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**3-4: Journal Entry: Product Owner**

As the Product Owner, I need to make sure that the client’s wishes are translated to a story that the team can use to create the program. Throughout the project, I have tools I can use to help streamline this process. At the outset, I employed the User Stories tool to get a set of requirements that the team can then translate to code.

When engaging with users or stakeholders it is important to first get them to understand that their vision of the project is what we want to turn into the product. When we get that buy-in, they become more comfortable with the process. We can move to identifying the pain points they are trying to alleviate. Through a series of interview style questions, we can the outline of the story – the program. We keep asking “why?” to keep the story flowing, actively listening to the responses. It takes a great deal of empathy to see past the answers and to the meaning behind the responses. Once these stories are complete, a guide has been created to keep the developers focused on the user’s needs and not the developer’s wants.

The user stories help create the guide for the Scrum Team. Instead of instructions on the specific way to make the program, the stories inform the developers on how the user wants to interact with the program and the results they want out of it. The “how we get there” is somewhat less important, at least early on. This gives the developers the flexibility to design their software using the best tools and processes. By using agile approaches, they can also offer the client early eyes onto the functionality of the program, allowing for feedback sooner when it is easier to incorporate into the process.

The user meetings were key to making these user stories into a guide for the developers. Having the interview sessions in person also created a personal connection between the stakeholders and me. This helped me look from their perspective, to “walk a mile in their shoes”. I understood better what they were trying to achieve and I wanted to achieve that for them.