Aalto University

Aalto Founder School

Extracting Value from Notes

Aalto Founder Sprint Fall 2025

Employees take notes constantly. Meeting transcripts, project documentation, client calls, research findings - organizations generate vast amounts of information through daily work. This documented knowledge should inform decisions, prevent rework, and accelerate projects. Instead, it largely sits unused. Microsoft's research shows that employees spend more than half their time in meetings and communication, yet struggle to find information when they need it.

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Fortune 500 companies lose...

$31.5 billion

...annually because knowledge isn't shared effectively.

Introduction

Employees take notes constantly. Meeting transcripts, project documentation, client calls, research findings - organizations generate vast amounts of information through daily work. This documented knowledge should inform decisions, prevent rework, and accelerate projects. Instead, it largely sits unused. Microsoft's research shows that employees spend more than half their time in meetings and communication, yet struggle to find information when they need it. Fortune 500 companies lose $31.5 billion annually because knowledge isn't shared effectively[1].

The problem isn't capturing notes anymore. Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and Zoom automatically transcribe and summarize meetings. Digital tools create audit trails of every decision, conversation, and idea, all in a uniform and predictable format. If anything, organizations now have too many notes, too much data, and no idea what to do with it. Thus, the real challenge is conversion: turning scattered observations into structured insights that teams and systems can actually use. Meeting transcripts don't become action items. Research findings don't inform product decisions. Client feedback doesn't shape strategy. The gap isn't in recording information, it's in extracting value from it, which is what this report addresses.

A foundational question must be answered first: Can professionals actually take useful notes? If documentation skills are lacking, solving conversion becomes irrelevant. Our research across eight industries found otherwise. In 25 interviews, professionals consistently captured notes: designers document decisions in Figma, consultants produce detailed summaries, sales teams log interactions in CRMs. The notes exist. The breakdown occurs downstream when teams need to retrieve, synthesize, or convert that information months later. This makes it a tool problem, not a training problem.

In this research, we examined note-taking workflows across eight industries - from law and medicine to creative work and management consulting. We interviewed professionals, analyzed existing tools and competitive gaps, and studied where organizations lose time and money to fragmented information. Our focus was identifying sectors with clear pain points, measurable costs, and realistic paths to adoption, and our initial hypothesis is that there are indeed strong business opportunities.

Our Focus

identifying sectors with **clear pain points**, measurable costs, and realistic **paths to adoption**, and our initial hypothesis is that there are indeed strong business opportunities.

Most sectors we examined proved unsuitable. Regulatory barriers, slow procurement cycles, or entrenched competition made them poor fits for rapid validation. However, we identified two industries where the conversion problem creates measurable costs and where solutions are buildable: creative work and management consulting. The following sections examine **where companies lose money on fragmented notes**, what solutions would need to work in practice, why existing tools fall short, and whether there is a real business opportunity there.

Market Opportunity

Now that we know there is a problem and a solution is needed, the next relevant step is to determine the market size. Knowledge workers globally number over 1 billion, spanning consulting, creative services, sales, engineering, finance, and legal roles. Research shows 20-30% of knowledge worker time is spent searching for or recreating existing information ,. Tools that streamline this conversion work could realistically improve 15-20% of that process. For example, management consulting alone represents $346 billion growing at 7.8% annually, while the creator economy sits at $205 billion growing at 23.3%. If 30% of firms in these markets adopt conversion tools that capture even 10% of the value they create, the addressable opportunity is $15-25 billion. The economics work: SaaS businesses in these segments typically achieve 75-85% gross margins, making this a lucrative market structure. Both markets demonstrate our assumption: wherever deliverables depend on synthesizing fragmented notes, there is willingness to pay for conversion tools.

Timing determines who captures this value. Generative AI became reliable for synthesis only in 2023-24. Before that, models hallucinated too much. Soon, incumbents will own this space, but right now, there is a gap. Microsoft Copilot converts one meeting into a summary. Google does the same. Neither synthesizes across platforms, and that cross-platform synthesis is the opportunity. Why hasn't someone built it? Platforms profit from lock-in, not interoperability. Antitrust blocks the obvious fix, acquisitions that consolidate ecosystems, therefore Microsoft won't integrate with Notion and Notion won't integrate with Figma. Remote work scattered notes across all these tools, making the pain acute. First movers can define synthesis workflows before the giants notice.. The technology exists, the pain is intense, and the clock is ticking.

Why does this matter?

1. **Faster decisions:** engineers stop recreating test results buried in lab notes, sales teams stop rediscovering why deals closed.
2. **Consistency:** when a pharmacist or designer leaves, their decision rationale doesn't vanish.
3. **Deliverables that match intent:** a mid-sized consulting firm loses $500K-2M annually in partner time spent formatting instead of thinking, while lawyers spend time on legal reasoning instead of searching case notes.
4. **Faster onboarding:** new researchers learn from searchable experiment logs instead of asking around, and AI models train on structured data instead of noise.

Methodology

We examined eight initial industries where notes are central to daily work and where market size and usage rate of note-taking principally justified investigation: law, medicine, pharmacy, space/aerospace, engineering operations, research/education, creative work, and management consulting. Following 25 user interviews across these sectors, including CEOs, designers, consultants, engineers, sales leaders, VC investors and compliance managers, to understand where note-taking workflows break down in practice. While keeping in mind our priority to iterate quickly given our limited timeline of 4 weeks, out of a total 13 weeks, we were then able to narrow our scope to deep-dive into two particular sectors. We supplemented these interviews with analysis of market reports, competitive tools, industry publications, and vendor documentation to assess market dynamics and existing solutions.

We evaluated each opportunity against four criteria:

- **Business value:**

Does this save significant time or money? Is it urgent?

- **Market access:**

How long are sales cycles? Who controls budgets? How bureaucratic is procurement?

- **Competitive position:**

What do existing tools miss? What creates defensibility

- **Technical feasibility:**

Can this integrate with existing systems? Does it meet governance requirements?

10 Client Engagement Services

6 Creative Sector

3 SpaceTech

2 PharmaTech

2 EdTech

1 LegalTech

1 HealthTech

Distribution of interviewees per Industry.

Grand View Research

$46.8B (2027)

$26.7B (2024)

LegalTech

The global legal tech market is valued at $26.7B (2024) and projected to reach $46.8B by 2030 (10.2% CAGR, Grand View Research). Note-taking is the foundation for nearly all legal workflows: case facts, evidence, hearings and depositions, affidavits, and countless other elements. Despite the emergence of digital mediums, 40% still prefer legal pads and 35% notebooks (Attorney at Work) as their primary medium of note-taking, then often paired with case management tools (ABA TechReport 2023). This hybrid causes inefficiencies: fragmented records, duplicate transcriptions, weak search, and poor integration, causing the average law firm partner to write off **~300 hours per year** of potentially billable time.

Competitors in the legal-tech space target higher-value areas: drafting, contract automation, semantic search, and legal research, while gaps remain in real-time multimodal capture, explainable risk scoring, and privacy-preserving collaboration (TR Legal; LexisNexis; ABA; Reuters).

Despite the market size and opportunities, the barriers outweigh opportunity: entrenched analog habits, confidentiality/IP risks, and slow adoption cycles make the space too high-friction and bureaucratic for our timeline, thus the sector will not be pursued further.

Grand View Research

$347B (2027)

$115B (2024)

EdTech

Researchers and academics take notes constantly, documenting experiments in lab notebooks, annotating papers in reference managers, outlining ideas in digital workspaces.

The broader EdTech market was valued at approximately USD 115 billion in 2021 and is projected to reach between USD 347 billion and USD 467 billion by 2027, growing at 13.3% to 26.3% CAGR. The sector includes over 80 million teachers, 10 million researchers, and 1.3 billion students who **all rely on note-taking workflows daily.**

However, note-taking represents only a fraction of EdTech spending, and that fraction is dominated by free or institutionally-provided tools: Google Docs and OneNote come with university IT packages at no cost to users, while reference managers like Zotero and Mendeley are open-source or institutionally licensed. Many researchers still prefer paper notes due to concerns about data privacy, permanence of digital records, and potential criticism of preliminary ideas.

New entrants would compete against **free, trusted alternatives** while navigating 12-18 month university procurement cycles requiring extensive compliance and security reviews, therefore we could not identify a viable paid market wedge within our time-frame.

Market Data Forecast

$47.37B (2033)

$4.69B (2025)

HealthTech

The NLP (Natural language processing) healthcare market is projected to grow from USD 4.69 billion (2025) to USD 47.37 billion (2033) at 33.52% CAGR. Clinical notes represent 80% of healthcare data in unstructured formats, with organizations generating millions annually containing untapped information about patient conditions and treatment responses. Manual review by clinical staff is time-consuming, inconsistent, and error-prone, representing significant operational costs.

Major market gaps exist in **specialty-specific solutions**, as vendors provide generic NLP struggling with specialty terminology. Healthcare systems rely on basic text search within EHRs (Electronic health record), limited to exact keyword matches without clinical context understanding. Current competitors and enterprise pricing **excludes** smaller specialty practices representing a wide range of physicians, creating a market opportunity regarding specialty private practicioners. While there are competitors such as Tandem Health in this market, the sector is relatively new and open for new players providing better solutions. However, EU regulatory barriers create substantial compliance challenges for startups. Regulatory compliance increases costs and extends development, favoring established incumbents. Considering the cohort doesn't have the resources to quickly navigate intense regulation and legislation challenges within the program's timeline, not to mention significant variance per country, it is not reasonable to build a product for this market. The Medical note-taking industry is to be excluded as a possibility considering product development.

Grand View Research

$12.79B (2030)

$7.7B (2024)

PharmaTech

The medication management systems market encompasses pharmacy workflow software, automated dispensing, clinical decision support, and documentation tools, valued at USD 7.70 billion in 2024 and projected to reach USD 12.79 billion by 2030, growing at 8.8% CAGR. Within this market, clinical documentation represents a critical but underserved component: pharmacists must take detailed notes on patient consultations, medication reviews, and clinical interventions to prevent errors, justify staffing, and demonstrate value. Hospital pharmacists demonstrate $582-8,213 in cost savings per shift when interventions are properly documented (Carlson & VanWert, 2024), and specialty pharmacists waste 5+ hours weekly on manual prior authorization paperwork for high-value prescriptions averaging $2,000+ per patient monthly.

However, the gap lies in implementation consulting, not software. Epic and Cerner (the two companies that provide Electronic Health Records (EHR) software to 70%+ of U.S. hospitals) already include pharmacy documentation modules built into their systems. Meanwhile, AI medical note-taking startups raised $800M in 2024 specifically targeting clinical documentation, with companies like Abridge reaching $5.3B valuations. Hospitals **struggle** to adopt these existing tools effectively, making this a **consulting services opportunity** requiring 18-24 month sales cycles, deep healthcare workflow expertise, and IT department approvals. This implementation-heavy business model is incompatible with rapid software validation, therefore this sector is not pursued further in our research.

Grand View Research

$27.5B (2027)

$8.9B (2024)

FieldTech

Field documentation is critical in capital-intensive operations: aviation mechanics complete job cards for every repair, data center engineers execute maintenance procedures, and chemical plant operators document safety rounds. When documentation fails, costs explode, aircraft grounded for **incomplete paperwork cost** airlines **$10,000-$150,000 per hour**, and data center outages cost $5,600-$9,000 per minute. The connected worker market (digital tools for field workers like wearables, mobile apps, voice systems) is growing from $8.9B in 2025 to $27.5B by 2030, with European data center maintenance alone is a $3.3B market growing to $8.4B by 2032,[4] and European aviation MRO at $21-24B. Field workers juggle paper checklists, photos on phones, and manual data entry, creating errors and missing information that auditors reject.

Existing field tools like SafetyCulture focus on forms and checklists. Healthcare ambient scribes prove voice-to-documentation works, but no vendor has adapted this for noisy industrial environments with strict audit requirements. However, proving that voice-captured outputs meet ISO standards, EASA Part-145 (aviation), and NERC (power grid) compliance requires regulators and auditors to accept the format and provenance: a validation process taking 18-24 months of pilot deployments and certification reviews. This regulatory acceptance timeline is incompatible with our 13-week sprint for rapid validation, therefore this sector is not pursued further.

Grand View Research

$12.07B (2030)

$5.94B (2024)

SpaceTech

The global on-board computing platform market in the space industry was estimated at USD 1.54 billion in 2023 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 12.9% from 2024 to 2030 while the space robotics market was estimated at USD 4.40 billion in 2022 and is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of 8.8% from 2023 to 2030.

The space industry presents clear challenges in data management, driven by increasing mission complexity, growing data volumes, and bandwidth limitations. The **amount of data** generated by the satellites is **humongous** and cannot be sent back to Earth in entirety, often resulting in **processing delays** and team conflicts on which sector's data should be sent back first. These pain points have led to the emergence of solutions such as onboard AI for data reduction and multimodal logging to potentially generate preliminary notes to decide the inbound data calling. However, much of this growth is concentrated in long-horizon government missions and capital-intensive ventures that follow multi-year procurement cycles.

The competitive landscape is also maturing. Companies such as KP Labs (Poland) are already pioneering onboard AI and notable work is also being done to implement TinyML, potentially for satellites, by companies such as Ninja Labo (Finland), positioning themselves as early leaders. While gaps exist in multimodal logging and knowledge retention, they are secondary concerns compared to the broader engineering challenges of space systems.

Given the steep expertise barrier, slow adoption cycles, and limited short-term market opportunities, we chose not to pursue this domain. While space remains an exciting long-term field, its characteristics are misaligned with the short, iterative, and traction-driven nature of the Founder Sprint.

Case Studies

*"When a project spans years, dozens of people, and hundreds of files, **no one** can reliably **find the right decision**, version, and context when they need it."*

Grand View Research

(2025) **$10B** (2032) **$14.5B**

Creative Sector

Strategic and Tactical Relevance of Notes

Strategically, the creative industry is primed for digital solutions that capture, structure, and retrieve qualitative insights across workflows. Tactically, teams need AI-powered note extraction to reduce wasted time, accelerate iteration, and preserve decision trails. Unlike the legal or pharmaceutical industry's slow adoption cycles, creatives are early adopters of new tools, open to experimentation, and accustomed to rapid software turnover (as seen with Figma, Discord, and Notion's explosive adoption). This combination of market scale, immediate ROI, and cultural openness makes the creative sector an ideal entry point for launching a next-generation note extraction solution.

Moreover, professionals in the creative sector are increasingly required to collaborate across various industries, requiring effective communication and interdisciplinary knowledge. Designers often engage in projects that span multiple fields, such as technology, business, and social sciences, to address complex challenges. This trend highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in fostering innovation and expanding the impact of creative work.

Market Segmentation

To narrow the scope enough that we could adequately deep-dive into a segment to understand user pain points and explore market gaps, we prioritized segments based on importance of note-taking within them. This would ensure we were researching problems causing enough pain to even be worth innovating for, which left us with the following five:

Estimates of the global creative industry's value vary depending on definitions and scope, but recent market research consistently underscores its multi-trillion-dollar scale. Business Research Insights (2024) reports that the creative industries market was valued at ~USD 2.9 trillion in 2024 and projects growth to ~USD 4.23 trillion by 2033 at a CAGR of ~4.3% (2025–2033), in total revenue. While it is not the sole contributor to this total revenue, note-taking is the central foundation to all creative workflows, existing in numerous formats and across several mediums. Coherent Market Insights estimated the specific market for creative tech to be 10B as of 2025, and growing to 14.5B by 2032. This market includes tools for physical and digital notes, drawings, wireframes, prototypes etc.

(Industrial, Interior, Product, UX/UI)

Designers

Design teams operate at the intersection of long-term product/brand strategy and rapid, iterative execution. Strategically, UI/UX and product designers shape user-centred differentiation, platform roadmaps, and product-market fit. Their choices determine retention, monetization, and brand perception over years. Tactically, designers translate those strategies into wireframes, prototypes, modular component libraries, and sprint deliverables that directly affect time-to-market and conversion metrics. Emerging AI in generative design, automated usability testing, and visual search accelerates iteration and surface pattern insights, but only if teams capture context from design rationale or client feedback in searchable notes and linked assets.

This particular segment was the most thoroughly researched, of all the segments that follow. Other than personal interests in this segment amongst the team, we also intuitively associated it with the largest volume of note-taking in workflows (e.g, compared to, say, photographers). The overwhelming majority of user interviews conducted with creative sector professionals also belong to this category, during which we observed a clear need for new tools. It is important to note that there already exist strong competitors (digital boards, canvas, presentation tools). This raises the question of whether it might be a better strategy to first target a smaller niche and, over time, adapt the tool to other segments or even other industries, as the solutions to the market gaps we deep-dove for this sector are likely adaptable to be industry-agnostic.

Brand Strategists and Digital Marketers

Strategically, brand and media teams define positioning, campaign funnels, audience segmentation, and long-range channel strategies, the playbook that governs creative direction and spend allocation. Tactically, they run campaign tests, creative optimization loops, media buys, analytics reviews, and creative briefs that translate strategy into measurable KPIs.

The global advertising and digital-media market tops the trillion-dollar scale, making efficient creative operations and rapid learn-and-iterate cycles commercially essential. AI enhances targeting, creative variant generation, and automated performance summaries; however, those gains depend on structured notes, central repositories of audience insights, past creative performance, and approved messaging. When notes, asset metadata, and campaign post-mortems are fragmented, teams duplicate briefs, misapply learnings, and waste media spend. Centralized note capture + integrated analytics dashboards converts tactical experiments into strategic playbooks that compound value across campaigns.

Architects, Urban Planners, Exhibition and Set Designers

In large-scale built and cultural projects, strategy involves multi-year visioning, stakeholder negotiation, regulatory compliance, and legacy concerns, the frameworks that shape masterplans, brand partnerships, and public value. Tactically, teams conduct site surveys, produce drawings, coordinate revisions across engineering, and document approvals; these activities require precise, time-stamped records and geospatial context. Digital tools and AI (3D model indexing, geotagged notes, BIM integrations, automated change logs) make tactical workflows faster and safer, while robust note-taking preserves the decision trail necessary for approvals, procurement, and liability mitigation. The architectural services market is large and growing, and reducing redundant site visits or rework through integrated notes and model-linked documentation delivers significant cost savings per project. For multi-stakeholder projects, institutional memory, stored as searchable notes tied to models and photos, is as strategically important as the masterplan itself.

Painpoints and Market Gaps

Creatives regardless of subcategory consistently report pain points around fragmented knowledge management: critical context (design rationale, client feedback, research findings) is scattered across Figma, Notion, Miro, Slack, Google Docs, and paper notes. This fragmentation causes lost insights, rework, and slowed project delivery.

Despite the rise of collaborative platforms, most creative professionals still rely on hybrid workflows: paper sketching + cloud storage + project management tools. Based on our interviews, designers report spending significant time weekly searching for past files, time that could be spent on actual design work. The vendor landscape is fragmented: tools like Milanote (visual boards), Notion (flexible docs), and Evernote/ OneNote (general note-taking) serve partial needs but lack deep visual search, decision provenance tracking, and seamless integration with design suites like Adobe or Figma.

Core frustrations are encapsulated by the idea that when a project spans years, dozens of people, and hundreds of files, no one can reliably find the right decision, version, and context when they need it. Across the user interviews we've conducted, the primary pain points are:

1. **Scattered and inconsistent notes:** Notes live in physical notebooks, iPad, Word docs, Figma comments, Confluence, Jira, and even email threads.
2. **Inefficient search & retrieval:** Project delays due to lost information.
3. **Fragmented tools & ecosystems:** The current tools don't fully meet user needs.
4. **Inactionable meetings:** Meetings concluding without a clear set of immediate, shared action items.

In one interview with a UI/UX designer working at an international financial institution, we discovered that the inability to locate a simple project requirement had resulted in a delayed project delivery by over 2 weeks! This error is not an uncommon occurrence, either. In another interview with a founding design lead, we discovered that even with complete tool-ecosystem freedom in their own design consultancy firm, in a lean and agile team, decision-making and deadlines are still regularly delayed by these information retrieval related blockers.

Despite the wide variance in tooling ecosystems, there is no variance in the fact that teams and organizations as a whole in these creative sectors are often using multiple tools simultaneously as a 'bandaid' solution to their pain points, suggesting there does not exist any one single tool that appropriately addresses the problems they face directly. These shared irritations are not only expensive, but also recurring; two qualities that strongly bolster the potential for opportunities in this market.

Trends and Why Now

The creative industries are undergoing rapid digital transformation, driven by the need for remote collaboration, multimodal content production, and AI-assisted workflows. Digital tools have normalized cloud-based collaboration, but they also expose the inefficiencies of fragmented knowledge capture. At the same time, AI is reshaping numerous creative practices, turning previously niche experiments to now mainstream expectations. Surveys by UX Tools and Figma highlight designers' demand for centralized, searchable repositories that connect research insights with design artifacts in real time. As creative work becomes more distributed, iterative, and data-rich, organizations have an increasingly large need for solutions that extract value from notes and turn qualitative knowledge into a reusable strategic asset.

While trends are ever-changing, the market gap we've explored has persisted and will continue to persist, which we believe to be a strong indicator of an opportunity ripe for innovation and disruption. Combined with the rapid evolution of AI, the pace and quality at which a solution can now be rapidly developed and iterated on, presents ideal circumstances and a clear "why now". Given that modern creative tooling ecosystems still consist of several tools for the sole purpose of addressing a single underlying pain point, it's clear that no current tool or incumbent on the market appropriately addresses the gap yet.

Adoption Barriers

Despite clear need and market opportunity, adoption faces several barriers.

tool fatigue is a significant issue: creative professionals already juggle many software tools and cloud storage, making them hesitant to add another standalone platform.

workflow inertia persists: many teams rely on established, if inefficient, habits such as sticky notes, online documents, or ad hoc chat logs, and changing these patterns requires visible, immediate ROI.

budget sensitivity is a challenge: we found across our user interviews mid-sized studios (EU) typically allocate only EUR€1,000–5,000 annually for team software, which makes pricing and positioning critical.

integration complexity is a barrier: if a solution cannot plug seamlessly into existing creative toolchains, it risks being ignored.

Overcoming these barriers requires a product that is lightweight at entry, deeply integrative, and demonstrably capable of saving hours per week in knowledge retrieval and project coordination.

*"**The challenge** is not the importance of notes, which is well established, but rather the efficiency, consistency, and governance of how they are captured, structured, and **turned into action.**"*

Grand View Research, Statista

(2025) **$103B** (2030) **$196B**

Client Engagement Services

We define client engagement services as an umbrella term that covers organizational activity that has to do with engaging with clients. More specifically we are focused on methods of how instead of what or where. This means that we are looking at how we are communicating instead of in which channel or what is the subject we are communicating. In short, all presentation material generation tools land under this umbrella term. According to Statista, the size of Office software market, that includes products like word editors and presentation software, is approximated to be around $29.51B whereas Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software market is $73.40B in 2025 according Grand View Research. In total we estimate the relevant market to be around $103B in 2025.

Our sector focus was on management consulting and B2B sales, as several members of our team have direct experience and interest in these sectors and as both of these industries have strict requirements for presentation material shown to clients. From our user interviews we found that the ability to capture and reuse notes is central to performance in both industries.

Strategic and Tactical Relevance of Notes

Notes are one of the backbones of human-to-human work. At a strategic level, organizations and individuals depend on notes to convert many short interactions into long-term knowledge.

Leadership teams use shared notes to keep track of various information such as project details and deliverables as well as customer needs and comments from different stakeholders. This valuable information is extracted from notes to help with choices regarding project management, organization management, pricing of products and services and important aspects such as how to allocate resources effectively into business or product development or other investment decisions. In long projects with many stakeholders, notes keep continuity when people change roles and when decisions are reviewed later for governance, audits, or lessons learned. In this way, notes are more than reminders, they form a clear record that supports revenue forecasts, pipeline management, delivery quality, and risk control.

In companies, frontline teams especially rely on notes for precision, coordination and execution. Sales professionals, consultants, and project managers handle dozens of parallel conversations and threads. Clear notes capture who decided what, by when, and why. They also capture context that is hard to recover later, such as decision dynamics, objections, and tone of conversation. This improves follow-ups, reduces duplicate work, and avoids contradictions between technical, legal, and customer success touchpoints. Interviews with CEOs, investors and sales professionals also highlight the importance of customization in the front-line work.

For example background research and meeting notes are used to tailor pitches and proposals to the client's sector and role. These tailored materials increase the probability of closing or advancing a deal. The experts also note that teams share notes in a consistent structure, execution is faster and fewer details are lost.

Market Segmentation

B2B Enterprise Sales

According to expert interviews, B2B enterprise sales are long**,** complex, and relationship-driven processes where deals can span six to eighteen months and range from thousands to even millions in value. **Success depends** on capturing and synthesizing a wide range of information, from budgets and timelines to subtle signals like decision-making dynamics or emotional tone. Because multiple stakeholders are often involved, from technical presales to legal advisors, **sales teams rely on consistent information-sharing** to maintain continuity and alignment. Our interviews with four experienced professionals across sectors such as insurance and enterprise software confirmed that notes and background research form the backbone of these processes. They highlighted that **preparing for meetings, customizing proposals, and tailoring solutions** to each client's industry context are impossible to execute effectively without accurate notes.

Notes are more than memory aids; they function as a strategic layer for both execution and decision-making. When aggregated, they reveal patterns such as recurring objections, procurement hurdles, or emerging customer needs. These can **influence pricing, product roadmaps, and go-to-market strategies**. The experts we interviewed emphasized that preparing for client interactions requires a mix of detailed research and note-taking in order to customize offers, while follow-up notes from meetings are often directly transformed into proposals. **One CEO described** tailoring proposals for clients in industries as different as defense and consumer electronics as critical to winning business, explaining that customization significantly improves the likelihood of closing a deal. This aligns with research showing that tailored proposals can raise success rates from around 20% to as high as 50%, underscoring why systematic **note-taking is indispensable in enterprise sales.**

Despite this importance, note-taking practices remain fragmented across the industry. Some salespeople continue to prefer handwritten notes for their immediacy, while others rely on **digital systems** such as HubSpot, Notion, or AI-powered assistants like Fireflies. **Customer relationship management (CRM)** software such as Salesforce or Microsoft Dynamics have become the standard repositories for sales notes, but our interviewees admitted that **adoption often fails** in practice because sales representatives are "too busy" or "too lazy" to update them consistently. **AI-driven transcription and note-taking** tools are beginning to reduce this burden by automatically creating transcripts, summaries, and action points, often syncing directly into CRMs. However, trust and discretion were identified as major barriers: visible AI note-takers in meetings were described as **intrusive** or **damaging** to client relationships, especially in high-trust sectors like banking or insurance. The consensus among the experts we spoke to was that the future lies in hybrid approaches structured data entry for essentials like budgets and decision-makers that is then supported by AI-generated transcripts for context. Even though the gap between capturing notes and reusing them effectively still remains a central challenge, the trends are indicating that **technological change** can help in bridging this gap.

Management consulting

In consulting, note-taking practices are deeply embedded in the day-to-day workflow but remain fragmented across tools and teams. A typical engagement involves a mix of stakeholder interviews, client workshops, and internal problem-solving sessions, each generating large volumes of raw input. Current practice relies heavily on digital documents such as Microsoft OneNote, Word, or Google Docs, often stored within project-specific folders on platforms like SharePoint or Teams. These notes are usually maintained by junior consultants or analysts and then synthesized into structured outputs such as interview summaries, workshop minutes, or issue trees. While effective at the project level, **this approach often leaves knowledge siloed,** making it difficult to reuse insights across clients or practice areas.

Some firms attempt to address this with centralized knowledge management systems, where sanitized project deliverables and selected notes are uploaded for firm-wide access. However, interviews with practitioners reveal that these repositories are often underutilized. The pressure of client delivery leaves little time for systematic knowledge capture, and consultants frequently resort to ad-hoc searches through old decks or informal knowledge sharing within networks. As a result, **institutional memory is patchy, and much depends on individual consultants' ability to recall or retrieve past cases.**

AI-driven tools are beginning to enter consulting workflows, but adoption is cautious. Meeting assistants that can join client calls or workshops to produce transcripts and action points exist, but many consultants avoid deploying them directly in front of clients, given sensitivities around confidentiality and data security. Instead, AI is more often used internally, for example to summarize brainstorming sessions, generate draft interview summaries, or extract themes from large sets of notes. Some firms are experimenting with proprietary platforms that combine structured project data (timelines, stakeholders, KPIs) with unstructured notes, aiming to create searchable knowledge bases that go beyond simple document storage.

Best practice in consulting is moving toward a hybrid model that blends human judgment with automation. Structured elements such as stakeholder maps, issue logs, and risk registers are maintained in standardized templates, while unstructured insights are captured through free-form notes or AI-generated transcripts. This combination ensures that key project data is not lost while still preserving the nuance and context that come from client interactions. Practitioners emphasize that while **automation can reduce the administrative burden, consultants still need to exercise judgment** in deciding what is most relevant to capture and how it should be framed for both internal and client-facing use.

Painpoints and Market Gaps

Every engagement in business with multiple stakeholders such as B2B sales or management consulting generates hours of interview notes, workshop outputs, and internal analyses. Managing and utilizing all gathered material and maintaining the big picture is necessary but difficult. Generating client ready material also takes a significant time when the material has to both be fully customized client-by-client but also matching the company template and requirements. The latter problem is one of the most time consuming and manual tasks especially in management consulting.

*"We have notes in CRMs, slides, Slack, and emails, but **no single place** that tells the story of what's actually happening across our accounts. **Funnily enough** the best notes are in someone's notebook."*

Pain points from management consulting and B2B sales work can be pointed to three issues:

1. **Fragmented note sources:** Raw inputs are scattered across Word documents, OneNote files, Excel trackers, email summaries, and handwritten notes from workshops. Reconciling them into one narrative is error-prone and slow.
2. **Formatting and rework:** Significant time is spent converting text-heavy notes into structured slides with the "consulting polish" or "sales polish" expected by clients. Revisions often require multiple iterations as managers and partners refine the storyline.
3. **Knowledge reuse gaps:** While firms have knowledge repositories, consultants or sales people rarely reuse past material directly. Instead, they rely on informal networks or personal memory to find relevant examples, leading to duplicated effort and inconsistent quality.

The main frustration in management consulting is that highly skilled consultants, who are hired for their analytical and strategic thinking, end up spending disproportionate time on tasks that are mechanical but necessary: formatting slides, aligning wording across workstreams, and backtracking through notes to ensure every claim is supported. As one manager put it, "80 percent of the work is just getting the material into a client-ready state, 20 percent is the actual insight."

In B2B sales, the thing frustrating the professionals the most is the precise nature of the deals in terms of presentation material. A small error or oversight can kill the deal but being diligent in getting the material right is not always a sure way to landing a contract. Generating material, reusing knowledge and maintaining the big picture takes significant expertise and effort in a quick deal to deal environment.

The market gap is clear: existing tools like Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, and standard knowledge management systems capture inputs but do little to accelerate the transformation of notes into polished client outputs. Meanwhile, AI-driven tools show promise but adoption is slow, constrained by concerns around confidentiality and the lack of solutions tailored to the "last mile" of consulting work—turning messy notes into structured, credible, and client-ready storylines.

Trends and Why Now

There are two large trends impacting client engagement services. Acceleration in the rate of adoption for new technology is increasing competition. This pushes companies to conduct core business more efficiently. Companies that are able to do 20% more enterprise sales deals with the same staff are beating competitors in the market while consulting companies that are able to produce higher quality analysis faster and cheaper than competitors are landing the deals. Companies in these fields are looking for ways to streamline operations by adopting new technology that enables radical improvements in efficiency. Based on our interviews it's either adopt or die especially in enterprise sales but strongly in consulting as well.

On the other hand, the developments on AI have opened the door for mass personalization. LLM enabled intelligent systems that are able to grasp large volumes of text form data quicker and easier than humans have opened opportunities in the industry. While the technology is still imperfect, tools like AI agents can in the near future replace human labor in junior and assistive duties in fields like management consulting or B2B sales where both understanding large volumes of data and generating repeatable but strictly formatted material is of essence.

The current landscape of notetaking in the business world is experiencing a paradigm shift.

People are increasingly shifting from only hand-written notes to also using AI notetaker tools. Now that LLMs and AI notetakers have started flooding the market, people are trying to adapt to these new technologies as well as possible. For us this means that the foundational note-taking tool landscape seems a bit crowded with multiple large-scale competitors such as Fireflies and Notion taking the spotlight and therefore the true market gap exists in how the new mass amount of data from the meeting transcripts are utilized better.

The 'why now' can be condensed into the fact that organizations are able to gather more and more data day-by-day, allowing the organizations to develop a true customized and specialized AI-helper that knows both the organization and its customers inside out. Thus, since the note-taking tool market is getting crowded, the real opportunity lies less in the act of taking notes and more in unlocking data and extracting value from the rapidly increasing volume of notes generated by current notetaking tools.

To unlock adoption, solutions must ship with native integrations, built-in provenance/audit controls and consent-aware capture, and firm-grade templating, validated through short pilots that prove measurable improvements in cycle time and first-time-right rates.

Adoption Barriers

Confidentiality and consent constraints: NDAs, sector rules, and client policies on use of material introduces challenges.

Brand/template compliance: Auto-generated client presentable content must meet firm-specific taxonomies and "client-safe" standards without heavy manual polish.

Provenance, audit, and trust: Verifiable sourcing, retention/DSAR handling, and low error rates are mandatory; subtle inaccuracies in client deliverables are unacceptable.

Resist to change: especially management consulting as a very traditional industry has deep routed routines on ways of conducting analysis and generating material.

Startup Opportunities

We identified five startup opportunities. Two align with our focus on creative work and consulting. Three others represent real markets we are not likely to pursue due to regulatory timelines, technical complexity, or market saturation. We prioritized opportunities based on addressable market gaps, consistency of pain points discovered during user interviews, and technical feasibility within our 13-week sprint

Semantic cross-artifact search layer

As previously mentioned, **a gap exists** within creative and product development workflows **between the generation of information and its effective, efficient retrieval**. This gap creates inefficiencies and bottlenecks when teams attempt to locate evidence across fragmented sources of research and design artifacts.

A clear opportunity thus lies in the development of an **integration layer**. Such a system would **ingest diverse inputs**: interviews (e.g., audio, video, and transcripts), workshop boards (e.g., Miro, digital whiteboards), design prototypes and notes or comments (e.g., Figma), as well as project documentation (e.g., Notion, Jira, Confluence). These inputs would be processed into a unified semantic index through embeddings, enabling retrieval of provable results such as verbatim quotes, time-coded references, artifact links, and exportable "insight packs" aligned to product roadmaps.

Deliverable as a lightweight service, the solution could be integrated directly with existing tools and ecosystems with minimal friction to be used by product and research teams. By providing **provenance-first instant access to specific quotes, screenshots, or prototype frames that substantiate insights**, the system eliminates the time lost to manual search and enables teams to progress more efficiently toward informed decision-making.

Generating presentation and proposal material from notes

Writing **client-ready presentation material** takes a significant chunk of a typical consultant's time, our focus demographic, however it is important to preface this by stating it is industry-agnostic. Most consulting companies have **strict requirements and templates** for material like PowerPoint presentations and reports. They have a consistent way of creating the material with requirements on features such as exact color scheming, placement, fonts, paddings and hierarchy on slides created. There are companies in the AI slide generation field that offer AI generated slides but don't let companies customize and match their templates exactly. Most customization companies offer it in terms of color scheming and fonts but the layouts are usually fixed.

We propose a **Lovable-like solution** that lets a client submit their PowerPoint template and examples of a presentation or a proposal document and based on those, the AI tool will generate slides for distribution and presenting based on the client's needs. This would allow the slides to be used on external use as well making them indistinguishable from human made presentation slides. Offering a service like this could **speed up** the creation of client ready material similar to how Lovable has sped up the creation of client ready websites.

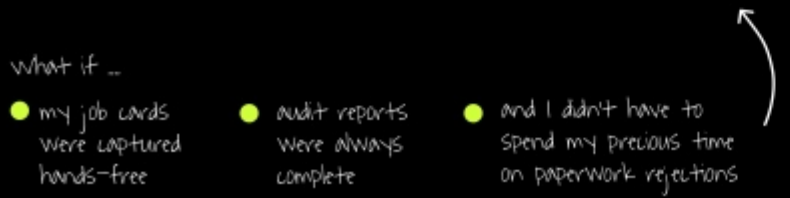
Voice-First Field Documentation Platform

As identified in the Engineering sector analysis, **field workers** in aviation, data centers, and industrial operations **struggle to document work while their hands are busy.** We identified an opportunity to build a voice-first mobile app where workers use voice and photos to capture maintenance, inspections, and procedures in real-time. The system would enforce required fields, capture provenance automatically (timestamp, GPS, equipment ID), and generate structured outputs (job cards, inspection logs, audit reports) that feed directly into existing systems like IBM Maximo, ServiceNow, or SAP PM via APIs.

Current field tools like SafetyCulture **are forms-based,** workers still tap checkboxes and type notes. Healthcare has proven that voice-to-documentation works brilliantly with ambient scribes like Abridge and Nabla, but those **systems are designed for quiet exam rooms** where a doctor speaks clearly into a device. **Adapting this to 85-dB factory floors** with multilingual crews speaking through push-to-talk headsets adds real technical complexity.

However, the largest barrier isn't technical; it's regulatory. Getting auditors and compliance officers to accept voice-captured records as valid proof for ISO standards, EASA Part-145 (aviation), or NERC (power grids) requires 18-24 months of pilot deployments and certification reviews to prove the outputs meet legal and safety requirements.

Why aren't we prioritizing it? Regulatory validation timelines exceed our 13-week sprint. This needs domain expertise in specific industries, patient capital for multi-year certification, and relationships with compliance bodies. Strong opportunity for someone with aviation, energy, or industrial operations background; wrong fit for our rapid validation model.



Onboard AI Inferencing for Satellite Data Reduction / Analysis

A significant issue within the aerospace community concerns the management of vast amounts of data generated by satellites during missions. Due to the limitations of downlink bandwidth and restricted transmission time, **satellites are not capable** of transmitting all their raw, unprocessed data bac<k to Earth; therefore, they often employ simplified preprocessing measures, such as averaging measurements, potentially losing important information. In addition, disputes often arise regarding prioritising data from different scientific groups within these limited transmission timeframes, causing inefficiencies and potential delays to research.

We proposed a solution to incorporate onboard artificial intelligence inferencing abilities, using lightweight models such as TinyML to enable data processing and analysis on the satellite directly. **By creating** initial summaries, **recognising** anomalous measurements, and **flagging** potentially important findings automatically, the satellite can send back to Earth a preliminary report that can be used to determine which category of data is most crucial for further research. This approach not only **saves valuable time and assets** but also ensures that information of critical nature to the mission or of scientific interest is not lost due to transmission constraints, increasing the efficacy and outcome of satellite missions.

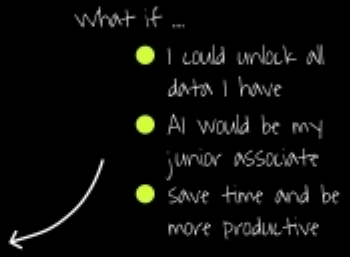
Why aren't we prioritizing it? This is a highly technical field that needs a vast amount of technical knowledge and information access that wasn't readily exploitable within the confines of our sprint timeline. It also has long decision-making and adoption periods, so both of those factors also decrease suitability for our rapid prototyping and verification of hypothesis requirements. The customer base is a narrow group, and the reality of entrenched competition with significant advantage to first-movers made it less likely for there to be any opportunity for differentiation. Those factors combined made it difficult to make substantive progress and traction for a thirteen-week sprint.

Deep-legal reasoning model

As previously established, **current legal research tools fall short** in applying precedent, especially in assessing credibility, weighing doctrinal weight, and distinguishing relevant cases or law. This limitation leaves the most valuable and time-consuming judgment-driven aspects of legal analysis in the hands of human practitioners.

By reducing reliance on senior review for such analysis by providing it through an interactive medium such as an intelligence platform, firms could **capture significant efficiency gains**. For instance, even a conservative conversion of 20% of partner review time into automated outputs could generate **cost savings** in the range of **$0.5–2 million annually** for a mid-sized firm of 200 attorneys.

Why aren't we prioritizing it? The underlying critique remains that true legal reasoning, especially the tacit application of precedent, doctrinal nuance, and judicial norms, cannot be reliably captured by current AI systems. Furthermore, additional factors compound the challenge: high friction in bureaucratic institutional environments, long adoption cycles within the legal industry, and substantial liability, privacy, and regulatory risks. Collectively, these considerations made the pursuit of this concept impractical relative to alternative opportunities identified.



Risks & Downsides

This section covers the primary risks of building a note-to-output conversion business in creative work and presentation business, the two opportunities we identified.

Market Risk: What if willingness-to-pay is lower than assumed?

Pricing unvalidated. Consulting firms may only pay $50-100/user instead of $200-500. Creative freelancers may resist subscriptions entirely. Market size could be off by 3-5x. Post-report interview: professional services firm spends 10 hours per sales deck but would pay only "small amounts".

Competitive Risk: What happens when incumbents add this feature?

Microsoft could extend Copilot across Office apps. Notion could build cross-workspace synthesis. Our only defense is workflow lock-in before they move. Microsoft already launched presentation features (mid-2024); users rejected them for quality issues (no fine-grained edits, non-native components). The bar is high, but incumbents are actively working on it.

Adoption Risk: Workflow change may be too disruptive.

Routing everything through a new tool requires behavior change. High friction = low adoption regardless of quality. Interview validation: "We are just so familiar with PowerPoint," current tools work "okay enough." Strong preference for incumbents despite acknowledged inefficiencies. High friction = low adoption regardless of technical quality.

Technical Risk: Can AI actually do this reliably?

Multi-source synthesis across formats (Miro + Slack + Notion) remains difficult. High-stakes deliverables require accuracy AI hasn't proven. Microsoft Copilot evidence: couldn't fine-tune details, didn't generate native PowerPoint components, produced non-editable images. Technical challenge unsolved even by well-resourced incumbents.

Execution Risk: Do we have the right team and timeline?

Building cross-platform synthesis requires expertise in multiple APIs, NLP for context preservation, and UI design for workflow integration. A 13-week sprint will face difficulties in delivering competitive, production-ready software. If the team lacks either technical depth or domain expertise in consulting/creative workflows, the MVP may solve the wrong problem or work unreliably.

Regulatory Constraints (Why We Rejected Other Sectors)

Heavy regulation was a disqualifying factor in sector selection, not a future risk. Healthcare AI falls under EU AI Act high-risk classification requiring 12-18 month compliance and 30-50% cost increases. Aviation MRO requires EASA Part-145 compliance. Engineering operations face NERC and ISO auditing standards. Financial services encounter SOX and MiFID II requirements. We deliberately chose creative work and consulting to avoid these compliance timelines, which are incompatible with rapid validation. This limits our addressable market but enables faster iteration.

A key conclusion we can make is that we don't know whether this opportunity is real without building and testing. Market risk and technical risk are the critical unknowns: we haven't validated pricing or proven multi-source synthesis works reliably. The next phase must answer: Will customers pay meaningful amounts for this, and can we build it well enough to matter? Everything else is secondary.

Conclusion

Organizations are drowning in notes they aren't using efficiently. We examined eight industries to find where this problem creates real business opportunity and discovered two markets where the pain is acute, the solutions are buildable, and the timing is right: the creative sector ($10B) where professionals waste 3-4 hours weekly searching fragmented notes across Figma, Notion, Miro, and Slack, and client engagement services ($103B) where consulting and sales teams manually convert project insights into presentations despite sophisticated systems that capture everything but extract nothing.

Five startup opportunities emerged from this research. Two target these markets directly: semantic cross-artifact search unifying creative workflows across platforms with provenance-first results, and AI-powered presentation generation automating consulting's notes-to-slides process while preserving firm templates.

Our confidence in these opportunities varies. We're highly confident note conversion is a real pain point, 25 interviews confirmed it with specific time costs. We are moderately confident about the creative sector because pain is acute and no major incumbent has failed yet. Consulting shows mixed signals: clear time costs (10 hours per sales deck) but strict requirements for products and stronger tool preference for incumbents, requiring careful validation. The honest takeaway: pain exists, solutions are feasible, but willingness-to-pay needs validation through actual pilots.

How would we proceed? Over four weeks we conducted research, interviews, and synthesis that taught us as much about validating opportunities as it did about note-taking markets. We believe we've formed a strong foundation not just for ourselves, but for anyone interested in innovating in this space, and we hope this report proves as insightful for you as it has been for us. For teams pursuing any of these ideas to market, we recommend:

- choosing an idea to focus on,
- iterating the MVP with feedback from initial clients,
- finishing the product for broader market launch,
- pursuing growth and funding traction.

After 25 interviews, we know extraction is a real pain point with willingness-to-pay signals across both markets, but both creative and consulting need explicit pricing validation before committing resources. The difference between a fundable business and an expensive solution people tolerate comes down to willingness-to-pay - not market size, not pain intensity, but actual revenue from paying customers. That's what determines if extraction becomes a business or remains a problem everyone acknowledges but nobody pays to solve.

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The Sprint follows a three-phase model: trend research, MVP development, and business strategy. This report encapsulates the first phase, completed over four weeks, and provides the analytical foundation for building and testing new business concepts.

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