

# **Startup Studio**

**AI-Accelerated Building and Validation**

01.22.26 C1W1

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# Agenda

- Instructor intro
- Class intro
- Exercises
- Homework

# Instructor Intro

# Who am I?

## Ken St. Clair

- Early-stage start-up Product Leader with 20+ years experience
  - Software engineering, sales engineering, product design, product leadership
  - Two robotics products from 0→1
  - Experience with 0→1, growth, acquisition, and depreciation
  - B2B, B2B2C, B2C
- BS Computer Science, Georgia Tech
- Masters of Human-Computer Interaction, Carnegie Mellon



aescape



facebook

Carnegie  
Mellon  
University



# Whom have I Worked with?

## Select Partners and Clients

Gyms + Spas

Print Media

Broadcast

Streaming/Sports

Food Service



LOTTE NEW YORK PALACE

R E M E D Y PL



THE WELL

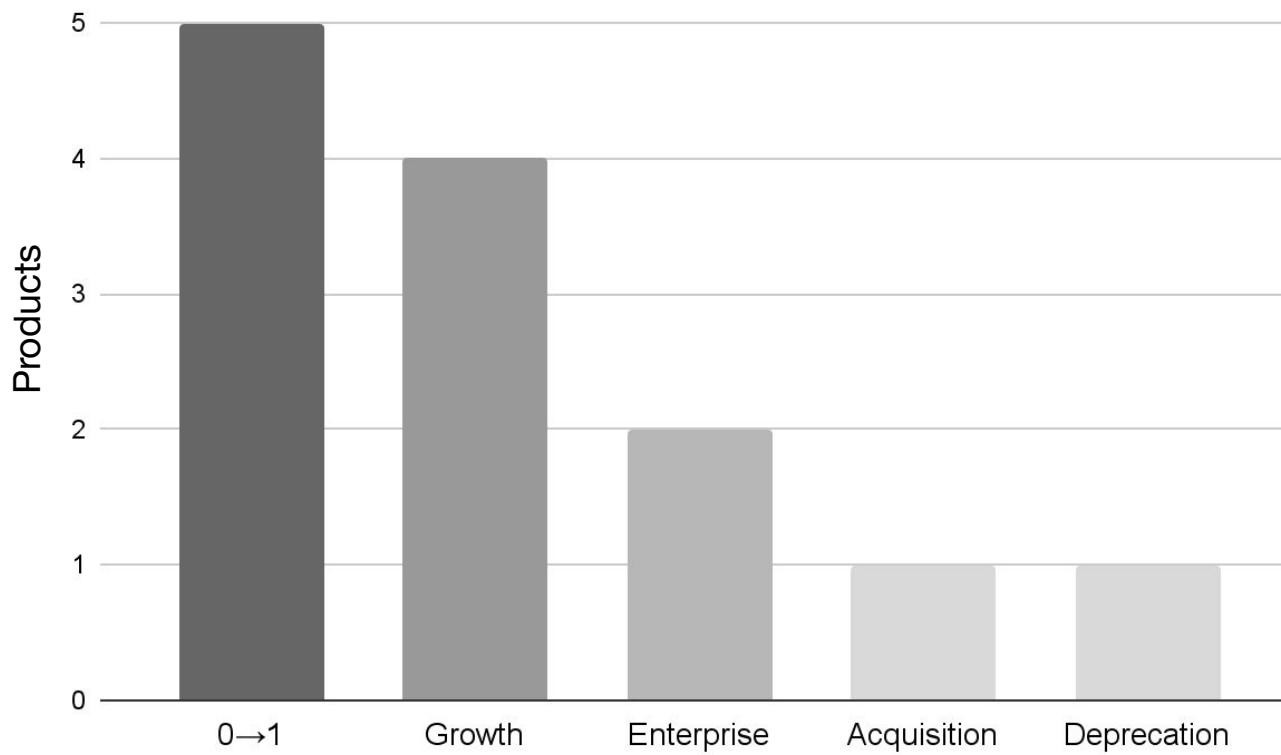


More...



Nationwide

# Product Stages I've Worked On



# Class Intro

# What's a “Studio”

A course focused on making, iterating, and critique.

Students learn by building real artifacts and receiving continuous feedback, rather than by absorbing theory first.



# What's “Startup Studio”

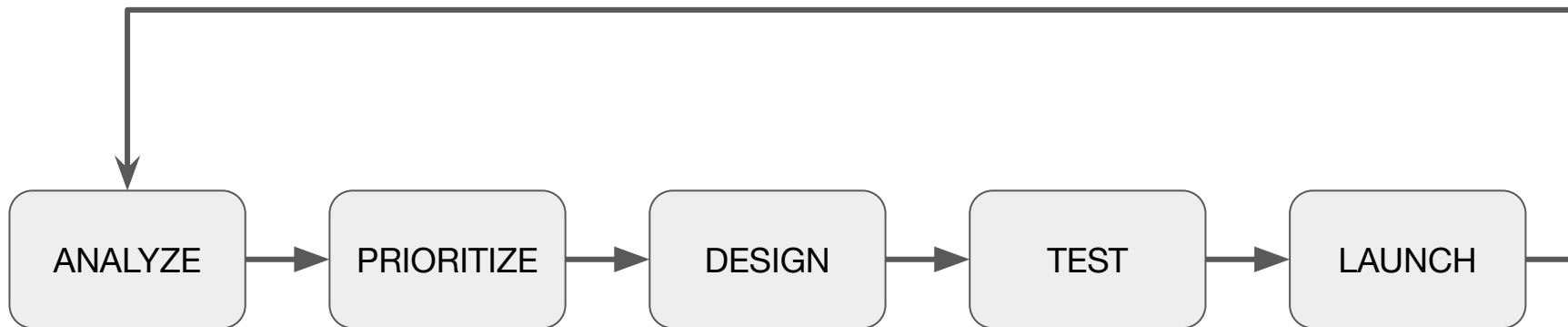
A course focused on making, iterating, critique, **experimentation and launching.**

Students learn by building real artifacts and receiving continuous feedback, rather than by absorbing theory first.



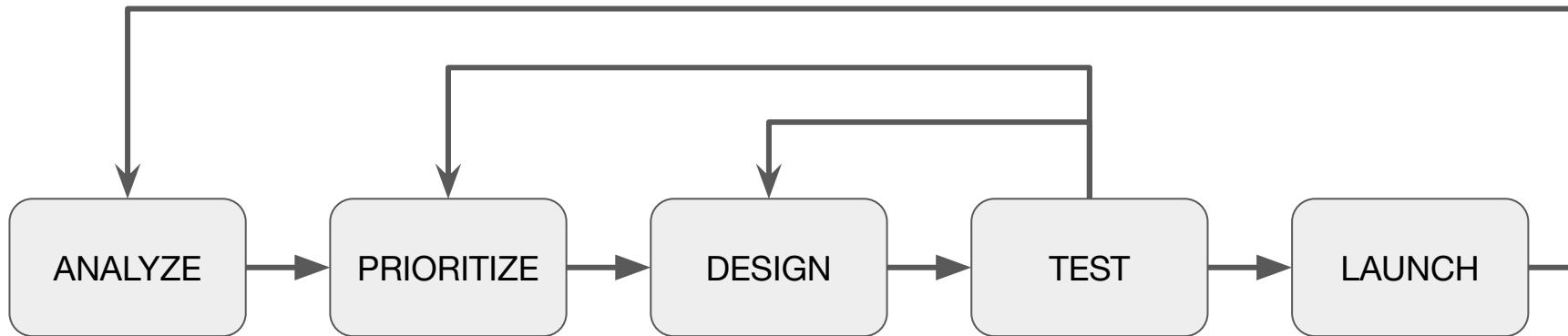
# Startup OS

The operating system for this class



# Startup OS

The operating system for this class



# Analyze

- Problem Exploration
- Market research
- Online research
- Monitoring analytics
- User interviews

# Prioritize

- I've got more ideas than I can execute at once
- How do I pick which to do first?

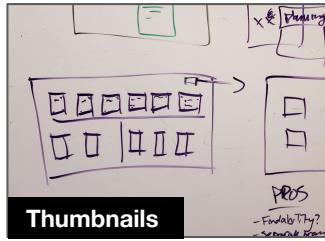
# Design(/Build)

- Software, yes

But building also includes

- Paper prototypes
- Low-fi prototypes
- Mockups

# [Design Ex.] Personas, Wireframing, Integrated Journeys



A Web Page titled "COOKING" showing a sequence of actions for a "Chicken Wing" item across four screens:

- Screen 21: Actions: Dip, Shake, Hang, Remove. Status: 21.
- Screen 23: ACTION BEHIND SCHEDULE HAND +0:05s. Status: 23.
- Screen 24: Actions: Dip, Shake, Hang, Remove. Status: 24.
- Screen 28: Actions: Dip, Shake, Hang, Remove. Status: 28.
- Screen 36: Actions: Dip, Shake, Hang, Remove. Status: 36.

The "IN" and "OUT" sections show "Tater Tots" and "Chicken Tenders" respectively, each with a "CHANGE FOOD" button. A note says "Time until slot is needed".

Wireframes for a COOKING application:

- COOKING screen: Shows a "Chicken Wing" card with actions: Dip, Shake, Hang. Notes: "Flip card (w/ preview mode and show log of technical details)" and "Color Me up: the entire card to show the time remaining for the next action".
- Tech WO Screen: Shows a "Tech WO" card with a "Disable slot" button.
- Part Screen: Shows a "Part Screen" with a "Scan" button.
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Annotations include: "Click title or image to change the classification", "Color Me up: the entire card to show the time remaining for the next action", and "Scan".

Temp Cook Persona:

Potentially their first day on the job in this location, the temp chef is responsible for flipping burgers, dropping fry baskets, and assembling food--sometimes all in the same shift. Their job is hot and chaotic, and sometimes dangerous.

They report to the stand manager.

They are likely to no-show or leave for a different job as soon as they can find anything better.

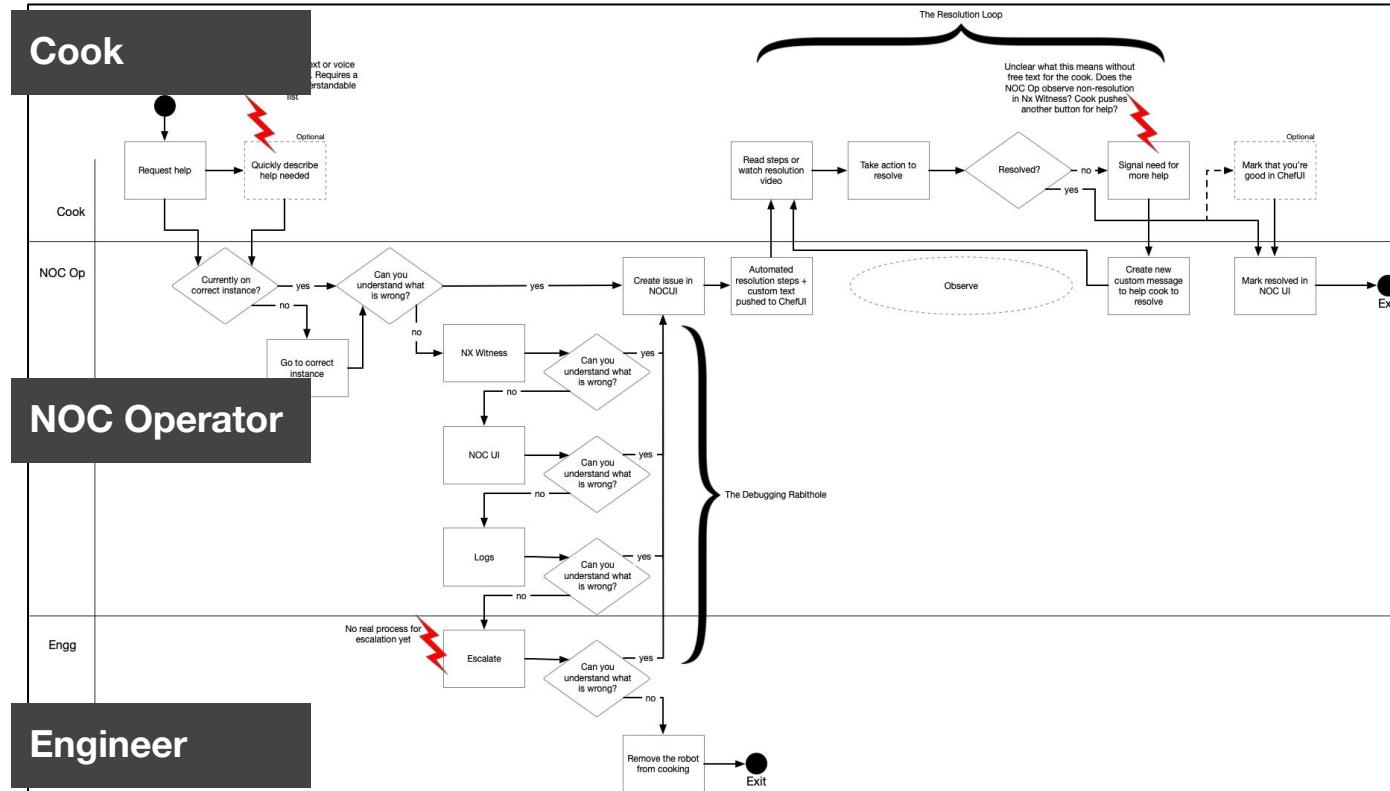
Stadium Manager Persona:

The stadium manager thinks at the level of resources: How many SKUs are we using across the stadium? Which stands aren't profitable and have to be supported by the manager? What's the best way to get items should be scaled down to only a few stands? He ensures that the stadium remains a profitable business and enjoyable destination to visit. He reports to the stand manager.

Seasoned Cook Persona:

Some cooks stay more consistently throughout the season, gaining skills and taking a greater stake in the success of their stand. The job is still hot and chaotic, and sometimes dangerous, but they've learned how to successfully navigate the terrain and may need to unlearn behaviors to work with robots. They report to the stand manager.

# [Design Ex.] The Debugging Rabbit Hole and Resolution Loop



Mapping the debugging process across each user – Cook, NOC Operator, and Engineer – allowed us to identify high impact areas of focus: the debugging rabbithole, and the resolution communication loop.

Improved performance and efficiency in debug and resolution have a direct impact on revenue by affecting the throughput and overall volume of the cooking session.

# Test

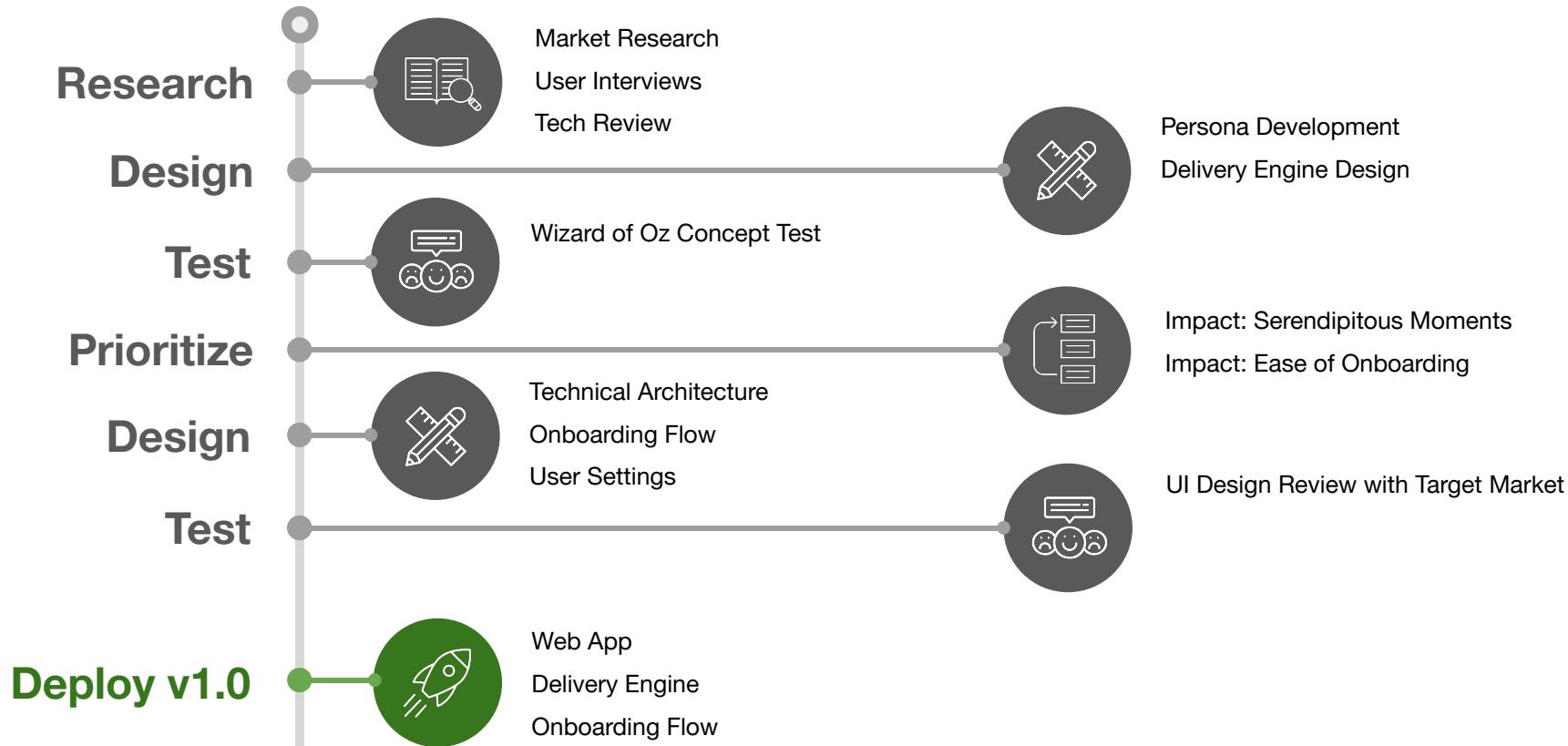
Not QA testing

- User Testing
- Experiments

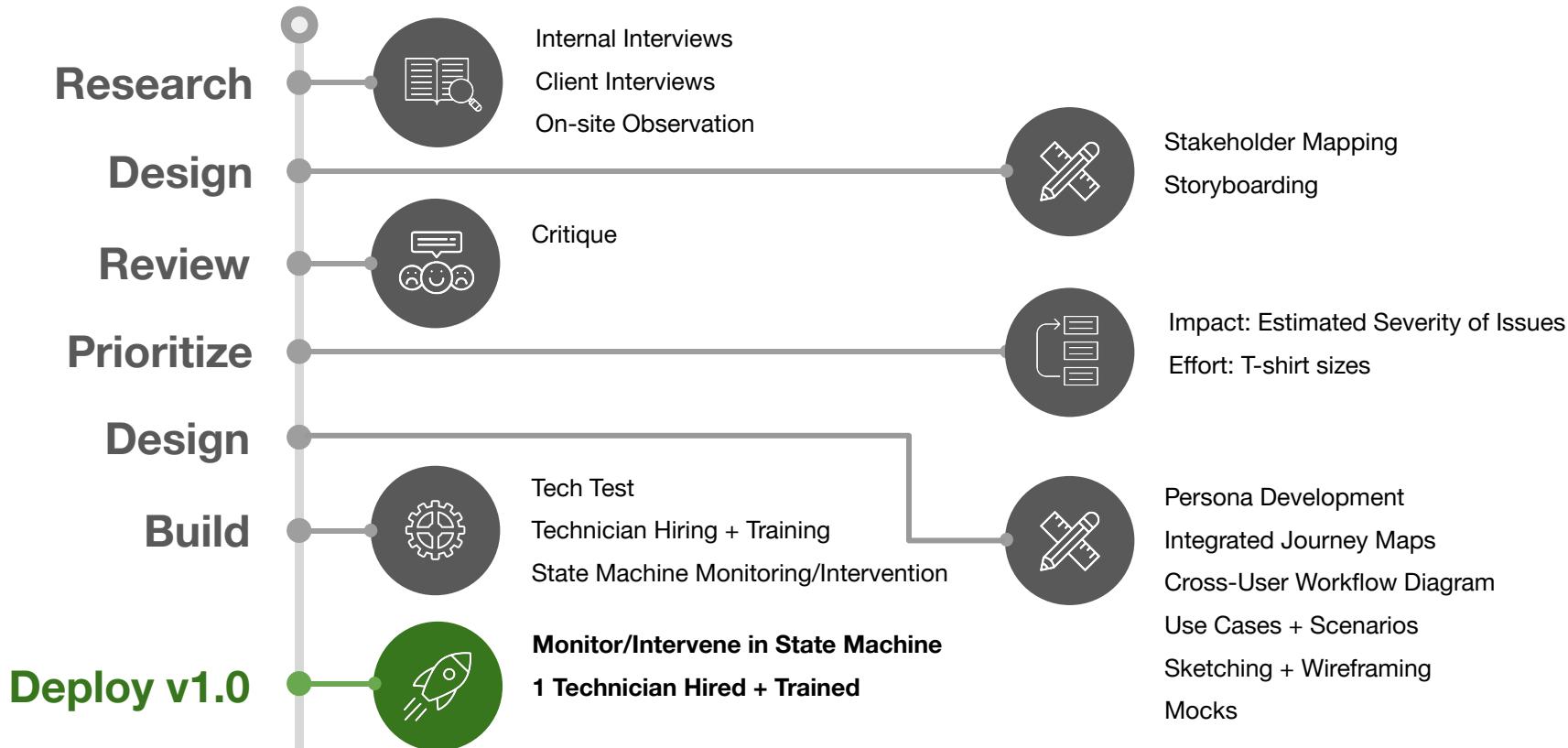
# Launch

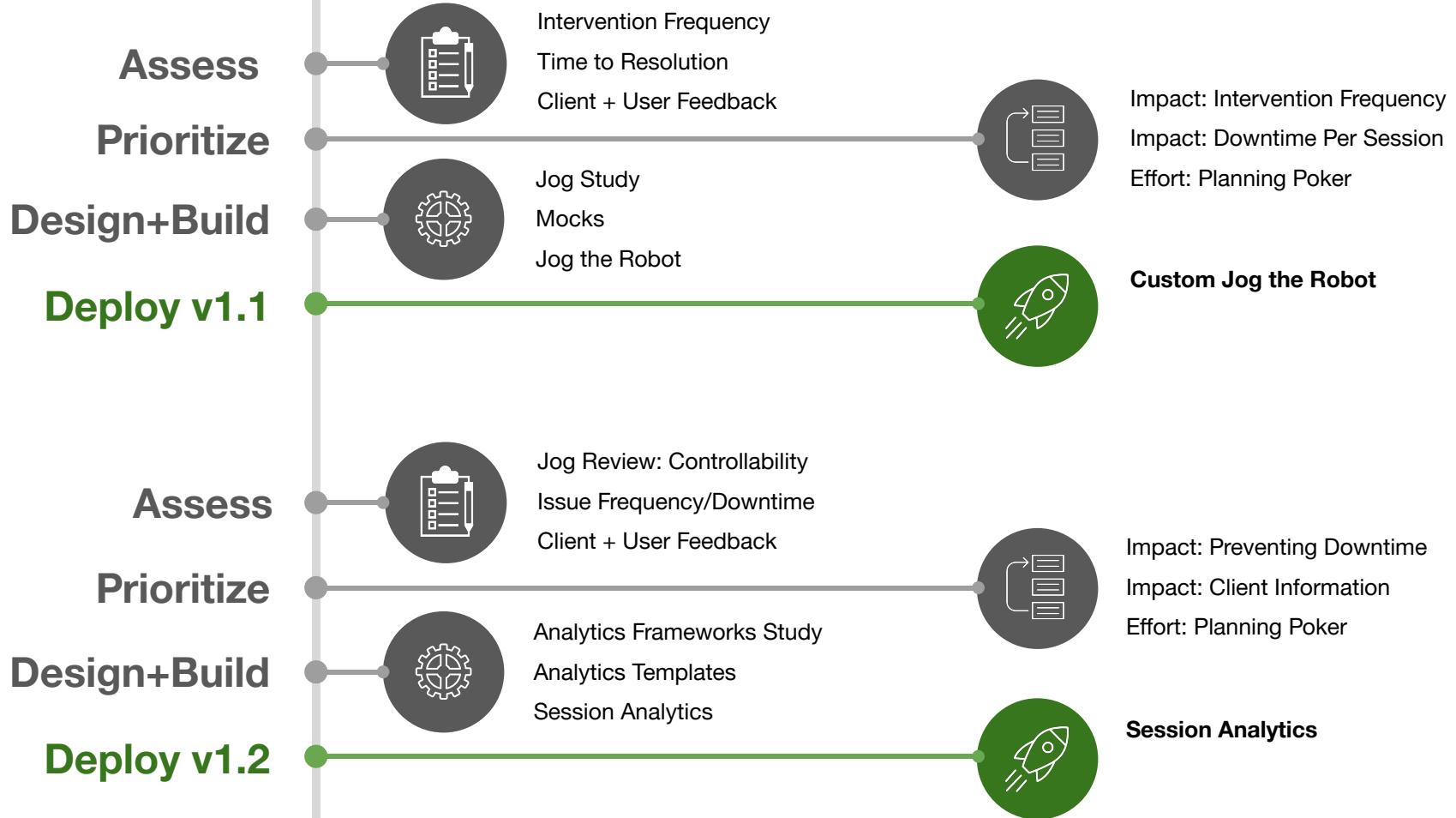
- Get real users

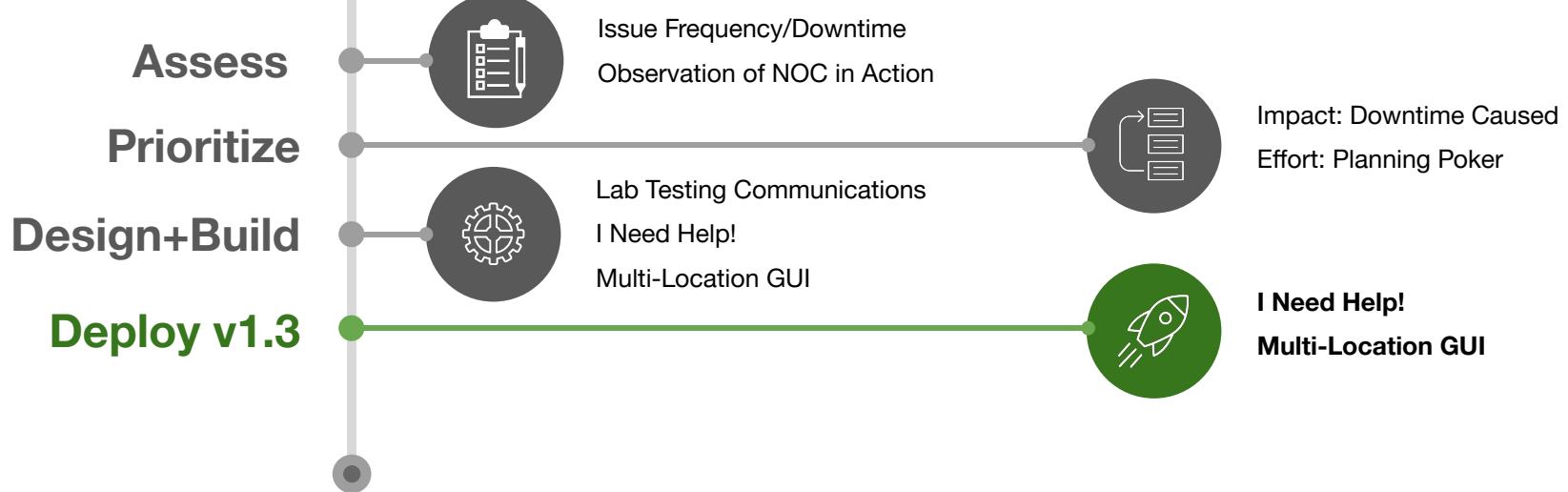
# Real Timeline Excerpt: Text Affirmations



# Real Timeline Excerpt: Network Operating Center







# What We're NOT Focusing On

- Hardware
- B2B
- Research/Publishing
- Theory/Deep Foundational Learning

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# **Class Position on AI**

Use AI for everything.

# Syllabus

<http://bit.ly/4sS0wl9>

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_dz-uGV6ifRUdEkUkkG9kIOrJoXkOSqEi6-Tzi-Ngo/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_dz-uGV6ifRUdEkUkkG9kIOrJoXkOSqEi6-Tzi-Ngo/edit?tab=t.0)

Deck: <https://bit.ly/4pYNAYd>

# Exercise

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# Speed Dating

Answer 3 Questions

- What is one project you're proud of?
- What kind of user/problem space you are drawn to?
- What would you like to get better at through this course?

**Back to Your Seats!**

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# Problems Brainstorm

*Just yell them out at me!*

# Homework

# Reading

*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*

Complete book (~220 pages) by Week 3

# Assignment 1 (Due Thurs 1/29) - KRS2212

## Build Anything

- Use any AI builder (lovable, cursor, etc)
- Build anything you like

It should have

- Some functionality (not just a brochure/marketing page)
- Be hosted somewhere. No custom URL necessary but get a live URL from lovable/railway.app/heroku etc

Avoid for now

- Logins, payments, other basic logistical features that will eat up time

## Write a Reflection

- What is AI bad at when it comes to building software? Reference your own work and where AI was less helpful or hampered your work/intent. What were some patterns you used that made it more helpful?

