

Building the Next Generation of Software



@destraynor
from @fin_ai

UXDX

THE GLOBAL UX COMMUNITY

**AI will change
almost everything
we do in some way,
and some things
we do in every way.**

First some background

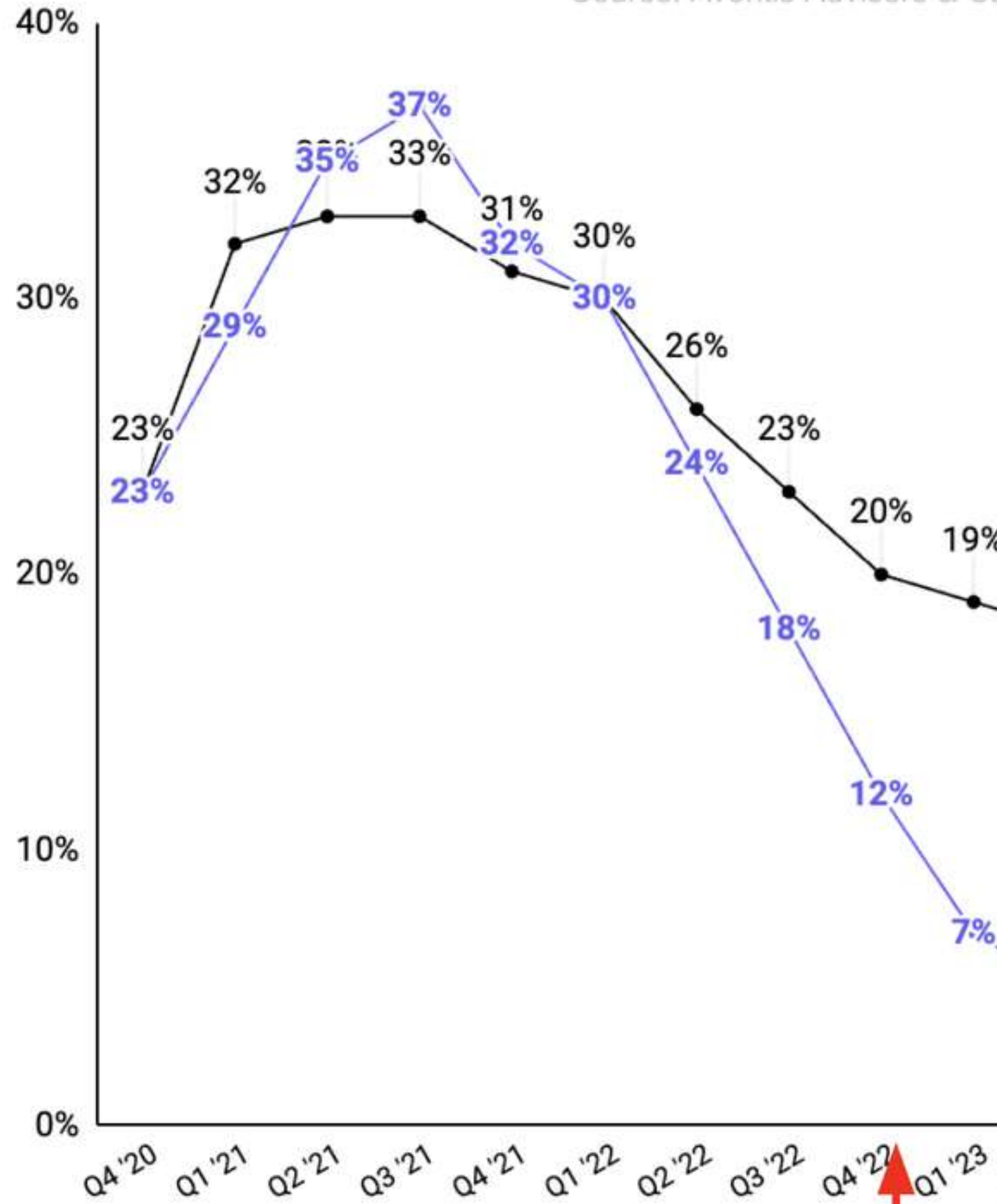
August 2022 was not a fun time in Intercom

● SaaS growth rate — —

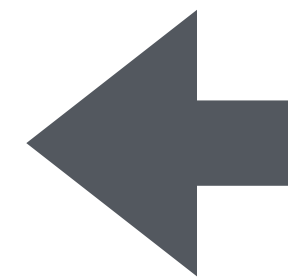
Source: Aventis Advisors & Capital IQ

● Intercom growth rate — —

Source: Intercom



CEO change



Not Fun.

The Q4 2022 reality for us

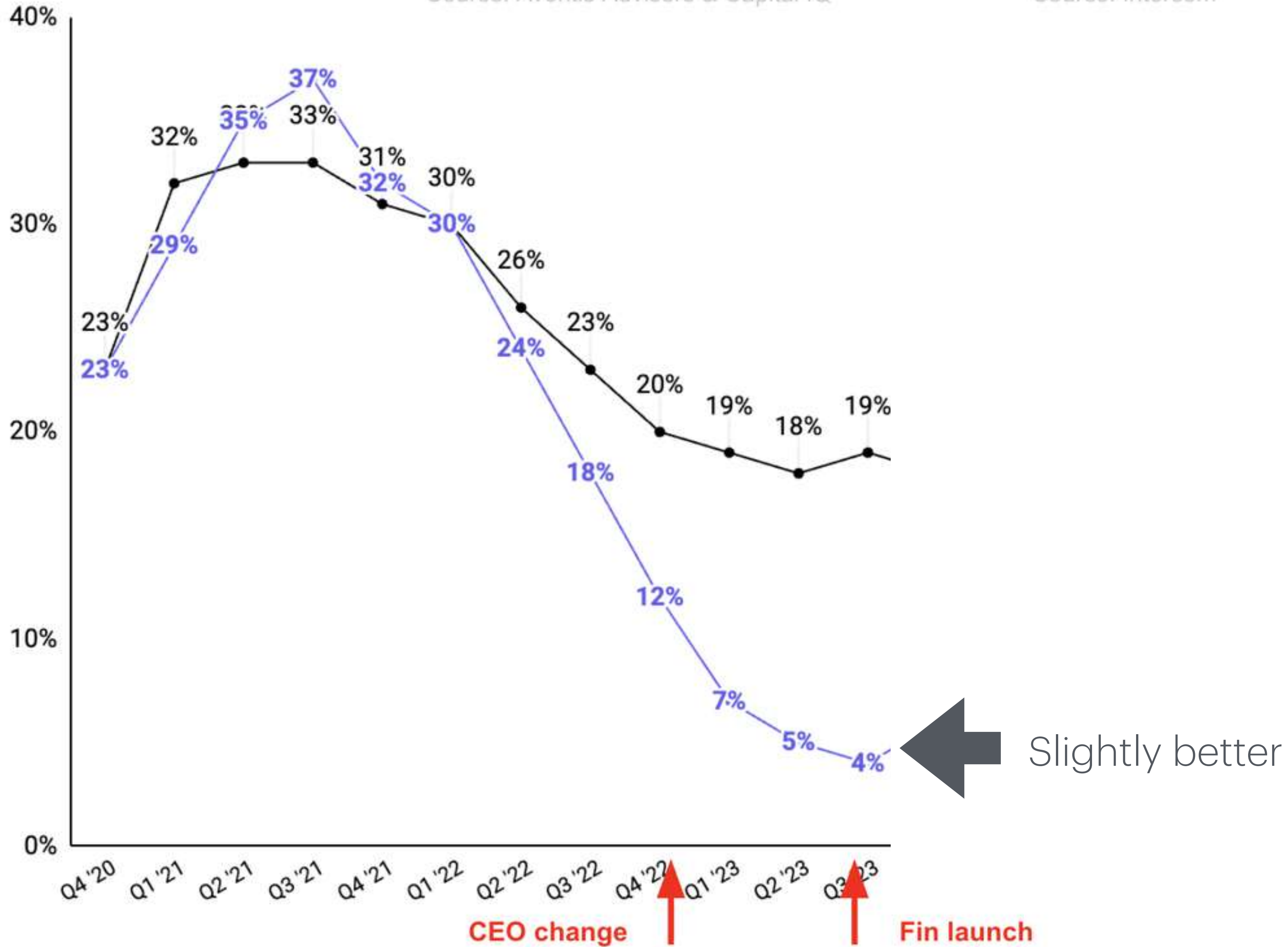
- We sold our product to Customer Support teams. Business was slowing.
- The new era of AI looked like it would fully automate customer support
- If this was actually possible, and we didn't built it, we would certainly die
- Therefore we knew we had to build an AI Customer Service product that we knew would kill our core business.
- Because if anyone else does it, we will die.
- We only have a couple of months to work this out

● SaaS growth rate — —

● Intercom growth rate — —

Source: Aventis Advisors & Capital IQ

Source: Intercom

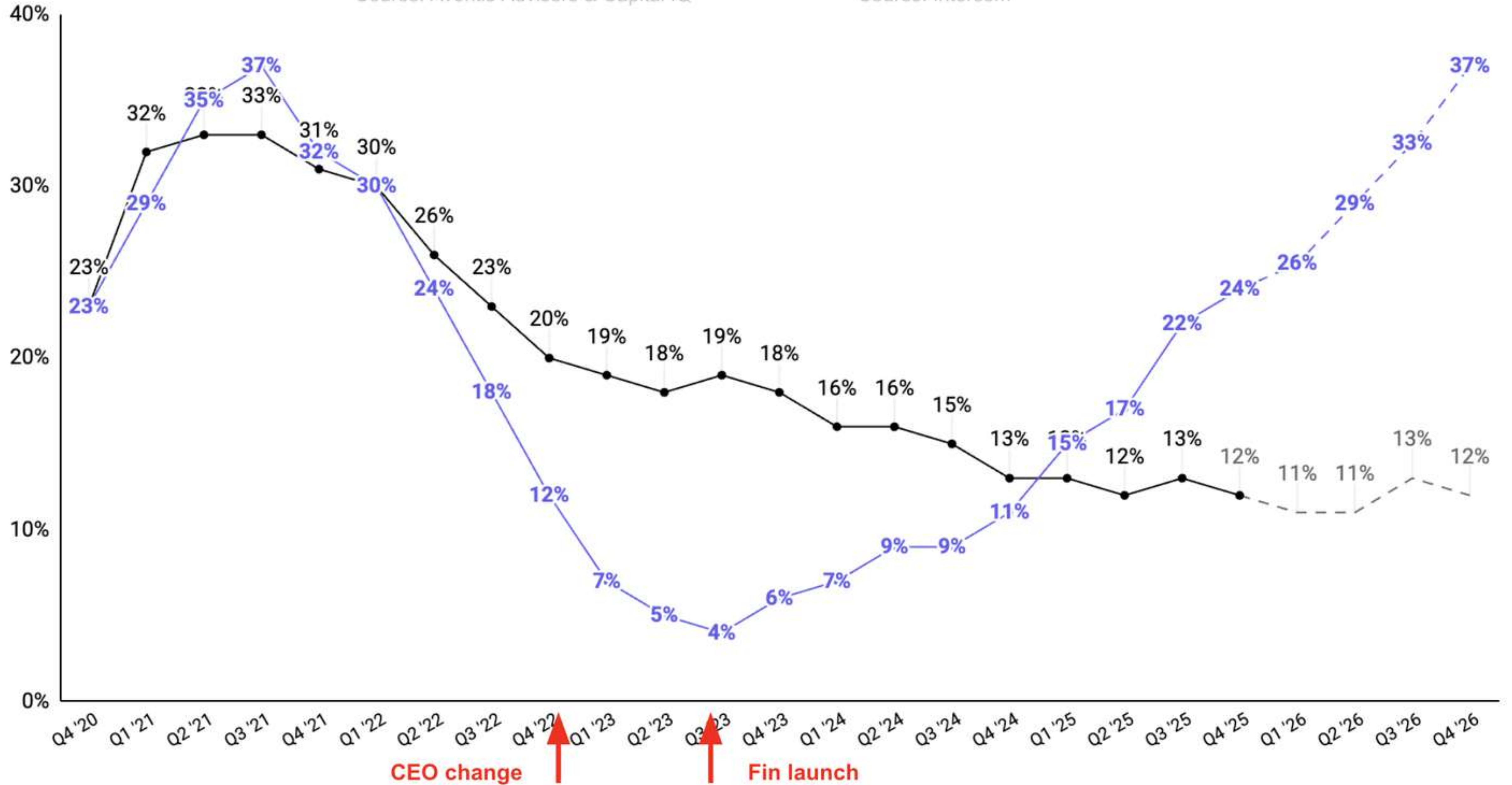


● SaaS growth rate — —

● Intercom growth rate — —

Source: Aventis Advisors & Capital IQ

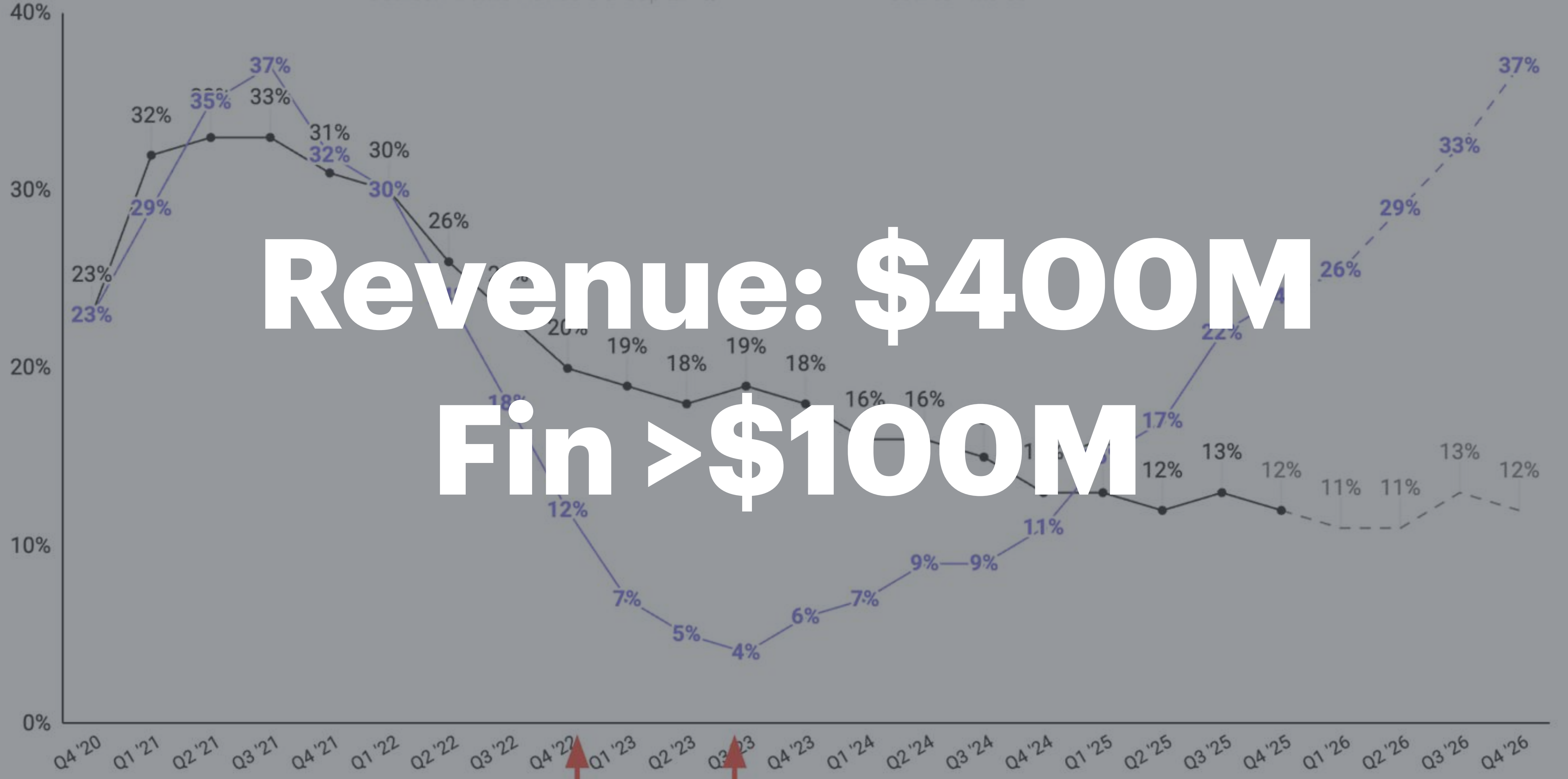
Source: Intercom



● SaaS growth rate ● Intercom growth rate

Source: Aventis Advisors & Capital IQ

Source: Intercom



Revenue: \$400M
Fin > \$100M

CEO change

Fin launch

The only thing that changed was everything

We changed our **strategy**, our company **mission**, our **culture**, **what we build**, **how** we build, our product momentum, our **pricing + packaging**, our **team**, our **roles**, our **titles**, our **product differentiators**, **how we sell**, **how we compensate**, we changed our **branding**, we launched new competitive brands, and 2 weeks ago we changed the **name of the company**.

Some of your customers will hate it, some of your team will hate it, some of your followers will hate it, some of your shareholders will hate it, there will be tough feedback and plenty of criticism.

And you **must** persist.

Oh...hmm...is there an easier way?

You have to go too far, so that you
know you've gone far enough.

AI changes *what you build*

Truths aren't comfortable. But neither is irrelevance.

The Inconvenient Truths

DAILY REMINDER

The world doesn't stand still. Neither should you.

VOL. 1 NO. 148

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28TH, 2025

PRICE: \$2.00

AI will make your product irrelevant.

By Des Traynor



Intelligence is becoming a feature. Differentiation is disappearing. If your product's value is being commoditized by AI, you need a new value.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

New competitors will come from nowhere.

By Des Traynor

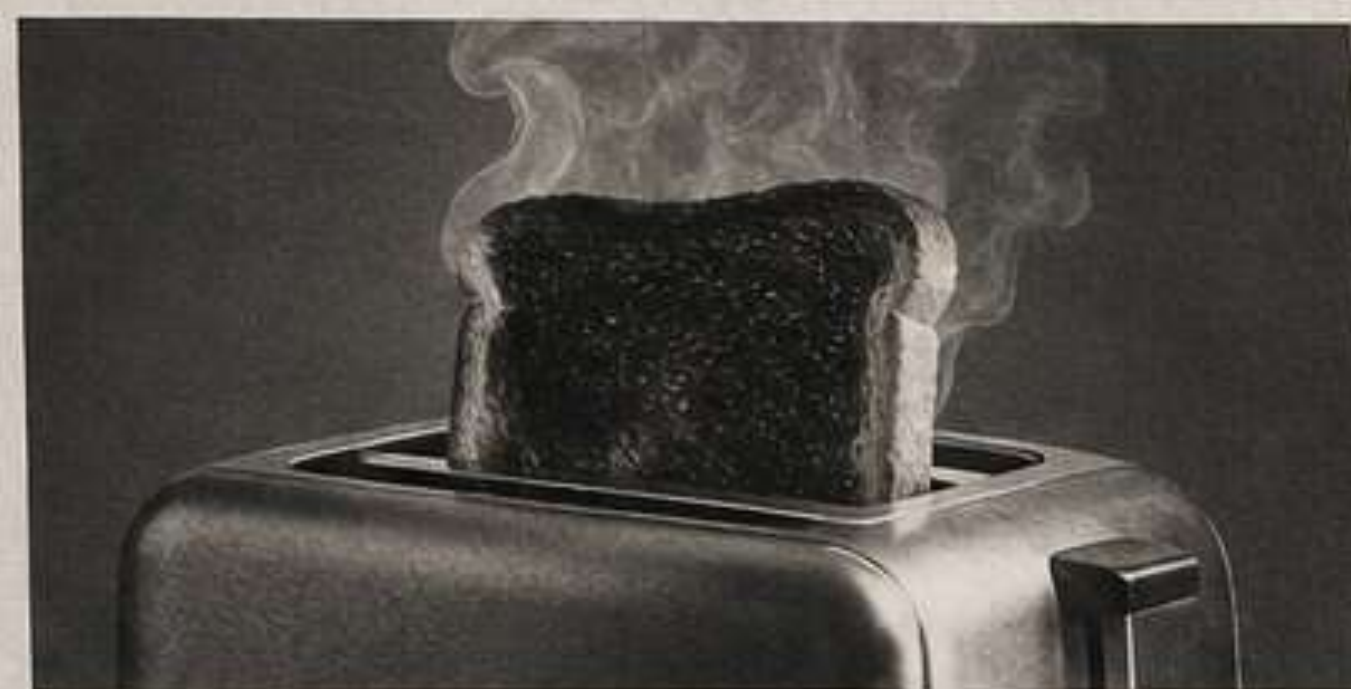


Barriers to entry are collapsing. Capital is global. Talent is everywhere. The next threat isn't on your radar because it doesn't exist yet.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

If you don't change how you work, you're toast.

By Des Traynor



Your processes, org chart and habits were built for yesterday. The future belongs to those who adapt faster than the world changes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Signals, Not Noise

How to tell the difference between hype and real shifts that matter.



Customers Don't Stay Loyal

Loyalty is earned every day. Entitlement is lost forever.



The Advantage Is In Motion

Speed isn't everything. Direction is. But standing still is fatal.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic."

Your product will become irrelevant. Fast.

The new competitors will blindside you.

You have to change everything to be fit to fight

AI removes some problems entirely



+ New Item

Website Redesign Project

Share



In Progress

Dec 1, 2023 – Jul 15, 2024

Owner: Sarah Chen



+6



Overview

Updates

Tasks

Meetings

Documents

Files

Risks

Timeline

Reports

Project Summary

We're redesigning the corporate website to improve user experience, modernize the brand, and increase conversions.

Overall Progress 62%

Tasks Completed 47 / 76

Overdue Tasks 5

Team Members 9

[View full project brief](#)

Latest Update

Posted by Sarah Chen • May 16, 2024

This week we completed the homepage wireframes and had a productive stakeholder review. We're incorporating feedback and moving into high-fidelity mockups.

- Stakeholder feedback: positive
- Next: Inner page designs
- Blocked: Waiting on content from marketing

6 likes 3 comments

[See all updates](#)

Project Health

Schedule On Track

Budget On Track

Scope At Risk

Resourcing On Track

Risks 2 Open

[View full health report](#)

Meeting Notes – Stakeholder Review

May 15, 2024 • 10:00 – 11:00 AM • Conference Room B / Zoom

Share



Attendees (7)

- Sarah Chen (You)
- Alex Rivera
- Jamie Lee
- Taylor Kim
- Morgan Smith
- Casey Johnson
- Riley Patel

Key Discussion Points

- Overall design direction approved
- Request to simplify navigation in header
- Add customer testimonial section to homepage
- Mobile experience looked good; minor tweaks needed
- Content team will provide finalized copy by May 22

Decisions Made

- Proceed with current visual direction
- Remove dropdowns from main navigation
- Add testimonials section below hero

Next Steps

- Update navigation per feedback – Alex R. (May 17)
- Add testimonials section to mockups – Jamie L. (May 20)
- Provide final copy for homepage – Taylor K. (May 22)

Follow-up Action Items

- Update navigation per feedback
Alex R. May 17
- Add testimonials section to mockups
Jamie L. May 20
- Provide final copy for homepage
Taylor K. May 22
- Review and approve content hierarchy
Morgan S. May 24
- Test mobile menu interactions
Casey J. May 24

[View all action items](#)

Action Items

[View all](#)

- Update navigation per feedback
Alex R. May 17
- Add testimonials section to mockups
Jamie L. May 20
- Provide final copy for homepage
Taylor K. May 22
- Review and approve content hierarchy
Morgan S. May 24
- Test mobile menu interactions
Casey J. May 24

5 open • 2 overdue

Recent Activity

[View all](#)

- Jamie Lee completed a task
Update homepage wireframe
May 16, 2024 • 2:45 PM
- Alex Rivera uploaded a file
[Homepage Mockup v3.fig](#)
May 16, 2024 • 1:30 PM
- Sarah Chen posted an update
[Weekly Update – May 16](#)
May 16, 2024 • 9:15 AM
- Morgan Smith added a comment
on Stakeholder Review Notes
May 15, 2024 • 4:20 PM
- Taylor Kim completed a task
[Content outline draft](#)
May 15, 2024 • 11:05 AM

Upcoming Meetings

[View calendar](#)

- Design Sync
May 20, 2024 • 9:30 AM
- Content Review
May 22, 2024 • 11:00 AM
- Dev Handoff
May 28, 2024 • 2:00 PM

Documents

[View all](#)

- Website Redesign Brief
Updated May 10, 2024
- Stakeholder Feedback Report
Updated May 15, 2024
- Content Outline v2
Updated May 12, 2024

Progress Over Time

[% Complete](#)



Risks

[View all](#)

- ⚠ Content delays from marketing High
- ⚠ Third-party plugin compatibility Medium
- ⚠ Resource availability in June Medium



Sarah Chen
Product Manager

When AI connects everything with status updates & project management is reduced

AI changes the shape of a solution

Products will merge and converge in a post AI world

BEFORE

Complex. Fragmented. Hard to use.

DATA SOURCES

- PostgreSQL
- Salesforce
- Google Analytics
- S3 / Cloud Storage
- Snowflake
- External APIs
- ...and more

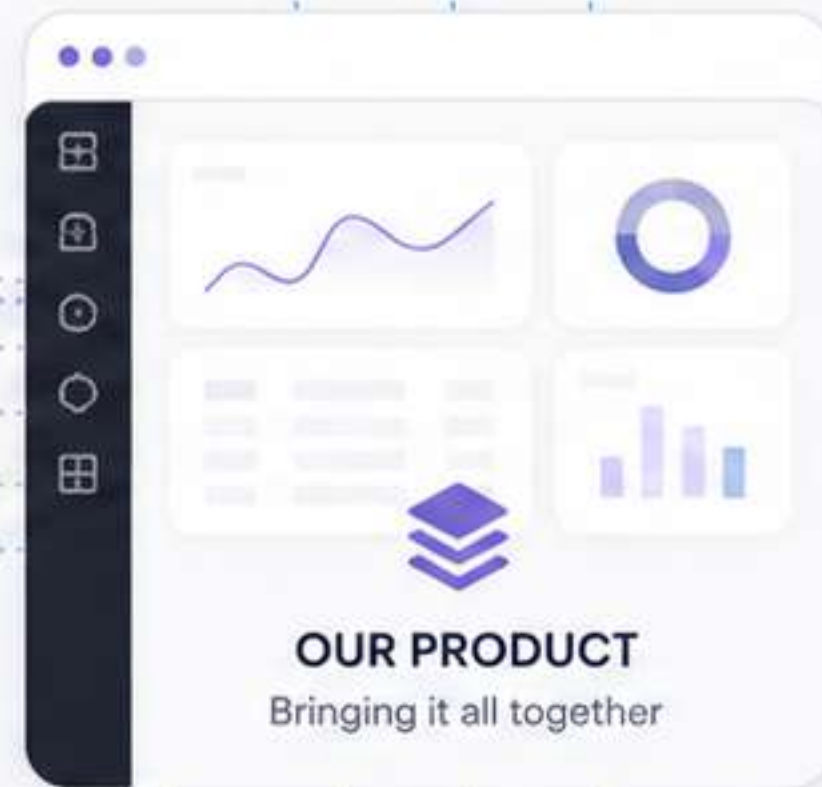
INTEGRATIONS

- Slack
- Microsoft Teams
- SendGrid
- GitHub
- Jira
- ...and more

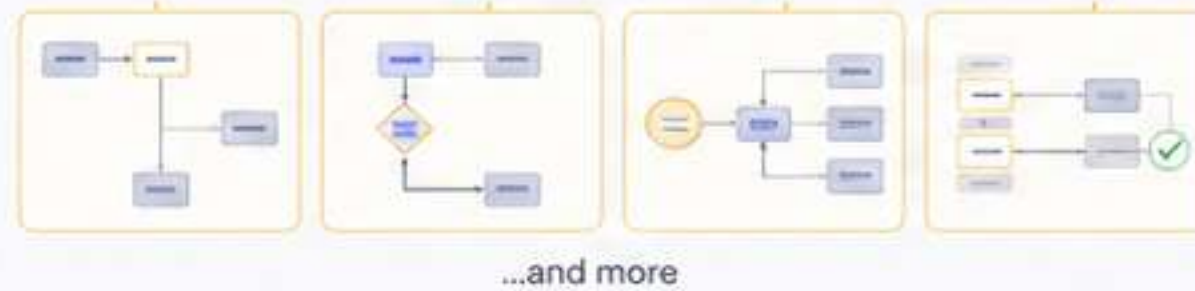
FEATURES

- Reporting
- Dashboards
- Data Exploration
- Alerts & Monitoring
- Data Transformation
- User Management
- ...and more

SCREENS

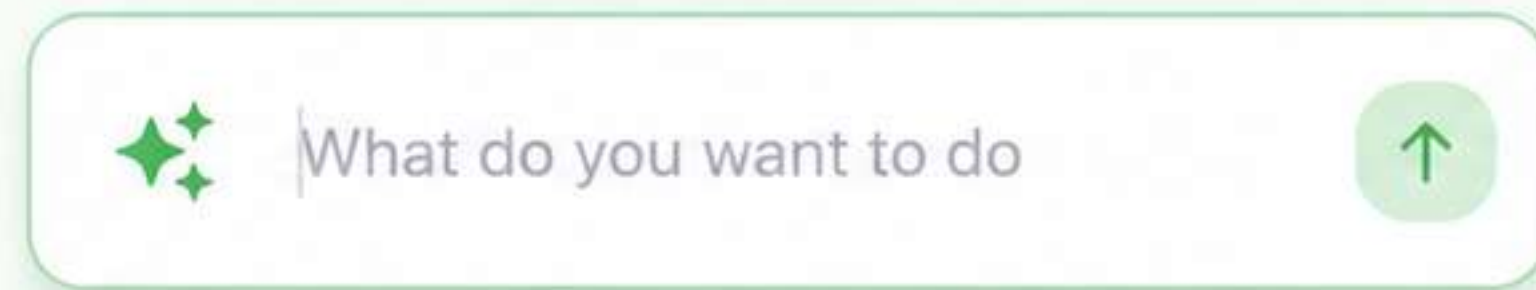


WORKFLOWS



AFTER

Simple. Unified. Effortless.



Where do you draw the line for a meeting Agent?

Schedule a meeting

Share agenda

Meet over VC

Record Transcription

Distill to summary
+Decisions/
Actions

Allocate actions out for recording

Track progress of each

Schedule check-in

What products are at your boundaries?

Schedule a meeting



Share agenda



Meet over VC



Record Transcription



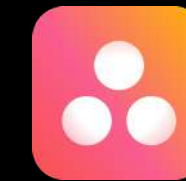
Distill to summary
+Decisions/
Actions



Allocate actions out for recording



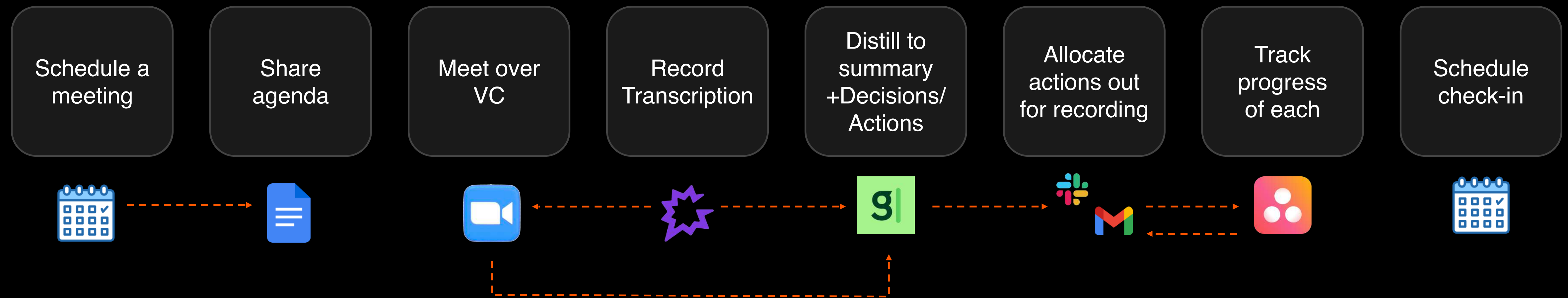
Track progress of each



Schedule check-in



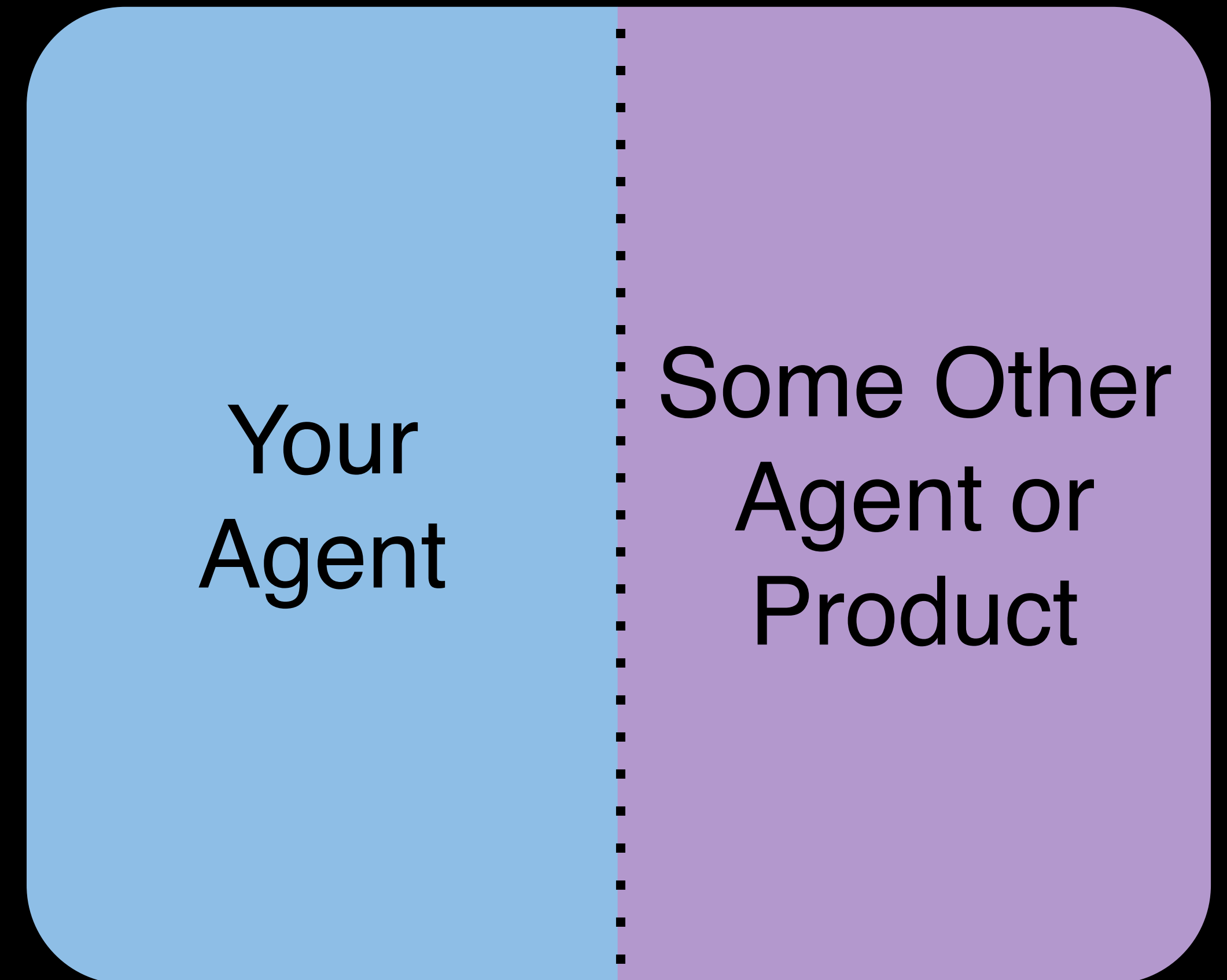
AI is a **convergent** force



So where does your product stop?

Things that matter, at least for now...

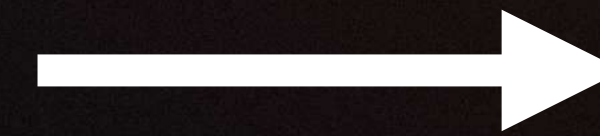
- Totally different buyer or owner
- Different level of data access, integrations, or permissions
- Different brand required or market to be known in
- Or if you're bumping into a well loved high performing product and you've no edge over them



AI changes UI

Command Line

Extremely fast
Hard to learn



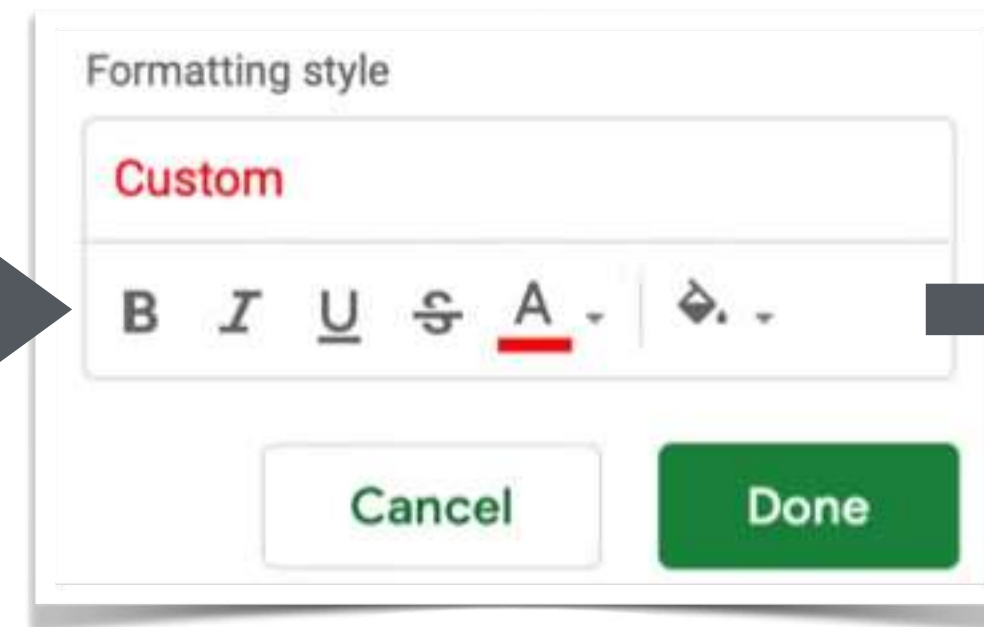
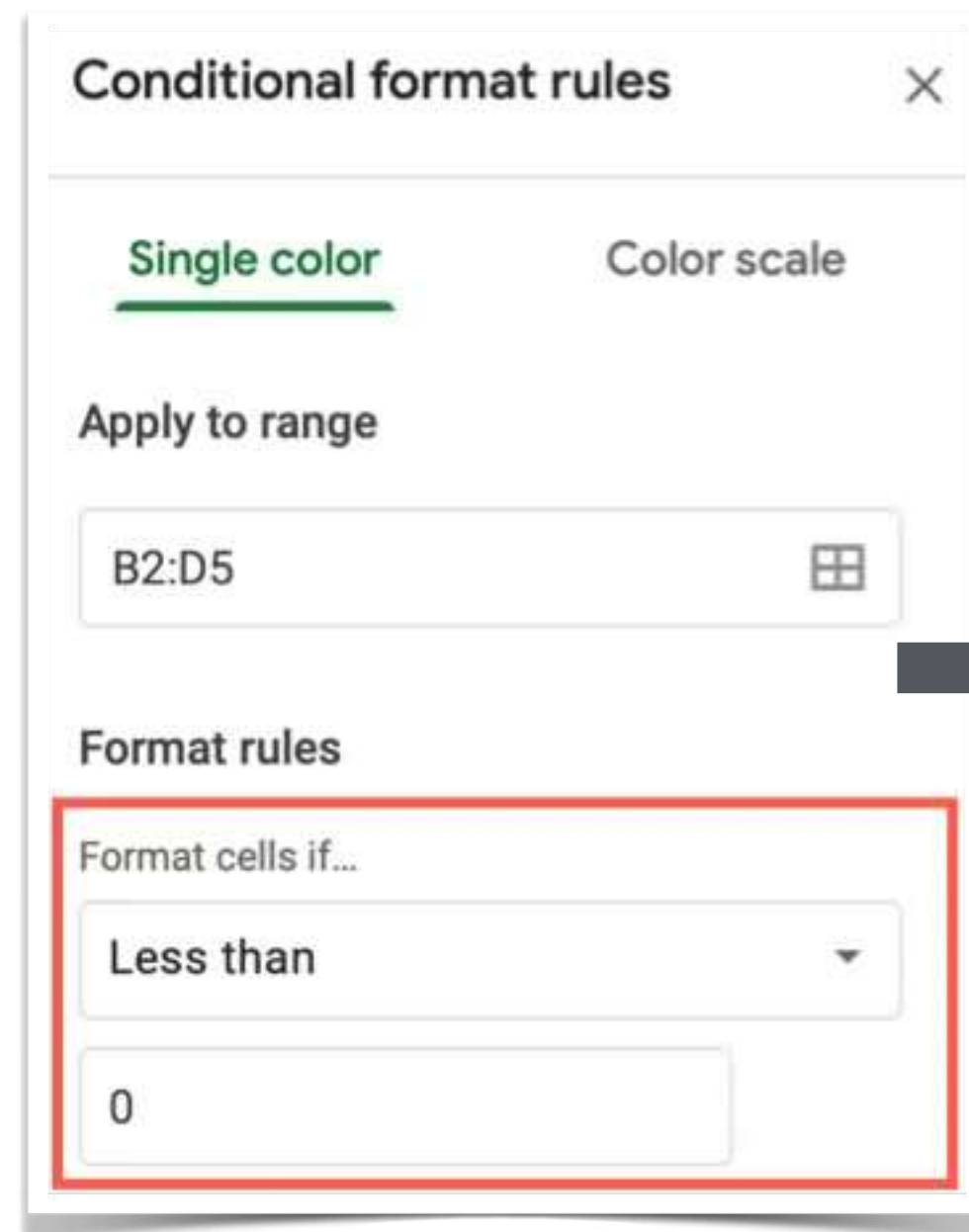
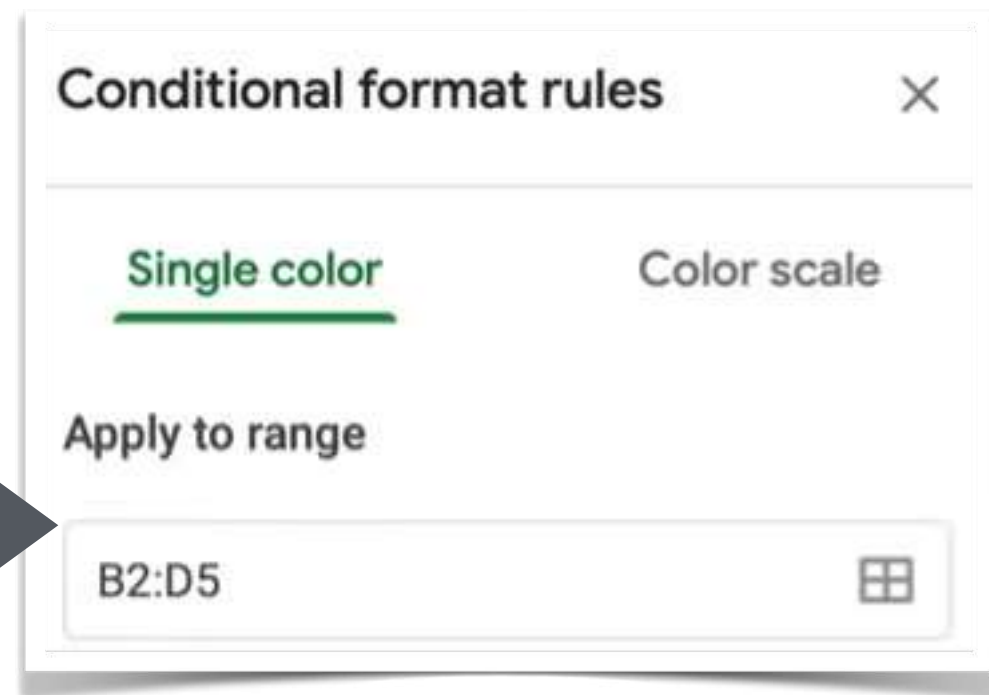
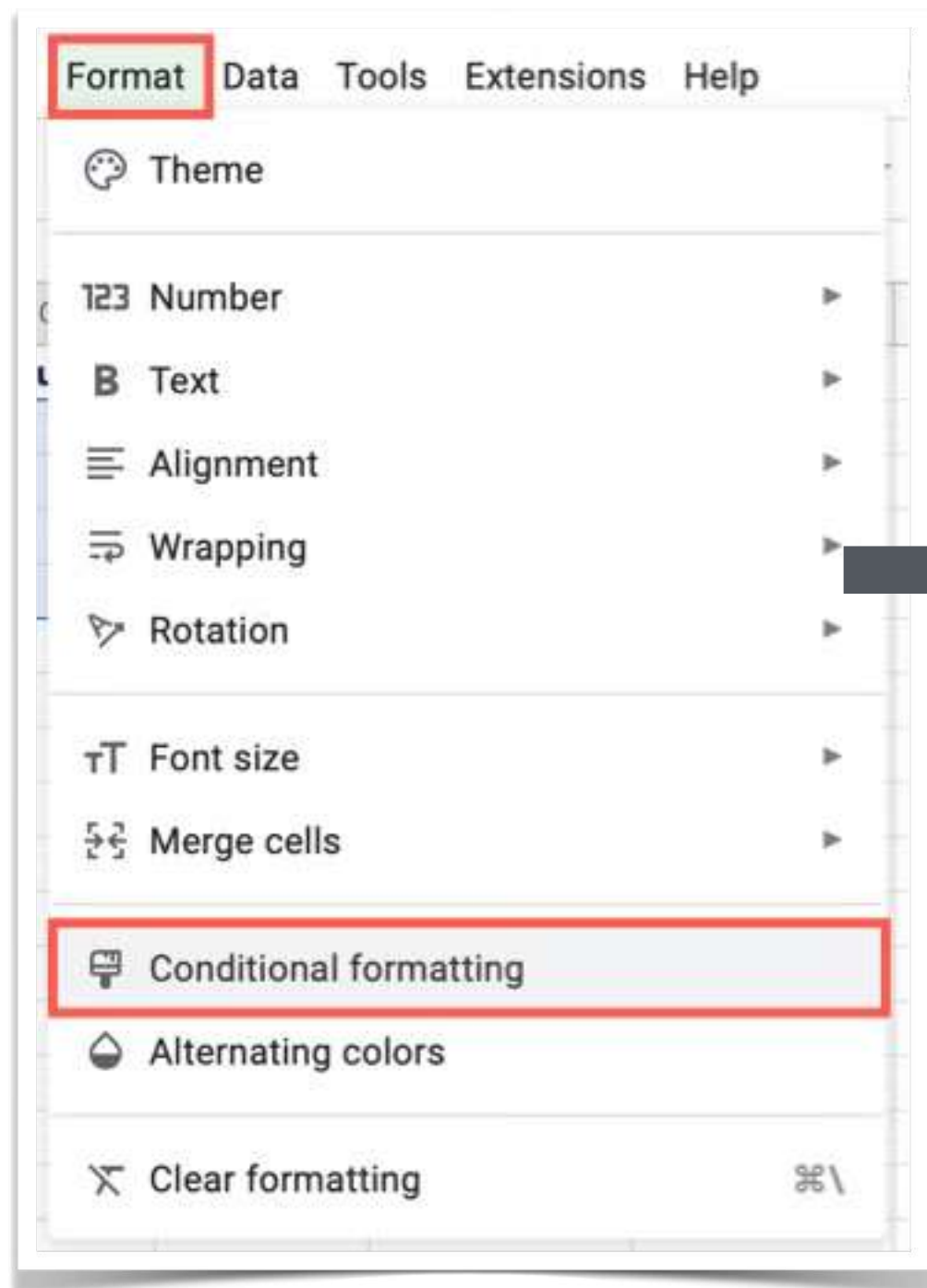
GUI

Much slower
Easy to learn

Just **say** the
thing you want

GUI

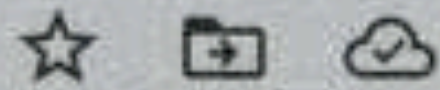
I want to make the negative cells red in my spreadsheet



	A	B	C	D
1	Item	January	February	March
2	Cases	126	-22	-19
3	Chargers	-43	194	-7
4	Cables	129	-17	113
5	Batteries	130	132	145



P&L Fy24



File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help

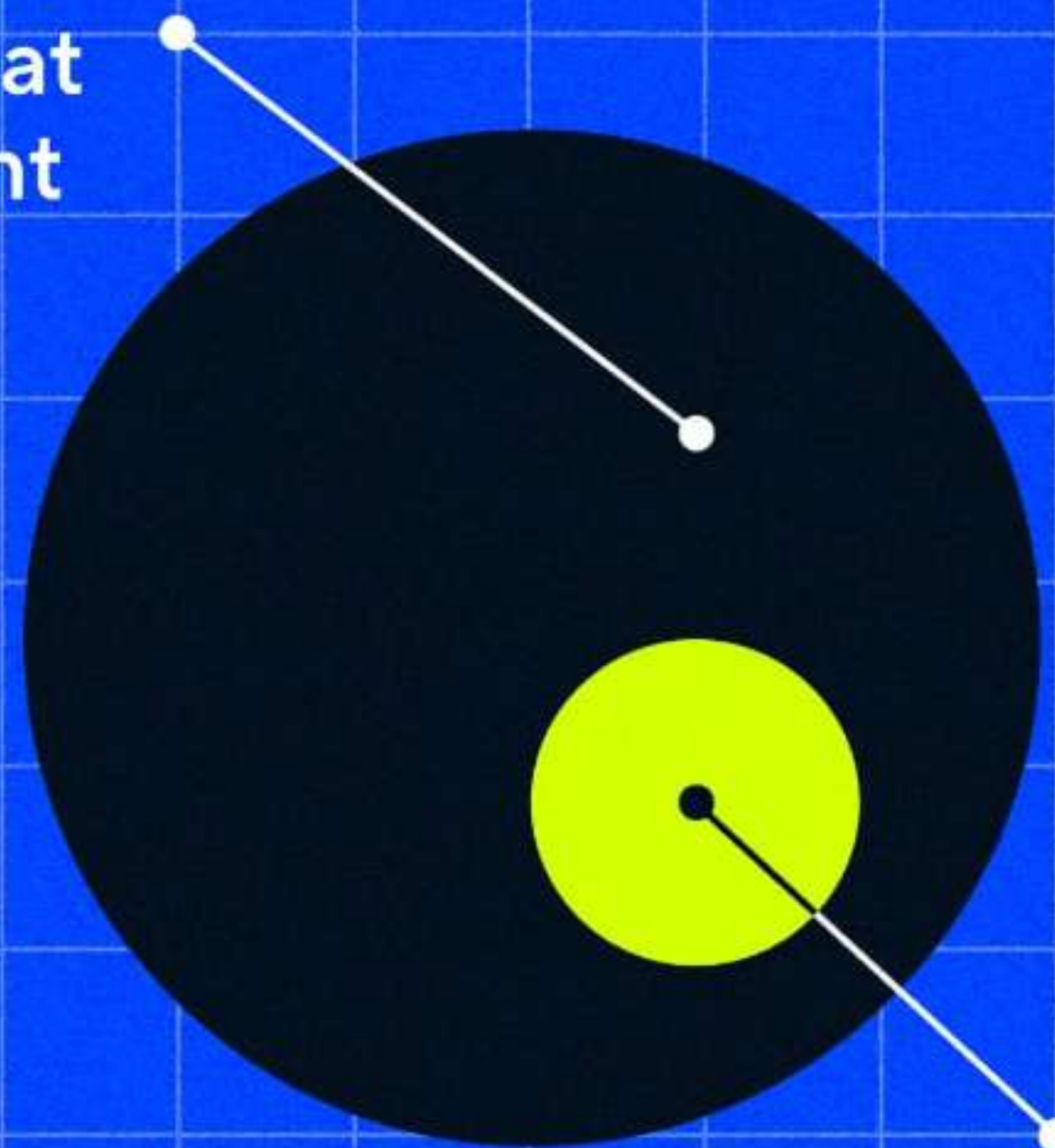
Menus 100% \$ % .0 .00 123 Arial

C4 fx May

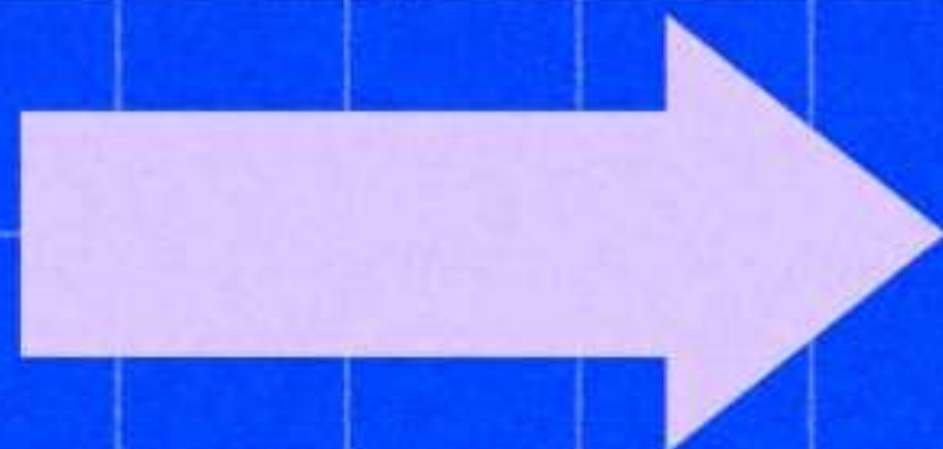
	C	D	E	F	G
4	May	June	July	August	Sept
5	803	660	-375	595	-453
6					-745
7					784
8	412	-98	238	883	-775
9	-29	49	-153	26	-851
10	477	487	317	708	258
11	310	-870	-433	951	650
12	331	189	175	714	781
13	-915	-402	114	-679	-338
14	-240	366	-151	-91	-998
15	-720	-752	227	724	-270
16	-193	478	-398	839	-783
17					

make the negative cells red

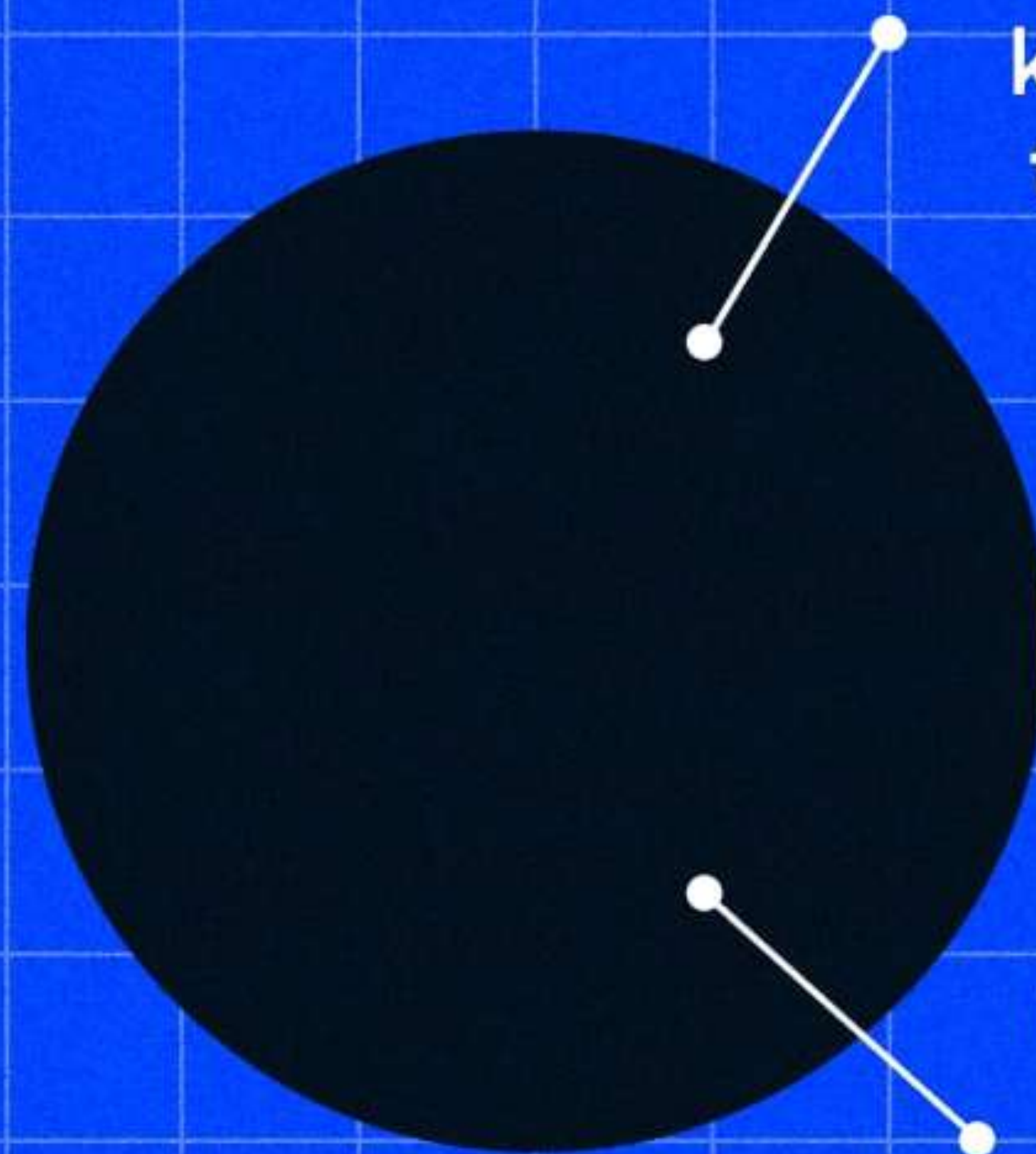
Users who know what they want to do



Users who know how to do it



Users who know what they want to do



Users who know how to do it

Before Chat as UI

After Chat as UI

FOUNDATIONS

- Colors
- Typography
- Spacing
- Radius
- Shadows
- Icons

COMPONENTS

- Buttons
- Inputs
- Forms
- Navigation
- Data Display
- Feedback
- Overlays
- Media
- Charts

TEMPLATES

- Page Layouts
- Sections

Theme



v 2.0.0

Design System

Beautiful, consistent, and accessible components for exceptional products.

What's new in 2.0

Crafted for clarity.

A design language that elevates every interaction.

Colors



Neutral



900

50

Typography

Ag

Inter + Satoshi

Clean, modern, and highly readable.

View scale

Radius & Shadows



Radius

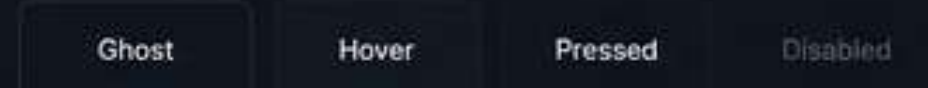
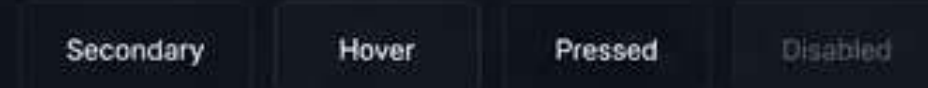
4 / 8 / 12 / 16 / 24

Shadows

Sm / Md / Lg / Xl

View tokens

Buttons



Inputs

Label

Placeholder text

Helper text goes here

Focused

Input text

Select

Choose an option

Checkbox

Radio

Forms

Email address

name@aurora.com ✓

Password

.....

Message

Your message...

Submit form

Navigation

Tabs

Overview Analytics Reports Settings

Breadcrumb

Home > Dashboard > Projects > Aurora

Pagination

< 1 2 3 4 5 >

Data Display

Product	Status	Users	Revenue
Aurora UI	Live	12,432	\$98,230
Spectrum	Beta	8,721	\$64,129
Insight	Live	6,213	\$43,902
Nova	Planned	-	-

View all

Feedback

Success! Your changes have been saved.

This is an informational message.

Please check the form for errors.

Something went wrong. Try again.

Overlays

Modal

Modal title

This is a modal window. It focuses attention on important content.

Cancel

Confirm

Tooltip

Helpful information

Chips & Badges

New Beta Featured Popular

Success Warning Error Info

Progress

70%

Loading

Icons



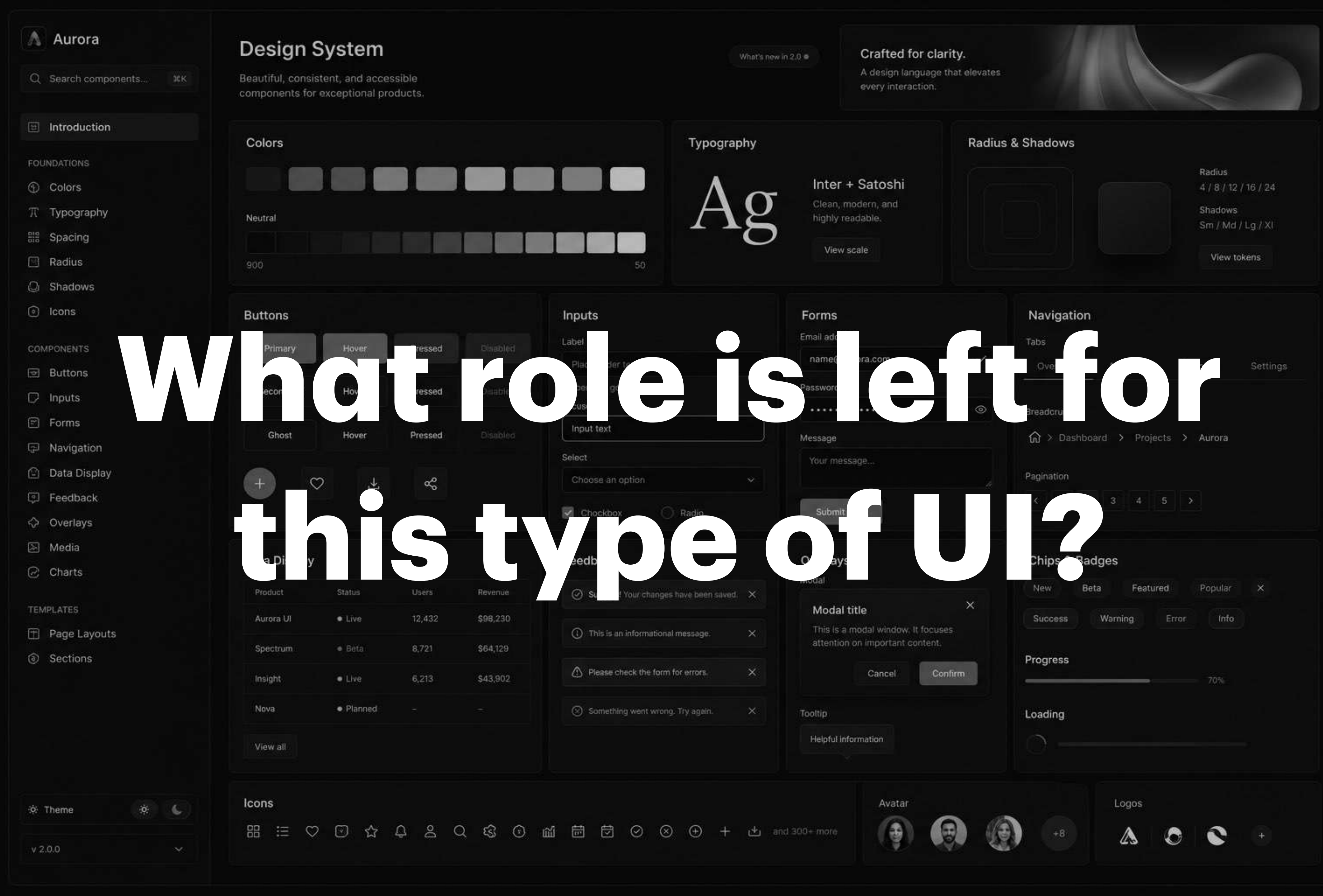
Avatar



Logos



What role is left for this type of UI?



| what do you want to do



K

This isn't just about

| what do you want to do



K

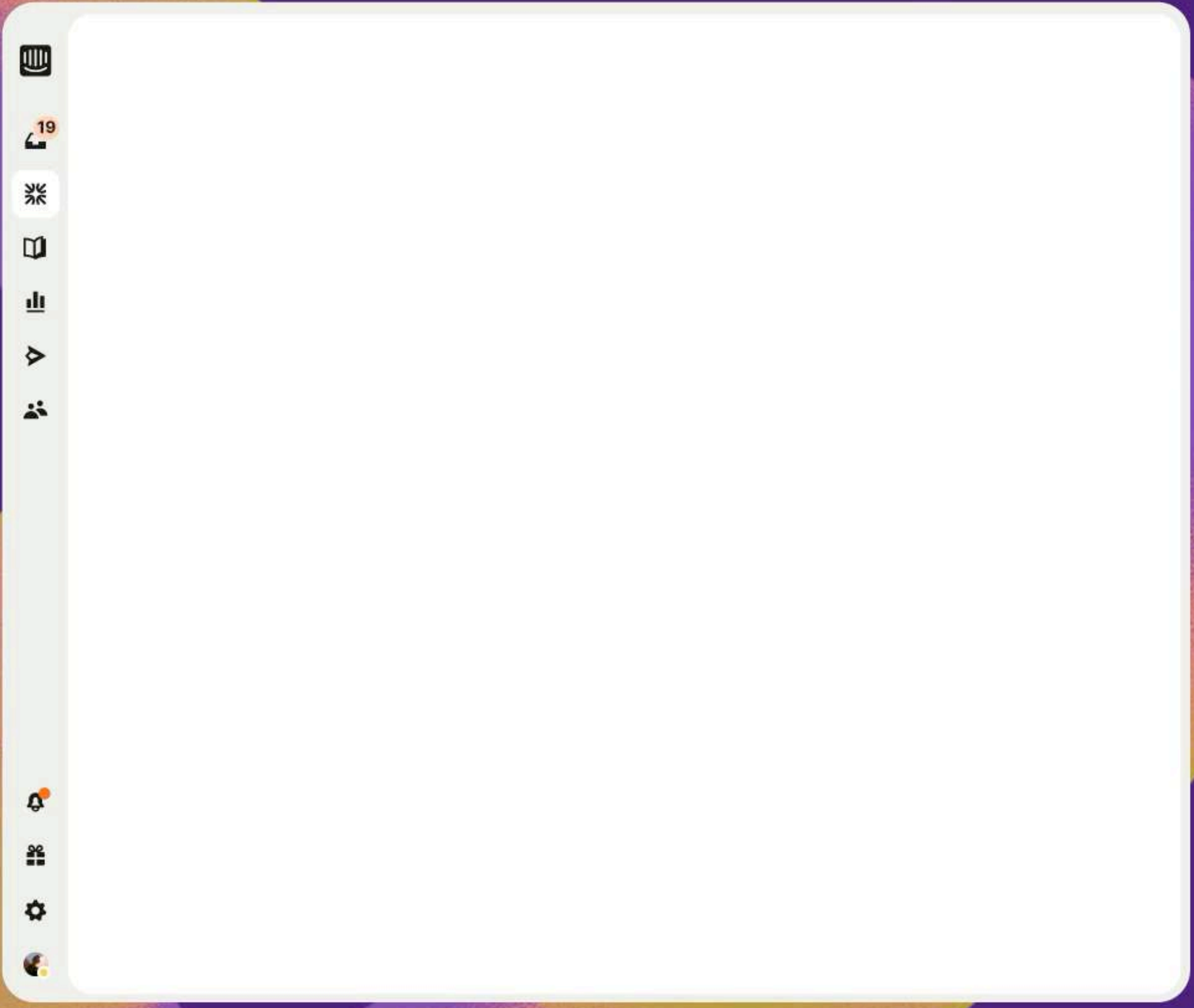
what's "faster"

It's not a better UI

| what do you want to do

⌘ K

**It's a strategic
thought partner**





Operator



Search



New chat



Scheduled



Previous 7 days



Update knowledge for Cl...



Review escalations on e...



Update help center after...



New chat

Designing in the UI era

When a need/problem occurs...you ask yourself

What is the **least** amount of user input (**if any**) that we need to take action?

How **deeply** can we solve the issue?

How **reliably** can we do this?

How **automated** can we make this?

bugtrack
Acme Platform v
 3

[+ File a Bug](#)

[Overview](#)

[My Issues](#)

[Assigned to Me](#) 4

[Activity](#)

[All Issues](#)

[Projects](#)

[Reports](#)

[Releases](#)

[Integrations](#)

[Settings](#)

Dark Mode

Alex Morgan

alex@acmecorp.dev

⋮

File a Bug

Help us squash it. The more detail, the faster we can fix it.

Acme Platform

v

Title *

Users are logged out when switching between tabs

Severity *

High
v

Priority

P1 - Critical
v

Product Area *

Authentication
v

Component

Session Management
v

Affects Version

v2.4.0 (build 2431)
v

Description *

Normal v **B** *I* U `</>` [🔗](#) [☰](#) [☰](#) [“”](#) [@](#)

When a user is authenticated and has multiple tabs open, switching between tabs after ~5 minutes causes the user to be logged out unexpectedly. This disrupts workflows and can lead to data loss if unsaved changes exist.

240 / 5000

Steps to Reproduce * + Add Step

1. Log in to the application.
2. Open at least two tabs (e.g., Dashboard and Reports).
3. Perform some actions in one tab.
4. Switch to the other tab after 5+ minutes of inactivity.
5. Observe that the user is logged out and redirected to the login screen.

215 / 5000

Expected Result

The user should remain logged in across tabs.

47 / 2000

Actual Result

The user is logged out and must sign in again.

50 / 2000

Drag and drop files here, or click to browse

PNG, JPG, GIF, MP4, MOV up to 20MB each

Create another

Save Draft

Submit Bug

Attachments (3) ^

bug-screenshot.png
1.2 MB
x

console-error.log
18 KB
x

screen-recording.mp4
4.6 MB
x

+ Add More Files

Environment

OS

macOS 14.4 (23E214)
v

Browser

Chrome 124.0.6367.91
v

Viewport

1920 x 1080
v

Additional Information

Found in Build Reproducible

2431

Yes

No

Occurs

Always
v

So it's not about UI

The image shows a web application interface for bug tracking. On the left is a sidebar with navigation options: 'File a Bug', 'Overview', 'My Issues', 'Assigned to Me' (with a count of 4), 'Activity', 'All Issues', 'Projects', 'Reports', 'Releases', 'Integrations', and 'Settings'. At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a 'Dark Mode' toggle and a user profile for 'Alex Morgan' (alex@acmecorp.dev).

The main area is titled 'File a Bug' with the subtitle 'Help us squash it. The more detail, the faster we can fix it.' The form includes the following fields:

- Title:** A text input with placeholder 'Enter a concise, descriptive title'.
- Severity:** A dropdown menu with placeholder 'Select severity'.
- Priority:** A dropdown menu with placeholder 'Select priority'.
- Product Area:** A dropdown menu with placeholder 'Select product area'.
- Component:** A dropdown menu with placeholder 'Select component'.
- Affects Version:** A dropdown menu with placeholder 'Select version'.
- Description:** A rich text editor with a toolbar (Normal, Bold, Italic, Underline, Code, Link, List, Quote, Mention) and a text area with placeholder 'Provide a clear and detailed description of the bug...'. A character count '0 / 5000' is shown at the bottom right.
- Steps to Reproduce:** A list of five numbered steps with placeholder text: '1. Enter the first step', '2. Enter the second step', '3. Enter the third step', '4. Enter the next step', '5. Enter the next step'. A '+ Add Step' button is on the right. A character count '0 / 5000' is shown at the bottom right.
- Expected Result:** A text input with placeholder 'What should have happened?' and a character count '0 / 2000'.
- Actual Result:** A text input with placeholder 'What actually happened?' and a character count '0 / 2000'.

At the bottom of the form is an attachment area with a paperclip icon and the text 'Drag and drop files here, or click to browse' and 'PNG, JPG, GIF, MP4, MOV up to 20MB each'. Below this are buttons for 'Create another', 'Save Draft', and 'Submit Bug'.

On the right side, there is a 'Copilot BETA' sidebar. It shows a 'You asked:' section with the prompt 'Please fill out the form with a bug report.' Below that, it says 'Copilot is filling out the form...'. The sidebar displays the filled-in form data:

- Title:** Users are logged out when switching between tabs
- Severity:** High
- Priority:** P1 - Critical
- Product Area:** Authentication
- Component:** Session Management
- Affects Version:** v2.4.0 (build 2431)
- Description:** When a user is authenticated and has multiple tabs open, switching between tabs after ~5 minutes causes the user to be logged out unexpectedly. This disrupts workflows and can lead to data loss if unsaved changes exist.
- Steps to Reproduce:**
 - Log in to the application.
 - Open at least two tabs (e.g., Dashboard and Reports).
 - Perform some actions in one tab.
 - Switch to the other tab after 5+ minutes of inactivity.
 - Observe that the user is logged out and redirected to the login screen.
- Attachments:** 3 files attached (shown as thumbnails).

At the bottom of the Copilot sidebar are buttons for 'Review and confirm to populate the form.', 'Edit Details', and 'Populate Form'.

And it's not about Copilots

What can I do for you today?

Please file a bug with the following details:

Title: Users are logged out when switching between tabs

Severity: High

Priority: P1 - Critical

Product Area: Authentication

Component: Session Management

Affects Version: v2.4.0 (build 2431)

Description:

When a user is authenticated and has multiple tabs open, switching between tabs after ~5 minutes causes the user to be logged out unexpectedly. This disrupts workflows and can lead to data loss if unsaved changes exist.

Steps to Reproduce:

1. Log in to the application.
2. Open at least two tabs (e.g., Dashboard and Reports).
3. Perform some actions in one tab.
4. Switch to the other tab after 5+ minutes of inactivity.
5. Observe that the user is logged out and redirected to the login screen.

Expected Result:

The user should remain logged in across tabs.

Actual Result:

The user is logged out and must sign in again.

Environment:

- OS: macOS 14.4 (23E214)
- Browser: Chrome 124.0.6367.91
- Viewport: 1920 x 1080

Attachments:

- bug-screenshot.png
- console-error.log
- screen-recording.mp4



And it's not just text as an alternative to UI

1 ⚡ When a **bug** detected

2 ↪ IF **bug.priority** is **extremely high**

OR

bug.customer_impact is **high**

OR

bug.category is **security**

2.1 YES

Send to incident management ...
Service Incident Management

2.2 NO

File in Linear ...
Project Bugs

Attached is how we deal with bugs, please update our policy |




bugpolicy.pdf
512 KB



Drop file to attach

PDF, DOCX, TXT up to 25MB

 Attach ▾

 Add context ▾

Clear

Send 

Designing in the UI era

When a need/problem occurs...you ask yourself

What is the **least** amount of user input (**if any**) that we need to take action?

How **deeply** can we solve the issue?

How **reliably** can we do this?

How **automated** can we make this?

Designing in the UI era

Here's the UI to handle
this situation



Here's the logic to handle
all situations of this type

The future products

Own complete domain areas (e.g. less point solutions, less tools)

Are fully agentic (automate everything)

Let you interact however you want (CLI, Claude, API, text UI, GUI)

Are self improving (they proactively identify areas for improvement)

Are strategic systems (inputs are policies & postures, not cases and tasks)

And most importantly

The primary performance vector is the quality and depth of the AI itself.

As I said, AI changes what you build

AI changes how you build

You must deeply understand the
job you're solving

Meetings & Project Management

Schedule
a meeting

Share agenda

Meet over VC

Record
Transcription

Distill to
summary
+ Decisions/
Actions

Allocate actions
out for recording

Track progress
of each

Schedule
check-in

Expense Management

Detect new
expense

Scan receipt

Find
categories
for each

File & allocate

Detect
overspend or
invalid spend

Update
manager
with link

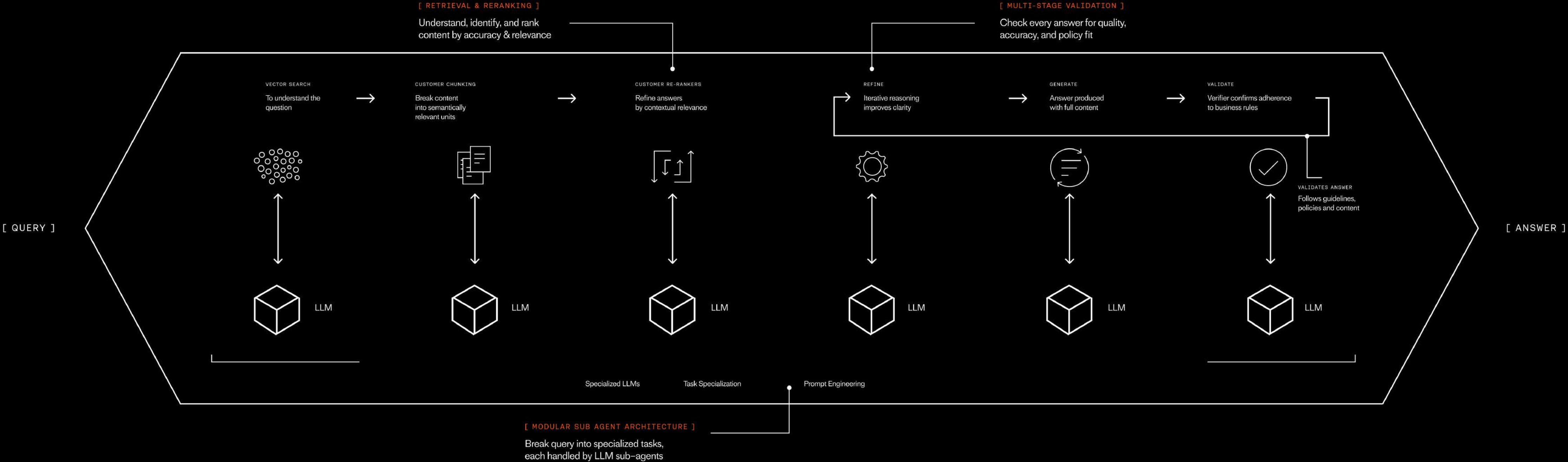
Nudge until
resolution

File expense

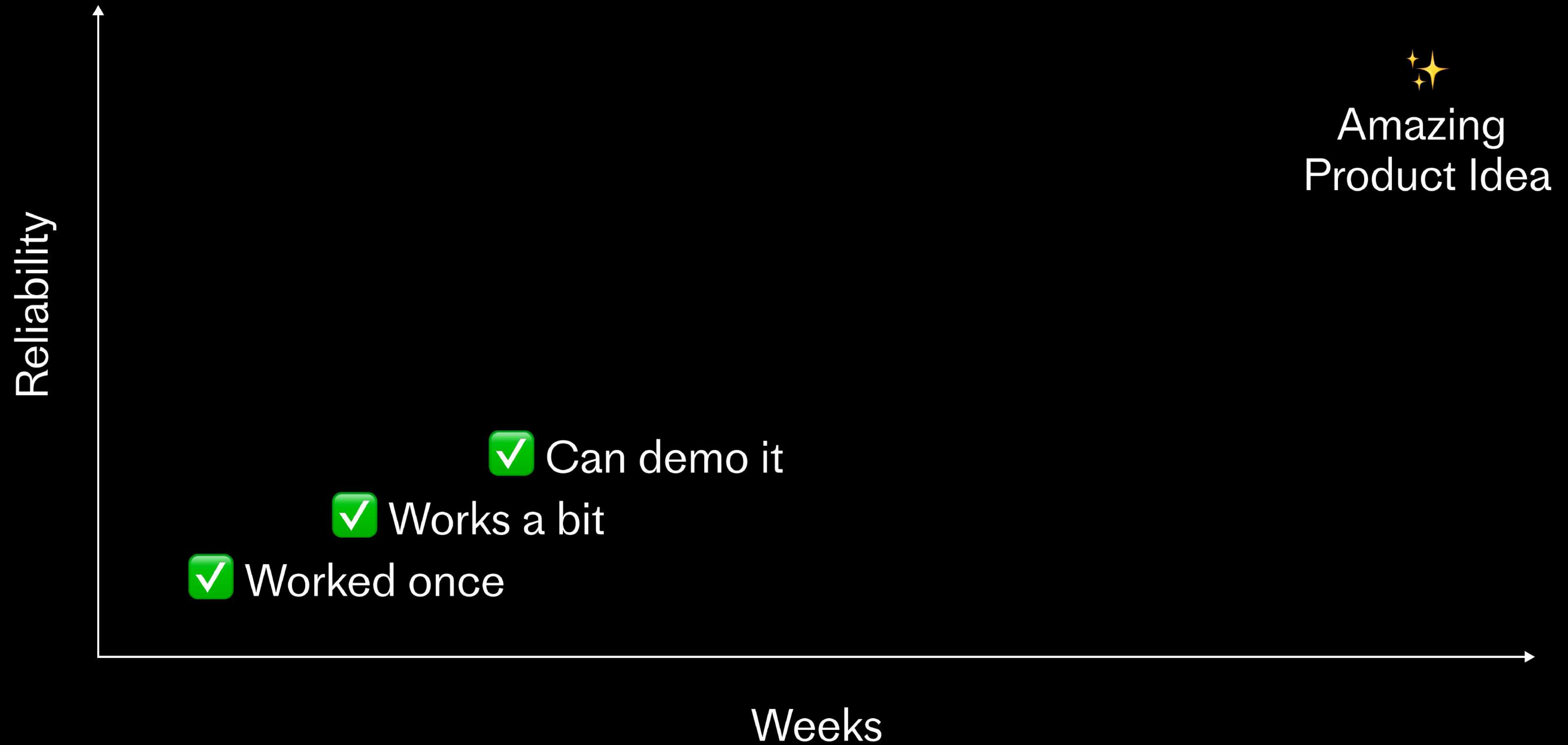
Can you reliably solve it
really, really well?

Step	Detect new expense	Scan receipt	Find categories for each	File & allocate	Detect overspend or invalid spend	Update manager with link	Nudge until resolution	File expense
Reliability	.99	.95	.98	.99	.99	.99	.98	.98

Do not underestimate the complexity needed.

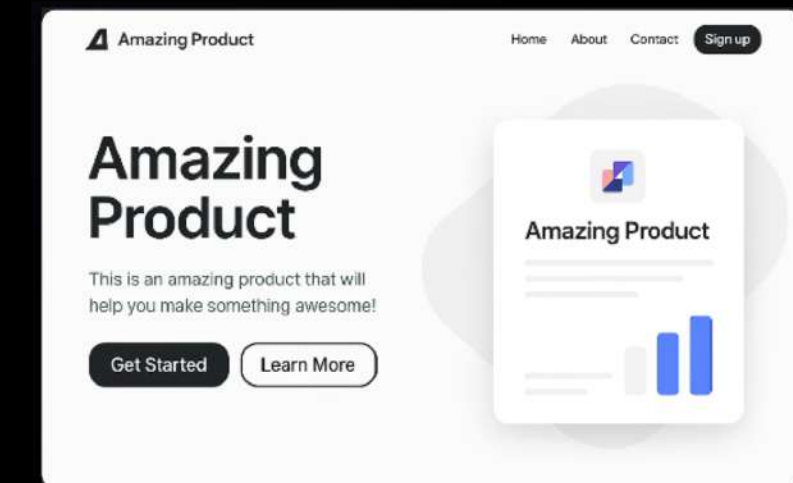


Beware the marketing overhang



Beware the marketing overhang

The Promise



The Marketing Overhang





APPLE INTELLIGENCE

JUNE 2024

Apple Targets Spring 2026 for Release of Delayed Siri AI Upgrade



Craig Federighi, senior vice president of software engineering at Apple Inc., during the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) in Cupertino, California. *Photographer: David Paul Morris/Bloomberg*

How you build software
is very different now.

Today software is built with empirical evaluation.

You need a very robust evaluation framework.

You tweak your AI Architecture or your prompts or your models or your RAG and you compare the new against the old and look for edge.

The majority of your product improvements are invisible and unpredictable.

The SaaS Era

Building fancy UI to help users do the job well



Building the CRUD back-end for the fancy UI

The SaaS Era

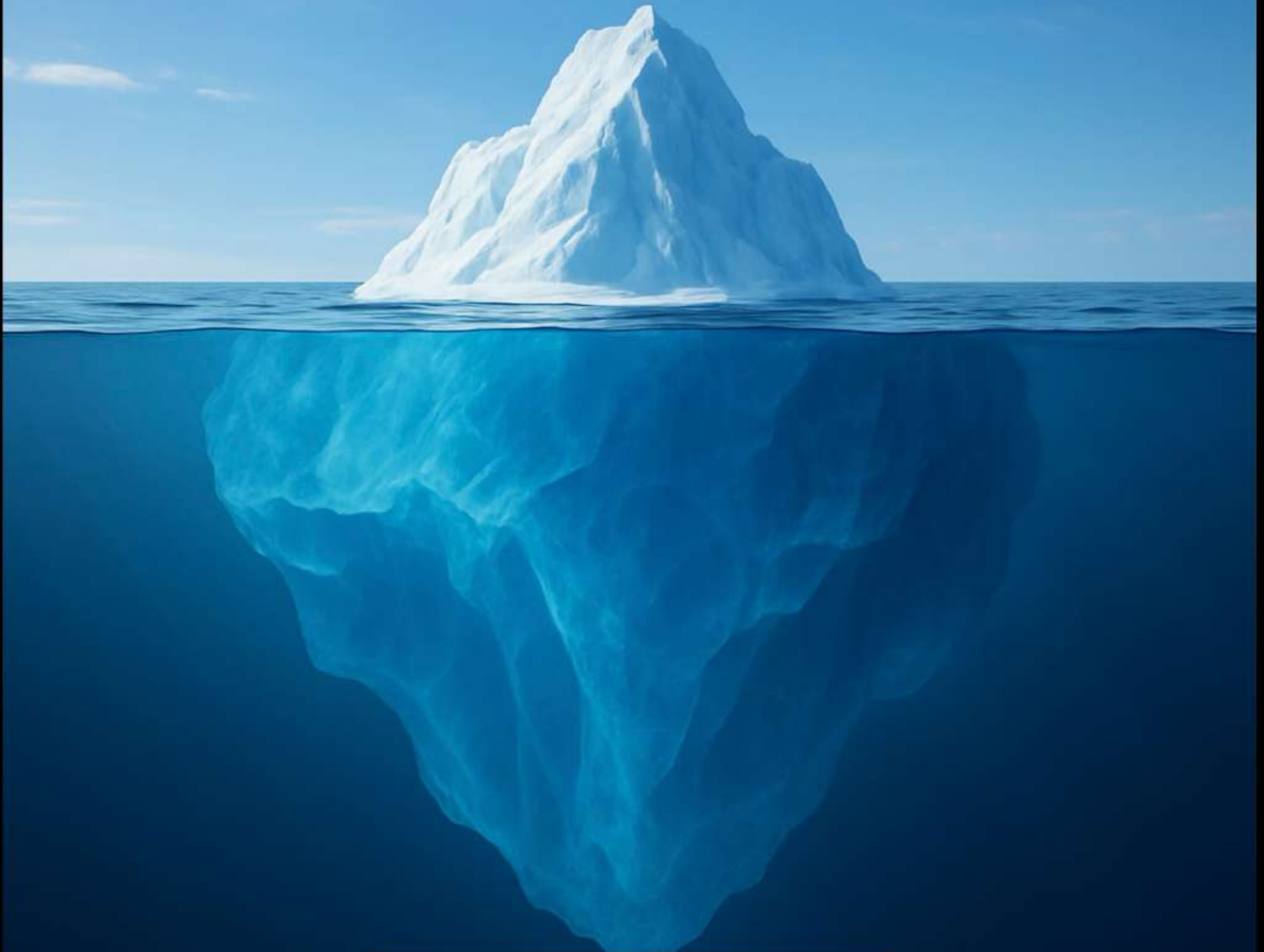
Building fancy UI to help users do the job well



Building the CRUD back-end for the fancy UI

The AI Era

Building the UI to control the AI



Building the AI do the job well


Your previous processes are hopelessly out of date.

Solve for AI Reliability first

Design Exploration is a lot cheaper now, use it


Grow the new muscles, fast.

Connected, modular systems




**Design principle
number one** We favor modular systems over bespoke optimizations. We reuse, evolve and merge before creating something new.

Opinionated by default, flexible under the hood




**Design principle
number two** We optimize our designs to feel simple and opinionated by default, but progressively reveal power and flexibility.

Follow fundamentals




**Design principle
number three** We favor established best practices and avoid overly clever, non-standard design patterns.

Make it feel personal




**Design principle
number four** Our designs reflect that we're connecting real people, not entries in a database.

What you ship is what matters




**Design principle
number five** Our deliverable is not the design file. We take pride and ownership of what we ship.

Start with the problem




**R&D Principle
number one** Design addresses the customer problem you're solving. Continuously evolve that understanding, and return to it often to make sure you haven't gone off course.

Think big, start small, learn fast




**R&D Principle
number two** For ambitious, fast-moving things, large things have small beginnings. Skip the smallest, safest solution. Find the fastest way to learn if you're actually solving the problem.

Ship fast, ship early, ship often



**R&D Principle
number four** Shipping is our heartbeat. It brings life to our brain, to our product, and to our customers. Challenge yourselves on how to move faster from idea to customer.

Deliver outcomes



**R&D Principle
number three** Shipping is the beginning, not the end. Plan to iterate, fight for a solution, and keep pushing to have customer and business impact.

Shape the solution



**Engineering principle
number one** We never blindly execute on requirements defined by others. We deeply understand the value of our work, and help design solutions which efficiently deliver that value.

Be technically conservative



**Engineering principle
number two** We like familiar solutions with boring technologies. We reuse the same patterns in different solutions as much as possible.

Build in small steps



**Engineering principle
number three** Large changes are hard to understand, and harder to debug. We deliver complex changes in a series of small, controlled, easy to understand steps.

Keep it simple



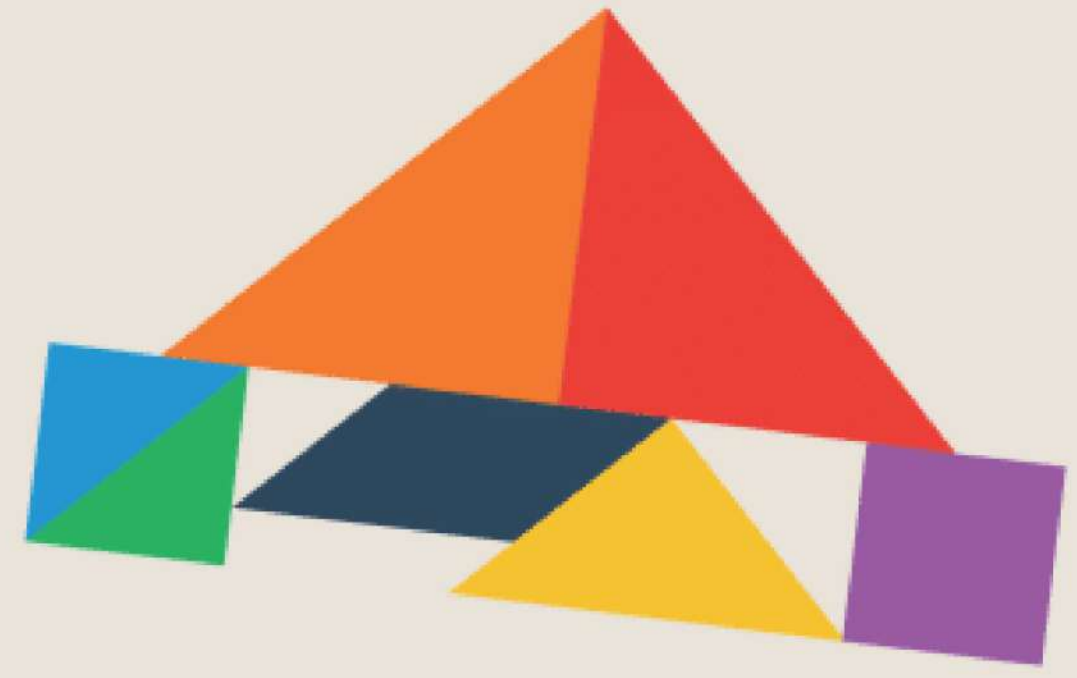
**Engineering principle
number four** Complexity is the enemy of our ability to move quickly. We will trade off performance, financial cost, and perfect abstraction in order to keep a solution simple.

Build with positivity and pride



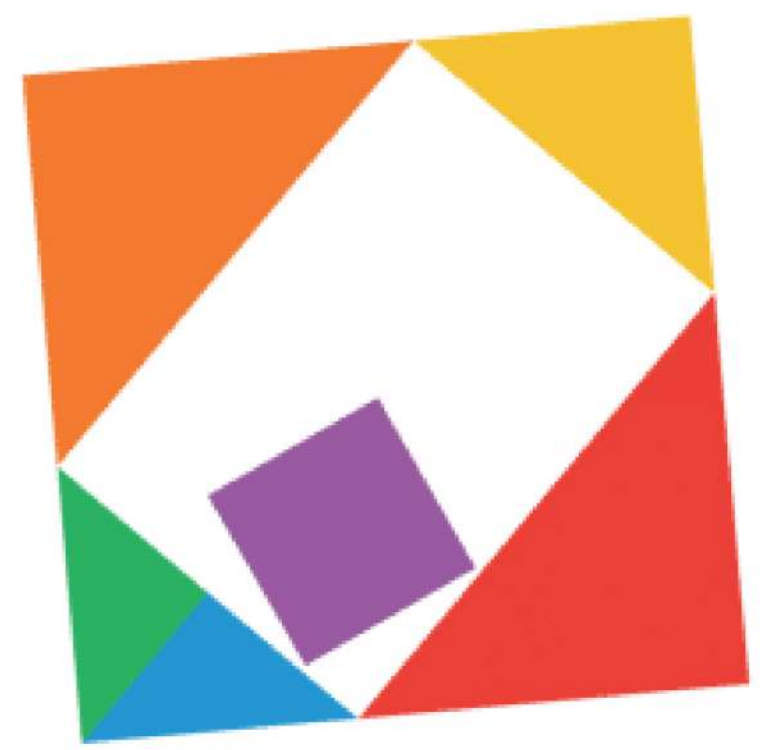
**Engineering principle
number five** Great things are only built by high-functioning groups of humans. We are optimistic, positive, and assume good intent. We are eager to teach and learn.

Opinionated by default, flexible under the hood



Design principle number two
<http://go.uber.com/principles>
We optimize our designs to feel simple and opinionated by default, but progressively reveal power and flexibility.

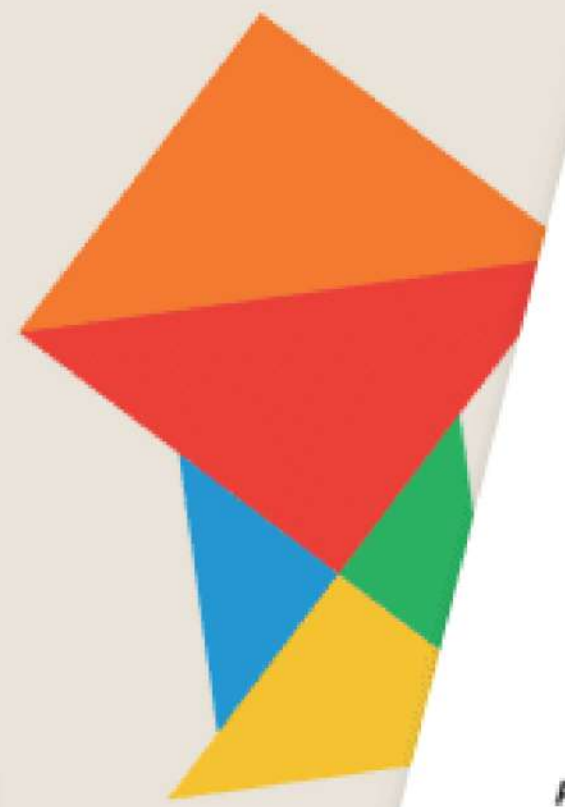
Start with the problem



R&D Principle number one
<http://go.uber.com/principles>
Start by deeply understanding the problem we're solving. Continually evolve this understanding, and persistently return to it to ensure you haven't veered off course.

Engineering principle number three
<http://go.uber.com/principles>
Large changes are hard to understand, harder to debug. We deliver our changes in a series of small, controlled understand steps.

What you ship matters



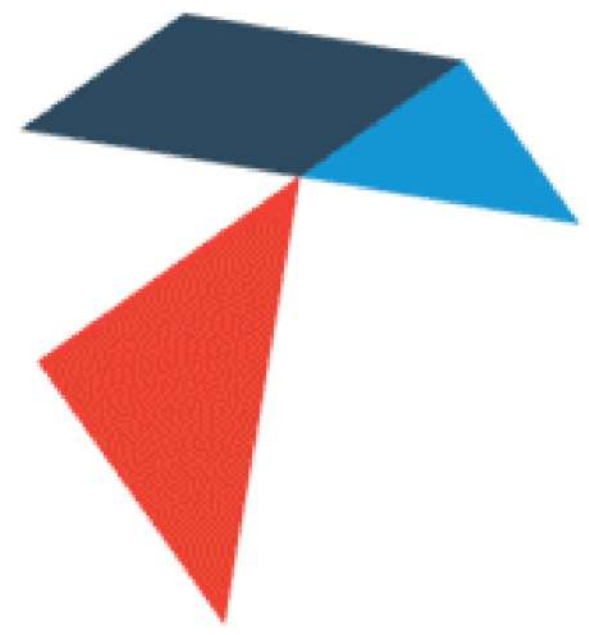
R&D Principle number two
<http://go.uber.com/principles>
Be ambitious from the beginning. Find the solution.

Shape the solution

Ship fast, ship early, ship often

Ship with pride and positivity

Shipping is our heartbeat. It brings life to our team, to our product, and to our customers. Challenge yourselves on how to move from idea to customer.



Teams over bespoke. Merge and merge.

We had to abandon all of this shit

Opinionated by default, flexible under the hood

Engineering principle number three
Large changes are hard to understand, harder to debug. We deliver complex changes in a series of small, controlled, understandable steps.

What you ship matters more than what matters

Shipping is our heartbeat. It brings life to our team, to our product, and to our customers. Challenge yourselves on how to move from idea to customer.

Design principle number two
We optimize our designs to feel simple and opinionated by default, but progressively reveal power and flexibility.

Ship fast, ship early, ship often

Work with pride and positivity

R&D Principle number one

Start by deeply understanding the problem we're solving. Continually evolve this understanding, and persistently return to it to ensure you haven't veered off course.

Shape the solution

Opinionated by default, flexible under the hood

Large changes are hard to understand, harder to debug. We deliver changes in a series of small, controlled steps.

What you ship matters more than what matters

Shipping is our heartbeat. It brings life to our product, and to our customer. Challenge yourselves on how to move from idea to customer.

Ability to perform, on in

R&D Principle number two

Be ambitious from the beginning. Find the solution

Shape the solution

Ship fast, ship early, ship often with positivity and pride

Ship fast, ship early, ship often

Teams over bespoke, buy and merge

R&D Principle number one

Start by deeply understanding the problem we're solving. Continually evolve this understanding, and persistently return to it to ensure you haven't veered off course.

Yes it was painful.

Yes people didn't like it.

Yes people were disempowered.

Old Way

Pick a JTBD

Design a
Solution

Build

Ship

WHY?

EXECUTION WAS CERTAIN

TECHNOLOGY WAS STABLE

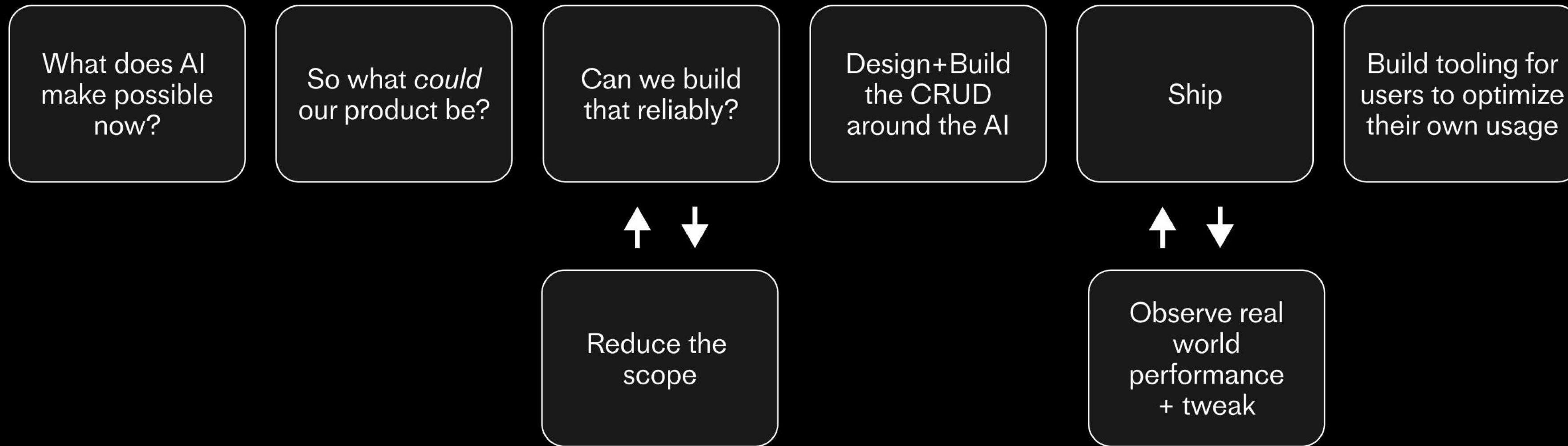
UI/DESIGN WAS THE CORE ISSUE

USERS COULD ARTICULATE THEIR PROBLEMS

OFTEN WELL KNOWN SOLUTIONS (COMPETITORS ETC)

NEVER A QUESTION OF "CAN IT WORK"

New Way



LOTS MORE POSSIBILITIES
EXECUTION EXTREMELY UNCERTAIN
TECHNOLOGY RAPIDLY ADVANCING
MOST AMBITIOUS PRODUCT WINS BUT MUST WORK
YOU LEARN MORE ONCE ITS LIVE

A Causal Inference Approach to Measuring the Impact of Improved RAG Content

Fe
2025.0

The Agency, Control, Reliability (ACR) Tradeoff for Agents

We experiment with the strategy of developing composable AI agents with slightly tempered autonomy. The resulting agent

exl



Home Capabilities AI Engine AI Research Customers Pricing

Contact sales Sign in View demo



202

Using LLMs as a Reranker for RAG: A Practical Guide

Ramil Yarullin Fedor Parfenov
2025.09.11

Contents

- The Core Idea
- Reducing output tokens
- Parallel Reranking
- RAG in Copilot: Keeping Source Diversity
- Impact
- Pointwise vs Listwise
- Reflections
- The Prompt

Good answers start with good context. Our AI agents use retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) to find the right context for a user's query. RAG retrieves top passages from a knowledge base, then uses them to generate an answer.

A key part of this process is **reranking**, which reorders the results from vector search so the final answer is grounded on the most relevant passages. Open-source cross encoder models are a popular choice for this because they are fast and easy to use. But in our experience, they don't hit the quality bar we need.

In this post we share how we deployed an LLM-based reranker and the engineering needed to make it **5x faster** while staying reliable on production traffic. We also show how we've applied it in our Fin and Copilot Agents and **reveal the prompt we used**. LLM reranker also guided the training of a custom reranker for Fin, which we describe in a [companion post](#).

NEW MUSCLES TO GROW

EMPIRICAL EVALUATION
(IS THIS ACTUALLY BETTER?)

SCIENTIFIC RIGOUR
(DON'T SHIP UNTIL IT'S GOOD!)

CAUSALITY
(WHY DID THIS METRIC MOVE?)

PROMPTING
(OBVIOUS)

ML ARCHITECTURE
TASK DECOMPOSITION

POST TRAINING

PRE TRAINING

TRADE OFFS -
SPEED, COST,
ACCURACY, HALLUCINATIONS

[FIN.AI/RESEARCH](https://fin.ai/research)

Bookworm ▾
Mobile Refresh

File Assets 🔍 📖

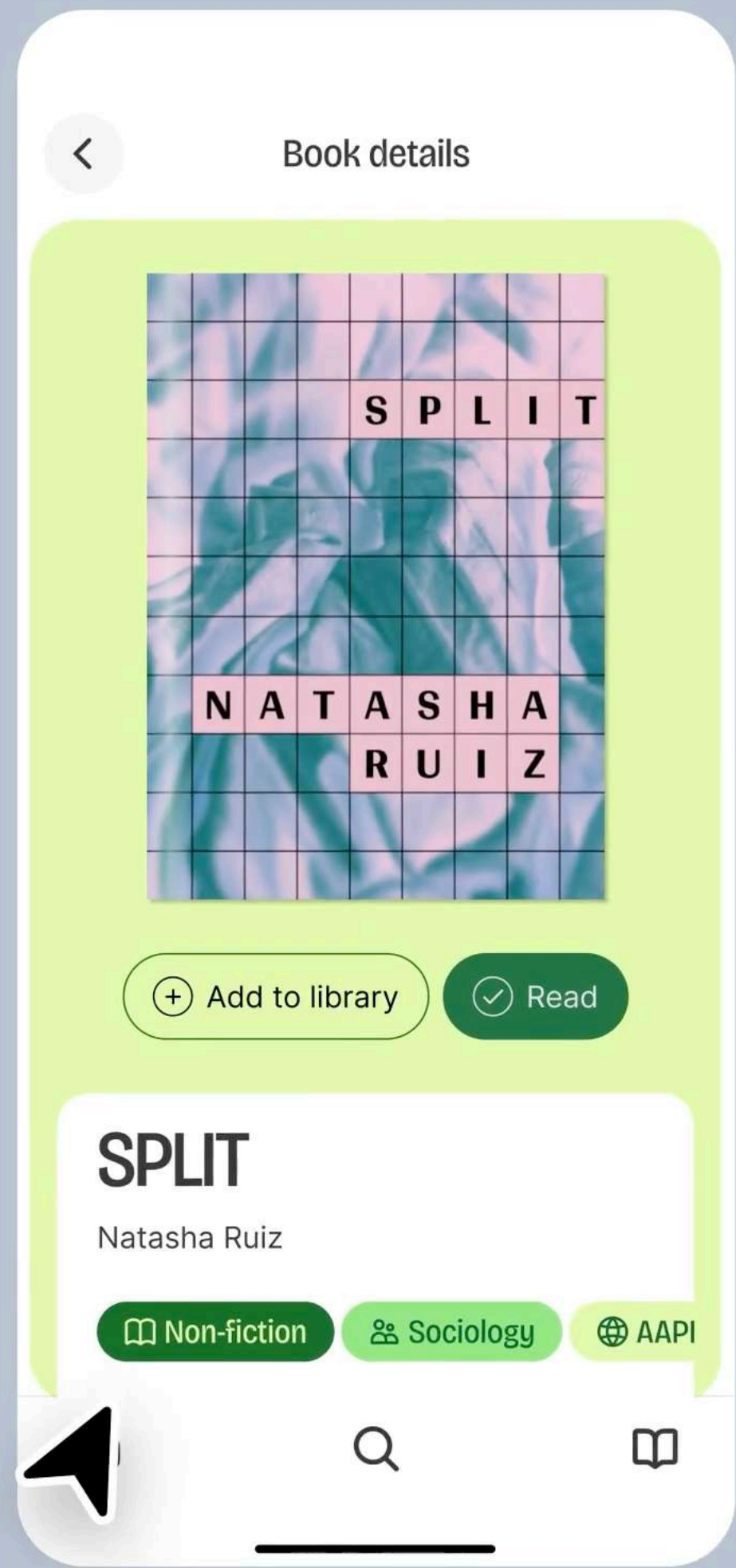
Pages +

Screens

- ALT explores
- Design Crit Feedback
- Archive

Layers

- Image
- Nilo / Home / Mobile
- Backgrounds
- Button / Active
- Menu
- Nilo / Cart / Mobile



Design Prototype 100% ▾

Image ...

Position

X 240 X 120

Layout

W 280 H 430

Appearance

100% 0

Fill

Image 100%

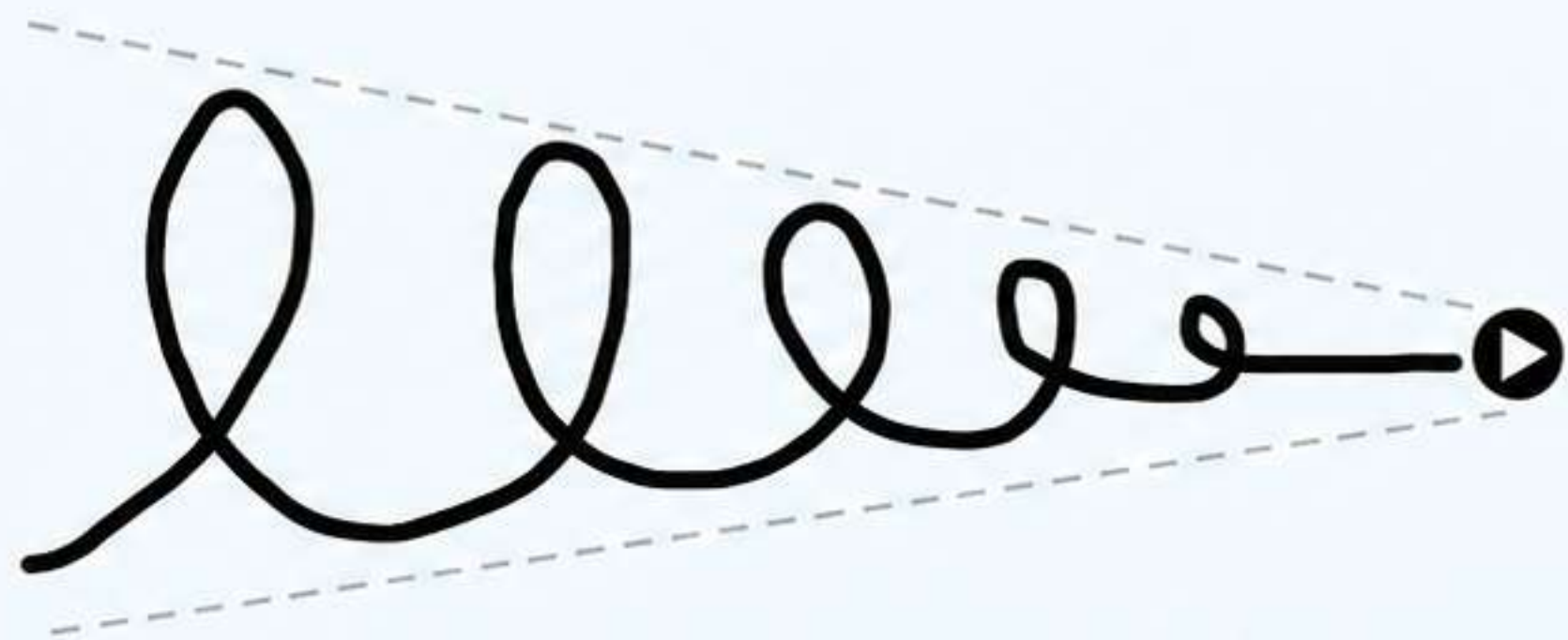
Stroke

Effects

Export

Navigation bar with icons: Home, Search, Add, Lasso, Text, Shape, Eraser, Undo, Redo, Copy, Paste.

Refinement



Best solution
is missed



THE OLD WORLD

SKETCH/WIREFRAME SOME IDEAS
PICK 1 BECAUSE DESIGN IS EXPENSIVE
PRODUCE FULL DESIGN
ITERATE TO GET IT RIGHT

WHATS POSSIBLE NOW

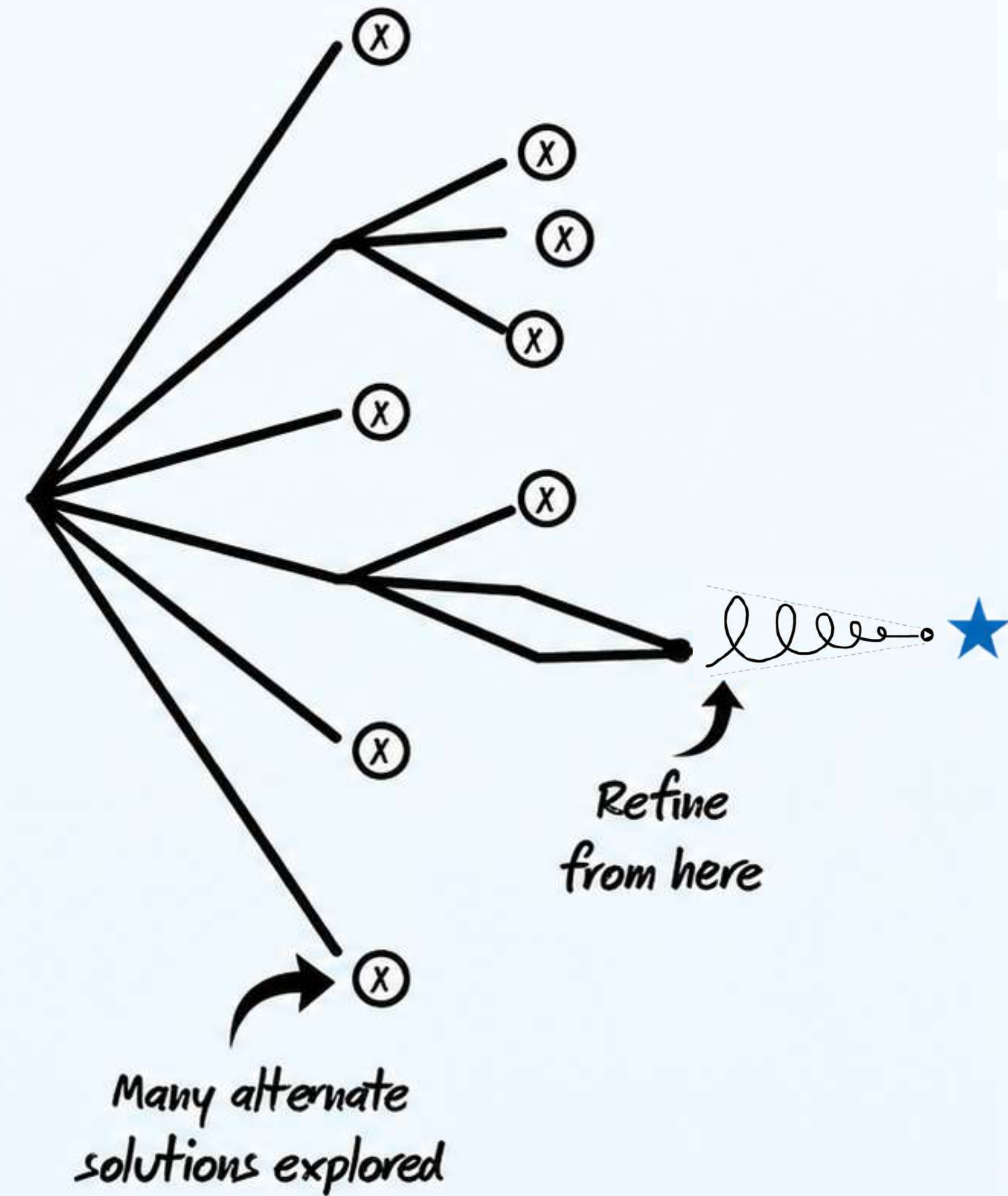
YOU CAN PURSUE MANY DIRECTIONS QUICKLY

YOU CAN PROTOTYPE QUICKLY

YOU CAN BUILD COMPLEX INTERACTIONS QUICKLY

THIS MEANS YOU SHOULD EXPLORE THE SOLUTION SPACE

Exploration



AI changes *the momentum of your team*

Changes within product, design, engineering

OLD

Should designers code?

Iterative improvements to
engineering velocity

PMs triangulate usage, feedback,
progress, marketing, etc.



NEW

Designers should code

Substantial
improvements (e.g. 2x, 3x)

PMs automate, distill,
decide, drive, with AI.



Domingo W.  · 2nd
Staff Product Designer at Intercom
1mo · 

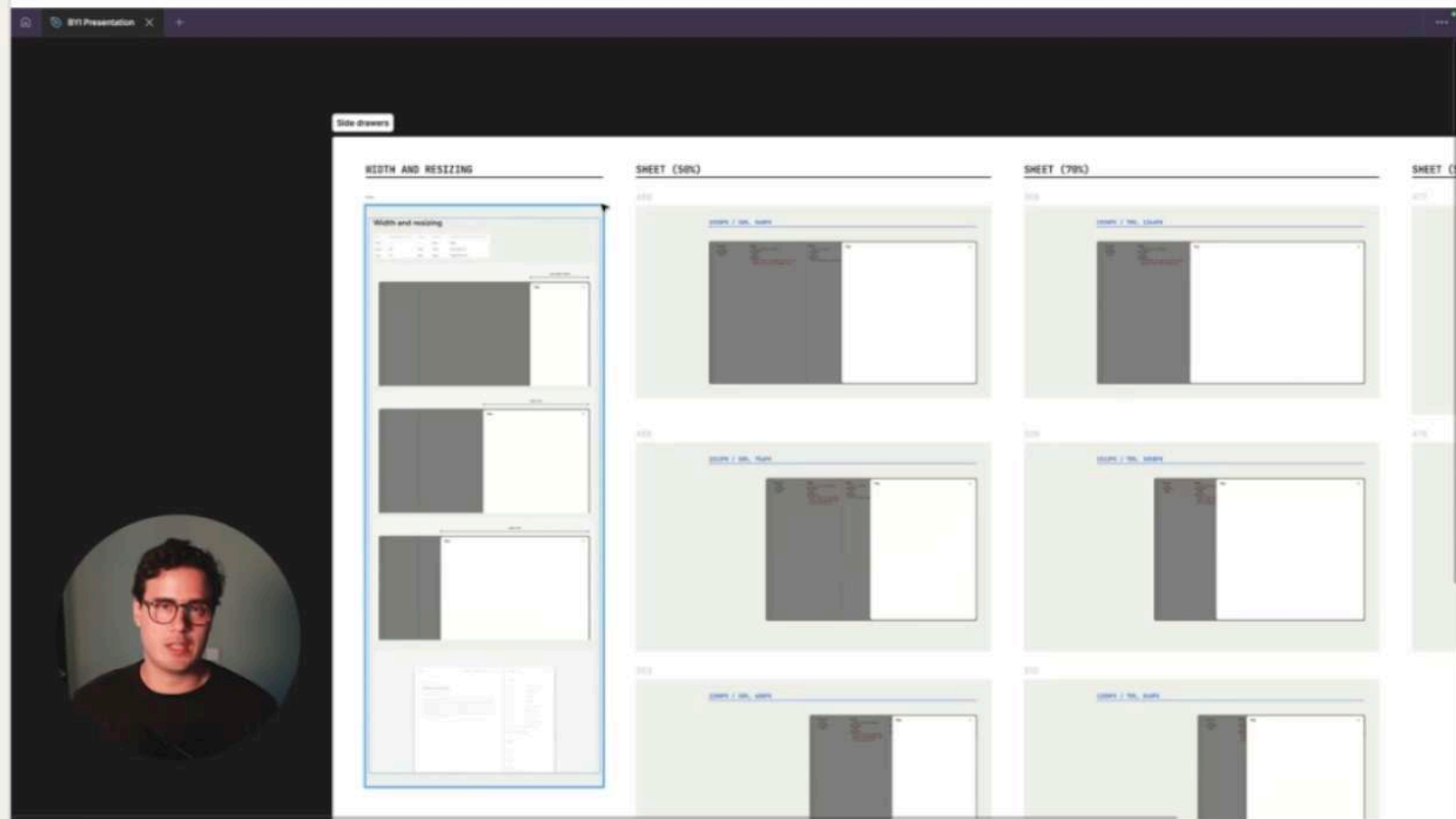
 **Connect** 




Our design team at Intercom is becoming fully AI-native, using AI to work directly in code and move from idea to execution faster, whether it's building new components, fixing UI bugs, or exploring new concepts.

Here's a quick example of how we're using AI in the Front-End Technologies team to build components as we transition our tech stack to React.

Having direct access to code gives me a clear view of how components behave and allows me to hand over working code to engineers. More importantly, AI has helped me grow my front-end skills and learn concepts that make me a more effective partner to my team.

Check it out!



   Phil Byrne and 1,262 others

86 comments · 67 reposts

EVERY DESIGNER IN FIN NOW SHIPS TO PRODUCTION

SET A DATE

START SMALL

BULLDOZE THROUGH THE INTERNAL TOOLING CHALLENGES

START TO GROW OWNERSHIP

Intercom's 3-point framework for AI-driven design

Shipping code, vibe coding the roadmap, and owning the entire frontend

THOM RIMMER AND EMMET CONNOLLY

OCT 07, 2025

❤️ 51

💬 2

🔄 6

Share

⋮

We all know that AI is changing how design gets done. At Intercom we led the charge earlier this year by having all of our designers ship code changes to production; in a short few months we've seen many other design teams follow suit, and it's fast becoming standard practice.

More broadly, design teams are using AI in many different ways to quickly redefine their role and impact.

We developed this three-step framework to expand design's role at Intercom:

1. **Designers shipping code:** Every designer is shipping directly to production, fixing UX debt and bugs, updating content and continuously improving the experience.
2. **Vibe coding the roadmap:** We can now create highly-convincing interactive prototypes that we use to directly influence our product roadmap.
3. **Owning the entire frontend:** Designers at Intercom are now building entire features and screens.

3 BIG IDEAS

1. DESIGNERS STOP FILING UI TICKETS

2. VIBE CODING THE ROADMAP + TEST IT

3. DESIGNERS OWN THE FRONT-END ENTIRELY

[IDEAS.FIN.AI](#)

WE WILL USE AI TO DOUBLE PRODUCTIVITY BY E.O.Y

SET A TARGET
PICK A "HARD TO HACK" METRIC
EQUIP THE TEAM WITH TOOLING
RUN INTERNAL TALKS/WEBINARS
MAKE A PART OF HOW YOU WORK

BE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THE IMPACT YOU WANT

2x

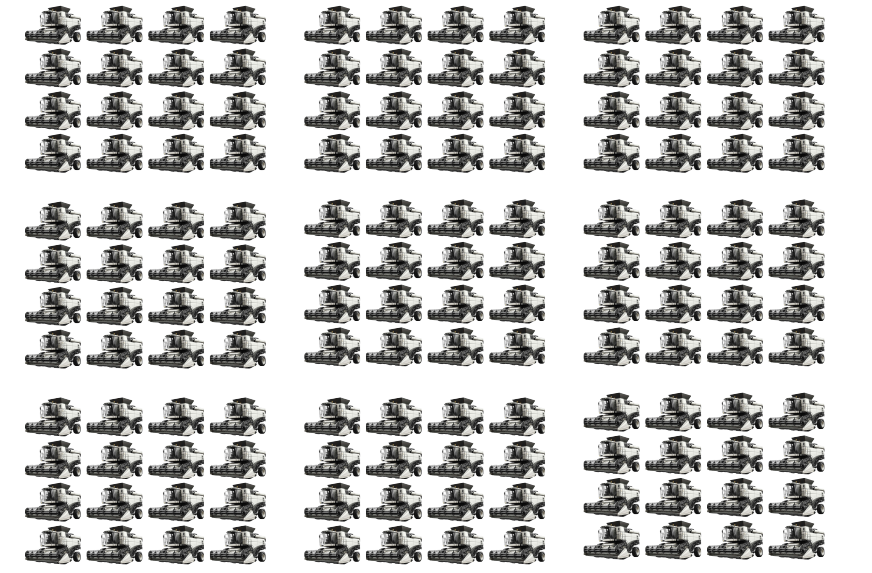
Darragh Curran June 13 2025

What follows is a version of an email I sent our entire R&D team about an explicit goal and deliberate action we'll take to become twice as productive through our embrace of AI.

Advancements in AI are precipitating the most transformative shift in software engineering of the past 25 years. It's dramatically expanding what software can do and transforming how we build it. We are all novices in this new world, and that's filling me with wide-eyed excitement.

If we were to literally hit pause on further advancements, I'm convinced any engineering team just leveraging the already existing tools effectively should expect at least **double their current productivity** – a 2x improvement. Yet most people and teams in the industry at large are not getting close to this today, they aren't trying, and they probably don't believe it's possible, and even if they do, behavior change is hard and the forces or incentives aren't clear yet.

IMPACT YOU'LL GAIN



EFFORT TO LEARN

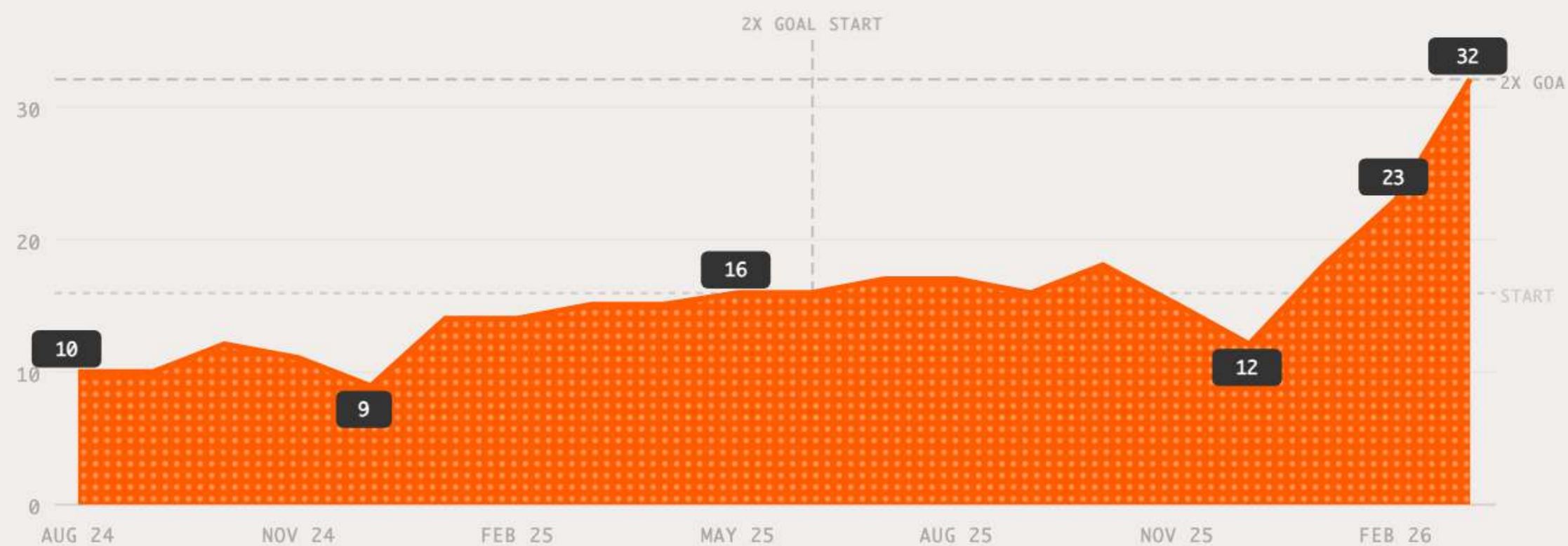
DON'T DO THIS





PRS PER R&D PERSON / MONTH

>3x OVER 16 MONTHS.
HIT 2X WITH 3
MONTHS TO SPARE



PRs per R&D head per month. All R&D roles included in denominator. Starting point = 16 (pre-initiative baseline).

WE HAVE TRIPLED THROUGHPUT

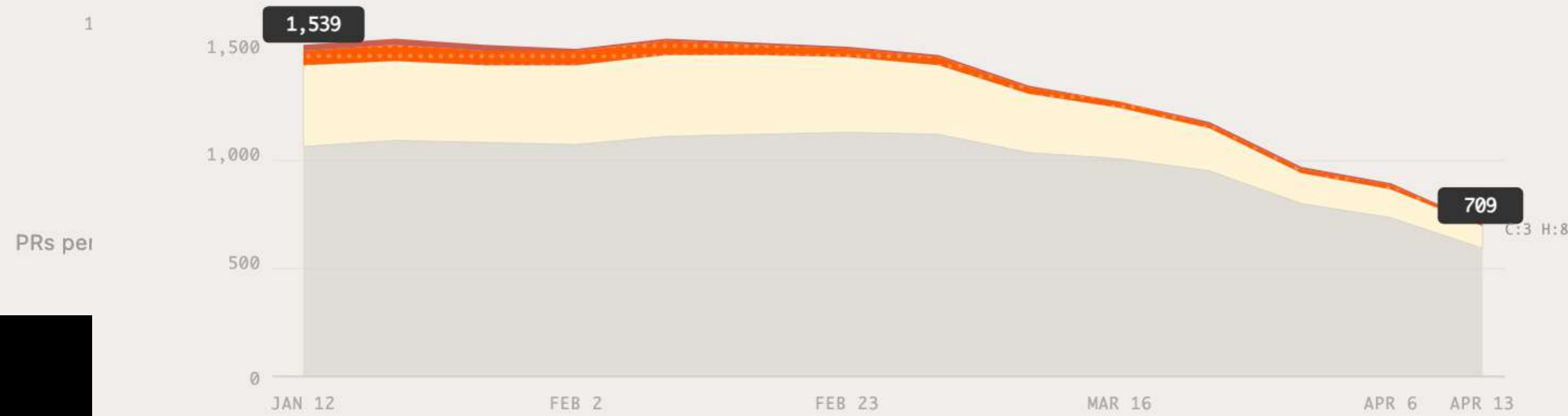
PRS PER R&D PERSON / MONTH

>3x OVER 16 MONTHS.
HIT 2X WITH 3
MONTHS TO SPARE

PRODUCT DEFECT BACKLOG BY SEVERITY

54% REDUCTION IN
TOTAL DEFECT
BACKLOG

CRITICAL HIGH MEDIUM LOW



All Critical (25→3) and High (67→8) nearly eliminated. Medium 381→100 (74% reduction). Operating toward <24hr SLO.

WE HAVE TRIPLED THROUGHPUT
WE HAVE HALVED OUR BACKLOG

PRS PER R&D PERSON / MONTH

>3x OVER 16 MONTHS.
HIT 2X WITH 3
MONTHS TO SPARE

PRODUCT DEFECT BACKLOG BY SEVERITY

54% REDUCTION IN
TOTAL DEFECT
BACKLOG

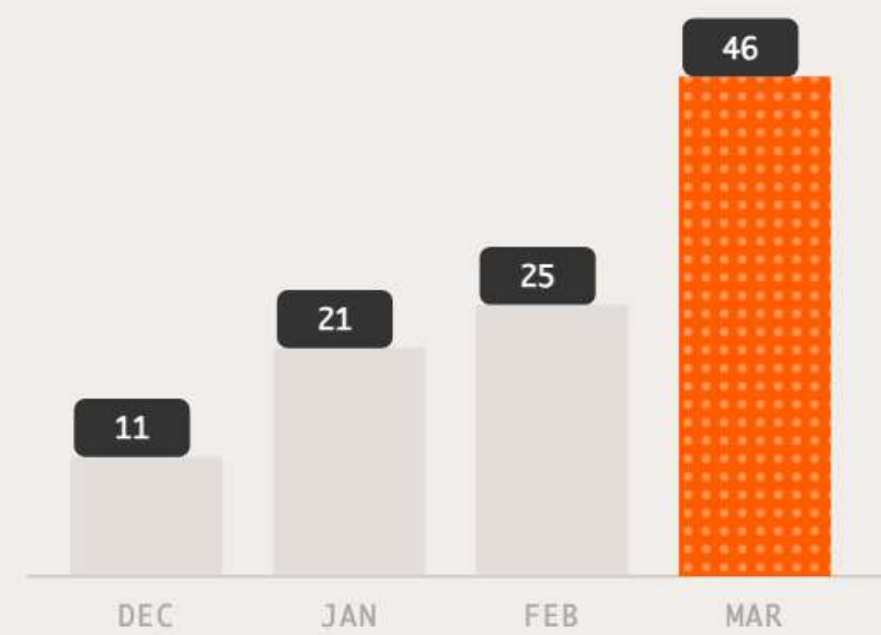
CRITIC

FEATURES SHIPPED / MONTH

>2x MORE PRODUCT
CHANGES

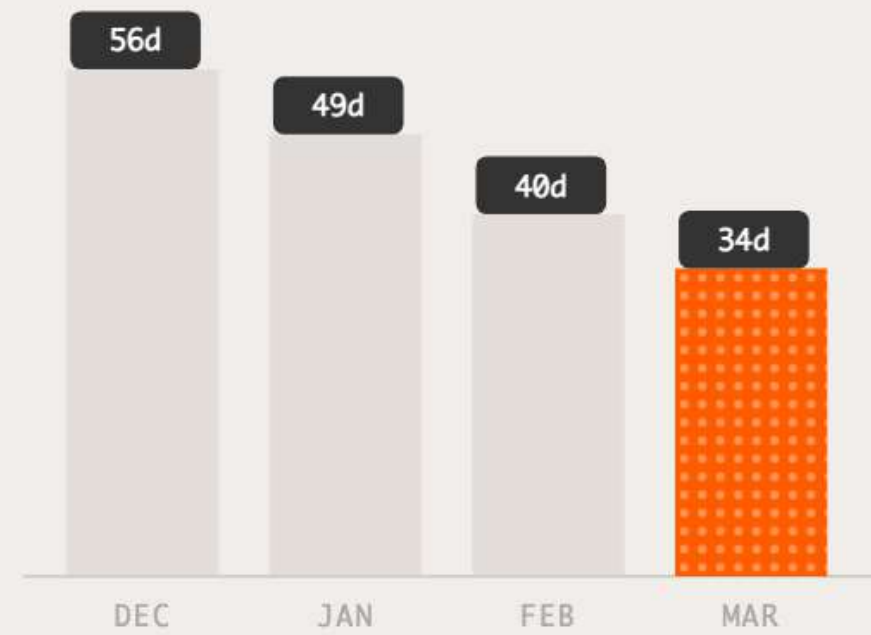
PRs per

All Critica



MEDIAN DAYS TO SHIP

39% FASTER
TIME TO SHIP



WE HAVE TRIPLED THROUGHPUT
WE HAVE HALVED OUR BACKLOG
SHIPPED TWICE AS MANY CHANGES
SHIPPING NEARLY TWICE AS FAST
CODE QUALITY IS GETTING BETTER

PRS PER R&D PERSON / MONTH

>3x OVER 16 MONTHS.
HIT 2X WITH 3
MONTHS TO SPARE

PRODUCT DEFECT BACKLOG BY SEVERITY

54% REDUCTION IN
TOTAL DEFECT
BACKLOG

CRITIC

FEATURES SHIPPED / MONTH

>2x MORE PRODUCT
CHANGES

MEDIAN DAYS TO SHIP

39% FASTER
TIME TO SHIP

PRs per

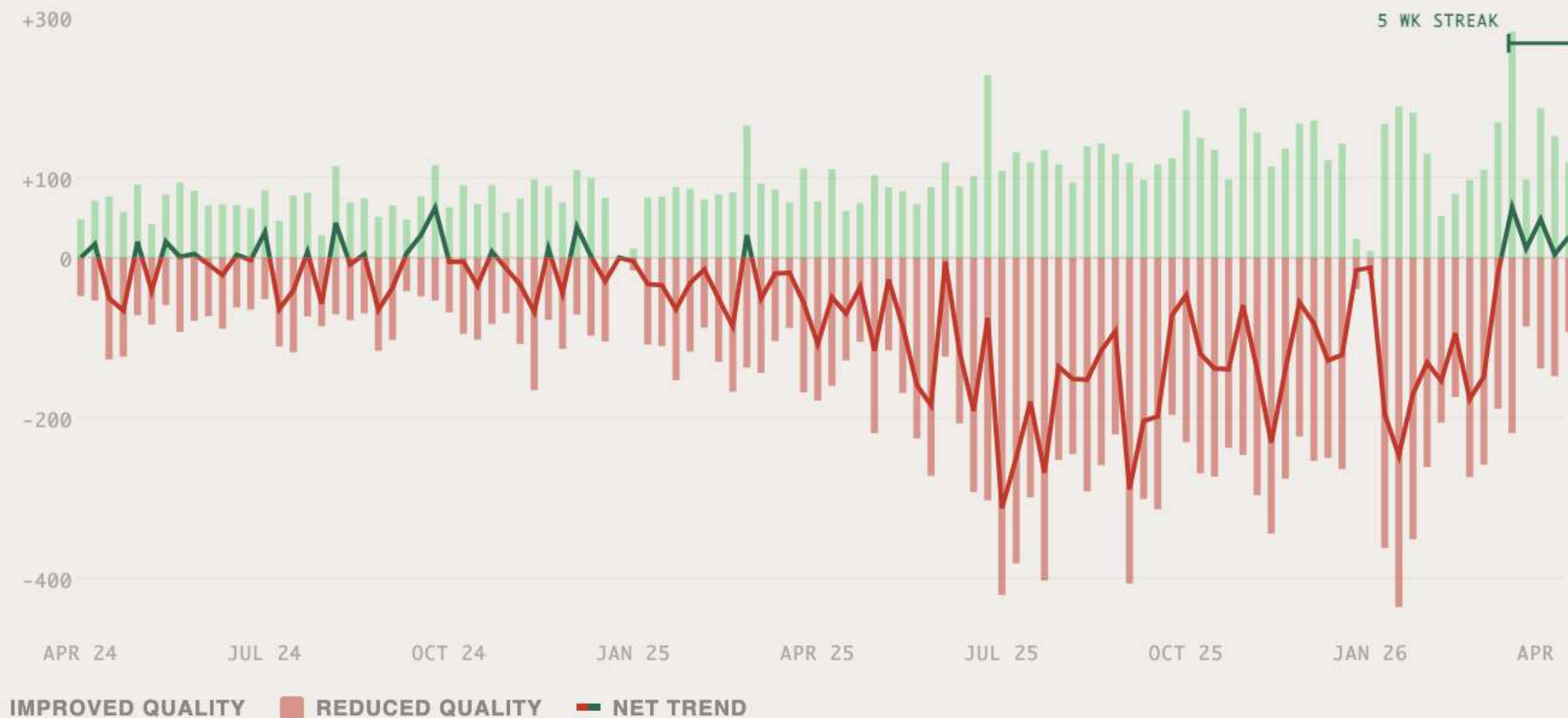
CODE QUALITY · NET POSITIVE/NEGATIVE WEEKLY

5 wk FIRST SUSTAINED POSITIVE
STREAK AFTER 18 MONTHS

All Critica

11

DE



IMPROVED QUALITY REDUCED QUALITY NET TREND

Static analysis code quality score. Green bars = weekly quality improvements. Red bars = weekly quality reductions. Green line = net trend. Last 5 weeks show first sustained positive streak.

WE HAVE TRIPLED THROUGHPUT
WE HAVE HALVED OUR BACKLOG
SHIPPED TWICE AS MANY CHANGES
SHIPPING NEARLY TWICE AS FAST
CODE QUALITY IS GETTING BETTER

MORE DEPLOYMENTS, LESS DOWNTIME

↓35% DOWNTIME FROM
BREAKING CHANGES

WEEKLY DEPLOYMENTS



DOWNTIME FROM BREAKING CODE CHANGES



Over the last 11 months. Deployments measured as merged PRs reaching production. Downtime attributed to code-related breaking changes.

WITH LESS DOWNTIME

MORE DEPLOYMENTS, LESS DOWNTIME

↓35% DOWNTIME FROM
BREAKING CHANGES

WEEKLY DEPLOYMENTS

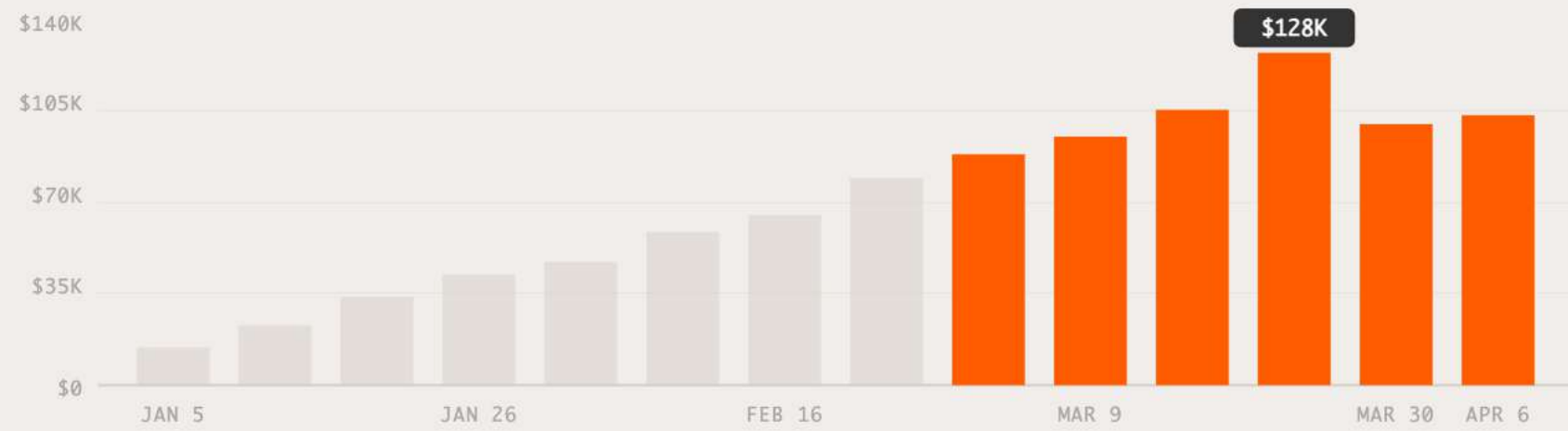


DOWNTIME

WEEKLY CLAUDE CODE SPEND

\$128K PEAK WEEKLY AI SPEND ON
CLAUDE CODE

Over the li
changes.



Weekly Claude Code API spend. Not yet optimized for cost. Mar 30 + Apr 6 dips reflect public/school holidays.

WITH LESS DOWNTIME
YES WE'RE SPENDING LOTS (\$)

MORE DEPLOYMENTS, LESS DOWNTIME

↓35% DOWNTIME FROM BREAKING CHANGES

WEEKLY DEPLOYMENTS



DOWNTIME

WEEKLY CLAUDE CODE SPEND

\$128K PEAK WEEKLY AI SPEND ON CLAUDE CODE

Over the last 12 months, the number of breaking changes has decreased by 35%.



FULLY LOADED \$/PR

45% DECLINE IN COST PER PR



Fully loaded cost (payroll + AI) per merged PR. Dec spike from reduced holiday productivity. Increasing PRs/head drives cost down.

WITH LESS DOWNTIME
YES WE'RE SPENDING LOTS (\$)
BUT SPENDING LESS PER CHANGE

MORE DEPLOYMENTS, LESS DOWNTIME

↓35% DOWNTIME FROM BREAKING CHANGES

WEEKLY DEPLOYMENTS

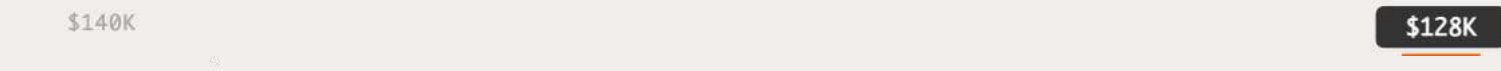


DOWNTI

WEEKLY CLAUDE CODE SPEND

\$128K PEAK WEEKLY AI SPEND ON CLAUDE CODE

Over the li
changes.



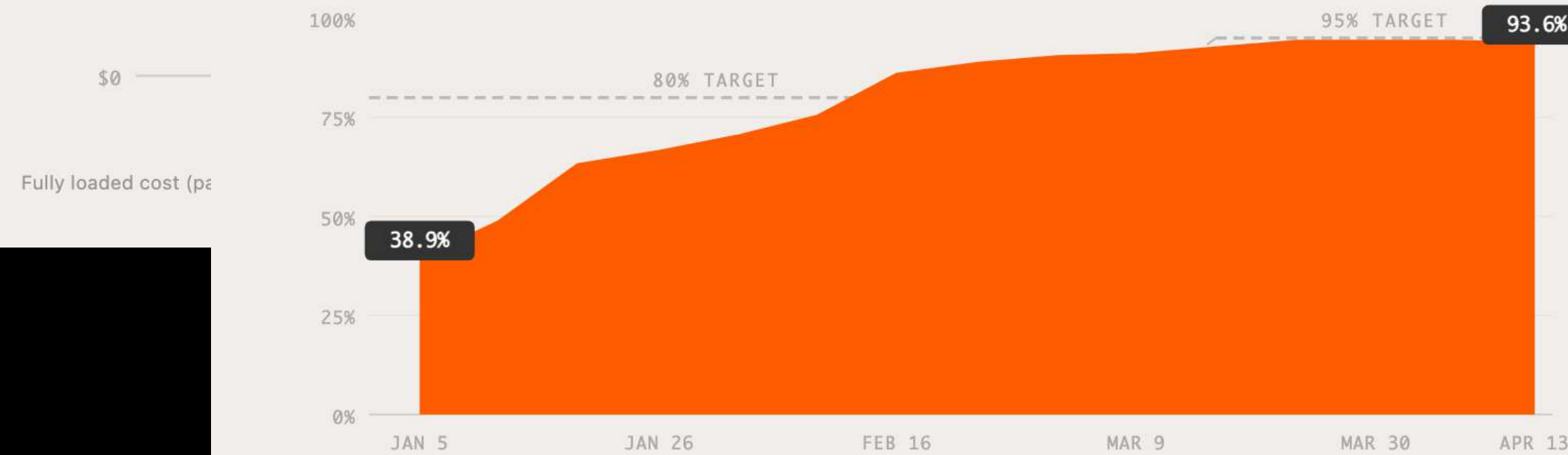
FULLY LOADED \$/PR

45% DECLINE IN COST PER PR



% OF PRS DRIVEN BY CLAUDE CODE

93.6% OF PRS DRIVEN BY CLAUDE CODE



Target raised from 80% to 95% in mid-March. Hit 80% in 6 weeks.

WITH LESS DOWNTIME
YES WE'RE SPENDING LOTS (\$)
BUT SPENDING LESS PER CHANGE
CLAUDE IS DOING THE WORK

MORE DEPLOYMENTS, LESS DOWNTIME

↓35% DOWNTIME FROM BREAKING CHANGES

WEEKLY DEPLOYMENTS



DOWNTIME

WEEKLY CLAUDE CODE SPEND

\$128K PEAK WEEKLY AI SPEND ON CLAUDE CODE

Over the last 12 weeks.



FULLY LOADED \$/PR

45% DECLINE IN COST PER PR



% OF PRS DRIVEN BY CLAUDE CODE

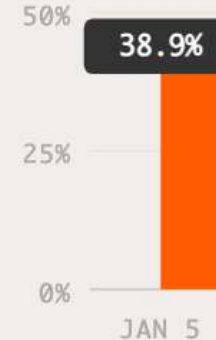
93.6% OF PRS DRIVEN BY CLAUDE CODE



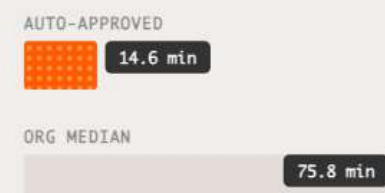
Fully loaded cost (per PR)

MEDIAN TIME TO MERGE

5.2x FASTER TO MERGE

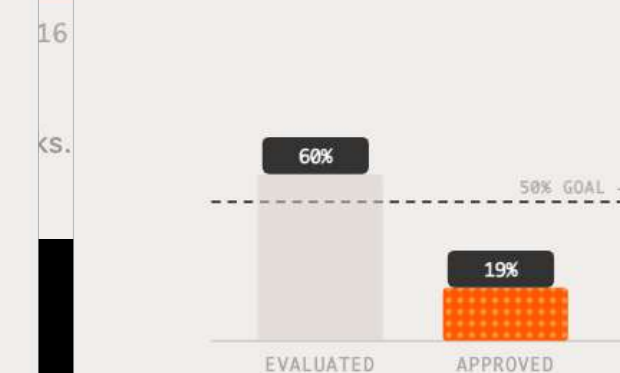


Target raised from



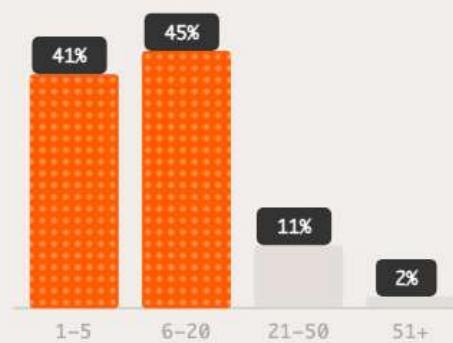
AUTO-APPROVAL PROGRESS

19% OF ALL PRS AUTO-APPROVED



AUTO-APPROVED PR SIZE

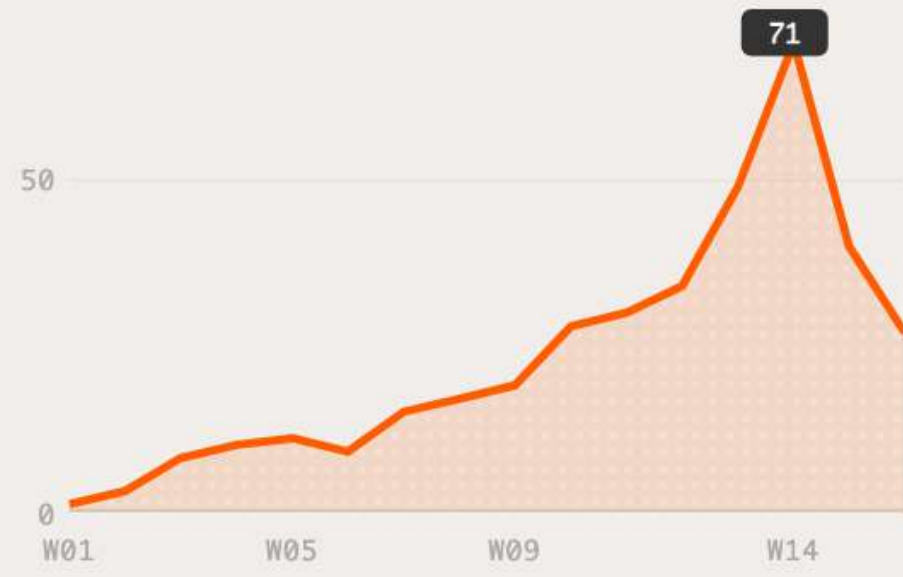
86% ≤ 20 LINES CHANGED



WITH LESS DOWNTIME
YES WE'RE SPENDING LOTS (\$)
BUT SPENDING LESS PER CHANGE
CLAUDE IS DOING THE WORK
MERGING/APPROVAL IS NOT A BOTTLENECK

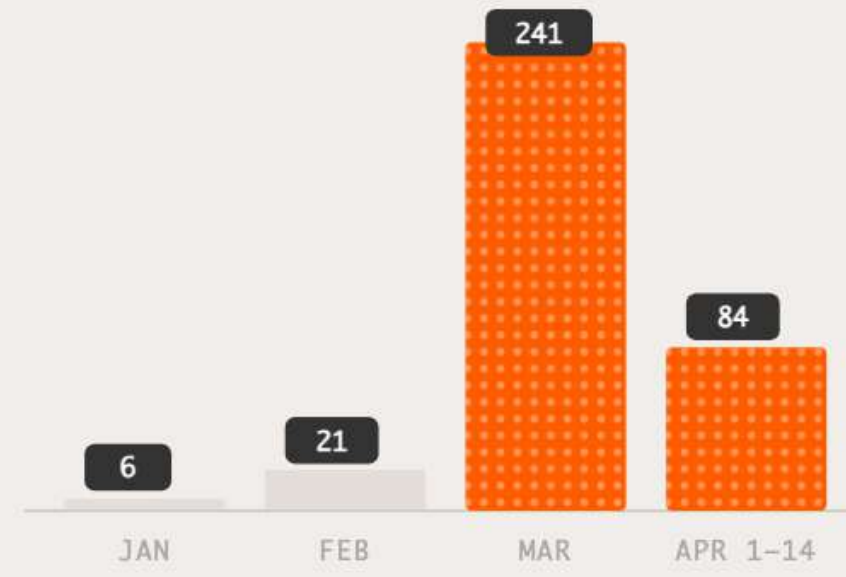
WEEKLY UNIQUE CONTRIBUTORS

153 TOTAL CONTRIBUTORS
(31% OF R&D)



NEW SKILLS SHIPPED / MONTH

267 SKILLS ACROSS
42 PLUGINS



WE'VE ADDED A LOT OF SKILLS TO CLAUDE

WEEKLY UNIQUE CONTRIBUTORS

153 TOTAL CONTRIBUTORS
(31% OF R&D)

71

NEW SKILLS SHIPPED / MONTH

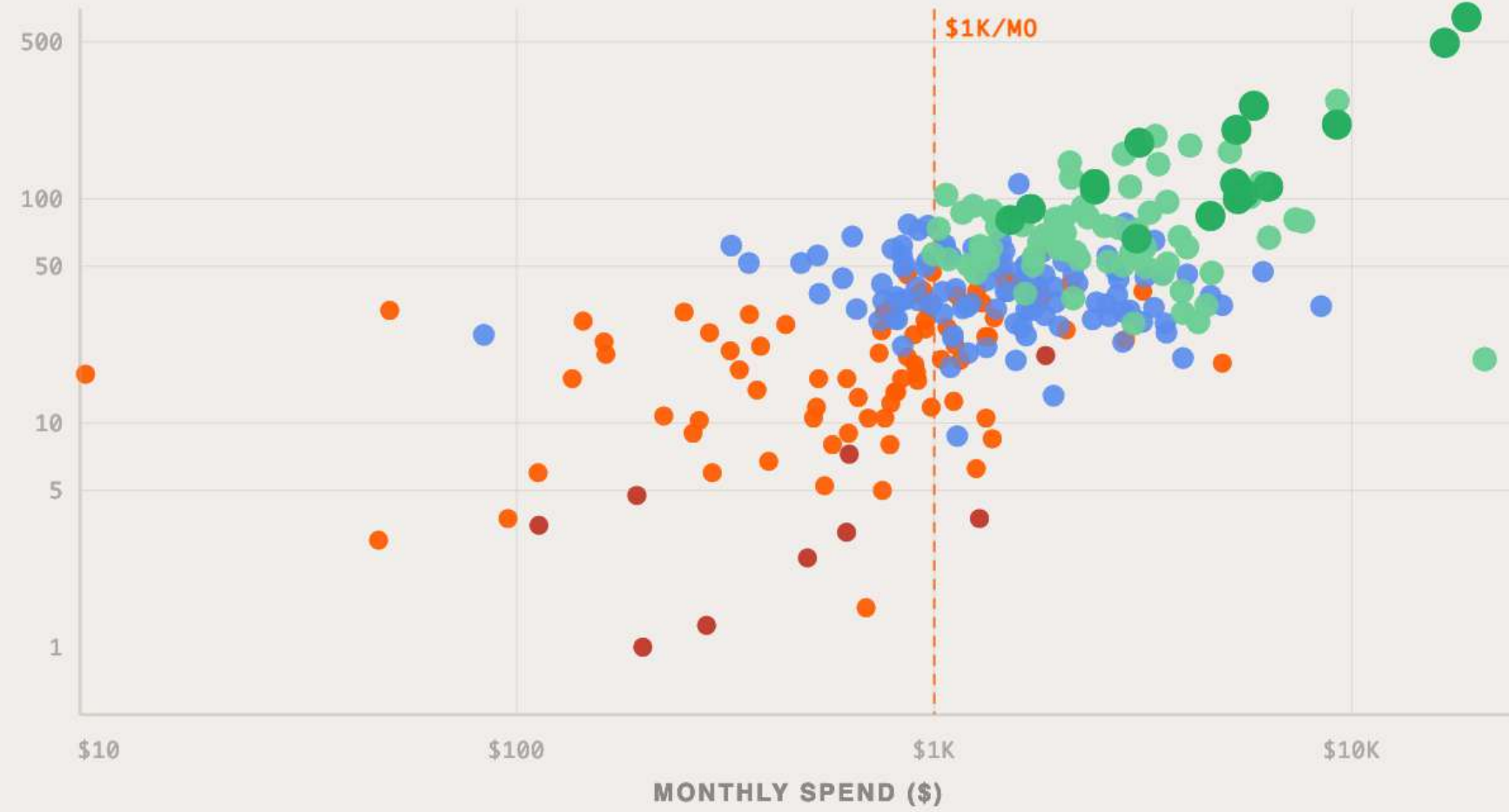
267 SKILLS ACROSS
42 PLUGINS

241

SPEND (\$) VS WEIGHTED PRS MERGED PER ENGINEER (LOG-LOG)

>\$1K MONTHLY SPEND
CORRELATES WITH HIGHEST
THROUGHPUT

■ ELITE ■ STRONG ■ DEVELOPING ■ EMERGING ■ MINIMAL



Each dot = one engineer (287 of 297 with >0 PRs shown). Log-log axes. Color = tier (Elite/Strong/Developing/Emerging/Minimal). Vertical line at \$1K/mo threshold.

WE'VE ADDED A LOT OF SKILLS TO CLAUDE
WE'RE PUSHING FOR PERFORMANCE

WEEKLY UNIQUE CONTRIBUTORS

153 TOTAL CONTRIBUTORS
(31% OF R&D)

71

NEW SKILLS SHIPPED / MONTH

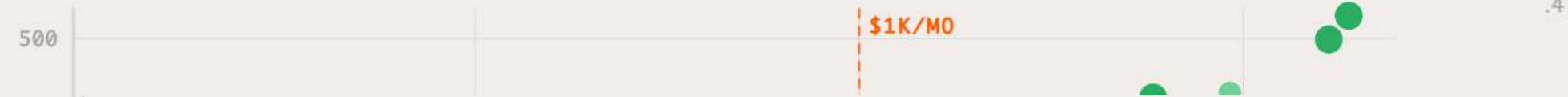
267 SKILLS ACROSS
42 PLUGINS

241

SPEND (\$) VS WEIGHTED PRS MERGED PER ENGINEER (LOG-LOG)

>\$1K MONTHLY SPEND
CORRELATES WITH HIGHEST
THROUGHPUT

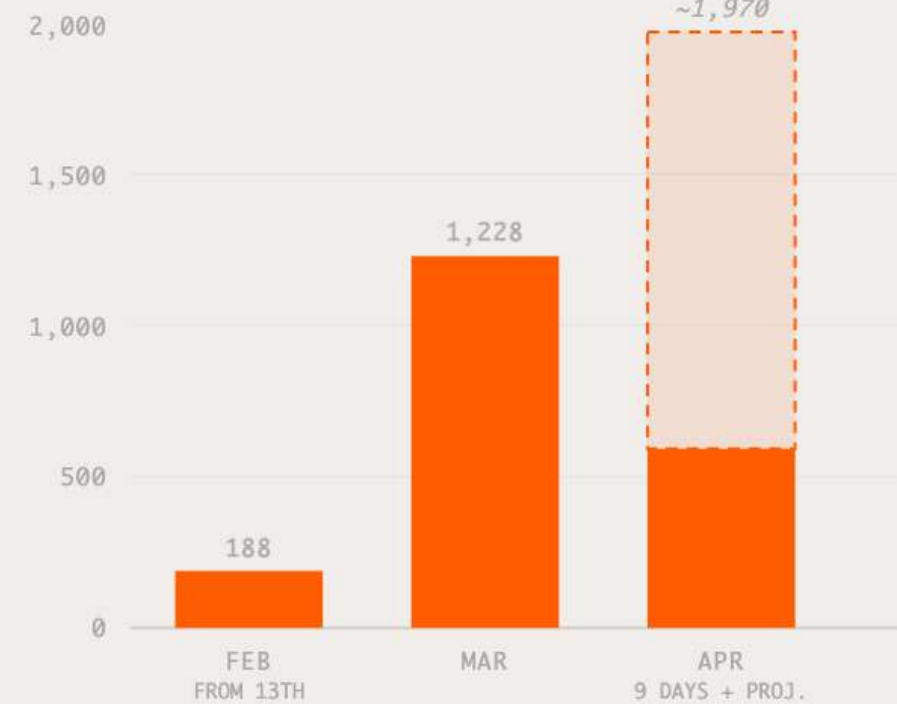
ELITE STRONG DEVELOPING EMERGING MINIMAL



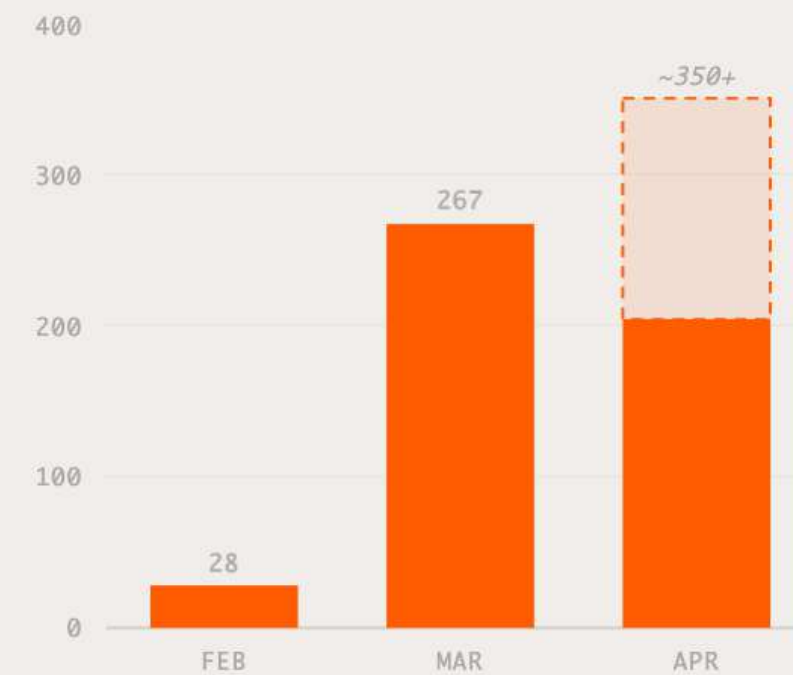
INTERNAL ANALYTICS PLATFORM — USAGE GROWTH

~2,000 REPORTS PROJECTED
IN APRIL

REPORTS PUBLISHED



UNIQUE PUBLISHERS



MARCH: 9,730 TOTAL VIEWS · 581 UNIQUE VIEWERS · 1,152 REPORTS VIEWED

Each dot = on line at \$1K/mc

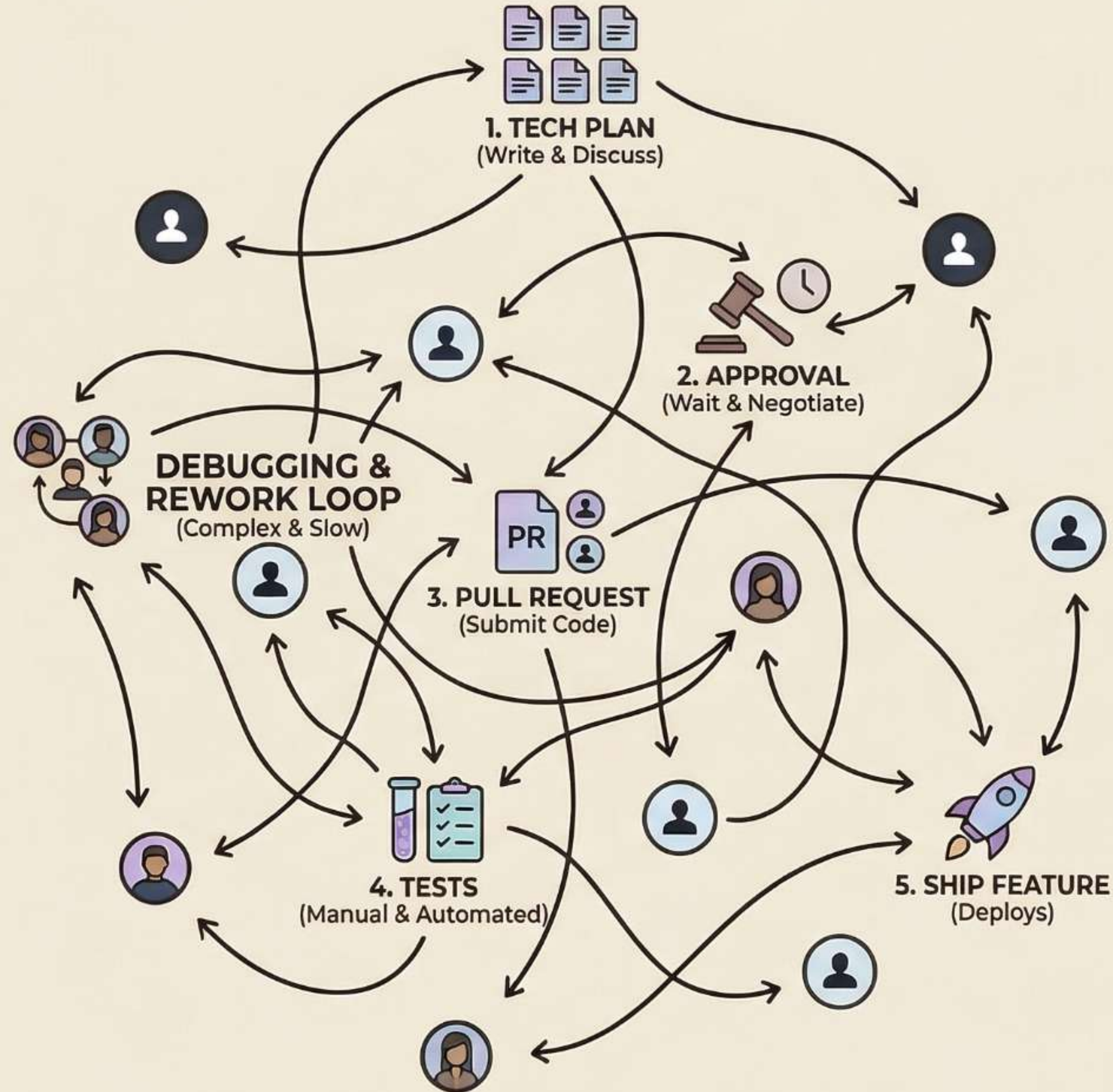
Internal analytics platform built on Snowflake. Dashed bars show projected full-month totals based on daily run-rate.

WE'VE ADDED A LOT OF SKILLS TO CLAUDE
WE'RE PUSHING FOR PERFORMANCE
WE'RE REPLACING TOOLS THAT GET IN THE WAY

THE OLD WAY

VS

THE NEW WAY



VS



You



Your customer



FAST GETS
GOOD BEFORE
GOOD GETS FAST

AI changes *what you build*

AI changes *how you build*

AI changes *the momentum of your team*



Post



Des Traynor  

@destraynor



There are no moats anymore.

Yesterday's product moats are today's Claude prompts.

There are only current gaps, headstarts, and leaders and laggards.

And there is **speed**.

No one can rest on their laurels.

Act accordingly.

4:24 PM · Jan 7, 2026 · **23.3K** Views



58



20



332



Relevant 

[View activity >](#)

THANK YOU

I'm @destraynor from fin.ai

Our blog is at ideas.fin.ai

fin.ai/research is our AI blog

If you want these slides des@fin.ai