Step 4: Estimating efforts and ordering requirements

» *Effort* is the ease or difficulty of creating functionality from a particular requirement.

» An *estimate,* as a noun, can be the number or description you use to express the estimated effort of a requirement.

» *Estimating* a requirement, as a verb, means to come up with an approximate idea of how easy or hard (how much effort) that requirement will be to create.

To score your requirements, you work with two different groups of people:

>> The development team determines the effort to implement the functionality for each requirement.

>> The product owner, with support from the stakeholders, determines the value and risk of the requirement to the customer and the business.

Estimating effort

To order requirements, the development team must first estimate the effort for each requirement relative to all other requirements.

Assessing business value and risk

Assessing business value and risk

Together with stakeholders, the product owner identifies the highest business value items (either high potential ROI or other perceived value to the end customer), as well as those items with high negative impact on the project if unresolved.

Similar to effort estimates, values or risks can be assigned to each product roadmap item. For example, you might assign value using monetary ROI amounts or, for an internally used product, assign value or risk by using high, medium, or low.

After you have your value, risk, and effort estimates, you can determine the relative priority, or order, of each requirement.

» A requirement with high value or high risk (or both) and low effort will have a high relative priority. The product owner might order this item at the top of the roadmap.

» A requirement with low value or low risk (or both) and high effort will have a lower relative priority. This item will likely end up toward the bottom of the roadmap.

Prioritizing requirements

To determine the overall priority for your requirements, answer the following questions:

» What is the relative priority of the requirement?

» What are the prerequisites for any requirement?

» What set of requirements belong together and will constitute a solid set of functionality you can release to the customer?
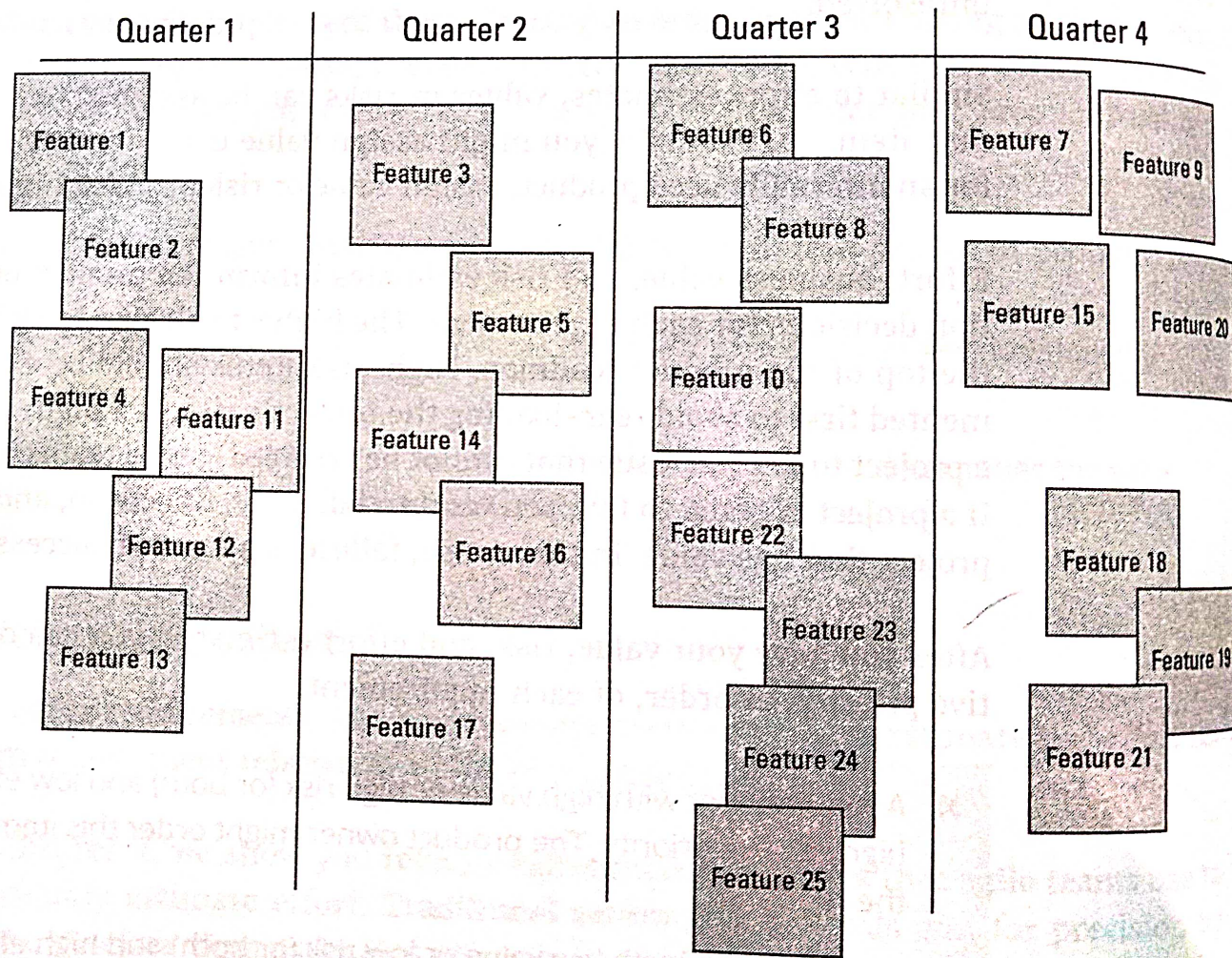
FIGURE 7-6:
Product roadmap with ordered requirements.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Feature 1	Feature 3	Feature 6	Feature 7
Feature 2	Feature 5	Feature 8	Feature 9
Feature 4	Feature 14	Feature 10	Feature 15
Feature 11	Feature 16	Feature 22	Feature 20
Feature 12	Feature 17	Feature 23	Feature 18
Feature 13		Feature 24	Feature 19
		Feature 25	Feature 21

Step 5: Determining high-level time frames

When you create your product roadmap, your time frames for releasing product requirements are at a very high level. For the initial roadmap, choose a logical time increment for your project, such as a certain number of days, weeks, months, quarters (three-month periods), or even larger increments. Using both the requirement and the priority, you can add requirements to each increment of time.

Figure 7-7 shows a sample product backlog. At a minimum, when creating your product backlog, be sure to do the following:

» Include a description of each requirement.

» Order the requirements based on priority.

» Add the effort estimate.

PRODUCT BACKLOG

Order	ID	Item	Type	Status	Estimate
1	121	As an Administrator, I want to link accounts to profiles, so that customers can access new accounts.	Requirement	Not Started	5
2	113	Update requirements traceability matrix.	Overhead	Not Started	2
3	403	Test automation training for Michael.	Improvement	Not Started	3
4	97	Refactor Login Class.	Maintenance	Not Started	8
5	68	As a Site Visitor, I want to find locations, so that I can use bank services.	Requirement	Not Started	8

FIGURE 7-7:
Product backlog
items sample.