Release Planning Tips

Priorities

You want to start by looking at your priorities. What are the highest priority user stories that need to be developed? You want to schedule those items first. Try to schedule all must-do user stories before you schedule any should-do user stories. Similarly, try to schedule should-do user stories before any could-do user stories.

Risk*

The high risk user stories are the ones that you want to be aware of. If you have high risk user stories, you want to evaluate those based on their priorities.

If you have a high-risk, high priority user story, this is a risk that you need to take because it will add value to the product. You want to complete these user stories as soon as possible in the project. This way, you can deal with the risk early on, or if you discover that the feature will not work in the product, you identify that early in the project.

If you have a have a high-risk, low priority user story, this feature does not add value to your product but has the risk to cause issues. For that reason, you want to avoid adding these features until they are essential to the product, and thus have a higher priority. Until that happens, you want to leave high-risk, low-priority user stories in the backlog.

Story Points

Make sure that the total number of story points in each sprint is less than or equal to your team's sprint velocity.

You don't want the total number of story points to be significantly less than your team's sprint velocity. If you can fit another user story in the sprint, do it!

Dependencies

Identify any user stories that have dependencies with each other. You then want to make sure that dependent user stories do not appear before the user stories that they are dependent upon.

Clarity

Make sure that user stories are uniquely identified and that story point values, priorities, and risk assessments are clearly visible.

This is something that we elaborate on in Module 4.