HOWARD PODESWA

The Agile Guide to Business Analysis and Planning

From Strategic Plan to Continuous Value Delivery

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The Agile Guide to Business Analysis and Planning

7.12 Chapter Summary

Here are the key points covered in this chapter:

- Root-cause analysis is a set of techniques for tracing effects back to their initial causes. The approach includes the Five Whys technique and cause–effect graphing.
- The product vision statement is a short description of a future when the product is used by its target market.
- Perform stakeholder analysis as early as possible and continue it incrementally throughout the development lifecycle.
- Represent business goals and objectives as themes.
- Represent customer objectives as epics and features.
- Leap of faith hypotheses are assumptions that must be true for the product to be viable. Identify them at the start of a venture so you can plan to validate them in the market as soon as possible.

7.13 What's Next?

In Chapter 8, we'll look at activities associated with *seeding* the backlog—the determination and specification of the features and other work items associated with the product.

Chapter 8

Seeding the Backlog—Discovering and Grading Features

Previous chapters were concerned with developing a vision for a product or change initiative. This chapter explains how to identify and analyze the initial set of features to support that vision and plant the first seeds in the product backlog. Figure 8.1 highlights the activities, events, and artifacts included in this chapter.

The chapter begins with the discovery of the product's high-level use cases using circumstance-based market segmentation. For example, the high-level use cases for a social network include "Stay in touch with my friends" and "Get my news." Each use case is represented in the backlog as an epic or feature, depending on its size. (An epic may span multiple quarters; a feature may not.) The chapter contains guidelines for representing these items in the product backlog using the Role-Feature-Reason (Connextra) template.

The chapter explains how to assess the value and cost of backlog items and how to use these measures to determine the item's priority sequence in the backlog. The chapter describes how to use Kano analysis to grade customer value, determine the cost of delay (total value of the item), and use those results to determine the item's weighted shortest job first (WSJF)—an indication of its priority sequence.

The chapter concludes with guidance on specifying and managing nonfunctional requirements (NFRs) within an agile analysis framework.

8.1 Objectives

This chapter will help you to

- Use the results of circumstance-based market segmentation to seed the backlog with features.
- Use Kano analysis to grade the customer value of proposed features.

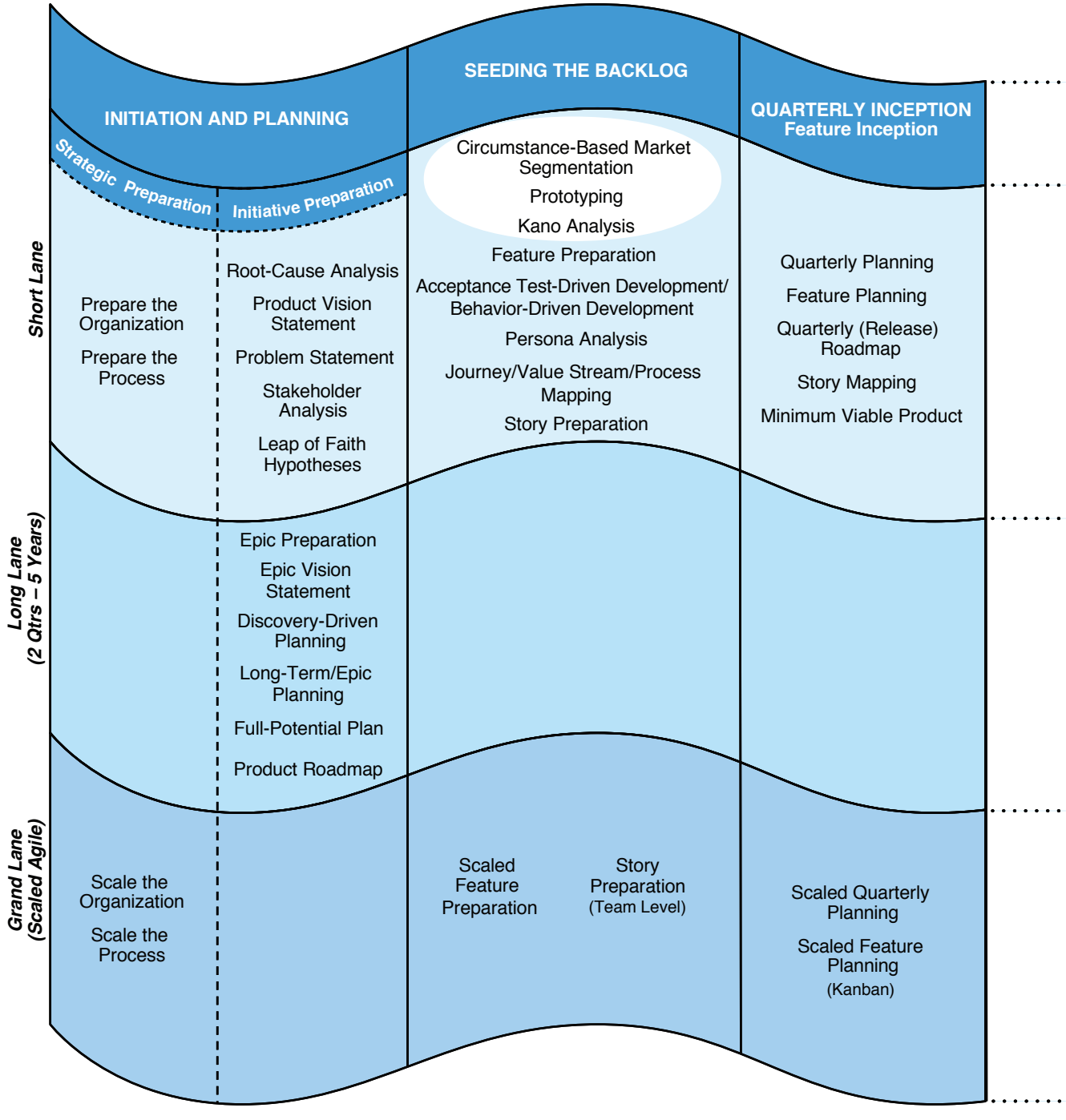
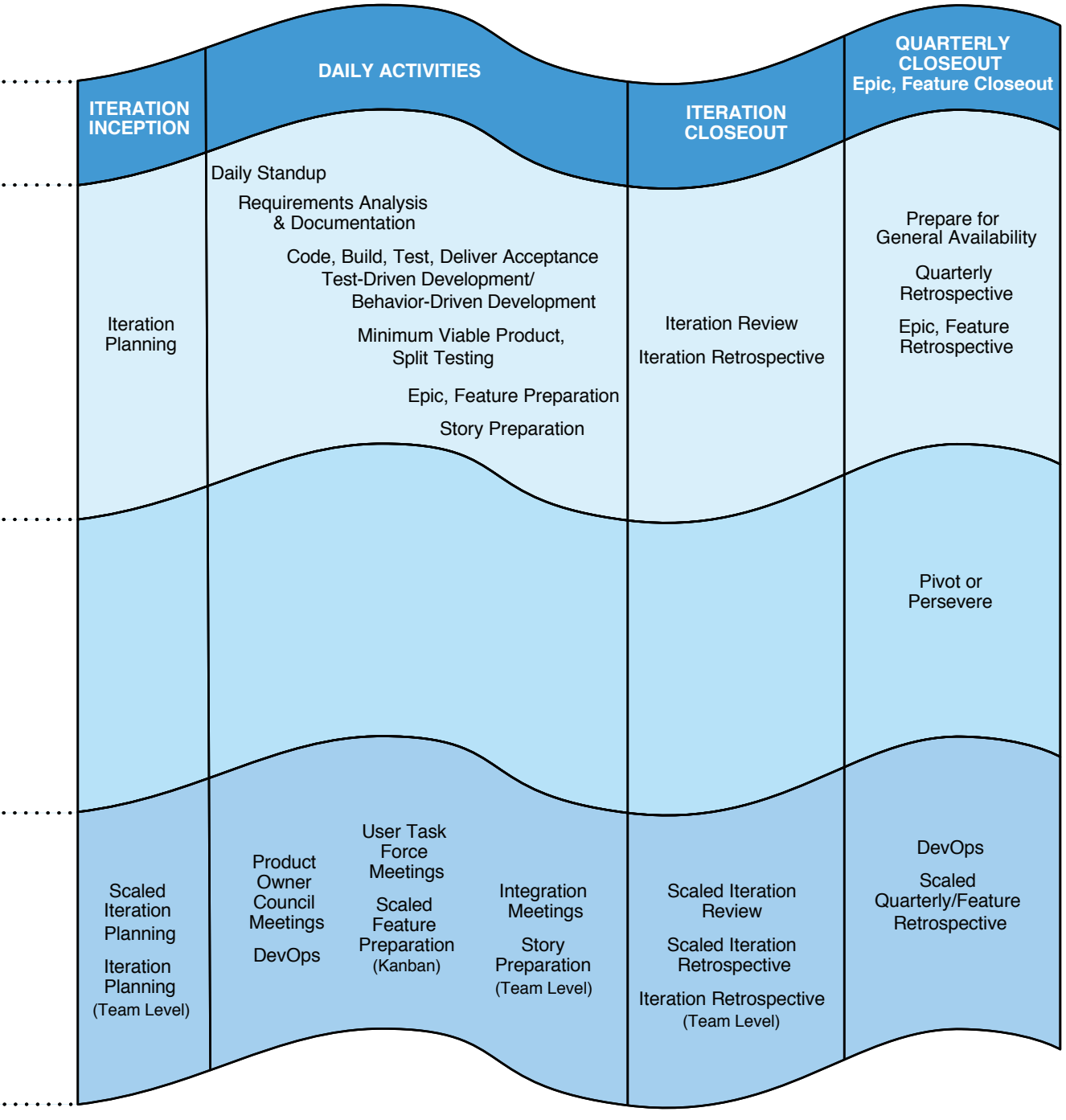


Figure 8.1 *Chapter 8 on the map*


ITERATION INCEPTION
DAILY ACTIVITIES
ITERATION CLOSEOUT
QUARTERLY CLOSEOUT
Epic, Feature Closeout
Daily Standup
Requirements Analysis & Documentation
Code, Build, Test, Deliver Acceptance
Test-Driven Development/ Behavior-Driven Development
Minimum Viable Product, Split Testing
Epic, Feature Preparation
Story Preparation
Iteration Planning
Iteration Review
Iteration Retrospective
Prepare for General Availability
Quarterly Retrospective
Epic, Feature Retrospective
Pivot or Persevere
Scaled Iteration Planning
Iteration Planning (Team Level)
Product Owner Council Meetings
DevOps
User Task Force Meetings
Scaled Feature Preparation (Kanban)
Integration Meetings
Story Preparation (Team Level)
Scaled Iteration Review
Scaled Iteration Retrospective
Iteration Retrospective (Team Level)
DevOps
Scaled Quarterly/Feature Retrospective

- Use WSJF and cost of delay to inform sequencing decisions.
- Know how to manage NFRs within an agile process.

8.2 This Chapter on the Map

As indicated in Figure 8.1, we'll be examining the following items in the Seeding the Backlog zone: circumstance-based market segmentation, prototyping, and Kano analysis.

8.3 Overview: Seeding the Backlog

If, like most analysts, you are not directly involved in higher-level visioning and planning, your active responsibilities begin with activities in the Seeding the Backlog zone: the determination of the initial set of features, their value to the customer, and their sequencing in the backlog.

The first items in backlog need to be prepared further so they will be ready for planning and implementation. We cover feature preparation in Chapter 10, "Quarterly and Feature Preparation," and story preparation in Chapter 13, "Story Preparation."

8.3.1 Definitions: Epics and Stories

As we're about to discuss large work items, let's review some relevant definitions from Chapter 3, "Fundamentals of Agile Analysis and Planning."

- An **epic** is a large work item. It may require multiple teams over multiple quarters and span multiple product areas. It should represent a high-level capability of the product affecting a user or group of users. For example, an epic may deliver a top-level menu item (e.g., Orders), a functional area of the product, the expansion of an existing capability, a business process, a project, or internal improvements.
- A **feature** is a work item that can be completed within one quarter by one or more teams. A feature should represent a characteristic of a product that a user, customer, or group of them cares about.

8.3.2 How Many Features Should You Seed Up Front?

As a rule of thumb, aim to limit the initial set of features to fifteen to twenty in order to avoid overplanning and analysis-paralysis. This is also the number of items that can be comfortably analyzed and prioritized using Kano analysis. We'll learn about Kano analysis in section 8.11.

The higher the uncertainty and the more novel the product, the less you should analyze and determine up front about its features. If the product is novel, allow the feature's requirements to emerge and evolve through customer usage. Because the conception of the product may change significantly over time, focus the initial analysis on near-term features and defer the analysis for items further back in the backlog. On the other hand, if the product is well-established, and uncertainty is low, the requirements are less likely to need significant revision (or be abandoned) during the development lifecycle. In that case, there can be a net benefit in performing a more extensive upfront analysis, since it provides more information on which to base cost estimates and implementation decisions. This reduces the need for rework otherwise needed when early implementations are based on an incomplete understanding of requirements.

8.3.3 Whom to Invite to Backlog Seeding

As a rule, don't invite investors to backlog seeding workshops, as their focus tends to be on targets and the plans for reaching them—not on product requirements. Do consider inviting the following attendees:

- Stakeholders who will benefit directly or indirectly from the product's features
- Those with prioritization and approval authorities
- Those who will be doing the development work (for input on estimation and alternatives)

Roles to consider include:

- Product owner (PO) council members
- Senior product manager
- Product-level PO, area POs, team-level POs
- Architects
- Development managers
- Developers, QA, analysts, and other team members

The elicitation may take the form of group meetings, individual interviews, or informal discussions.