

An Example Checklist for Product Owners

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Product Direction – *where we are going and why*

- ☐ I have a product vision created with customers, users, and key stakeholders when possible.
- ☐ I can explain the product vision and business model in a concise and inspiring way.
- ☐ I have a short, memorable tagline or narrative that communicates the essence and value of the product (e.g. *“1,000 songs in your pocket” – Apple iPod, 2001*).
- ☐ I focus on understanding user problems, not just collecting feature requests.
- ☐ I define success by satisfied users or customer benefits, not by delivered features.
- ☐ I validate assumptions and ideas with users or customers before committing to solutions.

Stakeholders – *who we create value for and work with*

- ☐ I actively engage with stakeholders to understand their needs and align expectations.
- ☐ I can explain the user or customer benefit of each Product Backlog Item, and why it matters.
- ☐ My forecasts, key value indicators (KVI), and other metrics are based on empirical evidence.
- ☐ I have the mandate, trust, and business understanding to make product decisions beyond product backlog administration.

Product Backlog – *how direction turns into actionable work*

- ☐ I have a Product Backlog and a single active Product Goal, supported by a useful metric.
- ☐ I have the mandate to decide on Product Backlog content and Product Goals.
- ☐ The Product Backlog is accessible and readable (but not editable) by the Scrum Team.
- ☐ My Product Backlog is ordered using value, risk, timing, dependencies (etc.), and I can explain why each item is worth building.
- ☐ Product Backlog Items are clearly expressed and become more detailed toward the top.
- ☐ I treat Product Backlog Items as hypotheses and adapt them based on learning and feedback.
- ☐ I regularly refine and update the Product Backlog, involving the Scrum Team when needed, so that the top items are actionable for the next Sprint.

Scrum Team – *how I work as part of the team*

- ☐ I work closely with developers to clarify intent and maximize user value.
- ☐ I help minimize outside interference that could disrupt the Sprint Goal.
- ☐ Developers have a clear Product Owner to clarify the Sprint Goal and Product Backlog Items.
- ☐ I regularly communicate the product vision and upcoming Product Goals to support shared understanding.
- ☐ I involve developers in story writing and analysis to build shared understanding (*and to reduce my own work while helping developers better understand user value*).
- ☐ I have a shared understanding of the Definition of Done with the Scrum Team.
- ☐ A Scrum Master is appointed, preferably by the developers when possible.
- ☐ I have a trusting and effective working relationship with the Scrum Master.

Empiricism – *how we learn and stay focused*

- ☐ I actively participate in Sprint Planning to craft the Sprint Goal with the Developers, order Product Backlog Items, and clarify their expected value.
- ☐ I help Sprint Reviews focus on outcomes, feedback, and learning.
- ☐ I collaborate with the Scrum Master to make Scrum Events effective and purposeful.
- ☐ I participate in Retrospectives to improve our collaboration and product outcomes.
- ☐ I seek to understand the real need behind requests before saying “no”.

My current Product Owner Score is _____ / 30 points