

2. Triage v Product Discovery

What is the Difference Between Service Desk Triage, Product Owner Triage & Product Discovery?

Service Desk Triage:

Purpose: Quickly assess, classify, and route incoming service desk tickets (BAU or Idea).

Product Owner Triage:

Purpose: Assess ideas and prioritise which ideas should move into Discovery.

Discovery:

Purpose: Validate the problem, explore opportunities, test assumptions, and define solution direction.

	Topic	Service Desk Triage	Product Owner Triage	Product Discovery
1	Purpose	• Service Desk triage is about sorting, assessing and prioritising incoming tickets (service desk). • It ensures teams focus on what needs immediate attention vs what can wait. • In product contexts, triage is often operational, handling tickets or ideas quickly.	• Product Owner triage is about sorting, assessing and prioritising ideas. • It ensures ideas are picked up for discovery in the right priority order.	• Product discovery is about deeply understanding user problems, validating ideas and identifying what should be built. • It aims to reduce risk by validating value, usability, feasibility and alignment with strategy before development. • It is more strategic and exploratory than triage.
2	Mindset	• Reactive. • Quick decision-making. • Minimal investigation.	• Problem clarity. • Product vision and long-term roadmap. • Business value. • User impact.	• Investigative. • Evidence-driven. • Involves research, testing, prototyping. • Designed to build confidence that the

			• Effort & complexity (high-level estimate) • Dependencies & timing • Risks & cost • Effort required <i>for discovery</i>	team is solving the right problem.
3	Activities	• Categorising service desk tickets (BAU or ideas) • Checking urgency / severity. • Deciding what to ignore, delay or escalate. • Surface-level clarification.	• Checking urgency / severity. • Deciding what to ignore, delay or escalate. • Prioritising Ideas	• User interviews & research. • Problem framing. • Hypothesis mapping. • Prototyping & validation. • Assessing value/usability/feasibility • Prioritising validated opportunities.
4	Outputs	• Service desk tickets are categorised into BAU or ideas. • Ownership and next steps.	• Ideas are prioritised ready to be picked up for discovery.	• Validated problem statements. • Validated solution directions. • Evidence to support “build / don’t build” decisions. • A refined backlog.
5	Timing	• Happens continuously • Often daily or weekly. • Focused on current workload.	• Every 2 weeks (aligned with platform owner meetings).	• Triggered when there’s uncertainty around a problem, idea, or opportunity. • Starts before development and may continue continuously for learning.