Enterprise Product Ownership Learning Outcomes

LICENSING INFORMATION

The work in this document was facilitated by the International Consortium for Agile (ICAgile) and done by the contribution of various Agile Experts and Practitioners. These Learning Outcomes are intended to help the growing Agile community worldwide.

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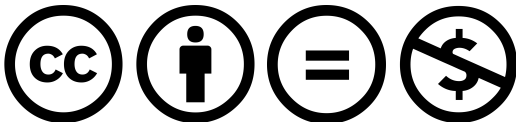
SPECIAL THANKS

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the Learning Outcomes that must be addressed by accredited training organizations intending to offer ICAgile's Enterprise Product Ownership certification.

Each LO follows a particular pattern, described below.

0.0.0. Learning Outcome Name

Additional Context, describing why this Learning Outcome is important or what it is intended to impart.

The Learning Outcome purpose, further describing what is expected to be imparted on the learner (e.g. a key point, framework, model, approach, technique, or skill).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. PRODUCT OWNERSHIP AS AN AGILE DISCIPLINE AND CRAFT

1.1. ENTERPRISE PRODUCT OWNERSHIP CONTEXT

1.1.1. The Product Ownership Team

Product Ownership requires a wide variety of skills and knowledge, often too wide to be embodied in a single individual.

Frequently Product Ownership will require taking a leadership role within a value team.

Empower the participant to take a leadership role in a value team, where there are a variety of roles working together to identify the various value elements.

1.1.2. Product Ownership Interaction with Other Roles / Disciplines

Many different roles incorporate knowledge and skills from the product ownership discipline, including but not limited to, the product manager, product owner, onsite customer, user representative, subject matter expert, business analyst, systems analyst, UI/UX specialist, iteration manager, team facilitator, Scrum Master and project manager.

Explain the diverse range of roles that incorporate product ownership skills and knowledge and how those roles interact. This includes:

relationships with other team roles; intentional alignment of all roles and decisions with value; and how business value management fits into the organization and scales to the enterprise level.

1.1.3. Product Ownership at the Enterprise Level

Where there are more initiatives to be funded than funds available, and where there are choices to be made about the sequence of initiatives, Enterprise Product Ownership drives decision-making at the enterprise level..

Provide the participant with a description of what Enterprise Product Ownership is and the common tradeoff decisions necessary at the enterprise level.

1.1.4. Enterprise Product Ownership and its Relationship with Program/ Portfolio Management

Enterprise Product Ownership and Program/Portfolio Management go hand-in-hand at the strategic level.

Ensure the participant is aware that in many initiatives value is only delivered through the completion of programs or portfolios of work, not through a single change or project.

2. SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS FOR ENTERPRISE PRODUCT OWNERSHIP

2.1. VALUE LEADERSHIP

2.1.1. Understanding Vision and Strategy

Product Ownership at the enterprise level entails understanding organizational vision and how it relates to the strategic direction.

Provide the participant with tools and techniques to understand, formulate and articulate organizational vision and strategy.

2.1.2. Defining Strategic Outcomes

For initiatives to be successful there needs to be clarity of strategic direction and in the relationship between organizational outcomes and strategy.

Equip the participant with information to contribute to setting strategic goals based on understanding organizational goals and objectives.

2.1.3. Identifying and Selecting Initiatives to Achieve Strategic Outcomes

Enterprise Product Ownership entails ensuring that the initiatives being undertaken collectively align with the organization's strategy in order to maximize the delivery of value from the portfolios.

Provide the participant with knowledge and techniques to make good decisions about accepting or rejecting change initiatives using strategic alignment as the guiding principle.

2.1.4. Identifying and Selecting Scope to Achieve Strategic Outcomes

Product Ownership at the initiative level entails ensuring that the work being done aligns with the organization's strategy in order to maximize the delivery of value from the initiative.

Provide the participant with concepts and techniques to make good decisions about including or excluding scope using strategic alignment as the guiding principle.

2.1.5. Modeling and Mentoring Value-Based Thinking

At the enterprise level, Product Ownership requires constantly taking a value-based viewpoint and conveying that perspective to all members of the value team.

Discuss how value based thinking influences value realization for enterprises and how Product Ownership exhibits a constant value-based focus.

2.1.6. Organizing for Value

To become value-based organizations, enterprises must structure themselves in cross-functional ways to minimize silos and maximize collaboration and learning.

Convey the impact that organizational structure has on the ability to manage and deliver value.

2.2. DEFINING ENTERPRISE VALUE

2.2.1. How to Facilitate Outcomes Regarding Value

While many of the facilitation approaches which can be used are common irrespective of the focus of the facilitated event, there are some specific tools which can be used to help the participants focus on value.

Introduce the participant to techniques that are most useful to help stakeholders focus on value rather than other aspects of an initiative.

2.2.2. Reaching Consensus of Multiple Stakeholders

Negotiation techniques may be needed to bring a diverse group of stakeholders to a common perspective.

Introduce participants to negotiation approaches and provide some tools to facilitate negotiation workshops around prioritization of value.

2.2.3. Decision Making for Value Optimization

There are times when a consensus result may not be possible, or when there are constraints which prevent consensus from being achieved. In those circumstances the Product Owner may need to make an overriding decision. When this happens it can impact team relationships.

Emphasize to participants that there are situations in which a decision must be made which may not be well received.

3. SEEKING VALUE

3.1. VALUE CONTEXT AROUND INITIATIVES

3.1.1. Aligning with Strategic Value

Any change initiative must align with the organization's strategic goals. Product Ownership includes ensuring that this alignment exists.

Equip the participant to ask alignment questions and challenge lack of alignment on initiatives.

3.1.2. Value to the Customer

Value comes in multiple dimensions - where one of the elements to be delivered from an initiative is customer/client value then this must be expressed in explicitly measurable terms.

Provide the participant with concepts behind customer/client value and ways to express it clearly.

3.1.3. Value to the Organization

Value comes in multiple dimensions - where one of the elements to be delivered from an initiative is organizational value then this must be expressed in explicitly measurable terms.

Provide the participant with concepts behind organizational value and ways to express it clearly.

3.1.4. Value Over Time

Timelines for value realization can vary greatly across initiatives, programs and portfolios. Cost of delay is also a factor when weighing different alternatives.

Convey the importance of time as a factor in value realization. Also, emphasize that organizational time constraints impact the Agile delivery mechanism.

3.1.5. Multiple Dimensions of Value

There are additional aspects to value which need to be ranked against each other.

Provide the participant examples of the various aspects of value that can influence the approach to undertaking an initiative.

3.2. VALUE BEYOND INITIATIVES

3.2.1. Articulating Value Proposition at the Enterprise Level

When taking a holistic approach, organizational value is derived through multiple initiatives across multiple time horizons. Selecting which initiatives to fund is a key to maximizing outcomes.

Introduce a variety of tools for selecting which initiatives to fund, which to discard and when to change direction.

3.2.2. Value Driven Tradeoffs

At the enterprise level, selecting which initiatives to fund requires making selections based around multiple dimensions of value.

Teach the participant about the many dimensions of value at the enterprise level and how they need to be balanced to ensure alignment with overall organization goals.

3.2.3. Communicating Value of Portfolios

Portfolios need to be visible - each initiative must be able to be assessed against others to enable objective comparisons. The various aspects of value need to be presented to support the decision-making process.

Provide the participant with ways of presenting the multiple aspects of value in such a way that good decisions can be made regarding the selection of initiatives to fund or cancel.

3.2.4. Stopping and Starting Initiatives

Enterprise value can / should be used as a guide for starting and stopping change initiatives.

Teach the participant ways to make recommendations, especially when those recommendations may not be popular within the organization.

3.2.5. Any Change Impacts People

Organizations are complex communication and social environments. It is important to understand how interpersonal relationships and levels of influence can impact the selection of initiatives, with both positive and negative outcomes.

Introduce the participant to key change management concepts and techniques to cultivate situational awareness around how individual and team motivations can impact Value Management at the enterprise level.

4. THE DISCOVERY PROCESS

4.1. THE BIGGER PICTURE

4.1.1. Seeing the Whole Initiative

Shifting focus from detailed tasks to the big picture helps the Product Ownership team view an initiative at the right level.

Present techniques to "step away" from the details of the problem and provide a holistic perspective as a way to ensure the correct value elements are identified. This could include demonstrating the use of tools such as System Thinking, Business Capability Analysis, Value Stream Mapping, Process Modeling or Personas.

4.1.2. Enterprise-Wide Stakeholder Analysis

At the enterprise level, stakeholders extend beyond those identified for any single initiative. Stakeholders in the enterprise need to be identified and their interests protected.

Explain frameworks to help build shared understanding of the stakeholders across the value stream; to articulate who the stakeholders are and how to identify their needs.

4.2. ANALYZING BEYOND AN INITIATIVE

4.2.1. Ideation & Invention

Ideation and invention are an important part of value creation and discovery in a portfolio.

Provide the participant with approaches to ideation and invention at the portfolio level.

4.2.2. Knowing the Constraints

An enterprise must deliver value within certain constraints.

Explain the wider variety of types of constraints (e.g., organizational, legal, social, regulatory, environmental, human, etc.) that impact Enterprise Product Ownership.

4.2.3. Managing Portfolio and Enterprise Risks

A Enterprise Product Ownership team needs to balance different levels of risk and return - this requires understanding the various aspects of risk and selecting a balanced portfolio based on the organization's risk profile.

Discuss enterprise-level risks and how they influence Enterprise Product Ownership decisions.

5. THE CONTINUOUS DISCOVERY OF VALUE

5.1. BUILDING FOR DISCOVERY VS. BUILDING FOR DELIVERY

5.1.1. Discovery through Building and Feedback

There are times when the solution options for a problem are unclear, or contain significant technical risks. In those circumstances it may be beneficial to build a part of the solution with a view to learning rather than with a direct value focus.

Describe when and how to use prototyping, spike solutions and other experiments to expose the emergent aspects of the solution. At times, this could be at odds with a "pure" value focus but it potentially saves time/money later.

5.1.2. Identifying Business Value Assumptions

Often business benefits are expressed in vague and nebulous terms, and are based on stated and unstated assumptions. Enterprise Product Ownership needs to expose these assumptions and ensure they are recognized as such.

Enable the participant to identify assumptions, explore the origins of such assumptions and make them explicit to the stakeholders.

5.1.3. Building to Validate Business Value Assumptions

Where the business case for an initiative is based on assumptions there is a risk that the predicted value will be unattainable. Where this is the case Enterprise Product Ownership includes planning to deliver components of the product which validate or disprove assumptions as rapidly as possible.

Equip the participant with techniques to identify the smallest elements of the product necessary to either confirm or invalidate assumptions as quickly as possible.

5.1.4. Pivoting

Enterprise Product Ownership understands the feedback being received through the delivery cycle and must be prepared to change direction where necessary in order to ensure the product being delivered will actually deliver value to the organization.

Convey the concept of "pivoting" as it applies to product delivery and provide examples of cases where changing product direction can maximize value.

5.1.5. Receiving Feedback

Agile practices emphasize the importance of continual collaboration between members of the project community. We actively create an environment where all project stakeholders can contribute to the overall change initiative's value, ideally in face-to-face facilitated workshops.

Prepare the participant to solicit both structured and unstructured feedback. This can include techniques such as Collaborative Games, Retrospectives and Feed Forward.

5.2. DISCOVERY BEYOND AN INITIATIVE

5.2.1. Learning Through Delivery

Some initiatives may exist not to deliver customer value directly, but to provide early feedback and organizational learning.

Convey to the participant that there are times when an initiative may be useful even if it does not deliver direct customer value.

5.2.2. Avoiding Waste

Agile methods emphasize the delivery of value to the customer. Effort is wasted if an activity does not contribute to the goal of delivering what the customer really needs.

Enable the participant to identify waste in a delivery process and introduce methods to remove that which is most detrimental.

5.2.3. Prioritizing for Value

Enterprise Product Ownership ensures that the list of things to build is prioritized so that the team is working on the items that deliver the highest value first.

Allow participants to experience techniques to prioritize the list of things to build. This could include storyboards, user story mapping or other methods of product prioritization. Prioritization needs to include concepts such as MMF (Minimum Marketable Feature set), MVP (Minimum Viable Product), "walking-skeleton" and/ or "tracer bullet" approaches to deliver value for one or more stakeholder groups.

5.2.4. Ensuring Constant Alignment with Enterprise Goals

On a regular basis all the initiatives underway need to be examined to ensure their goals are still aligned with the organization's goals and that they are still able to deliver value.

Enable the participant to understand that initiatives sometime outlive their usefulness and that stopping an initiative before it is completed may be the right choice in some circumstances.