Squish Level Objectives

How SRE can help align technical work to user benefit

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Agenda

- Finding the human in your machine.
- Figuring out what they want.
- Delivering it to them.

Dave Stanke
Developer Advocate
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Dave is a Developer Advocate for Google Cloud Platform, aligned to the DevOps community. He loves talking with practitioners: listening to stories, telling stories, sharing a healthy cry. Prior to Google, he was the CTO of OvationTix/TheaterMania, a tech startup in the performing arts industry, where he specialized in feeding memory to Java servers. He chose on purpose to live in New Jersey, where he enjoys baking, indie rock, and fatherhood.
Who’s this guy?

- **CTO** (Startup)
- **Product Manager** (Google)
- **Developer Advocate** (Google)

@davidstanke
Some Engineering Myths...
Myth #1

“I’m not customer-facing.”
“Hi!”

YOU

Platform Operations

Platform Development

Application Ops

Application Development

Product Owner

Project Management

Sales

Customer Support

YOUR CUSTOMER
Myth #2

“"I don’t work on a product.""
A product is a thing that someone chooses instead of another thing.
Your product is probably not a thing in a box...
Your product is probably not a thing in a box...

...because actually, no product is.
And now some SRE
SRE Principle #1
Reliability is the most important feature of any service [product].
Myth #3

“\textquoteinline{I don’t work on features.}”
Value x time
Your customer hates your code.
SRE Principle #2

We don’t determine the reliability of our systems; our users do.
SRE Principle #2'
We don’t determine the quality of our product; our customers do.
What do these people want?!!?
What do these people want?!?

Let’s go ask them.
We’ve learned not to do this...
Let’s stop doing this, too:
Engineers like to solve problems
Engineers need to understand customer problems
Understand your customer

Talk to them:

- Qualitative User Experience Research (UXR)
- It’s okay to just listen
- N > 1
Understand your customer

Read about them:

- Quantitative UXR
- Market research
- Analytics / logs
Understand your customer

Be them:

- Dogfooding
- Empathy Sessions
- Try the competition
Understand your customer

Mess with them:

Use Error Budgets to experiment on user experience
Everything is for the customer
Okay, but what about all the things the customer doesn’t care about?
Security
Security is for the customer
Tech Debt?
Refactoring is for the customer
Cost cutting
Cost cutting is for the customer
Your Happiness
Your Happiness 🙌 is for the customer
Keep the customer around during development
Keep the customer around...

When designing:

- User personas
- JTBDs
- Prototyping
Keep the customer around...

When implementing:

- Customer-oriented milestones
- Customer feedback loops
  - Trusted testers
  - CABs
  - etc.
Keep the customer around...

When operating:

- Customer-oriented SLOs

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**SLO Policy**  
Last updated: 2020-03-14

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**Rationale:**  
Error rates greater than .05% correlate with significant increase in customer support tickets
The best technology is the one that produces the best outcomes for its customers.
Recipe for success

- Define the product according to what your customer values
- Consistently deliver according to that definition

Research and Empathy
SRE
First steps:

1. Find your customer.
2. Learn what they value.
3. Write it down.
4. Deliver it.
Thanks!
@davidstanke
THANK YOU!

Meet me in the Network Chat Lounge for questions