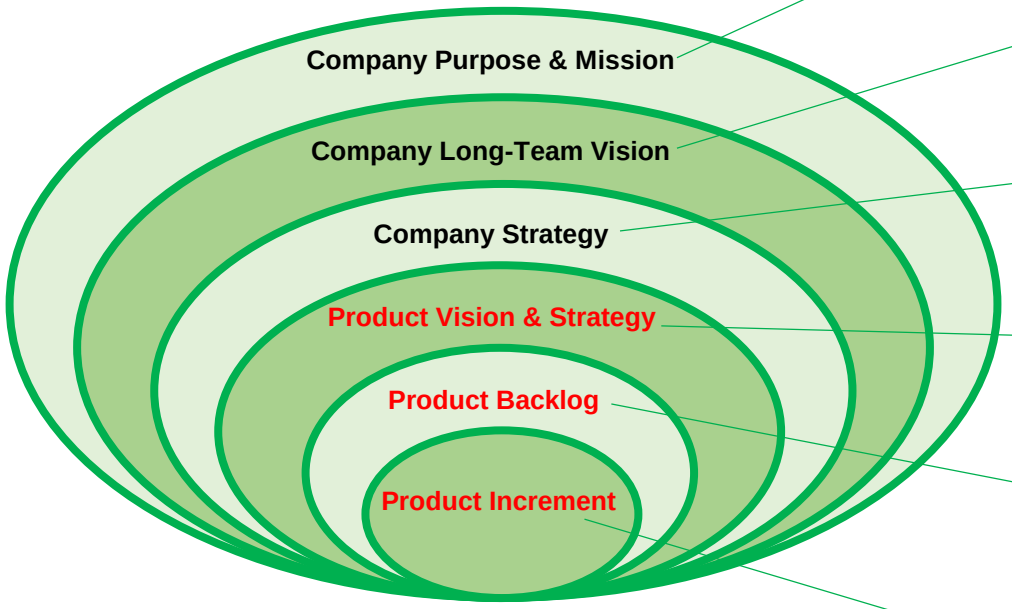
Product Definition & Exploration Workshop in LeSS

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

- Discuss what each ‘onion’ layer below means in the context of your organization
- Modify the ‘onion’, based on organizational specifics (add/remove layers)
- In respective areas on the right side, provide some examples and details for each layer
- Discuss and agree where to keep information (e.g. tool, directory, other repository)
- Discuss and agree how ‘onion’ layers will be maintained and updated over time



Notes:

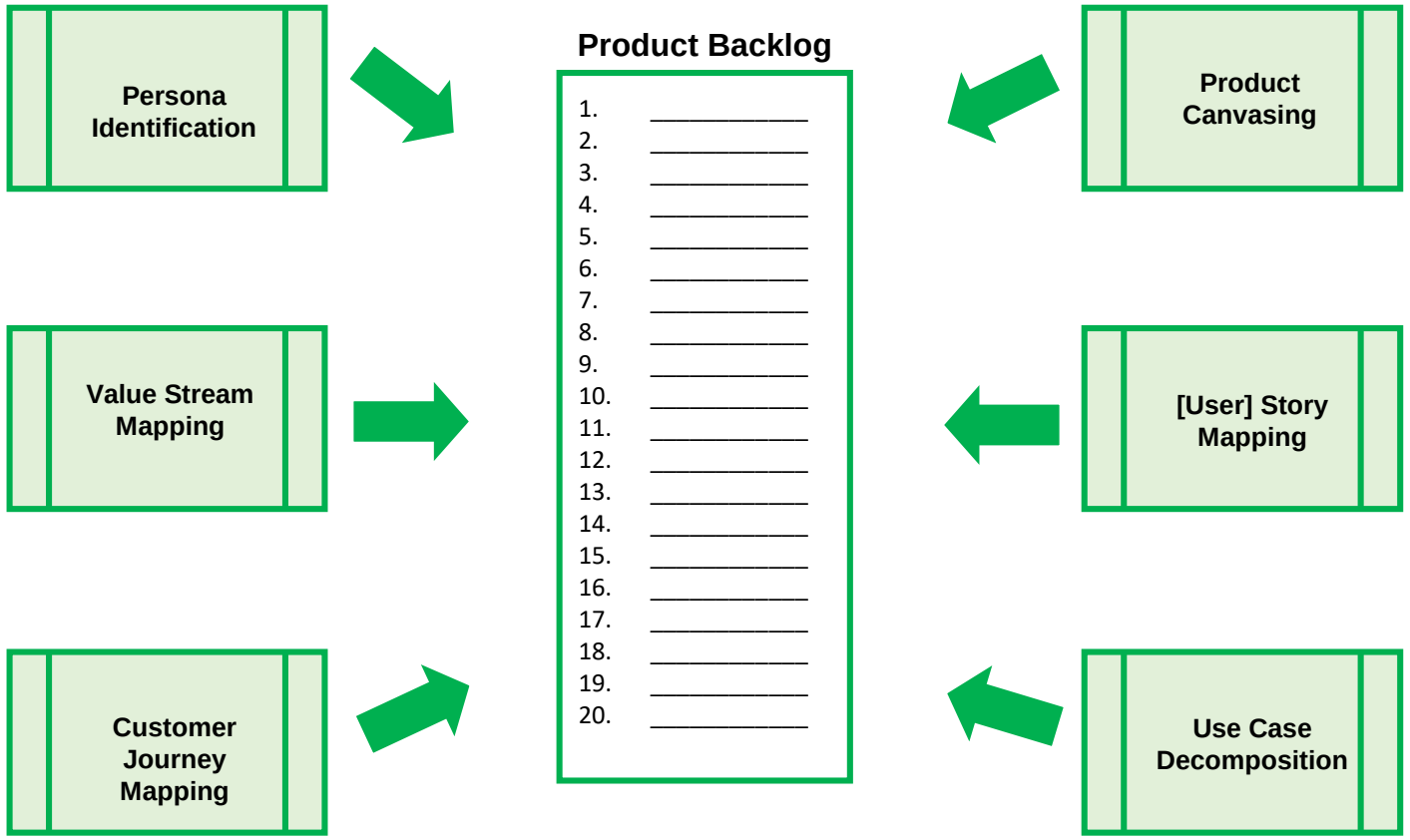
Note: *Since customers buy and users use Products, in agile development, we focus on ProDUCTs, not ProJECTs, not ProGRAMs. We also challenge the term Portfolio, unless it is a portfolio or real Products. Please, be mindful of this, as you add layers to the ‘onion’.*

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

- Understand a ‘big picture’ (Strategy, Mission, Vision, OKRs).
- Select & discuss a product.
- Define & explore a product with Product Canvas, applying *expanding & constraining* forces.
- Run exercises (e.g. Item mapping, value stream mapping, customer journey, etc, personas.)
- Create an *initial* Product Backlog.
- Create Definition of Done (DoD). Agree on what is “UNDONE”.
- Identify functional expertize & technical skillset required (each Team; LeSS Product Group)
- Prototype a team ‘blueprint’ (*Do NOT create teams, on behalf of teams*)
- Prototype a product group ‘blueprint’ (beyond Teams; entire LeSS Product Group)
- Identify (all known) organizational design impediments and assign them to executives
- Run team self-design exercise
- Start sprinting

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

To help yourself with PRODUCT BACKLOG creation, run various exercises and discovery activities:



Note: *Remember that the goal of all supplementing exercises and activities is to produce a single Product Backlog, to be prioritized by Product Owner and shared by all teams that will be working on a product.*

Persona Identification Template

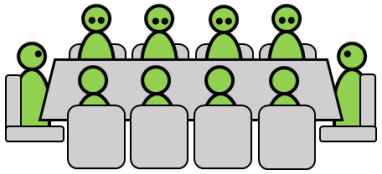
Attribute	Description
Picture	
Name	
Age/Gender	
Personality	
Interests	
Title/Organizational Position	
Career Path/Journey	
Technical Skills	
Business Expertize	
Personal Goals	
What is today's solution?	
Reasons to buy/use a product	
Comments	

CC BY SA

Use Case Template

Attribute	Description
Name	
ID	
Description	
Actors	
Assumptions	
Benefits	
Pre-Conditions	
Post-Conditions	
Main Path (Steps)	1. ------step------- 2. ------step------- 3. ------step------- 4. ------step------- 5. ------step-------
Alternative Path (Steps)	1. ------step------- 2. ------step------- 3. ------step------- 4. ------step-------
Exceptions	
Comments	
Related Use Cases	e.g. <<extend>>, <<include>>

CC BY SA



Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

(Peoples' Assessment: "Are You Talking To Right People?")

Use the following questions to validate if appropriate people are involved in conversations about a product definition)

20 Qualifying Questions

1. What is your current position within an *organizational structure* (org. chart)? Upward? Downward?
2. Historically, what role have you played in traditional *project, program, portfolio management*? *Product* management?
3. How can you articulate *vision, mission and strategic objectives* for a product?
4. Do you know what *competitio*n does a product face today (internally or externally)?
5. What ideas do you currently have with respect to *sales/marketing/promotion* of a product?
6. What involvement do you have today in a product's *cost management/expense reduction/investments* decisions?
7. What specific *business unit/line of business (LOB)* that will be using this product, do you represent?
8. In your current role, how closely are you positioned to *internal users/external customers*'? How well do you understand their needs?
9. How would you measure product *success/failure*? ROI? Cost per effort? Other metrics?
10. What control do you have over *funding/budgeting/sponsorship* decisions of a product?
11. In your current role, how closely do you interact with *product developers*? Do you have any special relationships built with R&D?
12. Would you be available/willing to engage directly with developers in a future, to provide *clarifications and details*, if/when requested?
13. Are you familiar (practice/theory) with the concept of *flexible/rolling-wave budgeting*? How is it different from traditional (annual) budgeting?
14. Are you familiar (in principle) with the process of *estimation/forecasting/ planning* in s/w product development (domain of high variability)?
15. How well do you understand what *components* (large, small) does a product consist of? Do you manage/work on any of them today?
16. Are you familiar with *regulatory/legal/compliance/quality controls* requirements of a product?
17. If presented with a set of features (*business-centric*), would you be able to articulate your own view on their *priority*?
18. Do you have any prior experience with *product discovery activities* (product canvasing, customer journeys, user story mapping?
19. Have you ever been involved in discussions of *broadening and/or narrowing* a product definition?
20. Would you be willing to invest time in sharing your *personal product knowledge* with others, as well as gaining new knowledge from others?

CC BY SA

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

(Balancing between "Ideal" and "Practical" Product Definition)

Use expanding and narrowing questions, to help deriving product definition that is both: as ideal, and as practical, as possible:

Expanding Questions (towards "Ideal" product definition)

- Who are the actual end-customers (or internal users)? Were they involved in product definition process from the very beginning?
- Given the current product definition, what business problem does it solve?
- Do you have free access to people who can identify Mission, Vision and Strategic Objective for the product, as it is currently defined?
- Are funders/sponsors directly involved in strategic discussions?
- As it is currently defined, can your product be easily marketed/promoted/sold to customers or offered to users?
- Does the current product definition give you a competitive edge in a marketplace? Can you acquire more market share with your current product?
- With the current product definition can you find business people that can comfortably set priorities and provide clarifications (product owners, users)?
- Can you effectively set priorities on product features, using various techniques, such as Business Prioritization matrix, Product Canvas?
- Can you define a customer journey from the standpoint of a real customer or user?
- Does customer journey include a real customer experience (interaction with a product)?
- Does your product definition freely cut across traditional WBS layers (products, programs, projects, initiatives, etc., without *political* obstacles?
- Does product definition include multiple system components, sub-components, applications, platforms, etc.?
- Can you align the current product definition with a revenue stream? ROI?
- Can you align and fund, long-lived, product-centric, cross-functional feature teams, based on the current product definition? Can you 'follow the money', from a market place to GEMBA?

Narrowing Questions (towards "Practical" product definition)

- Overall, what part of the product definition is within your company's control?
- How cooperative are third parties, that are involved in product-centric development?
- Internally, what part of the product definition (platforms, infrastructure, architecture, people) is controlled by *product definition-expansion effort, e.g.* led by organizational design consultants and coaches?
- How intensely will key business users be required to get involved with product clarifications?
- How dramatically/radically will your organization have to change (flatten/de-scale) to support the proposed product definition?
- How many traditional roles will get challenged (component leads, first-line managers), when you move from portfolios/programs/projects to products? How strong will be individual resistance to change?
- To what extent a newly proposed, broader defined product definition, challenge prior "quasi"-product definition efforts, spear-headed by your predecessors?
- How many developers can be effectively involved in product development?
- How many system components, sub-components, applications, platforms can *each team* handle, independently?
- How many system components, sub-components, applications, platforms can a *single developer* learn and be able to work on, effectively?
  How widely can each team span its biz domain knowledge to work effectively?
- How widely can each Product Owner span her knowledge of business domain to prioritize effectively?
- To what extent will customers and users be able to embrace product definition, given it's widened breadth?
- How effectively can you market your product, given its new, widened definition?

CC BY SA

Product Definition Canvas Template

Product Name:

Date:

Contributor (s):

Vision - What is your product's purpose? How do you envision your product will change human lives and experience?
Mission – What is your mission? What are you trying to do, specifically, to achieve your goals?
Strategic Objectives –What are your OKRs: what are your objectives and what results do you expect to see, over time?

Funding/Budgeting/Sponsorship - Where does funding come from? Who will pay for your product?

Costs/Expenses/Investments - What costs, expenses or other financial overhead do you expect to encounter?

Sales/Marketing/Promotion - What strategies/tools/techniques are you going to use to increase your sales and revenue flow? What is your marketing strategy? What promotion channels will you use?

Measurements/Metrics - How will you measure your success?

Customers/Users/Target Groups - Who is this product for? Who uses it today and who will use it in a future?

Partnerships/Benefits - Who are your key partners? What value will this product bring to them? What cost reduction, time/financial savings, improved time-to-market, increased satisfaction should they expect to see?

Business:
Key Benefits:

Technology:
Key Benefits:

Other:
Key Benefits:

Competitors - Who are our direct or indirect competitors? Today, what makes them more or less successful than if you? What are their weak areas that you need to take advantage of?

Users – humans and systems that interact with your product

UI/UX/Interfaces – systems, applications, devices, (upstream and downstream)

Data -bases/sources – DB, data warehouse, data-feeds, etc.

Business Layers – e.g. parameters, necessary to create a business object

Service Layers – discrete operations that must be supported (API, orchestration, entity, utility)

Components/Applications – "elements" that are included in your product, when seen from a user/customer perspective

Regulatory/Legal/Compliance – requirements, controls, policies, rules

Quality Controls – measurements, validations, testable properties & attributes

CC BY SA

CC BY SA

Business Prioritization Matrix

	Consistency with Vision/Mission/Strategy	Readiness of Funding/Budgeting/Sponsorship	Expected Costs/Expenses (Overall)	Chances of Effective Sales/Marketing	Effectiveness of Success Measurement	Availability of Customers/Users	Benefits to Business	Improvement of Competitiveness	Benefits to Technology	Benefits to Other	Complexity of Front-End Design (UI/UX)	Complexity of Data Layers	Complexity of Business Layers	Complexity of Service Layers	Number of System Components Involved	Strictness of Regulatory/Legal/Compliance	Complexity of Quality Control	Total Score
Weights																		
Feature 1																		
Feature 2																		
Feature 3																		
Feature 4																		
Feature 5																		
Feature 6																		
Feature 7																		
Feature 8																		
Feature 9																		
Feature 10																		
Feature ….																		
Feature ….																		
Feature ….																		
Feature N-1																		
Feature N																		

Column headers - criteria, based on which features are compared and prioritized

Row headers - features that are compared and prioritized

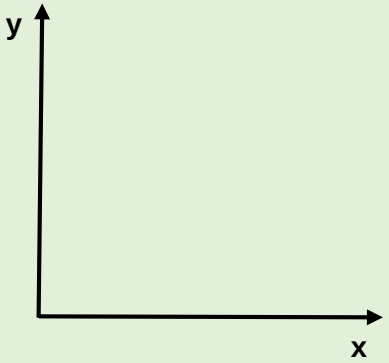
"Weights" header – weight (proportional importance) of each criteria

***Note**:*
Add/remove criteria, based on their relevance to specific organizational settings

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

Understanding Customer Journey

Dimensions



X-axis dimension – logically sequenced **steps/stages/phases** a customer goes through, as (s)he makes a journey (travels) through a product (service). All of them, are defined from a standpoint of a customer/user/consumer. steps/stages/phases. They can vary from product-to-product (service), based on purpose/intent. Start & end of a journey could vary.
Commonly used:

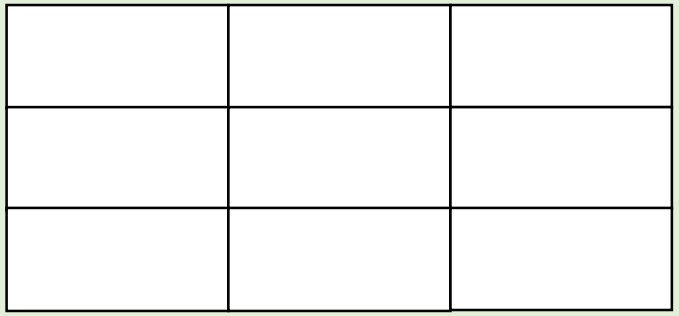
- Before → During → After
- Motivation → Search (of sites) → Browsing (of site) → Evaluation → Selection → Purchase → Product Experience → Feedback
- Awareness → Research → Choice Reduction → Making Selection→ Purchase
- Consideration → Discovery → Selection → Verification → Purchase → Self-Reflection
- Research → Evaluation & Comparison → Commitment → Use & Monitoring → Refining & Review

Y-axis dimension – concurrently aligned *elements* that are required (or expected to be required) at various steps/stages/phases. As a customer makes a journey (travels), (s)he can cross into various *elements* multiple times
Commonly used:

- Experience | Frontstage | Backstage | Systems & Processes
- Doing | Thinking | Touchpoints | Opportunities | Weaknesses | Comments | Ideas | Improvements
- Intentions | Expectations | Ideas | Activities | Perceptions/Feelings | Touchpoints | Risks | Opportunities
- PC Browser | Wireless Browser | Phone application | Customer Service | Retail Branch

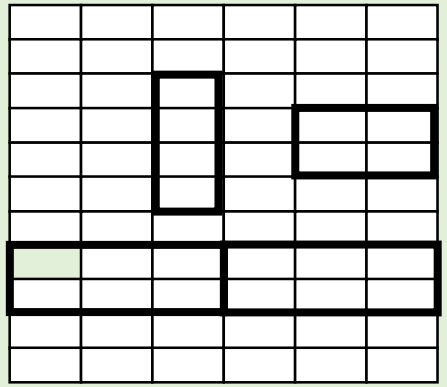
Matrix

Coarse-grained matrix



or

Fine-grained matrix



X-axis /Y-axis matrix can be **coarse-grained or fine-grained**, depending on how much information needs to be captured. Matrix can be also nested.

Customer Journey Map Template

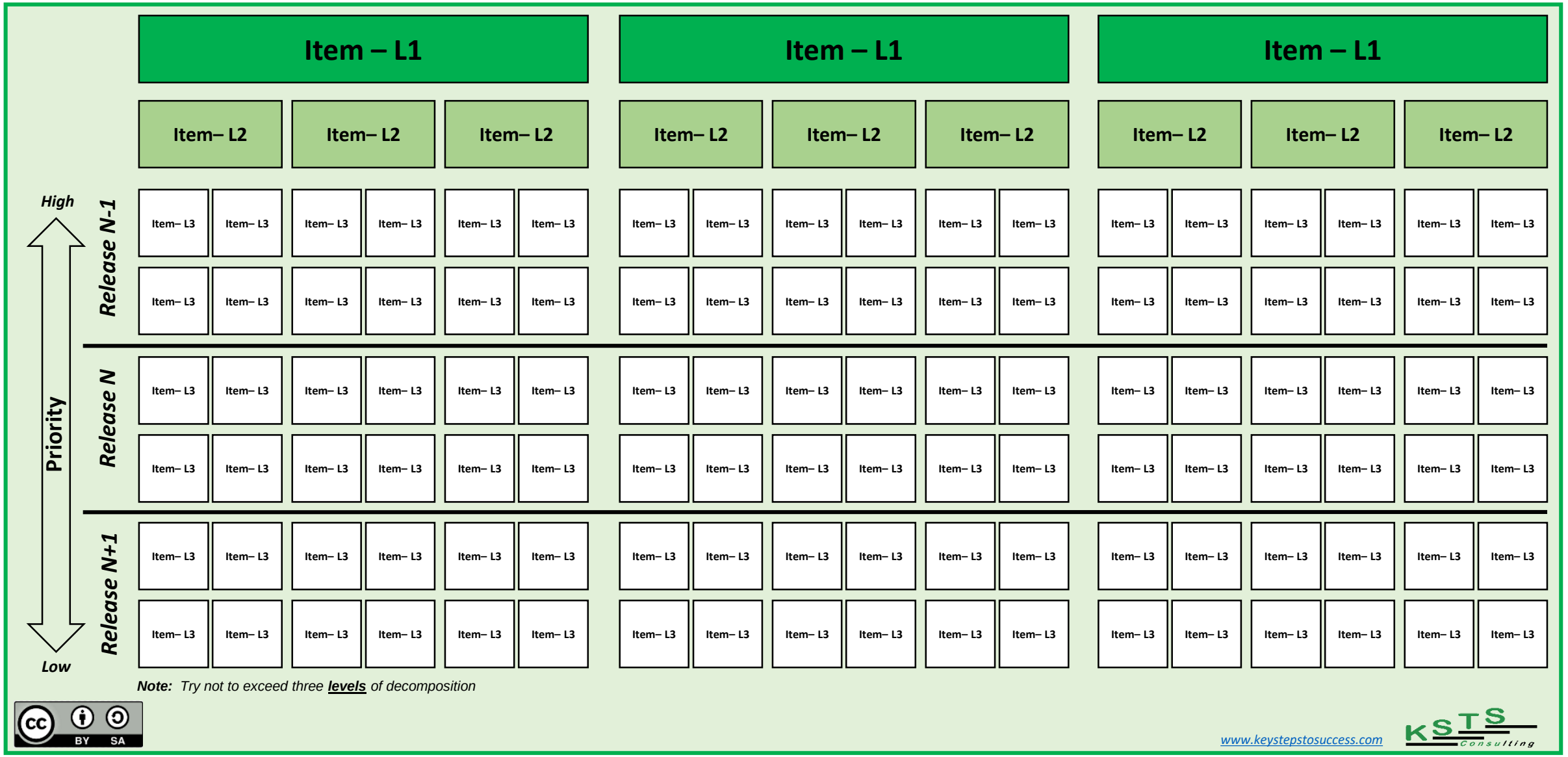
CC BY SA

KSTS Consulting

***Note**: Pick one of the options from X-axis or Y-axis, to do a customer journey discovery. Both dimensions (X and Y) contain most commonly used elements. Feel free to modify them and/or combine, as needed.*

			Step/Phase/Stage 1	Step/Phase/Stage 2			Step/Phase/Stage N	Step/Phase/Stage N+1
			Before >>>>

Story Mapping Template

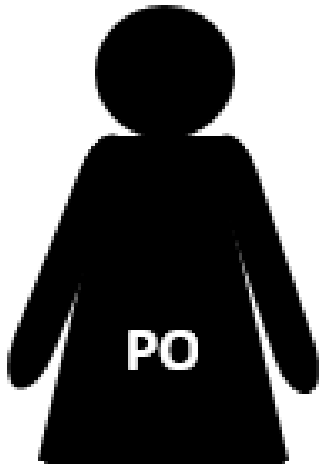


Note: *Try not to exceed three* ***levels*** *of decomposition*

CC BY SA

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

“Bricks & Snakes”



As Product Owner, I want the following components to be included in Product Definition, so that I see it as a REAL Product that I can successfully prioritize.

Product Components Discovery Template “Bricks & Snakes”

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

Component Name:
Component Owner:
Component ID:
Component Developer(s)/Location:

Skill-set/domain knowledge:

“Organizational Ownership”:

CC BY SA

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

Team 1

Technical Skill Set (per Team)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Note: *What technical skill set (e.g. technology, language) a team needs to have, in order to perform work in a backlog, to meet Definition of Done?*

Team 2

Functional Domain Expertize (per Team)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Note: *What domain expertise (e.g. line of business) each team needs to have, in order to perform work in a backlog, to meet Definition of Done?*

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

Team 1

Prototype Team 'Blueprint'

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Note: *Team 'blueprint' is a template of what a team may look like, given technical skillset and domain expertise required, in order to perform work in a backlog?* ***Do not assign individuals to teams****: teams will be created during a self-design workshop.*

Team 2

Prototype Product Group 'Blueprint' (beyond Teams)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Note: *Product Group 'blueprint' is a template of what the whole group may look like, including teams, Product Owner and users/customers, in order to function effectively and independently?*

The Big Day:
Team Self-Formation Workshop

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

Run Team Self-Design Exercise

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Team

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Note: *Use this sheet to capture names of team members (each team) during* ***Team Self-Formation Workshop****.* ***Managers do NOT create teams on behalf of teams.***

Initial
Product Backlog Refinement
(IPBR)

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

[Initial] Product Backlog

High Priority

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Low Priority

Note: *Initial product backlog should provide enough work ("feed" work) for teams during the first few sprints of LeSS adoption. This takes place during Initial Product Backlog Refinement event.* ***Participation of an entire product group is required****.*

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

Definition of Done

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Note: *A check list of items that must be done, by the end of each sprint, in order deliver a product increment (PI), as per agreement, by all teams, and with Product Owner. In LeSS, all teams share the same Definition of Done. The goal should be to expand Done, over time.*

"Undone" Department

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Note: *A check list of items that are explicitly known, as 'undoable', due to technical and/or organizational limitations. The goal should be to reduce 'Undone' over time.*

Product Definition & Exploration Workshop

Organizational Impediment Backlog

High Priority

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Low Priority

Note: *What organizational impediments (e.g. HR policies, reporting structure, career path, location strategies, budgeting, etc.) may potentially hinder healthy dynamics of a product group in LeSS adoption? Who will self-assign this responsibility (e.g. sr. manager, executive)? How do you plan on measuring progress of impediment resolution?*