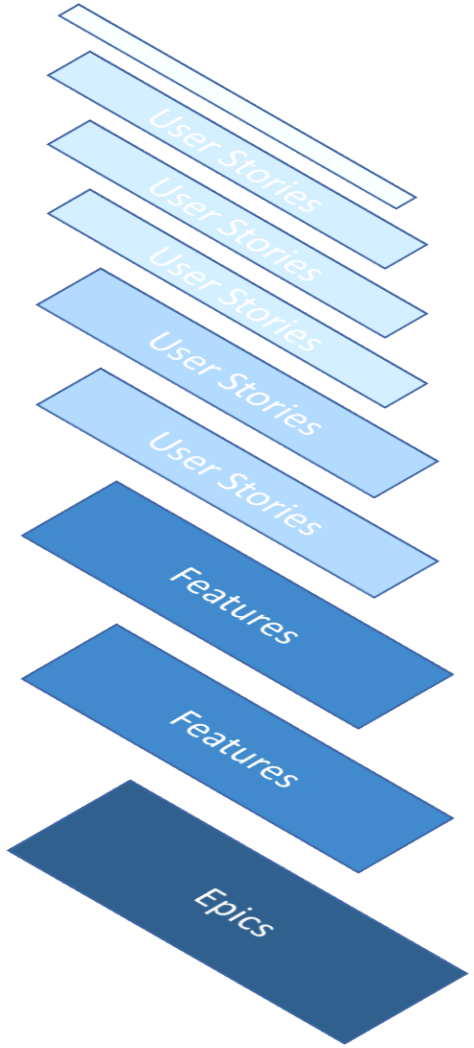






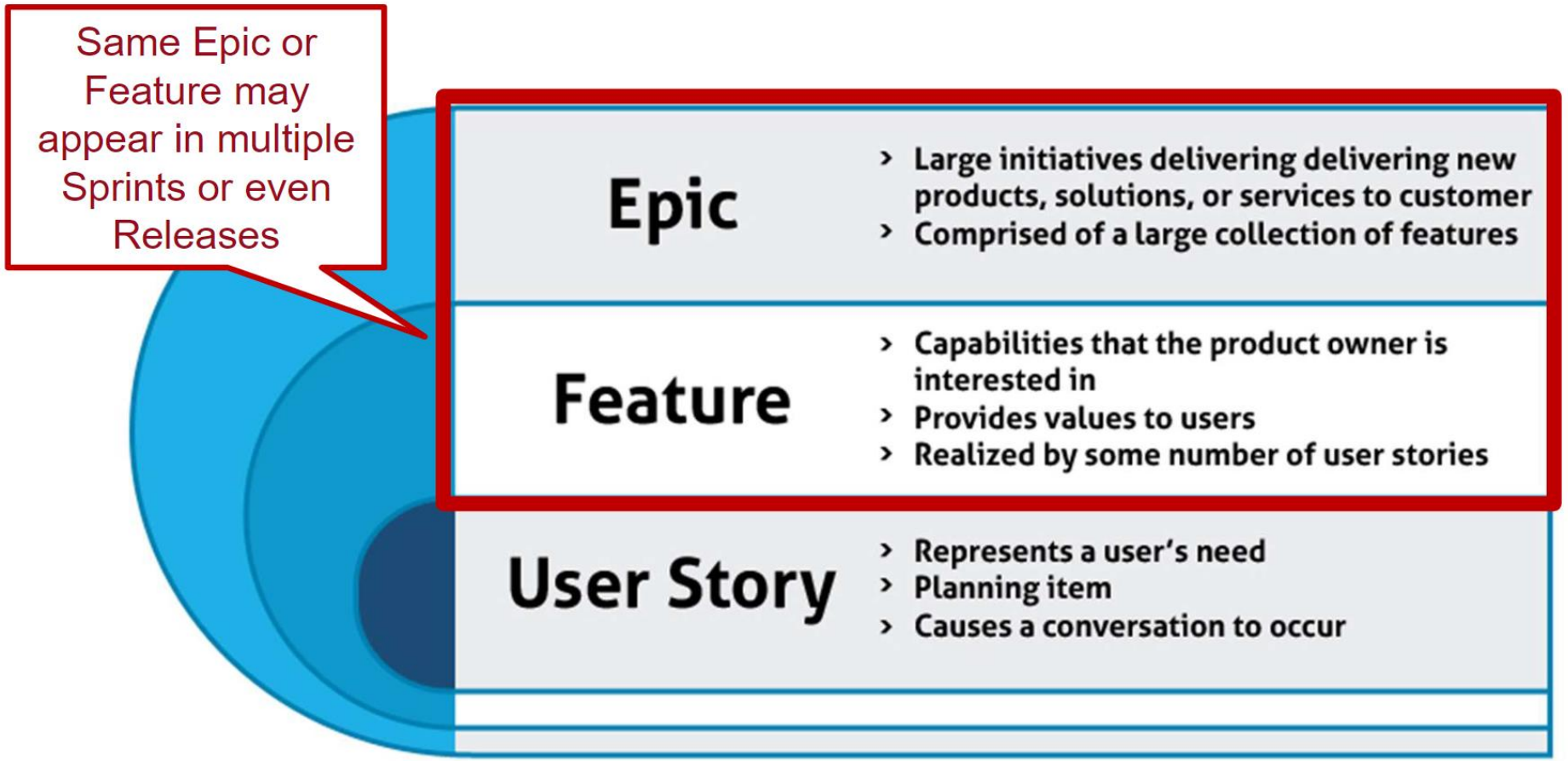
PRODUCT BACKLOG REFINEMENT:

EPICS VS FEATURES VS USER STORIES



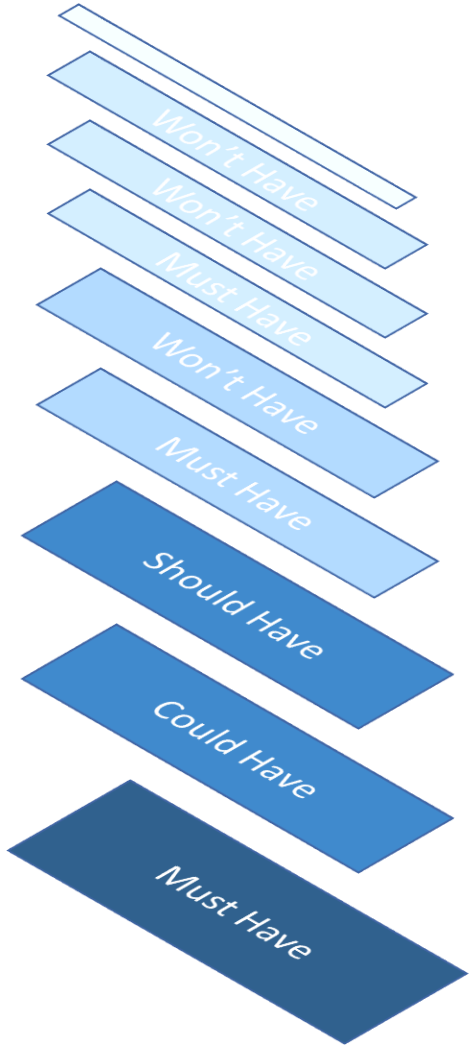
THE SIMPLE WAY

USER STORIES: VSTS PRODUCT BACKLOG



PRODUCT BACKLOG REFINEMENT:

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

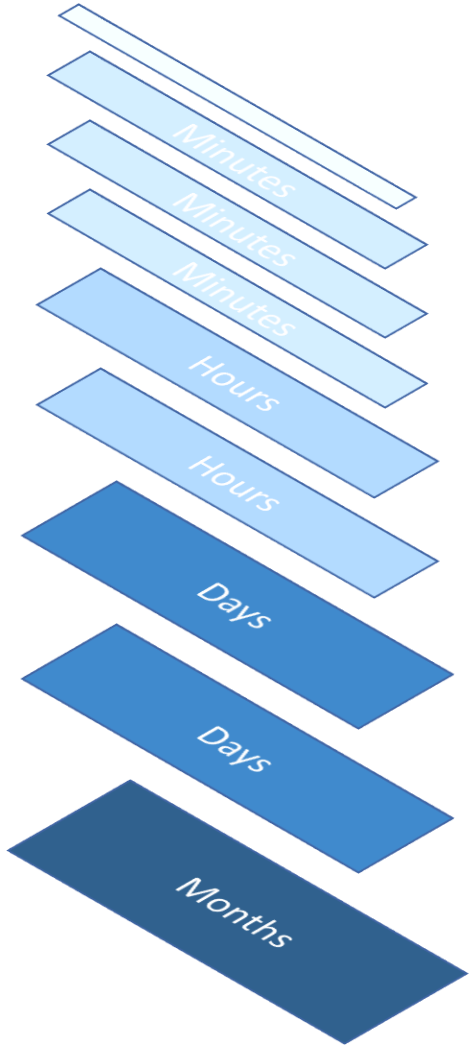


ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

- Like User Stories it is written in **simple language**
- Define the **conditions of success/satisfaction**
- Provide clear user story **boundaries**
- **Remove ambiguity** by forcing the team to think through how a feature or piece of functionality will work from the user's perspective
- Establish the basis for **acceptance testing**
  - **Steps to test the user story**(given-when-then scenarios)

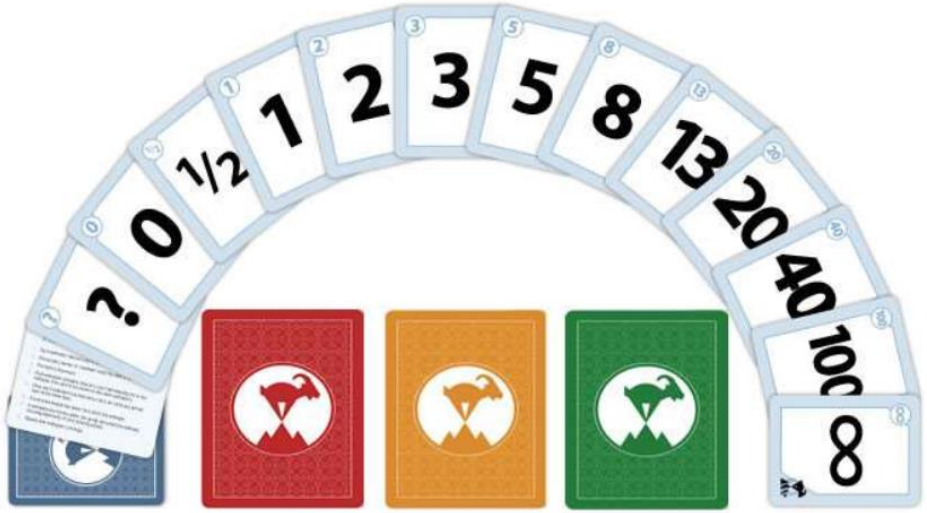
PRODUCT BACKLOG REFINEMENT:

ESTIMATION



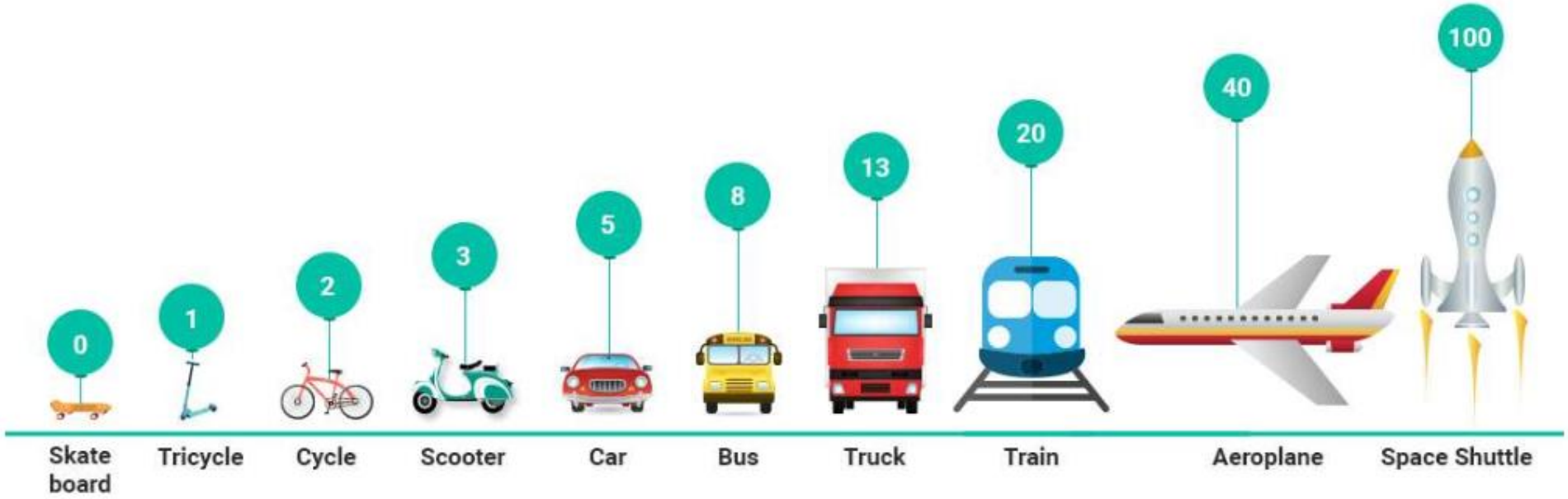
ESTIMATION

- Planning Poker (Story Points)



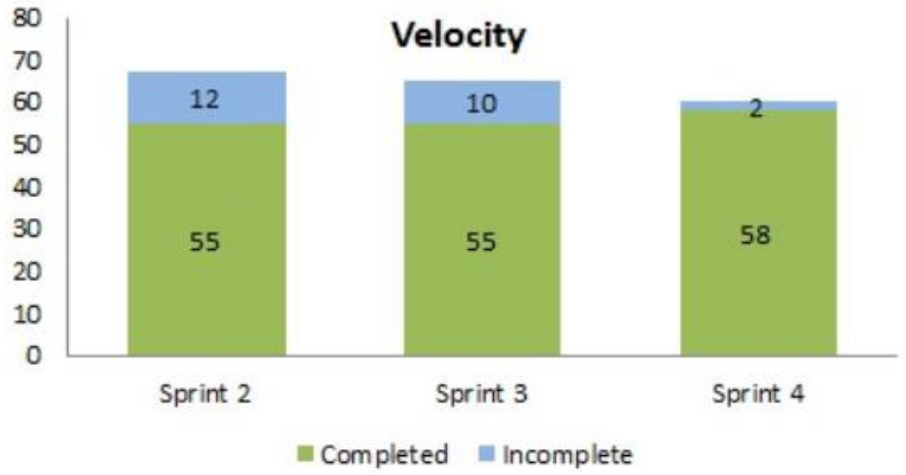
- T-Shirt Sizing

ESTIMATION

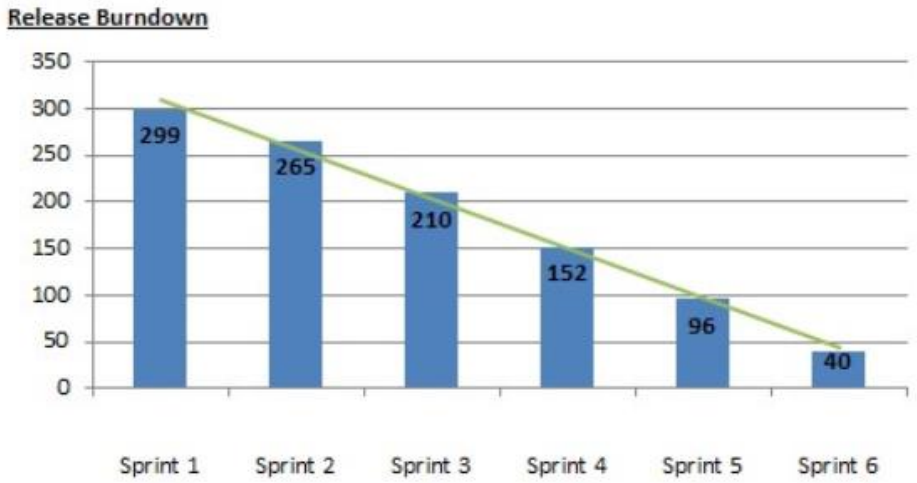


Complexity
Risk
Implementation
Deployment
Interdependencies

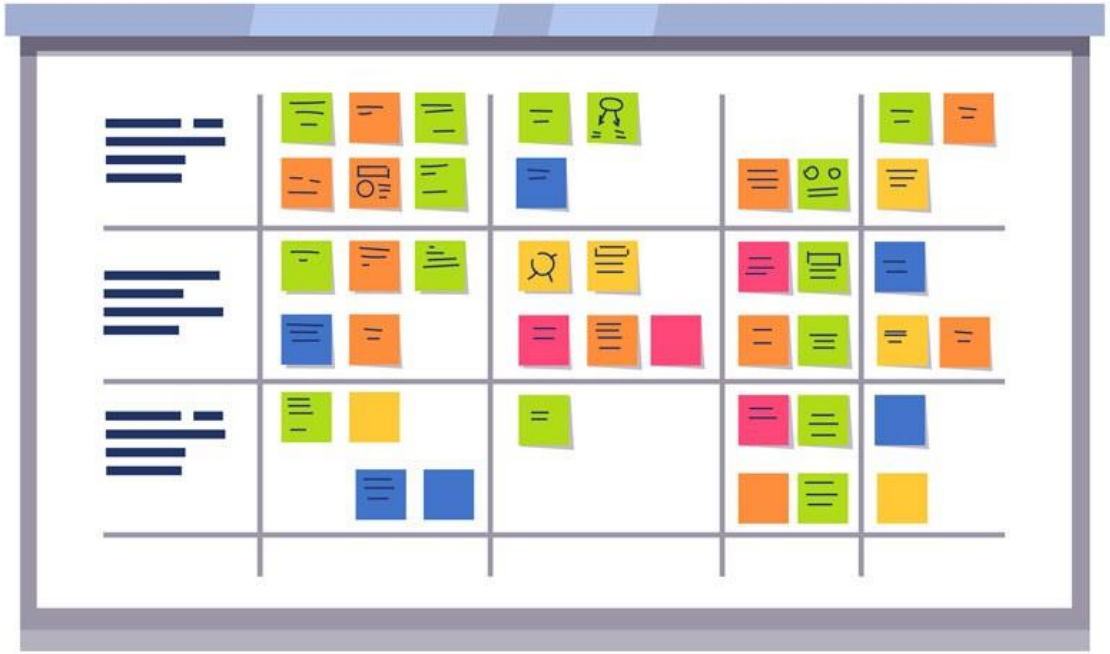
ESTIMATION: VELOCITY & RELEASE PLAN



56 Story Points

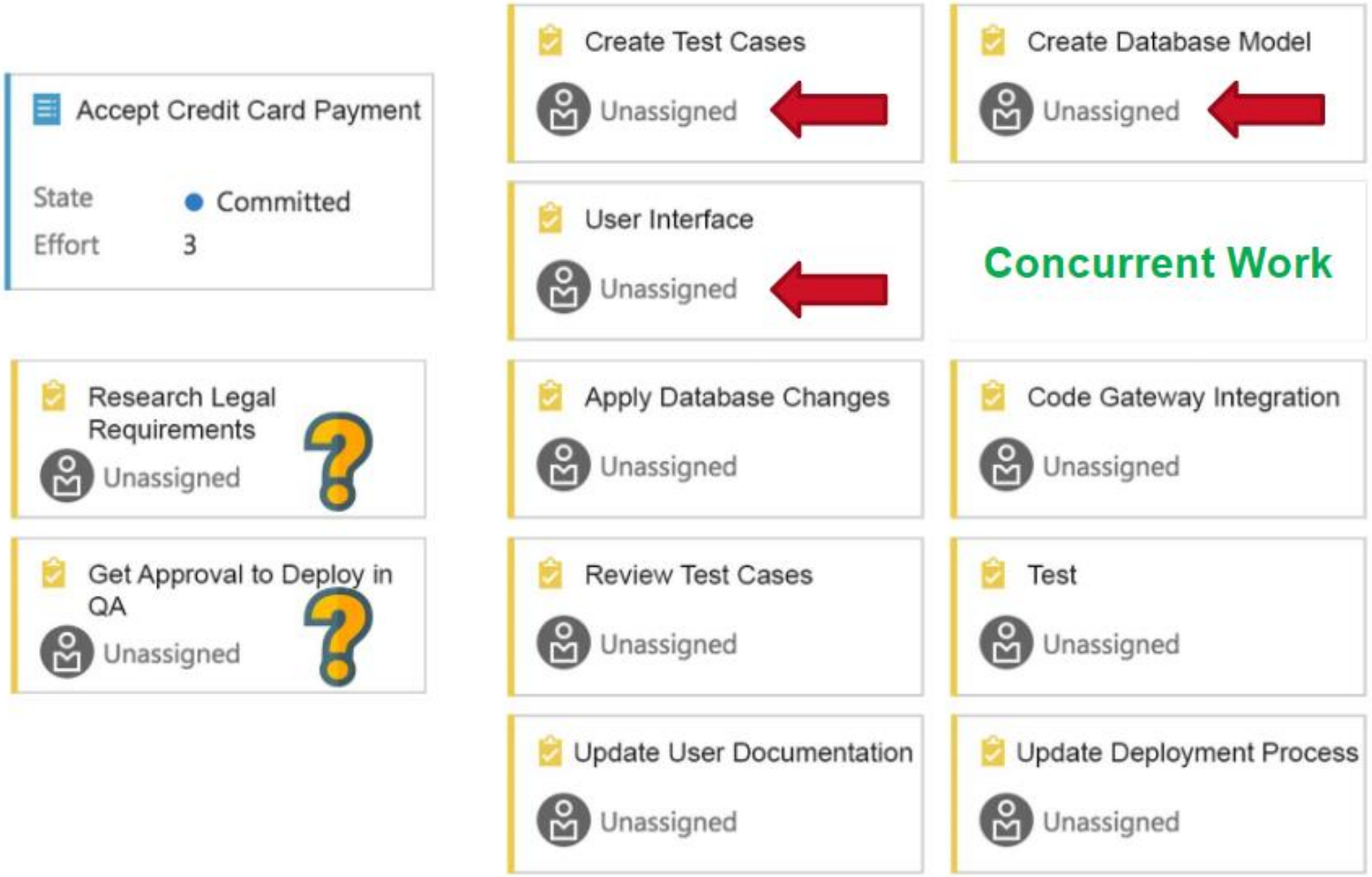


299 Story Points
Product Backlog



SPRINT PLANNING TASK BREAKDOWN

TASK BREAKDOWN – MAPPING THE VALUE STREAM



BAD AND GOOD EXAMPLES

USER STORIES: BAD EXAMPLES (1 OF 3)

Slice it!

As a Manny's food service customer, I need to save my list so that I can reorder from the list to create more accurate food orders.

As a Manny's food service customer, I need to copy my list so that I can use it as a starting point for creating another list.

As a Manny's food service customer, I need to print my list so that I can check a received shipment against the printed list.

As a Manny's food service customer, I need to email my list so that I can have someone who doesn't use the system review my list.

USER STORIES: BAD EXAMPLES (2 OF 3)

- As a Manny's food service customer, I want to see different food item types displayed in different colors—RGB = #FF0000 for meats, #A52AFA for grains, and #808000 for vegetables and fruits—so that I can quickly identify my food items by food type.

As a Manny's food service customer, I want food item types to be displayed in groups so that I can find them on the screen more quickly.

USER STORIES: BAD EXAMPLES (3 OF 3)

- As a customer ordering food, I want to locate previous food order lists so that I can see all the lists that I have.

As a customer ordering food, I want to see my saved food order lists so that I can reuse the list for future orders, making ordering faster and more accurate.

USER STORIES: 5 COMMON MISTAKES

Criteria Crisis

None, restate the narrative, and hide new stories.

“Confirmation”

Story Mania

Like any technique, user story writing has its strengths and limitations.

WHEN IS MY USER STORY READY FOR DEVELOPMENT?

DEFINITION OF READY

- Enables a team to specify certain pre-conditions that must be fulfilled before a story is allowed into an iteration
  - Example:
    - Acceptance criteria must be clear and testable.
    - All tasks assigned to the story.
    - Team is staffed appropriately to complete it.
    - User stories need to be INVEST.
    - Performance criteria exist
    - Ensure the result is demonstrable.
    - Mockups