

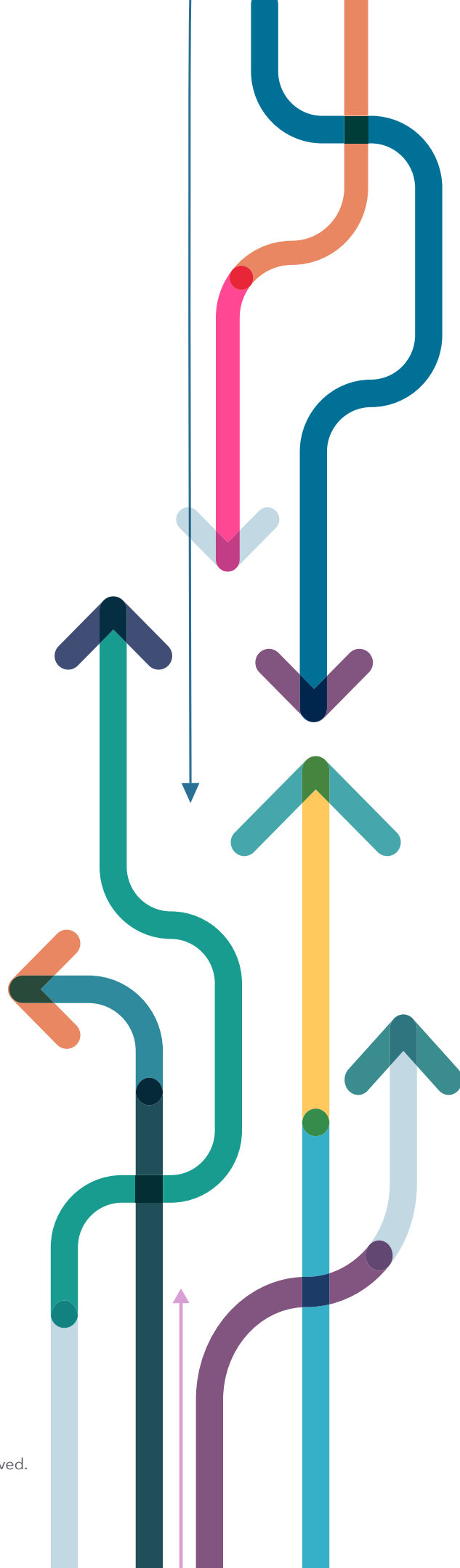


Partnering for Data-Driven Success:

A Product Leader's Guide to Supercharging Your UX Research Partnerships

Read on for:

- [Getting the most value](#)
- [Asking the right questions](#)
- [Impact stories](#)



Improve product value & performance with UX research

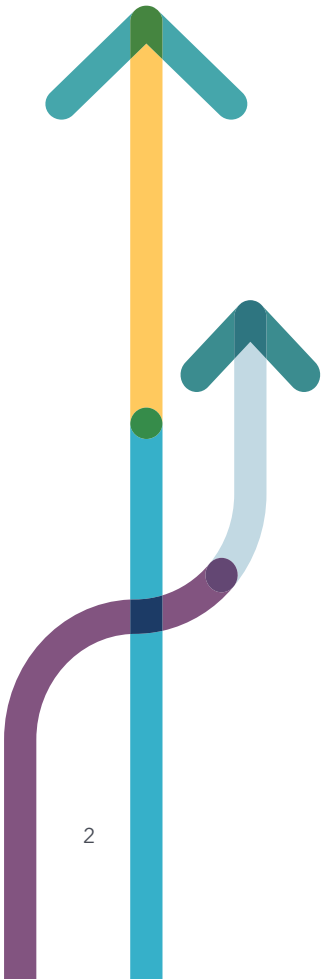
Feeling the pressure to maximize your UX research impact? In today's fast-paced environment, Product and UX leaders are constantly challenged to do more with less. They need to uncover deep user insights, identify critical product issues, and drive impactful solutions – all while navigating resource constraints, internal expertise gaps,

and the ever-evolving research landscape. Partnering with a specialized UX research firm can give you a strategic ally in overcoming these hurdles.

The right partner can help you achieve more with your existing resources in a few key ways.

- **Amplify your impact:** Leverage our team's expertise in diverse research methodologies, including more complex research initiatives like accessibility research or benchmarking studies.
- **Bridge resource gaps:** A leading UX research firm has all the resources you need to conduct research studies of all sizes and complexities, including lab facilities, technical support, relationships with vetted recruiting vendors, and the latest research operations practices.
- **Stay ahead of the curve:** Utilize the latest research tools, best practices, and cross-industry trends to maximize efficiency and data insights.
- **Empower your team:** A research firm can handle research execution from start to finish and deliver high-impact insights, enabling your team to focus on strategic implementation and business impact. With this advice and partnership, you can ensure that your research is as effective as possible, leading to meaningful insights and actionable results.

By partnering with a UX research firm, you can optimize your UX research efforts and budget and achieve your goals with greater ease and efficiency.





Deploy your research capacity wisely

While a UX research partner will enable you across a range of projects and needs, there are situations when it can make a more substantial impact.

You need to accelerate your product initiative

If you're working on a tight turnaround timeline and need answers fast, a UX research partner can often spin up quickly, offering you the expertise and resources to work through the challenges and implement a plan fast. UX research partners can work with you to seamlessly integrate within your product development lifecycle, [staying ahead of the sprint](#) to get you the insights you need fast. If you haven't started research yet, a research partner can help you "catch up" with your product lifecycle. With their support, you can make informed decisions and achieve success faster.



You need a neutral third-party to get alignment faster

Many of our clients find it helpful having an impartial third-party like AnswerLab come in when there are complex organizational dynamics. When you're working with a range of roles from Product to Engineering to Design, UX research is often left to "break the tie" using research insights and findings. But when organizational dynamics and relationships are tricky, that tie-breaker vote might be more tense than you'd hoped. When you bring in an objective third-party, there's more room in these discussions to focus on the findings and find solutions without the internal politics and pressures. Many UX research partners are also trained in moderation and facilitation to be able to adeptly and smoothly lead a discussion on the findings and recommendations.

You need a specific skillset or expertise you don't have in-house

Are you working with a tricky recruiting population? Need to conduct a study on an emerging technology that requires a nuanced approach? Want to utilize a new methodology your team isn't as comfortable with? A UX research partner can tap into a pool of experts in a vast range of methodologies and expertise areas, meaning you always get someone who understands what you're trying to achieve and can execute it confidently to help you get there.

Your bandwidth is stretched too thin and an increasing demand for research insights

Many of our clients come to us when they realize they have too much work and not enough bandwidth to complete it. Instead of going through a lengthy hiring process, they look to us as an extension of their team, asking us to build a research program that focuses on usability and iterative work, while their internal team members focus on higher-level strategic projects. Our rolling programs require minimal oversight and keep the tactical insights moving on a steady and consistent cadence. This re-prioritization of work for the client internally helps their team make a bigger impact on the strategic side, without the tactical work suffering or lagging.

You need help running a Research Ops Program

Many of our clients, from UX leaders to Product teams to Marketing departments, lack the resources to successfully run and manage a seamless Research Ops program. Hard-to-reach recruits or complex session logistics can hinder research timelines, and ultimately cause a backlog in your product roadmap. A UX research partner with a dedicated [Research Ops function](#) can help you tackle even the most complex of recruiting challenges with minimal oversight.

Risk is high and you need evidence-based product decisions

Let's say you're working on a high-stakes project – for example, a brand new technology, high-investment feature, or new product that has to go off without a hitch. You need reliable research insights to keep the project moving, and you can't afford to take a risk on whether or not the study will get you the insights you need. Working with a partner who has the expertise and ability to get it right reduces risk and keeps you on track.





What to look for in a UX research partner?

Choosing the right UX research partner can be a difficult task – balancing expertise and capabilities with budget and timelines. When selecting a partner for UX research, it's important to take into account your specific research needs, your organization's needs, and business goals.

Here are some key qualities to look for in a UX research partner and questions to ask potential partners in the search process:

Targeted research expertise in your industry and product area

The right UX research agencies build a culture of learning and development, enabling their UXRs to continue upskilling, learning, and exploring a range of methodologies, product areas, and industries. Look for an agency that prioritizes ongoing learning. At AnswerLab, we have [learning groups and practice areas](#) focused on topics like inclusivity, Artificial Intelligence, emerging technologies, financial services, and more. You'll also benefit from established peer review

processes, internal resources and tools, and best practices developed over time from a range of UX experts – something a one-off contractor can't provide you with.

Questions to ask:

- ☐ What are the typical qualifications of your UX researchers? What kinds of backgrounds do they come from?
- ☐ How does your team stay on top of current industry trends? Do you have continuing development and training opportunities for your team?
- ☐ What languages can you cover globally? How do you tackle international research?

A deep understanding of the competitive landscape and a perspective on how you stack up against the competition

The benefit of outsourcing parts of your UX research work is gaining access to a larger understanding of the competitive landscape, something internal UX teams rarely can provide in the same way. Our team has expertise in a range of industries and product areas and how they intersect and overlap. This enables our team to bring high-level context of the UX field combined with deep industry-specific knowledge to help you meet your needs and offer you insights on how you'll stack up.

Questions to ask:

- ☐ Do you work with other organizations and companies in our industry?
- ☐ What is your expertise in our product or technology area?

Top notch data security and privacy policies

Privacy and security are of utmost importance when working with highly confidential prototypes and proprietary information. Whenever you're working with a vendor, make sure to review their Data Security and Privacy policies and practices to make sure they will treat your information, prototypes, and proprietary information with care.

Questions to ask:

- ☐ What are your data security protocols?
- ☐ Do you have an accredited third party conduct annual security audits?



A full team experience to ensure the process is smooth

At a UX research agency, you often get access to a larger services delivery team, unlike when working with a one-off contractor. At AnswerLab, our delivery team includes:

- **UX Strategists** advise on the right approach and oversee the program
- **Research Management** provides oversight and feedback at every step
- **Research Ops experts** manage participant recruiting and tactical research execution
- **Designers** present your findings in the most impactful and digestible way
- **Tech support** tackles the gambit of data security questions plus day-of troubleshooting

The benefit of the full team experience is each of these vital roles offers you the best experience at every step of the process. And they enable our UX researchers to focus on what they do best - generating world-class insights.

Questions to ask:

- ☐ What happens if the UX Researcher assigned to my project gets sick?
- ☐ Do you employ inclusive recruiting practices? Will you ensure we have a diverse participant pool?

The ability to scale up and down as needed

Over the past several years, we've been building enterprise research programs for some of the world's biggest brands, helping them scale research at the pace of their product development process. When working with an agency, you want to work with someone who can meet you where you're at as you grow – meaning a partner with the capacity to scale up as your research needs increase. When we build programs of research for our clients, we are able to bring in additional resources when the client's needs shift. By tackling this with an agency versus hiring additional headcount or bringing on a contractor, you limit additional onboarding and set-up time, helping you get insights faster and more efficiently.

Questions to ask:

- ☐ What happens when you need to pivot on a recruit timeline or research plan?
- ☐ If we discover more research needs to be conducted, how can you help us expand the program?

Engage a **UX Research Partner**, hire a **contractor**, or take it **in-house**?

Working with the right UX research partner is greater than the sum of its parts and can elevate your research to new heights. An agency environment offers a number of hidden benefits – greater flexibility, a bigger pool of knowledge and skills, a full support team experience behind the scenes, and more.

Although keeping your research in-house or hiring a contractor may seem like a cost-effective solution, bringing in a third-party expert can take your research to the next level and provide you with tools and resources that you wouldn't otherwise have. Convincing executives to invest more upfront may seem daunting, but the return on investment is often much more substantial, and ultimately, more compelling in reaching your goals and KPIs. Highlight these hidden benefits to show the value of an expert partner rather than making a pure cost decision.



Impact Story: Increasing influence to improve product experiences

A Fortune 500
client asked us:

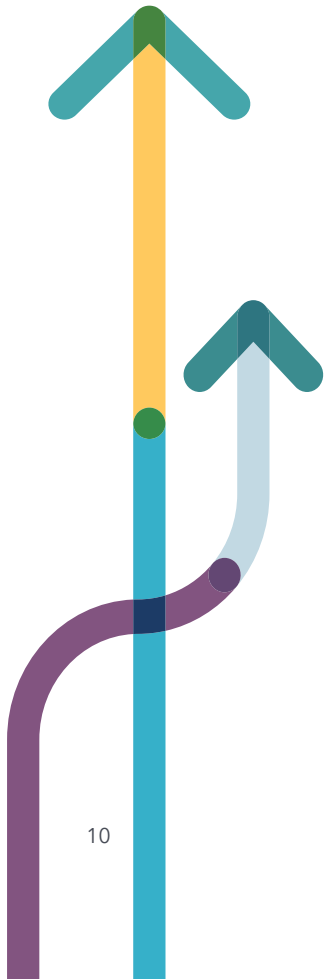
***"How can we
increase our
influence in the
organization and
scale our UX team?"***

A client came to us with concern that their team wasn't getting the respect or credibility they needed from stakeholders within the organization to truly influence product development with insights from research. With a team that needed guidance in how to yield more actionable results, the client asked for our **advice in how to scale their team to become more effective researchers** that would be able to have influence in the organization.

Our approach brought in the expertise of our senior research team, guidance from our project management practice, and strategic consulting around UX influence and educational training for their researchers. After developing a deep understanding of the product, **AnswerLab ran a handful of studies end-to-end for their team and subsequently provided consultative support on studies led by their own researchers.**

To support their team during this engagement, AnswerLab helped with project planning and research operations, observing research sessions alongside stakeholders, and coaching their team through the reporting process to help them create a self-sufficient, sustainable research process.

To help elevate their researchers to a position of influence and UX maturity, we held trainings on key topics in UX research in addition to observing sessions and advising them during the research process. By doing this **professional development training in conjunction with the research**, the team was able to build their in-house capabilities and apply their learnings to future research.



Impact Story:

Accessing a hard-to-reach audience to make evidence-based decisions

An international online marketplace asked us:

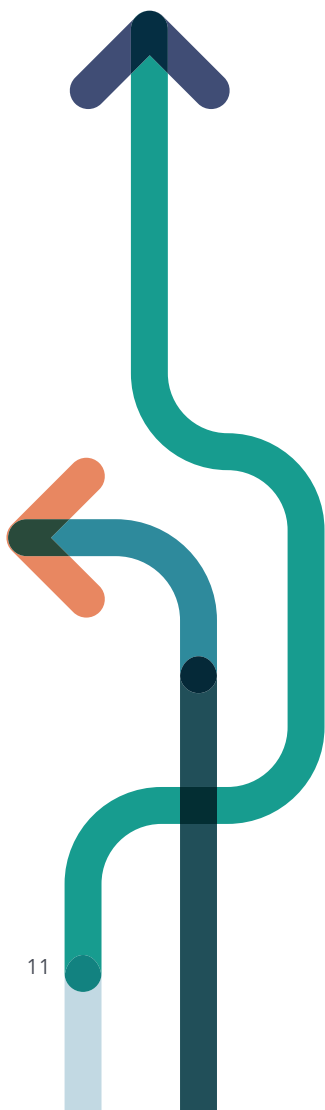
“What is the optimal co-working experience for both individuals and teams?”

AnswerLab designed a study to test a co-working space concept in various international cities. We set out to recruit individuals and teams/groups who would use shared co-working spaces and provide feedback regarding their experience.

Logistically, **this was a challenging recruit**, and was a surprisingly difficult audience to tap into, given the number of factors and criteria that had to line up perfectly with the research timeline.

Our **Research Ops team partnered local vendors in a number of countries from our existing pool of vetted and trusted vendors**, using expertise and lessons learned from thousands of international sessions conducted over the years. With their robust panels and creative networking solutions, we were able to work with them to source qualified participants. To overcome any potential negative perceptions of safety and workability of the co-working space, we shared photos of the space, location details, any included workspace amenities, and nearby restaurant information with all participants in advance of the sessions. This approach helped us build trust and rapport with participants, making the study process a positive experience from the start and setting the stage for open, honest conversation.

By utilizing multiple vendors, clearly communicating with participants, and thinking through the range of logistical steps, our **Research Ops team was able to meet our quota in each market with minimal oversight and input from our client team**, keeping the experience on track and seamless for our stakeholders.



Get UX research support when and how you need it

From a single study to an on-going UX research program, we get you the insights you need to build better products. AnswerLab's [flexible, dedicated teams](#) help UX leaders meet and exceed their user insights goals while maintaining quality and with maximum flexibility.

With every AnswerLab engagement, you can count on best-in-class research operations, a comprehensive methods toolkit, unmatched expertise, and the readiness to adapt to your priorities.

Get in touch to learn more:
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