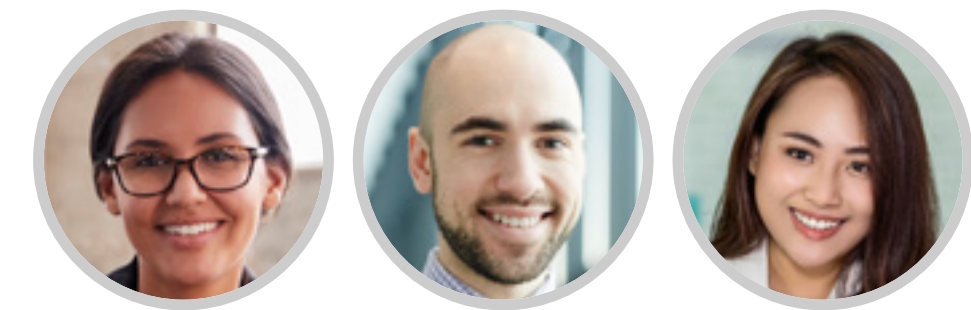# The "Rock Crusher"

contributed by Steve Adolph

An enhanced model of backlog management for maintaining flow, visualizing and managing ALL work and roles required to go from concept to cash.

The Rock Crusher Can Be Implemented Using a Kanban

Wishful Thinking/ Big Ideas	Speculative	Forecasted	Ready	Thin Pipe States

Roles Which Must Be Consulted or Informed

Subject Matter Expert

Stakeholder

Customer

Initiative Owner

Initiative Owner is accountable for shepherding an initiative through the Rock Crusher and getting it done.

Backlog Owner

Backlog Owner is accountable for prioritizing ALL Rocks in the backlog so team is working on most economically valuable backlog items.

Solution Owner

Solution Owner is accountable for delivering a valuable solution.
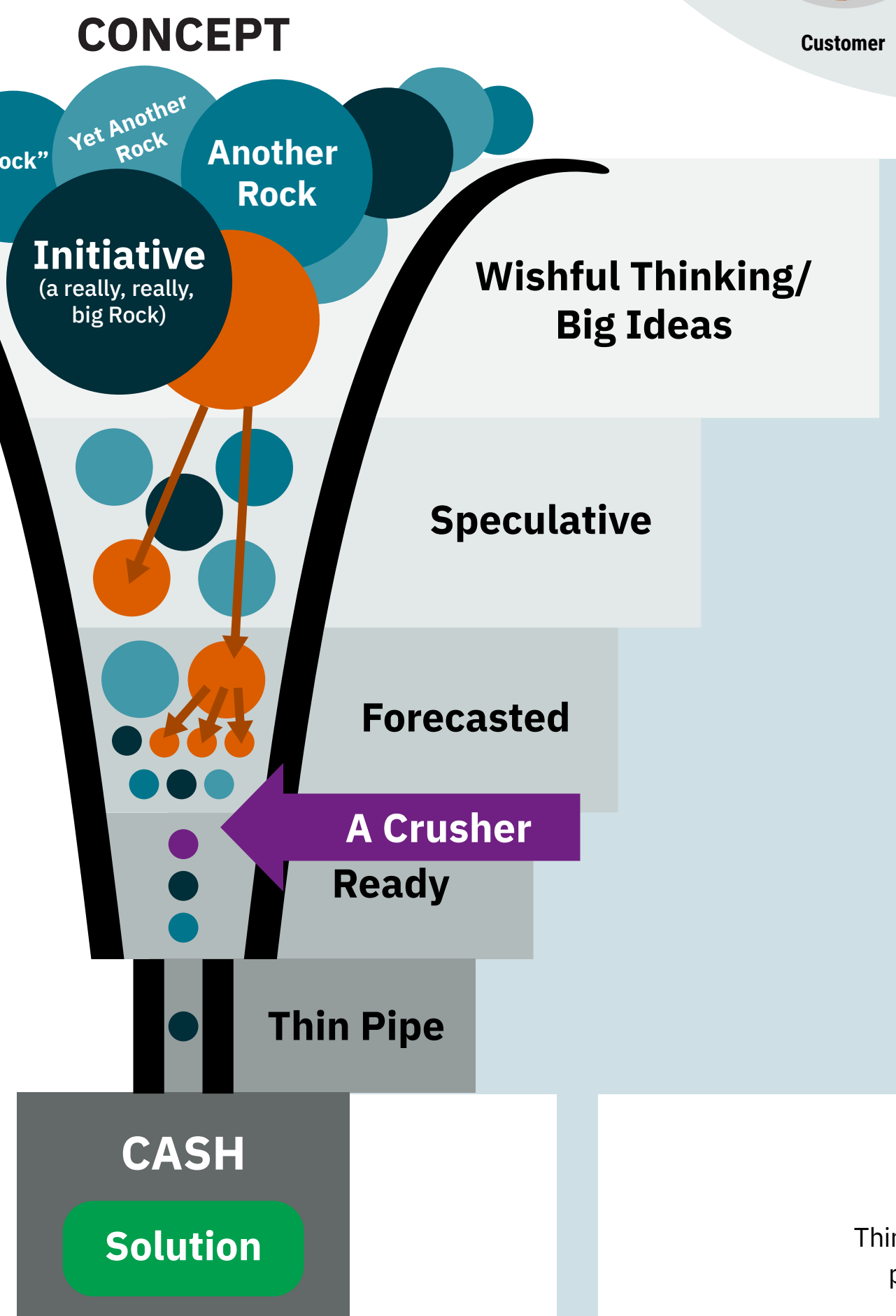
Analyst

Analyst is responsible for transforming the sometimes competing wants, hopes, interests and aspirations of the Customer, Stakeholder, the Initiative Owner, the Product Manager and the contributions of the Subject Matter Expert into a shared, clear understanding of precisely what to build.

Note:

Not all work is planned and expected and passes through the Rock Crusher. Other strategies supplement the Rock Crusher for managing work:

- Use capacity allocation for unplanned, expected work.
- Apply risk management for planned, unexpected work.
- Hold a retrospective after being hit by unplanned, unexpected work (black swan event).

It Takes a Village: One Person Cannot Do It All

Backlog Owner

Initiative Owner

Solution Owner

Analyst

Classical Product Owner

Stakeholder

Customer

SME

CONCEPT

A "Rock"
Yet Another Rock
Another Rock
Initiative (a really, really, big Rock)

Wishful Thinking/ Big Ideas

Speculative

Forecasted

A Crusher

Ready

Thin Pipe

CASH

Solution

Rock Crusher Delivers A Solution (Cash)

Terms & Metaphors

Rocks
Rocks is a metaphor for backlog items. Rocks come in all types (e.g., user stories, initiatives, defect fixes) and sizes.

Crushing
Crushing refines and elaborates a larger abstract parent backlog item into smaller more concrete backlog items by adding verified knowledge.
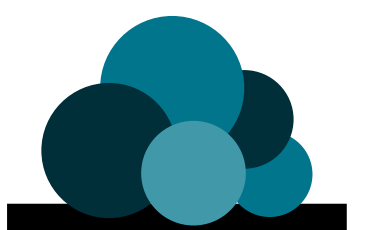
Crush Meeting (Backlog Refinement)
Team collaboratively refines / crushes Rocks and advises Backlog Owner on the economic value of Rocks. May also result in the creation of "Crushers" being added to the backlog.

Crusher
Crusher is a backlog item to create the knowledge required to crush Rocks. Crushers make the crushing process visible and therefore manageable.

Thin Pipe
Thin Pipe subsequent solution development steps that pull Ready Rocks and delivers Solution Increments.

Waste Gate

Waste Gate
Not everything in the backlog will get done. Economic value drives Rock priority because the Rock Crusher has limited capacity. Many Rocks are only partially crushed and may not be crushed at all. This waste is removed from the Rock Crusher through the Waste Gate.