



CASE STUDY



**How Extra Space
Storage transformed**
its product prioritization
and saved 10+ hours
a month – with airfocus

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airfocus has transformed how we prioritize and communicate with stakeholders. What used to take hours of manual updates now happens automatically."

Tyler Huish

Director of Product Management, Extra Space Storage

Problem

With around 4,000 locations across the US, Extra Space Storage struggled with using spreadsheets and disconnected Jira workflows for product management. Creating a lack of transparency in decision-making, wasted hours with manual updates across tools. With outdated documents, and chronically unreliable timelines, they urgently needed a change.

Solution

With airfocus, they streamlined product management processes, creating an integrated prioritization system that connected with their existing tools. This has led to better visibility across products, improved stakeholder communication, and significantly reduced manual effort – allowing their product team to focus on strategic initiatives rather than manual administrative tasks.

About Extra Space Storage

Extra Space Storage operates thousands of locations, primarily in densely populated areas across the United States. With a hybrid physical-digital approach, the company serves both individual consumers (95%) and business customers (5%) through its website, call centers, in-person management, and self-service kiosks. If you're in the US, check them out for all your storage needs at www.extraspace.com.

The 'spreadsheet update' challenge ✨

When Tyler began evolving the company's product management practices, the team relied heavily on manual processes. "We were using Excel spreadsheets alongside Jira for our product management needs," Tyler explained. "While our priority matrix methodology was sound, the implementation was incredibly manual and time-consuming." The resulting reality was hours of chasing multiple different people to keep it up-to-date.

This approach created several significant pain points:

- **Stakeholders struggled to understand prioritization decisions**
- **Product managers spent hours manually updating information**
- **Documentation quickly became outdated**
- **Cross-product prioritization remained a constant challenge**

In short, despite having multiple product managers, the company couldn't effectively communicate dependencies or visualize work across teams.

"The biggest problem was stakeholders. The only way they knew what was being worked on, and its progress and timing, was by asking the product manager directly. We were having the same conversation over and over again, making it hard to build trust," says Tyler.

The team was growing from a team of three, to a team of over 18. "The pain comes with scale," says Tyler. "There's a lot of transformation we've had to do over the last couple of years."

Why airfocus?

Adaptability, connectivity & visual functions

As Director of Product Management, Tyler led a selection process that involved experimenting with a range of product management tools, and airfocus stood out for several key reasons.

These included the ability to adapt airfocus to their existing methodology and workflows, two-way sync with their Jira implementation, and the ability to bring their own prioritization framework into airfocus, and have it visually represent multiple dimensions in their priority matrix.

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None of the other tools could pull off the priority matrix like airfocus. The ability to see cross-team dependencies in a single view was a game changer.”

Tyler Huish

Director of Product Management, Extra Space Storage

Tyler also pointed to a host of more specific benefits, including the use of Gantt chart views to improve communication about initiative timeframes, and the way shared workspaces provided cross-product oversight across the company's entire portfolio. Now, rather than creating timelines on multiple slides on PowerPoint, managers can take their stakeholders to airfocus to show that timeline, or share the link with them. They can then check it at any time, eliminating unnecessary back-and-forth.

The result: resources saved across the board, from communication to prioritization

"Now we can see all 50-60 items across nine products in one view. This has been game-changing for understanding our true capacity and making informed decisions about resource allocation."

Tyler Huish

Director of Product Management, Extra Space Storage



- **Better stakeholder communication:** "There was frustration with stakeholders being told a project was late... again. But now we can at least talk about why. Before, we'd spend entire meetings explaining why one initiative was prioritized over another," Tyler recalled. "Now stakeholders can see the evaluation criteria directly in the tool, understanding exactly why something scores the way it does."



- **Enhanced visualization:** For instance, the priority matrix in airfocus added a third dimension – circle size representing revenue impact – beyond the two dimensions possible in Excel. This provides a more nuanced view of priorities and is particularly valuable for presentations.



- **Cross-product prioritization:** "Now we can see all 50-60 items across nine products in one view," said Tyler. "This has been game-changing for understanding our true capacity and making informed decisions about resource allocation."



- **Dependency management:** airfocus allows the visualization of dependencies across teams. This has made a big difference to communication about sequencing constraints, making stakeholder conversations much more productive. "I can create a shared workspace and pull all of the workspaces into one. I can see when our platform team has to do something before the website team can make an update... that's been a big help. Before, people had to just conceptualize it in their mind."



- **Time savings:** Perhaps the most measurable change, though, has been the time savings that airfocus has brought. "The integration with Jira means our product managers can work at the epic level in airfocus while product analysts manage detailed stories in Jira, with everything staying in sync automatically," Tyler explained. "This alone has saved us countless hours of administrative work."



- **Incorporating feedback:** "Moving stakeholders from manual updates to a self-service tool is like teaching them to fish instead of just giving them fish," Tyler explained. "When they can access information themselves in airfocus, it breaks the cycle of constant meetings and repeated explanations. They can find answers on their own and leave comments for follow-up – which ultimately saves everyone time."

What has airfocus ✨ meant for Tyler, Director of Product Management?

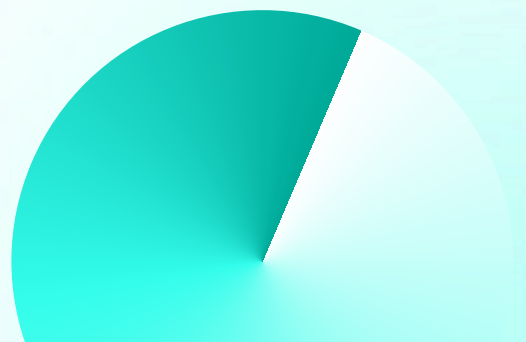
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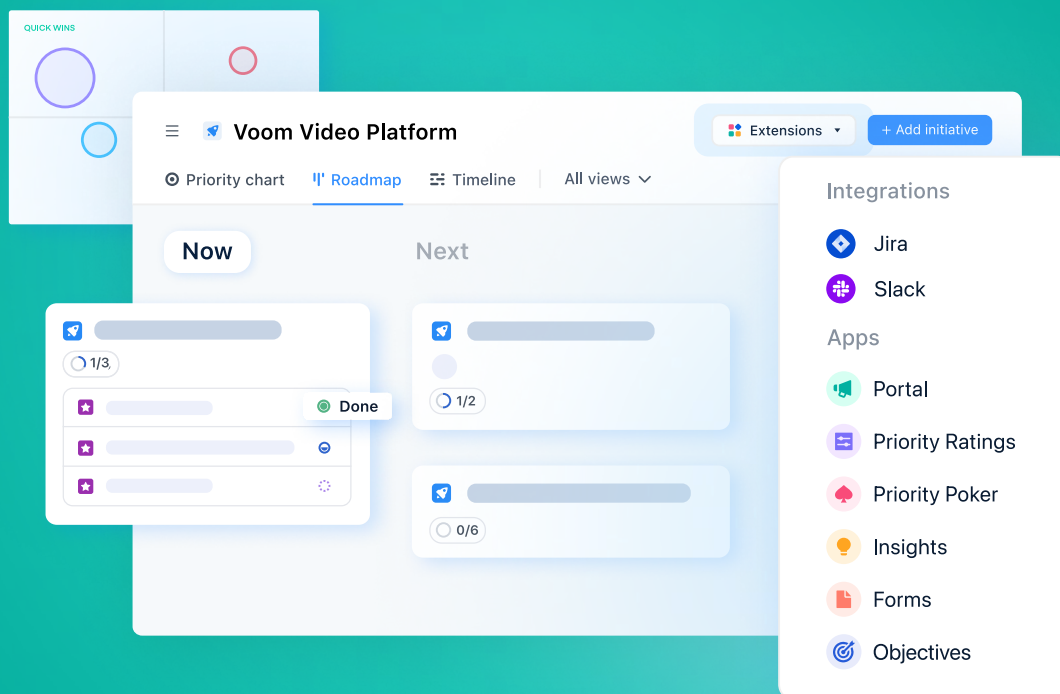
“I use airfocus daily to ensure timelines are accurate and to keep stakeholders informed. I’m making sure other teams are aware. If there’s a risk of a timeline, then I’m also looking for themes and how to better group things.”

Tyler Huish

Director of Product Management, Extra Space Storage

For Tyler, it’s dramatically reduced the time he spends communicating between teams, and reporting. “We do almost everything at the agile epic level in airfocus – although we do pull in the stories just to help us measure progress. I recently went in and found some fields that we were all using and moved them from individuals to a team field and I’ll create the quarters as they get closer.”





"airfocus has transformed how we prioritize and communicate with stakeholders. What used to take hours of manual updates now happens automatically, giving us back valuable time to focus on strategy rather than spreadsheet management."



Tyler Huish
Director of Product Management,
Extra Space Storage

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