

Level Up Your Program with Product Ops

How to scale human-centered design and product thinking
within government and other enterprises

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The logo for NAVA, consisting of the word "NAVA" in white, uppercase letters on a teal square background.

NAVA

NAVA



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



**A public benefit corporation
dedicated to modernizing
government services.**

We lead large-scale digital service
projects with **federal and state agencies**
in the **United States.**

The world we want to see

Public institutions continually earn trust by quickly and effectively responding to people's needs.

Cloud IT Transformation

Centers for Medicare and
Medicaid Services (CMS)

\$60M, 3-year contract

185 people



**We had to onboard 185 people
to this project over 3 months.**

**That amounts to 3 new
employees per day.** 🤪



The government expects us to simultaneously establish large teams and start shipping software immediately.


There were additional challenges...



Government is unfamiliar with design, agile and product thinking methodologies.



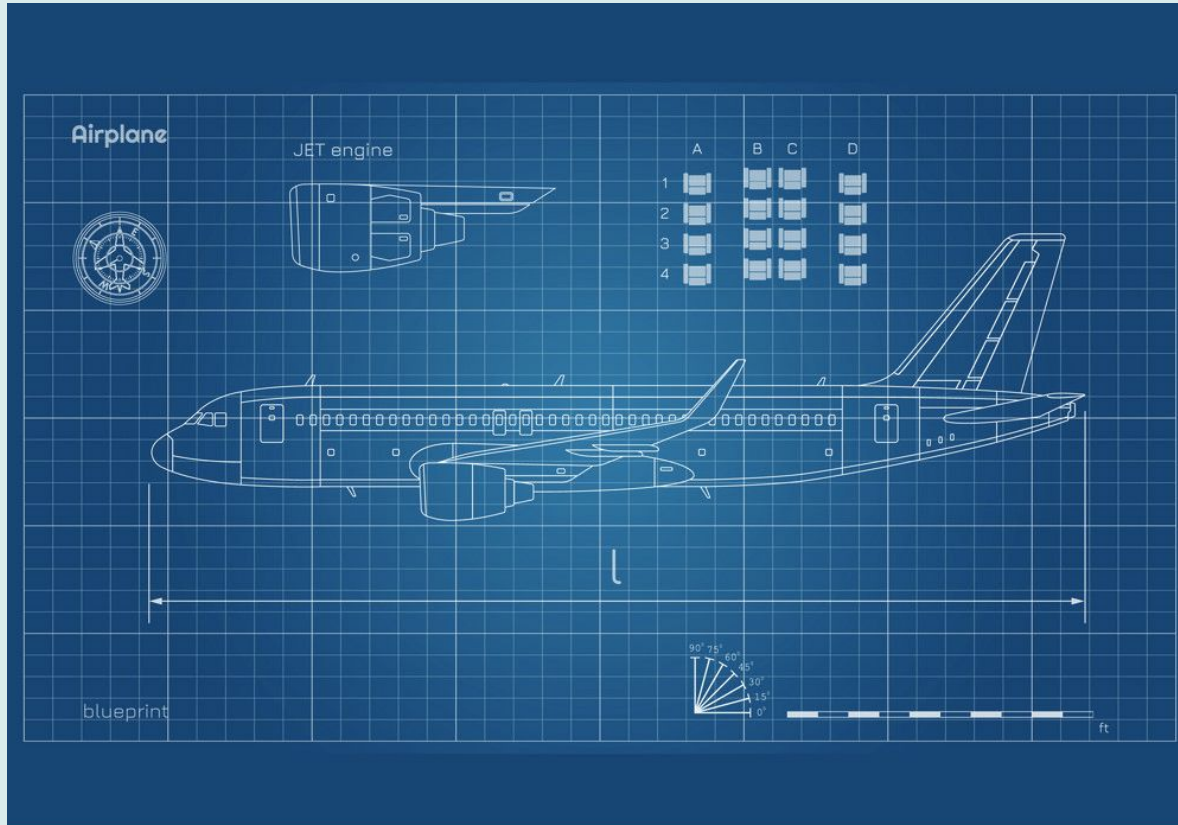
Contractors are constantly turning over, which disrupts continuity and knowledge transfer.



How do we ensure that human-centered design and product thinking become part of the **culture of a government agency?**



Product Operations



Product Ops is the blueprint for rapid, sustainable growth.

Key Business Outcomes of Any Operational Function



**Better
collaboration**



**Increased
output**



**More
efficiency**



**Higher
visibility**

Key Business Outcomes of Product Operations



Better collaboration between engineering, design, product and end-users.



Increased output of features that meet user needs.



More efficiency in rapid iteration and value delivery.



Higher visibility of Product and UX Thinking within the organization.

Core Components of Product Operations

1. Processes
2. Tools
3. Data and Experimentation





It supports rapid, sustainable growth.



It enables us to make data-driven decisions at scale.



It builds product thinking capacity across the enterprise.

Product Ops > Processes

**Repeatable, scalable processes
enable product teams to get to
maturity quickly.**

Title of Product Brief

Status

Target release	<i>Date or some other relative time measurement that is relevant for your project</i>
Epic	<i>If you use a project tracking tool (e.g. Jira), add the link here</i>
Document status	<i>Examples: DRAFT, APPROVED, READY FOR IMPLEMENTATION, IMPLEMENTATION IN PROGRESS, or COMPLETE</i>
Last updated	<i>So readers know whether this document is stale or up to date</i>
Document Owner	
Product Lead	
Design Lead	
Technical Lead	

Background

Highlight the need for this feature, product, or service for people who may only have a superficial understanding of it. Usually, there's a problem to be solved or an experience that can be improved, based on feedback from users or internal inspiration.

This section can be short but it should establish sufficient background and context. As you write:

- *Use simple words.*
- *Define any required acronyms.*
- *Include visuals like screenshots, flow charts, or graphs.*
- *Include anecdotes or metrics from the people affected.*

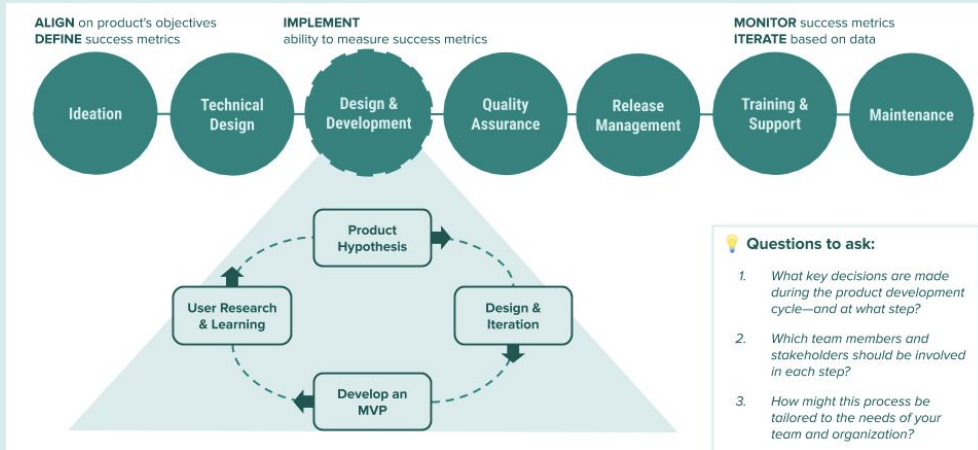
Goal

Product Ops > Processes

Start the development of every product, feature, or service with a product brief.

Product Ops > Processes

Keep multiple teams within large organizations on the same page with a product development lifecycle.



[Nava Template] To use this spreadsheet: go to File > Make a copy. Then add, modify, or delete tasks to customize this RACI for your team.

Product Team RACI Chart Learn more on navapbc.com in [Build High-Performing Product Teams with Product Ops Processes](#).

Task	Description	Associated deliverable (if applicable)	R = Responsible <i>Who does the work to complete the task?</i>	A = Accountable <i>Who is ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the deliverable or task, the one who ensures the requirements of the task are met and who delegates the work to those responsible?</i>	C = Consulted <i>Whose opinions are sought (typically subject matter experts) via two-way communication?</i>	I = Informed <i>Who is kept up-to-date on progress (often only on completion of the task or deliverable) via one-way communication?</i>
[Example] Sprint planning	Meet with the team every 2 weeks to align on the user stories that will be prioritized in the upcoming sprint	Upcoming sprint in Jira	Product Manager	Product Manager	Engineering Lead, Design Lead, Delivery Manager	Team
Sprint planning						
Sprint demo						
Sprint retro						
Huddle updates						
Program review						
Project leads check-in						
Metrics						
Defects/bug triage						
Define program-level vision and strategy						
Define program-level metrics						
Track program-level metrics						
Define feature-level metrics						
Track feature-level metrics						
Define features						
Define roll-out strategy for a feature						
Ensure technical design is valid, reviewed and validated by others						
Manage and communicate technical tradeoffs unearthed in design or development phases						
Coordinate broader processes: unit testing, monitoring, alerting						
Track how the product is doing against defined success metrics, and share it						
Define sprint goals and priorities						
Directly responsible individual for incident coordination						
Escalate recurring customer issues						
Coordinate with partners						
Monitor triage requests before escalating to Engineering						
Jira configuration						
OKRS: coordination, data entry						
Resource allocation						
Tasks are tracked and represented in Jira						
Broken-down and properly-sized tasks assigned to the right engineers						
Running stand-ups						
Creating milestones for projects						
Creating user stories to be used as acceptance criteria for QA review						
Scheduling QA review						
Project kickoffs						
Identifying and resolving cross-pillar technical dependencies						
Answer open questions from tech lead about how things should work, and reflect decisions back to channel and documentation						

Product Ops > Processes

Improve collaboration and accountability by giving teams a shared understanding of each person's role.

Product Ops > Tools

Shared tools streamline collaboration.

And in government, they are *essential*.



Product Ops > Tools

- **Streamline license management, and ensure everyone has access.**
- **Introduce and test out processes quickly and efficiently.**
- **Communicate information to all levels of stakeholders.**

Categories to think about

1. Whiteboarding (Mural)
2. Product roadmapping (Roadmunk)
3. Agile project management (JIRA)
4. Documentation and knowledge management (Confluence)
5. Video conferencing (Zoom)
6. Synchronous communication (Slack)
7. Prototyping (Mural, InVision)

Product Ops > Data and Experimentation

Data-informed teams produce high-impact outcomes.



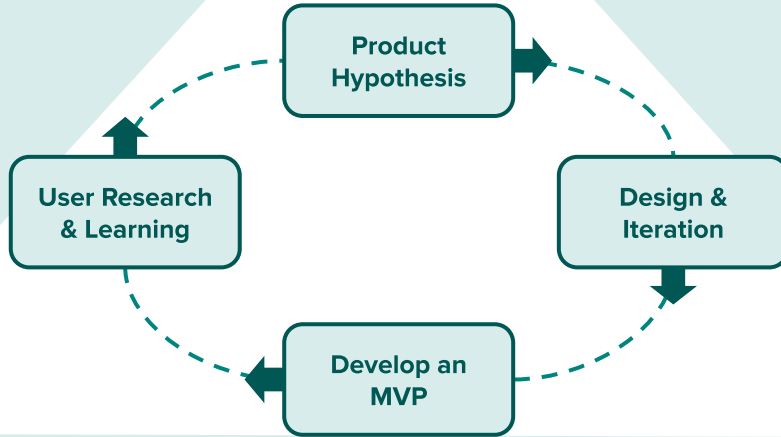
Product Ops > Data and Experimentation

- **Data helps us surface user behaviors and trends.**
- **Experimentation helps us to *rapidly validate assumptions and hypotheses.***

ALIGN on product's objectives
DEFINE success metrics

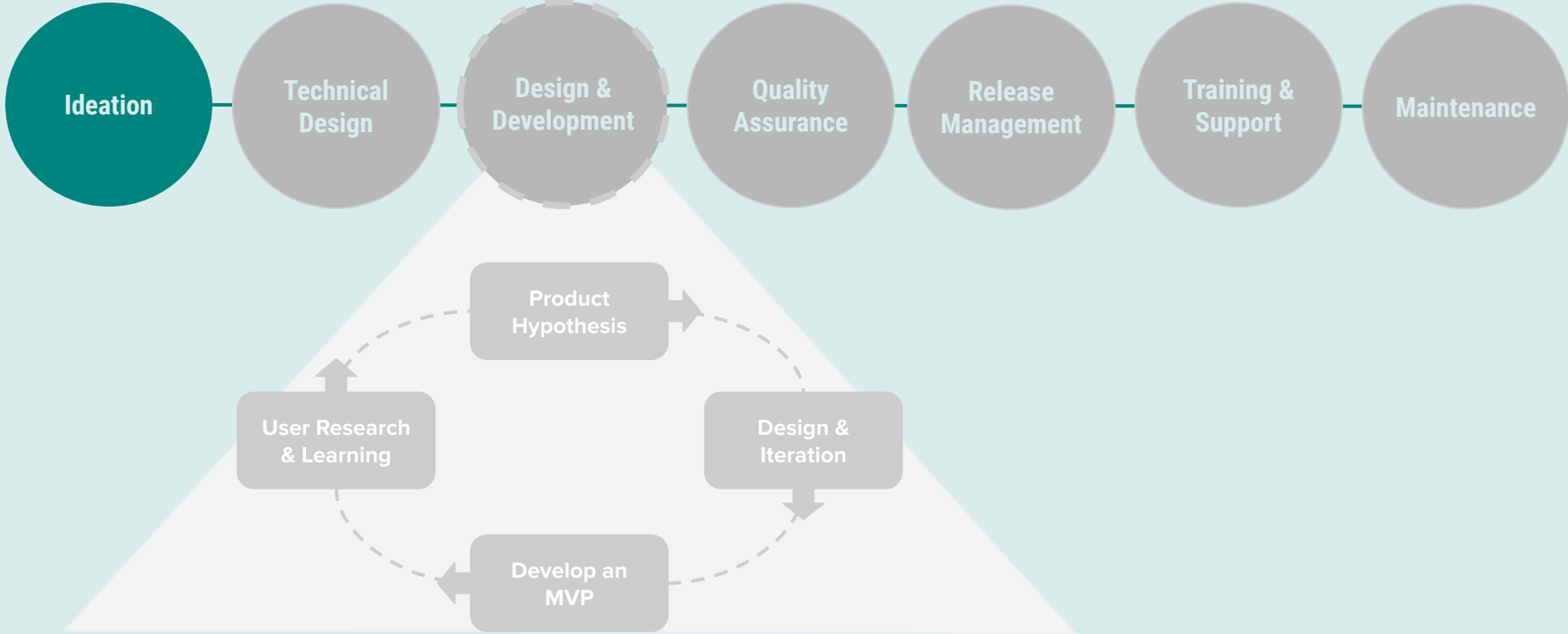
IMPLEMENT
ability to measure success metrics

MONITOR success metrics
ITERATE based on data

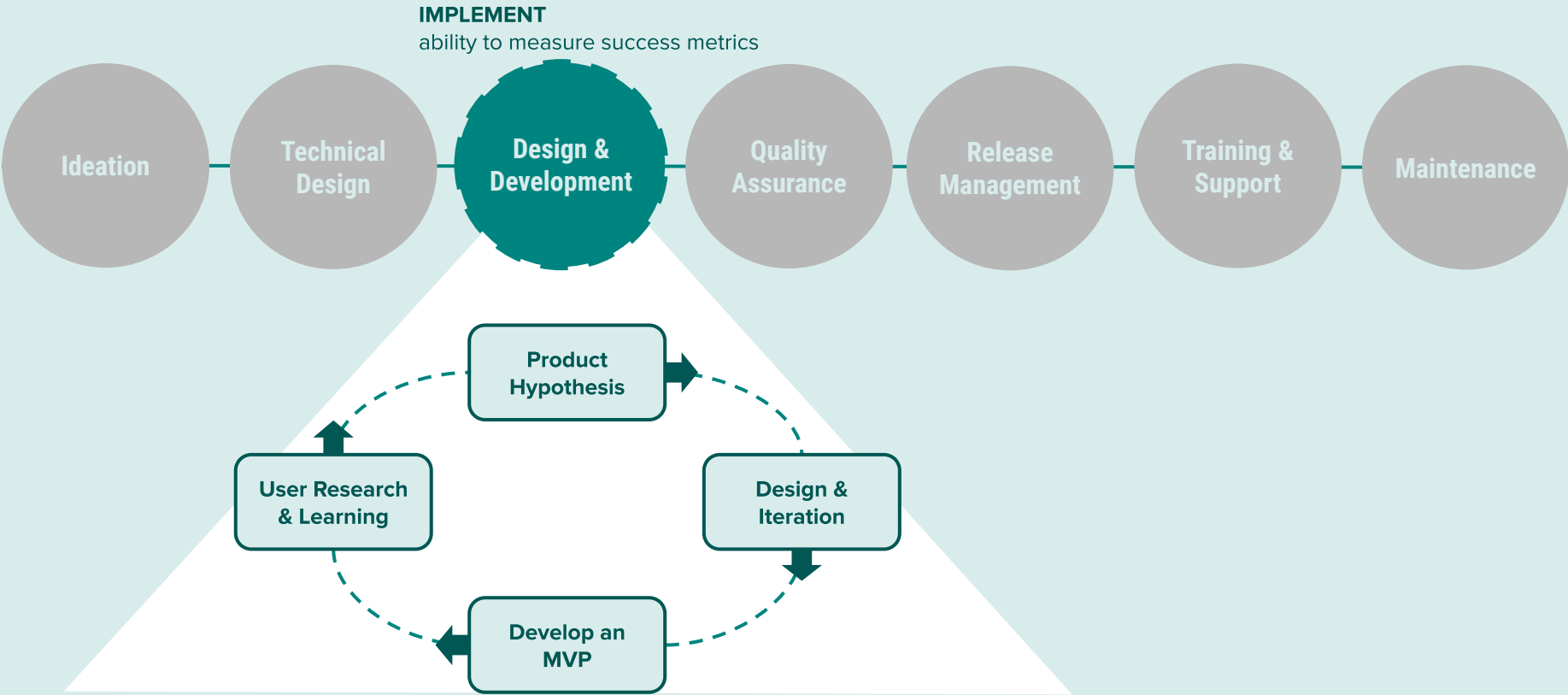


Create a data-driven culture by integrating data throughout the product development lifecycle.

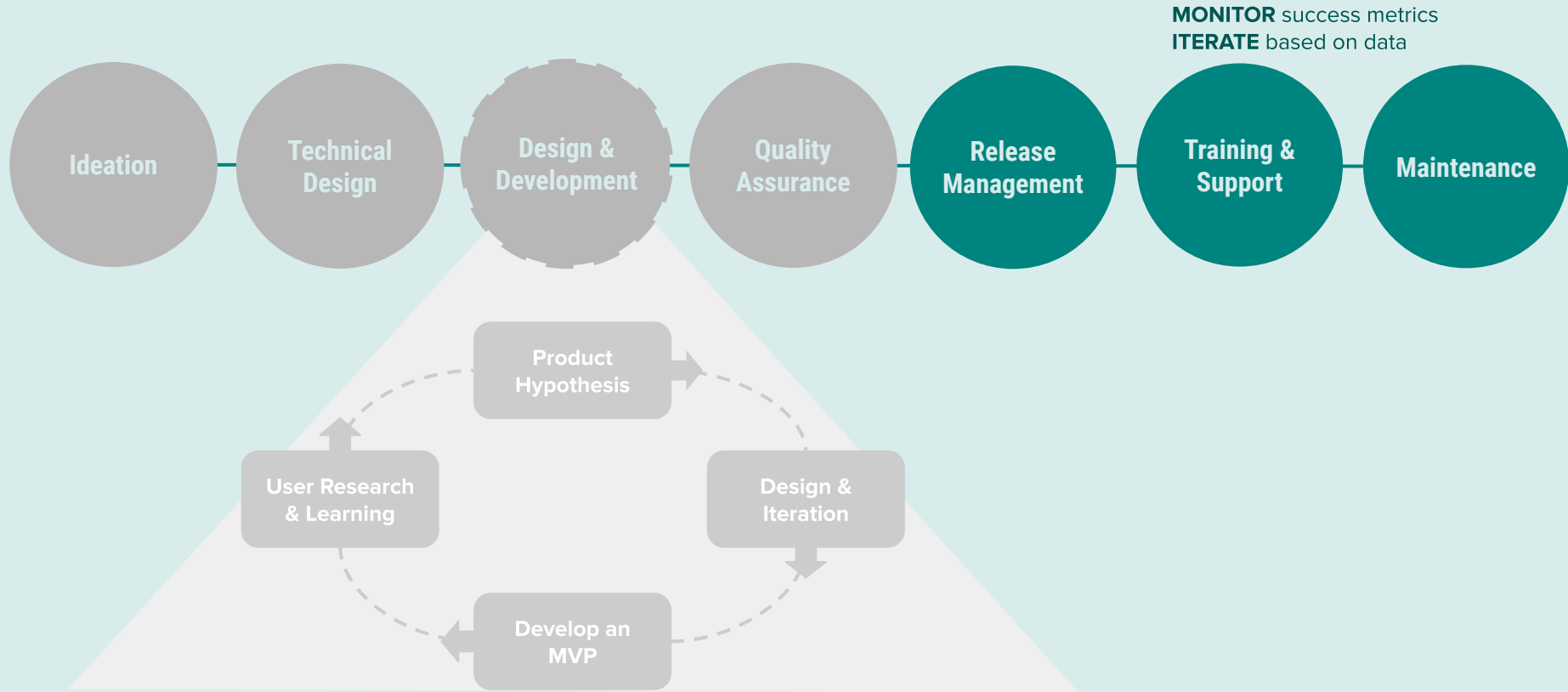
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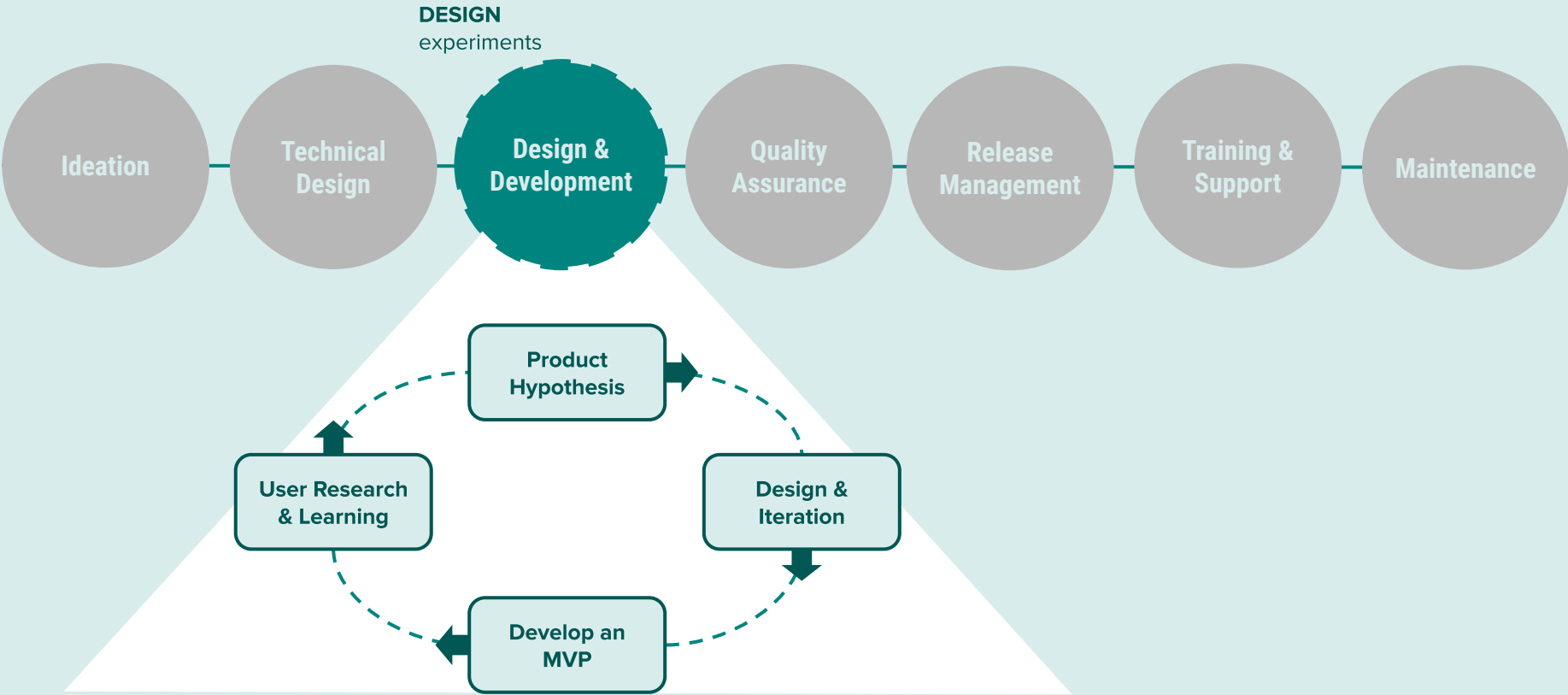
At ideation, define what success looks like for the product.



When designing + developing the product, make sure one of your business requirements is enabling your team to *measure* the success metrics.



In order to validate the hypothesis, monitor and evaluate user behaviors and data.



Experimentation is essential to user-centered, agile development. Develop and validate product hypotheses through user research and iteration.

Product Ops > Data and Experimentation > Case Study

Integrated Benefits in Vermont

Goal: Improve Vermonters' access to state-administered benefits like free or low-cost health care and assistance paying for food, fuel and daily expenses.



Product Ops > Data and Experimentation > Case Study

We ran 2 experiments to increase compliance rate

1. Consolidate upload user flow into one single page
2. Add document-specific help text

As a result, we saw a **12% improvement** in the compliance rate between November 2018 and July 2019.





How YOU get started today...

1. **Processes:** Use Nava's Product Ops Processes Toolkit (link in appendix)
2. **Tools:** Conduct an audit of the tools your team uses, and identify opportunities to consolidate and streamline.
3. **Data and Experimentation:** Develop a product hypothesis, and design an experiment to validate that hypothesis.

Thank you!

Questions, comments, feedback?

Let's continue the conversation over Slack
in *#ex-general*!

Appendix

Use Nava's *Product Ops Processes Toolkit* to introduce product ops to your team.

link:

<https://www.navapbc.com/toolkits/build-high-performing-product-teams-with-product-ops-processes.html>
