

Framing User Research in Multi-Product Organizations

Abstract

In multi-product organizations or any big corporates dealing with digital products, user research often fades away before it even starts. A stakeholder feels something is wrong, but does not yet have a clear research question. And it usually takes many back-and-forth to turn that feeling into something that a researcher can act on. This thesis works out a structured way to make that first conversation between the Stakeholder and Research Service Provider go more productive.

This approach is based on a four-step interview session: understand the product, its positioning, the trigger behind the request, and the research conditions. A question bank and an interactive prototype support the session, then a decision tree turns the answers into a suggested research method, as a starting point.

The approach did not start from theory. It grew out of hands-on experience in a multi-product organization and the author's own experience improving two earlier rounds of user research, at the same organization, where a shift toward a more structured approach measurably raised the quality of the results. That experience confirms this framing is needed and works. The four-step session and decision tree were then tested with Product Owners on real, live products, as a pilot test.



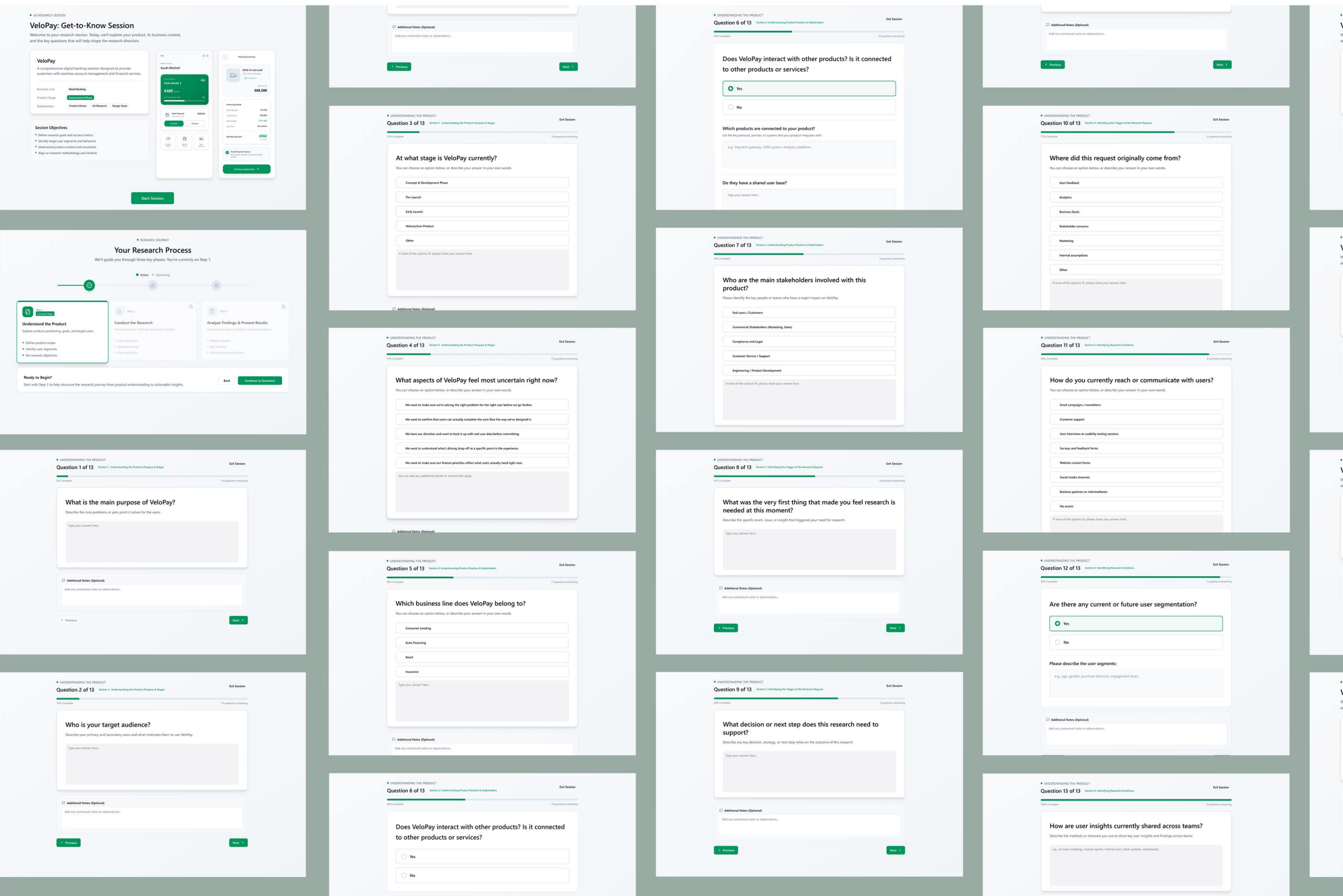
Research Request Is Initiated, Product Owner Meets UX Researcher

Special Focus

The central feature of this work is the transformation of qualitative conversation into a structured decision logic. While existing research frameworks provide guidance on conducting research or managing research operations, they rarely address how a research request can be consistently translated into a suitable research direction across different products and stakeholders.

To overcome this gap, the collected information from the intake session was analyzed and converted into a set of decision variables. These variables represent the factors that influence research method selection, such as product maturity, research intent, problem clarity, urgency, and user accessibility. Instead of depending solely on the individual experience of a researcher, the decision tree makes this reasoning explicit and repeatable.

The resulting tool does not aim to replace researchers' expertise or make final research decisions automatically. Its purpose is to create a shared starting point: making the reasoning behind a recommendation visible, supporting alignment between Product Owners and Research Service Providers, and enabling a more consistent approach to research planning in complex product environments.

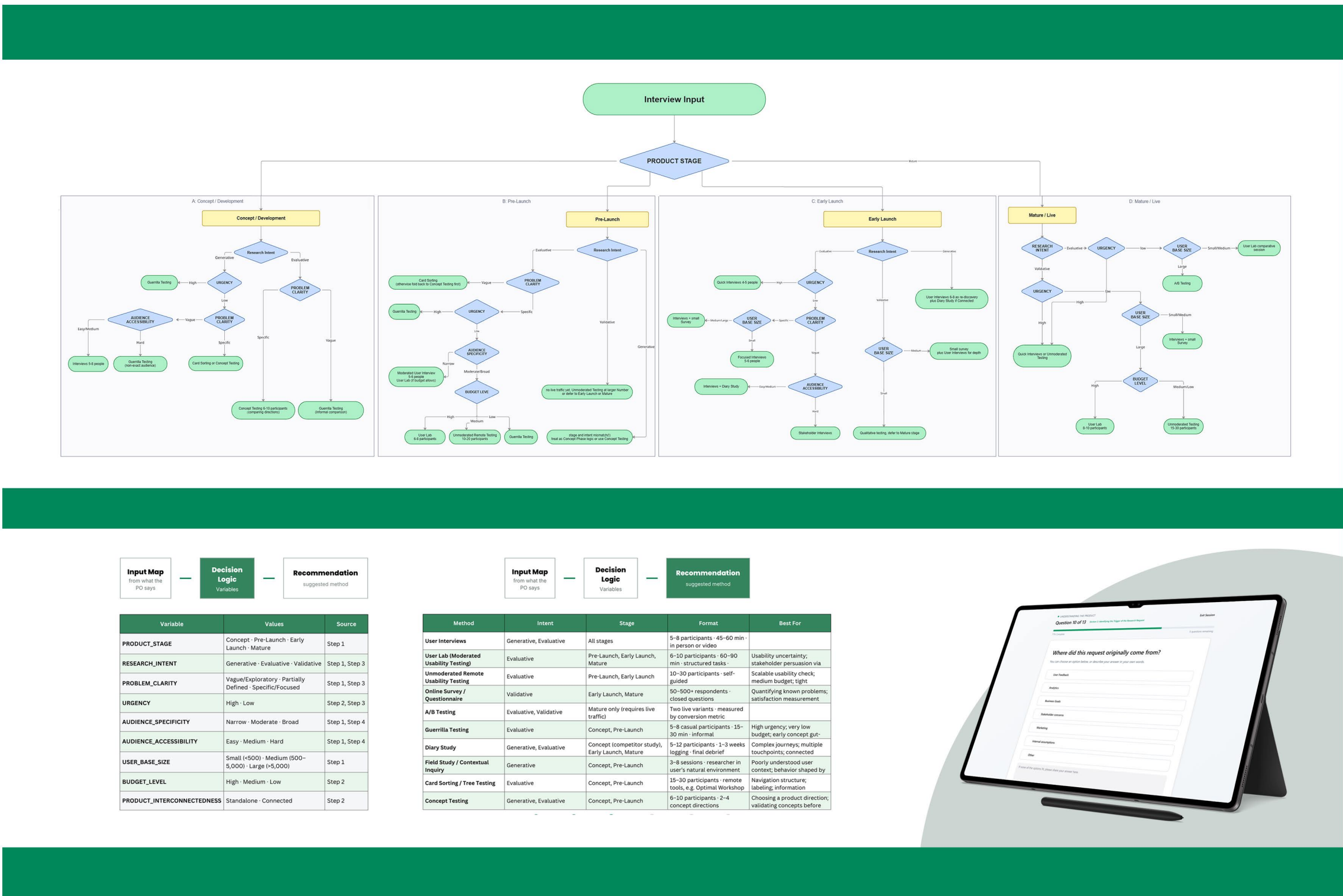


Intake Session Applied into a Facilitation Tool

Result and Future Work

The developed framework demonstrated that a structured approach to framing research requests can create a shared understanding between Product Owners and research teams before a study begins. The four-step structure (understanding the product, its position and stakeholders, the trigger behind the request, and the research conditions) remained consistent throughout the project and proved valuable not only for defining research needs, but also for communicating research topics and outcomes more effectively across the organization.

Future work could explore how this structure can support a shared research knowledge system across products. By documenting research requests and outcomes in a consistent format, organizations could create searchable research histories that preserve insights despite team changes and enable reuse of previous findings. With sufficient structured data, such an archive could further support AI-based assistance, helping identify relevant past research, classify new requests, and improve consistency in interpreting research needs. Additionally, testing the framework in other multi-product organizations would be necessary to evaluate its transferability across different contexts and organizational structures.



The Decision Tree Working Journey

