Faster Forward

ProductCamp 2015: From Vision to Backlog

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Session Overview

- Who (target audience)
  - Product managers new to agile software development processes and want to know how to get started
- What:
  - The story of how 1 newbie product manager got from product vision > MVP feature list > wireframes > user stories > prioritized backlog
- When:
  - March 8, 2015
- Where:
  - ProductCamp Portland
- Why:
  - As a PM new to Agile, I did not know how to start applying the theory in the Agile books I read to a real life project. Other PM's and developers helped me tremendously by sharing their backlog and inviting me to their planning meetings. I want to share what I learned for other people who may be just getting started.

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# (Executive) Product Vision for Communication Edge

- Who:
  - Target users are employees at a US car dealership such as Sales, Parts, Services, Finance

- What:
  - Communication Edge (CE) is an instant message & presence app embedded into the CRM (customer relationship management) software used at a dealership

- When:
  - Users use instant message throughout the workday for quick communication as an alternative to calling or emailing because they can see the presence of their coworker

- Where:
  - Users will use CE on their PC or their iPhone if they are away from their desk

- Why CE and not Hangouts/Slack/Jabber/Skype/etc:
  - We will migrate all their user information from the CRM to CE and keep it secure

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Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Feature List

- What do you actually need for instant messaging?
    - Logging in
    - Search a directory
    - See presence
    - Change presence
    - Switch between conversations with different people
    - Message history
    - Send messages
    - Receive messages
    - Timestamps

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UX Design -> Wireframes

- Ideally, there is a UX designer on your team that can design the UX with your input and create wireframes. Even better if the designer is also familiar with visual design and can go straight to clickable prototypes. We use Invision to upload images and hotlink them.
  - Example: https://pivotal.invisionapp.com/share/UB1JK9DFC#/screens

- If you don't have a UX designer, then you will have to do the design. I used Powerpoint to piece together this screenshot. Notice how many components I had to use. It's a Frankenstein mockup.
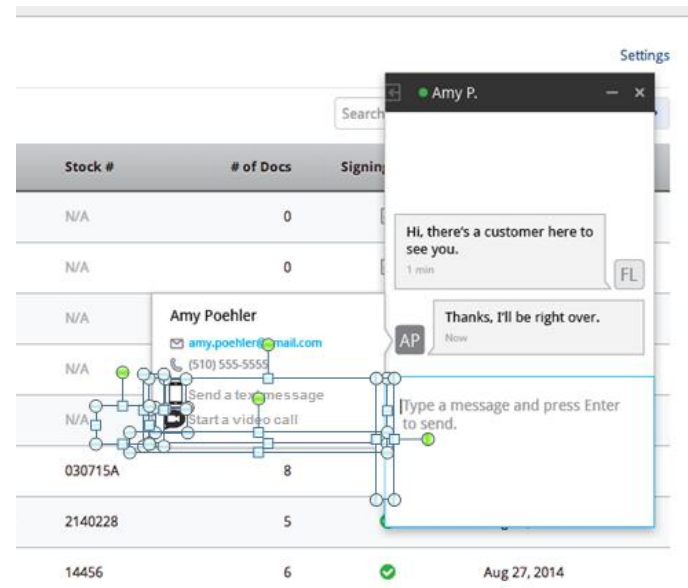
Writing User Stories

- I follow this methodology when writing user stories: http://pivotallabs.com/well-formed-stories/ which consists of the user value section then user interaction.
- I get pretty detailed in describing the UX from the wireframes, to reduce ambiguity of what I want to happen
- I link to the Invision wireframe so the developer can click through and explore the design

John should be able to remove a conversation from his active conversation list

DESCRIPTION (edit)

As John
I want to remove conversations with a certain person
Because I no longer need to chat with them frequently

Given I'm logged into the sample app
And the side panel is displaying a list of my conversations
When I hover over a conversation
Then a red x appears in the top right corner
And when I click the red x
Then the conversation disappears from the side panel.

Chat37
https://projects.invisionapp.com/share/UB1JK9DFC#/screens/44713591?maintainScrollPosition=false

Chat40
https://projects.invisionapp.com/share/UB1JK9DFC#/screens/44869890?maintainScrollPosition=false

Note that the undo, time and datestamp, and the tooltip are not part of this story.

Also the screenshots are not based on the side panel view but I thought it should be sufficient to work on the story. Let me know if it's not and I'll ask Dany to update the wireframes.

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Prioritizing the Backlog

- I took ~1 week to write enough stories for the backlog before running a planning meeting with the developers
- I prioritized the backlog according to user value prior to the meeting
- Some learnings from the 1st planning:
    - For completely new products, some "building block" stories are necessary. For example, I needed to add stories such as "User should see a box to input text" before "User should be able to search for his coworker".
    - My top priority are stories around sending messages, because that's the whole point, right?! Then various questions such as "Who are you sending the message to?" "How do you know it was sent?" was asked, so I had to re-prioritize to something more approximating the workflow.
    - Here's a screenshot of what next week might look like. It is a mix between user features, bug fixes, and techdebt chores
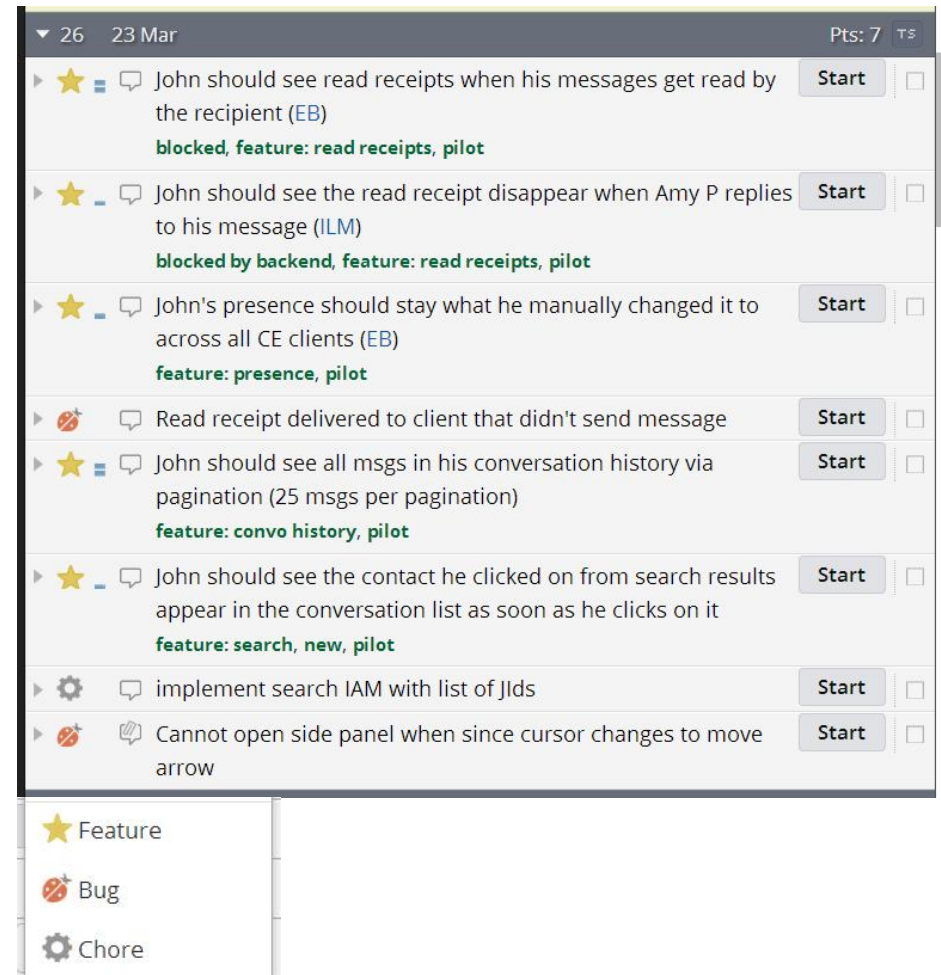
Session notes

- Shouldn't we start with the user problem instead of the vision?
  - Reality check for me: forget user research problem space exploration. The user problem and vision was basically fully baked by stakeholders when I joined the team. I think that will be common if you're joining as a market novice, especially if the project is already funded and tackling a relatively well-understood product like instant messaging. User research is still important though. I conducted enough exploratory user research to get on board with the belief that communication is a worthwhile problem to solve at a car dealership. It's important that I see value in my product. I also did research to inform the workflow design and usability.

- Did you have to prioritize more for workflow rather than user value?
  - I realized this as I was conducting the session, but yes, the backlog was prioritized more to build the workflow rather than user value. I feel like this is due to building a completely new product but it was a bit misleading, sorry! I'll improve this next time.

- What do you want to talk about for ProductCamp 2016?
  - 4 examples of things going wrong when user-centric product design was ignored
  - Methodology for using the value vs barriers graph to decide roadmap priorities →

Value
Epic's in the *Value Quadrant* have high client value and low barrier to entry. These represent the "low hanging fruit" of business transformation. These should represent a high percentage of our active efforts.

Priority
Epic's in the *Priority Quadrant* have high client value and high barrier to entry. These can be represented by significant shifts in platforms or enterprise client functionality which will eventually be leveraged down-market.

Tactical
Epic's in the *Tactical Quadrant* have low client value but also low barrier to entry. These can be tech debt, minor enhancements in UX, management & monitoring, etc. If other feature enhancements exist here their value should be reconsidered.

Dead Zone
Epic's in the *Dead Quadrant* have low client value and high barrier to entry. These can represent major shifts in architecture – The goal is to develop a stronger business value to these Epics or work to eliminate them from future consideration.

Value to the Business — High / Low
Barriers to Entry — Low / High

Thanks

- Thank you to everyone that voted for my session, attended, and gave me ideas for my roadmap!
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