

A primer on product thinking



#SchittsCreek

I AM ON DAY TWO
OF A PANIC ATTACK

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Monday
afternoon



Hei .

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¹ 📸 Portrait by Richard Ashton, Oslo



What is product thinking...

*The simplest way to define product thinking is that it is **the skill of knowing what makes a product useful – and loved – by people.**²*

– Julie Zhuo

² <https://future.a16z.com/product-thinking/>

... why you should care ...

**... and what this presentation
is all about**



Part 1





Delivery vs discovery





Product delivery

- in this context, includes all work required to build and ship our solutions to our users
- focus here when you have very little uncertainty



Product discovery

- is what happens before we decide on a solution we want to deliver
- is divided into **opportunity discovery** and **solution discovery**



Opportunity discovery

- We start with a high degree of uncertainty
- Some problems present better opportunities than others



Solution discovery

- We have more clarity now, but there is still some degree of uncertainty
- We generate ideas and hypotheses for how to address the opportunities we have identified
- We start with the most promising one



Part 2





How do I even?



Figuring out your goal

- There is likely something your company wants to achieve this cycle
- Your desired outcome should be directly related to your longer-term goal
- Pick the one metric you'd want to improve next



Discovering opportunities (1)

- **Look at your data:** analytics, support tickets, net promoter scores, search terms
- **Do research:** surveys, task analysis
- **Talk to people:** customers, customer success, in-house domain experts, support



Discovering opportunities (2)

- **Discuss & debate:** brainstorm as a team
- **Ask:** "How might we...?"



Prioritising opportunities

- Prioritisation is more of an art than a science
- Your product boundaries should guide you
- This is where a lot of overthinking happens
 1. Intuition is the result of experience
 2. Most prioritisation mistakes are easily reversible



Trying out different solutions

- Prototyping, design sprints, PoCs
- MVPs, experiments, iterations
- Build → measure → learn



Don't skip!

Opportunity discovery and prioritisation is where product strategy happens.



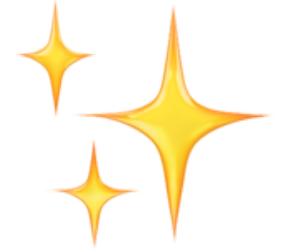
How does this influence how we build and ship software? (1)

- We know why we're building what we're building
- Once we have all roles on the team, we can operate in a truly autonomous way
- Accountability is built in because we're committing to achieving an outcome



How does this influence how we build and ship software? (2)

- Scoping is way easier because we know what is important and what is nice to have
- We are able to continuously discover problems and opportunities, experiment on different solutions, and deliver real value to our customers
- We feel a sense of pride and purpose



Part 3

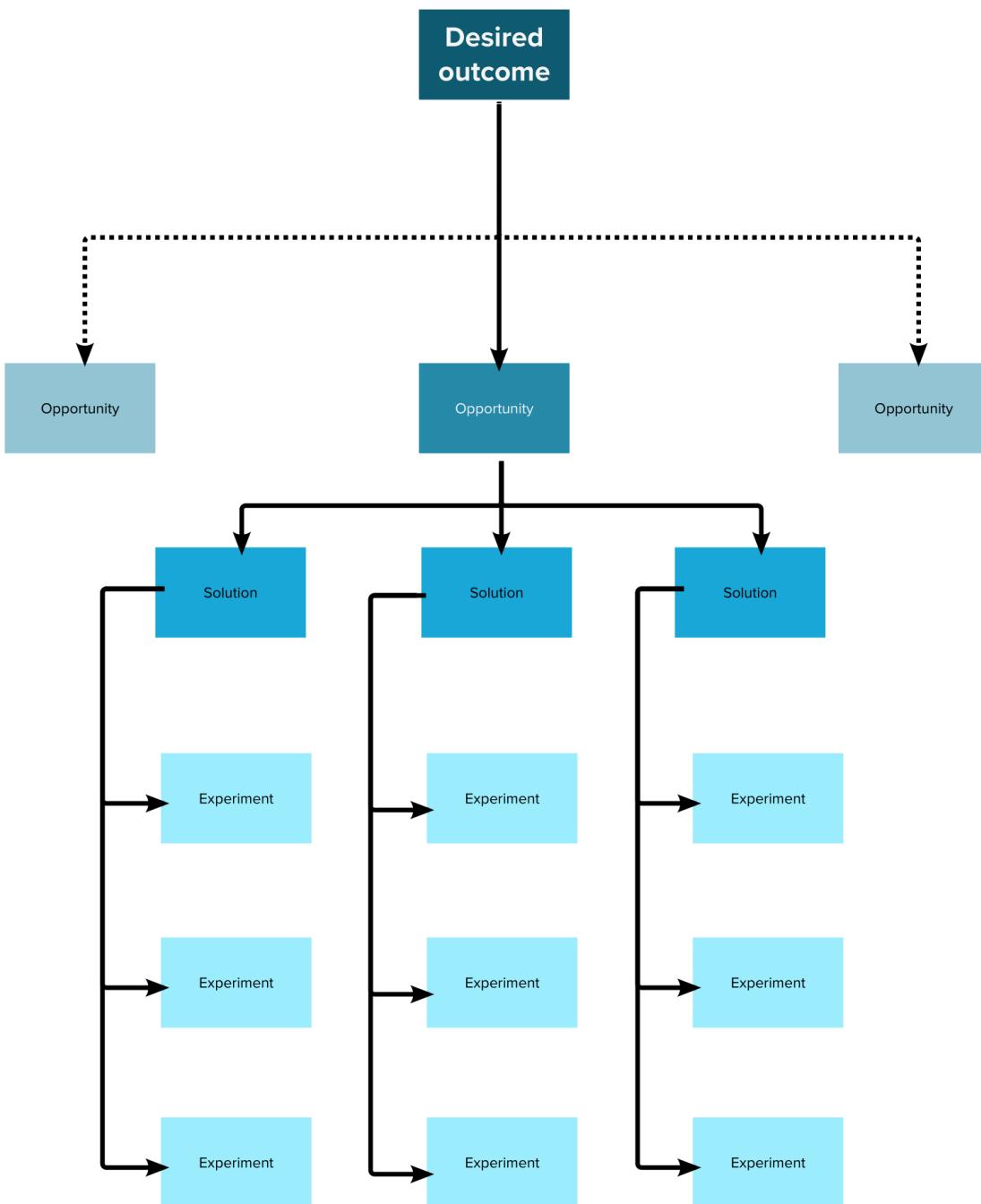


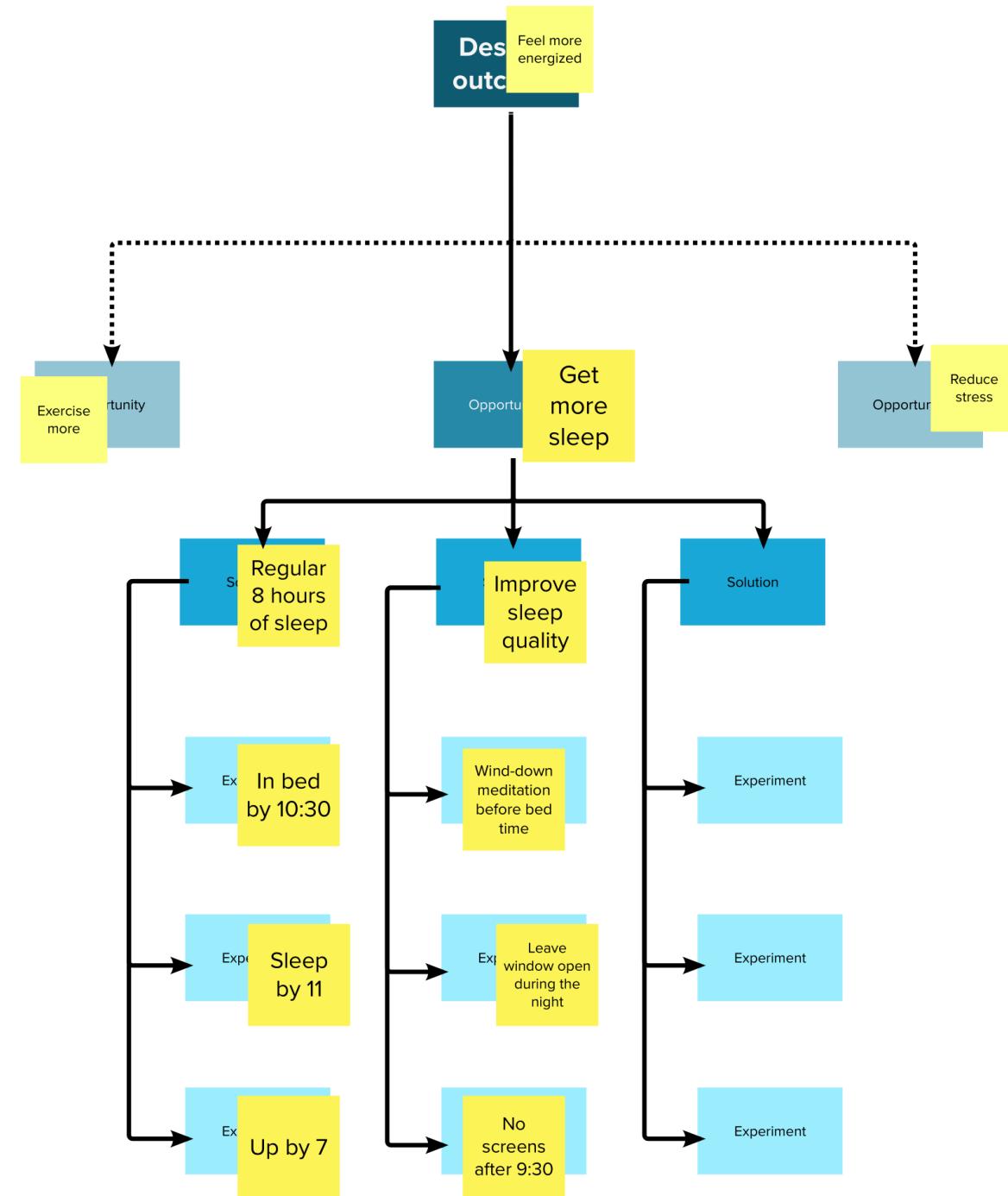
Pulling it all
together

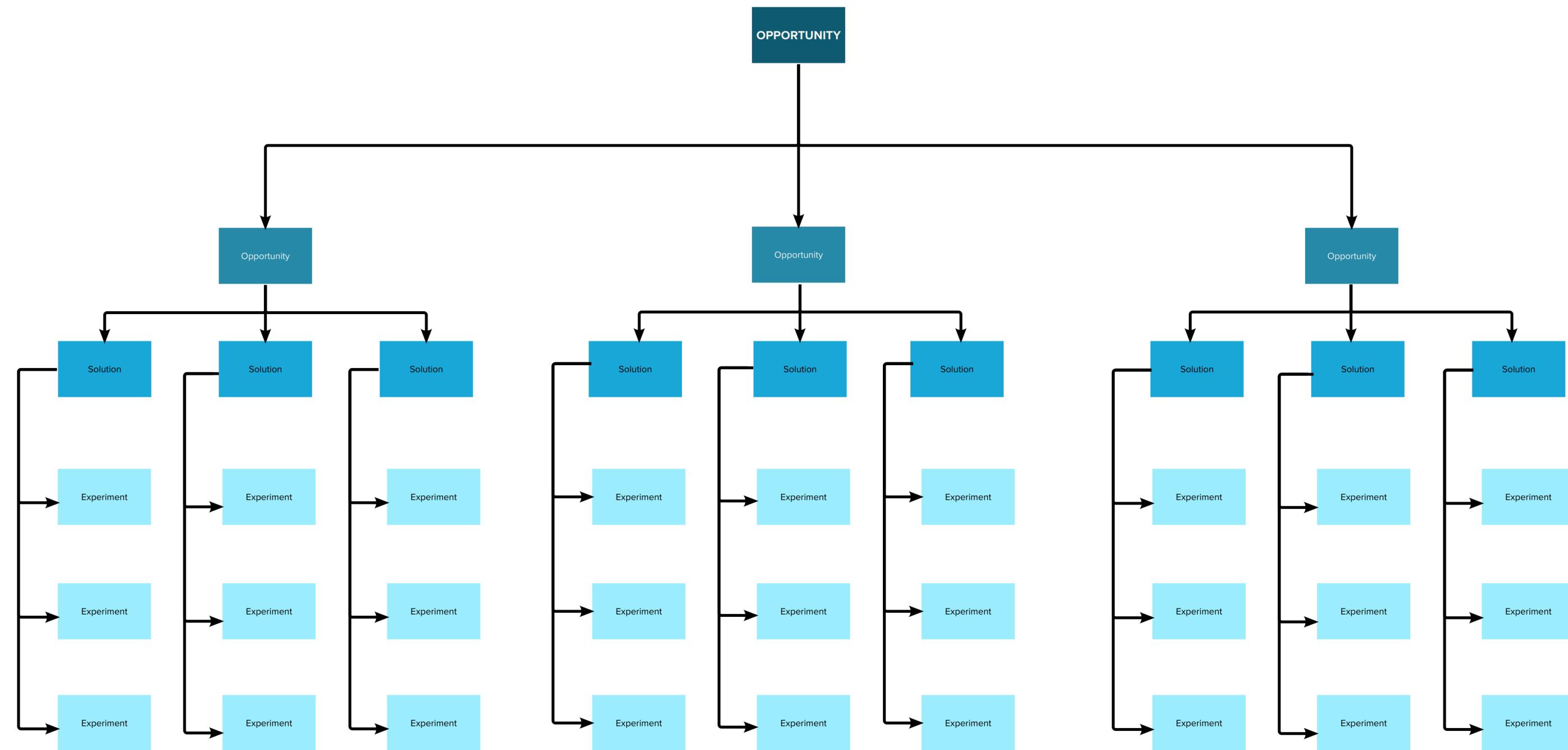
Opportunity-solution-tree

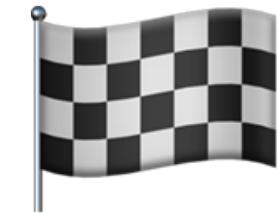
- A mapping technique devised by Teresa Torres³
- A neat way to visualise all of what I have just talked about

³ <https://www.producttalk.org/about/>









Conclusion

Recap (1)

- Product thinking is a skill
- Product sense comes with experience
- Defining your desired outcome might be difficult, but worth it

Recap (2)

- Don't skip right to problem solving, explore the opportunity space before you move into the solution space
- No framework has all the answers
- If you want autonomy, ask for the goal, accept accountability, and run with it



Housekeeping

Download the slides

[www.troubalex.com/
devopsdays-oslo-2021](https://www.troubalex.com/devopsdays-oslo-2021)

BRYTER is hiring

We have open positions
across all roles, and
we're fully remote.

Talk to me if you want
to know more. 

Further reading:

- Product Management Process 101 by Sérgio Schüler
- Opportunity Solution Trees: Visualize Your Thinking by Teresa Torres
- Product Discovery or Product Delivery: How do you Decide? by Philipp Krehl
- Talking to Humans by Giff Constable