

To the next product owner,

I am the last guy who had this position for the project. Although technically I was one of two, I'll get into that later. I wanted to write this letter for you as an introduction to our project and some tips on how to go about being a product owner.

First, a little background. In our semester, we were originally two groups, however for the last sprint, we decided to merge together into one group. Each group conveniently worked on completely separate parts of the program, making it a lot easier. I was a part of Scrum Bums, where we worked primarily on batch account creation and email/phone number compatibility. Using our section of the code, you'll be able to input a CSV file and create an account for each entry, then if their emails and phone numbers are valid, the users will actually be sent the respective items. It's not immediate, but it does happen. The other team (Team Bob) spent a lot of time getting the project deployed. Combined, we hope to actually have a playable game. If you were wondering, the merged team was called Bobbums.

The project that we received at the start of our time working on it was a well done project, but with very poor documentation. Your team may have already run across the read me file that just contains "BucHunt" a number of times. Please add one to that file, and nothing else. We're keeping a running tally (the number of "BucHunt"s minus one is the number of teams that have worked on it). That file was left there by the first team. It only had two "BucHunt"s when we got it. That was just about the extent to which it was documented. Hopefully, we have something better for you. The original team also went with a vertical slice of the project rather than a horizontal slice. This means they implemented a lot of things, but not fully. What you should be doing is horizontal slicing: implement what is required first to make it a playable game, then add things in order of importance to a gameplay experience. For us, this meant having only one hunt with as streamlined of a user experience as possible. With the batch account creation, they didn't even have to make their own accounts. To accomplish this, we had to disable some functionality. We didn't cut out code, we just turned some stuff off. It's worth noting that I'm primarily talking about my team's part of the project. I have limited knowledge of what the other team has done.

I'm not going to tell you where to go from here, that's for you to decide. What I will say, is that admins pretty much don't need to be there. You can have a game built solely out of code. The admins are a future thing. So, prioritize the user experience. However, if you or Mr. Kinser feel that going in a different direction would be better, go for it. Part of Agile is being able to adapt.

With regards to maintaining the backlog, when you give something to the team to work on for a sprint, telling them the acceptance criteria is important. If they know what you're looking for specifically, it can help them solve the right problem. It also helps get your words behind your words out. When the team is breaking down tasks, it can be tempting to try and point out things that they miss. However, what you should do instead is point them in the right direction. You want them to figure out how to break it down themselves, since they are the experts. Try to get feedback from Mr. Kinser once per sprint during the review, if you can. If you don't have anything new, it might not be as important. It can also be a good idea to have an Excel spreadsheet or something similar where the team can track tasks and you can post your acceptance, that way everyone can see it.

I've been rambling on for a while now, so I think it's about time to end this letter off. Of course, if you have any questions, Mr. Kinser should be able to provide you with some method to contact me/us. You can also get in contact with the other product owners. He's not likely to ever place a restriction on that, and actually encouraged it during our time. Plus, you can just ask him if you really need help.

Best wishes,

Richard Cashion