

The logo consists of a black square border. Inside the square, the word "INSIDE" is written in a red, sans-serif font, and the word "PRODUCT" is written in a black, sans-serif font directly below it.

INSIDE
PRODUCT

How discovery helps you build the right product

Kent J. McDonald

<https://insideproduct.co/>

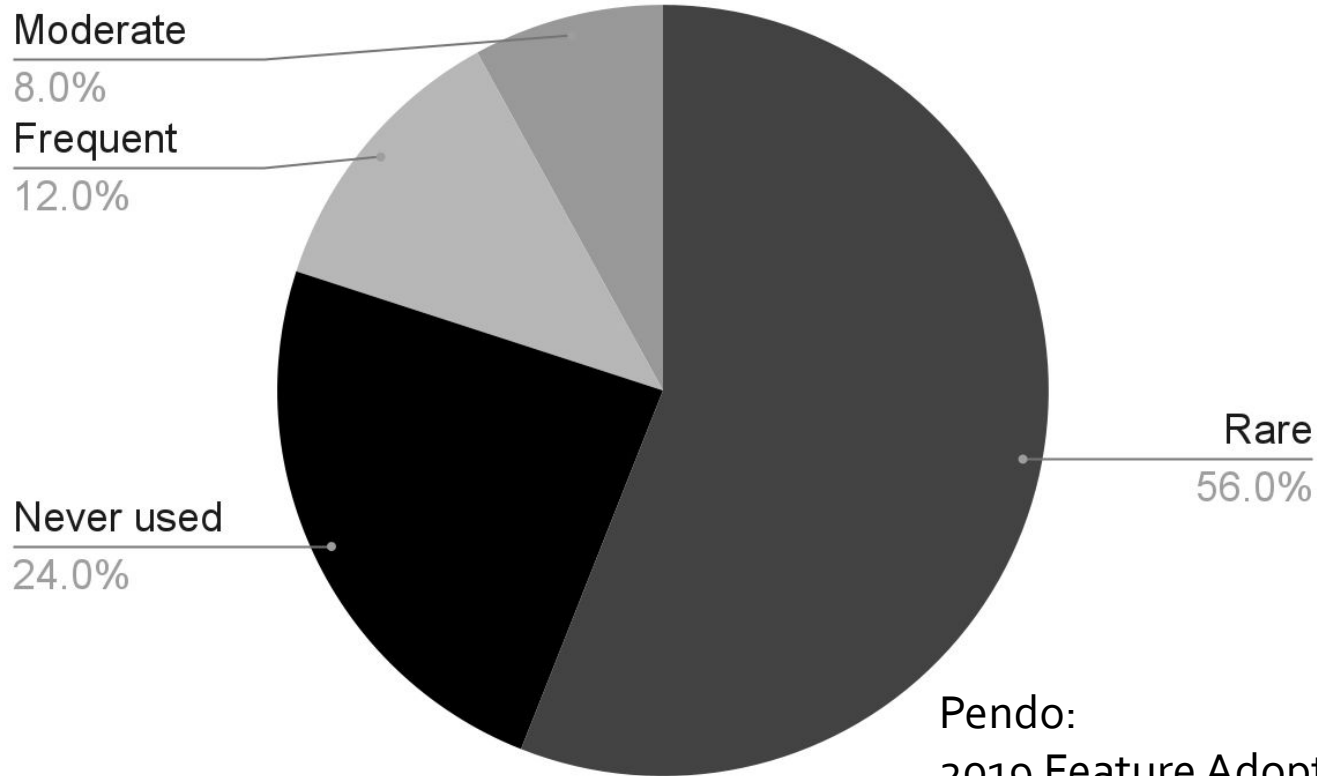
Do any of these
sound familiar?

I need a report

Implement a CRM

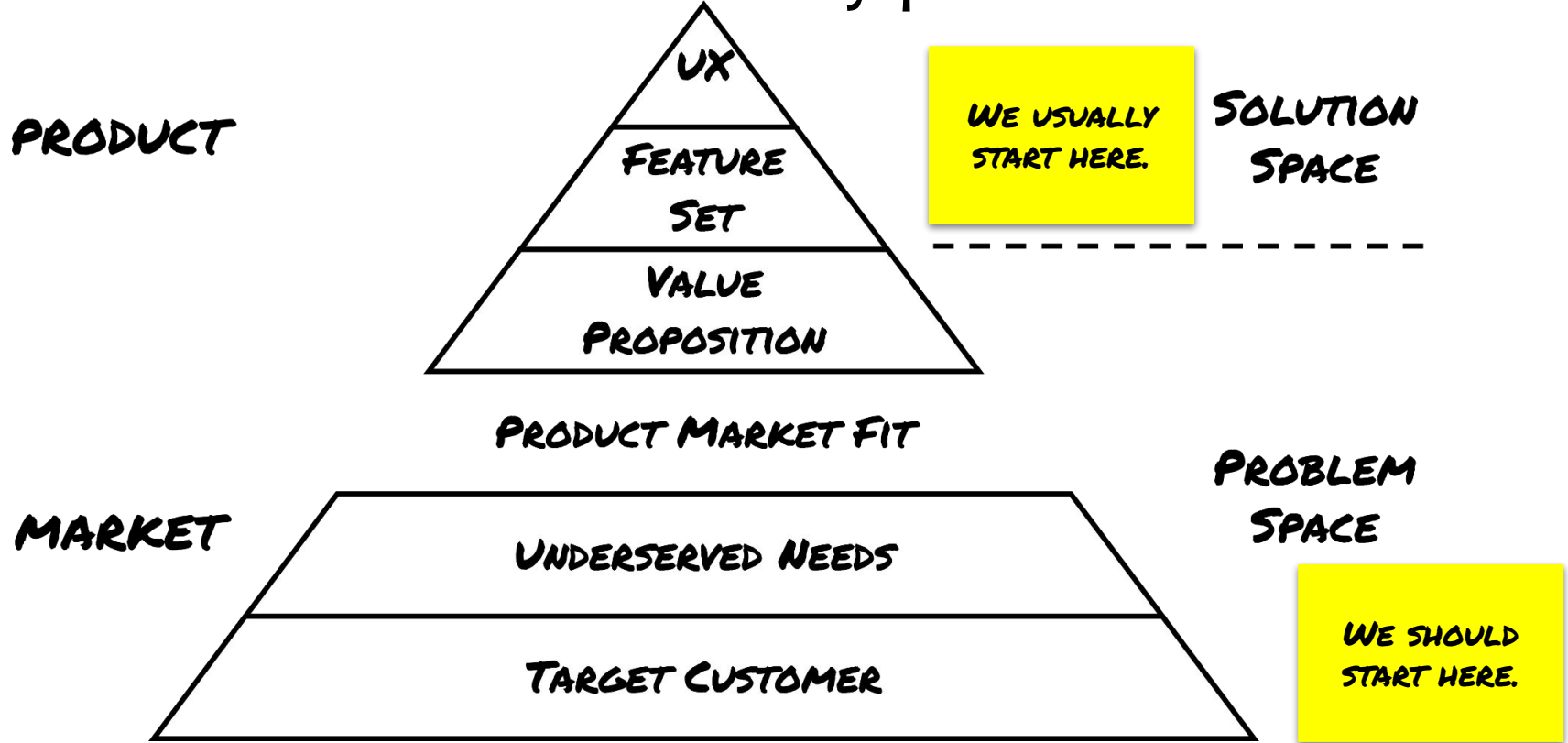
Rebuild this app

80% of Features are rarely or never used



Pendo:
2019 Feature Adoption Report

This is a discovery problem



Think twice about skipping discovery

Reasons teams skip discovery

Measured on output, not outcome

No direct market pressure to validate

“Buyer” is also the sponsor - difficult to push back

Culture of order taking

Why you'll pay for it in the long run

Build features no one uses

Scope creep due to never identifying true problem

Rework when solution misses the mark

Shipping things that don't matter damages team morale

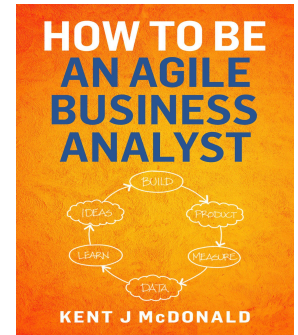
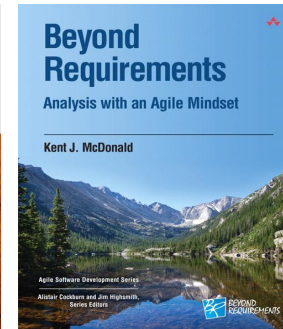
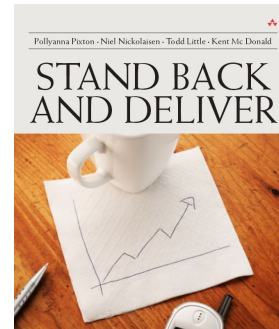
A little bit about me

Director of Delivery



We help 7-figure businesses scale to 8 figures through a proven approach that aligns marketing, sales, and service.

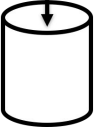
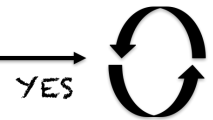
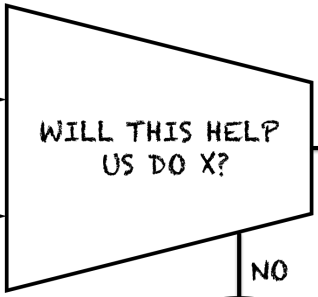
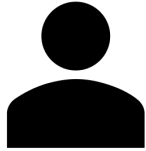
Writer/Advisor



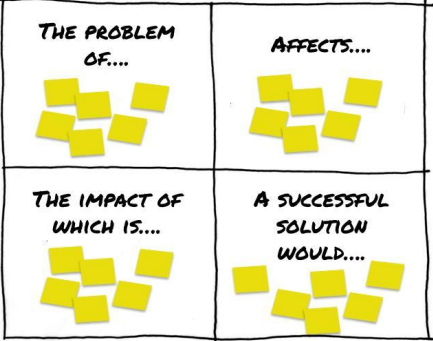
Three discovery techniques



STORY BASED INTERVIEWS



DECISION FILTERS



PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Story-Based Interviews

*ELICIT STORIES
INSTEAD OF REQUIREMENTS*

Don't make your interviewees lie to you

Generally Good Advice:

DECIDE WHAT
YOU'LL ASK
UP FRONT

ASK
OPEN-ENDED
QUESTIONS

DON'T ASK
ABOUT FUTURE
BEHAVIOR

DON'T ASK
LEADING
QUESTIONS

Even Better Advice:

RESEARCH
QUESTIONS
WHAT YOU WANT
TO FIND OUT

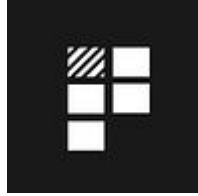
INTERVIEW
QUESTIONS
WHAT YOU ASK TO
FIND THAT OUT

"TELL ME
ABOUT THE
LAST TIME
YOU..."

FOCUS ON
ACTUAL
BEHAVIOR

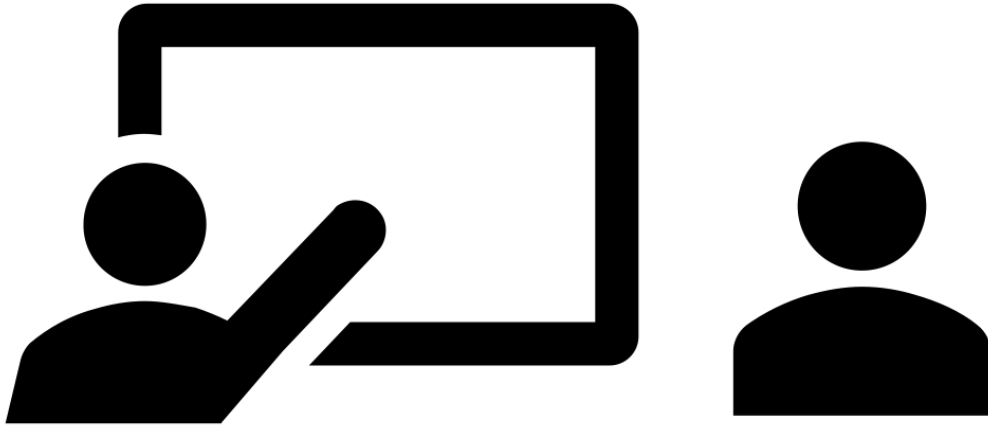
SHUT UP!

Example: Product Newsletters



**RAISE YOUR HAND IF
YOU HAVE READ AN
EMAIL NEWSLETTER
IN THE PAST
COUPLE OF WEEKS**

Your turn: story based interviews



Pair Up

Think of a relevant situation

Round 1: A interview B

Round 2: B interview A

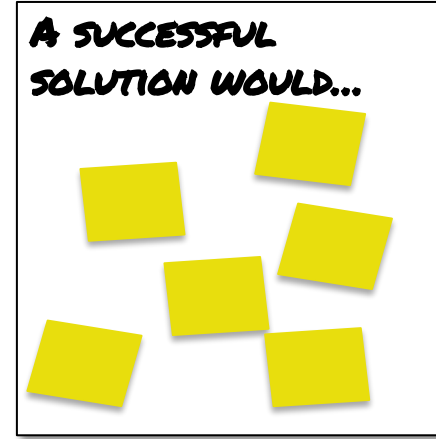
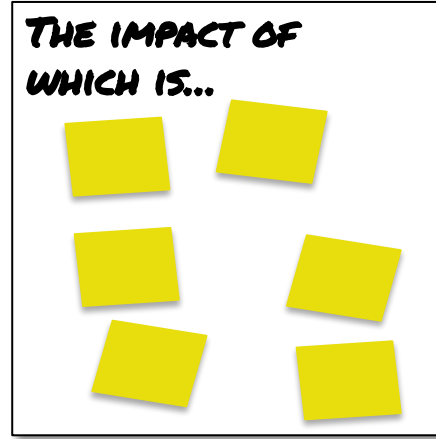
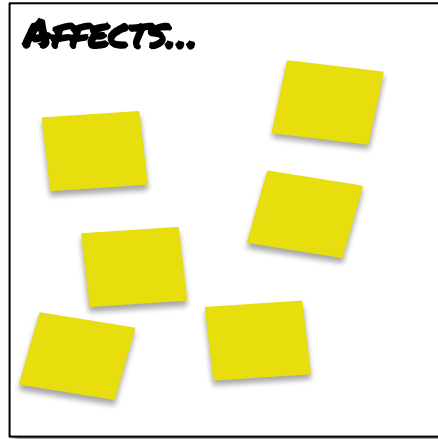
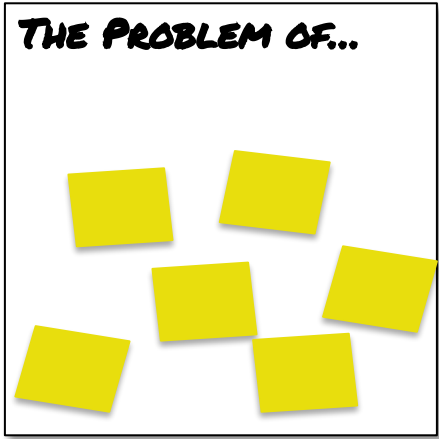
Debrief:

What did you learn that a survey wouldn't reveal?

Problem Statements

THE VALUE IS IN THE CONVERSATION

Problem Statement



Statement	Description
The problem of	Describe the problem.
Affects	Who are the stakeholders affected by the problem?
The impact of which is	What is the impact of the problem?
A successful solution would	What outcomes must any solution achieve?

Your turn: Problem Statement

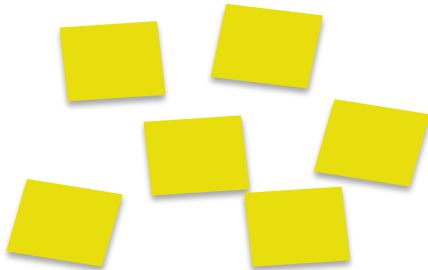
Select a scenario from your table

Everyone write out their individual problem statement on sticky notes

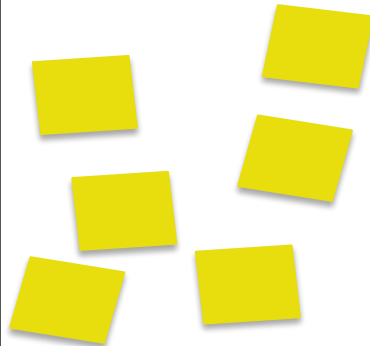
Each person at the table read out your statement

Work to create a single statement

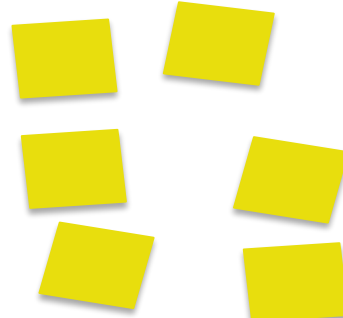
THE PROBLEM OF...



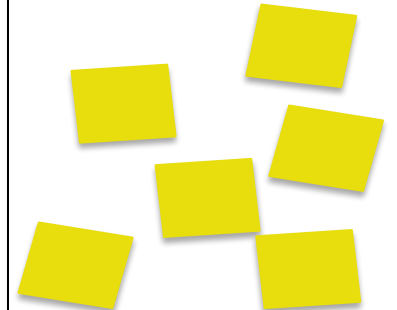
AFFECTS...



THE IMPACT OF WHICH IS...



A SUCCESSFUL SOLUTION WOULD...



From Story to Statement

What you heard

"I WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IF THE WESTERN REGION WAS ON TRACK. I HAD TO ASK THREE DIFFERENT PEOPLE, WAIT TWO DAYS, AND THEN RECONCILE TWO SPREADSHEETS THAT DIDN'T AGREE. I ENDED UP USING MY OWN NUMBERS BECAUSE I DIDN'T TRUST THE OFFICIAL ONES."

Pattern across 6 interviews: same story, same workaround.

What it becomes

The problem of unreliable and fragmented regional performance data

Affects sales managers and regional leads tracking targets

The impact of which is decisions get delayed, shadow spreadsheets proliferate, official data loses credibility

A successful solution would give every manager a single trusted view without needing to ask anyone

Decision Filters

DECISION FILTERS HELP TEAMS
STOP DOING THE STUPID STUFF.

Decision Filters

What

- Simple questions used to guide decision making.
- Quick way to communicate goals to everyone involved

When

- Ensure strategic alignment
- Align key product features
- Align key project objectives
- Align release goals
- Align Iteration goals
- Determine design approach



WILL THIS HELP US
HAVE A COMMUNITY
BASED SUBMISSION
PROCESS?



WILL THIS HELP US
RECEIVE
SUBMISSIONS AND
PROVIDE REVIEWS?

Use decision filters when you're in a situation that is not easily measured.

From Statement to Filter

Your problem statement

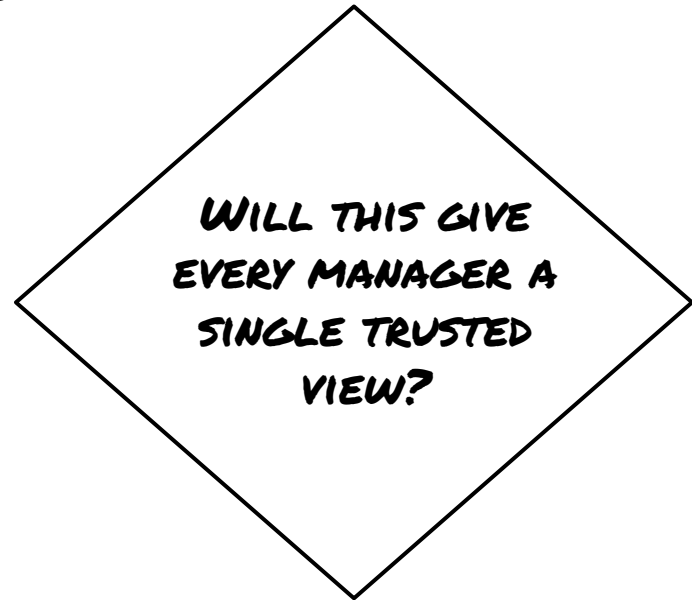
The problem of
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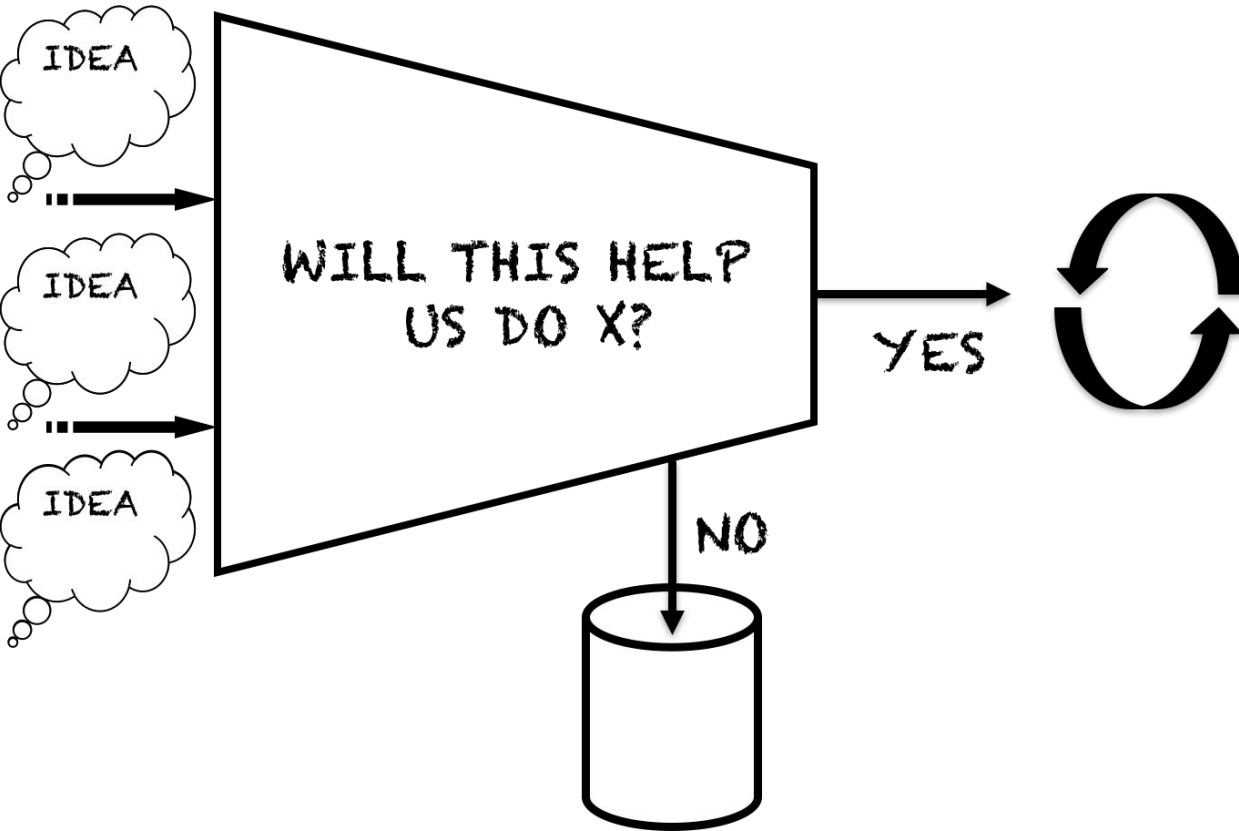
The impact of which is
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give every manager a single trusted view without needing to ask anyone

A good decision filter



Your turn: Decision filters



Refer to your problem statement

Individually identify decision filters

Determine a small number of filters (2 - 3) as a group

Test your filters

Putting it all together

The three techniques are connected

**SOLUTION HANDED
TO YOU**

**STORY BASED
INTERVIEWS**

**PURPOSE
STATEMENT**

**DECISION
FILTERS**

**BUILD THE
RIGHT THING**

**"I NEED A
REPORT"**

**SURFACE REAL
JOBS AND
BEHAVIOR
CHANGES**

**BUILD SHARED
UNDERSTANDING
ABOUT THE
REAL PROBLEM**

**"IMPLEMENT A
CRM"**

**"REBUILD THIS
APP"**

**PROVIDE GUARD
RAILS FOR
DECISIONS

DISTRIBUTE
DECISION
MAKING**

**WITH EVIDENCE,
ALIGNMENT,
AND THE
CONFIDENCE TO
SAY NO**

Overcoming resistance

"WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR DISCOVERY"



DISCOVERY PREVENTS THE GREATER COST OF BUILDING THE WRONG THING.

"THE STAKEHOLDER ALREADY KNOWS WHAT THEY WANT"



A STORY-BASED INTERVIEW GIVES THEM SPACE TO REALIZE WHETHER IT SOLVES THE ACTUAL PROBLEM.

"WE'RE MEASURED ON FEATURES SHIPPED, NOT OUTCOMES"



RUN THE PROBLEM STATEMENT EXERCISE AT THE NEXT KICKOFF.

"WE TRIED INTERVIEWS — PEOPLE JUST DESCRIBE REQUIREMENTS"



STORY-BASED QUESTIONS REDIRECT PEOPLE FROM HYPOTHETICALS TO ACTUAL BEHAVIOR.

If you remember nothing else

ASK PEOPLE
WHAT THEY DID,
NOT WHAT THEY
WOULD DO.

NAME THE
PROBLEM
BEFORE YOU
PROPOSE
A SOLUTION.

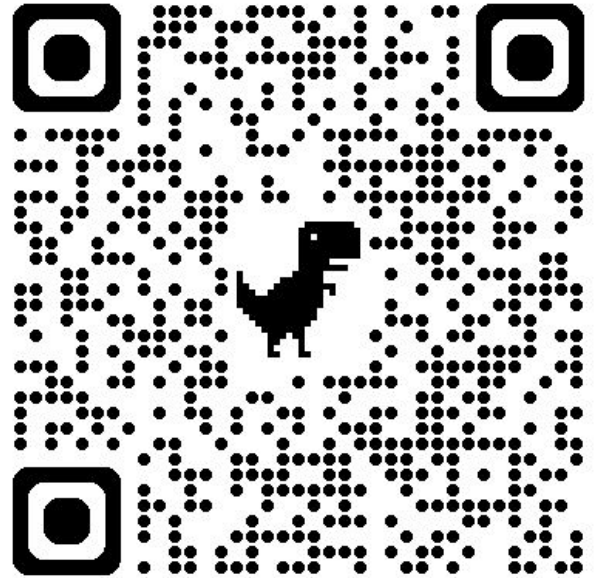
DISTRIBUTE
STRATEGY
AS DECISION
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TEAMS CAN
APPLY



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