



# Agile Estimation That Works

Julia Macalaster - @jmacalaster  
Def Method



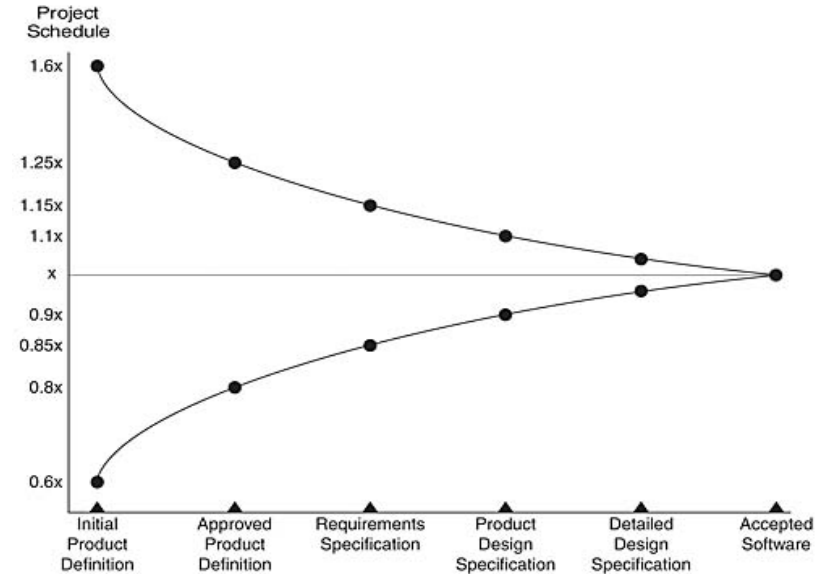
# SOFTWARE consultancy...



# Agile Estimation

- Don't throw something out just because it's difficult
- “Responding to change over following a plan” - Agile Manifesto
- Align business needs with engineering needs

Boehm's Cone of Uncertainty





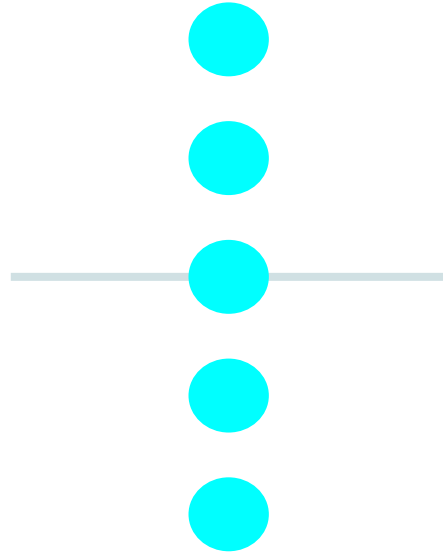
# How many days will it take to finish this project?





# The Process

1. Align the Team
2. Prioritize Your Workflows
3. Create Estimate *Ranges*
4. Prioritize User Story Estimates
5. Refine



## Step 1: Align the team

- Make sure the team understands what you know already
- Start with “why”
- Align the team on top priority goals
- Discuss and outline all risks and assumptions



## Step 2: Prioritize Workflows & Write User Stories

- Break your product into discrete workflows
- Rank your workflows based on value to the company, value to the user, and technical feasibility
- Outline your plan for product development



## Step 3: Create Estimate Ranges

- Estimate based on perfect developer days
- *Then* add % certainty (account for “but...”)
- Add in time for meetings, distractions, and everyday items that are not spent directly coding





## Step 4: Prioritize User Story Estimates

- Priority 1 - Need to Have
- Priority 2 - Should Have
- Priority 3 - Nice to Have



## Step 5: Refine

- Revisit your estimates on a monthly basis
- Revisit your estimates when speaking about scope increase or product pivots
- Revisit your estimates when talking about your roadmap





# Helpful Resources

1. Loren Davie: <https://www.estim8r.com/>
2. Agile Estimating and Planning by Mike Cohn
3. AgileEstimates.com



# Thank You!

[julia@defmethod.com](mailto:julia@defmethod.com)