

 UserTesting
The background of the entire page is a blurred office scene with several people working at computers. A large, diagonal split in the background separates a blue-tinted upper section from a magenta-tinted lower section. The text is overlaid on the magenta section.

2017

UX AND USER RESEARCH INDUSTRY SURVEY REPORT

Our 4th annual industry survey.

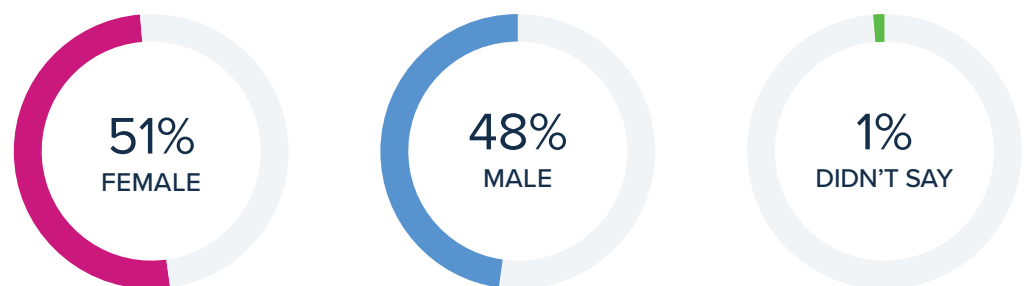
The fields of user experience and user research have taken a new shape over the past few years. No longer relegated to a few lone champions in any given organization, the user experience has become the concern of everyone from product designers to senior executives.

In today's highly competitive market, customers have come to expect excellent experiences from digital products, and companies that aren't delivering can quickly become irrelevant. Organizations are racing to understand their customers' behavior and attitudes so they can meet their needs and earn their business. Because of growing customer expectations and increased pressure from competitors, organizations are starting to invest in user research early and often throughout development and beyond.

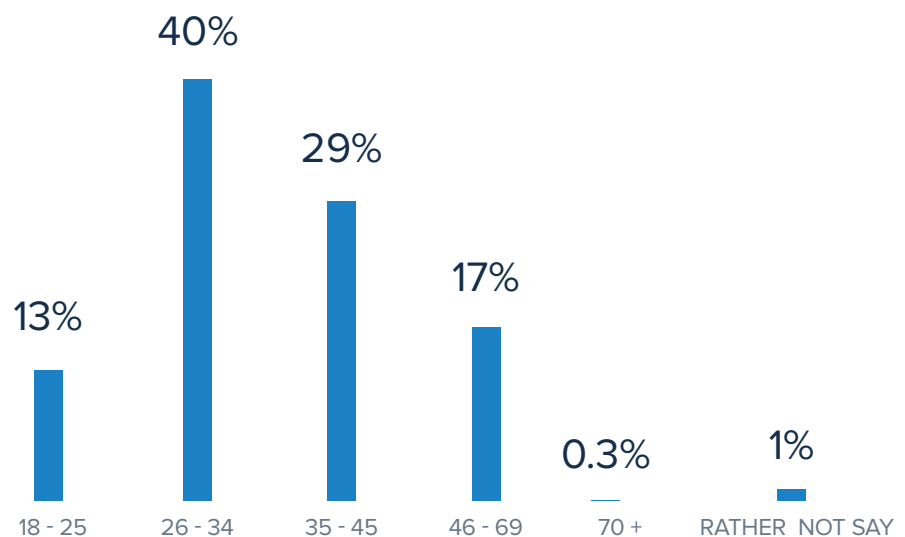
In this fourth annual UX and User Research Industry Survey, we asked 2,238 professionals across a wide variety of industries how their organizations are approaching user experience and conducting user research.

Here are the responses and key insights from this year's survey.

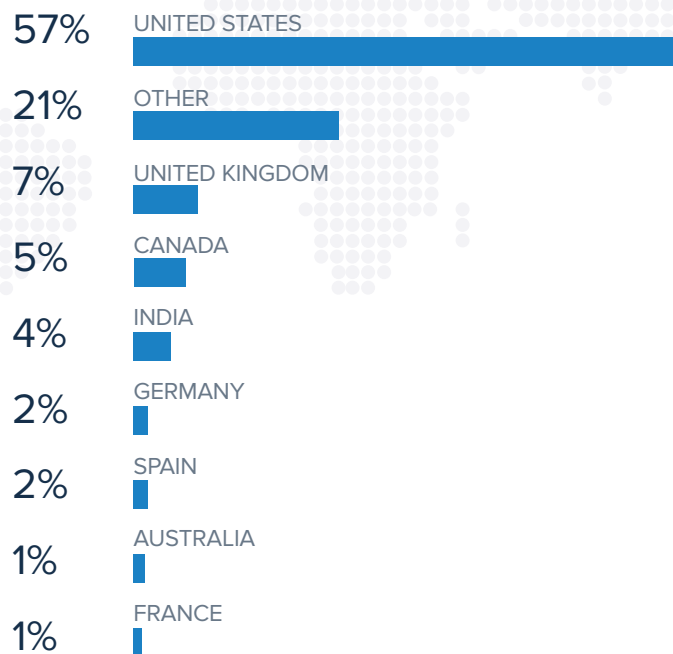
1. What is your gender?



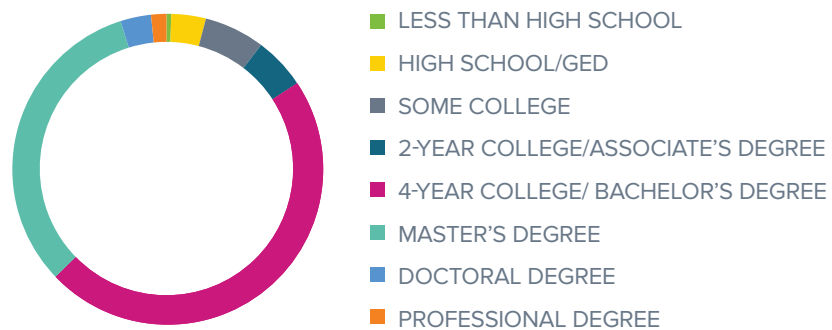
2. What is your age?



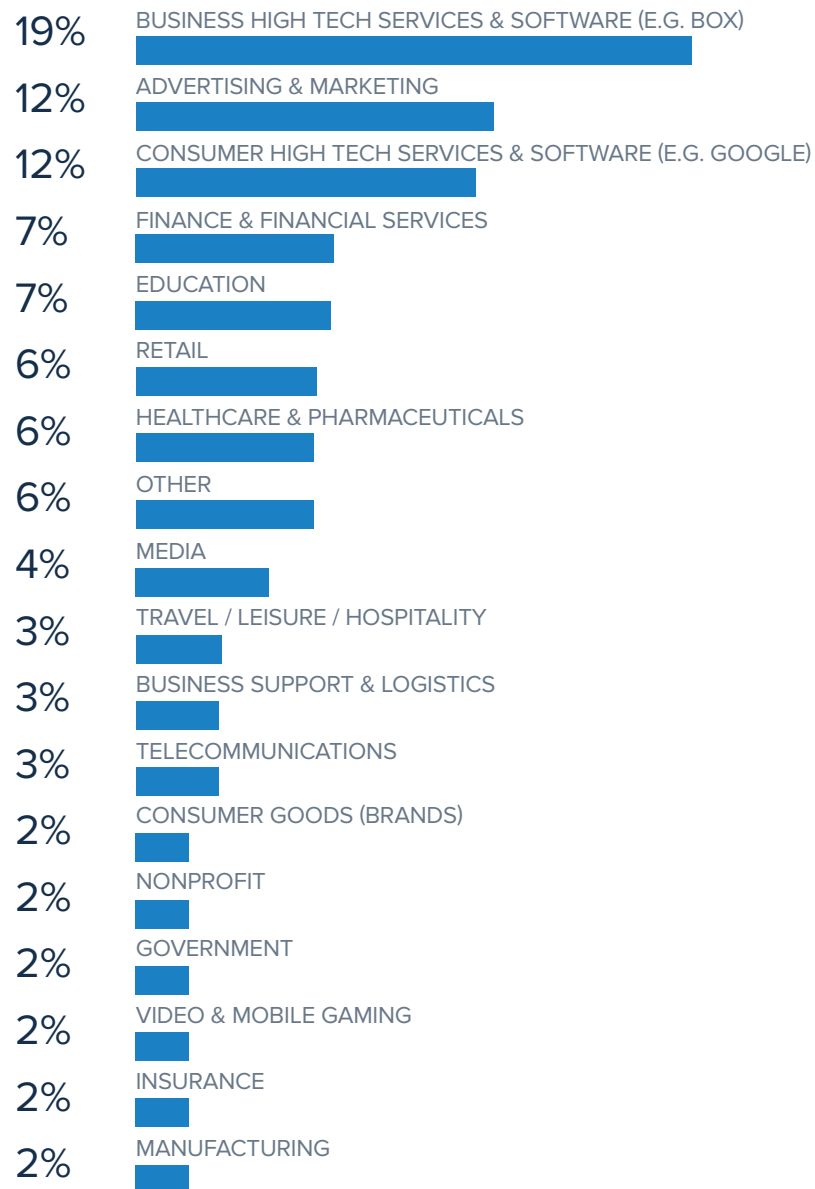
3. What is your country of residence?



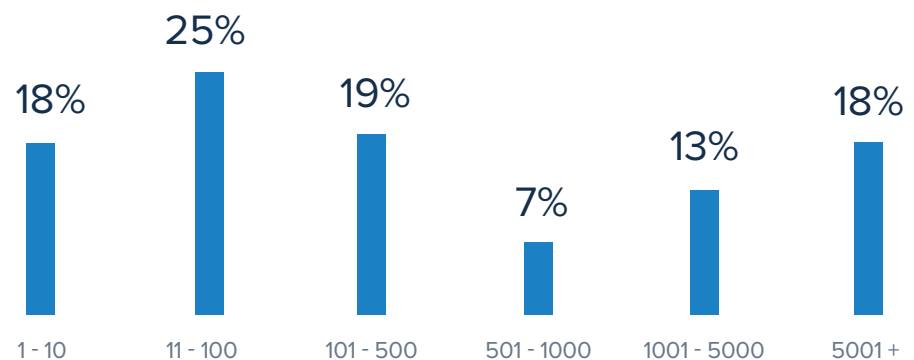
4. What's the highest level of education you've achieved?



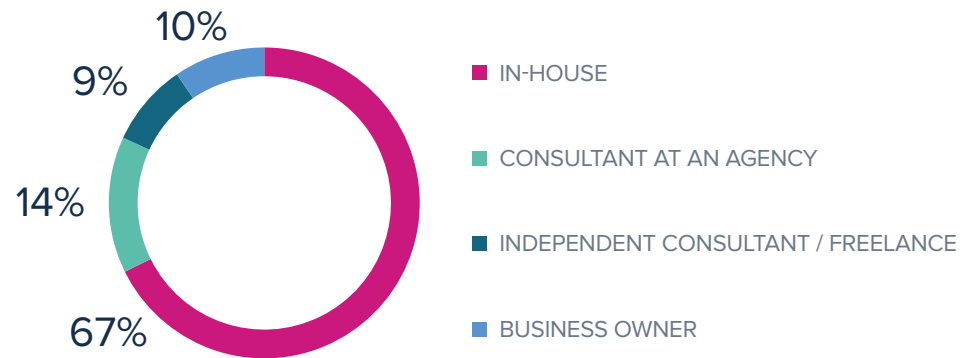
5. Which of the following best describes the principal industry of your organization?



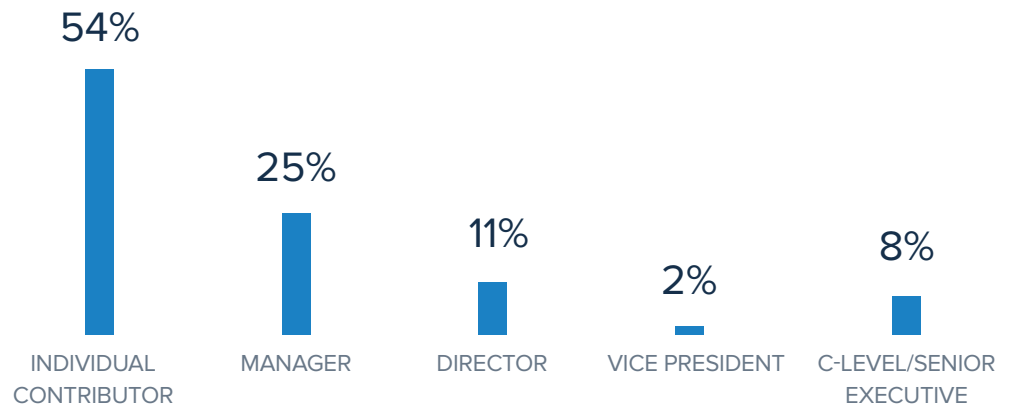
6. How many people are employed at your company?



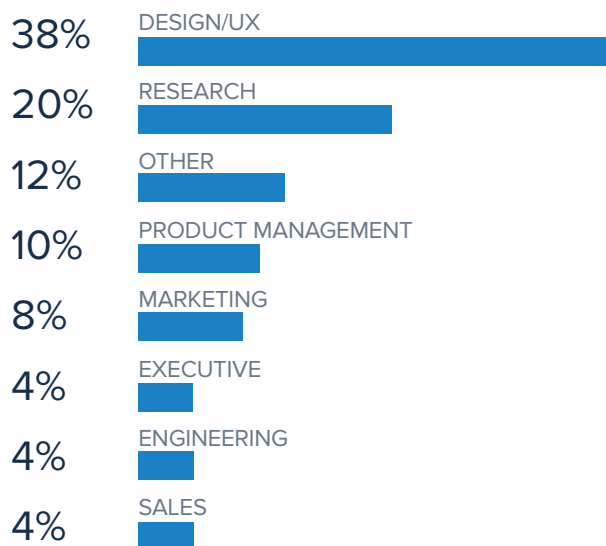
7. Which of these choices best describes your role?



8. What level of seniority is your role?

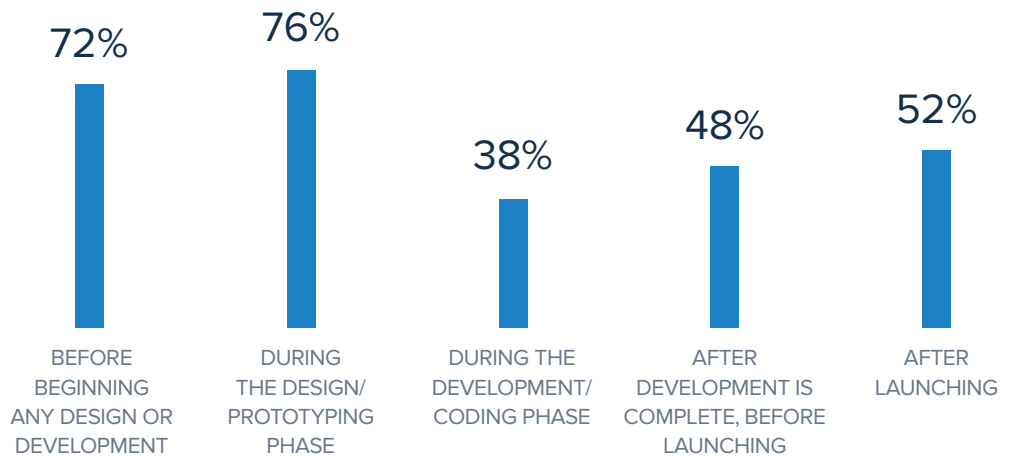


9. What is your primary job function?



Questions 10 - 12 target UX Design, Product Management, and Engineering roles.

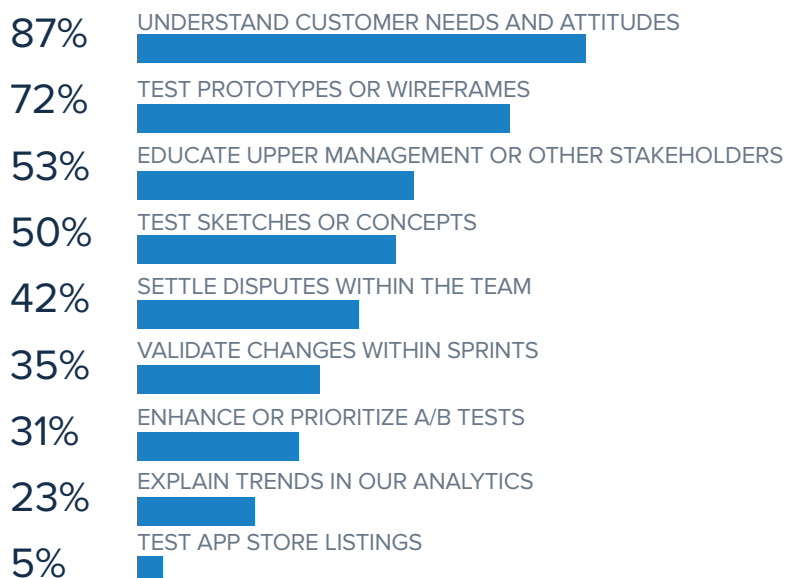
10. At what stages of development do you (or your team) conduct user research? Select all that apply.



Traditionally, product teams occasionally performed exploratory research using methods like in-person interviews and focus groups prior to the design phase, and then they ran usability tests immediately before or after launch. These days, however, there's a shift toward getting user insights earlier and more frequently during development. Product teams are finding that continuous user feedback during the prototyping phase helps them refine their concepts quickly before investing in development. This ultimately saves them the time, cost, and hassle of doing rework—and it helps to ensure product adoption.

Organizations are also pursuing more early-stage research before they even develop a product concept, looking to their target users to identify needs in the market. There's a growing interest in testing to understand users' needs and attitudes, not just their ability to use an interface. In addition, companies are incorporating more frequent competitive research to understand customer expectations and benchmarking to measure the impact of changes to the customer experience.

11. How does your team use the results of your user research?



12. How does your team review the results of your usability tests?



This question targets C-Level or Senior Executive roles.

13. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements:



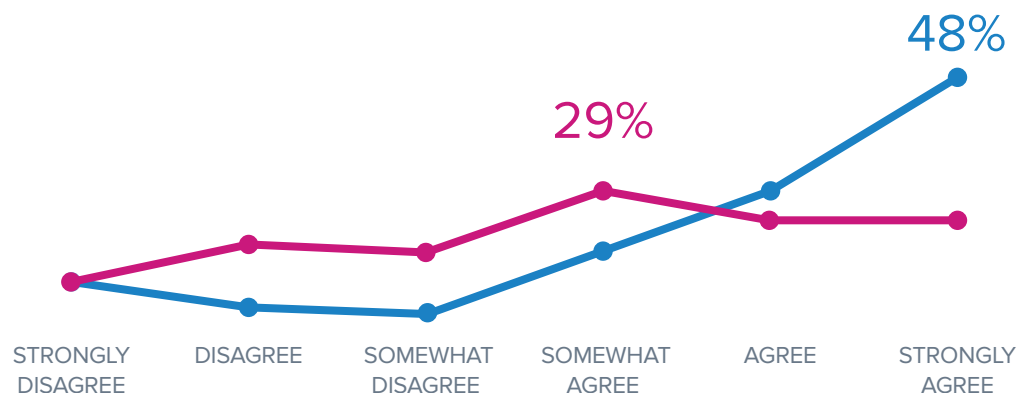
Whereas user experience used to be relegated to one or two designers within a company, it's now becoming a way of life for forward-thinking organizations. Executive support for UX, user research, and end-to-end customer experience is on the rise. Business leaders who have invested in UX are realizing the ROI of their user research dollars. Buy-in from the C-suite could be one reason for the growing user research budgets we've seen in this survey over the last four years.

Tangible change in organizations' approach to user experience can take time, especially in larger and more established companies. Still, this attitude indicates that businesses are growing more mature from a UX standpoint.

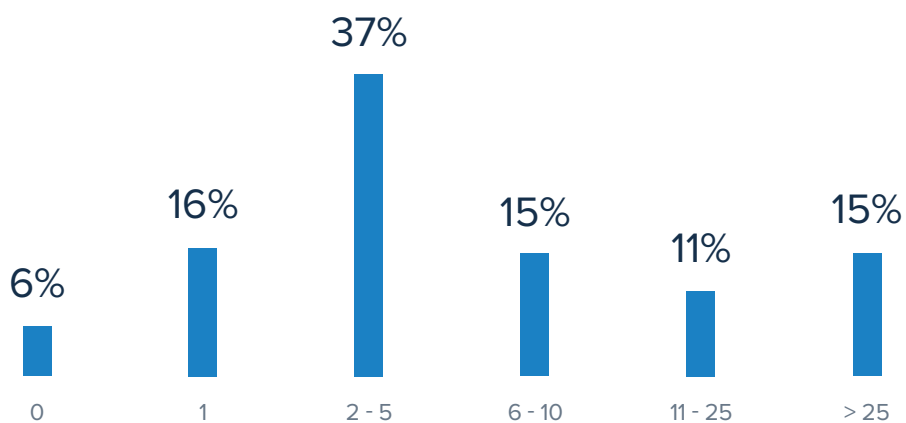
This question targets
Marketing roles.

14. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements:

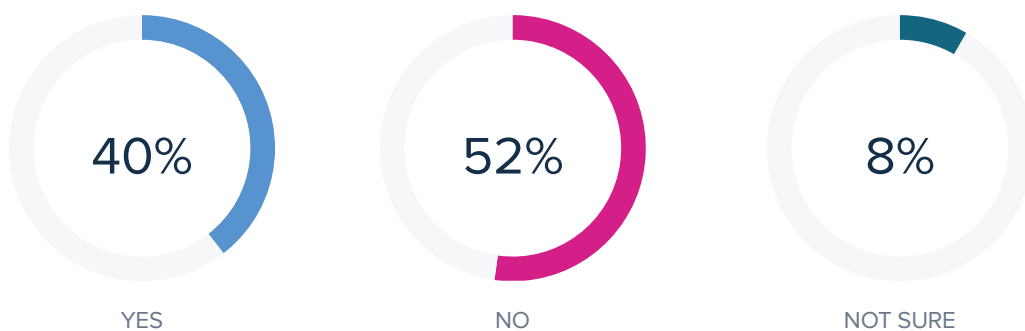
- WHEN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS BAD, MARKETING GETS BLAMED
- USER RESEARCH HELPS US CREATE EFFECTIVE MARKETING CAMPAIGNS.



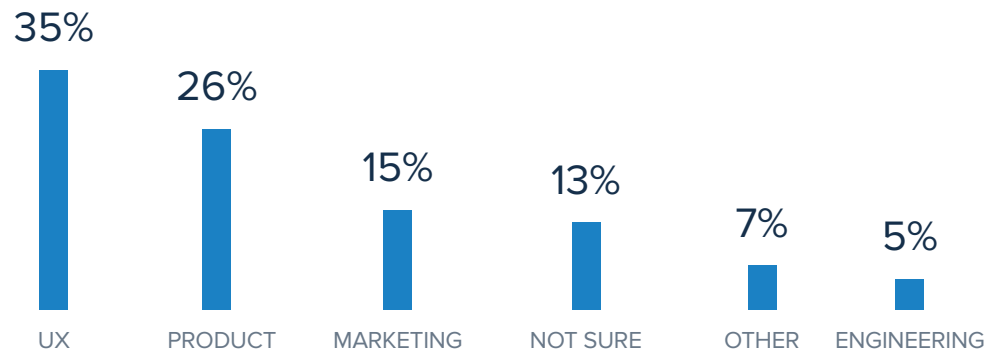
15. How many people in your company, part-time and full-time, work on user experience?



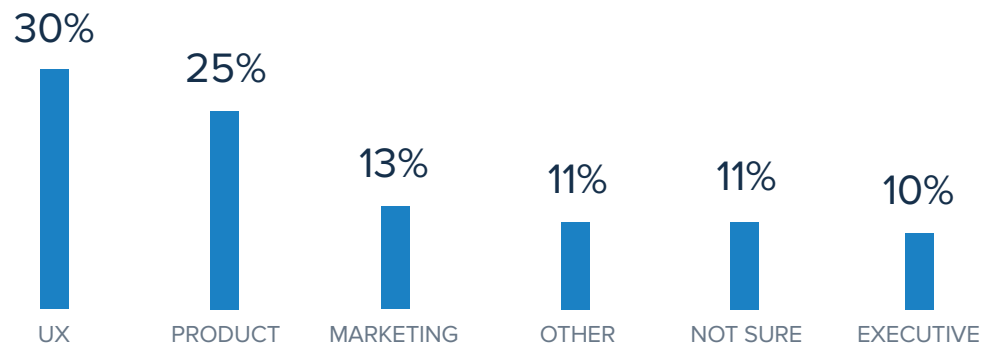
16. Does your company have a dedicated team for UX research?



17. Which team in your company finds the most value in user research?

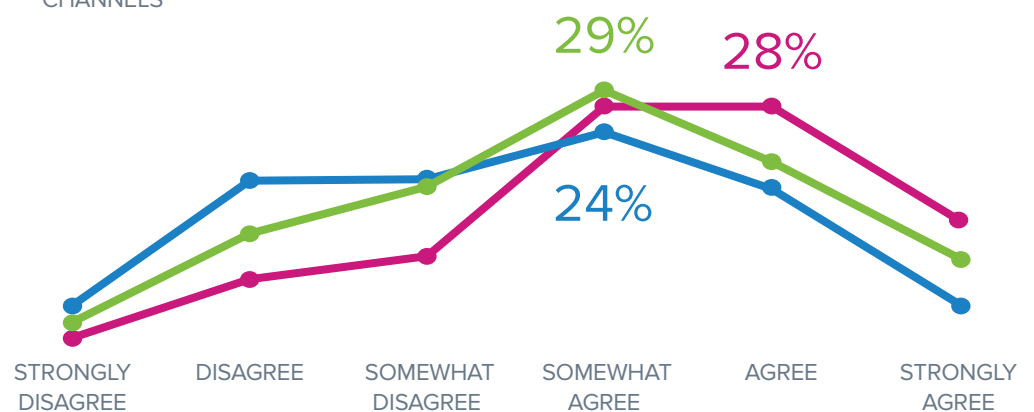


18. Which team is ultimately responsible for the customer experience at your company?



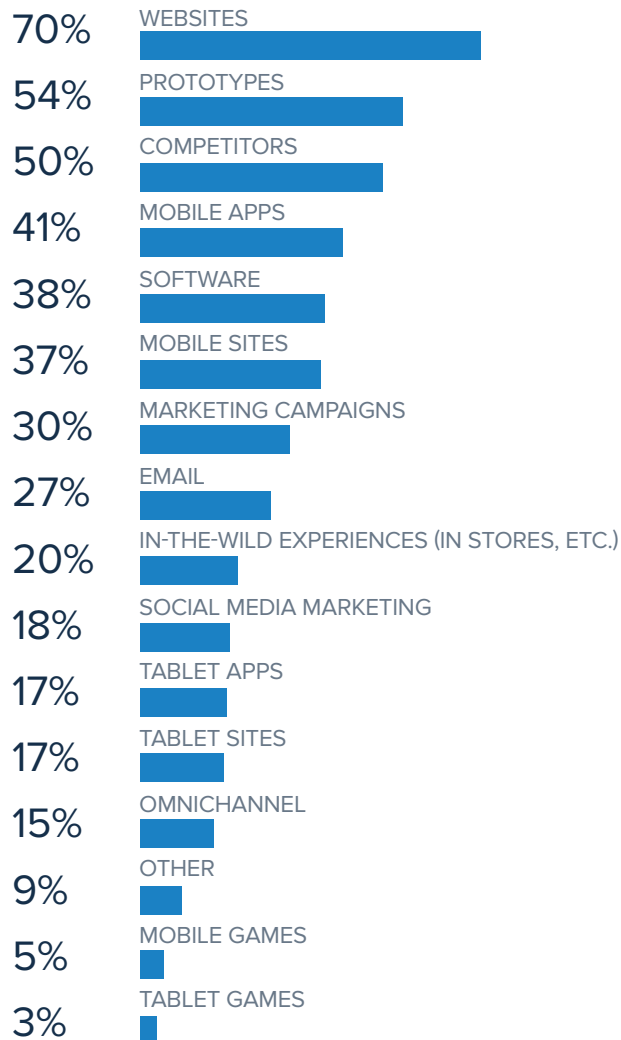
19. Please indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements:

- OUR OVERALL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS VERY GOOD
- IT'S EASY FOR US TO OPTIMIZE ALL OF THE ELEMENTS IN OUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
- WE UNDERSTAND OUR CUSTOMERS' JOURNEYS ACROSS ALL DEVICES AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

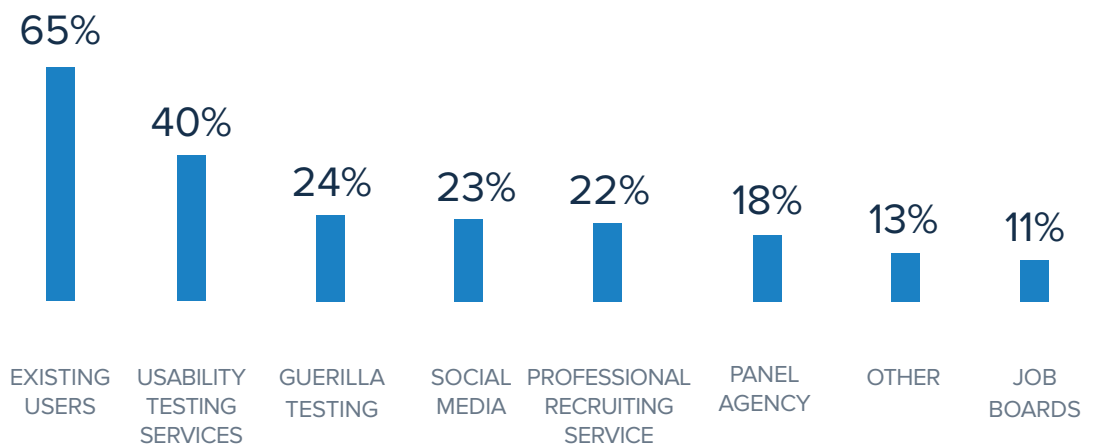


The number of respondents who do user research on their competitors more than doubled year-over-year.

20. What does your company currently do user research on? Select all that apply.



21. How does your company recruit participants for your user research? Select all that apply.



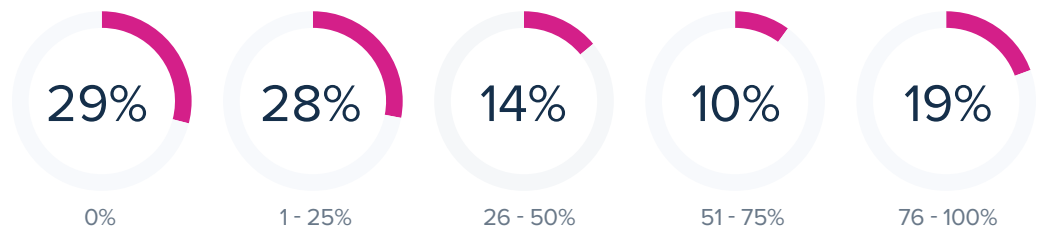
22. What percent of your time is spent conducting usability tests?



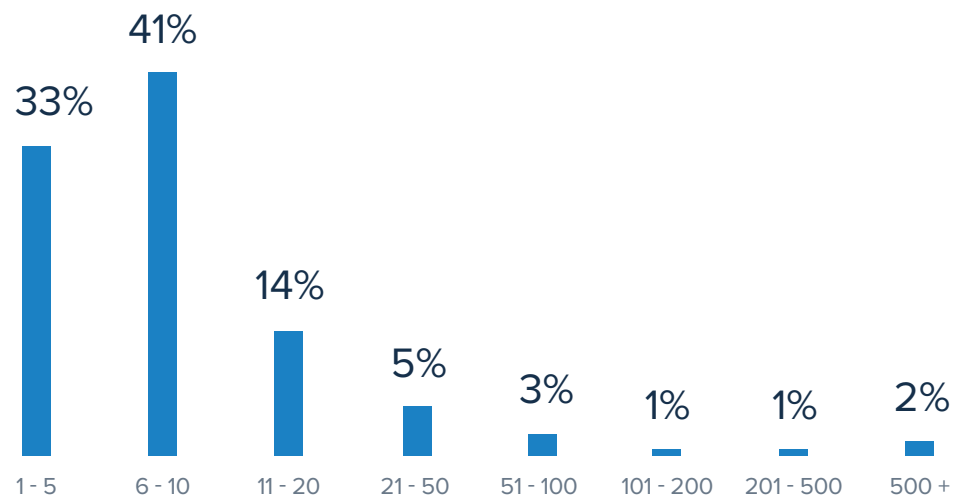
23. What percentage of your company's usability testing is done remotely/online?



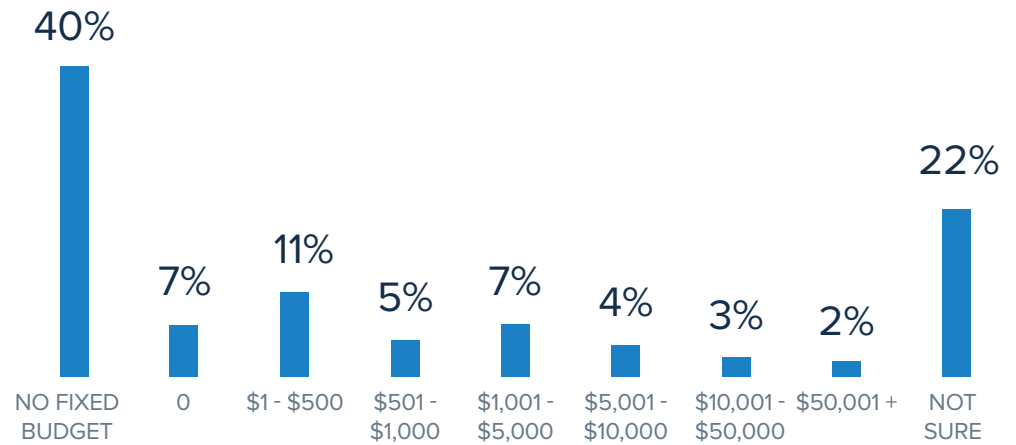
24. What percentage of your company's remote usability testing is moderated?



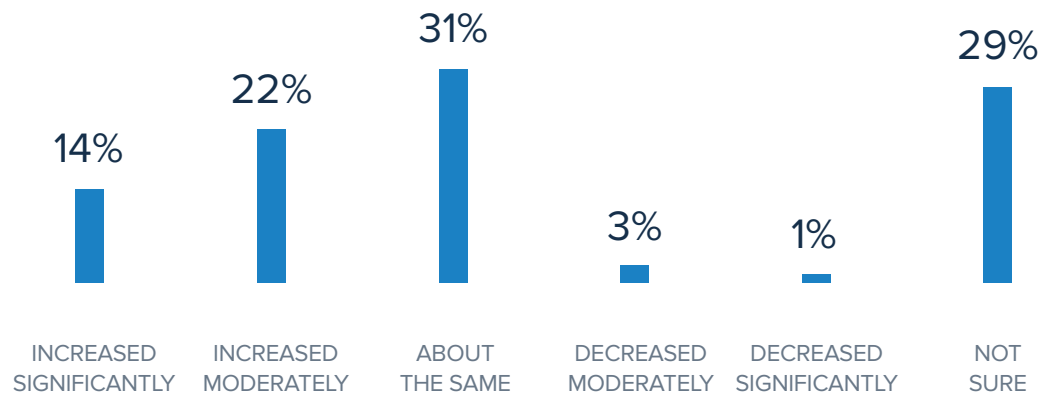
25. On average, how many users does your company recruit per usability study?



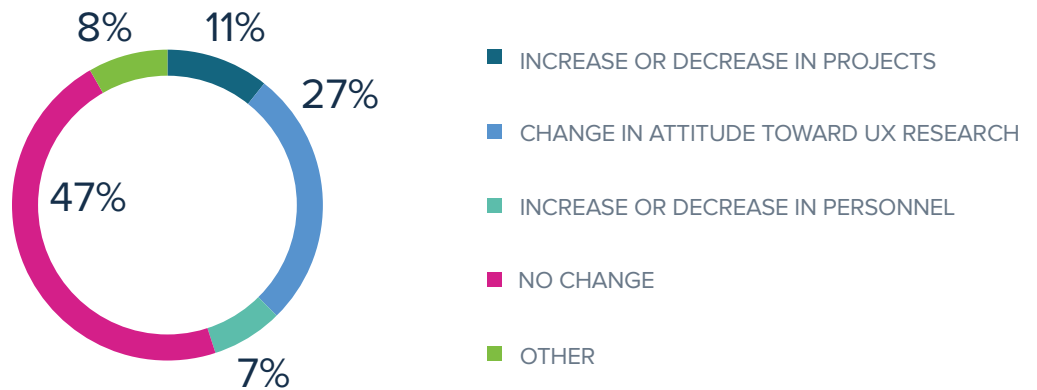
26. On average, what is your company's monthly budget for user research?



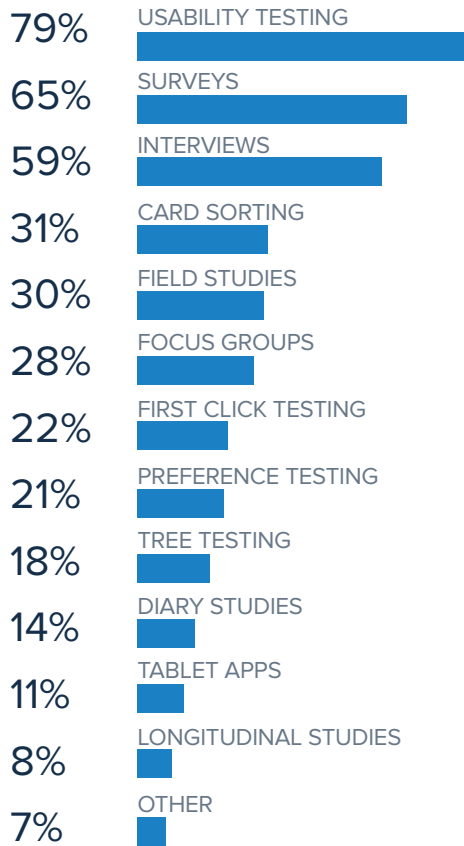
27. How would you compare your company's user research budget in 2016 to 2015?



28. What was the reason for the change in your company's user research budget?



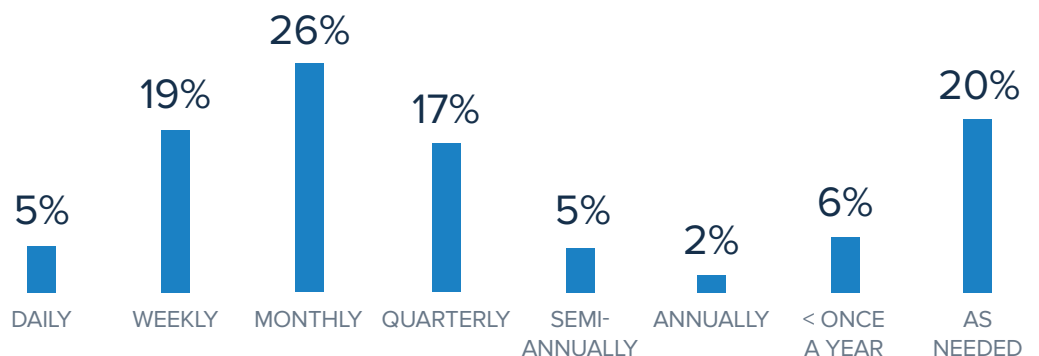
29. Out of the budget you just indicated, which of the following methodologies do you invest in? (Select all that apply.)



A well-rounded research strategy includes a variety of methodologies, including qualitative, quantitative, attitudinal, and behavioral research. Organizations that diversify their data sources end up with a more complete picture of their user experience than organizations that stick with only one method.

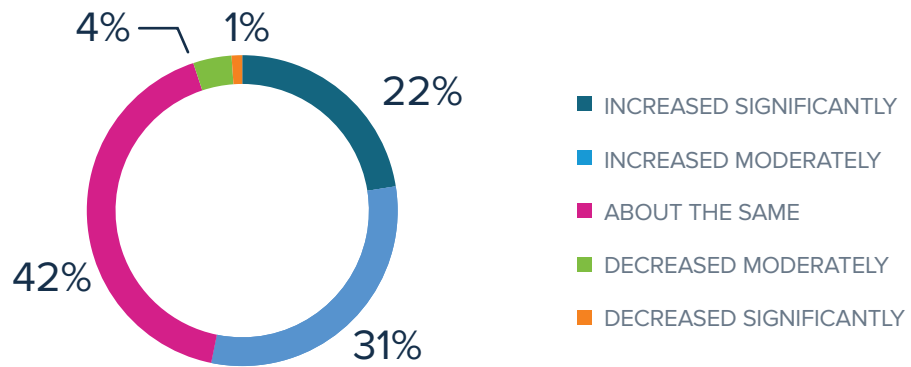
This year, the majority of survey respondents indicated that they invest in three or more of these research methodologies. The fact that so many respondents have the bandwidth and resources to invest in multiple methodologies indicates that companies are maturing their user experience and customer experience practices.

30. How frequently does your company run usability tests?

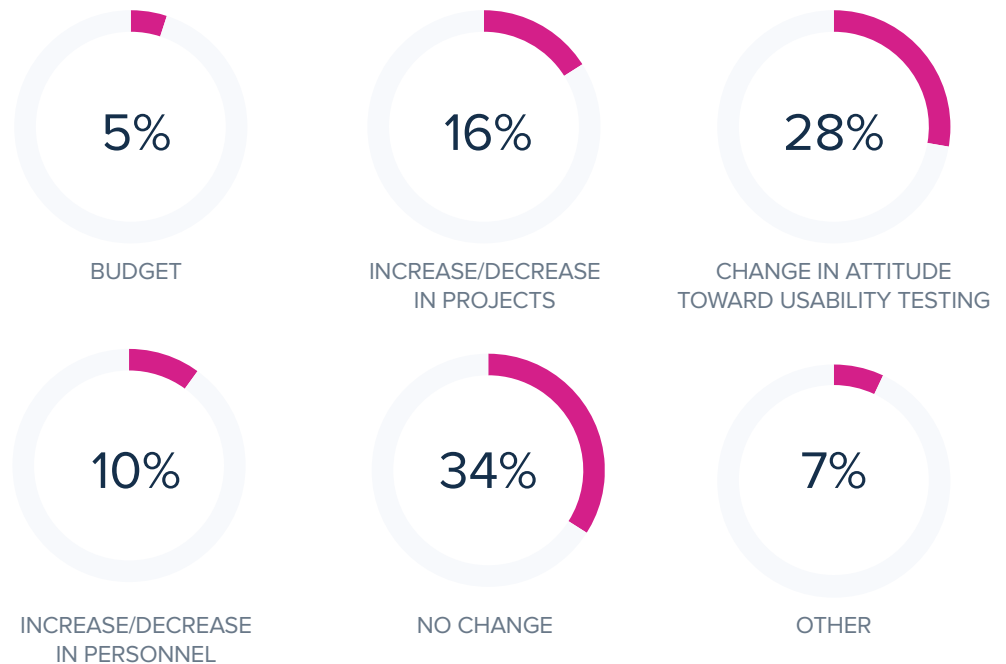


For the fourth year in a row, the majority of our survey respondents reported that their testing frequency has increased moderately or significantly.

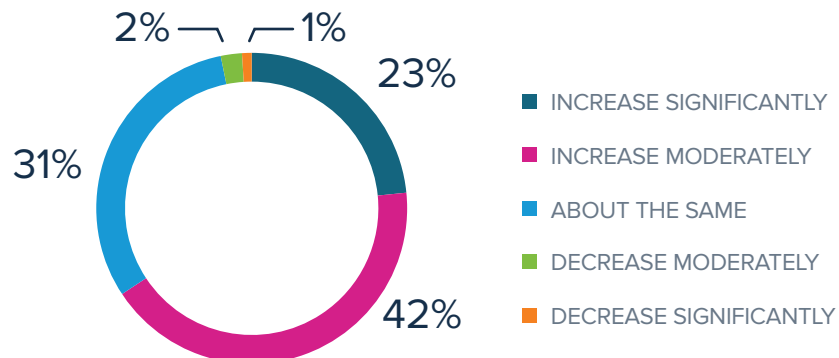
31. How does the frequency of your company's usability testing in 2016 compare to 2015?



32. What was the reason for the change in your company's usability testing frequency?



33. Looking ahead into 2017, how do you think the frequency of your company's usability testing will change?

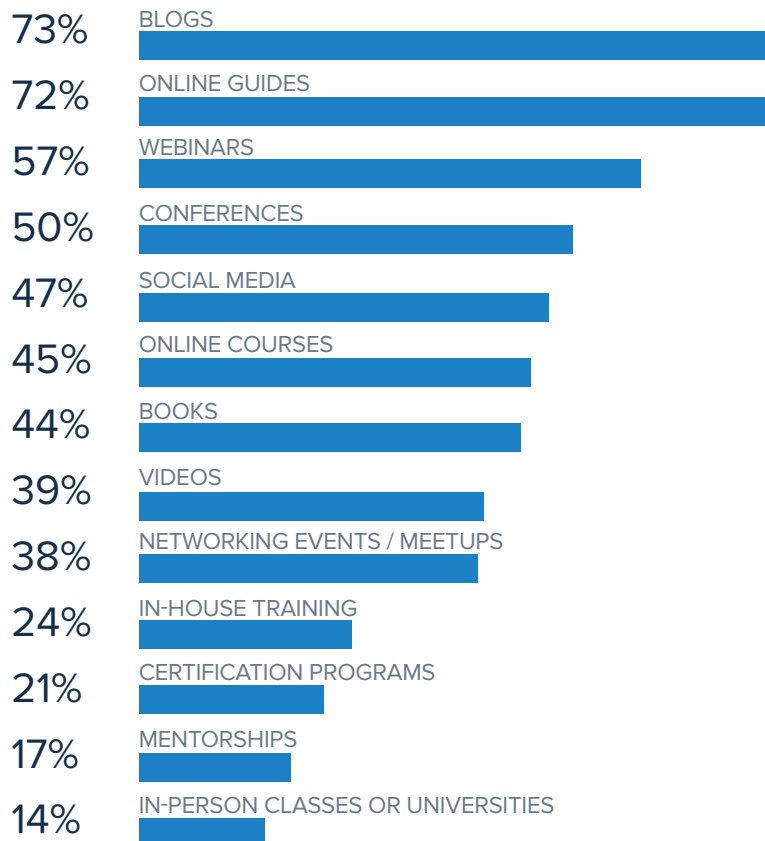


34. When launching a new digital product (website, mobile app, feature, etc.), describe your greatest concerns. What keeps you up at night as you get ready to launch?

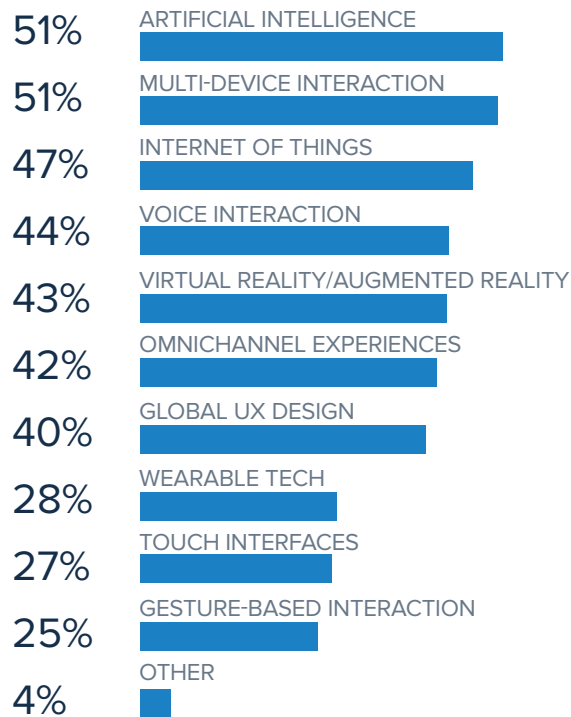
Note: This was an open response question. Below are the top five most common responses based on text analysis.

- USERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRODUCT
- KPIS AND BUSINESS METRICS
- NOT ENOUGH RESEARCH/TESTING
- BUGS AND TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE
- PRODUCT-MARKET FIT

35. What sources do you use to improve your user experience knowledge? Select all that apply.



36. What do you think will be the most important online trends affecting user experience in the next 5 years?



What once seemed like science fiction is now top-of-mind for leading companies. Artificial intelligence, virtual/augmented reality, and voice interaction are three top trends that made headlines in the past year, and organizational leaders are rushing to determine how those technologies will impact their business. Meanwhile, the now-commonplace trends of touch interfaces and wearable technology have dropped in importance year-over-year among survey respondents.

Notably, multi-device interaction and omnichannel experiences have remained high on the list over the last two years. This indicates that businesses are anticipating a more connected world in which they will need to meet the needs of their customers and provide a consistent experience across multiple channels if they want to remain competitive.

Conclusion

This year's survey responses indicate a positive trend toward early, frequent research throughout the design, development, and optimization of digital products. Instead of relying on internal opinions, organizations are bringing the voice of the customer to their decision-making process from the earliest stages of product development. The result? More customer-centered products, better user experiences—and an increasingly competitive market in which companies that don't invest in UX become extinct.

Create great experiences

UserTesting is the fastest and most advanced user experience research platform on the market. We enable product managers, UX researchers and designers, and digital executives to create better customer experiences.

More than 35,000 companies leverage UserTesting to deploy actionable customer insights throughout the design and development of prototypes, websites, mobile apps, and more.



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