

# INTEGRATING UX INTO AGILE DEVELOPMENT

*A practical guide for product teams, engineers & designers*

## UX + Agile Better Together



Why the tension exists



What good integration looks like



How to implement it – now

# What We'll Cover Today

01



## The UX-Agile Tension

Why they clash – and why it matters

02



## What UX Actually Is

Beyond wireframes: the full discipline

03



## Dual-Track Agile

The model that makes it work

04



## UX Inside the Sprint

Mapping activities to ceremonies

05



## Advocating for Discovery

How to protect research time

06



## Measuring UX Impact

Metrics that matter to the whole team

SECTION 01

# The UX-Agile Tension

*Why they clash – and what it costs your team*

# UX and Agile Are Built on Different Time Horizons

## Agile Mindset

- Deliver working software every 2 weeks
- Respond to change over following a plan
- Minimal upfront documentation
- Velocity and throughput are success metrics
- Build → Measure → Learn

VS

## UX Mindset

- Understand users deeply before building
- Research takes time – it can't be rushed
- Sketching and iteration precedes code
- Quality of experience is the success metric
- Empathize → Define → Ideate → Prototype → Test

# Skipping UX Doesn't Save Time – It Shifts the Cost

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100×

more expensive to fix a usability issue in production vs. design

70%

of rework in dev is caused by requirements and UX not being resolved upfront

50%

of engineering time is often spent on features users don't use

The goal isn't to add UX – it's to move UX earlier. Discovery before delivery is how teams go faster, not slower.

SECTION 02

# What UX Actually Is

*Beyond wireframes – the full discipline your team needs to understand*

# UX is a System of Disciplines – Not Just Visual Design



## User Research

Interviews, surveys, observation



## Information Architecture

Structure, navigation, findability



## Interaction Design

Flows, behaviors, states



## Visual Design

Typography, color, hierarchy



## Usability Testing

Task analysis, heuristics, sessions



## Content Strategy

Voice, messaging, structure



## Accessibility

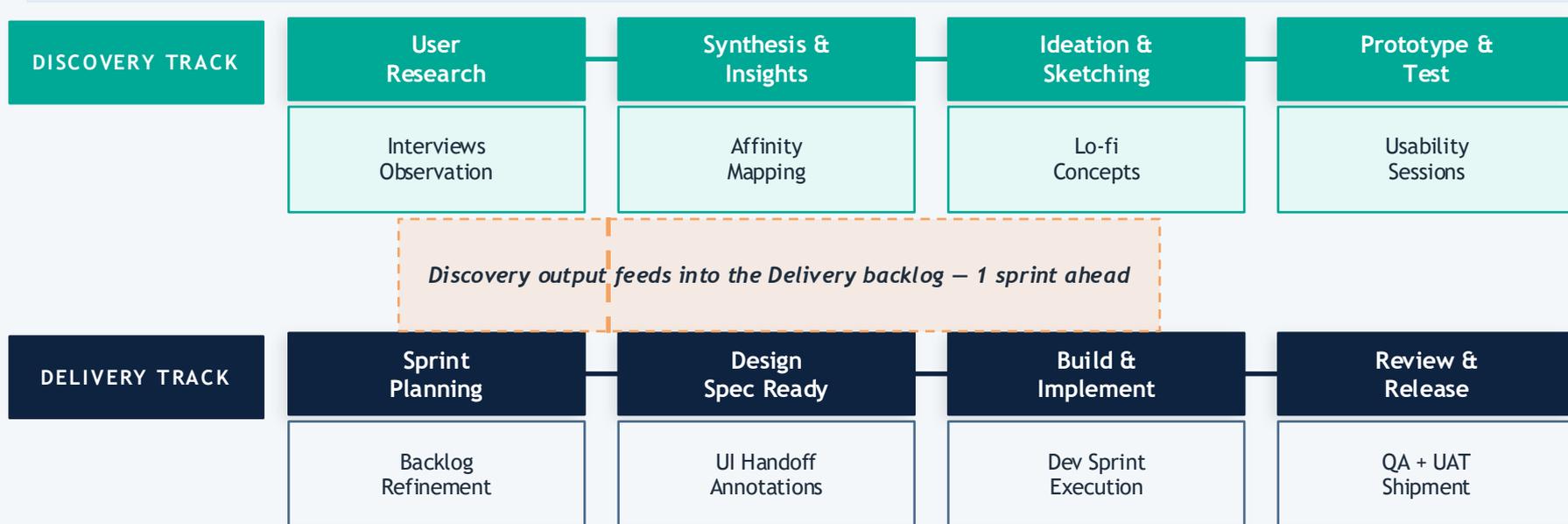
WCAG, inclusive design, 508

SECTION 03

# Dual-Track Agile

*The structural model that lets UX and engineering run in parallel*

# Run Discovery and Delivery in Parallel – One Sprint Ahead



Key Principle: Engineers never wait on design. Designers never guess what to explore. Both tracks run on the same cadence.

SECTION 04

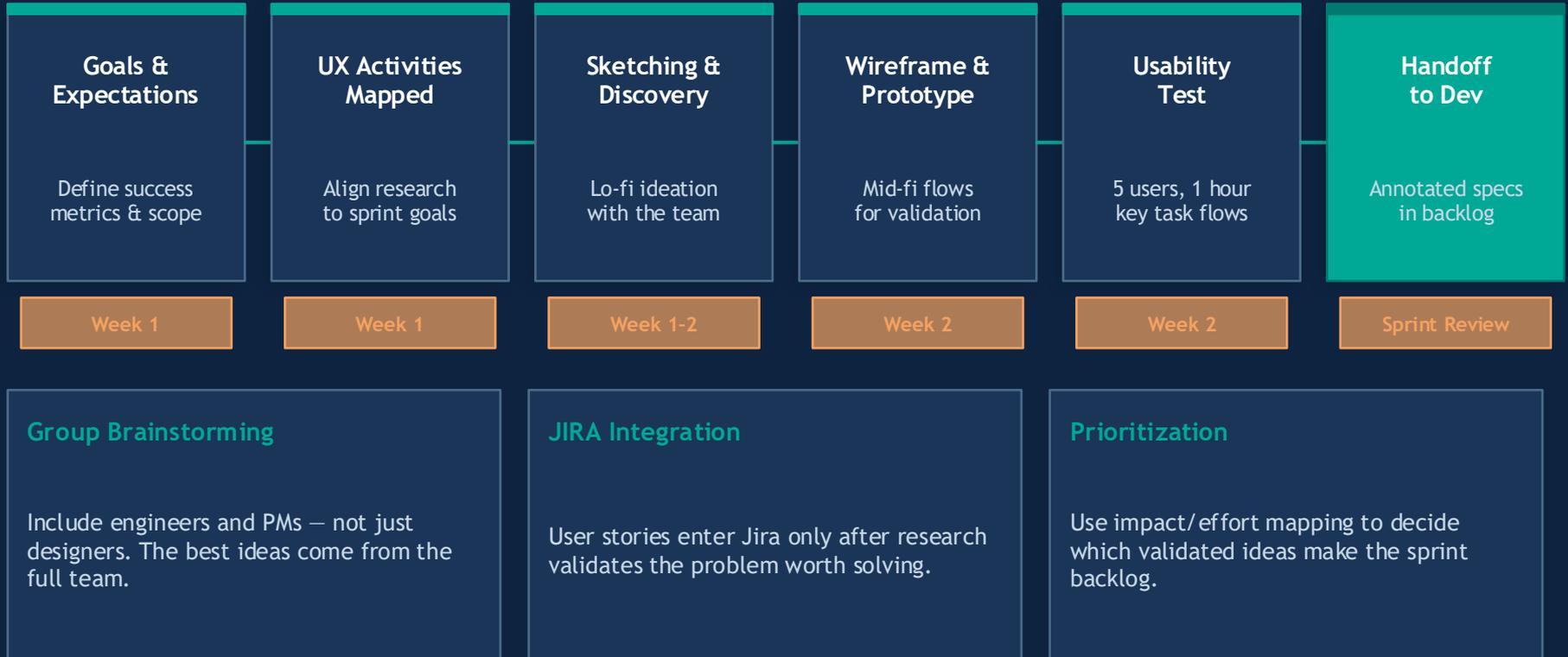
# UX Inside the Sprint

*How UX maps to every sprint ceremony – and what that looks like in practice*

# Every Sprint Ceremony Has a UX Role

<b>Sprint Planning</b>	<p><b>UX Role:</b> Review discovery output, present validated user stories with acceptance criteria rooted in user needs</p>	Engineers start with context, not just tickets
<b>Daily Standup</b>	<p><b>UX Role:</b> Report UX blockers, flag scope changes that affect user flows, align on any in-sprint design decisions</p>	UX and dev stay synced in real-time
<b>Backlog Refinement</b>	<p><b>UX Role:</b> Co-write user stories, add design annotations, ensure each story has clear UX definition of done</p>	No ambiguous tickets entering the sprint
<b>Sprint Review</b>	<p><b>UX Role:</b> Demo with real users when possible, validate that built experience matches intended UX</p>	Feedback loop closes before release
<b>Retrospective</b>	<p><b>UX Role:</b> Raise UX debt items, advocate for discovery time in next sprint, share research findings with team</p>	UX improvement is baked into team rhythm

# The Design Phase Lives Inside the Sprint – Not Before



SECTION 05

# Advocating for Discovery

*How to protect research time – and make the case to leadership*

# Five Tactics to Protect and Justify Research Time

01

## Frame Discovery as Risk Reduction

Position research as the team's quality gate. 'We're spending 3 days to validate the problem before 3 months of engineering.' This reframes cost as insurance.

02

## Reserve 20% of Sprint Capacity

Formalize a discovery capacity buffer in sprint planning. Even 1-2 days per sprint compounds into a powerful research runway over a quarter.

03

## Show the Output – Not the Process

Stakeholders don't care about research methods – they care about insights that drive decisions. Present findings as 'What we learned + what we're doing differently because of it.'

04

## Co-Research with Engineers and PMs

When the whole team observes a usability session, buy-in comes naturally. Schedule 1 session per sprint that engineers can observe – even 30 minutes changes perspective.

05

## Connect Research to OKRs

Map every discovery activity to a business objective. 'This research supports our Q3 OKR of reducing onboarding drop-off by 25%.' Research without a north star gets cut first.

SECTION 06

# Measuring UX Impact

*Metrics that connect user experience quality to engineering and product outcomes*

# Measure UX Across Three Horizons

## Experience Quality

*In-Sprint*

- Task completion rate (usability tests)
- Error rate on key flows
- Time-on-task vs. baseline
- System Usability Scale (SUS) score

## Product Outcomes

*Post-Release*

- Feature adoption rate (% of users)
- Funnel conversion improvement
- Support ticket volume by feature
- Net Promoter Score (NPS) delta

## Team Health

*Ongoing*

- Rework rate reduction (design-to-dev cycles)
- Sprint velocity stability (less mid-sprint redesign)
- Ratio of discovery to delivery stories
- % of features launched with research backing

Tip: Pick one metric per horizon per quarter. Measure consistently before optimizing.

# Where Do We Go From Here?

*Three things your team can do in the next sprint*

1

## Add a UX role to each ceremony

Update your sprint team agreement to include UX participation expectations in planning, refinement, and review.

2

## Run one co-research session

Invite an engineer to observe a 30-minute usability session. Let the user experience speak for itself.

3

## Define your one UX metric

Choose a single experience quality metric to baseline this sprint. Task completion rate or SUS score are good starting points.

**UX integration isn't a project — it's a practice. Start small, iterate, and build the habit.**

# Thank You

“Great UX is invisible—until it isn’t, and then everyone leaves.”

