Just Say No!

Why Saying No is Difficult for a Product Owner and How to Make it Easier
Goals of Today’s Workshop

- Why is it difficult to say no?
- Why do Product Owners, in particular, find it difficult to say no?
- Learn some tips that will make it easier to say no
Why Is It Difficult to Say No

● We want others to like us
● We don’t want to disappoint others
● We are afraid of or shy away from conflict
● We want to respect authority
● We lack the courage to say no
WE NEED TO LEARN THE SLOW ‘YES’ AND THE QUICK ‘NO’.

- TOM FRIEL
Product Owner Responsibilities

- Define the vision
- Maintain & prioritize the Product Backlog
- Anticipate customer needs
- Communicate with stakeholders & customers
Who do Product Owners have to say no to?
Why do you think it’s difficult for Product Owners to say no?
What is the impact when your Product Owner isn’t able to say no?
“Focusing is about saying no.”

- Steve Jobs
6 Tips to Help Make Saying No Easier
1. Be Clear on What No Really Means

- Not right now vs. never
- If possible, offer an alternative
2. Be Clear on What the Trade Offs Are

- What is the associated cost
- What value will be lost
3. Be Empathetic

- Empathy = the ability to understand and share the feeling of another
- Use statements that show that you are taking their thoughts into consideration
- Express gratitude
4. Be Prepared

- Know your product
- Know how your customer uses your product
- Bring data!
- Bring a subject matter expert
- Have the correct people in the room
5. Don’t Give a List of Reasons

- Be concise
- Practice rebuttals
6. Say No Without Saying No

- Let them know that they are heard and appreciated
- Don’t make a commitment
Let’s Practice!
Summary

1. Be clear on what no really means
2. Be clear on the trade offs
3. Be empathetic
4. Be prepared
5. Pick one or two concise reasons
6. Say no without saying no
Questions?