Product Led Hub

The State of Product-Led Experience

Volume one

Insights & Data Derived from the Practices of 40 Product-Led Organizations

About us

The **Product-Led Growth Hub**, a direct byproduct of **ReinventGrowth**, is the first business academy worldwide aiming to become the top destination for SaaS professionals, graduates, and organizations that want to learn how to deliver and accelerate the Product-Led Growth model.

The **PLG academy's** mission is to promote and elevate the role of PLG across the SaaS industry via its variety of online & offline programs and unique resources delivered by top PLG experts in the SaaS industry.

Who are the programs for

The programs are designed for executives who take part in building & executing GTM and business strategies in SaaS organizations. Be it part of Customer Success, Marketing, Product, Sales, Professional Services, Engineering or Customer Support.Participants will engage, via online and live trainings with our world-class instructors.

The academy's trainings will share cutting-edge research, frameworks & tools and give executives the opportunity to reflect on what it takes to deliver sound PLG strategies

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Research Scope

To uncover the challenges and competing strengths Product-Led organizations employ, we embarked on a mission to define product experience in the SaaS landscape. To achieve this, we surveyed 40 SaaS organizations and interviewed 50 executives who own or lead Product Management, Customer Success, Marketing and Sales activations.

The goal of our effort is to map, through real-world examples, Product-Led techniques used and estimate how they affect critical aspects of the customer journey. We believe that our massive data sample and thorough analysis will enable SaaS organizations to align their internal teams and optimize product delivery. Our commitment is to help reshape the SaaS growth mindset via the lens of Product Led practices. The survey's results directly guide those efforts, and this extensive report will highly reflect on them.

Key Points of Analysis

- Product-Led Growth as a concept. Introduction and analysis of Product-Led growth pillars, challenges, and limitations.
- Product-Led Experience (PLX) ™. Introduction of the term and how it impacts fundamental elements of a Product-Led growth GTM strategy.
- Product-Led Onboarding ™. Introduction of a remodeled onboarding definition – direct outcome of Product-Led growth GTM practices.
- Product-Led Growth Metrics. Introduction of Product-Led growth metrics, SaaS organizations can consider when assessing product experience.Product-Led Growth KPIs & Analysis.
- Extensive analysis of Product-Led Growth and Product-Led experience KPIs & benchmarks

Attribution Guidelines

At ReinventGrowth, we believe research is the best way to provide insights about the fast paced ever-changing SaaS landscape.

Feel free to distribute and use this report in your own content and republish any charts or findings with the caveat of providing ReinventGrowth as the source of the original research.

Special thanks to our participants for helping us compile one of the greatest surveys on Product-Led GTM practices, to date.

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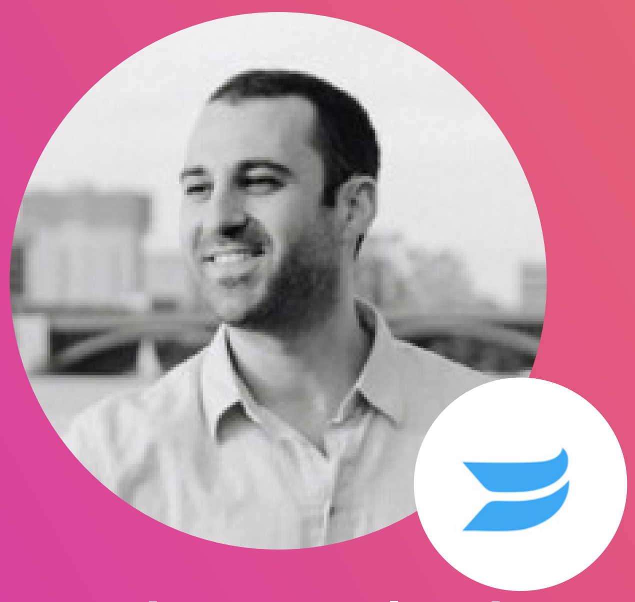

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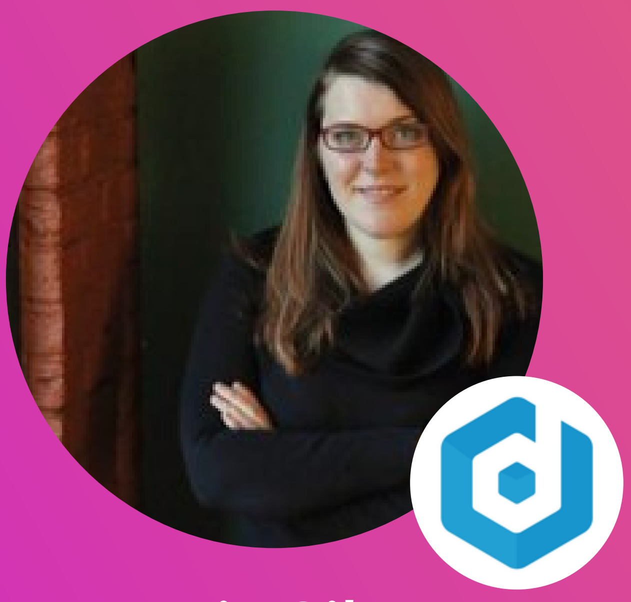

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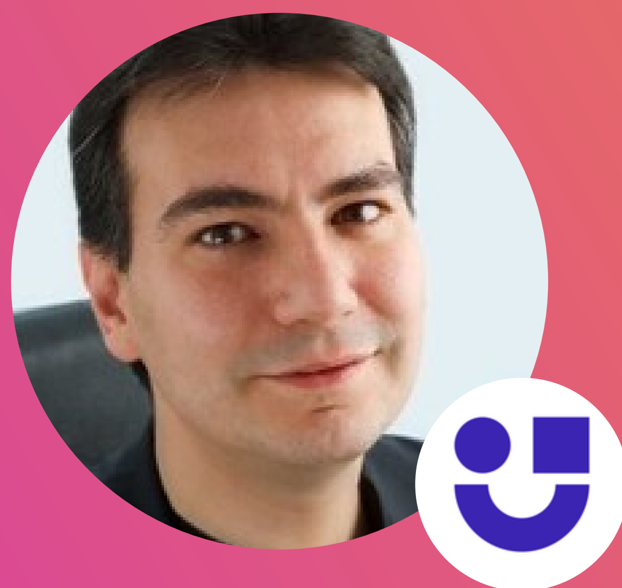

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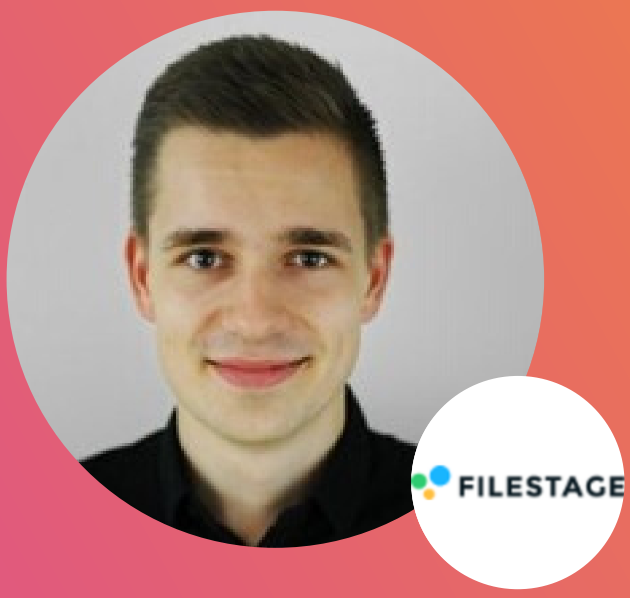

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The Product-Led Growth Challenge

The Product-Led Challenge

Developing a product is hard. Delivering it efficiently to many customer segments is an ongoing challenge. It is one thing trying to increase a customer base and another retaining it for the long run.Finding the optimal point that will make customers keep coming back for more, is a rather complicated task.

Especially when we refer to B2B solutions applying to a range of personas and industries. For a while now, the emerging Product-Led Growth practices, having as panacea products' superpowers raise the one million dollars question:

What defines customer experience?While optimized product delivery comes first into mind, the challenges following product-led transformation are far greater.

Challenge 1: The dominance of IT consumerization

The surge to deliver flawless product experiences in B2B is rising from the major challenge IT consumerization brings on the table. The frictionless, seamless experience B2C solutions provide is now expected in B2B too. This shift in the customer acquisition process elevates the product as the primary growth driver and disrupts the ever-changing SaaS landscape again.

Is not enough anymore for a product to deliver. Product features, should onboard users seamlessly and sustain engagement levels. Even beyond that first experience, product Led organizations retain and expand their clientele, based on products' features and by keeping retention and support costs low.

On the other side of the spectrum, inconsistencies in GTM practices, limited experimentation, and infinite handholding still have their fair share across the SaaS industry.

The more organizations deny to optimize product experience, the harder it will become for them to drive accounts towards retention and expansion.

Challenge 2: The rise of the customer

The abandonment of long term contracts has liberated customers. The **subscription economy** enables them to make up to twelve buying decisions within a year. If we add on that, the reduced switching costs, the surge of competition and the strength of customers' voice on social mediums we have the rise of an era where a sole user can hold all the cards under his sleeve.

This shift has raised customer expectations. Any product is now supposed to enable them to grow while offering a **stellar experience** at the same time.

Products' complexity and their delivery across an array of devices make things worse. Context, of usage, is no longer optional. Quite the opposite. It is the one ingredient that should follow a Product-Led Growth strategy. Its absence can be detrimental to any SaaS offering. An effect that becomes stronger in case a systemic process delivering personalized and tailored experiences is not in place.

Challenge 3: The abandonment of silos

Getting rid of silos' domination is the first step forward an organization should take when providing an exceptional customer experience. Sales and Customer Success, the direct or indirect surrogates of customer onboarding so far, along with Product Management need to establish a standard set of metrics when evaluating product experience.

Only the employment of a unified agenda and alignment across and within departments will bring clarity and optimize product delivery across the board. In the opposite scenario, confusion, misalignment, and decreased ROI will prevail.

Challenge 4: The emerging role of product management

Product Management is also **changing face**. Gut feelings are not supposed to lead any more product management decisions. Product leaders, have to evolve into data-driven experimenters relying on qualitative and quantitative results.

This mindset shift will enable them to get easier the internal buy-in from internal stakeholders and come closer to customers' needs. The continuous monitoring of passive feedback, the ongoing conduction of user research, followed by investment in data help product leaders get a better understanding of the context behind day-to-day usage.

Continuous Investment in a customer-centric approach will enable product leaders to deliver optimized experiences and build features compatible with products' vision and customers' evolving needs.

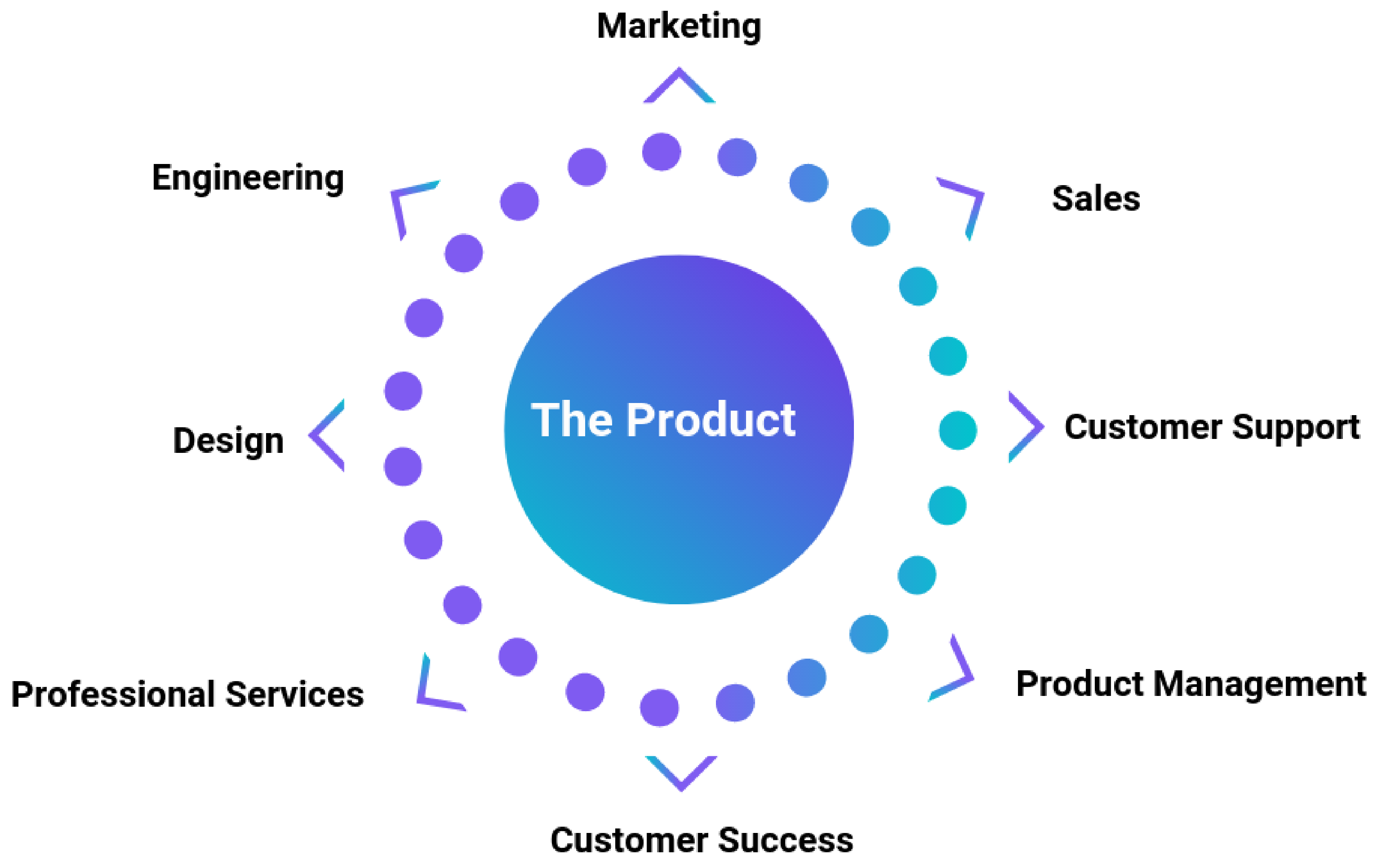
The State of Product-Led Growth

The **first reference** we get on Product-Led Growth as a GTM strategy is from Asana back in 2013. As a term, it was later analyzed by Nick Bonfiglio and Mickey Allon, founders of Gainsight PX, in "**Mastering Product Experience in SaaS**" back in 2017.

If you are into the product-led realm for while though, you most probably are familiar with **Product-Led Growth (PLG)** from Openview which coined and evangelized the term.

What is a Product-Led Growth GTM Strategy?

A Product-Led growth GTM strategy puts the **product at the center of an organization**. Product-Led organizations deliver products that anticipate and answer customers evolving needs. They achieve that by delivering stellar, customer-centric product experiences.



In this instance, the product is not a part of the customer experience. In a Product-Led growth GTM strategy, the product is the experience. An experience so strong and optimized that converts accounts, in a matter of minutes. While it keeps delivering value on a consistent cadence in order to retain and expand them.

Product-Led Growth main pillars

Besides having their departments consider the product as the main growth lever, in a Product-Led growth GTM strategy there are other elements to consider. Most of them are also considered as challenges as we mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

Product-Led Growth Pillar 1: Company-Wide Alignment

"Customers attach value to products in proportion to the perceived ability of those products to help solve their problems."
– THEODORE LEVITT, **THE MARKETING IMAGINATION Part II**

With the **rise of digital transformation** and the popularity of digital mediums across the spectrum, customer expectations are shaped way before they went ahead and try a product.

Whenever those expectations do not align with the product offering, customers experience a **value gap** and abandon the product for good. The value gap represents the difference between expected and delivered (or perceived) value.

Product-Led organizations avoid that by reorganizing their strategy around the product's mission and vision to improve collaboration across the board. They sustain their go-to-market messages across any medium and abandon silos for good.

Product-Led Growth Pillar 2: Investment in Product Analytics

A Product-Led growth strategy invests radically in product analytics to enable teams to understand where prospects leave their journeys and optimize positioning.However, this is only one facet of their role. Product analytics can also improve onboarding, embrace in-product engagements' experimentation and prove what needs to get on the roadmap.With one way or another, product analytics become the single source of truth within a Product-Led organization.

Product-Led Growth Pillar 3: Barriers to Entry are Eliminated

In a Product-Led growth GTM strategy, the pricing model delivered should be a **free trial** or a **freemium**. This allows the customer to realize value sooner and accelerates the sales process. Put simply, in a Product-Led growth model organizations deliver a **bottom-up approach**. Ideally targeting users who in turn will promote the product to buyers.

Product-Led Growth Pillar 4: From MQLs to PQLs

Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) are replaced by Product-Qualified Leads (PQLs). Unlike the Marketing-Led model, where online analytic prevail in a Product-Led Growth GTM model product usage takes the lead.

One of the earliest mentions **on the PQL concept** is in an article by Tomasz Tunguz where the natural progression from MQLs to PQLs is described.

The PQL term, however, was **coined by Gainsight PX in 2017** and is described as a prospect that signed up and demonstrated buying intent based on product interest, usage, and behavioral data.

Product-Led Growth Pillar 5: Product Virality

Organizations investing in a Product-Led Growth GTM strategy have products that include a **virality component**. They achieve that by investing in user research, UX and UI design, product marketing and building product features to engineer vitality.

Product virality is when the product users realize more value by inviting more users in their network or by sharing and evangelizing a product to grow awareness within their network.

Some popular product virality examples are:
- LinkedIn’s “Connect to Your Address Book” feature.
- Slack's social virality.
- Intercom's viral effect via the "powered by" link on its chat widget.
- Drift's as with Intercom it takes advantage of its chat widget to create a viral-loopTypeform's viral link on each form

The benefits following product virality? Lower acquisition costs and the creation of an eternal viral loop which is embraced (when the product meets its promises) by **strong word-of-mouth-virality**.

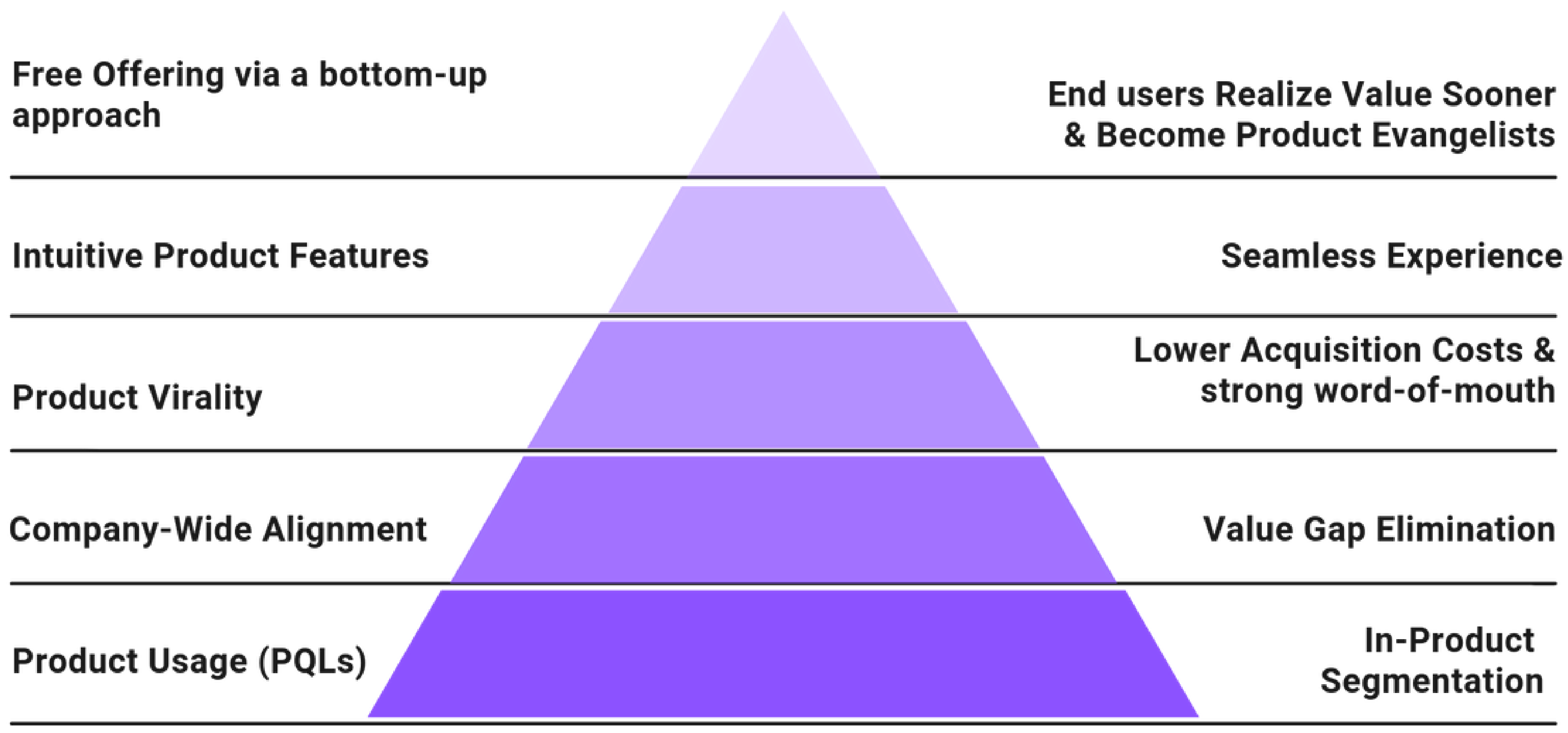
Product-Led Growth Pillar 6: Intuitive Product Features

One of the most important elements, of Product-Led growth, is the need to deliver **intuitive products**. Product features need to market, sell and **onboard users seamlessly** by capitalizing at the same time on a self-serve sales approach.

The ongoing value provided to users lead to increased levels of retention and expansion.As explained above the trend **IT consumerization** brings along is perceived as a challenge for SaaS organizations.

Users desire to manage products that are not followed by a **steep learning curve** - the likes of Facebook or Slack.

Product-Led Growth Hierarchy of Needs



Product-Led Growth Misconceptions

Misconception One

Product-Led growth is supposed to be achieved only when end users realize initial value via a bottom-up approach. While we agree and believe that end-users should become product evangelists within their organization, internal teams need to also consider that this effect may reflect on buyers too.

A fact also supported by "**The State of Product-Led growth**" a recent research Openview conducted, where it was proved that 80% of companies have adopted in-product tracking and analytics.

Those data can be used to:

- Streamline the PQL segments and **discover sales opportunities in disguise**.
- Invest in a tailored **JTBD** onboarding framework that will **accelerate time-to-value (TTV)** for buyers.
- Streamline the onboarding journey by investing in team onboarding (breadth of use) that will deliver value to both buyers and end-users.

Misconception Two

Prospects are supposed to convert seamlessly only by product features, without Sales reps. intervening in the process. A fact supported by Forrester which claims that **75% of B2B buyers** are leaning towards a self-serve model.

While we agree with that claim and encourage the delivery of intuitive products, for solutions offering multiple value points (eg. Marketo) things can get more complicated. Furthermore, when enterprise deals are at play strategic decisions will eventually have to be taken. So Sales will have to eventually be implicated in the buying process.

To find the middle ground on those situations organizations should:

- Alter their pricing and offer free value that will make users keep coming back for more. Successful Product-Led organizations, like Hubspot and Gainsight PX achieve that pretty successfully:

1. They both invest in a freemium model. (Gainsight PX was also doing that at the time this research was conducted).
2. They offer human assistance during the activation phase but only when a prospect has proved to be a PQL.

- While intuitive features are paramount to adoption, organizations need to invest in ongoing in-product guidance at scale, to lead accounts to retention and eventually expansion.

The kind of guidance that will be reinforced by insights product analytics and customer-facing teams provide. Put simply product experience should replicate as much as possible human assistance to accelerate growth and reduce associated costs.

This realization does not downgrade organizations imperative investment to keep creating products customers love. It only means that product guidance, when delivered in conjunction with usage, should sustain engagement levels and lead users successfully to upgrades.

Misconception Three

Product Qualified Leads are the sole point of reference in regards to in-product segmentation. While Product-Qualified Leads refer to prospects showing serious intent into buying a product they are limited to the acquisition and activation phase.

Users fall into many different buckets post-purchase. It only makes sense that internal teams need to define which bucket goes to each user category and how usage will be assessed.

What is Product Experience?

In a Product-Led growth strategy, **the product becomes the vehicle delivering value to customers** and summing up their perception about a company's offerings. Always by considering all touchpoints, interactions, and engagements.

When delivered right, product experience increases **customer lifetime value**, drives differentiation and accelerates growth.

According to Gainsight, stellar Product Experience (PX) is delivered when organizations:

- Make data-driven product decisions and leverage analytics for anything that goes on their roadmap.
- Streamline onboarding and adoption by using product engagements that lead users to their desired results.
- Align the impact of product investments with new feature adoption, retention, conversions, and expansion.
- Achieve company-wide alignment and consider different business metrics per department but define ownership and accountability.

What is Product-Led Experience?

In many ways, Product-Led experience (PLX)™ complements the definition Gainsight provides. It capitalizes the same technology and relies on Product-Led growth to optimize its outcomes.

But, what does this mean exactly?

Product-Led Experience (PLX) Foundations

- Serious investment in a Product-Led onboarding strategy throughout the customer journey. In this instance, onboarding drives the Product-Led growth GTM strategy at play and is one of the main differentiators in regards to growth.
- Investment in product analytics solutions like Gainsight PX, Mixpanel, Pendo, Heap, Amplitude and others. Those solutions provide real-time product insights and don't rely on engineering resources to extract data. A fact that leads to:

1. Reduced costs on engineering spend.
2. Internal teams get product insights on time, constantly iterate the customer journey and promote Product-Led growth across their organization.
3. Customer feedback is monitored on an ongoing basis and can be leveraged to the very end. Please note that depending on the product features each of those solutions provides product feedback can also be considered **alongside product analytics**.
4. Onboarding can take infinite in-product paths, tailored to user-roles and lead to initial and true value.

- Real-time product insights, allow heavy data analysis and the establishment of associated metrics that complement business KPIs. Product-Led Growth metrics **prevail** among those organizations. They extend the Product-Qualified Leads model to Product OQLs **(product onboarding qualified leads**), which rely on onboarding as a point of reference.
- The **growth team** is collecting input from internal organizations and act as the Product (Led) experience gatekeeper. It achieves that by putting together the insights provided by internal teams alongside Product-Led growth metrics and business KPIs. This fact alone results in a feedback loop and the optimization between high-touch and high-tech touchpoints.

Product-Led Experience as a concept

Product-Led Experience (PLX) ™, a term coined by ReinventGrowth, is delivered when organizations adopt a set of Product-Led growth metrics that go beyond acquisition.

Those metrics are considered in conjunction with business KPIs and user mapping and their outcomes lead to an end-to-end representation of the customer journey.

PLX has as a backbone Product-Led onboarding and serious investment in a technology stack that enables product data analysis on a day-to-day basis.

Product-Led Experience Delivery

	Current State		Optimal State
A	Data may be extracted via engineering resources	A	The toolstack enables real time data analysis
B	Onboarding prevalence ends during activation	B	Product-Led Onboarding assess every stage of the customer journey.
C	PQLs are the main points of reference in regards to usage	C	Product OQLs assess users progress beyond TOFU.

Product-Led Onboarding (PLO)

As a business function, the magnitude onboarding has for SaaS organizations renders it more critical by the day. Especially now that customer experience needs to be stellar and user satisfaction established in the early stages of the customer lifecycle. When effective, user onboarding helps new users become **proficient**, and customers grow within a service. A poor onboarding experience, on the other hand, disappoints buyers, infuriates users, and eventually leads to churn.

Being subject to the GTM practices at play, onboarding changes attributes with the ease a chameleon adapts to a new environment. Through a Self Serve onboarding strategy, it is fast and to the point, camouflaged behind scalable practices. On a Human-Assisted strategy, it becomes a thorough systemic process embraced by the handholding Customer Success provides.

Depending on its design, onboarding includes basic setup help, training, and leads to experiences that create proficient and habitual users. When executed correctly, it becomes a scalable and tailored educational framework, enabling accounts to grow by moving them down the customer lifecycle. When **executed wrong**, it delivers out of context messages, creates friction, and encourages drop-offs.

The Ever-evolving Onboarding Funnel

The multivariate nature onboarding has enables it to replicate Sales practices. The ongoing feature releases discourage the iconic sales funnel taxonomy. Every time a new release is launched, the onboarding process is reactivated to deliver initial value, lead to upgrades, and further account expansion. This process abandons the traditional sales model archetype, ending onboarding prevalence during activation.

Being a continuous process, onboarding needs to be evaluated at every stage of the customer lifecycle. The sales funnel has evolved into a circle where onboarding stands in its epicenter waiting for the next feature release to be triggered again. The industry’s transition to Product Led GTM practices, also plays its part in this evolution.As a process, onboarding no longer includes invasive, out of context in-app interactions presented at large in front of users.

Product data capitalization overrules the assumption implying product engagement activations cannot supplement the systemic process humans deliver. On the contrary, onboarding becomes the connective tissue between the two.

Product-Led Onboarding as a Concept

Product Led onboarding (PLO), a term coined by ReinventGrowth, is a set of data-driven product engagement practices, that consider behavioral notions and users’ proficiency.Strategically, it avoids random feature introduction to users. Instead, it exploits historic data and considers prospects' proficiency level when exploring a product for the first time.Contextual guidance constitutes its main pillar and enables product experience to double down on users’ workflow early on by following their progressive route to excellence.

Previously, even when a tailored experience was provided, the work was not done. A viable monitoring process following users' progression effectively could not be established. Marketing Led practices may have introduced the use of analytics to monitor prospects' online behavior but failed to provide organizations with an extensive analysis of in-product behavior. Product Led organizations already capitalize on PLO practices and combine insights from prospects' online presence with those derived from the product itself. Product managers are at the forefront, able to pinpoint which features are sticky and where drop-offs occur. Onboarding is finally able to be measured end-to-end and pinpoint where growth lies or churn lurks.

In a SaaS world, where stellar customer experience is now synonymous to optimized product delivery, user onboarding acts as the Jack of all trades. It takes users by the hand, helping them accomplish what needs to get done. Product Led practices transform onboarding in a data-driven force that fills in the gaps humans are unable to, by eliminating confusion and sustaining engagement.Eventually, it all comes down to what game is at play. The one ruled by humans, or the one led by machines.

Assessing Product-Led Experience

To make products competitive and an investment reflecting customers' expectations, product teams ship feature changes and improvements constantly. The word "agile" is part of their DNA, a quality following the onboarding process too. In-app educational practices introduce those changes on time, flawlessly by providing the right context. Product management should measure those interactions on a day to day basis to reassure they yield the necessary results.

Each department holds a different set of business metrics accountable for the productivity and input to the customer journey. Following this logic, product metrics need to be established and add value to existing KPIs by measuring activation, retention, and engagement levels.

Capitalization on product data, make this possible and delivers insights on every move a user makes in-app. The learnings derived can give a better indication on which user interactions the human involvement is necessary, or the product can pave the way.

On the always online era where the power of a sole user may jeopardize an otherwise "done" deal, onboarding is no longer a process measured insufficiently or lacking personalization. On the contrary, it becomes the single source of truth when referring to products' capabilities and predicts the anomalies caused by multiple users lacking context or proficiency.

In the foreseeable future, new terms will rise to describe the intimacy levels of the User-Product relationship. The first associated term established so far is the Product-Qualified lead (PQL), referring to prospects that signed up and demonstrated buying intent based on product interest, usage, and behavioral data.

The PQL term is limited to the point where a paid conversion is made. Product managers, need to create unique benchmarks directly associated with onboarding interactions to effectively measure product engagement levels.

Onboarding having as a mission to deliver both initial and repetitive value needs terms like **Product Onboarding Efficiency (POE)**, to measure and calculate the effectiveness of its activations. Those calculations can accurately monitor and guide onboarding efficacy on the customer journey.

Depending on which stage of the customer lifecycle a user is in, the POE can be based on four product engagement variables:

Breadth of use

An alternate form of (team) activation, product breadth helps product managers realize the extent a product is being used on an account level. As a product metric, it monitors account health and helps product managers and data owners proactively manage churn.

Depth of use

How extensively product key features are utilized is something that constantly troubles product managers. Onboarding should enable users progressively exploit a product’s features to their maximum extent. Depth of use is about adoption, both on a user and account level.

Efficiency of use

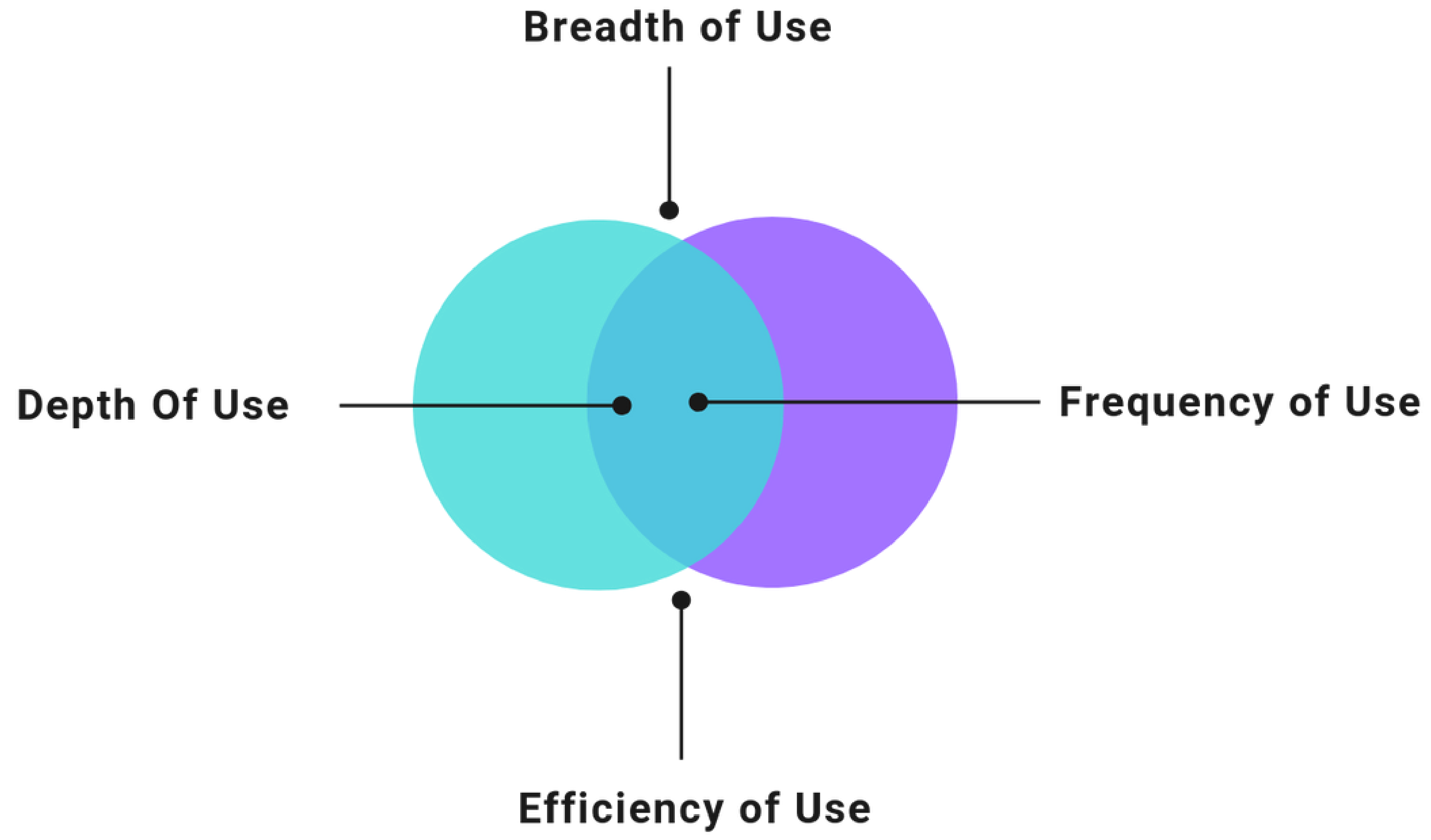
The difficulty level to complete common tasks is a critical evaluation of the onboarding flow. For efficiency to be measured accurately, product teams need to be aware of the total number of users per account who begin a task, versus those who complete it.

Frequency of use

Frequency of use is concerned with how frequently and for how long users engage with a product’s features. Reminding users why a specific feature is there in the first place and how it may further optimize their workflow is also something reliant to onboarding activations.

All things being equal, Breadth, Depth, Frequency, and Efficiency of use form an adoption loop. The loop's implementation is viable when the maximum number of an account's users exploit a product by using its features extensively in an efficient manner and repeating those actions frequently.

Adoption Loop

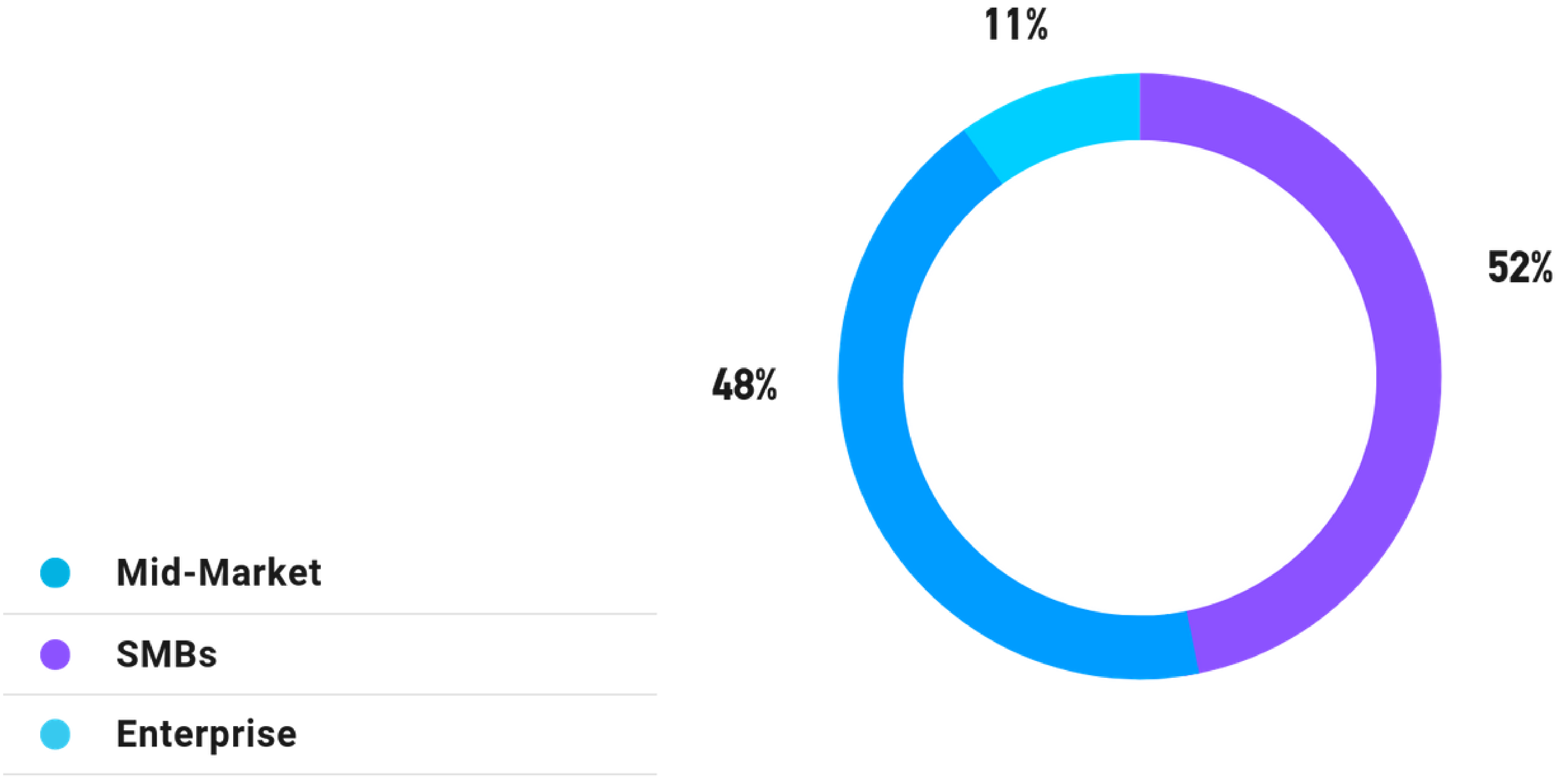


Again, the decisive role initiating this process is (team) activation. But for the adoption loop to be consistent, on every stage of the customer journey, all four metrics should be considered. Depending on the onboarding strategy at play, the loop is being supplemented by additional business KPIs and parameters.

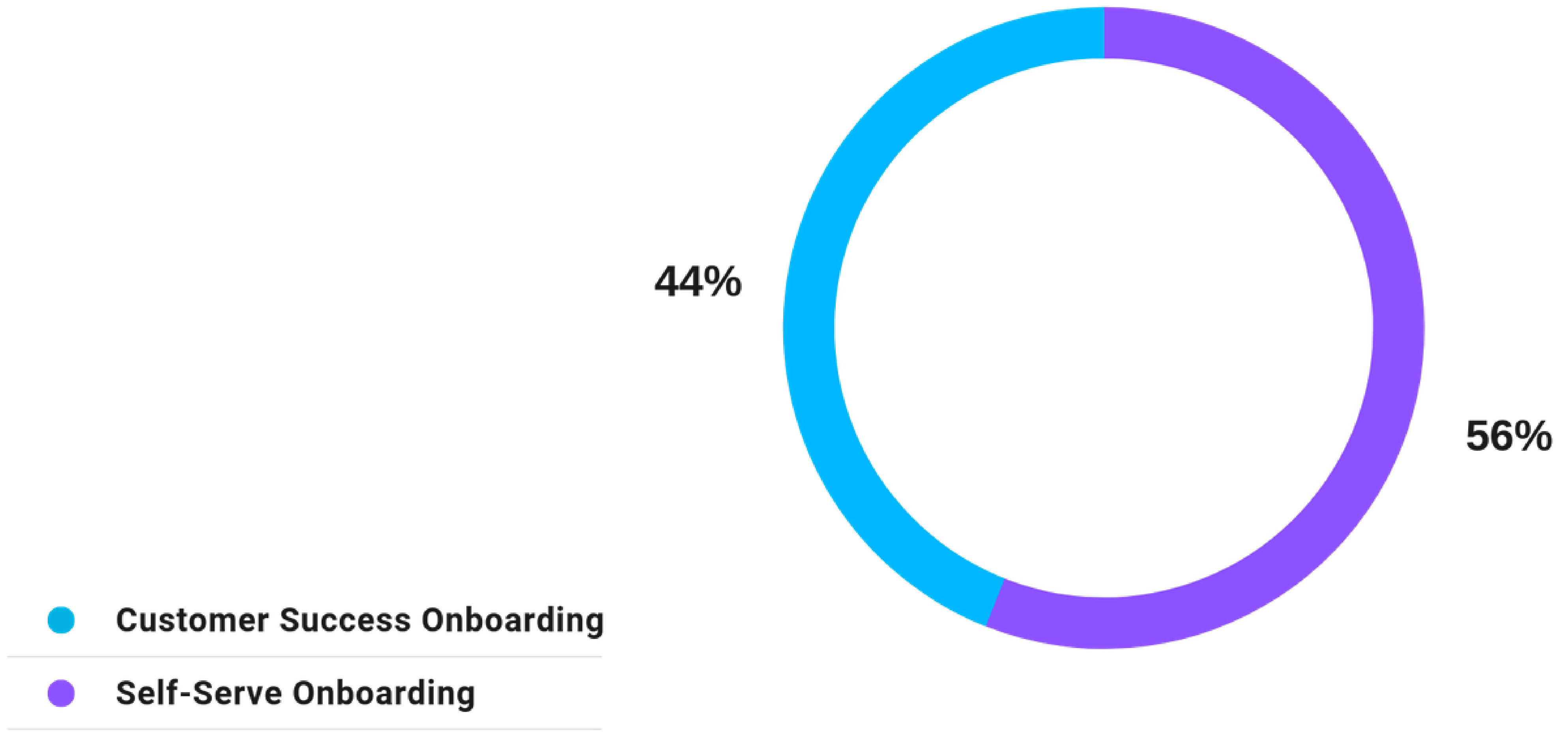
Research Overview

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

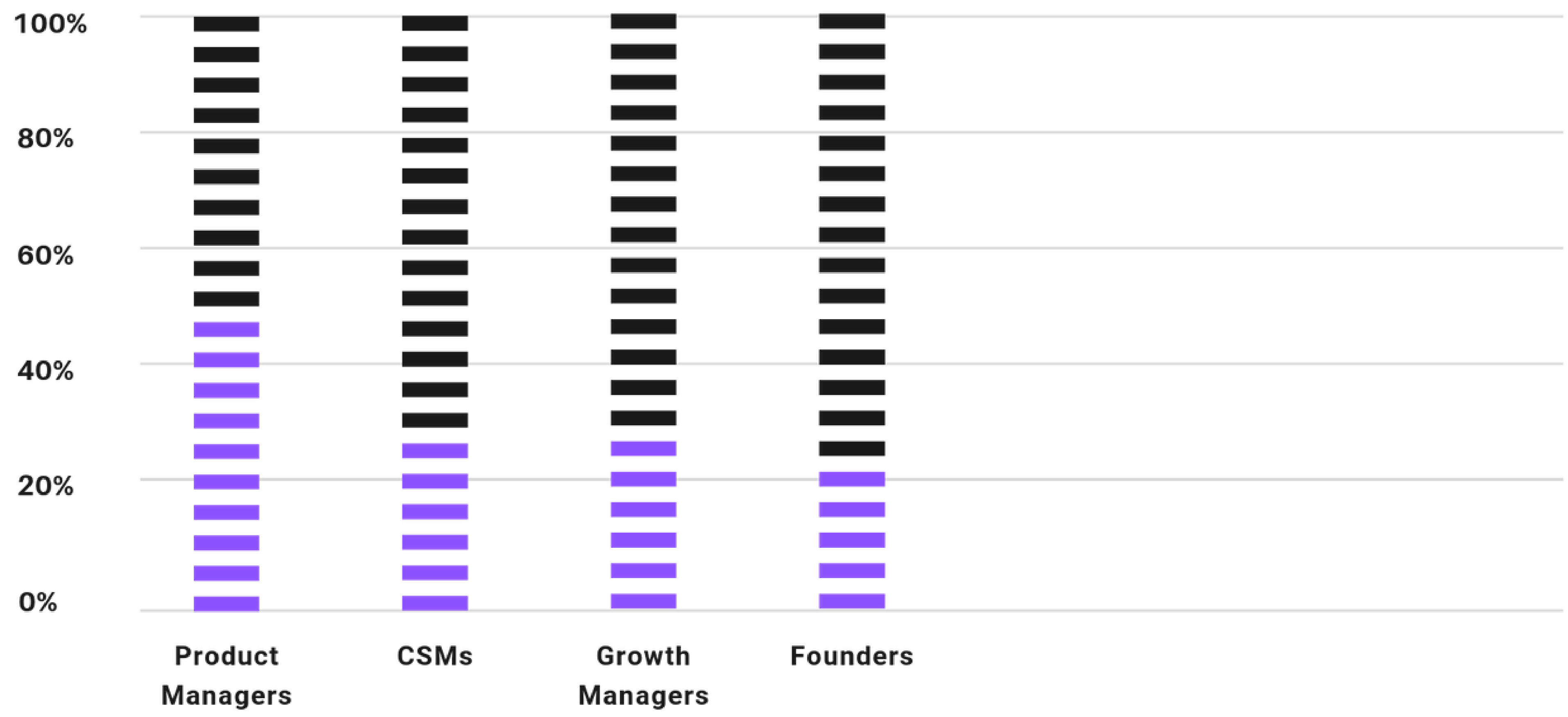
INDUSTRY SEGMENTS EXAMINED



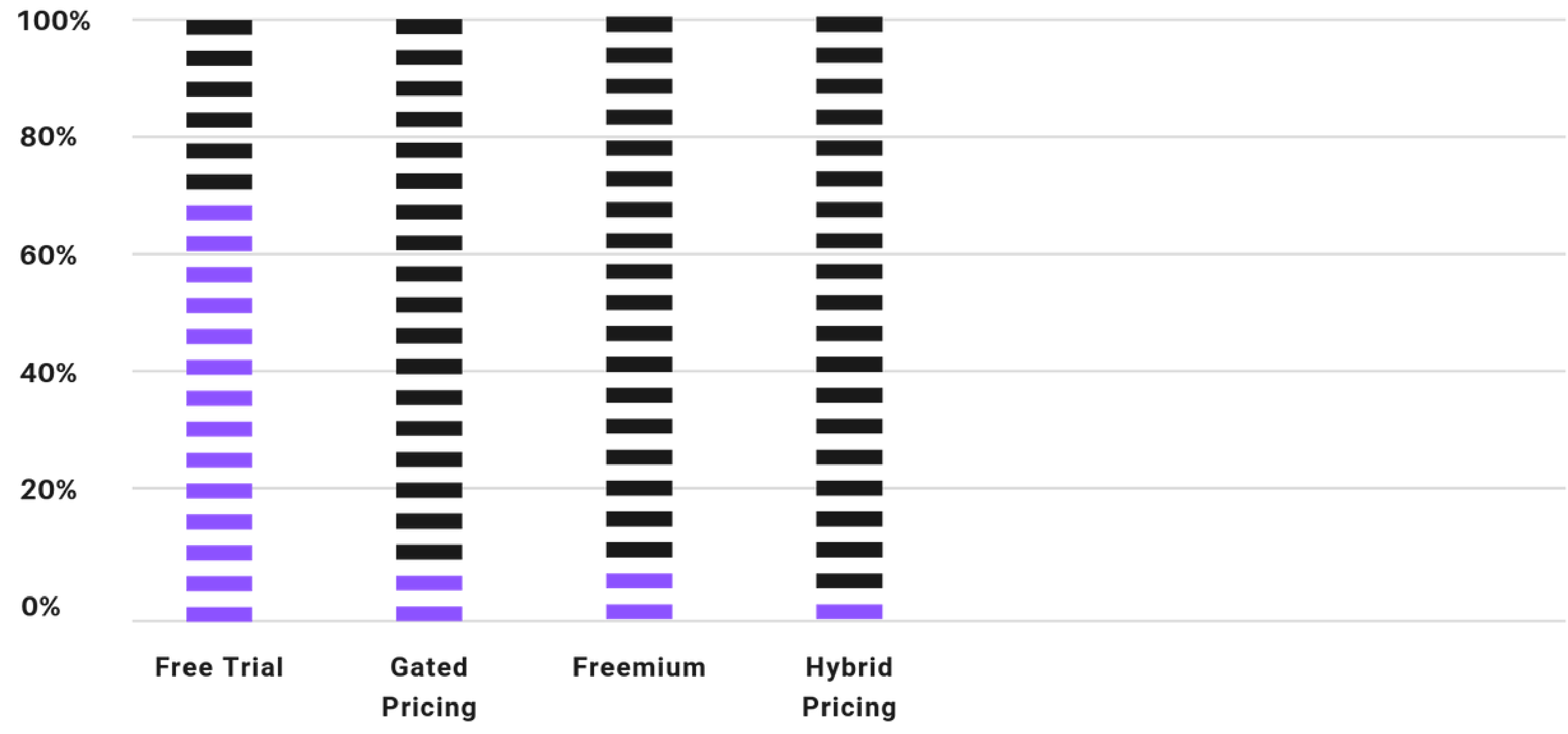
ONBOARDING STRATEGIES EXAMINED



PARTICIPANTS BUSINESS ROLES



PRODUCT DELIVERY METHOD



RESEARCH OVERVIEW

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

USER ACQUISITION

Acquisition rates, with 43% of participants favoring a freemium and 22% a free trial model

PRODUCT VALUE

Optimized product value delivery, with 14,5% mean preference across free trial & freemium.

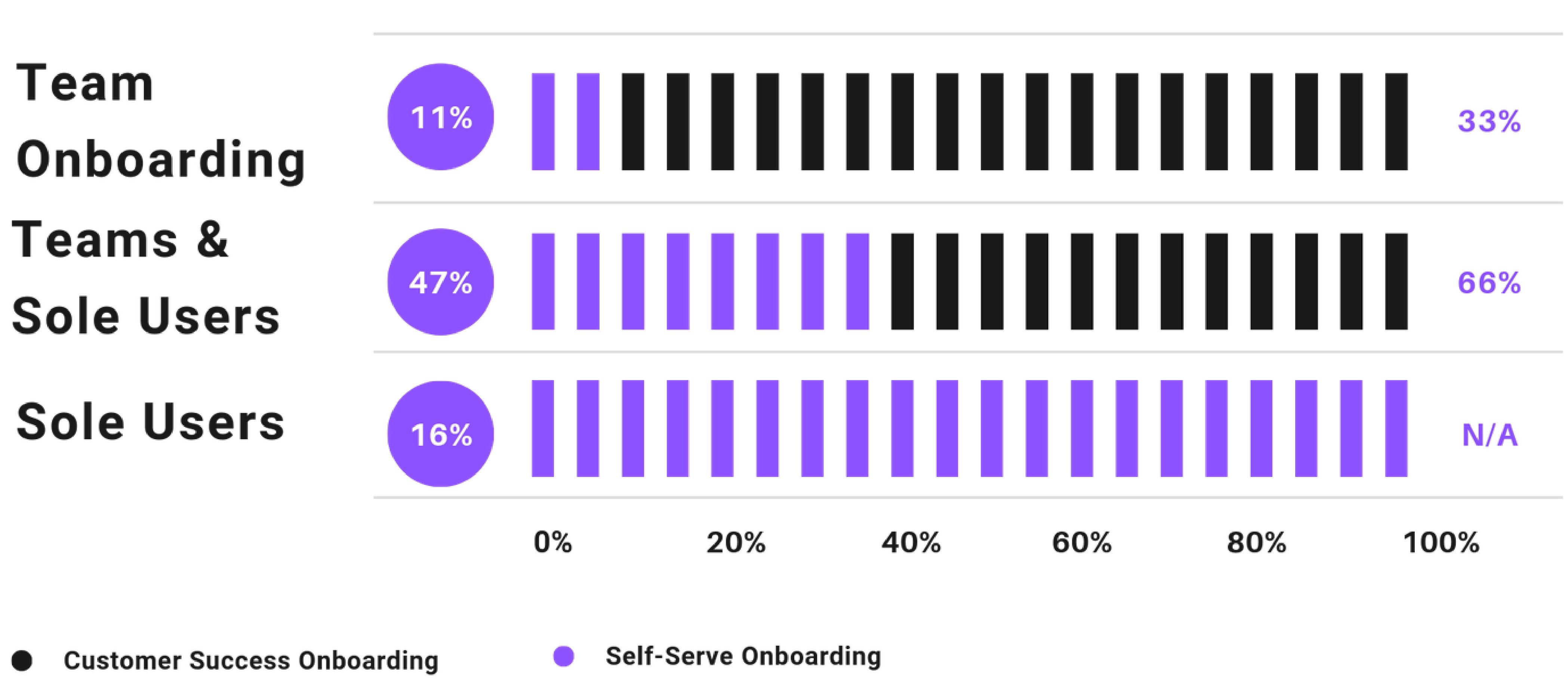
CUSTOMER SEGMENT

Whether or not product delivery fits the customer segments served, with 14,5% preference across free trial & freemium.

GTM STRATEGY

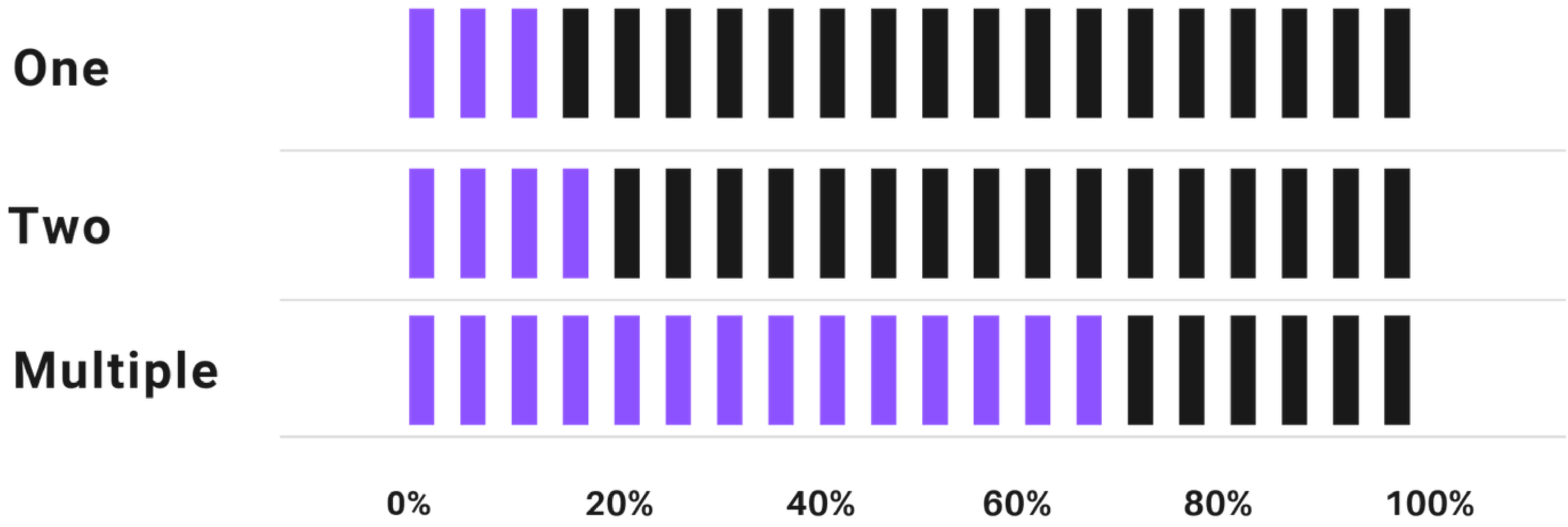
The Go-To-Market strategy, with 14% opting for freemium and 8% for free trial.

TEAM ONBOARDING



RESEARCH OVERVIEW

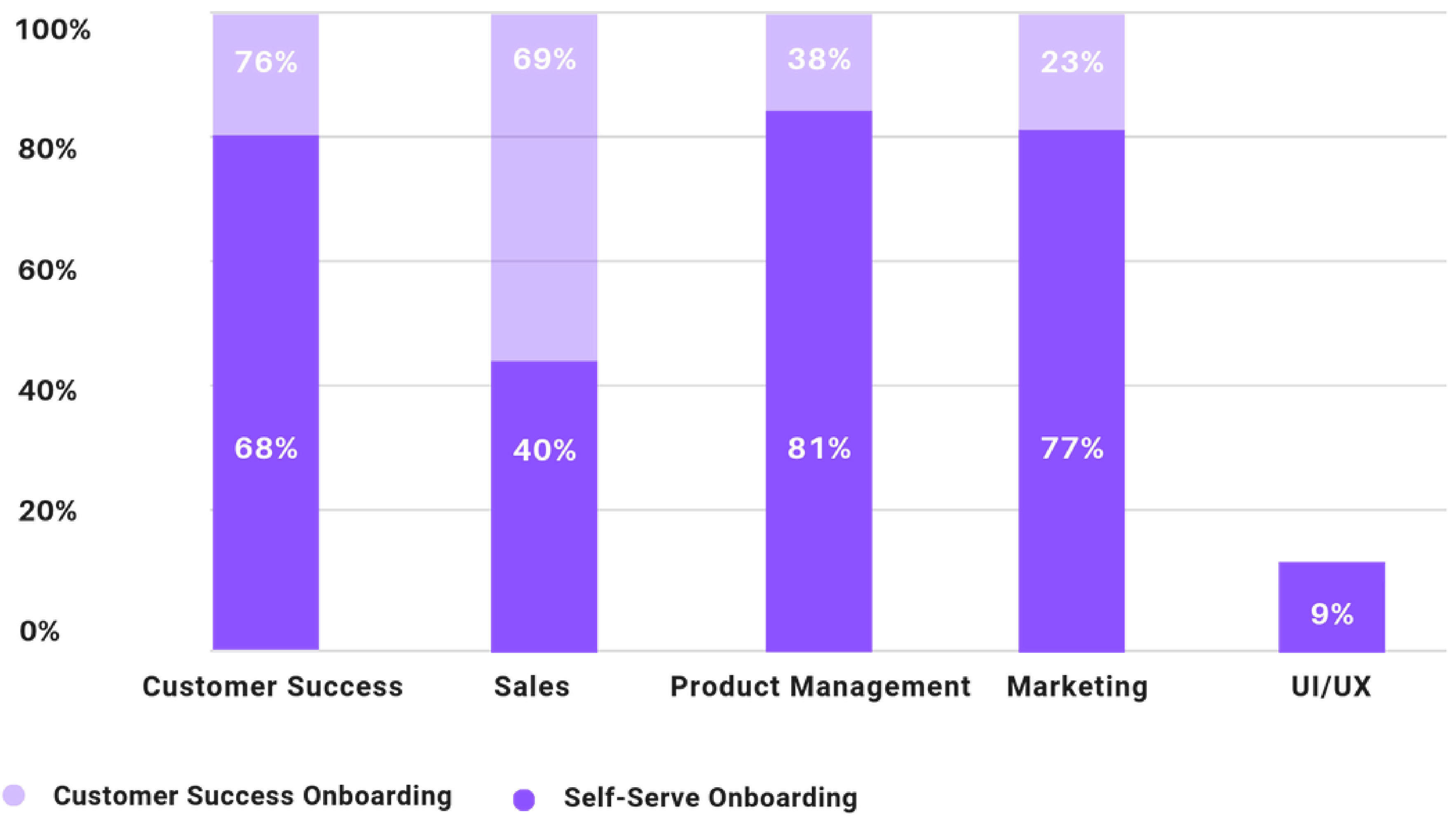
ONBOARDING BY PERSONA



PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 68% of the participants onboard more than one personas.
- While most participants onboard many personas (68%), a limited 20% onboards two and 16% only one

ONBOARDING OWNERSHIP



DATA ANALYSIS

- On Human Assisted, Customer Success (76%) and Sales (69%) take ownership. At the same time, Product Management (38%) and Marketing (23%) come last.
- On Self-Serve the role is dispersed across Product Management (81%), Marketing (77%), Customer Success (68%) while Sales (40%) come last.
- From the human resources' allocation, it resonates that the KPIs following the two strategies vary.

Those results are not surprising since:

GTM TRANSITION

The industry transitions towards Product Led practices and discrepancies on GTM practices execution are expected.

MULTIPLE KPIS

A main Product-Led challenge for organizations is that internal teams consider different metrics when evaluating product experience.

BUYER-SELLER DYNAMIC

Increased involvement of customer-facing teams on Human Assisted onboarding is inevitable since strategic decisions need to be taken both by both sides.

HIGH TOUCH VS. HIGH TECH

The argument implying Self Serve onboarding practices do not apply to Human Assisted still exists. Thus, the minimum involvement of Product Management.

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

SILOS ABANDONMENT

Silos abandonment, Product Led practices bring on the table, will not be achieved until internal teams learn to think as a unified force. The deployment of a unified agenda will bring alignment and clarify which parts of the customer journey may be neglected or falsely handled.

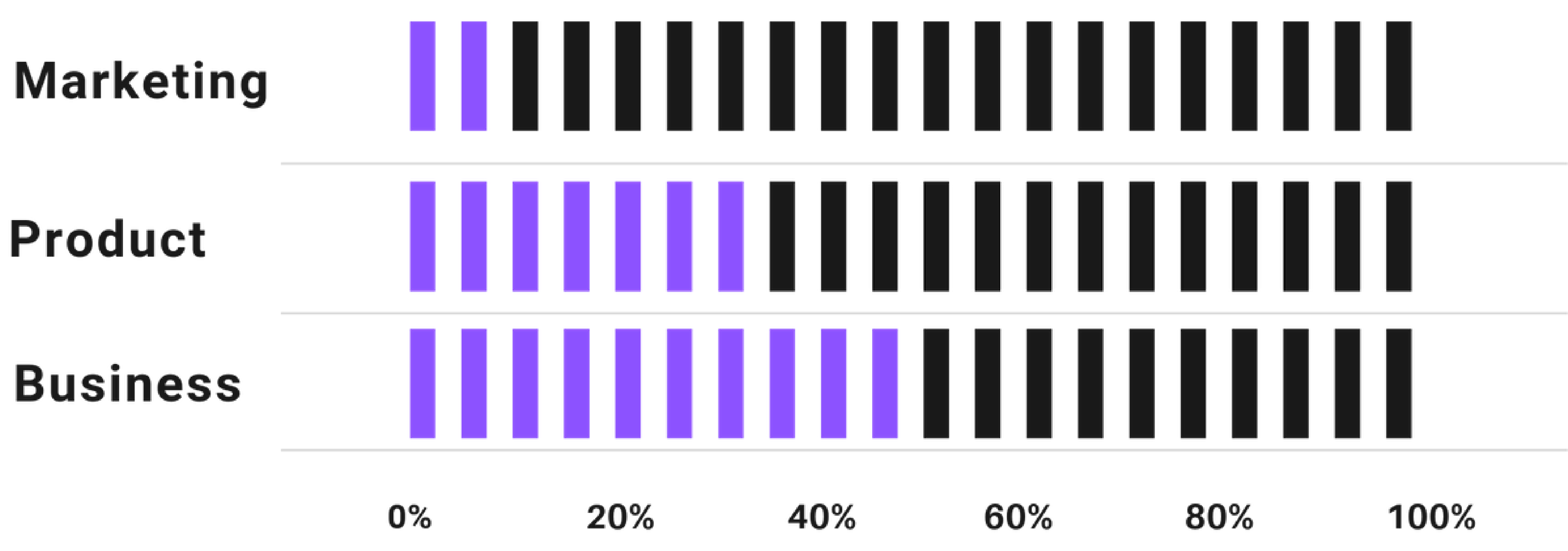
PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

Product Management, being the product's main gatekeeper, should be involved and align with internal teams on every step of the customer journey. This is how product experience will become an intentional effort across an entire organization.

Onboarding Benchmarks

ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

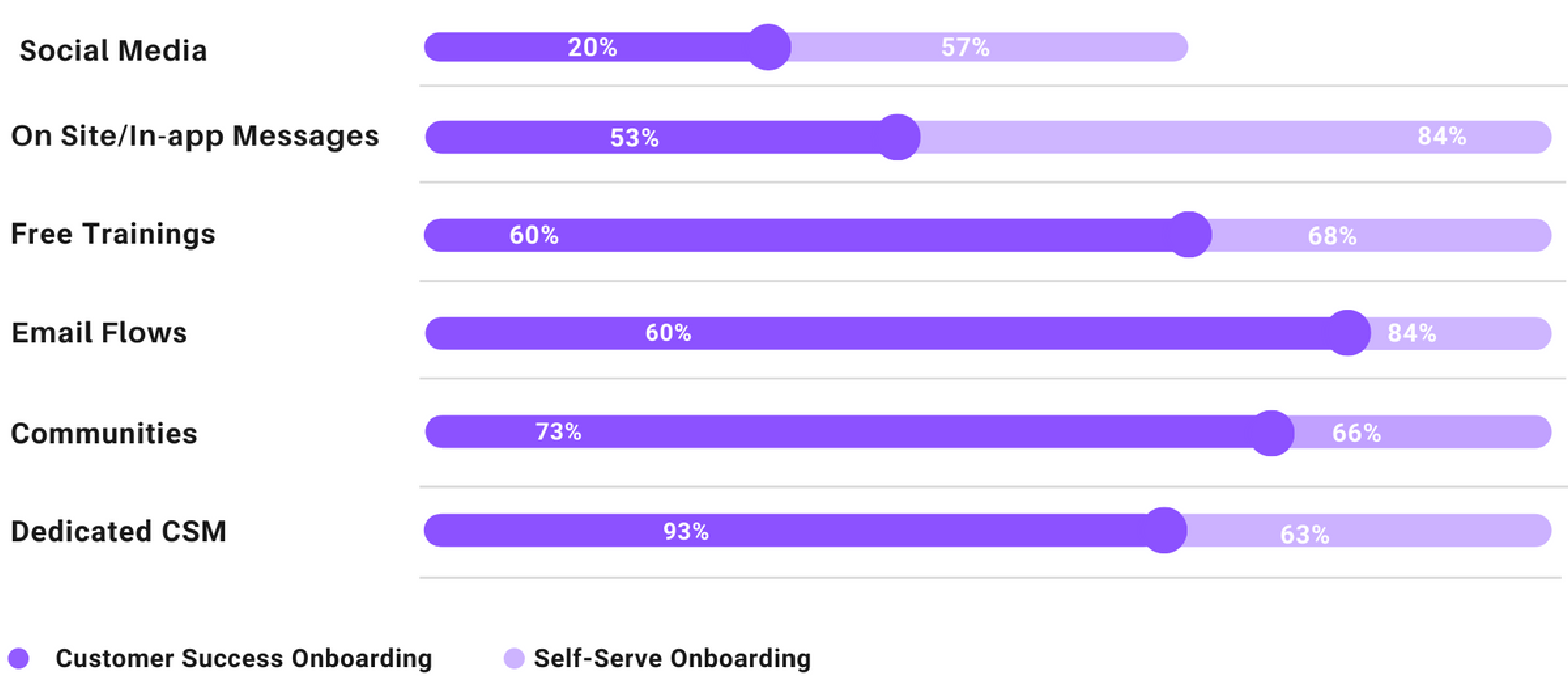
ONBOARDING METRICS ALLOCATION



PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

- SaaS organizations use an array of metrics - a blend of business (51%), marketing (15%), and product (34%).
- Being a fundamental need of any organization to be aware of its business and marketing activities ROI, those KPIs can be lagging indicators as they have little to do with product experience. Negative changes on those metrics do not make their appearance instantly, but when their (churn) effects are in place.
- Organizations should emphasize on product metrics to distill the right conclusions on users' behavior. The continuous onboarding delivery forces product managers to discover actions that reinforce or downgrade the process by considering in-app user behavior. This is how product experience will become an intentional effort across an entire organization.

PERSONALIZATION FACTORS



ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

Personalization, the double-edged knife following any onboarding tactic, on Human Assisted onboarding implicates Sales and Customer Success by increasing acquisition and retention costs.

On Self Serve, it is supposed to be established via scalable engagement practices tailored to users' needs.

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

- It is evident that Self Serve adopters strive to balance the involvement of Sales (40%) and Customer Success organizations' (63%) in an effort to activate and retain an account.
- On Human Assisted Onboarding, the disposal of Sales (69%) during acquisition and of a dedicated CSM (93%) later on, is the first choice coming into mind. The nature and needs of Mid-Market and Enterprise customers make sales procedure complex and customer satisfaction key priority.
- Email practices substitute a personalization tactic with 84% (Self Serve) and 60% (Human Assisted) preference.
- Education practices (Free trainings) affect the buyer-seller relationship with 68% preference on Self-Serve and 60% on Human Assisted.
- The same impact have On site/In-App messages with 84% and 53% preference on Self Serve and Human Assisted, respectively.
- Social Communities play an essential role when establishing a personal connection with an almost equal level of preference among Self Serve (73%) and Human Assisted (66%).
- Social Media is a prominent personalization tactic on Self Serve (57%) and less preferred on Human Assisted (20%)

USER BEHAVIORAL METRICS PER STRATEGY

DATA ANALYSIS

- On Human Assisted onboarding, top benchmarks are Monthly Churn Rate (100%), NPS (Net Promoter Score) (85%) and Key Features Adoption (65%).
- On Self Serve onboarding, top behavioral metrics are Monthly Churn Rate (65%), Website Traffic (65%), NPS (45%) and Key Features Adoption (45%).
- 40% of the metrics the research uncovered are product related, 40% marketing and 15% business.
- PQL measurements (PQL Scoring) are used by 35% of participants across both strategies.

USER BEHAVIORAL METRICS PER DEPARTMENT

ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

DATA ANALYSIS

- Top behavioral metrics are NPS, Monthly Churn Rate and Website Traffic, with mean preference 75%, 72%, and 60% respectively.
- Paradoxically, Marketing (46%) favors more PQL scoring, followed by Customer Success (36%) and Product Management (33%).
- Key Feature Adoption is monitored mostly by Customer Success (63%), followed by Product Management (51%) and Marketing (46%).
- Despite the increased consideration of product metrics (eg.PQL Scoring) Marketing equally assesses Lead Scoring 46%.
- Time to Invite Team Members (Breadth of Use) is mostly monitored by Customer Success (33%) while Product Management ranks second (17%) and Marketing (9%) last.
- The ROI onboarding yields (Conversions), is monitored mostly by Customer Success (55%) and Marketing (46%) and less by Product Management (21%)

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

PRODUCT METRICS

Emerging product metrics (PQL Scoring) redefine the evaluation of customer satisfaction by considering product usage.

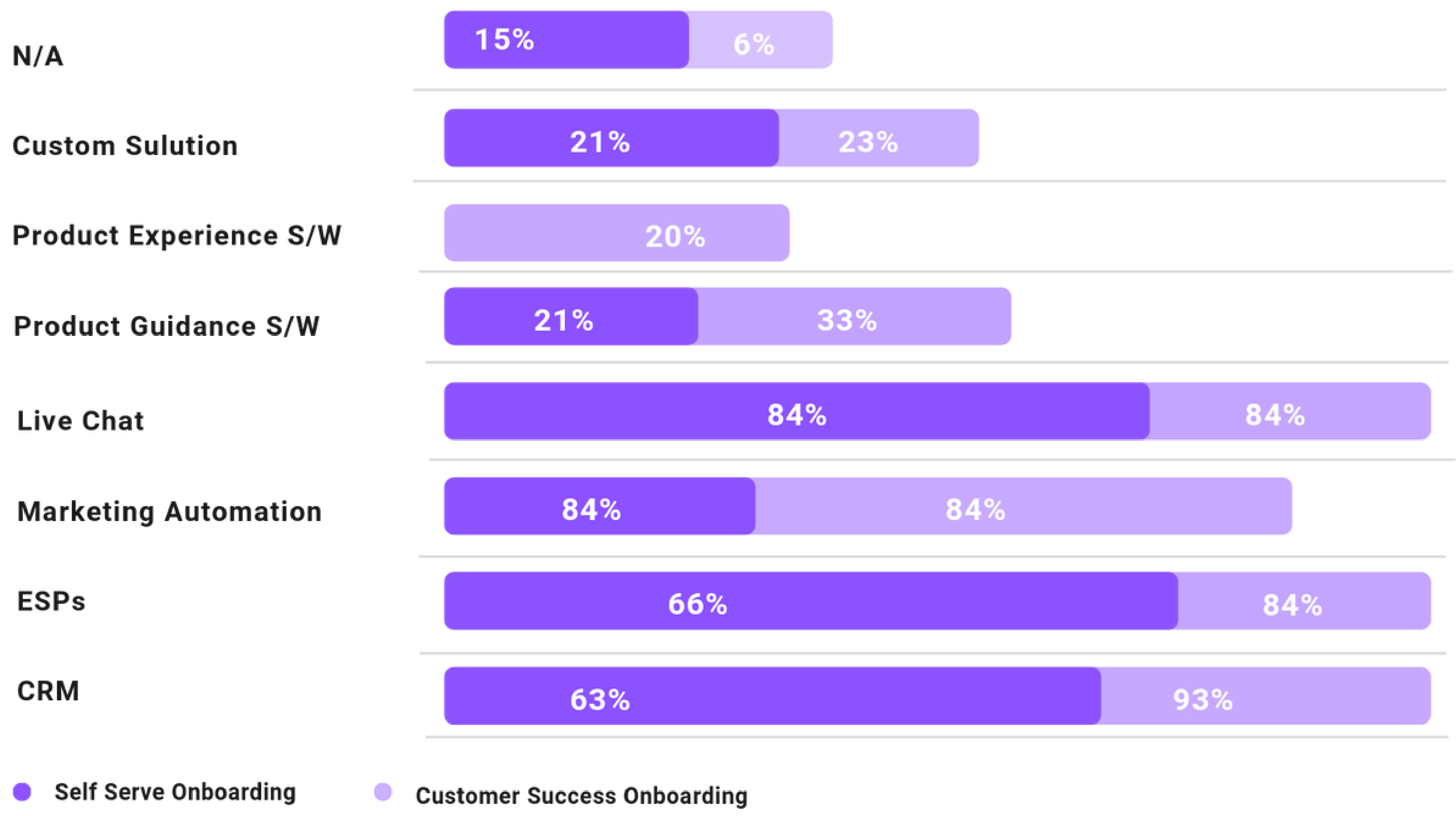
MARKETING METRICS

Marketing metrics still play a significant role when evaluating user behavior. Being out of the product activities, those evaluations don’t assess product behavior but acquisition practices.

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

The lack of product managers to adopt product usage KPIs to their full extent suggests that there is room for improvement when evaluating user behavior. Product performance and customer feedback in conjunction with product data analysis should be the top three priorities following product management decisions.

ONBOARDING TOOLSET



DATA ANALYSIS

SaaS organizations invest in software solutions related to customer engagement (Live- Chat s/w), Account Based Management (CRM), Email practices (ESPs) and Marketing Automation (MA)

Investment in solutions that go hand in hand with product experience evaluation (Product Experience Software) is 20% and realized only from Human Assisted adopters.

Qualitative data pinpoint organizations' investment (50%) in data enrichment and data storage solutions too.

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

CURRENT ANALYTICS PROGRAMS

The adopted services measure product analytics on multiple dimensions, such as feature or account/user-level measurements. If usage and UI instrumentation measurements do not supplement their analysis, they provide a short-sighted view of how user behavior is delivered.

ADVANCED ANALYTICS PROGRAMS

Organizations in favor of advanced analytics programs (20%), put together quantitative and qualitative measurements to derive the right insights. They invest in core product analytics and augment data by focusing equally on the breadth, depth, efficiency, and frequency of use.

Advanced Analytics Programs Characteristics

USER MAPPING

Advanced analytics programs can skew users' progress on the micro level and macro level whether or not an account is moving forward retention and expansion.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK CAPITALIZATION

By investing in product engagement actions customer feedback complements Sales or Customer Success activations.

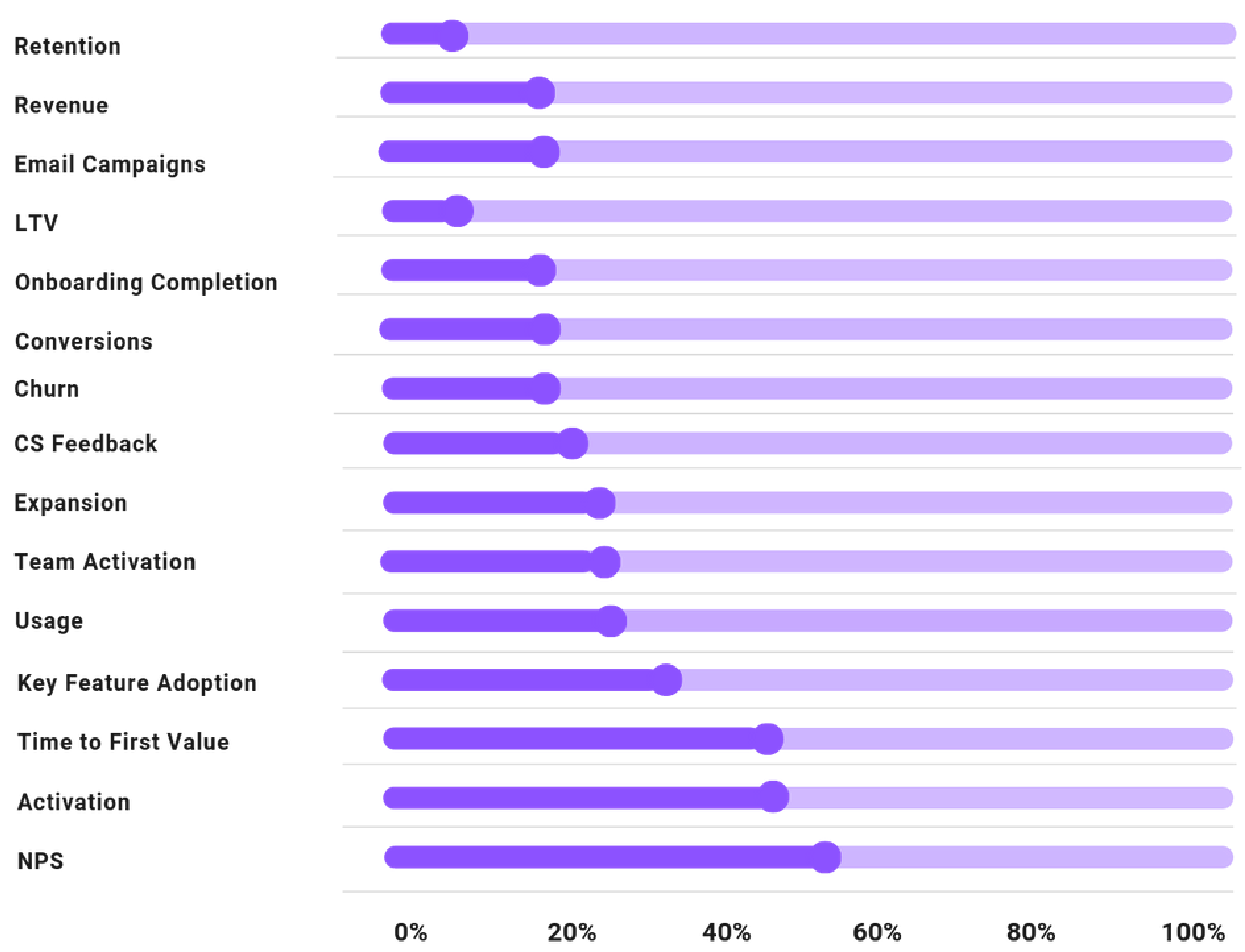
HEAVY EXPERIMENTATION

Experimentation delivers insights on users in-app behavior & enable organizations to experiment with product engagement practices.

ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

Customer Success Onboarding

PART ONE: CUSTOMER SUCCESS ONBOARDING KPIS



DATA ANALYSIS

- Top KPIs are NPS (50%), Activation (42%) ,Time to Initial Value (42%), Key Feature Adoption (33%), Usage (25%) and Team Activation (25%).
- Product measurements are critical, despite the limited involvement of Product Management (38%), due to the continuous monitoring of the customer journey from Customer Success.

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

CUSTOMER ADVOCACY

Customer advocacy (NPS) should consider additional usage metrics. In the opposite scenario acts as a lagging indicator and does not deliver objective measurements

BREADTH OF USE

Activation indicates how successfully users embark into products' value and should be measured via the lens of team activation (Breadth of use). While most participants attested to getting internal buy-in from end users as the number one challenge, Team Activation is considered important only by 25%.

RETENTION

Product engagement performance indicators are intrinsically related to Retention on Self Serve onboarding, but on Human Assisted, additional parameters are considered.

Being subject to Customer Success activations, Retention substitutes a KPI for 8% while Usage and Key Feature Adoption (Depth of Use) have a 33% and 25% of preference respectively.

EXPANSION

While Retention is neglected, its offspring, Expansion, is measured by 25%. Expansion is also subject to CS practices. Qualitative data reaffirm that consistency in meeting buyers needs, via one on one interactions, is the number one criterion leading to accounts’ long term prosperity.

HIGH TOUCH VS HIGH TECH

Despite the need to provide exceptional customer experience based on personal engagement, harmonization among the high touch techniques and high-tech techniques is essential.

Targeted in application training is not supposed to be used to replace one on one interactions. When used in conjunction with product data, it supplements Customer Success activations and allows CSMs to focus more on customers' needs. In addition, harmonization among practices reduces onboarding costs and increases adoption rates.

HIGH TOUCH VS. HIGH TECH USE CASES

USE CASE: PENDO

Pendo, the popular product experience software, is a living proof that this balance can be achieved. When new customers are onboarded, Customer Success sets up one-on-one calls and leverages the software's features to train users at the same time.

Being ingrained into product data analysis as an organization, the provided training at scale always considers the POE metrics to provide context behind users' usage. Those practices provide positive outcomes for Customer Success since its constituents have the luxury to focus on business objectives by dedicating only 25-30% airtime in application onboarding.

USE CASE: USERLANE

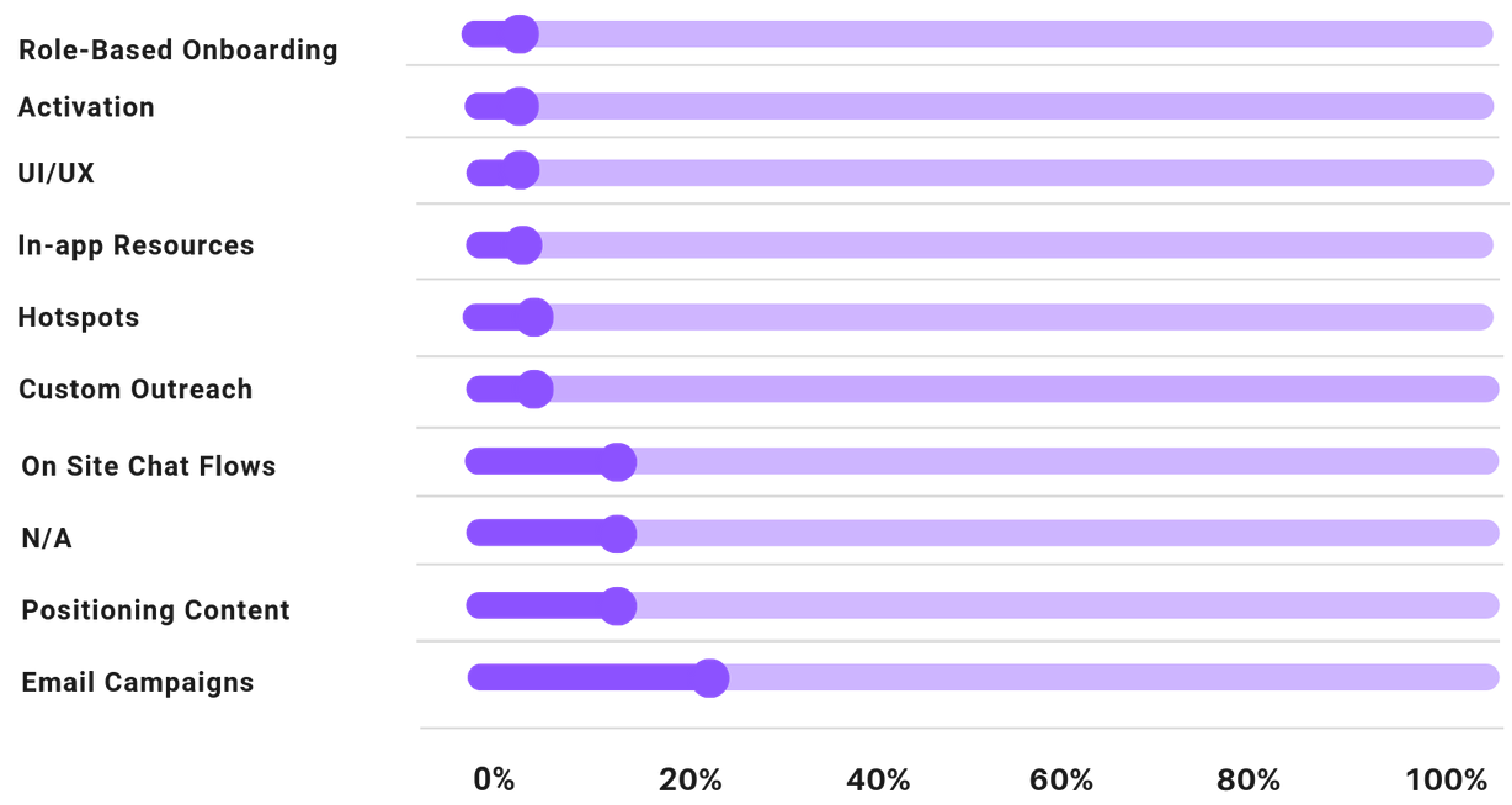
Userlane, the popular onboarding S/W , serving mostly enterprise customers launched a while ago an alternate asynchronous onboarding in addition to its Human Assisted strategy. The vendor uses the S/W own features to self serve end users all the way through without compromising the required decision making between the two parties.

The "Inception project" as it's known internally improved the delivery of the onboarding process and increased adoption (+48%). The implementation of targeted walkthroughs within the product allowed a thorough personalized, albeit automatic onboarding process that didn't require the active participation of different units. Additionally, time to initial value was decreased and after launch, buyers could go through the set up autonomously.

PART TWO: A/B FACTORS

The optimization of product engagement practices is a rather big discussion, but mostly an outcome of extensive experimentation. On Self-serve onboarding, where product engagement prevails, experimentation is perceived as a given.

On the flip side, when targeting Mid Market and Enterprise customers, customization is subsequent to any onboarding practice. The secret, in both cases, is disposing scalable practices cautiously by focussing on the context behind usage, always in conjunction with historical data analysis.



DATA ANALYSIS

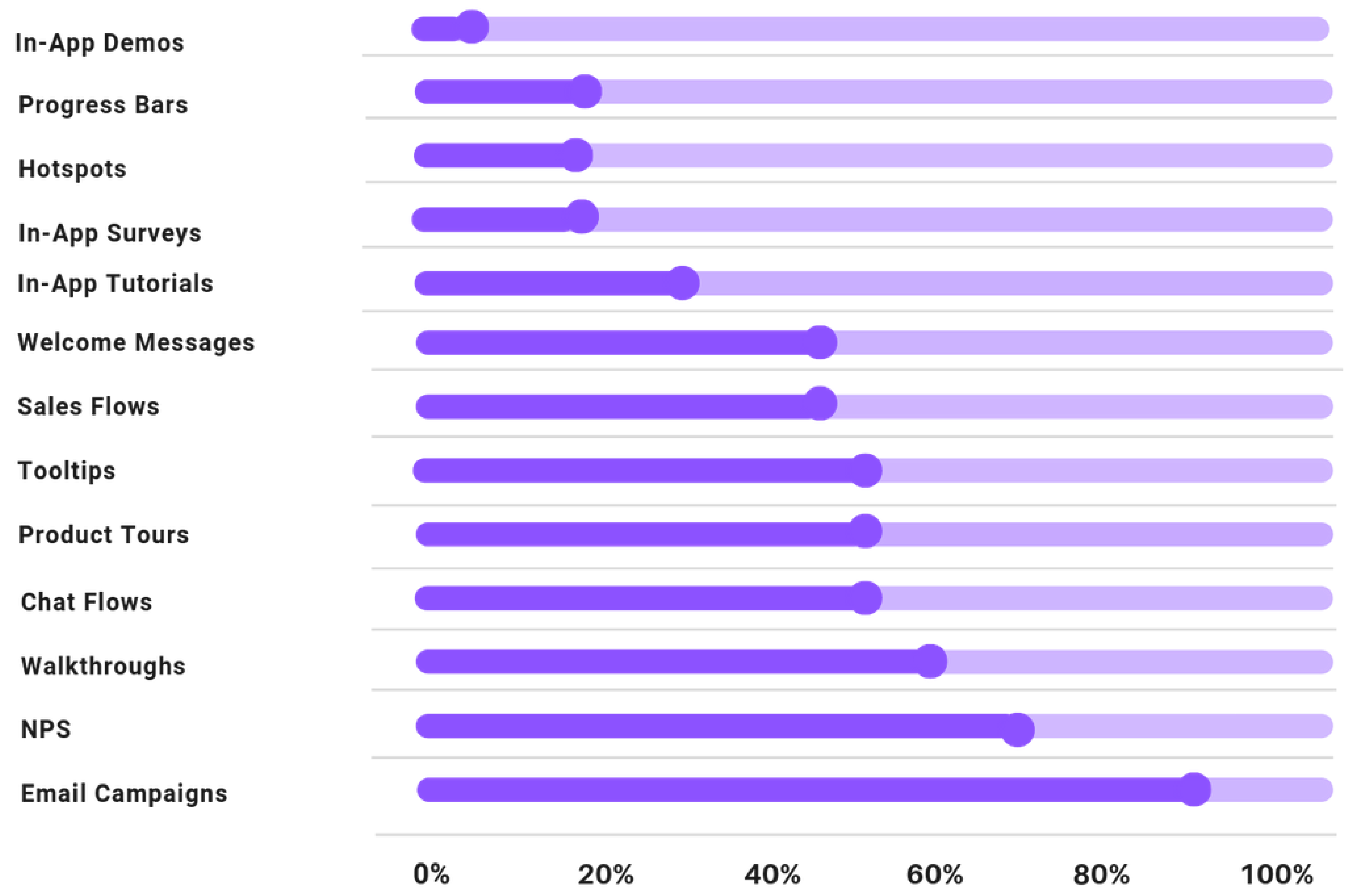
- 16% Does not experiment on any aspect of the onboarding strategy.

- Role-Based onboarding, Activation, UI/UX, Product Content optimization, Hotspots, and Sales Outreach have 8% preference.

ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

PART THREE: SCALABLE TACTICS

Moving forward to the scalable automation techniques



DATA ANALYSIS

- Email Marketing Campaigns, NPS, and Walkthroughs are top of mind with 73%, 66%, and 60% preference respectively.

- Product tours, Live Chat Flows, and Tooltips are preferred from half (53%) of the participants.

- Customer feedback (In-App Surveys 20%) and in-app training (In Product Tutorials 33%) are not among the top preferred tactics.

ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

ROLE BASED ONBOARDING

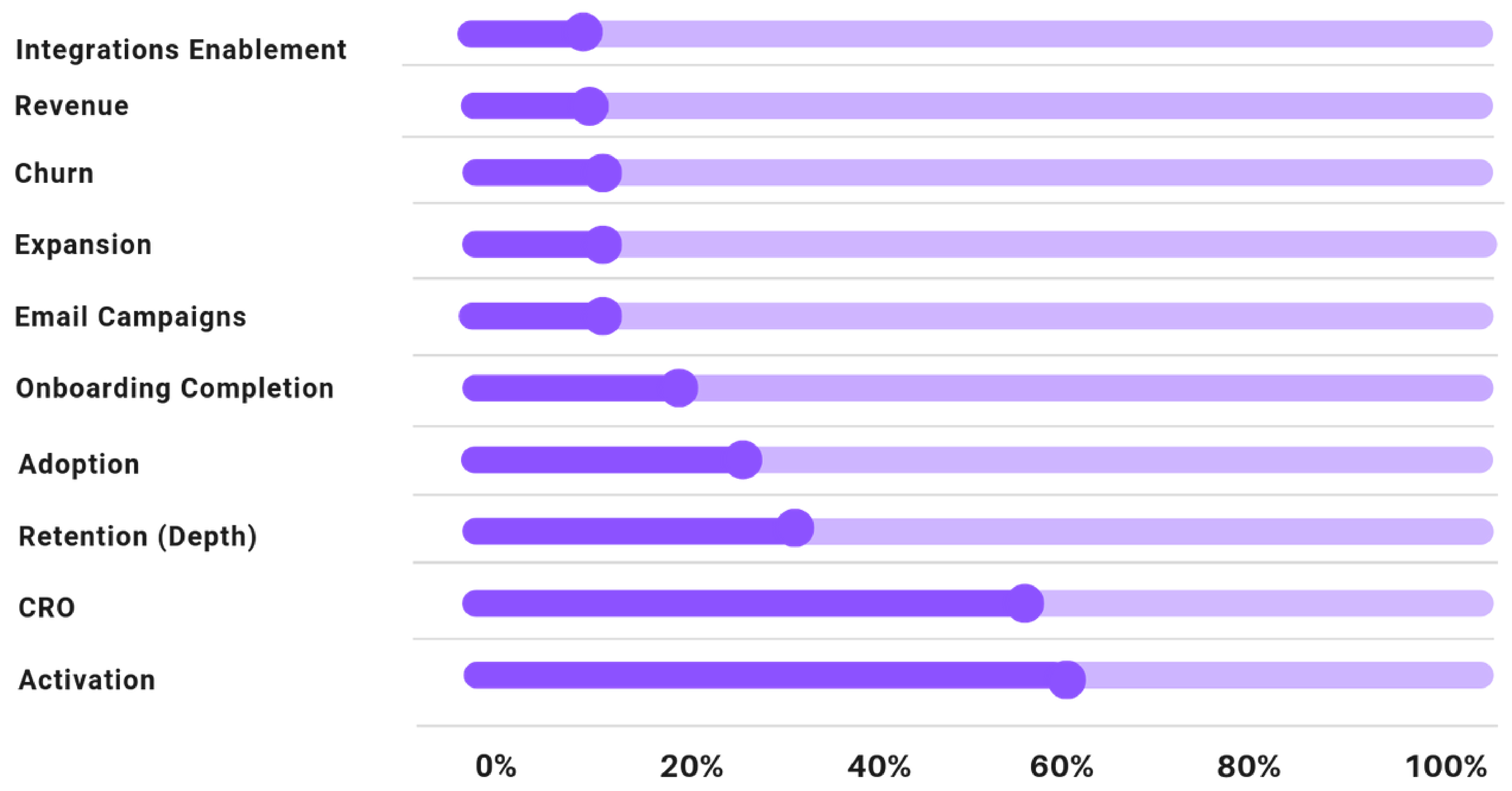
If we compare the A/B constituents versus the automation tactics, we realize that onboarding owners have multiple in-app engagement practices at hand. Limited investment on Role Based Onboarding (8%) indicates that in-app practices suggest a predispose route and don't consider the context behind usage.

BREADTH

Organizations in need to onboard hundreds of end users should optimize product experience by focusing on POEs metrics (e.g. Breadth) performance. In the opposite scenario, Sales and Customer Success will act as product champions who miss context behind users' behavior.

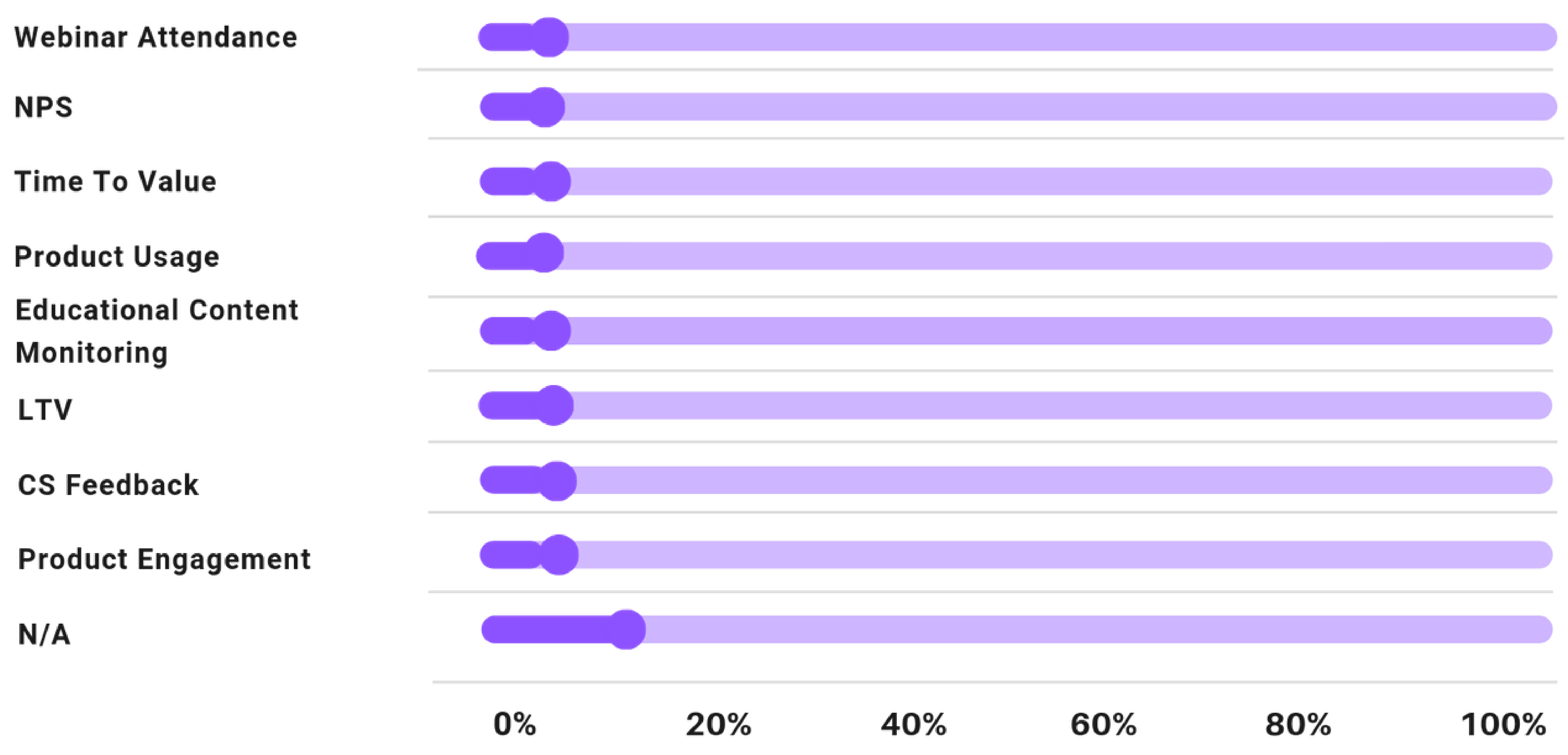
Self Serve Onboarding

PART ONE: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



DATA ANALYSIS

- Main onboarding KPIs constitute Activation (61%), CRO Techniques (57%) and Retention (33%).
- Retention, reliant to usage measurements, is an important indicator for a limited 33%. At the same time Expansion only for 14%.
- Activation (61%) is top of mind for most participants. But its constituents, Time to Initial Value and Team Activation, fall behind with 5% and 10% preference respectively.
- Increased preference in Activation and neglection of Retention and Expansion indicates that onboarding prevalence ends after the activation stage.



DATA ANALYSIS

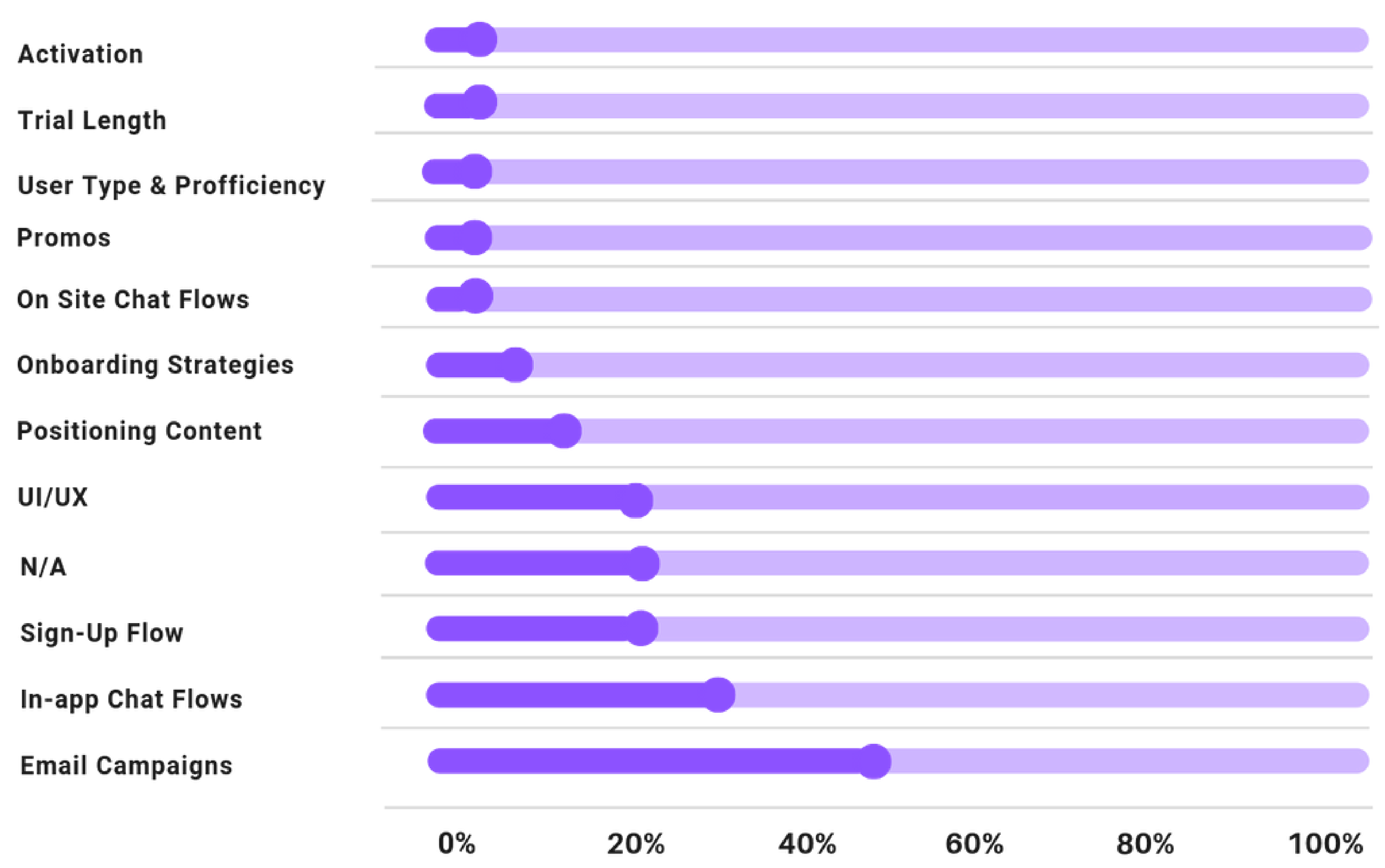
- CRO techniques are among the top three KPIs (51%), but LTV (5%) is neglected.

- 16% doesn't set any KPIs to track onboarding.

- NPS is among the least important KPIs (5%). Something implying that customer advocacy is not important when serving low trajectory customers.

- Product Management has increased involvement in the onboarding process (81%), but critical indicators like Product usage (5%), In-app engagement measurement (5%) and Educational Content Monitoring (5%), are neglected. The only exception to the rule is Feature Adoption (28%) which given the performance of product measurements, is not evaluated efficiently.

PART TWO: A/B FACTORS



DATA ANALYSIS

- Email practices (out of the app onboarding activations) take the lead with 47% preference, followed by In-App Chat Flows (33%), testing of the Sign-up experience (20%) and UI/UX practices (20%).

- CRO Techniques (57%) are vital for onboarding evaluations, but their constituent, Sign Up Experience, is optimized by 20% of the participants.

- Low levels of experimentation on Activation (5%) lead to the conclusion that acquisition practices (eg.Sign up experience) prevail.

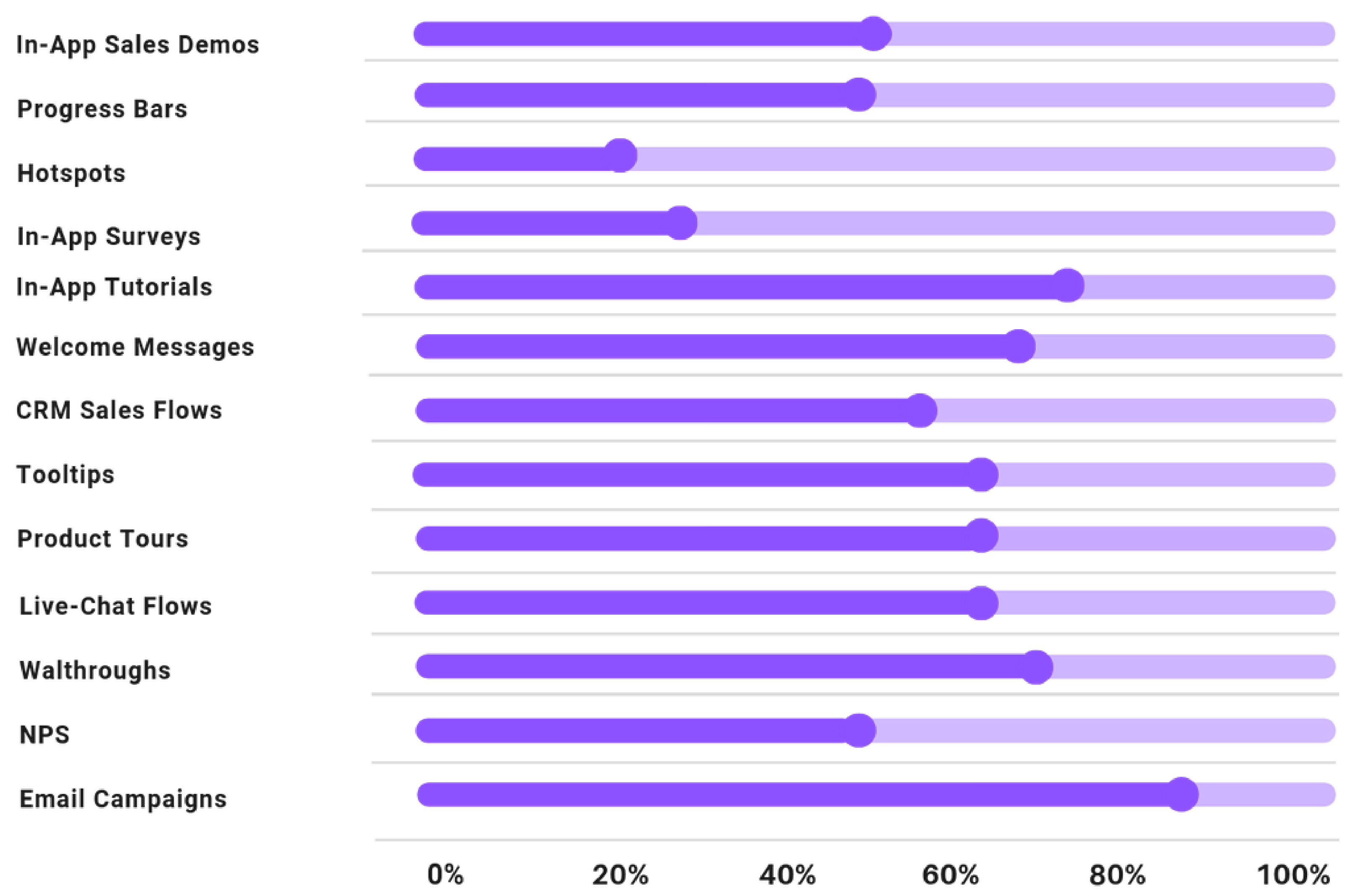
ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Increased preference on UI/UX experimentation (20%) in combination with decreased investment on User Type & Proficiency and Activation (5%) make the product experience subject to design practices.
- Speed to implement (Trial Length), the number one factor associated with Self Serve activation, has 5% preference.
- 20% of the participants do not test any aspect of their onboarding process.

PART THREE: SCALABLE TACTICS



DATA ANALYSIS

- Most preferred automation tactics are Email Campaigns (84%), In-App Tutorials, and Walkthroughs with 73% preference.
- Equally important are Live Chat Flows, Product Tours, and Tooltips with 70% preference.

PART FOUR: EXPERIMENTATION VS. SCALABILITY

The table below is a representation of the corresponding onboarding tactics for the top five A/B constituents:

From the top five experimentation constituents, we exclude Sign-up Experience since it falls under Marketing practices and is not reliant to in-app activations.

ONBOARDING BENCHMARKS

EXPERIMENTATION VS. SCALABILITY

A/B Factor	% Of Preference	Scalable Tactic	% Of Preference
Email Practices	47%	Email Campaigns	84%
In-App Chat Flows	33%	CRM Flows In-App Tutorials Live Chat Flows Welcome Messages In-app Sales Demos	57% 73% 68% 68% 57%
Sing-Up Experience	20%	N/A	N/A
UI/UX	20%	In-App Surveys	36%
Content	14%	Email Campaigns Live Chat Flows CRM Flows In-App Tutorials Welcome Messages	84% 68% 57% 73% 68%

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Content affects many scalable practices but is optimized by a limited 14%.
- Despite Email Campaigns prevalence (84%) only 47%of the participants iterate them constantly.
- In-App Tutorials (73%), Live Chat Flows (68%), Welcome Messages (68%) & In-App Sales Demos (57%) have high preference but are iterated by 33%.
- Limited investment on User Type & Proficiency (5%) experimentation implies that in-app. messages are thrown randomly in front of users and neglect context of usage.

Displaying messages to users indicates a predisposed route and that the learning curve, role, or proficiency levels are overlooked. Only product data analysis and historic usage indicate efficiently where and why product engagement practices should exist.
This investment does not imply displacing tooltips or product guides for the sake of experimentation.

Any product engagement iteration, should follow usage and executed when the onboarding team can validate the why behind that change.

Random displacements lead to confusion and friction while keeping conversions and retention rates low.

Product-Led Activation

PRODUCT-LED ACTIVATION

Part One: Self Serve Activation

Crowned as the onboarding queen, activation is the set of practices leading to first impressions. Being the lifeblood of new business, on Human Assisted onboarding activation is subject to the Sales organization activities. Prospects taste a solution's magic via a series of demos, likely to be followed by a POC (Proof of concept) or "controlled" trial. The involvement of human element guarantees that buyers are fully aware of a product's capabilities.

On Self Serve onboarding, the product is accountable for sealing the deal. In reality, regardless of the execution, activation is the acquisition grasp derived from the product itself.

Being a considerably faster process, the "ideal" activation formula delivers value to trialists, who ideally return to the product and eventually create a habit out of it.

In an effort to increase conversion rates, internal teams strive to shorten trial periods and create a sense of urgency. Speed to implement always needs to come first. In reality, this may not always be the case as products' complexity, radically affects the learning curve period.

A multifunctional solution like Hubspot, the Inbound marketing leader, cannot fully onboard its freemium users in two weeks time. As intimidating factor the learning curve period can be, users familiarize with the product by following their own pace.

On the other hand, Leadfeeder and Yesware, two overly simpler solutions, successfully shortened the trial period from 30 down to 14 days and increased conversion rates by 18% and 5% respectively.

In addition, it is essential the use case, role, and proficiency level to be defined early on. The internal teams acknowledge that and invest in behavioral aspects when delivering the onboarding strategy. The JTBD framework, with 50% preference from survey participants, helps distinguish the use case a prospect falls under.

Data-driven contextual guidance can now embrace this framework's results by defining proficiency early on and deliver initial value per user role.

Activation on Self Serve means fast and accurate results, and this is viable when onboarding is laser-focused on the value each user has to derive.

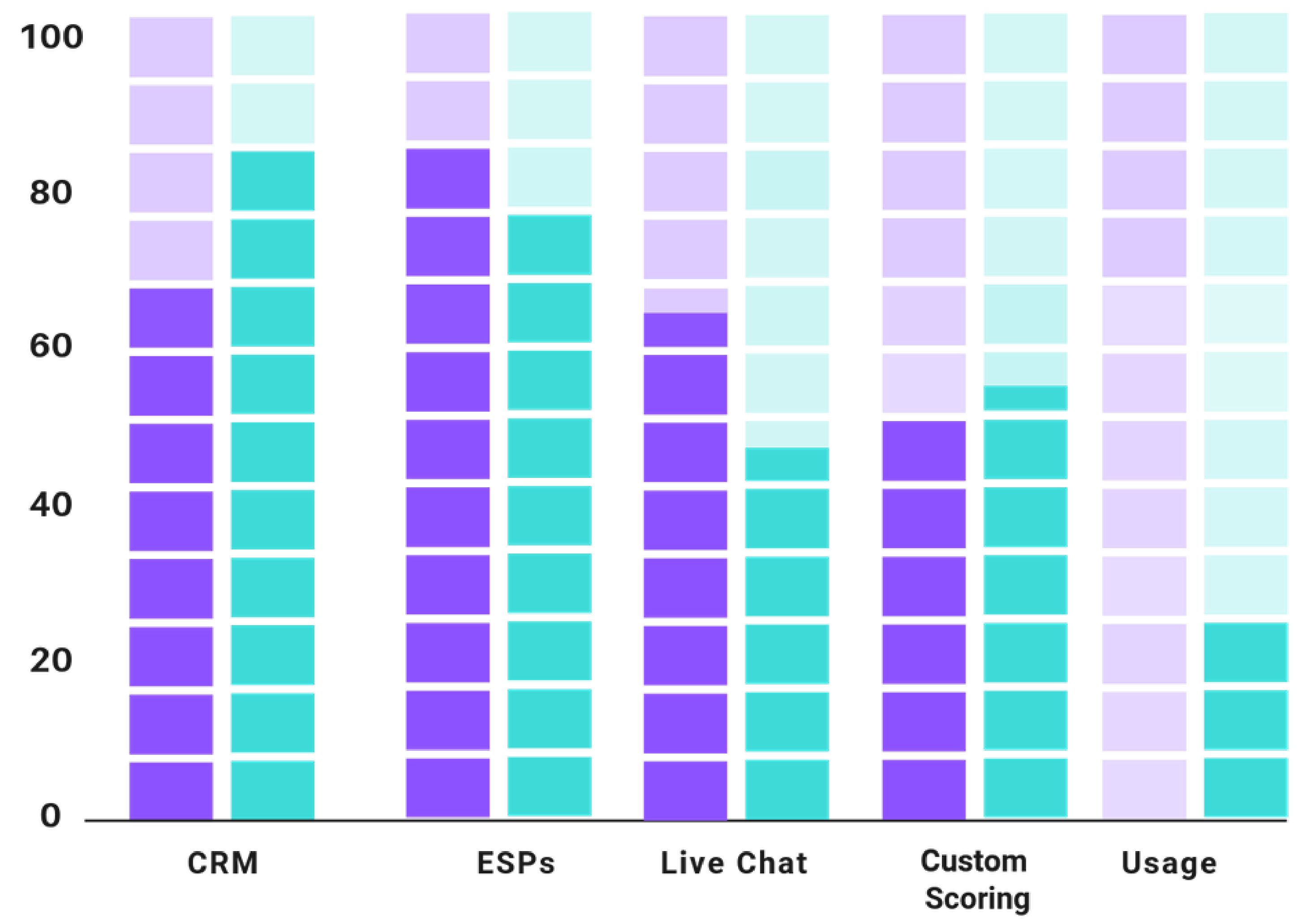
Part Two: User Segmentation

- Outreach optimization is the number one priority for every organization as the Sales' organization involvement leads to tremendous CAC (Customer Acquisition Cost) increase. While this association may resonate for companies serving Mid Market and Enterprise, Sales' involvement on Self Serve onboarding (40%) suggests otherwise. The customer experience gap, caused by lack of personalization and involvement of customer-facing teams, is a hassle faced by every organization

- Qualitative data (50%) indicate that the Sales organization relies heavily on data enrichment services, data storage & lead scoring tools, identifying where an account is assigned along with its industry and size.

PRODUCT-LED ACTIVATION

USER SEGMENTATION TACTICS

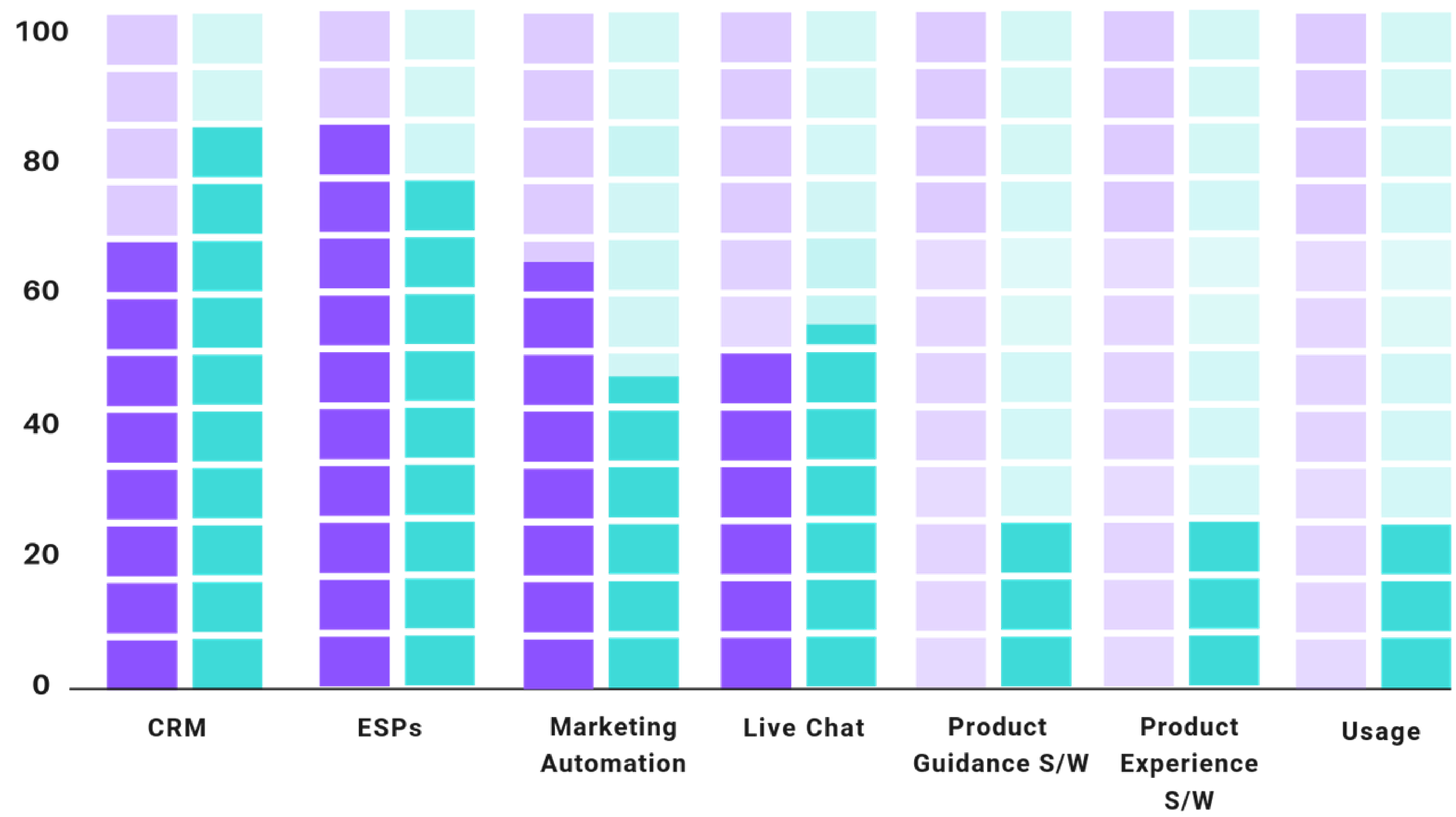


Self Serve Onboarding   Customer Success Onboarding

DATA ANALYSIS

- Additional segmentation tactics are related with capitalization on CRM (80%), Email (82%) and Live Chat practices (55%) or the use of a Custom Scoring System (49%).
- Only 20% of organizations in favor of Human Assisted onboarding, segment users based on product usage.
- Since PLQ Scoring evaluations are considered by 35% of the participants, we can conclude that some of the Custom Scoring Systems may evaluate usage as well.

USER SEGMENTATION TOOLSET



Self Serve Onboarding   Customer Success Onboarding

*See info: Who owns onboarding

PRODUCT-LED ACTIVATION

DATA ANALYSIS

- Top user segmentation solutions are CRM (80%) and Customer Engagement software (69%).
- Email Platforms and Marketing Automation software follow with 65% and 51% mean preference.
- Product management services are those least preferred:

a) Product Guidance services are adopted by 26% and 21% on Human Assisted and Self Serve onboarding respectively.

b) Product Experience Platforms are used by 20% on Human Assisted onboarding and 5% on Self Serve.

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

CUSTOM SCORING TECHNIQUES

Increased preference for Custom Scoring techniques (50%) show reliance on engineering resources to extract the necessary data. This realization is reimbursed by the user segmentation services participants employ.

The exploitation of engineering resources is a secure way to derive necessary product data but not scalable long term. Organizations have tradeoffs as to where engineering resources should be allocated and the continuous product releases lean the scale many times towards product development.

Timely access and reliance on product analytics should accompany ongoing releases, to help internal teams effectively map users' actions.

SALES & PRODUCT TEAM ALIGNMENT

In order for Sales representatives to establish PQL segmentation patterns, it is critical to work in conjunction with the product team. This feedback loop will enable both teams to discover trends indicating why an account showing signs of serious usage becomes dormant or where additional assistance to users should be provided.

Acknowledging the reason behind the various drop offs gives a competitive advantage to Sales reps as they can proactively reach out to prospects with a solution at hand. In the long term, exploitation of historical data will indicate specific trends based on product behavioral insights.

SEGMENTATION TACTICS

The majority of segmentation tactics offer high-level data for prospects' nature and behavior notions but don't provide feedback as to where the customer journey's delights or bottlenecks stand.

To balance its involvement in the customer journey, the Sales organization should set standards following PQLs behavior. Capitalization on product data enables adoption of in-app segmentation criteria, and acknowledgment of the route users follow. Usage segmentation draws better results in regards to which features yield more revenue.

PRODUCT-LED ACTIVATION

USE CASE GAINSIGHT PX

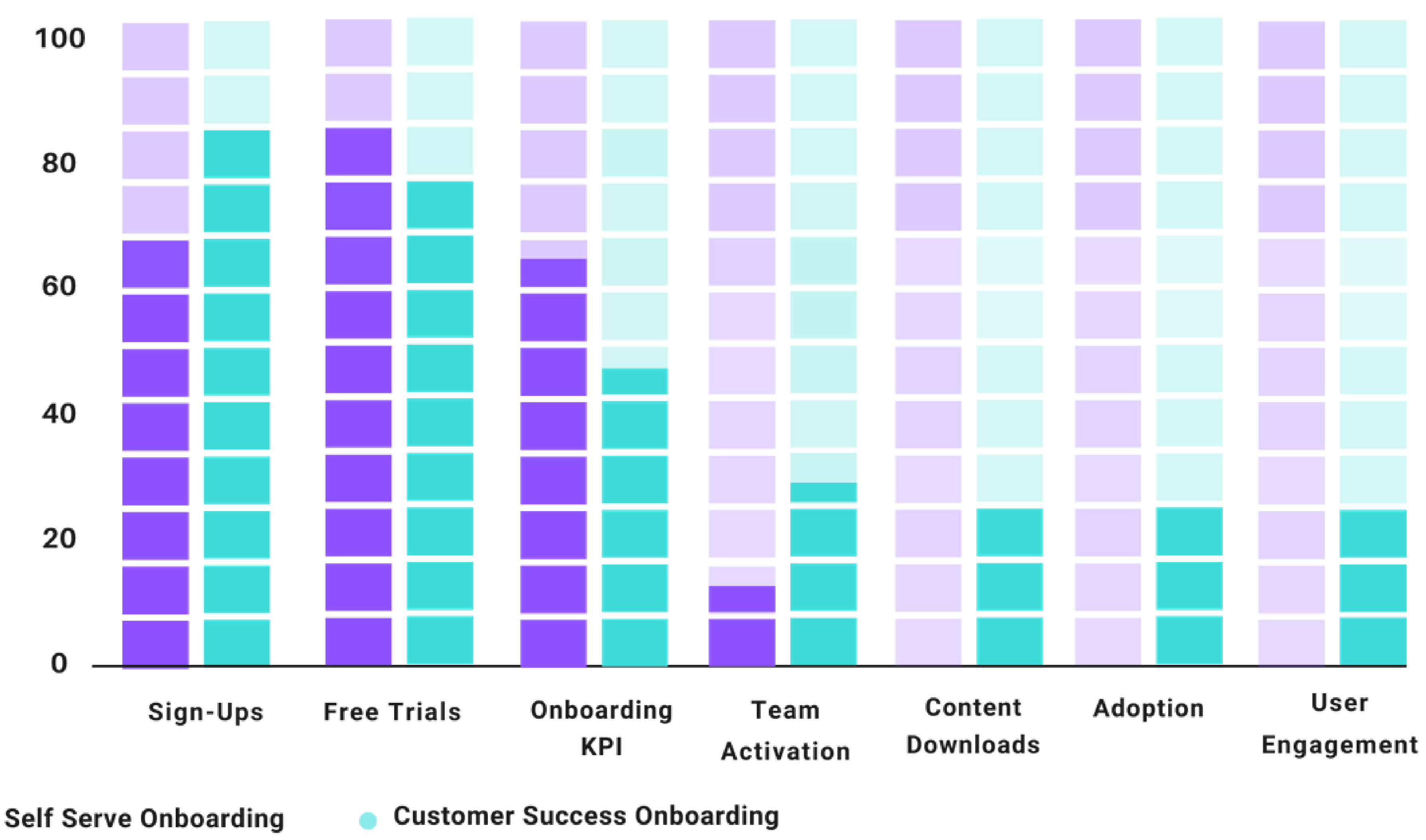
Gainsight PX, a leading product experience solution, segment users' behavior, and usage both during the first-time activation and on new feature release.

On first time activation, milestones track if PQLs complete setup by using key features during trial. When prospects use features more than the freemium version allows them to, internal teams measure conversion rates and revenue generated from the trial source.

On new product release, success is measured in terms of adoption. The product team releases targeted in-app guides to users based on historical product usage. The Query Builder feature, for example, is presented to users who have shown interest in other analytics areas the past 30 days. If the released feature is a paid only module, the revenue is measured by attaching a rate on it.

PART THREE: ACTIVATION KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

ACTIVATION KPIS



DATA ANALYSIS

- Sign Ups (Marketing metric) has 66% and 94% preference on Human Assisted and Self Serve, respectively.
- Free Trials prevail among both strategies with 66% preference on Human Assisted and 84% on Self Serve.
- Activation serves as onboarding KPI both for Human Assisted (42%) and Self Serve (61%).
- Team Activation ranks higher on Human Assisted onboarding (25%), while on Self Serve is limited to 10%. These stats complement those showing a limited tendency to onboard both teams and sole users with 11% and 33%, on Self Serve and Human Assisted adopters respectively.
- Feature adoption (Depth of Use) and User Engagement is considered an activation criterion by 13% of Human Assisted adopters.

PRODUCT-LED ACTIVATION

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

SIGN UP RATIO

Sign up ratio is a critical measurement, but when standing alone acts as a trailing indicator, emphasizing on acquisition and not activation. Sing up ratio should be considered in conjunction with feature adoption and user engagement to estimate if those users qualify as PQLs.

FREE TRIALS RATIO

Increased preference on Free Trials Ratio (66%), when targeting high trajectory customers, shows an inclination to abandon traditional sales practices.

TEAM ACTIVATION

Paramount to retention, Team Activation (Breadth of usage) should become the North Star Metric for every activation strategy.

TEAM ACTIVATION (BREADTH OF USE) ANALYSIS

To justify the importance of monitoring **Breadth of use** (Team activation) in the early stages of the customer journey, a joint analysis of its importance and of POE's execution during the activation stage will follow:

HIGH TRAJECTORY CUSTOMERS

For Mid Market and Enterprise customer segments, internal buy-in from end users is discouraging onboarding deployment. Heterogeneity on proficiency levels and complicated workflows decrease end users' willingness to adopt a new solution.

Focusing on Team Onboarding (Breadth of Use), historical usage and use case particularities, is an optimal way forward, internal teams can take to overcome this barrier.

SELF SERVE CUSTOMERS

Having Self Serve customers inviting team members during trial embrace activation rates. In the absence of Sales and Customer Success guidance, in-app flows can double down on inviting team members and emphasize on how their involvement increases perceived value. Product teams should define which roles may cause various drop-offs on their first-week activation cohorts and iterate flows accordingly. Last, training procedures need an equally concerted focus on the training of each user separately and team training.

PRODUCT ONBOARDING EFFICIENCY (POE)

Activation stage (Indicative)

Product-Led Growth Metric	Assessment	Considerations	Departments Involved
Breadth	• No of team members entering the solution	• How many team members entered the solution? • Which users did not login?	• Sales
Efficiency	• No of users reaching initial value	• Does the flow encourage team activation? • Are tailored flows leading to product delights? If not why?	• Sales • Product
Frequency	• How often users login into the s/w	• Are features sticky? • Are onboarding flows creating a habit early on?	• Sales • Product
Depth	• Features explored during trial	• No of key features explored within trial. • What characteristics follow users exploring key features?	• Sales • Product

PRODUCT-LED ACTIVATION

PRODUCT-LED KEY TAKEAWAYS

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

The product team should be highly involved in the activation process, no matter the onboarding strategy at hand.

SALES ORGANIZATION

The sooner Sales' decode the messages withheld into product data the better the conclusions drawn, in regards to the harmonization of human-product acquisition activations.

DEPTH OF USE

Depth of use has some variables to consider:

1) Whether or not during activation period users can realize initial and true value. This is most likely to occur on high-velocity customers where onboarding in many departments takes place post-purchase.

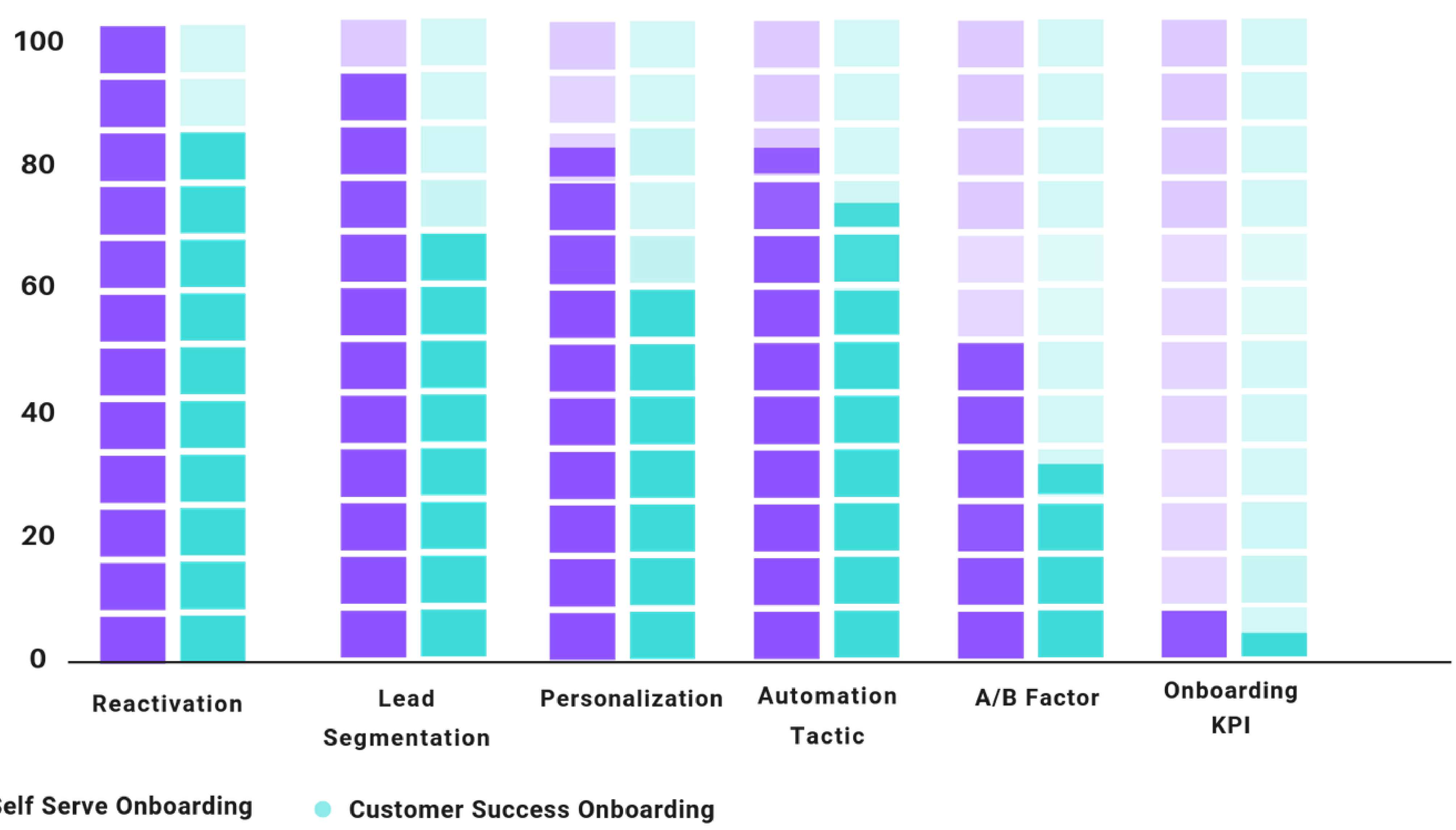
2) Users' proficiency levels need to be defined early on. An advanced user may explore more key features during trial, but this is also subject to a product's complexity.

3) On Self Serve onboarding, Retention initiation point varies. Thus Depth of Use may not be measured on Activation (during trial) but only post-purchase.

PART FOUR: EMAIL PRACTICES

- Activation is also subject to email practices (out of the product activations).
- Email activations classify as top reactivation tactic with 100% and 87% preference on Self Serve and Human Assisted respectively.
- Organizations segment prospects based on characteristics following their email campaigns. This reflects on both strategies with 90% preference on Self Serve and 73% on Human Assisted.

ONBOARDING FLOWS KPIS



PRODUCT-LED ACTIVATION

DATA ANALYSIS

- A/B FACTOR: mail practices are under the microscope, in an effort to make prospects activate efficiently. This is mostly true on Self Serve (47%) and not Human Assisted (25%) onboarding.
- SCALABILITY: Email activations rank as top automation tactic with 84% on Self Serve and 73% on Human Assisted onboarding.
- PERSONALIZATION TACTIC: The multivariate email campaigns introduce features gradually, connect prospects with Support, Sales or Customer Success and are considered a personalization tactic both for Self Serve (84%) and Human Assisted (60%) onboarding.
- Emphasis on behavioral notions by capitalizing the JTBD framework
- Making users commit, by providing WOW moments
- Use of email data to personalize flows, realize upsells and onboard users in a touchless way.
- Campaigns used in conjunction with product engagement practices, to monitor and increase adoption rates
- Time-based drip campaigns centered around targeted activation goals indicative of product stickiness.
- Use of dynamic email content.
- Human Assisted adopters (44%), rely on Customer Success intervention if email campaigns don't yield the desired results.
- Being the only scalable way to set up and reactivate users without increasing CAC, Self Serve adopters rely exclusively on email flows' effectiveness. Copy, timing, and extensive segmentation, are the main characteristics of any flow.
- Users' distraction or lack of investment to exploit a solution's capabilities is the No1 hassle following onboarding email flows.

PRODUCT-LED KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO ENTRY

To optimize email activations, SaaS organizations can eliminate barriers to entry, by having sign ups follow rather than lead the activation process.

REACTIVATE USERS IN APP

Customer facing teams can prevent users from slipping away. Ideally, internal teams should first monitor users based on their role, profession, or any other vital to adoption criterion. Then in conjunction with historic usage analysis they can indicate when users may lose interest and why.

In case users start showing lower usage and before long term churn prevails, in-app guides can prompt users to further capitalize on key features. Pendo, Gainsight PX, and Userlane perform such practices with tremendous success.

USE CASE TYPEFORM

On a recent experiment Typeform, the leading research software, opened its platform and prospects could build a form without signing up. Despite a 20% drop in registered accounts, users that eventually registered activated much better.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the first part of this report, we had the opportunity to discuss fundamental KPIs characterizing current onboarding practices. The Product-Led turn organizations take, alter their internal and customer-facing procedures radically.

Although the transition is the one way forward all organizations have to take, the SaaS industry has still miles to walk until its practices are homogenized and stabilized. The following recommendations, sum up the learnings derived from this paper and can be used by product leaders, success practitioners, sales advocates, and SaaS founders to align their teams to a Product-Led agenda.

CONSIDER ONBOARDING PREVALENCE

Product Led practices redefine Onboarding. Instead of being a set of random actions causing friction, onboarding becomes a set of data-driven product engagement practices, based on behavioral notions and users' proficiency. The exploitation of historic data, along with contextual guidance, constitute its main pillars.

Being able to be measured on every step of the customer journey, onboarding abandons the traditional sales model archetype ending its prevalence during activation. Organizations need to shift their mindset and track onboarding ROI during Activation, Retention, and Expansion.

EMPLOY A UNIFIED AGENDA

Silos abandonment, will be realized when internal teams deploy a unified agenda. Product Led practices and data analysis bring Product Management at the forefront and make its role critical on every step of the customer journey.

Product data insights, however, are not limited to Product Management activations. They need to be dispersed across Sales, Customer Success and rest customer-facing teams which need real-time insights about users' behavior.

An internal feedback loop mechanism needs to be established and sustain alignment across and within departments.

REDEFINE ONBOARDING METRICS

Onboarding is continuous, and its measurements should follow the same logic. Capitalization of POEs metrics (Breadth, Depth, Efficiency & Frequency of Use) constitute a foundation Product- Led organizations already use to estimate Onboarding ROI. Those metrics enable teams to establish in-app user segmentation criteria and derive insights via onboarding activations. Now organizations can measure which features yield more revenue, underperform, or not exploited at all.

Alignment of teams around the same onboarding KPIs, followed by business metrics, is paramount to business goals' evaluations and internal harmonization.

In addition, the particularities following each strategy should always be considered:

A) HUMAN ASSISTED ONBOARDING

1) Sales and Customer Success interactions with buyers should focus on strategic decisions going forward. In application, onboarding should not prevail but complement them. To achieve that organizations need to invest in product engagement activations at scale that consider context of usage and end users' characteristics.

2) Disposal of human resources should become proactive and not reactive to customers' needs. Usage analysis and dispersion of its insights across and within teams is one way forward organizations can take to optimize acquisition and retention costs.

B) SELF SERVE ONBOARDING

1) Self Serve activations should double down on Team Onboarding from the very beginning. Internal teams should follow these notions to predict retention and evaluate internal buy in.

2) Time to implement should be considered in conjunction with the learning curve period. The latter can be optimized by having product engagement activations laser focused on users' goals, type and proficiency. Product data analysis and historic usage should indicate where and why product engagement practices should take place.

ESTABLISH USER BEHAVIOR METRICS

Emerging product metrics may seem to redefine customer satisfaction evaluations, but business & marketing metrics still prevail. Organizations should consider product activations effectiveness when striving to evaluate user behavior.

Only, product performance and customer feedback in conjunction with product data analysis can evaluate user experience. In addition, in-depth knowledge of users' existing workflow helps to establish context behind their behavior.

REVISIT THE ONBOARDING TOOLSET

Organizations need to revisit their toolset and reassure; it enables them to capitalize on product data and customer feedback analysis. Feature or account/user-level measurements do not derive all necessary estimations regarding in-app behavior.

In addition, exploitation of engineering teams provide insights on past user behavior. Product teams need to acknowledge in real time the bottlenecks discouraging adoption. This is the only way to optimize onboarding flows accordingly and evaluate accounts' status.

CAPITALIZE ON PRODUCT ENGAGEMENT EXPERIMENTATION

Heavy experimentation should follow onboarding activations, to balance context with users' progressive route to excellence.

1) In regards to Human Assisted onboarding it will guarantee the internal buy-in from thousands of end users. At the same time, data capitalization, allows in-app education activations to be measured end to end.

2) Tailored experiences are also critical to Self Serve activations' success, as they replicate Sales and Customer Success interactions. Iterating email activations, to bring users back in app is not enough. Experimentation levers should consider product engagement activations too.

These are, only indicative suggestions to consider. The micro view of any onboarding strategy may be the optimization of every customer touchpoint, but the big picture is far greater. It is interrelated with successful synchronization within and across departments upon product delivery. It abandons vanity metrics and focuses on the value products' derive.

The investment in product data and the development of associated metrics is only the beginning. In a few years from now, data analysts will deliver multiple forecasts and growth scenarios having as sole denominator historic product data.

The SaaS industry may have disrupted the digital economy by capitalizing on a business model every organization will step on eventually, but in the end, it will introduce something far greater. A way to deliver a better service paramount to the ongoing monitoring of customer behavior.

Product Led Hub

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