How Media Product Leaders Are Navigating the 'More With Less' Era

📬 The Rebooting & WordPress VIP Report Summary – May 1, 2025

A summary of the key findings and insights from the report by The Rebooting and WordPress VIP, which surveyed 131 media product professionals and interviewed a handful of leading product executives. The report outlines how teams are prioritizing innovation and operational efficiency amidst budget constraints and shifting audience behaviors.

Want to download the full report from The Rebooting? Here's the [link](#).

📌 Key Takeaways:

🚀 Audience Engagement & Strategic Focus

• Audience engagement is the top product priority in 2025, driven by declining search/social traffic and the need for direct relationships.

• Podcasting and direct audience tools are gaining favor over traffic-driven tools like lead-gen or jobs boards.

• Winning teams are aligning product development tightly to monetization, retention, and user value,no fluff.

🛠️ Infrastructure, Tech & AI Constraints

• Tech limitations, organizational silos, and outdated CMS systems often hinder progress.

• CMS decisions are pragmatic: 63% use third-party systems, only 15% use fully in-house platforms.

• Key CMS issues include lack of flexibility (57%), integration (40%), and performance (31%).

• AI is used tactically (workflow automation, content support) but not yet trusted for editorial or strategic functions.

• AI and CMS improvements are viewed more as enablers of efficiency than competitive differentiators.

• Third-party tools and partnerships are key enablers of scale, especially with talent shortages.

🧭 Culture, Prioritization & Organizational Alignment

• Most tech budgets go to maintenance, not innovation. 45% of companies spend <10% on product/tech.

• Product, editorial, and revenue teams are rarely fully aligned, only 22% are integrated with shared KPIs.

• 56% of respondents cite resource constraints as a major alignment challenge; only 27% say product teams have strategic influence.

• Scarcity mindset dominates decision-making; fear of failure limits bold experimentation at large publishers.

• Lean teams are forced to prioritize ruthlessly; projects get cut if they don't directly support engagement or revenue.

• Pragmatism rules: focus on what can be built, maintained, and monetized without overextending teams or systems.