

The State of Customer Onboarding Report 2024

Top goals | Top challenges | 2024 trends



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Introduction

Unlocking the untapped potential of customer onboarding

Building lasting customer relationships have always been top-of-mind for businesses. However, in the last decade, organizations have come to recognize that the customer journey beyond the initial sale is as critical as the sale itself - making customer onboarding a more tangible function.

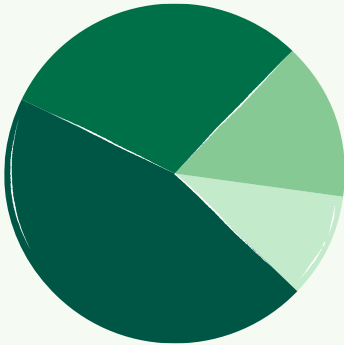
Customer onboarding, or the customer's first impression of you, holds the key to forging lasting relationships and long-term success. It is no secret that the customer, during the onboarding phase, can make or break their decision to renew or stay with you. And we all know customer retention is as important ([if not more](#)) than customer acquisition.

Even as we've explored the importance of the function in our [earlier editions](#), we believe there's untapped potential lingering just beneath the surface. So, this time, we're not just charting the landscape and reporting on the trends; we're digging deep and unearthing the hidden gems in customer onboarding.

With the State of Customer Onboarding Report 2024, we've unlocked some great insights from 850+ professionals across different industries, verticals, and organization sizes! While some might make you go 'aha!', others might have you nodding in agreement.

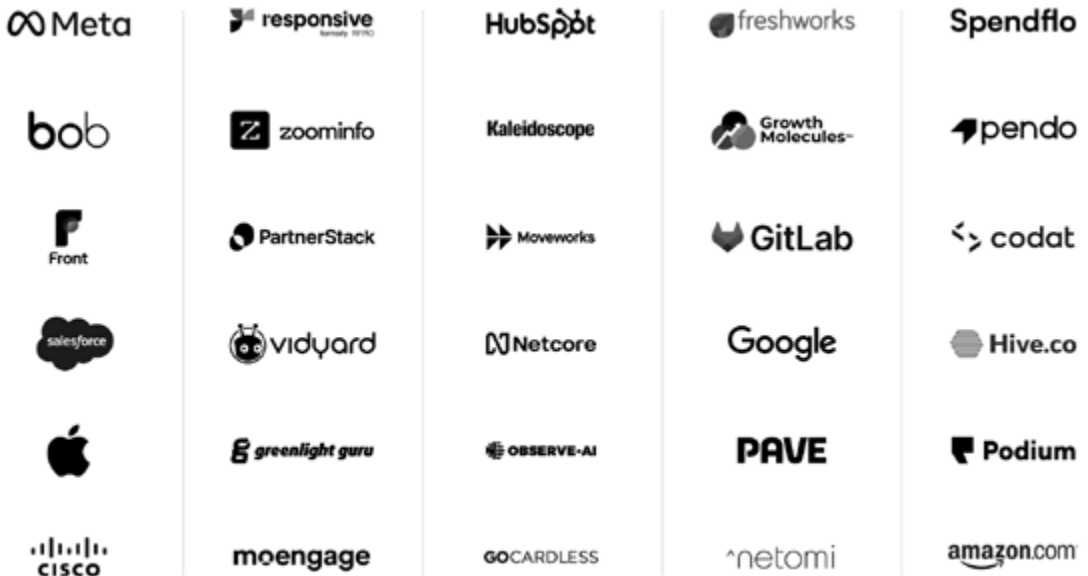
Set course for unparalleled customer satisfaction, operational excellence, and boundless profitability in 3..2..1...

Know our respondents



- 40% Customer Onboarding/ Success Manager
- 36% Customer Onboarding/ Success Lead
- 14% Director of Customer Onboarding/ Success
- 10% Vice President

Here are some renowned companies where our respondents work





Key findings

Rocketlane's survey reveals key trends around the current state of affairs regarding B2B customer onboarding. In this year's survey, we dug into the responsibilities, workload, strategies, processes, and tools used. If the end of 2023 is anything to go by, we see more of the following changes making their way to the foreground in 2024:

- ◆ More companies will charge for onboarding and implementation - the number is already growing – 42% of our respondents told us they charge for implementing their offering.
- ◆ Organizations increasingly recognize customer onboarding as a function in itself: 60% of teams either have an independent and well-defined customer onboarding function or are in the process of setting up one. This is a significant jump from [last year](#) and we only see it growing from here.
- ◆ Following-up with customers and holding them accountable for tasks assigned to them continues to be a challenge for over 62% of onboarders.
- ◆ Streamlining implementation processes and improving customer experience are the main goals for the year for over 70% onboarders.

**These are just the highlights of the survey.
We recommend you keep reading for more nuanced insights!**



People and processes

At the end of the day, every business is made up of human beings, as are their functions. So we decided to delve into how customer onboarding teams are organized.

The results show that a significant number of organizations either have an independent and well-defined customer onboarding function (33.2%) or are in the process of setting up one (28.1%).

How mature is the customer onboarding function in your organization?



Organizations also seem to understand that there's no one-size-fits-all approach to customer onboarding. An interesting observation we made when we looked at the results:

6.3% of respondents, in spite of having an independent onboarding function set up, are working with experts or consultants to develop their processes and strategies. This number will only grow, given that onboarding as an independent function is also gaining prominence.

The fact that organizations are willing to invest in expert consultations also shows that organizations are recognizing the impact onboarding has on business goals and the customer lifecycle.

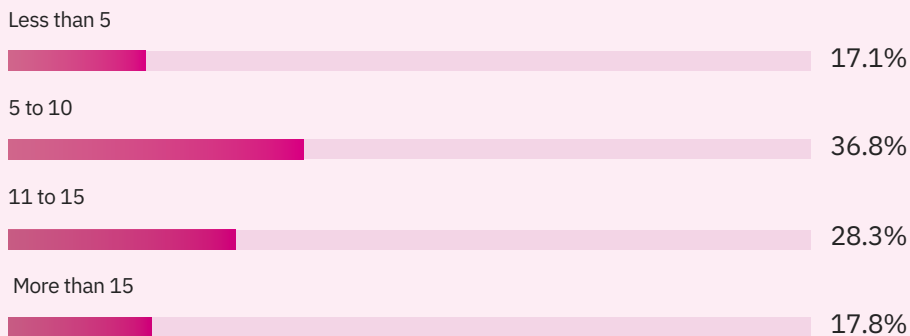
Post-sales teams are doing a lot more than just actual onboarding and implementation. They are managing multiple projects (sometimes more than a handful).

Each onboarding specialist will be tasked with managing a few projects only when organizations begin to prioritize personalized attention and in-depth support for customers. If not, teams would definitely need additional hands on deck to manage the workload.

However, if you are looking to maintain a lean team, it's a great idea to invest in a tool that will help you automate repeatable processes. By automating your processes, you free up bandwidth for your team so they can focus on customer delight and other work that move the business needle.

There also seems to be enough proof that onboarding professionals are overworked!

How many customer onboardings do you individually manage/oversee at a time?



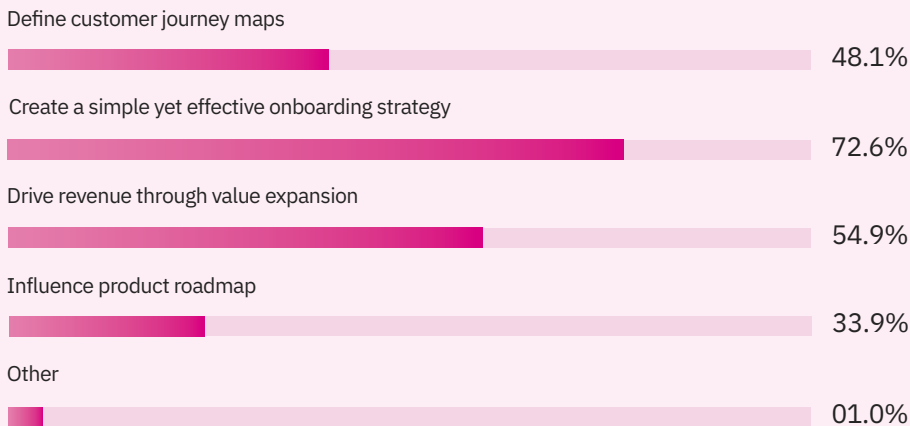
Although a higher number of projects handled per onboarding specialist may be a sign of positive business health, it can also point to a dire need for better resource management practices.

In our survey from 2023, 31.7% of teams were seen to be managing over 15 client projects at a time! We're relieved to see the trend change for the better this year, with 36.8% managing 5-10 projects at a time.

When we also asked onboarders about the responsibilities that would fall under their charter, a whopping 72.6% replied they were focused on creating a simple, yet effective onboarding strategy for customers.

54.9% also mentioned their goal was to drive revenue through value expansion, highlighting the growing recognition of onboarding's direct impact on the bottom line. While increasing product adoption and influencing product roadmap were not the popular options, they indicate the potential for onboarding teams to contribute to strategic initiatives beyond individual customer journeys.

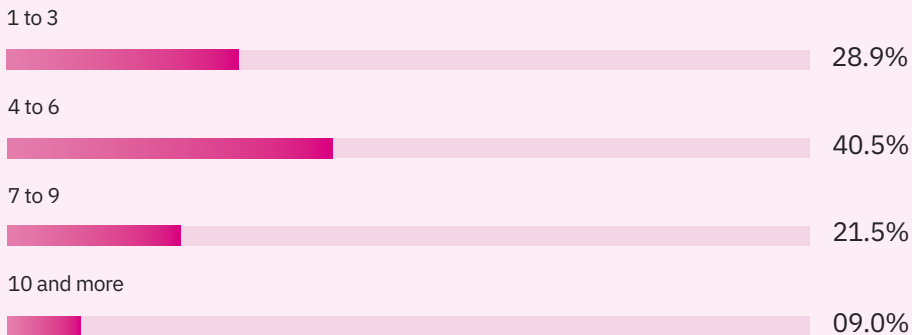
What according to you falls under the charter of customer onboarding teams?



We were also curious about the number of tools onboarding professionals used on a daily basis to run their implementations.

From customer collaboration to project management, we found that over 40.5% of teams are using 4-6 tools to run their onboarding program.

How many different tools in total do you use during the entire onboarding and implementation journey for communication, collaboration, project management, etc.?



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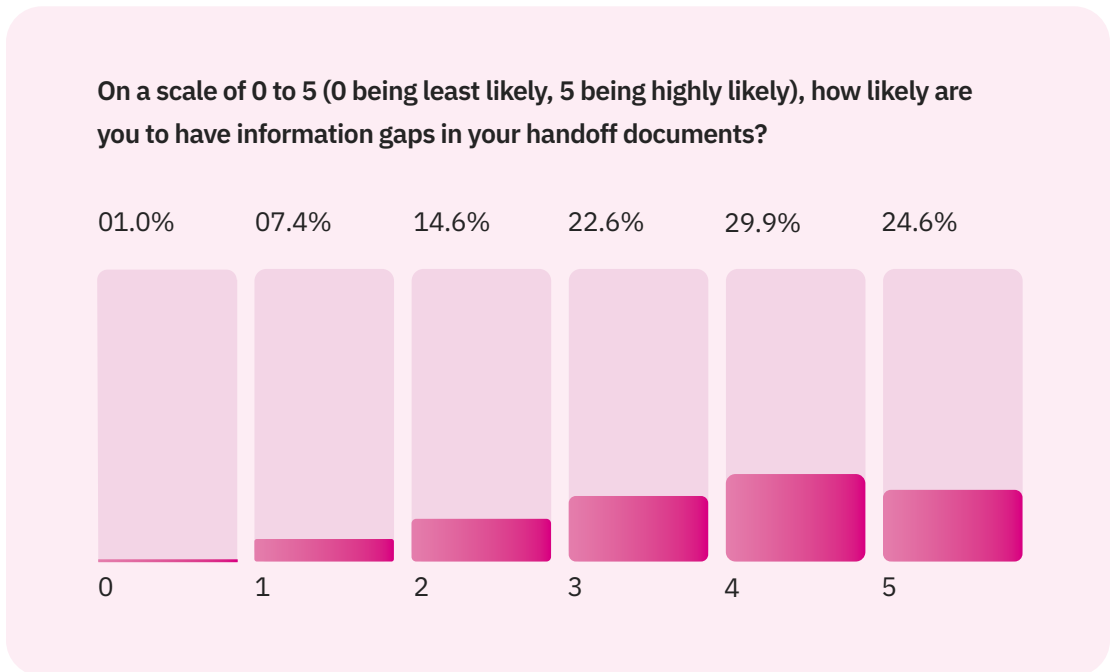
In the current economic climate, the team has had to adapt to doing more with less which has sharpened our focus on the efficiencies we can gain using a dedicated onboarding tool.

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Rob Marcall
Implementation Lead,
Codat

77.1% of them also felt their handoff documentation was more likely to have information gaps.

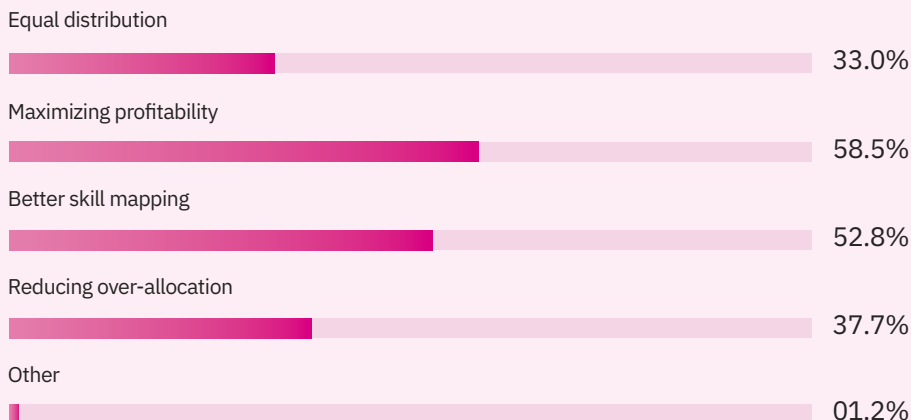


Pro-tip: Information gaps can occur anytime handoffs happen, be it from sales-to-onboarding or onboarding-to-CS. Using multiple tools for your onboarding only adds to the misery and creates information silos. You are left hunting for project updates and have zero visibility into their statuses (which is a big challenge for teams, as seen in our earlier reports).

Streamline all your onboarding projects into one tool, preferably one that lets you have all the relevant information in a single space.

When managing their resources, onboarding professionals are more focused on maximizing profitability (58.5%) and bettering skill mapping (52.8%).

Which of the following do you find most challenging when managing resources at your org?



We asked our respondents an open-ended question on areas onboarding and implementation teams would like to upskill in 2024.

Communication and collaboration and becoming data-oriented were the two top skills teams were looking forward to learning. If you want to learn these skills and more in 2024, Rocketlane offers an exclusive Slack community for post-sale folks: [Preflight](#). We also provide webinars, workshops, mentorship, city-based cohorts, and more. We'd be happy to have you join the bright minds in this space!





**Projects and
finance**

Around 78% of organizations still consider customer onboarding to be a cost center. This perspective requires change, especially with profitability and efficiency being top goals for 2024 for finance teams and execs.

Is customer onboarding considered as a cost center at your organization?

Yes



No

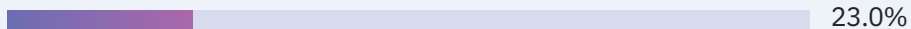


Have your board or finance team given you a target margin?

Yes



No



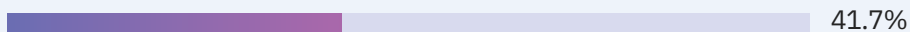
For too long, vendors have been bearing the brunt of implementation costs. Even today, a significant portion of our respondents (58.3%) tended towards a ‘no’ when asked if they charged for implementations. But there seems to be a shift in the landscape. Our survey reveals a rising trend towards charging for implementations, even though only 41.7% are doing it currently.

The shift empowers vendors to invest in better resources, leading to smoother project execution and client engagement. On the other side of things, customers are also more likely to stick to agreed timelines and help you execute faster.

Charging for implementation isn’t just about making money off of your offerings; it’s a win-win strategy that benefits both parties by ensuring dedicated effort and shared success.

Do you charge for your onboarding and implementations?

Yes



41.7%

No



58.3%

“

Customer Onboarding is now an established and critical component of the customer journey. I'm invigorated to see an increasing focus on initial value delivery and value expansion, rather than solely product implementation. 2024 is the year for teams to move away from running as cost centers to charging for crucial onboarding services to keep customers accountable and empower customer onboarding teams to drive increasing value.

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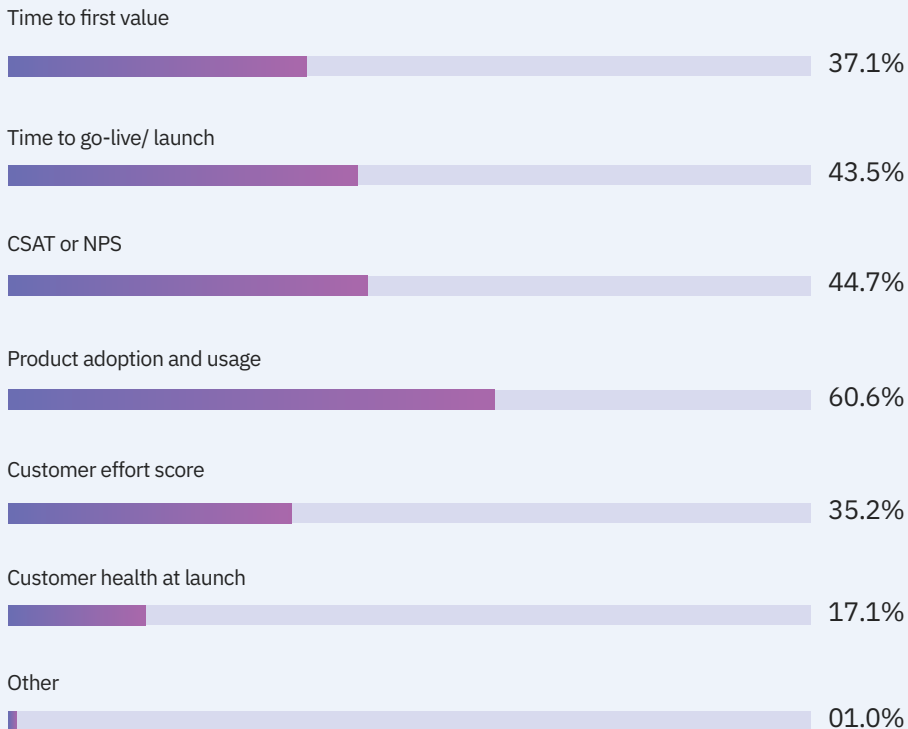
Donna Weber

Customer Onboarding Expert
Springboard Solutions

Adoption and usage are top KPIs

When users at the customer's end readily embrace and adopt your product or service, it's a clear sign that your customer onboarding and implementation efforts have been a success. Onboarding teams also have defined KPIs around product adoption and usage metrics, indicating that the function is coming into its own.

What are your customer onboarding team's KPIs?





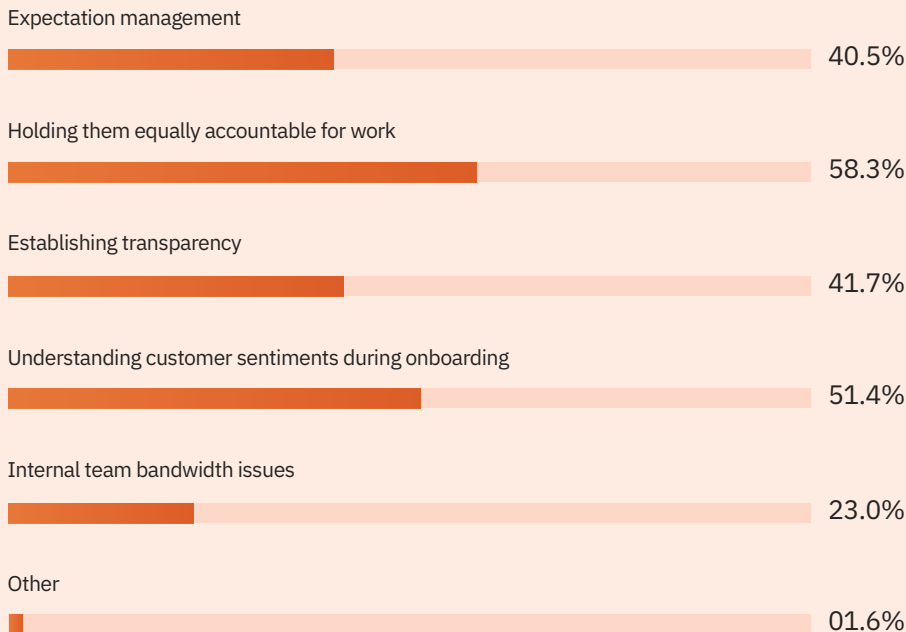
Customer experience and accountability

Although over 80% of onboarding teams are tracking the time spent on their projects, less than 20% seem to have projects finishing on time.

When we dug deeper, we found that a top challenge following onboarders in 2024 was holding customers accountable for their part in the onboarding.

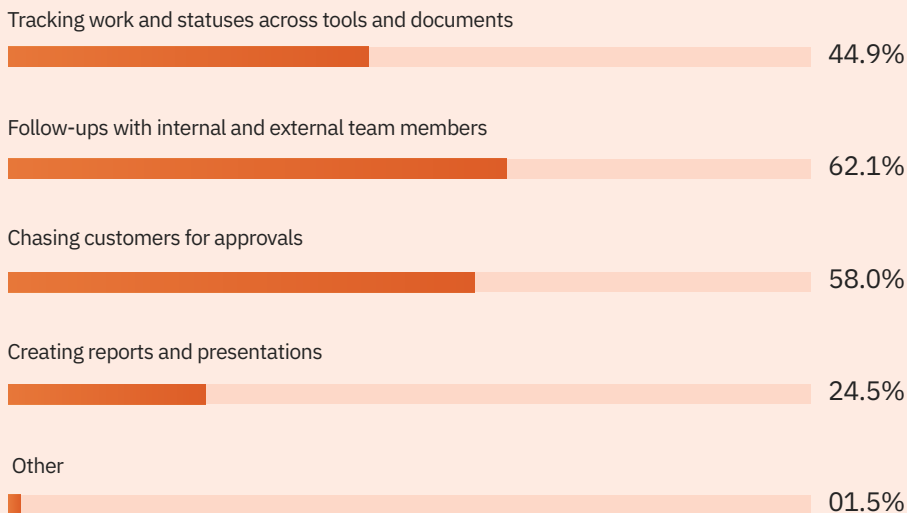
Understanding customer sentiments during onboarding was a close second.

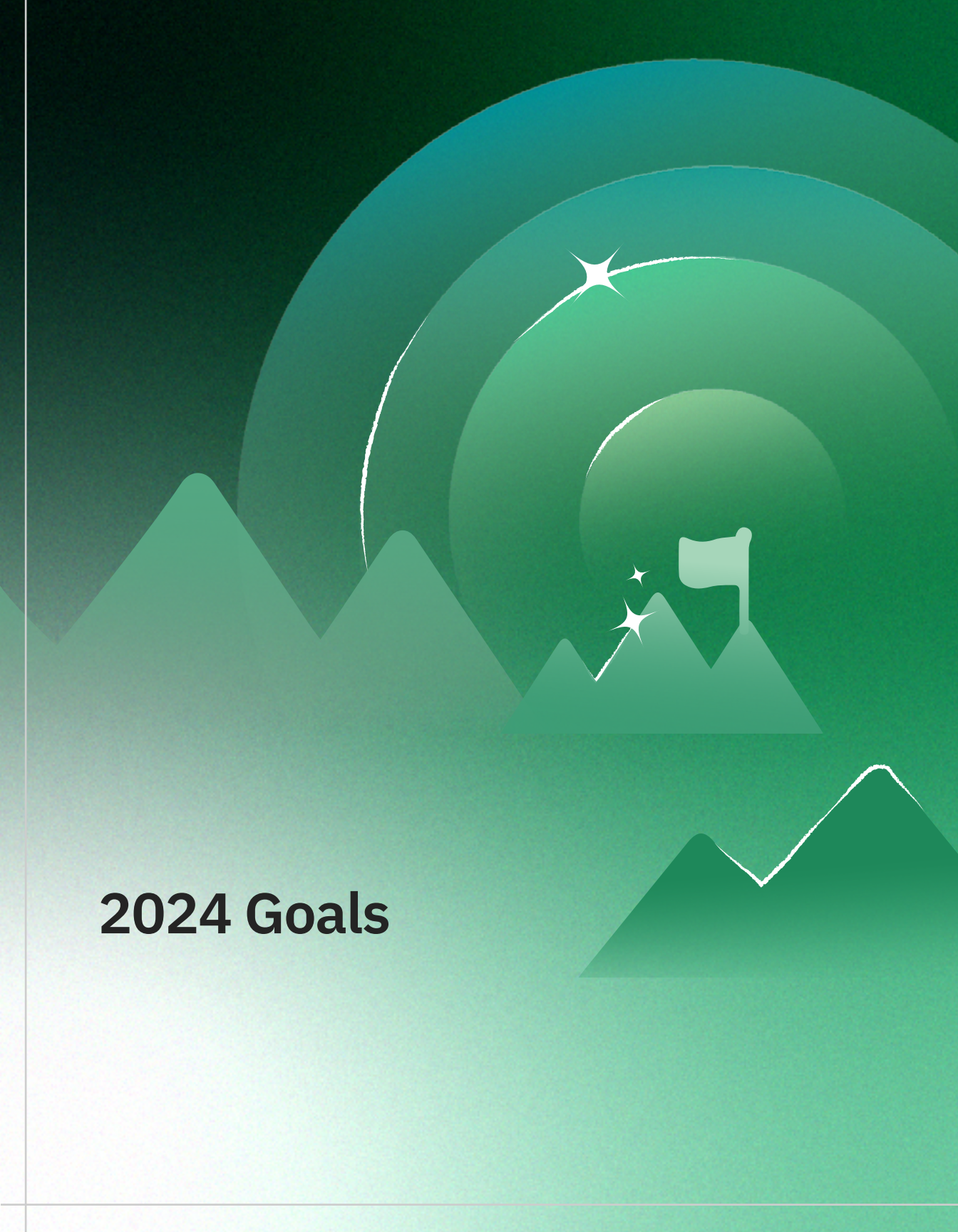
What are your top challenges when onboarding new customers?



A whopping 62.1% of onboarders felt the biggest time sink at work was following up and chasing customers and project stakeholders for approvals. It's also the activity that most of them want to automate.

Which are your biggest time sinks at work today?

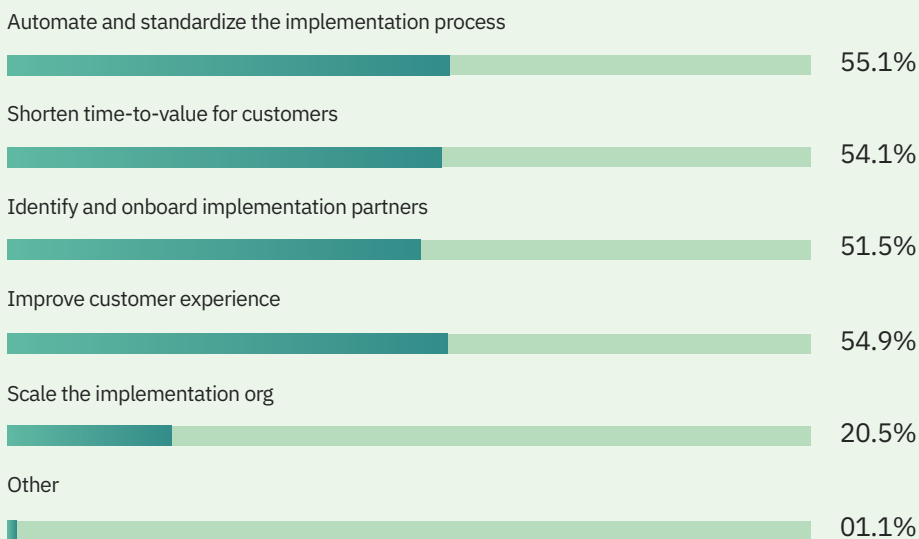




2024 Goals

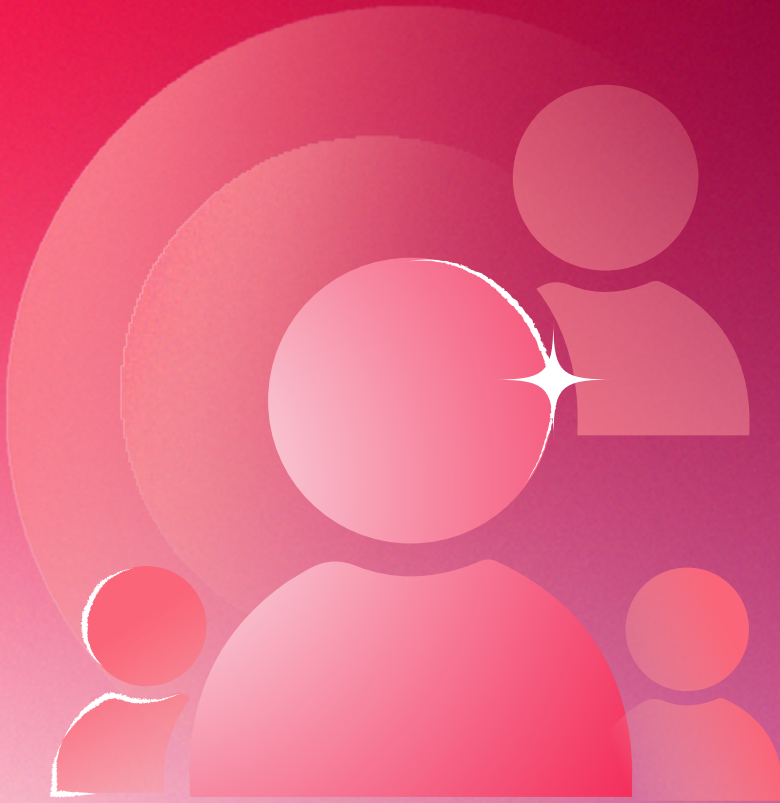
Streamlined implementation processes and improved customer experience seem to be a top priority for onboarders in 2024.

What are your top implementation goals for 2024?



2024 also seems to be the year in which onboarding and implementation teams bet big on AI for their processes.

P.S. With the help of a right customer onboarding tool, like Rocketlane, onboarders will be able to streamline and automate their processes to ensure projects finish on time and customers are delighted. More at the end of the report!



The state of customer onboarding (TL;DR)

Here are major themes that stood out to us in the survey results:

- ◆ Customer onboarding remains a pivotal gateway to forging enduring relationships, increasing profits, and ensuring satisfaction.
- ◆ Customer onboarding is growing into a distinct, significant function in itself: 60% of teams either have an independent and well-defined customer onboarding function or are in the process of setting up one. Onboarding teams count product adoption and revenue expansion among their key responsibilities.
- ◆ An interesting observation we made when we looked at the results: 6.3% respondents, although have an independent onboarding function set up, are working with experts or consultants to develop their processes and strategies.
- ◆ Customer onboarding is slowly gaining recognition as a source of revenue (and not a cost center) with 42% of companies charging for their implementations.
- ◆ Holding customers accountable for tasks assigned to them continues to be a challenge.
- ◆ The biggest time sink for onboarding teams is following up with project stakeholders, tracking project information and statuses across the multiple tools they use, and getting customer approvals.
- ◆ Respondents emphasized the need to automate follow-ups, reminders, and reporting. Most onboarders are also looking to implement or use AI for their everyday onboarding activities.
- ◆ Streamlining implementation processes and improving customer experience are the main goals for the year.



What's next?

As we venture into 2024, the domain of customer onboarding continues to offer an ocean of opportunities to better streamline and automate your customer onboarding processes. This potential lies latent, awaiting discovery and harnessing by organizations to not only enhance their operational efficiency but also to deliver unmatched experiences to their clients.

**Our survey has highlighted onboarding challenges of varying complexities.
But the good news is: all of them are solvable.**

Introducing Rocketlane

Rocketlane is like the magic wand you can wave around to solve all your customer onboarding woes.

We'll tell you how.

Rocketlane was built by a team with experience handling customer onboarding and implementations over the years. We've paid attention to every pain point in the function and have come up with an all-in-one modern solution.

Why Rocketlane?

Rocketlane combines communication, collaboration, project management, time tracking, and resource management capabilities to offer a single platform to manage your customer onboarding end-to-end.



For instance:

◆ **Rocketlane lets you hold your customers accountable with in-built CSATs and forms that you can use to get an idea of customer sentiments in real time.**

This way, you can catch any early warning signs and turn unfavorable situations around. Use project trends to see where your projects face the most delays and rectify problems.

◆ **Rocketlane lets you have a centralized space for all your onboarding projects, eliminating siloed information.**

You no longer need spreadsheets, checklists, docs, drives, task management apps, communication apps, or emails to manage your onboardings. All you need to do is to log into Rocketlane. You can also add internal and external stakeholders as project members, offering different levels of access to files and tasks. Rocketlane offers no-login, customizable customer portals that you can use to turn your customers into project collaborators: add them to your project, assign tasks, share documents and files, have conversations within the app, and offer them visibility into your project progress. All they have to do is click a Magic Link, and they'll have access to everything they need.

◆ **Rocketlane Automations empowers teams to ditch tedious tasks and focus on impactful work.**

It automates and streamlines processes, from nurturing customer relationships to identifying growth opportunities, through customizable workflows and automations across projects. You can now standardize your project governance, optimize operations, and drive customer-centric delivery, all powered by real-time insights and seamless integrations. With Rocketlane, you can automate reminders and follow-ups. This is a no-brainer; over 70 of our survey respondents had said they wanted to automate this part of their work. Use Rocketlane to configure and schedule reminders and follow-ups. You can also create templates for status updates and schedule them to be sent to all stakeholders at regular intervals.

What's next?

◆ **Rocketlane lets you up your resource management game.**

With profitability and efficiency being top of mind for execs in 2024, Rocketlane offers intuitive timesheets, time tracking reports, and resource reports that you can use to get accurate forecasts and insights for planning your projects.

Integrate it with your everyday tech stack, like Salesforce, and your team will have a full view of your project pipeline and can refine your resource forecasting.

◆ **Rocketlane gives you easy access to project data and reports in real-time (and in no time).**

Reports and dashboards are like second nature to Rocketlane. You can track project progress, trends, delays, milestones, etc., with custom dashboards and charts with the view that you want. Get real-time portfolio insights and drill down to minute details to spot issues from across projects to refine your customer experience.

◆ **Rocketlane lets you create and templatize your project plans, tasks, forms, and documents with a single click**

Craft unique project plans tailored to each customer - from tasks to timelines, assignees to projects, everything is personalized. This streamlines your onboarding process and ensures consistency in customer experience. Think of it as a little AI magic to let you finish your project creation in a jiffy. Set up conditional logic to tell Rocketlane what tasks, fields, and resources to include when a project is created for specific project types, and the tool will take care of the entire creation for you. This way, everyone on the team hits the ground running!

P.S. Rocketlane is built to handle multiple projects, so every onboarding person on your team can oversee and manage many projects at a time with ease.

See how Rocketlane can elevate your project delivery!

Want to know more?

Schedule a 30-min discovery call with our team and learn how Rocketlane can help you enhance your customer journey.

[Schedule now](#)

Try for free

Prefer DIY?
Check out the Rocketlane Experience for free.
Sign up for a 14-day trial today!

[Try now](#)

We're thrilled to share that Rocketlane has once again emerged as a Momentum Leader in the Client Onboarding category on G2!

