

Getting to Ready

Unhiding Work with a Backlog Refinement Board

Mark Grove

 mkgrov

 Excella

Mark Grove



Managing Consultant @ Excella / Ten years as Agile Coach

Professional Interests: System optimization / Value delivery / Flow of work

Personal Interests: Amateur astronomy / Photography / Pop & rock music history

Today's Topics

- **Context for Today**
- **Why a Refinement Board May Be Right for You**
- **Building and Using a Refinement Board**
- **Refinement Board Examples**
- **Results and Benefits**



Context for Today

Getting to Ready:

Unhiding Work with a Backlog Refinement Board

Definition of Ready

Product Backlog items that can be Done by the Scrum Team within one Sprint are deemed **ready** for selection in a Sprint Planning event.

- *2020 Scrum Guide*

Definition of Ready defines the criteria that a specific user story must meet before being considered for inclusion into a sprint.

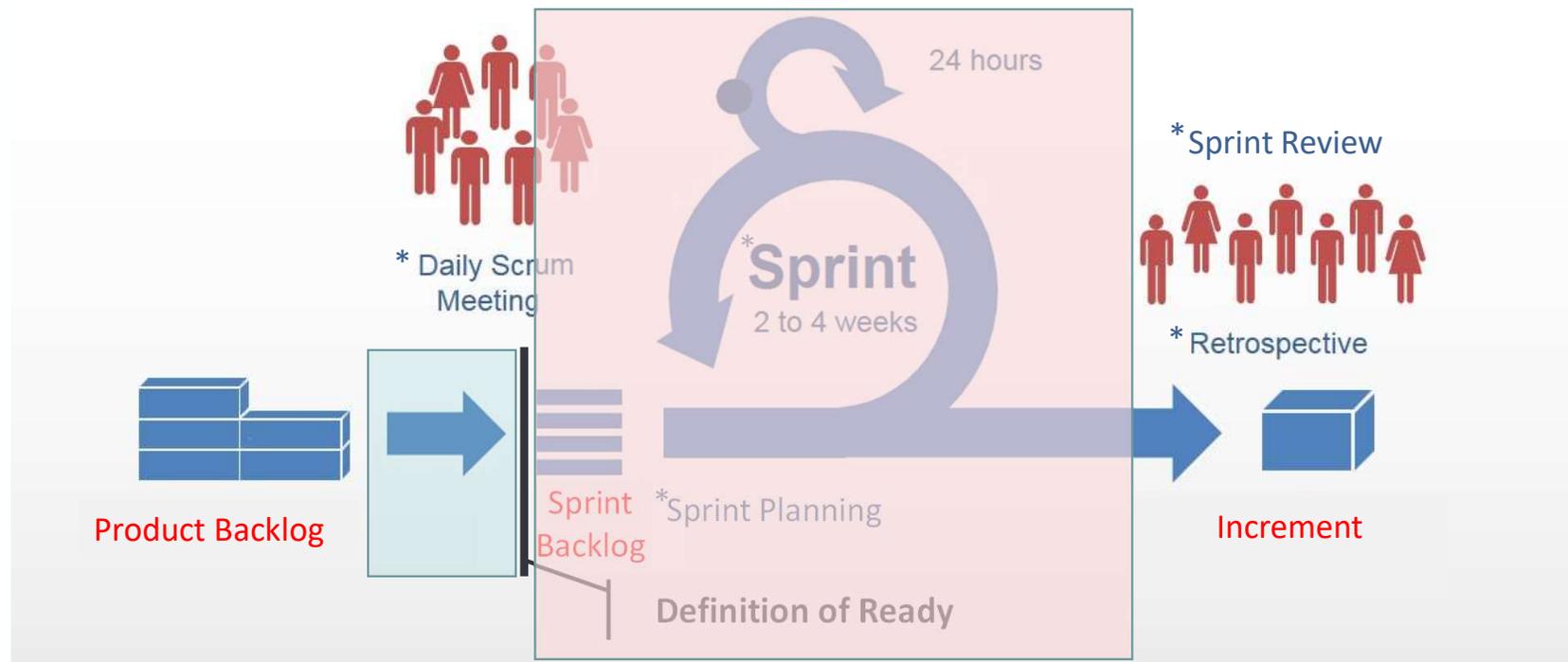
- *Brian Will, Agile Coach, Author, "Agile Adoption and Transformation"*

Product Backlog Refinement

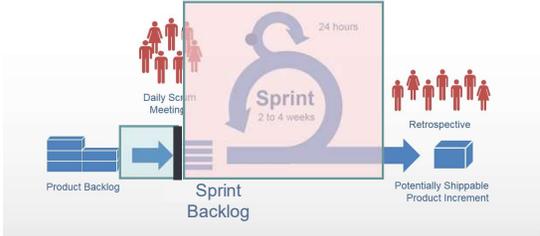
Product Backlog refinement is the act of breaking down and further defining Product Backlog items into smaller more precise items...This is an ongoing activity to add details, such as a description, order, and size. Attributes often vary with the domain of work.

– *2020 Scrum Guide*

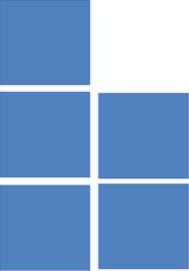
Scrum Framework



Unhiding the Work



Backlog



| Backlog Refinement | | | | | Sprint/Iteration | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |



Definition of Ready

Flow of Work

Flow is the movement of value throughout the product development system.
Optimizing flow in a Scrum context requires defining what flow means in Scrum.

- Kanban Guide for Scrum Teams

Workflow: Unhiding & Visualizing All of the Work



Backlog Refinement

Sprint/Iteration

| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | |

Why a Refinement Board May Be For You

- Confusion over “where” team members are working
- Refinement taking place during the sprint
- Work Items belong upstream as part of refinement
- Team not knowing “where” they are in the refinement process



Why a Refinement Board May Be For You

1. Confusion over “where” team members are working.



Backlog Refinement

Sprint/Iteration

| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Why a Refinement Board May Be For You

2. Refinement taking place during a sprint.

- Take the entire sprint to finish
- Not finished at all
- Pulled out during the sprint

| Backlog Refinement | | | | | Sprint/Iteration | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
| | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| | | | | | | ■ | | | |

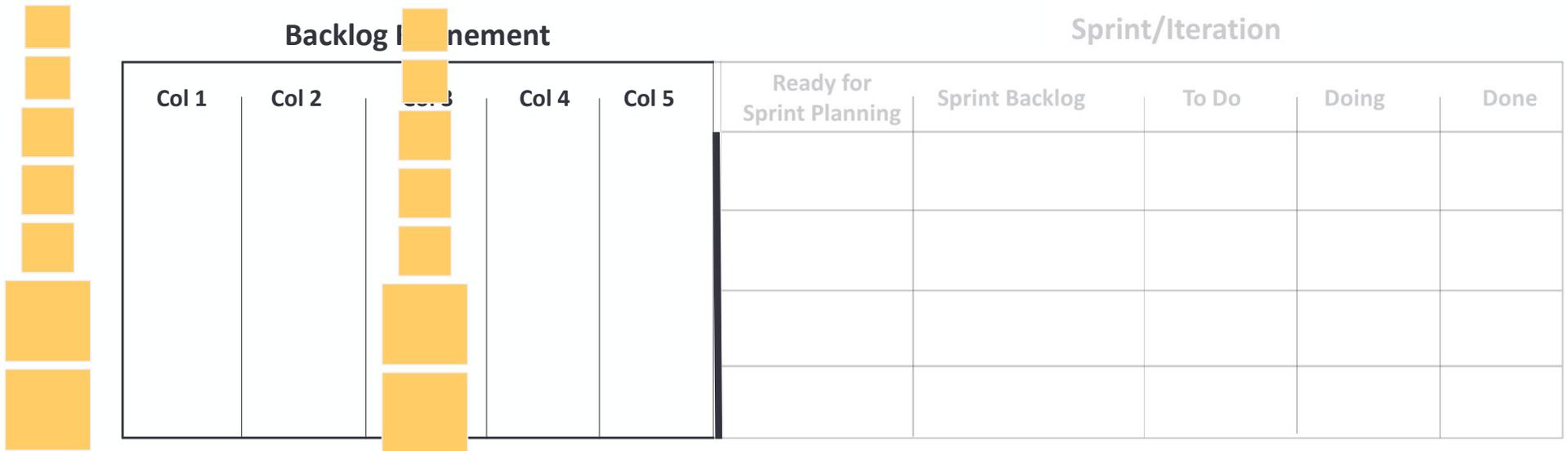
Why a Refinement Board May Be For You

3. Work Items really belong upstream as part of refinement.

| Backlog Refinement | | | | | Sprint/Iteration | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
| | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| | | | | | ■ | | | | |

Why a Refinement Board May Be For You

- 4. Team not knowing “where” they are in the refinement process.



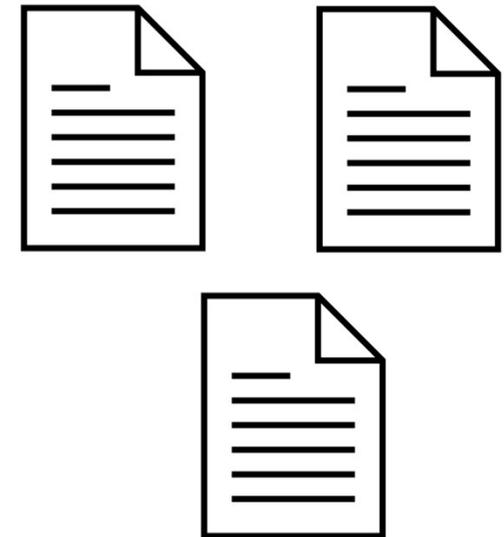
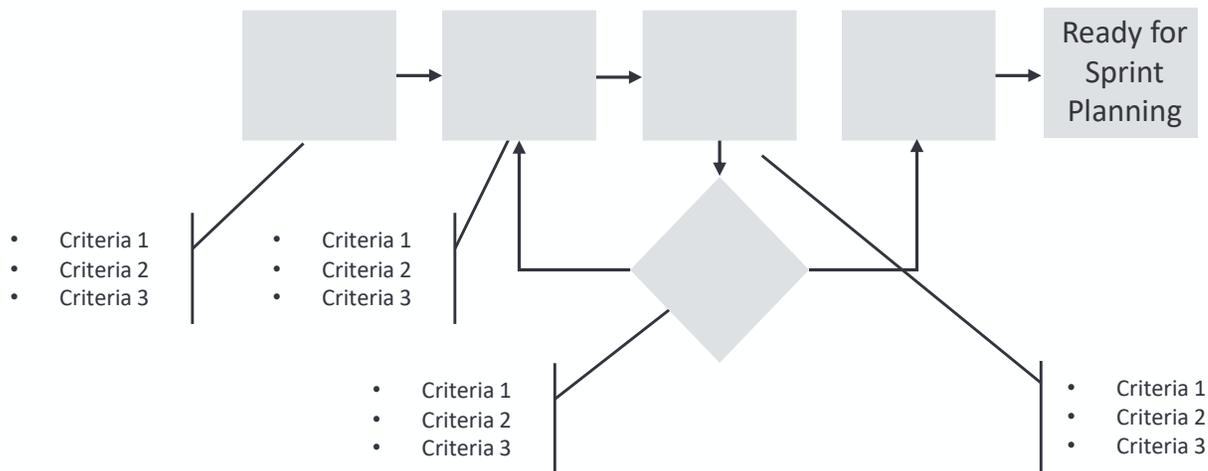
Building and Using the Backlog Refinement Board

- Identifying
- Visualizing
- Managing
- Using



Identifying the Refinement Workflow

- Identify logical sequence of steps
- Capture criteria
- Establish explicit policies



Visualizing the Entire Workflow



Backlog Refinement

Sprint/Iteration

| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |



Definition of Ready

Managing the Refinement Workflow

- Consider NOT managing refinement board by sprint cadence

| Backlog Refinement | | | | | Sprint/Iteration | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
|  |  |  |  |  | | | | | |
| | | | | |  | | | | |
| | | | | |  | | | | |
| | | | | |  | | | | |

Using the Workflow

Workflow

Backlog Refinement

Sprint/Iteration

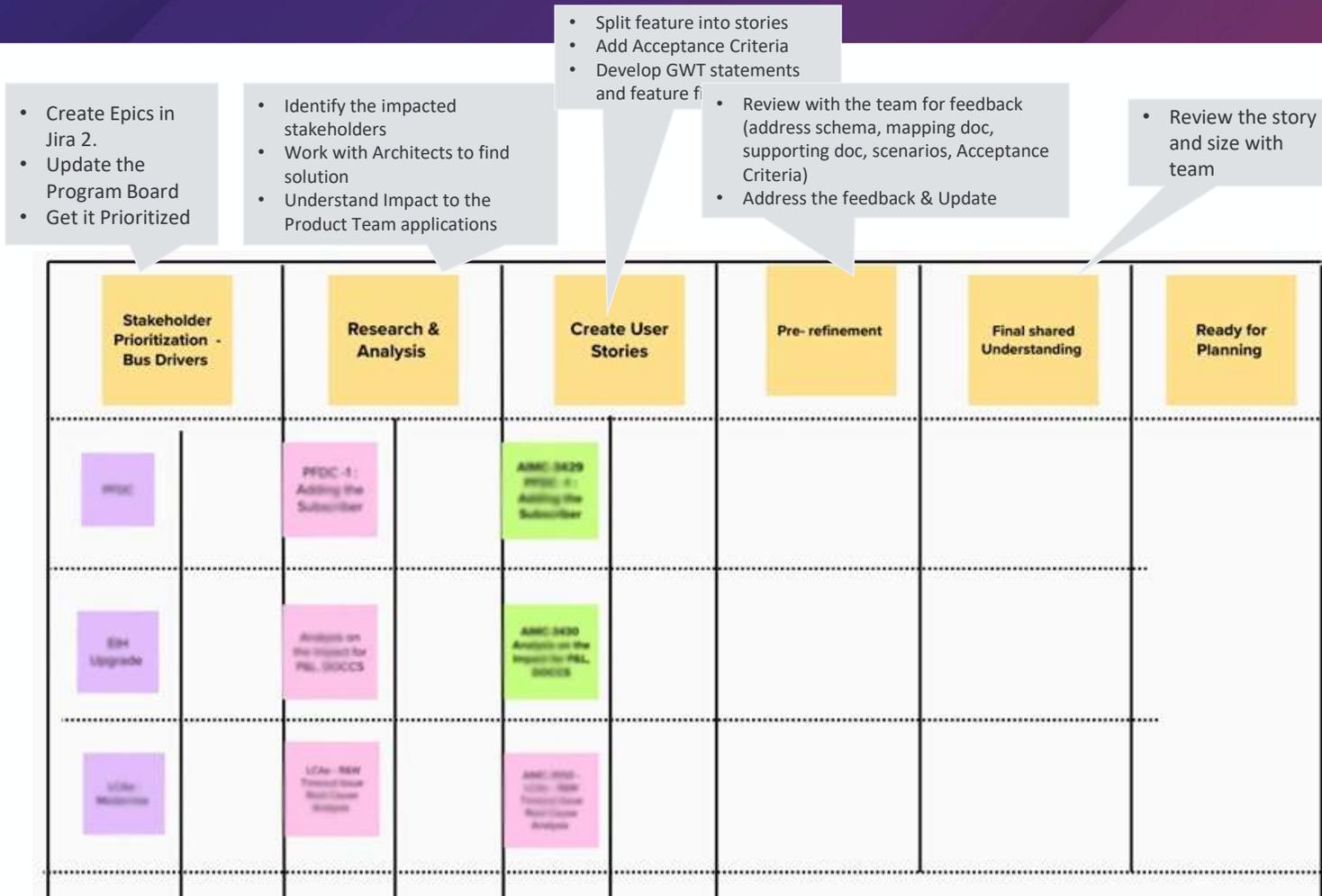
| Col 1 | Col 2 | Col 3 | Col 4 | Col 5 | Ready for Sprint Planning | Sprint Backlog | To Do | Doing | Done |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|------|
| ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ ■ | | | | | ■ |
| | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| | | | | | | | ■ | | |



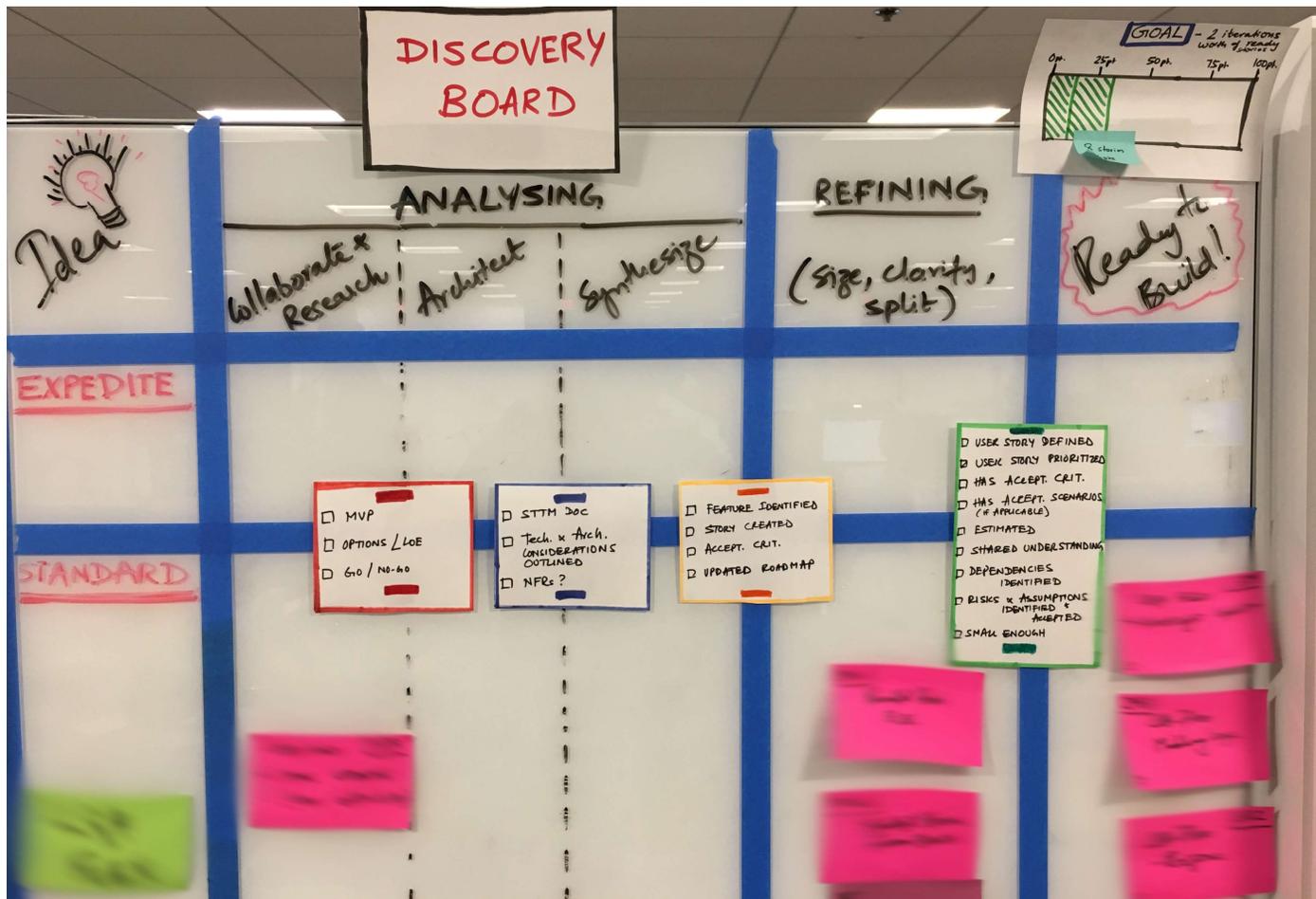
Refinement Board Examples



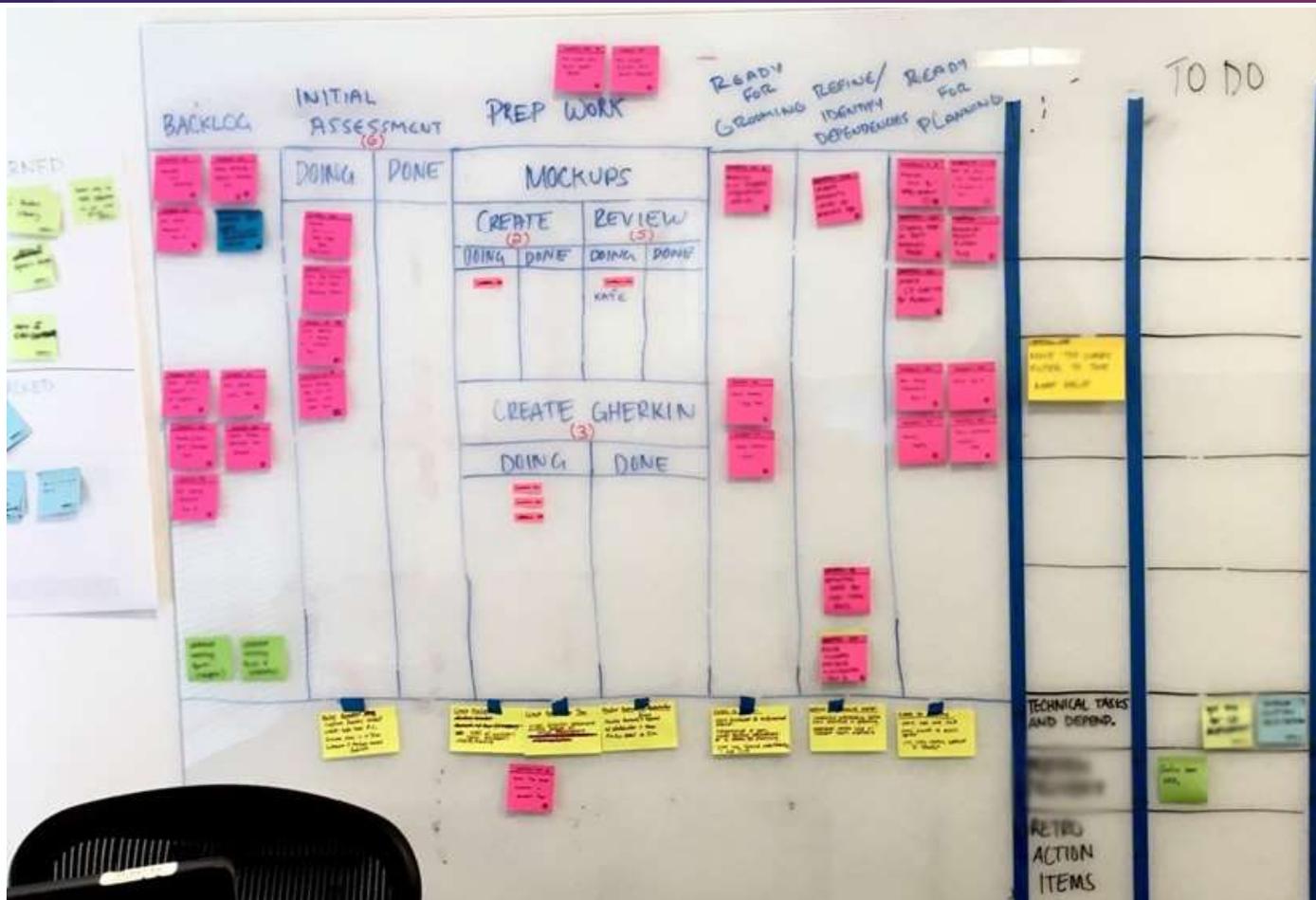
Refinement Board Examples



Refinement Board Examples



Refinement Board Examples



Refinement Board Examples

UPSTREAM WORKFLOW

- A Epic**
 - Research idea
 - Identify SMEs
 - Identify Dependencies
 - High level analysis
- B Epic**
 - Solutionize
 - Break into Features
 - Prioritize and Identify teams
- C Feature**
 - Prioritize feature
 - Additional analysis
 - Code analysis
 - BIR
 - Add data points
 - Create/split into stories
- D Story**
 - Determine interdependencies
 - Determine what docs are needed
 - Write story
- E Story**
 - Write Acceptance criteria
 - Attached documents
 - Size story

- Feature
- Story
- Story
- Story

| A | | B | | C | | D | | E | READY FOR SPRINT PLANNING |
|-------|------|--|------|--|------|-------|------|-------|---------------------------|
| DOING | DONE | DOING | DONE | DOING | DONE | DOING | DONE | DOING | |
| | | | | JIRA-2017 Feature Plan JIRA-2017 | | | | | |
| | | JIRA-2018 Feature Plan JIRA-2018 | | | | | | | |
| | | Non-Ares Features | | | | | | | |

Items
3D



Results and Benefits

- Confidently created "Ready" work items
- Improved Backlog refinement coordination and work item understanding
- Refinements more engaging
- Better visibility to bottlenecks or "stuck" work items
- Improved focus of value-based user stories (significantly fewer task-based "user stories")
- Smaller user stories



Q & A



Thank you!!

Mark Grove

mark.grove@excella.com

 mkgrov



Excella

excella.com | @excellaco