Twitter Thread by Jon Ng

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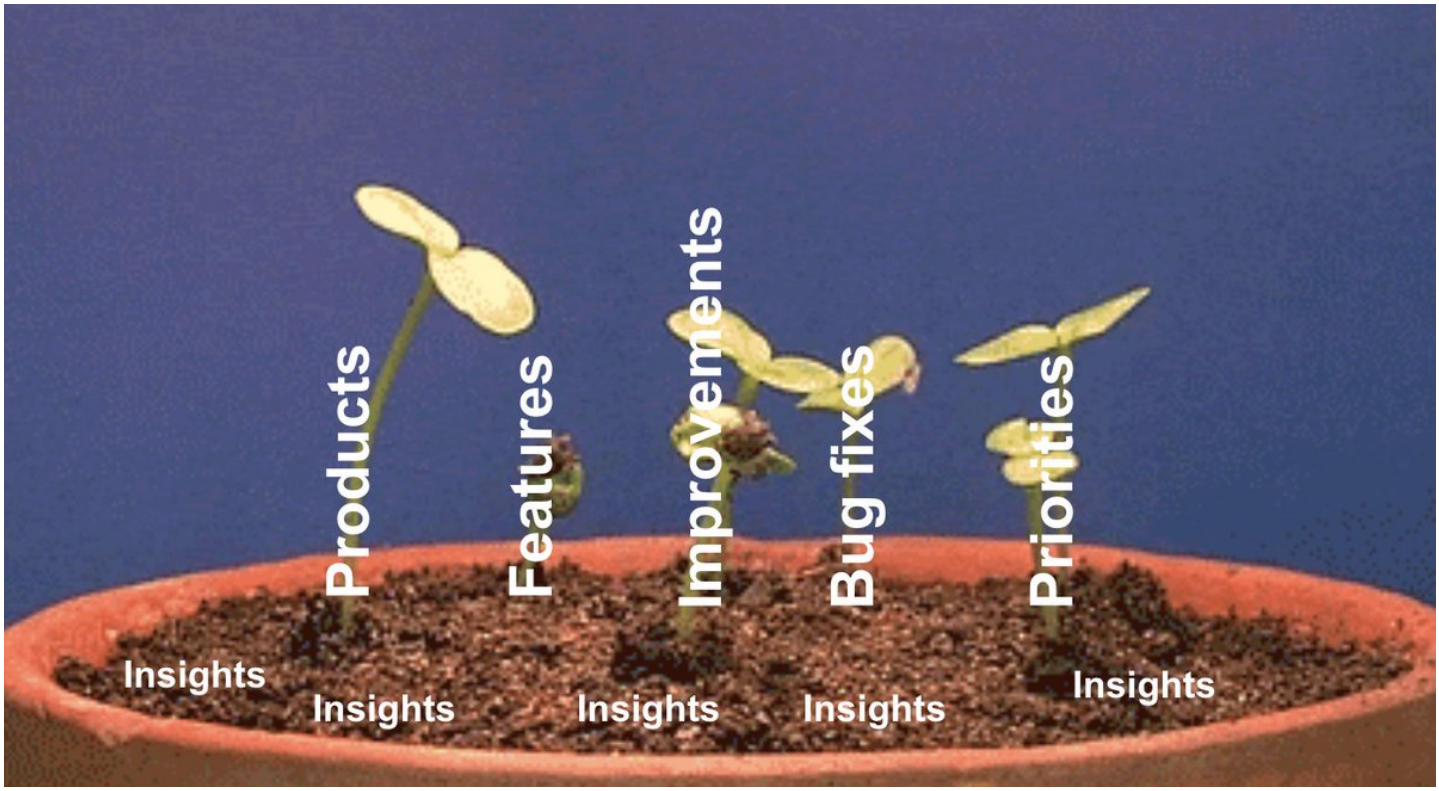
It’s been such a joy and honor being a coach for @lennysan's PM Fundamentals course.

Tonight I’m excited to live-tweet his workshop on customer insights! Buckle up and join us for the ride! ■ ■

■ Extracting customer insights is the skill that most separates new PMs from senior PMs, going beyond “how to build product” and into figuring out “what to build.”



■ Strategy and vision are rooted in insights about your customers. Customer insights are like the seeds of what you're building.



■ You win by reducing your customers' pains. People pay you to solve their pain points-- so you want to focus on gathering insights about their pain points, not just about what your customers want or need.

■ Goal: Identify (accurate and important) customer pain points.

Examples of pain points solved:

1. **Zoom**: Video conferencing is difficult and unreliable
2. **Peloton**: I never make it to the gym but need to exercise
3. **Spotify**: It's so hard and expensive to listen to my favorite music
4. **Shopify**: It's so hard to sell my products online
5. **Dropbox**: It's so complicated to keep my files safe.

■ Easy, right? ■ Coming up: five ways to get accurate and important insights about customers' pain points.

■■ 1. Talk to your customers! It sounds obvious and PMs hear it a lot, but many either don't do this or don't do it frequently enough. Actually do it!

Getting out of your office and talking to customers helps you start to see that many of the assumptions you had about the world, your product, your users, were wrong.

Three tips for getting out of your office:
1■■ Pick a few key customers and build a direct relationship with them.
2■■ Systemize. Schedule a weekly "customer lunch," bring in a rotating customer.
3■■ Participate. Join already-happening conversations (e.g. CX calls, meetups, etc.)

Who to talk to, in priority order:

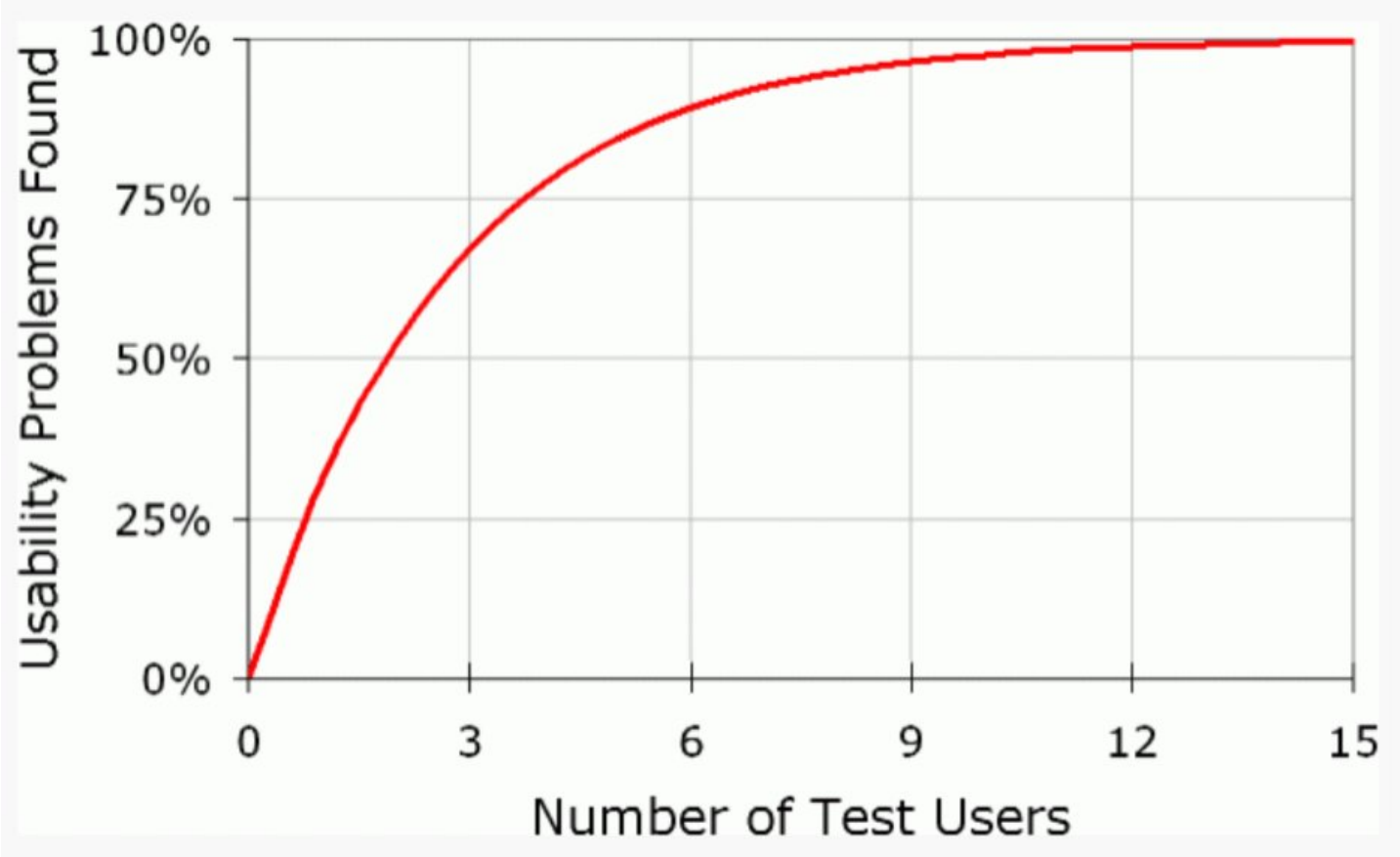
1. Who are your **most passionate users**?
2. Who are your **earliest adopters**?
3. Who would feel the **most pain if your product didn't exist?**
4. Who are people in your **ICP/segments?**
5. Who do you just **trust will give you valuable insights**?

■■ Popular User Research Tools:

1. **Collaboration**: Dovetail, EnjoyHQ, Miro, Reduct
2. **Interviewing**: Lookback, UserTesting
3. **Prototyping**: Figma, Axure, InVision, Maze
4. **Analytics**: Fullstory, Hotjar, Google Analytics
5. **Surveys**: Typeform, Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, UserLeap

■ Don't over think it. Find ways to talk to customers!

You don't need to talk to tons of customers. Talking to 5-8 people will usually get you 80-90% of the insights you're going to get from customers, when you're focused on a specific area.



■2. Don’t trust your customers.

Your customers will deceive you (not on purpose). Customers are deceiving you because they are deceiving themselves.

Why customers lie (not on purpose):

1. We are bad at predicting our future behavior (e.g. gyms, eating healthy)
2. We are bad at knowing the best solution vs. the easy solution (e.g. iPhone)
3. We tend to tell people what they want to hear (e.g. polling)
4. We are easily influenced by others
5. We forget things

Easy rule of thumb:

Past behavior ■
Future behavior ■

Do not ask people what they will do. Ask “how have you used this in the past?” NOT “Will you use this?”

Pay attention to: (1) what they actually do and (2) their pain points.

@robfitz in The Mom Test says it well: “Anything involving the future is an over-optimistic lie.”

Examples of bad questions from The Mom Test ("would you," "do you think," notice they are focused on future behavior):

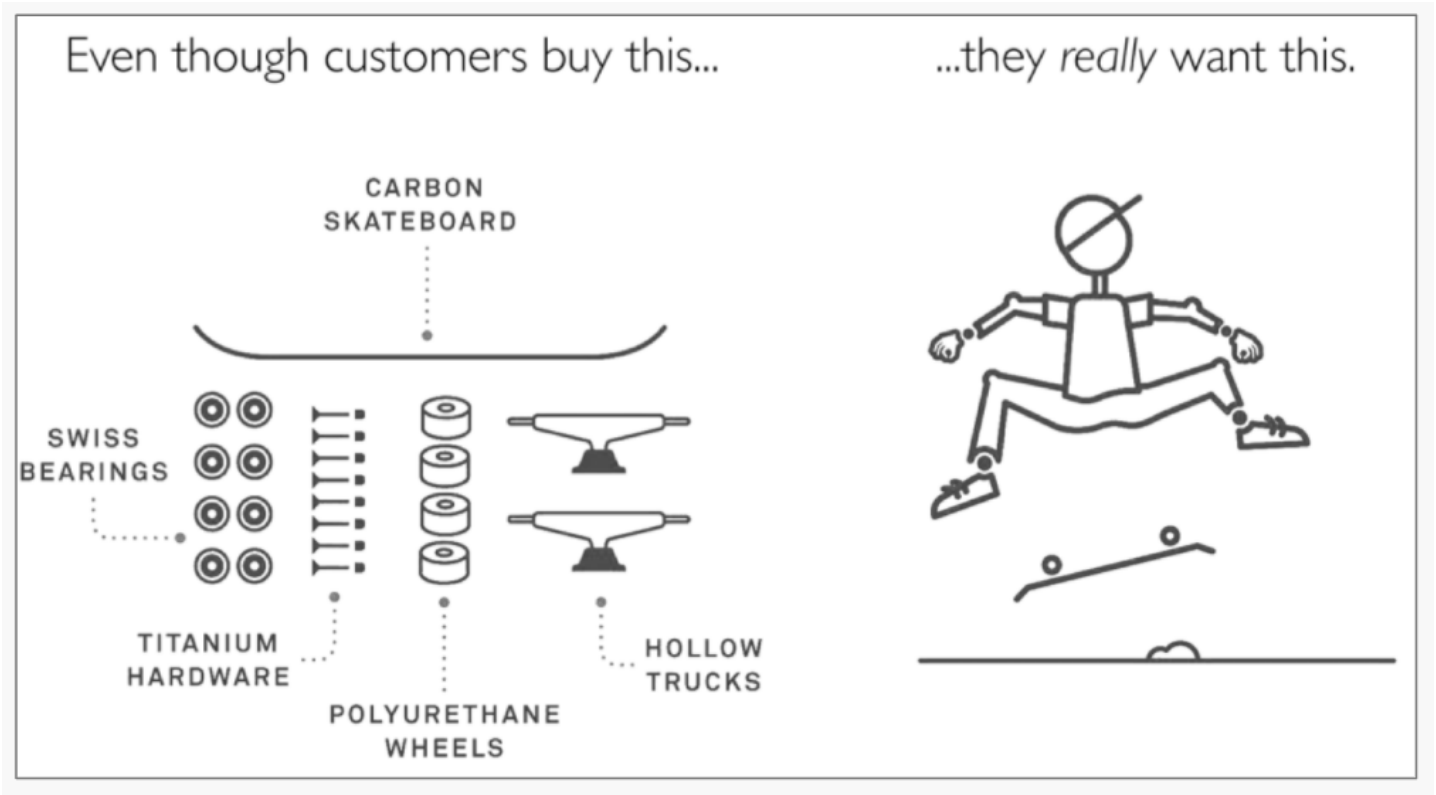
1. “**Would you** ever use this feature?”
2. “**Would you** buy a product which did X?”
3. “**Do you think** it’s a good idea?”
4. “How much **would you** pay for X?”
5. “**Would you** pay X for a product which did Y?”
6. “**Do you think** people would use this?”
7. “If we add this awesome feature, **would you** use it more often?”

Examples of good questions from The Mom Test (focused on pain points, past behavior):

1. “How are you dealing with it now?”
2. “Talk me through the last time that happened.”
3. “Talk me through your workflow.”
4. “What else have you tried?”
5. “Why do you bother doing this?”
6. “Which part of the product frustrates you most?”
7. “Is there anything else I should have asked?”

Remember, your goal is to deeply understand your customers’ pain points. That’s why great PMs are always listening for the underlying why.

■ The Jobs to be Done (JTBD) framework can force you to think about the underlying why. The core idea is to think about what job your customers are hiring your product to do.



The Jobs to be Done Examples:

1. **Clubhouse's job:** Pass the time while learning, network, build status
2. **PayPal's job:** Send money to friends and strangers
3. **DoorDash's job:** Get me food ASAP
4. **Fortnight's job:** Pass the time, connect with friends, relax your brain
5. **This course**: Make me a better, more successful, PM

■ The question you want to have on your mind as you talk to your customers is: "very practically, what job is my product doing for people?"

■ 3. 80/20 Listen vs. Talk

Simple rule of thumb: listen 80% of the time, talk 20%

Start by creating a safe space for listening. Here's a template for beginning the interview and creating that space:

Tell your interviewee:

1. Think out loud, share what's on your mind
2. You can't hurt my feelings – better we know now than later
3. This is not a test of your knowledge
4. There is no correct answer, or a bad question
5. I may not be able to answer your question immediately, in order to better understand your experience

Use the TEDW technique to ask questions:

"Tell me more…"
"Explain…"
"Describe…"
"Walk me through…"

Act like a therapist: keep the interviewee talking.

“What do you think that does?”
“What’s confusing about it?”
“Why are you trying to do that?”
“How would you do that?”
“What do you want to do next?”

Do not: Tell people the answer, explain your rationale

■ Focus on the motivation, the pain points, and the goals your user has. Not the solution they have in mind.

Let them struggle, because that will lead you to (accurate and important) insights.

■ 4. Synthesizing.

This is how you turn all of the raw data into actual insights you can act on.

■ Look for 2 things when you're talking to customers:

Patterns and Passion



When you're having customer conversations, write out each of the interesting insights or observations you hear during the conversation. Get them onto post-its and lay them all out.



Cluster the notes into themes.

This surfaces patterns-- common pain points and opportunities for you to explore and solve. You can tell which issues are most consistently raised by the number of post-its in a cluster.

Second, you want to look for things that get people excited-- Passion.

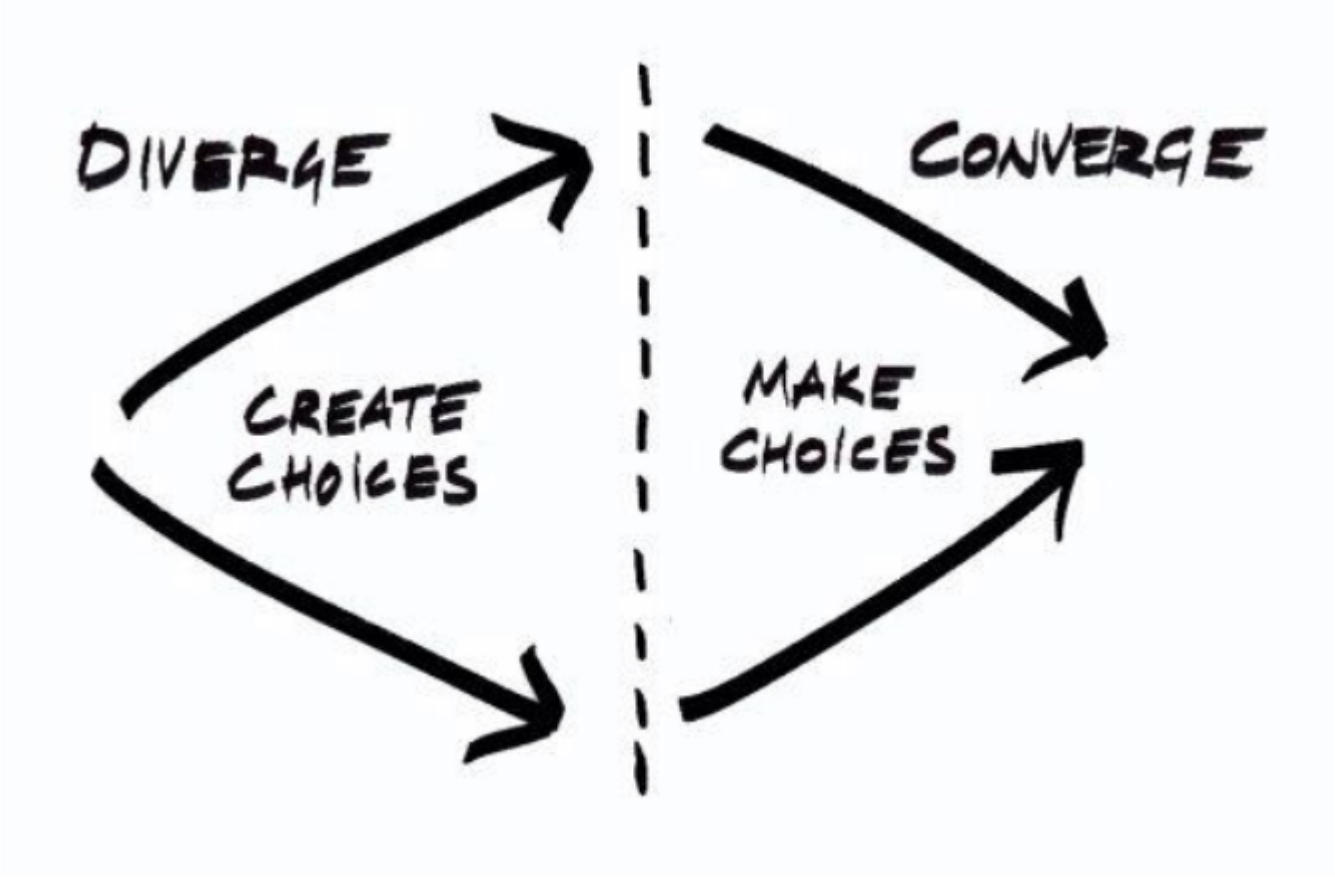
To identify Passion, look for:

1. Sudden excitedness
2. Sudden energy
3. Body language, leaning in, eyes opening
4. Pleading for the feature to exist
5. Returning to the idea/issue/product over and over

Next, ideate on solutions. Use the "How might we..." format. This format turns challenges into opportunities to solve.

Examples:
“How might we...better set guest expectations”
“How might we...improve co-hosting communication”
“How might we...sync with existing calendars”

After ideating, prioritize based on impact vs. effort, align the team around a problem statement, and kick off designing and building.



In prioritizing, make sure to think about what will help your business. Zero in on opportunities that will help both your customers *and* your business.



Quick step-by-step summary on synthesizing and prioritizing:

1. **Capture insights**: Talk to customers
2. **Cluster opportunities**: Identify patterns and passions
3. **Ideate on solutions**: Brainstorm using “How might we…” prompts
4. **Prioritize**: Prioritize the based on impact vs. effort
5. **Align**: Align the team around a problem statement
6. **Kick-off**: Get started designing and building

■ 5. Have a clear goal

It's important that you have a goal with your research

Create a research plan. Here's a template:

Background: What are you researching and why

Goals: What specifically do you want to learn

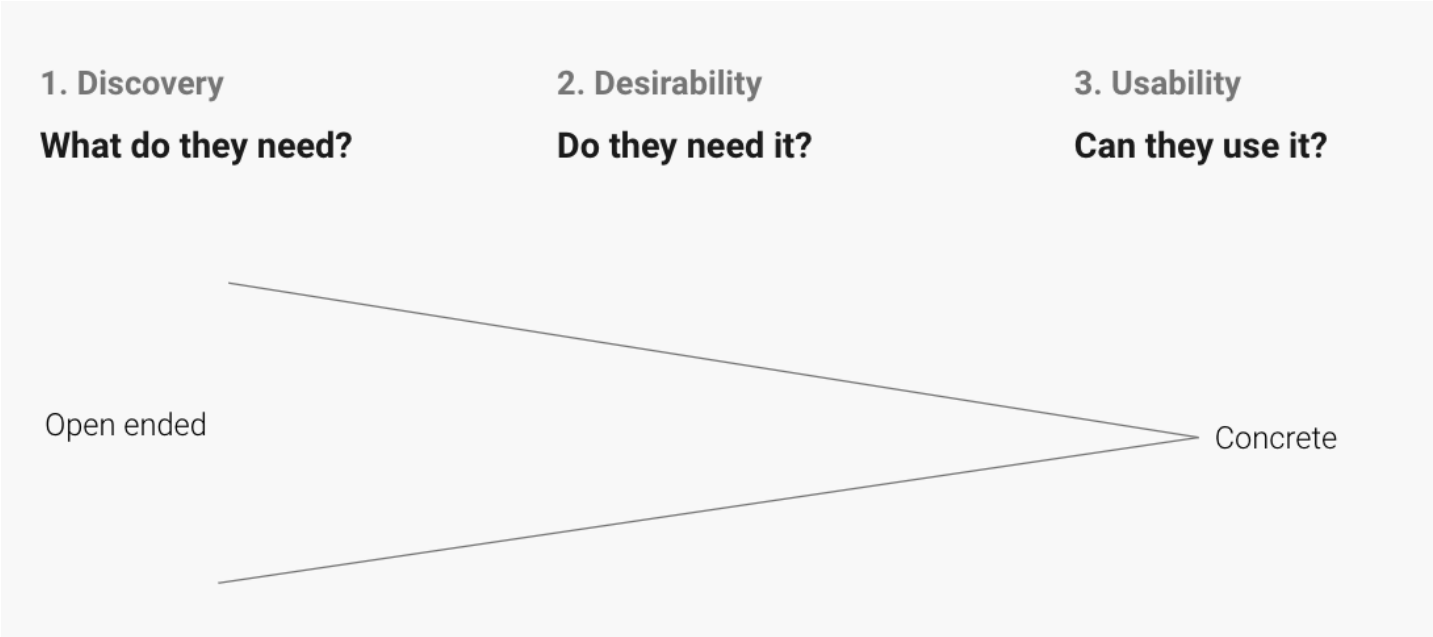
Audience: The group of people we want to target

Method: 1:1 interviews, focus group, survey, etc.

Conversation guide: What questions will you ask during the interview

Timeline: When research will start, end, and be synthesized

What type of user research are you doing? Discovery, Desirability, or Usability?



■ When doing research, always ask yourself – what will we concretely do with this information? Have a concrete plan.

■ Bonus: Involve your team in your research!

Seeing is believing. Help your team see for themselves (rather than having to convince them of what you saw).

Ways to involve your team:

1. Let them give feedback on the research brief
2. Invite them to sessions (not too many)
3. Record the sessions and share the recordings
4. Watch recordings together
5. Have them do the interviews

Recap

People pay you to solve their pain points.
Goal is to identify accurate and important customer pain points.

To do this:
■■ 1. Talk to your customers!
■ 2. Don’t trust your customers
■ 3. 80/20 Listen vs. Talk
■ 4. Synthesize
■ 5. Have a clear goal
■ Involve the team

In conclusion, let’s add to our running list of “Great PM Traits”:

Great PMs are:
■■ Frequently talking to their customers and are always
■ Listening for the underlying “why.”

Thanks for coming along-- that’s all, folx!

/end