User Story Mapping Handbook

All you need to know to get started
Definitions & Basics

StoriesOnBoard

Personas

Nick
Customer / Last minute shopper

Alice
Customer / Discount chaser

Kenny
E-commerce website administrator

Select product
18

Buy product
34

Find product
18

Sign up / Sign in
9

Add to basket
13

Browse by categories
READY   12

Sign up with Facebook account
DOING   5

Add to basket
DONE   13

Place order
READY   12

Basic search
DONE   6

Sign up with Google account
TODO   4

Browse by categories
READY   12

Sign up with Facebook account
DOING

Status report
Todo
Doing
Ready
Done

All you need to know about user story mapping Definitions & Basics

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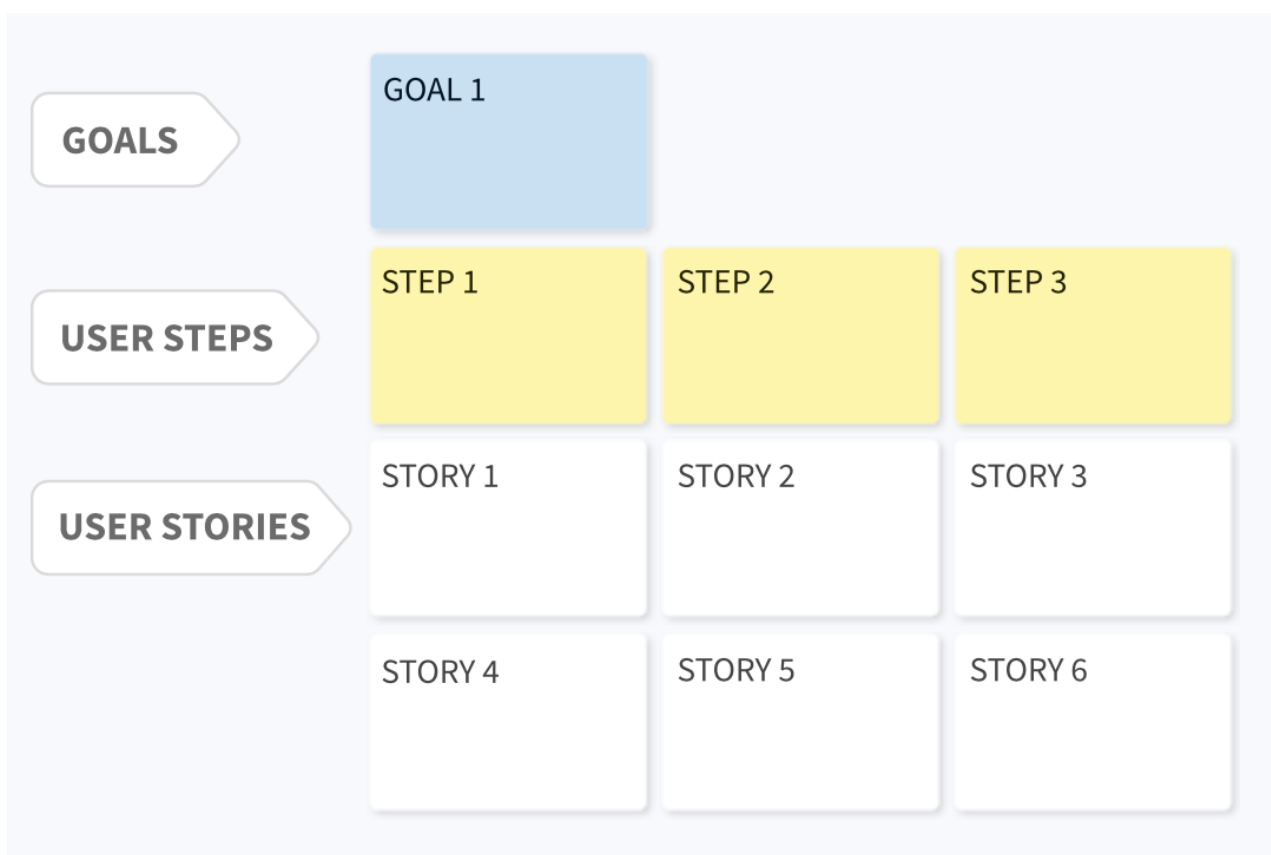## What is user story mapping?

User story mapping is a collaborative and visual technique wherein agile teams come together to build product requirements.

How do you conduct a story mapping session?

Story mapping session is typically a workshop which may be conducted in the form of a requirements brainstorming session or as a focused group wherein each agile team member contributes to developing the story map, adding clarity through adding various releases to the stories in the map and can see overall direction of the feature development in the upcoming future.

What does a story map consist of?

A story map consists of a a product backbone, user goals, user steps, user stories and releases mapped in a two dimensional visual form.

GOALS	GOAL 1		
USER STEPS	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
USER STORIES	STORY 1	STORY 2	STORY 3
	STORY 4	STORY 5	STORY 6

Who created story mapping?

Jeff Patton invented story mapping technique. He started to use this as a concept that will add to the conventional backlog of user stories and will give visual overview of the customer experience of the product being built through a tree like structure.

What is the lifecycle of story mapping?

Lifecycle of story mapping is generally comprised of following steps:
1. Discover project goals
2. Map the journey
3. Come up with solutions
4. Organize tasks according to priorities
5. Slice out release structure

What is a user story workshop?

User story workshop is same as story mapping session wherein each agile team member contributes to developing the story map, prioritize the stories in it, discuss detailed functionality of each story. User story workshop also gives agile teams the opportunity to clarify doubts and resolve conflicting views.

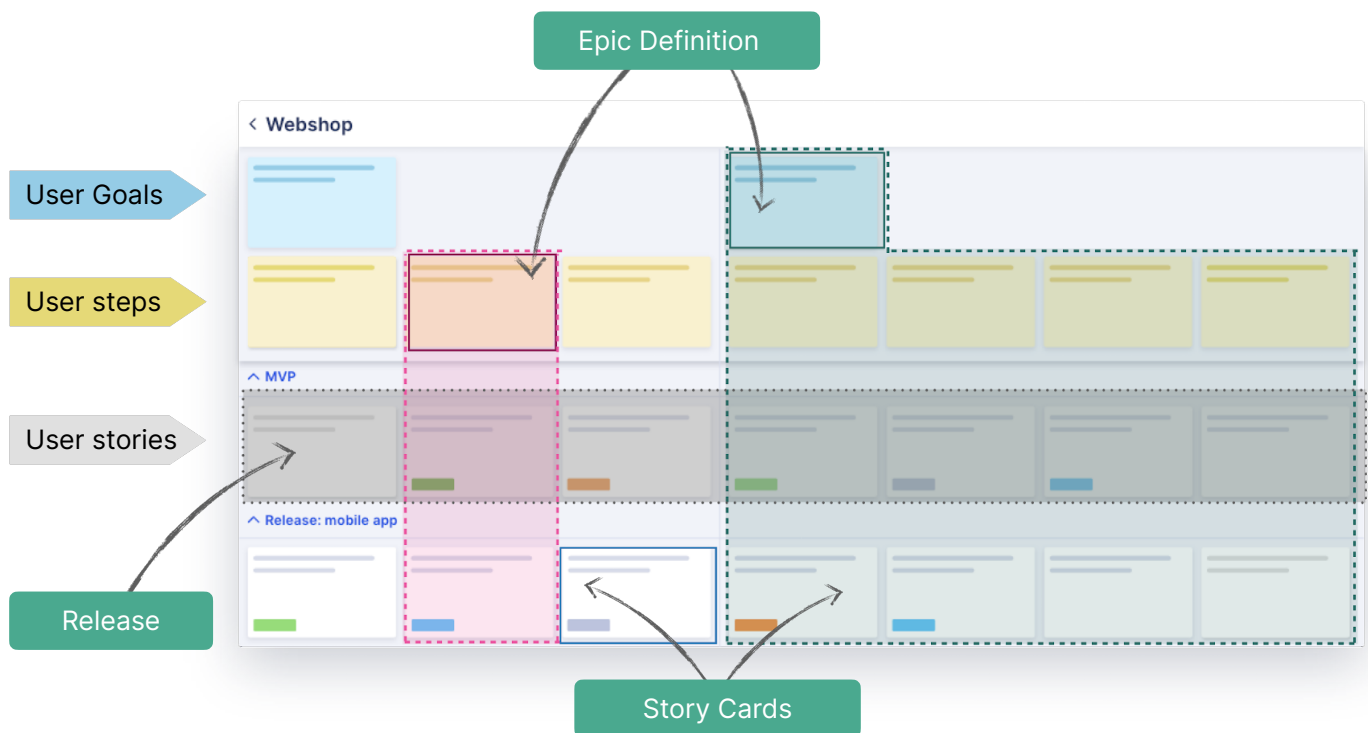## Why is story mapping important?

Story mapping is important because it is extremely useful in giving visual and two dimensional picture of the entire range of product features while at the same time letting the team members know which release what features are currently being worked on.

Tutorial video : How to create your story map

How do you make a story map?

In order make a story map, start by drawing a horizontal line on a whiteboard or large paper on which first you will write the key user goals/activities underneath, from left to right. These will be course grained functionalities of the product and written in a chronological order from left to right. For each user goal draw a vertical lines that cut through and write user steps in it. Under each step, there will be a varied number of user stories that describe given user step in greater detail.

Epic Definition

‹ Webshop

User Goals

User steps

∧ MVP

User stories

∧ Release: mobile app

Release

Story Cards

What is user story in Agile?

User story in Agile is a fine grained (atomic) piece of feature or a product requirement that can be effectively prioritized and assigned estimate by dev teams.

How to write a good story?

A good user story is easy to read, written from the user's perspective, has a clear goal and benefit clause, and it will have clear acceptance criteria.

A user story is a short description of a product feature that has been told from the user perspective. A user story is an element of the product backlog where these items are collected for execution. The stories on the top represent priority compare the lower level stories. The lower level stories can be dependent on the higher level stories.

User Story Map

Goal

Step 1   Step 2

User story 1   User story 2

Story Cards

User story 3   User story 4
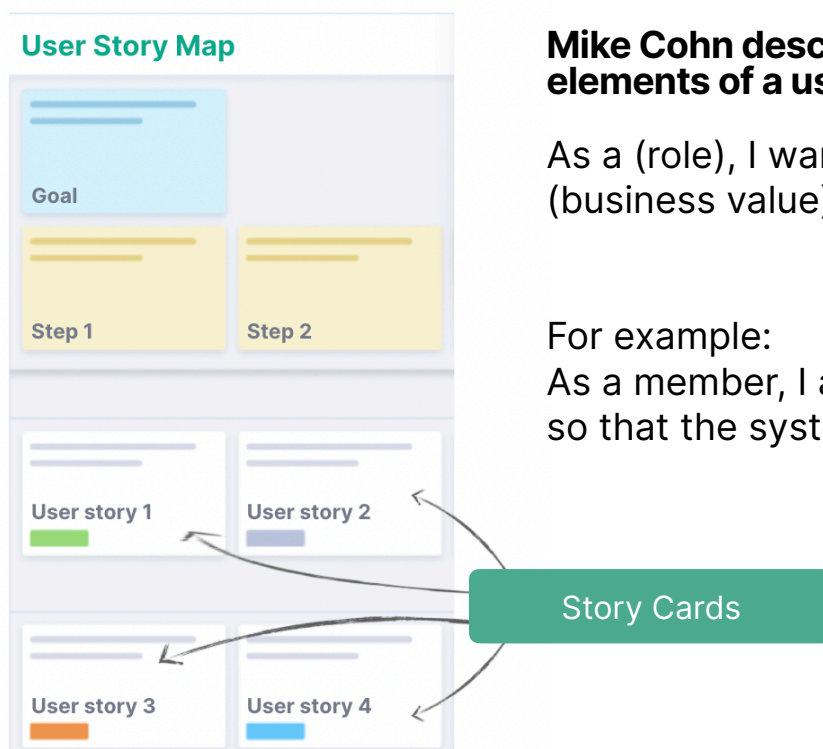
Mike Cohn described the three elements of a user story:

As a (role), I want (function) so that (business value).

For example:
As a member, I am required to log in so that the system knows it's me.

## What is acceptance criteria of a user story?

Acceptance criteria of a user story describes what exactly will make or mark the user story as successfully implemented. In turn it is the test criteria that will eventually lead to end users pass (or fail) an implemented user story.

How do you use story mapping?

Story map is used in conjunction and as an effectivity tool along with conventional agile development tools. Conventional backlog is a linear tool which has a set of epics, user stories stated in a linear manner which is hard to ready especially as the product gets evolved or complicated. Story mapping is very effective as it is visual and 2 D in nature and gives all stakeholders, especially users of the system an easy way to understand the big picture in the quickest possible way.

User goals & steps in a narrative flow

Story mapping helps you define stories to find out what the schedule is and how the product should be made. This is greatly aided by the narrative flow also known as the backbone, which transforms higher-level goals into a coherent process. Here are the steps the user has to go through in order to achieve their goal in the product.
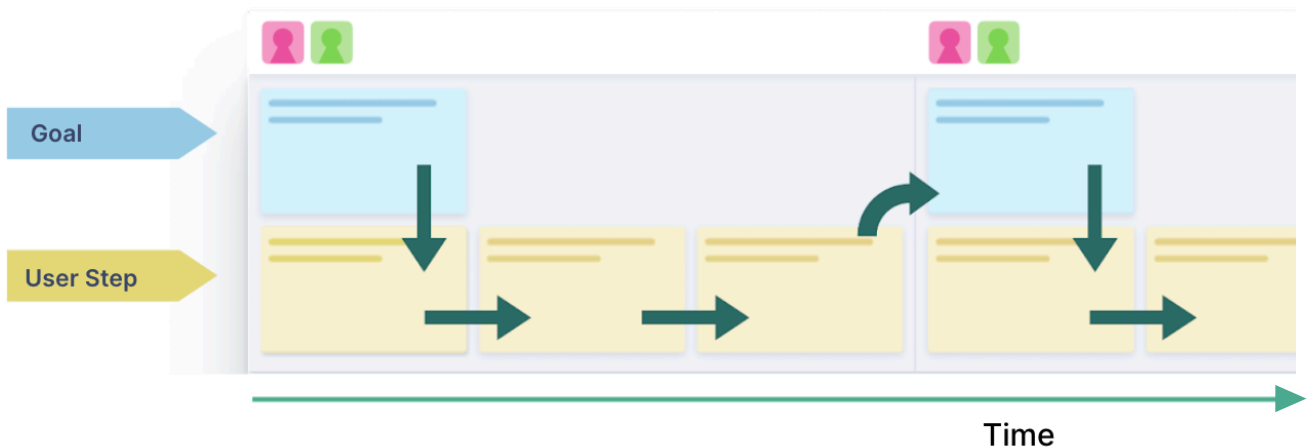

Who writes a user story?

User story is written collaboratively by the agile team while it is developed to serve the requirements of the end users, various agile roles such as product manager, product owner, dev teams, QA teams, scrum master contribute to adding to it in their own ways.

Who can be involved to story mapping session?

Typically story mapping session will involve each agile team or roles including but not limited to end users, product managers, product owners, business analysts, architects, developers, QA teams, design teams, project manager or scrum master.

What is user persona on the story map?

User persona is a fictional and generalized characters that represent target user group of the product or solution being built. It has a set of common characteristics/patterns/beliefs. It is typically also associated with a picture of that representative person. For e.g. the target user of the given product is a working professional with age in the a certain range and salary in a certain range, and one who has a certain set of hobbies.
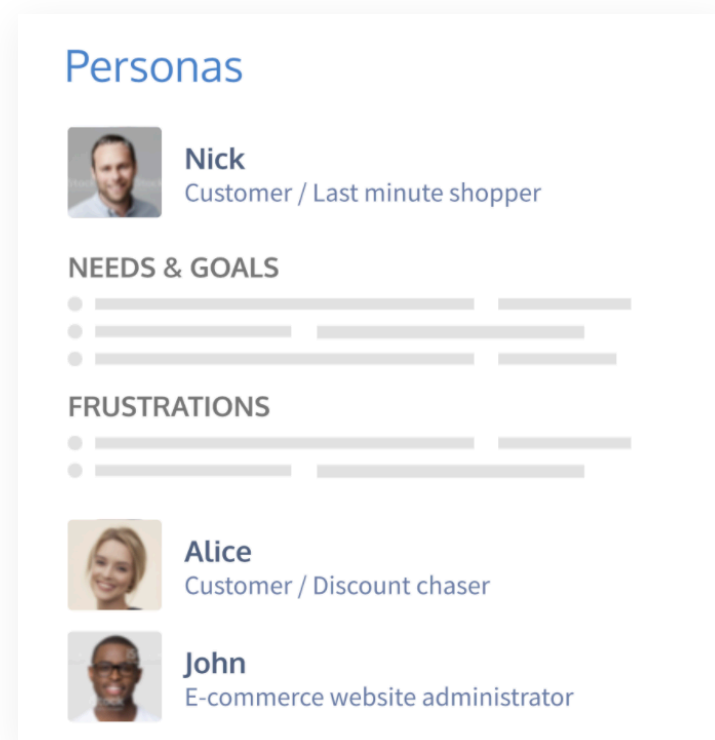
What are releases?

Releases are the chucks of features, user stories that the end users will get to use at the end or release timeline.

Slicing the backlog into releases is an iterative activity wherein prioritized user stories from the backlog are mapped into the releases. While doing this, dependencies and other constraints among user stories are also taken into account.

How to brainstorm user stories?

Brainstorming of the user stories can be done through usage of following proven techniques such as coming up with ideas, prioritizing ideas and then marking the most useful ideas for further thinking. You can also utilize some specialized brainstorming techniques such as role storming wherein participants are asked to imagine as if they are real users and through that role play the team arrives at newer perspectives.

Why is prioritization crucial while working with user stories?

Prioritization is crucial while working with user stories from a story map because it helps stakeholders arrive at consensus over which requirements are more valuable and feasible to implement, as compared to others.

There are several methods for prioritizing user stories. Some of the most known are MoSCoW (Must have, Should should, Could have, Will not have), Classifying (High, Medium, Low) , and Ranking. There are few other methods too which are used whenever situation demands, such as Voting, Timeboxing and Trade-offs.

What is the purpose of creating product backbone?

The purpose of creating product backbone is to come up with the core features or user activities in a product being built such that it depicts the customer experience/journey of the product across the horizontal axis.

How to convert a story map into conventional product backlog?

Story map can typically be converted into conventional product backlog through integration between respective tools. Such integration supports mapping of user activities and epics to epics in a conventional product backlog whereas user stories are then mapped to respective user activities/epics. Story mapping even allows to convert a traditional flat backlog into a visual design that everyone can understand.
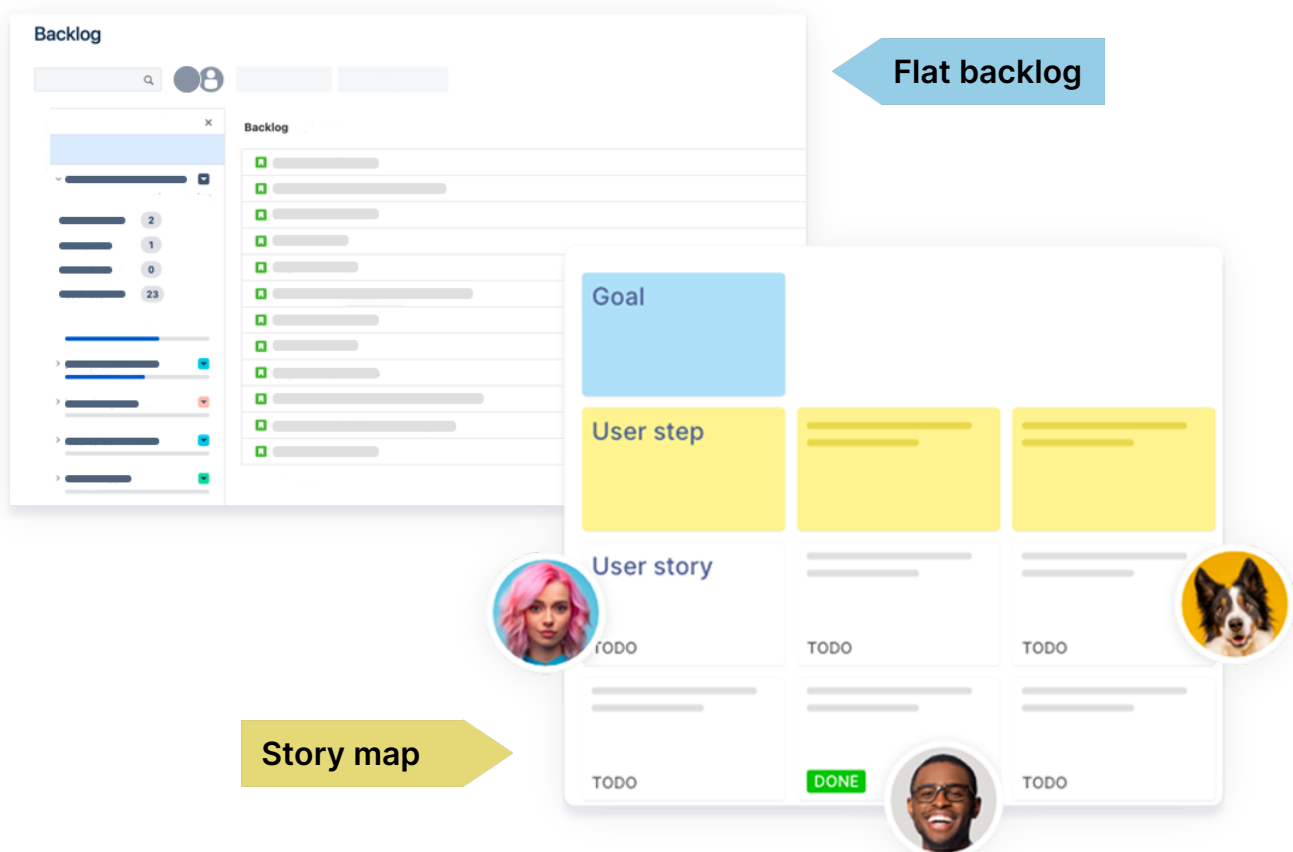
What is MVP release?

MVP (minimum viable product) or MVP release is a well thought combination of user stories from various epics, such that will give customers a slice of the product functionality that is simple, yet serves a significant function. MVP also facilitates early feedback from the users.

Release planning

Once the necessary user stories defined, it is a good tactic to tell the user story in a narrative flow to make sure our version is workable. This will help to think through the release and identify an MVP where need to be defined the most important features which needed to build a workable and functional software.

⌃ RELEASE 1 - MVP   ☰ Release details   ◐ Status report

Highlight promotions	Search by location	Set date
Order by ratings	Responsive page	Search by name
Filter by stars	Order by price	

⌃ RELEASE 2   ☰ Release details   ◐ Status report

⌃ RELEASE 3   ☰ Release details   ◐ Status report

What is the difference between epics and user stories?

Epics are higher level (course grained) features or requirements of the product being built. User stories are at mapped to epics in a way that they describe epics in a more granular manner.

In a story map, user activity depicts the key goal user has in the system. It thus captures the essence of the specific core functionality or a feature (at a very high level). For example, cab booking system will have 'Book a trip as a user activity or goal.
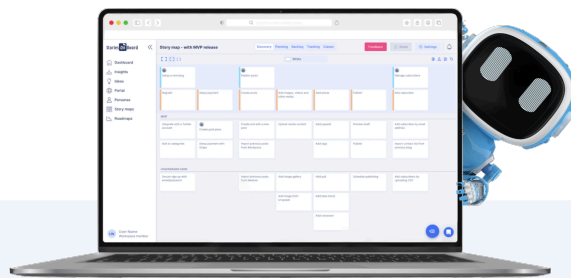
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AI Features

Collect high-level goals - Collect steps - Brainstorm user user stories
Write the user story itself - Write acceptance criteria
Create custom templates : Collect subtasks / Write test cases
Write release summary - Write release announcement