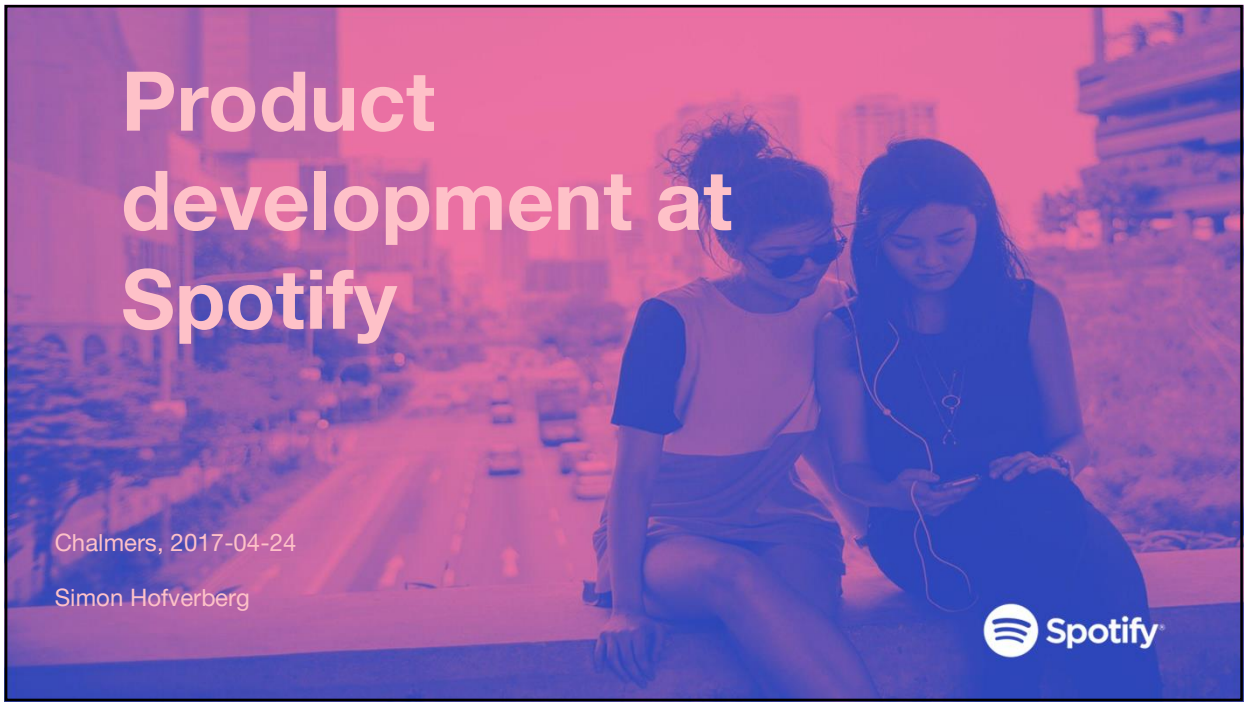
Product development at Spotify



Chalmers, 2017-04-24

Simon Hofverberg

Spotify

Simon Hofverberg

Product owner – Playback squad

shg@spotify.com

Spotify

- Started in 2006
- 100+ million active users
- 50+ million subscribers
- Head office(s) in Stockholm
- R&D in: Stockholm, NYC, Boston, Gothenburg, San Francisco
- Ca 3000 employees in total
- Ca 50% in R&D

Spotify GBG

- At Silicon Vallgatan
- Strictly R&D office
- 45 people and growing
- Expanded our offices TODAY!
- Crucial product parts
  - Playback
  - Playlists
  - Collection/Your music
- 2 student ambassadors at CTH

We are hiring!

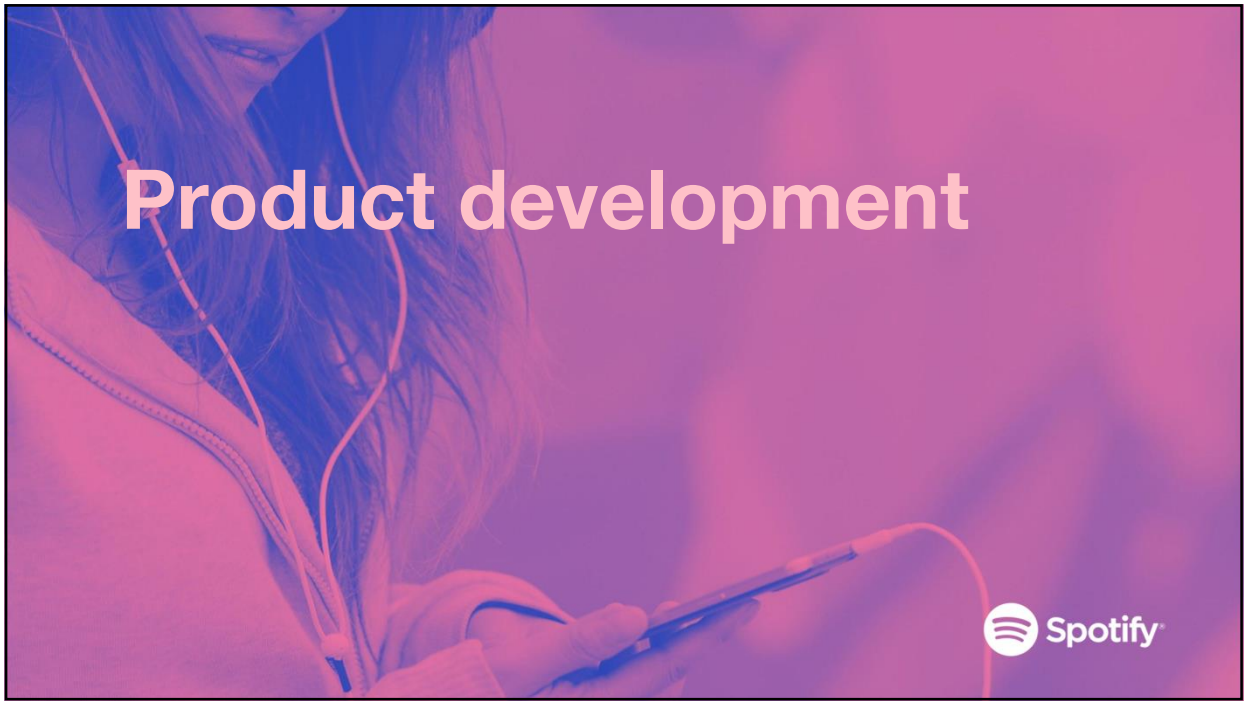
Data Scientist

Product Owner

Team lead

Designer

https://www.spotify.com/se/jobs/



Spotify is an Agile shop

Started agile, keeps being agile (or at least trying to be)

But Agile manifesto > Scrum or Kanban or Mob programming

Main guiding principles:

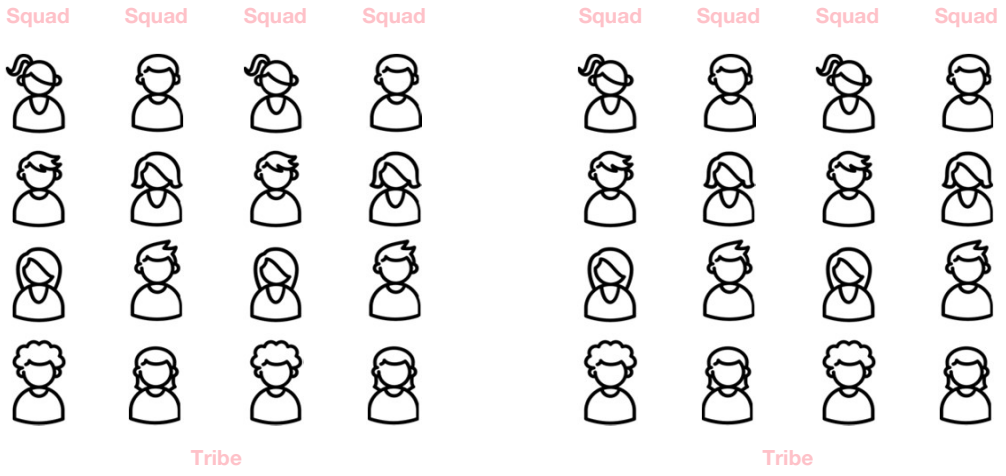
- Autonomous cross-functional teams (squads)
- Always evaluate and improve how we work – don't be afraid to change how we work – try and evaluate!
- Value teams over individuals, but give individuals a lot of freedom and a lot of support
- Celebrate failure! But don't do the same mistake twice, and fail fast!
- Diversity!

So far, we could be a ten people startup …

What happens when there are ca 150 squads?

Organization

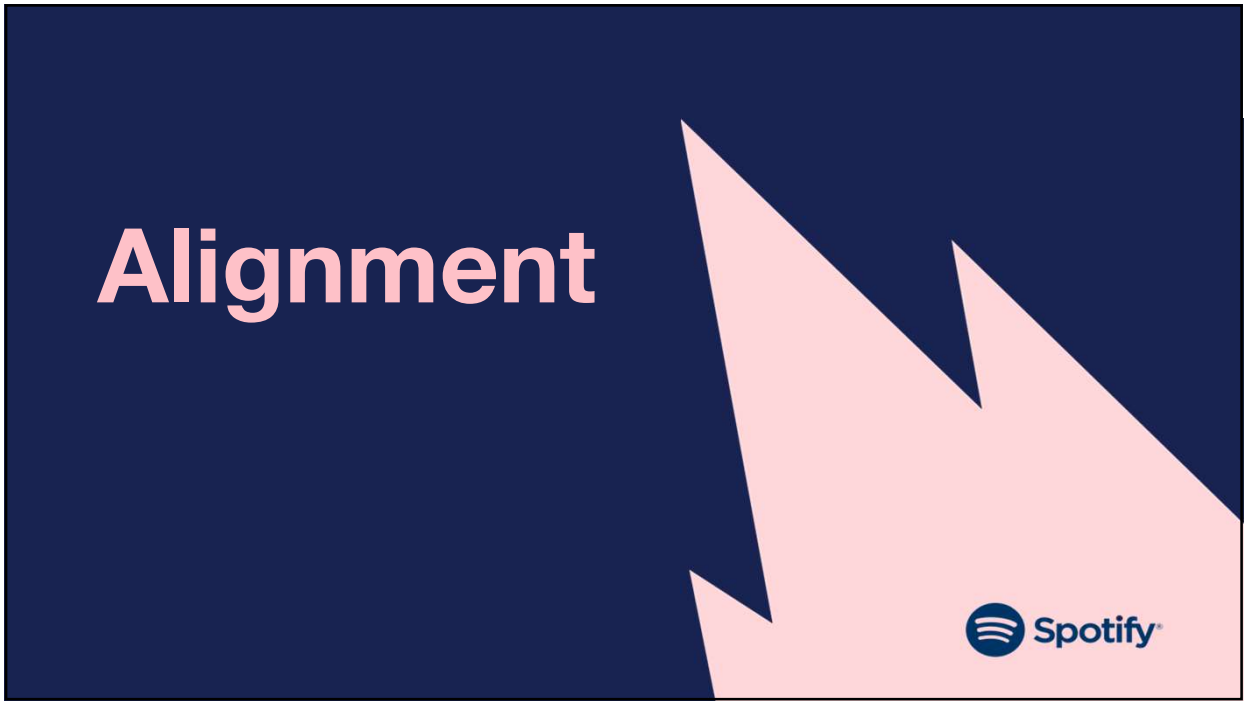
Spotify

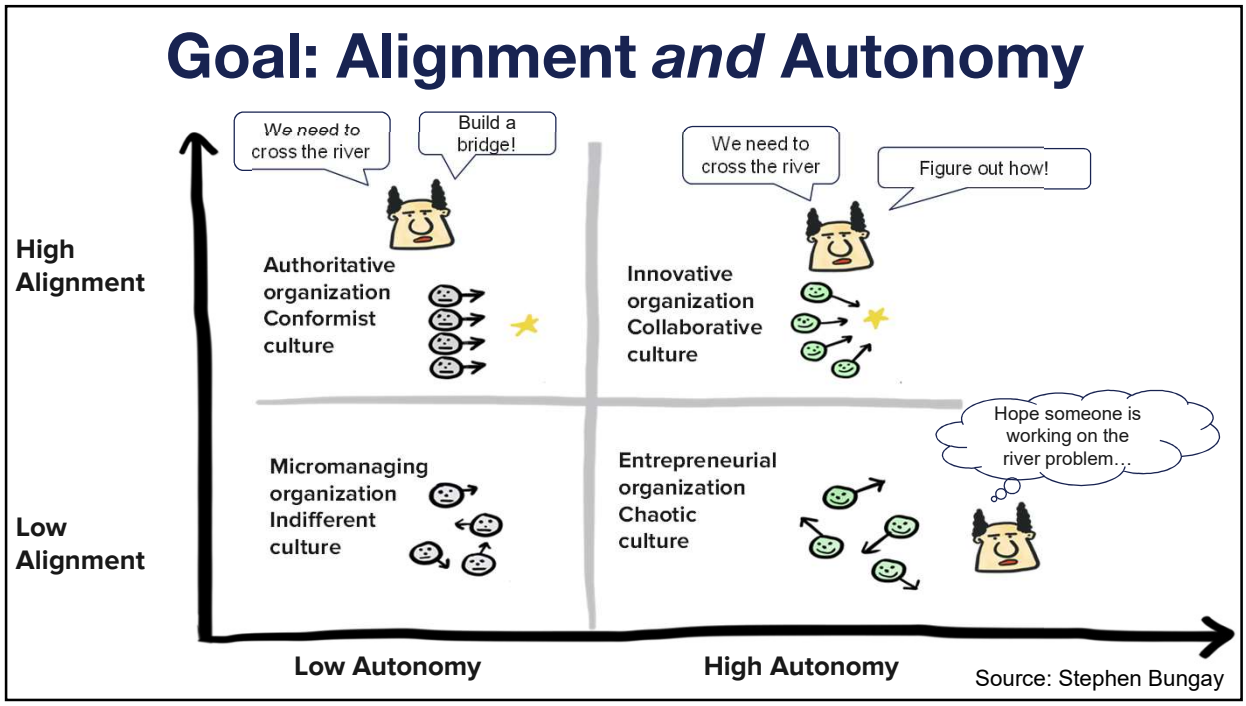


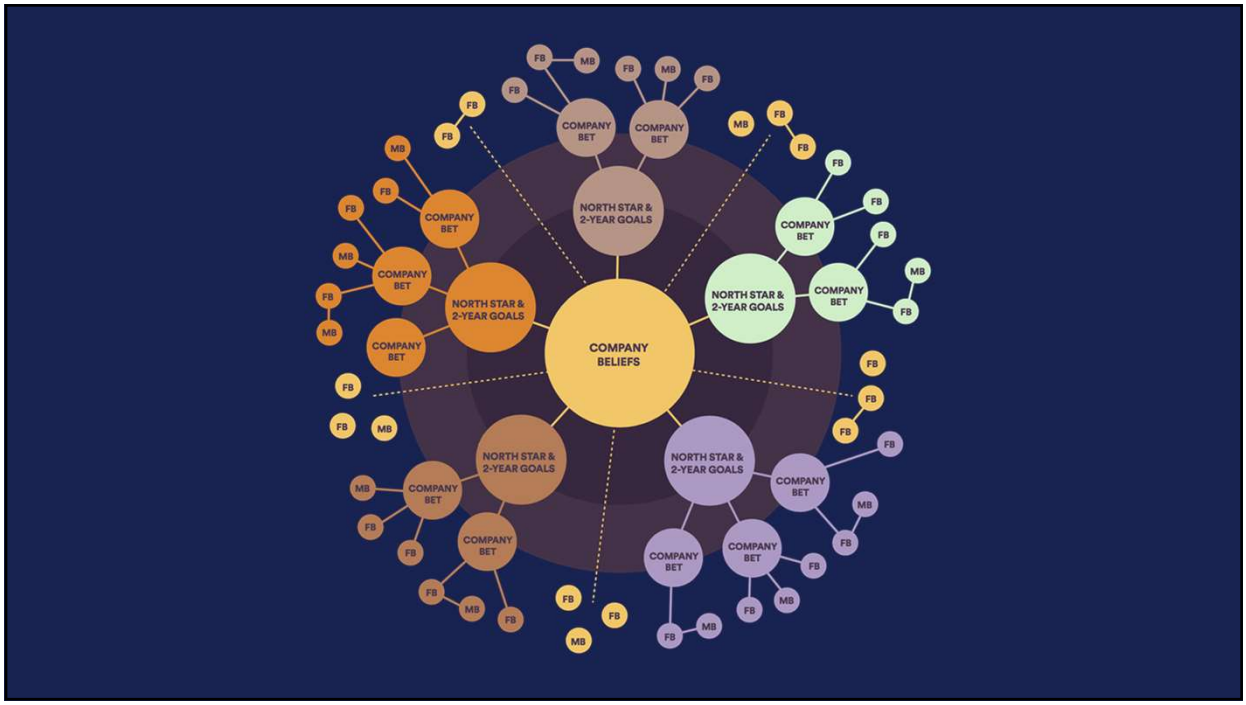
Mission and/or Alliance

Principles and challenges

Alignment




Goal: Alignment *and* Autonomy
We need to cross the river
Build a bridge!
We need to cross the river
Figure out how!
Hope someone is working on the river problem…
High Alignment
Low Alignment
Authoritative organization Conformist culture
Innovative organization Collaborative culture
Micromanaging organization Indifferent culture
Entrepreneurial organization Chaotic culture
Low Autonomy
High Autonomy
Source: Stephen Bungay


COMPANY BELIEFS
NORTH STAR & 2-YEAR GOALS
COMPANY BET
FB
MB

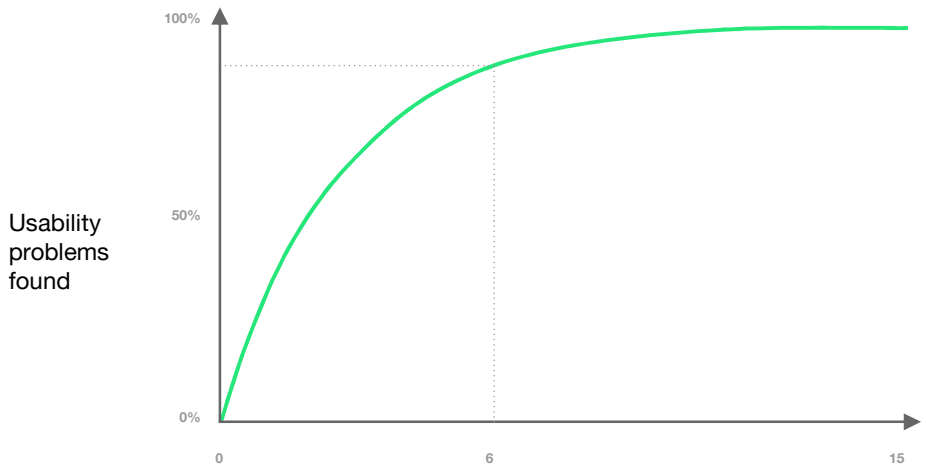
Current alignment strategy

- 10 Company bets ongoing at the same time
- Quarterly OKRs (on Tribe level)
  (Objectives and Key Results. But basically: this is what we'll do this quarter)
- Quarterly planning (on Squad level)
  (Remember: planning, and *estimation*, is HARD)
- Not super agile, but works better than before
  (We've done it one quarter ...)
- Also important: Central UI/UX teams

The journey of a feature

Avoid this

Illustration courtesy of Dan McKinley

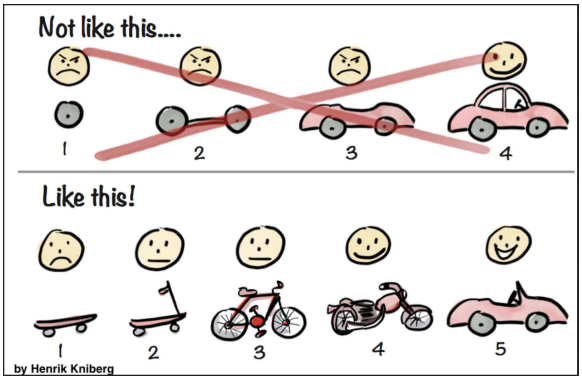


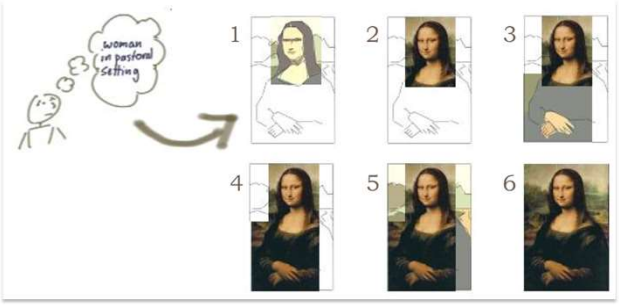
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/

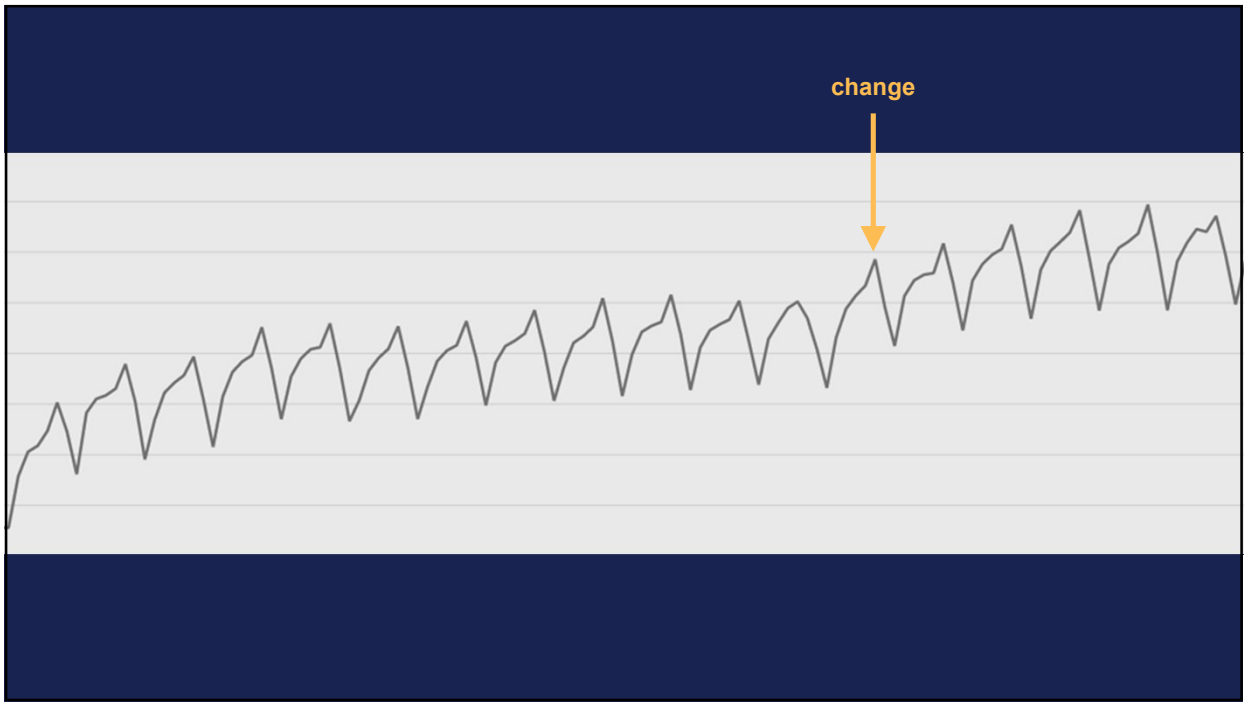
Better

Illustration courtesy of Dan McKinley

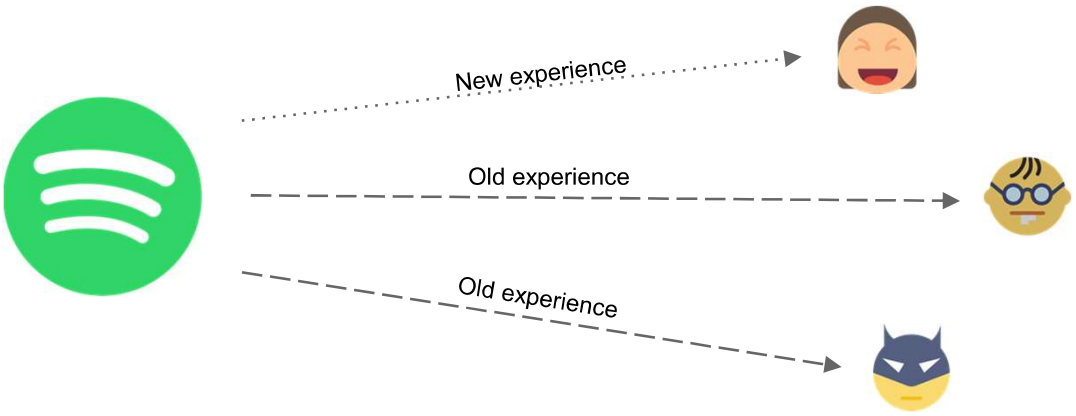
MVP





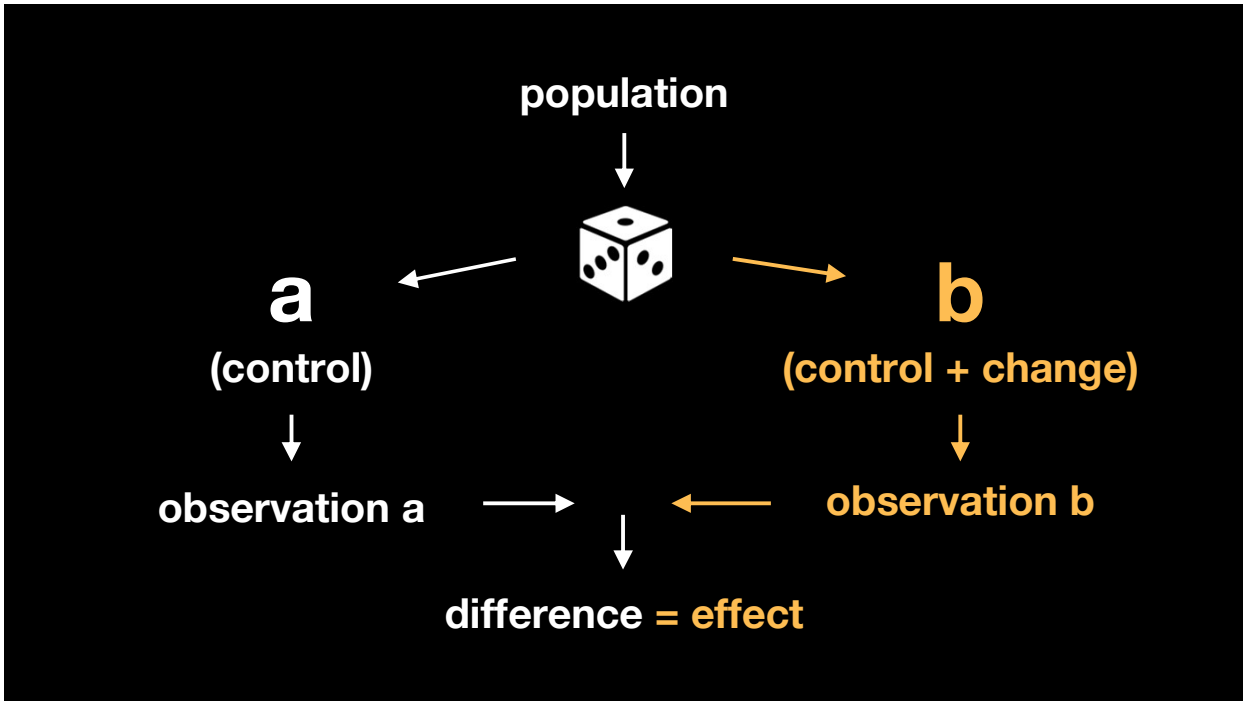


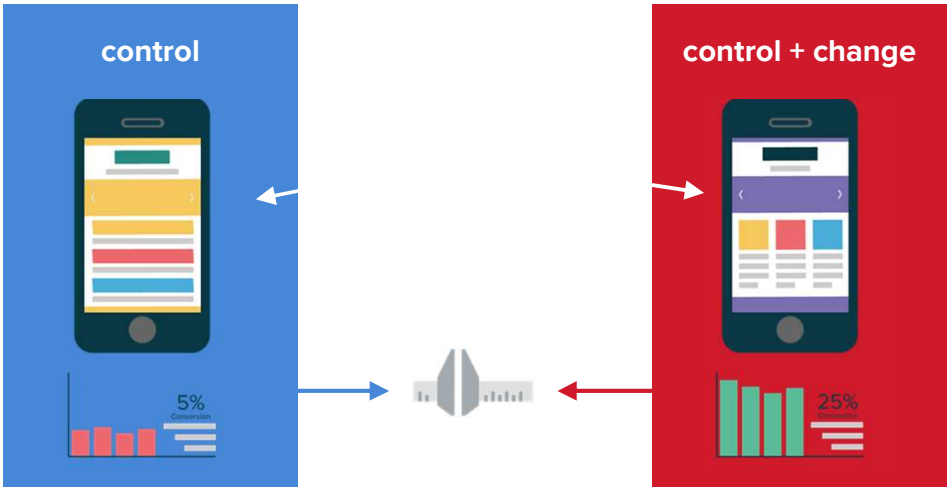
Feature toggling



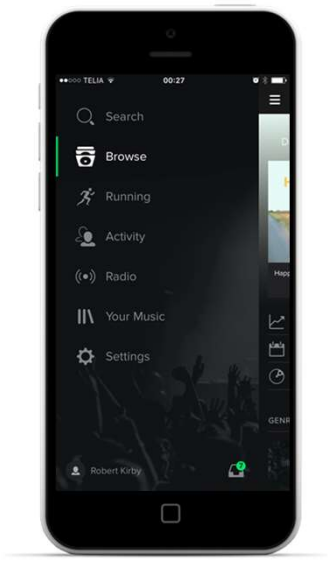
A / B Testing

Testing on users



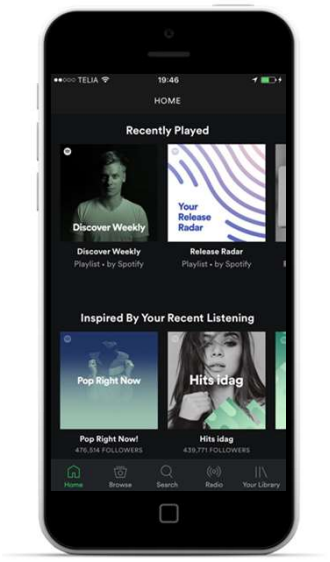


There is no one true Spotify

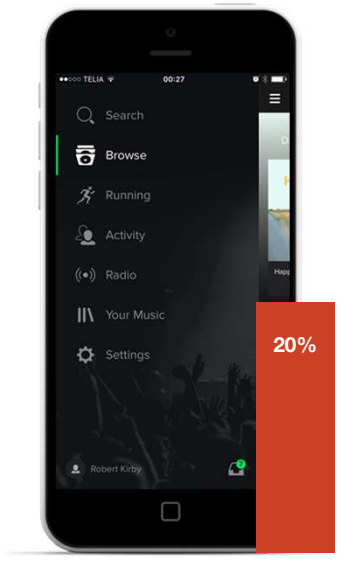


Control

VS

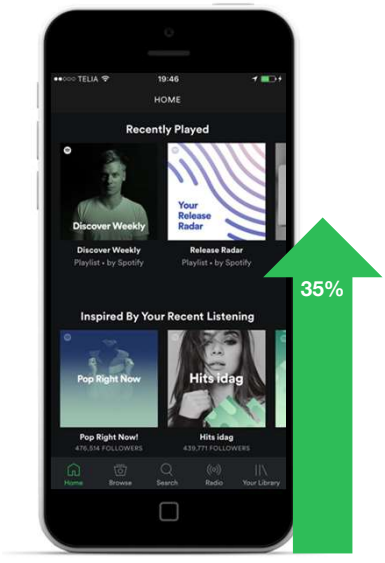


Test



Control

VS



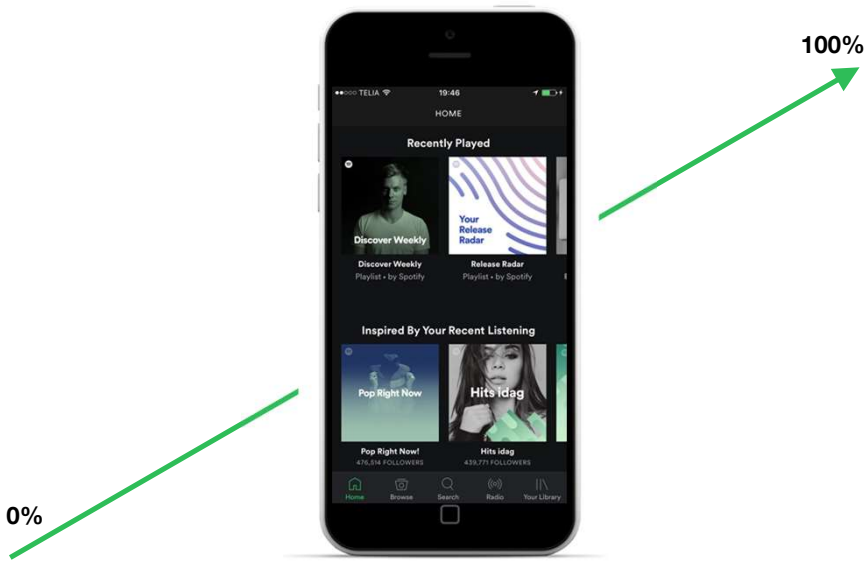
Test

Fictitious number are fictional

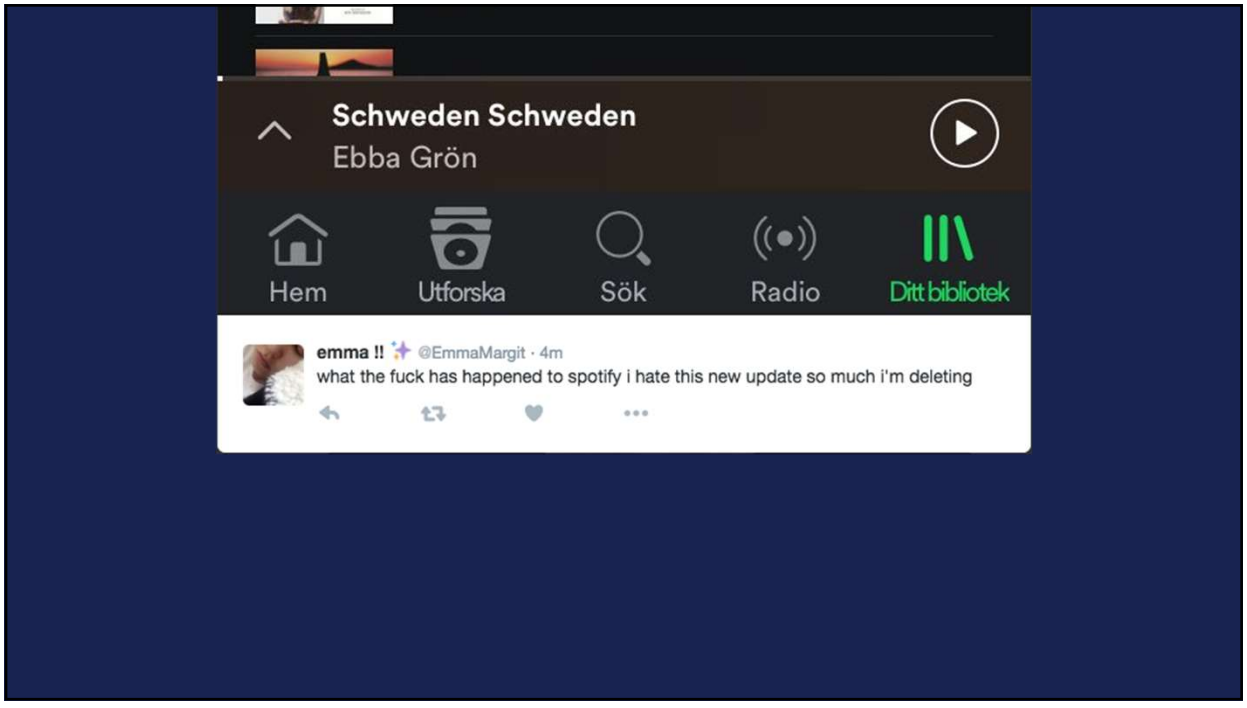
Best?

Idea	Prototype	Validate	MVP	Validate	Refine	Validate	Code	Release

Illustration courtesy of Dan McKinley



Rob McMorran @Noobstix · 3h
Thank you @Spotify for that update.
zac @zaccatron · 3h
Yo this @Spotify update
morgne moffat
Spotify update is
nim @nimzaytw
spotify's update
taylorwhalor
Yaaaass with the
C @__CheyenneRenee · 6h
Spotify's update is much more convenient
philly @phill_the_vibe · 6h
dude spotify's new update is great holy fuck
Ernesto García @gnapse · Jul 19
And they finally did it. @Spotify on #iOS uses tabs instead of a hamburger menu.
Adam Demasi @hbkirb · Jul 18
i've been playing spotify constantly for several hours, and now all of a sudden the hamburger menu has turned into a tab bar. A/B is fun!!!
Spotify update is actually good
The Weeknd Nacho @radxdaddy · 4h
I just got hype as fuck for the new user interface update Spotify just rolled out... I, am a dork.
Nomad
@A_Abdullahi88
Follow
@Spotify thx for the iOS update. It's life changing, and by life changing I mean I won't risk death as I change playlists while driving.


Schweden Schweden
Ebba Grön
Hem
Utforska
Sök
Radio
Ditt bibliotek
emma !! @EmmaMargit · 4m
what the fuck has happened to spotify i hate this new update so much i'm deleting

Thanks!
15 minute break
45 minutes questions
Spotify