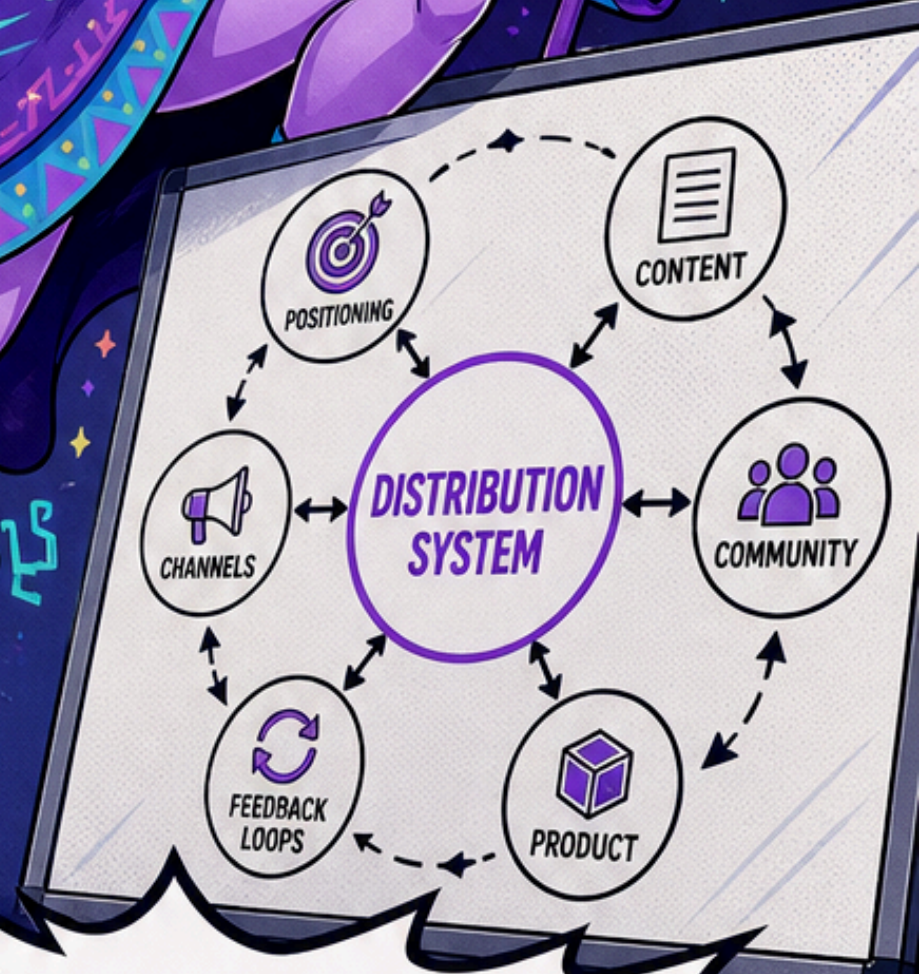


# GO-TO-MARKET FOR ENGINEERS:

A SYSTEM, NOT A SALES TASK



**ENGINEERING BUILDS IT.  
DISTRIBUTION COMPOUNDS IT.**

# GTM IS NOT A SALES FUNCTION

THE REFLEX IS TO TREAT GTM AS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PRODUCT SHIPS. YOU FINISH THE BUILD, THEN HAND IT OFF TO "THE SALES PERSON" OR START SENDING COLD EMAILS. THAT'S NOT A SYSTEM. THAT'S AN AFTERTHOUGHT.

A PROPER GTM SYSTEM HAS THREE LAYERS WORKING IN CONCERT:

## POSITIONING



ANSWERS THE QUESTION OF WHO YOU'RE FOR AND WHY **THEY** SHOULD CARE. IT'S NOT A TAGLINE. IT'S THE WORK OF IDENTIFYING THE SPECIFIC PERSON WITH THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM, THEN DESCRIBING YOUR SOLUTION IN THE LANGUAGE **THEY** USE, NOT THE LANGUAGE YOU USE.

## CHANNELS



DETERMINE HOW THAT POSITIONED MESSAGE REACHES THOSE SPECIFIC PEOPLE. CONTENT, OUTBOUND, COMMUNITY, PRODUCT TRIALS, PARTNERSHIPS, SEARCH—EACH CHANNEL HAS DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS, COSTS, AND FEEDBACK SPEEDS.

## FEEDBACK LOOPS

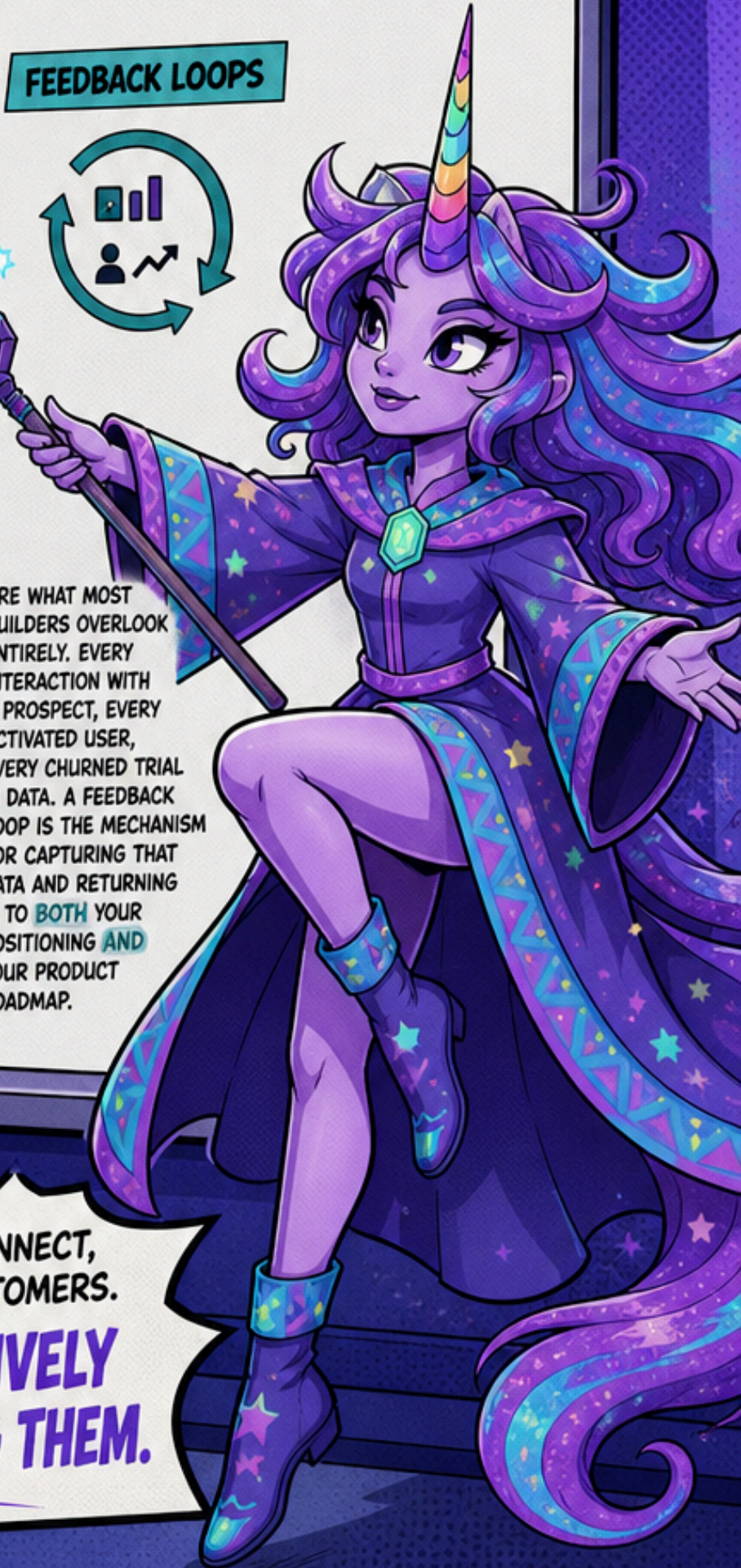


ARE WHAT MOST BUILDERS OVERLOOK ENTIRELY. EVERY INTERACTION WITH A PROSPECT, EVERY ACTIVATED USER, EVERY CHURNED TRIAL IS DATA. A FEEDBACK LOOP IS THE MECHANISM FOR CAPTURING THAT DATA AND RETURNING IT TO **BOTH** YOUR POSITIONING **AND** YOUR PRODUCT ROADMAP.



WHEN THESE THREE LAYERS CONNECT, YOU DON'T JUST ACQUIRE CUSTOMERS.

**YOU GET PROGRESSIVELY BETTER AT ACQUIRING THEM.**



# WHY SUPERIOR PRODUCTS LOSE TO ADEQUATE ONES

THIS IS THE PART THAT'S GENUINELY HARD TO ACCEPT.

## TECHNICALLY SUPERIOR



**Your Product**  
(Better Product)

## ADEQUATE PRODUCT

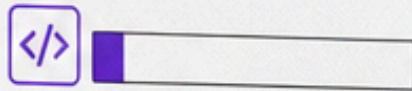


**Competitor**  
(Clear Distribution)

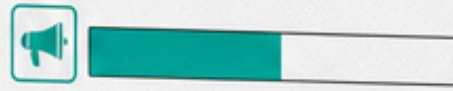
VS.

MONTHS  
0-6

### TECHNICAL SPECS

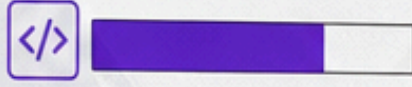


### DISTRIBUTION

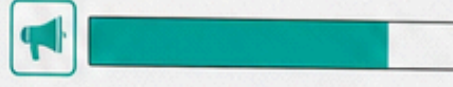


MONTHS  
6-12

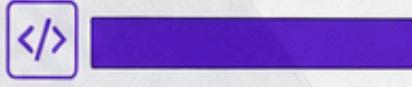
### TECHNICAL SPECS



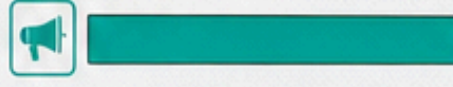
### DISTRIBUTION



### TECHNICAL SPECS



### DISTRIBUTION



1

### BUYERS CAN'T EVALUATE WHAT THEY CAN'T FIND.

If your ICP doesn't encounter your product during research, your technical merits are irrelevant. They'll buy the thing they found.

2

### FAMILIARITY CREATES TRUST FASTER THAN QUALITY DOES.

The company with more content, more community presence, and more social proof has already pre-sold the relationship before you get a chance to show your benchmarks.

3

### DISTRIBUTION COMPOUNDS.

Every piece of content, every customer success story, every referral adds to a growing asset base. Quality can compound too, but it takes time. A competitor who started marketing six months before you can be genuinely difficult to catch even if your product is better.



THIS ISN'T AN ARGUMENT FOR SHIPPING MEDIOCRE PRODUCTS. IT'S AN ARGUMENT FOR TREATING **DISTRIBUTION** WITH THE **SAME SERIOUSNESS** YOU TREAT THE CODEBASE.

# THE FOUR CORE GTM QUESTIONS

Before you decide on channels or write a word of copy, there are four questions every builder has to answer clearly. Vague answers here produce expensive mistakes downstream.

**1. WHO SPECIFICALLY HAS THIS PROBLEM?**



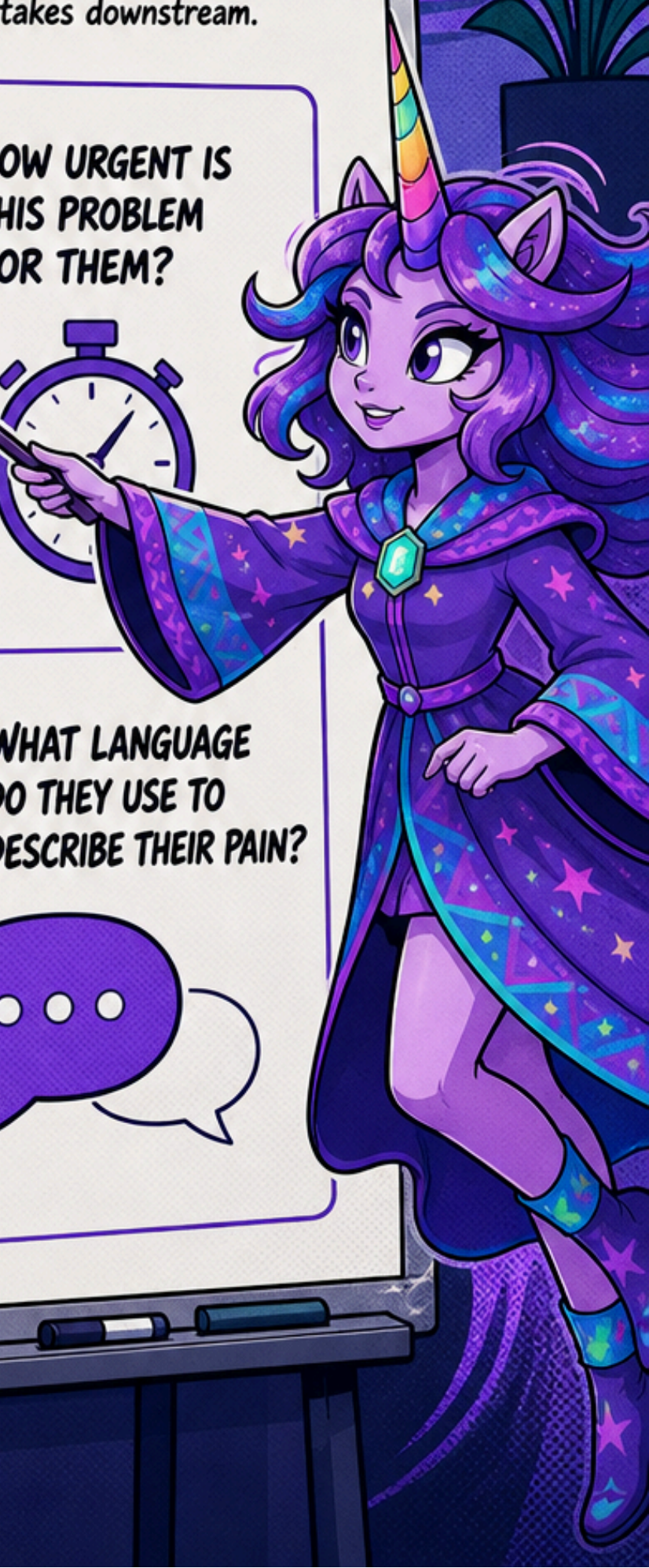
**2. HOW URGENT IS THIS PROBLEM FOR THEM?**



**3. WHERE DO THESE PEOPLE ALREADY GATHER?**



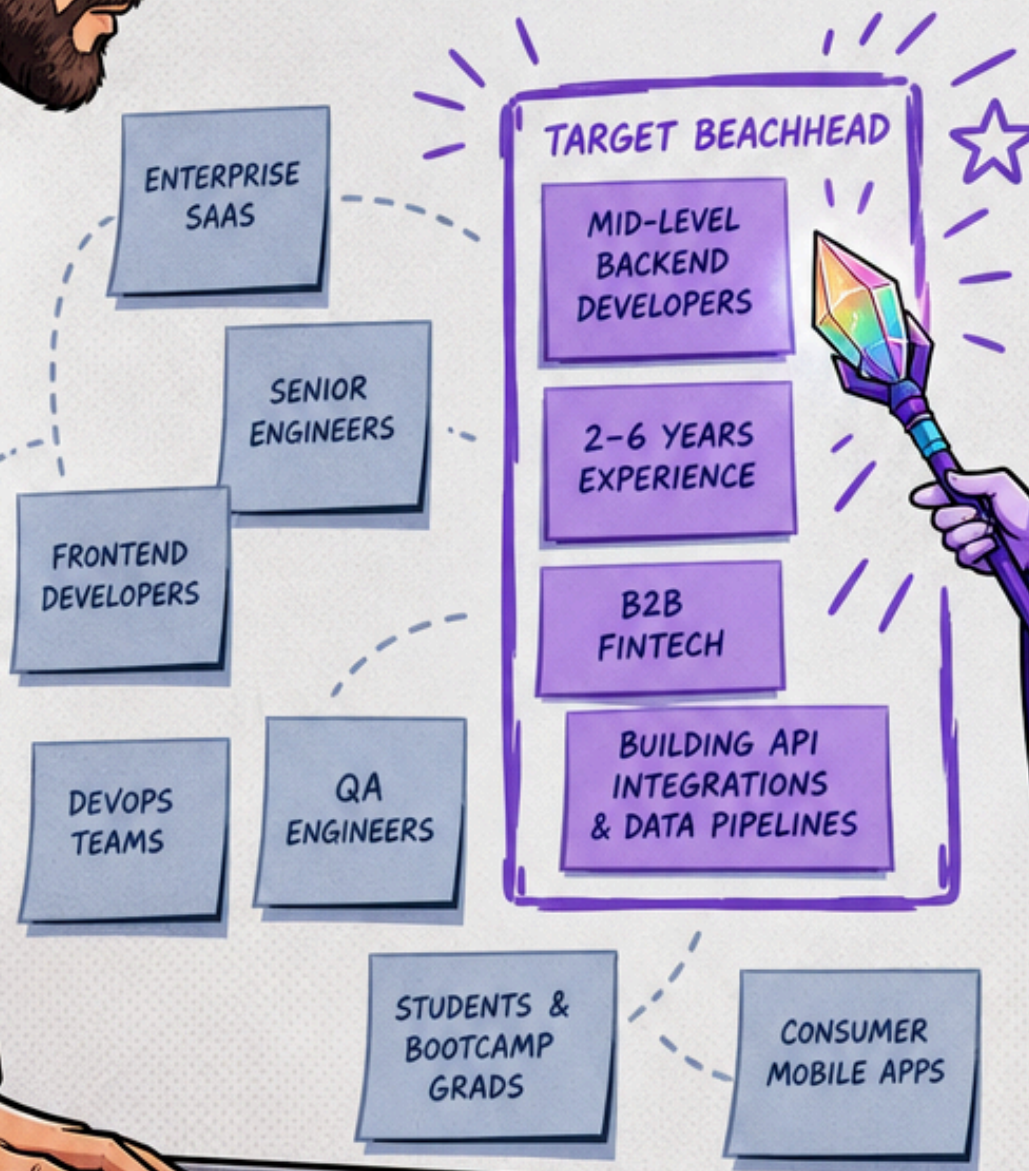
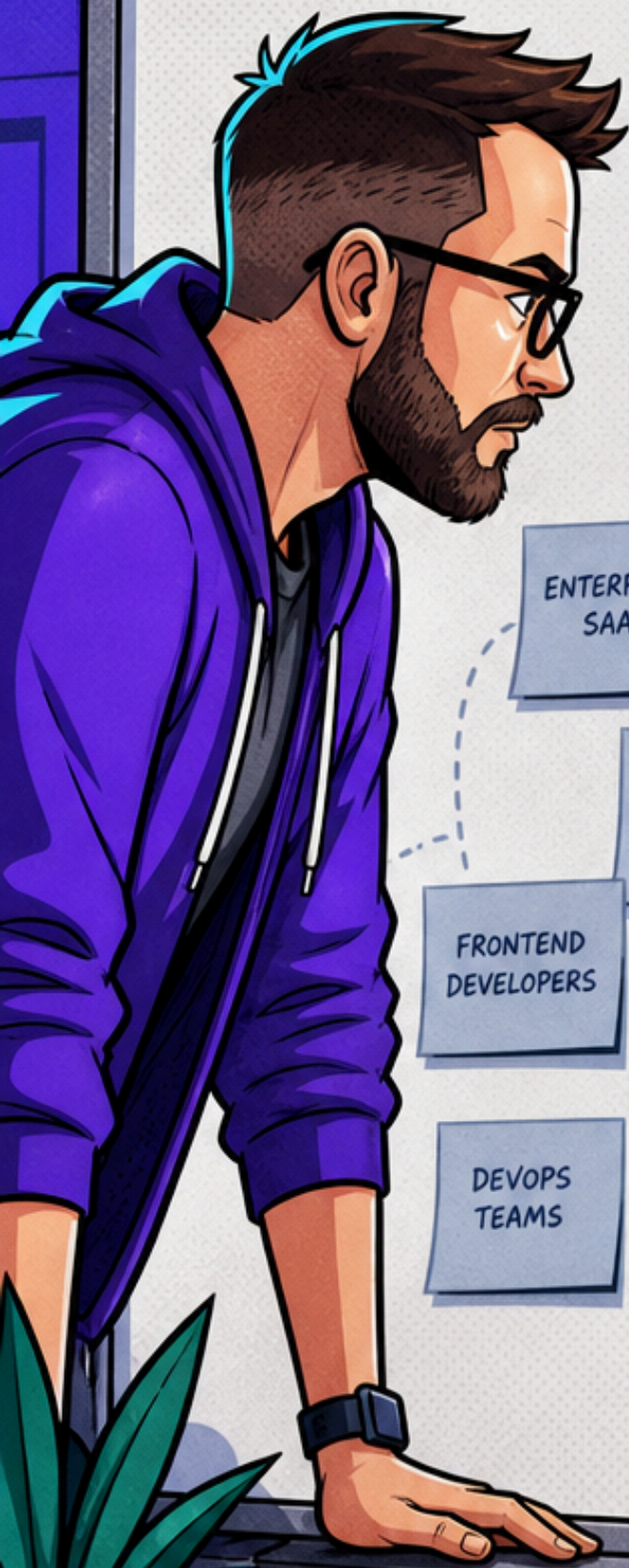
**4. WHAT LANGUAGE DO THEY USE TO DESCRIBE THEIR PAIN?**



# 1. WHO SPECIFICALLY HAS THIS PROBLEM?

NOT "DEVELOPERS" OR "SMALL BUSINESSES" OR "OPS TEAMS." GO NARROWER. WHAT KIND OF DEVELOPER? AT WHAT STAGE OF THEIR CAREER? IN WHAT INDUSTRY? WORKING ON WHAT KIND OF PRODUCT? THE MORE SPECIFIC YOUR ANSWER, THE EASIER EVERY SUBSEQUENT GTM DECISION BECOMES.

THIS IS THE BEACHHEAD QUESTION. YOU'RE NOT CHOOSING TO IGNORE EVERYONE ELSE. YOU'RE CHOOSING A CONCENTRATED PLACE TO START, WHERE WORD-OF-MOUTH IS TIGHT AND YOUR SIGNAL-TO-NOISE RATIO IS HIGH.



## 2. HOW URGENT IS THIS PROBLEM FOR THEM?

Pain urgency **drives buying decisions** more than feature lists do. A problem someone feels acutely, **right now**, will generate faster conversions than a problem they acknowledge in the abstract.

The test is simple: does your ICP actively search for solutions to this problem, or do they vaguely wish it were better? **If they're searching, the urgency is real.** If they're just wishing, you'll spend a lot of energy educating rather than converting.





### 3. WHERE DO THESE PEOPLE ALREADY GATHER?

Every specific audience has watering holes. Subreddits, Slack communities, LinkedIn groups, niche conferences, GitHub repositories, newsletters, Discord servers, Hacker News threads, specific podcasts. You don't pull people to a new place. You show up where they already are.



The fastest research method is direct: go to those communities and read. Read what questions people ask. Read what frustrations surface repeatedly. Read what products get mentioned. You'll learn more in a day of observation than in a week of assumptions.

4.

# WHAT LANGUAGE DO THEY USE TO DESCRIBE THEIR PAIN?

"IT'S SO TIME-CONSUMING"

THAT MATCHES!  
LET'S USE THEIR WORDS.

## WHAT CUSTOMERS ACTUALLY SAY

"It's so time-consuming"

"Too many tools"

"We constantly switch between things"

"Hard to keep track of everything"

"We lose important info all the time"

"It's not intuitive"

"Manual work is killing us"

"No visibility across the team"

"Takes too long to get answers"

"We end up building workarounds"

"It's so time-consuming"

INTERVIEWS

TICKETS

COMMUNITY

SALES CALLS



# FEEDBACK VELOCITY MATTERS AS MUCH AS BUILD VELOCITY

**1 HYPOTHESIS**  
WHO IS YOUR BUYER?  
WHAT DO THEY CARE ABOUT?

**2 RUN IT THROUGH A FAST CHANNEL**

**3 MEASURE THE RESPONSE**

- OPEN = WEAK
- REPLY = STRONGER
- CALL = STRONG
- TRIAL/PAY = STRONGEST

**4 UPDATE THE HYPOTHESIS**


**THE FEEDBACK LOOP**

**FEEDBACK VELOCITY**


**MARKO**  
TECHNICAL FOUNDER  
10 YRS STARTUP EXP

## NOT ALL CHANNELS ARE EQUAL

### FAST FEEDBACK (DAYS)

-  **COLD OUTBOUND EMAIL**
- Test across 50 prospects
  - Directional signal in ~1 week
  - Qualitative early on
  - More volume = more confidence

### SLOW FEEDBACK (MONTHS)

-  **LONG-FORM SEO CONTENT**
- ~6 months to know if a keyword cluster works

**VS**

**EARLY-STAGE GTM BENEFITS FROM HIGH-VELOCITY FEEDBACK FIRST.**  
NARROW DOWN WHAT WORKS BEFORE INVESTING IN SLOWER-COMPOUNDING ASSETS.



**FAST FEEDBACK. SMARTER DECISIONS. BETTER GTM.**



**THE CLOSER TO MONEY THE SIGNAL, THE MORE RELIABLE THE INFERENCE.**

# CHOOSING YOUR GTM MOTION

ONCE YOU'VE ANSWERED THE FOUR QUESTIONS AND HAVE SOME EARLY SIGNAL, YOU FACE A MOTION DECISION: HOW, STRUCTURALLY, DOES YOUR PRODUCT REACH AND CONVERT BUYERS AT SCALE?

THERE ARE FOUR PRIMARY PATTERNS. MOST MATURE COMPANIES BLEND THEM. BUT AT EARLY STAGE, PICKING THE RIGHT PRIMARY MOTION MATTERS A LOT, BECAUSE EACH ONE REQUIRES DIFFERENT INFRASTRUCTURE, DIFFERENT SKILLS, AND DIFFERENT PATIENCE.

## SALES-LED



## PRODUCT-LED



## MARKETING-LED

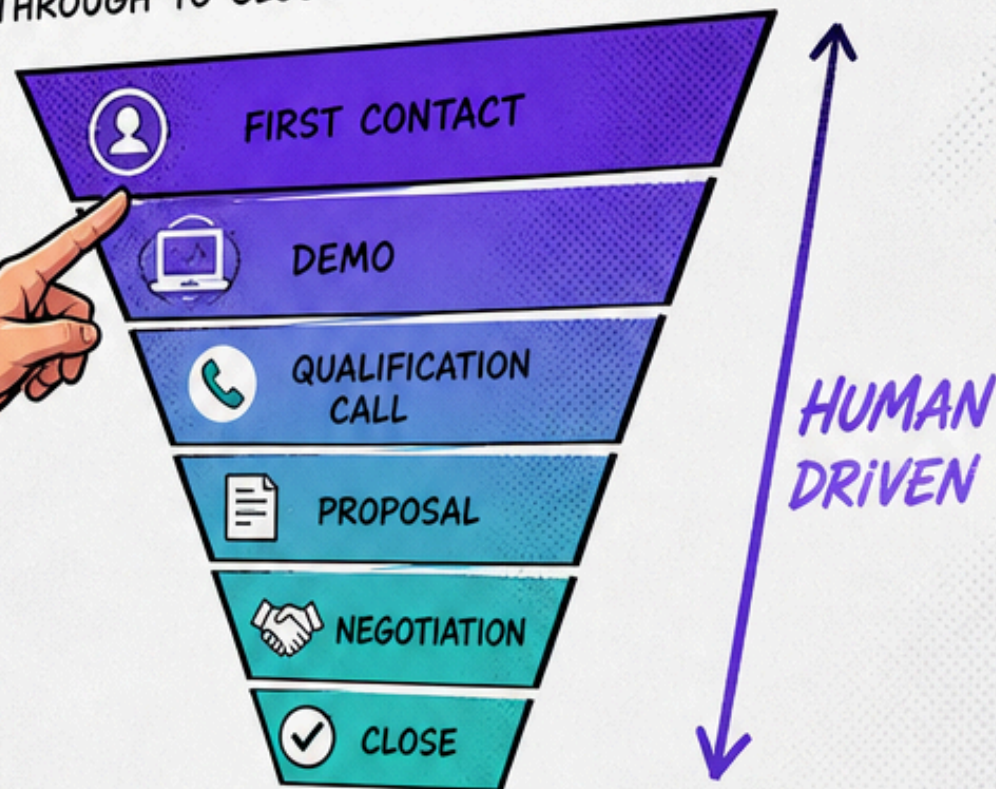


## COMMUNITY-LED




# # SALES-LED

IN A SALES-LED MOTION, A **HUMAN** DRIVES THE RELATIONSHIP FROM FIRST CONTACT THROUGH TO CLOSE.




THE MOTION IS APPROPRIATE WHEN YOUR AVERAGE CONTRACT VALUE IS **HIGH ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY THE COST** OF THAT HUMAN INVOLVEMENT, WHEN THE BUYER IS A **COMMITTEE** RATHER THAN AN INDIVIDUAL, AND WHEN THE PRODUCT **REQUIRES CONFIGURATION OR CONTEXT** BEFORE VALUE IS APPARENT.

AS A GENERAL STARTING HEURISTIC — THOUGH MANY MATURE COMPANIES BLEND MOTIONS REGARDLESS OF ACV —

 IF YOUR PRODUCT SELLS FOR **\$25,000 OR MORE PER YEAR** TO A BUYING COMMITTEE, SALES-LED IS OFTEN THE RIGHT PRIMARY MOTION.

 IF IT SELLS FOR **\$200 PER MONTH** TO A SOLO USER, THE ECONOMICS ARE TYPICALLY HARDER TO JUSTIFY.

 THAT SAID, THESE ARE ROUGH GUIDES; YOUR ACTUAL COST STRUCTURE AND SALES CYCLE **MATTER MORE** THAN ANY SINGLE THRESHOLD.

# #PRODUCT-LED



IN A PRODUCT-LED MOTION, THE **PRODUCT ITSELF** DRIVES ACQUISITION, ACTIVATION, AND EXPANSION.



USERS SIGN UP, EXPERIENCE VALUE WITHOUT ASSISTANCE, HIT A LIMIT, AND UPGRADE.



THE HALLMARK OF A PRODUCT-LED MOTION IS THAT A NEW USER REACHES GENUINE VALUE IN THEIR FIRST SESSION, WITHOUT NEEDING A SALES CONVERSATION OR ONBOARDING CALL.



PRODUCT-LED WORKS WELL FOR PRODUCTS WITH LOW SETUP FRICTION, SUB-\$10K ANNUAL CONTRACT VALUES, AND INDIVIDUAL USERS WHO CAN MAKE BUYING DECISIONS INDEPENDENTLY.



THE CORE TEST IS SIMPLE: CAN A STRANGER SIGN UP AND GET VALUE WITHOUT YOUR HELP?

- IF YES, PLG IS VIABLE.
- IF THEY NEED A SOLUTIONS ENGINEER AND THREE INTEGRATION STEPS FIRST, YOU HAVE A STRUCTURALLY SALES-LED PRODUCT REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU WANT.

SELF-SERVE.  
INSTANT VALUE.

SIGN UP.  
TRY. HIT A LIMIT.  
UPGRADE.



THOUGHTS  
→ VALUE

# MARKETING-LED



**CONTENT & INBOUND CHANNELS**  
do the demand generation work.



**SEO, THOUGHT LEADERSHIP, NEWSLETTERS, EDUCATIONAL CONTENT**  
attract buyers researching solutions.



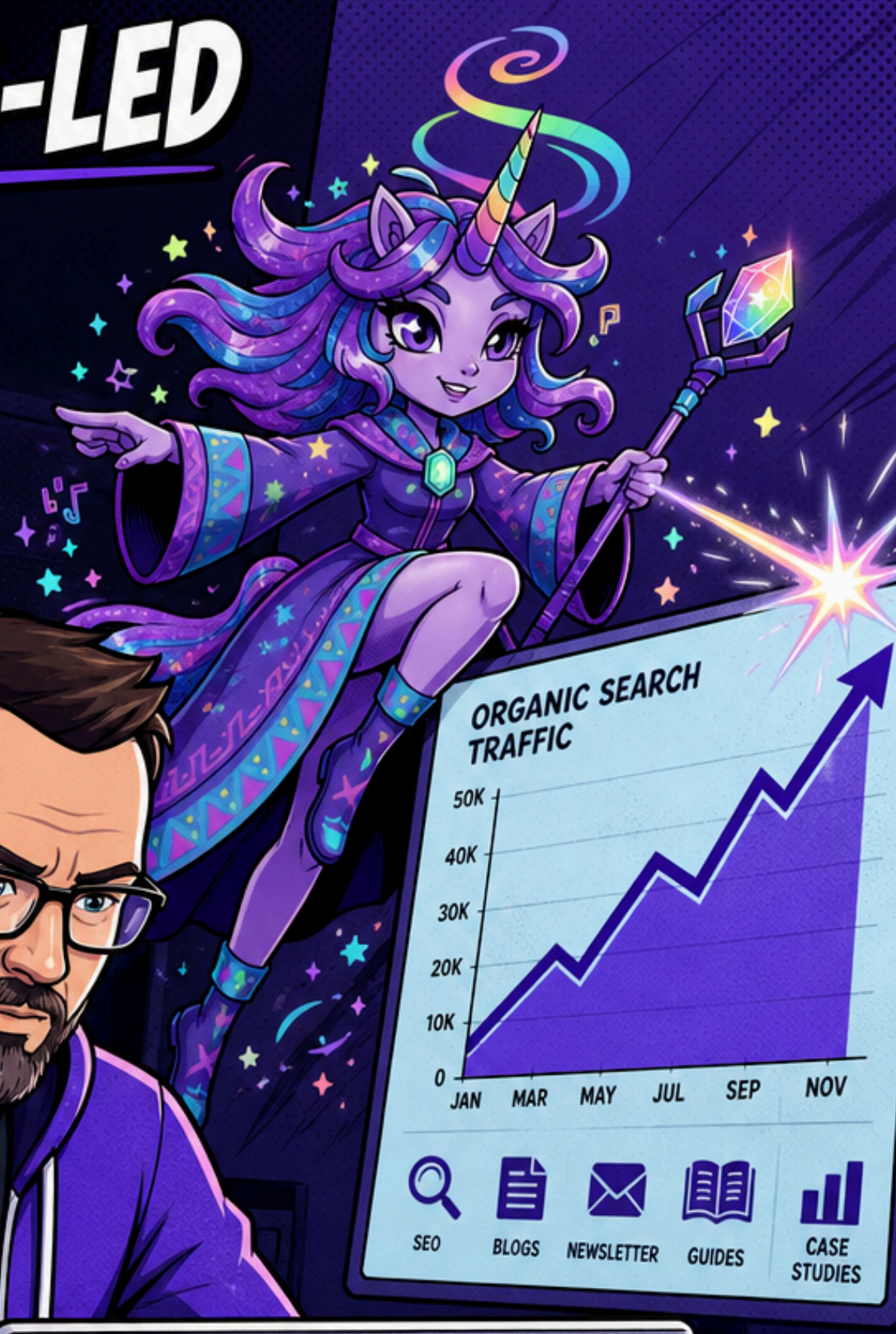
**CONVERSION HAPPENS**  
when educated prospects reach a free trial or sales conversation.



**COMPOUNDS OVER TIME**  
Content published today can generate leads for years — but it's slow to start and requires consistency.



**WORKS BEST AS A COMPLEMENT**  
Especially when your ICP does significant independent research before engaging with vendors.



## CONTENT CALENDAR

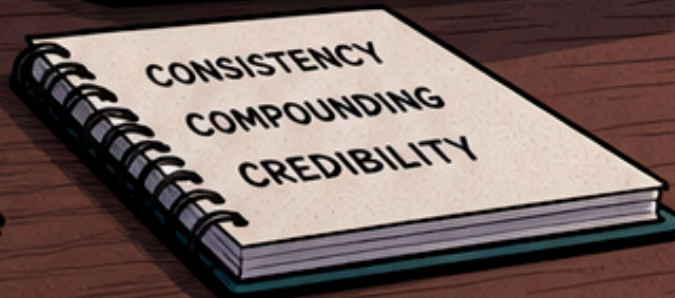
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
BLOG POST 	CASE STUDY 	HOW-TO GUIDE 	THOUGHT LEADERSHIP 	SEO OPTIMIZATION 
LINKEDIN POST 	NEWSLETTER 	X POST 	VIDEO 	CUSTOMER STORY 



## TREND, NOT RULE

Technical buyers increasingly conduct independent research and rely on credible, technically rich sources before engaging with any vendor.

Buyer behavior varies by market.



# COMMUNITY-LED

In a community-led motion, your users and advocates become the **primary distribution mechanism**.

Open-source projects, forums, developer communities, and user-generated content spread awareness and **lower the cost of acquisition**.

Great point!  
We'll improve the docs  
and share an example  
this week.



marko  
@marko-dev

affine-proj/affine  
Discussions

How to build custom views?  
Answered

dev\_neo 2d ago  
I'd like to create a custom view for my team's workflow. Any examples or guidance?  
12 4

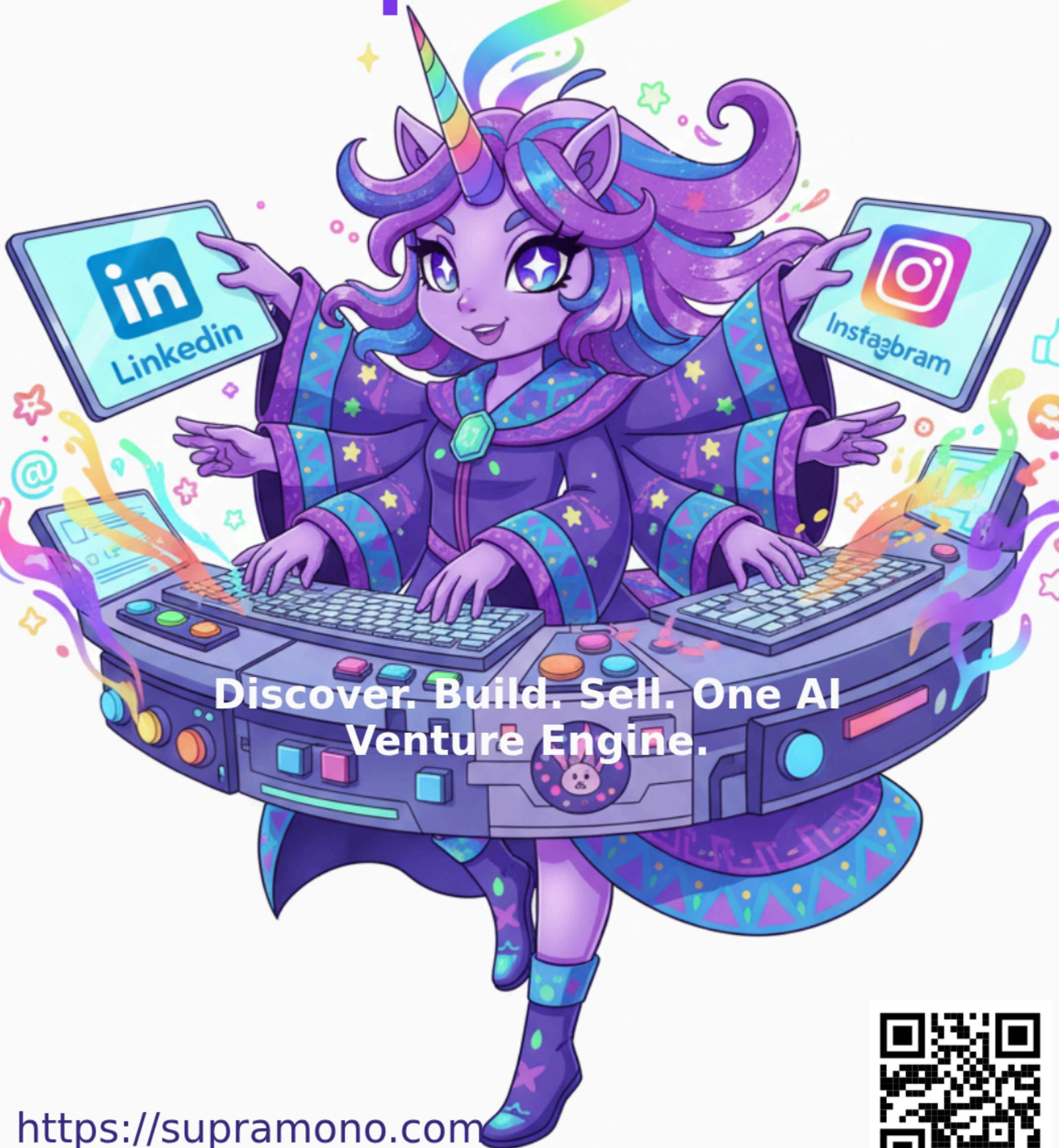
affine-team Maintainer 2d ago  
Great question! Here's a starter example and docs to help you get started.  
[docs.affine.pro/custom-views](https://docs.affine.pro/custom-views)  
21 2

marko 1m ago  
Great point!  
We'll improve the docs and share an example this week.  
3

BUILD  
IN  
PUBLIC  
</>



# supramono



Discover. Build. Sell. One AI  
Venture Engine.

<https://supramono.com>

