

VEED | Simulated Stakeholder Interview

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Question 1

Interviewer: Can you walk me through the most significant challenge VEED has faced recently?

Simulated Sabba:

The biggest challenge we've faced at VEED recently has been figuring out how to stay ahead of AI while protecting the economics of our business. It's not just a technology problem. It's a question of what kind of company we want to become.

1. We built a successful business, but AI changed the rules

When Tim and I started VEED in 2018, the opportunity was straightforward: video editing was too complicated. We wanted anyone to create great videos without expensive software or specialist skills. We grew through SEO, free tools, word of mouth and shipping quickly. Generative AI changed the game. Users now want to type an idea and have a video created for them. If AI can generate a video in seconds, what is the future of a traditional video editor?

2. Our AI costs were becoming a serious problem

The case study gives an example of third-party AI APIs costing around \$1 per minute of generated video. An illustrative scenario of 100,000 monthly active AI users generating five minutes each would cost \$500,000 per month in API fees. This is hypothetical usage, not VEED's actual spending, and excludes infrastructure. A popular feature could destroy margins if every additional user created disproportionate costs.

3. We made a big decision: acquire SpiritMe

SpiritMe specialised in AI avatars, synthetic video and voice cloning. Acquiring it gave us greater control over underlying AI technology: potentially reducing dependence on per-minute API fees, enabling engineers to experiment directly, and differentiating our experiences from wrappers around the same models competitors use. But models improve quickly and an advantage today could become standard tomorrow.

4. The hardest question is where we focus next

Do we go deep into video creation, editing, translation and distribution, or expand into a broader creative suite competing with Canva and Adobe Creative Cloud? Going deep protects focus but may mean a narrower market; expansion offers a bigger potential market but more competition and engineering complexity. We need to decide where VEED creates value customers cannot genuinely get elsewhere.

5. What I've learned

Growth without good unit economics is not sustainable. Owning technology is useful, but owning the customer experience is more important: customers care whether they can tell their story quickly and beautifully, not which model powers the feature. Focus becomes more important as opportunities multiply. The ultimate challenge is keeping VEED the easiest way to turn ideas into compelling video stories.

A question I'd put back to you

Imagine limited engineering resources and £5 million to invest. Would you build more proprietary AI to reduce costs, create a radically simpler AI-first experience, or expand into new segments? The founder challenge is deciding which good opportunities to say no to.

Question 2

Interviewer: You mentioned that balancing AI costs with long-term growth has been a major challenge. Could you walk me through a recent decision where AI operating costs directly affected VEED's product or investment priorities? What options did you consider, and what did you ultimately decide?

Simulated Sabba:

One of the clearest examples was our decision to acquire SpiritMe rather than continue relying on third-party AI providers for video generation. We were deciding whether VEED should keep paying others to power AI features or own more of the technology ourselves.

1. The problem: AI was becoming expensive to scale

Some third-party video generation APIs cost around \$1 per minute. At 100,000 users each generating ten minutes monthly, that would be \$1 million in API costs alone, before infrastructure, engineering, marketing or support. This is a hypothetical calculation, not actual VEED expenditure. The AI features driving growth could also undermine its economics.

2. The options we considered

The case describes reliance on APIs, AI talent hiring difficulties and the eventual SpiritMe acquisition, but not a formal investment committee discussion. Three strategic paths capture the trade-offs. External APIs offer rapid implementation and advanced models but high variable costs and supplier dependency. Organic internal development offers more control but slower development, hard recruitment and high upfront investment. Acquiring an AI company provides talent, technology and infrastructure more quickly, but brings acquisition costs, integration risk and ongoing maintenance. The central trade-off was short-term flexibility versus long-term control.

3. What we ultimately decided

We acquired SpiritMe, specialising in synthetic avatars and voice cloning. The acquisition enabled more of our AI pipeline to be run internally, shifting priorities from renting AI to owning capabilities, from integrating features to experimenting with experiences, and from short-term delivery to differentiation. The case does not provide an acquisition price or audited before-and-after savings; I would not claim a specific financial return.

4. Why this was difficult

Owning AI does not make it free. Computing resources, infrastructure, model improvement and specialist employees still cost money. Models can also become outdated quickly. We had to judge whether control would create enough product and economic value to justify the investment. That does not mean every AI capability should be built or acquired; external APIs can be better for commoditised features.

5. The bigger strategic lesson

External APIs usually have lower upfront costs but higher usage-linked expenses. Owned models require more upfront investment but can potentially lower marginal costs at scale. Ask which capabilities matter so much to customers and cost so much at scale that we need more control. Product strategy and AI economics are inseparable.

Suppose a better, cheaper external model arrived six months after the acquisition. Would you keep investing in proprietary technology or switch providers? Owning technology can create advantage, but attachment to it can become a liability.

Question 3

Interviewer: You mentioned that deciding where VEED should focus next is one of your biggest challenges. Can you describe a recent situation where VEED had to choose between different product or customer opportunities? What made that decision difficult, and what did you ultimately prioritise?

Simulated Sabba:

One difficult strategic decision is whether to double down on video creation for existing customers or expand into new AI-enabled markets. When growing quickly, the challenge becomes choosing which opportunities not to pursue.

1. AI opened several attractive markets

Small production studios (1-10 people) need editing, collaboration, subtitles and professional output, close to VEED's strengths. E-commerce businesses could create product videos, advertising and translations at volume without production teams. Hollywood and premium production might offer higher-value workflows but require demanding professional capabilities. Each market implies different products, marketing and engineering investment.

2. What made the decision difficult?

First, opportunity size versus ability to win: Hollywood is demanding; e-commerce is accessible but competitive with broad design and marketing tools; small studios are close to our product but may offer less expansion. Second, engineers are limited: time spent on avatars cannot simultaneously improve editing, collaboration or reliability. Third, venture growth expectations can push companies towards the biggest market even if they lack an advantage there.

3. What did we ultimately prioritise?

The concrete case-study decision was acquiring SpiritMe to strengthen AI-powered video creation, synthetic avatars, voice cloning and control over generation costs. It was not a documented choice to build a general design suite or enter Hollywood. The case does not establish a formal selection among small studios, e-commerce and Hollywood; those are opportunities requiring evaluation.

4. Where I'd place the next bet

Based on the case, I'd lean towards small businesses and lean creative teams producing substantial volumes of marketing video. They may value speed, accessibility, captions, editing and AI generation. But this is a strategic recommendation, not a confirmed VEED decision. I'd test whether an e-commerce business can produce ten effective videos in the time formerly needed for one, and whether willingness to pay covers AI costs sustainably.

5. The lesson

The key is distinguishing a fast-growing market from one where the company has a genuine right to win. VEED's advantage has been making video creation easy, not having the longest feature list. Imagine £5 million and 12 months to show growth. Would you target small creative studios or e-commerce businesses? What evidence would you require before committing?

Question 1

Interviewer: Can you walk me through the last video you created using VEED, from start to finish? What were you trying to achieve, and how did the process go?

Simulated Maya:

The last project I worked on in VEED was a short internal product update video. The goal was to turn a dense update into a two-minute video that employees across regions could understand, consistent with our brand and easy to distribute without a full production team.

1. Getting the brief and gathering content

Product marketing provided a presentation, screen recordings and a rough script. I worked with the product team to narrow the material to three key messages: what was changing, why it mattered and where employees could learn more. Deciding what to communicate took a surprising amount of time.

2. Building the first cut in VEED

I uploaded screen recordings and visuals, trimmed pauses, arranged the timeline and used a branded template. I added logo, brand colours, text overlays and transitions. The initial edit took around an hour. In a traditional workflow it could have taken half a day, although that's a comparison rather than a measured baseline. VEED let me avoid opening Premiere Pro or involving a specialist editor for this project.

3. Captions and localisation

VEED's automatic English captions were useful but needed corrections to product names and technical terms. AI translation was a starting point, but I'd want a native speaker to review terminology and tone before publication. A technically correct translation can sound unnatural.

4. Feedback and approvals

I shared the draft with product marketing and internal communications. Stakeholders wanted different wording, longer demonstrations and corrections to an outdated screenshot. I revised and exported another version. Editing was straightforward; consolidating feedback and securing agreement was hard. I spend more time chasing approvals than actually creating. I want feedback, version tracking and approvals more tightly connected.

5. Exporting and distributing

After approval, I exported the final video in 1080p and duplicated the project to make a shorter version for a company-wide update. We checked captions, branding and accessibility.

6. What worked and what didn't

The whole project took roughly two working days from brief to delivery, though actual editing was only a few hours. Strengths: speed, auto-captioning, accessibility and repurposing. Challenges: multi-stakeholder feedback, brand consistency, translation quality and tracking revisions and approvals.

7. Biggest takeaway

Not every video needs Hollywood production. For flagship campaigns I'd still use Adobe tools and specialist editors; for internal updates VEED fits well. The larger opportunity is enabling regional marketing teams and non-video specialists to create quality content without everything passing through my team. I want my team to focus on storytelling and strategy rather than resizing, subtitles and chasing minor edits.

Question 2

Interviewer: You mentioned that managing feedback and approvals was the most frustrating part of your last project. Could you walk me through exactly how you collected and managed feedback from different stakeholders? What happened when comments conflicted or changes were requested?

Simulated Maya:

This is probably where I lose the most time. Editing is quick; getting five people to agree on the final video is difficult. For this update, I worked with product marketing, internal communications and brand.

1. How I collected feedback

I shared a VEED review link, but feedback came through multiple channels. Product marketing emailed technical and feature comments; internal communications sent Slack messages about language and pacing; brand reviewed visuals, fonts, colours and tone. People could comment on the same moment in different channels. I consolidated everything in a tracker with timestamps, requested change, requester and status, and distinguished factual errors from subjective preferences.

2. What happened when comments conflicted

Product marketing wanted a longer feature demonstration while internal communications wanted a shorter video. Both were valid. I returned to the communication objective and proposed a concise main video with a link to full documentation. I try to resolve conflicts based on audience needs rather than seniority, except where factual accuracy, legal or compliance requirements are non-negotiable.

3. How I handled change requests

I sorted feedback into must-fix (incorrect information, outdated screenshots, accessibility and compliance), should-fix (pacing, clarity and explanation) and nice-to-have (stylistic preferences). I batched edits in VEED and shared an updated version. We went through a couple of rounds before final approval.

4. Where the process broke down

Version control was the biggest issue. A person could review the first cut and reply two days later after the second version was already updated, producing comments about scenes that no longer existed. Feedback such as 'make this more engaging' was vague and required follow-up. Late structural requests from senior stakeholders could undo hours of work.

5. How I got final approval

I established one contact in each stakeholder group, sent a revised video with a feedback deadline and requested consolidated comments. Product marketing signed off accuracy, brand signed off visuals and internal communications approved messaging. We checked captions and planned language review for translated versions.

6. What I'd change

I'd want one timestamped feedback location where everyone reviews the same version, clear reviewer and sign-off responsibilities, and version tracking that flags outdated comments. Ideally this would happen within the editing environment rather than across VEED, Slack, email and spreadsheets. I feel like both a video strategist and a project coordinator. VEED makes content creation faster, but organisational coordination hasn't caught up.

Question 3

Interviewer: Thinking about your recent video projects, how often have feedback or approval problems caused delays or rework? Could you describe a specific example and roughly how much extra time it took?

Simulated Maya:

Feedback or approval issues affect probably 60–70% of the projects I manage, to varying degrees. Of the last five or six, three or four had unexpected revisions or approval delays; one or two had significant rework. These are my estimates.

One specific example

For a roughly two-minute internal product launch video, the first cut in VEED took about an hour and polishing took another couple of hours. Product marketing wanted more feature detail while internal communications wanted a shorter video. I spent about an hour resolving the conflict through Slack and email. We agreed to keep the video concise and link to documentation, then I spent another hour revising it. A brand reviewer then noticed an outdated screenshot, requiring replacement, timing checks and caption alignment, followed by another approval round.

Roughly how much extra time?

Consolidating conflicting feedback: 1 hour. Revising script and video: 1–1.5 hours. Replacing screenshot and checking the edit: 30–45 minutes. Coordinating another approval round: 30–60 minutes. Total estimated additional hands-on work: 3–4 hours. There was probably another business day of elapsed waiting time. A project that could realistically have taken one working day ended up closer to two.

Why it matters

Multiple videos each week amplify these costs. Sometimes freelancers or other editors must be involved, adding coordination and potential costs. Reopening a supposedly finished project interrupts work on other campaigns.

What might have prevented it

One shared feedback location, clear decision authority and a formal approval cutoff. I think these changes could have removed at least half the extra work, but that's a prediction rather than an observed saving. Avoiding three hours of coordination and a one-day delay might be more valuable than saving another 30 minutes in editing.

Question 4

Interviewer: Can you tell me about a recent time when AI-generated captions or translations were inaccurate? What happened, how did you correct them, and what impact did that have?

Simulated Maya:

AI-generated captions and translations are useful, but I wouldn't publish everything without human review.

1. What went wrong

For the roughly two-minute internal product update, VEED's English auto-captions handled everyday language well, but a branded feature name resembling common words was transcribed incorrectly. A couple of punctuation choices also slightly changed the intended meaning. Incorrect terminology could confuse employees communicating with customers.

2. How I fixed it

I watched the video and corrected product names, punctuation and subtitle timing manually. This added about 20–30 minutes. Someone who understands the product still needs to review the output.

3. Translation was harder

One AI-translated version was understandable but too formal and unnatural for that market. A regional reviewer flagged the phrasing. We worked with regional marketing to revise terminology, wording and on-screen fit; translated text can be longer than English.

4. Impact on workflow

English caption corrections: 20–30 minutes. Reviewing translation feedback: 20–30 minutes. Updating translated subtitles and timing: 30–45 minutes. Coordinating regional sign-off: 15–30 minutes. Total estimated hands-on effort: 1.5–2.25 hours, plus unquantified waiting for regional review. The translation problem was more disruptive because it involved another person and approval step.

5. What frustrated me most

The main frustration was repeating the same corrections across projects. Product names, technical terminology and brand language recur. I'd like a reusable approved glossary applied to captions and translations, and regional reviewers able to edit translated captions without access to the entire editing project. At present I often transfer their corrections myself.

6. What I learned

AI dramatically accelerates first drafts but does not necessarily produce publish-ready output. Customer-facing content requires technical accuracy, cultural appropriateness, accessibility and brand consistency. Human reviewers should spend time on meaningful quality checks rather than repeatedly correcting basic errors. AI should make us look sharper, not robotic.

Question 5

Interviewer: Of the challenges we have discussed—feedback and approvals, AI captioning and translation, and brand consistency—which has had the biggest impact on your work, and why?

Simulated Maya:

Managing stakeholder feedback and approvals has had the biggest impact, without question. Captions, localisation and branding are recurring frustrations, but approvals consistently affect timelines, capacity and output volume.

Why feedback and approvals stand out

Three or four of my last five or six projects had some approval delay or unexpected rework. In the product update example, the first cut took around an hour but conflicting requests and an outdated screenshot added roughly 3–4 hours of hands-on work and another business day of waiting. Creation is faster, but approval has not become equally efficient.

Why it matters more than other challenges

First, it is unpredictable. I can budget 20–30 minutes to check AI captions; I cannot know whether a reviewer will sign off in an hour or return two days later with a major change. Second, it has ripple effects: a late structural change can require a new script, edit, captions, translations and approval cycle, delaying other projects. Third, I cannot solve stakeholder responsiveness and conflicting priorities on my own; they require clearer processes, ownership and tools.

Impact on my role

I should be focused on video strategy, storytelling and communication, but sometimes spend more time tracking approvals and following up on Slack. If every video requires me to coordinate four or five stakeholders, I become the bottleneck, limiting scalability.

What would make the biggest difference?

A centralised review and approval process, ideally integrated into VEED: one version, timestamped comments, visibility into resolved feedback, defined sign-off ownership and a distinction between mandatory changes and subjective preferences.

Bigger picture

Faster editing delivers diminishing returns if videos still get stuck in approvals. I'd rather save three hours coordinating feedback than another fifteen minutes trimming a video. Solving this could increase throughput, deadline reliability and time available for creative work. The opportunity is for VEED to support the workflow from first draft through final sign-off.