

# THE ROI OF USER RESEARCH

**Prove Value.  
Get Buy-In.  
Drive Success.**

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# Learning objectives

1

## **Prove the value of UX research.**

Master how to align your studies with stakeholder goals, showcase results persuasively, and promote the importance of ongoing research.

2

## **Manage AI opportunities and threats.**

Learn how to conduct effective small studies, even when working with as few as five users, and deliver insights that matter.

3

## **Build credibility in your organization.**

Gain democratization of UX research, engage others in the process, and position yourself as a trusted voice in your organization.

# Key themes



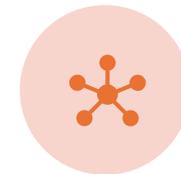
**Measure** goals and KPIs



**Share** visible progress



**Deliver** results in small steps



**Democratize** UX research



**Manage** AI threats and opportunities

“

Every dollar that an organization invests in user experience results in a return of \$100.

**That's an ROI  
9,900%!!**

**The Six Steps For Justifying Better UX**  
Report by Forrester

- **You** know the value of UX research . . .
- But do **your stakeholders** know?

# CHALLENGE

## How to show the value of User (UX) research

Teams that most need to **prove value** (newer, smaller teams) have the **least capability** to do so, while teams in secure positions (mature, large teams) have adequate infrastructure. Yet these are the teams **facing pressure to justify** their existence.

# How to show the value of UX research

1

## Demonstrate

- Demonstrate it

2

## Measure

- Measure it

3

## Calculate

- Calculate it



# Ways to demonstrate the value

- ✓ Conversions (browse to buy)
- ✓ Return customers (brand loyalty)
- ✓ New customers
- ✓ User satisfaction
- ✓ Reviews
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Improved operations & efficiency
- ✓ Reduced customer support calls
- ✓ Reduced training costs



Reviews!



Social  
media!



Surveys!



Surveys!

# ROI calculation

<https://www.userinterviews.com/ux-roi-calculator>

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{SAVINGS} - \text{COST}}{\text{COST}} \times 100$$

# KPIs

Align with stakeholder key performance indicators



- **Time on task** efficiency
- **Error rate** reduction
- **Task rate** success
- **Churn rate** reduction
- **Customer satisfaction**
  - NPS
  - SUS
  - SEQ

# NPS



## NPS

**Net Promoter Score**

Measures customer loyalty and likelihood to recommend

# SUS



## SUS

**System Usability Scale**

A standardized questionnaire for measuring usability

# SEQ

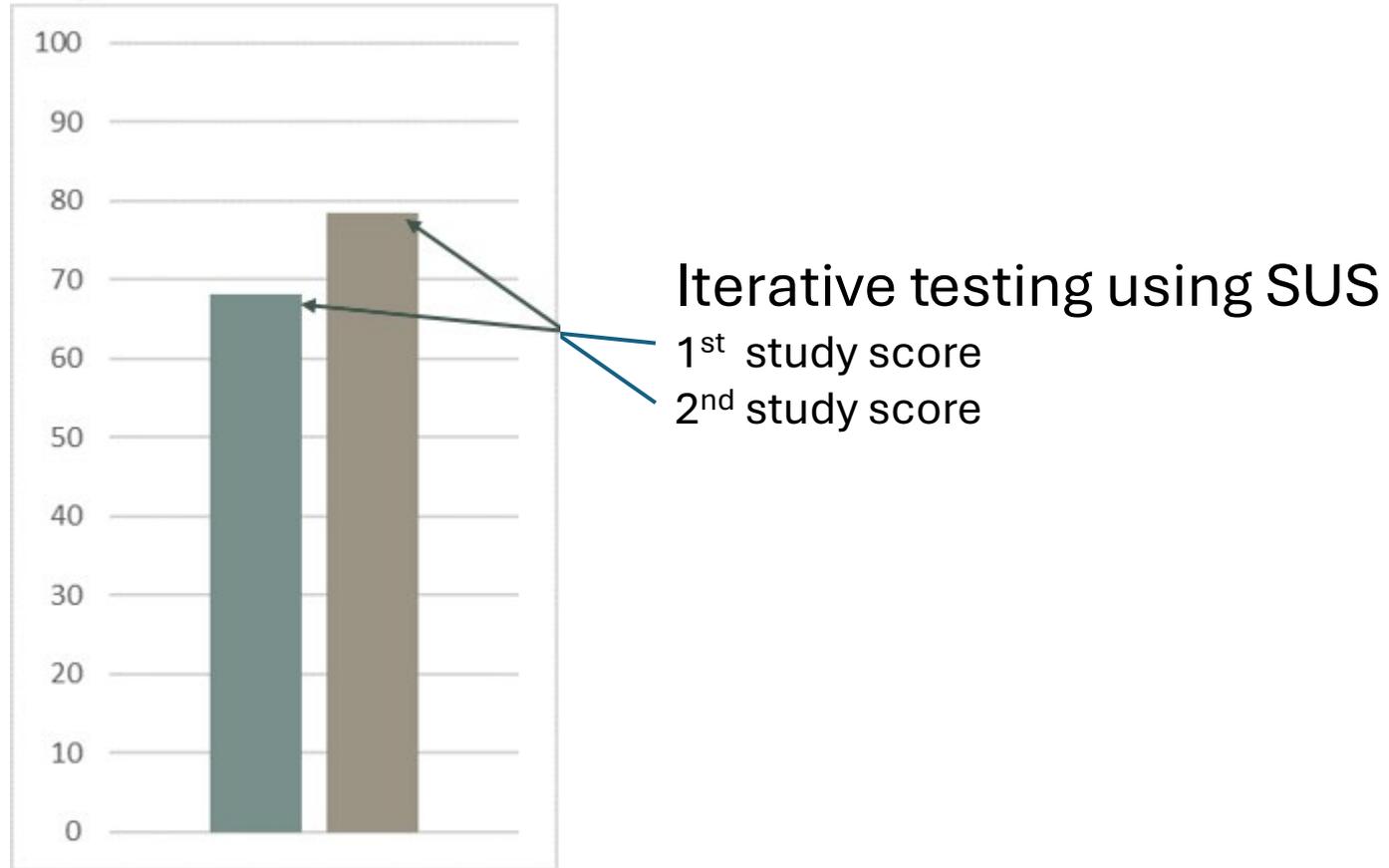


## Single

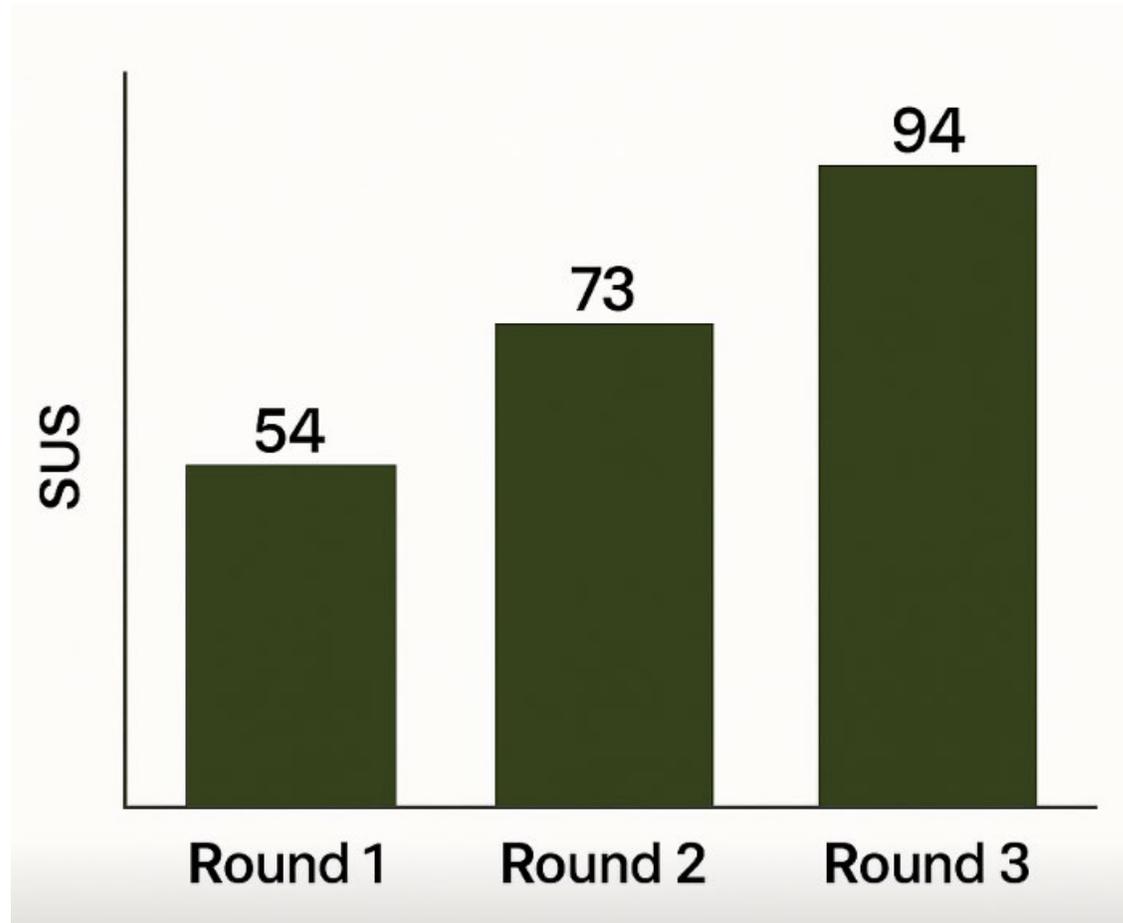
**Ease Question**

Assesses the ease or difficulty of task completion

# Iterative testing using SUS



# 3 rounds of testing – SUS





# No metrics? Start with a baseline study

Camera buying website -10 participants

- Current customers
- Prospective customers
- Website and mobile app
- SUS score 84.75
- Improvements needed:
  - Search
  - Filters to support browsing

**Result** – UX insights and marketing insights

How to deal  
with the  
elephant in  
the room?



# AI - Friend or foe?

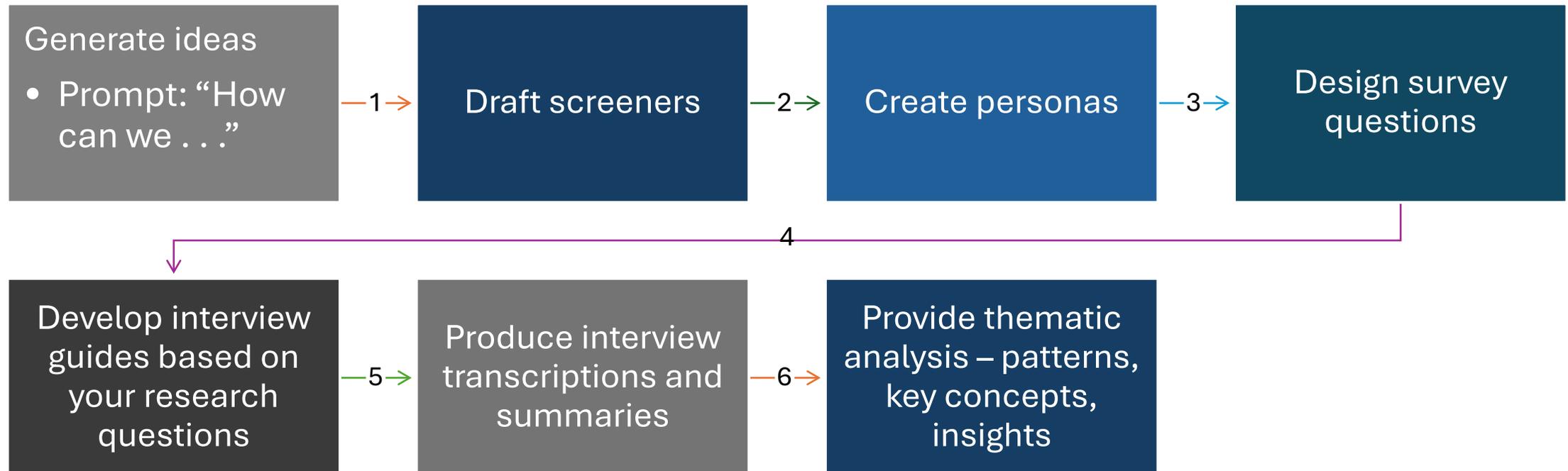




# AI as a friend

- 1 Data Analysis**  
Process large datasets quickly to identify patterns and themes
- 2 Transcription & Documentation**  
Capture conversations accurately and efficiently
- 3 Study Planning**  
Generate research questions and draft protocols
- 4 Synthesis & Reporting**  
Transform raw findings into actionable insights

# AI as a friend – support for UX activities



# AI as a foe



- **UX job losses**

Entry level – harder to get hired

Senior level – harder to show value

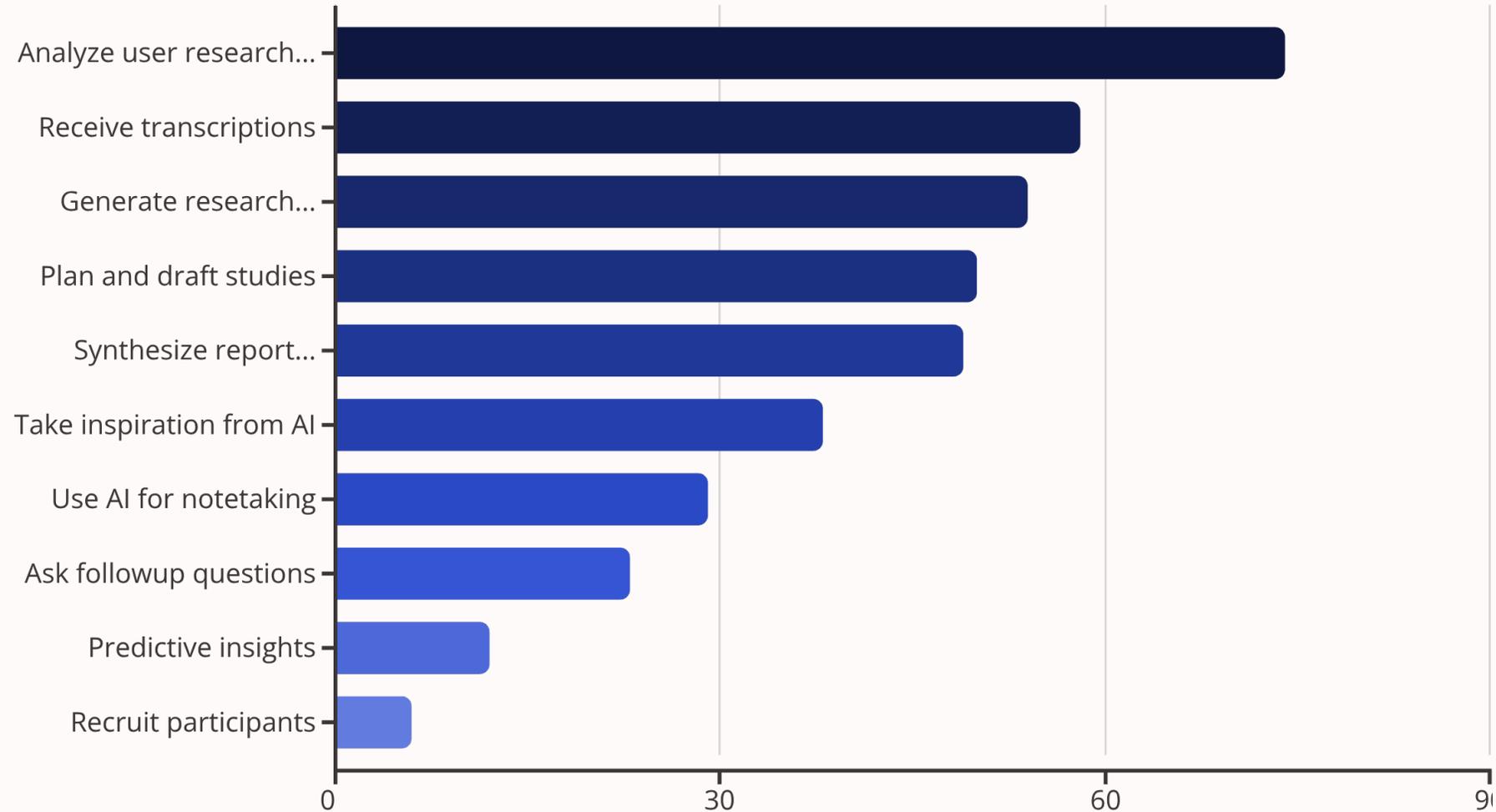
- **Stakeholder mindset**

Convenience trumps complexity

Simulated users (and interviewers!) are cheaper than real users and interviewers

# How companies are adopting AI

A 2025 Maze survey of 800 UX researchers worldwide reveals widespread AI adoption across research activities.



# Step up to your strategic role with AI

- Review, question, **challenge AI** responses
  - Engage in higher-level **critical and strategic thinking**
  - Free up time for more planning, executing studies
  - “Sell” more UX – become a **UX advocate**
  - **Democratize research** to spread knowledge of user experience
- ***Make the case:*** Don’t trade complexity for convenience.
  - Don’t underestimate the importance of ***empathy.***

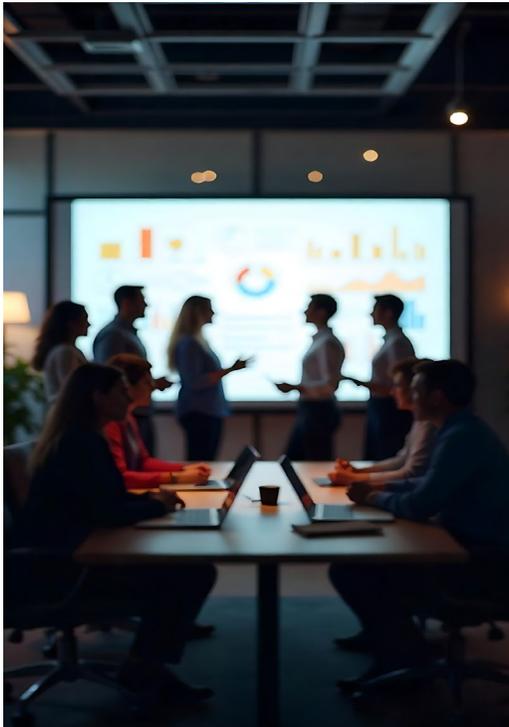


# Democratization of UX

The practice of making UX research and methods accessible across a company, enabling more teams and individuals to gather user insights and contribute to the design process.

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# Democratization of UX questions



Can (or should) everyone do UX research?

How can you manage and support new skill sets?

What role can (or should) software like UserTesting platforms play?

# The state of user research strategy 2025

userinterviews.com 485 responses

## Survey Results

71% work in companies that support democratization

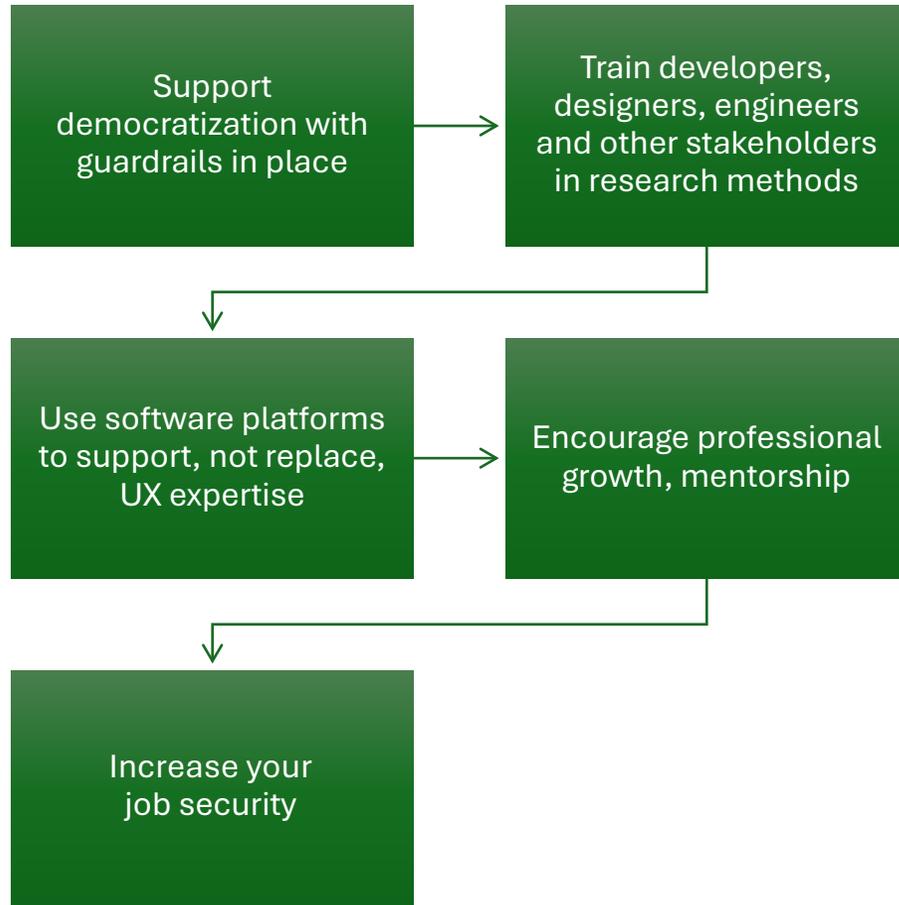
60% spend up to ¼ time supporting others

“democratization tax”

- More support for others doing research
- Less time for your research

**Potential outcome:** Diluted expert research focus  
Reduced strategic capability

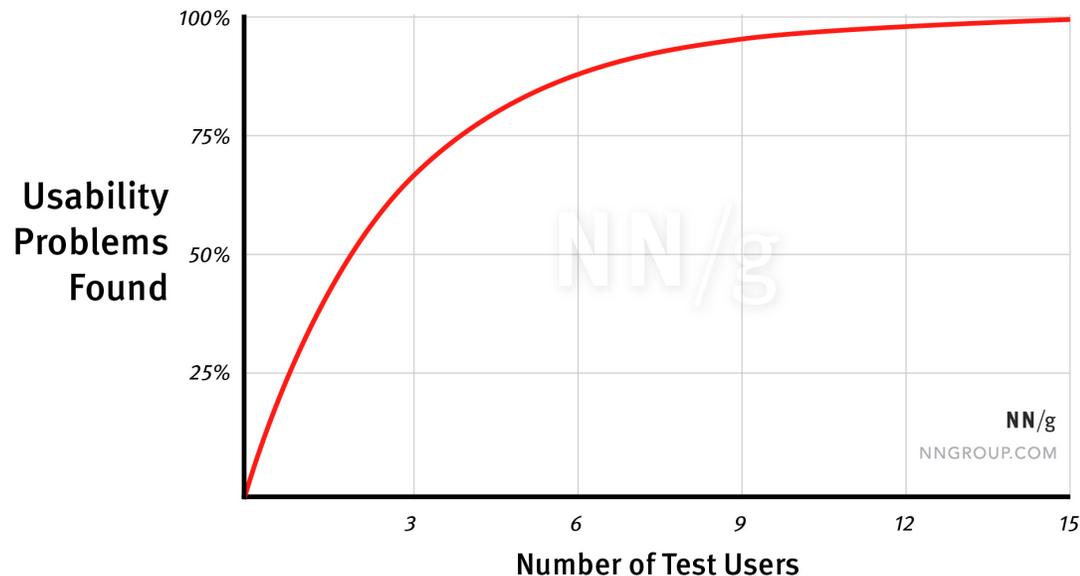
# Step up to your strategic role in democratization



- With more UX research, you get **more insights** into user experience. It's a **win-win** for your company.

# Think small – 5 users is enough, if done right

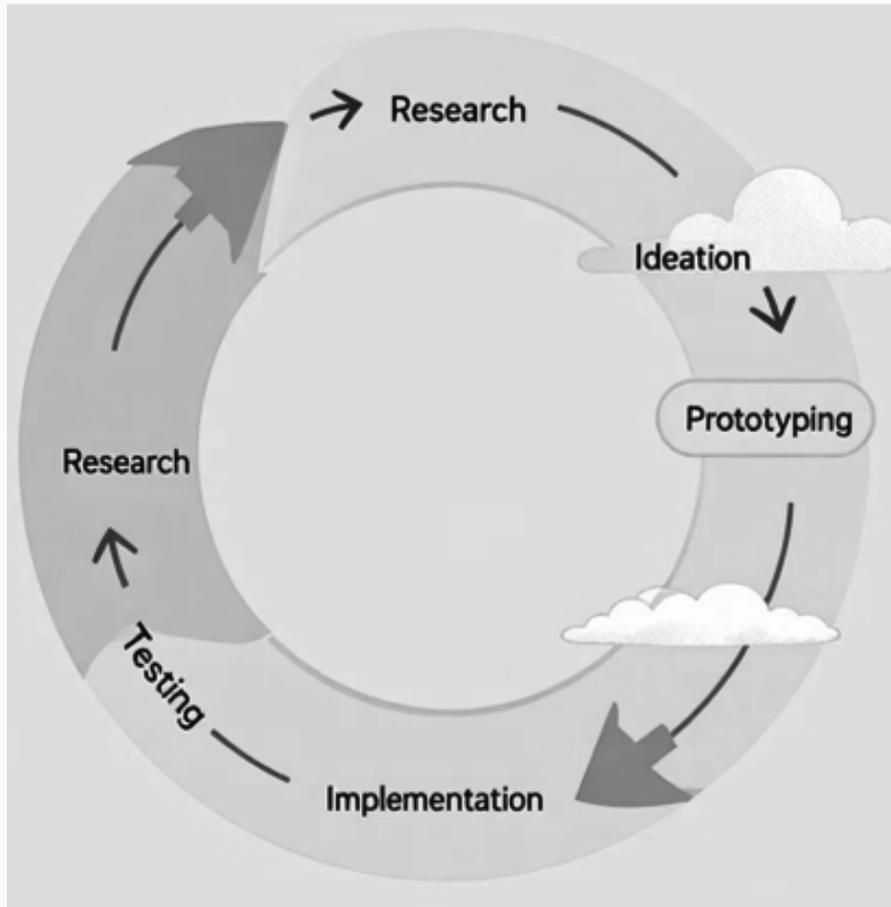
**5 Users:** The Optimal Sample Size for Qualitative Usability Studies



Source: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/>

- Maximum cost-benefit ratio at **3 – 5** participants
- Small studies, done right, uncover **80 – 85%** of the findings from that study
- “The most striking truth of the curve is that **zero users give zero insights**. As soon as you collect data from a **single test user**, your insights shoot-up and you have already learned almost a third of all there is to know about the usability of the design. The difference between zero and even a little bit of data is astounding.”

# The essential elements to do it right



**Small studies** deliver **big insights** when you follow proven research fundamentals.

**Don't blow the budget** on one big study. Test with 5 users before testing with more.

# Steps to do it right



For more detailed guidance, watch my YouTube video: <https://www.uxfirm.com/videos>

# It's a wrap



## Small studies, Big impact

Lean research methods support excellent user experiences without massive budgets



## Test early, Test often

The more you test, the more you learn—and the better your products become



## Showcase ROI

Connect findings to business metrics that matter to stakeholders



## Become an advocate

Champion UX research early, on more products across your organization

*Good usability is invisible.  
You need to stand out.*

