

# PM High Council

Strategic advisory from product leadership

## Problem Statement

Describe your product challenge in detail

Our churn is high. My team suggested making the Cancel Subscription button harder to find. Should we do it?

Convene Council

### Brian Chesky

Design & Experience

Absolutely not. Making the Cancel Subscription button harder to find is a short-term tactic that undermines trust and damages customer experience. At Airbnb, I learned that

### Marty Cagan

Process & Empowerment

I've seen many teams default to superficial solutions like hiding the "Cancel Subscription" button. This is a tactical move, not a strategic one, and it won't address the root cause

### Elena Verna

Growth & Metrics

Absolutely not. Hiding the Cancel Subscription button is a short-term "growth hack" that I strongly advise against. It may momentarily reduce churn numbers, but it will erode trust

"the details are not the details, they make the product." We should strive for transparency and integrity in every interaction; this includes allowing users to leave if they choose to, without obstacles.

Instead, focus on why customers are leaving. Consider reimaging their experience: What would an "11-star experience" look like, and how can we work backwards from there? This is not about quick fixes but about deeply understanding what customers value and improving those areas.

I believe that constraints breed creativity, so challenge small, cross-functional teams to come up with innovative ways to enhance value and engagement. As I said on the podcast: "I don't think you have to be as ideological or have to go all the way to 100... You should probably be doing 80% passes, 20% running the ball down the field." Focus on those long-term passes that create exceptional experiences.

Ultimately, it's about vision and craft, not just metrics. Your product should

of high churn. As I said on the podcast: "An empowered product team can do everything a feature team can do and more." You need to empower your team to dive deeper and understand why users are leaving.

Instead of focusing on quick fixes, leverage product discovery to identify the real problems. Your team should be given the challenge of reducing churn, not simply making a button harder to find. Encourage them to conduct user interviews, analyze usage patterns, and collect feedback to understand the underlying issues.

Empower your team to experiment with meaningful solutions, such as improving onboarding, enhancing product value, or addressing customer pain points. This approach aligns with delivering outcomes, not just outputs. As I mentioned: "The measure is not ship the thing. The measure is it solves the problem."

Ensure your team is structured as an empowered product team, tasked with solving customer problems

and harm long-term retention.

As I said on the podcast: "If you are declining in your revenue growth or whatever other metric that you're looking at, your weekly active users or whatnot, see at least that you're able to plateau it so you can stop the decline." Focus on understanding why users are churning and address those underlying issues.

Consider implementing a retention-focused growth loop. For instance, enhance your activation metrics by identifying the "aha moment" for users and ensuring they reach it quickly and consistently. This could involve improving onboarding processes or enhancing product value early in the user journey.

Measure retention curves to see where drop-offs occur and test interventions to stabilize them. Track metrics like user retention rate, activation rate, and customer satisfaction scores.

Remember, sustainable growth comes from creating value that keeps users engaged, not from

speak to people emotionally and resonate with their needs. 🎯 High confidence.

#### 📚 Sources (5)

Brian Chesky's new  
playbook · 00:39:00 ▶

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

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

rather than just completing a feature roadmap. This is how you'll see real improvement in retention. 💡  
Extrapolated

#### 📚 Sources (5)

Product management theater | Marty  
Cagan (Silicon Valley Product  
Group) · 00:42:20 ▶

Product management theater | Marty  
Cagan (Silicon Valley Product  
Group) · 00:47:57 ▶

Product management theater | Marty  
Cagan (Silicon Valley Product  
Group) · 00:47:57 ▶

obscuring their exit paths.

🎯 High confidence

#### 📚 Sources (5)

10 growth tactics that never work |  
Elena Verna (Amplitude, Miro,  
Dropbox, SurveyMonkey) · 00:54:24 ▶

10 growth tactics that never work |  
Elena Verna (Amplitude, Miro,  
Dropbox, SurveyMonkey) · 00:18:33 ▶

10 growth tactics that never work |  
Elena Verna (Amplitude, Miro,  
Dropbox, SurveyMonkey) · 00:56:20 ▶

## Synthesis

Strategic recommendations balancing all perspectives

### \*\*👉 Agreement\*\*

- All advisors agree that making the Cancel Subscription button harder to find is a short-term tactic that undermines trust and damages customer experience.
- They emphasize the importance of understanding the root causes of churn through user research and feedback, rather than relying on superficial fixes.
- There's consensus on enhancing product value and customer experience to drive long-term retention and engagement.

**\*\*⚡ Tensions\*\***

- While Chesky focuses on creating an "11-star experience" through visionary design, Cagan emphasizes empowering product teams to solve real customer problems, suggesting a potential trade-off between visionary design and practical problem-solving.
- Verna's focus on growth loops and activation metrics introduces a tension between immediate growth tactics and long-term experiential improvements advocated by Chesky.

**\*\*✅ Actions\*\***

1. **\*\*Conduct User Research:\*\*** Empower teams to perform user interviews and analyze usage patterns to understand the root causes of churn.
2. **\*\*Enhance Onboarding:\*\*** Improve the onboarding process to ensure users quickly reach their "aha moment" and realize product value early.
3. **\*\*Form Cross-Functional Teams:\*\*** Challenge small teams to brainstorm and implement innovative solutions that enhance the user experience and increase engagement.
4. **\*\*Implement Retention Metrics:\*\*** Track retention curves, activation rates, and customer satisfaction scores to identify areas for improvement and measure the impact of interventions.