



# Jobs-to-be-done

A framework for product discovery  
influenced by behavioural design

**Sabrina Duda**

BAD Conference, 13 November 2023

# User Researcher & Psychologist



**Sabrina Duda**

Principal UX Researcher  
The Stepstone Group



**Munich  
Bavaria**



**Leigh-on-Sea  
Essex**



**Past**

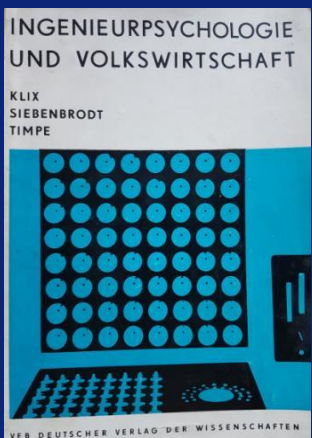


**Present**



# MSc Psychology

Engineering Psychology/  
Cognitive Ergonomics &  
Computer Science



HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT  
ZU BERLIN



# Founder of eye square

1999

Founded one of the first  
usability agencies in  
Germany

From 2 founders to over  
50 employees



Founders of eye square & investors



# Timeline of my career

MSc Psychology  
Humboldt University

Founder of eye square:  
UX agency start-up growing  
to 50 people

Move to the UK

Various UX roles:

Principal UX Researcher, Head of Insight,  
Head of UX, Senior Manager Research &  
Insights, Senior UX Researcher...

1998

1999

2015

2023



eye square



experienceLab



+ZAVA

/thoughtworks



LSEG

NHS  
Business Services Authority



THE  
VERY  
GROUP

Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

valtech\_

Ministry of  
JUSTICE

experian.







**The Stepstone Group is one of the world's leading job platforms.**

**We have over 20 brands across more than 30 countries around the globe.**

**We create opportunities for job seekers and companies by leveraging data and technology.**

**The right job for everyone**



# Product discovery



# Solutions need to solve a problem for the user

That's why we need discovery!

To find out about users' problems we need to solve.



**“My team has created a very innovative solution, but we’re still looking for a problem to go with it.”**

# Product discovery



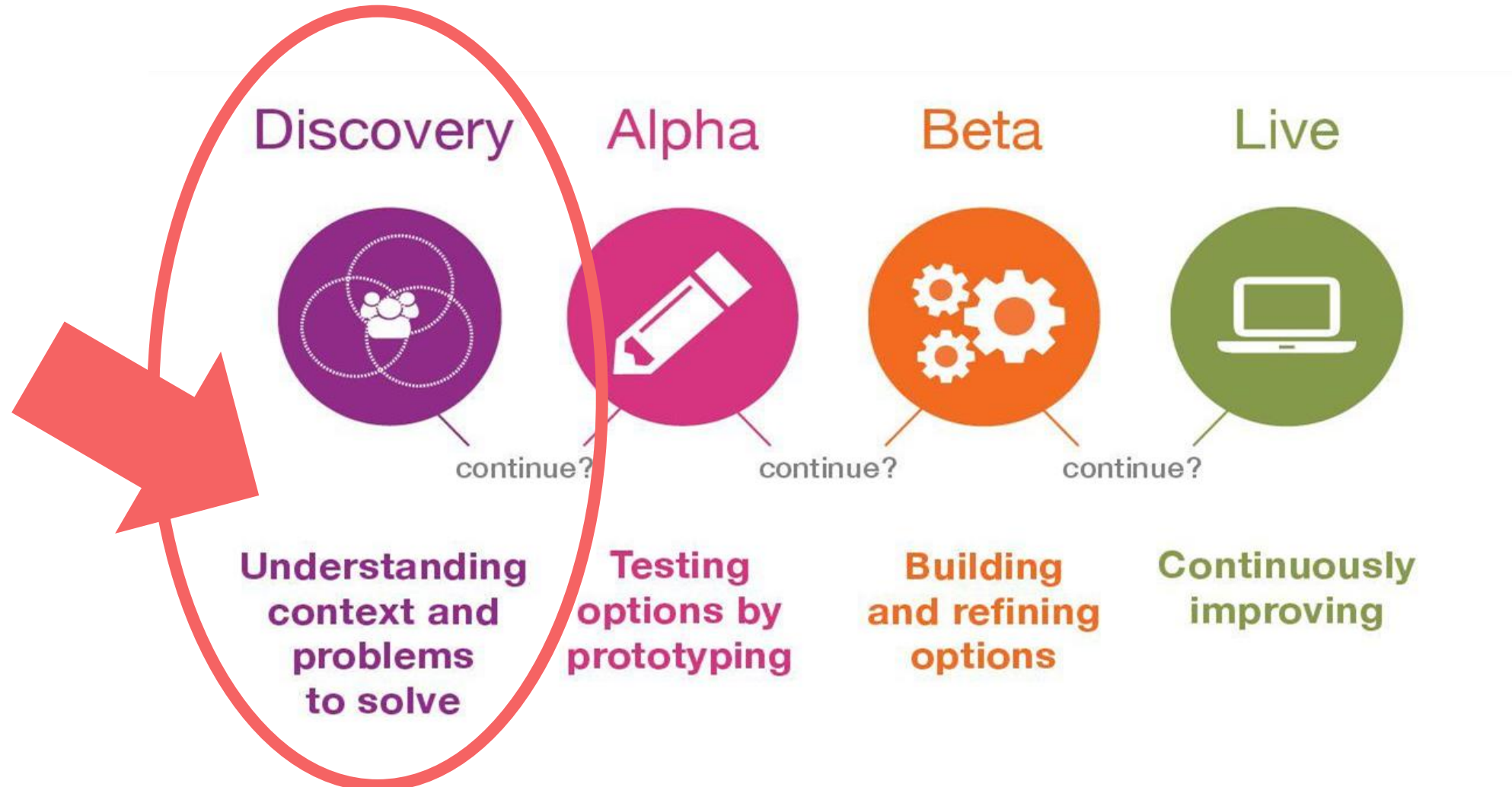
Discover  
problem space



Discover  
solution space



# Not starting with discovery: Biggest mistake in product development



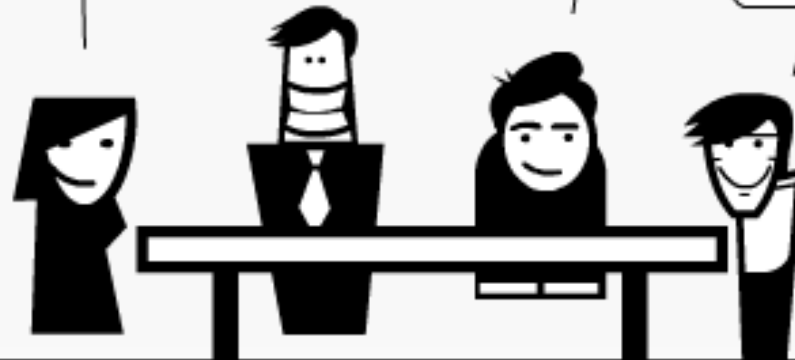
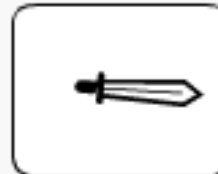


PROJECT BEGINS



Our customer  
ordered a tool!

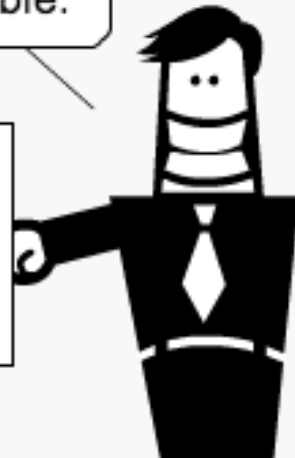
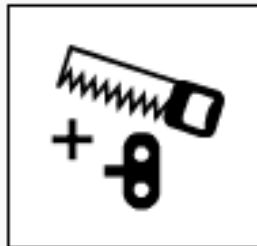
PROJECT TEAM GENERATES IDEAS



AT THE END THE PROJECT INVOLVES UX PERSON



Make a specification  
for this. And make it usable.



CUSTOMER GETS... SOMETHING

Nice saw but I needed a  
hammer.



S.K. 2014

This happens when you skip  
discovery:

The wrong product is  
developed.

The user researcher was  
involved too late, and the tool  
doesn't solve the user's  
problem.

***"Most teams are comfortable asking about usability, but the hard thing is not usability, the hard thing is evaluating value."***



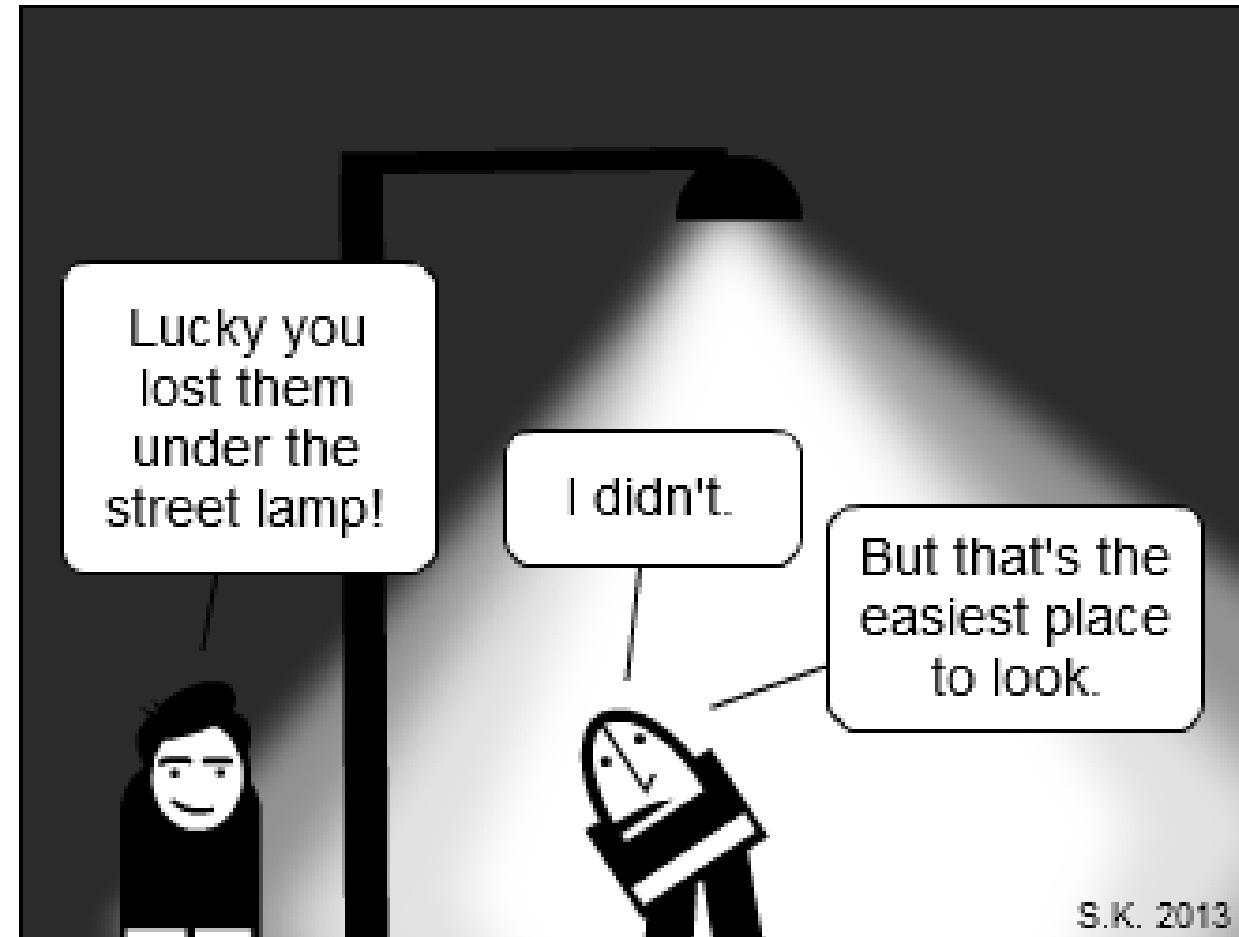
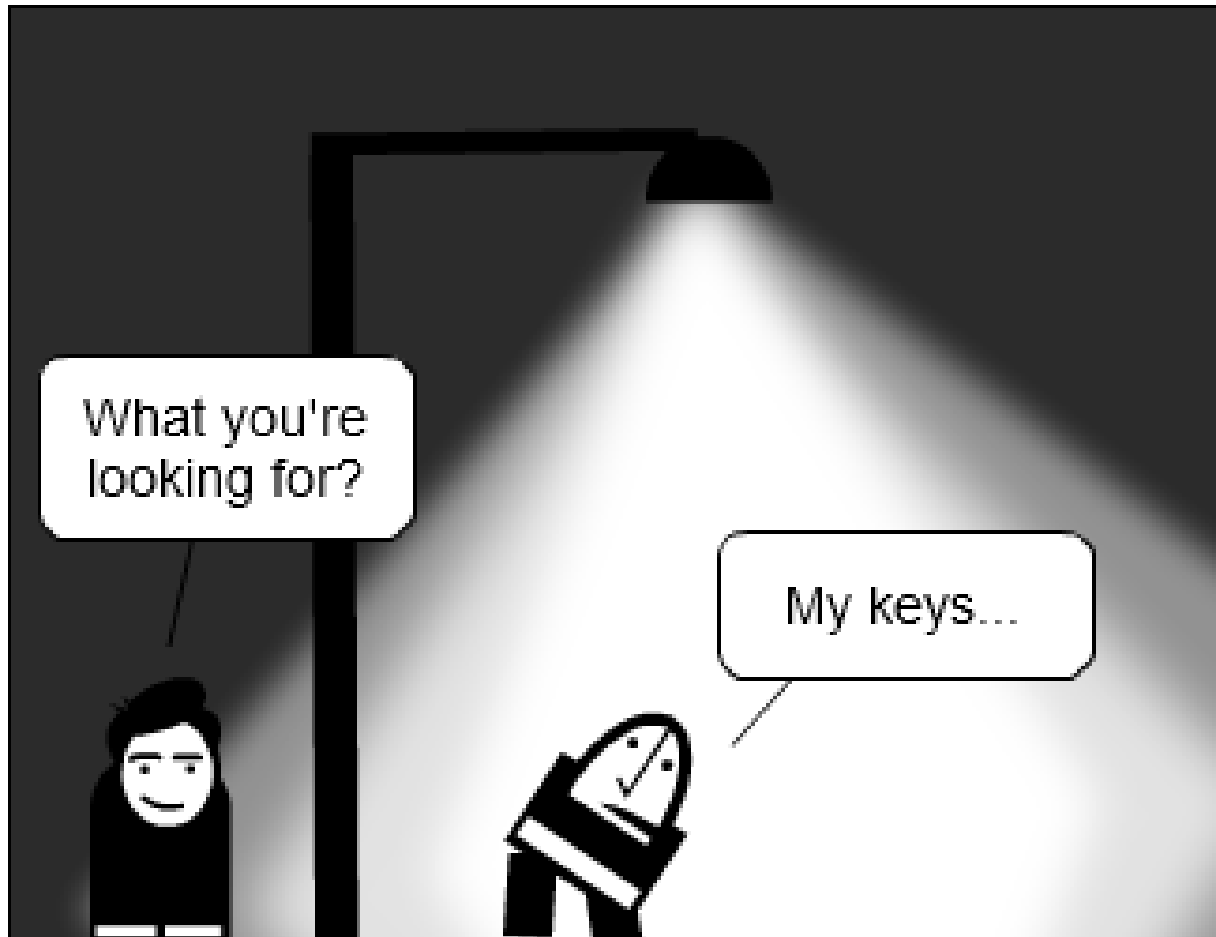
**Marty Cagan, 2022**

- Thought leader for product management
- Founder of the Silicon Valley Product Group (SVPG)

User research doesn't mean to make things just pretty and usable; it is about discovering the value for a user.

Value means: solving users' problems.

# Doing the easiest often does **not** give value





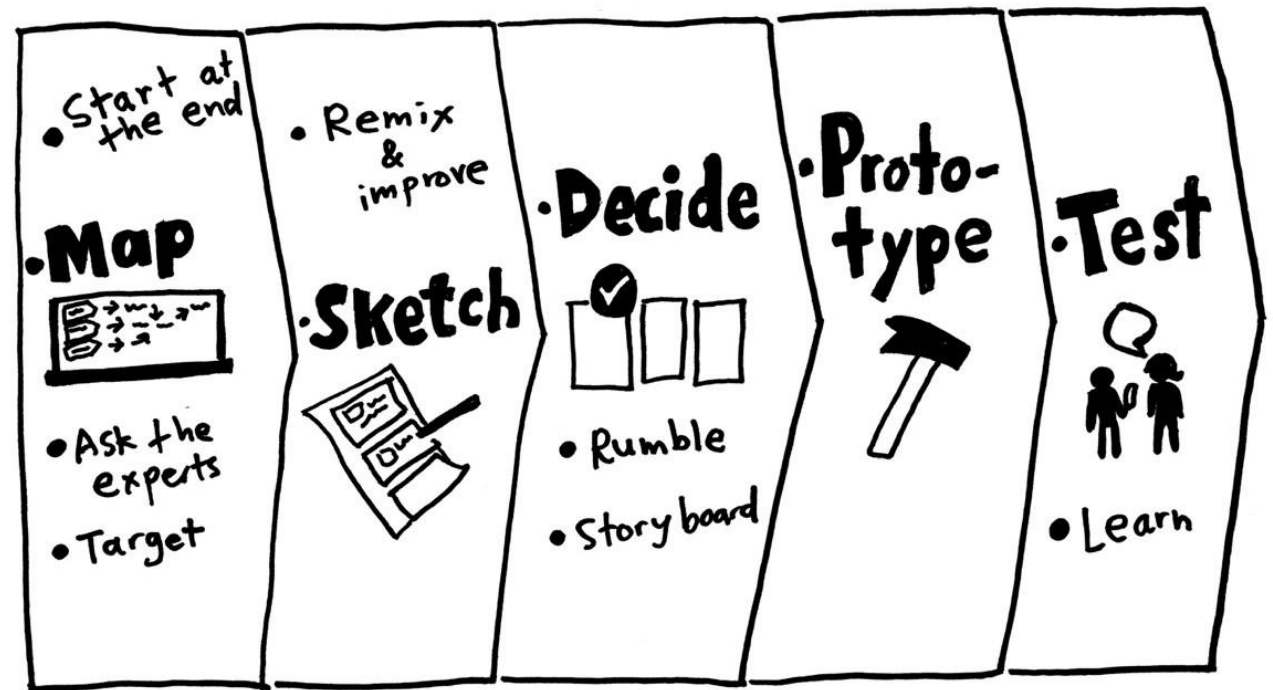
# Discovering the solution space:

## Design sprints are 'discovery sprints'

*"A discovery sprint is a one-week time-box of product discovery work."*



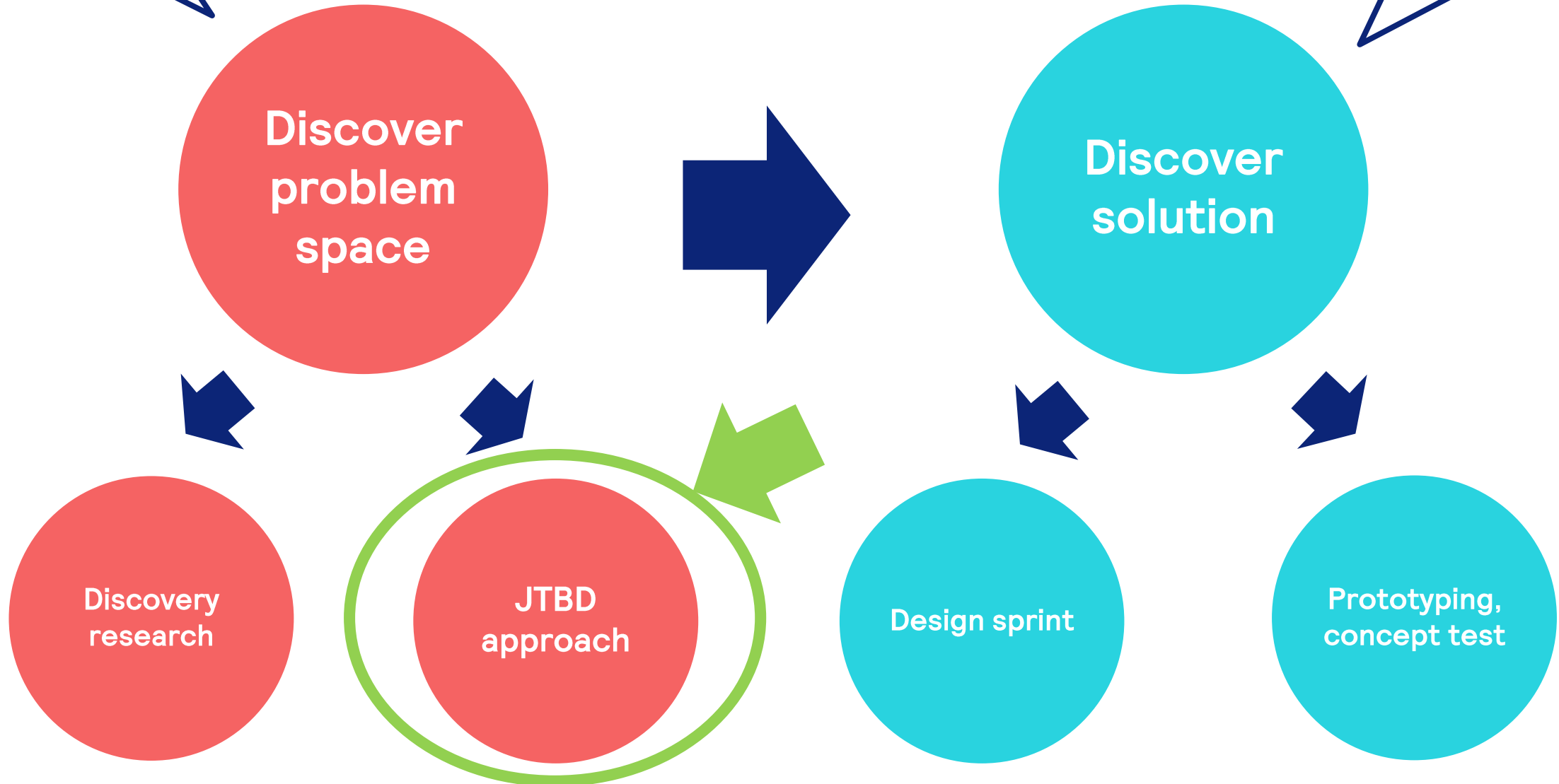
Marty Cagan  
2016



*What problem  
does the user  
have?*

# Discovery

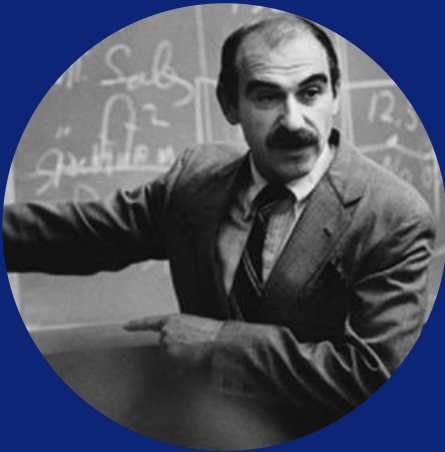
*How can we solve  
this user problem?*



# JTBD as discovery framework



# The origin of the JTBD concept



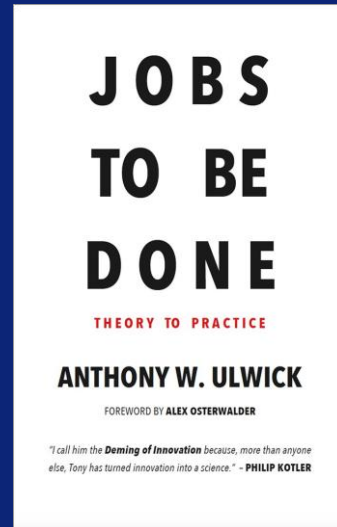
*"They don't want quarter-inch [drill] bits. They want quarter-inch holes."*

Theodore Levitt, 1983



People don't buy products; they 'hire' them to do jobs, such as solving a problem or fulfilling a desire.

# The creator of JTBD



Tony Ulwick

Pioneer of JTBD

Creator of Outcome-Driven Innovation

Founder of Strategyn

*“Consumers are great at identifying and articulating their struggles but have no idea what the solution looks like until they see it.”*

*“We have to separate the innovation process from the development process.”*

## Outcome-driven Innovation approach of JTBD

Identify the outcomes that clients want to achieve, and only then focus on the solutions.

# Made JTBD popular



Clayton Christensen

Harvard Business School professor



*“When we buy a product, we essentially 'hire' something to get a job done.”*

Popularized the concept and gave it the name ‘Jobs-to-be-done’ in his book :

‘The Innovator’s Solution: Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth.’ (2003)



# What is being sold here: Lipstick and nail polish – or a “new me”?

**ARE YOU  
MADE FOR 'FIRE AND ICE?'**

Try this quiz and see!

What is the American girl made of? Sugar and spice and everything nice? Not since the days of the Gibson Girl! There's a new American beauty... she's tease and temptress, siren and gamine, dynamic and demure. Men find her slightly, delightfully baffling. Sometimes a little maddening. Yet they admit she's easily the most exciting woman in all the world! She's the 1952 American beauty, with a foolproof formula for melting a male! She's the "Fire and Ice" girl. (Are you?)

Have you ever danced with your shoes off? yes ☐ no ☐  
Did you ever wish on a new moon? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do you blush when you find yourself flirting? yes ☐ no ☐  
When a recipe calls for one dash of bitters, do you think it's better with two? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do you secretly hope the next man you meet will be a psychiatrist? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do you sometimes feel that other women resent you? yes ☐ no ☐  
Have you ever wanted to wear an ankle bracelet? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do tables excite you, even on other women? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do you love to look up at a man? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do you face crowded parties with panic—then wind up having a wonderful time? yes ☐ no ☐  
Does gypsy music make you sad? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do you think any man really understands you? yes ☐ no ☐  
Would you streak your hair with platinum without consulting your husband? yes ☐ no ☐  
If tourist flights were running, would you take a trip to Mars? yes ☐ no ☐  
Do you close your eyes when you're kissed? yes ☐ no ☐  
Can you honestly answer "yes" to at least eight of these questions? Then you're made of "Fire and Ice"! And Revlon's lush-and-passionate scarlet was made just for you—a daring projection of your own hidden personality! Wear it tonight. It may be the night of your lifetime!

NOVEMBER 1, 1952 29

*"In the factories we make cosmetics. In the drugstores we sell hope."*

Charles Revson, the founder of Revlon

The jobs-to-be-done concept has been used in advertising for a very long time.

This ad shows the focus on 'higher level jobs' that buying the lipstick fulfils.

Customers don't want this

# What do customers really want?

## Not drilling a hole, not assembling furniture...



IKEA's innovation was to create furniture that you could order and assemble yourself without needing to “drill a quarter inch hole”.

But customers don't even want to assemble furniture.

# What do customers really want?

## ...just a nice home

### They want this



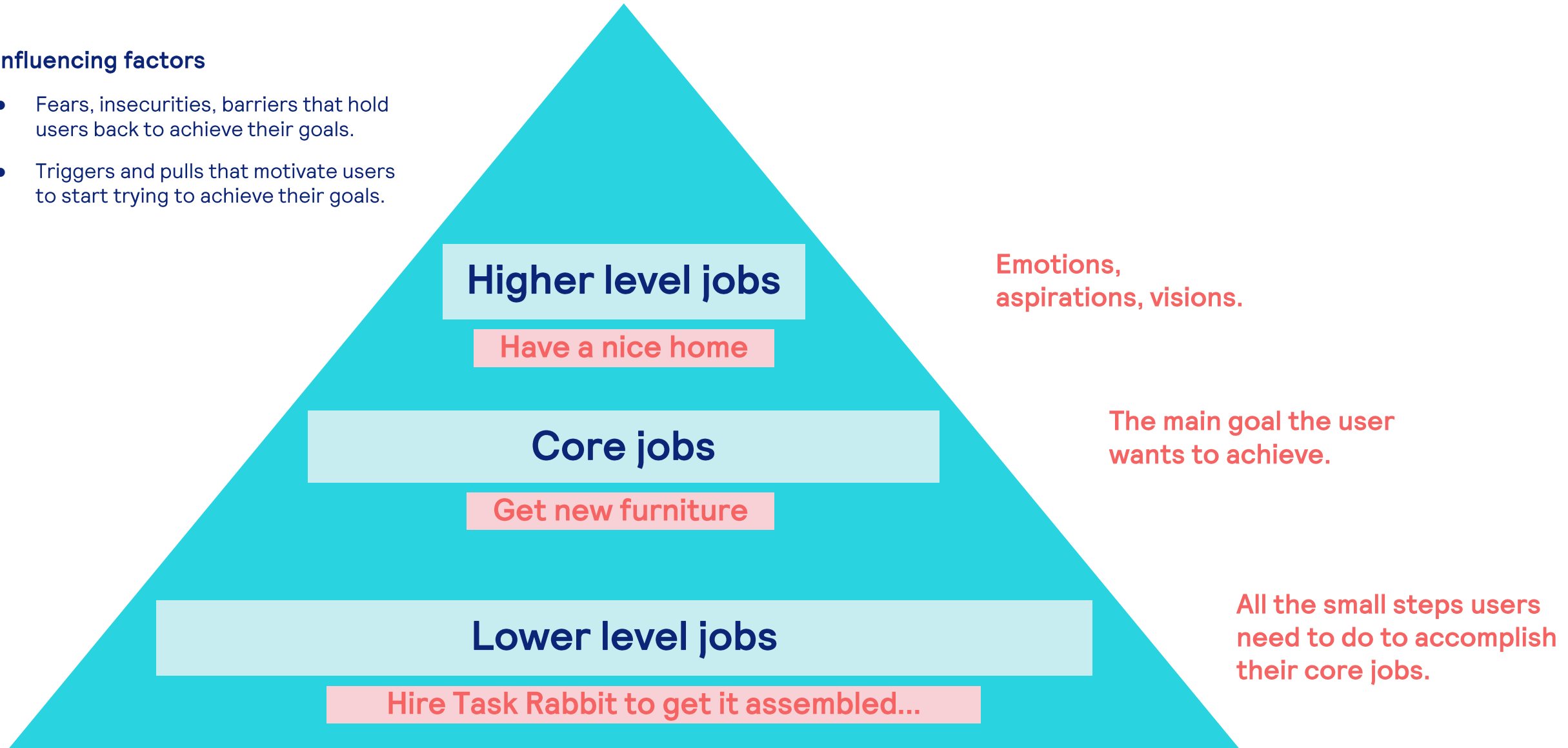
In 2017, IKEA bought Task Rabbit – because people don’t want to “assemble/ build furniture” either.

They want to express their individuality and feel comfortable in their home.

# JTBD Hierarchy

## Influencing factors

- Fears, insecurities, barriers that hold users back to achieve their goals.
- Triggers and pulls that motivate users to start trying to achieve their goals.





# How users measure how well a job gets done?

—> Job metrics

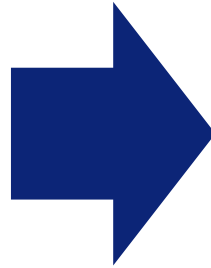


User needs & pain points



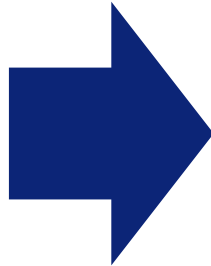
# Jobs-to-be-done

A new lens to look at products: From products to jobs

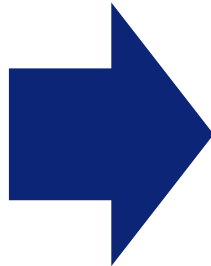


Nice home

**NETFLIX**



Relaxing



Bonding

# JTBD at Stepstone

# Driving our JTBD approach



**Florin Ciontu**  
SVP Product B2C Stepstone

His vision: Everyone at Stepstone talks about JTBD when having a coffee chat.





# The JTBD research





# The Vendbridge jobs-to-be-done study



**Yann Wermuth**  
Partner Vendbridge



**Beat Walther**  
Owner & Managing Director Vendbridge

# Qualitative research

The in-depth interviews  
provided the job metrics  
(user needs & pain points)

## Goal

Validate existing knowledge and  
identify gaps.

## Outcome

Validated JTBD hierarchies with job  
metrics, qual insights of unmet needs &  
emotional barriers & drivers.

—> It is important to have this qual  
research before quant, to make sure we  
measure the right things in the survey.

# JTBD Study

## Method

Qualitative in-depth interviews (N = 52)

Quantitative survey (N = 9230)

## Two surveys

Pain points (job metrics) in the  
jobs-to-be-done

Emotions in  
the jobs-to-be-done

## Two target groups

Job browsers



Job-to-be-done:  
To keep an eye on the job  
market

Active job seekers

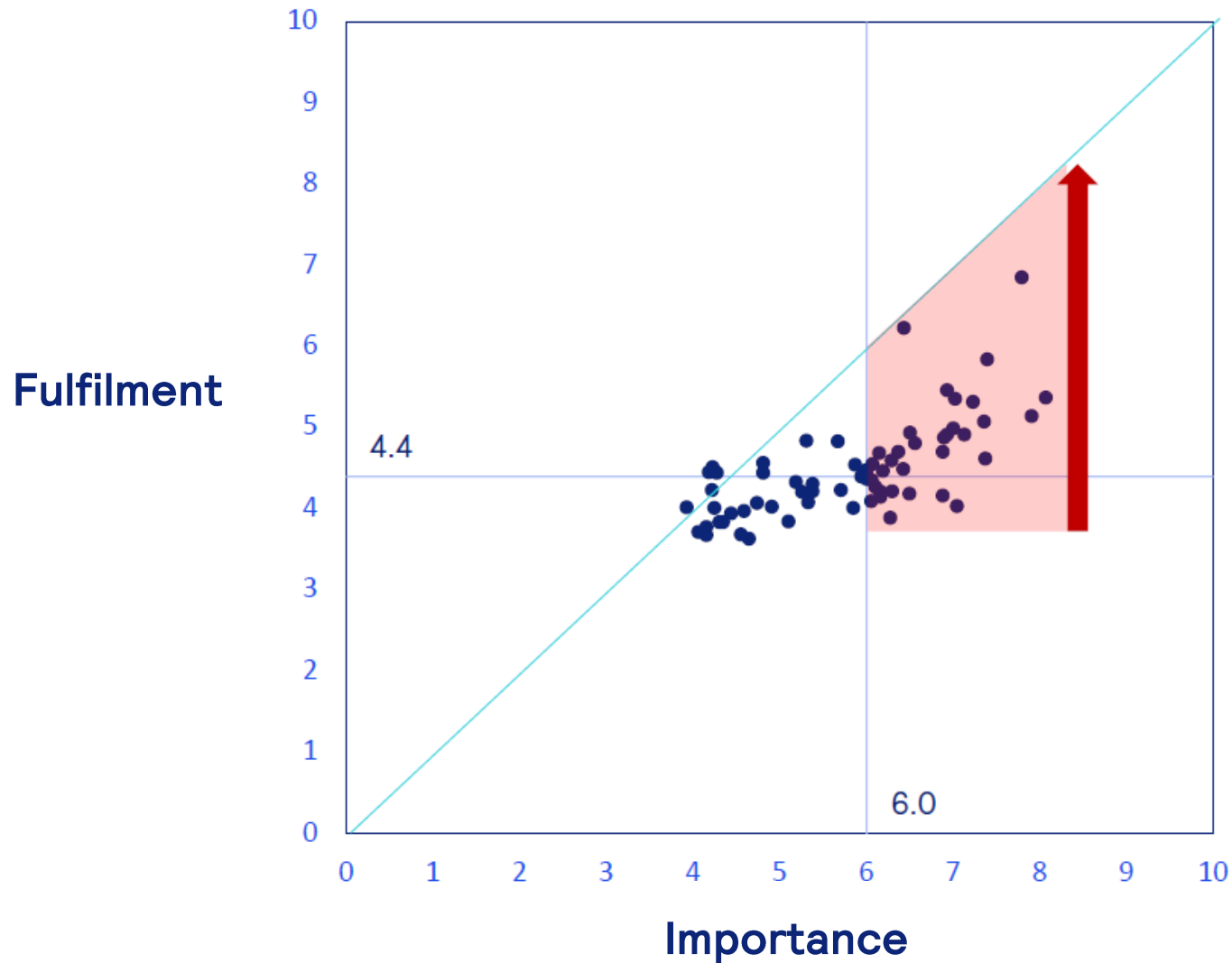


Job-to-be-done:  
To actively look for a new job



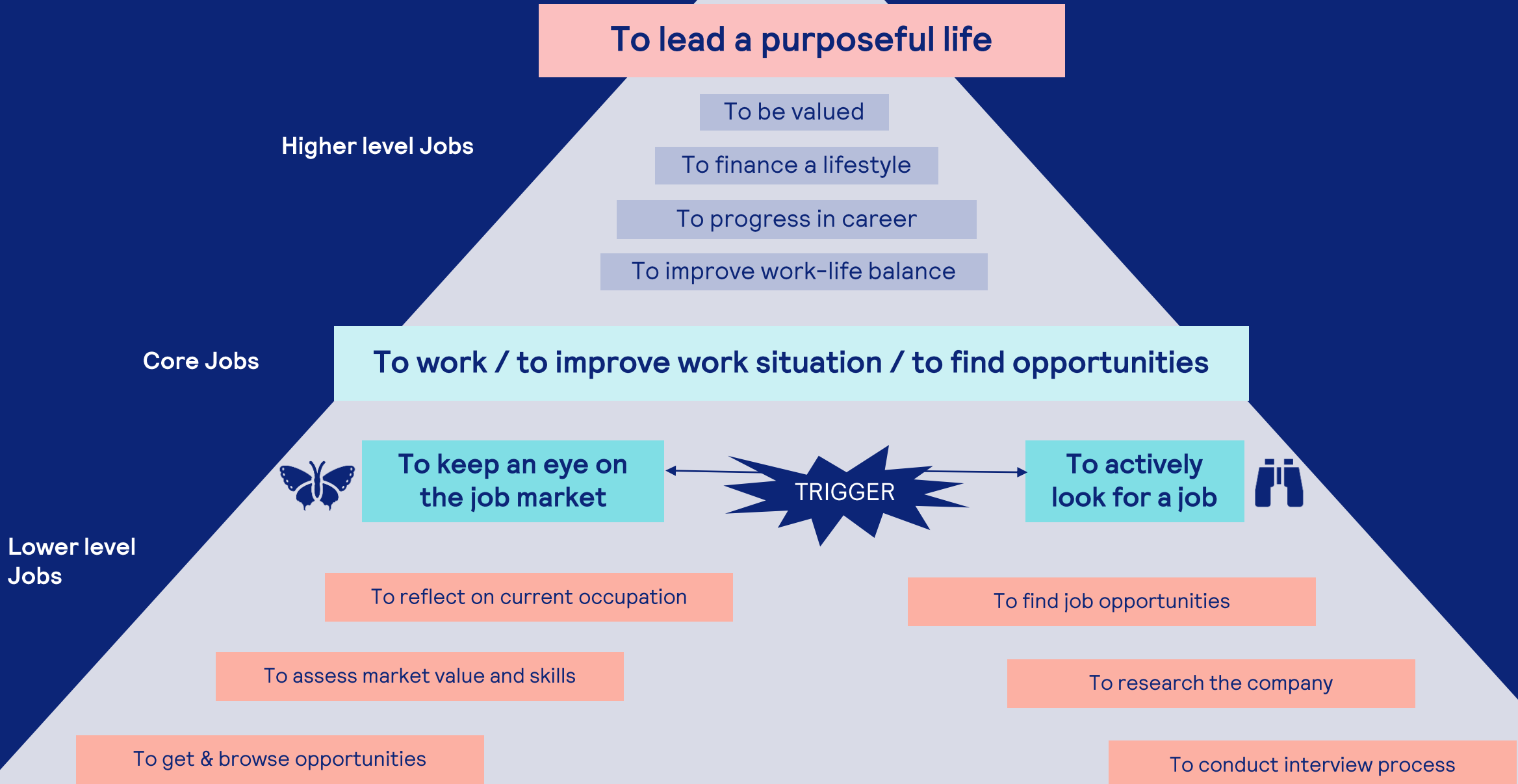
# Quantitative survey

## Measuring fulfilment & importance of job metrics



- Survey about job metrics (pain points and user needs).
- Respondents rated how important and fulfilled these job metrics were.

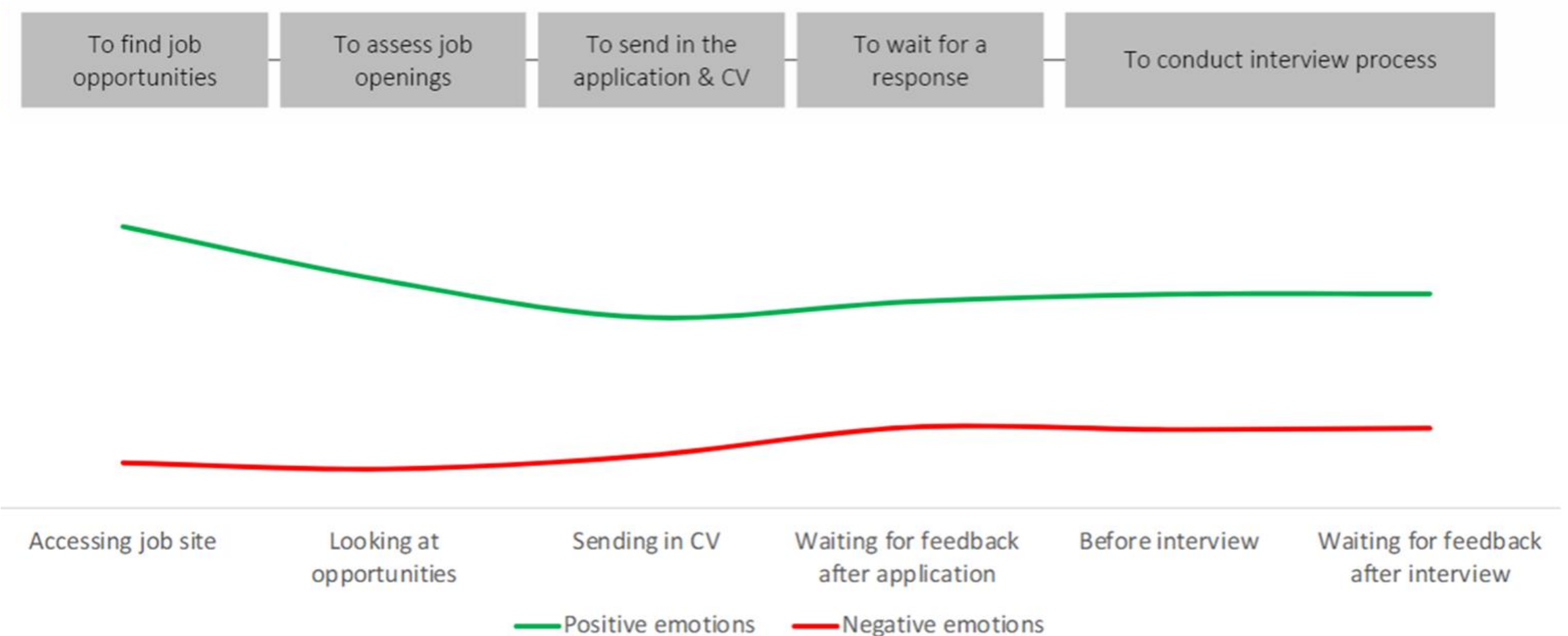
# JTBD at Stepstone





# Emotions during job search

## Positive emotions decline, negative emotions increase



# Feelings during the application process

Optimistic, confident, excited to demonstrate skills, FOMO

Self-doubts, helplessness when getting no answer, fear of failure



"The interview is about me."

"It's easy to adjust my application."

"Time to shine."

"One step at a time."

"A chance to get noticed."



"Will I be happier afterwards?"

"Will it match my expectations?"

"Will it be the right decision?"

"Was it the right preparation?"

"What if they didn't want to hear what I was saying?"

"What do I do when they (don't) want me?"

"You get used to No's."

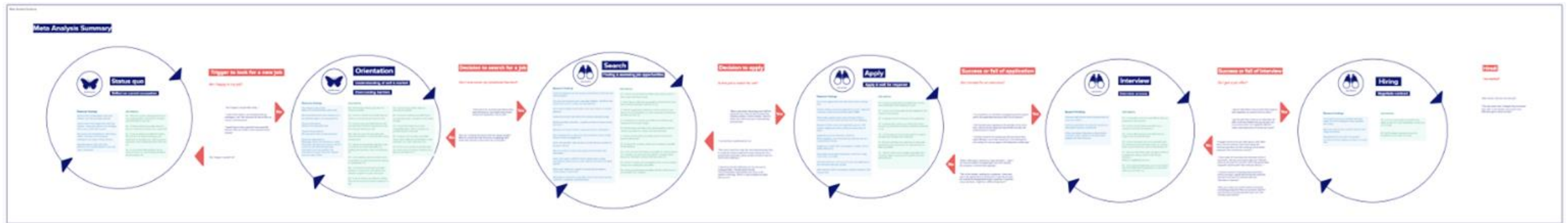
"It won't work anyway."

[illegible]

**Products should address the top priority job metrics (with high importance and low fulfilment).**

# Job seeker journey & JTBD

Mapping all research insights together with the job metrics shows phases of job search and decision points

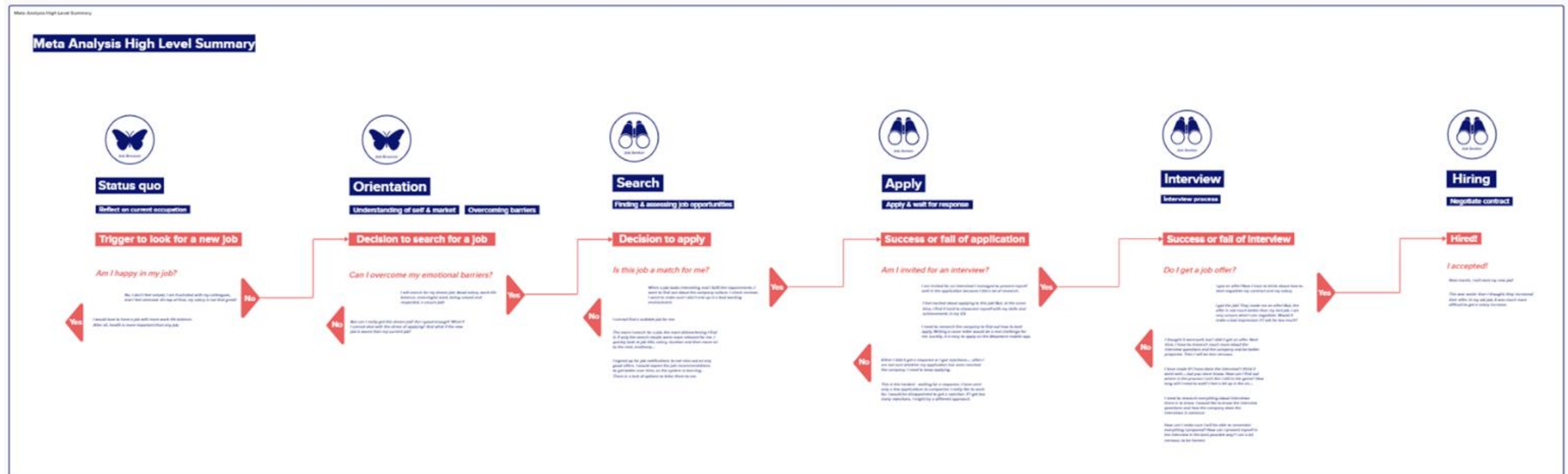


Holistic view of motivations, needs, emotions helps to identify opportunities for innovation.



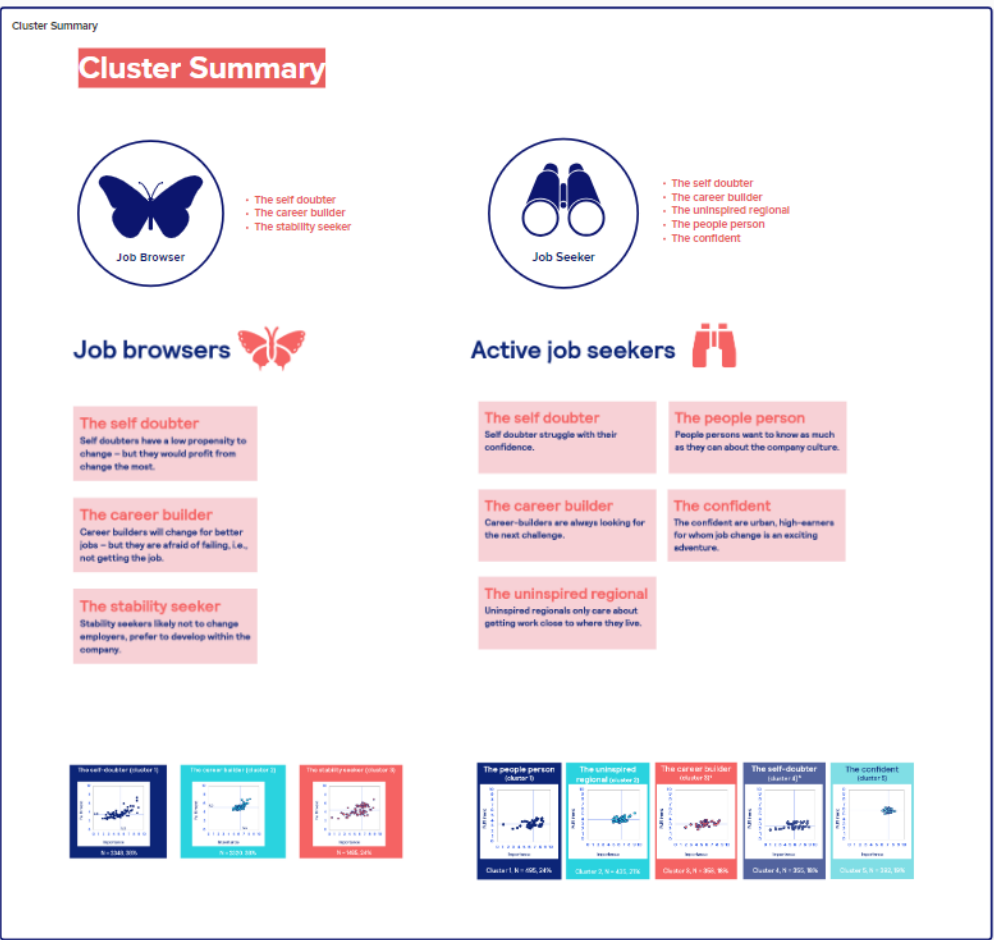
# Job seeker journey & JTBD

Summary with decision points (based on research and job metrics) shows when users transition to next phase and when they stay in current phase



JTBD and job metrics help to identify decision points and insights into why or why not users transition to the next phase.

# Clusters for our target segments, based on job metrics (JTBD)



With Vendbridge, we created clusters based on the job metrics (user needs & pain points), not on demographics.

# The JTBD activation



# JTBD training delivered in-house, planting the JTBD seed into Stepstone

## Problem

- Trainings from external experts in the past had limited impact.

## Solution with new approach

- Internal trainers and champions for JTBD.
- Concept, advice and guidance by our agency Vendbridge.
- Vendbridge as a partner who enables us to apply JTBD – not only a provider of research.



# The training

## Per product area

- Presentation with Vendbridge JTBD research insights
- Two tailored workshops

Cross functional participants from product, UX, analytics, engineering

## Duration

- Presentation 1.5 hours
- Two workshops each 2 hours

## Timeline

- Inception phase with leadership training: 2 weeks
- Product area specific training: 5 weeks

# Workshop I

**Initiatives**

Please put the initiatives here: → Initiative 1 Initiative 2 ...

Please put the pain points here: ↓

**Pain points (high / moderate opportunity)**

Relevant Pain Point 1

Relevant Pain Point 2

...

1 strongly -1 negative effect 0 no effect

2 strongly 2 strongly 0 no effect

Pain points fulfillment (count total by row)

Initiative (count total by column)

## Pain points matching

The product initiatives from a product area are matched to the job seekers' job metrics (pain points & needs).

### Meeting chat

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D7719ED40C4&action=edit  
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jvteam8 > ITB

1 min left

Patrick Kedzierski 10:40

At this stage we shouldn't think too much about if and what we can do about a specific pain point but rather how big the problem is we want to solve which determines the size of the opportunity. The 'how' would be next step.



super interesting group !!

thanks!

Last read

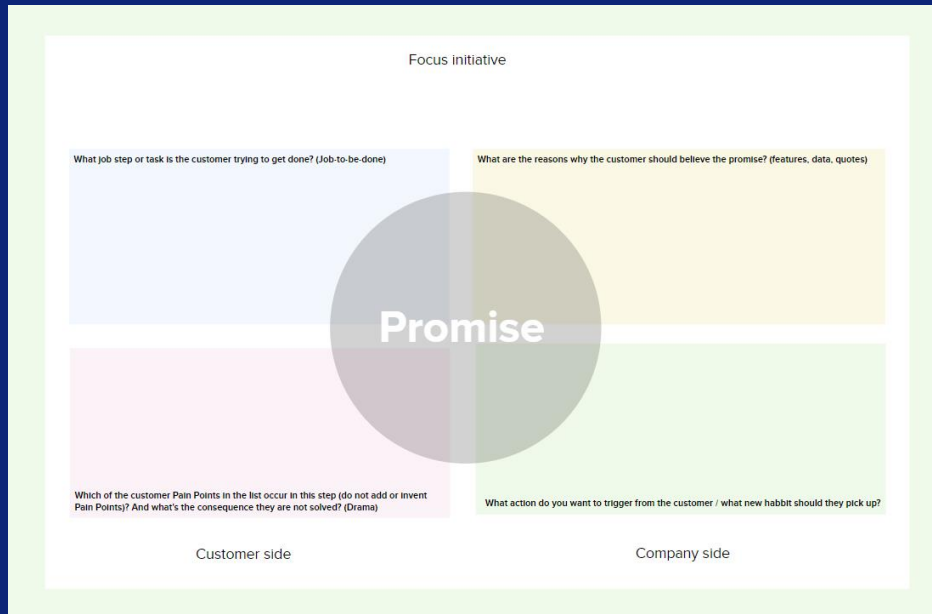
Magdalena Rudzka-Zdeb 11:05  
5 mins left; please also count totals per column & per row

 Dariusz Burak 11:13  
brb

[back](#)

Type a new message

# Workshop II



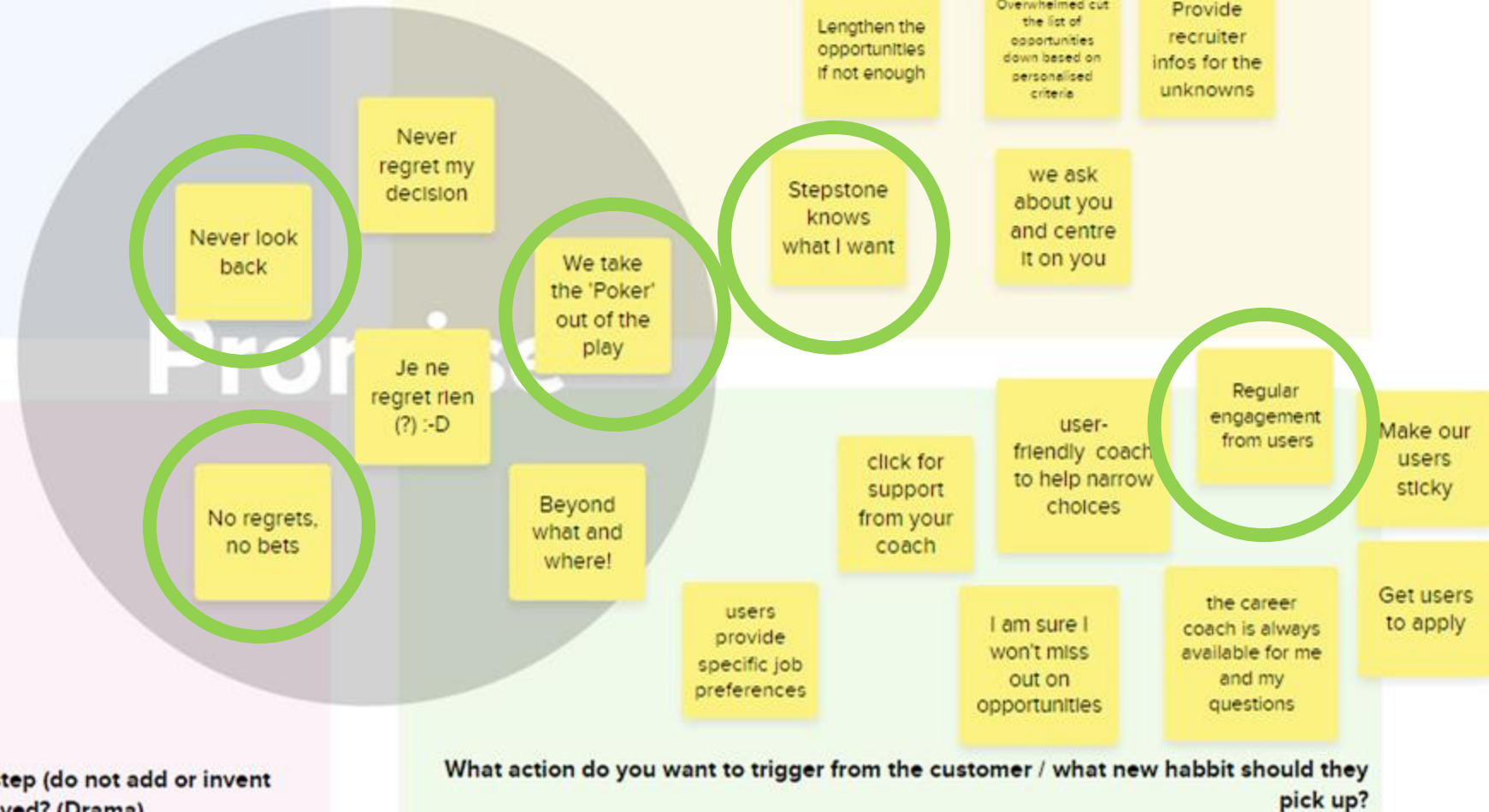
## Value proposition canvas

The outcome of the first workshop is used to ideate solutions for one product area.

What job step or task is the customer trying to get done? (Job-to-be-done)



What are the reasons why the customer should believe the promise? (features, data, quotes)



Which of the customer Pain Points in the list occur in this step (do not add or invent Pain Points)? And what's the consequence they are not solved? (Drama)

80 - to estimate precisely as possible whether a certain move will improve your situation compared to your current job

73 - to be as sure as possible that you will not regret the decision to quit and try to go for a new job before you start

44 - that your current company provides as many opportunities as possible to develop yourself further in your job

Customer side

Company side



# We trained 120 people

*“I was on your JTBD meeting today. Thank you, this was great for us.”*

*“How powerful it is to work in a group and bounce ideas.”*

*“Loved the value proposition canvas and the time limit to get ideas down.”*

# The JTBD implementation



# Prioritisation with JTBD



**Lawrence Hardy**  
Portfolio Product Director  
Stepstone

Interview

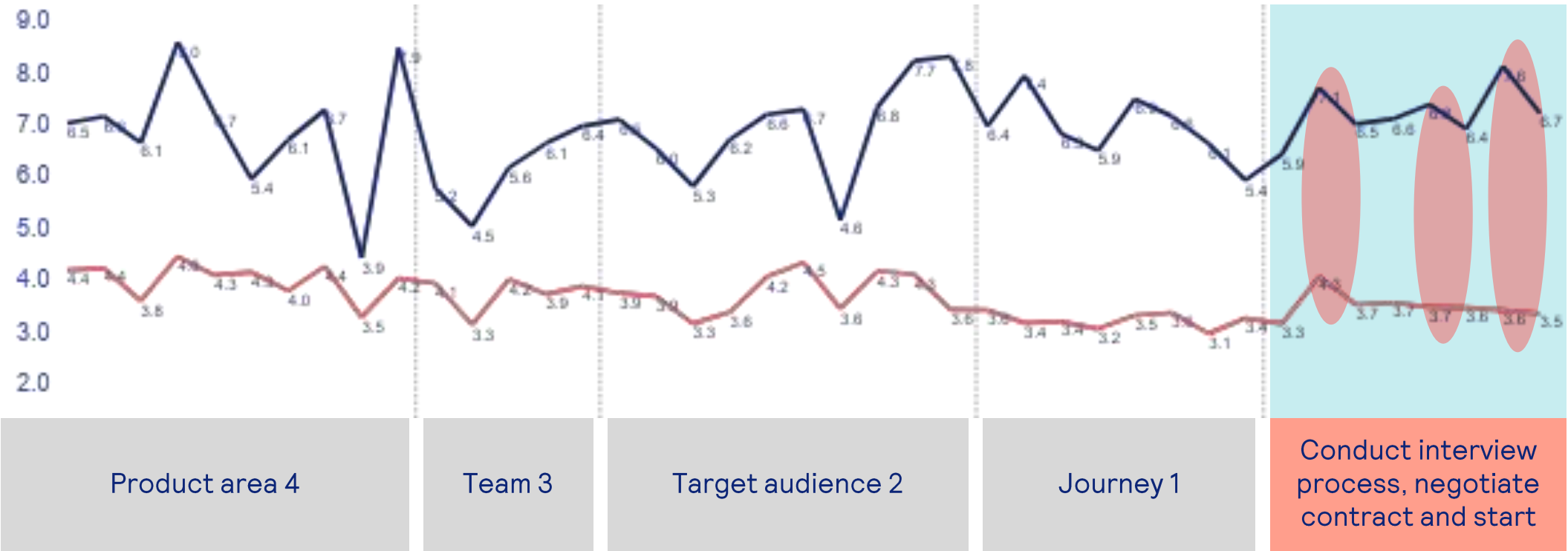
Validated by quant:

Remember answers

Be less nervous

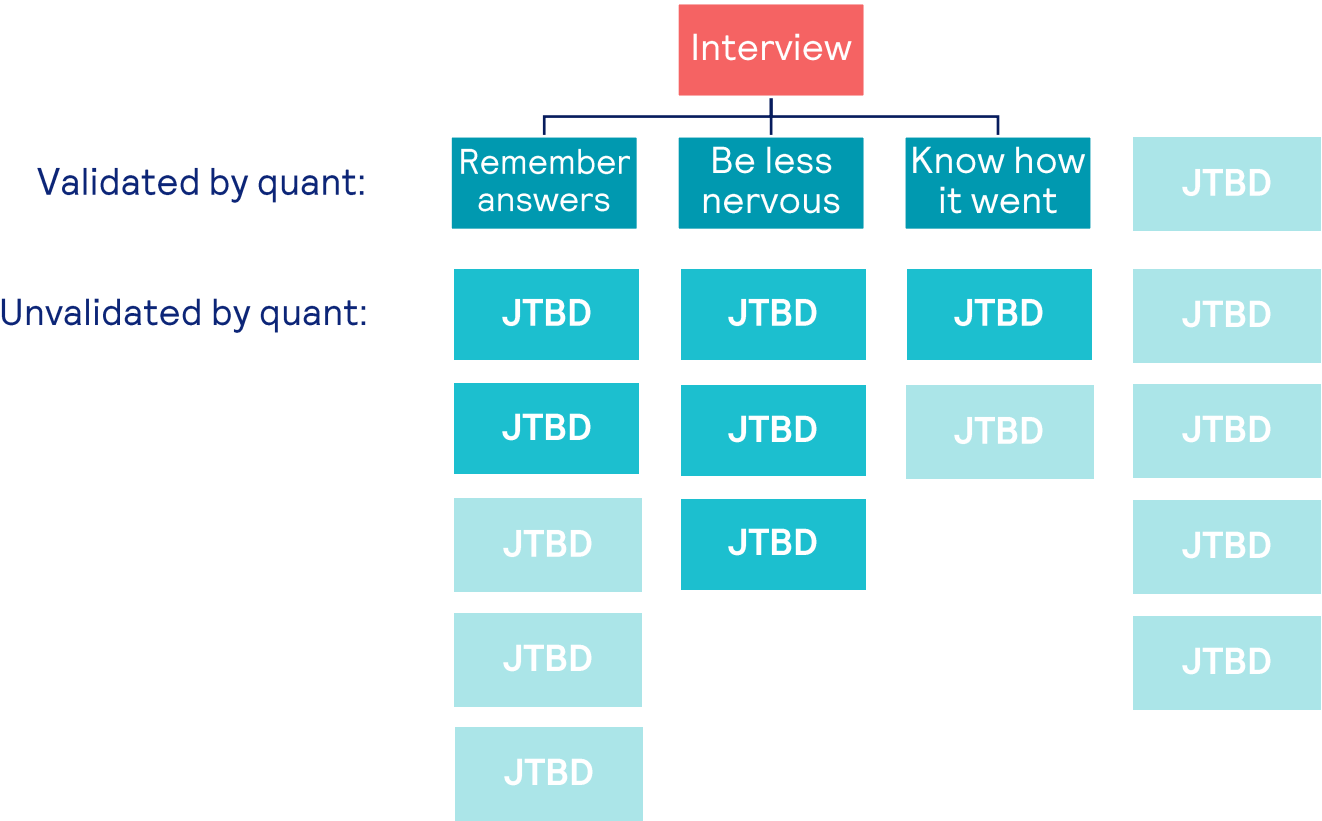
Know how it went

Problem space



# Interview target audience to find out micro JTBD

Problem space



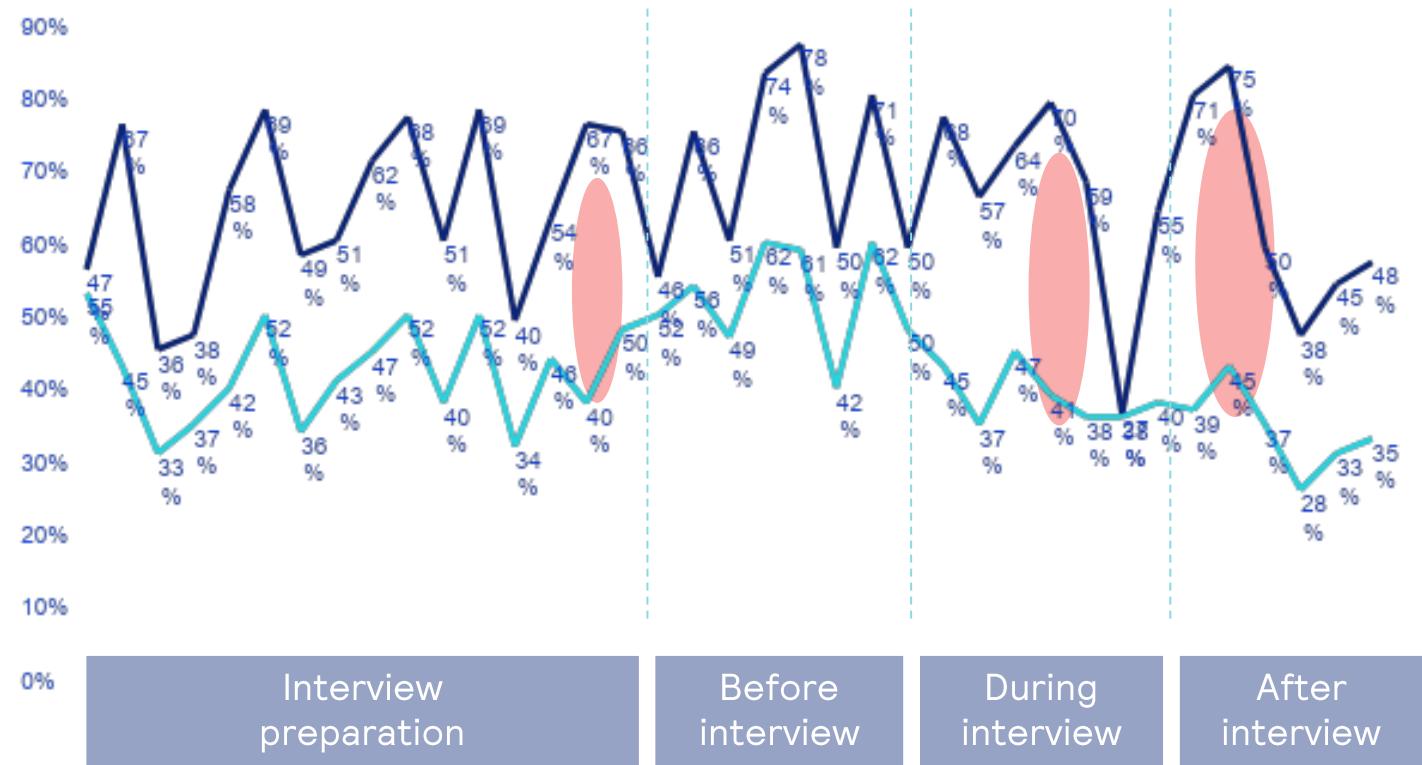
**Lawrence Hardy**  
Portfolio Product Director  
Stepstone

# Survey target audience



**Lawrence Hardy**  
Portfolio Product Director  
Stepstone

Problem space



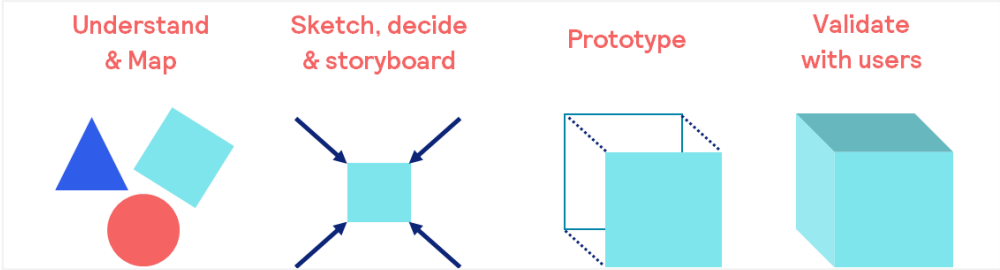


# Design sprints & iterations

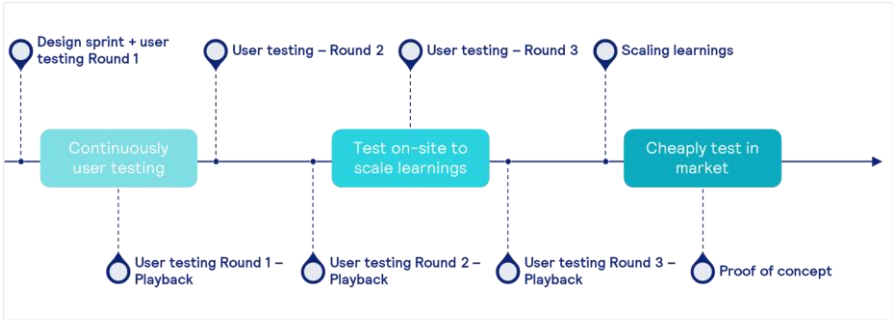


**Lawrence Hardy**  
Portfolio Product Director  
Stepstone

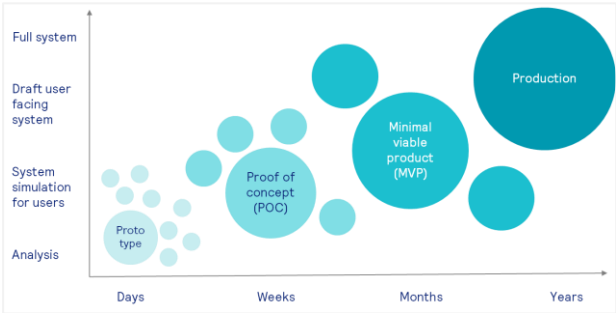
Solution space



**Design sprint**



**Iterate prototype**



**POC to production**

# The Virtual Interviewer

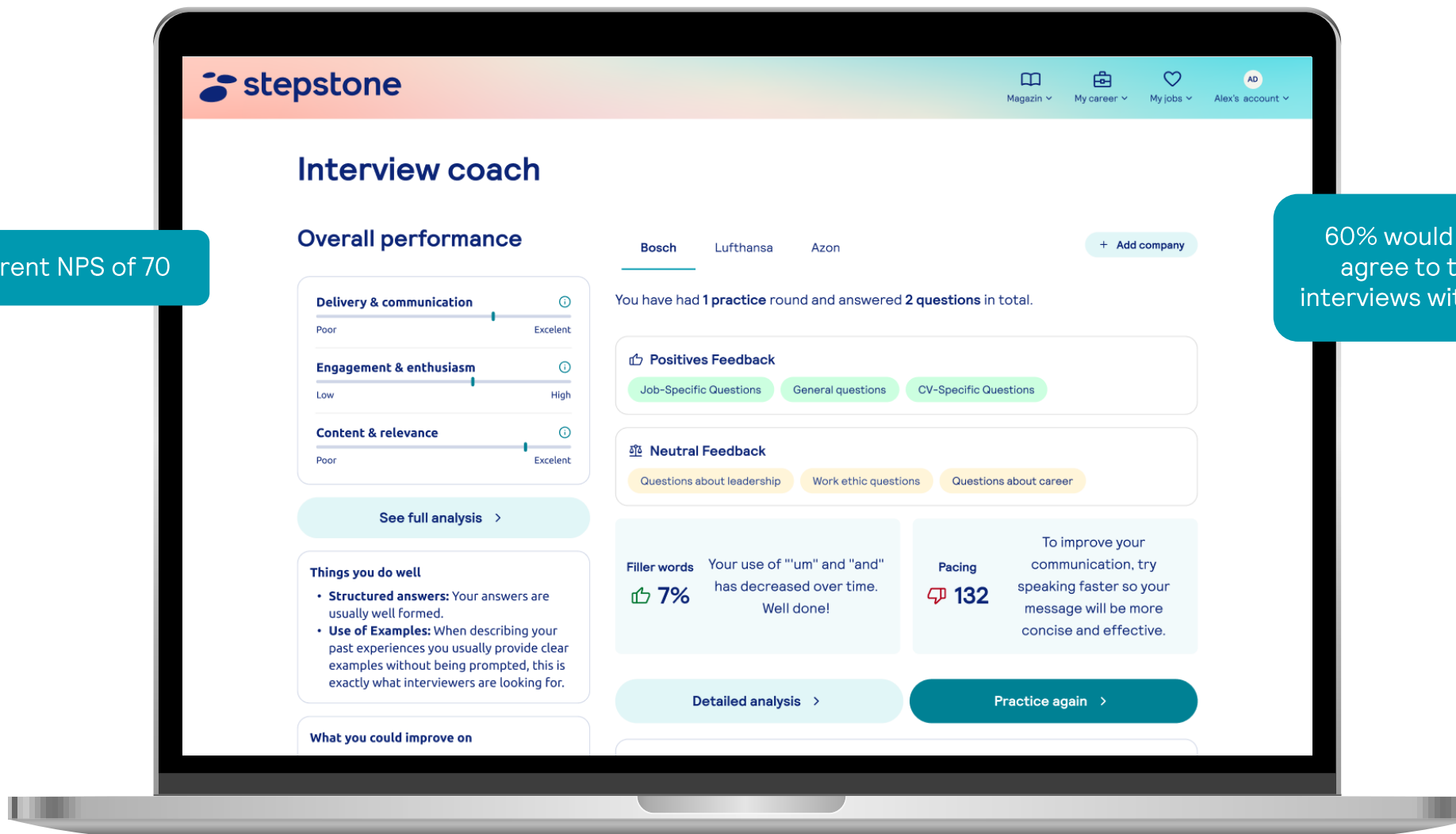
## A solution for job seekers based on JTBD

Current NPS of 70

60% would strongly agree to track all interviews with this tool



**Lawrence Hardy**  
Portfolio Product Director  
Stepstone



# Key learnings

**JTBD are an easy framework to align on the users and their 'jobs' (goals & tasks):**

- Higher level jobs (bigger, aspirational goals)
- Core jobs (necessary to do to reach aspirational goals)
- Lower level jobs (detailed tasks to accomplish goal)

- JTBD and job metrics illustrate the needs and emotions of users throughout their user journey.
- JTBD can identify opportunities for product development and help to focus.
- JTBD are solution agnostic; therefore, they have long term validity.

# Thank you!

Sabrina Duda

Principal UX Researcher

The Stepstone Group

[www.linkedin.com/in/sabrinaduda](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sabrinaduda)

More info: [www.smiling.club](https://www.smiling.club)



the  
stepstone  
group