Customer Insights Rollup

Q2 2020

VSP Service Design Team: Naomi Marcussen, James Chasia // **June 2020**

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We talked to people from

- 10 VFS teams
- 7 practice areas
- 4 organizations

We generated customer insights by

- Conducting user journey workshops w/ FE & BE engineers.
- Conducting directed interviews on the Collaboration Cycle.
- Tracking customer support requests.
- Doing a discovery sprint on the VFS developer experience .

Pain Point Themes For VFS Engineers

Interfacing with external services is a barrier for many teams

"Systems we integrate with are not super dependable, often have performance issues and take a while to come back. We end up doing more workarounds because of this."

- Back-end Engineer #1, User Journey workshop April 2020

"There is not a clear way to understand external services - what they are for and what they can do."

- Back-end Engineer #3, User Journey workshop April 2020

"Understanding conventions (what's the vets api way of doing things?) lots of implementations, no recommended way."

- Back-end Engineer #3, User Journey workshop April 2020

How might we...

remove barriers for engineers interfacing with external services?

Insufficient documentation has left engineers to find answers on their own

"Our [Form Builder] documentation falls off at the more advanced stuff."
- FE Engineer #2, User journey workshop - April 2020

"I'm asking in public channels how do we pull data for forms."
- FE Engineer #6, User journey workshop - April 2020

"I do control F in platform support [to find answers to my questions]."
- BE Engineer #3, User journey workshop - April 2020

"Can someone point me to a VA.gov guide on linting rules for javascript?"
- Engineer, #vfs-frontend Slack - April 2020

"For peer reviews, I usually hit up [specific engineers] to review. I feel like I should be asking in the FE channel but those guys don't have context on what I've been working on. But I should give everyone a chance to review the code."
- BE Engineer #5, User journey workshop - April 2020

How might we…

offer engineers more self-service ways to get their questions answered?

The process of testing and releasing products is complex

"Backend merge process is so painful. Has cost me days [of productivity] so far."

- BE Engineer #7, Developer Experience Needs Discovery Sprint

"Biggest problem is that we don't have parity between environments. Just b/c something works on staging doesn't mean it will work on prod. Can't do the same type of testing b/c of accounts and data."

- BE Engineer #1, User Journey Workshop

"The VA itself doesn't have test users for all services. So you have to rely on veterans. Hard to rely on a few people for testing."

- BE Engineer #1, User Journey Workshop

"Load tests (and other backend automated checks) take way too long to run, and contribute to Master merge conflict issue significantly."

- BE Engineer #1, Developer Experience Needs Discovery Sprint

How might we…

make testing and releasing simpler?

Collaboration Cycle Research

VFS teams value VSP ensuring quality

"Helps us build better products. Invaluable input and catching things we may not have been looking for. It's like having a bigger team of clever people. The intention is right - ensuring we delivering quality and gets a lot of more people involved in the process."
- Product Manager #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"For me, I think a lot of good stuff has come out of it. "
- Designer #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"Get a lot from 508 spot-checks."
- Product Manager #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"I personally feel that the process is overall beneficial."
- Product Manager #4, Collaboration Cycle V1 Survey

Process is better than before

"I much prefer knowing what's expected. Much more clarity than before"
- Product Manager #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"The new process is more meetings, but less of a big dog-and-pony show and this is much more conversational and I like that. "
- Designer #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"Our tech lead thinks VSP has been reasonable in removing unnecessary steps. Feels like a lot more meetings but there are short, concise. "
- Designer #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"Before designers were getting random feedback from different people."
- Designer #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

QA and Accessibility Collaboration Points

"Think QA was done better before. Seems like it's not called out in the same way."

- Product Manager #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"Wasn't clear who needed to write Testrail test cases."

- Product Manager #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"QA is so disconnected from the cycle. People don't know what to do w/ QA"

- Designer #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

"Did we prematurely ask for a 508 spot check? Did we ask for accessibility too soon?"

- DEPO #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research

How might we...

integrate QA and Accessibility/508 more effectively throughout the process?

Feedback that is not cohesive or actionable causes confusion

"The reviewers don't always align. There'll be conflicting feedback in the tickets."
- *Designer #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research*

"There is a missing linkage between cycle and value to vets. If we see that we can prioritize appropriately and communicate to stakeholders."
- *DEPO #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research*

"I have come away from feedback sessions overwhelmed due to all of the voices in a short 30 minute period."
- *Designer #3, Collaboration Cycle V1 Survey*

"My team feels exhausted and intimidated by it. It feels like all of vsp is management with so many voices and rules that it stifles our inspiration."
- *Anonymous #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Survey*

How might we…

improve the quality of VFS products by offering clear guidelines and feedback?

Process burden

"My DEPO has concerns about how this can impact time of deliver. Feels process and meeting heavy. Not agile. Do more asynchronously."
- *Product Manager #2, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research*

"Hard to do rapid iteration, making small changes, getting feedback. Scheduling of meetings feels the most burdensome"
- *DEPO #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Research*

"[The experience] feels like a one-size-fits-all that doesn't in fact fit all situations or product types."
- *Product Manager #3, Collaboration Cycle V1 Survey*

"It's really confusing and we inevitably miss something which frustrates VSP and makes our team feel bad"
- *Anonymous #1, Collaboration Cycle V1 Survey*

"I've really struggled with it because it seems inflexible, confusing, and not supportive."
- *Anonymous #2, , Collaboration Cycle V1 Survey*

How might we…

create a Collaboration Cycle that can fit into teams agile development?

Customer Support Issues

Most common types per VSP team:

	Ops	BE Tools	FE Tools	Content & IA	Analytics
1st	Socks	Architecture	Other	Request	GTM Implementation
2nd	PR review	Data Request	Forms System	Question	Contact Center Tier 3 Issue
3rd	Deployment	Local Environment & Metrics	Local environment		GTM Bug

Support Incident Tracker

How might we…

make the most common customer support requests self-service?

Feedback by Theme

External Services

read comments

Engineering Documentation

read comments

Collab Cycle Process

read comments

Accessibility & QA

read comments

Reviewer Feedback

read comments

Infrastructure

read comments

Next Steps

- Reach out throughout the week with questions or schedule time with us to further discuss pain points.

- Tell us what you want to research for your prioritized Q3 initiatives.

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Thank you.