The Product Backlog

Your Team's Single Source of Truth

100%

of value delivered by a Scrum team flows from a well-managed Product Backlog.

What is a Product Backlog?

It's a dynamic, ordered list of everything known to be needed to improve the product. It’s the single source of requirements for any changes to be made to the product. If a piece of work isn't on the backlog, it doesn't exist for the team. The Product Owner is solely responsible for its content, availability, and ordering.

The 'Why': Core Principles

🔍

Empiricism

Provides the **transparency** needed to inspect product direction and adapt plans based on reality.

☝️

Single Source of Truth

Eliminates confusion by being the **only** list of work for the team to pull from.

💎

Value Maximization

Ensures the team is always working on the item that delivers the **maximum value** next.

🎯

Vision Connection

Links the high-level **Product Goal** to small, concrete pieces of work the team can execute.

Anatomy of a Healthy Backlog: D.E.E.P.

D **Detailed Appropriately**
Items at the top are fine-grained and ready for the Sprint. Items at the bottom are larger and less defined.

E **Estimated**
Items have a size estimate (e.g., story points), created by the people doing the work, to help with planning and forecasting.

E **Emergent**
The backlog is never complete. It evolves as we learn from the product, customers, and market.

P **Prioritized (Ordered)**
All items are ordered. The most valuable, urgent item is at the top, ready to be worked on next.

The Cycle of Backlog Refinement

The Product Backlog isn't static. It's constantly managed by the Product Owner with the team in a process called refinement. This ensures the backlog remains healthy and items are ready for future Sprints.

Adding & Removing Items → Re-ordering by Value & Risk → Decomposing Large Items → Sizing & Estimating

Bringing Items to Life: The PBI

The User Story

The most common format for a Product Backlog Item (PBI) is a user story, which captures the

Acceptance Criteria

These are the conditions that a PBI must satisfy to be accepted as "Done." They remove

what, who, and why of a requirement in a simple format.

```
As a [Registered Customer],
I want [to reset my password via email]
so that [I can securely access my
account if I forget my password].
```

ambiguity and provide testable targets.

```
GIVEN I am on the login page
WHEN I enter a valid email and click
"Reset"
THEN I should receive a password reset
link via email.
```

Weighing the Benefits

Pros (Advantages) ✅

- **Value Focused:** Ensures teams always build the most important feature next.
- **Full Transparency:** Provides a clear, shared understanding of all potential work.
- **High Adaptability:** Allows for rapid re-prioritization based on feedback.
- **Reduces Waste:** Prevents big, upfront design on features that may change or be cut.

Cons (Challenges) ❗

- **The "Wish List":** Can become a dumping ground for ideas if not actively managed.
- **Misinterpretation:** Stakeholders might misinterpret low-priority items as commitments.
- **Refinement Overhead:** Requires consistent time and effort from the entire team.
- **Risk of Churn:** Frequent changes can destabilize the team if not communicated well.

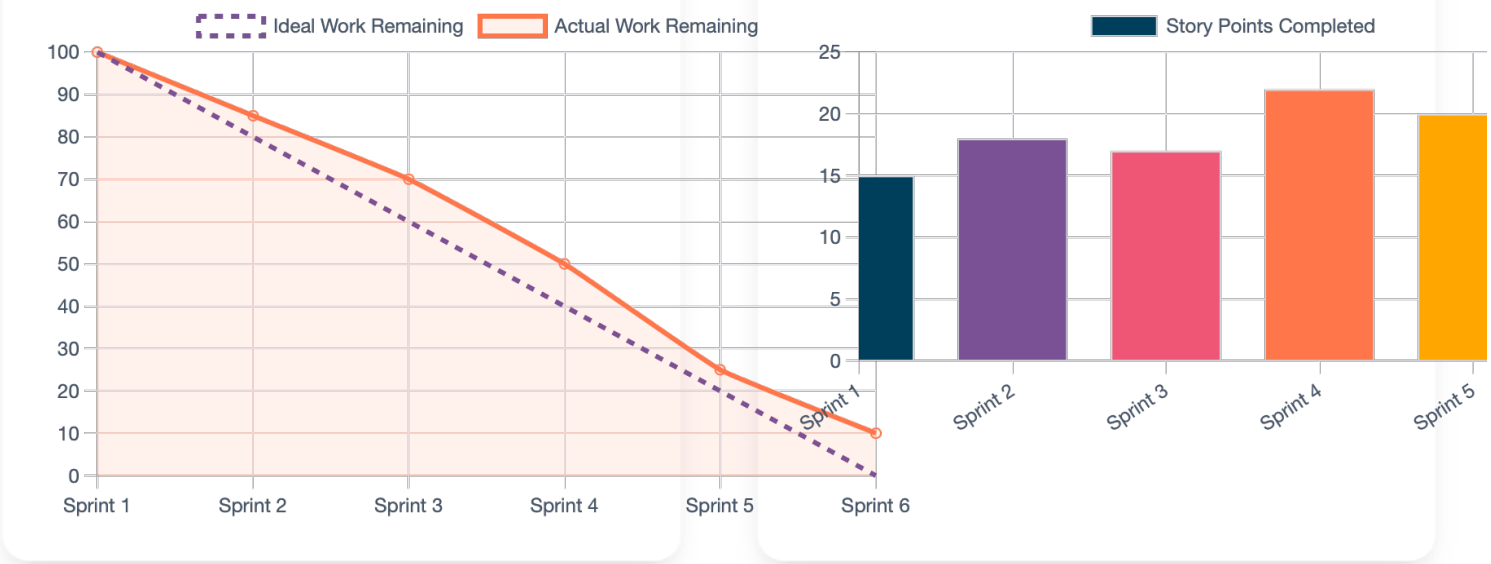
Measuring What Matters: Backlog Metrics

Release Burn-down

This chart visualizes the remaining work over time. It helps forecast when all the work in the backlog might be completed based on the team's current pace.

Team Velocity

Velocity is the average amount of work a team completes during a sprint, measured in story points. It's a key metric for planning and forecasting future sprints.



A well-managed Product Backlog is the heartbeat of a successful Scrum team.