Ginkgo

Case study 01

GIS app upgrades

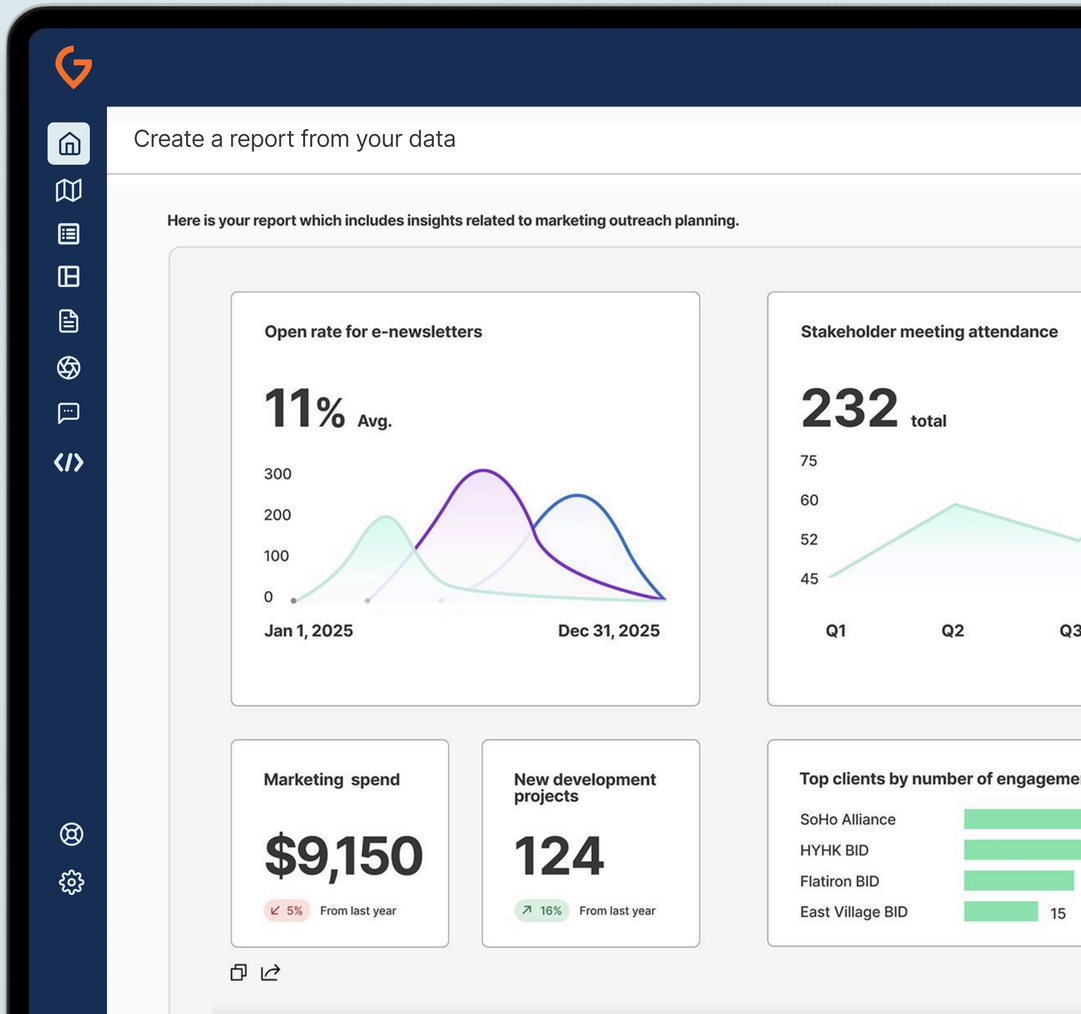
Increase retention & monetization

Role

UX/Product designer

Timeline

March – August 2025



Ginkgo is an app that integrates geographic information systems (GIS) with CRM, enriching neighborhood data and generating reports to guide decision-making for business improvement district (BID) staff.

What I Owned

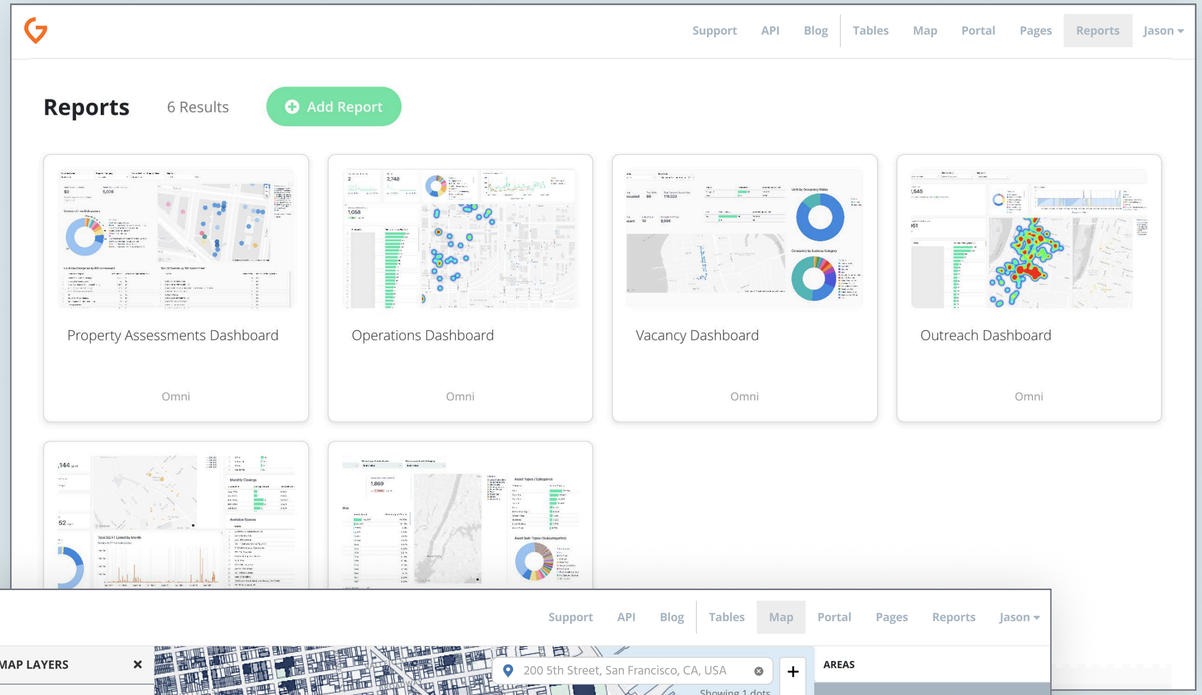
I led the design of an AI-assisted reporting workflow to help BID directors turn fragmented data into actionable outreach plans.

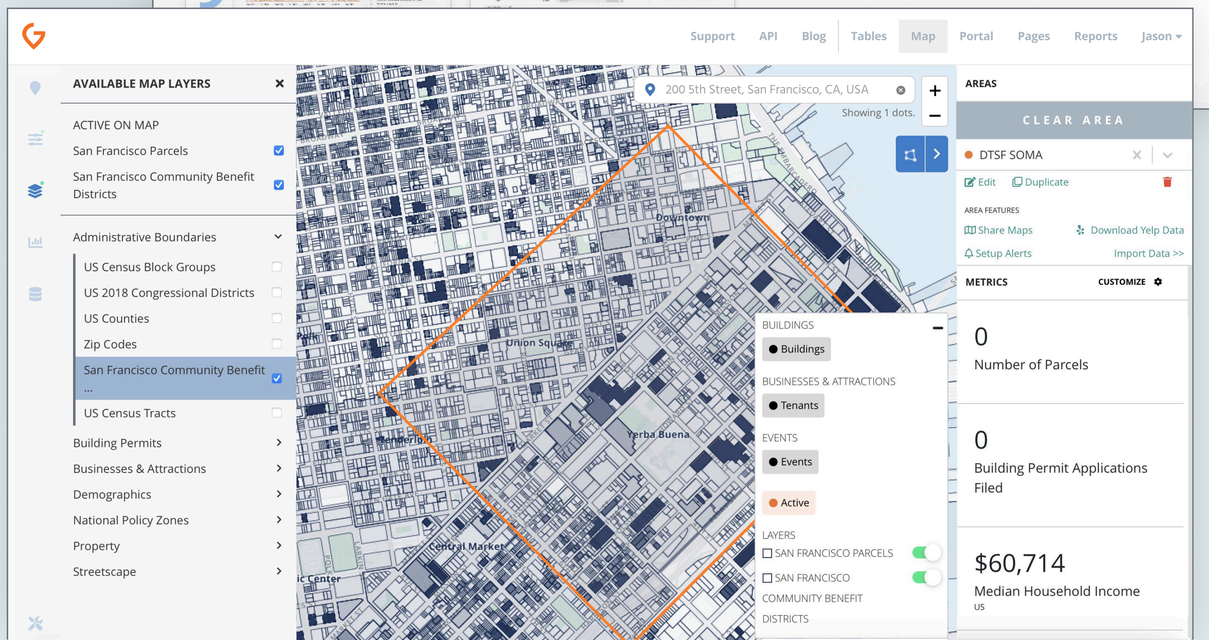
BID staff need to create actionable plans from reports

The app’s confusing UI/UX and lack of workflows present roadblocks

What users had to do

- Jump between maps, reports, and external files
- Manually interpret results
- Translate report data into plans outside the app



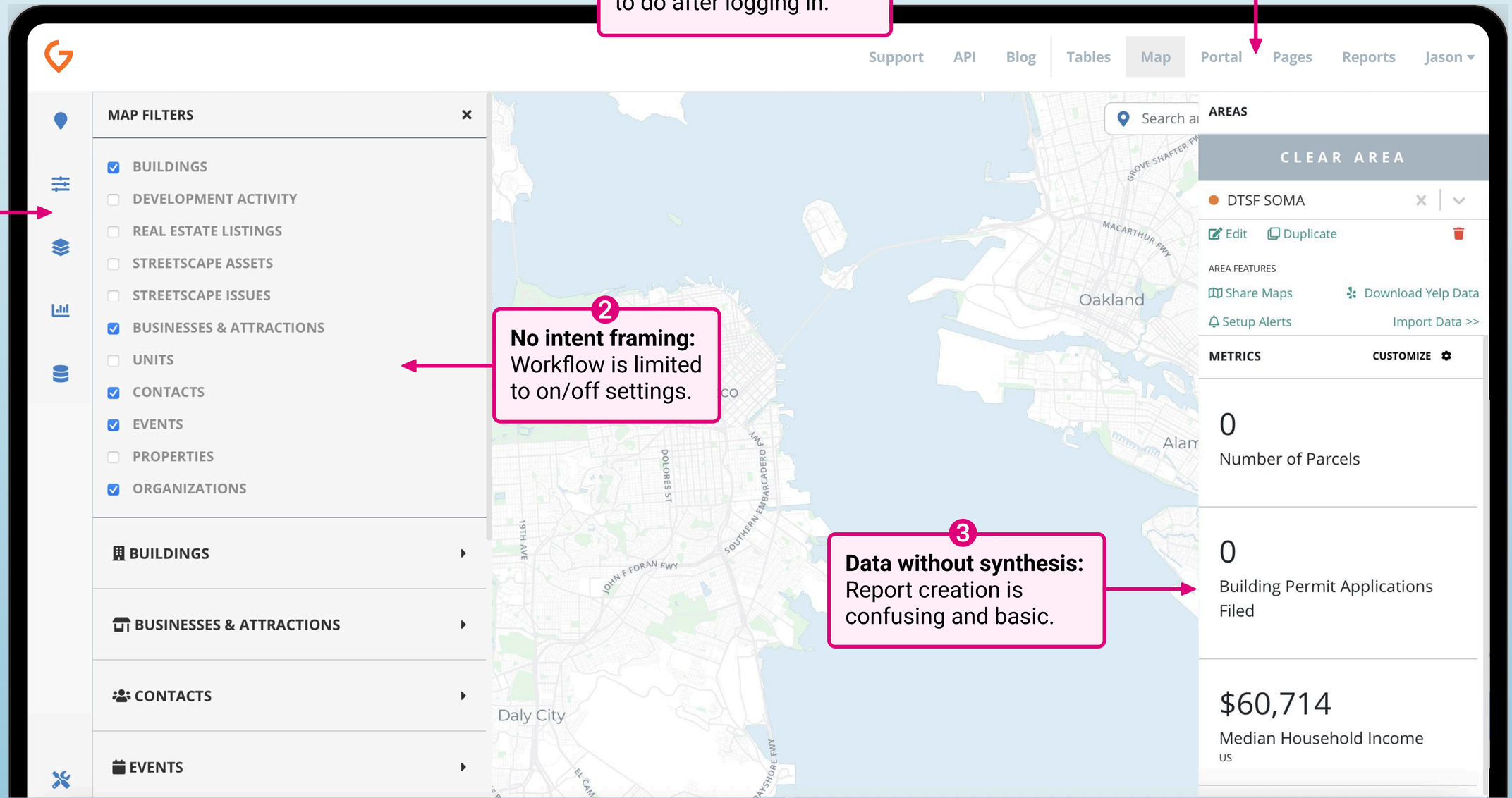


App login then no report guidance

1 Fragmented entry points: BID staff don't know what to do after logging in.

2 No intent framing: Workflow is limited to on/off settings.

3 Data without synthesis: Report creation is confusing and basic.



Ginkgo surfaces data, but does not help BID directors plan outreach

BID directors can find maps, records, and reports across Ginkgo, but they must manually connect these pieces to form an outreach strategy. This creates friction, slows down decision-making, and limits the value users get from the platform.

- Data lives across maps, records, and reports with no unifying workflow
- Users must export or manually synthesize information outside the product
- The app answers “what exists” but not “what should I do next”

BID directors are responsible for turning data into real-world action

BID directors are often under-resourced and time-constrained. They need tools that help them move from raw information to actionable plans, especially when coordinating across stakeholders, timelines, and neighborhoods.

- Plan and justify outreach efforts to boards, cities, and stakeholders
- Identify priority areas, trends, and risks quickly
- Translate complex data into clear recommendations and next steps

Proposed workflow

Home page → **Guided workflow for report setup** → **AI report**

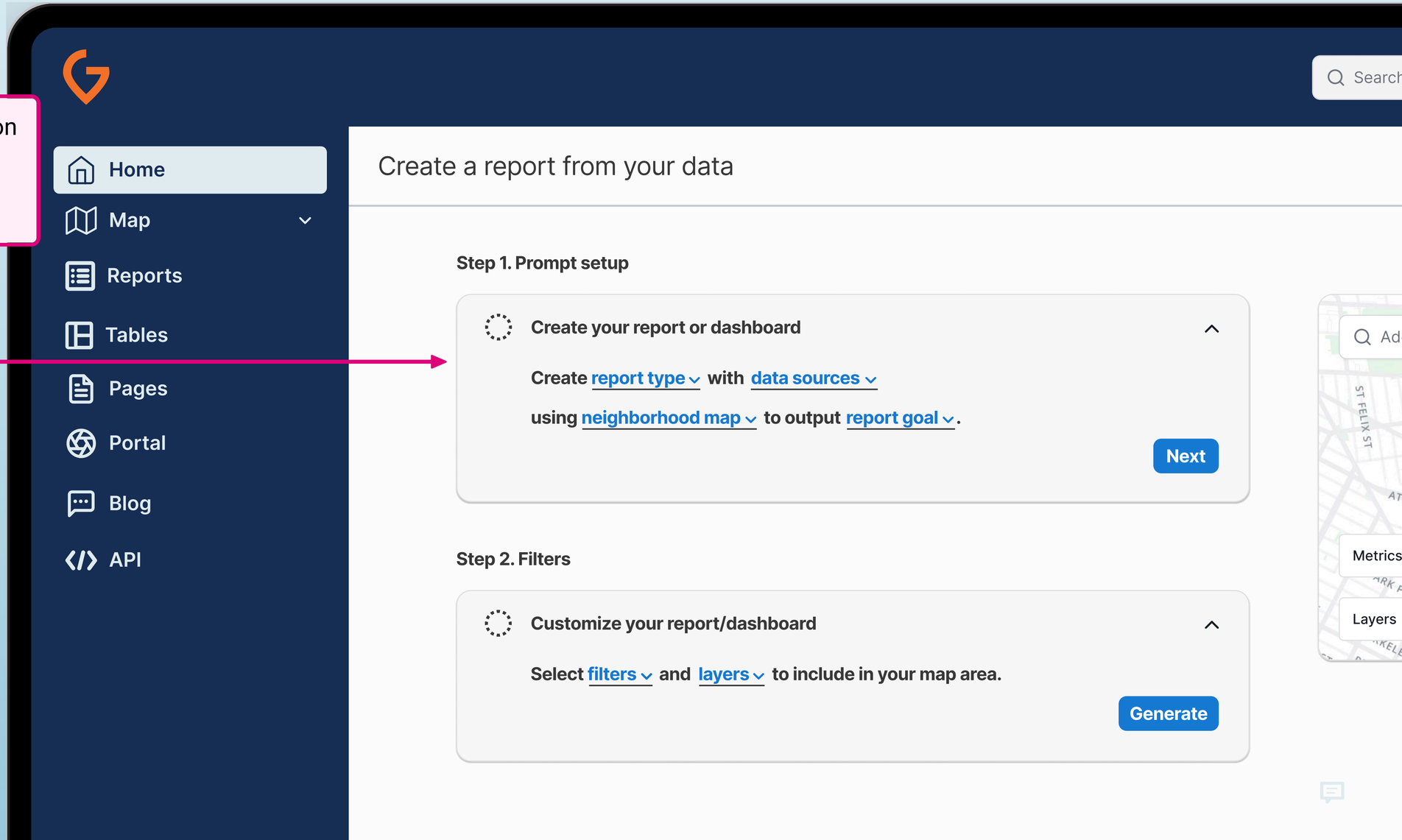
- 3 criteria questions
- 1 goal-based question
- 2 refinement questions

- AI insights and suggestions
- Raw data info graphics
- AI query field

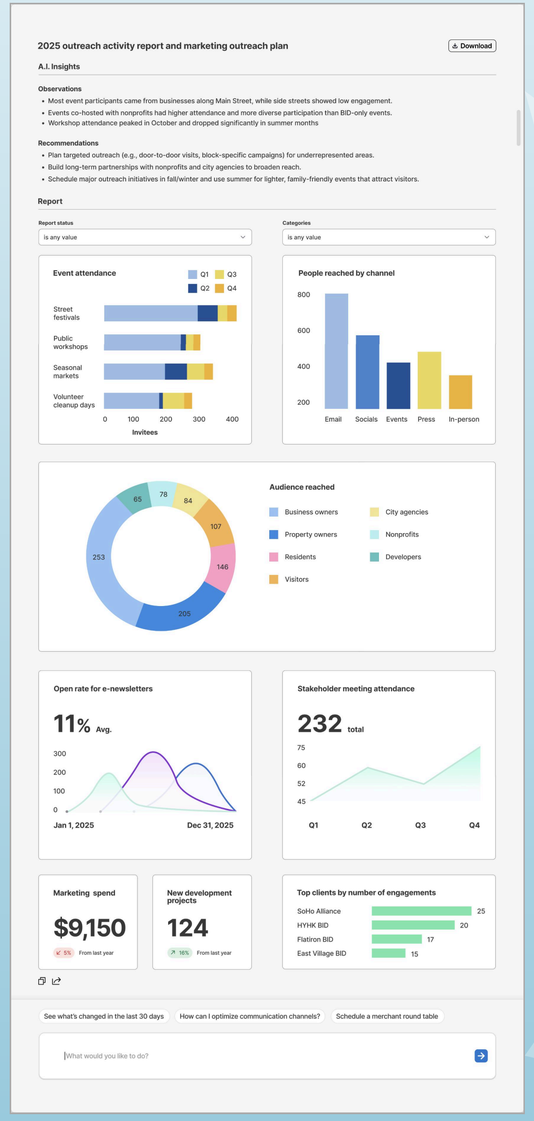
Key additions that structure intent, facilitate AI insights and interactivity in the report

Login › report setup immediately

Intent framing: Eliminated report-creation guesswork in favor of guided prompts with a defined report goal. Increased clarity and setup for AI insights.



Report › AI integration



AI-assisted report: Raw data output enriched with AI insights above it, and a query field below.

Outreach activity report and marketing outreach plan

Download

Insights

Observations

- Most event participants came from businesses along Main Street, while side streets showed low engagement.
- Events co-hosted with nonprofits had higher attendance and more diverse participation than BID-only events.
- Workshop attendance peaked in October and dropped significantly in summer months

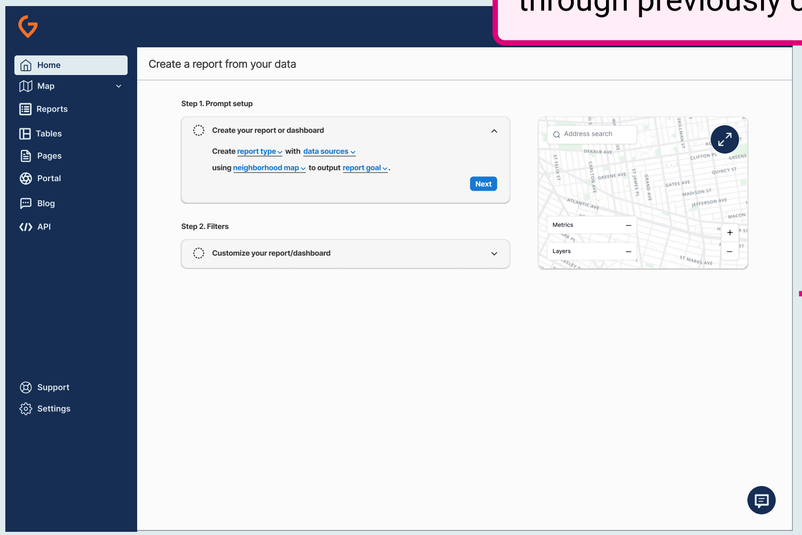
Recommendations

- Plan targeted outreach (e.g., door-to-door visits, block-specific campaigns) for underrepresented areas.
- Build long-term partnerships with nonprofits and city agencies to broaden reach.
- Schedule major outreach initiatives in fall/winter and use summer for lighter, family-friendly events that attract visitors.

See what's changed in the last 30 days | How can I optimize communication channels? | Schedule a merchant round table

What would you like to do?

Report setup: Mad Lib style prompt guides users through previously complicated menus (1-4)



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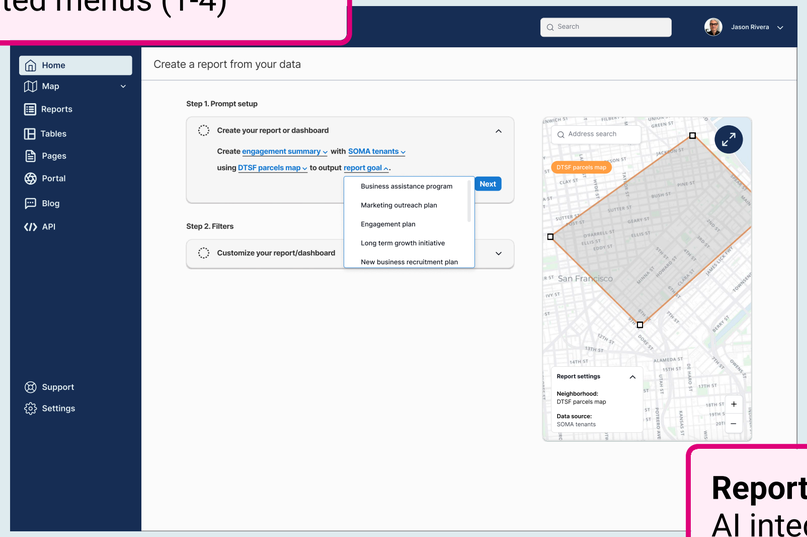

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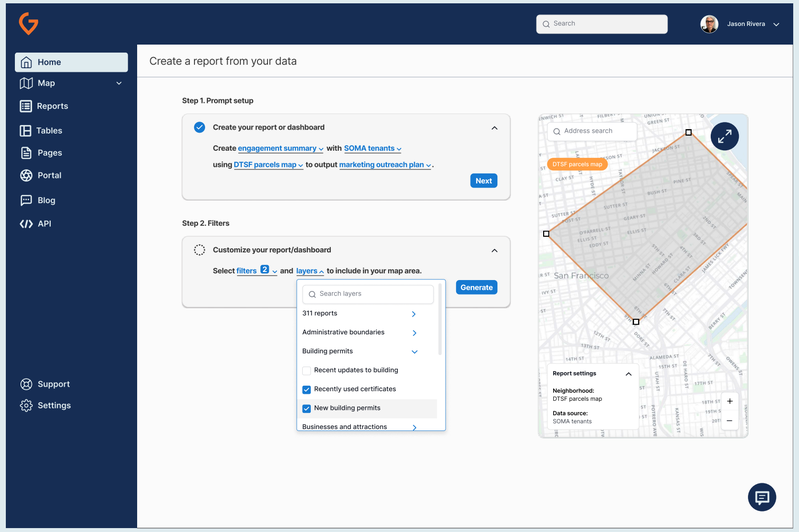
Report output: AI integration allows for output + insights to be regenerated on the fly



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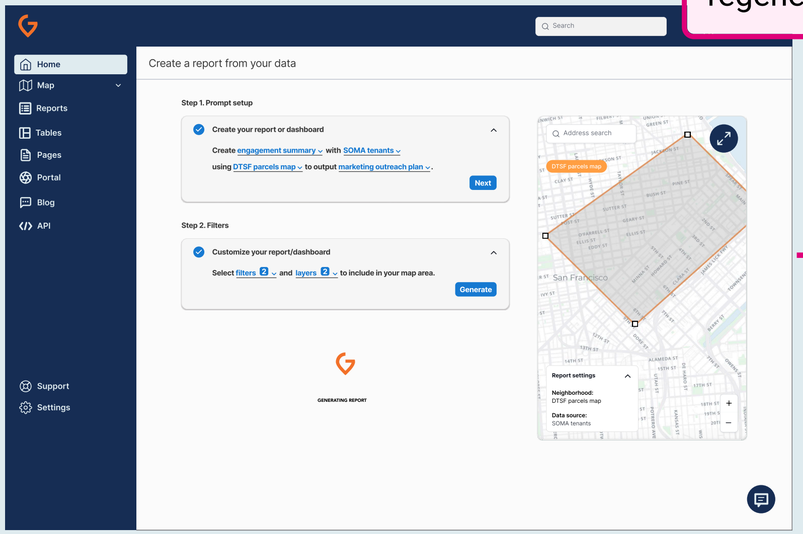

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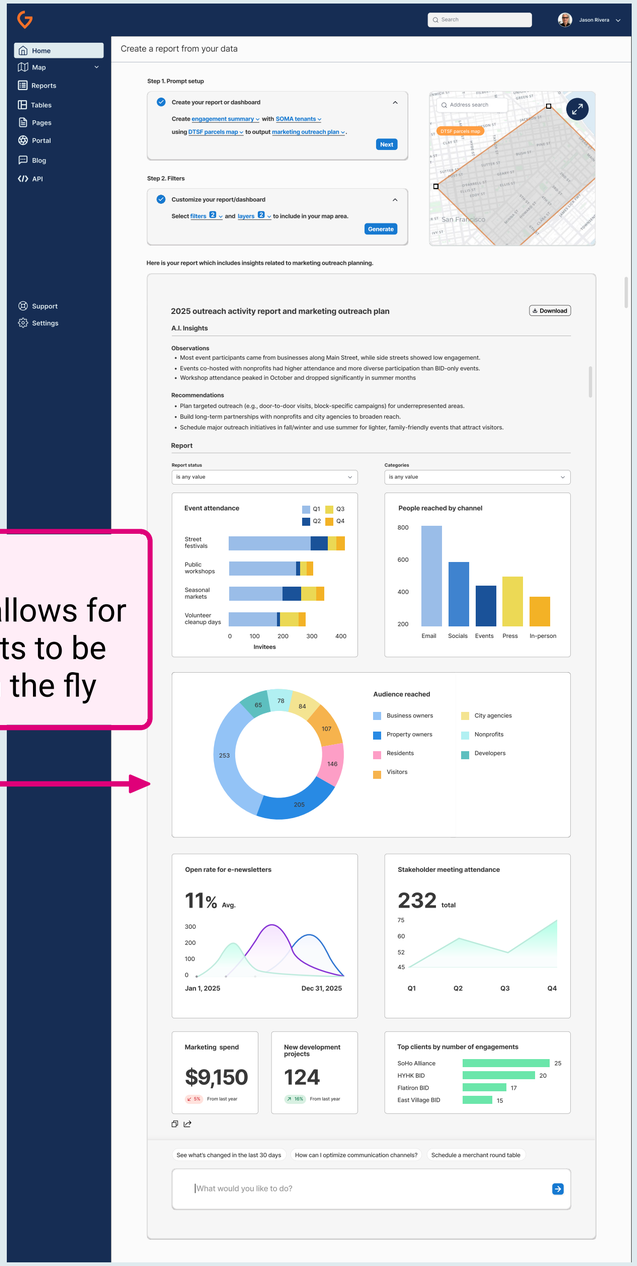

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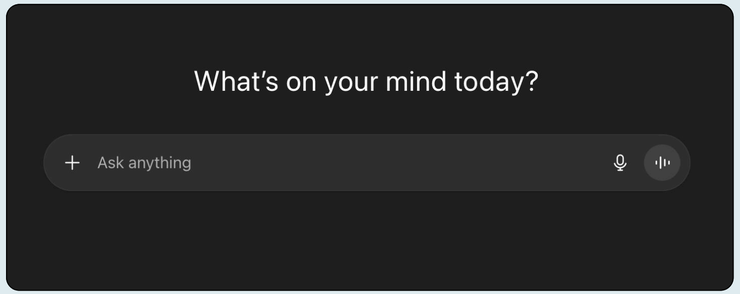
Ginkgo

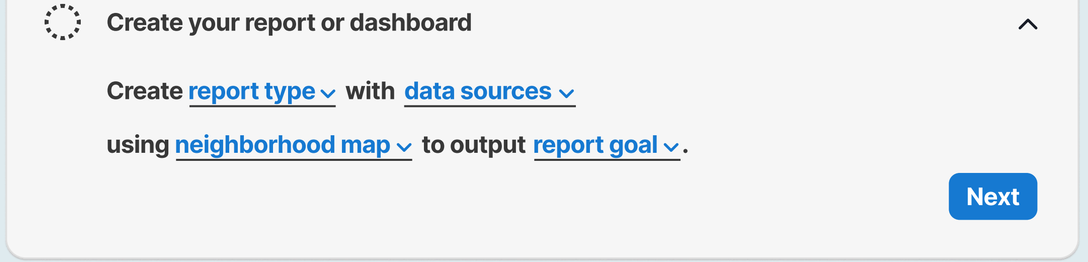
Interaction style: Open prompt versus guided sentence.

Free-form text input didn't seem like it would solve user needs or improve the UX as much as a inputs within a Mad Lib style prompt

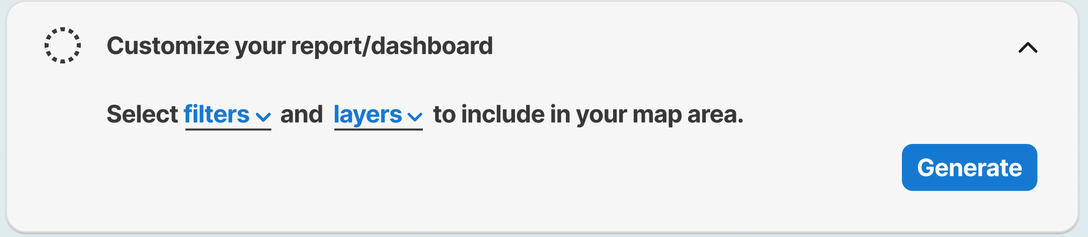
ChatGPT



Step 1. Prompt setup



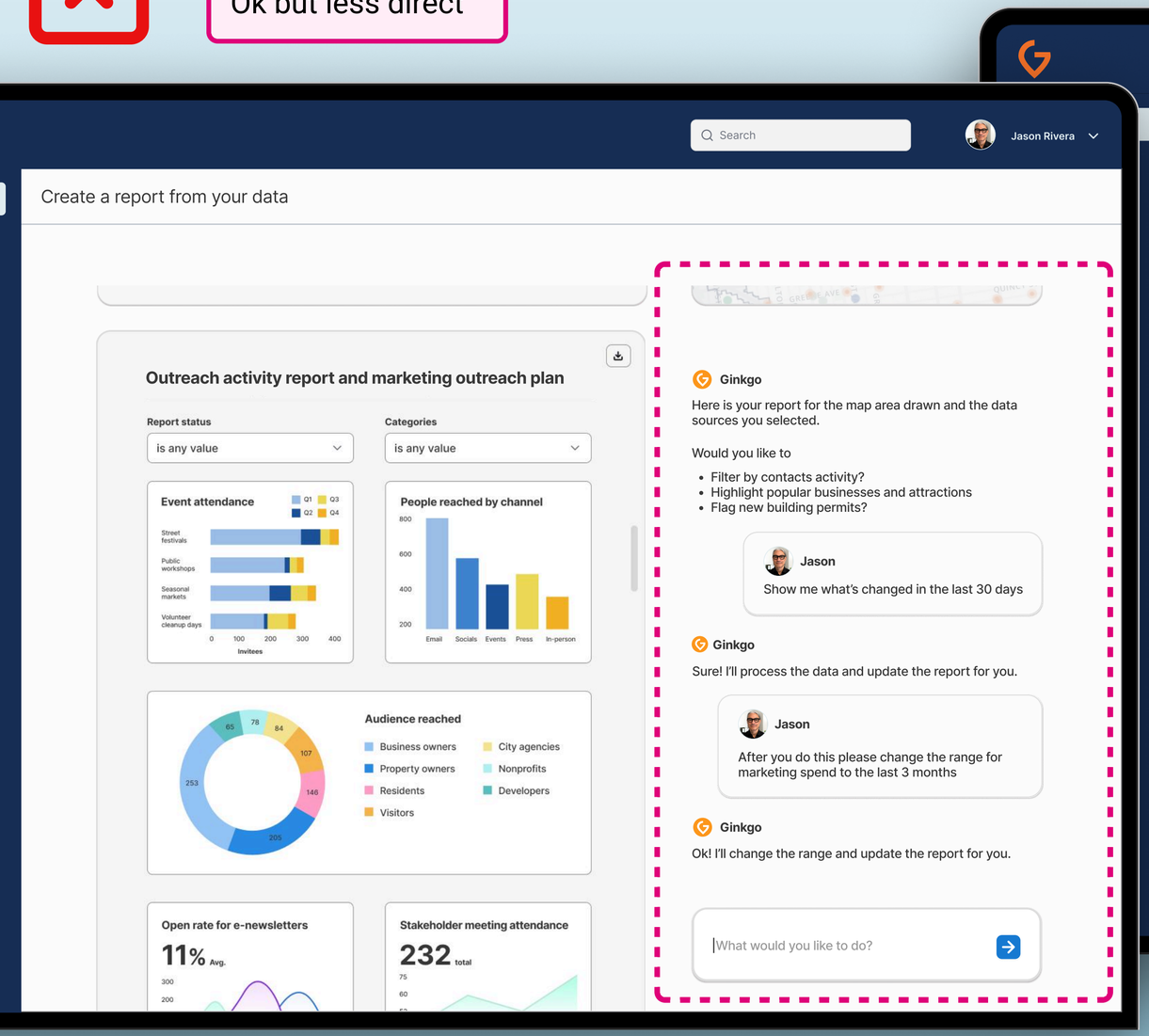
Step 2. Filters

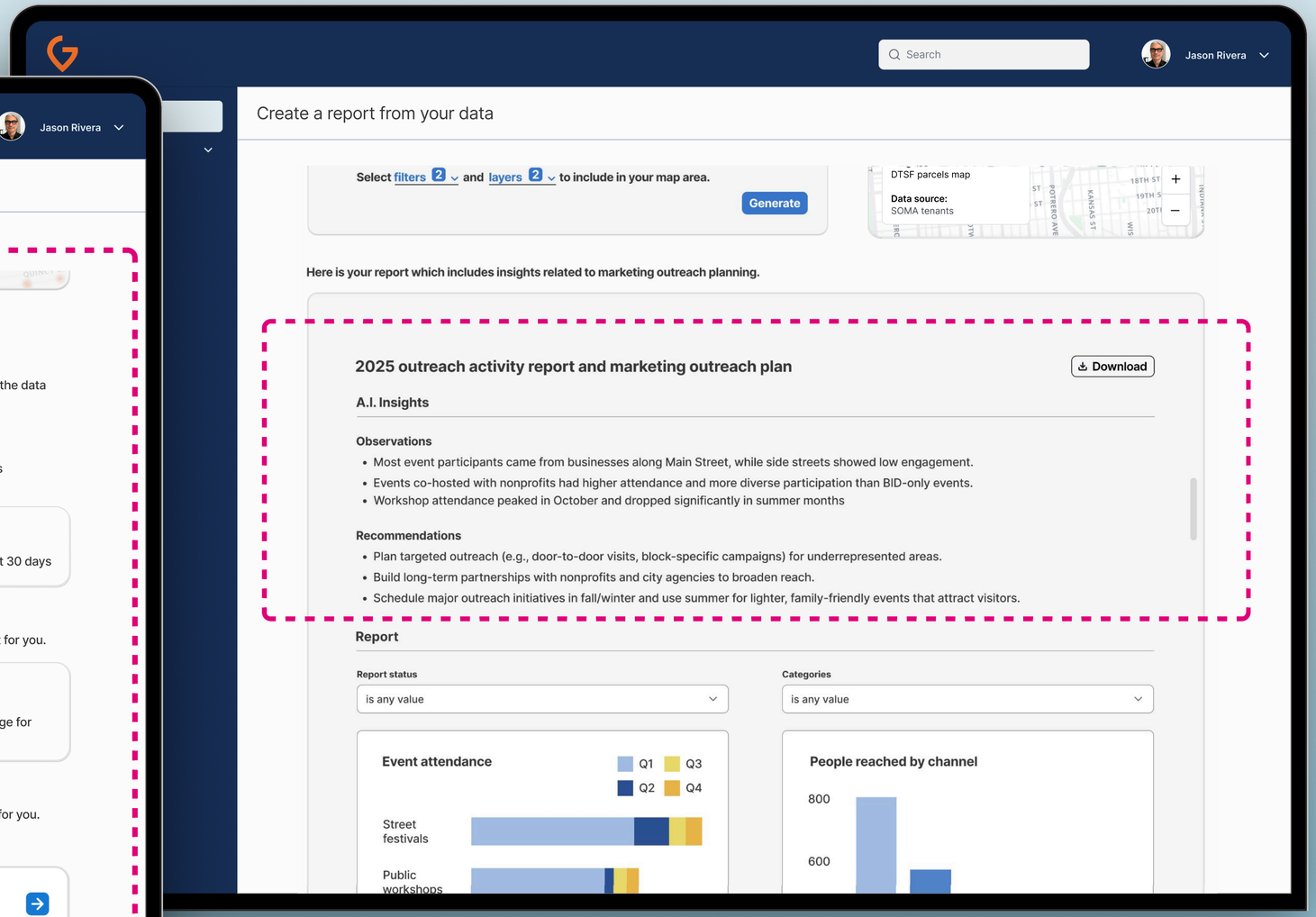


Case study 01 | Design decision › Split page report + AI vs full page report + AI

AI side-by-side:
Ok but less direct

AI within report:
Stronger connections to raw data





Engineering constraints shaped how the solution could be delivered

The concept required restructuring report creation and layering AI into the output, but major architectural changes weren't possible. So the design strategy had to work within existing systems while still creating enough customer value to justify a premium tier.

Constraints

- Engineering bandwidth was limited for custom development
- The Omni reporting plugin defined how reporting could be extended

Workarounds

- Extended functionality within Omni instead of replacing it
- Leveraged AI APIs to deliver insights without altering core architecture
- Positioned AI-assisted reporting as a premium feature to support integration costs

User interviews revealed distinct needs based on experience level

I interviewed users about their work roles, tasks, and app needs along with a QA about my prototype. This surfaced two usage patterns: newer users who needed structure to get started, and experienced users who wanted fast, flexible control. This informed how workflow guidance and AI capabilities were positioned within the product.

- Newer users valued guided workflows that reduced ambiguity
- Experienced users preferred fast access and selective AI usage
- Validation supported guided setup for onboarding and AI synthesis for power users

User interviews showed how guided setup and AI each contributed value

Interviews revealed that structured prompts helped users articulate what they wanted to analyze, while AI-generated insights accelerated synthesis and decision-making. Together, these patterns supported offering guided workflows as core value and AI-powered reporting as a premium capability.

- Guided Mad Lib setup helped users frame intent and reduce setup ambiguity
- AI-driven reports provided the most value by synthesizing raw data into insights
- Validated positioning AI reporting as a premium tier due to its differentiated impact

The MVP delivered core functionality and validated the business direction

The prototype enabled structured report creation and layering of AI insights in a way that worked within technical constraints. This allowed testing of real user workflows, evaluation of pricing strategy, and establishing a foundation for future product expansion.

- Introduced AI-assisted reporting to generate insights alongside raw data
- Confirmed that AI features supported a premium-tier pricing model
- Established a scalable design system to support ongoing product growth

The solution improved user workflows and differentiated the product

The updated reporting experience reduced friction for new users, accelerated decision-making for experienced ones, and positioned Ginkgo as more than a data repository. These improvements strengthened user perception and created strategic room for premium features.

- Guided workflows clarified how to create reports and reduced setup confusion
- AI-assisted output enabled faster synthesis and reporting compared to manual methods
- Strategic differentiation moved the platform toward insight-driven decision support

Thank you!