

Paul Buchheit’s Product-Kernel Essay Leads Today’s Strongest Recommendations

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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Four organic recommendations made the cut today, led by DHH’s endorsement of Paul Buchheit’s essay on why a strong product kernel can outweigh missing features. Bill Gurley, Reid Hoffman, and Sarah Guo added picks on CATL’s market power, Feynman’s essays, and AI inference-compute research.

What stood out

Four recommendations passed the authenticity filter today. The common thread was **specificity**: each recommender attached a clear lens to the resource—how to launch an incomplete but compelling product, how to reason about supplier dominance, how to reset curiosity, or where AI inference-compute research is moving.

Most compelling recommendation

A great product doesn’t have to be good

- **Content type:** Essay [1]
- **Author/creator:** Paul Buchheit [1]
- **Link/URL:** Direct resource link not provided in the source notes
- **Who recommended it:** David Heinemeier Hansson (DHH) [1]
- **Key takeaway:** DHH highlighted Buchheit’s argument that a product with a novel, appealing core can succeed without a full checklist of table-stakes features; what matters is nailing the key interactions that make users feel the new version is meaningfully better [1]
- **Why it matters:** This was the strongest pick because it was not just a title drop. DHH explicitly used the essay as a launch philosophy for

Basecamp 5, making it an applied framework for product teams deciding when a strong kernel outweighs missing polish [1]

“A great product can actually get away with far less of that because there’s a kernel of it that’s really strong.” [1]

Three more worth saving

CATL and the Automakers: Three Questions

- **Content type:** Article [2]
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the source notes
- **Link/URL:** <https://crossingriver.substack.com/p/catl-and-the-automakers-three-questions> [2]
- **Who recommended it:** Bill Gurley [2]
- **Key takeaway:** Gurley said the piece made an “Intel” analogy ring true for CATL in China, echoing his experience covering the PC market in the mid-90s as Intel expanded its power even into motherboards [2]
- **Why it matters:** The recommendation gives readers a concrete mental model for understanding how one supplier can become structurally dominant inside a fast-growing hardware ecosystem [2]

The Pleasure of Finding Things Out

- **Content type:** Book / collection of essays and talks [3]
- **Author/creator:** Richard Feynman [3]
- **Link/URL:** Direct resource link not provided in the source notes
- **Who recommended it:** Reid Hoffman [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Hoffman said he turns to the book for a mental tune-up, a reset, and a dose of optimism, and that the essays are ostensibly about science but also about curiosity, mischief, learning, and life [3]
- **Why it matters:** This recommendation stands out as a repeatable practice rather than a one-time read: Hoffman framed it as something useful in short bursts when he wants to reset how he thinks [3]

SPIRAL

- **Content type:** Research [4]
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the source notes
- **Link/URL:** https://x.com/jubayer_hamid/status/2069470993345913252 [4]
- **Who recommended it:** Sarah Guo [4]
- **Key takeaway:** Guo called it “cool research work on scaling inference compute” [4]
- **Why it matters:** It was the most direct pointer to current AI-systems research in today’s set [4]

If you only save one

Save Paul Buchheit's essay. It had the clearest combination of conviction and application: DHH did not just recommend it, he used it to explain how to judge whether a product is ready to ship when the core experience is much stronger than the surrounding feature list [1]

Sources

1. Launch Details and Decisions – REWORK
2. X post by @bgurley
3. Who's Got The Ball On Carbon Removal?
4. X post by @saranormous