



User Story Mapping

With a real-world Case Study

created by



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About the author

This article is written by Suresh Konduru – a globally recognized Scrum Alliance Certified Scrum Trainer (CST).

Suresh has more than 23 years of experience in Agile Transformation, Product Development, Agile Consulting, Agile Coaching & Scrum Training, Delivery Management, Program Management, Project Management for Global Fortune 500 customers.

He conducts workshops for Scrum Alliance flagship certifications such as Certified ScrumMaster (CSM) and Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO). These are interactive zero Power-Point sessions conducted across Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Kochi and other cities in India; as well as in USA, Europe, ME and APAC regions.

Suresh conducted more than 300 workshops, trained 10,000+ professionals across 30 countries in Agile and Scrum. Suresh delivered workshops in global locations including USA, India, Sweden, China, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, France, Thailand, UAE etc.

Suresh is specialized in "Training Scrum from the Back of the Room" based on Brain Science learning. He uses real-world examples, group learning activities to make the workshops learning as well as fun.

Suresh also consults for Fortune 500 organizations in product development, Agile transformation and change management initiatives.

Suresh runs 'ASK' program – a lifelong free mentoring program for his students registered through PremierAgile.

Table of Contents

- I. User Stories
 - a. Format
 - b. Real-world example
 - c. 3Cs
 - d. INVEST
- II. User Story Mapping
- III. User Story Mapping – Case Study

User Stories

As per the Scrum Framework, a Product Backlog is an ordered list of product features, functionalities, requirements, enhancements, tickets etc. The Product Backlog is created and maintained by the Product Owner. Each line item in the Product Backlog is called a Product Backlog Item.

User Stories are ways to write Product Backlog Items and described from a user's perspective. They are short, simple descriptions of a feature. keep your focus on the result your users want.

These are not prescribed by the Scrum Framework but became popular to write Product Backlog Items.

Format of a User Story:

As a <user role>

I want <purpose>

So that <objective>

Real world example of a User Story:

A Home Resident needs an energy monitoring device in the living room. The device displays the energy balance, so that the resident can monitor regularly, and make plans to save energy costs.

The User Story may be written as:

As a **Home Resident**

I want **to be able to see my daily energy usage**

So that **I can understand how to lower energy costs**



Image: A real Energy Balance information displayed in the living room

3 Cs of a User Story:



INVEST in User Stories:

The INVEST serves as a guidance to create a good quality Product Backlog Item. This is created by Bill Wake.

I	Independent	Write independent User Stories as much as possible. Remove dependencies on other User Stories.
N	Negotiable	Capture the essence of the user requirement and is always negotiable in terms of re-ordering, adding more details etc.
V	Valuable	Clearly demonstrate value to users.
E	Estimable	Provide just enough and specific information to be estimated.
S	Small	Write User Stories as small as possible, so that they can be planned for Sprints, and not spanning over multiple Sprints.
T	Testable	Describe just enough so that tests can be defined.

User Story Mapping

Overview	The Product Owner builds a map with the known User Stories and makes a high-level release plan.
Duration	Typically, 1-2 hours
Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Product Owner2. Scrum Master3. Stakeholders such as users, SMEs etc4. Developers
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Puts users first – increases empathy.▪ Helps to prioritize User Stories.▪ Helps to break down large User Stories into smaller User Stories.▪ Communicate effectively with stakeholders and team members. Creates team consensus and shared understanding.▪ Depict release plans easily. Can make release priorities and modify as required.
When to do?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. High-level planning – both initial and subsequent stages.b. Product Backlog Refinement.c. During the need to communicate with stakeholders and team members (ongoing basis).
Steps to create	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. List users.2. List user activities (Transactions or high-level features).3. Break into User tasks (Epics).4. Break into User Stories (further smaller units).5. Separate User Stories into different Releases.

Case-study

Product Vision:

Build world-class tennis players who can compete and win top tennis tournaments across the world.

Some ideas:

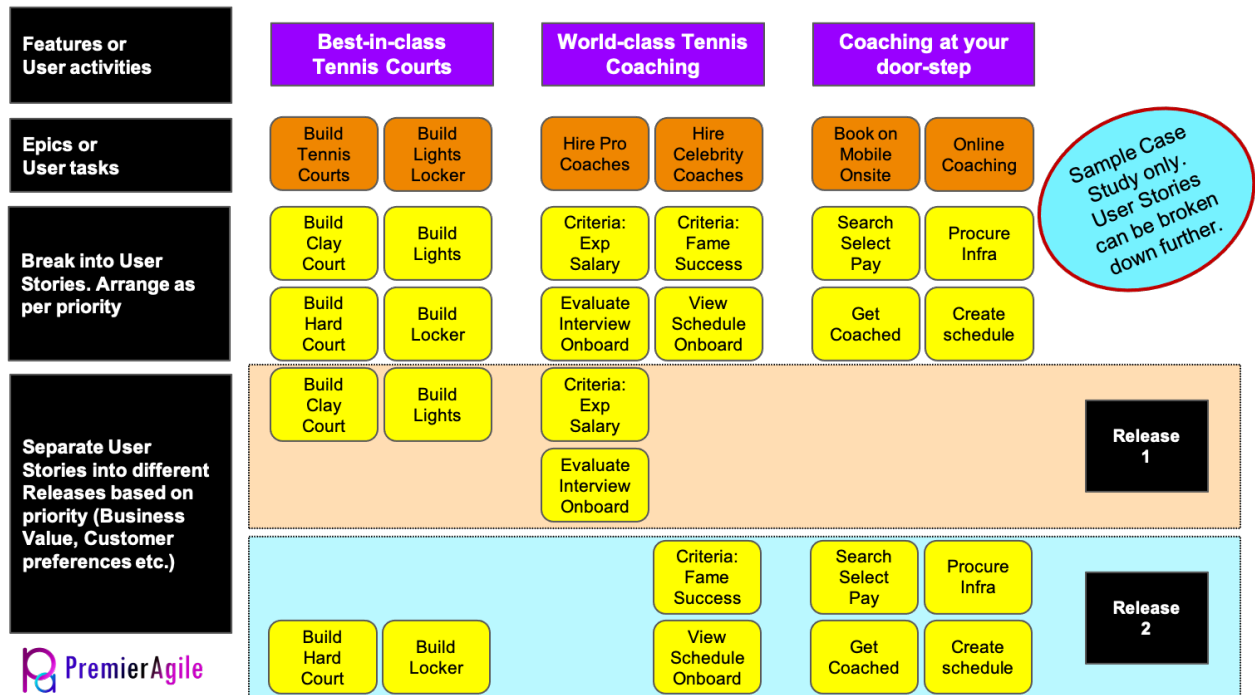
1. Provide Best-in-class Tennis Courts
2. World-class Tennis Coaching
3. Crash courses by top ranked players
4. Inhouse, onsite and online coaching
5. Other player amenities such as locker, parking etc.

Steps followed to create User Story Mapping:

- The listing of users is ignored here, assuming one user – the Tennis player.
- User activities (high-level features) are listed such as Best-in-class tennis courts, World-class tennis coaching etc.
- These high-level features are broken into User tasks (Epics).
- These Epics are broken into User Stories (further smaller units).
- The User Stories are separated into two Releases – 1&2.

Note: This is a sample Case Study. The User Stories shown in the below User Story Map are indicative. They can be broken down further.

User Story Map



References

1. The Scrum Guide Nov 2020 – by Ken Schwaber & Jeff Sutherland.
2. User Story Mapping – Jeff Patton.

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