The Art of Triage' in Online Game Development
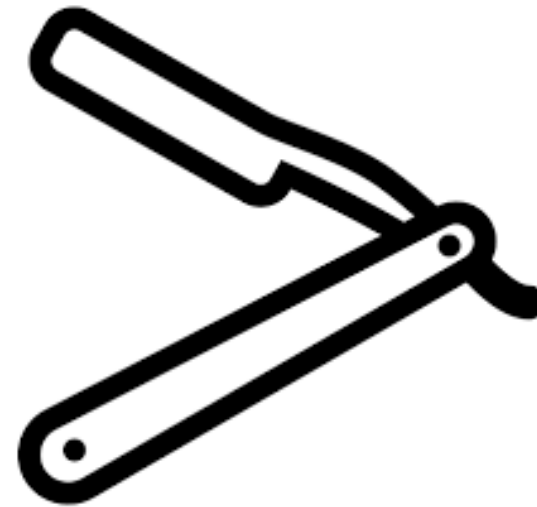
Richard Vogel
VP of Production, Certain Affinity

Triage is about

FOCUS
Player Experience

Triage is

There are Ten Touch Points to Triage
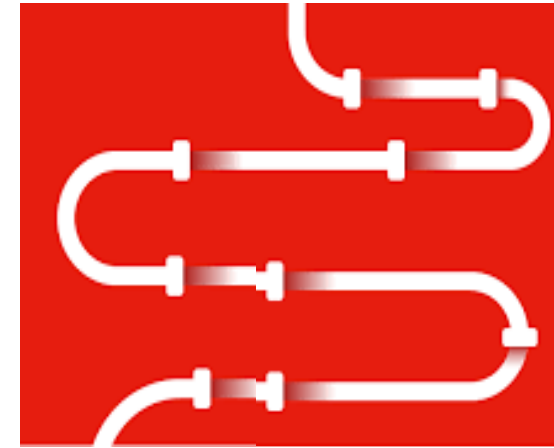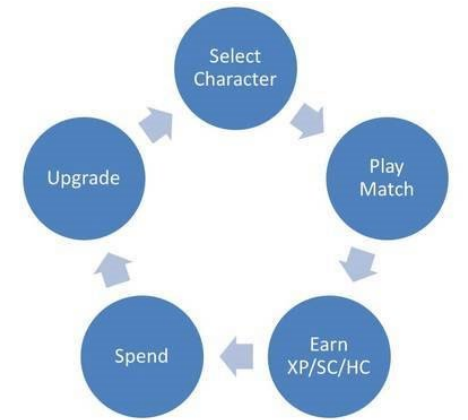

Concept

1st Playable

Vertical Slice

End of Prototype

Meta Vertical Slice

There are Ten Touch Points to Triage

Alpha

Closed
Beta

Vertical
Slice
Monetization

Open
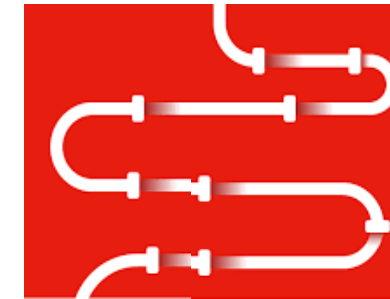Beta

Release

There are Ten Touch Points to Triage

- Concept Phase

- Prototype Phase

- Production Phase

Tools for Triage in a Pandemic World

- Miro – collaborative virtual presence

- Zoom – Communications

- Jira for task/burndowns and QA

- MSFT Excel for roadmaps

- Tableau for analytics (KPIs)

Concept Phase

Concept Phase

NYU's PRACTICE conference by Zak McClendon

The Yard Sale

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkZoGDKy_L4

Concept Phase

- **The Yard Sale Exercise**

  - Define creative promises
  - Brainstorm and add features
  - Define terms / Remove ambiguity - every creative promise/value should have a specific and narrow definition (vertically stacked cards)
  - Collectively stack rank Creative promises / Values
  - Align features with creative promises/value priorities
 - Group prioritized features into buckets

Concept Phase

- **Group Prioritized features into buckets**

  - **Interaction Paradigms** - Function as a sort of "super feature" to describe all your game's modes of interaction with the world and the simulation
  - **Required Features** - You absolutely need
  - **Desired Features** - Cool ideas but could ship without
  - **Wishlist** - Seem good but out of scope, risky
  - **Boilerplate** - Have to do that are not fun/creative
  - **Cornfield** - Ideas go to die (graveyard)
  - **Foggy Notions/Bounties** - Everyone wants, but no one knows how to do
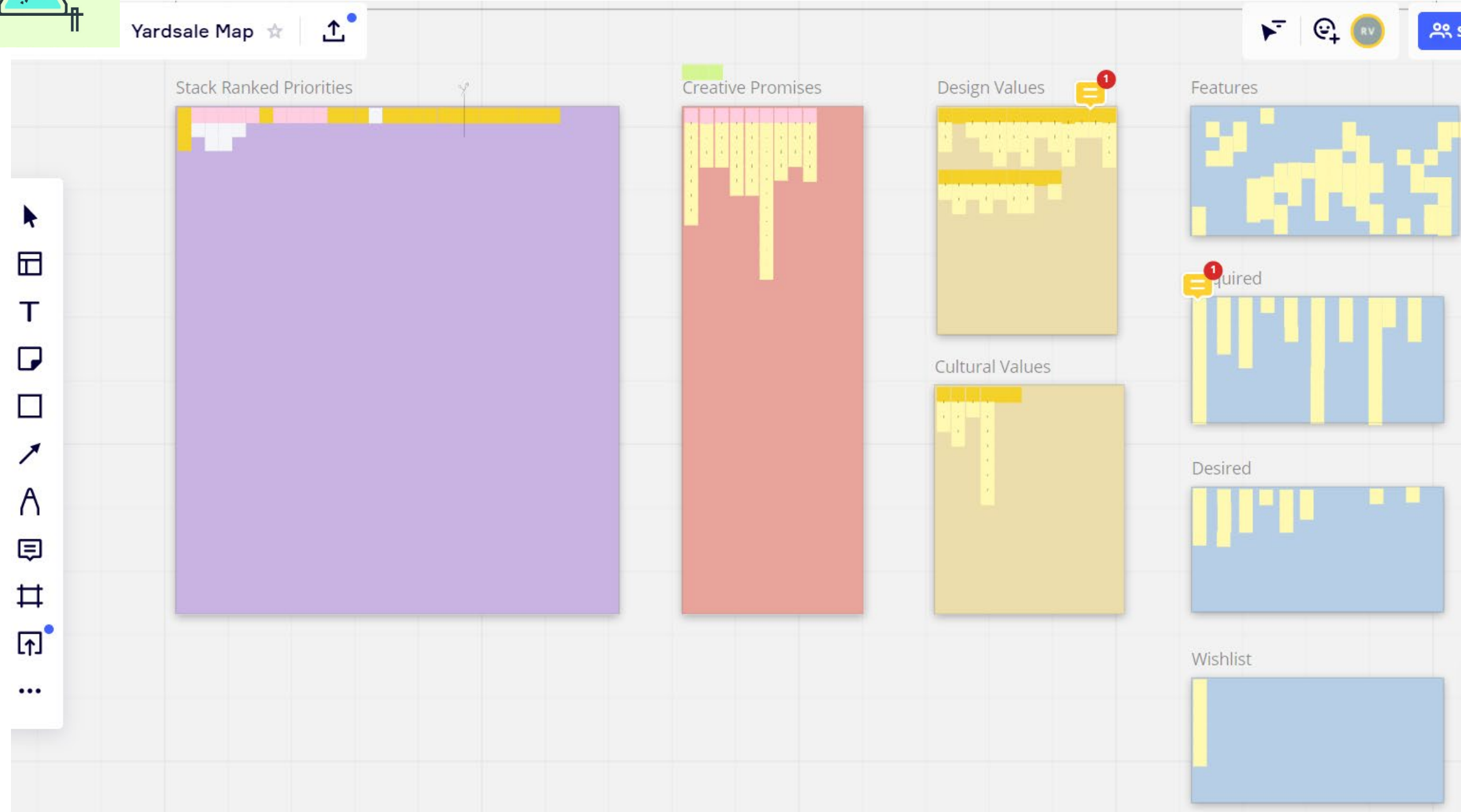
Concept Phase

Concept Phase

The Yard Sale Exercise

➤➤
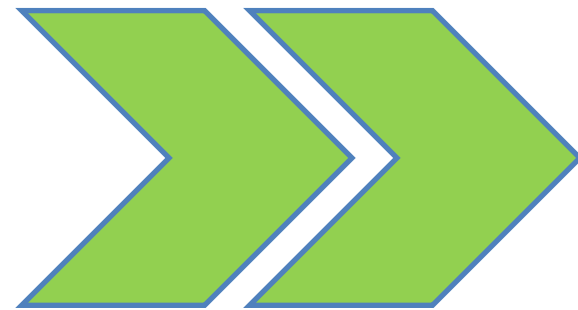
Game Pillars

Key Features

Elevator Pitch

Vision Statement

Prototype Phase

1ˢᵗ Playerable

Getting to **Fun**

1ˢᵗ Playerable

Moment-to-Moment
Gameplay

1ˢᵗ Playerable

Publish

Build
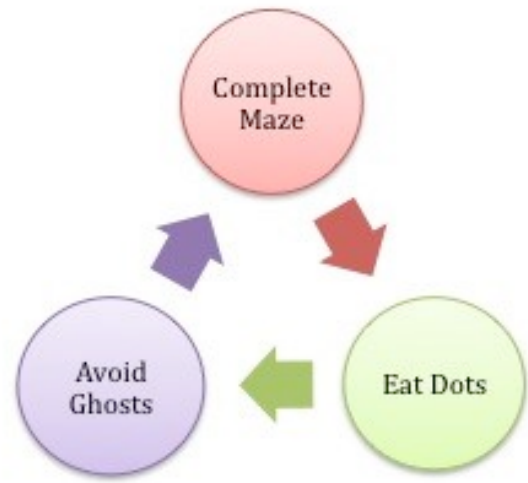
Feedback Loops
- Team Playtests

Iterate

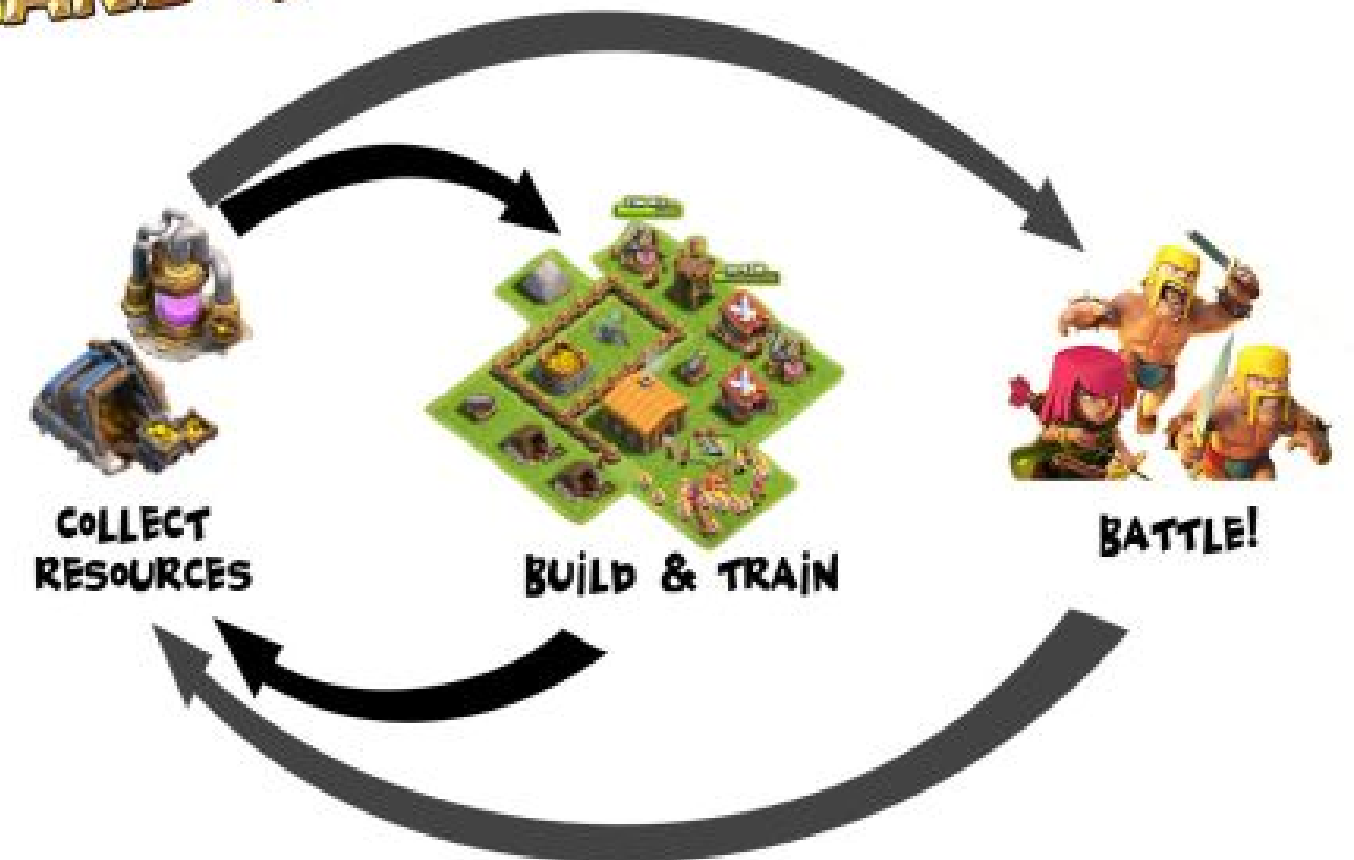**Feedback**
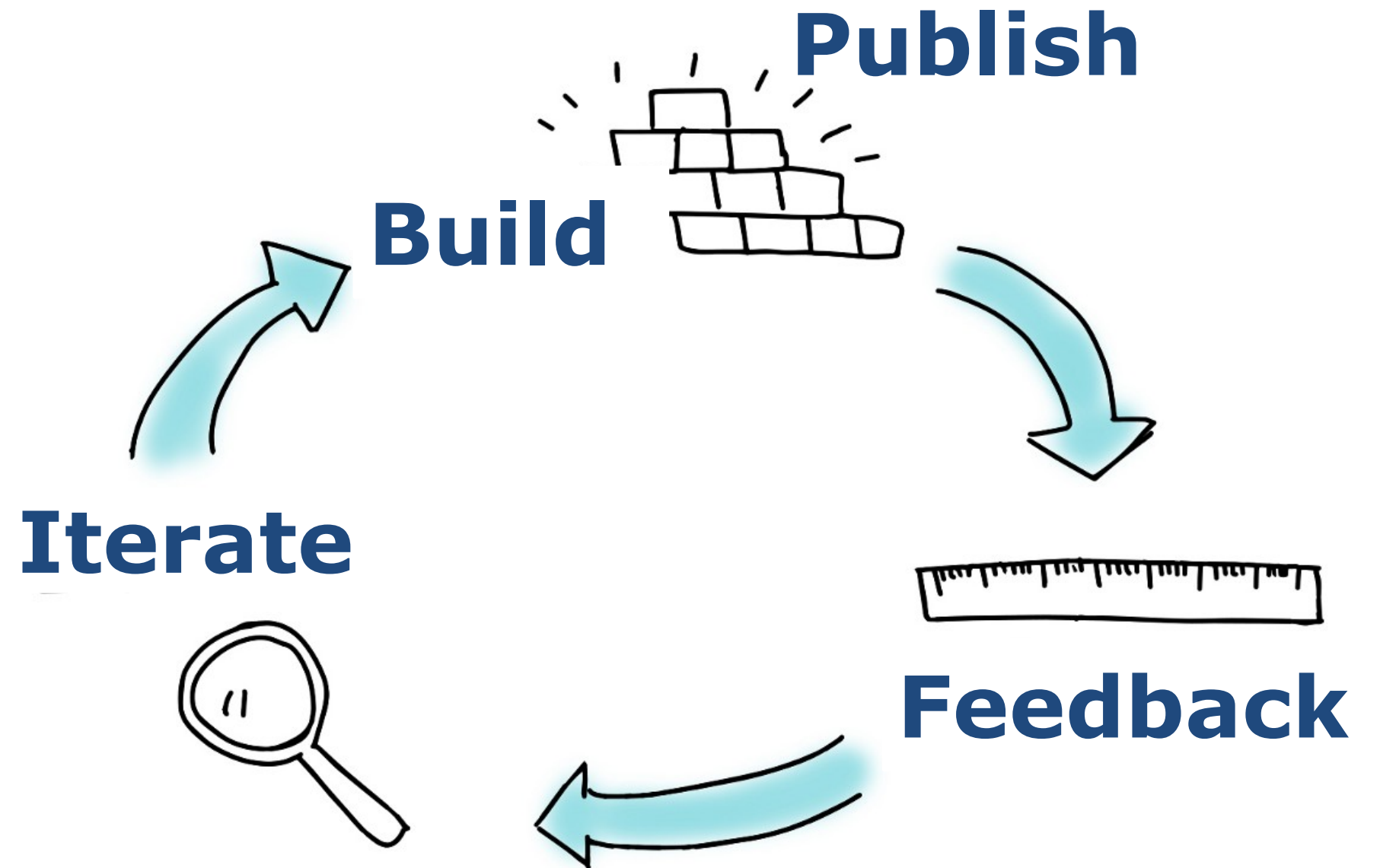
1ˢᵗ Playerable

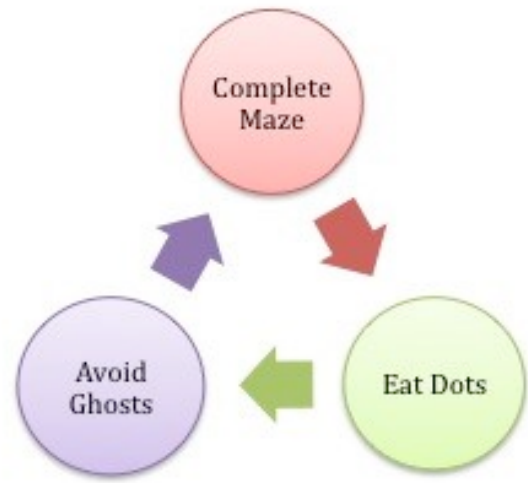## Getting to Look And Feel (Beautiful Corner)

Vertical Slice

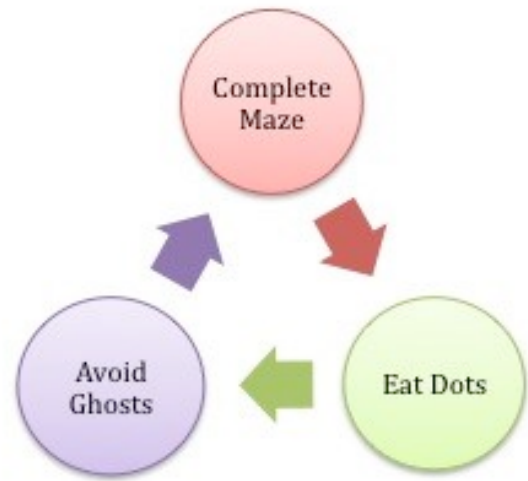**Moment-to-Moment Gameplay**

+

Core Game Loops
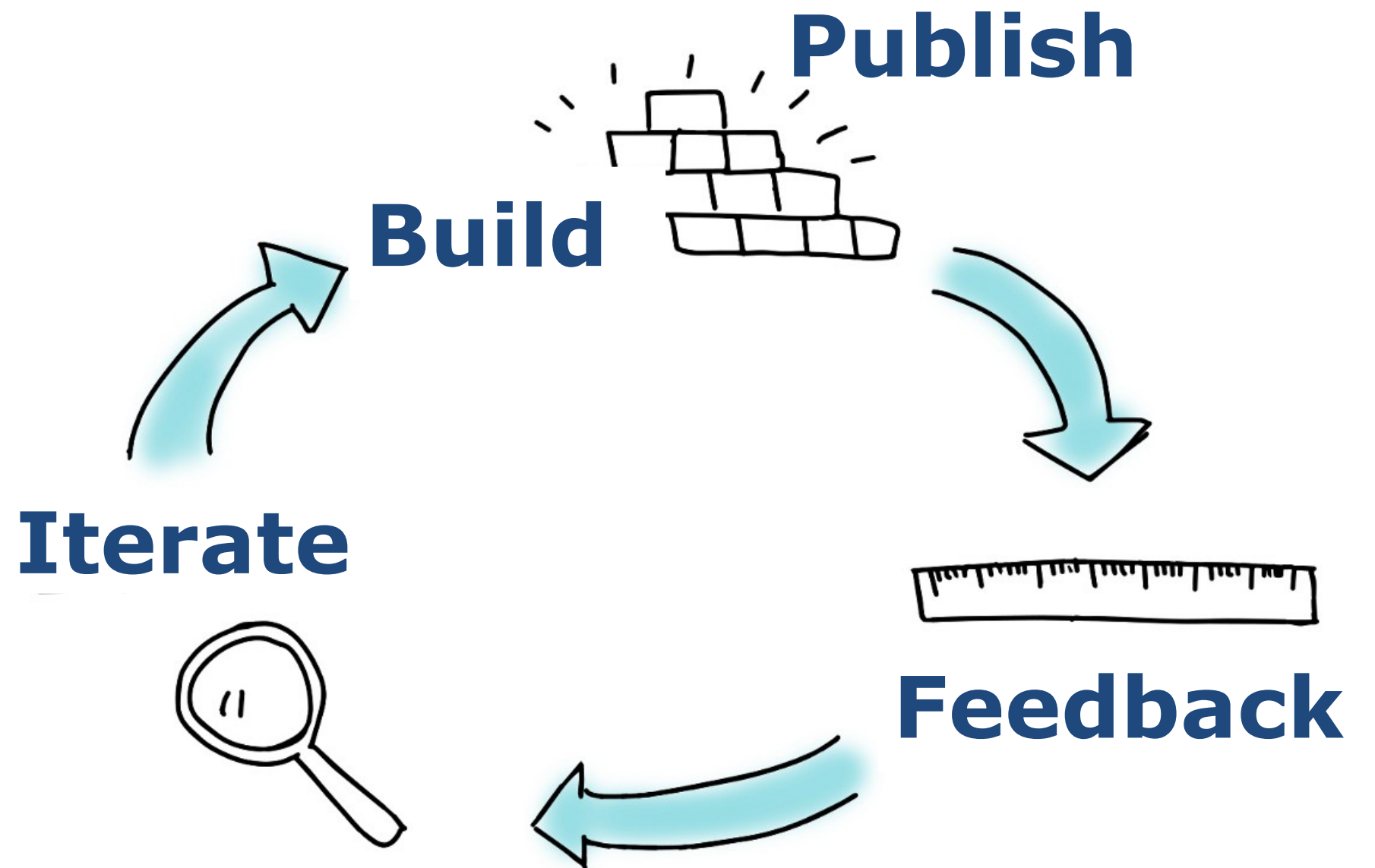
Vertical Slice

Day 1 Experience

1. Beginning FTUE
2. Core Loops (Inner)
3. Near final graphic quality
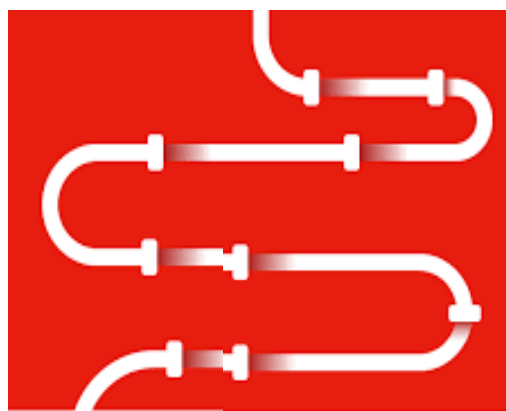4. ~ 45 minutes of gameplay
5. Rinse and Repeat

Vertical Slice

Feedback Loops

- Team Playtests
- Focus Testing

Publish

Build

Iterate

Feedback

End of Prototype

Getting Tools/Pipelines in Place

Engineering　　　Art　　　UX　　　Outsource

Build &　　　Design/　　　Audio　　　Analytics
Deploy　　　　Data
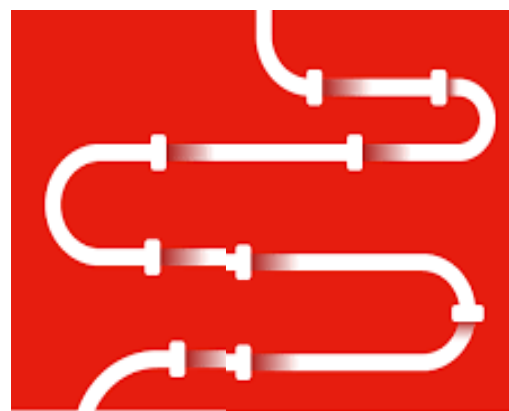
End of Prototype

Tool Creation → Optimize Content Creation
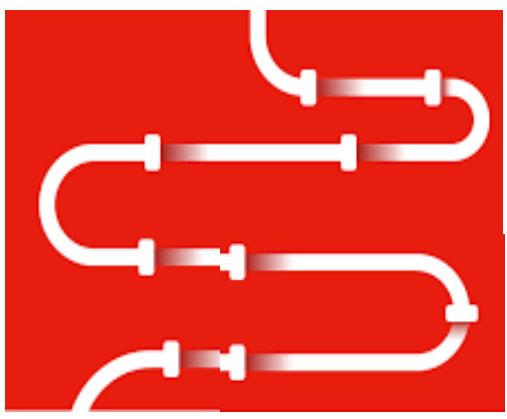
End of Prototype

The Player Journey

- Newbie — Onboarding
- Regular — Habit-Building
- Enthusiast — Mastery
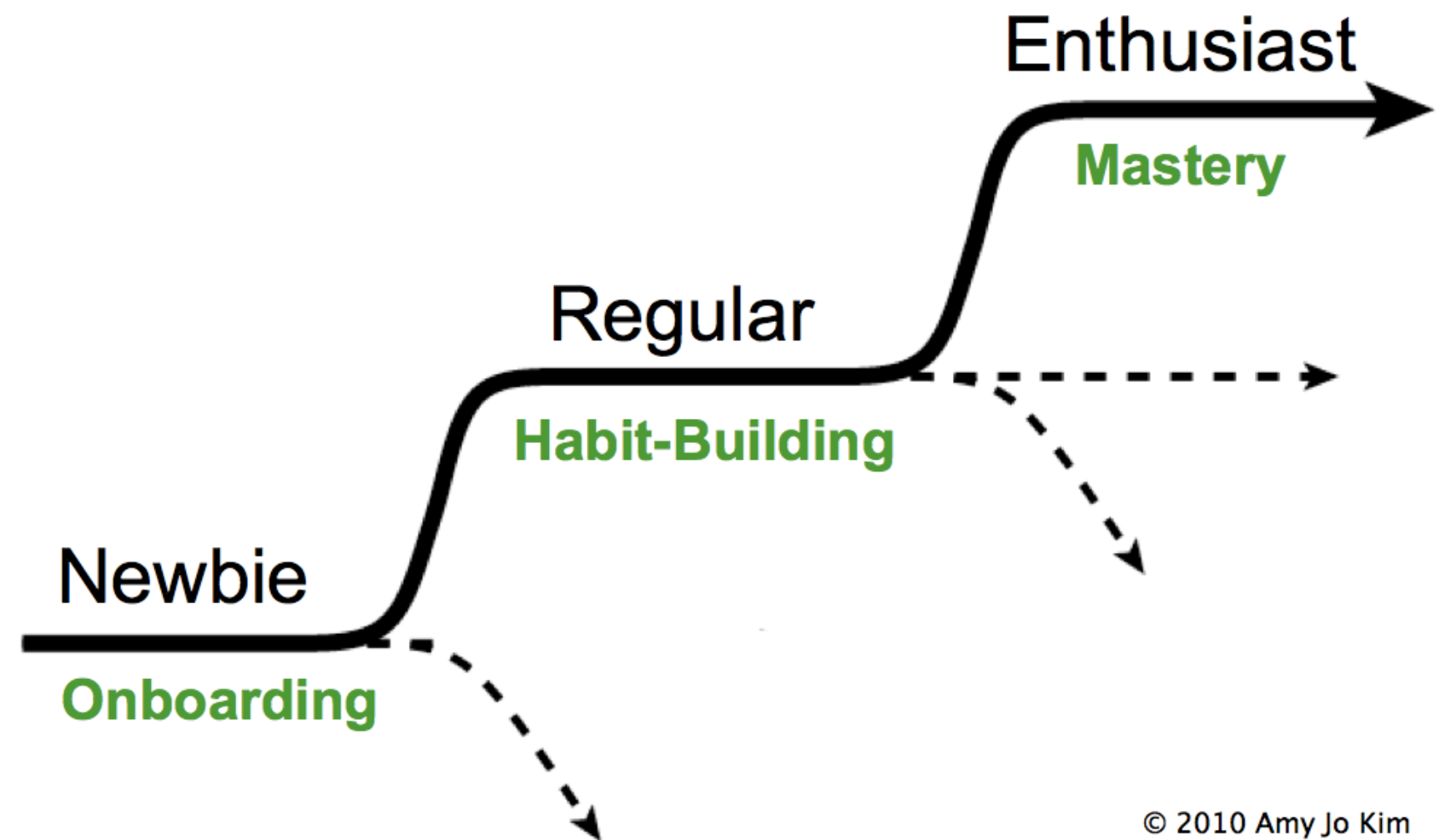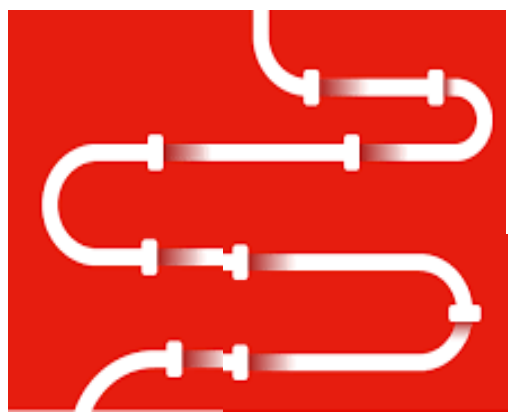
© 2010 Amy Jo Kim

End of Prototype

Miro – Blocking out the Player Journey
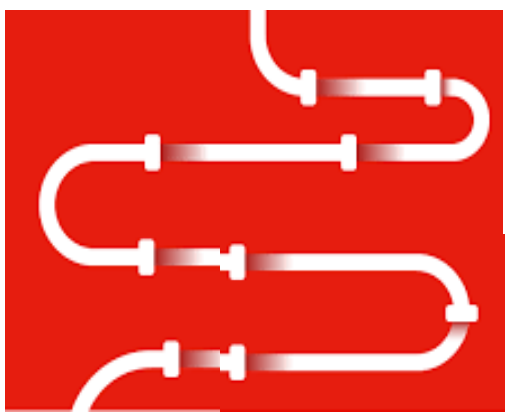
Gameplay Features   Content   UX/UI   FTUE   Backend
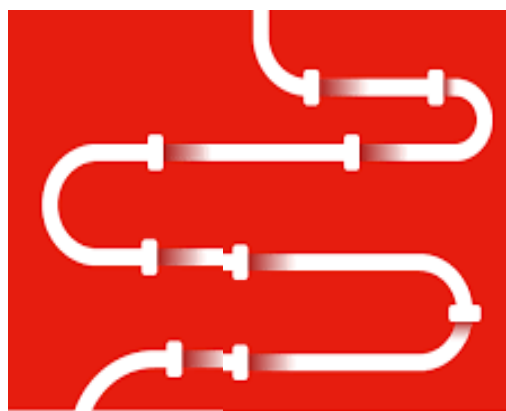
End of Prototype

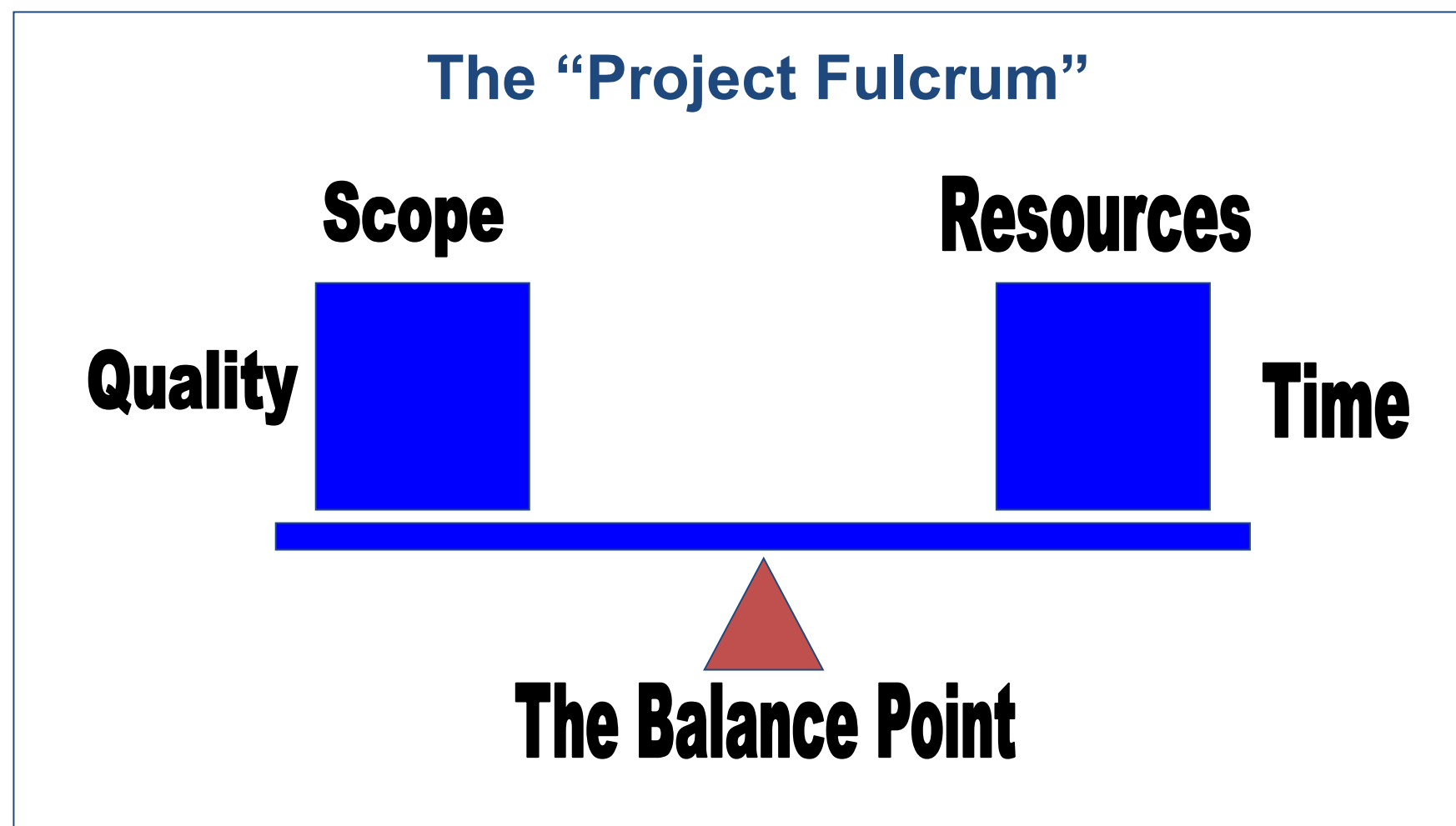**Miro – Blocking out the Player Journey**

Gameplay
Feature

Minimum Viable features

End of Prototype
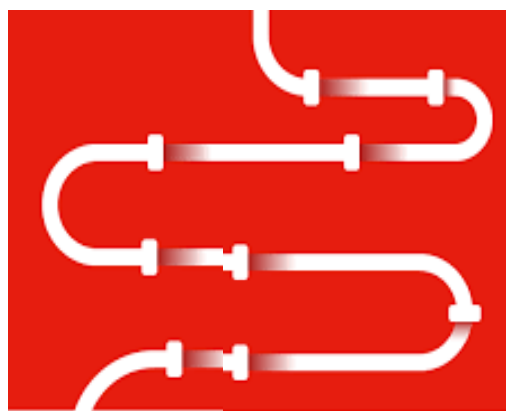
Roadmap to MVP

The "Project Fulcrum"

Scope

Quality

Resources

Time

The Balance Point

End of Prototype

Roadmap to MVP

The "Project Fulcrum"

Scope

Resources

Quality

Trade-offs

Time

The Balance Point
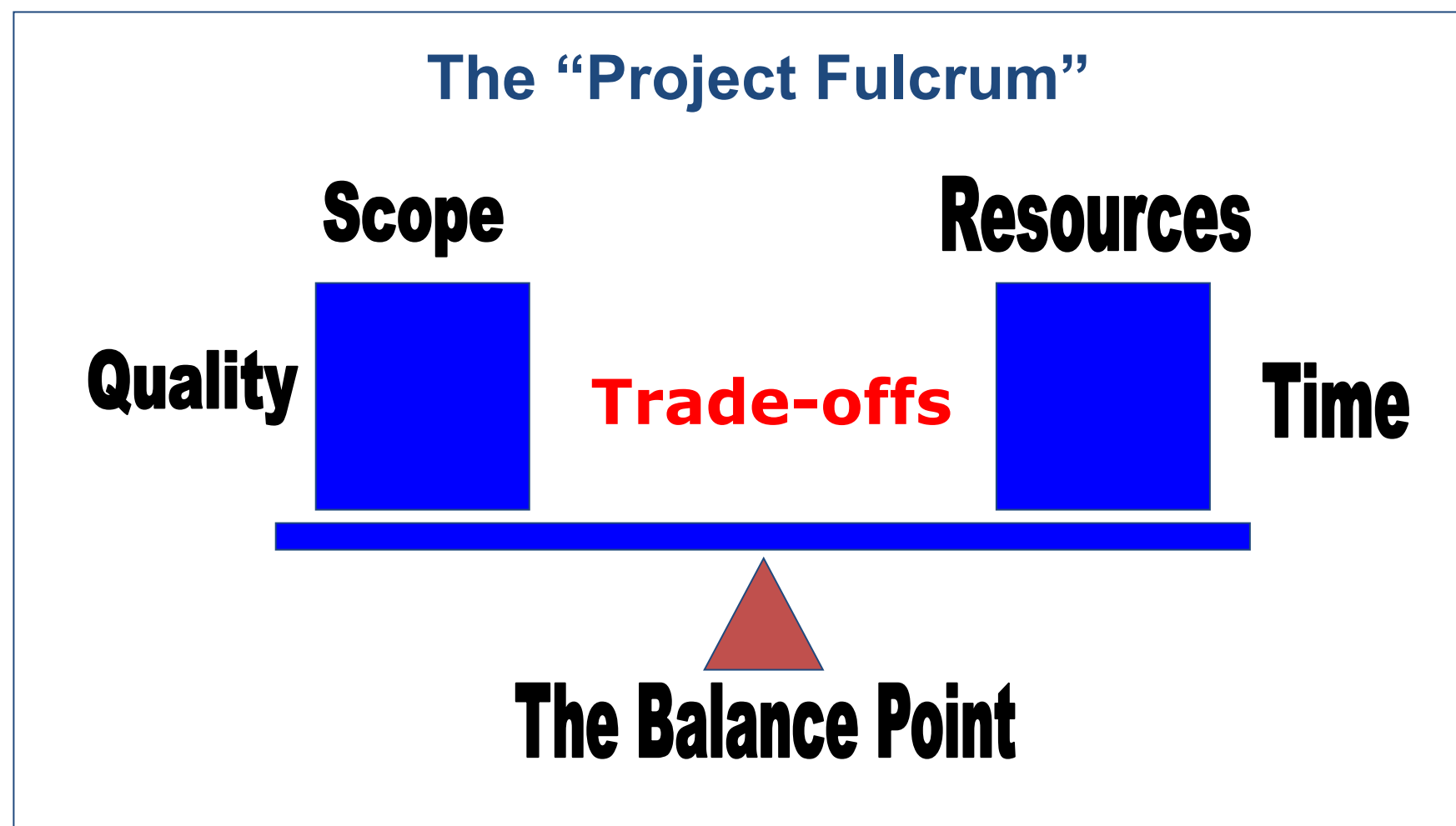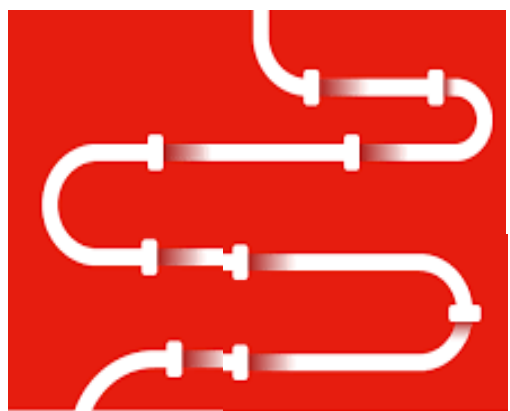
End of Prototype

Roadmap to MVP

Feasibility

Open Beta

Monetization VS

Closed Beta

Meta VS
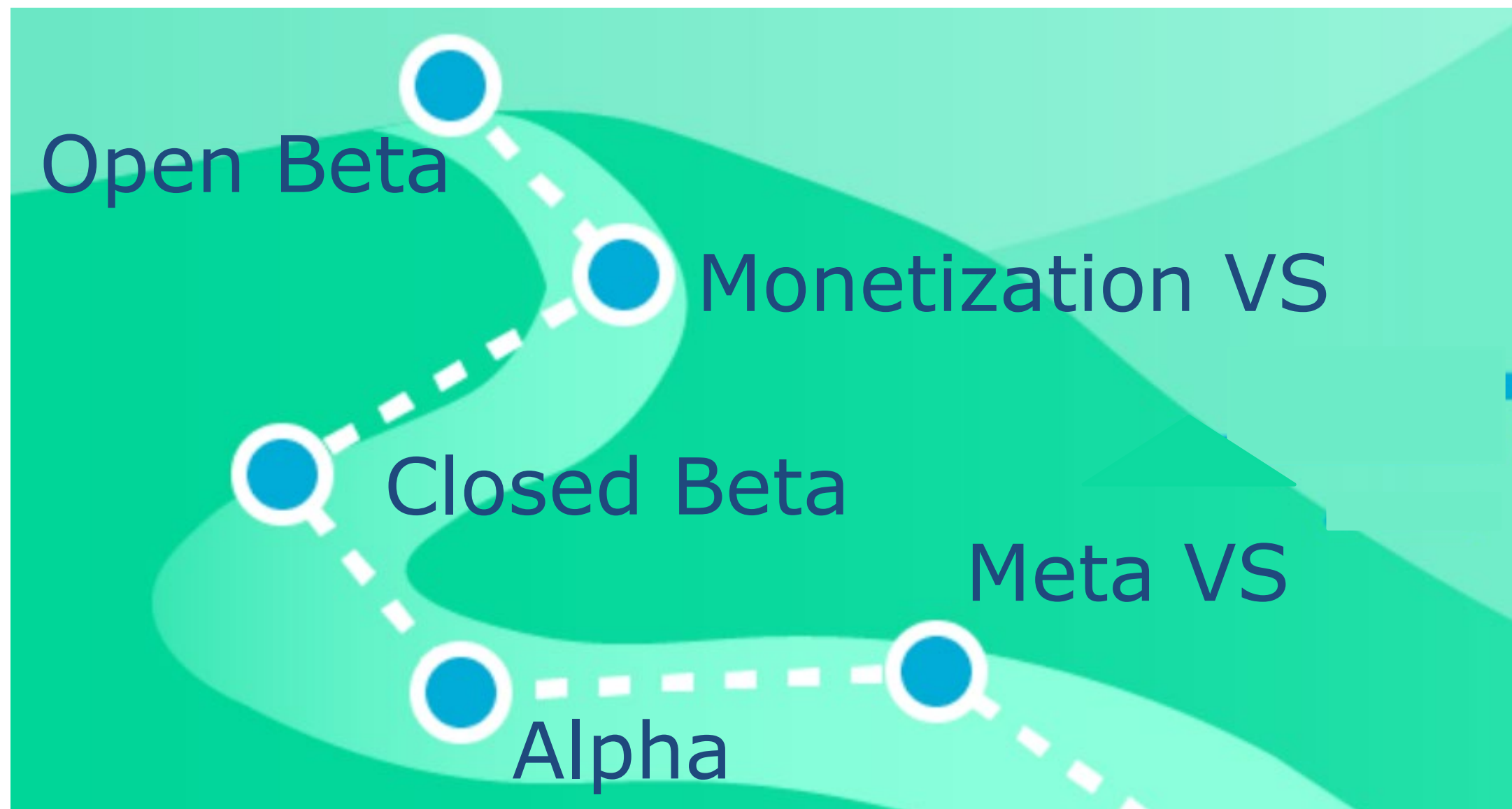
Alpha

Production Phase

Vertical Slice - Meta

The Core Outer Loops

Vertical Slice - Meta

Feedback Loops

- Team Playtests
- Focus Testing
- Analytics
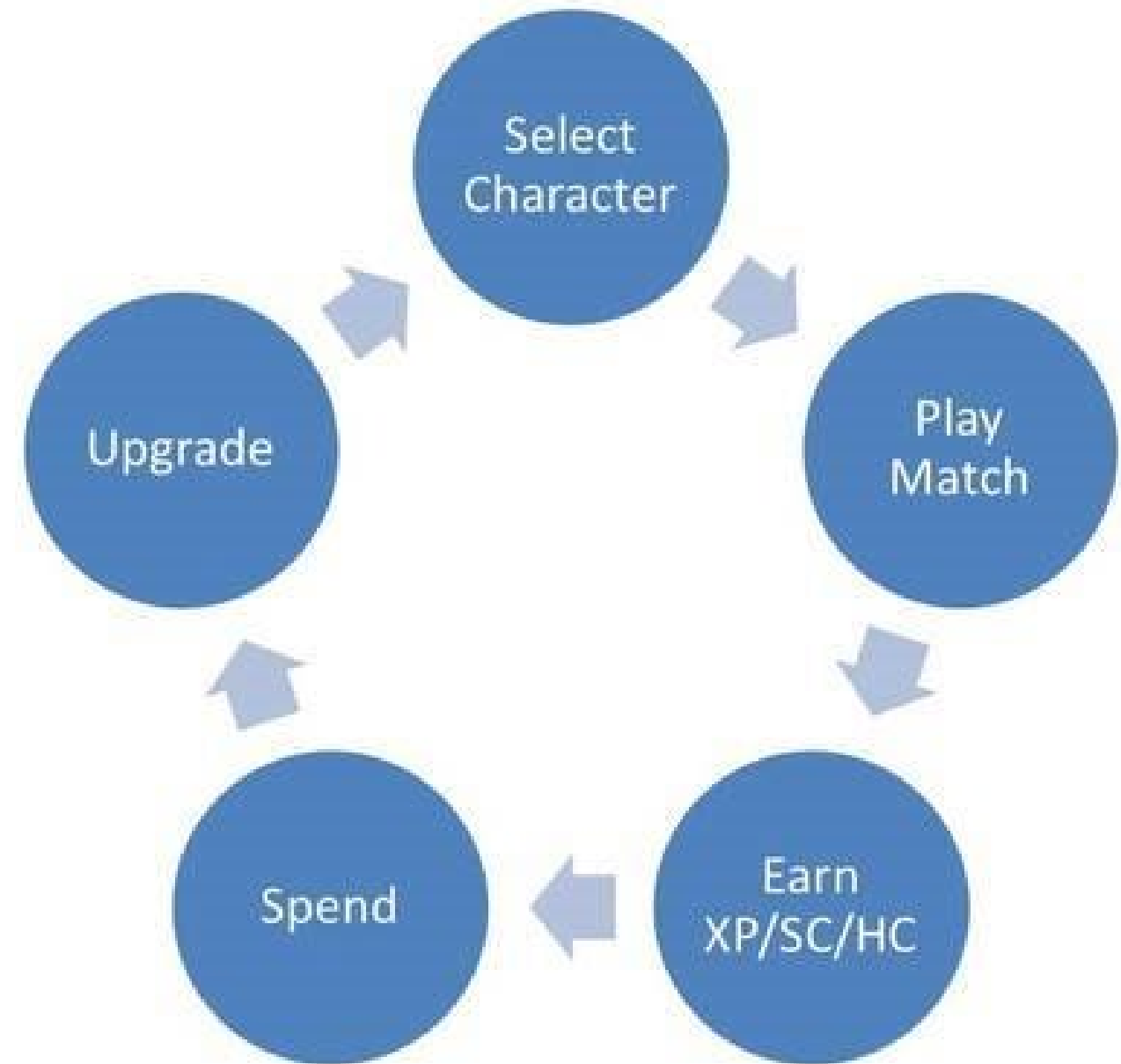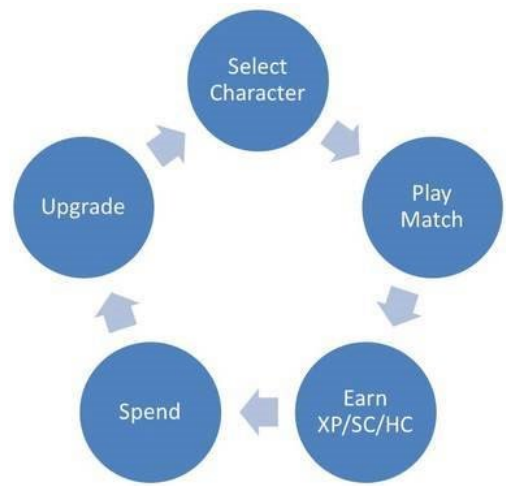
Publish

Build

Iterate
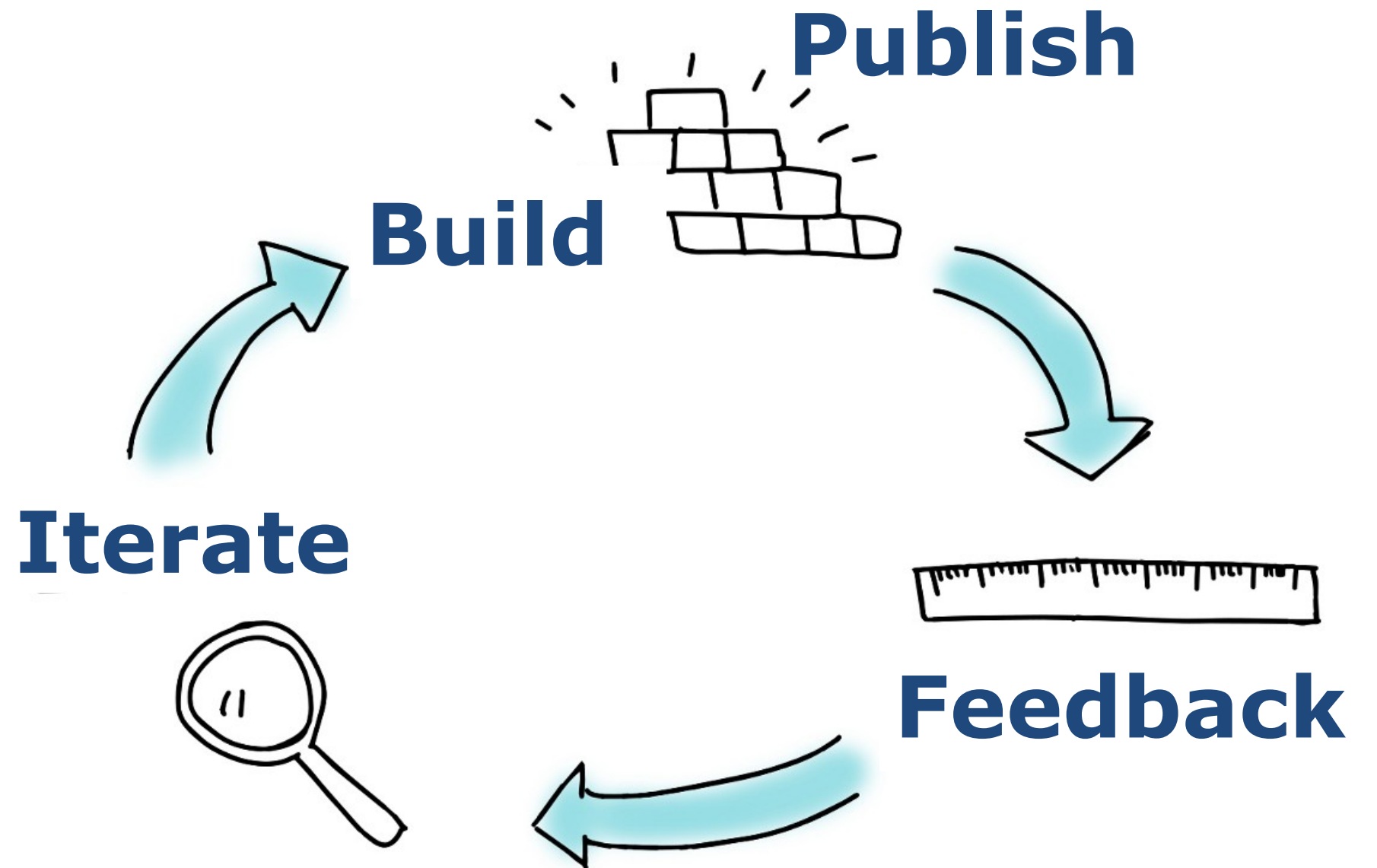
Feedback

Entering External Test

Alpha, Closed Beta, Open Beta

Feedback Loops

- Players
- Community
- Analytics

Publish

Build

Iterate

Feedback
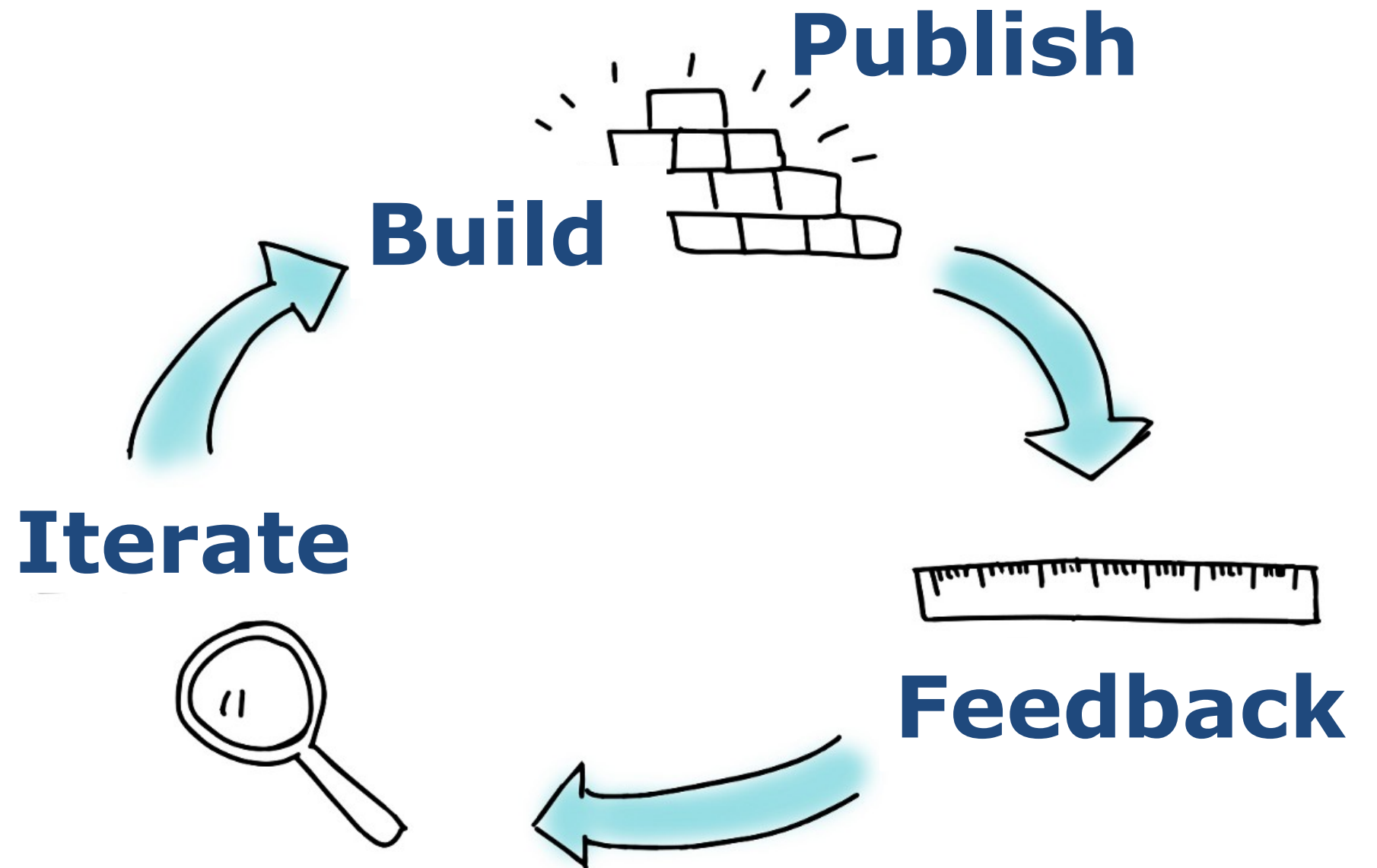
Alpha, Closed Beta, Open Beta
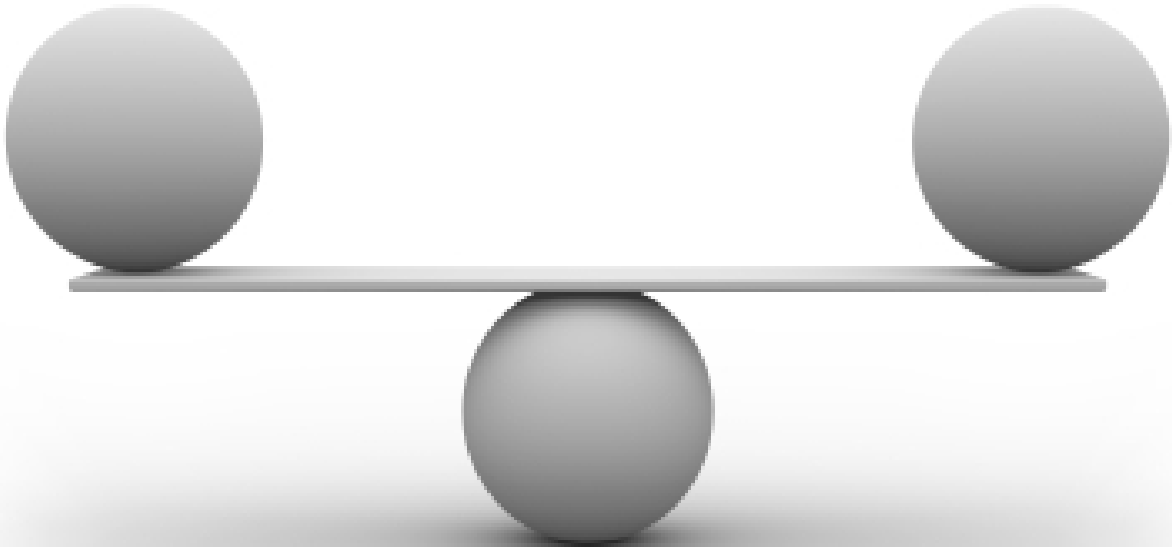
Alpha, Closed Beta, Open Beta

KPIs

Ratio of invites to logins	D1, D7, D14, D30
Peak Concurrent Users	Avg play session/user
Bug Count Curves	Retention Rate
DAU	K Factor
WAU	ARPU
MAU	ARPPU

Alpha, Closed Beta, Open Beta

KPIs

viability — can you make money with it?

feasibility — can you deliver it?

will people want it?

desirability
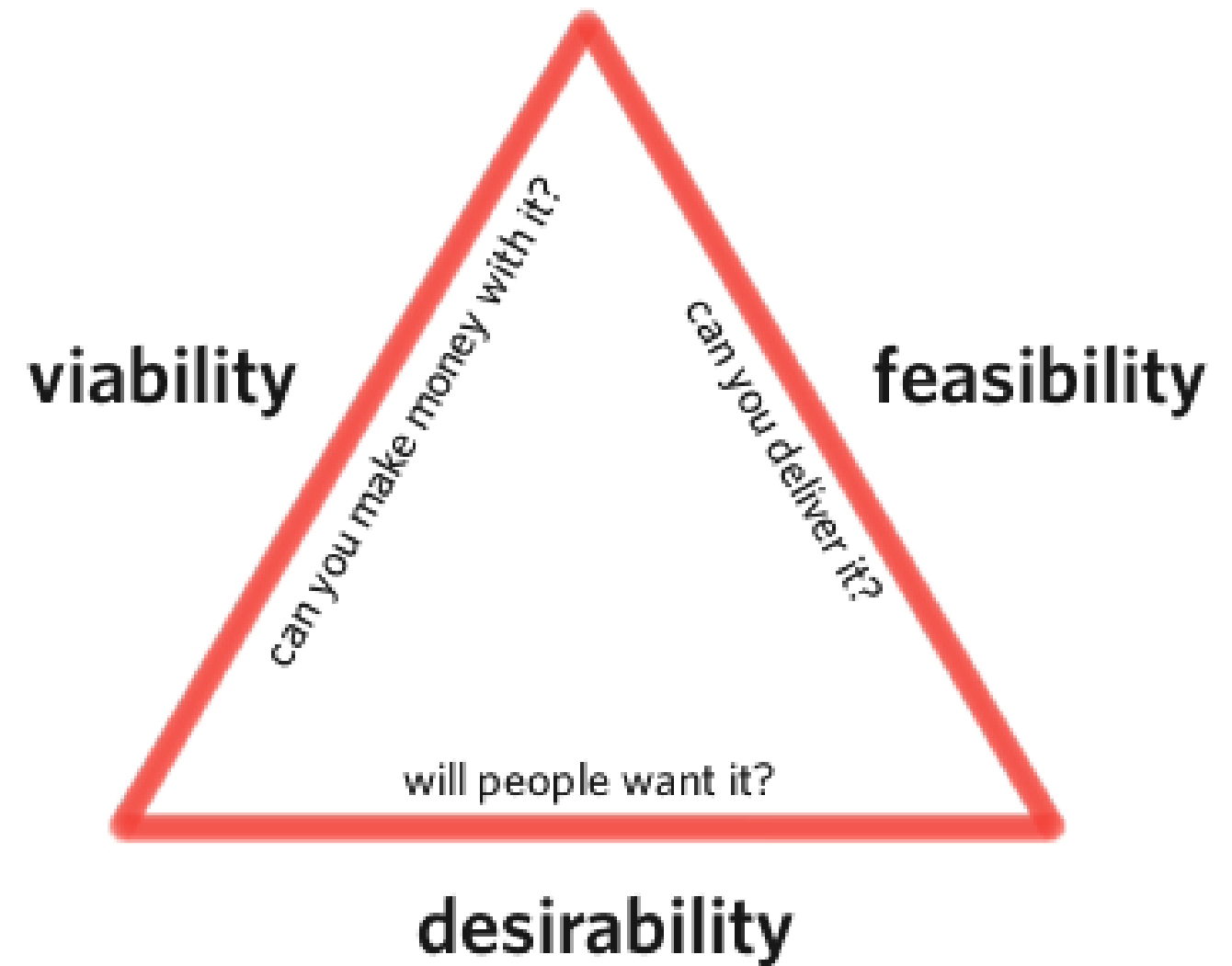
Source: The Keeley Triangle

Alpha, Closed Beta, Open Beta
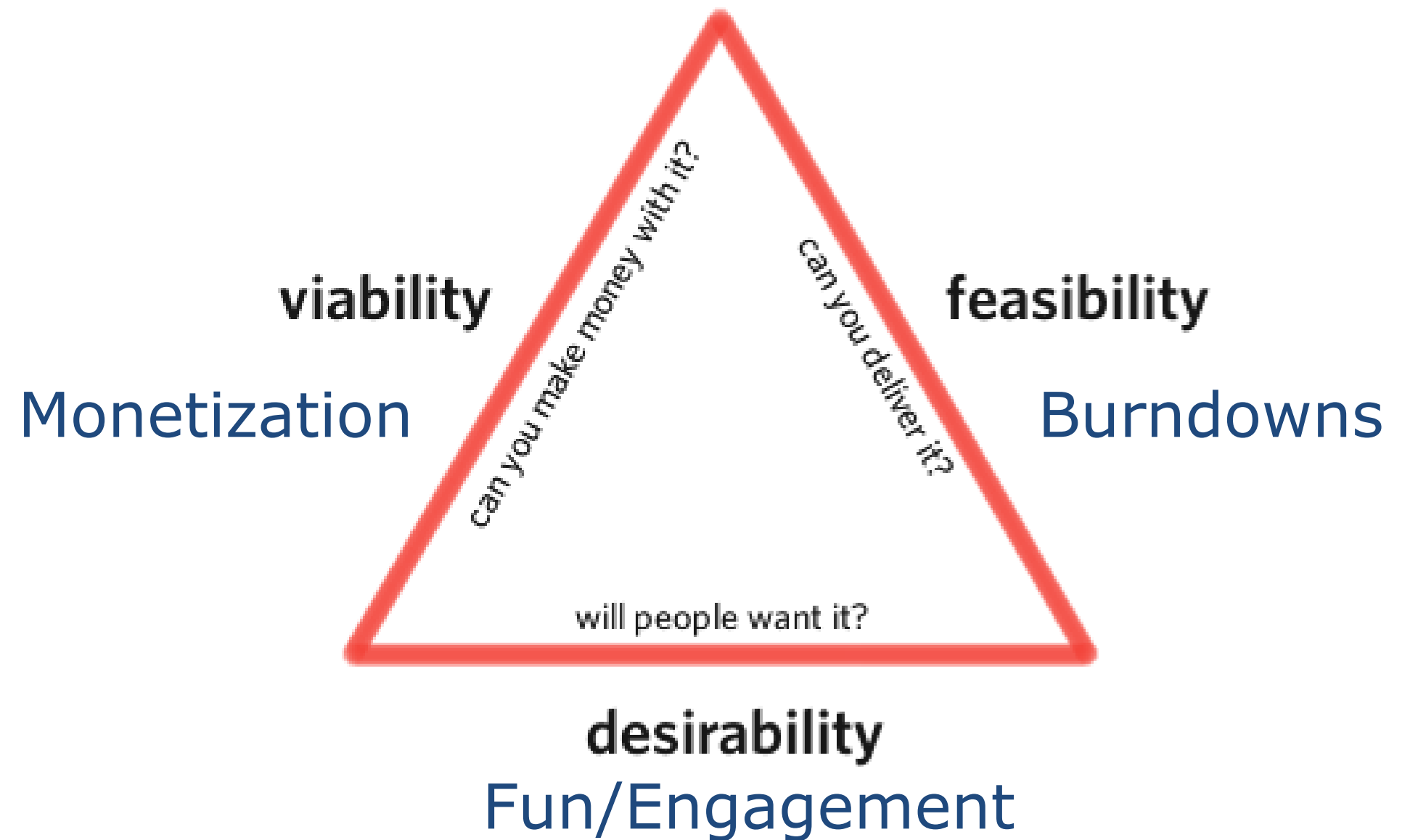
KPIs

viability

Monetization

can you make money with it?

can you deliver it?

feasibility

Burndowns

will people want it?

desirability

Fun/Engagement

Source: The Keeley Triangle

The Art of Triage' in Online Game Development

Summary

1. **Start with The Yard Sale exercise**

2. **Focus building the player journey**
   1. **Find the fun**
   2. **Build the core inner loops**
   3. **Defining the MVP - Content/Features**
   4. **Building the FUTE**
   5. **Build the Outer loops (Meta Game)**

3. **Prioritize tools/pipelines**

4. **Define KPIs to iterate the player journey**

The Art of Triage' in Online Game Development

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