

Six Steps

To Guiding Better Technology Decisions

For Your Team



HEADY

Introduction

Too often technology is mysterious — especially for time-starved product owners.

In an ideal world, technology should be guided by business objectives, not the other way around. But when companies make decisions about tools and systems without active participation and input from the people that use them, those tools can eclipse and obstruct broader business goals. We've seen it happen over and over; often it's a reason our partners turn to Heady.

Our goal as a mobile product consultancy is to make technology more accessible and transparent for our partners and their teams. But companies can do it without outside help: by asking questions, streamlining research, and encouraging their internal teams to collaborate.

Our six-step process boils down to a key bit of advice: work together. Involving teams in tech decisions encourages cross-industry inspiration, increases ownership of foundational decisions, and stimulates innovation. We've seen it lead to more efficient decisions and better outcomes at start-ups and Fortune500 companies alike.

Here are Heady's 6 steps to making better technology decisions, alongside tips to avoid common pitfalls.



Step 1

Frame your business need.

As a product owner, your main objective is clearly stating the business need — as well as context for your hypothesis on why a given technology might solve it. It is important to define precisely what you are evaluating and why, so you do not explore limitless options.

For example, you might be reviewing data indicating that Progressive Web Apps see a 20% increase in conversation rate in your industry. Is this something you should introduce at your company to help address conversation targets?

Asking specific questions keeps your objectives clear, while allowing for independent research.

Tip: Ground the research in business objectives, such as improving user retention, user growth, infrastructure, and market innovation. This creates guardrails for collective research and input. It is important to align expectations of stakeholders providing input.

Step 2

List your stakeholders.

The goal is to include stakeholders who will be impacted by this decision. Make sure there is an assigned representative from each department. Typically, we advise partners to engage Product Management, Design (UX/UI), Engineering, Quality Assurance, DevOps, and Marketing.

Tip: Stakeholders will depend both on your company and the tech you hope to get feedback on. There may be primary and secondary stakeholders and you can include them as you see fit.

Step 3

Set a research timeline.

Timeboxing your research helps team members prioritize and focus on answering their immediate questions. The goal is to encourage independent thought on how a potential technology/service may impact their department and get people more comfortable with providing input.

Tip: A week is usually enough time to complete desk research or tap into any technology communities a tool/framework/language may be part of.

Step 4

Evaluate costs.

Respective stakeholders will need to think about how a technology may impact them in order to assign a cost. It is an important step in understanding the technology itself.

Departments should evaluate the potential skill gap on their current team. Is this something they can easily adapt to, or will it require additional bandwidth and/or training? Changes in process or skill usually have a time/cost associated with it. The number one reason we see projects fail is not because of the investment to get it off the ground – it is the lack of support to keep it going.

Tip: Challenge your team to identify who will spearhead the project from their respective departments. This promotes accountability about how the department plans to integrate any new processes.

Step 5

Evaluate benefits.

What are the benefits of adopting this technology? New technology usually opens up different opportunities and each department should provide insight into this. Encourage your stakeholders to provide balanced feedback. If a department cannot identify a benefit with the given technology, make sure they are providing alternative solutions which address the business need.

Tip: There are more often than not nay-sayers who do not want to change the status quo. Remind them that this is not a debate — this is information gathering. And more information allows for better decisions.

Step 6

Discuss and decide.

A decision is not always black or white. More data = better decisions. As a product owner it is important to take into the various perspectives and not create a win/lose environment, but a knowledge share around achieving a common business objective defined on the outset.

Tip: Encourage your team to make a decision on behalf of their respective departments but don't create a win/lose debate style. It is about sharing different perspectives and sometimes the discussion is more valuable than having a clear-cut outcome.



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Heady is a mobile product consultancy building sustainable innovation through design and technology.

We design locally and build globally, using teams in clients' regions who work side-by-side with international engineering talent. Our people collaborate on equal footing to create cohesive, collectively vetted products. We are proud of our business model, our competitive prices, and our intuitive design.

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