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Product Owner Journal Clifton Brann

There are numerous benefits in the Product Owner engaging with users and stakeholders; the most important of which is that the resulting product is the product the users want and will pay for. Other benefits include greater product engagement or use, more frequent use, and possible purchase of other companion products made by the same company. By engaging with stake holders the priorities of the individual facets of the product can be managed and agreed on. By agreeing on what features to add and in what order, the most value is created for the stakeholders and company that produces the product. For the Product Owner “to be the voice of the customer” they must engage with the customer or user to find out what is needed, wanted and desired. (*Product Owner*, n.d.) By finding out what is necessary, what the customer or user would like, and what they wish for gives the Product Owner the information to take back to the Development Team in the form of Stories. Which will in turn be made into functioning features on a product.

The Stories that were created in this module shows that the goals for the team must be broken down to small pieces. By making the Stories only cover once piece or function of the product, it is much easier for the Development Team to address the that function, and create a good working solution for that function. At the same time, the Teams awareness of all the Stories allows them to be mindful of how each Story is related, and how they need to plan for integration. As I understand it, each Story is presented to the Development Team, and they pick some to work on, and decide amongst themselves how and who is doing what part of whatever Story or Stories they have chosen. This approach makes sense because some parts need to be finished before other features or functions can be added, there has to be and is an order of operations which must be maintained.

During the user interviews, open ended questions were asked, and the answers were received, sometimes with new or different requests, or a refinement or addition to an existing ask. It was easy during the user interview to see how that situation could spiral out of control and important useful ideas could be lost. By focussing on what the responses were, and how they sometimes played off each other, it was interesting to sift through the ideas and decide what was and wasn’t important. Not everything the users talked about is possible, but the broad ideas were very approachable. Through active listening, and looking for the common threads, a Product Owner has to gather the most important ideas and concepts, and find a way to communicate those ideas to the Development Team, in a way that they understand, in the form of Stories.

There are many ways to gather user or stakeholder feedback. Those ways can include: surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, social media, and online reviews, to name a few. (Bereton*, 2023*) One of the problems with some of these methods is that there can be so many responses that it is implausible for one person to read or analyze each one of them, but in some cases computers can collate certain data (like a 1- 5 rating system with questions about the product or features) into a simplified format. However computers cannot easily collate data that comes in the form of written responses, that is something that would have to be analyzed by hand, which can be laborious and lead to bias on the part of the person or people doing the reading and categorizing. In getting customer feedback, the Product Owner “must be prepared to receive negative feedback, and take it as an opportunity for growth.” (Bereton, 2023) Negative feedback can be just as important as positive feedback, because it gives the chance for the product to be improved in a meaningful and significant way.

**References**

Bereton, J. (2023, November 20). *How Do Product Managers Get Customer Feedback* [Review of *How Do Product Managers Get Customer Feedback*]. Www.launchnotes.com. https://www.launchnotes.com/blog/how-do-product-managers-gather-customer-feedback#:~:text=Product%20managers%20need%20to%20identify,or%20social%20media%20listening%20tools.

*Product Owner*. (n.d.). Scaled Agile Framework. https://scaledagileframework.com/product-owner/

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