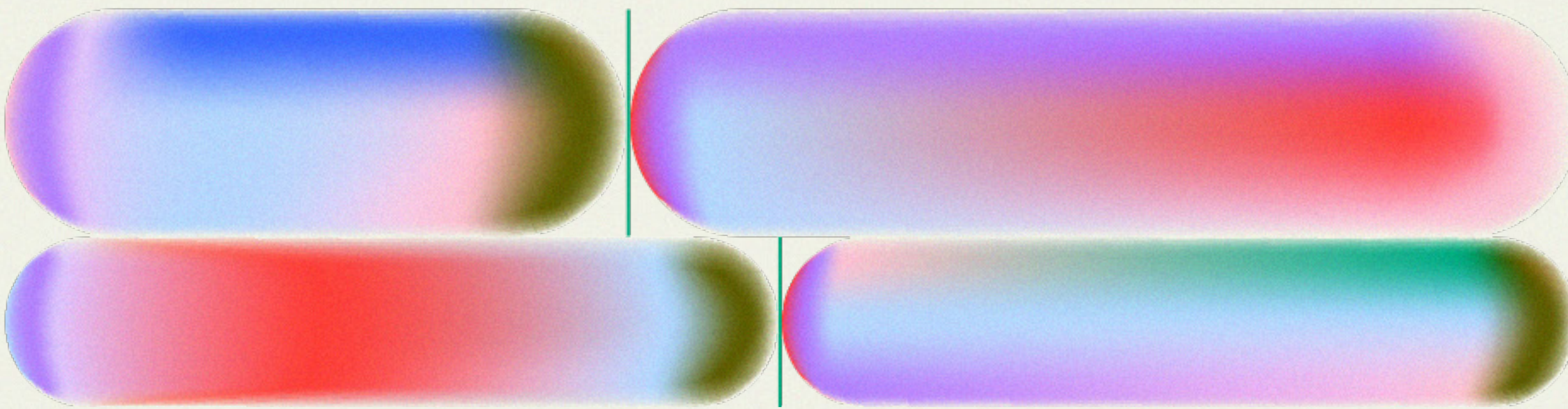
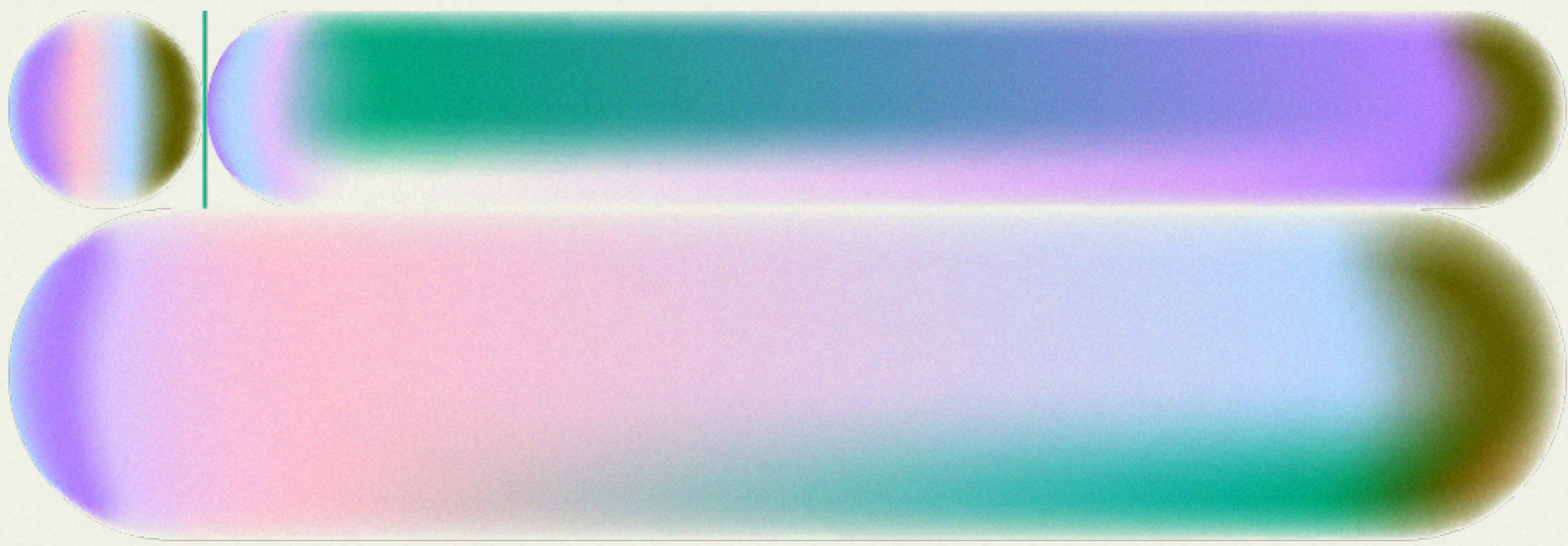


BECOMING OBVIOUS

Unlock Mainstream
Adoption for
Climate Tech

Index



Introduction	
The Climate Opportunity has a Chasm Problem	
The Missing Link: Demand-side Innovation	
Identify Demand Drivers	<i>Cheat Sheets</i>
Regulation & Compliance	<i>Watershed</i>
Supply Risk & Volatility	<i>Solario</i>
Competition	<i>Avalo</i>

Remove Barriers	<i>Cheat Sheets</i>
Financial Value & Price	<i>Palmetto</i>
Relevance	<i>Bedrock Energy</i>
Convenience	<i>GageZero</i>
Risk Perception	<i>Boston Metal</i>
Appeal	<i>Quilt</i>
Special Thanks	
Further Reading / Resources	
Contact information	

About this Guide

A practical field guide **for founders and investors use to play offense and actually scale up demand.**

What's in it

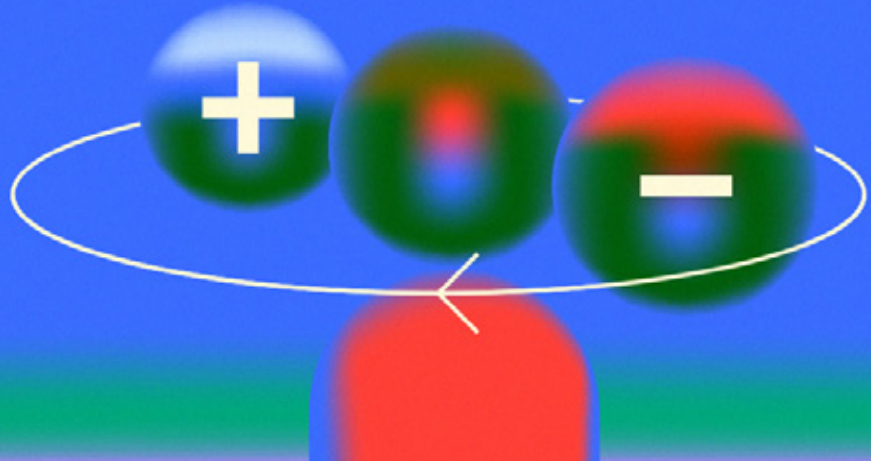
- ✧ *Demand drivers in climate tech:* how to identify, harness, and leverage them for growth
- ✧ *Common adoption obstacles:* why they matter and how to overcome them
- ✧ *Case studies and examples:* that show how real climate companies apply many of the principles in the guide to shape their market approach and to grow

Who it's for

For climate tech executives, founders, investors, salespeople, marketers, and leaders seeking to outpace slow growth, regulatory dependency, and outdated playbooks—and ready to make bold moves to kick-start mainstream adoption.

Why it exists

Climate tech's real bottleneck to adoption isn't the technology, it's lagging adoption. Mature technology backed by investments are not translating to customers fast enough. This guide exists to address the adoption gap—the missing demand-side capabilities, strategies, and pitfalls that keep life-changing climate tech from scaling.



INTRODUCTION

Climate technology stands at a critical juncture. While the high impact technologies in the space are mature, *less than 10% are considered commercially competitive*. Adoption lags behind—falling short of *climate benchmarks* and trailing typical adoption curves for new products.

The stakes for climate tech’s success could not be higher. Successful adoption delivers climate stability and everything it enables—including smooth economic operations. To do that, we need to transition every part of the economy to better systems that are *already available*. Ready supply hasn’t translated into market acceptance or mainstream adoption.

The adoption gap can’t be explained by technology maturity, regulation, investment context, politics, or pricing alone. The gap is the result of weak demand.

Sources: *McKinsey*, *Rewiring America*, *The Economist*

This guide is the accidental result of my desire to understand exactly why that is. I dug into research, attended events and interviewed over 80 leaders, investors, and service providers.

What I found is that behind weak demand there’s a critical shortage of the capabilities companies need to control their growth and accelerate adoption.

There’s also trepidation about building these capabilities. Ultimately, I wrote this guide because the impact of this trepidation is failure. Climate tech must develop demand-side innovation as a core part of its business strategy, as fundamental to success as R&D or fundraising.

Climate tech —whether consumer or B2B—requires lots of people choosing what’s new over what’s familiar to succeed.

Luckily, there’s a lot of expertise to draw from. Many technologies have done it. It’s time for climate tech across every category to become the obvious, irresistible choice for customers.

Let’s get started.

Michu Benaim Steiner,
Managing Partner
In-House International

Climate Tech has a Chasm Problem



Geoffrey Moore’s “*Crossing the Chasm*” showed the high-tech industry that breakthrough technology doesn’t guarantee success. Companies must either drive mass adoption or fade into irrelevance.

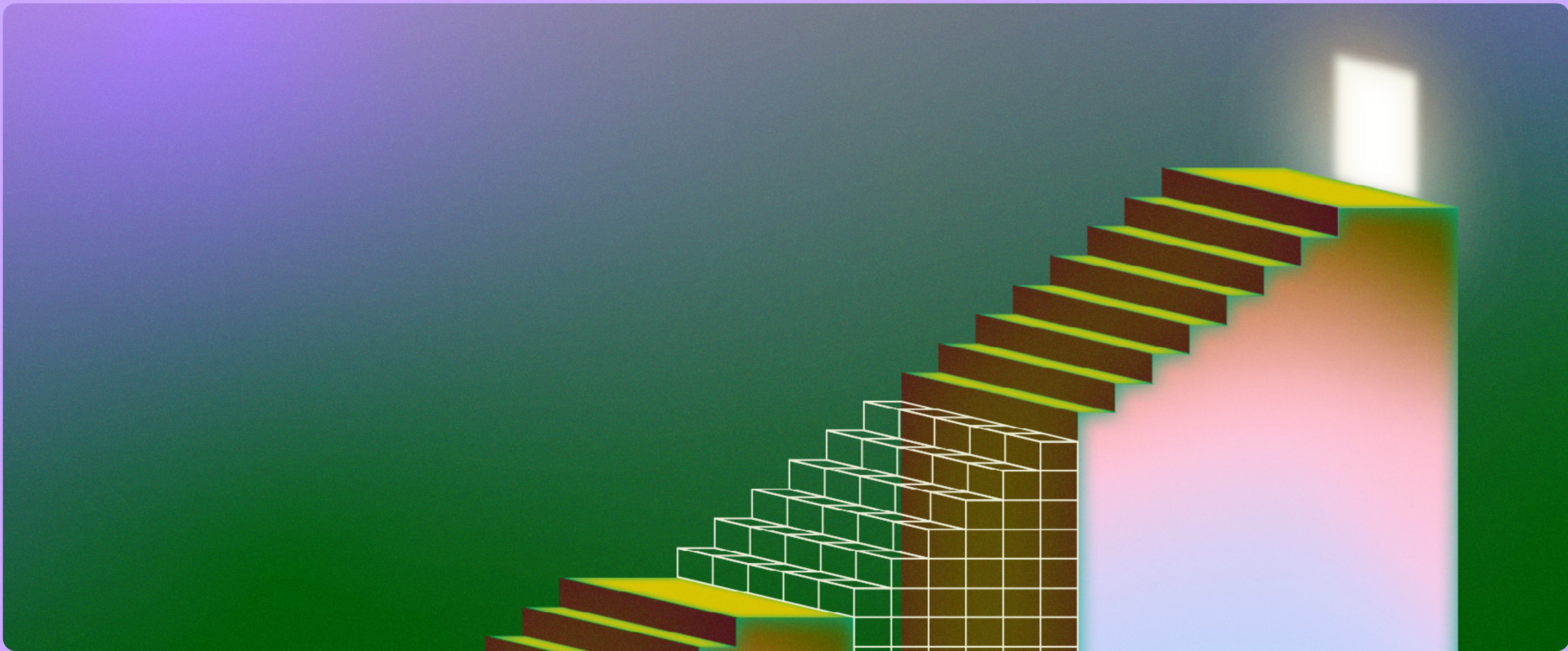
Climate tech is stuck on the wrong side of the chasm.

Mainstreaming innovation is tough. It means challenging established brands with proven operations and built infrastructure. The more dominant the incumbent, the harder they are to displace. Even so, markets adopt innovative technologies on a regular basis.

The key is understanding how mainstream buyers think, what they value, and what makes them comfortable with change.

If customer choice were purely rational, climate tech would be the clear winner. On paper, it couldn’t be more obvious: one side a better, faster, and more efficient system that adds up to abundance and stability, the other extractive model that’s wasteful, pollutive, and will deteriorate our lives as it depletes every resource.

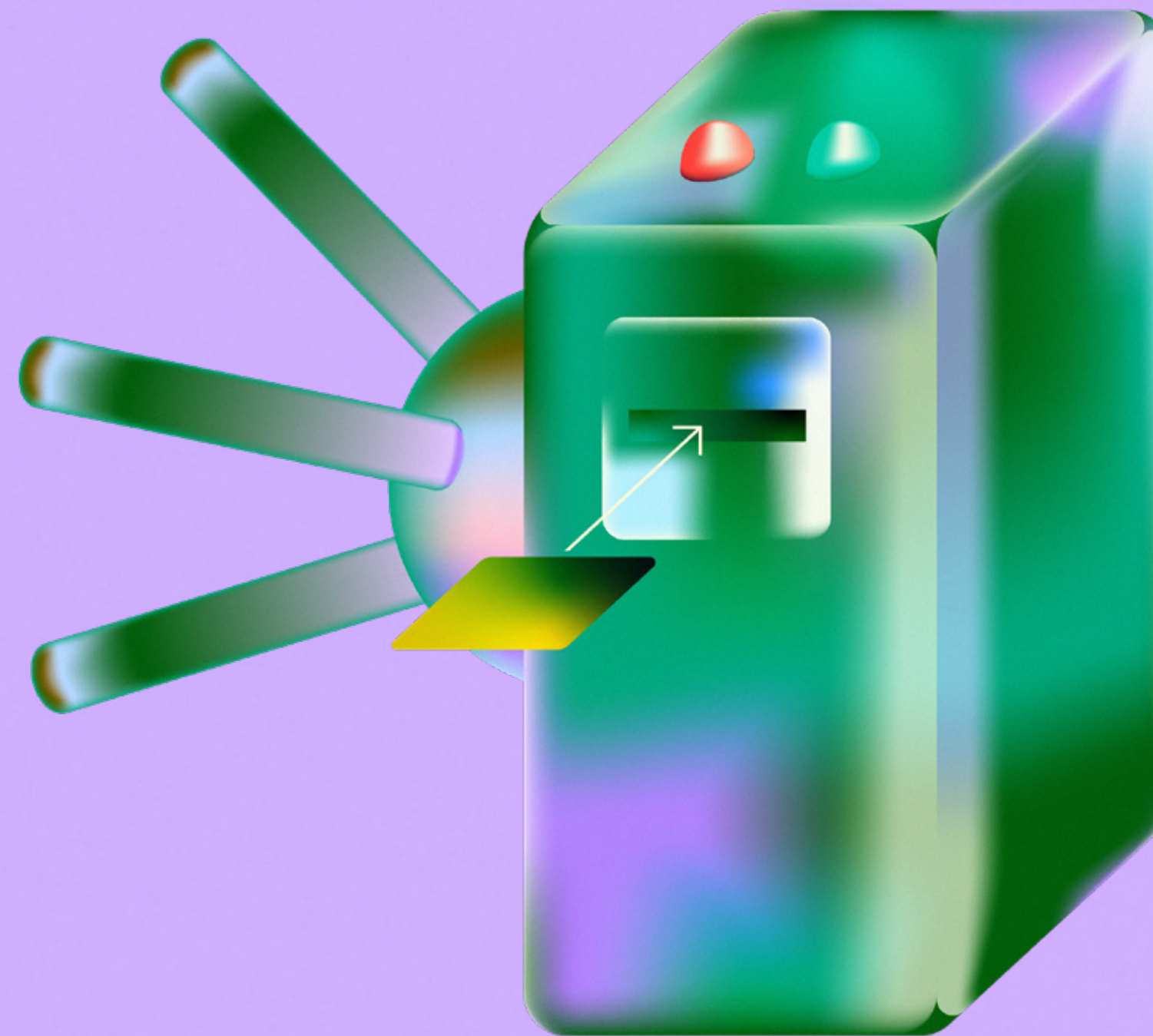
Instead, better options languish because there’s a lack of sophistication about what makes offerings irresistible to customers. It’s time for climate tech leaders to develop the skills needed to navigate the messy, human reality of purchase decisions and make climate solutions the preferred, obvious choice—despite a mountain of disadvantages.



The Missing Link: Demand-Side Innovation

Demand-side innovation is about redesigning business strategy to navigate irrational, noisy, competitive markets and win anyway. It reorients every aspect of the customer experience to serve active demand, nurture future market interest, and make adoption frictionless and delightful.

While supply-side innovation improves what technology can do, demand-side work focuses on how customers experience, access, and derive value from that technology.



The goal is to ensure that better solutions translate to better customer experiences that drive wide adoption through:

- ✘ Business models that shift risk away from customers.
- ✘ Customer experiences that make lives tangibly better.
- ✘ Positioning that's attuned to market signals and communicates business advantages so the value is obvious to customers.
- ✘ The skills to break through pricing, trust, access, and risk perception obstacles.

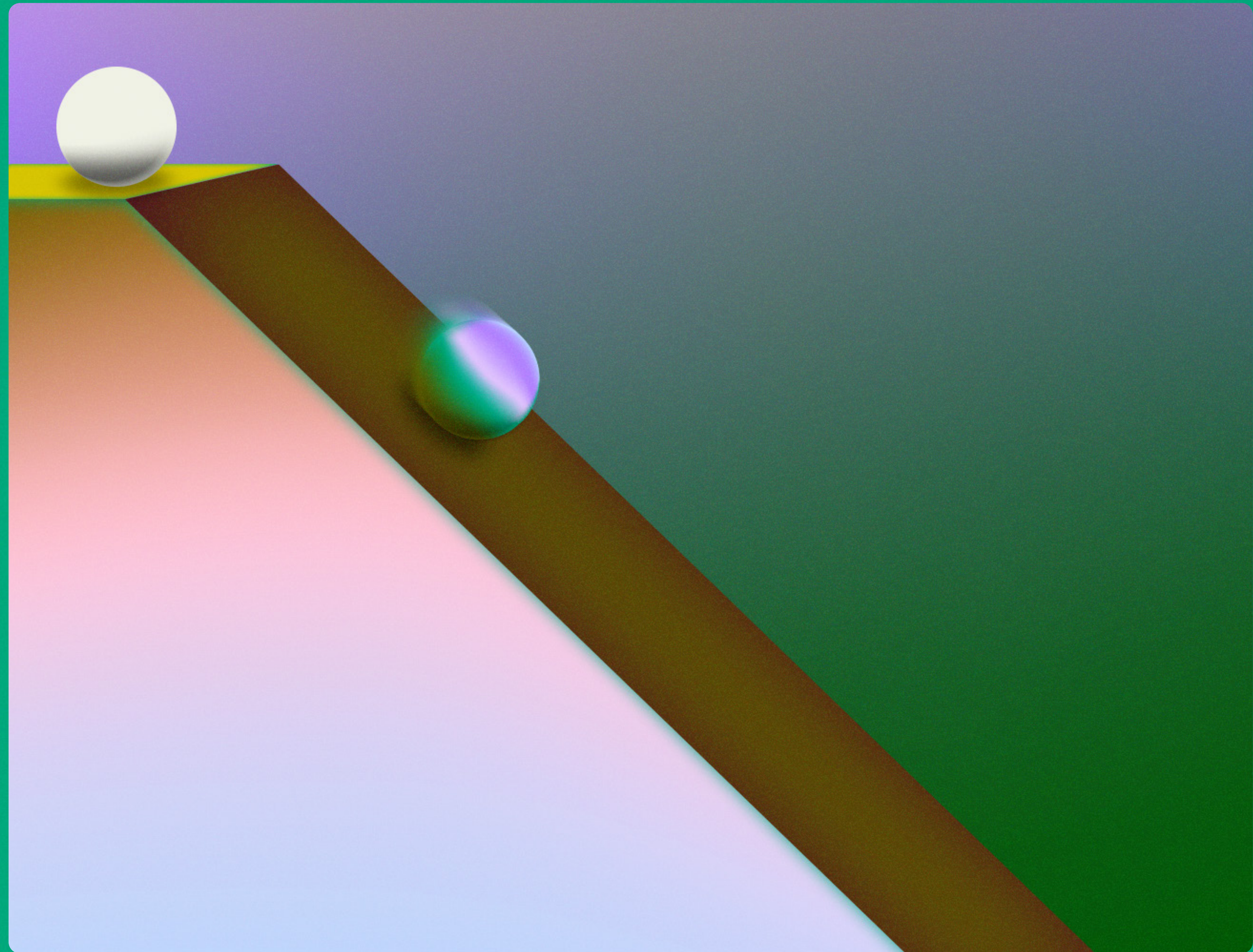
The two sections in this guide are tools for developing your demand-side capabilities. They're designed to help companies go on the offensive—so you can stop waiting for customers to find you and make the world want what you offer.

IDENTIFY DEMAND DRIVERS

When market forces create urgency around new challenges, opportunities open for solutions to enter and serve customers who wouldn't otherwise risk these changes. These **demand drivers are external forces that enable climate tech to gain a foothold.**

Regulatory deadlines, supply disruptions, and competitive threats are essential to adoption. But *relying* on conditions that offer no control isn't a great idea.

This section explores how demand works in this space, and invites companies to learn to navigate it as they build its own demand capabilities.



Demand Driver 01: Regulation & Compliance

Regulation and policy have shaped the climate technology landscape more decisively than any other factor. When governments signaled growing support, it created urgent demand for climate tech. Climate-conscious policy and regulation shaped how markets envisioned the future and increased the value of climate tech. Compliance guarantees buyers, which is about as strong of a driver of demand as it gets.

With all this in mind, it's no wonder policy feels like the sole make-or-break factor for climate tech. It completely changes the game; incumbents are no longer unbeatable. But there's a difference between capitalizing on an opening to enter the market and relying entirely on it to drive growth in the long term.

How it shapes demand

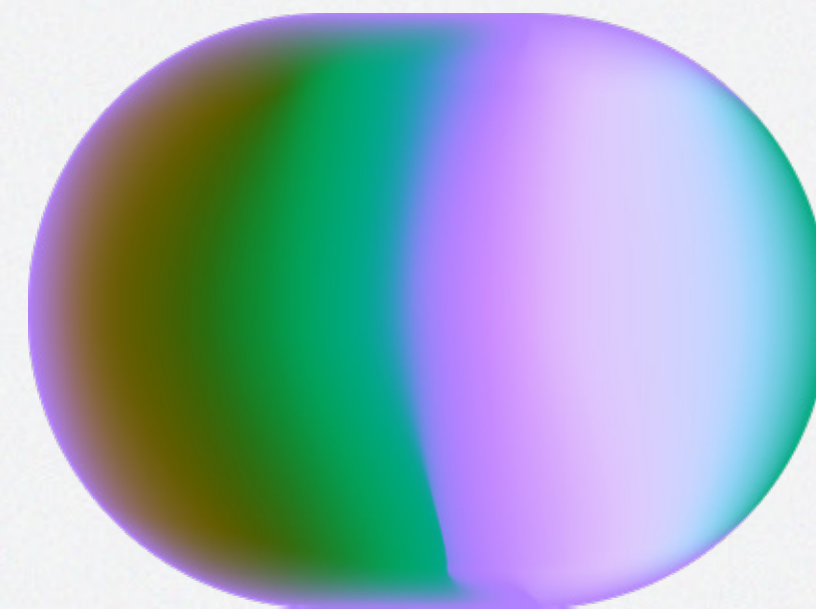
- ✧ **Definitive:** imperative, non-negotiable adoption of regulation as a condition for continued operation.
- ✧ **Incentivized:** Regulatory incentives change the cost-benefit calculation for buyers and dramatically accelerate adoption. For example, California's net billing tariff (NBT), which drove up paired solar+battery installations from 10% to 60% in the first year it went into effect, despite sudden price increases.
- ✧ **Far-reaching:** Its impact extends beyond directly regulated entities to their network of suppliers and partners.
- ✧ **Global:** Regulations in key economic territories drive adoption of climate technologies, prompting compliance from companies based in unregulated regions.

How it can backfire (and how to prepare)

Even the strongest policy advantages can disappear quickly. In June 2025, for instance, the U.S. DOE canceled more than \$3.7 billion in industrial-decarbonization funding overnight [1]. That single reversal rippled through supply chains and venture pipelines, reminding climate executives that:

- ✧ Government rules and incentives might only help you for a little while. Build your own demand pipeline, and have a plan in place in case those rules change or funding vanishes.
- ✧ Customers become hesitant when they sense changing policy support. Consider guaranteeing stable terms or pricing to make the decision to purchase easier.

In short: Compliance stories will open doors, but your company must also show why the solution makes sense with or without subsidies. Make your benefits clear even if tomorrow's regulations look different.



Sources: *How the CA market has evolved one year after the phase-out of net metering* Berkeley Lab (2024) / *Beyond the Green Ceiling: Why Climate Hardware Startups Struggle to Raise VC — and How to Beat the Odds.* | by David J. Neff

Watershed

Watershed is a SaaS enterprise sustainability platform that provides organizations with audit-grade “tools to measure, report, and reduce their environmental impact.” They emphasize expert leadership that’s trusted by established, well-known global brands.

Their approach: Watershed offers global brands with complex supply chains a full solution to comply with and stay ahead of sustainability requirements in the markets where their businesses operate.

Demand drivers

- 🏠 **Compliance:** Global variations and a dynamic compliance environment creates a need for a complete solution to monitor and meet requirements.
- 👁️ **Competition:** A growing number of multinationals require suppliers to disclose emissions data in RFPs, and investors, customers, and employees increasingly hold companies accountable for sustainability performance. Companies that can’t measure, report, and demonstrate climate action risk losing contracts, investment, and talent to competitors who can.

How they break down barriers

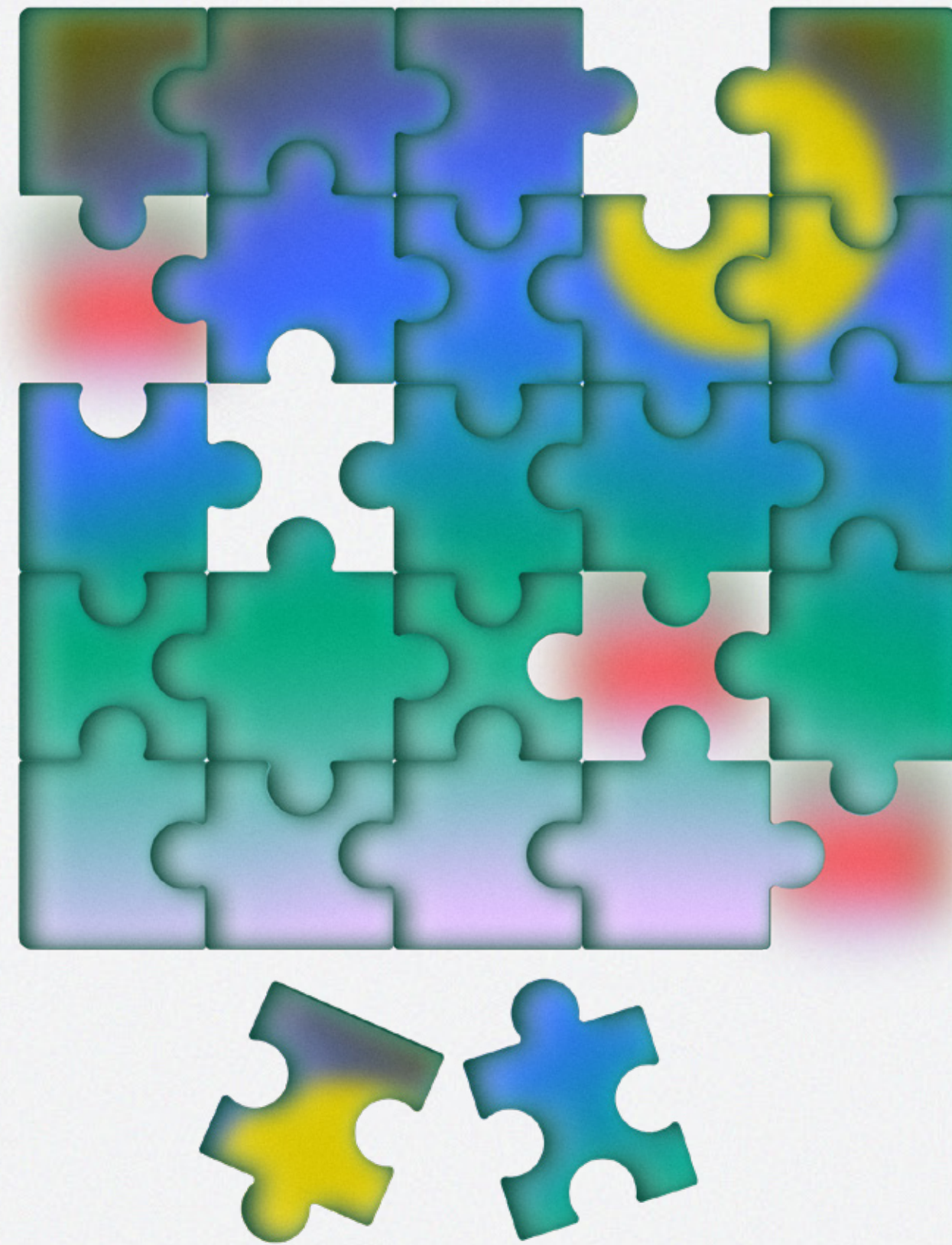
- 🕒 **Relevance:** Comprehensive solution for large companies with complex supply chains that have multiple reporting obligations around the world.
- ✅ **Convenience:** All-in-one platform for tracking, reporting, planning, and accessing carbon markets. Ongoing guidance and resources to keep up with changing requirements across markets.
- 👤 **Trust:** Lots of social proof, case studies from market-leading client brands in tech, finance, consumer product, apparel, food and beverage, entertainment. Advisors and staff are respected experts and thought leaders in the field.
- ♥️ **Appeal:** Look and feel meets the level of experience that demanding B2B customers expect. Their materials are thoughtfully designed and their campaigns show up where their customers are.



* Demand Driver 02: Supply Risk & Volatility

Business continuity depends on reliable access to energy, materials, and other critical inputs. When they're unavailable, unreliable or just too expensive, businesses have a strong incentive to look for alternatives that are more predictable and stable.

A 2020 McKinsey survey found that industries experienced supply chain disruptions lasting a month or longer every 3.7 years—and this was before the added volatility of COVID-19, AI demand, growing geopolitical tension, and policy rollouts and rollbacks further exposed the fragility of complex global supply chains. Supply risk highlights the advantages of reduced external dependencies. The urgency to find solutions creates the conditions that tend to drive new technology consideration. Climate tech is especially well positioned to offer resilience: more localized approaches, circularity to reclaim resources, and more control over energy access.



How it shapes demand

- * **High priority:** The impact on operations and finance means that the champion for adoption at a customer's company is likely to be a leader in a traditional business role rather than sustainability.
- * **Concentrated:** Businesses vulnerable to supply shocks will have greater interest in solutions that offer greater control over critical inputs (regardless of their sustainability credentials.)
- * **Urgent:** The experience or imminent threat of input disruption tends to drive active search and adoption of resiliency solutions.
- * **Inelastic:** Companies threatened by unreliable inputs have some tolerance for higher cost solutions that provide consistent access to critical resources.

Sources: *3 hurdles to resilient, antifragile supply chains*, Maersk (2024), *McKinsey on Risk and Resilience #14* (2023) *Customers turn to Microgrids & Backup Generators to Avoid Blackouts* | PERC

Solario

Solario is an energy retailer serving heavy industry customers in the Mexican wholesale market, addressing supply risks from strained public infrastructure.

Their approach: Emphasis on customer relationships. Ongoing high-touch service and advisory to show savings and performance month after month.

Demand drivers

- * **Supply risk:** grid insufficiency and political pressure threatened industrial manufacturing operations.
- 👁️ **Competition:** High (and rising) energy costs undercut profit.

How they break down barriers

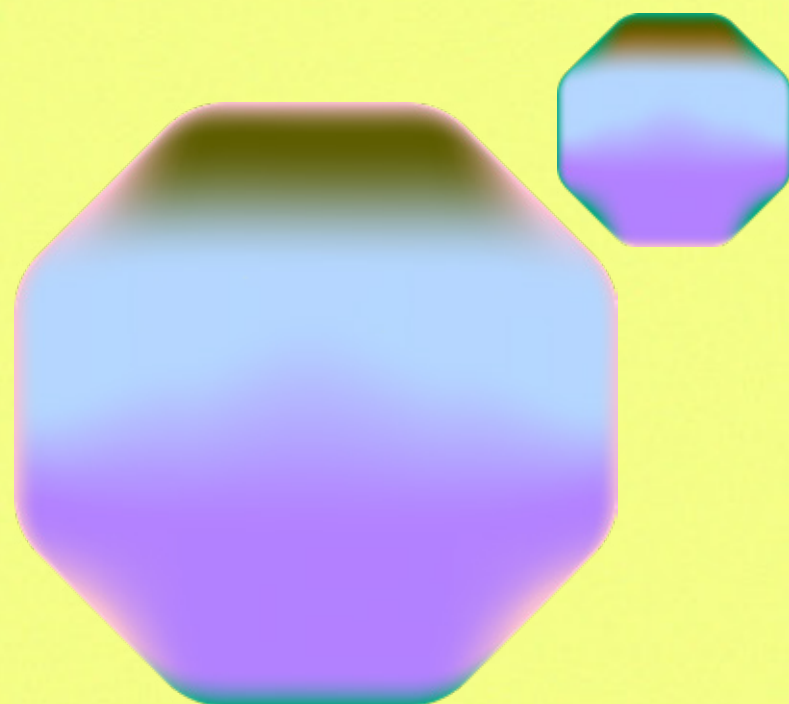
- 🏠 **Cost:** A track record of cost savings over time across existing customers. Minimal switching costs.
- 🗨️ **Relevance:** Solve a critical supply risk for manufacturers.
- ✅ **Convenience:** Turnkey implementation, concierge-level management.
- 👤 **Trust:** Referrals from satisfied customers, who value having a view of the company's infrastructure plans, and a voice in helping determine future development.
- ♥️ **Appeal:** High-end service culture, turnkey service. Cheaper, more reliable energy supply, delivered with high levels of expert service.

“80% of our customers come through word of mouth. Approaching someone cold is hard But if a cold contact calls one of our customers, it almost always closes because we invest very heavily in customer experience; one expert for a handful of accounts.

We're not a large company yet, but the concierge experience and making the switch easy for new customers is how we've been able to grow. Utilities will send you the bill at the end of the month, you pay and that's it. Experts prepare monthly use reports, ask about future plans, have a call each month.

Our customers at this stage are proud to have been part of our growth. They also know that the more customers we have the greater our range of services will be, which benefits everyone.”

Humberto Garza, CEO,
Solario



👁️ Demand Driver 03: Competition

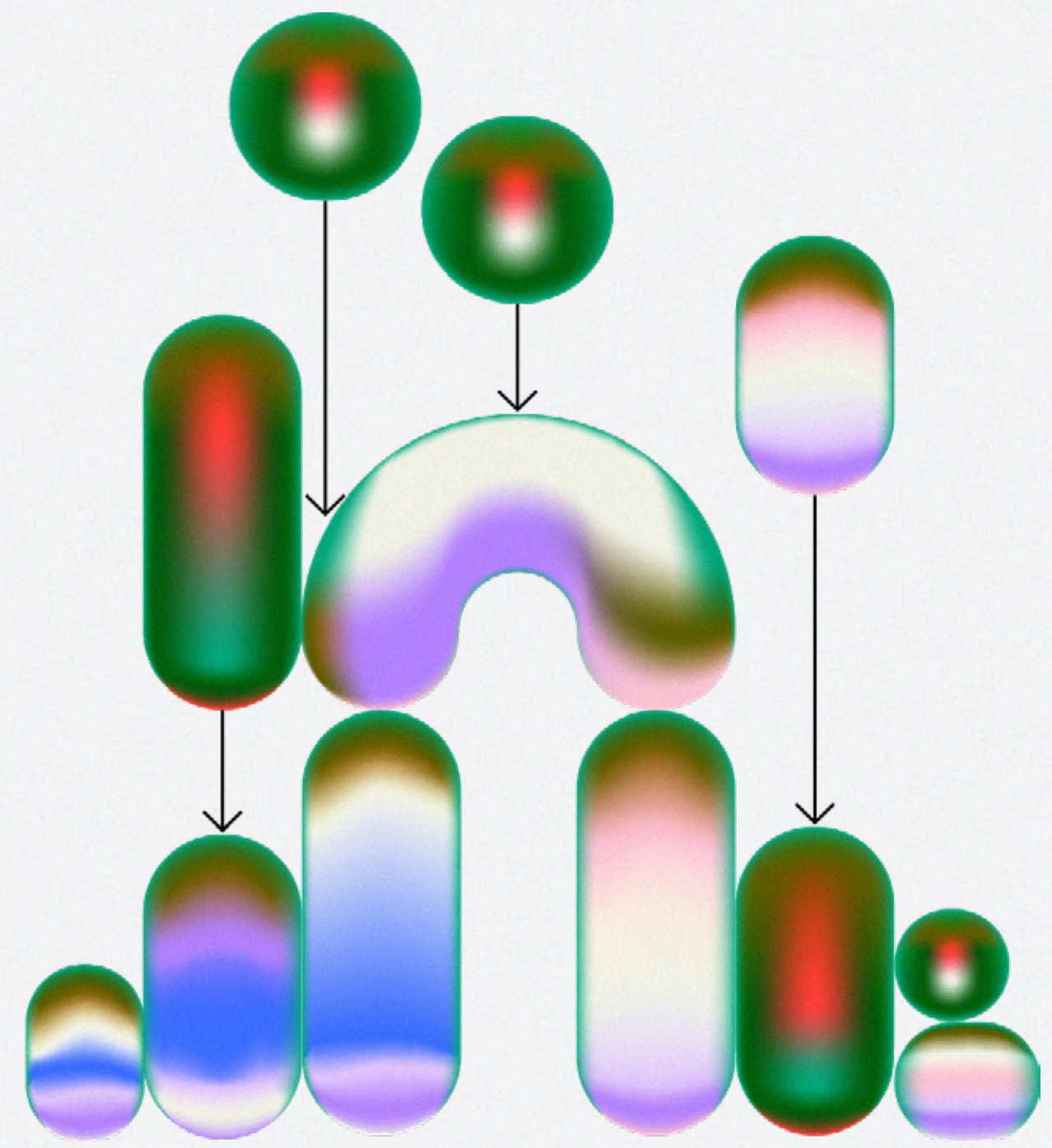
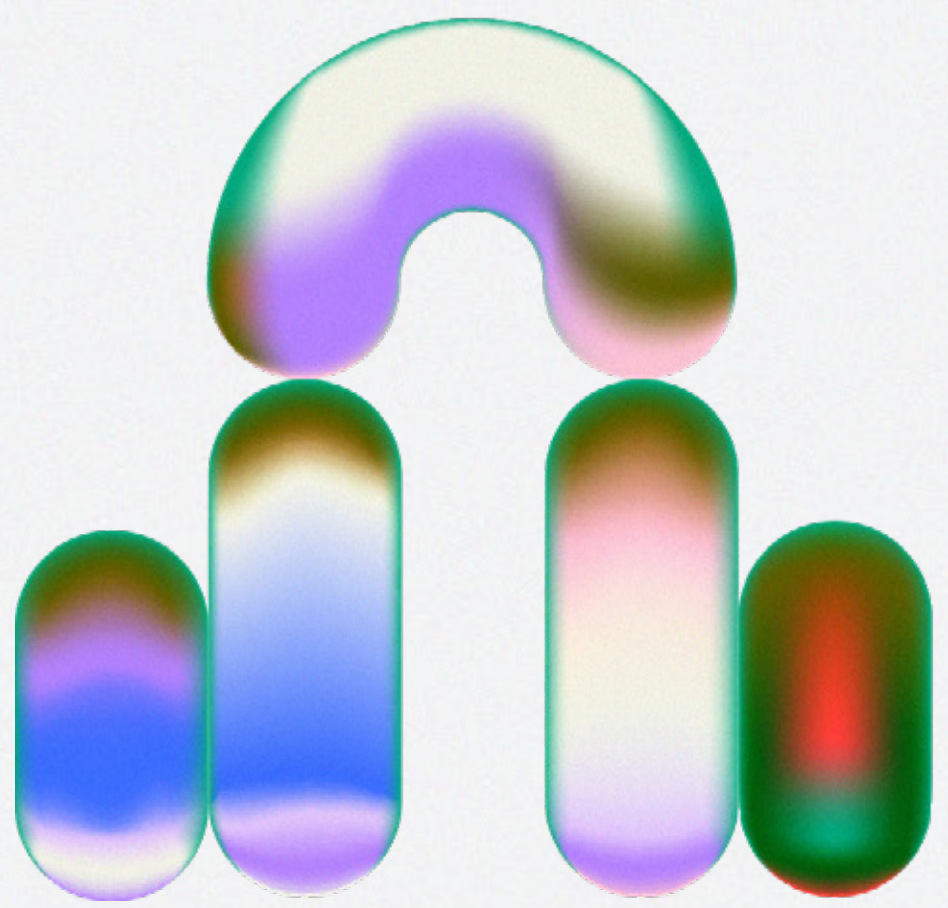
Climate technologies are increasingly becoming strategic business tools that can help companies outperform rivals or survive in really tough operating conditions. They appeal to customers seeking solutions that can help them gain a competitive edge—ways to be cheaper, faster, or better than rivals without sacrificing profitability.

For example, tech that reduces energy use or improves the efficiency of operations can improve margins or pass on savings to customers. Likewise, tech with climate benefit that appeals to B2B customers or the consumers they target can attract more customers, which can boost profit.

How it shapes demand

- ✖ **Strategic:** Business leaders make competition-driven adoption decisions—focus on business outcomes, not technical features.
- ✖ **Performance-focused:** Buyers prioritize solutions that deliver measurable profit gains.
- ✖ **Risk-weighted:** Competitive pressure drives companies to try unconventional solutions for market defense or growth.

- ✖ **Preferred:** Sustainable offerings outgrow and draw greater profits than conventional products across consumer categories. Differentiation through climate tech remains powerful.
- ✖ **Unevenly distributed:** Thin-margin, resource-intensive categories or sectors urgently seek solutions, accelerating adoption.



Sources: *Top Performers Unlock More Revenue from Sustainability* | Bain & Company (2025), *Sustainability—Your Brand's Next Cost-Saving Weapon* | Bain & Company.



Avalo

Avalo develops resilient crop varieties using machine learning to identify natural traits that enhance climate resilience, yields, and flavors—building on traditional breeding with data-driven techniques.

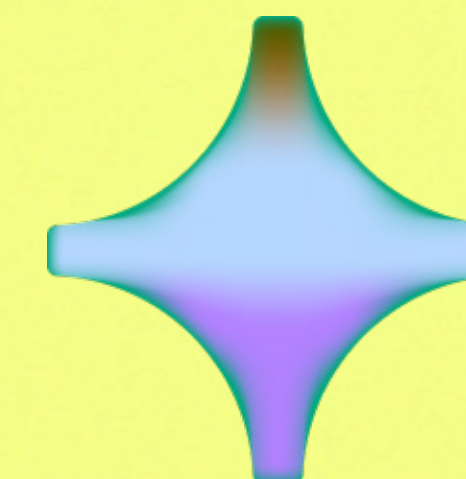
Their approach: Avalo creates crops requiring fewer resources while maintaining quality. They partner with farmers for piloting, providing seeds and support, then purchasing the resulting crops at favorable terms.

Demand drivers

- * **Supply risk:** Increasing climate volatility threatens agricultural productivity, creating urgent need for more resilient crops.
- 👁️ **Competition:** Farmers face thin profit margins and rising costs, driving them to seek innovations that provide competitiveness in challenging conditions.

How they break down barriers

- 🏠 **Financial value:** Crops that thrive with fewer inputs lower costs and improve profitability, crop purchase from pilot participants.
- 🗨️ **Relevance:** Directly addresses farmers' biggest challenges by reducing overhead and improving crop resilience.
- ☑️ **Convenience:** Year-round support for partner farmers, from seed provision through harvest, with guaranteed purchase of output.
- 🤝 **Trust:** Commitment to buy back harvested crops, and support throughout, shares risk and reduces farmers' trepidation.
- ♥️ **Appeal:** Distinctive visual brand with clear, concise copy and intuitive navigation for different audiences.

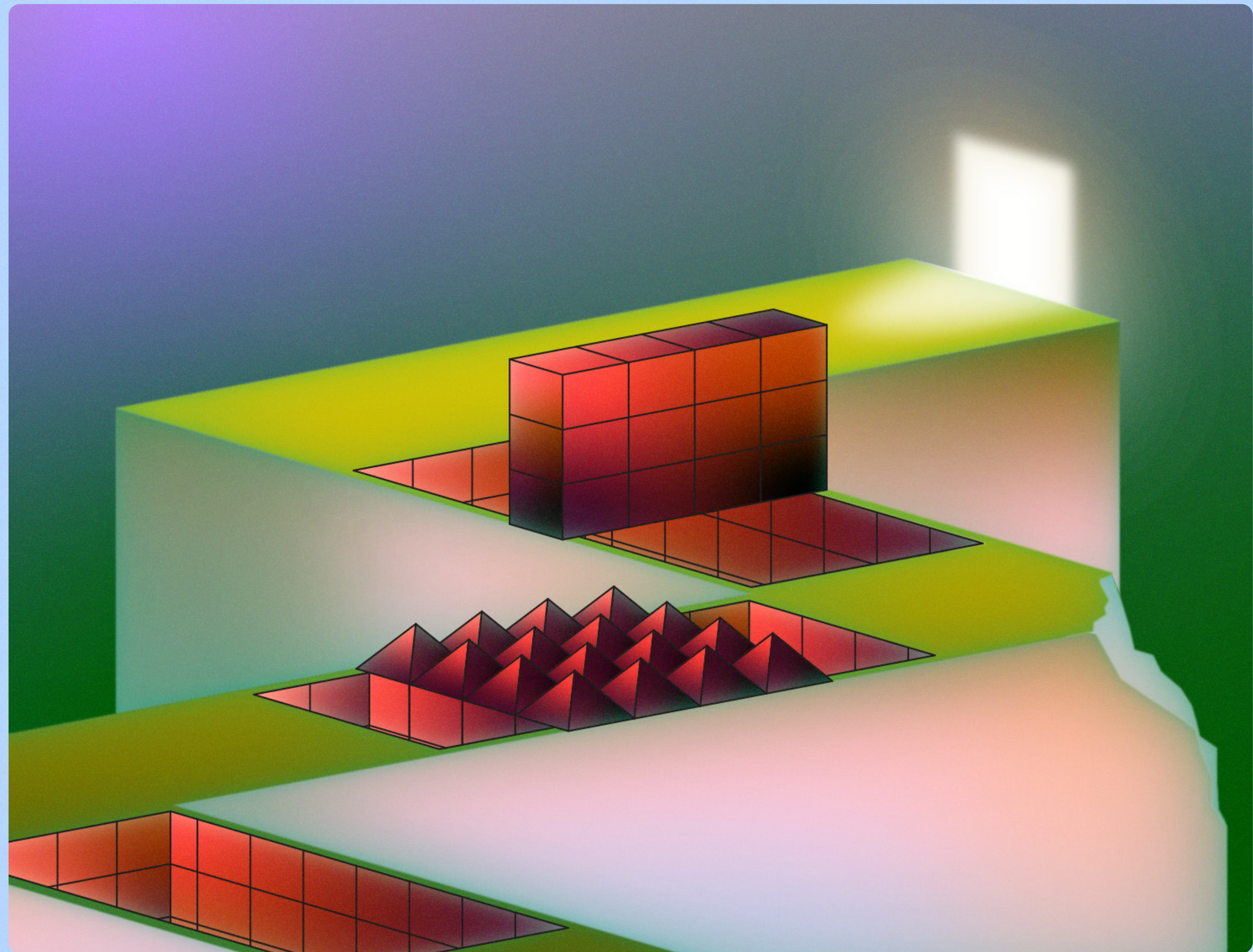


REMOVE BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

Meeting urgent demand is only part of the story. Adoption requires overcoming obstacles that block success in competitive markets—and all markets are competitive.*

Often, what blocks widespread adoption seems peripheral to your core product. These obstacles aren't about technology itself—they activate at the customer experience level.

* If they're not and you hold a monopoly... stop reading now, why are you here? Get yourself a treat, you have no need for this guide!



The good news is that you have more power than you think to shape customer experience. Technological excellence comes from supply innovation; adoption and growth comes from demand-side competencies. This section shows how to rethink your offering to overcome adoption friction and develop market-focused capabilities as core practices.

Cheaper, better, cleaner technology isn't enough. Startups face incumbents' advantages: cheap capital, proven technology, mature supply chains.

Key topics include:

- 1. **Demand-side obstacles:** How customers experience friction when adopting new technologies.
- 2. **Interdependence challenges:** Why climate tech needs cross-category growth to achieve scale.
- 3. **Overcoming strategies:** Business model adjustments, risk reduction, and aligned risk-sharing approaches.
- 4. **Real-world applications:** How climate ventures break through barriers to drive adoption.

None of this is meant to be prescriptive or formulaic. Examples show different approaches to market-focused innovation. This section identifies common blockers and strategies that work.

The goal is for you to build intuition for your specific challenges. Consider solutions beyond core product—partnerships, financing models, experience redesign. Create offerings superior not just in utility or climate impact, but in convenience, practicality, and appeal.

Barrier 01: Financial Value & Price Introduction

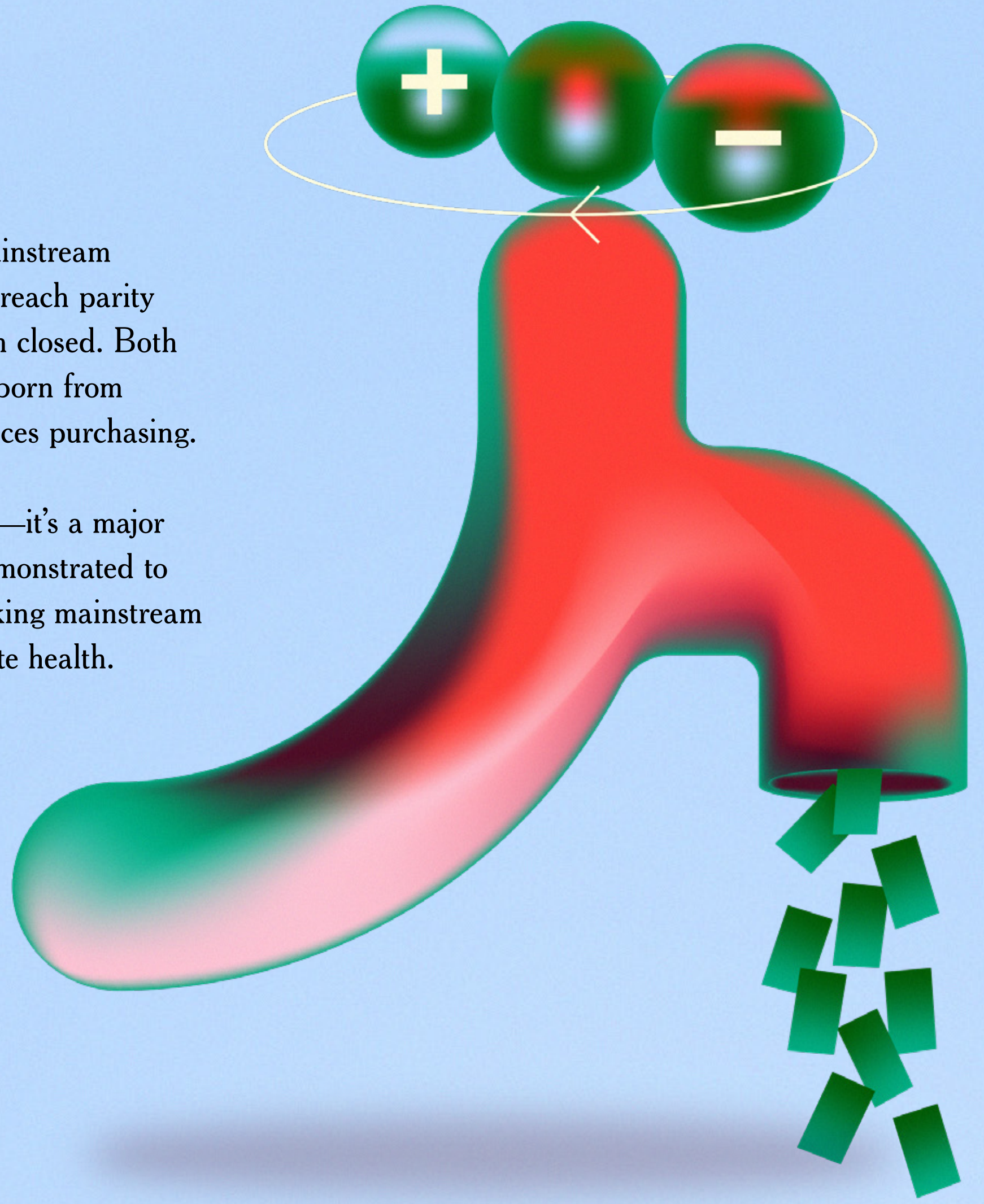
Green premiums have cast a long shadow over climate technology. There is latent demand for things and solutions that are better or less harmful to the environment—from B2B customers and individual consumers alike as long as they don't have to make any unacceptable tradeoffs.

These demand signals created two conflicting pricing beliefs. First: customers will pay premiums for environmentally responsible products—a necessary belief when astronomical production costs made parity impossible. This notion positioned “green” as luxury, enabling widespread greenwashing. Green premiums now block adoption *across the board*, especially for B2B customers who dominate the market.

The second belief: pricing parity unleashes mainstream adoption. This prevails now. Yet as categories reach parity with legacy leaders, adoption floodgates remain closed. Both pricing parity and green premiums are beliefs born from necessity, not from how pricing actually influences purchasing.

Which is not to say pricing parity is irrelevant—it's a major competitive milestone. But even as parity is demonstrated to customers, pricing remains a major factor blocking mainstream consideration of technologies that benefit climate health.

In other words, price parity is not nearly enough to guarantee a deal or win customers, and that's because there's more to how customers evaluate and assign value than the total ticket price.



Sources: *70% of Consumers Unwilling to Spend More on Energy Sustainability (EY Survey)*



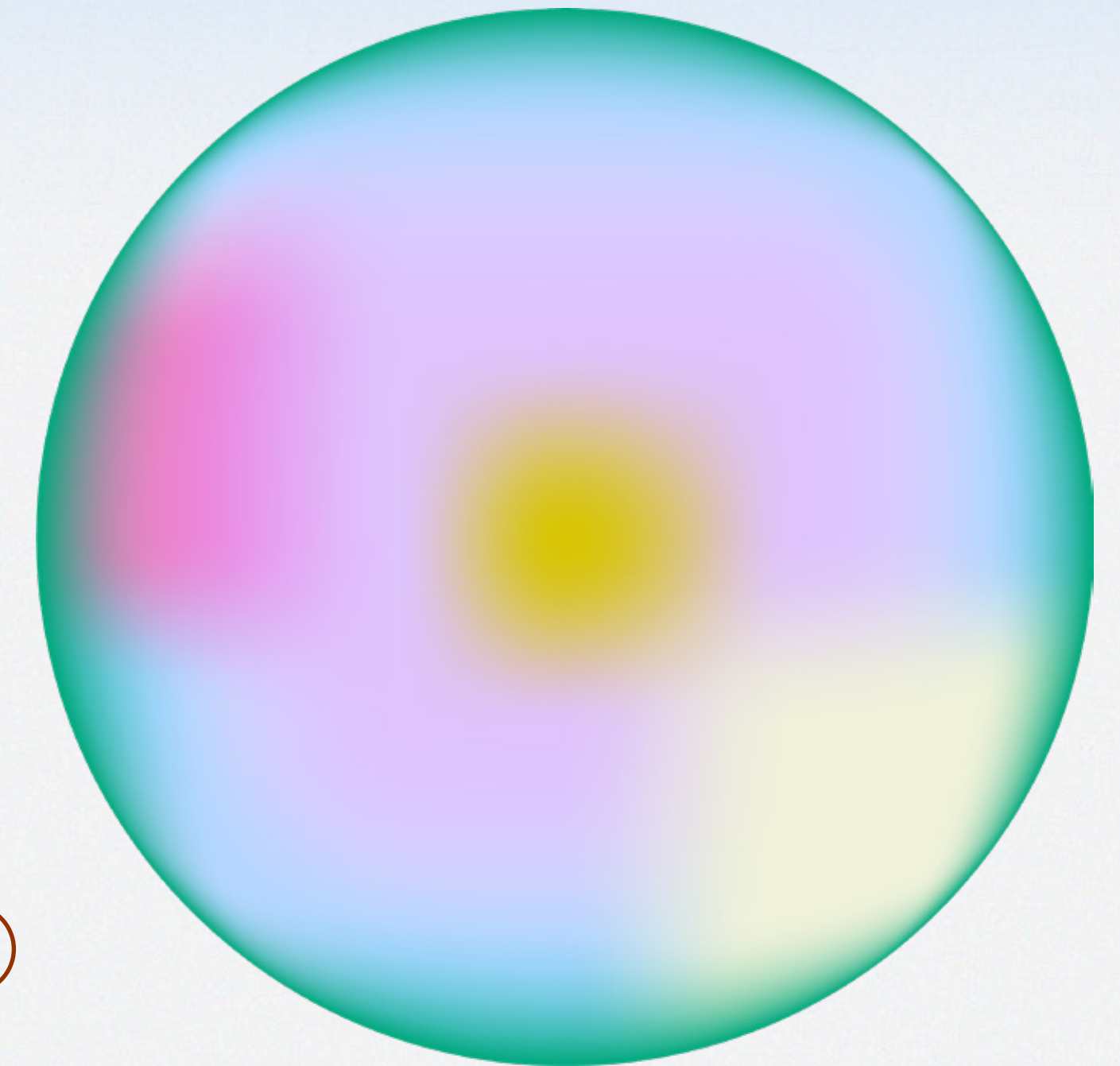
When customers have already invested in existing solutions, the cost of change can outweigh the benefits of switching. The cost of switching is about money, yes, but it's also about time, effort, training, and the risk of disruptions to operations. Which adds up to a much greater calculation of financial cost than the sticker price.

Climate tech companies often underestimate switching costs because they focus on the superior performance of their solution rather than the total cost of change. Solar beats grid economics, but rewiring, permits, financing, and months of installation headaches matter.

The challenge compounds when existing solutions are depreciated or integrated into larger systems. Even clunky technologies that customers actively dislike feel like the better deal when they're already paid for and working well enough.

How to overcome it

Reduce switching costs through financing that covers transition expenses, trade-in programs for existing equipment, or phased implementation that minimizes disruption. Quantify switching costs explicitly and build solutions that address them—don't just hope customers will overlook them.





Total cost parity doesn't guarantee adoption. Solutions costing less over their lifetime still lose to legacy technologies when cost structures don't align with customer needs.

Cash flow constraints, misaligned metrics, and pricing psychology create obstacles that parity doesn't solve.

Cash flow constraints can make large upfront payments impossible even when customers recognize long-term savings, or fail to square up with organizational planning horizons.

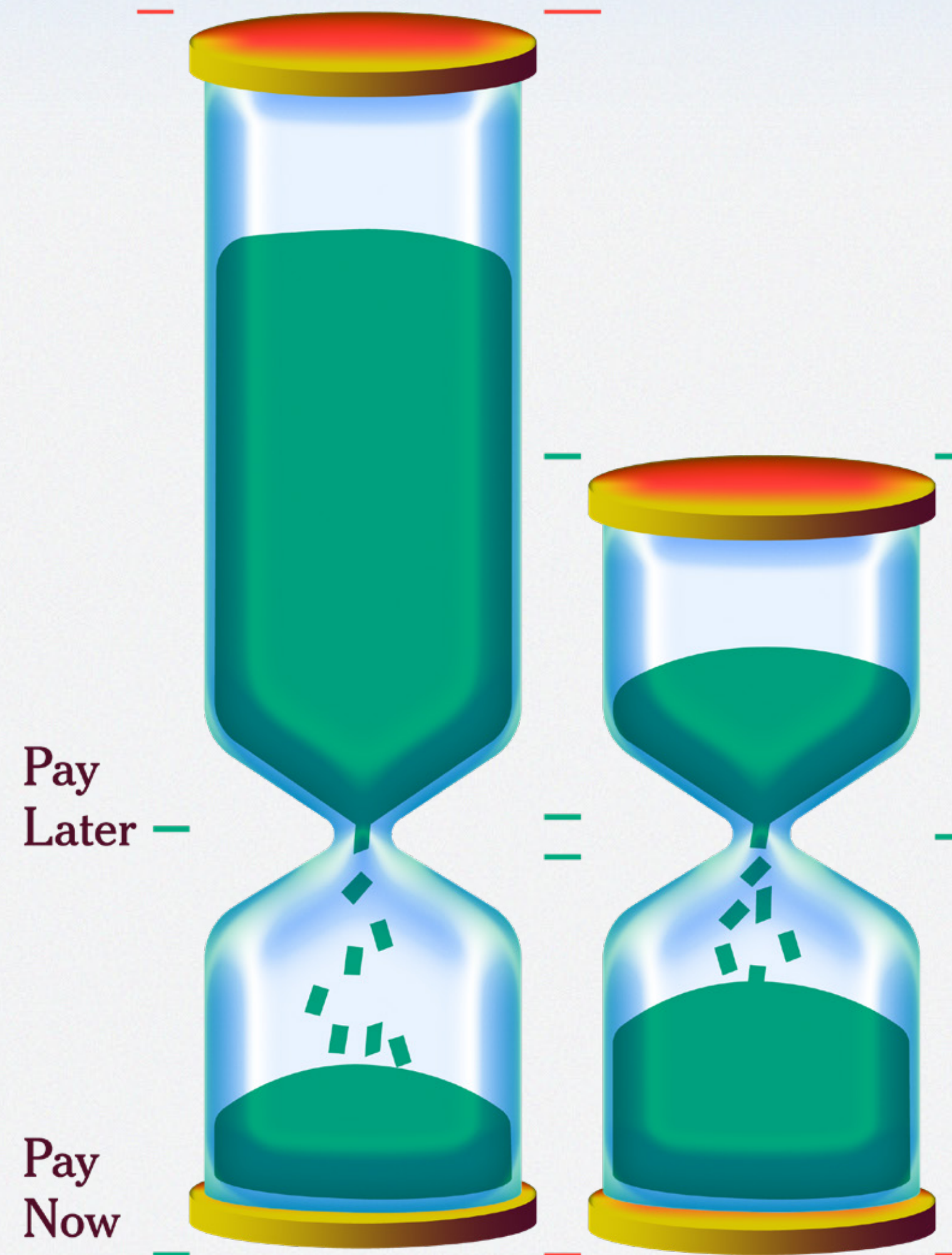
The mismatch can also have to do with the buyer's role or function within the customer organization. Financial metrics vary across stakeholders—facilities teams may be tracking operational costs while finance teams may be focused on capital requirements or quarterly profitability.

Finally, pricing psychology also generally plays a role in decision-making. Even when customers fully understand when the total price of a more efficient technology is equivalent or even lower than its legacy counterpart, customers feel immediate pricing pain more acutely than future savings. And prior experience with long term investments that don't realize savings as advertised tends to stick with people making decisions.

Sources: *Heatpump BtA* *Solar Panel BtA* (the cooldown)/ baseline report by Rewiring America), *Avoid the Parity Trap: Kelley Blue Book*

How to overcome it

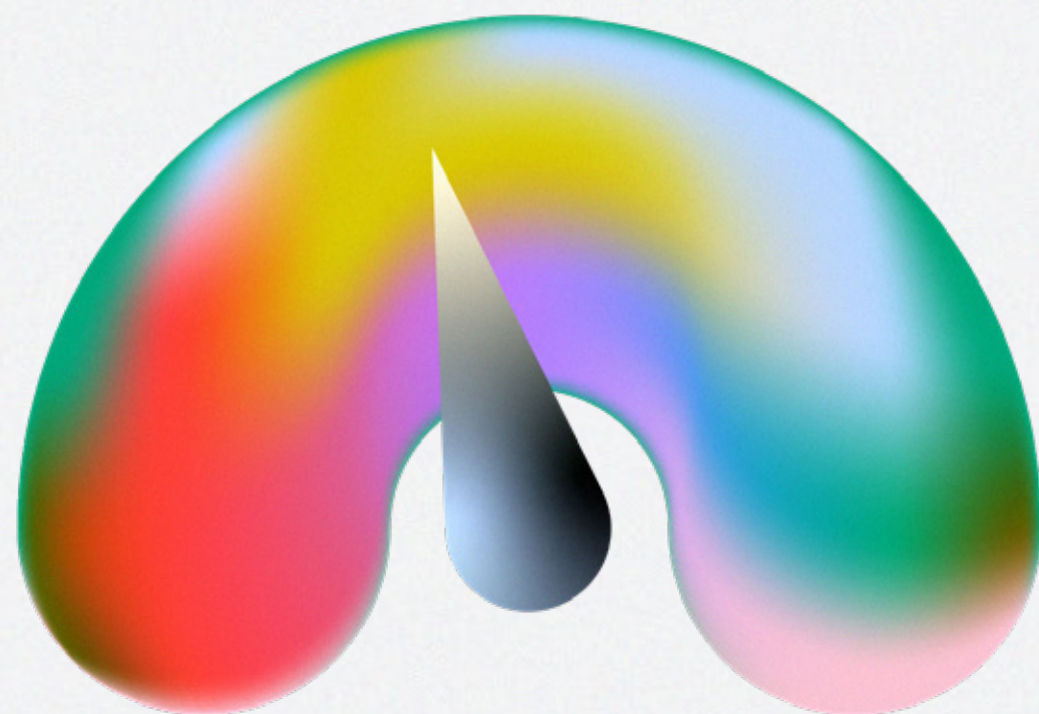
Understand your target customer's financial paradigms and constraints, and work to adapt your payments model to their requirements. Align payment timing with value delivery or customer cash flows; through outcome-based pricing, deferred payment structures, subscription-based pricing, or partnerships with financing providers. Design business models that generate immediate value—quick wins that justify longer-term investments—or break large investments into smaller, budget-friendly phases. Make the relevant cost metric calculations simple and credible with standardized calculators, third-party validation, or performance insurance that transfers financial risk away from customers.





Sometimes the obstacle isn't price but customers' inability to trust the value equation. This manifests as: complex ROI calculations with uncertain variables, intangible benefits resisting quantification, vendor projection distrust from past disappointments, and payback periods exceeding confidence horizons.

When savings depend on variables like energy prices, weather patterns, or usage behaviors, customers struggle to evaluate the investment. After years of overpromised energy savings and underdelivered results, many customers are skeptical of vendor projections. The further out the payback period, the less real the returns feel to decision-makers.



How to overcome it

Provide proof through pilot programs, performance guarantees, or third-party validation that reduces uncertainty about value delivery. Use conservative assumptions in projections and focus on benefits customers can measure and control. Create value demonstration tools—dashboards, case studies, or trial programs—that let customers experience benefits before committing to full implementations.

“What drives adoption? It depends who you ask. If you talk with sustainability, they want to reduce emissions. If you talk with the CFO, it's to reduce its cost. If you talk with the technical lead, they just don't want headache, but sometimes they have to do it because they're forced. For operations it's mainly resiliency, especially in places that have experienced a lot of volatility in energy and prices, they're looking for something to be fixed and predictable. So I think at the end of the day, to be a really scalable solution, you need to tick all these boxes. You need to reduce emissions, but you also need to make sure that if, even if you're not saving a lot of money, you don't cost more, the financial structure makes it appealing, and you can provide something that's valuable like resiliency or security without causing too much of a headache.”

Doron Brenmiller, Chief Business Officer,
Brenmiller Energy



Palmetto

Palmetto is a residential clean energy company focused on scaling adoption for whole home electrification, targeting 78+ million homes not yet equipped with efficient, modern systems. The company streamlines electrification by eliminating cost barriers and complexity that typically deter homeowners from switching.

What they offer:

Heat pumps, solar, energy storage, and whole home electrification through leases, financing, or purchase.

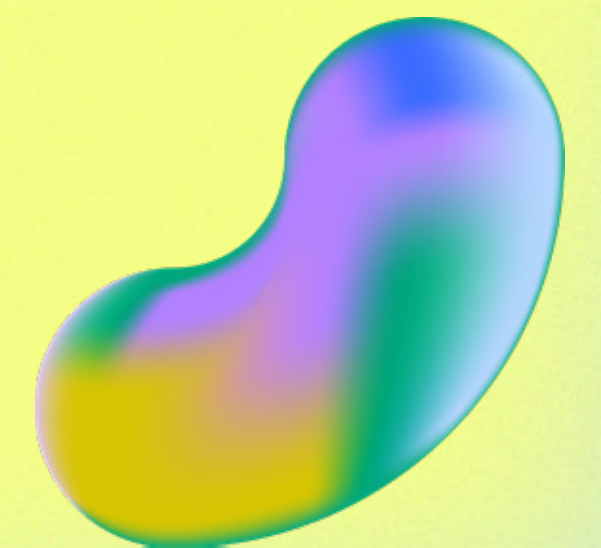
Self-service search tool that cross-references local costs, incentives, rebates, and delivers savings calculations in dollars.

Demand Drivers:

- * **Supply risk:** Rising energy costs and grid instability create urgency for energy independence.
- 🏠 **Regulation:** remaining incentives for homeowners.

How they break down barriers

- 🏠 **Financial Value:** Low and no upfront cost options through leases and financing. Guaranteed savings provide peace of mind and predictability.
- 🗨️ **Relevance:** Direct cost savings for homeowners in language they understand—dollars saved monthly
- ✅ **Convenience:** *Self-service search* eliminates hours of fragmented research. Large marketplace of vetted options in one location.
- 🏠 **Trust:** a wide-scale national operation, local partners, and 15+ years in business create confidence. Visible customer ratings and reviews.
- ♥️ **Appeal:** modern and differentiated design, clear brand voice and copy that match consumer standards. Tools and materials anticipate homeowners' questions and provide easy access to information.



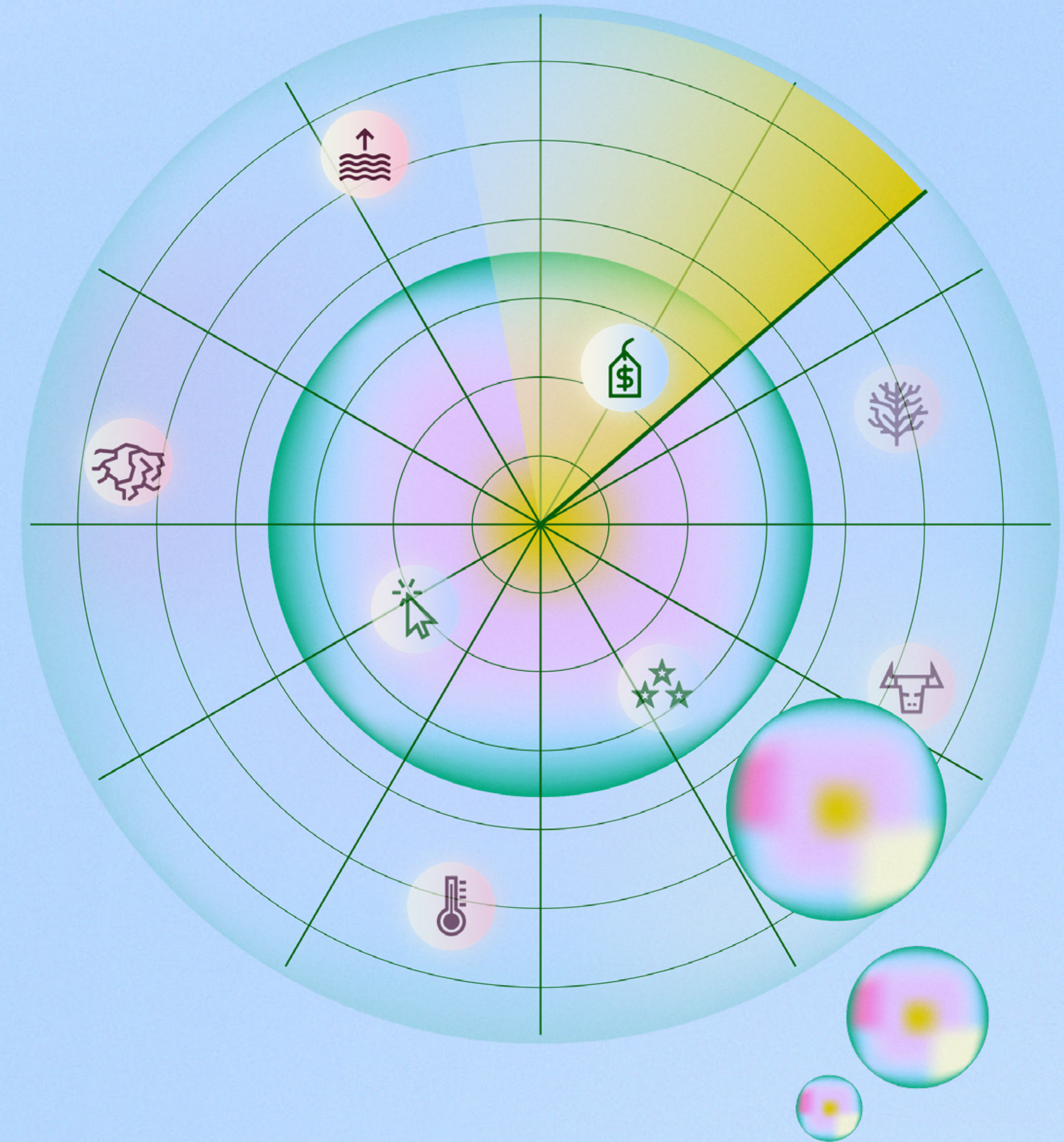
Q Barrier 02: Relevance

Relevance connects customer pain to your solution. Done right, it makes prospects notice your brand in that split second between awareness and dismissal. The difference is in whether you communicate *for* customers or *at* them? Do you talk about your product or their pain?.

This seems small but matters a lot. A huge proportion of companies in the climate space fail to meet the standard of relevance at every touchpoint: from confusing product or category names (cough-cough heat pumps), leading with climate impact instead of customer value, drowning prospects in complexity, making evaluation difficult. Irrelevance disqualifies solutions before they're even considered.

“A lot of the companies we work with are extremely impressive. But I look at their websites and I’m like, “I have no idea what you do.”

Helena Merk, Founder,
Streamline Climate



Customers can't buy what they can't find. Categories are how buyers navigate to solutions—and getting the category wrong means staying invisible to your target market.

Climate tech companies routinely categorize for themselves instead of their customers. A microgrid gets labeled “distributed energy technology” instead of “emergency backup system” or “cost reduction solution.” The wrong category means the wrong buyer finds you, evaluates you against the wrong criteria, and assigns the wrong budget.

Three common category mistakes destroy findability. First, technology categorization: calling your solution “electric motors” instead of “efficiency upgrade” misses how customers think about their problems. Second, function selling: positioning as “multi-use energy storage” rather than “grid stability solution” guarantees no one finds you for their specific need. Third, priority mismatch: if customers evaluate your energy storage as “home batteries” instead of “grid infrastructure,” they'll focus on cost per kWh rather than system-level value.

How to overcome it

Solving for relevance starts with deeply understanding your customers and how you fit into their businesses. The salespeople at your company are an incredible source of insights to understand what category your business truly belongs in from your customers' perspective. If you're creating a new category, anchor it in familiar concepts customers already understand. Make your value proposition crystal clear through the lens of what customers actually prioritize. Create decision frameworks and assessment tools that guide customers toward appropriate evaluation criteria. Control category definition through thought leadership that establishes the right frame of reference.

“You build your brand conviction from customers - so we've positioned ourselves based on what our customers care about. At Artyc, that's cold-chain reliability and traceability. As a company, we are tremendously motivated to help our customers reduce their climate impact, however we don't always lead with that from a brand perspective.”

Hannah Sieber, CEO,
Artyc

Inertia is a barrier to adoption when the prospect of change is more daunting than the vision of what change makes possible. Customers may know their current solution costs more, delivers less, and frustrates their teams. But what's installed and familiar has unfair advantages: predictable budgets, established relationships, and zero risk of implementation disasters.

Still, when after several meetings and demos prospects choose to stick with what they've got, founders wrongly assume it's about price or features. Cutting prices or adding custom features won't suddenly make change a priority. It might force a sale through, but it'll face resistance at every step.

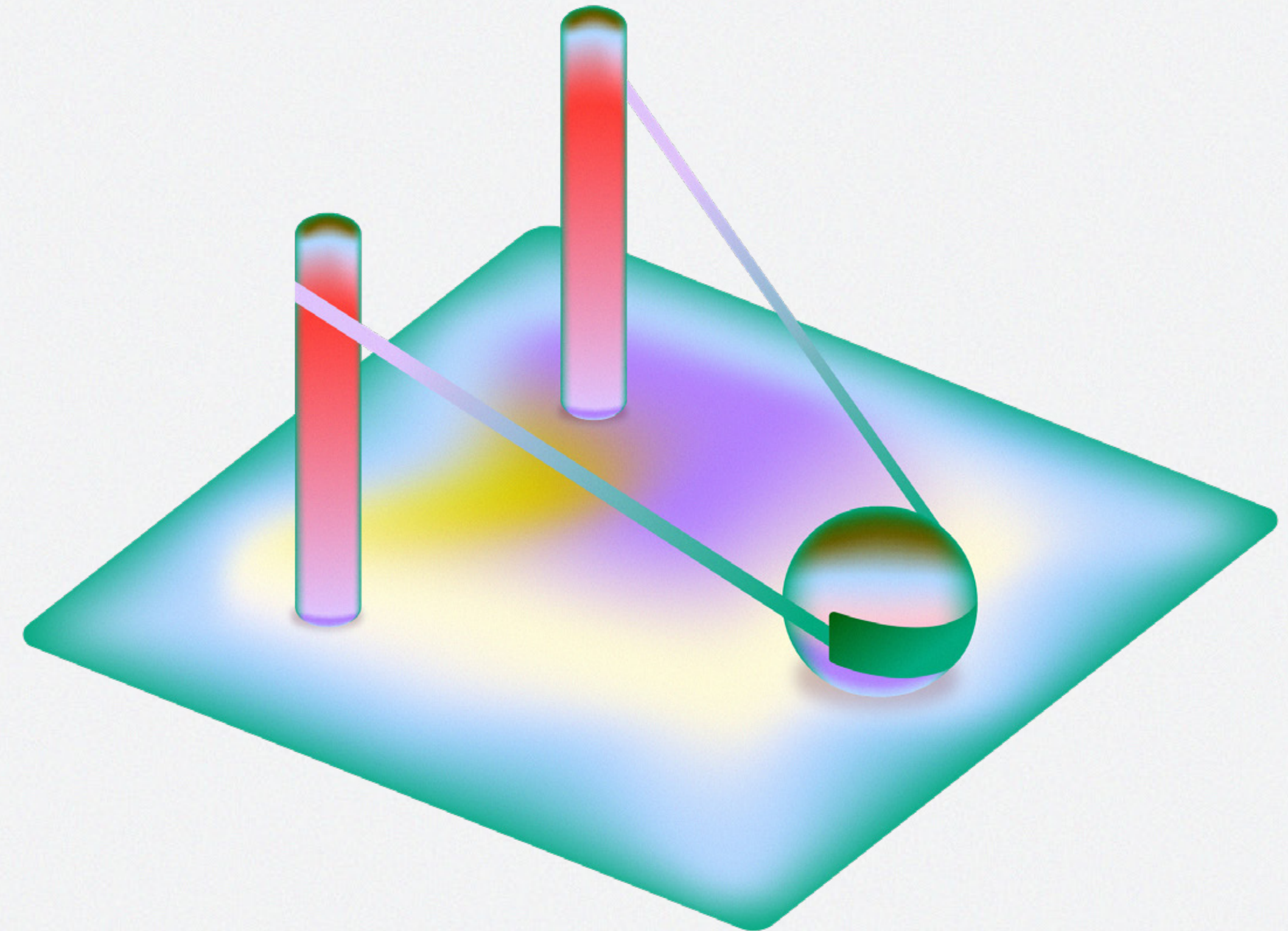
Because defeating inertia takes two things: a strong, acute, urgent reason to change, and reducing the effort of making that change.

“It's very hard for many customers to change their roadmaps, so to adopt climate technologies or initiatives, climate companies need to understand the specifics of those roadmaps, because customers are unlikely to disrupt those to adopt climate tech. Many customers have regulatory or other stakeholder constraints that dictate what tradeoffs they can make.”

Ivan Markman,
Climate Advisor and Investor

How to overcome it

Target customer segments with existing urgency—impending regulations, competitive threats, or shareholder pressure that make change attractive. Highlight acute costs of delay and limited-time opportunities that make action feel timely. Reduce friction through migration tools, training programs, and hybrid approaches that preserve familiar workflows. Cultivate internal champions who already support change.



Companies with a climate impact mission often turn it into their value proposition. The thinking goes that if a business cares about climate impact, they will adopt climate solutions for their business. But unless driven by compliance requirements, climate impact simply isn't a category of need for most business customers. That's not to say that it's entirely irrelevant. Climate impact may—and often does—improve how a prospective customer evaluates an offering. But climate impact is not, in itself, a business critical need that drives customer purchase decisions. For business leaders, sustainability importance fluctuates over time. Efficiency, profitability, brand strength, predictable operations, speed and agility stay constant priorities.

Luckily, climate technologies tend to offer benefits directly tied to business priorities, offering solutions to critical challenges. It's hard for a company to justify spending significant budget to reduce harm to the environment; but very easy to invest in cheaper, more reliable power sources to avoid outages and lower bills. This highlights the critical importance of positioning climate solutions within the framework of concrete business benefits. The reasons to adopt a product, service or solution has to be solidly in the customer's interests.

How to overcome it

You may be building a climate impact company, but that doesn't mean you need to be a climate brand. Understand what business category you're in from your customer's perspective and communicate the problem you solve for them accordingly. Lead with concrete business benefits that customers already prioritize. Position your solution in categories customers recognize and value. Make climate impact supporting evidence, not the primary argument.

“You might have a company that is doing something amazingly impactful, but people aren't going to buy it unless there's a financial or business motivation to do it.”

Abe Yokell, Co-Founder,
Congruent Ventures

Sources: solar panel customer motivation | [TCD Guide](#)

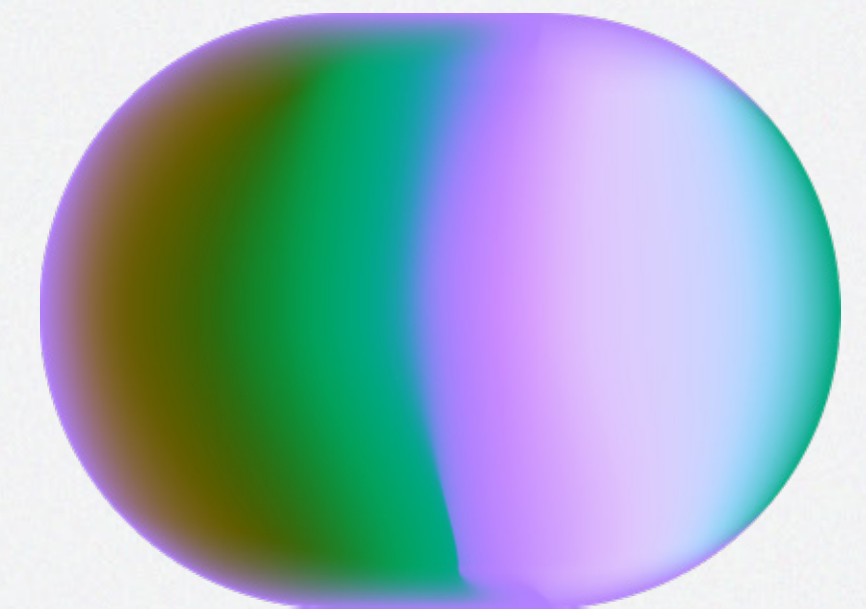
It's common for new-to-market technologies to resist choosing a niche first market, believing that focus limits potential. Instead, leaders will avoid committing to solving a particular problem.

Generic value propositions that could apply to any sector fail to resonate because they lack the specificity that drives search, and the precision that influences decisions. Customers don't know why they'd need what you offer if you haven't told them which specific problem you solve. Meanwhile, established competitors have already figured out how to attract specific customer segments, invested heavily in positioning themselves as the answer to particular needs—and have case studies to bolster their credibility.

Without a clear focus, new entrants compound their disadvantage by spreading themselves too thin. Challenger companies can't beat every competitor or substitute across every market because resources and credibility are limited early on.

How to overcome it

Select your first target market and focus on becoming the leading solution for that specific segment. Understand their needs, concerns, and decision-making process completely. Develop an offering that's precisely relevant to how they operate and make purchasing decisions. Establish presence where they are, communicate value in their terms, and document successes into case studies. Establish a strong word of mouth reputation. Then grow into adjacent markets from a position of strength.

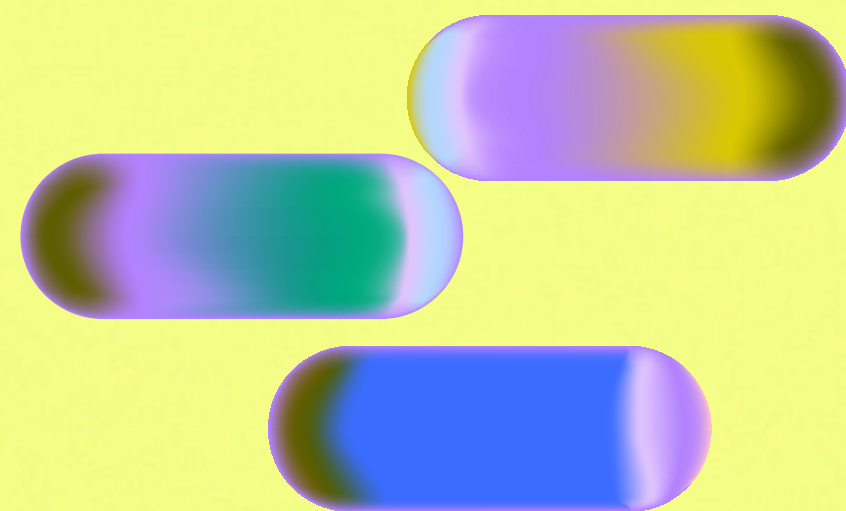


Bedrock Energy

Bedrock Energy is a geothermal company that's designed technology that improves the accuracy, speed and performance of geothermal installation. By innovating the installation process, the company is able to make geothermal HVAC deployments much more affordable and practical for its customers.

What they offer:

- ✳ Streamlined, end-to-end installation of geothermal heating and cooling in a fraction of the time at a fraction of the cost.



Demand Drivers:

- ✳ **Supply risk:** Aging U.S. electric grid increasingly unstable. Long grid connection wait times for developments with high energy needs, (including data centers)
- 👁 **Competition:** High (and rising) energy costs for heating and cooling buildings.

How they break down barriers

- 🏠 **Financial Value:** No upfront cost, and target real-estate developers for whom the financial returns of installation materialize short-term.
- 🕒 **Relevance:** Low, predictable energy costs. Helps enable data centers to bypass grid connection backlog.
- ✅ **Convenience:** Speedy, reliable, end-to-end installation.
- 👍 **Trust:** Geothermal is a proven, mature technology. Fast installations means more case studies sooner.
- ♥ **Appeal:** minimal drilling footprint, durable quiet systems, and drastically lower costs

“Property developers don’t like when construction is delayed because drilling for geothermal unexpectedly takes twice as long or costs twice as much as planned. That kind of uncertainty has limited the geothermal heating/cooling industry, because risk always results in higher cost.”

On the other hand, my co-founder had hundreds of patents and papers for the Oil & Gas industry before this. What Bedrock delivers to clients is the same geothermal that has been done for decades, but our technology reduces the cost and risk of installation. Drilling 3x-5x faster also makes the clean energy adoption way easier for real estate developers.”

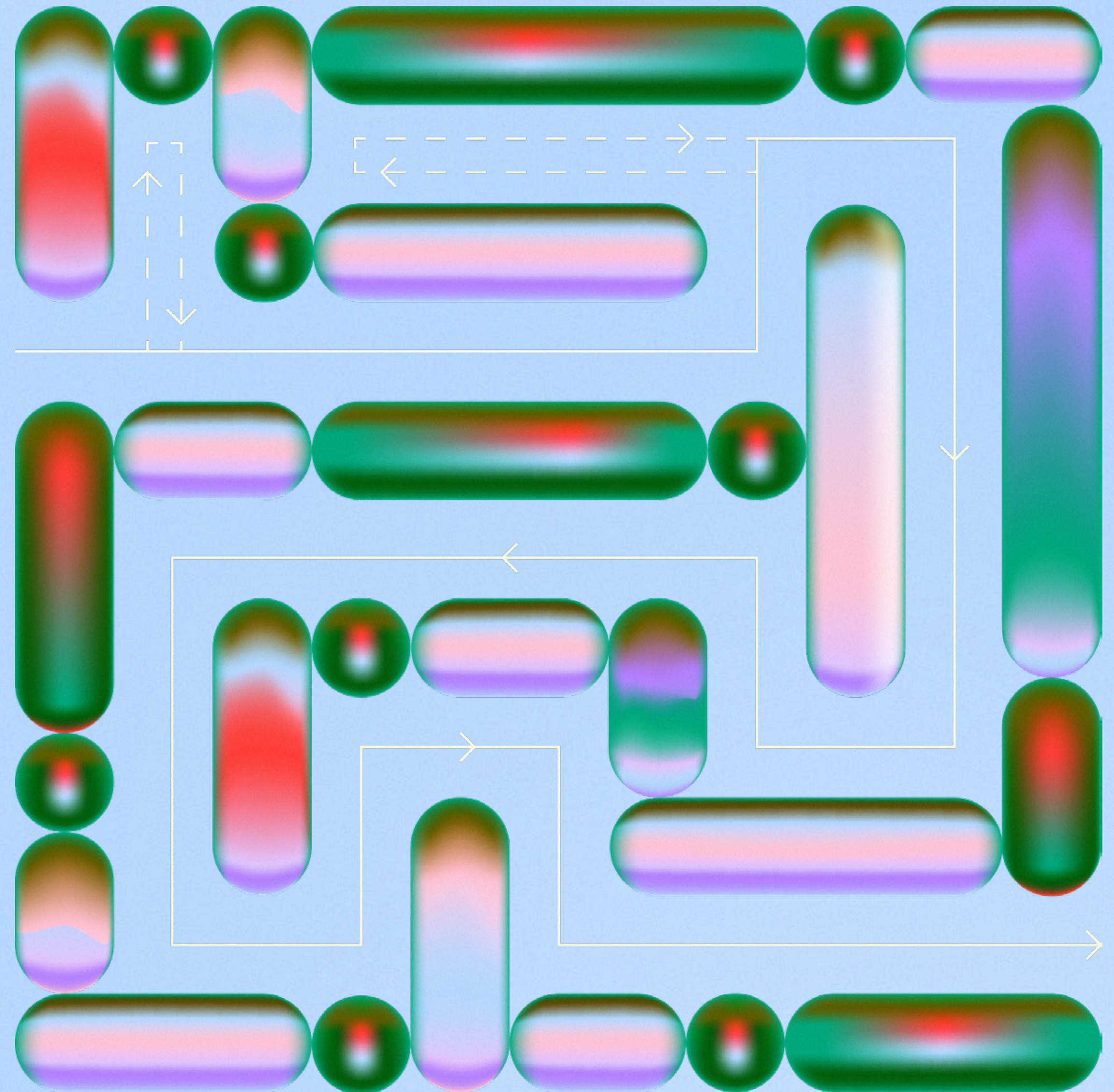
Joselyn Lai, CEO,
Bedrock Energy

Barrier 03: Convenience

Customers expect solutions that are easy to find, evaluate, buy, and use. Climate tech often demands extra effort from buyers relative to established competitors with mature ecosystems. Whether it's low availability, opaque purchasing processes, retrofitting infrastructure for compatibility, or coordinating fragmented systems—cheaper, faster, better, cleaner technology loses business to competitors that just make things easier.

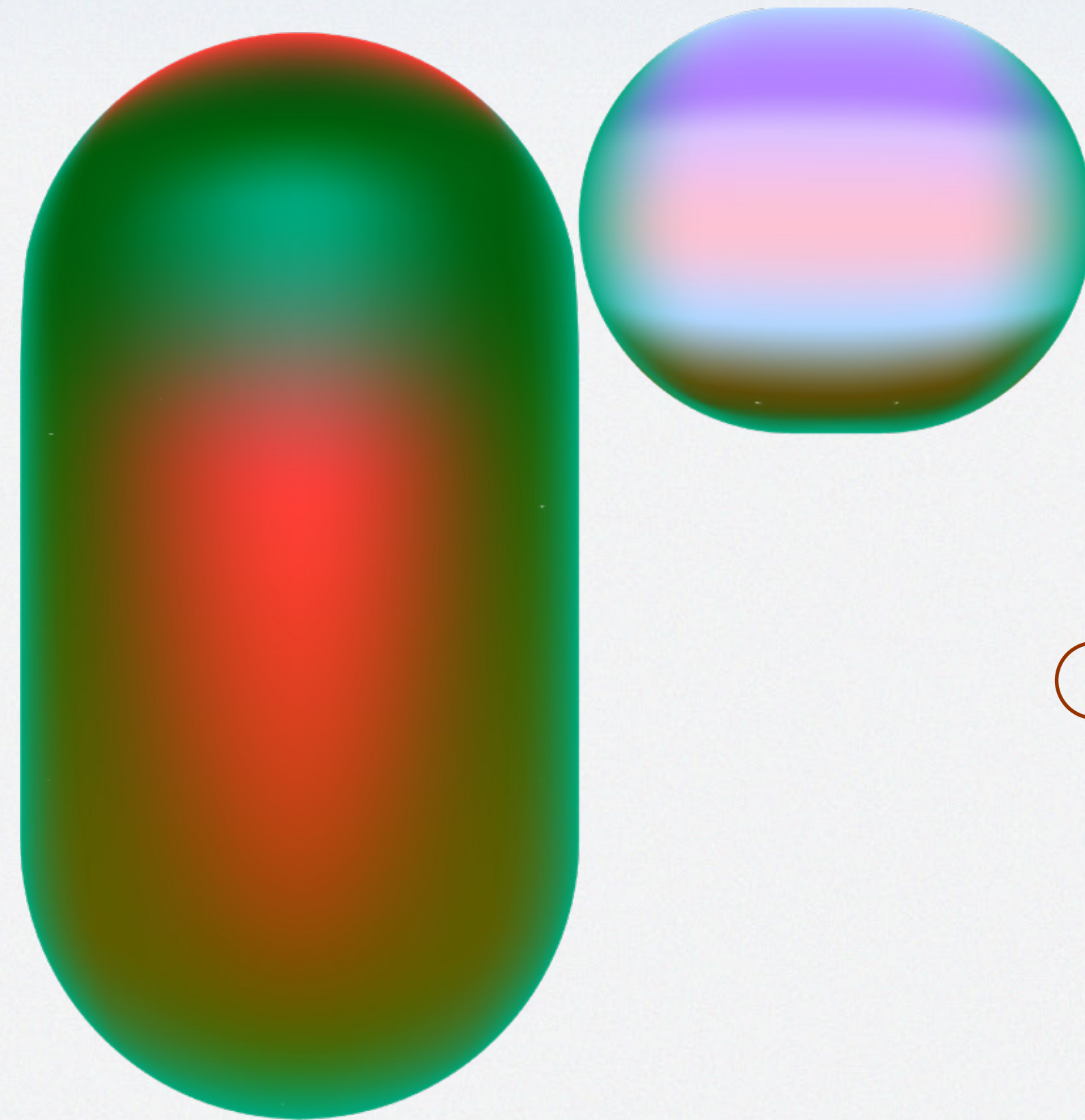
Companies that prioritize convenience by meeting customers where they are and designing around their needs expand their market. Those that don't remain small players serving specialty customers willing to endure friction in the absence of better options.

The barriers in this section show why it's crucial to develop demand-side capabilities and prioritize customer experience. Since there's still plenty of friction in how category leaders run their businesses, there's significant upside to setting a higher standard for convenience. Meet buyers where they already search for solutions. Design for seamless integration with existing systems. Take ownership of fragmented ecosystems by offering turnkey packages. Simplify implementation through standardization, modularity, and expert support. By reducing friction at every step, make convenience a driver—not a blocker—of adoption.



Access is about making it easy for customers to find, evaluate, and buy—and seamless self-service options are a baseline expectation for customers across industries and categories. Climate tech tends to be difficult to discover, and hidden behind high-friction purchasing experiences like sales calls, contact forms, and quote requests. The gap here is partly because solutions tend to need customization, or there's not enough scale to meet current demand —so channel presence seems pointless.

So sales teams depend on resource-intensive outbound efforts, and interested customers are expected to contact and wait to speak to sales to get the information they need. This low access, high effort model assumes that customers will bear inconvenience from the earliest contact. Which is ludicrous when current market leaders likely have brand recall for their category, verification and ways to learn about them that don't involve waiting to speak to a salesperson.



How to overcome it

Meet customers where they are; show up in their existing procurement channels and adopt familiar purchasing models from adjacent industries. Create trial options and support standardization efforts to make products more accessible and easier to evaluate. Where possible, develop self-service options that reduce barriers between interest and action.

Promising technologies stall not because they don't work, but because they don't work with what's already there. No matter how exciting or efficient any solution is, if it requires changing surrounding infrastructure, processes, or equipment, likelihood of adoption plummets. It adds risk, lock-in, and cascading costs that deter implementation.

Designing for seamless compatibility pays off. Consider that over half of residential lighting now uses LEDs. LED lighting succeeded because bulbs fit standard fixtures. If LEDs required new fixtures, they'd still be niche "energy-efficient" products.

Interface and skills compatibility also matter. Industrial and enterprise-scale implementation only moves forward if enough stakeholders in a procurement process approve. If your solution makes end users feel incompetent or forces them to learn new systems, you're adding friction that can block sales.

How to overcome it

Compatibility makes or breaks market viability. Design for seamless integration from day one. Develop technologies that integrate with existing infrastructure, minimize disruption during implementation, and are intuitive for end users.

Build your operator pipeline early; partner with vocational schools and online platforms to create certified training programs.

"Access to decision makers and product technical compatibility are key to closing B2B deals. Existing relationships, credibility, and influence are all valuable in providing and sustaining access throughout what are typically long and technical sales cycles in which the product has to pass muster at every step"

Sean Voight, CEO,
Energy Innovation Hub TX

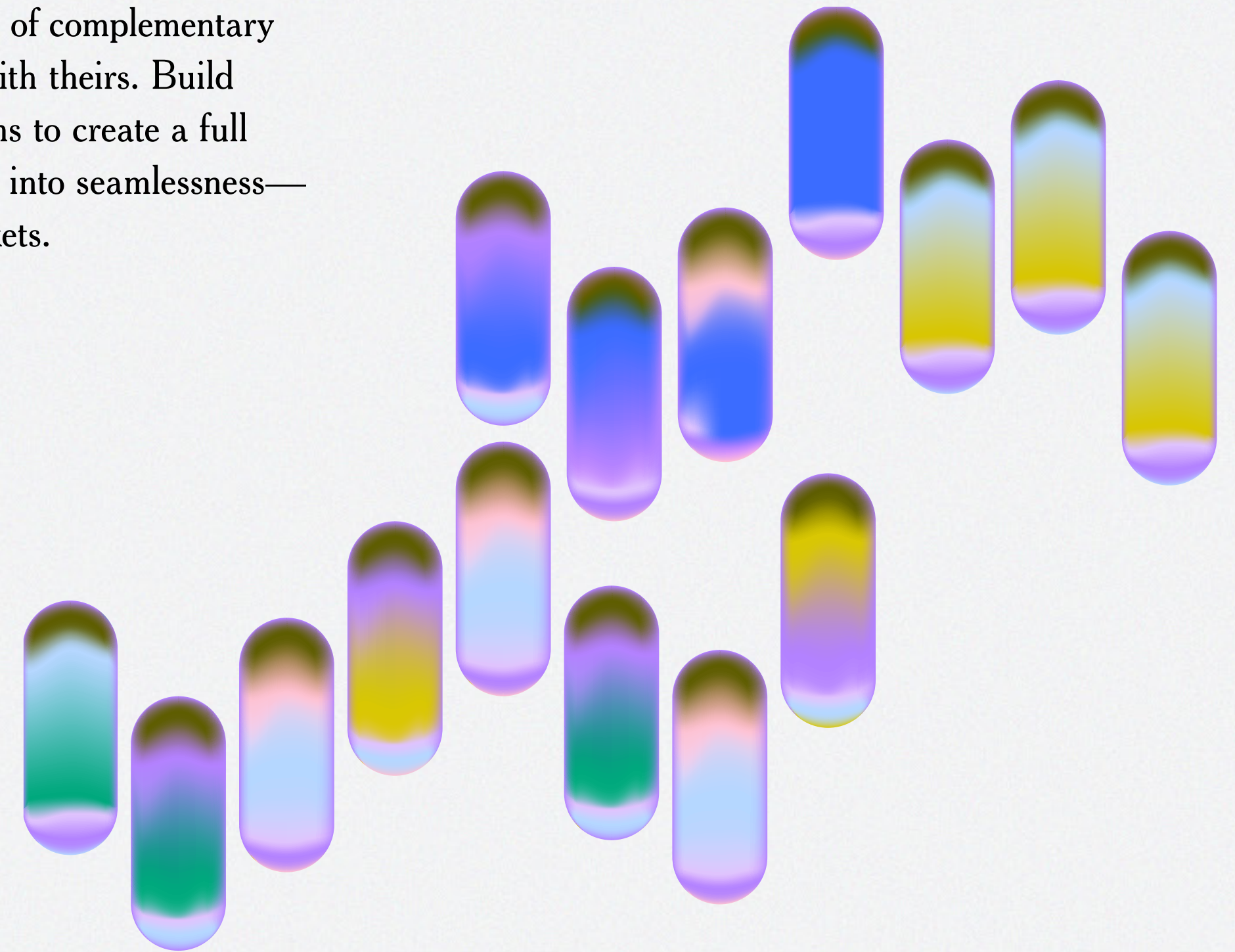
Most new technologies rely on existing support systems. But for climate technologies, a lot of that ecosystem doesn't exist yet—everything needs to grow simultaneously.

Take electric long-haul trucking. Its success depends on developing reliable charging networks spanning entire routes. Meanwhile, diesel trucks benefit from ubiquitous fueling stations, experienced mechanics, established insurers and widely available parts.

In practice, this leaves would-be customers to research, evaluate, select, and coordinate the different components of a full solution themselves just to get operational. Even unlocking financial incentives for climate tech requires separate processes and paperwork for buyers to struggle through. Every friction point deters adoption.

How to overcome it

Own the complete solution and remove the coordination burden from customers. Handle incentive admin to guarantee benefits. Work with suppliers of complementary systems to guarantee your tech works with theirs. Build partnerships with interdependent systems to create a full solution as a package. Transform chaos into seamlessness—that's how successful tech disrupts markets.



The implementation process for climate technologies involves significant challenges between purchase and full operation. Many solutions require customization and specialized installation that resembles construction projects—lengthy, expensive processes with heavy coordination burdens for customers who lack expertise and appetite for added risk.

Implementation hurdles include coordinating multiple stakeholders, extended testing periods, knowledge gaps, and complex compliance requirements—all contributing to delays, cost overruns, and resistance to future adoption.

How to overcome it

Streamline implementation and develop visual roadmaps that anticipate customer concerns. Handle all aspects of deployment. Offer modular options that allow incremental adoption rather than complete system overhauls. Provide deployment guarantees that minimize operational disruption and shift risk away from customers. Invest in customer success resources—implementation specialists, dedicated support, clear documentation, training—keeping connections open.

“It’s helpful to consider “how the science can be turned into engineering that can be used by customers, how to convince those customers that it will work with their existing systems and how to get the costs to an acceptable level for all parties.”

Hampus Jakobsson, Co-founder,
Pale Blue Dot (via PWC)

Gage Zero

Gage Zero is focused on electrifying medium- and heavy-duty fleets. Our charging stations will reflect the needs of Class 2-8 electric vans and trucks that require fast charging. Their guiding principle is removing complexity from the process by being a one-stop shop for “everything you need to electrify your fleet”

Demand drivers:

🏛️ **Regulation:** Petroleum reduction and net-zero targets for federal / state fleets respectively.

What they offer:

- ✖ Charging infrastructure for EV fleets and EV fleet resources.
- ✖ Experts to guide customers through every aspect of EV fleet adoption.

How they break down barriers

- 🏠 **Financial Value:** Existing charging infrastructure deployed, partnerships with experts to reduce total cost of ownership for customers.
- 🕒 **Relevance:** Quick implementation that can be gradual.
- ✅ **Convenience:** A one-stop-shop for everything from charging infrastructure to expert guidance on incentives, rebates, and EV fleet procurement.
- 🛠️ **Trust:** Uptime guarantees and maintenance.
- ♥️ **Appeal:** Charging sites feature driver amenities, maintenance and secure parking—all of which tend to be major points of resistance for drivers whose buy-in is key.

“Our business is fleet charging infrastructure. Originally, buying or leasing vehicles was the customer’s responsibility. But there’s so much complexity around the grants and incentives for procuring electric vehicles, and customers don’t necessarily have the expertise to do it, so progress stalled. We now partner with vehicle leasing companies that provide that service to our customers. In other cases, we actually will work with grant writers on behalf of our customers to get vehicles in their hands. That’s been a major modification in how we contract with our customers, because it essentially enables our business to move forward. And it’s because of all of those learnings of really understanding our own customers’ commitments and contracts and what it takes to meet their needs.”

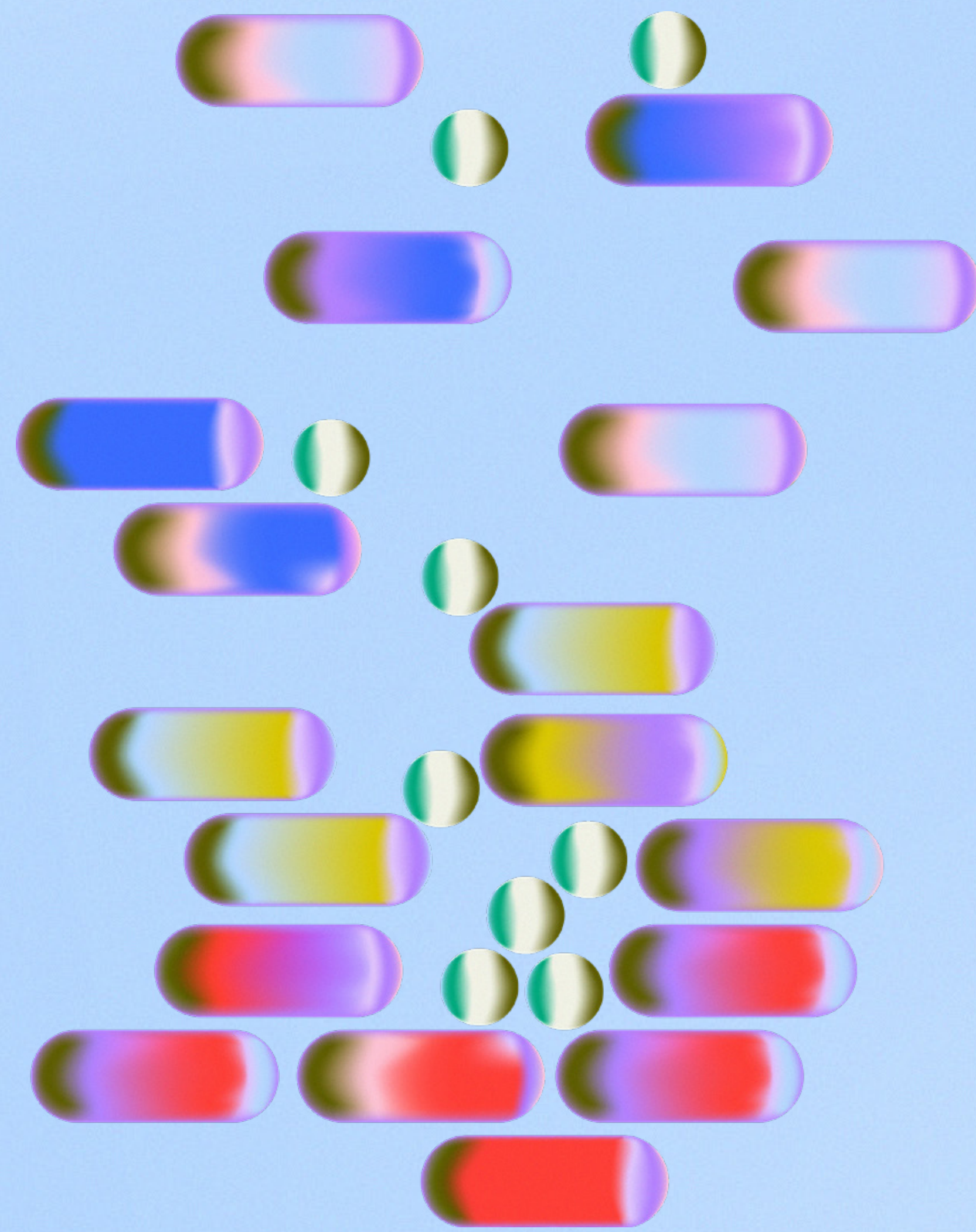
Zeina El-Azzi, CEO,
GageZero

Barrier 04: Risk Perception

Risk perception shapes every customer purchase decision. This calculation is complex and subjective—including factors beyond your control like economic conditions or other risks they’re managing.

In that subjectivity, there’s a major opportunity to impact the trajectory of climate tech adoption. In high-scrutiny B2B procurement, risk slows adoption and increases costs. Long sales cycles, prolonged negotiations, and last-minute concessions drain resources. The truth: reaching mainstream scale requires being perceived as trustworthy, not just being trustworthy.

Climate tech interdependence compounds its challenges, making trust even harder to achieve. Progress for one category depends on other unscaled technologies succeeding too, creating cascading risks. And category failures leave emotional scars: customer experiences with rooftop solar high-pressure sales tactics and misleading financing arrangements has made homeowners reluctant to consider solar for their own homes.



Add in that nearly every company across climate tech is relatively unknown to mainstream buyers—there’s no brand trust to counterbalance risk—and the lagging demand begins to make sense.

What most people miss is that risk and trust are assessed emotionally first, rationally second. Reducing actual risk is not enough. To overcome high risk perception, you need to manage and design the experience to inspire confidence before logic even enters the equation.

Fortunately, you have more control than you think. This section explores five common dimensions of buyer risk perception that executives need to navigate well to speed up adoption.

Sources: *Rooftop solar has a fraud problem* NPR (2024), *Risk as Feelings Theory*, *Psychological Bulletin*

If customers don't know your brand, doing business with you feels risky—no matter how superior your technology. This frustrates climate tech executives watching prospects choose familiar options time and again.

Yet climate companies expect customers to choose unfamiliar technology from unknown brands, calling for more “customer education.” But the decisive factor isn't knowledge—it's trust.

Building trust starts with recognition: attracting notice, creating awareness, becoming familiar through exposure. As one company leader noted, “Sales are the first to say it really helps when prospects know the brand going in.”

Two practices hold climate tech back from building familiarity. First, most ventures systematically underinvest in visibility, treating awareness as an afterthought to sales.

Second, founders from scientific backgrounds build trust through proof—long, technical, performance-focused messaging. This renders brands invisible. Awareness builds through impressions. Dense specs get tuned out.

Need another reason? Unfamiliarity makes you vulnerable. Minimal negative messaging sows doubt about companies nobody knows.

How to overcome it

Forget the fact sheets. Trust builds from awareness. Understand your target customers. Develop a distinctive presence that connects emotionally. Show up where customers are—conferences, media, industry groups. Be clear, succinct, attuned. The goal: be noticed and remembered so when they're ready to buy, your brand has built-in trust.

“There's this phrase that no one ever got fired for buying IBM. And that's because that brand meant something. It's safe. So even in the more enterprise and B2B spaces, brand has a role to play. Like, how do we make ourselves a safe choice? How do we play to the things that the decision makers are going to want to feel good about? And it's really the emotional side of the decision making process as opposed to just the quantitative side, that ends up driving that critical trust.”

Paul Lambert, CEO,
Quilt

New company? New solution? Low adoption? Getting customers to buy is going to be a challenge.

The credibility gap is a powerful invisible barrier, especially potent when you're selling a commitment. Without a track record, visible customer logos, or third-party referrals, your innovative solution exists in a trust vacuum. Procurement teams won't stake reputations on unproven companies. Finance won't partner with startups that might vanish tomorrow.

Trust is both a risk reduction mechanism and a feeling. We instinctively look for social proof—others who've already taken the leap and would share the risk—before committing.

Major organizations use formal supplier risk scoring systems that disadvantage newcomers. Technological breakthrough simply isn't enough to displace what's known and true, even if it's worse. Building credibility must be a top priority in your early market strategy.

Sources: *Why some EV Owners getting their tax credits rejected*, *Heatmap (2024)*, *IEA (for 2023 Actuals)*, *"Pace of Progress" (2023) baseline report by Rewiring America*

How to overcome it

Collect and use external validation relentlessly. Ensure early customers are satisfied, then create case studies demonstrating their success. Adapt success stories into conference talks, thought leadership, and media pitches. Set up strategic partnerships with established and trusted brands, which work as a form of vetting early on. Hire team members with deep industry experience. Respected, well-known investors also signal credibility.

Take care of how your company presents itself; a polished, market attuned brand projects commercial competence and confidence in your future. And critically, be judicious with your promises. Overpromising destroys credibility permanently, affecting not just your company but the entire climate tech category.

“Sales team members will be the first to tell you that it really helps when prospective customers know the brand and have positive associations with it. It's better to go into an account when customers are already impressed”

Alexa Schirtzinger, Head of Marketing,
Watershed

When there's market fluctuations or regulatory uncertainty, customers are less open to taking risks and trying new things.⁴ Organizations tighten their budgets and become even more cautious about taking a chance on a new technology or a young company. The perception that new technology or provider companies might not survive market turbulence creates a dangerous hesitation cycle: buyers delay decisions until companies prove stability, but companies need buyers to achieve that stability.

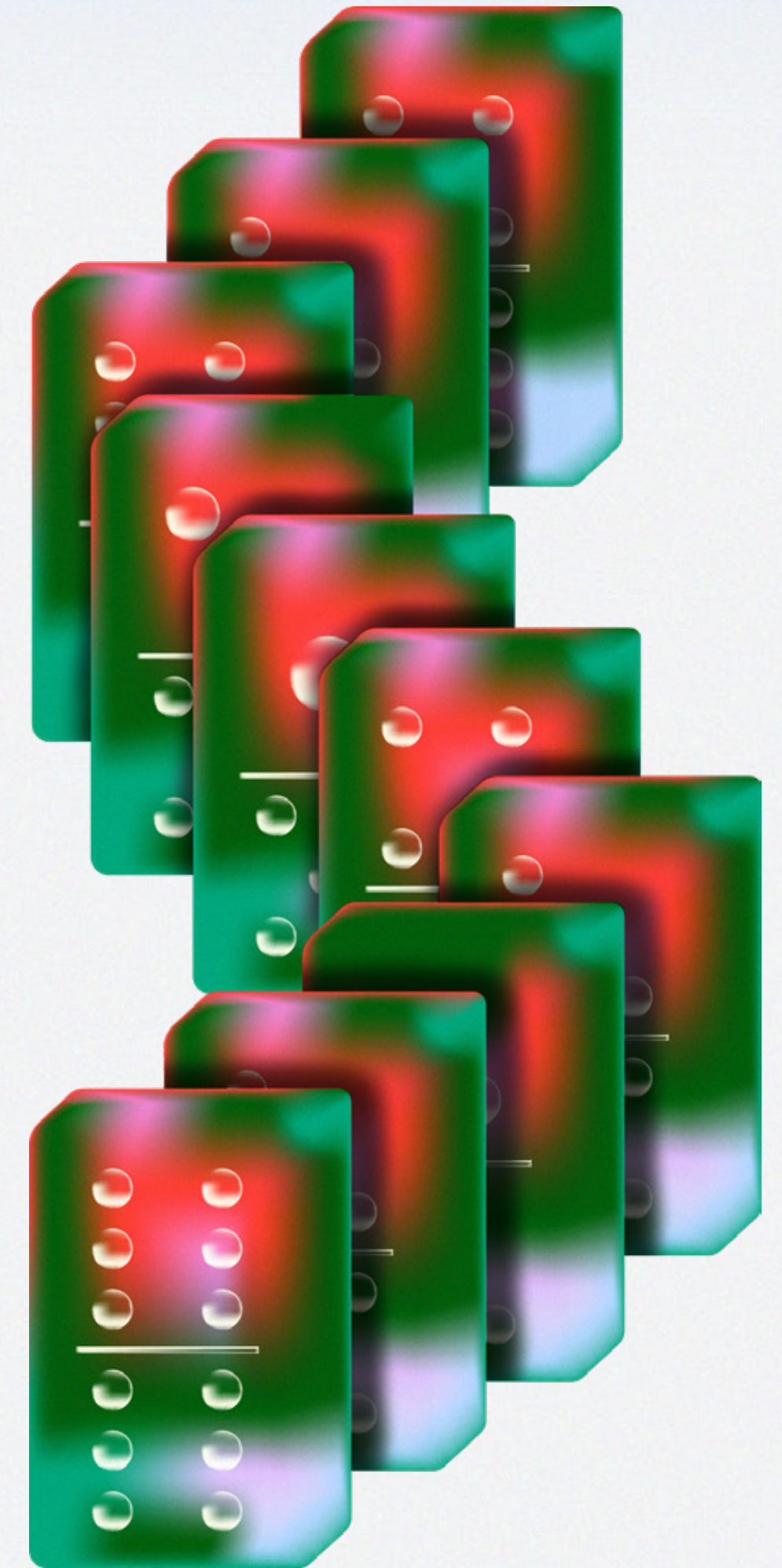
How to overcome it

Focus on reducing risk where you can. Develop pricing and risk-sharing models that align your success with customer outcomes. Consider performance-based contracts, gradual implementation approaches, and financing options that reduce upfront exposure. Show traction if you have it, or consider partnering with a legacy company in your offer. When customers trust that you're assuming meaningful risk with them they become more willing to proceed despite economic headwinds.

“Economic uncertainty and inflation means people will be tightening their budgets. That goes hand in hand with the sense that it's a risk to spend money, especially on something that's not a sure thing, or that you don't know if it's going to be around in a year or two.”

Alex Siminoff, Director of Marketing,
Parity

Sources: *3 hurdles to resilient, antifragile supply chains*, Maersk (2024),
McKinsey on Risk and Resilience #14 (2023)



Decision-makers worry about career consequences when choosing unproven technology. Inside organizations, familiar brands feel safe. As the saying goes, “No one gets fired for buying IBM.” And climate tech can compound anxiety when it introduces additional variables like rebates or complicated incentives.

Procurement is notoriously tough. Internal resistance forms when colleagues perceive new technology as bringing unnecessary risk. The uncertainty of adopting new technology and the unknowns of working with a startup raise internal questions like “Will this company exist in two years?” “What happens if the product or the company fails?” These concerns far outweigh feature comparisons or performance specifications.

How to overcome it

Having invested in awareness really pays off here. Targeting a set of initial markets that are motivated to explore solutions like yours helps too. Once procurement starts, find champions inside customer organizations and arm them with the right set of case studies and references, regularly supply them with results they can be proud to share. Reduce perceived career risk for decision-makers with performance and service guarantees, low upfront investment and other service levels that demonstrate your commitment to their success.

“The assumption that implementation is too challenging, there isn’t enough time, resources, or expertise to make a change it and do it efficiently is a barrier to adopting change. So you have to find ways to show how [the new solution] is going to work without adding burden. It could be we’ll take care of it or this is not drastically different from what you’re already doing. If you can cross those barriers, the chances of getting those changes to happen go way up.”

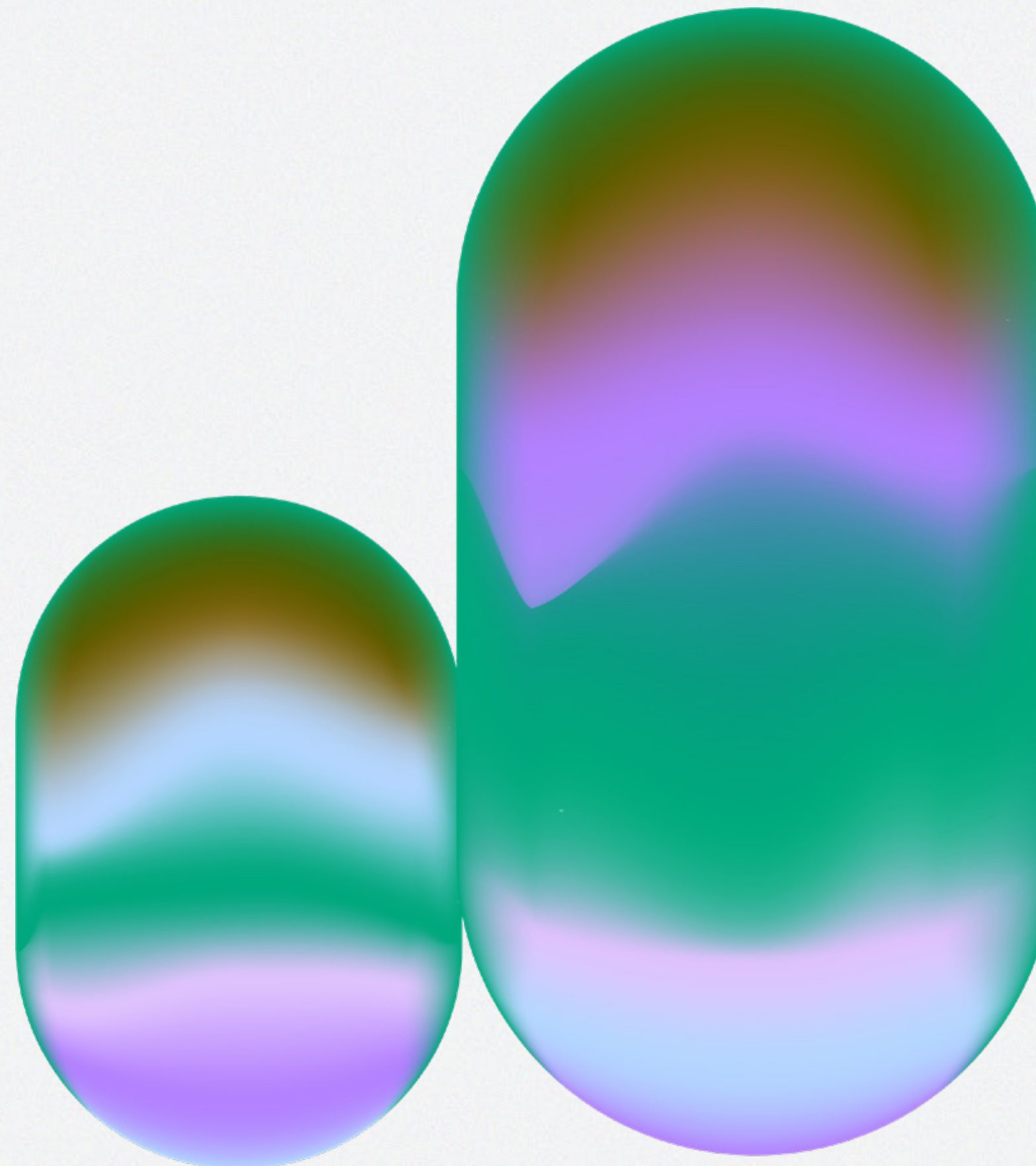
Lauren Lichterman,
Sports & Sustainability Advisor

Say you've developed breakthrough technology that's advancing at lightning speed. Each generation has better performance, higher efficiency, and lower costs than the one before. This seems like a win that should drive rapid adoption, right? Customers hesitate to buy rapidly advancing technology because it's likely to become obsolete soon. The faster the innovation, the more likely potential buyers adopt a "wait and see" approach—especially for significant investments.

Perceived obsolescence risk offers a real opportunity to rethink demand-side solutions. Slowing down product improvement isn't feasible if you want to become the market leader. Instead, focus on rethinking business models and how technology is priced and sold.

How to overcome it

Rethink revenue and service models to reward and de-risk early adoption. SaaS provides an interesting analogy—restructuring revenue models through agreements that retain customers while keeping them current as technology evolves creates continuous revenue streams. Leasing offers another effective solution, particularly for EVs where battery obsolescence concerns exist. In the U.S., leased EVs have priced-in incentive rebates, which is why over 50% of EVs on the road today are leased.



Boston Metal

Boston Metal is commercializing technology that replaces traditional blast furnaces with electricity-powered steelmaking, addressing the 10% of global emissions from the steel industry.

What they offer:

- ✘ Clean steelmaking technology using electricity instead of coal.
- ✘ Technology licensing model for existing steel producers.
- ✘ Collaborative product development with future customers.



Demand drivers:

- 🏠 **Regulation:** Decarbonization pressure, industry emissions targets, regulatory changes.
- ✘ **Supply risk:** volatility due to tariffs, import/export uncertainty driving need for national production.

How they break down barriers

- 🏠 **Financial Value:** Modular technology can be scaled by adding units. Electric process can be interrupted to benefit from off-peak energy pricing.
- ☑️ **Convenience:** Seamless retrofit to existing infrastructure reduces time, investment, and makes the switch more attractive.
- 🗨️ **Trust:** Building relationships ahead of licensing ensures customers are part of the design, ensuring customers feel safe that they're getting what they need. Funding from prominent investors. Team and advisors includes recognized experts in the field. Top-tier media recognition and endorsements. Patented technology.

Initiatives to Watch: Spark Alliance

Spark Alliance is a joint charging network launched by four major European EV charging companies— *Atlante*, *Electra*, *Fastned*, and *IONITY*— to offer the largest fast-charging network in Europe. Like airline alliances before them, this alliance enables drivers to use any of the four companies' over 11,000 charging points across 25 countries using their preferred brand's app. The ability to see chargepoints from all four networks in each one, reducing In April 2025, four major European EV charging companies announce.

Thesis:

EV drivers are frustrated with EV charging infrastructure, which is unreliable and slow. Fragmented, proprietary apps and network artificially limit charging options for drivers, who don't face the same limited choices for fuel. Poor charging experiences are constraining EV growth, so giving drivers a more robust choice set will grow the overall market.

Market opening:

An EV sales plateau across Europe and uneven deployment of charging stations between countries

♥ Barrier 05: Appeal

Appeal is about offering something customers want. B2B is increasingly consumerized, changing buyer expectations across all purchase decisions—including highly technical, niche solutions once exempt from user experience considerations. Great performance isn't a differentiator.

Still, it's common for challenger technology companies to resist “mushy stuff” like design, brand experience, marketing and appeal in favor of technical “hard skills” once they're ready to go to market.

“If you're a quantitative-minded leader focused on applying the scarce resources of the firm toward value-additive actions, then it's incumbent upon you to know how value-additive actions like marketing, experience, and branding work, especially through the qualitative lens of their customers' experience.”

Paul Worthington, President,
Invencción



The problem is that challengers earn customers by outmatching market leaders that have built-in trust advantages. Climate tech solutions are invariably category challengers, not market leaders. Every path to market leadership requires appealing to customers in a way that others don't—cultivating brand preference by offering something that customers want but can't get elsewhere. And brand preference is market power.

So this last set of barriers focus on developing memorable, delightful, trusted, irresistible brands customers recommend, and that prospective customers seek out by diving right into the “mushy stuff” that paves the way to mainstream adoption.

Sources: [Tom Gould for The New Scientist \(2024\)](#) ; [IEA \(for 2023 Actuals\)](#),
[“Pace of Progress” November 2023 baseline report by Rewiring America](#)



Customers can't buy what they don't know exists. Awareness can only happen if customers notice your brand—meaning it has to be present and capture attention.

The reality of B2B purchase behavior is brutal. At any given moment, only 5% of your market is actively looking to buy. They're the only ones who can “convert” into a sale.

The other 95% isn't ready to purchase, but they need awareness to form positive associations that lead to trust and mental availability over time. For many B2B companies, the focus is solely on outreach and conversion which means addressing 100% of the market as if it were ready to buy right now. When prospects' first touchpoint with your brand is a sales pitch, it'll feel spammy and pushy.

For climate tech brands, the hurdle for consideration is even higher—not just awareness, but deeper engagement that drives preference when the time comes.

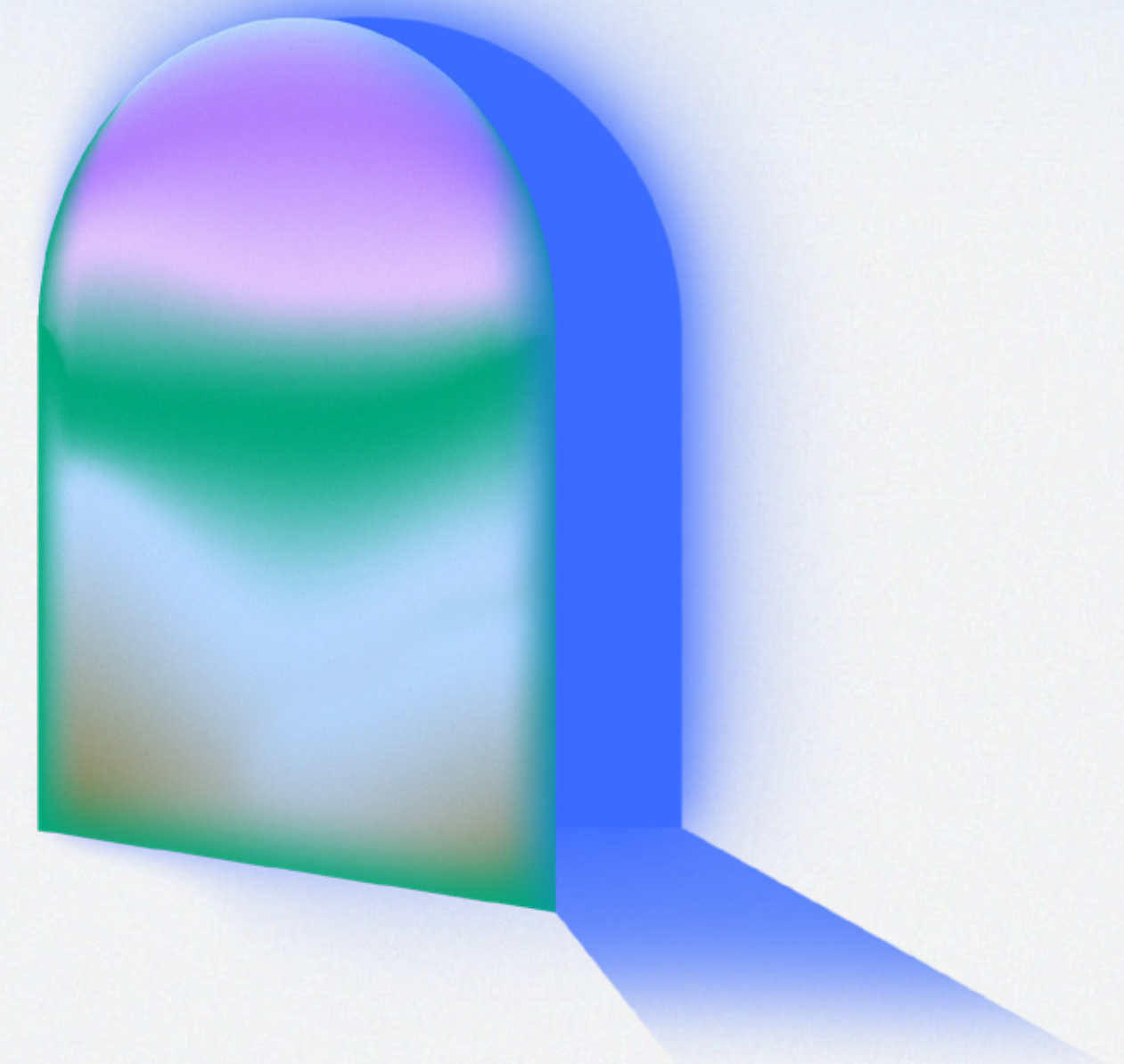
Sources: *B2B Superpowers Index by Dentsu (2024)*

Our interviews, conversations, and events revealed that climate tech under-invests in visibility and appeal, citing aversion to all things considered “marketing.” One common fallacy: thinking risk-averse customers want risk-averse vendors, so being visible isn't worth the risk of seeming too “out there.”

Instead, they blend in, which tracks: 68% of B2B buyers can't tell the brands they see at work apart. (Source) Camouflage is a terrible strategy. Mental availability drives sales; but we can't recall what we don't notice in the first place.

How to overcome it

Assess the in-market vs. out-of-market customer ratio for your solution and allocate resources for awareness accordingly. Build a distinctive brand that communicates your unique value with sharp positioning that differentiates you from competitors and substitutes. Build brand awareness where target customers spend time—not just when they're shopping. Focus on becoming the obvious choice rather than the best-kept secret.



“Brand competition and growth is largely about building two market-based assets: physical and mental availability. Brands that are easier to buy—for more people, in more situations—have more market share.”

Byron Sharp,
“How Brands Grow”



People avoid experiences they don't enjoy. Despite stereotypes about B2B having high tolerance for poor experiences, business purchase decisions are still made by people making subjective judgments that go beyond a solution's merits.

Market leaders have the advantage of brand safety. Even in deep industrial contexts, even significantly better performance is seldom enough to choose a newer, riskier challenger brand.

Attractive, intuitive design often paves the way for newer technologies. When people encounter brands and products that feel good they assume the underlying technology is better overall. Unattractive or clunky presentation signals unprofessional execution, creating doubt about technical capabilities regardless of actual performance.

The upshot is that climate tech stands to gain from making more attractive, enjoyable products and experiences. It's an underused competitive strategy to leapfrog legacy competitors.

How to overcome it

Study competitors and market leaders. Find what's painful in their experience. Invest in making your product delightful where they fail. Out-design legacy competitors so every part of the experience of your brand—functionality, discovery, trial, payment, interactions—are more enjoyable, easier, and feel better. Customer-focused experience design builds your brand reputation and drives recommendations.

Sources: *In a series of studies exploring the relationship between website design and perceived credibility, aesthetic improvements led to higher credibility ratings for over 80% of samples of identical content shown to respondents

“We see so much need and so much opportunity for climate tech leaders to think more strategically about how they can leverage the tools of design to drive adoption, sales, positioning in the marketplace, to drive the experience of their product. There's too much technical jargon and climate doom; it shows a lack of customer focus.”

*Nicole Dery, Principal,
Allelo Design*

“We're all grappling with climate change in different ways. But people are not into sacrifice. So how do we bring in a solution that impacts climate without bumming people out? We look to what we can solve for people, what we can make easy and delightful and what benefit we bring to their lives.”

*Jessica Applegren, SVP Communications and Marketing,
Palmetto*



After implementation, customers expect results. They only get results if people actually use your solution—which is trickier than it sounds. No usage means no results, no renewals, no references, and no growth.

The key is to design your solution with the humans who will have to use it in mind. And people don't like change. A clear, intuitive, easy-to-use solution designed with end-user input and insights is much likelier to overcome resistance to change and drive peer recommendations.

Which means it's likelier to get more use, and therefore much likelier to deliver on promises to the customer. If your solution is too complicated or cumbersome, intended users will avoid interacting with it. Which means your customer won't reap the benefits your solution promised.

Lackluster results that strain customer relationships can also endanger growth. Word of mouth is essential to B2B growth. Frustrated users share negative references, which become competitive disadvantages that persist long after fixing underlying issues.

How to overcome it

Invest in the experience design of what you sell. It matters. Conduct customer research. Understand workflows, friction points, frustrations, and what they appreciate or dislike about existing solutions. Design offerings based on insights. Bring intended end users into the process. Make using what you sell easy, convenient, and delightful.

“There is a bias among particularly developers and engineers that the way they think is the way other people think. The capacity of brand is very sociological - to understand that the majority of people have a totally different experience of what the world around them is.”

Sources: [Common pitfalls in transformations: A conversation with Jon Garcia | McKinsey](#), [Losing from day one: Why even successful transformations fall short](#)

Federico Boratto, Brand & Creative Director, formerly at Monta

Quilt

Quilt is a heat pump manufacturer for homeowners. Their units and systems were devised with interior designers, and they offer customizable fronts and beautiful device controls designed to make daily use delightful.

What they offer:

High-design heat pump systems for homeowners who want the benefits of heat pumps without compromising on interior design. "All electric heating and cooling systems that are as intuitive as they are beautiful"

Demand drivers:

✖ None of the above. Rebates, tax credits, and other limited time incentives do drive urgency.

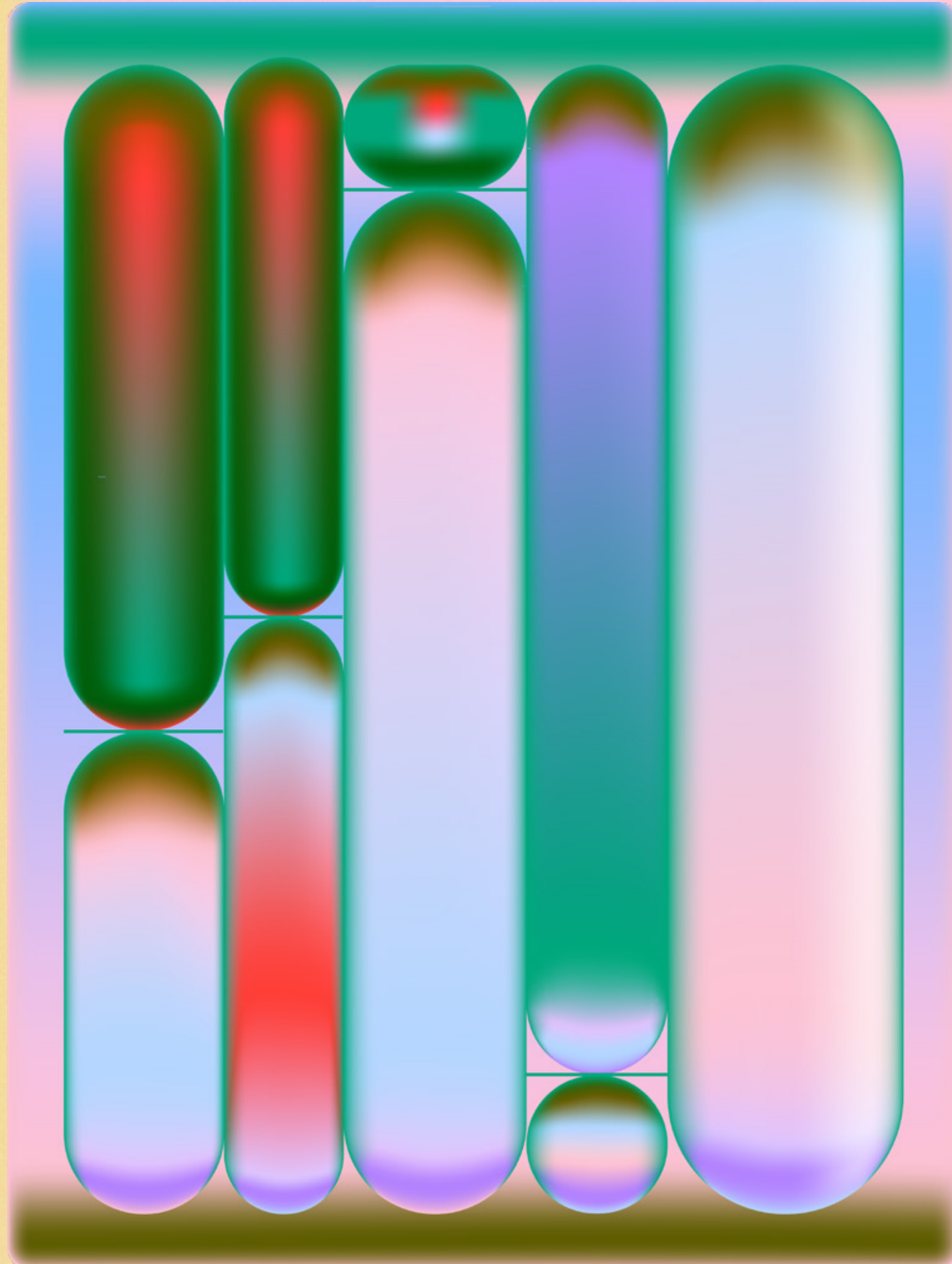
How they break down barriers

- 🏠 **Financial Value:** Aims for price parity with other heat pumps.
- 🕒 **Relevance:** Luxury, design, and quality emphasized.
- ✅ **Convenience:** Easy, searchable service by area. Company handles the order, delivery and installation.
- 🔍 **Trust:** Transparent pricing, with an online tool that shows all applicable rebates, tax credits and incentives and applies it to the total.
- ♡ **Appeal:** Emphasis on interior design style, intuitive interfaces, and making the experience of daily use delightful.

*"Heat pumps are a completely critical technology for accelerating the energy transition and address climate change, but the category of product was lacking for design. If you looked at what was out there, it wasn't actually very attractive. And that's actually very important. Because you need people to **want** to bring these things into their life. Not to be told to do it. So we bet on design to create desire as a critical part of our strategy. Our whole strategy, if I had to sum it up, is to elevate heat pumps into a coveted category, something that people **want** in their homes."*

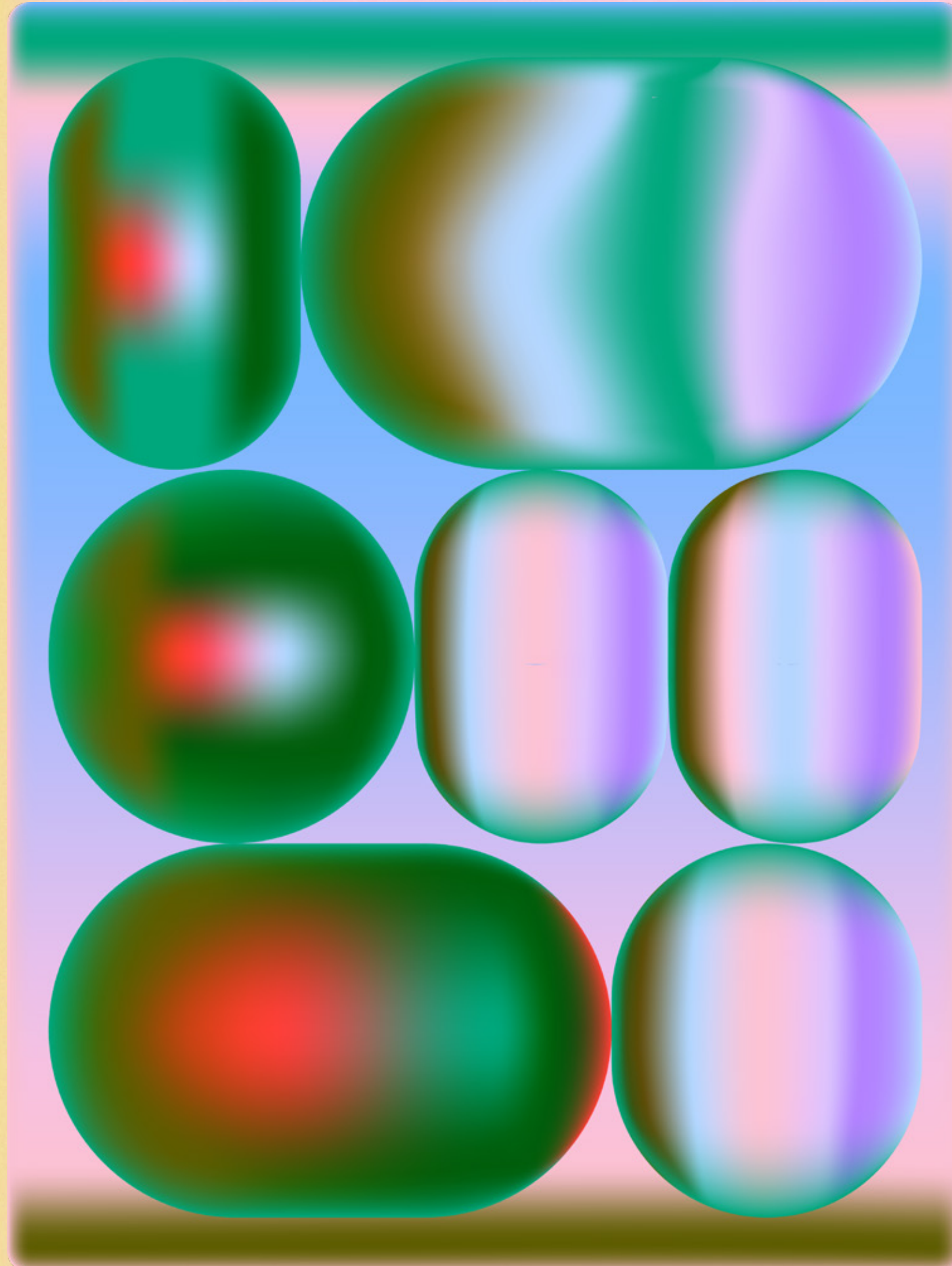
Paul Lambert, CEO, Quilt

Special Thanks and Sources



- Jessica Appelgren, SVP Communications and Marketing, Palmetto
- Lexie Asunto, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Helios Industries
- Erin Augustine, Director Marketing & Brand, SparkFund
- Mallory Baker, Sustainability & Social Impact, Weber Shandwick
- Lisa Baird, Principal, Fraîche Design Thinking
- Eric Berlow, Founder Vibrant Data Labs
- David Biello, Curator, TED Countdown
- Robert Boler, Product Designer, Scale Microgrids
- Jacob Borgeson, Senior Product Marketing Director, Unanet
- Federico Boratto, Brand & Creative Director, formerly at Monta
- Doron Brenmiller, Chief Business Officer, Brenmiller Energy
- Amanda Brown, Strategic Consultant, Blue Crab Strategies
- Ruby Brown, Climate Communicator
- Yana Buhner-Tavanier, Co-Founder, Fine Acts
- Benjamin Burke, Storyteller and Creative Strategist
- Christopher Burns, Prometheus Venture Partners
- Karin Bryant, Marketing Executive
- Pablo Alonso Cameselle, Marketing Director, Ecoforest
- Nicolás Alonso Cameselle, Strategy Director, Ecoforest
- Anna Marie Campbell, Founder Solarpunks Studio
- Andres Carvallo, President, CMG512
- Rachel Cellinese, Independent Creative
- Bill Combs, SVP Sustainability & Partnership Strategy, Penske
- Kyle Cox, Partner, ATP
- Jared Cruce, Marketing Strategy Consultant
- Maggie Cutts, VP of Partnerships, Vibrant Data Labs
- Erica Dahl, VP Government Affairs, formerly at Scale Microgrids
- Nicole Dery, Principal, Allelo Design
- Josh Dorfman, CEO and Host, Supercool Podcast
- Zeina El-Azzi, CEO, Gage Zero
- Theo Erasmus, Founder & Head of Strategy, The Rare Beast
- Rebecca Ewing, VP, Jones-Dilworth Inc
- Dominic Falcao, Founding Director, Deep Science Ventures
- Jessica Fishman, Renewable Energy Director, Kiterocket
- Haley Forest, Behavioral Scientist, Founder HCForest
- David Freas, Partner, Supermoon
- Eva Frye, Strategist & Storyteller, Climate Shifted Podcast & Two Hands Brands
- Humberto Garza, Founder & CEO, Solario
- Michael Glasky, Sales Executive and Co-Founder, Eristem
- Chris Grantham, Co-Founder, formerly at Renovate
- James Gray, Founder, SerenLabs
- Courtney Hardt, Creative Leader, Design Strategist
- Alex Haraus, Environmental Impact Strategist
- Justin Hardin, Co-Founder, Climatebase.org
- Justin Heyman, Managing Director, RockCreek Group
- Sean Higgins, Independent Communications Strategist
- Casey Hogue, Founder, Serotonin Creative
- Helen Hollyman, Executive Editor, SXSW, Sustainability Strategist
- Nada Hosking, Investor and Advisor, TAE Technologies
- Evan Hynes, Co-Founder, Climatebase
- Jesse Hynes, Co-Founder, Climatebase
- Meg Kendall, Head of Strategy, The Climate Hub
- Luke Kingma, Creative Leader, formerly at Tomorrow Farms

Special Thanks and Sources (cont'd)



- Amanda Kuhl, Co-Founder, InsideMedia
- Paul Lambert, Founder & CEO, Quilt
- Alejandro Largo, Creative Director, formerly at Sense
- Sarah Lazarovic, Former VP of Marketing & Communications, Rewiring America
- Kenny Lee, CEO & Co-Founder, Aigen
- Renee Lertzman, Climate Psychologist & Founder, Project Inside Out Founder
- Doug Lewin, Newsletter Author and Host, The Energy Capital Podcast
- Michelle Li, Founder, Clever Carbon & Women and Climate
- Lauren Lichterman, Advisor, Sustainability and Environmental Services, WM
- Julia Mangin, Director of Sustainability & Govt Affairs, Recology
- Ivan Markman, B2B SaaS Executive, Climate Advisor and Investor
- Ron Martin, Fractional CXO
- Laurie McGinley, Founder ViaLucent
- Chris Mele, Principal, Siberia
- Michelle Meleskie, Marketer, formerly at Modo Energy
- Duncan Meisel, Executive Director, Clean Creatives & Fossil Free Media
- Sarah Melvin, Strategy & Operations, SiTration
- Helena Merk, Co-Founder, Streamline
- Julian Moore, Writer & Editor, Climatebase Weekly
- Doug Morwood, Net Zero Transformation, Centrica
- Sean Voigt, Founder & CEO, Energy Innovation Hub TX
- Breene Murphy, President, CarbonCollective
- Sam Narr, Founder, Kibbo Kift Agency
- David Neff, Energy Resilience & Climate Investor, formerly Ecliptic Capital
- Guido Nuñez-Mujica, Data Scientist, Anthropocene Institute
- Marc O'Brien, Co-founder, Adjunct Faculty, Climate Designers, CalArts
- Eli Panken, Product Marketing, formerly at Arcadia
- Vivek Pandya, CDO, Eddy Energy
- Alexander Pfeiffer, CEO, Terralytiq
- Alex Raguet, Venture Partner, Energy Impact Partners
- Cara Reiner, UX Researcher & Product Designer
- Emily Rosenblum, Director of Brand Marketing, James Avery
- Alexa Schirtzinger, Head of Marketing, Watershed
- Nick Schenck, CEO, 3rd & Lamar
- Hannah Sieber, CEO, Artyc
- Geoff J. Skigen, Marketing Brand Advisor & Fractional Marketing Director
- Richard Skrinde, President, Grid Pathway Institute
- Alex Siminoff, Director of Marketing, Parity
- Lauren Tonokawa, Managing Director of Creative, Elemental Impact
- David Turnbull, Interim Director, CommsHub
- Mike Walters, Principal, Salas O'Brien
- David Willians, Sustainability Director, Bladonmoore
- Jamil Wyne, Principal, Riffle Ventures
- Will Wiseman, CEO, Climatize
- Abe Yokell, Co-Founder, Congruent Ventures
- Oksana Zheleznova, Communications Strategist

Further Reading / Resources



- *Brands are multipliers, not assets in themselves* — MarketingWeek (2024)
- *The Effect of Media Advertising on Brand Consideration and Choice* Terui, N., Ban, M., & Allenby, G. M. Marketing Science (2011)
- *B2B Superpowers: A Unique Perspective on the B2B Buyer and the Difference Between Winning and Losing* - DentsuB2B (2024)
- *Why Climate Hardware Startups Struggle to Raise VC — and How to Beat the Odds.* David Neff (2025)
- *The secret to scaling climate solutions? Don't sell climate.* Josh Dorfman, Forbes (2025)
- *Climate tech is back—and this time, it can't afford to fail* — MIT Technology Review (2023)
- *Climate Tech Needs A New Sales Strategy,* Jamil Wyne, Forbes (2025)
- *Eight lessons from the first climate tech boom and bust* - Bessemer Venture Partners
- *Is winter coming for climate tech?* Latitude Media
- *The better mousetrap fallacy* Latitude Media
- *Near Term Climate Risk and Intervention* — SilverLining
- *Industry Life Cycle: Phases and Examples*
- *Techonomics: Establishing best practices in early stage technology modeling* — Activate
- *Deep tech startups with very technical CEOs raise larger rounds, research finds* TechCrunch
- *The big reframe in B2B Sales* — McKinsey (PDF)
- *Product/Market Fit for Climate Startups* — Peter Nocchiero
- *The META Trending Trends: 02025* - by Matt Klein - ZINE Will Cady
- *Climate Tech Investment Trends 2024* - Sightline Climate
- *Scaling Up Climate Tech: Overcoming the Challenge* - Carbon Minus (2024)
- *“What are the drivers and barriers for green business practice adoption for SMEs?”* Environment systems & decisions 41,4 (2021)
- *The Brief: Upskilling lenders for the Great Deployment* - ImpactAlpha (2024)
- *Strategic Communications Guidebook for Cleantech CEOs* by ClimatePower (PDF)
- *“Decarbonization: Stocks and flows, abundance and scarcity, net zero (2024)”* — Nate Bullard
- *Targeting 100% LED lighting sales by 2025 – Analysis* - IEA
- *Adoption Curve of Different Technologies in the U.S.* — Our World in Data
- *Trust* - Our World in Data
- *An Exploration of Technology Diffusion,* American Economic Review (2010)
- *What Today's Climate Tech Can Learn from Yesterday's Energy Transitions* - BCG (2024)
- *From Pitch to Impact: Deep Dive into Climate Technology Startups* - UNDP Accelerator Labs (2025)
- *A radical approach to cost reduction at climate tech companies* - McKinsey (2024)

Further Reading / Resources (cont'd)



- *Climate tech: bridging the gap between innovation and impact* — Economist
- *State of B2B Climate Tech Marketing 2024* - Meg Kendall & Amelia Zimmerman
- *Risk as Feelings Theory - Breakdown, The Decision Lab* (2024)
- *“Risk as Feelings”*, Psychological Bulletin (2001)
- *Net Zero Roadmap: A Global Pathway to Keep the 1.5 °C Goal in Reach – Analysis - IEA*
- *Developing Sustainable B2B Sales Practices: Long-Term Success - Intelemark*
- *Credibility judgments in web page design – a brief review - PMC Journal of medicine and life vol. 9,2* (2016)
- *Delight by Design: The Role of Hedonic versus Utilitarian Benefits - (2008)*
- *What is stopping you from upgrading to a heat pump system?* - The Cooldown (2024)
- *Should ‘heat pumps’ be renamed?* - Fast Company
- *Sustainable technology: A competitive advantage for businesses*
- *The Cooler* Substack by LaunchSquad

Recommended Guides, Tools and Resources

- *Off Kilter*. An insightful weekly newsletter about brand, strategy and business by Paul Worthington / Invenciónx
- *How to Grow Your Brand [Report]* - Published by Mailchimp. A concise guide by leading business academics on the fundamentals of brand-building. (2024)
- *How to build a story that works: A value-first messaging playbook for climate-tech founders* by Sean Higgins / ClimateDrift (2025)
- *“A Practical Guide to First-Market Fit for Climate Tech Founders”* Stephen Beaton / MCJ (2025)
- Techstars’ *Position Your Product Worksheet* x
- *Project InsideOut* applying clinical and depth psychology to the climate and environmental crises
- *The Goldilocks Startup* for climate tech, First Matter (2024)
- *The Product Model for Climate Tech*, Moiz Kapadia

***Becoming Obvious: Unlock Mainstream
Adoption for Climate Tech***

By Michu Benaim Steiner

Art direction: In-House International

Design, Illustration & Animation:

Luis Carlos Redondo at In-House International

Copy editing & proofreading: Nicole Dery, Sean Higgins.

Typography:

Aventine by Stephen French

Cheltenham by Bertram Goodhue and

Hannibal Ingalls Kimball / Bitstream Foundry

© **In-House International LLC**

© **Michu Benaim Steiner**

All rights reserved

Studio team:

Michu Benaim Steiner, Lope Gutiérrez-Ruiz,

Luis Carlos Redondo, Alexander Wright

In-House International works with climate tech companies to unlock demand, build brand preference, and speed up market adoption. For more information or to book a 15-minute consultation, please *get in touch*.

Contact:

connect@weareinhouse.com

weareinhouse.com

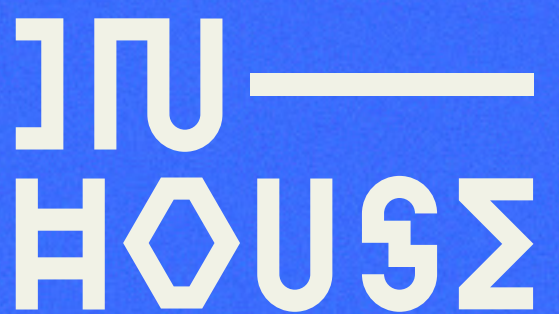
@weareinhouse

Austin, TX

Ready to Grow?

In-House International is a branding firm that unlocks breakthrough growth for challenger brands, including climate tech. We design strategy and systems that mint new categories, drive adoption for impactful technology, and establish market leadership against the odds. Our all-expert team works directly with leaders to deliver transformative clarity, uncovering what's most compelling about each client we partner with, translating it into effective, irresistible branding that redefines what's possible for our clients—so they can shape a better future.

Unlock Adoption



weareinhouse.com