


Make Better Decisions

UCD Gathering

mr Joe Leech
18 November 2021



Hi, I'm
@mrjoe but
you can
call me Joe

An idea may not be executed, because it doesn't align with the strategy or we might need to hire a new 20 people team just to run it. But that doesn't mean it's not a great idea, right?

– Erin, Wordpress

Make Better Product Decisions – the Podcast

Have you ever wondered how product teams in successful start-ups and large companies make decisions? What drives their choices? Do they always make the right choice?

This podcast is all about what to build next, how to plan what to do in a week, in a month and further ahead. How successful product teams make good choices and how your team can too.

Joe interviews product leaders from around the world, understanding how they make the choices they do.

A book will follow next year synthesising the learnings from the podcast to help you and your team make better product decisions.




[Apple Podcast](#)

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S1 E10 Optimising for Decision Making with Selena Hadzibabic

I'm joined by Selena Hadzibabic. Selena is VP of product for the global wedding company the Knot Worldwide. You might know them as Hitched in the UK, Weddingwire in North America and India. We talk optimising decision making, decisions now or later and how to assess the competitors' decisions.

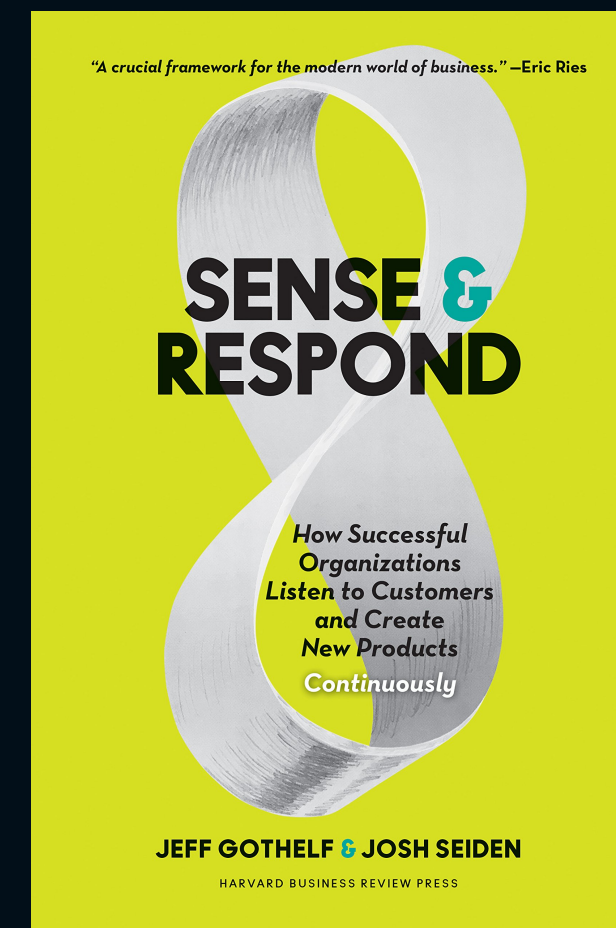
S1 E9 Meri Williams CTO of AI healthcare startup Healx, former CTO of Monzo

Meri Williams. CTO of AI healthcare startup Healx, former CTO of Monzo, Print on demand Moo and Marks and

Booking.com



Delivery Hero



1. The Types of Challenge = The Types of Decision

2. Making the Decision

3. Success and Failure

👉 **The Secret Sauce**



Flex the decision making muscle

**1. The types of challenge =
The types of decision**



DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 8

Complicated and Complex Systems: What Would Successful Reform of Medicare Look Like?

by

Sholom Glouberman, Ph.D.
Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care

Brenda Zimmerman, Ph.D.
York University



July 2002

Sholom Glouberman, Ph.D.
Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care
Brenda Zimmerman, Ph.D.
York University

Types of problems

Simple

Complicated

Complex

Follow a
recipe

Sending a
rocket to the
moon

Raising a
child

Fix a bug

Launch a new
feature

Get
promoted
to CEO

Hire a team

Simple

Complicated

Complex

We need a different decision making approach for each type of problem

2. Making the Decision

Types of problems

Simple

Complicated

Complex

What to have for lunch?

Should this button be a primary or secondary CTA?

Simple decisions

JFDI

Types of problems

Simple

Complicated

Complex

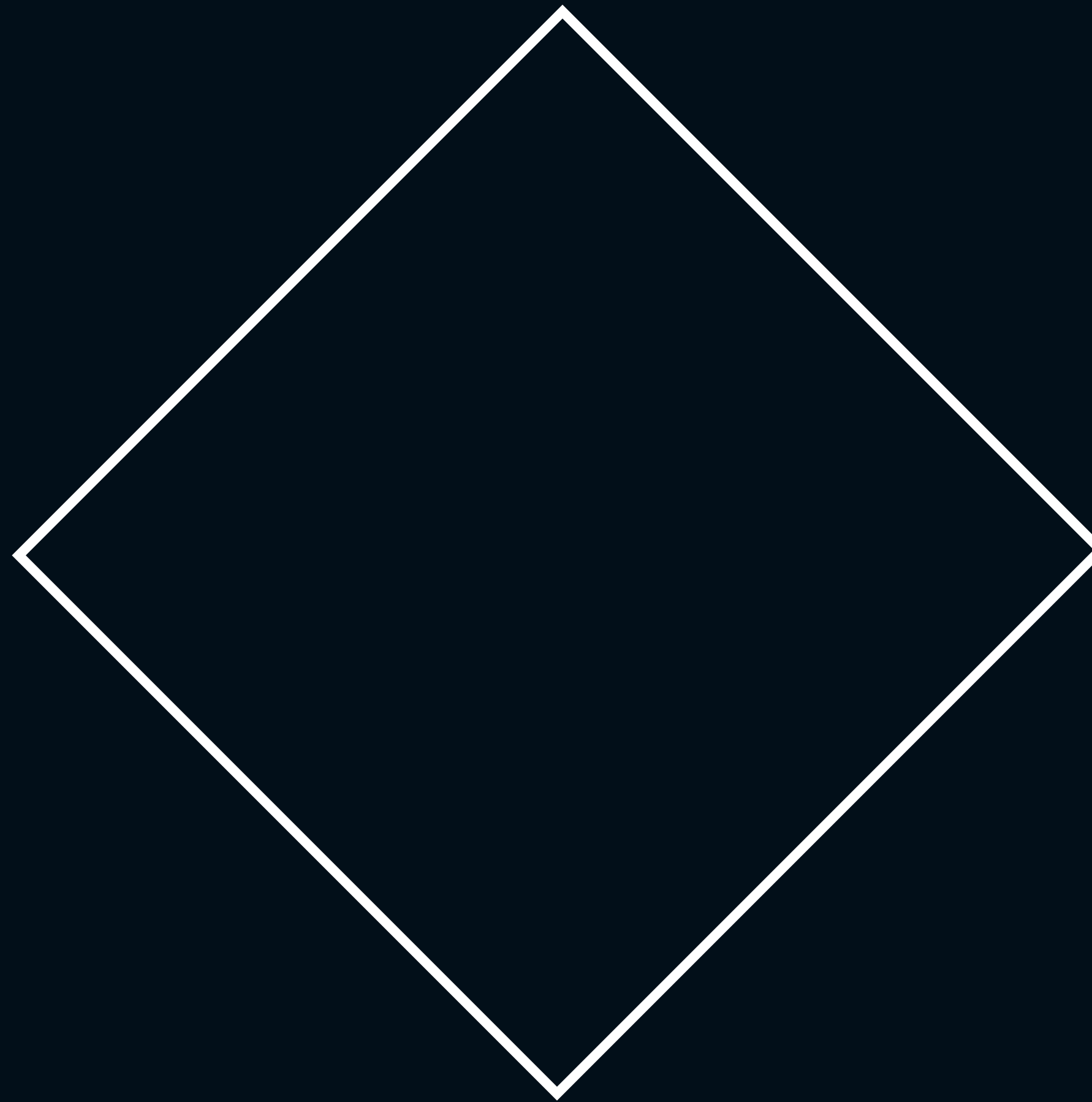
Should we build
feature X?

What should we
build next?

We really democratised data at Monzo. Anybody could go in and understand something and more details. It wasn't the realm of only analyst or only product managers

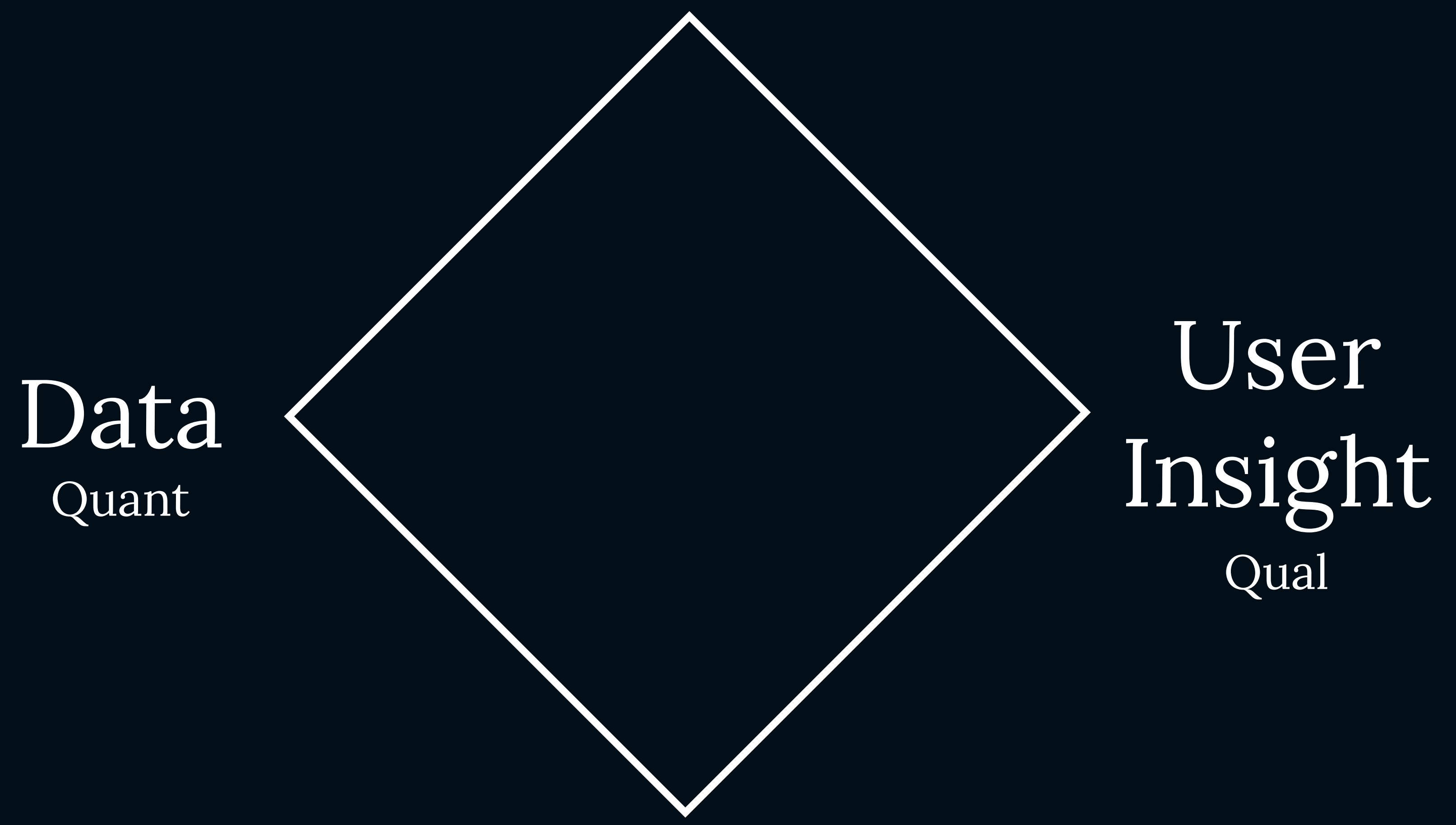
– Meri, Monzo

Data
Quant



My job is to get the inputs to support the decision,
research data, insight

Christian, Research Manager YouTube



Data is helpful, what defines direction is the
philosophy

– Christian, YouTube

We have a company mission and we have our beliefs about where the markets and where we should be going in, about three to five years. And that's the starting point for our strategic process. And. Feeding into that. We have a couple of two year goals.

– Sally Lait, CTO Farewill

What does the next quarter look like? What are the opportunities on the table and what do we think that we should prioritize? And on the one hand, you know, the, the goal is simple.

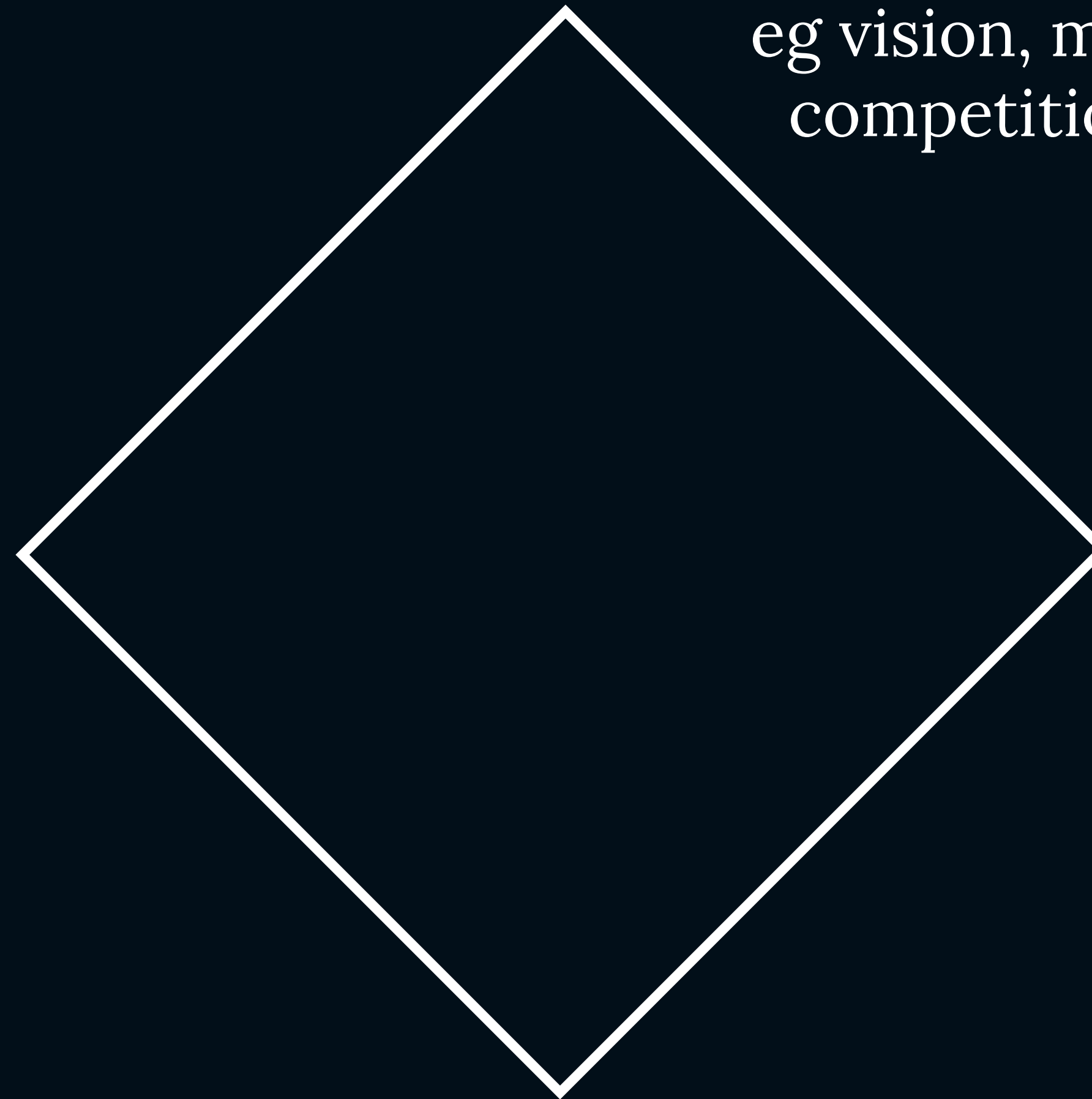
We simply want to prioritize the work that will drive the greatest impact for the customer and business.

Selena Hadzibabic, The Knot

Business Impact

eg vision, mission,
competition, \$\$

Data
Quant



User
Insight
Qual

I think it's been important to keep an eye on the competition. The difficulty there is not to be obsessed by it

– Erin, Wordpress

So the way we think about competition; I think of it as another experimentation platform. But the team is not very friendly and refuses to share data.

– Selena Hadzibabic, The Knot

When we are planning we focus on the problem space. It's not the time to obsess about the competition.

– Sarvesh Govindappa, Booking.com

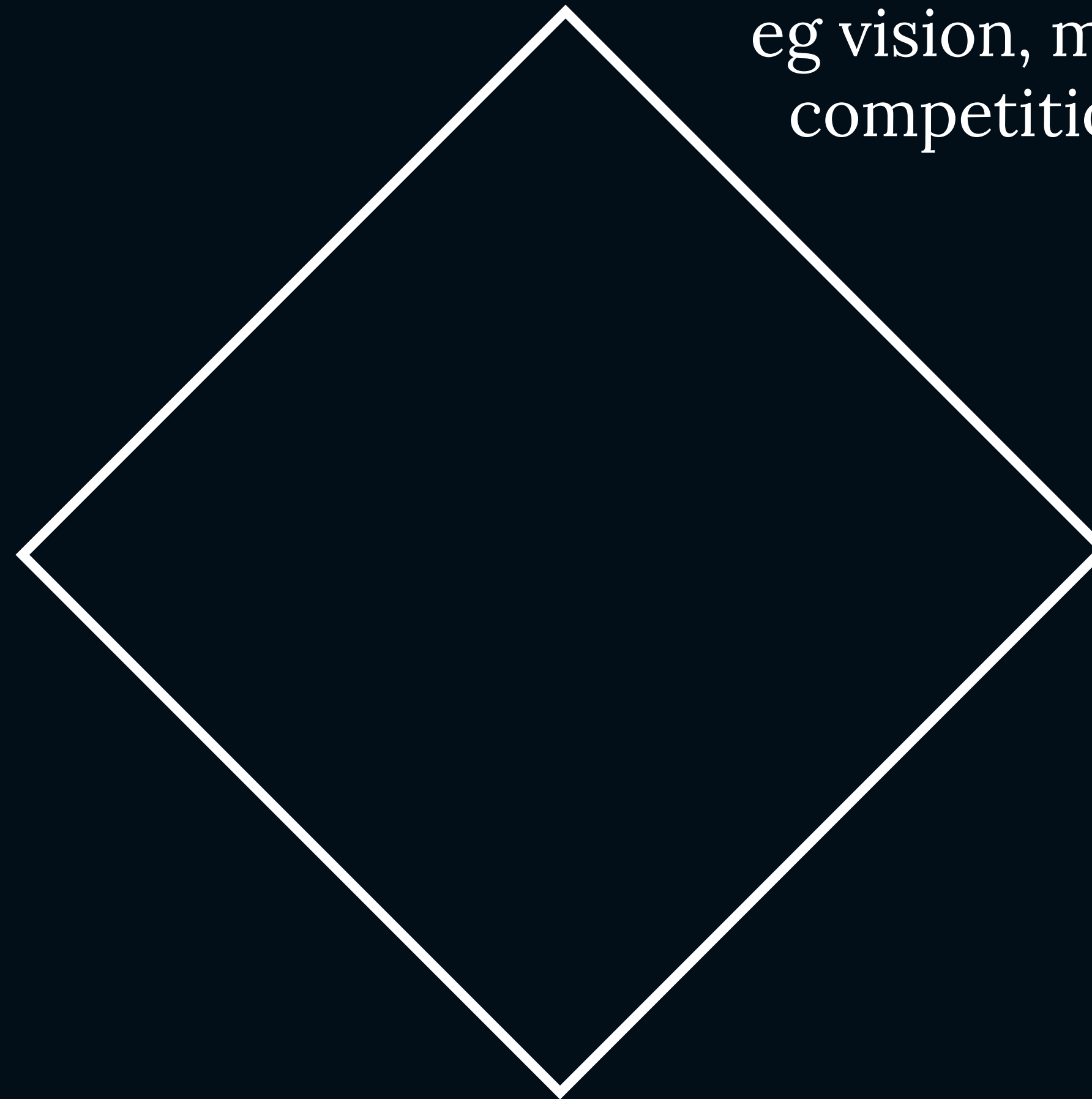
If you feature chase, You'll always be behind.

– Curtis, Delivery Hero

Business Impact

eg vision, mission,
competition, \$\$

Data
Quant



User
Insight
Qual

Ideas can come from anywhere and he [CEO] tries to push everyone to be open to that.

– Erin, Wordpress

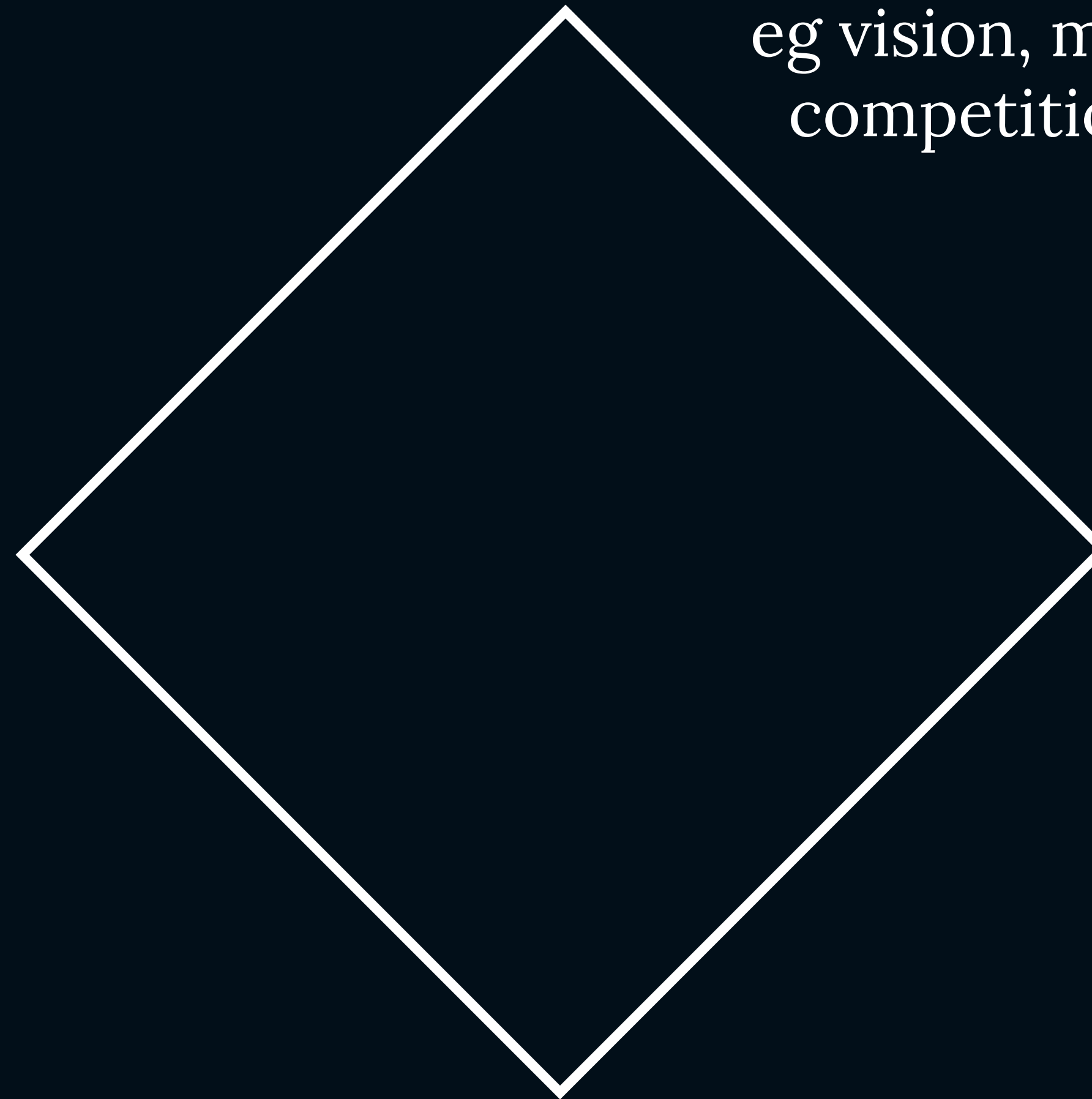
When I think about kind of decisions that I'm making, I try to balance out, Qual Quan and intuition as, as part of that mix. Sometimes you don't have data in terms of quantitative data. Maybe you're basing it all on research and a little bit of intuition.

– Tin, Instagram

Business Impact

eg vision, mission,
competition, \$\$

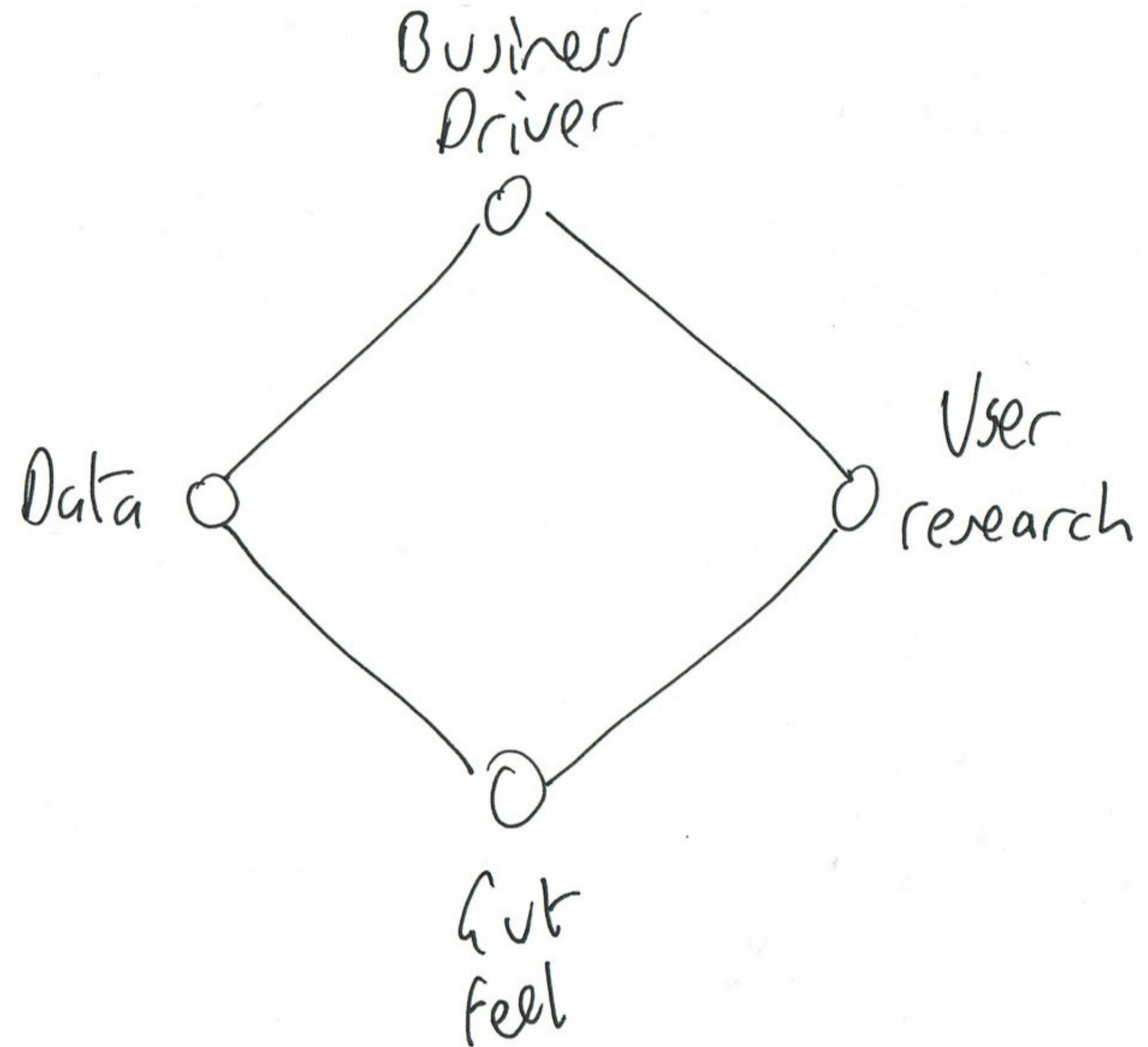
Data
Quant



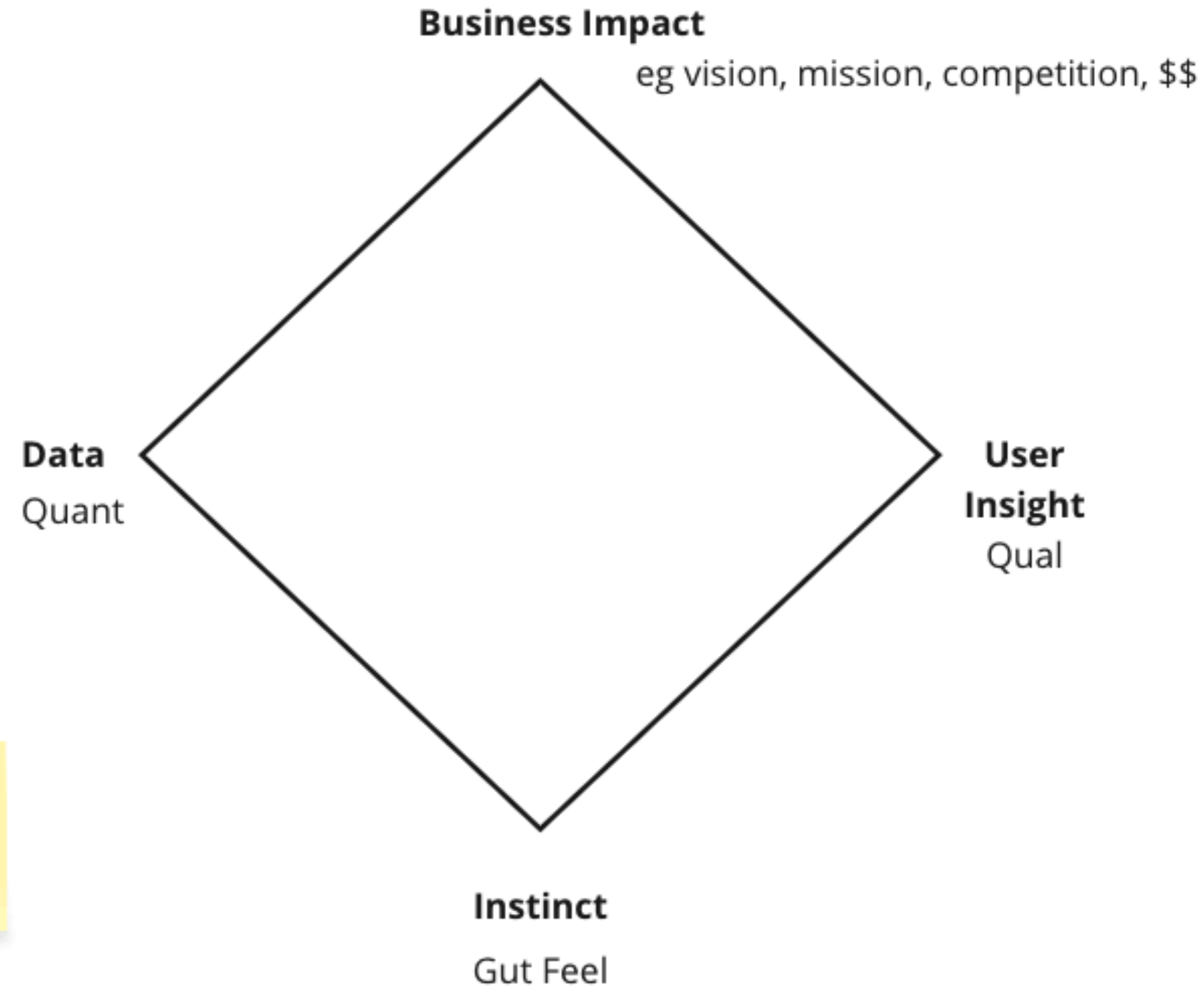
User
Insight
Qual

Instinct
Gut feel

Decision Diamond



<https://mrjoe.uk/the-decision-diamond-a-simple-and-effective-prioritisation-technique/>



I've got a great idea. We should create a direct messaging app

The competition have just launched a great new feature we don't have

Conversion is down 0.3%

If you're sensing fuzziness, if you're sensing confusion, then you have to ask yourselves, how can we learn more about this to make a better quality decision?

– Selena Hadzibabic, The Knot

Most decisions should probably be made with somewhere around 70% of the information you wish you had,” he said. “If you wait for 90%, in most cases, you’re probably being slow.”

— Jeff Bezos

Uncertainty, the two types

1. Don't know

2. Can't know

Uncertainty, the two types

1. Don't know

If users will
prefer option A
or B

2. Can't know

What our
competitor is
planning

How much will customers pay for this? / How much should we charge

Will this planned feature succeed?

What will happen if we wait a year?

How much appetite is there for this from users?

What will users think if we take away a feature?

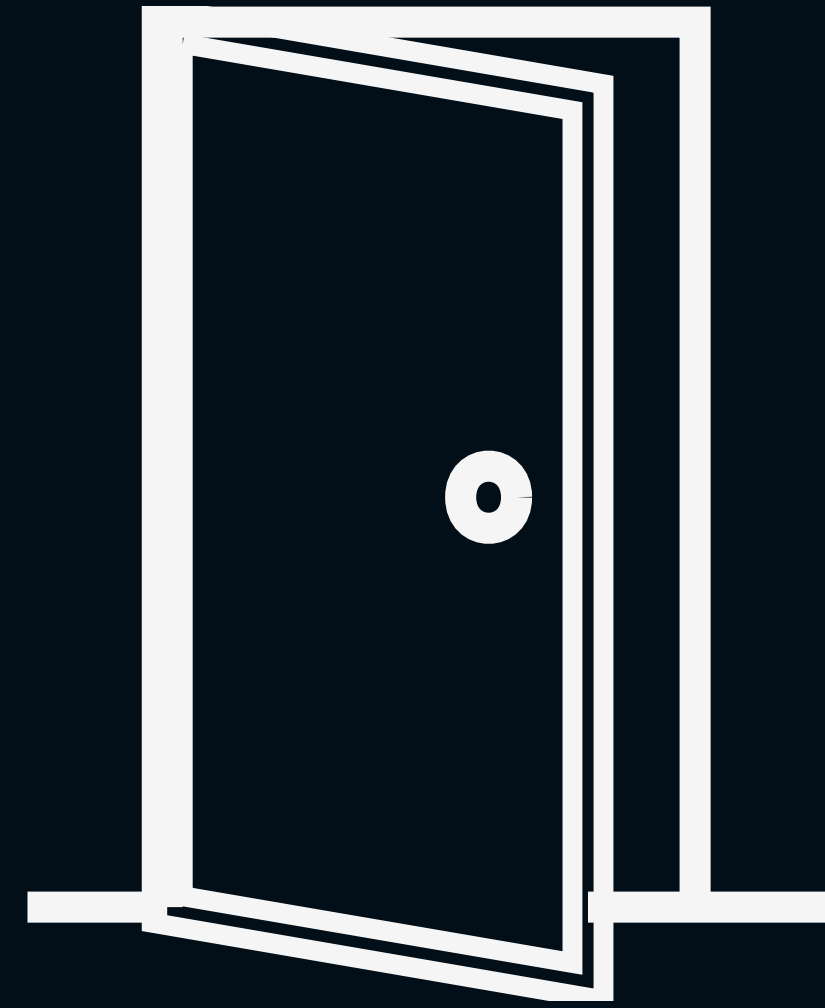
1. Don't know

2. Can't know

So that decision to deprecate, I guess it's hard to say if it was the right or the wrong one, but certainly there was a lot of users that were negatively impacted by that. Those that, that relied on it.

And I think it's maybe an example of where we didn't, you know, we made a decision kind of one lens, which was, you know, how often does this get used?

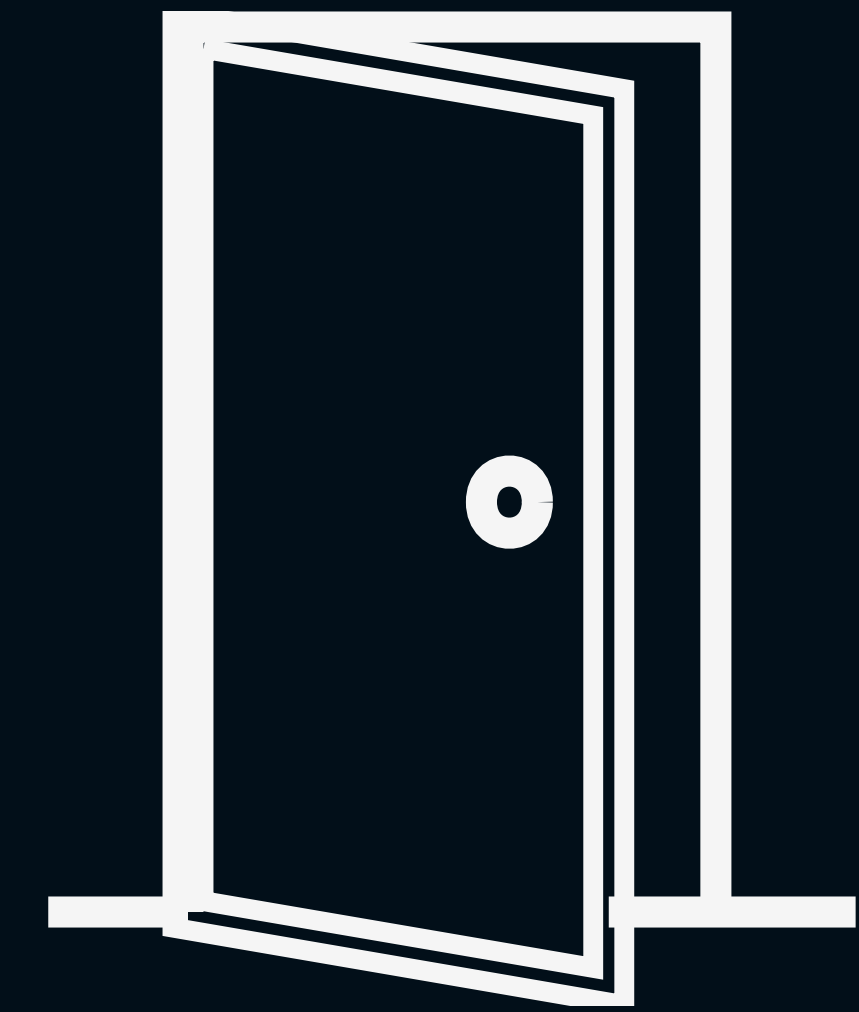
Christian, YouTube



Type 1: One way door: Consequential and irreversible

Type 2: Two way door: Reversible

– Jeff Bezos, Amazon



One way door:
Consequential and
irreversible

Two way door:
Reversible

Quit my job

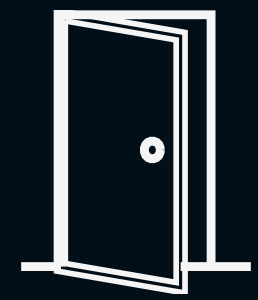
Unship / retire a
feature?

Hire a new
person on the
team

Launch a new
fetaure

At The Knot, we optimize for decision making
rather than process

– Selena Hadzibabic, The Knot



Type 2: Two way door: Reversible

Type 2 decisions can and should be made quickly by high judgment individuals or small groups.

As organizations get larger, there seems to be a tendency to use the heavyweight Type 1 decision-making process on most decisions, including many Type 2 decisions. The end result of this is slowness, unthoughtful risk aversion, failure to experiment sufficiently, and consequently diminished invention. We'll have to figure out how to fight that tendency.

So we [Wordpress] have a council of four people, but there's one business, one product, one design, and one technology engineering. And so all the decisions are taken by this group of four people.

– Erin, Wordpress

Simple

Complicated

Complex

Should we
launch in
China?

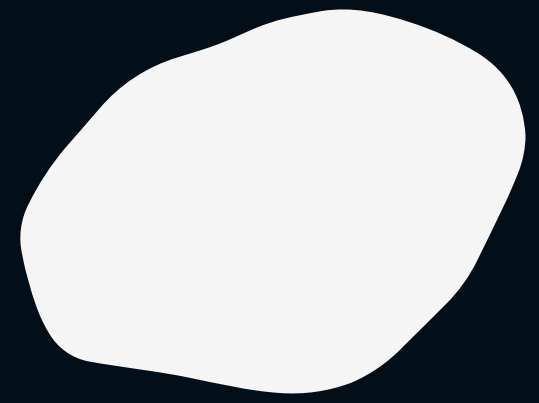
Will feature xx
be a
success?

Product people love, debating, like why, what are the what's the best prioritisation framework. And how do you prioritize them? I think ultimately for me, the framework is almost less important than the result comes out of it. It's more that you build a framework that people, everyone in the organization trusts,

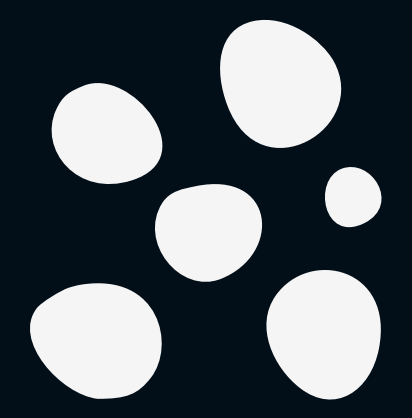
Martin, MTP and Product Leadership Author

It tells this beautiful story. If you have an empty jar, which is representative of all the team's energy and focus, and if you fill it with sand, then the jar is completely full and there's nothing else you can put in the chart. However, if you start with, let's say big rocks and you fill in the jar, you can say that the jar is full, but you can still go to the pebbles and then the sand.

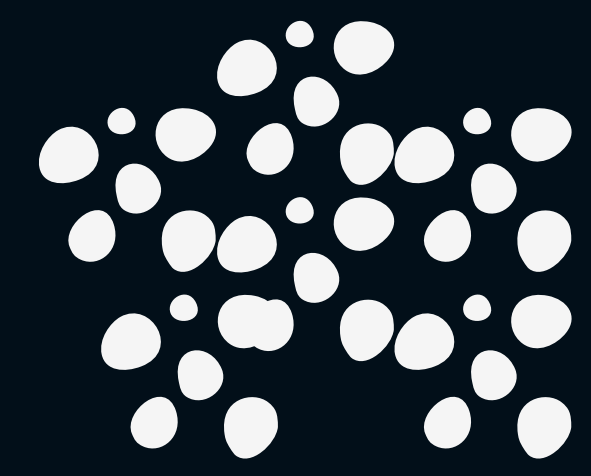
Tin Kadoic, Instagram



Rocks



Pebbles



Sand



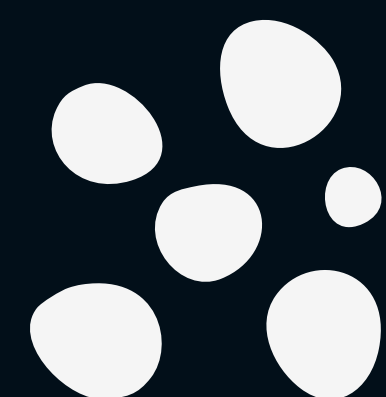
Jar



Rocks

Large important things

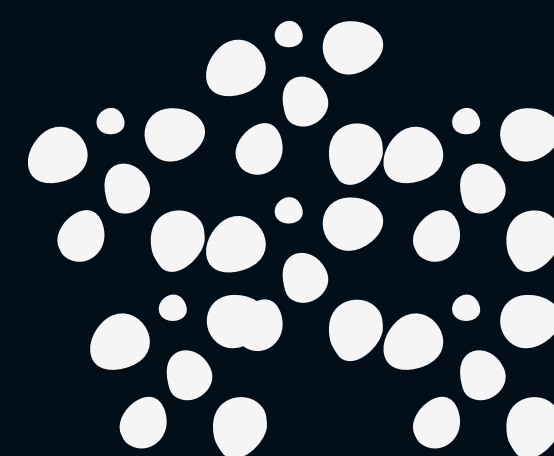
eg New products,
new markets or new features



Pebbles

Additives

eg add a new payment method



Sand

Small and important

Bug fixes
Optimisations
Refinements



Jar

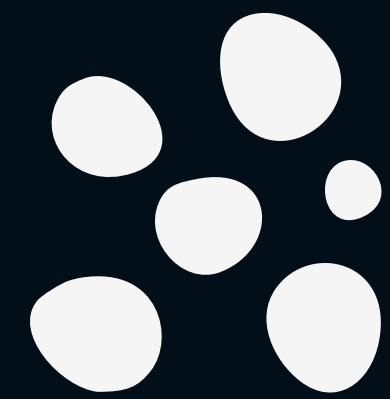
eg Q2



Rocks

Large important things

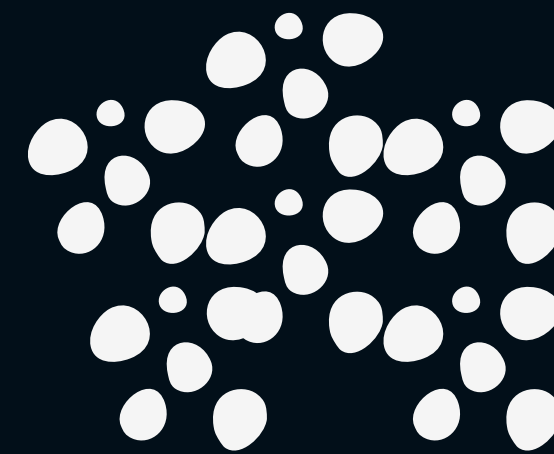
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Pebbles

Additives

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payment method



Sand

Small and
important

Bug fixes
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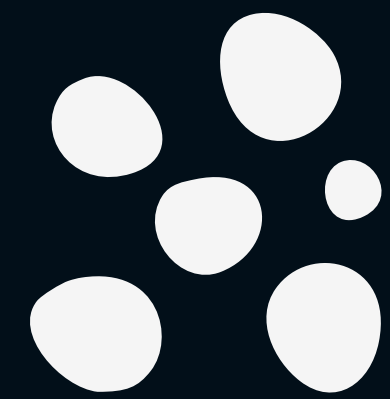
Jar

eg Q2



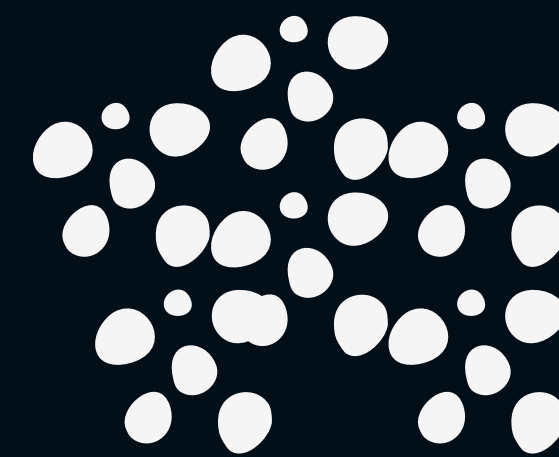
Rocks

Complex



Pebbles

Complicated



Sand

Simple



Flex the decision making muscle

We have, what's essentially kind of a Kanban board for the company strategy and each quarter, anybody can submit, what's known as bets

Sally Lait, CTO Farewill

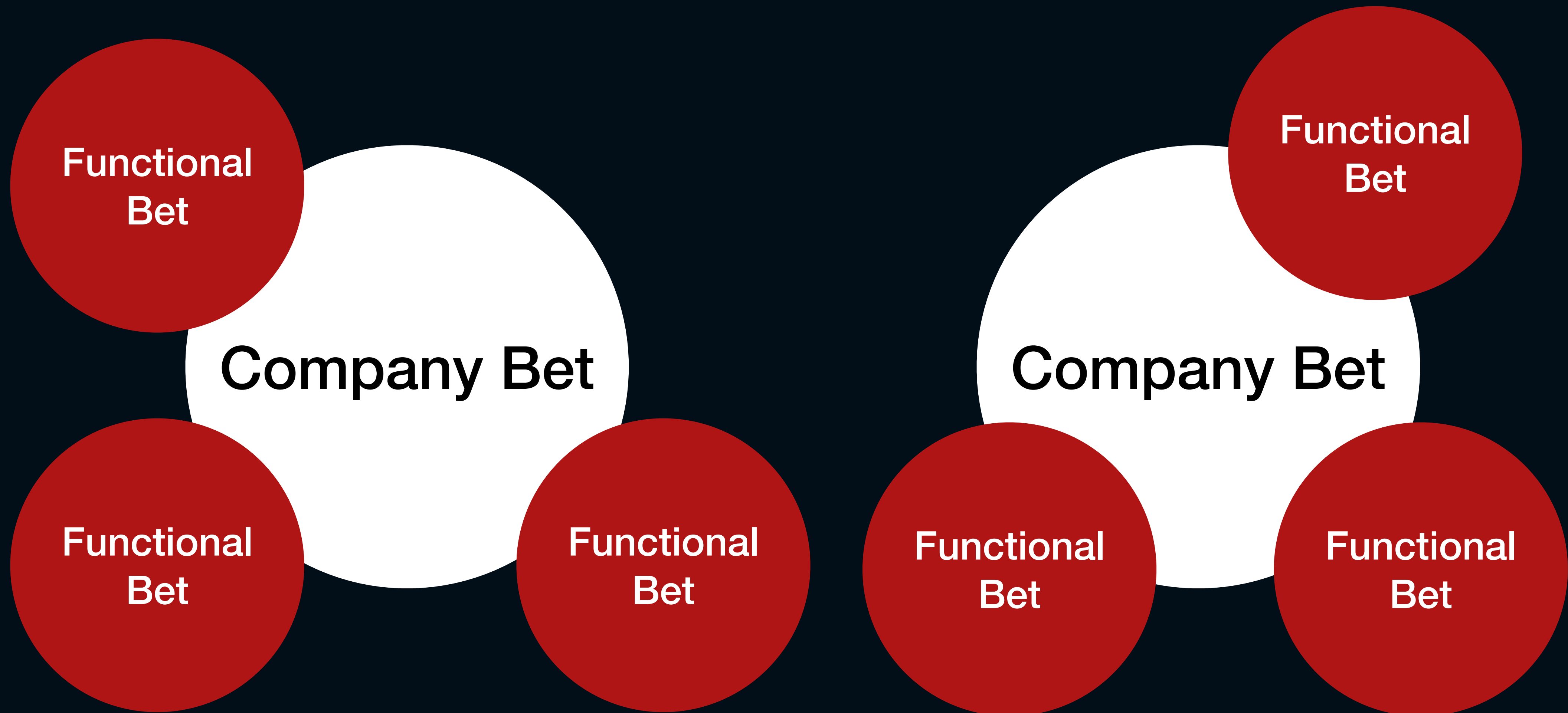
Company Bet

Company Bet

Data, Insight, Belief Bet (DIBB)

[Spotify Rhythm - how we get aligned (slides from my talk at Agile Sverige) - Crisp's Blog]

<https://blog.crisp.se/2016/06/08/henrikniberg/spotify-rhythm>



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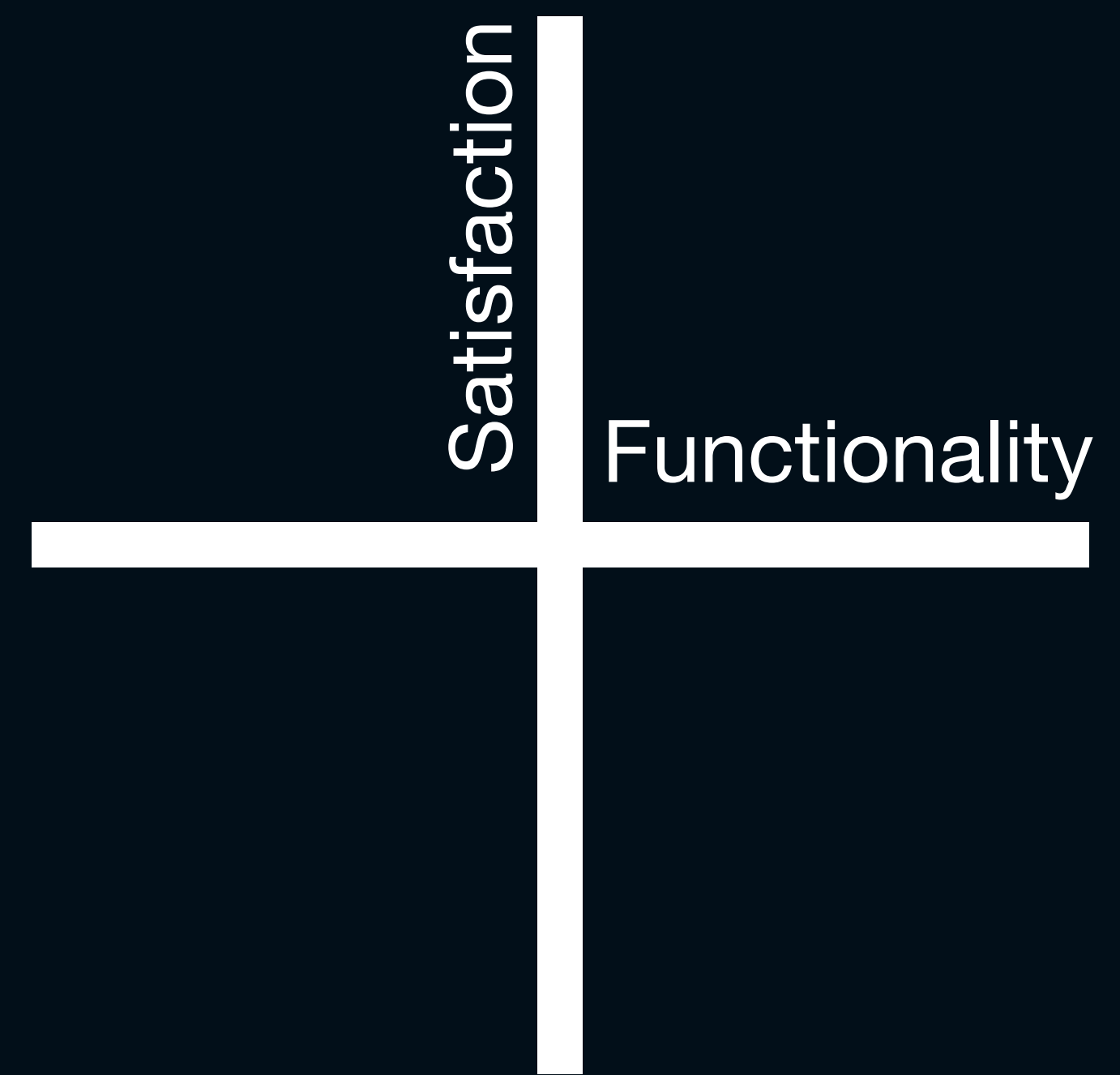
There is no perfect approach right? We
take the best bits from all of them

Sally, Farewill and Monzo

We mix and match, take what we like
from this framework, make it our own.

Tin Kadoic, Instagram



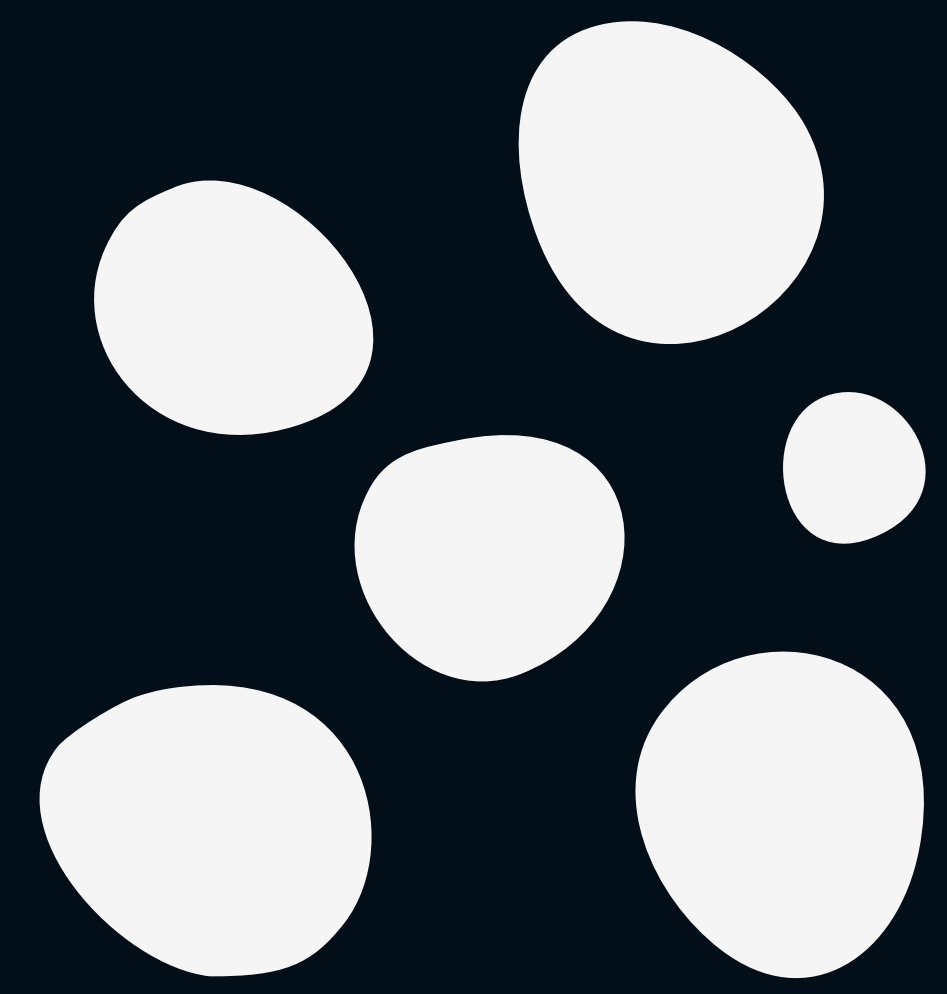


Kano Model

=



=



Pebbles

Are all the teams benefiting from the process or is there still ways we can improve it? And I think that's important. We manage our process in the same way that we manage our products.

Tin Kadoic, Instagram

Clear frameworks and a way to be confident in your decision, making clear principles of what you value, Those are really, really important.

– Sally at Fairwill / Monzo

An idea may not be executed, because it doesn't align with the strategy or we might need to hire a new 20 people team just to run it. But that doesn't mean it's not a great idea, right?

– Erin, Wordpress

There are sometimes situations , where a team will start overthinking something that that's really a decision down the line. That I see also as suboptimal decision-making right.

Because then the team gets to a point where this decision is as good as you can get it, but now you're not acting on it. You're taking another couple of weeks. To debate something that actually, you kind of figured out down the line. That's where experience and wisdom comes.

– Selena Hadzibabic, The Knot

3. Success and Failure

Execs have been taught for 20 years to have the answers. To know what to do.

It's not going to be easy to change that

– Jeff, Sense & Respond
Lean UX

A good product manager needs to arm their boss with what they are working on and why they are doing it. For when *her* boss asks.

– Jeff

I always prepare a document outlining what we are doing and why we are doing it. That's my job

– Curtis, Delivery Hero

Making sure that they [product teams] are aligned towards the same goals, heading in the same direction and focused on the same ultimate vision and mission.

Martin, MTP and Product Leadership Author



Go on 80%
— Harpal Singh

Most decisions should probably be made with somewhere around 70% of the information you wish you had,” he said. “If you wait for 90%, in most cases, you’re probably being slow.”

— Jeff Bezos

It's a continuous conversation with the market.

– Jeff Gothelf

Failure!
(cue dramatic music)

10 - 15% of new features will fail. That's normal,
that's expected.

- Harpal Singh

Booking learns from its failures, there is value in
what doesn't work

– Sarvesh, Booking.com

So a lot of my regrets have to do with over assuming too much early on, , and not, recognizing that if, we ship a V1 of something, the best thing that could happen is loud consumer outrage saying ***this needs to be better.***

– Selena Hadzibabic, The Knot

Instagram does this thing that I've not seen before, that I'm really humbled by and sort of appreciative, which is **unshipping** things and unshipping them in a way that it's almost public and sort of it's okay to unship things because a we've learned a ton and B where. we're really bullish on keeping like Instagram simple and trying to preserve the core DNA.

Tin Kadoic, Instagram

4. What is the secret sauce?

Make decisions in different ways depending on the problem

Simple

Complicated

Complex

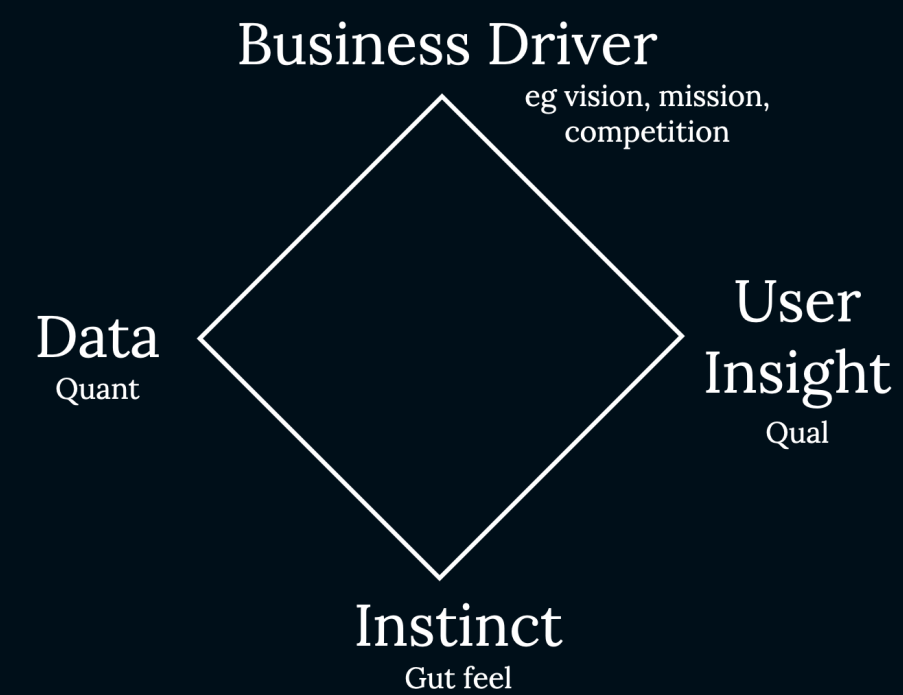
Fix a bug

Launch a
feature

Pivot

Launch in a
new country

1. Balance inputs



2. Define the problem



3. Empower, trust & Communicate



Go on 80%

4. Iterate & improve or unship

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