

# INSPIRED

HOW TO CREATE TECH  
PRODUCTS THAT CUSTOMERS  
LOVE

By

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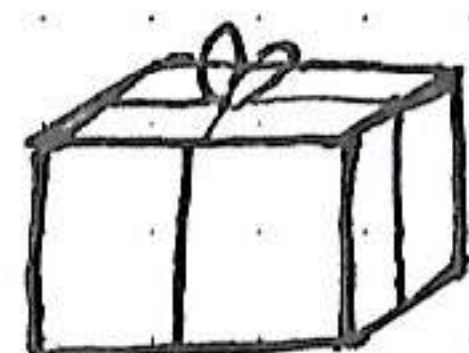
SKETCH NOTES  
By ARVIND



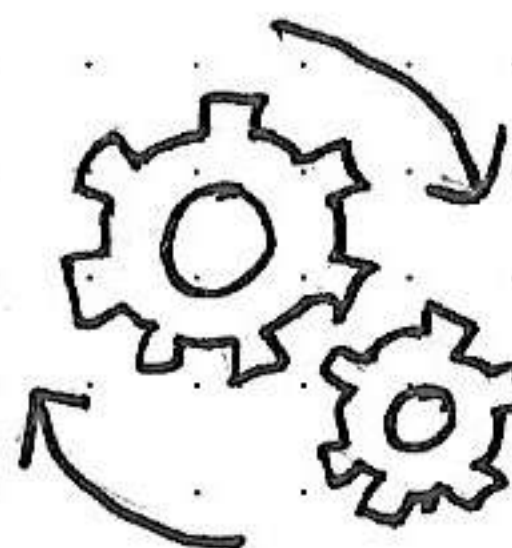
LESSONS FROM TOP TECH  
COMPANIES



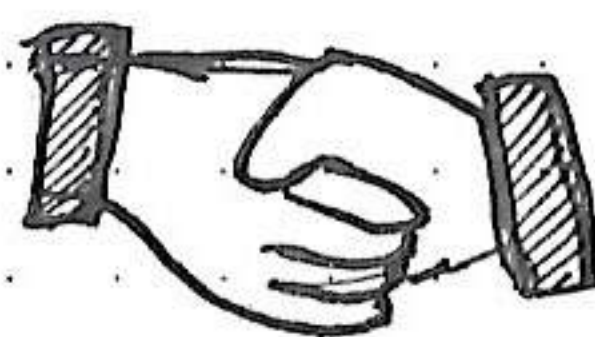
THE RIGHT PEOPLE



THE RIGHT PRODUCT



THE RIGHT PROCESS



THE RIGHT CULTURE



1. LESSONS FROM TOP TECH COMPANIES

## STARTUP

- GOAL → PRODUCT MARKET FIT
- MONEY IS TIGHT ~25 people
- OPTIMIZED TO LEARN FAST

## GROWTH STAGE

- GOAL → GROWTH + SCALE
- TECHNICAL DEBT ~100 people
- CHANGING PROCESSES

## ENTERPRISE

- GOAL → CONSISTENT PRODUCT INNOVATION
- CREATING NEW VALUE NOT INCREMENTAL

## ROOT CAUSE OF FAILED PRODUCTS

### TYPICAL PROCESS

IDEAS

BIZ CASE

ROADMAP

REQUIREMENTS

DESIGN

BUILD

TEST

DEPLOY

AGILE PROCESS FOR BUILD ONLY

WATER FALL

1. SOURCE OF IDEAS IS SALES / SENIOR STAKEHOLDERS

2. BIZ CASE NEED ROI FACT → WE CAN'T KNOW

4. PRODUCT MGRS WORK AS PROJECT MGR.

6. ENGINEERS ARE INVOLVED VERY LATE (ONLY TO BUILD)

8. ENTIRE PROCESS IS VERY PROJECT CENTRIC

10. OPPORTUNITY COST DUE TO BUILDING WRONG PRODUCT.

3. ROADMAPS ARE FAKE 50% IDEAS DON'T WORK.

5. DESIGN IS CALLED IN VERY LATE.

7. AGILE IS USED ONLY FOR DEV

9. CUSTOMER VALIDATION HAPPENS IN THE END.

3 PRINCIPLES TO MAKE BETTER PRODUCTS

1. RISKS ARE TACKLED UPFRONT.

⇒ VALUE RISK, USABILITY RISK, FEASIBILITY & BUSINESS VIABILITY RISK.

2. PRODUCTS ARE DEFINED & DESIGNED COLLABORATIVELY.

⇒ PRODUCT + DESIGN + ENGINEERING WORK SIDE BY SIDE

3. IT'S ABOUT SOLVING PROBLEMS, NOT IMPLEMENTING FEATURES.

⇒ PRODUCT ROADMAPS ARE ABOUT OUTPUT. INSTEAD IT SHOULD BE ABOUT ACHIEVING BUSINESS RESULTS.

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# THE RIGHT TEAM

## PRODUCT TEAM

- 1 PRODUCT MGR + 1 DESIGNER + 10-12 ENGINEERS
- TEAM REPORTS TO RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONAL MGR
- CO-LOCATED, AUTONOMOUS COLLABORATIVE.

## PRODUCT DESIGNER

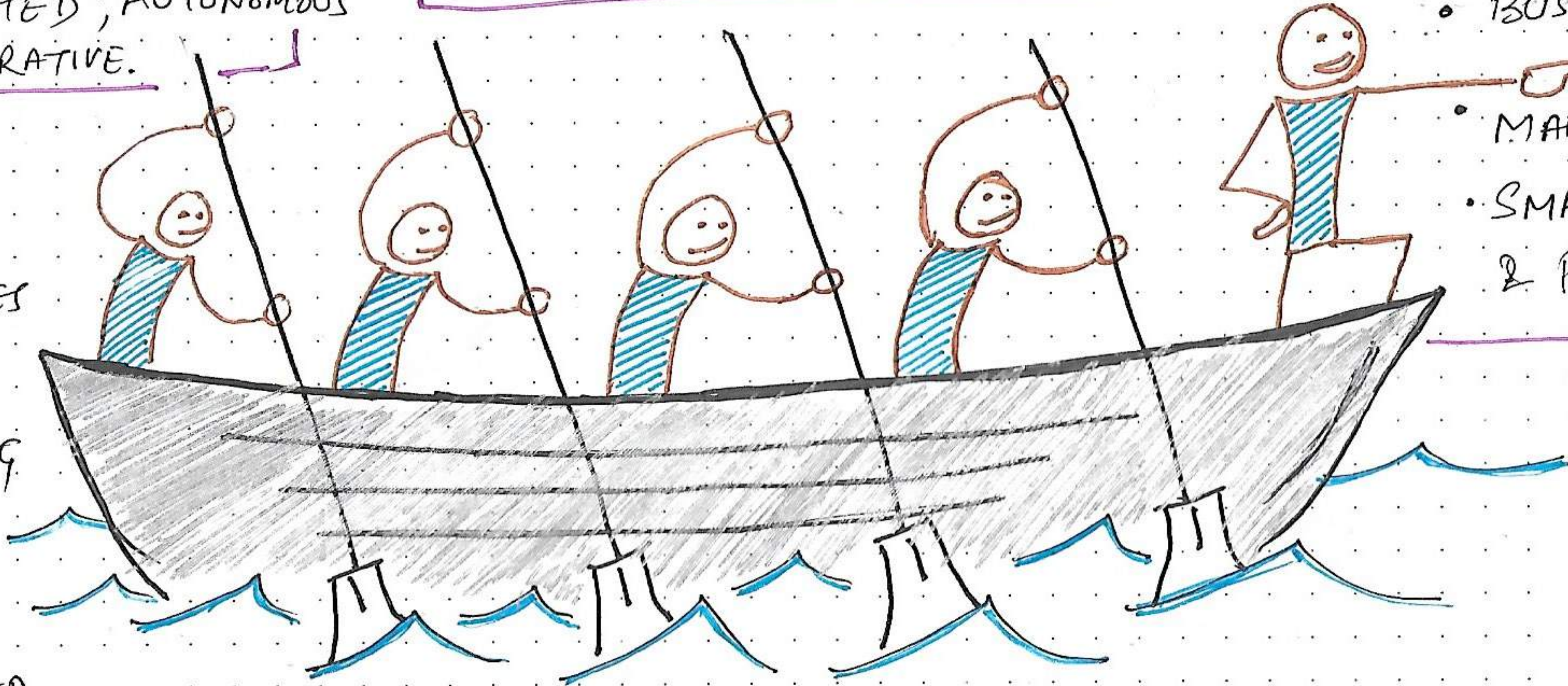
- RESPONSIBLE PRODUCT DISCOVERY
- HOLISTIC USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN
- USER TESTING & RESEARCH
- INTERACTION & VISUAL DESIGN
- MEASURED ON SUCCESS OF PRODUCT

## PRODUCT MANAGER

- STRONGEST TALENT IN YOUR COMPANY
- DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF:
  - CUSTOMER
  - DATA
  - BUSINESS
  - MARKET & INDUSTRY
- SMART, CREATIVE & PERSISTENT

## ENGINEERS

- MISSIONARIES & NOT MERCENARIES
- INVOLVE THEM IN UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER PAIN
- VERY IMPORTANT PRODUCT MGR BOND WITH ENGINEERS
- TECH LEAD ROLE IS KEY.



## MARKETING MGR

- REPRESENT MARKET
- RESPONSIBLE FOR
  - POSITIONING
  - MESSAGING
  - GO TO MARKET PLAN
- DEEPLY ENGAGED WITH SALES

## SUPPORT ROLES

- USER RESEARCHERS
- DATA ANALYSTS
- TEST AUTOMATION ENGINEERS
- THESE ROLES MAYBE PLAYED BY ENGINEERS/PART-TIMERS

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2. THE RIGHT PEOPLE

HOLISTIC VIEW  
OF THE PRODUCT

RECRUIT, DEVELOP  
& RETAIN TALENT

PEOPLE @ SCALE

# LEADER

## PRODUCT

- HOW ENTIRE SYSTEM FITS TOGETHER (PRODUCT VISION, STRATEGY, FUNCTIONALITY, BUSINESS RULES & LOGIC)
- VP-PRODUCT, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT, HEAD OF PRODUCT.

## DESIGN

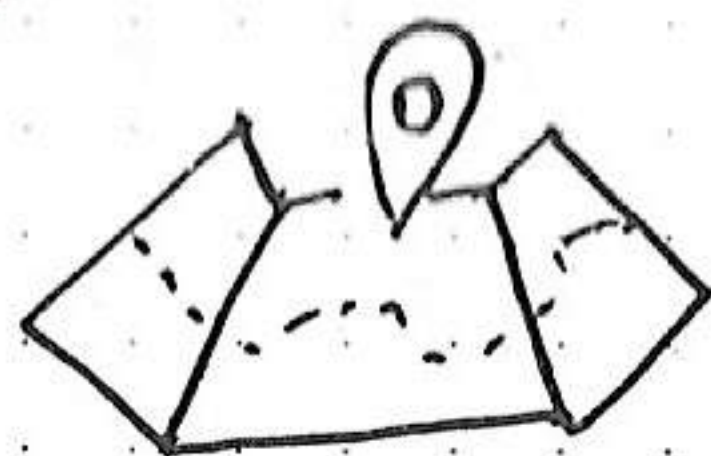
- RESPONSIBLE FOR HOLISTIC USER EXPERIENCE
- STRONG KNOWLEDGE OF BUSINESS, USERS, CUSTOMER JOURNEYS, INTERACTIONS & INTERDEPENDENCIES
- MANAGES/DIRECTOR OF DESIGN  
PRINCIPAL DESIGNER

## TECHNOLOGY

- HOLISTIC VIEW OF HOW SYSTEM WORKS FROM TECH POV.
- ARCHITECTURE, SYSTEM DESIGN, TECHNICAL DEBT.
- CTO, VP-ENGG.



### 3. THE RIGHT PRODUCT



## ROADMAPS

- PRIORITIZED LIST OF FEATURES & PROJECTS COMING FROM TOP STAKEHOLDERS. + DUE DATES

- ROADMAPS SUCK b'COZ
  - ① 50% OF PRODUCT IDEAS FAIL TO DELIVER IMPACT
  - ② EVEN FOR GOOD IDEAS, IT TAKES MANY ITERATIONS TO GET THERE.

- ALTERNATIVE IS TO GIVE TEAM BIZ OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE + CLARIFY HOW OUTCOME WILL BE MEASURED. LET TEAM FIGURE OUT HOW TO SOLVE.



## VISION

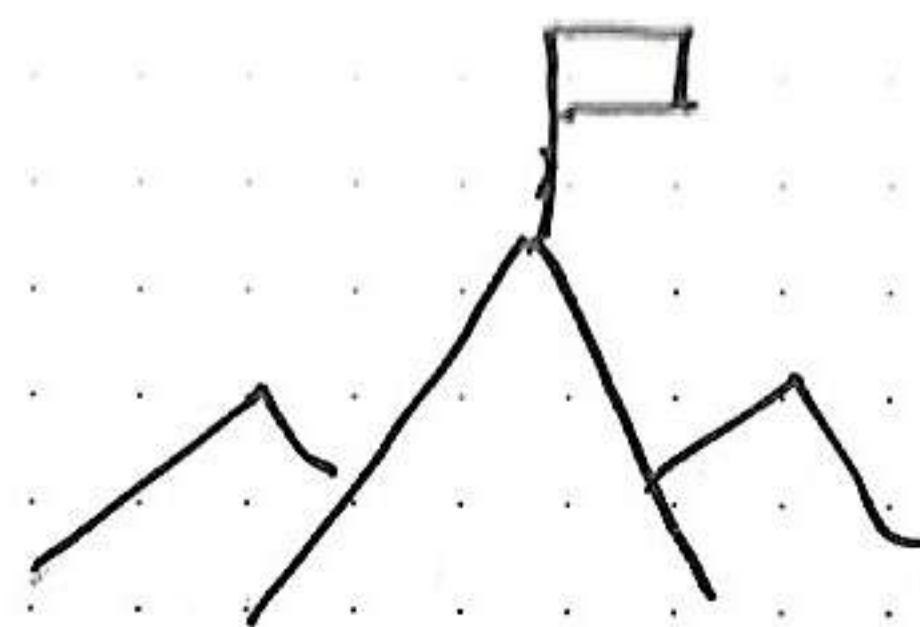
- DEFINES THE FUTURE WE ARE TRYING TO CREATE. 2-5 yrs away.

- VISION  $\neq$  MISSION STATEMENT

- VISION  $\neq$  SPECIFICATION

- VISION = PERSUASIVE PIECE OR STORYBOARD OR PROTOTYPE

- PURPOSE IS TO INSPIRE THE TEAM & ACT AS A EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT TOOL.

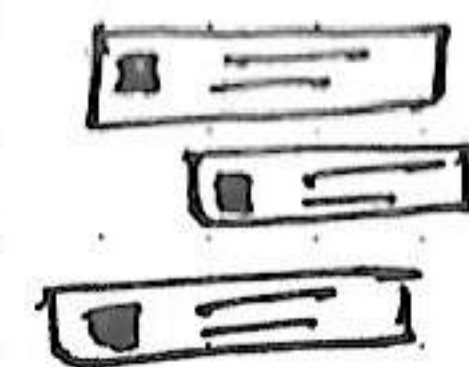


## STRATEGY

- SEQUENCE OF PRODUCTS & RELEASES WE PLAN TO DELIVER TO REALIZE VISION

- VISION = LEADERSHIP  
 $\Rightarrow$  STRATEGY = MGMT  
LEADERSHIP INSPIRES AND MGMT HELPS US GET THERE.

- PRIORITIZE & FOCUS NO ONE WAY TO DO
- FOR MARKET BASED PRIORITIZATION, CONSIDER TAM, GTM & TTM TO DECIDE.



## PRINCIPLES

### VISION

- ① START WITH WHY
- ② LOVE PROBLEM, NOT SOLUTION
- ③ THINK BIG
- ④ DISRUPT YOURSELF
- ⑤ INSPIRE
- ⑥ EMBRACE TRENDS
- ⑦ ANTICIPATE CHANGE
- ⑧ STUBBORN ON VISION FLEXIBLE ON DETAIL
- ⑨ VISION IS FAR
- ⑩ EVANGELIZE

### STRATEGY

- ① FOCUS 1 MARKET / PERSONA
- ② ALIGNED TO BIZ STRATEGY
- ③ ALIGNED TO GTM
- ④ OBSESS ON CUSTOMER
- ⑤ EVANGELIZE.



## 4. THE RIGHT PROCESS

\* THE RIGHT PROCESS IS A COMBINATION OF TECHNIQUES, MINDSET & CULTURE \*

\* BROADLY CLASSIFIED  $\Rightarrow$  [DISCOVERY PROCESS] + [DELIVERY PROCESS]

PRODUCT DISCOVERY PROCESS  $\rightarrow$  DISCOVERING IN DETAIL WHAT CUSTOMER SOLUTION NEEDS TO BE. SHOULD BE RELIABLE & SCALABLE

$\Rightarrow$  THE KEY IS TO GET IDEAS IN FRONT OF REAL USERS/CUSTOMERS EARLY & OFTEN

PURPOSE IS TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL RISKS

- ① VALUE RISK  $\rightarrow$  WILL CUSTOMER BUY.
- ② USABILITY RISK  $\rightarrow$  CAN USER FIGURE IT OUT
- ③ FEASIBILITY RISK  $\rightarrow$  CAN WE BUILD IT
- ④ VIABILITY RISK  $\rightarrow$  DOES IT WORK FOR BUSINESS

### PRINCIPLES:

- ① NO ONE CAN TELL YOU WHAT TO BUILD UNLESS THEY SEE IT (PROTOTYPE)
- ② MOST IMP. IS TO ESTABLISH COMPELLING VALUE
- ③ USUALLY GOOD EXPERIENCE IS HARDER TO BUILD THAN ENGINEERING
- ④ DESIGN, TECH NEED TO WORK CLOSELY
- ⑤ MANY IDEAS WILL NOT WORK OUT, THE ONES THAT WORK REQUIRE ITERATIONS
- ⑥ VALIDATE IDEAS ON REAL USERS/CLIENTS
- ⑦ GOAL IS TO VALIDATE IDEAS FAST + CHEAP
- ⑧ VALIDATE FEASIBILITY DURING DISCOVERY.
- ⑨ VALIDATE VIABILITY DURING DISCOVERY
- ⑩ IT'S ABOUT SHARED LEARNING.

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5. THE RIGHT CULTURE

CELEBRATE BUSINESS RESULTS

OBSESS OVER CUSTOMERS

INTEGRATE & RELEASE CONTINUOUSLY

UNDERSTAND NEED OF SPEED & QUICK ITERATION

TEAM KNOWS SEVERAL OF THEIR FAVOURITE IDEAS WILL NOT REACH CUSTOMERS.

ENGAGE WITH CUSTOMERS EVERY WEEK.

ENGINEERS PARTICIPATE IN PROTOTYPING IN DISCOVERY PHASE

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COMPELLING VISION

MISSIONARIES

OBSERVE CUSTOMER STRUGGLES

UNDERSTAND BIZ CONSTRAINTS

ABLE TO RAPIDLY TRY IDEAS

LOVE BRAINSTORMING

PRODUCT + DESIGN + ENGG WORK SIDE-BY-SIDE

CONSTANTLY INNOVATING

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## 5. THE RIGHT CULTURE

EXPERIMENTATION

EMPOWERMENT

OPEN MIND

INSPIRED BY NEW TECH

SKILL SET

DIVERSITY

DISCOVERY TECHNIQUES

STRONG PRODUCT CULTURE = STRONG INNOVATION CULTURE  
+  
STRONG EXECUTION CULTURE

URGENCY

COMMITMENT

EMPOWERMENT

ACCOUNTABILITY

COLLABORATION

RESULTS

RECOGNITION

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THE  
END