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Feedback as a Feature: Embedding User Insight Into Your Documentation Process

Speaker

Rachel Rigdon
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Documentation
SailPoint Technologies
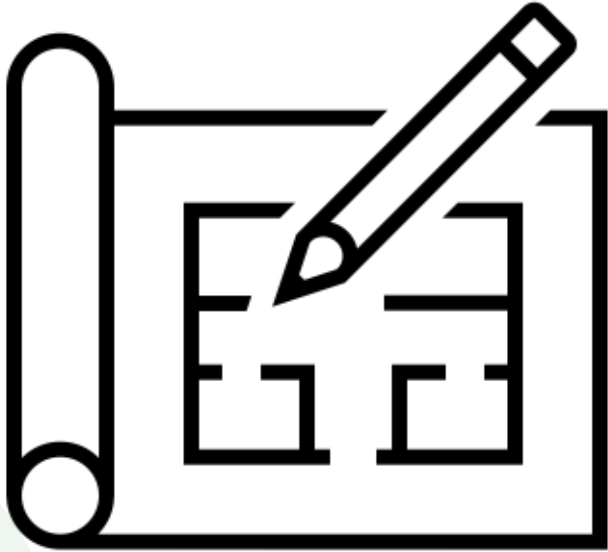
Overview

Why is user feedback worth pursuing?

Gathering user feedback

Methods and implementation

Demo

Embedding user feedback

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Why is user feedback worth pursuing?

Writers stand in for the user

Data > Vibes

Improve insights during product development

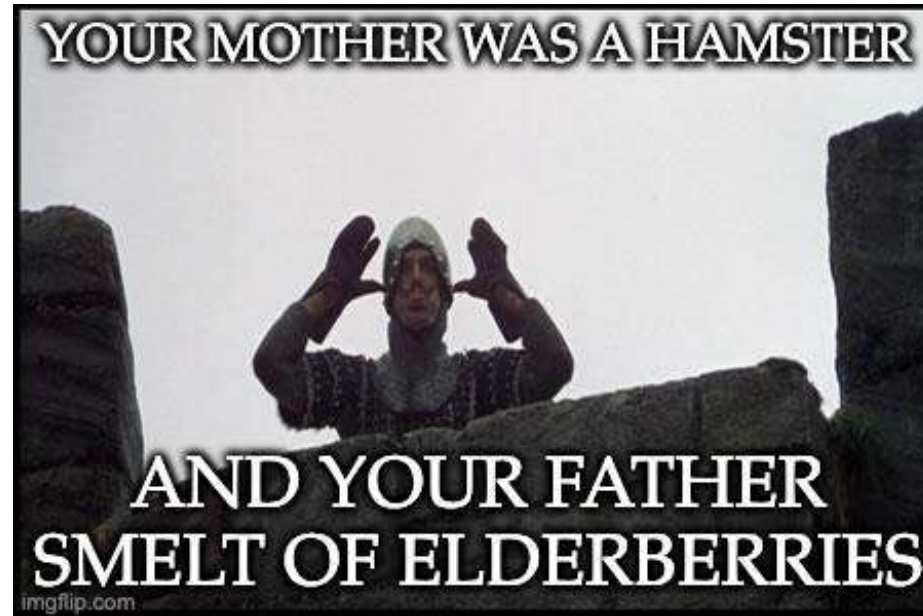Guides information architecture

Deepens empathy

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Was this helpful?

The docs aren't clear

Skibidi toilet

I'm not seeing this in my org

I liked when it worked this way.

I found a bug

When is this feature coming out?

If that is the case, that does not match what the Email Templates currently have for text. They currently have roughly the same text, which relates to the email sent to the Certifiers when the campaign is activated. I do see the text of the "Certification" has changed to include several options for Date Format since I created this post. It would be beneficial for the documentation if the email templates could have more more information. What I would like to see is: Trigger - What triggers this email and when How often - How often is this email triggered? (Reminders currently are every 7 days for Certification) Formatted Email Body - The text with the formatting is provided, but an example with default data would be helpful as well. There is the "Test Email Template" function on the page but does not allow for default data to be provided for the velocity variables, so an example here with those added would be good to show clients/management/end users. If that is the case, that does not match what the Email Templates currently have for text. They currently have roughly the same text, which relates to the email sent to the Certifiers when the campaign is activated. I do see the text of the "Certification" has changed to include several options for Date Format since I created this post. It would be beneficial for the documentation if the email templates could have more more information. What I would like to see is: Trigger - What triggers this email and when How often - How often is this email triggered? (Reminders currently are every 7 days for Certification) Formatted Email Body - The text with the formatting is provided, but an example with default data would be helpful as well. There is the "Test Email Template" function on the page but does not allow for default data to be provided for the velocity variables, so an example here with those added would be good to show clients/management/end users. If that is the case, that does not match what the Email Templates currently have for text. They currently have roughly the same text, which relates to the email sent to the Certifiers when the campaign is activated. I do see the text of the "Certification" has changed to include several options for Date Format since I created this post. It would be beneficial for the documentation if the email templates could have more more information. What I would like to see is: Trigger - What triggers this email and when How often - How often is this email triggered? (Reminders currently are every 7 days for Certification) Formatted Email Body - The text with the formatting is provided, but an example with default data would be helpful as well. There is the "Test Email Template" function on the page but does not allow for default data to be provided for the velocity variables, so

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High-quality user feedback

Relevant

Actionable

Improves the docs

Improves the product

Improves the org

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Gathering user feedback

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Feedback methods

Docs in community platform

Docs hosted with user-generated content adds risk

Increases dependencies

ServiceNow integration

Requires technical and cross-team support

Incentive programs

Do goals align?

Large volume of trivial tickets

Is this helpful?

What is "this"?

Risks being performative

Forms, surveys

Heavy time investment

Limited follow up

Interviews, customer calls

Limited audience, bias

Heavy time investment

Shared email box

Limited responsiveness

Generic

Unclear ownership

Limited triage options

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Components of a successful program

Comments are closely coupled with content

- Avoids generic and unactionable feedback

Robust notifications and triage options

- Ensures responsiveness and clear ownership

Partners with shared goals and priorities

- Provides greater support for integrations and initiatives

Maturity and subject matter expertise

- Org
- Product
- Docs

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Preparing to gather user feedback

1 Look for opportunities, but prioritize maturity

2 Consider team dynamics

3 Build on evaluation, acknowledgment, action, and closing the loop

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Prioritize maturity

Is your org ready?

Product
Engineering teams
Product teams

Is your docs team ready?

Resourcing
Doc quality

Prioritize team development

Greater maturity = Greater ability to use feedback to effect change

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Consider team dynamics

Comfort levels

Risk tolerance

Manage concerns

Investigative approach

Subject matter expertise

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Build on 4 principles

Evaluation	Acknowledgment
Action	Closing the loop

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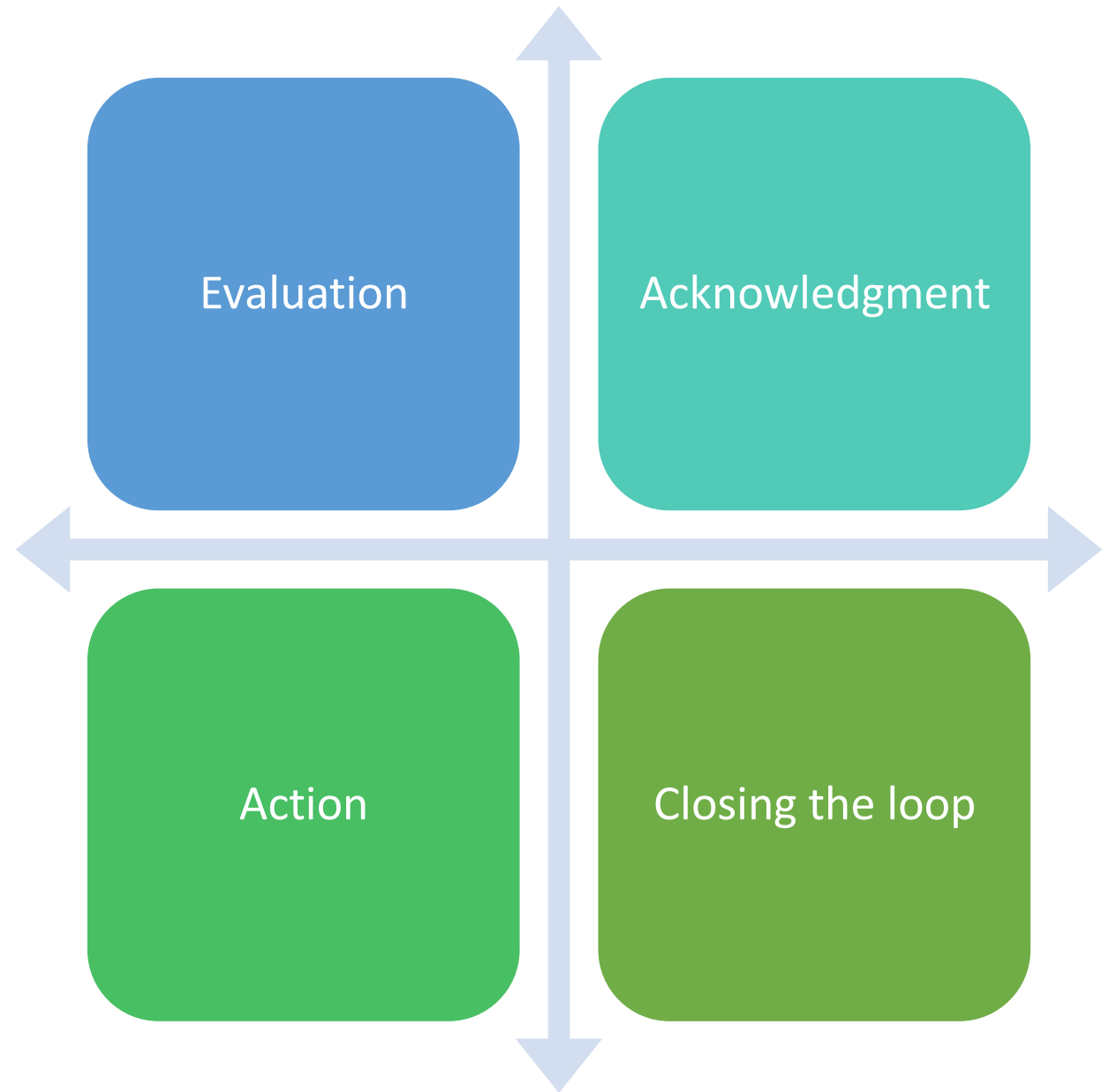
Success!

Success timeline

Coffee chat with Developer Relations lead.

Proposed to writers.

Configured widget, topic generation, auto-tagging, notifications, categorized responses, comms.

Feb 2024

June 2024

Jan 2024

Mar - May 2024

Formed team.

Launched on ~7,500 doc pages.

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Tech process

Publish
doc

Topic is
categorized

User
comments

Topic is
created in
Discourse

Topic is
tagged

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Writer process

Writer is
notified

Create Jira
ticket

Close the
loop

Evaluate
request

Action

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Demo

Impact and engagement

- Between June 1, 2024 – July 9, 2025
- Ambassadors, partners, and external audiences only
- 16 writers across 2 teams
- Innovation award for the successful creation and launch
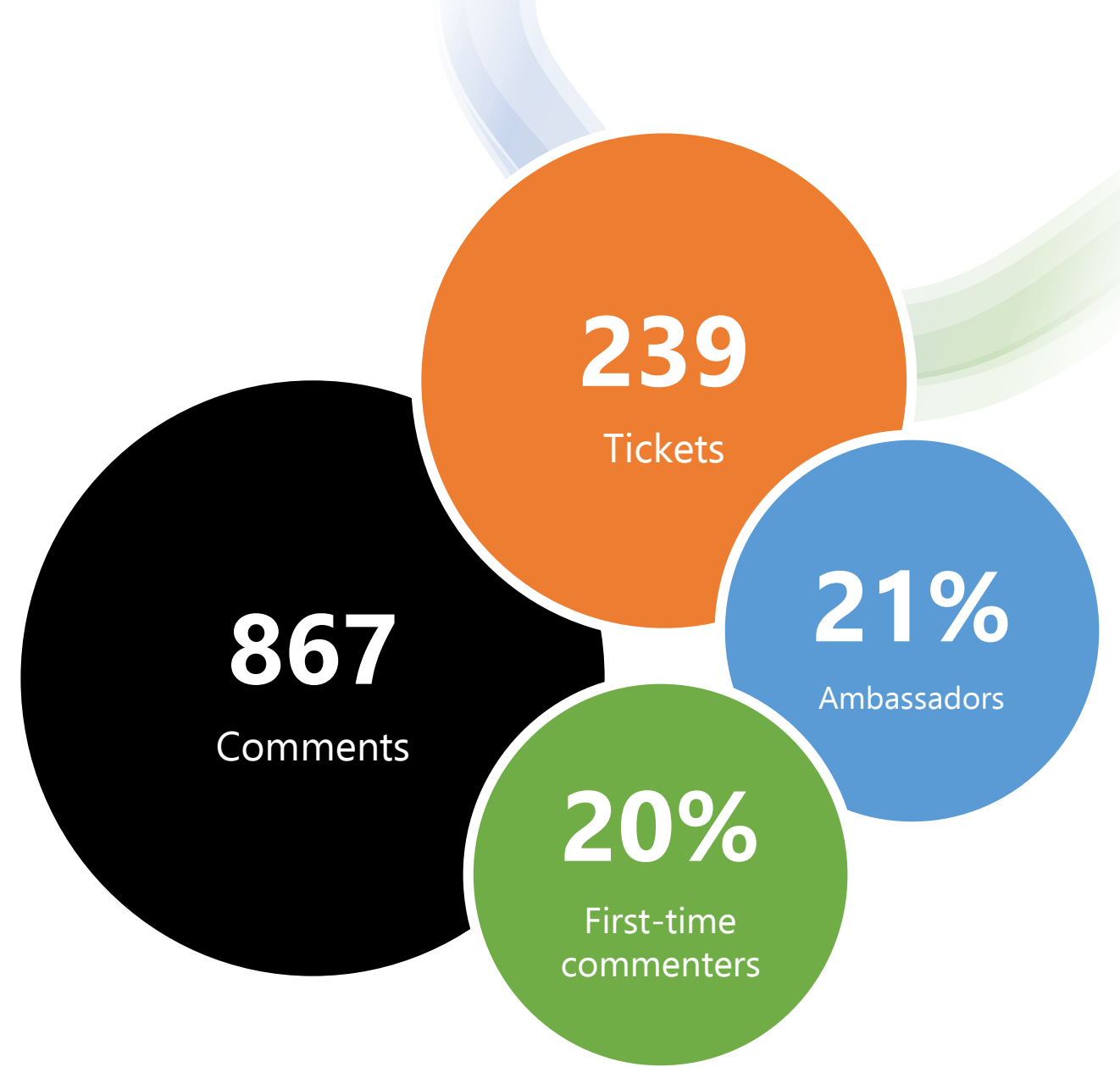
239
Tickets

867
Comments

21%
Ambassadors

20%
First-time commenters

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Pays off to comment

Responsiveness leads to gratification

"I really like the model you have where somebody comes in and says, 'Oh, you know, we've taken a look at this. We've either opened a ticket or yes, this is something I know myself.' There's just that gratification."

- Geoff Milunich, Instrumental Identity

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Closing the loop leads to constructive contributions

"I don't want to just tell you it's broken. I want to give some guidance. So, the acknowledgement by your team of, 'Oh, you know, that's helpful' is just a next-level piece that makes me... want to come back."

- Geoff Milunich, Instrumental Identity

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What if I don't have a community?

IDENTIFY WHAT TECH YOU DO HAVE

IDENTIFY PARTNERS WITH SHARED GOALS

LEAN ON PROCESS

SET EXPECTATIONS

LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO REMIX AND REVISE

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Embedding user feedback

SUPPORT EVALUATION   MANAGE CONCERNS   MIND THE GAP

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Evaluation is an art

- Not just commas and links
- Is it docs?
- Product?
  - Whose product?
- Subject matter expertise is key

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Different doc types = different feedback challenges

API Docs
Custom integrations, technical challenges

Integration Docs
3rd-party products, custom configurations

Feature Docs
Roadmaps, requests, and complaints

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Support the arts (of evaluation)

Earlier engagement from PM/Devs

Greater org awareness

Use official workflows for customer-facing needs

Target investigation

Sample responses and community support

Leverage AI

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Sample responses and community help

Situation	Response
The question is about docs and we're looking into their feedback.	Hi @username! Thank you for your input. We're looking into your feedback, and we'll update this thread when we've completed that review.
When they want help on doing something that is outside the scope of the docs.	Hi @username! Thank you for your input. This appears to be related to using the product features. I've moved your comment to our ISC Discussions and Questions category for greater help from the community.

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Leverage AI
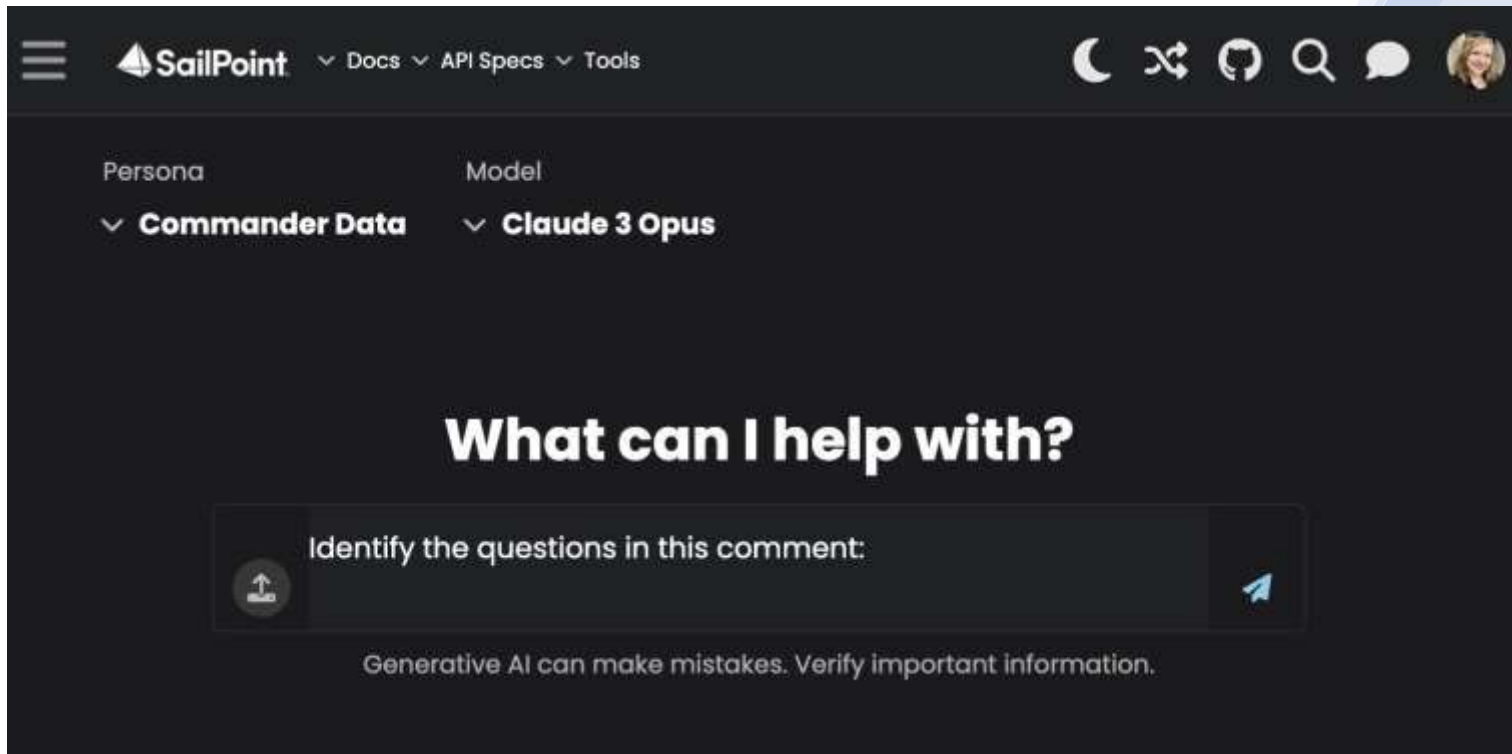
- Identify the questions in this comment
- What resources would you reference to find the answers to this question?
- Draft a response answering this question based on this information

Manage concerns

- Customers = higher stakes = higher anxiety

- Feeling "on the hook"

- Getting feedback can feel icky

- Have clear escalation processes in place

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Practice empathy

1. Reflect on *why* the comment was bothersome (only for a few minutes!)

2. Remind yourself it's unlikely the commenter just decided "I'm going to show them!" and they probably have other issues causing them stress

3. Silently wish them better circumstances. It's helpful to shift away from the negative feelings and focus on kindness for both of us

Mind the gap

DOCUMENTATION

PRODUCT

ORG

DOC TEAMS

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Bridging the gap

Surfaced feedback to PMs, Devs, and Technical Program Managers

Developing improvements this quarter

Reallocated resources

Coffee/tea chats with docs

Build rapport, address confusion
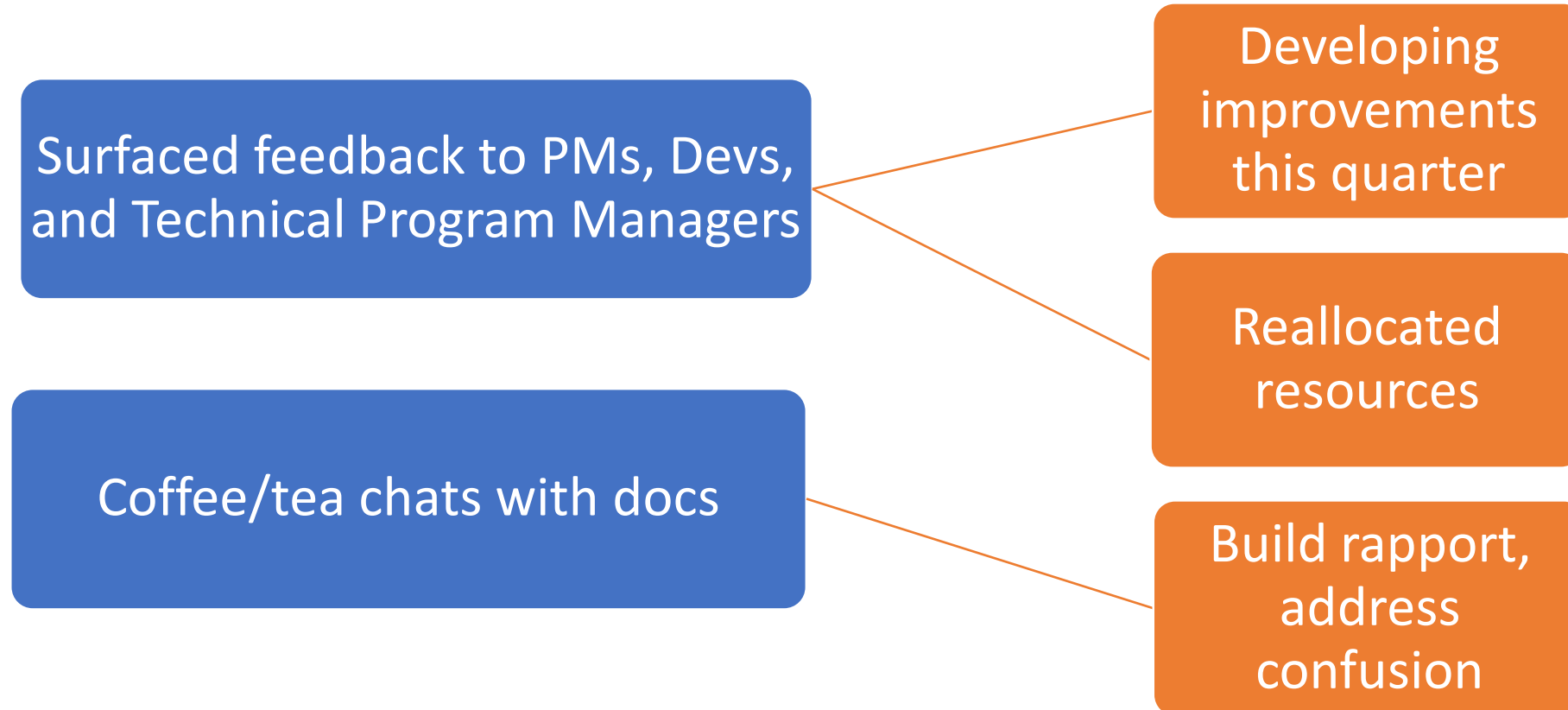
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Hero

Graeme Fidler ◎ SaaS Documentation Writer   29m

Hi Angelo

Thanks again for your feedback. The enhancement to allow transformed dates using the Subtract Time operator to be in the past has been released, and the documentation has been updated accordingly.

👏❤️ 2   ◆   ↩ Reply   👏   🔗   ✏️   •••   🔖

Angelo Mekenkamp Expert Ambassador   16m

Hero!

Thank you very much! I will update my workflows and substitute that ugly workaround we used for this. 😣

                                        ◆   ↩ Reply   ♡   🔗   🚩   ✏️   •••   🔖

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Conclusion

1 Prioritize maturity

2 Consider team dynamics

3 Build on:
- Evaluation
- Acknowledgment
- Action
- Closing the loop

4 Support evaluation and manage concerns

5 Mind the gap

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Questions?

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Thank You!