

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 solution that damages trust and the user experience. As I said on the podcast: "You have to think about the whole cohesive system." Obscuring options leads to frustration, not loyalty.

At Airbnb, I learned that the details make the product and that a cohesive, respectful experience is crucial. Instead of making it hard to cancel, focus on understanding why users are leaving. Are there unmet needs or poor experiences? Use those insights to improve.

Remember, "the details are not the details, they make the product." Your product should make people feel valued and understood, not trapped.

When I think about customer experiences, I always aim for that "11-star" level, even if we can't reach it immediately. Imagine the most extraordinary service you'd want to provide, then work backwards to improve incrementally.

Constraints breed creativity. Use this challenge to enhance your offering, not to obscure it. A cohesive, transparent product will always outperform one that manipulates user behavior.  High confidence.

Sources

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

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

Marty Cagan

Process & Empowerment

In my experience, hiding the "Cancel Subscription" button is a classic symptom of a feature team's mindset, where the focus is on outputs rather than outcomes. It's an optimization tactic, not genuine product discovery. As I said on the podcast: "An empowered product team can do everything a feature team can do and more."

Instead of quick fixes, you should focus on understanding the underlying reasons for high churn. This involves a deep dive into customer feedback and behavior. Your team should be empowered to discover the true problems causing churn and develop solutions that deliver real value.

Product discovery is about experimenting and learning what genuinely solves customer issues. As I said, strong product companies focus on outcomes: "You just don't get points for shipping, you get points for delivering the value."

Encourage your team to frame the challenge as a problem to solve, not a feature to tweak. This might mean rethinking your product's value proposition or improving user experience. The goal should always be to serve your customers better, leading to reduced churn naturally.

In short, empower your team to explore and solve real problems.  High confidence

Sources

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

"The other thing I'd argue, Lenny, is an empowered product team can do everything a feature team can do and more. And once in a while I do hear somebody say, why isn't it good enough to be a feature te..."

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

Elena Verna

Growth & Metrics

Absolutely not. Making the Cancel Subscription button harder to find is a short-term tactic that can damage trust and harm long-term retention. Instead, focus on understanding why churn is high. Dive into retention curves to identify when and why users leave. As I said on the podcast: "If you are declining in your revenue growth... see at least that you're able to plateau it so you can stop the decline." Address core product issues and improve user experience.

In terms of metrics, prioritize retention and activation. Analyze user behavior to pinpoint drop-off points and areas where users fail to realize value. Activation metrics are key—ensure users quickly reach their first "aha" moment.

Growth loops, not hacks, are essential. Consider developing new loops that enhance engagement and retention. For example, create a feedback loop to gather insights from departing users, or implement a referral loop to incentivize current users to bring others onboard, increasing perceived value.

Remember, sustainable growth comes from compounding systems, not quick fixes. "You need to start layering [growth loops] very soon into your initiatives" to prevent future slowdowns. 🎯 High confidence.

Sources

- 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 strongly oppose making the Cancel Subscription button harder to find, emphasizing potential damage to trust and user experience.

- There is a consensus on the importance of understanding why users leave, suggesting a need for deeper customer insights and feedback.
- Each advisor underscores the value of a cohesive and transparent product experience, focusing on long-term improvements over short-term hacks.

⚡ Tensions

PM High Council

Strategic advisory from product leadership

✓ Actions

1. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of customer churn, collecting feedback to identify core issues causing user departure.
2. Empower product teams to experiment and focus on solving root causes of churn, rather than implementing superficial fixes.
3. Develop growth loops and optimize activation metrics to ensure users quickly experience value, enhancing retention.
4. Foster a culture of continuous improvement by aligning design, process, and growth strategies to deliver a cohesive, user-centric product experience.

Powered by RAG on Lenny's Podcast transcripts