

Going over to the dark side: from developer to product manager

Amy Nicholson, *Developer Technical Product Manager, FT.com*



Makers Academy

Developer

2016

2017

2018

Junior Developer

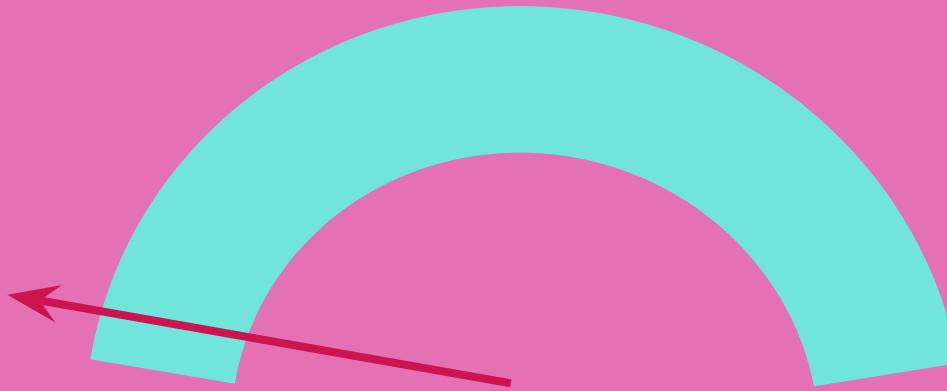
Where do you want to be in 5 years time?



#FALLONTONIGHT



<http://fallontonight.tumblr.com/post/121936507672/web-exclusive-elmo-from-sesamestreet-hung-out>



Developer

Product Manager

If you ask devs:

What do product managers do?



「(ツ)」



Myth #1:



“Product managers just make presentations and arrange meetings and stuff”

Sort of

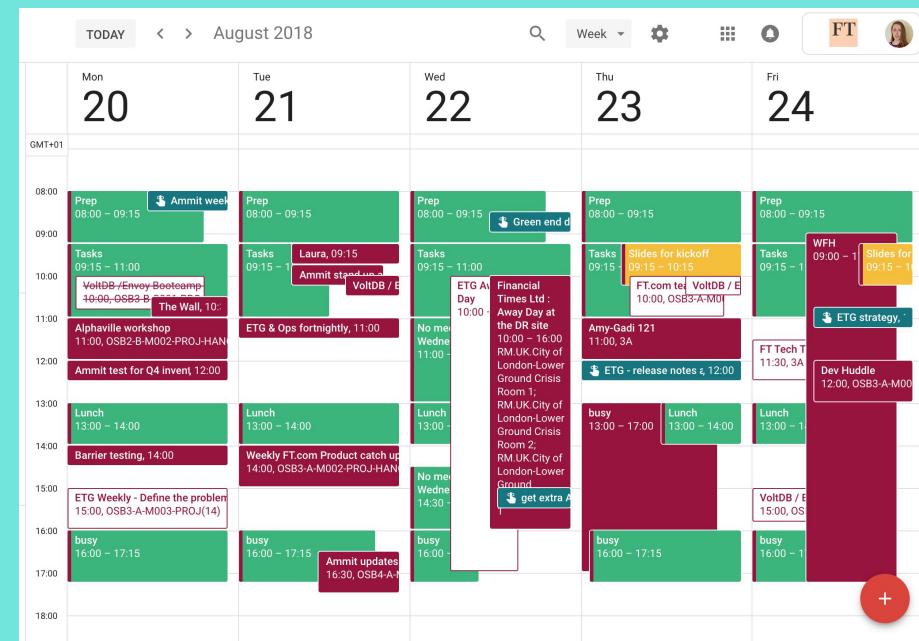
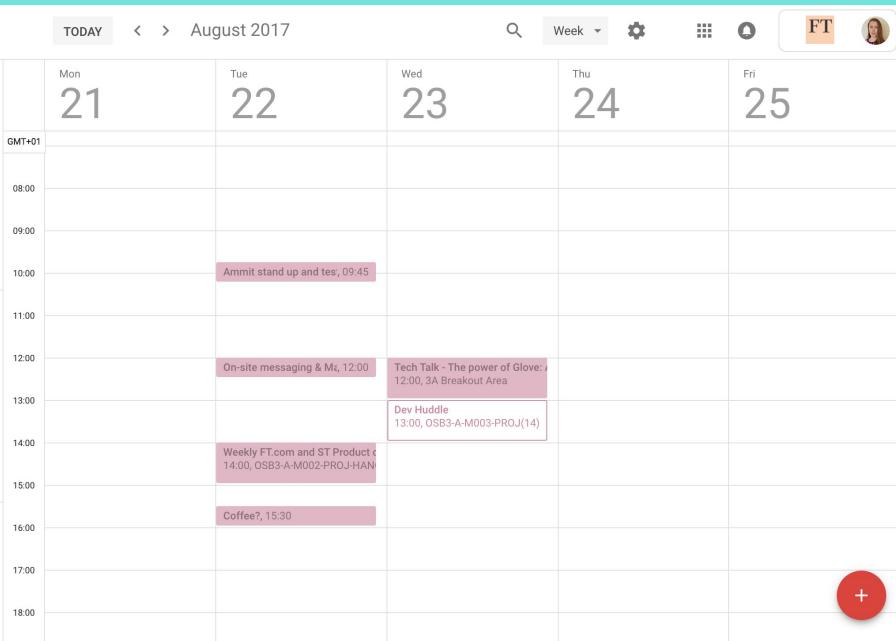
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15th-16th of September

HackConf 2018

Imagine.Learn.Hack.Explore!



Developer

Product Manager



Myth #2:

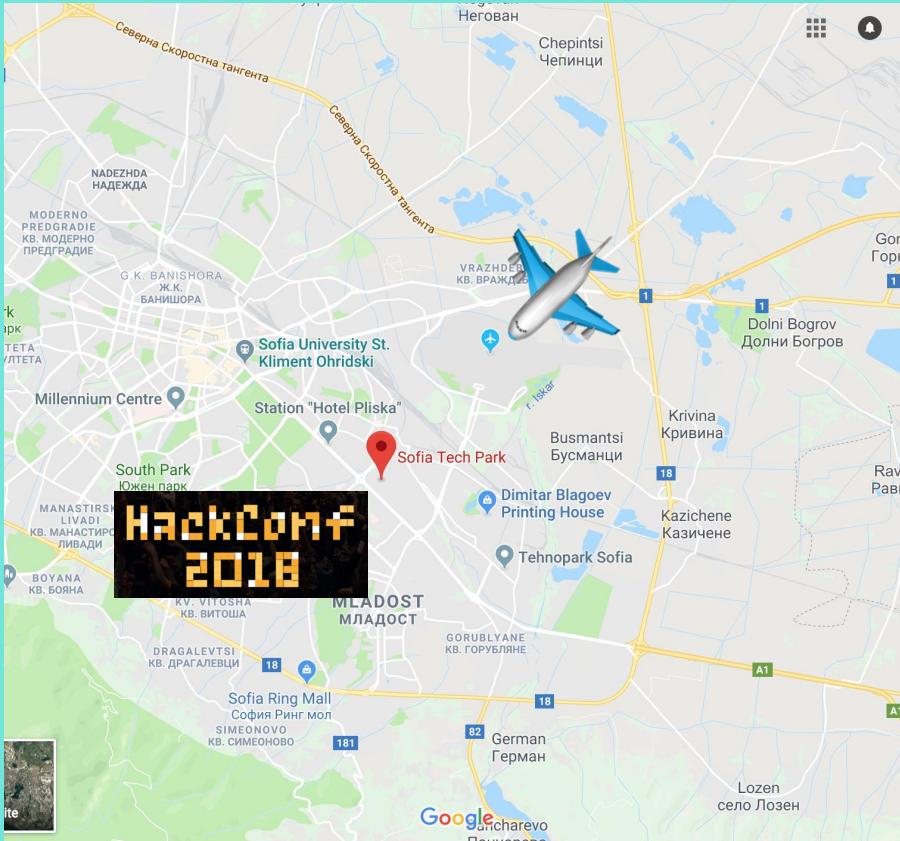


*“Product managers decide what
developers build”*

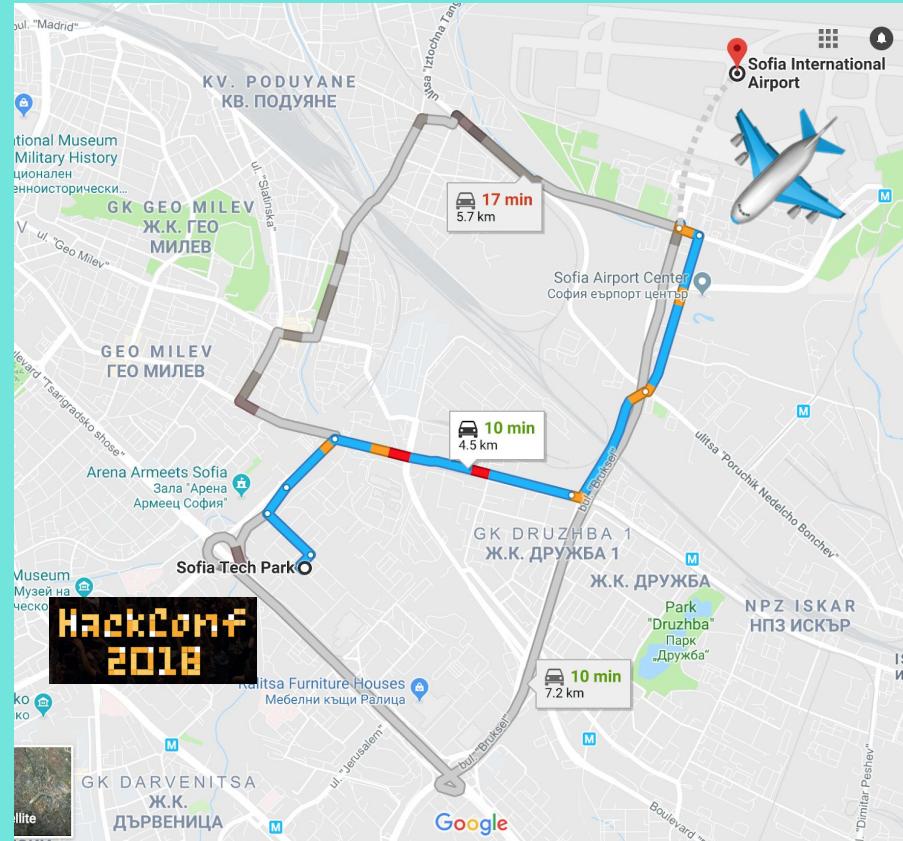
Sort of

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Product Manager



Developer





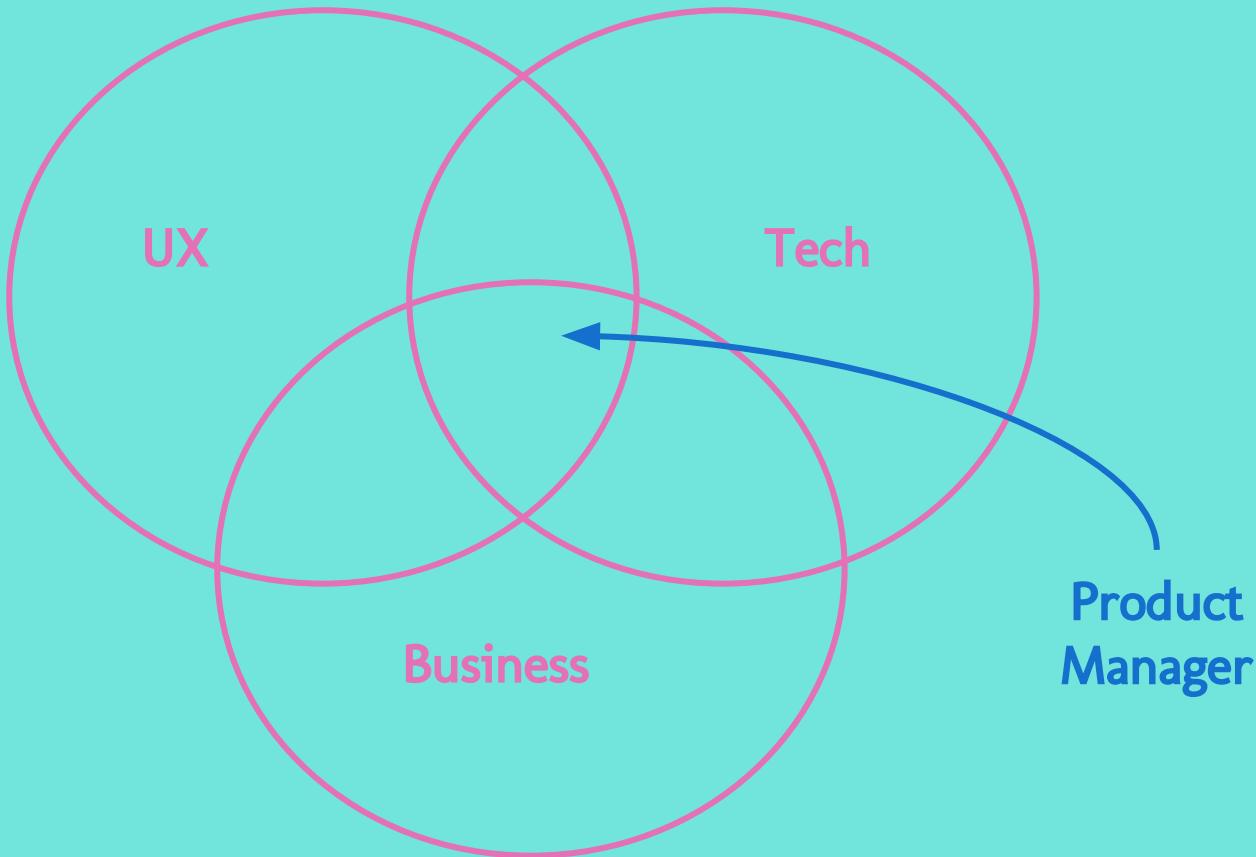
Myth #3:

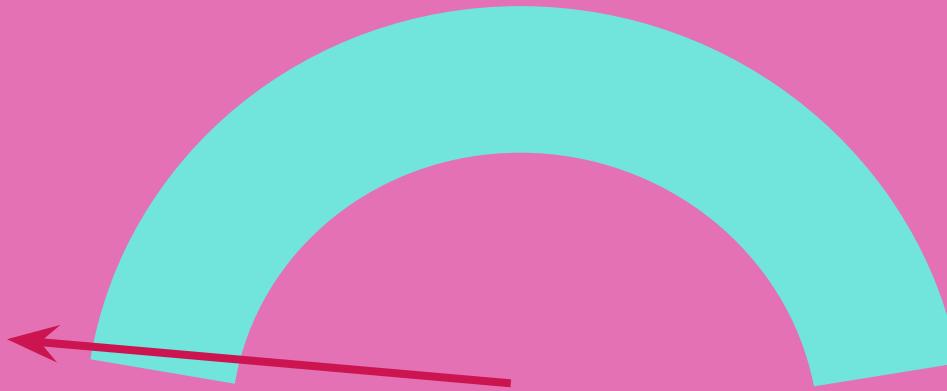


“Product managers talk to the business so that developers can get on with work.”

Sort of

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Developer

Product Manager



Myth #4:

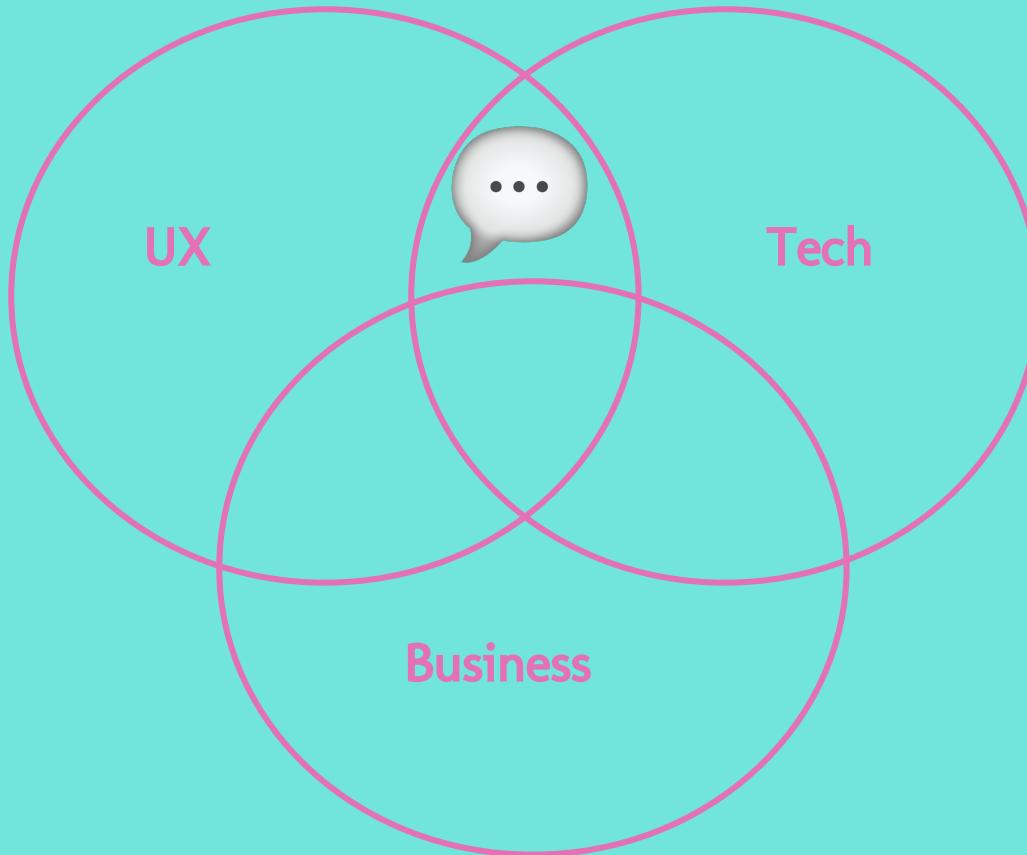


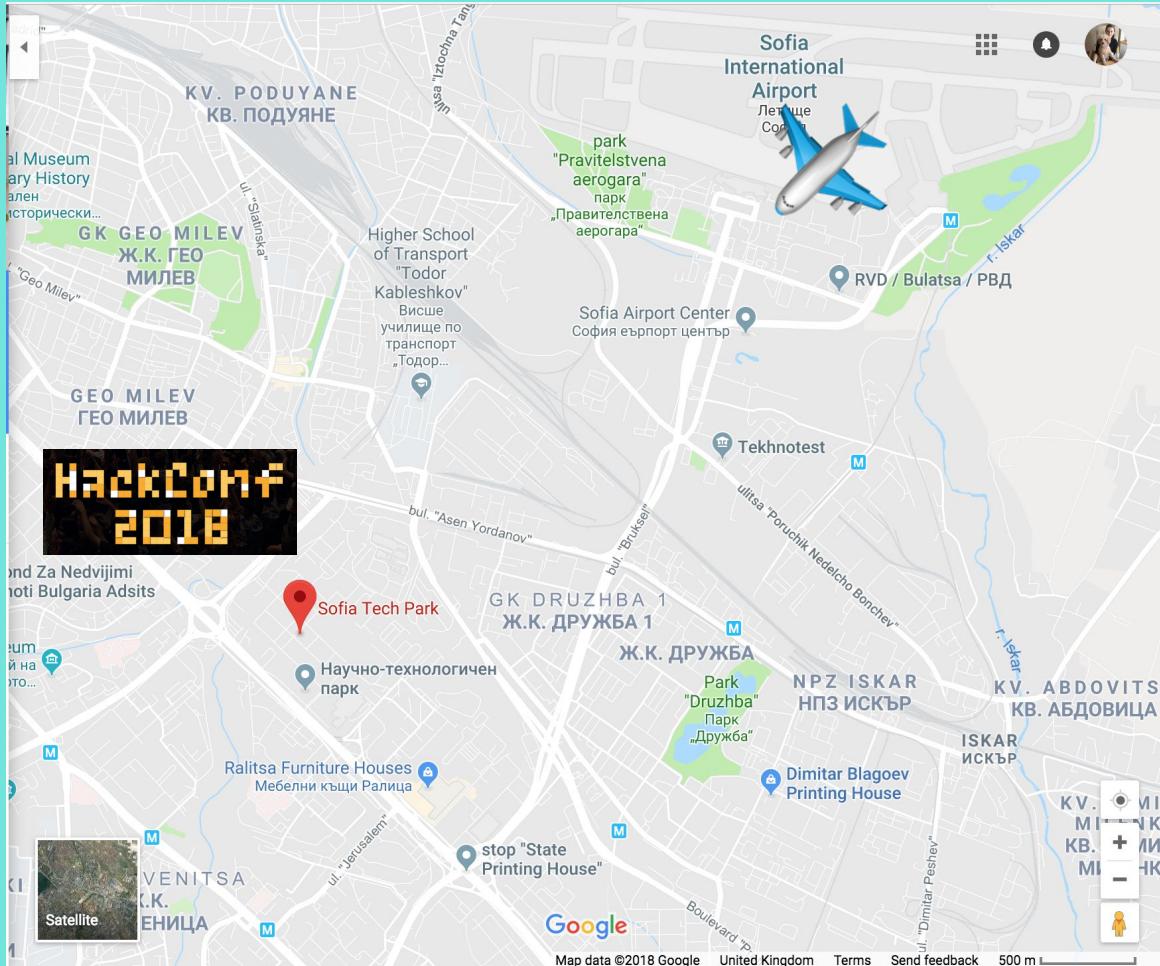
“If we got rid of product managers stuff would still get built, if we got rid of all devs....there would be nothing.”

Sort of

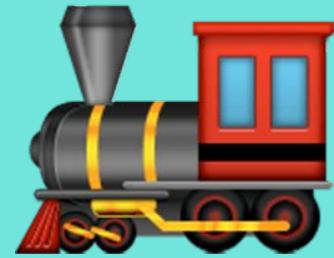
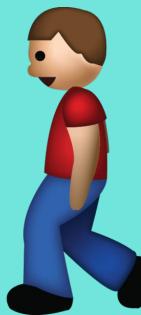
FT

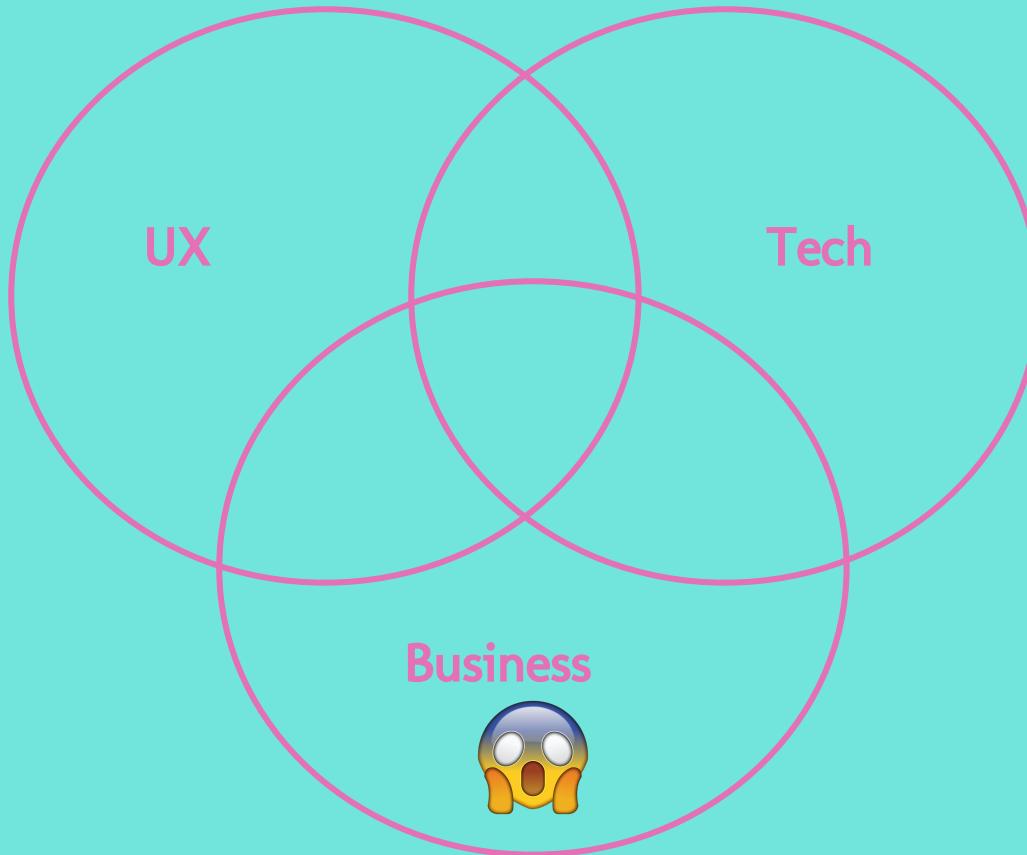
But what would get built?

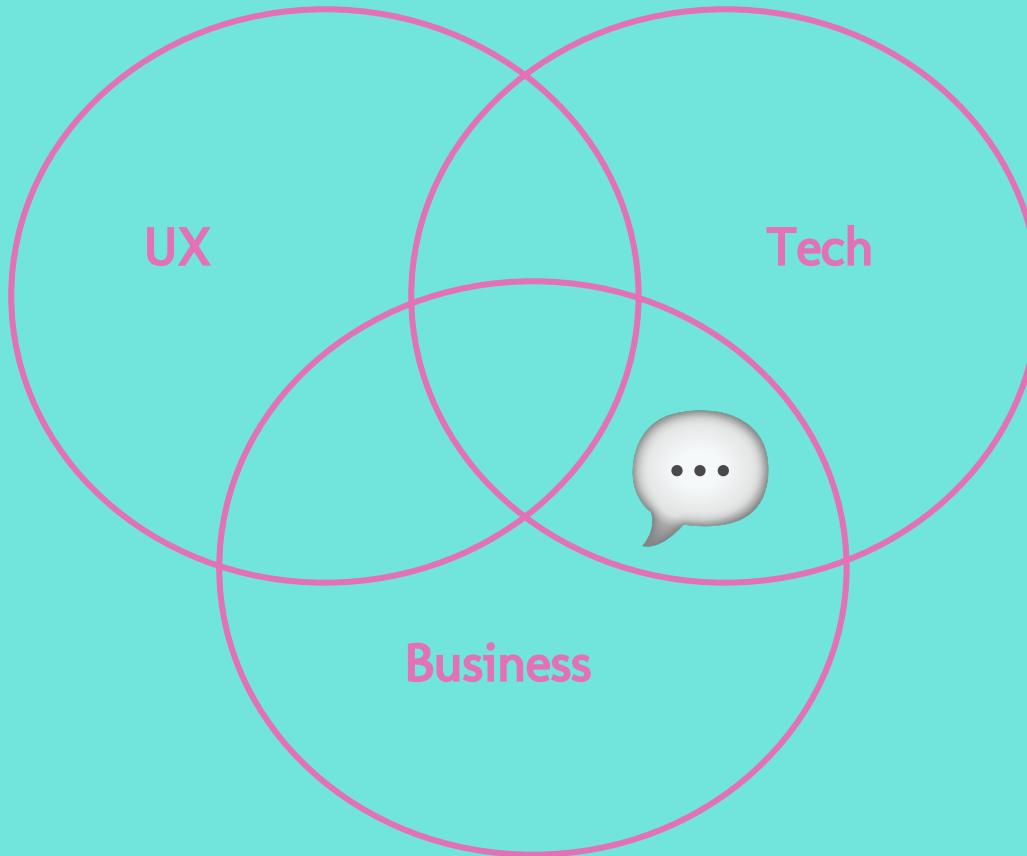


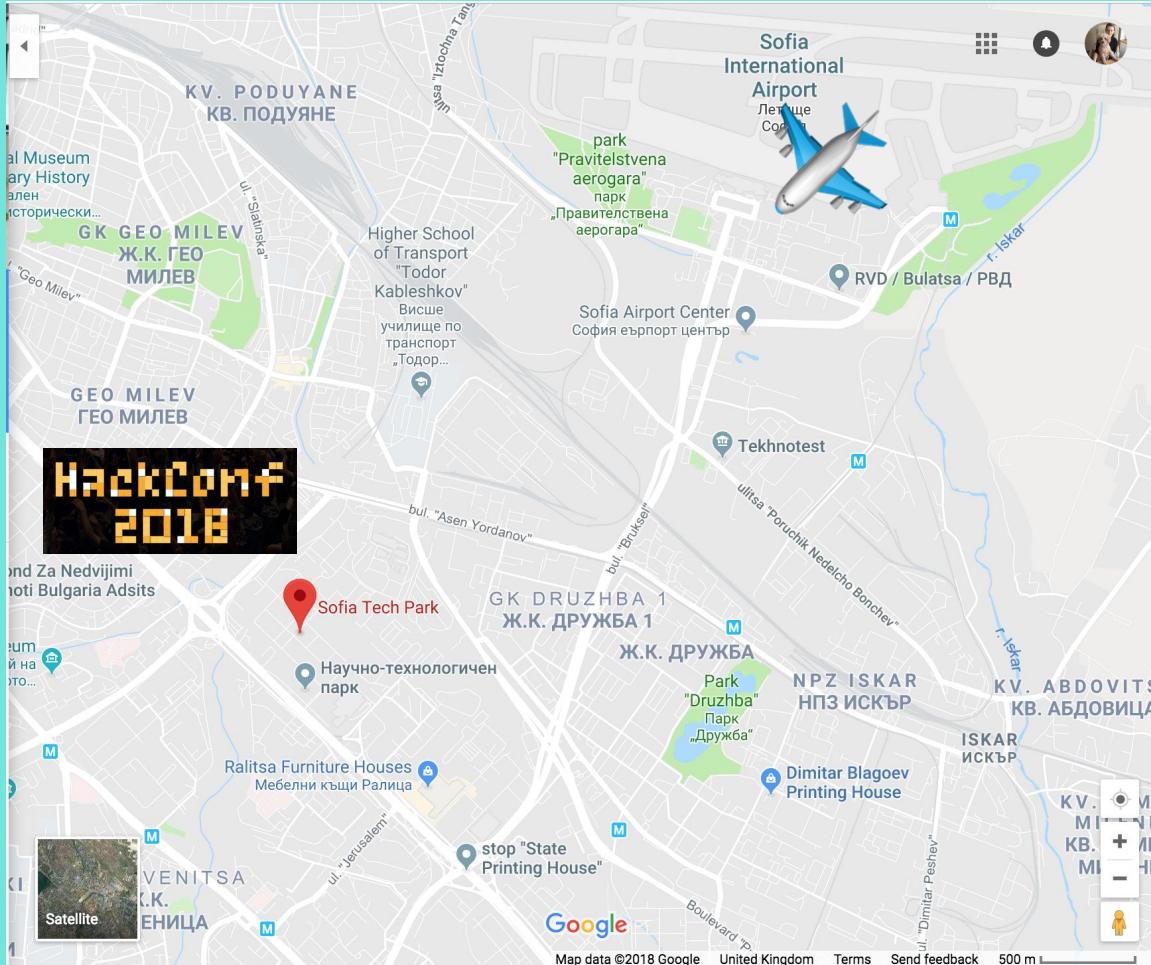


“Quick and comfortable”

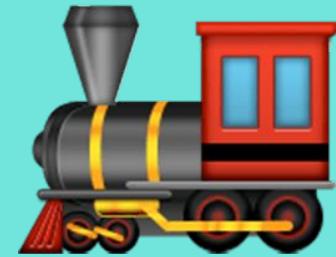
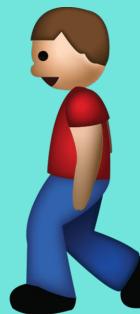


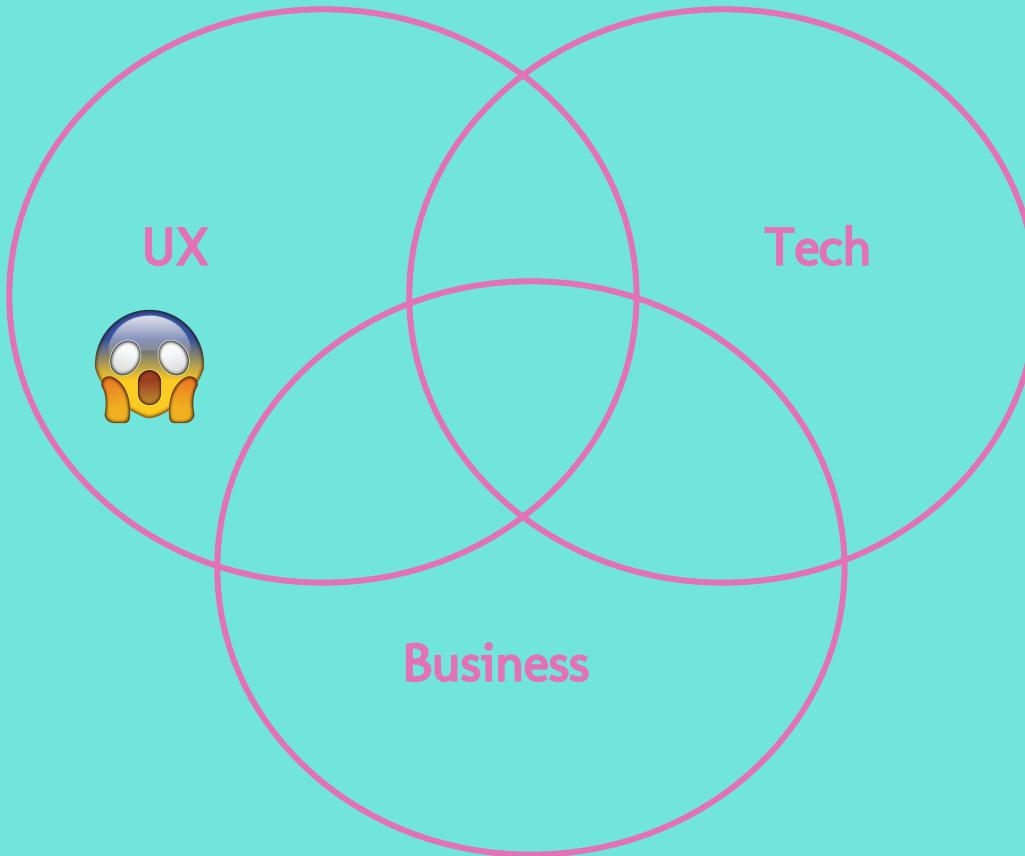


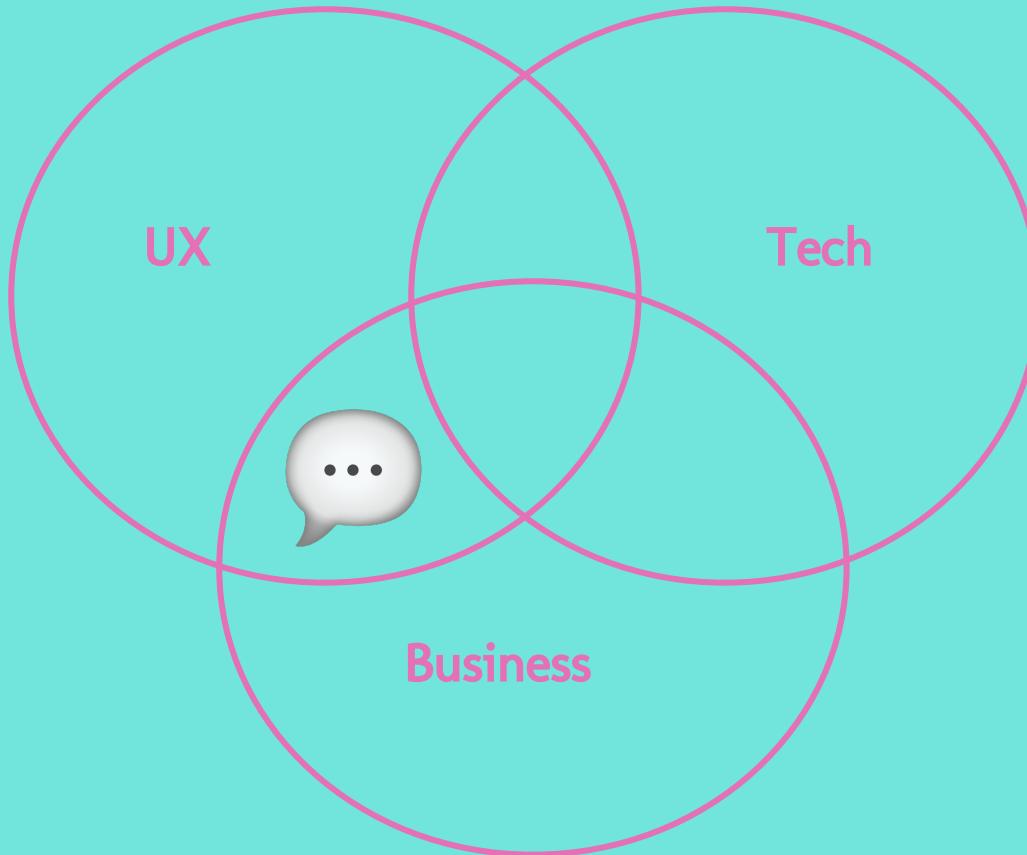


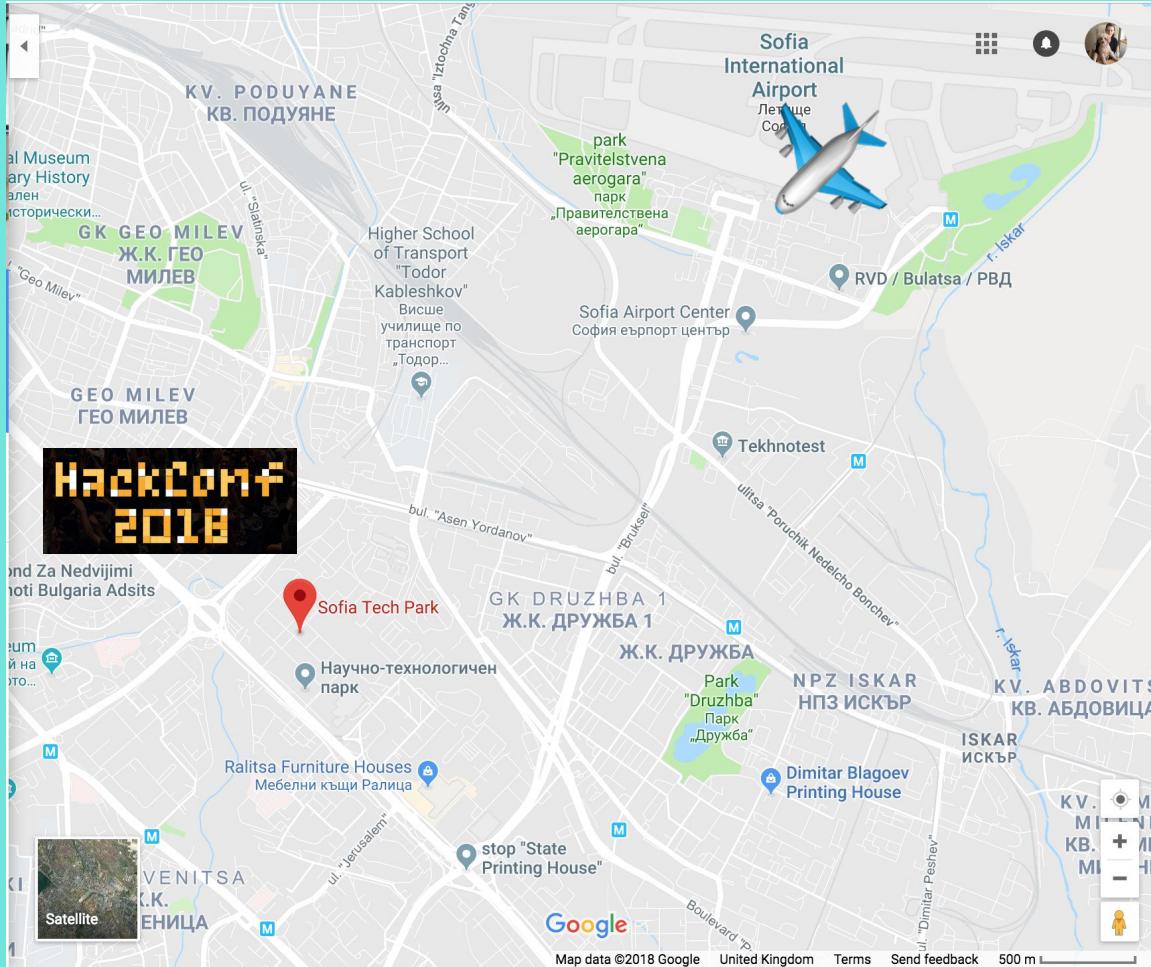


"Cheap and scalable"









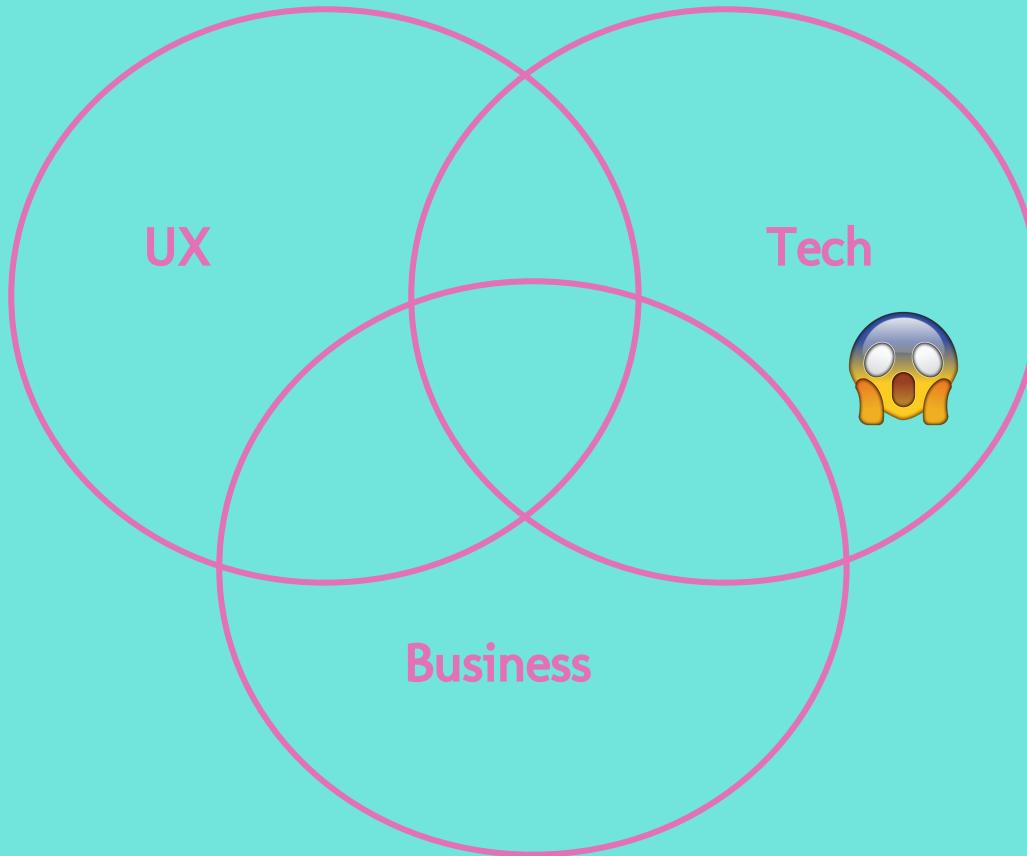
“Quick and comfortable”

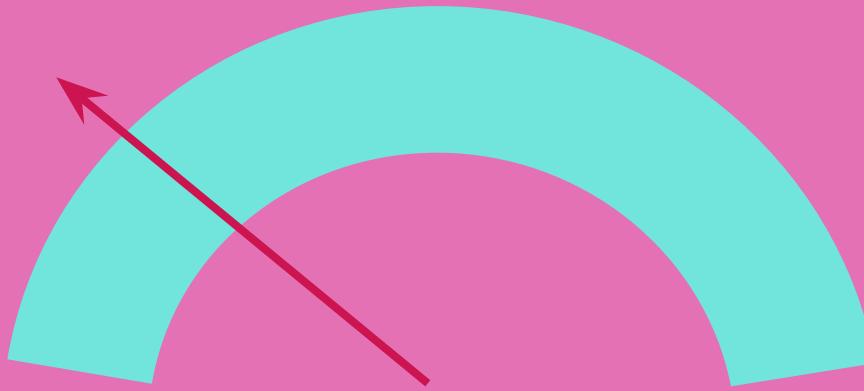
“Cheap and scalable”





Back to the Future II & <http://i.imgur.com/Hwlmw3N.gif>





Developer

Product Manager

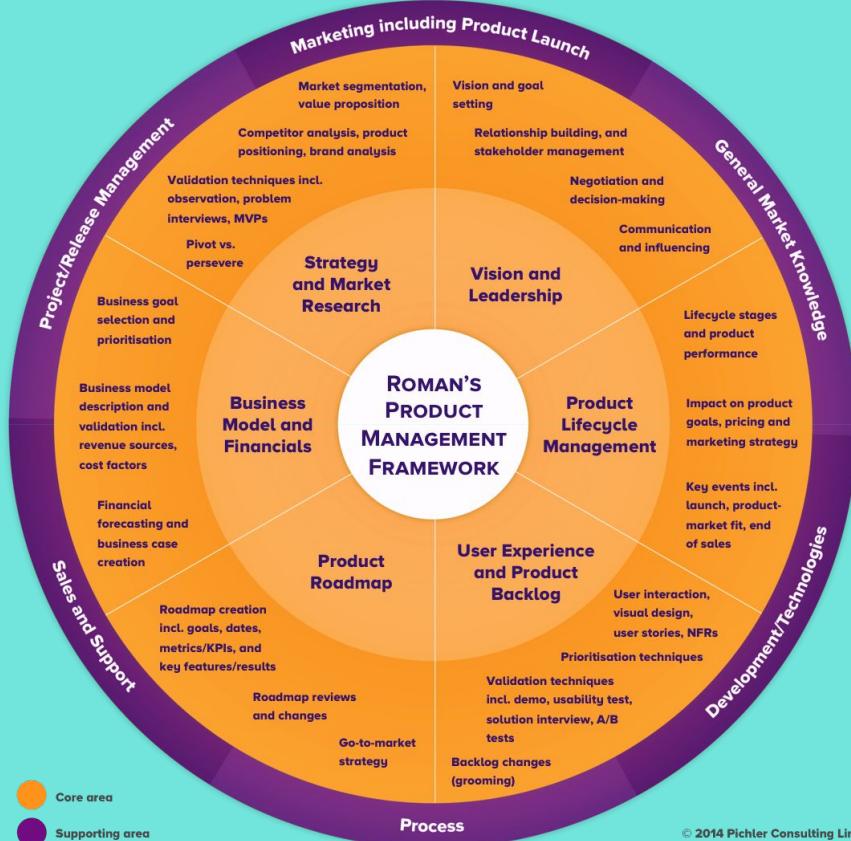
If you ask product managers:

What do product managers do?



Everything





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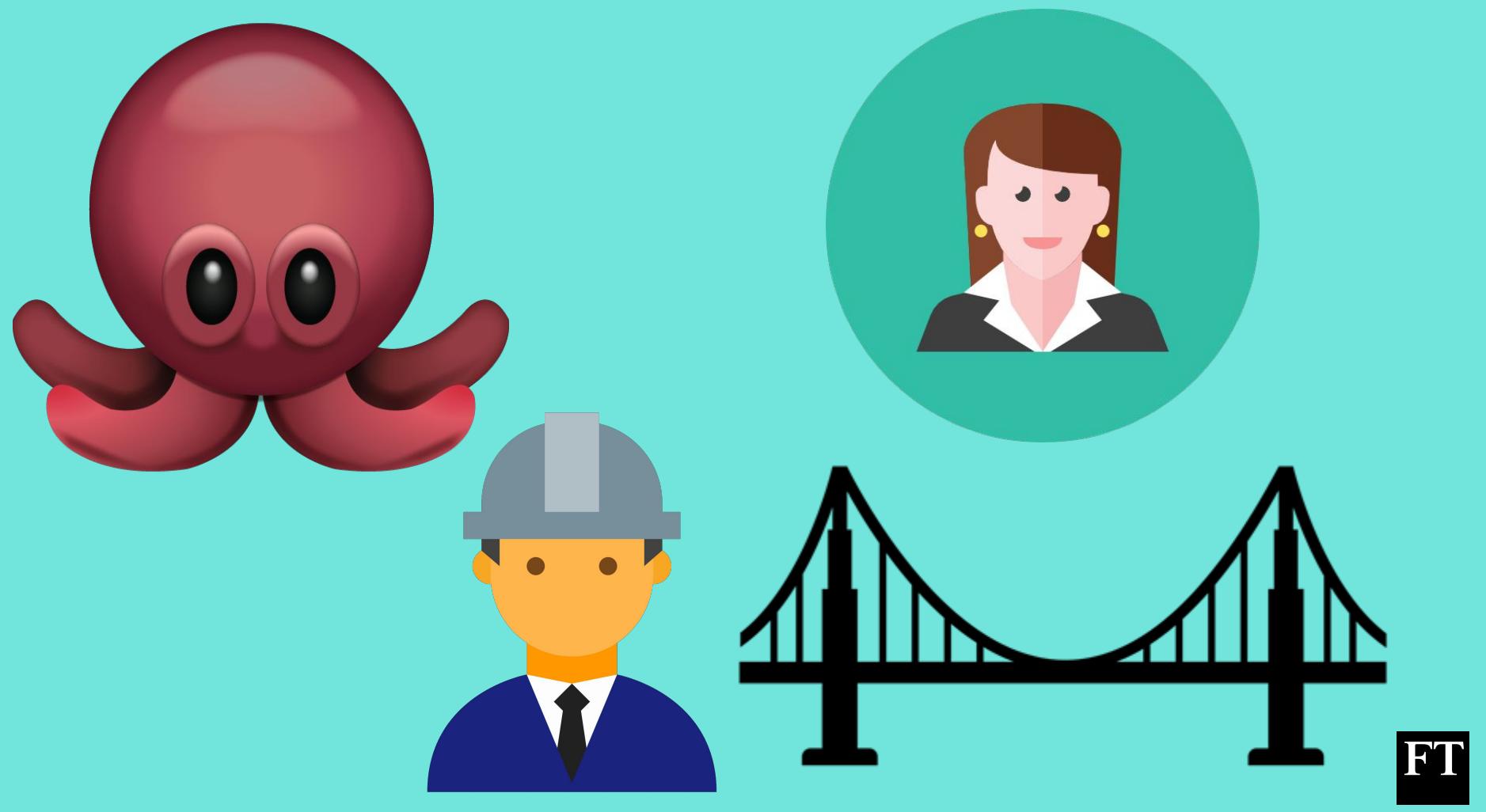
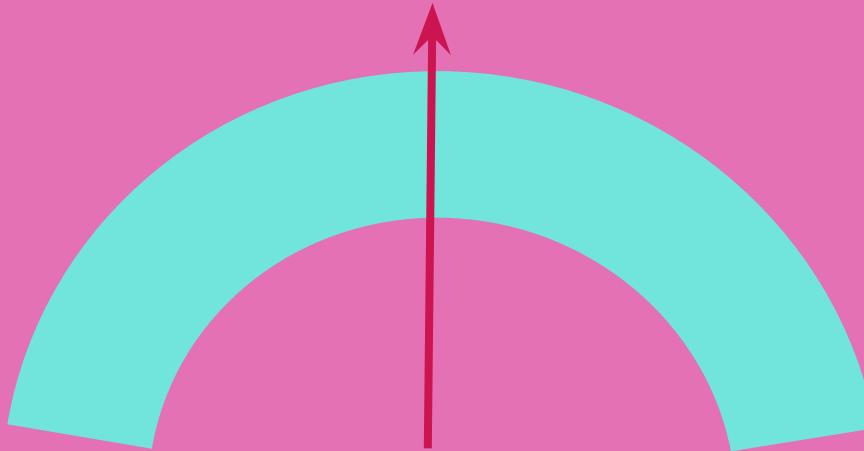




Plate spinning routine by Henrik Bothe on the Ed Sullivan show



Developer

Product Manager

If you ask hiring managers:

What do product managers do?

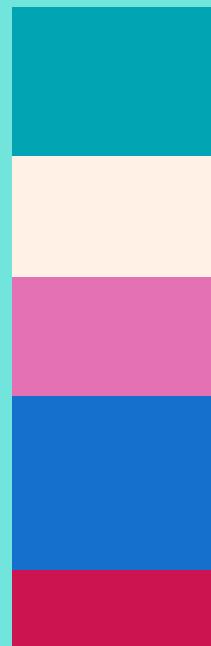


It depends

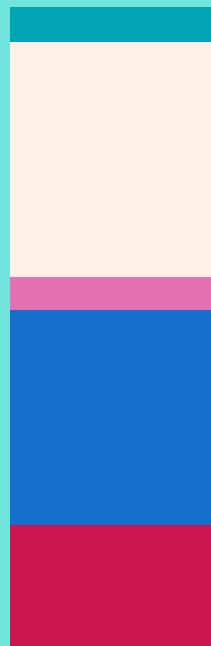
- **Strategy** **Where are you going and why?**
- **Stakeholders** **What does the business want, is it feasible, is it possible?**
- **Comms** **Does everyone know what you're doing and why?**
- **Users** **What do users want – is that what you're building?**
- **Roadmap** **What are you doing, when? Are you still on course?**



Strategic



Technical



UX

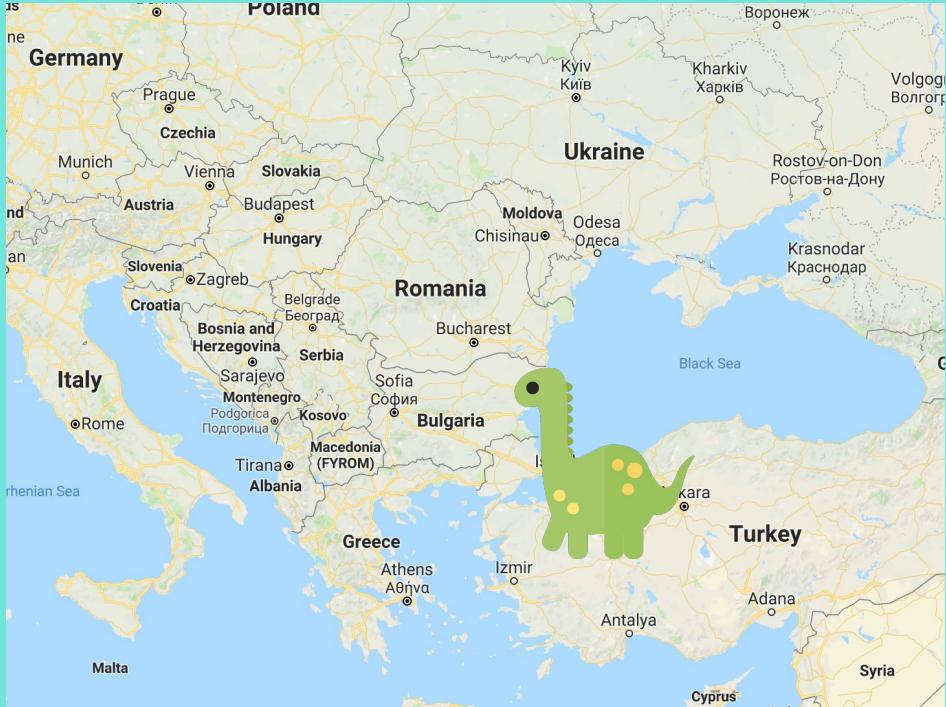
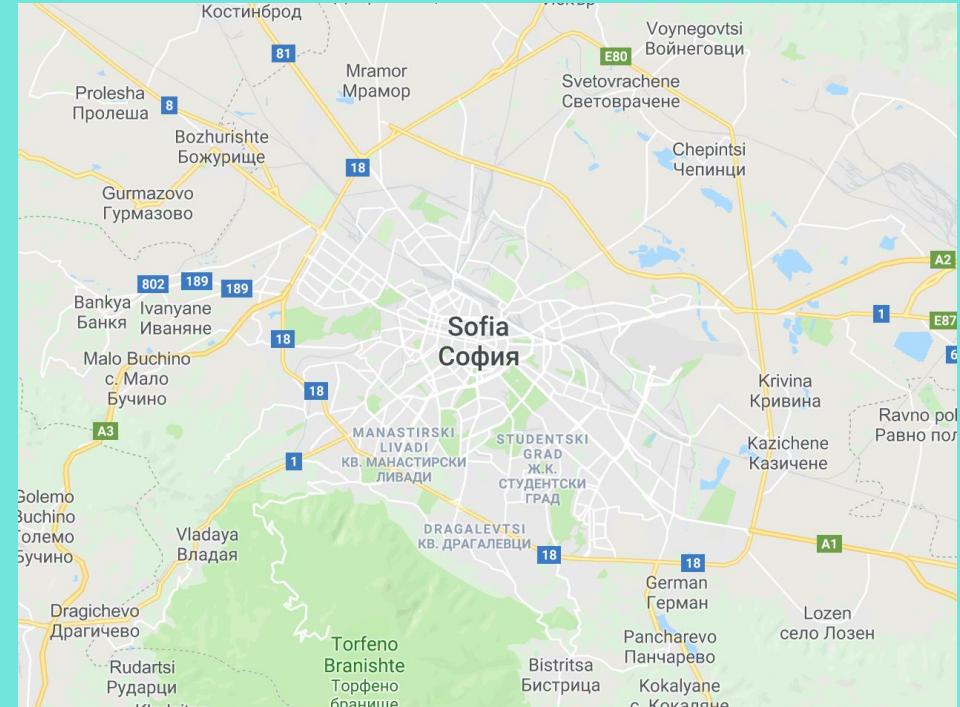


Why does it matter to me what a
product manager does?





<https://twitter.com/collegegameday>



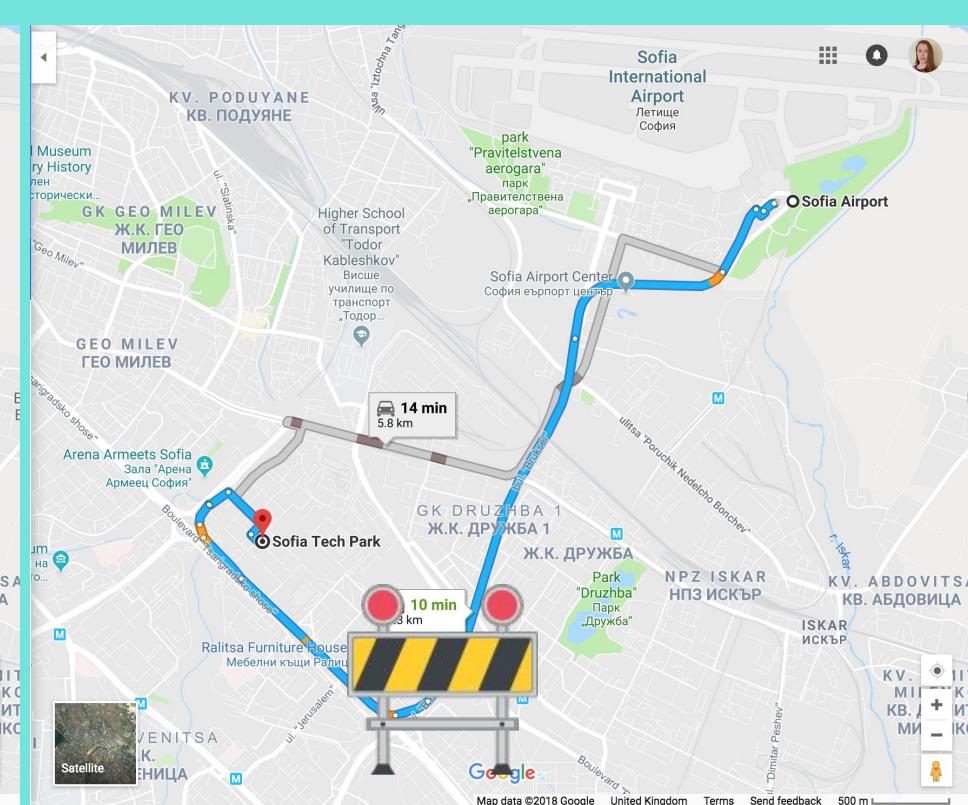
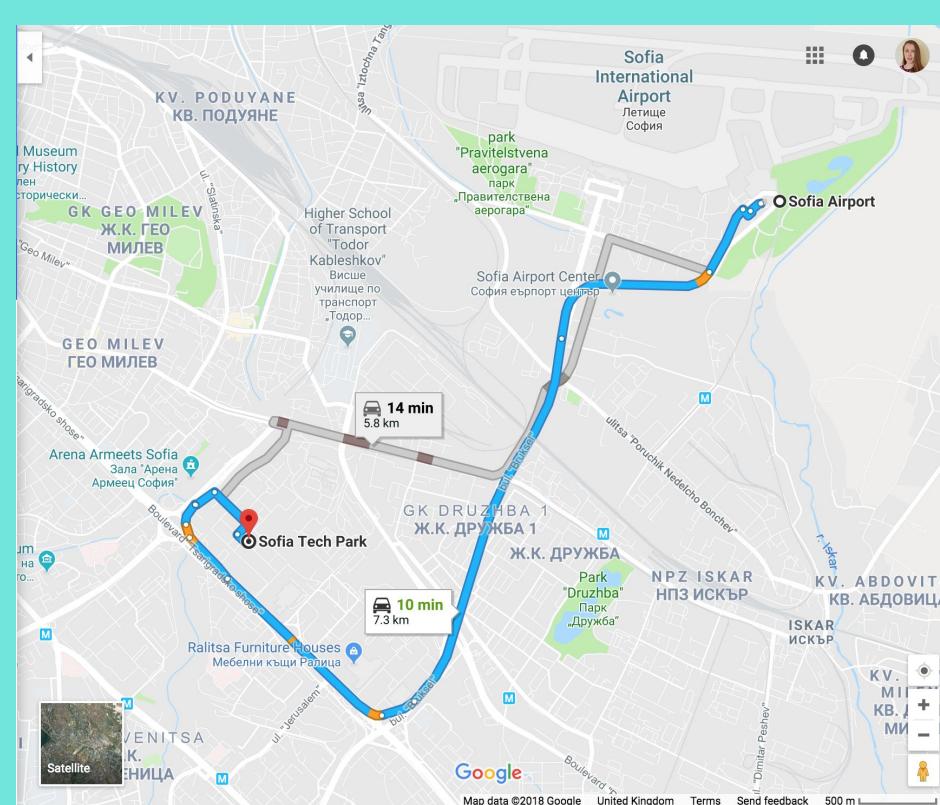
Developer

Product Manager

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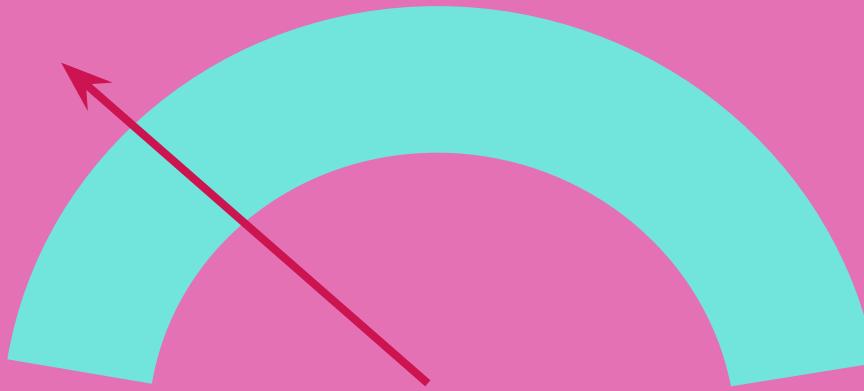
<https://nba.com>



Developer

Product Manager

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Developer

Product Manager



Myth #5:

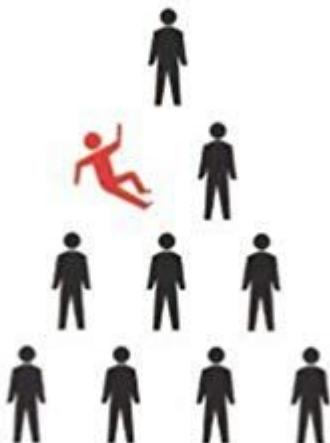


“I’ll always be a developer because I love coding and problem-solving”

THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

THE
**PETER
PRINCIPLE**

Why things always go wrong

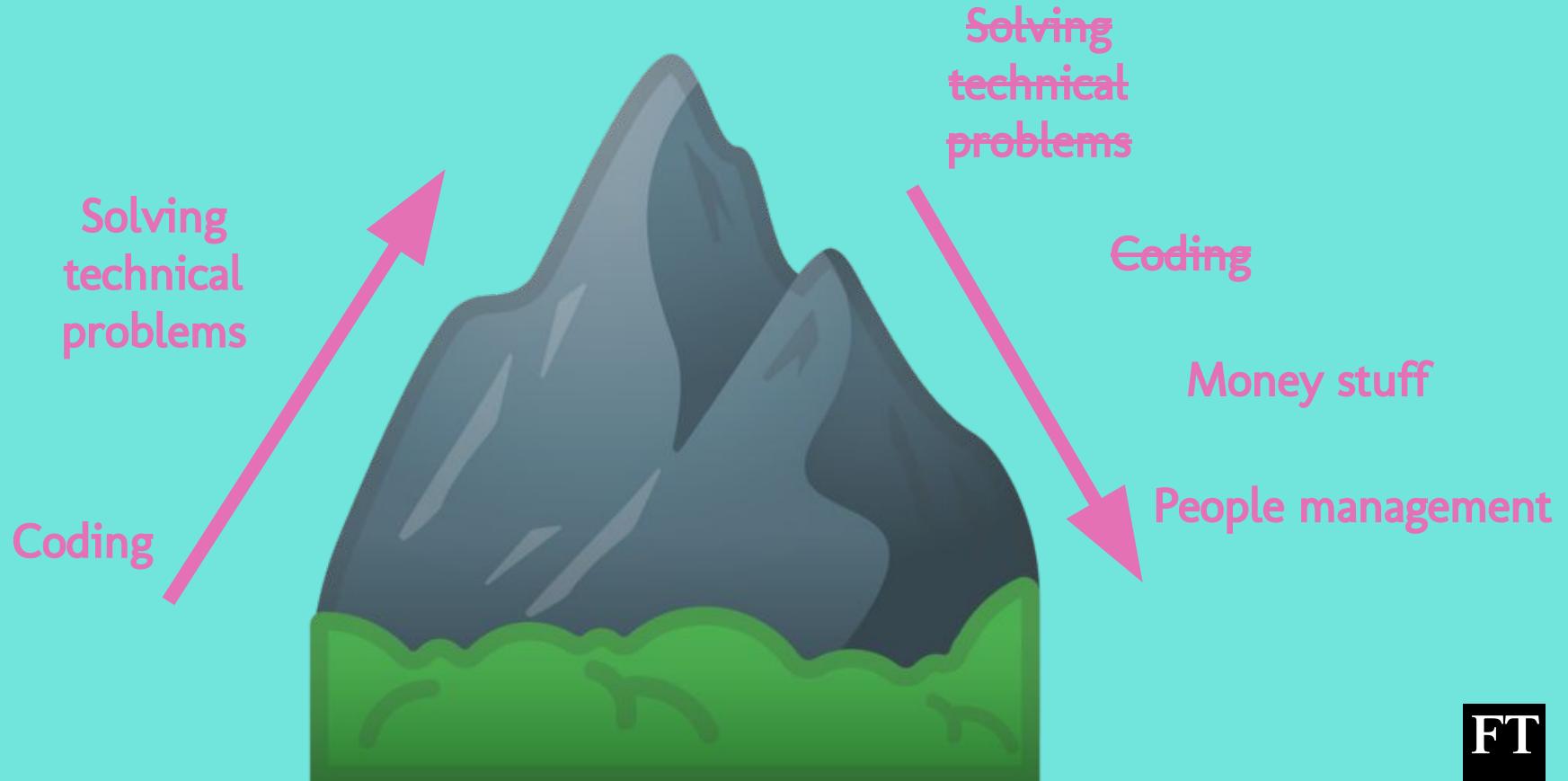


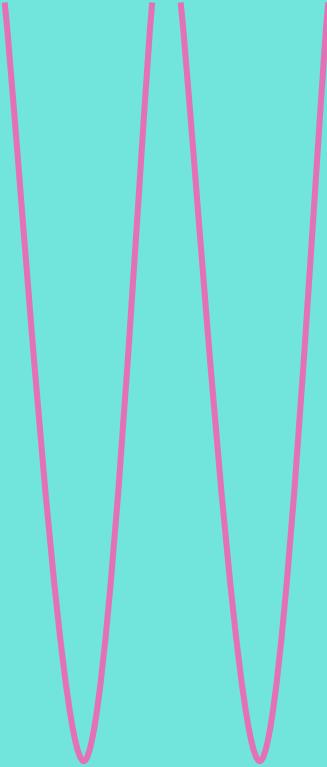
"The classic send-up of managerial hierarchy,
disturbingly funny but painfully true."

Dr Laurence J. Peter & Raymond Hull

*"People are promoted to
their level of
incompetence"*

FT

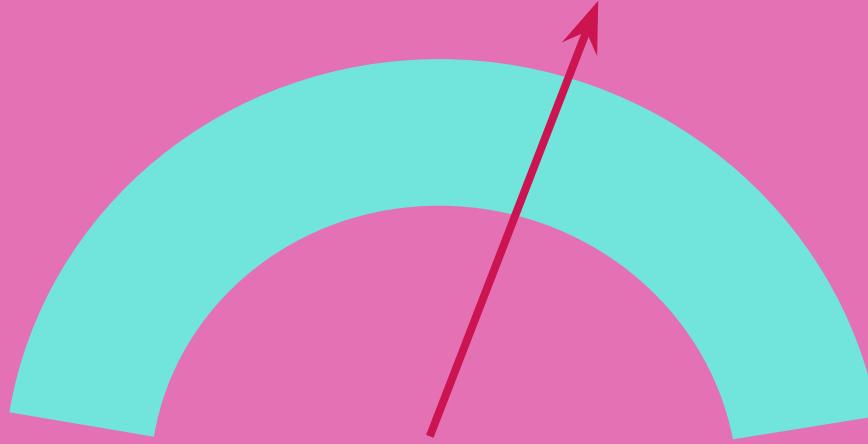




Developer

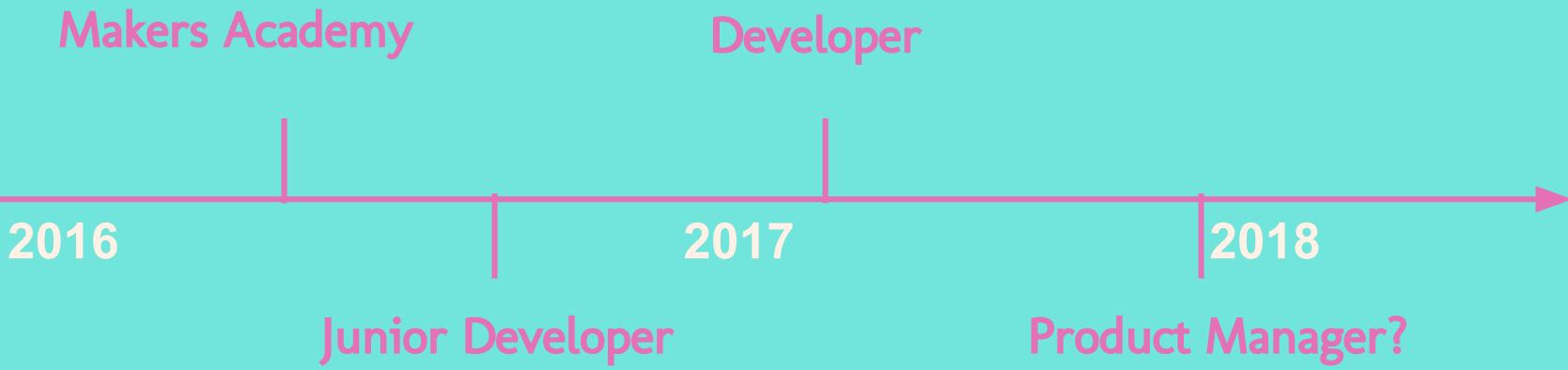
Product Manager





Developer

Product Manager





Myth #6:



“Product managers are always busy but they don’t actually do any work.”

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Sort of

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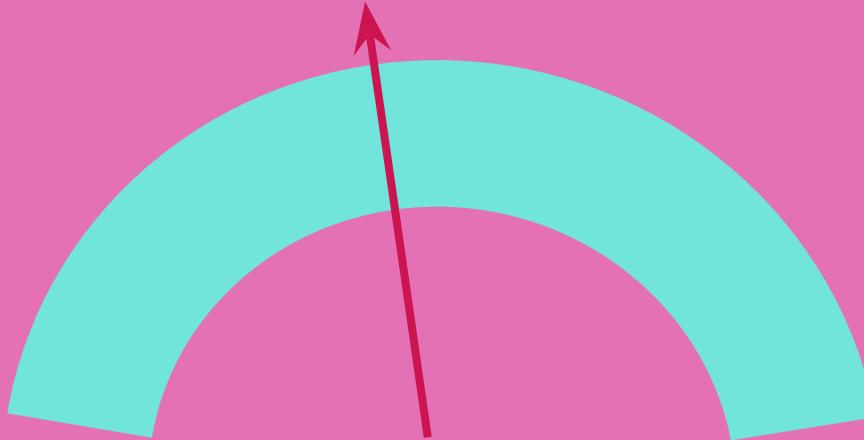
Average time spent focusing on one task

13
minutes

13
minutes

Developer

Product Manager FT



Developer

Product Manager



Myth #7:



“Only developers who aren’t very good become product managers.”



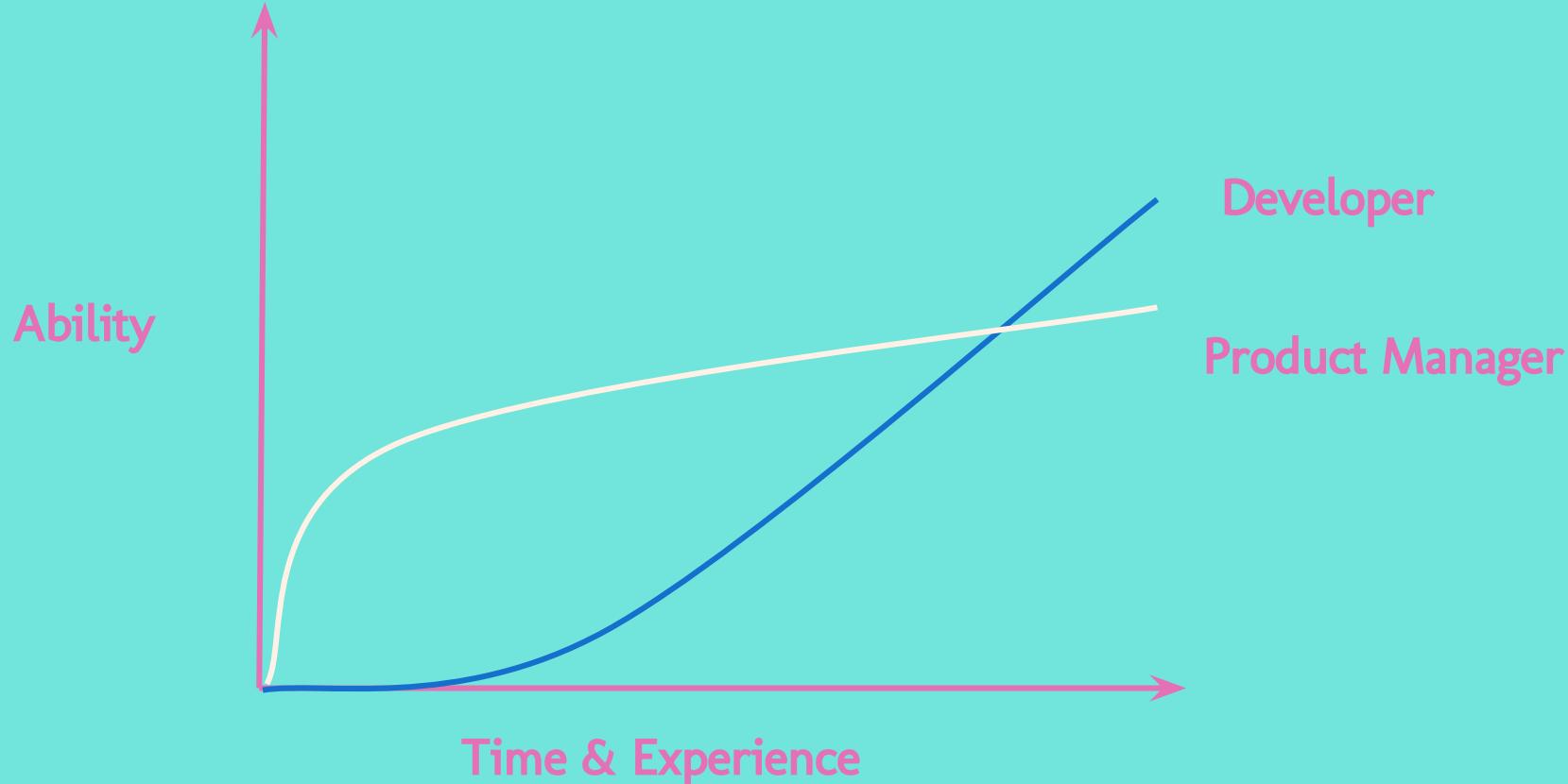
Myth #8:

“Anyone can be a product manager”

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No, just no

Hard skills vs. Soft Harder skills

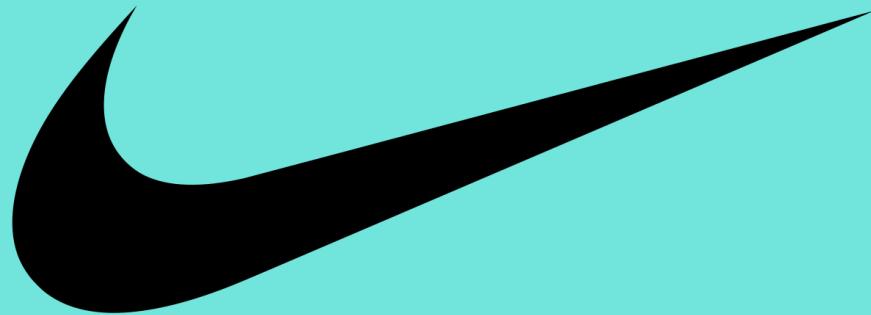


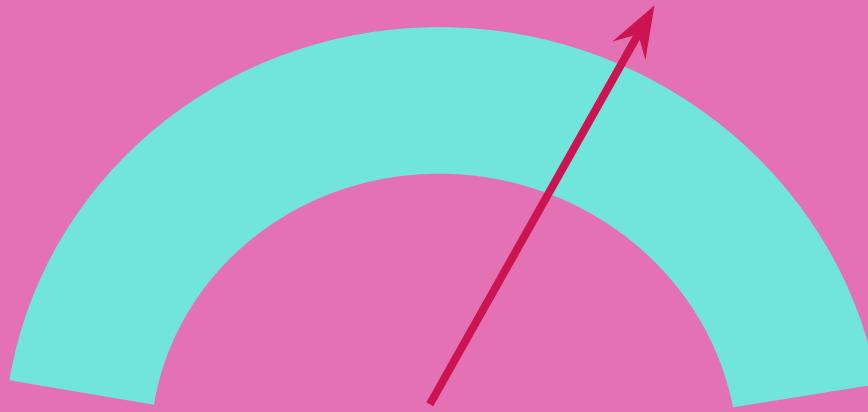


Myth #9:

“You can’t be good at both jobs.”

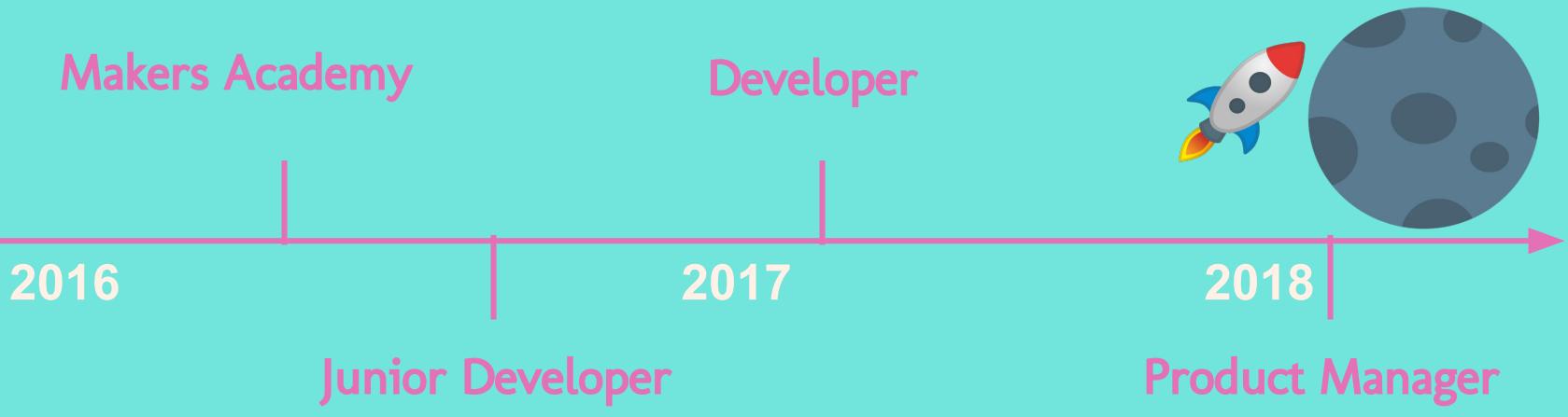
Why not?

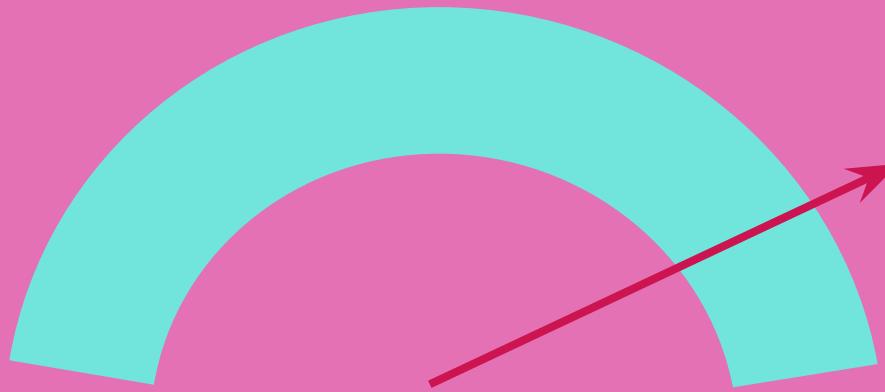




Developer

Product Manager





Developer

Product Manager



Volvo Trucks & <https://cheezburger.com/7900638976>

If you're a developer, or a designer, or a
UXer, or a Business Analyst...

Ask your product manager what they do.



If you're a product manager...

Make sure your team know what you do.



If you're not a product manager... yet

Consider a trip to the dark side.

