

An Example Checklist for Product Owners

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Product Vision

- I have a product vision (created with customers, end users, and investors, when possible)
- I can answer to questions about the product vision and business model in a concise and inspiring way
- I have a short tagline for the product vision, for example “1,000 songs in your pocket” (iPod in 2001) to communicate the essence and value of the product release.

Stakeholders

- I understand the needs of my stakeholders (for example customers, end users, and investors)
- I communicate regularly with my stakeholders to understand their needs and to manage their expectations
- I can answer to questions about how each product backlog item will generate value for the stakeholders
- I am motivated to work as a Product Owner, and make sure I have the stakeholders’ mandate and trust
- My forecasts, key performance indicators (KPI), and other metrics are based on empirical evidence

Product Backlog

- I have a product backlog
- I have a mandate to make decisions about the product backlog and the next product goal.
- I update the product backlog at least before each sprint planning meeting, to better achieve the product goal
- The product backlog items are ordered (based on value, technical risk, work estimates, cost of delay, etc.)
- The product backlog items are clearly expressed and more detailed towards the top
- The product backlog is accessible and readable (but not editable) to all scrum team members
- I regularly refine the product backlog to make the top of it actionable, aka. “ready” for the next sprint (or release) planning meeting. The Scrum Team decides when and how refinement is done.

Development Team

- I communicate and work with my development team even on daily basis, when needed, to clarify the requirements, improve their design, and to optimize the user value and sprint’s outcome.
- I protect my development team from anyone who tries to replace the sprint’s product backlog items
- There is only one Product Owner who chooses the product backlog items and refines them with the development team. Otherwise, developers do not know who to listen.
- I inspire my development team by occasionally describing my product vision and next product goal, including the planned benefits and impacts of the next product release.
- I inspire and educate my developers by involving them in writing and analyzing user stories, when possible (thus also reducing my own work and helping developers better understand end user value).
- I trust my Scrum team’s development capabilities. If not, I will try and build trust by offering them training, recruiting, better communication, personnel changes, etc.
- My Scrum team trusts my business domain and end user knowledge. If not, I will try and build trust by improving my own and the Scrum team’s business and end user understanding.
- I have a similar understanding of the Definition of Done with the Scrum team

Scrum Master

- A Scrum Master is appointed (preferably by the development team, when possible)
- I have a good understanding and trust with my Scrum Master. If not, I work together with my Scrum Master to improve our cooperation.

Scrum Events

- I participate in sprint planning meetings to select and clarify the product backlog items with the team
- I participate in sprint review meetings, give and gather constructive feedback, and verify which of the selected product backlog items fulfill their unique Acceptance Criteria and the general Definition of Done.
- I facilitate the sprint review meetings, if I have the skill, especially when stakeholders are participating
- I participate in retrospective meetings to observe and improve our cooperation as a Scrum team
- I have scheduled sprint events with Scrum Master (for example as repetitive calendar events)

My current Product Owner Score is _____ / 30 points