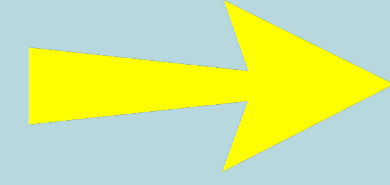


# BUILDING UNSTOPPABLE CROSS FUNCTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

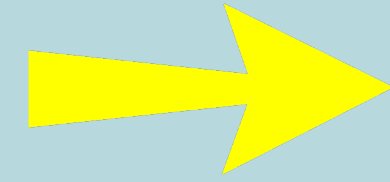
Iban Benzal, Design Director at **7wise**

**Working  
with people  
from other  
disciplines  
is hard.**

**Working  
with people  
from other  
disciplines  
is hard.**



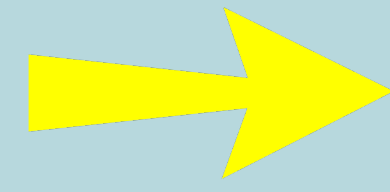
Product Manager who wanted me to copy Amazon's checkout for our health app.



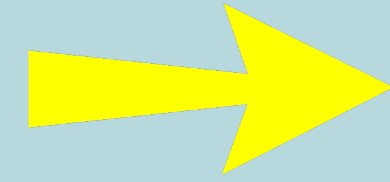
CEO who kept pushing for design changes looking for something 'innovative'.



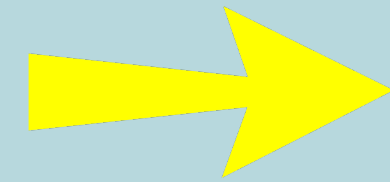
# Working with people from other disciplines is hard.



Product Manager who wanted me to copy Amazon's checkout for our health app.



CEO who kept pushing for design changes looking for something 'innovative'.



Engineer interrupted research because we already had 300 survey responses.





We dread meetings  
because arguments  
are constant.



We spend more time  
defending process than  
actually designing.

# THIS FRICTION IS EXHAUSTING

---

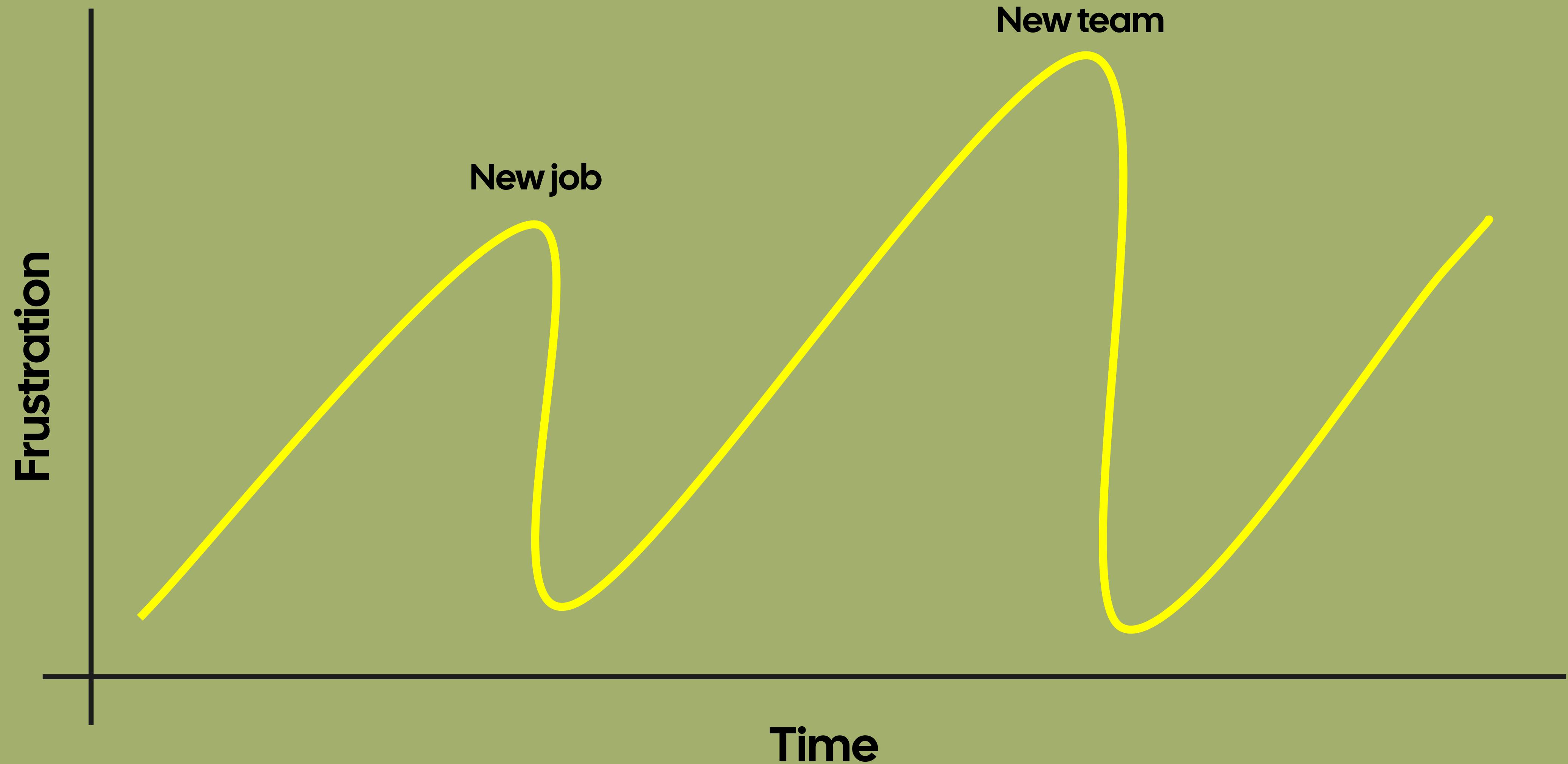


We feel misunderstood  
and undervalued.

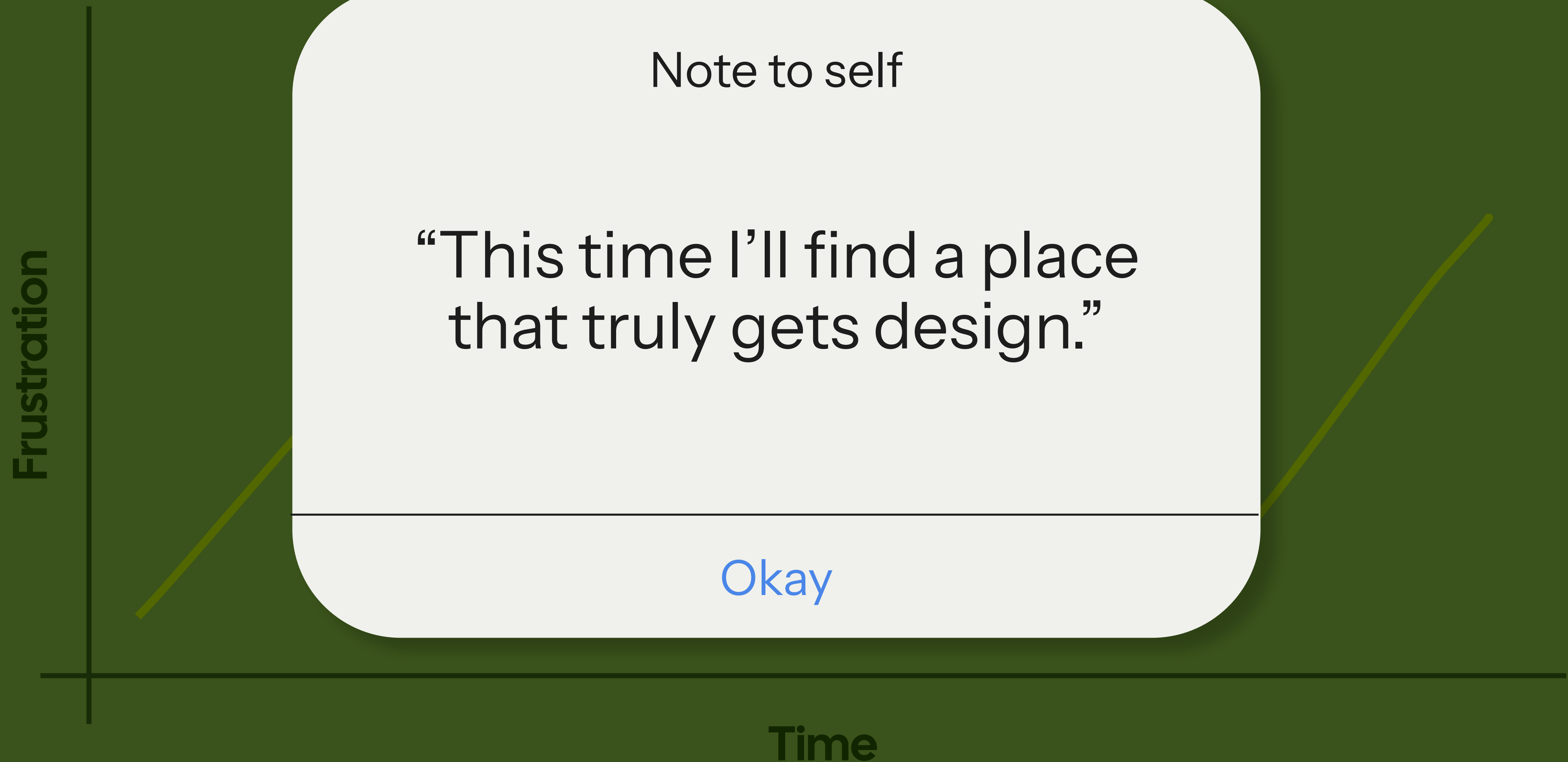


**We see our partners  
as enemies**

# The grass is greener elsewhere



# The grass is greener elsewhere





# The grass is greener elsewhere



Reminder

Design utopia  
doesn't exist.

Oh.

Okay

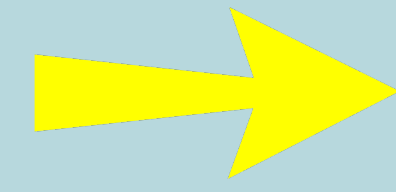
Frustration

Time

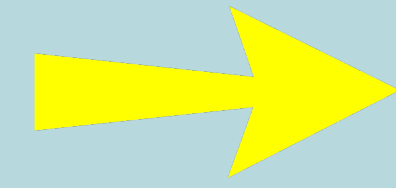
The big opportunity

**Becoming designers  
that can make it  
work anywhere.**

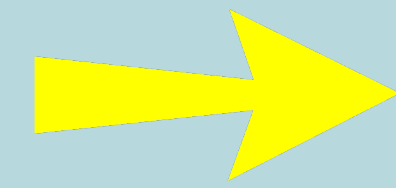
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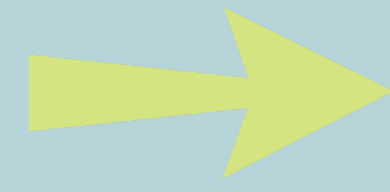
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Working  
with people  
from other

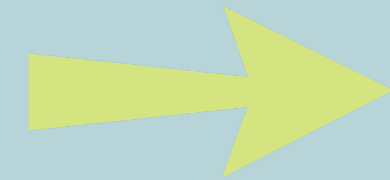


Product Manager who  
wanted me to copy  
Amazon's checkout for  
our health app.



CEO who kept pushing

These conflicts are about **process**.



Engineer interrupted  
research because we  
already had 300 survey  
responses.

**‘GOOD  
DESIGN’, =**

- ➔ Double Diamond is THE process.
- ➔ User research comes first, always.
- ➔ We need at least three rounds of iteration before shipping.
- ➔ Wireframes must be approved before any visual design.
- ➔ No feature gets built without user testing.
- ➔ Design reviews are mandatory for all changes.
- ➔ ...

**‘Design security  
blanket’**

**~~GOOD  
DESIGN~~, =**

- ➔ Double Diamond is THE process.
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- ➔ ...



**GOOD  
DESIGN**

**=**

**Shipping  
solutions that  
work in the  
real world.**

# Building unstoppaable partnerships

01

Understand  
their partners  
perspectives

02

Partner on  
the problem  
space

03

Create shared  
wins instead of  
design wins

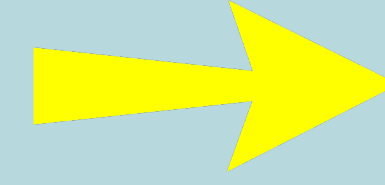
Understand our  
partners and their  
perspectives



**Research your partners  
as rigorously as you  
research your users.**

**Four principles  
to follow to  
understand  
your partners**

**Four principles  
to follow to  
understand  
your partners**



Make it mutual,  
not one-sided

Reveals their collaboration style

**“What is your best  
experience working  
with a designer”**

Reveals their collaboration style

**“How can I be successful  
working with you?”**

Make it mutual, not one-sided

**“Let me share how  
I work best too...”**



# Working with Romi - User Manual



Owned by [Romi Fellows](#) ...

Last updated: Apr 07, 2025 • 1 min read • 14 people viewed

## How I'm productive

I typically work from 9.00-9.30am until 6.00-6.30pm, but happy to answer slack queries outside of that if needed (from 8am-8pm).

At the start of everyday, I try to book focus time if I have a block between meetings — you'll see it appear in random places in my calendar. I also try to group meetings in blocks where I can to do this.

### ✓ Other ways to increase my productivity

I work best when:

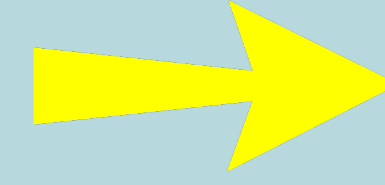
- **Listening and talking with others** — I'm a 'talk to think' person and get insights faster through conversation.
- **Focus time:** I still need focus time, to explore and collate all my thoughts/ideas into tangible actions for myself and others.
- **In the office:** I need the hum/buzz of busy places around me to stay focussed, otherwise I get distracted with silence (I'm an extrovert).
- **Values driven:** I have a sense of, and believe in our direction and purpose — I understand what we are trying to achieve as a team.
- **Diversity when making decisions:** I have multiple perspectives on a problem and some/enough evidence that supports what we are trying to achieve (or know ways to get this).
- **Autonomy:** I know people in my team are on it, and they trust me too — I get stressed if

Writing User manuals to align on expectations

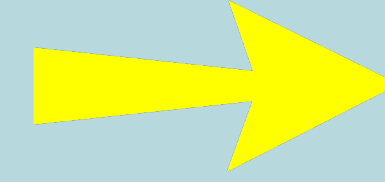


Romi Fellows  
Staff Product Designer

# Four principles to follow to understand your partners



Make it mutual,  
not one-sided



Go beyond  
the official story

Uncovers business context

**“What does success  
look like for us in the  
next 3 months?”**

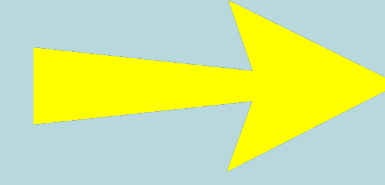
Go beyond the official story

**“What would make  
this project feel like  
a huge win for you  
personally?”**

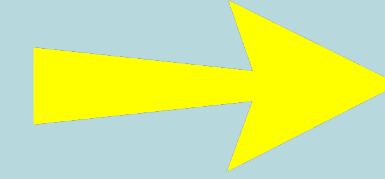
Go beyond the official story

**“How can we make  
our bosses happy  
about our work?”**

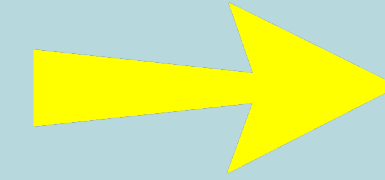
# Four principles to follow to understand your partners



Make it mutual,  
not one-sided



Go beyond  
the official story



Show empathy,  
build trust

Surfaces real anxieties

**“What is your biggest  
fear about this project?”**



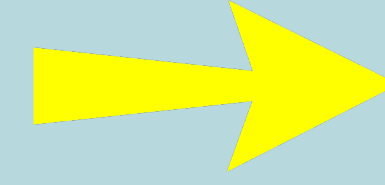
Show empathy, build trust

**“I hear you. I’m here to  
work through them  
together with you.”**

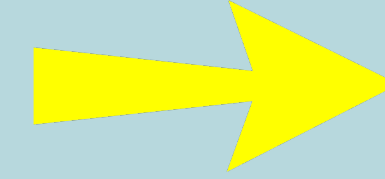
Show empathy, build trust

**“What would help  
you to feel like we’re  
truly partners in this?”**

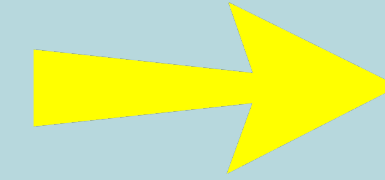
# Four principles to follow to understand your partners



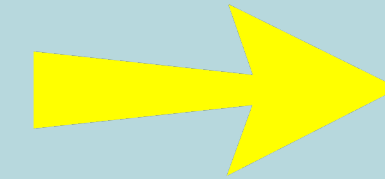
Make it mutual,  
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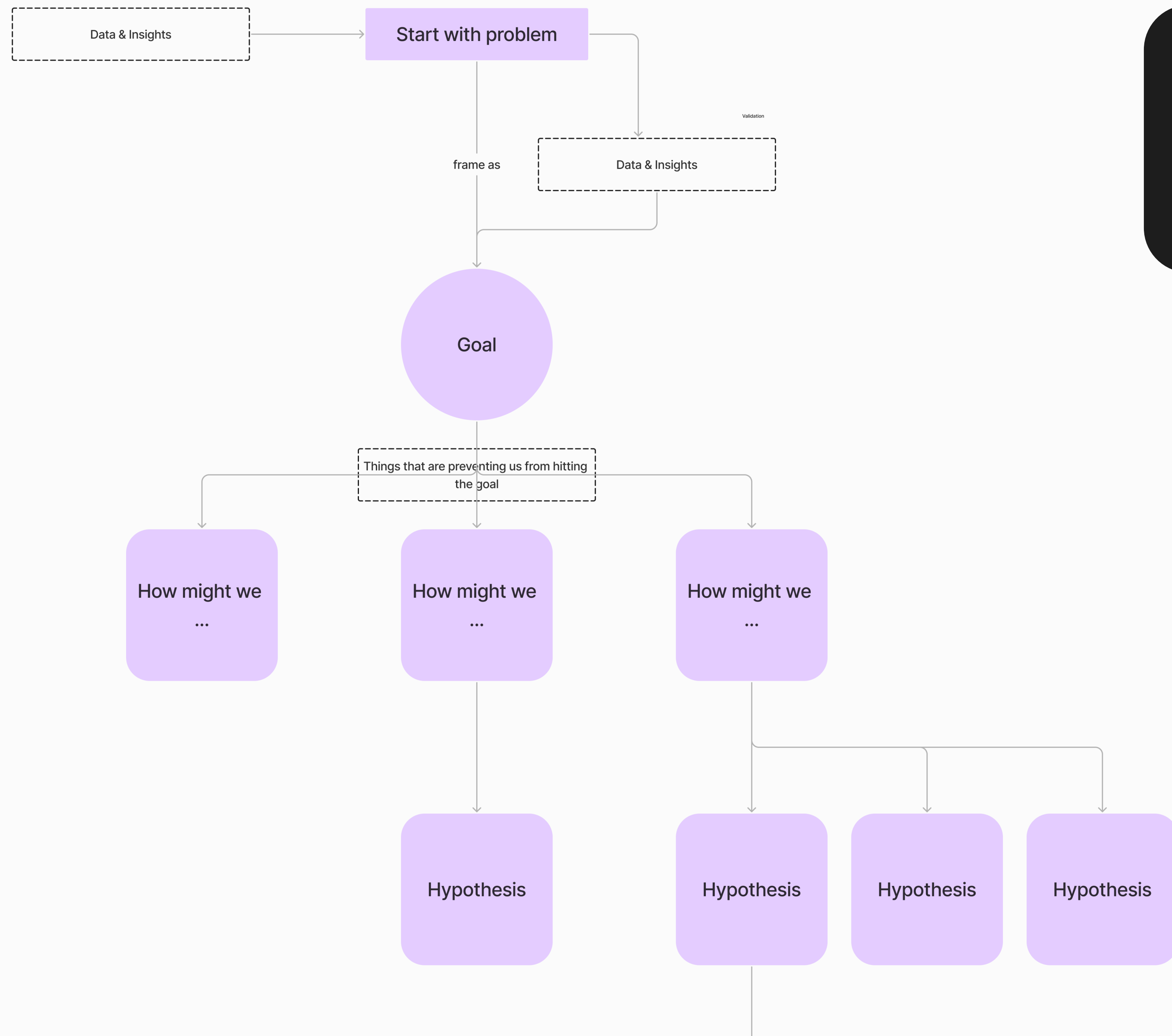
Go beyond  
the official story



Show empathy,  
build trust



Make it interactive  
and fun



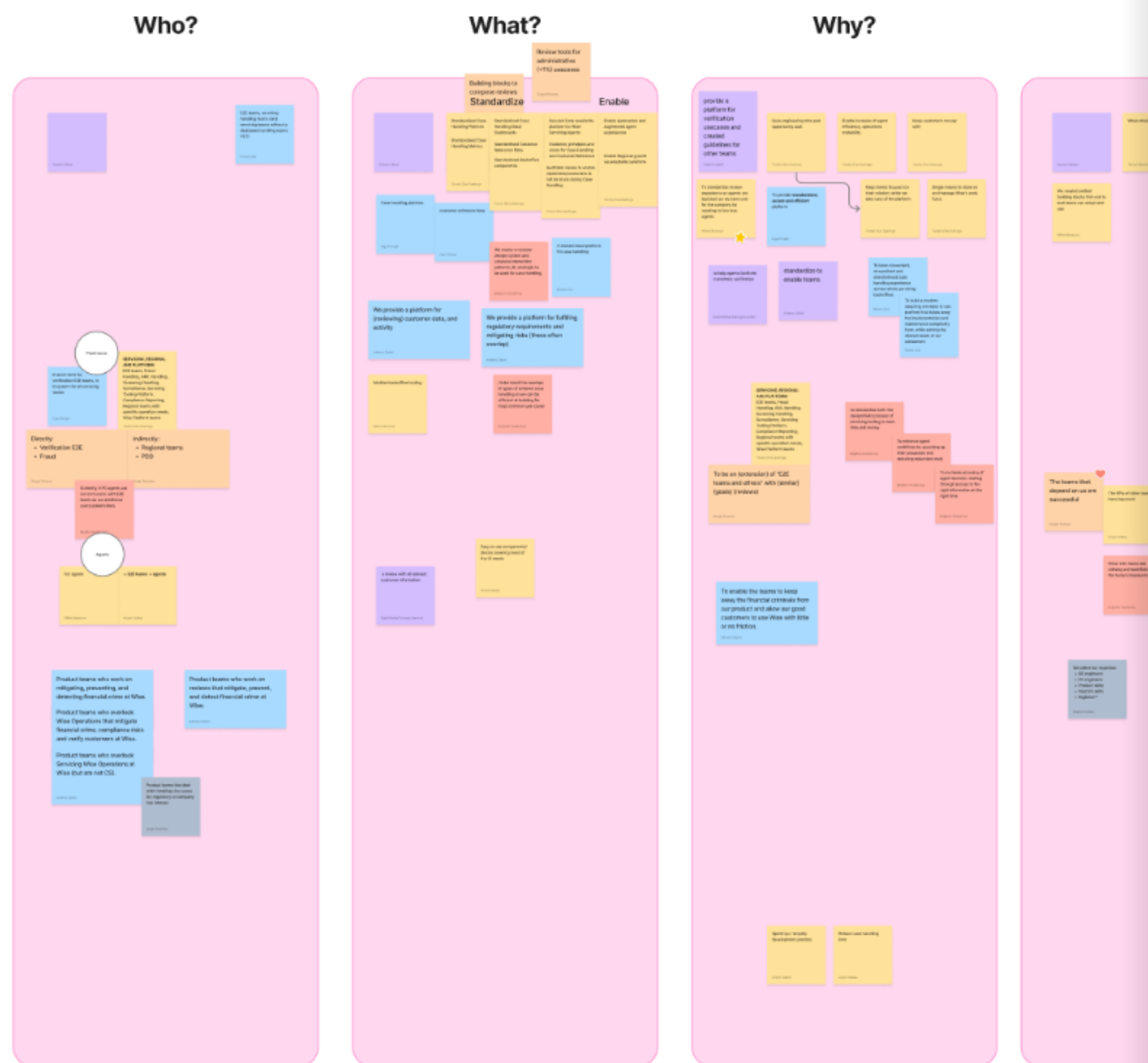
## Mapping the ideation process together



Madalina Nastase  
Senior Product Designer

# OUR PURPOSE 20 MIN

1. Who are we building our platform for?
2. What do we do/build?
3. Why? *What is our goal? What benefit are we bringing to the company and our users?*
4. How? *How do we know when we've done our job?*



# MISSION STATEMENT 30 MIN

"We're doing X(what), for Y(who), because Z(why)" - 1 for each person

Now comes the fun part! The task now is for to work together to combine the individual purpose statements into one agreed statement for the team.

This agreed purpose statement should be no more than 20 words and they have 20 minutes to complete the task.

## DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT

"We enable case handling to be standardised, data driven, secure and scalable for Wise servicing operations to scale and be more efficient. We choose KYC first as they are enablers."

## TEAM'S MISSION STATEMENTS

"We're doing X(what), for Y(who), because Z(why)"



## WORD CLOUD



## ROUND 2 - NO CREDAL



Facilitating workshops to aligning on team purpose

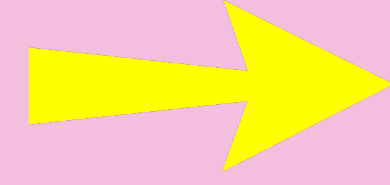


Adrienn Zádori  
Senior Product Designer

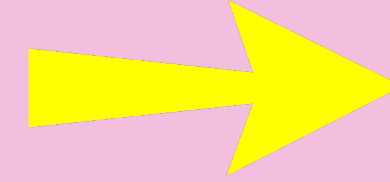
What we're not going to do...

**The best insights come  
from going deeper and  
creating safe spaces for  
honest chats.**

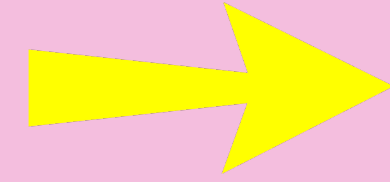
# When we invest in understanding our partners



No surprises.



Anticipate their concerns  
and address them.



Frame your work to align  
what they care about.



# Partner on the problem space

## < Book appointment

Select date & time

### Appointment details



#### Headache or migraine

Throbbing or intense pain around the head, flashing lights with headache.



**Dr. Michael Johnson**  
Specialist

\$120

### 📅 Select date

Mon  
Today

**Tue  
Tomorrow**

Wed  
Wed 28

Thu  
Thu 29

Fri  
Fri 3

### 🕒 Select time

09:00

09:30

10:00

10:30

**11:00**

11:30

14:00

14:30

15:00

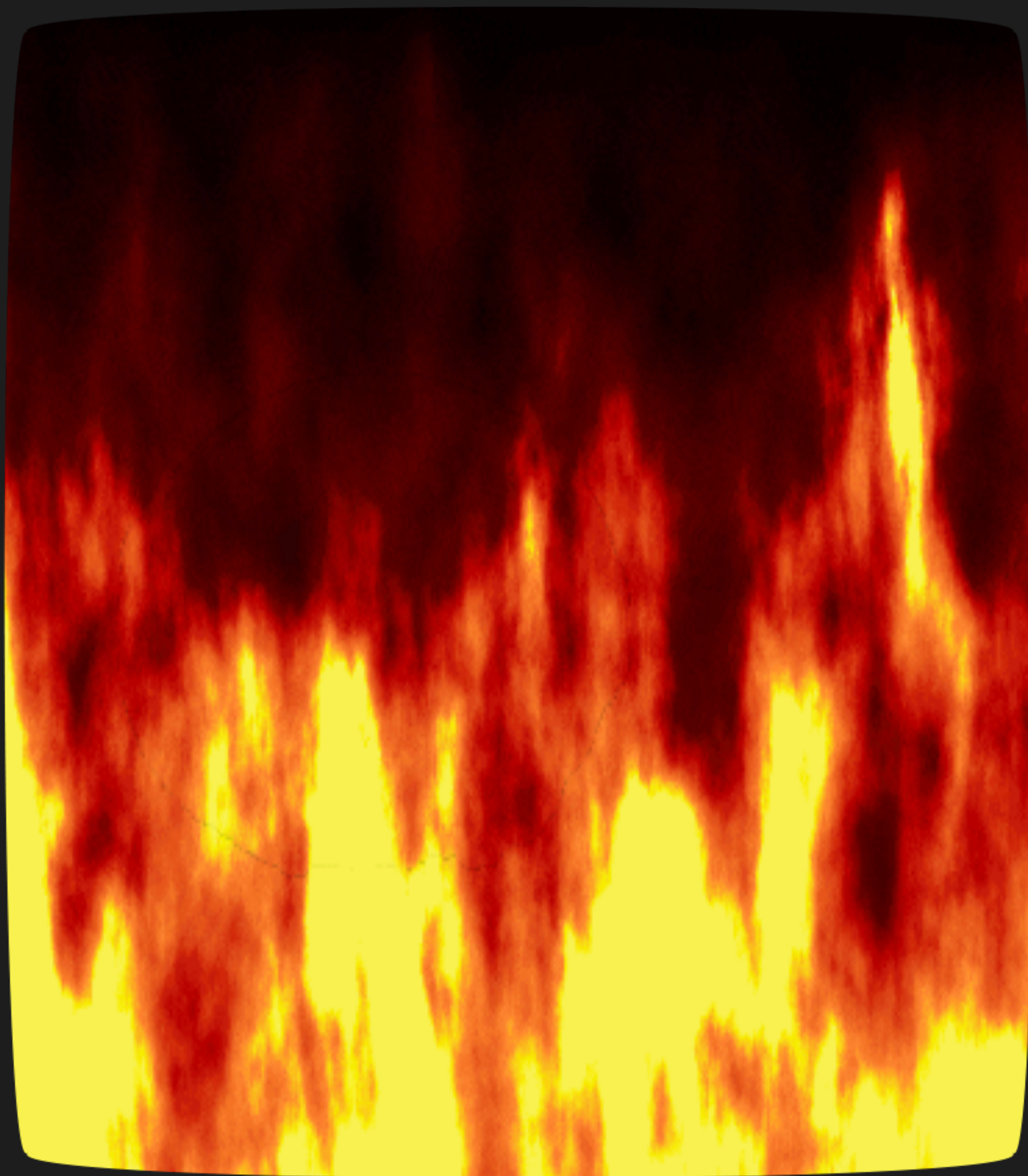
15:30

16:00

16:30

\$ Consultation fee

\$120



**“We don’t have  
time. Amazon’s  
checkout is super  
intuitive.  
Just copy that.”**





**“Our patients  
are not trying to  
buy books,  
they’re trying to  
see a doctor!”**





Be curious

**We are misaligned.  
I want to see what  
you are seeing.**

# We didn't align



Process



# We didn't align



Process



We both  
cared about  
customers



We both  
wanted to be  
efficient

# We aligned



We were  
committed to  
finding the  
right solution



The big question

“How can we align  
on what process to  
follow?”

Go

✓  
We both  
about

✓  
We both  
wanted to be  
efficient


✗  
We didn't

igned

✗  
Proce


we  
mitted to  
inding the  
right solution

UX Collective




We believe designers are thinkers as much as they are makers.  
<https://linktr.ee/uxc>


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Canvs Editorial


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5 min read · Dec 9, 2021


207











Source: [tubik.arts on Dribbble](#)

What is context in design?

Context is a term used in design to refer to the circumstances, background, or environment in which a person, thing, or idea exists or occurs.

Consider this, if you were to write a letter to a friend, you would write in a

7wise

Handling cases and contacts

Current UX Challenges

 Iban Benzal  
Design Lead

1

Log out from NinjasTake a breakEnd shiftOliver Silas Available | 15:13

End

Current caseCustomerPast casesTransactions

98764746Assigned to Me

Customer past cases (4)  
This list only contains new, open and solved cases. See all cases on Zendesk.

Merge

Status	Case ID	Subject	Issue selector	Date
New	987654321	Transfer problem	Status of this transfer	27 Oct 2021
Open	987654333	Where is my money?	Status of this transfer	25 Oct 2021
Open	987655481	Transaction completed	Balances	5 Sept 2021
Solved	987666521	Request for refund...	Verification	1 Sept 2021

2

Simplicity

Consistency

Delight

Content-driven

Personalization

Accessibility

...

3

Sin

Con

D

Conte

Perso


Acco

4

Simplicity is not just about using fewer colours  
or adding a lot of white space.

Simplicity is about understanding our user's needs  
and fulfil them by **reducing complexity with minimal design.**

5





6

IFTTTHomeSearchAccountActivityMy AppsMy ServicesCreateHelpSign OutIFTTHelpingGet more

Your world works better together

Filter services

IFTTTAndroid ServicesApple App Store

UberBeeBeeboxBeebox widgetCamera widget

Date & TimeDribbbleEmailFacebookFacebook PagesFeedly

FitbitGoogle CalendarGoogle ContactsGoogle PhotosGoogle AssistantGoogle MapsIFTTTInstagramInstagram widgetInstagram widget

7

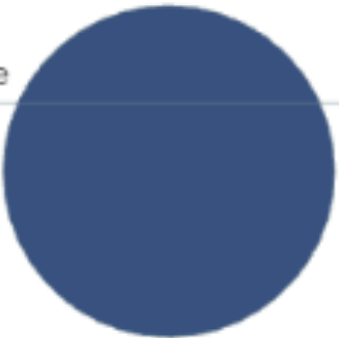


What the user sees


8

How much do CS agents need to see to achieve their goals?

What agents see

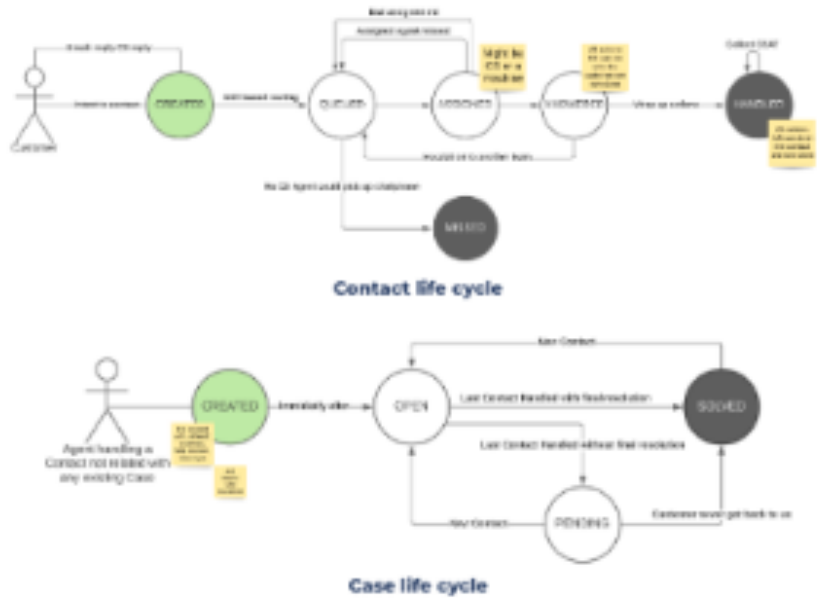


9



Simple can be harder than complex:  
You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple.  
-Steve Jobs

10



Case life cycle

11

How much do agents need to see to achieve their goals?

What agents see

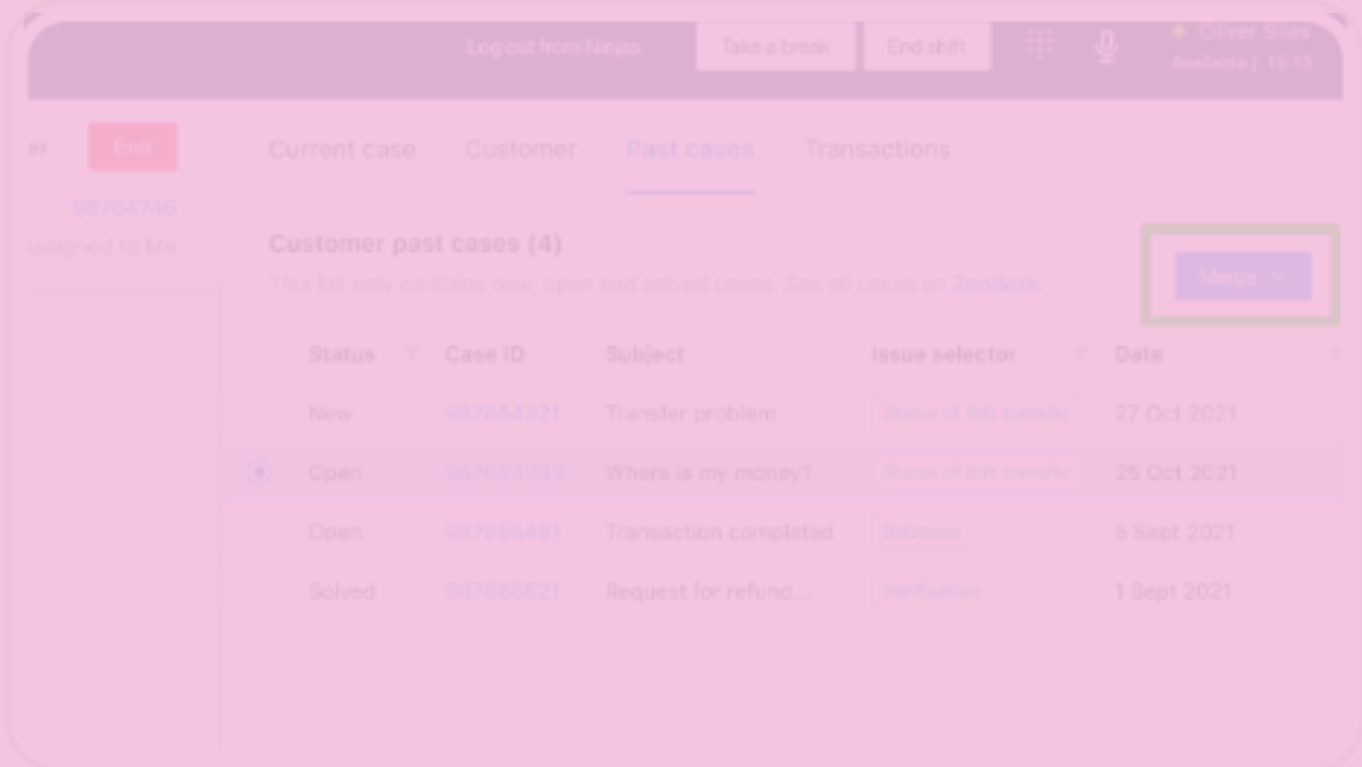


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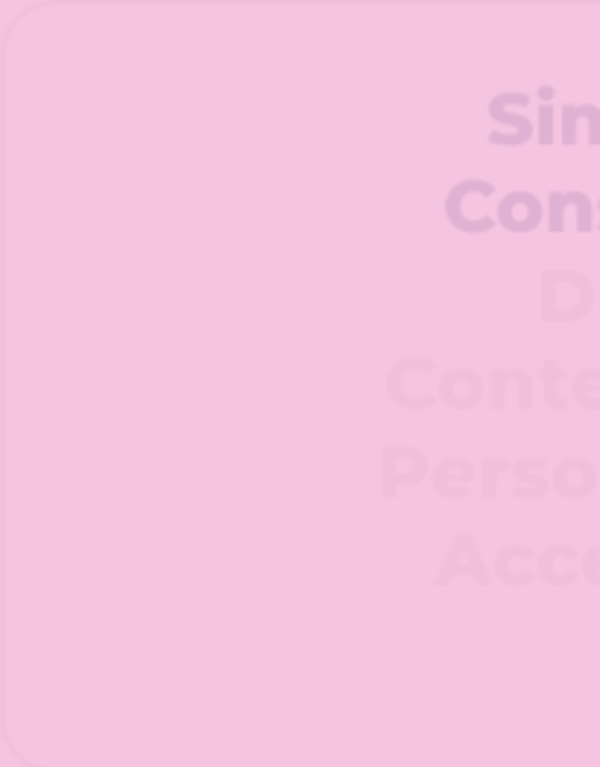
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2



3



4



5



6



7



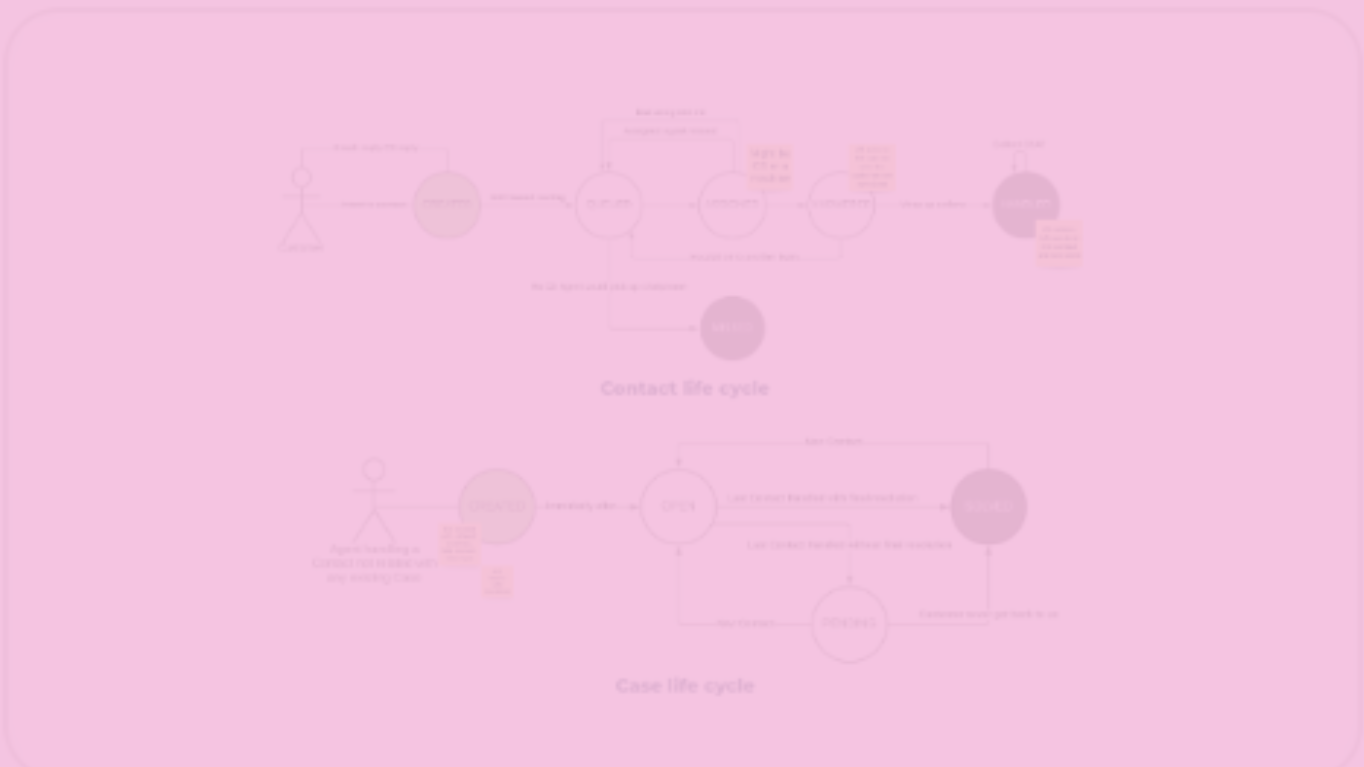
8



9



10



11



12

**How can we partner on  
the problem in a way  
that will shift how they  
see design?**

!

**Tip: The best way to learn is by doing.**

Invite, not present

# Let's work through this together.

## PROBLEM

*Let's dive into the real issue together*

### Data Points:

- 67% drop-off rate at appointment confirmation page
- Average time on page: 4.2 minutes (industry standard: 1.5 min)
- 312 support tickets last month asking "Did my appointment go through?"

### User Research Quotes:

#### Trust & Anxiety:

- "I kept thinking 'What if this isn't the right specialist?' but I couldn't find a way to double-check"
- "The \$25 copay thing confused me. Is that per visit or just to book?"
- "I wish I could see the doctor's photo again before confirming, just to make sure"

#### Process Confusion:

- "After I entered my insurance info, it just said 'processing' for like 30 seconds with no explanation"
- "I thought I had to print something but couldn't find a confirmation page"
- "Does 'earliest available' mean tomorrow or next month? I need to plan time off work"

#### Comparison Expectations:

- "On Amazon I can change my mind until it ships, but here I didn't know if I could cancel"
- "I expected to get an email immediately like when I buy something online, but nothing came"
- "The 'review order' language felt weird - this isn't shopping, it's my health"

### Behavioral Observations:

- Users clicked "confirm" then immediately checked their email
- 43% navigated back to verify doctor details before confirming
- Users hovered over the confirm button for average of 8 seconds (vs 2 seconds on e-commerce)
- Many users refreshed the page after clicking confirm, thinking it didn't work

### Key Questions We Identified:

- Why are users uncertain about what 'confirm' does?
- What information do patients need to feel before booking?
- How does booking a medical appointment emotionally from e-commerce?

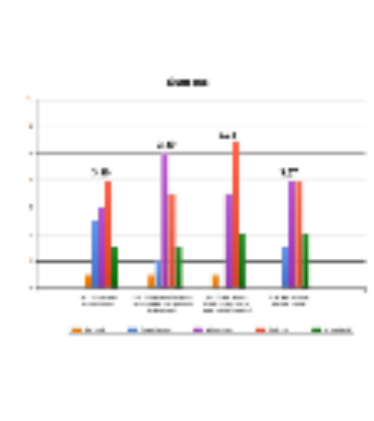
Need to ship by end of Q2 - need presentation

Booking doctor & buying product simultaneously

We're solving for speed, they need confidence

## USER RESEARCH

*What our customers are saying*



### Support Call Transcripts:

- "I clicked the button three times because nothing happened. Did I book three appointments with Dr. Johnson?"
- "The screen just froze after I put in my insurance card. Am I supposed to wait or try again?"
- "I got scared when it asked for my Social Security number. Is this legitimate?"
- "Can I cancel this? I realized I picked the wrong location but I already confirmed."

3 bookings issue = major operational problem

Multiple clicks suggests UI isn't giving feedback

### User Interview Quotes:

- "I kept second-guessing if I selected the right doctor. The name just said 'Dr. M. Rodriguez' but I wanted to make sure it was the cardiologist, not a family doctor."
- "When it said 'processing payment' I panicked because I thought it would charge my card, but I just wanted to book the appointment."
- "I expected to get an email confirmation right away like when I book a flight, but nothing came for 20 minutes."
- "The whole thing felt rushed. I needed a moment to double-check the date because I have to request time off work."

Felt rushed - we're not matching their emotional pace

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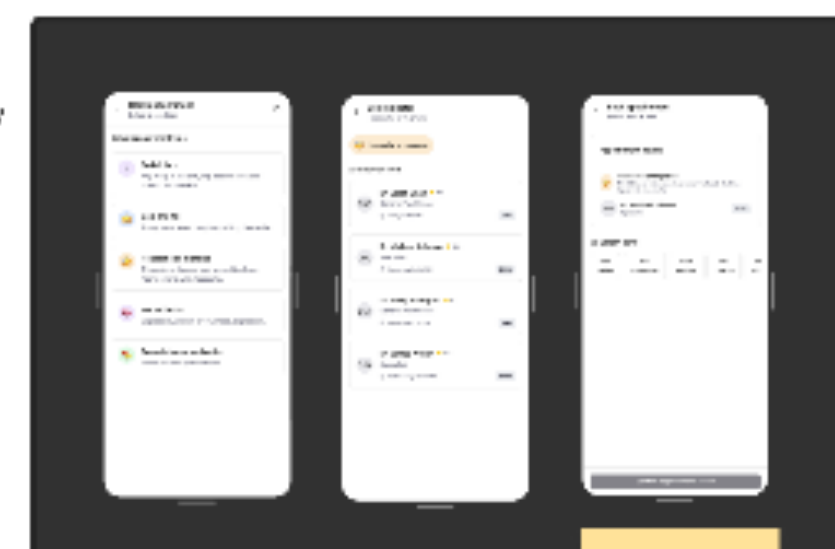
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Need to ship by end of Q2 - sound presentation

Booking doctor & buying product functionally

We're solving for speed, they need confidence

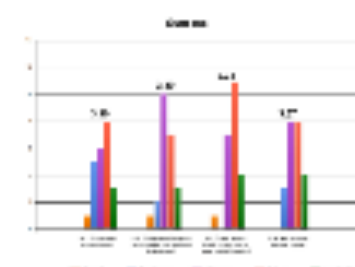
Support team getting flooded with 'did it work?' tickets

Confirmation language sounds too transactional

What if we skip insurance check until after booking?

# USER RESEARCH

What our customers are saying



Multiple clicks = anxiety, not impedance

Different emotional stakes than e-commerce

Healthcare shopping - different mental models

Felt rushed - we're not matching their emotional pace

With Survey Responses: Confusing - wasn't sure if my appointment was actually booked

- "Too much like shopping online, this is my health we're talking about"
- "Needed more reassurance that I picked the right specialist"
- "Wanted to see what happens next before I committed"

These quotes show the emotional complexity and trust issues that distinguish healthcare booking from e-commerce.

## Support Call Transcripts:

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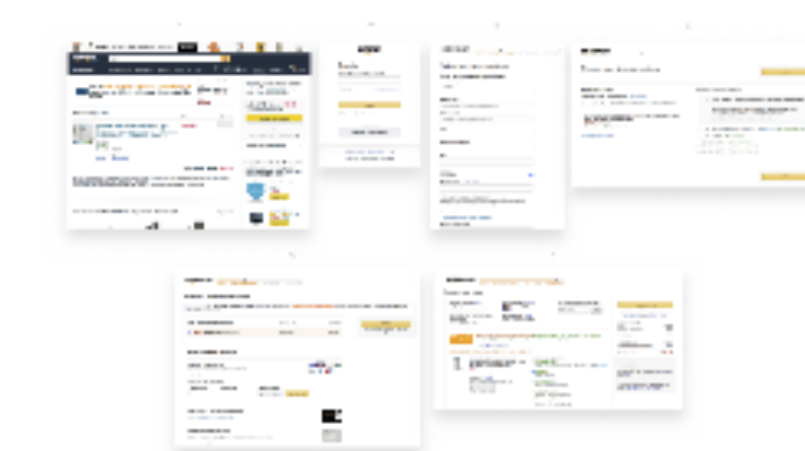
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# OUR OPTIONS

Brainstorming discussing options



## AMAZON

How it works: One-click purchase with saved payment/address. Immediate "Order confirmed" message with tracking number. Focus on speed and frictionless completion.

### Why it works for them:

- Low emotional stakes (return policy reduces risk)
- Familiar products with clear expectations
- Trust built through years of reliable delivery
- Impulse purchases benefit from reduced friction

### Why it doesn't work for us:

- Healthcare appointments aren't returnable
- High emotional stakes require confidence building
- Patients need time to process and verify details
- Speed optimization ignores trust-building needs

Felt rushed - we're not matching their emotional pace

"I felt booking = good reassurance point actually"

Confirmation language sounds too transactional

"They need control = reassurance, not speed"

"Wait - they're not clicking because it's broken..."

## COMPETITORS

How it works: Multi-step calendar selection

### What they do well:

- Doctor photos
- Insurance verification
- Clear next steps
- Email + SMS reminders

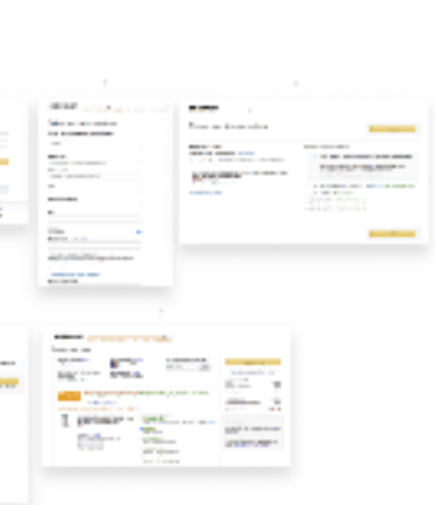
### Where they fall:

- Still feels transactional
- Limited ability to build trust
- Doesn't address emotional complexity
- Confirmation is often missing

"Wait - they're clicking because it's broken..."

# IONS

Brainstorming and discussing options



## COMPETITORS

How it works: Multi-step process with doctor profiles, insurance verification, and calendar selection. Clear progress indicators and confirmation screens.

✔ What they do well:

- Doctor photos and credentials visible throughout
- Insurance verification happens upfront
- Clear next steps after booking
- Email + SMS confirmation immediately

✖ Where they fall short:

- Still feels transactional
- Limited ability to modify after booking
- Doesn't address "did I pick the right doctor?" anxiety
- Confirmation language borrowed from e-commerce

"Ahh - they're not clicking because it's broken..."

Los Angeles

Multiple doctors suggests different giving feedback

Los Angeles

"They need control - insurance, not speed"

Los Angeles

"They need control of reassurance, not speed"

Los Angeles

## PROPOSAL

✦ OUR PROPOSED APPROACH

Core principle: Build confidence before asking for commitment

Key features:

- Doctor verification summary before final step
- Preview of "what happens next" after booking
- Insurance status clearly displayed (not hidden)
- Confirmation language specific to healthcare
- Immediate reassurance with clear next steps

✔ Why this works:

- Matches the emotional complexity of healthcare decisions
- Addresses trust concerns proactively
- Maintains efficiency while building confidence
- Reduces support tickets through better communication

We're asking for speed, they need confidence

Los Angeles

Felt rushed - we're not matching their emotional pace

Los Angeles

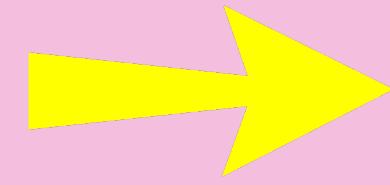
Felt rushed - we're not matching their emotional pace

Los Angeles

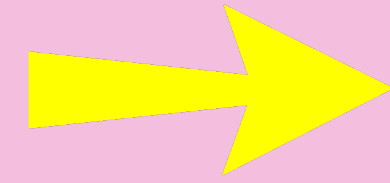
“Aha” moment  
“Oh... I see what you mean.”



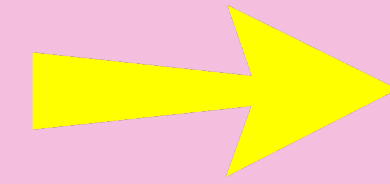
**We  
partnered.  
We learned  
together.**



Curiosity over  
preaching.






Invite, don't present.






Learning by doing.

Create shared  
wins instead of  
design wins




# When we face pushback designers create...

-  Design Goals
-  Design Roadmap
-  Design Vision

# When we face pushback designers create...

-  Design Goals
-  Design Roadmap
-  Design Vision

# Meanwhile...

-  Engineers build their Technical.
-  Product builds the product strategy.
-  Marketing has their acquisition targets.
-  Data Science has their experimentation roadmap.

**Stop thinking about  
design success and  
start thinking about  
team success.**

**Design  
success = Team  
success**



# How to make this shift

01

Frame  
challenges as  
ONE team

# Create team opportunities for everyone to get behind



Engineering says my design is too complex to build.



The PM keeps asking for more features on this screen.



How can we break this down into phases that work for both users and our technical constraints?



What if we map out user priorities together to see what actually needs to be visible?

# Create team opportunities for everyone to get behind



Engineering says my design is too complex to build.



The PM keeps asking for more features on this screen.



Legal is blocking all of our design improvements.



How can we break this down into phases that work for both users and our technical constraints?



What if we map out user priorities together to see what actually needs to be visible?



How can we design compliance in a way that actually helps users understand their choices?

**You're now solving team problems and aligning the whole team behind your work.**

# How to make this shift

01

Frame  
challenges as  
ONE team

02

Write  
documentation  
as ONE team

✕ Product  
“One pager”

✕ User research  
brief

## Design Brief

### Project overview

Example: Redesign the brand identity of FreshBrew Coffee, including logo and packaging. The goal is to attract a younger audience while retaining the existing customer base.

### Objectives

- Primary goals: e.g., modernize the look and feel of the brand
- Secondary goals: e.g., increase brand recognition among 18-34 age group.

### Target audience

Age range	18-34
Location	Urban areas in North America
Interests	Specialty coffee, sustainable living, minimalism
Values	Authenticity, quality, and sustainability

### Deliverables

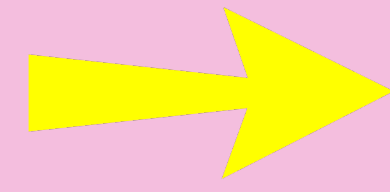
❗ List all required deliverables clearly, specifying file types and formats where relevant.

✕ Creative  
brief

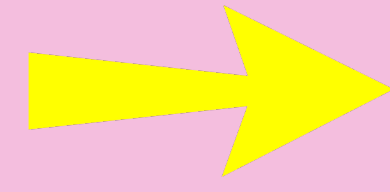
✕ Technical  
requirements



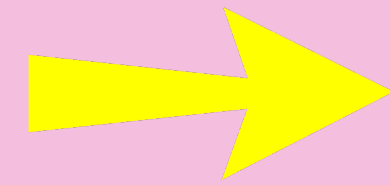
# When disciplines work on one brief together



Create strong alignment from the beginning.



Build shared ownership of both problems and solutions.



Leads to faster execution.

# Building unstoppaable partnerships

01

Understand  
their partners  
perspectives

02

Partner on  
the problem  
space

03

Create shared  
wins instead of  
design wins

# Three challenges

**Next time** you join a new project with new partners...

**Next time** someone pushes back on your design process...



**What if** you interview them as thoroughly as you interview users?



**What if** you get curious and tell them: 'Help me understand what's driving that thinking'

# Three challenges

**Next time** you join a new project with new partners...

**Next time** someone pushes back on your design process...

**Next time** you're fighting for design priorities...



**What if** you interview them as thoroughly as you interview users?



**What if** you get curious and tell them: 'Help me understand what's driving that thinking'?



**What if** you reframe the challenge as a team opportunity?

Your PM brings  
you problems,  
not solutions,  
**because they  
trust you to solve  
them together.**

Your stakeholders  
understand why  
research matters  
**because they  
experienced it  
with you**

Your team builds  
a strategic vision  
together **because  
you're all solving  
for the same  
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~~Not Design Utopia~~ – that's  
just good partnership.



Thank you.