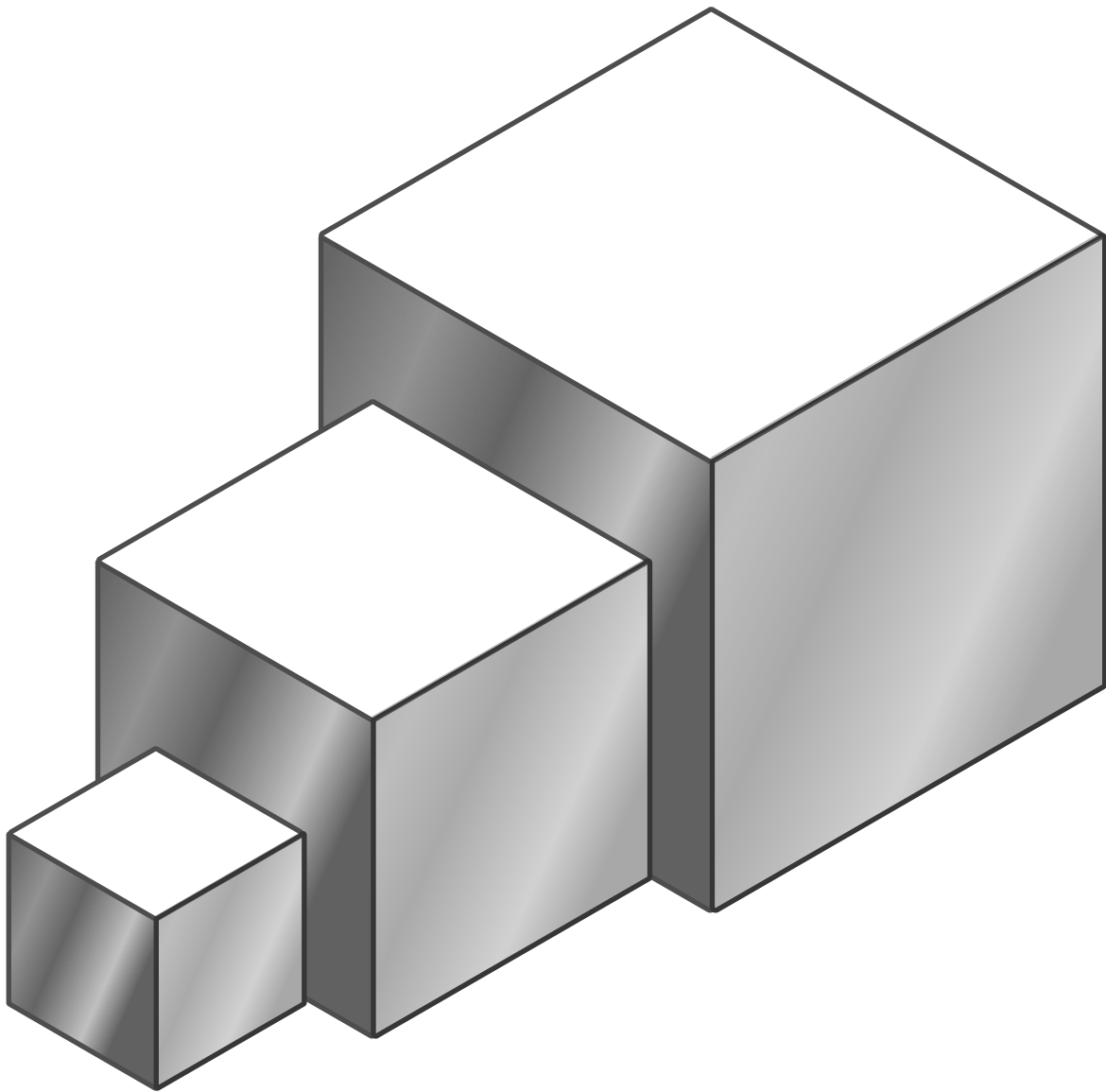


2023 Product Management Trends & Opportunities



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Introduction

You know what they say — you can't predict the future.

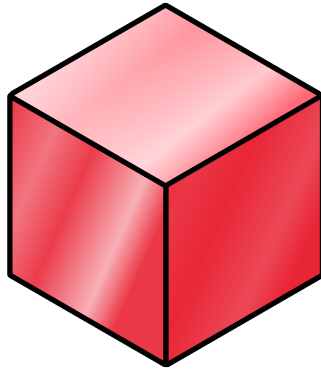
Over the past few years, we've seen a lot of volatility, both in the world at large and within the tech industry. A cloud of uncertainty looms overhead with today's economic environment. In 2023, we see customers questioning every expenditure as businesses look to reduce costs. Many leaders have been shifting from a pure focus on growth at all costs to efficiency and profitability. Revenue and ROI take precedent over experimentation and risk-taking.

With these realities in mind, we've nailed down six trends that we believe will define product management in 2023:

1. **Product managers will continue to focus on working smarter and more efficiently**
2. **A fresh take on customer-centricity is needed**
3. **Building alignment around product vision and strategy is a key focus**
4. **Product teams are prioritizing hybrid collaboration**
5. **Getting product management systems and processes in place is more crucial than ever**
6. **The PM role remains critical despite economic uncertainty**

In the face of challenges, there are also opportunities. **There's never been a better time to show customers you're really listening, get features right the first time, and build alignment in- and outside the product team.** In all these ways, a product management system can help, and we'll share some of the solutions we recommend.

Together, we'll brave this storm. And if we're able — forge ahead in the meantime, barely breaking our stride.



TREND #1

Working smarter and more efficiently

We started seeing high-profile tech layoffs in the latter half of 2022, and in 2023, economists are still unsure about whether we're heading into a recession. As a result, many business leaders have been shifting from a pure focus on growth at all costs to efficiency and profitability. Budgets are tighter and there's more focus on revenue and ROI rather than experimentation and risk-taking.

For product people, this translates to being asked to do more with less. Whether you've been impacted by layoffs or just have a tighter budget, you're likely to have the same expectations, even though now you have fewer resources.

In these circumstances, it's more important than ever to create great products. This requires tighter communication and more cross-functional collaboration. This is not the time to work in silos!

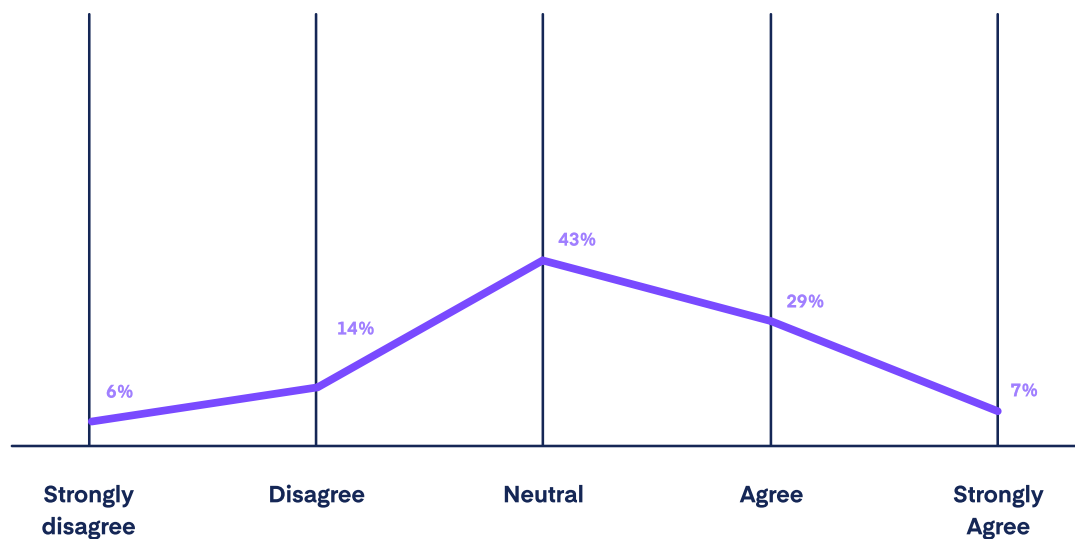
Prioritization also matters more than ever, and it's critical to be honest with stakeholders about when and why you'll be tackling specific projects. You'll need to stay focused and avoid getting distracted by requests that aren't aligned with your top-level goals.

TREND #2

A fresh take on customer-centricity

According to the [2022 Product Excellence Report](#), only 36% of respondents are confident that products and features they release are consistently well-received by customers. In 2023, we expect to see a lot of product teams focusing on improving that number.

The products and features we release are consistently well-received by our customers*



*as indicated by product usage metrics, Net Promoter Scores (NPS), or another measure of customer engagement.

There are a few tactics that can help with this. Co-founder of Product Collective [Mike Belsito](#) suggests aiming to be the best for at least one group of customers. How can you ensure your product is mission critical for at least one of your critical customer segments?

Productboard Group Product Manager [Sophie Lalonde](#) recommends returning to your ideal customer profiles (ICP). How clearly have you defined your ICPs? Sophie says you can think of this like a bullseye, with the people who get the most value in the center ring and closely related but distinct groups in the rings around it.

Anytime you're in doubt about who your customers are or what they want, this is a clear signal that it's time to engage in more [product discovery work](#). Go back to the feedback you've collected from various sources, identify key themes and trends, and link them to specific feature ideas or customer problems you're trying to solve.

Building alignment around product vision and strategy

Setting a clear product vision and strategy was the #1 product management challenge of 2022, a pain point felt by both individual contributors and product leaders alike. And as teams are stretched with fewer resources and operating in long periods of uncertainty, it's more important than ever to build alignment.

If you're a product leader, setting and communicating a clear product strategy is your most important job. Make sure you regularly check in with product teams to ensure you're on the same page and they're using strategy to guide all prioritization decisions.

Productboard CEO Hubert Palan says it's all too common for people to confuse strategy with plans. A plan is a list of the features you're going to build, while strategy is a collection of the pain points and customer segments you're going after, the ways you differentiate yourself from your competitors, the key bets you want to make, and how you're thinking about allocating your investments in a portfolio.

During times of economic uncertainty, Hubert says leaders are forced to think longer term: "There's a much lower probability that someone will fund you in the next six months if you don't figure it out." This is both a challenge and an opportunity: "It's a forcing function for companies to be more disciplined with strategy," says Hubert.



TREND #4

Prioritizing hybrid collaboration

In the early years of the pandemic, most businesses shifted to an all-remote model out of necessity. And this was touted as a success, with many company leaders proclaiming that they were doing away with offices and going all in on remote work. However, [Productboard CEO Hubert Palan](#) isn't convinced that remote work is the perfect solution, especially for work that requires creativity and collaboration.

New for 2022: Where in the world is product?

Globally distributed hybrid, remote, and in-person teams are part of the new normal for companies, the product team being no exception.

In 2022, our data showed that remote and hybrid workers were evenly split – 45% each – while less than 10% of product professionals responded that they work completely in-person.



90%
of product professionals
are both **hybrid and remote**



Less than 10%
of product professionals
responded that they work
completely in-person

Working together in person builds up critical “trust capital,” which is needed in order for people to feel comfortable asking questions, interrupting, or offering constructive criticism. Working remotely comes with a time penalty of people hesitating to ask their questions or share their thoughts, and this can ultimately hurt a company's ability to innovate or gain an edge over competitors.

Rather than relying completely on remote work, Hubert imagines a future where product teams come together when it's strategically critical to do so. There will be a time and a place for remote work, but it's not the ideal way of working for everyone at all times — especially not product teams.

Getting product management systems and processes in place

The [2022 Product Excellence Report](#) reveals that confidence is currently quite low in product management systems and processes.

Only 12% of 1400+ respondents are satisfied with how they capture product insights — which makes it hard to truly listen to your customers and what they need.

When it comes to roadmapping, just 32% of teams believe their roadmaps will deliver desired business outcomes, and only 31% can easily share their roadmaps with cross-functional partners.

With increased focus on efficiency and making the most of limited budgets in 2023, getting these systems and processes in place should be a top priority. You want your teams and stakeholders aligned around a shared plan. And you need to get new products and features right the first time to save valuable time and money.

Whether you're an individual contributor or product leader, now is the time to systematize how you [capture and act on product feedback and insights](#), define your product strategy and how you approach prioritization, and create rituals around how you communicate your plans across the organization so everyone is on the same page.

The PM role remains critical despite economic uncertainty

State of product management Events of the past 18-24 months

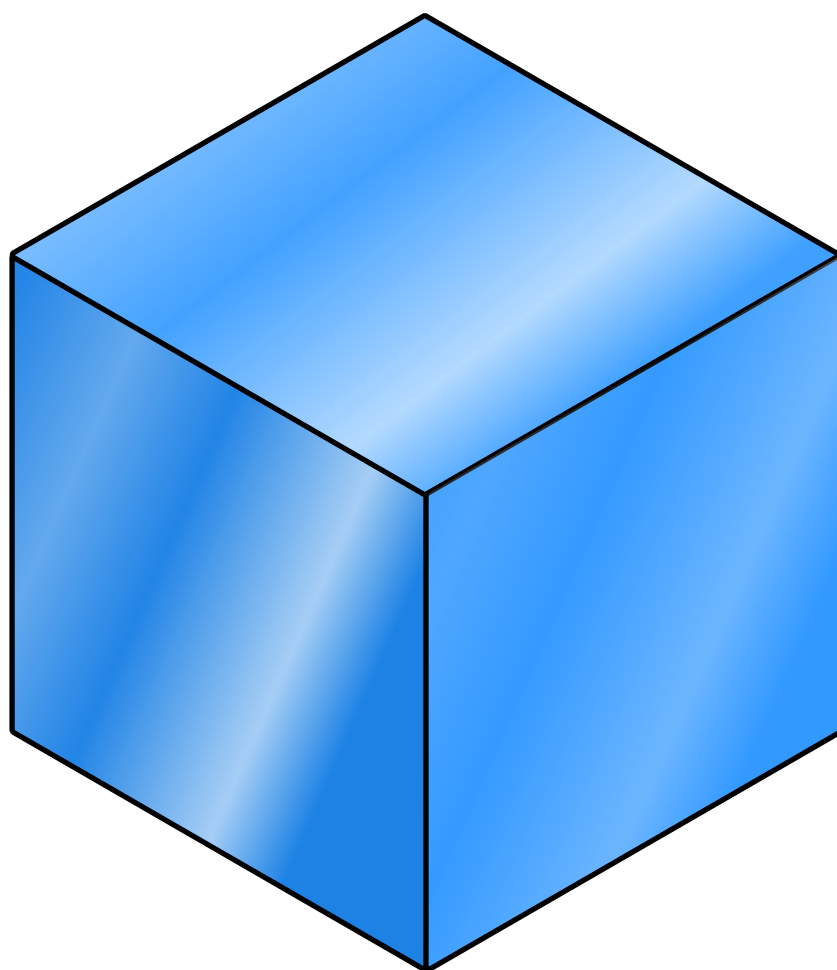


Over the past few years, the tech labor market has been erratic. Hired's [2022 State of Tech Salaries](#) report sums it up well: "In the fall of 2021, we were climbing the mountain of post-pandemic recovery with teams scaling up to tackle ambitious hiring goals... Then, as inflation grew and a recession approached, hiring slowed or froze in many areas."

Product managers have not been exempt from recent waves of layoffs, but they still appear to be in demand. After all, building the right products and features for your customers is more important than ever, and product managers are needed to get to the bottom of customer needs and prioritize what comes next.

According to the [Product School Future of Product Management report](#), 43% of companies are hiring more PMs and 26% of PMs are planning to leave their jobs within the next 12 months. And product management roles are still [one of the highest-paying](#) tech roles in the US, despite the economic uncertainty.

Even when tech workers are impacted by layoffs, their likelihood of landing on their feet is high. In fact, economists estimated that [75% of tech workers](#) who were laid off in October 2022 would end up finding a new job within three months.



Areas of Opportunity in 2023

(& How Productboard Can Help)

There's never been a more important time to:

- 1. Get products and features right the first time**
- 2. Maximize the ROI of your product decisions**
- 3. Optimize productivity and alignment across your product organization**
- 4. Show customers you're really listening**

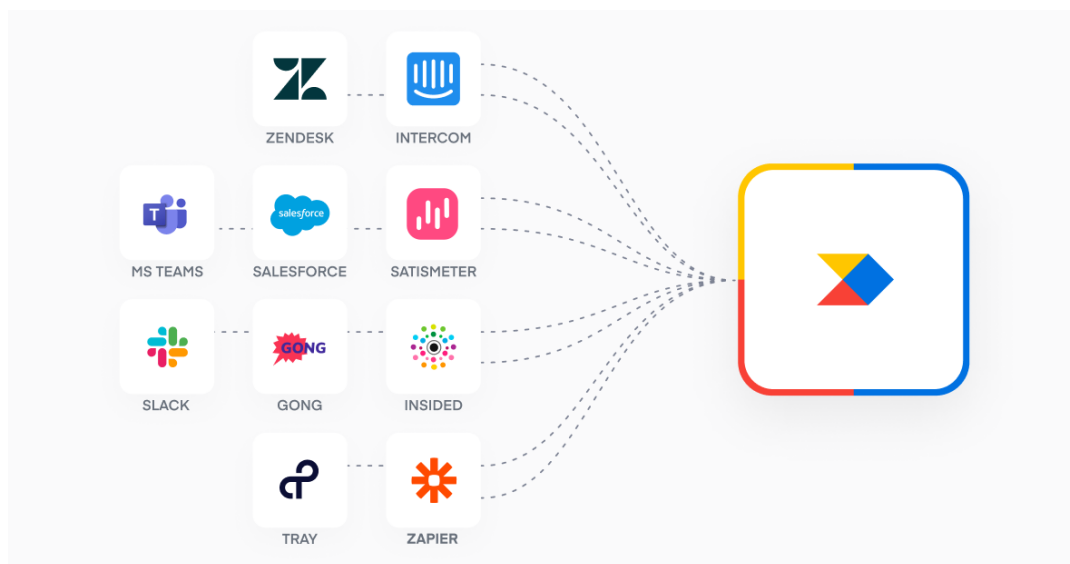
In all these ways, a product management system like Productboard can help. Let's dive in.

Opportunity #1: Get products & features right the first time

These days, there's no time to waste shipping products and features users don't really need, or losing cycles by working off of flawed assumptions. Gradually iterating toward the right solution is a price most teams can ill afford. Prevent these missteps by equipping your team with relevant user insights to support important product decisions.

Optimize your feedback pipeline

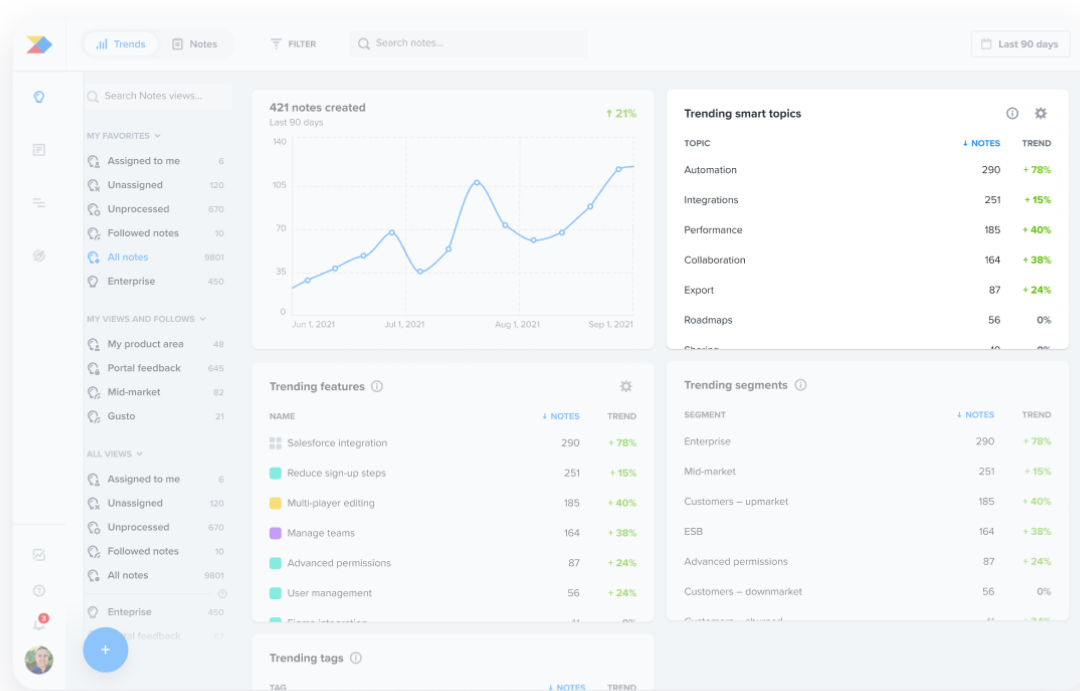
It's more important than ever to keep open lines of communication for sharing product ideas and market insights. On the Insights board in Productboard, you have a centralized feedback repository for collecting feedback on an ongoing basis. Include all your stakeholders in the process, as this feedback can arrive (and be submitted) from many integrated sources like support platforms, CRMs, messaging solutions, and sales tools. This will ensure that no valuable insights slip through the cracks!



Back product decisions with user insights

One of the best ways to cut down on wasted effort is by practicing continuous product discovery — the process of continuously collecting user insights so they're on hand when you're ready to prioritize features. With this information on hand, you'll have a big head start in uncovering the underlying user needs behind feature requests so you're equipped to deliver the optimal solution.

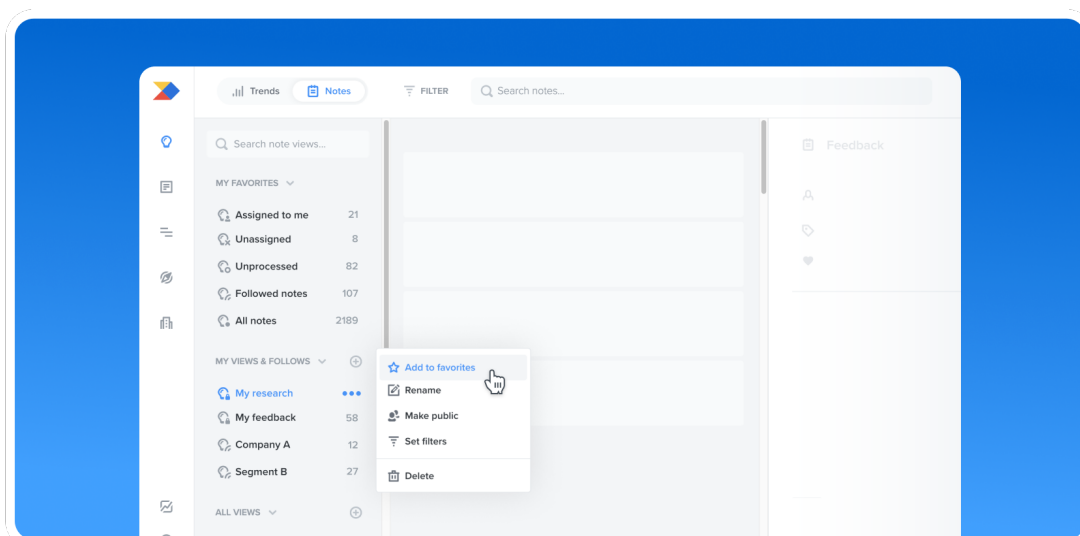
In Productboard, you can review product feedback to identify interesting user insights and link them to related feature ideas. Of course, time is of the essence, so take advantage of Productboard's intelligent capabilities for automatically distilling trends in large volumes of feedback — called "smart topic detection."



For each feature idea, see everyone who expressed a need for it and how important it is to them

The ability to pull out trends and themes, and to segment feedback in a meaningful way, allows you to identify relevant feedback and actionable insights. You can also personalize your Insights board to put your most important views front and center. This allows you to follow specific users, companies, segments, and product areas and easily review all related feedback.

This is how teams can do continuous discovery in a scalable way and ensure that the voice of the customer echoes in every product decision.



Personalize the Insights board to put your most relevant feedback front and center

Opportunity #2: Maximize the ROI of your product decisions

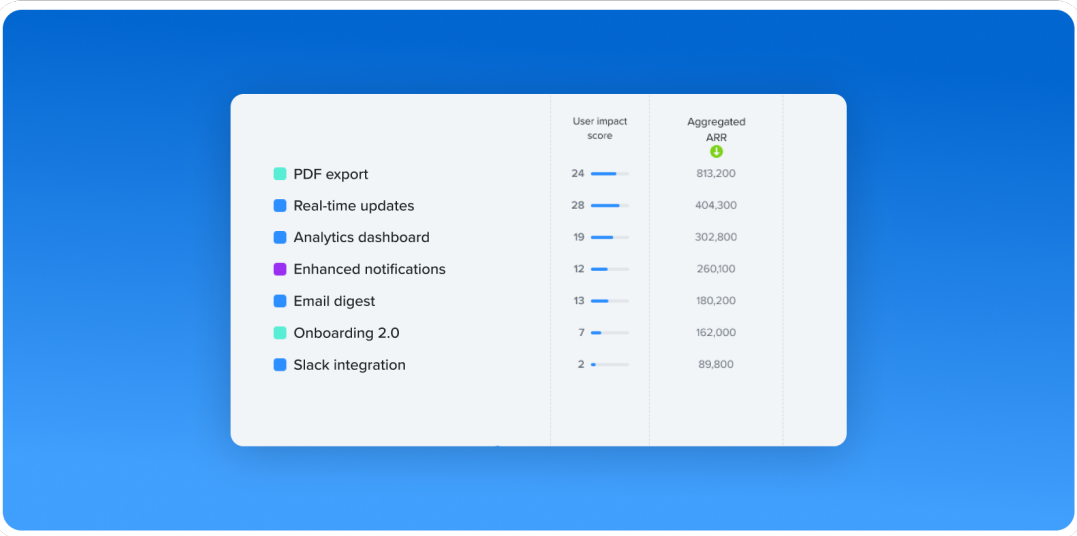
With tightening budgets and the pressure to do more with less, it's more important than ever to back your product decisions with data and demonstrate their impact.

Product managers have always dreamed of being able to attach a dollar amount to every feature idea to understand the revenue building each feature might help them gain or retain. Now this dream can become a reality!

See what every feature idea is worth (\$) to your business

With aggregated company fields, you can aggregate any numerical field associated with customer companies in your Productboard workspace (such as how much money they're paying you) and see a total value for each feature idea — based on which features each company has requested.

In the past, you could use the Opportunity value field to calculate how much revenue each feature could help you generate from closing new opportunities. With the new aggregated company fields, this can be done for all your customers.

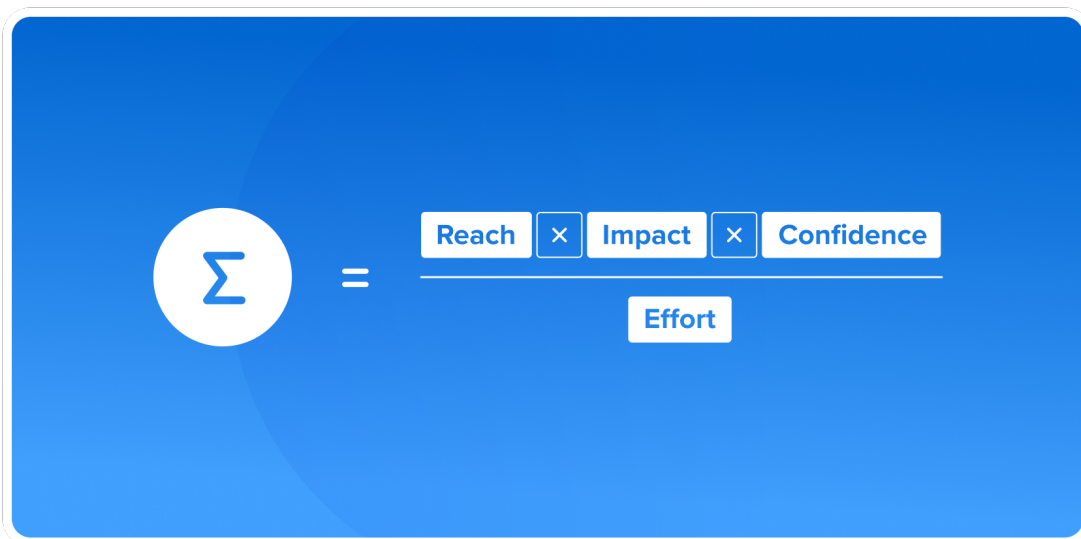


Aggregate any numerical company data field to quantify the business value of every idea

Make data-driven prioritization decisions

Productboard offers customizable formulas you can use to standardize your organization's prioritization processes and make more data-driven decisions. You can define formulas based on popular prioritization frameworks ([RICE](#), [WSJF](#), [ROI](#)), or customize them to create your own.

Scores can be computed based on values that you input, or they can be based on other auto-calculated scores in Productboard — like the user impact score, which represents the impact of features based on how often they've been requested, and with what importance.


$$\Sigma = \frac{\text{Reach} \times \text{Impact} \times \text{Confidence}}{\text{Effort}}$$

Define custom prioritization formulas with user impact score incorporated

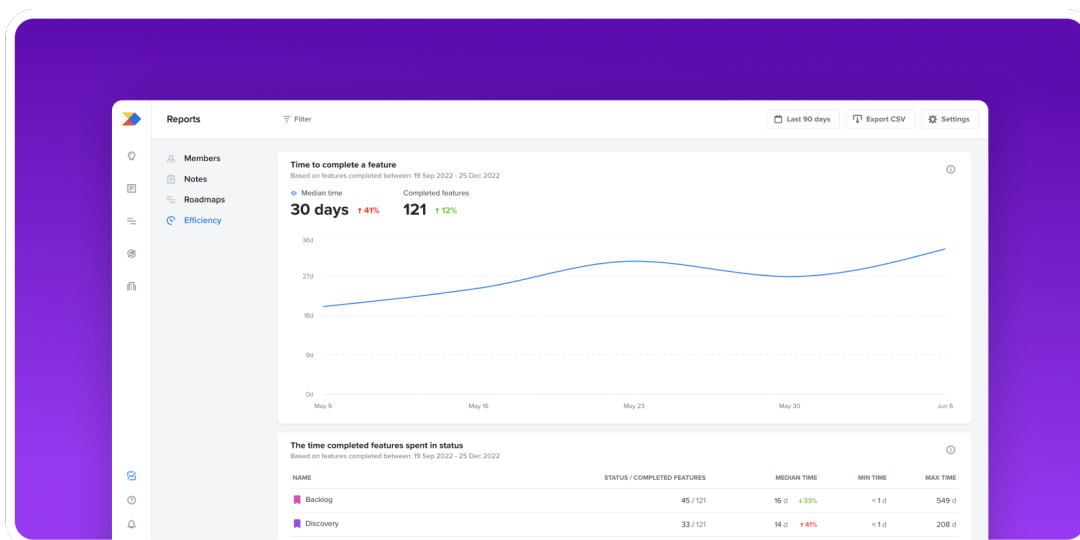
Opportunity #3: Optimize productivity and alignment across your product organization

If — like the majority of product teams — you're trying to do more with less, you need to be more aligned, and not just within your own team. Clear communication and fostering a culture of transparency is critical to keep everyone in-sync on what's planned and how timelines are being impacted by new obstacles.

Remove bottlenecks with efficiency reports

Efficiency reports help you get features to market faster by answering questions like these:

- How long does it take to deliver features on average?
- Is my product organization becoming more or less efficient over time?
- As features progress from conception to launch, where are they getting held up the longest?
- Within each status/phase, which features have been there the longest, and who's working on them?

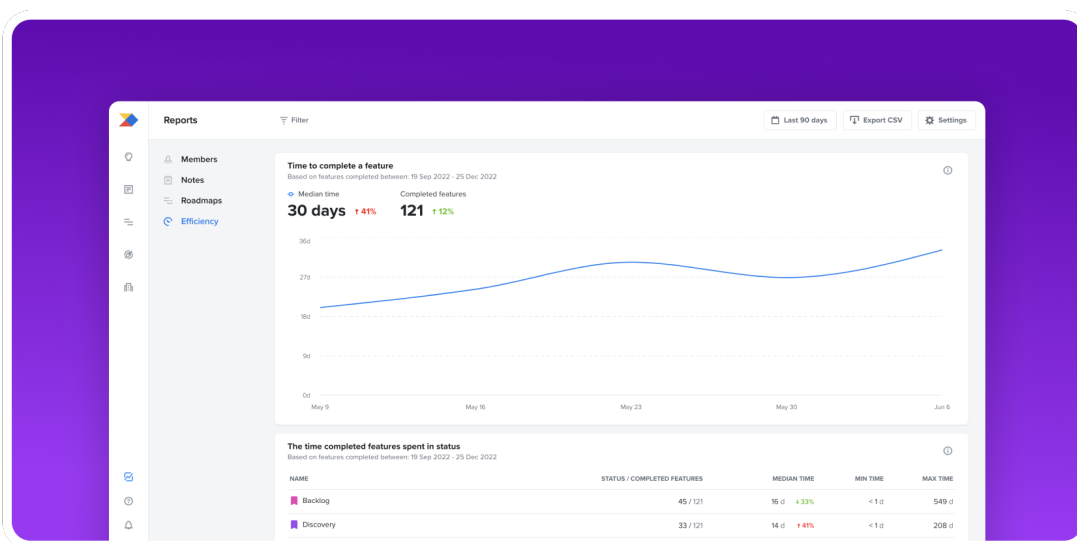


Efficiency reports help you identify bottlenecks in your process and ship faster

Ensure every team is working on what matters with allocation reports

Allocation reports help product leaders ensure that the work product teams are doing is really advancing the overarching strategy. They help answer questions like these:

- How many features have you shipped within each objective, theme, or product area?
- How much effort have you expended toward each objective, theme, or product area?
- At a glance, how much work being done falls outside of your stated areas of focus?
- Within each area of focus, what features have been worked on, who owns them, and how much effort did they require?

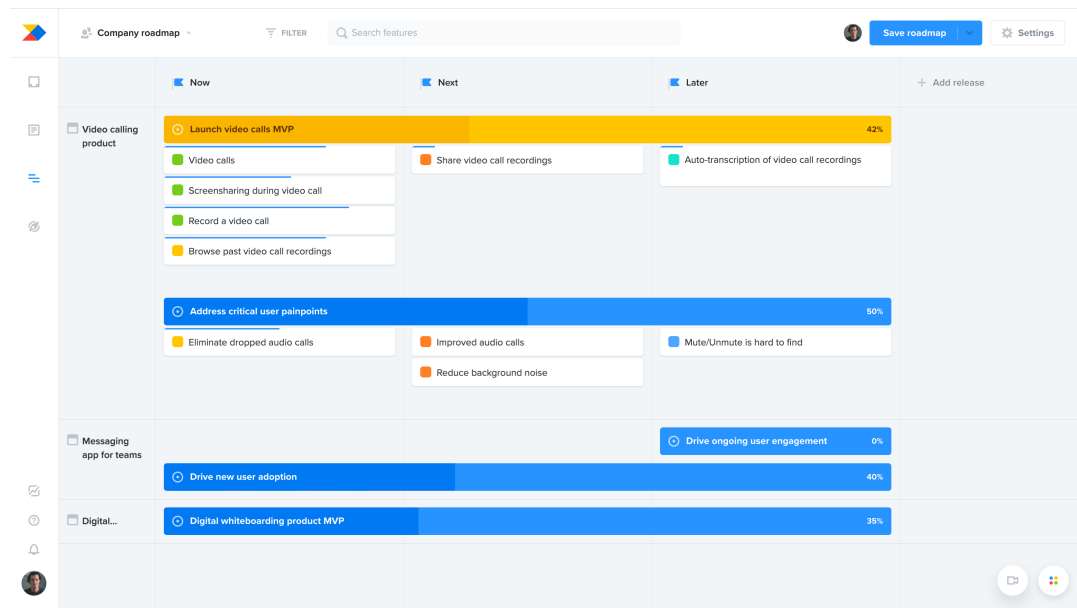


Allocation reports let you see whether product teams' work best supports your stated areas of focus

Keep stakeholders up-to-date with tailored, dynamic roadmaps

Roadmaps mean different things to different people. To make communication more efficient, product managers can create tailored, self-serve roadmaps in Productboard that are always up-to-date and provide just the right amount of detail for each stakeholder.

This turbo-charges your product discovery process, helping you crowdsource new problems or look at existing problems in a new light. And, when folks are looped in early, it's easier to earn buy-in down the road.



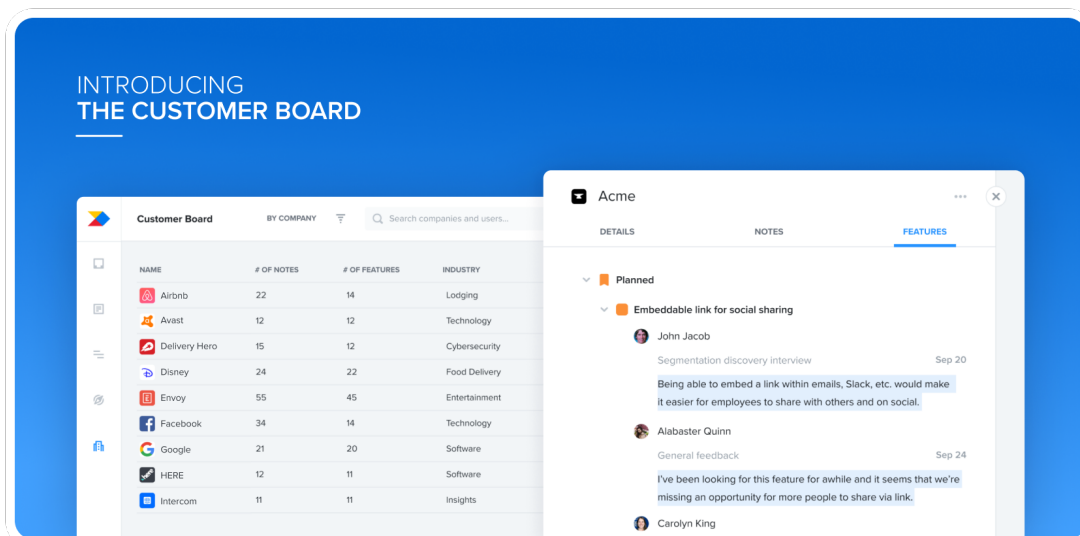
Opportunity #4: Show customers you're really listening

In times of hardship, when budget-constrained customers may be at risk, there's no choice but to double down on investing them in your solution and where it's headed next. To turn passive users into champions, give them a voice in the process and show them you're listening.

Track any customer's needs and provide tailored updates

Productboard's new Customer board provides an overview of each user and company so you can see what they've requested in the past and what progress your team has made toward addressing their needs. You can also access additional data about customers here, including attributes brought in from your CRM. All this information is invaluable if you're reviewing the needs of your VIP customers, preparing for a quarterly business review, or looking to recruit the right customers for user research, a beta program, or your customer advisory board.

Naturally, it's not just product makers and leaders who will benefit from this information. Customer success managers and account managers have long struggled to capture information on user needs, past requests, and product team progress in traditional customer success platforms. Now they can use Productboard to help manage their book of business, delight customers to drive renewals, and help retain key accounts.

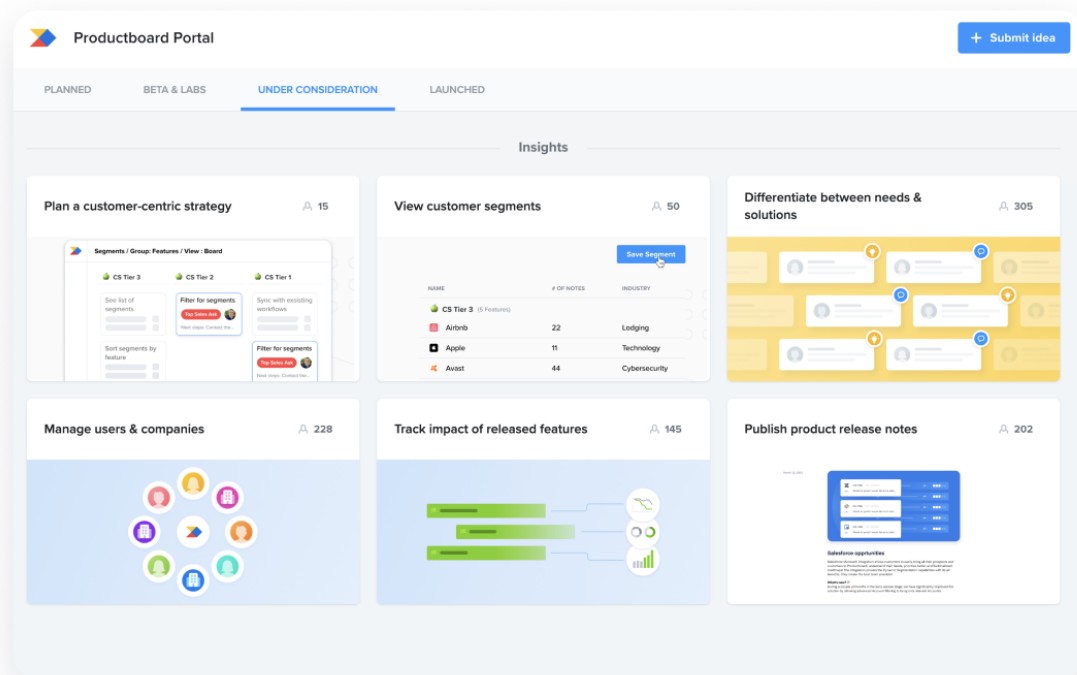


The Customer board lets product makers and CS managers track the needs of any customer and provide tailored progress updates

Invest customers in your product direction

The [Product Portal](#) is an interface you can share with colleagues and customers to showcase what's planned, collect votes and feedback on ideas, and source new requests. It's a great way to both earn buy-in for where your product is headed and validate feature ideas before you work on them.

You can start by adopting the Portal internally with colleagues, or share it only with a select set of customers. When ready, share your Portal with all customers, make it public, or even embed it within your app or website.



Create one or more Portals to share ideas and continuously collect feedback from different audiences.

Request a personalized demo to learn more about how Productboard can help your product organization to seize opportunity in the face of uncertainty.



Productboard is the customer-centric product management platform that helps organizations get the right products to market, faster. Over 6,000 companies, including Toyota, Microsoft, Zoom, 1-800-Contacts, and UiPath, use Productboard to understand what customers need, prioritize what to build next, and align everyone around their roadmap. With offices in San Francisco, Prague, and Vancouver, Productboard is backed by leading investors like Dragoneer Investment Group, Tiger Global Management, Index Ventures, Kleiner Perkins, Sequoia Capital, Bessemer Venture Partners, and Credo Ventures. Learn more at www.productboard.com.

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