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DELTA TESTING INDUSTRY REPORT

2021



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KEY INSIGHTS

RESOURCES

- More than 80% of today's companies are leveraging beta or delta tests.
- Only 14% manage beta or delta tests as their primary job.
- On average, nearly ⅔ of test managers say they don't spend the right amount of time managing their tests.
- About half of all test managers aren't able to get tester participation, find time to manage tests, and collect useful feedback.
- Over a third face big challenges trying to analyze test data and prioritize action items.
- 1 in 3 has issues proving the ROI from their testing efforts.
- 1 in 4 is not obtaining the necessary buy-in from key stakeholders.

PROCESSES

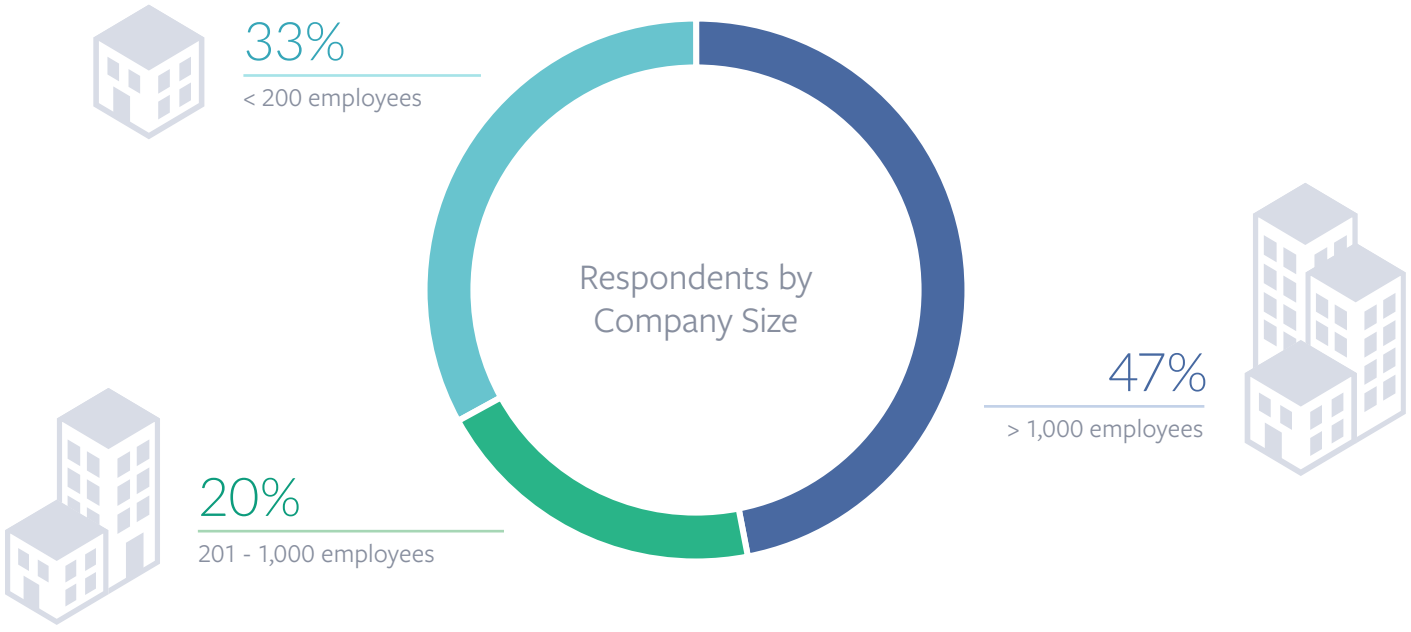
- In 2020, companies using defined testing processes decreased to 31% (down 11% from 2019).
- Almost 8 out of 10 test managers with defined processes feel their tests are effective, as opposed to just 47% of test managers with reactive processes.
- Professionals with reactive processes are concerned they're not spending enough time on planning and recruitment.
- Those with reactive processes also report more difficulty prioritizing feedback.

SYSTEMS & TECHNOLOGY

- Last year, those using three or more tools to manage and collect feedback jumped to 59% (up 13% from 2019) as more people turned to additional tools to help during the pandemic.
- 67% of professionals using three or more tools are experiencing serious challenges organizing data across multiple systems.
- 70% of professionals using three or more tools report difficulty finding the time to manage tests and prove ROI.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

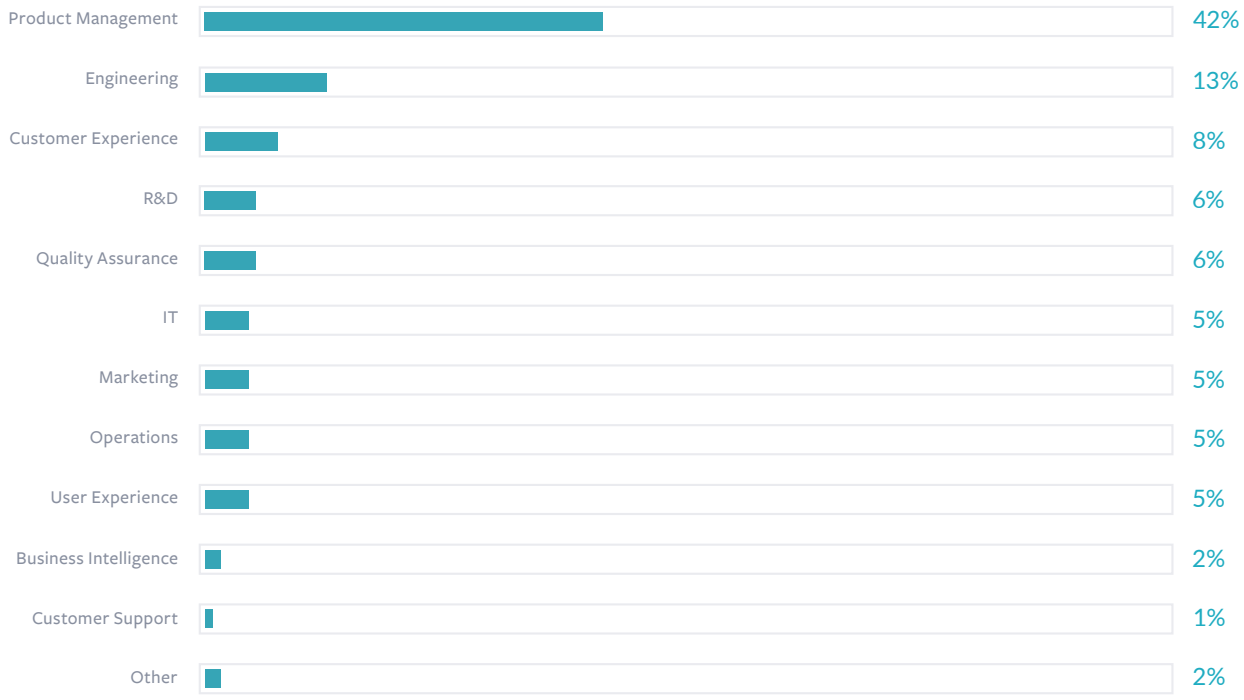
In December 2020, 124 respondents across various industry verticals completed the fifth-annual delta testing survey. These responses represent a broad collection of company sizes, job titles, levels of responsibility, and experience managing user tests. Together, their insights illustrate how companies structure their user testing programs, how they're managing their time and resources, how they identify success, and what they find most challenging.



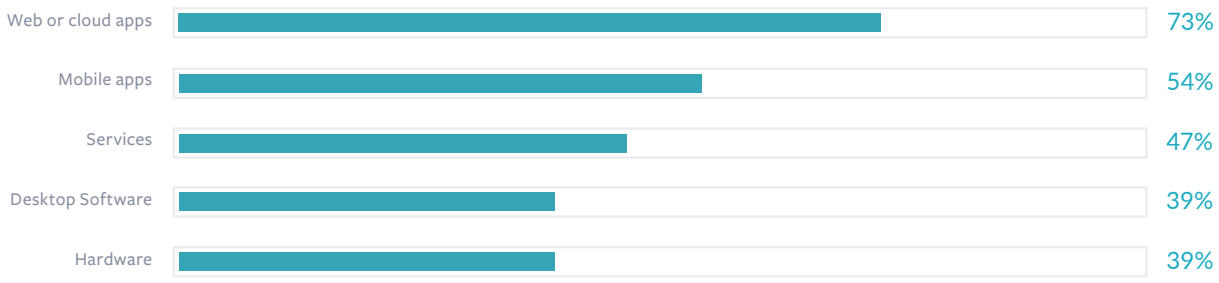
RESPONDENTS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



RESPONDENTS BY DEPARTMENT



RESPONDENTS BY PRODUCT TYPE



DELTA TESTING INDUSTRY TRENDS

The shared experiences of hundreds of industry professionals revealed three trending factors that stand out as we move through 2021. Let's take a closer look.



TREND #1

Test Managers Find It Difficult to Keep Up With the Demands of Rapid Development



TREND #2

Programs With Effective Processes Continue to Thrive



TREND #3

An Increase in the Number of Tools Used to Run Beta Tests Is Making Them Harder to Manage

Trend #1

TEST MANAGERS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO KEEP UP WITH THE DEMANDS OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT

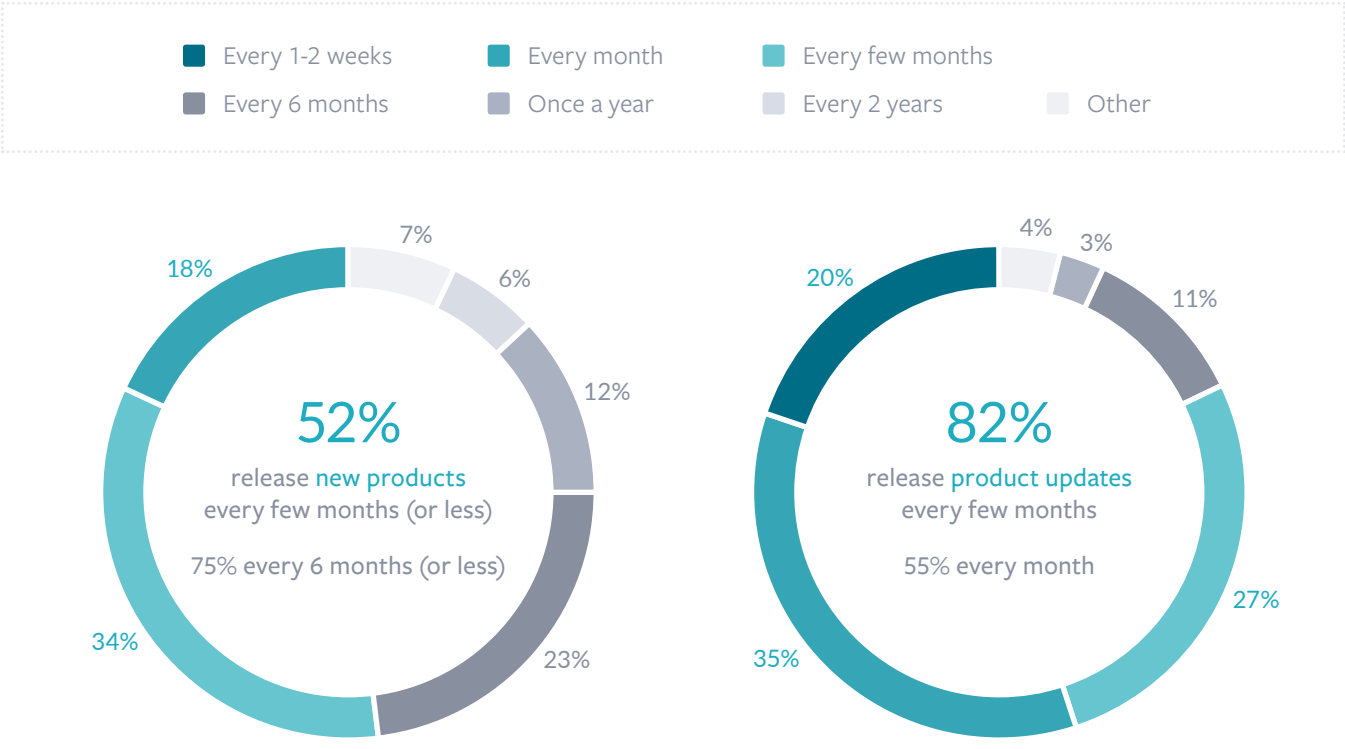
Today, seven in ten companies have adopted some form of agile development. Whether those practices are true agile or hybrids, Agile's widespread adoption indicates companies have embraced continuous improvement.

7 out of 10 companies have adopted some form of Agile



PRODUCT RELEASE AND UPDATE CADENCES

With the nature of today's connected and rapidly evolving technological landscape, speed and flexibility are key priorities in modern product development. The main challenge with supporting Agile is keeping up with the increased pace at which products are being launched and updated.

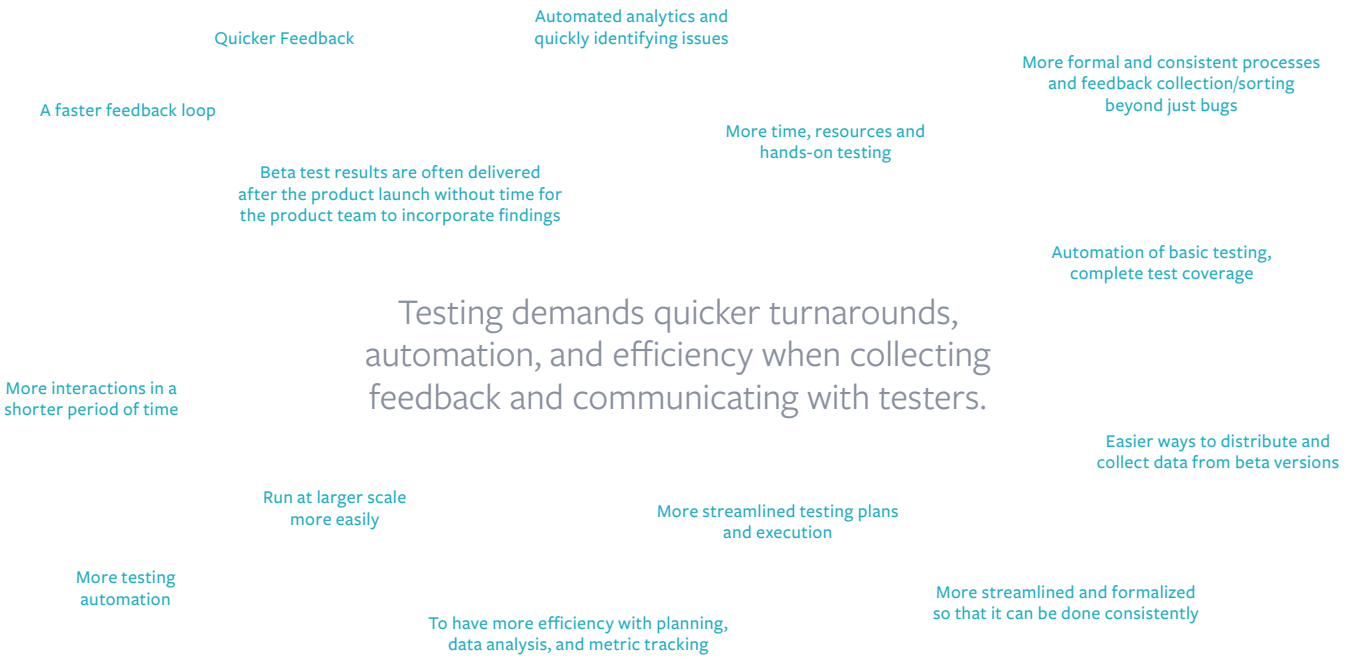


HOW DOES BETA TESTING STACK UP?

The speed and frequency of product releases underscore how important it is to be able to capture feedback from real users on a continuous basis. While beta has long been practiced as a reliable process for validating product quality before release, today's testing professionals say that their **current processes aren't keeping up with the pace of today's product launches and updates**.

Professionals say it's hard to collect and manage feedback that drives actionable insights in the tight release and update windows products have today. This leaves them struggling to deliver beta testing results that effectively support the demands of agile development.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: WHAT'S YOUR ONE WISH TO IMPROVE YOUR BETA PROGRAM?



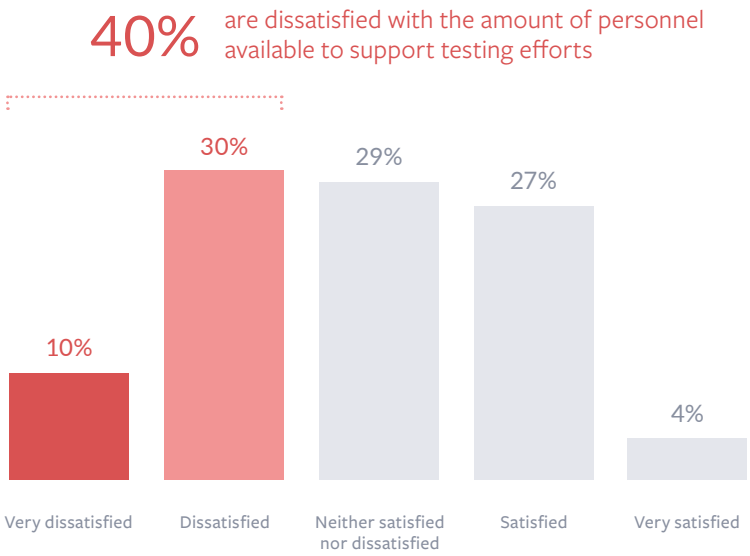
Why are so many professionals struggling to align their beta processes to the speed of agile development? According to the data, one of the biggest obstacles is a **shortage of time**. More than half of testing professionals report difficulty finding time to manage their tests.



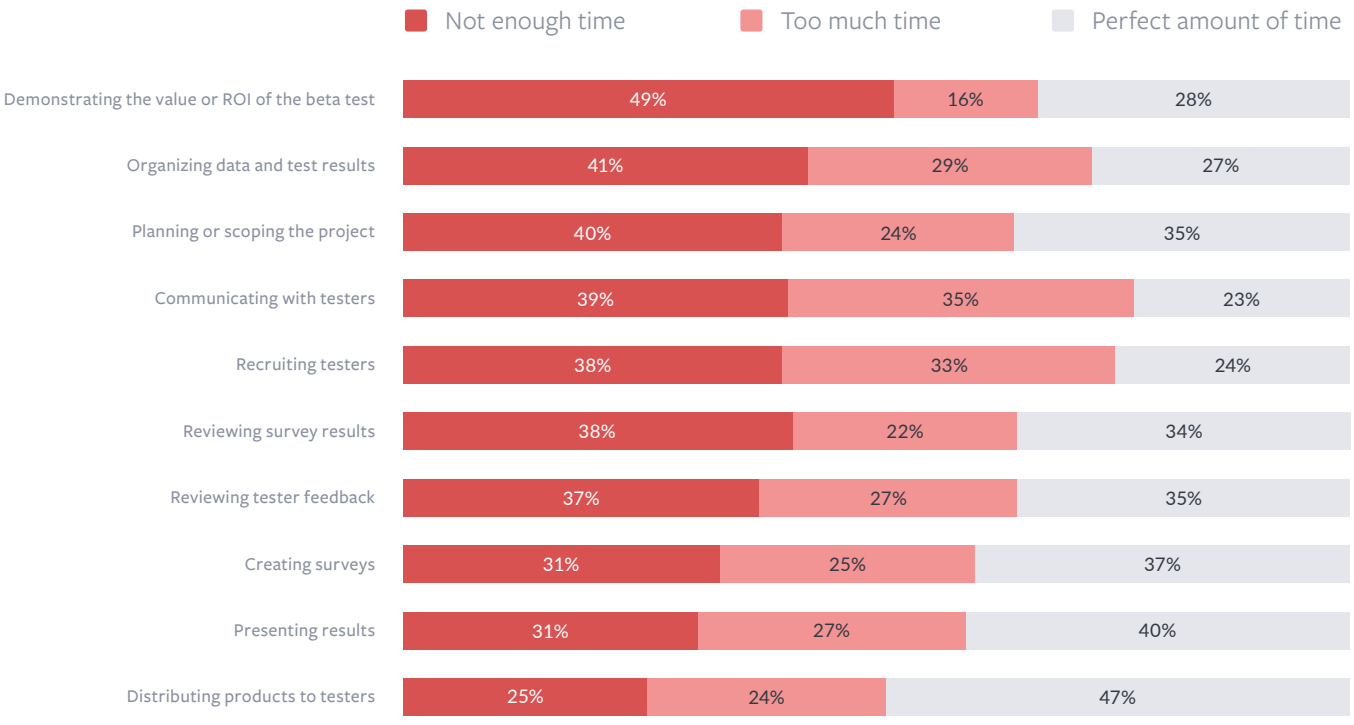
HALF of professionals report DIFFICULTY COLLECTING USEFUL DATA

Digging deeper into this, consider that only 14% of professionals managing user tests do so as their primary job. Meanwhile, two out of five test managers are dissatisfied with the availability of personnel to support their testing efforts.



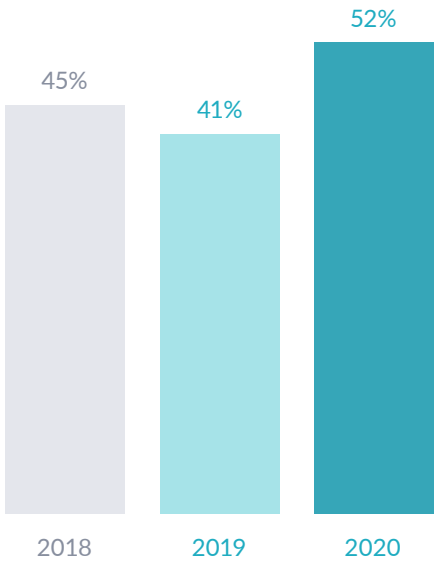


It's no surprise that most professionals find it difficult to allocate time for key test execution tasks. For some, that means spending too much time on manual tasks. On the flip side, many are not spending enough time on key tasks that will ultimately impact their results. On average, **nearly ⅔ of test managers say they don't spend the right amount of time managing their tests**.



And with the disruption and instability caused by the pandemic, many are feeling that pressure more acutely than ever before.

Percentage of test managers who say finding time to manage tests is difficult, shown year over year



But while this backslide might seem disheartening at first glance, a closer look at the data tells a more nuanced story.

There ***is*** a significant chunk of professionals who are driving improvements. In addition to decreasing time shortages related to test management, their user testing programs are becoming more effective year over year.

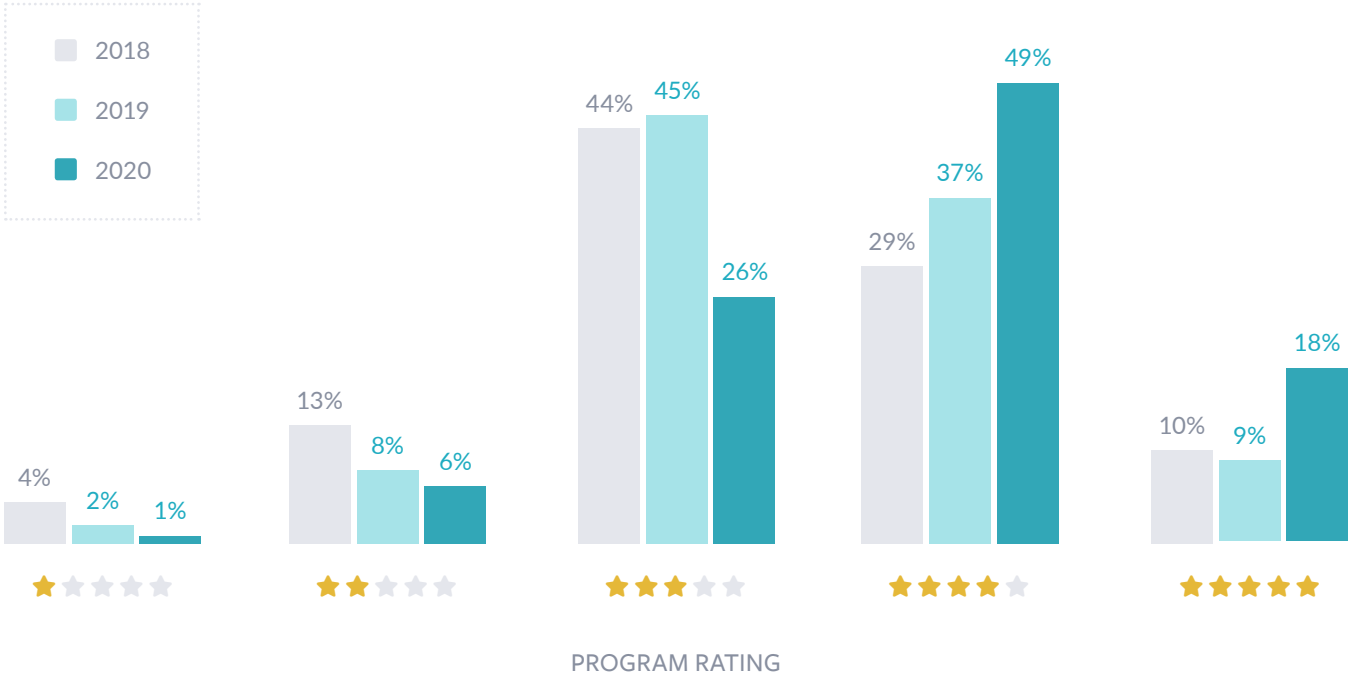
What do these professionals all have in common? We'll talk about that in our next trend.

Trend #2

PROGRAMS WITH EFFECTIVE PROCESSES CONTINUE TO THRIVE

User testing has many moving parts, and the factors that influence the effectiveness of a project (or an entire program) vary greatly. But by and large, this year's data reinforces that the **biggest contributor to consistent success is having defined processes**. Let's take a look.

Overall, program effectiveness is shifting



DEFINED PROCESSES LEAD TO GREATER PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

To get the full story behind these numbers, we need to divide the data into two groups: professionals who rely on defined user testing processes and those who use reactive processes.

Professionals who are actively focused on process improvement **rate their satisfaction with their program more than ½ a star higher** on average.

Defined

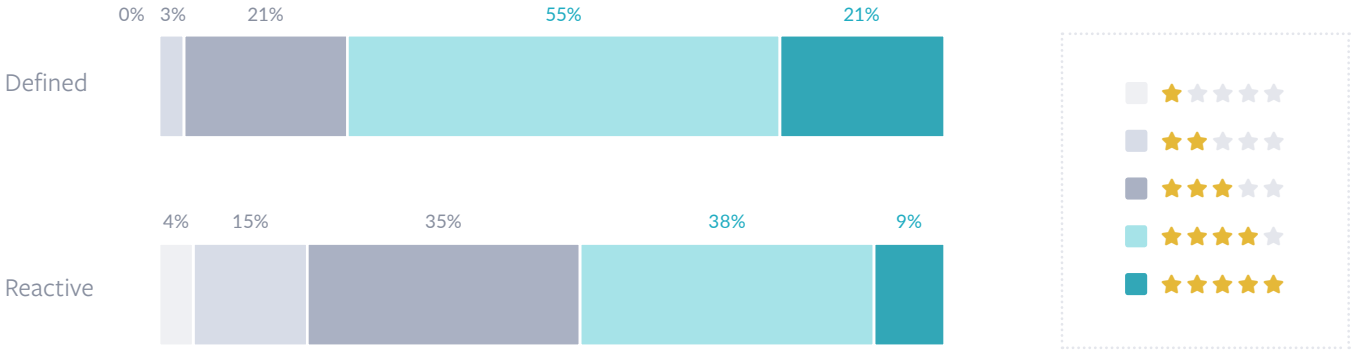
Process are defined and standard across projects

Average program rating for those using defined processes:

Reactive

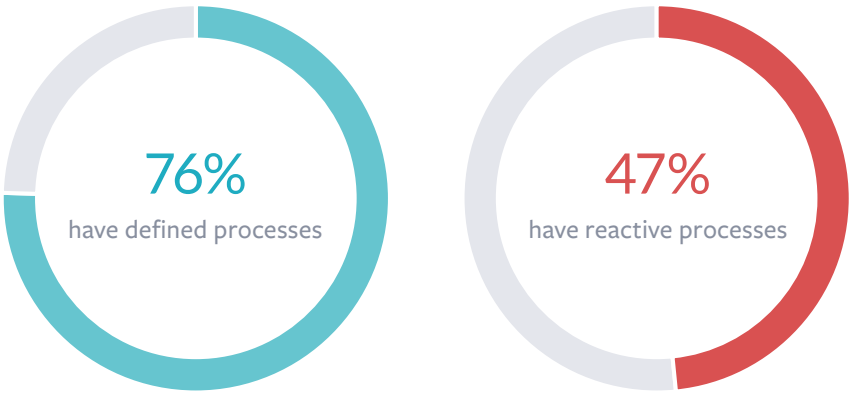
Processes are unpredictable and reactive

Average program rating for those using reactive processes:



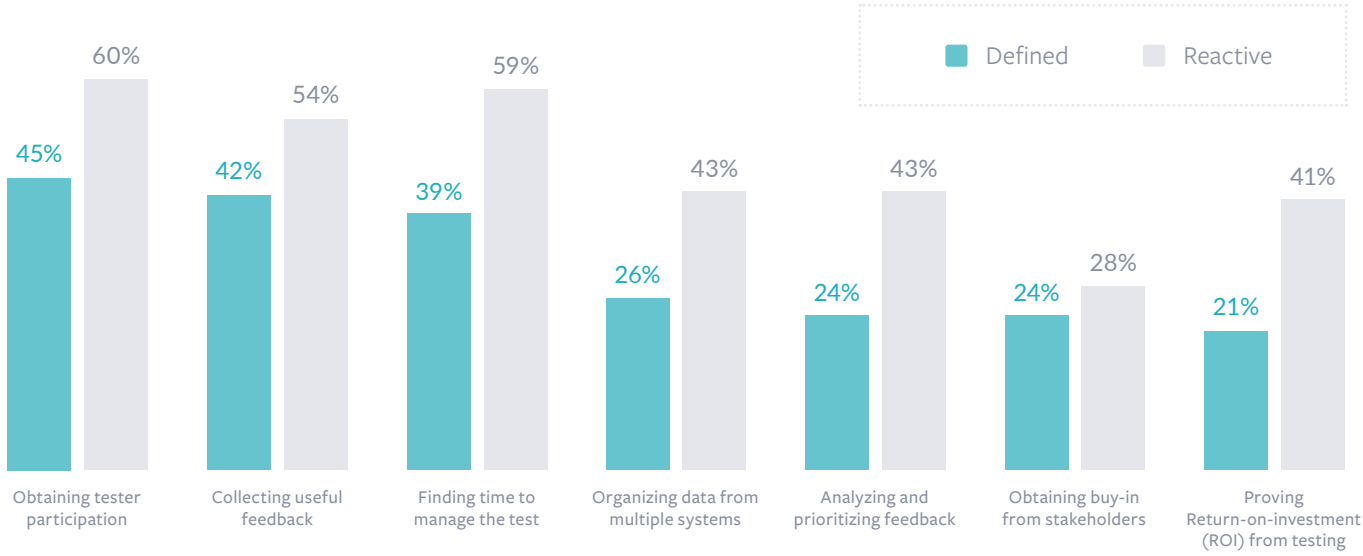
Breaking it down further, the difference is even more dramatic. We see that a higher percentage of professionals with defined processes for user testing rank their program's effectiveness at 4 stars or more.

Of professionals who rated their program's effectiveness at 4 stars or more



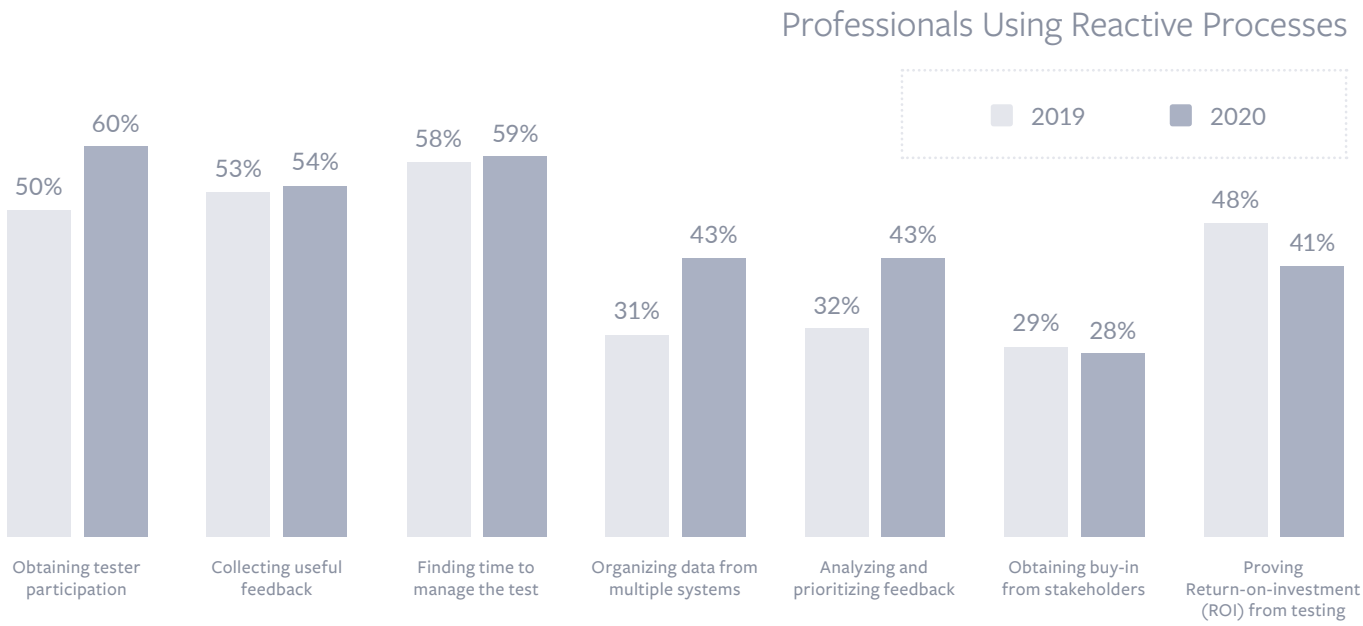
DEFINED PROCESSES ARE ALLEVIATING CHALLENGES FOR TEST MANAGERS

Why are professionals with defined processes so much more satisfied with their output? It isn't just the placebo effect of their effort. The data shows that these same professionals report fewer challenges in critical test management areas like maintaining tester participation and collecting feedback.



Number of professionals experiencing testing challenges

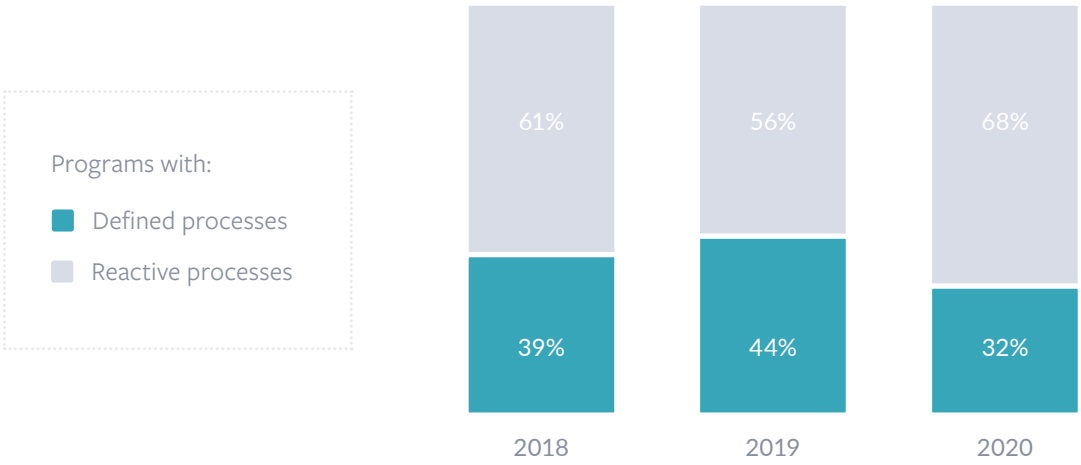
When you compare this to changes year over year, the gap between the challenges experienced by those with defined processes versus reactive processes is widening. This indicates that while both groups experience challenges, those leveraging defined processes are seeing measurable program improvements.



Number of professionals experiencing testing challenges



Despite the concrete benefits of defined processes on user testing program effectiveness, 2020 saw a backslide in the number of programs actively using them. The disruptive nature of the pandemic and its effect on workflow and life in general may be to blame. It's also more difficult to break old habits in times of stress and uncertainty.



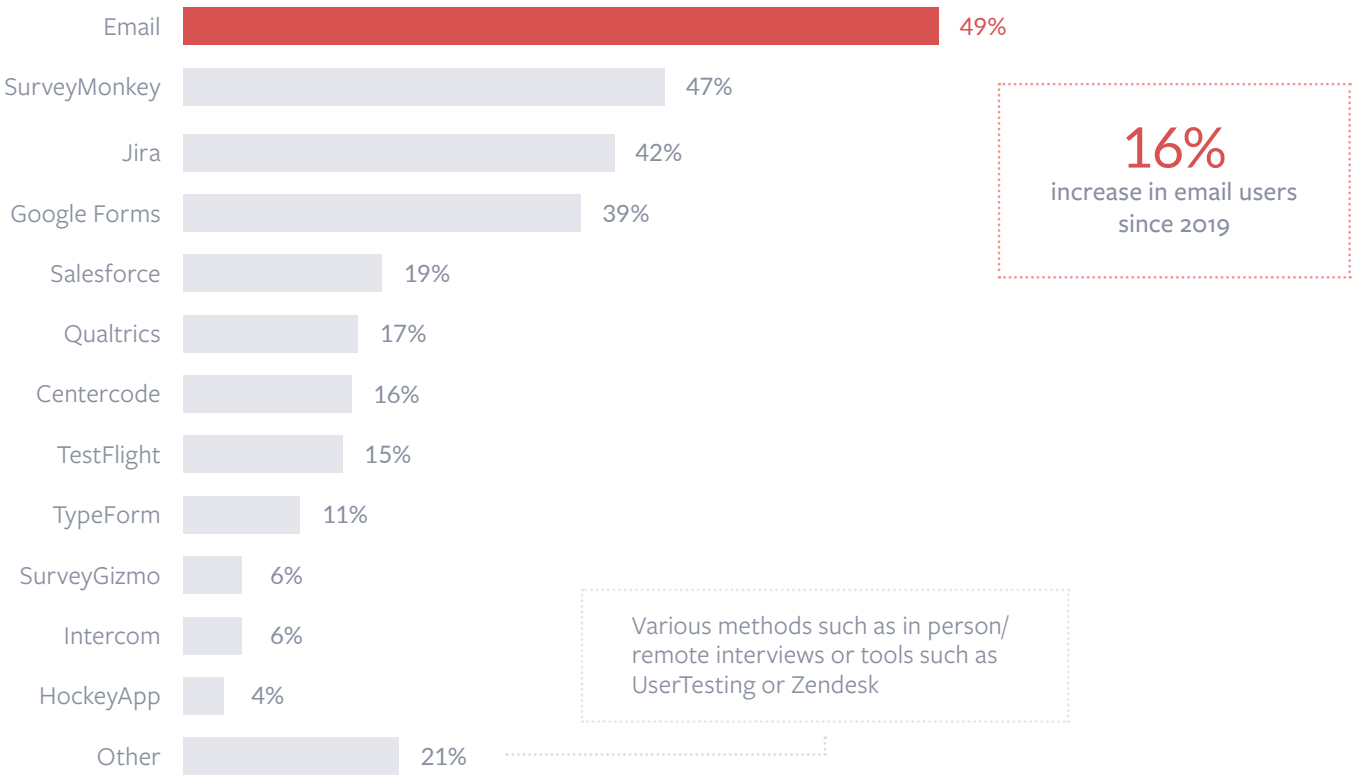
The other factor compounding test management difficulties? We'll discuss that in our final trend.

Trend #3

AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TOOLS USED TO RUN BETA TESTS IS MAKING THEM HARDER TO MANAGE

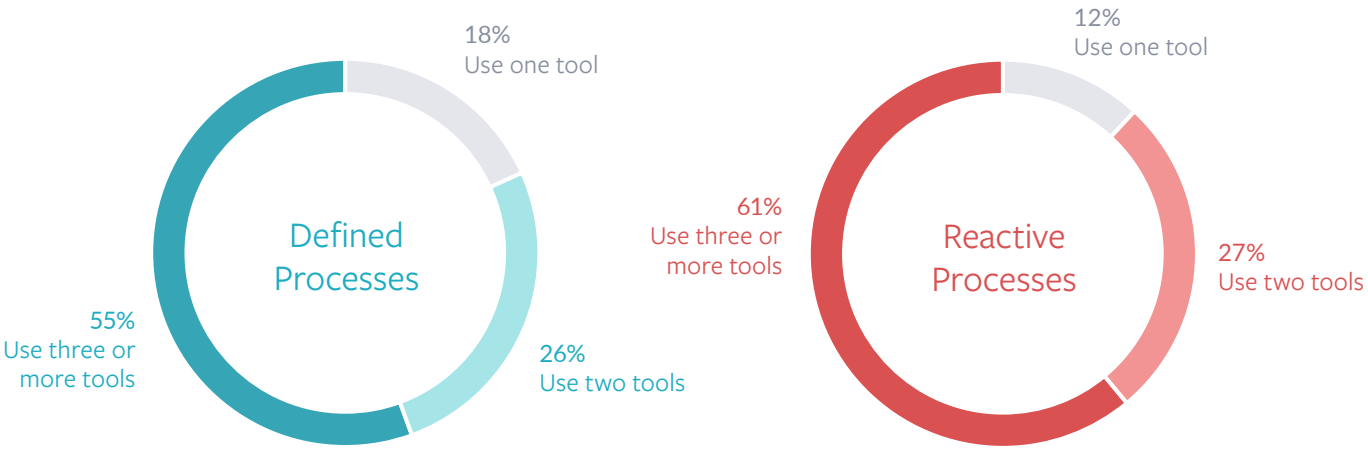
Companies using three or more tools to collect user feedback jumped to 59% in 2020 — up 13% from the previous year.

Tools used to collect feedback from testers

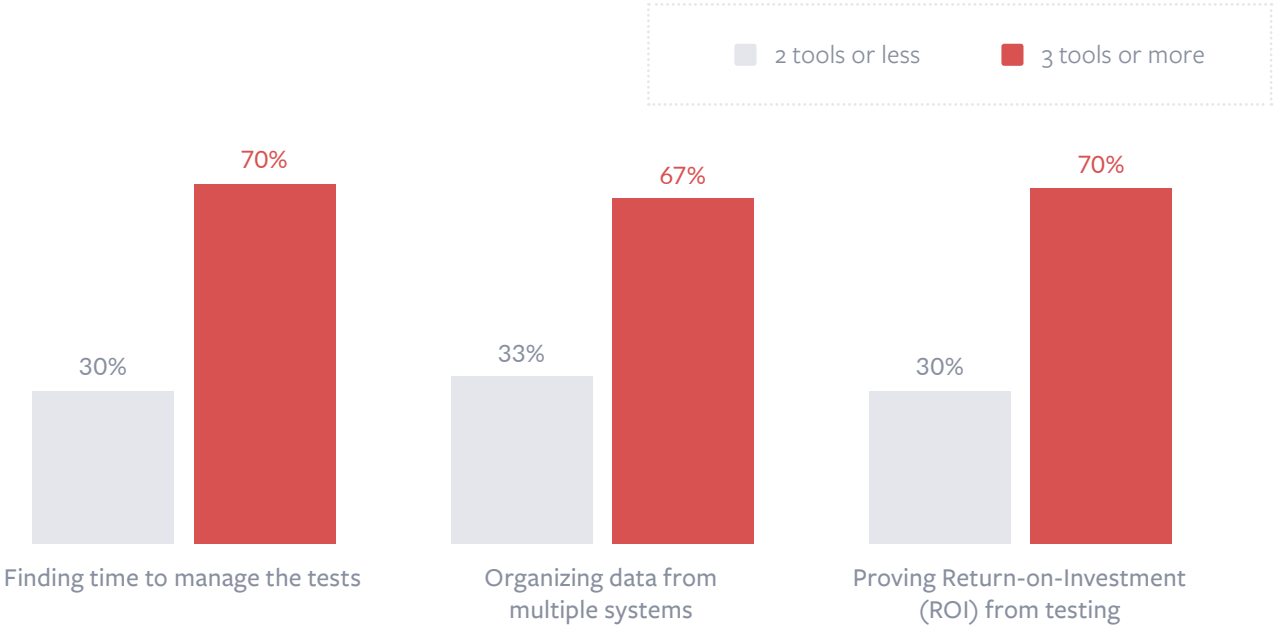


Why the rise? Disruptions caused by the pandemic — tighter budget constraints, limited resources, and layoffs — as well as the cost of investing in specialized tools are probably linked to the uptick in generic productivity tool usage.

It's also interesting to note that the majority of test managers are leaning on multiple decentralized tools regardless of their test process style. Looking at the distribution, the pie charts are virtually identical.



But data shows that using these tools makes test management unwieldy. Testing professionals using more than two tools reported more difficulty organizing data across multiple systems, proving the return-on-investment of testing efforts, and (as we established in Trend #1) allocating the right amount of time for test management overall. It's clear that decentralized productivity tools are exacerbating existing obstacles to effective test management.



Number of professionals experiencing testing challenges

Even test managers who are using defined processes are running into challenges managing multiple tools. All of this data together suggests that while defined user testing practices do make it easier to address certain challenges,

centralized tools are essential for significantly increasing the efficiency of beta test management. Test managers using both defined processes and centralized tools are experiencing fewer challenges and improved effectiveness.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR TESTING PROFESSIONALS?

While the turbulence caused by the pandemic will level out, teams will continue to focus on staying lean for the foreseeable future. Addressing the efficiency gaps caused by both undefined processes and an overabundance of tools is critical to reducing the obstacles to success and the time deficits faced by test managers.

More professionals will define their processes to iterate and improve. But keeping up with Agile means they will also need to adopt platforms that reduce time investments in areas like tester management and organizing feedback. This, along with the increasing demands of today's technology, points to a necessary union between defined processes and centralized tools that support them. This winning combination will play a pivotal role in delivering user testing results that support agile development and increase product success.

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Delta Testing Solutions

Leading product ops teams use Centercode to identify real-world issues to fix, areas to improve, and what their users love in order to build amazing products.



Centercode's delta testing platform is built on decades of experience user testing the world's most successful products. Our platform equips you with the automation, best practices, and processes you need to get actionable user insights for any use case.

PRODUCT LAUNCH

Engage your **Target Market** to successfully bring new products and services to market

USE CASES:

- Beta Tests
- User Acceptance Tests
- Field Tests

PRODUCT GROWTH

Recruit **Existing Customers** to continuously mature live products and services

USE CASES:

- Progressive Delivery
- Early Access
- Customer Advisory Boards

CUSTOMER ZERO

Gather **Employee** feedback to enhance your products while fostering a product culture

USE CASES:

- Alpha Tests
- Dogfooding
- Employee Tests

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Enlist **Competitors' Customers** to rapidly gain actionable intel about their products

USE CASES:

- Competitive Intelligence
- Market Testing
- Comparative Research

DELTA TESTING PLATFORM

Get a live demo of Centercode to experience the easy way to run your user tests, including:

- Auto-generated test designs
- Ted, your tester engagement bot
- Smart feedback prioritization
- Instant KPIs and dashboards

SCHEDULE A DEMO

WHY CENTERCODE?

Increase Revenue
½ ☆ INCREASE
in product ratings

Release Sooner
50% FASTER
test cycles

Gain Participation
75% INCREASE
in tester engagement

Save Time
40% + DECREASE
in time managing tests