in collaboration with

fitter for purpose

Why scientific brilliance isn't enough for commercial success

Reflections

11 December 2025

Objective

Enable researchers and teams identify, define, and prioritise their needs —thus enabling faster, more focused, and productive engagement with relevant support providers.

Audience

Primarily for projects from TRL 1 to 7, where these challenges are most prevalent. All sectors.

We help

Sciencepreneurs, tech teams, and lab-to-market organisations

to

transform brilliant science into **Buyable Stories**
that Customers and Investors can believe in

and, in the process,

build **Teams you can Trust**

The Shift

See, Apply and Build Talent	Know deeply what the Team has, and what it need. Value each individual. More traction, less friction. Grow your Team Power.
Uncover Customer Value effectively, efficiently	Work with the End in mind | Learn by Doing | Build practical, repeatable Know-How
Focus attention on producing well-targeted, strong evidence	Work step-by-step through the process of building a Buyable Story. Manage initiative progress more effectively and transparently

Key Principles

Context

Opportunity

You have €60k available through EIC Access+

Observation

Many teams struggle to identify what support they actually need

Why?

Because they don't yet understand where they're stuck and need help

Today:

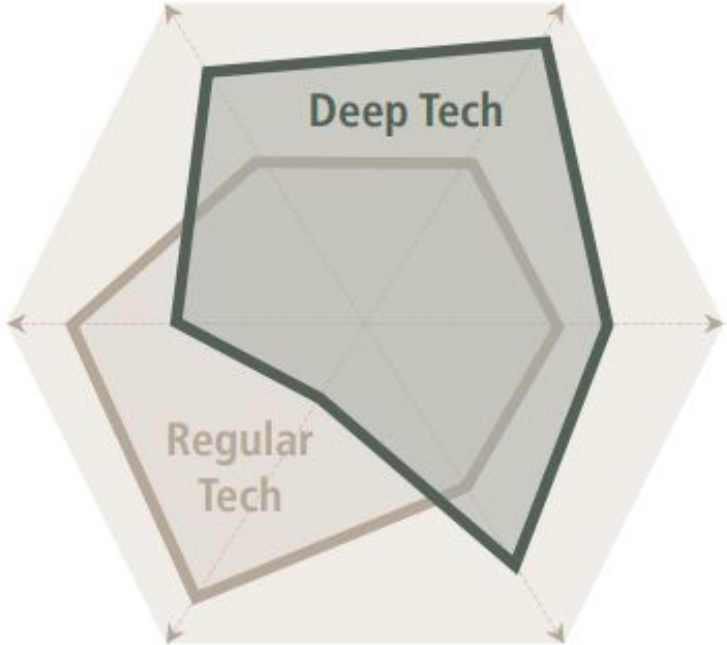
We'll help you diagnose your real need - so you can choose services that move you forward

Deeptech is hard

Deeptech: Lab-to-market is harder

Development risk
Longer initial development phase

Capital intensity
Often heavy CapEx ahead of revenues and PMF



Market risk
If the technology solves one of the world's biggest problems, there will be ample demand

Team risk
Academic and scientific backgrounds may have less commercial experience

Competition risk
Often the strong technology edge prevents competition

Technology risk
New technologies don't always work as expected

The 2025 European Deeptech Report

Four Foundational Challenges

1

Competitive Moat

Protecting breakthroughs against rapid patent proliferation

Compounded by rigid academic-industry IP agreements that stifle spinout growth

2

Technology Readiness Gap

The "Valley of Death" (TRL 4-7): high capital demand and concentrated engineering risk as concepts move from lab to operational environments

3

TRL-MRL Alignment

Failure to synchronize technical maturity (TRL) with manufacturing capability (MRL) and market validation

Leading to commercial rejection, despite scientific success

4

Unit Economics Collapse

Inability to establish positive unit profitability due to high, volatile COGS

Unrealistic market sizing and confirmation bias in pricing strategy

Your IP Moat is Surrounded by a Patent Minefield

The Funding Advantage

Deep tech's core attractor for investors is **strong IP** – 'technical advantage'

Startups with secured patents are up to **10X** more likely to secure funding

The Friction

With over 8,000 patents filed worldwide daily, startups risk infringing on **dense patent thickets**

Rigid university IP agreements demanding high equity stakes can stifle growth before it begins

10x

The "Valley of Death" is an Engineering Chasm

The transition from **TRL 4 to TRL 7** is chronically underfunded: sits between academic grants and later-stage VC investment.

AND

Moving to verifiable **engineering robustness** demands reliable quantification of technical risk: formal failure mode analysis and full engineering documentation

It Works in the Lab. It Fails on the Assembly Line.

The Industrialization Gate

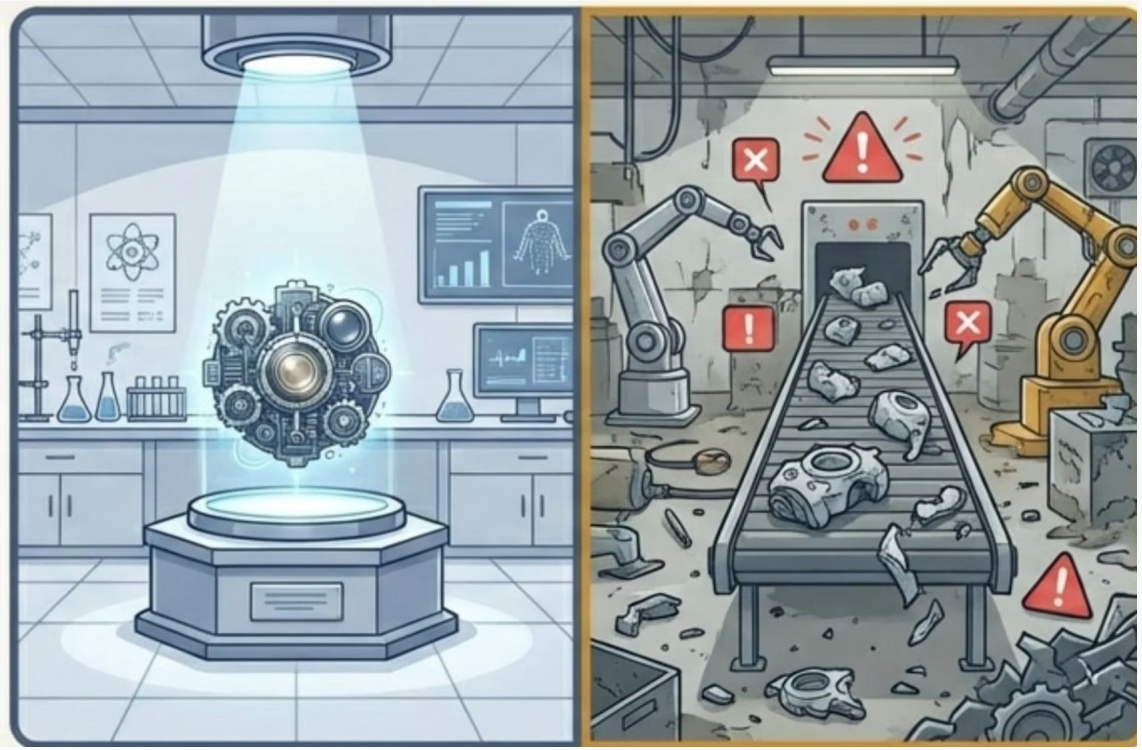
Viability depends on manufacturability (MRL)

A prototype that performs flawlessly in the lab may be impossible to replicate reliably, cost-effectively, or at scale.

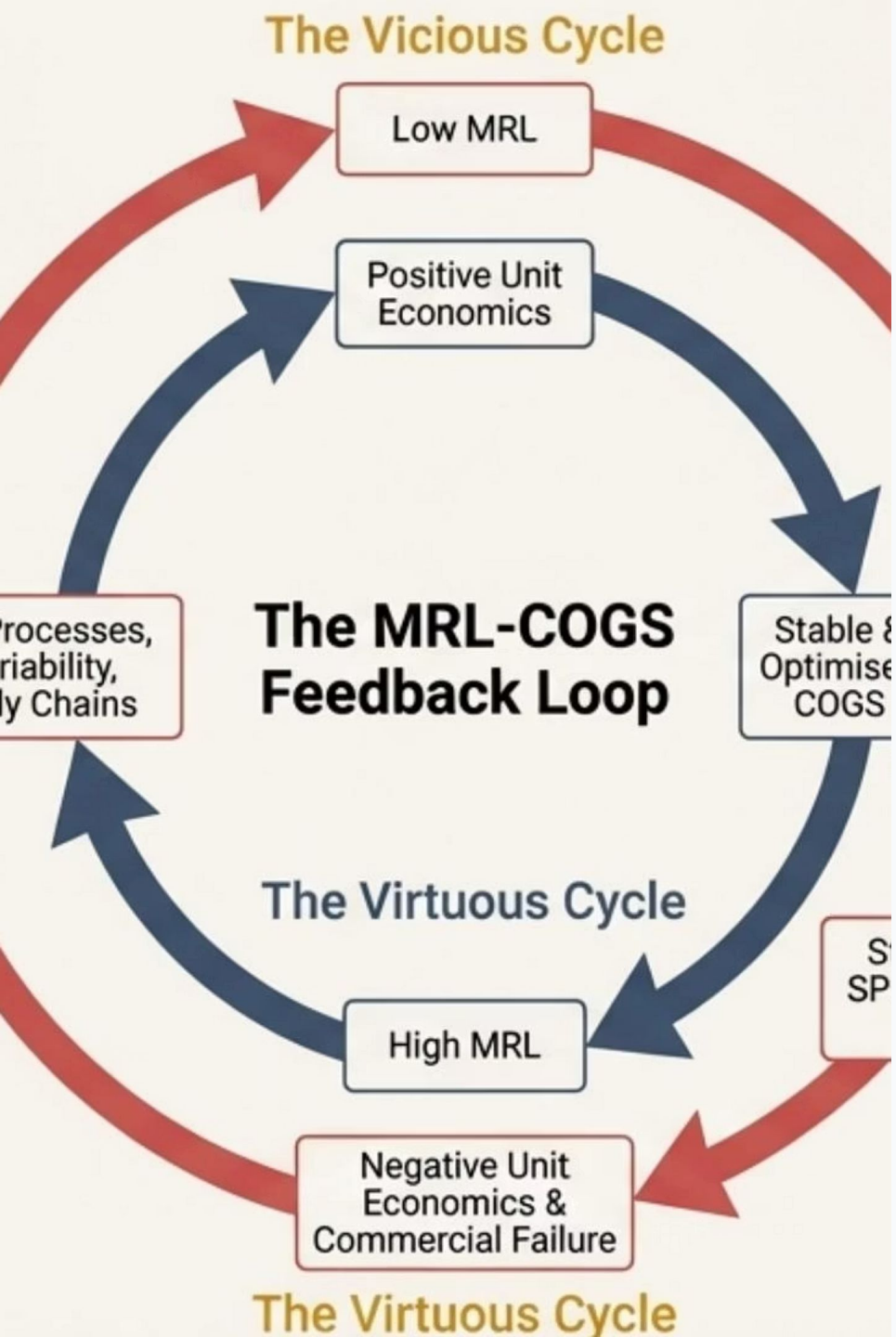
The MRL Challenge

Manufacturing risk cannot be deferred.

It involves navigating novel supply chains, scarcity of specialized talent, and limited access to advanced manufacturing infrastructure.



Establishing viability at pilot scale is non-negotiable



1

The Vicious Cycle

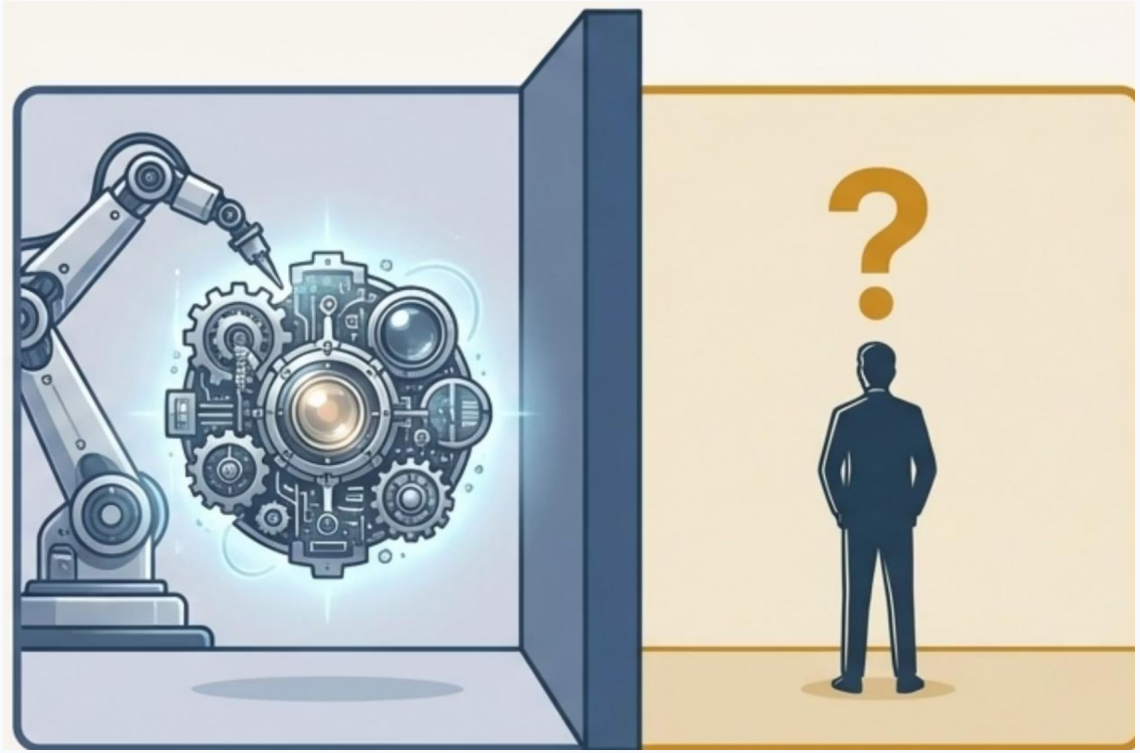
Low MRL → Unpredictable Processes → Volatile & Inflated COGS → Negative Unit Economics → **Commercial Failure**

2

The Virtuous Cycle

High MRL → Stable Processes & SPC → Optimized COGS → Positive Unit Economics → **Sustainable Growth**

Engineering a Perfect Solution to a Problem Nobody Has

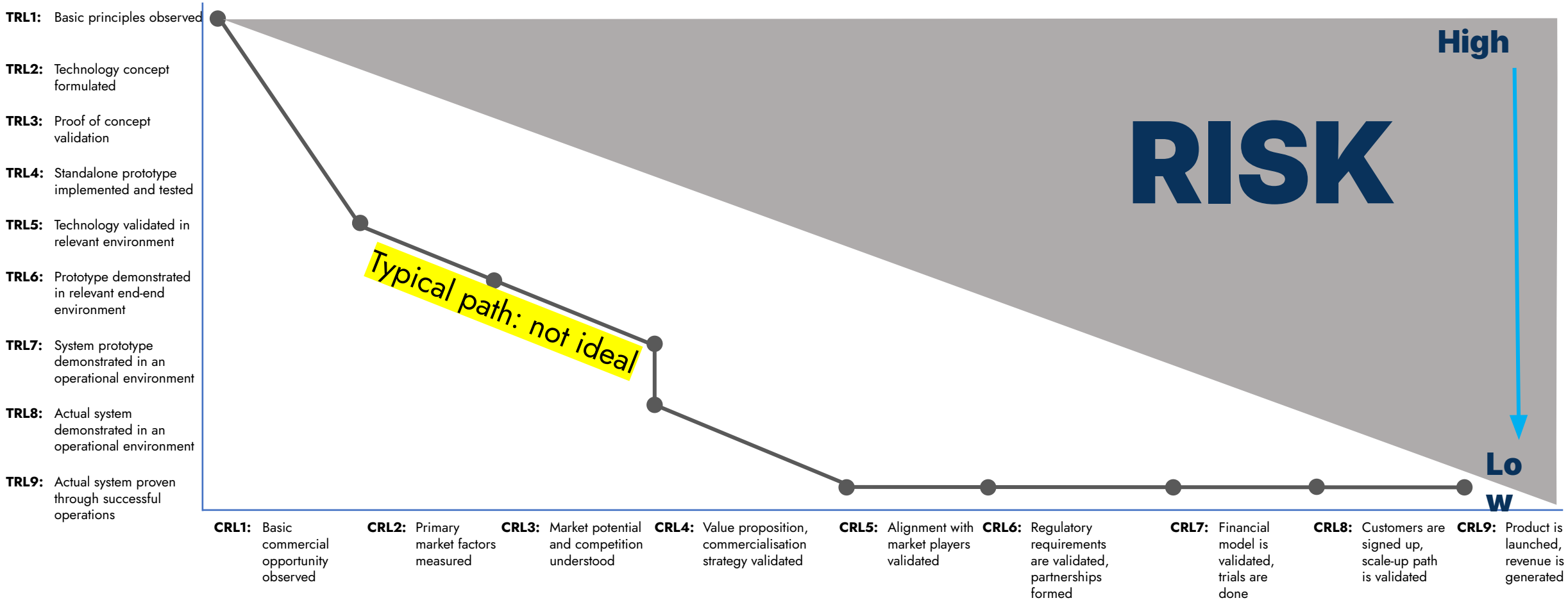


The Value Disconnect

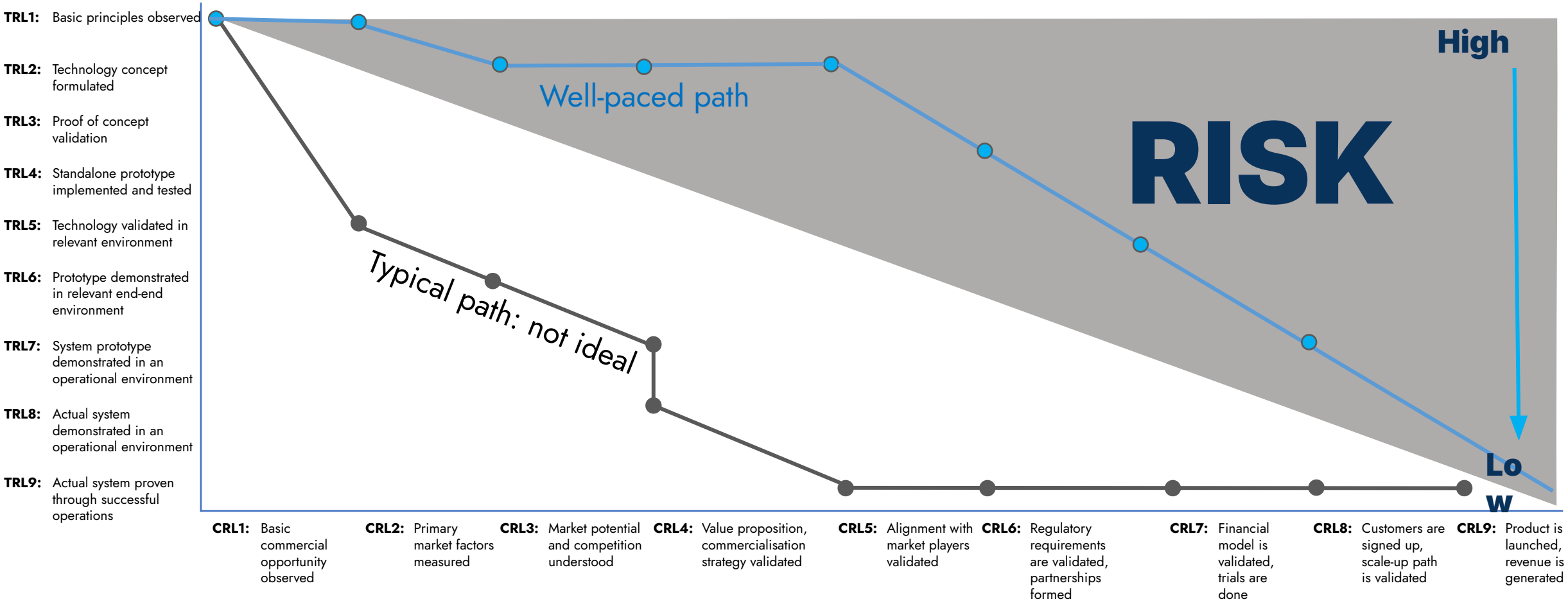
Technical excellence is necessary but insufficient.

Often a company achieves TRL 7 while remaining at CRL1 (unvalidated business model)

TRL > CRL: High Investment Risk



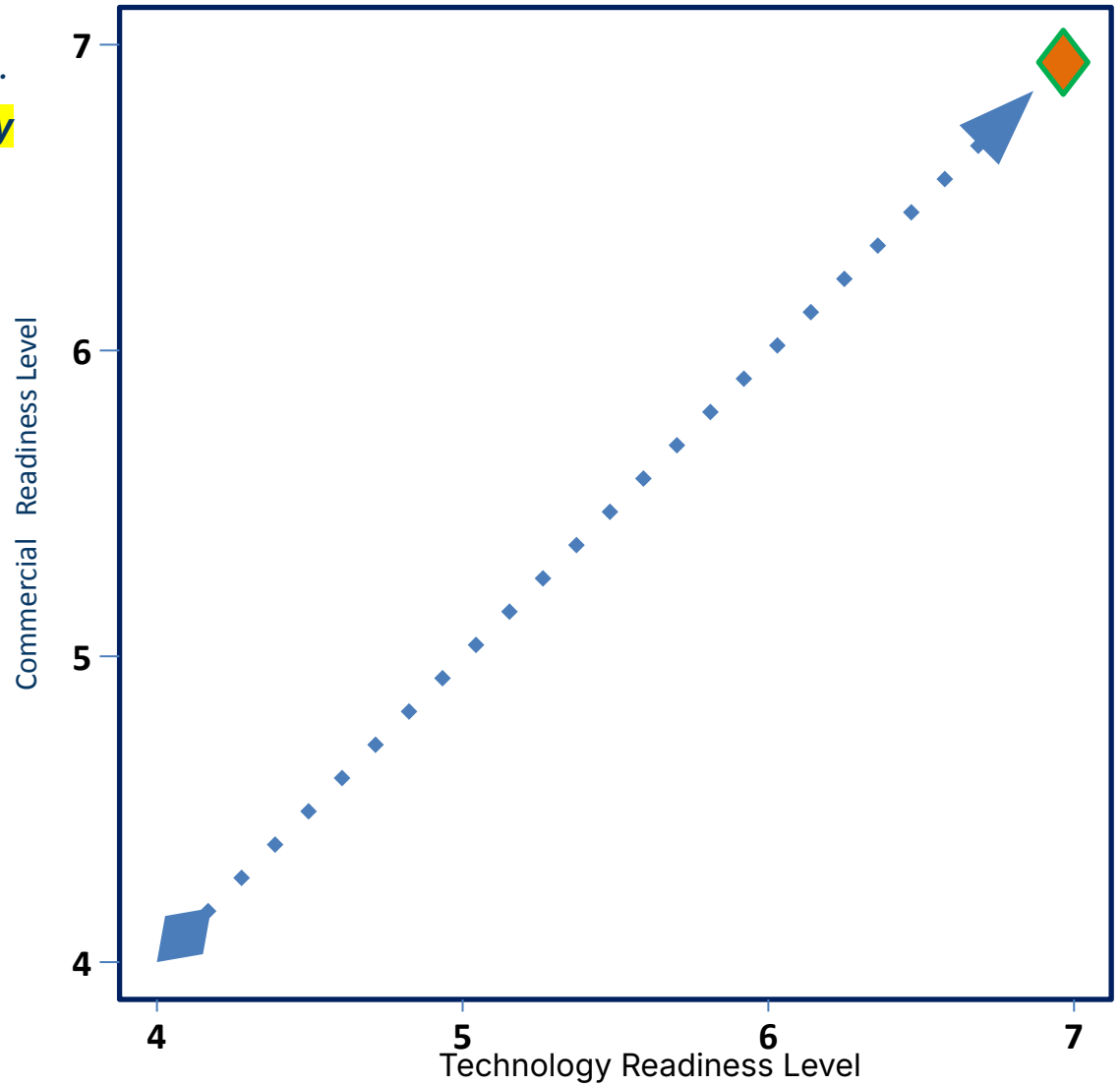
CRL ≥ TRL: Balanced Development



Commercialisation: Build Market Readiness

The full business model is validated.

Willingness to Pay *is demonstrated with sales to and use by target Customers*



Product-Market-Fit

There is ***solid proof*** *that we are in a good Market, with a Product that satisfies the value expectations of that Market, delivered via a sustainable Business Model.*

Our business model is ***ready to scale***

"Technical excellence does not equate to market value."

Case : Ansaro's $2M Lesson

The Promise

AI-powered hiring platform. Sophisticated data analysis.

Technically excellent solution.

The Reality

ROI arguments "never resonated with HR buyers."

Failed to drive adoption or behaviour change.

The Fatal Flaw

Focused on technical feasibility.

Failed to validate economic buyer's decision criteria.

Critically, discounted adoption friction

Value disconnect despite technical excellence. Issue: Customer Discovery failure

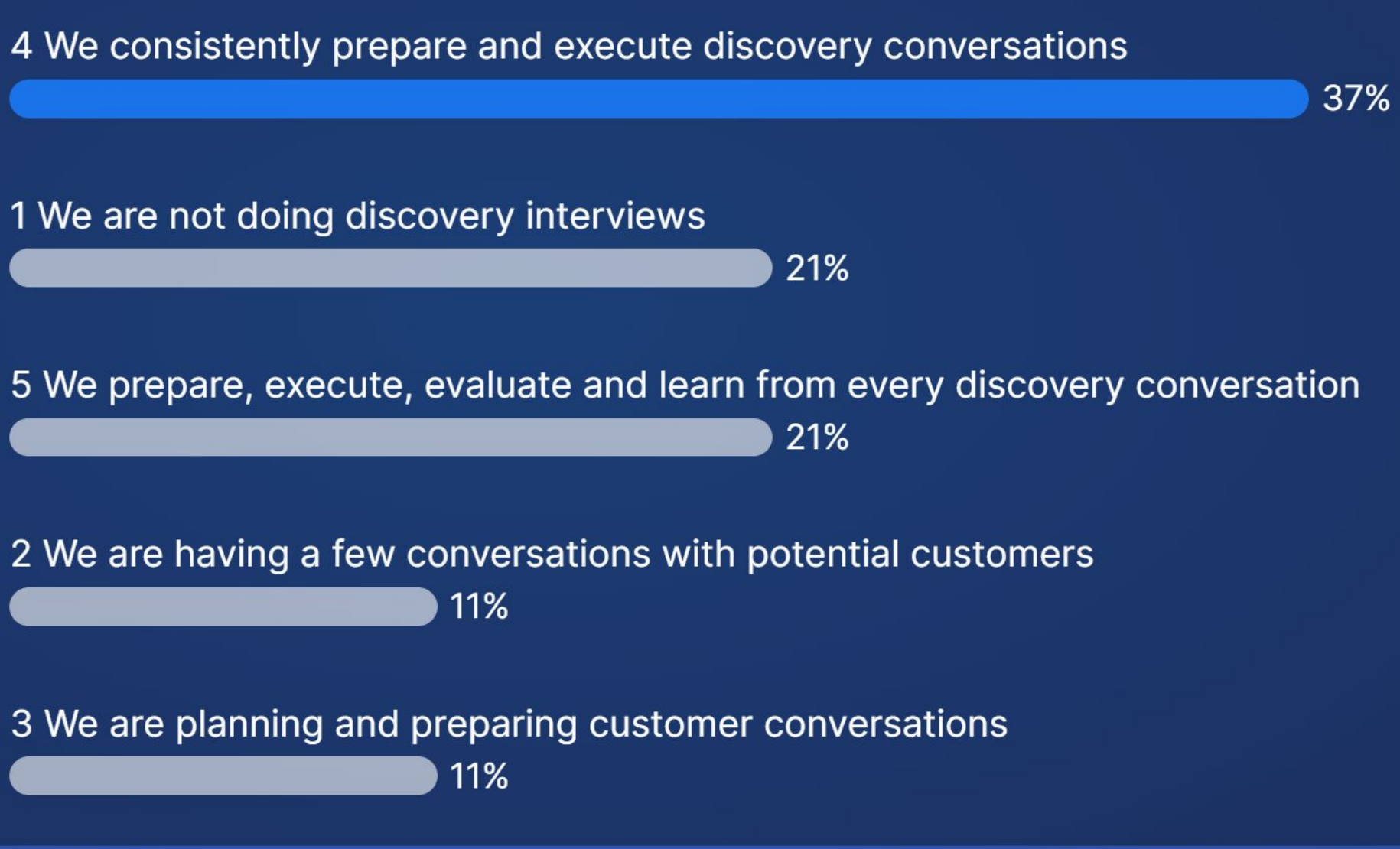
Who is already doing a good job at Customer Discovery?

Active poll

19

Join at
slido.com
#7936 804

Who is already doing a good job at Customer Discovery?



The Value Disconnect

73%

of customer discovery interviews
fail to uncover actionable insights

Technical Inertia: Triple Threat

Psychological

1

- Perfectionism
- Fear of rejection
- Sunk cost fallacy
- Founder's syndrome

Structural

2

- TRL vs MRL gap
- Investor pressure for prototypes
- Know-How gaps

Execution

3

- Confirmation bias
- Jargon barrier
- Active listening deficit

δiscovery Lab

Where lab-to-market teams
master the art of effective customer discovery,
before facing real customers

Synthesis…

Three Readiness Levels Must Synchronize

TRL

Technology Readiness Level:

Scientific and Engineering Feasibility

Does the technology work?

MRL

Manufacturing Readiness Level:

Production and Industrialisation Viability

Can we build it reliably at scale?

CRL

Commercial Readiness Level:

Customer Need and Commercial Viability

Does anyone want it? Will they pay?

Key Insight: These three levels are interdependent axes. A high score on one does not guarantee success.

Enterprise Development

Governance

Professional structures for decision-making. Legal & regulatory compliance. Financial architectures and oversight

Scaling

Systematic approaches to scaling, marketing and sales, talent

Operations

Readiness for production, delivery. Risk management. Partner engagement

Investment and Funding

Financial architecture for attracting and deploying capital

Lab-to-Market Success

is not the absence of risk,
but the mastery of readiness

Questions?

Why Brilliant Science Gets Stuck in the Lab

Lost in the Innovation Woods

Brilliant science gets stuck. Why?

The Brilliance Trap

Technical excellence and breakthrough discoveries don’t automatically translate to market success

The Translation Gap

Something gets lost between you and less-expert audiences who control funding and adoption

Fundamental Market Truth

"Investors and Customers don't buy Science

Fundamental Market Truth

"Investors and Customers don't buy **Science**

What they buy is

a story they can believe in

and

a team they can trust

to deliver it."

What Makes a Story "Buyable"?

1

Not a Fairy Tale

Grounded in reality and evidence

2

Key Differentiator: PROOF

Evidence

3

Scientific Method

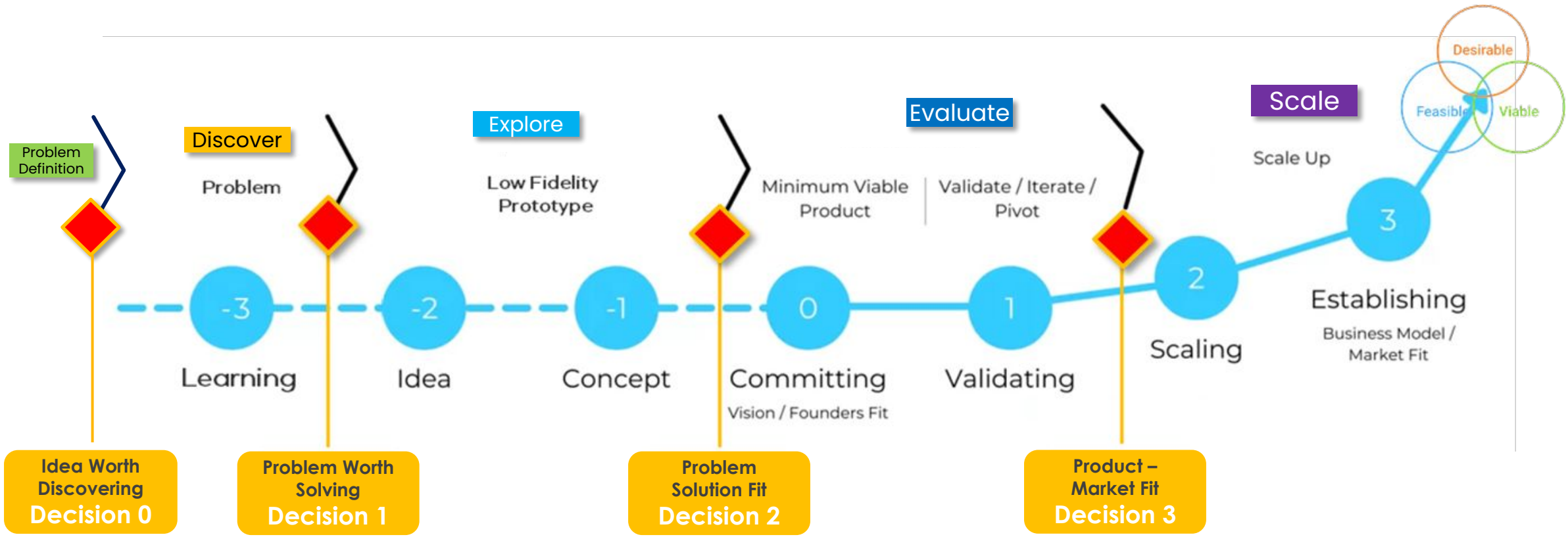
Applied to market commercialization

"**Commercialisation**" is a systematic, evidence-based discipline—an application of the scientific method to the market itself.

How to create a Buyable Story?

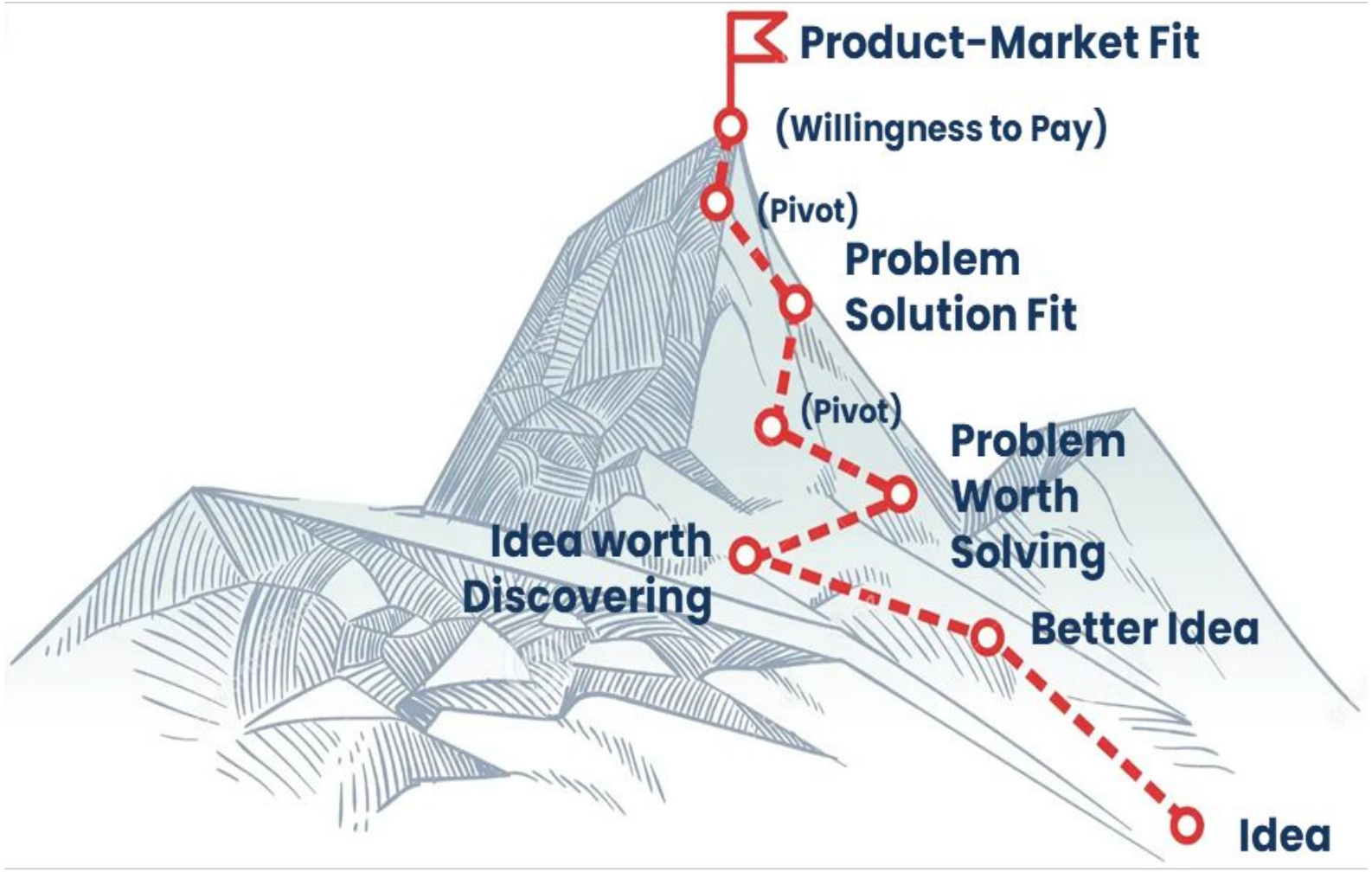
Step. by. Step

Initiative Journeys progress through a series of Decision Points



A **Decision Point** is a formal, structured evaluation of whether a proposition merits further investment of time, energy, attention, and money

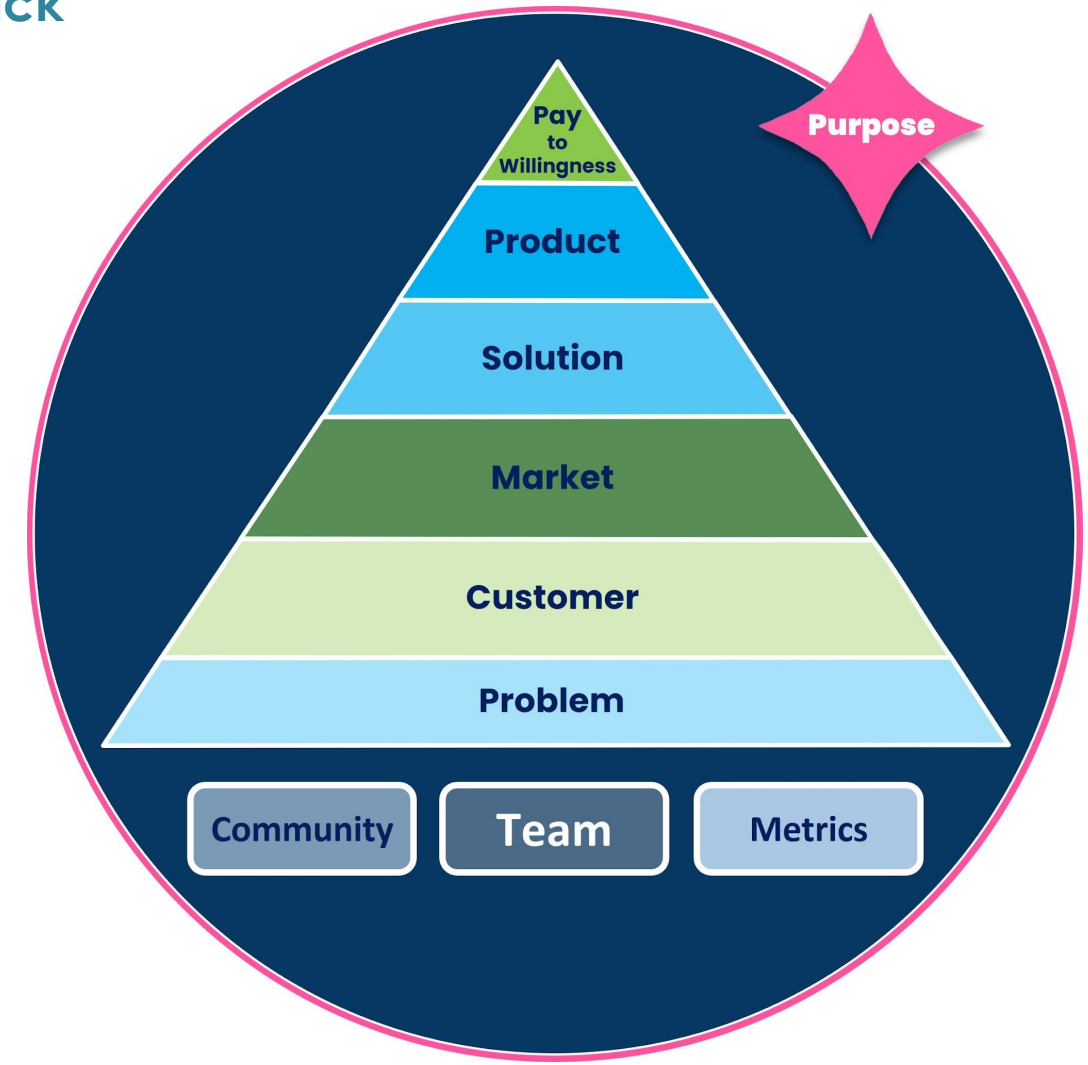
Initiative Journeys progress through a series of Decision Points

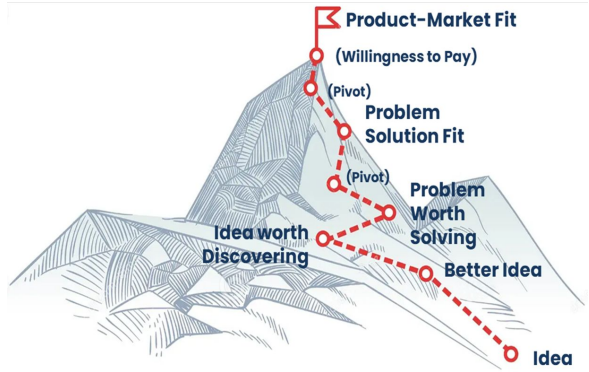


Use a common framework

People | Process | Progress

Customer Value Stack





Team Power is Key

Deeptech: Lab-to-market is harder

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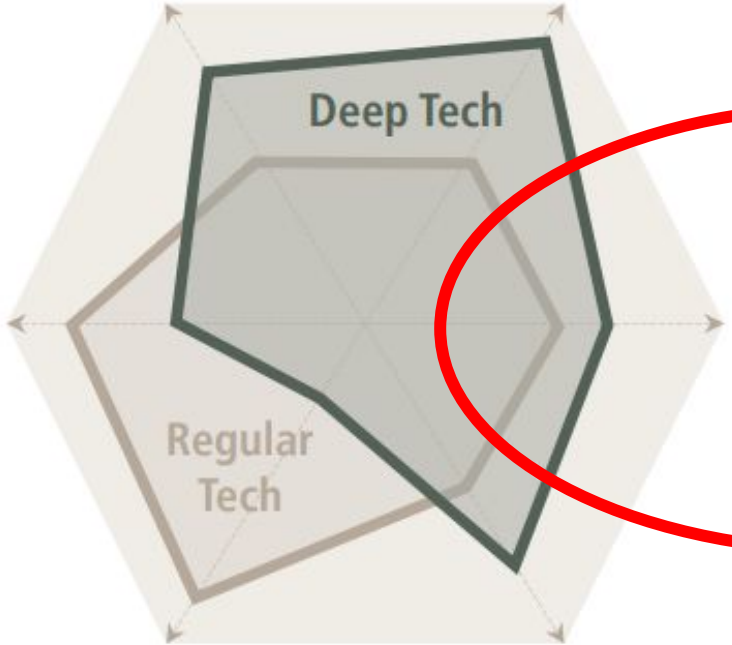
Longer initial development phase

Capital intensity
Often heavy CapEx ahead of revenues and PMF



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The 2025 European Deeptech Report

What is “Team Power”?

Progress | Process | People

- ✔ Clearly articulated, shared **Purpose**
- ✔ Right **mindset;** the right mix of **skills**
- ✔ Clarity about what each member brings (**repertoire**)
- ✔ **Roles, responsibilities:** well-defined
- ✔ Agreed **strategies** to maximise Team Power
- ✔ **Work interactions** are effective, efficient
- ✔ Team **systematically improves** individual and collective Power

Twice as likely to deliver to expectations*

How do we see Team Power and build it?

Engineer Teams you can Trust

Impact Potential: what you bring

Engineer Teams you can Trust

Impact Potential

Assessed for each Team member, and the Team as a unit

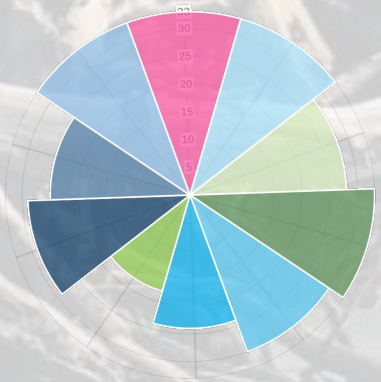
Progress

Initiative Maturity

Engineer Teams you can Trust

Impact Potential

Initiative Maturity
Actionable characterisation of the current status



Initiative Maturity

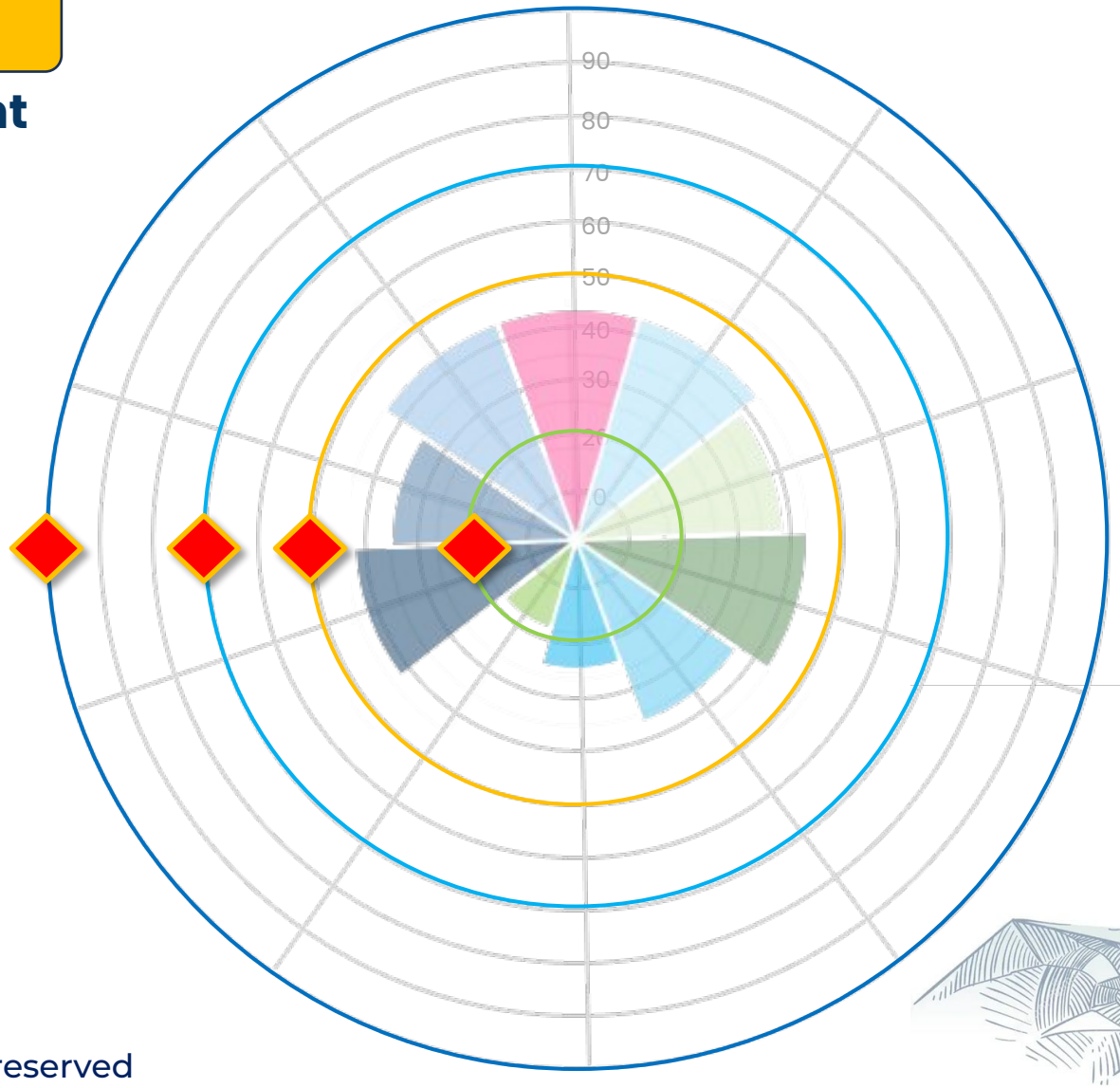
Execution

Doing the thing right

- Team
- Communities
- Metrics

Investment Decisions
are made at the end of each Maturity phase

- Evaluation
- Exploration
- Discovery
- Problem Definition



Content

Doing the right thing

- Purpose
- Problem
- Customer
- Market
- Solution
- Product
- Willingness to Pay

Team Power

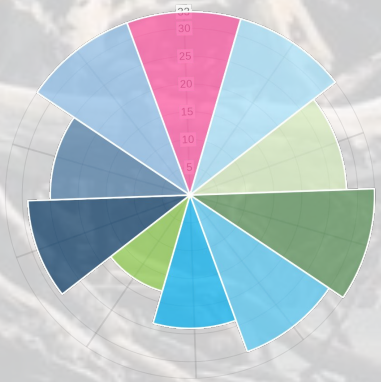
Engineer Teams you can Trust

Impact Potential

Team Power

Your Team's **Fitness** to progress the initiative successfully

Initiative Maturity



Team Power – See what you have and what you need

Execution

Doing the thing right

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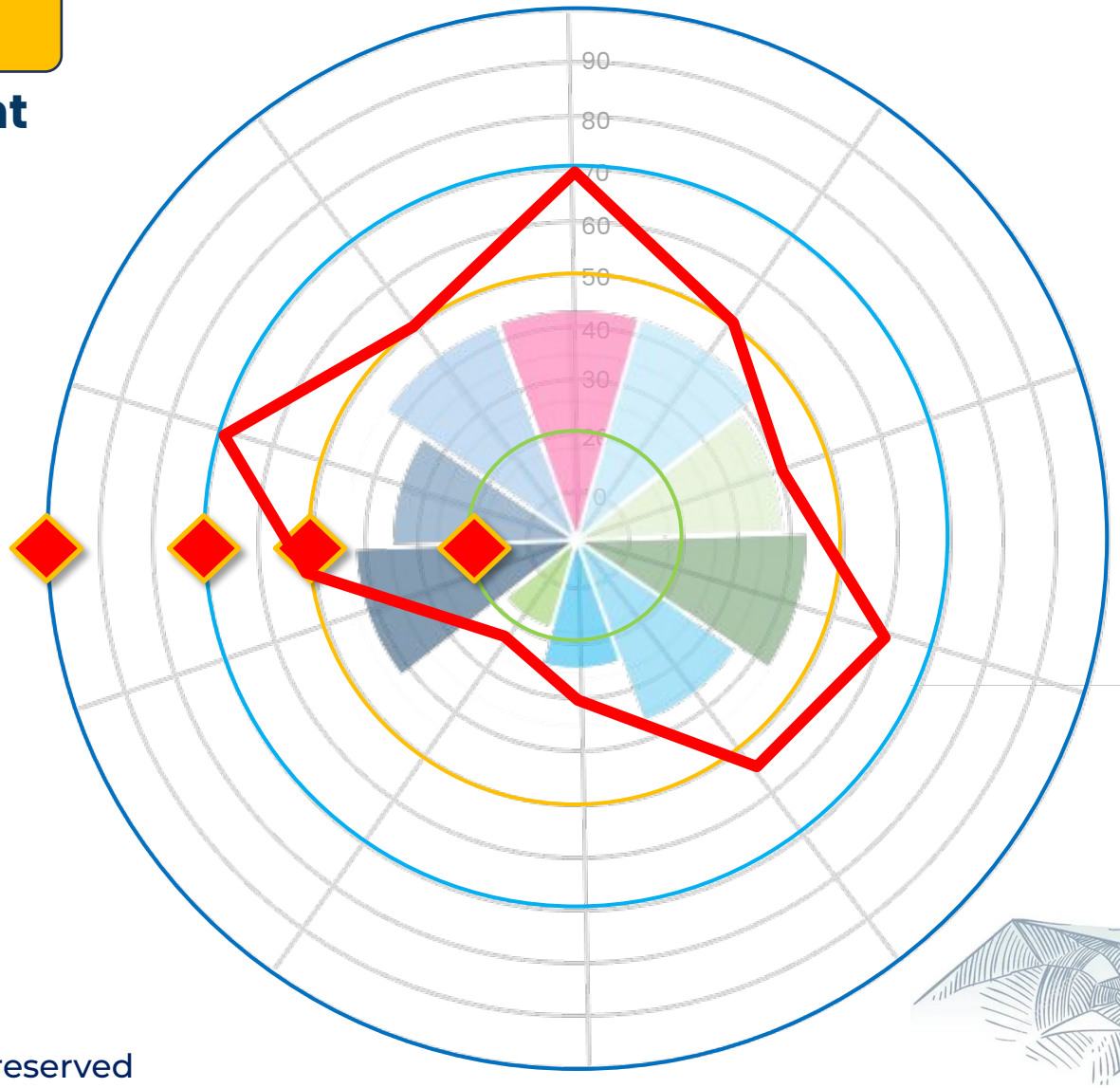

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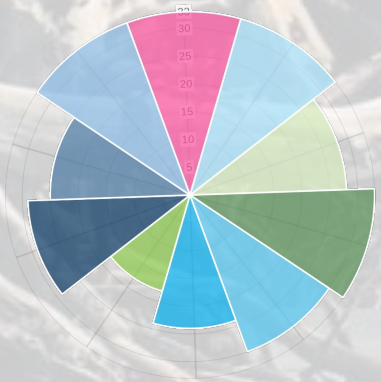
Fitter for Purpose: Services Flow

Engineer Teams you can Trust

Impact Potential

Initiative Maturity



Team Power

Team Optimise

Deeper **Alignment** of your Team with their Purpose, with action strategies to power up collective performance

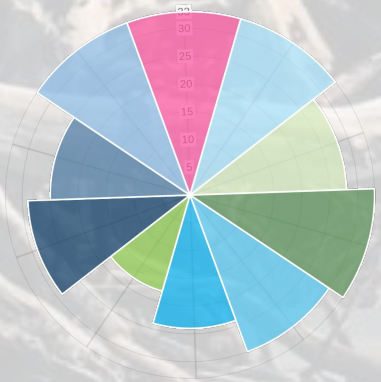
Fitter for Purpose: Services Flow

Engineer Teams you can Trust → **Build Buyable Stories**

Impact Potential

Team Power → **Team Optimise**

Initiative Maturity

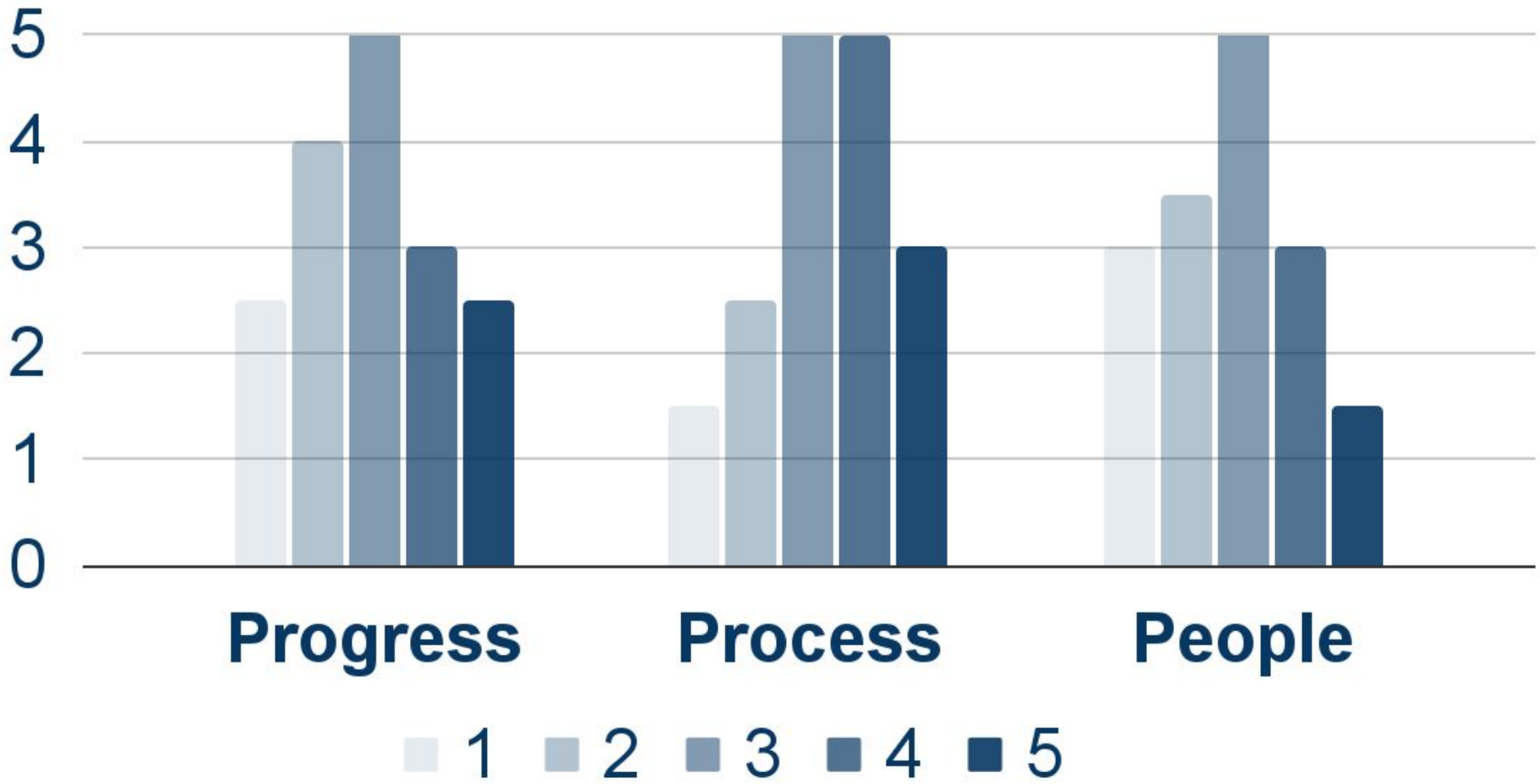


FFP Commit

Guiding Angels for Initiative Progress and Team Growth

How Buyable is your Story?

How Buyable is your Story?



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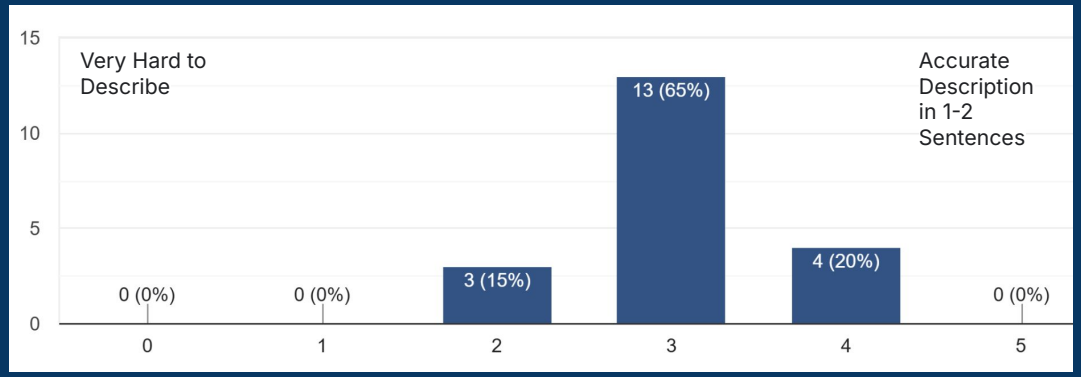
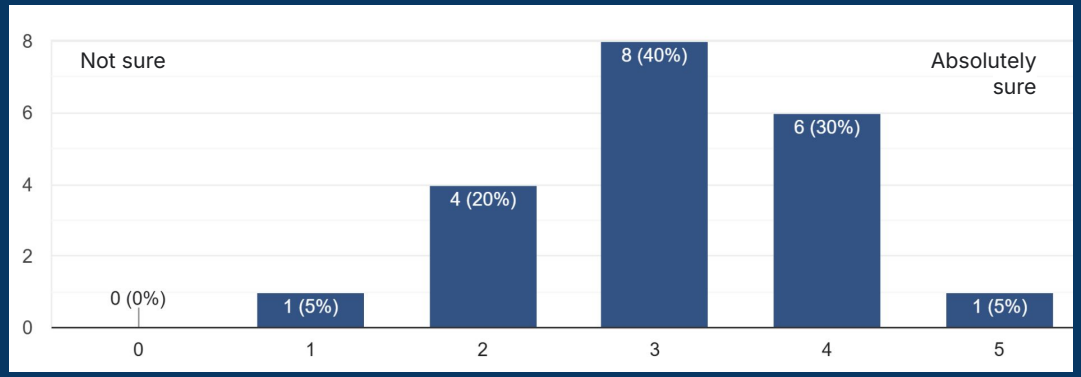
Progress



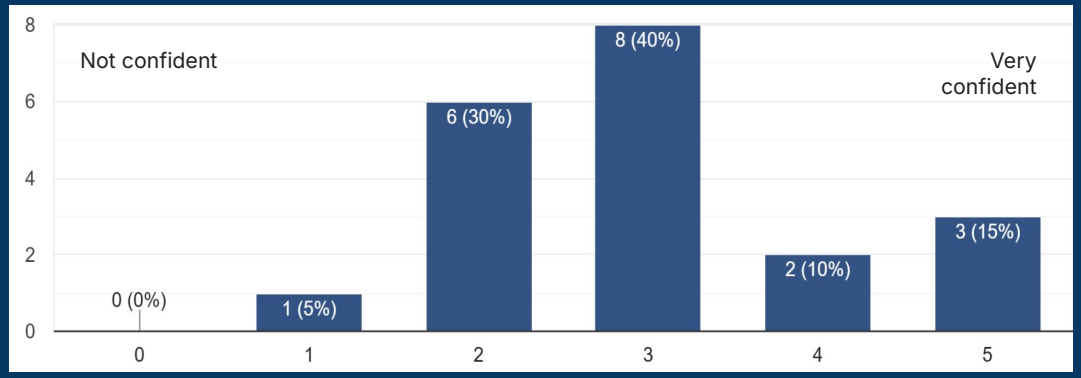
How quickly and accurately could you characterise the maturity of your initiative?

Process



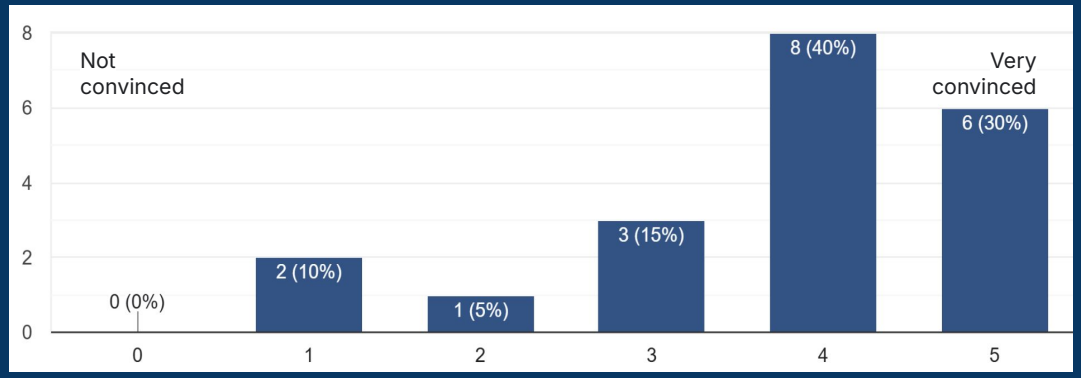
How sure are you that your Solution will win?

Process



How confident are you that your team can navigate the lab-to-market journey?

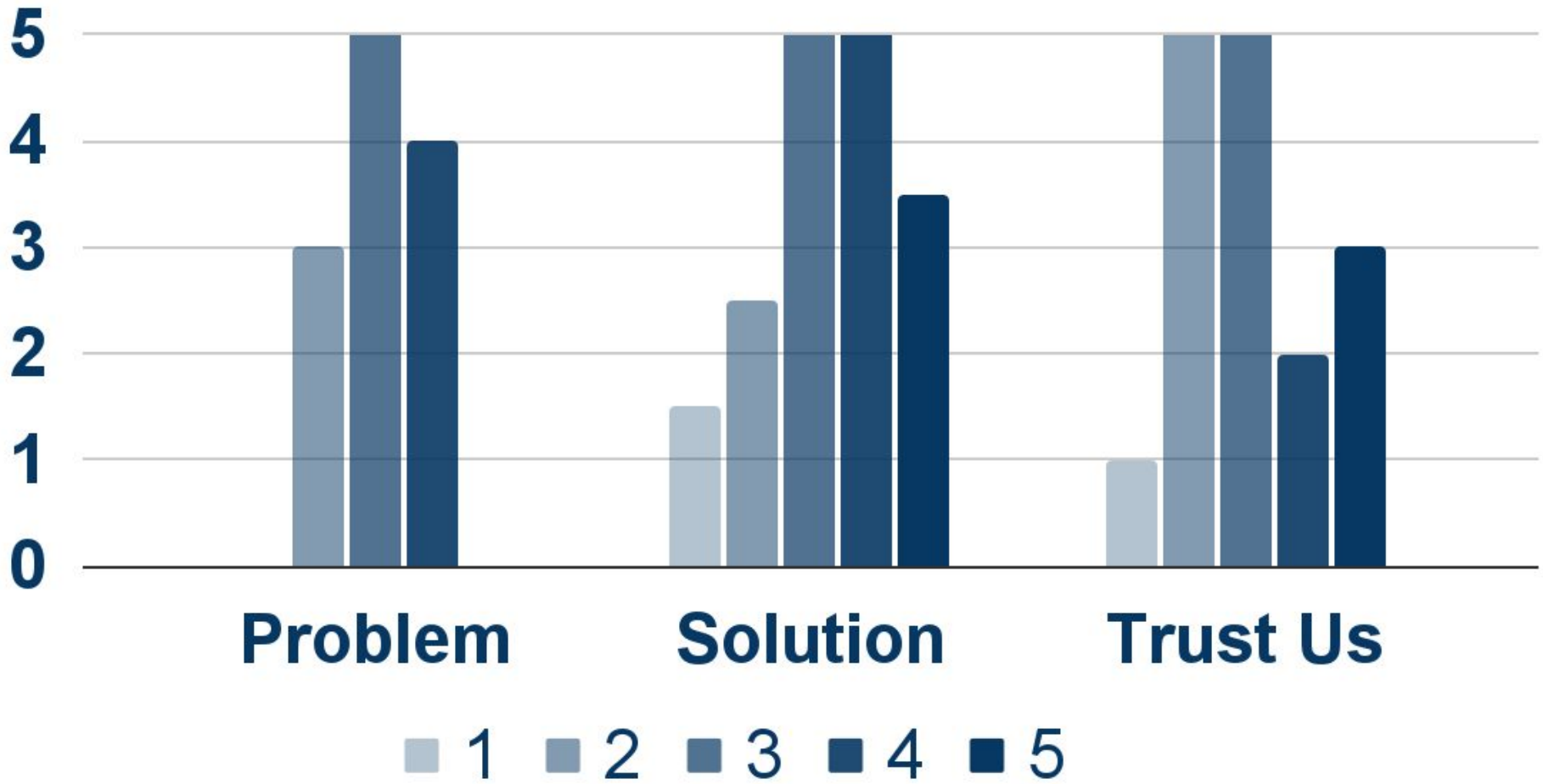
People



How convinced are you that your current team can deliver the promise of the science?

Can we ask you a few questions about δiscovery

discovery about Discovery



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δiscovery

Problem

Over the last 3 months, who has been purposefully engaging with Users | Customers | Stakeholders to understand the Problem and the value of solving it?

δiscovery

Problem

How structured is your process for discovering and updating your understanding of the Problem?

δiscovery

Solution

When you test your Solution (eg via prototypes, demos, pilots), who is directly involved in designing, running and debriefing those experiments?

δiscovery

Solution

To what extent do you follow a consistent and repeatable cycle for Solution validation?

(eg define hypothesis → design test → run → review data → decide next step)

δiscovery

Trust Us

Across your core team, how regularly do people (not just founders) engage directly with the outside world - customers, users, partners, critics - and then bring back insights to validate your proposition?

δiscovery

Trust Us

To what extent do you ensure that the different strengths in the team (technical, business, relational, analytical) are actively used in discovery - and in adapting to what you learn from the outside world?

Recap

Lab-to-Market Success

is not the absence of risk,
but the mastery of readiness

Connect

Michael@fitterforpurpose.io

Renzo@fitterforpurpose.io

fitterforpurpose.io

Baseline

Book a call

Discovery

Book a call

Buyable Stories delivered by Teams you can Trust