

TOP 10 CHALLENGES

Growth Leaders Faced in 2024 & Actionable Paths Forward

GTM 10

Introduction

As part of the GTM10 nomination process, Cello conducted over 100 semi-structured interviews with growth professionals from Big Tech giants, high-growth scale-ups, and GTM influencers. Based on these GTM10 interviews, Cello's research reveals the ten biggest challenges growth teams faced in 2024.

By aligning your priorities with GTM10 honorees' proven playbooks, you can transform past hurdles into growth engines:

Core Challenges:

Ranging from scaling sustainably and executing strategic GTM pivots to balancing PLG with sales motions, driving data-backed ROI, integrating complex tech stacks, and attracting/retaining talent—each directly affects ARR velocity, GTM agility, and team effectiveness.

Actionable Playbooks:

Concrete tactics—quota frameworks, organizational designs, and strategic tech investments—that top performers have applied.

Next Steps

A concise three-point roadmap to benchmark your current state, prioritize high-impact initiatives, and set success metrics for continuous progress.

Insights from the Front Line

“We built a revenue operating system with AI-powered lead routing and end-to-end CRM automation—optimizing our funnel to achieve a 40% trial-to-paid conversion rate and balancing growth across paid, partner, and organic channels.”

“By democratizing product usage insights—making real-time behavioral data available to sales, marketing, and success—we doubled our self-serve business in one year and hit near-100% close rates on high-intent trials.”

— GTM10 Interviewees

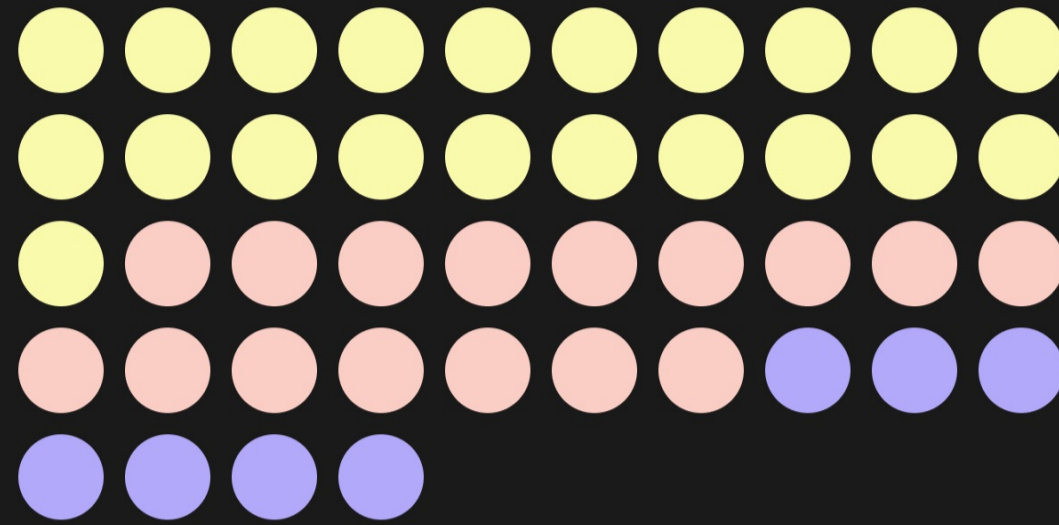
Top Challenges Overview

RANK	CHALLENGE	PREVALENCE	BUSINESS IMPACT
01	SCALING GROWTH SUSTAINABLY	VERY HIGH	CRITICAL
02	DEFINING & EXECUTING GTM STRATEGY & STRATEGIC PIVOTS	VERY HIGH	HIGH
03	RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS & LEAN RESOURCING	HIGH	HIGH
04	PRODUCT-LED GROWTH ADOPTION & BALANCING SALES MOTIONS	HIGH	CRITICAL
05	TECHNOLOGY STACK INTEGRATION & AUTOMATION COMPLEXITY	HIGH	HIGH
06	DATA-DRIVEN MEASUREMENT & GROWTH ROI	MODERATE	HIGH
07	CROSS-FUNCTIONAL ALIGNMENT & TEAM STRUCTURING	MODERATE	MEDIUM
08	COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE & MARKET DIFFERENTIATION	MODERATE	MEDIUM
09	CHANNEL & MARKET EXPANSION (UP-MARKET, GEOGRAPHIC)	MODERATE	MEDIUM
10	TALENT ACQUISITION, RETENTION & "TEAM OF ONE" PRESSURES	MODERATE	MEDIUM

The GTM10 Awards in Numbers

806

TOTAL NOMINATIONS



386

STARTUP/SCALE UP

276

BIG TECH

144

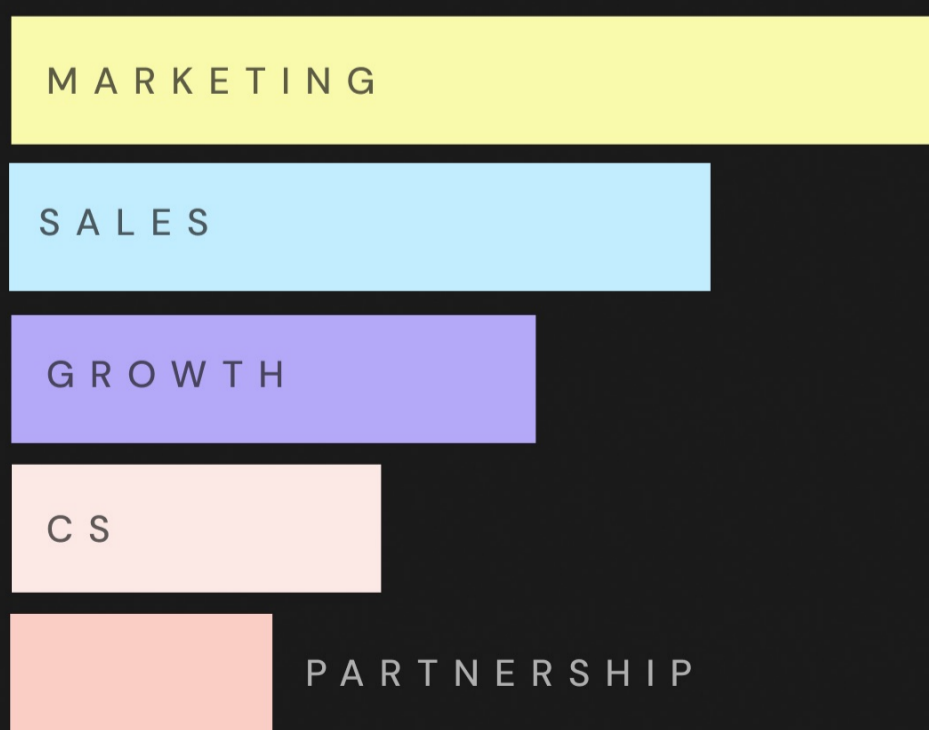
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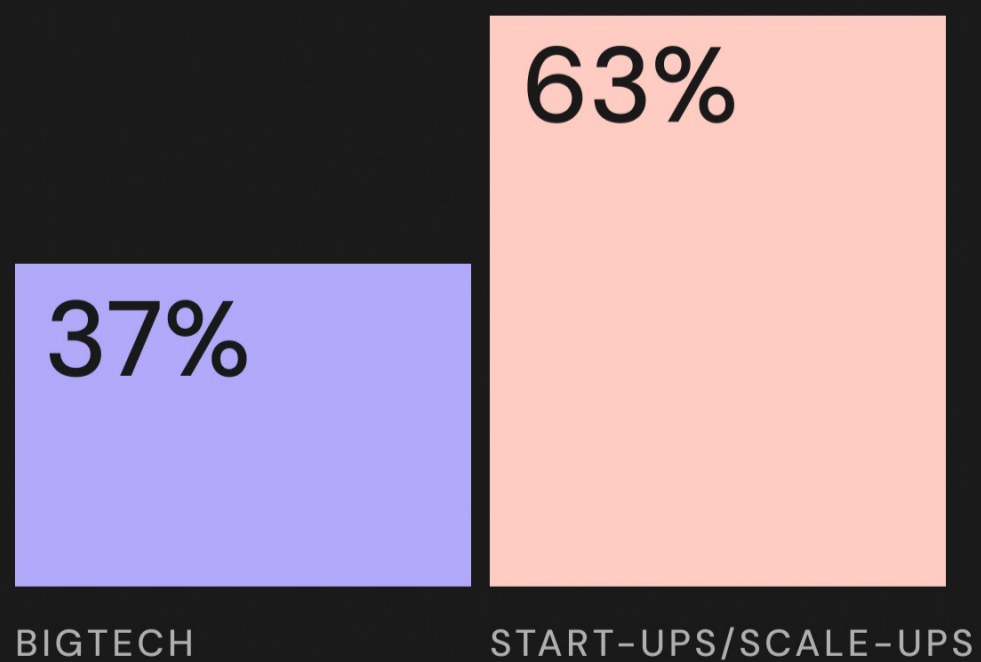
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COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

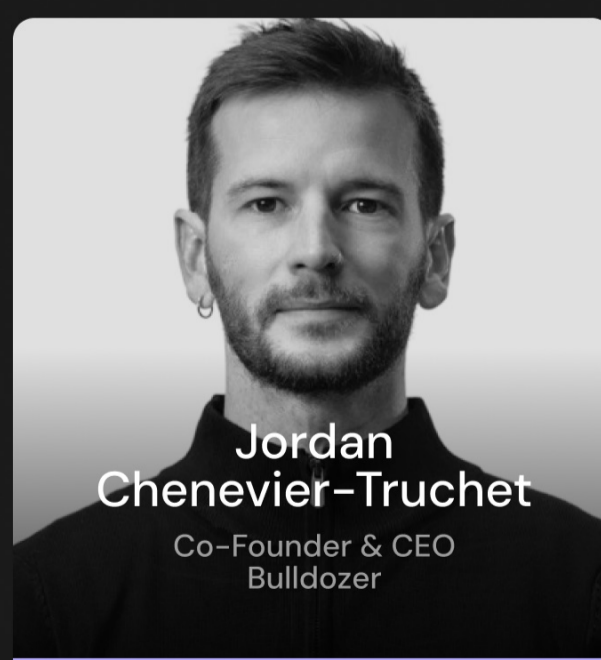
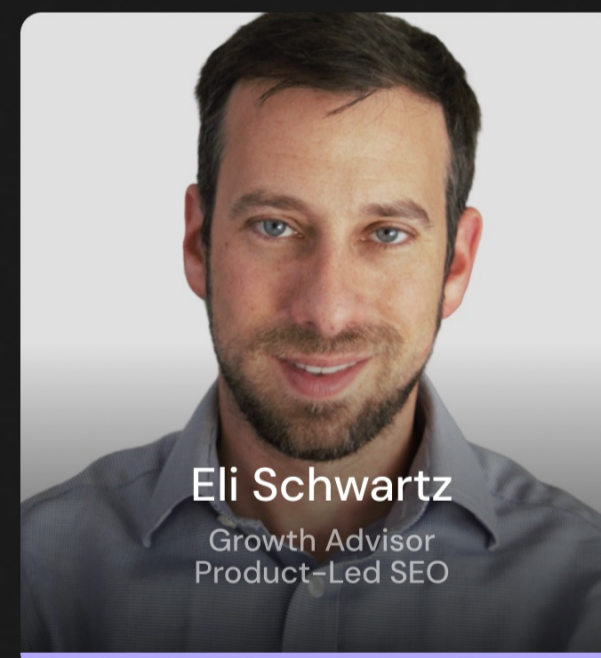
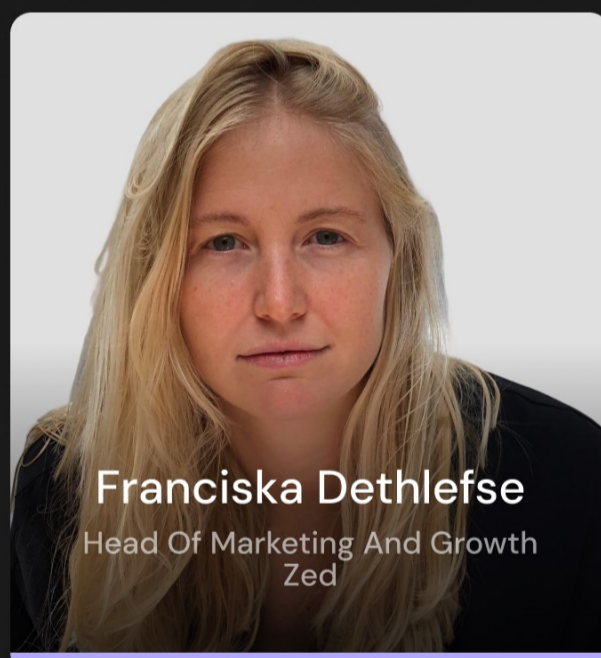
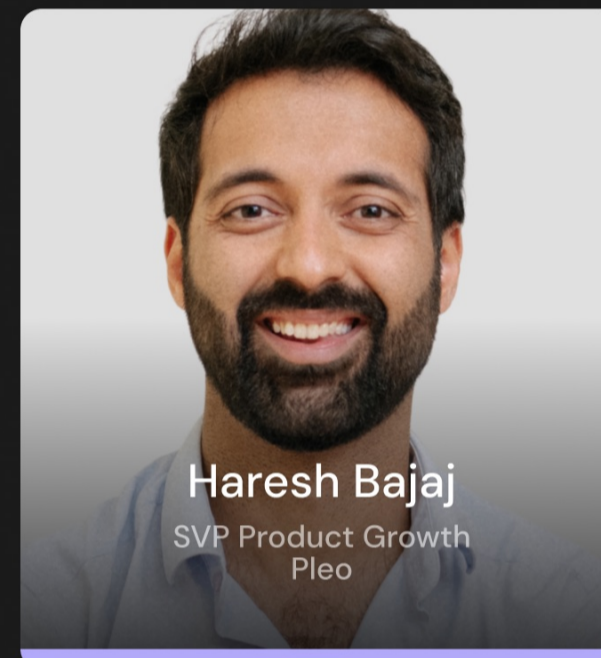
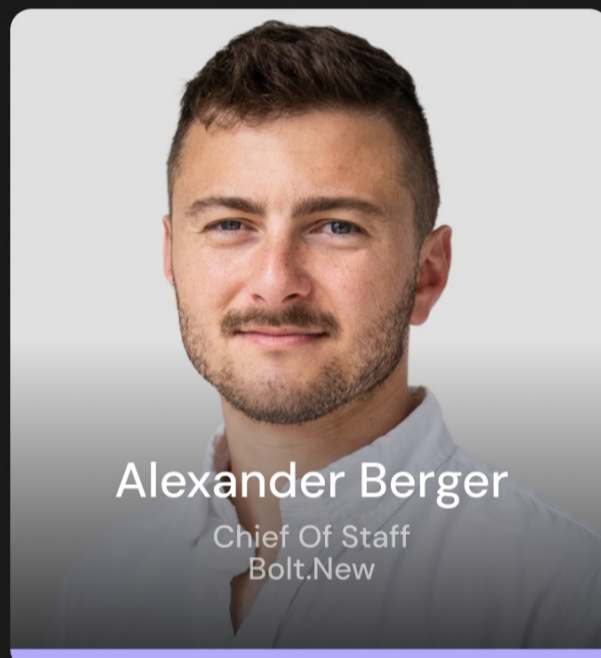
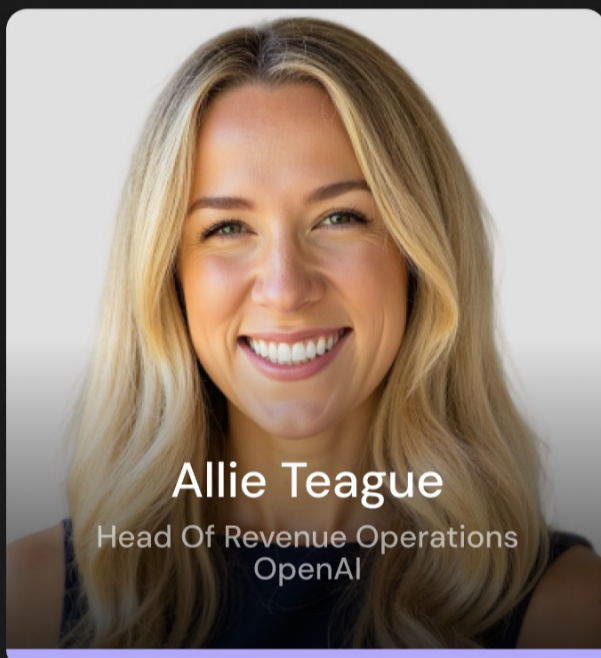
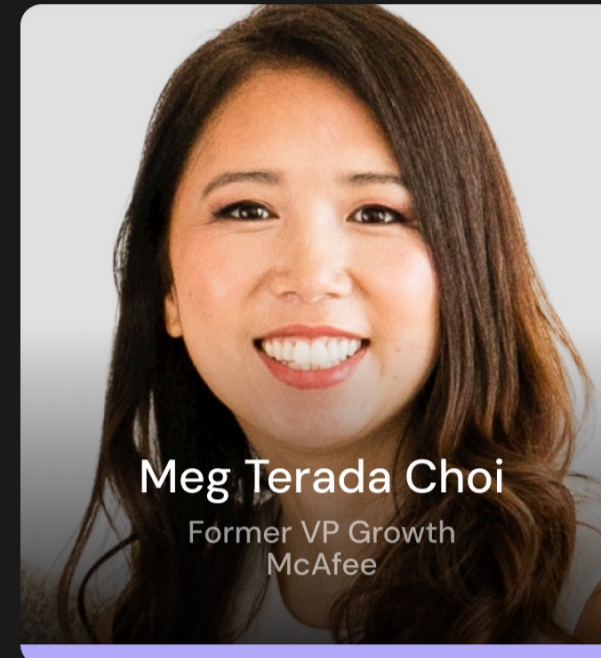
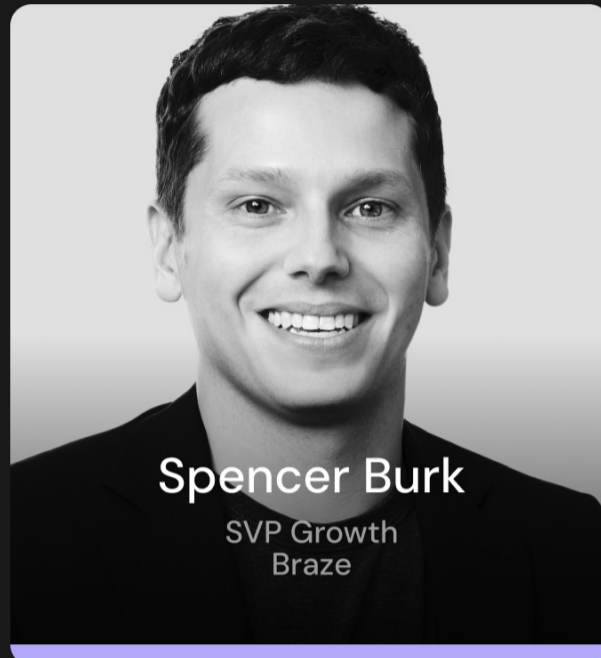
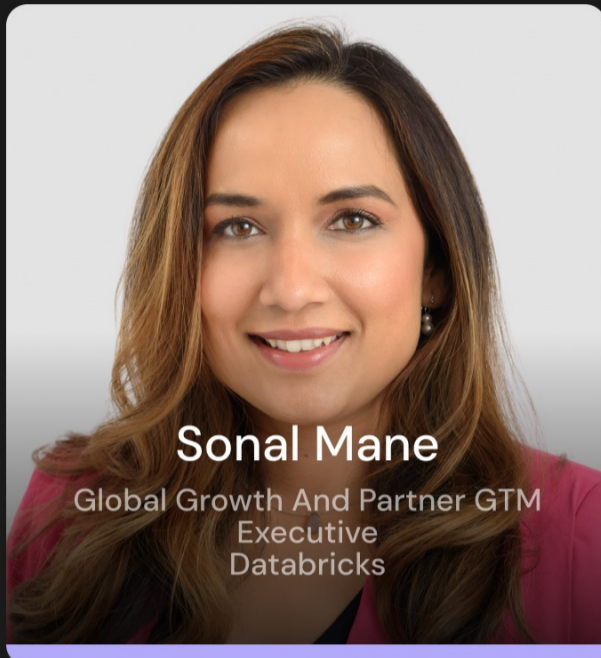
Most competitive category



Startups vs. BigTech



Meet the Growth Winners



The Growth Jury



Kyle Poyar

GROWTH UNHINGED

Kyle Poyar is the creator of the Growth Unhinged newsletter and co-founder of Tremont; a former OpenView partner and a leading voice on PLG, pricing, and SaaS GTM.



Heidrun Luyt

CMO • LASTPASS

Heidrun Luyt serves as Qonto's Chief Growth Officer; formerly Pipedrive's CMO, she delivered €1.15 B revenue and improved ROI by 33 points through product-led growth strategies.



James Da Costa

PARTNER • ANDREESSEN HOROWITZ

James da Costa is a partner at Andreessen Horowitz focused on B2B and AI; co-founder of YC-backed Fingo, Stanford researcher, and FT-shortlisted author of Fintech Wars.



Prelini Udayan-Chiechi

FORMER SVP MARKETING, GROWTH • ZENDESK

Prelini Udayan-Chiechi is a 25-year software marketing leader, formerly Zendesk SVP of Marketing & Growth; ex-IBM and Adobe; now advising Northzone and Evercopy.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

1. Scaling Growth Sustainably

The Challenge

- Lead-routing inefficiencies throttle inbound velocity.
- Manual CRM updates consume precious rep time.
- New-hire ramp is slow while ARR targets soar.

Playbook

- Deploy an AI-powered revenue operating system to automate routing, CRM hygiene and in-call coaching.
- Pair the tech with a leadership academy to scale frontline managers without a head-count spike.
- Keep spend tied to a burn-multiple of 1 by linking every program to validated unit-economics.

Expected Impact

Companies reported ARR rising doubling in one year while reps became 3-4x more productive and the burn-multiple held at 1.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

2. Defining & Executing GTM Strategy & Strategic Pivots

The Challenge

- ICP and positioning blur during product or market pivots.
- Fragmented messaging erodes credibility across channels.
- Securing stakeholder alignment stalls decisive action.

Playbook

- “Question everything” workshops that rebuild GTM from first principles, not recycled frameworks.
- Run alpha-beta-gamma pilots, iterating until the pivoted motion lands.
- Codify updated messaging and ICP in a playbook reviewed with leadership each quarter.

Expected Impact

One team reached \$40 M ARR in <3 years after a full-funnel pivot.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

3. Resource Constraints & Lean Resourcing

The Challenge

- People-light, AI-first missions demand outsized output from tiny teams.
- Budgets and hiring pipelines remain tight.
- Manual workflows trigger burnout.

Playbook

- Use ICE scoring to surface the highest-ROI experiments.
- Automate lead handling, CRM, and onboarding to remove low-leverage tasks.
- Stand-up shared-service pods (analytics, design) that multiple teams can tap on demand.

Expected Impact

Participants applying this framework dropped AQL cost by 70 % and hit growth targets without linear head-count expansion.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

4. Product-Led Growth Adoption & Balancing Sales Motions

The Challenge

- Fragmented self-serve journey produces trial drop-offs.
- Leadership worries new PLG tiers will cannibalize existing revenue.
- Limited visibility from free usage to paid prevents targeting.

Playbook

- Stream product-usage signals to sales, marketing and success in real time.
- Automate onboarding flows and signals-based routing for reps/CSMs.
- After three pilot phases, launch a monetized self-serve tier with clear upgrade paths.

Expected Impact

PLG leaders doubled self-serve revenue and hit near-100 % close rates on high-intent trials.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

5. Technology Stack Integration & Automation Complexity

The Challenge

- Fragmented GTM stack spawns data silos.
- CRM upkeep is tedious and error-prone.
- Rapid tool proliferation risks technical debt.

Playbook

- Real-time call transcription feeds structured data straight into Salesforce/HubSpot.
- Event-driven automations keep routing and notifications in sync across apps.
- Enterprise-grade security (e.g., SOC 2) bakes compliance into every integration.

Expected Impact

GTM reps became 3-4 × more efficient and onboarding time plummeted.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

6. Data-Driven Measurement & Growth ROI

The Challenge

- No single pane connects experiments to pipeline.
- Attribution gaps across PLG and sales cloud investment decisions.
- Usage insights live in functional silos.

Playbook

- Build a unified analytics dashboard spanning product, marketing and revenue data.
- Trigger campaigns off behavioural signals rather than static segments.
- Standardize pre-/post-campaign ROI reviews so budget follows proven wins.

Expected Impact

Teams saw significant lifts in self-serve conversion and far steadier pipeline forecasting.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

7. Cross-Functional Alignment & Team Structuring

The Challenge

- PLG, sales and product run on different cadences.
- Ownership of growth experiments is unclear.
- KPI misalignment sparks friction.

Playbook

- Form a cross-functional PLG pod (growth, product, engineering, marketing) with a shared North-Star.
- Hold weekly funnel reviews to surface blockers quickly.
- Publish a roles-and-responsibilities (RACI) matrix for every major initiative.

Expected Impact

Fixed a 40 % authentication drop-off, sped launches and improved hand-offs across the funnel.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

8. Competitive Landscape & Market Differentiation

The Challenge

- Crowded categories recycle indistinguishable messaging.
- Well-funded rivals dominate share-of-voice.
- Hard to articulate unique value at speed.

Playbook

- Launch a practitioner movement that champions first-principles GTM thinking.
- Publish differentiated thought-leadership to seed demand.
- Iterate ICP to target underserved niches and out-maneuver incumbents.

Expected Impact

Community-led awareness fuels pipeline and positions the brand as the category's strategic voice.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

9. Channel & Market Expansion (Upmarket, Geographic)

The Challenge

- Moving up-market against tech giants in EMEA raises credibility and compliance hurdles.
- Local regulations and language slow roll-outs.
- Existing ICP and playbooks don't map 1:1 to enterprise.

Playbook

- Run 90-day proof-of-value pilots to de-risk large deals.
- Leverage cloud-marketplace listings and credit-card self-serve paths for land-and-expand.
- Use signals-based routing so reps focus on the highest-value regional leads.

Expected Impact

A interviewee's team experienced successful EMEA entry with new geo's contributing a material slice of ARR.

Detailed Challenge Analysis

10. Talent Acquisition, Retention & "Team Of One" Pressures

The Challenge

- Scaling Gen-AI offerings needs scarce specialist skills.
- < \$750 k budgets force tough hiring trade-offs.
- Individual contributors juggle multiple mandates.

Playbook

- Lean on personal-branding channels (e.g., LinkedIn, user-generated content) to attract top talent cost-efficiently.
- Restructure teams post-pivot to align skill sets with the new growth loops.
- Use clear, skills-based scorecards to accelerate screening and improve retention.

Expected Impact

A team went \$0 → \$20 M ARR in 8 weeks and built a U.S. sales unit capable of 40 M-scale growth.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The ten challenges detailed here define the shared battleground for growth teams in 2024, regardless of company stage or size. By implementing these playbooks—spanning from data-driven measurement foundations to cross-functional operating models—growth leaders can convert today’s hurdles into tomorrow’s engines of scale.

Next Steps for Your Team

Benchmark

Assess your organization against each challenge to spotlight strengths and gaps.

Prioritize

Choose one “quick win” (e.g., unified analytics dashboard) and one “strategic shift” (e.g., PLG integration framework) to tackle in the next quarter.

Measure & Iterate

Define clear KPIs, review progress monthly, and evolve your playbooks based on learnings.

Prepared by the GTM10 Awards Research team at Cello.

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