

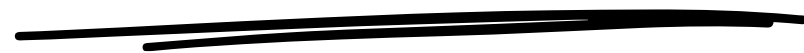
A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, standing on a stage with his arms outstretched. The background is a bright, hazy stage with several spotlights. Golden confetti is falling from the top of the frame. The overall mood is one of celebration or triumph.

Built it! Shipped it!

...and no one used it

DEVSUMMIT 2026 ADEO &
DECATHLON DIGITAL

Rachel Dubois Senior Agile & Product Leader Mentor, Coach, and Speaker



We already know the numbers.

85%

IT projects often face challenges that can lead to failure.

Standish Group CHAOS Report

42%

Failures happen when there isn't a real need in the market.

CB Insights

95%

the rate of failure for new products.

Pr. Christensen, Harvard

Now, let's take a peek inside!

46%

a company's SaaS apps are not being used enough or are sitting idle.

Zylo · 2026

70%

features of a software program are often not used.

Whatfix

61%

Employees aren't happy with the technologies their company offers.

Josys · 2024



Raise hand if you've launched a
product within your company

... for which folks found workarounds?



Ghost adoption

The tool is up and running. Access has been set up. The project is all set!

Yet real magic happens in elsewhere ...

in Excel, in WhatsApp / slack or in an email sent to the whole department.



On the outside, failure is easy to see.

On the inside, it stays out of sight

=> folks are nice humans, they won't tell you.

Internal users are stuck with us.

That is the issue.

"Internal teams believe a "market" is out there because they have a mission, a mandate even, and they often stop experimenting before finding a real product-market fit."

PETER GILLARD-MOSS

**→ Mandate doesn't mean PMF.
"Monopoly Fallacy"**

"Internal users usually have to use the system and don't have other options, which makes usage unavoidable, but it can hide a mismatch between the product and the users, leading to frustration."

Marty Cagan · SVPG · "Commercial and Internal Products"

73%

Microsoft 365 Copilot programs are currently not available.

RecordPoint · 2025

Not because AI isn't effective.

Not because the group wasn't prepared.

- No real pain, no real need
- ROI is not clear.
- Workflows remain the same.

"A tool that functions well, but hardly anyone uses: that's ghost adoption"

Marty CAGAN



So, what's with all the failures?

Is it because the tools aren't designed very well? or poorly built?

The easy diagnosis. And the wrong one.

The sponsor, not the users, defined the problem based on beliefs

- The tool addresses a challenge that management feels.
- Not something the end user really see as a problem.
- The message came from higher up. The finding never happened.

Canonical example : the reporting tool was set up to "provide insight to the executive committee," but the teams fill it out without much faith in it, and it seems like no one actually looks at the data.

If you find yourself needing to convince users that a problem is there... then it probably isn't real enough.

REASON #2 — LACK OF SEGMENTATION

"All employees" isn't a specific group.

THE AUDIENCE FOR THIS BRIEF:

~~Everyone on the team.~~

THE REAL SEGMENTS, IN FACT

- Department Head
- Supply chain manager.
- Friendly HR team.
- Maintenance worker.
- IT Project Leader.

REASON #3 — REAL LIFE WINS

The true competition comes from what's already out there.

Shadow IT isn't just a governance problem; it's a sign of what's happening in the market.

42%

Enterprise apps are like
Shadow IT.

PRODUCTIVE

67%

Fortune 1000 workers are using apps
that haven't been approved.

GARTNER

38%

They turn to Shadow IT because the IT
team takes too long to respond.

GARTNER

*"When folks choose Excel over your tool...
Excel has the PMF. You don't."*

MARTY CAGAN

REASON #4 — NO TRUTH ELIXIR

Inside, there's no cost for being honest.

OUTSIDE ITEM

The price is the key factor.

No one really needs to pay.

No \$ intention = No solid need.  **The cost is swapped for quiet.**

INTERNAL PRODUCT

The big surprise is...???

No one really "pays," so how can we be sure?

**Internal truth serum =
willingness to use when the alternative is still available.**

The four reasons for things going wrong inside.

1
No real pain.

Only one word, "mandate"

2
No segment.

"Everyone" isn't a target.

3
Not enough variety.

The current system is a winner, also known as Excel, ruling the world.

4
No truth juice.

Quiet takes the place of cost.

None of these reasons suggest poor code or design

EVERYTHING ROOTS UPSTREAM

(in house) Product-Market Fit

also known as the art of internal positioning.

Internal "PMF" happens when a tool becomes essential for certain groups of employees because it genuinely enhances their workflows, work experience, and outcomes, rather than just being something they have to use.

Before the PMF, you give it a little nudge. Then, the teammates take their shots.

BEFORE INTERNAL PMF

- You're encouraging adoption.
- Active change management.
- Required training classes.
- Deployment KPIs.
- People are just getting by.



AFTER INTERNAL PMF

- The tool spreads out by itself.
- Early adopters turn into ambassadors.
- New folks are asking for access.
- The workarounds vanish.
- People would definitely be upset if we took it away.

THE TEST: WHO'S PUSHING?

**If you can't describe success that way, it wishful thinking.
Not a PMF.**

X% of the target group achieves something valuable every period.

RETAIL

70% of department managers finish their weekly review using the tool, all on their own, within 48 hours.

SUPPLY CHAIN

80% of teams wrap up their replenishment plan in the tool, without needing a separate Excel spreadsheet.

ONBOARDING

60% of new employees start using the training platform right from their first week, and they do it willingly!

HOW CAN I TELL IF YOU HAVE THE INTERNAL PMF?

The 5 true signals.

- 01 Usage while other options are still available !
- 02 Noticeable decrease in using parallel tools (Excel, WhatsApp groups).
- 03 People get upset when the tool is taken away from them. **Disappointed Test.**
- 04 A friendly suggestion for a teammate from a different group.
- 05 New arrivals want access, but it's not being given to them.

Measure truth, not pride.

DIMENSION	WHAT WE TRACK	EXAMPLES
Happiness	Satisfaction tool, Employee NPS	"Would you suggest this tool to a coworker?"
Engagement	Frequency, depth	Number of sessions each week, features being used.
Adoption	% lively target group	% of active department managers during a 30-day period.
Retention	Voluntary return	% users J+7, J+30.
Task success	Main job done!	The weekly review is all set and ready in the tool!

Vanity metrics: number of accounts created.
Truth metrics: task finished, tool opened up again the next day.

How can you find your PMF like a superstar?

Not with magic. Not with pushing change on everyone.

With good product craft.

The five steps.

01

Begin with the actual issue (like, dive into the field)

02

Create a clear internal segmentation.

03

Spot the most uncertain assumptions.

04

Building a simple early experimentation plan

05

Scale the proof, not the rollout plan

aka all the Great PM craft !

Treat internal users just like you would treat external customers : do your discovery work !

- Go check them out. Watch them closely. Don't give them a form.
- "Why are you still using that Excel file?" is usually the best question to ask during a product interview.
- Shadow IT and workarounds = a starting point, not something to be eliminated.

"If you need to persuade users that a problem is there, then it's not really a problem."

Teresa Torres, Continuous Discovery Habits.

STEP #2 — TARGET

**A particular role. A particular situation.
Not "everybody".**

CRAPPY TARGETING

~~All team members. Leaders.~~

~~The teams that keep things running smoothly.~~



BETTER TARGETING

- Department managers in France on the weekly orders JTBD (*Job To Be Done*)
- The supply chain teams at Leroy Merlin Spain have automated the restocking process.

Hidden beliefs can lead to expensive errors.

"Field managers will definitely want to use it."

How did they test it?

"It will naturally take the place of emails and Excel."

How did they test it?

"The local team will take care of the adoption."

How did they test it?



Make the assumptions clear.

Sort them by risk.

Try out the most dangerous ones first.

"One sprint usually costs around €40,000 in Europe.

Is it worth it?"

Don't mix up deployment with adoption.

FLUFFY NUMBERS

- Number of accounts made.
- Number of active sessions.
- Connection rate.
- Number of training courses finished.



TRUTH MEASURES

- % of the active target group every week.
- Key task finished in the tool (not at the same time).
- Tool was purposely reopened on day 7.
- Fewer parallel files.

**You might achieve a 100% deployment rate, but the actual adoption could be just 20%.
The first number is not true. The second one is honest.**

Focus on the evidence, not the assumptions.

- Scale only what has truly shown signs of being embraced.
- The overall rollout before proving its value can make wrong assumptions seem even bigger.
- More effort means more proof.

Community-Led Software Embrace.

Mandates and internal marketing lead to failure. Working together with early adopters results in organic adoption and natural growth.

Google SRE — A fun look at how it works.

sre.google

**Don't grow just because the team is excited
Scale, as users in the trenches give their feedback.**

WATCH OUT FOR FALSE POSITIVES

It seems like PMF... but it's not.



≠ PMF INTERNAL

Launch in 20 countries.

Geographic deployment focuses on the effort put in, not the value gained.

≠ PMF INTERNAL

All required training courses have been finished.

Compliance isn't the same as adoption.

≠ PMF INTERNAL

Great NPS for the project at J+1 delivery!

First impressions come before we actually use something.

The only thing that really counts is folks using your product willingly and often, so it makes a noticeable difference in their work life.


**But most teams aren't beginning
from the ground up.**

By the time we recognize the problem, we've already spent months, money, and our pride. The big question is: what do we do now? **DAMAGE CONTROL**

Four steps to break free from ghost adoption.

- 01** Stop acting like it's not true.
- 02** Conduct a product review.
- 03** Reduce the wager.
- 04** Choose! Fight or Change direction.
No floating.

Stop making up stories in your head.

- 
- Don't mix up being busy with making real progress.
 - It doesn't make sense of weak signals.
 - Take a closer look at what's happening in the field.
 - List all the assumptions and hypotheses that haven't been verified yet.
 - Who profits from the crime?

"Before fixing the product, let go of the story."

Stop sticking up for the product. Begin looking into it.

- Who really uses it? Who returns on their own without being asked?
- Who invests their time and attention, and not just their compliance?
- Where do folks take a break on their journey?
- What tasks are still being done outside of the tool?
- Who came up with a solution, and what was the reason? How did they do it?

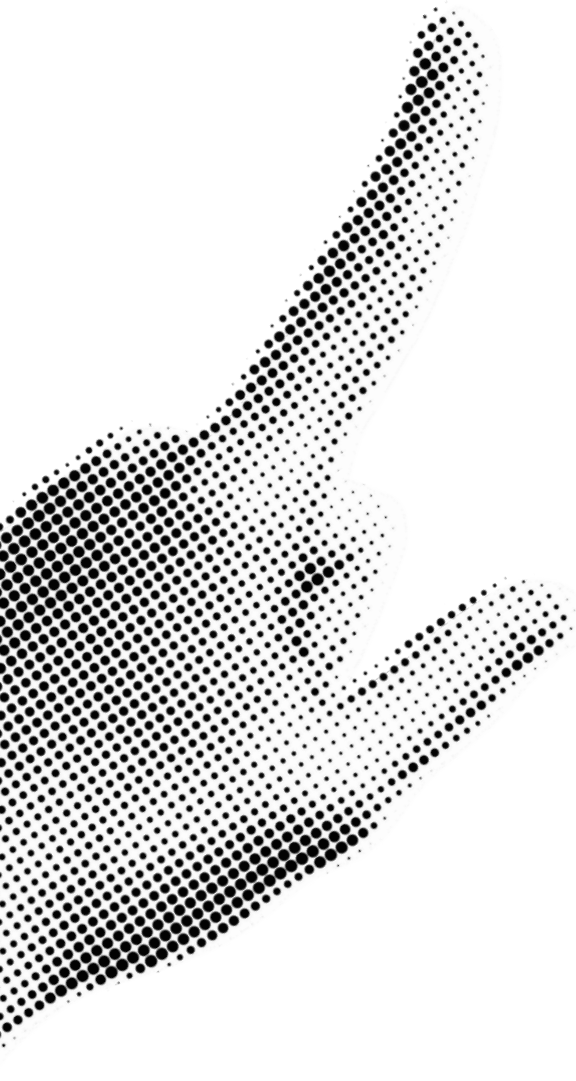
VOLUNTARY USE = TRUTH ELIXIR.

Inside, the price doesn't reveal the whole story.

It's the voluntary usage that does.



Shrink the perimeter to refocus.

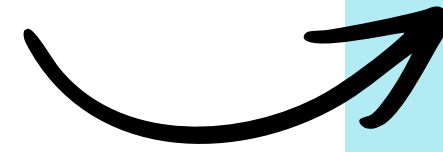
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- Cut down the segment to just 1 role, 1 context, and 1 country.
 - Narrow it down to just one specific problem instead of five.
 - Quicker, smaller tests.
 - Check the price of value (how ready you are to change the workflow) before looking at the features.

When the product is having a tough time, it's best not to raise the bet.

Make it smaller until situation is back on tracks

Stubbornness is not the same as perseverance. Choose a side !!

- Time-box: 1–3 months, as we think.
- Clear criteria: what shows success or failure?
- Written promise: **"If we don't reach X by Y, we either stop or change direction."**



KILL

Stop smoothly.

- Discover. Record.
- Avoid creating the same tool again in two years.

PIVOT

Change perspective.

- From section, example, or benefit statement.
- Take the proof with you.

CONTINUE

Just with proof

- Not only hope.
- Date, date, date!



Many internal products don't fail because they didn't succeed.

They keep going as zombies because no one had the bravery to make a choice.

Marty Cagan

Failing doesn't mean you're a bad PM.
Pretending that your tool is awesome
when it isn't used, does.

If you try to create products and stumble a few times,
the silver lining is that you'll really get to know what your team needs.



Thank you!
Merci!

**A huge thank you to the amazing
organizing team for this fantastic event!**

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