Design Staffing for Impact

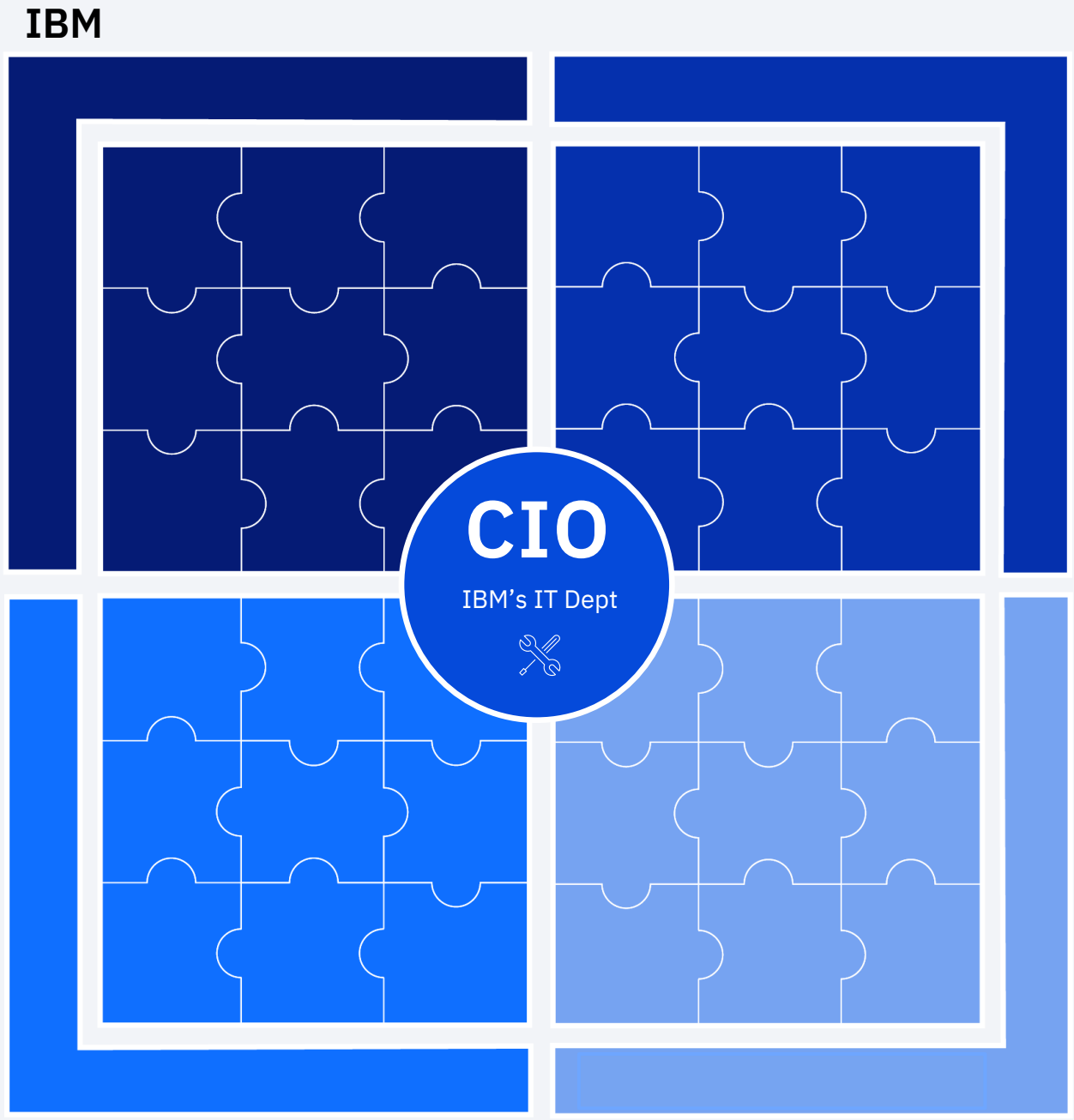
How we ensure we support the highest priority projects and how we measure our progress

Oct 22, 2020 | IBM CIO Design

IBM

Project A
Project B
Project C
Project ...
Project N
Project A
Project B
Project C
Project ...
Project N
?

The CIO is IBM's Centralized IT Department



The CIO owns IBM’s IT strategy and provides the tools, workstations, devices, and infrastructure that IBMers use to do their jobs every day.

“

Every minute spent struggling with an IT system is a minute of time not spent on delivering value for IBM and our clients.

- Fletcher Previn
CIO, IBM

CIO Domains

CIO is organized into 10 domains, each with their own mission and executive leader.

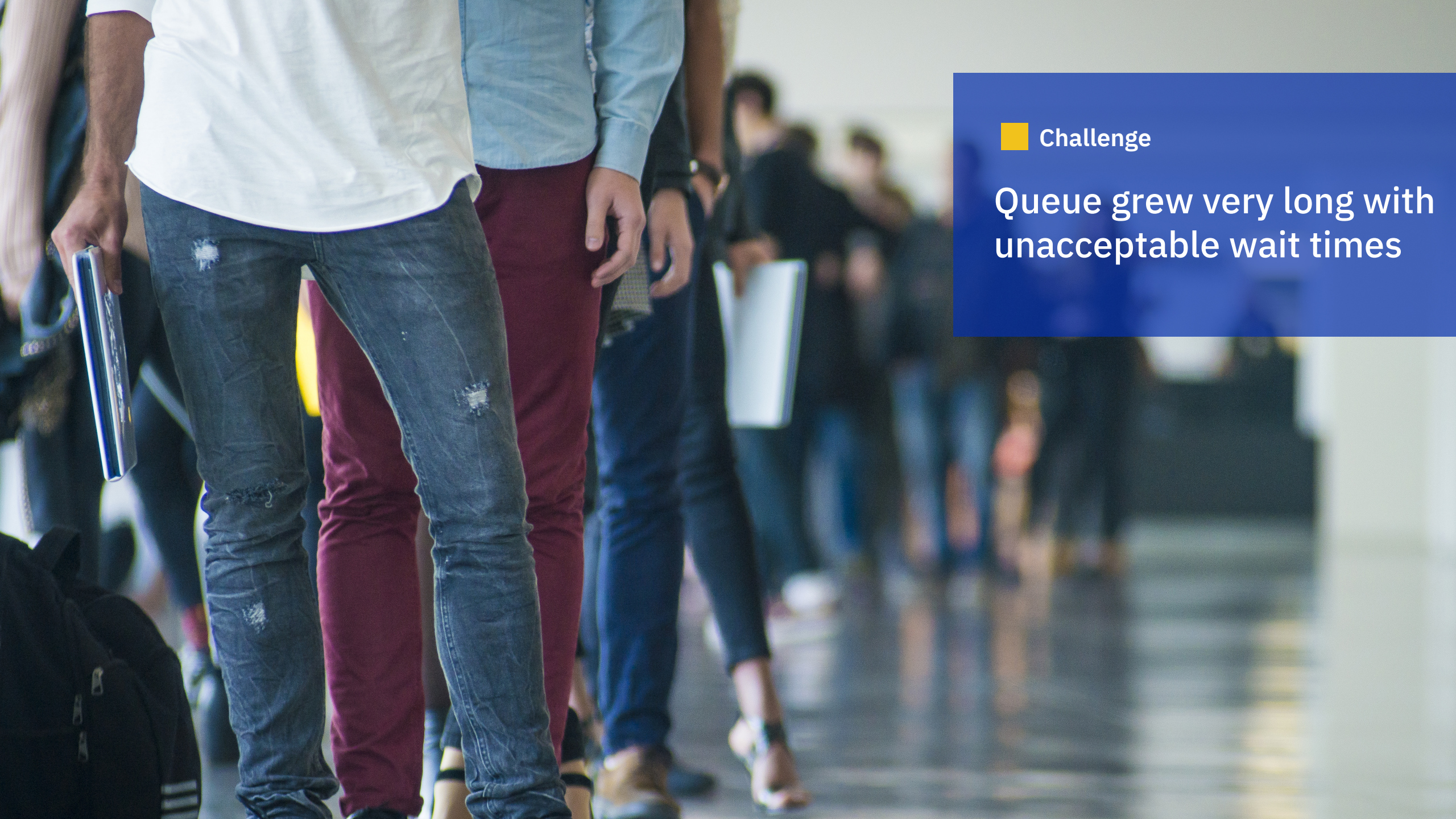
- CIO Finance & Operations
- Digital Workplace Engineering
- Network Engineering
- CIO Design
- Services & Client Support
- Finance & Supply Chain
- Identity & Cybersecurity
- Sales & Marketing Systems
- Global Infrastructure
- Systems & Tools

Project Selection Process

2017 – June 2020

Challenge

No documented criteria; decisions felt mysterious



Challenge

Queue grew very long with unacceptable wait times

Challenge

Often missed opportunities for meaningful UX impact

Challenge

Designers often stretched too thin

Key Challenge

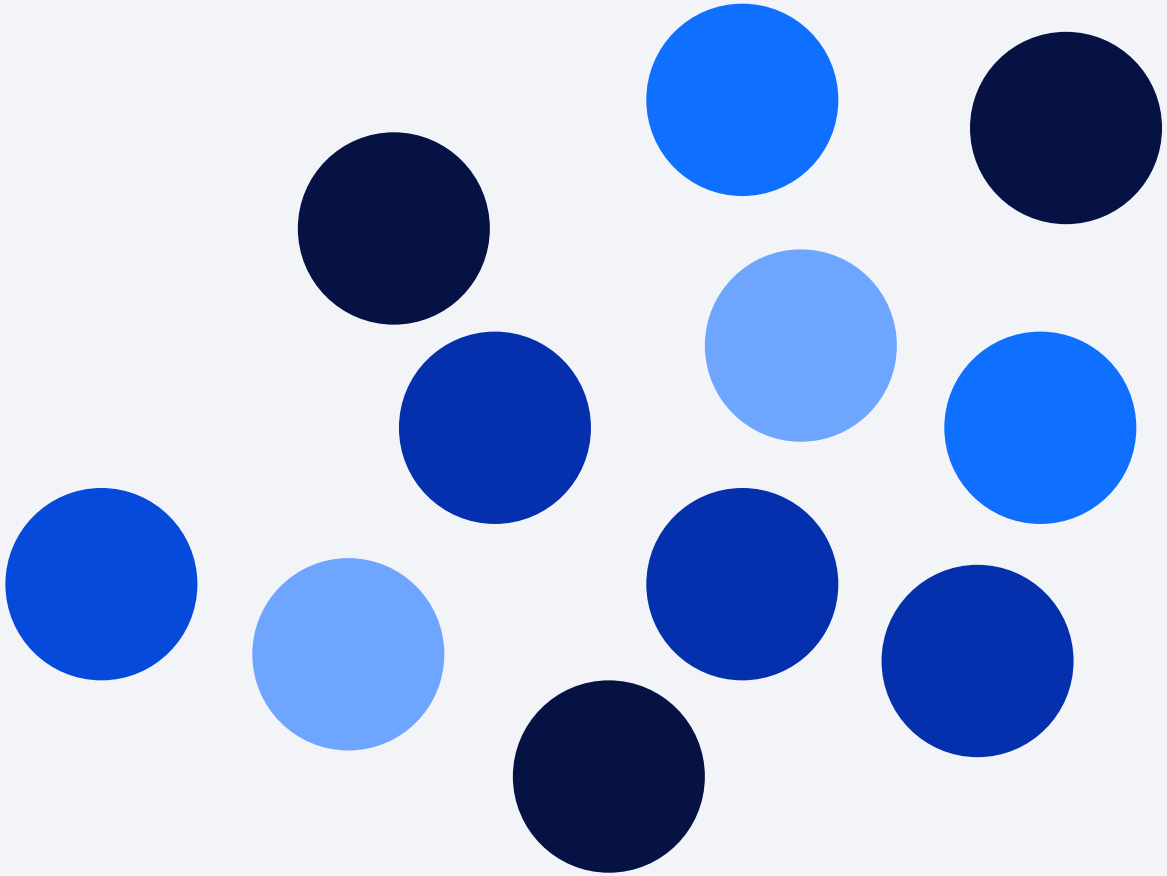
Uncertainty as to whether we were making the right decisions

What we sought to achieve

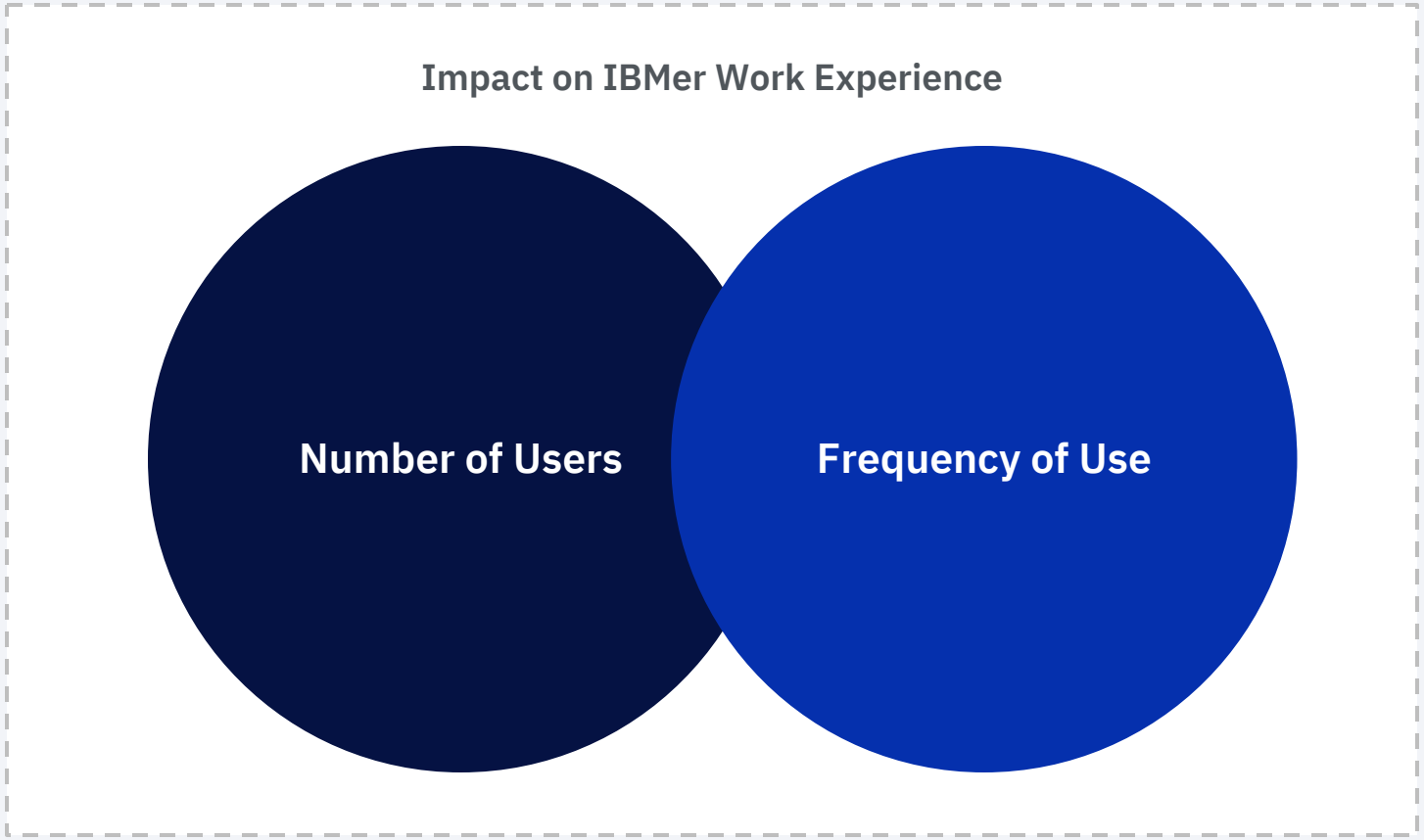
Given our ***obsession with the IBMer experience*** and our desire to positively impact IBMer productivity, it is ***extremely important that we allocate our scarce UX Design & Research talent to the projects that have the greatest impact*** on IBMers' work experience.

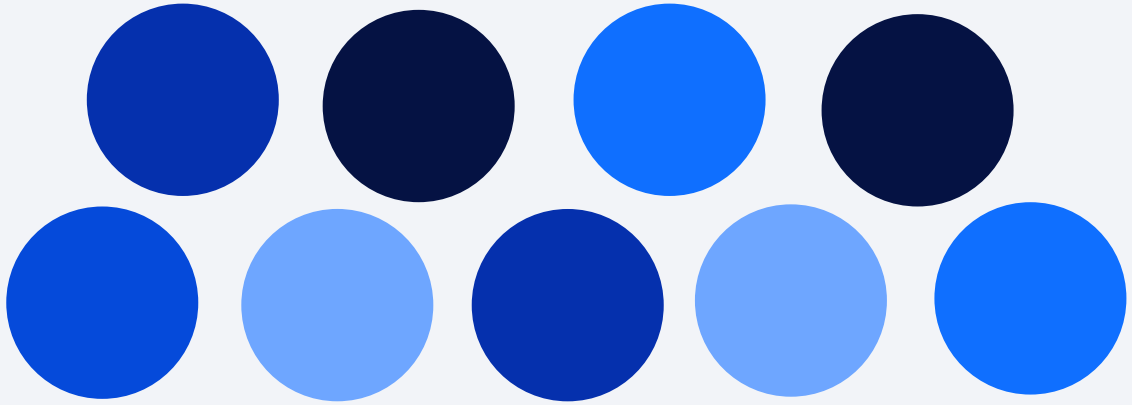
Which projects?

How do we determine priority?

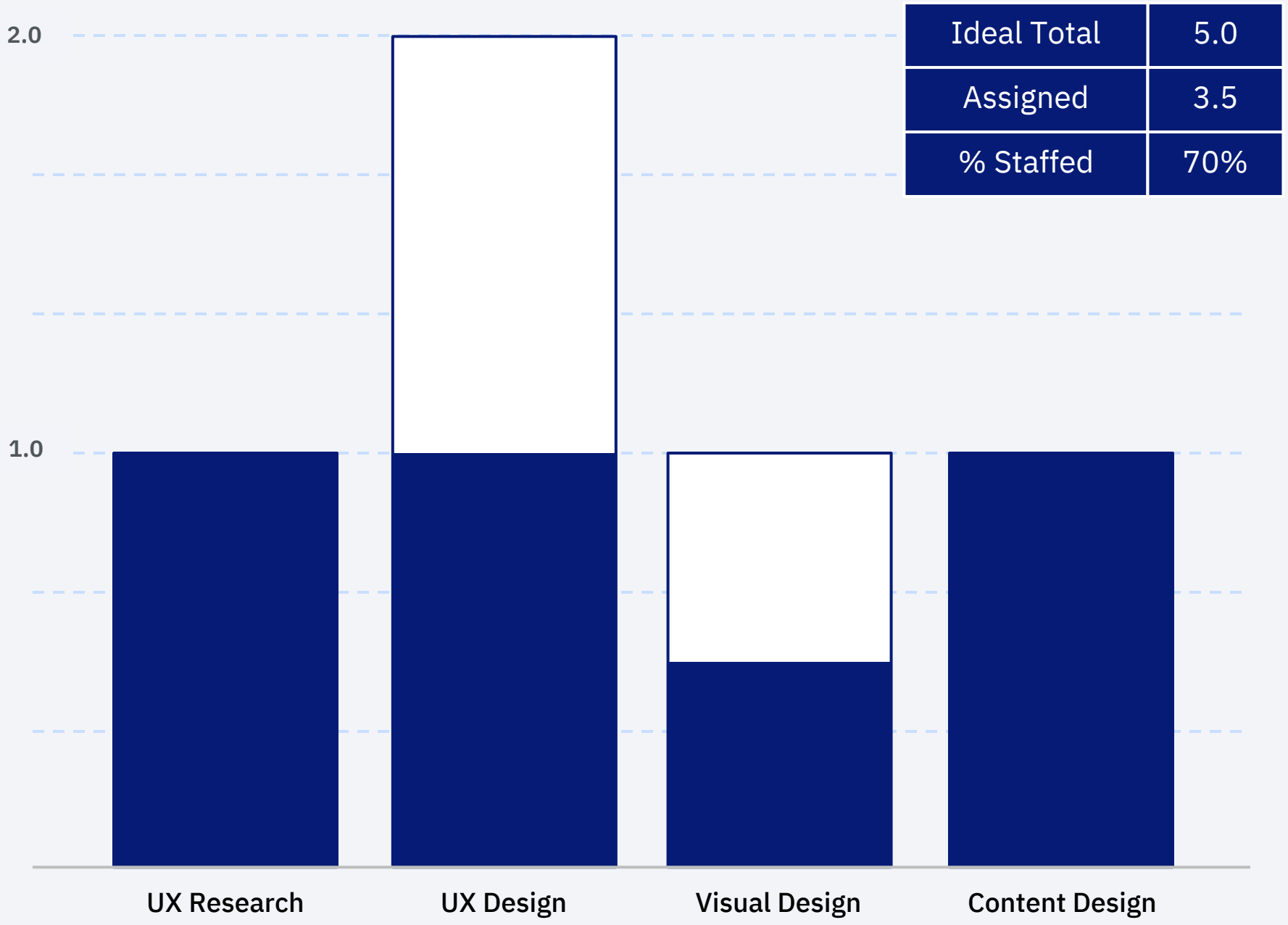


How do we determine priority?



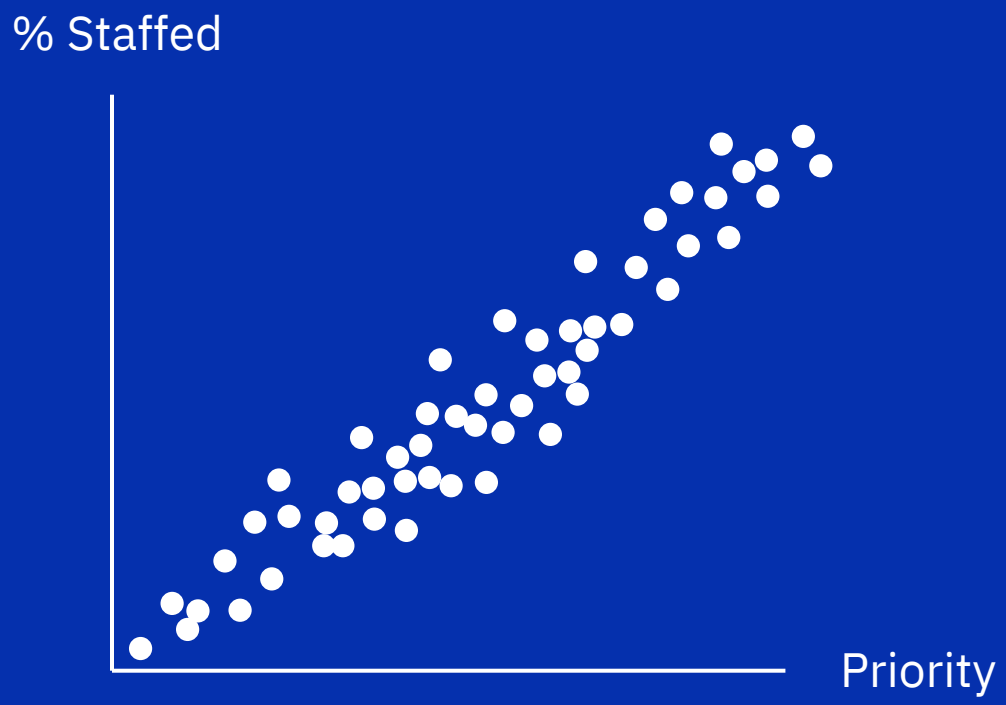


% Staffed


2.0
1.0
Ideal Total 5.0
Assigned 3.5
% Staffed 70%
UX Research
UX Design
Visual Design
Content Design

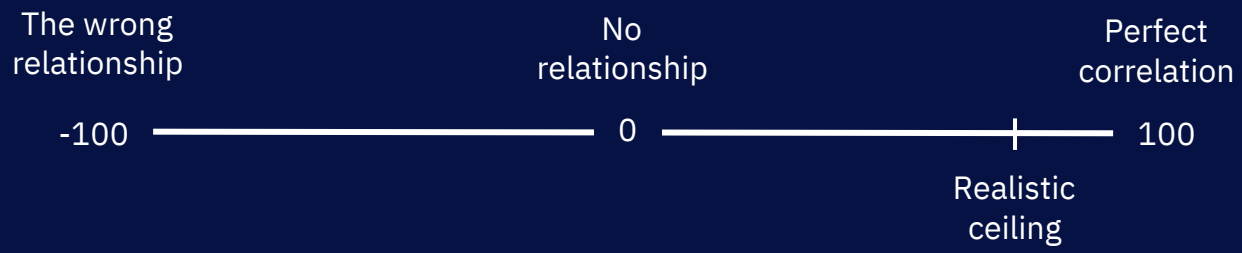
The Desired Relationship

The higher the priority, the more important it is that we fully-staff



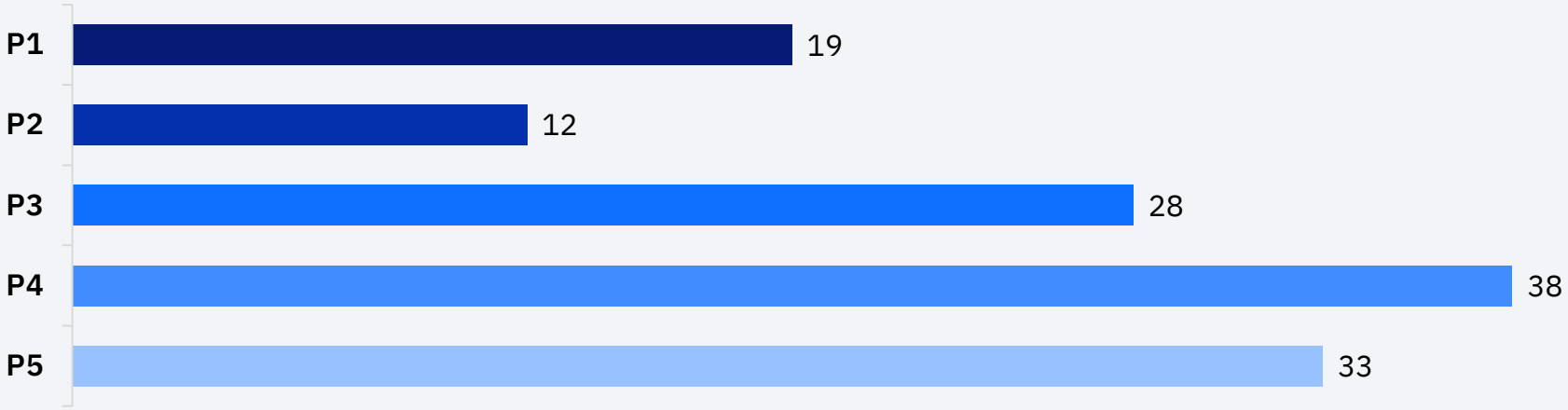
The Design Staffing Score

Based on the correlation between project priority and the degree to which the project is staffed

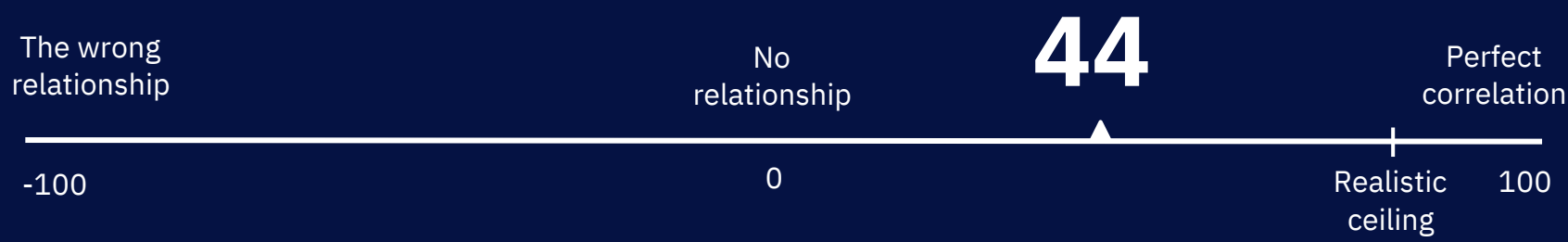


Results of our initial investigation

Priority distribution

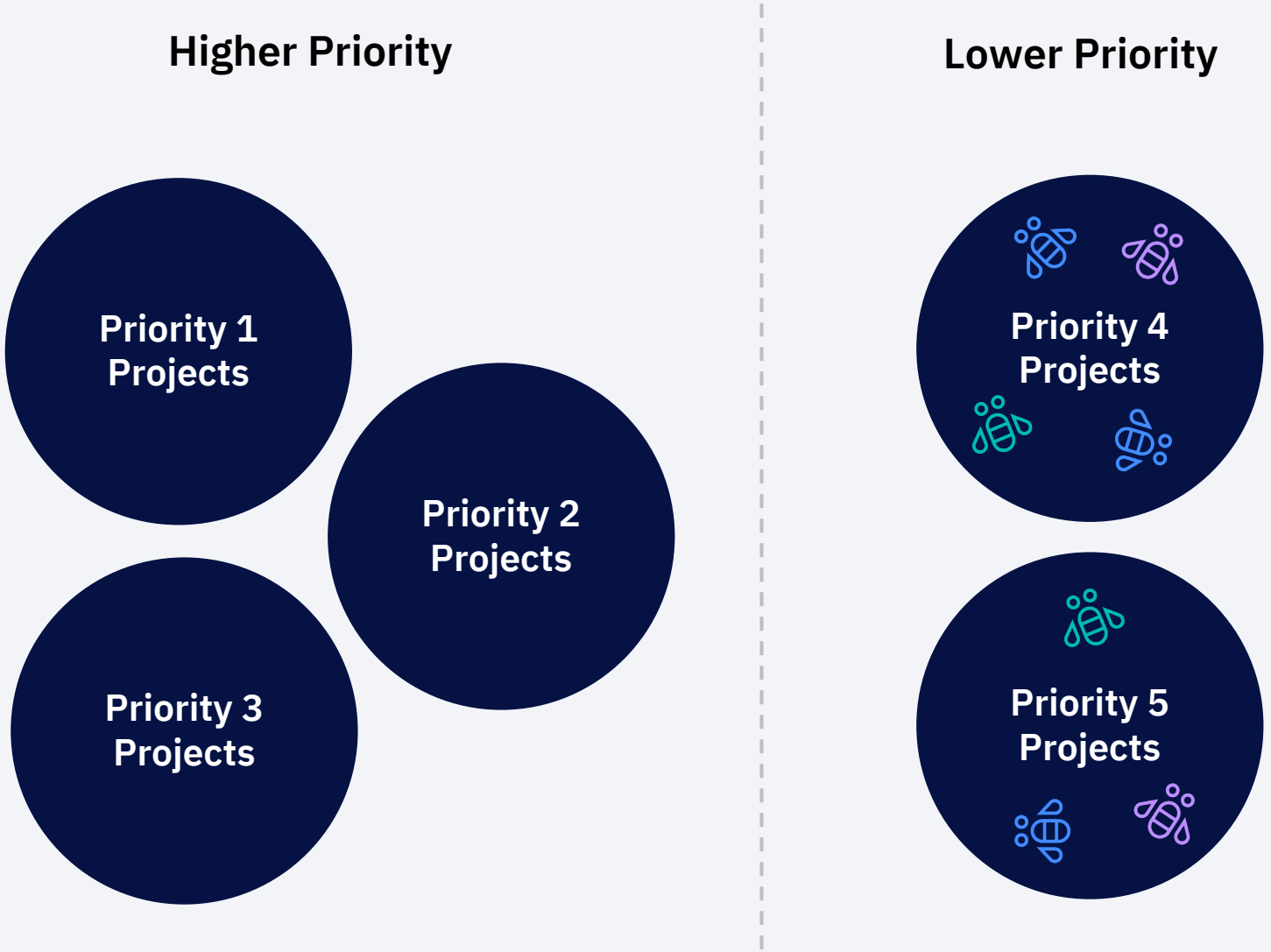


Baseline score



Actions, improvements, & benefits

Immediate transitions

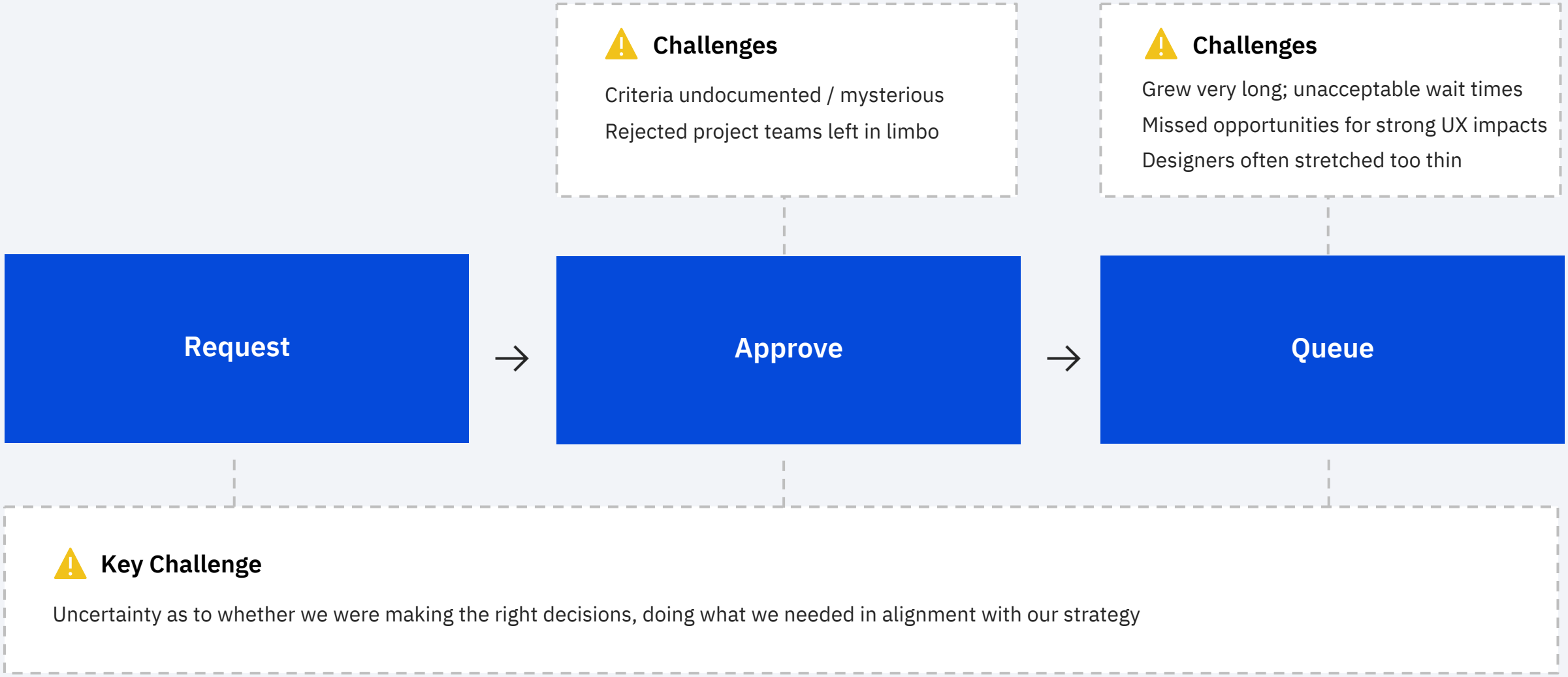


Recommended Design Support by Priority

Priority	Recommended Services	Investment
1-3	Long-Term, Embedded Supplement with other services such a short-term support as needed	Months - Years
4	Short-Term Support	Days - Weeks
	Design & UX (DUX) Review	70 hours
4-5	Rapid Design Sessions	Up to 8 hrs
	Office Hours	45 min

Project Selection Process

2017 – June 2020



The new selection process

Improvement

Clearly-documented criteria inform expectations prior to submitting the request

Improvement

No project is “rejected”

Projects leave with fully-agreed priority, which drives level of support decisions.

Improvement

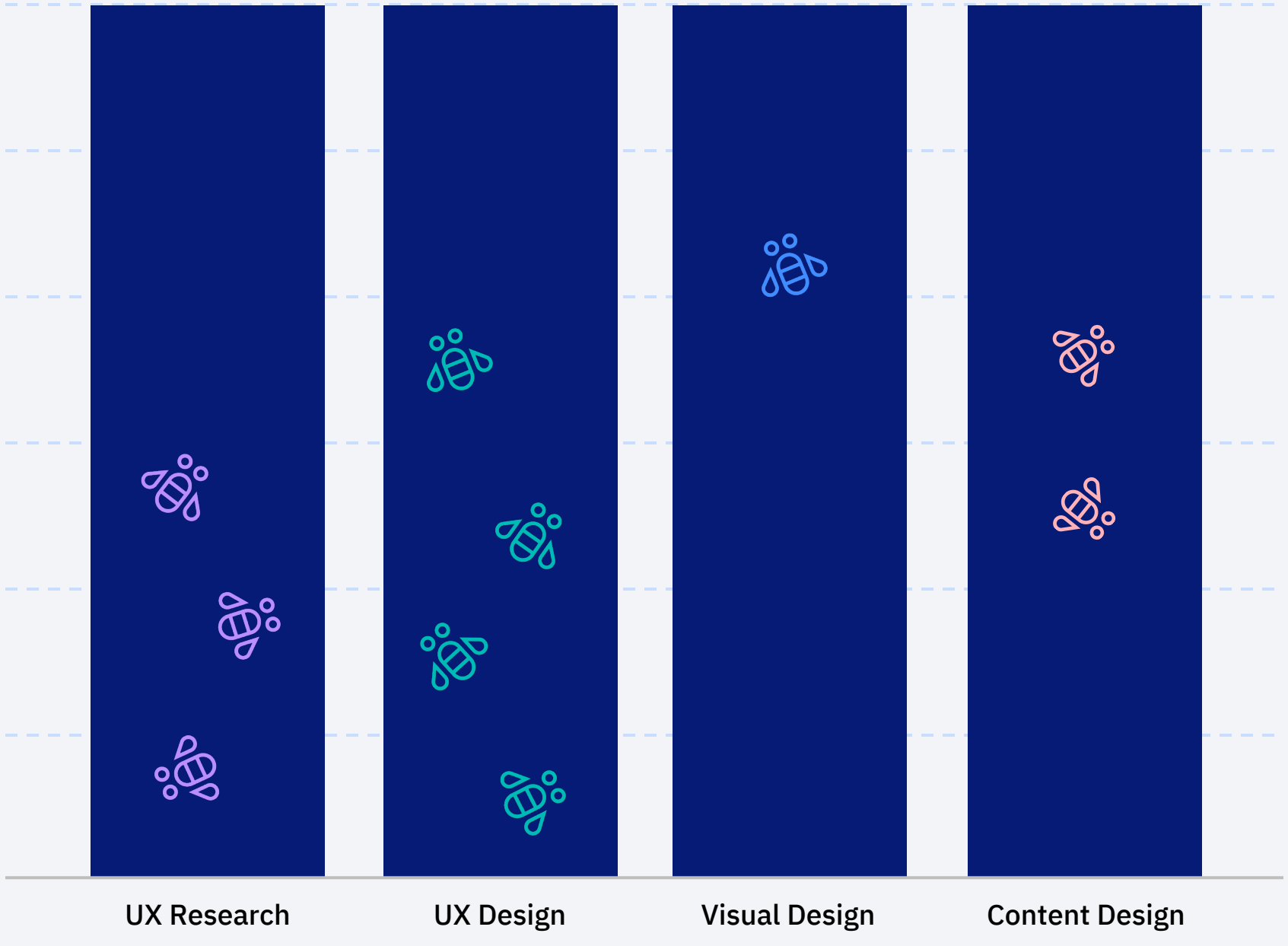
Projects are placed in queue by priority, driving immediate and full staffing for the highest priority projects.

Request (priority calculated) → **Confirm or adjust priority** → **Transparent, prioritized queue**

Key Improvement

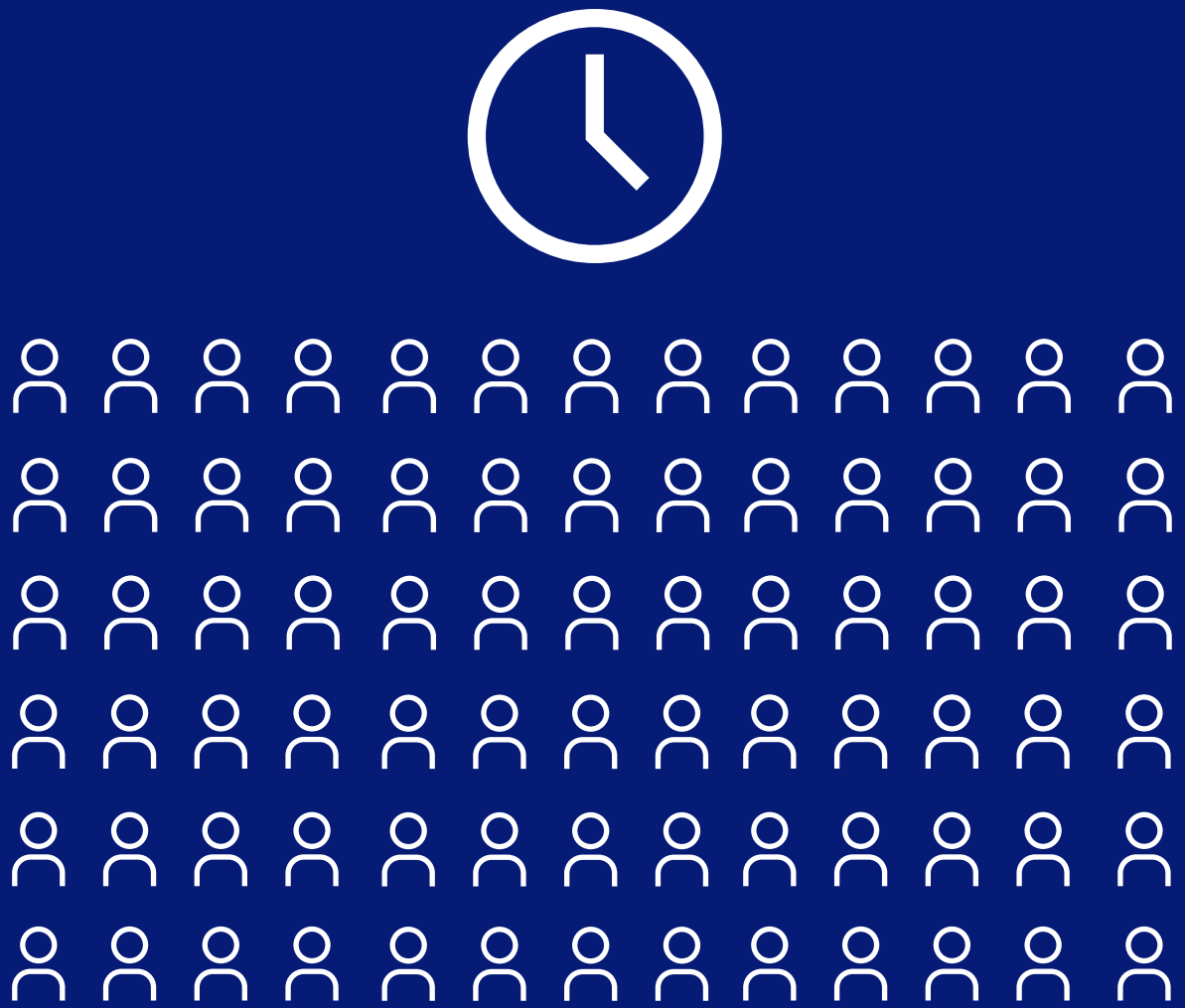
Absolute clarity that decisions align with strategy

Skill gaps inform recruiting



Initial Collection

Many hours, many people

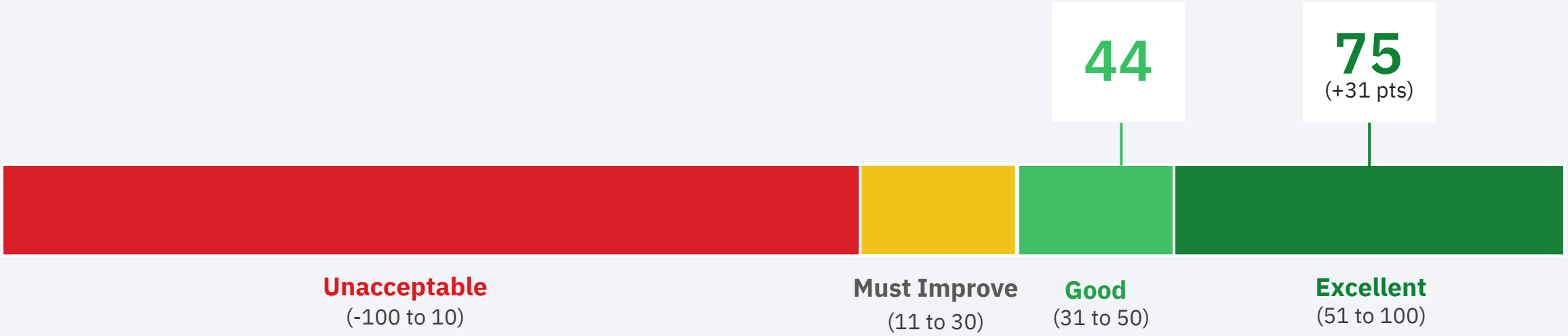


Now

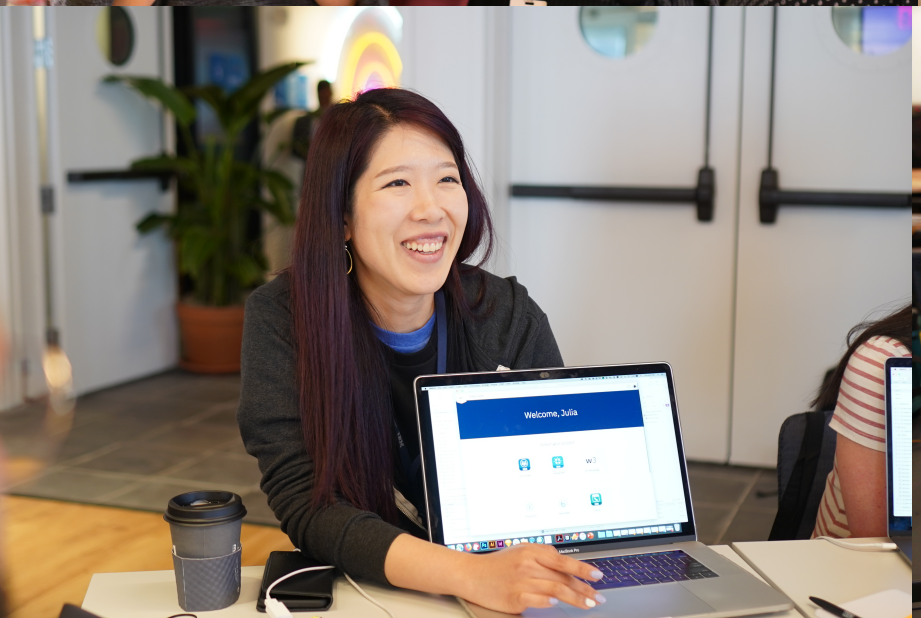
We maintain accurate staffing records and click a button weekly

Calculate!

Clear improvement in alignment with our strategy



Keeping our eye on the prize



Applying to your org

Taking a similar approach within your organization

1

Start with your mission, strategic focus areas, and goals

2

Align on key, objective metrics that will drive prioritization

3

Weight if appropriate & map metrics to priority levels

4

Form decision-making body and process for priority adjustments

5

Revisit and modify your approach as beneficial

6

Communicate & stay transparent throughout

Thank you