

# Cobb, Charles G. – Agile Planning, Requirements, and Product Backlog

## Agile vs Traditional Planning

- **Myth:** Agile doesn't plan.
- **Truth:** Agile does *continuous*, rolling-wave planning with **progressive elaboration**.
- Agile prefers planning "at the last responsible moment" to minimize rework caused by assumptions.

## Planning Levels

1. **Project-level:** Vision, scope, high-level estimates.
2. **Release-level:** Grouping user stories into timeboxed releases.
3. **Iteration-level (Sprint):** Fully defined user stories and tasks for immediate execution.

## Techniques to Manage Uncertainty

- **Spikes:** Time-boxed research/prototyping to reduce unknowns.
- **Value-Based Decomposition:** Break down epics into user stories that directly relate to business value.

## Agile Requirements Best Practices

- Minimize bloated, over-engineered requirements ("just barely good enough").
- Use:
  - **Five Whys** to explore root causes
  - **MoSCoW** method to prioritize: Must, Should, Could, Won't

## Personas & User Stories

- **User Personas:** Make requirements user-centric.
- **User Stories:** Follow the format As a [role], I want [feature] so that [benefit].
- Follow the **INVEST** model: Independent, Negotiable, Valuable, Estimable, Small, Testable

## Product Backlog Management

- View backlog like an **iceberg**:
  - Top: 2–3 sprints of groomed, ready-to-develop stories.
  - Bottom: Rough ideas requiring grooming.
- Groom regularly, balance planning depth with upcoming sprint needs.