

How does this idea fit into our long term strategy?

As a PO, you should be very clear about the product strategy. New requests are viewed as not supporting the strategy unless the requester convinces you that their idea will help reaching significant strategic goals faster. Tip: Try "Impact Mapping"

You need to convince the other stakeholders.

When you put an item into the backlog at a certain priority it pushes down other items. Items whose stakeholders ask you to justify that decision. Don't put yourself into that position. Let the requester go into the line of fire. Tip: Try "Buy-a-feature"

A Product Owners most important word: 7 Ways to say "No" as a Product Owner – using valid reasons instead of the word

"No."

This is going to cost 10x as much as you'd want it to.

Random ideas congest the path to maximum value. Stakeholders often have little understanding of how much work a "small favor" is. Always ask the team for estimates before committing to anything.

"Which of your requests should I scrap to put the new one in?"

People are good at coming up with ideas. People are bad at understanding that limiting Work In Progress is key to getting things done and delivering a valuable product. Avoid becoming a "request manager" tracking endless lists of things that have no chance of ever getting done. Tip: Try a Visual Dashboard with WIP limit 3. Requests are only accepted once something got done.

We have limited WIP.

Our backlog is a prioritized list.

Don't waste time figuring out whether something is worth doing, delegate that to the requester. You are a bottleneck. Don't be pressured into making something Priority 1 just because it's the Group CEO's idea. Arrange your backlog items so that they make sense from an economic perspective. Tip: Google "Weighted shortest job first"

"Do you have any data that warrants putting it into a position where it has a chance to be done in the next half year?"

This has no chance of being done anytime soon.

Why would you track things so far into the future that your product won't fit to the idea any more should you get there? If the idea is good, it will come back later. If it isn't - well, why is it important to keep? Any backlog item moving beyond a predictable horizon wastes your capacity if you think about it at all. Tip: Cap the backlog to contain at most 6 months of work

We discuss things when they become important.

Here's a polite way of saying: "This item is wasting my time". Focus on the top few priorities in the backlog. Avoid getting dragged into meetings for things that may never happen. If others want to discuss these things, let them. Once they can prove it's worth your time, you join. Until then, your product is fine without the requested item.

"We will consider your suggestion at an appropriate time. Thanks."

