TRUST IS THE NEW CONVERSION RATE

How to understand and optimize for decision-making in an ever-changing, post-funnel world

Talia Wolf | GetUplift



You've felt like you're doing more marketing than ever, but getting less from it

You've looked at a competitor for inspiration because you weren't sure what to try next

You launched something this year that you weren't that excited about, because something needed to go live

You've opened LinkedIn and thought:

“We should be doing that too”



Our default:

Do more.

You’re not alone

65.3%

Feel overwhelmed

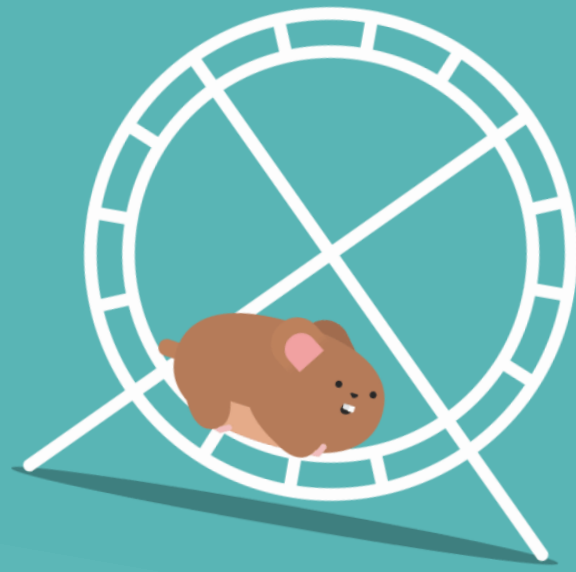
55.1%

Report emotional exhaustion

Marketing Week, 2026 Career & Salary Survey.

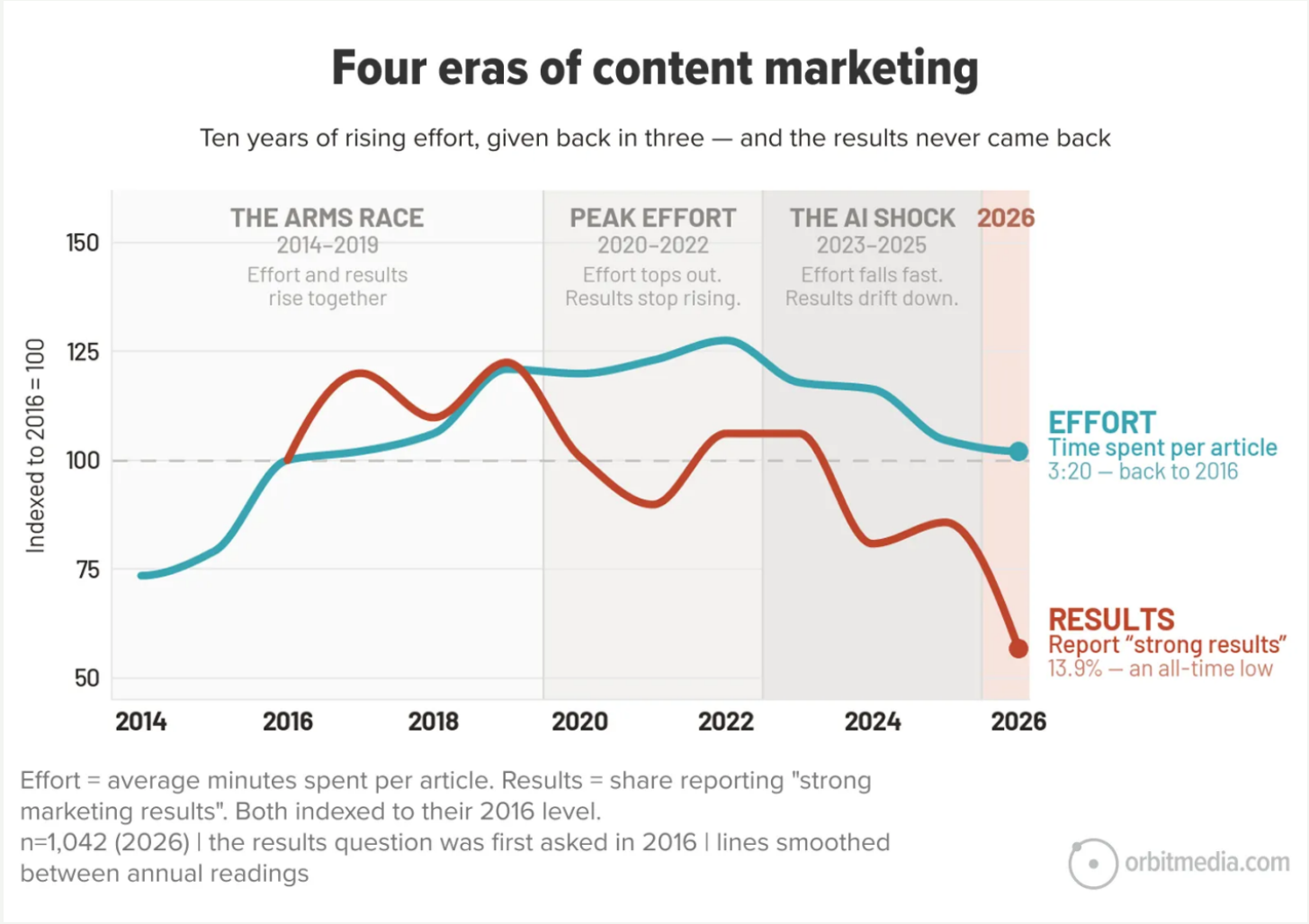
Doing more (our auto pilot) makes it worse

- More content
- More channels
- More SEO/ AIO / GEO
- More A/B tests
- More tools and software
- More landing pages



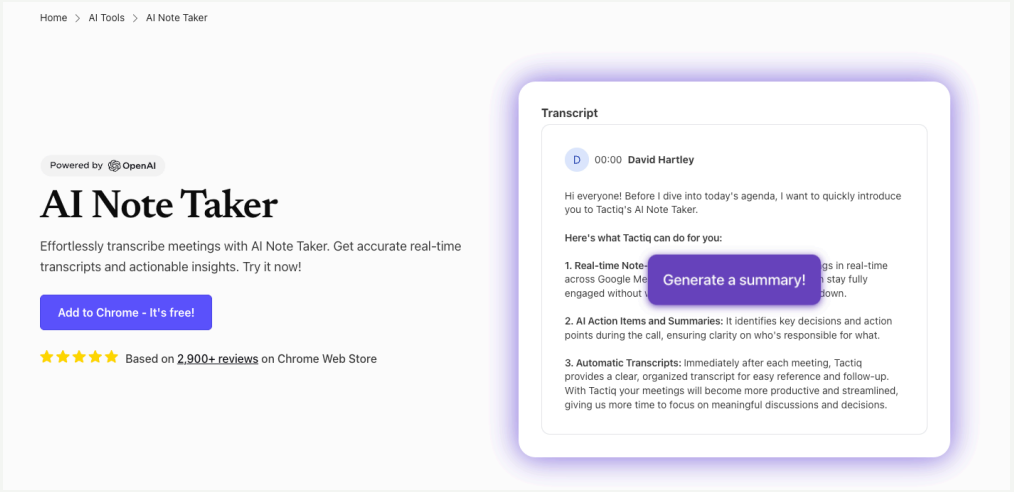
We got faster, but did we get better?

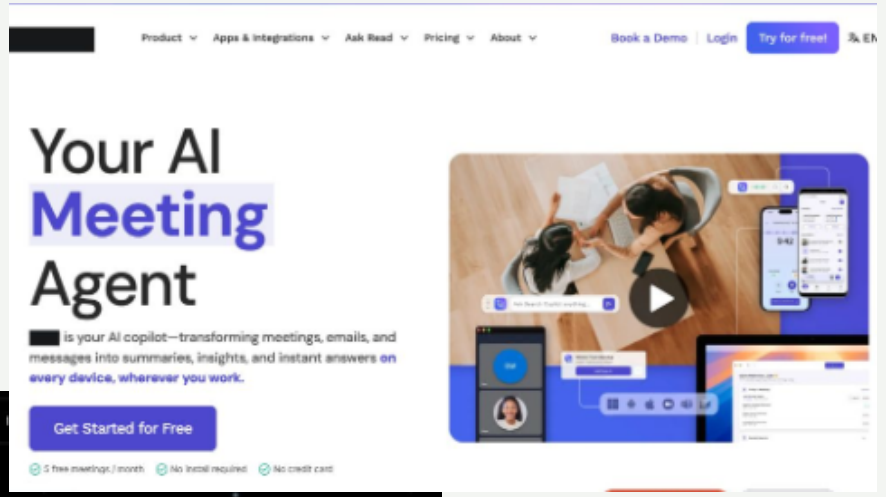
Time to produce content dropped by 20%, yet the marketers reporting strong results, nearly halved

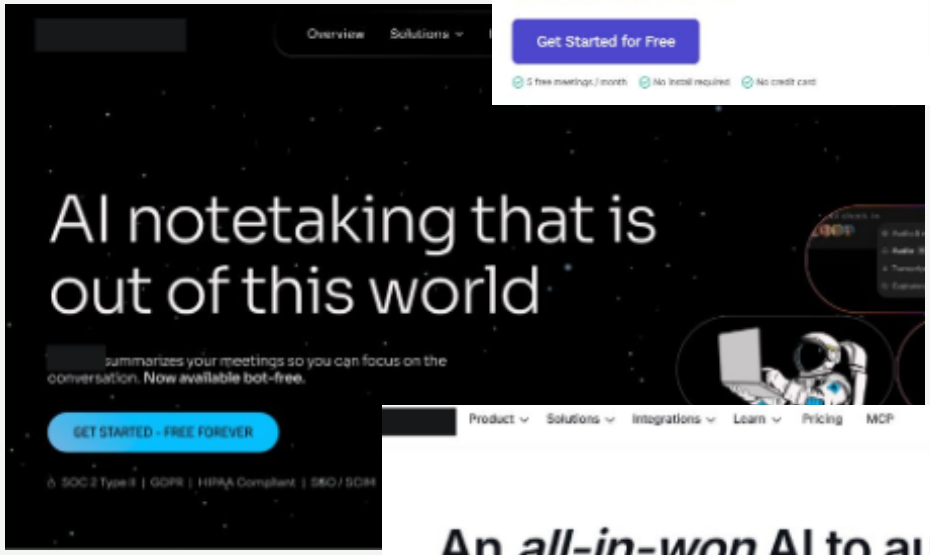


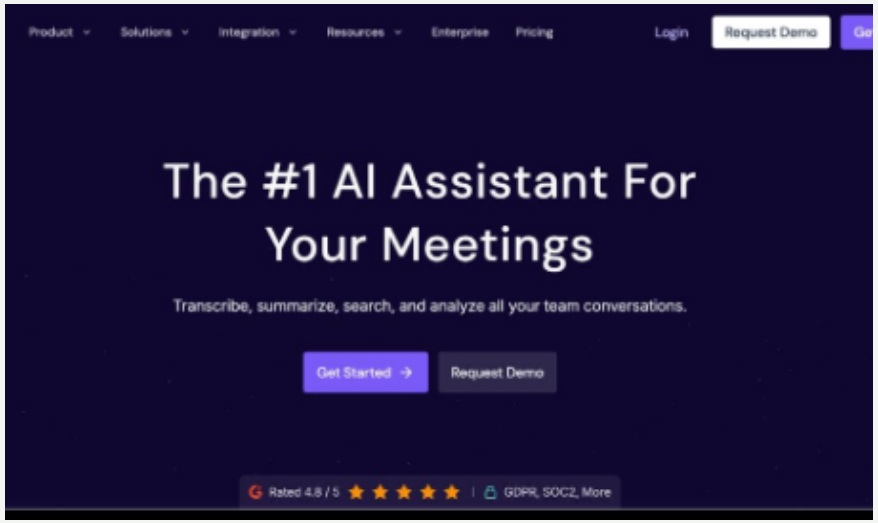
Orbit Media blogging survey, 2022–2026; self-reported results.

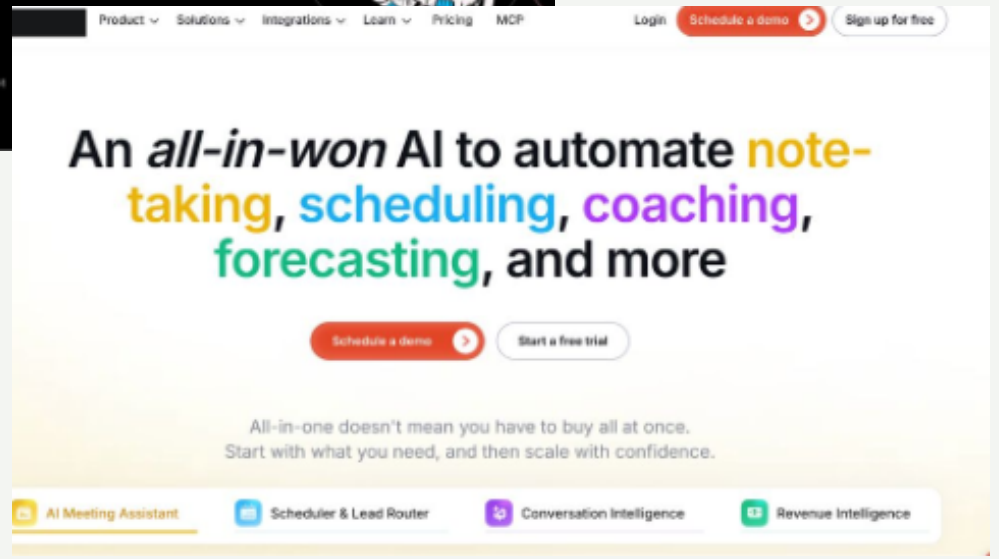
Everything online looks, sounds and promises the same











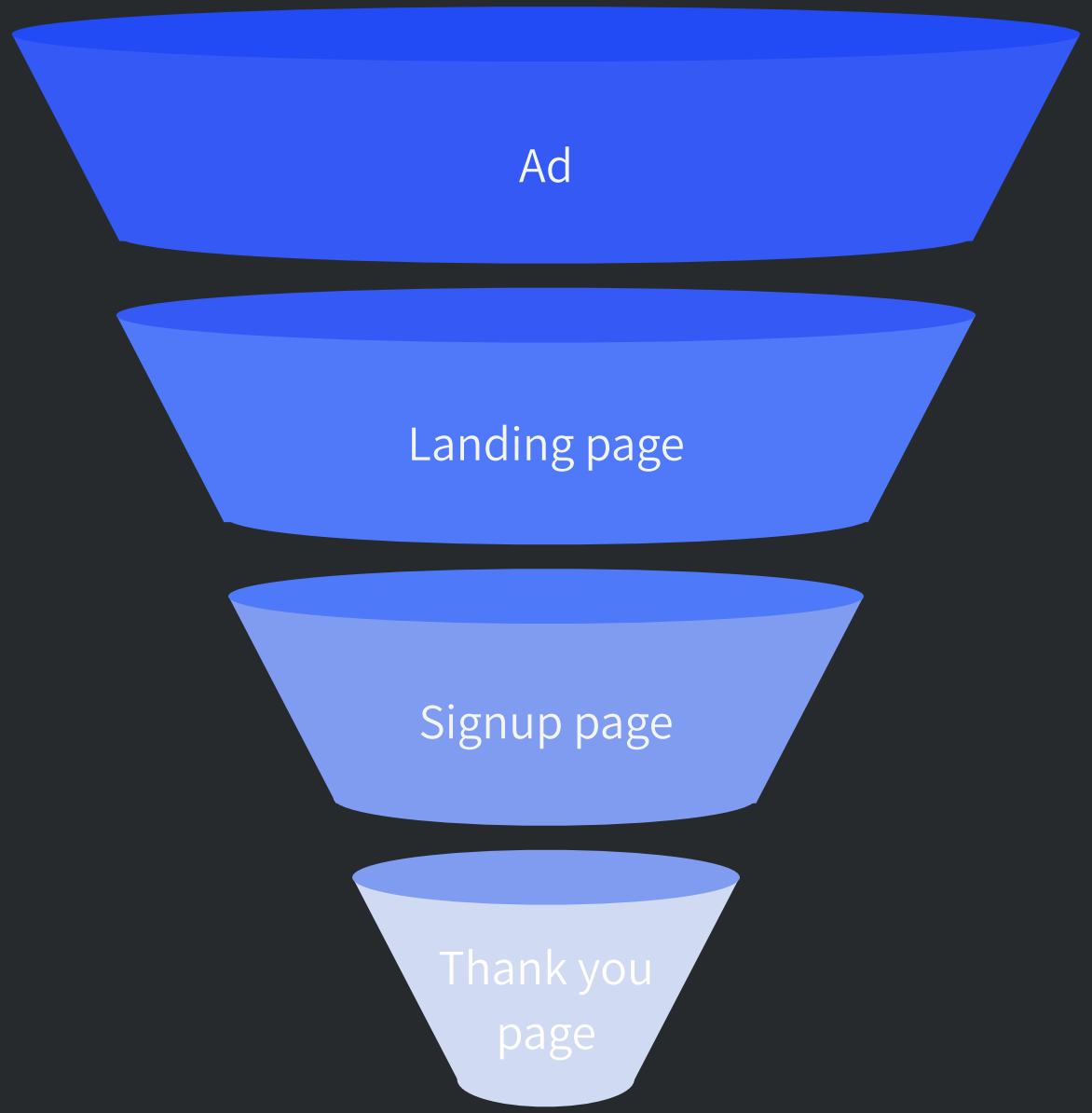
Less differentiation.

Less connection.

Less reason to trust.

Less conversions.

The linear funnel is dead



Buying decisions aren’t just happening on your website anymore

A colleague

Discord

Reddit

Claude

Your website

YouTube

Facebook groups

Reviews

WhatsApp

CHATGPT

Substack

Slack



Trust is determined in public

- “Has anyone actually tried this?”
- “Did this work for you?”
- “What’s the catch?”
- “Am I about to make a mistake?”
- “Can I trust this brand?”
- “Is this for someone like us?”
- “Is this good for people like [x]?”



“Consumers have become harder to convince”



“I only buy products or services from a trusted brand”

“I spend quite a lot of time researching brands before a major purchase”

EVERYTHING ONLINE.

EVERY SENTIMENT.

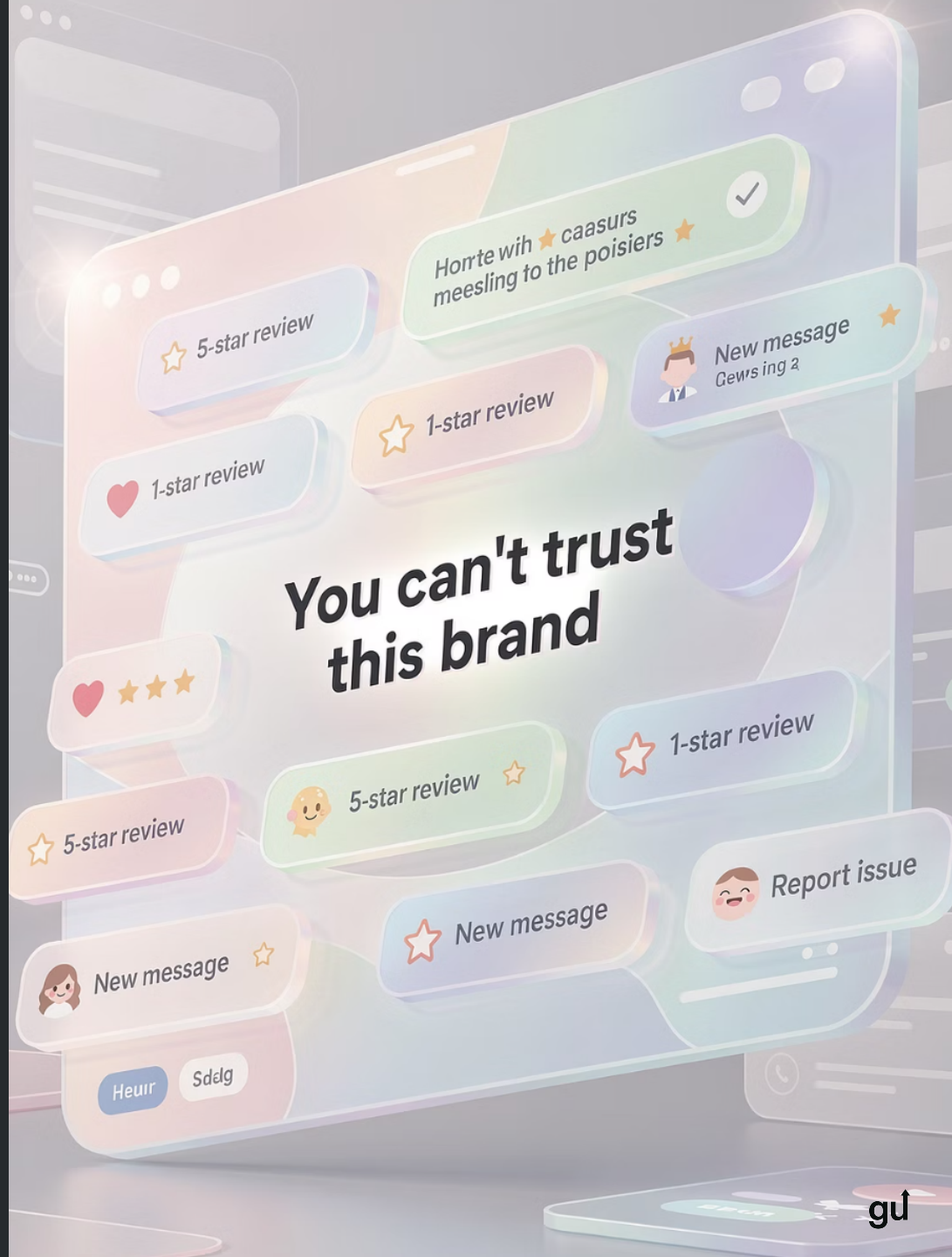
EVERYTHING FRUSTRATION.

EVERY MOMENT OF TRUST.

EVERY WARNING.

EVERY PRAISE.

SUMMARIZED INTO ONE DECISION:



Without trust...

Without trust...

There are no conversions

TRUST =

The perceived probability
that choosing you won't end in regret.

The new customer journey

1. **Discovery Phase**

   Buyer discovers your brand through ads, peer recommendations, organic content…

2. **Research Phase**

   Multi-channel investigation across reviews, social proof, competitor comparisons (mostly off your site)

3. **Validation Phase**

   Buyer visits the site to confirm what they've already decided, looking for deal-breakers

4. **Conversion Moment**

   Final click happens only if nothing contradicted the trust built elsewhere

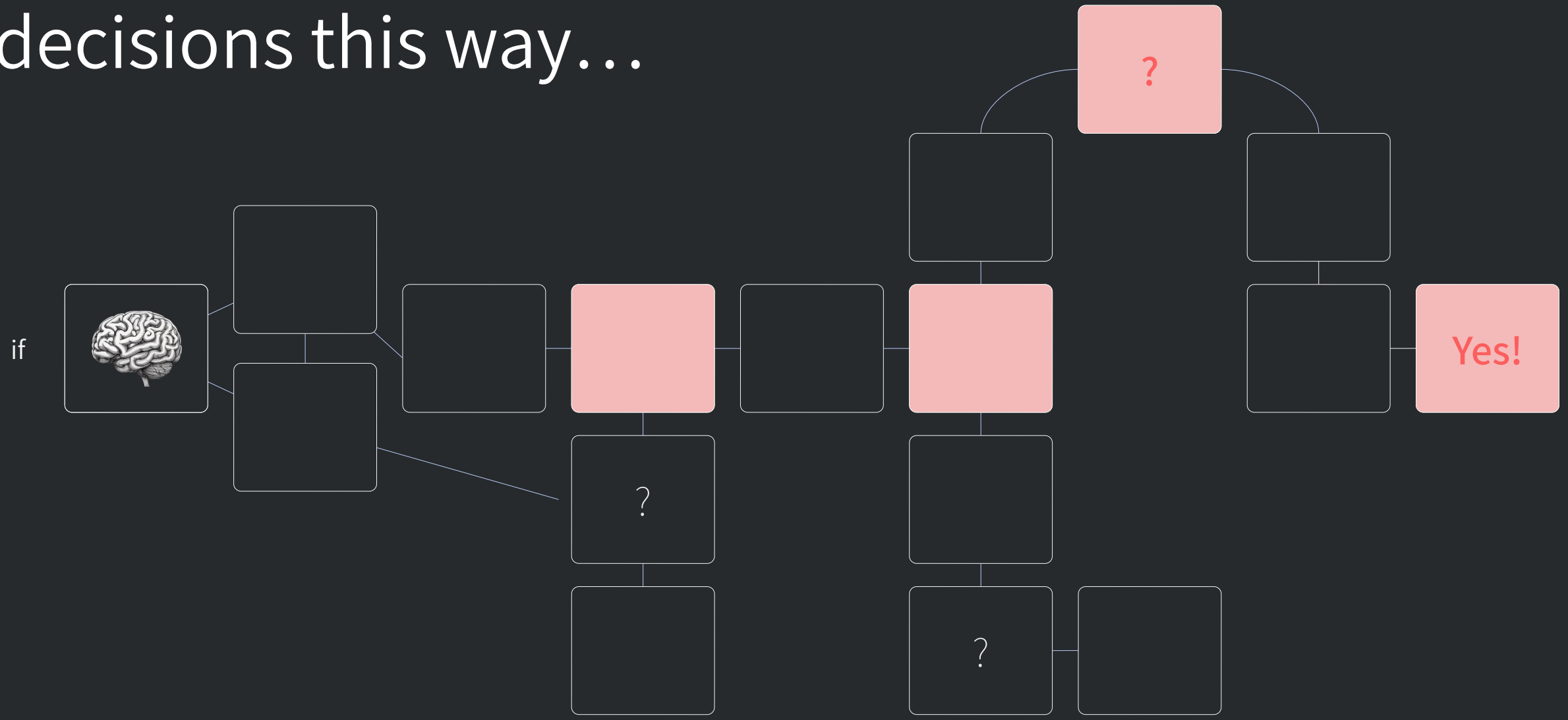
Everything has changed…

AI / Search / Algorithms
Channels / Automation / Content
Tools / Demands / Attribution

But one thing hasn't…

People.

We market as if people make decisions this way…

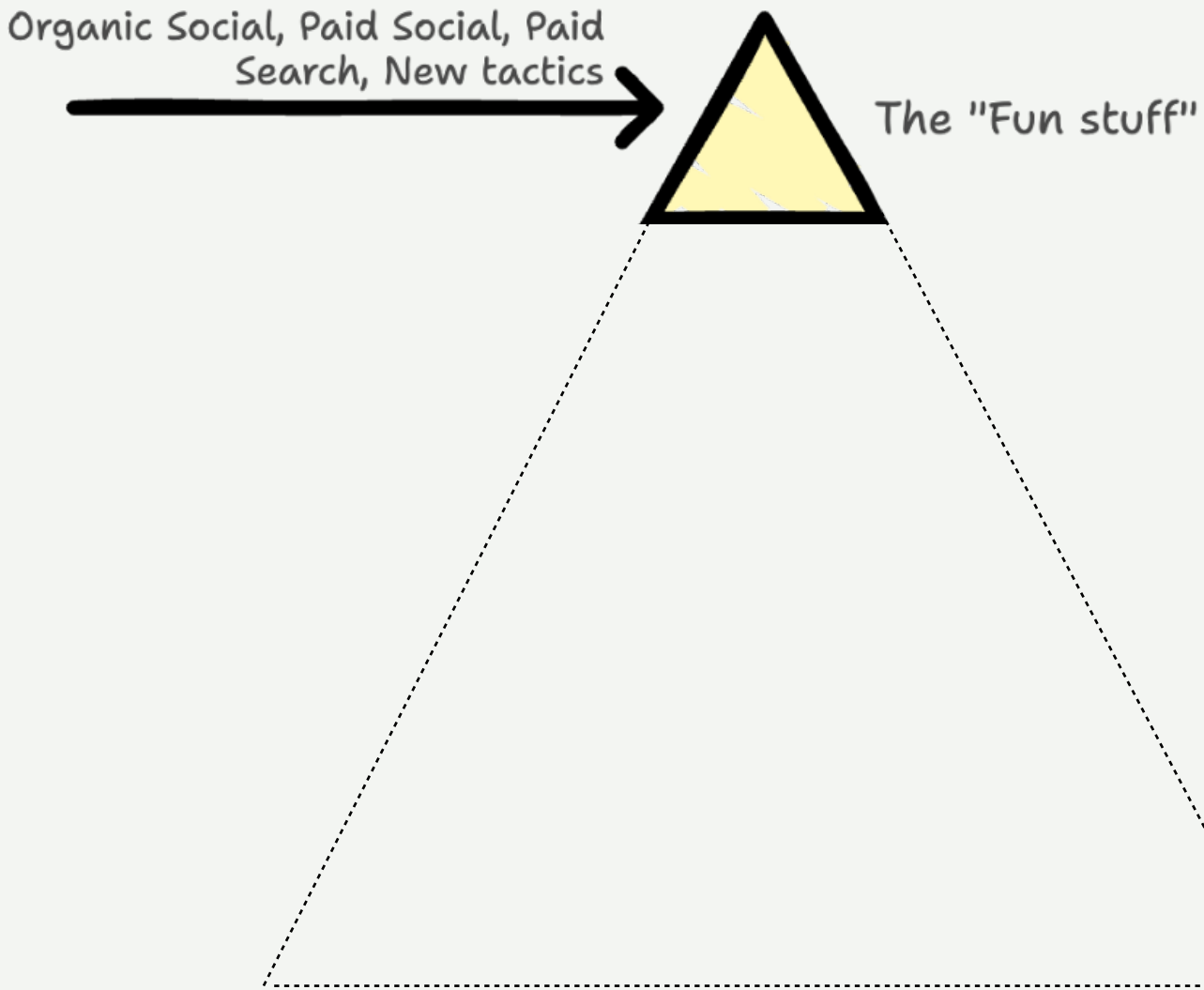


Every decision we make in life is based on EMOTION

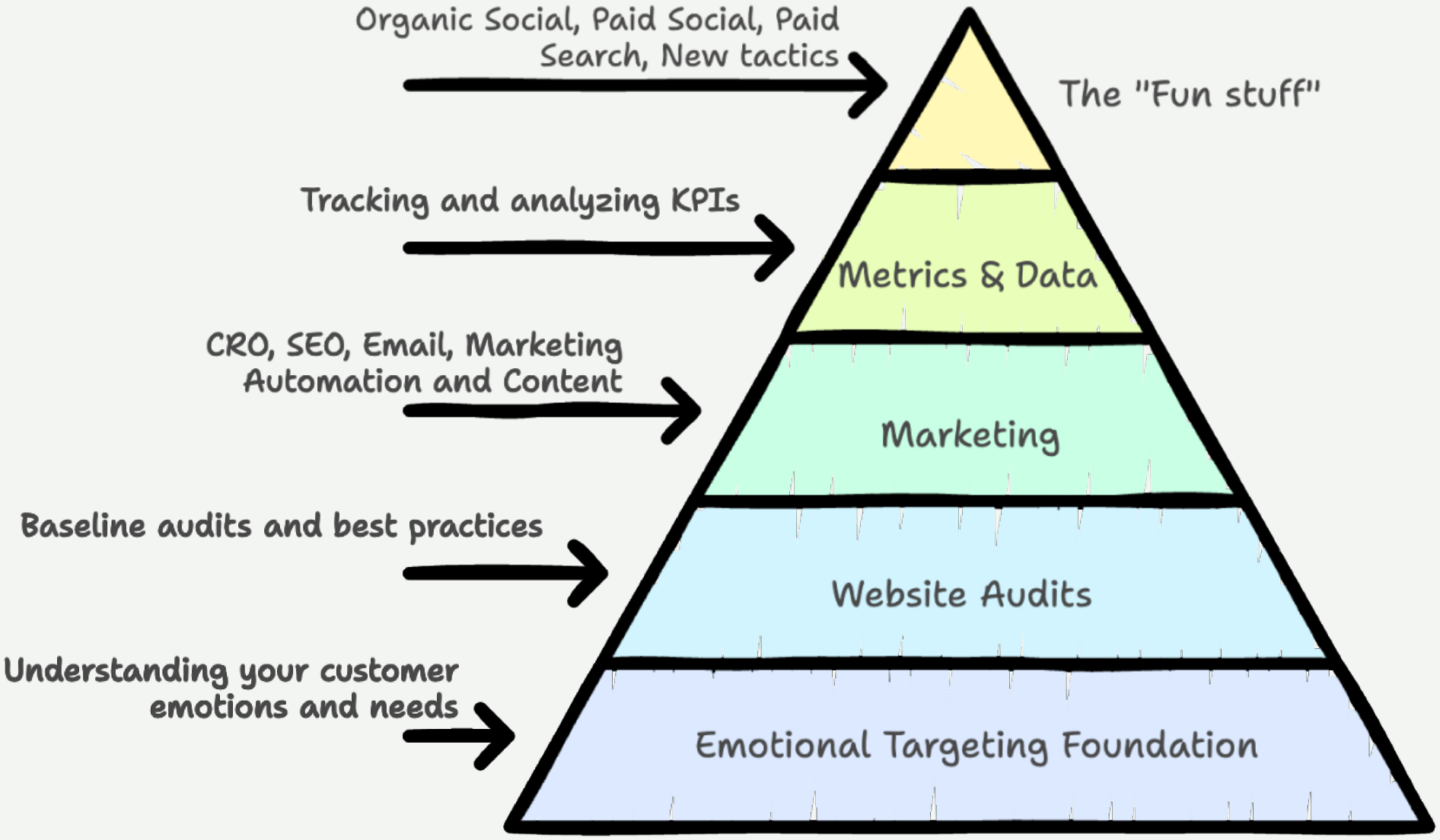
IF 

YES!

What everyone’s getting wrong



What all marketing teams are missing



Emotional Targeting

Is the foundation for everything you say,
where you say it and how you convert.

The data we had before:

Business owner
36-50 years old
Runs multiple businesses
AI experience = simple daily use
US-based

01

Real estate

02

Healthcare

03

Recording studio

04

Childcare

CASE STUDY

“My entire business lives inside my head.”

All the business knowledge, processes, customer insight and brand voice live inside my brain… I’m the bottleneck.

Hiring more people is expensive, scary and too time consuming for me right now, but I can’t do it alone anymore.

The underlying doubt:

“I’m already so busy… How hard will I need to work, to get good results?”

BUYER QUESTION

“Will Sintra understand my business without me having to explain it?”

SEARCH-ASSISTED ANSWER

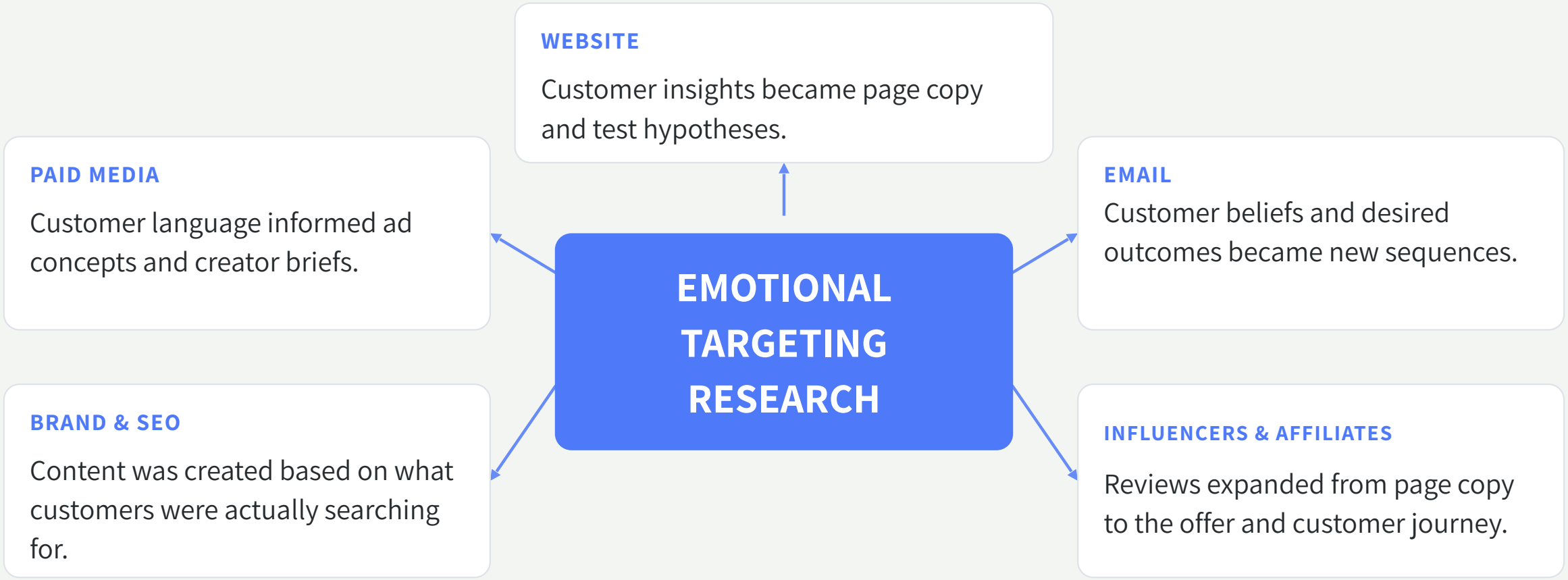
“Not without some setup. Sintra says Brain AI uses the business information you add - such as documents, brand guidelines and website content - to give its AI employees context. You need to add that information and keep it current.”

An answer about you…

That doesn’t actually answer their real question.

CASE STUDY

Emotional Targeting helped shape more than the website



How to use Emotional Targeting to build trust and convert everywhere

01

Research the emotions

02

Identify the trust gap

03

Run an emotional targeting audit

04

Optimize what you own

05

Optimize what you don’t

Understand your customers' emotions

What's at stake if they don't solve this problem?

How do they want to feel about themselves once they solve it?

How do they want others to see and feel about them?

Understand your customers' emotions

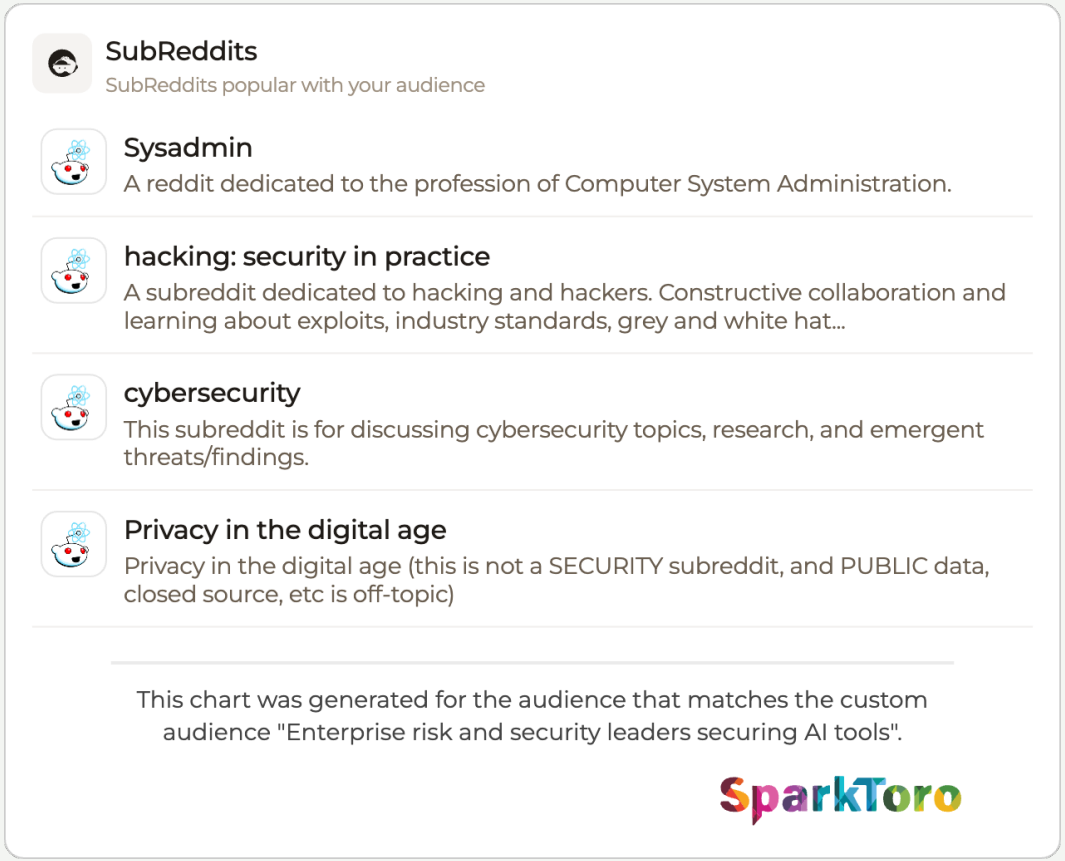
What are they worried will happen if they make the wrong call?

How is this problem affecting their daily lives?

What have they tried before and why didn't it work?

a. Where is your audience making decisions?

Uncover social platforms your prospects use, the podcasts the listen to, communities they hang out in, influencers they trust



b. Identify the trust gap

WHAT WE'RE SAYING



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



Audit your customer journey strategically

Are you making it about yourself or about your customer?

Are you describing your prospects' pains and challenges?

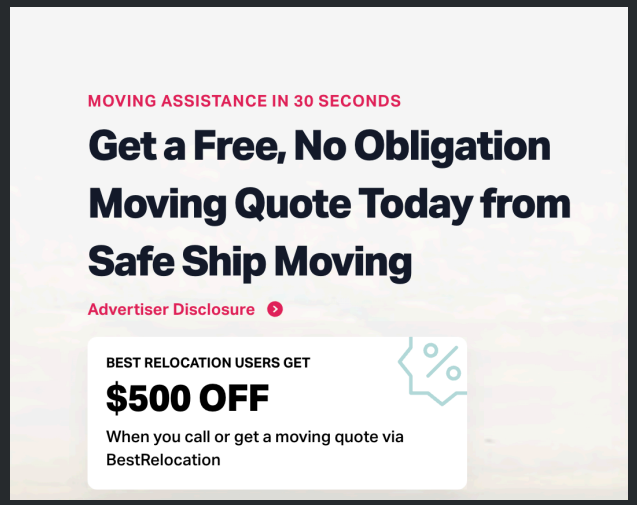
Are you promising outcomes prospects actually want?

Can a prospect immediately see it's for someone like them?

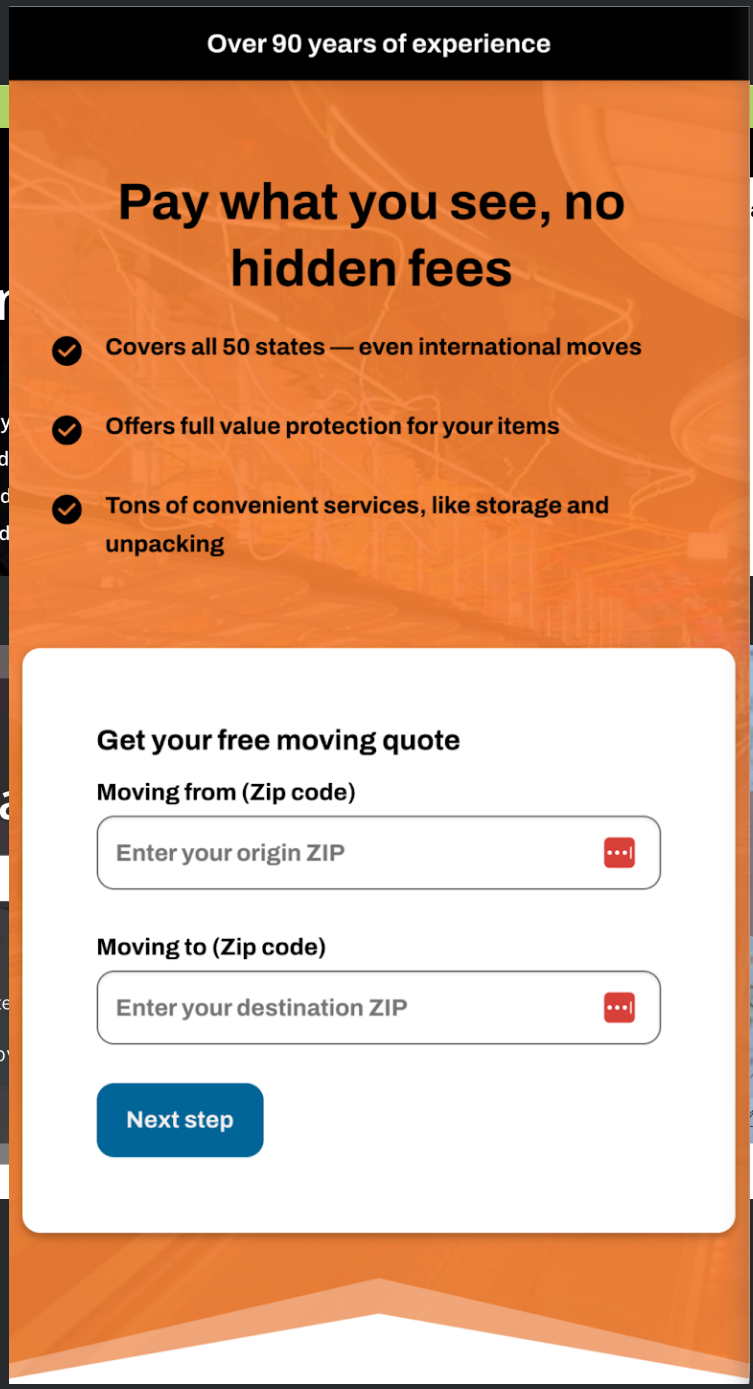
CASE STUDY

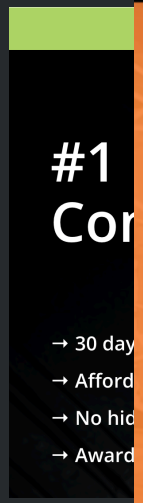
What everyone is saying

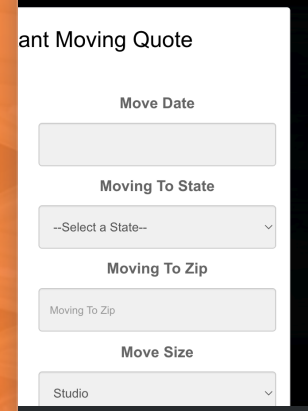
"The best price"
"The cheapest quote"
"The biggest deal"
"Act now to get X% off"
"Guaranteed price match"
"No hidden fees"

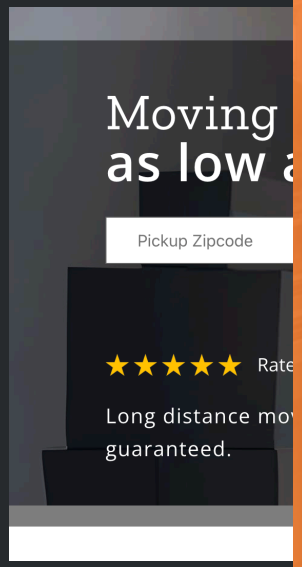


CONTROL











WHAT MOVING PROSPECTS ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT

“All my stuff will arrive safely”

“Will my life arrive in one piece?”

"Are these trustworthy people?”

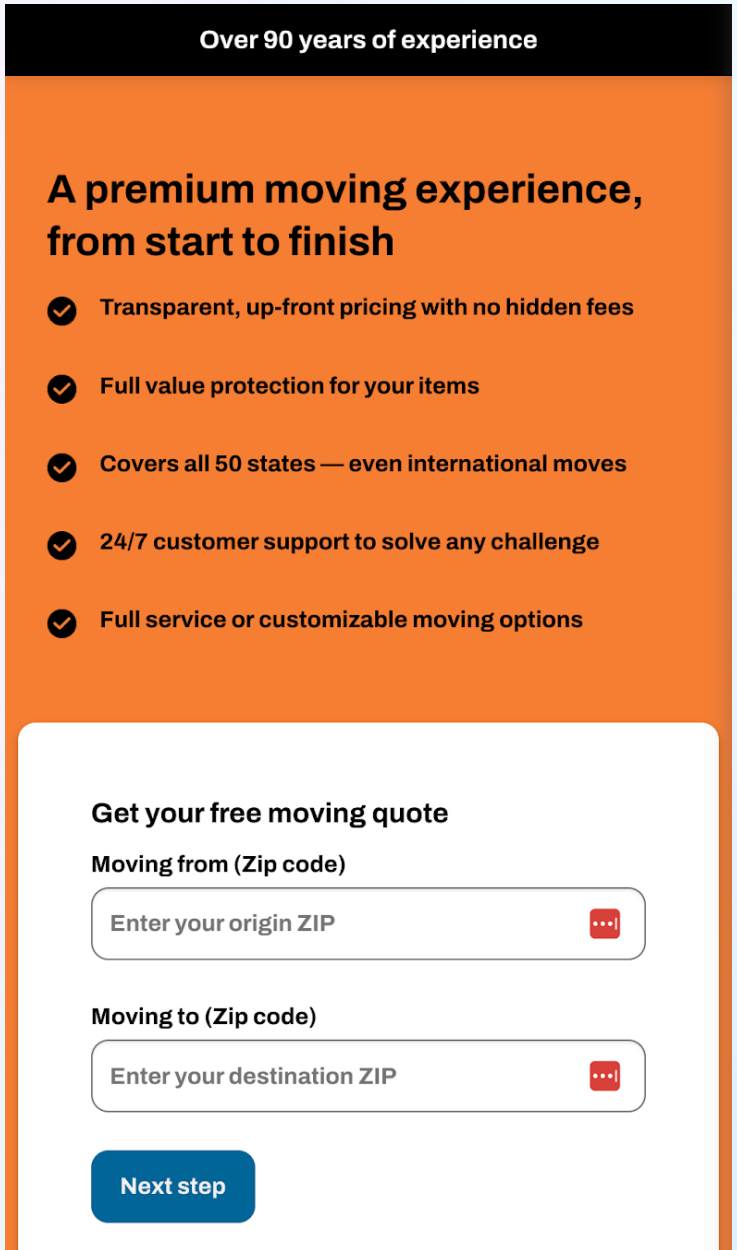
“Someone will help me from start to finish”

“Someone to call if things go wrong”

“Friendly, kind people”

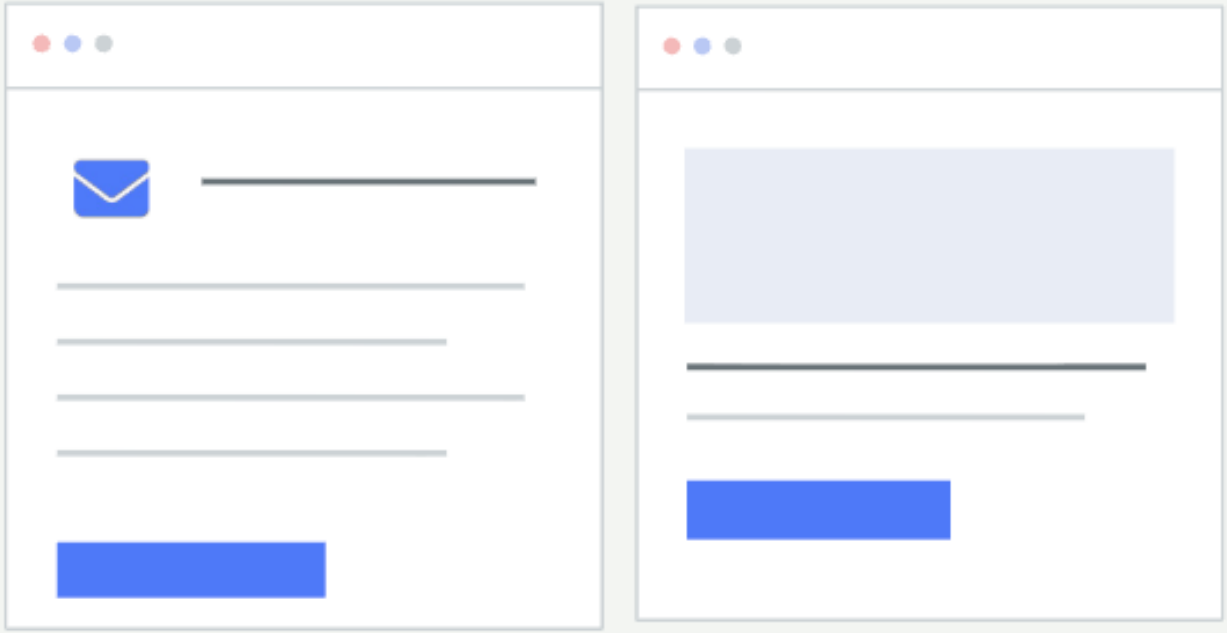
+14%
increase in conversions

Variation



Optimize what you own

- Turn research and audit findings into hypotheses
- Test the message, proof, design, and experience
- Use what you learn to decide what comes next
- Run meaningful tests (not random elements on a page).



Planning a meaningful experiment

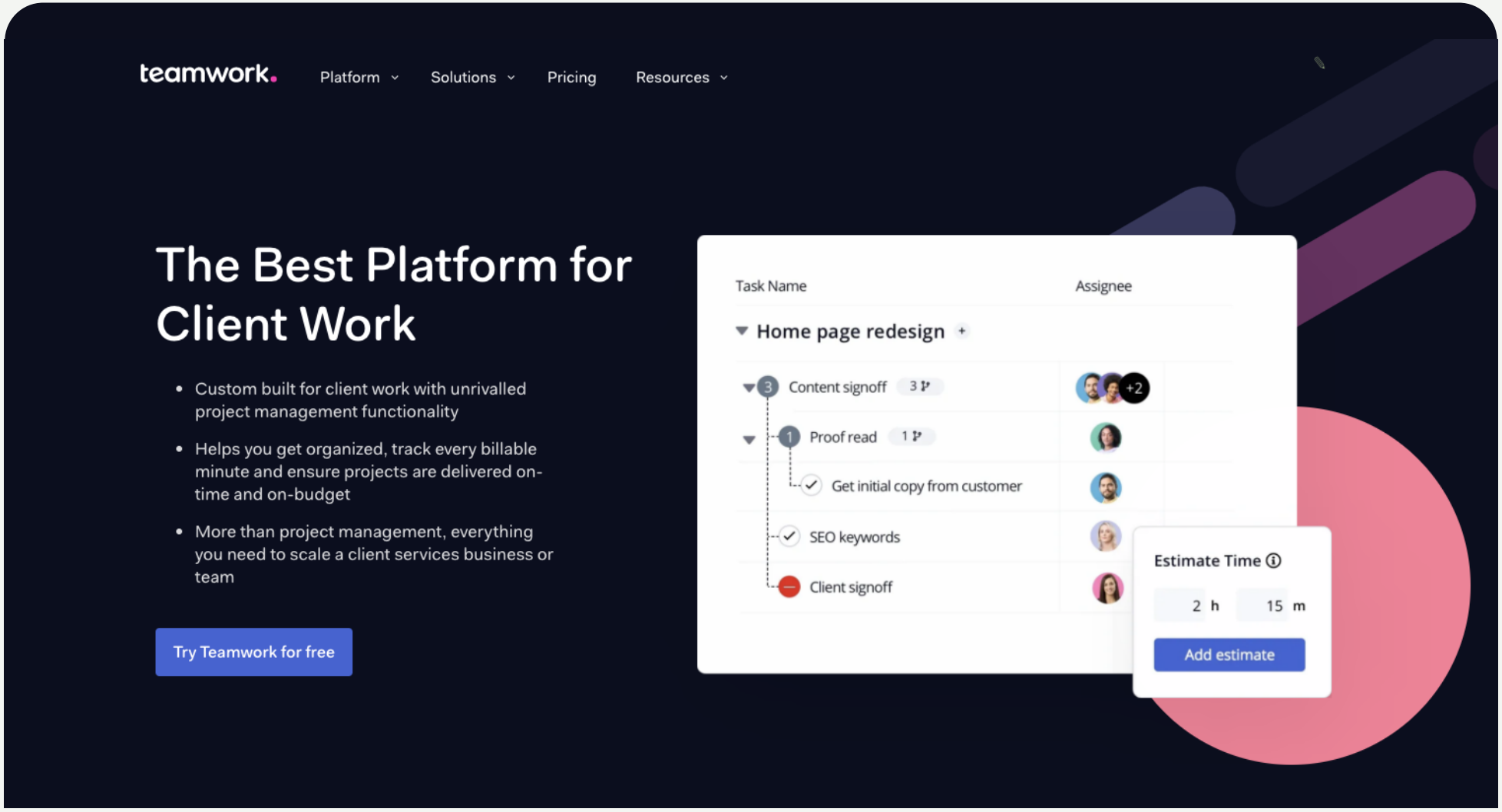
What problems have you identified?
(based on your research and audit)

Where is this happening?

Why could this be happening?
(your hypothesis)

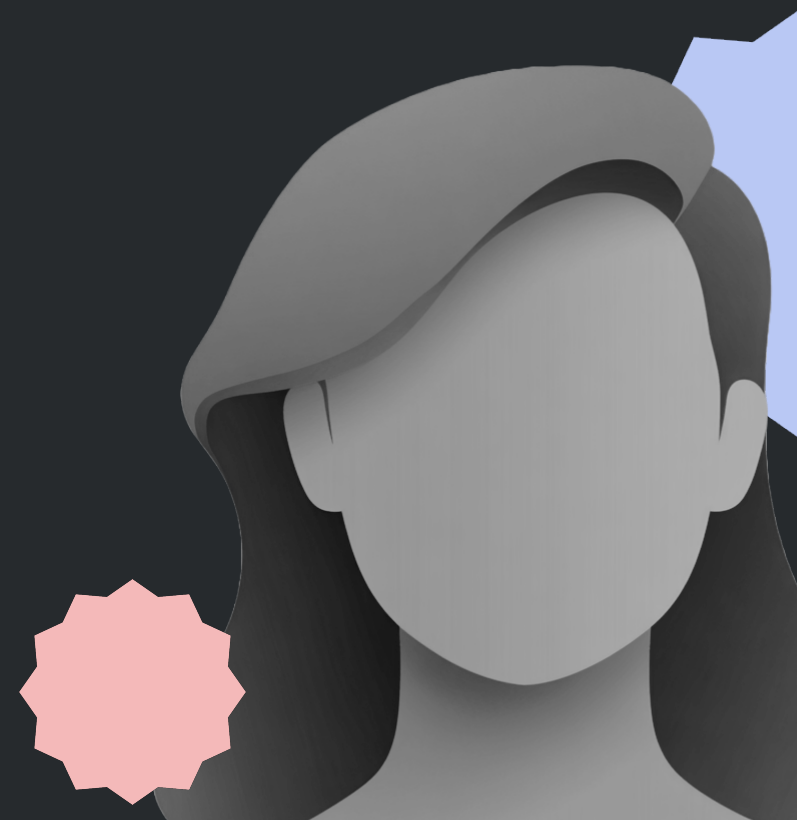
What tests will you run to solve this problem?

Control


teamwork.
Platform
Solutions
Pricing
Resources
The Best Platform for Client Work
Custom built for client work with unrivalled project management functionality
Helps you get organized, track every billable minute and ensure projects are delivered on-time and on-budget
More than project management, everything you need to scale a client services business or team
Try Teamwork for free
Task Name
Assignee
Home page redesign
Content signoff
Proof read
Get initial copy from customer
SEO keywords
Client signoff
Estimate Time
2 h
15 m
Add estimate

The data we had before:

Agency owner (32-55 years old),
10+ employees, needs reporting,
dashboards and chat.



What most PM tools were saying

All your teams, all their workflows—
connected in one workspace

AI-powered project management

The #1 project management tool

The best platform for client work

Supercharge your teams with AI that gets
work done

Project tracking made simple

Seamless project management for
your team

Discover Powerful Project Management From [brand]

WHAT PROSPECTS ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT

r/projectmanagement · 1y ago
CynthiaSky

What project management tools do you guys recommend?

My company uses Excel as its primary tool for running the projects; everything from the Gantt charts to its resource tracking is being done here. Honestly it works and I think excel is great but the problem I am having with this Excel infrastructure is that most of the team spends large amounts of man-hours encoding data just to keep these sheets updated, and as a project manager, consolidating all these Excel files into one report is taking a lot of man-hours from me as well that I could be spending managing the actual project. What tool or tools do you recommend? We work for a non-profit, so there is a budget constraint too

The requirements aren't complicated and are pretty simple
1.) A Gantt chart to help the team track dependencies
2.) A task tracker for the day-to-day
3.) A resource tracker to help me track inventory
4.) The workspace has to be shared to reduce the consolidation of reports

But even if you have nothing to suggest then just let me know what you use and why you use it? I'd still like to know how others are running their projects and why those tools are your preferred tools

Edit: This is my first time posting in this community. Thank you to all who took the time to entertain my question. My perspective has widened to the many different tools everyone uses, and that everyone has their unique workflows very much tailored to their industry, organization, and personality. There are a lot of tools that you guys have suggested that I am excited to look into. Thank you everyone, for sharing I enjoyed reading all the comments

Read more

86 · 93

r/projectmanagement · 7mo ago
WhiteChili

How many project management tools did you try before finding the right PM software for your team?

Hi fellow PMs,

Curious to hear how messy the journey was for others.
I went through at least 5 different project management tools before we found one that actually worked for our team. Most of them looked slick during demos but struggled the second we had to manage dozens of projects at once.

The big turning points for me were finding a tool that:

- Let us run proper what-if scenarios on schedules without breaking dependencies.
- Had reporting dashboards that updated almost instantly (instead of lagging whenever the project list grew).

That combo alone cut down so much of the “Excel + side spreadsheets” chaos we were juggling.

So I’m curious.. did you land on your current PM software right away, or was it more of a trial-and-error nightmare for you too?

32 · 133

Why is it so difficult to introduce new productivity tools and/or knowledge management tools in a company?

All related (35) · Sort · Recommended

Drew Dillon
worked in and around startups almost my whole career · 12y

It's a few things:

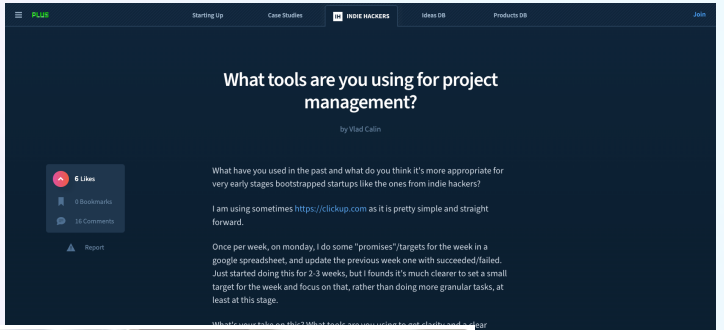
* What's in it for me?
Knowledge management solutions are great for content creators, but don't necessarily add value for the knowledge seeker. If I can just email Alice and get the same thing delivered to my phone, why am I going to go search somewhere?

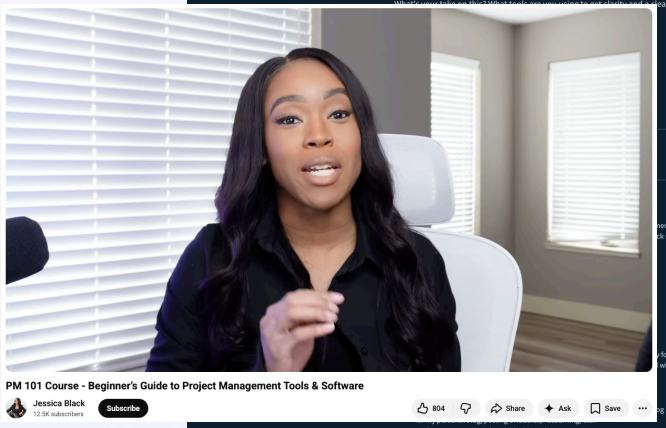
* They suck.
Modern SaaS applications have pro… designers and A/B test [https://www.quora.com/topic

Continue Reading

Upvote · 5









The insights we uncovered

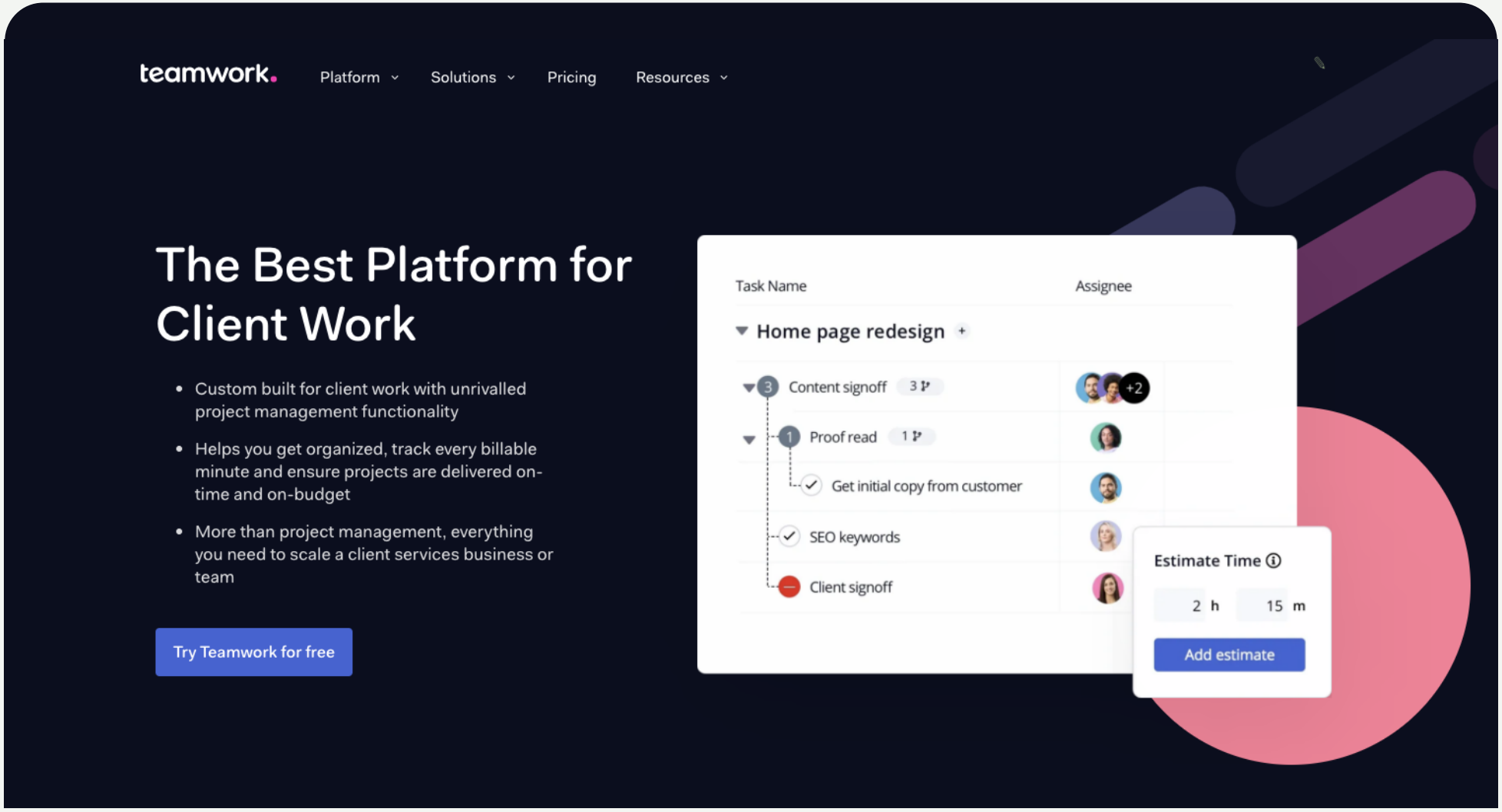
Agency owner who is tired of over promising and under-delivering. Wants to know what the F*@&# is going on, wants to know if she's profitable or not, and if Patty the designer is actually working.

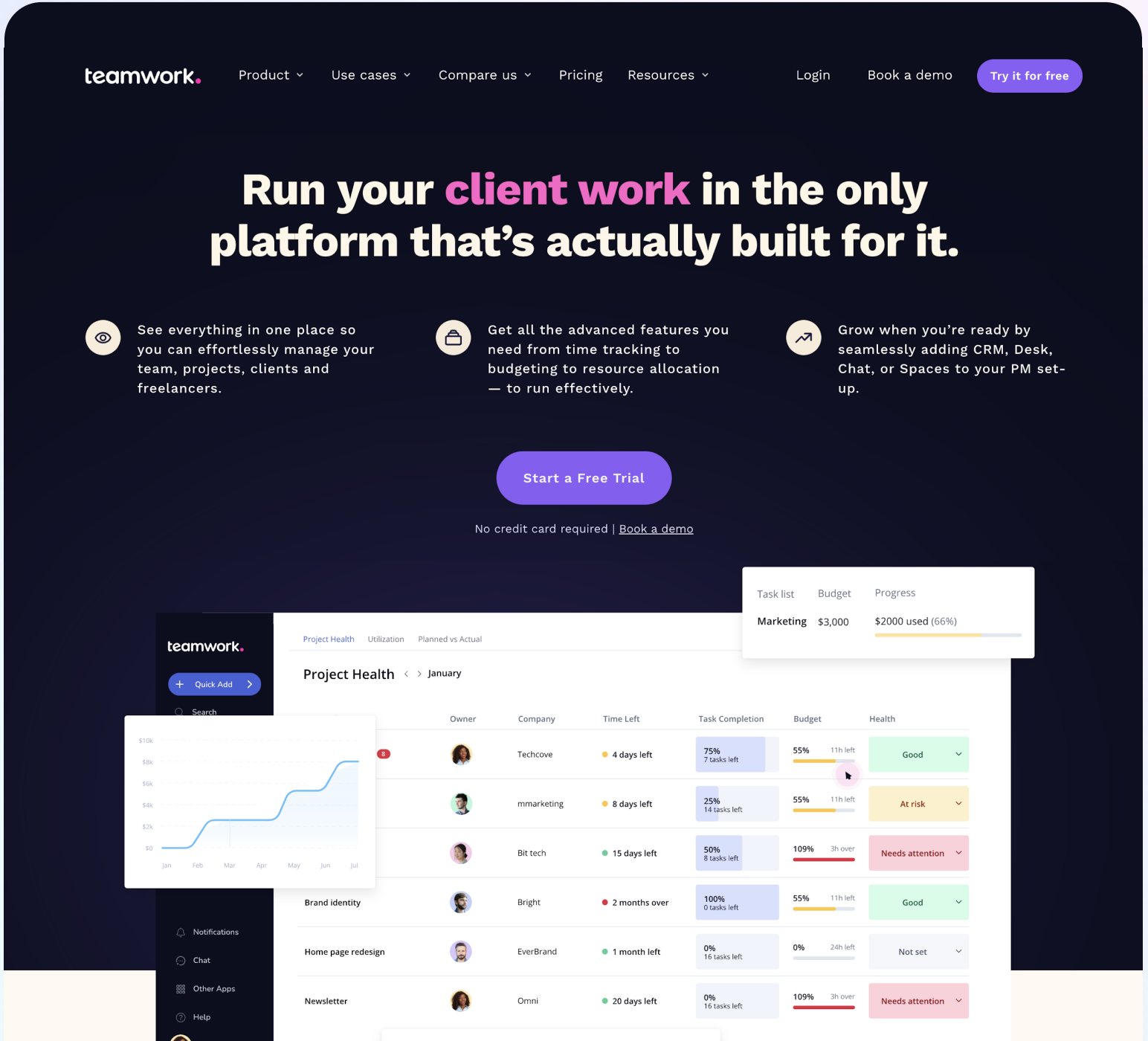


Planning a meaningful experiment

What problems have you identified? (based on your research and audit)	Prospects cannot immediately see that this solution was specifically built for them and do not know the difference between us and competitors
Where is this happening?	Our homepage and comparison pages
Why could this be happening? (your hypothesis)	Our copy is too generic and speaks to everyone. We sound and look a lot like our competitor and it’s hard to tell the difference
What tests will you run to solve this problem?	Messaging experiment on the comparison page and the homepage to clearly show we’re built for creative and client-facing teams that do retainer and project work

Control

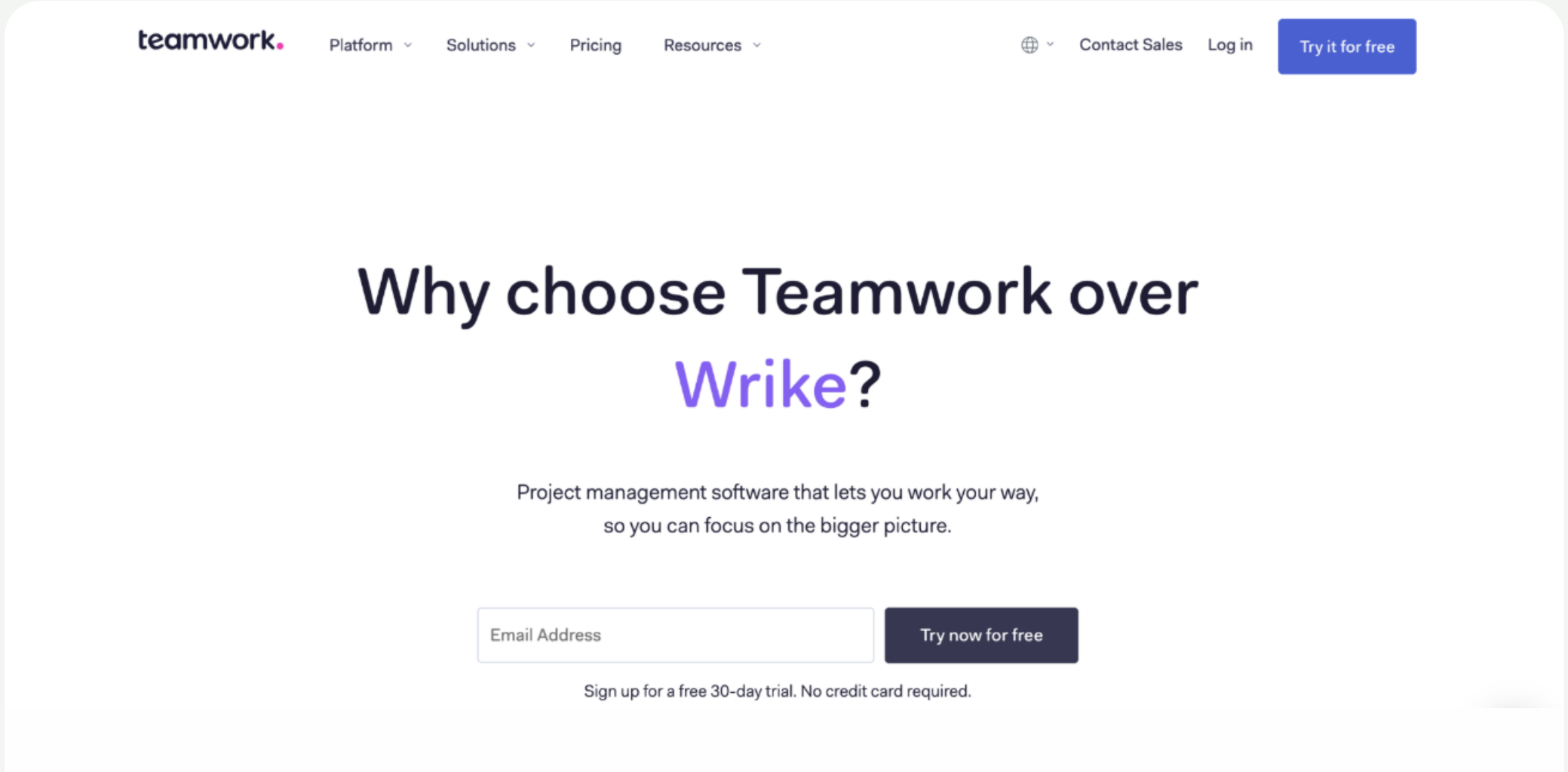

teamwork.
Platform
Solutions
Pricing
Resources
The Best Platform for Client Work
Custom built for client work with unrivalled project management functionality
Helps you get organized, track every billable minute and ensure projects are delivered on-time and on-budget
More than project management, everything you need to scale a client services business or team
Try Teamwork for free
Task Name
Assignee
Home page redesign
Content signoff
Proof read
Get initial copy from customer
SEO keywords
Client signoff
Estimate Time
2 h
15 m
Add estimate



+7X

increase in free trials

Control


teamwork.
Platform
Solutions
Pricing
Resources
Contact Sales
Log in
Try it for free
Why choose Teamwork over
Wrike?
Project management software that lets you work your way,
so you can focus on the bigger picture.
Email Address
Try now for free
Sign up for a free 30-day trial. No credit card required.

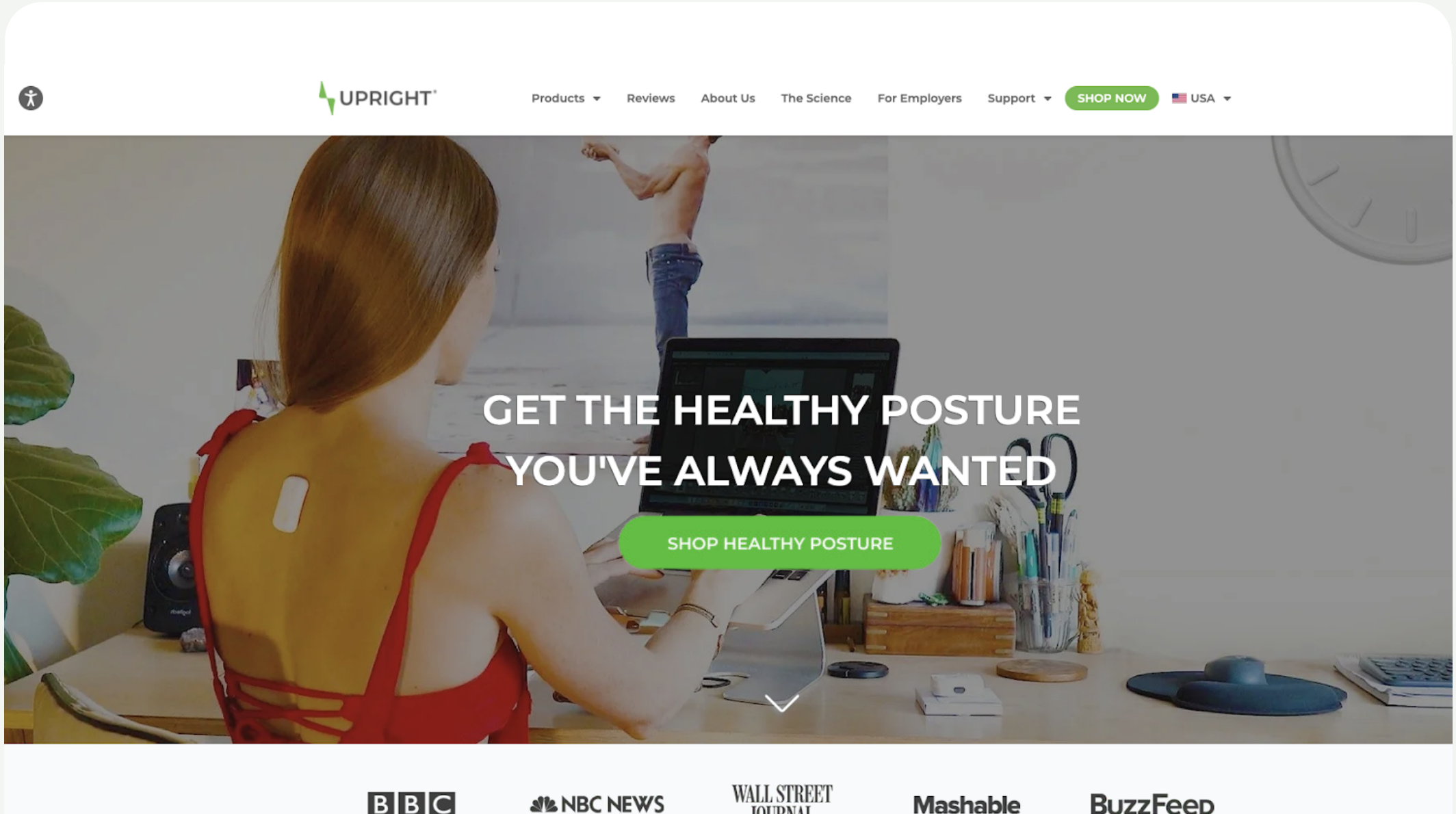
+54%
in free trials from organic traffic

What can your team do with Teamwork.com that you can't with Wrike?

Some of this depends on the plan and how much you spend. (If you are willing to pay hundreds of dollars a month more, you can get some great functionality with Wrike.) To keep things even, this table compares our Grow plan ($18 a month) with Wrike's Business plan ($24.80 a month) without taking any costly add-ons into account.

	Teamwork.com	Wrike
See challenges before they cause problems	✓ Board view ✓ Portfolio ✓ Project time budget	✓ Board view ✗ Portfolio ✗ Project time budget
Get visibility into performance and profitability	✓ Burndown reporting ✓ Utilization reports ✓ Workload resource management	✗ Burndown reporting ✗ Utilization reports ✓ Workload resource management (through Workload charts)
Manage financial obligations	✓ Billing and invoicing ✓ Resource scheduling ✓ Budgeting	✗ Billing and invoicing ✓ Resource scheduling (called resource management in

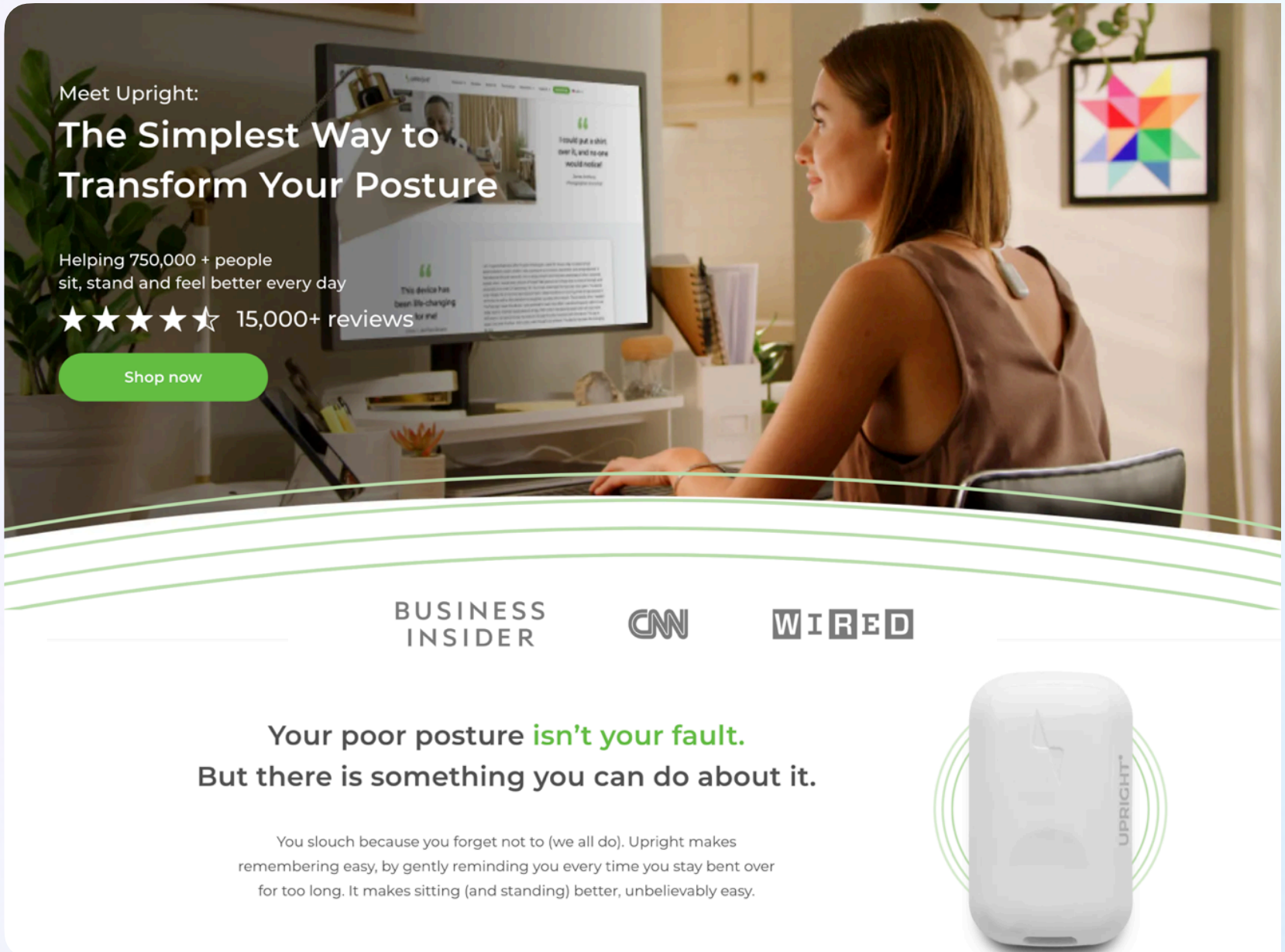
Control


UPRIGHT
Products
Reviews
About Us
The Science
For Employers
Support
SHOP NOW
USA
GET THE HEALTHY POSTURE
YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED
SHOP HEALTHY POSTURE
BBC
NBC NEWS
WALL STREET
Mashable
BuzzFeed

VARIATION

33.69%
Increase in transactions

25%
Increase in revenue



a. Optimize what you don’t own

Bring useful answers to the places that matter.
Address the questions and concerns your audience has.

Listen intently

Disclose your role

Answer usefully

Respect the space

b. Collect insights everywhere

01 What worries them before buying?

02 What helped them choose?

03 What have they tried before?

04 What put them off an offer?

05 How do they describe themselves?

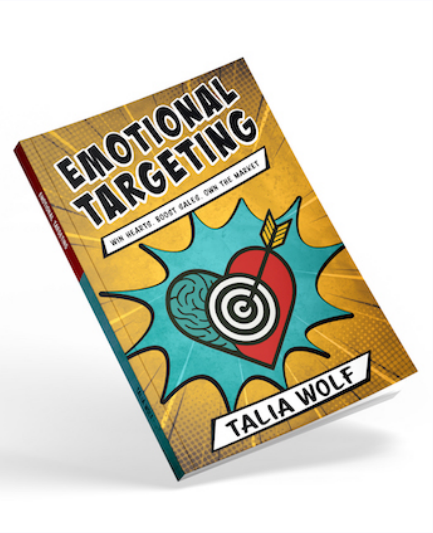
You don’t need to optimize and do ~~everything~~…



YOU NEED TO OPTIMIZE AND FOCUS ON WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS


9¾
HOGWARTS EXPRESS
REALITY SUCKS.

THANK YOU!



FREE RESOURCES & MY BOOK: