

2025



# The 2025 State of Product Management Report

10<sup>th</sup>

Edition

2025

2025



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# Introduction

Welcome to the 2025 State of Product Management Report, **the tenth anniversary edition!**

For a decade we've had the privilege of collaborating with hundreds of product professionals across the globe to research product management practices. Each year, our research uncovers changes in technology, shifting priorities, and new challenges in the field. This tenth year is no exception, and we're eager to share our findings with you.

Our surveyed product professionals come from organizations across industries such as Information Technology, Software/SaaS, Manufacturing, Financial Services, Healthcare, Retail, Education, and many more; their teams deliver innovative products and services that drive real progress globally.

According to the [2024 CPO Insights Report](#), 40% of Fortune 1000 companies have a Chief Product Officer (CPO) in 2024, up from 15% in 2022 and 30% in 2023. In addition to the increase in CPOs, product managers increasingly help organizations focus on monetization by making sure product teams deliver high impact solutions.

A recurring challenge for product organizations is keeping teams focused on

the right things. Many organizations successfully overcome this challenge by creating a concise **product strategy** that quickly adapts to changing circumstances. With a clear strategy, product teams deliver products that address customers' core needs and advance the business' longer-term goals. Meanwhile, product leaders forge a new path for product teams to compete and win against fluctuating market conditions and other influences, including: global economic uncertainty, artificial intelligence, and hiring and retaining talent.

This year, we asked nearly 400 product professionals to share their experiences with developing and communicating product strategy, prioritizing work, selecting product tooling, measuring success, and using Artificial Intelligence. We mirrored many of the questions asked in our 2024 State of Product Management Report and, where it made sense, we noted how the responses changed between 2024 and 2025.

Our goal is to provide you with data-driven insights that will heighten your awareness of emerging opportunities and challenges, and potentially inform your own approach to product management this year.

We hope you enjoy the report!

# Report Highlights

## 1. Product strategy is a central focus

Product strategy is the most valuable job to be done for product managers. The drivers of your product strategy and the approach you take to communicating it can play a big part in how effective your product strategy efforts are.

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## 2. Product teams favor tool consolidation

Product teams aim to find the right combination of capabilities in their product tooling while reducing cost. As a result, tool consolidation is increasingly favorable. There's special interest in finding a product management tool that can handle product strategy, roadmapping, and prioritization.

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## 3. AI is more prevalent and more concerning

During 2023, AI became a must-have technology for businesses, leading some organizations to adopt AI to avoid appearing to fall behind. Heading into 2025, product managers are taking a sober look at AI and choosing a more careful approach to adoption. They're moving away from adopting AI for the sake of adopting AI and are instead looking for ways that AI can add real value to their businesses.



# Product Strategy

As organizations took a hard look at their staffing levels, product leaders and managers found the need to double down on the specific activities that add the most value. A primary value-adding activity is creating a **product strategy**.

A product strategy is a high-level plan that defines your product goals throughout its life cycle. Strategy also defines how your product supports the organization's goals. It addresses who exactly the product serves and how it benefits them.

In order for your product strategy to effectively guide your product development efforts, everyone involved in developing your product needs to know and understand your product strategy, and how it aligns to the goals of your organization.

## Developing Your Product Strategy

Product organizations cannot develop strategy in a vacuum; company goals and other influences contribute. We asked our respondents about the primary driver of their product strategy and compared the overall results to last year's survey.

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What primarily drives the development of your product strategy?

Product Strategy Driver	2024	2025
Senior leadership decides for us	31.1%	36%
Reviewing customer feature requests	27.4%	29.5%
Reviewing competition and market	20.7%	16%
Feedback from sales/support	15.5%	15.7%
Other	5.3%	2.8%

Notice the slight **increases in Senior Leadership deciding product strategy** and ‘reviewing customer feature requests’ at the expense of reviewing competition and the market.

That shift means that 51.7% of respondents said the primary influence of product strategy was direction from Senior Leadership (36.0%) or sales/support feedback (15.7%) compared to 46.6% last year.

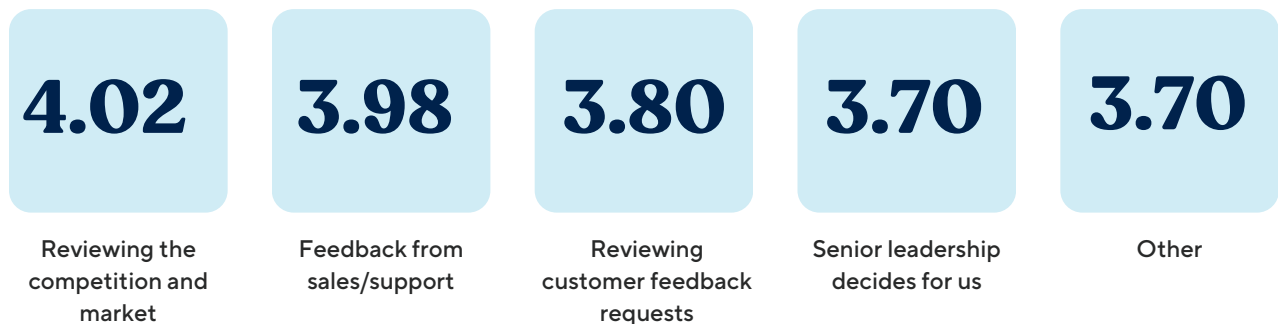
The increase in internal influences accompanies a decrease in the respondents who said their primary influence was external. This year external influences accounted for 45.5% where Customer feedback was the primary driver for 29.5% and competition/market was an influence for 16%. Compare that to last year where external influences were the primary driver for 48.1%.

This year we measured the **effectiveness of product strategy** by asking respondents to rank the alignment of individual teams’ goals with the high-level company goals on a scale of 1 - 5. The average effectiveness measure was 3.84.

When we looked at the alignment ranking by product strategy driver, we found that strategy drivers used more frequently were associated with lower alignment, while the less frequently-used actually led to more alignment.

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#### Alignment of individual teams' goals with your high-level company goals compared to drivers of strategy





## Communicating Your Product Strategy

No matter how beautifully crafted your product strategy is, it won't be an effective tool for aligning your product team if people don't understand it. A big factor in how well people understand your product strategy your **strategy communication**.

To gain insight into this relationship, we asked our respondents to rate how effective their organization was at communicating strategy across departments. On a scale from 1 - 5 with 1 being ineffective and 5 being very effective, the average rating was 3.47.

We then asked our respondents how confident they were that people in their organization **understood** the product vision and strategy. Based on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all confident and 5 being very confident, the average rating was 3.27.

**3.47** Average effectiveness of strategy communication

**3.27** Average confidence that strategy is understood

In aggregate, this tells us that respondents were generally happy with how they communicated strategy, but not quite as

satisfied with how people understood the strategy. That's to be expected as understanding a product strategy relies on both the way it's communicated and the person receiving that communication.

We reasoned that digging into the detailed data may provide some additional insight into how big a factor communication is in overall understanding.

### Effectiveness of communicating strategy associated with average understanding

Effectiveness (1 - 5)	Percent	Avg. Confidence in Understanding
5	19.4%	4.57
4	33.4%	3.71
3	27.5%	2.81
2	13.8%	2.18
1	5.9%	1.24

While it's encouraging that 80% of our respondents rated their communication effectiveness 3 or better, there's also an apparent difference in understanding that comes with truly effective communication.

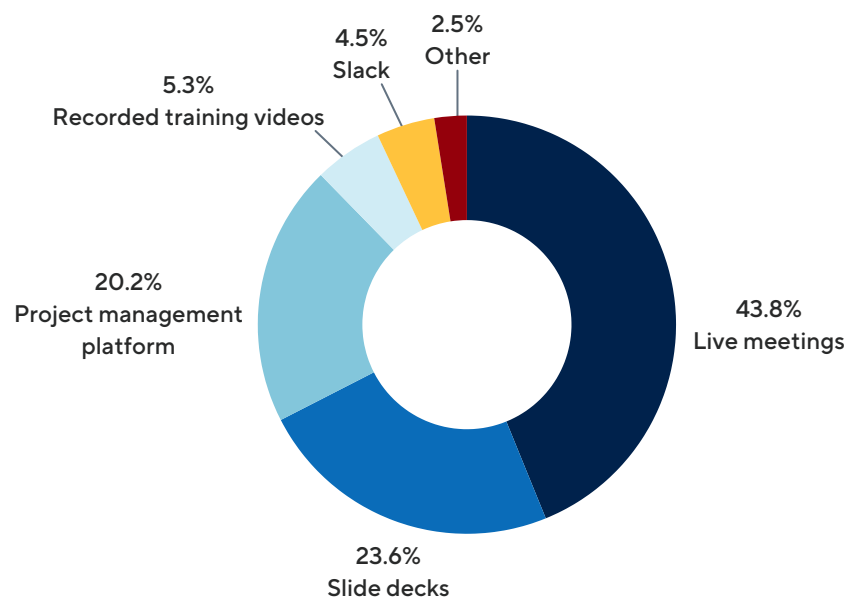
Respondents were generally happy with how they communicated strategy, but not quite as satisfied with how people understood strategy.

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To understand how different organizations can have differing levels of effective communication, we asked respondents about their **most effective method of communicating product strategy**. That's not to say their only means of communicating strategy, only their most effective.

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### Most effective method of communicating product strategy



Notable answers in the 'other' category included:

- Internal hub
- Documents that draw on product management tools
- Steering committees
- Multi-channel (town halls, recurring emails, Slack)
- Google Docs



Some interesting results came when we determined the average communication effectiveness and average strategy understanding scores associated with each communication method.

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#### Average communication effectiveness and understanding by communication method

Communication Method	Communication effectiveness	Confidence in understanding
Slack	3.88	3.44
Product management platform	3.83	3.71
Recorded training videos	3.74	3.58
Live meetings	3.51	3.40
Slide decks	3.04	2.63
Other	2.56	2.56

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Note that although 43.8% of the respondents thought that live meetings were their most effective method for communicating product strategy, their communication effectiveness and confidence in understanding rankings were lower than other methods.

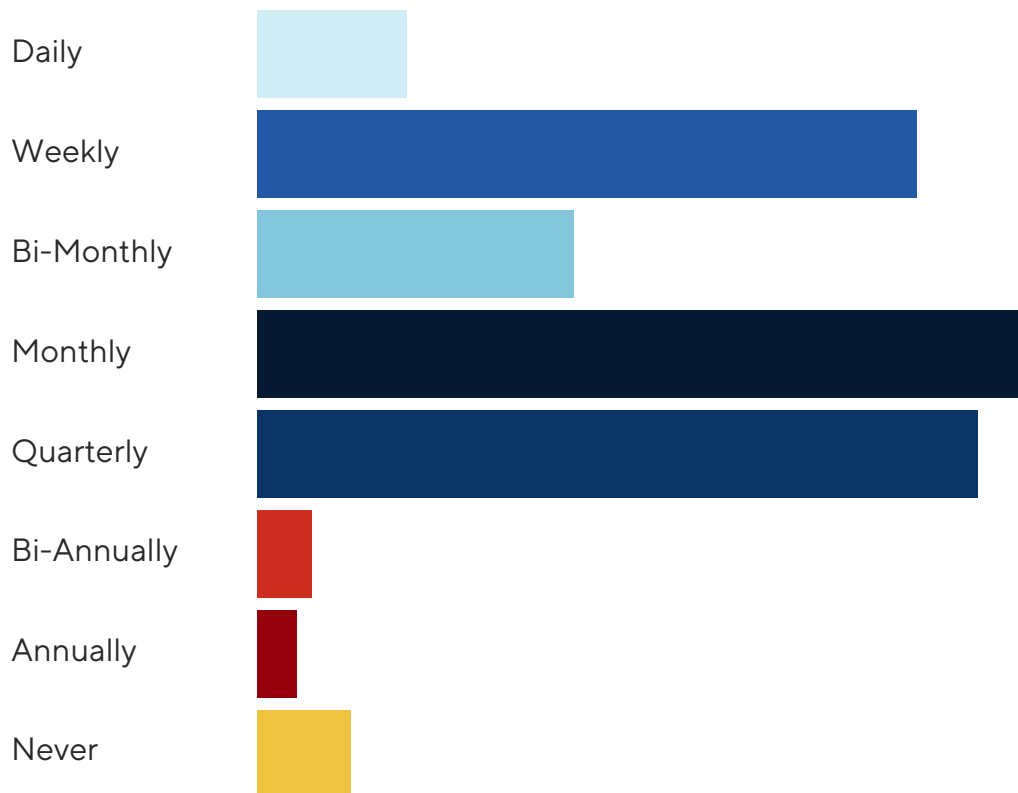
Note also that the 20% of respondents who found **product management platforms** to be their most effective communication method rated their communication effectiveness second highest and reported the **highest average confidence in understanding** scores.

If you'd like to join those respondents who effectively use a product management platform to communicate and understand strategy, take a look at [ProductPlan's strategy space](#).

## Check-In Frequency

For an additional data point within product strategy communication, we wanted to see how often our respondents checked in on progress toward their strategic objectives. Here are the results:

### Frequency of check-ins on progress toward strategic objectives



As we expected, the most common frequency of check in falls around regular calendar periods of weekly (23.6%), monthly (27.5%) and quarterly (25.6%). It is promising to see that almost a quarter of respondents check weekly and that only 3.4% never check in on progress.



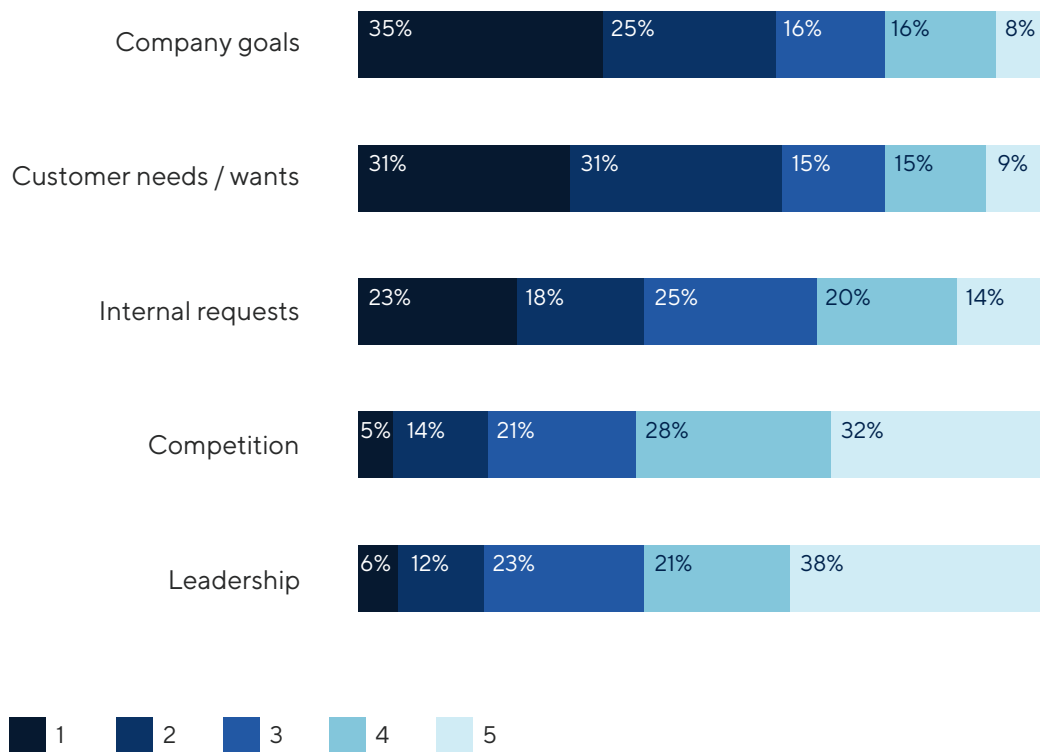
# Prioritization

One of the ways that product teams translate product strategy to execution is by using it to guide their **prioritization** decisions.

With that in mind, we wanted to look at what drives prioritization. We asked respondents to rank five factors in the order in which they drive prioritization. The resulting order was:

- 1 Customer needs / wants
- 2 Company goals
- 3 Leadership
- 4 Internal requests
- 5 Competition

## Factors that drive prioritization, by rank distribution



Notice that company goals and customer needs/wants were fairly close 1 and 2. That shows that **organizations consider solving customer problems and business problems equally.**

Notice also that while ‘Senior leadership decides for us’ is the leading driver of product strategy, leadership is ranked last as a factor that drives prioritization. We found that comparison interesting, so we filtered the responses by those that stated ‘Senior leadership decides for us’ as the leading driver of product strategy. For those respondents, the ranking was:

- 1 Leadership
- 2 Company goals
- 3 Customer needs/wants
- 4 Internal requests
- 5 Competition

This seems to indicate that when Senior Leaders drive product strategy (vs other factors) they also play a key role in prioritization decisions as well.

We took a closer look at just who in leadership controlled prioritization decision making, comparing responses between 2024 and 2025.

Who controls priority decision making?

Role	2024	2025
Product	39.8%	38.8%
CEO	37.5%	33.4%
CTO	8.6%	12.4%
Other	7.0%	7.6%
Rev. Ops	4.8%	5.1%
Finance	2.3%	2.8%

For the most part, the percentages stayed consistent between 2024 and 2025 except for a slight decrease in the percentage of organizations where CEOs controlled prioritization along with a notable increase for **CTOs**.



We reasoned that who controlled prioritization decisions might differ based on the **size of the company**, so we dove into the numbers. Here's what the split looks like.

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### Who controls priority decision making, by company size

Role	Small	Medium	Large	All
Product	37.9%	43.3%	45.5%	39.8%
CEO	43.4%	30.8%	18.8%	37.5%
CTO	7.6%	9.6%	11.6%	8.6%
Other	2.4%	1.9%	2.4%	2.3%
Revenue Operations	5.2%	10.6%	12.0%	7.0%
Finance	3.5%	3.8%	9.6%	4.8%

In small and medium-sized companies, the percentages of organizations where product and CEOs controlled priority decision making both decreased. In both cases there was a corresponding increase in the percentage of CTO's that controlled priority decision making.

Meanwhile, in large companies, the shifts were the opposite. The percentages where product or CEO controlled prioritization increased where CTO's decreased.

It's tough to pinpoint the exact cause of those shifts, but one possibility for the small and medium companies is the CEO could be a hired manager and the CTO may be a founder who has switched into founder mode.

Another way to understand the influence of leadership is to compare who respondents said ultimately controls prioritization decisions compared to **whom product reports to**.

Ultimate priority decider based on whom product reports to

		Product reports to:								
		CEO	CPO	CTO	CIO	Mkting / Sales	COO	Other	Spread	All
Ultimate priority decider	Product	36.1%	47.2%	28.1%	27.3%	53.3%	32.0%	39.3%	48.6%	41.9%
	CEO	44.4%	33.7%	26.3%	42.4%	26.7%	36.0%	21.4%	24.3%	36.2%
	CTO	13.9%	5.6%	29.8%	18.2%	6.7%	4.0%	7.1%	5.4%	13.4%
	Other	2.8%	5.6%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	24.0%	25.0%	13.5%	0.0%
	Rev. Ops	1.4%	5.6%	7.0%	6.1%	13.3%	4.0%	3.6%	5.4%	5.5%
	Finance	1.4%	2.2%	5.3%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	2.7%	3.0%

In most cases, regardless of who product reports to, **the CEO and product have the highest percentage of controlling priority decisions**. Interestingly, the one exception is where product reports to the CTO. In those cases the CTO also controls priority decision making more frequently than product or the CEO.

If you’re curious about the percentage of organizations in which product reports to the CTO, we explore those numbers in the Product Organization section of the report.

There are several conclusions you can draw from these results. First, **there is no one model for determining who controls priority decisions** - it is up to each organization, and probably heavily dependent on the people filling specific roles.

Second, when product reports to a role other than CPO, but product decides priority, that could be a sign that **product managers** in those organizations control priority decisions.

Finally, we asked the respondents to describe the **method or process** their organization uses for prioritization decisions. The results are as follows:

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### Ten most common methods/processes used for prioritization decision making

#### RICE

Reach, Impact, Confidence, Effort

#### PIE Scoring

Product Impact, Ease of implementation  
expected Effect

#### MoSCoW

Must have, Should have, Could have, and Won't have

#### RICE + MoSCoW

#### Cost-Benefit Analysis

#### Opportunity Score

#### Agile

Backlog grooming and sprints

#### Impact vs Effort Matrix

#### WSJF

Weighted Shortest Job First

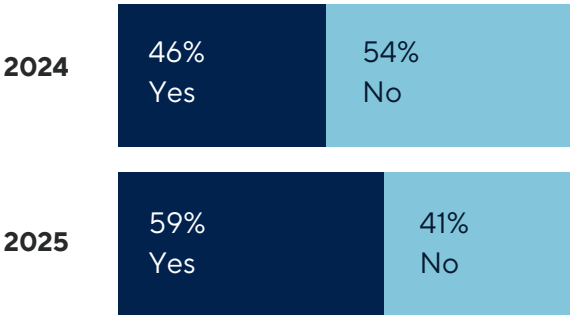
#### OKRs

Objectives and Key Results

# Tool Consolidation

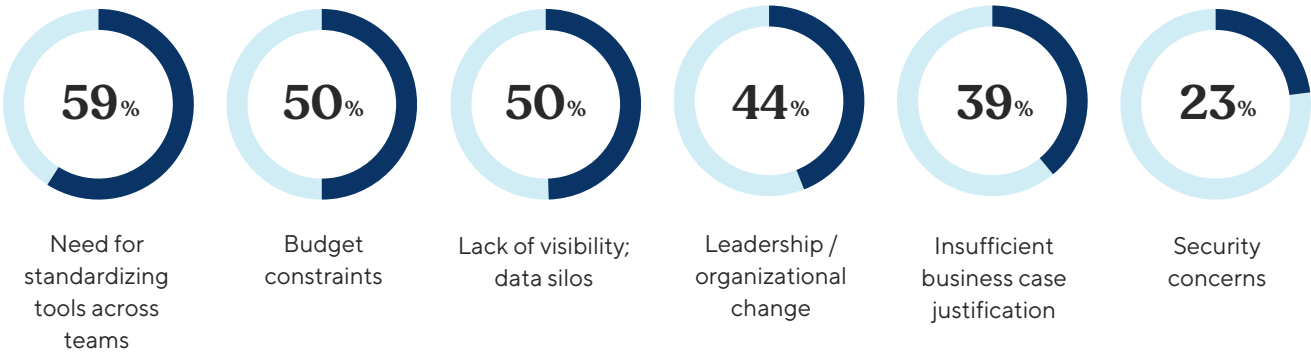
One of the more striking changes between the 2024 and 2025 reports is the increase in the percentage of respondents who are experiencing or experienced **tool consolidation**. Here's a comparison of the responses to this question between 2024 and 2025.

Are you currently experiencing/have you recently experienced tool consolidation?



To understand the need for tool consolidation, we asked the respondents who said they were experiencing a tool consolidation to select the **influences that led to the tool consolidation**. Respondents could select multiple influences. Here's what they said:

Influences contributing to the need to consolidate tools



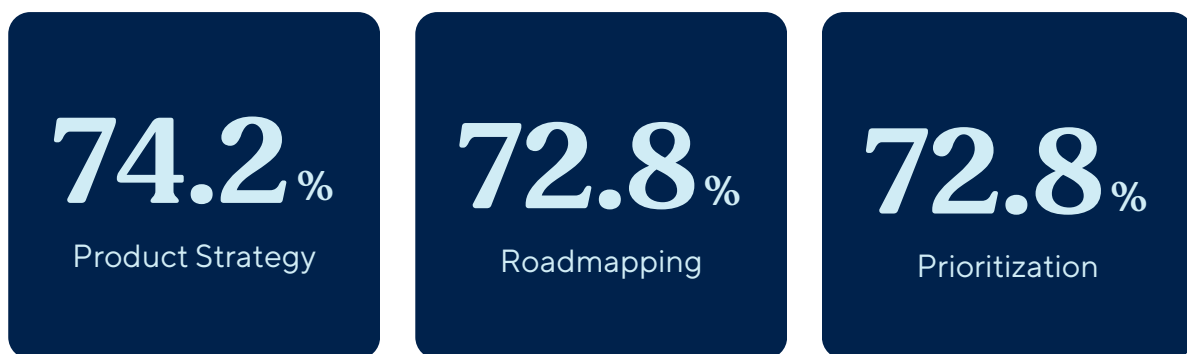


Three quarters of the respondents reported multiple influences, with the top three influences (all at nearly 50% or more) identified being: need for standardizing tools across teams, budget constraints, and lack of visibility; data silos.

All three of those influences imply the need to incorporate multiple jobs to be done in a single tool, so we asked our respondents what jobs to be done should be combined in the same tool, allowing for multiple selections. The most selected were as follows:

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#### Top most-selected jobs to be done within the same tool



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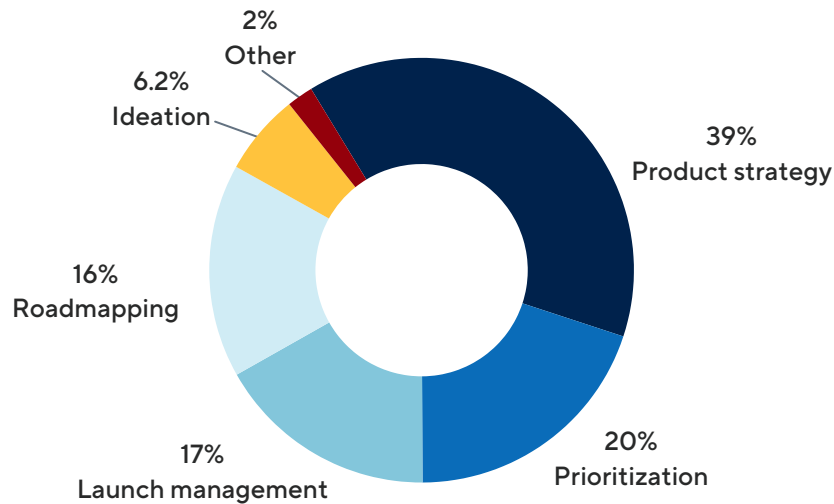
The remaining jobs were ranked as follows: Ideation (49.2%), Launch management (47.2%), Design/prototyping (27.5%), Ticket management (24.7%), and Other (3.1%).

It makes sense that **respondents want strategy, roadmapping, and prioritization in the same platform**, as these activities are frequently viewed as the activities that product managers' primary responsibilities. And as we saw above, product management platforms are one of the most effective means of communicating product strategy to stakeholders.

We also wanted to gain insight into which **areas of the product process** organizations want to support with a product management tool. We asked our respondents to identify which area is their organization's **most important investment**. Here are their responses.

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Area of the product process that is the most important investment for your organization



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As a continued indication of the importance of product strategy, it holds the largest percentage of importance out of all the areas, nearly doubling the next most important category - prioritization.

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**39%**

(the largest percentage) of respondents selected **product strategy** as the most important area of the product process for their organization to invest in

# Success Measures

Product managers are very aware of the need to measure success in order to adjust what we're doing. We usually talk about success measures around our product, but organizations often want to measure success from other perspectives, such as investment decisions and even the entire product organization.

## Product Success Metrics

For measuring the success of your product, your first choice should be **product metrics** - quantifiable and actionable data points that can guide your product decisions. Examples of product metrics include product usage, product adoption, or retention rate. Your product team can have a direct impact over these types of metrics.

In contrast, **business metrics** such as revenue growth or average revenue per user are influenced by several variables. These are lagging metrics because changes to your product take some time to show up as an impact in revenue.

When we asked respondents to rank their product success metrics, revenue growth came in as number 1. We take some solace from the results because the product metrics of product usage, product adoption, and retention rate came in 1 - 4 in the rankings.

**Output-focused metrics** such as backlog items/points delivered came further down the list, which we take as a good sign that product teams are gauging success more on outcomes than the typical measure of 'feature factory' - how many features you can produce.

## What are your team's primary product success metrics?

- 1 Revenue growth
- 2 Product usage
- 3 Product adoption
- 4 Retention rate
- 5 Backlog items/points delivered
- 6 Average revenue per user
- 7 Net promoter score
- 8 Customer acquisition cost
- 9 Other

For the most part, these rankings match those of 2024, except average revenue per user and backlog items/points delivered switched places between 2024 and 2025.

The most likely explanation for why revenue growth is the top-ranked product success metric is because organizations were primarily focused on financials due to the higher interest rate and economic conditions. Product teams found their organizations were more focused on **clear result measurements** and needed to select measurements that made sense to the executive suite.

Since product metrics were ranked 1 - 4, it's possible that product teams used those metrics for their internal purposes but also used revenue growth to communicate to the rest of the organization.

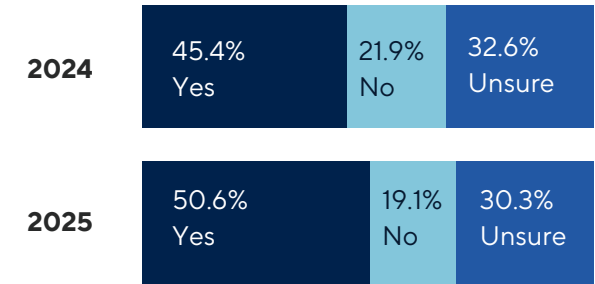
### Investment Decision Success Metrics

Product **success metrics** provide guidance on the actions you take with your product. Organizations also want to gauge whether their decision to invest in a particular product and product team turned out the way they were expecting.

Organizations commonly use business metrics - such as revenue, sales, cost, and profit - or product metrics such as retention, adoption, usage and growth.

Given the wide range of measures of investment success, we next wanted to find out if respondents thought that their investment decisions met senior management's expectations. Here's their responses compared between 2024 and 2025.

#### Are investment decisions meeting senior management expectations?



Note the increase in respondents who believe investment decisions meet senior management expectations between 2024 and 2025. The higher percentage may be the result of better clarity of senior management expectations, or because senior management expectations are aligned with the product success measures teams are using.



We were also interested to see if there was a difference between individual contributors and product leaders. Here are the results:

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#### Are investment decisions meeting senior management expectations by role

	Individual contributors	Product leaders	All
Yes	53.15%	44.12%	50.6%
No	16.14%	26.47%	19.1%
Unsure	30.71%	29.41%	30.3%

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Notice the higher percentage of **individual contributors** that believe investment decisions are meeting senior management expectations (53.15%) compared to product leaders (44.12%). Since product leaders are likely to have more direct interaction with senior leadership, we could assume that individual contributors are fairly optimistic about senior management expectations.

We next wanted to see why our respondents thought investments weren't meeting expectations. Here's a comparison between 2024 and 2025.

### Reasons investments did not meet expectations

Reason	2024	2025
A lack of a clear company strategy	25.1%	38.2%
Lack of a sound go-to-market strategy	19%	10.3%
Misallocation of resources between products and initiatives	17.5%	20.6%
Poorly prioritized ideas, products, or features	16.4%	7.89%
An underdeveloped product roadmap that doesn't accurately reflect or tie into the company's strategy	14.8%	13.2%
Other	7.2%	5.9%

There were some significant changes between 2024 and 2025; notably **an increase in the percentage of respondents identifying lack of a clear company strategy**, offsetting decreases in lack of a sound go-to-market strategy and poorly prioritized ideas, products or features.

We thought it would be informative to take a closer look at the reasons investments did not meet expectations by role type and company size.

## Reasons investments did not meet expectations by role type and company size

	Reason	Role Type			Company Size		
		IC	PL	ALL	Small	Medium	Large
	Lack of clear company strategy	36.6%	40.7%	38.2%	47.37%	46.15%	11.76%
	Lack of a sound go-to-market strategy	22.0%	18.5%	20.6%	15.79%	15.38%	35.29%
	Misallocation of resources	17.1%	7.4%	13.2%	13.16%	7.69%	17.65%
	Poorly-prioritized ideas, products, or features	14.6%	7.4%	11.8%	7.89%	15.38%	17.65%
	An underdeveloped product roadmap	7.3%	14.8%	10.3%	10.53%	15.38%	5.88%
	Other	2.4%	11.1%	5.9%	5.26%	0.00%	11.76%

Product leaders and individual contributors agreed on the two main reasons investments didn't meet expectations but had some disagreement on other reasons. Product leaders identified a lack of a sound go-to-market strategy whereas individual contributors identified an underdeveloped product roadmap and poor prioritization.

These differences may stem from the distinct areas of focus that each role type emphasizes in their daily responsibilities. For individual contributors, this often means concentrating on roadmaps and prioritization.

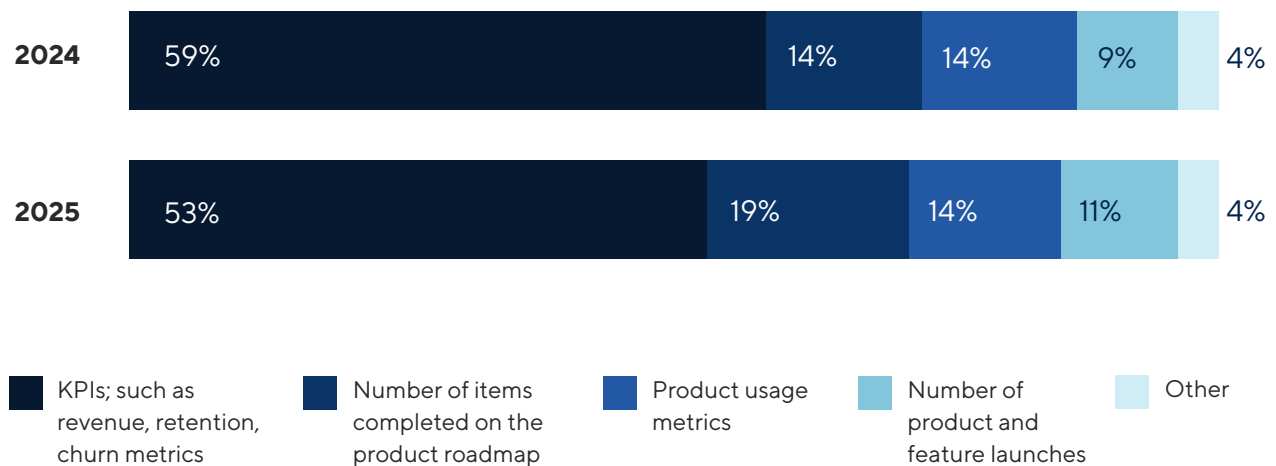
Considering company size, the standout was the difference in the top reason between large companies vs small and medium-sized. Large companies seemed to have more of a problem with a misallocation of resources and less concern with lacking clear company strategy comparatively.

These differences could point to inherent problems that come with different-sized organizations. Small and medium businesses may not have established means of creating company strategy, while large companies have relatively more resources and thus more difficulty allocating them to the right places.

## Organization Success Metrics

In addition to measuring their actions on specific products and the success of their investment decisions, many leaders want to measure their **product organization's success**. We asked our respondents which metrics they used, drawing comparisons with 2024.

### How organizations measured the success of their product teams



In both years, **outcome-related measures were the primary measure of success for product teams**. Those outcome metrics included business measures like revenue and product metrics like retention or churn.

We did note there was a small shift between 2024 and 2025 from KPIs to the number of items completed on the product roadmap. This switch doesn't necessarily imply a move back to output focused measures of success. If an organization uses outcome-driven roadmaps, counting the number of items completed may mean that they are tracking the outcomes they've accomplished. If they use feature-driven roadmaps then that may be an indication that they've moved to output based success measures.



We were also curious how different roles viewed measures of product teams' success, so we compared the responses from individual contributors (IC) to product leaders (PL).

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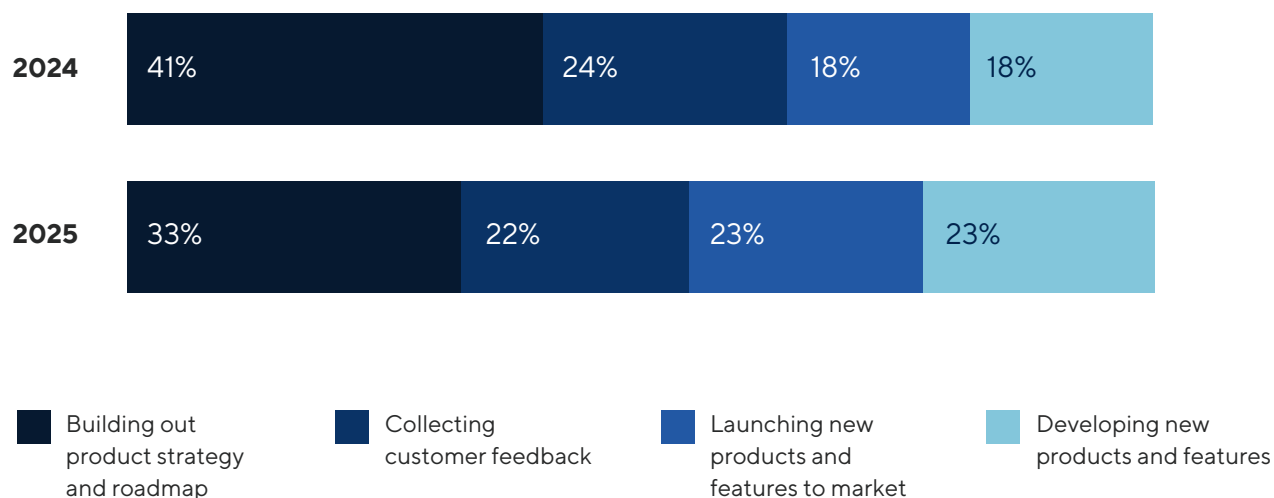
### How organizations measured the success of their product team by role

Success metric	IC	PL	All
KPIs; such as revenue, retention, churn metrics	51.2%	57.8%	53.1%
Number of items completed on the product roadmap	17.7%	20.6%	18.5%
Product usage metrics	15.4%	10.8%	14.0%
Number of product and feature launches	13.0%	4.9%	10.7%
Other	2.8%	5.9%	3.7%

On the surface, there's not a significant difference between individual contributors' and product leaders' responses. However, it appears individual contributors were slightly more likely to look at the number products and features they launched or product usage metrics compared to product leaders. This indicates a slight preference of individual contributors for looking at product metrics versus product leaders' preference for looking at broader business metrics.

We also considered that the activities product teams choose to use as success measures could be based on how easy those activities are easy to track. We asked our respondents which activities were **most challenging to track and measure** and compared the results between 2024 and 2025.

### Activities most challenging to track and measure



The most interesting note here is that the percentage of respondents indicating that building the product strategy and roadmap was the most challenging activity to track decreased between 2024 and 2025. This decrease was accompanied by an increase in respondents challenged by tracking new product/feature launches and new product/feature developments.

The shift could be explained by a couple factors:

- Organizations became more comfortable with their approaches to product strategy
- Organizations tried to measure outcomes from developing and launching new products instead of relying on output measures

During 2024, there was no shortage of articles and news coverage about **artificial intelligence**. It was easy to get the impression that everyone was using AI everywhere. So we were anxious to find out the extent to which AI has influenced product management and compare fresh results with last year's.

	Stage in AI/ML journey	2024	2025
<div>Early</div> <div></div> <div>Late</div>	N/A	12.8%	7.6%
	Beginning discovery	37.3%	26.7%
	Identified first use case	16.1%	19.4%
	Adopted AI/ML to support one use case	14.9%	20.8%
	Using AI/ML in multiple places	18.9%	25.6%

92%

# 46%



ProductPlan

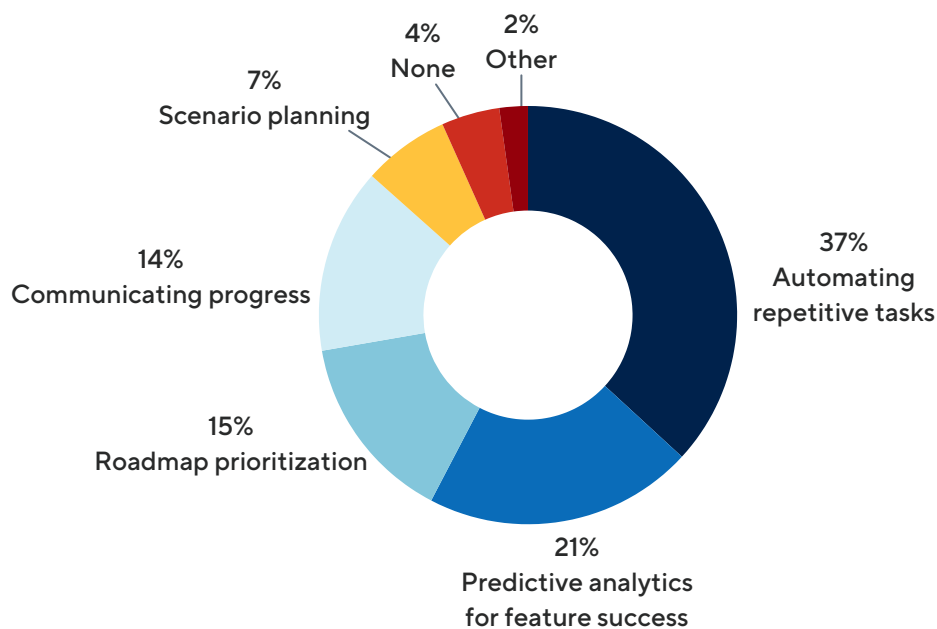
One reason AI adoption was not quite as pervasive as some thought leaders might have you believe is that organizations have moved away from using AI for AI's sake. Organizations are searching more intentionally for uses of AI that add **real business value**.

According to Greg Barrett, CEO and founder of GMB Consulting [in CIO magazine](#), "We will need to drive the conversation away from coming up with ways to implement AI to [answering], 'What are the top N business needs, and how might we address them using AI?'"

Given that inspiration, we asked our respondents a form of that question by asking which area of the product management process would benefit most from AI integration. Here's what they said.

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Which area would benefit most from AI integration in your product management process?



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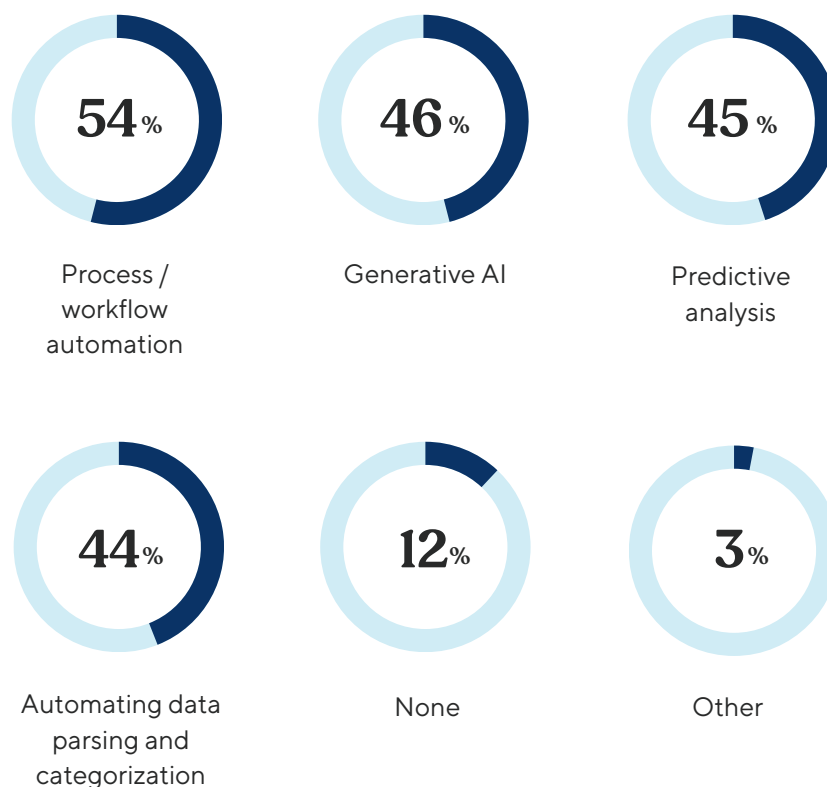
Based on these results, it looks like our respondents see a variety of places where AI can act as a tool to **aid product managers** rather than completely replacing them. The top two selections are activities where AI is particularly well-suited to supplement the work of product managers rather than completely replace them.



Since AI is such a broad topic, we wanted a bit more clarity on exactly what types of artificial intelligence our respondents were considering or have implemented. Here's what they said.

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### What artificial intelligence use cases are you considering/have you implemented?



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Although Generative AI is the most talked about use of AI, there are a lot of other AI use cases that may be better suited for product teams, whether for aiding the work of the product team, or for use in their product.

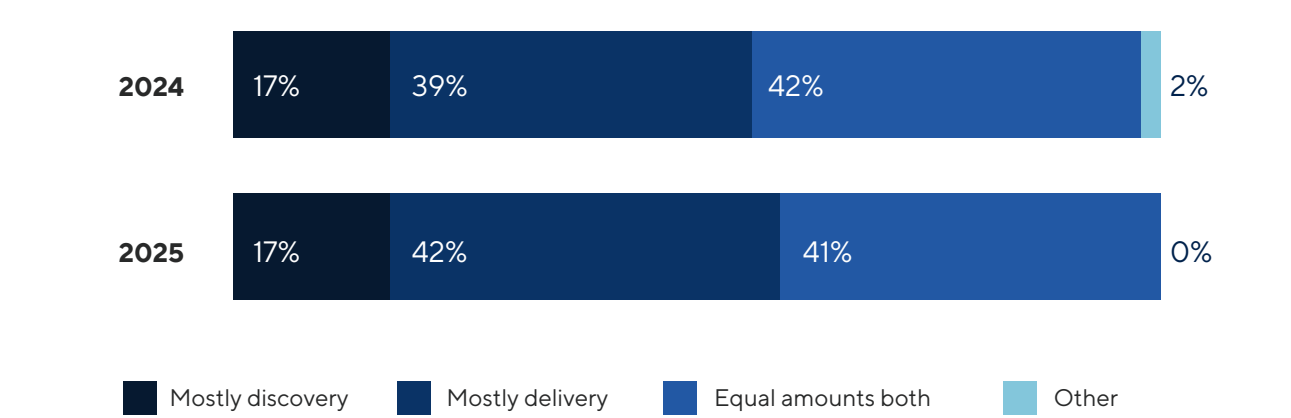
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**Our respondents see a variety of places where AI can act as a tool to aid product managers rather than completely replacing them.**

# Product Process

The product community continues to discuss whether product management most heavily centers on discovery, delivery, or both. We asked our respondents to give a current answer to this question and compared the results to 2024.

## Where do you spend most of your product management activity?



While the spread of activity was fairly consistent between 2024 to 2025, there was a slight shift; product managers focused more on either discovery or delivery than both equally. Further, **‘mostly delivery’** was the most popular choice compared to ‘equal amounts both’ in last year’s research.

To get a little more insight into the focus spent in different activities, we chose to split the response up based on **role type**.

## Where do you spend most of your product management activity? (by role)

Activity	IC	PL	All
Mostly discovery	18.5%	13.7%	17.1%
Mostly delivery	39.4%	50%	42.4%
Equal	42.1%	36.3%	40.5%

The observation that stood out to us here is that a slightly larger percentage of individual contributors spent 50% or more of their time in discovery (60.6%) compared to product leaders (50%).

We determined the percentage of respondents who spend 50% or more of their time in discovery by combining respondents who responded equal amounts both or mostly discovery.

The split by **company size** also presented an interesting finding.

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#### Where do you spend most of your product management activity? (by company size)

Activity	Small	Medium	Large	All
Mostly discovery	19.3%	13.6%	13.0%	17.1%
Mostly delivery	38.6%	52.5%	46.4%	42.4%
Equal	42.1%	33.9%	40.6%	40.5%

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A larger percentage of respondents from small companies spent 50% or more of their time in discovery whereas a larger percentage of respondents in medium and large companies tended to spend more of their time in delivery. We suspect the spread in the medium companies may be related to the larger percentage of people who report to the CTO in that size grouping.

We were also curious to see the comparison between **influences on product strategy** and PM activity.

#### Product management activity compared to primary influences on product strategy

Activity	Sales support & feedback	Other	Customer feature requests	Competition and market	Senior leadership	All
Mostly discovery	25.0%	20.0%	17.1%	14.0%	14.8%	17.1%
Mostly delivery	37.5%	20.0%	41.9%	29.8%	52.3%	42.4%
Equal	37.5%	60.0%	41.0%	56.1%	32.8%	40.5%

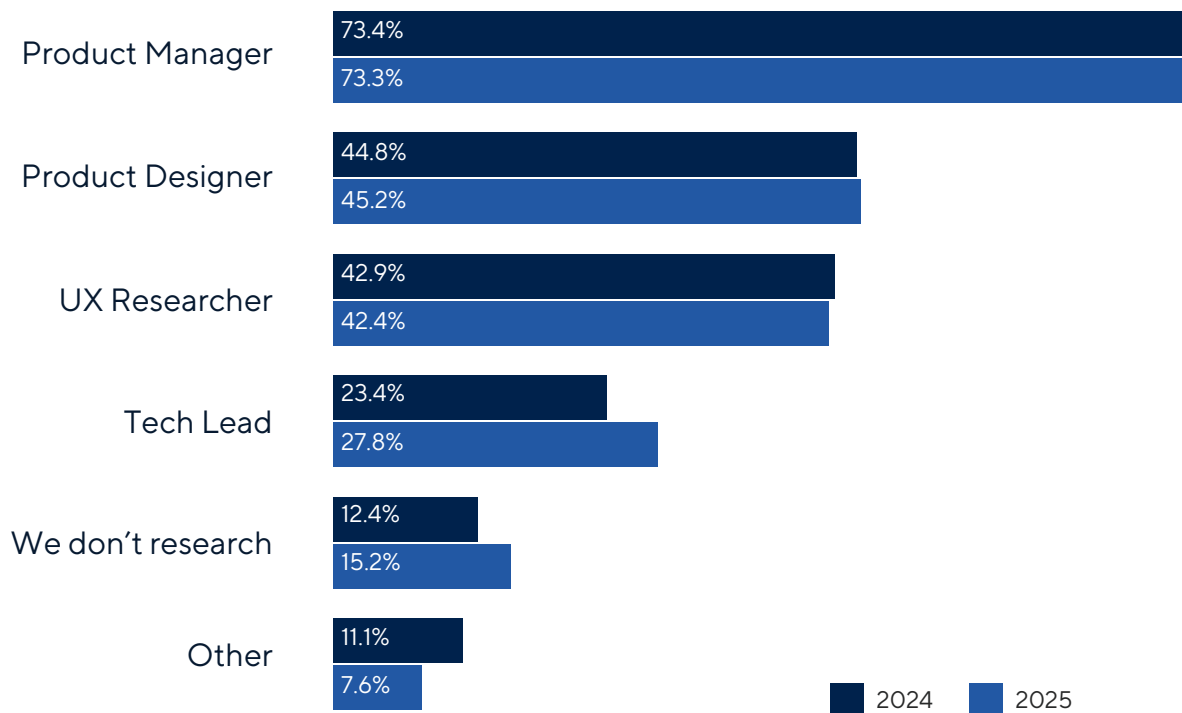
We'll start off by admitting that we can't use this data to establish a causal relationship between PM activity and primary influences on product strategy. That said there does seem to be a correlation between **senior leadership as the primary influence on product strategy** and a **heavier focus on delivery activity**.

It's also worth noting that organizations in which competition and market is the primary influence on product strategy had the largest percentage of respondents who spent equal amounts doing both discovery and delivery.

# User Research

In order to get a clearer idea of how organizations approached discovery, we asked a couple questions about **user research**. First, we wanted to get a handle on who performed user research. Respondents could select more than one role, so this was partly an attempt to find out how many organizations were taking a cross functional approach to user research.

Who is involved in user research? (Percents will total more than 100%)



These results did not change much from last year to this year. We found that 73.3% of our respondents reported that a product manager was involved in user research. 45.2% of organizations had a product designer involved in user research and 27.8% had a tech lead involved.

If we consider product designers and UX researchers to be focusing on similar aspects in the case of UX research, we found that 61.5% of teams have a Product Designer and/or UX Researcher performing user research.



When you hear about discovery and UX research, a bit of common advice is to have a **product trio** of a product manager, product designer (or UX researcher) and tech lead perform that activity. Based on our results, only 19.1% of teams have a product trio consisting of a product manager, tech lead, and either product designer or UX researcher. So while there may be a lot of talk about the product trio, the use of it in practice is not nearly as wide as you might expect.

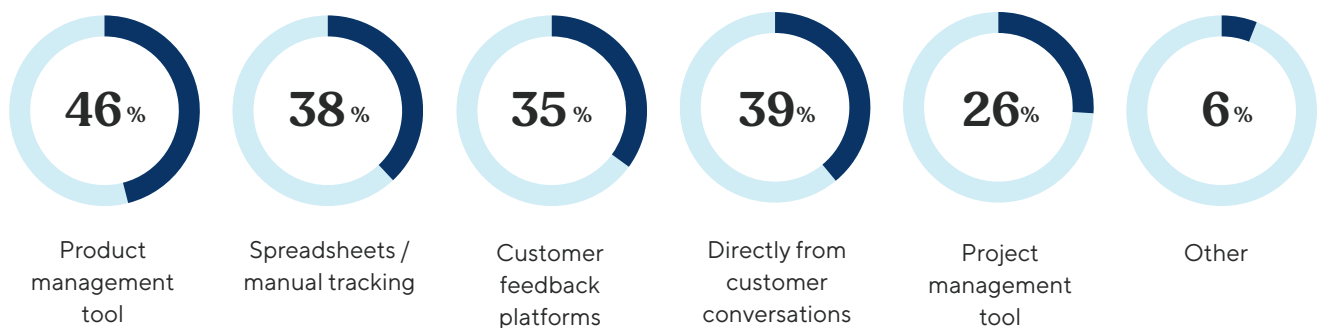
The role most often missing from those teams that have two of the three roles? **Tech lead.** The clear piece of advice here is for more teams to find ways to incorporate their tech lead, or another engineer in their discovery activities.

Next, we wanted to know how our respondents dealt with **feature requests**, one of the key outputs from UX research. We asked two questions to get a better understanding.

First, we wanted to know how teams captured and managed feature requests. We let the respondents choose more than one selection so the results will total more than 100%.

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### How do you capture and manage feature requests?



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**Over 70% of respondents use a product tool (such as ProductPlan) or a project management tool (such as Jira) to manage feature requests.** In contrast, 38% use spreadsheets or manual tracking.

Next, we asked what respondents do with feature requests and compared the results to last year's responses.

### What do you do with feature requests?

Feature request location	2024	2025
Specific repository for feedback	38.6%	46.6%
Backlog	13.8%	31.2%
Interview notes	20.7%	11.0%
Other	5.5%	5.6%
N/A (no tracking for feature requests)	11.0%	5.6%

Note the increase in using a **specific repository for feedback** from 38.6% last year to 48.6% this year. That most likely corresponds to the use of a dedicated product management tool.

Likewise, note the increase in feature requests that go straight to the **backlog** from 13.8% to 31.2%. There's probably a correlation between that number and the teams that use a project management tool. It does depend on what kind of tool teams use to track their backlog.

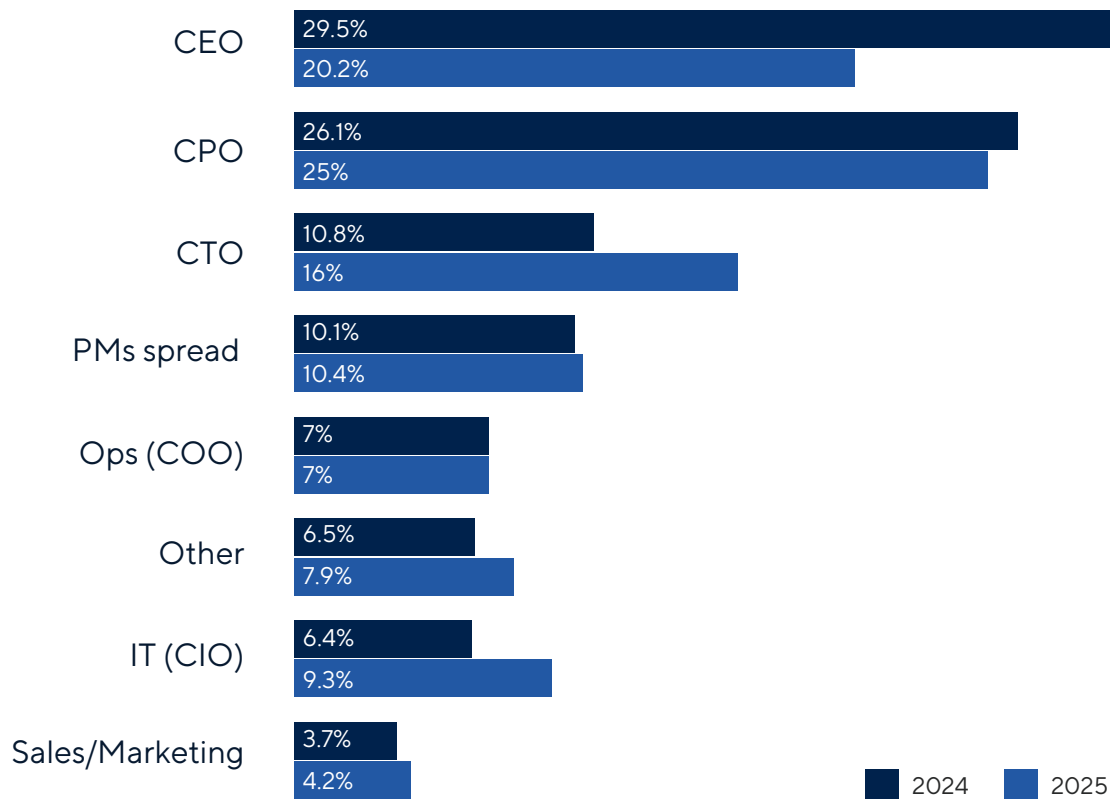
Why separate feedback from backlog? It's highly unlikely that you're going to act on every single piece of feedback you receive. Storing feedback separate from your backlog gives you the opportunity to analyze and consider whether you take action on feedback. The separation prevents you from trying to do everything and helps to identify patterns and trends.

**The percent of product teams using a specific repository for user feedback increased from 36.6% in 2024 to 46.6% in 2025.**

# Product Organization

When exploring product organizations, we were particularly interested in whom product teams reported to. Here's a comparison between last year's answers and this year's.

## Whom product reports to



The key changes we identified here and noted previously is the decrease in the percentage of organizations where product reported to the CEO. This is primarily offset by the percentage of organizations where product reported to the CTO.

## Percent of product reporting to CTO

**10.8%**  
in 2024

**16%**  
in 2025

Next, we looked at **whom product reported to** and compared the results for different-sized companies.

### Whom product reports to, by company size

		Company size			
		Small	Medium	Large	All
Product reports to	CEO	23.7%	40.7%	15.9%	25.0%
	CPO	26.3%	5.1%	13.0%	20.2%
	CTO	20.6%	6.8%	8.7%	16.0%
	PMs spread	5.7%	10.2%	26.1%	10.4%
	IT (CIO)	6.1%	11.9%	17.4%	9.3%
	Other	7.0%	6.8%	11.6%	7.9%
	Ops (COO)	6.1%	15.3%	2.9%	7.0%
	Sales/Marketing	4.4%	3.4%	4.3%	4.2%

There are interesting trends in each company size.

In **small companies**, note the fairly even spread of product reporting to a CPO, a CEO or a CTO. A larger proportion of small companies had product managers reporting directly to either the CEO or CTO than in medium or large companies. This shouldn't come as a big surprise. As most organizations start out, the CEO or CTO will typically act as the main product person until the product gets large enough that the organization needs to pay more dedicated attention to product.

**Medium companies** have the largest percentage of respondents where **product reports directly to a CPO** (40.7%), with the next highest being the COO (15.3%) and CIO (11.9%). The explanation for this could be explained by two different types of companies in the medium category. First, tech companies that reached a size that necessitated a Chief Product Officer. Second, tech-enabled companies that mostly do internal product development and have adopted the product model. It's in this second group that product reports to either the COO or CIO.

In **large companies**, the two leading responses were **PMs are spread around the organization** and **PMs report to the CIO**. The relatively large percentage of respondents that said PMs were spread could be due to organizations starting to adopt the product model by placing product managers in a variety of different business units but not yet creating a central product organization. As with the medium-sized companies, the respondents who answered product reports to the CIO could be an indication of tech-enabled organizations that build internal products.

## Whom product reports to based on number of people in product

		Number of people in product						
		1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100+	All
Product reports to	CEO	21.6%	26.4%	24.7%	19.7%	27.6%	34.6%	25.0%
	CPO	28.4%	28.3%	22.1%	14.1%	24.1%	3.8%	20.2%
	CTO	21.6%	15.1%	16.9%	18.3%	13.8%	5.8%	16.0%
	PMs spread	2.7%	5.7%	10.4%	9.9%	6.9%	28.8%	10.4%
	IT (CIO)	2.7%	3.8%	9.1%	16.9%	13.8%	11.5%	9.3%
	Other	12.2%	9.4%	6.5%	5.6%	3.4%	7.7%	7.9%
	Ops (COO)	8.1%	5.7%	5.2%	12.7%	3.4%	3.8%	7.0%
	Sales/Mkting	2.7%	5.7%	5.2%	2.8%	6.9%	3.8%	4.2%



Next, we compared who product reports to with the number of people in product. (above)

The main point of interest from this view is the percentage of respondents with 100+ people in product that said PMs are spread throughout the organization (28.8%).

There are a few explanations for the higher percentage of organizations with PMs spread throughout the organization. First, larger organizations are more likely to have multiple product teams sitting in separate business units rather than a central product development organization.

Second, large organizations and organizations with over 100 product managers are likely to be enterprises with multiple products or are enterprises adopting a product operating model and therefore moving several people into product roles.

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**29%**

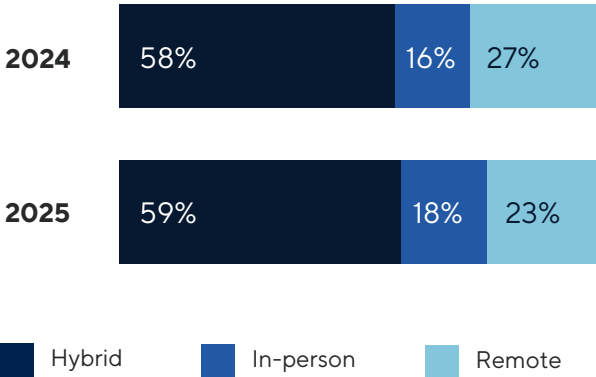
of respondents at companies with 100+ people in product answered that product managers are spread throughout their organizations.

# Workforce Setup

We asked our respondents for some insight into **where they worked**, and compared the results to last year's survey.

While at first glance the results are very similar one year to the next, there is a **slight increase in hybrid and in-person** and a decrease in remote. We expected to see some movement based on all the conversation about return to office, but we're admittedly surprised the change isn't more significant.

## What is your workforce setup?



## Workforce setup by company size

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Hybrid	51.3%	72.9%	73.9%	59.0%
In-person	20.2%	11.9%	15.9%	18.1%
Remote	28.5%	15.3%	10.1%	22.9%

To get a bit more insight, we dove into a more detail and organized the data based on company size. When we look at different-sized organizations, **a larger percentage of smaller organizations are completely remote** - most likely because those organizations have been set up to operate remotely from the beginning. Another interesting point is that a higher percentage of small companies are in-person compared to medium and large companies.

# Challenges

Looking ahead, we asked what people expected to be the **biggest challenge** they'll face in 2025 and compared their responses to last year's.

What challenges do you expect to face next year?



A standout is the **decrease in respondents citing economic uncertainty** (37.8% to 27.8%) and the **increase in respondents citing artificial intelligence** (12.6% to 24.2%) as a challenge.

The decrease in economic uncertainty can potentially be attributed (at least for respondents from the US) to the results of the presidential election, as we surveyed in November of 2024. The increase in concern over artificial intelligence is probably speaking to the need to find positive ROI from artificial intelligence efforts.

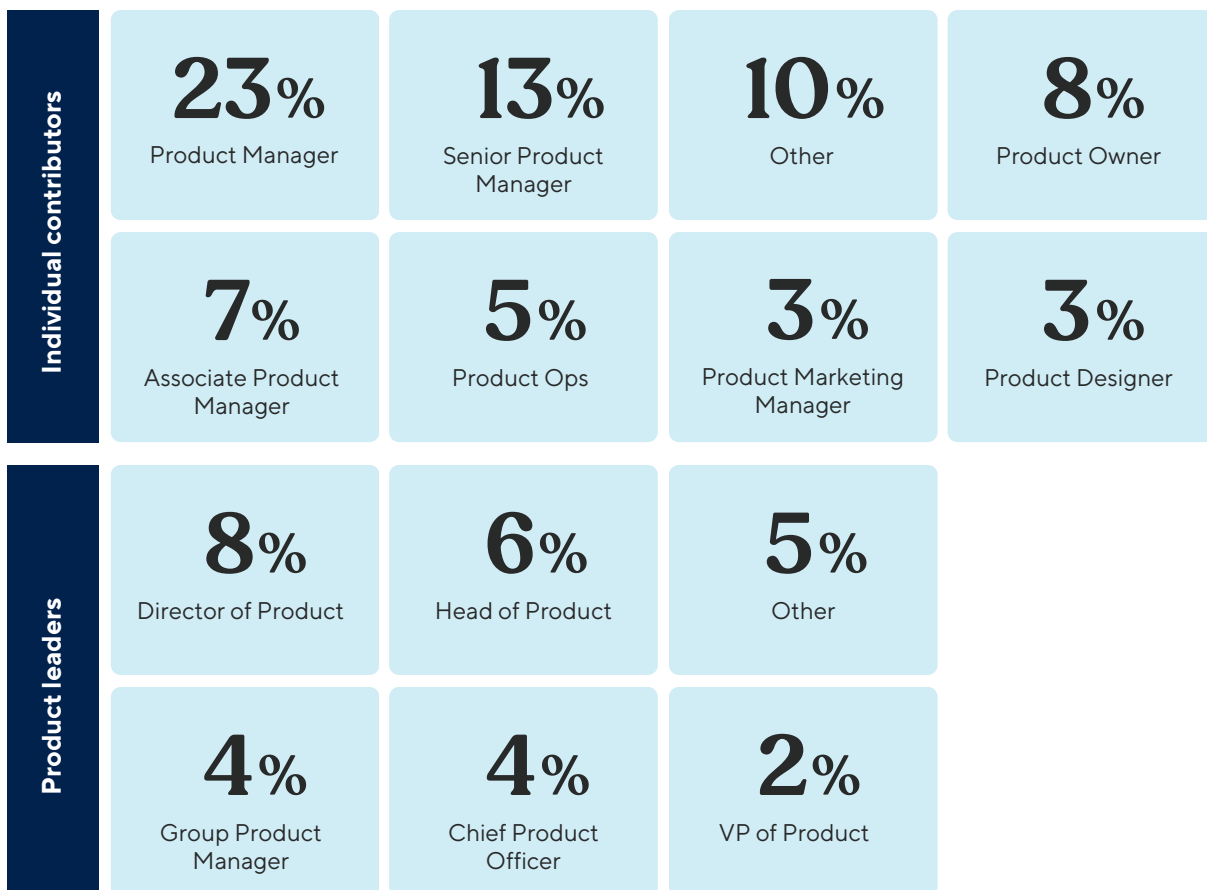
# Report Methodology

We conducted the 2025 Product Management report survey in Q4 of 2024. The survey audience includes product professionals contacted via social media, product management communities, and ProductPlan's email subscribers. We received over 350 responses.

To provide some context to the results, we asked the following demographic questions. Sometimes we consolidated the responses to provide some common categories. We've noted those groups where appropriate.

## What is your job title?

We listed most of the common product job titles in industry and provided an 'other' category. We also identified each title as an Individual Contributor or Product Leader. In the 'other' category we categorized each response individually.



### How many employees are at your current company?

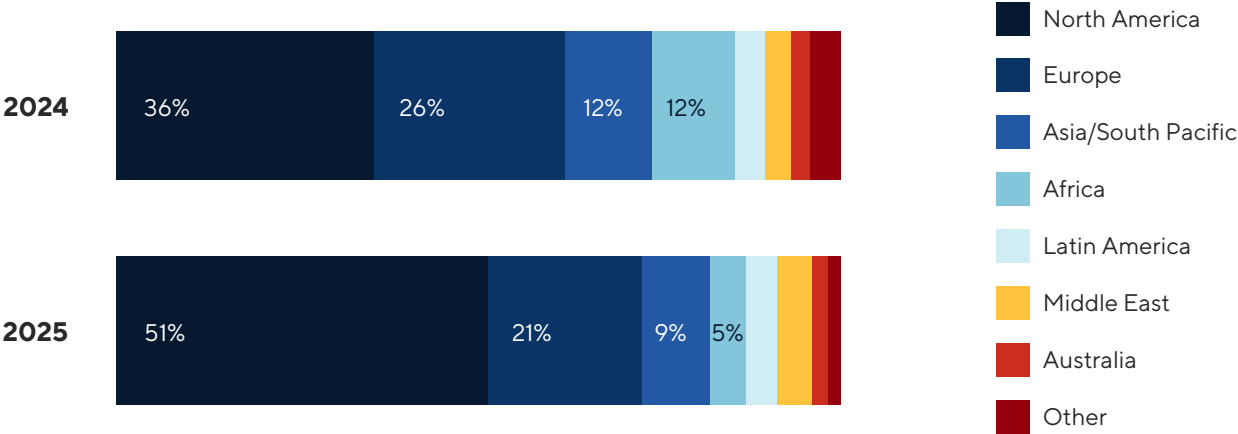
We provided ranges of the number of employees for this question. We also grouped the responses into Small, Medium, and Large categories based on the [Small Business Administration definition of company size](#).

For comparison purposes we've included the percentages from the 2024 survey. Note the shift in the percentage of respondents from small to medium-sized companies between 2024 and 2025.

	# of employees	2024	2025
Small	Less than 50	28.4%	18.0%
	51 to 100	14.9%	17.1%
	101 to 1,000	29.3%	28.9%
Medium	1,001 to 5,000	7.1%	16.6%
Large	5,001 to 10,000	7.3%	7.3%
	Over 10,000	12.8%	12.1%

### Where is your company's headquarters located?

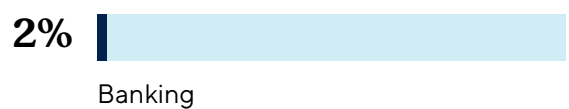
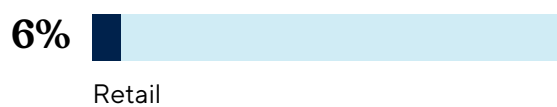
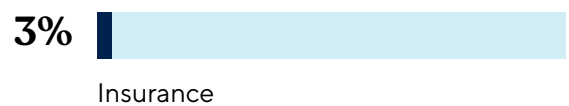
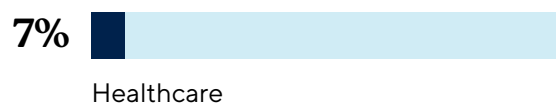
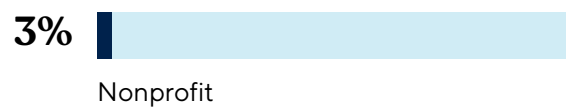
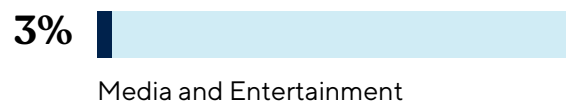
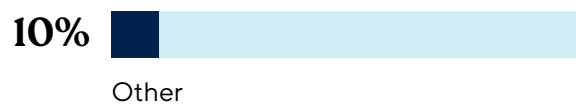
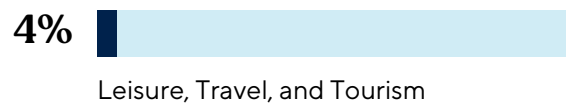
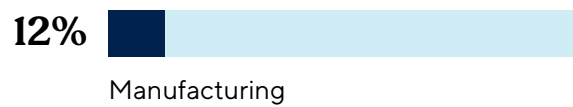
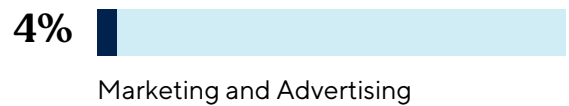
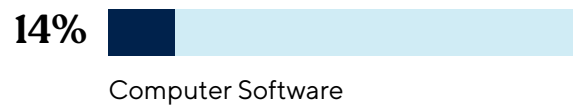
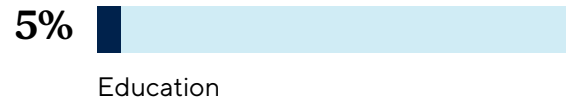
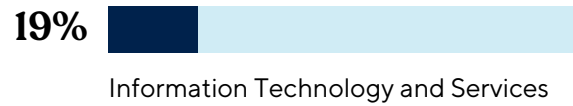
For this question, we provided a list of regions and an 'other' category. For comparison purposes we've included the percentages from the 2024 survey. Note the shift to respondents from North America between 2024 and 2025.





## What industry do you work in?

For this question, we provided a common list of industries and an 'Other' category.



# Conclusion

Our 2025 research reveals that product continues to be front and center as the strategic nerve center of the business, the primary arm for executing strategy. Product organizations recognize the importance of developing a clear **product strategy** in alignment with overall company strategy. **Tool consolidation** is an increasingly popular means for achieving strategic alignment.

Internal challenges continue to include product-market fit, managing customer feedback, developing and communicating product strategy, and successfully launching new features and functionality. AI is an increasingly prevalent external challenge, accompanied by the additional external challenges of economic uncertainty and changing consumer habits. Many of these same challenges, such as customer feedback and AI, also pose interesting opportunities in product.

In response to these opportunities and challenges, we found that organizations increasingly rely on **outcome-related measures of success**. We also found that product organizations balance customer needs and company goals to influence their prioritization decisions.

We hope you enjoyed reading the 2025 State of Product Management Report and will take away insights to inform your own approach to product management.



2025

## About ProductPlan

ProductPlan is an intuitive product management software helping product organizations efficiently define strategy, craft roadmaps, and communicate progress across teams and stakeholders. ProductPlan's expert product and customer service teams partner with your organization to provide support at step of the product lifecycle. With over 10 years as market leaders in product management software, ProductPlan is a proven solution.

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