"The Art of Agile Development" by James Shore

STORIES

Stories are for planning.

They're not requirements. They're not use cases. Instead, they . . .

1. Represent customer value and described in customer terminology.
2. Have clear completion criteria the customer understands.

When you use stories well

* On-site customers understand all the work they approve and schedule.
* It's easy to explain to stakeholders what the team is working on and why it matters.
* Your team works on small, manageable pieces and makes customer-valued progress multiple times per week.
* Stories are cheap to create and easy to discard.

Detailed stories are a sign that people are missing the point.

THE PLANNING GAME

Goal: Focus the team on work that provides the best return on investment.

* Developers **size** the stories.
* Customers **prioritize** the stories.

1. Cusomers decide the scope of the plan
    1. Product managers choose highest priority value increments
    2. Review team purpose
    3. How do increments fit the plan? What's their value?
2. The whole team brainstorms stories
    1. Stories needed to release each increment
    2. Stories that aren't part of increment but must be done anyway
3. Developers size the stories
    1. Group as just right, too big, too small, can't size (don't understand or technical unknowns)
    2. "Just right": team can finish 4-10 per week on average
4. Customers prioritize the stories
    1. Add to visual plan in rough order of priority
    2. Discard stories that are unimportant or too far in the future. They'll be outdated by the time you get to them. (Or at least archive somewhere out of sight)
    3. Customers, make sure you understand each story. They need to match your perspective. Don't let developers bully you into adding a story you don't understand.
5. Repeat until the plan is complete

PLANNING

Deliver valuable increments

Valuable increments can be

1. Releasable (reap the benefit)
2. Valuable (benefits organization)
3. Incremental (one step in the right direction)

And are generally categorized as

* Direct value (benefit when customer uses)
* Learning value (experiment finding out how to increase value)
* Option value (able to postpone or change decision)

Stakeholders love it when teams work on multiple ideas simultaneously. It feels like a lot of work is being done, and everything gets to be top priority! So easy. And so very, very wasteful. Focusing on one increment at a time will improve delivery speed and increase value.

Rolling-wave planning

Detail is added gradually, just before it's needed.

Planning Horizon

1. **Purpose of team** [~6 months]
2. **Visual Planning** of possible valuable increments [~3 months]
3. **Smallest valuable increments**
4. **Planning game** "just right" stories
5. **Incremental requirements** detailed

Spread technical considerations across all stories. Rather than a single "Design domain layer" story, for example, incrementally modify the design of your domain layer with every story.