

# 2024 Insights report for product teams



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# Executive Summary

Over the last two decades, digital transformation has turned every company into a digital product company.

Whether you're leading Product at a bank, airline, retailer, or tech organization, the ability to deliver digital products at scale is a core requirement for success. And now, with the emergence of AI, executives and consumers alike expect more than just digital products. They expect personalized, inspiring, AI-infused experiences that drive revenue and growth.

In this new reality, product teams are under intense pressure to deliver. They are not only expected to create captivating, AI-infused customer experiences—they're also held accountable for an array of performance metrics that extend far beyond the quantity and quality of features shipped. In the current market where agility and AI reign supreme, product teams need an entirely new operations model to succeed.

We surveyed 550 U.S.-based product leaders across various industries—from retail and financial services to healthcare, manufacturing, and more—to uncover what sets successful product teams apart.

The standout teams—those consistently hitting targets, exceeding leadership expectations, and seeing sustainable growth in both budget and headcount—share three key traits:

#### **Maintain a strong strategic focus**

Successful product teams prioritize strategic goals over reactive feedback. They ensure product releases align with revenue objectives and establish clear visibility across teams to avoid drifting from strategy.

#### **Embed AI extensively across workflows**

These teams leverage AI across all stages of the product development life cycle—from parsing customer insights to prioritizing roadmap initiatives and measuring the impact of new product releases. By deeply embedding AI into their workflows, they are also better equipped to deliver AI-infused customer experiences.

#### **Think beyond the roadmap**

High-performing teams connect product development with upstream and downstream data, using integrations and custom workflows to make smarter, data-driven decisions. Taking a holistic approach to digital product development helps them drive revenue, retain customers, and increase market share.



**Execute / Manager dashboard**

**Project details**

Product Tag (from Team) | Product Area | Team Tag (from Team)

**Projects by owner**

Owner	Projects
Cameron Toth	1
Jules Harris	1
Kelly Seif	1
Logan Grandmont	2
Mitsuko Snay	2
Paris Fotiou	1
Rin O'Shea	1
Robby Pritchett	1

**Business priority legend:**

- Critical
- High
- Medium
- Low

**Projects by key results**

- Key results
  - > Add realtime price sync for top 3 inventory management providers
- Key results
  - > Improve search results relevance across platforms 1

By adopting these strategies, product leaders can enhance their team's agility and responsiveness to market changes to ensure they remain the disruptors, rather than the disrupted, in the years ahead.

This report dives into the survey findings and outlines strategies that product leaders—from CPOs and GTM strategy executives to UX and product management leaders—can implement to adapt their product operations model to meet growing expectations.

**As the rate of disruption continues to increase—exacerbated by the rise of AI—these proven best practices are what will separate industry leaders from laggards.**

### About the survey

Conducted by Qualtrics, the study includes 550 respondents who are at the director level and above in their marketing department. All respondents are full-time employees at U.S. companies with 1,000 or more employees; 61% work for companies with over 5,000 employees. These leaders' primary responsibilities range from brand and content to marketing ops, campaigns, and product marketing.

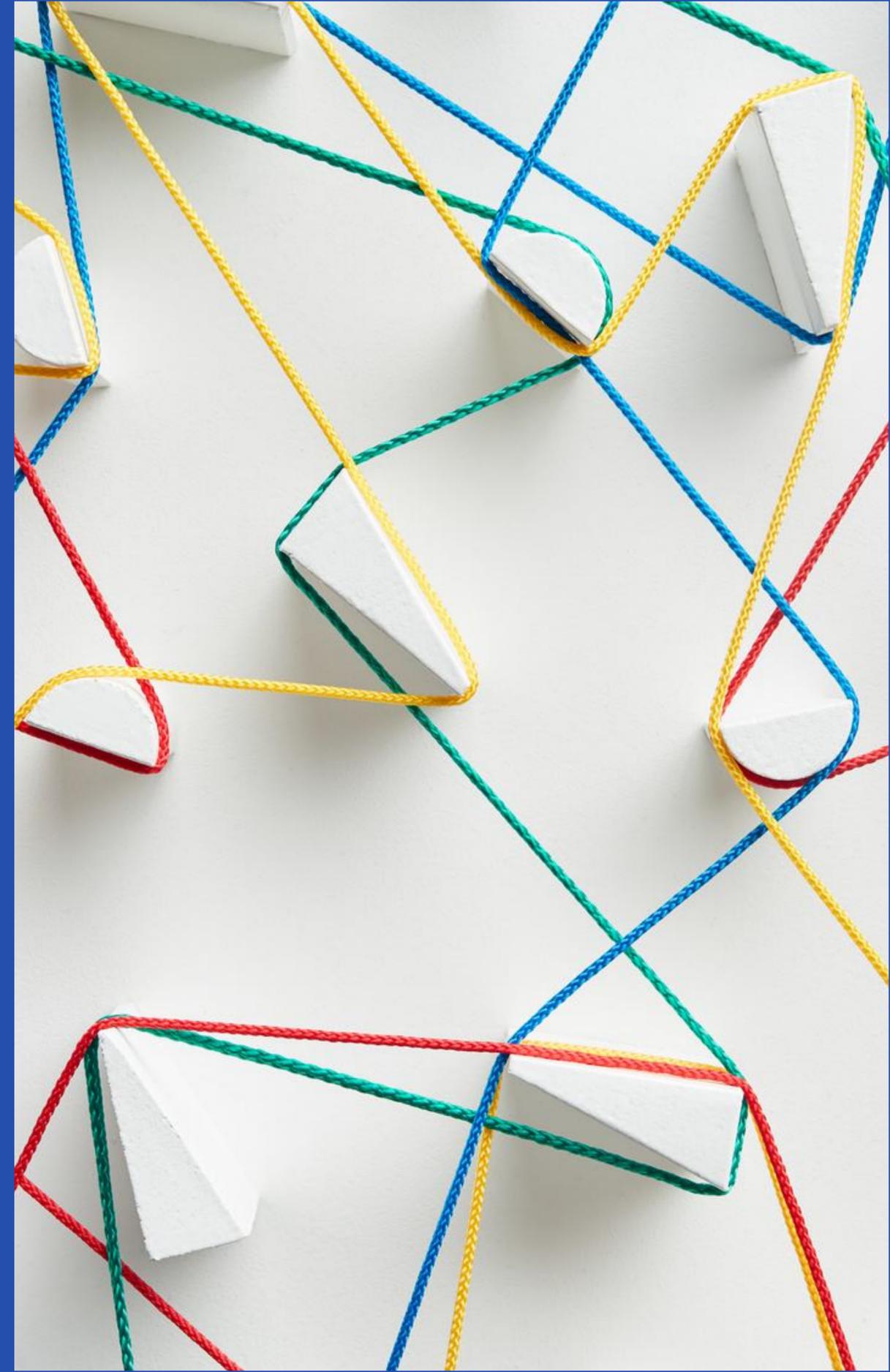
[View the survey methodology and demographics](#)



FROM ROADMAPS TO RESULTS

# Redefining product leadership

Product leaders are no longer just building features and roadmaps—they're building the future of the business itself. As companies across every industry embrace digital-first strategies, product teams have evolved into central drivers of growth and competitive advantage.

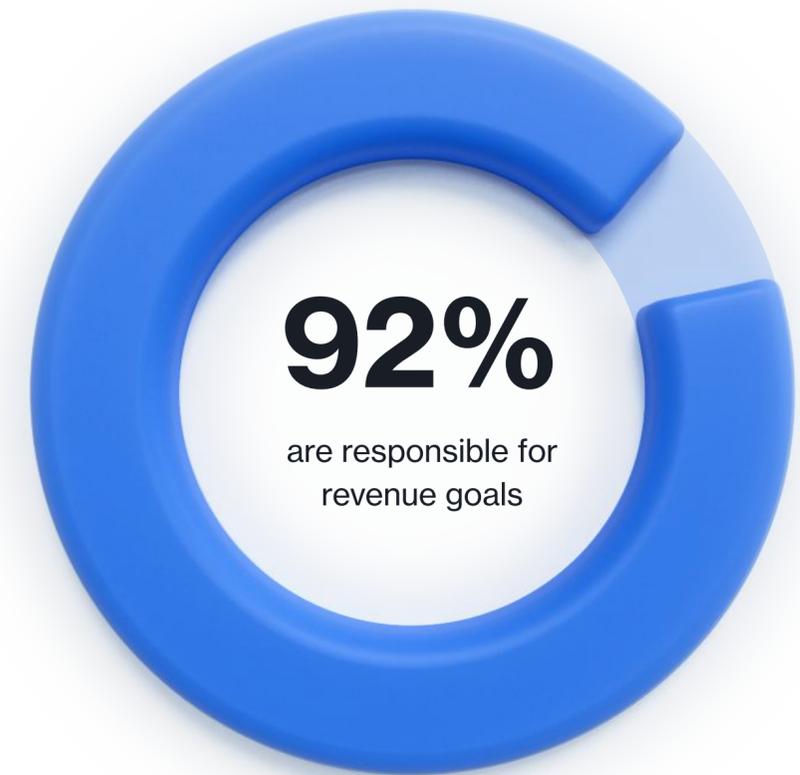


It's no longer enough to ship products on time —product leaders are now responsible for delivering strategic outcomes, driving revenue growth, and keeping pace with rapidly changing market dynamics.

The expectations are staggering: Our survey of 550 product leaders found that **92% are responsible for revenue goals, yet only 26% have high visibility into the ROI of their product launches.**

Despite ballooning budgets and growing teams (89% reported increased investment last year), many product teams are struggling with the relentless demand to deliver more, faster.

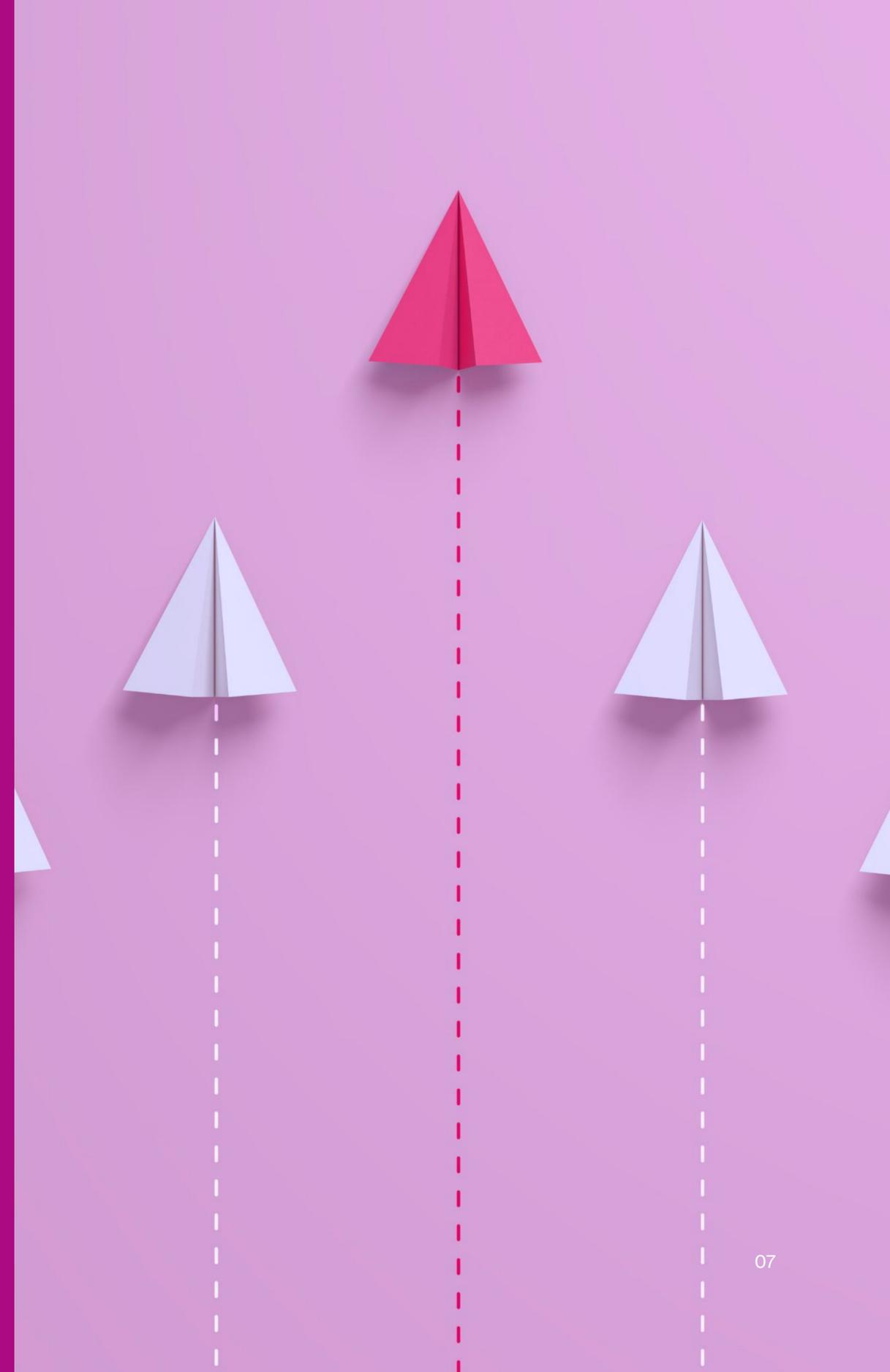
The challenges are deeply ingrained in how product teams operate. **Only 1 in 3 teams report having “very efficient and repeatable” workflows.** The number one bottleneck? Resource constraints. On top of that, the complexity of projects is skyrocketing, and teams are battling stress, scope creep, and changing user needs.



MEET THE MOMENT

# How product leaders can rise to expectations

To thrive in this era of rapid, AI-driven innovation and heightened responsibility, product leaders must adopt an operational model grounded in three core practices:



1

## Maintain a strong point of view on market fit and product goals

**Top-performing product teams stay squarely focused on their strategic objectives, avoiding distractions from reactive, ad-hoc customer requests or feedback.** Our research shows teams that stick to their goals “almost always” are significantly more likely to meet goals and expectations.

**Keeping the entire product organization focused on strategic goals enhances performance and builds trust with key stakeholders**—including executives who control budgets. As a result, these teams are also significantly more likely to have seen a 50% or greater increase in resources—such as headcount, budget, and technology—over the past year.

2

## Embed AI extensively across critical processes

Integrating AI into critical workflows is essential for staying competitive. Product teams that increased resources by 50% or more in the last year are significantly more likely to have *also* invested heavily in AI solutions. **And teams that invest extensively in AI tend to meet their goals and deadlines more consistently, indicating that AI enhances both innovation and execution.**

By incorporating AI-infused workflows throughout the product development life cycle, these teams are also better equipped to deliver AI-infused digital experiences that align with customer expectations.

3

## Think beyond the product roadmap

To enhance effectiveness, product teams should connect with upstream and downstream workflows to leverage cross-functional data. **Strengthening go-to-market partnerships, prioritizing data hygiene, and using no-code tools for app customization and integration are essential strategies** for this approach.

These actions are also linked to a greater likelihood of meeting goals and deadlines consistently. By fostering collaboration across teams, product leaders are better prepared to anticipate and navigate market changes.

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**It's important to recognize that these three best practices are closely intertwined, working together to create an optimal operational model.** For example, investing in AI and thinking beyond the product roadmap not only boost operational effectiveness but also help bolster the product leader's strategic point of view (POV). **This interconnection highlights how these practices collectively enhance a team's ability to meet growing expectations.**



# | Maintain a strong product point of view

Strategy drift occurs when product teams stray from strategic goals to address “urgent” but non-critical feedback or requests. While common, this can be particularly disruptive in managing product operations, as the loudest voices—often from customers or Sales—can easily sway teams off course.

And as product teams grow larger, the challenge multiplies. With hundreds or even thousands of employees spread across different initiatives, maintaining strategic alignment can feel like a Herculean task.



# Only 31% of product leaders are “very confident” that they’re building the right product for their market.

This uncertainty can lead teams to react impulsively to immediate concerns and feature requests, often sidelining their strategic objectives. Our research highlights the widespread struggle to maintain strategic focus and alignment across the product organization:

- **20% of teams struggle to stay aligned to the roadmap**, frequently shifting focus when faced with ‘urgent’ feedback from Sales or customers.
- Just **36% of leaders** report it’s “very easy” to ensure all teams adhere to the strategic roadmap without deviating into unplanned areas.
- Nearly **1 in 3 product leaders** say their teams focus primarily on “individual feature delivery” rather than driving toward shared strategic goals.

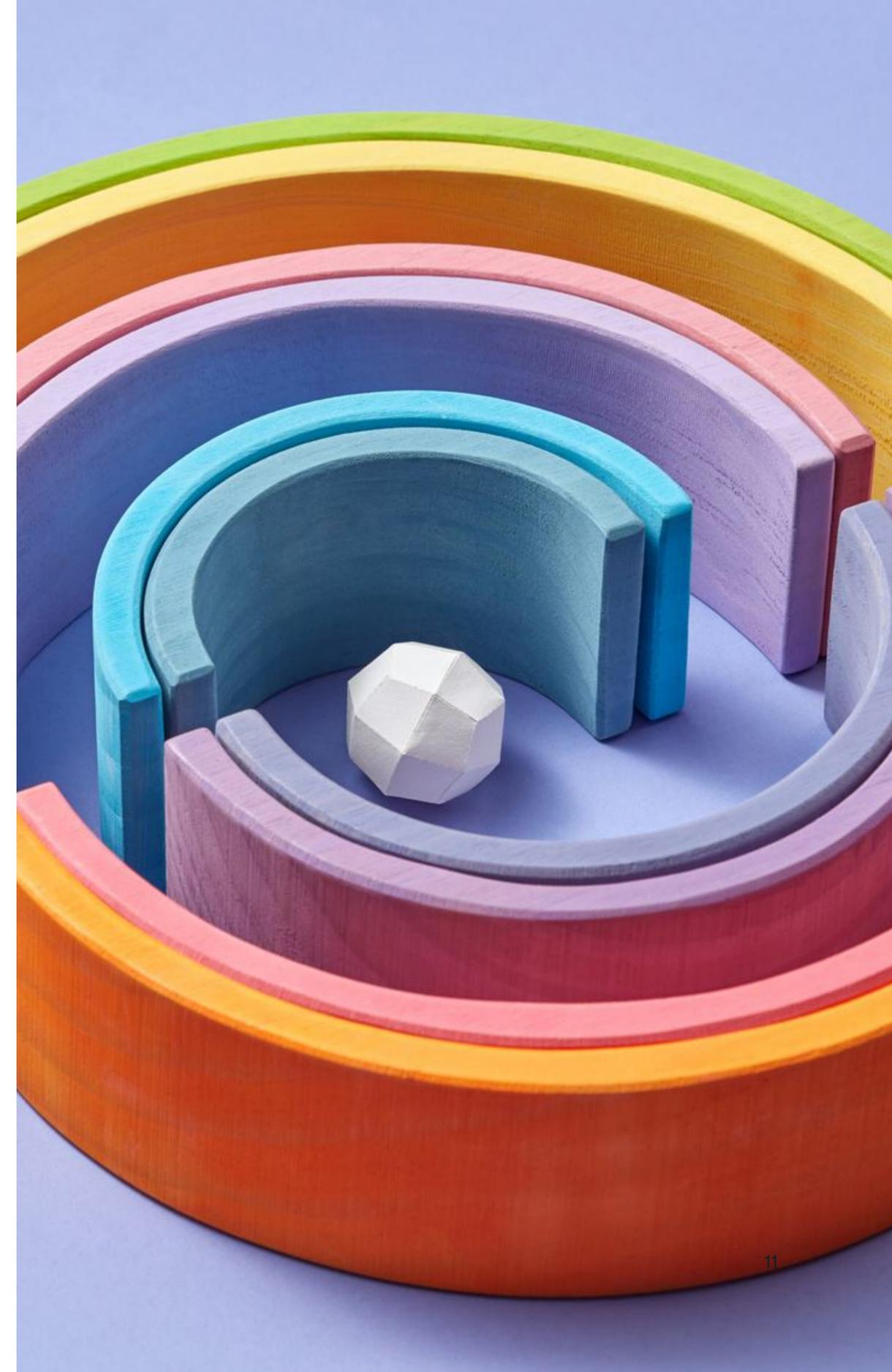


# A strong product POV is essential for maintaining focus amidst the noise.

Teams that often meet their goals and deadlines are significantly more likely to view product POV as a critical input during roadmap planning.

Unfortunately, this is often deprioritized in product discovery, where "customer feedback" is rated as the most important critical input—considerably outweighing "product POV" or "business pressure." Most leaders also cite "customer satisfaction and feedback" as the primary measure of success, overshadowing the achievement of strategic goals.

**To combat strategy drift, product leaders need a clear POV on market fit, a robust approach to goal setting, and high visibility across their operations.**



# 1

## Establish strong leadership and clear direction

**Strong leadership is the number one factor that keeps product teams on track with their projects and timelines.**

Yet, many leaders prioritize immediate customer feedback over strategic objectives, market demand, or technological feasibility. This reactive approach can lead to a lack of cohesion across the product organization, causing team members to lose sight of strategic priorities and slowing overall progress.

**In contrast, teams with a long-term roadmap are much more likely to maintain alignment with their goals—even when faced with ad hoc requests.**

By having a clear product vision for the future, these teams keep their focus intact. Meanwhile, teams that frequently shift their strategy based on feedback tend to have shorter roadmap planning cycles of only 3 to 6 months.



## 2

# Connect product features to business goals

## Tying product features directly to business goals is essential for minimizing strategy drift.

**Why is this connection so important? It fosters executive and cross-functional buy-in, reducing the risk of strategy churn. Our research also indicates that teams that tie product features to business objectives are more likely to consistently meet their goals and deadlines.**

The data reveals a clear trend: teams that only “sometimes” connect product features to business goals tend to frequently shift focus based on ad hoc feedback. In contrast, teams that “often” make this connection generally maintain alignment, with occasional deviations. Most compellingly, **teams that “always” link product features to business goals are significantly more likely to always stay aligned with the product strategy—even when faced with external pressures.**

By connecting product features and business objectives—and ensuring this connection is visible across the organization—product leaders can create a focused, agile development process that achieves strategic targets.



# 3

## Provide transparency into progress

**Without a clear view of the product roadmap and the status of each team's contributions, it's challenging for leaders to pinpoint where work may be veering off course. It's why our research reveals a direct correlation between roadmap visibility and staying on track to meet strategic goals.**

Those leaders with greater visibility into roadmap progress are more likely to always remain aligned with team and company objectives compared to those with limited insight. However, nearly half (49%) of teams still find themselves consulting 5 to 9 different sources of information just to piece together a clear picture of product progress.

By providing transparency into the roadmap, product leaders can ensure teams stay aligned and make informed decisions. This visibility allows for early identification of potential issues, enabling teams to adjust and focus on delivering high-priority features.



# 4

## Deepen visibility into ROI

**For product leaders, having strong visibility into ROI is critical for making informed, strategic decisions. Teams with a clear view of ROI are better equipped to make data-driven choices that align with long-term goals, rather than reacting to every piece of feedback.**

Our research shows that teams with high ROI visibility are much more likely to stay on course with their plans. But despite its importance, only 26% of product leaders report having "very high" visibility into the ROI of their product launches. Not surprisingly, those with this level of insight tend to describe their processes as "very efficient."

By prioritizing ROI visibility across the product organization, leaders can keep teams focused on delivering high-impact features and avoid reactive decisions that disrupt long-term product strategy.



# Full visibility, zero drift: Align your roadmap to OKRs

Keeping product teams aligned on shared goals is critical. Without it, strategy drift happens and products miss the mark.

Airtable lets teams plan, manage, and report on OKRs—all in one place. With complete visibility into team progress against company-wide objectives, CPOs can swiftly spot and address any issues before they affect delivery.

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Want to dive deeper into setting and aligning on product objectives in Airtable?  
[See how it works](#)



# Embed AI across critical processes

AI is already reshaping how product teams operate, and the teams leaning in are pulling ahead. The misconception that AI threatens human jobs is outdated. In truth, AI is *driving* growth.

Product teams investing in AI aren't just more efficient—they're expanding. **Product teams that invest heavily in AI are more likely to have increased headcount by 50% or more in the past year.** These same teams are also more likely to have reported a 50%+ increase in technology investment over the past year.

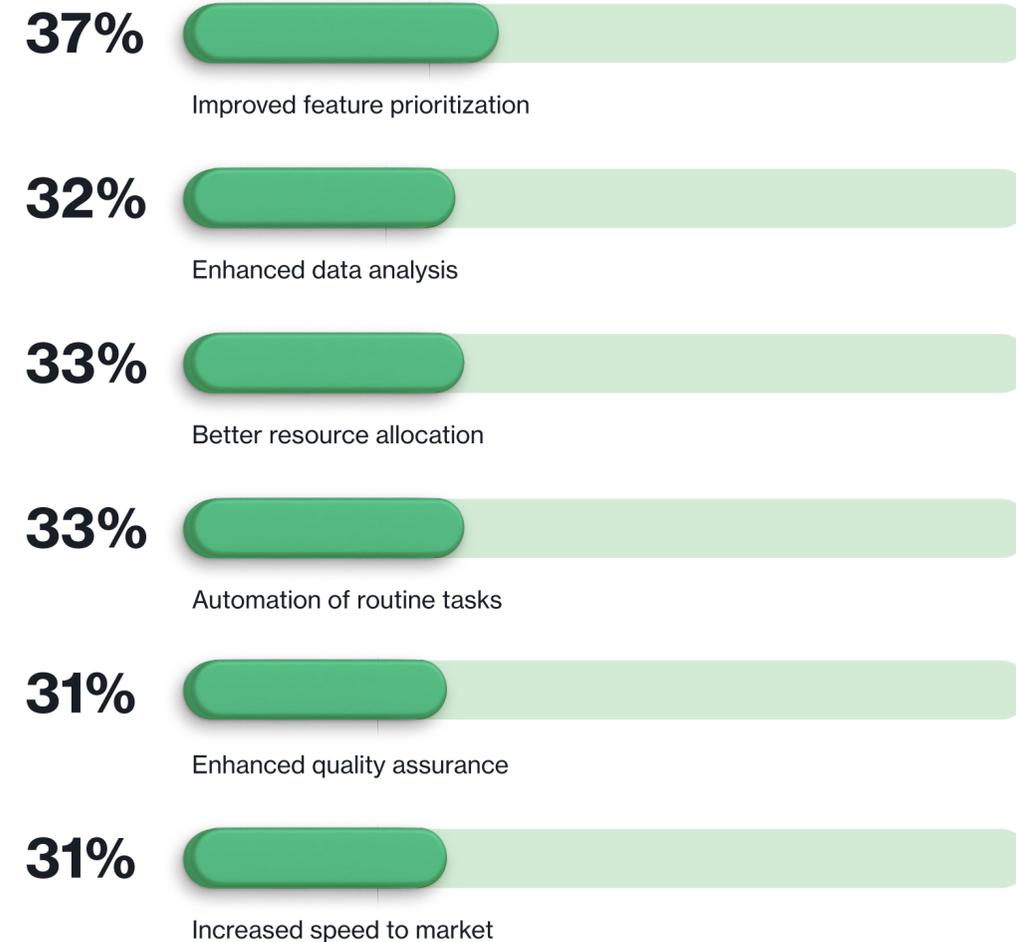


# AI is here to stay, and it's changing how organizations build, prioritize, and deliver products.

With 55% of product leaders reporting that AI already plays a major role in product development—and a whopping 76% expecting that investment to grow over the next year—the momentum is undeniable.

Product teams that don't integrate AI into their workflows are missing out on more than efficiency. **Those that use AI extensively are significantly more likely to hit their goals, ship releases on time, and scale faster.**

## The top benefits of AI adoption according to product leaders are:



# Where are product leaders investing in AI?

AI isn't a tool to use occasionally or piecemeal—it should be embedded into the fabric of your product development life cycle. When teams fully integrate AI into their everyday workflows—rather than view it as an ad-hoc tool used inconsistently—they can realize its full potential. Here are a few areas where AI can have the biggest impact on product operations:

## **Parsing customer feedback**

Teams that extensively use AI are more likely to automate customer feedback analysis, enabling quick discovery of actionable insights. For instance, when examining tens of thousands of sales calls or Jira tickets, AI can identify patterns and potential opportunities in seconds—tasks that would take humans days or weeks.

## **Prioritizing product features**

Teams that rely heavily on AI are significantly more likely to automate product prioritization than those with less investment in AI. AI can help teams align product initiatives with strategic goals and OKRs (Objectives and Key Results), as well as automatically prioritize projects based on potential impact.

## **Syncing and analyzing data**

Teams with high AI adoption are much more likely to have fully automated processes for updating data across tools. For example, a product organization can use AI to sync customer support, project management, and sales data, ensuring all teams have real-time access to insights.

## **Scaling inputs for roadmap planning**

Teams using AI extensively draw from a broader range of inputs—typically 6 to 10 different sources—when planning their roadmaps, compared to teams using AI less. By using AI to parse customer feedback, competitive analysis, and market trends, product leaders can improve decision-making and strengthen prioritization.

## **Streamlining handoffs and approvals**

Product teams using AI extensively are more likely to use AI to automate handoffs and approval processes. Instead of waiting days for feedback from multiple stakeholders, AI can quickly route documents to the right individuals, track responses, and compile approvals in real time.

## **Leveraging real-time insights**

High AI usage enhances a team's ability to use real-time insights to improve the planning process. For example, product teams using AI analytics can quickly track user engagement metrics post-feature release. This enables them to adjust their strategy based on usage patterns while gaining clear ROI visibility.

**As AI adoption accelerates, product leaders need to embrace AI at every stage of the development process. From feature prioritization and real-time analytics to automation, AI is the key to scaling, optimizing, and accelerating your product strategy.**



# Airtable AI: Empower your team with AI-driven workflows

Airtable AI makes it easy to embed AI directly into every stage of the product development life cycle, from parsing customer insights to measuring the impact of product releases:

Learn more about Airtable AI, ways it can help your product team, and how it protects your data with enterprise-grade security.

[Read more](#)



<input type="checkbox"/>	Artist	Royalty
1	Echo Drift	15% of
2	Neon Reverie	22% of
		11% of
		14% roy
		10% of
		18% of
		12% on
		13% of

## ✦ Extracting royalty terms...

... compensate the Artist for all sales of their recorded work as outlined in this agreement. The Artist shall receive a royalty of 15% of all net profits generated from physical and digital sales. Net profits shall be defined as gross revenues from the sale of recordings, minus any applicable manufacturing, distribution, and marketing costs incurred by the Company. Royalties will be paid on a quarterly basis, with

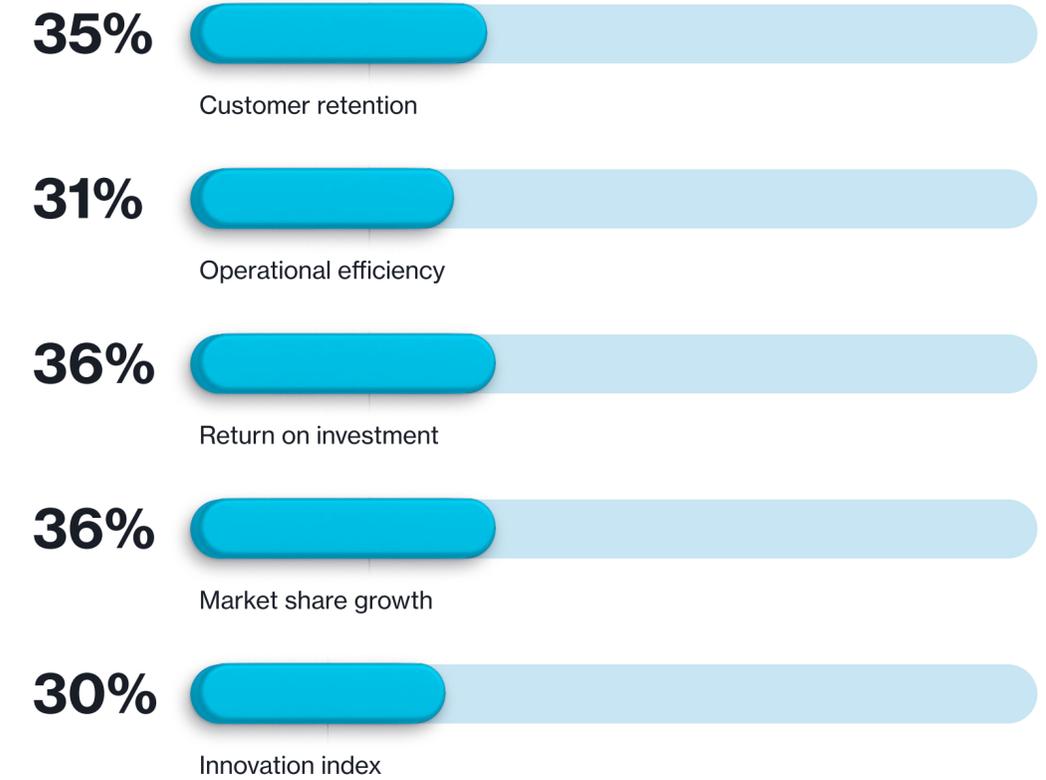
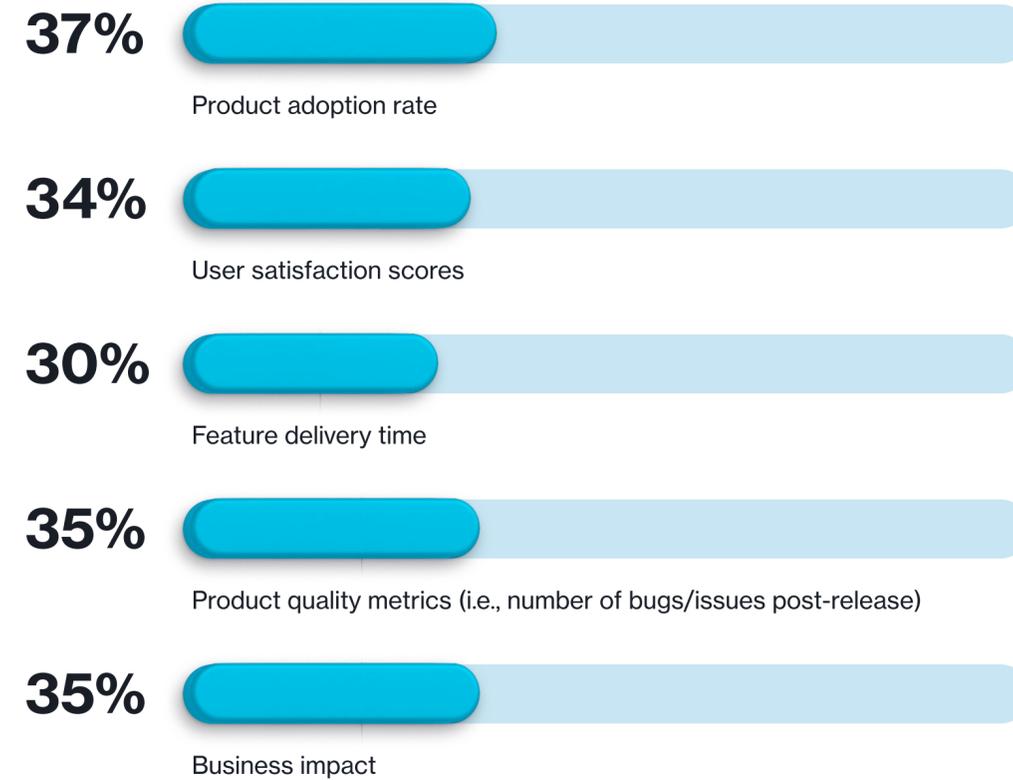
# Think beyond the roadmap

Product teams today are at the center of digital transformation. No longer just focused on delivering features, their roles have evolved to drive overall business success. As a result, product leaders must shift their thinking beyond their immediate purview of the product roadmap.



Historically, a product team's success was measured by the speed of feature delivery. But now, with teams responsible for revenue and business growth, success is evaluated against a wider set of metrics that reflect Product's true impact.

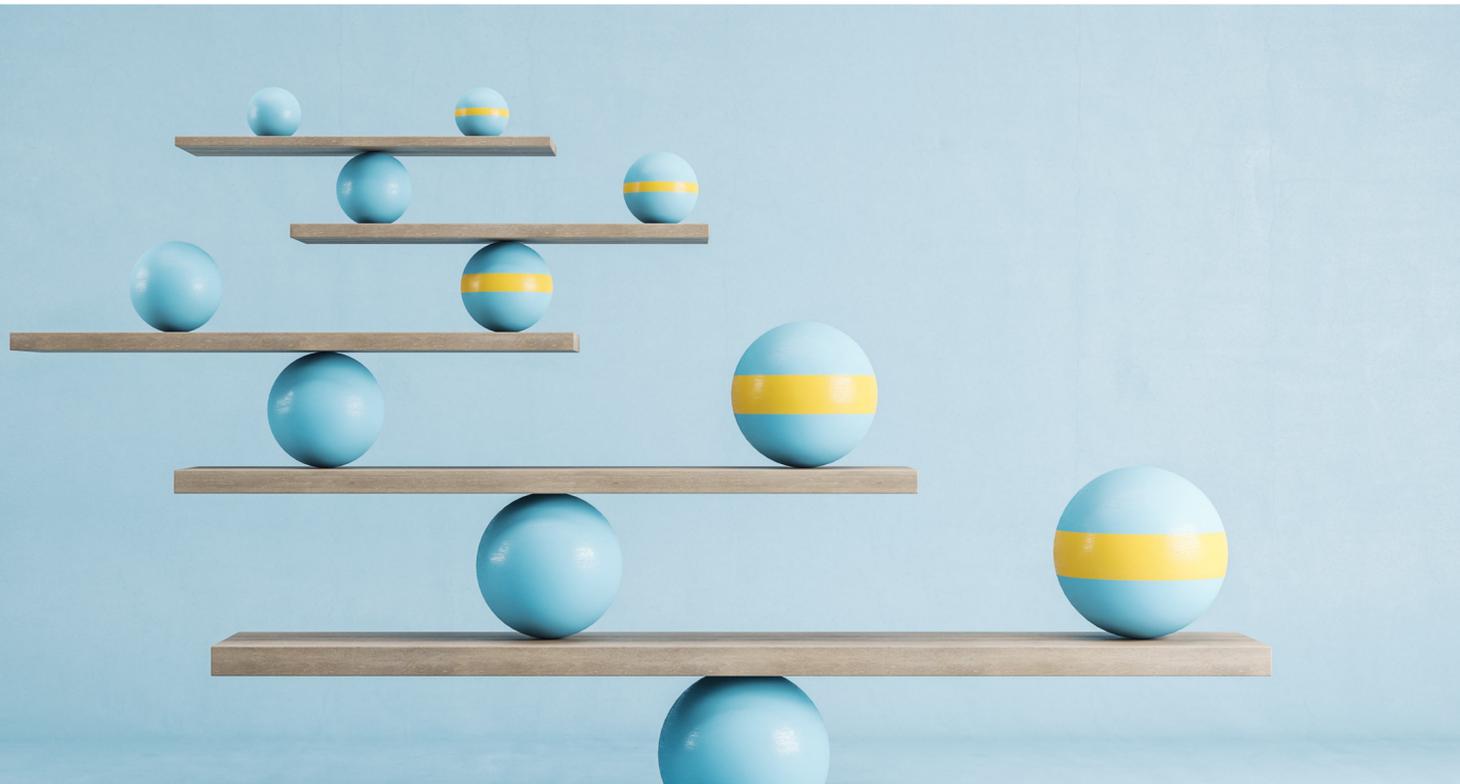
### Product leaders in our survey report being evaluated across multiple dimensions, including:



# To hit these metrics and "think beyond the roadmap," product leaders must adopt a more holistic approach, plugging the team into upstream and downstream data flows.

They must have a deep understanding of sales performance and customer retention metrics, and they must be able to seamlessly integrate with go-to-market workflows across Marketing and Sales. By doing so, the team can gain a more nuanced understanding of customer needs and market conditions, enabling them to make smarter, more strategic decisions.

**How to view product strategy through a wider lens:** To expand product strategy beyond the roadmap, leaders must focus on three key areas: strengthening partnerships with go-to-market (GTM) teams, improving data hygiene, and using no-code tools to improve agility via customized apps and integrations.



# 1 Strengthen partnerships with GTM teams

**For product leaders, building strong partnerships with GTM teams is critical for translating product innovation into tangible business outcomes. Unfortunately, many teams still face challenges with transparency and communication that can slow progress.**

According to our survey, [only 60% of product leaders feel they have robust partnerships with their GTM teams](#), and a similar 60% report that their roadmaps are “mostly transparent.” That’s bad news when you consider what the research says about roadmap transparency: teams that share information openly are more likely to meet their goals and deadlines.

**So, what’s holding teams back? The reality is that product managers are drowning in administrative tasks. Consider these findings:**

- 31% of leaders indicate their teams spend most of their time drafting launch materials rather than on product development.
- 66% of teams acknowledge that most of their work (over 51%) is still manual, relying heavily on emails, spreadsheets, chat, emails, and meetings.
- 41% of respondents cite “regular updates via email or newsletters” as the primary way they communicate the product roadmap with key stakeholders.

**To strengthen GTM partnerships, product leaders should consider adopting automation and real-time collaboration tools.**

By enhancing communication and visibility, teams can work together more efficiently—and surface more profound insights and ideas for future releases. Investing in these improvements can lead to a more productive relationship between product and GTM teams, paving the way for more impactful product launches.



## 2 Invest in data hygiene

**Beyond collaboration, data hygiene is another area in which today's top-performing product teams are investing.**

**While product teams often rely on tools like Jira to manage their workflows, integrating external data sources can yield valuable insights to shape your product strategy.**

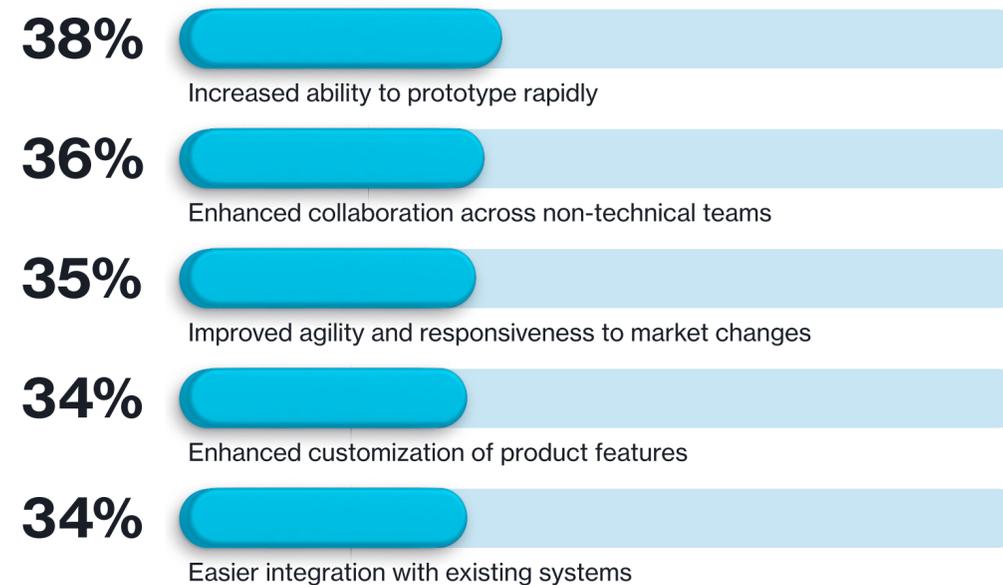
**For example:**

- Integrating with Salesforce can reveal sales trends and the reasons behind wins and losses.
- Plugging into marketing reporting tools like Marketo can illuminate customer sentiment and industry trends.
- Analyzing large data sets from platforms like Snowflake or Databricks can offer a clearer picture of product usage.



### 3 Choose tools that are flexible enough to customize apps and integrations

To be successful, product teams must be able to build and customize applications to solve unique and complex use cases—without extensive coding. And they must be able to integrate tools across the development lifecycle to keep all teams updated with real-time, accurate information.



# No code, no limits: Embracing the flexibility of Airtable

The extensibility of Airtable means anyone can easily build and customize applications to solve unique use cases. For example, product teams might use Airtable to build roadmaps, analyze data, track team progress against company goals, and measure the success and adoption of product launches.

**With Airtable you can centralize and connect all of your product information to keep teams aligned, eliminate silos, and prevent duplicate data. Product teams use Airtable to:**

- Connect data from multiple sources to a single source of truth
- Build logic on top of data, automating repetitive or trigger-based parts of their workflows
- Understand the data in interactive, visual, and actionable ways



# Conclusion

Every company is becoming a digital product company. Consumers now rely on digital platforms for everything—whether it's ordering groceries, managing healthcare, or even buying a home. **For many companies, the digital experience is the business.**

Creating world-class digital products is now critical for survival. [McKinsey cited](#) that technology is driving rapid disruption, with the average lifespan of a company on the S&P 500 shrinking from 61 years in the 1950s to only 18 years today. This trend will only accelerate over the next decade as AI fuels a new wave of rapid business model transformation.

**To realize the full potential of AI and continue to drive meaningful innovation in this environment, product leaders must rethink their entire operating model.**

Product teams need to integrate AI into both customer-facing experiences and internal operations. And they can no longer limit themselves to tracking OKRs and managing Jira tickets—they must connect with upstream and downstream workflows to gain a holistic view of how their products are marketed, positioned, sold, and used.

**That's why CPOs in every industry are tuning to Airtable's no-code platform to connect the entire product development process—**

from the ground truth of customer insights to strategic roadmapping, detailed execution management, and go-to-market launches. And with AI infused at every stage, product leaders can turn their investments into tangible business impact.



# Methodology

This report is based on a 550-person survey fielded in August, 2024 by Airtable in partnership with third-party research firm, Qualtrics.

The study included respondents who met the following criteria:

- A full-time, U.S.-based employee at a company with more than 1,000 employees
- Director level or above in a product function
- Not working for an organization that is a current Airtable customer

## Company size

1,000-4,999	61%
5,000-9,999	33%
10,000-24,999	6%
25,000+	0%

## Job level

Director	17%
VP or General Manager	55%
Executive or C-Level	28%

## Primary product responsibility

Product management	54%
Product engineering	24%
Product ops	18%
UX research	4%

## Product department size

1-24	1%	50-99	61%
25-49	18%	100+	20%

## Industry

Retail and eCommerce	30%	Agriculture	1%
Consumer Goods and Services	6%	Automotive	1%
Manufacturing	18%	Travel and Hospitality	2%
Financial Services and Insurance	3%	Healthcare and Life Sciences	7%
Professional and Technical Services	3%	Technology	5%
Media, Entertainment, and Publishing	1%	Chemical	0%
Transportation	3%	Education	0%
Construction	5%	Mining and Extraction	1%
Telecommunications	3%	Nonprofit	1%
Wholesale	5%	Government and Public Sector	1%
Utilities and Energy	5%	Other	0%



# About Airtable

**Airtable enables teams to build workflows that modernize their business processes.**

More than 450,000 organizations use Airtable to customize workflows that help them stay aligned from concept through market release.

When you have a single source of truth in Airtable, you can keep all functions aligned and working as one team—so you can turn insights into user-centric products that fuel business growth.

**Using Airtable, product leaders like you have been able to:**

**Eliminate 90% of manual data entry**

Achieve 2X faster deployment of new features. The product team at financial services firm, BlackRock, cut release timelines in half, dramatically improving their ability to roll out new features and meet client needs. How? By using Airtable to streamline workflows and connect cross-functional teams in real time.

[Get the full story](#)

**Cut reporting and prioritization from weeks to minutes**

Without a single source of truth, the team at JetBlue was struggling to centralize requests, prioritize initiatives, and share progress with executives. With Airtable, the team can now prioritize and report on the roadmap of 400 initiatives in just minutes—a process that used to take weeks.

[Get the full story](#)

## Ready to get started?

Your own success is right around the corner.

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[Contact Sales](#)

