

# **Building products is a team sport**

Rod Garcia, VP of Engineering Slack

**How was lunch?**

**I hope good!**



# Beyond the lab: Rethinking the engineering- product partnership



# Book 1

Generating good software is not a production process: it is a development process.

Development is quite different than production. Think of development as creating a recipe, and production as following the recipe. [...]

Developing a recipe is a learning process involving trial and error. You would not expect an expert chef's first attempt at a new dish to be the last attempt. In fact, the whole idea of developing a recipe is to try many variations on a theme and discover the best dish.



Source: <https://unsplash.com/@alexkondratiev>



Source: Rod García

Building software is a *learning*  
process

**3 key  
dimensions to  
any successful  
product  
development  
partnership**

**Synergy between leaders**

**Ability to reduce complexity**

**Effectively driving  
operations**

**Lack of focus on  
reducing complexity**

**Lack of effectively  
driving operations**





**Partnership between  
engineering and  
product is always a...**

**...pull and push  
process**

# 3 key dimensions to any successful product development partnership

→ Synergy between leaders

Ability to reduce complexity

Effectively driving  
operations



**Building products is a team sport, your partner's success is you and your team's success.**

**Always approach difficult conversations with your product partner.**

**Antipattern one:**

**Only product  
managers define the  
product**

**Sometimes we confuse product management with the activity of building the product itself**

**Antipattern two:**

**Only product  
managers talk with  
customers**

# 3 key dimensions to any successful product development partnership

Synergy between leaders

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Effectively driving operations



A group of hikers is seen on a dirt trail overlooking a canyon with red rock formations. The hikers are wearing backpacks and using trekking poles. The landscape is rugged and scenic, with a mix of red rock and green pine trees. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The text "Planing a hike" is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

# Planing a hike

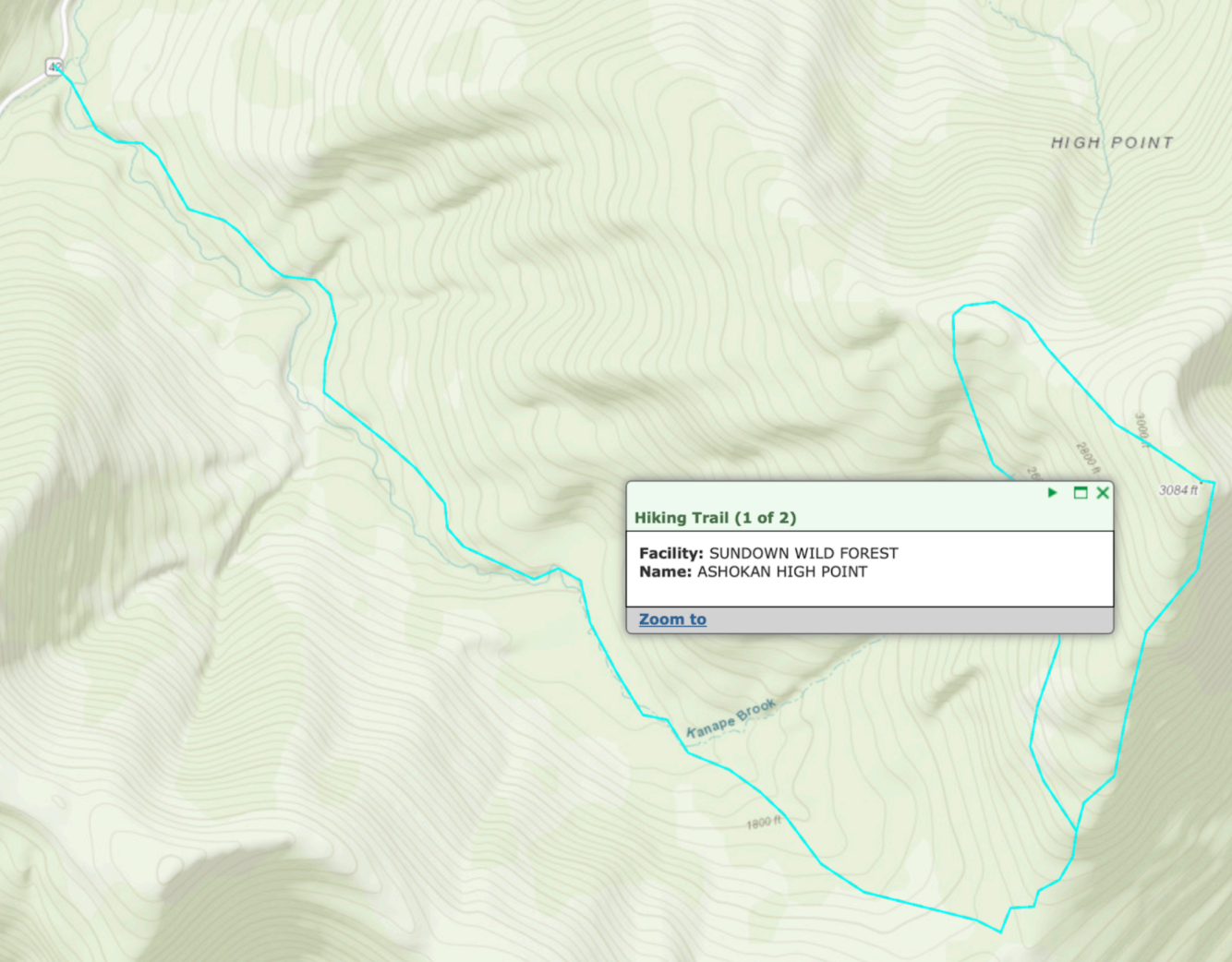




### Hiking Trail

**Facility:** SUNDOWN WILD FOREST  
**Name:** ASHOKAN HIGH POINT

[Zoom to](#)



Hiking Trail (1 of 2)

Facility: SUNDOWN WILD FOREST  
Name: ASHOKAN HIGH POINT

[Zoom to](#)



### Measurement Tool

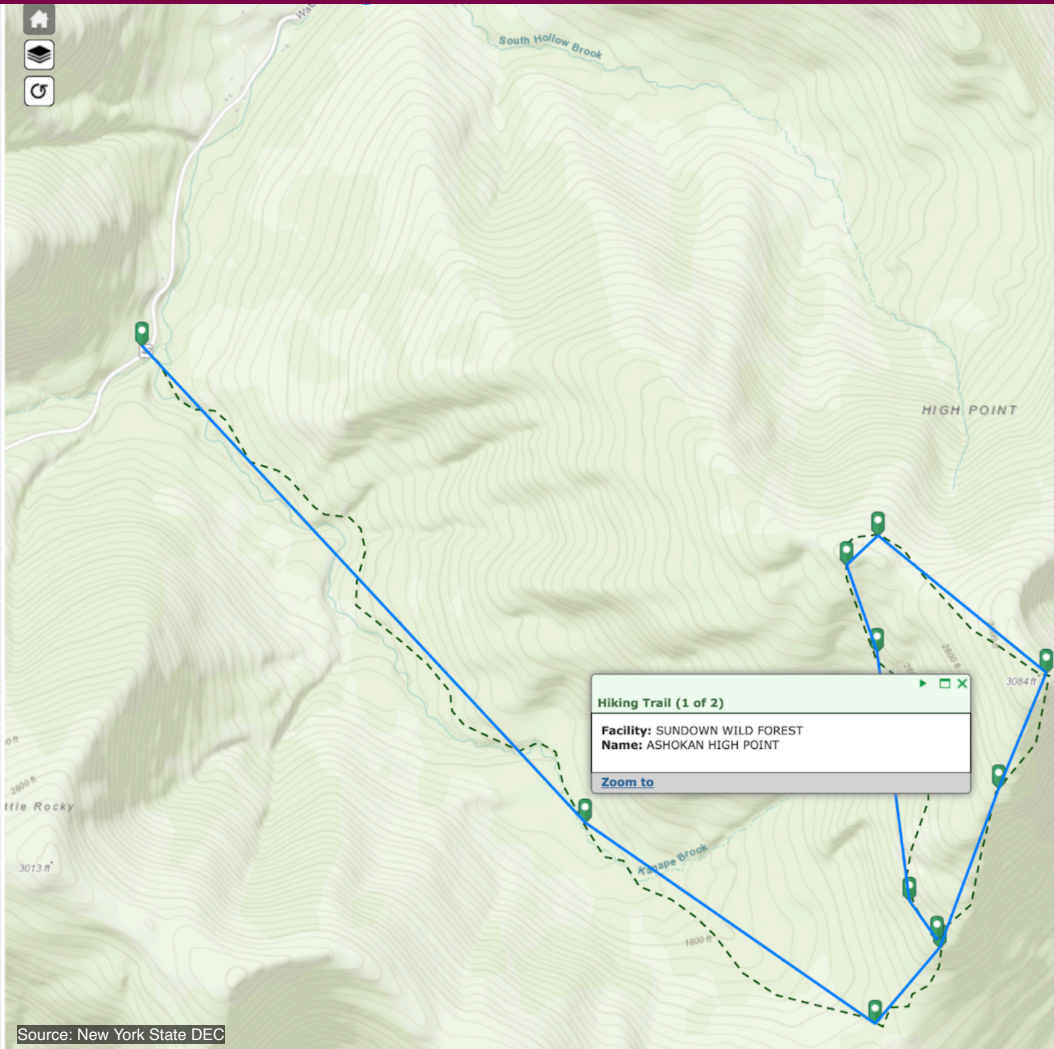
  | Miles ▾

#### Measurement Result

4.76 Miles

[Clear Result](#)

The measurement tool is currently active. To interact with map features, deactivate it above.



**Product roadmaps  
are an abstraction**

# Multiple layers abstracted in a roadmap

Staffing.

Dependencies.

When staffing is  
available based on  
dependencies.

Business priority.

Seasonality.

Etc.

# **Complexity as an indicator**

**of organizational alignment**

| <b>Variable</b>   | <b>Description</b>  |
|-------------------|---|
| Clear goals       | What success looks like for each project.                     |
| Staffing capacity | Is the team staffed to deliver what are defined as goals.     |
| Scope             | Is the size of the problem aligned to the capacity and goals? |
| Dependencies      | Can the team independently deliver the scope?                 |

# Roadmap abstracted

With the 4 previous variables, **n**  
**times** the amount of teams.

**Exercise **curiosity** to  
understand the terrain that the  
map represents**

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# **Organizational Operations Areas**

**Planning**

**Team and  
organizational  
capacity**

**Processes**

**Portfolio and its  
composition**

**Operations enables leaders to  
put to work the insights they  
have**

**My summary to  
reduce my own  
complexity on this  
talk is**

**Focus on building lots of  
synergy with your product  
partner**

**Be curious, when looking at  
your team roadmaps**

**And put to work those  
insights**