
# AI RELEASE RADAR

## FOR PRODUCT ENGINEERING TEAMS

Uncover the challenges that product and engineering departments face amidst the “AI Revolution”. Discover the critical role that feature management and experimentation play for teams across a broad range of industries.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Feature Management & Experimentation Are Critical to AI Success

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into various industries has ushered in a paradigm shift, presenting both challenges and opportunities for product and engineering departments. Central to navigating this transformative landscape is the critical role of feature management and experimentation in optimizing AI software release practices.

This report delves into the adoption of AI by companies, its implications on software release strategies, and specifically, the significance of feature management and experimentation throughout the AI revolution.

Our research shows a massive wave of AI-models and AI-powered releases coming into fruition. Almost 3/4 of companies across industries are knee-deep in developing these initiatives today. However, very few product and engineering teams feel prepared to mitigate the risk of releasing AI. Astonishingly, only **9%** of companies are set up to catch release issues when the time comes.

This report concludes that feature management and experimentation are emerging as a critical enabler of the AI revolution. In fact, **82%** of surveyed respondents believe feature management is more important for releasing AI features than for their traditional rollouts.

> "Experimentation is a new requirement for developing and releasing AI capabilities. It is the gold standard for quantifying the impact of new AI models and understanding how users will respond to the outputs."

**Dr. Iavor Bojinov**
Professor at Harvard Business School

## OBJECTIVE OF THE SURVEY

The primary aim of this survey is to gain insights into how companies are embracing AI technologies and the consequent impact on their software release methodologies. Moreover, we seek to ascertain the perceived importance and utilization of feature management and experimentation tools amidst the AI revolution. At Split, across the industry, and even in a recent Harvard Business Review Article written by Dr. Bonjinov, there is a strong hypothesis that the proliferation of AI initiatives will catalyze the growth of the feature management and experimentation market.

## METHODOLOGY

How did we go about procuring our “AI Release Radar”? At Split, we conducted two distinct online surveys targeting a diverse pool of respondents, yielding 89 and 55 responses respectively. Participants represented various industries and occupied roles across product and engineering departments. Notably, **75%** of respondents were not Split customers, while **12%** utilized Split’s free product. Finally, **13%** were paying Split customers.

## Discovery 1

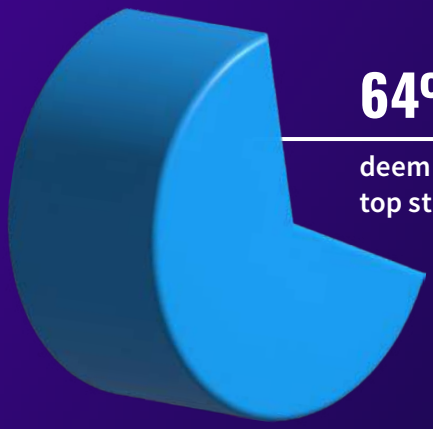
# THE INDUSTRY IS KNEE-DEEP IN AI-DEVELOPMENT

**72%**

are presently engaged in the development of novel AI models or AI-powered capabilities

**69%**

of those respondents have initiated their endeavors within the preceding 12-month period



**64%**

deem this line of work to be a top strategic priority

According to Split's recent survey, there is a burgeoning wave of development in AI-models and AI-driven functionalities, with a conceivable emphasis on the democratization of Generative AI technologies, particularly in applications such as chatbots and co-piloting systems.

### Survey Snapshot

**WHAT TYPE OF AI MODEL, CAPABILITY, OR APPLICATION DO YOU EXPECT TO DEPLOY SOON?**

"Models to provide personalized product recommendations"

"Developer assisted AI tools"

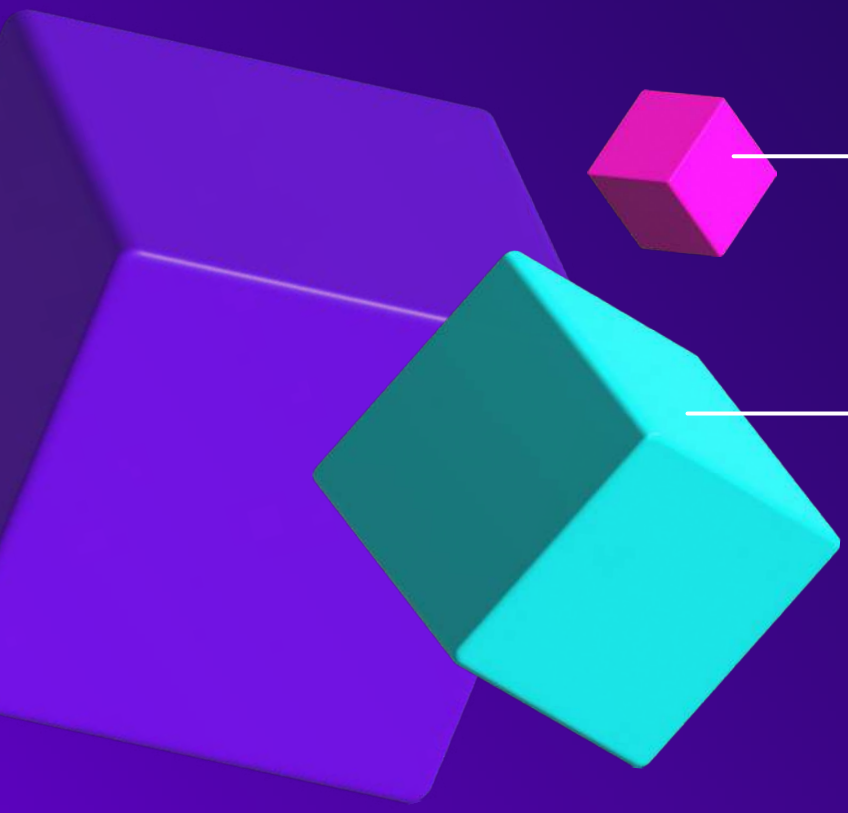
"LMM embedded guidance a la virtual assistant"

"User services AI"

"Chat bots"

## Discovery 2

# A WAVE OF AI RELEASES IS ABOUT TO COME CRASHING IN



**21%**

expect to deploy AI within the next 90 days

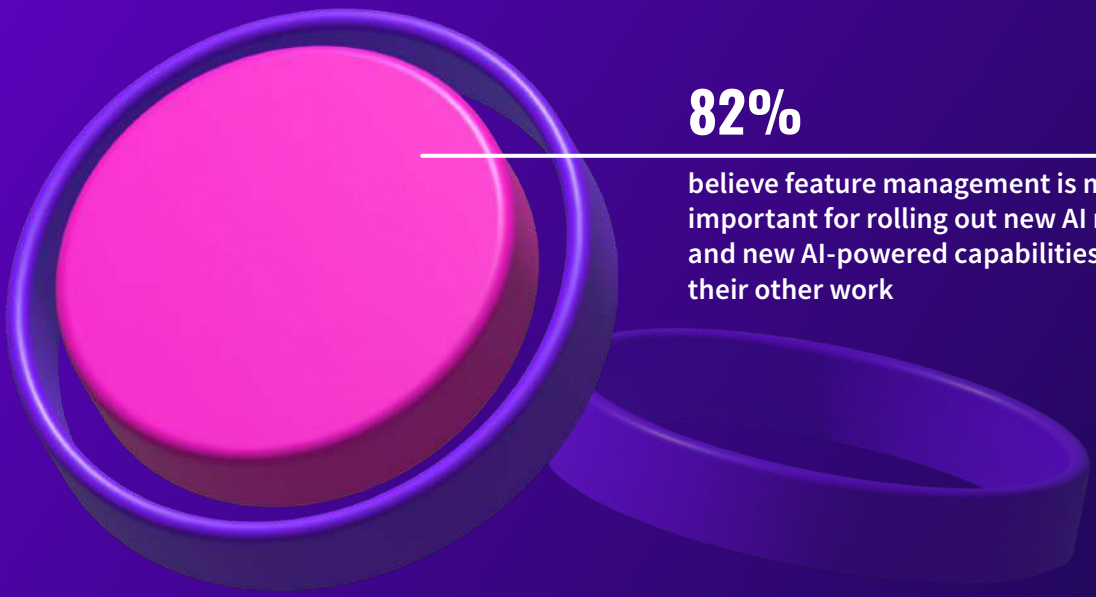
**58%**

have plans to deploy AI within the ensuing year

Given the substantial momentum behind the ongoing wave of AI-related initiatives, the imminent emergence of consequential AI releases is hardly unexpected. In fact, more than half of respondents play to deploy AI in the coming year. And, nearly a quarter within the next 90 days.

## Discovery 3

# FEATURE MANAGEMENT IS NOW TABLE STAKES



**82%**

**believe feature management is more important for rolling out new AI models and new AI-powered capabilities vs. their other work**

According to industry analyst reporting, recent years have witnessed a notable evolution in pivotal technologies geared towards facilitating swift and secure releases of any novel functionality. Within this transformative landscape, feature management and experimentation tools, exemplified by platforms such as Split Software, are swiftly gaining prominence as essential components.

Consequently, it is unsurprising that engineering leaders tasked with introducing novel AI models and AI-powered functionalities perceive these technologies as indispensable to their endeavors. Indeed, these tools are regarded as even more crucial than their counterparts pertaining to non-AI-related initiatives.

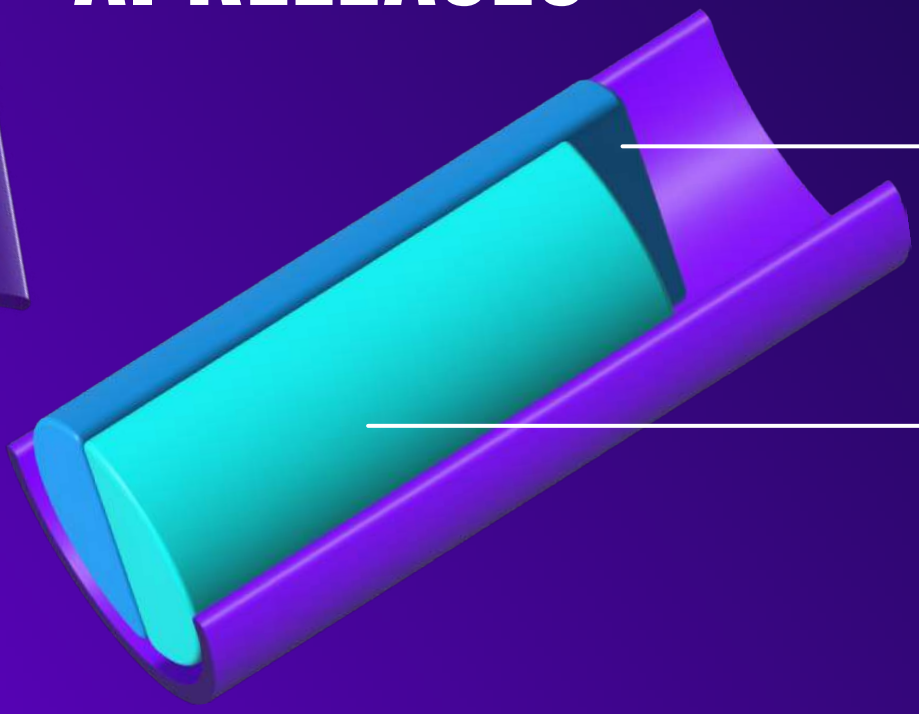
### Survey Snapshot

**WHAT TYPE OF TOOLS AND RESOURCES DO YOU EXPECT TO BECOME MORE IMPORTANT AS THE MARKET FOR BUILDING AI FEATURES GROWS?**

"Testing tools" "Continuous monitoring" "Measurement devices" "Automatic feedback"

## Discovery 4

# ISSUE DETECTION, EASY ROLLBACKS – CRITICAL TO AI RELEASES



**81%**

**believe it is more important to be able to roll something back easily in case of unintended consequences**

**72%**

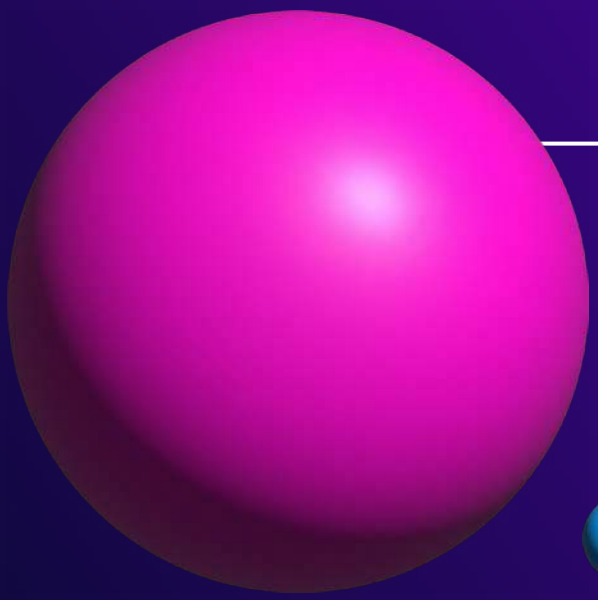
**believe it is more important to be able to catch issues quickly**

The significance of feature management and experimentation in the deployment of AI functionalities and models is underscored by several critical factors. AI initiatives necessitate substantial financial investment, allocation of career capital, diversion of engineering and project management resources, and heightened opportunity costs. These demands place a significant focus on resources and may lead to resource depletion. However, organizations must navigate these challenges while safeguarding the end-user experience from any potential harm or negative impact.

Supporting statistical evidence highlights the importance of feature management and experimentation. Of those who believed feature management and experimentation tools to be critical, **72%** of respondents consider it crucial for the swift detection of issues, while **81%** emphasize the need for the ability to easily roll back implementations in the event of unintended consequences.

## Discovery 5

# VERY FEW ARE EQUIPPED TO RELEASE AI SAFELY



**91%**

are not set up to catch issues quickly

**9%**

are fully set up to catch issues quickly

**15%**

are fully prepared to roll something back easily in case of unintented consequences

The current landscape presents heightened stakes, and despite a high level of awareness for the need of feature management and experimentation software, respondents acknowledge the inadequacy of their preparedness to address these challenges. There is a prevailing sentiment among respondents as they lack the requisite capabilities for the effective risk mitigation of AI releases.

Supporting statistical data reveals that only **9%** are fully equipped to swiftly identify and address issues, while a mere **15%** are fully prepared to easily revert implementations in the event of unintended consequences.

### Survey Snapshot

**HOW DO YOU PLAN ON MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF NEW AI-BASED PRODUCT INITIATIVES?**

"Success starts with tying to concrete business objectives like increased revenue, lower costs, and higher efficiency. I'd start by aligning my team to business goals."

"We plan to establish measurable objectives aligned with desired outcomes like enhanced user experience or increased efficiency"

## Discovery 6

# EXPERIMENTATION CREATES A COMPETITIVE EDGE

**73%**

**believe experimentation, including AB testing, is more important for rolling out AI-powered capabilities or models vs. non-AI related rollouts**

**80%**

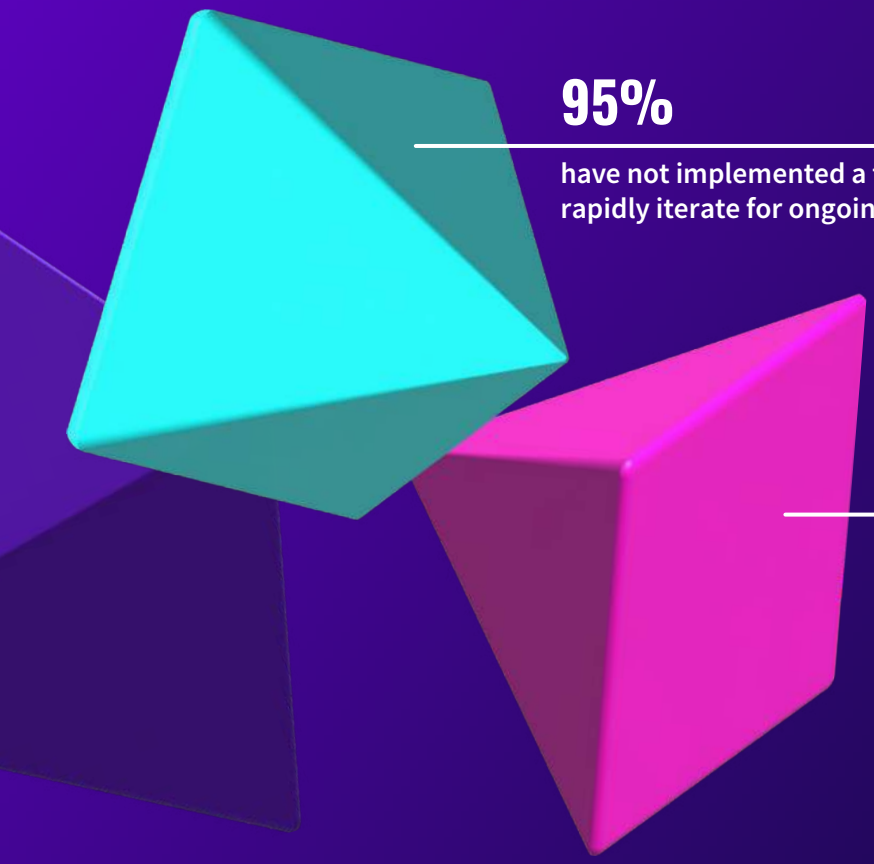
**believe it is more important to be able to rapidly iterate for ongoing optimization**

In the realm of releasing AI functionalities and models, there exists a palpable and substantial imperative to innovate, iterate, and maintain a competitive edge. Specifically, there is a pronounced necessity to conduct extensive experimentation in order to achieve optimal outcomes.

Supporting statistical data reinforces this notion, with **73%** of companies emphasizing the greater importance of experimentation, including AB testing, for the deployment of AI-powered capabilities or models compared to non-AI related rollouts. Moreover, **80%** stress the heightened significance of rapid iteration for continuous optimization.

## Discovery 7

# THE INDUSTRY ISN'T GEARED UP TO ACCELERATE AI RELEASES



**95%**

**have not implemented a tool or capability to rapidly iterate for ongoing optimization**

**93%**

**have no way to measure their model's impact and use that data for continued optimization**

When it comes to having the essential speed and safety to release AI, respondents also feel ill-equipped. An astonishing **95%** have not implemented a tool or capability to facilitate rapid iteration for ongoing optimization, while **93%** have no mechanism to gauge their model's impact and leverage that data for sustained optimization efforts.

## SUMMARY

Our research proves that there is an imminent wave of new AI-models and AI-powered releases coming. AI-powered capabilities being built by many product development teams today, potentially with a focus on the democratization of Generative AI technologies.

Alongside this revolution, Feature management and experimentation tools, like Split Software, were already fast becoming table stakes. In turn, it should also come as no surprise that engineering leaders planning to release new AI-models and AI-powered capabilities see these technologies as absolutely critical to their success. In fact, these tools are seen as even more important than their non AI-related work

However, while stakes have never been higher, product and development leaders admit that they aren't equipped to tackle these challenges. Few have the right tools in place today. This all indicates that the importance, prevalence, and unmet need of feature management and experimentation will continue to grow significantly along with this wave of new AI-models and Ai-powered capabilities being immediately released into the market.

## THE FUTURE

As the AI revolution continues, we're curious to see how it's fundamentally changing your development process. Let us know what issues you are facing and what tools have been effective for your product development team.

Reach us at split.io/company/contact

## SWITCH IT ON WITH SPLIT

**The Split Feature Data Platform™** gives you the confidence to move fast without breaking things. Set up feature flags and safely deploy to production, controlling who sees which features and when. Connect every flag to contextual data, so you can know if your features are making things better or worse and act without hesitation. Effortlessly conduct feature experiments like A/B tests without slowing down. Whether you're looking to increase your releases, to decrease your MTTR, or to ignite your dev team without burning them out – Split is both a feature management platform and partnership to revolutionize the way the work gets done.

To learn more, book a demo today.

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Switch It On at split.io