



THE AI FUTURE IS HERE

How to use AI agents to ➤ innovate smarter ➤



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Foreword

By Steve Phillips

I am a Gen Xer. What that means is that I grew up with great music and no internet. The internet didn't really become a reality for my work until I was already well into my career. Indeed, the technology and business conditions that made Zappi possible are only a little more than a decade old.

The younger professionals I work with have never known a life that isn't at least partly digital. And when they eventually take the reins at Zappi, the generation that follows them will have grown up in a world profoundly shaped by AI. In just two generations, how we work — and even how we think about work — will have fundamentally changed.

I stepped back from my CEO role at Zappi at the end of 2024 because of AI. Well, it was bigger than that. I stepped back to focus on what I'm most passionate about: developing cutting-edge solutions to help brands stay ahead of market trends.

People regularly tell me that it seems like we are at “peak hype” when it comes to AI. Maybe that's true. It is also true that there is a genuine reason for excitement. Zappi's early foray into AI (back in 2012!) was no accident. It was the natural extension of our mission to help brands leverage data and insight to create commercial advantage and lasting value. Our recent book, ***The Consumer Insights Revolution: Transforming market research for competitive advantage***, fully articulated this vision. In it, we shared practical, actionable steps brands can take to break away from their competitive set and lead their markets.

This new guide shares how Zappi will enable the revolution. Not surprisingly, artificial intelligence is at the center of our approach. But it is far more than just taking our existing products and slapping an AI label on the tin. While other insights and marketing agencies are thinking about AI as a way of reducing costs and increasing efficiency, we see it also as an opportunity to fundamentally change how businesses operate.

Every business seeks the same thing: viable ideas. Ideas that customers want, that can be produced profitably, and that companies have the capacity to execute. For years, Zappi has helped brands achieve this efficiently and effectively. But AI changes the equation. **It doesn't just make processes faster — it creates new opportunities to do things better.**

The first thing most people say when I talk about AI in this context is that, as powerful as AI is, it will never replace human strategic thinking. And they're right. AI lacks human intuition, industry instincts and the ability to balance competing priorities.

But what if it could be augmented?

What if we could build AI models with access to the right tools and data — supervised by humans — to tackle different aspects of the product or communications development process? What if we build a model that provides category and competitive intelligence? Or another that leverages company data and consumer insight, even collecting new insight from customers when it needs to? How about one that generates creative concepts, and one that ensures legal and regulatory compliance? And, to make it all work together, a model that orchestrates the entire process?

This is what we've done. These models are called **AI agents**, and they are game-changing. They remove the constraints that limit every business: the scarcity of resources, the limits of knowledge and experience and the bottlenecks of process and decision-making.

They enable what every business wants: **the shortest, fastest path to a viable great idea.**

And just as importantly, they give our customers the proof they need to justify AI investments — not just as a cost-saving tool, but as a driver of creativity, smarter decision-making and faster execution.

AI isn't just accelerating work; it's reshaping how companies innovate.

In the chapters ahead, we'll define what AI agents are and how they differ from other AI applications. We'll explore how they function as integrated partners in the product development process with humans in the loop. We'll introduce a practical vision for how AI agents can help brands work smarter, reduce friction and bring viable ideas to market faster. And finally, we'll share real-world examples of how AI agents are already transforming the way businesses operate.

As William Gibson once said, ***"The future is already here, it is just not evenly distributed."*** This guide is written to help make sure that you are on the right side of the future!



CHAPTER 1

What are AI agents?

What is artificial intelligence? After all, the term is so pervasive these days that you'd think everyone knows what it is... but what is it really?

Perhaps the simplest definition is that **artificial intelligence refers to computer systems that can analyze data, recognize patterns and generate responses without relying on explicit step-by-step programming.** That output can be an answer to a question, a design, a poem or song, a video, a mathematical equation and much more.

Simplistically speaking, artificial intelligence (at least as we currently understand these things) relies on three components:

1. **Data** is the source material, like school books, training materials and lectures to a human. It represents the total extent of the AI's "knowledge."
2. **Domain knowledge** is akin to the wisdom one might receive from a professor or a more experienced colleague. It is the specialized knowledge embedded in the system, often shaped by training on expert datasets or specific rules, by which the AI learns what data to prioritize and what a good answer to a prompt or question looks like.
3. **Algorithms** are like the thought processes humans use to make sense of data, solve problems or come up with ideas. They are the processes by which an AI organizes information and makes decisions.



While AI has been around for years, the recent explosion in AI-based applications has arisen from **two hugely influential developments** that now power all major public variants of AI.

Large language models

The first of these are **LLMs**, or Large Language Models. LLMs are trained on datasets so vast that they include hundreds of billions — potentially trillions — of words, from text snippets to full books, from printed, digital, audio and video sources. LLMs are designed to understand how words relate to each other in context. By processing vast amounts of contextual language, they generate responses that feel remarkably “human.”

Transformers

The second is a special type of algorithm called a **Transformer**, which enables AI to process context more effectively. GPT (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) is a widely known example of this, powering tools like ChatGPT. Transformer algorithms are essentially highly advanced recipes by which AIs learn to read, understand and generate text. Before Transformers, AI struggled with context, like remembering what was said earlier in a conversation. The Transformer allows these models to “pay attention” to important parts of a sentence or paragraph, making their responses feel much more coherent, natural and intelligent.

Hallucinations, fabrications and calculations

If LLMs and Transformers make AI feel magical, the spell is easily broken by some of the inherent downsides to LLMs. Early ChatGPT models were famously incapable of even basic math and would completely fabricate answers to questions. Yet they would do so with the confidence and ease of an expert. Who among us expects a computer to get something wrong? The reason for their inaccuracies is simple: LLMs are fundamentally designed to put words together, not to seek true statements. They are designed to be generalist, not specialist, tools.

While LLMs have transformed how we interact with AI, their limitations — like a lack of real-time accuracy and contextual depth — have led to the development of AI agents. Unlike LLMs, which generate responses based only on training data, **AI agents actively engage with live data, tools and human input to drive real-world decision-making.**

What is an AI agent?

While there is no single definition, there is widespread consensus that an **AI agent** has **three key characteristics**:

1.

It takes direction and input from a human, typically in the form of a context and a question or problem to solve. It will even take direction from other agents, as we will see in the next chapter.



2.

It has access to tools and data by which it can gather and process new information that was not present in its underlying dataset or used for training purposes.



3.

It autonomously decides how to use the tools and data at its disposal to respond to the direction and input from the human.



The primary advantage of an agent — what sets it apart from an LLM — is its ability to access tools and data. This means we can feed the AI context and specialized information from a virtually unlimited number and type of sources. These inputs could be specific data, preferences or rules of thumb, all of which serve to improve the quality of its output and limit wrong or undesirable responses.

One of our founders, Donovan Kennedy, describes agents this way:

“In a way, agents give you isolation. They serve to contain the thinking of the AI to a specific area. They allow you to break a problem down into manageable chunks.”

This perspective makes it easy to understand how AI agents are being used, and their allure. AI agents are already operating across several sectors of the economy. For example:

- **Customer service AI agents** field requests from customers, ask clarifying questions, then look up information in internal documents or databases and respond with a solution.
- **Ecommerce AI agents**, trained on a company's products, make recommendations to customers based on their described needs.
- **Travel AI agents** take your preferred holiday specifications and return a list of top destinations that fit those specs along with pricing for flights, recommendations for hotels and even things for the kids to do.

Now, imagine not just one agent, but a team of AI agents that can synthesize years of research and internal datasets and provide immediate, actionable recommendations that are shaped by a company's strategic goals and brand voice.

You don't have to imagine — it already exists!

In the next chapter, we'll share how Zappi's AI Agents are transforming product development through human expertise, real-time data and AI-driven automation.



CHAPTER 2

Using AI agents for concept creation

Anyone who has ever worked in early-stage innovation knows that a great idea is only one piece of the puzzle in bringing new products to market. Generally speaking, every new product must clear three hurdles to be successful:

- **Appeal:** Something people will buy that, in the best of circumstances, stands out from the crowd.
- **Profitability:** Something the business can produce at a decent margin given the price the market will bear.
- **Execution:** Something the business can deliver. Here we're speaking not only about marketing and distribution, but also about the organization's internal dynamics — the preferences, priorities and policies that inevitably impact the process.

The challenge is finding a great idea that is also viable, and bringing it to market as quickly and effectively as possible. Some companies can do this quickly, but for most it is a time-consuming, resource-intensive process.

Let's take a deeper look into the concept creation process.

The concept creation process

While every company has its own priorities and nuances, each follows a structured concept development process. The company evaluates its current product lines and those of their category competitors to either (a) find a gap or (b) launch a competing product by which they can capitalize on market trends. Marketing and insights teams leverage proprietary data to narrow down audiences and add color to their reflections. What are the purchase drivers? How do people prefer to use their products? What do we know that will maximize the appeal of the product across different segments?

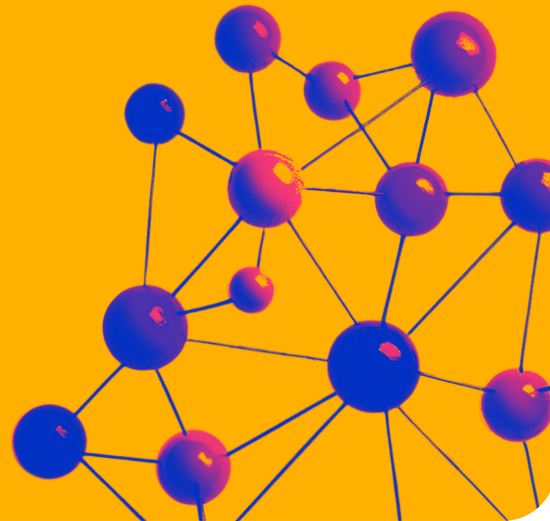
From these insights and trends, the company develops initial creative materials — logos, packaging and straplines. It then tests the fully-formed concept with consumers in the target audiences. What is the reaction? Is there sufficient purchase interest to warrant bringing the product to market?

All of this culminates in a go/no-go decision that sets the plan in motion.

This seemingly straightforward process is typically **complex and time-consuming**. Why?

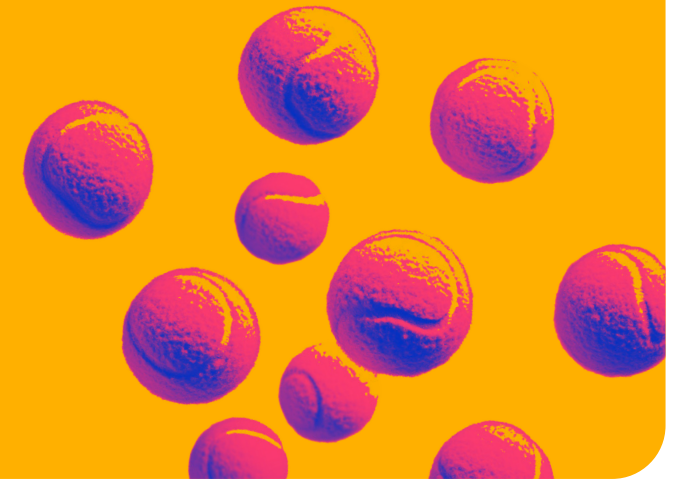
Content

Useful category and consumer data, as well as specialized experience, are essential for making good decisions. Bringing this data to bear from different sources is often challenging.



Coordination

At any given point in time, the creative process requires contributions from multiple team members, and each will have other priorities they are managing. This impacts speed.



Constraints

Whether financial, legal, creative or operational, every new concept has to fit within an organization's best practices and ways of working. Therefore not everything is on the table.



Checkpoints

Finally, each stage can only be passed if the requirements for that stage have been fulfilled. Each stage has different stakeholders, and quite often there are more people who seem to be able to say no than there are who can say yes. And any "no" means iterating on a step until a "yes" is achieved.



So how can companies accelerate early-stage innovation without sacrificing rigor? How can they unlock creativity while managing complexity? AI alone isn't the answer. Asking a general-purpose AI like ChatGPT to generate product ideas is a recipe for generic, off-brand concepts. The key is structure and specialization. This is where AI agents come in.

Building the AI team

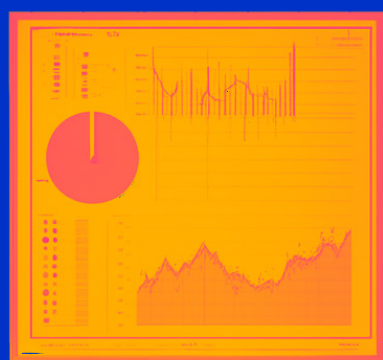
At the heart of Zappi's AI-driven innovation process is a coordinated team of specialized AI agents, each dedicated to a specific aspect of concept development — just like a human team. We actually developed this AI team by running a series of concept creation workshops with customers and focusing on the skill sets and insights brought to the table by each person. Then we went through a process of making each of those roles an agent.

Each agent operates with task-relevant context and tools, accessing the appropriate data and information to perform its function effectively. Overseeing the entire workflow is a Facilitator Agent, which manages interactions between the various agents and escalates uncertainties to human decision-makers when needed.

The agents draw on two principal bodies of knowledge:

1.

Zappi's rich consumer data and best practices, which includes the underlying prompting for the agents so they operate effectively.



2.

The client's own data and preferences, which ensure (among other things) that the client's brand guidelines, tone of voice and other internal constraints are respected.



Our AI agents are set up explicitly to operate as a human team would, with the advantage that they mitigate the problems that arise from human and resource limitations. Let's meet the team!

1. Best practice agent (a Zappi assistant)

Before any creative work begins, this agent establishes best practices for concept development. It ensures that ideas are presented in a way that is clear, concise and consumer-friendly. It applies general guidelines, such as keeping descriptions brief and using accessible language, ensuring consistency across projects. It can also be easily trained by the customer to add their specific requirements.

2. Client agent (a Client assistant)

At the start of the process, the Client Agent introduces company-specific context, constraints and expectations into the workflow. It also plays a final validation role, ensuring that any AI-generated outputs align with the client's strategic needs before moving forward.

3. Category agent (a Zappi assistant)

This agent provides category-specific insights, drawing on Zappi's research, tracking data, and attitudinal & usage (A&U) studies. It ensures that concept development is grounded in industry trends and market realities.

4. Insight agent (a Zappi assistant)

Insights come not just from raw data, but from understanding how consumers express themselves. This agent analyzes respondent verbatim responses, linking them to key performance indicators (KPIs). By ranking themes against high and low-scoring KPIs, it helps uncover underlying performance drivers.

5. Audience agent (a Client assistant)

Great products become great because they resonate deeply with their target audience. This agent helps define the ideal customer or demand space, surfacing relevant insights to ensure the concept aligns with real-world needs.

6. Creative agent (a Zappi assistant)

Given the context and insights provided by other agents, the Creative Agent takes charge of bringing the concept to life with creative elements that adhere to the brief with the goal of maximizing consumer appeal.



7. Tone of voice agent (a Client assistant)

A strong brand voice is essential for differentiation. This agent ensures that all concept descriptions adhere to the client's established tone of voice, using uploaded brand samples as a reference to maintain consistency.

9. Visual design agent (a Zappi assistant)

Every concept needs a visual representation. This agent translates concept descriptions into detailed image prompts, which are used to generate visuals with DALL·E.

8. Respondent agent (a Zappi assistant)

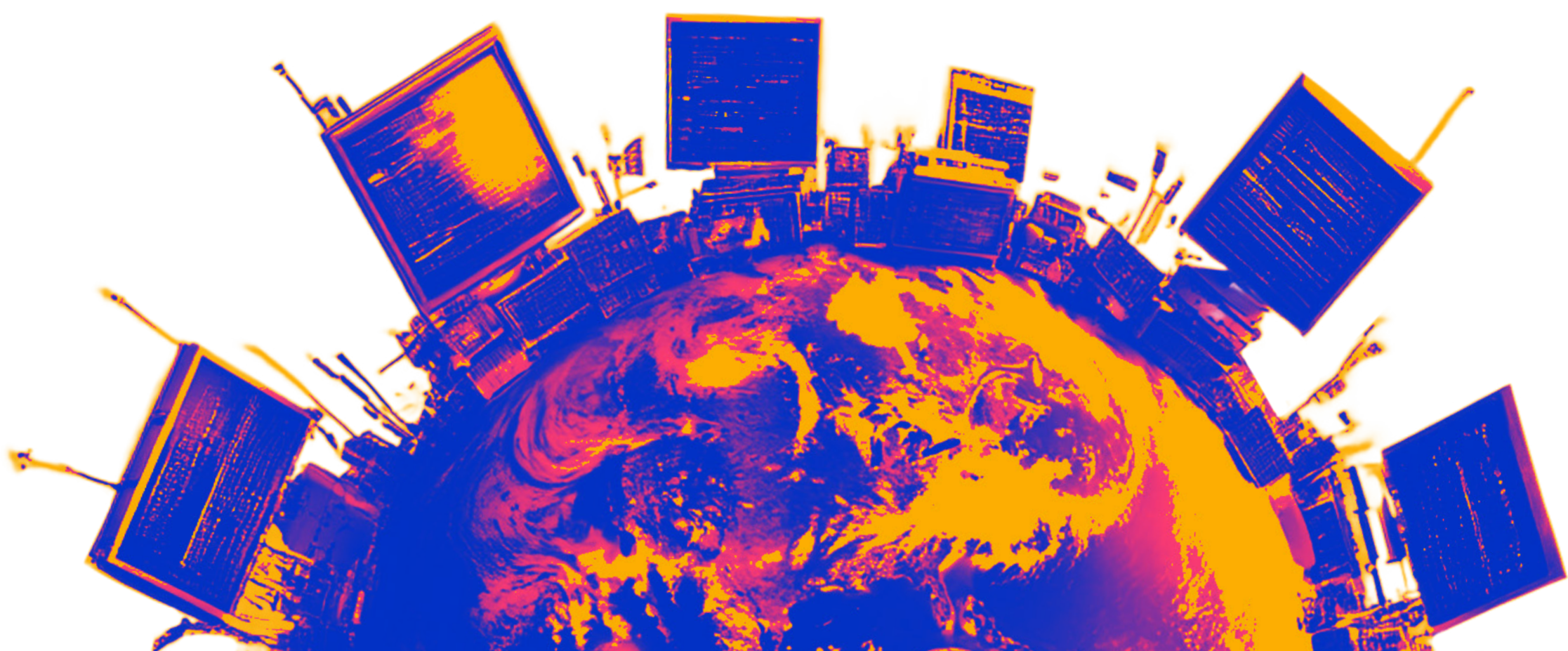
To simulate early consumer feedback, this agent takes on the persona of the target audience. It evaluates the concept as a potential consumer, providing initial feedback on appeal, distinctiveness and trial interest.

10. Facilitator agent (a Zappi assistant)

Acting as the conductor of the AI orchestra, the Facilitator Agent ensures that each AI Assistant is activated at the right moment, with the right context. It orchestrates interactions between the agents, making sure that the flow of work is efficient, that only the best ideas are brought forward and that any gaps or questions are escalated to human users when needed.

While the agents listed above are standard to our approach, we are by no means limited to these profiles. We can, and regularly do, build bespoke agents to address other functional needs and specialisms that our customers have.

With the AI agent team assembled, each representing different stakeholders or requirements in the concept creation process, the next step is to provide the operational structure in which they will work.



Zappi's AI-enabled concept creation process

Experience tells us that successful outcomes are far more likely when AI agents and humans operate within a structured, iterative framework — one that mirrors the typical product development process and facilitates the successive stages of concept ideation, validation and refinement. Our goal in this framework remains the same: To generate viable ideas as quickly as possible.

Zappi's process is configurable and generally resembles the following:

1. Concept kickoff

The process typically begins with a basic product idea that includes some key selling points and a target audience.

Let's say it's a new soft drink with natural flavors aimed at young women in Texas. At this stage, the idea is just an outline of what the product could be. From here, the AI agents go to work, orchestrated by the AI Facilitator acting as the central coordinator, to shape it into a complete concept.

2. Fleshing out the brief

Before any creative development begins, the AI Facilitator engages the AI Client Agent, whose role is to ensure the concept aligns with the brand's approach to innovation. This could mean structuring the idea in a way that fits the brand's preferred storytelling framework — such as emphasizing three key reasons to believe, a unique differentiator or a specific emotional hook. It may also include internal constraints, like regulatory considerations, pricing guardrails or lessons learned from past launches.

The Client Agent begins to mold the initial idea into something that is innovative, compelling and on-brand.

3. Gathering insight

With the brief in hand, the AI Category Agent and AI Insights Agent step in, leveraging first-party brand data and Zappi's extensive category insights. These agents assess consumer trends, market performance of similar products and any historical learnings that can inform the concept.

This ensures the product has a solid foundation in real consumer behavior and market dynamics.



4. Creative work begins

With insights in hand and a clear client brief, the AI Creative Agent begins shaping the product concept by defining its positioning, messaging and key attributes. This output is reviewed by the AI Facilitator against the Client Agent's inputs to ensure it conforms to brand guidelines and positioning.

If the concept doesn't fit the bill, it is sent back for revision until it meets the established criteria.

5. Quick consumer feedback

When the concept has passed the input criteria, it is sent to the AI Respondent Agent. The Respondent Agent is a synthetic consumer modeled after the target audience and is used for early feedback to assess the product's appeal.

If the Respondent Agent flags weaknesses in appeal or fit, the concept goes back to the Creative Agent for refinement. This iterative loop ensures that only the most appealing ideas make it to the next stage.

6. Visualizing the product

Once the concept meets consumer expectations, the AI Visual Design Agent steps in to generate product imagery. This even extends to visualizations of the product at the point of sale to provide a realistic representation of how it will appear to consumers.

7. Ready for consumer testing!

With the completion of the visual design, the agents deliver the finished, fully-formed concept, with its insights-driven messaging, strong consumer appeal and a compelling visual identity.

And, with a single click, our Human client can send the completed concept to full-scale testing with real consumers to gather feedback.

The research report is, naturally, written by a highly-trained AI Research Agent.

Depending on how the concept performs, the Human client can directly ask the AI agent team to revise it.

And remember, while this process seems long, it takes place over the course of just a few minutes!



Humans always in the loop

We think the power of AI agents can only be fully realized by keeping humans constantly in the loop.

There are three ways humans remain an essential part of the process:

- First, **a human initiates the process**, providing the strategic direction and objectives for the AI team.
- Second, throughout the workflow, **humans can intervene at any stage** to refine inputs, adjust parameters or steer the AI based on their expertise.
- Lastly, by imbuing the AI team with context and inputs — from data to brand guidelines to past learnings and other factors — **humans effectively train their AI teammates** in an explicit structure, ensuring that their outputs are aligned with consumer preferences, market dynamics and organizational imperatives. The result is a truly collaborative process where AI enhances human decision-making rather than replacing it.

AI agents represent a fundamental shift in how companies create, refine and validate ideas.

By structuring AI in a way that mirrors best practices and human teams, Zappi has built a system that reduces complexity, accelerates decision-making and ensures every concept is rooted in data, consumer insights and commercial viability.

In the next chapter, we'll explore real-world examples of AI agents in action.



CHAPTER 3

Real world application

The value of AI for business lies in its ability to create value. As anyone who has experimented with AI has experienced, AI can generate output, but not all of that output is useful.

To assess AI's performance for the creative process — which presents unique challenges that call for structure, specialized knowledge and expertise — we decided to conduct real-world experiments. We put our AI agents to the test in a live innovation challenge where we pushed them to create original, fully-formed concepts in minutes, not months.

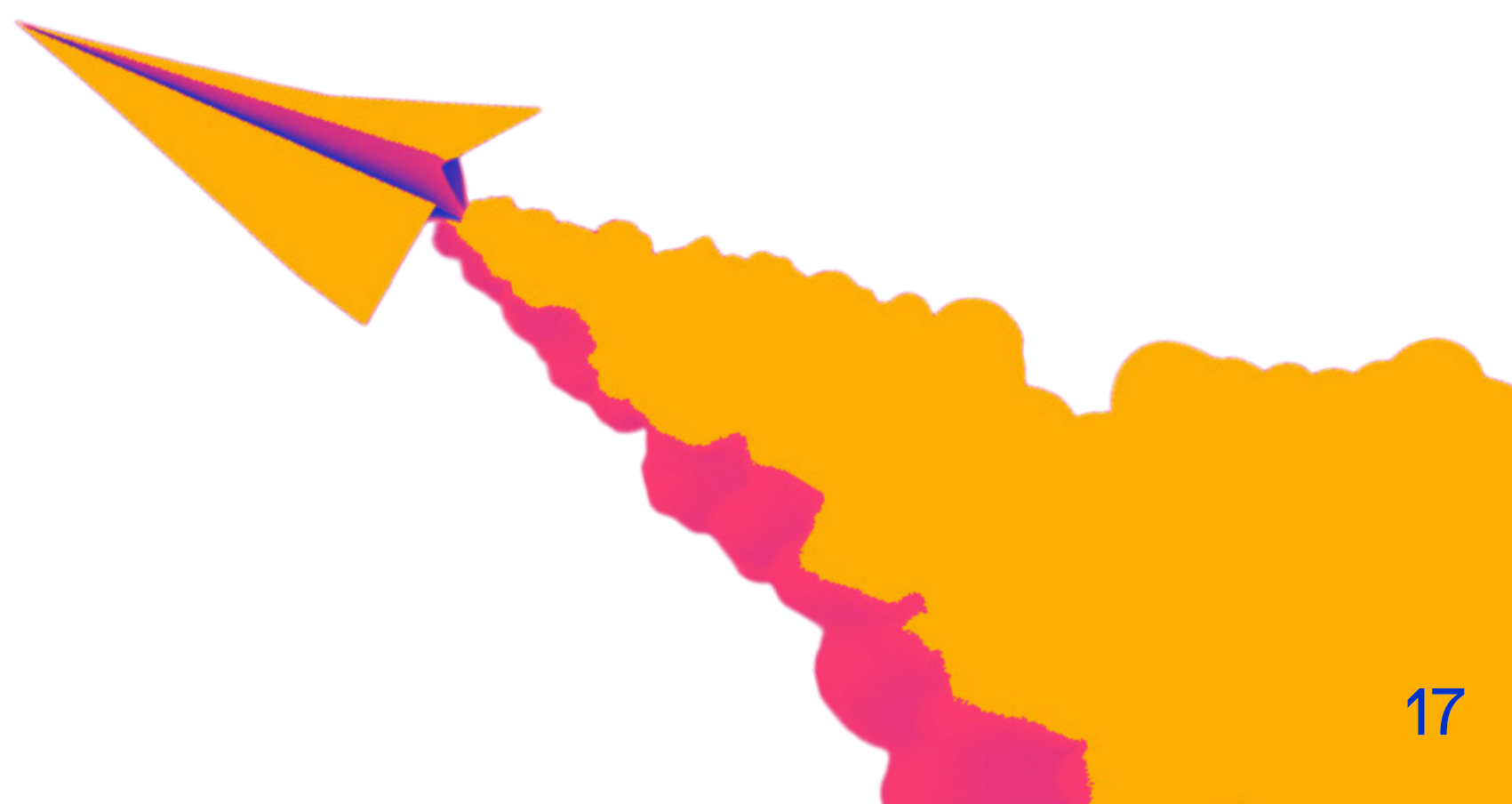
Our internal tests

In late 2024 we ran an internal competition where 150 Zappi team members used AI agents to create fully-formed concepts in minutes. The goal was to create brand new holiday treats — one for Halloween and one for the winter holidays.

We began by feeding the agents the data from past analyses of seasonal innovation across fall/Halloween, winter holidays and Easter. The insights from these analyses provided both best practices for the agents to follow, as well as a scorecard against which their efforts could be judged.

Our best practices instructed the agents to pursue three objectives:

1. **Small tweaks to core products always win.** Brands that modify existing, well-loved products with seasonal changes in color, shape or packaging tend to see the best results.
2. **Align with expectations.** Brands should only pursue seasonal innovation if it aligns with their category and consumer expectations, as it ensures credibility and strengthens brand trust.
3. **Aim for a broad audience.** Since seasonal products have a short shelf life, concepts should appeal to the largest possible consumer base.

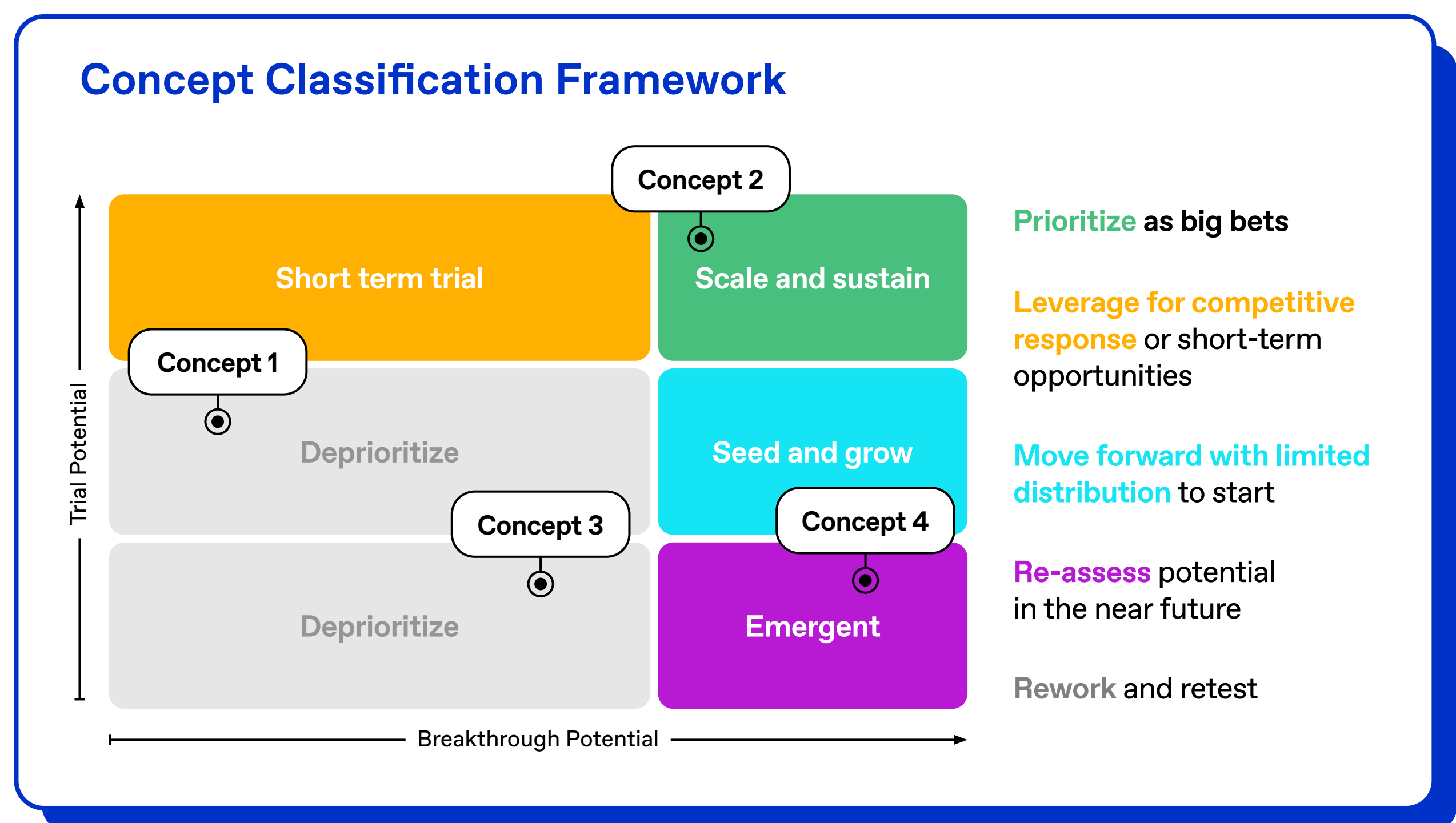


Success criteria

We focus on two success metrics: **Trial Potential** and **Breakthrough Potential**. Trial Potential is based on the product's purchase likelihood and is a leading indicator of purchase likelihood. Breakthrough Potential is defined by how different and superior the product is perceived to be versus what's already available in the market.

We plot these metrics on a five-cell classification grid to forecast a product's performance in market and advise on the best launch strategy. The five cells in our Concept Classification Framework are:

1. **Scale & sustain:** Prioritize the concept as a big bet
2. **Short-term trial:** Leverage the concept for short-term opportunities or competitive response
3. **Seed & grow:** Move forward with the concept, but with a limited distribution to start
4. **Emergent:** Re-assess the concept's potential in the near future
5. **Rework:** Revise the concept and re-test



Zappi's Concept Classification Framework measuring Trial Potential & Breakthrough Potential

With these objectives and success measures in mind, we asked the agents to create a new candy for Halloween and a new indulgent treat for the winter holidays that would appeal to consumers based on all we knew about seasonal innovation.

MoonBite Minis

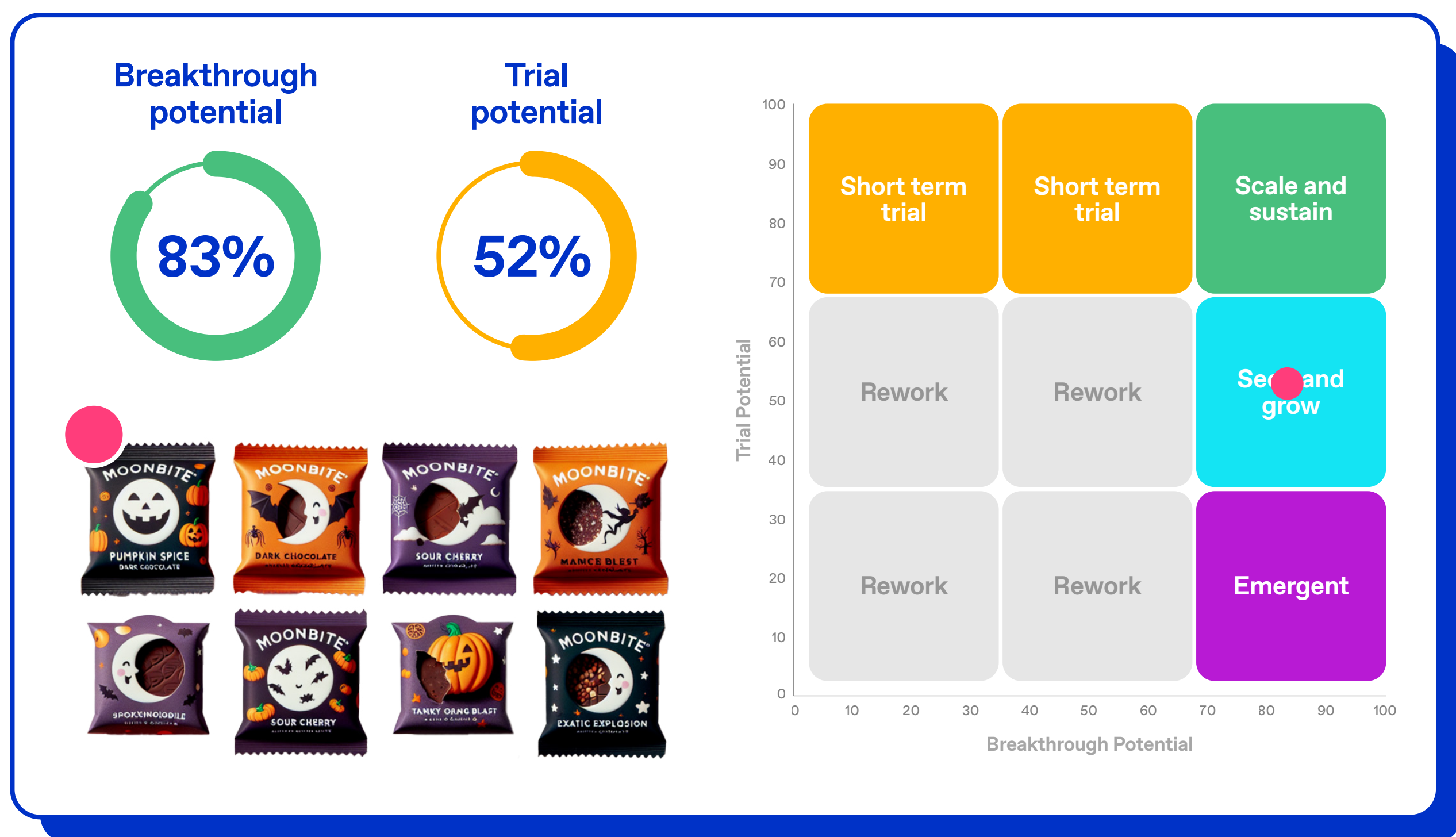
For our Halloween candy, we worked with the AI agents to create MoonBite Minis. These all-natural, luxurious, individually-wrapped mini chocolate treats in whimsical Halloween shapes were perfect for trick-or-treating, and gave younger adults a sense of indulgence without the guilt of unhealthy eating.



Visual identity for MoonBite Minis

The chocolates scored in the **top 20% of all food innovations tested in the US in Breakthrough Potential**, and performed in line with the average food innovation on Trial Potential. Per our Concept Classification Framework they sit in the 'seed and grow' section. This means this Halloween candy is highly unique and distinctive and therefore able to stand out in the market. It also has good trial potential considering it is a new product that doesn't have the benefit of an existing parent brand.





MoonBite Minis Trial & Breakthrough Potential

The strong performance of MoonBite Minis is not surprising as the concept uses many of our seasonal best practices for innovation, most notably:

- **Seasonally relevant category:** Chocolate
- **Seasonal packaging:** Orange, purple, green
- **Seasonal shapes:** Ghosts, pumpkins and bats
- **Appetizing Halloween-themed flavors:** Pumpkin spice dark chocolate, spooky sour cherry, tangy orange blast and exotic matcha explosion
- **Broad appeal:** Appeals to a fairly broad consumer base of category buyers



The comments we received in testing also show the strength of the concept. Here's what people had to say about MoonBite Minis:

“
I love these. I love the packaging and marketing, the fact they are cute little spooky treats, and that they have so many different flavors. I think these would sell super well in October.”

“
I really like the visual appeal of the whole entire product and especially the cool name.”

“
I really like the package. I think the portion size is spot on. The fact that it is a healthier option for a chocolate fix is great.”

“
I like the cute packaging and the flavors sound really good.”

“
I like the health benefits. The flavors seem good and the design is cute.”

“
The product is unique and I would like to try healthy chocolate options.”

“
I love the idea. So cute and single serving perfect.”



Comfort Craves

While MoonBite Minis demonstrated how AI agents can create strong concepts aligned with seasonal best practices, Comfort Craves highlights another critical capability: rapid iteration. Unlike our first example, this concept went through multiple refinements until we landed on a true breakthrough innovation.

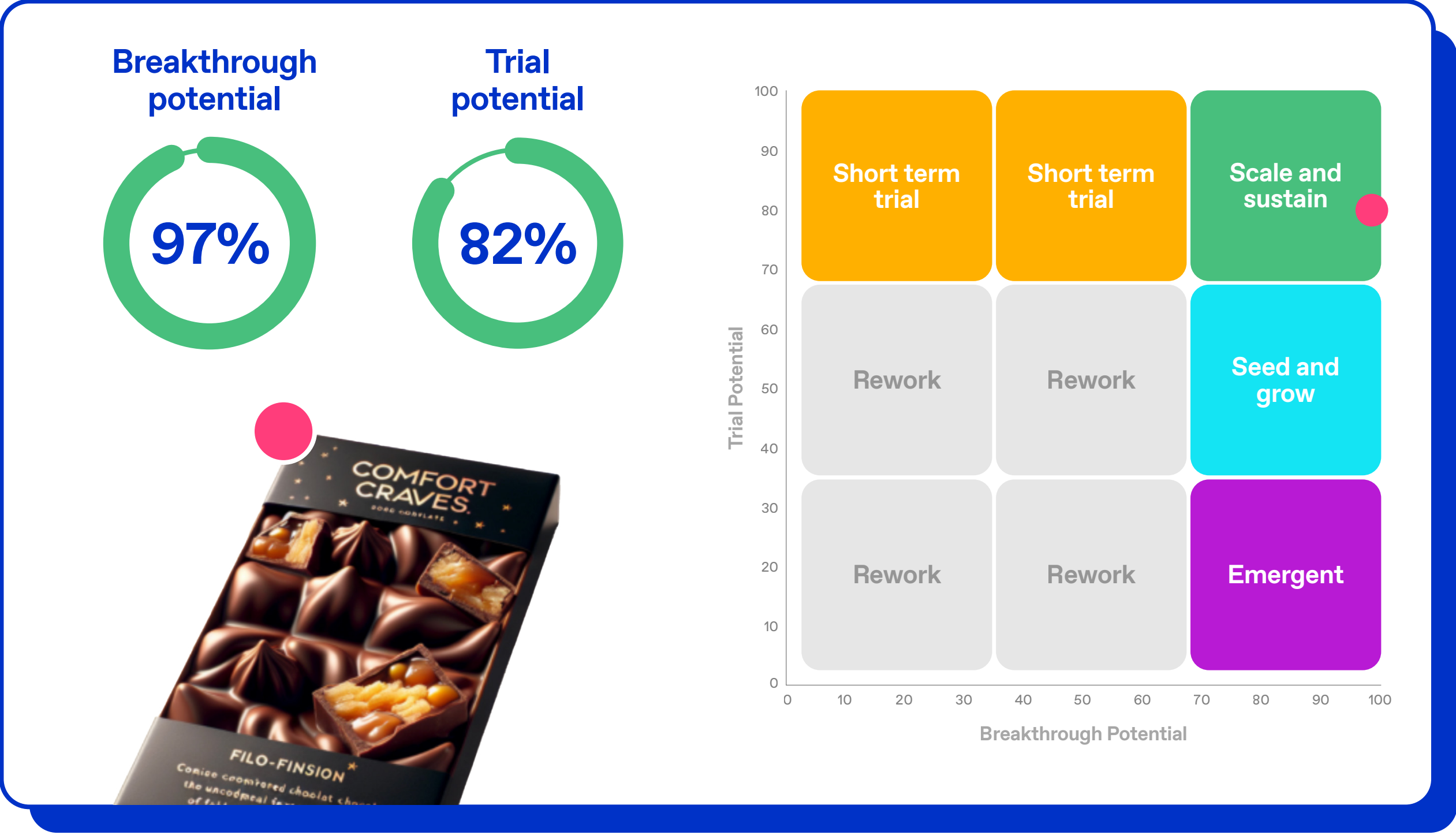
We began with a festive, wintery chocolate called YuleFusion, but we weren't quite satisfied with the concept that the agents generated. We decided to shift gears and explore a filo pastry direction, which resulted in a new filo twists concept.



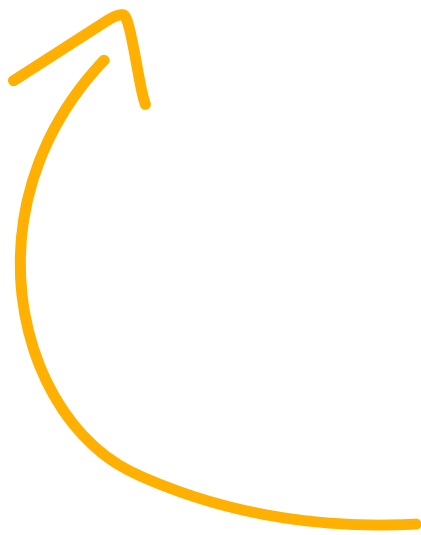
But it still wasn't exactly what we were looking for. We then asked our AI agents to create a hybrid of the two, resulting in Comfort Craves: A filo-fusion chocolate bar that has the flaky crispiness of filo pastry with flavors of caramel apple and chocolate — an interpretation of the traditional chocolate bar that's not only delicious but refreshingly unique.



The fusion concept was a runaway hit on our success metrics! Comfort Craves scored in the **top 3% for Breakthrough Potential** and **top 20% for Trial Potential**. That puts it firmly in “Scale and Sustain” territory of our matrix — an incredible feat for any innovation, let alone an AI-generated one.



Comfort Craves Trial & Breakthrough Potential

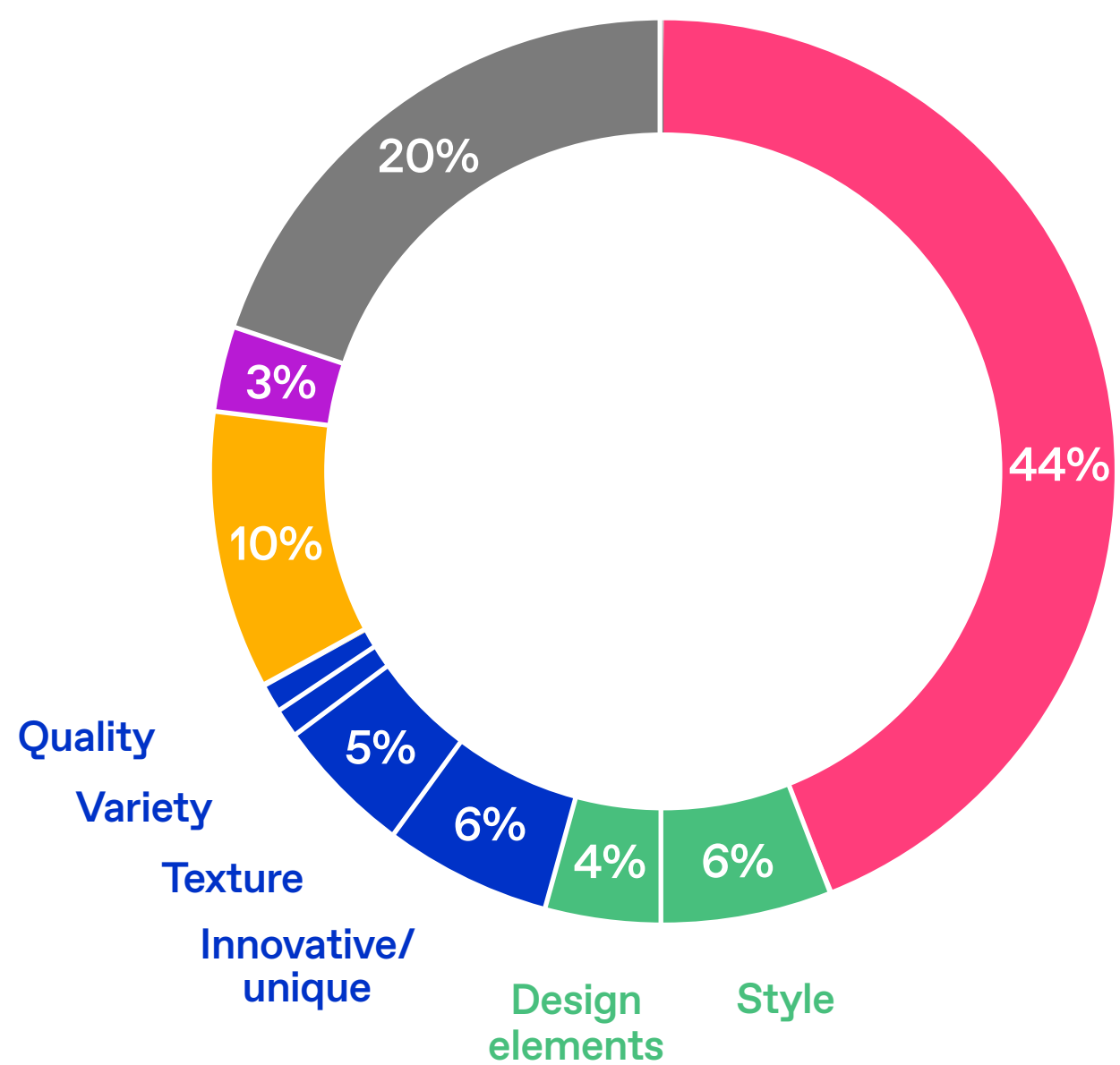


Comfort Craves scores high in both **distinctiveness** (79% vs. 70% norm) and **advantage** (63% vs. 53% norm), indicating that the product is both **differentiated** and **stronger** than what is available in the market. And trial potential is quite high, especially given that this is a new brand that can't benefit from any existing brand's equity.

Based on the feedback from consumers, the product description and texture were the most exciting part for respondents. The enticing, flavorful description and the thought of experiencing a crunchy or flaky texture stirred their curiosity. They particularly appreciated the caramel apple and dark chocolate flavors, which they found appealing and relatable to the season. They also liked the sleek and refined look that made the product appear as highly appetizing, and the “sneak peek” packaging cutaway really stole the show. Finally, respondents liked the idea of a treat they can conveniently carry around.

Product likes:

- Flavors/ingredients
- Content delivery
- Product/service features
- General positive comments
- Packaging
- Other



What consumers liked most about Comfort Craves

Here's what else people had to say about Comfort Craves:

“

It's new and different, filo dough makes it intriguing.

“

like that it's different from the regular chocolate I've been having.

“

The packaging looks elegant and classy. The description of the texture with the filo dough is a new interesting take.

“

I think the packaging looks amazing and has a sleek design.

“

It looks ridiculously yummy!

“

The picture of the inside of the chocolate looks good and I would love to try it.

Creating AI teams for our customers

We currently partner with brands to develop AI agent-based capabilities that transform the way they approach concept creation and product development. Our customers are not only interested in accelerating their innovation processes, but also how they build strategic AI capabilities that add value for their business.

Below are some comments from the visionaries we are working with to shape the future of both insights and innovation.

It is the best AI offering I have seen on the market, and I am really excited about the potential it unlocks.

Deirdre Van Zyl

Head of Innovation Planning - Africa

DIAGEO



The AI solutions I've seen coming up from Zappi are immediately relevant to my business. We're writing concepts and claims the whole day, Zappi is helping with that immediately. Compared to some of the other vendors out there, Zappi has a deep understanding of what it feels like to be a client-side researcher and what needs to get done on a frequent basis.

Jacci Weber

Team Lead, Pet Parent Insights

MARS



Acceleration and advantage

Traditionally, companies take weeks, even months, to arrive at a fully-formed concept — a process that requires multiple iterations and significant resource commitments. Zappi's AI Agents turn this model on its head, generating viable concepts in minutes, enabling overnight testing and rapid refinement to ensure concepts reach their full market potential, all without the usual resource strain.

Our customers take advantage of this accelerated process to quickly experiment, learn, refine and finalize ideas with confidence.

At the same time, they are taking the first steps to a new way of approaching innovation. AI is reshaping workflows, decision-making and even how teams collaborate. It is quickly raising bigger questions about operational structure, resourcing even competitive strategy.

As it has been since we first experimented with AI some thirteen years ago, Zappi is pleased to partner with leading brands and their insights teams to **create lasting competitive advantage**.



Afterword

By Steve Phillips

Every successful brand is built on a foundation of viable ideas — ideas that people want, that can be produced profitably and that companies have the capacity to bring to market. This has always been the formula for success, but it has never been easy. In addition to the challenges of generating great ideas, businesses face friction, bottleneck, and trade-offs that slow innovation down.

AI is changing that.

The AI agents we have built are redefining how businesses approach innovation. They eliminate the old limitations related to knowledge, resources and time, allowing brands to generate ideas with maximum potential, aligned with their preferences and workflows, quickly.

Zappi AI Agents don't replace the creative and strategic work of humans, either; they extend it. The great outcomes we have seen through our testing have arisen because we have implemented our AI in a structured data-driven process — one that's aligned to the realities of our customers' businesses and yet free of needless friction. A process that's guided by humans.

This is the real promise of AI agents. They do more than save time. When applied effectively, they can be trained to do all the things AI does best — processing vast amounts of information, identifying patterns, generating responses in the way the business needs. They enable innovation without human limitations, and yet are guided by human judgment.

This isn't some distant future. Change is already underway. Businesses that embrace AI are already seeing the benefits. Our clients are seeing their ideas move from concept to execution in record time, informed by data, in sync with the business and with minimal organizational drag.

For years, Zappi has helped brands find the shortest, fastest path to viable ideas. With AI agents, that path becomes even more direct, and the outcomes are as good or better. This is the revolution we believe in, and it's the reality we are building. It is highly technical, yes. But at its core, it is deeply human.

Because the best businesses — the ones that will win in the AI era — will be those that use AI to expand insight, expertise and ambition.

