



How to Improve a Product



As a recruiter, when I ask the question what I'm really looking for is a clear line of thinking tracing back from the product to the problem the product is ultimately here to solve.

- **Chris Lee, Medium**

Agenda

1. Framework
2. Improve a Product vs. Design a Product
3. Takeaways
4. Breakout Rooms



1.

Framework

Step-by-Step Guideline

How to Structure your Answer

1. Narrow the Scope
2. Goal of the Product
3. Areas to Improve
 - Current Pain Points
4. Implement Solution
5. Evaluate Tradeoffs



Narrow the Scope

Ask Clarifying Questions

- What part of the product am I focusing on?
- Who is it for?
 - Find user base
- Where is it available?

Note: If you don't know the product, that's okay!
Just speak up and ask questions - don't try to BS.



Define Structure

“Let me start by understanding the goals of the product, then I’ll move onto the current issues and how to solve them. Lastly, I’ll evaluate the features and tradeoffs.”

Excerpt From: McDowell, Gayle Laakmann. “Cracking the PM Interview: How to Land a Product Manager Job in Technology.” Apple Books.

Goal of the Product

- Summarize goal of product
 - Make sure you know what the product does
- Connect goal back to user
 - What problems does it solve?
 - Different from use cases
- Identify product users here
- Example: Facebook
 - Post status updates and pictures (*use case*)
 - Connect with others and share updates with friends and family (*goal*)



Areas to Improve

Define Metrics

■ Customer Base

- Too low? Why? What could the product do better?

■ Revenue

- Per customer or total number of paying users?

■ User Engagement

- How long are customers spending time on the product? Too little?

■ Retention

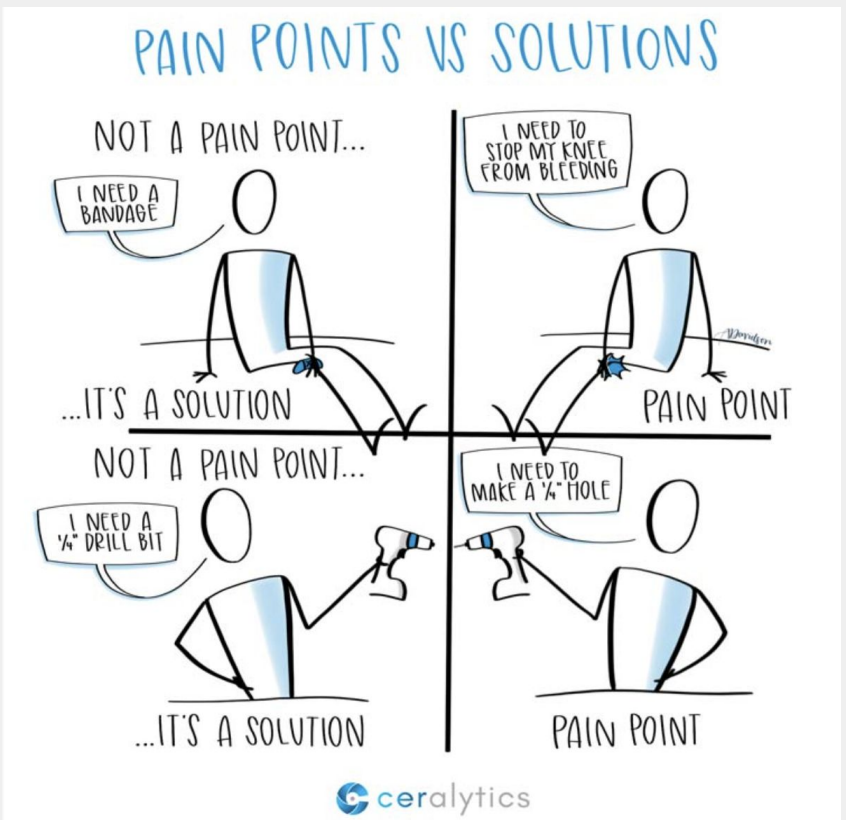
- Are customers leaving and not coming back?

■ Conversion

- Is there a need to increase unpaid to paid users?

Current Pain Points

- **Pain-point**
 - Specific problem that your user is facing
- **How to find?**
 - Go through key user journey
 - Identify important interactions or pain-points along the journey
- **Prioritize pain-points**
 - Impact - severity of issue and its effect on customers
 - Reach - scope of affected users, ranging from a few outliers to entire population



Implement Solution

■ Describe approach

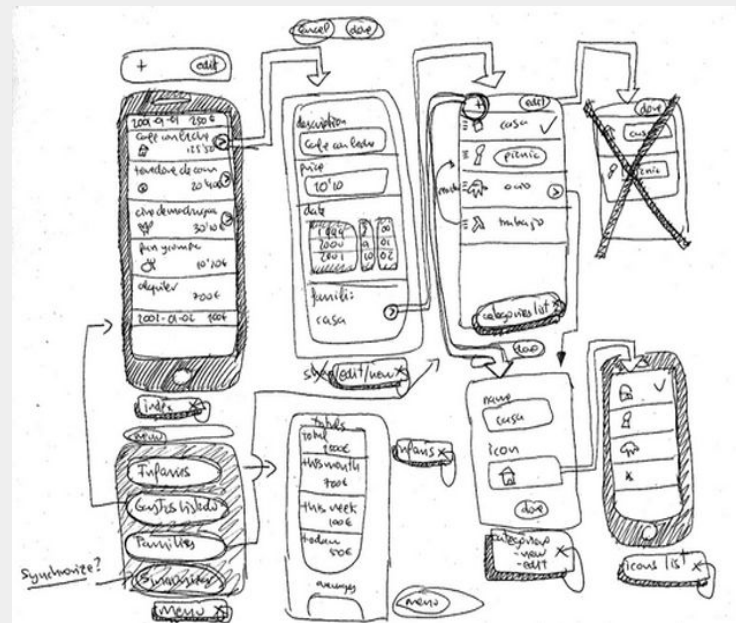
- Structure answer

■ List solutions

- Always tie solutions back to goal

■ Sketch out mockups

- To communicate effectively with engineers and designers
- To facilitate more detailed critiques of visual elements and functionality so changes can be made



Evaluate Tradeoffs

- **Discuss technical challenges**
 - Data storage
 - Back-end functionality
- **Discuss pros/cons**
 - Feasible for engineers to build or designers to create?
- **Reduce costs/risks**



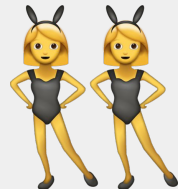
2.

Improve a Product vs. Design a Product

Difference between the two interview questions

Improve a Product vs. Design a Product

- Only real difference is that **you're taking an existing product and building on it**
 - Otherwise, the same ideas/framework apply
- Focus on addressing user pain-points
 - Build a solution to fix one or two pain-points
- If they ask about how to deem if your product was a success
 - Relate back to goal + metrics



3.

Takeaways

Key Points to Consider

Key Takeaways

Show your Consumer Insight

- Find target motivation
- Discuss pain points
- Each user has a use case
 - Tie it back to goal of product



Thanks!

Any questions?

Midterms next week!!

Mock interviews with Sriv or Desiree

- 30-minute slots
- Sign-ups will be sent through email by tonight
 - Rubric will be posted on Elms
- Format:
 - 1 behavioral (5 minutes)
 - 1 technical concept (5 minutes)
 - 1 product design (20 minutes)
 - Not improving a product

Breakout Rooms:

How to Improve a Microwave for College Students

