

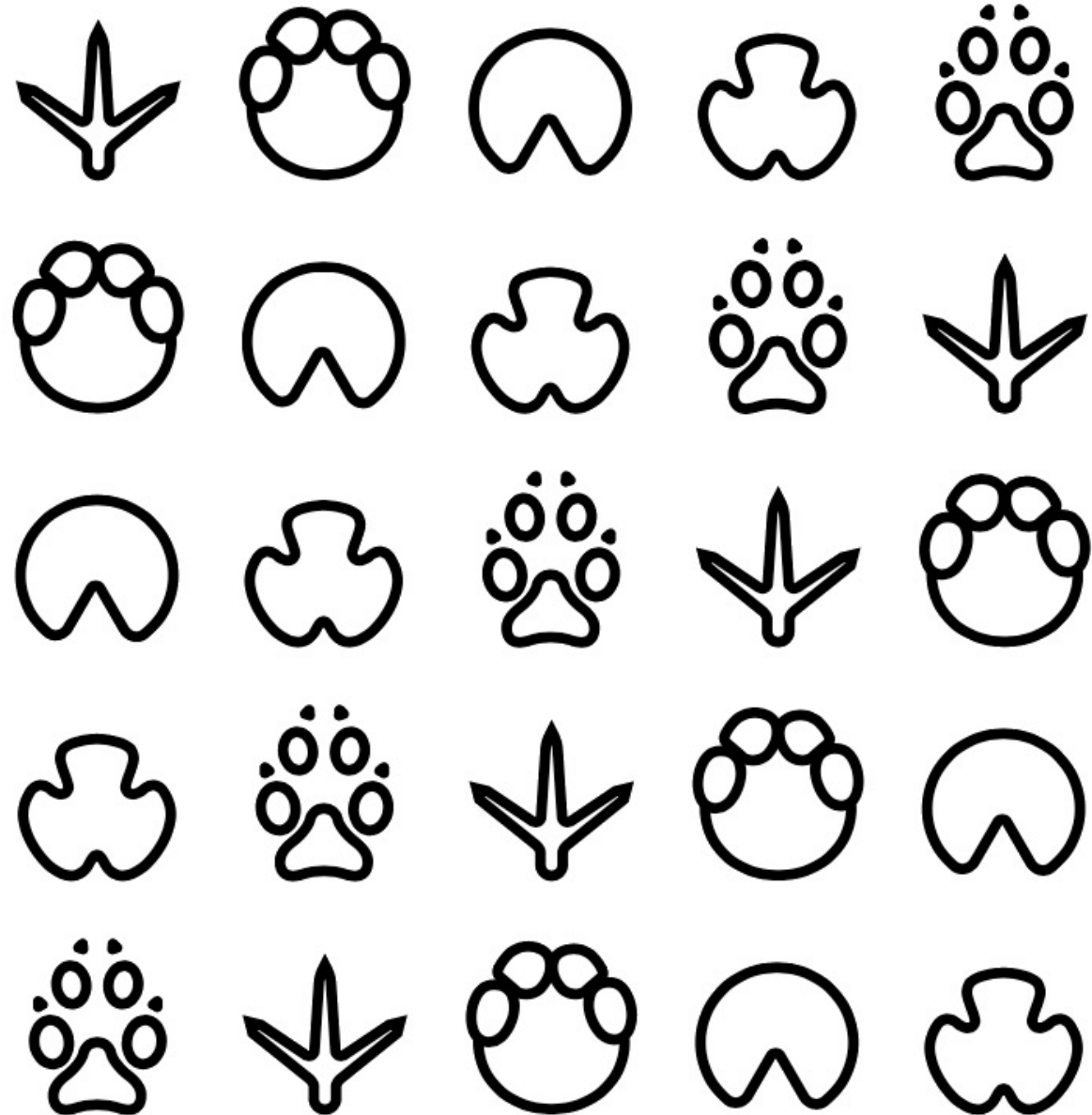


THE DANGEROUS ANIMALS OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

The Art of Managing Stakeholders while Staying True to Your Product Strategy

*presented by Dean Peters
with awesome animal artwork via the
good folks at ProductBoard & their free eBook:
'The Dangerous Animals of Product Management.'*

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Introduction



Who is Dean Peters?

- An experienced agile product manager & recovering programmer.
- Just wrapping up at IQVIA, with big new adventures happening on July 6th!
- Enjoys building great products by building great dialogs & great teams
- Worked with quite a bit of AI and NLP over the past decade
- Spends his spare time mountain biking trails & gardening a scale
- Looking to get a product management podcast started this summer

- Introduction
- Dangerous Animals 101
- Influence without Authority
- Process & Frameworks
- El Fin!

On
The
Menu

Who Are These
Beasts Who
Trample Over Our
Product Vision &
Strategic Roadmap?

DANGEROUS ANIMALS 101

HiPPO

Highest Paid Person's Opinion



- Players: founders, C-Suite executives, & VPs
- Powers: ultimate control of the budget, strategy, & staff
- Dangers: pushing down invalidated ideas & solutions
- Motivations: good intentions, past success, customer demands
- Outcomes: context switching, disruption of flow, high-turnover
- Example: how Ron Johnson ran JC Penny into the ground

RHiNO

Really High-value New Opportunity

- Players: Sales, Marketing, & CFOs
- Powers: ability to bring in revenue
- Dangers: optimizing on output of features
- Motivations: revenue goals, making a sale,
- Outcomes: coin-operated feature factories
- Example: how ScaleFactor resorted to smoke & mirrors



ZEbRA

Zero Evidence but Really Arrogant



- Players: stakeholders, power players, deep-pocket customers
- Powers: domain expertise, big egos, politically savvy
- Dangers: unchecked assumptions, upstream escalations
- Motivations: cognitive bias, overconfidence, ignorance, tone-deafness
- Outcomes: stagnation, customer dissatisfaction, extinction
- Examples: Blockbuster CEO John Antioco who laughed at Netflix

WoLF

Works on Latest Fire

- **Players:** DevOps, Engineering, QA, & Product Management
- **Powers:** ability to directly influence product implementation
- **Dangers:** unchecked tech debt, limited scalability, delivery failures
- **Motivations:** time commitments, technical limitations, shiny objects
- **Outcomes:** unchecked technical debt, late night escalations
- **Example:** how Knight Capital lost \$460 million in 45 minutes



Seagull Manager

a.k.a. Swoop-n-Poop Manager



- Players: noisy managers who rose through the ranks
- Powers: technical skills, past experience, good intentions
- Dangers: disruption, distraction, delivery delays, dumping
- Motivations: impatience, good intentions, & thinking they're helping
- Outcomes: context switching, unhappy teams, Frankensoft
- Example: real-life Dilbert-esque, Marketoonist like disruptions

How do we
Approach
These
Beasts?

PRACTICE INFLUENCE WITHOUT AUTHORITY

Exercise Empathy

- Understand their perspective.
- Align their motivations with your product goals.
- **Works best for:** HiPPOs, RHiNOs, and Seagull Managers



Be Transparent

- Surface not just the WHAT, but also the WHY
- Provide transparency of tradeoffs, decisions, customer insights, data, & more.
- Bring context to the conversation with more data-informed ideas.

- **Works best for:** All animals



Empower Stakeholders w/Tech Facts

- Demonstrate how tech-debt impedes scale & growth
- Don't go in the weed with too much geeky detail
- Provide real-world examples of what can and has gone wrong in the past.

- **Works best for:** WoLFS, HiPPOs, and RHiNOs



Engage Tiny Acts of Discovery

- Tiny Acts of Discovery offer a data-informed way to challenge assumptions
- Remember that a paper prototype, data mining, &/or online surveys is less expensive than code
- Run canary tests, painted-door features, & similar experiments on a tiny segment
- Control the blast-radius by limiting experiments to small user or server segments

- **Works best for:** All animals



Train Stakeholders to think like Product People

- Paint a vivid picture of the end user
- Employ simple frameworks to evaluate new ideas
- Engage your dangerous animals to join in these exercise
- Be ready to surface the monetary & opportunity costs
- **Works best for:** RHiNOs, ZEBRAs, and Seagull Managers



Connect Concepts with Context

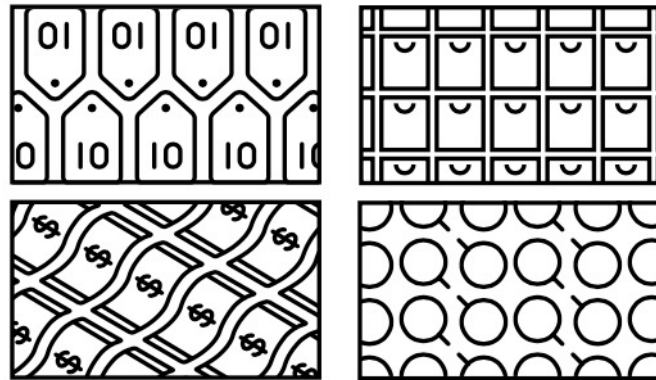
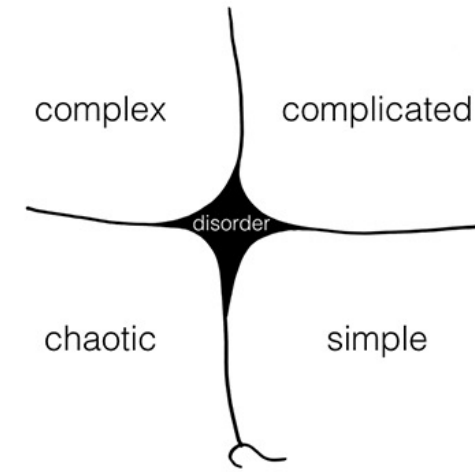
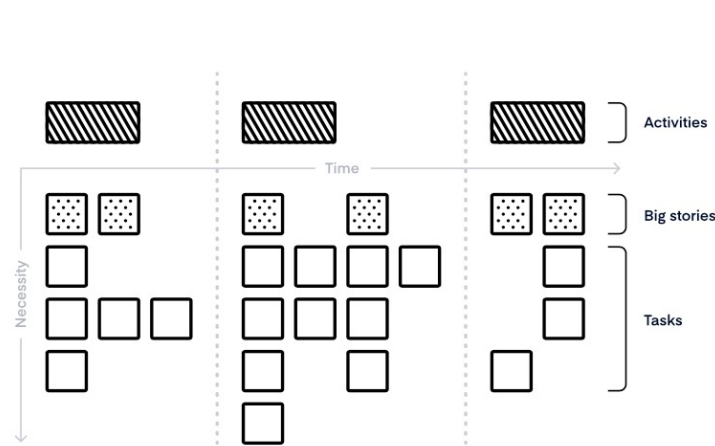
- Seek to take the emotion & ego out of product decisions
- Always keep the company & product vision & strategy in the forefront
- Seek to present quantitative data w/the context of qualitative feedback, & visa versa
- Present arguments that support outcomes over output

- **Works best for:** HiPPOs, RHiNOs, and ZEBRAs



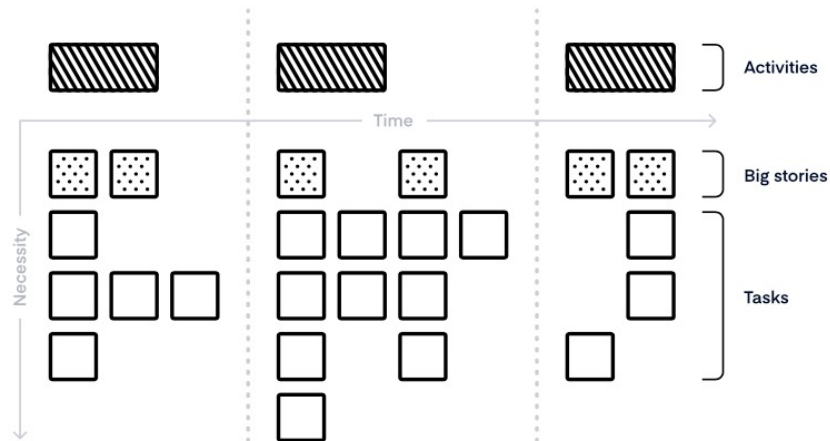
How can we Frame
 Prioritization Conversations
 with Stakeholders, Dev, &
 Customers?

SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE PROCESSES OF 4 FRAMEWORKS



	MARKET			ORGANIZATION		
	Impact of problem	Dissatisfaction with current situation	Evidence	Advantage to us	Effort to deliver	PRIORITY
Use 1-5 or Fibonacci sequence	Where 1 = low importance	Where 1 = totally satisfied	Where 1 = few; 5 = all	Where 1 = low advantage	Where 1 = easy (or small)	I'D'E'A/E

Story Mapping



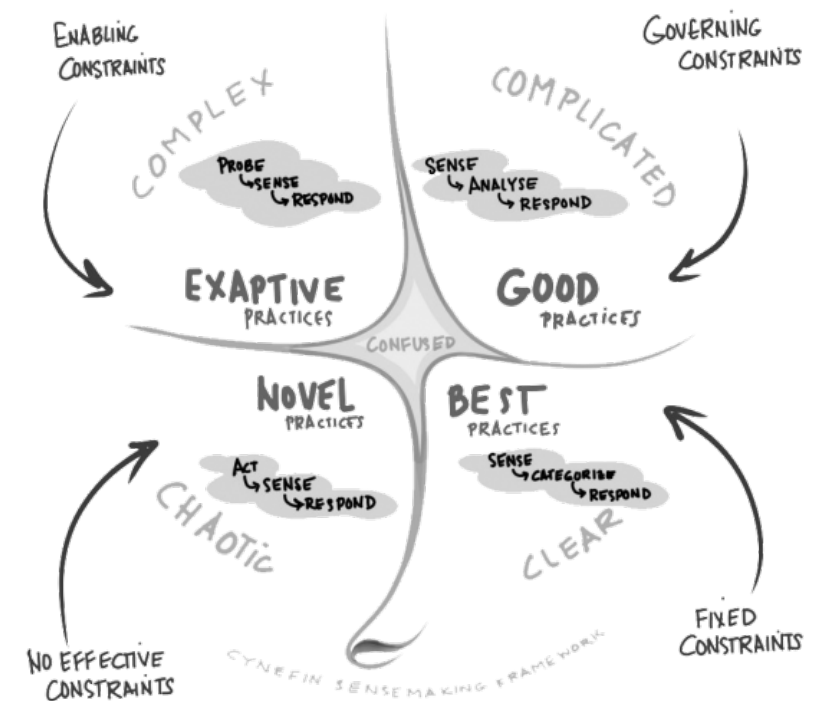
source: [Story Mapping Slides - Jeff Patton & Associates](#)

- Identify the persona, their pain points, & desired outcomes
- Retell the user's story, mapping their journey over time
- Propose hypotheses in fulfilling the desired user outcomes
- Prioritize the hypotheses by their impact on the user journey
- Offer tiny acts of discovery tasks to validate each hypothesis
- Submit the validated hypothesis for feature solutions

Cynefin

Collaborate on problems & ideas, categorizing as:

- Clear – most desired, simple, & obvious outcome
- Complicated – doable with unknown knowns
- Complex – difficult with unknown unknowns
- Chaotic – dangerous as cause & effect unknown
- Disorderly – defer until there's greater clarity



source: [The Cynefin Framework®](#)

IDEA/E

	MARKET			ORGANIZATION		
	Impact of Problem	Dissatisfaction with current situation	Evidence	Advantage to us	Effort to deliver	PRIORITY
Use 1-5 or Fibonacci sequence	where 1= low importance	where 1= totally satisfied	where 1= few; 5 = all	where 1= low advantage	where 1= easy (or small)	I*D*A/E

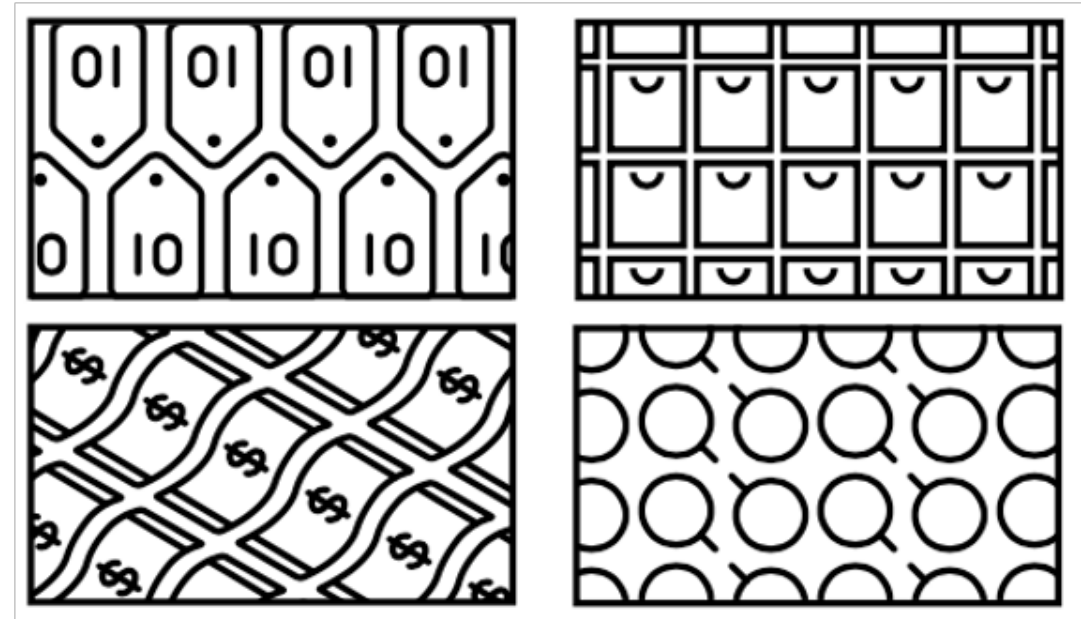
Use this simple scoring system to help prioritize competing ideas that evaluates them by:

- Impact - How does this issue affect customers?
- Dissatisfaction - Big deal or minor annoyance?
- Evidence – Is there qualitative & quantitative data?
- Advantage - Will a solution benefit us?
- Effort - Can we achieve this quickly?

Buy a Feature

Run this prioritization with competing stakeholders.
Here are the steps:

- Enumerate proposed ideas & features
- Assign each a dollar price, sum the total
- Get stakeholders & customers together
- Give each participant cash that's 25% of the sum total
- Have the participants buy their most desired items
- Sum up the most purchased ideas & features
- Encourage participants to discuss their purchases



source: [Buy a Feature - Innovation Games](#)



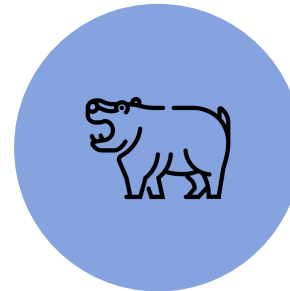
Collaborate to a shared understanding through context



Show empathy & be respectful for the sense of agency for others



Remove the emotion through experimentation & validation




Remember, the dangerous animals should never be more powerful than your customers

CONCLUSION



El Fin!

Useful URLs

- The original 'Product Management Prioritization Menagerie' the 2018 blog post that started it all
<http://bit.ly/PrioritizationMenagerie>
- ProductBoard's 'Dangerous Animals of Product Management' free eBook and source of animal images
<http://bit.ly/dangerous-animals-of-pm-ebook>
- Reaching Dean via:
 - [Linkd.in/deanpeters](https://www.linkedin.com/in/deanpeters)
 - [Twitter.com/@deanpeters](https://twitter.com/@deanpeters)
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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

