

Questions not Stories

Agile 2013, Aug 7 2013

Adrian Howard (@adrianh)
quietstars.com

Hello!

Please ask
questions

Disclaimer 1: Eh?

Disclaimer 2:
I could be confused
and stupid

Disclaimer 3:
Be careful if you're
new to agile

Who am I?

I <heart> feedback

Agile2013 Session Feedback

Date: _____

Session: _____

Speaker(s): _____

Comments:

swears a lot
not really appropriate

- good hands in workshop
otherwise

Swear Jar



(obligatory cute animal slide)

Who are you?

Exploring user stories

Chatham House Rule
applies please

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed”

Exercise

- Everybody write a user story
- Real (if you can) or made up

Exercise

- Each person explain their user story to the group
- Card. Conversation. Confirmation.

Stories?

Relax

Why stories?

Stories are
statements

Stories describe
the product

Product owner says

“X will return
business value”

Splitting & Thinning

Stories

=

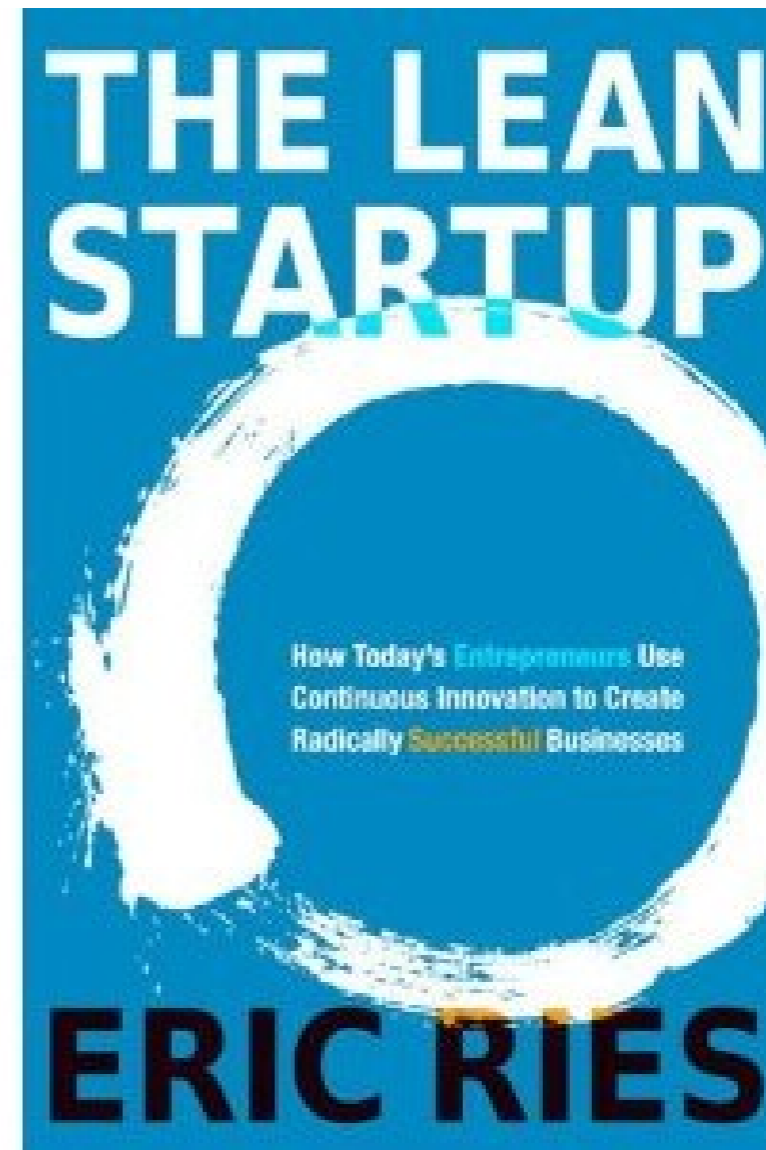
known knowns

What about
known unknowns?

What about
unknown unknowns?

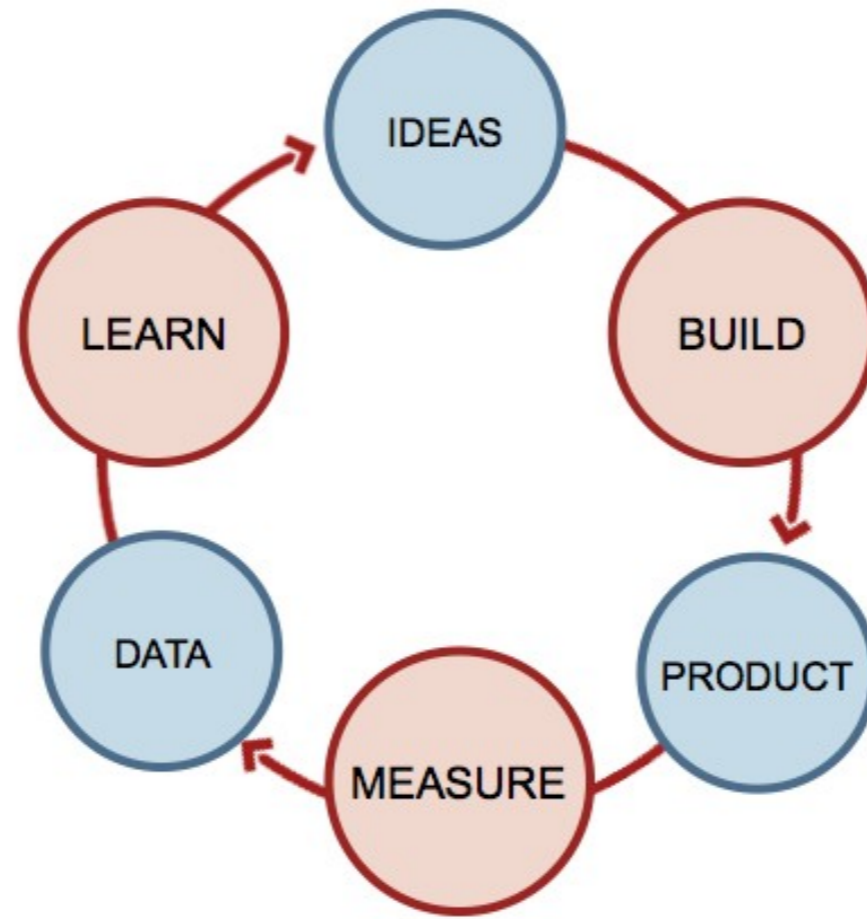
The Lean Startup

“A true experiment follows the scientific method. It begins with a clear hypothesis that makes predictions about what is supposed to happen. It then tests those predictions empirically”



The Lean Startup

- Come up with hypothesis
- Design experiment
- Run experiment
- Validate/Invalidate hypothesis
- Repeat



The Lean Startup

Moving from Stories to Hypotheses

As a potential user, I
want register using
twitter so that I don't
have to fill out a
registration form.

Step 1

As a potential user, I
want register using
twitter so that I don't
have to fill a
registration form ?

As a potential user, I
want register using
twitter so that I don't
have to fill a
registration form ?

Step 2: Ask why?

- Increase # registrations?
- More social media penetration for marketing?
- Allow notification features?

Step 3: What's our
hypothesis?

Allowing users to register with twitter will drop abandoned registrations by 5%

Exercise

- 5m
- Pair up
- Pick a story card and apply:
 1. Question mark
 2. Why (or “whys”) ?
 3. Generate hypothesis

Building Experiments

Experiments
produce learning
not product

Experiments can
get thrown away

Focus on cost &
feedback time

Allowing users to register with twitter will drop abandoned registrations by 5%

Example

- Built fake “register with twitter” link which led to nice error message
- Released to segment of customers on live site
- Measured how many new users tried it
- <1% - hypothesis invalid

Not just A/B testing

Example

- Zappos
- Annual sales > US\$1 billion
- Hypothesis: Is there a demand for superior online shoe shopping
- Experiment: Took photos from shoe shops, came back and bought them full price if customer bought them online

Exercise

- 5m
- Pair up
- Pick a hypothesis
- Come up with as many ways to validate the hypothesis as possible

Why hypothesis?

The Good, the Bad &
the Ugly

Hypotheses talk
about business
value directly

It's hypotheses
before, during and
after development

Alignment on value

Helps build an
experiment culture

Encourages
value-oriented
infrastructure

Splitting/thinning
changes

Where's the user?

Success changes

Where are the
running, tested
features?

Where's the
delight?

Horde of zombie experiments

What happens
when I can't
validate cheaply?

What about non-
startup contexts?

Some folk find
reality hurts

Further Reading

- Lean Startup by Eric Ries
- The Startup Owner's Manual by Steve Blank
- Running Lean by Ash Maurya
- The Four Steps to the Epiphany by Steve Blank
- The Entrepreneur's Guide to Customer Development by Brant Cooper & Patrick Vlaskovits

Remember your
feedback forms

Questions

@adrianh
quietstars.com
slideshare.net/adrianh
adrianh@quietstars.com