

The Topic

PLG HAS CHANGED

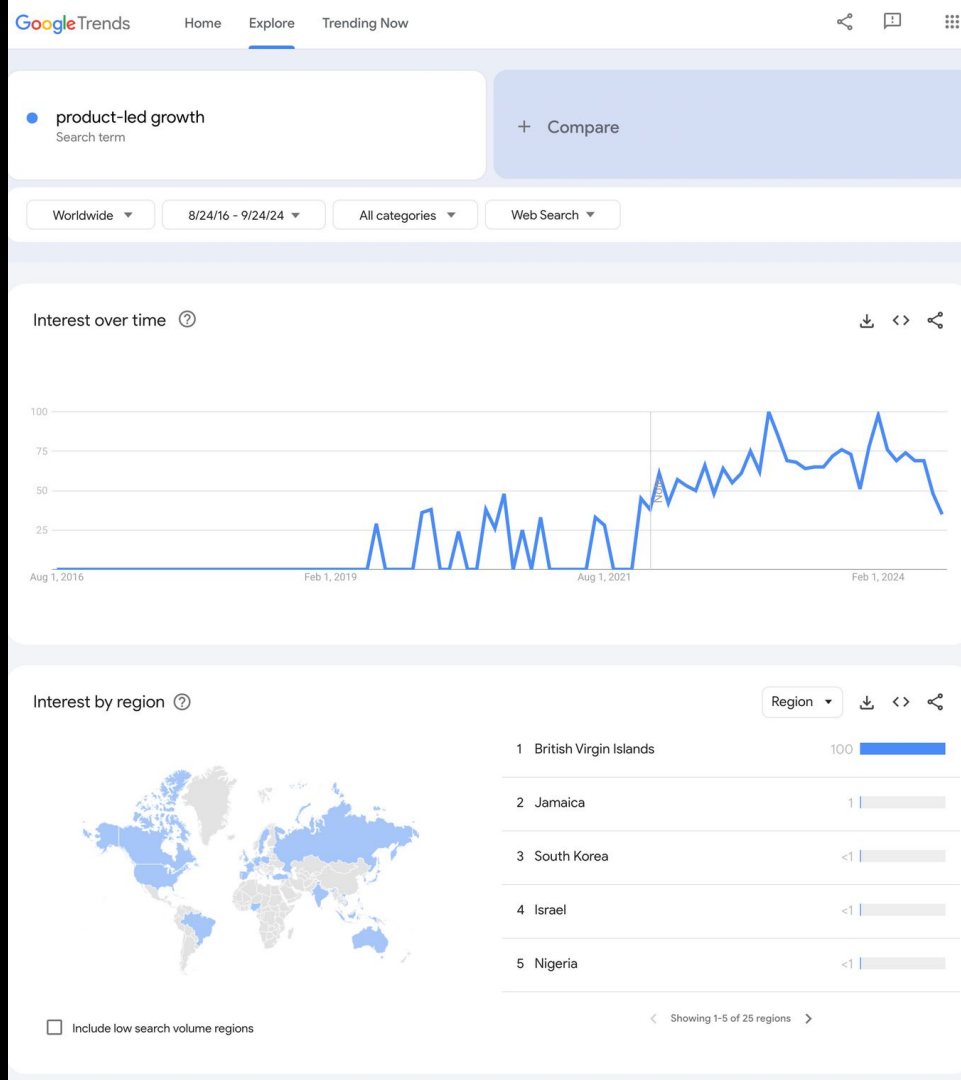
8+ YEARS 

PLG as a term was coined in 2016. Since then, the way to do it like a best-in-class company has changed.

But few people have update their mental models about the topic.

Today, we're going to break down how product surfaces have evolved.

You'll walk away with tactical ideas to improve your products.



Hello, I'm

AAKASH GUPTA



ABOUT ME ▶▶

15+ years in product, most recently VP of Product at the Unicorn PLG B2B SaaS Startup Apollo.io. Led product growth at Affirm, Epic Games, and thredUP.

Now, I write the Product Growth newsletter to 145K+ subscribers and host the Product Growth podcast. I study PLG companies all day.



About Me

I WRITE

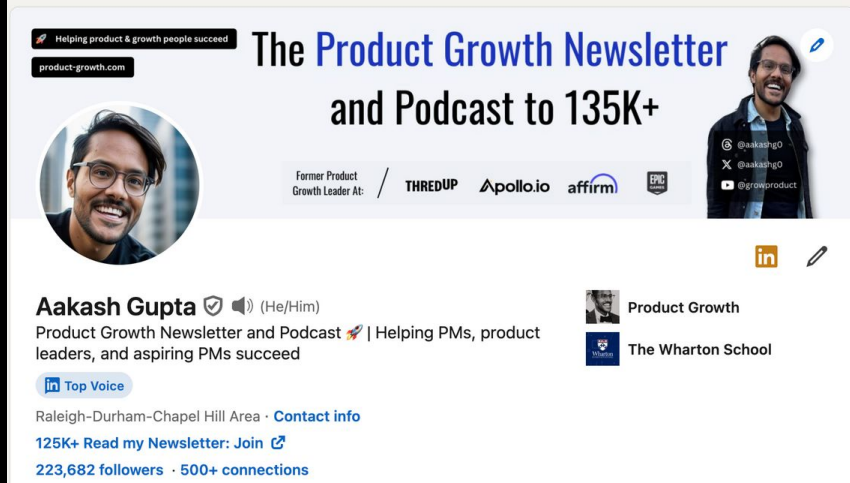
ONLINE ↘

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN ME... ▶▶

I started writing online in 2021 at the height of COVID when I was leading product growth at Epic Games - a local company here in the triangle.

When I snapshotted my followers at the beginning of this year, here's what they looked like. Since then LinkedIn and the newsletter continue to grow fast.

I apply the same product growth principles we're going to discuss today.



Helping product & growth people succeed
product-growth.com

The Product Growth Newsletter and Podcast to 135K+

Former Product Growth Leader At: THREDUP Apollo.io affirm EPIC

Aakash Gupta (He/Him)
Product Growth Newsletter and Podcast | Helping PMs, product leaders, and aspiring PMs succeed

Product Growth
The Wharton School

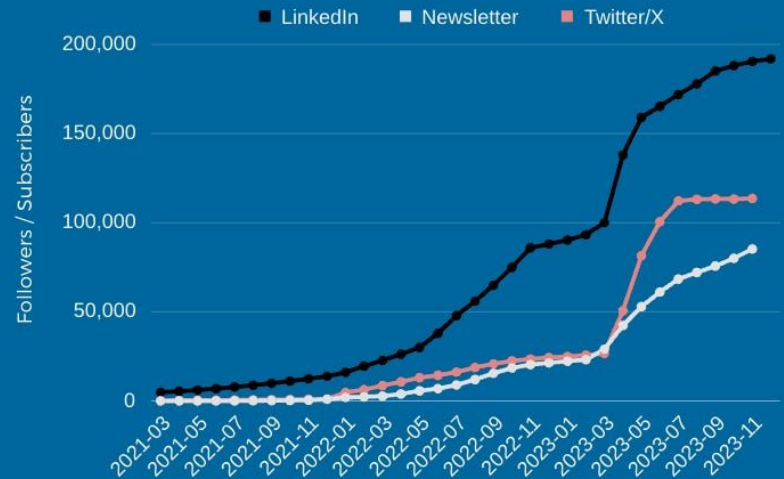
Top Voice

Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill Area · [Contact info](#)

125K+ [Read my Newsletter: Join](#)

223,682 followers · 500+ connections

By the Numbers: Product Growth 🚀





LET'S START

What is PLG?



Let's clarify some things right at the top.

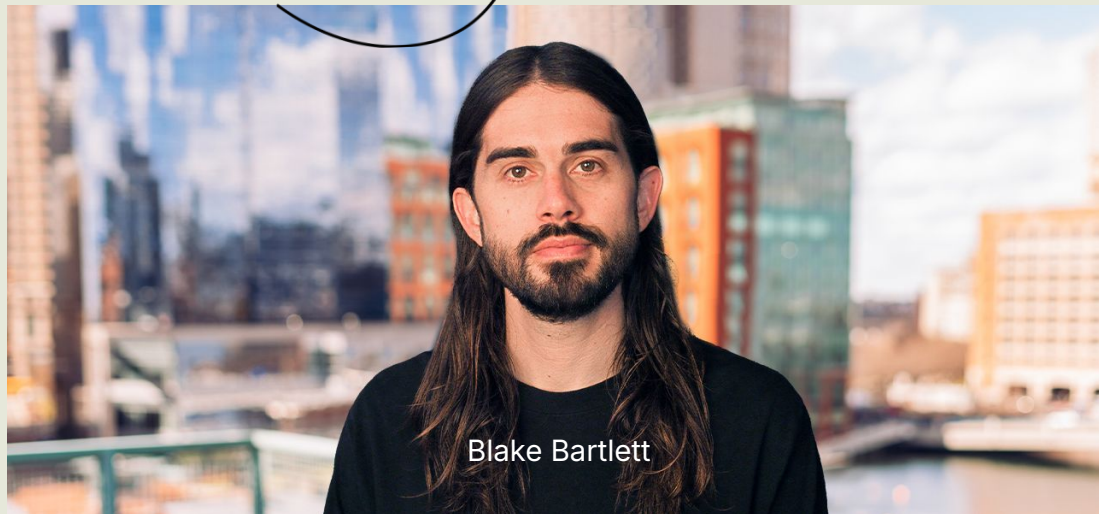
PLG *Intro* ~~=~~ ~~/~~ = SELF-SERVE

What actually is PLG? It's one of those elusive questions.

Product-led growth was coined by Blake Bartlett (pictured) in 2017, and it describes a growth motion in B2B SaaS where you acquire, onboarding, engage, retain, and monetize customers all via the product.

Product-led growth usually involves this self-serve component, but it doesn't mean you can't use a sales outbound motion (see: lempire), or can't go after a large portion of enterprise customers (see: Twilio).

It's a method of organizing and building companies putting the product first.





AT THE TOP

▶▶ STRATEGY RULES

Having worked with so many companies on PLG, the most common mistake I encounter is that the company doesn't have a PLG strategy. They want to add it on as a GTM motion to an already successful enterprise, sales-led business. Or there is a marketer or a product person who is really excited about, but not the CEO and the senior leadership team (SLT). Unfortunately, if the SLT is in it, most of your efforts at PLG are bound to hit a brick wall at some point where you can't get the resources to make the moves needed. This is not a 'blue ocean' space anymore. It's a competitive red ocean, so you need to be all-in.

▶▶ TACTICS WIN

Today, we're going to go through all the tactics of every layer of the product-led growth motion. These are helpful. And they will lead you to win. But make sure you have the strategy first. Once you have the strategy, you're in a place to give it your all and evolving all the tactics to take the latest and greatest best practices, instead of copy-pasting from strategies that worked 10 years ago but are now long outdated.

People

MATTER



▶▶ PRODUCT MANGEMENT

Product-led doesn't mean product management led, but it is important to have very high quality product managers who iterate fast and roll up their sleeves to do whatever is needed. There's a certain DNA of big tech core PMs who really struggle with the growth mentality.

▶▶ THE COMPANY

Everyone from growth design, engineering, analytics, customer success, marketing, and sales need to be ready to embrace the new PLG reality instead of pushing for some other strategy.



THE ICEBERG

Understanding PLG



Let's introduce our framework to understand PLG.

THE LAYERS

Intro

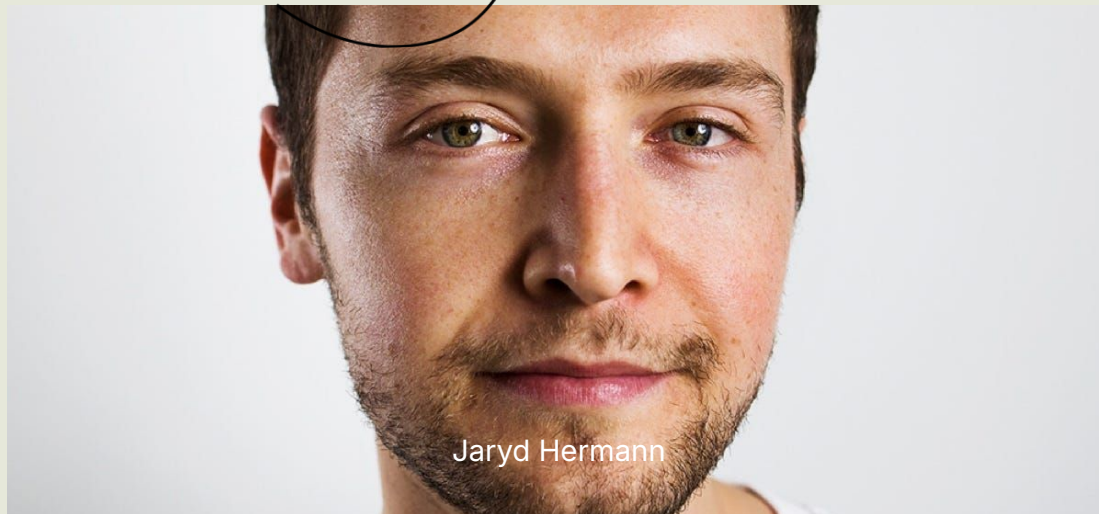
Jaryd Hermann is the author of How They Grow.

Between the two of us, we've probably written the most product growth deep dives out there.

We go 5-10K words deep, plus many images, on all the hottest PLG companies.

Along the way of analyzing so many companies, Jaryd built a framework that is really powerful for analyzing PLG companies.

So let's walk through it. It'll be the guiding force for our discussion today.



Jaryd Hermann

Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

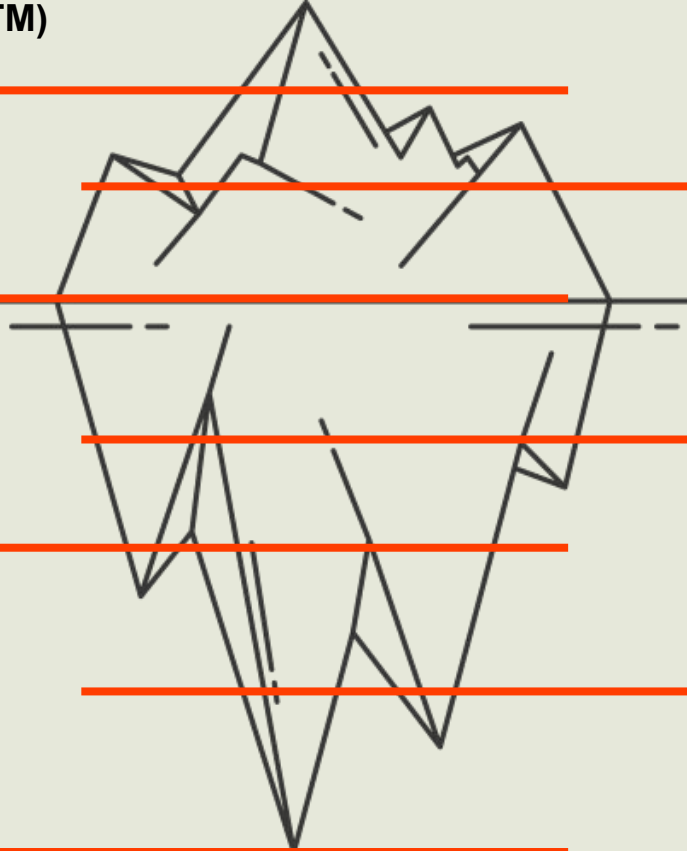
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



SEQUENTIAL OR NOT?

Direction

Mature product-led growth companies will want to operate at every area of the iceberg at all times. And that's totally fine.

But if you're a smaller company, it's generally best to focus (especially your product team) to 2-3 layers of the iceberg at a time.

Once you start working everywhere, you get a spray and pray product that is always changing and it's hard to crack that product-market fit with something stable.

So - ideally go 'down' the iceberg to where your problems are. But, of course, there are a lot of exceptions.



Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

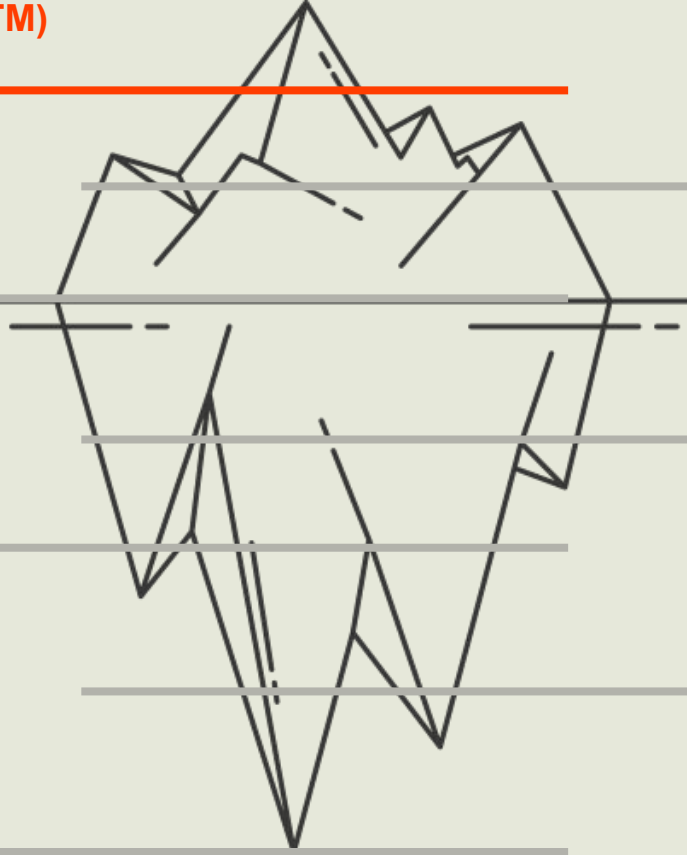
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



Definition

LAYER 1



▶▶ MARKETING

The major surface that core problem communication is executed upon is what's said outside your product where your potential buyers live.

▶▶ WEBSITE

The website is the first artifact that you own that is a crucial lever in communicating the problem well.

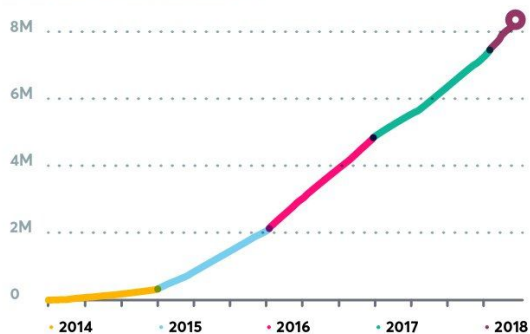
2018

Rewind



Daily Active Users

In May, we reached 8 million DAUs



May 2018
8+ Million



▶▶ WHO WAS A TOP PLG CO IN 2018?

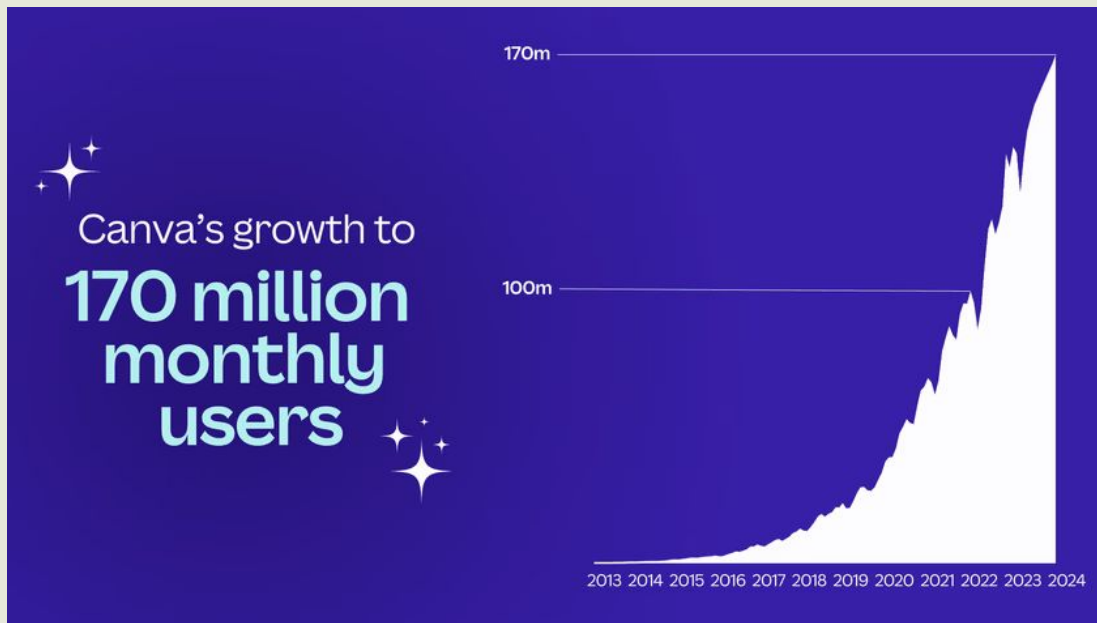
Slack was one of the canonical examples.

But their landing page was pretty simple. They had a very simple CTA to get you straight into the product with an e-mail.

Then they had customer logos, another CTA for e-mail, and then their sitenav.

2024

Fast Forward



▶▶ CANVA IS A PLG LEADER

Canva has grown to 170M users in the US and 190M+ users globally.

Canva is at \$2B+ ARR, growing a stunning 50% (!), and is cash flow-positive.

How have they evolved Slack's playbook?

2018

Slack



What it feels like to
get 48% less email.



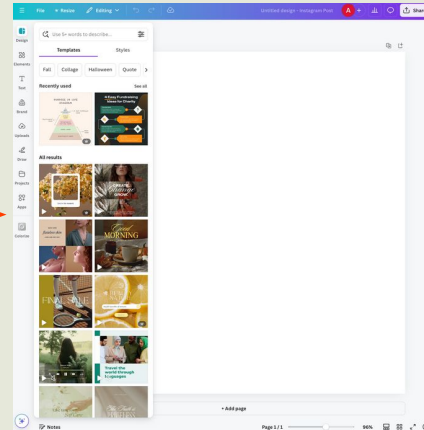
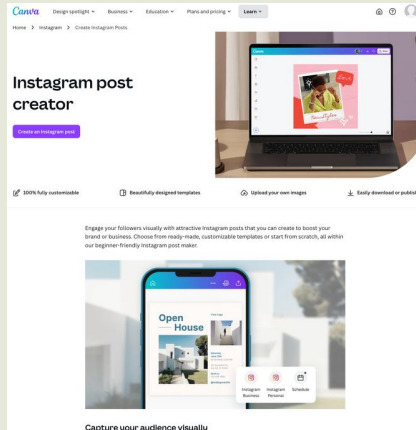
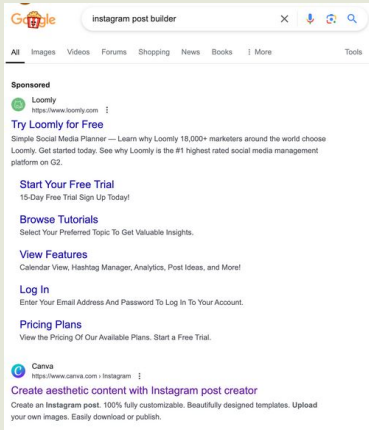
▶▶ FIGHTING AN INCUMBENT

Slack positioned itself against email.

The core problem was clear: your alternative.

2024

Canva



▶▶ **CANVA HAS A
PRODUCT-LED SEO
STRATEGY**

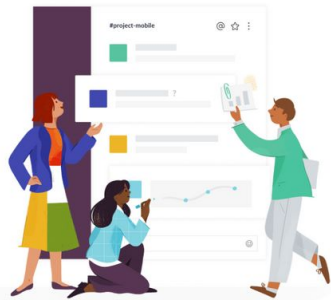
They own all the #1 rankings for high volume key words like create an Instagram post and have a great flow for people into the products and templates all for free.

Where Work Happens

When your team needs to kick off a project, hire a new employee, deploy some code, review a sales contract, finalize next year's budget, measure an A/B test, plan your next office opening, and more, Slack has you covered.

GET STARTED

Already using Slack? [Sign in](#)



You're in good company

Millions of people around the world have already made Slack the place where their work happens.

DISCOVER WHY



Los Angeles Times

ORACLE

ticketmaster*

Try it for free

Already using Slack? [Sign in](#)

GET STARTED



COMPANY

[About Us](#)
[Careers](#)
[Blog](#)
[Press](#)
[Brand Guidelines](#)

PRODUCT

[Why Slack?](#)
[Enterprise](#)
[Customer Stories](#)
[Pricing](#)
[Security](#)

RESOURCES

[Download](#)
[Help Center](#)
[Guides](#)
[Partners](#)
[Events](#)
[App Directory](#)
[API](#)
[Gartner Report](#)
[eBooks](#)

EXTRAS

[Podcast](#)
[Slack Shop](#)
[Slack at Work](#)
[Slack Fund](#)

2018

Slack

▶▶ SIMPLE WON, CUSTOMER PROOF WON

There were two key elements to this strategy:

1. Be fast
2. Drive to 1 CTA

And they drove to it by being simple and having customer proof. It was a masterclass in 'PLG for the enterprise' with those logos.

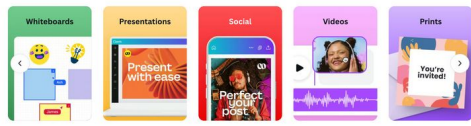
Trusted by well known companies



What will you design today?

Canva makes it easy to create professional designs and to share or print them.

Start designing



A perfect fit for everyone

For one person

Canva Free

For designing or working on anything.

Get Canva Free

For one person

Canva Pro

For growing your brand or passion project with premium features.

Start free Pro trial

For your team

Canva Teams

For teams to create together with premium workplace tools and workflows.

Start free Teams trial

For your organization

Canva Enterprise

For organizations to unite and manage their teams, brands, and designs.

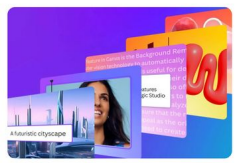
Contact sales

Our pricing page has full details. Educational organizations and nonprofits can enjoy premium Canva features for free.

Love your work

When your work looks good, you look good. Design stunning slides that close deals and visual docs that pop off the page. Turn standard work into standout work and crush every goal, with Canva.

Show me how



Create with AI

Redefine the way you create with Magic Studio, our suite of AI-powered tools that generate copy in your brand voice with Magic Write and transform your photos with Magic Edit.

Discover now

Design with others

Invite friends and family to design with you, or get your whole team up to work together. Our collaboration features let you comment and work in real-time on Presentations, Whiteboards, Docs, Videos, or that birthday party planning.

Start designing



Design and print in one place

Turn your memories into photo albums, your designs into T-shirts, and your branding into business cards, flyers or invites. Get all your printing done right here with free delivery to your doorstep.

Print your creation

Plans that get down to business

Empower your whole team or business to design together with one of our workplace plans



AI-powered efficiency
Leverage AI to create on-brand copy, templates and video-editing.

Bring your brand in house
Set up Brand Kits and templates for your team to design with.

Beautiful approval flows
Easily control individual permissions, assign tasks and share your work.

Explore Canva Teams

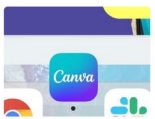
Explore Canva Enterprise

We're full of surprises

Here are some of our best traits you might not know about



We've got an Apps Marketplace
Access leading AI features, discover more content, or integrate Canva with your existing platforms.



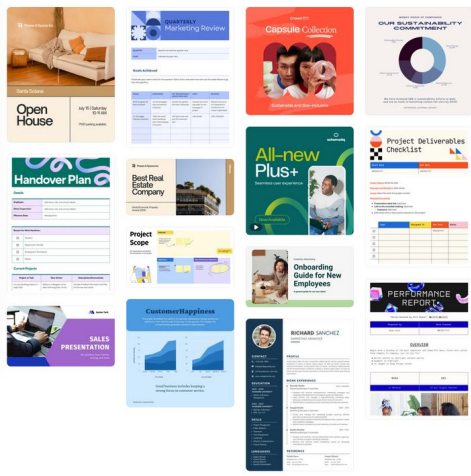
We've got a desktop app
Design and collaborate from the comfort of your desktop - no browser, no tabs, no distractions. Download the app for free!



Businesses love us
See how teams of all sizes are using Canva to manage their workflows and create together!

Templates for absolutely anything

Customize an office template, or design something more personal, like an invitation.



Start designing with Canva

Get started for free

2024 Canva

Features	Explore	Community	Download	Company
Curved text generator	Design ideas	Online communities	iOS	About
Photo effects	Custom prints	Creators	Android	Newsroom
Image enhancer	Font pairing	Canva Represents Fund	Windows	Careers
Add frames to photos	Colors	Developers	Mac	Step Two
Add text to photos	Color wheel	Partnerships		Sustainability
Online video recorder	Color palette generator	Affiliates program		Trust Center
Video trimmer	Blog			Security
Convert videos to MP4	Apps			Terms and Privacy
See more features				Contact Sales

English (US)

© 2024 All Rights Reserved, Canva®
Privacy policy | Terms



Browse all templates

WHAT'S CHANGED

Layer 1



▶▶ THE 2018 PLAYBOOK

- Simple and broad, one-size-fits-all messaging
- Reliance on traditional marketing channels
- Static landing pages with single CTA
- Fighting against an alternative
- Limited personalization in messaging
- Emphasis on free trials as primary conversion tool

▶▶ THE 2024 PLAYBOOK

- Show the different plans and cater to different users
- Create product-led channels like SEO for marketing
- Dynamic, personalized landing pages based on endpoint
- Focus on your product (no Adobe in sight)
- Different messages for different types of users
- Emphasis on freemium and a large free user base

The Canva logo, featuring the word "Canva" in a large, blue, cursive script font.

Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

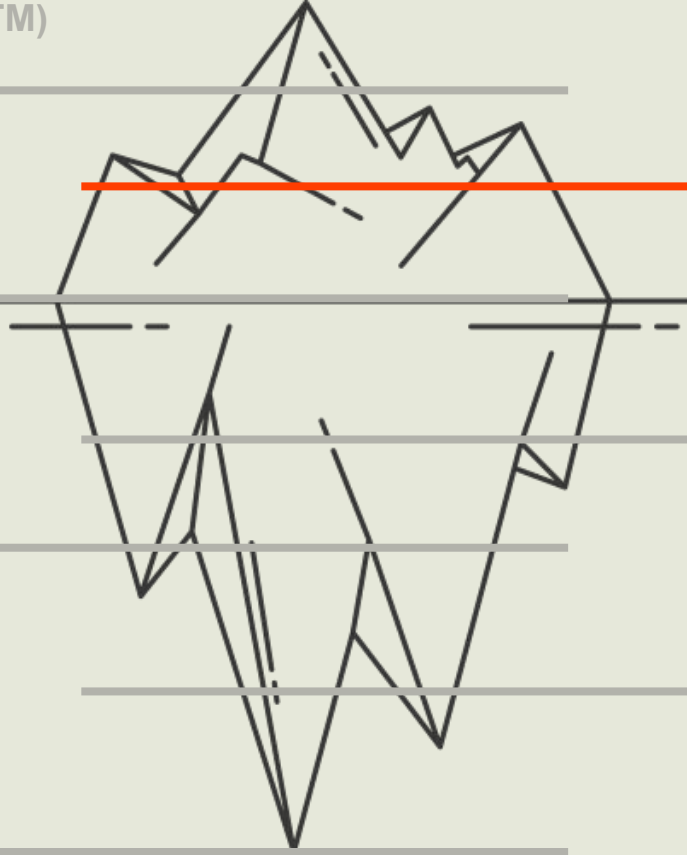
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



Definition

LAYER 2



▶▶ PRICING PAGE

The pricing page is critical in helping users understand what value they'll get and at what cost. Clarity, transparency, and the right segmentation are key here.

▶▶ LOWER-FUNNEL MARKETING (CUSTOMER CASE STUDIES, TEMPLATE GALLERIES, REFERRALS)

Lower-funnel marketing includes detailed, decision-driving assets like customer case studies, interactive galleries (e.g., templates), and referral programs. These assets are designed to help users take the final step toward conversion, offering concrete proof of value through real-world examples and encouraging user-driven growth through referrals. The focus is on ensuring that potential customers can clearly visualize the product's impact or benefit and drive others to adopt it.

2018

Rewind

Tomasz Tunguz
Venture Capitalist at Theory

[About](#) / [Categories](#) / [Subscribe](#) / [Twitter](#)

Dropbox S-1 Analysis - The King of Freemium



▶▶ DROPBOX WAS THE KING OF FREEMIUM IN 2018

If there was an example that folks studied in 2018 and the early era of PLG, it was Dropbox.

They had mastered PLG perfectly - scaling platforms and plans.

Let's take a look at best in class in 2018.

Again, there is nothing wrong with this. It's the best!

Things have just gotten even better.

2024

Fast Forward

How Notion built a world-class PLG company

Product-Led Growth (PLG)



Co-Founders



Ivan Zhao
CEO



Akshay Kothari
COO



Simon Last
Ex-CTO

From SF to Kyoto



And back again...

It's a company operating system.



1. Docs
2. Wikis
3. Notes

30M

Active Users

4M

Paying Users

The third evolution of workplace software



Notion has the building blocks (docs, databases, views) for all your work.

Excels in all 7 layers of the PLG iceberg



1. **Core problem:** multiple workplace apps
2. **Information for decision:** influencers and use cases
3. **Friction:** quick onboarding
4. **Value discovery:** free plan & free trials
5. **Repeatable value:** becomes OS for work
6. **Monetization:** Plus, business & enterprise plans
7. **Flywheels:** community templates, building blocks

Powerful Community-Led Growth

Highly Global
User Base



Template
Flywheel

►► NOTION IS A PLG
ROCKSTAR

It has managed to take on Office and GSuite.

It's the operating system of choice for most early stage startups these days.

How have they evolved Dropbox's playbook?

\$576M \$10B

Estimated ARR

If an average \$12 per month—based on its paid active users numbers.

Valuation

May 2023 was up 5x from \$2B in April 2020.

2018 Dropbox

The screenshot shows the Dropbox pricing page for teams. It features a dark blue header with the Dropbox logo and a sign-in button. Below the header, there are tabs for 'Individual plans' and 'Team plans'. The main content is a table comparing three plans: Standard, Advanced, and Enterprise. The Standard plan is priced at \$12.50 per user per month, the Advanced at \$20 per user per month, and the Enterprise plan is a contact-us option. The table lists various features such as storage capacity, file sync, sharing options, and advanced data protection. To the right of the table, there are additional options for device wipe, smart sync, and professional sharing, along with a toggle for billing frequency (yearly or monthly) and buttons for purchasing or signing up for each plan.

Core features	Standard \$12.50 / user / mo	Advanced \$20 / user / mo	Enterprise Contact us
Storage	3 TB (2048 GB)	As much as you need	As much as you need
Best-in-class sync technology	✓	✓	✓
Easy and secure sharing	✓	✓	✓
Anytime, anywhere access	✓	✓	✓
256-bit AES and 256-bit TLS encryption	✓	✓	✓
Advanced data protection			
Version history and file recovery	180 days	180 days	180 days
Advanced sharing permissions	✓	✓	✓
Password-protected and expiring links	✓	✓	✓

▶▶ STATIC AND LINEAR

Dropbox's 2018 pricing page was rigid, listing basic, plus, and professional tiers in a static table. There were no customization or dynamic elements for users to input variables like team size or feature preferences. The plan features were relatively simple—focusing on storage, file sync, and camera uploads—but lacked deep insights into enterprise needs.

▶▶ LACK OF USER SEGMENTATION

The page lacked meaningful segmentation beyond "team" vs. "individual" plans. This static approach means a single user and a large enterprise saw the same page, with no adaptations for complexity. There were no clear indicators of which plan best suits what types of businesses or use cases (freelancers, small businesses, large enterprises).

▶▶ MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR VISUAL CLARITY

Dropbox's pricing table uses checkmarks to indicate available features, but the lack of visual hierarchy makes it difficult for users to identify key differences between plans. PMs and designers should note the absence of progressive disclosure—a technique that reveals more detailed information as users express interest.

2024 Notion

Notion Product Teams Individuals Download Pricing Request a demo Log in Get Notion free

Meet the new Notion AI

One tool for your whole company. Free for teams to try.

Uber Figma amazon TOYOTA crowdstrike Password

Price in USD Pay monthly Pay yearly save 20% Add Notion AI

- Free \$0**
Sign up
• Collaborative workspace
• Integrate with Slack, GitHub & more
• Basic page analytics
• 7 day page history
• Invite 10 guests
- Plus \$10 per seat/month**
Get started
Everything in Free +
 - Unlimited blocks for teams
 - Unlimited file uploads
 - 30 day page history
 - Invite 100 guests
 - Synced databases with 3rd party apps
 - Custom webhooks
 - Custom automations
 - Charts & dashboards
- Business \$15 per seat/month**
Get started
Everything in Plus +
 - SAML SSO
 - Private workspaces
 - Bulk PDF export
 - Advanced page analytics
 - 90 day page history
 - Invite 250 guests
- Enterprise**
Contact Sales
Everything in Business +
 - User provisioning (SCIM)
 - Advanced security & controls
 - Audit log
 - Customer success manager
 - Workspace analytics
 - Unlimited page history
 - Security & Compliance integrations
 - Invite 250 guests

Notion AI
Add to your workspace for \$8 per member/month, billed annually.
\$9 per member/month billed monthly.

- Connect apps like Slack & Google Drive
- Limit the AI's search to your trusted sources
- Generate and edit text in any doc
- Autofill databases with summaries & insights
- Chat about anything using GPT-4 & Claude

Get started Read AI FAQ

►► DYNAMIC PRICING TRANSPARENCY

Notion's 2024 pricing page goes beyond basic price tiers, incorporating key options like monthly vs. yearly billing (with visible discounts). This reduces friction for users who might want to explore cost-saving opportunities. The page dynamically adjusts based on usage scenarios, such as adding Notion AI, making it a much more flexible tool for decision-making.

►► HIGHLY SEGMENTED USER JOURNEYS

Notion clearly segments its plans into Free, Plus, Business, and Enterprise. Each of these user journeys is thoughtfully segmented with key feature breakdowns that speak directly to the needs of different types of users. For example, the Business plan calls out SAML SSO and custom analytics, features highly relevant to larger organizations or enterprise teams. This segmentation ensures that the pricing page can guide both freelancers and enterprise managers to the most relevant decision.

►► FEATURE-FIRST TRANSPARENCY

Notion's pricing page does an excellent job of putting essential features at the forefront. The "Everything in Free/Plus/Business" breakdown eliminates the guesswork for users. This clarity is crucial for both small teams and large businesses evaluating value. For example, PMs evaluating a Business plan will immediately recognize that advanced page analytics and workspace analytics are available, helping them understand the direct ROI.

2018 Dropbox

Get up to 32 GB of free space by inviting your friends to Dropbox!

For every friend who joins and installs Dropbox on their computer, we'll give you 1 GB and your friend 500 MB of bonus space (up to a limit of 32 GB)! If you need even more space, [upgrade your account](#).

Send

More ways to invite your friends

 Invite your Gmail contacts

 Copy link

 Share on Facebook

Once you've invited friends, you can [view the status of your referrals](#) or visit our [Help Center](#) if you have any questions.

▶▶ REFERRAL GROWTH LOOP

Dropbox's referral program in 2018 was a hallmark of its PLG success, incentivizing users with extra storage for bringing in new users. The simplicity of the referral page – showing ways to invite friends via email, social media, or links – made it easy for anyone to participate. However, it was a very transactional growth loop, focused on personal use, without pathways for businesses or teams to scale referrals across departments.

▶▶ BASIC LOWER-FUNNEL EXECUTION

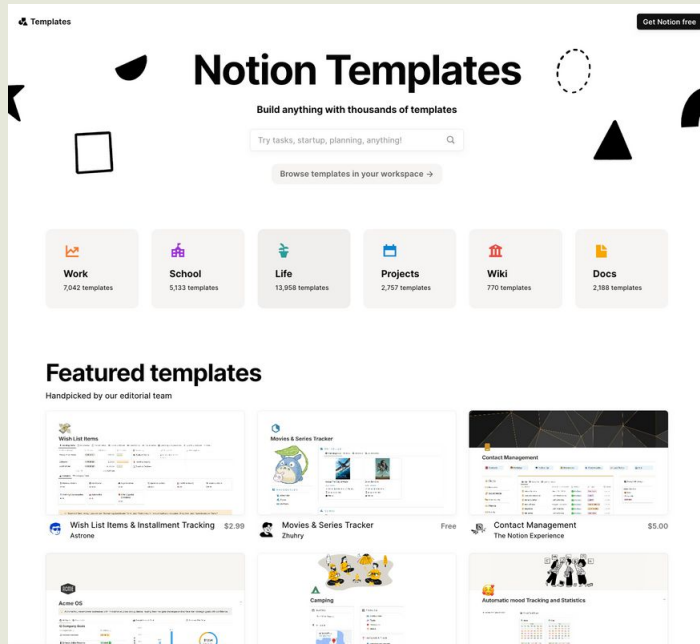
The lack of personalized user journeys at this stage meant that Dropbox's referral system was more about acquiring volume than nurturing higher-value, long-term users (like enterprises). This lower-funnel marketing focused on user expansion rather than showcasing specific use cases or solution-driven workflows.

▶▶ BROADER PLG TREND

At the time, virality was a key component of early PLG, with Dropbox being one of the best examples. However, this strategy was mostly individual-user-centric and lacked the complexity needed to handle team collaboration, growth, or deeper business adoption. There were no incentives for enterprises or teams to participate in the same way that individual users were.

2024

Notion



▶▶ DYNAMIC TEMPLATE GALLERIES FOR SELF-SERVE USERS

In 2024, Notion has fully embraced self-service onboarding through its interactive template galleries. These galleries are categorized by work scenarios (Work, School, Projects, etc.), providing users with an immediate way to see how Notion could fit into their workflows without any interaction from sales or customer support. Unlike Dropbox's 2018 referral system, Notion is engaging users by showing practical use cases up front, removing any cognitive load or need for exploration. Users can dive into templates instantly and customize them to their needs.

▶▶ LOWER-FUNNEL ACTIVATION VIA PERSONALIZATION

By giving users access to these templates, Notion reduces the friction in converting users from free to paid plans. Each template, such as a project tracker or wiki, is designed to demonstrate value quickly, leading to more hands-on discovery, even for larger teams. This approach addresses the gap Dropbox had, where business users needed deeper, more customized onboarding paths to see real value.

▶▶ BROADER PLG TREND

The shift to interactive, use-case-driven marketing reflects how modern PLG companies have recognized the importance of personalization and role-specific engagement. It's no longer just about viral loops and referrals—today, it's about showcasing how the product fits into each user's workflow and ensuring they can self-serve through interactive content before making a decision.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Layer 2



▶▶ THE 2018 PLAYBOOK

- Transactional, one-size-fits-all referral programs
- Focus on viral growth via referrals without deeper engagement
- Static pricing page with limited options (Basic vs. Professional)
- Lack of dynamic elements or role-specific messaging in the lower funnel
- Minimal emphasis on team or enterprise users
- Basic feature breakdown, lacking customization or business-specific value

▶▶ THE 2024 PLAYBOOK

- Show personalized, interactive templates to different user segments
- Create product-led channels like template galleries for self-serve onboarding
- Dynamic, segmented pricing pages with tiered plans (Free, Plus, Business, Enterprise)
- Focus on hands-on discovery and early value activation through templates
- Emphasis on personalized lower-funnel content with use-case-driven engagement
- Transparent, flexible pricing allowing customization based on team size and features



Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

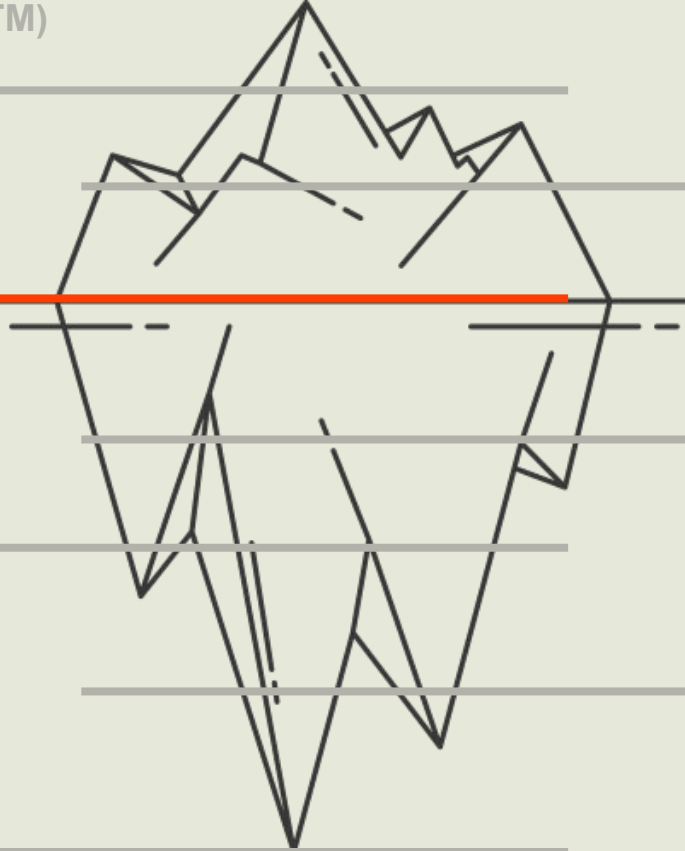
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



Definition

LAYER 3



FREEMIUM



▶▶ **FREEMIUM, FREE TRIAL,
REVERSE TRIAL**

The model you use to let people into your product has a massive impact on your free to paid conversion rate.

▶▶ **BILLING GATES**

The ways inside the product that you help people move to paid also has a large impact.

2024

Fast Forward



Attio Secures \$33M in Series B Funding to Revolutionize the CRM Landscape

attio.com

11-50 employees

USD 33.0M

Software Development

We are thrilled to announce that Attio, the innovative company revolutionizing the customer relationship management (CRM) space, has successfully raised a remarkable \$33 million in its latest funding round. This substantial influx of capital comes from a variety of renowned investors who are excited about Attio's vision of creating the CRM of the future. Attio is built on the premise of reimagining how businesses manage their relationships with customers by providing a seamless, collaborative, and intelligent platform that empowers teams to strengthen their connections and drive growth. The funding will primarily be directed towards accelerating product development, enhancing user experience, and expanding our engineering team to embark on ambitious new projects that leverage cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. In addition, Attio aims to grow its market reach, enabling more teams and organizations to push the boundaries of customer engagement and relationship management, ultimately transforming the way businesses operate in a digital-first world. This latest capital raise marks a significant milestone in Attio's journey, paving the way for the company to solidify its position as a leader in the CRM landscape and demonstrate the power of innovative thinking in redefining customer relationships. We are excited about the next chapter of growth and innovation at Attio and are eager to share our journey with our partners and customers along the way!

▶▶ ATTIO IS TAKING ON SALESFORCE

This is a series B company that just raised a \$33M series B in this tough market.

They continue to grow really quickly in a crowded space with Hubspot and Salesforce as large incumbents.

2018 Dropbox

The screenshot shows the Dropbox pricing page for teams. It features a dark blue header with the Dropbox logo and the text "Choose the right Dropbox for your team". Below the header, there are tabs for "Individual plans" and "Team plans". The main content area is divided into three columns representing different plans: Standard, Advanced, and Enterprise. Each plan has a "Try for free" button. The Standard plan is priced at \$12.50 per user per month and offers 2 TB of storage. The Advanced plan is priced at \$20 per user per month and offers storage "As much as you need". The Enterprise plan is priced at \$20 per user per month and offers storage "As much as you need". The page also lists various features and advanced data protection options.

Core features	Standard \$12.50 / user / mo Try for free	Advanced \$20 / user / mo Try for free	Enterprise Contact us Contact us
Storage	2 TB (2048 GB)	As much as you need	As much as you need
Best-in-class sync technology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Easy and secure sharing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anytime, anywhere access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
256-bit AES and 256-bit TLS encryption	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Advanced data protection	Standard	Advanced	Enterprise
Version history and file recovery	180 days	180 days	180 days
Advanced sharing permissions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Password-protected and expiring links	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

▶▶ FREEMIUM + FREE TRIAL

Dropbox combined a freemium model with a 30-day free trial of its Plus or Professional plans. Users could sign up for free with 2 GB of storage, and upgrade to a free trial of premium tiers for additional storage, file sharing, and collaboration tools. This allowed users to explore the paid features but created a clear gap between free and paid tiers.

▶▶ NO CREDIT CARD FOR FREEMIUM; REQUIRED FOR FREE TRIAL

Dropbox did not require a credit card for the freemium plan, allowing users to start with no immediate commitment. However, upgrading to the 30-day trial required a credit card, which created some friction for users who might be hesitant about providing payment details upfront.

2024

Attio

From zero to IPO.

Designed for every stage of your journey.
Start today, no credit card required.

Monthly Annual

Free

€0

Per user/month, billed annually

For very small teams

- ✓ Real-time contact syncing
- ✓ Automatic data enrichment
- ✓ Up to 3 seats

Start for free

Plus

€29 15% off

Per user/month, billed annually

For growing teams

- ✓ Private lists
- ✓ Enhanced email sending
- ✓ No seat limits

Continue with Plus

Pro

€59 15% off

Per user/month, billed annually

For scaling businesses

- ✓ Fully adjustable permissions
- ✓ Advanced data enrichment
- ✓ Priority support

Continue with Pro

Enterprise

€119

Per user/month, billed annually

For large organizations

- ✓ Unlimited reporting
- ✓ SAML and SSO
- ✓ Custom billing

Talk to sales

▶▶ REVERSE TRIAL

Attio's reverse trial, introduced in September 2023, allows users to start on the Pro plan for two weeks, experiencing the full feature set (including historic pipeline reporting, analytics, and collaboration tools). After the trial, users are downgraded to the free plan unless they upgrade. This approach focuses on getting users to their Aha moments faster, while allowing them to downgrade to free without immediate payment pressure.

▶▶ NO CREDIT CARD REQUIRED

No credit card is needed to start the trial, further reducing friction. Users can explore the premium features without hesitation, making it easier for them to see the value of the product before committing to pay.

▶▶ TRANSPARENT ENTERPRISE

Unlike many SaaS companies, Attio displays its enterprise pricing clearly on the pricing page. This removes friction for larger organizations and enterprise users who often have to go through lengthy sales processes just to discover pricing. By making enterprise pricing clear from the start, Attio appeals to decision-makers looking for transparency and a straightforward buying process.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Layer 3

▶▶ THE 2018 PLAYBOOK



- Freemium model with a 30-day free trial for premium tiers
- No credit card required for freemium but needed for premium trial
- Limited feature set in the free plan, creating a clear gap between free and paid users
- Emphasis on viral user acquisition with storage-based upsells
- Strong initial adoption but moderate conversion rates to paid plans

▶▶ THE 2024 PLAYBOOK

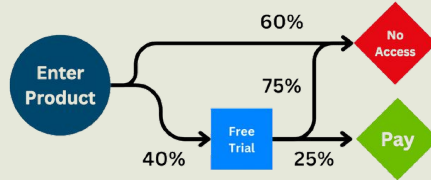


- Reverse trial model, starting users on the premium Pro plan
- No credit card required at the start, reducing friction for new users
- Users experience the full feature set upfront, then downgrade after two weeks
- Conversions happen over time as users hit feature limits after downgrading
- Enterprise pricing is transparent, appealing to larger organizations and reducing sales friction
- Doubled free-to-paid conversion rates by exposing users to premium features upfront

It's not just free trial or freemium

The reverse trial is one of the most powerful methods for increasing paid conversion, while maintaining a large free base.

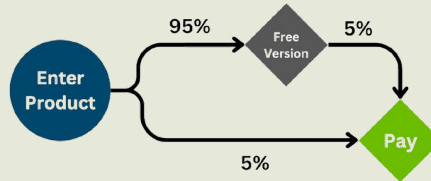
Free Trial



Free Audience: None

Paid Conversion: 10%

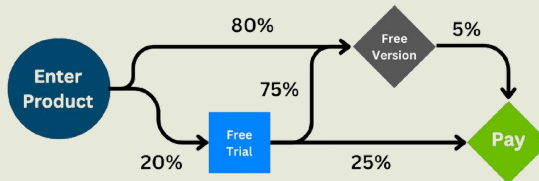
Free mium



Free Audience: Max

Paid Conversion: 10%

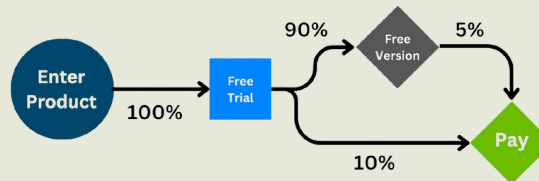
Trial + Free mium



Free Audience: Very Large

Paid Conversion: 10%

Reverse Trial



Free Audience: Large

Paid Conversion: 14.5%

Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

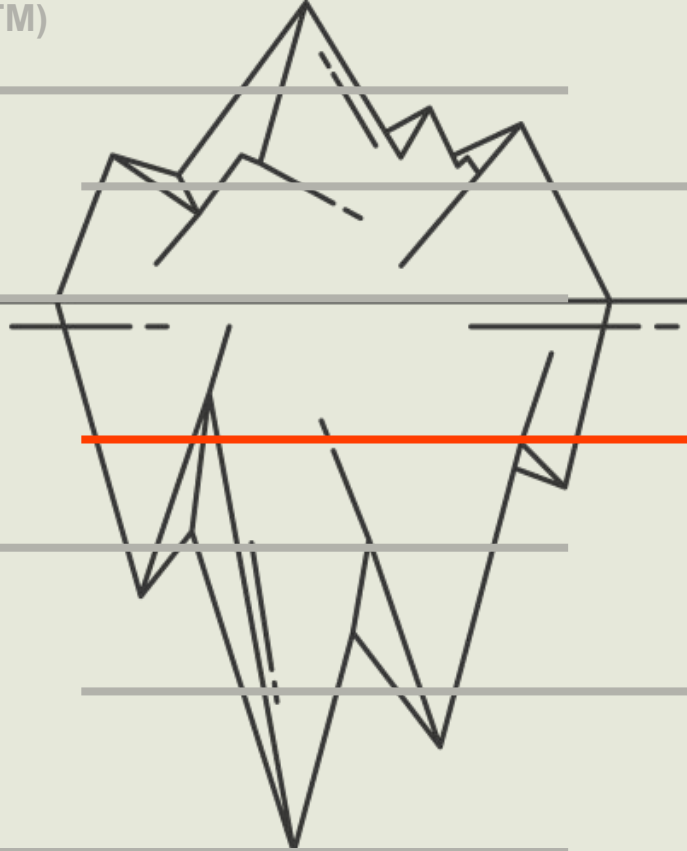
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



Definition

LAYER 4



WELCOME
ONBOARD

Activation is about ensuring users can quickly set up and experience the core value of a product. The goal is to get users to their "aha moment" as fast as possible, helping them form habits that lead to ongoing engagement. The key surfaces for activation include:

▶▶ ONBOARDING FLOW

The guided or flexible flow that helps users set up the product and become familiar with its key features. A well-designed onboarding flow reduces friction and increases time-to-value.

▶▶ IN-PRODUCT CHECKLISTS

These are task-based checklists within the product that guide users through essential setup steps, helping them complete critical actions that drive engagement and habit formation.

2018

Rewind



Decibel

[Why Decibel](#) [Team](#) [How We Help](#) [Companies](#) [Learn](#)

After receiving \$600M+ in funding since its inception in 2005, Box went public in January 2015 on the back of a successful enterprise Sales motion, completed by a tremendous Communications and thought leadership engine led by CEO Aaron Levie.

[Marie Gassée](#) joined them in August 2013 as an Associate. Back then, PLG (f.k.a. self-serve or online sales) was not front and center, despite the freemium roots of the company. Marie quickly climbed the ranks and ended up being the Sr. Director and General Manager of the Online Sales Business Unit before subsequently joining Confluent in 2019. By the time she left Box, the self-serve segment she was overseeing represented roughly 80% of Box's customers and close to 20% of the overall ARR (a convenient 80 / 20 rule).

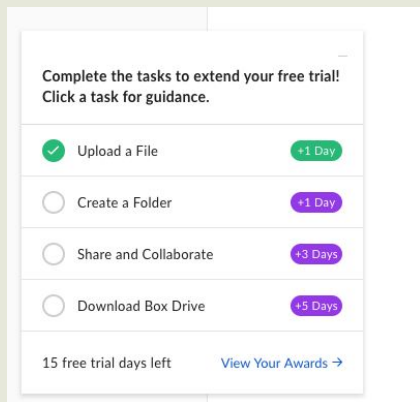
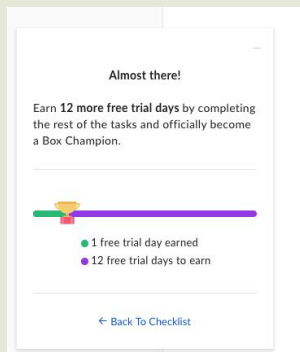
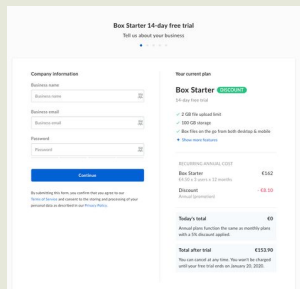
Marie shared with me how she got started at Box, why they prioritized PLG when they did, how they approached the challenge, their first wins, and more. She also shared how the team at Box managed to scale a significant PLG motion in a culture that had invested heavily in their sales motion, as well as her criteria for a great Head of Growth.

▶▶ BOX MADE A BIG SHIFT TO PLG

The traditionally sales-led company had gone public in 2015 and was looking to re-invent itself compared to the IPO-ing Dropbox.

They released an onboarding that used all the modern best practices...

2018 *Box*



STEP-BASED ONBOARDING

In 2018, Box used a structured, step-based onboarding system. Users were guided through multiple tasks, like uploading files, creating folders, and sharing documents. Each completed task earned users extra free trial days to continue using the product.

AHA MOMENT THROUGH TASKS

Users reached the aha moment after completing essential tasks like uploading their first file or sharing it with others. However, the step-by-step flow delayed the aha moment for some users who had to complete a specific sequence of tasks.

MOTIVATION WITH REWARDS

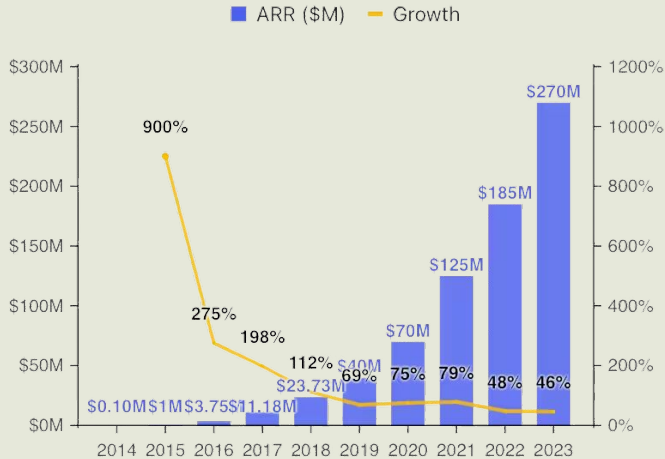
Box incentivized users to complete setup tasks by offering rewards, such as extra free trial days. However, the linearity of the flow sometimes led to drop-offs before users realized the full potential of the product

2024

Fast Forward



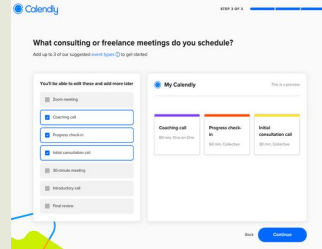
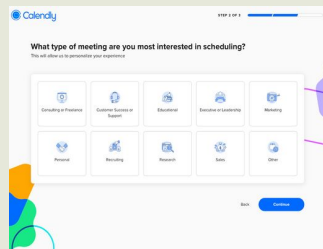
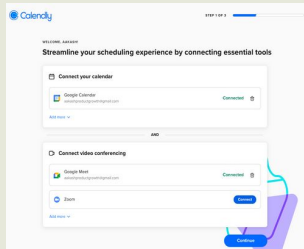
Annual recurring revenue (ARR)



▶▶ **CALENDLY IS**
GROWING 40%+

The PLG company has managed to grow to 270M ARR and still grow 46% per year

2024 Calendly



▶▶ FLEXIBLE, GUIDED SETUP

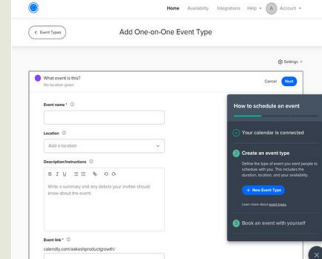
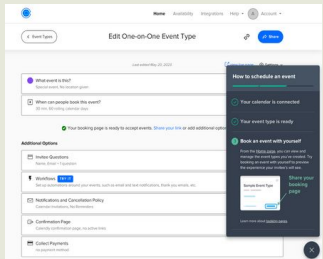
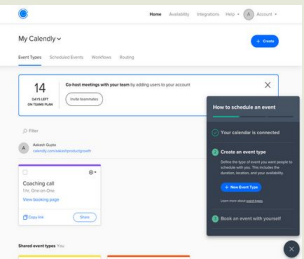
Calendly's 2024 onboarding experience uses a flexible, self-paced checklist to guide users through the setup process. Users can connect their calendar, set up event types, and integrate video conferencing tools based on their immediate needs.

▶▶ IMMEDIATE AHA MOMENT

Calendly focuses on delivering value early. By allowing users to schedule their first event within minutes, the aha moment happens quickly. The checklist highlights key actions without forcing users to follow a rigid sequence.

▶▶ PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCE

Calendly's guided setup offers customization based on the types of meetings users are most interested in scheduling, creating a tailored experience that increases engagement and reduces friction.



WHAT'S CHANGED

Layer 4

The logo for Box, consisting of the word "box" in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font.

▶▶ THE 2018 PLAYBOOK

- Task-based onboarding with rewards (e.g., free trial days)
- Rigid, step-by-step process delaying the aha moment
- Static flow with limited flexibility and personalization
- Delayed feature discovery through required task completion
- Minimal customization based on user needs

▶▶ THE 2024 PLAYBOOK

- Flexible, self-paced onboarding with in-product checklists
- Personalized setup based on user preferences for faster aha moments
- Early feature exposure and immediate value delivery
- Dynamic task flow allowing users to skip unnecessary steps
- Hands-on discovery and habit formation through customized guidance

The logo for Calendly, featuring a blue circular icon with a stylized 'C' and the word "Calendly" in a blue, sans-serif font.

Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

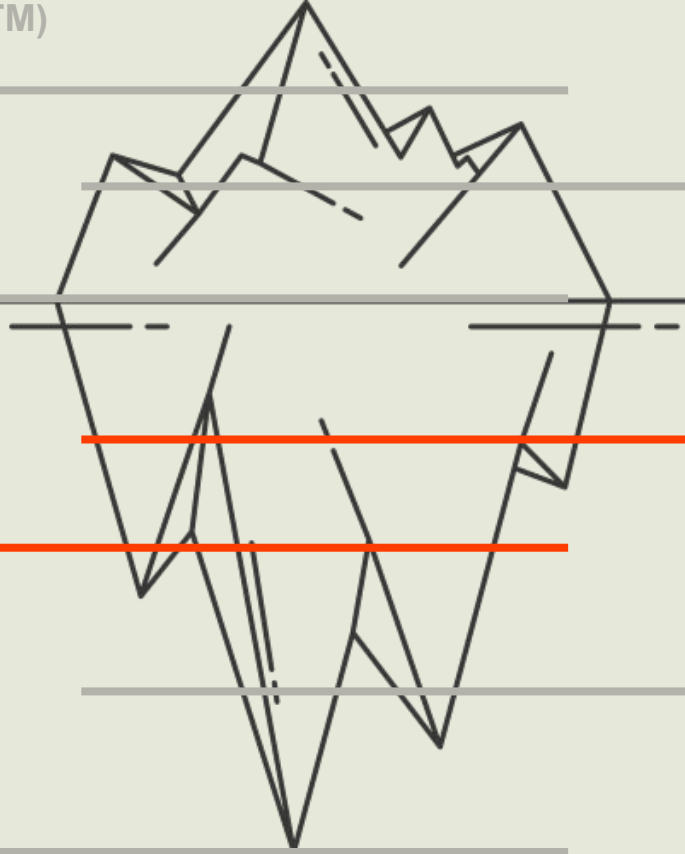
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



Definition

LAYER 5

Retention is the process of keeping users engaged over time by continuously delivering value, encouraging product usage, and preventing churn. The goal is to ensure users form habits around your product and stay active over the long term. Two key surfaces for retention are:

▶▶ HABIT LOOPS

Creating repetitive actions that users return to daily, weekly, or monthly. Retention strategies use triggers, actions, and rewards to build habit-forming behavior.

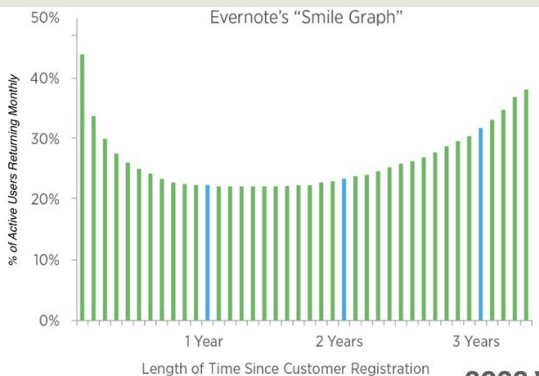
▶▶ PRODUCT UPDATES AND ONGOING VALUE

Regularly introducing product enhancements or new features that keep users engaged and continuously provide value.



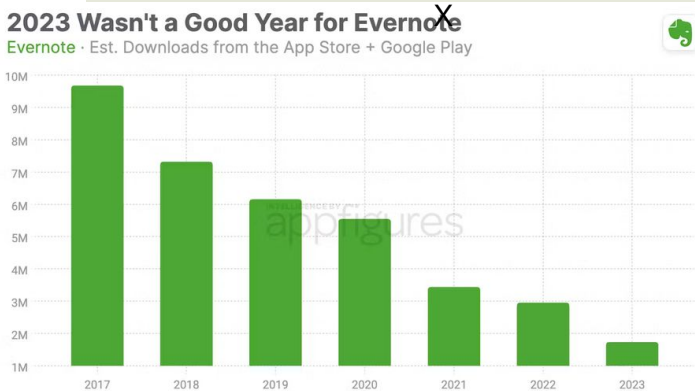
2018

Rewind



▶▶ EVERNOTE'S SMILE

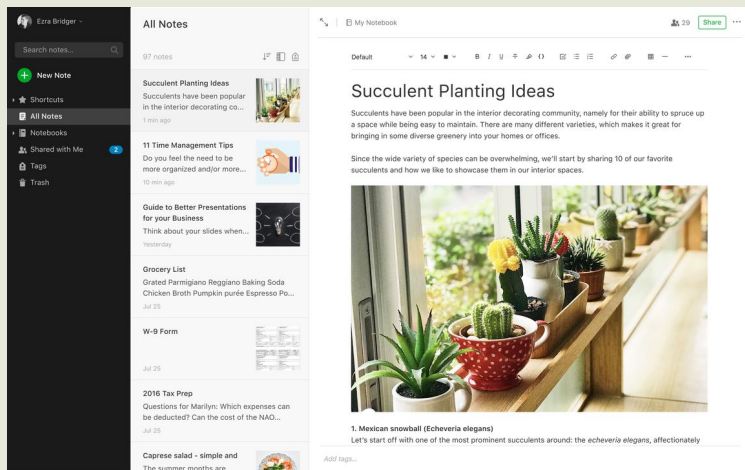
The smile chart is ideal for your retention charts - and Evernote had achieved it by 2018. They zoomed past over 200M users in 2023 and are still doing well.



▶▶ BUT THINGS ARE NOT AS THEY WERE...

Evernote is great, but lately they've hit a bit of a rough patch. Their app downloads are illustrative of the tool's fall for grace as other tools like Apple Notes, Obsidian, and Notion take its share.

2018 Evernote



►► FREEMIUM MODEL AND SYNCING

Evernote's freemium model let users sync notes across devices, creating a habit loop. This daily interaction—whether on phone, tablet, or desktop—helped drive retention through consistent use.

►► NOTE ORGANIZATION AND TAGGING

Evernote's organization features allowed users to tag and categorize notes. This made information easy to find, driving users back to retrieve content.

►► SINGLE-USE LIMITATION

While Evernote excelled in note-taking, it failed to expand into team-wide collaboration. Its focus on personal use limited its ability to evolve into a broader tool.

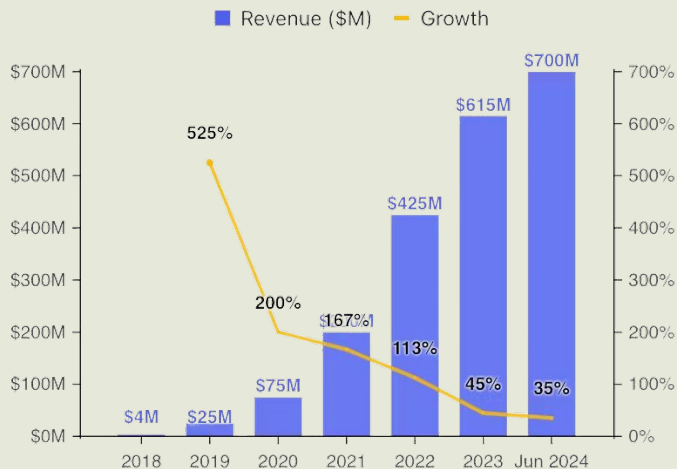
2024

Fast Forward



Figma

Annual recurring revenue (ARR)



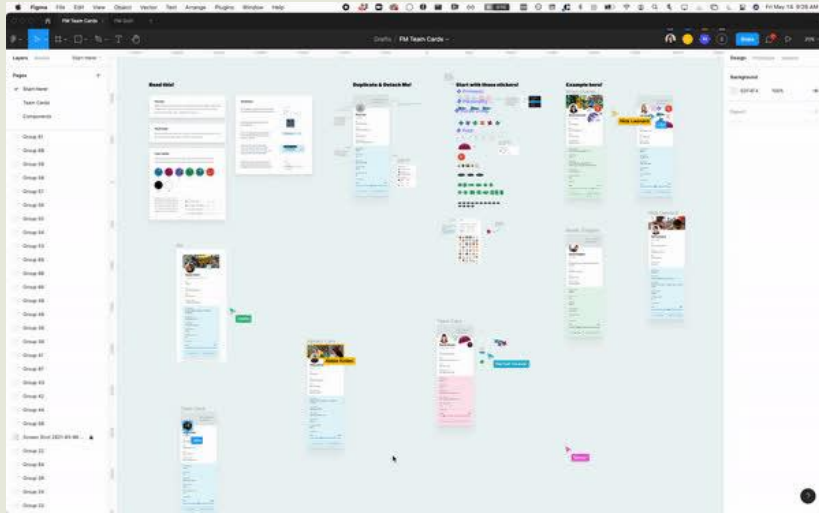
▶▶ FIGMA IS GROWING FAST

The company has fully taken over Sketch's market share and is stealing more share daily from Adobe's tools as the entire product design disciplines moves to Figma.

At \$700M ARR, it's still growing 35% per year.

2024

Figma



▶▶ REAL-TIME COLLABORATION

Figma expanded from design into team collaboration. Users can work on the same file simultaneously, making it essential for daily use across departments.

▶▶ INTEGRATIONS WITH OTHER TOOLS

Figma integrates with Slack, Jira, and Notion, embedding itself in broader workflows. This integration increased its utility, keeping teams engaged.

▶▶ FREQUENT FEATURE UPDATES

Figma continuously releases new features like plugins and prototyping, keeping users engaged. These updates ensure it remains relevant to evolving user needs.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Layer 5



▶▶ THE 2018 PLAYBOOK

- Freemium model to build early loyalty and reduce entry barriers
- Retention driven by cross-device syncing and note organization
- Habit loop created around personal use but lacked team-wide engagement
- Single-use focus on note-taking limited long-term retention
- Few expansions beyond core use case, leading to stagnation over time



▶▶ THE 2024 PLAYBOOK

- Freemium model expanded into multi-team collaboration workflows
- Retention driven by real-time collaboration and seamless integrations
- Habit loop focused on cross-functional collaboration, driving daily use
- Expanded use cases across teams, increasing daily engagement
- Continuous feature rollouts, making the platform essential across departments

Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

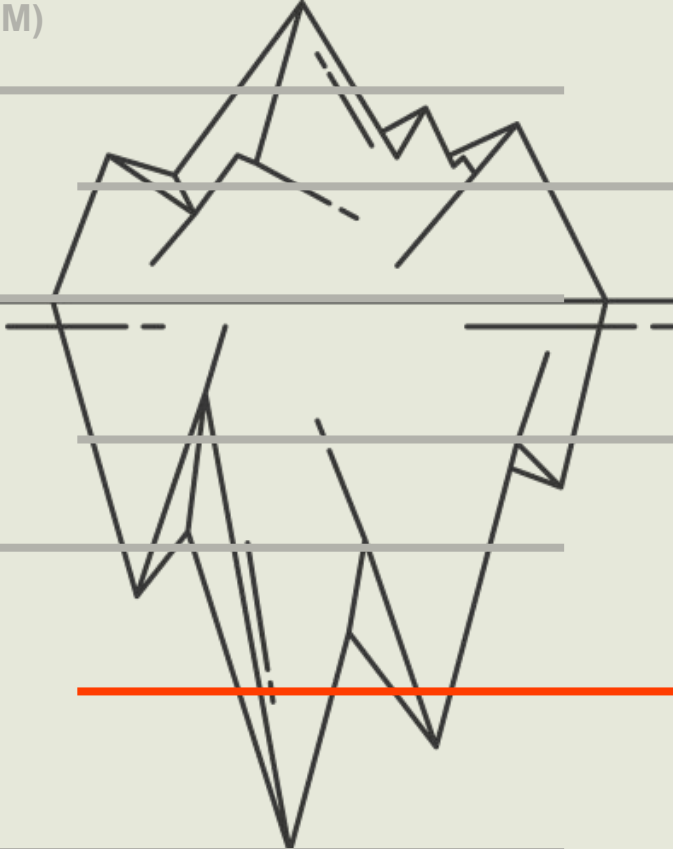
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



Definition

LAYER 6



Monetization in PLG has evolved from static, one-size-fits-all pricing tiers to dynamic, usage-based, and freemium models that scale with customer needs. Two key surfaces for monetization are:

▶▶ PRICING TIERS

Offering tiered plans or freemium-to-premium models that allow users to upgrade as they experience more value.

▶▶ USAGE / HYBRID PRICING

Introducing flexible pricing models where users are charged based on how much they use the product, which creates natural expansion within teams and companies.

2018

Rewind



▶▶ AN ORIGINAL PLG GIANT

Trello was one of the PLG darlings in the early era.

▶▶ ACQUIRED IN 2017

Trello was acquired by the PLG godfather Atlassian in early 2017.

2018 Trello

See What Trello Can Do For You
Trusted by millions, Trello powers teams around the world. Check out which option is right for you.

[Sign up for free!](#)

Atlassian.com/US

Free	Business Class	Enterprise
\$0	\$9.99	\$20.83
per user/month (billed annually)	per user/month (billed and renewed annually)	per user/month (billed and renewed annually)
Sign Up	Upgrade Team	Contact Us

- Unlimited boards, lists, cards, members, checklists, and attachments
- Low bandwidth per board
- Attach files up to 10MB from your computer, or link any file from your Google Drive, Dropbox, Box, or OneDrive
- Everything you love about the free version of Trello
- Unlimited integrations with 100+ different tools like Slack, Salesforce, Zendesk, and more
- Attach files up to 250MB
- Group and organize all of your team's boards with Collections
- Maximum control with granular permissions and access removal for board members
- Stay secure by controlling who can create public or private boards
- Keep company information private with restricted membership invitations
- Add privacy with custom board backgrounds and stickers
- Priority email support with a human being and a guaranteed 1-day response time during business hours
- Learn more about our services for government, staff, and industrial institutions
- All of the robust features of Trello Business Class
- Single sign-on available for all users
- Enable 2-factor authentication to keep all work data secure
- Receive personalized onboarding assistance to aid in adoption, migration, and resolution of all requests
- Get answers quickly with priority email and phone support with responses in less than 1 business day, guaranteed
- Be informed with comprehensive legal (privacy notice and enhanced SLA)
- File encryption at rest
- Add privacy with custom background software monitoring
- Custom security review

The screenshot shows a Trello board with a card titled "Add Trello power up information to account - Integrations". The card's description reads: "This is part of the Trello Trello Power Up page from the integrations section. We should link to the Hourly Trello Power Up page from the integrations section. I've attached a screenshot of the page where the new UI element will need to be added." The card includes a "Time Recorded By" section with a table:

Time Recorded By	Total Billables	Total Hours
Hourly	\$0k	1h

Below the table, it says "See all 2 work items for this card...". The card also has an "Add Comment" section with a text input field and a "Save" button. The activity section shows a comment by "Cam Taylor" dated "Aug 3 at 1:41 PM".

▶▶ FREEMIUM ENTRY WITH LIMITED FEATURES

Trello used a freemium model where core functionality like boards, lists, and cards were free. To unlock more advanced features like automations and integrations (Power-Ups), users had to upgrade. This model appealed to small teams but had limited expansion potential beyond individual users and small groups.

▶▶ POWER-UPS AS THE KEY UPSSELL

The Power-Ups feature was Trello's main expansion lever. Users could start with free usage, but they'd need to pay for access to advanced integrations like Slack, Salesforce, and custom fields. This expanded the usage within teams but didn't deeply penetrate organizations.

▶▶ ORGANIC GROWTH, NO AGGRESSIVE CROSS-TEAM STRATEGY

While Trello did see organic growth, it relied on individual teams upgrading for Power-Ups rather than aggressively pushing for cross-department adoption or modular product add-ons for broader organizational use.

2024

Fast Forward



▶▶ HUBSPOT PUTS ON A PLG MASTERCLASS

In an industry dominated by sales-led companies Hubspot is going up and to the right over the long run.

It's been one of the best performing tech IPOs of all time, all powered by PLG.

2024 Hubspot

The screenshot shows the HubSpot pricing page for Marketing Hub. The navigation bar includes 'HubSpot', 'Software', 'Pricing', and 'Resources', with a 'Get started' button. Below the navigation, there are tabs for 'For businesses & enterprises' and 'For individuals & small teams'. The main content area features two pricing cards: 'Marketing Hub Professional' and 'Marketing Hub Enterprise'. The Professional plan starts at \$800/mo and includes 3 seats, 2,000 marketing contacts, and various features like dynamic personalization and social media. The Enterprise plan starts at \$3,600/mo and includes 5 seats, 10,000 marketing contacts, and features like multi-touch revenue attribution and custom objects. Both plans have 'Talk to Sales' buttons.

HubSpot Software Pricing Resources [Get started](#)

[Back to Overview](#)

For businesses & enterprises For individuals & small teams

Platform Solutions **Marketing Hub®**
Generate leads and automate marketing that drives growth. [Calculate your price](#)

Customer Platform
Free Tools
Create a Bundle
Marketing+

Products
Marketing
Sales
Service
Content
Operations
Commerce

Enhancements
Breeze Intelligence [Beta](#)
USD (\$) -

Marketing Hub Professional
Comprehensive marketing software for automation, reporting, and campaigns

Starts at **\$800/mo**

Includes 3 seats
Additional seats start at \$45/mo

Pay Monthly
Commit annually

Pay Upfront
BEST VALUE
Commit annually

Includes 2,000 marketing contacts

[Talk to Sales](#)

Starter plus:
✓ Dynamic personalization
✓ Social media
✓ Lead Scoring App
✓ Teams
✓ Breeze social agent (Beta)
✓ Custom reporting
✓ Omni-channel marketing automation
✓ Marketing SMS

*Cost shown does not include the required, one-time Professional Onboarding for a fee of \$5,000. [Learn more](#) ☞

Marketing Hub Enterprise
Our most powerful marketing automation software for advanced control and flexibility

Starts at **\$3,600/mo**

Includes 5 seats
Additional seats start at \$75/mo

Includes 10,000 marketing contacts

[Talk to Sales](#)

Professional plus:
✓ Custom events
✓ Multi-touch revenue attribution
✓ Customer journey analytics
✓ Custom objects
✓ Limit access to content and data
✓ Organize teams

*Cost shown does not include the required, one-time Enterprise Onboarding for a fee of \$10,000. [Learn more](#) ☞

▶▶ FREEMIUM TO FULL-STACK CRM ADOPTION

HubSpot started with a freemium CRM but expanded by upselling users into additional product hubs—Marketing, Sales, and Service. By making each hub essential to different departments, HubSpot ensured multi-department expansion.

▶▶ CROSS-DEPARTMENT GROWTH W PREMIUM FEATURES

HubSpot focused heavily on getting different departments within an organization to adopt its various tools. Marketing might start with email campaigns, while Sales could adopt pipelines, and Customer Success could use support tools—all within the same HubSpot ecosystem.

▶▶ ENTERPRISE FEATURES DRIVING REVENUE GROWTH

HubSpot also drives significant expansion revenue through enterprise-grade features like advanced automation, reporting, and custom integrations. These features encourage larger organizations to scale with HubSpot across their teams, making it an indispensable tool for growth.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Layer 6



▶▶ THE 2018 PLAYBOOK

- Freemium entry with limited Power-Up expansion
- Expansion through individual users and small teams
- Power-Ups as the primary monetization lever
- Organic growth within teams but no strong cross-department strategy
- Limited organizational adoption beyond niche use cases



▶▶ THE 2024 PLAYBOOK

- Freemium entry but modular expansion with full-stack hubs (Marketing, Sales, CRM)
- Expansion through cross-department adoption across multiple teams
- Enterprise-grade features driving high-revenue growth
- Aggressive upsell strategy for full organizational adoption
- A multi-functional tool that scales across various departments

Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

How they acquire customers

Layer 2: Info For Decision

The details before they try

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Shifting users from free to paid plans

Layer 4: Activation

Helping users to set up and find value fast

Layer 5: Retention

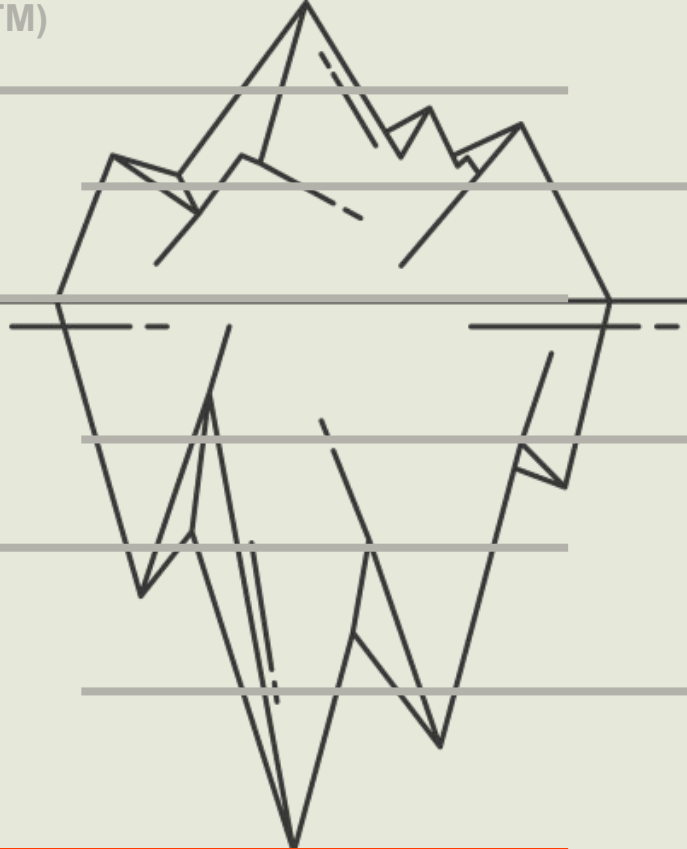
Keeping users engaged

Layer 6: Monetization

Nailing pricing and packaging

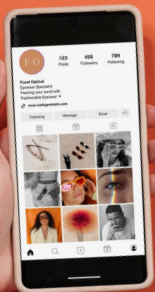
Layer 7: Expansion

Growing accounts after initial sale



Definition

LAYER 7



The key to driving long-term growth in PLG is expansion revenue. This means growing within existing accounts by selling more users, additional features, or products after the initial adoption. The two key surfaces are:

▶▶ EXPANSION VIA ADDITIONAL FEATURES

Upselling premium features or adding new product modules over time as users grow.

▶▶ CROSS-USER EXPANSION

Expanding usage within teams or across departments by encouraging more people to adopt the product and fostering collaboration.

2018

Rewind



▶▶ RIDING HIGH

SurveyMonkey IPOd on Nasdaq in 2018

momentive™ 

 SYMPHONY
TECHNOLOGY
GROUP

▶▶ TURBULENCE SINCE

They had a disastrous rebrand to momentive, then were bought by PE firm SPG and branded back to SurveyMonkey

2018

SurveyMonkey

	Basic	Standard	Advantage	Premier	Enterprise
Base price (\$USD) per user	Free	\$37 / month \$372 / year	\$384 / year	\$1,188 / year	Negotiated pricing
Unlimited surveys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unlimited questions	10 questions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unlimited responses	100 responses	1000 responses	✓	✓	✓
Branding & customization		✓	✓	White label surveys	Custom subdomain
Survey logic		✓	Enhanced logic	Advanced logic	Advanced logic
Advanced design			✓	✓	✓
Advanced collection					✓
Data Exports		✓	✓	✓	✓
Benchmarks			✓	✓	✓
Team collaboration			✓	✓	✓
Support	24/7 email support	24/7 expedited email support	24/7 priority email support	Phone support	Success manager
Partner integrations & APIs	✓	✓	✓	Direct API access	Unlimited API access Salesforce, Marketo & Eloqua integrations
Advanced admin features					Admin dashboard & user management Account control & migration Single sign-on (SSO)
Advanced security features					Enhanced governance & security HIPAA-compliant features

▶▶ FREEMIUM MODEL WITH TIERED UPGRADES

SurveyMonkey used a freemium model to attract users and then relied on tiered pricing to monetize. Users could create and distribute surveys for free but were limited in features like advanced analysis, reporting, and customization, which required upgrading to higher tiers.

▶▶ FEATURE GATING

The free plan had heavy feature gating. Users were restricted on the number of responses and customization, which often pushed them to upgrade. However, this one-size-fits-all approach lacked flexibility, particularly for users with varying needs.

▶▶ LIMITED CUSTOMIZATION OF PLANS

The pricing model didn't account for usage-based scaling, which meant small teams and enterprises had to pick from the same set of tiers, leading to friction for larger organizations.

2024

Fast Forward



▶▶ APOLLO.IO IS TAKING OVER

I might be biased since I was a VP of Product here, but Apollo.io is taking a big chunk out of the sales tech market.

It raised a \$110M series D in 2023, well after the downturn in tech as it continues to grow quickly on the back of its PLG motion.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Layer 7



▶▶ THE 2018 PLAYBOOK

- Static freemium and tiered pricing model with feature gating
- Little flexibility for growing or scaling teams
- Users paid more for unlocking features, not for usage
- No dynamic pricing based on actual product consumption
- Focused on upgrading to pre-set tiers, regardless of team size



▶▶ THE 2024 PLAYBOOK

- Freemium model combined with dynamic usage-based pricing
- Users can scale based on the volume of data or features they consume
- Custom pricing plans tailored for enterprises and large-scale teams
- Monetization tied to actual value extraction through CRM and data enrichment
- Flexibility in upgrading based on team size, feature needs, and usage



CONCLUSION

Together



Let's sum it up.

Layer 1: Go-To-Market (GTM)

Shift from broad messaging to tailored, job-focused acquisition.

Layer 3: F2P Conversion

Freemium and reverse trials dominate, reducing friction and increasing paid conversions.

Layer 5: Retention

Expanding daily-use cases across departments boosts long-term engagement.

Layer 7: Expansion

From team-based growth to organization-wide adoption for full-scale expansion.

Layer 2: Info For Decision

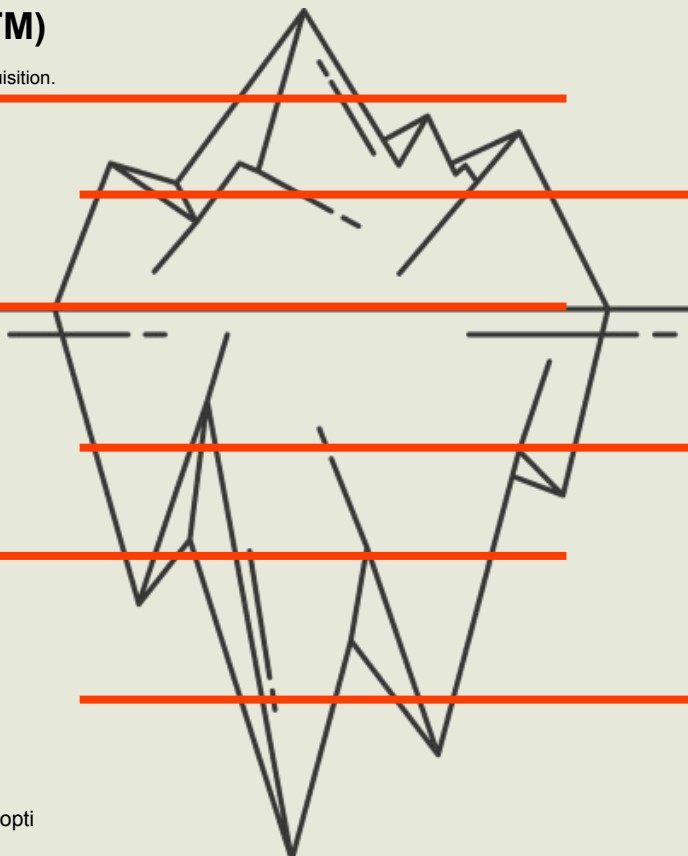
Dynamic, role-specific pricing replaced static pages to boost conversions.

Layer 4: Activation

Personalized, flexible onboarding drives faster Aha moments.

Layer 6: Monetization

Flexible, modular, and usage-based pricing scales with growing teams.



WHAT'S CHANGED

Overall



▶▶ PERSONALIZATION WINS

The leaders today craft personalized experiences from onboarding to expansion, optimizing every step.



▶▶ CROSS-ORG ADOPTION DRIVES GROWTH

Expansion success hinges on adoption across multiple departments, not just individual teams.



▶▶ FREEMIUM EVOLVES

Freemium thrives, but success lies in flexible, transparent models like reverse trials and usage-based pricing.

PRODUCT GROWTH

studies in

companies



If you enjoyed this...

I study companies all the time in my newsletter and on my podcast.

www.news.aakashg.com