



Report

The State of UX 2022

**Bridging the gap between
UX insights and business impact**

THE UX INSIGHTS SYSTEM

FOREWORD

In a digital-first, access anything-from-anywhere world, the brands of the future that wish to remain competitive will rely on exceptional digital experiences that work for everyone.

The role of UX research is critical to identify, measure, and optimize these experiences, but organizations are still missing out on revenue by ignoring the power of UX insights.

As you'll see from the survey results, there's an increasing demand for research, and more companies are seeing the positive impact of UX on business KPIs. However, for UX research to fulfill its business-critical function, it needs to be used more strategically and embedded throughout the product development lifecycle.

To achieve this, there should be board-level responsibility for customer facing-experiences and the critical business impacts these interactions drive. Exceptional digital experiences rely on an insights-fuelled culture driven from the top. And this journey begins and ends with the user.



Alfonso de la Nuez

Co-CEO and Co-Founder
UserZoom

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth edition of our *State of UX survey report*, where we take the temperature of the user experience (UX) industry to see the trends, challenges, and opportunities ahead.

Organizations are missing out on golden UX optimization opportunities—and leaving growth opportunities and financial gains out on the field.

Digital experiences perform poorly when UX insights are not routinely embedded in decision-making. And because poor digital experiences lead to lost customers, organizations are losing money and letting competitors take the digital advantage.

WHAT WE FOUND

#1

User insight is getting left out of product and UX decisions

#2

Organizations aren't linking the power of great UX design to revenue

#3

Many rely on incomplete UX metrics, without actionable insight

#4

Time is the leading obstacle to creating a culture of user-centricity

#5

Demand for UX research is outpacing supply

#6

DE&I considerations are not standard practice in nearly half of UX teams

#1

User insight is getting left out of product and UX decisions

For your organization, how much does user experience improve the following?



Is user research well-integrated into the product development process?



**Too many companies—
45%—are failing to properly
integrate user research
into the full product
development lifecycle,
despite this being a clear
business growth lever.**

In some organizations, our surveyed UX professionals are unable to demonstrate their impact on the finished design:

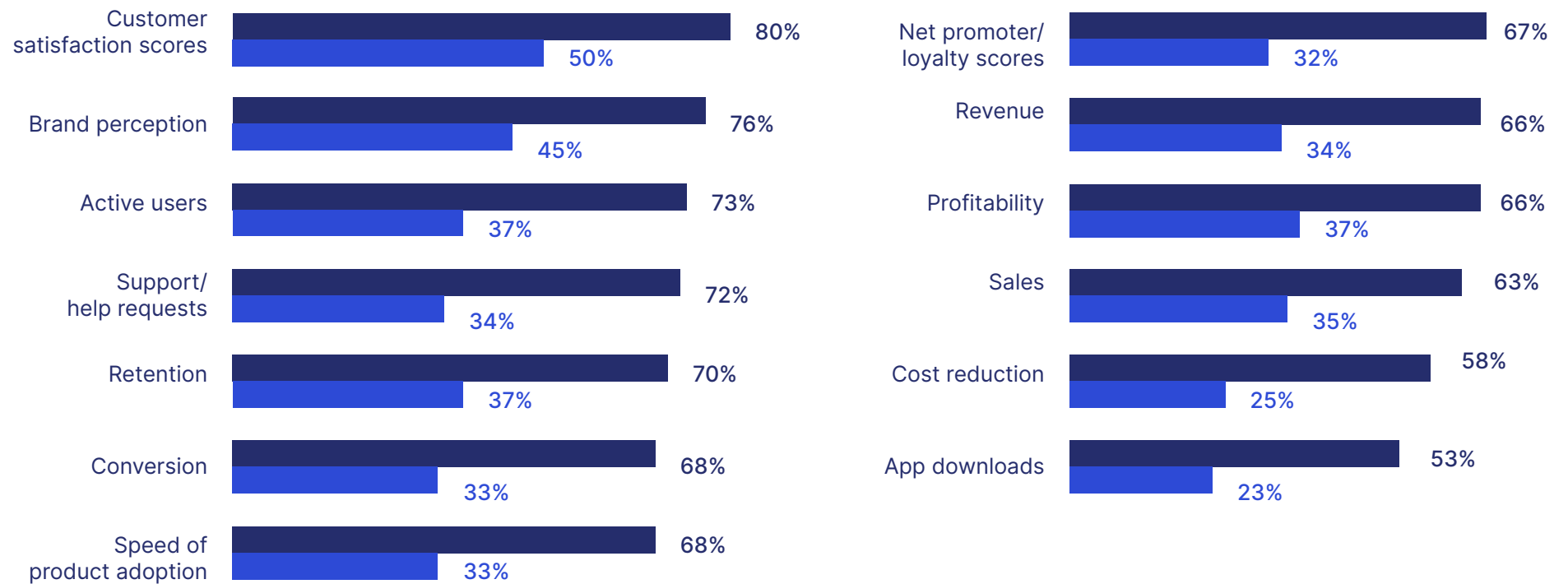
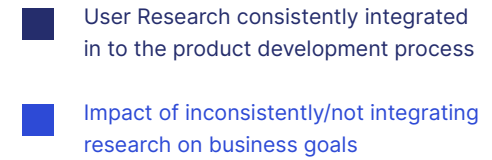
43% of organizations don't have processes in place to make design and UX decisions based on feedback.

These companies are leaving users out of critical investment and product decisions, and that means they're not getting the full benefit of their UX investment, and worse still, missing out on the financial gains of using real UX insights to shape their products and services.

These results are all the more surprising given that companies that integrate UX into the product development process see significant, measurable gains on key business metrics.

By margins of 30+ points, digital experience teams that consistently integrate user research in product development report a positive impact on customer satisfaction (80% to 50%) and brand perception (76% to 45%), compared to those that don't.

The impact of UX on business goals



On critical metrics that impact the bottom line—retention, conversion, and revenue—the teams that integrate user research in product development are roughly twice as likely to outperform those that don't.

Our results highlight how critical it is to embed UX research throughout the product development life cycle. From the beginning, UX research enables you to gain assurance about your solution, tweak ideas based on viable feedback and transform good ideas into great ones.

Having a deeper understanding of the what, why, AND how of your users will also help power an insights-driven culture.

Truly customer-centric organizations have UX embedded in the culture. Every decision and priority is insight-driven from the top-down, with the user given a voice in the boardroom.

As Google's philosophy states:

"Focus on the user and all else will follow."

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The best design performers increase their revenues and shareholder returns at nearly twice the rate of their industry counterparts.

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THE BUSINESS VALUE OF DESIGN

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#2

Organizations aren't linking the power of great UX design to revenue



Which C-suite executive is responsible for UX in your organization?

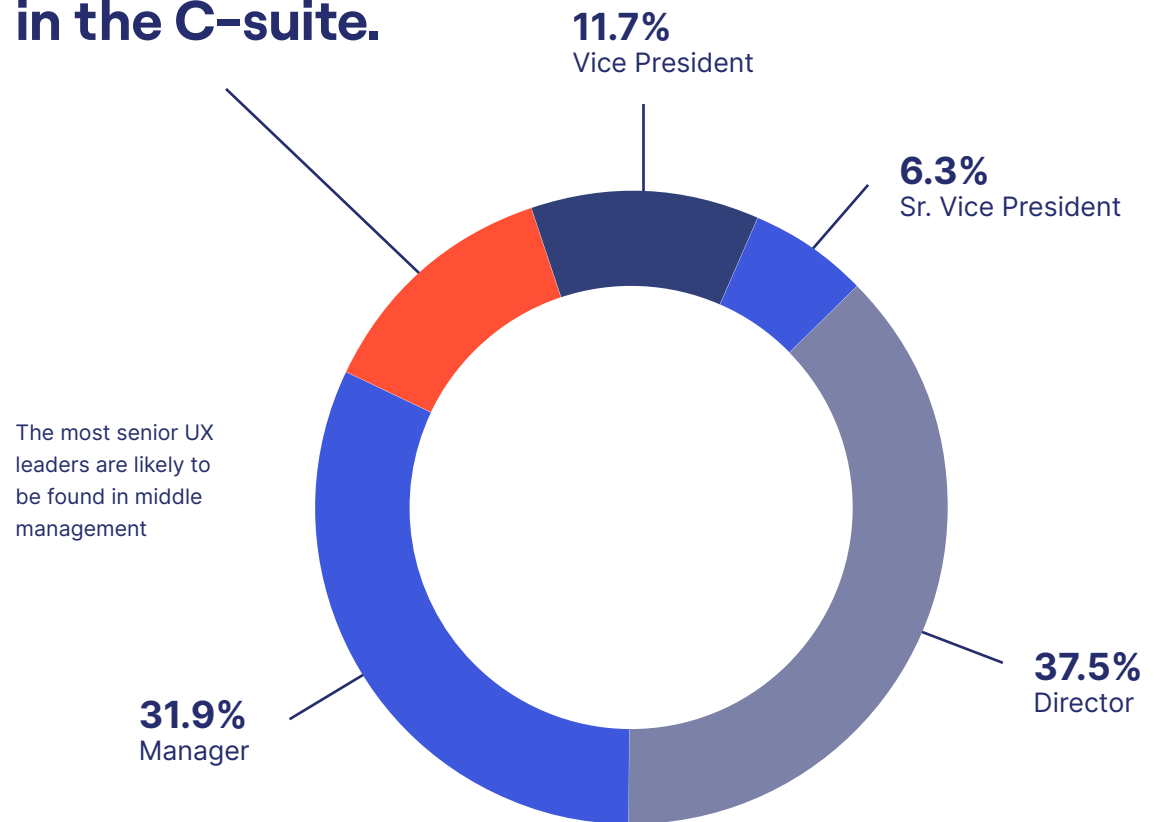


Last year, our [State of UX report](#) found that, in most organizations, there is no clear-cut accountability for delivering an optimal user experience.

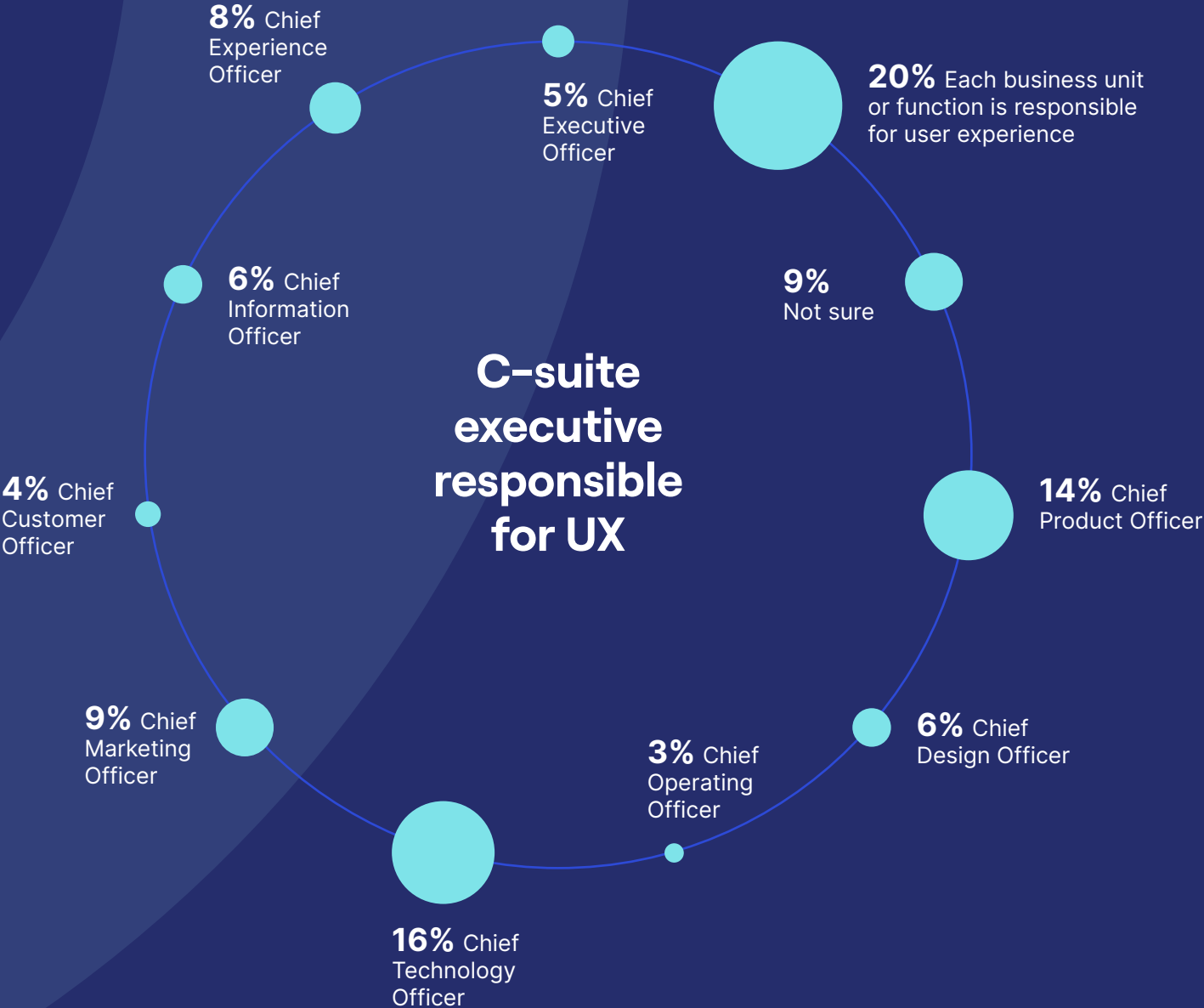
In 2022, the most innovative organizations are moving UX management and strategy into the C-Suite, leaving behind the majority of organizations that still consider UX management to be primarily a tactical consideration.

In other organizations, the business unit tends to be responsible for UX (20%) over a single C-level role in most companies. Overwhelmingly, the most senior UX leader is a middle manager.

Just 13% of organizations have a UX leader in the C-suite.



C-suite executive responsible for UX



More than two-thirds of you say that UX positively impacts customer satisfaction and a substantial majority (62%) say it improves brand perception.

Despite a lack of executive leadership in the majority of organizations, the value of a great UX is evident.

User experience also correlates highly with improving critical KPIs like active users, support requests, retention, and conversion.

Organizations need to start measuring UX as a business-critical function, as investments have a massive potential impact on revenue. Just imagine the improvements you could make if you had stronger backing from your executives—and a growing budget to match.

Executive buy-in is a holy grail for many UX teams, but it is achievable. UX teams need to learn to speak the language of the C-Suite.

From our experience, this starts with good data: showing your executives the value of UX in the context of wider business metrics.

For more information on demonstrating the business impact of UX, [read our complete guide to UX Benchmarking.](#)



One of the challenges that UX teams face today is identifying the right success metrics.

70% report the demand for UX research has increased in the past year, but almost half say that budgets are unchanged.

This indicates a tipping point of needing to prove the value of UX investment AND the need to translate UX insights into measurable business outcomes.

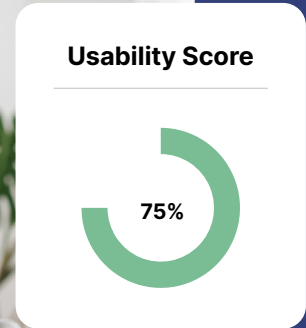
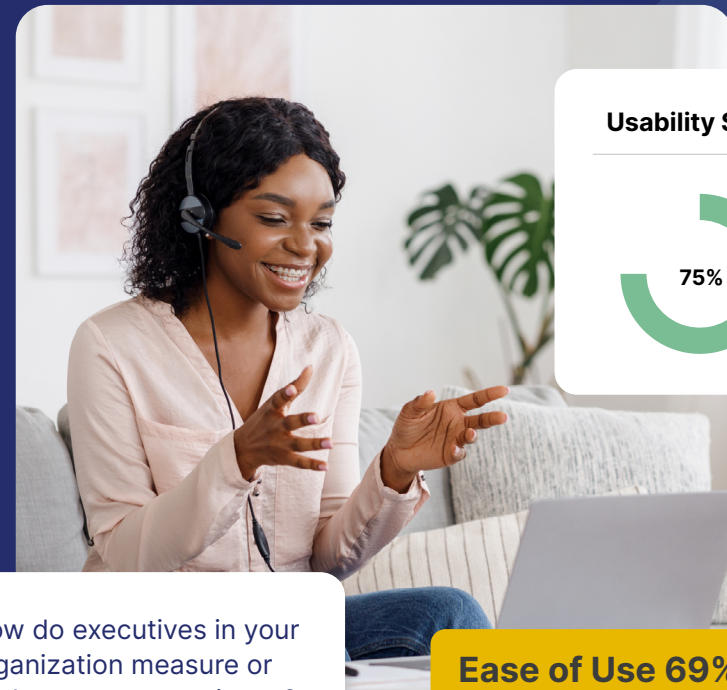
Dana Bishop

VP Research Partner, UserZoom



#3

Many rely on incomplete UX metrics, without actionable insight



How do executives in your organization measure or evaluate user experience?

Ease of Use 69%

Appearance 56%

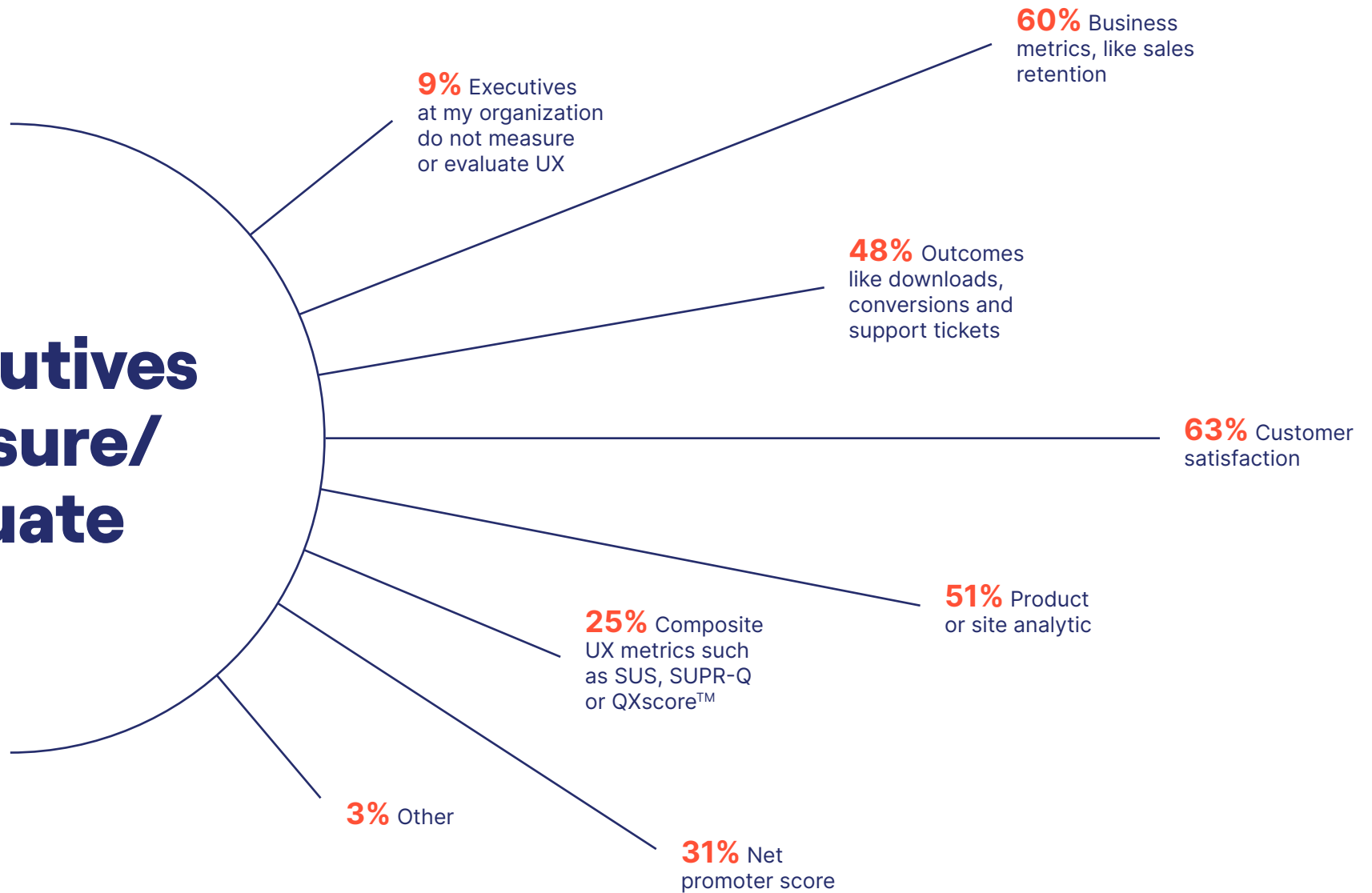
The good news is that executives are using measurement to assess UX. The bad news is they're often using the wrong metrics.

There's a reliance on UX performance measures that provide little guidance on how users react to experiences and how to improve them, despite the proven stated impact on CSAT and revenue.

There are signs that may change, with broad aspirations among digital experience professionals to do more UX benchmarking in the coming year.

The most common ways leadership evaluate UX—customer satisfaction (63%), business metrics (60%) and product/site analytics (51%) – say little about how users react to digital experiences or how to improve them.

How executives measure/evaluate UX

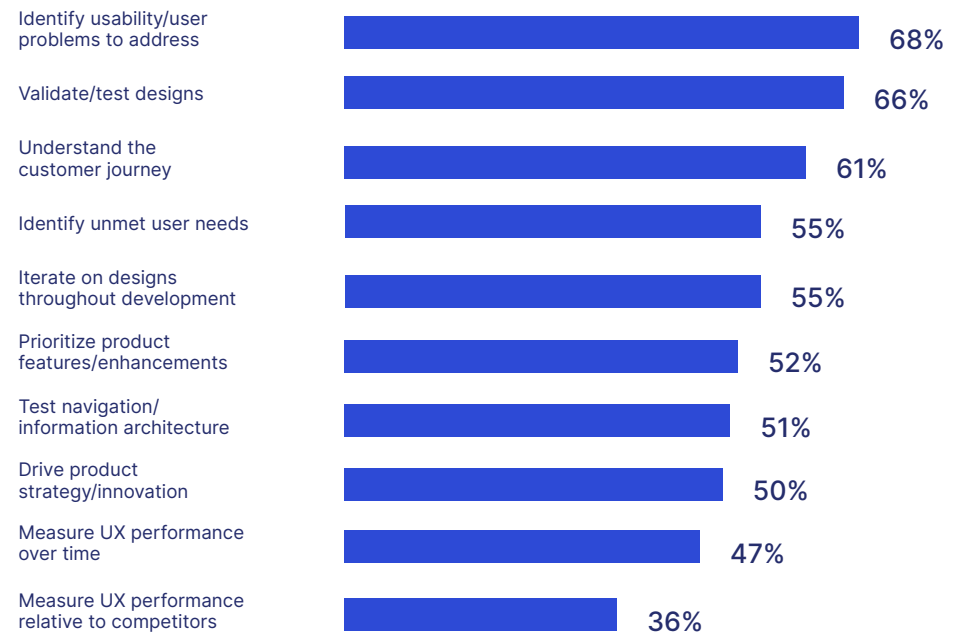


Encouragingly, a quarter of executives are benchmarking UX—which is great news and something we'd like to see more.

Organizations tend to use UX to discover usability issues (68%) and validate designs (66%) rather than drive product strategy or innovation (50%) or measure UX performance against competitors (36%).

Companies are missing a trick here, and overlooking higher value research opportunities that can inform broader business decision-making earlier in the process.

Moving from tactical to strategic UX research doesn't happen overnight, but you can take steps to lay the foundations for more impactful research. The best way to do this is by developing a ResearchOps program in your organization (more on that in insight 5).



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I don't have the time or resources to waste on A/B testing. Sacrificing traffic and potential sales to observe marginal performance differences doesn't make sense. I need to know what visitors think and why.

Caroline Jensen

VP of Marketing, Whistle

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#4

Time is the leading obstacle to creating a culture of user-centricity

What are the obstacles to doing UX research in your organization?



Time, budget, and resource constraints are holding back efforts to create a user-centric culture.

Last year, we found that time, budget, and resources were the top three obstacles to effective UX. The state of play is exactly the same in 2022.

Top five UX research obstacles:

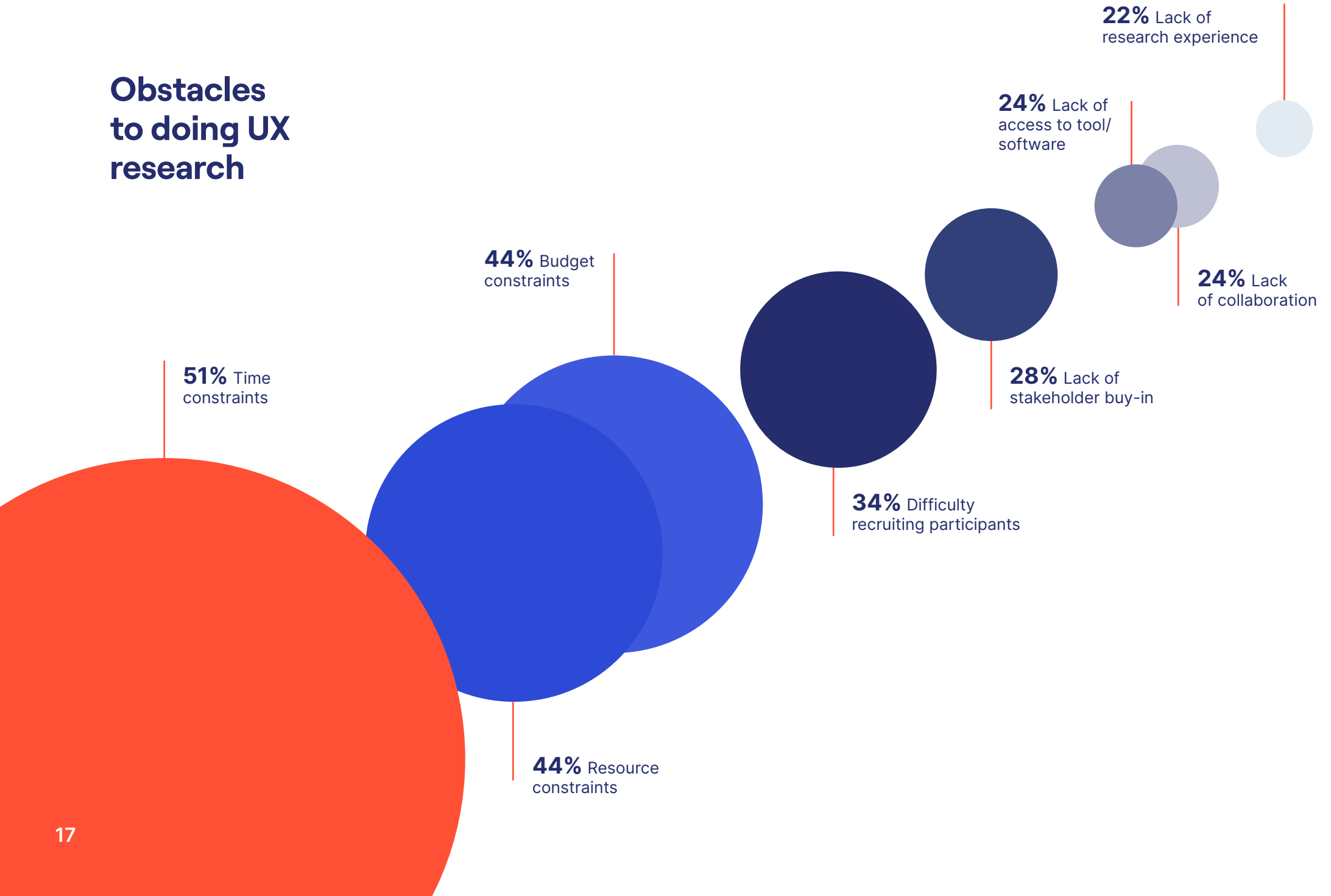
- 55%** – Time constraints
- 44%** – Budget constraints
- 44%** – Resource constraints
- 34%** – Difficulty recruiting participants
- 28%** – Lack of stakeholder buy-in

70% of you say that demand for UX has **increased** in the past year—a quarter of you say significantly so. At the same time, **45%** say budgets have remained the same.

It's positive that demand for UX is increasing. It shows that other departments believe in the value of UX research. However, you can't deliver that value when you're overstretched and under-resourced.

"70% say that demand for UX has increased in the past years—yet budgets stay the same."

Obstacles to doing UX research



Current methods, budgets, and staffing simply can't keep up with demand and too many resources are wasted.

There's also a potential perception failure here, that UX research is seen to be time-consuming and adding extra steps in the product development process.

And this is often why digital product, design, and research leaders are forced to trade off the quality of insights in favor of speed. They can either go faster with limited insights but at a more frequent pace, or go deeper with high-quality insights that slow down product development.

Choosing either path can stop UX teams from contributing meaningfully.

However, with the right system, you can take the digital experience advantage, and deliver exceptional digital experiences by surfacing higher-quality UX insights at a faster pace. Satisfying both business demands and customer needs.

To do this, you need the right multi-method research capabilities, automated participant recruitment and data analysis, and embedded research best practices, to ensure you're surfacing actionable insights throughout the product development lifecycle and driving measurable ROI.



Not everything is about tactical feedback on a prototype for us. Running moderated interviews helps us drive strategy by using conversations with real users to build our market knowledge.

Lead Design Researcher
Leading Financial Institution



#5

Demand for UX research is outpacing supply



Which teams in your organization rely on UX research to make decisions?



Which teams in your organization conduct some form of UX research today?

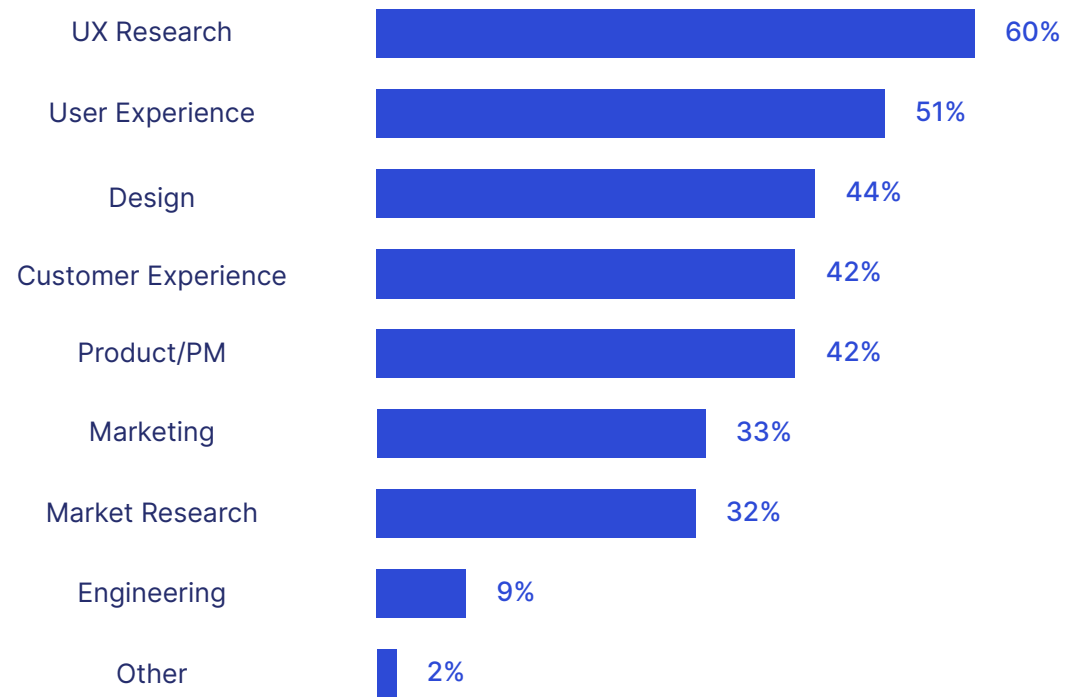
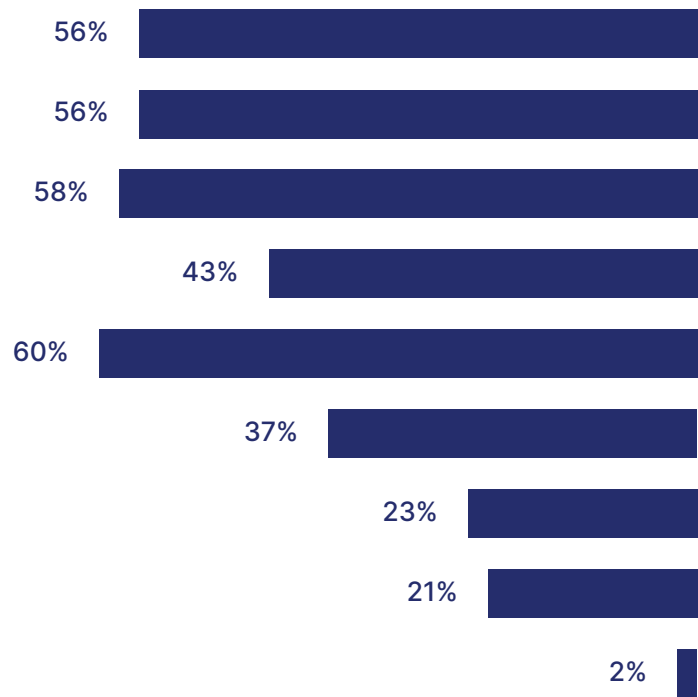
The increased demand for UX research is fueling a trend for democratization. But how can UX research departments keep up with the UX needs of the wider business?

About half (51%) of digital experience professionals say that UX teams conduct UX research. While almost a third of marketing teams are conducting UX research, and two in five respondents say that design, customer experience, and product teams are performing UX analysis.

As demand for UX spreads across organizations, it's encouraging to see the rise of centralization along with research operations teams.

50% of respondents said they centralize and share UX research insights, while 42% said their organization has a research operations team.

Consumers and suppliers of UX research across the organization



Training people from other teams is vital to success. Not only will it free up your time to focus on more strategic initiatives, but you'll end up creating UX advocates across the business. This, in turn, improves the chances of stakeholder buy-in.

To do this successfully, you'll need the right governance in place. This means developing tools that help expand capacity whilst ensuring quality research is conducted by all teams.

This includes training programs, centralized support, templates for study builds and screener questions to ensure quality data, and rigorous sign-off procedures.

If this all sounds too ambitious, you can use a platform or partner to help your organization learn best practices, develop custom templates,

align stakeholders and make UX research everyone's business, and equip UX practitioners of all experience levels with the skills and knowledge needed to create better digital experiences with the right insights.

According to Kate Towsey, Research operations provide the infrastructure that helps support and shape how research is seen and done in an organization. Developing a research operations infrastructure takes a little time and effort—but it is certainly worthwhile.

Research operations, essentially, is about creating streamlined processes for user research.

The ultimate aim is to make user research activities easier, speedier, more consistent, more accessible and helps build confidence in UX across the entire department.

If you're interested in getting started, check out this [in-depth guide to research operations](#).

“

I've been able to train up 50+ people across the organization to run their own research. My company now gets the best value from my expertise working on the really complex projects.

Dr. Ciara Davey

Lead UX Researcher, LV=

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#6

**DE&I considerations
are not standard
practice in nearly
half of UX teams**



The UX research industry needs to cast the net wider to better understand and serve all users.

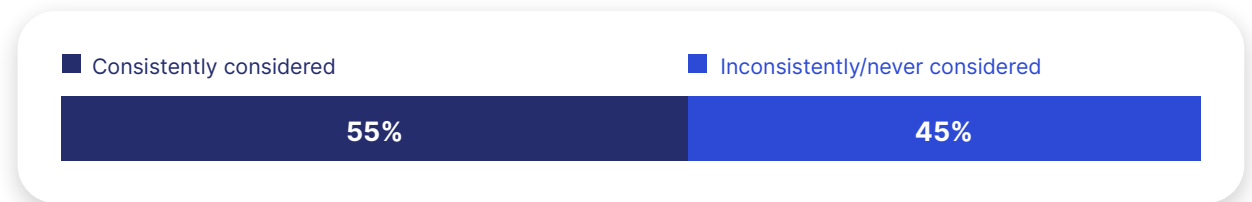
We should be striving to ensure our usability tests, explorations, or desk research include users from a range of backgrounds, household incomes, life stages, ethnicities, disabilities, sexes, and genders.

43% say DE&I will be one of the most critical trends affecting user experience in the next five years.

This mirrors external third-party research suggesting, organizations that embrace DE&I are more successful than those that don't.

45% of UX teams say that DE&I considerations are not standard practice.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a standard consideration in our UX design and research practice.



The current state of DE&I in UX research

28%

Say ensuring diversity and inclusion in participant recruiting is the most challenging part of their research process

43%

Say DEI will be one of the most important trends affecting user experience in the next 5 years

Minority community members deserve to be represented just as much as anyone else. It would be immoral to ignore their voices, and it would be a lost commercial opportunity too.

More than over a fifth (28%) say that ensuring diversity and inclusion in participant recruiting is the most challenging part of the research process.

This might be why nearly half of UX pros (45%) say that DE&I considerations are not standard practice when conducting research.

Designing solutions and conducting research that reflects a real-world user base is critical to the validity of your insights. Without DE&I as a top consideration, your research paints an incomplete picture.

To tackle this challenge, you need to have a strategy in place to ensure the inclusive recruitment of participants.

5 ways to increase diversity in participant recruitment

#1

Choose quotas carefully. Less flexible quotas will increase sample costs and time in field.

#2

Increase sample size. A larger sample size will naturally include greater diversity of participants, as well as support demographic quotas.

#3

Think deeply on whether diversity between people is related to a diverse UX. Asking underrepresented minorities to overly participate in unaligned research can be laborious and tokenizing. Be strategic with who to target and when.

Sarah Haverly, Sr. Research Partner, presents five tips for broadening DE&I in participant recruitment.

#4

Zoom out. Every study needn't ask every question. Keep your long term program of research focused on representation.

#5

Collaborate! To bolster your sample, work strategically with partners to maximize the inclusivity of your recruitment.

THE WAY FORWARD

UX insights are one of the biggest levers for growth, yet they're still underutilized

While too many organizations are wasting money overlooking the link to growth and revenue, and not making the most of their UX professionals, the UX industry is clearly on the precipice of positive disruption.

Every company is a digital company today, and the user experience is an overlooked lever of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately revenue growth.

As the democratization of UX research spreads and more executives begin to realize the intrinsic value of their UX investments, UX researchers need to firmly take their seats at the boardroom table.

Get in touch

Contact UserZoom to see how you can power exceptional digital experiences through rapid, detailed insights.

Speak to us

The collage features several UserZoom interface components:

- Demographic Filters:** A panel with filters for Country (United States), State (California, Nevada), Age (From 21 to 50), Gender (Female), and Household income (\$40,000 - \$49,999).
- Bar Chart:** A horizontal bar chart with 10 bars of varying heights and colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue).
- Chat Window:** A chat interface showing a profile for James (03:00pm-04:00pm) and a message at 01:02: "The #scheduling feature is super slick and #easy to use. I love having the flexibility to choose how much time is in between each session, and it calculates whether I have put in enough availability for all the participants I need." The message has "Copy", "Add note", and "Create clip" buttons.
- Survey Question:** A poll titled "There should be a question here?" with three radio button options: "All the time" (selected), "Some of the time", and "Never".
- Survey Question:** A question "Q7 How was your recent e-shopping experience?" with a progress bar showing 7 out of 11 responses. The scale ranges from "1 - Difficult" to "Easy - 11".
- Marketing Banner:** A green banner for "Your Next Online Bank." with statistics: "6X" (smaller deposit), "-15%" (smaller deposit), and "3M+" (smaller deposit). It includes a heatmap and an image of a child.
- Video Feed:** A large video feed showing a smiling woman with curly hair waving, and a smaller video feed showing a smiling man sitting at a desk.

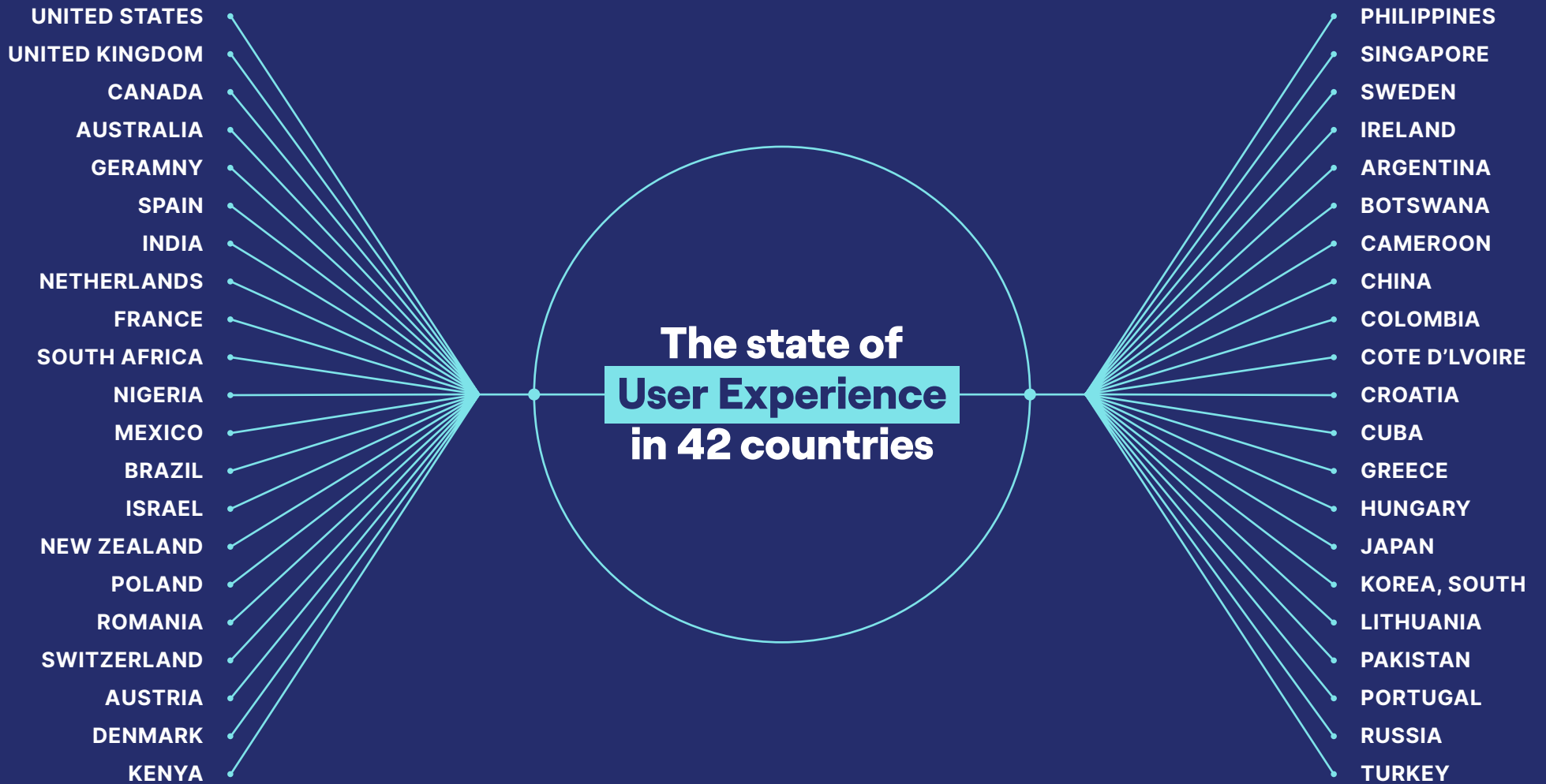
METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted among 693 digital experience professionals across 42 countries.

Our respondents included C-Level executives, VPs, SVPs, Directors, Managers, and Individual Contributors.

Job roles include UX Design, UX Research, Customer Experience, Product Management, Marketing/Market Research/Insights, and Research Operations.





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