centercode



THE REAL ROLE OF BETA TESTING IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

A GUIDE TO CUSTOMER VALIDATION FOR PRODUCT MANAGERS



ABOUT CENTERCODE

We help companies build better products. Since 2001, we've helped companies of all sizes with a wide variety of products achieve customer validation through beta testing.

OUR OFFERINGS

We can help you run more effective beta tests faster.

Software Platform
Centercode

- Cloud-based beta test management platform
- Portal, recruitment, feedback, reporting

Professional Services
Managed Beta Tests

- Turnkey professional outsourced service solutions
- Leverages the Centercode software and Betabound

Beta Testers
Betabound

- Highly-profiled beta tester community (> 90k members)
- International user base (50% US • 50% International)

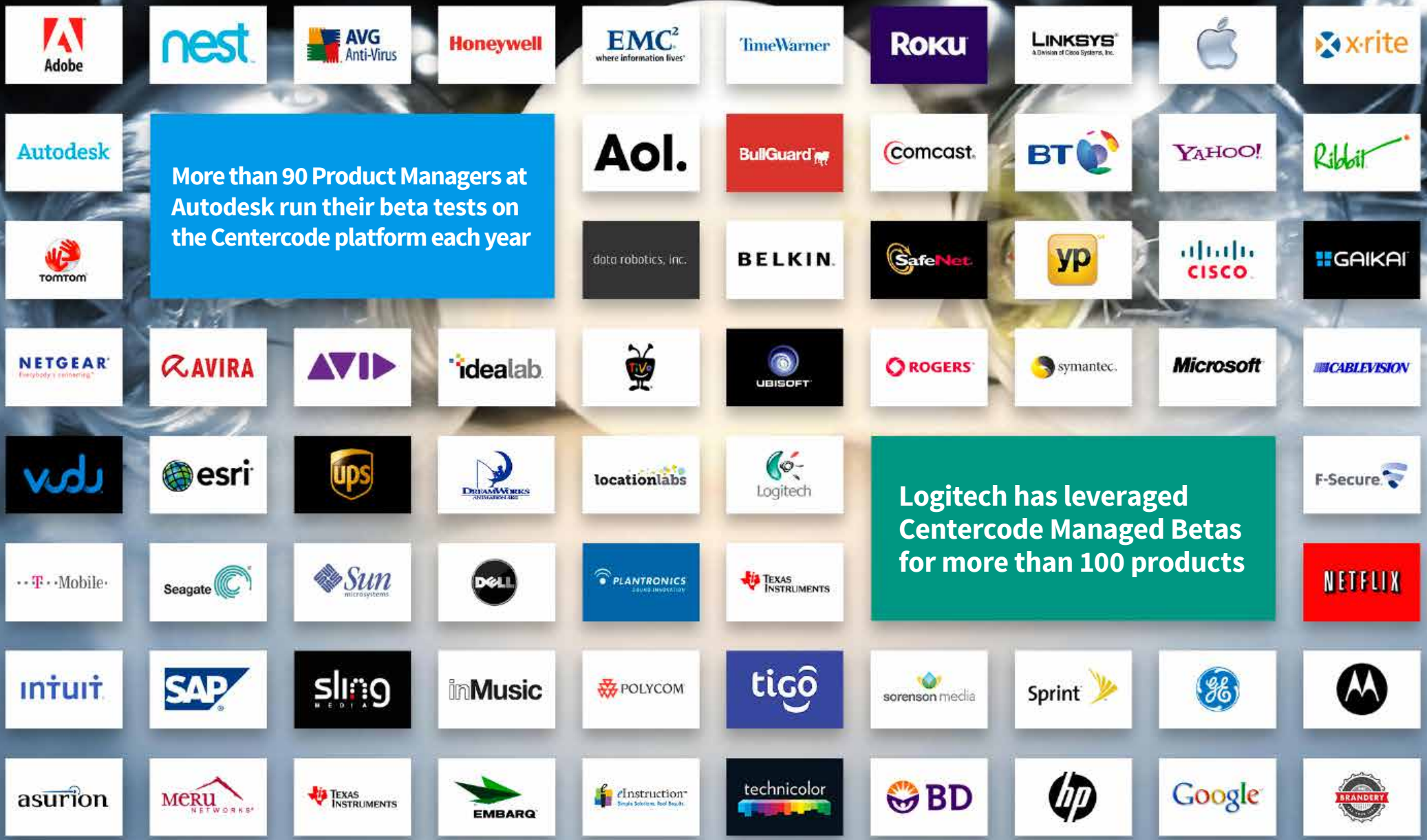
Knowledge
Industry Resources

- Free best practices tools and guides
- eBooks, whitepapers, kits, calculators, and more



OUR CLIENTS

Incredible companies trust their beta programs to Centercode



LEVEL SET

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF BETA TESTING (BY PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

THE REAL ROLE OF BETA TESTING (IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

SEVEN KEYS TO A SANE AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BETA TEST

FINAL THOUGHTS

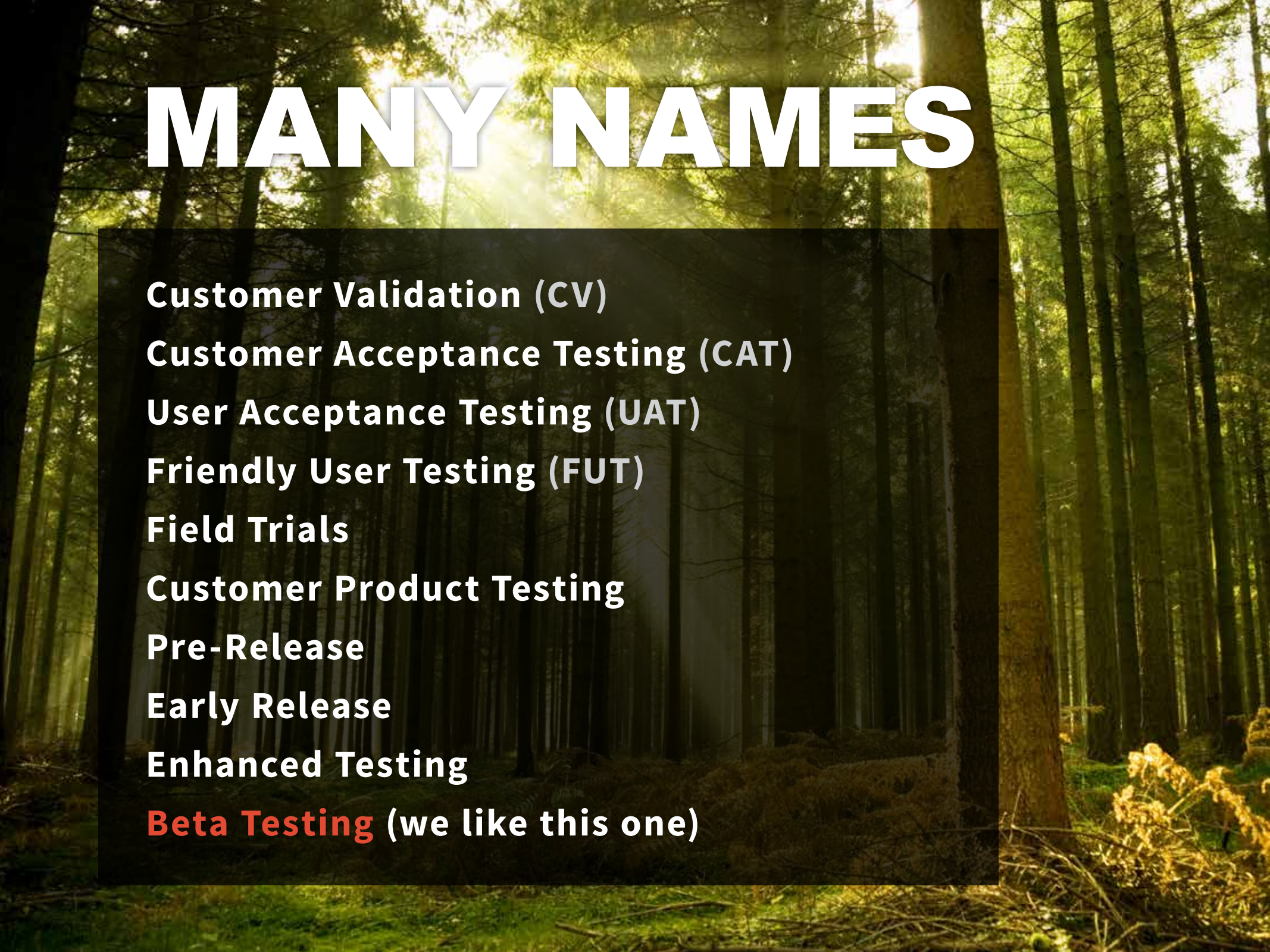
centercode

LEVEL SET

WHAT EXACTLY IS BETA TESTING?

A test of an unreleased product by real customers in real environments.




MANY NAMES
Customer Validation (CV)
Customer Acceptance Testing (CAT)
User Acceptance Testing (UAT)
Friendly User Testing (FUT)
Field Trials
Customer Product Testing
Pre-Release
Early Release
Enhanced Testing
Beta Testing (we like this one)



HOW IT WORKS

1. Recruit a pool of candidates from your target market
2. Select the most qualified candidates as participants
3. Prep and NDA participants
4. Distribute product
5. Solicit feedback (bug reports, surveys, forums, etc.)
6. Distribute results to organizations in your company

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL



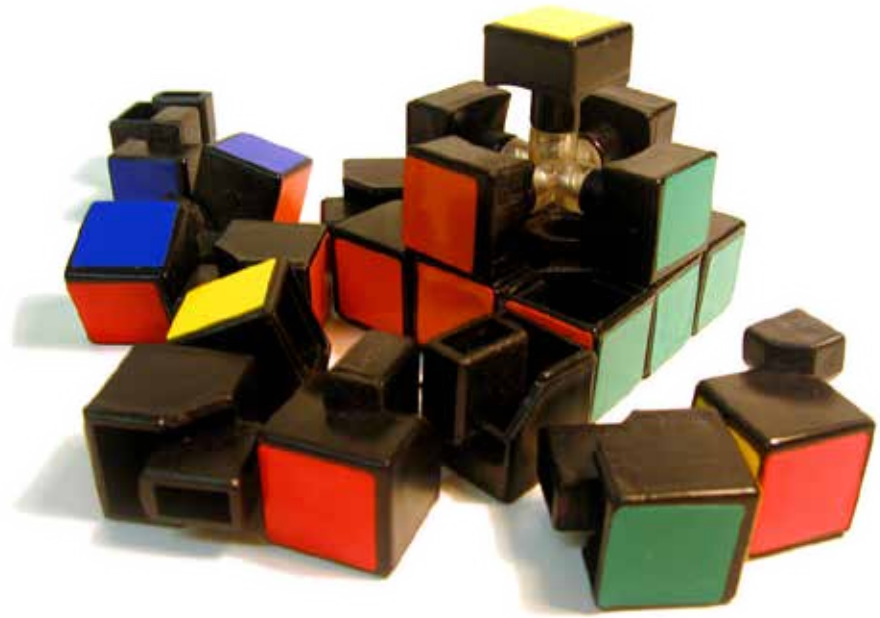
A beta test validates the performance of the product in the hands of real customers.

HOW IT'S CHALLENGING

1. **Dedicating qualified resources**
2. **Recruiting appropriate beta testers**
3. **Maintaining user participation**
4. **Collecting relevant feedback**
5. **Organizing and distributing feedback**



WHY IT'S PAINFUL



- It's not your full-time job
- It typically lacks a well-defined process
- It frequently has no clear owner
- You likely lack appropriate tools to help
- The timing is horrible
- It involves customers using a buggy product (never fun)
- You may be worried about controlling information
- If you succeed, you've got a fire hose of data to deal with



Thus, Beta is a "Necessary Evil"

LEVEL SET

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF BETA TESTING (BY PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

THE REAL ROLE OF BETA TESTING (IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

SEVEN KEYS TO A SANE AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BETA TEST

FINAL THOUGHTS

centercode

BUGS!

MOST OF WHICH YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT





MARKET RESEARCH

BUT ISN'T IT ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THAT?

FEATURE REQUESTS





CUSTOMER DISCUSSIONS

WHICH ARE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO QUANTIFY

LEVEL SET

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF BETA TESTING (BY PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

THE REAL ROLE OF BETA TESTING (IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

SEVEN KEYS TO A SANE AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BETA TEST

FINAL THOUGHTS

centercode


BETA MIRRORS YOU
1
BETA TOUCHES THE ENTIRE PRODUCT
2
BETA REPRESENTS THE CUSTOMER

BETA IS AN ARBITRATOR



BETA IS A SAFETY NET



QA CAN'T FIND EVERYTHING. BETA IS AN EFFECTIVE INSURANCE PLAN TO FURTHER REDUCE RISK.


BETA IS A
PRIORITIZER
QUALITY IDENTIFIES BUGS AND THEIR SEVERITY.
BETA INTRODUCES FREQUENCY TO DETERMINE IMPACT.

BETA IS FOR PLANNING

IT'S YOUR TEAM'S JOB TO DESIGN A GREAT PRODUCT. BETA FEATURE REQUESTS EXIST TO PROVIDE INFLUENCE FOR FUTURE REVISIONS.

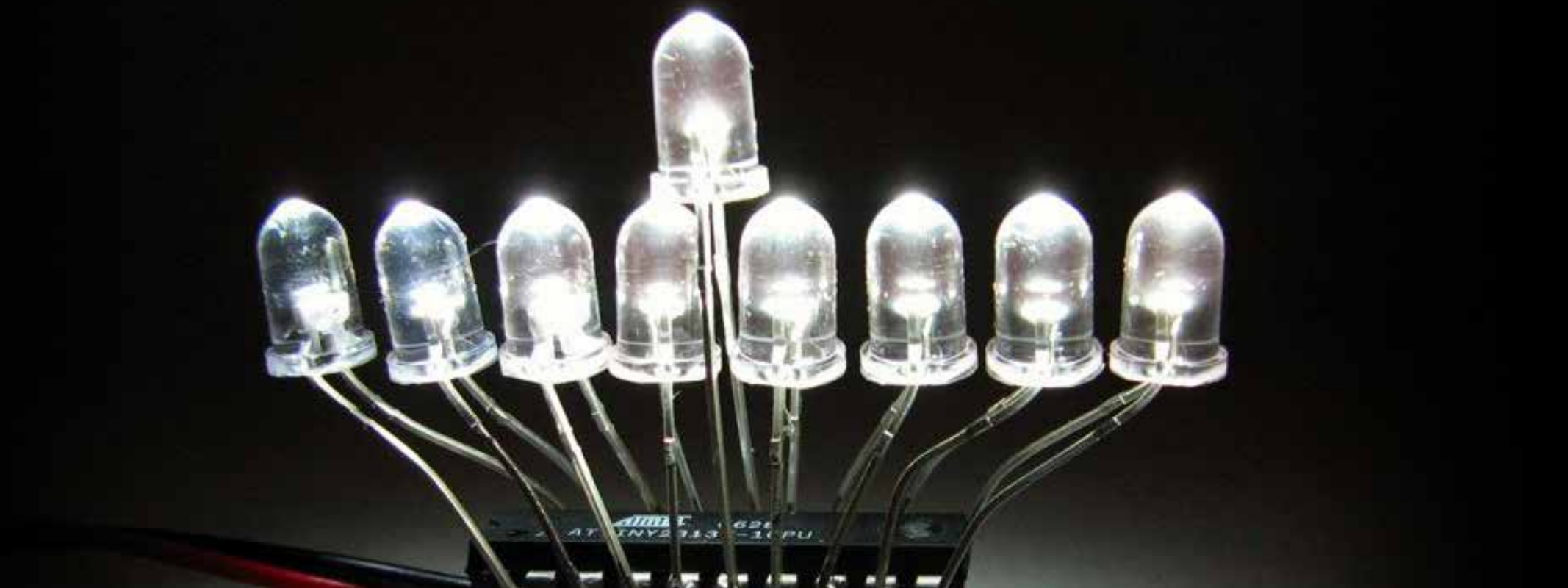


BETA IS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

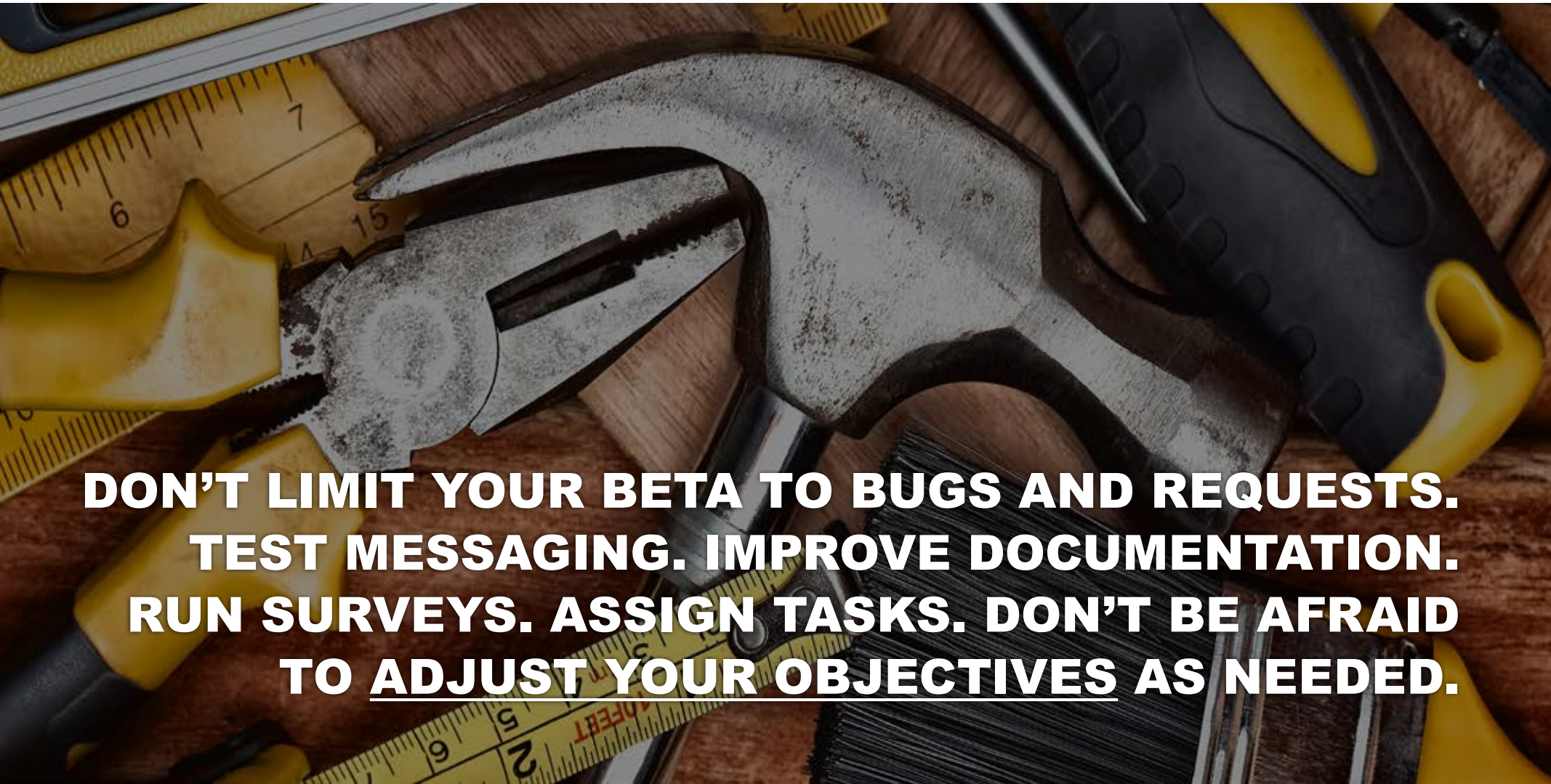
USE BETA TESTERS TO BUILD A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR MARKET AND CUSTOMERS. YOU CAN LEVERAGE THIS GROUP AGAIN AND AGAIN FOR VALUABLE INFORMATION.

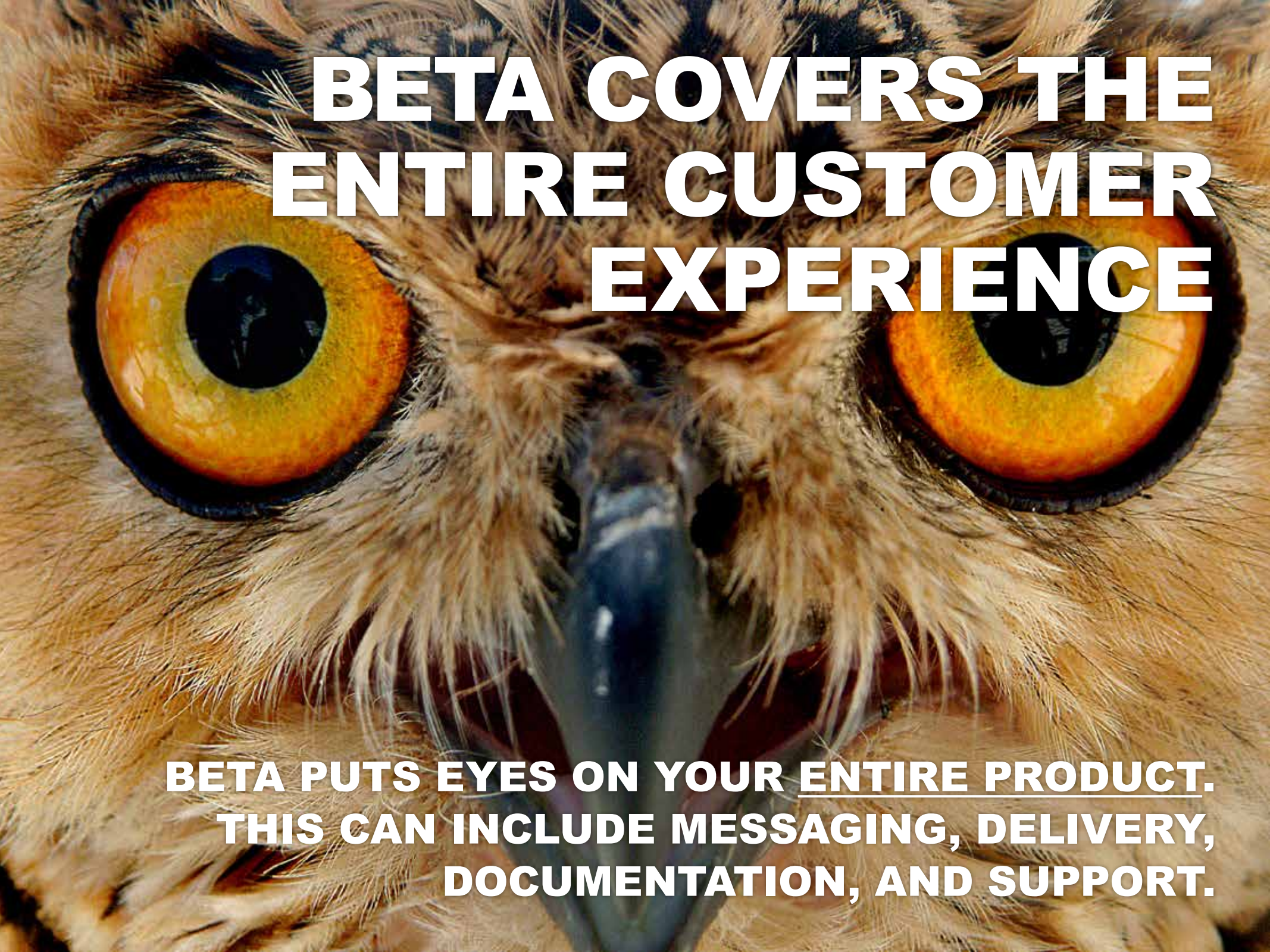
BETA IS KNOWLEDGE

AND “KNOWLEDGE IS POWER”... YOUR BETA TEST PROVIDES VALUABLE PRODUCT AND MARKET AWARENESS THAT CAN BE USED TO ENHANCE YOUR POSITION AND RESPOND TO CRITICS.



BETA IS A TOOLBOX




BETA COVERS THE ENTIRE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
BETA PUTS EYES ON YOUR ENTIRE PRODUCT. THIS CAN INCLUDE MESSAGING, DELIVERY, DOCUMENTATION, AND SUPPORT.

BETA ASSESSES LAUNCH READINESS

YOUR BETA WILL DEMONSTRATE HOW READY YOU ARE FOR RELEASE AND EXACTLY WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED BEFORE YOU GO TO MARKET.



LEVEL SET

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF BETA TESTING (BY PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

THE REAL ROLE OF BETA TESTING (IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

SEVEN KEYS TO A SANE AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BETA TEST

FINAL THOUGHTS

centercode



1 FOCUS ON GOALS

ALWAYS DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR BETA. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (I.E. BUGS) IS IMPLIED. EVERYTHING ELSE IS UP TO YOU.

2 PICK GREAT TESTERS



DON'T JUST TAKE ANYONE. YOU WANT ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE WHO MATCH YOUR TARGET MARKET AND DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY CAN AND WILL COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.

3 REDUCE FRICTION

YOUR TESTERS HAVE A LIMITED POOL OF ENERGY THAT THEY'LL INVEST IN YOUR BETA TEST. IT'S YOUR JOB TO MAXIMIZE THAT POOL TO GAIN THE MOST BENEFIT POSSIBLE. DO THIS BY PROVIDING CLEAR CHANNELS OF FEEDBACK. MAKE EVERYTHING EASY.





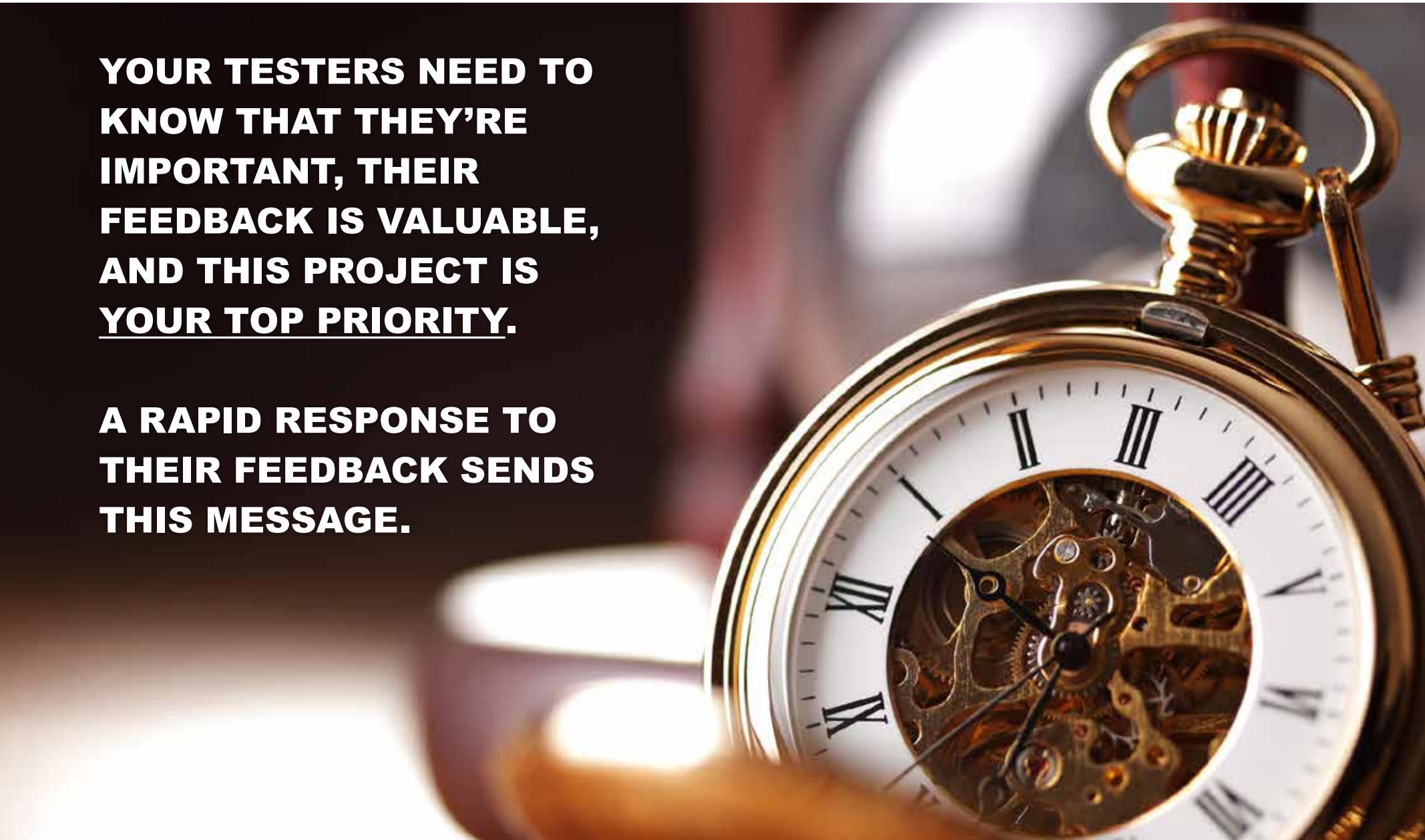
4 PROVIDE A STABLE PRODUCT

YOUR PRODUCT SHOULD BE "BETA READY." THAT MEANS THE EXPERIENCE IS CLOSE TO THAT OF A REAL CUSTOMER. IF THERE ARE GLARING BUGS, YOUR TESTERS WILL BURN OUT BEFORE THEY PROVIDE MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK.

5 BE RESPONSIVE

YOUR TESTERS NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY'RE IMPORTANT, THEIR FEEDBACK IS VALUABLE, AND THIS PROJECT IS YOUR TOP PRIORITY.

A RAPID RESPONSE TO THEIR FEEDBACK SENDS THIS MESSAGE.



6 SHARE THE RESULTS

BETA CAN BENEFIT NEARLY EVERY ORGANIZATION TIED TO YOUR PRODUCT, BUT ONLY IF IT REACHES THEM. THAT SAID, IT'S IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT NOT EVERYONE IS FORCED TO DIVE INTO EVERY PIECE OF DATA. ALWAYS FILTER YOUR DATA SO THAT IT LANDS IN THE RIGHT HANDS.





7 LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

THIS WON'T BE YOUR LAST RODEO.

LEVEL SET

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF BETA TESTING (BY PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

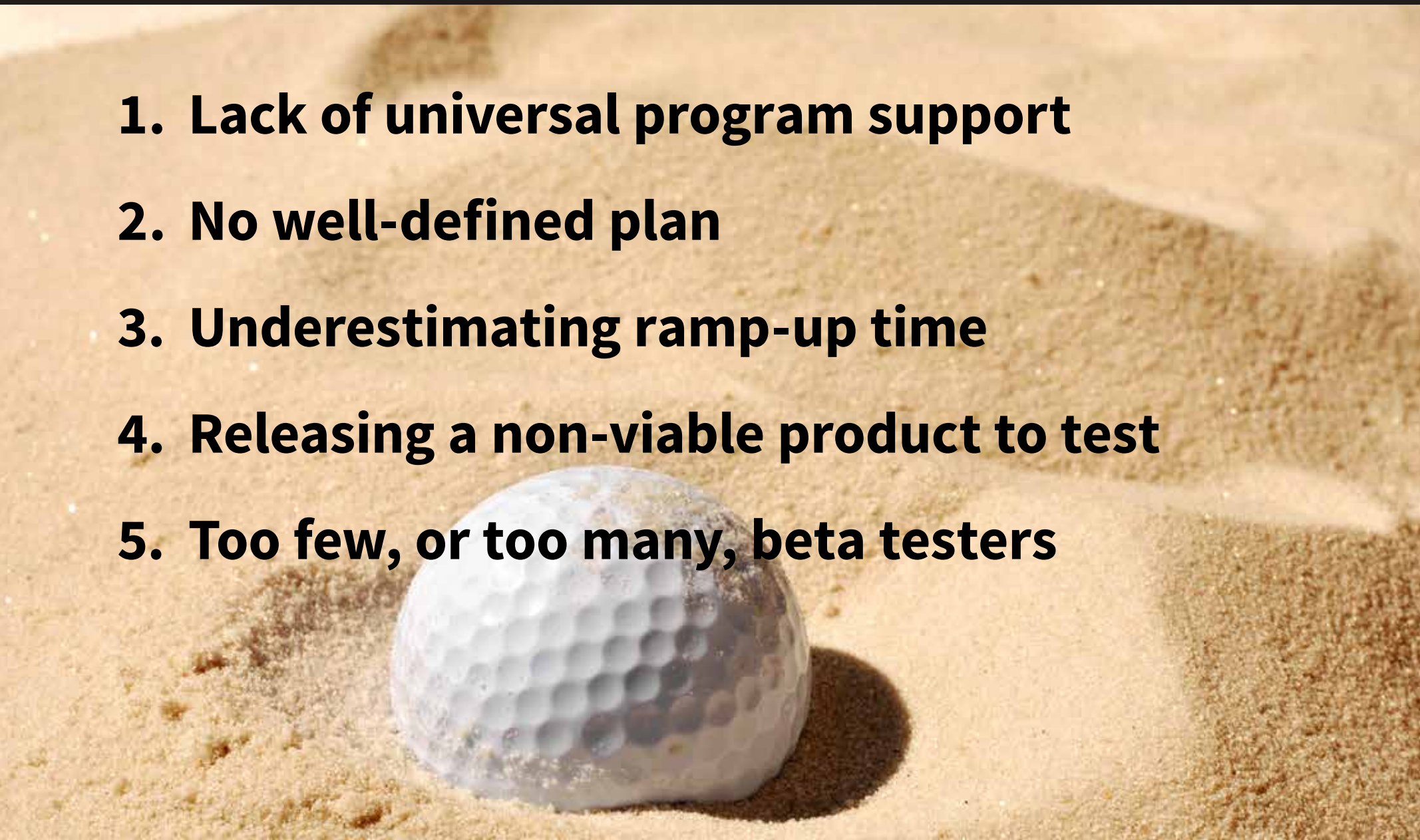
THE REAL ROLE OF BETA TESTING (IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT)

SEVEN KEYS TO A SANE AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BETA TEST

FINAL THOUGHTS

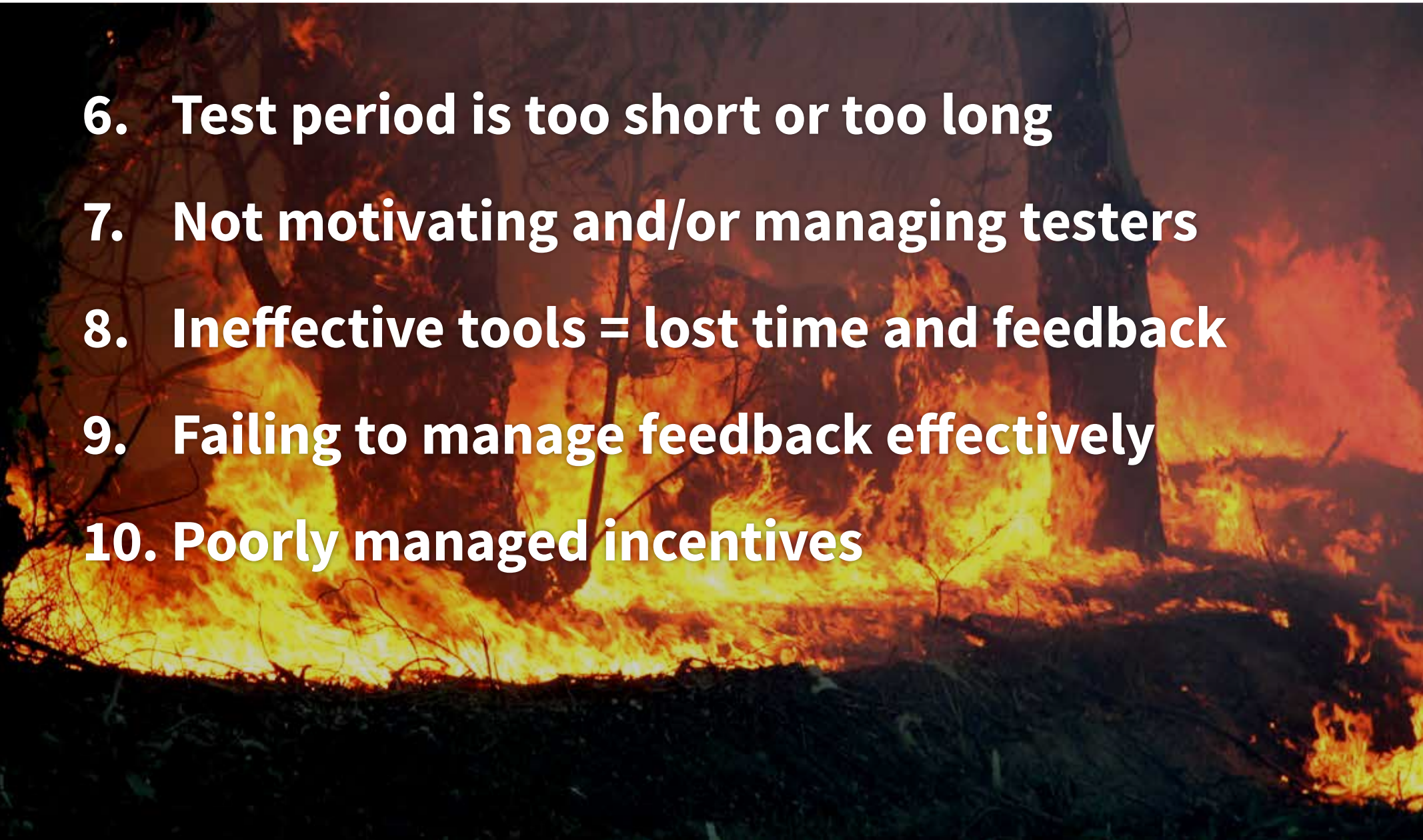
centercode

TOP 10 MISTAKES (PART 1)

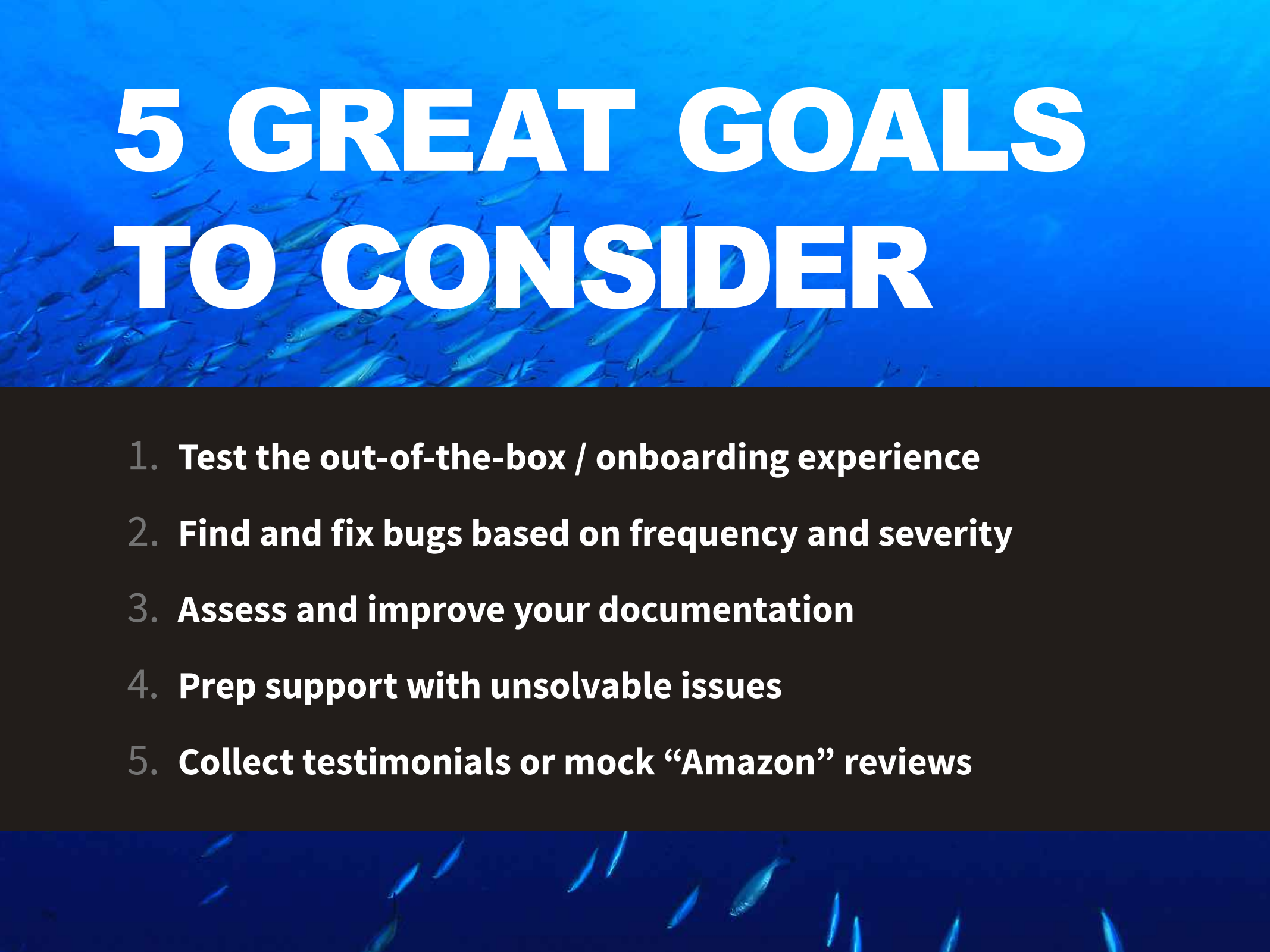


1. Lack of universal program support
2. No well-defined plan
3. Underestimating ramp-up time
4. Releasing a non-viable product to test
5. Too few, or too many, beta testers

TOP 10 MISTAKES (PART 2)



6. Test period is too short or too long
7. Not motivating and/or managing testers
8. Ineffective tools = lost time and feedback
9. Failing to manage feedback effectively
10. Poorly managed incentives



5 GREAT GOALS TO CONSIDER

1. **Test the out-of-the-box / onboarding experience**
2. **Find and fix bugs based on frequency and severity**
3. **Assess and improve your documentation**
4. **Prep support with unsolvable issues**
5. **Collect testimonials or mock “Amazon” reviews**

ONCE YOU HAVE A SOLID GRASP



- Structured alpha testing
- Continuous feedback community
- Competitive testing

centercode

Delta Testing Solutions

WHY CENTERCODE?

Increase Revenue
½ ☆ INCREASE
in product ratings

Release Sooner
50% FASTER
test cycles

Gain Participation
75% INCREASE
in tester engagement

Save Time
40%+ DECREASE
in time managing tests



The Centercode Platform equips you with the automation and best practices you need to get actionable user insights for any use case.

PRODUCT LAUNCH

Engage your **Target Market** to successfully bring new products and services to market

USE CASES:

- Beta Tests
- User Acceptance Tests
- Field Tests

PRODUCT GROWTH

Recruit **Existing Customers** to continuously mature live products and services

USE CASES:

- Progressive Delivery
- Early Access
- Customer Advisory Boards

CUSTOMER ZERO

Gather **Employee** feedback to enhance your products while fostering a product culture

USE CASES:

- Alpha Tests
- Dogfooding
- Employee Tests

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Enlist **Competitors' Customers** to rapidly gain actionable intel about their products

USE CASES:

- Competitive Intelligence
- Market Testing
- Comparative Research