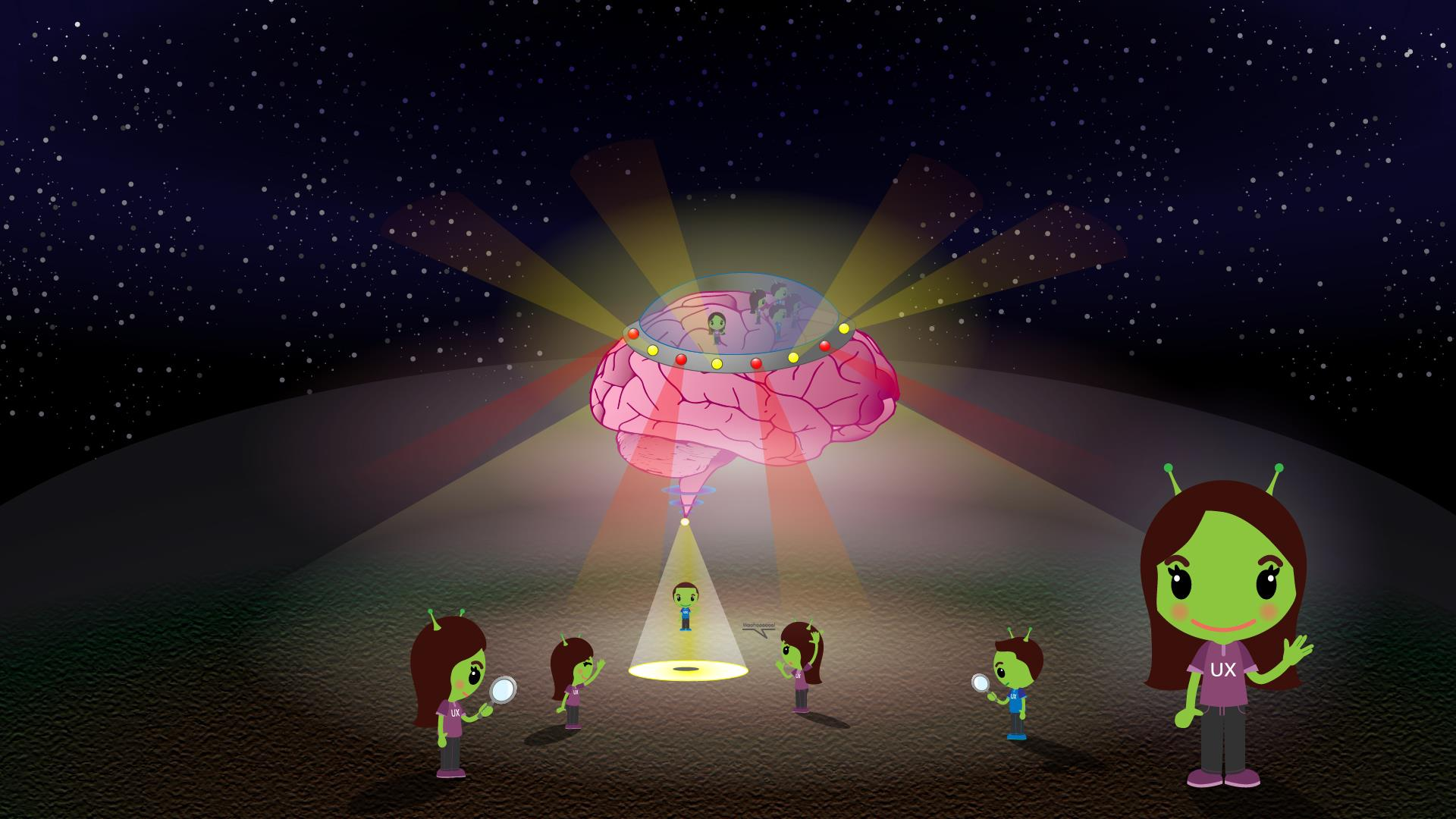# How we introduced **UX** to **Epic Games'** production pipeline

Celia Hodent & **Heather Chandler**

Director of UX   **Senior Producer - Fortnite**

@CeliaHodent

Epic's organization

Product teams:

Unreal **Tournament**
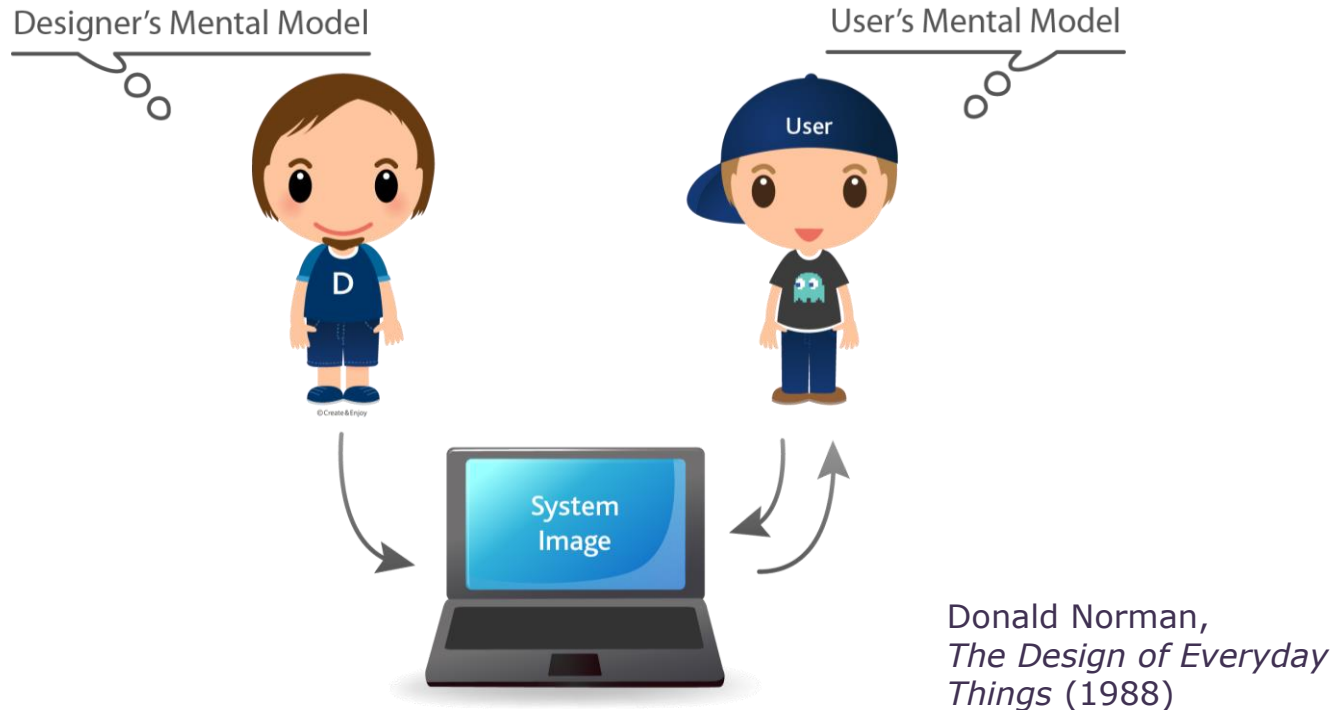
Paragon

Fortnite

Spyjinx

UE4

Operation / Support teams:

Publishing

Consumer Insights

UX

Marketing

What it is like for the targeted user to interact with the software, including how engaging the experience is, relative to the design intentions.

Designer's Mental Model

User's Mental Model

User

System Image

Donald Norman,
The Design of Everyday Things (1988)

© Create & Enjoy

Groundhog Day of UX

Misconception about UX #1: UX will distort design intentions

Dark Souls

Misconception about UX #2: UX is just common sense

Misconception about UX #3: UX is yet another opinion
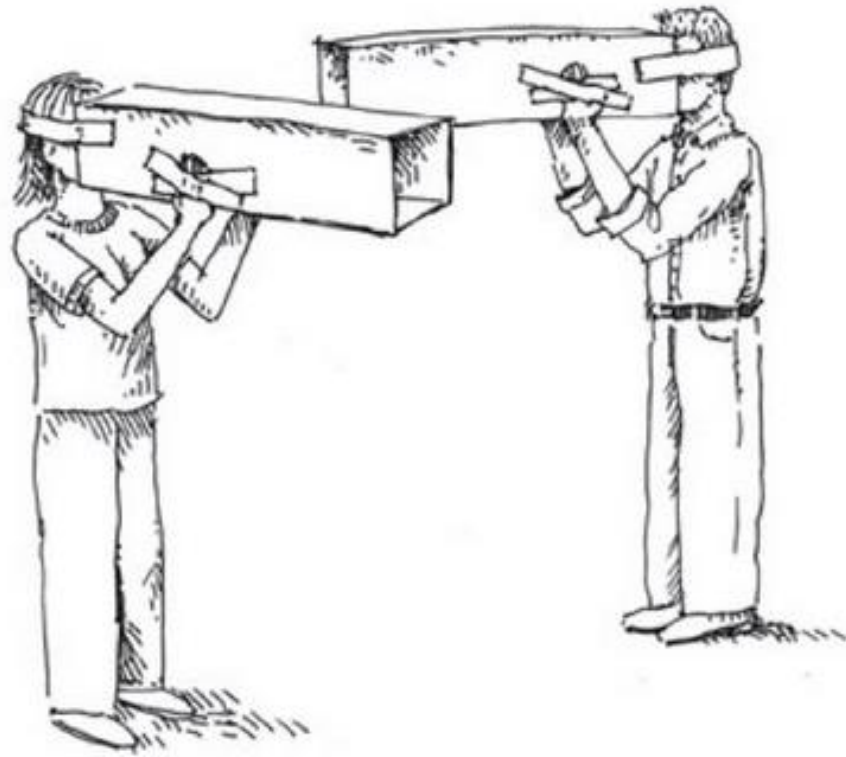
Misconception about UX #5: Let's "UX it" later
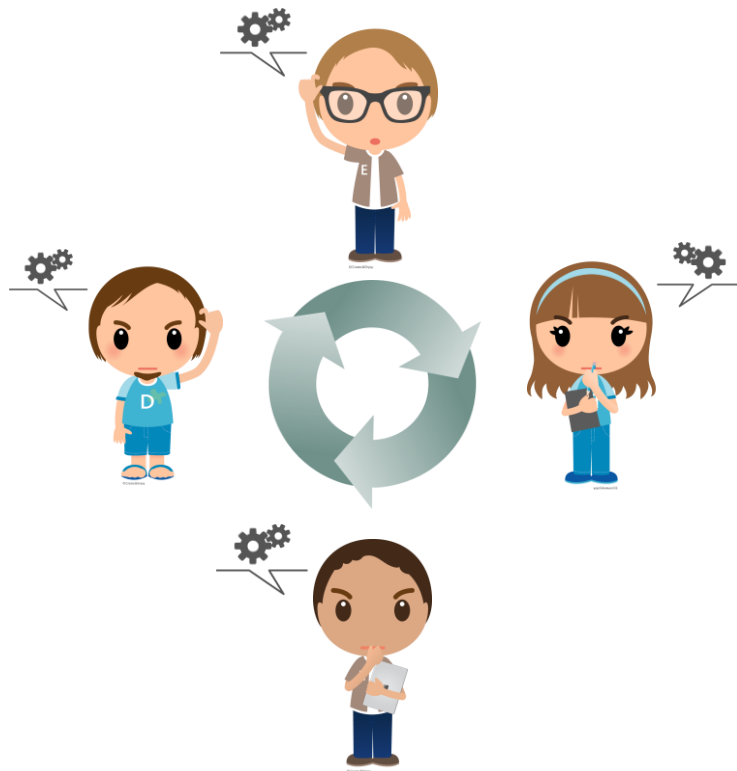
Misconceptions about Prod #1: Devs don't understand UX

Misconceptions about Prod #2: Dev team not interested in UX

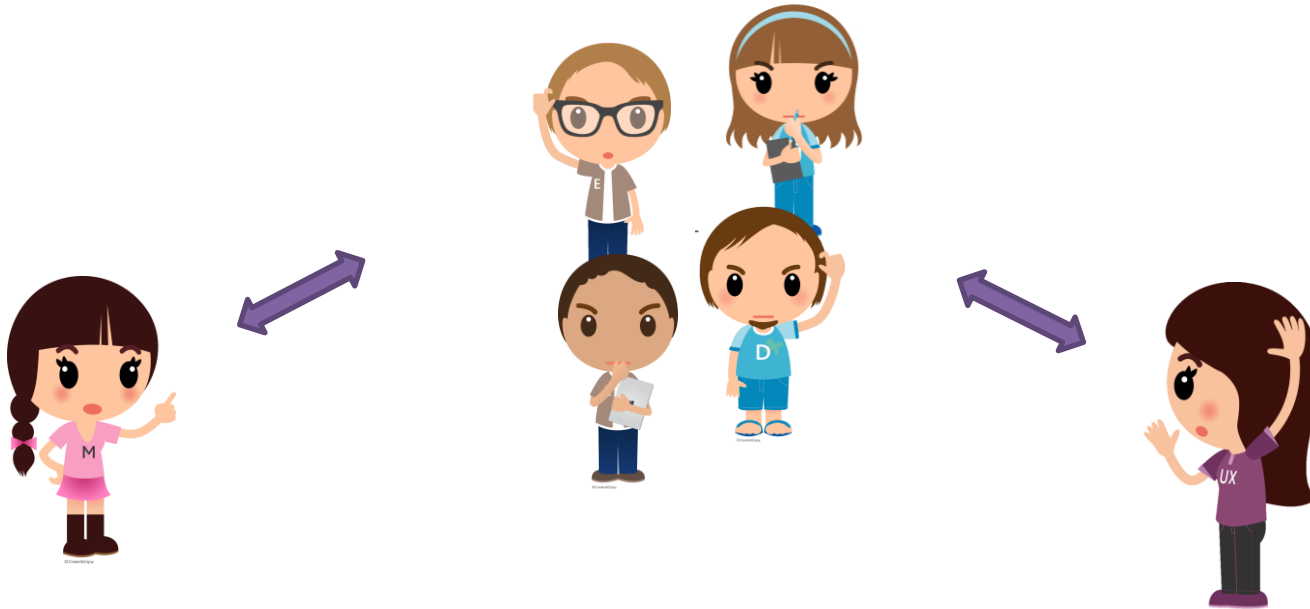# Misconceptions about Prod #3: UX doesn't require extra time

Misconceptions about Prod #4: EZ to implement UX feedback

Dev team has to face inputs from Execs, Marketing, Publishing..
… and now from UX!

Don't become the "usability police".

© Alamy

Part 2 – UX Shift

Project Direction

- Ask Designers their intentions
- View the current progress of the project
- Ask Execs about Business Plan

Testing

Did we get players to play the game?

No →

Yes ↓

People play the game

Report

Report of all Issues

It was huge

The hope was to start a conversation and get feedback from the designers

Action

Designers will adjust

Reality

Never got Feedback or chat with Designers → UX Team left in the dark

Shifting to a tailored UX-dev relationship
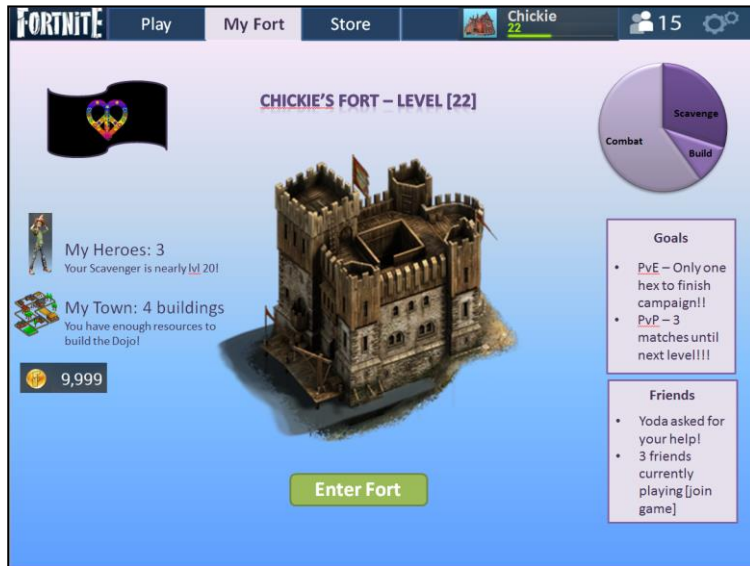
Concept mock for Fortnite's metagame (late 2013)

Fortnite alpha – Homebase (march 2016)

@GamesUR

- Dev team didn't see how UX feedback was different than dev feedback

- Dev team was overwhelmed by the amount of information

- Dev team didn't make reviewing UX feedback a priority

- Dev team didn't view UX as part of team

- UX feedback is neutral and scientific (when done correctly)

- UX tend to be too thorough

- UX feedback should be the #1 priority as it's the least biased one

- UX needs distance with the product but should be close to the team

Getting to Know Each Other …

- UX was flexible in working with Dev Team.

- Low friction in working with UX.

- Production was evangelist of UX.

- UX not another "gate".

How to enable the shift:

- Listen to the dev team.

- Start small.

- Demonstrate on a small scale: quick wins.

- Empower: UX has to be a concern of everyone.

- Plan for UX as part of iteration pipeline.

#	UXstatus	UX Rating	Team prio	Category	UX feedback	UX suggestions	Latest UX test seen	Related # ?	Dev Team feedback	Dev owner	Feature status	Jira/ Hansoft	Expected fix date	1st entry
117	0-Pending	0-MVP	2	Homebase / UI	Progression bars unclear. Both Homebase and hero progression bars are unclear and often not even seen by players.	- Homebase progression bar and level are very important since they are representing player's account level in the game. So this information should be central and clearly understandable and visible. - Progression bar for heroes should be more visible as well. It should also be consistent and visible on the cards in the heroes tab, which is not the case right now	9/19/2014		wip					1/28/2014
140	0-Pending	1-Critical	3	Flow	Game becomes suddenly very difficult. Players had no difficulty beating their first 2 zones (difficulty: easy). The 3rd zone was a hard level one. They failed 5 gate attempts before finally winning the 6th one. It took them over 2 hours to beat that zone. The game should not suddenly be that difficult to beat. It cannot go from 1 gate capture to 3 gates. And more importantly, we must make sure players are already well-engaged in the game before introducing hard failure conditions.	- Find a way to increase the difficulty progressively for new players. - Make sure that players don't experience a 3-gate capture before experiencing a 2-gate capture. - Offer subtle options (should not hurt their ego) to let them escape a constant failure condition (adjust dynamically the difficulty, encourage them to reinforce their Homebase because they gonna soon level up and be more awesome, etc.). - Introduce early on the fact that players can leave a zone, try another one, come back later, etc.	9/19/2014	#27	Re-assess with next build.					1/28/2014
69	2-Fixed	1-Critical	1	UI	Save green for health.	Don't use green as critical hit when harvesting.	3/5/2014		Will fix					4/10/2014
76	1-Addressed but not UX fixed	0-MVP	0	HomeBase	HomeBase is not clearly represented and meaningful.	- Start game experience with Homebase - HomeBase 2D space.	N/A		Working on new onboarding	Derek	Mockup			8/29/2013
123	0-Pending	2-Medium	5	Homebase	Hard to spot available workers. Players were seen mousing over their cards to find an available worker. Seems like the red corner is not a clear enough sign. Besides, it's not consistent with the orange banner when mousing over.	- Make the sign more visible for assigned workers. - It should be more consistent with the sign seen on mouse over (same color and location).	9/19/2014							1/28/2014
124	0-Pending	2-Medium	5	Homebase	Players don't always know why and how to go back to HB. From the town map, players were not naturally checking on their Homebase. Even after being prompted to, it took them some time to figure out where to click.	- Homebase should be introduced as the heart and soul of the player. It should be obvious that they should upgrade their Homebase after each zone completion, and the UI should clearly show where their Homebase is compared to the town map.	9/19/2014							1/28/2014
39	2-Fixed	2-	5	UI	Critical hits not obvious and not consistent.	- Keep the feedback consistent across all activities: have	3/5/2014							7/1/2014
158	2-Fixed	2-	5	Onboarding	Creating wrong association between night and storm.	- The onboarding should be in daylight the whole time.	7/1/2014							7/1/2014
68	3-Removed	3-Low	5	Storm	Having a clock moving forward above an objective	Put the clock away from mission log, and have the hands	3/5/2014		I adding in Sky Clock in CL #2062466	CodyH.	In Build-			9/19/2014
160	2-Fixed	2-		Onboarding	Players didn't know how much time they got left. After	- At the very least, the players should know how much	7/1/2014							9/19/2014
16	2-Fixed	2-	5	HUD	[mockup paper test] Lack of consistency of building in	- If building is as much as a pillar as defense/scavenging is,	8/29/2013	#17		Robbie	Done			9/19/2014

One-sided conversation

- Process not well-defined.

- No clear owners.

- Too overwhelming.

Part 3 – Working Together

Evolving use of tools

Fortnite - UX Lab Feedback

Two Dimensional Filter Statistics: Fortnite - UX Lab Feedback

	Fix For Versions (all)									
Priority	RT1	RT2	CB1	CB1.3	OT6	OT6.1	OT7	Future	Unscheduled	T:
? TBD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
0 0 - Blocker	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1 1 - Critical	1	5	1	1	6	0	2	3	2	21
2 2 - Major	2	14	4	0	7	1	7	18	6	59
3 3 - Normal	0	8	8	0	23	1	15	41	21	117
4 4 - Minor	0	3	0	0	11	0	13	44	14	85
Total Unique Issues:	4	30	13	1	47	2	37	106	44	284

Showing 6 of 6 statistics.
Filter: Fortnite - UX Lab Feedback

Two Dimensional Filter Statistics: Fortnite - UX Lab Feedback

	Issue Type		
Status	Bug	Task	T:
NEW	1	135	136
IN PROGRESS	1	1	2
REOPENED	0	1	1
FIXED	0	42	42
CLOSED	19	80	99
TO DO	0	4	4
Total Unique Issues:	21	263	284

Showing 6 of 6 statistics.
Filter: Fortnite - UX Lab Feedback

Aligning goals

- Priorities for testing features.

- UX Testing goals.

- Communicating schedule.

- Evangelizing to team.

Part 3 – Working Together
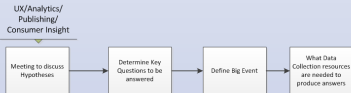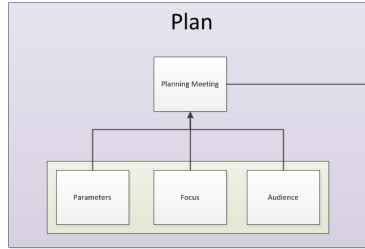
Hypotheses

Milestone Start

Hypotheses Generation

UX/Analytics/ Publishing/ Consumer Insight
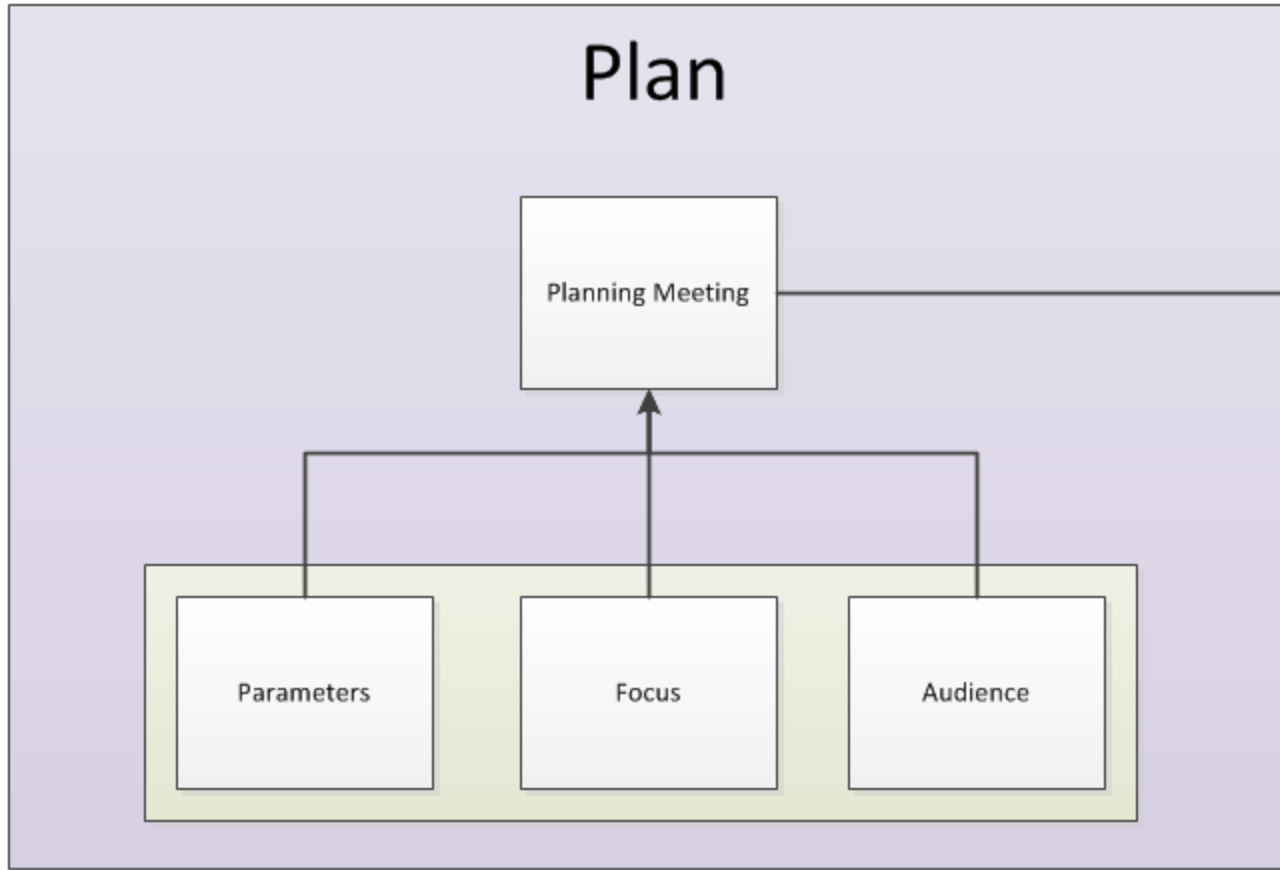
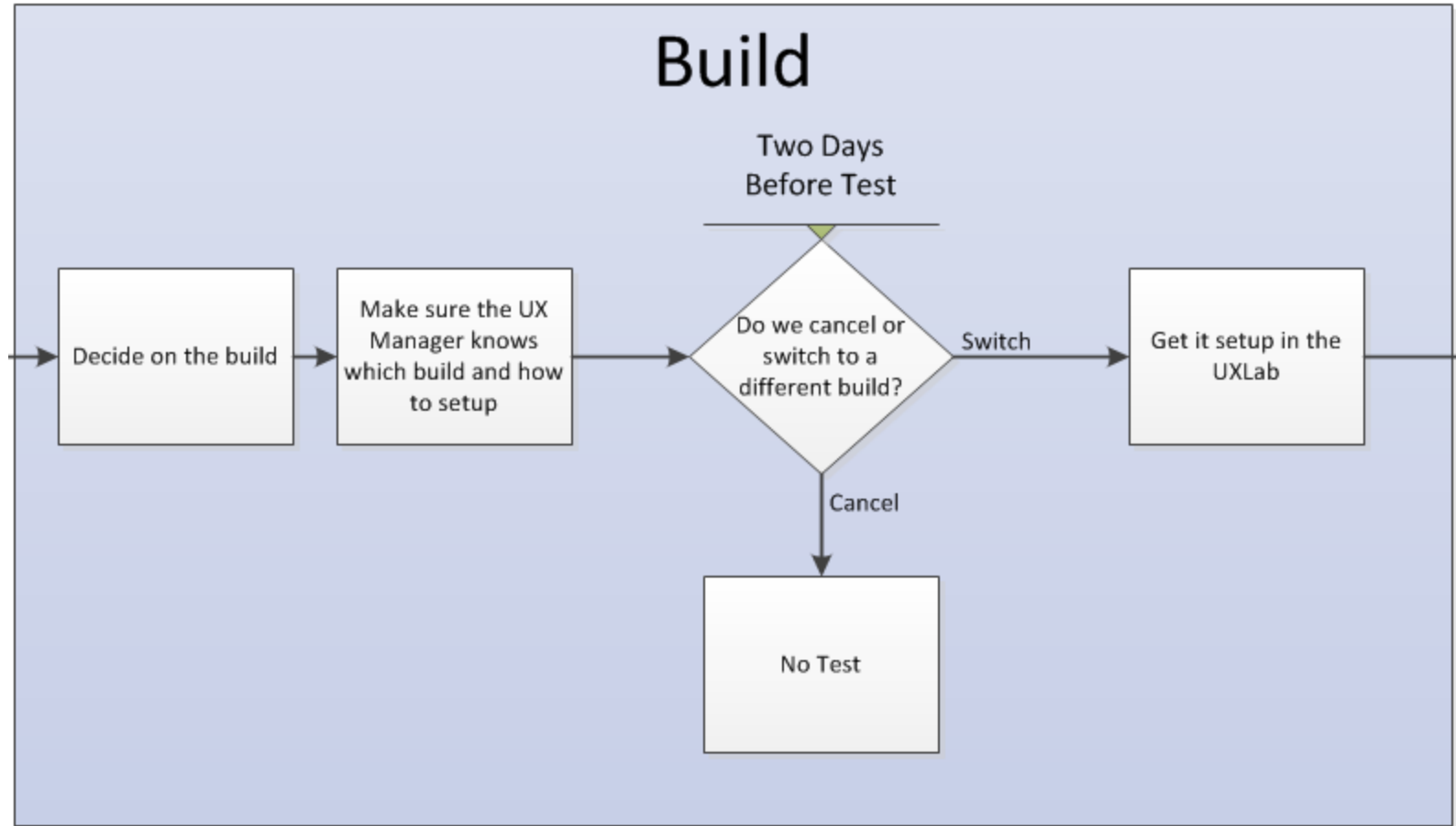Meeting to discuss Hypotheses → Determine Key Questions to be answered → Define Big Event → What Data Collection resources are needed to produce answers

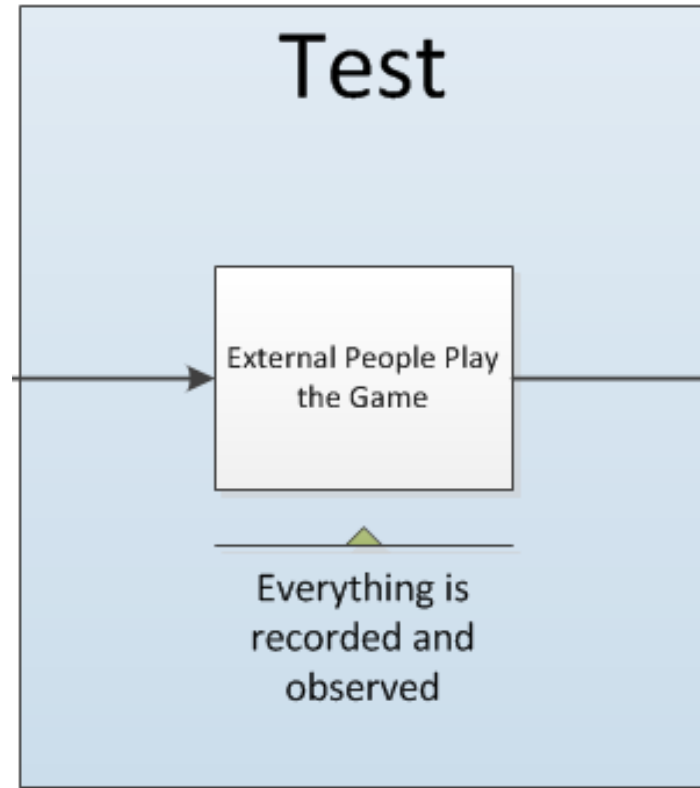Goal: Everyone in sync for what is needed for that milestone test

Plan

Plan

Planning Meeting

Parameters — Focus — Audience

Build

Build

Two Days Before Test

Decide on the build → Make sure the UX Manager knows which build and how to setup → Do we cancel or switch to a different build? — Switch → Get it setup in the UXLab

Cancel ↓

No Test

Test

Test

External People Play the Game

Everything is recorded and observed

Report

Report

UX Team generates a report with the findings
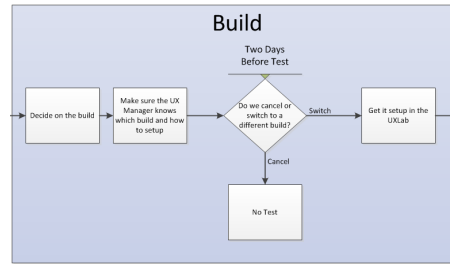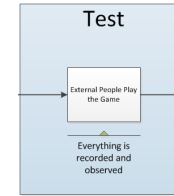
Task Creation

Task Creation

UX Team, EP, Lead Designer, Strike Team Owners set-up a meeting → Results of the UX test are explained → Actionable Items are turned into Jira Tasks and assigned to the appropriate bucket
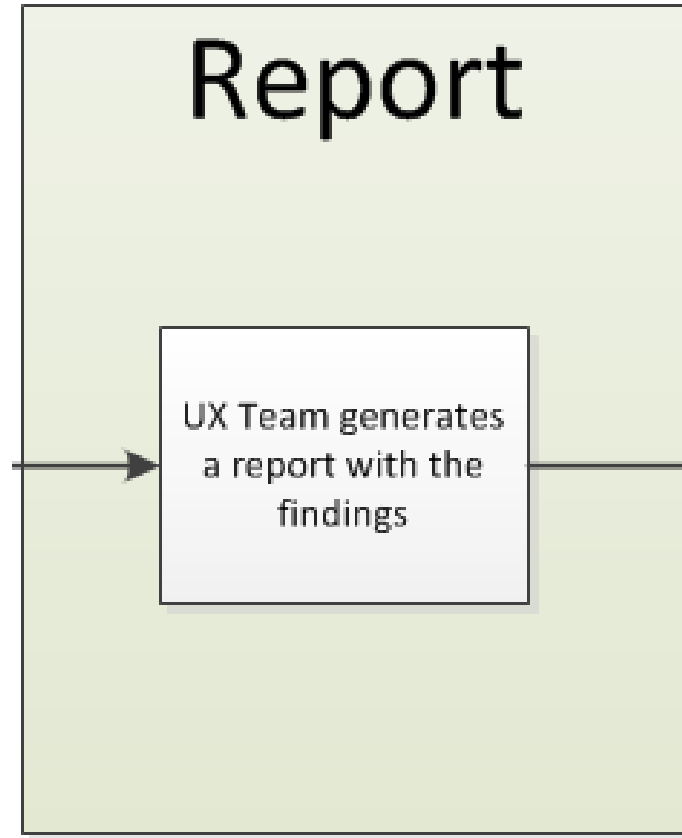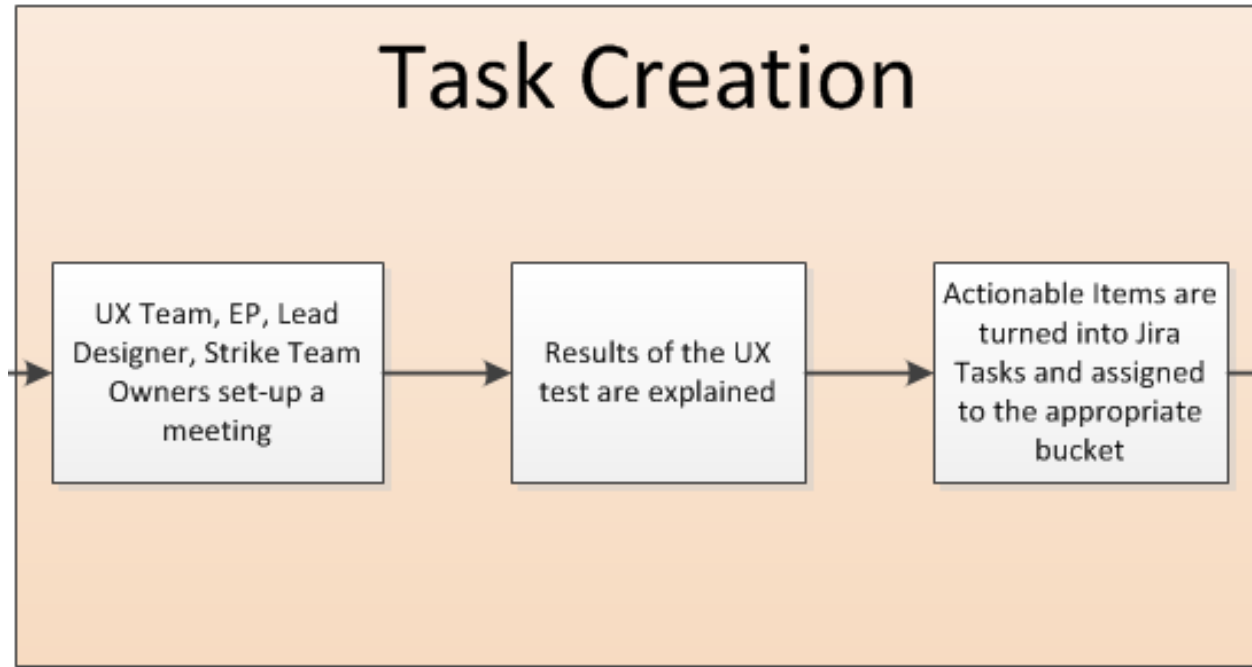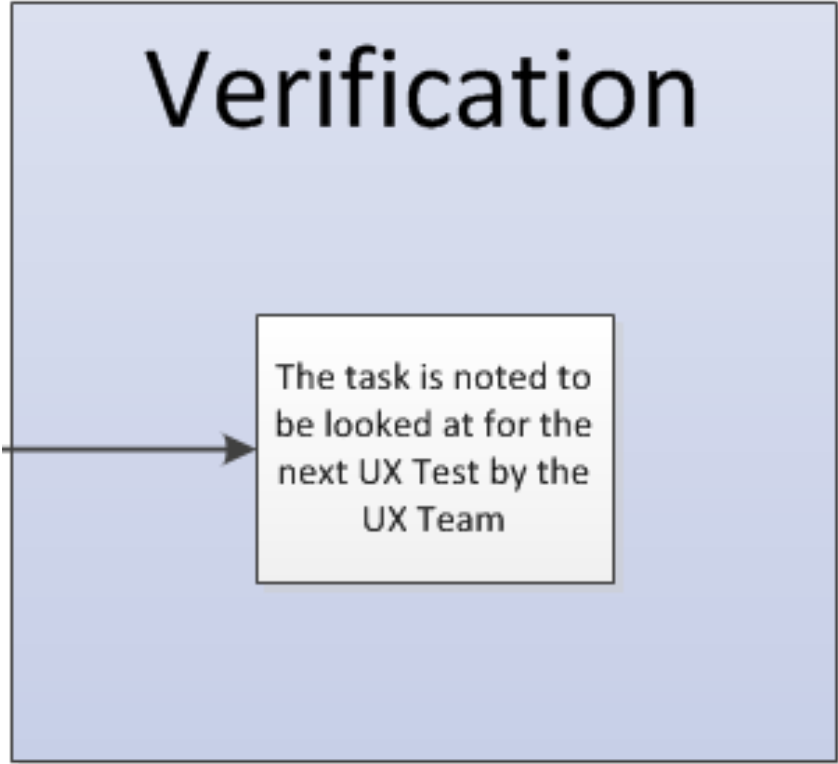
Triage

On the next Sprint Pre-Planning Meeting

Triage

Strike Teams will Triage all Tasks labeled with UXLabFeedback → Does the strike team agree with the task — yes → The Task is assigned to this sprint

no ↓

Strike Team will explain to the UX Team why the task was adjusted → Will the task be assigned to this sprint? — yes →

Wait for the next Pre-Planning Meeting ← no

Verification

Verification

The task is noted to be looked at for the next UX Test by the UX Team

One-Sheet

Common Findings One-Sheet

UX Team Generate Report

Analytics Team Generate Report

Consumer Insight Generates Report

Community / Live Team

→ Find Common Threads across all areas → Generate a Common Findings One-Sheet with the results → Communicate findings to Execs

Build

Two Days
Before Test

Decide on the build

Make sure the UX Manager knows which build and how to setup

Do we cancel or switch to a different build?

Switch

Get it setup in the UXLab

Cancel

No Test

Report

UX Team generates a report with the findings

Task Creation

| UX Team, EP, Lead Designer, Strike Team Owners set-up a meeting | Results of the UX test are explained | Actionable Items are turned into Jira Tasks and assigned to the appropriate bucket |

Triage

On the next Sprint Pre-Planning Meeting

Strike Teams will Triage all Tasks labeled with UXLabFeedback

Does the strike team agree with the task

yes

The Task is assigned to this sprint

no

Strike Team will explain to the UX Team why the task was adjusted

Will the task be assigned to this sprint?

yes

no

Wait for the next Pre-Planning Meeting

Verification

The task is noted to be looked at for the next UX Test by the UX Team
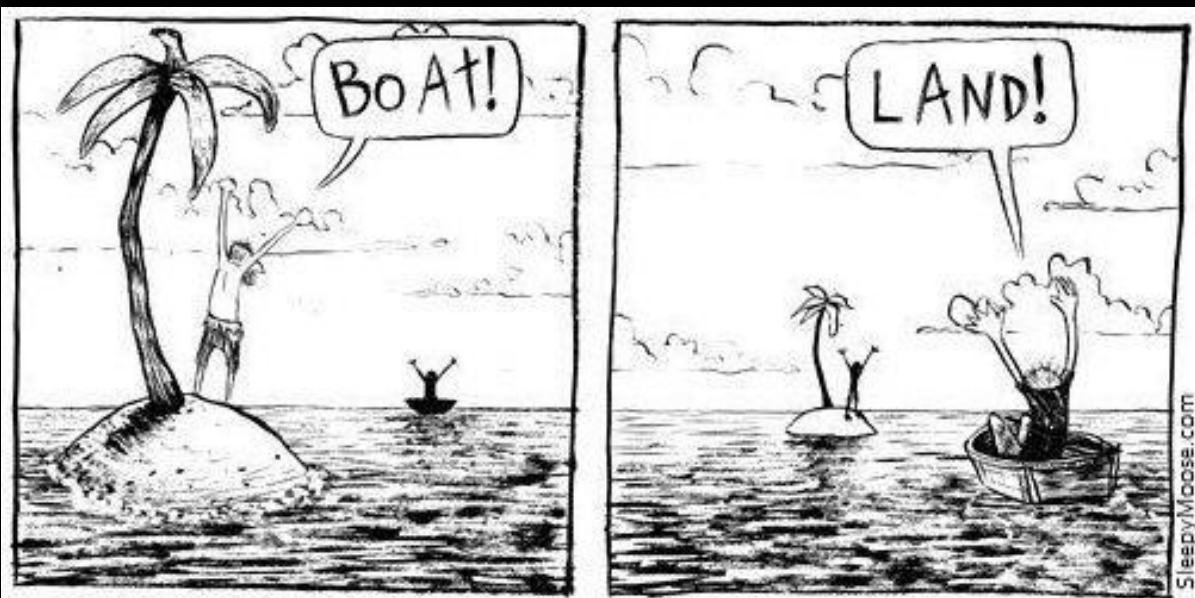
Common Findings One-Sheet
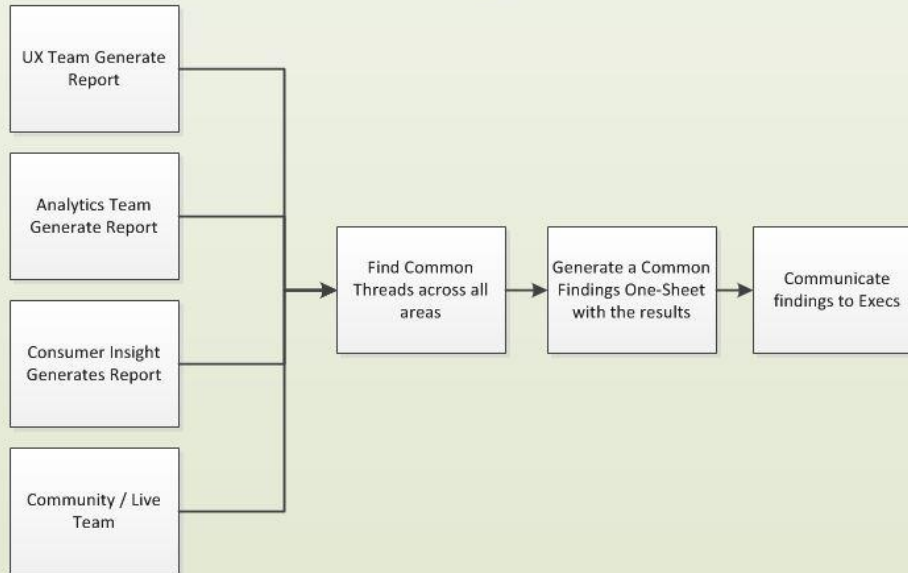
Process still needs work …

- Keep things visible.

- Strengthen feedback loop.
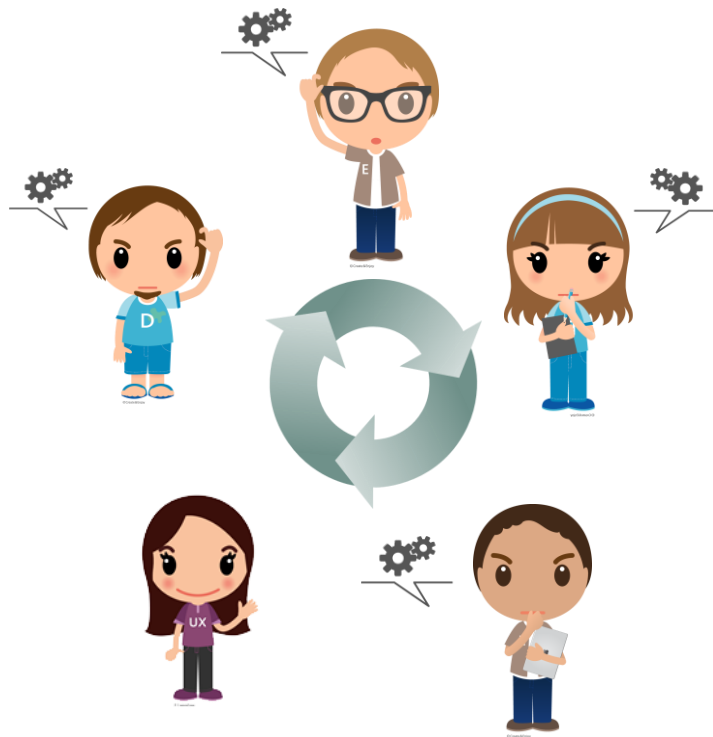
- Drive participation in process.

- Adjust workflows.

Take Away

1. Debunk **UX and prod misconceptions**. Don't be afraid of each other.

2. Start small with devs interested in UX to **demonstrate UX quick wins**.

3. Don't be the UX police, instead work together to be successful and measure/communicate the progress.

4. Establish a feedback and implementation loop.

5. Celebrate together for the progress made …