Problem Statement

Describe your product challenge in detail

> I am the CEO. We have been building a SaaS workflow tool for 2 years with modest growth. I suddenly realized that 'AI Agents' are the future. I want to pause the entire roadmap immediately, reassign all 50 engineers to build an AI agent framework, and pivot the company next week. My team thinks I'm manic.

Convene Council

The Visionary

Vision, Intuition, Culture, Founder Mode

From a visionary founder's lens, the inclination to pivot towards AI Agents could be bold and transformative. As Brian Chesky highlights, sometimes a crisis or realization provides clarity, leading to significant shifts. Still, it's crucial to ensure alignment with the company's mission and culture.

Vision and Long-term Thinking: While the allure of AI is undeniable, evaluate if this pivot aligns with your long-term vision. Does it enhance your core mission, or is it an opportunistic detour?

Founder Instincts and Intuition: Trust your instincts, but validate them. Engage with key stakeholders, potential customers, and industry experts to gauge the potential impact and fit.

Culture Building and Company DNA: As Chesky noted, "if you try to appease employees, they may not even be there the whole time." Ensure your team understands and buys into the pivot. The shift should resonate with your company's DNA, not just your personal epiphany.

"Founder Mode" - Direct Involvement vs. Delegation: In times of change, hands-on leadership can be vital. However, involve your team in the decision-making process to foster a shared vision and mitigate perceptions of mania.

Innovation over Incrementalism: As Chesky advocates, think in 10X terms. This pivot could redefine your company, but ensure it's not at the expense of existing value propositions.

Ultimately, balance visionary thinking with pragmatic execution. A sudden pivot without team alignment or strategic validation can be perilous. Approach with conviction but seek collaborative validation. 💡 Extrapolated

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Sources from the collective

Brian Chesky · Brian Chesky's new playbook · 00:16:08   ▶

Brian Chesky · Brian Chesky's new playbook · 00:16:08   ▶

Brian Chesky · Brian Chesky's new playbook · 00:34:53   ▶

Brian Chesky · Brian Chesky's new playbook · 00:16:08   ▶

The Scaler

Strategy, Empowered Teams, Product Discovery

Pivoting an entire company towards AI Agents without a clear strategy could be risky. As Tomer Cohen emphasized, "let go of your roadmaps... go back to what you're trying to solve for." It's crucial to first reassess your objectives and see how AI can enhance them. Here's a disciplined approach:

1. **Strategic Clarity**: Align on the problem you're solving. AI should not be a goal itself but a means to improve value delivery. As Cohen suggested, focus on how AI can help achieve your existing objectives better.

2. **Discovery and Validation**: Before reallocating resources, validate the AI agent opportunity. Conduct rapid discovery sprints to test assumptions about the market and user needs. This involves interviews, prototypes, and market analysis.

3. **Empowered Teams**: Transition to empowered product teams. As Marty Cagan noted, empower teams to explore and experiment rather than mandating a top-down shift. Encourage them to discover innovative applications of AI aligned with user needs.

4. **Incremental Transition**: Consider a phased approach. Instead of pausing everything, allocate a subset of resources to explore AI. This minimizes risk while building institutional knowledge.

5. **Skill Development**: Ensure your teams are equipped for AI. As Cohen did with LinkedIn, consider training programs or hiring AI specialists to bolster expertise.

PM High Council

Quad-Swarm strategic advisory from collective product leadership wisdom

decisions based on user value and business viability. 🎯 High confidence

Sources from the collective

Tomer
Cohen · Why AI is disrupting traditional product management | Tomer Cohen (LinkedIn CPO) · 00:17:26   ▶

Tomer
Cohen · Why AI is disrupting traditional product management | Tomer Cohen (LinkedIn CPO) · 00:36:14   ▶

Tomer
Cohen · Why AI is disrupting traditional product management | Tomer Cohen (LinkedIn CPO) · 00:40:57   ▶

Tomer
Cohen · Why AI is disrupting traditional product management | Tomer Cohen (LinkedIn CPO) · 00:36:14   ▶

The Scientist

Loops, Acquisition, Pricing, Retention

You're not crazy, but a drastic pivot requires a balanced approach. As Brian Balfour highlighted, transformation is a "fundamental culture change of how we operate as a company." Your enthusiasm should be tempered with systems thinking and careful planning.

1. **Growth Systems**: Establish a cross-functional team to explore AI capabilities while maintaining core product momentum. As Sean Ellis noted, cross-functional collaboration is crucial for successful growth experiments.

2. **Metrics to Focus**: Prioritize leading indicators like activation rate of new AI features and initial user engagement with AI agents. Measure retention curves to understand long-term user engagement and churn rates.

3. **Growth Loops**: Develop a feedback loop that integrates user feedback on AI features to iterate quickly. Also, consider a virality loop where users can easily share AI-driven outputs, enhancing organic growth.

4. **Sustainable Scaling**: As Elena Verna advised, introduce new growth loops annually but don't expect immediate results. AI initiatives might take 6-18 months to impact revenue, so maintain existing growth channels to ensure financial stability.

5. **Team Management**: Identify "catalysts" within your team who can lead the AI initiative without causing internal disruption. As Balfour noted, some team members will adapt faster than others; support and clear communication are key.

Remember, while innovation is crucial, maintaining a balance between existing growth and new initiatives will prevent destabilization. Adopt a phased approach rather than a complete pivot to mitigate risks.

💡 Extrapolated

Sources from the collective

**Brian
Balfour** · Why ChatGPT will be the next big growth channel (and how to capitalize on it) | Brian Balfour · 01:05:09

**Elena
Verna** · 10 growth tactics that never work | Elena Verna (Amplitude, Miro, Dropbox, SurveyMonkey) · 01:00:49 ▶

**Elena
Verna** · 10 growth tactics that never work | Elena Verna (Amplitude, Miro, Dropbox, SurveyMonkey) · 00:15:28 ▶

Brian .

The Architect

Systems, Technical Debt, Feasibility

Embarking on such a pivot requires careful consideration of several technical and organizational factors. First, assess the current team's skill set to determine if they have the expertise needed to build an AI agent framework. "As Chip Huyen said: 'We have gone into this phase of specializations, people very highly specialized...'" Your team may not be equipped for this pivot without substantial upskilling or hiring.

Next, evaluate the feasibility of integrating AI agents into your existing product ecosystem.

Determine if AI agents align with your company's core competencies and business strategy. "As Geoff Charles highlighted: 'Be very clear with the tradeoffs that you need to make...'" Consider the opportunity costs of diverting resources from your current roadmap.

Technical debt in your existing SaaS product should also be assessed. Pivoting without addressing existing system issues could compound technical challenges. Additionally, ensure you have the infrastructure to support AI workloads, as these can be resource-intensive.

From an organizational perspective, halting the current roadmap can disrupt team dynamics and morale. Sudden changes can lead to resistance or burnout. A phased approach, where you explore AI opportunities while maintaining current momentum, might be more prudent.

Lastly, consider the market landscape. AI is rapidly evolving, and entering this space requires a clear differentiation strategy.

While innovation is essential, balance it with maintainability and strategic alignment. A complete pivot in a week may not be feasible without risking the company's stability and long-term growth prospects.

💡 Extrapolated

Sources from the collective

Chip Huyen · OpenAI researcher on why soft skills are the future of work | Karina Nguyen · 01:08:34 ▶

Camille Fournier · The things engineers are desperate for PMs to understand | Camille Fournier ("The Manager's Path") ·

Chip Huyen · OpenAI researcher on why soft skills are the future of work | Karina Nguyen · 00:57:40 ▶

Farhan Thawar · How Shopify builds a high-intensity culture | Farhan Thawar (VP and Head of Eng) · 00:33:02 ▶

Synthesis
Strategic recommendations balancing all perspectives

🤝 **Alignment**
- All experts emphasize the importance of maintaining alignment with the company's core mission and strategic objectives when considering a pivot to AI agents.
- A phased approach, balancing innovation with ongoing operations, is recommended to minimize risks and maintain stability.

- Cross-functional collaboration and empowerment of teams are crucial for successful exploration and implementation of AI initiatives.

⚡ **Tensions**
- **Vision vs. Feasibility**: Founders' transformative visions must align with engineering realities, including team capabilities and infrastructure readiness.
- **Scale vs. Quality**: Rapid scaling of AI initiatives must not compromise product integrity or user experience.
- **Innovation vs. Sustainability**: Balancing bold, innovative moves with the need for sustainable growth and financial stability is critical.
- **Strategy vs. Execution**: Bridging strategic aspirations with practical execution requires careful planning and phased implementation.

✅ **Recommended Actions**
1. **Strategic Assessment**: Conduct an immediate strategic review to ensure AI initiatives align with long-term company vision and core competencies.
2. **Discovery Sprint**: Initiate rapid discovery sprints to validate AI opportunities, involving prototypes, user interviews, and market analysis.
3. **Phased Resource Allocation**: Allocate a subset of resources to explore AI while maintaining focus on existing product momentum and growth channels.
4. **Skill Development**: Invest in upskilling current teams or hiring specialists to bridge expertise gaps necessary for AI integration.
5. **Feedback and Iteration**: Establish robust feedback loops for AI features to iterate quickly, ensuring alignment with user needs and fostering organic growth.

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