

Product Protégé Product Roadmap Cheat Sheet

Digital Product Management



PRODUCT ROADMAP OVERVIEW



A product roadmap is a visual summary that maps out the vision and direction of your product over time. It shows what you're building, the timeline, and the milestones.

Duration of Roadmaps

- Short-Term Roadmaps: 3-6 months, detailed with sprints or monthly targets
- Medium-Term Roadmaps: 6-12 months, balancing detail, flexibility, and focus on intent
- Long-Term Roadmaps: 12 months +, focusing on high-level vision & goals

TIPS WHEN CRAFTING ROADMAP



- Understand the Duration and Detail: Tailor your presentation of the roadmap based on type and focus your audience's expectations.
- Recognize the Dynamic Nature: Roadmaps are living documents that evolve with new insights and market changes
- Collaborate : Ensure stakeholders can access, understand and contribute to the roadmap

STEPS TO BUILD A STRONG PRODUCT ROADMAP



Define Key Initiatives



Tip Identify projects and features and assess the problems they solve and their worth. Prioritize the initiatives based on value

Set Timeframes



Remember: Only give specific dates when you are confident. Provide months or quarters when showcasing medium to long term roadmap

Identify Dependencies



Question Which teams are all required to realize the roadmap? What needs to happen first before you can start delivering

Communicate with Stakeholders



Remember: Before setting initiatives and timelines, gather input from stakeholders like developers, designers, QA, analytics, and leadership to consider all feedback

TYPES OF ROADMAPS

- Goal-Oriented Roadmap:** Focuses on goals and objectives, including dates, goals, features, and metrics.
- Theme-Oriented Roadmap:** Organizes features under broader themes for upper management communication.
- Feature-Based Roadmap:** Detailed, focusing on specific features and their lifecycle from design to release.
- Strategy-Based Roadmaps:** Aligns with business KPIs, providing an overview of initiatives and timelines.
- Release Roadmap:** Tailored for external audiences, outlining release dates and key deliverables.





Product Manager - Product Roadmap Cheat Sheet and Companion Guide

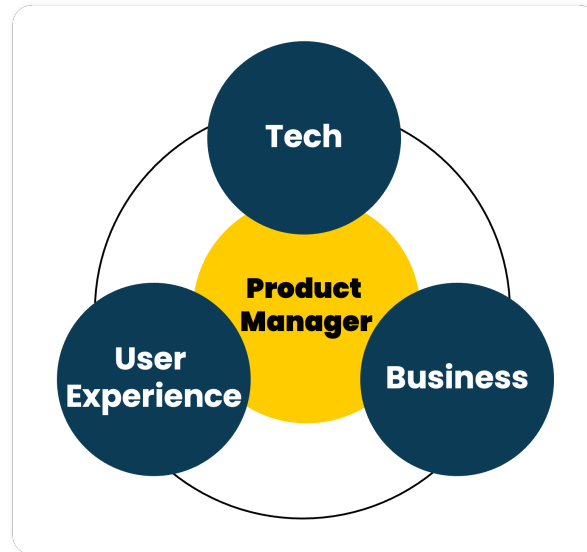
Part 3- Roadmap

Welcome to your free handbook on Product Management! This guide is designed to give you a solid foundation in the key areas of vision, strategy, and roadmap creation. **In Part 3; we are focused on product roadmap and prioritization. This builds upon our Part 1 Cheat Sheet focused on Vision (should be in your inbox. If not - www.productprotege.com) and Part 2 Cheat Sheet based on Product Strategy.** Whether you're just starting out or looking to improve your skills, you'll find valuable insights here. For more detailed guidance, check out the Product Protégé Guide at www.productprotege.com.





Quick Recap!



What Does a Product Manager Do?

Quick Recap! A product manager's job is to solve problems for their company's customers in a way that is easy for the customer to understand and engage with while also driving positive business results for their company. I cover all the key themes and principles of product management in the [Product Protégé Guide](#) as well as in my newsletter the [Protégé Pulse](#), which you can look at and subscribe for free. It's a great refresher or great place to start for those that are new to product management. We covered Part 1 - Product Vision and Part 2 - Product Strategy - this continues to build on that content!



5. Creating an Effective Product Roadmap

What is a Product Roadmap?

A product roadmap is a visual summary that maps out the vision and direction of your product over time. It shows what you're building, the timeline, and the milestones.

Typical Duration of Roadmaps

- **Short-Term Roadmaps:** Usually span 3 to 6 months. These roadmaps focus on immediate priorities and are highly detailed, often breaking down tasks into sprints or monthly targets.
- **Medium-Term Roadmaps:** Cover a period of 6 months to 1 year. These roadmaps provide a balance between detail and flexibility, outlining major initiatives and expected timelines.
- **Long-Term Roadmaps:** Extend beyond 1 year, sometimes up to 3 or 5 years. These roadmaps are more strategic and high-level, focusing on the overarching vision and long-term goals rather than specific tasks.



Flexibility and Adaptability

Product roadmaps are not set in stone. They are dynamic tools that need to be regularly reviewed and updated based on new information, feedback, and changing market conditions. Here's why they need to be flexible:

- **Responding to Market Changes:** Market conditions, customer needs, and competitive landscapes can shift rapidly. A flexible roadmap allows you to pivot and adjust your strategy to stay relevant and competitive.
- **Incorporating Feedback:** As you release new features and gather user feedback, your priorities might change. Updating the roadmap ensures that you continue to meet customer needs effectively.
- **Managing Resources:** Resource availability can fluctuate due to various factors such as budget changes, team capacity, and unexpected challenges. An adaptable roadmap helps in reallocating resources where they are most needed.

You Should Notice

- **Duration and Detail:** Understand that roadmaps can vary in their duration and level of detail. Short-term roadmaps will be more detailed, while long-term roadmaps will focus on broader goals and visions.
- **Dynamic Nature:** Recognize that roadmaps are living documents. They should evolve as you gain new insights, encounter obstacles, or as your market landscape changes.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** Roadmaps are not just for product managers. They should be communicated and discussed with all stakeholders to ensure alignment and to gather diverse perspectives for better planning and execution.



Types of roadmaps

Types of Product Roadmaps

Creating a product roadmap is essential for aligning teams and stakeholders on the direction of a product. Let's dive into the different types of product roadmaps and how they serve various needs within an organization.

1. **Goal-Oriented Roadmap** This roadmap focuses on the product's goals and is great for teams using Agile methodologies like Scrum. It outlines the objectives and then breaks them down into specific features and tasks. Key elements include:
 - o **Dates:** When milestones or features will be completed.
 - o **Goals:** The main objectives or outcomes.
 - o **Features:** Specific functionalities that will be developed.
 - o **Metrics:** How success will be measured.

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For all the examples of roadmaps below, let's consider a product initiative to improve the user experience on an e-commerce platform by enhancing the checkout process. Here's how this initiative would be presented in different types of roadmaps:

Goal-Oriented Example Roadmap

Date	Goal	Features	Metrics
Q1 2024	Enhance Checkout Flow	- Simplify payment process - Add guest checkout option - Improve mobile checkout UI	- Increased conversion rate - Reduced cart abandonment - Improved mobile user ratings



You Should Notice:

- **Goals and Metrics:** This roadmap ties specific goals to measurable outcomes, making it clear what success looks like.
 - **Feature Breakdown:** Each feature is linked directly to a goal, ensuring that every development effort contributes to a larger objective.
 - **Time-Bound:** It shows when goals are expected to be achieved, helping in planning and prioritizing work.
2. **Theme-Oriented Roadmap** Ideal for high-level strategic objectives, this roadmap organizes features under broader themes. For instance, a theme might be "Improving User Experience," under which you might have features like "Mobile Support" or "Faster Load Times." It's useful for communicating major initiatives to upper management.

Theme-Oriented Example Roadmap

Theme	Categories	Features
Improve User Experience	- Payment Simplification - Mobile Optimization - Speed Enhancement	- Simplify payment process - Improve mobile checkout UI - Reduce loading times during checkout

You Should Notice:

- **High-Level Themes:** This type focuses on broader themes or areas of improvement, providing a strategic overview.
- **Categorization:** Features are grouped under categories, helping to visualize how different tasks contribute to a common theme.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Great for communicating major initiatives to stakeholders, especially for high-level strategic discussions.



3. **Feature-Based Roadmap** This type is very detailed and focuses on specific features that will be delivered over time. Each row usually represents a major initiative or goal, and the columns show the time frame (often in quarters). It's perfect for deep dives into specific features but can be complex for broad stakeholder consumption.

Feature-Based Roadmap Example

Feature	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024
Simplify Payment Process	Design phase	Development	Testing	Release
Add Guest Checkout Option	Design phase	Development	Testing	Release
Improve Mobile Checkout UI	Research & Design	Development	Testing	Release

You Should Notice:

- **Detailed View:** This roadmap provides a granular view of each feature's lifecycle, from design to release.
 - **Timeline Focus:** By showing the timeline for each feature, it helps teams manage and track progress over specific periods.
 - **Depth of Information:** Ideal for internal teams who need to understand the intricate details of feature development.
4. **Strategy-Based Roadmap** This internal-facing roadmap helps stakeholders understand the overarching strategy of the product. It's organized by priority initiatives aligned with business KPIs, such as improving conversion rates or launching new payment methods. This type is essential for new product launches and strategic initiatives.



Strategy-Based Example Roadmap

Initiative	Priority	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024
Enhance Checkout Flow	High	Design & Planning	Development	Testing	Release & Review
New Payment Methods	Medium	Research	Design	Development	Testing
Optimize Load Times	Medium	Design	Development	Testing	Release

You Should Notice:

- **Priority Indicators:** Prioritization helps in understanding which initiatives are most critical for the business.
 - **Broad Overview:** Provides a strategic look at major initiatives and their timelines, useful for high-level planning and communication.
 - **KPI Alignment:** Often aligns initiatives with key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure that strategic goals are being met.
5. **Status-Oriented Roadmap** Simple and straightforward, this roadmap shows the current status of development without specific deadlines. It typically uses categories like "Now," "Next," and "Later" to indicate the development stages. It's great for providing a high-level view of prioritization and progress without committing to exact timelines.



Status-Oriented Example Roadmap

State	Features
Now	Simplify payment process
Next	Add guest checkout option
Later	Improve mobile checkout UI

You Should Notice:

- **Simplicity:** This roadmap is easy to understand and quick to create, showing current focus areas without detailed timelines.
 - **Flexibility:** It's ideal for agile environments where priorities might shift frequently.
 - **Focus:** Helps stakeholders see the immediate priorities and what's coming up next without getting bogged down by specifics.
6. **Release Roadmap** Tailored for external audiences, such as customers or investors, this roadmap outlines when new features or products will be released. It focuses on the timeline and key deliverables, often used in presentations or customer communications to show the company's commitment to delivering new capabilities.

Release Example Roadmap

Release Date	Features	Objective
April 2024	Simplify payment process	Improve user experience
June 2024	Add guest checkout option	Reduce cart abandonment
September 2024	Improve mobile checkout UI	Enhance mobile user satisfaction



You Should Notice:

- **Customer Focus:** This roadmap is geared towards external stakeholders, like customers or investors, showing what they can expect and when.
- **Clear Timeline:** Provides a clear timeline for feature releases, helping to manage expectations.
- **Objective-Oriented:** Each release is tied to a specific business objective, making it clear why each feature is important.

Each type of roadmap serves a unique purpose, helping to align different stakeholders and teams on the product's direction and priorities. Choose the one that best fits your needs and the needs of your audience.

As the year progresses, the roadmap might be adjusted to include:

- **Unexpected Challenges:** Delays in prototype testing might push back the beta launch.
- **Market Feedback:** Positive beta feedback might accelerate the full launch timeline.
- **Resource Reallocation:** Shifting resources from marketing to development if additional features are prioritized based on user feedback.

By understanding and utilizing a flexible product roadmap, you can better navigate the complexities of product development and ensure your team is aligned and prepared to adapt to changes and new opportunities.



How to Create a Roadmap

1. **Define Key Initiatives:** What are the major projects or features? What problems do these projects or features or capabilities solve for your customers? Why are these truly problems? What is your solution? Is it a problem worth solving?
2. **Set Timeframes:** When will each initiative be started and completed?
3. **Identify Dependencies:** What needs to happen first? What resources are required?
4. **Communicate with Stakeholders:** Ensure everyone understands and agrees with the plan.

Activity: Roadmap Creation and Analysis Activity

Objective: Engage in a solo workshop where you create and analyze different types of product roadmaps based on hypothetical stakeholder feedback. This activity helps you understand how to tailor roadmaps to meet various stakeholder needs and improve your strategic planning skills.

Steps:

1. **Preparation:**
 - **Choose a Product Initiative:** Select a product initiative to focus on. For example: "Develop and launch a new mobile app feature that enhances the checkout experience by adding a one-click purchase option."
 - **Understand Stakeholder Perspectives:** Imagine the needs and concerns of different stakeholders such as the CEO, Marketing Lead, Developer, Customer Support, and Sales Lead.
2. **Stakeholder Profiles:**
 - **CEO:** Concerned with overall strategy, ROI, and timeline.



- **Marketing Lead:** Focused on user engagement and acquisition metrics.
- **Developer:** Interested in technical feasibility and development timelines.
- **Customer Support:** Prioritizes customer feedback and ease of use.
- **Sales Lead:** Looks at how the feature can drive sales and customer retention.

3. Create Different Roadmaps:

- **Goal-Oriented Roadmap:**

Date	Goal	Features	Metrics
Q3 2024	Enhance Checkout Experience	- One-click purchase	- Increase conversion rate by 25%

4. Feature-Based Roadmap:

Feature	Q3 2024	Q4 2024	Q1 2025
One-click purchase	Design & Development	Testing & Launch	-

5. Status-Oriented Roadmap:

State	Features
Now	One-click purchase design
Next	Development
Later	Testing & Launch



6. Release Roadmap:

Release Date	Features	Objective
Oct 1, 2024	One-click purchase	Improve checkout experience

7. Hypothetical Stakeholder Feedback:

- **CEO:** "How does this roadmap ensure our strategic goals are met on time?"
- **Marketing Lead:** "What impact will this feature have on user engagement?"
- **Developer:** "Are the timelines realistic given our current resources?"
- **Customer Support:** "How will this feature address current customer complaints?"
- **Sales Lead:** "How will this help us increase sales and customer retention?"

8. Analyze and Adapt Roadmaps:

- **Review Each Roadmap:** Examine how each roadmap addresses the concerns of the different stakeholders.
- **Adapt Based on Feedback:** Adjust the roadmaps to better align with stakeholder needs. For instance, ensure timelines are realistic and clearly show the expected impact on key metrics.

9. Document Your Process:

- **Write a Summary:** Document your thought process, how you adapted each roadmap, and the rationale behind your decisions.
- **Reflect:** Reflect on what you learned about the strengths and weaknesses of each roadmap type. Consider how different stakeholder needs influence your planning.

10. Iterate and Improve:



- **Revise Roadmaps:** Based on your reflections, make final adjustments to your roadmaps.
 - **Future Application:** Think about how you can apply these learnings to real-world scenarios in your role as a product manager.
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Additional Resources and Next Steps

For more in-depth guidance, check out the Product Protégé Learning Options at www.productprotege.com. Here you will find detailed guides, online courses, templates, and our weekly newsletter to help you excel as a product manager. **We will be sending you Part 3 next!**



Recommended Reading

- "Crossing the Chasm: Marketing and Selling High-Tech Products to Mainstream Customers" by Geoffrey A. Moore
- "Lean Product and Lean Analytics" by Ben Yoskovitz and Alistair Croll

Product Protégé Resources

- Check out our **free newsletter** that ships weekly! All the tips, tricks and tactics you. [Sign Up today!](#)
- Our [digital templates](#) allow you to quickly get tactical with your own product management work. [Take a look at our template store](#) for downloadable templates and premium examples.
- Elevate your product management skills with our **in-depth [Product Protégé online courses](#)**. Dive into strategic thinking and user-centric design with real-world examples, downloadable templates, open office hours, and a **certification of completion**.
- Where it all started - Unlock the secrets of successful product management with our **highly rated [Product Protégé Guide](#)** ([available on amazon](#)) – your comprehensive guide to mastering strategic thinking, user-centric design, and our full review of our authentic E3 Framework: Envision, Empower, and Elevate, which builds a top-tier product management discipline.