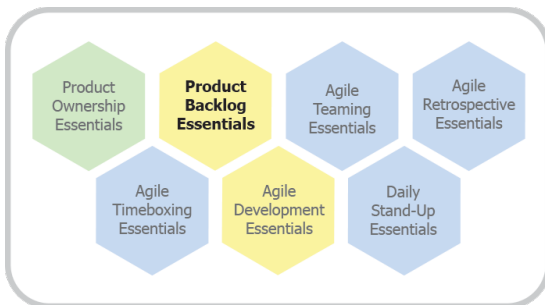# Product Backlog Essentials
Part of the IJI Agile Essentials Practice Pack

Agile Essentials practices provide a starter kit that describes key common aspects of team-based development. Each practice contains cards that provide succinct advice on how to successfully adopt and apply the practice.

Practice Overview
Capture what the users of a system want it to do as a priority-ranked list of items.

Activities – the things we do

- **Refine Product Backlog:** Get and keep the Product Backlog visible, up-to-date and in good working order, with high priority items agreed and well understood.
- **Agree Definition of Done:** Agree the quality criteria that will be used to determine whether any change to the product is fully and correctly implemented.
- **Prepare a Product Backlog Item:** Ensure that the Product Backlog Item is ready for development and that it is clear how it will be tested.

Alphas – the essential elements that we progress

- **Product Backlog Item:** Something to build into the product to enhance its value.

Work Products – the concrete things that we work with

- **Product Backlog:** An ordered list of things to build into the product to enhance its value.
- **Definition of Done:** The quality criteria that will be used to determine whether each Product Backlog Item is fully and correctly implemented.
- **Test Case:** Defines test inputs and expected results to evaluate whether a Product Backlog Item is fully and correctly implemented.

Patterns - supporting practice guidance

- **INVEST:** An acronym of the quality criteria for a Product Backlog Item to be ready for development: Independent; Negotiable; Valuable; Estimable; Small; Testable.
- **Relative Estimating:** Effort to get Product Backlog Items done is estimated not in absolute units of time, but relative to each other.

Resources - referenced external sources of information and content

- This practice description uses the OMG Essence standard, with key concepts like Activities, Work Products, Alphas and Patterns being defined by this standard (http://www.omg.org/spec/Essence/).
- The concept of a *backlog* as an ordered to-do list is common across many agile approaches (see for example http://guide.agilealliance.org/guide/backlog.html).
- A *Product Backlog* is part of Scrum (see for example http://www.scrumguides.org/scrum-guide.html#artifacts-productbacklog).
- *Relative Estimating* and related topics are described in Mike Cohn's book Agile Estimating and Planning (Addison Wesley 2006).

Creating winning teams.