

How to Implement Product Frameworks: Jobs-to-be-Done

A step-by-step guide to setting up your org and processes around the jobs-to-be-done framework



Defining the Jobs-to-be-Done Framework

Products and services fail when they do not align with what customers need—or ask for. Remember New Coke? The reinvented formula only lasted for 77 days before the beverage company had to bring back “Coca-Cola Classic” at an estimated \$30 million dollar loss.

The jobs-to-be-done (JTBD) framework helps avoid costly and time-consuming product development debacles by reframing the user’s (i.e., the customer’s) relationship to their problem. **User needs are viewed as a “job” that they want to get done. Your product is what the user “hires” to successfully complete that job.**

Viewing customer goals as jobs helps product teams focus on solving actual problems as opposed to just building features. Since these jobs are relatively stable over time, this is a useful concept for your product managers to follow to maintain a consistent, predictable product strategy. This framework can be leveraged by organizations of all sizes, from startups to large enterprises—and even for founders that are just starting to build their teams.

When to Use the Jobs-to-be-Done Framework

- You want to gain a deep understanding of your customers' needs and motivations
- You are looking to innovate and create something that solves real customer problems
- Your product development process needs realignment to be more customer-focused
- You've been shipping features that are flopping because you misunderstood what customers need
- A failed launch has required re-prioritization of your product team's roadmap

✓ PROS

Save Time:

Focuses on what's relevant by having a customer-centric approach to product development

Grow Customer Loyalty:

Solves customer needs in a unique way that accommodates their emotional and social needs

Competitive Differentiation:

Identifies unmet customer needs and potential innovation opportunities

Quickly Identify Gaps:

Know where to invest next in your product

Increase Buying Power:

Improves alignment between product features and customer motivations

More Efficient Teams:

Creates consensus across the org when everyone refers to jobs and terminology in the same way

✗ CONS

Requires a significant amount of research and analysis

May not be suitable for short-term projects with tight deadlines

Since JTBD explores customer needs in an expansive way, organizations used to executing on use cases may respond negatively to the approach and the research investment required

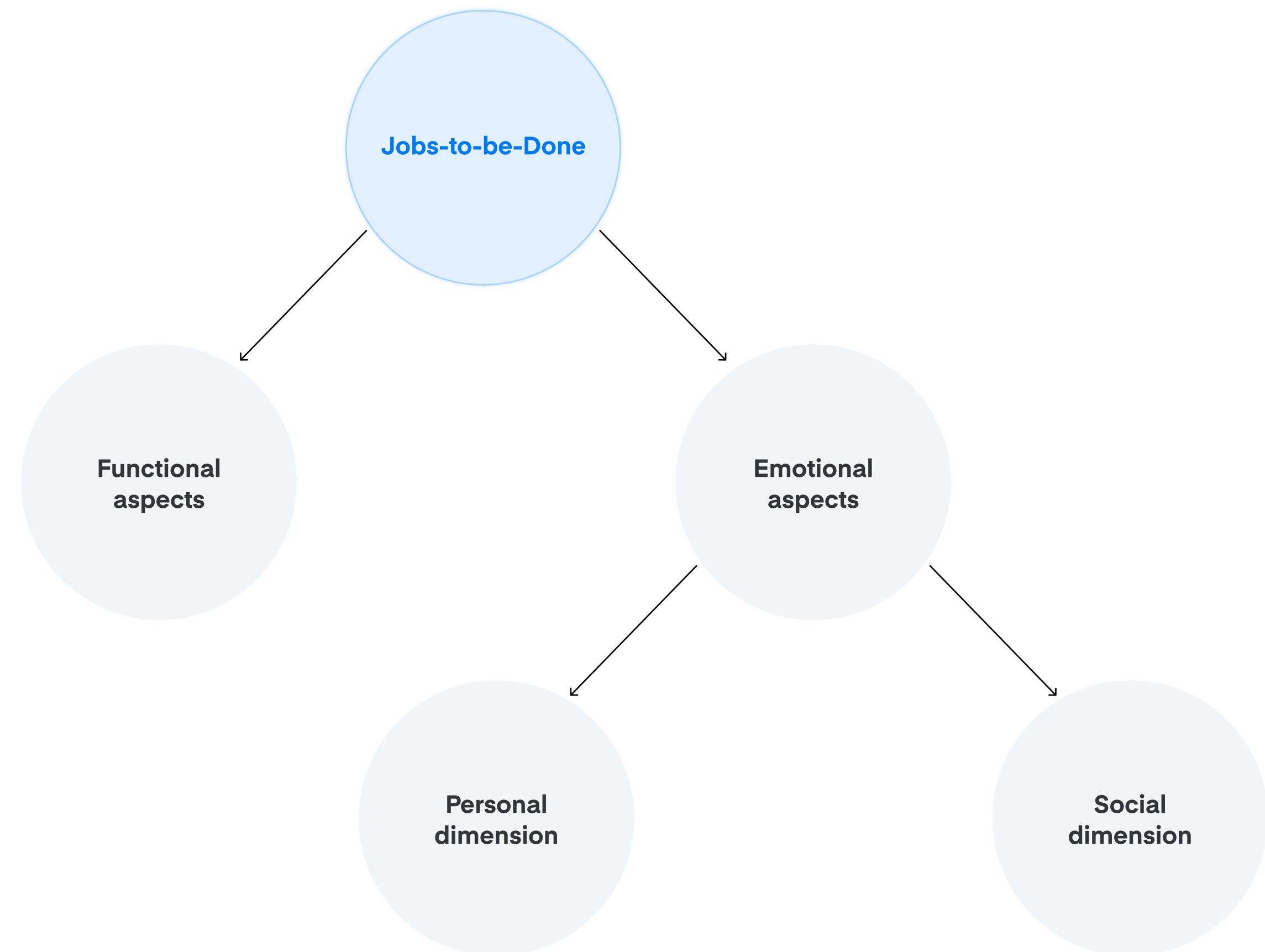
Anatomy of a Job

The jobs-to-be-done framework combines both the practical, measurable aspects and the subjective, emotional considerations that customers weigh in their decision-making process.

COMPONENTS

When customers are looking to hire for a specific job (or use case) there are emotional and functional aspects that they are considering.

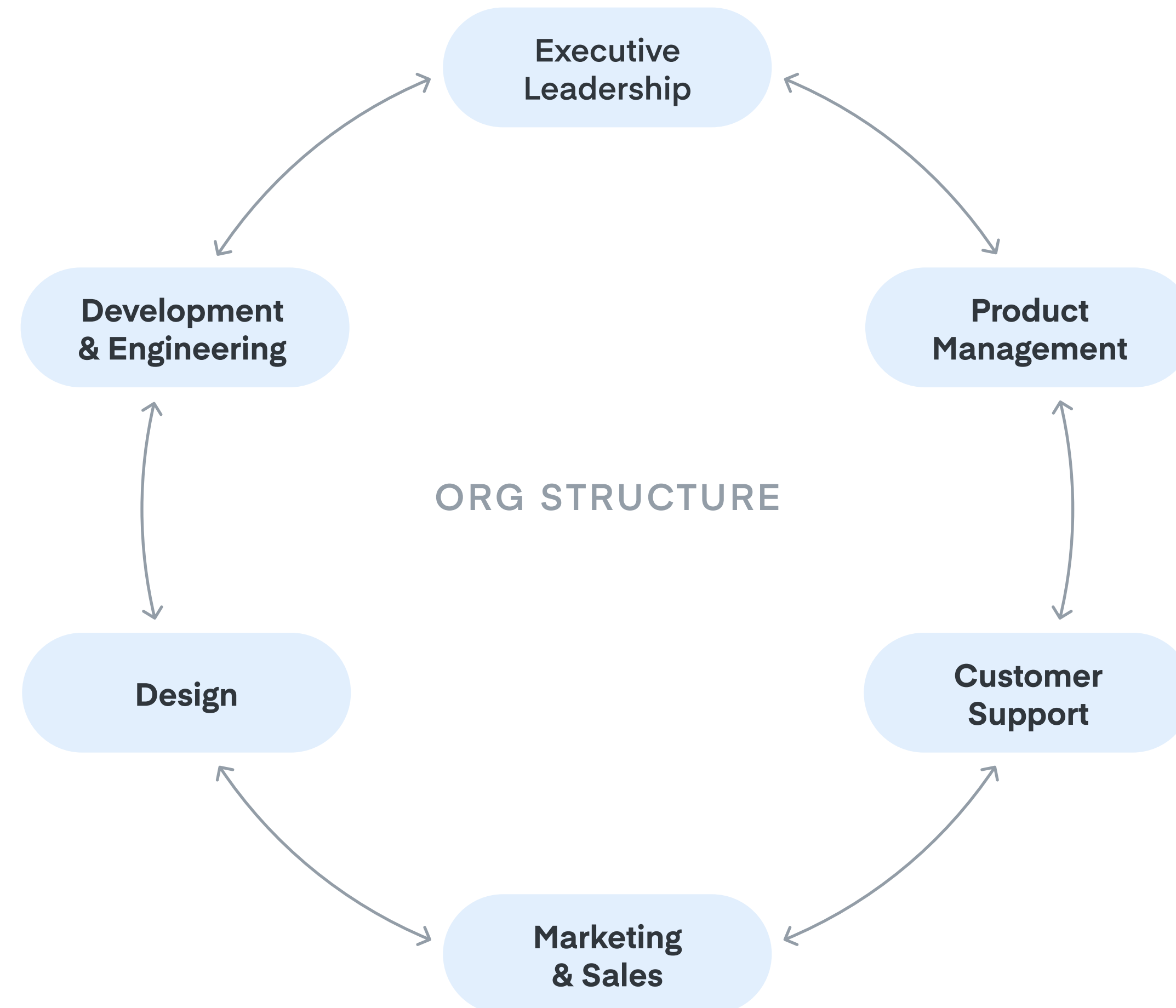
- **Functional job aspects** are specific tasks that customers must be able to achieve with their hired product or service—these are typically measurable. Using ride-sharing services as an example, the functional job aspect is to efficiently get to work on time.
- **Emotional job aspects** are much more subjective—the “why” behind a customer’s choice. If you use ride shares to commute to work every day, the **personal emotional job aspect** may be driven by the desire for relaxation and not having to deal with the stress of traffic. **The social emotional job aspect** could be a sense of elevated status by arriving to work in a nicer car.



ORG STRUCTURE

For organizations that offer a product or service they would like to be hired for, implementing this framework may require cross-functional collaboration among **executive leadership, product management, marketing, and customer success / customer support (CX)**, among others. A dedicated team or committee can be formed to oversee the framework's integration within the organization. In addition to department-specific roles, you could establish cross-functional task forces that include representatives from various teams.

Larger enterprises may have dedicated teams for each function. The key is to establish clear communication channels, ensure alignment with the JTBD framework, and foster a customer-centric culture throughout the organization. Regular training and communication about the framework, along with consistent data sharing, are essential to make sure all teams are on the same page and working towards the common goal of addressing customer needs and improving products or services accordingly.



DETAILED VIEW

Developers & Engineers:

Builds the features aligned with the jobs framework, collaborating with product managers

UX Designers:

Creates user interfaces & experiences that meet the identified expectations

Marketing Teams:

Leverages insights to create compelling messages, value props & campaigns that resonate with customers

CEO:

Sets strategic direction & allocates resources

Sales Teams:

Trained to understand and communicate how the product or service aligns with customers' jobs, closing deals more effectively

CPO / Head of Product:

Oversees overall product strategy & ensures alignment with identified customer needs

Product Managers:

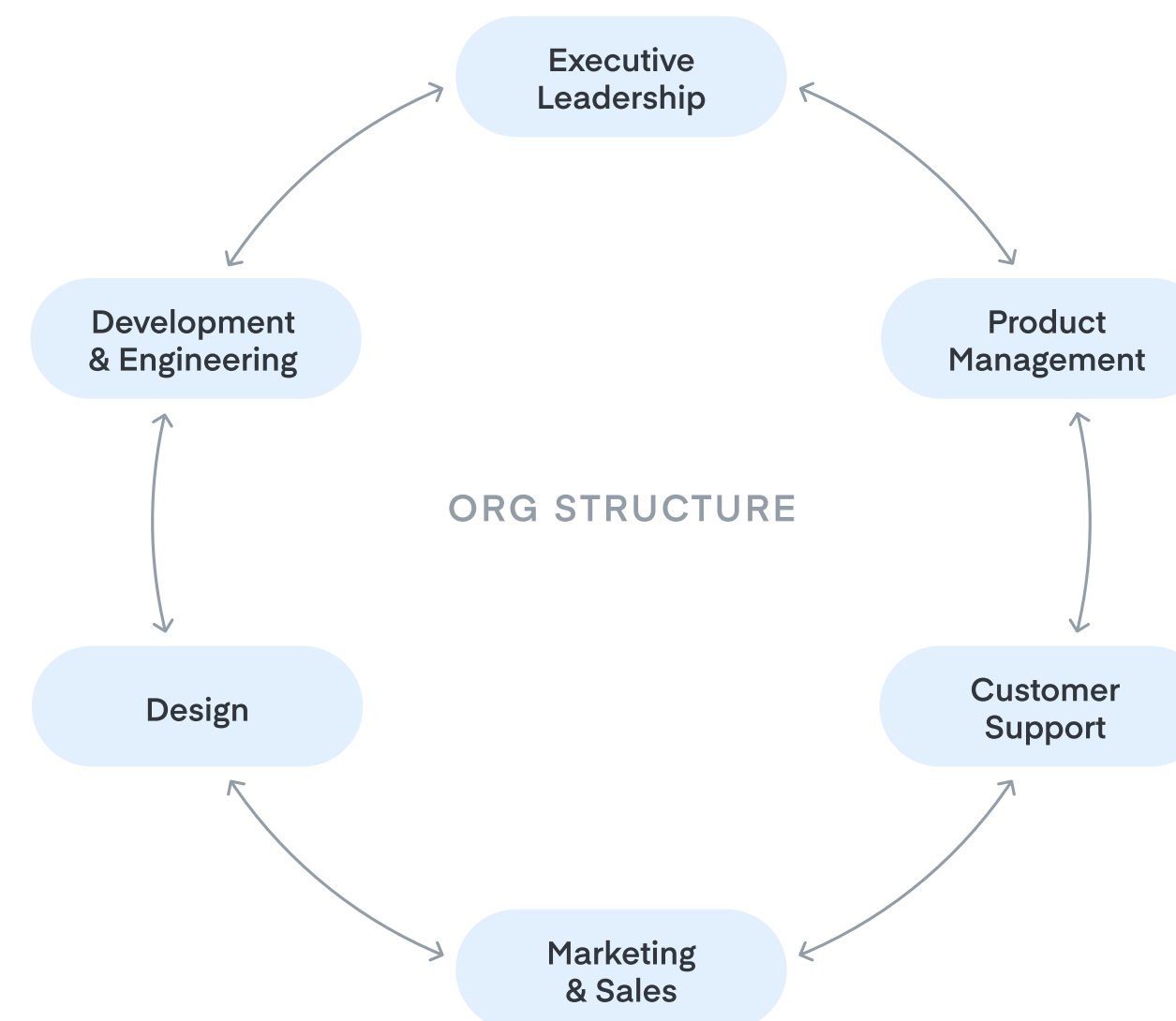
Implements framework in their respective product lines, working closely with other teams to prioritize features & improvements that address customer jobs

Support & CX Teams:

Uses framework insights to better understand & address customer issues / inquiries, providing valuable feedback for product improvement

User / Market Researchers:

Conducts customer interviews, surveys & usability testing to understand customer jobs & pain points



Your Step-By-Step Implementation Guide

Let's dig into how to successfully achieve each step so you can move onto the next.



We'll use an overarching scenario as an example: You work for a video conferencing software company, and you want to enhance your product by using the JTBD framework to better understand your customers' core needs when collaborating virtually.

1 Identify the target segment

Begin by identifying the specific customer segment or persona you want to focus on to ultimately understand their demographics, industry, behaviors, and preferences.

Start with the quick wins: Your ideal targets are customers who recently bought your product or a similar product from a competitor.

Conduct market research: Send out customer surveys to assess their satisfaction levels and see if there is a target segment that has a job they can hire you for. Don't forget basic desk research to make sure your ideal customer profile (ICP) is up-to-date.

Use data and customer insights: Further define your target segment (e.g., remote educators, hybrid software development teams, etc.) by looking at CX data. Answer questions like *"Who uses our product the most?"* or *"Which persona submits the most ticket requests?"*



After market research, you identify that small to medium-sized businesses in the technology sector that rely heavily on remote work are your primary target segment.

2 Define the job

Clearly define the job or task the customer is trying to accomplish. What is the end goal they want to achieve?

Ask questions: Keep in mind that these aren't quick chats. Start with their thinking at the point of purchase and work your way back to their original intent. After the interview, you should be able to articulate all of the following:

- When and how they realized there was a problem
- When and how they started passively looking for solutions
- When and how they started actively looking for solutions
- What evaluation criteria they had when making a buying decision
- What triggered their purchase and the steps required to make one

Avoid assumptions: Let customers articulate their job. Validate all assumptions you have (e.g., "Users want to have more fun virtual background options") with a question.

Gather from multiple sources: Comprehensive user feedback can come from surveys, interviews, internal customer support teams, user testing, and reviews, among others. Consolidate all these.

Craft the statement: Once you've gone through and analyzed your interviews, follow this straightforward structure to define the job: Action verb > Object of action > Clarifier

An alternative structure is to think about statements in terms of the Situation > Motivation > Expected outcome. This boils down to "When doing... I want to... So I can...." and helps product teams think in terms of the functional and emotional job aspects.

- Action verb = Improve
- Object of action = Virtual meeting quality
- Clarifier = When participants are on-the-go



The job that your target segment wants to hire you for is "improving the quality of virtual meetings when participants are on-the-go."

3 Understand job executors

Identify who is responsible for executing the job and who is involved in the process. This may include end-users and other stakeholders.

Identify executors end-to-end: Recognize that multiple people or departments may be involved in different phases. Consider those who influence software buying choices.

Persona mapping: Map out the roles and responsibilities of each executor. Answer questions like “*What overlaps?*” or “*What’s a bottleneck?*” to ensure you’re prioritizing the biggest need.



The job executors are identified as meeting organizers, presenters, participants, and IT administrators who manage the software and hardware.

4 Explore job context

Understand the context in which the job is performed.

Explore external factors: Look at environmental, situational, and emotional factors.

Check for nuances: Does context vary based on industry, location, or any other variable? What challenges might customers face in different situations?



For SMB tech companies that rely heavily on remote work, the job context includes factors like international time zones and variable internet quality.

5 Analyze forces of progress

Determine the motivating forces that make customers hire a product or service, as well as the restraining forces that might deter them from doing so.

Focus on fixes: Prioritize addressing restraining forces to improve adoption.



A major motivating force was identified as the desire to see and collaborate with employees all over the world, while a restraining force was UX design that made setting up a new account difficult.

6 Determine desired outcomes

Now that you have all this added context, it’s time to identify the specific outcomes customers expect when the job is completed. What goals are they trying to achieve?

Craft the outcome statement: Action verb (an improvement) > Measurable characteristic (related to the improvement) > Clarifier (related to user)

- Action verb = Reduce
- Measurable characteristic = Lag time and dropped calls
- Clarifier = When screen sharing on a mobile device



The outcome that your customer expects is “reducing the amount of audiovisual disruptions, like lag time and dropped calls, when initiating a screen share on a mobile device.”

7 Evaluate current solutions

Analyze the existing products or services that customers use to get the job done.

Rank the competition: Conduct competitive analysis to see where other vendors (both direct competitors and alternative tools) fall short and how you stack up against them. Answer questions like *“What weaknesses do we have that others excel in?”* and *“What features or service offerings do we have that outperform the rest?”*



After evaluating, you found that competing video conferencing software offer lower pricing, but customers are dissatisfied with inconsistent video quality—further proving that enhancing your mobile experience is key to staying competitive.

8 Identify unresolved pain points or needs for innovation

You know what to build next and why—great! But there’s always room for future improvement. Discover what aspects of the job are not being adequately addressed by current solutions. These pain points represent opportunities for innovation.

Partner with CX / Support: Look through customer feedback and support tickets to identify pain points. Consider both incremental and disruptive innovations; what addresses the outcome statement and makes sense to prioritize now compared to a cutting-edge nice-to-have.



A newly uncovered pain point was unreliable transcription features, which you put on your roadmap to improve in a few sprints’ time. This will help bolster your mobile offerings as well, since your analysis found that on-the-go mobile users rely on transcripts more than those on a laptop or office computer.

9 Change management

Implementing any new framework requires that all internal stakeholders are prepared for and aligned with the new direction—not just product teams.

Determine the need: Before anything, you must assess the impact of the proposed change on the people, process, and technology. Start by understanding where improvements can be made. Have one-on-one discussions with team members and ask about their work to answer questions like *“What’s working well?”*, *“Where do they face challenges?”*, and *“How have you tackled problems befovre?”*. Don’t reinvent the wheel; people often find effective solutions even without fancy tools, so make sure to uncover existing solutions before making any major investments.

Use the WIIFM communications approach: The “what’s in it for me” style of communication enforces value for the change. Map out your stakeholder groups impacted by the change and assess what they will be most interested in. When introducing the change to their stakeholder group, leadership should always start with how this will benefit them.

Have a top-down approach: Change starts at the top. Executive leadership should communicate the rationale for the process change clearly and passionately.

Follow the 5 D's

To plan on how change will be effectively rolled out and managed long-term, you must Designate, Determine, Decide, Develop, and Decrease. (For more information on the 5 Ds, watch this [change management webinar](#) between Productboard and Joshua Childs, Director of Product Management Email Solutions at Validity.)

Designate champions to help drive change and adoption

Determine the process for gathering feedback and monitoring how change is being adopted post-implementation

Decide what key metrics will be used to determine if change is working or needs improvement

Develop rewards to recognize the right behaviors and processes for further encouragement

Decrease risk by putting processes in place to overcome blockers

9

Build your change community: Change starts at the top. While executive leadership should communicate the rationale for the process change clearly and passionately, there should also be change champions that help promote change across the company culture. When it comes to picking change champions, a complementary mix is key.

- **The educator:** They know the framework very well and can help quickly align those who don't, creating performance milestones to keep everyone excited and on track
- **The project coordinator:** They understand what the vision is for the new framework, and with their decent amount of exposure to the rest of the organization, they hold the right people accountable and routinely check in on output and status
- **The team peer:** They are closely tied to the group you want to adopt change, so it's important that they really understand the vision and the framework to become an influencer for the rest of the group

Provide (continuous) training and documentation: Supporting the transition will not be a one-off conversation. Put new / updated processes, goals, and KPIs in writing.

10 Test and validate

Develop and test your new solutions before sending them out into the market.

Validate: Create prototypes for testing with your target customers and any other key stakeholders.

Continuously iterate: Use A/B testing or gather user feedback to refine your product, making improvements based on user insights. Continuously update the software based on validation results.

Ways to Measure Success

We spoke to our community of product makers to see their thoughts on the JTBD framework, and the responses had one thing in common:

Decision-makers need to know that there will be measurable ROI, or else they think of the framework as a time-waster.

“But leadership is burnt out on talking about features and technologies that may or may not deliver on the goals. User-centric jobs make sense to them and have a higher chance of success because they allow for solution pivots,” said one product maker. *“Jobs mesh well with an outcome-driven business. The important thing with a customer outcomes focus is to also talk about your experiments. The business needs something tangible to think about. Just make sure they understand the outcome is the commitment, everything else is a test.”*

For example: In the next six weeks, we'll focus on helping the market [achieve X]. These are the proposed solutions (the experiments) we'll test with users: [Y and Z]. By the end of the cycle, we expect to have a promising pilot launched with key users.

Success should be evaluated in the context of how well your products or services align with the identified jobs and desired outcomes. With tangible metrics in mind, below is a **checklist** of how to assess customer satisfaction, adoption rates, revenue growth, and more.

Customer Satisfaction

- ☐ Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- ☐ Customer Surveys
- ☐ Increase in Case Studies

Usage Metrics

- ☐ User Engagement
- ☐ Feature Adoption

Financial Metrics

- ☐ Revenue Growth
- ☐ Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)

Customer Support Metrics

- ☐ Reduced Support Tickets
- ☐ Faster Resolution Times

Market Share

- ☐ Market Share Growth
- ☐ Competitive Analysis

Qualitative Feedback

- ☐ Customer Interviews
- ☐ User Testing

New Product Development

- ☐ Number of Successful Innovations
- ☐ Speed to Market

Thanks to its outcomes-focused approach, this framework has grown in increasing popularity. A famous example is Apple. Despite not inventing the smartphone, Apple has become synonymous with the word. After countless interviews, the innovative minds behind Apple created something that consumers didn't even know they needed—the iPhone went on to become the fastest-selling smartphone of all time.

Apple leveraged the JTBD framework to design the iPhone after discovering that customers wanted a device that could replace multiple gadgets. People didn't want to buy a phone when they had one at home. They wanted to buy something that helps them conveniently complete multiple jobs, no matter where they were. These jobs evolved over time from texting and checking emails to looking up directions and learning a new language. By hitting the functional and social aspects that underpin a consumer's purchasing decision, Apple continuously innovates and continues to sell in record numbers today.

Helpful Tooling

Having just explored a highly successful product management framework, one implemented by industry giants like Apple, McDonald's, and Amazon, the imperative for organizations becomes clear. There's a pressing need to transition from sporadic product releases to a more rapid and strategic market delivery, particularly in the context of today's remote working environments with dispersed teams. This necessitates a modernized approach to product management—one that effectively implements the JTBD framework virtually and at scale.

What if gathering user insights, prioritizing the jobs, and creating the product roadmap was more automated and supercharged by AI, allowing your team to cut through the noise and deliver the right products faster? **You need a purpose-built product management tool to enable this, and such a tool exists to help execute the JTBD framework at scale.**

As the first product management platform of its kind, [Productboard](#) is an all-in-one dashboard that centralizes all customer feedback, quickly gets to the bottom of user needs, prioritizes your users' jobs, and keeps everyone aligned. All this enables your product teams to confidently build irresistible and relevant products that solve for the jobs-to-be-done.

To increase the agility of your team, your organization needs to go from scattered to centralized feedback; faulty assumptions to validated user insights; missing opportunities to identifying the trending user needs. [Try Productboard for free to see how we help you get the right products to market, faster.](#)

Productboard's customer-centric platform provides the following capabilities to support the JTBD framework at scale:

BEFORE

In the past, feedback was scattered across many tools that product managers often didn't have access to—and weren't purpose-built for categorizing feedback in a way that was useful to product teams.

Other simpler solutions don't include these workflows for managing high volume, which is a bottleneck for larger product teams. In those cases, it's important that the right feedback gets to the right product managers because they may specialize in understanding certain customer jobs.

Segmentation is an early, critical step in JTBD. Yet historically, product managers had no way to easily analyze all their customer feedback to identify the most promising feature ideas, let alone do this for individual customer segments.

Product managers were never able to leverage AI to analyze feedback and detect emerging trends at this scale.

NOW WITH productboard

Consolidate user feedback:
Provide product teams easy access to all feedback, requests, and user research from colleagues and customers alike with the right integrations.

Prioritize what customers really need:
Efficiently manage high volumes of incoming feedback with Insights. Pre-categorize real-time feedback and route it to the right colleagues for review, with extra weight given to those that customers say are critical.

Better address your target segments:
Hone in on which feature ideas would help the most customers with Productboard's feature prioritization. This can be done based on all customer feedback (the user impact score), specific customer segments, or user segments. These segments can be defined dynamically based on customer attributes pulled in from Salesforce, Amplitude, and Mixpanel.

Supercharge decision-making with AI:
Automate the summarization of customer feedback to zero-in on the most helpful comments with Productboard AI. Lengthy customer insights or long conversations no longer need to be reviewed and categorized manually.



About Productboard

Productboard is the customer-centric product management platform that helps teams get the right products to market faster. Over 6,000 companies, including Microsoft, 1-800-Contacts, and UiPath, use Productboard to understand what users need, prioritize what to build next, and rally everyone around their roadmap. With offices in San Francisco, Prague, and Vancouver, Productboard is backed by leading investors like Tiger Global Management, Index Ventures, Kleiner Perkins, Sequoia Capital, and Bessemer Venture Partners.

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