

A crisis of confidence

Alex Kohlhofer, Director of Product - UserVoice

alex@uservoice.com



About me...

- The one where I started a design consultancy.
- The one where I made art and installations in London.
- The one where I co-founded an online payments business.
- The one where I made a multiplayer online strategy game: Weewar
- The one where I sold Weewar to Electronic Arts.



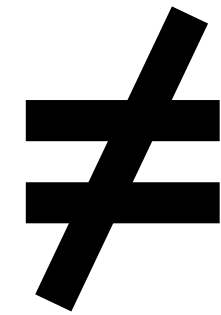
Spredly



A crisis of confidence

Direct feedback from our customers

(Ideas and votes through our own
widget and idea portal)



Anecdotal feedback from internal teams

(Support, Sales, Success)

- **What our customer facing teams heard contradicted what customers shared directly through our own product!**
- Which side was right?
- Where was the disconnect?



What had changed?

We chose to focus on our best customers:

- We moved from serving startups to Mid-Market and Enterprise
- Yearly contracts replaced monthly subscriptions.
- Our average price is now 8x higher than it was

We were transforming our business and we were on track!



So which side was not keeping up?

Direct feedback from our customers

(Ideas and votes through our own
widget and idea portal)

VS.

Anecdotal feedback from internal teams

(Support, Sales, Success)

Normally we'd use direct feedback to back up or disprove anecdotal feedback.



Was our direct feedback data wrong?

In order to find out:

- We took the 1,000s of ideas in our platform
- We classified every supporter behind every idea
- We filtered on specific criteria while looking at the top ideas



Our top 5 ideas by supporters (at the time)

- 1 Mobile-optimized Admin Console
- 2 Make forum URLs simpler
- 3 Make it possible comment on existing, but not submit new ideas
- 4 Allow users to subscribe to suggestions
- 5 Multi-lang support for articles

Everybody at UserVoice was familiar with these.



Our top 5 ideas by supporters

(at the time)

1	Mobile-optimized Admin Console
2	Make forums as simple as possible
3	Make it possible to comment on existing, but not submit new ideas
4	Allow users to subscribe to suggestions
5	Multi-lang support for articles

- We removed customers who did not use our product management tools **(behavioral data)**

None of these ideas remained in the top 5!



Our top 5 ideas by supporters

(at the time)

- 1 Allow custom fields for ideas
- 2 Bulk actions for ideas
- 3 Assign & filter feedback by admin (and team)
- 4 Organize ideas in a public roadmap
- 5 Support per-user vote limits


- We removed customers who did not use our product management tools **(behavioral data)**

Instead we got an entirely new set!



Our top 5 ideas by supporters

(at the time)



1	Allow customer fields for ideas
2	Bulk actions
3	Assign & filter ideas by admin (and team)
4	Organize ideas by roadmap
5	Support per user vote limits

- We removed customers who did not use our product management tools (**behavioral data**)
- We removed startups & small companies (**customer data**)

And again: None of the previous ideas remained in the top 5 either!



Our top 5 ideas by supporters

(at the time)

- 1 Integration with on-premise Team Foundation Server (TFS)
- 2 Support ability to filter "my ideas" in user profile by "Top"
- 3 Admin to set user traits
- 4 Moderation settings should be applied at the forum level
- 5 Support Private forums in SmartVote

- We removed customers who did not use our product management tools (**behavioral data**)
- We removed startups & small companies (**customer data**)

Another new top 5. One last time...



Our top 5 ideas by supporters

(at the time)

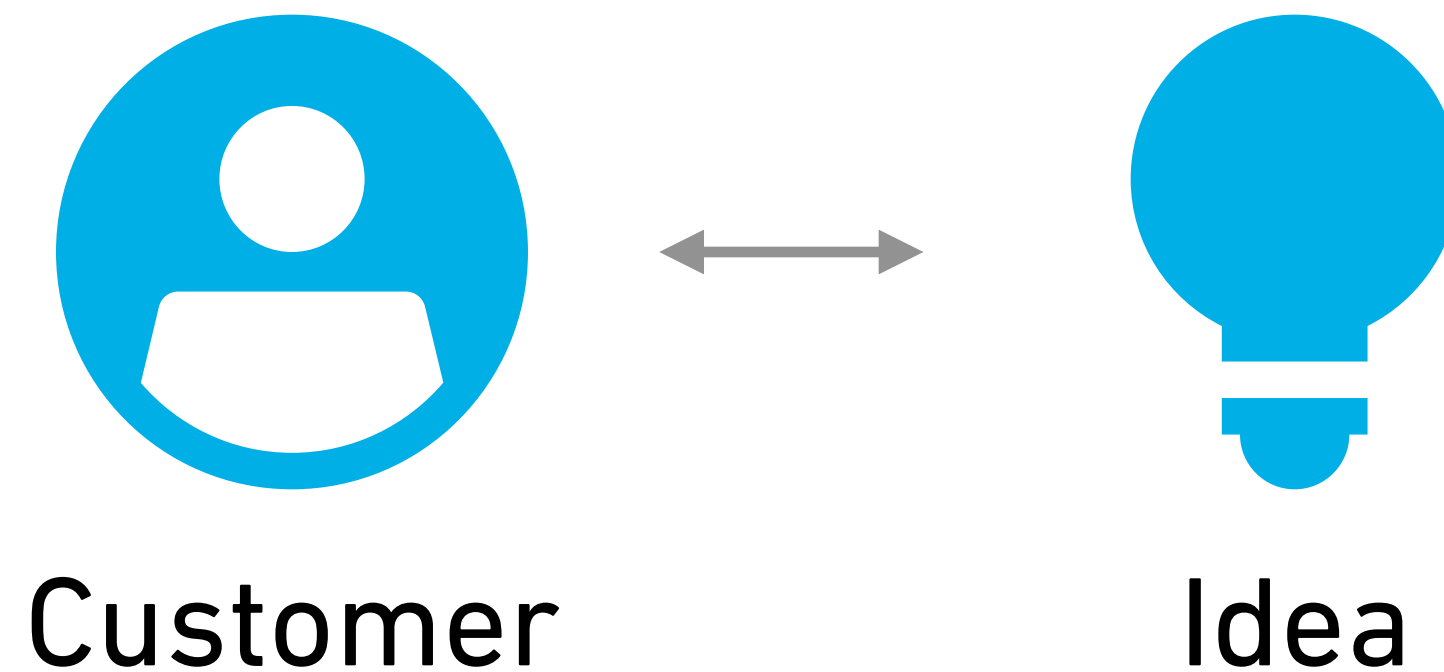
1	Integration with on-premise Team Foundation Server (TFS)
2	Support ability to set "my ideas" in user profile by "Top"
3	Admin to set user traits
4	Moderation settings should be applied at the forum level
5	Support Private Ideas in SmartVote

- We removed customers who did not use our product management tools (**behavioral data**)
- We removed startups & small companies (**customer data**)
- We removed any votes that were older than 6 months (**time data**)

The entire set had drastically changed!



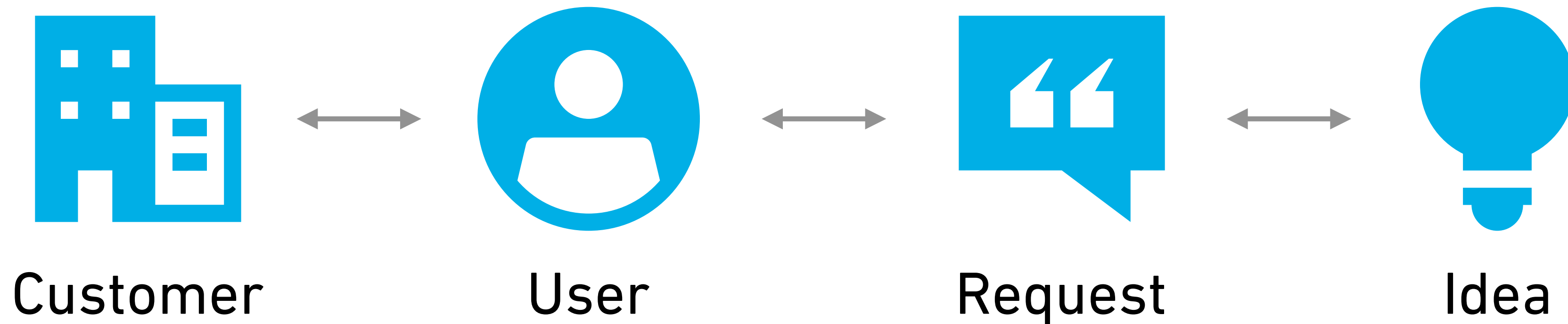
We needed to change *how* we think about customer feedback



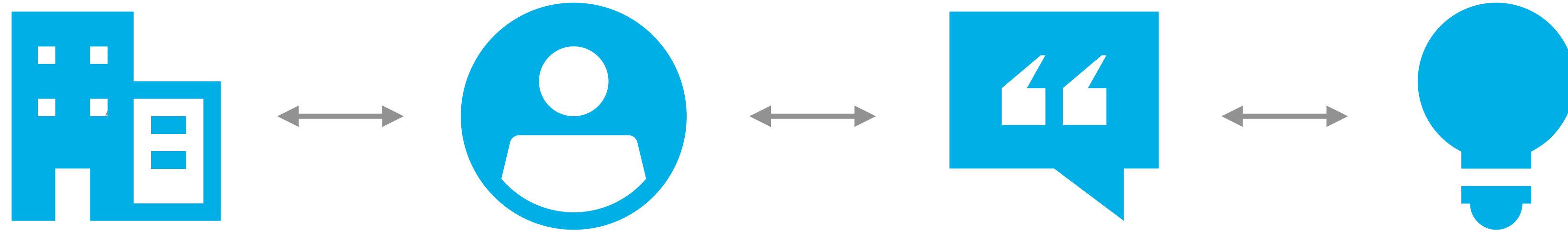
It's not this simple...



For us better decisions means having better information



Including details about every person and company requesting something



Employees	...
Industry	...
MRR	...
Churned	...
Opportunity	...

Age	...
Role	...
Gender	...
Seniority	...
Persona	...



What did we learn?

Our direct feedback was ~~wrong~~ incomplete!

- Customers are not all the same! You need to know your audience to find the correct signal in the noise. (Duh!)
- In order to account for this we needed to completely change our notion of what is required to make feedback data useful!



Now our direct feedback started to come into focus

Direct feedback from our customers

(Ideas and votes through our own widget and idea portal)

vs.

Anecdotal feedback from internal teams

(Support, Sales, Success)



So how about Sales, Success, Support?

As we moved up market our customer facing teams had more interactions with customers than ever:

- Enterprise Level support
- Dedicated Success Team
- High touch Sales

Internal feedback was anecdotal.

We did not know how much there was (or wasn't)



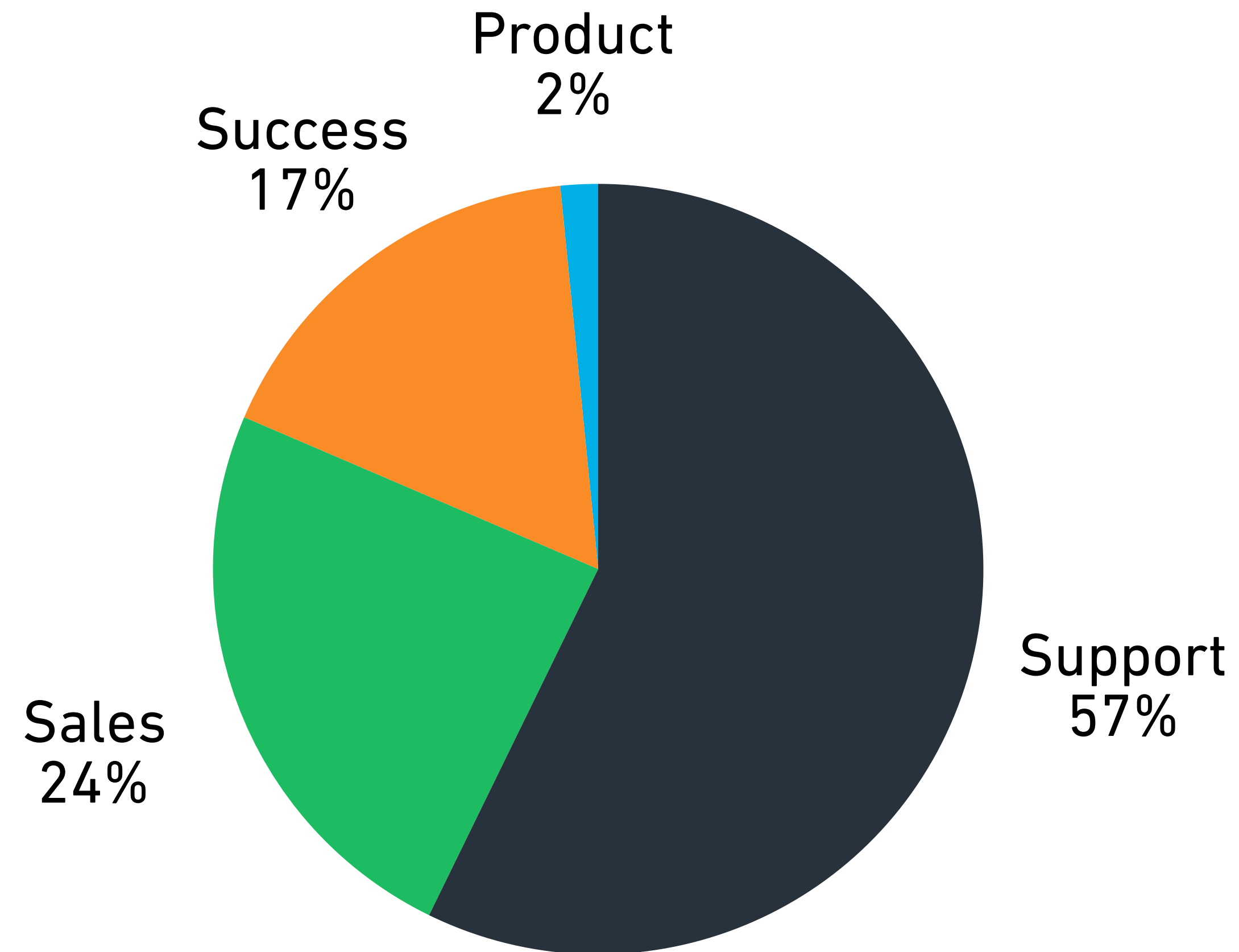
Could we trust the feedback coming from our teams?

In order to find out:

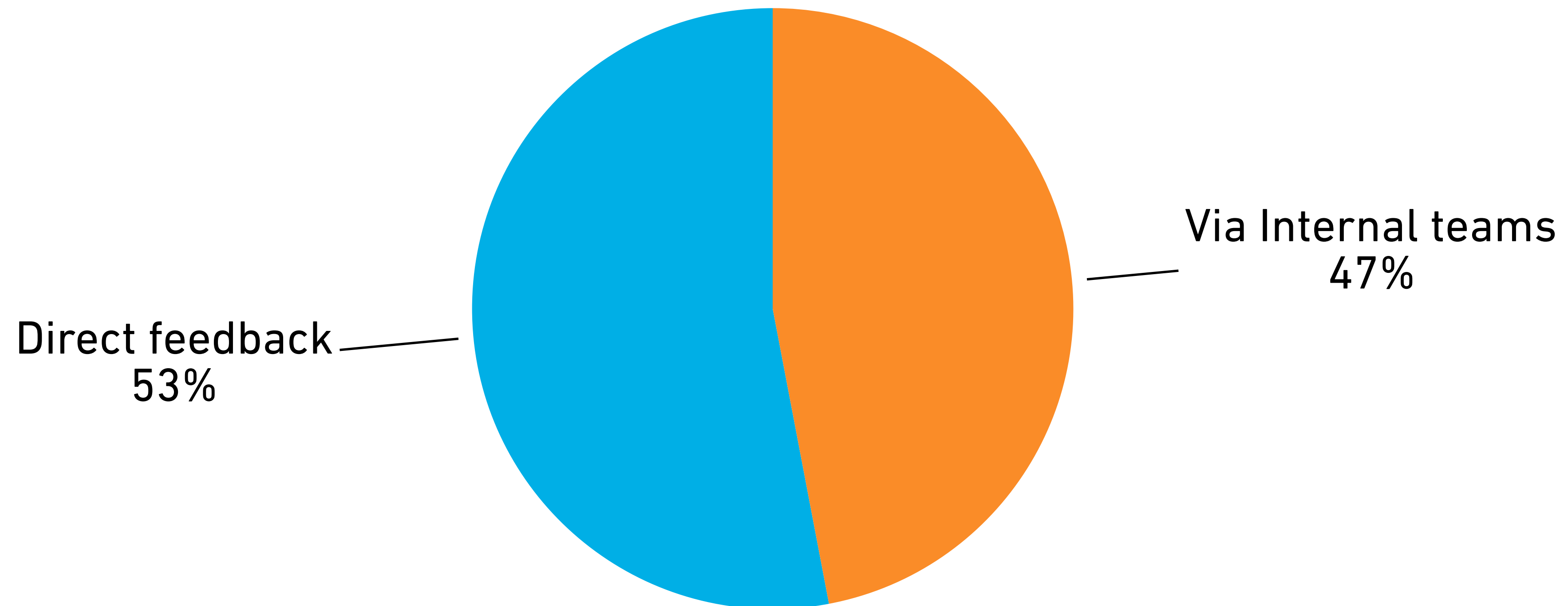
- We built a dedicated tool to capture feedback on behalf of customers.
- We enforced the same requirements we had implemented for direct feedback
- All teams (support, success, sales) worked with product through this tool



Now all teams are collecting feedback



Almost half of our feedback comes in via teams now



Almost half of our feedback comes in via teams now



Over 80% of this feedback is from customers who have never provided direct feedback



So today:

- **Direct and Indirect Feedback are just Feedback**
- We can measure it
- We can analyze it
- We can treat it as one thing.



Two channels working together

Direct feedback from our customers

(Ideas and votes through our own
widget and idea portal)



Anecdotal feedback from internal teams

(Support, Sales, Success)

- Which side was right?
- Where was the disconnect?

- Neither and Both
- All about Signal from Noise



Thank you!

Alex Kohlhofer, Director of Product - UserVoice

alex@uservoice.com

