

NOTION: THE DECISION-PATH EVALUATION

*A CX Architecture Case Study of [notion.com](https://www.notion.com)
using the Radz Diagnostic Framework*

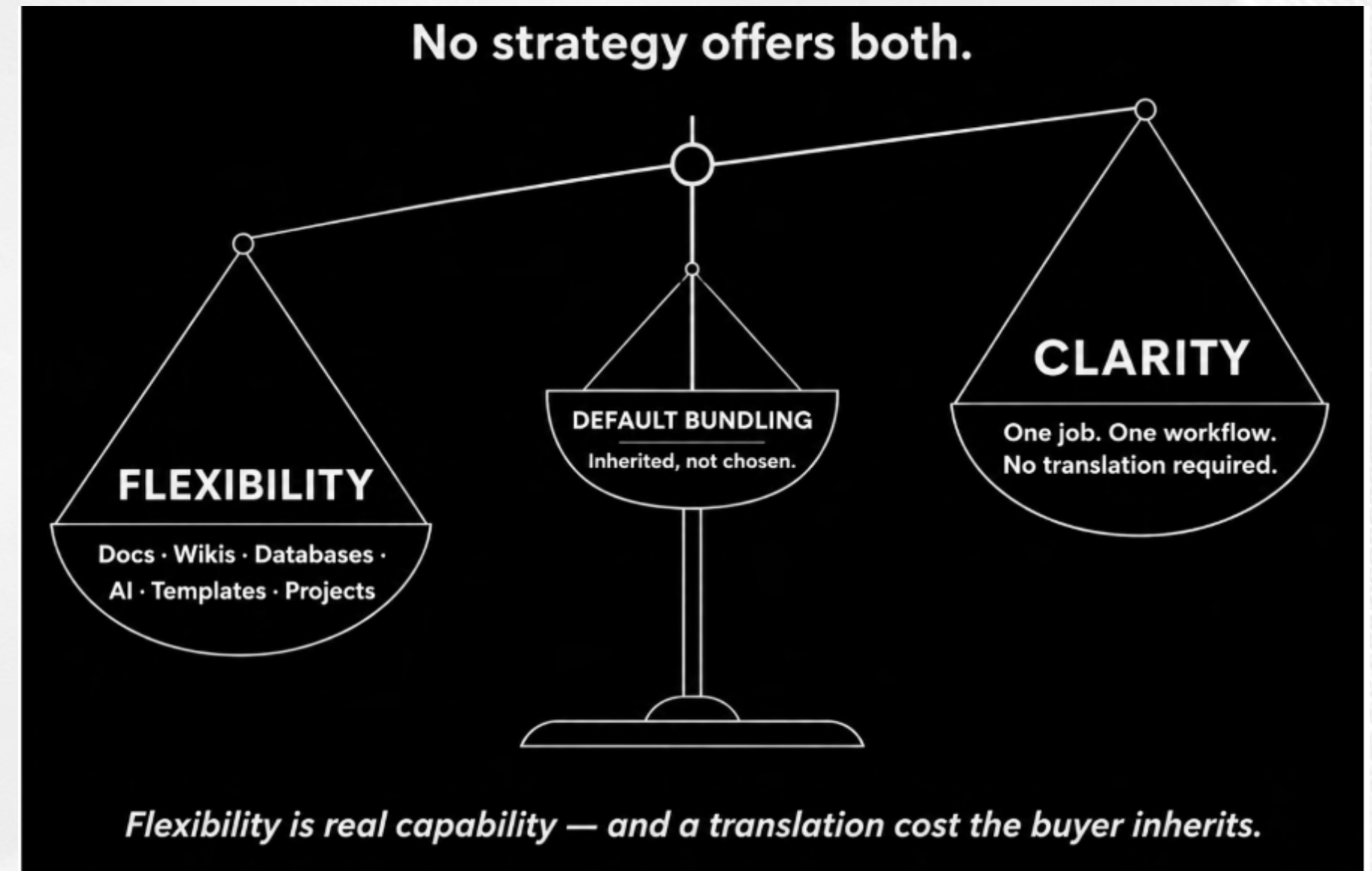
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ECOSYSTEM CONTEXT

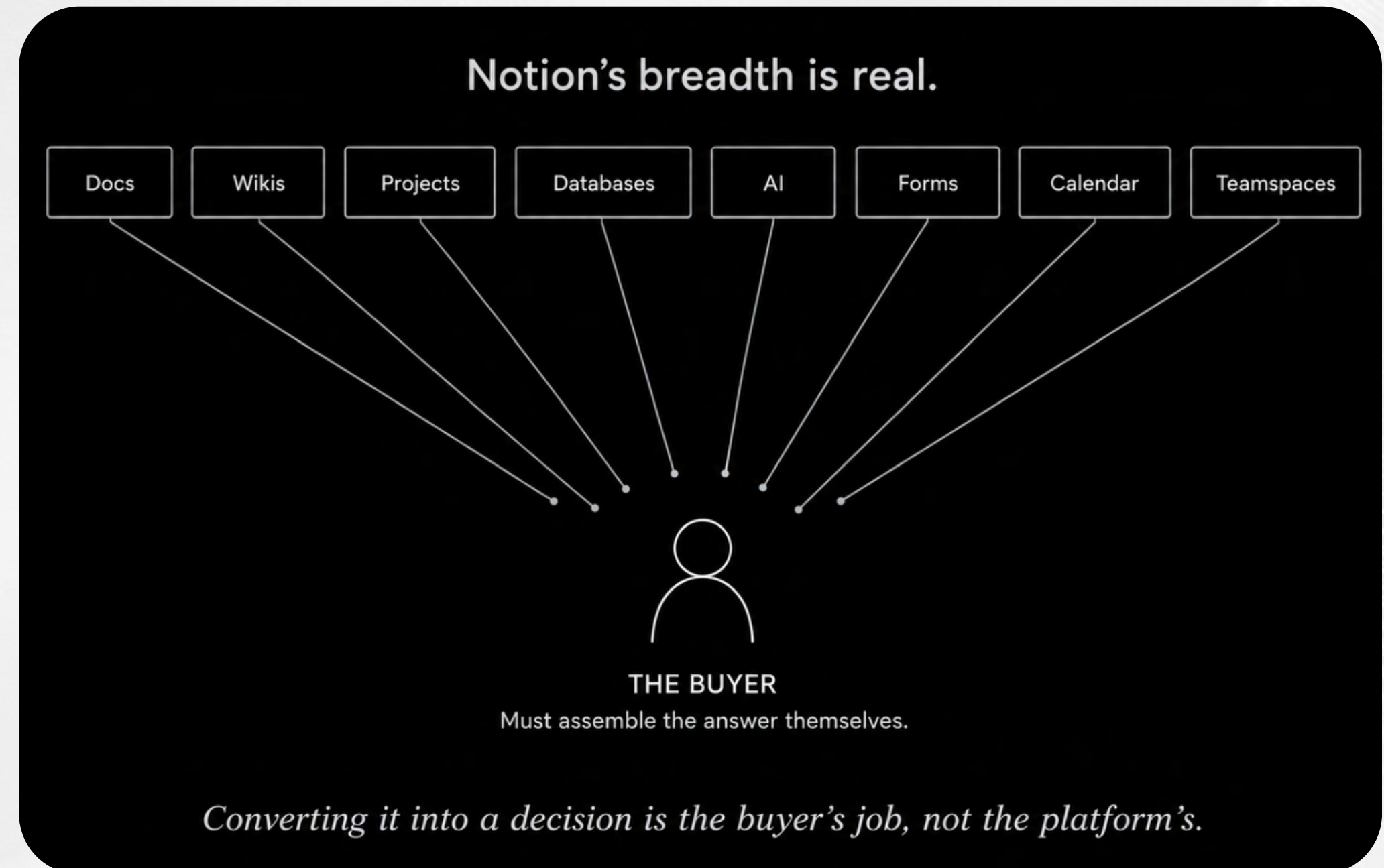
The Structural Trade-Off Between Clarity and Flexibility in Work Software

- Work software has split into three strategies: predefined clarity, default bundling, or flexible configurability
- Specialists preserve clarity deliberately; suites inherit value through bundling; flexible platforms like Notion absorb the full work stack
- Flexibility multiplies decision points a buyer must clear before finding their entry point
- **Result: flexibility is real capability, and a translation cost the buyer inherit**



NOTION'S POSITION WITHIN THIS ECOSYSTEM

- Multiple navigation systems (Products, Solutions, Templates, Pricing, Enterprise, AI) each ask a different question
- 100M+ users, 30,000+ templates, product list spanning Docs, Wikis, Projects, Databases, AI — breadth is the asset and the debt
- Pricing tiers framed by audience size (Free/Plus/Business/Enterprise), not by workflow
- But no single recommended configuration exists for a first-time buyer's specific job

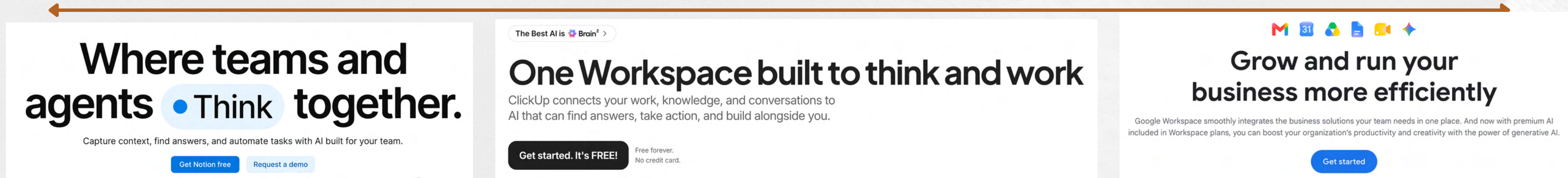


DIAGNOSTIC SCOPE

- **Identifying Critical Customer Touchpoints:**
 - Mapping the critical decision moments for retail and wholesale buyers.
- **Competitive Position: Notion vs. ClickUp vs. Google Workspace:**
 - Comparing the mental model each platform gives a buyer, and how much decision burden each leaves on them
- **Mapping Navigation and Template-Driven Routes:**
 - Tracing the ordered paths a buyer takes through the site and template marketplace, and where those paths break
- **Mapping Sales- and Consultant-Driven Routes:**
 - Evaluating the wholesale path where a human, not the product, carries the decision burden
- **Mapping In-Product Routes:**
 - Assessing whether the product continues the decision path after signup, or resets it to "figure it out yourself"
- **Translating Findings into Business Impact:**
 - Converting the retail and wholesale diagnoses into measurable outcomes

DIAGNOSTIC 1:

LANDING PAGE & FIRST-TIME BUYER PATHS



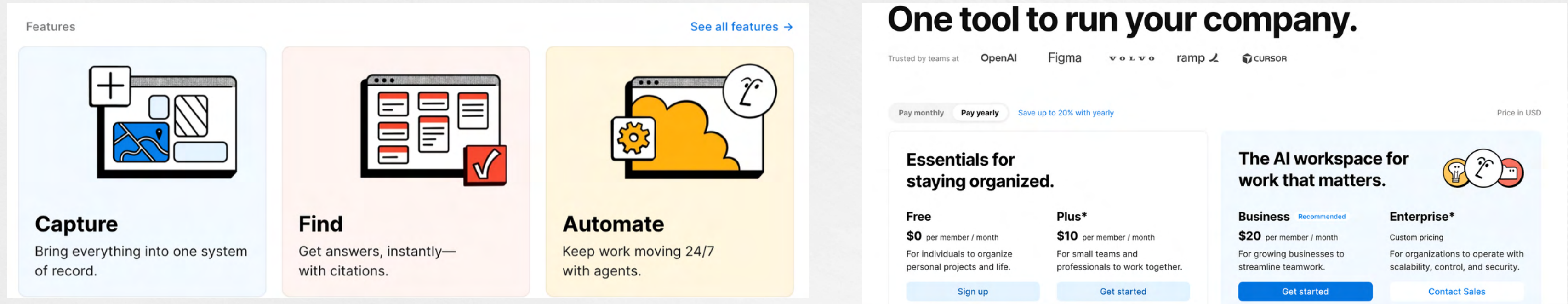
- **Notion's** headline rotates the verb itself (**Think/Ship/Create/Scale/Jam/Build**) : Structurally unfixed before the buyer chooses a use case
- **ClickUp** fixes one mental model (**tasks/projects/sprints**);
- **Google Workspace** inherits the buyer through tools they already trust

Notion, ClickUp, and Google Workspace solve the first-time buyer's problem in 3 ways:

- **Google Workspace** inherits the buyer through tools they already trust. The decision is really just "upgrade or don't."
- **ClickUp** gives the buyer a fixed mental model to check their work against
- **Notion** does neither: it **shows the buyer everything the platform could be, then asks the buyer to decide** what it should be for them, before they've built anything

- **Notion's Retail buyer: Catalogue with no Starting Point;**
- **Notion's Enterprise buyer: Components with no Pre-assembled Configuration**

PRODUCT & PRICING PAGES



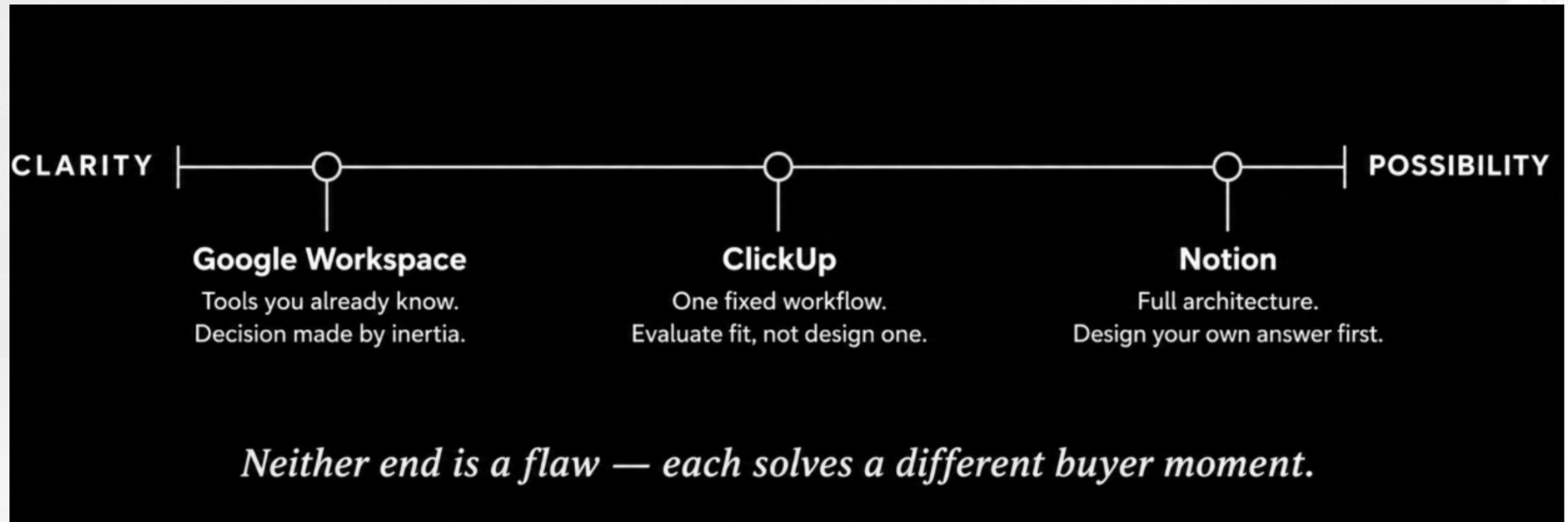
- **Product page** reduces to **Capture/Find/Automate**, then fans into **a wide capability catalogue with no recommended first move**
- **Pricing** organizes by **commercial tier, not workflow**:
 - Buyer must know what they're building before choosing a plan, but often doesn't know until after they start
 - Enterprise tier adds SCIM, audit logs, zero data retention — real depth, still not converted into a recommended deployment

Pattern: Transparency into a Feature Matrix isn't the same as Helping a Buyer Choose



DIAGNOSTIC 2: COMPETITIVE POSITION

Radz





THE THREE ARCHETYPES

Dimension	Notion	ClickUp	Google Workspace
Core Promise	Build your own connected workspace	Run work through an execution-first workspace	Use familiar apps that already work together
Primary Mental Model	Flexible blocks, databases, pages, AI	Tasks, projects, sprints, automations	Docs, Sheets, Drive, Gmail, Meet, Chat
Buyer's Starting Question	"What should I build with this?"	"How do I manage this work?"	"Can we do this with what we already have?"
Decision Burden	High — workflow, structure, and plan	Medium — predefined work views	Low-medium — stretch familiar tools
Strength	Breadth, configurability	Execution clarity, PM depth	Distribution, familiarity, bundling
Friction Point	Possibility arrives before a decision path	Can feel rigid for non-project work	Can feel "good enough," not purpose-built
Buyer Trade-off	Possibility vs. clarity	Execution vs. flexibility	Default vs. best-of-breed

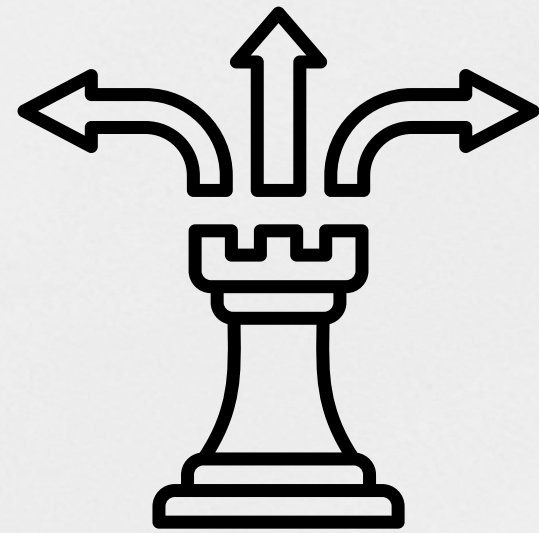
Google Workspace: Names the task before the product, **decision made by inertia**

ClickUp: Names the workflow before the product, **buyer evaluates fit against a fixed model**

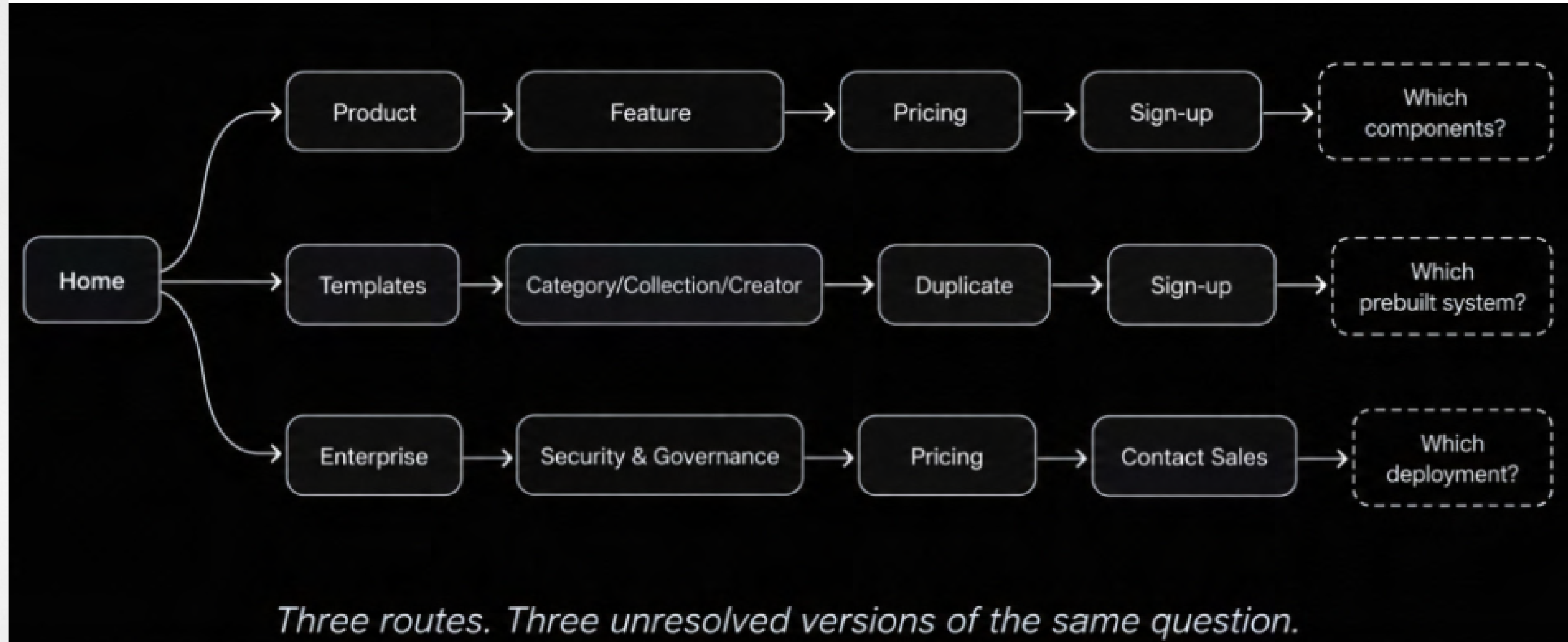
Notion: Presents full architecture up front, buyer designs their own answer before experiencing a working system

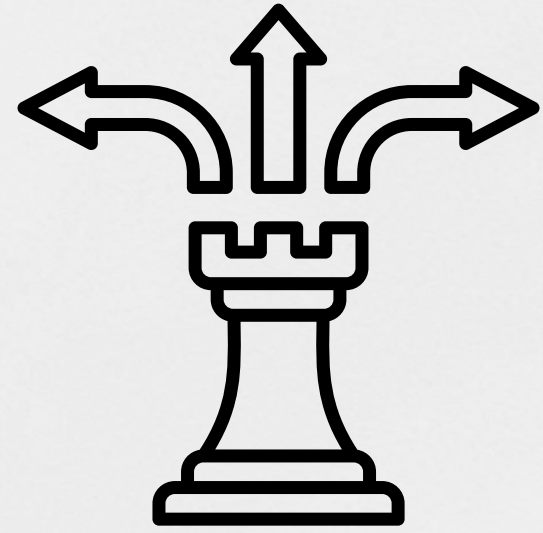
Decision burden is Category-Inherent.

The question is whether options are sequenced into a legible path



DIAGNOSTIC 3: NAVIGATION & TEMPLATE ROUTES





THREE ROUTES, ONE UNRESOLVED QUESTION



Route 1: Feature-Led Discovery

Home → Product → Capture / Find / Automate / Built for Teams → Feature → Pricing → Sign-up

Route 2: Template-Led Discovery

Home → Templates → Category / Collection / Creator / Template → Duplicate → Sign-up → Workspace

Route 3: Enterprise Discovery

Home/Product → Built for Teams / Enterprise → Security, AI, and Governance → Pricing → Contact Sales

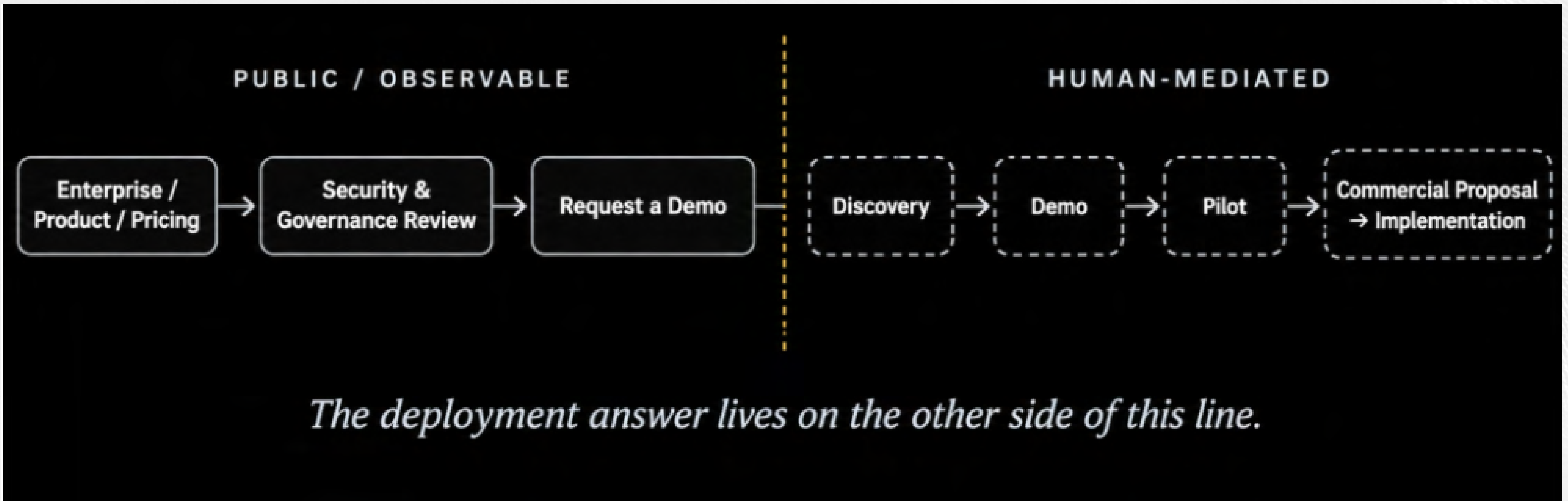
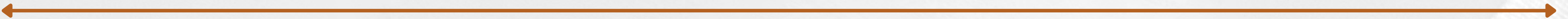
Pattern Across Routes

Route	What the Buyer Wants	What Notion Provides First	What Remains Unresolved
Feature-led	"What should I use?"	Capability Catalogue	Which components form the first system
Template-led	"Can I start with a working system?"	Large Marketplace	Which prebuilt system fits, how much adaptation it needs
Enterprise-led	"What should we deploy?"	Capability and Entitlement set	Which configuration, plan, governance model, rollout path



DIAGNOSTIC 4:

SALES & CONSULTANT ROUTES

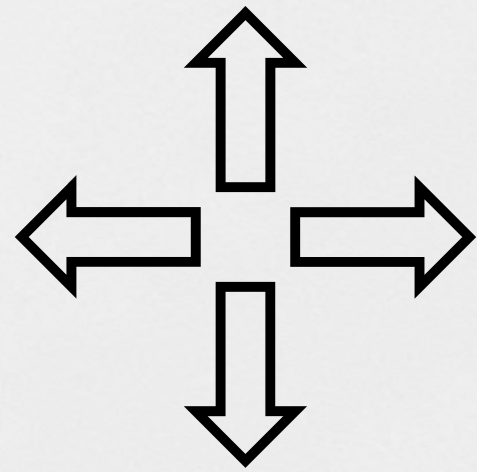




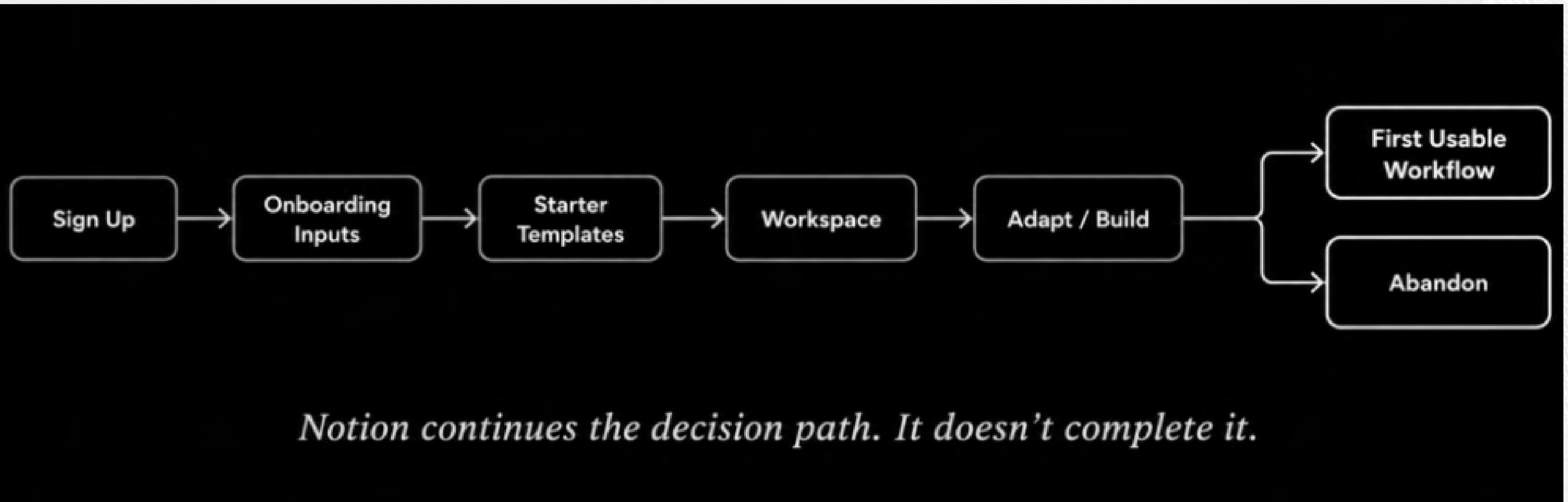
WHERE THE DECISION ACTUALLY GETS MADE

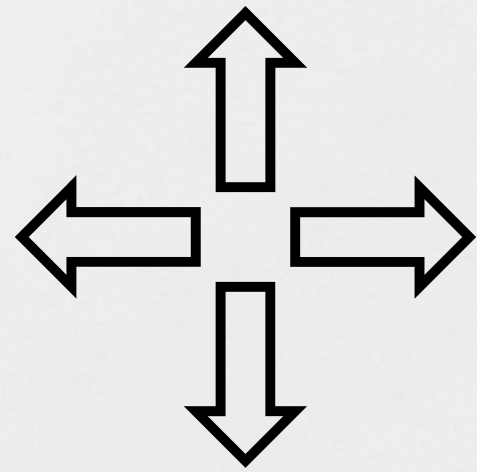
- **Enterprise buyers need an operating model, not just product features:** what Notion will replace, connect to, govern, and deploy across the organisation.
- Public site proves capability; it doesn't convert components into an **organisation-specific deployment before Contact Sales**
- **Six sub-decisions remain unresolved** at handoff: which layer, which teams, what it replaces, governance, plan, ownership
- That work shifts to the human-led route: **sales discovery, solution design, professional services, customer success, or certified consultants.**
- Certified consultants function as **the bridge between "Notion could do this" and "this is what we should build"**
- Sales route becomes the first serious solution-definition route, not just a commercial one

Core diagnostic: Notion's flexibility creates Flexibility Debt, turning "Notion could do this" into "We need someone to determine what we should build."



DIAGNOSTIC 5: IN-PRODUCT ROUTES





POST-SIGNUP: CONTINUATION, NOT COMPLETION

- **Sign-up** does not equal activation. The buyer still needs to determine what to build first.
- **Onboarding and starter templates** continue the decision path, but do not necessarily provide one clear starting system.
- **The buyer must still configure the workspace:** retain or modify templates, create databases, connect pages, add integrations, and introduce AI or automation or invite a team.
- More capabilities create **more configuration decisions**, including questions about plan eligibility and feature availability.
- **Core break:** Notion reduces the blank-page problem but may still require the buyer to become the system designer. Account creation is immediate; a working connected workspace is not. The gap between the two is where activation risk lives
- **Diagnostic:** The journey moves from a public feature catalogue to an in-product catalogue of templates and tools, while activation certainty remains unresolved.



DIAGNOSTIC 6:

TRANSLATING FINDINGS INTO BUSINESS IMPACT





THE PRESCRIPTIVE CLOSE: PRE-RESOLUTION

- **Recommendation:** Move a validated, working answer earlier than commitment, on both paths. Resolve the buyer's core decision before commitment, not after it.
- **Retail:** Onboarding should recommend one clear starting workspace, identify what to ignore initially, and define the next action.
- **Enterprise:** PEnterprise and Pricing pages should present named, pre-assembled deployment patterns by team size or use case.
- The buyer should reach Contact Sales with a proposed system, not merely an understanding that Notion has relevant capabilities.

Core impact: Pre-Resolution reduces the system-design work currently transferred to buyers and moves resolution to the point of decision.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR GROWTH

- Growth doesn't imply decision-path efficiency. Breadth attracts curious users, freemium removes signup friction
- The real question isn't "is Notion growing," but *how many users activate, adopt, convert, and retain after signup*
- Decision clarity, not just capability breadth, is the strategic asset in this category

THE CLOSE

This diagnostic reflects notion.com's navigation, pricing structure, and positioning as observed on September 14, 2026. Both the retail self-serve path and the wholesale sales-led path were evaluated across the same window, using Notion's own published pages — Product, Templates, Pricing, Enterprise, and the sidebar-templates onboarding described in Notion's help documentation — rather than internal data. Findings on plan entitlements, template marketplace figures, and comparative positioning against ClickUp and Google Workspace should be read as a snapshot in time and re-verified against the live site before any client-facing presentation of this material.

- **Scope:** Diagnostic runs entirely on **what's publicly observable** — no internal access, no engineering time, no disruption to your team
- **Differentiation:** Growth teams read metrics after damage is visible; Radz identifies **behavioral and structural gaps before they surface as a metric**
- **Next Step: Request a Free Baseline Diagnostic**

REQUEST A FREE BASELINE DIAGNOSTIC