Product Backlog Grooming

User Story 1: Task Management

As a project manager, I want to be able to assign tasks to team members within the project management tool so that I can efficiently distribute workload and track progress.

Grooming Activities

During backlog grooming, the team should focus on refining, estimating, and prioritizing this user story to ensure it is ready for sprint planning. Below are the specific activities to perform:

1. **Clarify Requirements and Scope**

    – **Discuss the User Story Details**: Confirm the functionality required, such as detail information (assignment and due date, description, etc.). Discuss edge cases, e.g., what happens if no team members are available or if a task is reassigned.
    – **Review Acceptance Criteria**: Validate the provided acceptance criteria to ensure these are clear, testable, and cover all necessary scenarios. Add or refine criteria if needed, e.g., handling cases where email notifications fail.
    – **Define Scope Boundaries**: Clarify if this user story includes additional features like unassigning tasks, bulk assignments, or role-based access (e.g., only project managers can assign tasks).

2. **Break Down into Smaller PBI**

    – Decompose the user story into smaller, manageable PBI.
    – Ensure each PBI is small enough to be completed within a sprint and has clear deliverables.

3. **Estimate Effort**

    – Use techniques like Planning Poker to estimate the story points or ideal hours for the user story and its tasks.
    – Consider factors like:
        • Complexity of integrating with an email service (e.g., third-party APIs like SendGrid).
        • Data retrieval for the team member list (e.g., database query performance).
        • UI/UX design for the dropdown and history view.

– Discuss any dependencies, such as existing user authentication or a team member database, that may impact effort.

4. **Identify Dependencies and Risks**

- **Dependencies**: Confirm if prerequisites like a user management system or email service integration are in place. If not, create separate PBIs or note dependencies.
- **Risks**: Discuss potential risks, such as:
    • Performance issues if the team member list is large.
    • Email delivery failures or spam filtering.
    • Security concerns (e.g., ensuring only authorized users can assign tasks).
- Add mitigation steps, such as caching team member data or implementing retry logic for email notifications.

5. **Refine Acceptance Criteria**

- Ensure each acceptance criterion is specific, measurable, and testable. For example:
    • Original: "THEN the task is assigned to the selected team member and saved in the system."
    • Refined: "THEN the task is assigned to the selected team member, saved in the database, and visible in the task list within 1 second."
- Add any missing criteria, such as handling errors (e.g., "GIVEN a team member is unavailable, WHEN I attempt to assign a task, THEN I see an error message indicating the issue").

6. **Validate with Stakeholders**

- Review the user story and acceptance criteria with stakeholders (e.g., product owner, project managers, or end-users) to ensure alignment with expectations.
- Ask questions like:
    • Should the dropdown include inactive team members?
    • Are there specific email notification formats or branding requirements?
    • Should the history log include additional details, like task status changes?

7. **Document Assumptions and Open Questions**

- Note any assumptions, such as:
    • Team member data is already available in the system.
    • Email notifications use an existing service.
- List open questions to resolve before sprint planning, e.g.:
    • What is the maximum number of team members in the dropdown?
    • Are there compliance requirements for storing assignment history?

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the grooming session, the team should have:

- A clear, well-defined user story with specific, testable acceptance criteria.
- A list of tasks with effort estimates.
- Identified dependencies, risks, and mitigation plans.
- Consensus on the user story's priority and readiness for sprint planning.
- Stakeholder feedback incorporated and open questions documented for resolution.