

Content Design for Digital Products



- A strategic, user-centered discipline that plans, structures, and creates content across digital products



- Differs from copywriting, technical writing, and UX writing in scope, strategic focus, and systems thinking



- Reduces user confusion, lowers support costs, and builds trust at scale



- This training covers the end-to-end process from user needs to measurement, ready for immediate application



The Content Design Mindset



- Start with user needs, not stakeholder assumptions



- Design with data: research, analytics, and support insights



- Collaborate early with product designers, engineers, and researchers



- Embrace iteration: treat content as a prototype, not a final draft



Understanding User Needs for Content



- Discover needs via interviews, usability tests, search logs, and support tickets



- Map content to user journeys and mental models to find friction



- Translate research findings into actionable content briefs



- Use search-log analysis to see what users actually look for



Structuring Information for Clarity



- IA organizes content so users find what they need fast



- Use progressive disclosure: reveal details only when needed



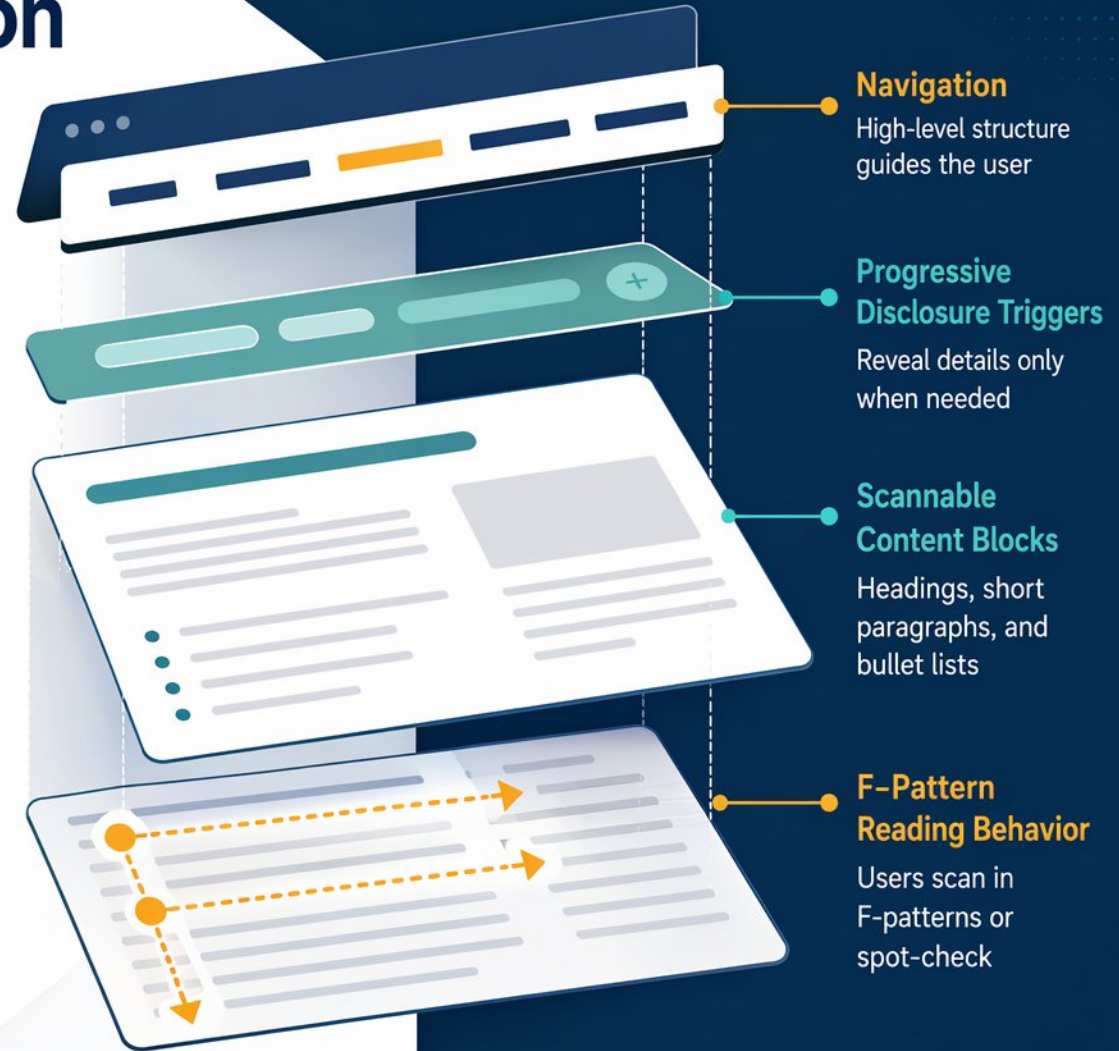
- Design for scanning: headings, short paragraphs, bullet lists



- Follow the inverted pyramid: key info first, then context



- Users scan in F-patterns or spot-check; walls of text fail



USER JOURNEY MAP



Discover
Find the right place to start



Scan
Quickly assess key information



Engage
Reveal details as needed



Understand
Absorb and make sense of content



Act
Complete task with confidence



Voice, Tone, and Inclusive Language



- Define a product voice reflecting brand values and building user trust



- Adapt tone for context: errors, success, onboarding, and sensitive moments



- Use plain, inclusive language; avoid jargon, stereotypes, and idioms



- Align content with WCAG accessibility standards and readability guidelines



- Create scalable style guides for consistent voice across your team

One message. Different tones.



CASUAL

Uh-oh! Looks like something went wrong. Let's try that again.



Friendly and conversational.
Great for low-stakes moments.



NEUTRAL

Something went wrong. Please try again.



Clear and direct.
Works well in most everyday situations.



SERIOUS

We're unable to complete your request right now. Please try again later.



Respectful and reassuring. Best for sensitive moments.

Inclusive language adaptations



Avoid assumptions
Use "they" instead of "he/she."



Be identity-affirming
Use person-first or identity-first language.



Be culturally neutral
Avoid idioms and references that don't translate.



Inclusive language builds trust, reduces barriers, and helps every user feel seen and respected.

Microcopy:

Buttons, Labels, and Forms



- Button labels: Use specific, action-oriented verbs that name the outcome (e.g., "Create account" not "Submit")



- Form labels should always be visible; use placeholders only for format examples



- Help text and tooltips explain complex inputs without cluttering the interface



- Avoid generic labels, placeholder-as-label, and vague CTAs that leave users guessing

Email address

? We'll never share your email with anyone else.

Create account →

T

LABEL

Be clear and specific.
Always visible.



PLACEHOLDER

Show format examples.
Not a replacement for labels.



HELP TEXT / TOOLTIP

Provide helpful context that supports accurate input.



ACTION BUTTON

Use action-oriented verbs that clearly state the outcome.

Error Messages and System Feedback

 What Happened Clearly state the issue in plain language.	 Why It Happened Explain the cause simply and honestly.	 How to Fix It Give clear, actionable steps the user can take.
 Low Severity A small issue occurred, but you can continue.	 This happened because of a minor issue with your input or settings.	 You can keep working. No action is needed right now.
 Medium Severity Something went wrong and needs your attention.	 This may be due to a validation rule, a temporary system issue, or a conflict.	 Review the details and follow the suggested steps to resolve it.
 High Severity A serious problem occurred that may affect your data.	 This occurred due to a critical error that could cause data loss.	 Take action now using the steps below or contact support.



- Structure: what happened, why, and how to fix it in plain language



- Match tone to severity: calm for minor issues, serious for data loss



- Validation, network, permission, and 404 pages each need distinct patterns



- Use inline validation, preserve user input, and always offer a next step

Onboarding, Empty States, and Notifications



- **Onboarding:**
Guide users to value via progressive disclosure and clear next actions



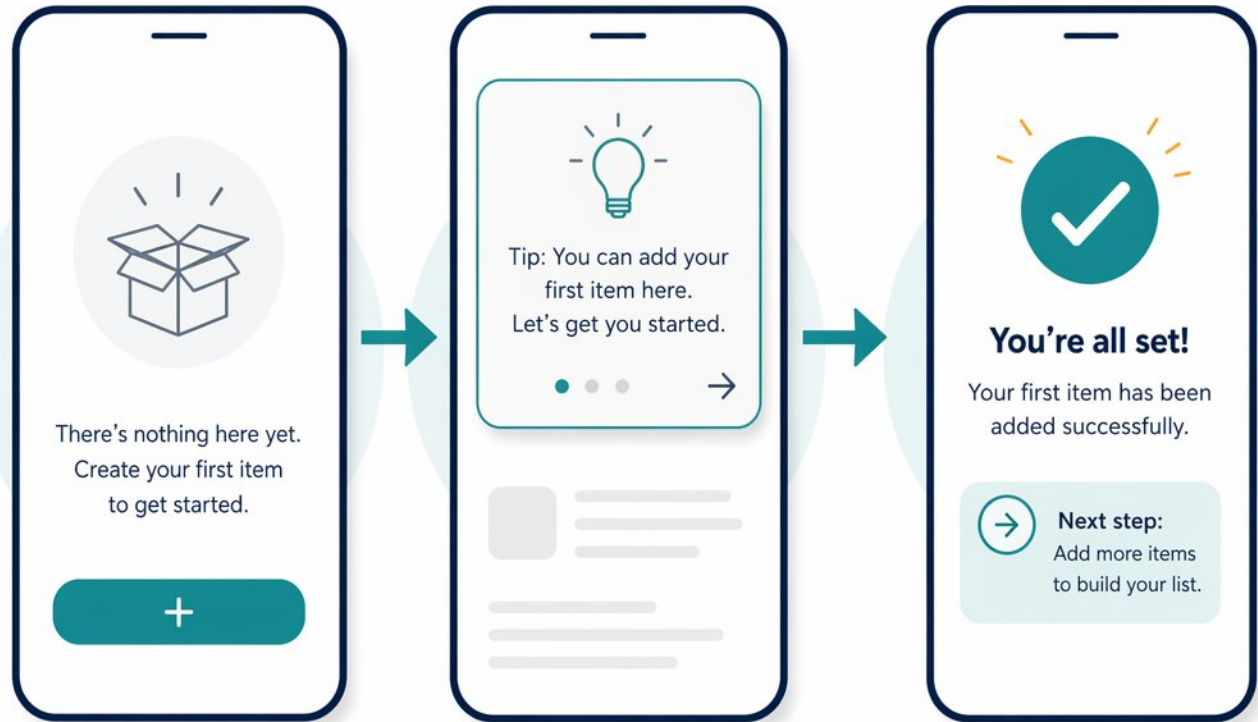
- **Empty states:**
Explain why the screen is empty and provide a direct path to fill it



- **Notifications:**
Earn the right to interrupt by matching message value to disruption cost



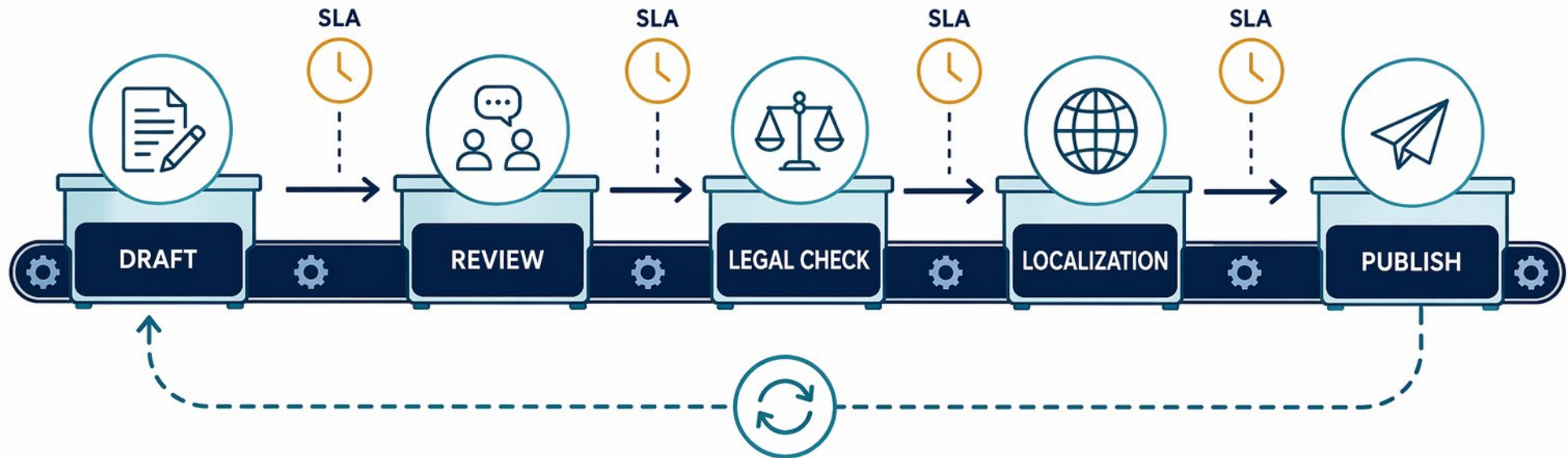
- **Confirmation messages:**
Close the loop by naming the completed action and the next step



USER
JOURNEY



Content Operations: Workflows That Scale



- Design end-to-end workflows with clear owners, stages, SLAs, and hand-off protocols



- Embed legal, compliance, and localization governance into automated approval gates



- Centralize work in connected CMS, DAM, and workflow engines for real-time visibility



- Scale quality via risk-tiered review paths, automated QA scripts, and reusable checklists

Content Governance and Design Systems



- Policies, standards, and oversight to ensure consistent, quality content at scale



- Embed content patterns, components, and content tokens directly into design systems



- Maintain quality with regular audits, version control, and continuous feedback loops



- Document decisions in style guides, guidelines, and AI-ready rule repositories



AI and the Future of Content Design



- Shift from writing words to designing the systems that generate communication



- **Content modeling:** encode rules, patterns, and knowledge bases AI can follow



- Use LLMs as judges: define evaluation criteria and automate quality checks



- The role expands into shaping how AI systems interpret intent and build trust



Measuring Content Effectiveness



- Define metrics tied to user and business goals, not vanity numbers



- Qualitative: usability tests, comprehension checks, content heatmapping



- Quantitative: task success rate, time-on-task, support ticket reduction



- Apply the HEART framework: Happiness, Engagement, Adoption, Retention, Task Success

QUALITATIVE

Understand how users feel and what they experience

“

“

“



Capture feedback and sentiment to uncover insights



QUANTITATIVE

Measure what users do and the outcomes achieved



Task success rate



Time-on-task



Support ticket reduction

Track behavior and outcomes to drive impact

Testing Content with Users



- **Banana test:** replace key actions to check mental model alignment



- **Cloze test:** remove words, ask users to fill blanks for comprehension



- **Moderated sessions** uncover the "why" behind user confusion

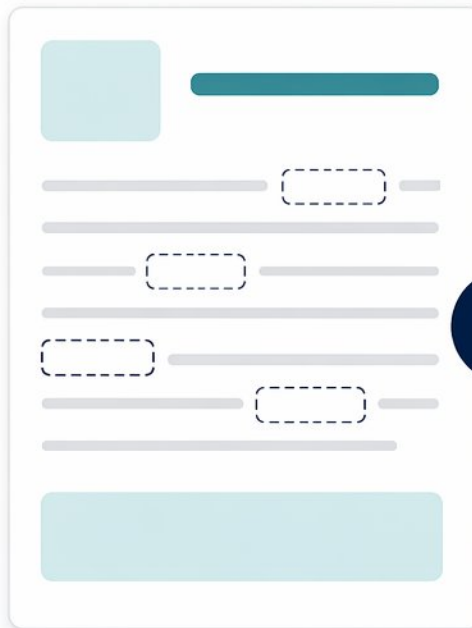


- **Test at concept, midway, and post-launch stages iteratively**



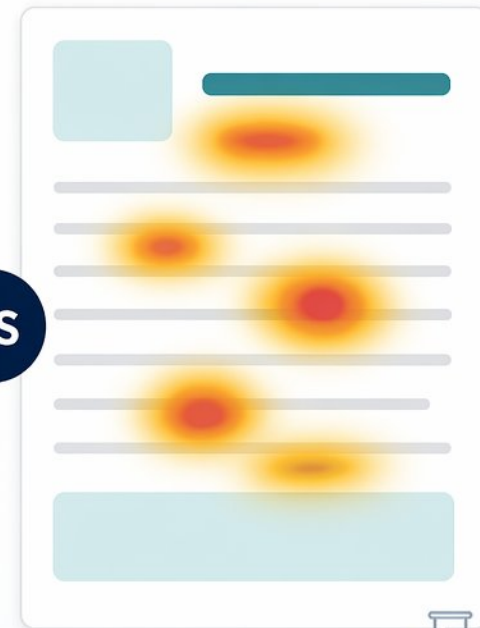
- **Analyze patterns, iterate copy, and share findings with stakeholders**

CLOZE TEST



VS

HIGHLIGHTING HEATMAP



Building a Content Design Culture



- Prove content value with data: cost savings, support ticket reduction, and task success



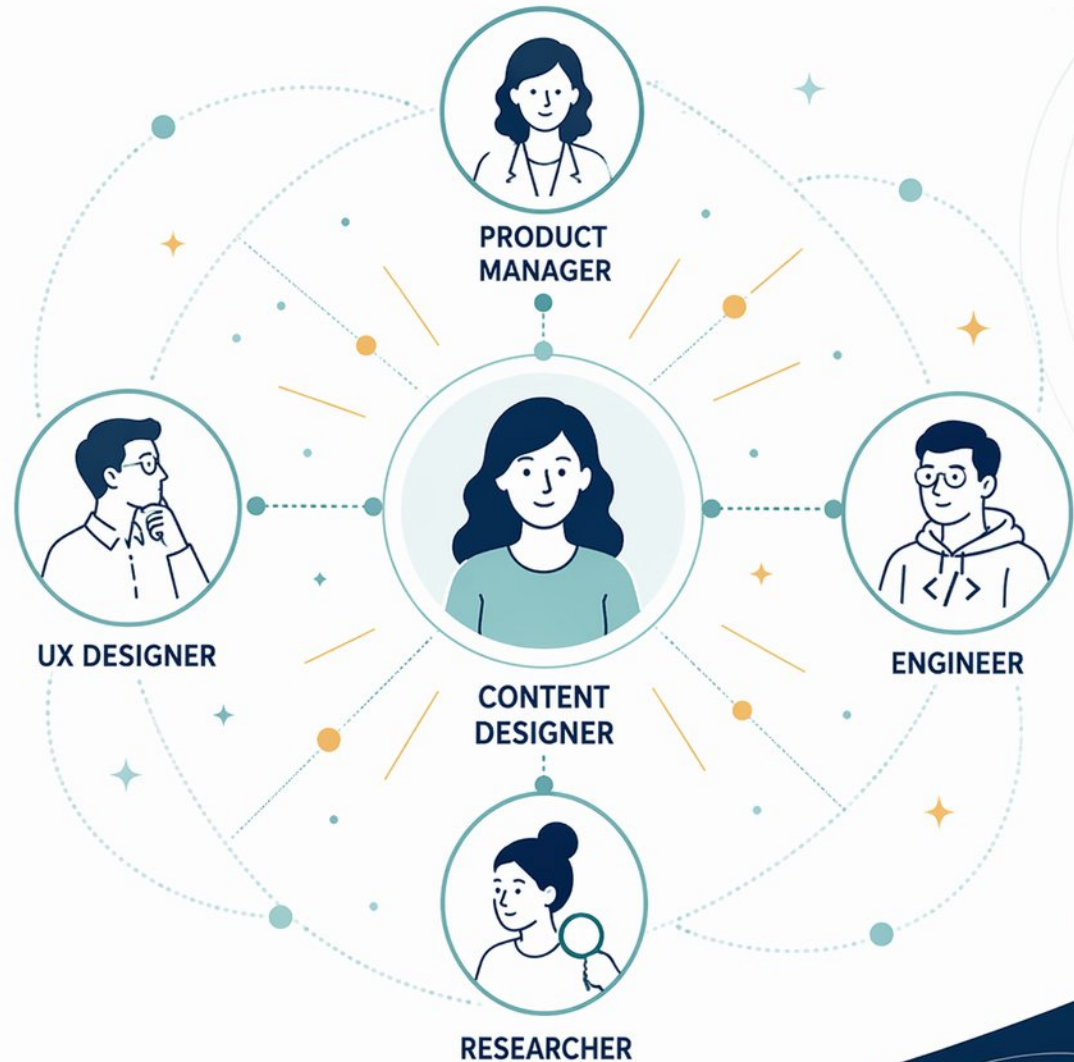
- Embed content designers in agile teams from discovery through launch



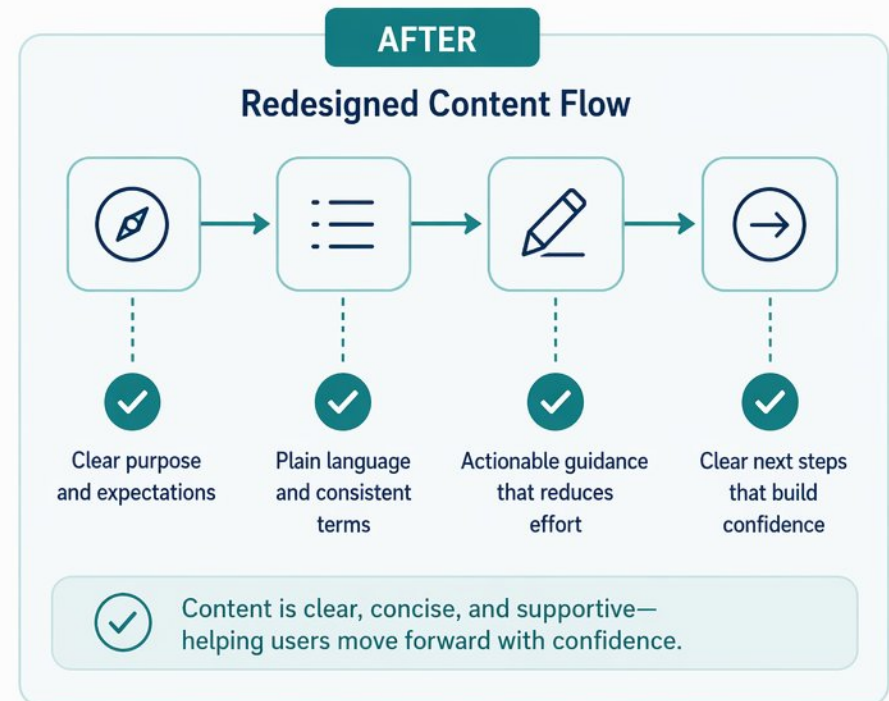
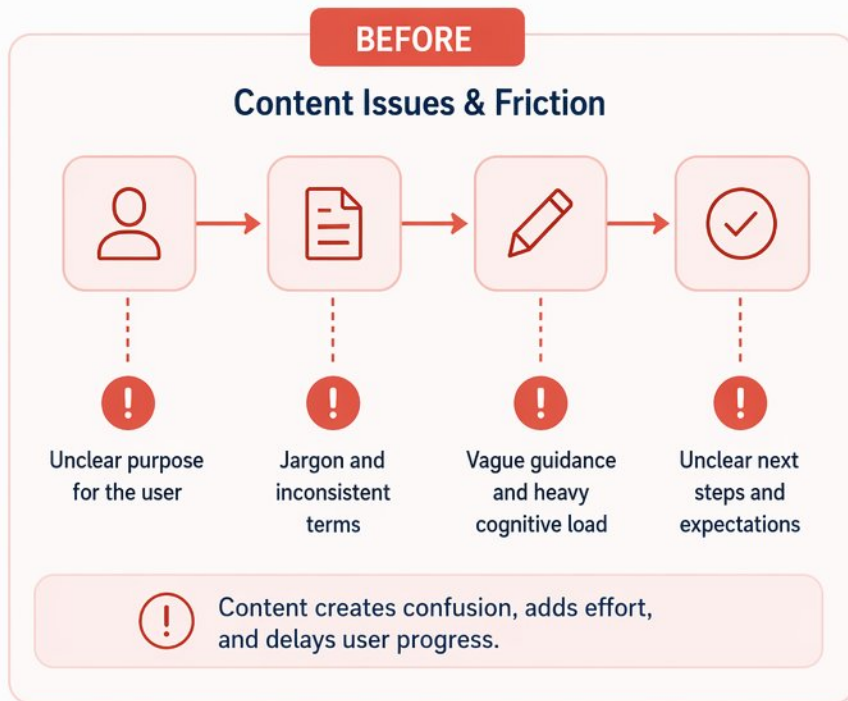
- Educate PMs and engineers on content decisions through workshops and shared principles



- Shift to a content-first process: design the message before the interface



Practical Workshop: Redesigning a Content Flow



- Audit a real digital product flow for content issues and friction points



- Apply the end-to-end process: research, structure, write, test, iterate



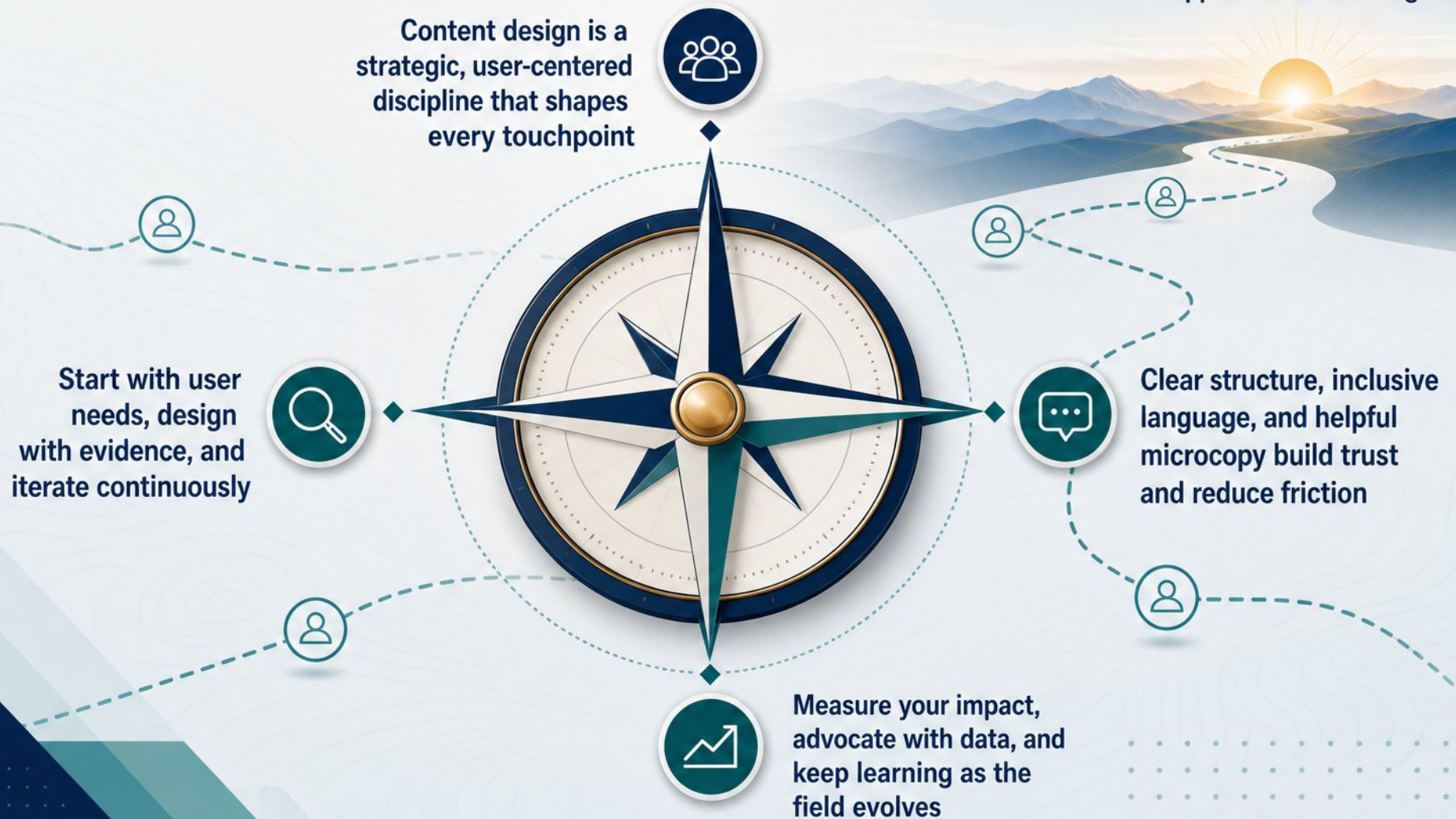
- Peer critique: give and receive constructive feedback on content decisions



- Build a personal action plan to use content design principles daily

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

Applied Content Design



PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform



Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/179e5b07/public