

Prioritisation

In 60-90 minutes, name the constraint that forces a choice, pick a scoring lens that fits, score silently, reveal together, and leave with a committed order of work.

DURATION

90

min

GROUP SIZE

—

people

WHAT YOU BRING

A named constraint on a card, 10-30 candidate items with one-sentence descriptions, and rough t-shirt effort per item.

WHAT YOU LEAVE WITH

- A stated, committed order of work for the cycle
- A top-three to start and a bottom-three explicitly parked
- The constraint and chosen framework recorded with the list
- Hidden context surfaced from wide-scoring disagreements

WHO TO INVITE

- **Facilitator.** Runs the clock, protects silent scoring, holds the framework; does not score.
- **Product lead.** Mandatory decision-owner. Commits to the final order at the end; without them the output rots.
- **Engineers (2-3).** Carry effort estimates and technical risk; catch 'small' items that hide a week of surprise.
- **CS / UX / Ops voice.** Weights items against lived subscriber pain that dashboards miss.
- **Founder or senior stakeholder.** Optional. Useful when budget or strategic bets are in play; risky if they chill honest disagreement.

USE WHEN

The backlog has outgrown the room's working memory and decisions are drifting

A constraint is about to bite: quarter-end, release window, budget, hiring slowdown

Stakeholders keep looping on work order in planning, Slack, and corridors

A new initiative needs the first three items picked out of twenty

AVOID WHEN

The backlog isn't refined enough for the team to understand items

No constraint is agreed – it becomes a preference poll

The decision is strategic; run Impact Mapping or Canvas first

The person who can commit to the order isn't in the room

How the session runs

● Phase 1 – Frame the constraint (10 min)

Put the constraint card on the wall and read it aloud, then test that everyone agrees what it means. Sharpen fuzzy constraints and name which one dominates when there are several.

● Phase 2 – Propose the framework (10 min)

Facilitator proposes one lens – MoSCoW, RICE, Cost of Delay, or value-vs-effort – and says why it fits the constraint. Allow challenge, but don't let framework debate eat the session.

- **Phase 3 – Silent scoring (15 min)**

Each person scores every item alone against the framework's axes – no talking, no eye contact. Clarifying questions go on a side sheet and are answered only once everyone has finished.

- **Phase 4 – Reveal and discuss (25 min)**

Collect all scores onto one sheet. Confirm the items with tight agreement, then open the wide-distribution items by asking the extremes to explain what they were seeing.

- **Phase 5 – Argue the fringes (20 min)**

Walk the top three and the bottom three out loud. Invite objections by name; force a trade when someone rescues a bottom item, since pulling one up means dropping another.

- **Phase 6 – Land the order and commit (10 min)**

Product lead reads the final order and commits. Name owners and next actions out loud; photograph the wall, sheet, and list. End on commitment, not summary.