

# The Refinement Meeting or Backlog Grooming

# Reasons for a Refinement Meeting

- Shorten the Planning meeting
- Get the latest insights
- Estimating
- Creating new user stories in response to newly discovered needs.
- Correcting estimates in light of newly discovered information.
- Splitting user stories which are high priority but too coarse grained to fit in an upcoming iteration.

# What happens in the Refinement Meeting?

- Discuss the stories to get clarity (only the "what" part but not the "how" part).
- Split stories if they are large.
- Merge stories if they are too small.
- Discuss acceptance criteria.
- Discuss the assumptions and constraints.
- Identify dependencies.
- Estimate the stories using story points.

# Ground Rules for an effective Refinement Meeting

- Time boxed slot for each story – otherwise move to next story
- Always keep INVEST in mind when talking about a story (Independent, Negotiable, Valuable, Estimable, Small, Testable)
- Everyone works together - it has a workshop character
  - New stories and epics may be added
  - Extracting stories from existing epics
  - Estimating effort for existing stories
- Do not over-discuss or over-design

# In general

- > Participants
  - SCRUM Master
  - Product Owner
  - Team

## In general

- > Input
  - Prioritized and prepared User stories
- > Output
  - Estimated (Story-Points) User Stories
  - Common understanding of the scope of the User Stories
  - Individual acceptance criteria for each User Story
- > Frequency
  - Weekly for approx. 1hour

# Tips

- > Frequency
  - A weekly refinement meeting proved to be most efficient. However, it is also not advisable to have too much time between the Refinement Meeting and the implementation. As a thumb rule you can remember: You should have prepared and estimated User Stories for about 2 sprints in the backlog
- > Acceptance Criteria
  - The acceptance criteria should be developed and defined by the whole team. In case they are already pre-written people stop thinking.

# Tips

## > Marathon

- Estimating is only one small part of the refinement meeting. The more important focus should be on the requirements included in the User Stories. Estimation is more or less a tool to find out the complexity and the understanding of a User Story

## > Digitalization

- Working with digital tools might appear to be easy. But written User Stories on a wall makes it more “alive” and transparent



# Tips

## > Preparation

- The product owner must prepare the meeting well. The most important upcoming stories of the backlog have to be prioritized, clearly comprehensible and small enough (INVEST)

## > Goal Keeper

- The SCRUM Master has to see that discussions serve the purpose of defining and developing user stories. Discussions, which are not intended to serve this purpose, should be interrupted.

# Get in touch

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