

TOOLKIT

# Assumptions and Questions

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## INTRODUCTION

Why do you use this activity?

Reflect as a team on what you know and what you still need to understand about your work.

Brainstorm how to reduce risks by learning more.

## INTRODUCTION

# When should you use this activity?

We recommend using this activity early and often. The sooner you can recognize and evaluate your team's assumptions and questions, the more quickly you can act to reduce the risk they pose.

## Assumptions and Questions

30 min

### INTRODUCTION

You have to guess.

This is the basis for the scientific method. Form a hypothesis and test to see if it's right or wrong.



## Assumptions and Questions

30 min

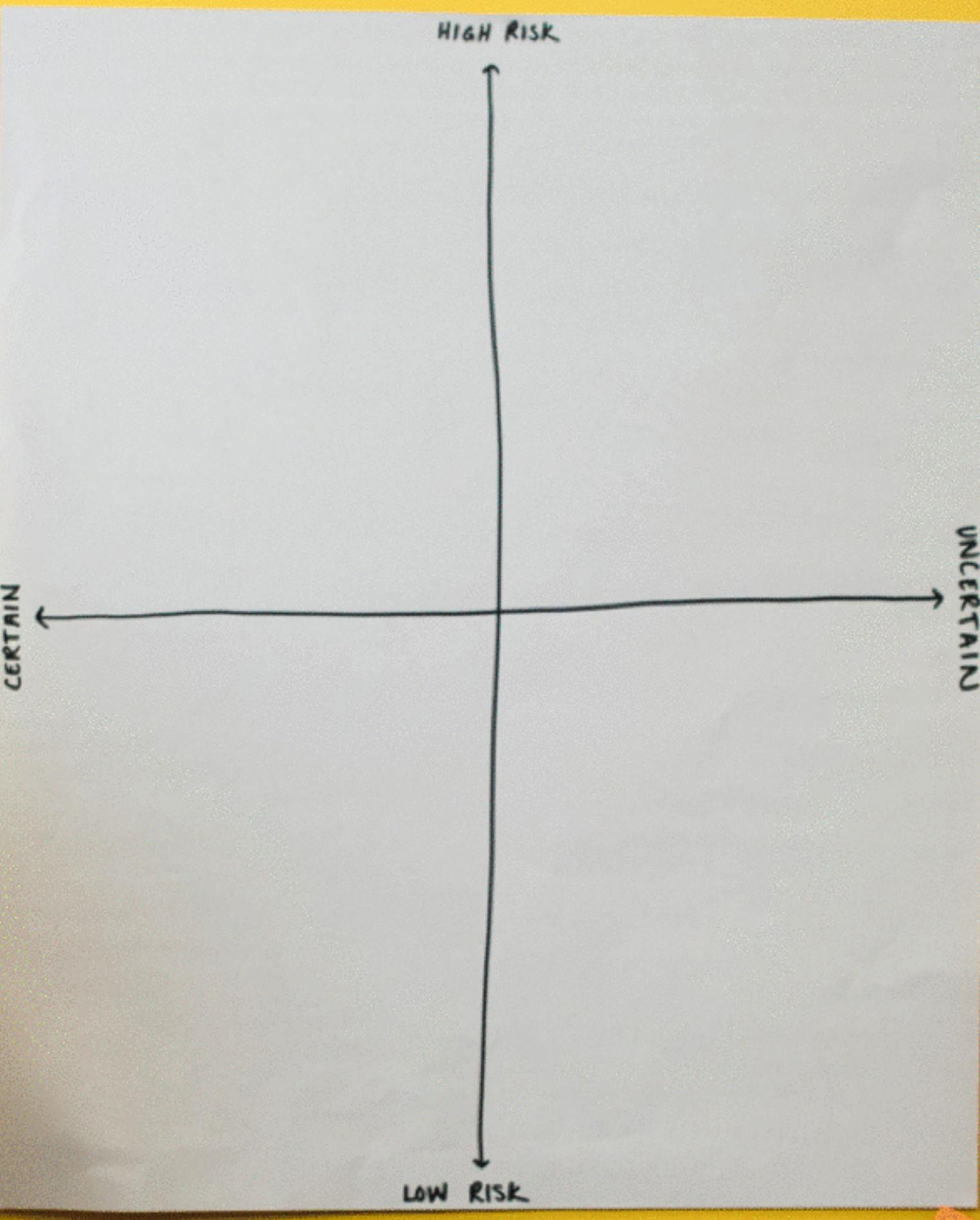
### INTRODUCTION

Fail fast and fail cheap.

Guess early, test early, and learn early.

This activity helps you reduce the risk of being wrong.





A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a white shirt, and a woman with dark hair, wearing a black top, are looking at the diagram and holding small sticky notes.

A woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a striped shirt, is pointing at the diagram with a red sticky note.

# We suggest **30 minutes** for this activity. How much time you spend is up to you!

- **Write before you talk.** Write or sketch lots of your ideas on sticky notes *before* talking about them. During discussions, capture the main points on sticky notes and post to the wall.
- **There are no bad ideas.** Start big. Diverge to get everyone's ideas out there. Come back together to discuss, cluster, and seek patterns. Then, converge to determine the strongest ideas.
- **Stay focused on your users.** Tell stories about users to keep them at the center of your attention.
- **Everyone participates.** Everyone has a marker and a pad of sticky notes.
- **Stay engaged.** Avoid side conversations. Use a “parking lot” to capture issues that are off-topic.
- **Start on time, stay on time.** To meet our goals, we need to watch the clock and stick to the plan.
- **Yes, and...** Instead of dismissing the ideas that your teammates suggest, push yourself to build on them.

# Ready, set, go!

## Assumptions and Questions

30 min

### COLLECT ASSUMPTIONS

As individuals, write one assumption or question per sticky note. Withhold judgement or discussion until later.

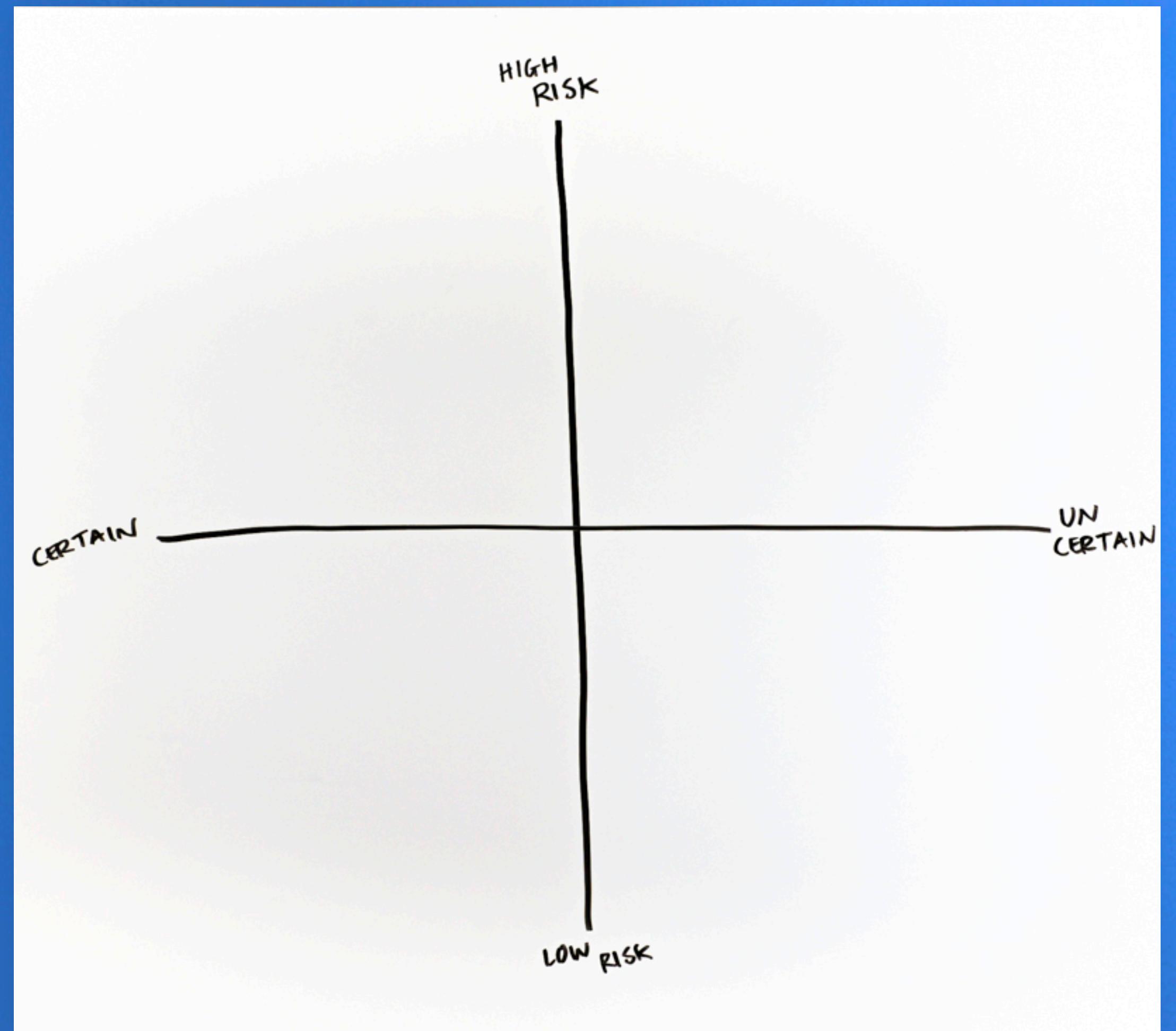


## Assumptions and Questions

30 min

### SETTING UP

Draw a two-by-two grid with *High-risk* on the top, *Low-risk* on the bottom, *Certain* on the left, and *Uncertain* on the right.



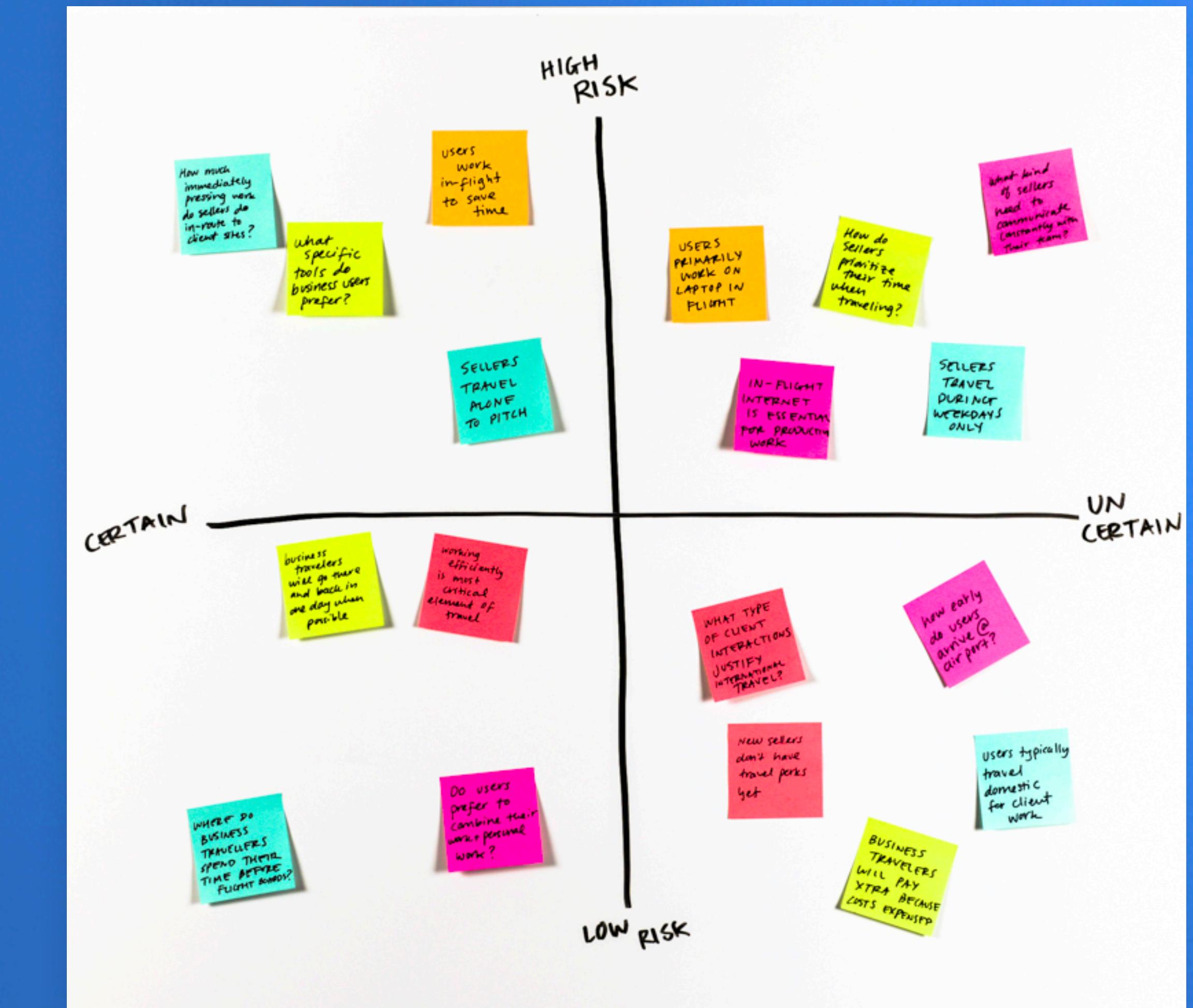
## Assumptions and Questions

30 min

### IDENTIFY HIGH-RISK UNCERTAINTIES

Evaluate each idea quickly and individually. Roughly plot them on the grid where they make the most sense.

Begin to discuss with your teammates and re-position the ideas in relation to each other.



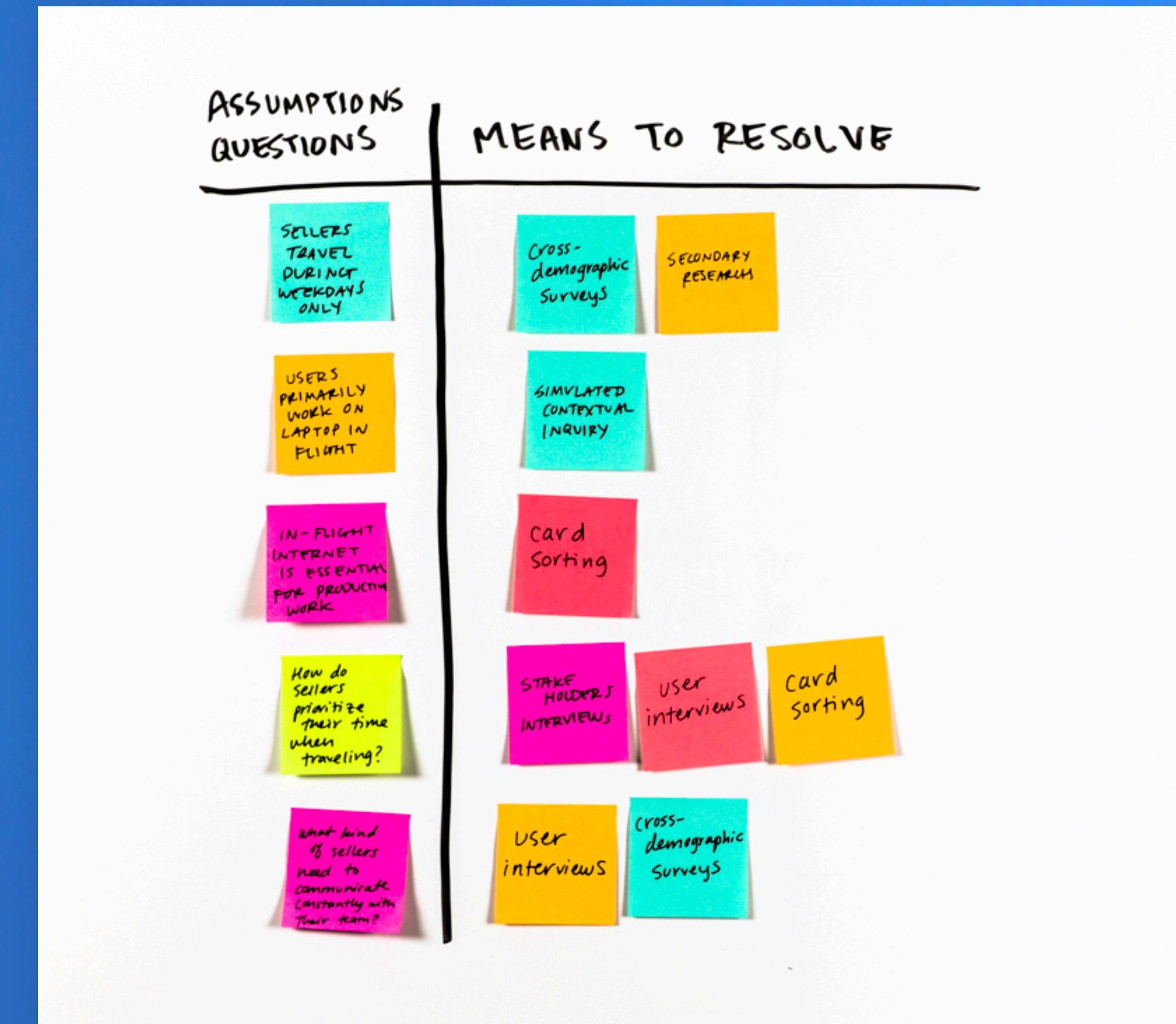
## Assumptions and Questions

30 min

### BUILD AN ACTION PLAN

Pull high-risk and uncertain items from the upper-right quadrant into a new space.

- For each item, diverge on different ways to validate or invalidate these assumptions and questions.
- Is there someone you can talk to directly to get an answer? Could you validate an assumption through direct observation? Could you build a prototype to test a hypothesis?



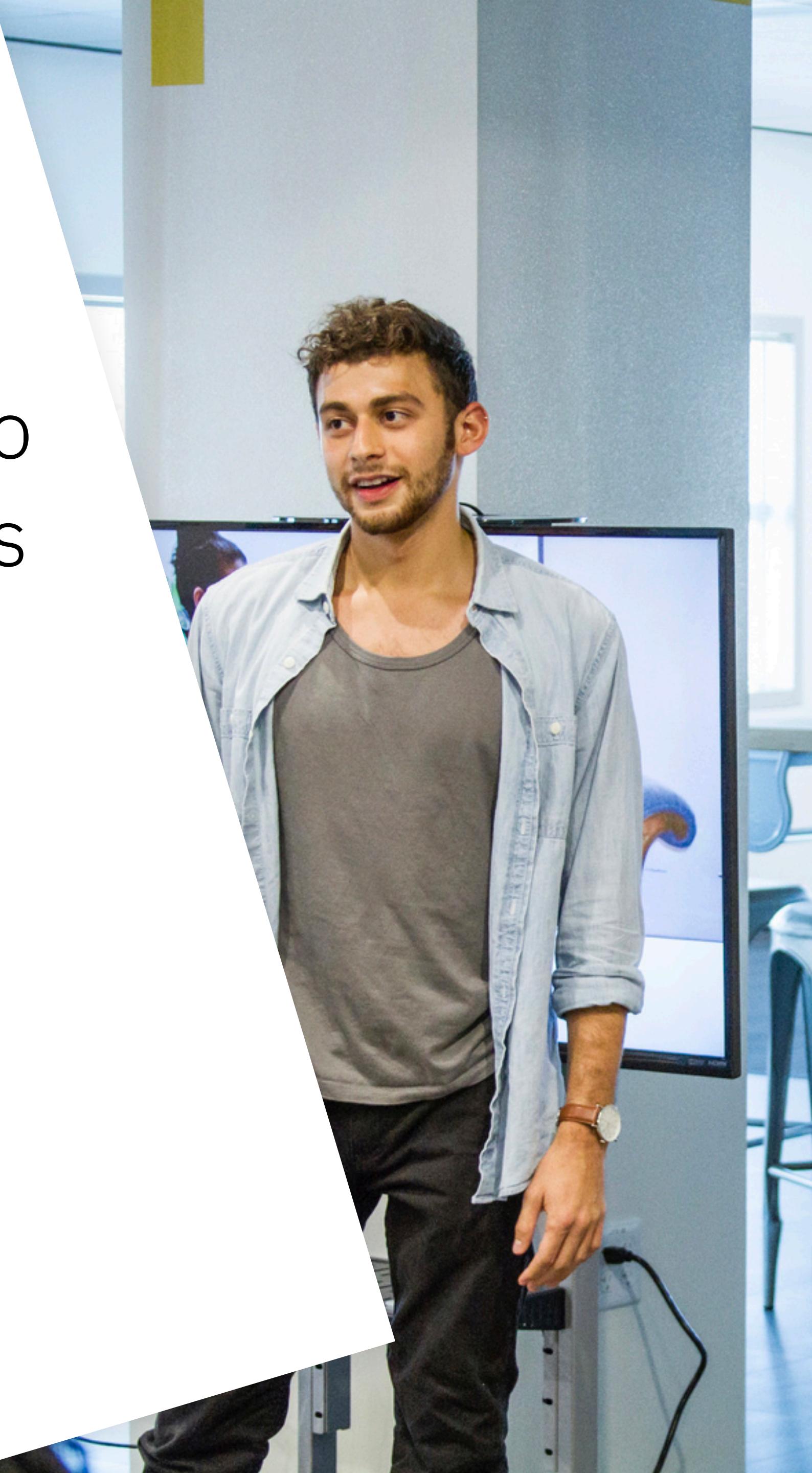
# Assumptions and Questions

**30 min**

# PLAYBACK

Choose one person to play back your team's Assumptions and Questions.

- Have someone else play back how you plan to resolve them.



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