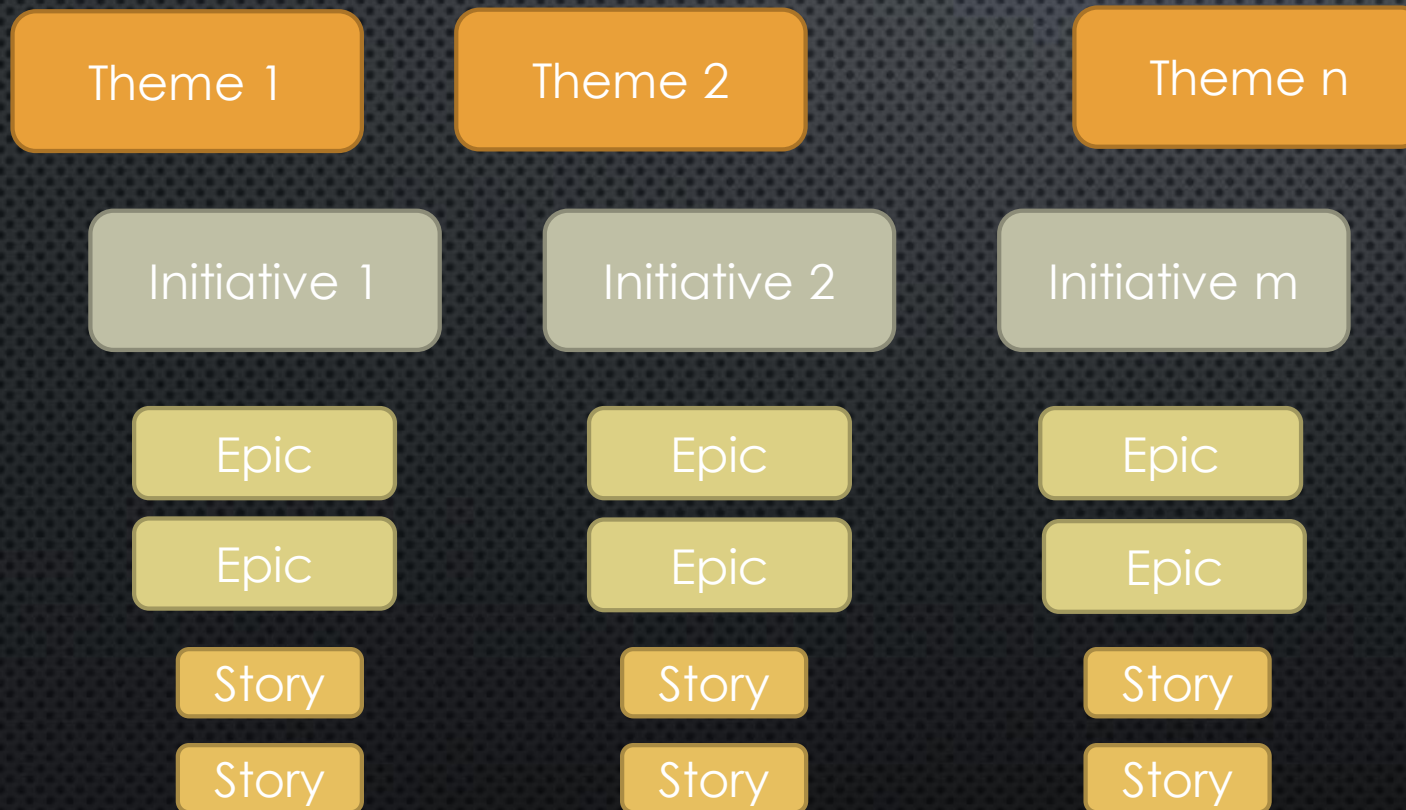


AGILE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

AGILE STRUCTURES: EPICS, STORIES, THEMES, AND INITIATIVES

Epics, Stories, Themes, and Initiatives are a way of organizing the work in an Agile project

They are the results of the breakdown of the work



Themes are large focus areas that span the organization

Initiatives are collections of epics that drive toward a common goal

Epics are large bodies of work that can be broken down into a number of smaller tasks (called stories)

Stories, also called “user stories,” are short requirements or requests written from the perspective of an end user

A story is one chapter of a book; a series of related and interdependent stories makes up an epic
the completion of all related stories leads to the completion of an epic

The stories tell the amount of the work completed while the epic tells about the status of one of the scopes of the project

Usually, an Epic comprise a very global and not very well defined functionality in your software. It is very broad
It will usually be broken down into smaller user story or feature when you try to make sense of it and making them fit in an agile iteration

Example :

Epic

Allow the customer to manage its own account via the Web

Feature and User Story are more specific functionalities, that you can easily test with acceptance tests

It is often recommended that they are granular enough to fit in a single iteration

Features usually tend to describe what your software do

Example :

Epic

Allow the customer to manage its own account via the Web

Feature

Editing the customer information via the web portal

User stories tend to express what the user want to do

Example :

Epic

Allow the customer to manage its own account via the Web

Feature

Editing the customer information via the web portal

User Story

As **bank clerk**, I want to be able to modify the customer information so that I can keep it up to date

A user story can be a specific justification for a feature, or a specific way to do it
Or it can be the other way around
A feature can be a way to realize a user story
Or they can denote the same thing
You can use both: User stories to define what bring business value and feature to describe constraint of the software

Stories are something the team can commit to finish within a one or two-week sprint

Usually developers work on dozens of stories a month

Epics, in contrast, are few in number and take longer to complete

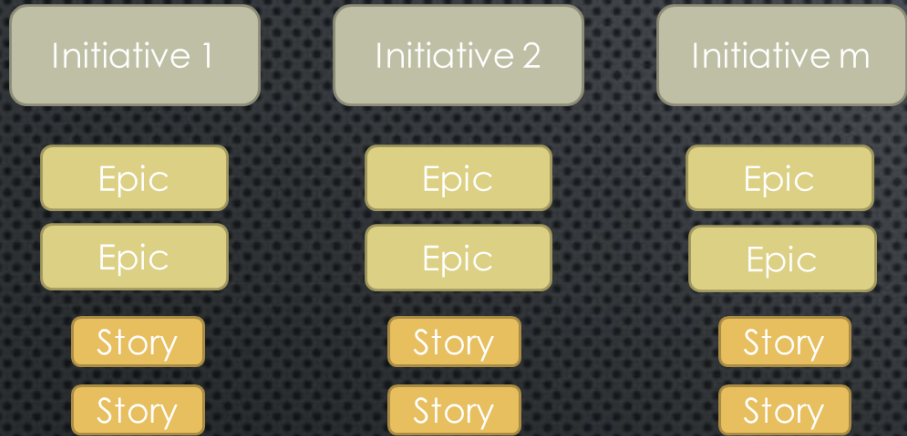
Usually two or three epics will be completed each quarter

Organizing work into stories and epics also helps you and your team communicate effectively within the organization

If you were reporting your team's progress to the Head of Engineering, you'd be speaking in epics

If you were talking to a colleague on your development team, you'd speak at the story level

Initiatives



In the same way that epics are made up of stories, initiatives are made up of epics

Initiatives offer another level of organization above epics

In many cases, an initiative compiles epics from multiple teams to achieve a much broader, bigger goal than any of the epics themselves

While an epic is something you might complete in a month or a quarter, initiatives are often completed in multiple quarters to a year

An example of **Initiative** is:

Create an Online Course

The relative **epics** can be:

Create the course Structure

Create the streaming videos

Create the examination process

Themes

In many organizations the founders and management team will encourage the pursuit of some aspirational destination. These are the goals announced each year or quarter, and themes are how you keep track of them. Themes are labels that track high-level organizational goals.

Themes vs Initiatives

Initiatives have a structural design

Initiatives are collections of epics

the completion of epics will lead to the completion of the relative initiative

Themes are an organizational tool that allows you to label backlog items, epics, and initiatives to understand what work contributes to what organizational goals

Themes should inspire the creation of epics and initiatives but don't have a rigid 1-to-1 relationship with them