

# A primer on product thinking



#SchittsCreek

**Tuesday , 7am**

**I AM ON DAY TWO  
OF A PANIC ATTACK**

Alexandra Leisse - [www.troubalex.com](http://www.troubalex.com) - @troubalex



👋 Hei.

- Alexandra Leisse<sup>1</sup>
- Principal PM @ BRYTER
- Previously: Nokia/Qt, CFEngine, Ardoq, VIBBIO
- @troubalex
- [www.troubalex.com](http://www.troubalex.com)

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<sup>1</sup> 📷 Portrait by Richard Ashton, Oslo





# What is product thinking...

*The simplest way to define product thinking is that it is **the skill of knowing what makes a product useful – and loved – by people.***<sup>2</sup>

– Julie Zhuo

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<sup>2</sup> <https://future.a16z.com/product-thinking/>



... and what is this  
presentation about



# Part 1







Delivery vs  
discovery





# Product delivery

- includes all work required to build and ship our solutions to our users
- focus here when you have very little uncertainty





# Product discovery

- is what happens before we decide on a solution we want to deliver
- is divided into **opportunity discovery** and **solution discovery**



# Opportunity discovery

- We start with a high degree of uncertainty
- Some problems present better opportunities than others





# Solution discovery

- We have more clarity now, but there is still some degree of uncertainty
- We generate ideas and hypotheses for how to address the opportunities we have identified
- We start with the most promising one



# Part 2







**How do I even?**

# Figuring out your goal

- There is likely something your company wants to achieve this cycle
- Your desired outcome should be directly related to your longer-term goal
- Pick the one metric you'd want to improve next

# **Discovering opportunities**

- **Look at your data:** analytics, support tickets, net promoter scores, search terms
- **Do research:** surveys, task analysis
- **Talk to people:** customers, customer success, in-house domain experts, support
- **Discuss & debate:** brainstorm as a team





# Prioritising opportunities

- Prioritisation is more art than science
  - Your product boundaries should guide you
  - This is where a lot of overthinking happens
1. Intuition is the result of experience
  2. Most prioritisation mistakes are easily reversible



# Discovering solutions

- **Discuss & debate:** brainstorm as a team
- **Ask:** "How might we...?"
- **Shape the work:** Prototyping, PoCs



# Trying out different solutions

- MVPs, experiments, iterations
- Build → measure → learn



# Don't skip!

Opportunity discovery and prioritisation is  
where product strategy happens.



# 🤔 How does this influence how we build and ship software? (1)

- We know why we're building what we're building
- Once we have all roles on the team, we can operate in a truly autonomous way
- Accountability is built in because we're committing to achieving an outcome

# How does this influence how we build and ship software? (2)

- Scoping is way easier because we know what is important and what is nice to have
- We are able to continuously discover problems and opportunities, experiment on different solutions, and deliver real value to our customers



# Part 3





Pulling it all  
together



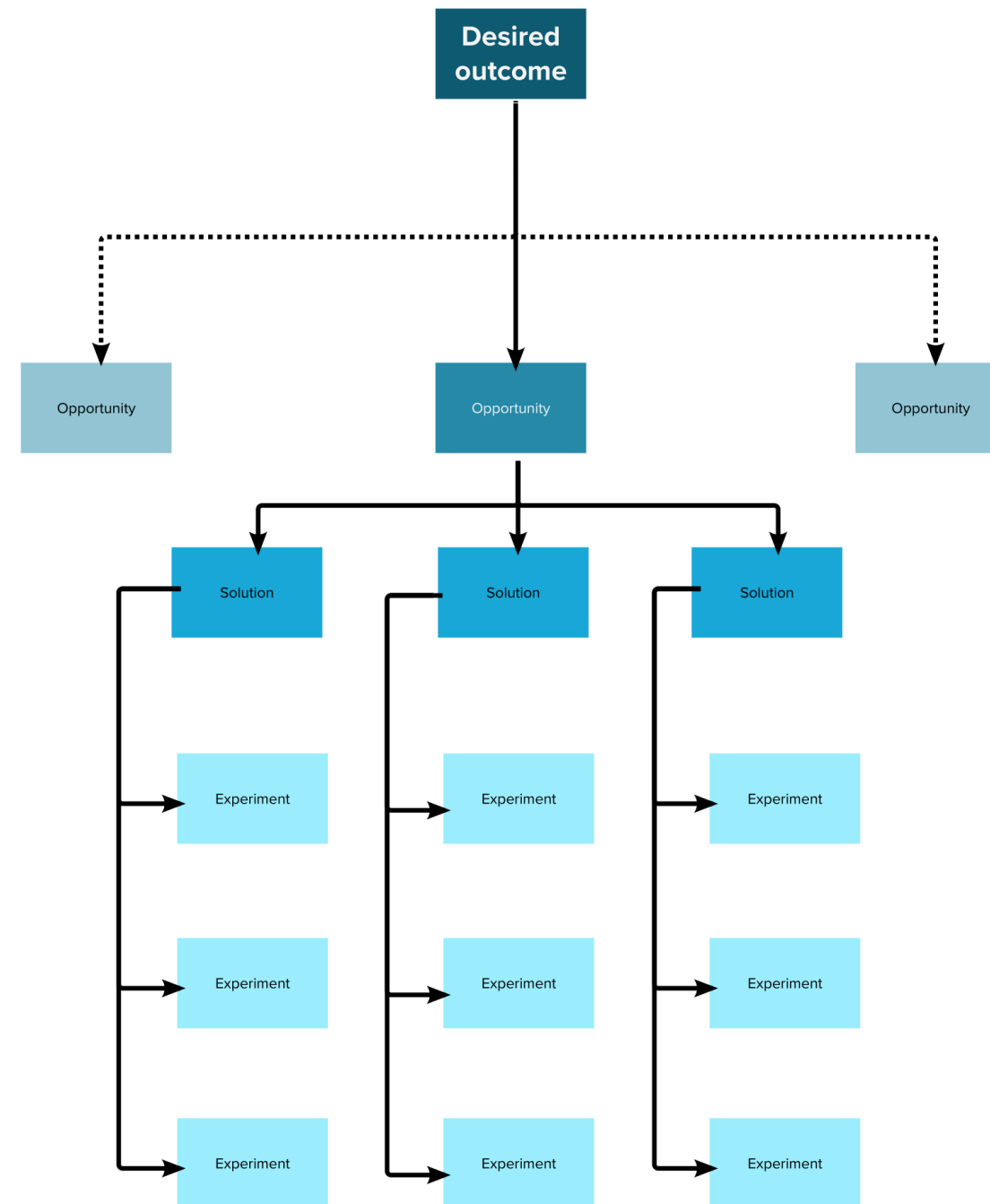


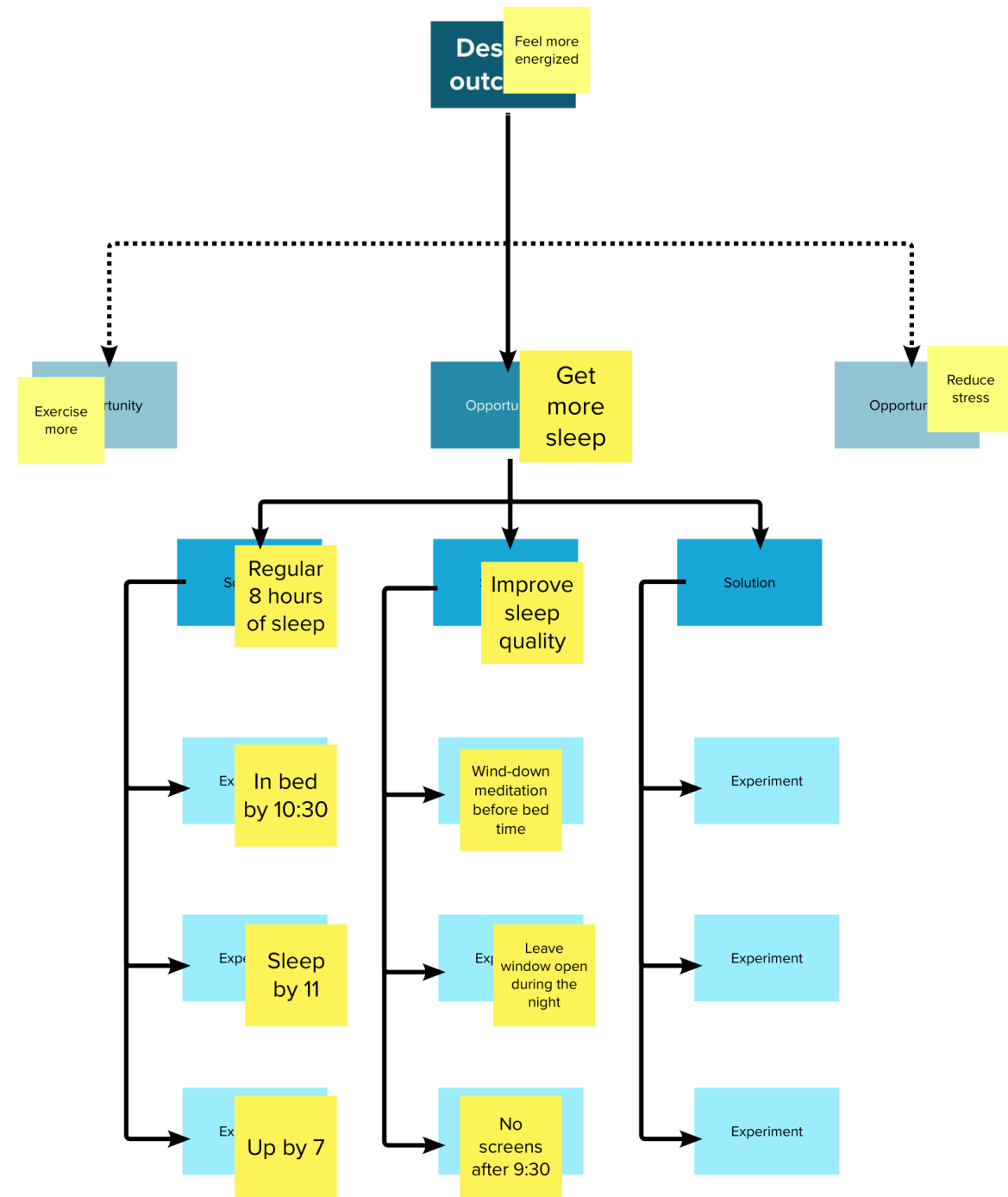
# Opportunity-solution-tree

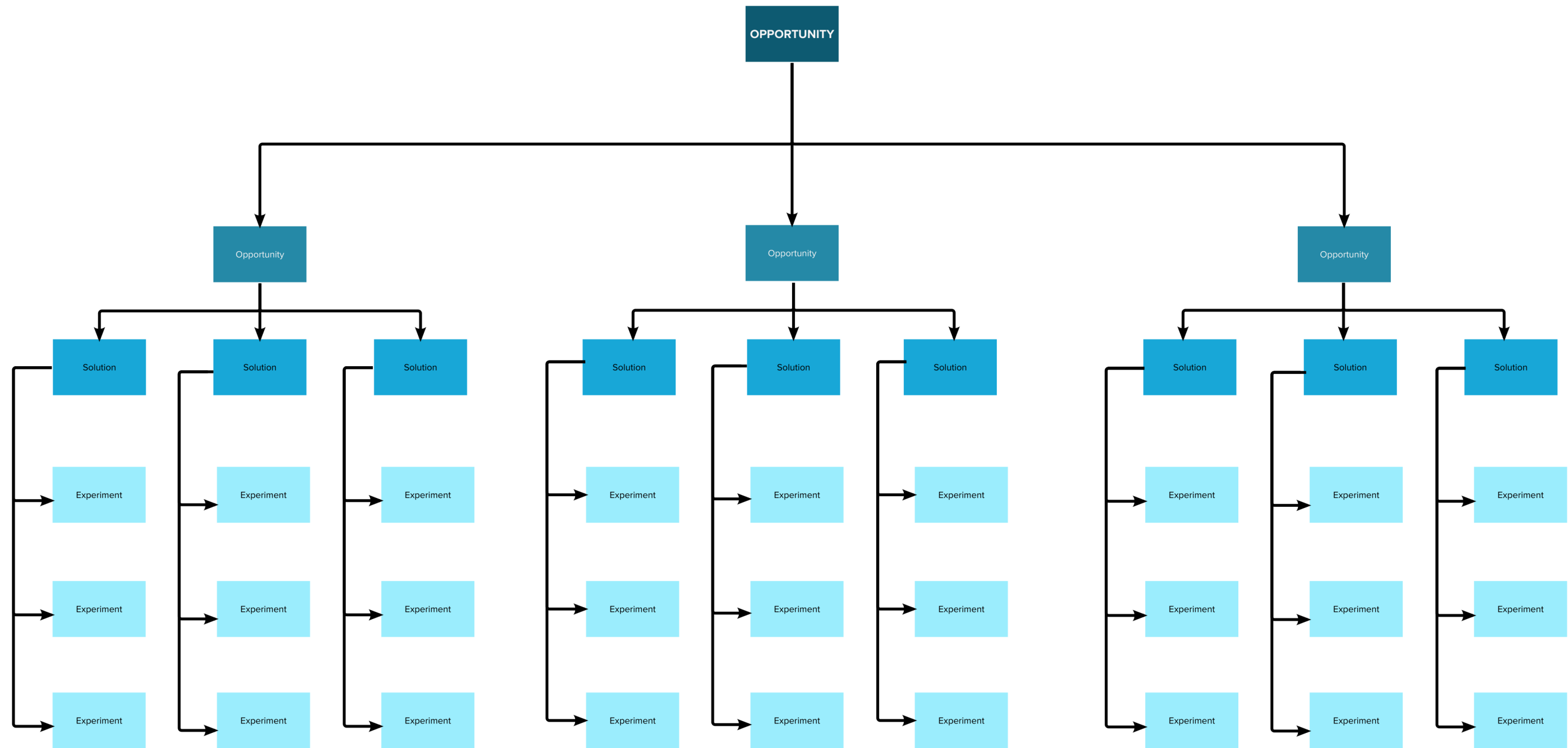
- A mapping technique devised by Teresa Torres<sup>3</sup>
- A neat way to visualise all of what I have just talked about

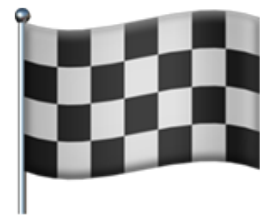
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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.producttalk.org/about/>









# Conclusion





# Recap (1)

- Product thinking is a skill
- Product sense comes with experience
- Start by defining your desired outcome



## Recap (2)

- Don't skip right to problem solving, explore the opportunity space before you move into the solution space
- If you want autonomy, ask for the goal, accept accountability, and run with it



# Housekeeping

**Download the slides**

[www.troubalex.com/  
devopsdays-oslo-2021](http://www.troubalex.com/devopsdays-oslo-2021)

**BRYTER is hiring**

We have open positions  
across all roles, and  
**we're fully remote.**

Talk to me if you want  
to know more. 🙋



## Further reading:

- Product Management Process 101 by Sérgio Schüler
- Opportunity Solution Trees: Visualize Your Thinking by Teresa Torres
- Product Discovery or Product Delivery: How do you Decide? by Philipp Krehl
- Talking to Humans by Giff Constable
- Product vs Feature Teams by Marty Cagan