Product Craft

A step by step approach to building great products that customers love

🔍 Today's Agenda

1 Introduction & Framing

2 Product Discovery

3 Product Design

4 Planning & Execution

Introduction

Arun Rajappa (@appa, www.appapappa.com)
Author. Product Guy. Dad.

Currently, Country Manager for Riot Games, India & South Asia. Previously, Director of Product for Android & Play Store at Google, and Partner Director of Product for Microsoft Teams, Microsoft 365 Platform, Sovereign Clouds, and Emerging Markets at Microsoft.

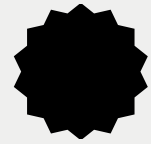Love teaching & coaching product teams.

Q **Your facilitator**

Arun

GAMES, AI, TECH

Building great products is ~~tough~~

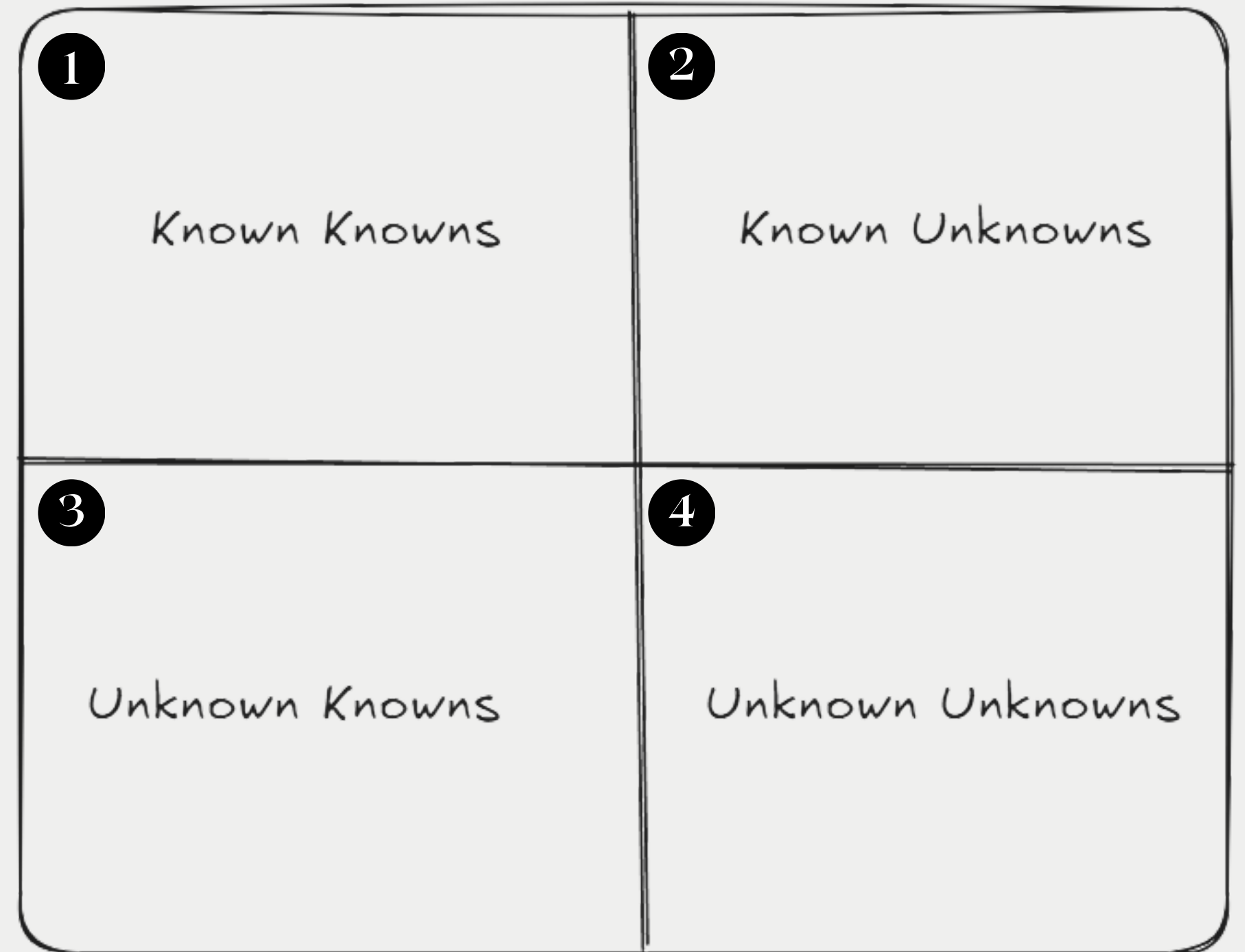Introducing **Pure Veg Mode**

Where should we start?!

"In the expert's mind there are few possibilities, in the beginner's mind there are many"
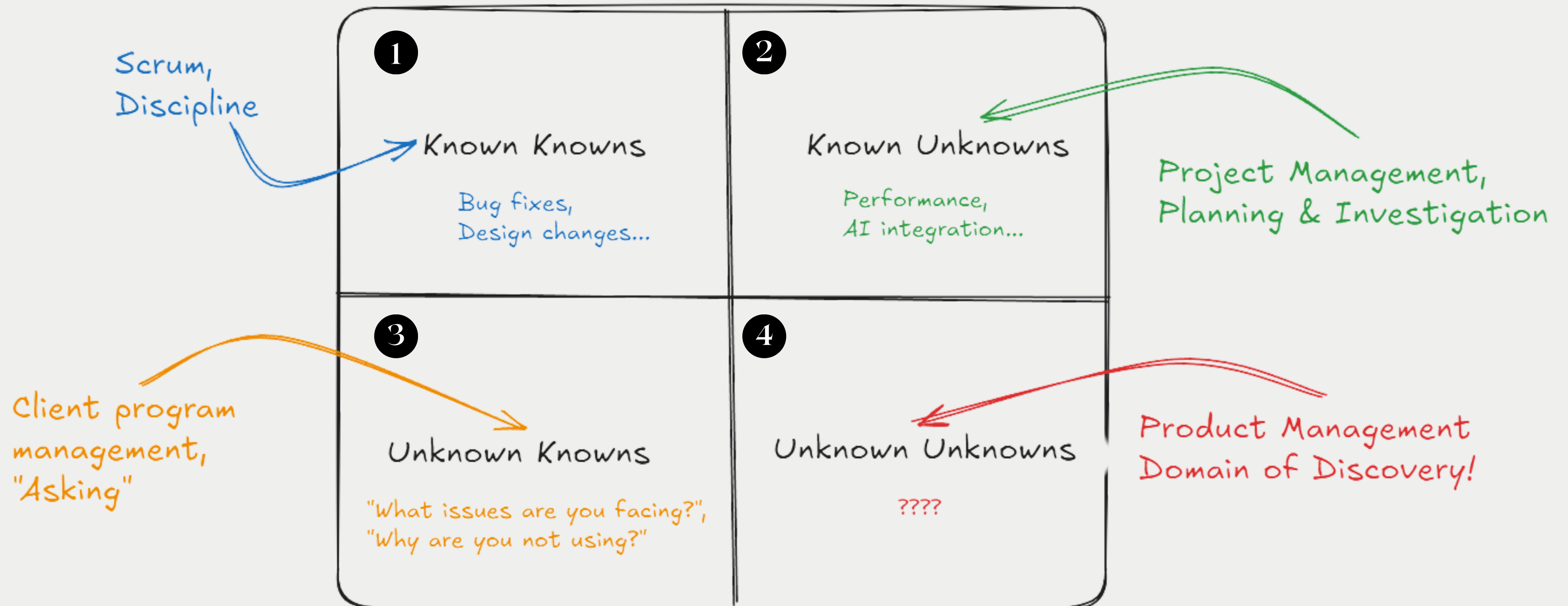
Shunryu Suzuki

Learn–it–all, not know–it–all, Growth mindset (Satya)

Domain of knowledge

Let us quickly examine this familiar model in the context of building products....

1 Known Knowns

2 Known Unknowns

3 Unknown Knowns

4 Unknown Unknowns

Welcome to the unknown...

① Known Knowns
Bug fixes,
Design changes...

Scrum,
Discipline

② Known Unknowns
Performance,
AI integration...

Project Management,
Planning & Investigation

③ Unknown Knowns
"What issues are you facing?",
"Why are you not using?"

Client program
management,
"Asking"

④ Unknown Unknowns
????

Product Management
Domain of Discovery!

Product Discovery

The most important part of building new products is the discovery phase. This requires a mindset of inquiry & curiosity.

It requires listening to customers – and going beyond to uncovering their true & unstated needs.
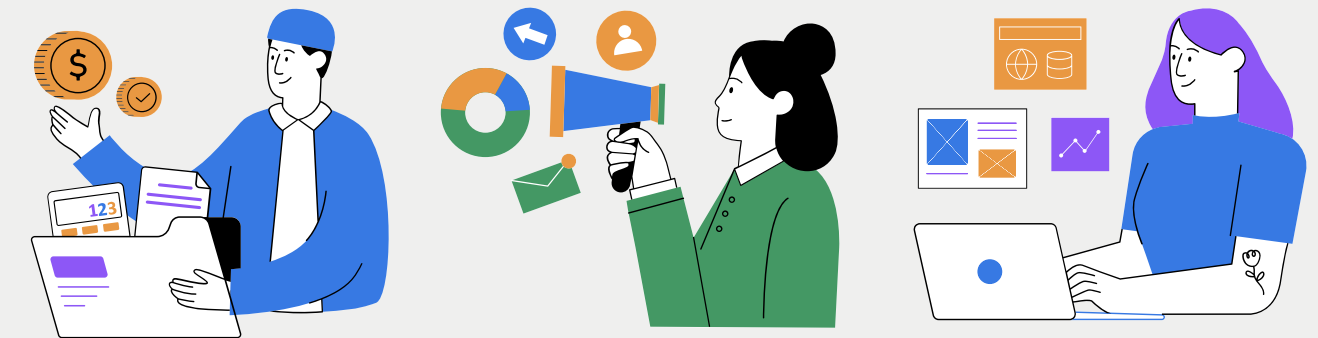
0 **Ground 0: The Inquiry**
Setting the right question will shape your entire product outlook.

Example: "What is productivity for the mobile only user?"

1 **Background of Relatedness**
Understanding our enterprise users...

2 **Identifying Possibilities**
What do our users really need?

3 **Identify a Single Opportunity: The Job**
Strong user need + Business value

Jobs to be done (JTBD)

Instead of seeing the world through the lens of **what the company is doing...**

See the world of innovation through the lens of **what the customer is trying to get done.**

Let's begin!

Enterprise SaaS Users

Understanding the different users we serve, and what they value and what is important to them is a key part of discovery.

1. **Executive Buyer,** e.g. CFO
"Prove RoI to the exec team"

2. **Internal IT**, e.g. CISO, CIO
"Is it secure? Does it integrate?"

3. **Champion**
"Does this drive innovation? Is there real–time inventory tracking?"

4. **End user:**
"How do I create a plan?",
"What does this button do?"
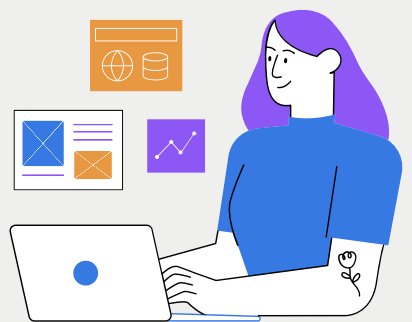
Interviewing users to identify the jobs

1 **Trigger Moment (Context)**
Understand what kicked off the need
"What made you realize that your current approach wasn't working?"

2 **Motivation (Why now?)**
Understand urgency & intent
"What are you hoping will happen if you solve this?"

3 **Actions Taken (Struggles & Solution)**
See how they looked for solutions
"What did you try first? What did you like or dislike about it?"

4 **Desired Outcome (What is success?)**
Both functional and emotional
"What does success look like to you? How will you feel once it is solved?"

Dont ask
"What do you want?"

...Too client focused

Do ask...
"Tell me about the last time..." (reveals context)

Also, go deep on emotion

Follow the path
Trigger →
Struggle →
Search →
Solution →
Outcome

A template for jobs

Use either of these templates to capture the main and related jobs for your users

JTBD template 1

"When I [situation],
I want to [motivation],
so I can [expected outcome]."

Example
xxx

JTBD template 2
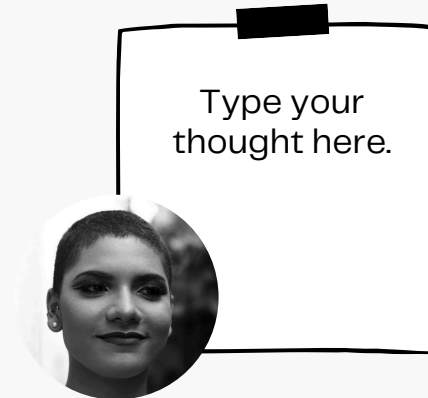
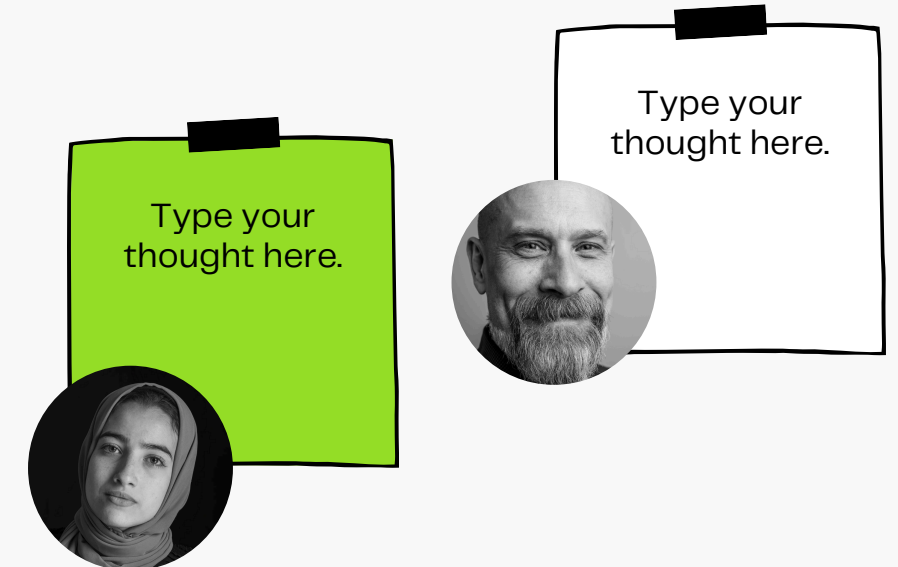Action verb –> Object of action –> Clarifier

Example
xxx

Workshop activity 1

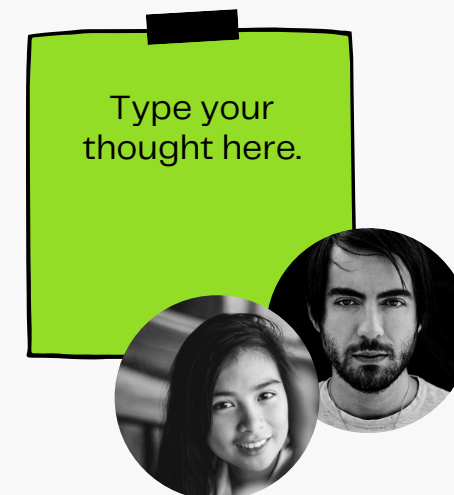Let us discuss... What are some of the key jobs that you see for your customers...

Q Job 1

Type your thought here.
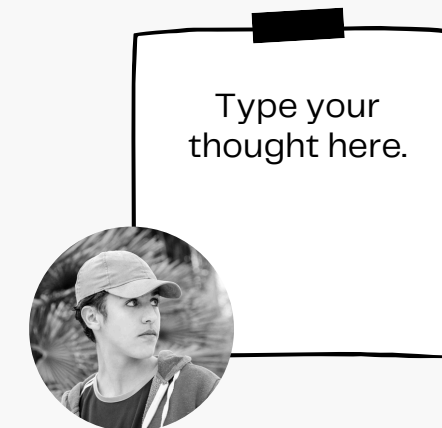
Q Job 2
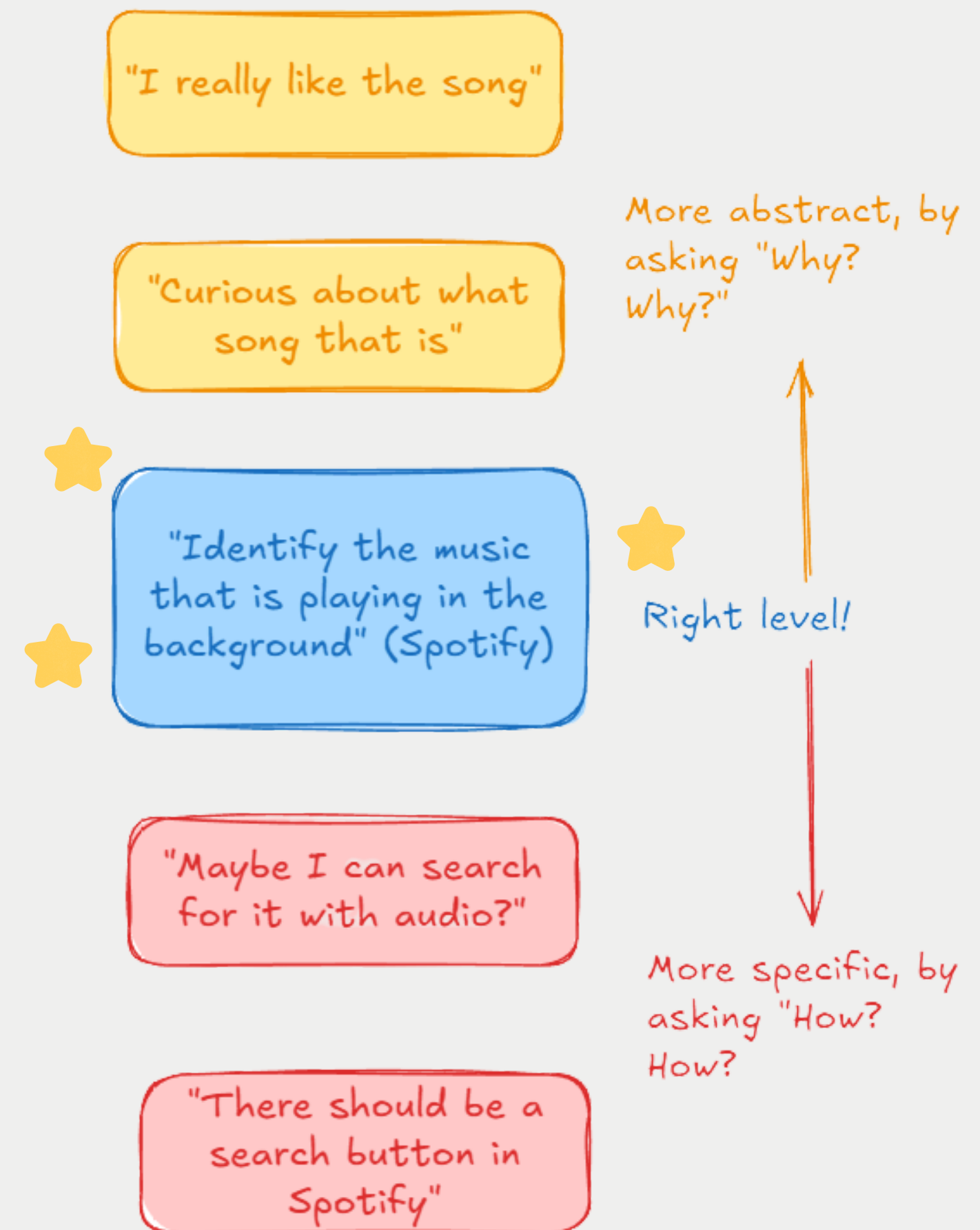
Type your thought here.

Type your thought here.

Q Job 3

Type your thought here.

Q Job 4

Type your thought here.

Job laddering

Finding the right level of job can be tough, and requires skill...

"I really like the song"

"Curious about what song that is"

More abstract, by asking "Why? Why?"

"Identify the music that is playing in the background" (Spotify)

Right level!

"Maybe I can search for it with audio?"

More specific, by asking "How? How?

"There should be a search button in Spotify"
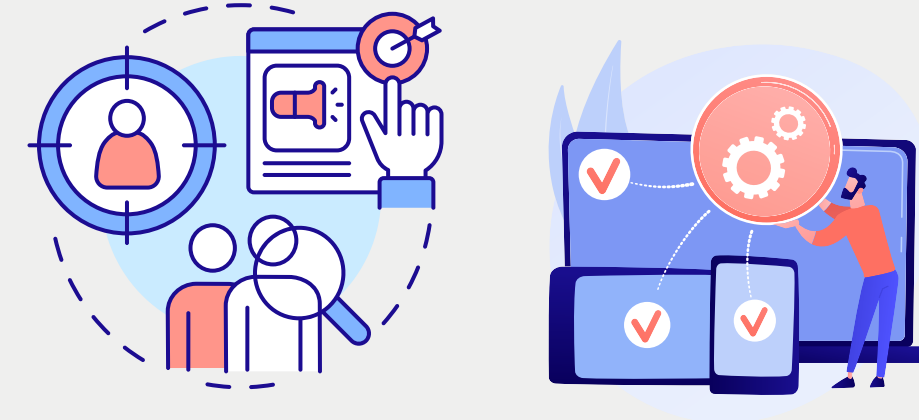
Now that we have the core job...!

Product Design

Design is fun! It requires translating the job "opportunity" into a real-world solution for users. This is a collaborative, cross-functional effort, which concludes with a prototype of the design that users and other stakeholders can approve...

1 **User Journey Mapping**
What is the user journey for the job

2 **"How might we?"**
Brainstorming on solutioning...

3 **Prioritize a design & Figma prototype**
This is the "happy path"!

Journey map

An example journey map for a Spotify user, for the job, "Identify the music playing in the background"

Stage	Action	Thought	Emotion	Pain Point	Spotify opportunity
Discovery	Listens to a new song in a cafe	"Oh, what is that song?	Curious	Dont know what the song is…	Song discovery like Shazam or Google
Search	Opens Spotify and clicks "Find" icon	"Will this find the song…?"	Eager	Not sure the first time	One-click search and find; freemium for Spotify
Listen	Plays the song on Spotify	"Finally, I can listen to this!"	Satisfied	May not find the right version	Catalog depth
Favorite	Adds to liked songs	"I can hear this whenever!"	Happy	Managing playlists	Make it easier to manage liked songs…

Workshop (activity) 2

What is the user journey map for a key job for your product?

Stage	Action	Thought	Emotion	Pain Point	Opportunity

Brainstorming solutions

Brainstorm area

"How might we?"
Brainstorming on design...

How might we help the user find a song they want?

How might we create the right search algorithm for the user to find the song?

How might we help the user manage their favourited songs?

How might we enable this functionality with minimum work?

Design ideas...
"Can we try..."

Can we have partnerships with Shazam to enable this functionality?

Can we try semantic voice based search algorithms?

Can we implement a playlists feature...

Our favorite ideas

How might we enable this functionality with minimum work?

Can we have partnerships with Shazam to enable this functionality?

Happy path

How might we enable this functionality with minimum work?

Can we have partnerships with Shazam to enable this functionality?

1. Based on the brainstorming, we came up with many solutions

2. We prioritized the design of partnership with Shazam to enable this job

3. Based on this design ("happy path"), we sketched out the Figma prototype
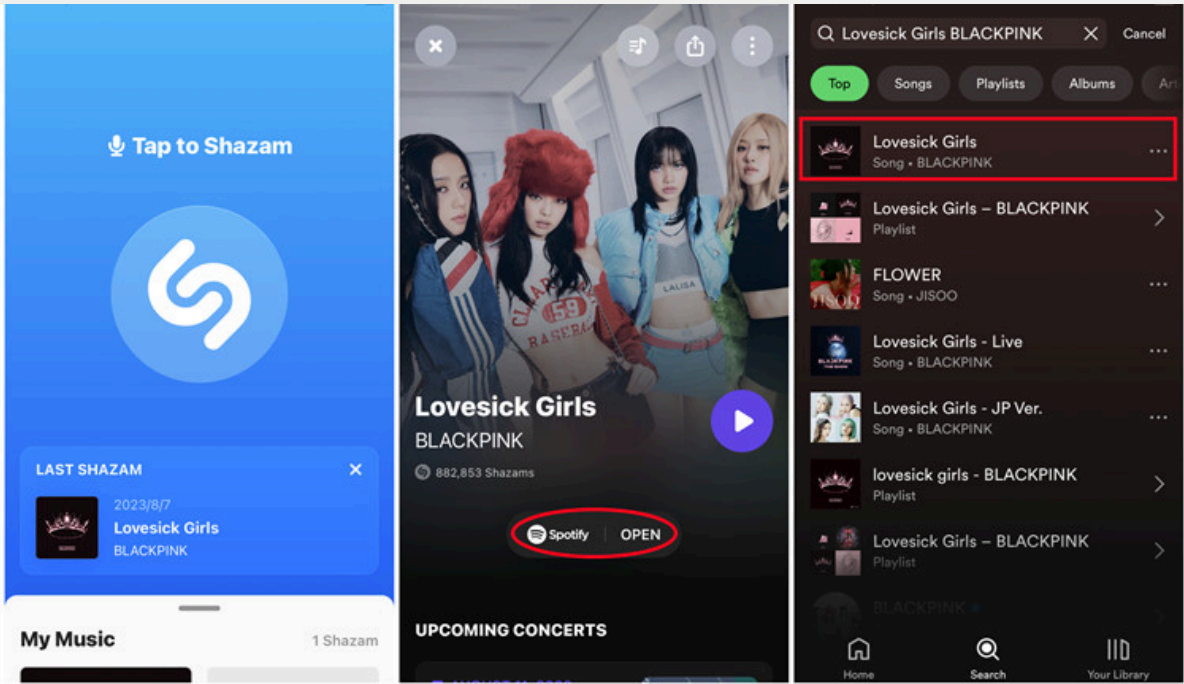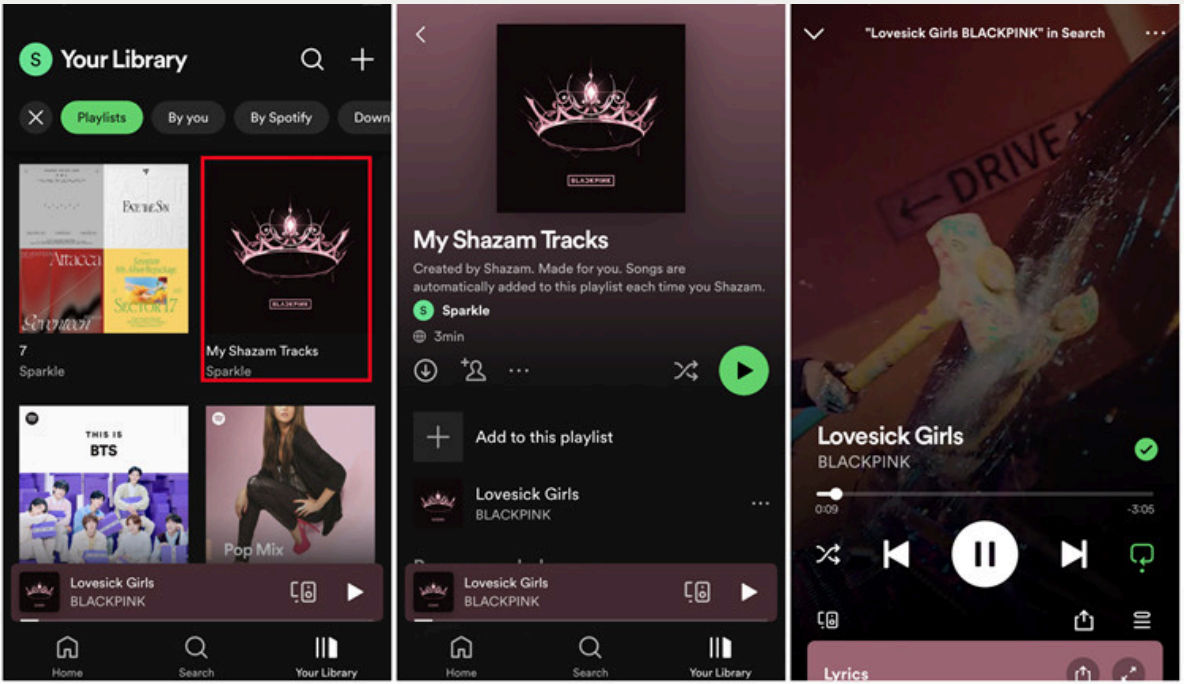
1 Connect from Shazam to Spotify
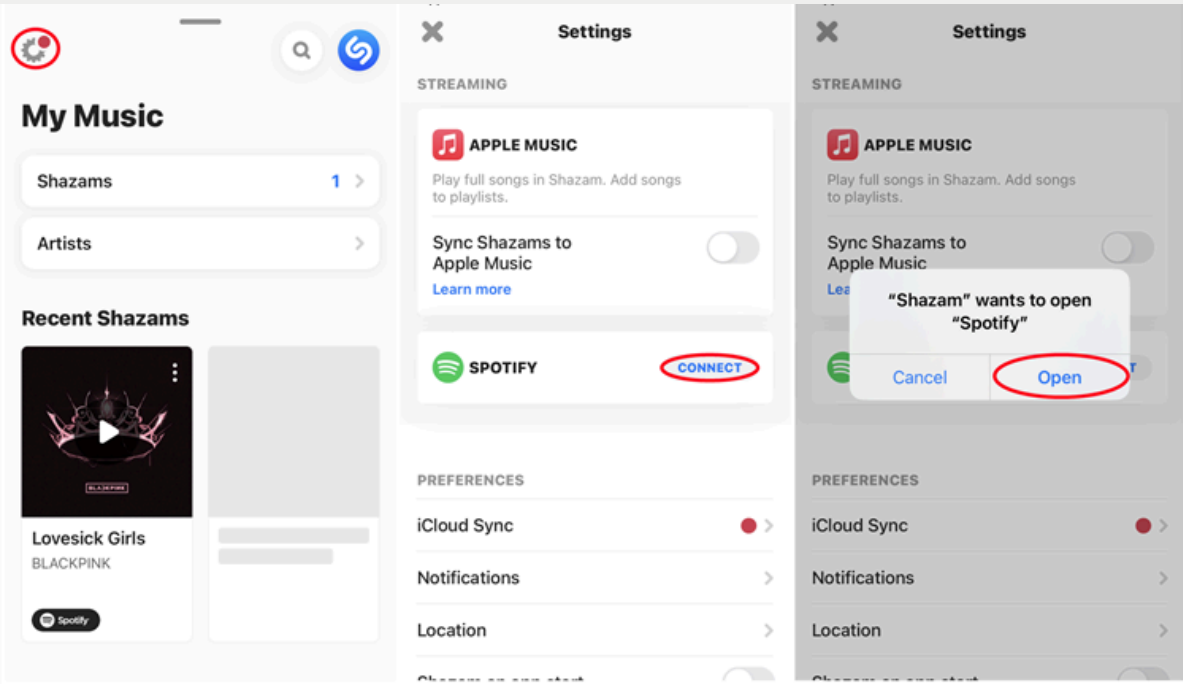
2 Add from Shazam to Spotify

3 Find Shazam tracks in Spotify & play

Before section 4

Check your design! Does the user journey you have prototyped...

- Meet the needs of the user?
- Solve the job requirement?
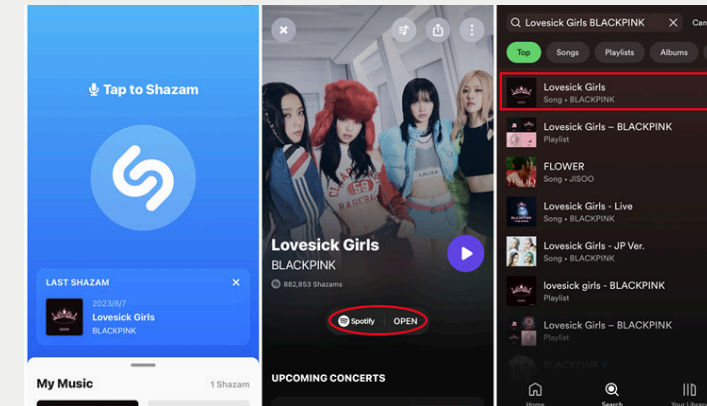
Will the user hire your design for their job?

And, from the business side...

- Does it make business sense?
- Do we have the right metrics in place?
- Can it be implemented?

1 **Demo & review the happy path...**
Demo the Figma prototype before you start coding:
with users, with stakeholders, with execs.

2 **Define success metrics**
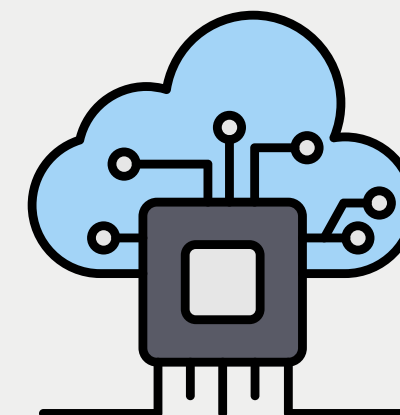Metrics for the happy path are important

BUSINESS METRICS   **Usage metrics**   **quality metrics**

3 **Write a service, integration & data blueprint...**
Partner with engineering & data science

Section 4

Planning & Execution

Now, it is time to build… but wait!

1. Create a PRD to align stakeholders before starting;
2. Create epics & user stories to build in phases;
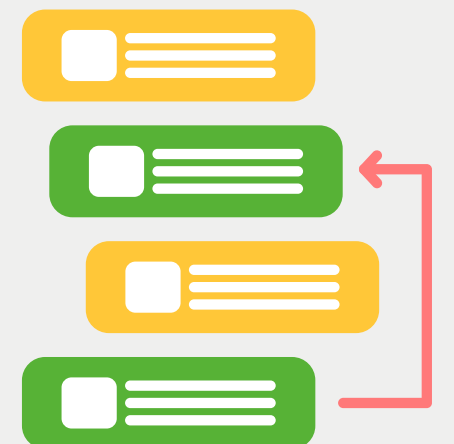3. Add these to a backlog and prioritize!

1 **Summarize the design in a PRD**
Big picture, Goal, Metrics, "Why, what, who"

2 **Create epics & user stories**
Break the job into "chunks" for execution

UAT
USER ACCEPTANCE TESTING

3 **Create a backlog & prioritize…**
Add the stories to a backlog, and "groom" the backlog through a prioritization framework…

PRD Template

A good PRD creates clarity, and aligns all internal stakeholders.

It captures what problems we are solving, why now, what success looks like for the user and the business, shows metrics to measure.

It motivates why this problem is important to the user with the JTBD;

Shows the ideal solution through user journeys;

And showcases this through Figma Prototypes.

It also captures key dependencies, risks, and has a timeline for when this can be delivered by.

Great PMs write great PRDs.

Title

Author: Arun Rajappa, Date: 18.05.25, Status: Draft

1. Exec Summary

2. Context & Background

3. Users & Jobs to Be Done
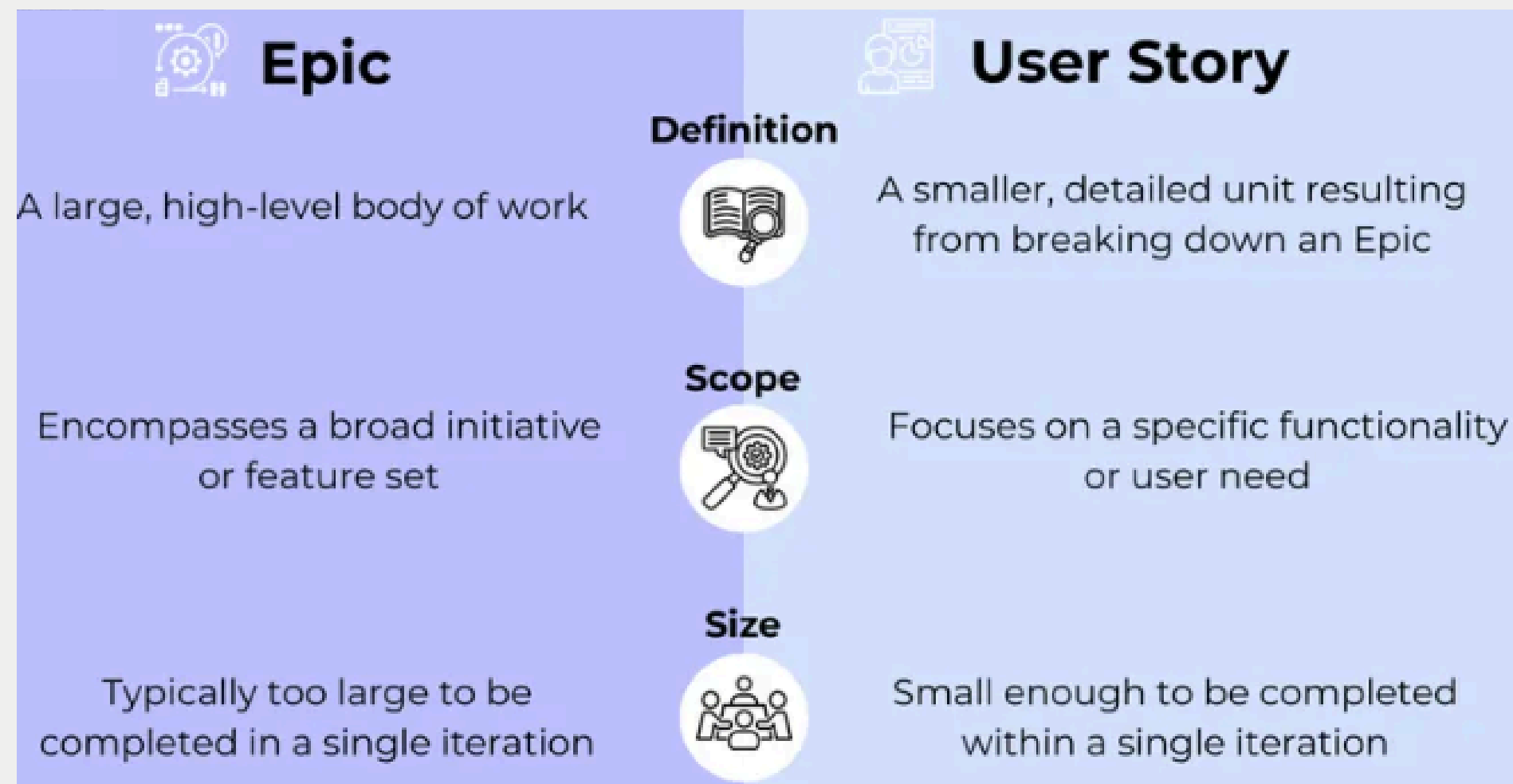
4. Goals & Success Metrics

5. Golden path scenario

6. Figma Designs

7. Dependecies

8. Risks & Mitigations

9. Timeline

Writing epics & user stories

	Epic		User Story
Definition	A large, high-level body of work		A smaller, detailed unit resulting from breaking down an Epic
Scope	Encompasses a broad initiative or feature set		Focuses on a specific functionality or user need
Size	Typically too large to be completed in a single iteration		Small enough to be completed within a single iteration

Epic is a large body of work

"Shazam and Spotify integration"

User story template

As a [type of user],
I want to [do something],
so that [I achieve a goal].

User story example
As a Shazam user,
I want to connect Spotify
so that I can add Shazam tracks to Spotify

Bad user story
Build Shazam connection in

The backlog

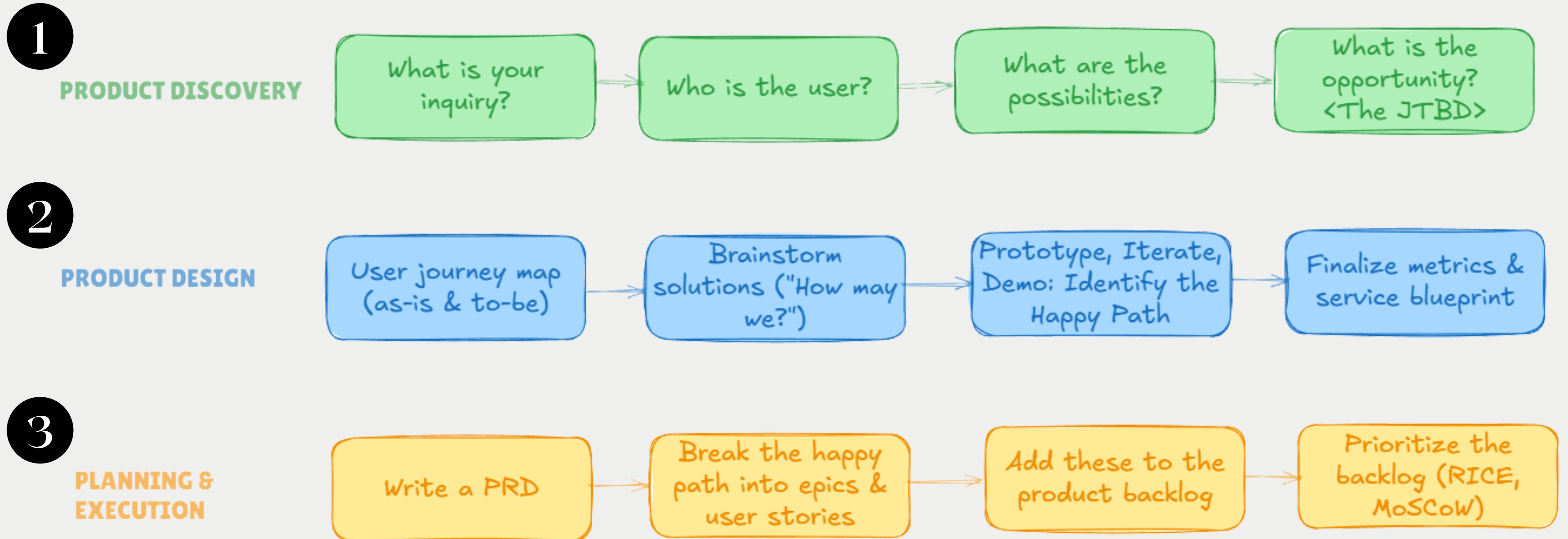Two popular frameworks for prioritizing the backlog: RICE and MoSCoW…

Story	Reach	Impact	Confidence	Effort	RICE score (ReachxImpactxConfidence)/Effort
As a Shazam user I want to connect Spotify…	2	3	3	1	18
As a Spotify user I want to identify songs directly in Spotify	5	5	2	5	10

Must – Required in MVP
Should – Important, not critical
Could – Nice to have
Wont – Wont do now

Story	Epic	Priority	Sprint	Status
As a Shazam user I want to connect Spotify…	Shazam–Spotify integration	Must	Sprint 1	In archictecture review
As a Spotify user I want to identify songs directly in Spotify	Spotify discover	Wont		

Lets now build!

Product Craft

1

PRODUCT DISCOVERY

What is your inquiry? → Who is the user? → What are the possibilities? → What is the opportunity? <The JTBD>

2

PRODUCT DESIGN

User journey map (as-is & to-be) → Brainstorm solutions ("How may we?") → Prototype, Iterate, Demo: Identify the Happy Path → Finalize metrics & service blueprint

3

PLANNING & EXECUTION

Write a PRD → Break the happy path into epics & user stories → Add these to the product backlog → Prioritize the backlog (RICE, MoSCoW)

Anti-patterns in Enterprise PM

It is hard to be an enterprise PM. Clients are always asking for things to be done. Your promotion depends on your boss being happy. You don't know how to go from what a single client is telling you to what customers what in general.
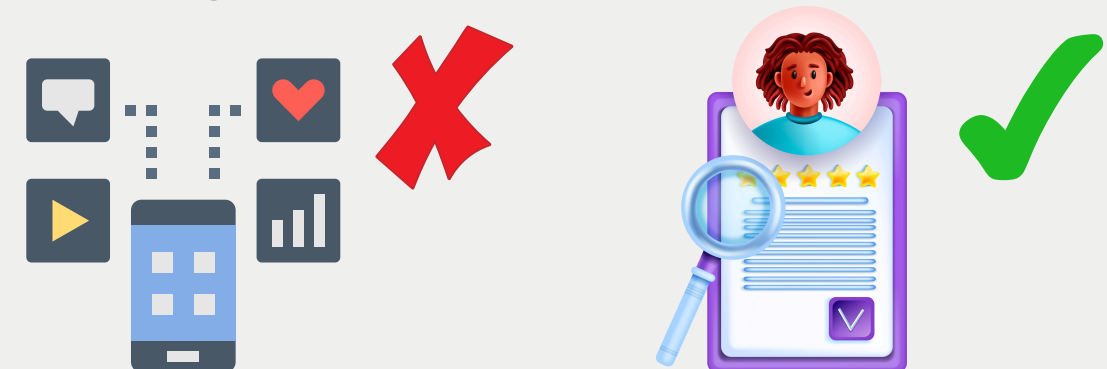
The way out is to follow the process....

1 Building for your boss, and not for customers

2 Confusing feedback with validation
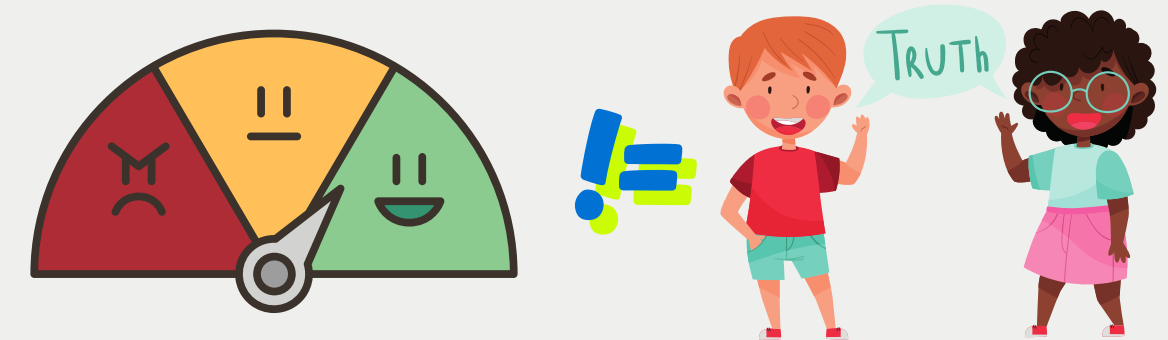
3 Starting with features instead of jobs

3 Shipping without defining success...

Great products...

... Can be built systematically, using a process. By adopting a "Unknown unknowns" (Discovery) mindset, we understand our users, and the jobs to be done.

With the journey mapping, we then proceed to finding solutions and prototyping the happy path design that is validated with users and stakeholders.

We then structure the happy path into prioritized epics and user stories that can be built with high confidence...

1 **Discovery** (Unknown unknowns), not **Client Solutioning** (Unknown knowns).

2 **Iterate, iterate, iterate – and demo!**
Iterate on the user job, the user journey map, and the golden path prototype: and keep demo'ing till everything is perfect!

DEMO
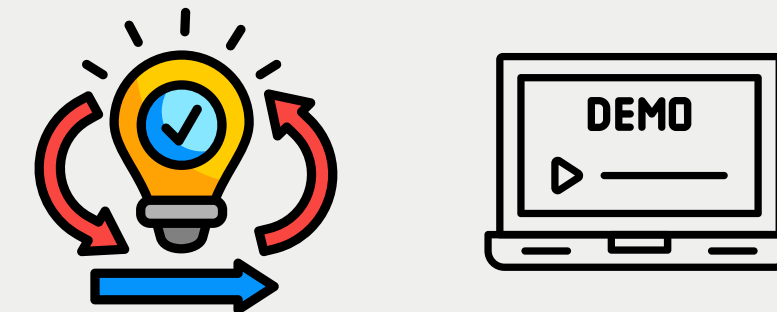
3 **An honest "No" is worth a 1000 "Maybes"**
Radical candor – with clients, with stakeholders, with bosses – is the way to creating a product mindset (rather than a client–service mindset).

Remember, your "No" today makes the world better for all your current and future customers...

That's a wrap!

Thank you for participating.

TIME FOR some QUESTIONS...