Decisions, Debt, and other Dilemmas

A story by @simplybastow

Hi, I'm Janna Bastow!

ProdPad

mind the PRODUCT

Let's chat

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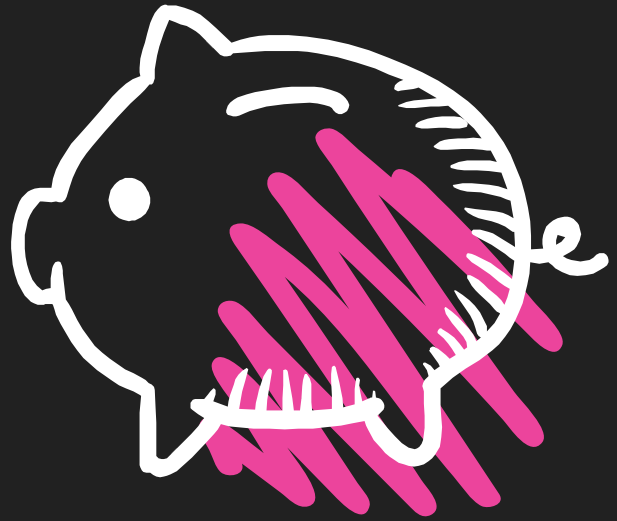
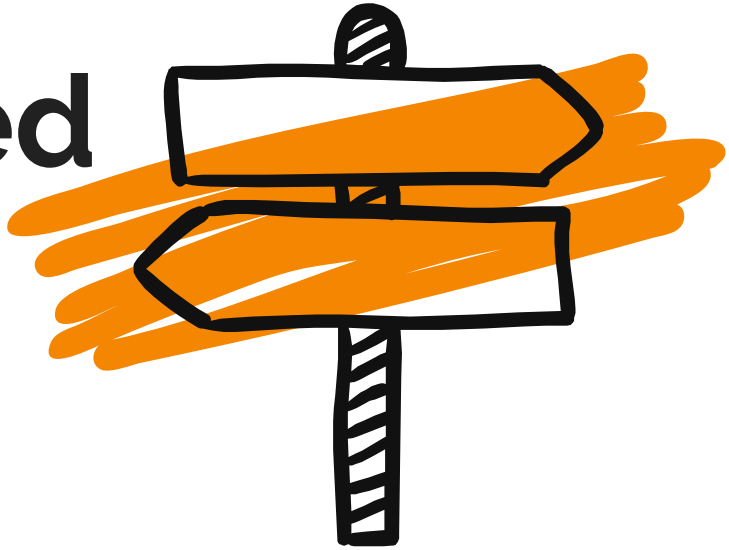
www.prodpad.com/blog/decisions-debt-and-other-dilemmas

bit.ly/decisions-debt

Debt



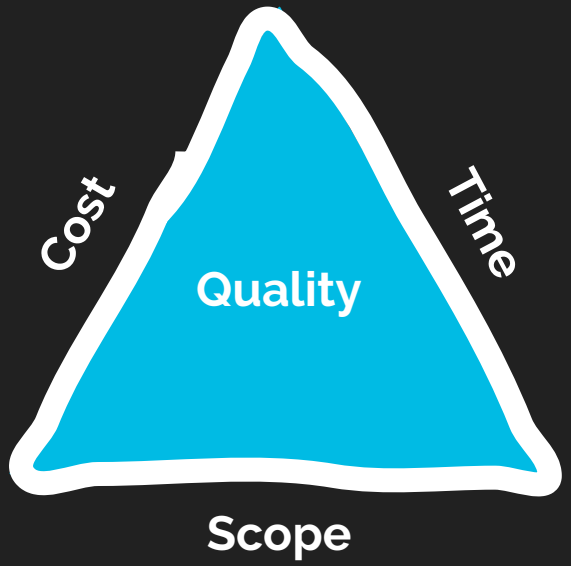
Our world is filled with decisions



Decisions

Trade-offs

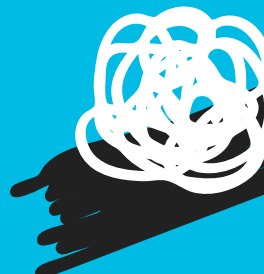
Debt is an enabler



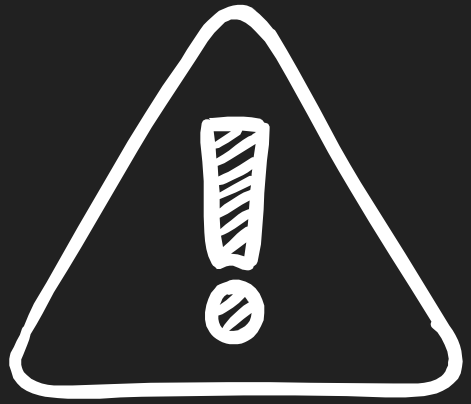
Debt enables trade-offs

Tech Debt

No one likes tech debt,
but it's a reality of life
your product's

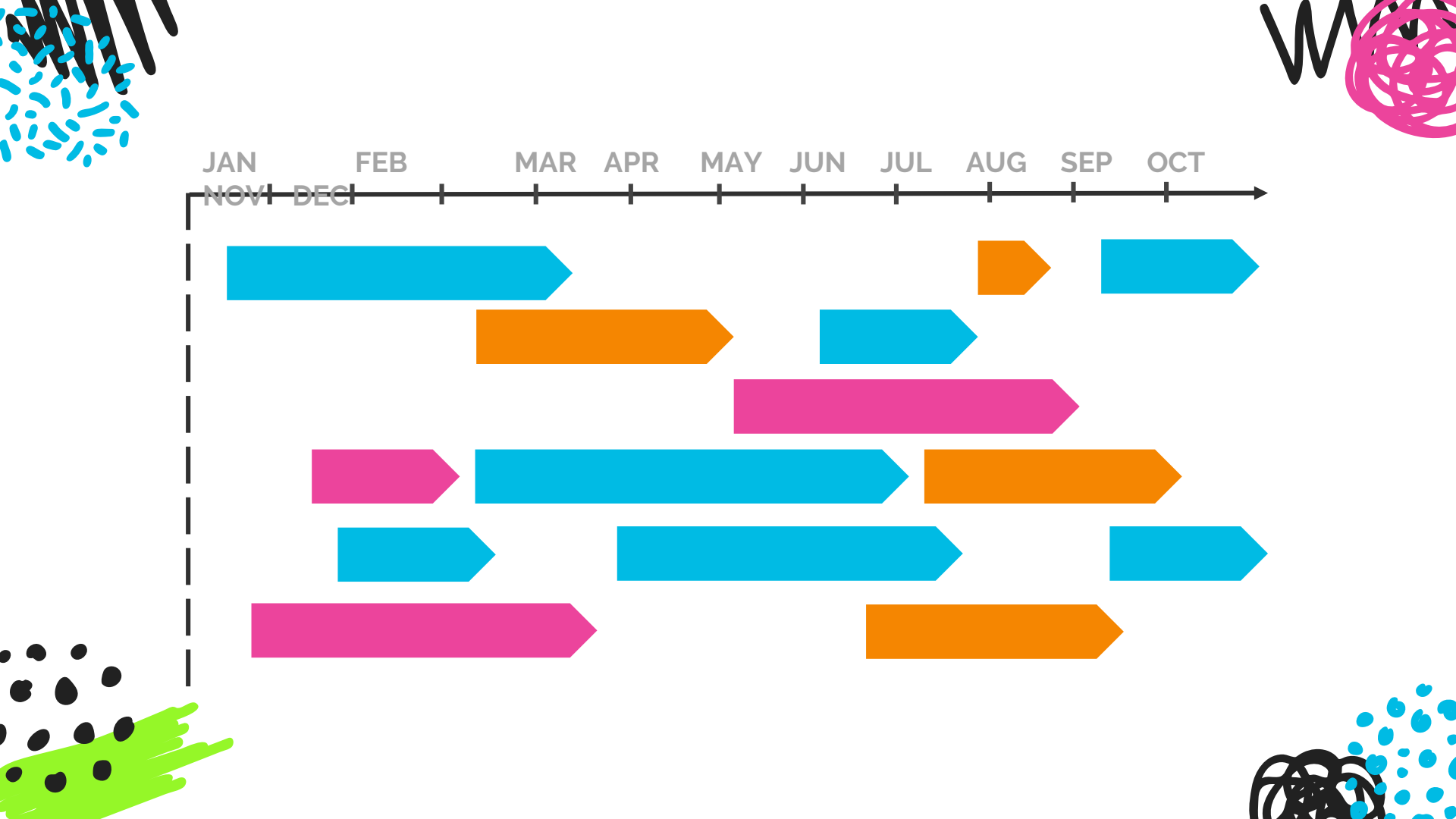


Intentional



Unintentional

Deadlines.


JAN
FEB
MAR
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MAY
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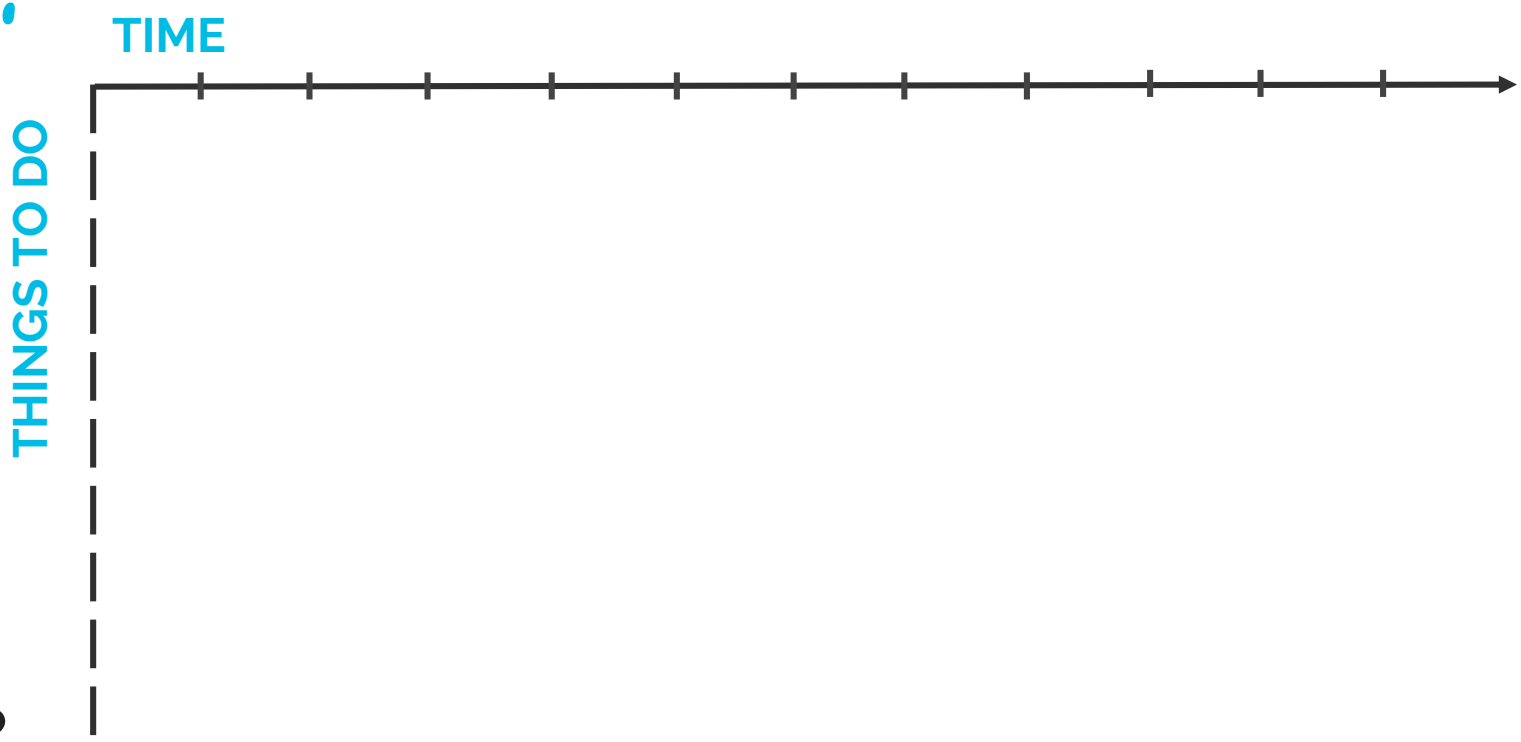
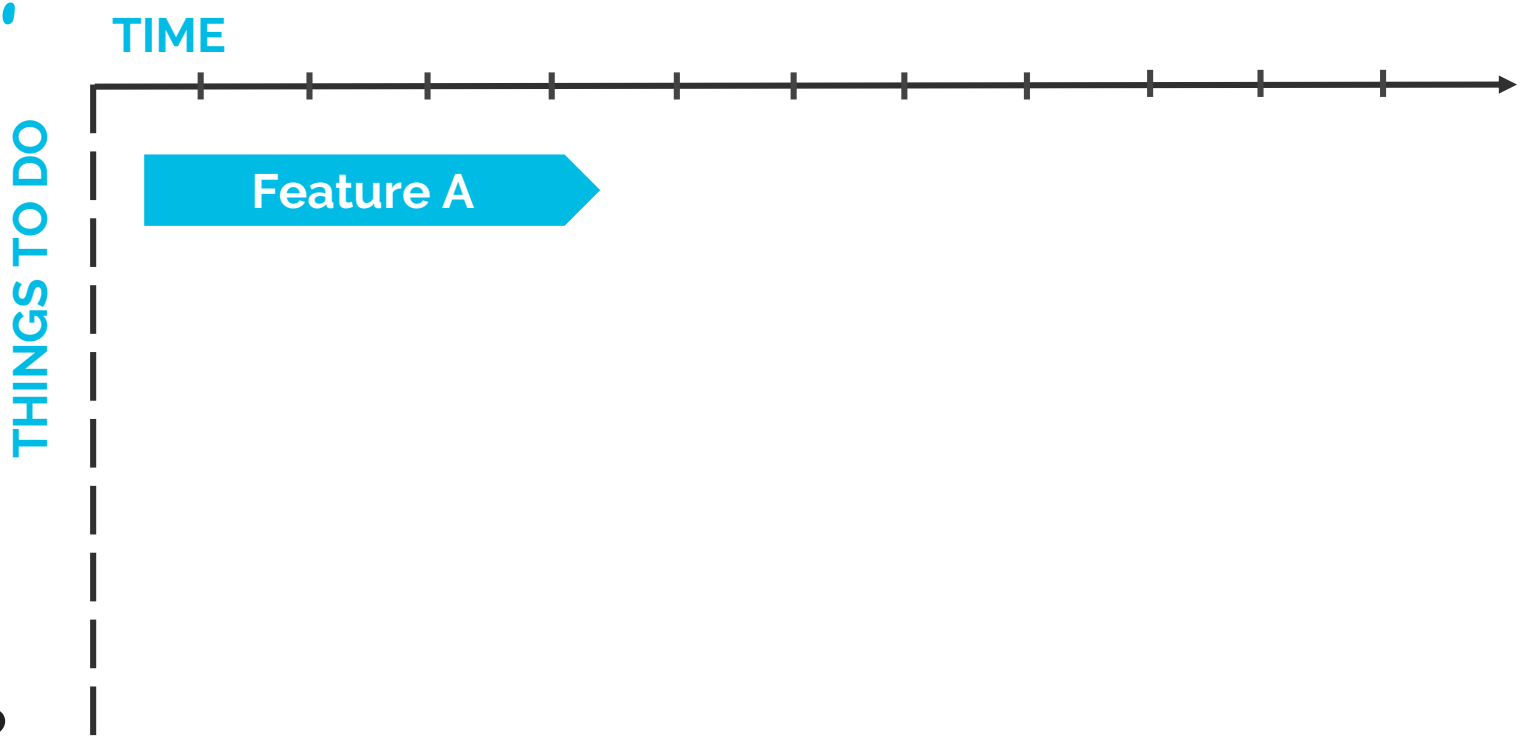
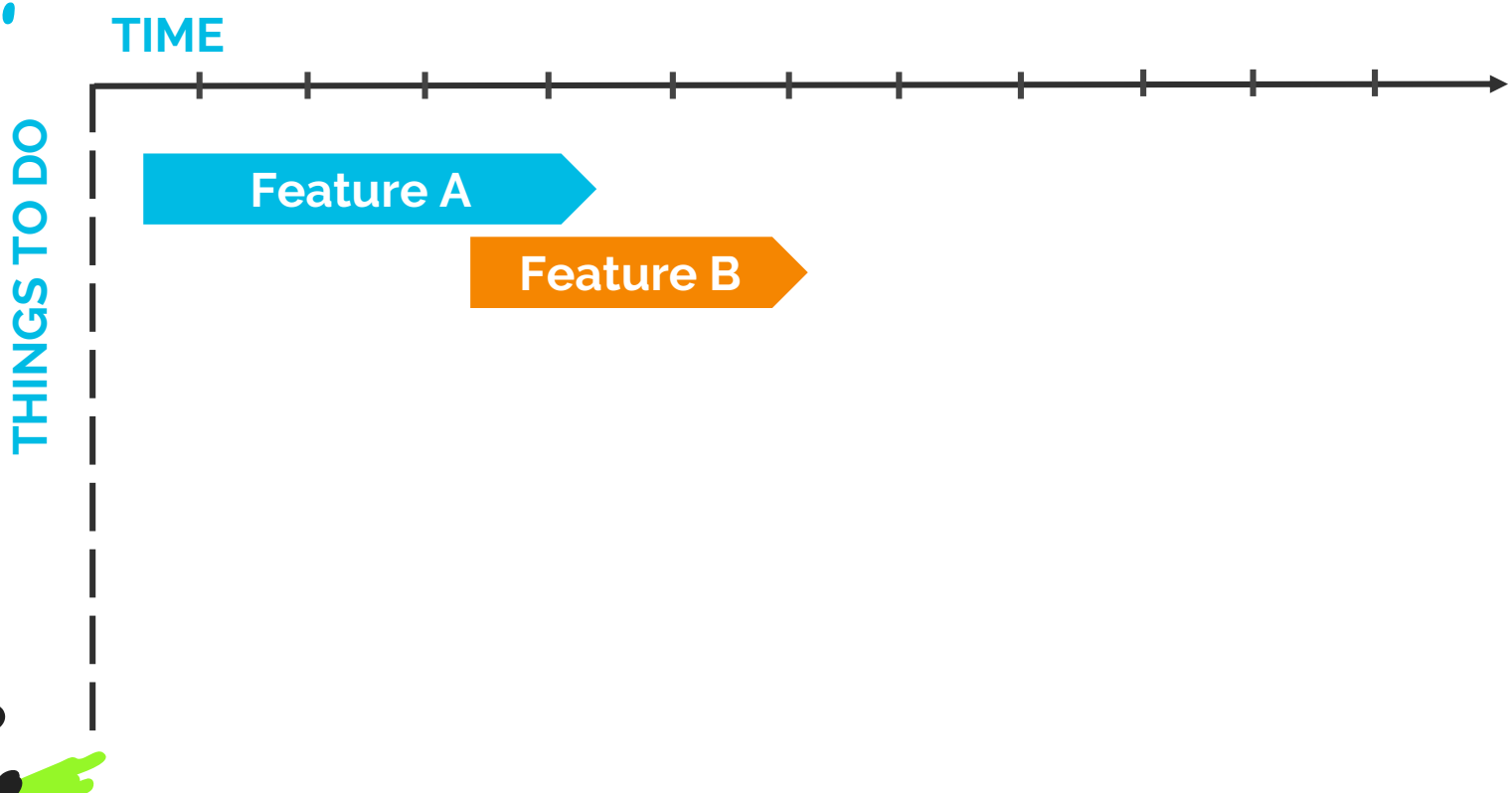
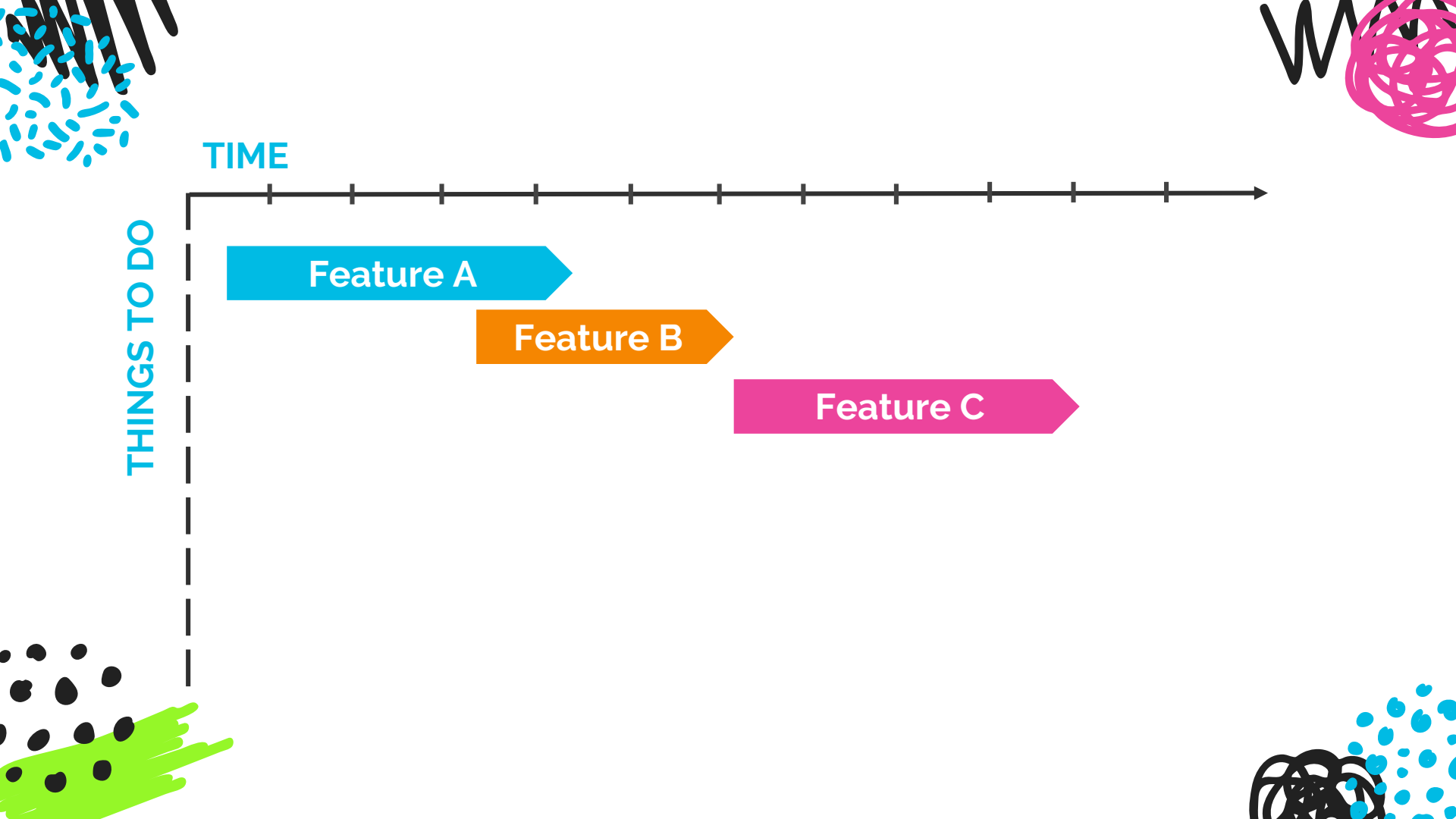
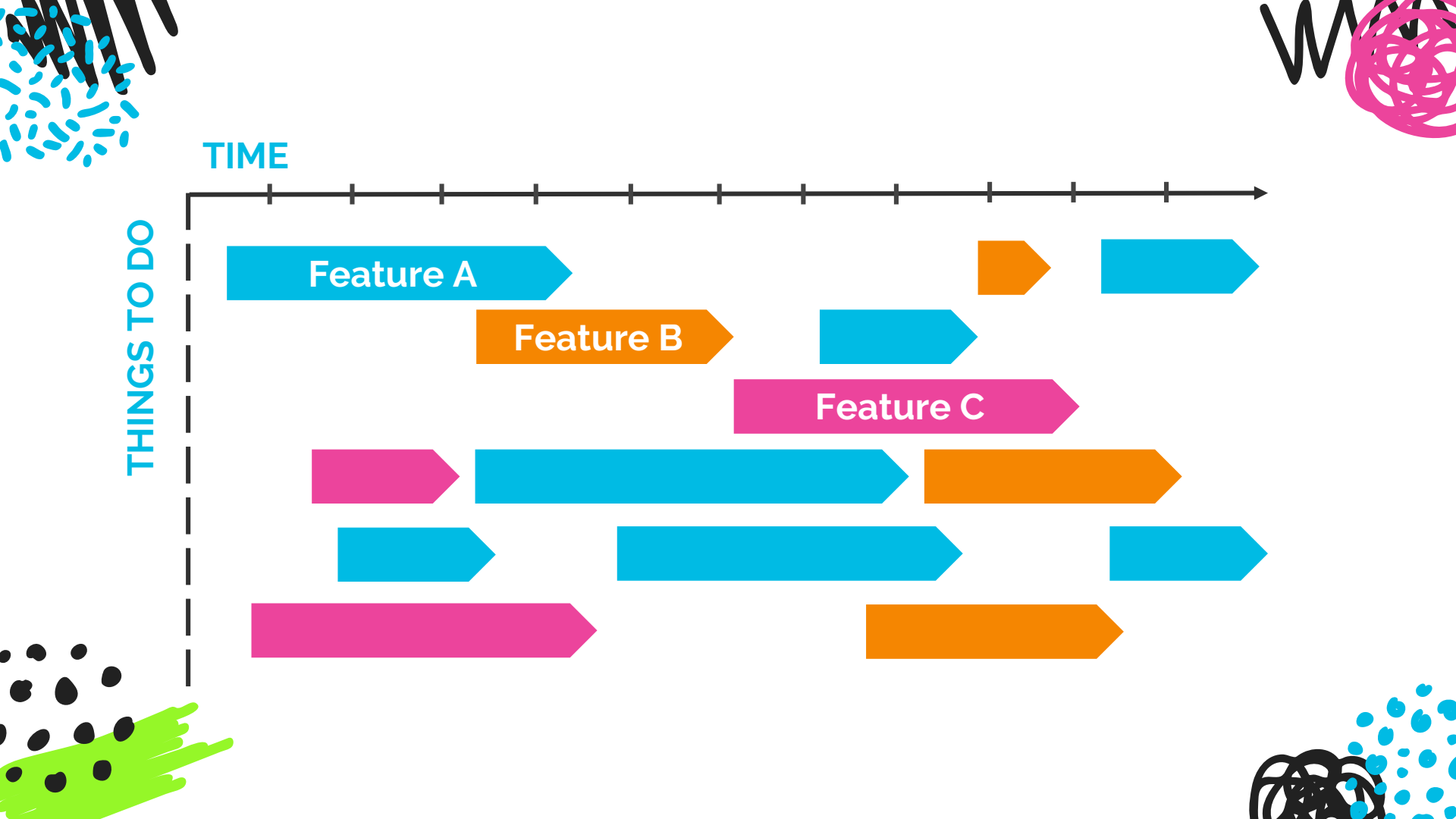
DEC

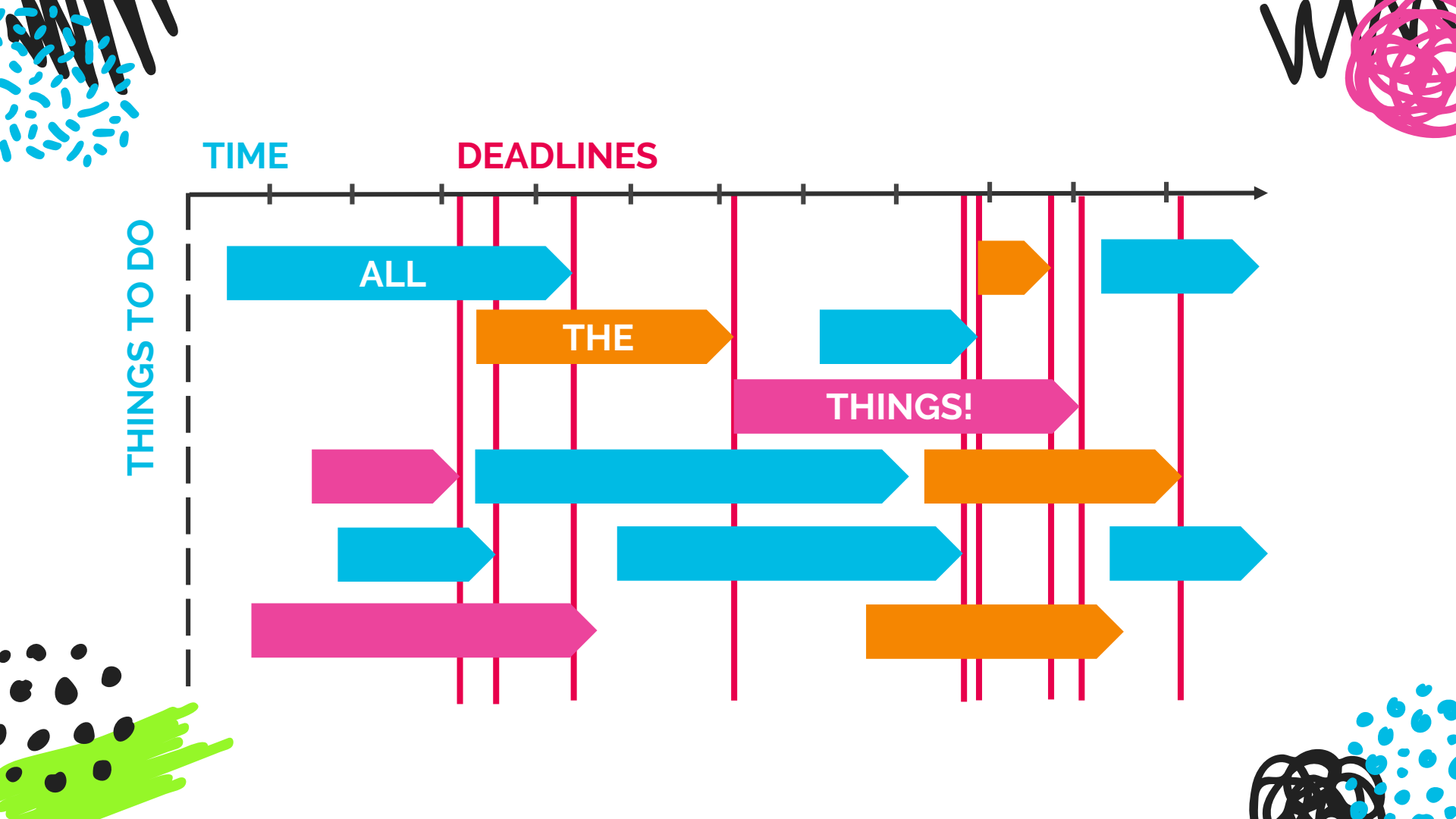

TIME
THINGS TO DO


TIME
THINGS TO DO
Feature A


TIME
THINGS TO DO
Feature A
Feature B


TIME
THINGS TO DO
Feature A
Feature B
Feature C


TIME
THINGS TO DO
Feature A
Feature B
Feature C

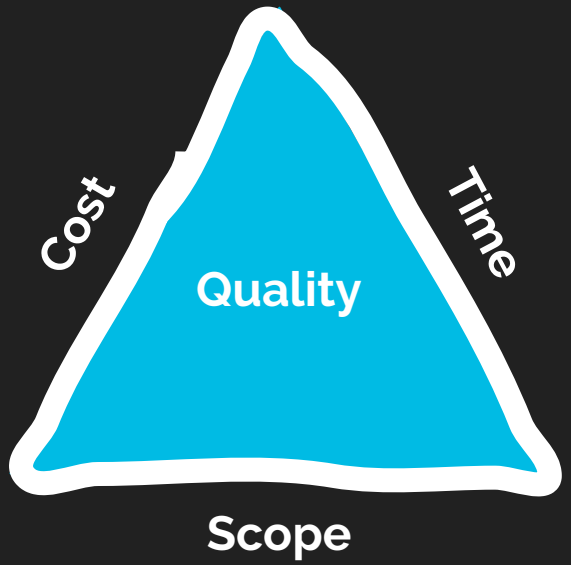

TIME
DEADLINES
THINGS TO DO
ALL
THE
THINGS!

Parkinson's Law

Parkinson's Law

Work expands
to fill the time allotted

Deadline crunch!

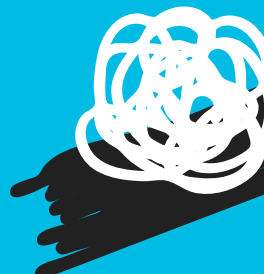


You need to make lots of trade-offs

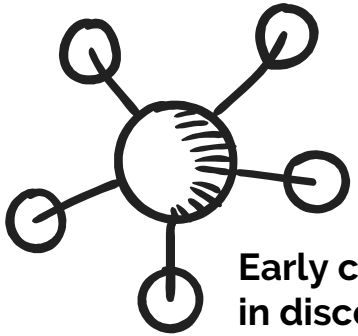
Team stress

The biggest lie in software is Phase 2.

– Jeff Gothelf, Lean UX

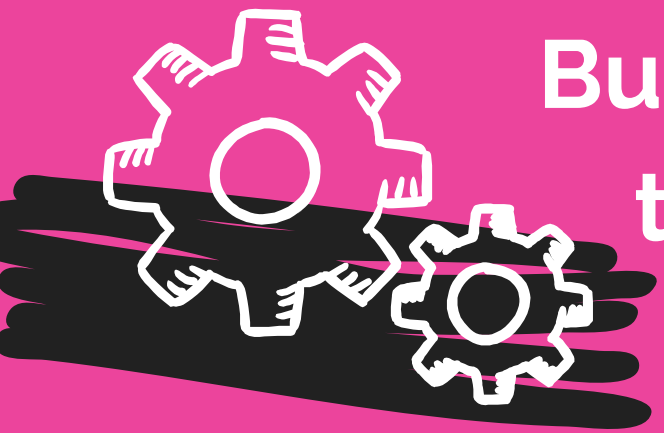


Shared understanding
of company goals



Early collaboration
in discovery phase

Time and space to
deliver great code

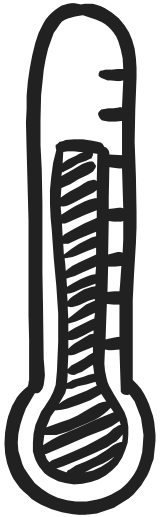


Build as if you'll be training a junior in a couple years' time.

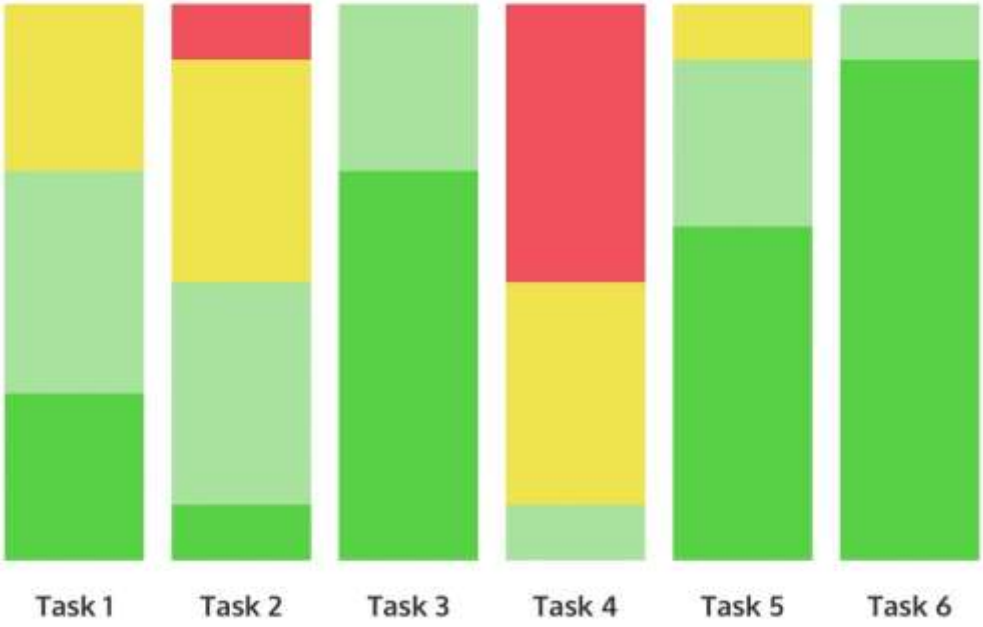
Trust

Design Debt

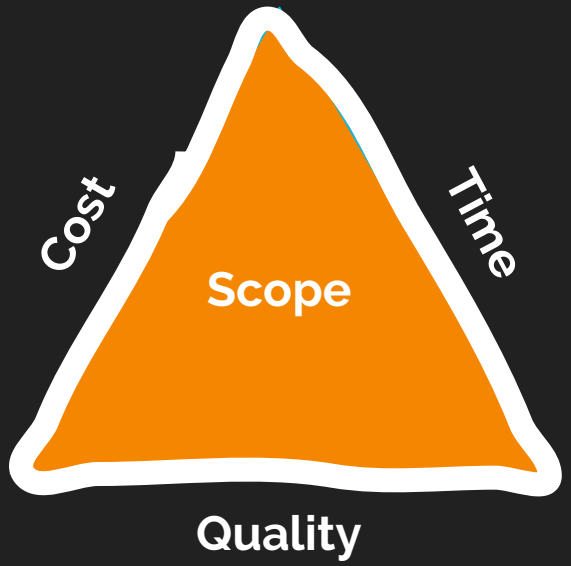
It's not a bug,
it's a feature!



Current Feature



Via Kav Webb @kylokav



Trade-offs for experimentation's sake

Design system

Better & faster
product design decisions...

Fewer trade-offs!

Process Debt

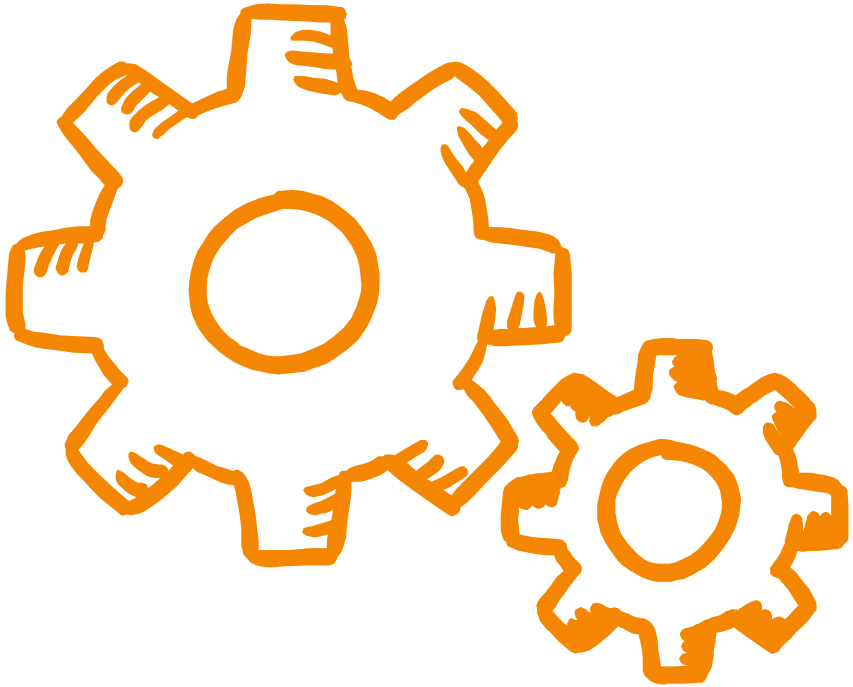
App too hard to use?

Tech not up to scratch?

Support bears the burden

Better help docs are needed

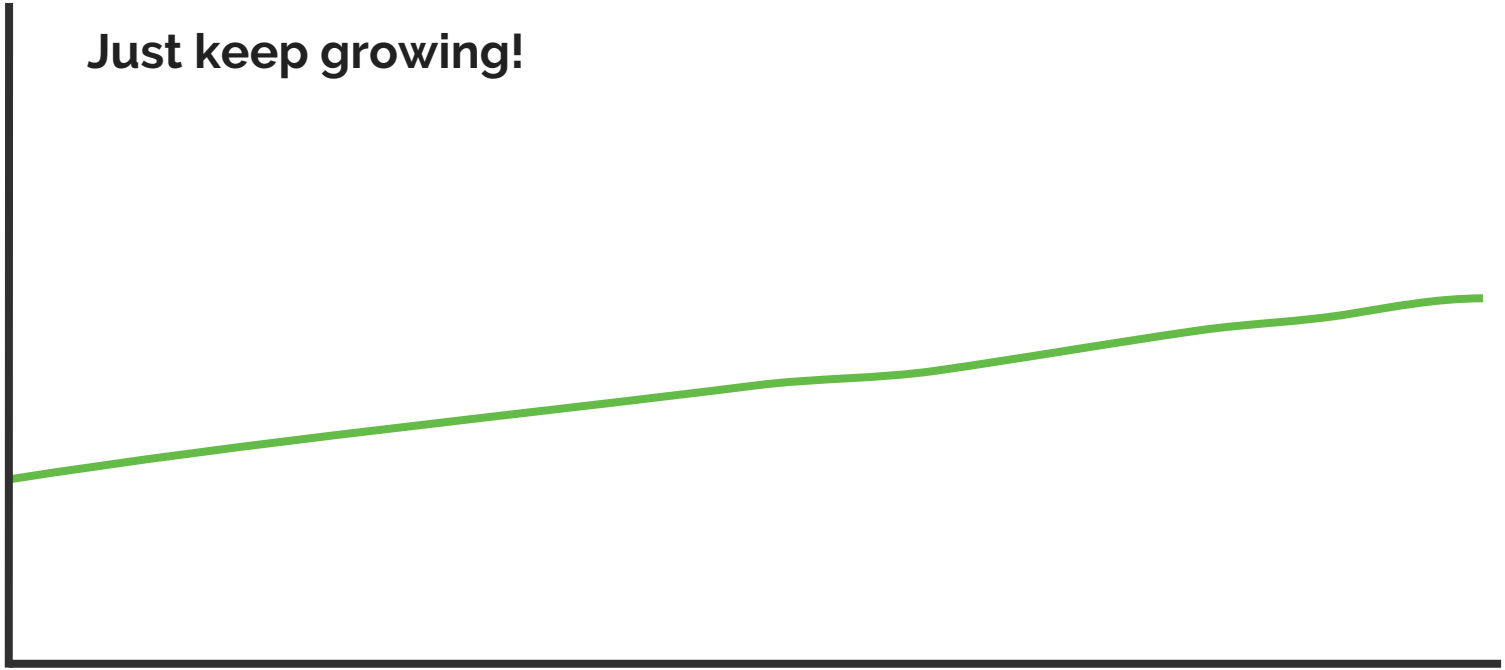
Wasted time with manual processes or shaky automations



Culture Debt

Shareholder value

Just keep growing!



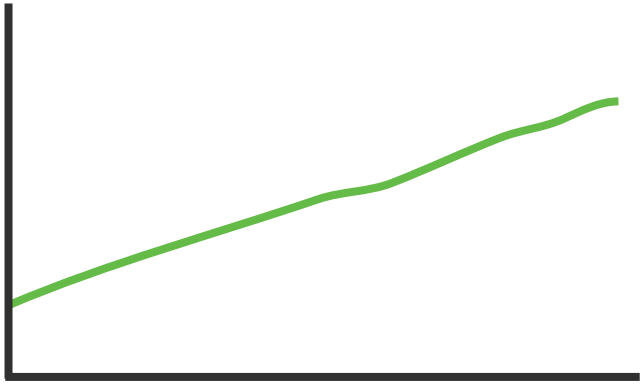
Predictability is King

Marketing
Sales
R&D
HR

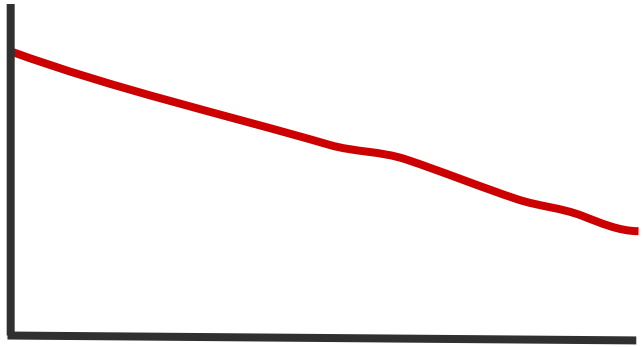
OUR MARKETING PROGRAM IS CLEARLY SUCCESSFUL, AS SHOWN BY THIS GRAPH OF HOW AWESOME I THINK IT IS.
TOM FISH BURNE
©marketoonist.com

I'm pleased to be able to report considerable efficiency savings...
COMPLAINTS
COSTS
© JR 2010

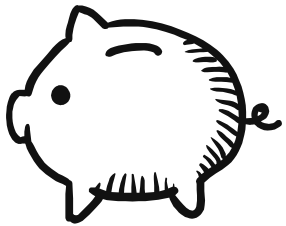
Profit Center

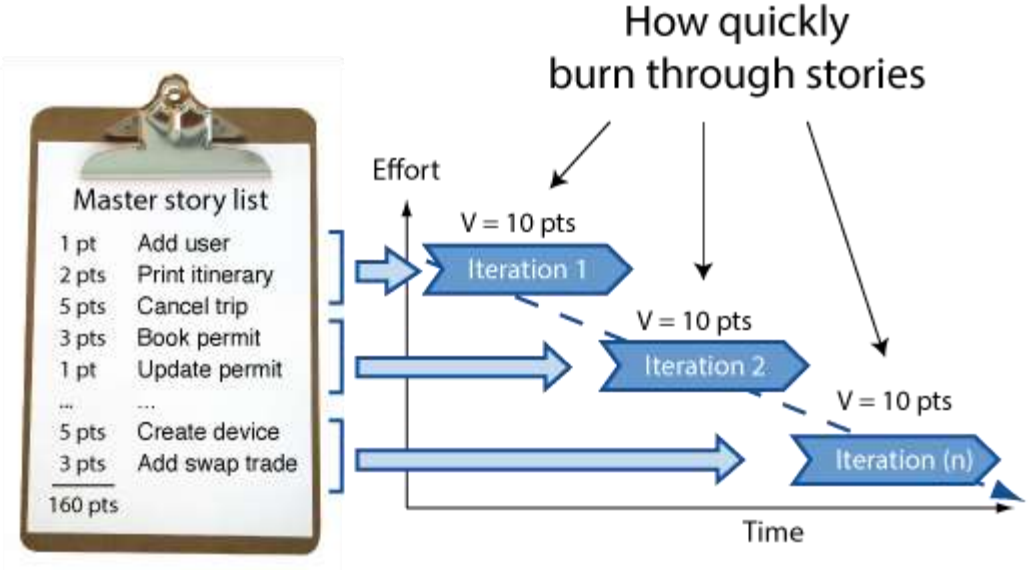


Cost Center



Product management is a cost center




How quickly
burn through stories
Master story list
1 pt Add user
2 pts Print itinerary
5 pts Cancel trip
3 pts Book permit
1 pt Update permit
... ...
5 pts Create device
3 pts Add swap trade
160 pts
Effort
V = 10 pts
Iteration 1
V = 10 pts
Iteration 2
V = 10 pts
Iteration (n)
Time

OUTCOME!

...not output

More debt throughout

Building wrong thing

Getting disrupted

John Cutler
@johncutlefish

Massively underestimated:

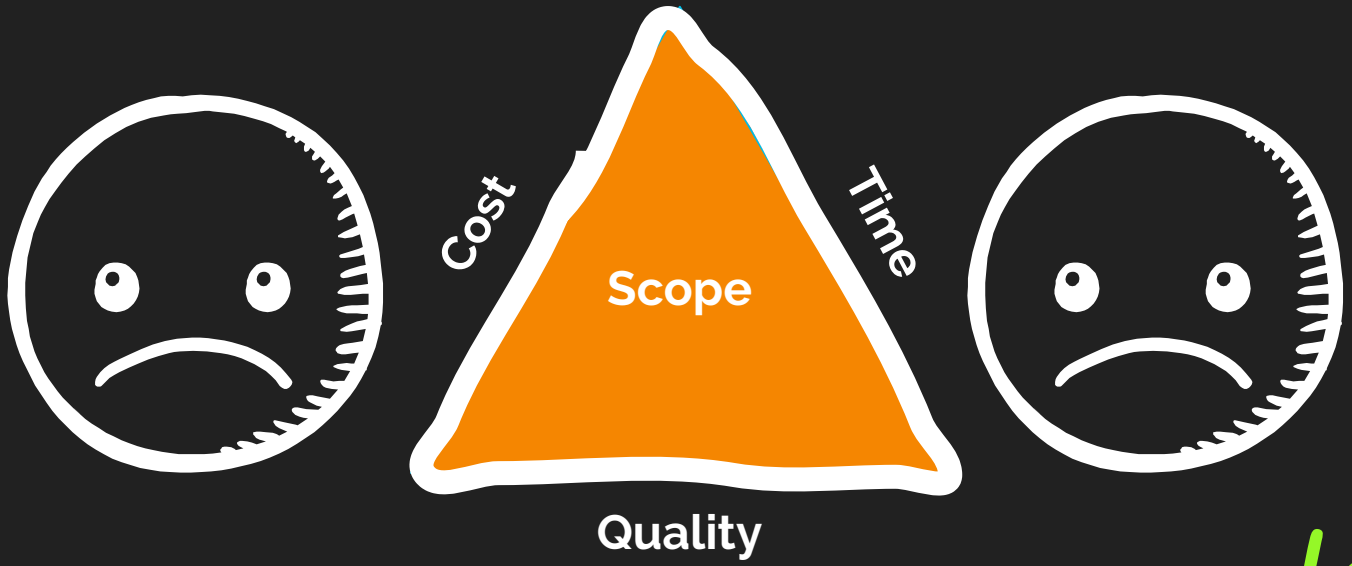
The "cost" of people coming to work knowing things are broken & fearing the next thing breaking.

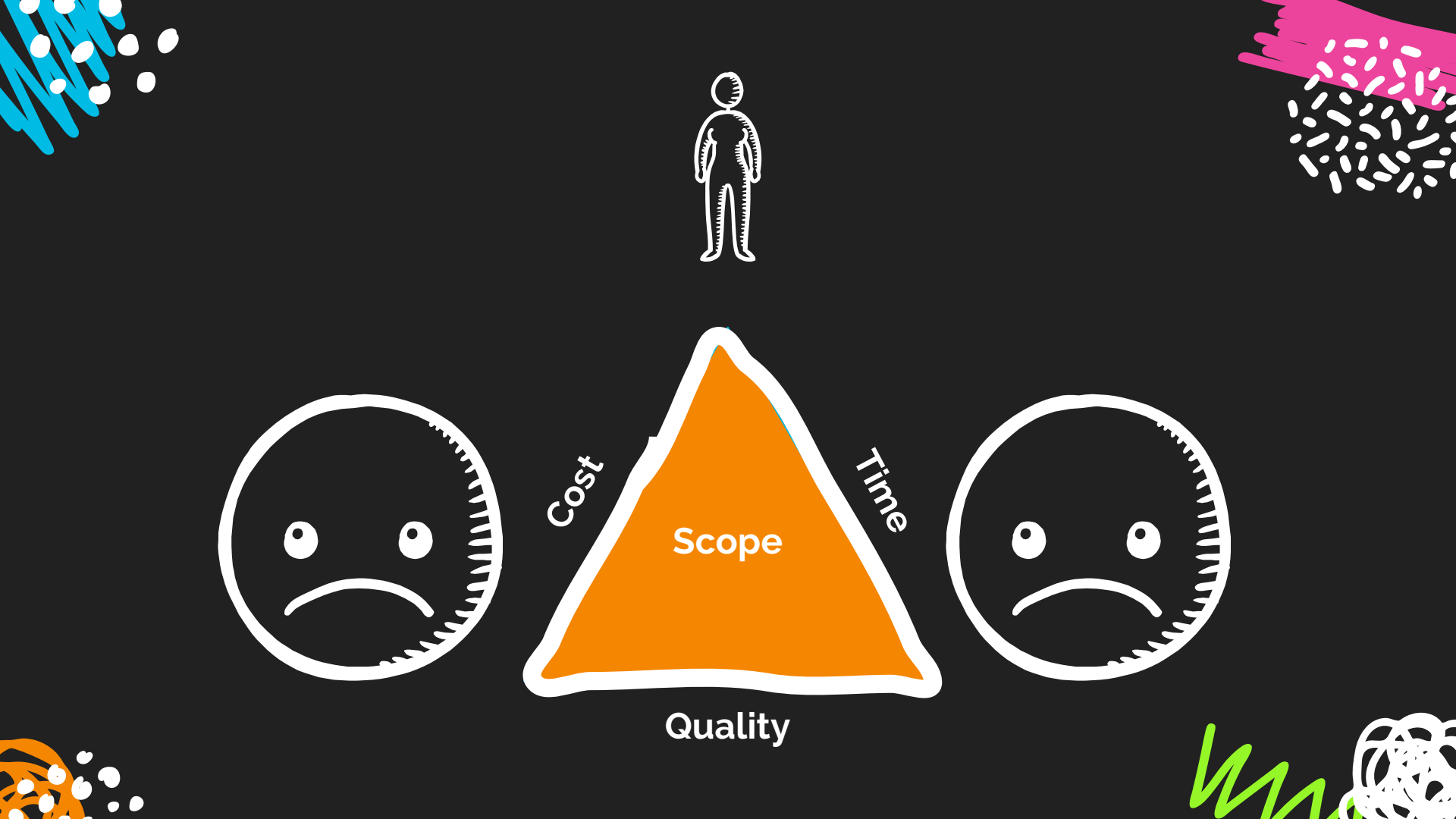
This holds for usability issues, "bugs", "quality", elephants in the room, strategy misalignment...anything.

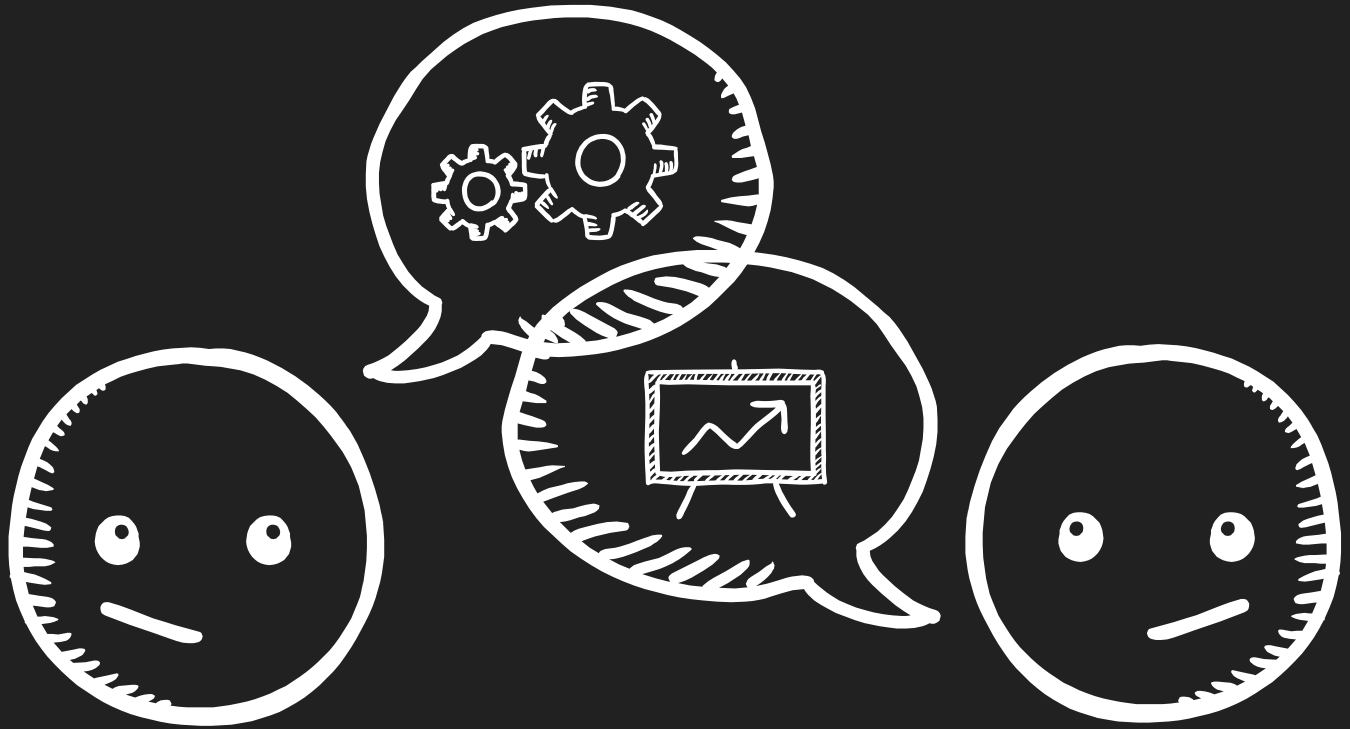
The drag and dissonance is extremely costly.

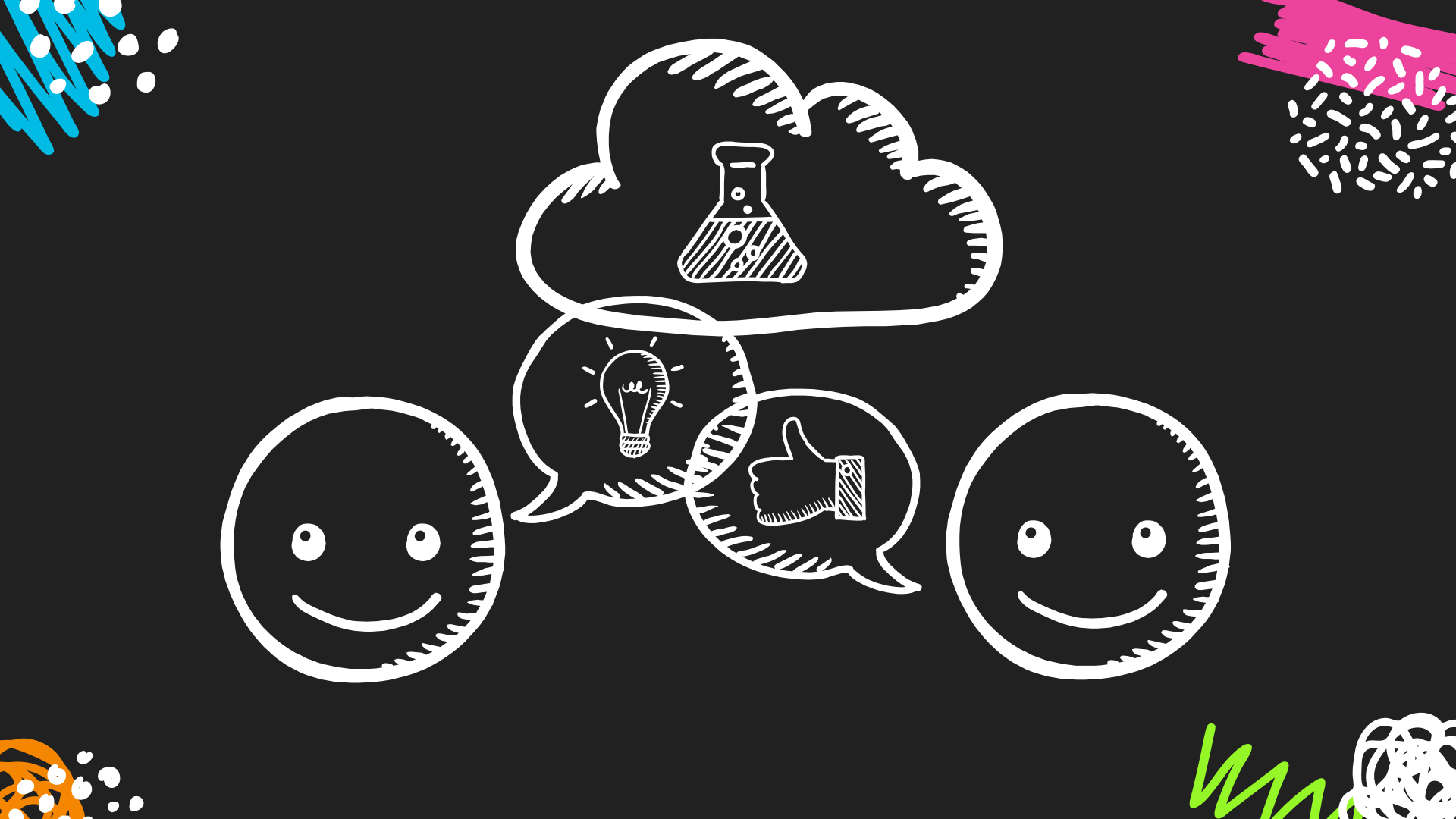
6:29 AM · Jan 31, 2020 · Twitter for iPad

195 Retweets **747** Likes


Cost
Scope
Time
Quality


Cost
Scope
Time
Quality



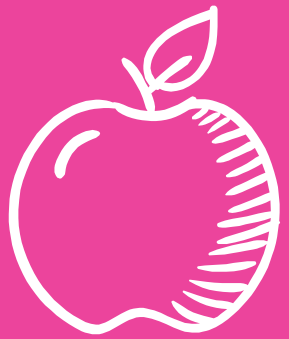


Strategic objectives

Holistic measures

Safe communication

Admin Debt



Tidy up Time

Don't just make product decisions

Step back,
look at the wider picture,
& use debt to your advantage

Take a pic of this slide!

Want to ditch deadlines? Here's how to handle the objections:

bit.ly/ditch-timelines

www.mindtheproduct.com/free-your-product-roadmap-and-ditch-the-timeline

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