

# Brent Palmer

Design Manager & Organizational Leader

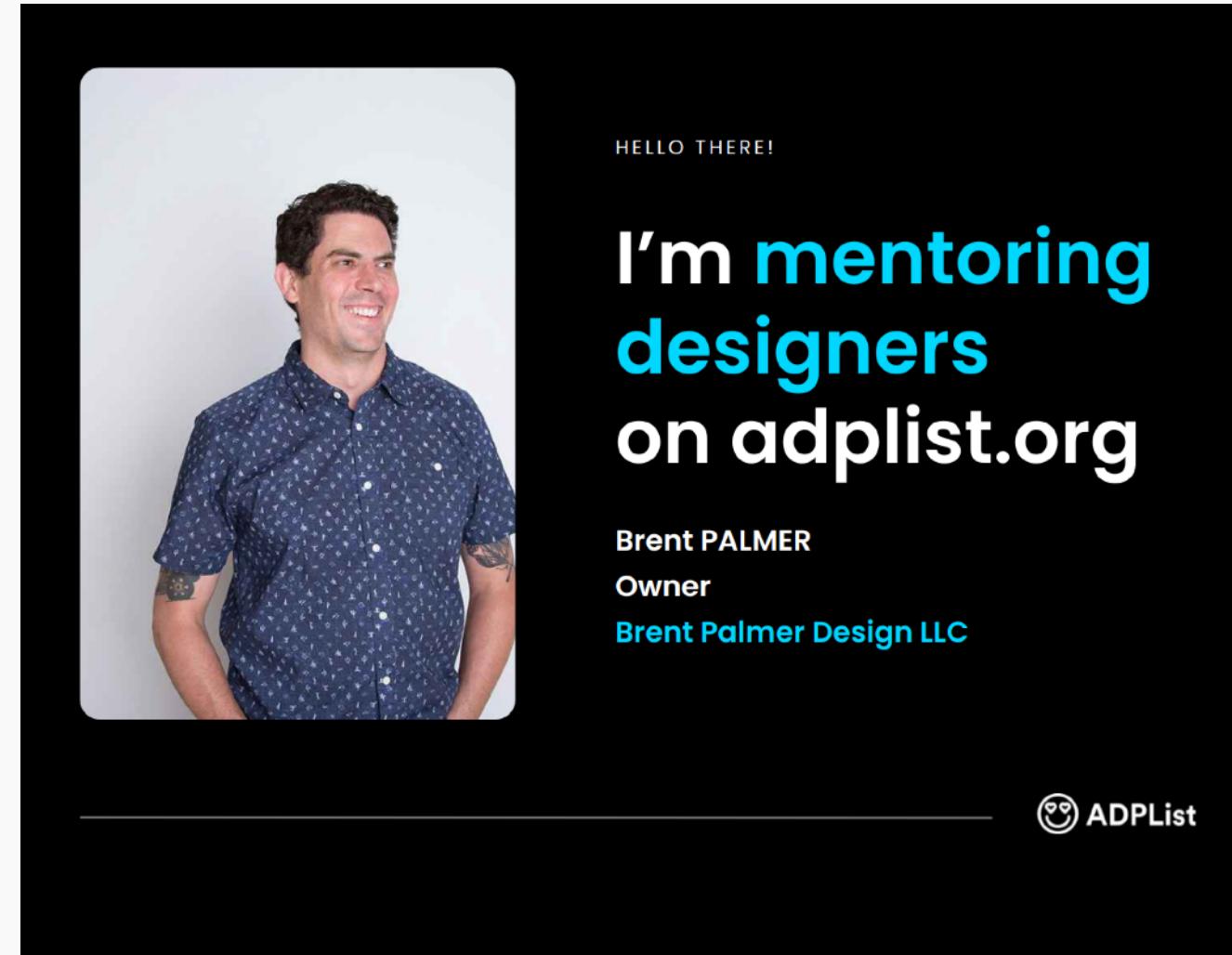
# Agenda

1. About me
2. Carwow case study
  1. Background and context
  2. Things I tried
  3. Outcomes and learnings
3. Fast case study
  1. Background and context
  2. Things I tried
  3. Outcomes and learnings
4. Q&A



## About me





## Mentoring

I volunteer my Thursday afternoons to mentor and coach Product Designers.

## Public speaking

International conferences, events, and podcasts on the intersection of customer support and design

## Side hustles

I launched a Matthew McConaughey lorem ipsum generator on Product Hunt. It went alright, alright, alright.



## Be customer-led

Great outcomes are a result of talking to users constantly. Humans drive new ideas. There's always time to speak with customers and users.



## People > Process

Strong relationships within teams can overcome any problem. The inverse is true. Internal issues can usually be traced back to missing or broken relationships.



## Try it out

Progress over perfection. Put the best foot forward and see how it goes. Keep switching costs low and make it easy to change course if needed.

# Buy. Sell. WOW.

[Sell my car](#)[Buy a car](#)

Rated **4.7/5** from **28,664** reviews

Trustpilot



## The free, easy way to change your car online



I was hired to

**Set the design vision for  
car buying in the UK**

TL;DR

Over a series of workshops,  
I increased website conversions  
and employee engagement.

### Customer behavior

- **19k** monthly uniques
- **72%** use the online configurator
- **3.4** avg # of brands shortlisted

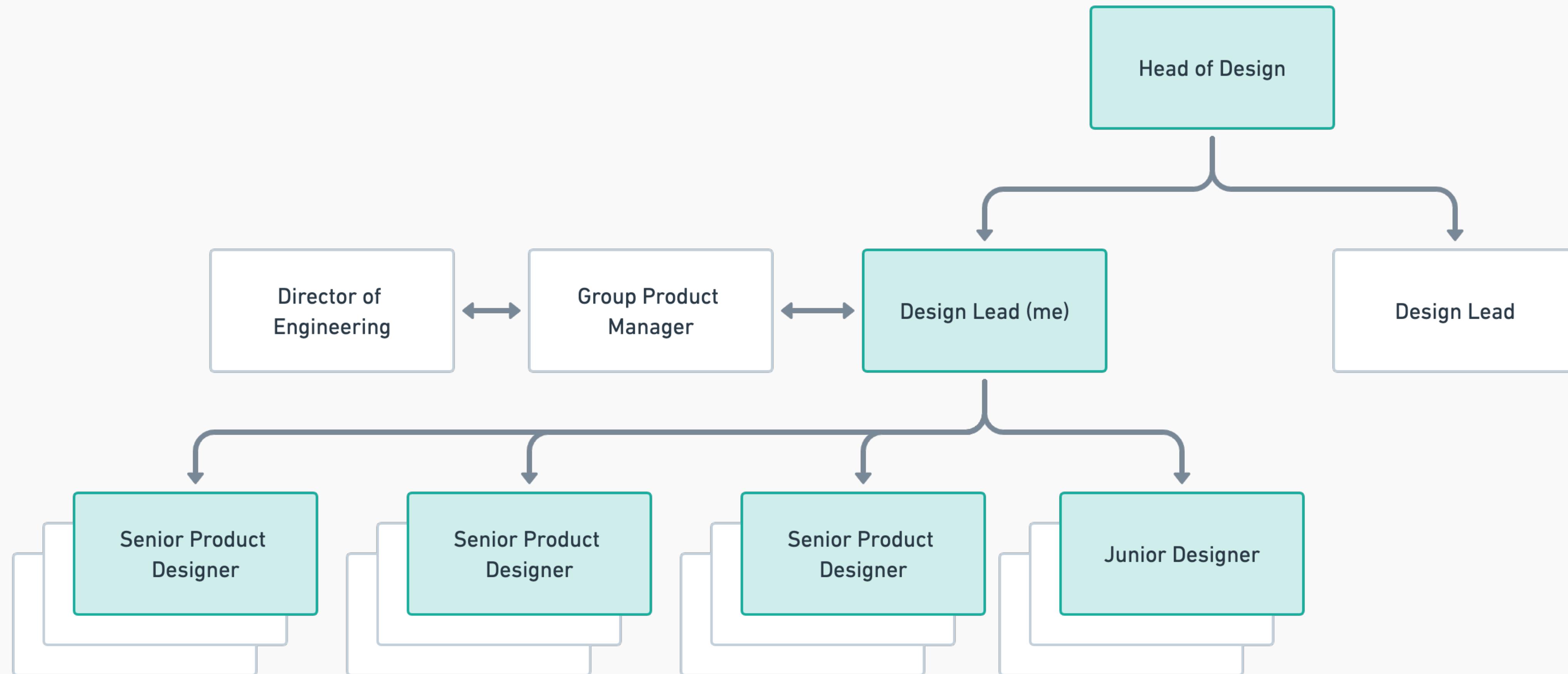
### Important KPIs

- # Accounts created
- # Avg of brands shortlisted
- # Offers accepted

### Carwow makes money

- \$300 on transaction, reported
- Flat rate for every car purchase

# Organizational structure





## The problem

Hyper autonomous squads

**Everything's fragmented** 😡



### Frameworks

Communicating the set of principles for decision making and why this effort is important.



### User Insights Team

Consolidate relevant research to date and make it accessible to every team



### Collaboration

Run a series of design sprints to reimagine the car buying journey across three squads

## Challenges

- UK market first, French and German market later
- Lack of space to workshop
- New tooling (Whimsical) introduced a learning curve

# Frameworks

Joined-up way of working



# Frameworks

**Curious**

We have an insatiable hunger to improve ourselves and our products.

**Confident & Humble**

We're self-starters, with bold ideas lots to know we have them. Learn from others.

**Force for Good**

We do things that have a positive impact and empower others.

**Wow**

We aim to wow. We want to be the best, not 'good enough'.

**Clear**

We strive to be clear and simple. Confusion lies in complexity.

**Impact**

We're determined to make the biggest impact, quickly.

“We want our customers to be  
the most **empowered** and **confident**  
car buyers in the **world**”



# Frameworks

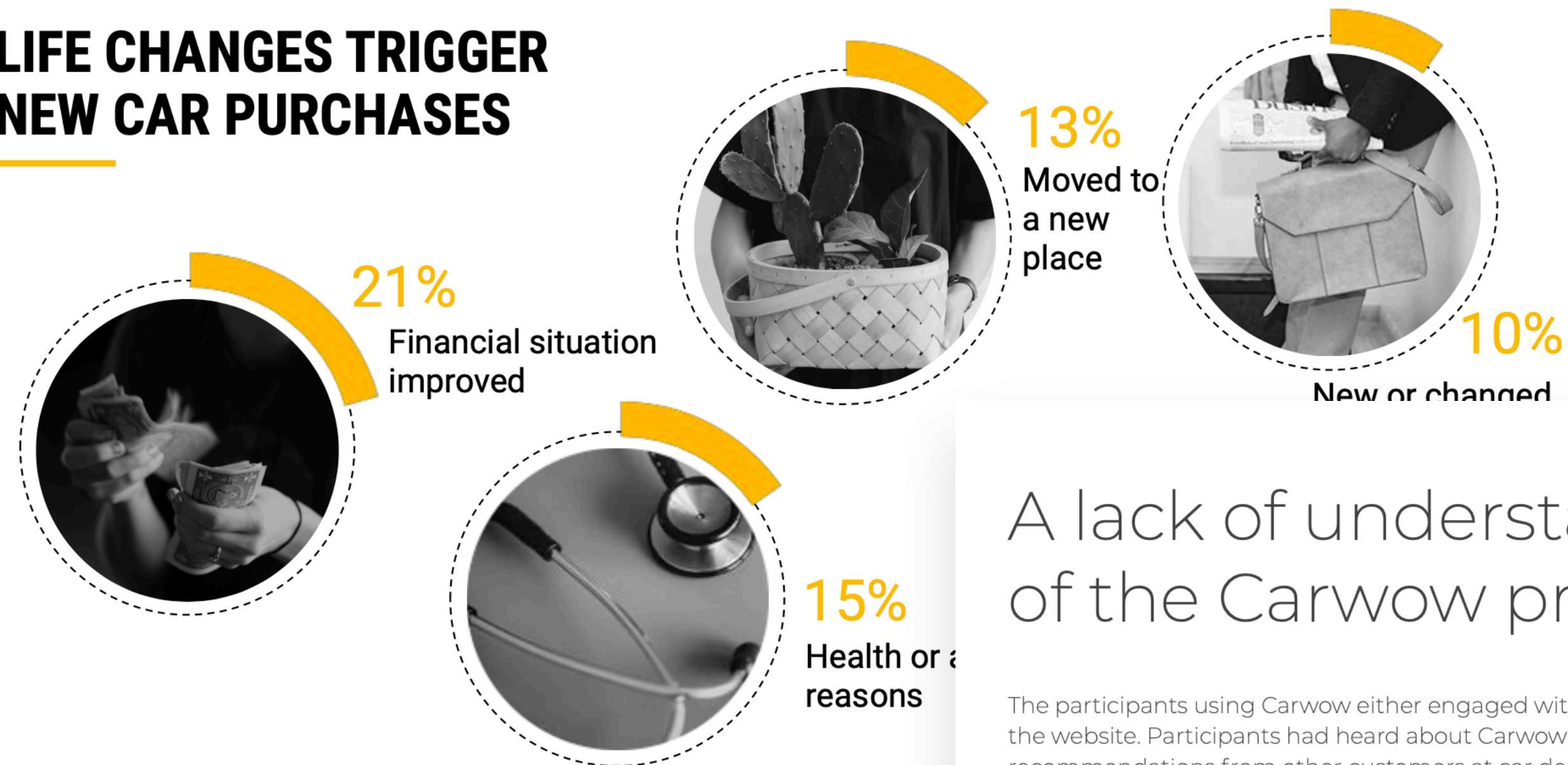
The image shows a digital whiteboard interface with four columns of cards, set against a background of orange slices.

- Column 1: Research and Inspiration**
  - Here is a list of research docs :)**
    - Inspiration (what sites/apps do we think have awesome user experiences)
    - Guiding principles
    - List of competitors can be found here.
    - Input from stakeholders here.
    - How do people buy cars? (Spotless)
  - + Add another card
- Column 2: Search and Filter**
  - SEARCH AND FILTER**
    - How do we help users filter down i.e. what options should we give them?
    - Should we allow the user to search for their preferred car? Do they need to be logged in?
    - What should we allow the user to search by?
  - + Add another card
- Column 3: Instant Cars and Sort Algo**
  - INSTANT CARS AND SORT ALGO**
    - Can we show cars instantly? Is there anything technically stopping us from showing this straight away?
    - How might we decide on a max number of cars to show? i.e. we need to be careful not to show too much stock of the same car as can impact views on the brand.
  - + Add another card
- Column 4: Factory and Stock / New and Used**
  - FACTORY AND STOCK / NEW AND USED**
    - Ken's research
    - If we combine stock and factory, what different features do we need to call out? e.g. available now, built to order?
    - When and how should we show new and used cars?
    - What does the user need to know about when looking at factory, stock, new or used? What should be displayed in the product details area?
  - + Add another card

# User Insights Team

Joined-up car buying behavior

## LIFE CHANGES TRIGGER NEW CAR PURCHASES



KANTAR TNS // UK // Google

## A lack of understanding of the Carwow proposition

The participants using Carwow either engaged with the brand via YouTube or the website. Participants had heard about Carwow via advertising or by recommendations from other customers at car dealerships.

Two misconceptions of the proposition were identified:

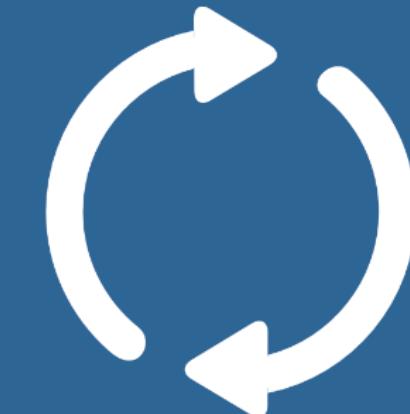
- “**Carwow is an independent editorial channel**” - Participants shared that Carwow was a source for independent video reviews by Matt Watson on cars. They enjoyed watching the videos to experience the cars they were considering from the driver's point of view.
- “**Carwow is a price comparison site**” - Participants shared how they would use the Carwow website to specify needs, brand and model, and gain a price benchmark. The customer would then print the car deals and take them to the dealerships to negotiate the cheapest price.

### What does these misconceptions mean for Carwow?

- + The lack of customers understanding the Carwow proposition leads to misuse of the service.
- + Misuse of the Carwow proposition leads to leakage and losing out of potential sales.

S.

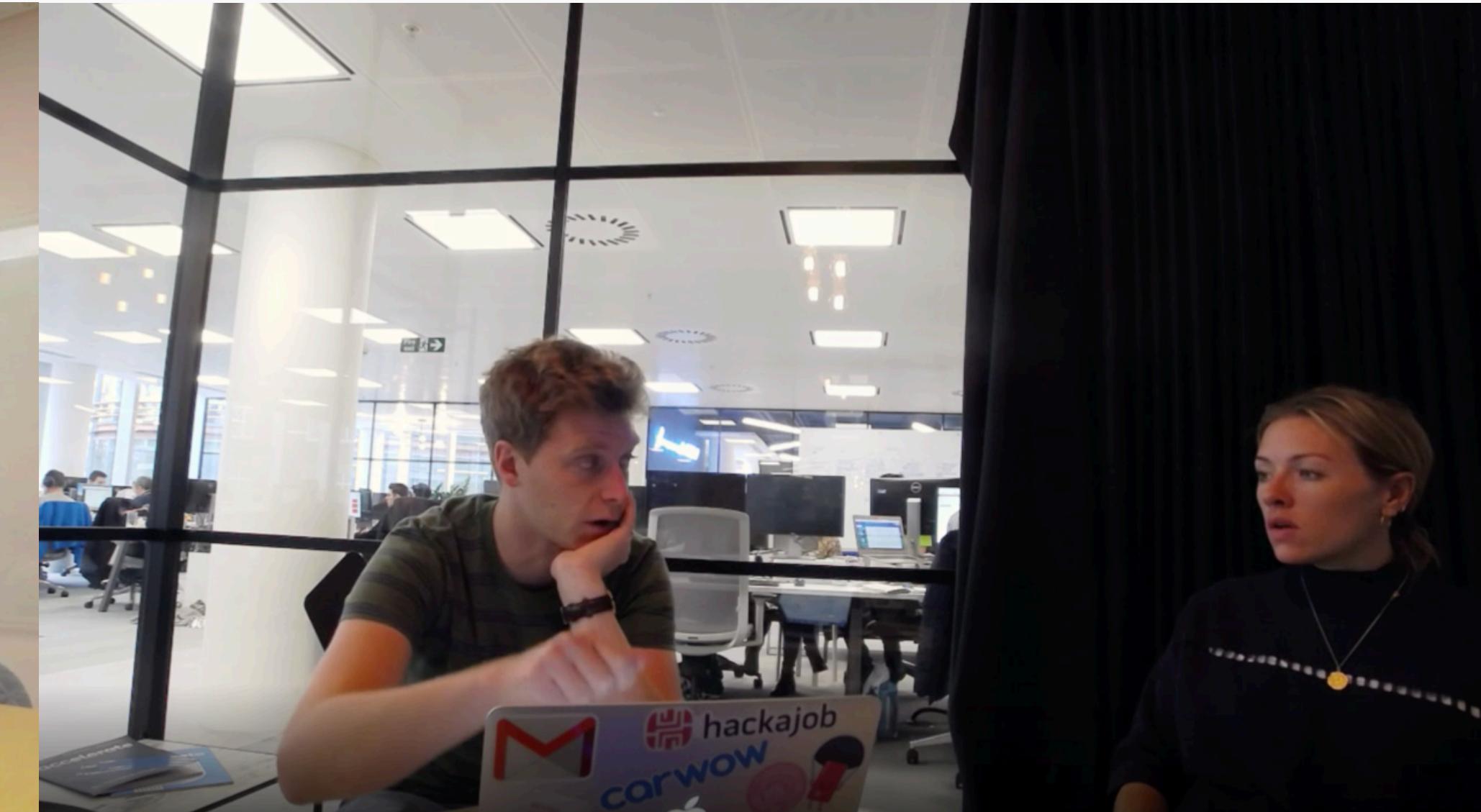
Misunderstanding the Carwow proposition



Misusing Carwow  
Internal and external leakage

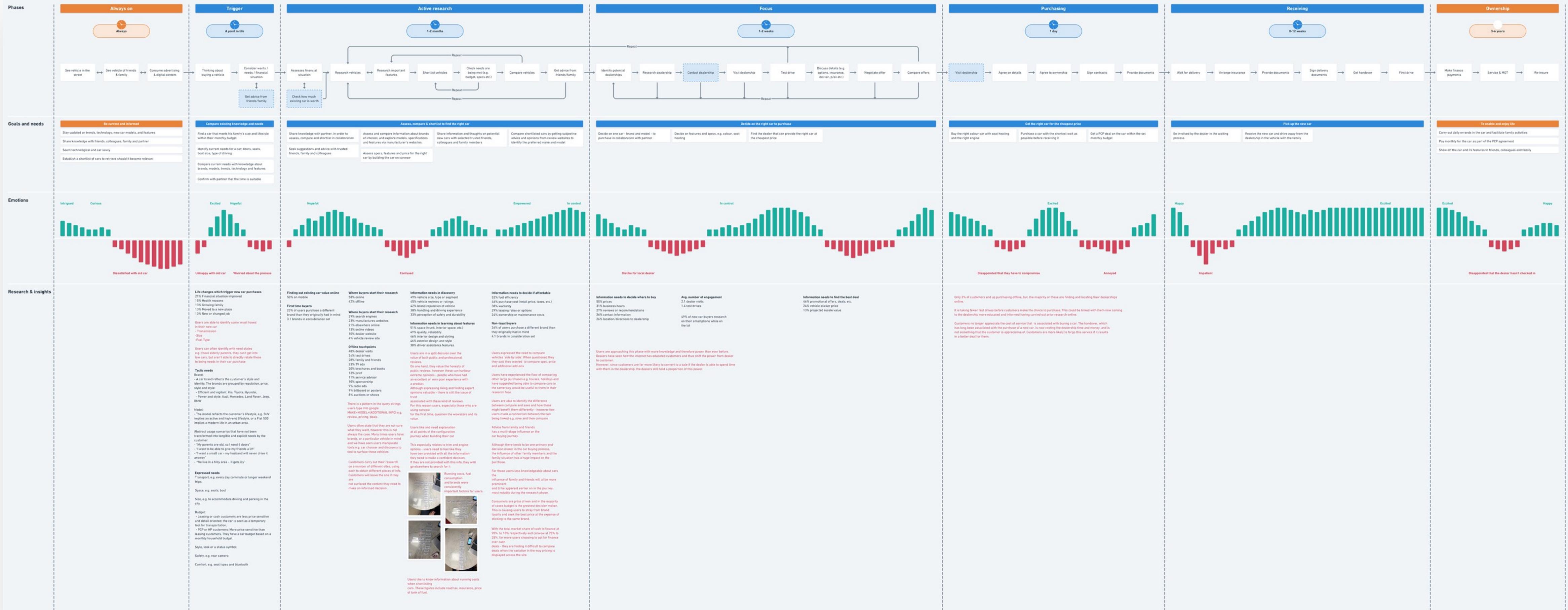


## Joined-up user insights





# Joined-up user insights



# Design Sprints

Joined-up team collaboration



## How Might We and Problem Post-its

October 12

### How might we send users down the right path?

- I can't see all ways of buying a car (stock, used, other)
- I have so many options. I'm lost
- As a buyer, too many options, hard to choose
- Should I get a new or used car?
- Should I buy new or used given my budget?
- I want to just search for cars on carwow like I do on Google
- I can't easily search f
- or multiple models or brands
- I accidentally built a factory order vehicle. I didn't mean to
- As a buyer I don't want to go back and forth between multiple websites
- I can't search for cars
- I don't know whether to buy new or used

### How might we help a user select the right car?

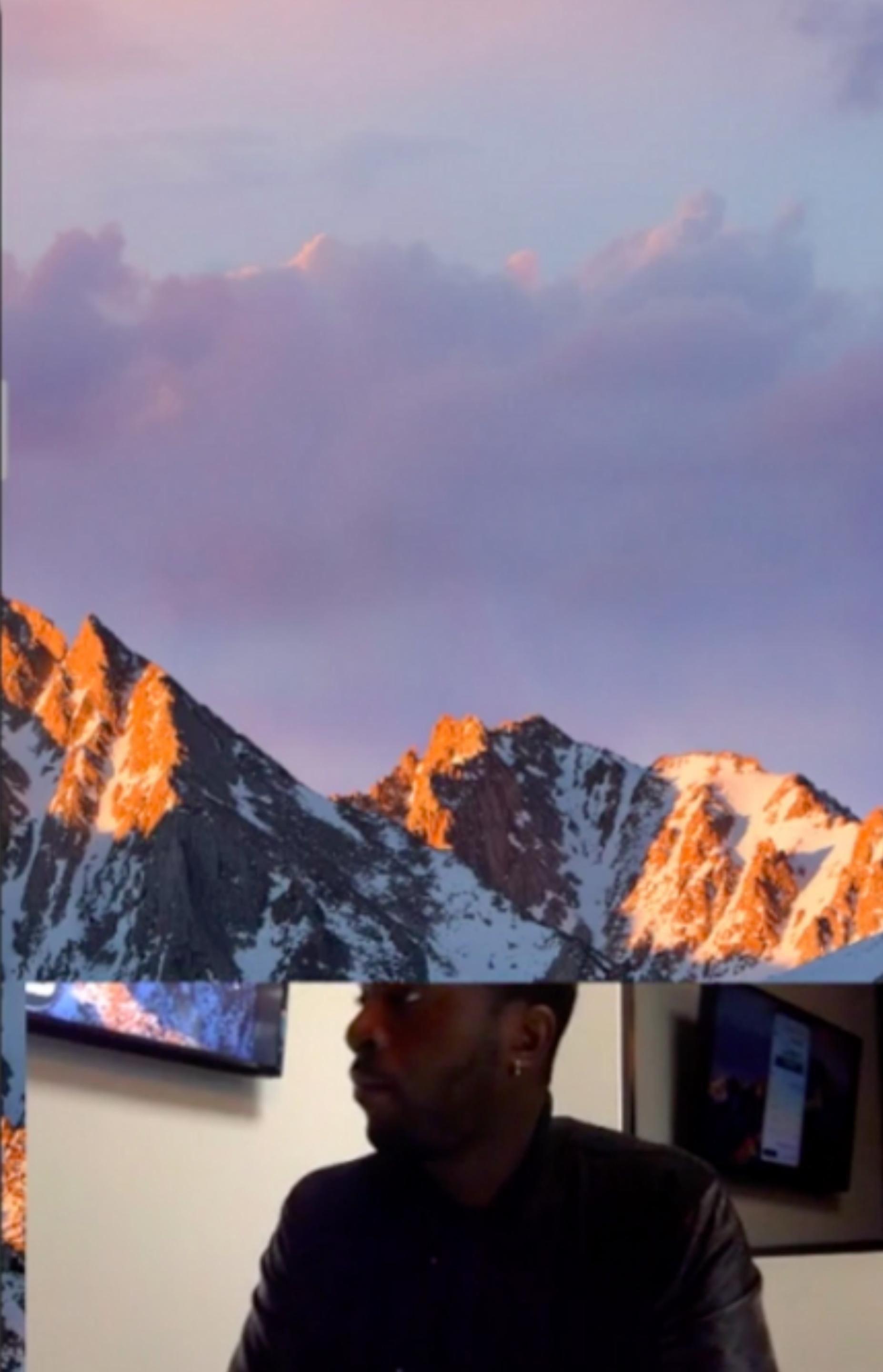
- I want reassurance that my car buying decision is right
- I can't compare a shortlist of cars by features
- I can't compare shortlist on the same website
- I would like to write down notes on my shortlisted cars
- It's difficult to compare cars side by side
- Which car suits my lifestyle?
- Is this the best option for me?
- I don't know how efficient this car is
- I don't know which car is right for me
- I can't find cars based on my needs very easily
- I need help finding the right car for my needs
- I want to choose based on personalised criteria
- I don't understand how to compare costs across models (what am I getting for my money?)
- I know which model I want but I don't know how to answer the questions about engine, etc.

### How might we better facilitate communication between buyer and dealer?

- I have an offer but I'm not ready to be sold. Why do I have to go to a dealer?
- I want to avoid dealerships altogether
- I want user reviews around different aspects of dealers
- I can't trust the dealer review because they're all five stars
- All the dealers have 5 stars I can't differentiate



A smartphone screen showing a car configuration interface from [arwow.invisionapp.com](https://arwow.invisionapp.com). The phone is held by a person with dark skin and short hair, wearing a black t-shirt, standing in front of a wall with framed pictures of snowy mountain peaks. The phone's status bar shows signal strength, battery level at 28%, and time 13:17. The app interface includes a back arrow, a home icon, a lock icon, and a refresh icon. The URL bar shows the website address. The main content area features a white Audi A1 Sportback, a title "Audi A1 Sportback", and a "View full details" button. Below this are dropdown menus for "Trim" (set to SE), "Engine" (set to SE 30 TFSI), "Colour" (None Selected), and "Options" (None selected). A section for "Estimated running costs" shows a monthly payment of "£249/mo | £18,540" and a "6% off RRP". A "SEE DEALS" button is at the bottom right.



# Outcomes

Reflections and learnings

# The smarter way to buy your new car

Choose your perfect car, compare offers from local and national dealers and buy at a price that's right for you.

Select make

Select model

Select a car

[Not sure what you want?](#)

Rated **9.5/10** from 15,634 reviews Trustpilot



## Special offers

Discover a selection of cars with even bigger savings and special deals for limited time only!

Special offer



Extra savings



Going fast



## The car buying comparison site

Save on average £2,900 off RRP. Compare offers on new & nearly new cars, from top rated local and national UK dealers.

[Select a car](#)[Not sure what you want?](#)

Get 30 day free Insurance

**Volvo XC40 Recharge Pure Electric**

No deposit, no long-term contract  
and no hidden costs

Monthly price from  
**£619**

[Get offers](#)

[Learn more about Care By Volvo >](#)

Advertisement

**Let carwow help you choose your next car**



## 28% increase

In OfficeVibe employee engagement survey



## UIT “Sprints”

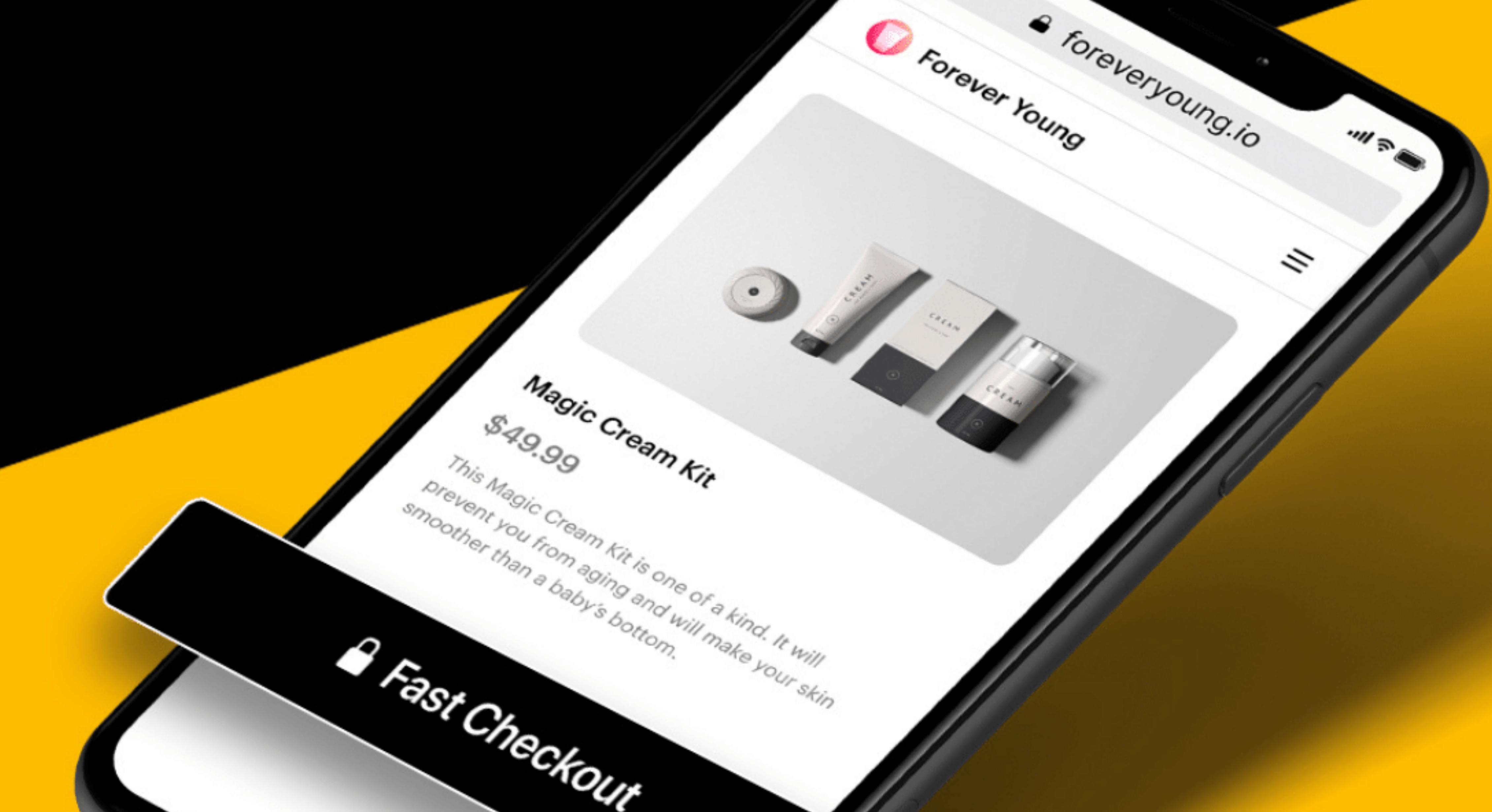
Customer Support, Data Science, and User Research joining forces



## 12% increase

Significant increase in reported sales and # of accepted offers





I was hired to

**Get product design aligned with  
company initiatives**

TL;DR

Over a month, I improved  
**velocity** and **prioritization** within  
the Seller Group.

### Customers

- Saks 5th Avenue, The Honest Company, Backcountry,
- \$5M+ Gross Merchandise Value (GMV)
- Head of E-Commerce, Marketing Operations

### Important KPIs

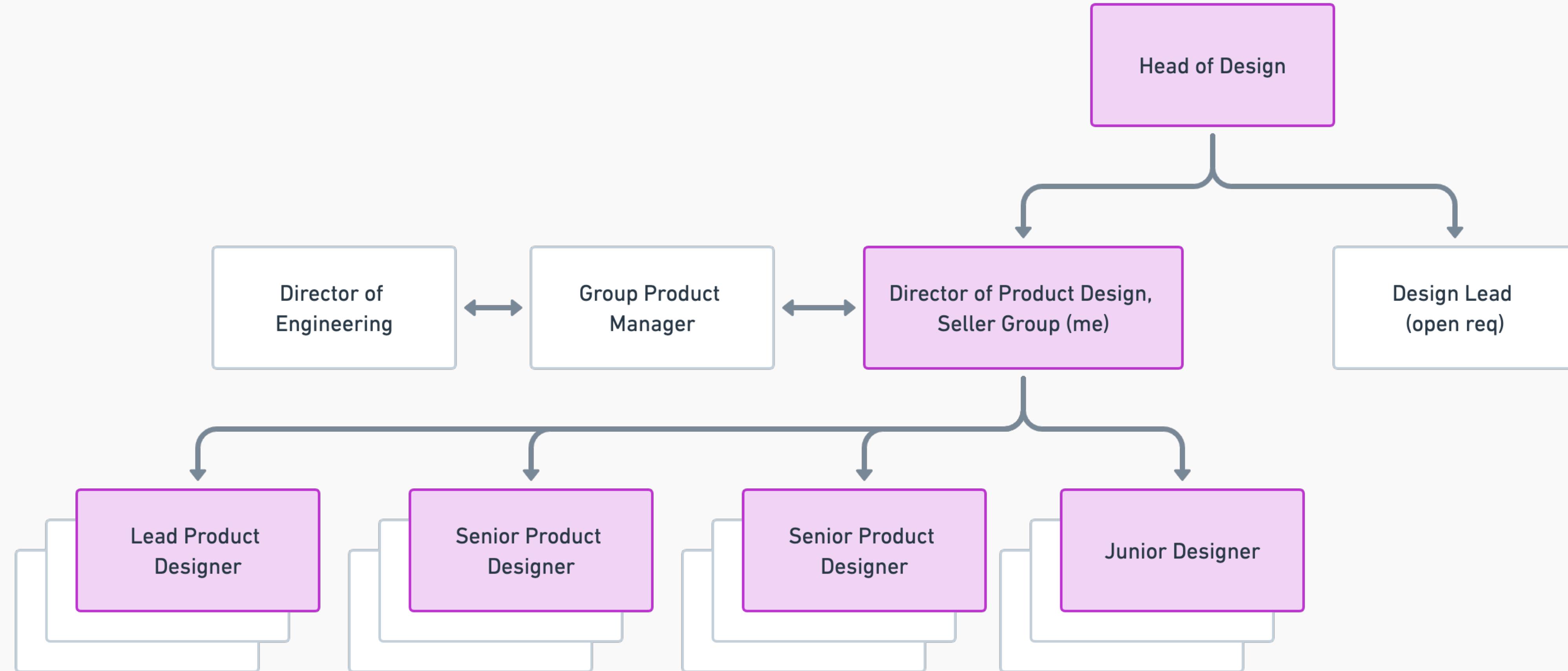
- Share of Wallet (SoW)
- Repeat purchase with Fast, see the value of 1-click on 2nd purchase
- Reducing the time to publish (Merchants only)

### How Fast makes money

- Interchange; 1.3%
- Purchases processed by Fast only

**B**

# Organizational chart



## The problem

Q2 planning

**We're understaffed** 



### Provide clarity

Get telemetry on the problem we're solving and why



### Provide focus

Eliminate distractions and protect my team's time.



### Boost velocity

Leverage existing patterns within the platform and ship to learn

## Challenges

- Hiring freeze
- Contract and vendor freeze
- Design system not complete

# Clarity

Why is this feature more important?

## Providing clarity

1

### Question bank

Identify what we know and what we don't know.

2

### Working sessions

Examine every initiative's 1-sheet in detail.

3

### Unit of measurement

Represent my team's time in a format that feels like math.

# Focus

What can we commit to?

## Providing focus

1

### Clockwise

Chrome plugin that optimizes my teams calendar automatically.

2

### Flexing the process

Advising designers on which fidelity of process to deploy

3

### Cut-off line

P0s only. Set the team up for ongoing success.

# Velocity

What does finished work look like?

# Boosting velocity

1

## Design “Office hours”

Delegate work within the system  
for low-scoped improvements

2

## Copy review

Advising designers on which  
fidelity of process to deploy

3

## Separate critiques

Reviewing work with the broader  
team 2x a week now

# Outcomes

Reflections and learnings



## Provided clarity

Established a benchmark for quarterly planning.



## Provided focus

Provided air cover for my team by sharing out our commitments



## Boosted velocity

Unblocked teams and restored trust in design organization



## Be customer-led

Great outcomes are a result of talking to users constantly. Humans drive new ideas. There's always time to speak with customers and users.



## People > Process

Strong relationships within teams can overcome any problem. The inverse is true. Internal issues can usually be traced back to missing or broken relationships.



## Try it out

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# Thanks!

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