Writing Effective User Stories
for Agile and Waterfall and everything in-between

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Welcome!

- Enterprise Agile Coach helping companies transform to Agile. Coached over 50 teams
- Writer for "Agile Journal" and "CM Journal"
- Writer of the *Agile Adoption Blog*
- CSM and CSP having implemented Scrum, XP, and Kanban at the product and organizational levels.
- Author of *Adapting Configuration Management for Agile Teams*, 2009, Wiley
- Author of **Software Configuration Management Implementation Roadmap**, 2004, Wiley
- Author of **Agile for Dummies,** 2010, Wiley and written for CA Agile Vision Product Marketing
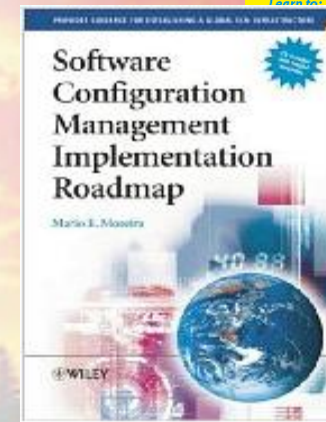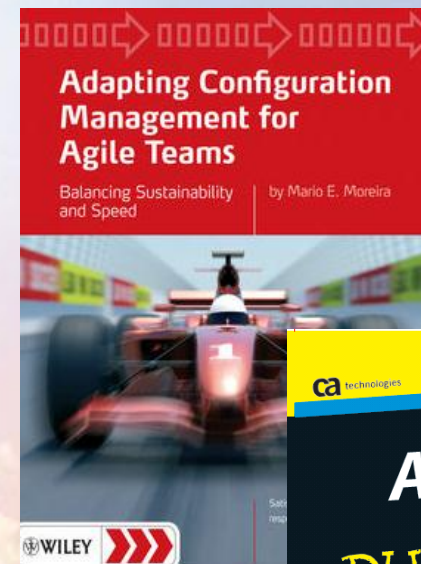
The Journey

- Definition of User Story
- Hierarchy of Requirements
- Personas
- Construct of User Story
- Glossary

Why this session?

- Do you have inconsistently written requirements that all over the map?
- Are their elements of your requirements statements that are missing?
- Do you think that you are missing requirements altogether?

What is a User Story

- The "currency" used to determine effective requirements to build effective products and solutions.

- Describes functionality that will be valuable to either a user (aka, persona) of a system or software.

- A requirement statement that transcends development delivery methodology
  - ◆ Works just as well for Waterfall as it does for Agile

- A written description of a requirements used for planning

- A statement that promotes conversations about the story to help flesh out the details

Requirement Hierarchy
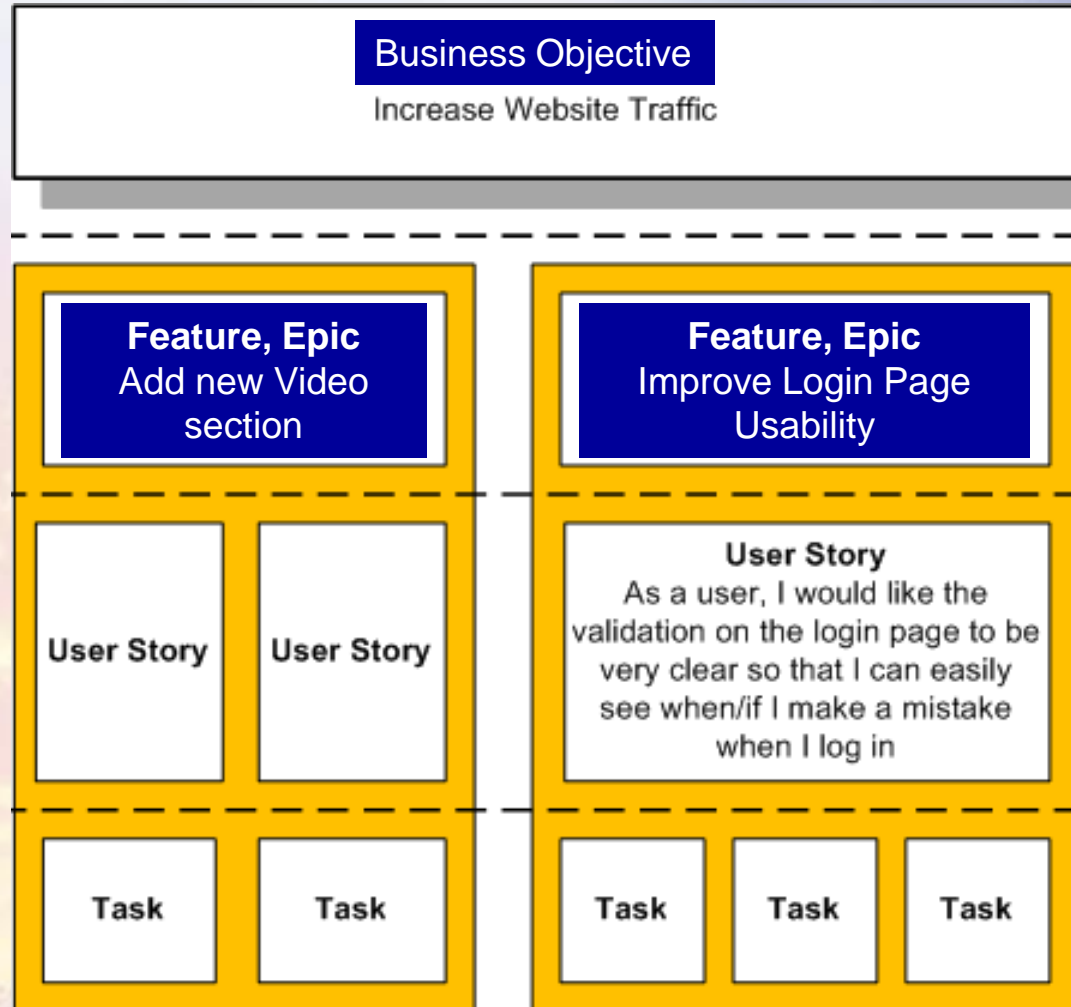
You may ascribe whatever hierarchy as long as the levels are defined and it is communicated to the team

| Business Objective |
| Increase Website Traffic |

Feature, Epic
Add new Video section

Feature, Epic
Improve Login Page Usability

User Story | User Story

User Story
As a user, I would like the validation on the login page to be very clear so that I can easily see when/if I make a mistake when I log in

Task | Task | Task | Task | Task

User Story

- **A good User story has the following properties (following the INVEST acronym):**
  - Independent, Negotiable, Valuable, Estimatable, Small, Testable
- **Every story contains enough information so that developers and QA can size how much effort it would take to implement it**
  - Per the Done Criteria
- **A story should be no larger than 2 weeks of work or in Agile, half the size of the sprint**
  - They may be broken down into tasks during Sprint Planning

Personas

The Users of your product
– Not those that write, develop, or test it

An imaginary or real representative of someone that uses your product
– A detailed version of an important user role needed for requirement clarification
– Defined attributes of a target user population and their intended interaction with the product

End-user, power-user, administrator, etc.

How many Personas

- Think of a Product you are involved in
- How many different Personas use that product?

Most products teams I've survey have between 2 and 8

Persona Map

- **With a clear mapping of persona's, you can avoiding missing a whole set of requirements for a user group**

Missing…

Possible elements of a User Story

- **Persona** - the actor or role that has the need
- **Action** – the goal
- **System** – the system or function that is used
- **Output** – the receiving entity
- **Business benefit** - Why they want to achieve it

Requirements Language Construct Options

The key is to build your own Requirements Language Construct and apply it consistently on your product or organization.

Here are some options:

As a <persona>, I want to <action>, so that <business value> *

As a <persona>, I want to <action>, with the <system>, to derive an <output>, so that <business value>

As a <persona>, I want to <action>, to derive an <output>, so that <business value>

* Known as the canonical form

Writing Good Stories

- **Canonical form**
  - As a <user role/persona>, I want to <action/behavior>, so that <business value>
- **Story examples**
  - As a website visitor, I can create an account in order to become a member of the site

  - As a trend analyst, I can search by homes for the sales in a specific sector, so I can determine what promotions to offer

  - As a prospective buyer, I want to search on homes so I know what properties are available in my price range

Write a User Story

- Define the Requirements Language Construct that you will use

- Write a User Story

- Who would like to share their story?

Why Business value is important

- **Provides context and motivation of why the action or behavior is occurring**
- **Helps with testability factors**
- **Example:**
  - As a website visitor, I can create an account….
- **Why:**
  - … in order to become a member of the site
  - … in order to purchase concert tickets

- **Note: Consider training your stakeholders and customers on how to provide their requirements as stories**

Glossary

— **Persona Terms**

    — What personas utilize your product

    — List each persona in a product glossary with their descriptions

— **Systems Terms**

    – What systems you are acting on

    – List the systems/subsystems related to your product with their descriptions

Wrap-up and take-aways

- Definition of User Story

- Hierarchy of Requirements

- Personas

- Construct of User Story

- Glossary

Questions and Answers

Thank You!

Reference: **Tips for an effective Agile Customer Validation approach**
Feel free to visit **Mario's Linkedin Profile** and his **Agile Adoption Blog**