Prioritization decision rules

A simple, defensible prioritization system that makes tradeoffs explicit and repeatable.

PURPOSE

Decision rules that reduce politics and keep teams shipping the highest-leverage work.

The rules (make them explicit)

■ We prioritize by outcomes, not requests. Every item must map to a KR or a committed operational metric.

■ We fund bets that have a measurable hypothesis and a defined decision point (ship/iterate/stop).

■ We protect capacity: at least __% for reliability/tech debt and __% for discovery/experiments.

■ We do not start work without instrumentation defined (what success looks like + how we measure it).

■ We limit WIP: no more than __ concurrent "big rocks" per team.

Decision matrix (score 1–5)

Criteria	1	3	5
Customer impact	Minor	Meaningful	Material to core journey
Business impact	Unclear	Moderate	Directly moves KPI / KR
Confidence	No evidence	Some evidence	Strong evidence / experiment
Effort	Large	Medium	Small
Risk	High	Manageable	Low / reversible
Strategic fit	Nice-to-have	Aligned	Critical to priority

Scorecard (fill-in)

Candidate	Impact	Confidence	Effort	Risk	Total	Decision
_____	__/5	__/5	__/5	__/5	__/20	Do now / Next / Later / No
_____	__/5	__/5	__/5	__/5	__/20	Do now / Next / Later / No

Tie-breakers (when scores are close)

- Choose the work that reduces future cost (platform leverage, reliability, reuse).

- Choose the work that unlocks multiple teams or removes a dependency.

- Choose the work with the fastest learning loop (earlier decision point).

- Choose the work that protects trust (quality, compliance, safety).

- If still tied: pick the smaller reversible bet and re-evaluate next month.