USER STORIES & REQUIREMENTS
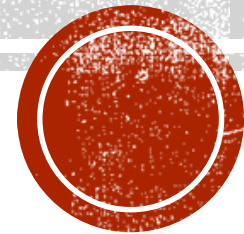
GETTING PRACTICAL

What we aren't going to cover tonight in detail

Sizing, splitting, prescribed format, prioritizing, who writes them

What we are going to talk about

Practical ways to improve your User Stories

Heuristic: enabling a person to discover or learn something for themselves.

I've heard this so many times, even from previous bosses. Let's see what you think by the time we finish today.

"USER STORIES AREN'T REQUIREMENTS"

USER STORY DEFINITIONS

- "An approach to creating high-level product requirements, which includes information containing the most pertinent business case questions: who, what, and why. The ultimate goal of the User Story is to have enough of a vision for the feature to begin working on it and an understanding of when it will be considered done. There is also an understanding that the more pertinent , intimate details of the feature will emerge during it's creation."

- "short, simple descriptions of a feature told from the perspective of the person who desires the new capability, usually a user or customer of the system."

These are definitions from 2 Agile guru's that I highly regard. Given the importance of the details, the circumstances of the situation and the team, they make me a little nervous. The right amount of time and the right connections are so relevant for getting those details to emerge.

Cards
(their physical medium)

Conversation
(the discussion surrounding them)

Confirmation
(tests that verify them)

The "card" in whatever form is used by the team is really a visual to get the discussion stimulated and capture the conversation. It brings relevant information to light.
In our role as BA's, the bridge builder's, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to make sure that the important "conversations" are happening. We can't expect the scrum master or the project manager or someone else to facilitate that happening.

3 ELEMENTS OF A USER STORY

REALLY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Have you established Working Agreements?

- Are your team members Distributed? Dispersed?

- What is more important than Collaboration?

- What Communication tools are being used?

Working Agreements or Team Norms or whatever you choose to call them are essential to great teamwork regardless of the SDLC methodology being used. Think about any problems in your current teams and what could be solved if you brought things to light and everyone contributed to and committed to shared agreements of how to work together. They need to be visible and living. They need to be a springboard that we keep coming back to. Here are a few links with info:
http://www.estherderby.com/2011/04/norms-values-working-agreements-simple-rules.html
https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/working-agreements-defined.pdf

Distributed: working on more than one project. Dispersed: working in varied geographical locations and/or timezones.
Be aware of this for all of your team members. Think about how you as a BA need to do things to share information, provide the amount of detail needed, plan communication, etc. We can't expect things that work well with a fully collocated team to work the same with teams that are distributed and/or dispersed.

Connection is most important. As BA's, we are the bridge builders, bridging connections across the team. Better collaboration and teamwork are outcomes of strong connections. Think about ways to build connections.

If your teams are not collocated, are the communication tools – phone, video conferencing, etc. working? Can you hear well and at least occasionally see each other? Be an advocate for effective communication tools. They are a game changer.

PERSONAS

build a connection with the beneficiaries of your product, develop empathy, and understand their current wants, needs, and circumstances.

- Users?

- Customers?

- Stakeholders?

Knowing about our stakeholders and team members is foundational. As BA's, using a log or register of information about the people we work with and serve helps us to build human connections, have empathy and create better interactions. There is an example at the end of the deck.

Personas are another tool that can be used regardless of SDLC methodology. The template displayed is provided as an example. Create your template and questions based on what is relevant and important in your situation. Links to other good stuff:
https://www.romanpichler.com/blog/10-tips-agile-personas/
https://medium.com/beakerandflint/personas-74c4e1c12ee2

Name & Picture	Details	What's Working/What's Not?	Goals	Screening Questions
Choose a name and relevant role	What makes them tick? Who is an example? Thinks? Sees? Feels? Does?	What do they like about the current system/process? What don't they like? What are the top 5 hardest things that they need to do relevant to <area of interest>?	What do they need to accomplish?	What questions will you ask to validate your understanding?

USER STORY - FORMAT

- As a < role (who) >, I want to < do something (what) >, so that < goal/business benefit/value (why) >.
  - Traditional Style

- So I can <goal/business benefit/value (why)>, As a < role (who)>, I want to < do something (what) >.
  - Reverse User Stories

- As the CTO, I want the system to use our existing orders database rather than create a new one, so that we don't have one more database to maintain.
  - CTO response: "NO! I didn't ask for that!"
  - Rewritten: "We want the system to use our existing orders database rather than create a new one, so that we don't have one more database to maintain." Much better ☺

The template is a Thinking Tool. It challenges you and the team to ensure full understanding, benefit/value and communicate. But don't get obsessed with it and if it creates confusion drop it and write what feels natural. Consider what purpose it serves.

IS THIS A GOOD STORY?

- As a Product Owner, I want the system to take payment from customers so that they can pay for their purchases.

- As a Buyer, I want to pay for my purchases. **Much better!**

- As a tester, I want to see a log of all user actions so that I can check that the final reports are what was requested.

  Stories like that may be needed. I take into consideration how much effort/time it will take, if we need transparency of the item, etc. A lot of these though would raise question for conversation and could reveal a need for team trust work or other challenges.

- As the payroll system, I want to know the tax code of every employee so I can calculate the income tax payments each month.

- As a payroll manager, I want salary payments to be made after tax deductions so that employees have simpler tax schedules.

  System stories may be ok in particular situation, like major integrations or reporting. It is difficult to have a conversation with a system! When rethinking system stories, consider who you would talk to for the conversation.

- As an accounts clerk, I want the balance sheet report.

- As an accounts clerk, I want the balance sheet report to be delivered within 2 minutes.

  These are both ok stories as placeholders for the backlog. When they reach priority for planning work, they will need to be better written with more detail.

BUSINESS BENEFIT

- What difference will it make?
  - Is there a financial benefit?
  - Is there cost savings?
  - Will the customer experience improve? How?
  - Other soft benefits?

- Who will benefit?

- How will we know if we achieved the benefit?

- Time considerations

This is big topic, worthy of another session some day on it's own. As BA's, we have such an opportunity to help our teams (especially developers and testers) understand how their work is bringing business benefit and how important they are!
Knowing the business strategy that we are contributing to and sharing that with the team contributes to empowerment and focus.
If we don't know the benefit or value than why are we doing it? Question any work that doesn't have benefit.
Add comments from conversations to the story that may contribute to later calculations of benefits.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA
SYNCHRONIZING, CONSENSUS & TESTING

- How will we know it's working?

- Who contributes? **EVERYONE!**

- How will you (as the BA) demonstrate?

- Given <precondition>, when <scenario>, then <expected result>

- What tools and/or techniques demonstrate the AC (requirement details)?

- Are there boundaries?

- Evaluation – how will you evaluate later that it benefits?

EXAMPLES –
MAKE CHECKLISTS OR OTHER THINKING TOOLS TO HELP YOU

TEAM REGISTER									
First Name	Last Name	Title	Project Role	Geographic location	FTE/Contractor	Goals/Motivation	Risks	Communication channels	Comments
Victoria	Bialko	Sr Developer	Developer	Belarus	Contractor		limited communication window	Phone; webex (need to prearrange video conf)	
Devon	James	Customer Service Manager	Stakeholder SME	USA - PA	FTE	Cost reduction User experience improvements	availibility	face to face; phone; email	Recently promoted to manager Schedule shadowing with him and his team members

Story name

Value statement

Attach details and documents when necessary

Edit User Story » US9: Credit card payments

General

ID: US9

Name: Credit card payments

Tags: Choose Tags

Description:

As a purchaser on the website,
I want the ability to pay with a credit card,
So that I may immediately confirm my purchase.

Acceptance Criteria:

- Accept Discover, Visa, MC
- Validate CC# when entered
- Validate expiration date and CVV
- Validate billing address
- Generate success and failure messages after processing

Definition of Done:

- Passes all regression tests
- Passes testing per acceptance criteria items
- Approved by UI Team
- Able to show feature in company demo

Attachments: Browse...

mockup.png

Description: Mockup of entry form

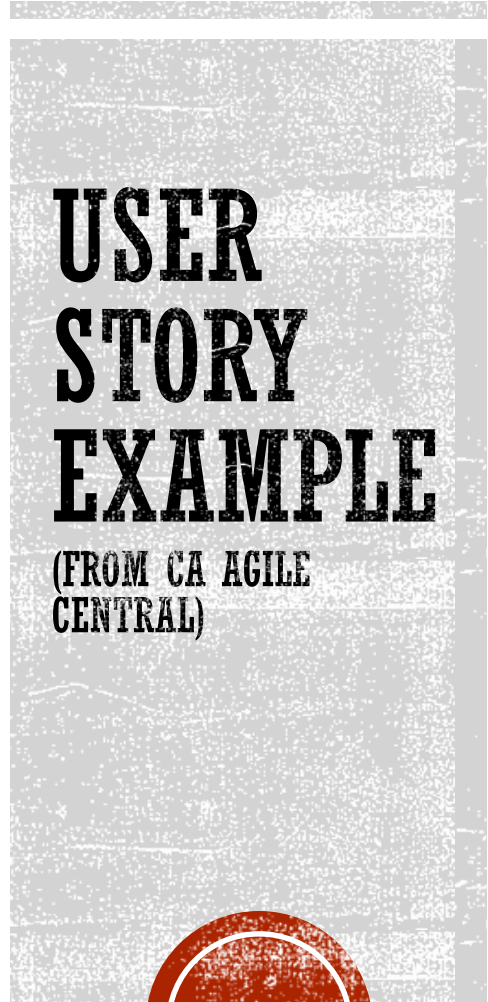Owner: Greg

Schedule

State: Defined

Iteration: Unscheduled

Plan Est: 8.0 Points

Task Est: 0.0 Hours

Save & Close   Save & New   Save   Cancel

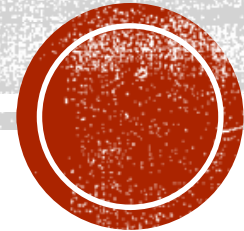What is required for the business and product owner to accept the story

What is required by the team (quality/standards) before sending out for review. Does not change from one story to another. Mature teams may post this on the wall of the team working area instead of within each story.

Size (effort) estimate, in relative points

USER STORY EXAMPLE

(FROM CA AGILE CENTRAL)

Checklist for visualization of requirements				
BABoK v3				
ID	Technique	Section	Page	Template ID
T1	Balanced Scorecard	10.3	223	
T2	Benchmarking and Market Analysis	10.4	226	
T3	Brainstorming	10.5	227	
T4	Business Capability Analysis	10.6	230	
T5	Business Cases	10.7	234	
T6	Business Model Canvas	10.8	236	
T7	Business Rules Analysis	10.9	240	
T8	Concept Modelling	10.11	245	
T9	Data Dictionary	10.12	247	
T10	Data Flow Diagrams	10.13	250	
T11	Data Mining	10.14	253	
T12	Data Modelling	10.15	256	
T13	Decision Analysis	10.16	261	
T14	Decision Modelling	10.17	265	
T15	Document Analysis	10.18	269	
T16	Financial Analysis	10.20	274	
T17	Focus Groups	10.21	279	
T18	Functional Decomposition	10.22	283	
T19	Glossary	10.23	286	
T20	Interface Analysis	10.24	287	
T21	Mind Mapping	10.29	299	
T22	Non-Functional Requirements Analysis	10.30	302	
T23	Observation	10.31	305	
T24	Organizational Modelling	10.32	308	
T25	Process Analysis	10.34	314	
T26	Process Modelling	10.35	318	
T27	Prototyping	10.36	323	
T28	Risk Analysis and Management	10.38	329	
T29	Roles and Permissions Matrix	10.39	333	
T30	Root Cause Analysis	10.40	335	
T31	Scope Modelling	10.41	338	
T32	Sequence Diagrams	10.42	341	
T33	Stakeholder List, Map, or Personas	10.43	344	
T34	State Modelling	10.44	348	
T35	Survey or Questionnaire	10.45	350	
T36	Use Cases and Scenarios	10.47	356	
T37	Calculation Examples			

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

In the humble opinion of this presenter…

"User stories **are** requirements!"

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES & LINKS

- [BABoK Guide v3](#) – IIBA
  - 10.43 Stakeholder List, Map, Persona
  - 10.48 User Stories

- [Agile Extension](#) – IIBA
  - 7.21 User Stories
  - 7.7 Personas

- [A Little Book about Requirements and User Stories](#) by Allan Kelly

- [User Story Mapping: Discover the Whole Story, Build the Right Product](#) by Jeff Patton

- [User Stories – The Practical Way](#) by Daniel Duetsch

- [Your Best Agile User Story](#) by Alexander Cowan

ABOUT ME – JODIE KANE

I serendipitously entered the world of business analysis in the late '90's and found her sweet spot. I learned the Agile Manifesto in the early 2000's and was hooked. I believes in and practice bringing humanness and meaningful engagement to developing excellent requirements and empowering teamwork.

I love teaching and coaching in all things related to better business analysis and building better teams. I am passionate about inspiring people to do their best work, have fun doing it and building human connectivity.

I am certified in Business Analysis, Business Intelligence, Agile Scrum Master & Agile Product Owner. I continues to learn and try new things every day.

Feel free to reach out to me at: jodieenglekane@gmail.com

I love a good conversation!