Spotting The Difference & Closing The Gap:
Jr Devs to Mid-Level Devs

Caleb Crawley

Intro

Welcome and thank you all for taking the time to come be present at my talk.
This is my first one so I just want to express my gratitude for all of you.
Today the topic is Spotting the Difference and Closing the Gap between Jr
Developers and Mid Level Developers

I was motivated to speak about this topic because I was a junior developer, lots of
motivation, and thought I had answers about how to think about certain things and
behave, but after conversations with others, I realized that while I was on track, I
was off by just a little bit.

So who is this talk for?...

Target audience

- You are upper management frustrated with your Jr Devs not advancing quickly enough
- You are the Jr Dev wondering why you're not advancing, or you're looking to accelerate your process
- You value saving time, become more efficient, reducing effort strain, increasing value and making more money.
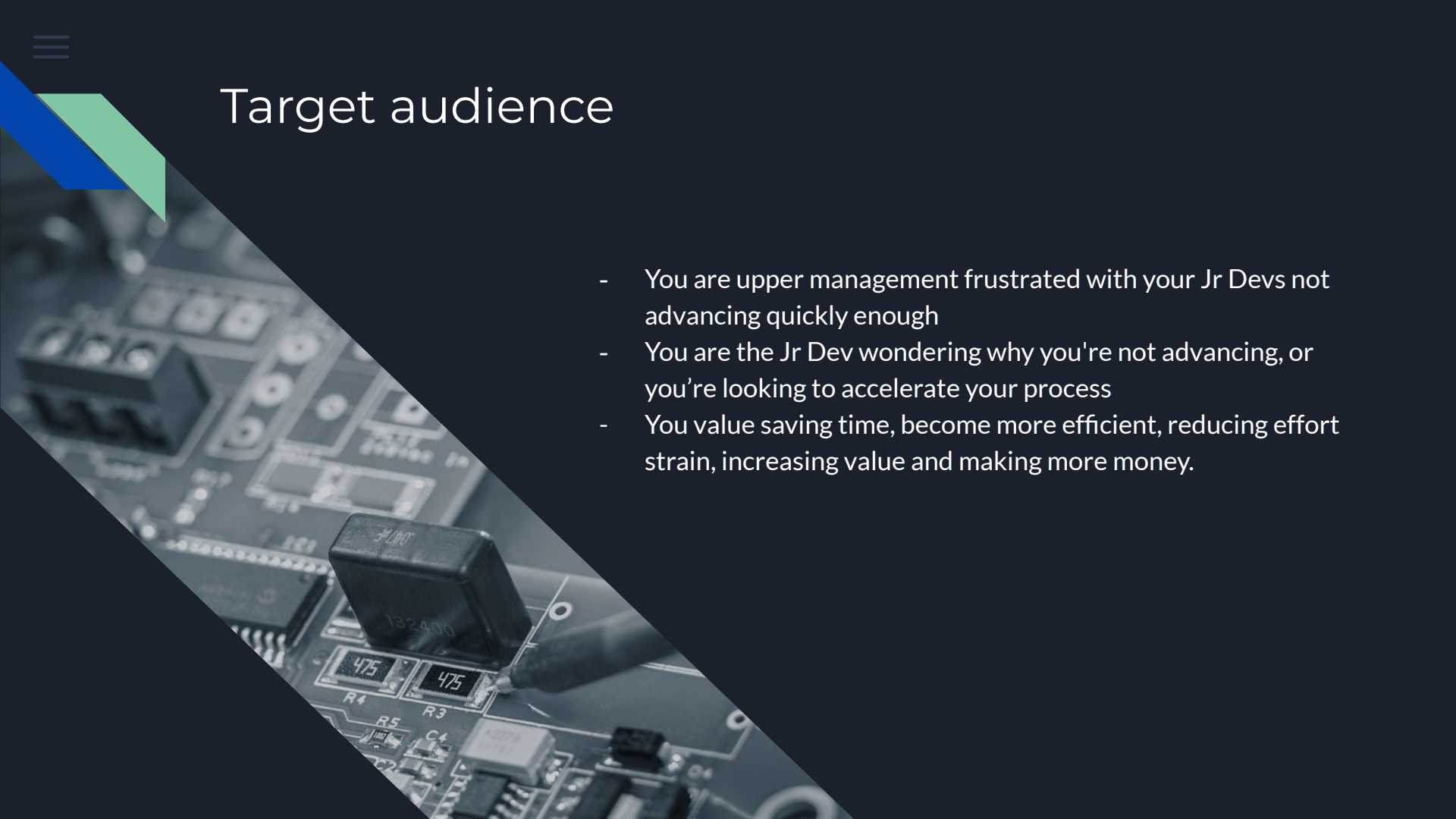
Why This Topic is Important

The biggest point of any relationship is Value.

Why are we doing this? Why does this relationship exist?

Why do we need each other? What are we getting out of it?

- Employee/Boss
- Company/Client

How does everyone win?

The hardest part of being a Jr Dev is understanding the value you bring to your organization and also understanding why you are considered a Jr Dev. and not a Mid Level one.

Project objective

- Identify the major, but often overlooked or misindentied aspects of what hold Jr Devs back and what sets Mid Level devs apart from them.
- To leave with a better sense of how to advance or help others advance their knowledge and careers
- To cut the average time/lifespan of Jr Dev phase in half

The Value of a Jr. Dev

From the moment you start, your value is in the fact that You have Potential. Potential Energy

You have shown your ability to seem Coachable, Eager, Willing, Capable, valuable.

It's your job to deliver on that.

Your understanding of the underlying principles is limited, which limits your ability to:

- Ask the right questions
- Find the right answers
- Do things on your own
- Save time & Get things done.

Junior Dev A

- Can only be assigned up to 1 project, IF THAT
- Most questions require standup time with other developers
- Does not communicate their workflow on tasks, leaving others putting in extra effort to figure out what they're working on and if they know how to complete it.
- Doesn't complete tasks on time and on budget, but is typically too afraid to tell anyone.
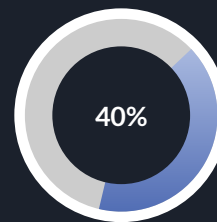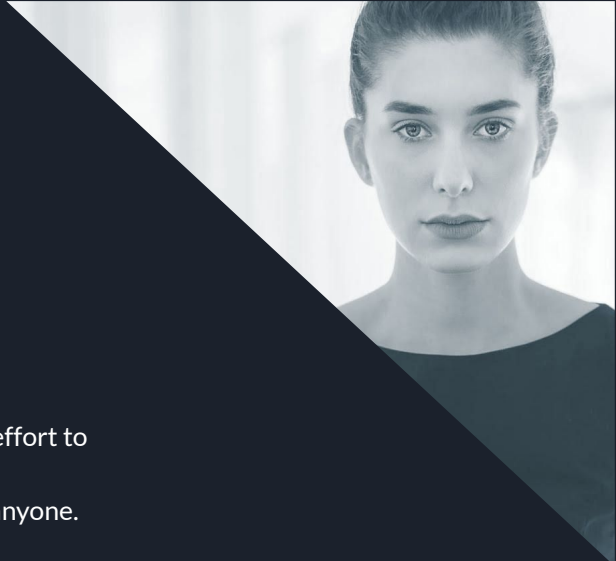
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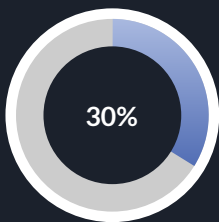
Writing code that fails

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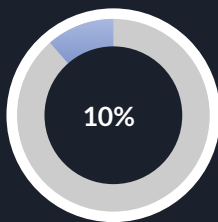
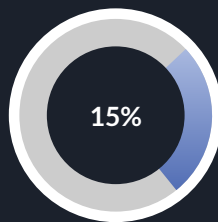Researching, Collaborating

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Waiting

**40%**
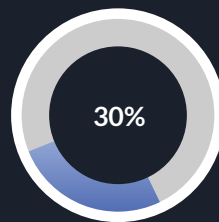
Asking Questions

Junior Dev B

- Can be assigned to work 1 to 2 projects
- Communicates their goals for the week and the day
- Asks questions which can typically be answered with a quick response, some MIGHT require short standup time
- Updates their tasks with current status
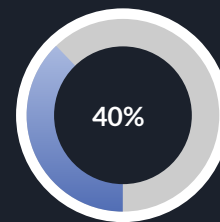- Communicate their workflow on tasks consistently

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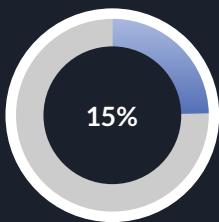
Coding, Debugging, Problem Solving

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Documentation

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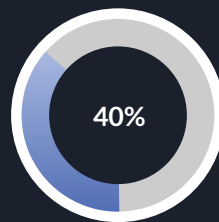
Collaborating, Watching, Asking Questions

**40%**

Researching, Learning, Training

Berry Books

- Can manage 2+ projects
- Can find solutions to blockers independently
- Answers questions and offers solutions for the team
- Honing their skills to proposing workflow processes for new projects
- The boss can count on them to take the lead on team projects with responsibilities they've worked on before
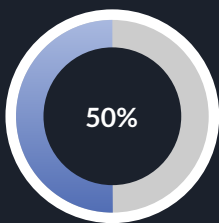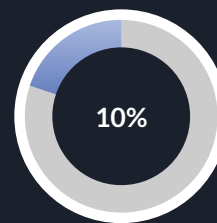
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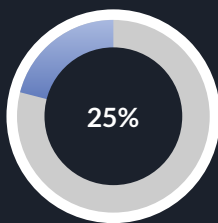
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Research & Learning
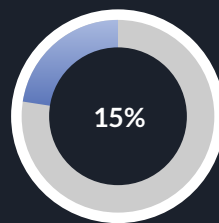
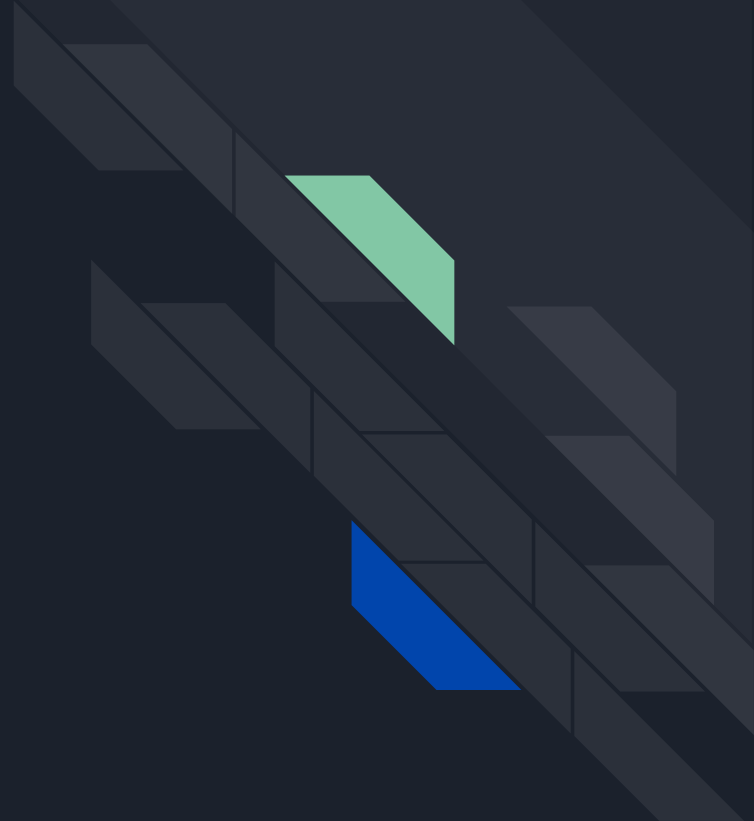**15%**
Communicating & Collaboration

10%
Planning & Prioritizing

Caleb Crawley then

- I knew nothing about Drupal
- I was terrified of migrations
- I asked way too many vague questions without doing any research
- I did not practice enough
- I could not learn from my mistakes because I could not Identify them

Caleb Crawley now

Acquia Certified Mid Level Developer

Part of Drupal Community for 4 years
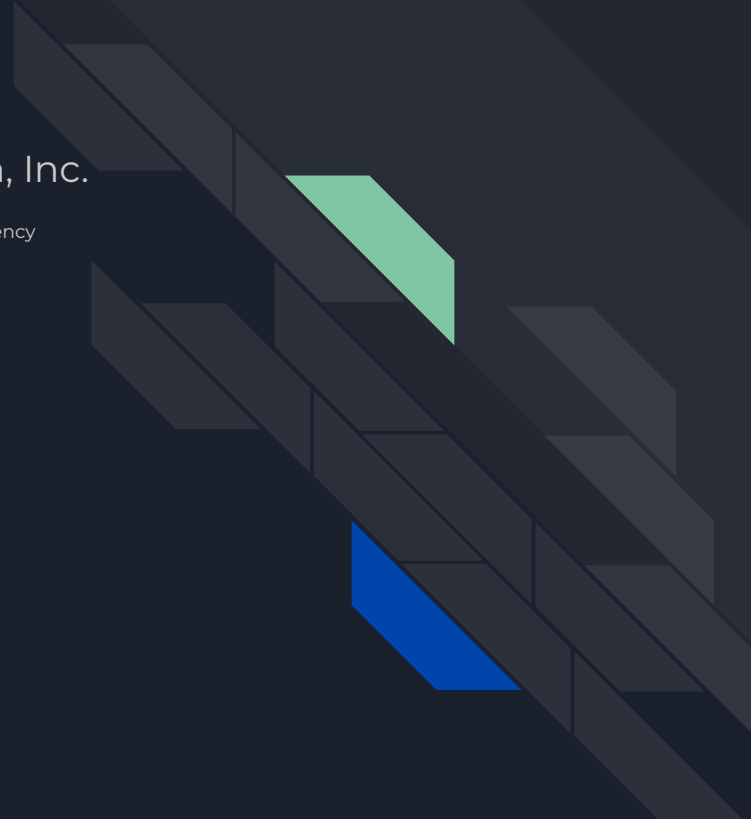- www.drupal.org/u/crawleyhost

Recently worked with Drupal Association
- Community Events
  https://www.drupal.org/community/events
- Made 52 contributions in 2022

Currently working with Dept. of Defense
Education Activity
- Migrations and site building
  https://www.dodea.edu

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So how did I "Figure It Out"??

- I had conversations with my boss and mentors asking them "What Am I missing?"
- I had conversations with my colleagues and asked them "How did you do this?"
- I had conversations with our clients and asked them "What do you need?"
- I had conversations with myself asking "What do I want & who do I want to be?"

You have to communicate. You've got to get through the conversations that are confusing to get to the ones where everything makes sense.

You've got to put effort into understanding how those around you think and learn what they want so that you can understand how to be valuable.

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What they constantly reinforced/Why Does The Gap Exist?

Attention To Detail
- The difference between good work and great work
- The difference between being blocked and not blocked
    - Sometimes it's just a matter of clearing the cache
- Break issues and tasks down into smaller parts for better understanding

Communication
- You can make all the changes and improvements in the world, but if no-one knows about it or what you've done, it will never matter.
- If communication doesnt exist, and is not clear, nothing can get done.
    - Noone will know what's needed
    - Noone will know what to do
    - Noone will get promoted
    - Noone will get along.

Time Management
- If you manage your time wisely, you will learn more, perform better, be more efficient, and you will have more time to relax because you will end up being ahead of schedule.

Adaptability
- At any point in time, your coworker might be on vacation, pulled onto another project, or not working with you anymore. You need to be prepared for your boss to come to you and say yes to "Hey, I need your help, can you handle it?"
- There are 10 ways to do anything in Drupal and everyone wants to pick a different number.

Repetition
- Repetition equals reputation
- You will learn faster, learn how to recognize patterns in your tasks, and remember the solutions to things you just got stuck on so it becomes muscle memory

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Documenting and Ticket Process

Example Client Request:

Hovering my cursor over the subheadings . . .

- Welcome to the Library
- Hours, Locations & Maps
- Jobs
- Etc.

. . . on the "about" page does not change my cursor to the click-hand icon (see below) to indicate the subhead is a link to another page.
Compare the subheads to those on the books page and the user can easily tell it is a link to another page.

Can you update the subheadings on the "about" page so they behave the same way as those on the book page when hovered over?

How a Jr. Dev sets up a new ticket:

How a Mid Level Dev sets up a new ticket:

Task Workflow: Blockers w Example

How a junior dev handles being blocked:

How a Mid Level Dev handles being blocked:

Client Communication

How a junior dev speaks with/responds to a client:

How a Mid Level Dev speaks with/responds to a client:

When you understand the differences, the goal becomes clear.

01   As a Junior Dev, it is now your responsibility to become an asset, by first proving you can hold your own, then showing you can further increase your value to and for those who invest in and depend on your success

02   Understand the Why first, then get to know How
- Why does your client want to do it THAT way instead of THIS way?
- Why should I create a migration config in code and use drush to import the config?
- Why does THIS work, but THAT doesn't work?
- Why does everyone get Acquia Certified?
- Why aren't you making that magical salary number?

03   Communication is key. Your company culture, current status and roadmaps for success should be clear with an open door policy when it comes to discussions about them.

You might think you need to be working 5 projects and clocking 80 hours a week, when all you really need is to get Acquia Certified.

Now You Can

Communicate

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Plan & Prioritize

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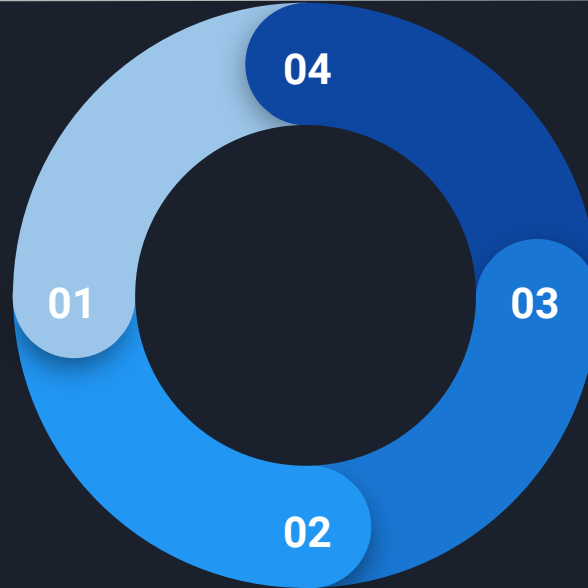
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Deliver

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04

01

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02

Now I can

Have productive conversations with colleagues and tell them "This is how I did this" and make suggestions

Have conversations with our clients and explain to them "This is how we are delivering on what you asked and this is how long it will take"

Have conversations with management and mentors tell them "These are my goals. This is what I'm working on now, this is what I've completed." and experience will allow you to start coming up with ideas that work for everyone.

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Asking the right questions

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If something is or isn't happening, there's almost always a reason why

Understand the Why first, then get to know How
- Why does your client want to do it THAT way instead of THIS way?
- Why does everyone get Acquia Certified?
- Why aren't you making that magical salary number?

There's a reason why you're blocked.

There's a reason why you need to document your tasks.

There's a reason why

Market trends

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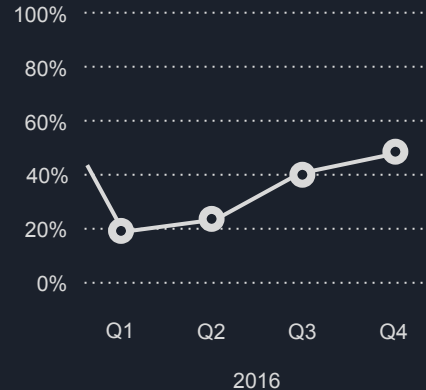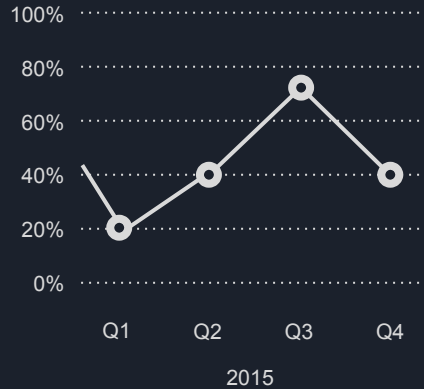
Introducing: Lorem ipsum

Showcase how your tools work across different devices

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QUICK TIP

Try right clicking on a photo and using "Replace Image" to demonstrate your prototype.

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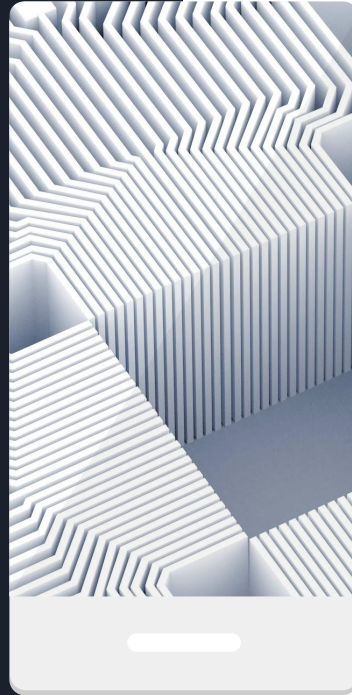# Lorem ipsum dolor sit consectetur amet adipiscing donec

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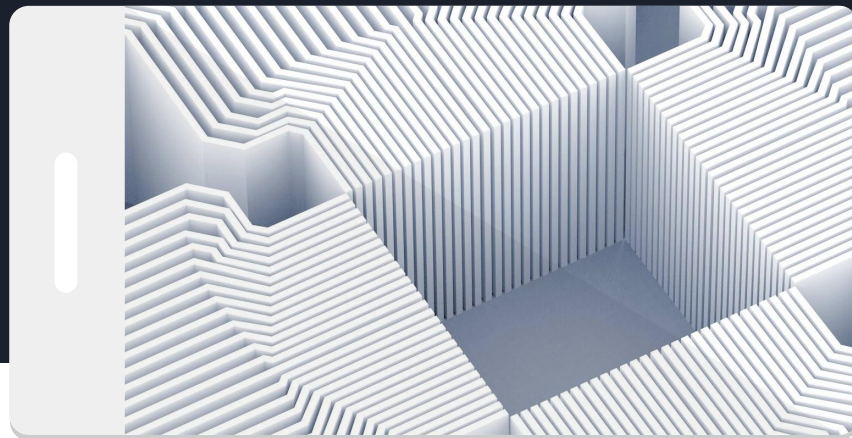# Lorem ipsum dolor sit consectetur amet adipiscing donec

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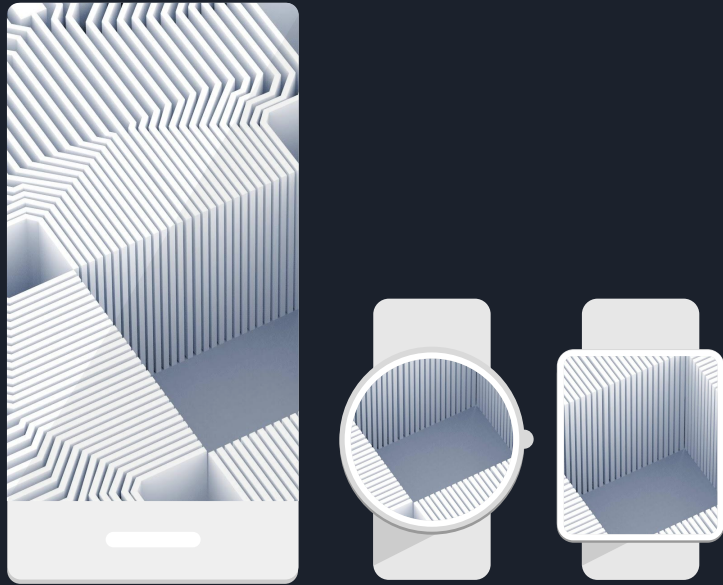
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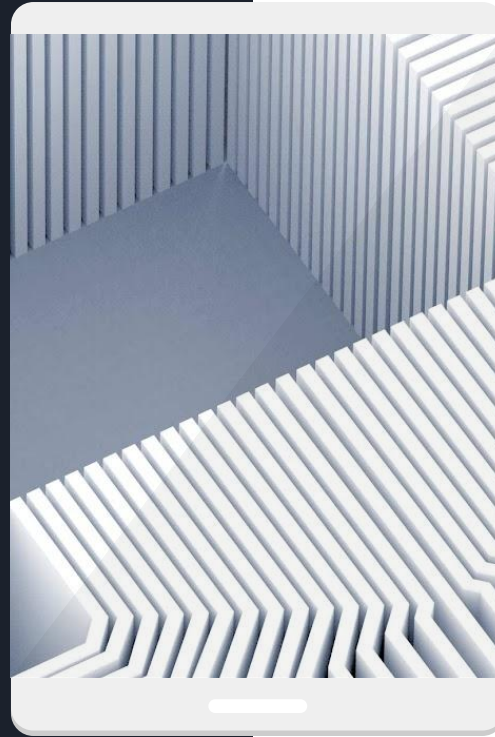
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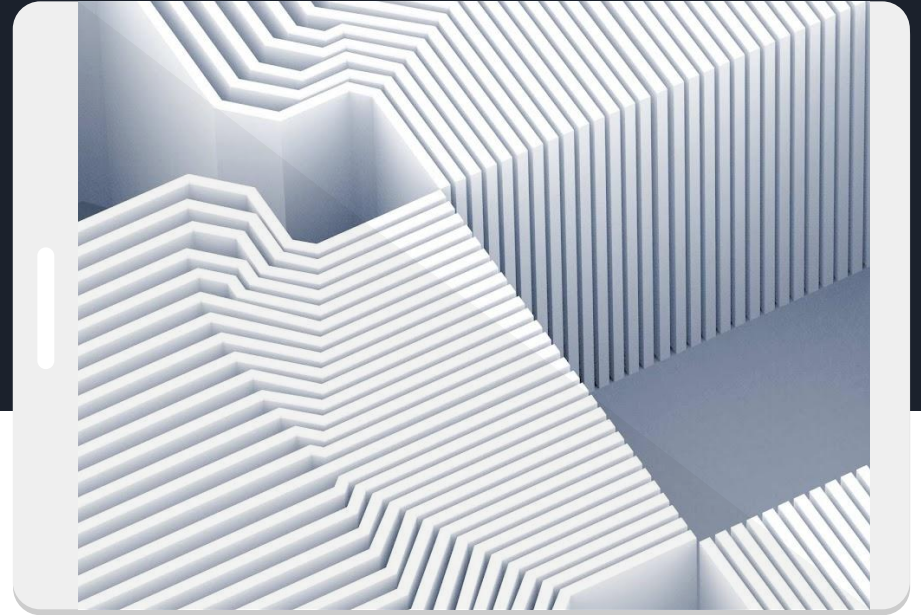Lorem ipsum dolor sit consectetur amet adipiscing donec

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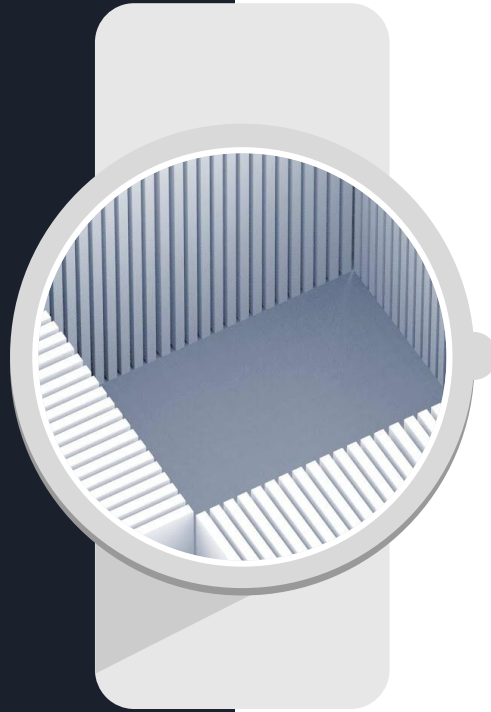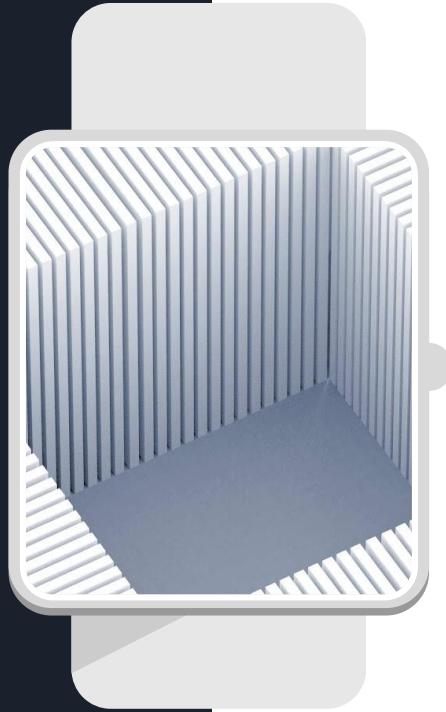Lorem ipsum dolor sit consectetur amet adipiscing donec

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Project timeline

JAN   FEB   MAR   APR   MAY   JUN

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