

Analytical Thinking - Setting a Goal

Interview Question

Before I dive in, would like to make some up front assumption if that works for you?

<1 min	Assumptions
Assumptions	

Tip: clarify the prompt means something specific, state anything that'll help you proceed

"I want to start by reviewing the product's landscape and reason for existing, then identify key stakeholders and ecosystem health metrics, define a North Star metric with guardrails, and finally set specific team goals. We can discuss trade offs along the way at any point. Does that sound like a good plan for our time together?"

Tip: spend the 30-45 seconds to say this. It will set the tone for the interview.

Great, let me take a minute to gather my thoughts

<5 min	Product Rationale (Product, Users, Value)
Describe the product functionality, maturity and how it makes money Current alternatives / competitors Why this company is uniquely positioned to deliver the best experience/product	
Mission statement for the product	

Talk about why the product/experience matters to users, ecosystem and company.

What problem does it solve and why does that matter to the market and the company (and why NOW).

Talk about key gaps with current options.

Anchor for tradeoff questions later

E.g. for Instagram Reels: "Empower creators to share engaging short-form videos that entertain and connect the Instagram community."

Next, I'd like to spend a couple minutes thinking through ecosystem players, primary motivations, and key activities for realizing value. Does that sound good?

< 8 min	Ecosystem Players		
Ecosystem Players	Value Proposition To Ecosystem Player	Must-Take Actions to Realize the Value Proposition	Ecosystem Health Metrics To Track Must-Take Actions

Good to mention revenue but likely not a top-line ecosystem health metric for the product

Now that we have our ecosystem health metrics, I'll take a minute to identify a north star metric and any guardrail metrics

< 4 min	North Star Metric		
Metric (behavior/action/event)	Timeframe (Daily/Weekly/Monthly)	Strengths of this NSM (why do you like it)	Drawbacks of this NSM (how can optimizing for this NSM go wrong)

Tip: remember to critique the north star metric by stating drawbacks. The drawbacks will inform your guardrails.

< 3 min	Guardrails and Countermetrics to Address NSM Drawbacks
Guardrails / Counter Metrics	

Tip: Guardrail metrics should map to key drawbacks of the NSM. Guardrails allow the ecosystem to stay within a healthy range as the NSM grows.

E.g. if you're growing the number of messages sent, you want to do that without increasing spam reports as a % of messages

Working backwards from the NSM and considering the guardrails, I'd love to focus my team on 1-2 specific goals

<5 min	Team Focus for the next 3-6 months (Goals)		
Ecosystem player to focus on and why (rationale)			
Selected ecosystem player's key user journey steps leading to NSM event/action			
Potential goals based on key actions along that journey that can be influenced within 3-6 months	Potential Team Goal/Metric	Ability to Influence	Impact on NSM

Tip: which ecosystem player would unlock the biggest growth based on the current state and maturity of the product?

Tip: Work backwards from the action the chosen ecosystem player takes to contribute to the NSM to identify leading actions. These are your potential leading metrics.

Tip: Prioritize one of these goals based on ability to influence and potential impact on

Prioritized Goal with Rationale			

Ability to influence includes internal friction (e.g. influencing Feed algorithm if you're not the PM for that will be Low-Med influence).

<10 min

Tradeoff Question	
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I'd like to start by clarifying the tradeoff and then I'll walk you through my thinking on how I would navigate the decision.	
Clarify Tradeoff	
Describe	

Tip: spend 15-20 seconds to say this. It will help.

Tip: clarify the prompt means something specific, state anything that'll help you proceed

Let me think about the common goal for these options	
Common Goal/Mission	

How do both options contribute to a shared goal?

Frame the Tradeoff		
	Pros	Cons
Option 1		
Option 2		
Summarize Fundamental Tradeoff		
Decision with rationale		

What are the main advantages and disadvantages in each option

Convey what it ultimately boils down to
Determine which option you believe aligns better to the company/product goal and articulate your rationale.
Bonus: finish by sharing what would need to be true for you to change your mind.