Technical Risk Examples : Things that cause rework or additional work to be completed before delivery of an item

- Solution performs too slowly and needs to rework to hit releasable performance goals
- Solution uses too much server runtime memory and risks server failure. Rework required to reduce memory needs
- Solution has security vulnerabilities that causes rework to be releasable
- Solution uses too much data storage space and needs rework
- Solution fails to scale across multiple dynamic servers as expected and needs rework to support scaling
- Solution has hard coded configuration and cant be deployed to testing or production environments without rework
- Solution fails to work on different browsers, used to be IE, now think Safari
- Solution breaks previously working features that were thought to be unrelated and those need to be fixed/reworked
- Solution doesn't have required level of production monitoring features and needs rework to move into production environments
- Solution works on test data, but becomes unusable when exposed real customer data, requiring rework

Process Risk Examples: Things that delay work irrespective of the item itself

- Work sits idle, queued before a constraint for some resource that we didn't anticipate
- Images or other assets aren't available to develop a solution
- Test data isn't available to develop a solution
- Un-planned work increases beyond what was anticipated and slows progress
- Team isn't in a position to begin building a solution when planned (physically present, with everything they need to code, not shared)
- Test environments not available when needed

External Risk Examples: Dependencies, things we need from "others" before delivery of an item

- Blocked waiting for external hosting vendor to configure and install servers
- External stakeholder is slow in giving sign-off approval
- Legal / Geopolitical or other regulatory sign-off is slow

Group Exercise – Step 1 Capture Risks

In a group, share and capture stories (real spoken stories) of reasons previous features were delayed. Capture at least one from each team member, then discuss how these might impact future work.

General Risk Description	Impact? (Low/Med/High)

Group Exercise – Step 2 Prioritize Risks, Create Actions

Looking about 3-Months into the future, dot vote what avoidance ideas you will tackle. Create a list of actionable steps and how you will measure success. How many “dots” per person? about the square root of the team size.

How hard to avoid ? (Easy/Med/Hard)	Ideas: How to avoid/lessen this risk?	Dot Votes

Actionable Steps	Who	When	Evidence its working...

	Likelihood 1 - Rare	Likelihood 2 - Sometimes	Likelihood 3 - Often	Likelihood 4 – "Certain"
	Rare = 1 in ____ items	Sometimes = 1 in ____ items	Often = 1 in ____ items	Certain = Expected Every item
Impact - High	High = _____ days/weeks			
Impact – Medium	Medium = _____ days/weeks			
Impact - Low	Low = _____ days/weeks			

Exercise:

1. Agree on the definition of likelihood and impact, fill in the column and row headers.
2. Using one post-it note per risk, silently and individually, capture as many reasons some factor or missing thing has/might delay delivery of work
3. Pair up with another person and talk through the risks you captured. Clarify the language and throw away duplicates.
4. Join another pair (now there are 4 of you) - discuss and rank each risk you have on the basis of impact (L = low, M = medium, H = High) and likelihood (1 = Rare, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always).
5. Select one person from the group to present the top 3 or 4 risks to the entire group.
6. Position the risks on a poster or whiteboard in a grid form like this page, and discuss positioning as a group.

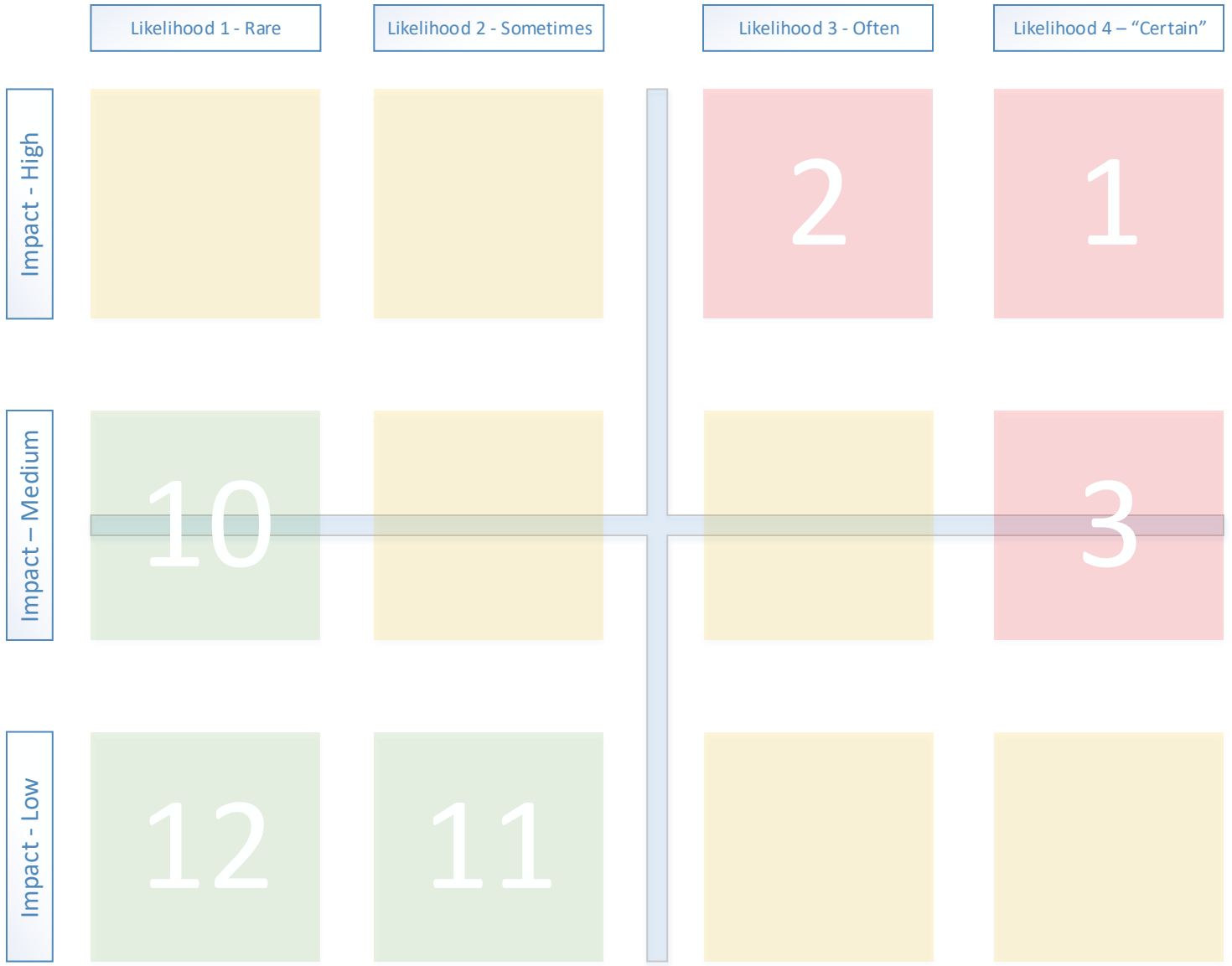
Preferred Order of Action

What risks are most important to deal with first? Deciding which risks are cost effective and beneficial to go after is important, and it's not as easy as you might think. How much "sometimes" turns a "medium" impact into more important than a "rare/high"? It will depend.

Group Exercise

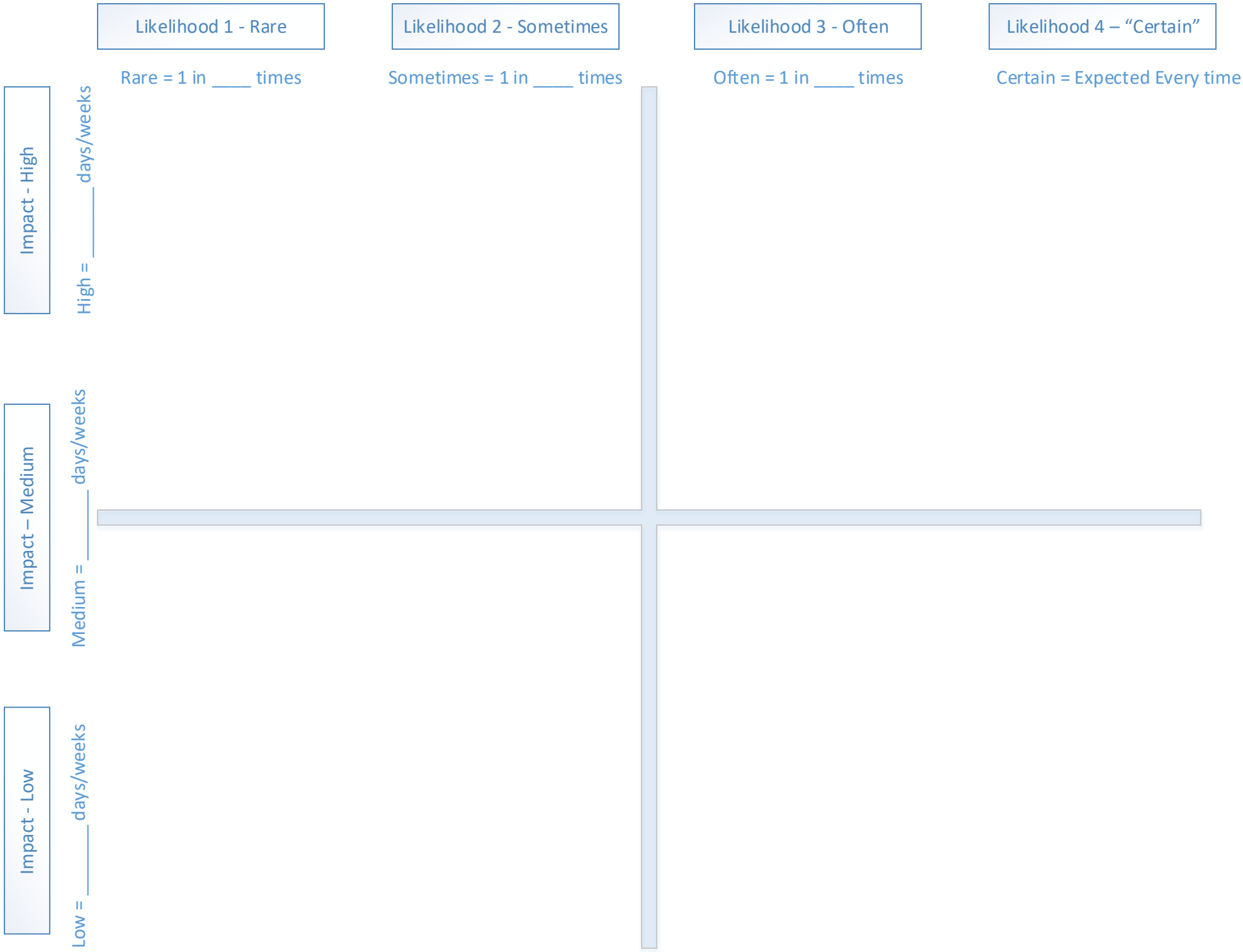
In a group, discuss what order you would address the un-numbered zones.

1. First, make clear the definitions for Likelihood and Impact. Agree on some numerical way to measure these in your context (Document these on the risk canvas).
2. Then, agree on how much impact would equal an increase in likelihood to make it more sense to do one medium impact before a high impact.
3. Fill all of the un-number zones.



Tips and Ideas

1. It's often hard in the un-clear zones to have an exact optimal order. This means that there may not be an exact optimal order! It's OK to best guess.
2. There will be process risks, and item specific risks. Look to understand that some risks will be "certain" for some kinds of work and "Rare" for others
3. A "medium" "sometimes" might be more important than a "high" "often" if it applies to more items in the backlog. Think frequency and exposure
4. For each risk, think what type of backlog item it applies to and how many of them there are. Drop risks that are no longer applicable.
5. Don't solve risks where the impact is less disruptive than the fix. The goal is to not eliminate every risk, just the impactful ones with easy fixes!
6. For each risk, decide on a "Solvability" score – this will help find the easiest solved risks that have big benefit; especially in the unclear zone.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Likelihood 3 - Often
Likelihood 4 – "Certain"
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Impact - High
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