

12 Ways

Innovative Brands Build Better Products with Dscout

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1.

Evaluate their AI tools

Headspace understands that introducing AI into the mental health space requires more than just technical precision—it requires a safety-first framework.

When the team began developing Ebb, a generative AI companion for guided reflection, they faced a complex challenge. While stakeholders were excited about scaling access to care, there was deep-seated skepticism about how AI might negatively impact users in such a potentially vulnerable context.

To navigate these waters, Design Lead Priyanka Marawar and her team used Dscout to conduct an iterative, safety-centric research program. They began with a large-scale attitudinal study to understand the desirability and attitudes towards AI.

The findings were clear: while users trusted the Headspace brand, they were wary of AI. This insight led to taking several steps to build trust with research groups, from bringing in underrepresented communities from the start to being transparent about the creation process and sharing how clinical best practices informed the product.

The research then moved into Dscout diary studies, which provided a “longitudinal” view of how members engaged with conversational prototypes in their actual lives. This allowed the team to refine Ebb’s persona into a “compassionate companion” that provides non-judgmental support, without crossing the line into medical advice. “Ebb never offers you advice as a coach or a therapist would,” Marawar noted, ensuring the tool remains a “safe container” for reflection.

Safety was further bolstered through:

- **Vulnerability testing:**
The team conducted internal red teaming to test the AI’s responses and identify potential risks.
- **Safety detection mechanisms:**
Ebb was designed to sense if a user’s needs are escalating, gently guiding them toward crisis resources or human providers when necessary.
- **User autonomy:**
Design choices like the ability to end or delete a conversation anytime were implemented to ensure users felt in control of their data and experience.

By using Dscout to capture the voice of the customer, Headspace built a new AI product with the users’ safety at the center. The result is a tool that helps members feel validated and seen, all while maintaining rigorous standards required for mental health support.

2.

Validate product launches with cross-team insights

For many brands, the period immediately following a major product launch is defined by firefighting—fixing bugs and addressing immediate user complaints. However, SiriusXM wanted to look beyond the launch of their new streaming technology to envision a long-term, innovative roadmap for future products that cater to “Zillennials”, the generation between Millennials and Gen Z. Senior UX Researcher Laura Oxenfeld turned to Dscout to ensure this future vision was built on a foundation of authentic user needs, rather than internal guesswork.

The team leveraged Dscout for concept testing and co-creation, gathering a large amount of data that allowed them to understand how users interacted with digital streaming apps in their daily lives. This bottom-up research approach provided the raw material for a series of high-impact Creative Matrix workshops, where participants across design, research, and product teams generated a high volume of ideas for the future.

To turn this massive influx of ideas into an actionable strategy, Oxenfeld applied a meticulous and granular analysis. By affinity mapping themes in FigJam and cross-referencing them with Dscout research, the team was able to:

- **Validate viability:**
They quickly identified which concepts were viable for the next few years versus those that were too far out to be a priority.
- **Connect concepts via storytelling:**
Oxenfeld used breadcrumbs to link new ideas to existing product briefs, showing leadership exactly what was already in motion and what represented a net new opportunity.
- **Communicate design concepts:**
By creating low-fidelity wireframes based on user feedback, the research team could communicate the potential of an idea without stakeholders getting bogged down in final design solutions.

Ultimately, Dscout helped SiriusXM move from a reactive post-launch state to a proactive, visionary one. By involving stakeholders in the research process and presenting clean and digestible insights, the team successfully gained buy-in from VP-level leadership for a product roadmap that resonates with the modern listener.

3.

Uncover usability issues before development

Identifying usability issues in advance is a game-changer for fast-moving product teams. By uncovering friction early, organizations can de-risk launches and avoid wasting time, money, and resources on features that won't drive revenue or improve the customer experience. Greg Marinelli, Executive Director of Research at JP Morgan Chase, and Dr. Nikki Smith, Experience Research Manager at Enterprise Mobility, shared a few tactics that made a difference for them.

1. Understand the language and metrics your stakeholders use

To champion early research, researchers must adopt the specific business language of their partners. By discussing metrics like engagement growth percentages or year-over-year expenses, stakeholders are more willing to listen to pre-development recommendations.

2. Form strong partnerships across departments

Successful risk mitigation relies on integration with "quad partners"—a collaborative group consisting of Design, Product, Tech/Dev, and Data/Analytics. By deciding what to learn together, these teams can collectively identify which projects are unlikely to be impactful.

3. Ensure that insights are actionable

Research is only valuable if stakeholders can do something with it. Instead of making book reports that list what customers said, translate insights into tactical and tangible recommendations. This helps partners understand exactly how to build the right system for the user.

Dscout supports uncovering usability issues before development through:

- **Targeted recruitment and screener management:**

Find niche audiences—like doctors or specific product users—and manage them effortlessly, ensuring stakeholders trust the data because it comes from the exact right people.

- **Rapid concept and usability testing:**

Quickly find the right participants to test early concepts and provide feedback on how they feel about proposed systems—before they go into production.

- **Video playlists and stakeholder socialization:**

Using the Playlist Builder, transform raw usability sessions into high-impact highlight reels that make user pain points undeniable. This helps stakeholders make more informed, contextual decisions before development starts.

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I use Dscout for usability testing and prototype validation. Dscout is very user-friendly and has the features we need. I love the way to build questions; it's super easy, and being able to reuse questions as well as screeners is helpful. This saves time and makes iterating on studies much faster.

Alissa P.
Verified G2 Reviewer

4.

Drive product decisions with video storytelling

For research teams, the battle isn't just about finding insights—it's about getting stakeholders to actually watch and use them.

At Turo, Lead UX Researcher Denise Sauerteig recognized that her team was competing in an attention economy where colleagues are inundated with content. To cut through the noise, she moved away from traditional slide decks and turned to Dscout to gather video data that really shines.

The team treated their research share-outs like a media launch. Before the study even ended, they released teaser videos or trailers on Slack to generate early interest and buzz among their cross-functional partners.

Instead of a typical final report, they produced a final 15-minute video that prioritized high-quality storytelling over exhaustive slides. This video-first approach followed a clear structure of three big insights and three big opportunities.

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I used a combination of the playlist builder in Dscout, which is really awesome for tagging videos, making clips, and creating playlists of insights.

Denise Sauerteig
Turo Lead UX Researcher

By using Dscout to capture these moments, Turo was able to:

- **Curate powerful narratives:**
The team utilized the playlist builder in Dscout to organize video data into specific themes, making it easy to identify and share the most impactful moments with stakeholders.
- **Ensure clarity and accessibility:**
Captions were added to every video clip to make sure the findings were easy to consume, even for busy team members watching without sound.
- **Foster emotional connections:**
By showing the human side of the data, the team made their research a whole lot more memorable, which helped ground the product roadmap in the actual needs of users and stakeholders.

This shift toward snackable, high-quality video content transformed Turo's internal research culture. By presenting user feedback in a format that was both easy to watch and emotionally resonant, the team ensured that their insights directly influenced key product decisions.

5.

Get input from niche audiences

Aya Healthcare operates in a highly specialized field, providing a platform for travel healthcare providers and hospitals that require supplemental support. As the organization pivoted to a product-first mindset following the pandemic, the research team needed to understand the specific journey of travel nurses in a changing landscape.

Lead UX Researcher Dr. Christine Maldonado realized that understanding these professional journeys required a longitudinal approach that their previous tools simply could not support.

By working with Dscout, Aya Healthcare was able to bridge the gap between their complex research goals and their highly specific audience. While the team originally sought out the platform for its diary study capabilities, the partnership evolved as they discovered Dscout could handle their broader usability needs as well. This flexibility allowed them to sunset their previous vendor and consolidate their research operations onto a single platform.

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Dscout checks all the boxes, not only in helping you tactically execute your research and your research strategy, but also in helping you to evangelize your discipline even within your company.

Christine Maldonado, PhD
Lead UX Researcher, Aya Healthcare

The impact of this transition was felt across several key areas of the research process:

- **Recruit high-quality, niche participants:**
Finding travel nurses and doctors is inherently difficult, but Dscout enabled the team to bring their own participants by intercepting them from homepages and directing them into studies. To ensure data integrity, the team asked participants to verify their credentials by showing hospital badges, which helped alleviate stakeholder concerns regarding the legitimacy of the niche professional audience.
- **Evangelize research’s value internally:**
The team leveraged People Nerds resources to build an internal team site and develop a content strategy to spread awareness about UX research within the company. This effort helped the team advocate for their discipline, using the platform to not only execute tactical research but also to demonstrate its strategic importance to the wider organization.
- **Expand into mixed methods research:**
Although the team initially joined for diary studies, they quickly expanded into usability testing, finding that Dscout supported a wider variety of methodologies. This transition gave the team the agility to adapt their research designs to whatever specific questions or goals their stakeholders presented.

Ultimately, the move to Dscout yielded results that exceeded internal expectations. A long-term diary study saw zero attrition, a success that surprised stakeholders who doubted participants would stay engaged for the duration. The richness of the data—including participants whiteboarding their own job journeys—helped Aya Healthcare enhance their research operations across the board.

6.

Get insights into real moments, not manufactured scenarios

Traditional research often forces users into artificial environments or asks them to recall past behaviors, which can lead to biased or incomplete data. When participants are placed in a manufactured scenario, their actions may not mirror how they truly behave in the wild. Real-time intercepts allow brands to stop relying on these artificial frameworks and start capturing insights while users are organically browsing, comparing, or purchasing in the moment.

Dscout's approach to intercepts is designed to meet users exactly where they are—on any website—without requiring a single line of code or a complex software installation. When an opted-in participant visits a target URL, the study appears, allowing researchers to gather feedback while the experience is fresh.

Unlike standard pop-up surveys that only offer static feedback, this method provides a much richer view of the user journey. Researchers can see what a participant did before and after the intercept, providing the necessary context to complete the story of their organic behavior.

Instead of simple multiple-choice questions, researchers can ask participants to engage in screen recording, “talk out loud” to explain their thought process, or even perform card sorts and ranking exercises in real-time. This ensures that the data collected isn't just a snapshot of a “what,” but a detailed narrative of the “why.” Because these intercepts involve Scouts who have already opted in to share their data, the process is seamless and respects the user's desire to participate in research.

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This is a huge unlock for us...being able to get rich data at the moment a person is doing something is conceptually where the gold is.

Amazon UX Research Manager

Dscout supports these goals through flexible intercept features:

- **Intercept on any URL:**
Launch studies on your own site or any target URL without needing developers to write code or perform installs.
- **Capture rich, media-based data:**
Go beyond simple surveys by asking for screen recordings, talk-aloud explanations, and interactive tasks like card sorting.
- **Understand the full journey:**
Gain context by seeing the user's actions before and after the intercept to understand how they arrived at a decision.
- **Connect with opted-in participants:**
Reach a pool of Scouts who are ready and willing to provide high-quality feedback during their organic browsing sessions.

7.

Gain competitive intelligence

To truly differentiate, innovative brands need to adopt a user-centered approach to competitive intelligence—looking deeply into the actual user experiences of competitors to identify ways their own product can better serve the market.

By conducting generative research and usability testing on competitor products, researchers can move beyond static data and uncover the real-world needs, goals, and pain points of their competitors' audiences.

Rather than just listing strengths and weaknesses, teams can use Dscout to act like detectives, observing how real people interact with competitor platforms in their daily lives. This enables organizations to identify experience gaps—the glaring usability issues or unmet needs that competitors have overlooked—and transform them into unique opportunities for innovation. This proactive research allows companies to benchmark their own usability against the market, and establish a clear advantage by solving problems the competition hasn't even noticed.

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I'm better able to understand customer and competitor engagement over a period of time through diary studies on Dscout.

Verified G2 Reviewer

Dscout's platform provides the essential tools to execute this “outside-in” research strategy:

- **Targeted recruitment for competitor users:**
Dscout's screening capabilities allow teams to find and talk to verified users of specific competitor products, providing direct insights into user loyalty and reasons for potential switching.
- **In-context competitor testing via diary studies:**
Researchers can capture in-the-moment video of users completing organic tasks on a competitor's app or site, revealing the “gold” of how people actually use those tools in the wild.
- **Rapid benchmarking:**
For quick-turn questions about market perception or feature comparison, teams can gather feedback from targeted segments in as little as a few hours to inform immediate strategic pivots.
- **High-impact stakeholder reporting:**
Using the playlist builder, researchers can curate highlight reels of competitor successes or failures, turning competitive audits into actionable stories that build cross-functional empathy and alignment.

8.

Validate product-market fit

Validating product-market fit early isn't just about avoiding failure. It's a strategic lever that saves companies millions in wasted development time—and ensures that every dollar invested is aimed at a real user need. By replacing internal assumptions with human insights, innovative brands can pivot away from weak concepts and double down on features that drive immediate value.

SteadyIQ, an income data app, provides a clear example of how deep user understanding shapes product priorities. When Jasmine Hentschel started as the company's sole researcher, she realized that stakeholders across the organization were asking, "Who are we even designing for?"

To find the answer, she used Dscout to recruit 50 participants to explore their complex, day-to-day relationships with money and supplemental income.

The longitudinal nature of the study was invaluable for SteadyIQ, as it captured the emotional shifts that occur when people manage their finances over time. This deep immersion allowed SteadyIQ to move past surface-level demographics and build a product roadmap that addressed the evolving financial goals and research habits of their target users.

The broader business impact of this type of validation is quantified in the Forrester Total Economic Impact™ study.

The Forrester study found that Dscout users:

- **Saved \$918K by cutting failed ideas early:**
With timely input from real users, teams were able to spot weak concepts before launch, halting bad investments and reducing wasted development costs.
- **Saw \$406K in added profit from faster time to market:**
Automation and smarter workflows helped teams uncover insights quicker, allowing them to launch products weeks earlier and capture early revenue.
- **Gained \$350K by improving product/market fit:**
Access to user-driven research created stronger alignment between what users actually want and what teams build, resulting in more successful, high-impact launches.

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With Dscout and diary studies, we can engage with a particular group over a period of time. That's so valuable for us in talking about things like money and work, because it's not something that people feel the same way about every single day—so being able to interact over a long period of time is important.

Jasmine Hentschel
UX Researcher at Steady

9.

Empower product designers to do concept and usability testing

For footwear brand KEEN, staying ahead of seasonal trends and fan preferences requires more than just intuition; it demands a continuous, data-driven discovery process. Aura Nelson, Director of Fan Insights at KEEN, spearheaded an initiative to move the company toward a culture of constant learning, ensuring that every product brief was backed by real-world evidence. By integrating the Dscout platform into their workflow, KEEN transitioned from isolated research projects to a fluid system of continuous discovery and concept validation.

Dscout empowered the team to run in-depth diary studies for upcoming seasonal lines, such as their Fall/Winter 2025 winter boots. By utilizing Dscout, the team engaged with 60 participants to document their winter experiences, current footwear choices, and daily pain points.

The real breakthrough came from the visual depth of these studies. Dscout's screen recording capabilities allowed researchers to actually see how fans shopped, and what style meant to them in their own environments. This generated hundreds of images and videos that revealed clear patterns of polarization—highlighting exactly what fans loved or hated—and enabled the design team to develop aspirational themes with a high level of clarity.

Beyond long-term studies, Dscout also facilitated rapid, high-stakes concept testing. When the utility team needed immediate feedback on a key story product just days before a major seasonal meeting, they turned to Dscout concept testing. Within just two days, the team captured feedback from 50 targeted utility customers. These quick-turn results provided vital videos and quotes that demonstrated purchase intent, giving the sales and leadership teams confidence to move forward with data-backed decisions.

Key ways Dscout supported KEEN's product evolution included:

- **Deep visual discovery for trend forecasting:**
Using photo and video entries to build comprehensive vision boards defined aspirational style for upcoming seasons.
- **Quick-turn feedback on critical concepts:**
Leveraging Dscout helped gather high-quality responses on product storyboards and purchase interest within a 48-hour window.
- **Continuous learning embedded in product briefs:**
Ensuring that every kickoff for performance or lifestyle categories tied directly to insights captured on the Dscout platform.

Ultimately, Dscout didn't just provide data; it provided a visual and emotional connection to the fans, ensuring that KEEN's footwear mission always resonated with the people wearing them.

10.

Uncover how real users and customers are using AI

As brands rush to implement AI, a critical question remains: how are real people actually using these tools in their daily lives? To find the answer, the research firm KR&I partnered with Dscout to study one of the most high-motivation consumer segments—fans.

To move past surface-level trends, KR&I founder Susan Kresnicka and Research Manager Karis Eklund designed a four-step mixed-method approach on the Dscout platform. They began by fielding a Screener to identify 240 active AI users, nearly three-quarters of whom had already used AI for fandom-related activities.

To witness this behavior firsthand, they launched a Dscout Diary study with 48 participants to capture real-time, in-the-moment AI usage. This qualitative data revealed that fans aren't just tech experts. They're using AI as an "expert tutor in their pocket" to solve real problems, like a new viewer using the AI tool Claude to map out complex relationship timelines in *Vanderpump Rules*, or an MLB fan using ChatGPT to "do the math" for an upcoming series.

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We'll often turn to Dscout for foundational research like this because we find it so helpful for learning about the role of [AI] in everyday life.

Karis Eklund
KR&I Research Manager

The research identified six distinct roles AI plays: Teacher, Forecaster, Concierge, Co-creator, Companion, and Medium. Following the diary study, the team used Dscout Live interviews to conduct deep-dive interviews with participants. These sessions were vital for uncovering the nuanced ethical boundaries users set, such as the firm desire for AI to enhance (but never replace) human creativity and judgment.

By leveraging Dscout's integrated tools, KR&I demonstrated that for AI to be successful, it must respect human agency. They found that fans are highly protective of the elevating human quality of what they love, and don't want AI slop degrading the quality of their experiences.

Dscout enabled KR&I to:

- **Capture real-time behavioral shifts:**
Diary studies documented how users experiment with conversational AI to navigate complex information and lore in their daily lives.
- **Uncover deep emotional drivers:**
Moving from broad screeners to Live interviews probed the intimate "Companion" role AI plays, and the ethical lines users refuse to cross.
- **Identify high-value product opportunities:**
Cataloging emerging user roles—from forecasting to co-creation—helped KR&I align their roadmap with actual consumer needs.

11.

Running continuous discovery research

Vivid Seats, a leading ticket marketplace, faced a common hurdle: traditional research was moving too slowly to keep up with product and research needs. To solve this, the team shifted from reactive, project-based research to a continuous discovery model. By embedding researchers directly into specific product teams—such as the web and app squads—Vivid Seats ensured that research stayed ahead of the curve, anticipating questions before they reached a blocker stage.

The heart of their strategy? A weekly cadence of customer interaction. Rather than waiting for a full-scale study, the team spoke to one or two customers every week using Dscout's recruitment and Live interview features. This allowed them to monitor the impact of recent site releases in real-time, effectively serving as a continuous qualitative QA process.

This continuous model also empowered the broader design team to take the lead on research. With a push from management to expand their skillsets, designers at Vivid Seats used Dscout to get rapid feedback on early prototypes, often obtaining answers the same day or the next. This exponentially grew the team's research capacity. With Dscout's recruiting features, the team attracted hundreds of high-quality responses, allowing them to find the perfect user for a session in as little as half a day.

Beyond simple optimization, this approach built cross-functional empathy. One session with a visually impaired user sparked discussions about accessibility, leading to actionable clips shared with the engineering teams.

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Recruiting [is] a really important piece, and that's actually where Dscout shines for us.

Brad Mattan

Senior UX Researcher at Vivid Seats

Dscout enabled Vivid Seats to:

- **Scale capacity through design-led research:**
Training designers to lead moderated sessions on Dscout allowed the team to iterate on prototypes at a rapid cadence (without overtaxing dedicated researchers).
- **Maintain a pulse with weekly discovery:**
Interacting with 1-2 customers every week allowed the team to monitor success of new releases and capture moments of user delight for immediate sharing.
- **Streamline recruitment for niche targets:**
A comprehensive, quarterly screener identified specific user profiles—such as sports fans or those with accessibility needs—often within hours.
- **Continuously optimize for conversions:**
Getting immediate qualitative feedback on new site elements helped Vivid Seats to understand and address specific friction points throughout the shopping journey.

12.

Save money and bandwidth with one tool that can do it all

Teams running research often rely on a patchwork of tools to recruit participants, run studies, analyze findings, and share insights. While each tool might solve a specific problem, switching between platforms can slow teams down and create unnecessary operational overhead.

Dscout helps streamline the entire research process by bringing these workflows together in one flexible platform. Instead of juggling vendors and exporting data between systems, teams can recruit participants, run studies, analyze responses, and share findings—all in the same place.

This consolidation does more than simplify workflows. It also helps research teams move faster, reduce costs, and maintain consistency across studies.

With Dscout, teams can:

- **Recruit the right participants:**
Tap into a panel of high-quality Scouts with video-based screeners and behavioral targeting. For more specific recruits, scale to over 3M global participants. Teams can also bring their own participants into studies to centralize their panels.
- **Run multiple research methods:**
Conduct diary studies, usability tests, media surveys, and interviews from a single platform. Dscout even offers AI tools to help users decide on the method and start designing the study.
- **Analyze insights faster:**
Use built-in tools (both AI and manual) to tag responses, organize video clips, and quickly surface patterns.
- **Share findings across teams:**
Create highlight reels and playlists that make insights easy for stakeholders to understand and act on.

By replacing fragmented tools with a single research platform, teams can spend less time managing logistics and more time learning from their customers.

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As our UX practice (specifically in qualitative research) continued to grow, and that maturity model scaled, we needed a true partnership rather than just a tool.

Breanne Abo
Senior Manager of Research, Discovery Education

Build better products with real human insight

The brands in this list don't rely on guesswork. They learn from real people early, often, and in the moments that matter.

With Dscout, you can capture in-context feedback (actually IN context, not just manufactured scenarios), test ideas faster, and turn customer insight into smarter product decisions.

Ready to explore what you could build with Dscout?
See our platform in action.

[Book a demo](#)

