

## Exercise Description

In this exercise, I am a Product Manager at Overcast. I will work off the assumption written below with the goal of answering the following question.

### Assumption

Listeners who **interact** with other users have a **better overall experience**.

### 1. What new feature would you build to test this assumption, and why?

#### ✅ New Feature: “Shared Listening Circles”

Overcast is known for its streamlined, no-frills listening experience. However, it lacks any form of user-to-user interaction. To test the assumption that social interaction enhances user experience, I propose building “**Shared Listening Circles**” – lightweight, invite-only listening groups where users can recommend and react to episodes within a small circle of friends.

This avoids cluttering the core UI and instead introduces **intentional, private social engagement**.


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## Hypothesis

I believe that **engaged Overcast users** will **spend more time listening and exploring new content** when part of a small **Listening Circle**, leading to a better overall experience.

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## Brainstorming List of Alternate Features Considered

- Native comments (too disruptive to UI philosophy)
- Timestamp comments (adds noise)
- Direct messaging (complex to moderate)
- Public activity feed (not aligned with Overcast’s privacy values)
- AI-based shared recommendations
- “Listening Circles”  low complexity, high signal potential)

## Target User Persona

**Name:** Alex

**Age:** 29

**Device:** iPhone 13

**Profession:** UX Designer in Austin

**Habits:**

- Listens during commutes and workouts
  - Shares favorite episodes manually with a small group of friends
  - Enjoys curated content without algorithmic noise
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## 2. How does it look and behave?

### User Stories

- As a user, I want to share podcast episodes privately with my friends so I can discuss them.
  - As a user, I want to see recommendations from my trusted circle.
  - As a user, I want to react quickly to what friends share without disrupting my feed.
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### Product Requirements

- Create/join a Listening Circle (max 5–7 users)
  - Share episodes with one tap into the Circle
  - See lightweight reactions: 👍 / “Queued this” / 🤔
  - Inline display of shared episodes in a "Circle" tab
  - Privacy-focused: no public feeds, no comments
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### Wireframe Concept Overview

**UI Elements:**

- New tab: **Circle**
- Episode cards with:
  - Friend's name
  - Episode title & cover
  - “Add to Queue” button
  - 3 quick emoji reacts

- Option to mute/unsubscribe from a Circle

(Drawn as a vertical feed similar to a chat, but without messages—just episodes and reacts.)

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### 3. Trade-Offs, Risks, and Success Metrics

#### Trade-Offs & Risks

- May alienate users who prefer Overcast's solo listening model
  - Adds new behavior not aligned with existing use
  - Potential UI clutter
  - Risk of low adoption or inactivity in Circles

#### Success Metrics

Track weekly/monthly:

1. Number of Circles created
  2. Number of episodes shared per Circle
  3. Number of reactions per shared item
  4. % of shared episodes that were listened to (80%+ played)
  5. Time spent listening
  6. NPS change among users using Circles vs. not
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#### Could it be used but still fail?

Yes. For example:

- Users may create Circles but stop engaging after initial curiosity
    - Lots of sharing but no increase in listens or app usage
    - Social pressure deters sharing controversial content
  - Users react with emojis but don't queue or play episodes
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### Final Thought

"Listening Circles" could introduce **Overcast's first real social layer** without betraying its clean and private design values. If successful, it could offer a **quietly powerful engagement boost** while remaining aligned with Overcast's user-first ethos.

