I Ain't Afraid of No Ghost Products™
Using a human centered approach to breathe life into unused products

Rachel Gregory

UX Director

Haley Hendershot Malone

UX Research Lead

In this talk, we will equip you with the knowledge and experience to advocate for research to your stakeholders to guard against

Ghost Products™

What are Ghost Products™?

Spoiler: Spirit Airlines doesn't count

Ghost Products™ Defined

We define Ghost Products as products or features that users don't want, need or like to use. We call them ghost products because not only are they dead and gone, to users, but as a person involved in the making of the product, they can come back to haunt you.

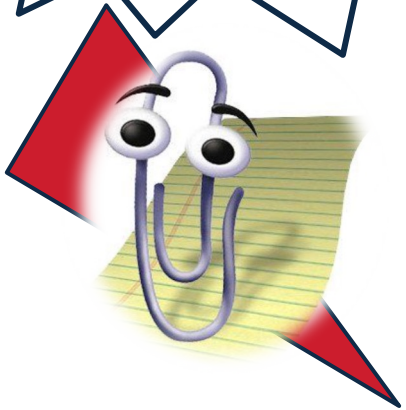
WOW

Product Graveyard

Any Examples?

Apple Vision Pro

TouchScreen Toaster

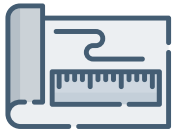


Microsoft Clippy

How do we guard against spirits?

Leave the iron and salt at home

The UX Process



Align

Understand today
Define questions

Research

Create empathy
Identify direction

Design

Envision product
Validate direction

Build

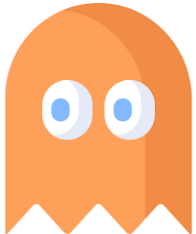
Create UI
Ensure quality

Mature

Standup COE
Enable org

UX Activities & Deliverables

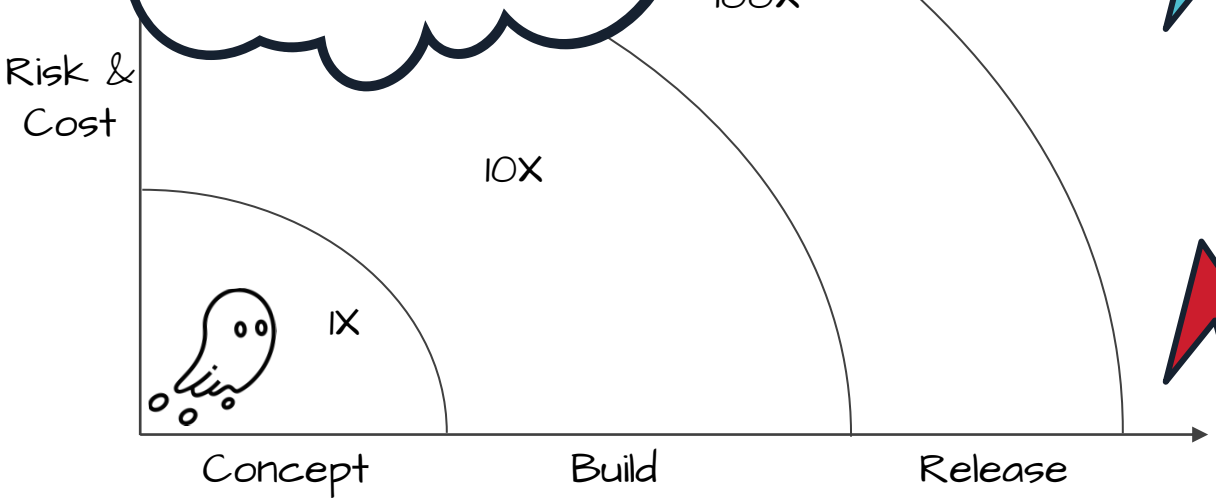
Align	Research	Design	Build	Mature
Stakeholder Interviews	User Interviews	Design Thinking	Detailed Design	Coaching
Product Overview/Demos	Contextual Interviews	Information Architecture	Accessibility Review	Design Ops
Documentation Review	Journey Maps	Card Sorting	Design Reviews	Research Ops
Heuristic Review	Surveys	Tree Testing	Design System	Metrics
Analytics Review	Usability Testing	Wireframes		
Service Blueprint	Personas	Prototypes		
Style guide/Design System Review	User Flows	Style Guides		
		Usability Testing		



Why We Lead With UX

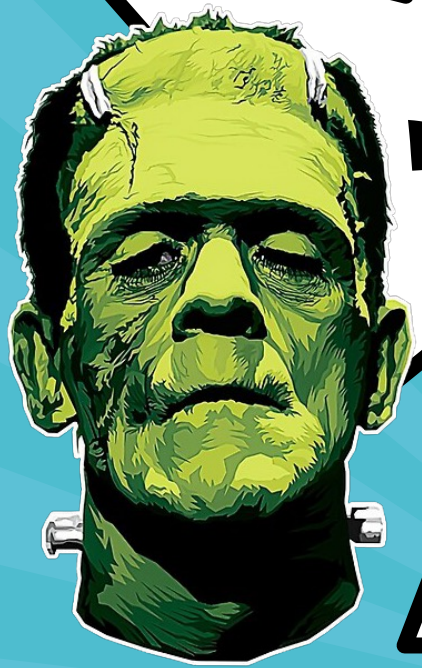
"You can use an eraser on the drafting table or a sledgehammer on the construction site"

- Frank Lloyd Wright



For every $1 invested in UX provides an ROI of $100

88% of people are less likely to return to a site after a bad experience



How do we resurrect the dead?

No séance required

Steps to Bring Products Back to Life

Step 1

Analysis

What seems to be the problem?

Step 2

Solutioning

Time to come up with ideas!

Step 3

Validation

Did we do it right?

Analysis

Why do this step?

This step is done to gain a baseline understanding of what is working and what isn't.

Roles to Include

- Research
- Design
- Product

Activities

Analytics (if applicable)

- What are users doing and how often?
- What are the primary pathways and drop offs?

Usability Study

- How usable is the product (SUS, SEQ)?
- What are the users' frustrations?

User Interviews

- What are users' needs and wants?
- Uncover the "why" behind user behavior

"You can't make it better if you don't first understand what's wrong with it"

- The Ghost Gals

Solutioning

Why do this step?

Now that research has been conducted it's time to create some solutions to test.

Roles to Include

- Research
- Design
- Product
- Development

Activities

Analysis

- Using the conducted research, uncover pain points and areas of opportunity

Ideation

- Sketch out ideas that could solve the problems
- Quantity is key, then narrow down

Design

- Create a testable artifact to bring to users

Validation

Why do this step?

Suggested improvements need to be tested to verify if the problems have been solved. We don't want to slow down our users in their normal process or risk creating a ghost product.

Roles to Include

- Research
- Design
- Product

Activities

Craft the Plan

- Align on learning objectives
- Identify appropriate methods and users
- Create a discussion guide and schedule sessions

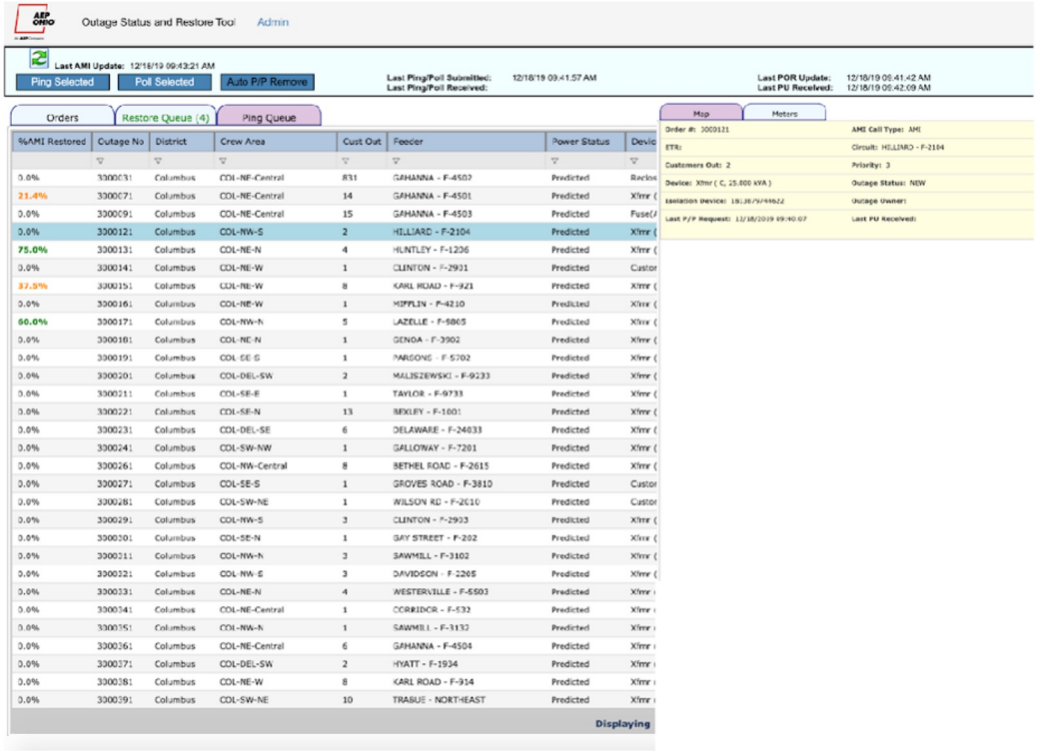
Test and Learn

- Another round of ideation and testing is likely
- Start thinking about your analytics strategy to measure long term usage and satisfaction

Let's see it in action

A resurrection case study

Outage Status & Restore Tool



%AMI Restored	Outage No	District	Crew Area	Cust Out	Feeder	Power Status	Devic
0.0%	3300031	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	831	GAHANNA - F-4503	Predicted	Recloe
21.4%	3300071	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	14	GAHANNA - F-4501	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300091	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	15	GAHANNA - F-4503	Predicted	Fuse/
0.0%	3300121	Columbus	COL-NW-S	2	HILLIARD - F-2104	Predicted	Xfmr (
75.0%	3300131	Columbus	COL-NE-N	4	HUNTLEY - F-1206	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300141	Columbus	COL-NE-W	1	CLINTON - F-2931	Predicted	Custo
37.5%	3300151	Columbus	COL-NE-W	8	KARL ROAD - F-921	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300161	Columbus	COL-NE-W	1	MIFFLIN - F-4210	Predicted	Xfmr (
60.0%	3300171	Columbus	COL-NW-N	5	LAZELLE - F-5865	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300181	Columbus	COL-NE-N	1	GENOA - F-3902	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300191	Columbus	COL-SE-S	1	PARSONS - F-5702	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300201	Columbus	COL-DEL-SW	2	MALISZEWSKI - F-9233	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300211	Columbus	COL-SE-E	1	TAYLOR - F-9733	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300221	Columbus	COL-SE-N	13	BEXLEY - F-1601	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300231	Columbus	COL-DEL-SE	6	DELAWARE - F-24033	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300241	Columbus	COL-SW-NW	1	GALLOWAY - F-7201	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300261	Columbus	COL-NW-Central	8	BETHEL ROAD - F-2615	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300271	Columbus	COL-SE-S	1	GROVES ROAD - F-3810	Predicted	Custo
0.0%	3300281	Columbus	COL-SW-NE	1	WILSON RD - F-2010	Predicted	Custo
0.0%	3300291	Columbus	COL-NW-S	3	CLINTON - F-2903	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300301	Columbus	COL-SE-N	1	GAY STREET - F-202	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300311	Columbus	COL-NW-N	3	SAWMILL - F-3102	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300321	Columbus	COL-NW-S	3	DAVIDSON - F-2205	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300331	Columbus	COL-NE-N	4	WESTERVILLE - F-5503	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300341	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	1	CORRIDOR - F-532	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300351	Columbus	COL-NW-N	1	SAWMILL - F-3133	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300361	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	6	GAHANNA - F-4504	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300371	Columbus	COL-DEL-SW	2	HYATT - F-1934	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300381	Columbus	COL-NE-W	8	KARL ROAD - F-914	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300391	Columbus	COL-SW-NE	10	TRABUE - NORTHEAST	Predicted	Xfmr (

Goal

This company wanted to enable dispatchers to quickly see where customers were out of power and how soon they could be restored.

Problem

The current state interface is outdated and does not surface relevant information quickly.

Strategy

Our researchers were called in to identify opportunities for improvement before implementing a new solution.

Steps to Bring Products Back to Life

Step 1

Analysis

What seems to be the problem?

Step 2

Solutioning

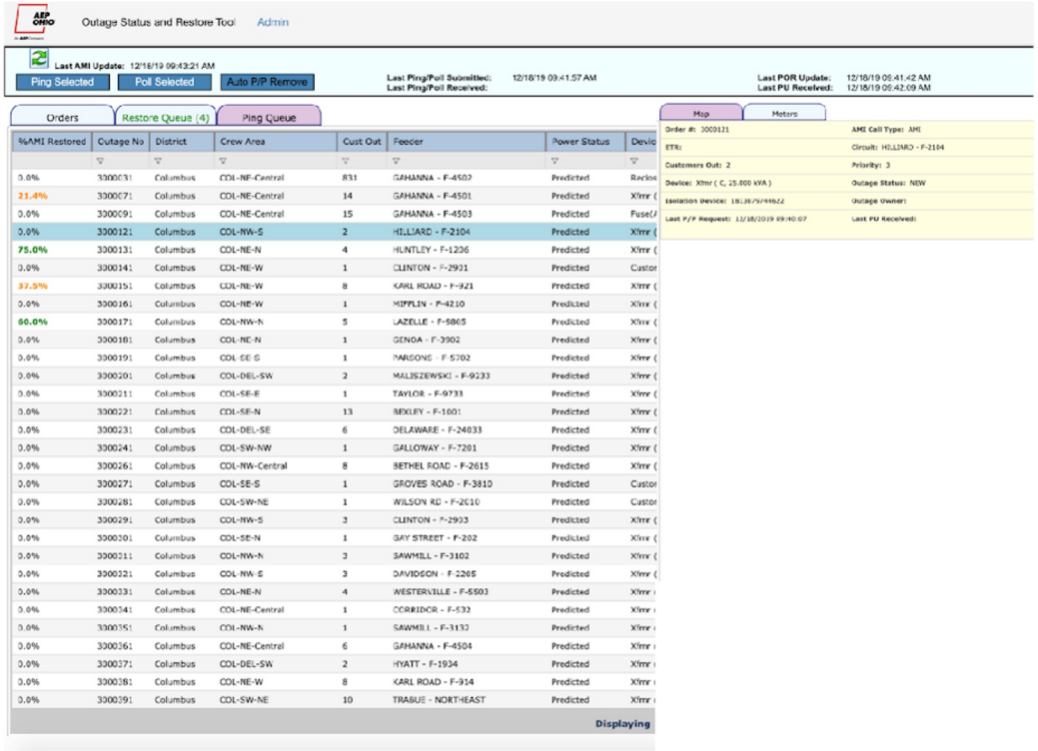
Time to come up with ideas!

Step 3

Validation

Did we do it right?

Outage Status & Restore Tool



%AMI Restored	Outage No	District	Crew Area	Cust Out	Feeder	Power Status	Devic
0.0%	3300031	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	831	GAHANNA - F-4503	Predicted	Recloe
21.4%	3300071	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	14	GAHANNA - F-4501	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300091	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	15	GAHANNA - F-4503	Predicted	Fuse/
0.0%	3300121	Columbus	COL-NW-S	2	HILLIARD - F-2104	Predicted	Xfmr (
75.0%	3300131	Columbus	COL-NE-N	4	HUNTLEY - F-1206	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300141	Columbus	COL-NE-W	1	CLINTON - F-2931	Predicted	Custo
37.5%	3300151	Columbus	COL-NE-W	8	KARL ROAD - F-921	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300161	Columbus	COL-NE-W	1	MIFFLIN - F-4210	Predicted	Xfmr (
60.0%	3300171	Columbus	COL-NW-N	5	LAZELLE - F-5865	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300181	Columbus	COL-NE-N	1	GENOA - F-3902	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300191	Columbus	COL-SE-S	1	PARSONS - F-5702	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300201	Columbus	COL-DEL-SW	2	MALISZEWSKI - F-9233	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300211	Columbus	COL-SE-E	1	TAYLOR - F-9733	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300221	Columbus	COL-SE-N	13	BEXLEY - F-1601	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300231	Columbus	COL-DEL-SE	6	DELAWARE - F-24033	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300241	Columbus	COL-SW-NW	1	GALLOWAY - F-7201	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300261	Columbus	COL-NW-Central	8	BETHEL ROAD - F-2615	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300271	Columbus	COL-SE-S	1	GROVES ROAD - F-3810	Predicted	Custo
0.0%	3300281	Columbus	COL-SW-NE	1	WILSON RD - F-2010	Predicted	Custo
0.0%	3300291	Columbus	COL-NW-S	3	CLINTON - F-2903	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300301	Columbus	COL-SE-N	1	GAY STREET - F-202	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300311	Columbus	COL-NW-N	3	SAWMILL - F-3102	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300321	Columbus	COL-NW-S	3	DAVIDSON - F-2205	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300331	Columbus	COL-NE-N	4	WESTERVILLE - F-5503	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300341	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	1	CORRIDOR - F-532	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300351	Columbus	COL-NW-N	1	SAWMILL - F-3130	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300361	Columbus	COL-NE-Central	6	GAHANNA - F-4504	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300371	Columbus	COL-DEL-SW	2	HYATT - F-1934	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300381	Columbus	COL-NE-W	8	KARL ROAD - F-914	Predicted	Xfmr (
0.0%	3300391	Columbus	COL-SW-NE	10	TRABUE - NORTHEAST	Predicted	Xfmr (

01 Analysis

- Conducted contextual inquiries with several dispatchers on site
- Audited the current tool for basic design conventions

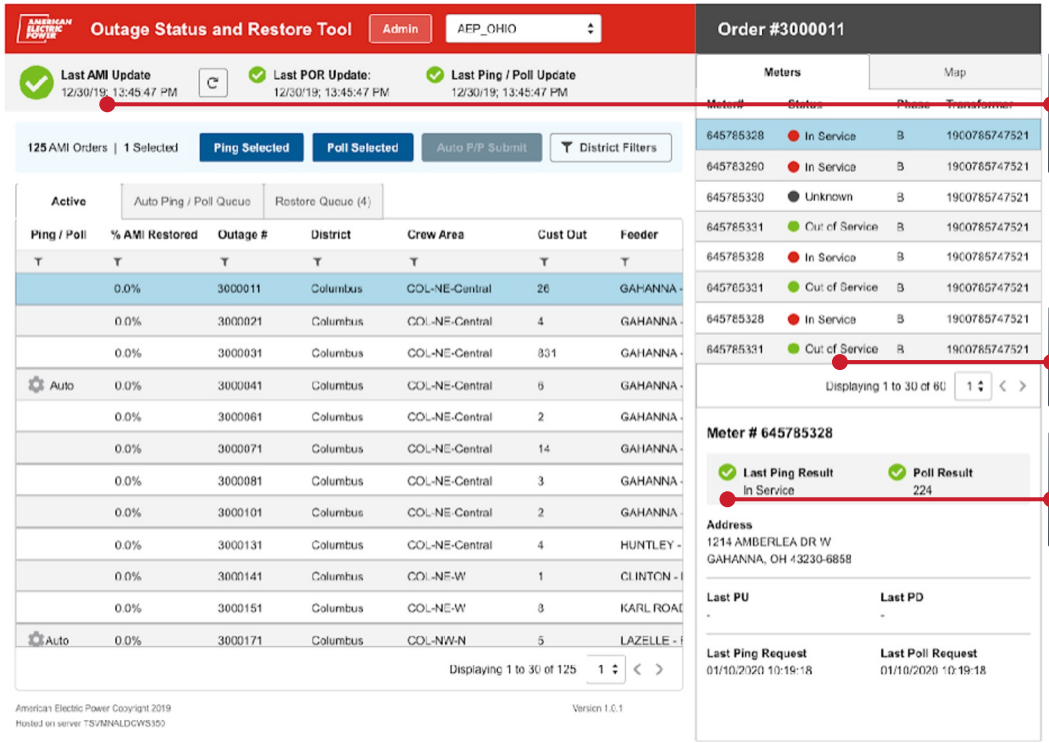
02 Solution

- Improve visual hierarchy and typography for scanning
- Add iconography to quickly represent status
- Provide visual feedback to show when information has changed

03 Validation

- Test proposed design with 8 users, real scenarios and a high fidelity prototype

The Solution



Visual hierarchy was improved, time sensitive information is surfaced to the top of the page

Visual feedback allows dispatchers to view changes in status information

Iconography allows for quick scanning of information

The Exorcism... erm, Exercise

The power of research compels you!

Drop everything, Venkman. We got one!

Our Inspiration

- Families love to gather in their kitchens.
- The refrigerator is the largest appliance
- We want to modernize the refrigerator
- Let's put a screen on it!

The Problem

- People aren't really using the touchscreen features
- We want people to buy this product and we want to evolve it

User Data

Each archetype below is a representative of our user base

Through research, we've created archetypes of our target and core users. The information below includes our users' needs, motivation, and current pain points with our product.

User A

- Single person
- Lives alone
- Enjoys entertaining
- Experiments with meals
- Can't seem to incorporate device into life

User B

- Busy family
- Spouse and 2 kids
- Little time to cook
- Weekly meal planning
- Likes to eat healthy
- Kids use device more than adults - lots of fingerprints

Time to bust this ghost!

Grab something to write with and on.

Please save our sweet baby angel of an invention!

Remember the sky is the limit!

Brainstorm (4min)

Take 4min to brainstorm on your own, ways to bring this ghost product back to life.

1-2 Features

Specifically, we're looking for 1-2 features to test with users. Keep in mind, it's important to consider the known needs and pain points of our users.

User Data

Each archetype below is a representative of our user base

Through research, we've created archetypes of our target and core users. The information below includes our users' needs, motivation, and current pain points with our product.

User A

- Single person
- Lives alone
- Enjoys entertaining
- Experiments with meals
- Can't seem to incorporate device into life

User B

- Busy family
- Spouse and 2 kids
- Little time to cook
- Weekly meal planning
- Likes to eat healthy
- Kids use device more than adults - lots of fingerprints

Time to share your ideas!

Ideas for a better fridge!

Here's what people have said at previous conferences.

Recipe Suggestions

Based on the contents of your fridge, here's what you can make

Auto Order Groceries

You are out of these items, let's set up Instacart for you

Expiration Tracking

Your milk will expire in 3 days

Hit up the Discord!

Takeaways

If we will remember this information, please give us a sign

3 takeaways

01

Never Give Up!

It is never too late to turn a product around

02

What's the problem?

Analysis is always the first step

03

Check Yo'self

Validation is essential to make sure you got it right

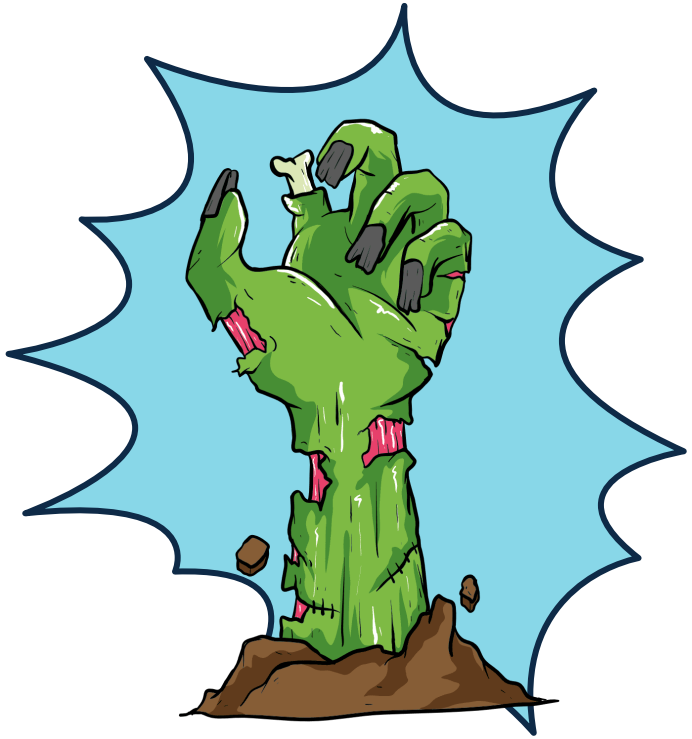
Phrases to Listen For

When you hear this, you may be on your way to a ghost product.

01 "We already know what our users want."

02 "We don't need to talk to users, our stakeholders understand what our users' needs are."

03 "I don't want to ask our users what they want because we won't be able to give that to them."



04 "We need to fail fast and learn from it, we don't want to waste time on analysis paralysis."

05 "We need to innovate to stay competitive and leadership has decided this is the product we should deliver."

06 "Our users are our employees so they have to use whatever we give them. We can provide them training."

Who you gonna call?!

Haley & Rachel

Licensed UX Ghostbusters

Thank you!

Questions?