CS - 250

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**3-4 Journal: Product Owner**

**Benefits of Engaging With Users or Stakeholders**

As the Product Owner, engaging directly with users and stakeholders provides critical benefits. First, it ensures that the development team works on features that align with actual business needs rather than assumptions. Stakeholder collaboration also helps build trust and promotes shared ownership of the product. Agile frameworks stress that close user involvement improves satisfaction because requirements are continuously refined based on direct feedback (Leffingwell, 2021). By fostering this communication loop, the Scrum Team can respond quickly to evolving needs and avoid delivering low-value features.

**How User Stories Help the Scrum Team**

User stories act as a bridge between stakeholders and the development team. They frame requirements from the user’s perspective and clarify the value each feature is expected to deliver. For the Scrum Team, stories break down complex goals into manageable increments that can be prioritized and estimated in sprint planning. According to Cobb (2015), this progressive elaboration process allows teams to adapt requirements over time while keeping the overall vision intact. In practice, stories keep the team focused on outcomes rather than just tasks, which leads to higher-value delivery.

**Role of Interviews and User Meetings**

The interviews and user meetings we conducted were essential in shaping clear, realistic user stories. These conversations helped uncover not only functional needs (such as “view top five destinations”) but also emotional drivers—like a traveler’s desire for convenience or inspiration. Without this direct dialogue, it would have been difficult to capture the nuances that matter most to end users. Meetings also helped the team validate assumptions early, reducing the likelihood of costly rework later.

**Other Methods for Collecting Feedback**

While interviews are powerful, other methods should also be used to strengthen user stories. Surveys can capture a broader sample of preferences quickly, while usability testing provides observable insights into how users interact with prototypes. Analytics from existing travel platforms could also guide prioritization by highlighting which destinations or features users engage with most. Agile practice recommends maintaining multiple feedback channels—such as stakeholder reviews, product demos, and backlog refinement sessions—to continuously evolve requirements (Cobb, 2015). Together, these approaches ensure the backlog reflects the voice of the customer at all times.

**References**

Cobb, C. G. (2015). The project manager’s guide to mastering agile: Principles and practices for an adaptive approach. Wiley.

Leffingwell, D. (2021). SAFe 5.0: The scaled agile framework for lean enterprises. Scaled Agile, Inc.