

# Some Problems Matter More

*Grant Baker / IxDF / August 20, 2025*

# Describe a time when you have worked on a product that ended up solving the wrong thing.

we included too many patient options based on patient-defined requirements

we were trying to reduce the task on time for a vendor approval process for federal application

Take one

After some exploration, trying to expand a floundering segment was just not worth the squeeze (bad partner, low ROI)

Brandon Locke

Creating a left hand navigation system that was too complex for legal users

Melvin Morales

designing a system that was intended to get people out of spreadsheets and onto the platform, yet didn't (it actually created the need for more spreadsheets)

We were trying to design an onboarding experience and completely focused on the aesthetics more and not so much on usability

Today we're going to identify the  
problems worth your time and energy.

# Why don't all problems have equal weight?

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- Business Impact and Strategy concerns

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- Business impact and strategy concerns
- Users' goals

"Culture is public because meaning is. You can't wink ... without knowing what counts as winking."

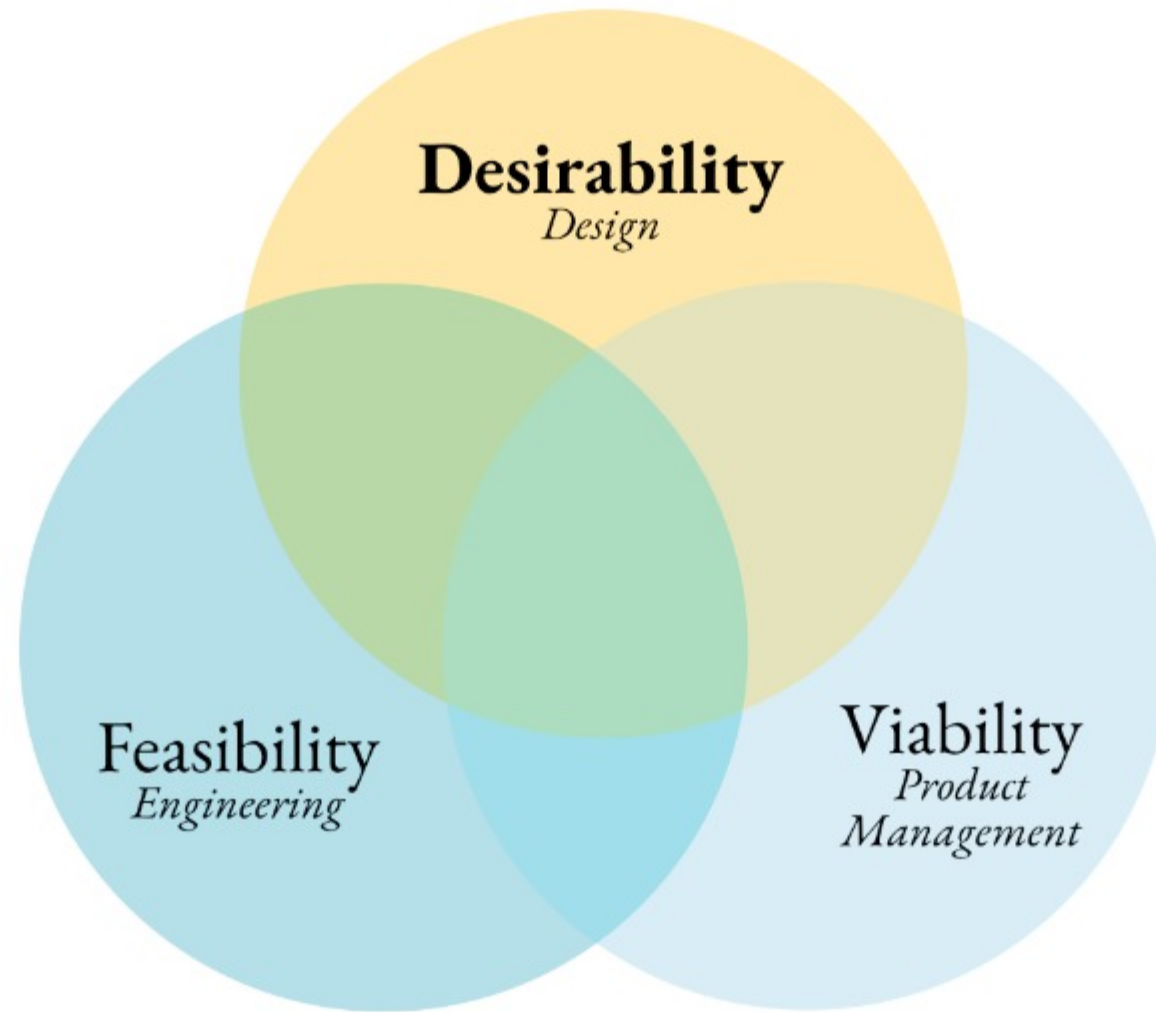
Clifford Geertz

*Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*

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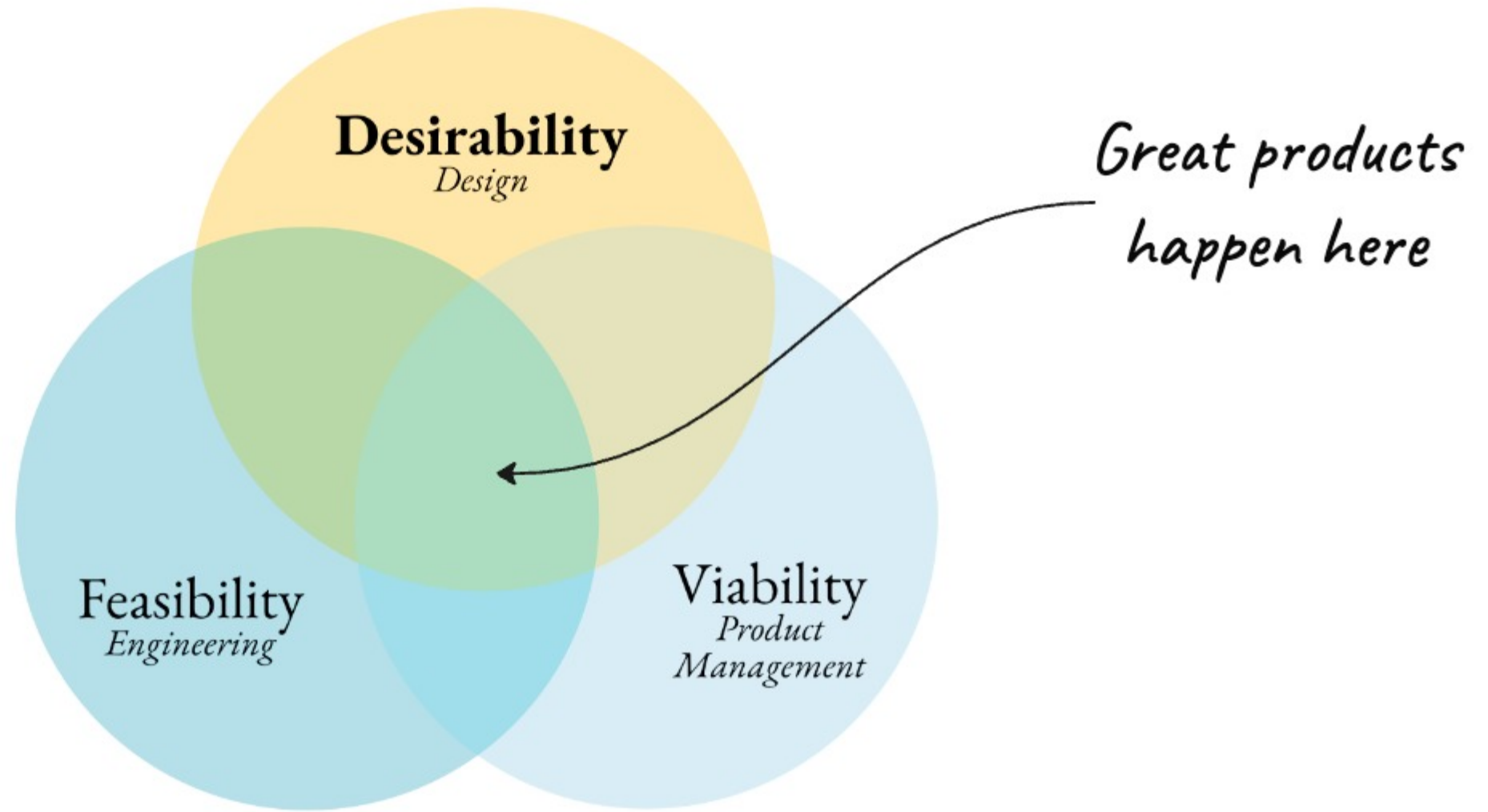
- Business impact and strategy concerns
- Users' goals
- Organizational and human factors



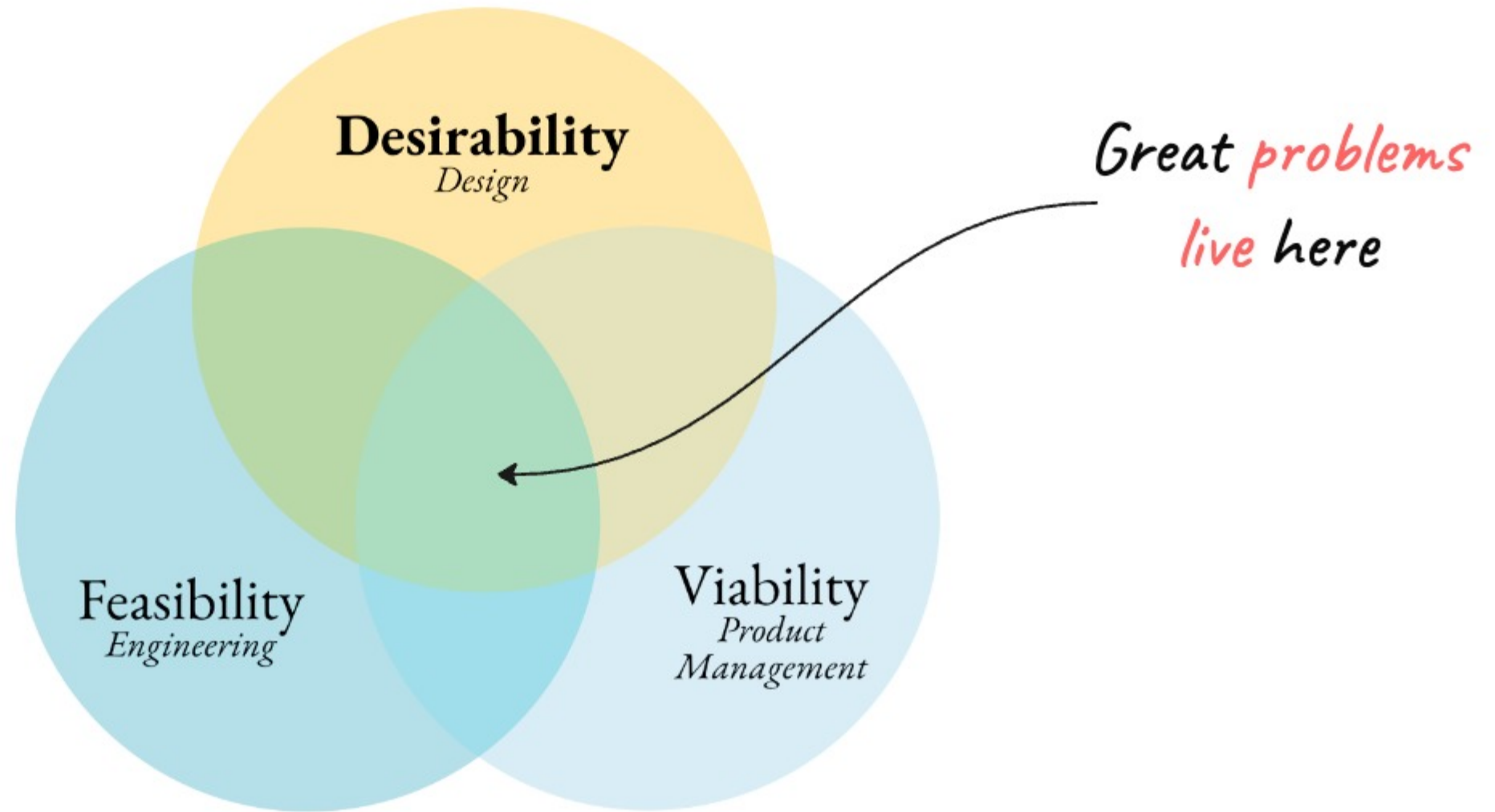


## The Keeley Diagram

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# The Problem-Value Matrix

High Value for Users

Future  
Opportunities

Career Makers

Low Value for  
the Organization

High Value for  
the Organization



Backstage  
Priorities

Low Value for Users

The best products present a clear value to the  
User and a high value to the business

Think about a design challenge you are facing right now. Note the value from the business perspective and the user perspective.

What makes a problem valuable  
to users and the organization?





# Warning Signs





# Warning signs of a problem not worth pursuing

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How do we deal with low-value problems?

First, flip the script. Let's practice:

- Unclear or undefined problem
- Designing for “everyone”
- No quantifiable business value
- Over-indexing on features

First, flip the script. Let's practice:

- ~~Unclear or undefined problem~~ Clarify through research!
- Designing for “everyone”
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- Over-indexing on features



First, flip the script. Let's practice:

- ~~Unclear or undefined problem~~ Clarify through research!
- ~~Designing for “everyone”~~ Discover Personas!
- No quantifiable business value
- Over-indexing on features

First, flip the script. Let's practice:

- ~~Unclear or undefined problem~~ Clarify through research!
- ~~Designing for “everyone”~~ Discover Personas!
- ~~No quantifiable business value~~ Discover how value is created!
- Over-indexing on features

First, flip the script. Let's practice:

- ~~Unclear or undefined problem~~ Clarify through research!
- ~~Designing for “everyone”~~ Discover Personas!
- ~~No quantifiable business value~~ Discover how value is created!
- ~~Over-indexing on features~~ Refocus on user goals!

But what if you can't?

# Four simple suggestions

Don't stand in front of the train

Document your work and the outcomes of the team's work



Be open to being wrong



# Build accountability as a virtue

# Thank you!

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