PRODUCTS
THAT
COUNT

Inside the 2026 Product Leader Awards

WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN

Executive Summary

Congratulations to the winners of the 2026 Product Leader Awards!

The 3rd annual Product Leader Awards, presented by Products That Count, a global network of more than 600,000 product builders and leaders, recognize 39 individuals at the forefront of product leadership. It began with an independent Awards Advisory Council of 23 top product leaders tasked with evaluating a competitive field of qualified nominees.

This year's awards are made possible with support from our sponsors, **EY** and **Nottingham Spark**. Thank you for championing the product leaders shaping what comes next.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS





This publication is your guidebook to how product leaders win in 2026. Once again, keeping up with technological change is the top challenge facing product leaders, and every winner who described a different challenge in their own words also pointed to AI.

But the 2026 winners have moved past AI experimentation to a harder question: what actually creates value? Here are the three winning qualities of the 2026 Product Leader Award winners:

1 Learn by Building:

These leaders prototype, code, and ship it themselves, so their judgment comes from experience.

2 Signal Over Hype:

Every new capability faces a hard filter: does it move a real customer or business outcome? The winners can prove theirs did.

3 Rebuilding How Teams Work:

These leaders are redesigning operating models and team structures to keep pace.

In the pages below, you'll learn more about each of the winners, including their biggest wins and how they're preparing for what's next.

You'll also discover more about the selection process and the indispensable service of the Advisory Council. To each member of the Council, Products That Count offers a special 'thank you'! The awards would be impossible without you.

We begin by exploring the three themes common to great product leaders in 2026. **Let's go!**

Theme 1:

Learn by Building

A year ago, Optic Head of Product, Agentic Platform **Dmitrii Radkevich** knew nothing about the drug industry or how to build deep-research systems. For more than three years he had led a 40-person team, "doing more people management than hands-on building." So he relearned how to build with his own hands.

It paid off. The AI research agent he helped build reached 79.7% F1 on an evaluation designed by PhD domain experts, ahead of the leading frontier deep-research models, and it is now used in real work by big pharma and top biotechs. "What I am proudest of," Radkevich says, "is that I did it hands-on, merging my own pull requests, setting it up for clients, and building the analytics."

This willingness to get hands-on is the first big theme among the winners of the 2026 Product Leader Awards. AI is changing too fast to understand secondhand. So instead of reading about it, the winners build with it.

Some have folded AI directly into their daily work. Stripe AI Product Leader **Shankar Krishnan** built a "personal operating system" in Claude Code, with AI agents that summarize customer meetings, draft requirements, and run competitor analysis. FalconFirst AI Founder & CEO **Varun J. Vincent** vibe-coded the first version of his company's product, Falcon Terminal, himself.

Building also makes these leaders better teachers. Many winners spoke at conferences, ran internal workshops, or mentored other product builders, and described teaching as a way to sharpen their own thinking. As Walmart Senior Product Manager **Artem Miloserdov** puts it, "Explaining the field forces me to master it."

Docusign Corporate Head of Gen AI **Aarthi Srinivasan** describes the same cycle:



Aarthi Srinivasan, Corporate Head of Gen AI
Company: **Docusign**

"AI is evolving too quickly to stay current through reading alone, so I learn by building. This cycle of building, learning, sharing, and learning again keeps me energized and helps me identify innovations that can create meaningful business value."

Similarly, Microsoft Principal Product Manager **Suhel Parekh** vibe-coded the dashboard his entire Zero Query Logging program runs on, and now teaches other product builders to work the same way. He says,



Suhel Parekh, Principal Product Manager
Company: **Microsoft**

"I treat staying current as a discipline, not luck. I learn by building: I ship small AI-native tools so I understand new capabilities hands-on, not secondhand."

From relearning to code like Radkevich to running a personal AI operating system like Krishnan, this cohort of winners learns by doing. And as the next theme shows, all that hands-on experience serves a purpose: knowing what's real.

Theme 2:

Signal Over Hype

When people started asking AI tools how to send money abroad, Remitly Chief Product & Technology Officer **Ankur Sinha** noticed. Remitly became the first cross-border money transfer company to launch an app in ChatGPT.

But Sinha is quick to say the launch isn't the achievement. "Plenty of companies can issue a press release," he says. Instead, he "refused the novelty version," treating ChatGPT as top-of-funnel to reach first-time senders and route them into a secure Remitly experience. It became an acquisition engine, launched in the year Remitly reached its first full year of GAAP profitability.

That discipline is the second big theme. The 2026 winners are enthusiastic about AI, but they're not swept up in it. Every new capability faces a hard filter: does it move a real outcome?

Skins.Cash CPO **Oleksandra Pariy** describes her filter in a few words: "Does this make our pricing more accurate or our fraud detection faster? If yes, adopt. If not, ignore." For LG Electronics Senior Product Manager **Hemang Upadhyay**, the challenge "is not learning every new model or tool; it is distinguishing durable capability from noise."

> “My objective isn't to chase every breakthrough, it's to build a disciplined learning system. Technology changes quickly. Strong product principles endure.”
>
> - McAfee Senior Director, Product Management **Siddhartha Pratihari**

That filter shows up in the results. Nominees who stood out didn't just describe what they built with AI. They showed what it changed, in numbers.

Here are a few more results that impressed the Advisory Council:

- Microsoft Principal Product Manager **Suhel Parekh** drove Zero Query Logging from concept to GA, unblocking over 1 million paid Copilot seats, roughly $500 million in opportunity.
- Meta Senior Product Manager **Rajesh Ranjan** led recommendation systems for more than a billion users, delivering a 20% increase in CTR and an 18% increase in Dating matches while cutting compute costs by over 20%.
- Stripe AI Product Leader **Shankar Krishnan** rebuilt Amazon Transcribe at AWS, making speech processing 50–60% faster, cutting cost in half, and improving accuracy 30–40%.
- McAfee Senior Director, Product Management **Siddhartha Pratihari** led Scam Detector, which protects 2.3 million active users and has identified more than 140 million scams.
- LG Electronics Senior Product Manager **Hemang Upadhyay** grew a dedicated B2B commerce channel from 0.5% to 98.7% of OBS net sales.
- Volvo Cars Product Leader **Sunil Subramanian** led a content platform modernization across 100+ global markets that delivered USD 10 million in annual licensing savings.

Whether a billion users, millions of protected consumers, or ten million dollars in savings, the impact of the 2026 Product Leader Award winners was defined by outcomes. At a time when anyone can say they're "doing AI," these winners actually *prove* it.

Delivering those outcomes at speed often meant rethinking how teams work. That's the third and final theme.

Theme 3:

Rebuilding How Teams Work

When Castlight Health VP Product Management **Nicole Fink** lost team capacity through restructuring, she didn't backfill with headcount. She redesigned the operating model, building AI-augmented systems for triage, capacity planning, and KPI tracking that let the team ramp back to full velocity. "We did more with less, by design, not by strain," she says.

The results followed: year-over-year strategic prioritization performance doubled, and engagement on a new product ran at 2x historical norms.

Fink's story reflects the third theme among the 2026 winners. Instead of bolting AI onto old processes, they're rebuilding how work gets done. As Monumental CPO **Pawan Gaargi** puts it, "the teams that rethink from the ground up rather than bolt AI onto old processes will win."

At Thomson Reuters, Product Director **Guilherme Arruda** saw that with AI accelerating software creation, the bottleneck was no longer building products but identifying and delivering customer value fast enough. His answer, Hyperfast Journeys, aligns Product, Engineering, Sales, and Customer Success around critical customer outcomes rather than feature delivery.

RHEO Founder and CPTO **Sushma Kittali-Weidner** went further, setting out to prove that a two-person team can out-execute a traditional headcount-driven org. In her AI Development Lifecycle, the founders own every product and architecture decision while an agentic engineering layer executes, at a pace that would normally require five to ten times the headcount.

Fink sees the shift as a cultural one:



Nicole Fink, VP Product Management

Company: **Castlight Health**

“I can't personally stay ahead of every development, and I don't think any one leader can. Instead, I'm building a culture where the team surfaces what they're learning and testing as they go, so knowledge compounds across the group rather than living in silos.”

Rebuilding how teams work is also about people. For 3Pillar Global Sr. Director, Global Head of Product and UX **Lindsay Kloepping**, the biggest challenge ahead is "helping my team redefine their identities in the presence of AI." Her biggest achievement of the year? "Building systems and processes that stand and endure without me."

> “My answer isn't to chase every new capability, it's to build an organization that absorbs change faster than it arrives. The goal is to make 'keeping up' the default state of the system, not a heroic effort by individuals.”
>
> - Remitly Chief Product & Technology Officer **Ankur Sinha**

Hands-on learning. A hard filter for value. Teams rebuilt for speed. These are the traits that define the 2026 Product Leader Award winners, and the standard for the next generation of product management.

Meet The Judges

The 2026 Product Leader Awards Advisory Council

The Awards Programs at Products That Count are made possible by the work of independent Awards Advisory Councils. Their independence ensures the integrity of our awards, while their experience ensures the rigor of our selection process.

The Advisory Council for the 2026 Product Leader Awards is made up of 23 exceptional product leaders. They come from global enterprises (Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Netflix, Walmart) and high-growth companies (Rokt, PubMatic), and bring a range of disciplinary experience, from product and data engineering to security and product marketing.

Nominees completed a detailed survey, providing evidence of success across a range of five criteria:

1. **Business & Financial Impact**
2. **Team Building & Talent Development**
3. **Product Thinking & Innovation**
4. **Cross-Functional Influence**
5. **Product Champion**

In the end, the Council selected 39 worthy winners for the 2026 Product Leader Awards.

Thank you to each member of the 2026 Product Leader Awards Advisory Council. Your insights and expertise are an incalculable contribution to the global product management community.

Here they are:

The 2026 Product Leader Awards Advisory Council:



Abhai Pratap Singh
Amazon
Senior Product Manager-Technical



Aditya Chandak
PayPal
Head of Product



Akshay Talegaonkar
Rokt
Principal Product Manager



Amar Saurabh
Bytedance Inc
Product Manager



Anastasiia Moskovchenko
ex-Phillips, Yandex, Adidas
Product Manager Lead



Anshul Gandhi
Formerly Dell Technologies
Product & AI Strategy Lead



Aravind Naarayanan Kannan
Intuit
Director



Arjun Rao
Amazon
Senior Manager - Product Tech



Arun Kumar Elengovan
Okta
Director, Engineering Security



Ben Lazar
Netflix
Senior Manager, Product Management



Chandra Inguva
Microsoft
Director of Product



Dhvani Unadkat
PayPal
Lead, GTM and Product Growth



Gabriyel Wong
RAiD, RSAF
Chief Product Officer



Harshita Lall
PubMatic
Associate Director Of Product



Madhuri Somara
Microsoft
Product Lead



Prashanthi Ravanavarapu
Workiva
VP of Product, Sustainability Management & Product Operations



Rajesh Sura
Amazon
Head of Data Engineering and Analytics



Rashmita Redkar
Google
Product Marketing Manager



Rohit Taneja
PetSmart
Senior Product Manager



Sangita Raj
Walmart
Sr Manager, Product Management



Subhojit Ghosh
Ernst And Young
Insurance Technology Leader



Sukhmani Lamba
Microsoft Teams
Senior Product Manager



Zaheer Mohammad
Google
Senior Technical Program Manager

Who Are The Winners?

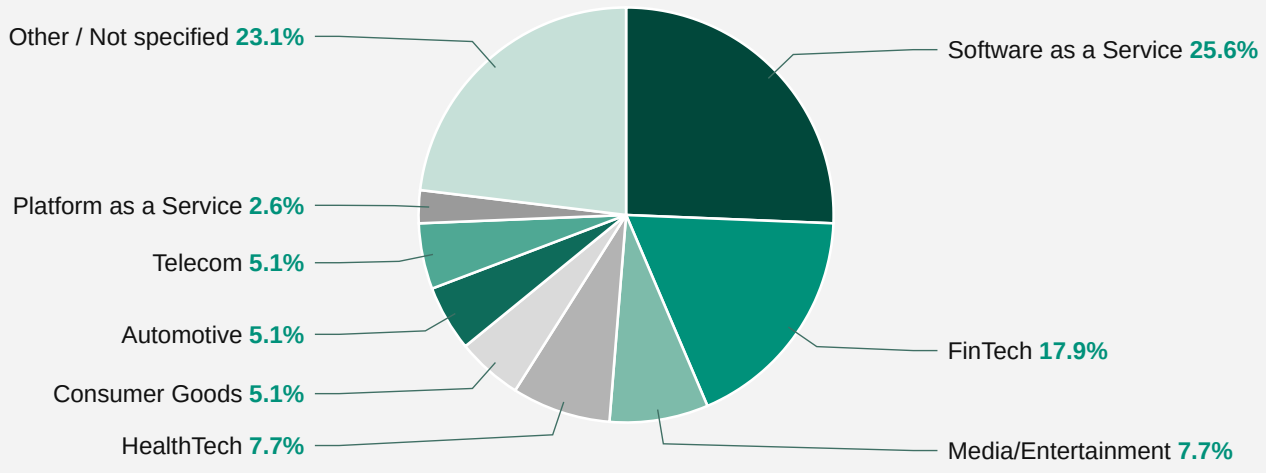
The third annual Product Leader Awards recognizes 39 outstanding winners.

Representation in this cohort shifted notably. More than half (17 of 32) are women, up from roughly one-third last year.

Geographically, the awards remain predominantly North American. More than 80% of winners work in the United States, with international representation from India, Germany, Brazil, Sweden, and France. Within the U.S., the West Coast leads, with California and Washington home to nearly half of U.S. winners. Other represented states include Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia, showing that product excellence extends well beyond Silicon Valley.

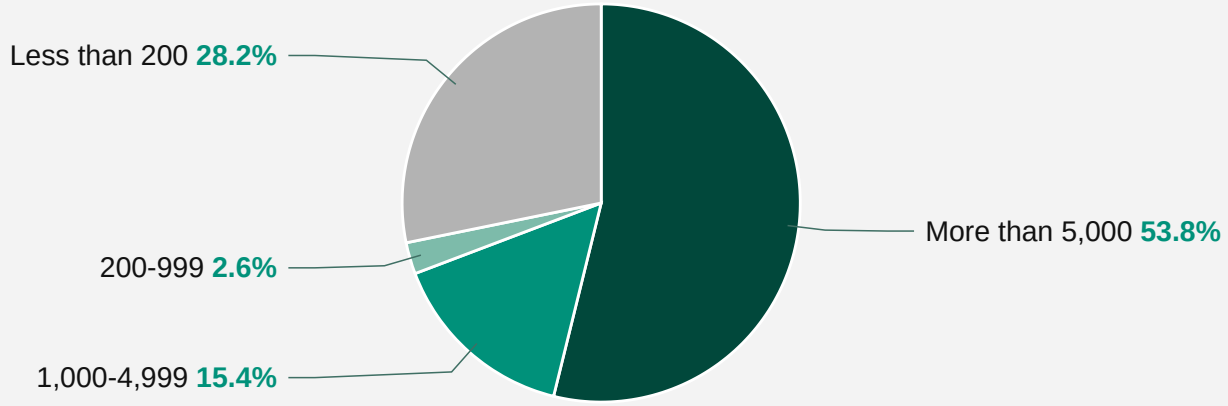
The most represented sector is SaaS, followed by FinTech, with winners from industries as varied as automotive, agriculture, gaming, and healthcare.

Industry

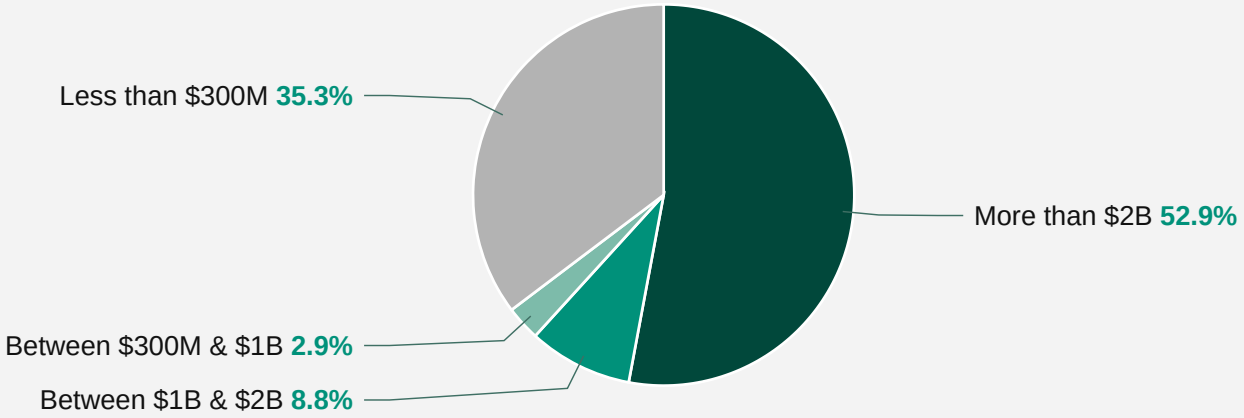


Company scale also tells a story. Winners come mostly from large companies of more than 5,000 employees. But smaller companies made a strong showing: 28% of winners work at companies with fewer than 200 employees, up from 10% last year. Among winners who shared revenue figures, more than half work at companies generating more than $2 billion annually, showing that product leaders are driving impact at every scale.

Number of Employees



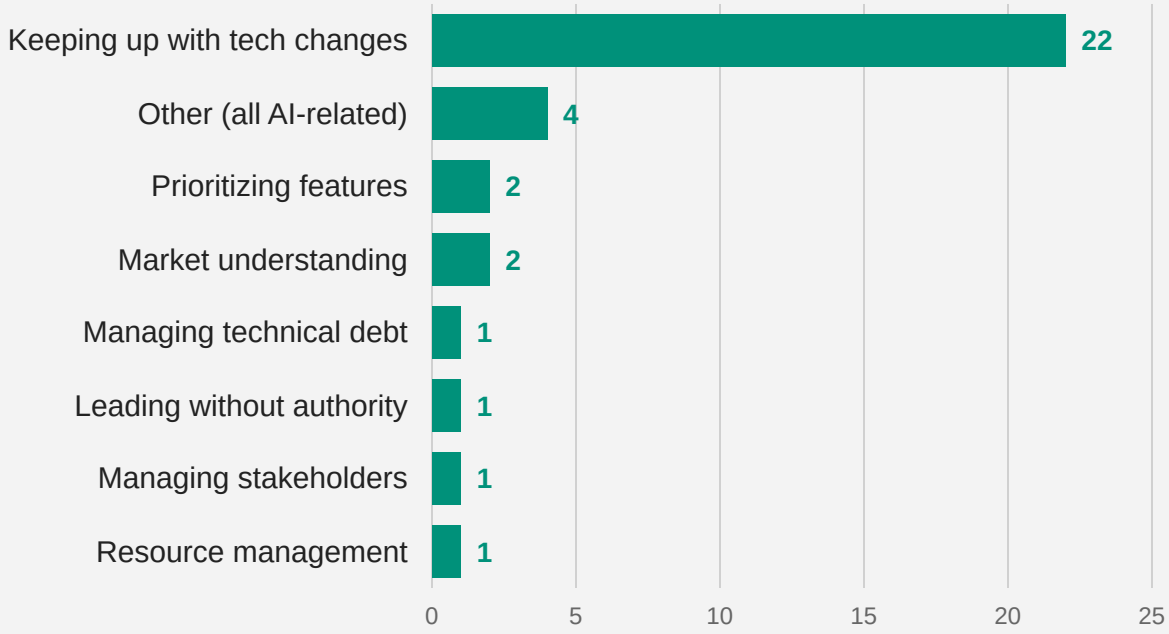
Annual Revenue



Revenue based on the 34 winners who reported it.

Winners expressed that their top challenge, by far, is keeping up with technological changes, named by 22 of 34 respondents. Every winner who described a different challenge in their own words also pointed to AI: "maintaining strategic clarity amid rapid AI change," "prioritizing strategic bets in an era of accelerating AI disruption," and "helping my team redefine their identities in the presence of AI."

Number One Challenge



Looking further ahead, 14 winners aim to work their way up to Chief Product Officer, and six plan to found their own company.

The next section spotlights the 2026 Product Leader Award winners themselves. Learn about their biggest wins in the past year and how they're preparing for what's next.

Each winner has a unique story to tell, which, taken together, provides an illuminating glimpse at excellence in product leadership in 2026.

2026 Product Leader Award Winners



Aarthi Srinivasan, Corporate Head of Gen AI

Company: **Docusign**
Industry: **SaaS**
Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Built the foundation for enterprise-wide AI adoption at Docusign, moving from isolated pilots to scalable, governed execution. Led AI Academy enablement for the C-suite and senior leadership, designed a platform approach that democratizes AI agent development, and launched agentic solutions across security, customer success, and engineering productivity.

Looking Ahead:

"AI is evolving too quickly to stay current through reading alone, so I learn by building. I regularly experiment with agents, code with tools like Claude Code, and test emerging capabilities firsthand to understand what is real and what is hype. Teaching is another important part of how I learn. This cycle of building, learning, sharing, and learning again keeps me energized and helps me identify innovations that can create meaningful business value."



Alagappan (AL) Shanmugam, Head of Product, Personalization, MarTech & AdTech

Company: **EchoStar Corporation (Sling TV & Dish Network)**
Industry: **Media/Entertainment**
Location: **Colorado**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Unified a fragmented personalization, MarTech, and AdTech portfolio under one product vision, delivering a platform with about 30% fewer system errors, a redesigned home and content discovery experience that lifted engagement across free and paid tiers, and a sharper, more consistent story for advertisers across Sling TV and Dish Network.

Looking Ahead:

"My plan is to keep learning by doing rather than by reading about it. I already use tools like Claude, Gemini, and GPT directly in my own workflow, not just as something my team adopts, so I understand the real capabilities and limits before I ask others to build on top of them. I am training my team to evaluate new technology the same way, starting from the problem, so the whole organization gets faster at this together, not just me."

AL
HEADSHOT

Andi Le, Chief Digital Officer

Company: **FMC**

Location: **Pennsylvania**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Together with Sara Sterling, led FMC's transformation through Arc™, an AI-powered farm intelligence platform that helps growers predict pest pressure and make precise, data-driven decisions. Arc™ extended FMC's innovation strategy beyond crop protection products into a scalable digital agriculture ecosystem, improving yield and ROI while supporting more sustainable crop management, and earned a CIO 100 Award.



Andrei Miloserdov, Sr. Product Manager Technical

Company: **Amazon**

Industry: **FinTech**

Location: **Washington**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Moved from leading features to leading multiple AI platforms that shape purchasing decisions for tens of millions of customers, driving hundreds of millions in incremental value. His AI Product Intelligence Platform changed how 50+ product managers find problems, prioritize, and plan.

Looking Ahead:

“My biggest challenge isn't learning new tools—it's distinguishing durable product shifts from short-term hype and making the right technology bets. Every quarter I prototype with the latest AI capabilities in real products because building exposes limitations faster than reading. No company has a monopoly on innovation—the best thinking emerges when builders challenge one another across industries.”



Ankur Sinha, Chief Product & Technology Officer

Company: **Remitly**
Industry: **FinTech**
Location: **Washington**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led Remitly into conversational AI as a genuine growth surface, making it the first cross-border money transfer company to launch an app in ChatGPT. Treated the surface as top-of-funnel for first-time senders rather than a tech demo, during the year Remitly reached its first full year of GAAP profitability.

Looking Ahead:

“My answer isn't to chase every new capability, it's to build an organization that absorbs change faster than it arrives, while staying honest about what's real. I judge any new technology by whether it moves a real customer outcome or a real unit of leverage, not by how modern it looks. The goal is to make 'keeping up' the default state of the system, not a heroic effort by individuals.”



Artem Miloserdov, Senior Product Manager

Company: **Walmart**
Industry: **Consumer Goods**
Location: **Arkansas**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Migrated Walmart Canada's 400+ stores onto a new Receiving app, retiring a 20-year-old legacy system without disrupting a single day of operations, with full adoption and a 4.9 app rating. Across markets, he drove pallet-based receiving to 100% of stores and cut trailer receiving time in Mexico from 340 minutes to 30.

Looking Ahead:

“My mitigation plan is to make technological change a structured practice, not passive reading. First, I learn by teaching. Explaining the field forces me to master it. Second, I stay hands-on, so my judgment comes from experiments, not hype. My goal is to build a repeatable filter: what is real, what is noise, and what can improve KPIs.”



Askar Kamalov, Principal Product Manager

Company: **Microsoft**
Industry: **SaaS**
Location: **Washington**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Took Copilot Discover from an idea sketched on paper to a product in users' hands. Shaped the vision that AI personalization should optimize for meaningful value, not infinite consumption, and built the personalization and ranking strategy around it, aligning research, engineering, data science, and design.

Looking Ahead:

“The biggest challenge I anticipate is maintaining strategic clarity while AI capabilities, costs, and user expectations are changing extremely quickly. My approach is to separate what is durable from what is temporary. I anchor product strategy in stable user needs while treating models, architectures, and interfaces as replaceable implementation choices.”



Atishree Jindal, Director of Products (AI & Platform)

Company: **PEM Technologies**
Industry: **Automotive**
Location: **India**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Built CortexAD, an ADAS validation platform, from the ground up in about nine months, staying hands-on in the foundational code. The platform delivered an ~82% reduction in scenario generation effort, 68% validation automation, and 60% faster failure analysis, leading to multiple customer POCs.

Looking Ahead:

“My biggest challenge over the next year is scaling the platform without allowing speed to become architectural debt. My objective is not simply to deliver more features. For me, sustainable product leadership means building the architecture that tomorrow's growth requires, not merely shipping what today's roadmap demands.”



Cristina Crespo, VP Product

Company: **Paytient**
Industry: **FinTech**
Location: **Texas**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Identified an adjacent market in alternative health plans and led a new embedded-financing product line from demand validation to launch, driving double-digit revenue growth. Hundreds of thousands of members will access care differently because of a product that didn't exist 18 months ago.

Looking Ahead:

“Our customers need to see ROI, not roadmaps. When budgets tighten, the products that survive are the ones that can prove they earn their keep. We prioritize against one filter: does this move healthy utilization, retention, or revenue? If not, it waits. As the product surface grows, saying no becomes a competitive advantage.”



Dmitrii Radkevich, Head of Product, Agentic Platform

Company: **Optic Inc.**
Industry: **HealthTech**
Location: **Germany**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Helped build Bioptic, a B2B AI research platform for the drug industry, from a blank page. Its agent reached 79.7% F1 on a benchmark built by PhD domain experts, ahead of leading frontier deep-research models. Co-authored the peer-reviewed paper accepted at AAAI-26, and the platform is used by big pharma and top biotechs.

Looking Ahead:

“The base model is not our moat. Everyone gets the same frontier LLMs, so we do not try to out-run them. We build what stays valuable no matter which model wins. First, evals as the moat: a maintained benchmark owned by our experts that tells us right away whether a new model or technique actually helps, so we adopt based on measurement instead of hype.”



Guilherme Arruda, Product Director

Company: **Thomson Reuters**

Industry: **SaaS**

Location: **Brazil**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Created Hyperfast Journeys, a customer-centric operating model that aligns Product, Engineering, Sales, Customer Success, and leadership around critical customer outcomes rather than feature delivery, reshaping how the organization prioritizes, measures success, and brings AI into customer workflows.

Looking Ahead:

"Most transformation challenges are not technical; they are organizational. Leaders must create clarity during uncertainty. By communicating a compelling vision, demonstrating early wins, and making trade-offs transparent, I can help organizations move faster while maintaining trust and alignment. In a world where technology changes daily, organizational adaptability becomes the true competitive advantage."



Hemang Upadhyay, Senior Product Manager, AI Search, Discovery & Platform Modernization

Company: **LG Electronics USA**

Industry: **Consumer Goods**

Location: **New Jersey**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Turned LG's dedicated B2B commerce platform from a complex modernization program into an adopted operating channel. The channel grew from 0.5% to 98.7% of OBS net sales, with 410 active B2B accounts.

Looking Ahead:

"My challenge is not learning every new model or tool; it is distinguishing durable capability from noise while the technology changes quickly. The goal is disciplined adaptability: move quickly when evidence supports action, preserve model and vendor optionality, and stop experiments that cannot demonstrate incremental customer or business value."



Holly O'Driscoll, Founder & CEO

Company: **Ampersand Innovation LLC**

Location: **Ohio**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

A pioneering advocate for human-centered innovation, Holly is the former Global Design Thinking Leader at Procter & Gamble and now a trusted advisor helping organizations across industries transform how they develop products, strategies, and customer experiences. Her blend of innovation, leadership development, and design thinking has elevated the practice of product leadership worldwide.

Katey Norris, VP UX

Company: **UnitedHealth Group**

Industry: **HealthTech**

Location: **Arkansas**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Connects human-centered design with product strategy to drive meaningful digital transformation across complex organizations. Her leadership champions innovation, customer experience, and cross-functional collaboration, shaping the evolution of digital experiences in healthcare and delivering measurable value for both users and the business.



Kingshuk Ghosh, Head of Product Management

Company: **Kanverse.ai**

Industry: **SaaS**

Location: **India**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led Kanverse's evolution from an Intelligent Document Processing vendor into an agentic AI pioneer, earning recognition as the #1 Emerging Provider in the 2026 ISG Buyers Guide. Compressed client onboarding and deployment cycles by ~75% and cut operational processing costs by up to 80%.

Looking Ahead:

“To mitigate the relentless pace of technological change, my plan focuses on agility over prediction. I dedicate 10% of our standard sprint capacity to rapid prototyping of emerging tools, and I run tight feedback loops with early-adopter enterprise clients. This ensures our technological pivots are driven by immediate market utility and commercial viability, rather than chasing industry hype.”



Krishna Suman Dara, Senior Principal Engineer

Company: **HPE**

Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Defined and launched a next-generation Juniper Routing Director platform that automates and scales multi-tenant routing environments, securing major tier-1 enterprise accounts, reducing customer network provisioning time by 45%, and cutting operational churn by 35%.

Looking Ahead:

“Every new technological shift will be filtered strictly through a matrix of physical constraints and actual customer problem domains, ensuring we avoid hyped market distractions. This systematic balance keeps our platform highly adaptable while preserving our engineering focus on building deep, mathematically reliable product value.”



Laura Williams Argilla, VP Product Management

Company: **Alteryx**

Industry: **SaaS**

Location: **Washington**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Joined Alteryx after a period of layoffs and reorganization and turned a shaken team into a cohesive, resilient, high-performing one, providing stability and continuity of strategy. The team became champions of the new product direction and consistently delivered user-centric work that drove real outcomes.

Looking Ahead:

“Build useful solutions that solve real problems, deliver new work in the smallest logical slices and constantly evaluate success and failures. I go back to the foundation of product management and try not to fixate on any single path forward to the exclusion of all others. Stay informed and engaged and be ready to inspect and adapt at every point.”



Lindsay Kloepping, Sr. Director, Global Head of Product and UX

Company: **3Pillar Global**

Location: **Virginia**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led Engage, an AI-powered platform for 3Pillar's product delivery org, shipping the MVP in three months and reaching near-100% adoption across global delivery teams, saving 10 hours of manual account review and improving retention by 10%. Above all, built systems and processes that stand and endure without her.

Looking Ahead:

“My biggest challenge: helping my team redefine their identities in the presence of AI. My plan is the same thing we always do: stay close, listen, work with them to build plans for growth, and block and tackle to clear the space for them.”



Nicole Fink, VP Product Management

Company: **Castlight Health**

Industry: **HealthTech**

Location: **Ohio**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Rebuilt her product organization's operating model with AI-augmented systems for triage, capacity planning, and KPI tracking after restructuring. More than doubled year-over-year strategic prioritization performance and led Castlight's expansion into a new product, where engagement exceeded historical norms by 2x.

Looking Ahead:

“I can't personally stay ahead of every development, and I don't think any one leader can. Instead, I'm building a culture where the team surfaces what they're learning and testing as they go, so knowledge compounds across the group rather than living in silos. That approach protects us from both extremes: falling behind, and overcorrecting into technology for its own sake.”



Nikki Ahmadi, Product

Company: **Amazon**

Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Currently leading work she can't yet disclose. In her words: “Stay tuned and I'll be able to talk about it soon.”

Looking Ahead:

“I want the dashboard number that only moves when the product works. What's on the wall is what people optimize. Looking ahead, it's about meeting the customers where they are: educating, and bringing them along with us.”



Oleksandra Pariy, Chief Product Officer

Company: **Skins.Cash**

Location: **USA**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led the development of an AI-powered dynamic pricing engine for Skins.Cash, a CS2 digital goods marketplace with millions of users, delivering a 32% profit increase and scaling the platform to $12M in annual GMV.

Looking Ahead:

“I frame technology decisions around the problem, not the tool. When foundation models shifted the landscape, we didn't chase the trend. We asked: does this make our pricing more accurate or our fraud detection faster? If yes, adopt. If not, ignore.”



Pawan Gaargi, Chief Product Officer

Company: **Monumental**
Industry: **Media/Entertainment**
Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Revived a 40-game portfolio from loss-making to profitable using his Reviving Live Games framework, while leading the relaunch of Kongregate around a contrarian thesis: that the open web becomes the strongest way to distribute games once AI agents mediate discovery.

Looking Ahead:

“The pace of technological change, especially AI, is going to reset how work itself gets done, and the teams that rethink from the ground up rather than bolt AI onto old processes will win. Treating change as the opportunity, not the risk, is the mitigation.”



Rajesh Ranjan, Senior Product Manager

Company: **Meta**
Industry: **Media/Entertainment**
Location: **Washington**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led a step-change in the recommendation systems powering Marketplace and Dating for over a billion users, delivering a 20% increase in CTR and an 18% increase in Dating matches while reducing compute costs by over 20%.

Looking Ahead:

“My approach is to design recommendation systems that separate 'core intelligence layers' from rapidly changing model and tooling components. This lets us adopt new advances without rebuilding product surfaces or disrupting live user experience, so we can absorb rapid technological change while maintaining stability at billion-user scale.”



Ritika Maheshwari, Principal Product Manager Technical

Company: **Mastercard**

Industry: **FinTech**

Location: **Missouri**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led research across 180 technical assets and 12 AI decision products that became the foundation for a $12M risk mitigation plan, reducing open portfolio risks from 25 to 17, improving operational efficiency by 44%, and accelerating feature delivery by 27%.

Looking Ahead:

“The pace of AI and automation change means today's technical edge can become tomorrow's baseline within a single roadmap cycle. I'm evaluating emerging tools from direct experience, not secondhand summaries, so I catch inflection points earlier rather than reacting to them after they've already reshaped the market.”



Sahil Arora, Director of Product Management, AI Infrastructure

Company: **Salesforce**

Industry: **SaaS**

Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Turned platform resource management and service protection for Hyperforce into a product with a strategy, roadmap, and executive sponsorship, adopted by teams he had no authority over because they chose the paved road he built. Also filed a patent on the platform architecture.

Looking Ahead:

“I stay upstream of the enterprise: startups are my early-warning system. I architect for optionality, designing the platform so tomorrow's models slot in without replatforming. I don't aim to predict the future correctly—I aim to build a platform, and a personal learning system, where being wrong is cheap and adapting is fast.”



Sara Sterling, Director, Commercial and R&D Digital

Company: **FMC**

Location: **Pennsylvania**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Together with Andi Le, led the development of Arc™, FMC's AI-powered farm intelligence platform combining machine learning, predictive analytics, and real-time field intelligence to help growers predict pest pressure and make data-driven decisions. The platform's recognition, including a CIO 100 Award, validates a vision that is redefining a traditional industry.



Satya S. Das, Director of Product Management

Company: **Unisys**

Industry: **FinTech**

Location: **India**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led strategy and execution for next-generation banking solutions, including a greenfield digital onboarding product and the modernization of a 30-year-old branch banking product. Infused AI into development and testing, and built an MCP-based banking assistant now used as a platform for client use cases.

Looking Ahead:

“With the pervasive change in technology advancements with artificial intelligence, I need to be constantly on my toes, and unlearn and learn.”



Selena Hadzibabic, VP Product

Company: **Understood.org**

Location: **New York**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led Understood.org's shift from a pure media company to more of a consumer product company.

Looking Ahead:

“You can't understand new capabilities purely from reading about them. Spend half a day or a day experimenting: try things, fail, succeed, and discover what's now possible that wasn't before. The goal isn't to chase AI. It's to know what's possible, then apply it where it creates real value.”



Shalaka Kharche, Product & Technology Executive, Advisor, Co-Founder (Stealth)

Company: **Independent**

Industry: **SaaS**

Location: **Washington**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led Amazon Prime's global membership offers portfolio serving more than 200 million customers across 26 countries, introducing experimentation and analytics frameworks that drove a 17% year-over-year increase in Prime Day subscriptions and multi-million-dollar subscription revenue growth.

Looking Ahead:

"The pace of AI innovation creates tremendous opportunity but also increases the risk of pursuing technology without clear customer value. I evaluate every opportunity through three lenses: customer impact, business value, and organizational readiness."



Shankar Krishnan, AI Product Leader

Company: **Stripe**

Industry: **FinTech**

Location: **Massachusetts**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Rebuilt Amazon Transcribe, AWS's voice AI product, from the ground up after his product team was cut from 10 to 2, making speech processing 50–60% faster, halving cost, improving accuracy 30–40%, and doubling revenue growth.

Looking Ahead:

"I have constructed a personal operating system using Claude Code that includes AI agents handling my daily product management work, from summarizing customer meetings to drafting requirements to running competitor analysis. I test new models and harnesses to evaluate what works in production versus what only works in demos."



Siddhartha Pratihari, Senior Director, Product Management

Company: **McAfee**

Industry: **SaaS**

Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led Scam Detector, McAfee's first AI-first consumer protection platform, aligning 500+ contributors in eight months. It now protects 2.3 million active users, reaches 22 million subscribers across 11 countries, and has identified more than 140 million scams.

Looking Ahead:

“My objective isn't to chase every breakthrough—it's to build a disciplined learning system. I strengthen my product judgment by asking one question before every investment: Does this meaningfully improve the customer experience? Technology changes quickly. Strong product principles endure.”



Sivan Zamir, EVP & Chief Innovation & Products Officer

Company: **Xylem**

Location: **North Carolina**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Leading a strategic reimagination of Xylem's product landscape through a two-speed approach running in parallel: transforming product management methodology with an AI-first mindset, while building a strong foundation for sustained innovation through landscape consolidation and operating model optimization.



Suhel Parekh, Principal Product Manager

Company: **Microsoft**
Industry: **SaaS**
Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Drove Zero Query Logging from concept to GA, unblocking over 1M paid Copilot seats (roughly $500M in opportunity) and powering a 55,000-employee Copilot commitment, all as an individual contributor leading by influence.

Looking Ahead:

“I treat staying current as a discipline, not luck. I learn by building: I ship small AI-native tools so I understand new capabilities hands-on, not secondhand. I anchor every new technology to a first-principles test: does it remove real toil on the critical path and compound for others? Build, teach, filter, and listen: that keeps me ahead without chasing everything.”



Suma Kumaraswamy, Senior Director, Online & Mobile Banking

Company: **First Tech**
Industry: **FinTech**
Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Led a complex banking platform conversion with minimal-to-no customer disruption and shipped more than seven key digital features. Now preparing First Tech's product strategy and digital experiences for a merger that doubles its customer base.

Looking Ahead:

“My biggest challenge over the next year is maintaining stakeholder alignment and protecting member experience while navigating a complex merger and technology consolidation. I've already integrated AI-powered solutions into how we synthesize member feedback, analyze experience gaps, and improve team productivity—creating more capacity for higher-value product work.”



Sunil Subramanian, Product Leader

Company: **Volvo Cars**
Industry: **Automotive**
Location: **Sweden**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Defined the strategy for a shared Enterprise AI Platform after assessing 85+ AI initiatives across the company, and led a content platform modernization across 100+ global markets that delivered USD 10 million in annual licensing savings.

Looking Ahead:

“The competitive advantage won't come from adopting every new technology. It will come from knowing which innovations to embrace, when to scale them, and how to integrate them responsibly into products that create lasting value.”



Sushma Kittali-Weidner, Founder and CPTO

Company: **RHEO**
Industry: **SaaS**
Location: **Michigan**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Founded RHEO and proved that a two-person team can out-execute a traditional headcount-driven org, architecting an AI Development Lifecycle in which the founders own every product and architecture decision while an agentic engineering layer executes.

Looking Ahead:

“My mitigation is structural, not just harder work. Resource allocation is less about hiring ahead of need and more about sequencing which decisions require senior judgment versus which can run through the agentic pipeline with human review.”



Thomas Bullot, Product Director

Company: **Extreme Networks**
Industry: **Telecom**
Location: **France**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Transformed SD-WAN from a pure SD-WAN product into an enabler for massive, high-value cross-portfolio opportunities, while sharing his love of customer-serving technology solutions with his team.

Looking Ahead:

“In the world of AI, the market is constantly changing. Leaders can become obsolete the next day, and outsiders can become leaders. It's key to anticipate potential changes and fluid landscapes, and have a very agile approach to market understanding.”



Varun J. Vincent, Founder & CEO

Company: **FalconFirst AI, Inc.**
Industry: **PaaS**
Location: **Illinois**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Left an eight-year career at JPMorgan Chase to found FalconFirst. Vibe-coded Falcon Terminal, validated it with 100+ Fortune 500 product leaders, raised $500K in pre-seed capital, and shipped from prototype to Minimum Marketable Product in under six months.

Looking Ahead:

“My mitigation is to eat my own cooking. Every candidate feature gets a hypothesis and a kill criterion before code is written. Every month I review feature utilization. Anything under 30% means we shipped the wrong thing. That is a leadership signal, not a metric to hide.”



Vishwanath Hiremath, Principal System/Software Engineer

Company: **Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE)**

Industry: **Telecom**

Location: **California**

Biggest Achievement in the Past Year

Turned the conviction that security and network design must be built together into recognized work: filing a patent on application-aware network segmentation, co-authoring a book on cybersecurity and SD-WAN synergy, and delivering keynotes on agentic, self-healing networks.

Looking Ahead:

“I treat continuous learning as a structured practice, not an occasional effort. I stay ahead of technology shifts by building hands-on proof-of-concepts rather than only reading about them, which forces me to find the gaps between theory and operational reality early.”

PRODUCTS THAT COUNT

ABOUT PRODUCTS THAT COUNT

Products That Count is the world's largest nonprofit community, engaging 600,000+ product builders and Chief Product Officers (CPOs) united by a mission: to empower everyone to build products that truly count.

In a world flooded with products, only a few ignite passion, deliver value at scale, and transform lives. Behind those exceptional products are visionary CPOs and high-performing product teams driving innovation at the most bleeding-edge companies. We recognize these trailblazers through our coveted Awards, accelerate careers from PM to the C-suite and beyond through daily best practices, and serve as the trusted advisor to nearly all Fortune 1000 CPOs. Our Corporate Alliance includes Walmart, Ford, Cisco, Johnson & Johnson, Amplitude, and more. The most admired product leaders across industries serve on our Advisory Council, guiding the future of product leadership. Together, we're shaping a future where every product counts.

Learn more at productsthatcount.org

THE 2026 PRODUCT LEADER AWARDS ARE SUPPORTED BY