A method for maintaining an overview of the Backlog and predict a possible release date.

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From prioritized list to 2D Release board

Benefits:

• Easy to communicate an overview of the release
• Improves communication between PO and team
• Helps predicting the release date
• Visualize the status of the release in the same level of detail as the status of an iteration
Backlog is arranged according to epics. All epics have equal priority. Each epic consists of a number of stories. The stories are arranged according to priority. At this level we also talk about what is in scope for this release.
All stories are estimated at a high level. The estimate is relative and referring to the complexity of the story.

The total sum of the estimates is calculated. This is a rough estimate of the scope.

A release date is predicted.
At the start of each sprint we select a number of stories and mark them in progress. Typically with a blue sticker.

At the end of each sprint the completed stories are marked with a green sticker.

Sprint progress

Release Board

Epic 1
Story 12
Story 8
Story 9
Story 5
Story 11

Epic 2
Story 3
Story 8
Story 5

Epic 3
Story 3
Story 12
Story 8
Story 5

Epic n
Story 5
Story 7
Story 12
Story 8
Story 5

Scope

Predicted
Release date

Time/sprints

Predicted
Release date

Scope

Time/sprints
Adjustment of scope

If progress is slow we take a few stories out of scope.
Adjustment of scope

If progress is good we add stories to the scope.
Further reading

Jeff Patton on Story Maps:
http://www.agileproductdesign.com/blog/the_new_backlog.html

Alistar Cockburn on Walking Skeleton:
http://alistair.cockburn.us/Walking+skeleton