

IMPERIAL

Information and Communication
Technologies (ICT)

FESTIVAL OF PRODUCTS

Collaborate. Learn. Deliver.

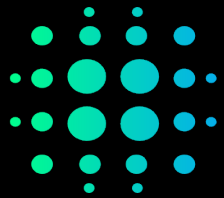


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Information and Communication
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SPONSORS

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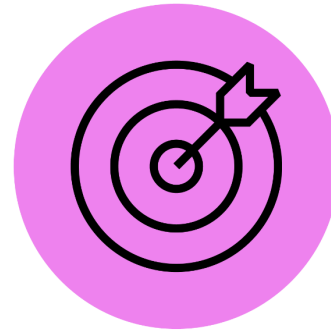
servicenow



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Information and Communication
Technologies (ICT)

Welcome to the Festival of Products





SOUTH DOWNS
VENISON
& GAME

SOUTH DOWNS
VENISON
& GAME

SOUTH DOWNS
VENISON
& GAME

WILD MEAT WITH
OUTSTANDING FLAVOUR

SOUTH DOWNS
VENISON
& GAME

DEERLICIOUS
Splendid Venison Burgers

FROM
SOUTH DOWNS
VENISON
& GAME

SOUTH
DOWNS

DEERLICIOUS
Splendid Venison Burgers

FROM

SOUTH DOWNS
VENISON
& GAME

Welcome to Imperial

Welcome to Imperial, a world-leading university for science, technology, engineering, medicine and business (STEMB).



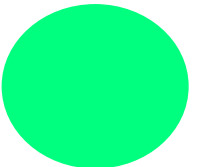
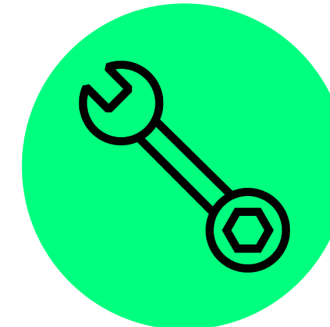
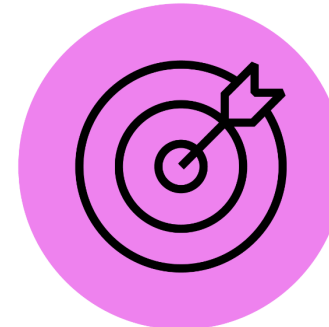
We were founded in 1907 with a mission **'To be useful'**, but we know that.

Before anyone can usefully change something, they first need to understand it.



Botanical Laboratory—Advanced. Prof. Farmer to the left. This is the room in which Prof. Judd for many years conducted his practical classes in Geology.

That's what we do here: We use science to try to understand more of the universe, and improve the lives of more people in it.



Festival of Products

Inspired by Science for Humanity

Keynote Speaker:
Louise May, Product Leader,
Product Focus
Changing the Conversation
from “what do you want?” to
“what problem are we
solving?”



Building Digital Products is as much an art as it is a science. We are here to celebrate in learning together and sharing best practices. Something that is at the heart of the HE sector.

The real question for all of us –
‘in a difficult period how do Universities
create value through the Product
Approach?’

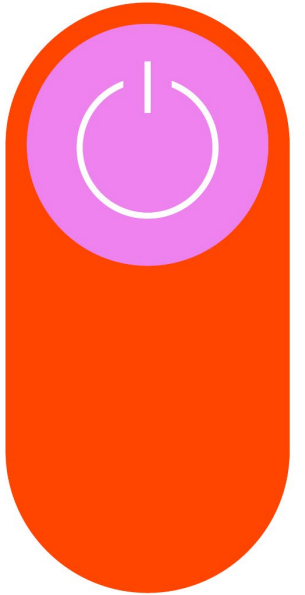
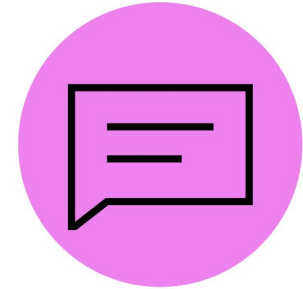
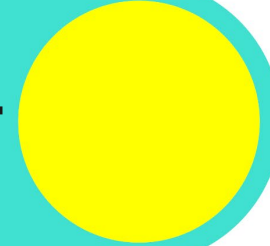
We have a full day of sharing real examples.

Products at Imperial

At Imperial, we're not just adopting product thinking we're scaling it across the institution.



Across ICT



We moved to product because project delivery wasn't enough.

A group of people, including a woman with long brown hair and a man with glasses, are gathered around a computer monitor. They appear to be engaged in a discussion or demonstration. The woman is smiling and looking at the screen. The man is also looking at the screen and has a slight smile. In the background, other people are visible, including a man wearing an orange hard hat and a woman wearing a VR headset. The setting appears to be a public event or exhibition.

Services Products Platforms

Why not have Services sit directly on top of Platforms?

Fragmented journeys

Hands off

Data requirements

Cybersecurity

Overlapping features

Weak ownership

One and done

Accountability

Panel One:

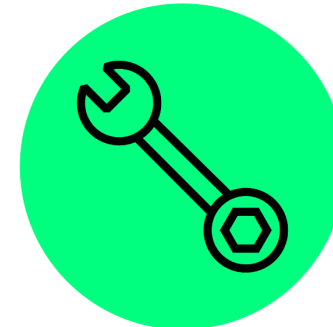
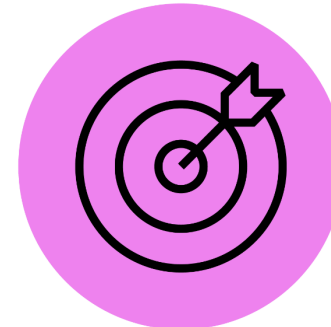
The Long Game: The Product Journey

The Product Model - Customer-centric approach

Solve real problems. Measure success by Outcomes

We have

- Students (Ugs, PGs, LLL)
- Staff (Professional Service,s Teaching and Researchers)
- The Community



The Product Model - Service Design and Personas

And we address these communities



Personas

A screenshot of the Imperial College London student persona catalogue website. The browser address bar shows the URL: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/personae/catalogue/>. The page features navigation links for 'PhD Students', 'LGBTQ+', 'Faculty of Engineering', 'Part-time work', 'Faculty of Natural Sciences', 'Faculty of Medicine', and 'All Personae'. Below the navigation links, there are three persona cards, each with a photo and text:

Adrian Chong	Ahmir Sayid (He/They)	Aisha Raad
23, from Singapore	19, from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	22, from Palembang, Indonesia
MSc Computing	BSc Biochemistry	MEng Mechanical Engineering with Nuclear Engineering
Tags: Overseas, PGT, Full-time, FoE, DoC	Tags: Overseas, UG, FoNS, Life Sci, LGBTQ+	Tags: Overseas, UG, FoE, Mech, Muslim
→ Read Adrian's Bio		

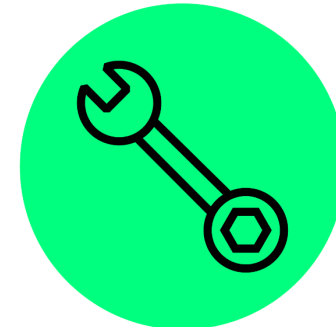
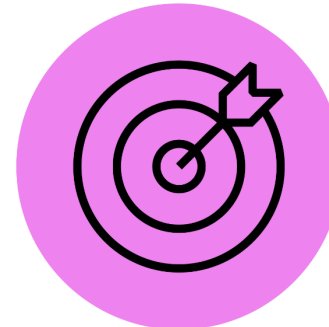
Liam Jones, and Andrew Bottomley, Digital Campus Team

Presentation: **The users were right! How the product model led to Imperial's campus App.**

Product Thinking, The Academic Reality: Making Governance Work

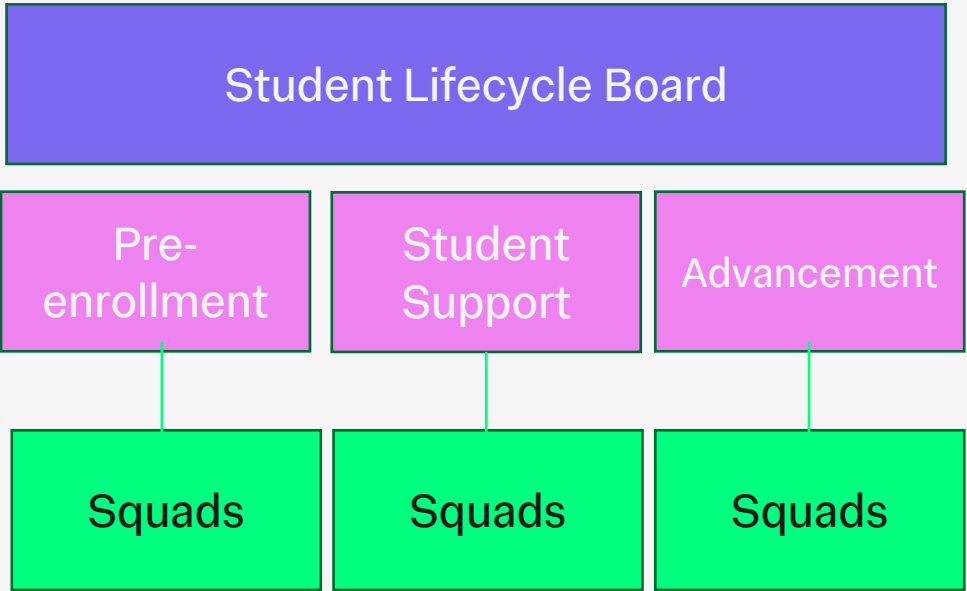
Mind shift to move:

- From projects to persistent products
- From outputs to outcomes
- From technology to user value (student, colleagues)

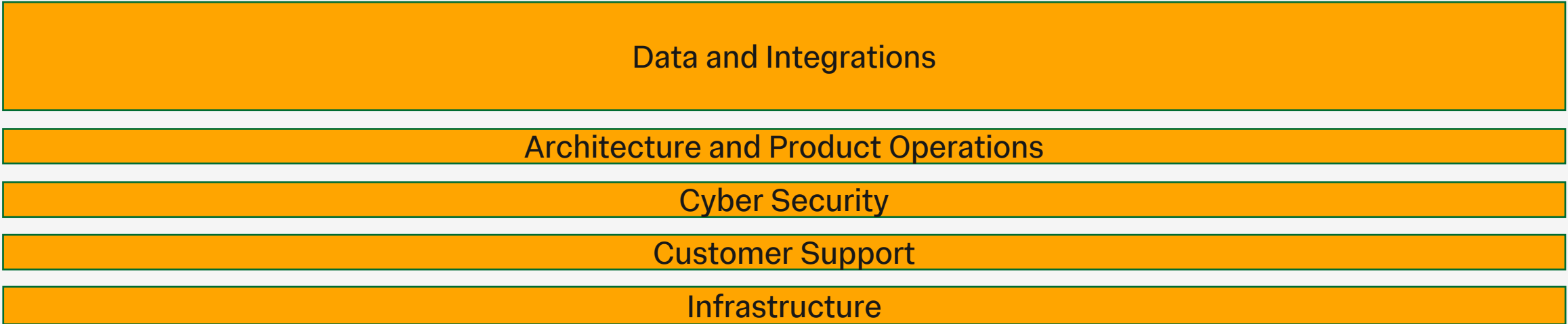


The Student Example

Workstream



Supported by ICT



Initiatives can be classified as “Run, Improve, Transform”

Run: Led by the Product Manager

- Maintain or Upgrade to provide a stable reliable secure and monitored product platforms working across ICT
- Respond to major incidents
- Work with platform team to review new vendor features for new Initiative

Improve: Prioritised by Workstream Lead and Head of Product

- Lead deliver incremental enhancements based on feedback with an Initiative lead
- Optimise processes to reduce friction
- Use data and service design to refine journeys

Transform: Prioritised by the Board

- Lead major programmes, such as Great Service that reshape experiences
- Agree replacement platforms for future-proof services

Board Transform

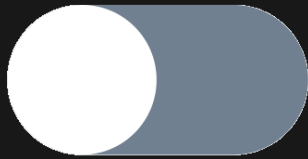
Work Stream

Improve

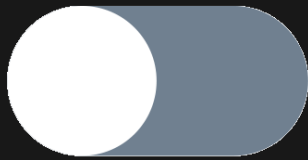
Product Squad

Run

**The product model
gives us continuity,
accountability, and
measurable value.**



**Driving value
every month,
not projects
every few years**



People, Process, Product

- **Career Pathways**
- **Continuous Process**
- **Improvement**
- **Reliable Product**

Panel Topic: The Future of Product in HE



What is the Future?

Like this one for our automated coffee?

Liz Goulding, Managing Director &
Chief Product Officer, The
Economist

Presentation Title: The Future of
Product Delivery



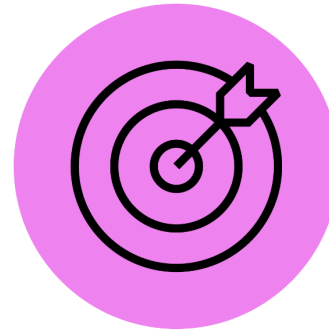
**Where science meets creativity.
Product people who don't just create
culture but reshape the future.**



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THANK YOU



Presentation Title
DD/MM/YYYY

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Information and Communication
Technologies (ICT)

FESTIVAL OF PRODUCTS

Collaborate. Learn. Deliver.



product

focus

Event

Changing the conversation

Product thinking for complex business systems

Louise May



Louise May

Director of Product Management at Product Focus with over 20 years' experience in product management, consultancy and learning and development.

Current focus is to develop a professional development programme for product managers to support them throughout their career.

Previous positions include head of product and director of product roles in start-ups, scale-ups and multi-nationals.

Hobbies include gym, cycling, netball and bridge.



Product Focus

Practical training, workshops and resources to help product professionals and teams excel.



Product Management and Product Marketing

Core training to build strong product foundations



Advanced Practitioner Suite

Advanced skills and frameworks for experienced product professionals.



Leading Product Management

Leadership, strategy and impact at scale.



Product Focus



Reviews 1,017 •



4.9



High-quality training that's practical, relevant and immediately useful.

— Trustpilot reviewer



Today's two questions



Why do we need to
change the conversation?



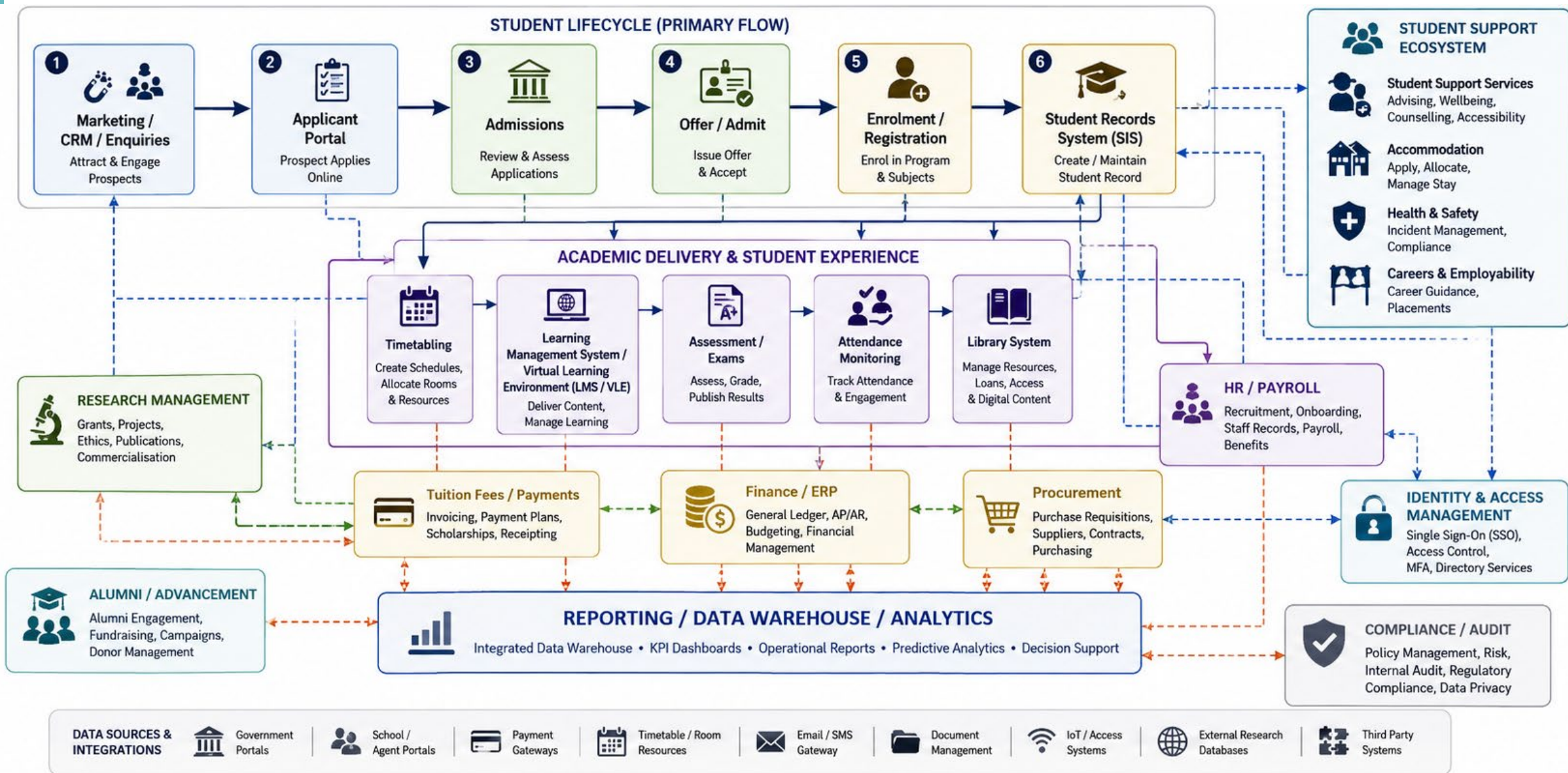
What does the new
conversation sound like?

Business requirement



Continuous improvement of
business efficiency across
people, systems, data and AI.

The solution – business systems



The solution has become the problem



Outcome: Your very expensive business systems estate isn't meeting expectations.

But why?



Perceived problem:
Our business systems are too complex.

1

Project managers focus on big projects.

2

Projects are siloed.

3

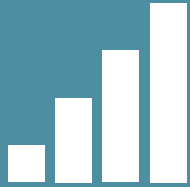
Projects end.



Real problem:
The operating model is wrong.



Now we can change the conversation



Requirement:

Continuous improvement of business efficiency across people, systems, data and AI.



Problem:

Business systems have grown in number, size and complexity, and performance requirements. Traditional operating models are no longer fit-for-purpose.



Solution:

Systems thinking approach with a product management operating model.

From business systems to systems thinking



Core premise:

Problems are often caused less by individual failures and more by the structure, incentives, processes, feedback loops and relationships within the wider system.



Systems thinking:

Helps organisations move from fixing isolated symptoms to understanding and improving the wider conditions that produce outcomes.



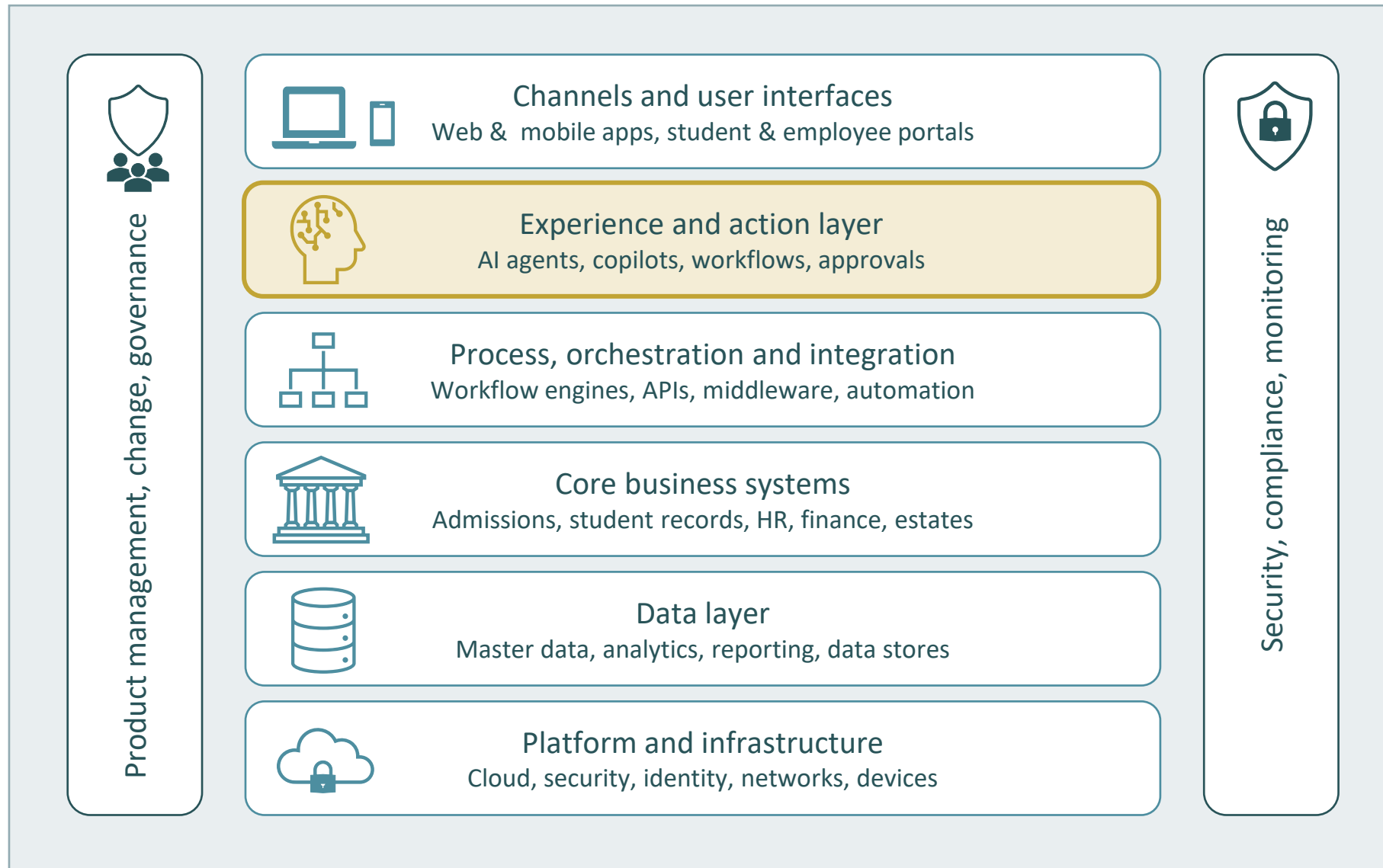
Outcome:

Better decisions.
Fewer unintended consequences.
Sustainable improvement .

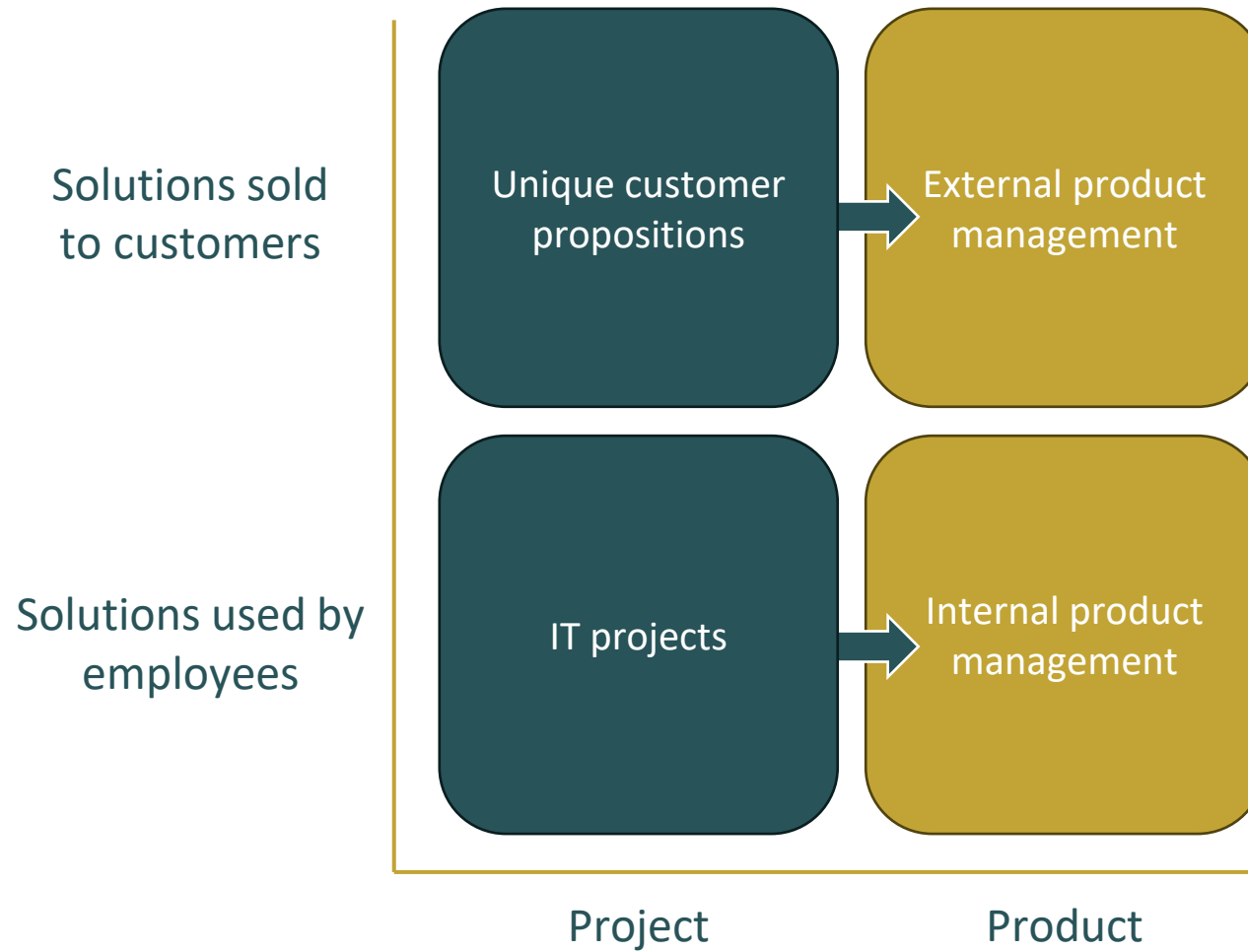
Key principles:

- 1 The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- 2 Interconnections matter as much as the components.
- 3 Cause and effect are often indirect.
- 4 Short-term fixes can create long-term problems.
- 5 Structure drives behaviour.

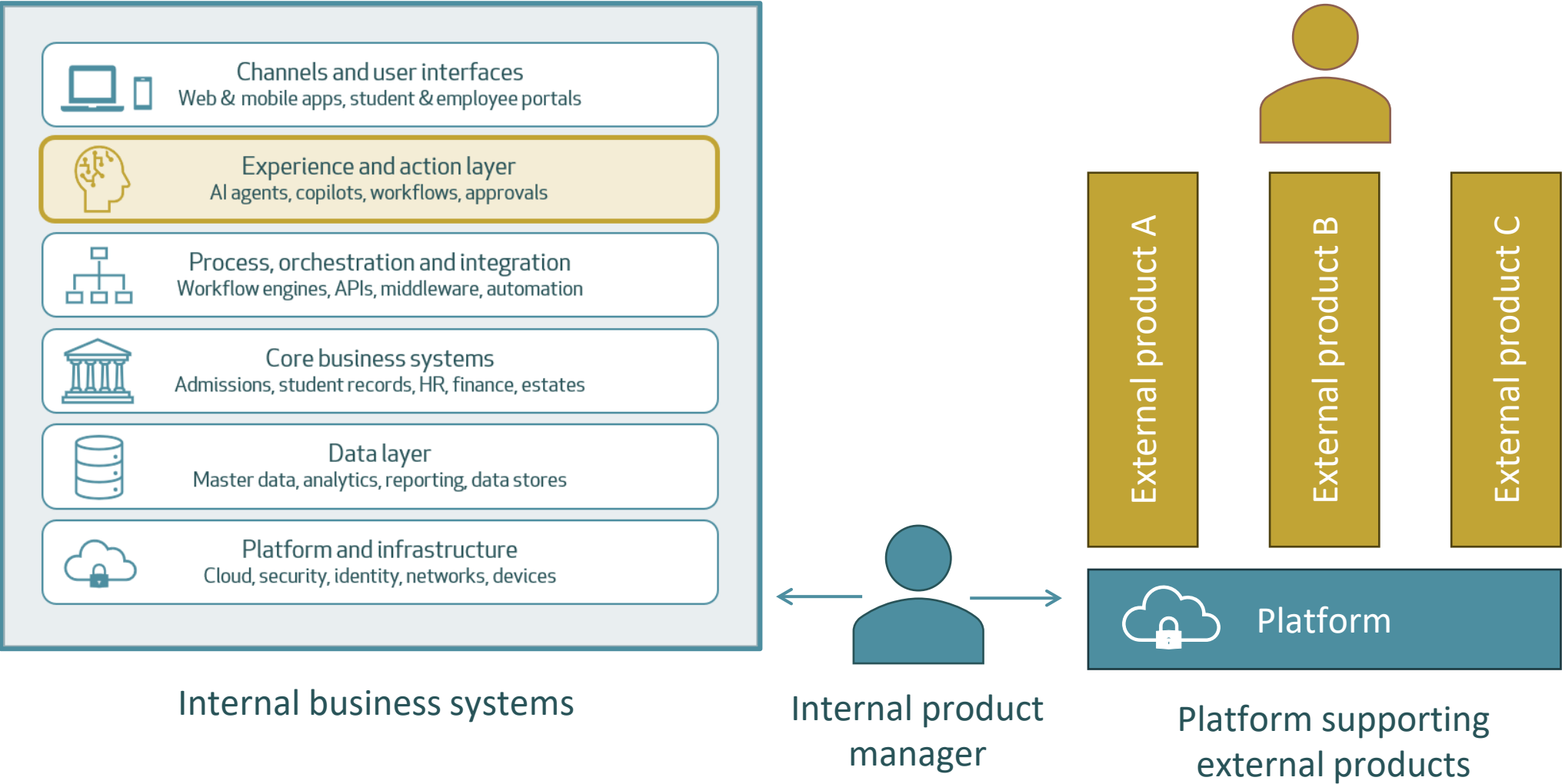
From business systems to systems thinking



From project to product



From project to product

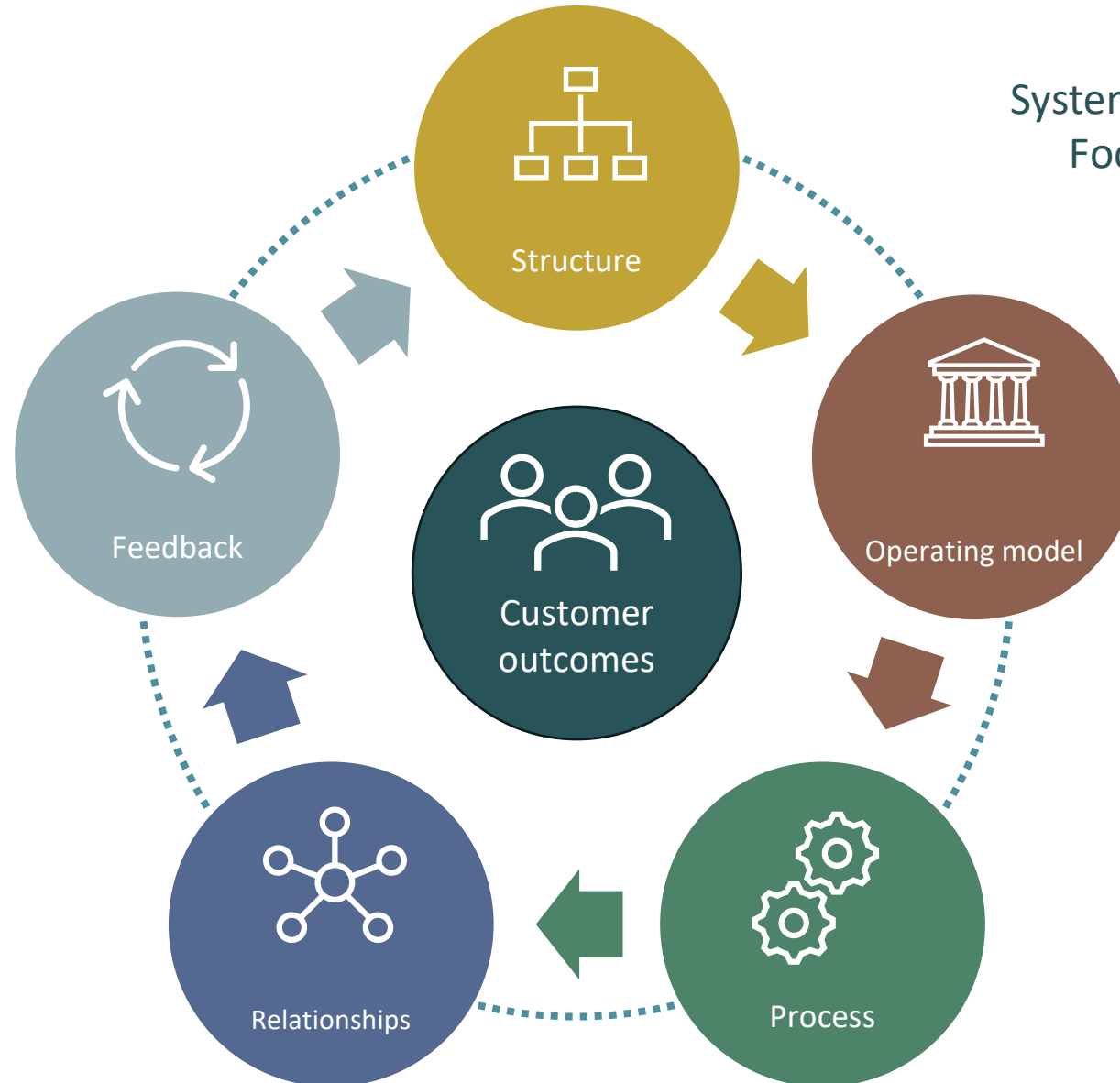


Systems thinking and product management

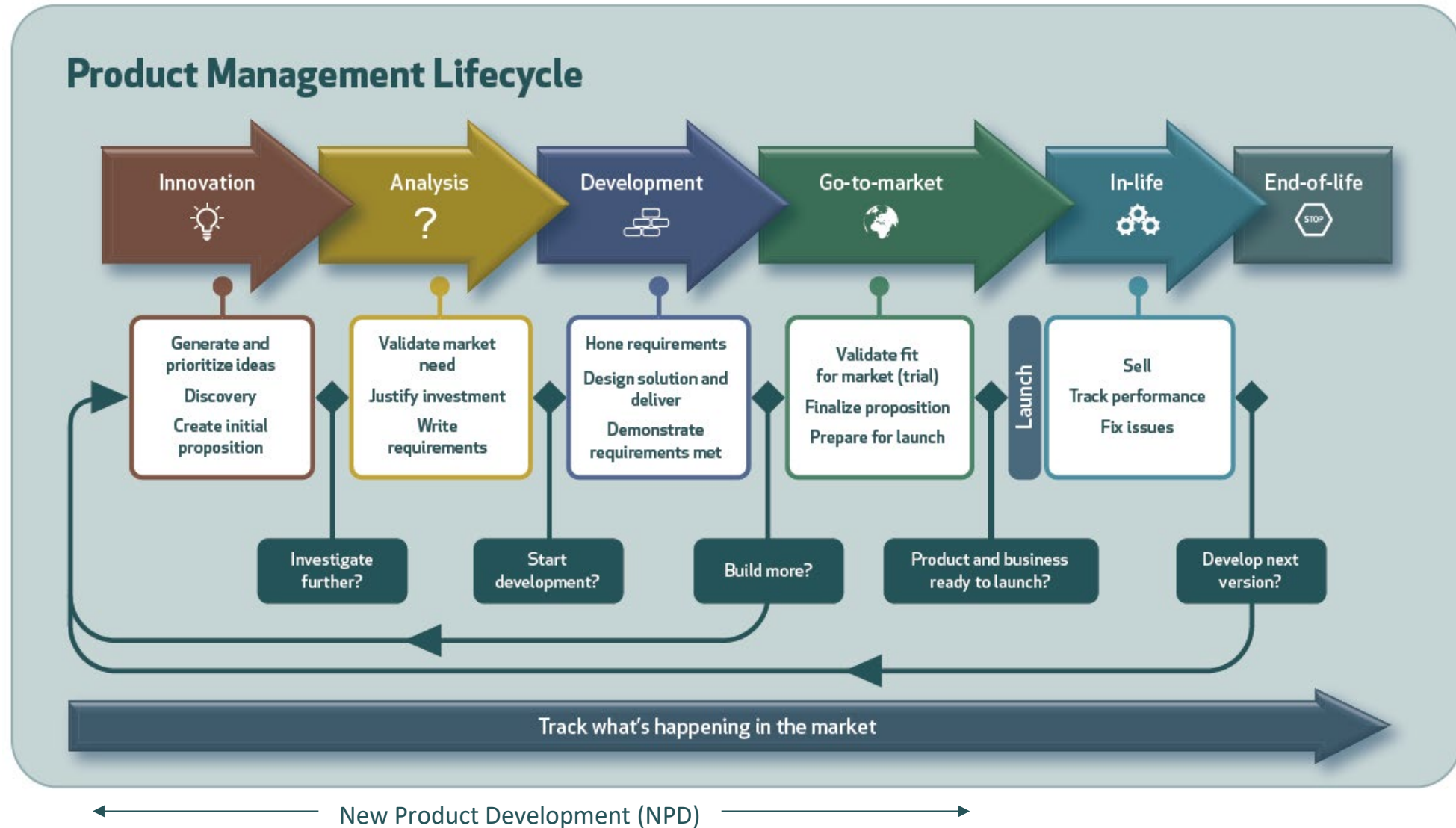
Traditional approach
Focus on symptoms



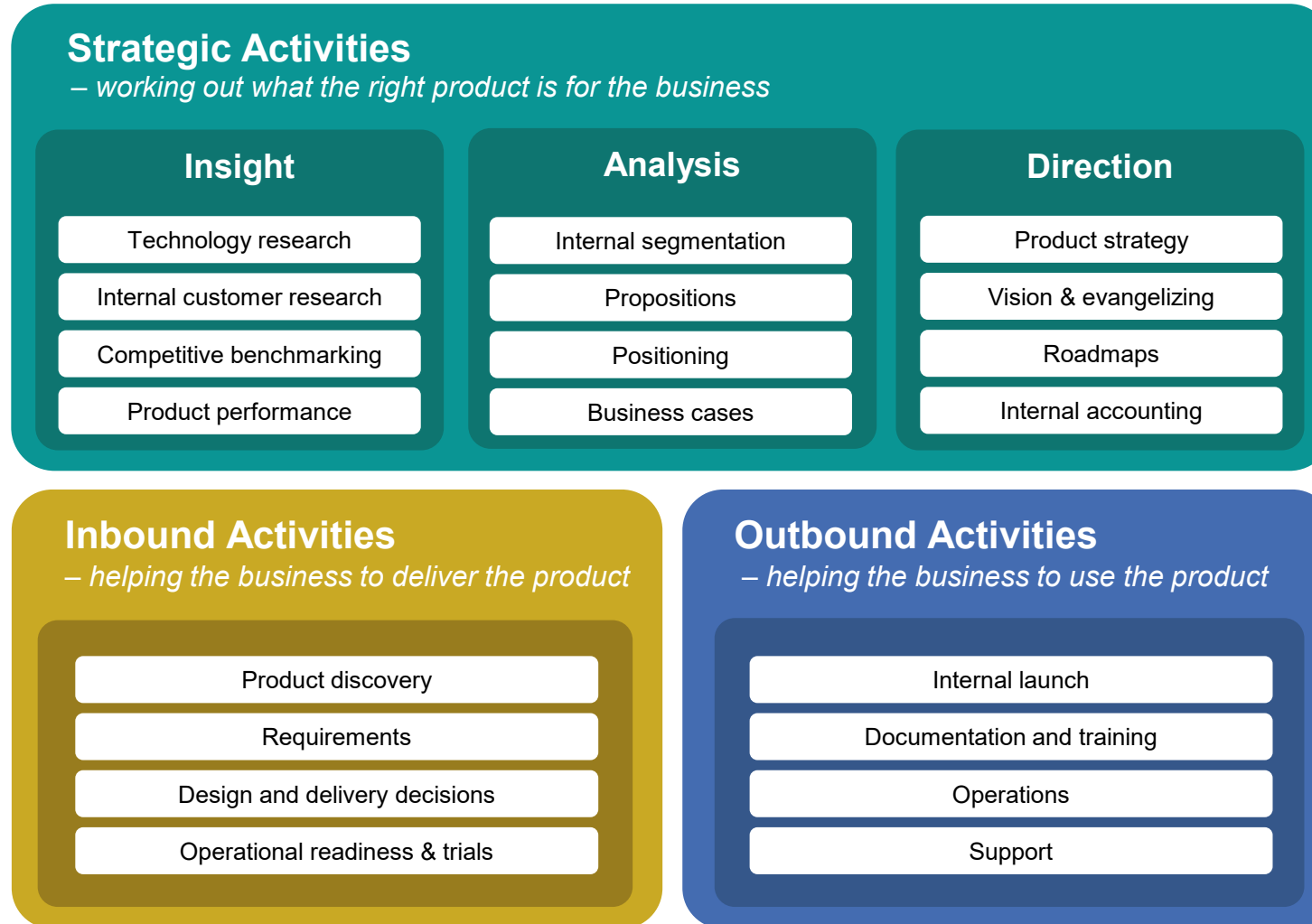
Systems thinking approach
Focus on the system



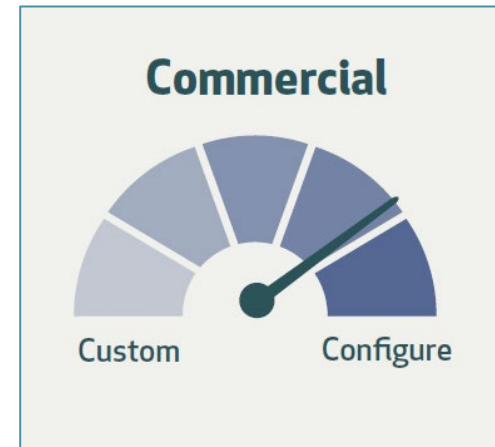
What is product management?



Internal Product Activities Framework



The focus of internal product management



From output to outcome



Output



Outcome

Systems thinking and product management



Better alignment with business outcomes.



End-to-end ownership.



Continuous improvement vs ad-hoc change.



Better mgmt of interconnected systems.



Improved customer and user experience.



More effective prioritisation.



Faster response to change.



Stronger technical health.



Better use of data.



More stable, knowledgeable teams.



Improved governance.



Better investment decisions.



Increased organisational resilience.



Lower cost of ownership over time.

Summary

- Changing the Conversation argues that the root cause of overly complex business systems is a **failure of systems thinking**, and that the **fix is structural**.
- A **product approach** changes the **operating model**: Systems are managed as a coherent portfolio, roadmaps are aligned and prioritised to meet business needs, and every decision is anchored to a clearly defined problem and a **measurable outcome**.
- Organisations can create **clearer ownership** and **better accountability** for cost, quality, usability and **value**.

Q&A



product

focus

Event

Thank you for listening

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www.productfocus.com

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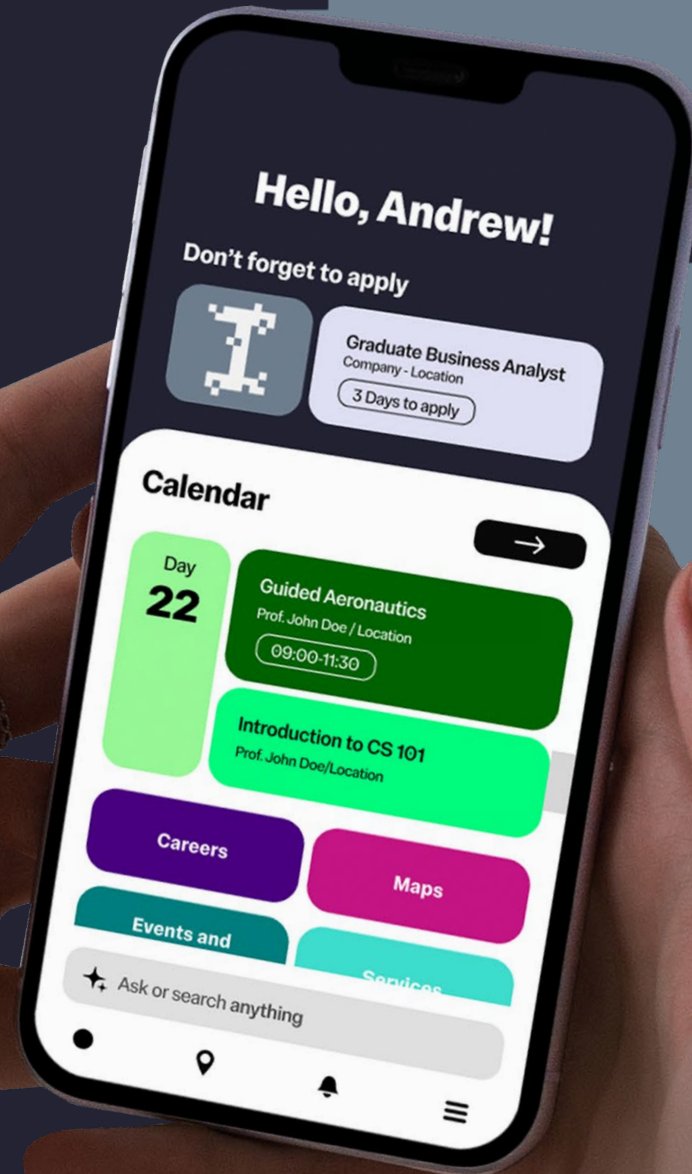
IMPERIAL

Information and Communication
Technologies (ICT)

The users were
right!

My Imperial Campus

Liam Jones & Andrew Bottomley



Set-up

The Trap

The Gamble

Set-up

Imagine it's
Welcome week



Set-up

**What is
happening?**

Where is it?

**Am I meant to
be there?**

**How do I get
there?**

Set-up

The Trap

The Gamble

The Trap

Traditional approach

requirements gathering and analysis

looking for, or designing a solution

Undertaking implementation, development
and testing phases

before finally going into production and
releasing to end users

Hold your breath

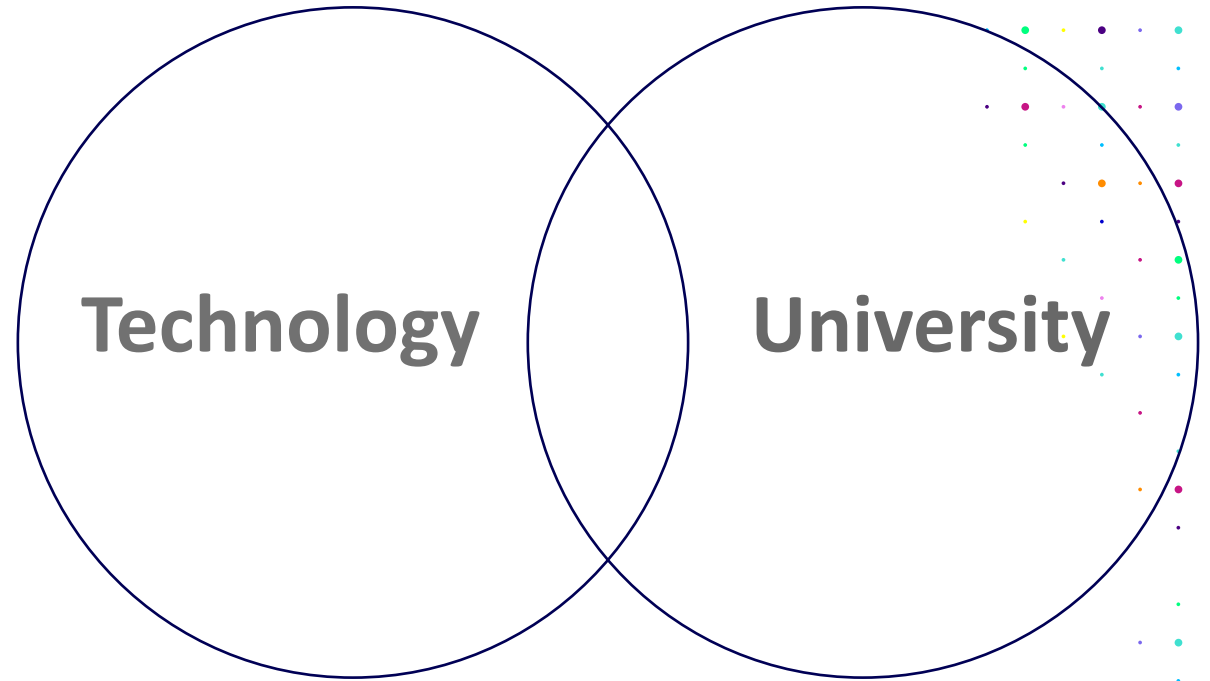
Set-up

The Trap

The Gamble

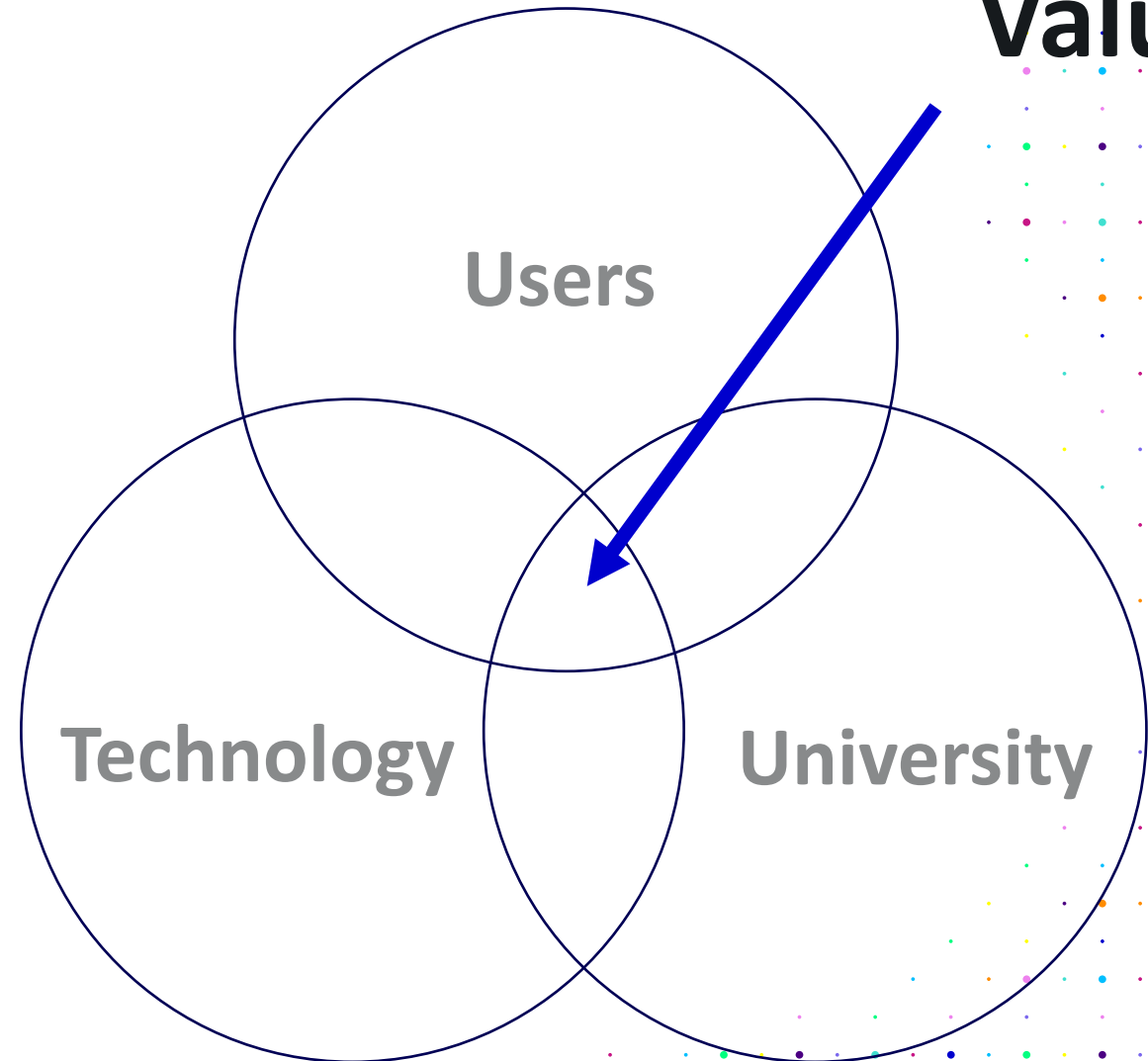
The Gamble

Product Model



The Gamble

Product Model

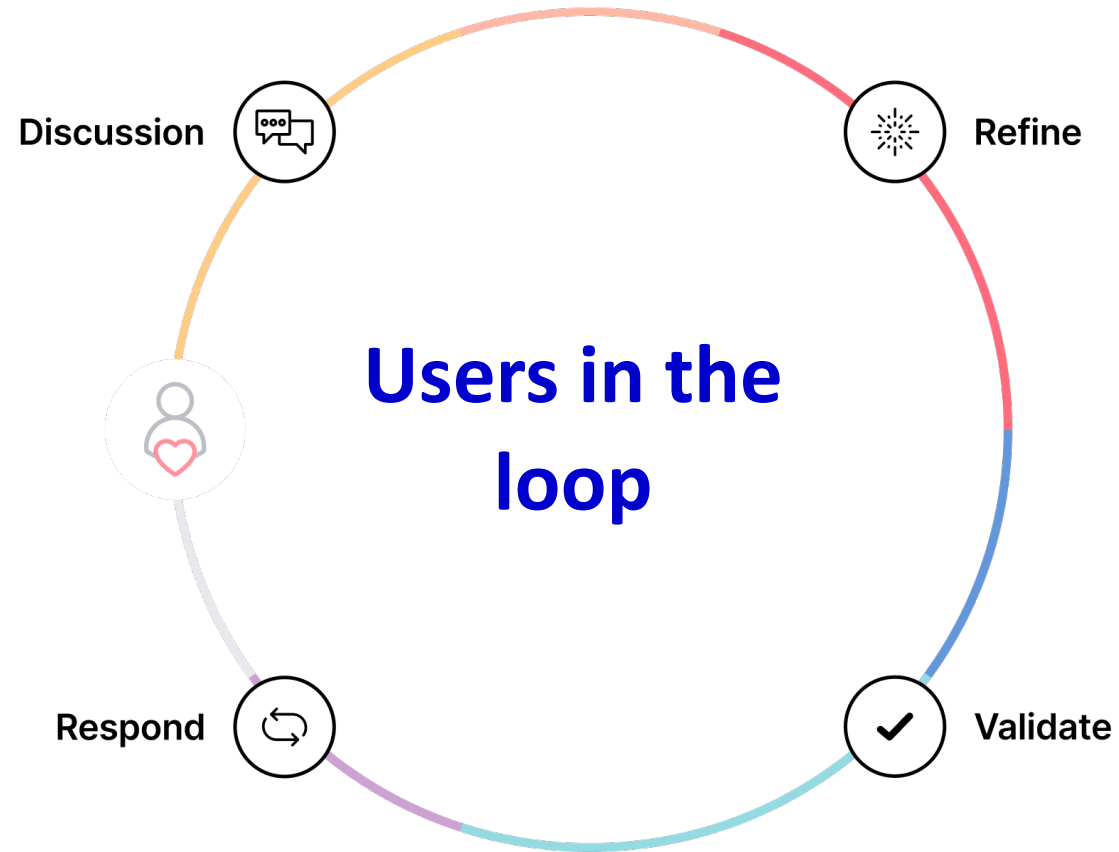


The Gamble

Users in the Loop



The Gamble



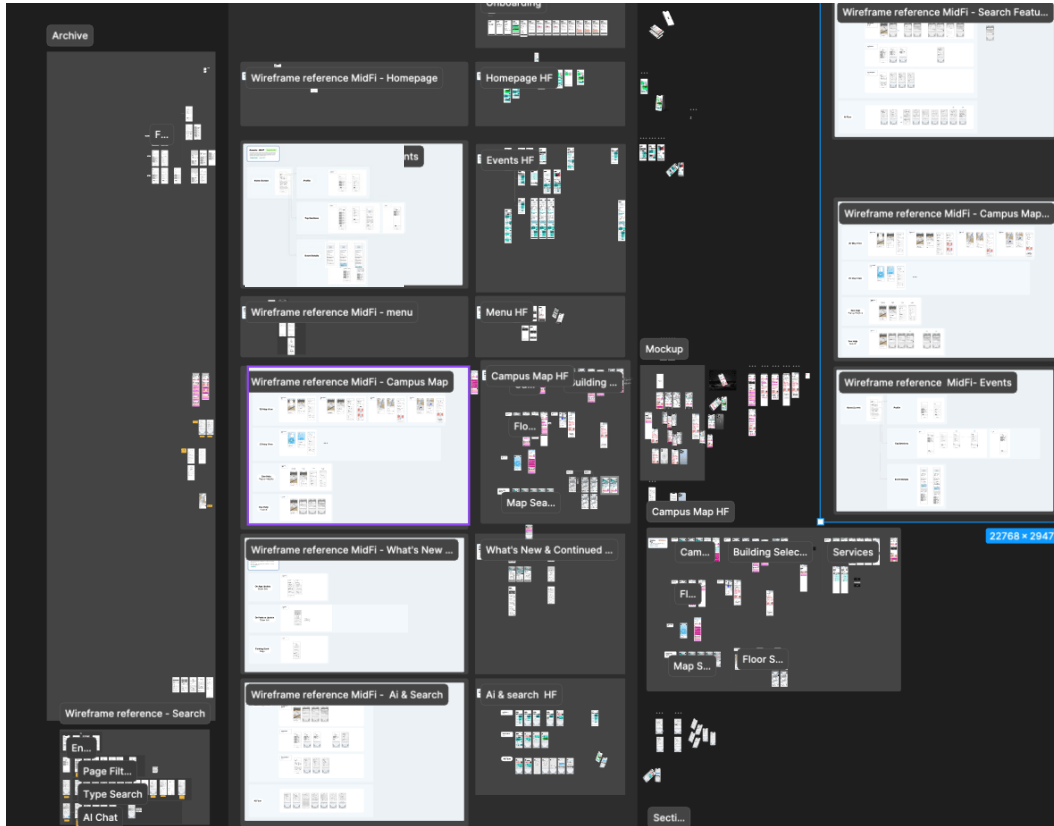
Discovery

Low-fi

Hi-fi

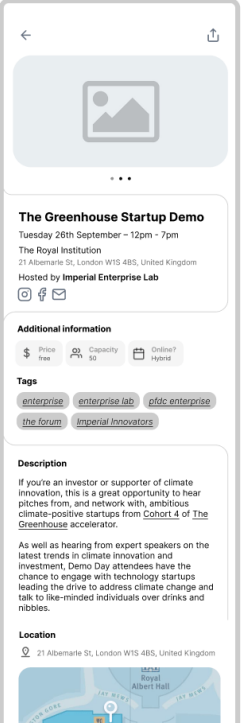
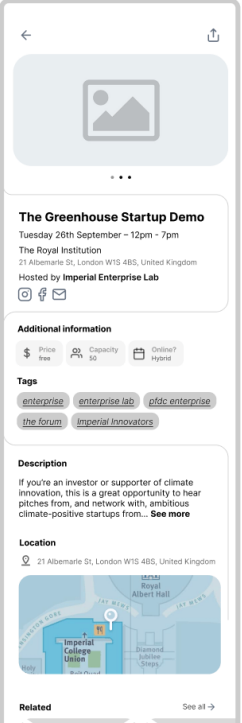
Iterate

The Gamble



Low-fi

The Gamble



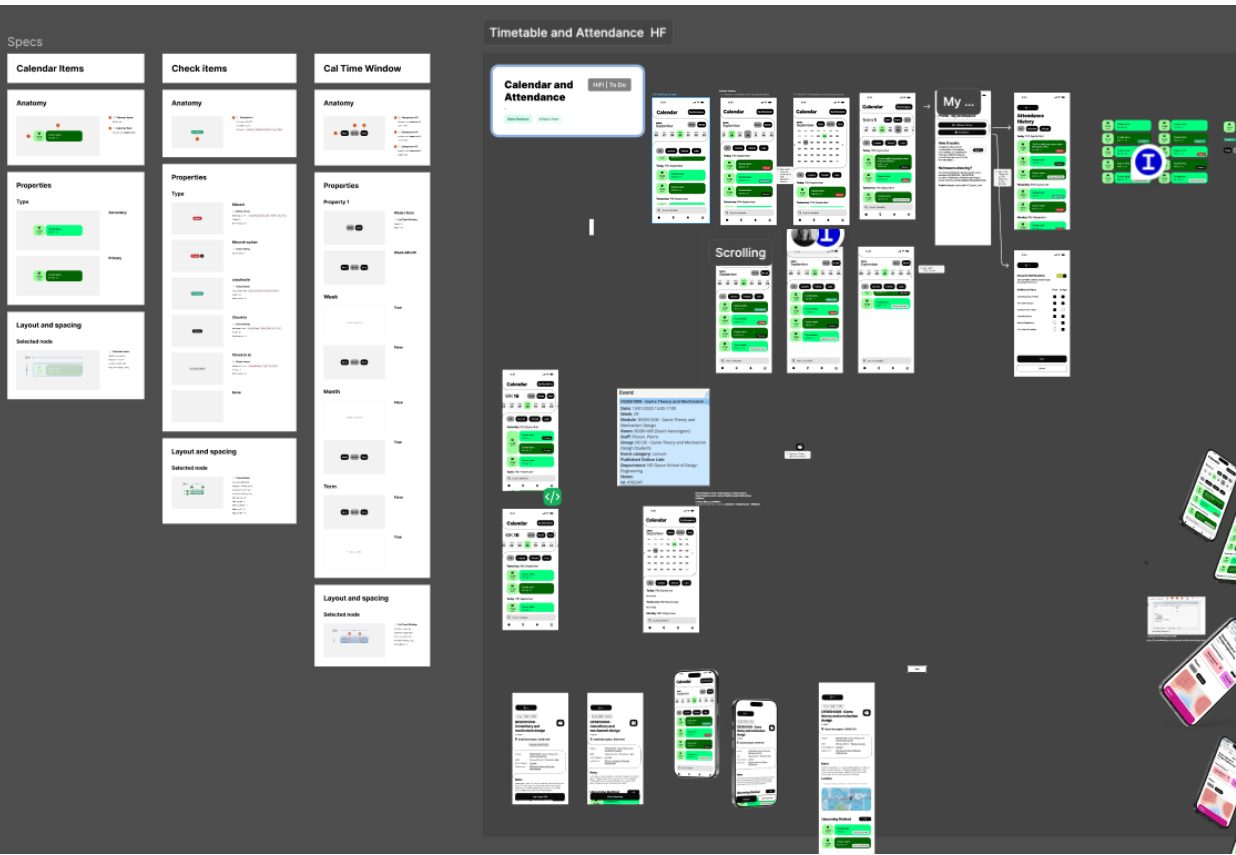
Discovery

Low-fi

Hi-fi

Iterate

The Gamble



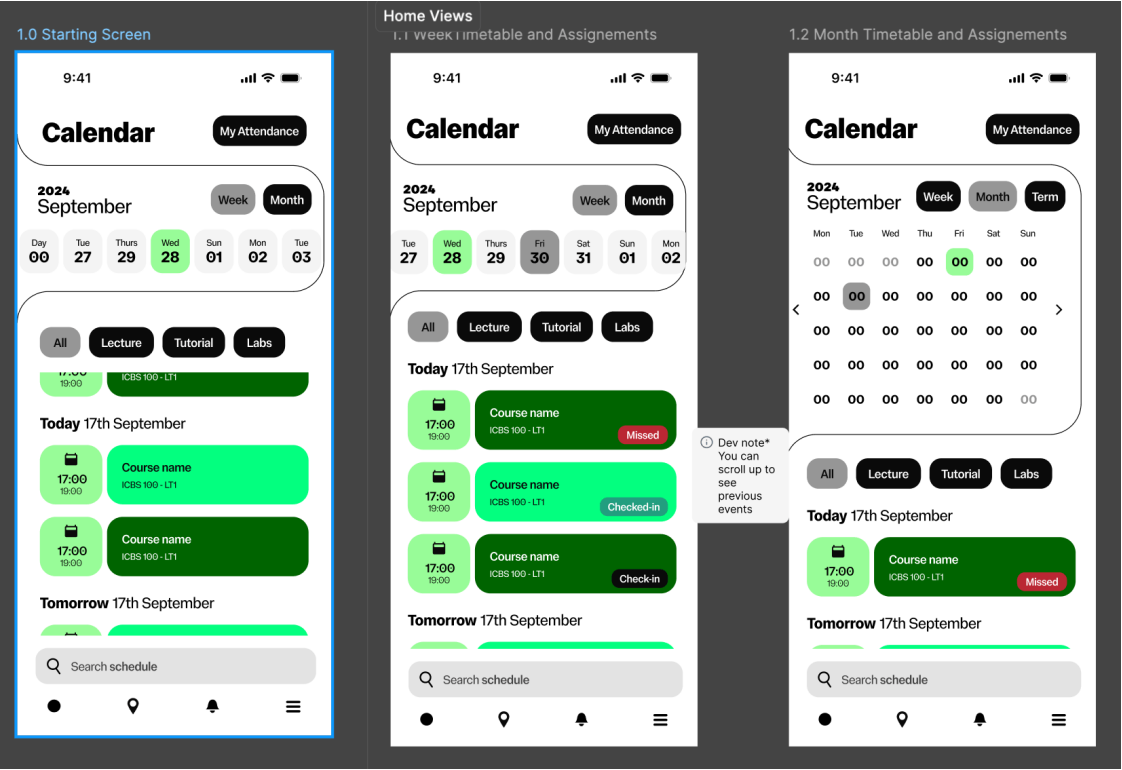
Discovery

Low-fi

Hi-fi

Iterate

The Gamble



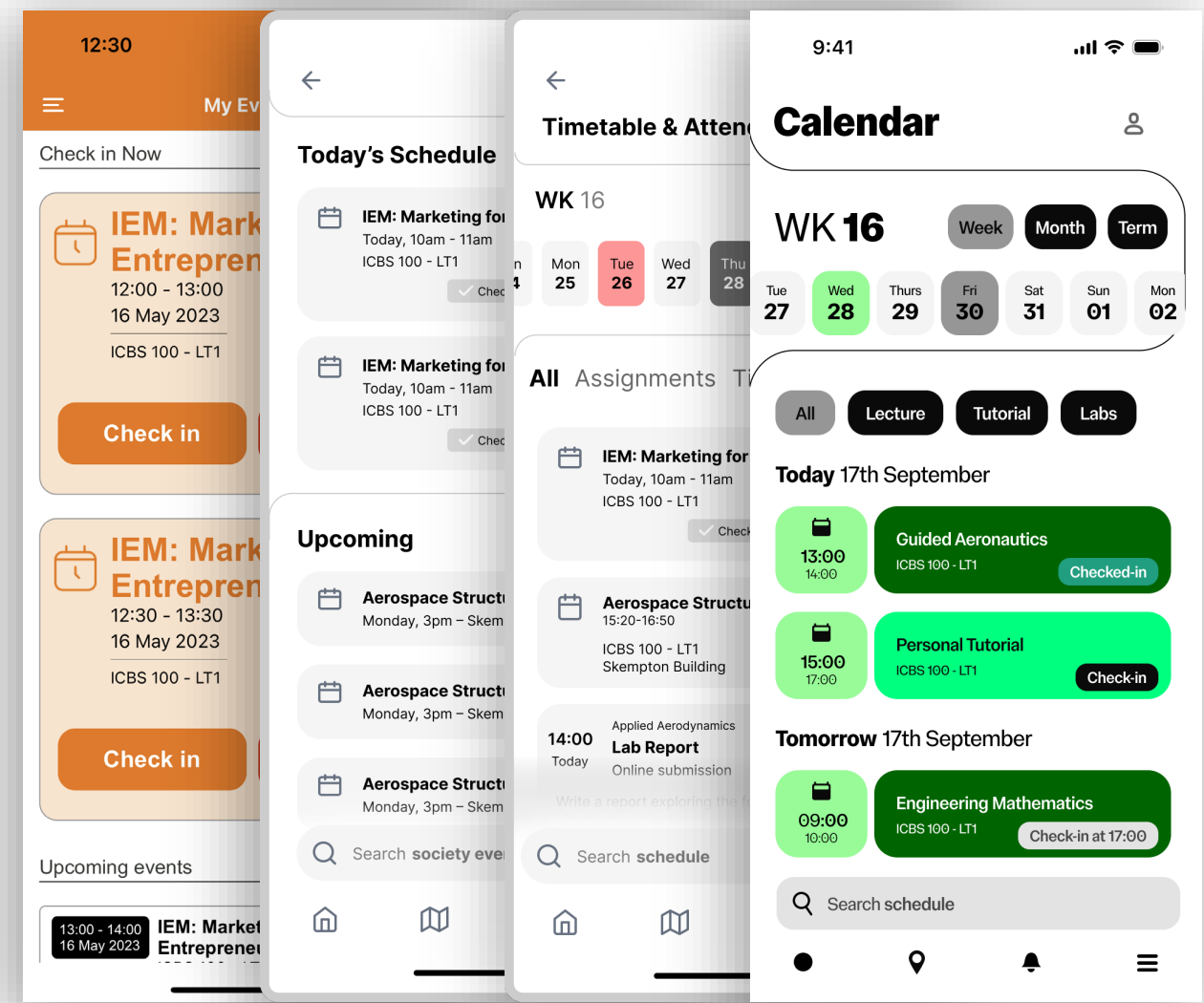
Discovery

Low-fi

Hi-fi

Iterate

The Gamble



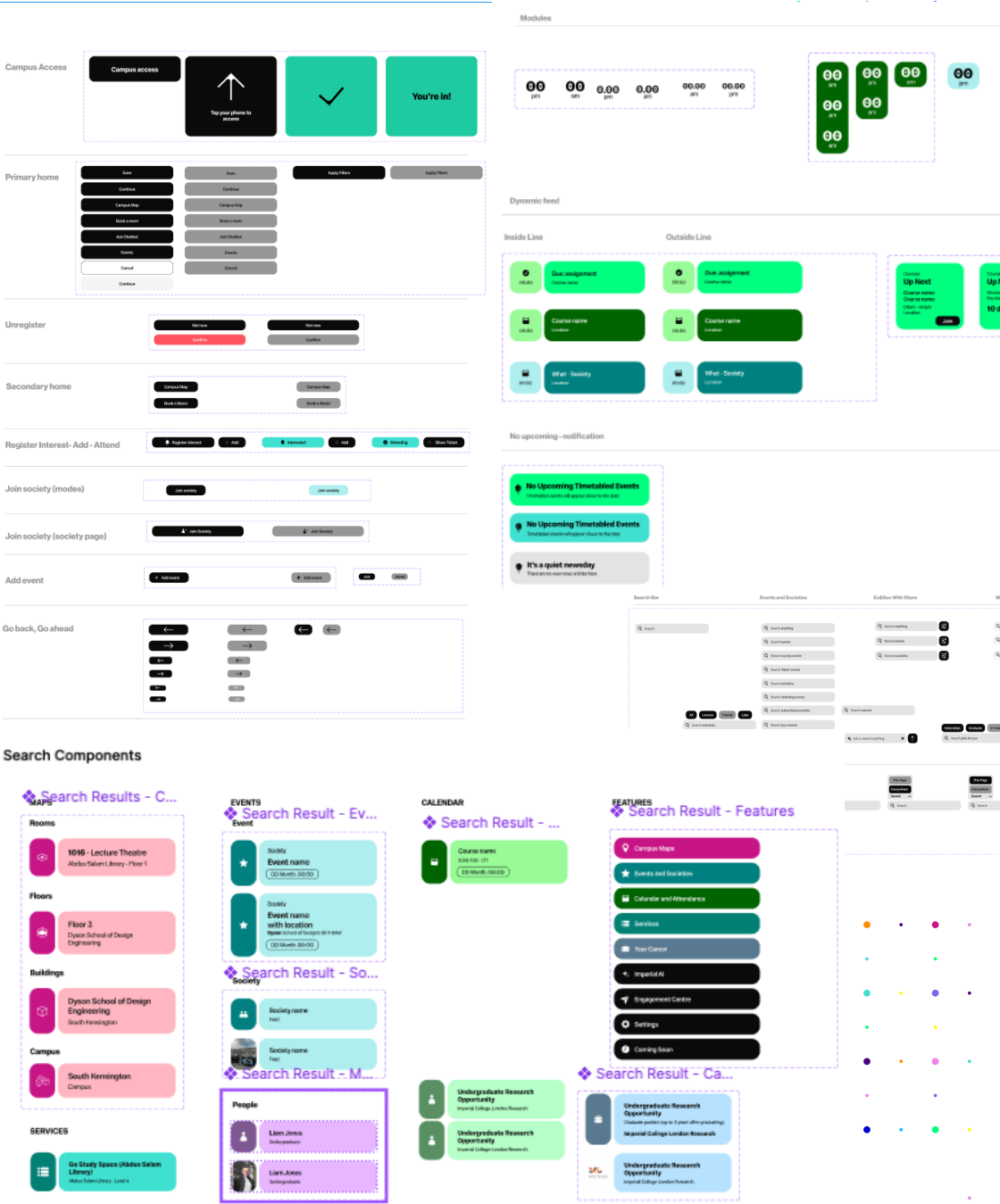
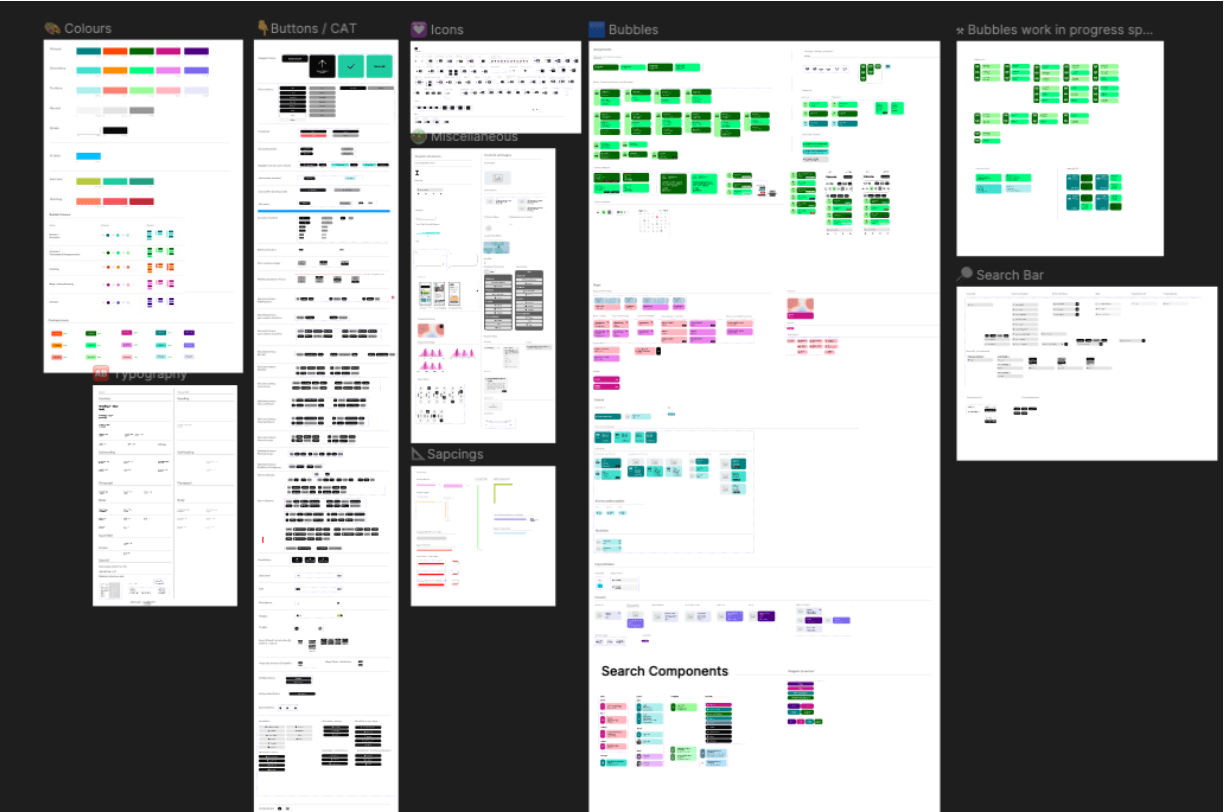
Discovery

Low-fi

Hi-fi

Iterate

Design System



Design System

Bubble Colours

What

Palette

Rythm

Events + Societies

PB SB TB



Courses + Timetables & Assignements

PG SG TG



Catering

PO SO TO



Maps + Room Booking

PP SP TP



Careers

PP SP TP

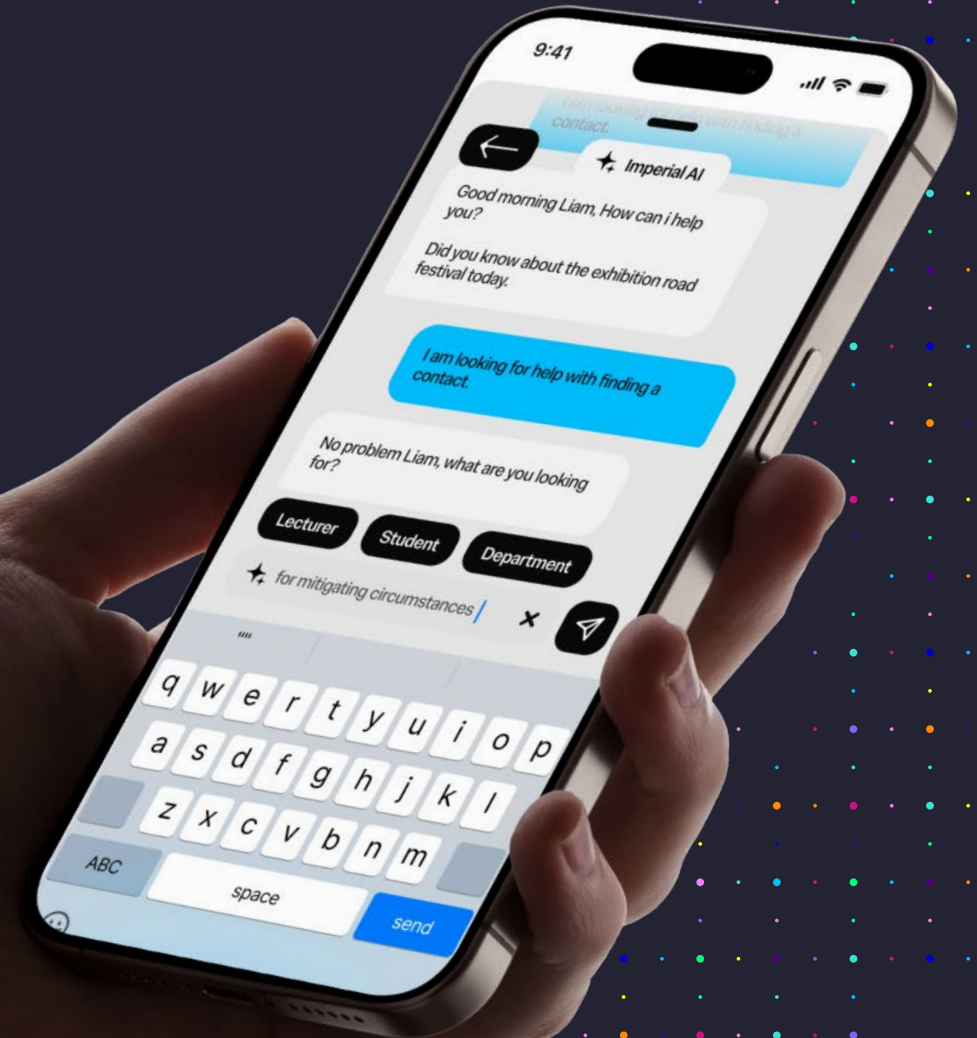


What we built

What changed

What we have learnt

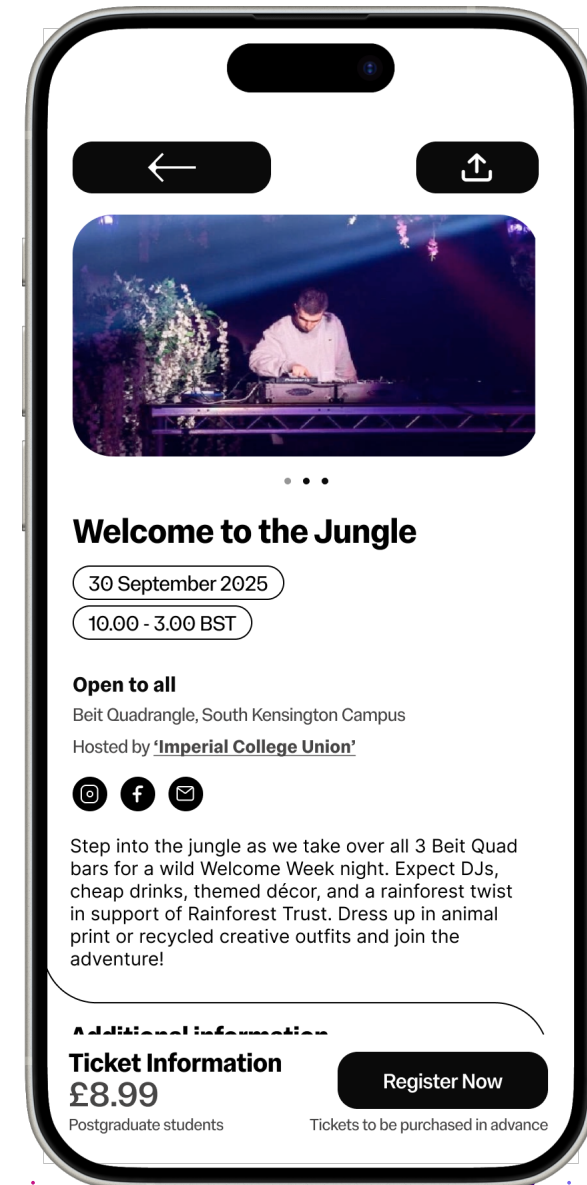
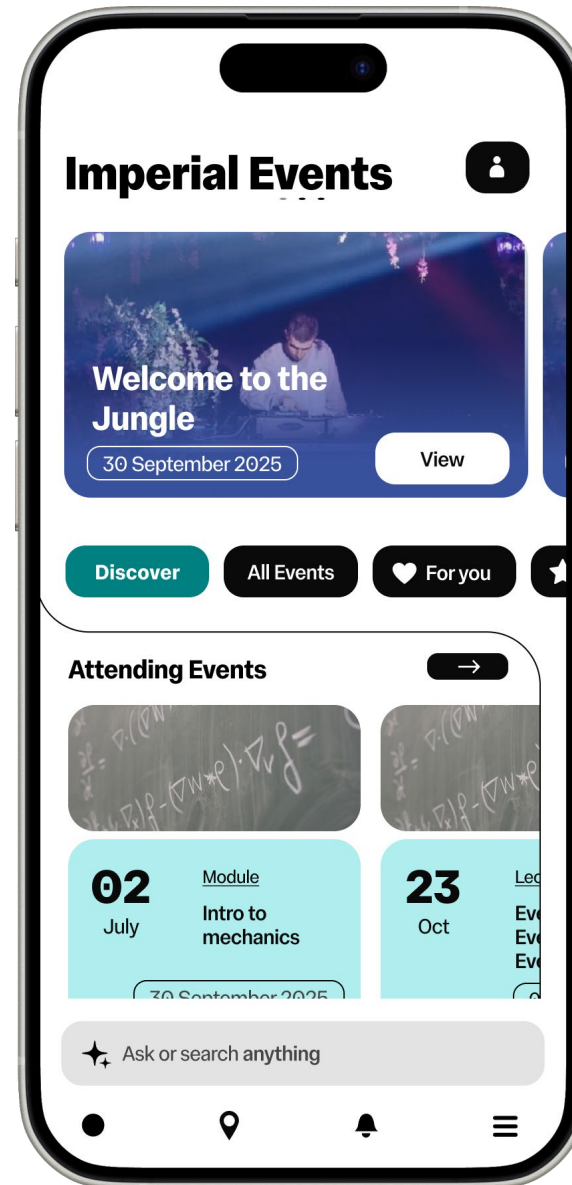
Where it's going



What we built

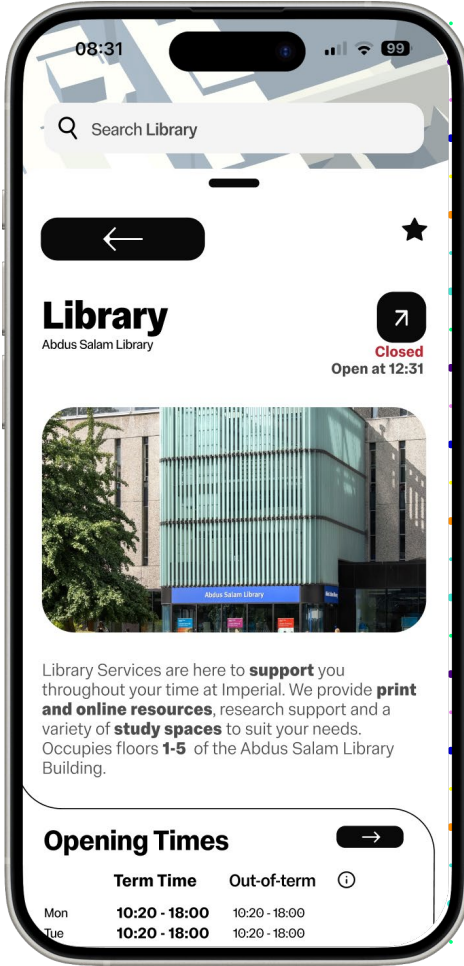
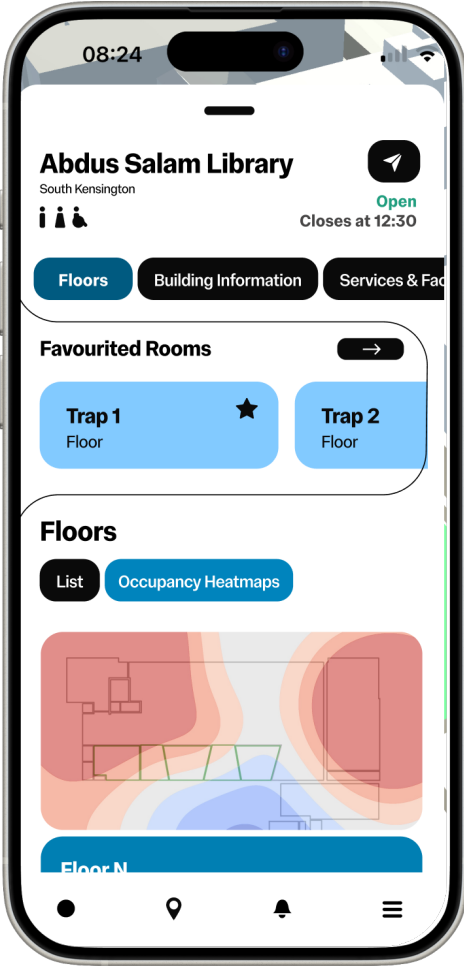
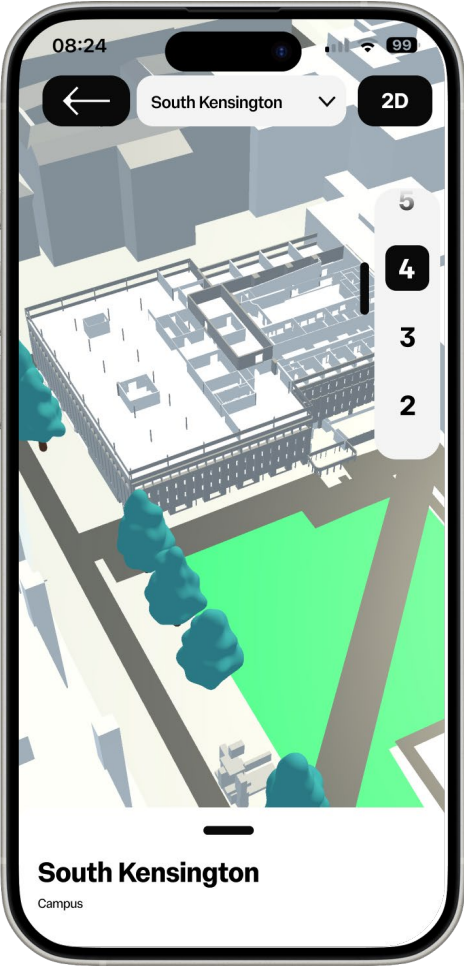
Users can:

See what is happening.



What we built

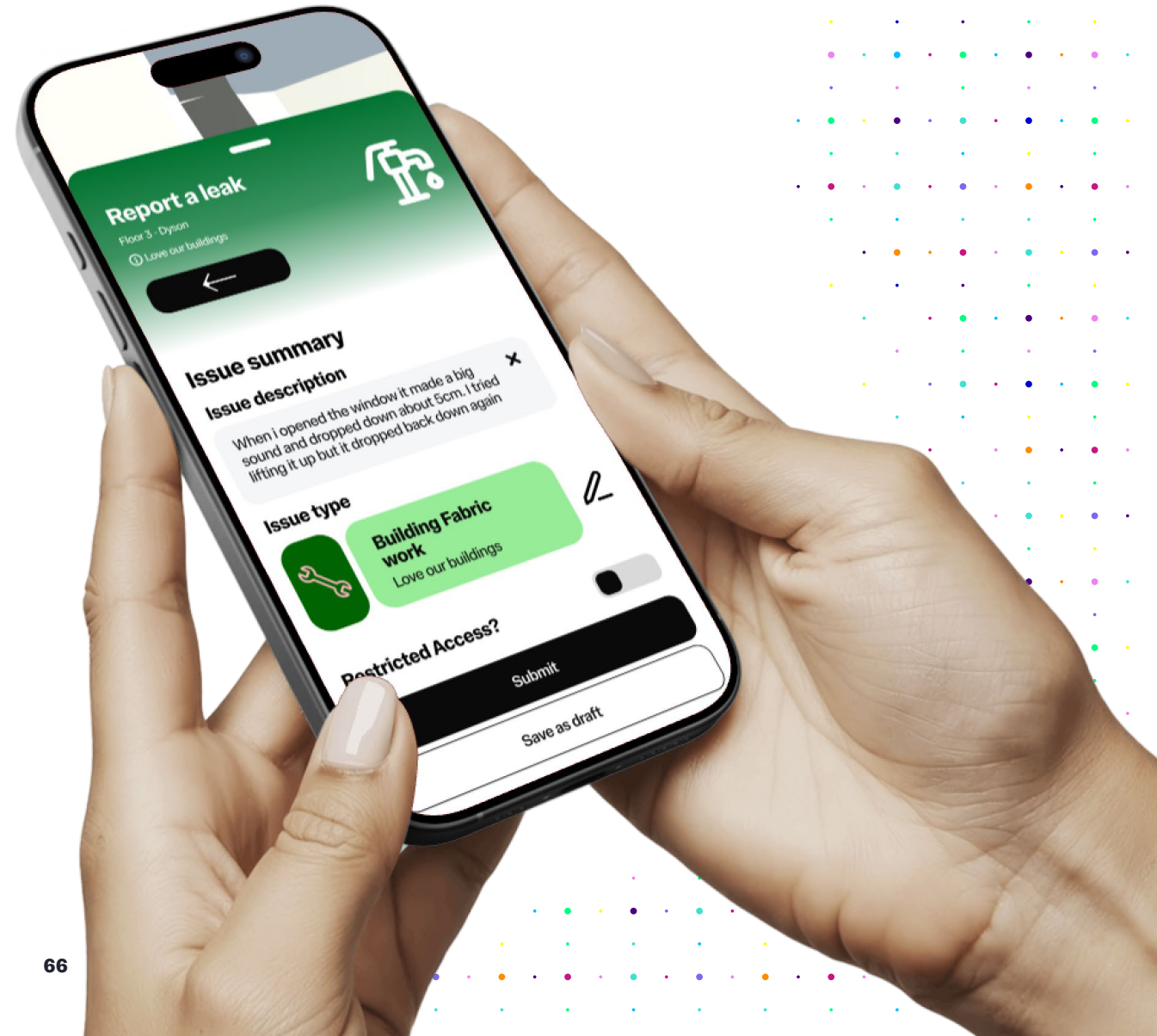
Users can:
**Find where
to go.**



What we built

Users can:

**Find where
to go.**

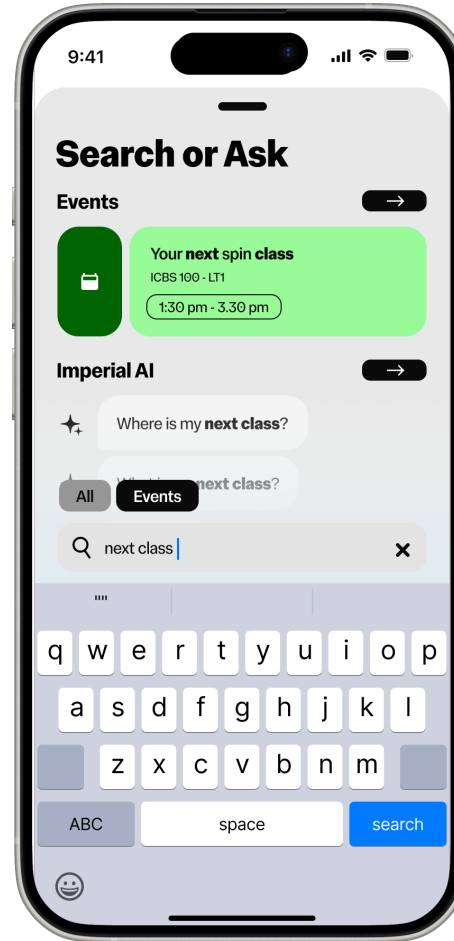


What we built

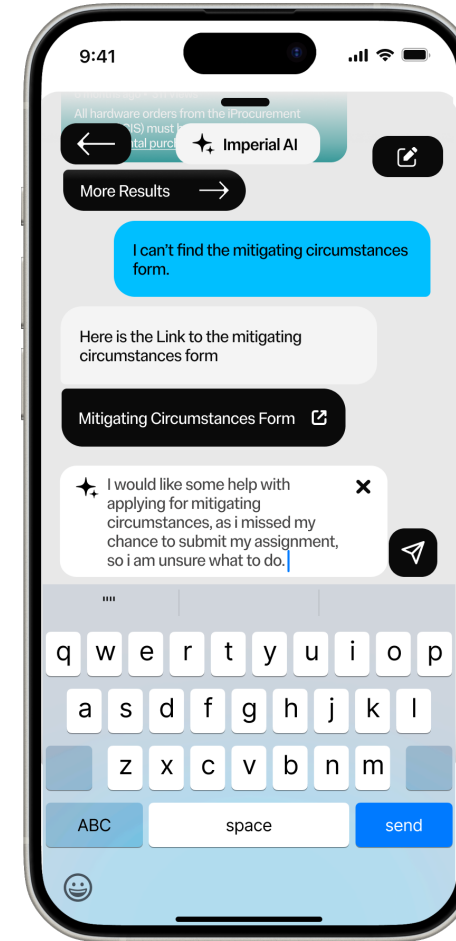
Users can:

Ask what
they need.

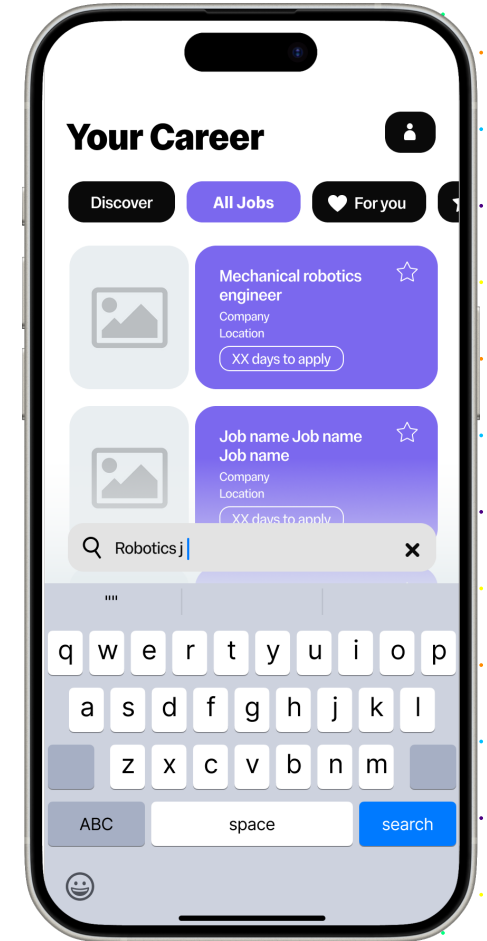
Search



ASK AI



Local Search



What we built

What changed

What we have learnt

Where it's going

22,000

active users

3

million sessions

5

releases

25

features

62%

YOY increase in check-ins

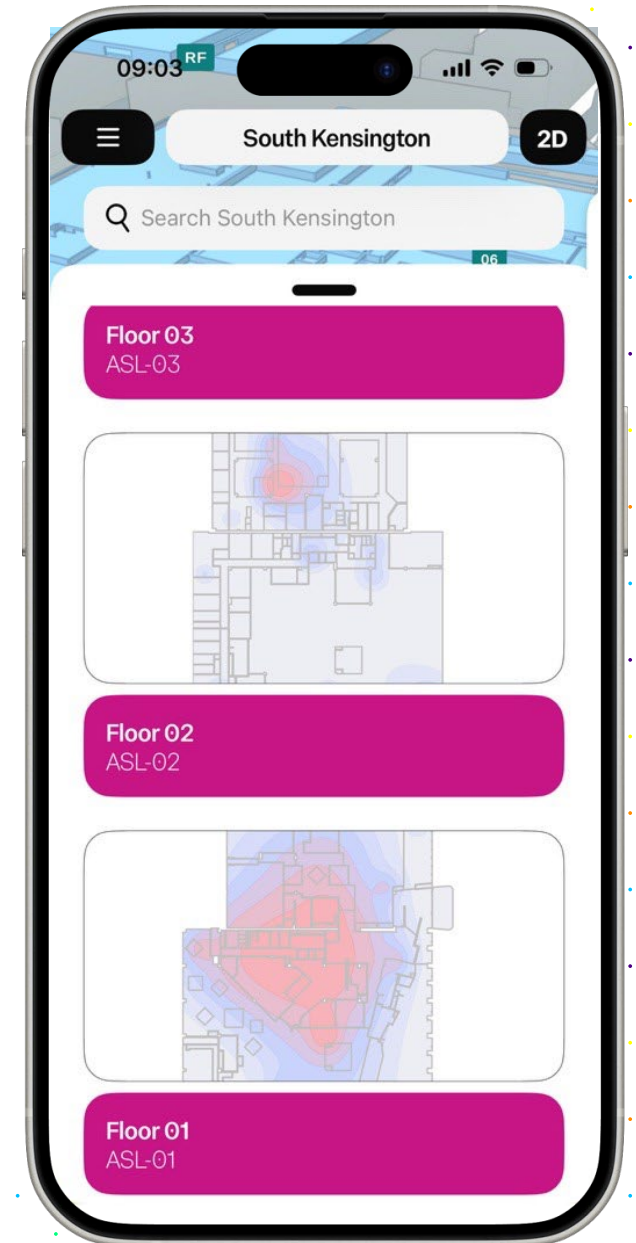
User Pain-point

Finding study
spaces

Development Journey

Action taken

Built
occupancy
heatmaps



Development Journey

Student impact

Finding
student
study spaces

Built
occupancy
heatmaps

Improved access
to study spaces

Improved user
satisfaction

Development Journey

Institutional Impact

Finding
student
study spaces

Built
occupancy
heatmaps

Improved
occupancy data

Institutional
space utilisation

What we built

What changed

What we have learnt

Where it's going

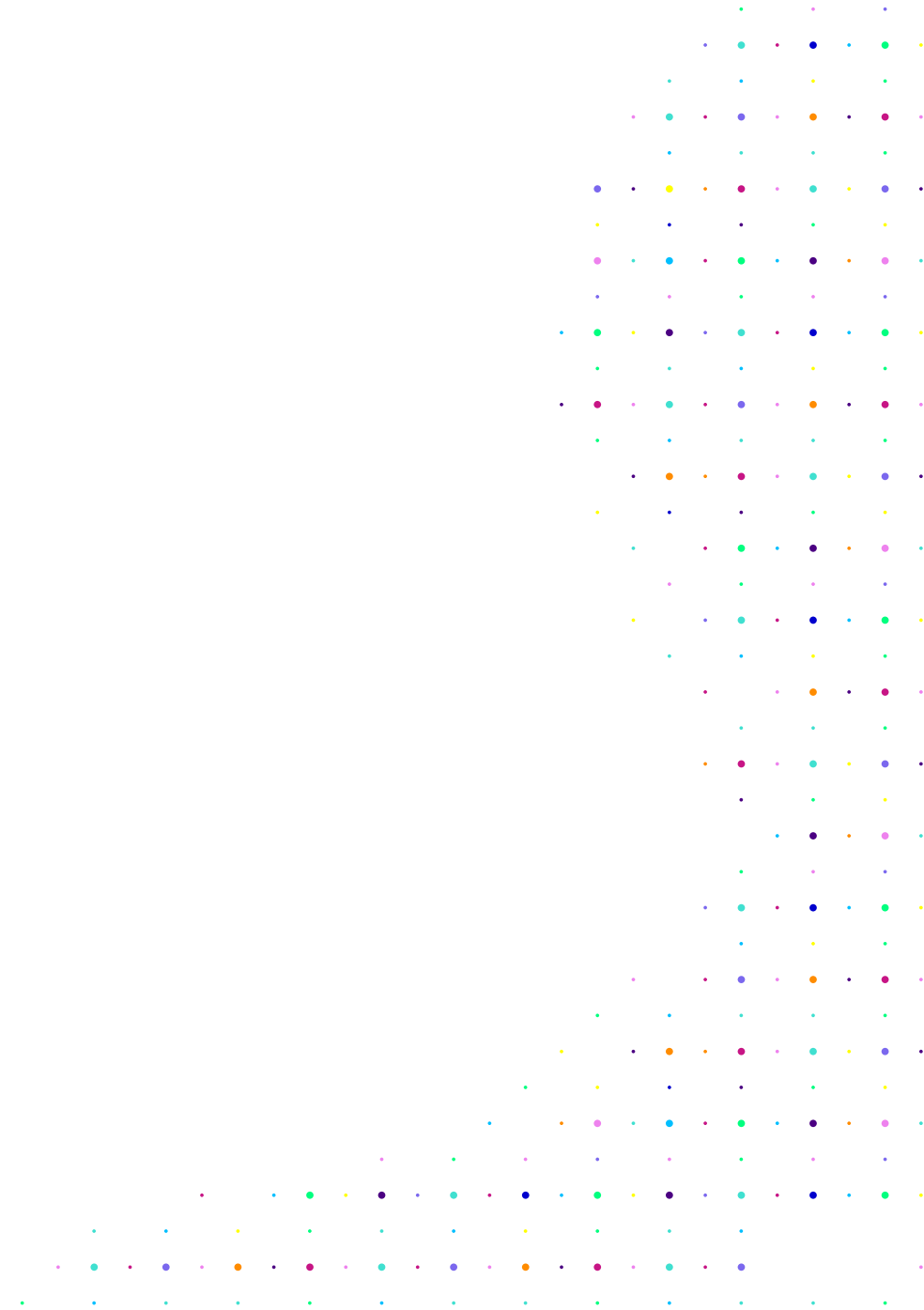
What we have learnt

Autonomy

Governance

**What we have
learnt**

Continuous Discovery



What we built
What changed
What we have learnt
Where it's going

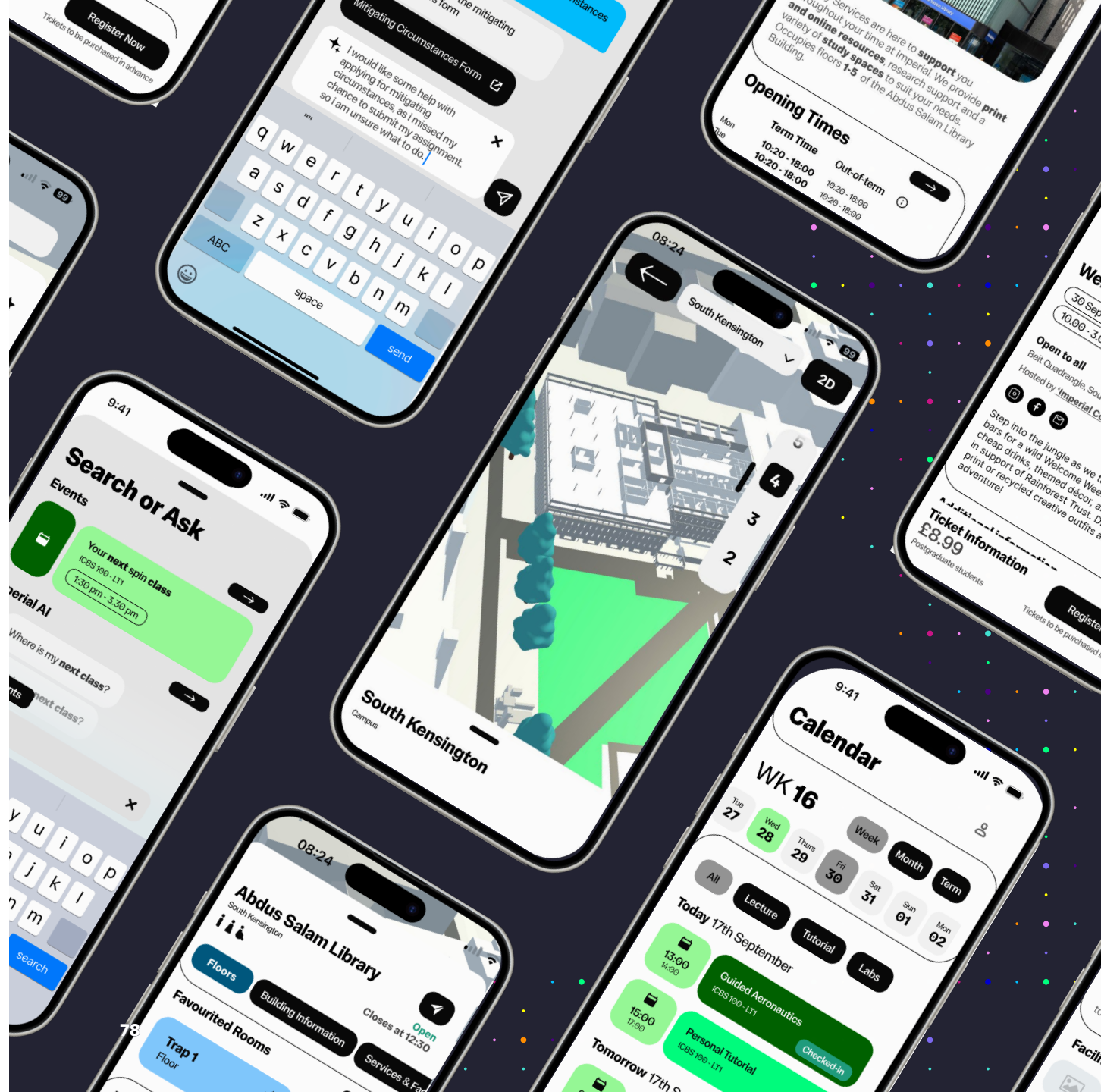


Where it's going

Smart campus



Thank you



The Next Set

Liz Goulding, CPO | The Economist | Festival of Products, 2
July 2026

The
Economist



Why I'm here

Making the corporeal digital

The harder something is to digitise, the more product thinking matters

The
Economist

01

Delivery → Development

Stage one of product maturity

The
Economist

02

A small word shift encodes a completely different mindset

DELIVERY

- The thing we built
 - Measured by: did we ship it?
 - Success = project closed

DEVELOPMENT

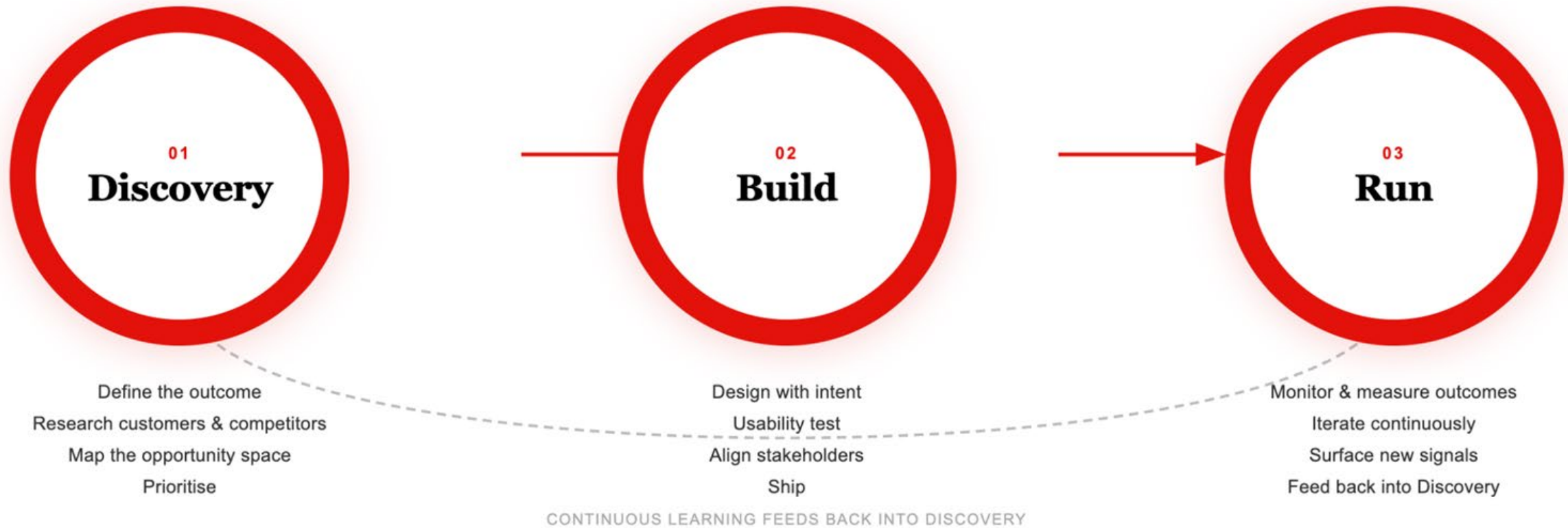
- The capability we enabled
 - Measured by: what changed?
 - Success = outcome achieved

AI changing the game

The
Economist

03

Product development runs on three interconnected loops



The activities that always have to happen

Whatever tools you use — these are non-negotiable

- Define the outcome you're trying to drive
- Research competitors and customers
- Map the opportunity space
- Prioritise ruthlessly
- Design with intent
- Usability test
- Align stakeholders on ideas and direction

Judgement becomes the key differentiator

What stays the same

- Which questions to ask
- Which outputs to trust
- Which bets to make
- What “good” looks like

What AI is changing

- Accelerating discovery research
- Synthetic usability testing
- Automated competitive intelligence
- Faster design iteration and build cycles
- Balance of testing for non-deterministic systems
- Who ‘owns’ the prompt?

Building together

What this means for all of us

The
Economist



When AI handles more execution, product thinking and team structure becomes invaluable

Outcomes, not outputs

Everyone needs to understand what you're trying to change, not just what you're building.

Judgment, not just speed

AI raises throughput. The quality of thinking required rises with it.

One direction

Design, engineering, data, and stakeholders must all pull toward the same outcome, and have a shared understanding of how the SDLC changes in non-deterministic systems

Your moment

HE is at the start of this journey. You get to build it right from the beginning.

The next set is yours to serve

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Building a HE product community - working together to
maximise value

Brendan Whitfield, Head of Cross Functional Products



Building a Product Community

- **Key aim - to strengthen our Product community within Higher Education**
- Working to create a network to share more often about our product journeys and help each other, that works well alongside our UCISA product group (we will be following up to create a group and get a virtual follow up session in diaries in the Autumn)

Attendees from 21 Uni's

Imperial, Oxford, Birmingham, Anglia Ruskin University, Birmingham City Uni, Royal College of Music, Oxford Brookes, Reading, RCA, LSE, KCL, UCL, Queen Mary, UAL, Kingston, University of Nottingham, Canterbury, Glasgow & University of York.

From overseas

Pontifica University Catholic and the University of Galloway

Wider sector

UCAS, NHS, The Economist, Youtube and other product organisations

Imperial attendees

Transformation team, Registry, Education office, Finance, Research, our Faculties and ICT

Why is this vital for the sector?

Challenges

- **Financial pressure:** Rising costs, frozen fees and international student recruitment barriers, require universities to do more with less.
- **Changing expectations:** Students expect seamless, digital-first experiences comparable to consumer services.
- **Legacy systems & rapid technology development:** Fragmented technology slow change in opposition to ever more rapidly developing technology ecosystem (e.g. AI).

How the Product model helps

A product model shifts the focus from **lengthy, costly projects**.

To focus on the outcomes, we want to achieve for users.

Innovating to continuously improving services and **deliver regular value**.

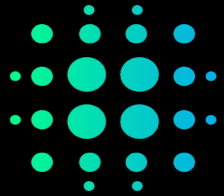


Thank you

- Thanks to everyone involved in making this event happen
- **All our volunteers** who have tirelessly helped to organise, communicate and keep this event running smoothly on the day
- To all the **staff working** on the event today
- A big thanks to all our speakers
- A massive thanks to all the attendees



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Thank you and enjoy the networking

