



The 5 Biggest Mistakes Your Team is Making in Requirements Definition





About this session



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#5mistakes #productdesign

Mistake #1: Thinking too small





One important thing

“In SAAS, if you are 10x better at One Important Thing that customers value and will pay for, that’s enough. Many founders build a key feature that is indeed 10x better — but not one important enough to pick a new vendor to get.”

Jason Lemkin, Silicon Valley VC, Founder SaaStr



Questions to generate ideas

- What trends are impacting the way my clients do business?
- What growth segments do I not currently serve that I could?
- What technology trends might they benefit from?
- What could I do to significantly impact their business results?



Mistake #2: Being stuck in the past



Explore new tech in parallel





Mistake #3: Assuming too much





Ask. Listen.

“Go to your users. Get to know them. Get your customers one by one.”

— Paul Graham, of Y Combinator, to Brian Chesky on how to build Airbnb
(Masters of Scale podcast with Reid Hoffman)

HELLO, I'M KEVIN

 COFFEE!!
(MY TREAT!)

The catch?

20 minutes of your time
&
YOUR OPINIONS ON
USING PANDORA





Fast, affordable user insights

- Tech support/customer service reviews
- Conferences
- Site visits
- Unmoderated testing (e.g. [UserTesting.com](https://www.usertesting.com))
- Conference room “lab”
- Other ideas?



Mistake #4: Rarely saying no





COSTS

BENEFITS



Use themes to focus roadmaps

“A theme is a group of features tied together by a simple, clear benefit, usually to the user.”

Focus on a small number (1 – 3) of overarching themes oriented around solving customer problems. Exclude distracting features that don't relate to the problem at hand.

— See articles by Bruce McCarthy & Jared Spool



Ways to say no

- Use themes to enforce focus.
- Let your users deliver the bad news, so you don't have to.
- Measure perceived complexity.
- Measure & report on features that are rarely or never used.
- Do a “prescribed burn” regularly to remove features that aren't being used.

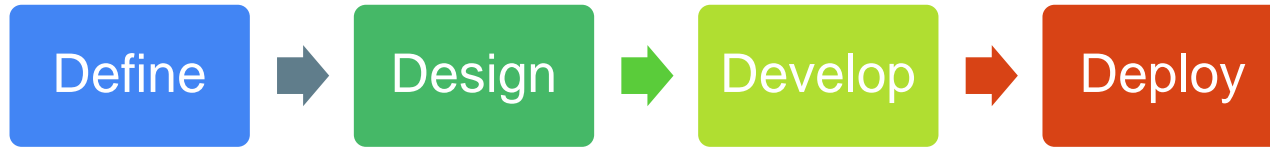


Mistake #5: Jumping to the answer





Define before you design



Define = WHAT capability is needed.
Design & Development = HOW to do it.



Sample feature matrix

Feature Matrix >>> Weighting >>> >>> Column Heading >>>		Value (0-10)				Value Total	Effort			Grand Total	Phase Notes	
		8 Jose	6 Sara	3 Meghan	8 Business		5 Build	5 Maintain	5 Effort Total			
Self service	Allow user to reset password	6	7	5	10	185	2	2	20	1380	1	
Change transparency	Notify user when comments are resolved	8	5	6	5	152	2	2	20	1116	1	
Change transparency	User can view an older version of their note	10	7	8	7	202	6	6	60	1316	1	
Collaboration	User may share a note with other authenticated users	8	10	4	9	208	9	9	90	1214	2	
						0			0	0		
						0			0	0		



Build the right it

“Most prototypes are built to answer questions such as, ‘Can we build it?’ or ‘Will it work as expected?’ instead of focusing on questions such as ‘Should we build it at all?’ or ‘If we build it, will people buy it and use it?’

Make sure you are building The Right It before you build It right.”

— Alberto Savoia, Google’s Innovation Agitator, Author



Be a change agent

- Always ask for user validation.
- Expose the entire product team to user input whenever possible.
- Build allies for cultural change.
- Learn to speak the language of business!



Thank you!