



Prakriti Mateti, Director of Engineering

“The familiar old axiom of software development is that it takes three times as long as you expect to rewrite an existing system”

—M.A. Jackson

“A rebuild is never  
finished, only started.”

—A colleague

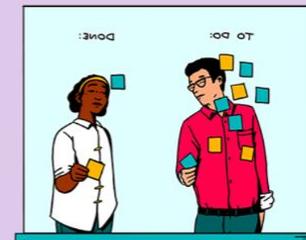
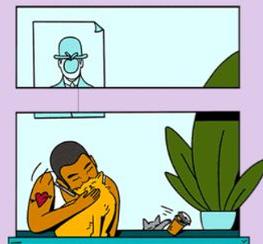


# An employee experience that people love

Get the employee engagement, performance and development tools and insights you need to build a category-defining culture.

Book a demo

See how it works



4.6 ★ on G2

4.7 ★ on Capterra



# Empower your people to drive performance at scale

Make performance reviews fair and effortless. Culture Amp's performance management solution enables managers and teams to continuously align on expectations, goals, and feedback.





# 2019

Acquired Series A 6 years ago

# Thousands

Of customers today



# 850-1500

Performance review cycles  
launched each month

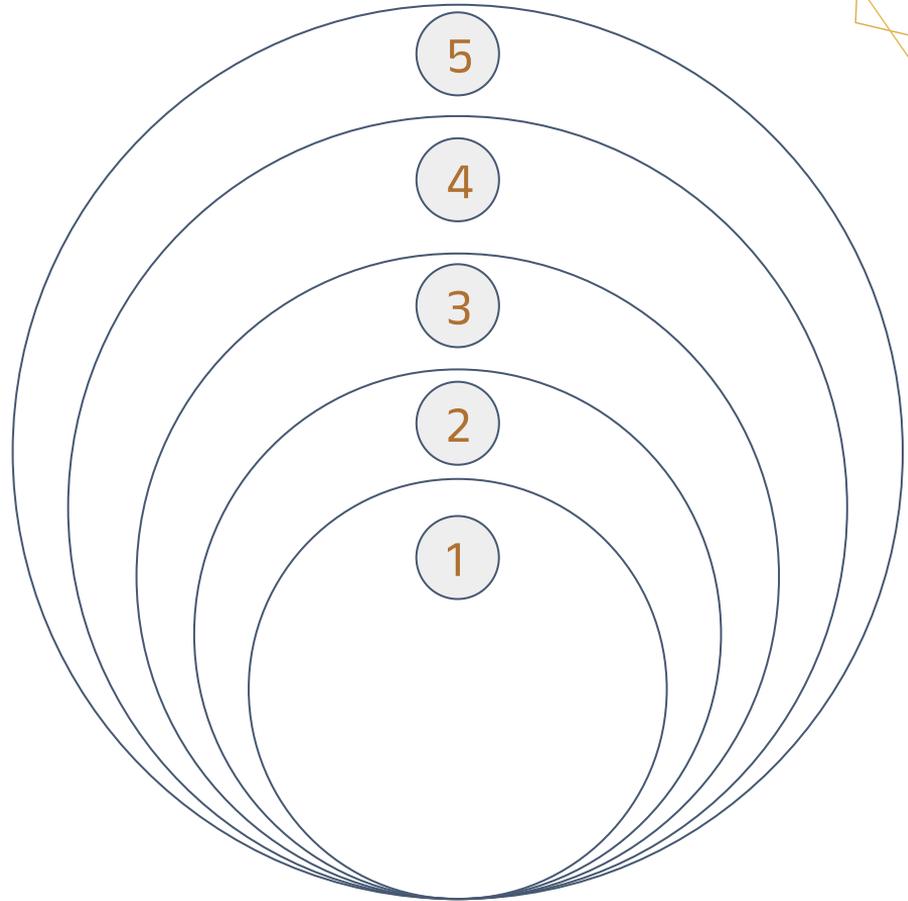
The background features a dark blue color with abstract, thin, light-colored geometric lines forming various shapes and patterns, primarily concentrated on the left and right sides.

\$3 billion

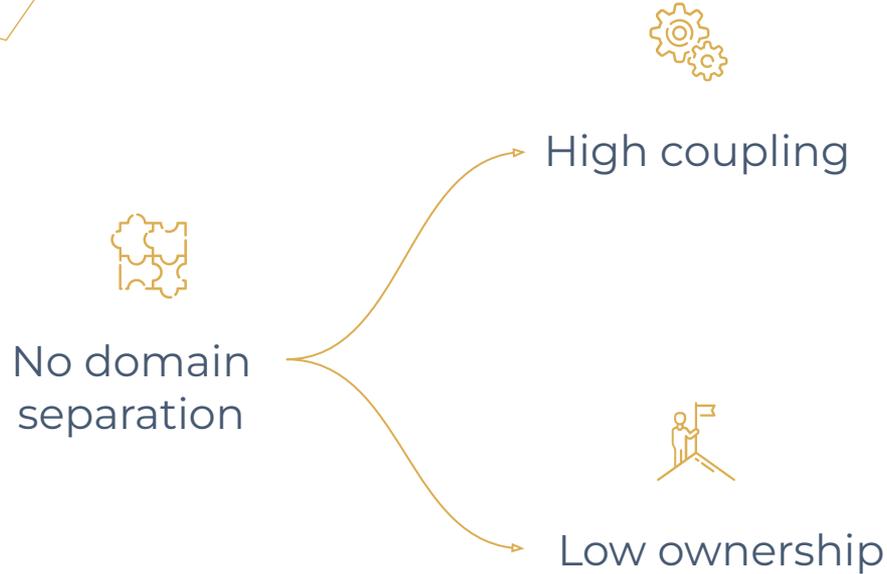
Global potential performance market

# Technical Obstacles

- 1 Underlying domain model and architecture
- 2 Other products in the same codebase
- 3 Common shared concerns
- 4 Enormous tech debt
- 5 Early stage decisions right at the time



# Team Obstacles



# Team Obstacles



No domain  
separation



High coupling



Teams moving  
slow



Poor ownership



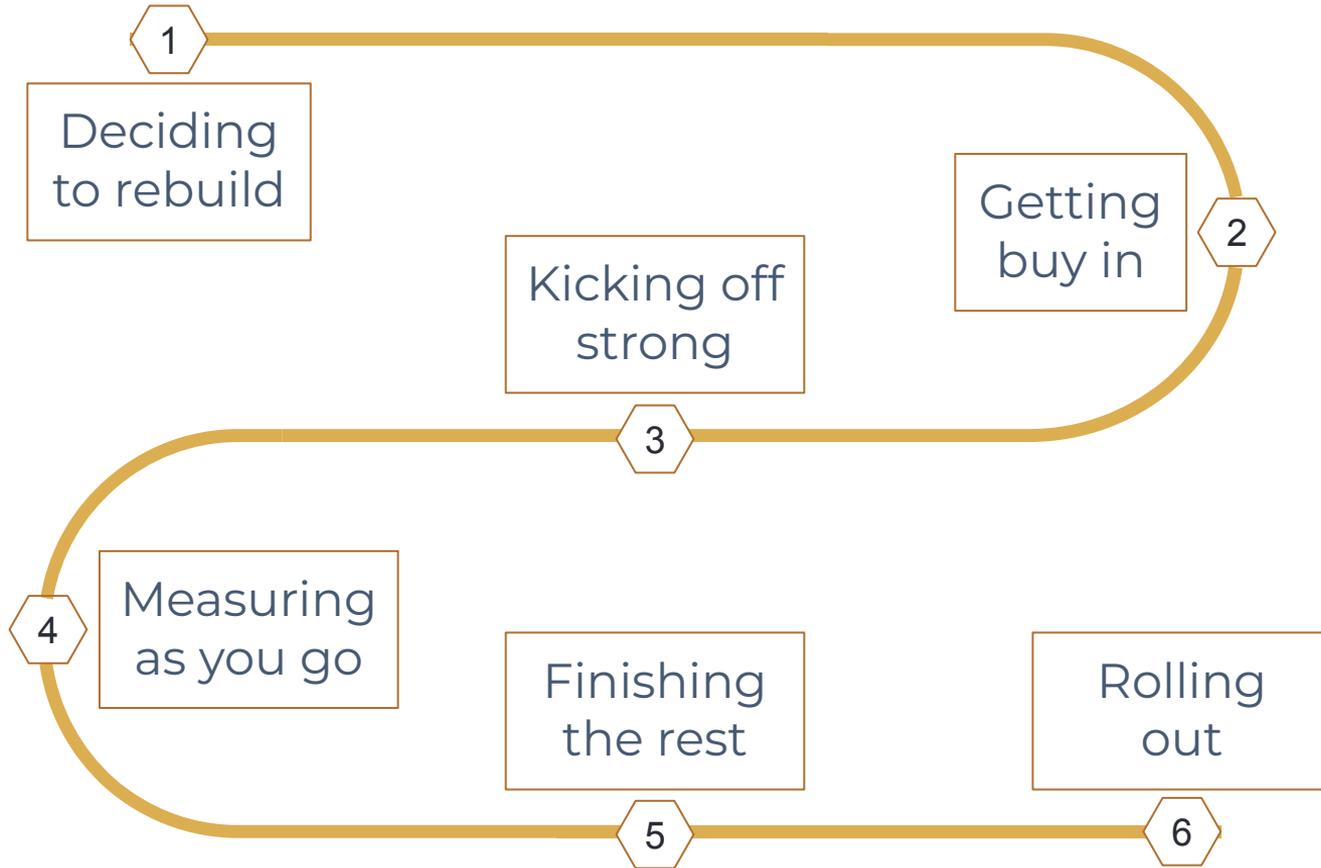
Couldn't benefit  
from shared tooling  
and infrastructure



Not a high  
performance culture



- FIRST, I'LL JUST REACH IN  
AND PULL MY LEGS OUT.



A scene from the movie 'The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey' showing Bilbo Baggins running through a lush green field. He is wearing a dark brown coat and a white shirt. In the background, there are other characters, including a woman in a red dress and a man in a grey coat, and a white horse. The scene is set in a rural, hilly landscape with a wooden signpost on the left.

***I'm going on an adventure!***

*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012)*



1

# DECIDING TO REBUILD

Knowing when to burn it all  
down and avoid sunk cost



# We tried 3 approaches first



## Removing tech debt

Identify, prioritise,  
and remove tech  
debt one step at a  
time



## Rearchitecting in places

Identify and  
re-architect one  
domain at a time  
inside the monoliths



## Extracting from the monoliths

Extract domains out  
from the monoliths  
one at a time

# We tried 3 approaches first



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Extract domains out  
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one at a time

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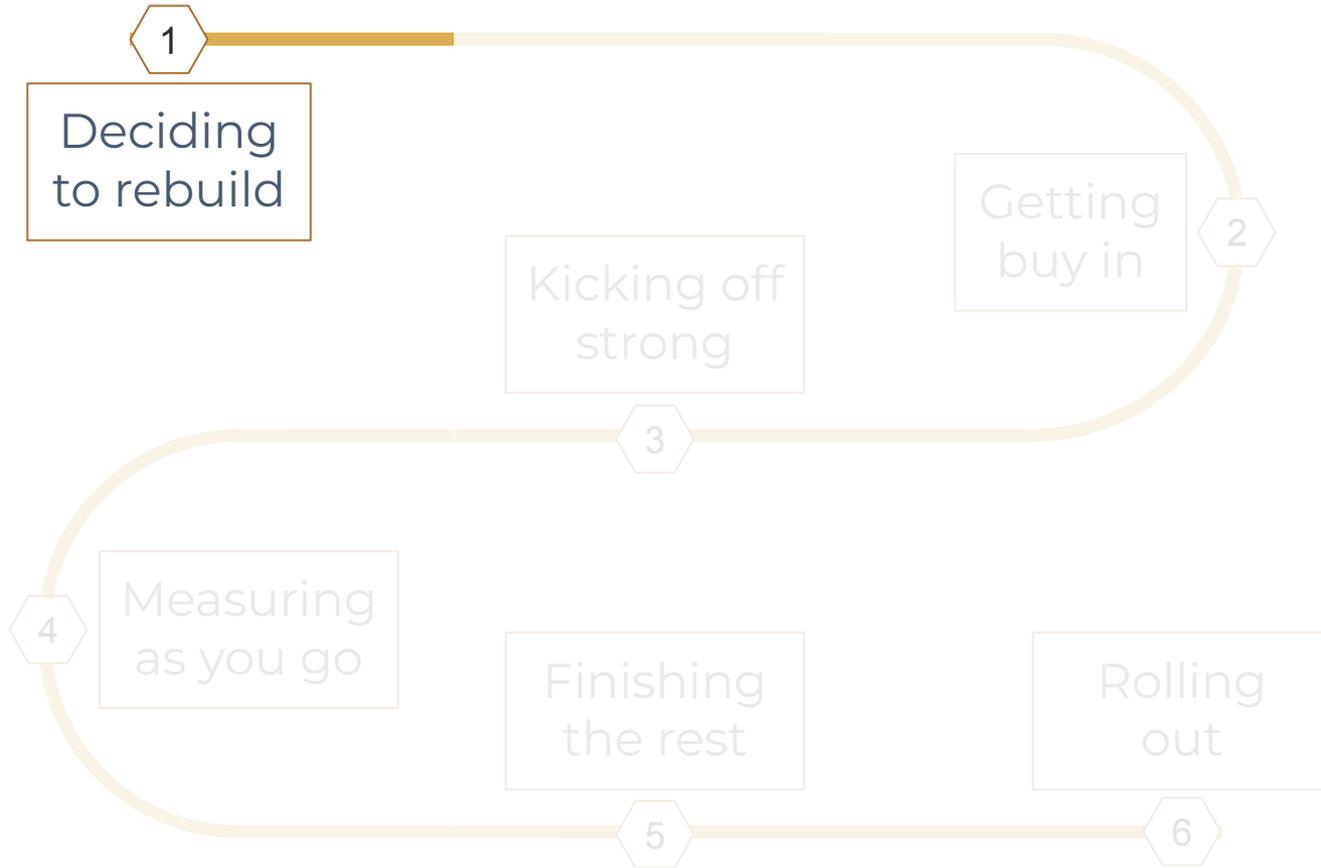


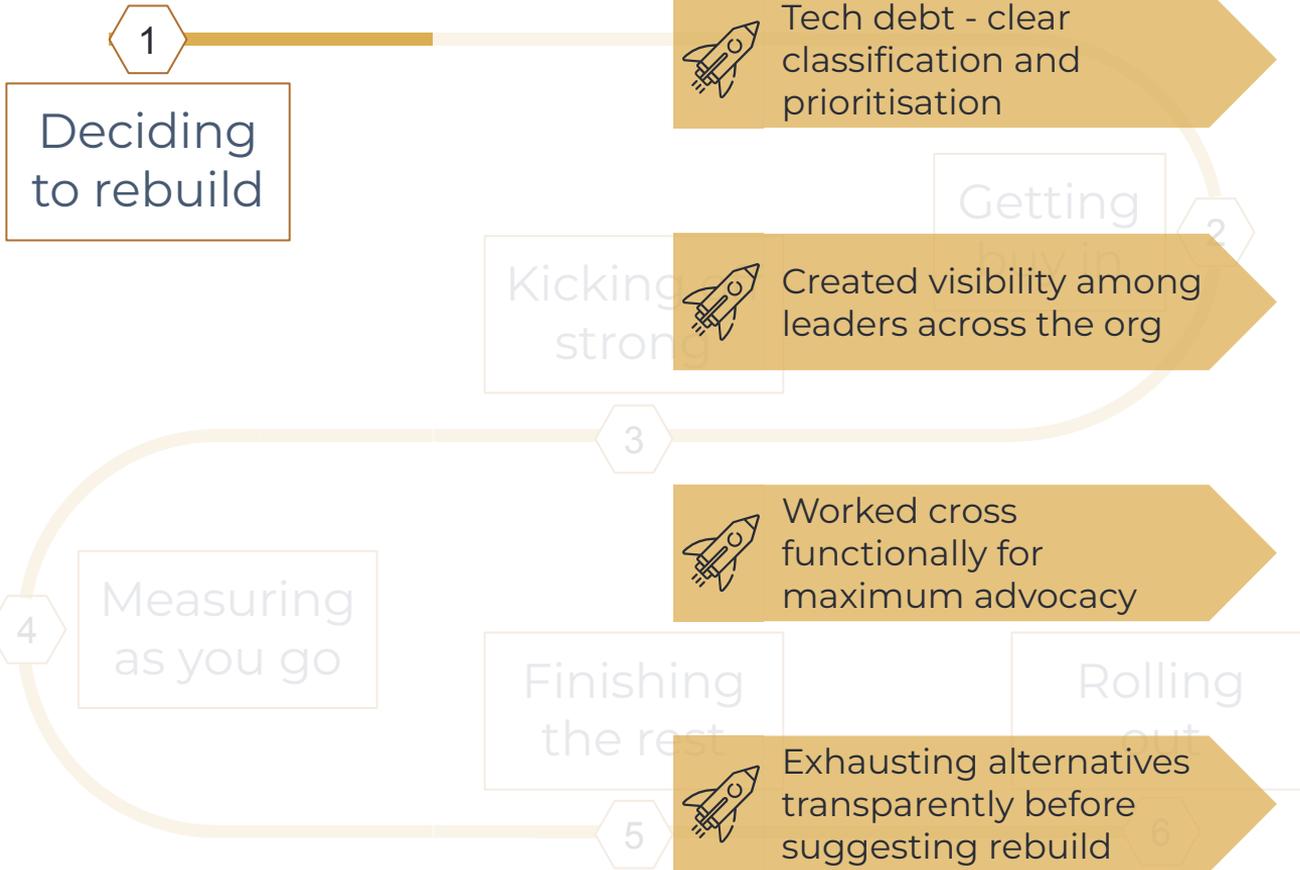
Extracting from the monoliths

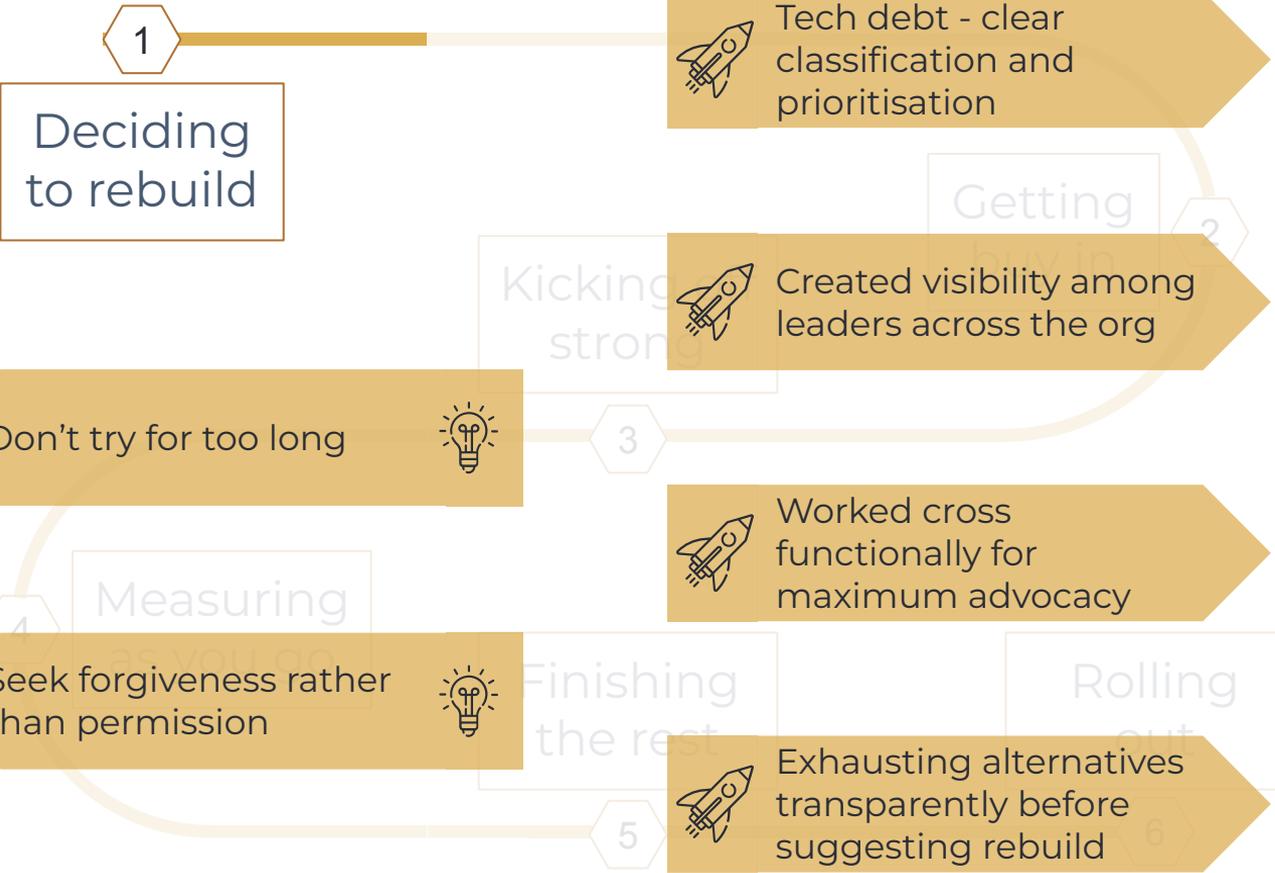
Extract domains out  
from the monoliths  
one at a time

A meme featuring the character Elmo from Sesame Street. He is shown from the chest up, with his arms raised in a 'V' shape. He has a neutral, slightly concerned expression. The background is a dark, fiery explosion of orange and yellow flames. The text 'SO IT BEGINS' is overlaid at the bottom in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a black outline.

**SO IT BEGINS**









2

# GETTING BUY IN

Validating our decision and  
getting it funded



- Administration Improvements
  - Expanded demographic filtering
  - Edit review post launch

- Roles & Permissions
  - Scope HRBP to more than "Department"
  - More nuanced permissions e.g. cycle creator role, multiple managers completing manager reviews
  - Expanded collaborator access. e.g. viewing SR

## To prioritise post rebuild

- Administration improvements

### Flexibility in review types

- Probation reviews
- Anniversary based reviews
- Goal based reviews
- Competency based reviews

- Roles & permissions

- Flexibility in review types

## Fast follow

- Rebuild Peer & Upward Feedback (rebuild complete)

- Fully unified cycle -  
Self Reflections + Manager Review + Peer & Upward feedback

- Demographic snapshotting
  - Performance data trended over time
  - Remove need to freeze hierarchy during live performance cycles

- Question intent
  - Trend performance data over time
  - Insights about performance data, not just reporting
  - Better linkage of performance data to other product data - e.g., goals, develop, engage
  - Group responses by question not just author

- Question intent

- Updated and scalable cycle configuration experience

- Multi-lingual performance reviews

- Demographic snapshotting

## Up Next

- Rebuild Manager Review  
Updated UI and stable experience

- Unify Self Reflections & Manager Review \*

- Rebuild Calibrations

- Rebuild Insights

- Self reflections updates
  - Ability to toggle comments
  - Comments included in SR export
  - Self reflections landing page
  - Edit SR after submitting
  - Intro text to SR

- Self reflections updates

- Question flexibility
  - Question library
  - Question branching
  - Conditional questions

- Question flexibility

## In Progress

- Rebuild Self Reflections  
Updated UI  
More stable experience

- Editable self reflections

- Bulk approve P&U nominations

**\*Note:** Unified Self Reflections and Manager Reviews will only be available to customers who do not use Peer & Upward feedback. Customers who use peer & upward will get access to the unified experience when we rebuild and unify peer & upward feedback

**Performance Management**

Performance Management is the process of setting performance goals for an organization, its departments, and its employees, and then monitoring, evaluating, and developing the performance of the organization, its departments, and its employees.

**Objectives**

Align individual and organizational goals to ensure that all employees are working towards the same objectives.

Provide a clear understanding of what is expected of employees and how their performance will be measured.

Identify areas for improvement and provide feedback to help employees develop their skills and abilities.

Recognize and reward high performance to motivate employees and encourage them to continue to improve.

**Key Elements**

- Goal Setting
- Performance Measurement
- Feedback
- Development

**Benefits**

- Improved Performance
- Increased Productivity
- Enhanced Employee Engagement
- Clearer Communication
- Identified Areas for Improvement
- Recognition and Reward
- Development of Skills and Abilities
- Alignment of Individual and Organizational Goals

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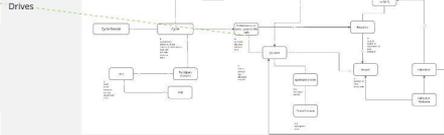
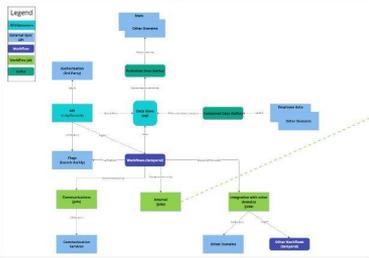
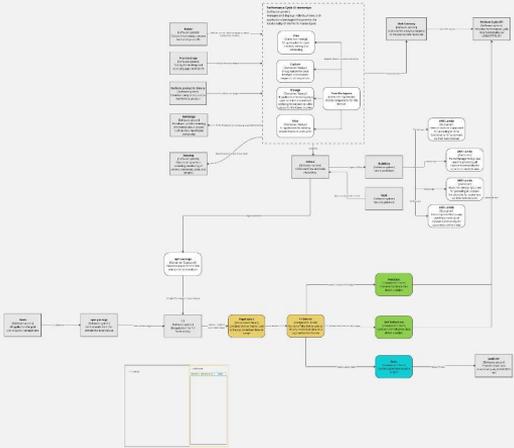
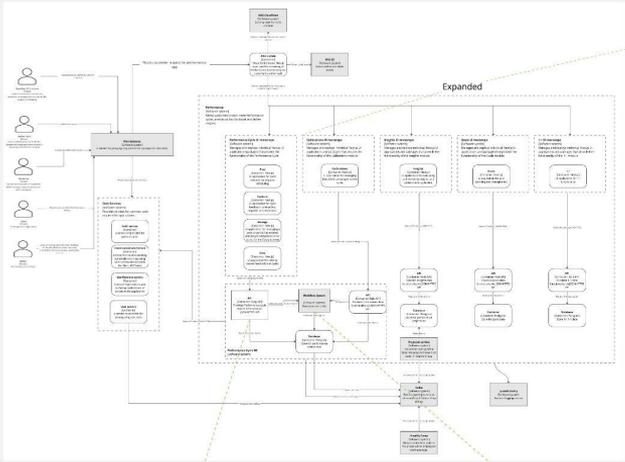
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# Converging on an architecture and tech



# Getting Exec on board



Spoke to an external advisor

Increasing confidence  
in our decision and  
seeking advice on  
direction



Exec presentation

Telling the holistic story  
of the product including  
what we can offer our  
customers in the  
meantime

# Getting Exec on board



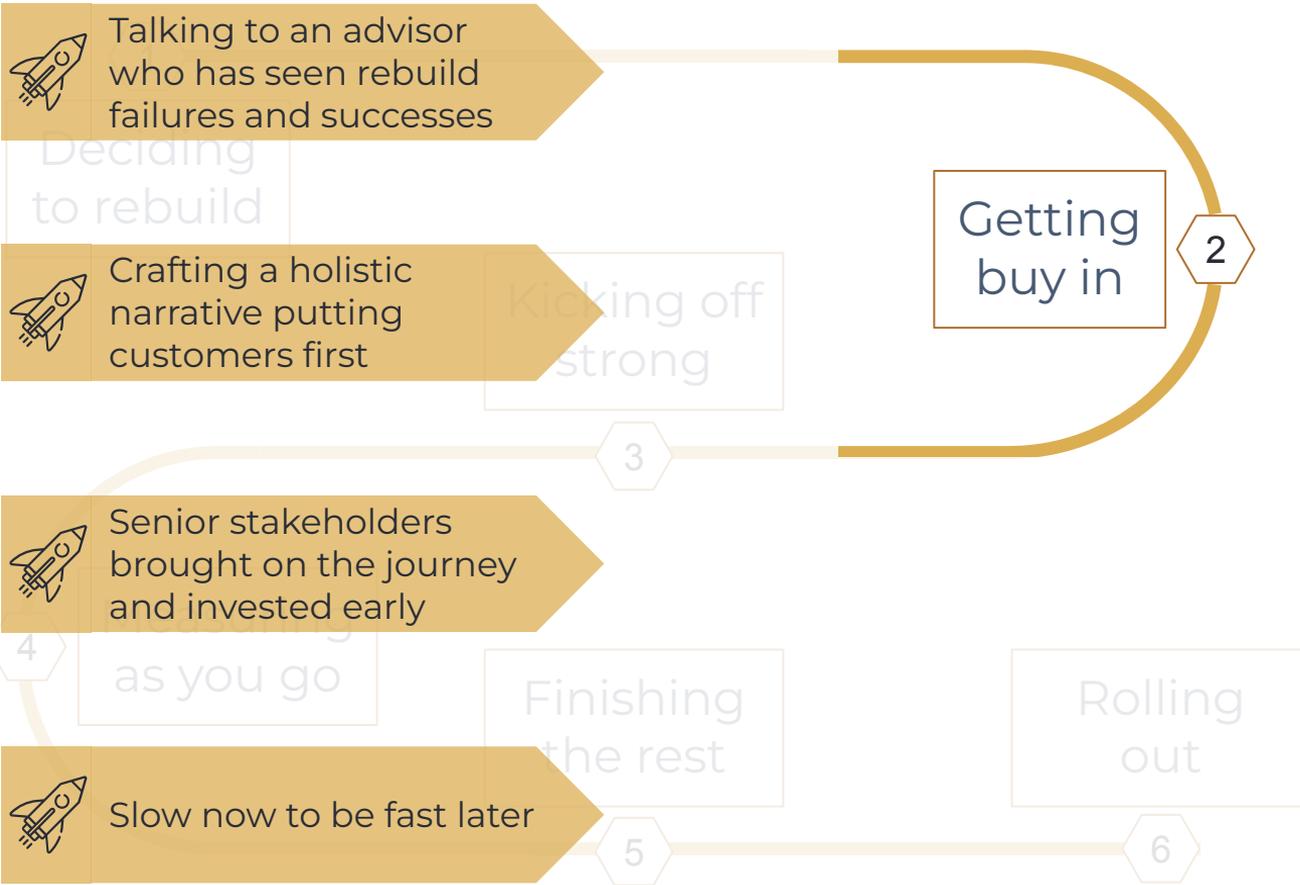
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3

# KICKING OFF STRONG

A lot riding on the start



# Rebuild Goals

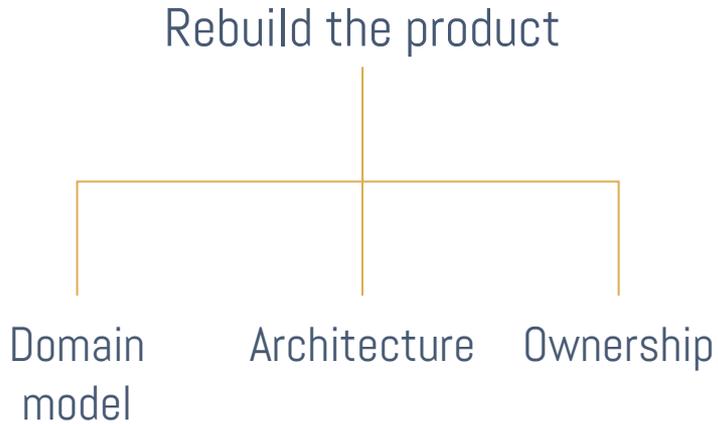
Rebuild the product

Domain  
model

Architecture

Ownership

# Rebuild Goals



# Rebuild Goals

```
graph TD; A[Rebuild Goals] --> B[Rebuild the product]; A --> C[Rebuild the teams]; B --> D[Domain model]; B --> E[Architecture]; B --> F[Ownership]; C --> G[Culture and WOW]; C --> H[Engagement]; C --> I[L&D growth opportunities];
```

Rebuild the product

Rebuild the teams

Domain  
model

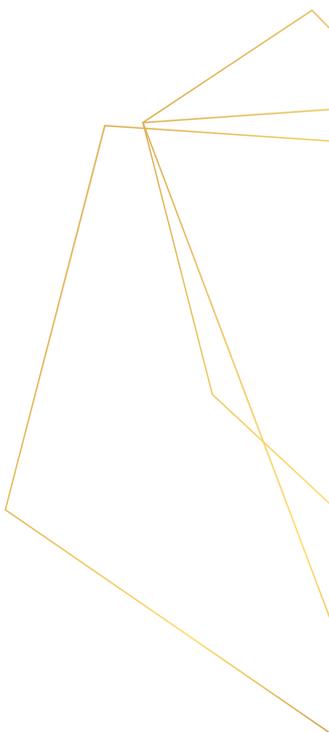
Architecture

Ownership

Culture  
and WOW

Engagement

L&D growth  
opportunities



**REBUILD  
THE PRODUCT**

**REBUILD THE TEAMS**



**ME**



**Did you just take both pills?**

# Rebuild Principles



Like for like

Stand up our existing  
product

# Rebuild Principles



## Like for like

Stand up our existing  
product



## Freeze and decommission

Definition of done

# Rebuild Principles



## Like for like

Stand up our existing product



## Freeze and decommission

Definition of done



## Holistic and deliberate

High engineering, design standards and ways of working

# Choosing the first slice

## Usage

Well used by  
customers



## Condition

In the worst shape,  
not touched for the  
longest



## Coupling

Relatively isolated  
from the other  
domains



## Complexity

Representative of  
challenges but not the  
most complex



Goldilocks timeframe  
commitment

Start with a small strong  
team

Setting the  
first slice up  
for success

Set high standards to  
build something we're  
proud of

Internal PR campaign



*Captain Planet and the Planeteers (1990-1996)*

Goldilocks timeframe  
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Start with a small strong  
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Setting the  
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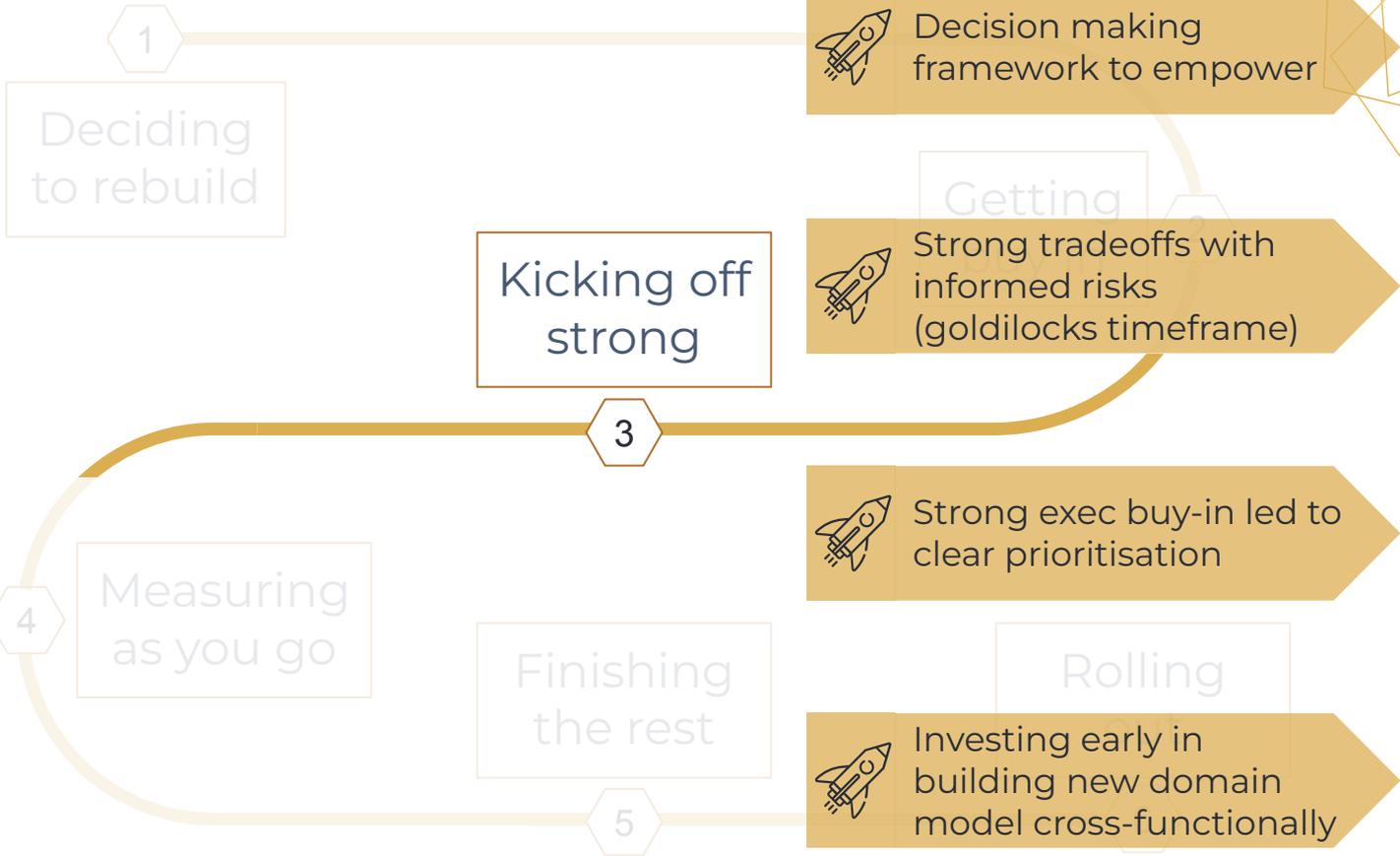
Adopting all internal  
standards

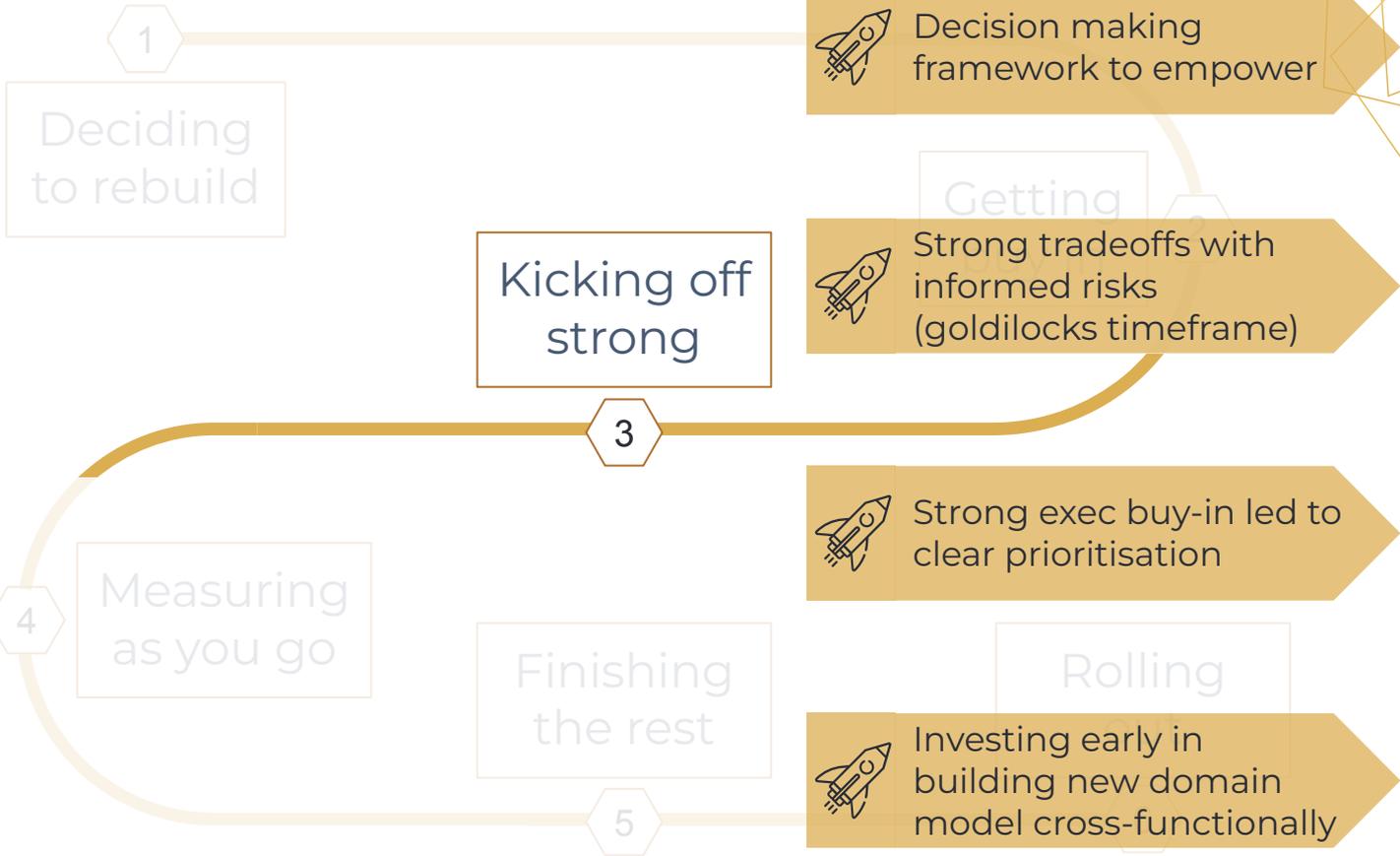
Internal PR campaign



**It's done.**

*The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003)*





Burnout and stress from targets and visibility 

 Decision making framework to empower

Deciding to rebuild

Getting

Establishing momentum was difficult 

Kicking off strong

 Strong tradeoffs with informed risks (goldilocks timeframe)

3

Refinement and estimations prioritised too late 

 Strong exec buy-in led to clear prioritisation

4

Measuring as you go

Finishing the rest

Rolling

Complex dependency management 

5

 Investing early in creating new domain model cross-functionally



4

# MEASURING SUCCESS

At every step as we go through





*Mr. Bean (1990–1995)*

# Rebuild Goals

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Rebuild the product

Rebuild the teams

Domain  
model

Architecture

Ownership

Culture  
and WOW

Engagement

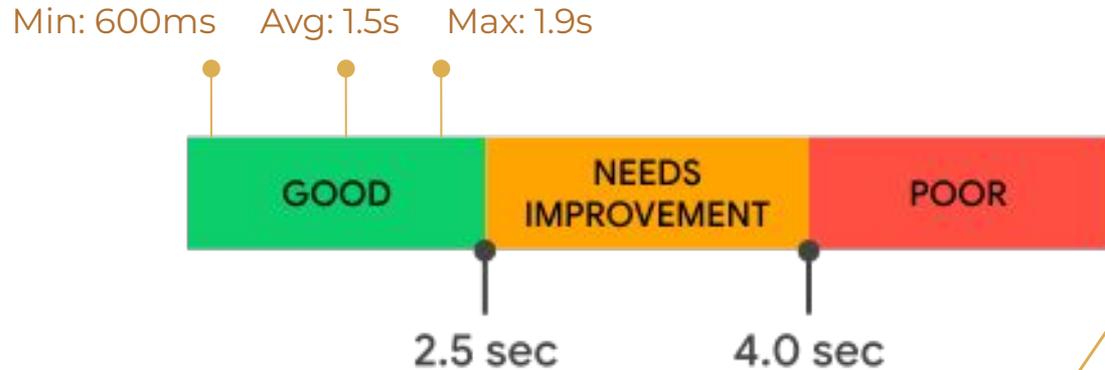
L&D growth  
opportunities

# Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)

Old Self Reflections



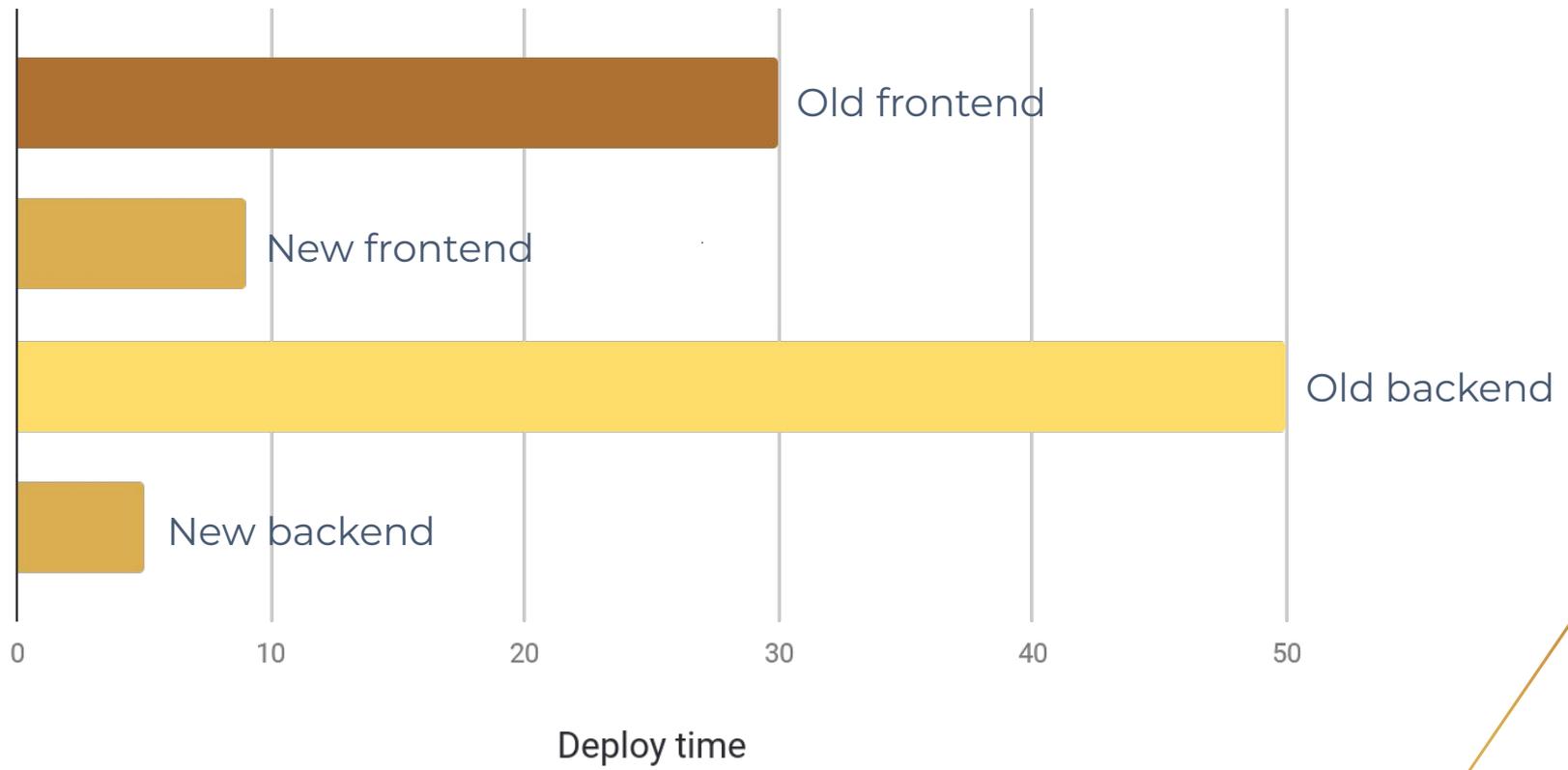
New Self Reflections



# Specific Feature Performance

	Old Self Reflections	New Self Reflections
Filtering employees	4 seconds	<b>60 ms</b>
Employee assignment	8 seconds	<b>2 seconds</b>
Async customer communications	1 minute	<b>50 seconds</b>
Exporting cycles	1+ minute (async email delivery)	<b>8-10 seconds</b> (sync download)

# Developer Productivity



Most of 560  
UX / UI issues fixed



Simplified overall page structure

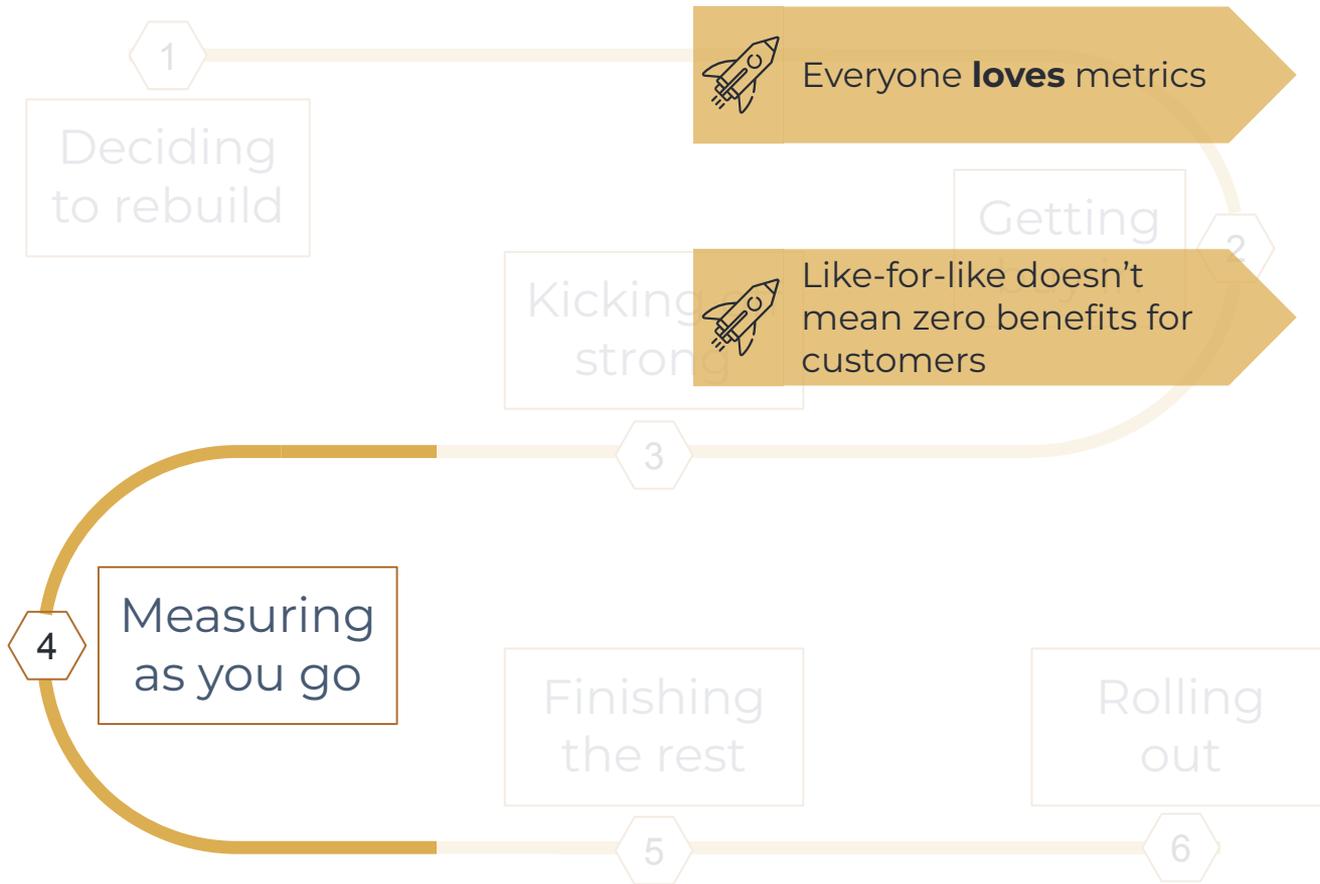
More consistency leveraging design system

Uplifted accessibility

More responsive pages which work on smaller screens

Streamlined workflows with fewer clicks

All copy and content reviewed and improved



Hard to measure old product to compare



Everyone **loves** metrics

Deciding to rebuild

Invest more in instrumenting key tradeoffs



Like-for-like doesn't mean zero benefits for customers

Getting

icking strong

3

4

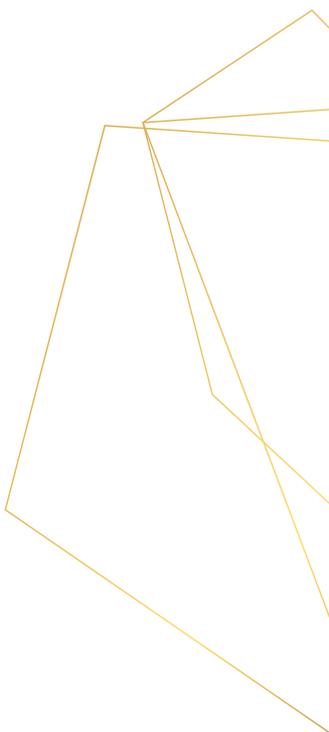
Measuring as you go

Finishing the rest

Rolling out

5

6





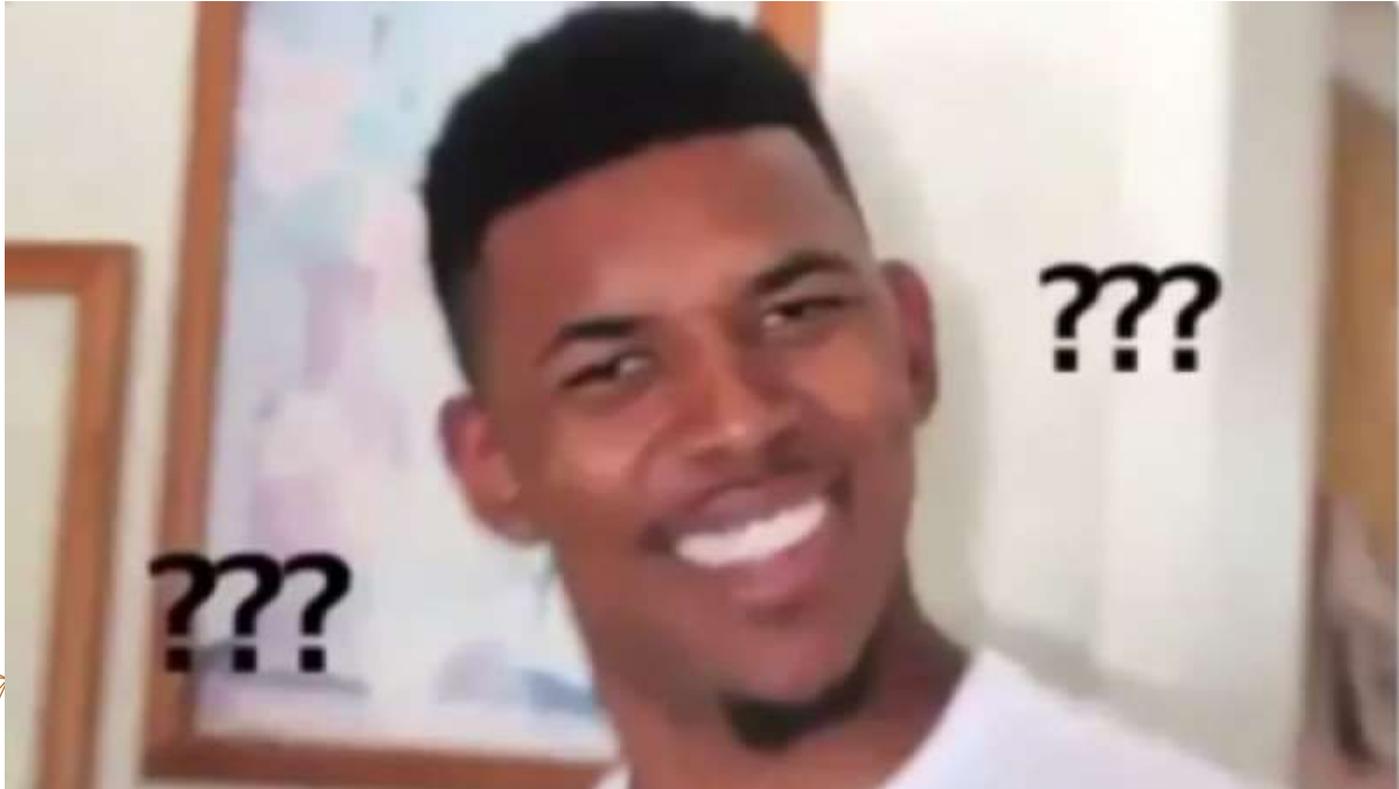
5

# FINISHING THE REST

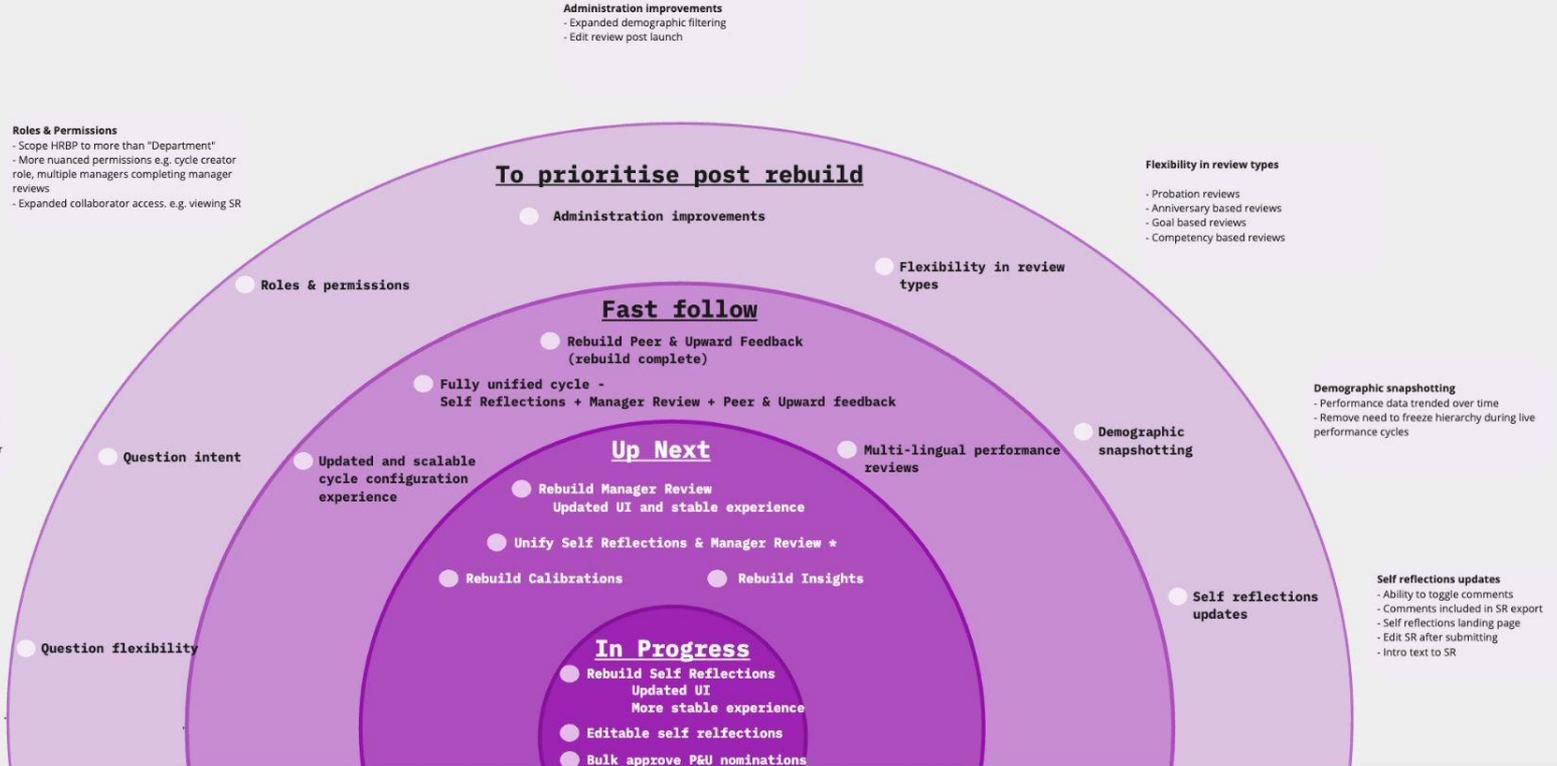
1 down, 5 slices to go



# The Plan™



# Product opportunity radar



★Note: Unified Self Reflections and Manager Reviews will only be available to customers who do not use Peer & Upward feedback. Customers who use peer & upward will get access to the unified experience when we rebuild and unify peer & upward feedback

# Potential roadmap items

High

## Platform expectations

### Customise notifications

Customise communications cadence

Customise communications text

### Customise terms

Customise terms in product e.g. "manager"

Customise text for review acknowledgement

Sandbox / Masquerade ability

2 way HRIS sync

### Roles & permissions

More granular roles and permissions. e.g. cycle creator role, translator role

Scope HRBP to more than Department

### Support change in manager

Previous managers can access current managers' functionality

Remove need to freeze HRIS sync when cycle is live

## Performance product expectations

### Complete reporting - usage

Admin dashboard of completion stats across all units

Manager dashboard of completion stats across all units

Custom demographics available in all reporting

Have more filter flexibility in reporting & insights

### Support more review types

Multi-lingual reviews

Date based reviews

Goal and competency based reviews

PIP or coaching plans

### Question flexibility

Question and template library

Question branching

Unified cycle

Export combined report for all units

Medium

## Nominations

Limit P&U feedback noms

Nominations - exclude based on start date

nominations - explicit number of feedback requests

Mass approve nominations

## Flexibility to current process

Include hard deadlines in addition to soft

Managers can choose to share SOME feedback

Edit feedback after submitting

Group P&U feedback by question

Have option to not need to select peer reviewers

Edit self reflection after submitting

Anon P&U feedback

Remove 1-2 people from calibration

Allow admins to reopen reviews immediately for employees while a cycle is live and after a cycle has closed

## Better support collaborators and matrix orgs

Second manager can do all manager tasks

Expand existing collaborator role

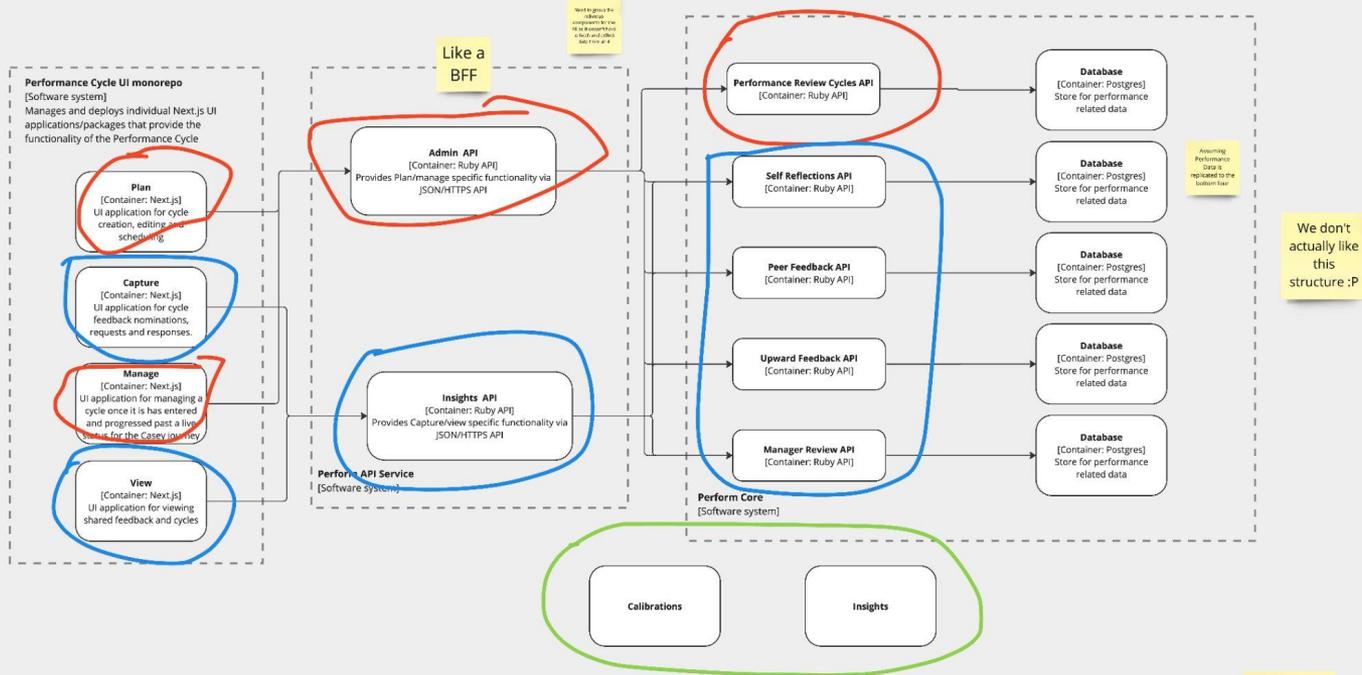
## Data over time

Historic upload of perf reviews

Trending data over time



# Potential team structures



Multi-lingual reviews

In order

Red team

Allow admins to enter ML question text

Render correct language question

Blue team

Render correct language question

Admin dashboard of completion stats across all units

Red and green

Question branching

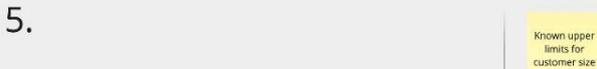
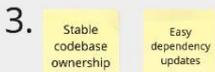
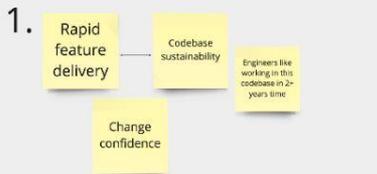
All 3 teams

Date based reviews

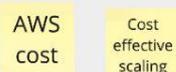
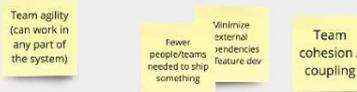
All 3 teams

# What are we optimising for?

## Person 1



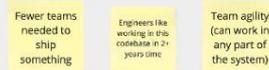
## Person 2



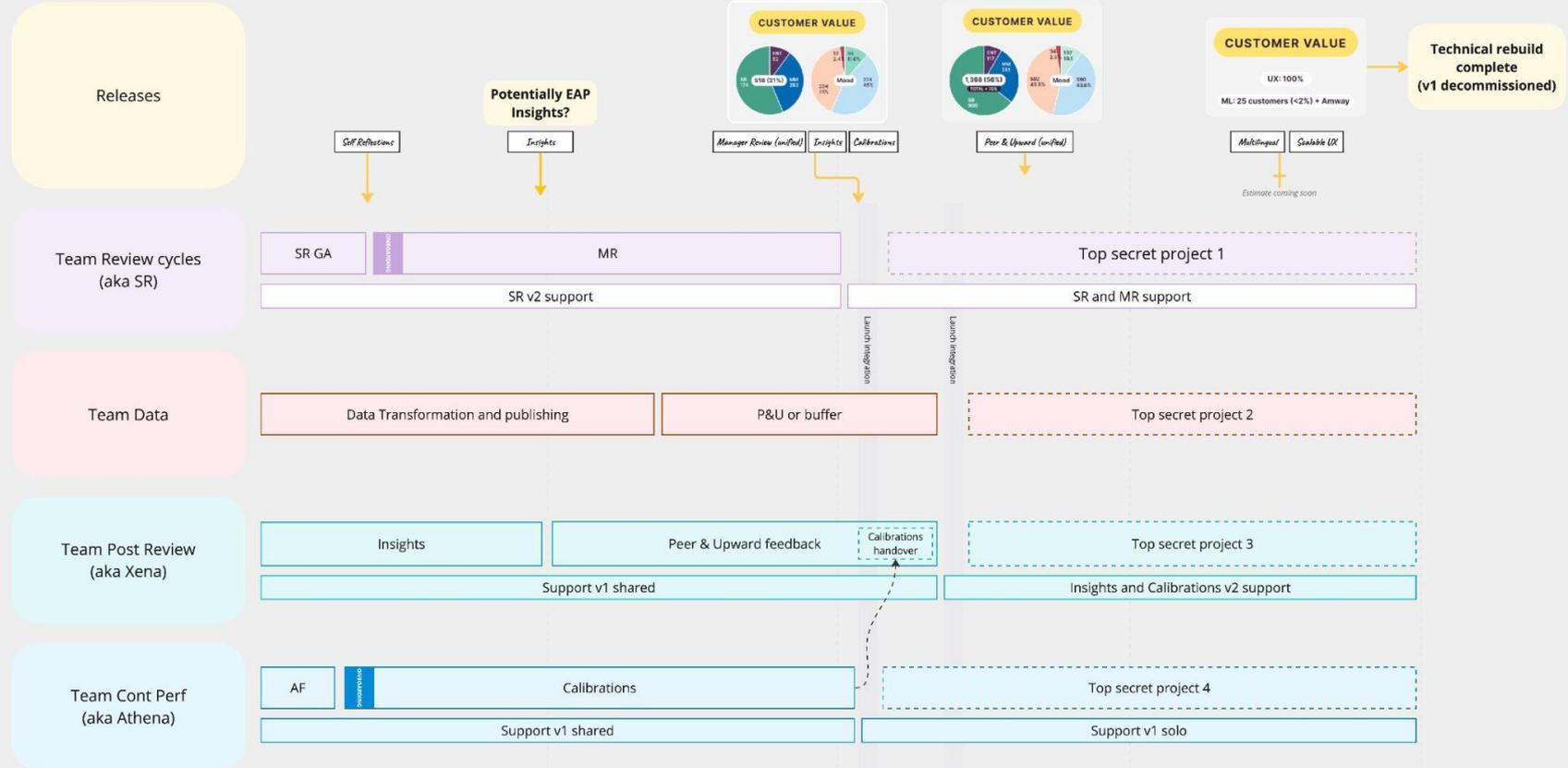
## Person 3

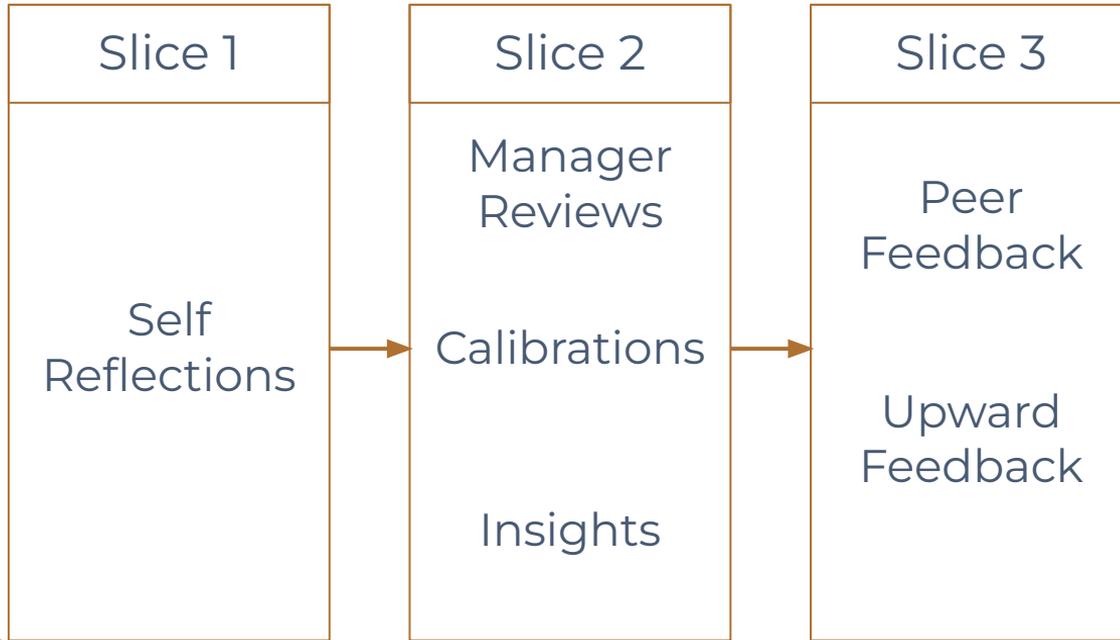


## Person 4



# The Plan™







*Saving Private Ryan (1998)*



Not everyone could be highly resilient



Deciding to rebuild

Pressure didn't decrease after the first slice



Kicking off strong



Overlay product roadmap + architecture options + team composition

Getting



Clarity on what different people are optimising for

3

Unprecedented laser focus - lots of saying "no"



Measuring as you go



Culture of expecting frequent change and agility

4

Finishing the rest



All teams focussed on one high priority initiative

5

6



6

# Rolling out

It's not done even though it's finished

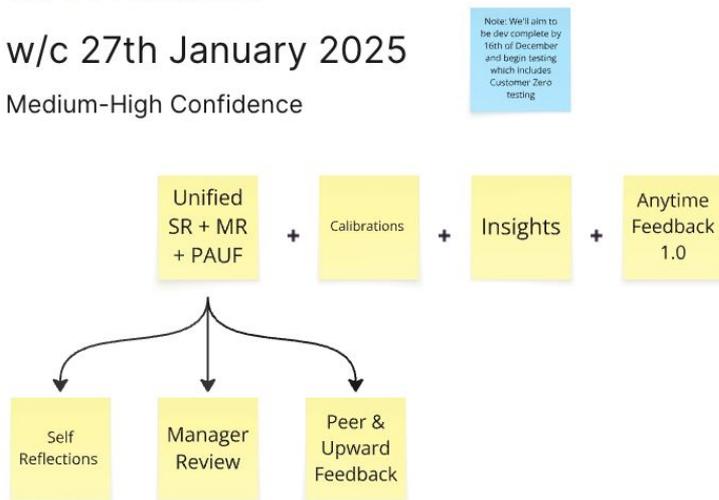


# Perform Rebuild - GA Release plan

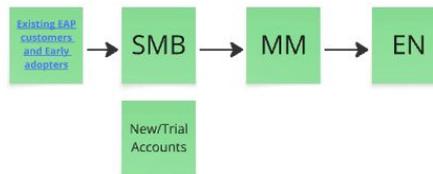
## GA release

w/c 27th January 2025

Medium-High Confidence



As rollouts take time to migrate data, between SMB>MM>EN there will be a 1 week interval after each segment



Enterprise customers will have the option to delay toggling on Unified Cycles until end of April 2025 [here](#)

Stretch goal for w/c 16th December to release with Customer Zero

Customer Zero

## Perform Rebuild - Change log



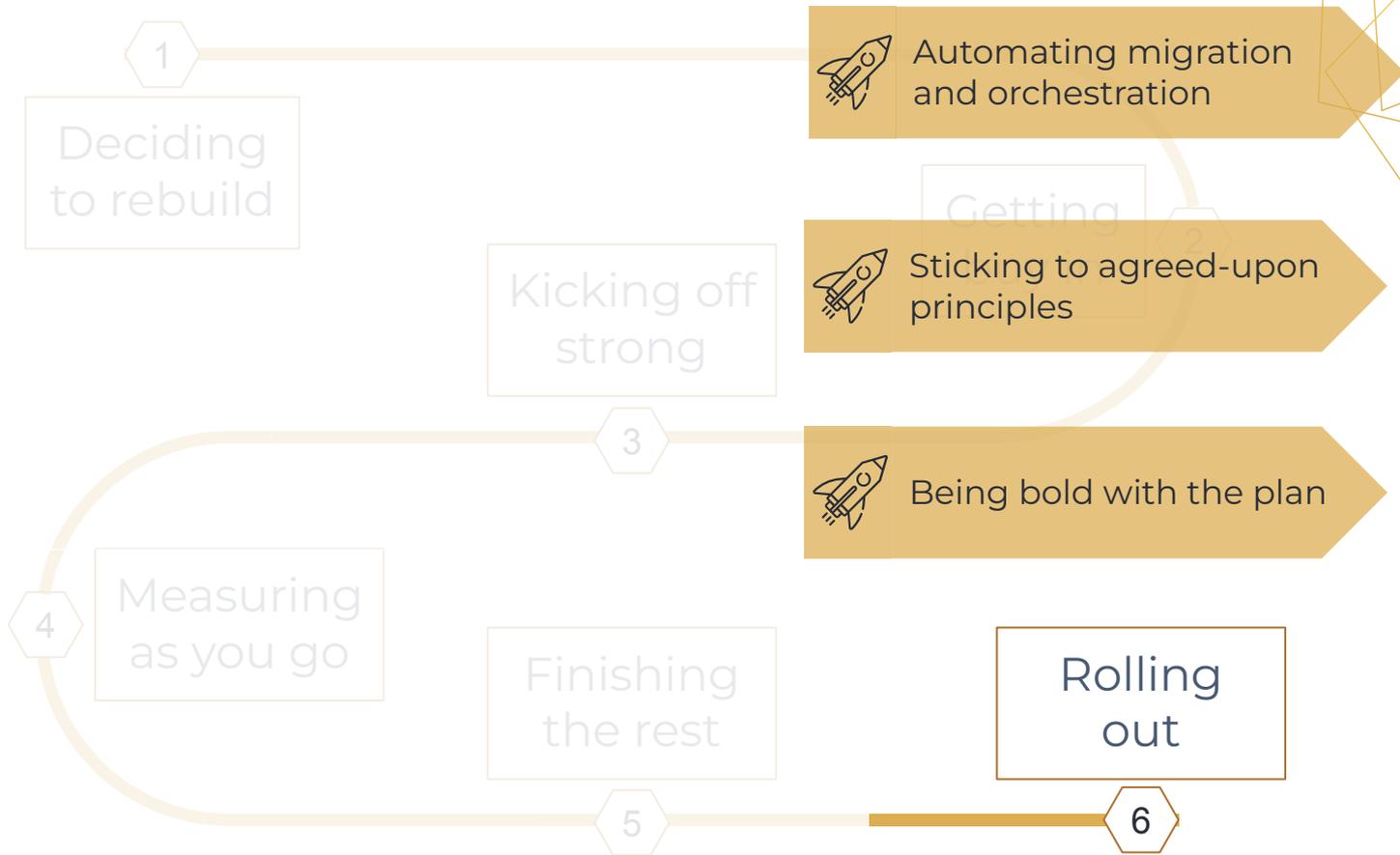
Perform Rebuild Feature Change Log

<https://cultureamp.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CAR/pages/38102313...>



The best-laid plans of mice  
and ~~men~~ engineering teams  
often go awry

- Robert Burns 🤪



Assume things will go wrong - even at the very end



Deciding to rebuild

Build very deep shared understanding early rather than at crisis time



Kicking off strong

Fixing transformation bugs required re-running migrations



3

Last customer migration env vastly different from first



Measuring

Finishing the rest

5



Automating migration and orchestration

Getting



Sticking to agreed-upon principles



Being bold with the plan

Rolling out

6



Me before  
the rebuild



Me after  
the rebuild

If...

- Domain model can't take the product forward
- Stuck with series A decisions banded over
- Teams are grinding to a halt
- Tight coupling
- Underperforming product in a huge potential market
- You've tried everything else



It...

- Domain model can't take the product forward
- Stuck with series A decisions bandaided over
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- You've tried everything else



*Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (1993–1996)*

# Thank you!

Prakriti Mateti  
Director of Engineering

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