The GTM Alignment Gap

Why teams fall out of sync
and what to do about it

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The go-to-Market Alignment Gap is stalling growth and transformation

In this era of overwhelming customer choice and constant disruption, only the companies that adapt—and align—can sustain growth. To thrive, businesses must break down silos between Marketing, Sales, and R&D, working as one go-to-market (GTM) team guided by shared success metrics. When these core business functions pull in different directions, it creates a costly "alignment divide" that slows innovation, wastes resources, and erodes growth.

Today's customers demand seamless, tailored experiences at every touchpoint. Meeting those expectations requires new levels of collaboration, integration, and agility from GTM teams. Our research shows that nearly everyone recognizes this in theory. But when asked about their day-to-day experience, a striking 85% of teams report ongoing misalignment—even when 85% express perceived confidence in their GTM strategies. We call this the "85/85 Go-to-Market Alignment Gap"—a silent threat to business performance.

This white paper exposes the hidden costs of misalignment and delivers actionable ways for organizations to build unified, high-performing GTM teams—fueling transformation and accelerating growth into 2025 and beyond.

Read on to learn how misalignment might be costing you.

The impact of GTM misalignment
(Hint: It's costing you money)

Go-to-market teams—made up of Sales, Marketing, and R&D—play a critical role in building and sustaining customer relationships that keep companies growing. However, there's a pervasive roadblock keeping modern GTM teams from driving growth today: misalignment.

Over half of go-to-market leaders report that their biggest challenge when working together is creating effective customer experiences that drive growth. With the rise of personalization and high-demand customers, the need to create seamless customer journeys is becoming increasingly mission critical. Yet, that is exactly where GTM collaboration is breaking down.

For many companies, that should set alarm bells ringing.

Misalignment is preventing GTM teams from creating the seamless experiences customers have come to demand and causing the growth engine of companies to break down through real costs in time, budget and people power.

The cost of misalignment: Wasted resources and lost revenue

This misalignment has real, concrete impacts on the bottom line. In short, it's costing companies money as teams struggle to make the best use of their time and resources.
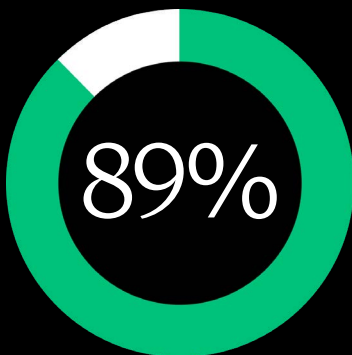
An overwhelming 89% of respondents say breakdowns in their go-to-market collaboration have direct revenue-related impacts.

These impacts include:

- **Ineffective customer messaging and positioning** that fails to resonate with target audiences
- **Lost revenue** due to decreased customer retention and missed growth goals
- **Decreased return on investment** across marketing and sales initiatives
- **Weakened conversion rates** due to improper handoff of generated leads
- **Inability to scale** go-to-market efforts to meet business objectives
- **Slower time-to-market** that allows competitors to gain advantage
- **Decreased competitive advantage** in fast-moving markets
- **Inconsistent and diminished customer experiences** when interacting with different teams

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QUESTION

How would you characterize the impact or consequences when go-to-market collaboration breaks down?

89%

of respondents say breakdowns in their go-to-market collaboration have direct revenue-related impacts

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Beyond these direct revenue impacts, 83% of respondents indicate that collaboration breakdowns result in indirect revenue-related consequences, as well, including:

- **Wasted resources and duplicated efforts** across departments
- **Lower employee morale** resulting from frustration and inefficiency
- **Siloed systems and processes** that inhibit information sharing
- **Decreased transparency** throughout the organization
- **Misaligned KPIs and metrics** causing confusion and performance issues
- **Increased team frustration** leading to weakened cross-functional relationships
- **Constant "fire drills"** to manage crises rather than strategic initiatives

## Why teams are so misaligned even when they're collaborating

The GTM teams we surveyed pointed to several key reasons for persistent misalignment. In short, it's a combination

"Collaboration with other go-to-market colleagues to plan and execute our business strategy is not at all productive because the operational constraints and lack of strategic visibility hamper our input."

—Sales professional

QUESTION

How would you characterize the impact or consequences when go-to-market collaboration breaks down?

83% of respondents indicate that collaboration breakdowns result in indirect revenue-related consequences

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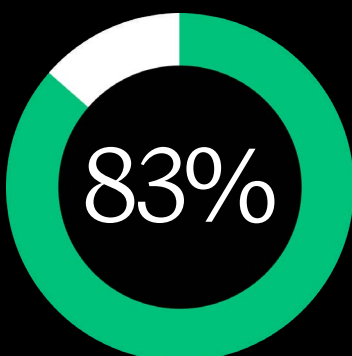
of needing better tools and ways of working to establish healthy cross-functional collaboration.

Who sits on the go-to-market team & who is responsible for what?

While marketers and sellers readily identify themselves as key members of the go-to-market team, R&D professionals are less likely to. This fundamental disconnect creates a critical breakdown in how these functions collaborate. After all, you need to know you're on the same team before you can effectively work together toward common goals.

This leads directly to one of our key findings. One of the biggest factors leading to misalignment is unclear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. Teams often remain stuck in place because they don't know who has the final authority to make decisions and move initiatives forward.

"Engineering teams often feel disconnected from the go-to-market strategy, with communication gaps that are frequent."
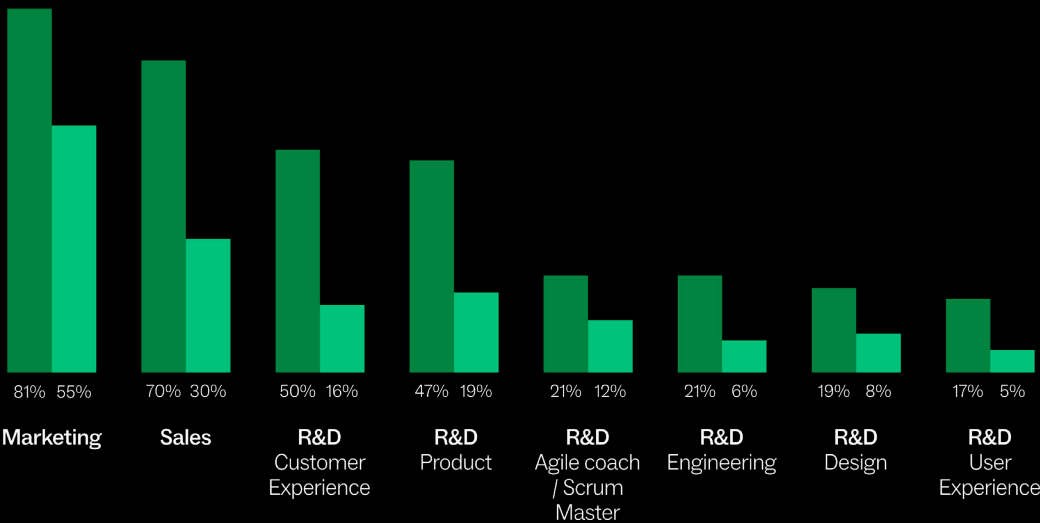
—R&D professional

The takeaway: To truly unite into one growth engine, Marketing, Sales, and R&D first need to understand they're on the same team and share the same goal: creating great customer experiences that grow their business.

What is the go-to-market strategy?
Many go-to-market teams also lack clarity on their overall vision and plan for success. While these teams equally value the impor-

tance of core metrics like Customer Acquisition Cost, they're less likely to be aligned on their level of ownership on other metrics that matter. Even decision-makers say this is a top reason why their teams cannot align. Without a clear destination, even for those in leadership positions, teams can't effectively navigate toward their goal or recognize when they've successfully arrived—together.

QUESTIONS

- ■ Which specific teams are involved in planning & executing your go-to-market efforts?

- ■ Who is primarily responsible for coordinating cross-functional go-to-market processes & collaboration?

	Marketing	Sales	R&D Customer Experience	R&D Product	R&D Agile coach / Scrum Master	R&D Engineering	R&D Design	R&D User Experience
	81% 55%	70% 30%	50% 16%	47% 19%	21% 12%	21% 6%	19% 8%	17% 5%

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Which of the following metrics are you responsible for or contribute to?

Legend:
- Marketing
- Sales
- R&D
- Total

Customer acquisition cost
27% 23% 29% 25%

Customer lifetime value
23% 17% 14% 19%

Win rate
14% 25% 6% 18%

Conversion rate
20% 14% 9% 16%

Number of qualified leads
17% 14% 26% 17%

Annual & monthly recurring revenue
8% 10% 14% 10%

Net Promoter Score
14% 8% 14% 11%

Customer activation rate
10% 8% 11% 9%

New user growth rate
13% 12% 0% 11%

Return on ad spend
3% 8% 17% 7%

Number of website visitors
10% 8% 9% 9%

Number of demo bookings
13% 6% 6% 9%

These metrics are ordered by how many respondents measure these metrics in decreasing order from left to right, top to bottom.

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***Only showing the top most measured metrics by Go-to-Market teams.*

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What do you think causes misalignment among
your go-to-market teams?

■ Decision-maker

■ Individual
Contributor

■ Total

Difficulty in clearly communicating between teams

46%
39%
43%

Complexity of internal & external coordination needed

41%
35%
38%

Lack of a clear go-to-market strategy & goals

43%
22%
33%

Absence of a clear & effective go-to-market process to follow

35%
25%
31%
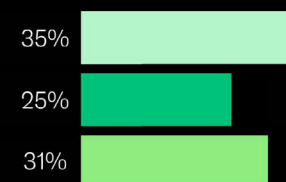
Large & frequent organizational changes

25%
15%
20%
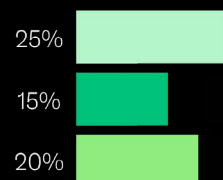
Unclear deadlines & project priorities to meet

24%
10%
18%

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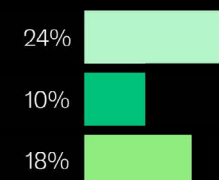
What is the process for working together? There's often a struggle to communicate and develop healthy collaboration habits. Go-to-market teams acknowledge these as the major contributing factors to misalignment. As Marketing, Sales, and R&D remain entrenched in their own tools and processes, they need to develop clear ways of working cross-functionally.Who sits on the go-to-market team & who is responsible for what?

The takeaway: GTM teams need better clarity and communication across the board. Today, not only individual contributors but leaders lack the vision, the tools, and the processes to work cross-functionally towards the ultimate goal: growth.

The bottom line: GTM misalignment not only creates headaches for Marketing, Sales and R&D teams. It also impacts the bottom line, wasting precious time, budget, and effort on the quest to create the great customer experiences that drive growth.

This begs the question: "Why?" If GTM misalignment comes at such a high price, why aren't GTM leaders doing everything they can to fix it? We'll explore the answer to this exact question in Part 2.

"Clear objectives reduce misalignment and keep everyone focused on the same outcomes."

—Marketing professional

"Siloed thinking of some team members prevents holistic business strategy execution. Basically it seems like we don't work in the same company sometimes"

—Sales professional

The perception vs. the reality of GTM alignment

So, why aren't GTM teams successfully moving in the same direction?

The first step to fixing any problem is understanding you have a problem to begin with. Our research revealed a striking paradox: 85% of teams surveyed claim to be either "very" or "extremely" confident in their GTM processes. However, the same exact percentage (85%) experience mis-alignment on a weekly or monthly basis.

We call this the "85/85 Go-to-Market Alignment Gap," which demonstrates that the problem is much deeper than many go-to-market teams and leaders realize. To fuel new levels of growth, companies must take a hard look in the mirror and commit to understanding and bridging this gap going forward.

QUESTION

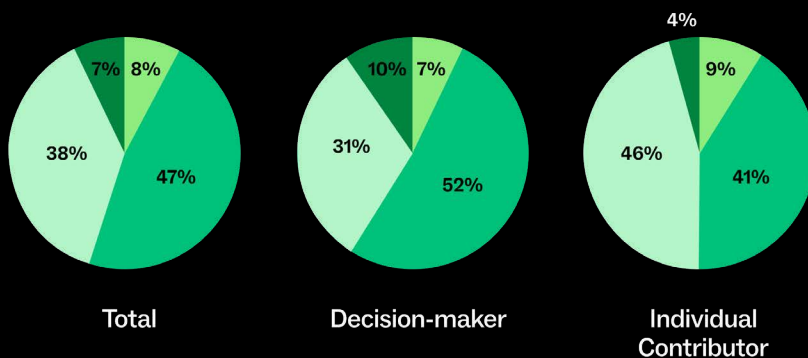## How confident do you think your go-to-market teams know go-to-market execution best practices?

- Extremely confident
- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not very confident*
- Not at all confident*

Total
15%
31%
54%

Decision-maker
10%
36%
54%

Individual Contributor
22%
25%
53%
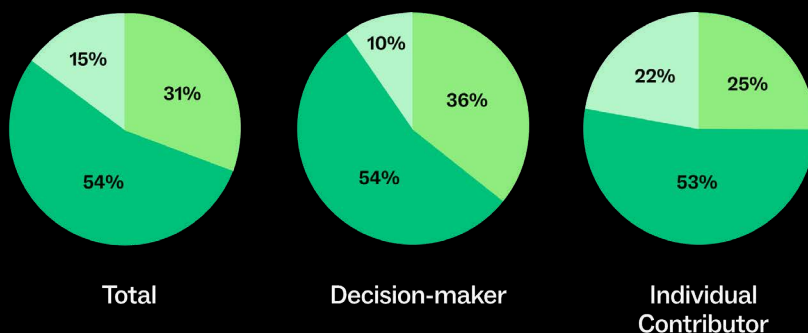
QUESTION

How often do you experience misalignment between your go-to-market teams?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually*

No one selected these options.

Total
7% 8%
38%
47%

Decision-maker
10% 7%
31%
52%

Individual Contributor
4%
9%
46%
41%

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Misalignment still slows GTM effectiveness

The Go-to-Market Alignment Gap indicates there's a major disconnect between perceived collaboration skills and the actual effectiveness of how GTM teams are working together. There is an especially large gap between how leaders see collaboration in theory versus collaboration in practice – 90% are extremely or very confident in their best practices while 83% experience misalignment weekly or monthly.

Nearly all respondents (98%) we surveyed acknowledged that GTM collaboration plays either a "very" or "extremely" important role in their company's success, with a majority describing their collaboration as "very productive." However, the same GTM leaders and teams say that collaboration breaks down on a regular basis.

The significant impact of GTM misalignment—both how often breakdowns happen and how deeply they impact the

bottom line—demonstrates that the perception and the reality of collaboration are out of sync.

To fix this high-stakes problem, first GTM leaders need to acknowledge that the GTM Alignment Gap exists. Our research shows that one reason why they may not be ready to face the hard reality is that they overestimate the value of the tools in their tech stack.

There are many tools used to collaborate, but no single tool used to align effectively

Almost every team is already using some form of centralized system for cross-functional collaboration. However, diving deeper into the tools teams are using reveals further disconnects. From project management software and CRMs to messaging platforms and analytics tools, teams disagree on which collaboration tools they should be using to work together effectively. Moreover, these tools are not

QUESTION

How important is go-to-market collaboration to your company's success?

98%
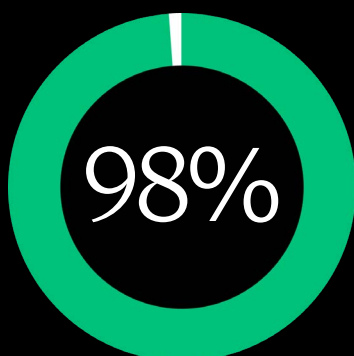
of respondents say it is "extremely important" or "very important"

- 44% Extremely important
- 54% Very important
- 2% Somewhat important
- 0% Not very important
- 0% Not at all important

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actually helping teams reach the critical state of alignment.

GTM teams need the right tool for the job and they're all in agreement that it can improve their work. An overwhelming 95% of respondents say that a centralized planning system that supports cross-functional collaboration for go-to-market strategies is highly impactful. Furthermore, 88% claim to be very or extremely satisfied with their centralized tool system.

Yet paradoxically, respondents also identify having a centralized system for cross-functional collaboration as a top opportunity for improvement. This reinforces the point that while teams may have systems in place, these tools are not adequately addressing the misalignment challenges they're experiencing.

"System fragmentation limits holistic customer views, and that causes us some major issues with other go-to-market colleagues to plan and execute your business strategy."

—Sales professional

QUESTION

If your go-to-market teams had a centralized system that supports cross-functional collaboration for go-to-market planning, how impactful would it be in executing your goals?

95%
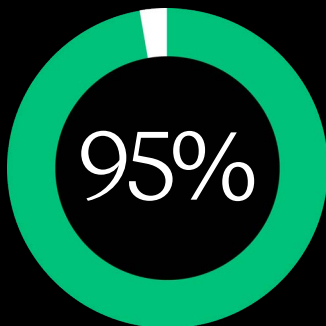
of respondents say it is "extremely impactful" or "very impactful"

- 45% Extremely impactful
- 50% Very impactful
- 5% Somewhat impactful
- 0% Not very impactful
- 0% Not at all impactful

QUESTION

How satisfied are you with your centralized tool system that teams use for cross-functional collaboration on go-to-market initiatives?

88%
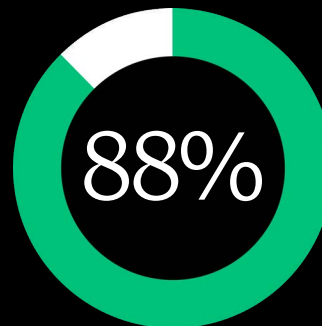
of respondents say they are "extremely satisfied" or "very satisfied"

- 22% Extremely satisfied
- 66% Very satisfied
- 11% Somewhat satisfied
- 1% Not very satisfied
- 0% Not at all satisfied

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While each team may have a trusted tool for their specific function, they're often relying on CRMs or project management tools rather than platforms purpose-built to fuel GTM collaboration and growth.

The bottom line: GTM leaders and teams may say–and think–they are collaborating effectively, but a closer look reveals that go-to-market motions are plagued by chronic misalignment. This GTM alignment gap is taking a huge toll on the potential for growth and innovation, slowing down speed to market.

While teams in Marketing, Sales and R&D may be satisfied with tools they've adopted for their own team's work, they acknowledge one of the greatest opportunities to improve is in finding a better tool for cross-functional collaboration.

In the next part, we'll take a look at how GTM leaders and teams can finally overcome the persistent GTM Alignment Gap through not only better technology, but improved workflows that help unlock the potential of everyone on your GTM team.

QUESTION

What would help you better align with your
go-to-market teams?

☑ Having a central system for cross-functional collaboration — 31%

☑ Being able to track & report on the same metrics — 31%

☑ Understanding key moments to collaborate with my GTM teams — 30%

☑ Creating a process to collaborate cross-functionally — 29%

☑ Aligning our go-to-market teams on shared goals & metrics — 27%

☑ Developing a holistic view of our customers & their journeys across teams — 26%

☑ Defining who's accountable for shared goals & metrics — 26%

☑ Co-creating our go-to-market strategy & motions together with other teams — 25%

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How to bridge the Go-to-Market Alignment Gap

Once GTM leaders see the problem, the next question is inevitably: "How do I solve it?" What we can take away from our research is that teams are eager for greater go-to-market alignment but lack clarity on exactly how they can come together to achieve it.

While many respondents pointed to better tools as a solution, it's important to recognize that technology alone cannot solve the alignment problem. Many organizations have and will continue to heavily invest in technology, including collaboration tools and platforms, yet still struggle with misalignment.

Our research shows that implementing new technology without addressing underlying structural issues simply creates "digital silos" on top of physical ones. While the right technology is certainly part of the solution, companies must take a more holistic approach to truly transform how their teams work together.

To accomplish this, a three-tiered framework can be applied.

The Three P's—Platform, Process and People

Successful GTM alignment requires thoughtful integration of people, tools, and methodologies. Companies that achieve exceptional GTM alignment don't just implement new software—they reimagine how their teams collaborate, establish clear processes for working across departmental boundaries, and foster a culture that values shared outcomes over individual departmental wins.

We've identified three key opportunities to bridge the Go-to-Market Alignment Gap. We call them the "Three Ps": Platform, Process and People. Each component is necessary but insufficient on its own—it's their integration that creates lasting alignment.

These three Ps are intended to help GTM teams reimagine how they come together to form a single customer-centered growth engine for their companies, drive organizational transformation, and accelerate go-to-market results.

1. Platform

Ultimately, teams just want to get on the same page and work toward the same goals—in other words, get aligned. Having centralized tools to collaborate is a top objective for achieving this alignment.

QUESTION

To what extent do you believe that using visuals to communicate complex ideas across teams would improve your efficiency, alignment, and problem-solving capabilities?

81%
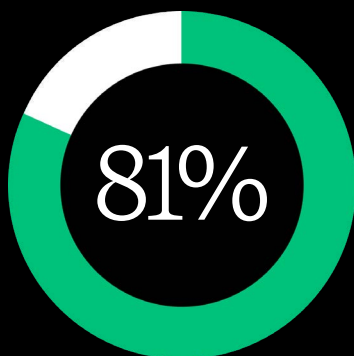
of respondents say "a great deal" or "a lot"

- 37% a great deal
- 44% a lot
- 18% somewhat
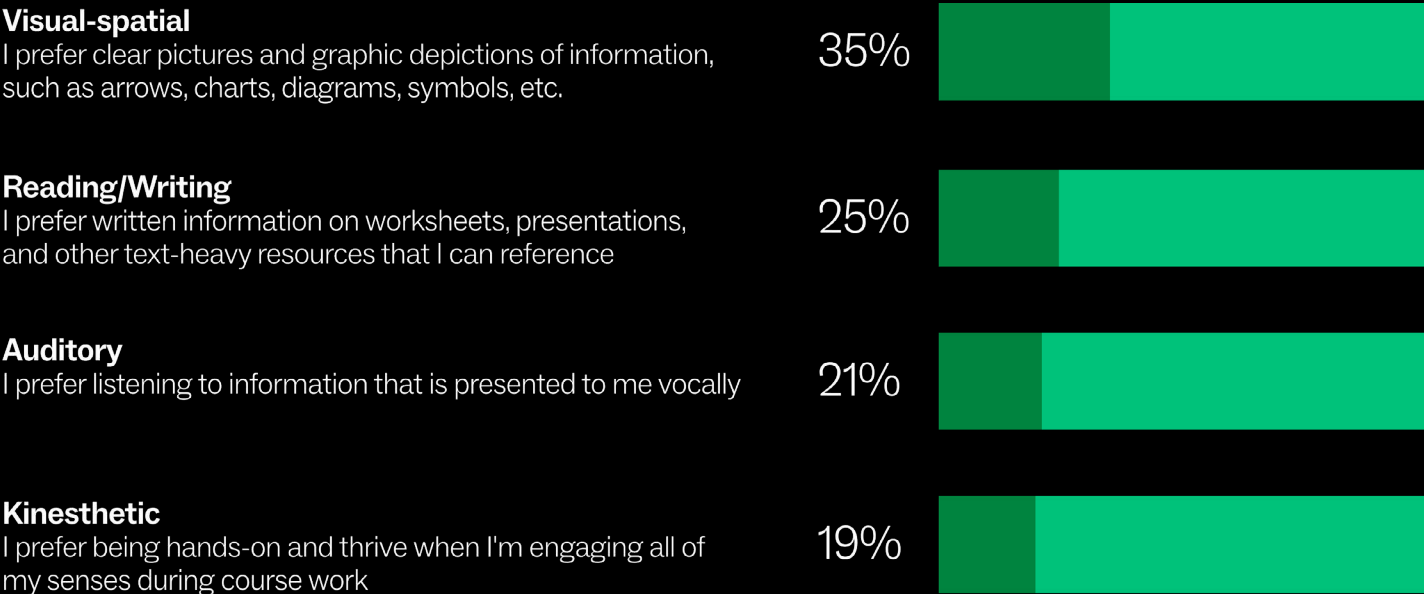- 1% a little
- 0% Not at all

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When thinking about solutions to this problem, 81% of respondents place a lot or a great deal of value on visuals to drive greater alignment and efficiency. The top-rated learning style among survey respondents was visual learning at 35%. This tells us that as teams push to drive greater efficiency, there's an opportunity to establish a centralized tool with a focus on visual collaboration.

Pro tip: A visual collaboration platform is a way for people to share a common language to agree on the problems they need to solve for their customers and chart a path forward to solve them. Our research shows that many people are visual learners, so a unified space in which to share ideas visually can often be the most powerful way to get teams aligned.

A visual collaboration platform is a way for people to share a common language to agree on the problems they need to solve for their customers and chart a path forward to solve them.

QUESTION

What's your primary learning style?

Visual-spatial
I prefer clear pictures and graphic depictions of information, such as arrows, charts, diagrams, symbols, etc.

35%

Reading/Writing
I prefer written information on worksheets, presentations, and other text-heavy resources that I can reference

25%

Auditory
I prefer listening to information that is presented to me vocally

21%

Kinesthetic
I prefer being hands-on and thrive when I'm engaging all of my senses during course work

19%

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2. Process

Even with the right people and platforms in place, driving alignment requires a systematic approach to collaboration. Our research shows that many GTM teams lack well-defined processes for cross-functional work, creating confusion and inefficiency, despite all of them having methodologies for serving their customers. Building effective processes means establishing clear protocols for how and when teams work together, what milestones they'll use to measure progress, and who has decision-making authority at critical junctures.

Developing a clear process of when to work together and how is key, as well as identifying who is responsible for what (especially who has final decision-making authority) is critical to closing the gap. Adopting Design Thinking methods can be a powerful way to make your processes not only clearer but also rooted in customer-centered outcomes.

30% of respondents say that understanding key moments of when to collaborate and how would help close the Alignment Gap. Meanwhile, 53% of respondents identified Agile as an important methodology to define not just who is working together but how, enabling teams to ultimately make the most of the go-to-market team's time and talent.

Pro tip: Chances are you already have one team using a trusted methodology, like Agile, to help create a clear process for how you can work together on these key deliverables. But are these shared and scaled across all levels of the team? A visual collaboration platform can help you scale those methods and best practices across every level of your GTM team—infusing a consistent, customer-centric approach throughout all steps and processes.

To start, identify areas, like these customer touch points, where go-to-market teams can come together and use proven methodologies to constantly iterate and improve based on customer insights.

The top areas where go-to-market teams see the greatest potential for stronger collaboration across Marketing, Sales, and R&D are:

- Product roadmap briefings
- Product demos
- Email campaigns
- User guides & documentation
- Trainings & Workshops

When serving your customers, what processes, methodologies, or ways of working do your go-to-market teams follow?

100%
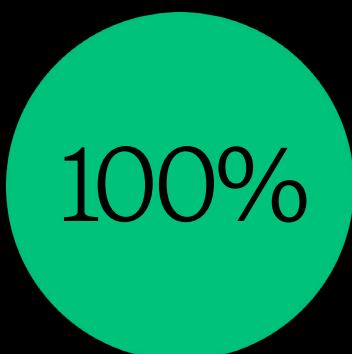
of respondents say their teams have a defined process.

- 0% Our teams do not have a defined process
- 53% Agile methodologies
- 40% Design Thinking
- 25% MEDDIC
- 19% BANT
- 17% SPIN Selling

QUESTION

Which of the following customer touchpoints do you think need more collaboration?

- Marketing
- Sales
- R&D
- Total

Product roadmap briefings
32% 39% 31% 35%

Product demos
35% 35% 26% 34%

Email campaigns
36% 29% 43% 34%

User guides & documentation
35% 26% 34% 31%

Training & workshops
37% 28% 17% 31%

Business reviews
34% 26% 23% 29%

Webinars & virtual events
25% 31% 34% 28%

Customer discovery calls
28% 28% 23% 27%

Onboarding sessions
27% 27% 31% 27%

Renewal & upsell conversations
19% 22% 26% 21%

Alpha & Beta testing programs
19% 23% 20% 21%

Content marketing
15% 18% 29% 17%

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3. People

The one thing everyone on the go-to-market team can agree on is that the customer is always right. That means teams need to ground what they do in understanding their customers—it's a common thread that can transcend across go-to-market teams.

Co-creation is a powerful way to get the best insights and ideas from people working across your go-to-market function. By taking an interactive, collaborative approach to gathering, visualizing and agreeing on ideas to prioritize, you can align on the customer problems you want to solve and the path forward to resolving them.

52% of decision makers we surveyed agreed that Design Thinking is a key methodology their go-to-market teams follow. Design Thinking has been proven to help drive transformation by getting

teams co-creating the solutions they want to build, together. Making your work more human-centered naturally makes it more customer-centered, ultimately driving growth.

Pro tip: A visual collaboration tool can help you gather customer insights into one place so you can co-create a customer-centric journey that aligns the team around the path to driving revenue.

There are also many design thinking methodologies to help teams work cross-functionally to agree on customer needs and priorities. Visual collaboration and design thinking together are a powerful way to engage people on your team and surface innovative ideas to improve your product or service and the overall customer experience.

The bottom line: The GTM Alignment Gap is a pervasive challenge go-to-mar-

ket teams face, even as they try their best to improve their collaboration, that poses a significant risk to growth and transformation.

Here's the good news: there is a clear path to bridging the GTM Alignment Gap and transforming siloed teams into a growth engine for your company. To power growth, GTM teams need to make an honest assessment of their alignment maturity, understanding where, when and how misalignment happens. Together, Sales, Marketing and R&D must thoughtfully choose the right tools and build the right processes to overcome these miscues, uniting their teams into a single go-to-market engine that will drive transformation and growth.

Ready to reimagine how you go to market?

Mural is a leading visual collaboration platform that helps go-to-market teams see the big picture, align on their customer-centered strategy and execute faster. Designed to accelerate speed to market and transformation, Mural combines a secure, enterprise-grade visual platform with trusted methods via the LUMA Institute to reimagine how go-to-market teams work together and power growth.

Ready to see what your go-to-market team is capable of when they're aligned? **Click [here](#) to get started.**

Methodology

Our research team conducted a survey with marketing, sales, and R&D professionals across multiple industries from March-April 2025. Participants included both decision-makers and individual contributors across the globe to ensure a holistic view of go-to-market processes and challenges.

The survey collected responses from 350 professionals working in organizations ranging from mid-sized businesses to enterprise companies. Respondents were asked about their current go-to-market practices, collaboration tools, challenges faced, and perceived impacts of misalignment on business outcomes.

The data was analyzed to identify patterns, disconnects, and opportunities for improvement in go-to-market alignment. Special attention was paid to understanding both perceived effectiveness of current processes and actual outcomes, revealing the significant "85/85 Go-to-Market Alignment Gap" discussed in this white paper.

About Mural: Mural is a leading visual collaboration platform for driving organizational transformation and accelerating go-to-market results. Powered by AI-enabled, interactive workspaces, Mural empowers businesses to reimagine processes, unlock new ideas, and achieve outcomes faster through proven methodologies and visual tools.

About LUMA: The LUMA System is a practical approach to innovation through human-centered design. LUMA offers training, certification, and tools to help organizations become more innovative, adaptive, and customer-focused through proven design thinking methods.