Twitter Thread by John Cutler

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"The engineers on my team just want to code. They don't want to have anything to do with product. They just want specs. What do I do?"

1/n Are you asking them do to X *and* do their "day job" as defined by their managers (and frankly your roadmap) ?

If so, start there...

2/n Do they have a reason to believe that doing X will in any way improve the quality of the product and make their lives easier? Have they ever seen X "work" ?

Show don't tell.

3/n Is there average day/week a quagmire of unnecessary meetings, wading through tech debt, struggling to get *anything* to work ... and jumping through process hoops to prove their worth?

If so...no they will not have bandwidth.

4/n How do incentives work on the engineering team? Maybe they want to help, but their "grade" is determined by something altogether different.

"I'd love to, but I am on the hook to deliver [some project] this quarter to make a good impression..."

Talk to eng management.

5/n Have they had any time to practice?

Or did they get thrown into the deep end the first time they were given a shot ... expected to brainstorm on demand, be as vocal as practiced PdMs and designers, and "participate" !

Make it safe to practice. Reasonable expectations.

6/n In the past, did they experience an executive crapping on everyone's ideas, and treating them badly? You'd be amazed how often this happens. A non-team-member pulls the brakes 20m in and says "ok, so WTF are we doing here?!"

7/n Say they've tried, and quit. "No more discovery meetings! Just tell us what to build!"

This is likely because they attended, but didn't feel like they added value or were able to shape the direction.

8/n They feel overwhelmed.

This is were an experienced lead modeling how to participate can really help (cc @GergelyOrosz). They may have no role models on how this can be healthy or go down well. Just performative kickoffs that are all slides and orders, no conversation.

9/n finally....don't expect and engineer to immediately open up about their hesitations. Like anyone, they probably don't want conflict. This is where building relationships as a co-team member and eliminating the awkward PM/team power dynamic really helps.

Have a conversation.