ZURE

The importance of design

within application development.

Introduction

Utilizing design thinking methods is a great way to break down the barrier between designers, developers and stakeholders; it creates a culture of user centricity and agility by amplifying the quality, efficiency and value of design.

Taking user-centric and agile design into use ensures that design is not just a phase in the "development process" but is treated as a continuous iterative ritual consisting of research, experimentation and validation – which, when implemented properly, can easily place user experience at the core of any business.

In this white paper we will go through our design process at Zure, touching on the topics of why it's beneficial for your business and what methodologies are used to successfully complete each step in said design process.

"Before you try to solve a problem, you must take the time to understand it."

– Natasha, UXD at Zure

How well communicated ideas form concepts

Whether you're creating a feature, service or system; co-creation is an essential tool during the concepting process, it's a method that involves all the stakeholders in the process in order to find a solution for the problem at hand.

During co-creation the designer takes on the role of the translator, they have the tools and skills needed to listen and understand the business goals and user needs in order to turn it into a rough prototype of a system; also known as a conceptual model.

It's important to define the conceptual model early on, as it means there's a higher probability of remaining consistent during the development process and will help shape everything that follows. Once defined, it's followed up by a creative concept that will help to align the entire team regarding how the system should function and evolve.

"Concepts are metaphors that designers use to help people understand how a system will work.

We live in a world of ever-changing trends and consumer behaviors; therefore, businesses have come to recognize that good design can easily be the differentiator between the success and failure of a product. The method of innovative design thinking, which we designers at Zure use, has proven to successfully drive business growth, which as a practice happens at the intersection of desirability for users, viability for the business and feasibility for technology - also known as the ideal user experience.
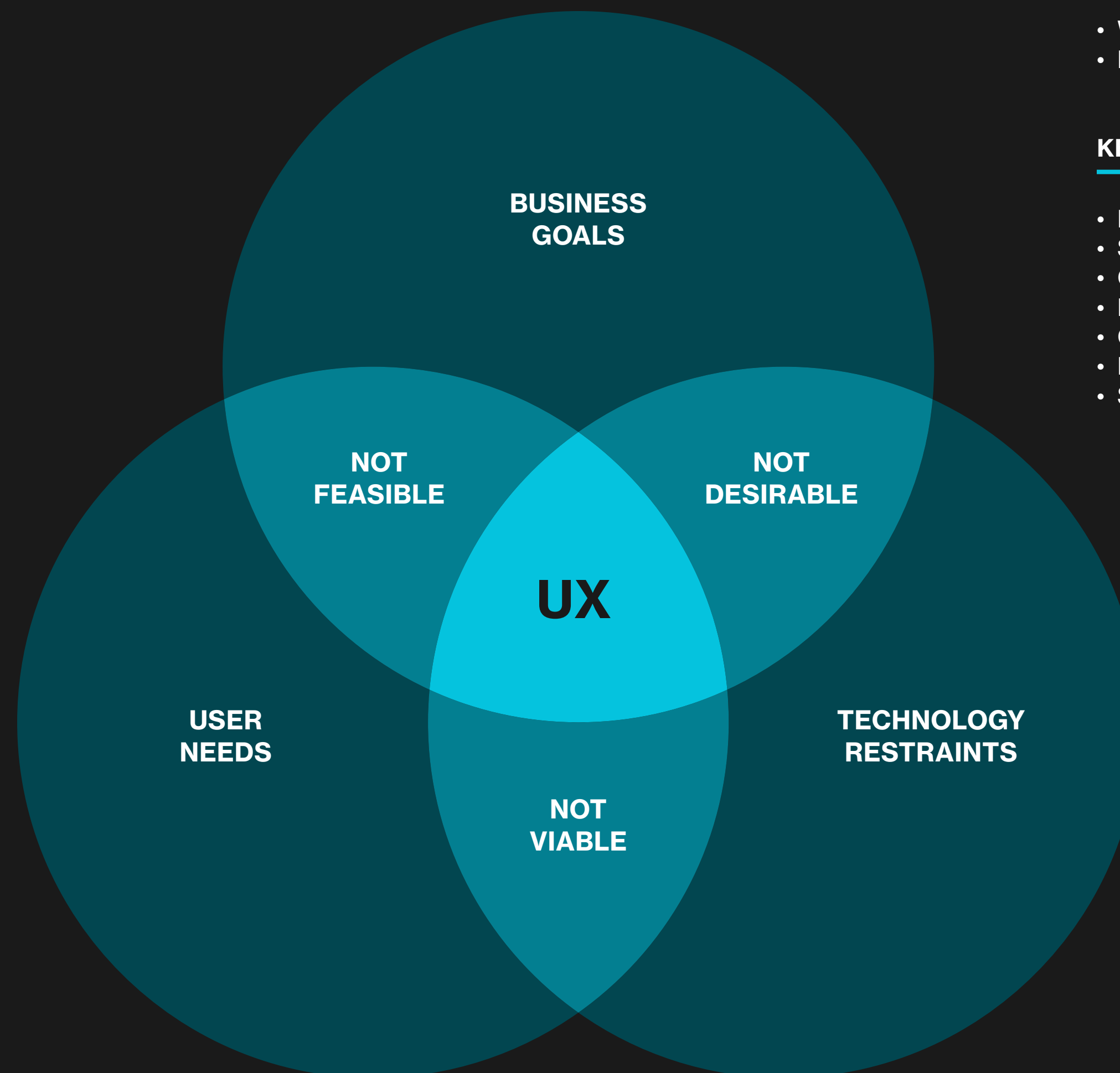
METHOD

- Workshop
- LSC (Lean Service Creation) Canvases

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Rapid sketch
- Stakeholder Input
- Current state analysis
- Business goals and limitations
- Concept and Value proposition
- Benchmarking
- Stakeholder mapping

BUSINESS GOALS

NOT FEASIBLE

NOT DESIRABLE

UX

USER NEEDS

TECHNOLOGY RESTRAINTS

NOT VIABLE

Helping you understanding your users

"Research is creating new knowledge"
– Neil Armstrong

METHOD

- User Interviews
- LSC Canvases

KEY ACTIVITIES

- User Segmentation
- Archetypes
- Journey Mapping

To ensure a positive user experience you must first understand the user and their full experience when using a system; an encounter with a system suggests there is a beginning, middle and end to the interaction and although it's strongly experienced within the UI of the system, the experience can begin before the actual encounter.

Users can have indirect experience to a system, whether based on previously used systems that hold a similarity or simply by the opinions of others, thus making it more important to fully understand what the user needs.

User research and task analysis allows you to understand how your users interact with your product in order to complete tasks and achieve their objectives, whilst user testing and conducting user interviews are key factors in fully understanding your users' needs and identify new business opportunities.
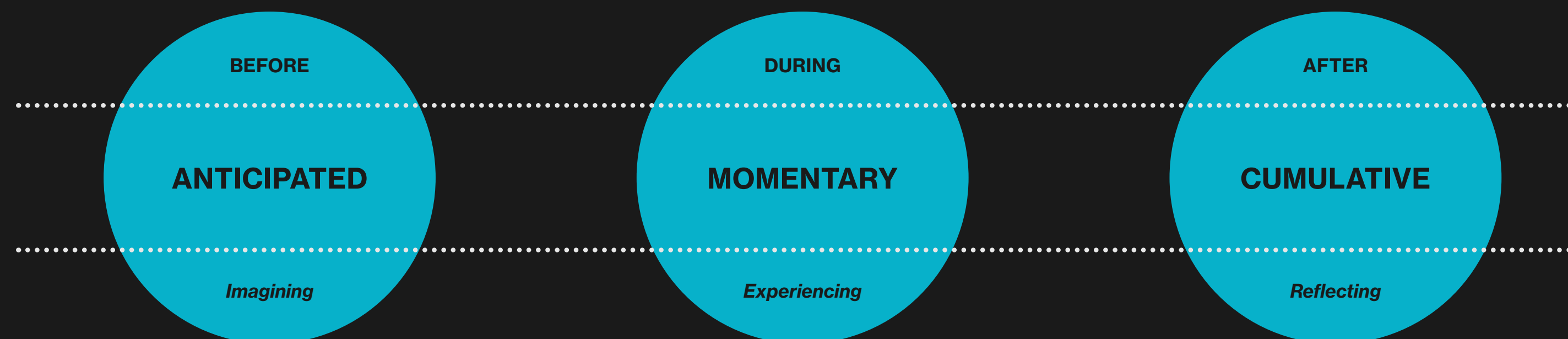
To help you and your team understand the user groups you can use methods such as journey mapping, defining user personas, use cases and user stories - gathering this data before development begins is vital when validating your concept and prototype in order to avoid cognitive biases.

"

Utilize user research to identify user problems - for without user problems, there are no new opportunities.

BEFORE

ANTICIPATED

Imagining

DURING

MOMENTARY

Experiencing

AFTER

CUMULATIVE

Reflecting

What makes for good design

"Good design is good business"
– Thomas J. Watson

Good design is measurable, profitable and helpful for the user, but more so it is time saved. The ability to produce a seamless and well-tailored experience that understands your users' need and ensures that they don't get distracted or disorientated during the interaction with your business is one of the key factors in user retention and guarantees less maintenance in the future.

In our design process we have many stages of testing; early on we test a rough concept of your business' potential final product, this allows us to gain insight into your users' core needs. Further into the process we test with an interactive prototype, allowing us to identify your products most valuable features, define user flows and uncover potential flaws or missed opportunities.

ITERATE

Mind-mapping & concept definitions

ITERATE

User needs, business requirements

ITERATE

Concept development & assumptions

Wireframes & customer co-creation

ITERATE

Interactive prototypes & refining

End user validation

Measure & reflect

DISCOVERY

IDEATION

TEST

SCALE
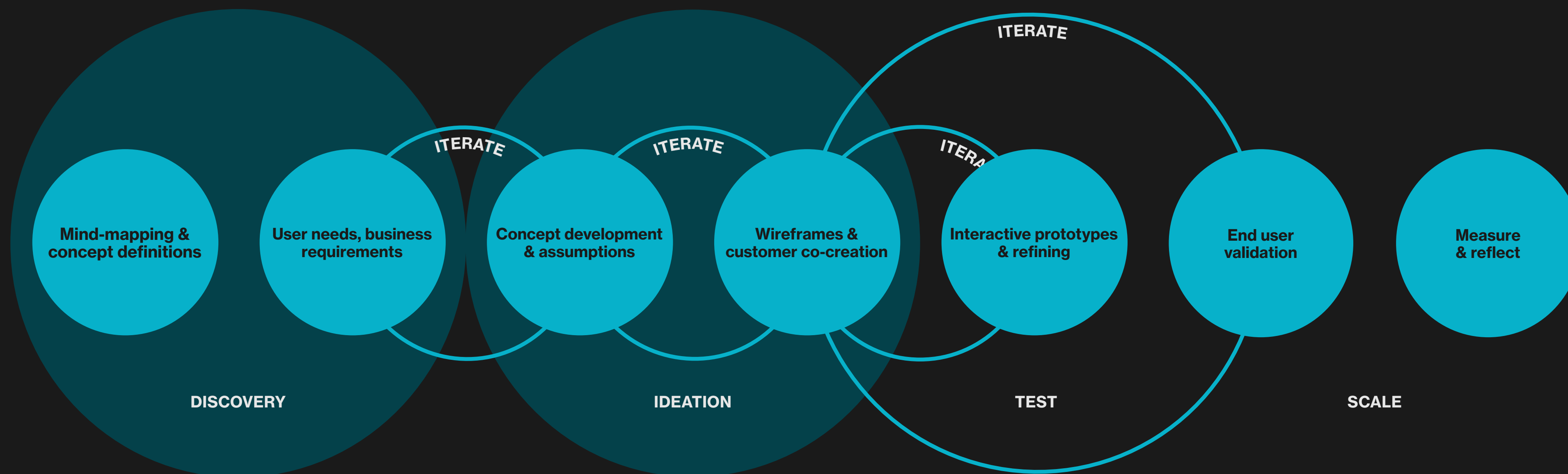
When product ownership meets design

> "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself" – *Henry Ford*

METHOD

- Data analysis & user feedback
- Product & project management
- Software development

KEY ACTIVITIES

- A/B Testing
- Analytics
- Planning & prioritization
- Create & maintain the backlog
- Start developing
- Iterate your design
- Agile development

To summarize, design should not be treated as an add-on, or just an outer layer to make a system look visually appealing; design is the glue that tethers all technical layers, business requirements and user needs of a system together.

Much like our agile software development, design is iterated (completed sprints as they are called in Scrum). When you adopt our design process, you're guaranteed a solid understanding of the business problem and to find a feasible solution to it.

Use an equal balance of qualitative and quantitative metrics to identify performance trends and users' motivations; with this data you can generate assumptions to aid in planning your upcoming sprints but be sure to test your assumptions – as an unvalidated assumption is a risky solution.

As a next step, gather that knowledge to form user stories and create a prioritized backlog. A high-quality backlog is your primary tool to successfully drive your development iterations and scale your product. You should adjust and re-prioritize your backlog as you learn more about your business, users and technology.

Validated assumption

Product backlog

ITERATE

SPRINT RETROSPECTIVE

Sprint planning

Sprint backlog

Daily scrum

Scrum team

Sprint review of product increment