

From Collaboration to Co-ownership

Hugo Filipe Costa

About me



Hugo Filipe Costa

Who am I

Product Design
Manager
based in Barcelona.

I currently lead design at
Manychat.

What I bring

Working across AI,
automations, design
system and content
design.

18+ years of experience
in design.

I also

Process life through music,
art, sports and humor.

Love record stores and hi-fi
nostalgia.

Run, play football,
basketball and surf.

How the session will flow

1 How the session will flow

Set the context and session tone.

2 Warm up the room

Start with the room and its dependencies.

3 What is co-ownership?

Build the language for ownership and decisions.

4 Map and redesign

Map the current reality and redesign the ownership model.

5 What to take back

Leave with one rule worth taking back.

What you will leave with

Clearer language

A more useful way to talk about ownership and decision rights.



Visible tension

Where accountability becomes fuzzy and escalation starts doing the work instead of clarity.



Practical model

A simpler way to define what is shared, how is shared, and what actually deserves escalation.



Reusable rules

A small set of practical and operating principles you can take back to your team.



Start with the room

1 Introduction

We will begin lightly, but not randomly.

1. Name
2. Role
3. Team you rely on the most
(to do your best work)

2 Why it matters

Before we talk about co-ownership, we make interdependence visible.

Most of us already rely on other teams more than our org chart admits.

"Design is a process on the
verge of chaos"

Jon Kolko

Discontinuities are where ownership starts to leak.

When teams span distance, time, culture, tools, structures, and habits, the gaps become structural friction, not just communication noise.

Geographic

People work apart, so context gets lost more easily.

Temporal

Time zones and rhythms make shared momentum harder.

Cultural

Feedback and trust do not mean the same thing everywhere.

Rituals and WoW

Teams use different rituals and ways of working.

Organization

Structures and incentives can pull ownership apart.

Functional

Functional teams connect but often have divergent context

Most teams collaborate. Few teams truly co-own the result.

The issue is not a lack of collaboration. It is a lack of consequence-bearing ownership.

What looks healthy

- Handoffs are polite
- Meetings happen
- Timelines are coordinated
- Everyone sounds reasonable

What still breaks

- Nobody owns the whole outcome
- Trade-offs happen without clear decision rights
- Escalation becomes the default
- Failure gets personalized
- Success gets generalized

Co-ownership is shared consequence.

It means every person involved stays accountable for whether the result actually lands, not just their bit.

Collaboration asks "did I do my part?"

Co-ownership asks "did the result work?"

Three key ideas we will use

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Features, launches, experiments,
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Decision rights

The logic behind why this matters, which trade-offs are acceptable, and what the team is trying to move.

Three key ideas we will use

Teams often have clear output ownership, fuzzy outcome ownership, and ambiguous decision rights.

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Decision rights

The logic behind why this matters, which trade-offs are acceptable, and what the team is trying to move.

Co-ownership starts with synoptic minds.

Synoptic comes from the Greek synoptikos: able to see together.

Before a team can co-own a result, each person needs to hold more than their piece.

From "I own my deliverable."



To "I see how my work connects to the result."

Collaboration is a relay race. Co-ownership is football.

In a **relay**, you run your leg, hand the baton, and trust the next person.
Clear lanes, clean handoffs.

Relay = task ownership
each person owns their leg

The baton drop = the moment escalation starts doing the work that clarity should have done

In **football**, everyone reads the game.
The striker tracks back to defend.
The centre-back plays a long ball forward.

Football = outcome ownership
everyone owns the match

Reading the game = synoptic mind
seeing the whole pitch, not just your zone

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Exercise 1

Co-ownership mapping

The scenario

The metric that pulled three teams apart.

Collaboration was high, co-ownership was zero.

1

Map individually

Read the scenario in silence. Then each person writes what they see — one post-it per idea.

2

Find your trio

Place all post-its together on the shared table. Read each other's maps, discuss and signal divergences.

Exercise 1 / 1

Duration: 3 minutes / Individual

The scenario

The metric that pulled three teams apart. Product, Design, and Growth are co-owning a new activation flow.

1. Product's OKR is "increase 7-day retention."
2. Design's is "improve first-session task completion."
3. Growth's is "reduce time-to-first-value."

All three sound aligned — until Growth pushes to skip the guided setup, Design argues it drives completion, and Product wants an A/B test that will take 4 of the 5 remaining weeks in the quarter.

Step 1

Read the scenario in silence. Then each person writes what they see - one post-it per idea.

Question Prompts

1. What needs to move in this scenario?
2. What could break under pressure?
3. What happens to ownership when things get hard?

Exercise 1 / 2

Duration: 8 minutes / Trio

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Step 2

Map your ideas. Place all post-its together on the shared paper. Read each other's maps.

- Cluster post-its that map things together.
- Where do your maps agree? Where do they diverge?
- The divergences are not disagreements to resolve, they are signals of blurry ownership.

Exercise 1 / 3

Duration: 5 minutes / Trio

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Step 3

Name the break and prepare share-back.
As a trio, identify:

The biggest mismatch - Where did your maps diverge the most? This is where the mental models of ownership were most different.

The escalation point - Where in the scenario did someone escalate because the decision rights were unclear?

Where ownership blurs - Who owns the work but not the result?

Share-back.

Exercise 2

Redesign the ownership model

The context - The breaks and divergences from Exercise 1

1

Define shared outcome

Write down one shared outcome for the scenario - not a list of deliverables, just one result.

2

Identify the decisions

1. Shared decisions
2. Delegated decisions
3. Escalation-only decisions

3

Make it hold

Define one tie-break rule.
Think about your real team.

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Exercise 2 / 1

Duration: 5 minutes / Trio

The context

In the trio. Look at the breaks and divergences from Exercise 1.

Constraint

Same scenario, same pressure as Exercise 1.
If you cannot agree on one outcome, that is the finding, write it down.

Step 1

Define one shared outcome.

1. Discuss and define your shared outcome
2. One post-it: the shared outcome as a result
3. Not a task like: "Ship onboarding redesign"
4. More like "Reduce first-week churn by 40% this quarter."

Exercise 2 / 2

Duration: 5 minutes / Room

The context

Not all decisions are equal.

Not every decision needs the same process.

Constraint

Think about your real team. Give us one decision that should be delegated but keeps getting shared, or one that gets escalated when it shouldn't.

Step 2

Identify the decisions, in the room.

1. **Shared** - High-stakes, hard to reverse, affects the shared outcome. All perspectives weigh in before anyone moves.
2. **Delegated** - Belongs to one person. The one closest to the information decides.
The others trust the call.
3. **Escalation-only** - Goes up only when a defined threshold is crossed. Not "when someone feels uncomfortable."

Exercise 2 / 2

Duration: 5 minutes / Room

The context

Not all decisions are equal.

Not every decision needs the same process.

Constraint

Think about your real team. Share one decision that should be delegated but keeps getting shared, or one that gets escalated when it shouldn't.

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Exercise 2 / 3

Duration: 5 minutes / Individual

The context

This is a personal reflection, not an abstract exercise.

Examples

"The person closest to the user calls experience trade-offs"

"Whoever owns the metric makes the call on what ships this week"

Step 3

What makes it hold?

1. Define one tie-break rule

When your team disagrees and time is short, who makes the call?

2. Think about your real team, the trio or squad you will work with tomorrow.

3. If your rule has the word 'align' in it, try again.

Share-back.

What a better operating model needs

A better model makes the outcome clearer, the decision path simpler, and the accountability visible under pressure.

Structural clarity

1. There is one shared outcome
2. Local and shared decisions are clear
3. Escalation rules are visible
4. The tie-break path is actually understood

Behavior under pressure

1. Surface risk early
2. Decide at the lowest responsible level
3. Optimize for the outcome, not local wins
4. Make escalation a tool, not the default

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Methods that can help, if we use them well

No framework fixes ownership on its own. The value comes when it makes the outcome clearer, the decision path simpler, and the accountability more visible.

OKRs

Useful when we need a **shared outcome** and a visible way to measure progress, not just a list of work.

RACI, DACI, RAPID

When a team keeps **getting stuck** on who decides, who contributes, and what really needs escalation.

DRI Directly Responsible Individual

Useful when one person **needs to carry a bet forward** without letting the rest of the team detach from the result.

Product trios and service ownership

When the work is **cross-functional by design** and we need shared stewardship rather than cleaner handoffs.

The future makes this sharper, not softer

The more intelligent the system becomes, the more deliberate the team has to be about ownership.

As teams become more AI-native

- Execution gets faster
- Experimentation gets cheaper
- Decisions multiply
- Human accountability gets easier to blur

So the operating model must be clearer

- Shared outcomes stay visible
- Human decision rights stay explicit
- Machine execution is delegated with intent
- Review and escalation loops stay visible

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What to take back

The gap we named

Shared understanding of when co-ownership breaks. Diverging interpretations in execution. Slow decisions, eroded trust, structural tension.

The shift we practiced

From coordination to shared ownership. Found where accountability blurs, clarified decision rights, tested collective responsibility under pressure.

What stays after today

A synoptic mind that sees the whole. Clearer language for what is shared, what stays local, and what escalates. **Co-ownership as behavior, not title.**

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Thank you.

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Leadership Ateliers

by  Hatch Conference