EverAfter

2022

Customer Onboarding Report

When automation & personalization work together like magic.

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Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

All customer-obsessed professionals are being offered royal access to EverAfter's Industry Report on Customer Onboarding in 2022.

This is how early adopters practice automated customer onboarding magic with royal personalization, giving each customer an illustrious onboarding experience with the efficiency of kings and queens.

From EverAfter's Customer Onboarding Survey, customer success professionals around the world shared insider statistics, best practices and influencer insights that show us how to turn every customer's fantasy into an onboarding reality in 2022.
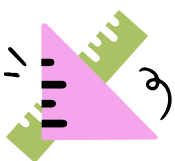
**Noa Danon
CEO of EverAfter**

Key Findings

60% of companies personalize client onboarding processes.

34% of companies measure their onboarding success by time-to-value.

61% of customer success managers manage up to 10 high-touch accounts.

47% of companies using customer success software or custom tech stacks have grown to 100+ employees or more.

69% of companies believe that retention is impacted by customer onboarding success.

Who's in the survey?

45% Customer Success Managers

17% Customer Success Team Leads

24% C-Level & VPs

5% Revenue Ops

How many employees per company?

31% 50 or less

15% 51 – 100

29% 101 – 500

12% 501 – 1,000

13% 1,000+

Hybrid Onboarding

Early adopters are catching on to the trend of automated onboarding, combined with personalized onboarding; better known as: **HYBRID ONBOARDING.**

94% of customer success professionals increase productivity by spending **5 hours or less in meetings —** enabled by using either customer success software, customer onboarding software, or a customized tech stack.

*"Companies that want to **scale quickly** need to automate the onboarding processes; whether to partial or full automation. Otherwise, their scalability will rely on increased manpower, potentially causing a bottleneck in their expansion. This is **an evolving trend that will grow in the upcoming years.**"*

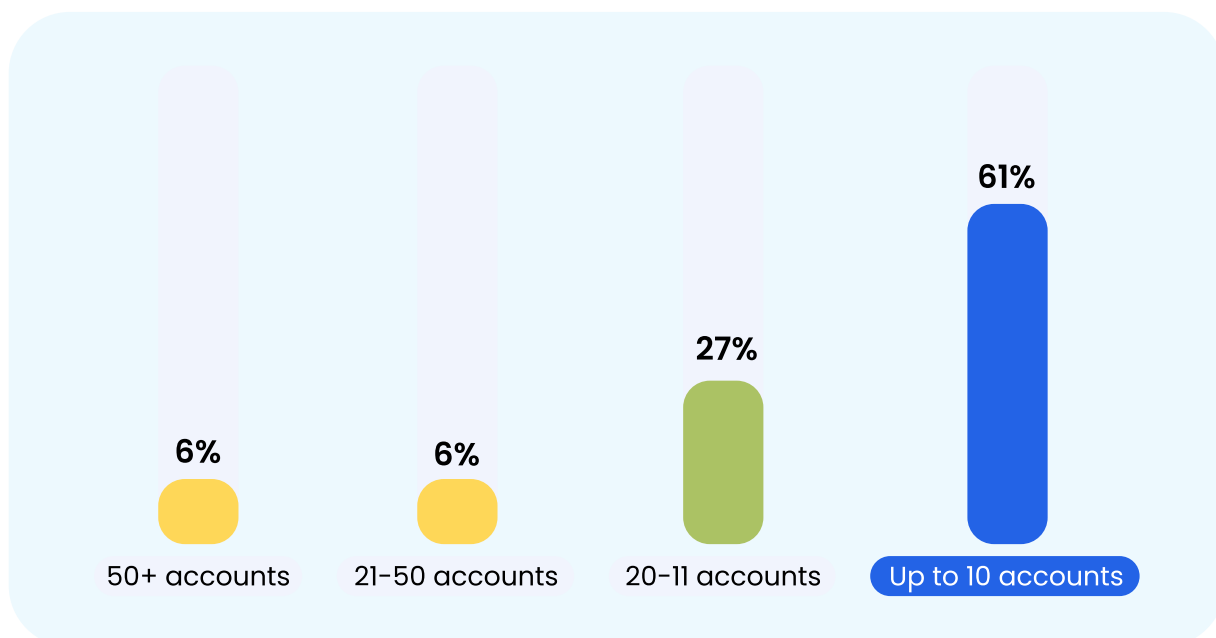control**UP**

Yair Bortinger,
Head of Customer
Success Operations

How automation can help:

- ## Companies grow at scale

47% of companies using either customer success software, customer onboarding software, or a customized tech stack have **grown to a company size of 100 or more.**

- ## Customer Success Managers manage high-touch accounts

The role of the CSM is to operate from the customer's point of view and empathize with his challenges — so that they can **drive & adapt the product's value, according to each customer's unique needs.**

Once a CSM adopts automation for onboarding, training, and other processes, they spend less time on technical, low-touch tasks and more time managing high-touch, more strategic customers where personal, ongoing relationships are key.

• Deliver rapid value realization

Automating technical tasks like software training and configuration **lets the customer success team bring their value into onboarding discussions** so that **customers adopt & deploy.**

"The core value of the customer success team is value realization. **This is where customer success is the differentiator in the organization."**

Oliver Plane,
Customer Success Executive

• Increase customer satisfaction

Automation allows **customers to spend less time waiting in the support pipeline,** thereby **increasing their satisfaction** with the product or subscription."

"The KPI for automated onboarding is how quickly customers can find the information and destination they're looking for, and get from point A to point B.

If we can automate and consolidate the transition period between product activation and deriving its key value, then we know that we've automated onboarding successfully."

Yair Bortinger

What's your onboarding KPI?

- 🔵 **TTV**
- 🟣 **Feature Adoption**
- 🟢 **Customer Satisfaction**
- 🔴 **Don't measure**
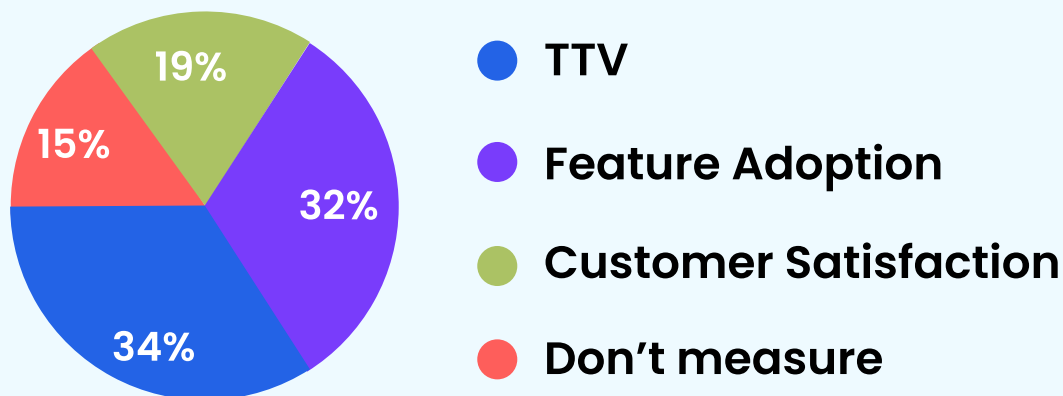
"Time-to-value is a natural metric for onboarding, specifically because the longer it takes a customer to derive value from our product, the more time they are spending questioning the purchase."

Craig Jackson
Customer Success
Regional Manager

The **customer success team's shift to automated onboarding** also **impacts which KPI is most appropriate** for their onboarding success.

While the survey responses for SaaS companies' onboarding KPI was evenly divided between TTV and feature adoption, **we expect the growing trend of automated onboarding to correlate with a widespread gravitation towards the "customer satisfaction" KPI.**

What does it mean to 'gravitate towards automation'?

Shifting your customer success model means focusing on empowering the customer's ability to self-serve.

This creates a balance between two key customer needs:

1. **To feel taken care of.**

2. **To feel empowered to use the best points of the product independently.**

The Rise of Churn

Key pain point of 2022: The rise of churn

69% of companies believe that the **success of customer onboarding impacts retention.**

Do you consider onboarding success to impact customer retention?

50%			
48%			
40%			
	25%	21%	
30%			
20%			
10%			6%
0%			
Varies by use case			None
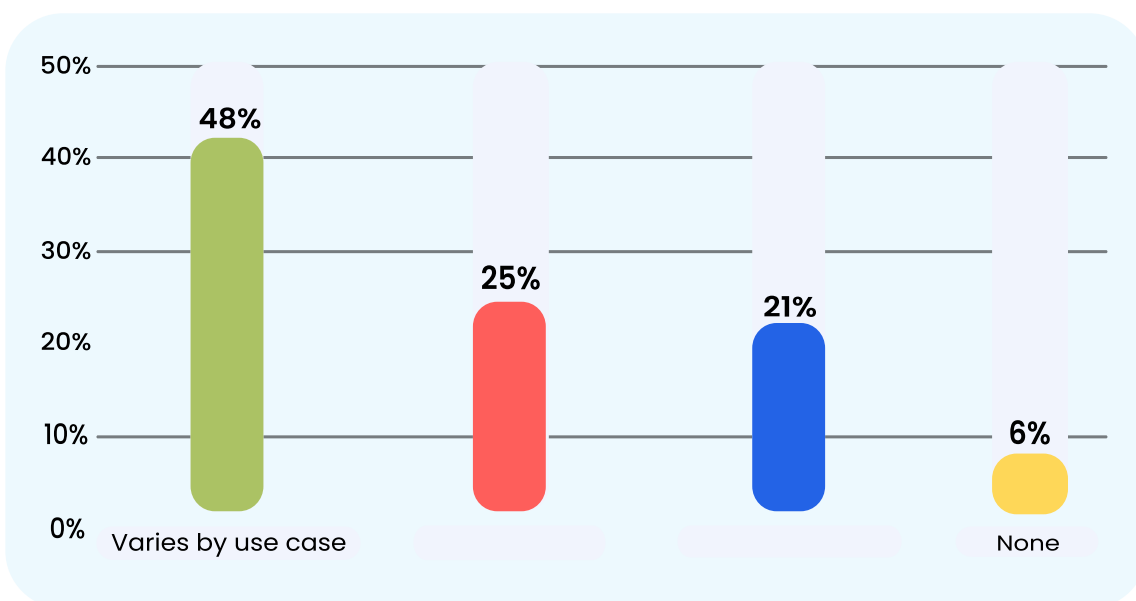
The way to **ensure renewal and eliminate the risk of churn** is to increase customer satisfaction.

Automation is a key tactic for achieving this.

Ready for a demo of EverAfter? BOOK A DEMO

Trend 3
Transitioning from Sales-centric to Customer-centric Relationships

The shift from a sales-centric to a customer-centric mindset.

"More and more companies are finally realizing that customer success is a growth engine and are adopting a customer-centric approach to their businesses."

Oliver Plane

92% of SaaS companies' customer onboarding processes are run by their customer success team.

Customer
Success Team
92%

Sales Team
8%

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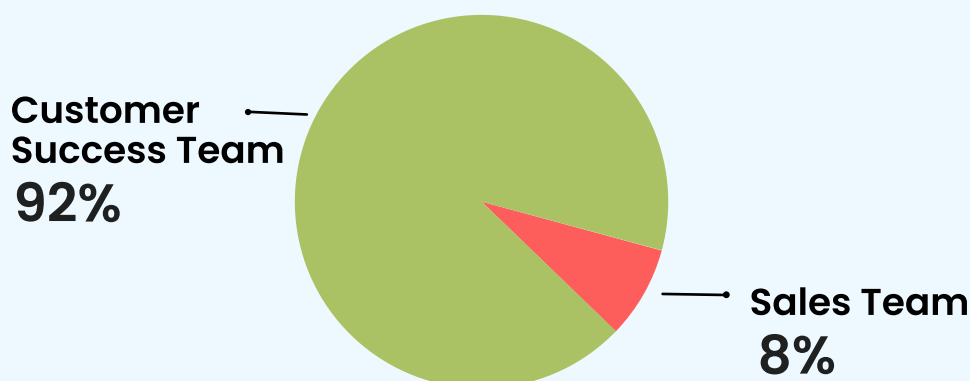
Business owners in the subscription-model business, who identify as **'early adopters' need to adapt their annual & renewal plans to the customer-centric mindset of:**

- Focusing on **customer satisfaction**
- **Avoiding churn** at all costs
- Making sure **renewals happen**
- Working with teams and models that are **built on the customer-centric approach**

The commonality between these goals lies in their ultimate objective: **to influence customer decision-making.**

The **dividing factors among these customer-centric early adopters,** however, are how their **business size and growth strategies.**

For **large enterprise companies,** the customer-centric mindset means **high-touch customer success stratgies,** while the **low-touch CSMs** focus on **multiple renewals** in a monthly period.

Navigating from the sales process to customer success: a daunting challenge

Once you have a customer success team in place, how do you know where to start?

Step 1		Step 2		Step 3
Sales team defines company core values & strategy	▶	Tech support steps in	▶	CS enters to cultivate relationships & ensure renewal

"The shift from a sales-centric to customer-centric onboarding approach means finding balancing revenue-based goals and value-based goals.

This is rooted in the fact that value is not always monetary. Collaboration between sales and customer onboarding teams is the golden overlap for proving both the product's ROI and its core value."

PartnerStack
Katie Clark
Onboarding Manager

How do we measure the transition from sales-centric to customer-centric onboarding?

Customers **measure a product's value by calculating its ROI.**

Therefore, for a CSM, the KPI for onboarding's sales-centric to customer-centric transition is rapid ROI, indicated by customer renewal and retention; agreed upon by 69% of companies.

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"All in all, the future of customer success lies in formalizing how to drive meaningful relationships with customers and make them cost-effective so that you can measure their impact."

EXPLORIUM
Gali Michaeli
VP Customer Success

The **emerging trend of technologies dedicated to customer engagement and collaboration**

allows companies who have reached a certain scale to track the customer-to-CSM engagement level, as well as overall platform activity.

The most recent area of improvement that the industry has gotten better at tracking is the actual relationship that customer success professionals have with stakeholders on the customer side — in terms of the relationship's strength and its content.

This is why the CS industry is developing a more formalized process for monitoring and measuring — to understand each relationship's health and potential for renewal, and if it's at risk of churn.

Manage your onboarding process in one shared hub with EverAfter >>

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Onboarding Strategies

Every customer success organization has a 'fits like a glove' onboarding plan that fits their unique needs.

Expert customer success influencers share their onboarding strategies and how they balance automated onboarding with personalized customer experiences.

How do you know how long your customer onboarding process should be?

12% — 2 weeks max

26% — 2 weeks - 1 month

35% — 1 - 2 months

22% — 2-4 months

5% — 4 months
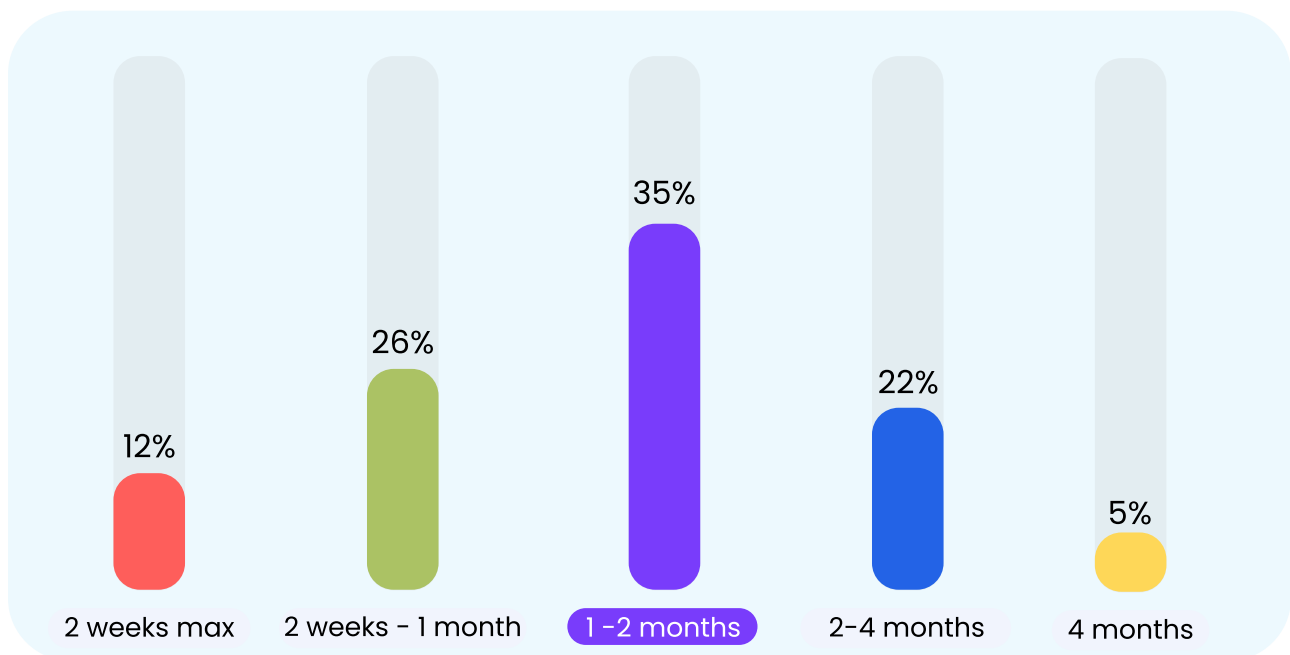
*"There are some products which are being used at the core of the business (CRM, infrastructure-related/must-have tools) so **the less sticky a product is, the more impact time-to-value has on the future of the relationship, and vice versa."***
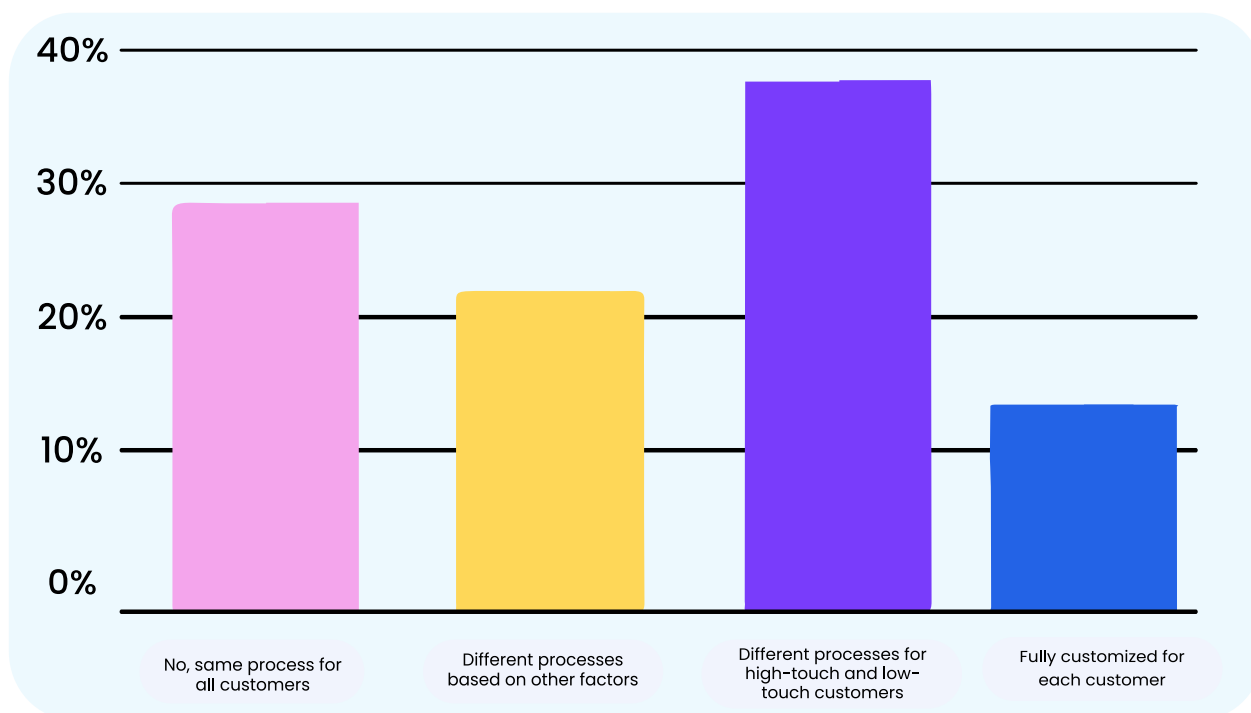
Zesty

Matan Alperovitch
Head of Revenue Operations

Balancing personalization & automated client onboarding helps to:

How many customer success teams cater their onboarding plans to to the customer's level of touch?

60% of respondents use multiple types of onboarding processes for their overall client base.

Bar chart with y-axis from 0% to 40% and the following categories: "No, same process for all customers" (~28%), "Different processes based on other factors" (~22%), "Different processes for high-touch and low-touch customers" (~38%), "Fully customized for each customer" (~13%)

• Identify customer needs

We asked Matan from Zesty:

"The majority (60%) of survey respondents customize their **customer onboarding processes**. Do you think this suggests that the remaining 40% should also be modifying their onboarding processes, based on the client's level of touch?"

Matan from Zesty:

"Choosing high-touch vs. low-touch processes depends on several factors:

- The amount of customers you're managing
- Your team's resources
- The value you're getting from each customer
- The threshold you're setting for average ARR (annual recurring revenue) or lifetime value
- The threshold you set for your level of touch"

Craig from Pleo:

"The selection process between high and low touch onboarding is based on a **deep understanding of the customer's need in terms of value,** as well as our availability to give to them (resources).

We want to develop very sleek processes for smaller customers that allow them to **get through the pipeline quickly,** made possible by **operational, digital onboarding.**

Larger customers have more high-touch points, especially where financial integration is required — demanding a more hands-on approach for a more complex onboarding."

• Identify how each customer uses your product

"Customers have different use-cases, and are usually focused on different aspects of the product.

This indicates the type of usage and value that each customer is getting from the product on a case-by-case basis.

As a result, the nature of the relationship and the 'size of the deal' varies — impacting how high-touch the relationship is."

Gali Michaeli

- ## Balance personalization with automation

- ## Decide what to automate and what to address more hands-on

"We try to automate the documentation processes by:
- Creating templates
- Standardizing processes to cut out extra time.

But there is also personal touch in onboarding that's gotten great feedback.

Onboarding consultants work to personalize experience for vendors: balance between making things work as smoothly and efficiently as possible vs. being a consultant."

Katie Clark

"Each customer has a unique challenge they face; the more personalized we get, the more lasting the activation"

Chase Mohseni
Head of Performance

• Divide your time mindfully between tasks

Majority of customer success teams agree upon the following hierarchy for how to divide their time:

Meeting with customers

Following up with customers

Preparing for meetings

Updating CRM

Chase Mohseni from Pencil is an exception to the rule;

Chase's magic wish is to prioritize his time in the following order:

Meeting with customers

Following up with customers

Updating CRM

Preparing for meetings

"Our future goals are to be able to bucket these centers of personalization (whether databases or customer hubs) that drive action and automate the bulk of them. That is why we spend the most time on meetings, prep, and CRM updates.

If I am mostly spending my time responding via email to customer challenges, I'll never learn anything that helps me deeply solve the root cause today and into the future (forget being able to scale the solution).

In an ideal world, synthesizing macro and micro customer experience data with the platform, synced with an ongoing log of product feedback, would give us all levels of he quantitative & qualitative information we need to actualize the customers' goals, both short and long term — in every conversation."

Chase Mohseni

# How is it possible to balance hands-on personalization with automation?

Because personalization **is at the epicenter of their customer success strategy**, Pencil's ultimate goal of personalizing and the length of customer activation explains why he sees **having an updated CRM as crucial to fruitful customer experiences,** even more so than customer follow-up.

Do customer success teams use dedicated tools for onboarding processes?

Use dedicated tools
42%

Don't use dedicated tools
65%
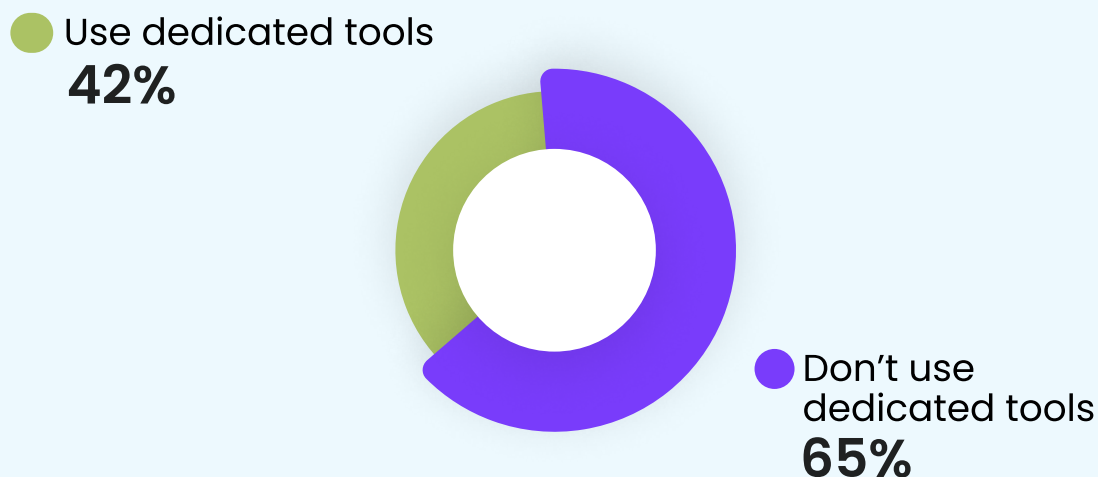
The percentage of **how many teams use dedicated tools is indeed lower in both cases** — regardless of whether the onboarding process is personalized or not.

Personalize Onboaarding

63% don't use dedicated tools

46% use dedicated tools
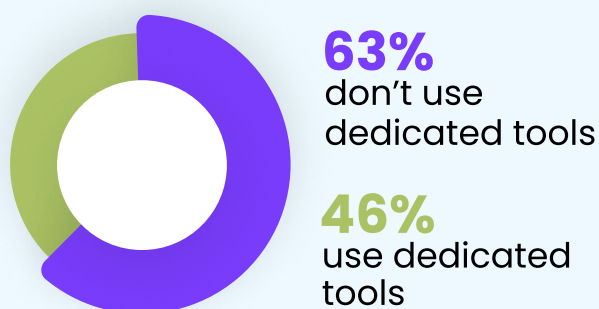
Don't Personalize Onboarding

79% don't use dedicated tools

31% use dedicated tools

There may be no right or wrong length for how long your customer onboarding process, yet the **growing trend of using a dedicated tool for personalized onboarding** can be explained by the recognizable weakness in the customer success industry, now gradually being fortified by this recent trend of investing in customer success operations.

Implementing new onboarding technologies into existing ones, but effectively

"Many companies lack self-service onboarding, even mature SaaS organizations.

This is why they don't use dedicated tools, as they operate on the assumption that users employ 'muscle memory' to understand the product's user interface (if it's familiar to common popular SaaS products).

*However, **because each customer owns a unique use-case for how they use their product, they do actually need dedicated resources** (whether automated or in the form of a CSM) — that will educate them how to apply a product to their specific needs."*

Kevin Leonor
Customer Success Manager

Once companies provide a valuable form of self-service onboarding through an optimized tech stack, they automatically scale their CS team's resources and cabilities.

Essentially, our main concern is how to scale up our productivity and efficacy as a team — by enabling self-service.

This means finding the operational tools that will allow team members to use fewer resources to generate greater results than they have thus far.
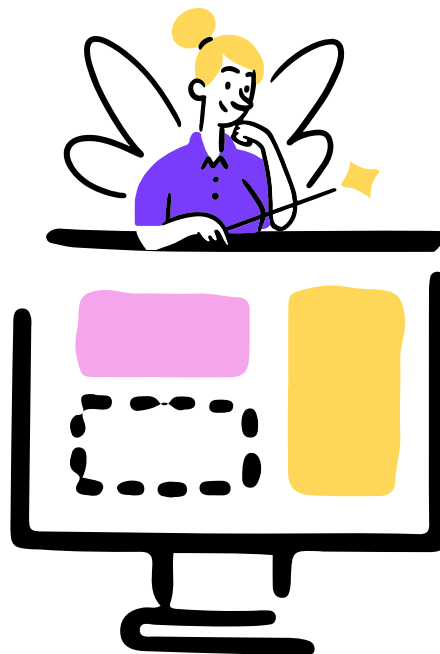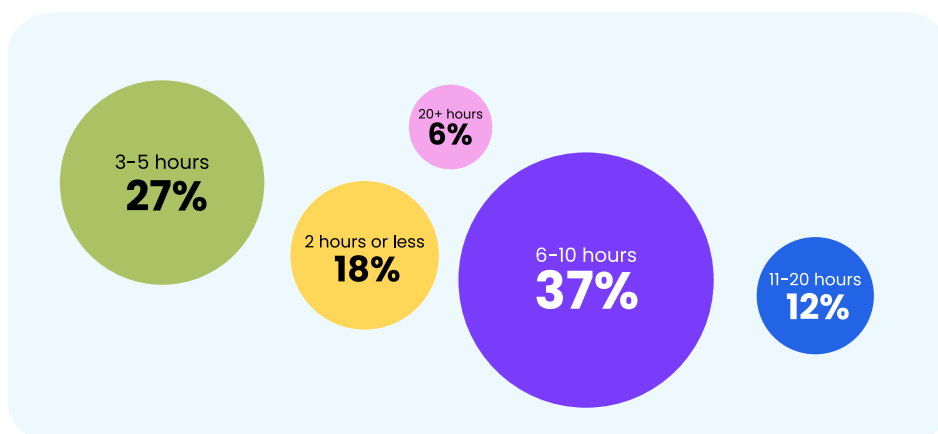
How does an optimized tech stack for customer onboarding minimize the necessary resources for successful and fruitful onboarding?

We can identify the relationship between types of tools used and a team's efficacy by looking at how different technologies influence the time factors of onboarding:

Those who use dedicated tools:
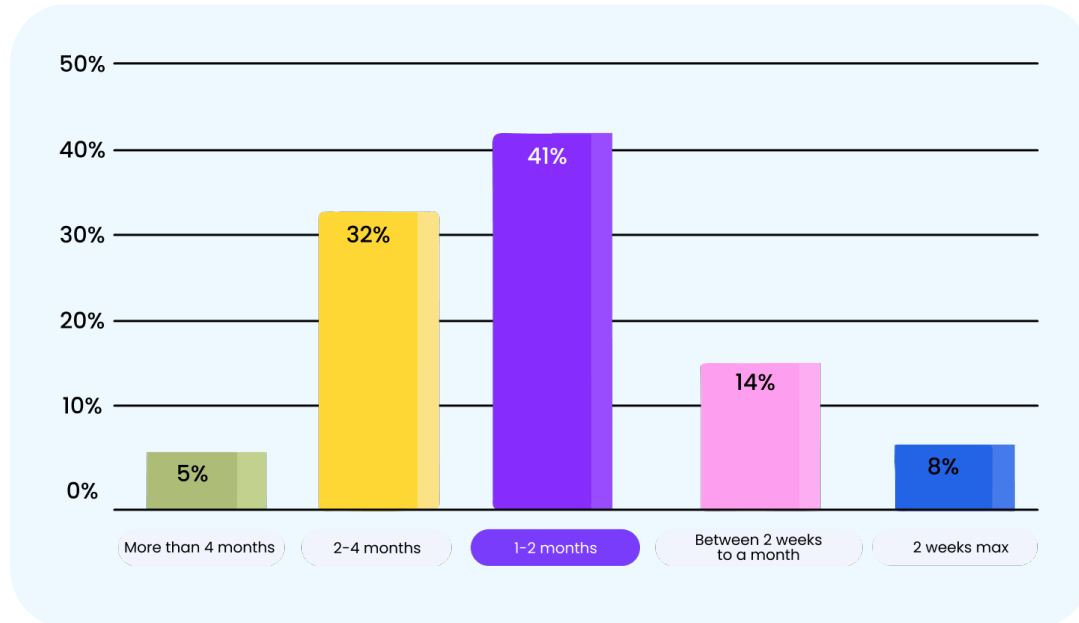
20+ hours
11%

3-5 hours
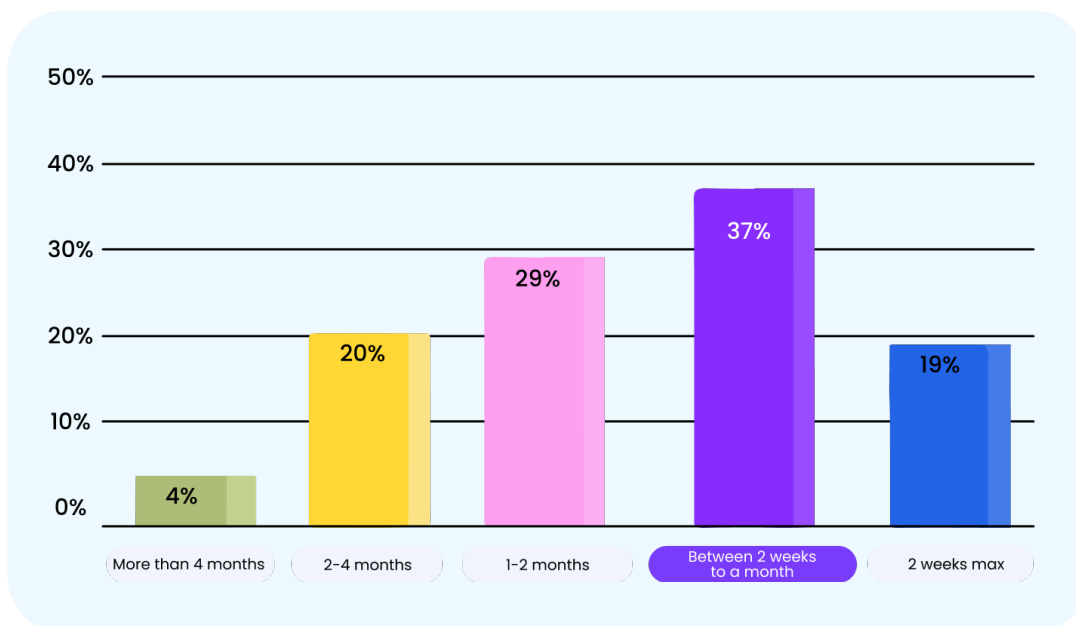**22%**

6-10 hours
32%

2 hours or less
16%

11-20 hours
19%
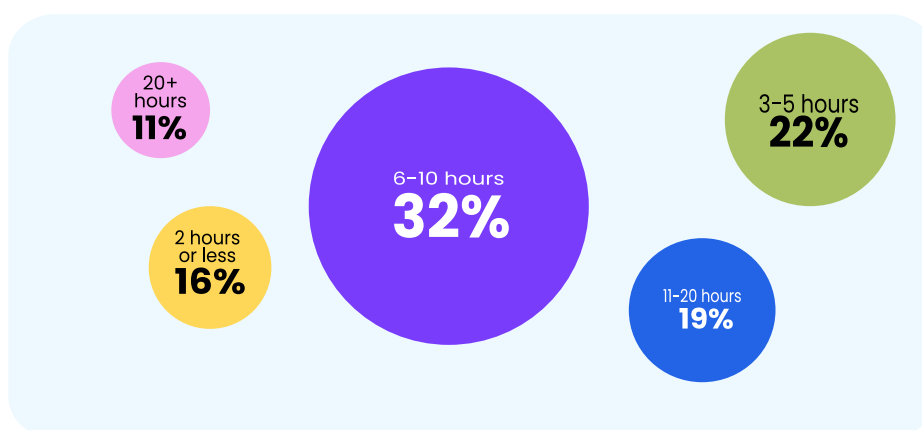
Those who don't use dedicated tools:

3-5 hours
27%

20+ hours
6%

2 hours or less
18%

6-10 hours
37%

11-20 hours
12%

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What is your time frame for personalized onboarding?

Personalized onboarding with dedicated tools:

| More than 4 months | 2-4 months | 1-2 months | Between 2 weeks to a month | 2 weeks max |
| 5% | 32% | 41% | 14% | 8% |

Personalized onboarding with non-dedicated tools:

| More than 4 months | 2-4 months | 1-2 months | Between 2 weeks to a month | 2 weeks max |
| 4% | 20% | 29% | 37% | 19% |

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Strategic Takeaways:

- Using dedicated tools shortens the time frame you spend in customer meetings.

- Using dedicated onboarding tools most likely indicates a 1-2 month onboarding process, whereas non-dedicated tools imply a likelihood of between 2 weeks to a month.
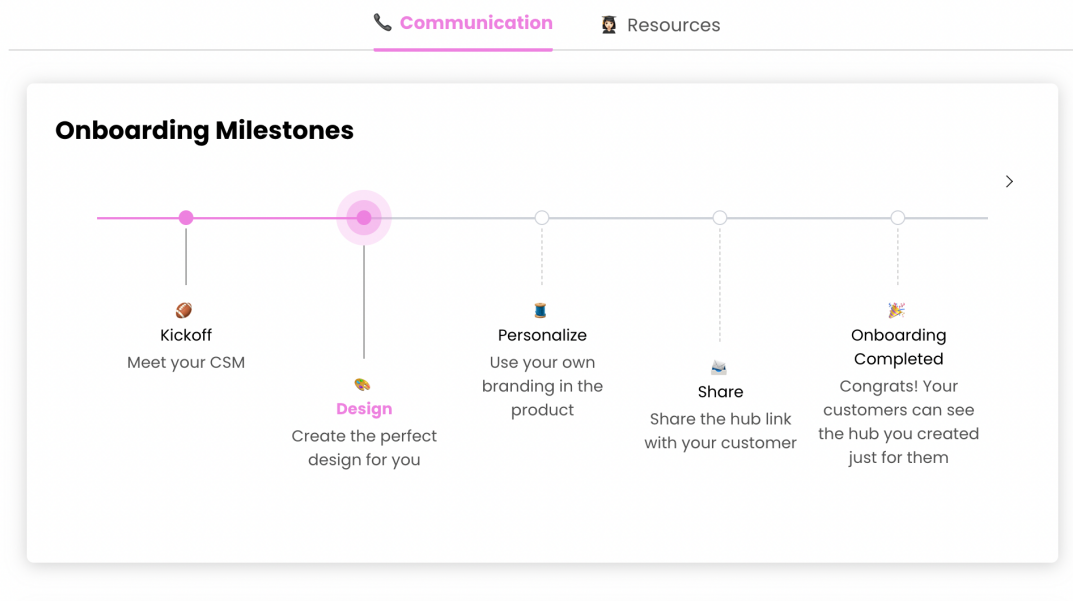
The End (for now...)

This report represents our strong belief in customer onboarding as a crucial pillar of successful business — of immeasurable significance for organizations of every size.

For this reason, companies seeking optimal results should strive to own their onboarding and fine-tune its methodologies to each customer use-case.

EverAfter equips companies with the tools needed to create this onboarding journey for every customer; delighting them with the sheer simplicity and clarity of the EverAfter client onboarding experience.

Why not give it a try and build your first customer onboarding hub today?

📞 **Communication**   👤 Resources

Onboarding Milestones

🏈
Kickoff
Meet your CSM

🎨
Design
Create the perfect design for you

🧵
Personalize
Use your own branding in the product

✉️
Share
Share the hub link with your customer

🎉
Onboarding Completed
Congrats! Your customers can see the hub you created just for them

GET STARTED WITH EVERAFTER