

Business Value Game Rules

The Goal: to earn as much money as possible

- By releasing products containing features customers asked for.
- By making customers happy by releasing features
 - You earn money at the end of the game per happiness point.
 - Customers whose happiness reaches zero leave.

The Roles

- “Salespeople” represent customers and try to earn as much money as possible for the team.
- “Development team” determines velocity, implements stories and builds releases. Played by game coach or proxy in the team.
- “Accountant” keeps the score and verifies the rules. Played by game coach or proxy in the team.

Business Value Algorithm

1. Assign a Business Value (BV) number to each Customer Request by taking into account the attributes of the request like income, customer happiness, constraints... Make your BV estimates consistent by comparing with previous requests.
2. Distribute the Business Value of the Request over the stories that comprise the Request
3. Sort the stories, based on their Business Value/Cost.
4. Align the stories per Customer Request.
5. Select story cards until their total cost is equal to the developer’s velocity. From the second round, the Developer throws a die to determine actual velocity.

Die throw	Actual velocity
1	Velocity -3
2	Velocity -2
3	Velocity-1
4	Velocity
5	Velocity+1
6	Velocity+2

6. The Developer ‘implements’ each story in turn until the velocity is reached, by marking it as Done.
 7. Salespeople update their Customer Request sheets to indicate which stories are implemented or released.
 8. Update the iteration sheet based on the Customer Requests that are fully implemented. Fill in the columns as indicated on the sheet.
 9. Update the happiness on each Client Persona sheet
 - If no request of this client was released, decrement client happiness by one.
 - If requests were released for this client, add the happiness value of the request to client happiness. This is the second variable we want to maximize to win the game!
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Real Business Value Tips

- Look at the whole and reward appropriately. Keep the goal in mind.
- Start by collecting some useful base *estimates*: extra income that can be generated, income that could be lost if the product does not contain a feature, how much the client wants the feature, deadlines...
- To estimate the value of a request, start by the estimate of value added of the sale (or value lost if the feature is not available). Adjust the value based on client importance, client happiness, potential of further sales, risk... Compare and assign request business value relative to some baseline requests. This is your **Business Value Model**.
- Prioritize requests based on business value/cost. Adjust the ordering to take into account deadlines and other constraints.
- Don't over-analyze story-level business value: start by distributing request value evenly over all the stories in the request. Compare and adjust.
- Define acceptance criteria and evaluate all stories against them.
- Value is generated by releasing features, not by developing stories.
- Know your developer capacity and limit the intake of requests and stories accordingly.
- Focus. Sometimes it's better to satisfy one client and lose another than to have two unhappy clients.
- To close the feedback loop, compare actual sales per client with estimated business value per client. Track client satisfaction to see if your estimate of client happiness is correct.

Some further models to prioritise your backlog:

- Kano Analysis: classify features as Exciters ("Wow! I didn't know you could do that!"), Linear ("More is better"), Mandatory ("Must have") or Useless.
- Theme Screening: compare all features on a few criteria against a baseline feature
- Theme Scoring: score features on weighted criteria against a baseline per criterion.
- Relative Weighting: score each feature for having and not having the feature. Prioritize by Relative Value/Relative Cost.

See <http://mountaingoatsoftware.com/presentations> for more on these backlog prioritisation tools.

Business Value isn't a value.
Business Value is a model.
Business Value models what you value.