

Agile Product Ownership

Maximizing the role and accelerating success



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Building Alignment with Business Analysis



Maximizing the Role and Accelerating Success

Many teams want to see better agile results, but can't pinpoint the root cause of their struggles. In many cases, the missing link between agile struggle and agile success is a lack of focus on the Product Owner role. Most Product Owners are just thrown into the role. They don't understand what product ownership is and don't receive Product Owner training. When teams only focus on Scrum Master training and sprint execution, teams can easily create waste and rework, building the WRONG stuff, maybe even faster!

The Product Owner role is critical to ensure the team delivers **value** by working on the RIGHT product, features, and feature details. This is so important to project success, it inspired this eBook. Enjoy a journey into what great product ownership looks like and help your team get more from agile.

Is your organization/team getting everything they expect out of agile or are they searching for a missing link?

Are you seeing any of these symptoms?

- **Never-Ending or Carry-Over Stories** - Do your iterations/sprints drag on for weeks or months after the target delivery date? Does your team complete iterations on time, but only after deciding to carry several stories over to the next iteration? Does your team struggle with low morale because they don't feel like they are making progress?
- **Going Nowhere Quickly** - Does your team focus on speed/velocity instead of focusing on value and building the right thing?
- **Foggy Future** - Does your team have a clear vision? Do they have a shared understanding of the product? Do they know how each iteration contributes to the vision? Do they understand how every item in the backlog connects to the vision?
- **Skeptical Leaders** - Are leaders questioning if agile is delivering promised benefits? Do they still see scope creep? Are defect lists and enhancement requests trending up? Has product quality/value from a business and user perspective remained the same or decreased?

In contrast, effective product ownership delivers pleasant side effects like:

- **Steady Progress** - Sprints/iterations finish on time with expected scope.
- **Steady Flow** - Resources are maximized because of timely decisions that provide a steady flow of work.
- **Shared Understanding** - The team understands the big picture and uses this understanding to deliver the right features. They understand how small features fit in the big roadmap. They know where they are going, and why.

Myths Associated with Product Ownership

Myth - No Planning

Planning, especially product planning is essential. A Product Owner's planning tools include the product vision, product roadmap, release plan, and personas. Planning includes:

- Understanding priorities
- Reducing risk (business, technical, and social)
- Increasing solution **value** and feasibility
- Aligning solutions to the organization's strategy for serving users

POs do not plan using detailed solution specifications and/or project tasks. Instead, PO planning is more about setting a direction, understanding **value**, and aligning **values** and directions. POs expect plans to change. As the product evolves and market conditions shift, POs apply new ideas, and only dig into details for the most immediate pieces of work. Features and tasks are not well-defined until they rise to the top of the priority list. Planning in the early stages of product development focus on what the product is, what it does and what increments of **value** should be delivered.

Myth - No Documentation

The agile manifesto does not call for the end of documentation—it simply encourages collaboration over documentation. Here are a few ways to demonstrate this **value**:

- Only document when it delivers **value** and when it makes sense. Don't document out of fear, but out of **value**. Question whether or not documentation serves the team and the team's goals.
- If the team agrees a document will help them work faster, consider creating/maintaining the document.
- If documentation is "needed" because a process claims it is needed or someone fears it will be needed, question the **value**.
- Ask your team: "How long will the document live for and be valid?" "Who would pay for the time it takes to create it, do they **value** the document that much?"

Myth - No Requirements or Business Analysis

We have all seen the list of roles for agile methodologies—they do not include a Business Analyst. Does that mean we get to skip business analysis? **Absolutely not!** The skill set of business analysis is critical; the role that performs this skill is flexible.

To fill this skill set on the team, many **BAs work with the POs** to carry out the mission of product ownership and keep the team moving forward. When BAs know where they fit and where to focus their mindset, energy and skills, they are a huge asset to the team. Teams that neglect analysis struggle with delivering timely and **valuable** products.

The Three Pillars of Product Ownership

Now, more than ever, Product Owners need to develop a deeper understanding of their role, which leads us to several obvious questions:

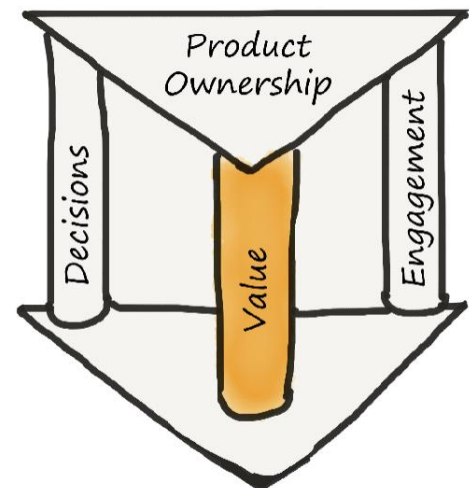
- What are the characteristics of an effective Product Owner?
- What are the responsibilities of an effective Product Owner?
- What does the average day of a Product Owner look like?
- What techniques do effective Product Owners use?
- How do effective Product Owners model agile principles?

We will explore these questions below as we look at the pillars of product ownership, key aspects of the role, and how to be a great Product Owner.

Product ownership balances on top of three pillars: value, decisions and engagement.

When all three pillars stand together, your team experiences effective product ownership. A missing or stunted pillar increases the likelihood your team will struggle. Effective product ownership happens when the right person or group consistently applies a **value** mindset to facilitate good **decisions** with the team. Consider what happens when one of the pillars is missing:

- Without a **value** mindset, your product might not align with customer needs or organizational goals (getting the right stuff built, not just building it faster).
- Without the consistent **engagement** and presence of the Product Owner, the team might lose focus or productivity might suffer. The Product Owner needs to be **engaged** with the team to make timely **decisions**.
- Without a Product Owner that knows how to work collaboratively to make good, **value-focused decisions**, your team might struggle with communication and the vision might become murky.
- Without timely **decisions** the team struggles with pace. Product owners need the authority to **make decisions** quickly. Waiting on **decisions** is detrimental to flow pace.



The Agile Mindset for a Product Owner

At first glance, the 12 Agile Principles seem simple. But applying the lens of a Product Owner helps us dig deeper. To truly understand the Product Owner mindset, let's look at the 12 Agile Principles from a successful Product Owner's point of view:

1. *Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of **valuable** software.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: What goes into each sprint/iteration is more important than the iteration itself. POs determine the highest priority requirements, and that is what the team works on.

2. *Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: Openness to emerging thoughts and ideas will make the product more **valuable** as we learn along the way. POs allow external market changes and feedback from customers to continuously influence product vision and drive **value** to the customer. Effective POs should be changing requirements and priorities as needed to maximize **value**.

3. *Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: POs decide which functionality gets delivered and in what order. POs and BAs help the team slice work into small increments of **value**. POs and BAs help the team slice stories using business **value**, technical dependencies, technical debt, and learning from experiments and research.

4. *Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: POs and BAs are **engaged** and available to the team on a daily basis. They facilitate continuous conversations throughout the day using high impact form of communication that results in rapid learning and fast **decision-making**. When this is done well, requirements and documentation are kept lightweight.

5. *Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: Product owners serve the team, the user and the organization. They determine what gets built and help the team understand each piece of work. The PO must have authority to prioritize, **make decisions**, balance trade-offs, and say "no" when needed to features or work that does not align with the product vision. The PO allows the development team to use their technical know-how to co-design and develop features.

- 6. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: The PO and BA do not “hand off” requirements and stories. They are **engaged** and the team works together via conversations, facilitated sessions and structured dialog. They collaborate on a daily basis to understand stories and features. The PO **values** face-to-face conversation with the team over documentation. A common face-to-face collaboration format is the “Three Amigos”, where the Developer, QA, and BA/PO get together to review stories.

- 7. Working software is the primary measure of progress.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: Working software is defined by **value** to the users and organization. The PO and BA demonstrate this principle via prioritized stories and well-defined acceptance criteria.

- 8. Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: The PO and BA deliver work, just in time, to developers. The PO helps the team slice and estimate work. When the backlog is well refined, the planning and execution of the iteration flows smoothly and maintains a steady, manageable pace.

- 9. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: The PO and BA work with the development team to understand technical risks, architecture, and debt. The PO contributes to technical excellence by helping the development team understand the product vision and roadmap. In turn, the development team helps the PO manage workflow and prioritization by communicating technical tasks in the context of **value**.

- 10. Simplicity — the art of maximizing the amount of work not done — is essential.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: The PO and BA refine the backlog to shift the team’s focus to the highest priority items. The PO has a ruthless focus on **value** and says “NO” to many items submitted to the backlog. Teams do not spend time elaborating lower priority items. Details are sparse until work items move to the top of the backlog.

- 11. The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: The PO sets the priorities, but all team members have the skills and expertise needed to self-organize and get the work done.

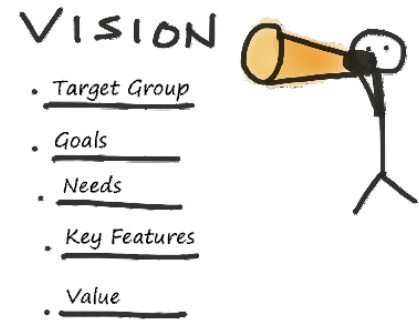
- 12. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.*

PRODUCT OWNER LENS: POs and BAs participate in retrospectives. Frequent retrospectives drive continuous improvement and change the way the team works to maximize **value** to the users and organizations. POs are open to change in the product and the process.

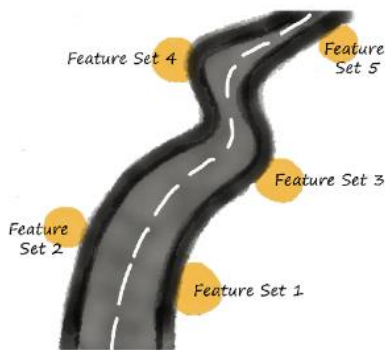
Product Owner Responsibilities

Create and Communicate the Product Vision

The product vision includes the strategic attributes of the product. It's like an elevator pitch that describes the product, its functions and the **value** it brings to the end-user. Product owners use techniques like a vision statement, product box or a visual product chart to create the product vision. POs work with the team to create a shared understanding of vision and **value**. What happens if the PO skips the product vision, or creates it but fails to communicate its contents? In most cases, projects struggle without a clear product vision. The risk of building the wrong product increases dramatically.



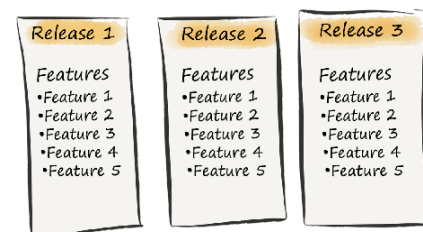
Build the Product Roadmap



Using the product vision as a guidepost, the product roadmap outlines the key features of the product, and offers a proposed sequence for delivery. The roadmap usually changes as the team learns more about **value** and market conditions. **Value** analysis helps the PO, BA and the team determine which features to build first. The PO leads the team in “minimum viable” thinking, just enough to meet the goals. Product Owners and Business Analysts work with the team to balance **value** and risk. Teams usually experiment with high-risk features early in the project to accurately determine where it belongs on the roadmap.

Plan Releases

Product Owners drive release planning. They ensure that each release delivers **value** to the customer. They use the product vision, the product roadmap, and input from the technical team to help the team bundle features into releases.



Create and Refine the Backlog

The backlog contains features and user stories in varying levels of detail and readiness. The backlog may contain product-level features, release-level features and iteration/sprint-level user stories. Product Owners and BAs evaluate and update the backlog constantly as the team learns, and as user environment and expectations change. Product Owners prioritize the backlog based on the product vision, the product roadmap and the release plan. As backlog items move closer to release, their priority rises and the level of details defined increases. Ideally, the team does not dive into user story details unless the story is scheduled to be in the next few iterations/sprints.

Here's an example:

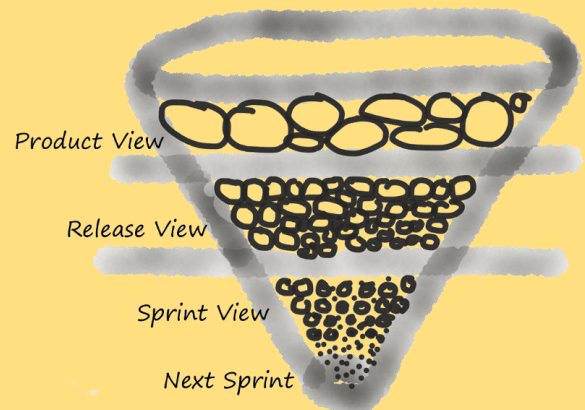
Backlog – Funnel View

Product View - Top level of the funnel

- As a shopper, I would like to see what is in my cart, while shopping, so I can manage what I am going to checkout with.

Release View – Middle level of the funnel

- As a shopper, I need to see the item details in my cart, so I can make sure it is what I want to buy.
- As a shopper, I want to see the total amount of my cart, so I know how much I am spending when I check out.



Slice it! – Bottom of the funnel

- As a shopper, I want to manage the quantity of each item in my cart, so I can make sure the quantities are correct before checking out.
- As a shopper, I want to see the total amount of the products in my cart, so I know how much I am spending before checking out.

Slice it more! SPRINT VIEW! – The very bottom of the funnel

- As a shopper, I want to see the quantity of each item in my cart, so I can make sure it is the right number before I check out.
- As a shopper, I want to change the quantity of each item in my cart, so I can make sure my cart is correct before checking out.
- As a shopper, I want to apply a promo code and see it reflected in my cart, so that I know what the price is before checking out.

Elicit and Prioritize Requirements

The product vision, product roadmap and release plan include features and themes of features. To get these features into an iteration/sprint, the team needs to break features into requirements, stories, or increments of **value** small enough to complete in a sprint/iteration. Since many teams utilize user stories, they will be our example going forward. Getting user stories ready for an iteration/sprint is a big task! Product Owners and BAs work with the team to analyze stories and slice them into pieces of **value** that can fit into a single iteration.

Prepare, Analyze and Prioritize User Stories

User stories describe the **value** of the product from the user's perspective—not the Product Owner's or team's perspective. When teams approach user stories as a placeholder for conversation, the user stories

become a great tool for creating shared understanding. They are meant to be discussed, not to be a formal document or item to hand off. Effective Product Owners and BAs protect the **value** of the product by facilitating great user stories and refining them into the backlog. Here's how the user story process might work:

User Story Workshops

The PO or BA facilitates user story workshops to get ideas from various perspectives and to ensure user stories focus on **value**, NOT tasks the team needs to complete. The team prepares for the workshop by: Providing context via the product vision, product roadmap, release plan and personas. Reviewing key features, creating the top level of the story map with features, showing the team the user story format and what a good user story is (INVEST criteria for example), some example user stories, and facilitating an activity to get the team talking about value, priority and alignment to the roadmap are the steps to facilitating a User Story Workshop.

User story writing and editing

Everyone can submit user stories (including the PO and BA), but the PO and BA have the added responsibility of evaluating user stories. POs modify, re-write and slice user stories to keep work aligned with the product vision. POs place aligned stories into the backlog according to the stories priority. Product Owners and/or BAs meet with the developers and QA often to review upcoming stories in what is commonly referred to as a “Three Amigos” meeting.

User story prioritization

The PO determines the priority level of each user story. The PO drives the processes that assess **value** and **decide** on delivery sequence and timing.

Define Acceptance Criteria

Product Owners work with BAs and the team to define acceptance criteria for features and user stories. Acceptance criteria should be pretty solid when the sprint begins and should not be full of technical design. The detailed design evolves and changes throughout the iteration/sprint as the team sees the product being built.

Prioritize

Agile teams **value** constant learning and adapting, which makes prioritization an ongoing task for the PO and BA. Prioritization happens on 3 levels: product features, releases and sprints/iterations. POs and BAs use a wide variety of techniques to prioritize in a fluid and ever-evolving manner.

*POs and BAs modify, re-write and slice user stories
to keep work aligned with the product vision.*

A Day in the Life of the Product Owner & BA

Obviously, a Product Owner and BA's daily schedule varies, but use this example to gauge the level of hands-on team **engagement** required for effective product ownership. Notice that is a typical day and there is not much room for an additional full time job. The Product Owner role is a full time job itself!

Time Activity

- 8AM** Get to the office and head to the daily stand up. Listen to the development team share progress and barriers, and share your own barriers. Think about how to help or collaborate to remove the barriers. Listen for the team's understanding of **value** to the user.
- 8:15** Based on the stand up, prepare for the day by thinking about what will provide the most **value** today.
- 8:30** Review and test mid-sprint stories, give feedback to the team.
- 9:00** Plan backlog refining session for following week.
- 10:00** Look at the latest industry and company news. Think about how the events (internal and external) may impact the product. Are there personas we are not considering? Do the priorities change based on news events, internal company happenings or competition factors? Review priorities, review personas, and analyze story map for gaps.
- 11:00** Review stories submitted by other team members for **value**. Determine if they should be added to the backlog. If appropriate, place the stories in the backlog.
- 1:00** Prep for tomorrow's story writing session.
- 1:30** Meet with the development team to talk about a story currently in progress. Discuss context, acceptance criteria and minimum viable product in relationship to the story.
- 2:00** Test the latest updates from the development team per the story feedback given earlier in the day. Provide more feedback to the team and update the acceptance criteria if needed.
- 3PM** Attend an estimating session to provide context and minimum viable product information for story estimating.

Role of the PO

Product Owners represent the customer-facing product. This role entails:

- Communicating and creating a shared understanding of the product vision and how this vision creates **value** for the customer and organization
- Making timely **decisions** about product priorities, attributes and details

Key Functions of Product Owners in Agile Ceremonies

Consider the positive impact an **engaged, value-minded** Product Owner could have on the following agile ceremonies:

Backlog Refinement

The PO and BA facilitate the creation, prioritization, and maintenance of the backlog. The PO usually hosts backlog refinement sessions/workshops with the team every 2-3 weeks. In these sessions the short, mid, and long-term views of the product are refined. Effective backlog sessions create shared understanding among team members. POs use refinement sessions to generate dialog about technical options for the features and stories.

Estimating

The PO and BA bring context, clarify scope and identify the minimum viable product when the team estimates user stories. If the team determines stories are ready for an iteration, but are too big, the PO or BA can lead the slicing process. POs and BAs work with the team to analyze stories to determine where to slice, or to identify gaps in story **value**. Just remember these estimates are relative! Estimates are relative and useful for this team only and are a learning tool.

Sprint/Iteration Planning

Product Owners and BAs are critical to sprint/iteration planning. The PO and BA need to be **engaged** to help the team understand the feature and stories, identify assumptions, answer questions, and continue to facilitate shared understanding and vision with the team. As the team plans the sprint, the PO and BA ensure the team understands the minimum viable product so that the stories being estimated and tasks to complete do not over or under engineer to the goals.

Daily Stand Up/Scrum

The PO and BA should attend daily stand up meetings to protect **value** and clarify vision for the team. The PO listens for obstacles and assists, on the spot, as needed to keep the team moving forward. The PO and BA share their own barriers and activities as well.

Sprint/Iteration Review/Demo

The PO and BA attend the sprint/iteration reviews and demo the functionality. The PO invites others to the review that the product has met the acceptance criteria and will provide the intended **value**. This should NOT be the first time in the sprint the Product Owner sees the working software!

Retrospective

During retrospectives, the PO and BA promote continuous improvement and keep the team focused on building the right product, not just building the product right. POs advocate for frequent and effective retrospectives. POs help the team incorporate changes based on feedback gathered in the retrospectives.

Product Owner Skills

There are many critical skills POs and BAs need to be successful:

- Relationship Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Communication Skills
- Design Thinking Skills
- Leadership Skills

In addition, here are some critical, but often neglected and misunderstood, skills of great Product Owners:

Value Thinking & Analysis

How would your team benefit from a consistent focus on **value**—from a person who truly understands how to find, communicate and deliver **value**? **Value** should be front-of-mind for POs at all times. POs and BAs are like guard dogs of **value**. They protect **value** by ensuring the team understands how features/stories/iterations benefit the end-user and the organization. POs use **value** to question and analyze even detailed options and alternatives. They evaluate the **value** of their options against risk and cost to make good **decisions**. When POs and BAs hit the mark on **value** analysis, they influence the market, the competition, and the dynamics of the organization in a big way!

The Value Mindset

The Product Owner and BA roles are all about **value**—**value** to the customer, **value** to the end user and **value** to the organization. It can be difficult to make sure Product Owners and teams do not skew the definition of **value** with their own biases. POs and BAs need to work hard to truly understand the needs of the business, the customer and the end user.

Product Owners and BAs ensure the right product gets built with the right features at the right level of robustness to maximize **value**. POs and BAs help teams make sure not to over or under engineer the product and its features.

Facilitation

Is everyone **engaged** in your meetings? Is everyone participating? Does the strength of the PO and BA's facilitation skills directly impact the **value** of the solution? Of course! Excellent POs and BAs use innovative facilitation techniques to promote **value-thinking**, inspire creativity and create shared understanding. When **value-minded** teams fully **engage** and collaborate, they deliver better products that delight end users and align with the goals of the organization. POs and BAs use a wide variety of facilitation techniques to create meaningful dialog that empowers all stakeholders to participate equally—introverts and extroverts. Effective techniques like visual metaphors, collaborative games and brain

writing helps teams interact and learn together. Themes that are common in well-facilitated meetings include:

- **Small group work** - Break people into small groups to work on pieces then facilitate small groups sharing with the larger group.
- **Collaboration tools** - Flip charts, sticky notes, markers, games and activities to leverage high impact collaboration environment.
- **Individual activities** - Solo brain writing before out loud sharing
- **Visuals** - Consistent use of conceptual visuals to facilitate shared understanding

Product Ownership Techniques

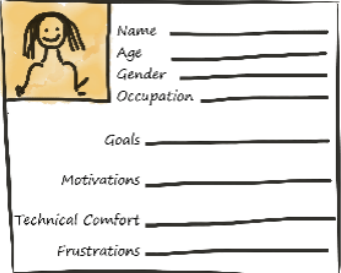
Effective Product Owners and Business Analysts fill their toolbox with dozens of techniques to keep the team focused on **value**, create shared understanding, and make good **decisions**.


Collaborative Product Vision Box or Vision Canvas

The product vision box is like a walking product billboard. It helps the team visualize the product and creates a shared understanding of the product features and how it aligns with strategy. How does the PO create the product vision box? Here's one approach to consider: The PO facilitates a product vision session. The PO begins by stating the goals and target group of the product to the team and key product stakeholders. The participants break into small groups. The PO facilitates the small groups to create their view of the product vision that includes key features and an elevator pitch for the product. Groups use flipcharts and markers, or even random art supplies and magazine cut outs. The small groups present their product vision boxes to the large group. The PO facilitates a discussion with the large group about the various vision boxes. The large group discusses differences, similarities, **value** propositions, alignment to strategy, and customer perspective of **value**.

Personas

Personas help teams understand and empathize with their customers. They personify various users so the team can think about the product from their point of view. POs and BAs develop personas to get the team focused on the user's definition of **value**.

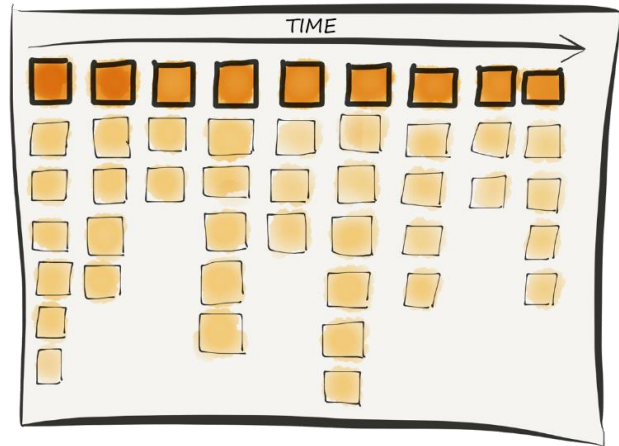


	Name _____
	Age _____
	Gender _____
	Occupation _____
Goals _____	
Motivations _____	
Technical Comfort _____	
Frustrations _____	

Personas help teams understand and empathize with their customers.

Story Mapping

Story mapping is a crucial technique for teams to see a group of user stories mapped out from a user perspective of how a user uses a product. It tells the story of the user stories. Story maps help teams understand how stories relate, and how stories fit in the solution scope. POs and BAs use story maps to highlight dependencies, value, and priority from a user point of view. Story maps help teams see the big picture and can be created to show the stories of a release or the whole product. Despite these great benefits, many teams misunderstand and/or misuse story mapping. Please:



Don't use story maps to manage work.

Story maps are visual maps of the stories from a user perspective. They are NOT a list of team tasks needed to complete an iteration or sprint.

Don't use story maps as a tool to track progress towards completion.

Less is more, keep the story map focused on the story line not the team's progress.

Don't limit the scope of the story map.

Story maps are a view of the product, release or feature. They show how ALL user stories relate sequentially based on user dependencies. They help teams see the forest through the trees. For example: I need to log in before I can create a profile, before I can select to check out. Without story maps teams can't see the forest through the trees, value is lost, and teams become task oriented vs. value oriented. The PO and BA should communicate to the team how the story map aligns to the release plan, product road map and product vision. Teams can supplement story maps with lo-fi prototypes too!

Less is more, keep the story map focused on the story line not the team's progress.

Story Slicing/Splitting

Effective agile practices rely heavily on story slicing! Unfortunately, many teams do not have POs or BAs with the skills and/or training needed to break stories into manageable pieces of value. The most common mistake teams make is slicing and splitting stories into technical components and tasks vs. increments of customer value. The slices of value need to come from the user's perspective, not the team's perspective.

Prioritization Techniques

POs have **decision-making** authority, but that does not mean they **make decisions** in isolation. Instead, POs use a wide variety of prioritization techniques to generate team dialog needed to guide **decision-making**. Key methods to get information needed to prioritize include:

Forced ranking

POs and BAs facilitate others, or themselves, to put each feature/story in order of importance/**value**. Every feature/story needs to be above or below another. The **value** is in the dialog—the result is not a final backlog order.

Voting

POs and BAs facilitate others to vote on which stories have the most **value**. POs should facilitate dialog based on the results.

Categorization

POs and BAs facilitate others to categorizing stories by high, medium and low **value**. Again, it's about the dialog, not the outcome.

Product Owners and BAs use these techniques as input to the **decisions** they make on priorities and where stories and features land in the backlog. These techniques produce various perspectives about the feature or story. The various perspectives and dialog may include things like: technical risk, user dependencies, technical dependencies, persona variances, competitive forces, market dynamics, and of course organizational and customer **value**.

Buy a Feature

POs and BAs facilitate buy a feature by assigning a relative monetary **value** to each item to prioritize, and then handing out a pool of money to the group, but not enough is handed out to buy everything. The team then works together to determine which items they will spend on and “buys” the features that they would like the most.

Other Techniques to Consider

- Business Model Canvas
- Lean Canvas
- Empathy Mapping

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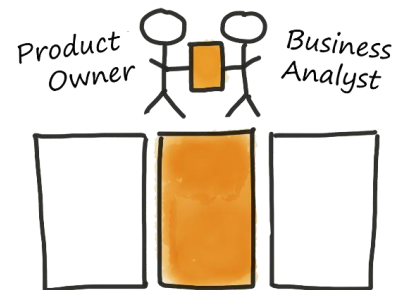
The Product Ownership Team & Collaborating with Business Analysts

The PO role is so complex and so big that it's nearly impossible for a single person to really do it justice. If your solo Product Owner does not have bandwidth to hold up all three pillars—**value, engagement and decisions**—then you might need a PO team.

The product ownership team works together to fulfill the mission of the Product Owner. They **engage** with what could be multiple Product Owners working together, multiple Product Owners reporting to a chief Product Owner, or a Product Owner partnered with a Business Analyst.

When POs and BAs form a product ownership team, the overlap in roles and responsibilities can create a bit of confusion. To form an efficient and effective product ownership team, POs and BAs need to lay out some initial ground rules, and then remain open and adaptable as the partnership evolves.

Here's what a PO/BA product ownership team might look like:



Here are some ways to differentiate the PO and BA roles:

- Product owners face external to the team with product management and external stakeholders and executives.
- Business analysts face internal to the team working with the hour-by-hour happenings of the team.
- Product owners focus on product vision, integration with other products, road mapping and release planning.
- Business analysts focus on prioritizing the backlog according to the PO's point of view, facilitating the team in story writing, and analyzing stories and story maps for gaps.
- Business analysts often help the team understand intent, acceptance criteria and testing.
- Product owners have **decision-making** authority.
- Business analysts facilitate **decision-making**.

Conclusion

Effective product ownership requires stability and balance of all 3 pillars. Product Owners must consistently promote **value**, make good **decisions** and be **engaged**! Using a wide variety of tools and techniques, Product Owners achieve their mission through continuous collaboration with the product delivery team.

[Contact BA-Squared](#) or [visit our website](#) to learn more about effective product ownership and how it can benefit your organization. We're here to help you build and balance the pillars of product ownership!

About the Author:

Angela Wick is the Founder & CEO of BA-Squared, LLC a training and consulting company that helps transform organizations. With over 20 years of experience, she helps BAs, Product Owners, PMs, and teams develop the skills they need to inspire collaboration, creativity and innovation. Angela is passionate about helping traditional and agile teams build great products. Find out how Angela can help you at www.BA-Squared.com and get free requirements tips and trends by following Angela on Twitter @WickAng.

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