

POSITIONING AUDIT

Linear.

*A reading of where the product development system sits,
what's in its way, and what it should do next.*

Linear's biggest 2026 bet, *agents*,
is invisible to all five AI tools
we asked.

[EVIDENCE BASE]

386

REDDIT POSTS CAPTURED

5

AI TOOLS, SAME 3 QUESTIONS

4

LINEAR.APP PAGES CAPTURED

All sourced. Captured 23 May 2026. Where a platform blocked us, we say so.

CHAPTER ONE

Where Linear sits.

*The opinionated product development system for software teams. The tool
engineers ask their company to switch to.*

25,000+ organizations.
OpenAI scaled to 3,000
users. \$1.25B valuation. *The
product development system
for teams and agents.*

CHAPTER TWO

What's in its way.

The belief that issue tracking IS the work. The category Linear is now trying to leave behind.

5 / 5

AI tools describe Linear as the prettier Jira. None mention the agent stack.

All five AI tools, asked the same question. *All five returned the same 2019 framing.*

CLAUDE

“A sleek alternative to Jira. Fast, keyboard-driven, tracks bugs and tasks.”

CHATGPT

“Linear is like a streamlined Jira focused on speed and clean workflows.”

GEMINI

“A faster, more streamlined, aesthetically pleasing alternative to legacy tools like Jira.”

PERPLEXITY

“Fast, minimal, keyboard-friendly. Often described as a cleaner alternative to tools like Jira.”

[MARCH 2026]

Linear published “*Issue Tracking is Dead.*”

*Same month: Linear Agent shipped public beta on every plan including Free.
The training-data internet has not caught up.*

Two gaps now, *not one.*

[STORY GAP]

The five AI tools haven't caught up to the homepage.

Training data lags by months. Convergence shows the 2019 to 2024 Linear, not the 2026 one.

[CONTEXT GAP]

Decisions live outside Linear.
Slack. Docs. GitHub
markdown.

Agents need context. The agent-first bet requires Linear to become the context layer, not just the issue queue.

Both close-able. Both worth naming.

CHAPTER THREE

What it should do.

Make the agent-native positioning concrete. Close both gaps explicitly.

*“Where teams and agents share
the same context.”*

THE FORWARD-FACING ANTIDOTE. THE TAGLINE THAT NAMES THE BET

OI

Local-first speed.

5/5 AI tools name speed as the structural moat. Gemini: “it downloads your workspace data to your local machine. Zero latency.”

O2

Opinionated workflow.

The Linear Method. 5/5 AI tools contrast Linear's opinionated design with Jira's configurability. ChatGPT: "Here's a good way to run product and engineering. Use it."

03

Built for software teams.

*And explicitly not for everyone. 4/5 AI tools call out who it's NOT for. The narrowness *is* the moat.*

04

The agent-native context layer.

28% of issues are already authored by agents. The AI tools don't yet surface this. That gap is the positioning opportunity.

CHAPTER FOUR

How to talk about it.

Opinionated, plain-spoken, forward-honest.

[TODAY · VERBATIM, LINEAR.APP]

“The product development system for teams and agents.”

[RECOMMENDED]

“Where teams and agents share the same context. The product development system built for the AI era.”

Same agent bet. Made concrete. The shared-context promise gives the agent claim a job.

[DO]

“Linear isn’t for every team. It’s for software teams that want one opinionated way to work.”

[DON'T]

“A flexible work-management platform for every team in your company.”

Lean into the narrowness. The audience self-selects.

CHAPTER FIVE

Implementation.

Three prompts. Drop into any AI tool with the Brand File.

O1 Premortem

O2 Red Team

O3 AI / Human Quadrant

Each prompt walks an AI tool through the audit from a different angle. Pressure-test it. Argue against it. Apply it.

[STRATEGIC CORE]

*Where teams and
agents share the
same context.*

Read the whole thing.

[STRATEGY SITE]

rational-magic.com / s / linear-v1 /

[BRAND FILE]

/linear-brand-file.md. Drop into any AI tool as context

[EDITORIAL PDF]

/full-strategy/. The long-form publication

[RESEARCH TRANSPARENCY]

/research/. 386 Reddit posts + 5 AI responses + verbatim captures

[RIGHT OF REPLY]

/right-of-reply/. Corrections within 48 hours

A RATIONAL MAGIC PUBLICATION

Thanks.

Linear has a standing invitation to correct any claim at fred@rational-magic.com. Corrections published within 48 hours.