autologyx

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
as implemented by Whimsical

THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS USING SHAPE UP - BASECAMP

The product development process should involve a team, which may include a project manager, tech lead, designer and engineers. This team works together to figure out what products to build, using the four questions: *Is it Valuable? Is is Usable? Is it Feasible? Is it Viable?*
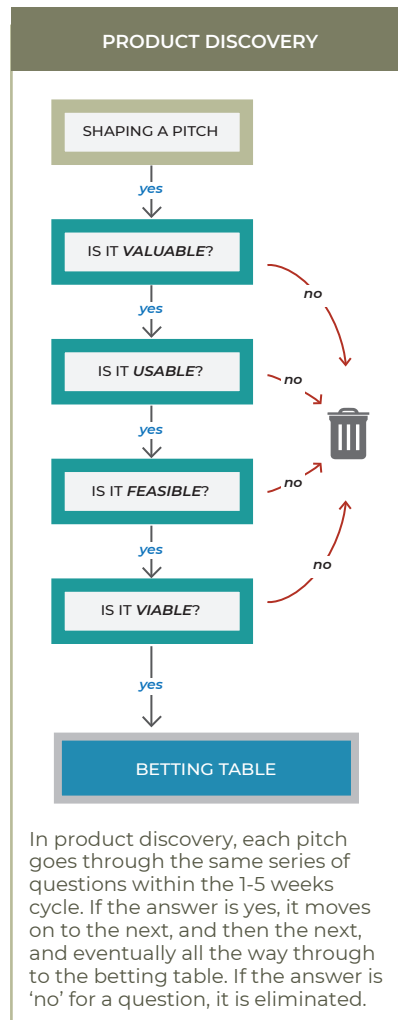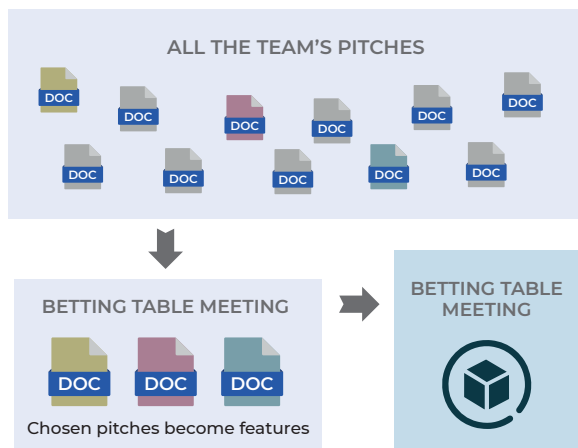
The team working together on product discovery is typically made up of the 'product trio', consisting of a product manager, a group engineer (typically a tech lead), and a designer. In a sprint exercise, the members of the team comes up with as many pitches as possible. The key through the whole process of product discovery is to not gauge how long does something take to build but to see what can you build within a given time constraint.

THE TEAM

DISCOVERING THE PRODUCT TO BUILD:

VALUE: Will customers buy it?
USABILITY: Can users use it?
FEASIBILITY: Can we built it?
VIABILITY: Will our business support it?

When your pitch can produce a 'yes' to all these questions, then you're sitting with a potential pitch that can be turned into a feature. Sometimes to meet the needs of a product you are building, you may have additional questions you want to ask, such as "could sales use it?" or "will the business support this product?".

ALL THE TEAM'S PITCHES

BETTING TABLE MEETING

DOC DOC DOC

Chosen pitches become features

BETTING TABLE MEETING

PRODUCT DISCOVERY

SHAPING A PITCH
yes
IS IT *VALUABLE*? → *no*
yes
IS IT *USABLE*? → *no*
yes
IS IT *FEASIBLE*? → *no*
yes
IS IT *VIABLE*? → *no*
yes
BETTING TABLE

In product discovery, each pitch goes through the same series of questions within the 1-5 weeks cycle. If the answer is yes, it moves on to the next, and then the next, and eventually all the way through to the betting table. If the answer is 'no' for a question, it is eliminated.

LIFETIME OF A PITCH
A Pitch is given a 1-5 weeks lifetime

For each pitch, you want to spend 1 to 5 weeks writing it - no more. In matters of investment, your company's life only has so much time and finite resources. How do you want to use them? If the engineers say your pitch would take many more weeks than 5, then you'd ask if it's possible to make a small proof of concept that works within 5 weeks.

Input for pitches come from different people, sometimes it's from customers and stakeholders, sometimes it's from the product manager.

Occasionally you may have a pitch that runs longer than 5 weeks, due to the feature or product itself. Typically, this is a red flag and you should have a serious conversation and proceed with caution.
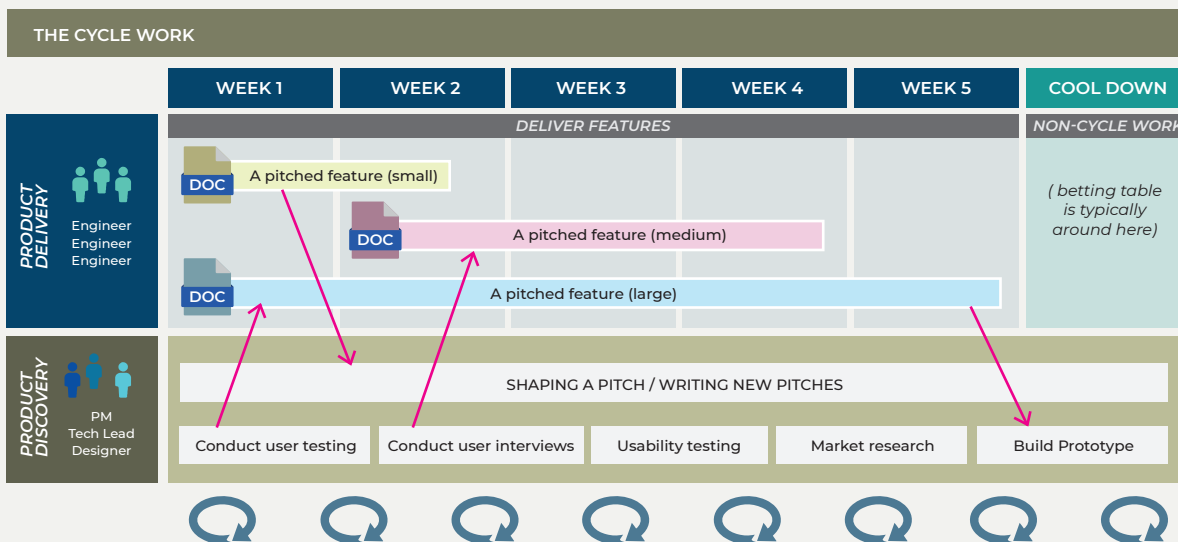
KILL YOUR DARLINGS
Kill your darlings as fast a possible. Shut down the thing you thought was a really good idea, but turned out not to be.

IT'S OKAY TO FAIL
It's okay to fail. We all fail, but do it fast. Hopefully within 1 to 5 weeks, then it's okay.

AT THE BETTING TABLE

The team sits together at the 'betting table' with all the ideas and documentation which all have read. Then you would bet on the pitch you believe in the most, based on value, risks, testimonies, etc. Typically, you bet on a group of pitches, not just one, so you end up with a handful of pitches.

THE CYCLE WORK

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	COOL DOWN
	DELIVER FEATURES					*NON-CYCLE WORK*
PRODUCT DELIVERY — Engineer Engineer Engineer	DOC A pitched feature (small)	DOC A pitched feature (medium)				(betting table is typically around here)
	DOC A pitched feature (large)					
PRODUCT DISCOVERY — PM Tech Lead Designer	SHAPING A PITCH / WRITING NEW PITCHES					
	Conduct user testing	Conduct user interviews	Usability testing	Market research	Build Prototype	

* A number of pitches are created and researched parallel to delivery. It is an ongoing cycle.

THE CYCLE
Product delivery is typically done by engineers and designers. Since there are more engineers on the team to work on the delivery, the rest of the team continues to write new pitches, conducting user tests, interviews, market research and many more. This is a very collaborative process, and everyone in the team is expected to jump in and be a part of it.

THE COOL DOWN
Bidding table for the coming cycle is typically done at the cool down. Where you can get ready for your next set of pitches for the next cycle.

"At the betting table, it should be purely a discussion about value and prioritization. So what do we think based on all of these stories. Which are the ones that are most relevant to the company right now? Solve the biggest problems and maybe solve the biggest problems, but also possible to build with the team that we have right now."