



January 25, 2024

Alignment

BUSINESS INSIGHTS

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In one of his previous articles, my colleague, Jesse LaDousa, wrote about the importance of our project **inception phase**. As Jesse explains, this is an important phase of any project as it provides a common understanding of the problems that need to be solved and the ways in which success will be measured. Once that foundation is laid, the next phase, which we call an alignment phase, is focused on preparing a team to start working.

We treat the alignment phase just like any other sprint. It's a two-week effort aimed at completing a set of user stories and tasks focused on making sure the team can begin work. Throughout our experience of starting software projects, we have identified a set of critical tasks that need to be completed to prepare a project team for success. Over time we have refined these tasks to ensure we focus on only the essential preparation activities.

We spend time preparing the project backlog, defining the definition of done for a user story, coordinating and

scheduling sprint ceremonies, identifying the team members who will work on the team and granting them the necessary access, defining our development process which includes environment creation/definition and deployment processes, and creating the necessary feature level design for whatever business capabilities are needed. We timebox these activities into a single sprint because while preparation is important, too much preparation can be costly and cause unneeded delays.

We know that the alignment phase is critical to the success of a project. Without completing the proper preparation, executing the upcoming constructions sprints will be a challenge. Spend just enough time on preparation (but not too much!), as it is well worth the investment for the success of your project.