



From Reactive to Strategic: Transforming Brooks Running's UX Research Practice into a Key Partner in Digital Product Development

Brooks Running, Digital Products 2025

Full case study available on request

BROOKS

Brooks Running, a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, is a sports equipment company headquartered in Seattle, Washington. In 2025, Brooks was the No. 1 adult performance running shoe in the US.

- “Brooks achieved the No. 1 spot in the adult performance running footwear market in U.S national retail and led the U.S. specialty retail channel, the most discerning channel in performance run...”

- [Business Wire, May 2025](#)



A key aspect of Brooks' brand identity is its "Run Happy" philosophy, which aims to celebrate the joy of running rather than depicting it as a grueling activity.

From Reactive to Strategic: Transforming Brooks' UX Research Practice into a Key Partner in Digital Product Development (2025)

Project Summary

I developed strategic frameworks to ensure product vision bridged user needs and business goals by defining research approaches, methods, and a prioritization matrix.

Timeline & Team

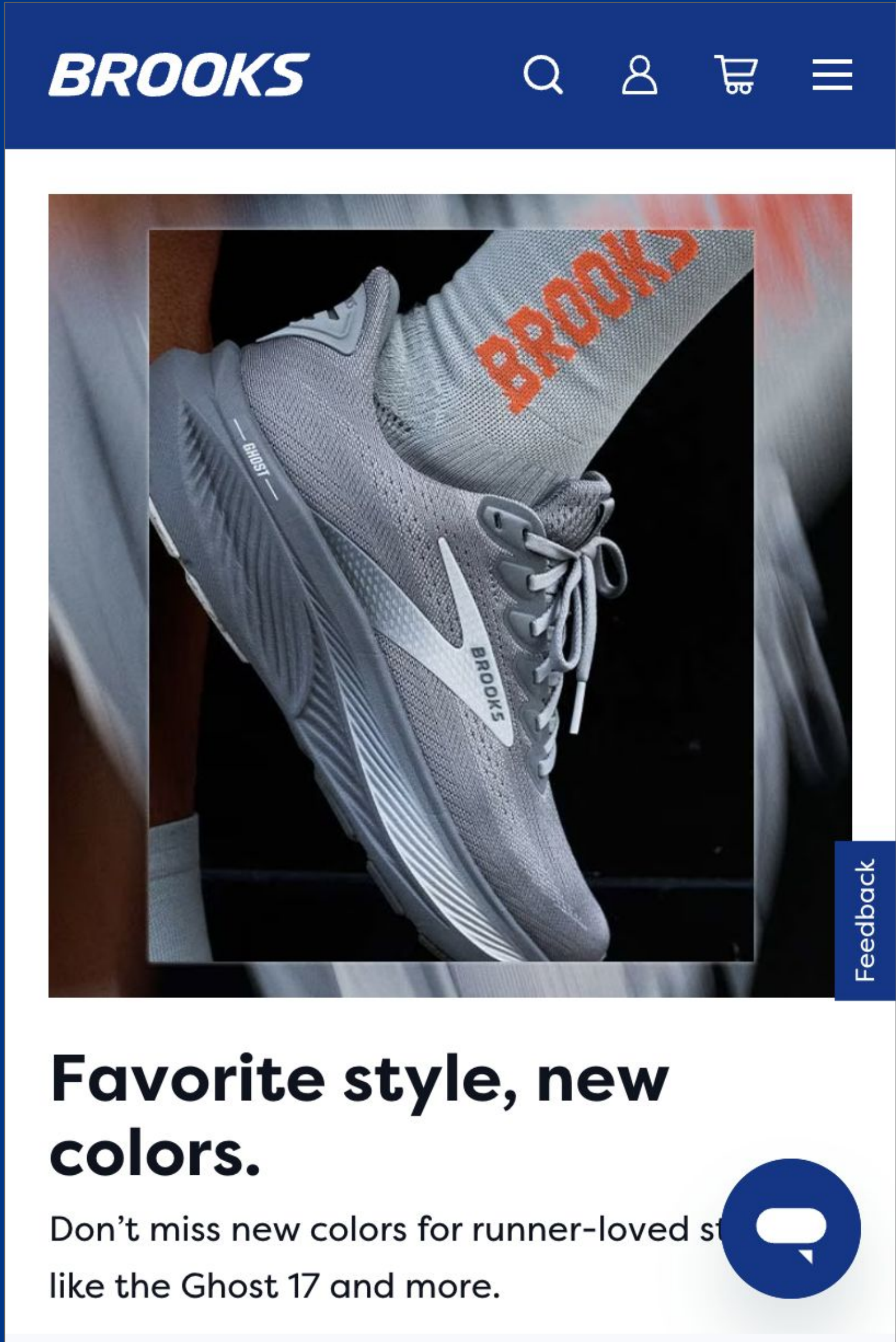
Co-authored with UX Manager, Head of Digital Products over 2 months

Deliverables

- Strategic UX research framework
- Decision-making matrix
- Problem-centric UXR intake process

Impact

Re-centered user voice in product dev, leading to products that meet actual user needs and improved conversion



Brooks Running, a Berkshire Hathaway subsidiary, makes innovative running shoes, apparel, & accessories.

Problem: Brooks' UX research was engaged after product decisions were made and using limited methods. This kept the Digital Products team from putting users first and compromised their ability to build experiences users truly wanted, hurting online purchases and overall business success.

- **Risk:** Building products that don't fully align with the brand's "Runner First" promise
- **Opportunity:** Transform UX research into a strategic function within the Brooks Product Development Lifecycle



“At the center of everything we do is the runner - our obsession, our inspiration, our path forward. When in doubt, solve for the runner.”

GOAL: Realign UX research from an ad-hoc, detached function to an integral part of the product development, grounding decision-making in user voice.



I led the integration of core strategic UX principles within the Product Development Lifecycle, collaborating with leadership to create a comprehensive suite of concepts, tools, and processes.



I introduced 3 core strategic UX research concepts and developed corresponding tools to convert them into tools and practice.

1

UX Research Seasons:
Aligning to the Product
Development Lifecycle

2

Right-Sized UX Research:
Tailoring UX Investment
and Approach

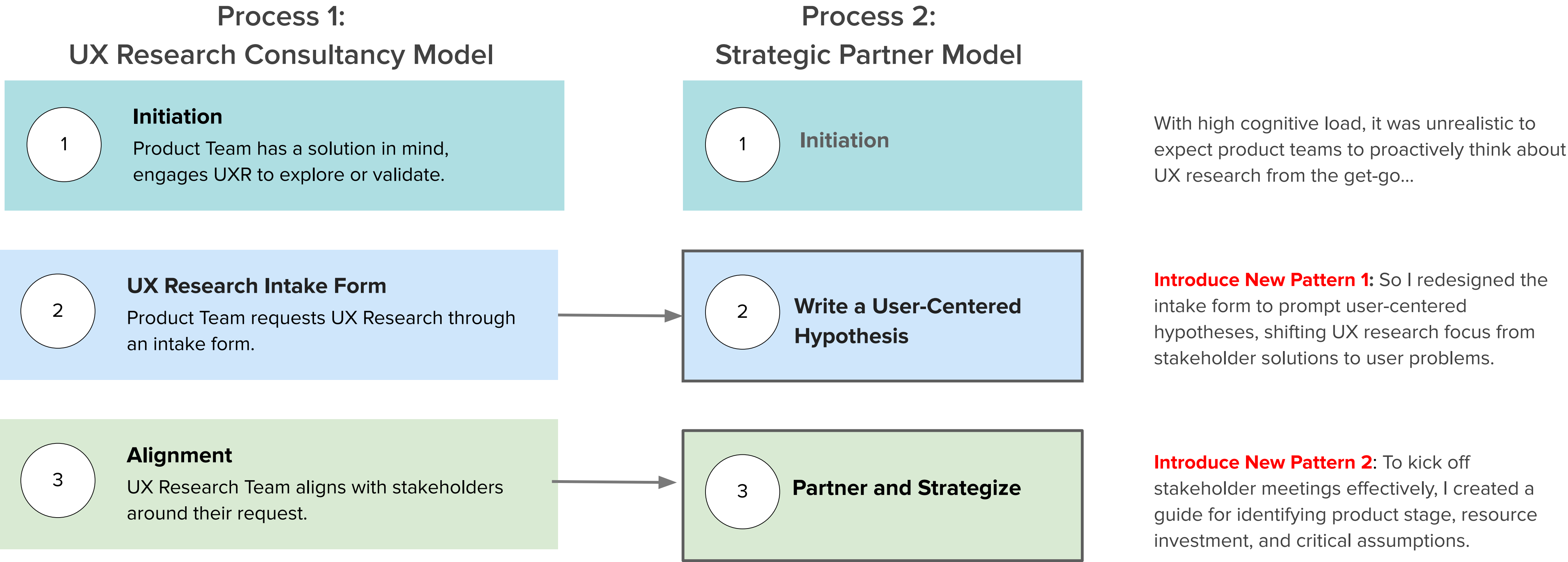
3

**User-centered
Hypotheses:** Driving
Effective UX Research

Rewiring Process: Interrupting Old Patterns, Cultivating New UX Research Habits



To translate my concepts into new processes, I pinpointed exact moments in the current process to interrupt old patterns. This would allow the Product Team to directly embed new ideas into workflows, ensuring change isn't just discussed, but transacted.



IMPACT

By developing a strategic framework, a decision-making matrix, and a problem-centric intake process, I effectively embedded UX research into the Brooks Product Development Lifecycle, empowering the team to conduct right-sized, diverse, and customer-led studies that drive product vision.

REFLECTION

Learning Beyond My Lane: Seeking senior perspectives transformed my work. "Talk to Jon Phillips (Head of Digital Product Development). Jon knows." A simple instinct led to invaluable insights and the foundation for new UX research materials.

The Life-Changing Magic of Empowering Managers: This body of work was co-developed with an exceptional manager, Lexa Keenen, who trusted my instincts and ideas and allowed me to find my own strategic voice as a UX Researcher. I was able to assert a vision of the role of UX Research in product development, re-centering user voice in product and business strategy.