

UX Designer meets Product Owner

How to set up successful cooperation?



Who am I?

Since 2016

Experience & Service Design
Consultant @**Nowy**

From 2009 to 2016

UX Designer @**Future Processing** who
were designing IT products and services
together with his team and helped
people make the right design decisions

Since 2010

Originator and coordinator of World
Usability Day Silesia Conference

Since 2014

Mentor and lecturer at University of
Social Sciences and Humanities

Goal of this session

To share with you some of my insights on how to set up cooperation between UX Designer and Product Owner.

But those rules are universal for every cooperation.

How to set up successful cooperation between
PO and UX Designer?

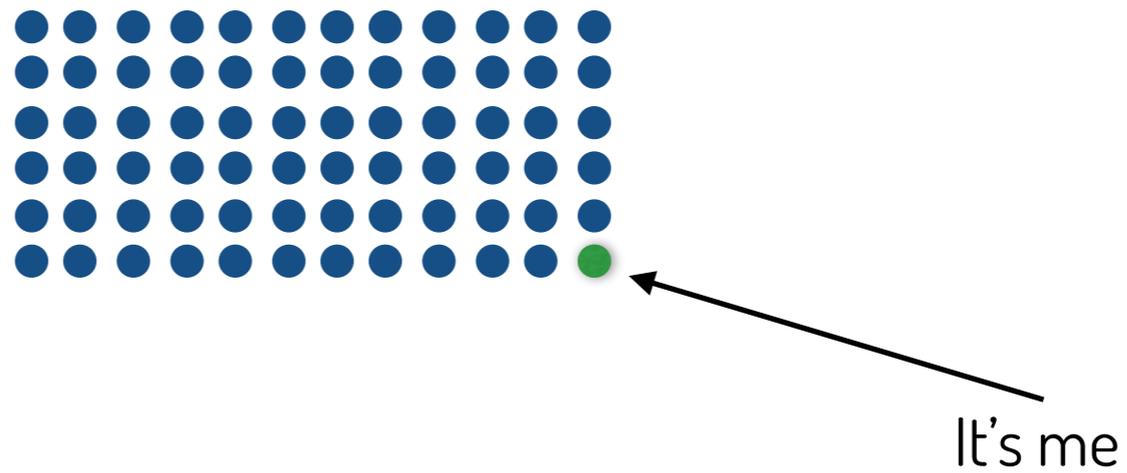
- „Ask Agile Coach for help.”
- „It’s a task for Scrum Master, why should I care?”
- „Hire a consultant.”

Those answers might be right in some contexts,
but what if the context is different or when the context
changes?

A little bit of my context...

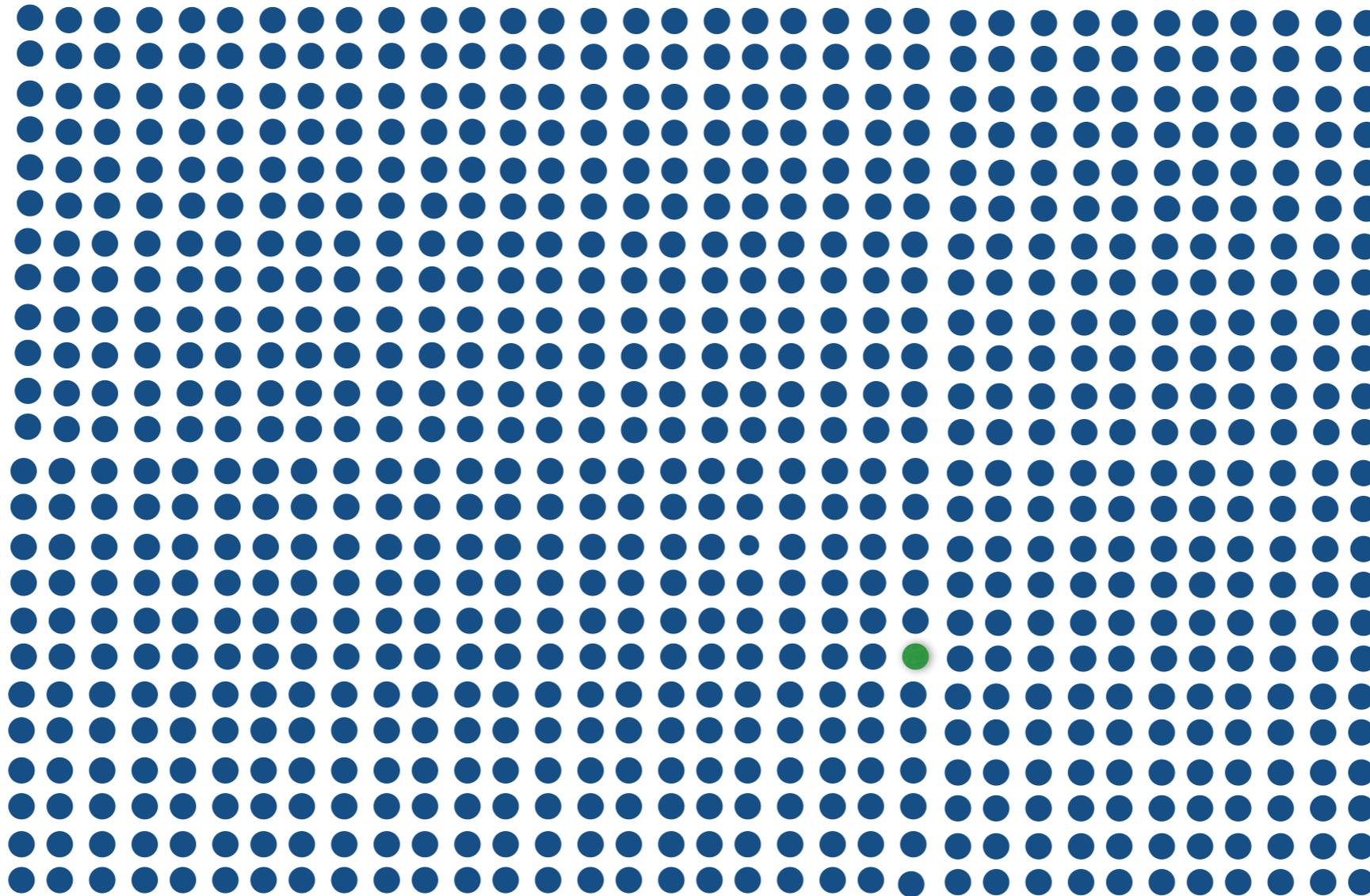
UX Designer who has built UX Design team at software development company.

A little bit of my context...



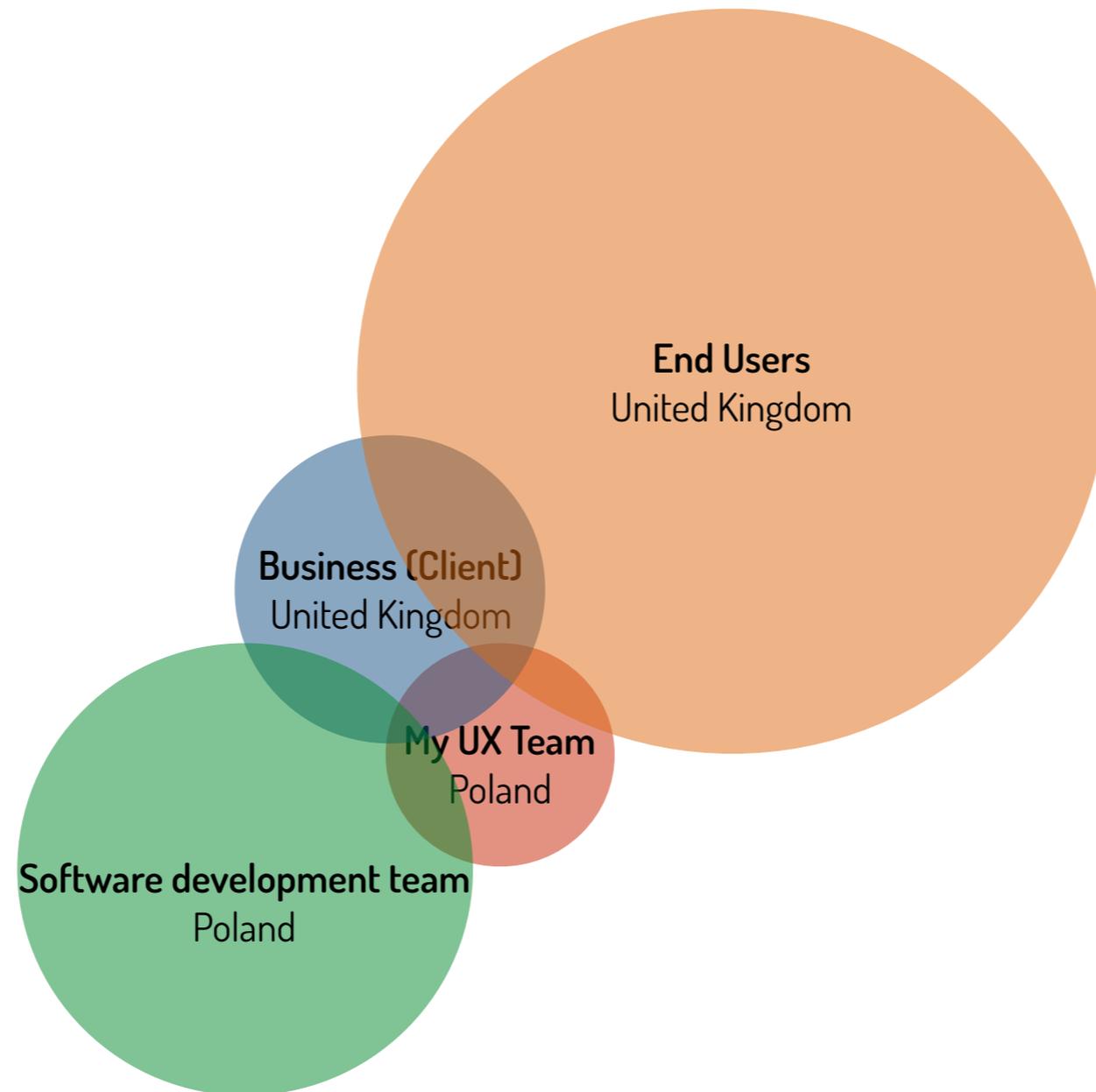
Number of employees in 2008: around **70** people

A little bit of my context...



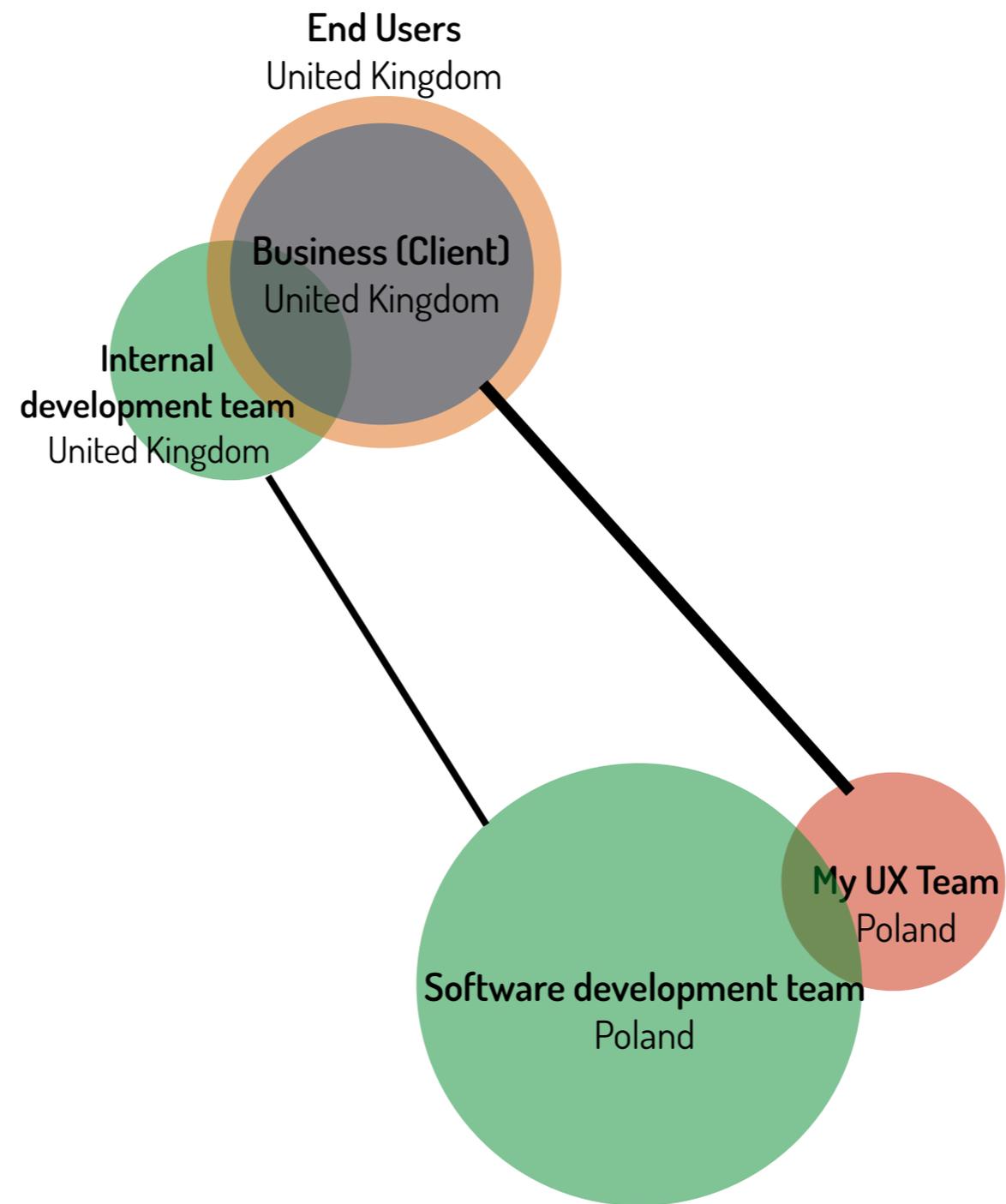
Number of employees in 2016: over **800** people

A little bit of my context...



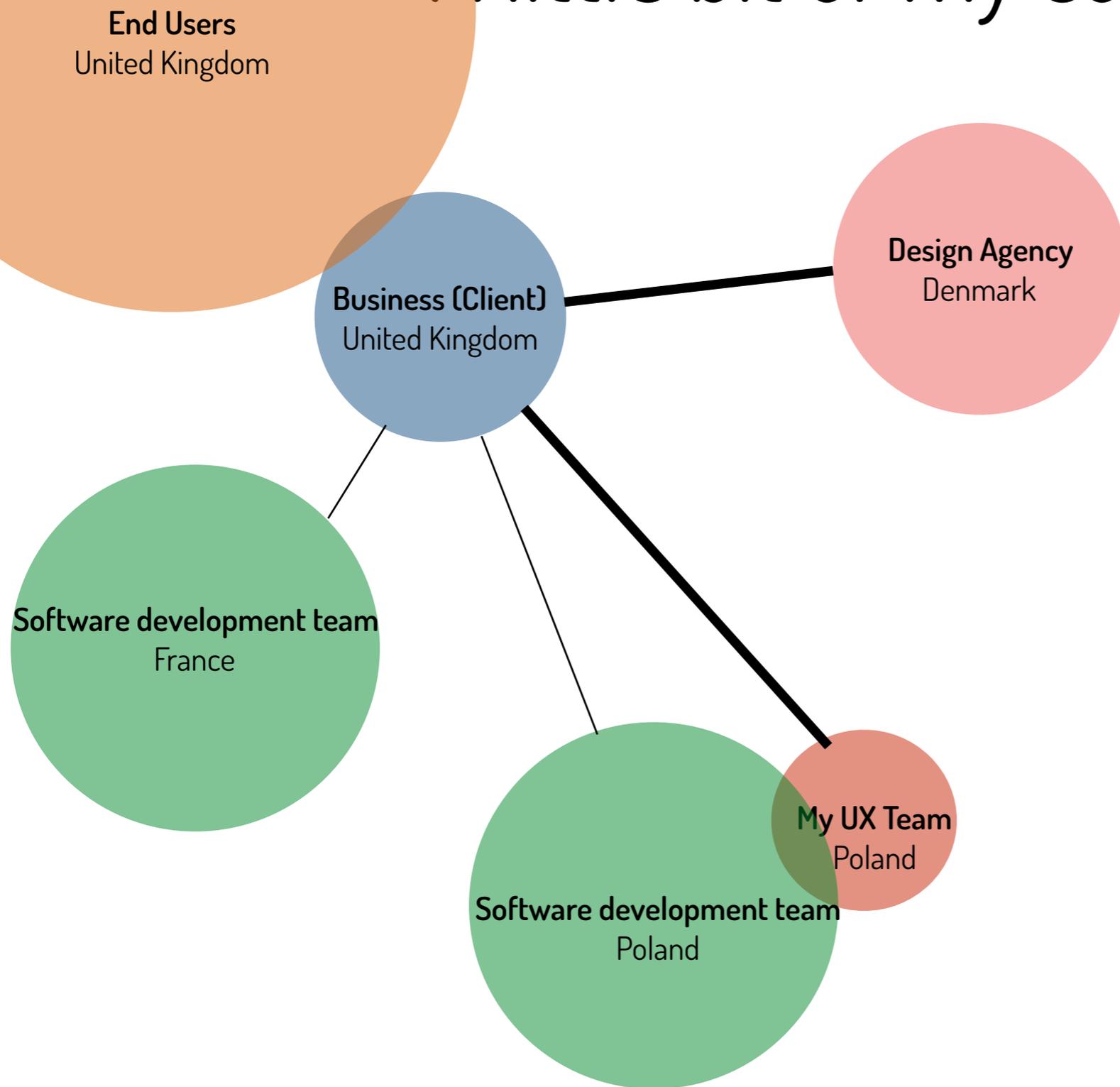
Example of development teams and stakeholders distribution.

A little bit of my context...



Example of development teams and stakeholders distribution.

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Example of development teams and stakeholders distribution.

A little bit of my context...

Various projects in terms of duration, people,
business relationships, business domains,
standards and processes...

Sometimes pure Scrum, sometimes poor Scrum, sometimes Waterfall, Scrumfall, ScrumBut...

A little bit of my context...

During those 7 years I was working with many different Product Owners...

Sometimes they even didn't know, that they are POs :)

Let's meet with the Product Owner...

Product Owner's role by definition

„[...] The Product Owner is the sole person responsible for managing the Product Backlog. Product Backlog management includes:

- Clearly expressing Product Backlog items;
- Ordering the items in the Product Backlog to best achieve goals and missions;
- Optimizing the value of the work the Development Team performs;
- Ensuring that the Product Backlog is visible, transparent, and clear to all, and shows what the Scrum Team will work on next; and,
- Ensuring the Development Team understands items in the Product Backlog to the level needed. [...]"

Scrum Guide

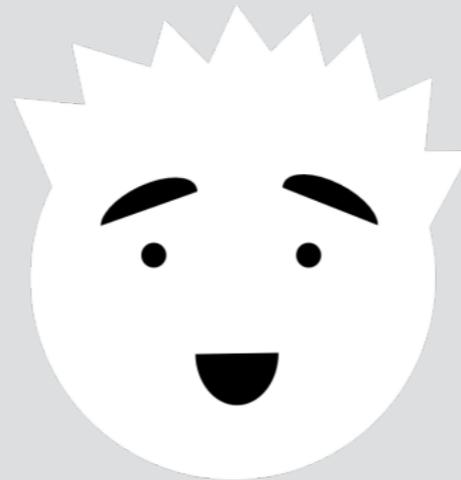
Product owner is often expected to...

...be a visionary and leader

...have proper business knowledge

...understand sales and marketing

...have product strategy and
always up to date market
research



...manage product backlog

...understand UX design

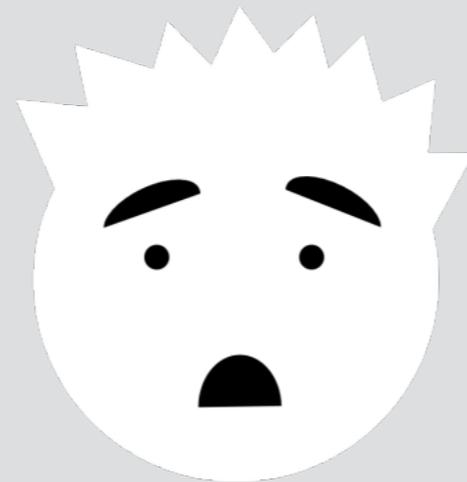
...have deep domain knowledge

...talk with all stakeholders
and end users

...have some technical knowledge,
especially on software
development and design

...know everything and have
answer for every single question

Product owner often is...



...very overworked, tired and does not have all the answers.

Most Product Owners that I've met...

... commonly were...

...tired and overworked

...carring huge responsibility

...obligated to meet the deadlines

...expected to be unicorns

...differed in...

...understanding the business

...understanding the domain

...understanding technology

...understanding the value of Agility

...leadership and vissionary skills

...expectations management

...understanding of the market

...understanding the value of design

I'd met a lot of POs who haven't been unicorns and it didn't stop them to deliver successful products to the market. Why?

POs are not working alone.

Let's meet with the UX Designer..

UX designer's role definition...

?



I haven't found any definition that I can fully agree with...

UX designer is expected to...

...be a visionary

...have proper business knowledge

...understand sales and marketing

...do data analytics

...understand product strategy and be always up to date with market research



...run user research

...design UI

...run usability testing

...talk with all stakeholders and end users

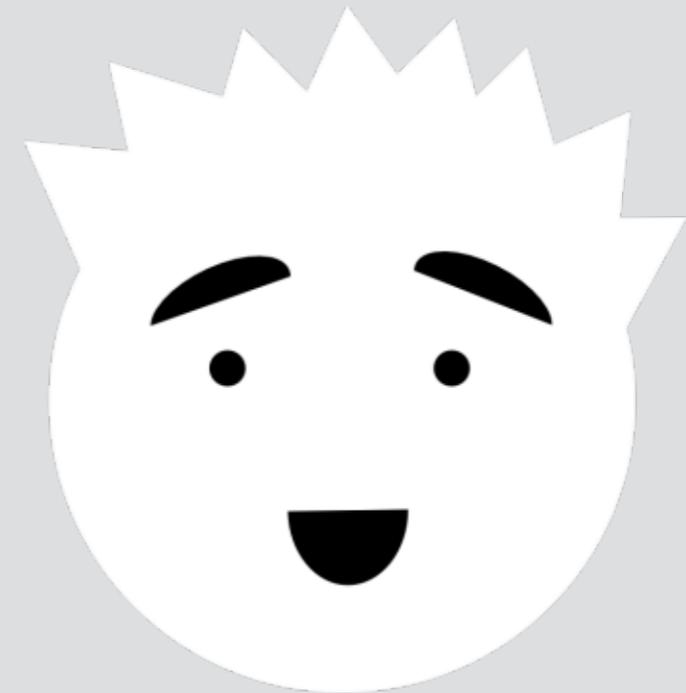
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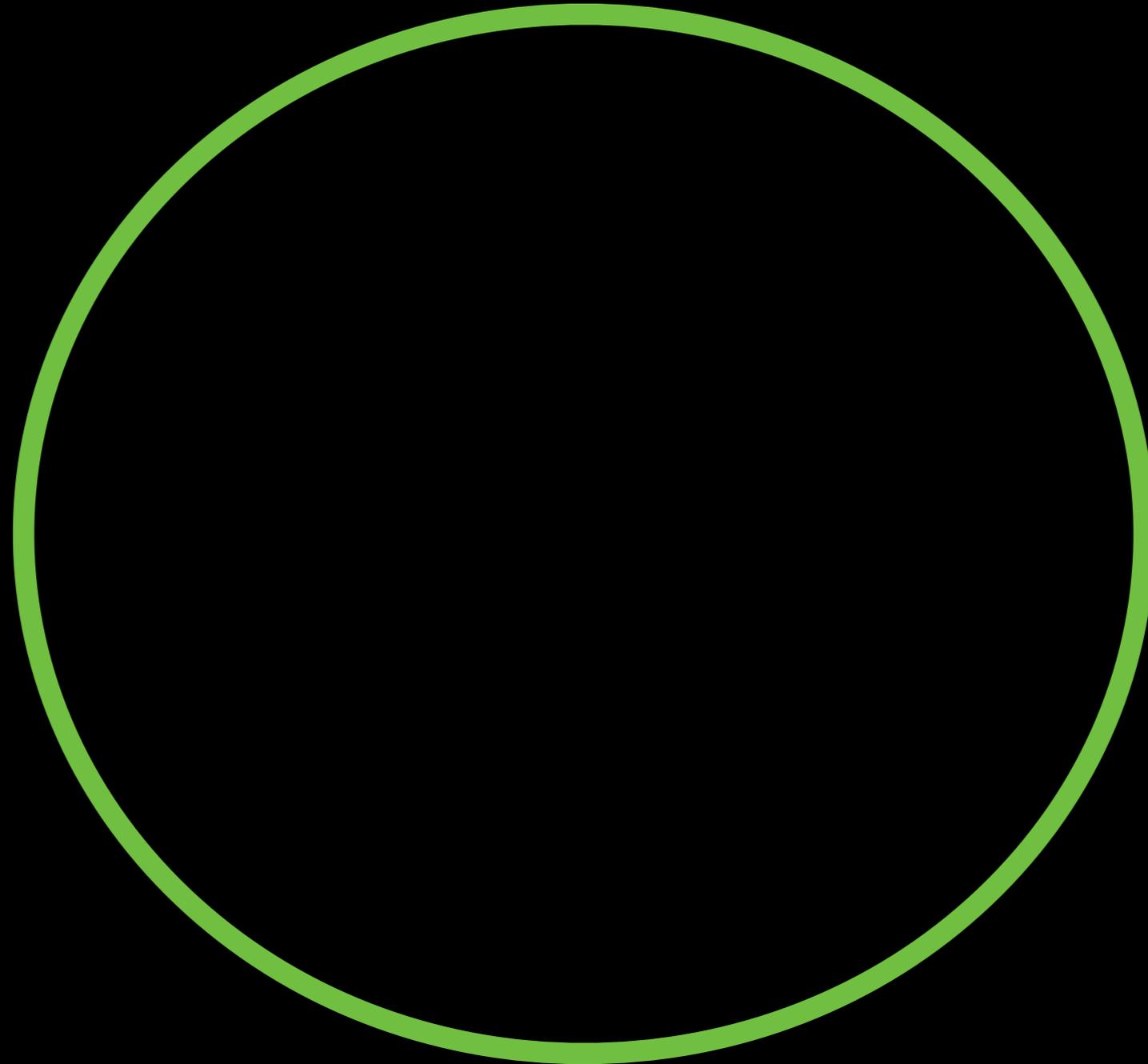
And now they meet and have to start working
together...

UX Designer meets Product Owner

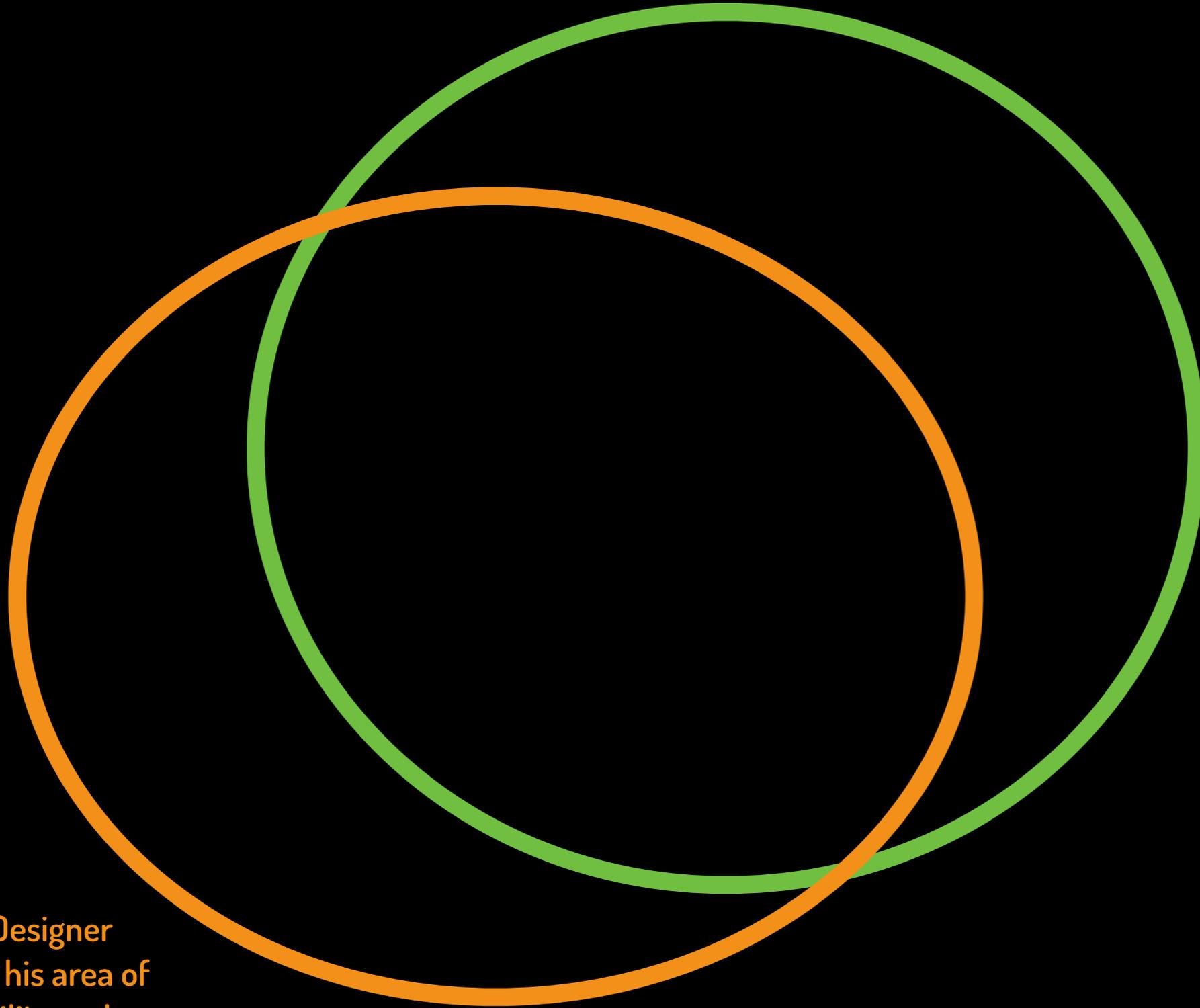


Common approach

Things that are important for
the product's success

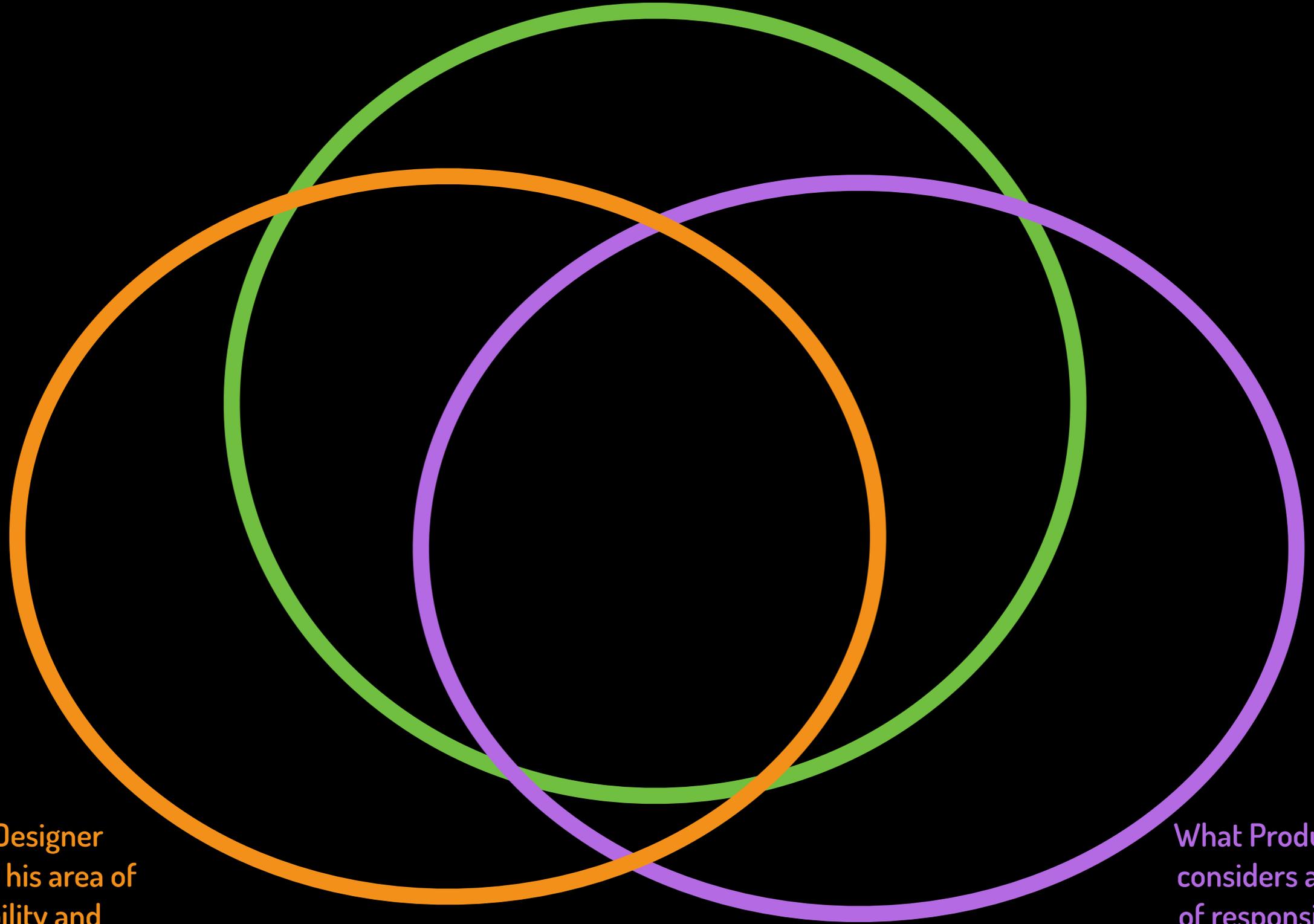


Things that are important for
the product's success



What UX Designer
considers as his area of
responsibility and
competence

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Things that are important for the product's success

Mutually ignored competences

Mutually ignored competences

Overlapped competences and responsibilities
- risk of conflict

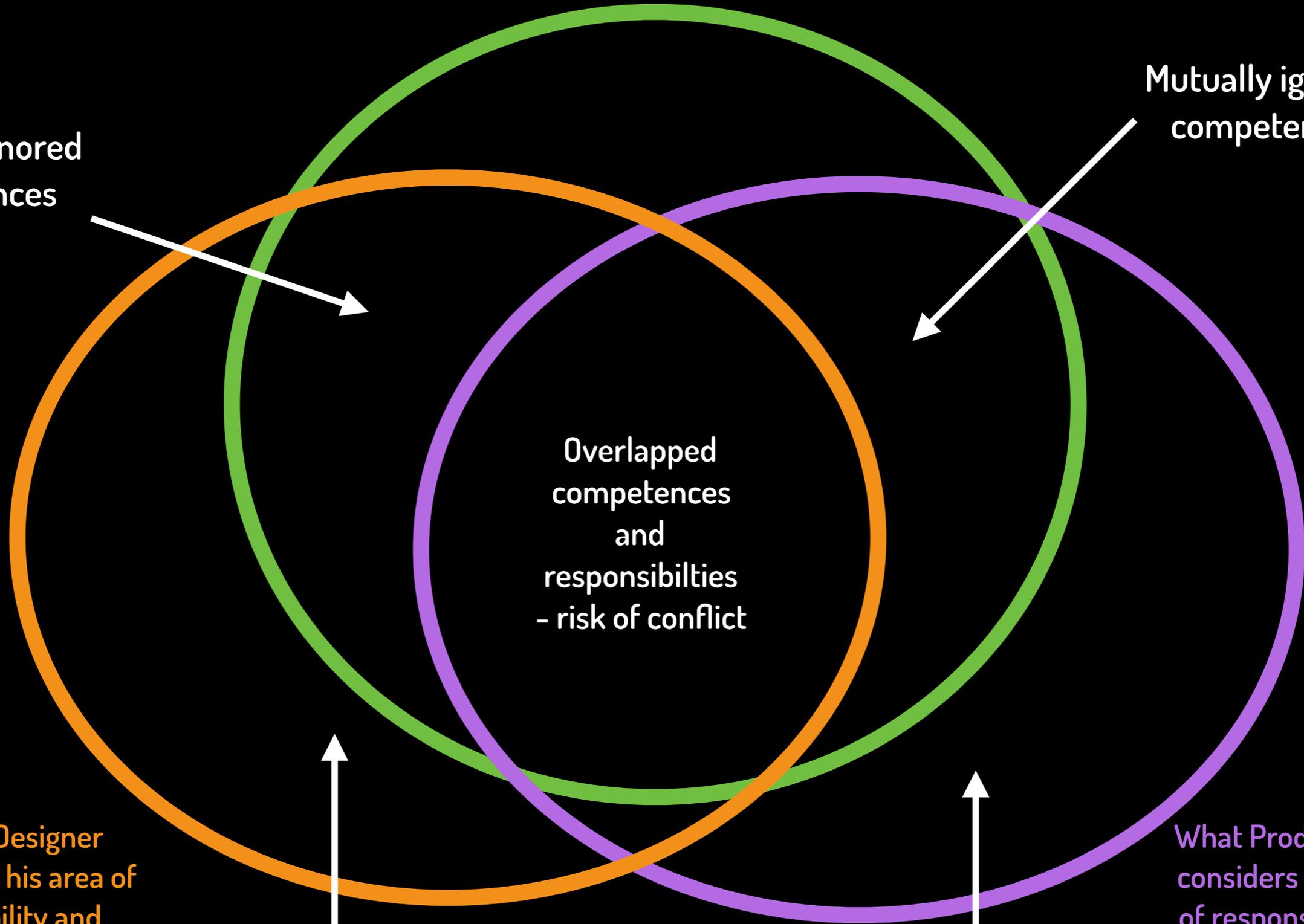
What UX Designer considers as his area of responsibility and competence

What Product Owner considers as his area of responsibility and competence.

Things that are important for the product's success

Mutually ignored competences

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Overlapped competences and responsibilities - risk of conflict

What UX Designer considers as his area of responsibility and competence

What Product Owner considers as his area of responsibility and competence.

Time consuming activities that don't create any business value.

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Things that are important for the product's success

Mutually ignored competences

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Overlapped competences and responsibilities - risk of conflict

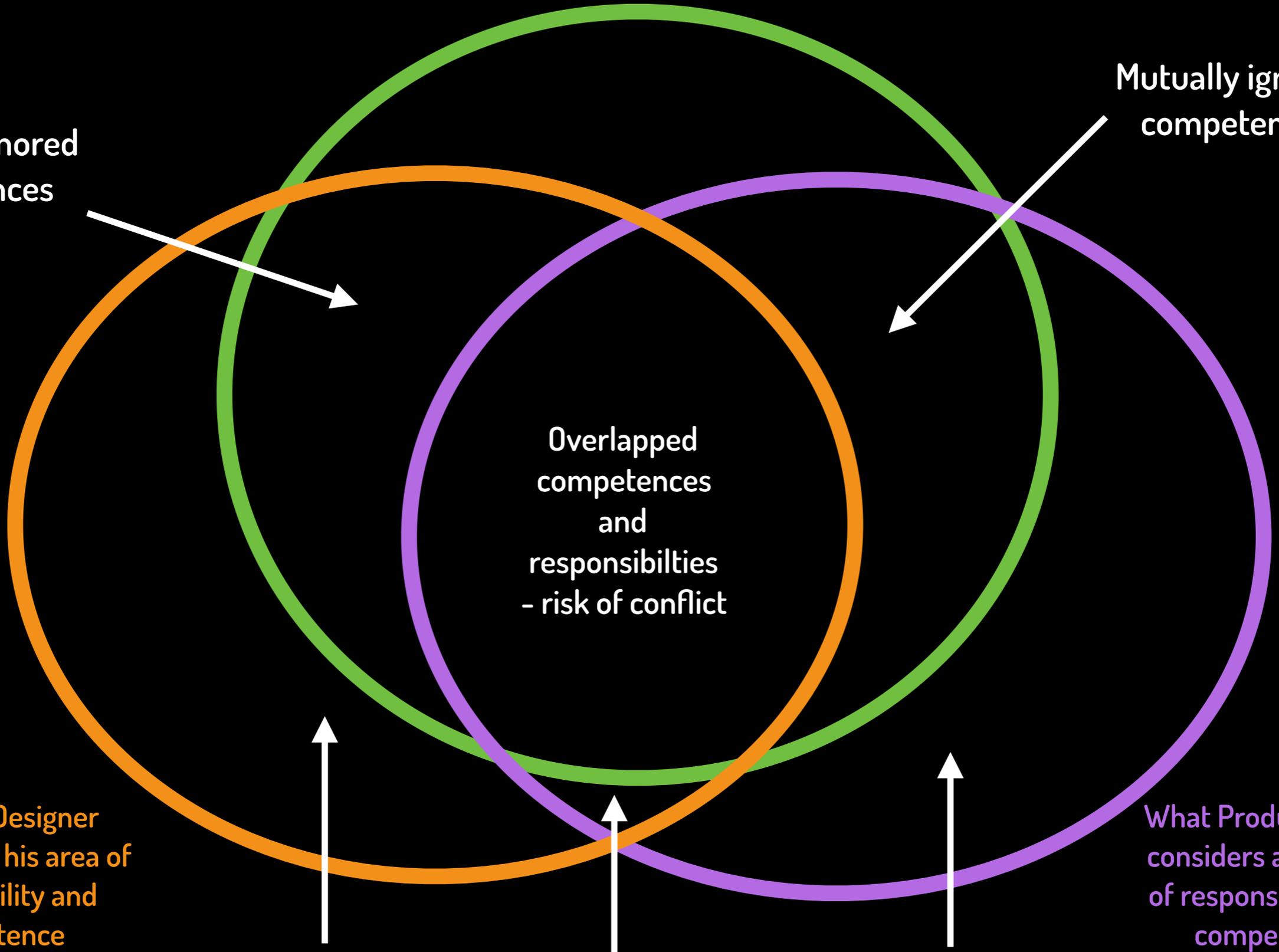
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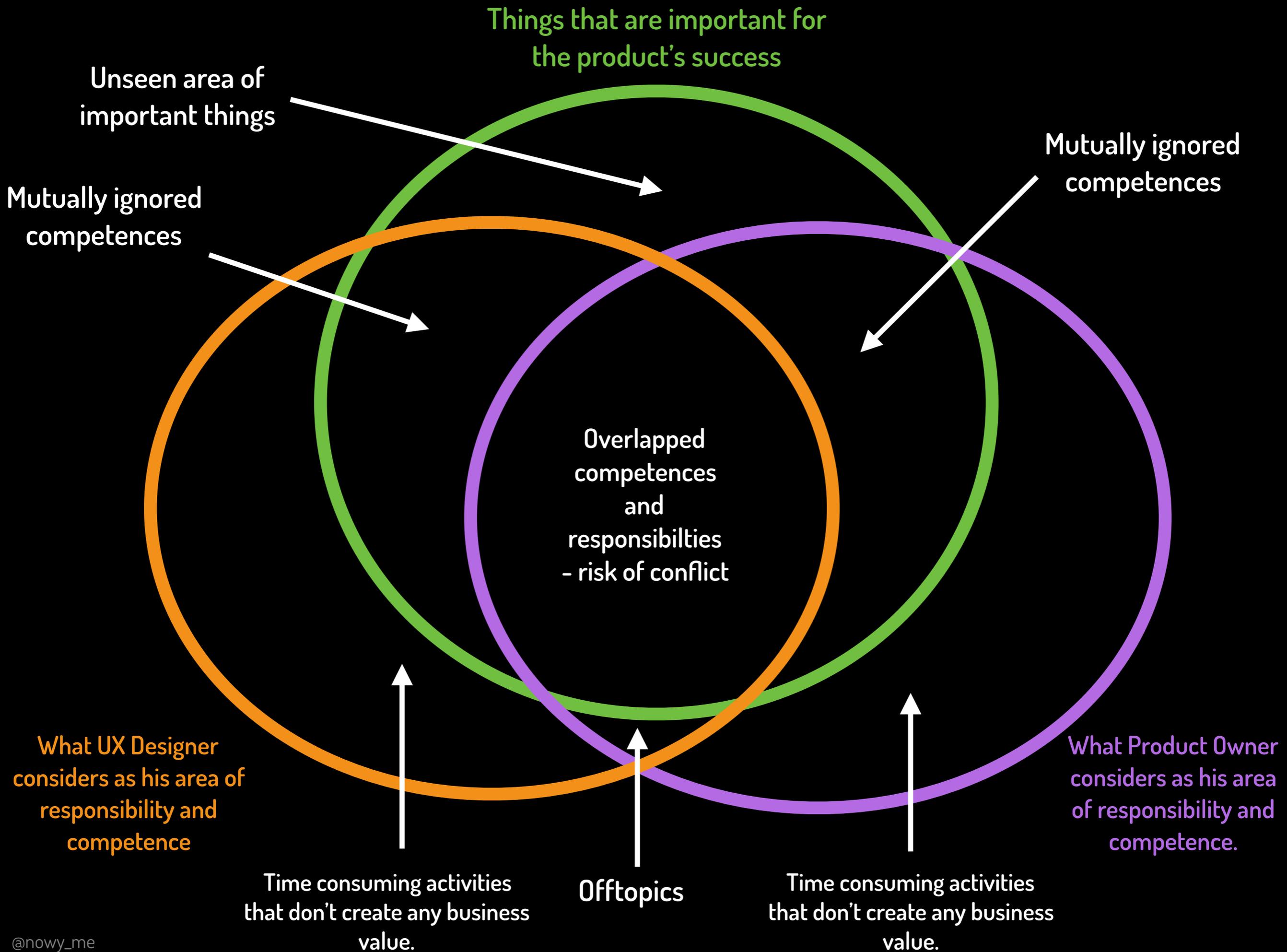
What Product Owner considers as his area of responsibility and competence.

Time consuming activities that don't create any business value.

Offtopics

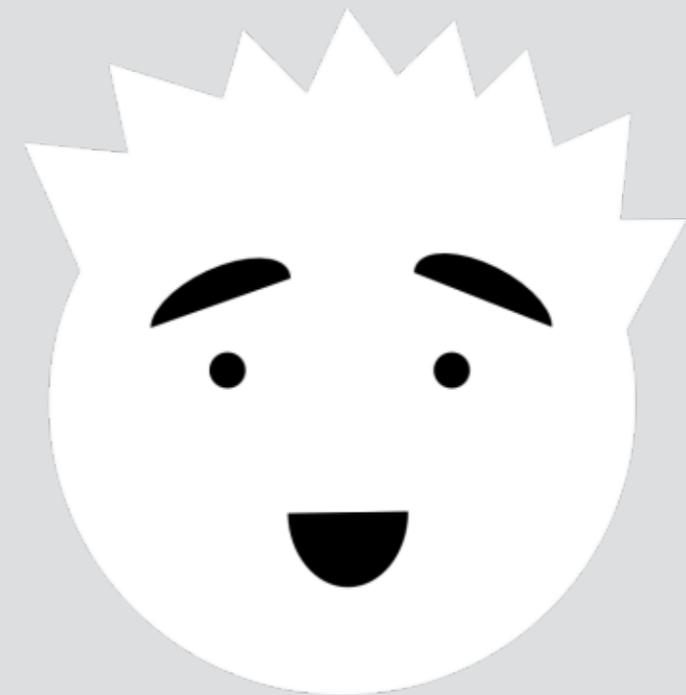
Time consuming activities that don't create any business value.





How to deal with all of these problems?

UX Designer meets Product Owner

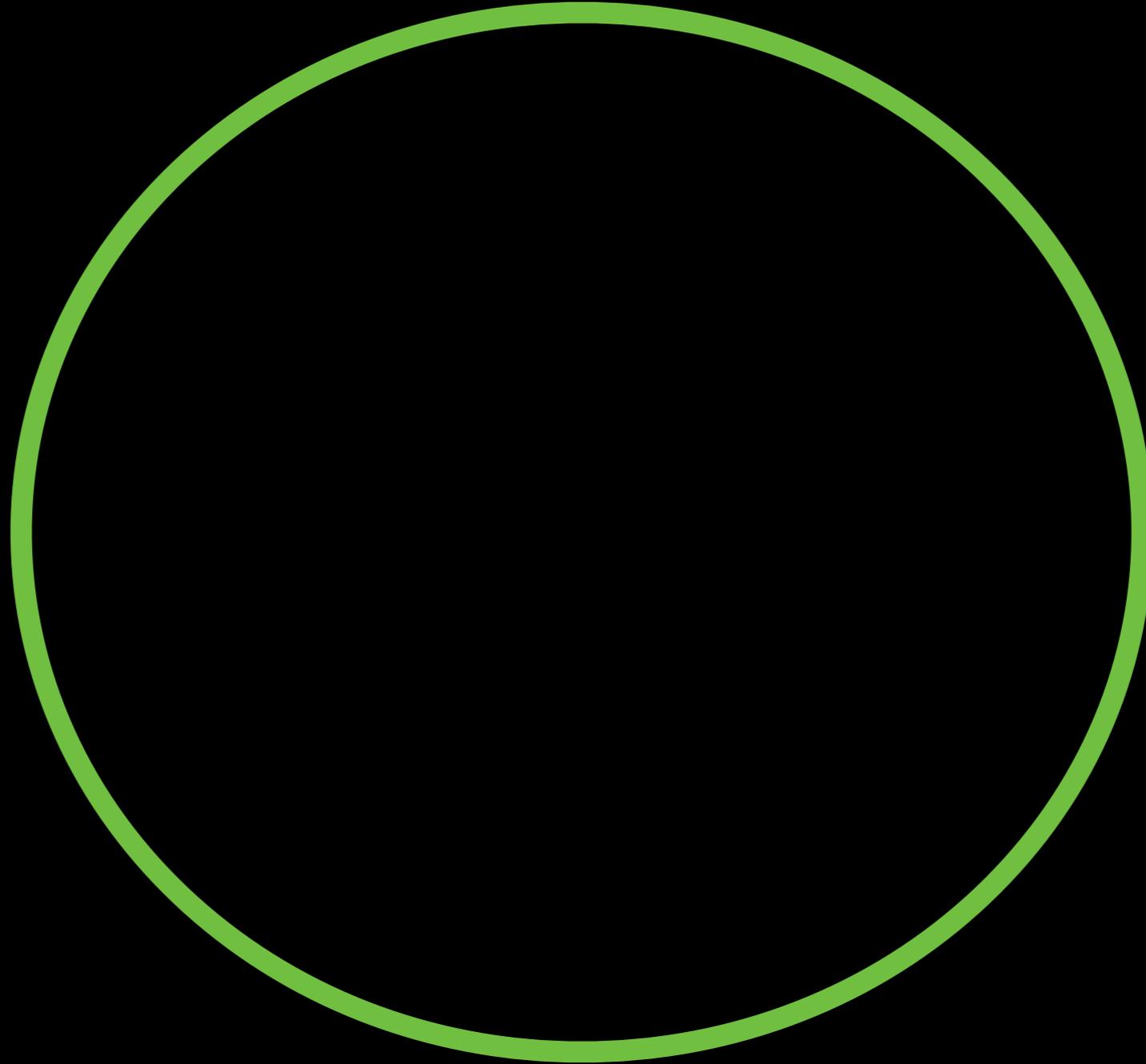


Collaborative approach

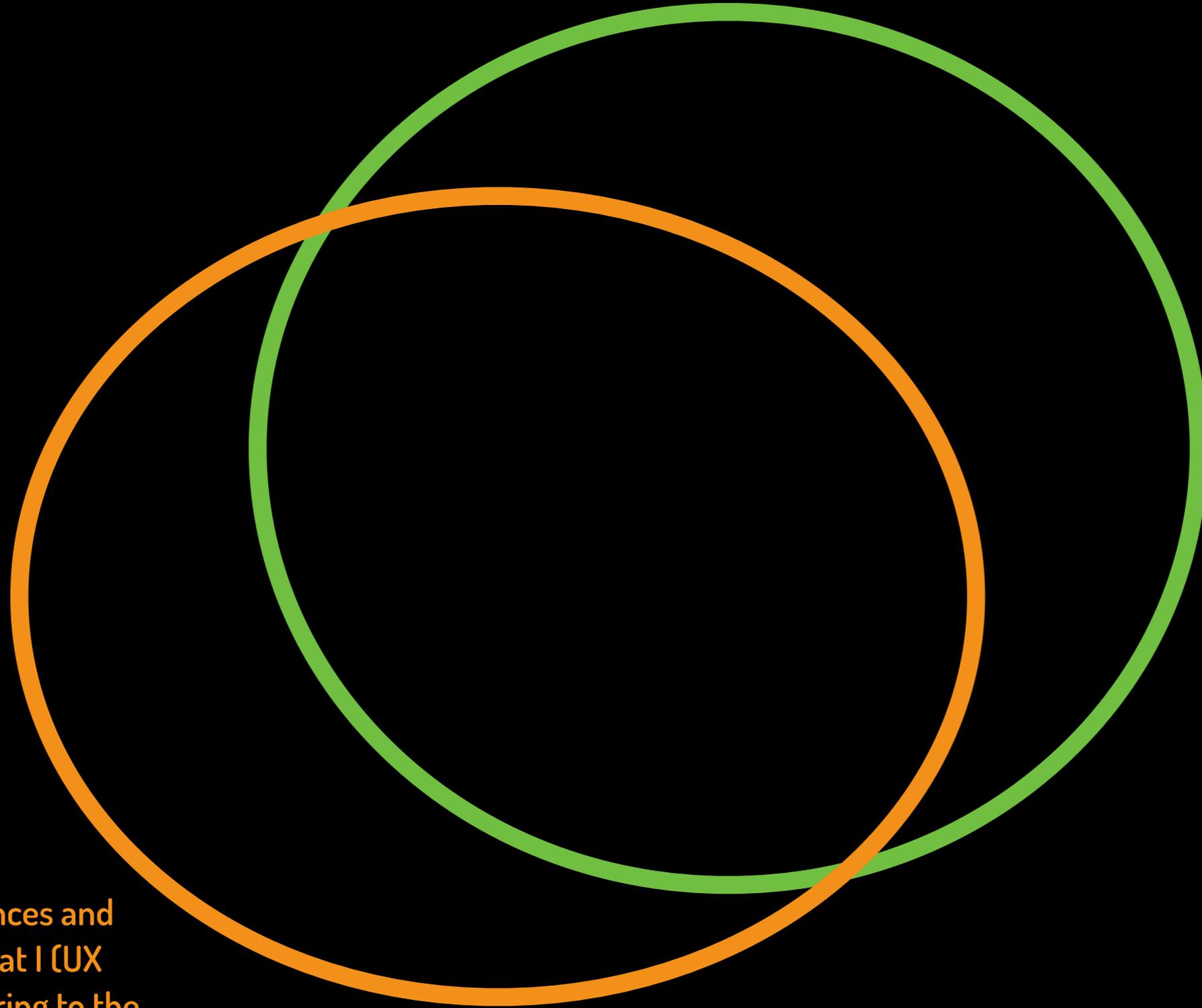
First things first

1. Forget for a minute about roles you play.
2. Switch your conflict mindset into caring mindset.
3. Realize that we are all in the same boat! If someone loses, you will lose too.
4. Change your language and stop talking about conflict zones
5. Sit together with PO (or if you are PO sit with UX designer) and look at those circles again and start listening to each other.

Things that we have to do to
make the product successful.

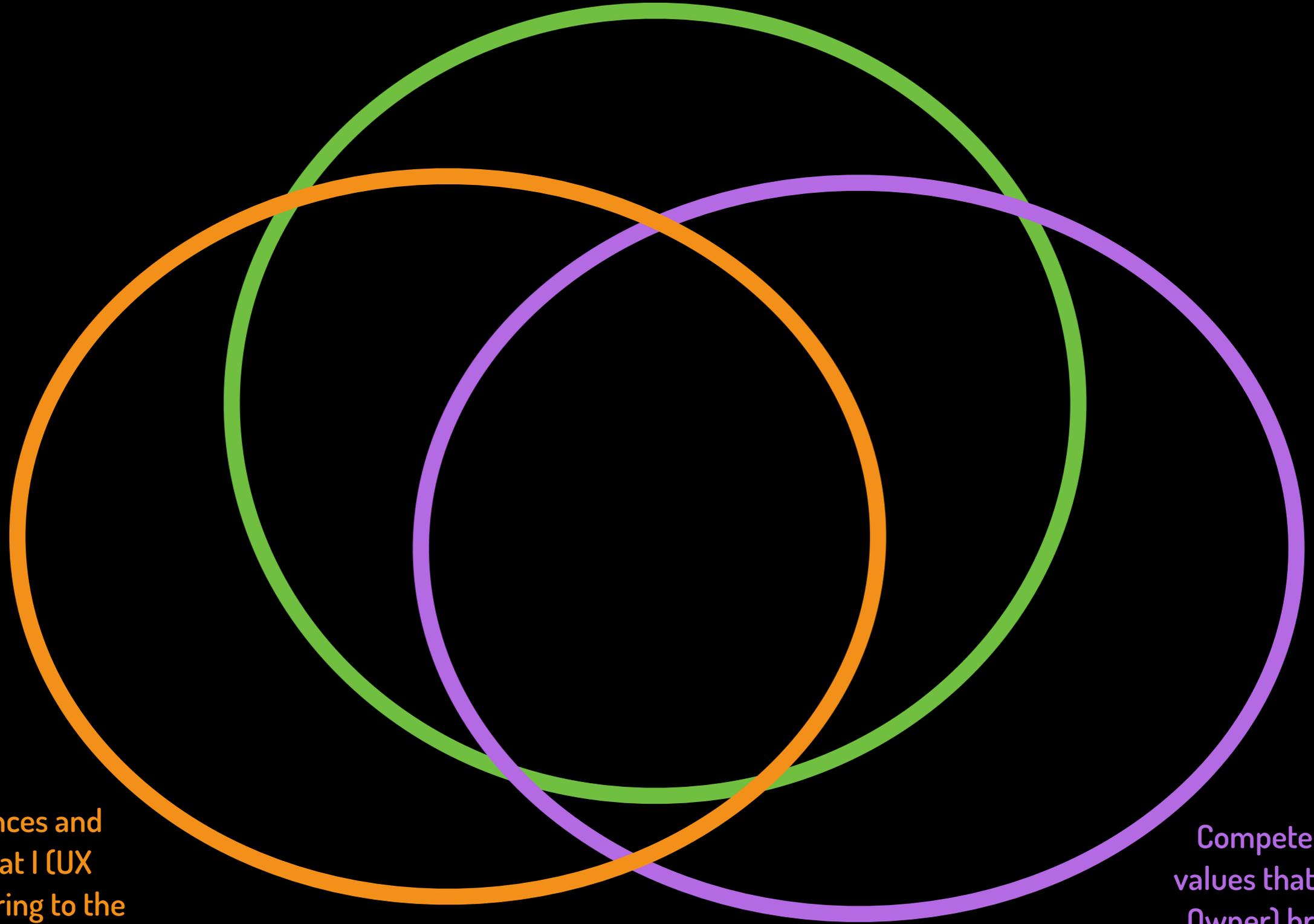


Things that we have to do to
make the product successful.



Competences and
values that I (UX
Designer) bring to the
project.

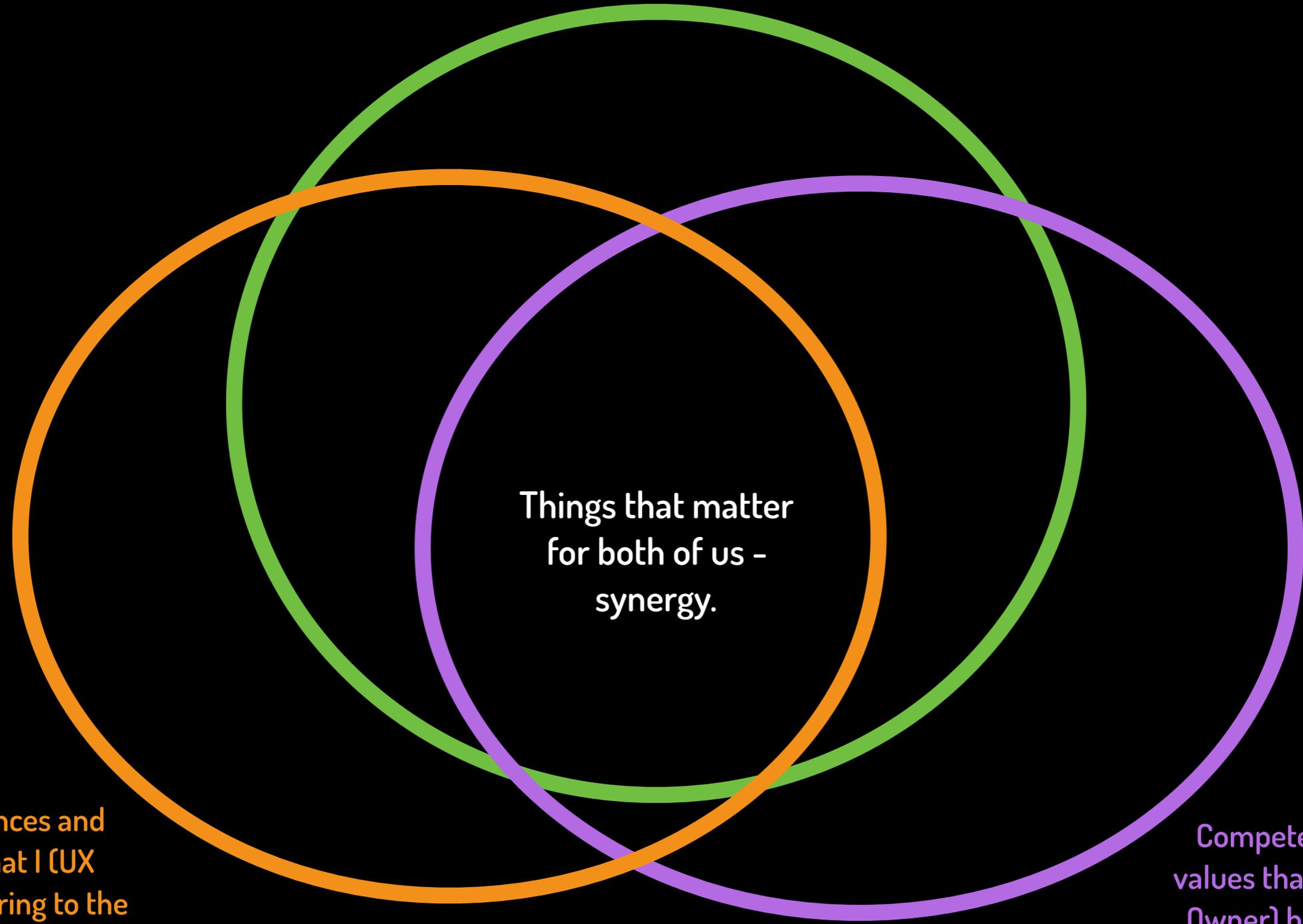
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Competences and values that I (UX Designer) bring to the project.

Competences and values that I (Product Owner) bring to the project.

Things that we have to do to make the product successful.



Things that matter for both of us - synergy.

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Competences and values that I (Product Owner) bring to the project.

Things that we have to do to make the product successful.

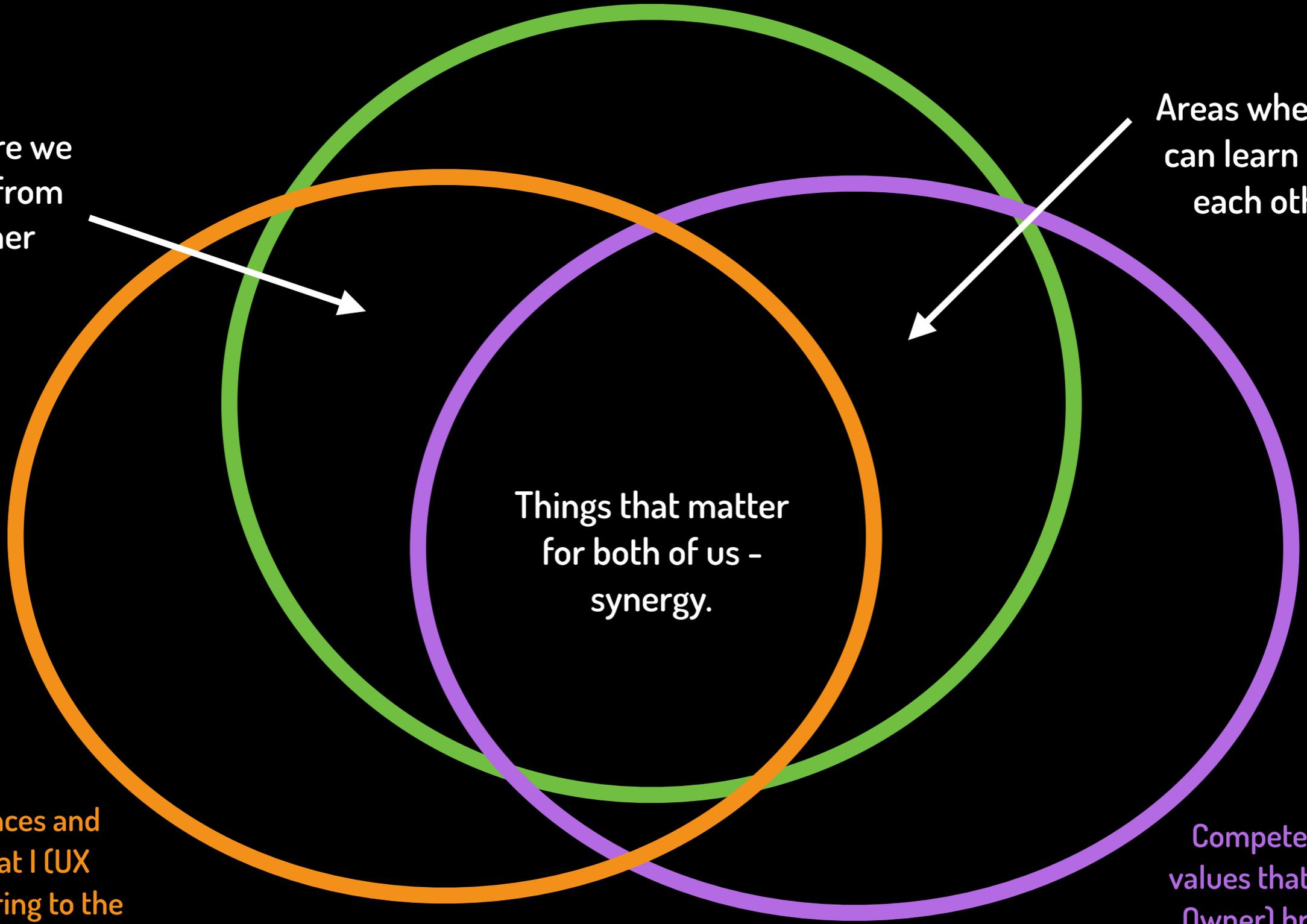
Areas where we can learn from each other

Areas where we can learn from each other

Things that matter for both of us - synergy.

Competences and values that I (UX Designer) bring to the project.

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Things that we have to do to make the product successful.

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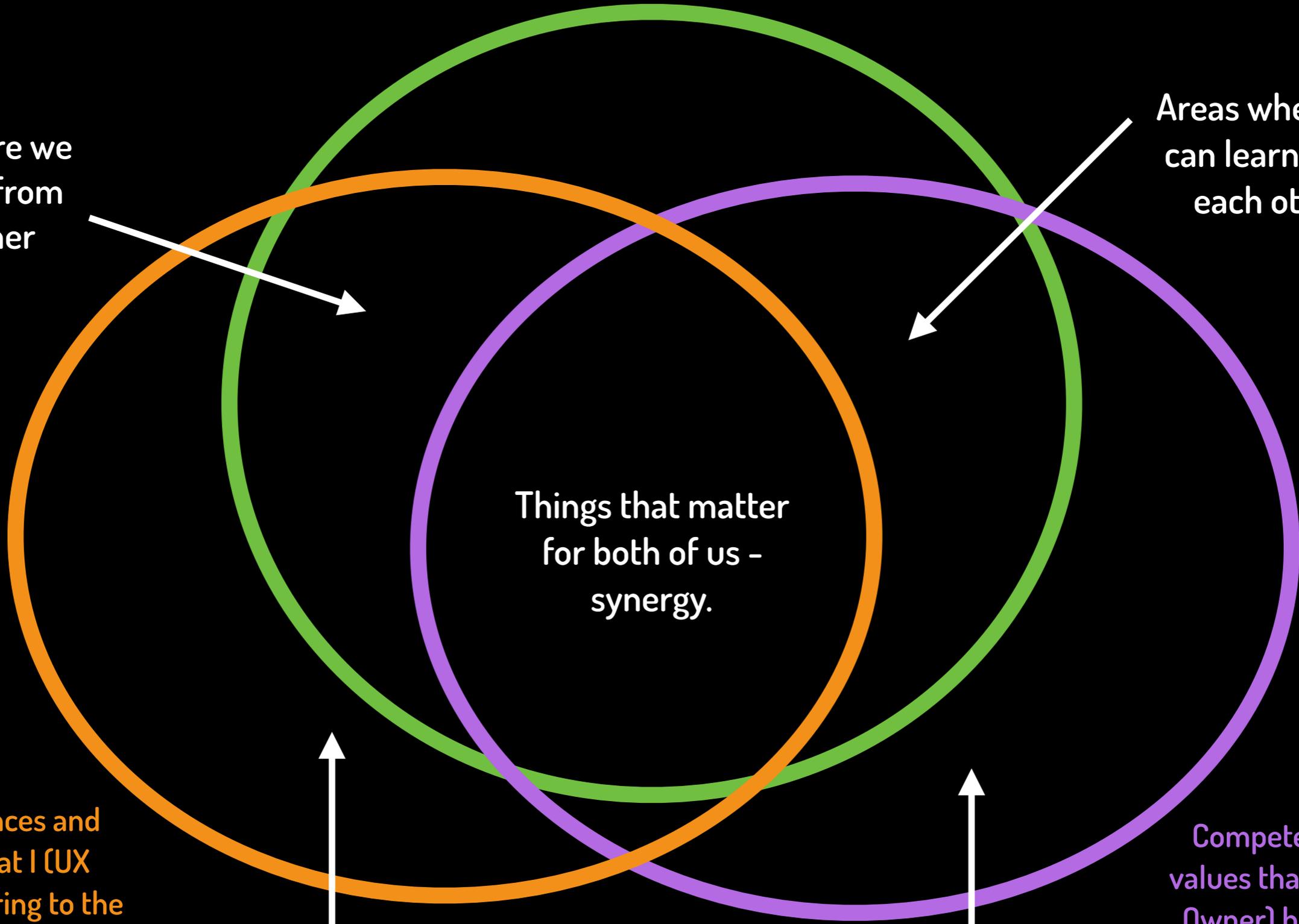
Things that matter for both of us - synergy.

Competences and values that I (UX Designer) bring to the project.

Competences and values that I (Product Owner) bring to the project.

Competences that may be important for the product's success, but not now.

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Things that we have to do to make the product successful.

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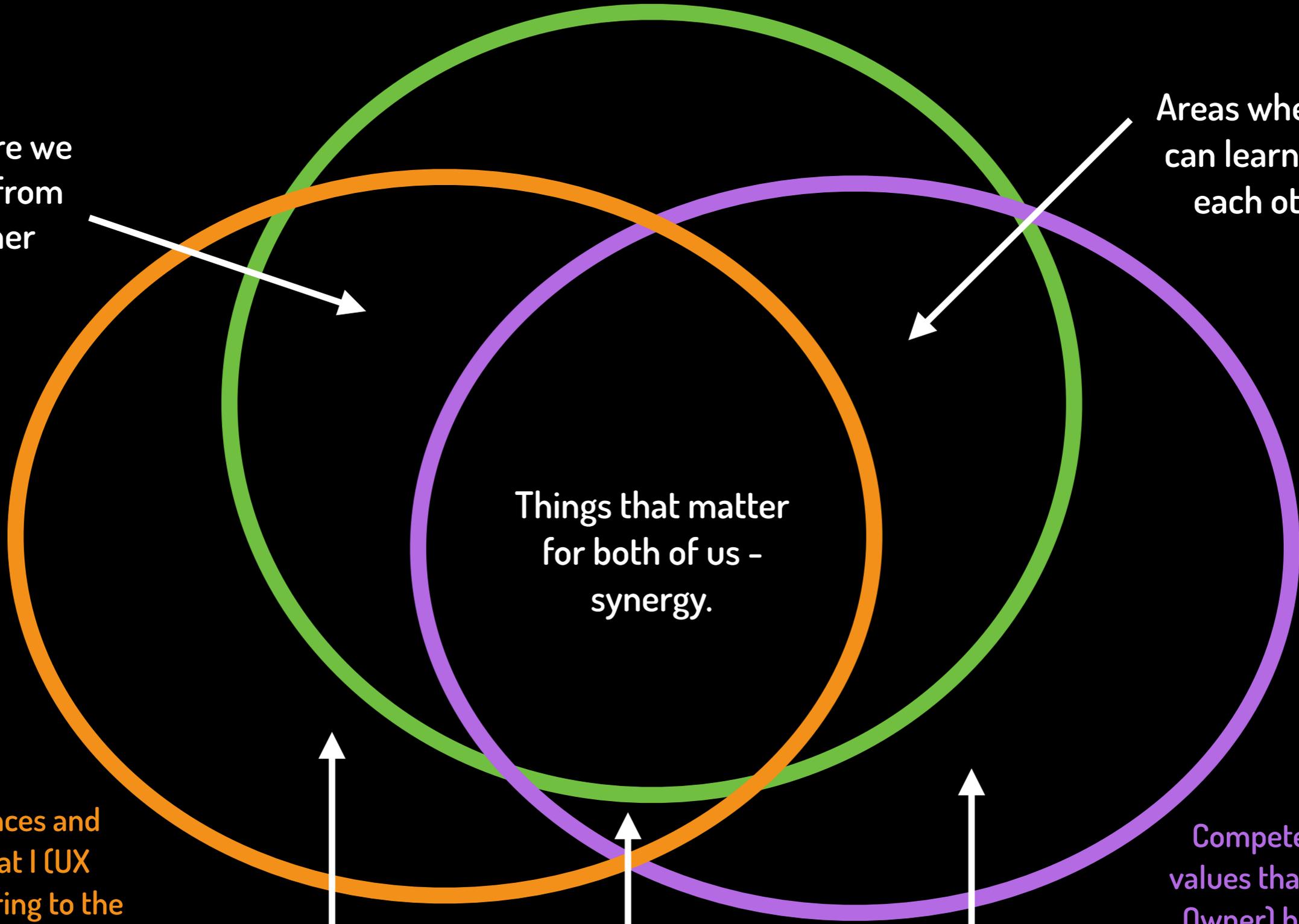
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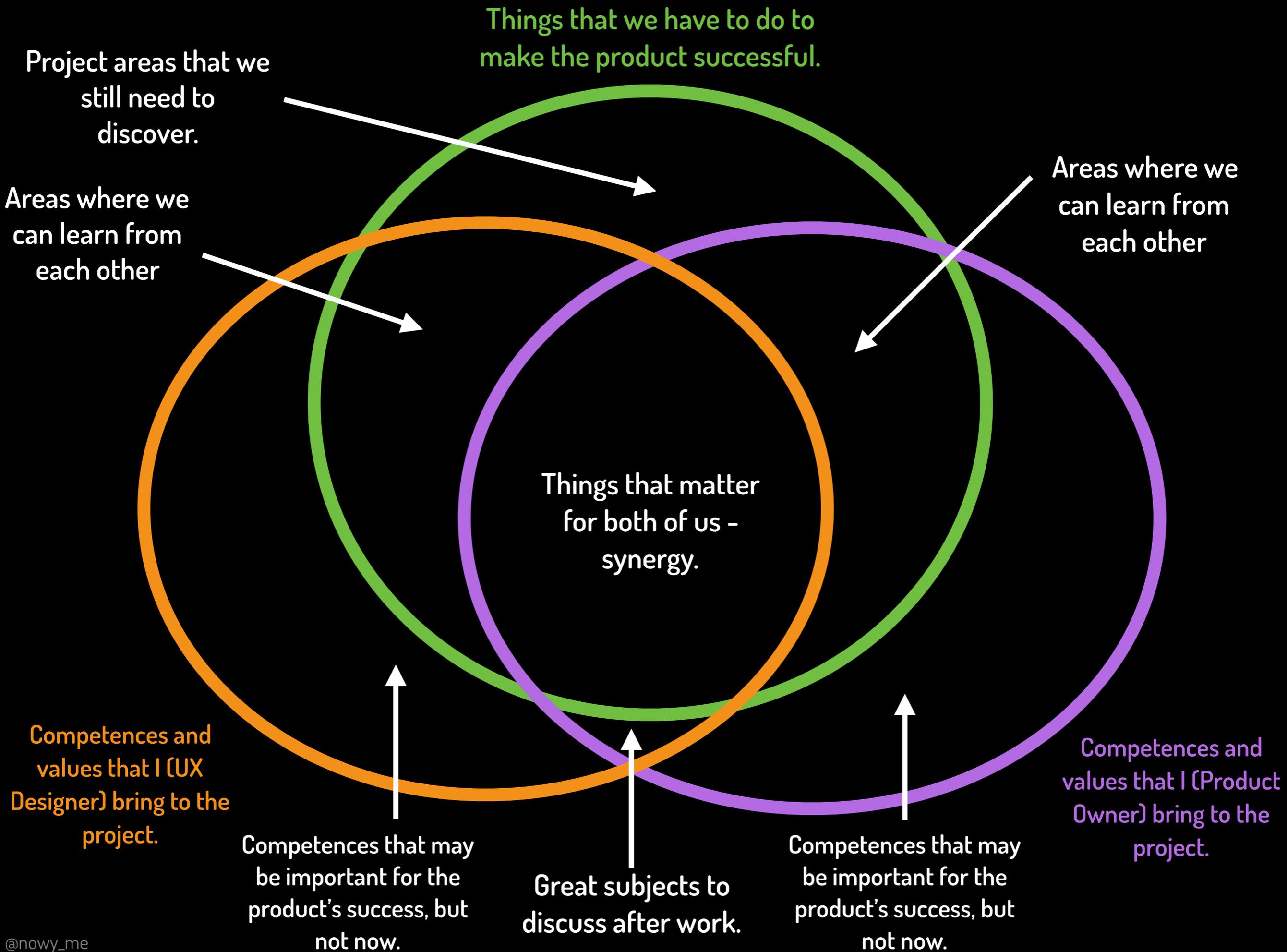
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Great subjects to discuss after work.

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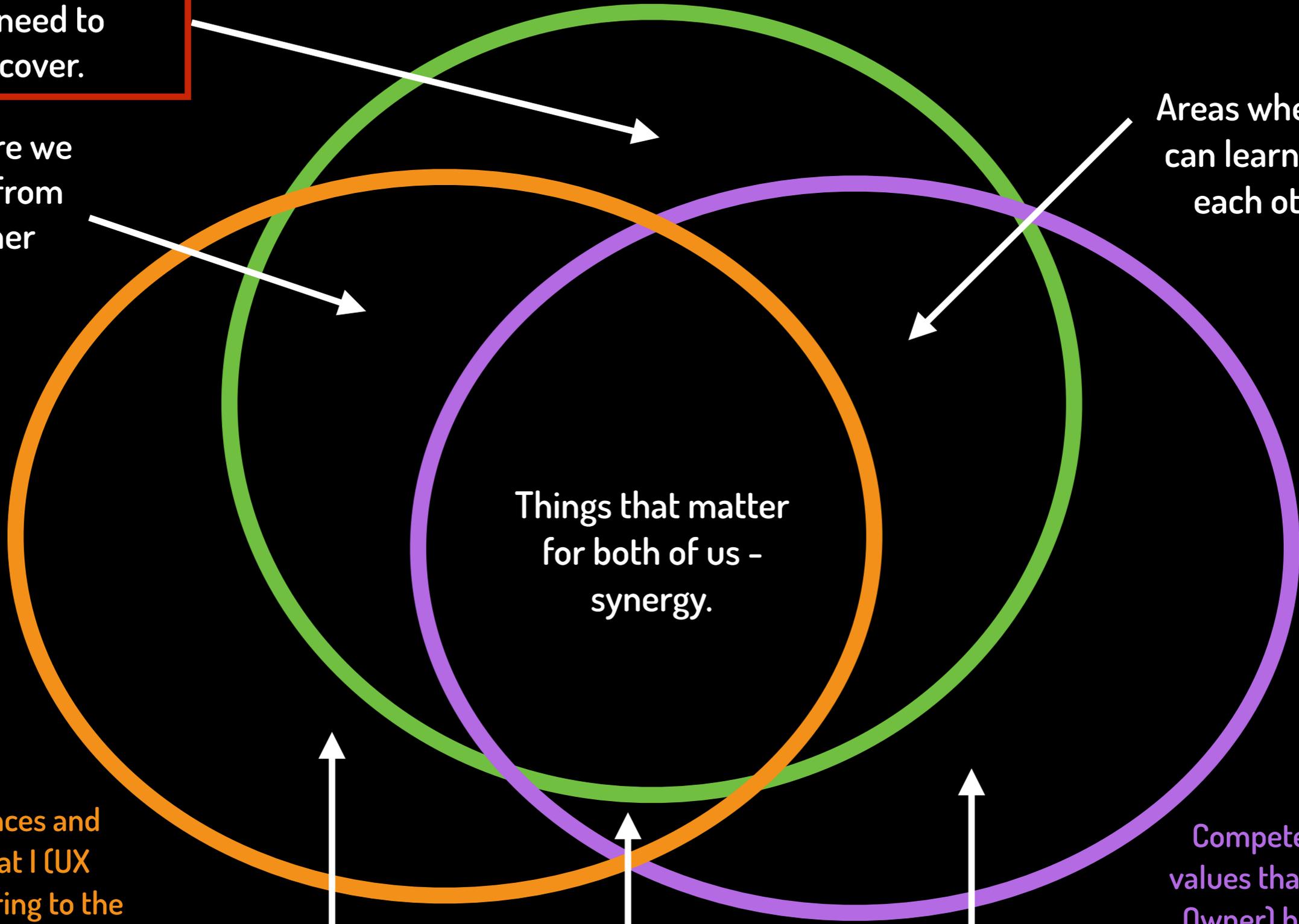


Project areas that we still need to discover.

Things that we have to do to make the product successful.

Areas where we can learn from each other

Areas where we can learn from each other



Things that matter for both of us - synergy.

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Competences that may be important for the product's success, but not now.

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Competences that may be important for the product's success, but not now.

OK, so we've got those circles. What should we do next?

Start working together and...

1. Accept that you don't know everything.
2. Listen to understand, not to reply.
3. When you speak **use facts and data**, not hunches.
4. Present possible solutions of identified problems, instead finger pointing or proving your great wisdom.
5. Respect the other person (yes, be punctual on the meetings).

And what about everyday tasks?

When you do your...

1. Use all your skills and competences to create value for the project.
2. When you promised something don't renege.
3. Meet deadlines.

Is it that easy?

Yes, but... it is not easy at all.

Business relationships are normal human relationships, just in the business environment.

When is the highest risk of conflict?

Conflicts often appears when...

1. PO and UX Designer talk too rarely.
2. PO or UX Designer considers himself as a more competent person.
3. PO and UX Designer have very different values in approach to product design.

And what if cooperation does not work anyway?

Sometimes the best solution is to quit toxic cooperation instead compromising your own values.

And the last but not least...

Remember that not roles and definitions but
people who work together create great
products and services.

Thx!

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www.nowy.me/about