

the  
**no bullshit**

guide to

**product management**

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# After your product is built

Your product is done, launched, out there in the market, and people are using it. Congratulations, you are about half done.

When you came up with the initial ideas for your product, you basically guessed. It was an educated guess - you looked at data, talked to people, used your experience and so on - but you couldn't say with absolute certainty whether it would work, because you've never launched exactly this product into exactly this market before. Now that you have launched, you have a golden opportunity to adjust the product. It's like playing crazy golf - you whacked the ball vaguely in the right direction, but now it's stopped closer to the hole, you have a better chance with each putt to sink it and pelvic thrust at your friends in victory.

You should now have two important types of information coming at you.

- Statistical data from the product
- Personal reactions of your users

Both of these are massively important. Data will tell you what is happening, people will tell you why. These are yin and yang - without both, your understanding will be incomplete.

# Statistical data

If you're building a digital product, you should be able to reap masses of data from it. There's no reason not to use data gathering tools on every part of the experience. First, a set of very basic statistics, like pageviews, uniques, and clicks on any interface element. Then, a set of more interesting statistics that are harder to get, but will tell you more.

- Track batches of users through the product flow. Where are they dropping off?
- Get demographic data on your users, identify which ones are important to you (e.g. perhaps older users are more likely to purchase), then focus your analysis on their behaviour.
- Next, you need to pick out what's important from this data. Go back to your list of goals - if you were trying to increase traffic from search, examine whether this did or didn't happen. The data may pinpoint an issue - for example, if you've created a five step process, and you're losing 70% of users at step three, that step needs examining.

# Personal reactions

Once you have a good idea of what's happening, you need to know why. If you are losing users at one stage of the flow, it might be because your copy is confusing, the link to the next step is hard to find, or the system was too slow for the user. Until you know the answer to why, you cannot fix the problem.

To do this, you need to find and observe test users. Ideally these should be the segment of users you care about - users that are just like the persona or personas you created this product for. This can be hard, but

you can get closer to find them with highly targeted ads on sites like Facebook. Want to find people of a certain age, education level who like product X in a certain area? You can find them and offer them something to talk to you, or pop in for an hour while you observe them doing a task with your product. Careful with your incentive - you'll need to set it high enough to get them to bite, but not so high that it distorts their feedback. (Check the resources section for an alternative approach.)

## Pulling them together

Once you have an idea what is happening and why, you can solve the problems and release an updated version of your product. Now, you can start the process again - analyse data and personal reactions to see where the new problems are and fix them. As you continue to iterate, two things will happen:

Your product will get better at attacking the goal. Iteration will improve your product, but bear in mind that you can only improve what you have built already. If the initial premise was flawed, you should remove the solution and start again.. In crazy golf terms, if you were shooting at the wrong hole in the first place, putting closer to it won't help.

The benefit you get for each iteration will decrease. There's a lot of work involved, and while the first few iterations may yield great benefits, the fifth or sixth iteration may yield little.

Therefore, you must decide at what point you are done, and move on to the next task in your list. Others will pressure you to move on as quickly as possible, because a product looks done once it's launched - stay firm, understand the value of iteration, and move on when you believe you are ready.