

Product Discovery Framework

Discovery | Adapted synthesis | Portfolio version 1.0

An evidence-driven cycle for framing uncertainty, investigating needs, synthesizing opportunities, experimenting, deciding, and learning.

Problem it solves

Discovery activities can produce research outputs without reducing the uncertainty behind a product decision.

When to use it

- The problem, user, value, or solution is uncertain.
- A proposed investment is expensive or difficult to reverse.
- Teams have opinions but insufficient evidence.
- The organization needs continuous discovery alongside delivery.

When not to use it

- The issue is a known defect with a clear correction.
- A mandatory change has no meaningful product choice.
- Research would not influence the decision.

Inputs

- Strategic intent
- Initial problem signal
- Known users and stakeholders
- Available analytics and research
- Technical and operational context
- Decision deadline and investment size

Process

- 1. Frame** - Define the decision, uncertainty, assumptions, users, and intended outcome.
- 2. Investigate** - Collect qualitative, quantitative, commercial, technical, and operational evidence.
- 3. Synthesize** - Identify patterns, opportunities, tensions, and evidence gaps.
- 4. Prioritize** - Select the most important opportunities or assumptions to test.
- 5. Experiment** - Choose the fastest responsible method to create decision-quality evidence.
- 6. Decide** - Proceed, revise, pause, reject, or continue learning.

7. Learn - Document what changed and return insight to strategy, roadmap, and delivery.

Decision points

- What decision must discovery support?
- Which assumption creates the greatest risk?
- What evidence is sufficient for this investment?
- Which experiment is fastest without being misleading?
- What changed because of the evidence?

Outputs

- Discovery brief
- Research synthesis
- Opportunity map
- Assumption register
- Experiment plan
- Decision record
- Updated roadmap or requirements

Success measures

- Decision confidence
- Time to evidence
- Assumptions tested
- Research-to-decision conversion
- Avoided delivery waste
- Post-launch validation accuracy

Portfolio application

I use discovery to clarify enterprise workflows, stakeholder needs, exception paths, reporting requirements, and AI opportunity readiness before converting evidence into product requirements.

Common pitfalls

- Research without a decision.
- Interviewing only internal stakeholders.
- Validating a preferred solution rather than testing assumptions.
- Running experiments with unrealistic users or context.
- Failing to document disconfirming evidence.

Skills demonstrated

- Customer discovery
- Workflow analysis
- Evidence synthesis
- Experiment design
- Decision-making
- Requirements framing

Interview discussion prompts

- How do you decide what to discover?
- How do you know when evidence is sufficient?
- Tell me about evidence that changed your direction.
- How do discovery and delivery operate together?

This is a portfolio framework and is not legal, regulatory, compliance, financial, or medical advice.