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Bridge strategy and execution in Jira

with BigPicture Advanced

A practical guide for enterprise leaders connecting strategy to delivery in Jira.

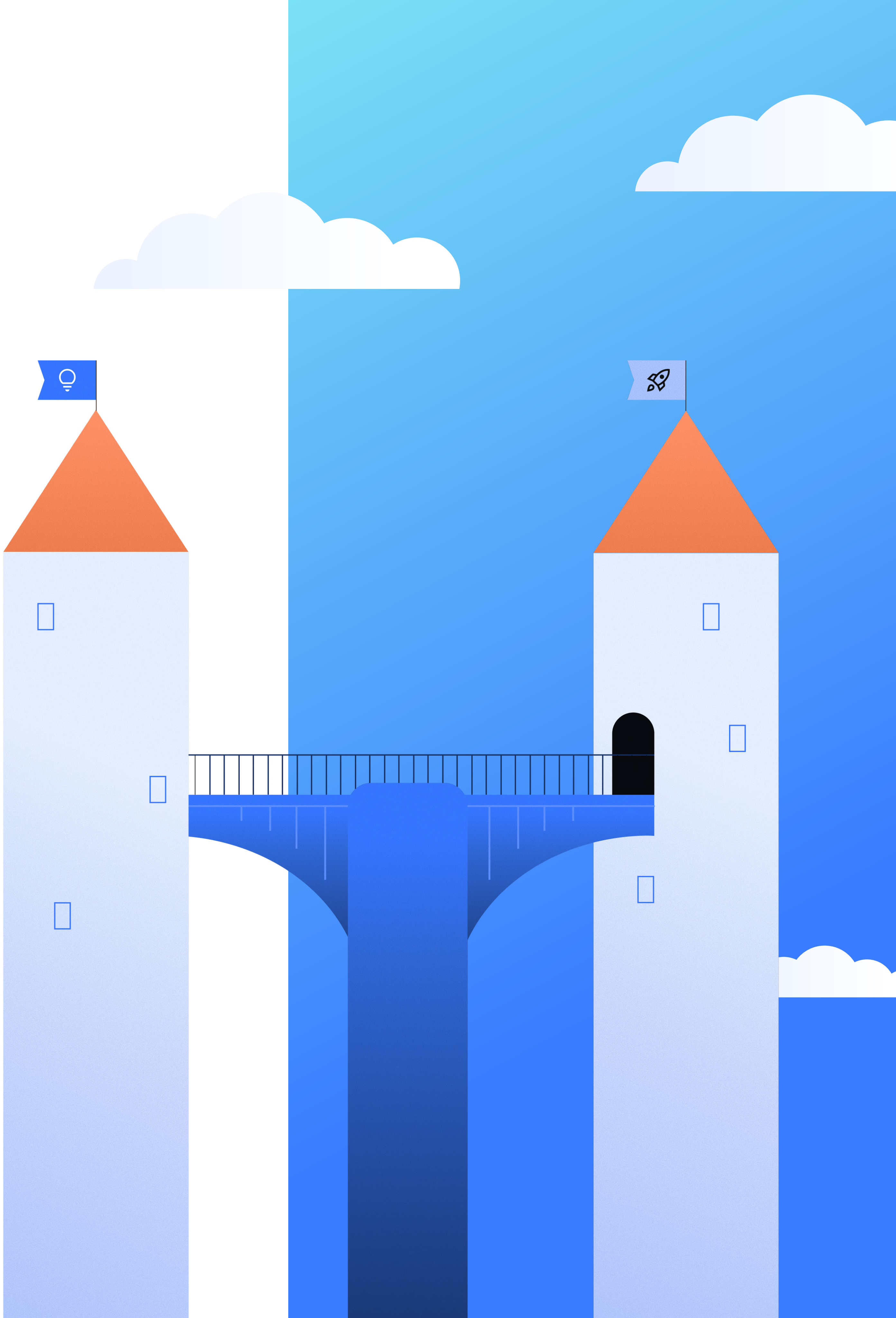
Contents

Foreword

Eighty percent of senior enterprise leaders say their strategic priorities are clear. **Only 11% say three-quarters or more of their active work is explicitly linked to those priorities in a shared system, according to new** [Atlassian research](). The gap between those two numbers is where your strategy stalls out.

Leadership sets priorities, portfolios get funded, and teams execute in Jira. Somewhere across those handoffs, the thread breaks, and the other 89% of organizations end up closing that gap manually: in meetings, spreadsheets, and status decks that go stale the moment they're built.

That's the gap strategic portfolio management (SPM) closes. SPM brings strategy, prioritization, funding, and delivery into one connected view, so PMOs, portfolio leads, and executives can see not just what teams are doing, but whether it's moving the business forward. Without it, even strong teams end up executing plans that no longer reflect the strategy behind them.



What to look for in a Jira-centric SPM solution

If the current state is fragmented, what does a connected SPM solution actually look like?

Analysts agree on the shape of it. Forrester's evaluation of 13 leading strategic portfolio management vendors, in "The Forrester Wave™: Strategic Portfolio Management Tools, Q2 2026," found that top platforms have moved well past basic project tracking, adding objective management, real-time financial context, and portfolio-level reporting alongside execution. In practice, a strong Jira-centric SPM solution should give you:

- **Strategic objective management:** a way to connect day-to-day work to strategic objectives in real time, whether through OKRs or a similar goal framework. Look for the ability to cascade objectives, link Jira epics and issues to higher-level goals, and track progress toward outcomes without leaving Jira.
- **Strategic portfolio prioritization:** a repeatable way to compare and rank initiatives using criteria your organization agrees on, such as RICE, ICE, or WSJF, instead of resolving competing priorities case by case.
- **Financial governance:** visibility into budgets, forecasts, and actual spend at the portfolio level, so investment decisions are grounded in real numbers instead of quarterly guesswork.
- **Advanced reporting and executive visibility:** a consolidated view of portfolio health, progress, and financial signals that gives leadership one source of truth, instead of requiring them to stitch together reports from separate tools.

Underneath all four capabilities, enterprise organizations need the same foundation: portfolio data that stays connected across business units, support for whatever delivery framework each team runs (Agile, SAFe®, waterfall, or hybrid), and governance that scales as the number of portfolios grows. A solution that delivers the four capabilities above without that foundation will still leave gaps.

BigPicture Standard (PPM) and BigPicture Advanced (SPM): one base, two layers

BigPicture Standard (PPM) is the project portfolio management foundation of BigPicture, including Gantt timelines, project and program scoping, resource and capacity management, dependency tracking, and risk management. It's built for delivery teams, program managers, and PMOs running complex projects, programs, and portfolios at any scale, in any framework.

BigPicture Advanced (SPM) adds the strategic decision layer for the leaders who need to connect strategy, investment priorities, and portfolio performance to that delivery, including CPOs, CTOs, finance and R&D leaders, product directors, group PMs, and PMO or ePMO teams. Advanced includes everything in Standard, plus four capabilities built for strategic portfolio management:

- Strategic objective management (OKRs)
- Strategic portfolio prioritization
- Financial governance
- Advanced reporting and executive visibility

BigPicture	Standard (PPM)	Advanced (SPM)
Scenario	Manage projects, programs, and portfolios, at any scale and framework.	Align strategy and business outcomes with execution.
Target users	**Delivery teams** (Project Managers, Program Managers, and Operational Teams)	**Executives** (CPO, CTO, Finance, R&D) **Mid-level Managers** (Product Directors, Group PMs, PMO, ePMO)
Gantt, Scope, Resources, Board, Risks	✓	✓
OKR module	⊗	✓
Priorities module	⊗	✓
Financial module	⊗	✓
Advanced reporting and Strategic Areas	⊗	✓

For organizations new to BigPicture, Standard is simply the PPM foundation everyone starts with, and Advanced is the strategic layer on top of it. For existing BigPicture Standard (PPM) customers, that same framing explains why an upgrade may be worth evaluating now: the delivery foundation you already use can extend into strategic decision-making without adopting a new platform.

When does portfolio management become an SPM challenge?

Managing projects well and managing a strategic portfolio well are two different disciplines, and most organizations don't notice the shift until the gap between them starts costing money. A few signals tend to show up first:

- **Leadership can't easily connect active work to strategic objectives.** Ask which epics ladder up to this year's top priority, and the answer takes a meeting, not a dashboard.
- **Initiative prioritization is inconsistent or driven by urgency.** Whoever escalates loudest gets resourced, regardless of value.
- **Financial context sits outside the portfolio process.** Budget conversations happen in finance tools or spreadsheets, disconnected from the delivery data that should inform them.
- **Executive reporting depends on spreadsheets and slide-building.** Someone spends days each month assembling a status deck that's outdated the moment it's presented.
- **Multiple portfolios or business units need common governance.** Each team tracks work its own way, and there's no shared standard for comparing initiatives across the organization.
- **Strategic changes are hard to evaluate before they affect live plans.** There's no way to model a shift in priority without disrupting work that's already underway.

If two or three of these sound familiar, project management alone isn't the constraint anymore. The constraint is that strategy, prioritization, funding, and delivery all live in different places, which is exactly what the next four capabilities are built to fix.

If you're already using BigPicture Standard (PPM), this isn't a sign that delivery is broken. You may be managing execution effectively. The real question is whether the decisions around that delivery, what to fund, what to prioritize, how to report progress to leadership, have become more strategic than your current setup was built to support. That's the gap BigPicture Advanced (SPM) is built to close.

Strategic objective management: Connecting day-to-day work with company goals

Can your leadership see whether the work happening in Jira right now is actually advancing your strategic objectives? For most enterprises, the honest answer is no, or only after someone builds a report to find out.

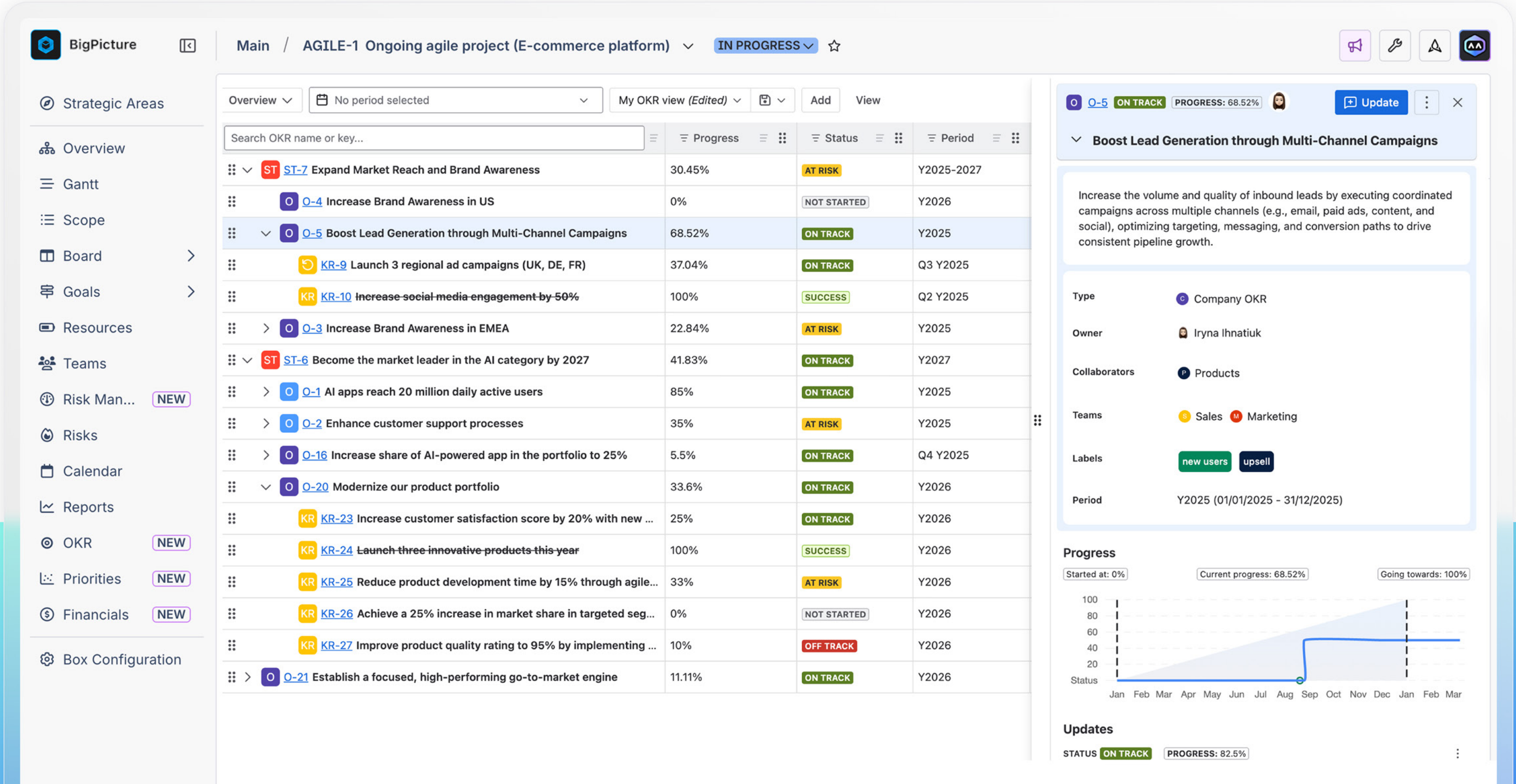
Objectives set by leadership often lose clarity as they move through departments and teams. Teams stay busy, but without a direct line from strategy to execution, their effort doesn't always drive the outcomes that matter most. Gartner® research shows that when employee goals align with organizational priorities, and help people adapt to change, coordinate with peers, and hold themselves accountable, performance can increase by up to 22%.

OKRs, objectives and key results, close that gap. Objectives define what you want to achieve; key results define how you'll know you got there. BigPicture Advanced (SPM)'s strategic objective management capability brings OKRs directly into Jira, so leaders can define, track, and manage goals alongside the work that drives them, and portfolio managers see not just what's being done, but why it matters.

Every BigPicture Box, whether it represents a portfolio, program, or project, can host its own OKRs, with sub-objectives and measurable key results linked to the Jira issues or Boxes that deliver them. A portfolio-level objective like "expand EMEA market share by 20%" might break into sub-objectives for launching a new partner program and localizing the product for French and German markets, each with key results tracking launch milestones, partner sign-ups, and adoption, updating automatically as linked work progresses.

This closes one of the most common gaps in strategic planning: objectives that live apart from execution. Instead of managing OKRs in a separate system, or a static spreadsheet, BigPicture Advanced (SPM) keeps them in the same environment as the work itself, so leadership gets real-time insight into whether the strategy is actually on track.

The result is a continuous, closed-loop planning process: leadership defines the vision, teams execute with clarity, and progress data flows back to decision-makers without manual effort. It turns OKRs from a quarterly reporting exercise into a living management tool – one that helps teams adapt to change while keeping strategy front and center.



Strategic portfolio prioritization: focused investment, not urgency-driven scrambling

Even the strongest strategic plan falls apart if teams keep working on the wrong things, or if the initiatives that matter most stall because resources are tied up elsewhere. In fast-moving organizations, priorities shift constantly. Without a structured way to decide what matters most, teams end up reacting to whoever's loudest instead of what's most valuable.

The cost of that gap shows up in decision speed. Atlassian's 2026 research on strategic portfolio management found that fewer than one in three organizations can act on a performance signal within a week; nearly two-thirds take a month or more.

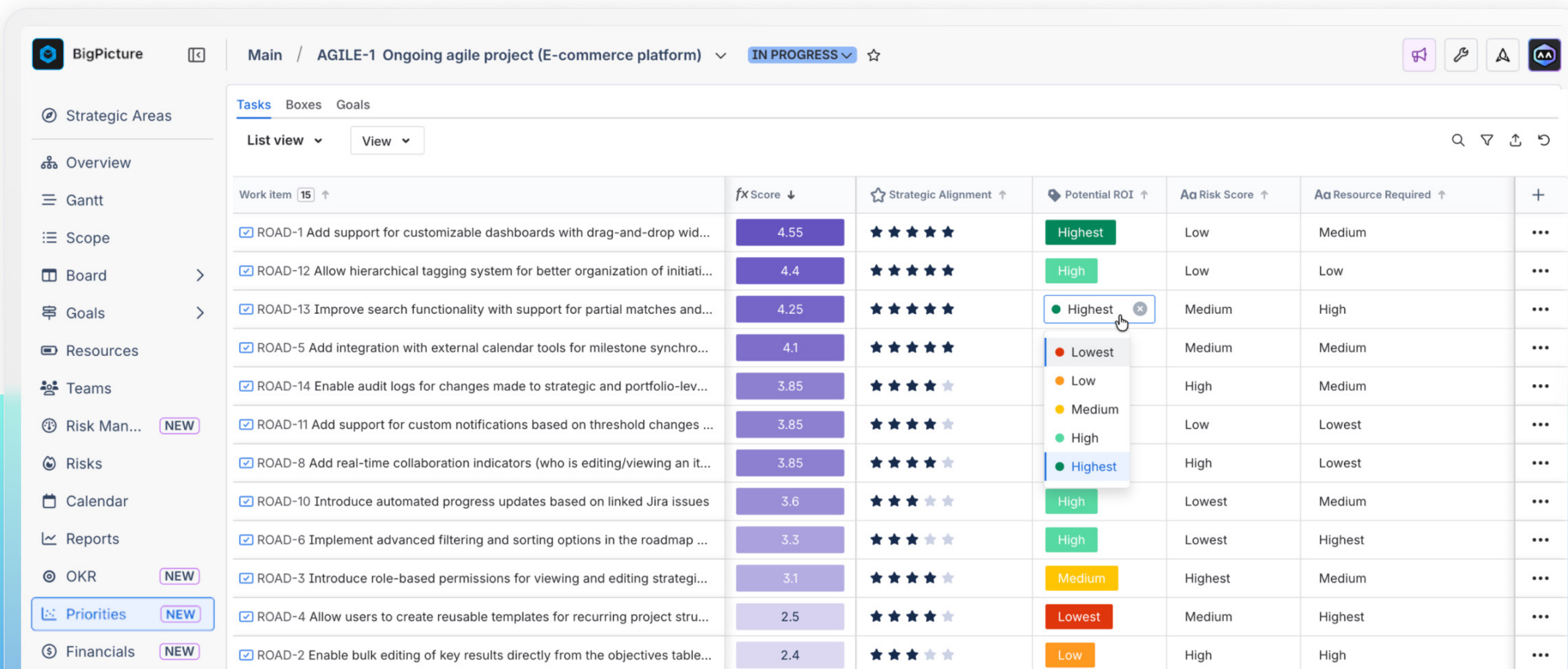
We think Gartner® backs this up. In "Effective Strategic Portfolio Management Drives Better Outcomes" (Robert Handler and Shilpa Pental, 11 July 2025), Gartner found that "organizations that are highly effective at strategic portfolio management (SPM) are twice as likely to achieve better business outcomes."

BigPicture Advanced (SPM)'s strategic portfolio prioritization capability brings discipline and transparency to that decision. Instead of gut-feel calls, teams apply structured, data-driven scoring directly in Jira, using RICE, WSJF, ICE, value versus effort, or a fully custom model, and scores update in real time as project data changes.

Picture a portfolio lead choosing between five competing initiatives, each with a champion who considers theirs the top priority. Instead of resolving that by seniority or urgency, the lead scores all five against the same WSJF (Weighted Shortest Job First) criteria: cost of delay divided by job size. Two initiatives that looked similarly important on paper come out clearly ahead once cost of delay is factored in, and the lead can defend that call to every stakeholder with the same data everyone else can see. Prioritization isn't limited to Jira issues, either: you can score entire projects (BigPicture Boxes) and goals (OKRs) using the same templates, so everything gets compared on consistent terms.

Every Box can host its own prioritization template, so portfolio leaders set scoring criteria that reflect strategic goals while delivery teams apply the same model to backlog items, epics, or initiatives. All scores roll up and stay visible across modules, so decision-makers, from PMOs to program leads, share one view of what matters most. The capability offers a table view for detailed scoring and a priority matrix for quick visual analysis, and priority scores surface in Gantt, Scope, Board, and Overview views, so that context stays present in planning and review conversations.

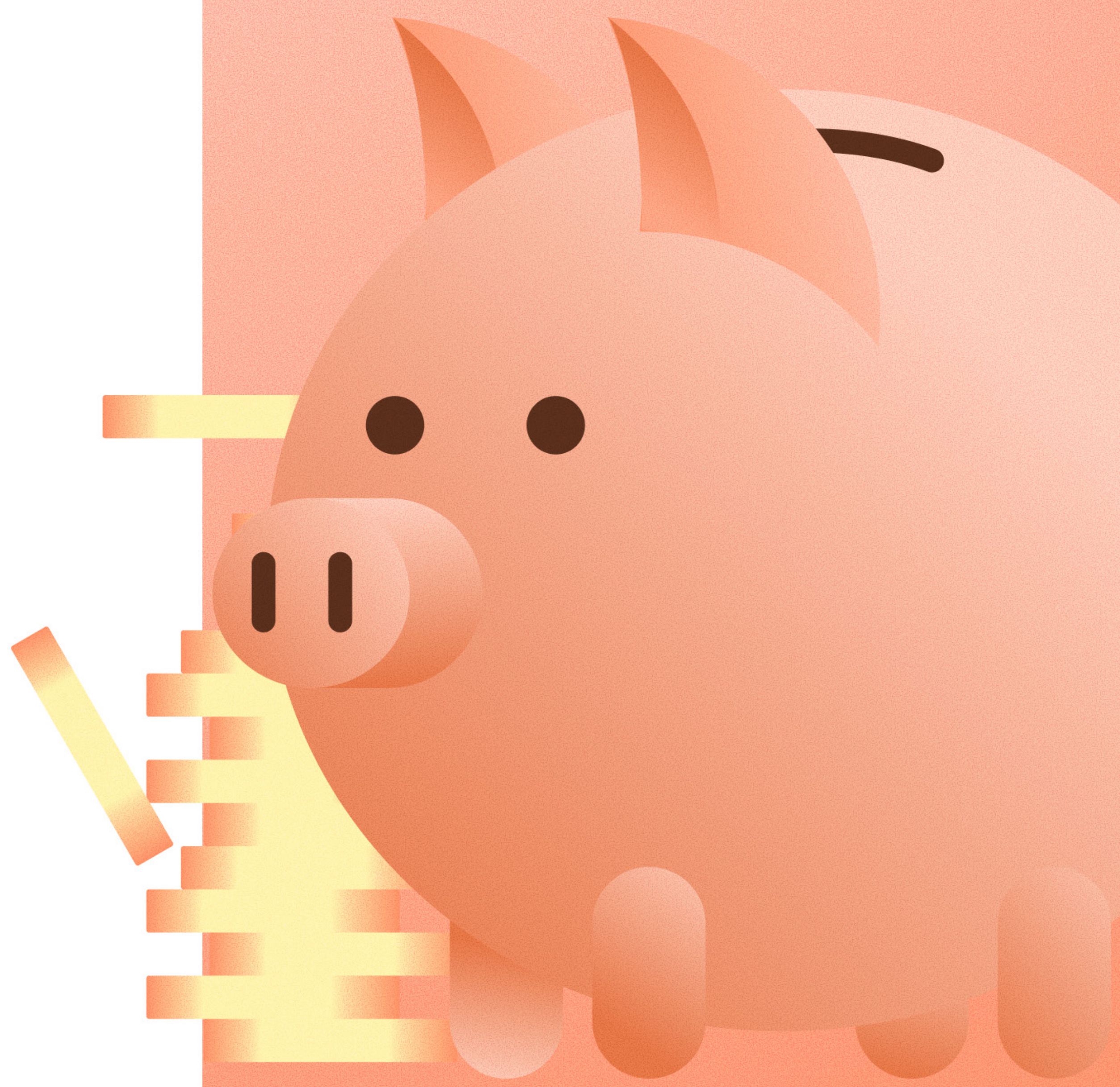
So leaders can see at a glance which initiatives deliver the most value for the effort, teams understand why they're working on certain items over others, and the organization can respond to change without losing sight of long-term goals.



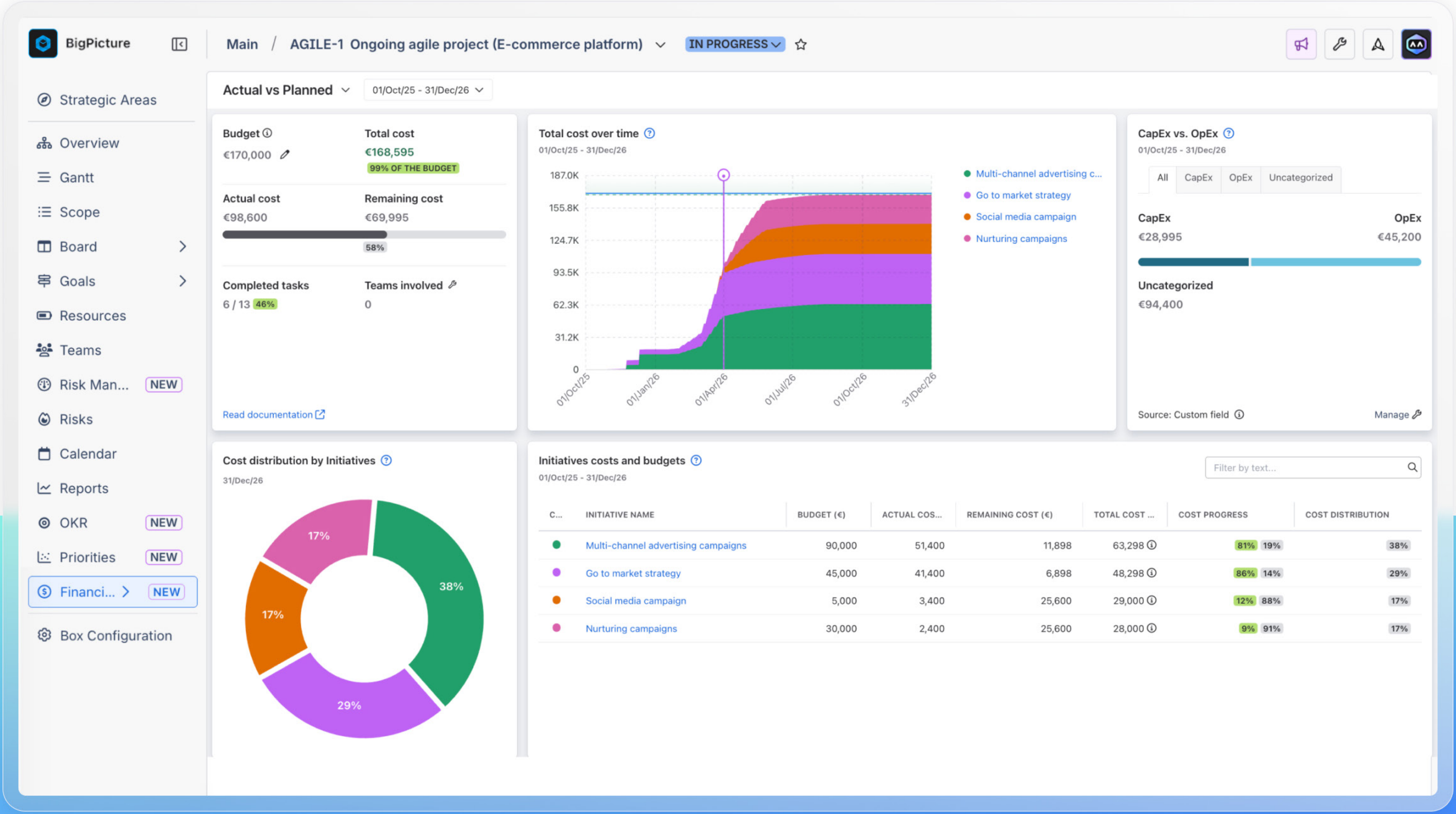
Financial governance: budget and cost context where portfolio decisions get made

If your teams are still managing budgets in spreadsheets that live outside Jira, portfolio decisions are being made without the financial context that should inform them. Projects and initiatives are investments, and without financial governance at the portfolio level, spending can outrun value before anyone notices.

Finance teams feel this pressure directly. PwC's Pulse Survey found that 65% of CFOs were adjusting forecasts and budgets in response to ongoing volatility, a sign that funding decisions need to move faster than most portfolio processes allow. At the same time, Atlassian's 2026 SPM research found that only 8% of organizations use dynamic, outcome-based funding; the rest are still locked into funding models that can't flex when strategy needs to change.



BigPicture Advanced (SPM)'s financial governance capability brings budget, cost, and investment context into portfolio planning, connected to the work driving it. This isn't a replacement for your finance system of record. It's the layer that lets portfolio leaders see budget context next to delivery status, without exporting data to a separate tool first. Access is role-based, so sensitive financial data stays visible only to the people who should see it.

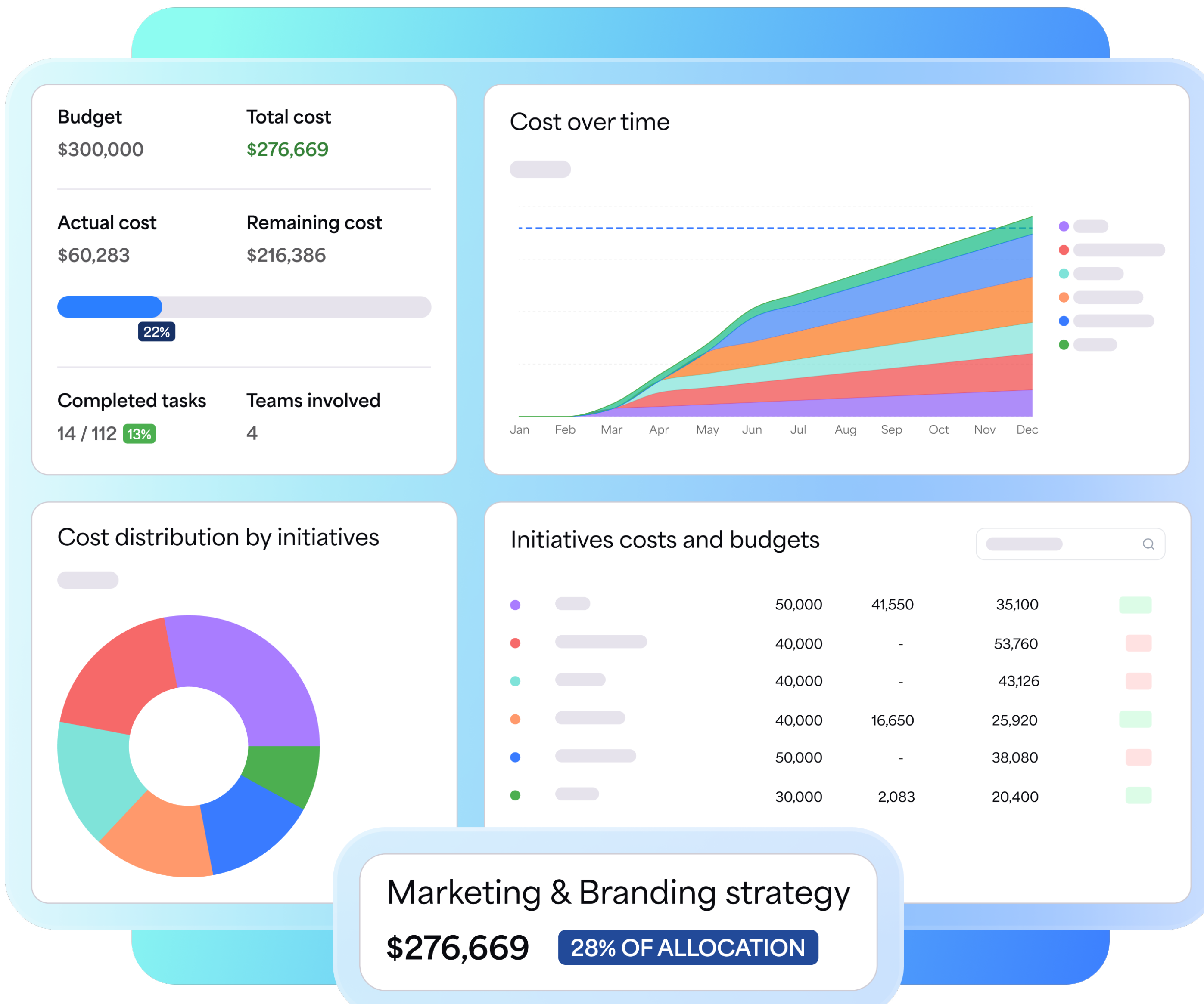


C...	INITIATIVE NAME	BUDGET (€)	ACTUAL COS...	REMAINING COST (€)	TOTAL COST ...	COST PROGRESS	COST DISTRIBUTION
	Multi-channel advertising campaigns	90,000	51,400	11,898	63,298	81% 19%	38%
	Go to market strategy	45,000	41,400	6,898	48,298	86% 14%	29%
	Social media campaign	5,000	3,400	25,600	29,000	12% 88%	17%
	Nurturing campaigns	30,000	2,400	25,600	28,000	9% 91%	17%

Every BigPicture Box can carry an associated budget and cost plan. As Jira issues get estimated or completed, BigPicture Advanced (SPM) rolls up costs automatically, so you can see running totals against budget at any point. If a program has a $2 million budget, allocate it across epics or teams, then monitor actual costs, from Jira time entries or integrated sources, against those allocations.

Built-in charts, including budget-versus-actual timelines, cost distribution, and cost-over-time views, help you track burn rate and forecast whether you'll stay on budget. Snapshots and baselines let you capture a financial plan at a point in time and compare it to actuals later, so PMOs get early warning of overruns instead of finding out at quarter-end. BigPicture Advanced (SPM) also supports CapEx/OpEx classification and custom expense tracking for non-labor costs like office rent or licensing fees, alongside labor costs calculated from Jira work logs.

The goal isn't to make BigPicture Advanced (SPM) your accounting system. It's to make sure cost overruns don't stay invisible until it's too late, so portfolio managers can reallocate funds, secure more budget for a high-value initiative, or pause a project that's trending over budget with limited return, while there's still time to act.



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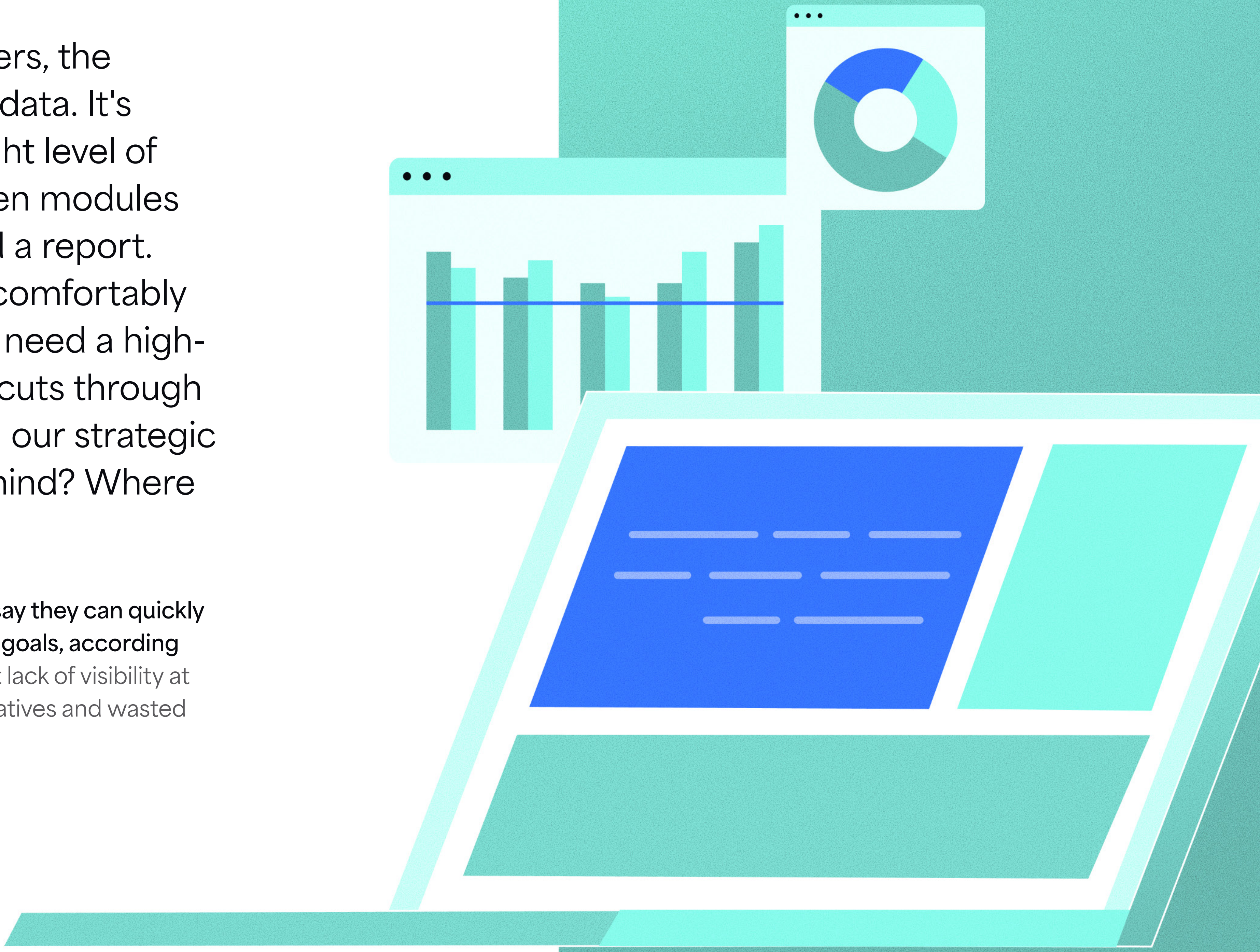
Advanced reporting and executive visibility

For product and portfolio leaders, the challenge usually isn't a lack of data. It's finding the right data, at the right level of detail, without hopping between modules or waiting on someone to build a report. Portfolio managers may work comfortably in Gantt charts, but executives need a high-level, cross-portfolio view that cuts through the noise: Are we on track with our strategic goals? Which initiatives are behind? Where is our investment going?

The gap is measurable. **Only 7% of executives say they can quickly see how each team's work supports company goals, according to Atlassian's State of Teams 2025 survey.** That lack of visibility at the top is exactly what leads to misaligned initiatives and wasted investment.



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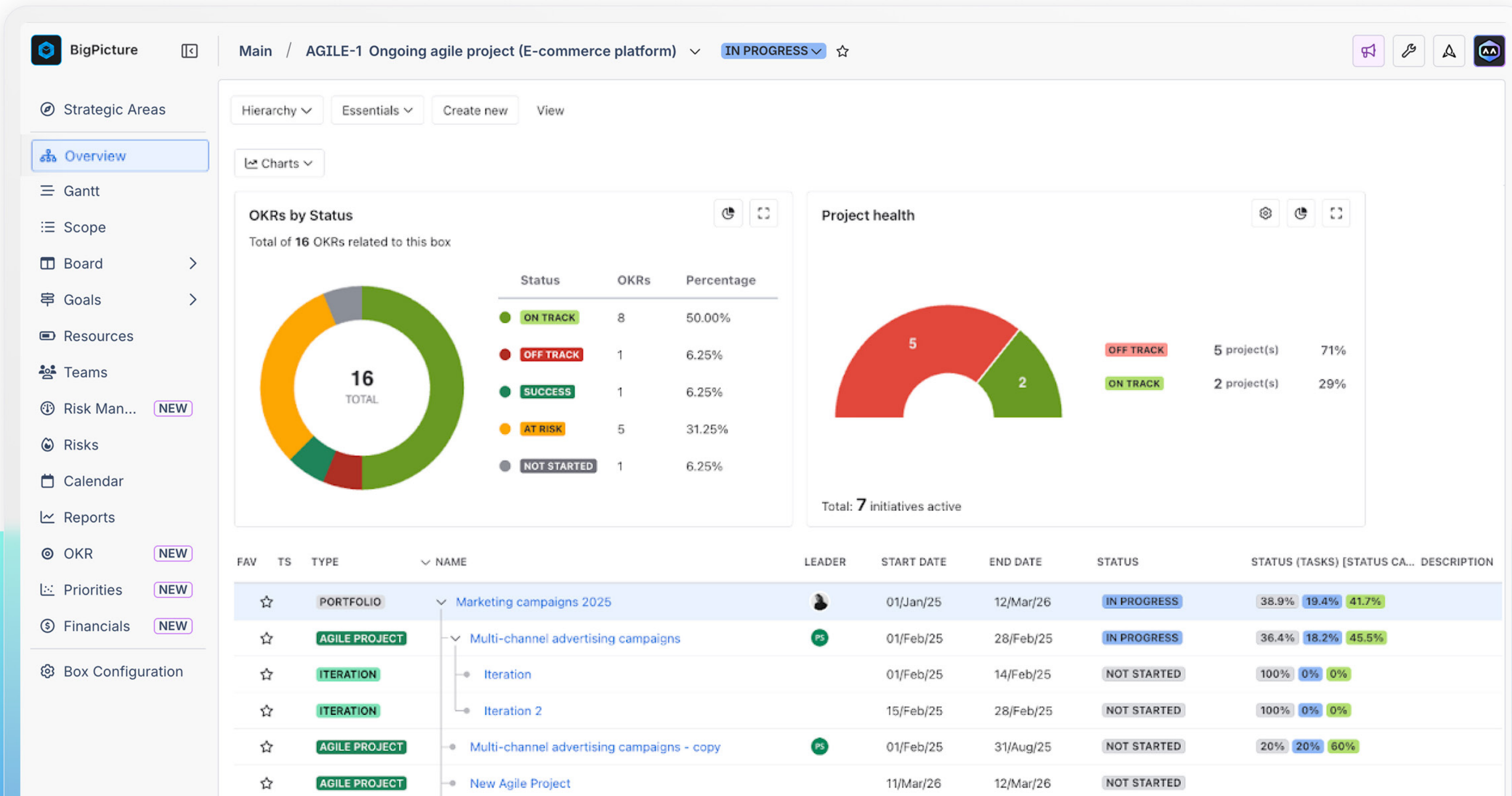
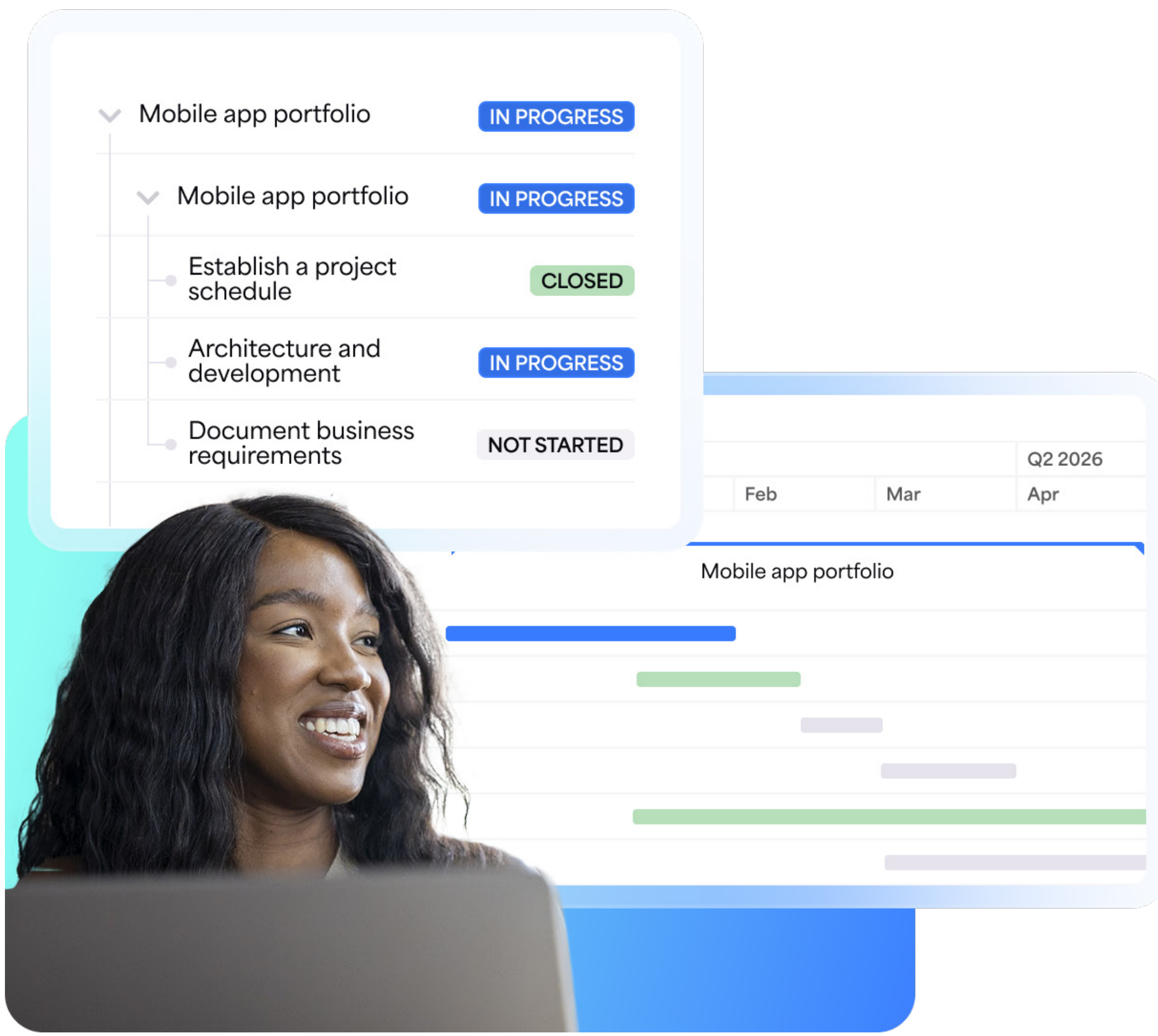
BigPicture Advanced (SPM)'s advanced reporting and executive visibility capability solves this by pulling data from across OKRs, prioritization, and financials into a single, digestible view. One example of this in practice is Strategic Areas, which organizes objectives, key results, and initiatives under top-level strategic themes, so leaders can see how each theme is progressing without changing context.

From an executive view, leaders can scan active themes with progress summaries, timeframes, and counts of supporting objectives and key results, then drill into any one of them to see which key results are on track, which are at risk, and which have stalled. The initiatives view shows exactly which projects and programs contribute to each key result, along with progress status, responsible leads, financial metrics, and risk signals inherited from BigPicture Standard (PPM)'s risk registers, so if a key result is at risk, leaders can see immediately whether the underlying work hasn't started, is underperforming, or is blocked.

This is designed for aggregation, not team-level tracking. It surfaces the health of entire strategic themes, cuts horizontally across portfolios, and gives leadership one live, authoritative view that ties long-term goals to real-time delivery performance and investment outcomes, instead of requiring someone to dig through multiple tools or wait for an ad hoc report.



How to evaluate BigPicture Advanced (SPM)



Already using BigPicture Standard (PPM)?

Build on the portfolio environment you already use. Talk to a BigPicture consultant about evaluating BigPicture Advanced (SPM) for one high-value use case first, such as OKR alignment, strategic prioritization, financial governance, or executive reporting, before rolling it out more broadly. Your existing Boxes, timelines, and data stay intact. There's no migration and no new platform to learn – just expanded access to strategic portfolio management functions.

New to BigPicture?

Evaluate BigPicture Advanced (SPM) as a connected PPM and SPM environment for Jira, from complex delivery planning through strategic portfolio governance. Because BigPicture Advanced (SPM) includes everything in BigPicture Standard (PPM), you're not choosing between delivery management and strategic decision-making. You get both, in Jira, from day one.

Either way, adoption follows a natural path: you're already running work in Jira, BigPicture Standard (PPM) extends that into full project and portfolio management, and BigPicture Advanced (SPM) adds the strategic layer on top.

You don't have to adopt all three at once. Many teams start by enabling strategic portfolio prioritization on top of the Standard environment they already have, and are tracking strategic goals in Jira within weeks. If you already know Jira, you're most of the way there: BigPicture Advanced (SPM) follows the same design principles as the BigPicture interface your teams already use.

Rolling out new practices, like running your first OKR cycle or your first prioritization exercise, may take some coaching on the concepts, but the tool itself doesn't require a steep learning curve.

Strategy and execution, connected in the Jira you already run

Every quarter without a connected strategy layer is a quarter of misaligned work, slow decisions, and investment that doesn't clearly tie back to what leadership cares about most. BigPicture Advanced (SPM) gives enterprise leaders the strategic clarity to close that gap, built directly into the Jira environment your teams already use.

You're not starting over. BigPicture Advanced (SPM) builds on your existing projects, workflows, and data, so you can connect strategy to execution and start seeing results in weeks, not quarters.

Ready to see it in action?

[Talk to a BigPicture expert]()
Book a demo to see BigPicture Advanced (SPM) against your own portfolios.

[Explore BigPicture on the Atlassian Marketplace]()
See plans, pricing, and documentation.

Gartner, Effective Strategic Portfolio Management Drives Better Outcomes, Robert Handler, Shilpa Pental, 11 July 2025.