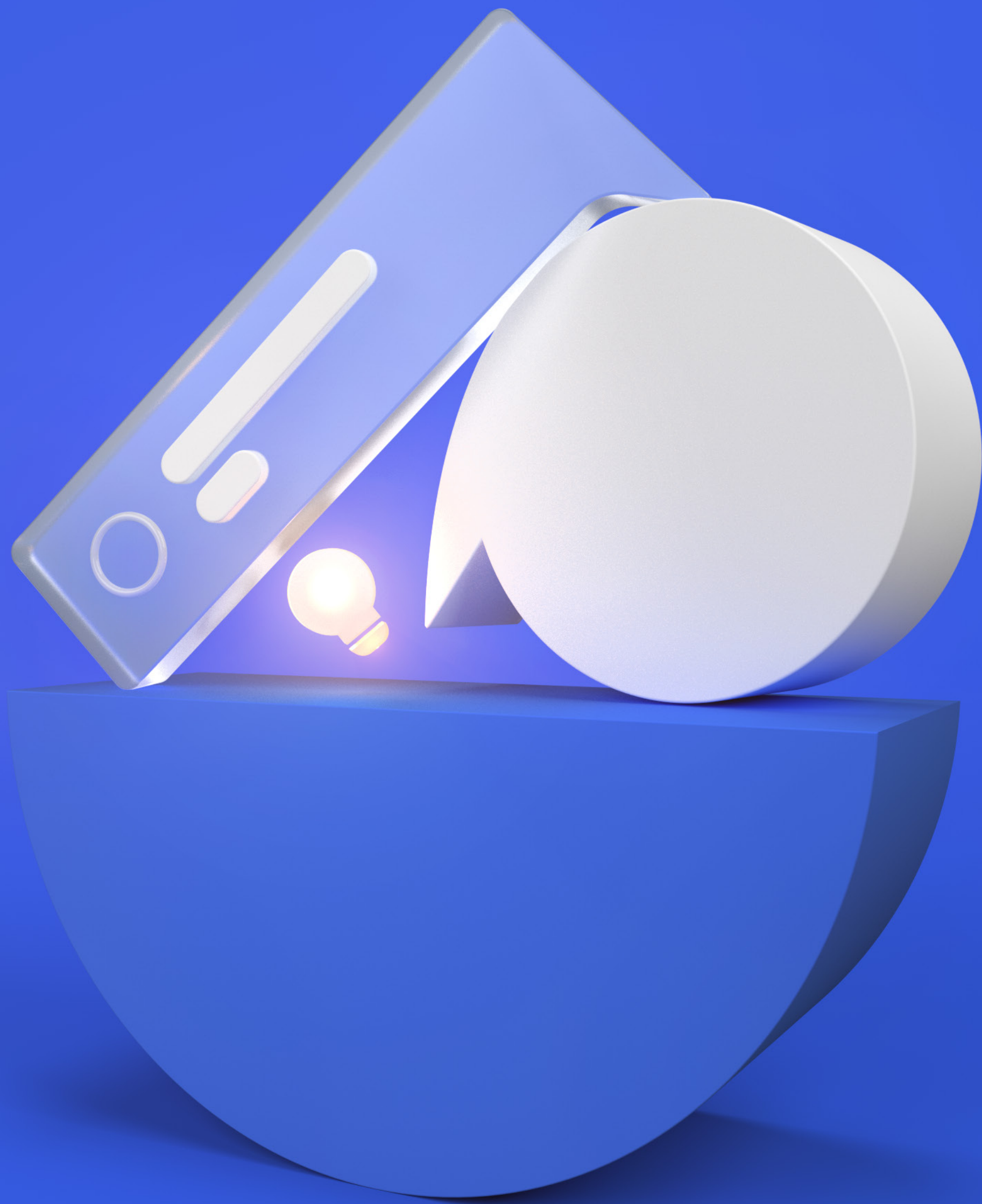


How To Use
Customer Feedback
for Business Growth



by **airfocus**

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Why we wrote this ultimate guide on customer feedback and insights

Product managers play a pivotal role in defining the solutions that assist their customers in accomplishing their goals. These solutions can be end-to-end products, or features within an existing product.

Product managers make many assumptions and have hypotheses to test prior to launching a new product.

Post-launch they review the success of their work by not only viewing their metrics, but by utilizing one extremely vital method to confirm success.

“Feedback is the breakfast of champions.”

Rick Tate

How can a product manager confirm that the product that their company spent many months, resources, cash, and people’s effort on is actually solving a problem for their customers? How can they justify that their released product is delighting their customers? How can they gather insights on how

to improve their product for their customers and what their next steps should be?

The answer is simple: by obtaining customer feedback.

Customer feedback is the most pivotal tool that product managers can use to help them prioritize, build, and sustain their products while working towards business growth.

But what exactly is customer feedback? What are the types of customer feedback? And after obtaining customer feedback, what does a product manager do with it?

All of these questions and more will be answered in this detailed guide.

By the end of this guide you will not only understand the importance of customer feedback to leverage business growth, but also how to use the right tool that fits your approach to make tracking customer feedback and acting upon it easier.

What is Customer Feedback



Customer feedback includes suggestions on improvements, thoughts, experience and general sentiment.

These pieces of feedback can come in various forms, from different channels, and from many stakeholders.

A **stakeholder** is anyone that affects or is affected by your product. They are impacted and/or can influence the fortunes of your product.

Some of the stakeholders that product feedback can come from includes:

Customers

Those who pay for your product.

Users

Those who are engaged with your product on a regular basis and utilize it to accomplish their goals.

Sometimes your customers and users are the same people, sometimes they are different.

Industry analysts

Individuals who analyze your product and company along with others to report on how the industry that you operate within is performing. At times they provide advice on how players in the market can remain competitive.

Customer success team

The main goal of a customer success team is to ensure that customers are accomplishing their goals.

Customers regularly share feedback with customer success representatives on how a product can be improved.

Customer support

They act as the first line of defence for any issues within your product. Customers will share feedback with them on any issues or bugs they encountered that they would like addressed.

Sales team

While their main job is to bring in as much revenue as possible by selling products, they provide vital feedback from their conversations with prospects, existing customers, competitors, and lost deals due to missing functionality.

Marketing team

Your marketing team can share feedback on competitor activity as well as other relevant events occurring in your industry.

... and more.

As you can see, **feedback can come from various stakeholders.**

In this guide we are going to focus specifically on feedback received from customers (including users as part of this definition).

We will also touch upon how to address the customer feedback that is passed on through internal stakeholders as well.

Why the focus on customers?

Paying, happy customers not only help companies remain profitable, but when they are treated well they help companies grow and thrive.



Customer Feedback is Vital to Product Success and Business Growth

Customers are stakeholders who trade their cash for a solution in the hopes that it will assist them in solving their problems (accomplish specific goals).

Product managers are the ones who define and work with their teams to build and sustain the solutions that help customers accomplish their goals.

The easiest way for a product manager to know if a product is accomplishing the goal for their customers and users is by obtaining their feedback.

Here are the 3 main reasons why customer feedback is vital to product success and business growth.

Customer feedback lets you know how your customers feel about your product

Customer sentiment is the view or attitude that your customers have about your product and/or company.

You do not have to wait until you have a high **churn rate** because there are many customers that are displeased with your product (low customer satisfaction).

You can receive advance notice of their thoughts and emotions and take quick action by simply asking your customers for

feedback in advance.

Seeking customer feedback will help you uncover those who are pleased with your product and those who are not. And what should follow up next is discovery regarding why.

Customer feedback helps inform prioritization

Your team may have spent many months working on a brand new feature. Post-launch of this feature you may have plans in your product roadmap to get started on the next feature.

How do you know that this is the best course of action to take? Is the initial feature that you launched reaching its goals? Are your customers even using this feature, and if they are, how do they feel about it?

You won't know this valuable information unless you seek customer feedback.

Maybe after speaking to your customers you will learn that there are those who see value in the feature however many of them are not using it because the workflow is too difficult. Or some are not even aware that it exists.

Thereafter you will have to decide if you should continue executing on your product

roadmap as planned or make some changes based on your customer feedback. While customer feedback is not the only factor that determines how you craft your product roadmap, it does play a role.

Customer feedback leads to new uncovered problems to tackle

Product managers are problem finders.

When they receive feedback from customers they focus on deeply understanding the underlying problem that their customers are facing.

While customers may at times simply reach out with feature ideas, it's imperative to understand the underlying reasons why they are requesting such features.

This is why product managers perform [discovery](#) and ask the right questions, to truly understand why their customers may need a requested solution.

Feedback leads to uncovering new problems which leads to new opportunities. Product managers are the ones who connect customer feedback to their [product backlog](#) to uncover potential new problems to solve.

The problem solving never stops.

After gathering a list of problems faced both by their company and their customers, product managers then work to prioritize this list of problems and generate ideas to solve them.

Ideas can be generated from using the product (dogfooding), analyzing the market, keeping an eye on competitors and more. Though not exclusively, product ideas can come directly from customers.

If you have established a good relationship with your customers (and even if you haven't in some cases) some customers may be more than forthcoming with product ideas to improve your product.

Some customers may even reach out and share what they have seen implemented in competitor products and give you a sneak peak if they have access to it (a demo they recorded from a salesperson for example).

Rejoice if you have customers that share ideas with you, even if they are displeased with your product and have many ideas on how you can improve it.

This is additional beneficial information that you can utilize to understand how your customers feel about your product and help you determine what the next set of problems to solve are.

Which Customers Should You Collect Feedback From?



When you work within a company that has a few customers then hopping on phone calls with them to ask for their feedback is doable.

However, what happens when your company has hundreds of customers? Which ones should you solicit feedback from?

Make it a point to get feedback from as many of your customers as possible, even if you need to get assistance from other members of your team to accomplish this. This does not mean that you have to hop on a call with each and every single customer however.

Different feedback methods can and should be used at various times with various customers.

However you should make it a point to regularly keep a pulse on customer sentiments about your product to avoid any surprises (a customer unexpectedly churning).

Collect feedback from two types of customers:

- Your most engaged customers
- Your least engaged customers

Collecting feedback from your most engaged customers

Your most engaged customers are the most invested in your product. They have used your product for a long time and probably know your product in and out.

Since these are your most engaged customers you want to exert as much effort as possible in keeping them engaged. Not just by continuing to offer value to them with your product(s), but also including them as part of your product development process when working on new items, and even post-launch.

Since they are the most engaged they are also beneficial for helping you understand what you may have missed as you are working on new solutions.

Collecting feedback from these customers can also give you insights as to what made them engaged, and look at strategies for converting more people. This is crucial.

Collecting feedback from your least engaged customers

It is beneficial to collect feedback from your least engaged customers to understand why they are not using your product as frequently.

These customers may not be engaged for many reasons. Maybe they no longer find value in your product, perhaps a recent price hike is leading them to consider other options, maybe some recent bugs were the last straw. There are many possible reasons, seek their feedback to understand why.

Low engagement can lead to customer churn. And all businesses want a high retention rate. It costs **five times more** to acquire a new customer than sell to an existing one.

Speaking with these customers will help you understand the changes that you can consider for your product to improve their experience.

Collect feedback from your internal stakeholders

While gathering feedback from customers is vital, it's extremely important to also gather feedback from your internal team as well. Not simply because they interact with the product and you want them to be engaged, but to be frank, they may also have great ideas on how to better serve your customers.

Also, because they're in touch with your customers, they can act as a conduit for

those conversations that you as a product manager aren't able to have.

These stakeholders also need to be considered in your feedback loop.

Understanding trends in your user base

It's beneficial for product managers to identify any changes in trends from product usage and work with their teams to understand why.

If you notice for example that user activity within a particular part of your product has dropped this month compared to a consistent amount in prior months, then perform some customer research to understand why.

In 2005 when Gibson Biddle, former VP of Product at Netflix, noticed an **unexpected increase in their cancel rate**, their team quickly took action to understand the underlying reason.

After formulating some hypotheses and further digging they realized that the reason was due to the fact that they did not lower their prices that spring as they had done the past four years. They were able to uncover this by keeping a pulse on their metrics and analyzing the change in their trends related to product activity.

To summarize this entire section here are the 4 key groups to obtain customer feedback from:

- 1** Your most engaged users
- 2** Your least engaged users
- 3** Your internal stakeholders
- 4** Your entire customer base (by recognizing changes in customer trends and digging further to understand why)

Customer Feedback by Product Lifecycle

Product managers never stop collecting feedback from their customers. Feedback is gathered prior to launching a product, and post-launch as well.

However, the type of customer feedback they elicit and the timing does at times depend on the stage in which their product is in.

For example usability testing via design prototypes may be utilized more in the development stage, a customer effort score (CES) during introduction, and an exit survey in decline.

This relates to the product lifecycle, the journey that all products go through from birth (when it is first introduced to the market) to retirement (once the product has been sunsetted).

There are 5 stages of the product lifecycle. Each product that you use or have used falls into one of these 5 stages:

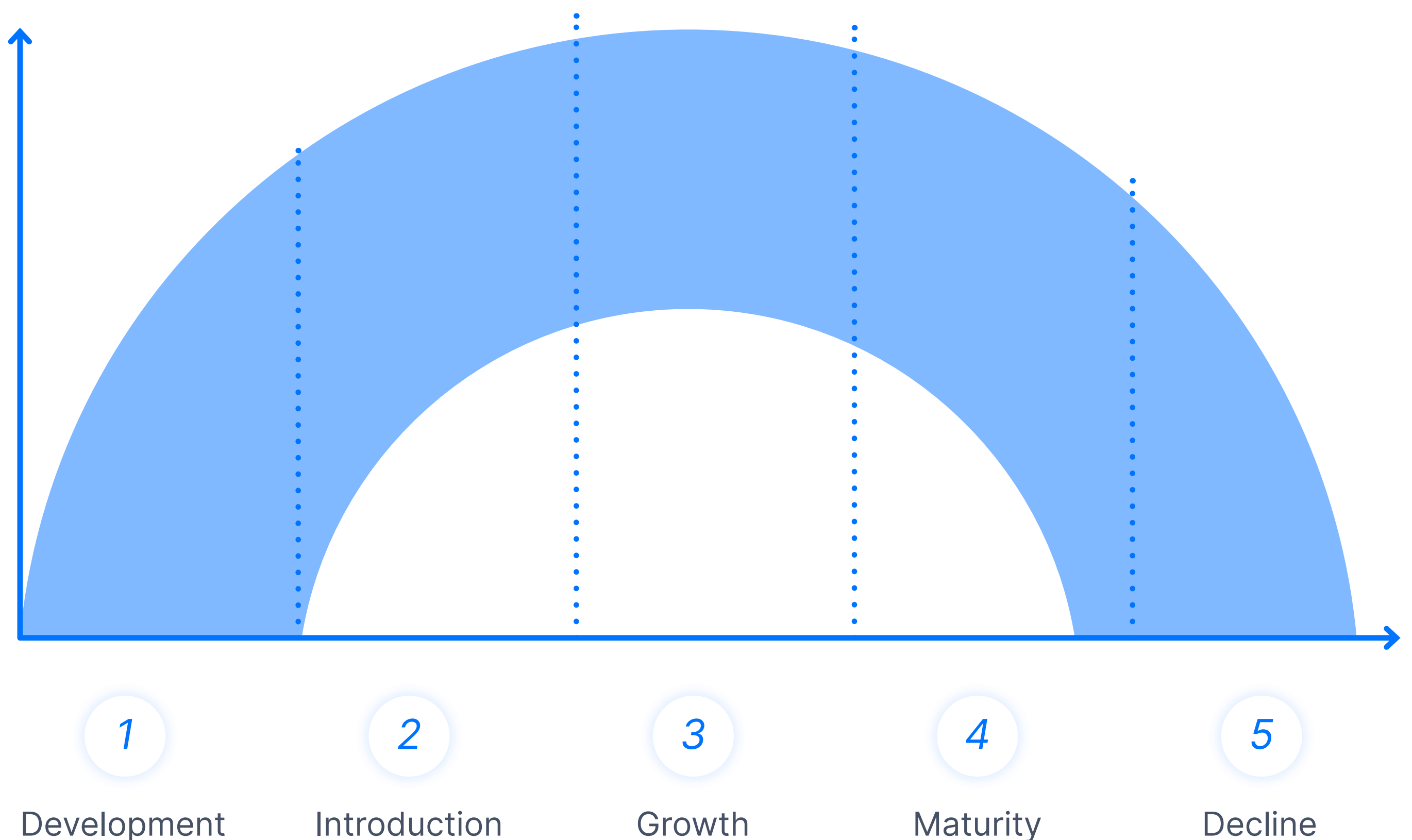
- 1 Development
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Growth
- 4 Maturity
- 5 Decline

Each stage of the product lifecycle presents various opportunities, risks, and challenges for product managers and business leaders. Product managers need to ensure that as their products are introduced into a market and work their way through to decline, that they maintain a very close relationship with their customers and stakeholders and elicit their feedback throughout their journey with the product.

This will help ensure that they are gathering the information that they need to understand customer and stakeholder sentiments, uncover which problems they need to tackle in each stage, and verify that their key stakeholders are receiving value from their products.

Check out [this article](#) to learn more about how product managers navigate the product lifecycle.

Product Life Cycle Stages



Various Types of Feedback

Feedback can be divided into two main categories:

- 1 Information about your product that you actively seek
- 2 Information about your product that you receive without asking

There are many different forms of feedback that you can gather from your customers. These forms include the following:

Feedback request

When users give you feedback about their experience with your product.

CES (Customer Effort Score)

A metric that communicates the level of effort that customers and users experience with a particular area of your product.

This is great feedback that product managers can receive as it ties directly to customer sentiments. Upon receiving the score product managers will have further information on which areas/features of their product they need to improve.

Surveys

A list of questions (open-ended and closed-ended) sent to your customers to understand how they feel about your product

App reviews

When customers rate and/or share their feedback about your product. This can be done online (a forum for example) or via a rating and review platform(such as g2), or provide their feedback inside your product prior to sharing their feedback online.

Interviews

These can be 1:1 interviews where you meet with your customers to hear their thoughts on your product or focus groups, group interviews with individuals that have common traits to get their thoughts at once.

Usability tests (also a type of interview)

Placing your product into the hands of your customers and users while asking them to narrate their thoughts as they complete set tasks within your product.

App/website metrics

One other method of feedback (which one may argue whether it is feedback or not) is tracking product metrics (also known as [product analytics](#)).

These are metrics that come from app usage and website traffic.

Product metrics can give you insights as to potential successes and failures within the product and company (like adoption of certain features).

[Key Performance Indicators](#) (KPIs) however, a term you may have come across, relate to Key Results and the progress you are making towards them.

All KPI's are metrics, but not all metrics are KPIs. Check out our article on how to [set, measure, and track KPIs](#) to learn more.

Do product metrics count as customer feedback? Definitely.

If we go back to the definition of feedback then this fits: information about your product.

This is beneficial information that comes directly from your customers. Beneficial information that lets you know if your customers are using your product, which customers are using it, how they are using it, and more.

Track product metrics and use this information to determine which customers to speak to as you aim to discover more about how your customers are using your product and what your next steps should be.

Industry analysts

Industry analysts perform research on a particular industry and, either independently or with a firm, publish writings on key industry trends and consumer and business activity within the industry.

One of the key reasons why their publications and analysis are important is because they play a vital role in influencing the purchasing decisions of customers and providing insights on [competitor benchmarking](#) and activity.

Business leaders pay close attention to notable industry analysts to understand where their company is positioned in their industry, the major trends taking place, and where their competitors rank based on their analysis.

Your competitors won't always be forthcoming with information so when there are experts that understand your industry and share insight into what your competitors may be up to this is valuable information to get your hands on.

[Gartner](#), a technology research and consulting firm, has industry analysts that produce publications on major trends in the software and technology industry. Check out their recent publication on the [Top Strategic Technology Trends for 2022](#).

Some other popular ones include [Forrester](#), [IDC](#), and [Everest Group](#).

Let's dive a bit deeper into some of these feedback forms.

Feedback Requests

While not limited to this, It is very common that feedback that customers provide will come in the form of functionality improvements.

However, feedback can be given in many forms. It can be shared directly via email, can be channeled through customer success, via an in-app prompt, or can come directly from customers from 1:1 discussions.

Here are some important things to keep in mind when receiving feature requests from customers

Ensure that the feedback meets the needs of your target customers before acting on it

Your target customers are those customers who you built your product for. They are the ones who feel the problem you are working on solving and actively looking for a solution.

Products should not be built to serve everyone.

It's impossible to build a product that will keep every single customer happy. As a product manager [segment your market](#) to understand who your target customers are and from there ensure that you are building products that meet their specific needs.

For example, if you built a product to serve the needs of entrepreneurs who own small businesses and they make up the majority of your customer base, if you happen to have some enterprise customers their requests won't always be prioritized. This is because your enterprise customers are not your target customers.

Strive to understand the why

Your customers will ask you for many things, especially if they love your product and want to continue using it to assist them in reaching their goals.

When customers provide feedback, especially around feature ideas, make it a point to do some further analysis and understand why they are making their request.

Why is about understanding the reason that something will be useful to your stakeholders. Why is about understanding whether there is value to the rest of your customer base and your business.

Rather than taking a customer's feature request and acting upon it, understand the underlying reason why the request is being made by them in the first place. What problem will having said feature solve for their team?

Try the [Five Whys](#) technique to get to the underlying cause of their problem.

Do not give your customers exactly what they ask for

There's a famous quote that's attributed to Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, where he says "... if I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses."

Steve Jobs is also quoted as saying "it's really hard to design products by focus groups. A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them."

What does this mean?



Customers know the problems that they face, however, they generally do not know the right solution to solve the problem.

A customer may ask for a specific feature in hopes that it will solve their problem when in fact there may be a better way to do so. Likewise, a customer may ask for a feature that solves their specific problem, however, a product manager also needs to keep their other customers in mind as well.

Will you spend your company's resources solving one specific problem for one specific customer, or solving a problem that the majority of your target customers face? Obviously the latter generally makes more business sense.

Make it a point to deeply understand the problem your customers are facing, and from there you can work with your team to define the right solution that will not only solve the problem for your customers, but will delight them as well.

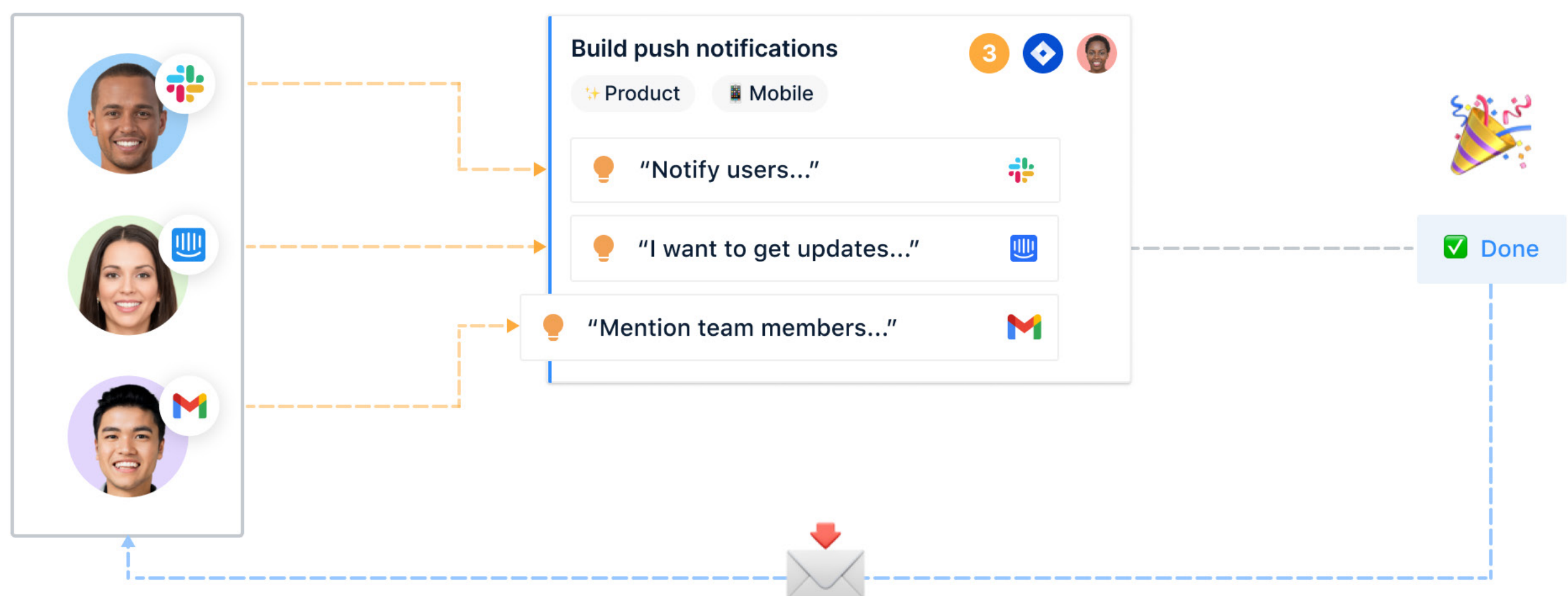
Centralize all of your information

Make your life easier. Have a central repository where you document all of your customer feedback.

That is why a tool like [airfocus](#) insights comes in handy.

With airfocus [Insights](#) you can:

- 1 Keep all product feedback organized
- 2 [Connect insights](#) to product discovery and strategy
- 3 Keep your team and customers up to date and close the feedback loop



Learn more at airfocus.com and start your [14-day trial now](#).

Check out [this article](#) to learn more about this modular tool. When customers request new features or changes to your product do not forget to record them.

Do not simply record the name and request from your customer, there is additional important information that you should collect as well.

These include the following:

Customer name

It is beneficial to have this in case you need to follow up in the future for additional discovery, usability tests, or to enlist beta testers.

Do not record the one customer that made the request, but record the others as well.

Prior to adding a new piece of feedback in your repository make it a point to search the entire repository to see if the request was made prior and then add additional customer names to the piece of feedback.

Total ARR (Annual Recurring Revenue)

ARR is the amount of revenue that the customer contributes to your company on an annual basis.

Collecting this information will help you [segment](#) the feedback received from your customers. Segmentation can give you great insight as to how your company and product is growing in terms of target audience, as well insight into how to develop product-led growth strategies.

Check out the [Introduction to Product-Led Growth and the Role Product Managers Play](#) to learn more about this topic.

Target customer

Is the customer that made the request a target customer or not?

Module

Which module of your product are they making the request for?

Opportunity for additional revenue

Is there an opportunity to earn additional revenue for this request? Meaning, is the customer that made the request, and potentially other customers, willing to pay for it?

This is important to capture to determine further growth opportunities for the product.

It's important to collect these additional pieces of information so that product managers can make more informed decisions.

If customer feedback for new requests is being channeled via your customer success team, sales, or marketing team (any internal stakeholder) then they should also obtain and document this information as they receive each request. This helps them understand the level of information needed by the product management team to make informed decisions.

To summarize, here are 4 key tips to keep in mind regarding customer feedback:

- 1 Verify that the feedback meets the needs of your customers before acting on it
- 2 Strive to understand the reason behind the request
- 3 Do not simply provide your customers with what they ask for
- 4 Document your customer feedback in a central location

Custom Surveys



A CES survey is one type of survey that can be sent to customers to gather their feedback, among many.

If you are planning on sending a survey to your customers to understand their sentiments about your product here are 5 key tips to remember before sending the survey:

- 1 Understand the type of feedback that you are looking to receive and craft your questions accordingly
- 2 Know the specific customers you want to receive feedback from
- 3 Use open-ended questions to gather additional insights
- 4 Ask “why” often to understand the reasoning behind the answers that your customers provided
- 5 Keep your survey short

What’s the problem with lengthy surveys?

[SurveyMonkey](#), one of the relied upon tools for custom surveys, noticed a correlation between survey length and completion rate.

“In addition to the decreased time spent answering each question [as surveys grew in length](#), we saw survey abandon rates increase for surveys that took more than 7-8 minutes to complete; with completion rates dropping anywhere from 5% to 20%. The tolerance for lengthier surveys was greater for surveys that were work or school related and decreased when they were customer related.”

Think hard about the type of feedback you want to receive from your customers and craft your survey questions accordingly.

Online Reviews/ App Reviews



There are many platforms that customers and users rely upon to share their product feedback online. These platforms include [G2](#), [Capterra](#), and [Gartner Peer Insights](#).

And let's not forget the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#).

These platforms are important because interested buyers rely on these platforms to view feedback from others prior to making their purchasing decision.

If there is mainly positive feedback about your product then they are more likely to buy. If however the feedback is mainly negative then they are less likely to buy.

Here are some tips to keep in mind for on-line product reviews from your customers:

Proactively ask your customers for reviews

Do not ignore rating platforms. Having a positive presence online can create beneficial opportunities for your product and assist with business growth.

Time this well, however. You want to reach out to customers at a time when they are most likely to have positive things to say about your product. If you recently increased your prices or had a major outage then it is best to ask at a different time.

Reach out to your most supportive customers

One of the benefits of performing an NPS survey is that the results will let you know who your promoters are among your customers. Definitely reach out to these customers to share their positive experience with others.

Also reach out to your strategic customers, those whose presence can create beneficial opportunities for your product, then consider asking these customers to leave a review. Also know at what point you will reach out to them for a review.

Follow up post customer review

When customers provide reviews (positive or negative) be sure to follow up with them.

If a negative review was given due to a bug in your product then respond to the review (publicly) letting the customer know that you apologize for the experience and the said bug is being looked into. And when customers leave positive reviews, thank them and let them know that you appreciate their support.

Solicit in-app feedback prior to online reviews

Prior to asking your customers to share feedback about your product online, consider asking for their feedback inside of your product first.

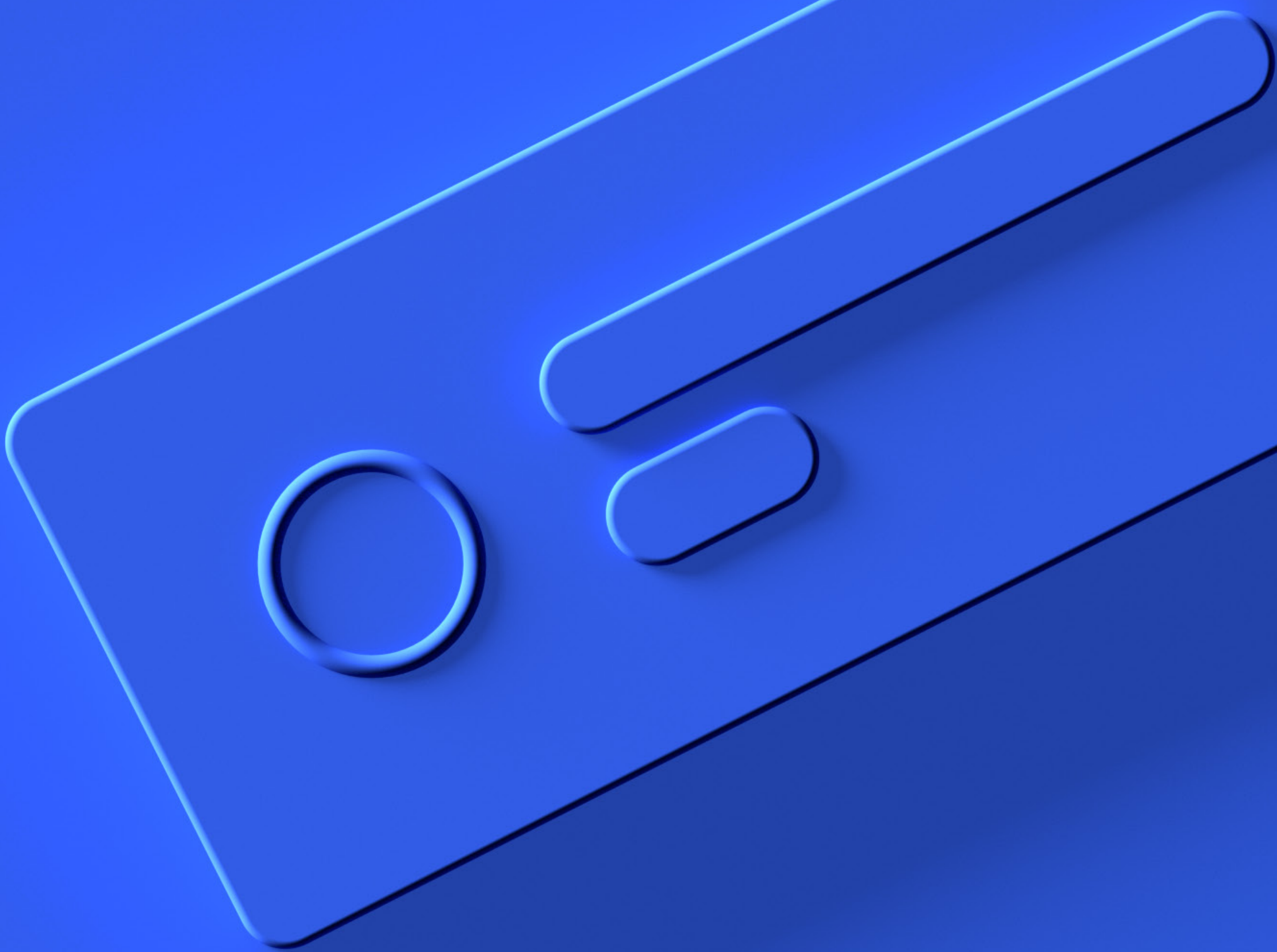
One way to implement in-app reviews is to ask your users inside of your product for a rating, rate 1-5 stars for example.

If they rate a 4 and above then take them to your respective app store (or review platform) to share the rating and their feedback there. If however they rate a 3 or below then ask them for their reason.

This information should then be collected and prioritized.

Garner feedback from your entire user base, even those who have been on your product for 5 minutes. Doing so will give you insights as to why they didn't stay, what you can do better, why your product failed to impress them, and how to improve your onboarding process. This is definitely encouraged.

Usability Tests



There are many different types of interviews that you can perform to get customer feedback.

These include one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and even usability tests.

Usability testing is when you meet with your customers and watch them interact with your product as they complete set tasks.

They are extremely beneficial for understanding whether your customers are able to navigate through your product to accomplish key tasks and their overall experience. Here are some things to keep in mind when performing usability tests:

Filter your customers and users

A usability test with 5 users can **uncover 85% of issues**.

You do not have to perform usability tests with every single customer, identify the ones that you would like to test your product and put a plan in place.

How many customers do you want to perform tests, how long will the tests be, and what exactly will they test? Also ensure that the customers chosen are your target customers.

Prepare in advance

As the saying goes: “Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.”

Customers give up their free time to assist your business with valuable feedback. So show them some respect by valuing their time and effort.

From the moment they meet someone at the front desk of your office, who will you introduce them to, where will they go, and what will you tell them. And if the session takes longer than planned then let them know and ask for their permission to continue.

Offer a reward

While it is nice to have customers that are willing to assist you with testing your product for free, if you can offer them some sort of reward for their assistance then do so.

They will appreciate it.

Ask users to share their thoughts audibly while completing tasks

This tactic will let you know how your customers are feeling as they complete their given tasks with your product and provide you with the feedback that you need for improvements that need to be made.

Utilize open-ended and closed-ended tasks during usability testing.

Open-ended questions enable customers to provide a free form answer, there is no limited range related to the answer that they can give. For task scenarios they also determine how the testing participant will choose to accomplish the task.

Close-ended questions on the other hand have a defined range of questions that users can choose from, the answer options are limited. For task scenarios they determine whether the testing participant is able to accomplish the task or not.



Some questions to ask testing participants to answer as they test your product to understand their thoughts include

- What do you think of _____?
- I noticed that you _____, please tell me why
- What were you expecting when you _____?
- How did _____ make you feel?
- What did you think of the navigation?
- What did you think of the on screen prompts?
- Did you find _____ easy or difficult?

When performing usability tests here are some things to watch out for:

- Testing your product too late - test early to receive feedback that can be actioned upon
- Failing to screen testing participants - testing with the wrong people will lead to poor results
- Asking leading questions - these are questions that point participants towards a particular answer. Keep questions open-ended and allow participants to answer on their own
- Interrupting participants as they are testing your product - give participants the chance to get used to your product and figure out how to complete their given tasks

Check out the [airfocus glossary](#) to learn more about this topic.

Document the feedback from your usability tests

After your usability tests are complete, document the feedback you received from your customers and put a plan in place on next steps.

With [airfocus](#) you can link feedback to ideas and opportunities gathered from your usability tests and close the loop by updating your customers on the status of features as they are being actioned upon.

What Do You Do With This Customer Feedback?



What should follow is gathering this information with the important details, and then go on to do some further digging on why your customers are making this request (consider the [five whys exercise](#)).

From here you should also do some additional research to see if this idea will benefit your remaining customers as well.

This research includes understanding how many other customers have requested something similar, do their reasons for requesting it match, how much value can taking advantage of this opportunity bring, and what is the associated effort.

Here's what you absolutely do not do when a customer gives you a seemingly great idea: ask your team to work on it right away.

Take the time to do further analysis and discovery before taking action on execution.

Customer feedback helps establish a stronger relationship with your customers

Product managers help digest information coming from customers and help their business make the right decisions as to what to build next

Product managers are able to do this by understanding who their customers are, not just with [buyer](#) and [user](#) personas, but by deeply understanding their needs, pains, and desired gains. This is why the [Jobs To Be Done \(JTBD\) Framework](#) is so valuable, it makes it easier to understand exactly what customers need.

When a company releases an [MVP](#) of their product early adopters who face the problem the company is solving will acquire the solution.

In many cases early adopters are patient as they use these solutions and are happy to provide feedback. They enjoy the process.

As the product team improves that product they should continue to utilize customer development to work towards [product-market-fit](#).

According to Marc Andreessen, co-founder of the famous silicon valley VC firm [a16z](#), product/market fit means being in a good market with a product that can satisfy that market.

In a nutshell, your product provides such a great experience for your customers and users that they then tell their networks about it. Which makes your life easier because there is no better advertising than word-of-mouth advertising.

When you continue to return to your customers at specific stages of your product's development, it helps to establish a stronger connection with them.

They will provide important information on the product and you will have a clear direction on what your next steps can be.

And this doesn't have to be once the product has been fully developed. You can obtain feedback on ideas, wireframes, prototypes, proof of concepts, and even during beta tests.

It goes without saying ... actually we should say it, you should also seek feedback post-launch of your product.

If your customers are not pleased with your product, seeking their feedback will also help strengthen your relationship with them because they will still appreciate the fact that you reached out to them to hear them out and are considering their thoughts.

Business growth cannot occur without feedback, as feedback helps you grow and mature your product into something that is helpful and solves a real problem.

Happy customers are a side effect of this.

For more on this topic check out our blog on [The Role of Customer Development in Building a Winning MVP](#).

Customer Feedback Tools



The purpose of obtaining customer feedback is to determine what steps to take to improve your product.

However, not all customer feedback should be actioned upon.

It is a product manager's responsibility to determine which customer feedback to act upon and not. Likewise the order of priority of which customer problems to solve.



It is difficult to make these decisions without having your feedback centralized in one location with the information that you need (the other pieces of beneficial information that we recommended gathering earlier on in this guide).

While you might be tempted to record your customer feedback manually (in a spreadsheet for example), as the amount of feedback that you receive increases it will become harder to manage the sheer amount of feedback you will receive from various sources while managing your feedback loop.

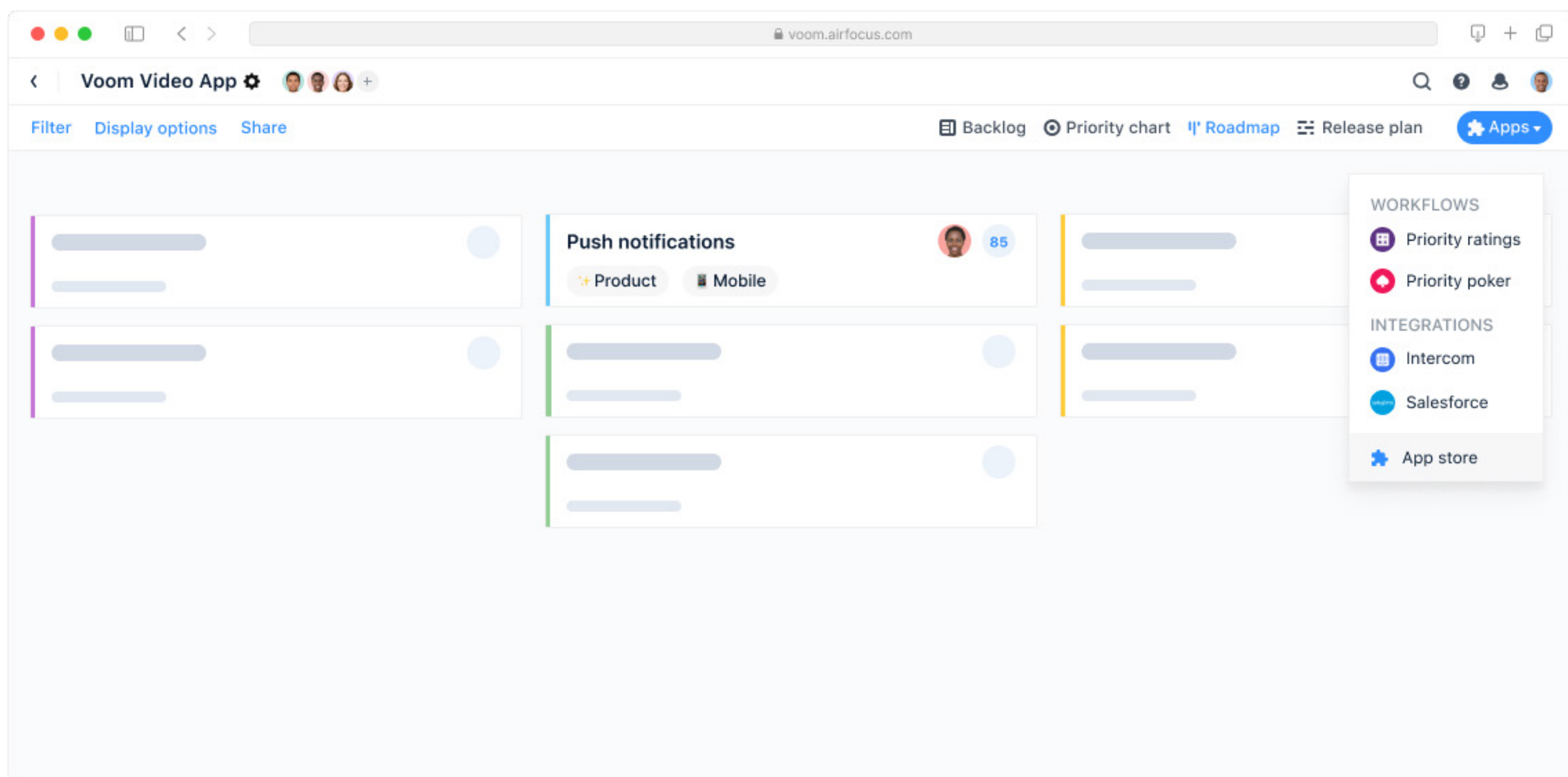
Here are some tools that you can use to manage customer feedback:

airfocus

[airfocus](#) is the first modular product management platform that helps product teams discover, learn, plan and deliver solutions in a way that fits their specific needs.

The [airfocus Insights app](#) is the most flexible way to centralize feedback and generate insights for product discovery. With it you can easily collect and organize feedback from various sources and teams into one place, uncover insights and inform your product strategy.

Learn about how [Lemonway uses airfocus](#) to consolidate ideas, surface insights collaboratively and build the right features for their customers.



Learn more at airfocus.com and start your [14-day trial now](#).

Intercom

[Intercom](#) is one of the most relied upon customer communications platform in the market.

While they're known for their messaging tool, they have additional solutions that help companies build great relationships along their customer journey and manage their customer experience.

ClientSuccess

[ClientSuccess](#) is a tool that is relied upon by customer success teams. It helps them ensure that their customers achieve their desired outcomes while using their product or service.

Among the many features this tool offers, including having a central repository for your customers and recording conversations, it enables teams to measure and share their customer pulse as well as send them NPS surveys.

Zapier

[Zapier](#) is not a tool to collect feedback directly, but rather can be used to integrate your tools with one another. Link your web apps, automate your processes, and get more done with no code required.

Slack

[Slack](#) is a popular communication tool that teams use to communicate with one another and get things done.

Though internal teams rely on Slack, it can also be used to communicate directly with customers. For example, inviting your beta testers to a specific Slack channel to obtain their direct feedback.

Slack also has integrations with many other apps such as Intercom, Zendesk, and ClientSuccess to stay updated on customer feedback.

Zendesk

[Zendesk](#) is one of the most popular products for customer service. While it is primarily known and used for customer service management (for example customers reporting bugs to your customer support team) it contains other features that may come in handy to improve customer service.

Email

Email can be used to collect customer feedback.

How does this work? Simply email a customer the questions you have, a survey, or email them to set up an interview to discuss further.

Google Sheets/Excel

With spreadsheets you can also send Google Forms or Microsoft forms to customers. These can be used to send surveys to gather specific information from your customers.

Feedback can also be gathered manually in a spreadsheet. The issue with collecting feedback in a spreadsheet manually is that it becomes difficult to manage and organize as the amount of feedback that you receive increases.

Don't make life more difficult than it has to be, consider a tool like [airfocus](#) to manage your customer feedback.

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Collecting Customer Feedback

Here are some common mistakes to avoid when collecting customer feedback.

Not collecting feedback from enough customers

If you have hundreds of customers but you're only collecting feedback from a few (for example those that contribute the most ARR to your company) this is problematic because you're not getting an accurate representation of how all of your customers feel.

Delaying asking for customer feedback

Give your customers a chance to get used to your product. A chance to use your product enough times to receive your communicated value proposition.

One may think that asking customers for feedback too soon may not provide the right information. That customers need to be given enough time to use the product to receive the communicated value proposition.

However, this is incorrect.

Obtain customer feedback at all stages of the user journey, there is no such thing as too soon.

Not documenting all customer feedback

Document all of the feedback that you receive from your customers.

Customers will follow up on the feedback that they provided, oftentimes requesting an update.

How can you provide an update if you did not record their feedback? You can only remember so much at once.

Also, what if the person who heard and remembers the feedback provided leaves your company, how then will your company take action?

Document your customer feedback.

Not keeping the feedback centralized

Customer feedback is golden information, not just for a product team, but for an entire company.



It is beneficial to make customer feedback transparent, have it in one central location so that everyone in your company can access it.

Let your internal stakeholders know the feedback that you received and also give them a chance to share their thoughts as well. Perhaps someone on the customer support team has some insight on a piece of feedback that would make implementation easier.

Having no feedback loop

Have a process in place for how to act on customer feedback.

Feedback should not go into a black hole, when your customers provide product feedback they should be informed of what is next.

The same goes for when your internal team provides feedback.

Once customer feedback is received: who reviews it, when, what are the different statuses it can get, and what are the next steps.

If you decide to take action upon the feedback at what stage will customers be informed? And if you decide not to take action upon it, again, when will customers be informed.

Most customers understand that companies that build SaaS products are not custom agencies; they don't expect that they will receive every request they ask for to build a product that fits their specific needs.

While they do appreciate when their requests are met, they will also appreciate you keeping them in the loop on what will happen with their feedback.

What next?

Congratulations! You made it to the very end of this detailed guide.

Now that you have reached this point you should have a great understanding of why customer feedback is important for business growth, the various methods of customer feedback, how to document customer feedback, and how to close your feedback loop and action on customer feedback.

Don't forget our advice, save yourself the time and hassle of trying to manage your customer feedback manually. Despite what your workflow or process may be, [airfocus](#) is a tool that can adapt to your product needs.

Check out our much-awaited airfocus [Insights app](#). It enables you and your team to centralize feedback from any channel in one place to uncover actionable insights for product discovery and strategy.

With airfocus Insights you have:

- One central location to store your product feedback
- The tools you need to make customer-informed decisions
- Transparency among your team with everyone kept up to date
- A tool that enables you to work more effectively with your team
- The ease and flexibility to manage your data, your way

About airfocus

airfocus offers a modern and modular product management platform. It provides a complete solution for product teams to manage and communicate their strategy, prioritize their work, build roadmaps, and connect feedback to solve the right problems. Designed with flexibility in mind, airfocus allows you to quickly customize the platform to fit your needs without disrupting the way your team works.

Join thousands of global product teams who use airfocus to make better decisions and build outstanding products.

Learn more at airfocus.com and start your [14-day trial now](#).

