Ana Pegan
Productwize.rs

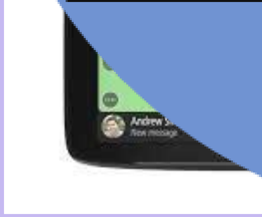
Buy a feature

Innovation games

My Portfolio

Serbian
Product
Community

Roadmaps




yeah, i'm pretty awesome

Agenda

Innovation games

Luke Hohmann

Buy a Feature

When to use it

Basic instructions

Workshop Goal

💡 What Are Innovation Games®?

Innovation Games® are a set of collaborative techniques developed to help teams and organizations better understand their customers, uncover needs, and prioritize ideas — through *play*.

Unlike traditional research or survey methods, Innovation Games use **structured, game-like activities** to surface insights about what people truly value.

They create a safe, engaging environment where stakeholders can **negotiate, make trade-offs, and reveal priorities** — which mirrors how real decisions are made.

👤 Who Is Luke Hohmann?

Luke Hohmann is an entrepreneur, author, and innovation expert who created the *Innovation Games®* framework.

As the founder of *The Innovation Games Company* (later *Conteneo* and *The Innovation Ecosystem*), he wanted to make **product discovery, prioritization, and customer understanding** more collaborative and fun.

His games — such as *Product Box*, *Speed Boat*, and *Buy a Feature* — are used worldwide by product managers, innovation teams, and organizations like Spotify, Cisco, and the U.S. government to build **alignment and empathy** across teams.

🕹 When Were the Innovation Games® Created?

Innovation Games® were created by **Luke Hohmann** in the **early 2000s**.
The first collection of games was published in his book:

> *Innovation Games: Creating Breakthrough Products Through Collaborative Play*
> 📔 Addison-Wesley, **2007**

Hohmann had been developing and testing these methods with teams throughout the early 2000s, drawing on ideas from:

- **Game theory and behavioral economics**
- **Design thinking and agile product development**
- **Collaborative user research techniques**

The games quickly gained traction in the **product management and innovation** communities because they made it possible to gather **rich qualitative insights** through **structured play** — something traditional interviews and surveys rarely achieved.

What Is “Buy a Feature”?

Buy a Feature is one of the most popular Innovation Games.
It helps teams understand **which features or ideas customers and stakeholders value most** — by simulating real-world trade-offs.

In the game, participants are given a limited budget of “money” (tokens, coins, or points) and a list of potential features, each with a “price.”
The prices reflect the estimated **cost, complexity, or effort** required to build each feature.

Participants must **decide which features to “buy”** — individually or collaboratively — within their budget.
This forces meaningful discussion, negotiation, and prioritization, helping teams see **what’s truly important** and **why**.

When to Use “Buy a Feature”

Use ***Buy a Feature*** when you want to:

- Prioritize features, ideas, or investments with limited resources
- Understand **why** customers or stakeholders prefer certain features
- Encourage **collaborative decision-making** among cross-functional teams
- Explore trade-offs between cost, value, and desirability
- Align product, business, and user perspectives before roadmap planning

It’s especially useful during:

- Product discovery or pre-roadmap phases
- Strategy workshops and backlog refinement
- Early-stage innovation discussions or concept testing

Basic Instructions for “Buy a Feature”

1. **Prepare the Feature List**
   - List potential features (existing or proposed).
   - Assign each feature a *price* based on cost, complexity, or effort.

1. **Give Each Player a Budget**
   - Each participant or team gets a limited amount of “money” (e.g., 100 coins).
   - The budget should be **smaller than the total cost** of all features — to create trade-offs.

3. Play the Game

- Players decide which features to buy individually or in groups.
- Encourage **discussion, negotiation, and co-investment** — participants can pool money to buy expensive features together.
- Capture not just what they buy, but **why** they choose it.

4. Debrief & Discuss

- Review which features were purchased.
- Explore the *rationale* behind decisions: what value participants saw, what they traded off, and what they’d sacrifice.
- Use these insights to inform **product strategy, prioritization, and roadmap decisions**.

💰 Setup in a “Buy a Feature” Workshop

Setup:

- Each participant gets a limited “budget” (**100 coins**).
- Features are “priced”.
- Participants must *buy* features they value most given the budget.

Workshop Goal

By the end of this session, you should:

- Understand what features are most valuable to each user group
- See how different stakeholders make trade-offs when faced with constraints
- Gather insights to inform future **prioritization and roadmap discussions**

Spotify®

Spotify — Value Proposition Statements

For Listeners

"Spotify helps you discover, enjoy, and share music and podcasts effortlessly — personalized to your taste, anytime, anywhere."

Core value elements:

Personalization
Ubiquitous access (multi-device)
Discovery and sharing

For Podcasters

"Spotify gives podcasters a powerful platform to host, distribute, and grow their shows with deep audience insights and monetization tools."

Core value elements:

Hosting and distribution
Audience analytics
Monetization and advertising tools

For Artists

"Spotify empowers artists to reach and grow global audiences, understand their listeners, and monetize their creativity fairly."

Core value elements:

Global exposure
Data insights and analytics
Monetization opportunities

TAKE A LOOK AT THE BOARD

LET'S DISCUSS

GO TO
THE BOARD

New Business: every feature that will potentially bring new customers or new markets, will also bring a fresh flow of money

Up Sell: every feature that will potentially bring money from existing customers and could be sold as add-on, upgrade or plug-in

Retainment: every feature that will avoid losing customers and will avoid the company losing money as well

Operational Efficiency: every feature that will allow the company to save money (costs) given a potential increase in any operation (installation, configuration, customization…)

LET'S DISCUSS

Buy a Feature reveals

1

What people value the most

Participants reveal which features they see as most valuable when they're forced to make trade-offs.
Because they can't buy everything, they must decide what's *worth paying for* — surfacing their **real priorities** instead of polite or abstract opinions.

2

How they perceive cost versus value

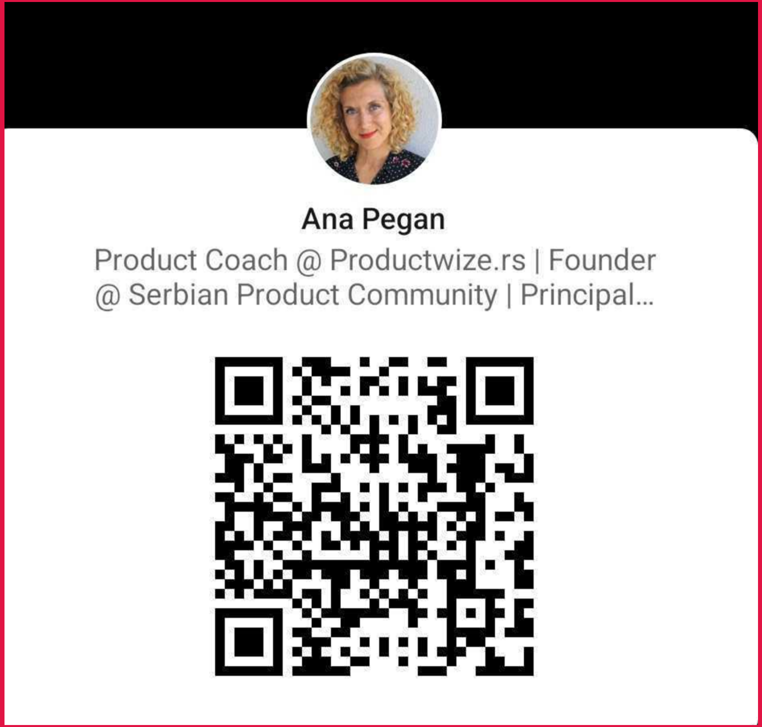
When features have prices, participants start thinking about **return on investment** — consciously or not.
Their behavior shows how they balance *desirability* with *feasibility* and *effort*.

3

How they negotiate and align around shared priorities

Because participants can **pool their money** to buy costly features together, the game becomes a live simulation of **stakeholder alignment and negotiation**.
You see team dynamics in action — who influences whom, how consensus forms, and where conflicts lie.

THANK YOU!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