Release Plan

A release is a set of minimally marketable features – the smallest group of product features that team/s can effectively deploy and promote in the marketplace. A release plan contains a set of features and a release date.

Release Plan serves as a guidepost towards which the team/s progress iteration by iteration.

The goals of Release Plan are:

- Resolve discrepancies between the product roadmap (top down) with a team/s commitment (bottom up)
- Extend visibility past a single sprint, so executives can make informed budget and schedule decisions
- Give Scrum teams a chance to understand the complete set of functionality in the product
- As a forcing function

To create a release plan, use the following steps as a guide:

1. Establish a release goal
2. Review the product backlog to determine the highest priority user stories/features/epics/themes that support release goal using Story Mapping or similar technique
3. Refine and estimate features/epics/themes
4. Align iteration and release date
5. Get the development teams' buy-in

A release planning meeting is used to create a release plan, which lays out the overall project. The release plan is then used to create iteration plans for each individual iteration.

Release Planning is a collaborative effort of the Product Owner (Owners if required), DevTeams, and Stakeholders (sales and marketing, sponsors, current and potential customers, product management folks, infrastructure teams, and anyone else who are dependent or affects dependency).

For the purpose of release planning product backlog should be:

- Prioritized
- Features/epics/themes should be estimable on relative scale (preferable T-shirt sizing or similar nonnumeric value)
- Features/epics/themes should be arranged in at least in at least three dimensions - user story, priority, and timeline

While communicating release plan to stakeholders, POs must make it clear that release plan is tentative because of detailing, new information discovery, and dynamic nature of the environment.

P.S.: Release Planning is not a meeting but an event.

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