

Aha! Product Managment Tool

Daniela Tomás

FEUP

Porto, Portugal

up202004946@up.pt

Diogo Nunes

FEUP

Porto, Portugal

up202007895@up.pt

Love Hedelius

FEUP

Porto, Portugal

up202402030@up.pt

Rengert van Dolderen

FEUP

Porto, Portugal

up202403102@up.pt

Abstract—Requirements management ensures that a company documents, evaluates, and meets the needs and expectations of its customers, as well as internal and external stakeholders. Requirements management starts with understanding and eliciting the organization's goals and constraints. Aha! intends to address these challenges by providing a set of tools that will enable teams from disparate departments and teams to reach a single, cohesive vision at each needed level. In this article, we will present an overview of several of Aha!'s tools, give use-case examples, and discuss their strengths and drawbacks, as well as integrations with other tools that complement Aha!'s.

Index Terms—Requirements management, Aha!, agile, knowledge-base, idea management, product roadmap

I. INTRODUCTION

Aha!¹ is a cloud-based software company founded in 2013, California, by Brian de Haaff and Dr. Chris Waters. Today, they have a varied array of SaaS tools catering to product management, product operations, engineering, IT, project management, business operations, marketing, and UX. Aha!'s suite of products is all accessed through a browser and thus do not require any installation on the users' devices.

Aha!'s software suite stands out for its dedication to strategic product planning. It offers a collection of capabilities geared at aligning products with company goals, something that other tools of a similar nature don't usually prioritize.

In this article, we will provide a deeper understanding of some of Aha!'s products, describe and exemplify various use cases and real-world applications, discuss advantages and drawbacks, detail some integration options with other tools, and make comparisons with competing tools.

II. TOOL DESCRIPTION

In this section, all the tools in the Aha! suite are described.

A. Aha! Roadmaps

Aha! Roadmaps² was the first software released by Aha!. A product roadmap is a concise visual summary that demonstrates your product's vision and direction across time. It describes why and what you are developing. The roadmap is a useful blueprint that directs your strategy and defines how you will execute your product plans.

A comprehensive product roadmap tool, such as Aha! Roadmaps gives a platform for easily defining and sharing product strategies. You may use a single platform to set

objectives and initiatives, collaborate on product planning, prioritize features, and rapidly generate visual timelines for various audiences. By tying each release and feature to the goals and initiatives they support, the team may obtain a better understanding of how effectively you are meeting your objectives.

B. Aha! Ideas

Idea management software is a comprehensive platform for submitting, discussing, and collaborating on ideas from various involved parties. It functions as a catalyst, expediting the innovation process from idea to implementation, and provides several benefits to enterprises across various sectors:

Aha! Ideas³ is an excellent fit for anybody trying to obtain customer feedback to help drive your product development ahead. A custom-branded gateway allows you to effortlessly collect and prioritize ideas. There are also cutting-edge features, such as AI-powered idea discovery for internal teams and private idea portals for clients.

C. Aha! Whiteboards

Aha! Whiteboards⁴ is a virtual whiteboard software which acts similarly to a traditional whiteboard but is hosted electronically. Virtual whiteboards may integrate smoothly with existing video conferencing and screen-sharing services to enable collaboration even when everyone is not physically present in the same room. A digital whiteboard allows you to pick from a variety of colors, shapes, and templates and may be saved as a shared file for future reference.

Aha! Whiteboards was created with product teams in mind and can integrate with Aha! Roadmaps to easily migrate ideas from whiteboards to your roadmap.

D. Aha! Knowledge

Aha! Knowledge⁵ is knowledge-based software which allows you to construct and administer a self-service online library of information about a product, service, business processes, or any other topic. This streamlines the process of developing internal knowledge bases, client knowledge bases, and public information databases.

Made for product teams, Aha! Knowledge is a comprehensive knowledge-base program accessible. It may be

¹<https://www.aha.io/>

²<https://www.aha.io/roadmaps/overview>

³<https://www.aha.io/ideas/overview>

⁴<https://www.aha.io/whiteboards/overview>

⁵<https://www.aha.io/knowledge/overview>

used to produce easily accessible product documentation for cross-functional teams, establish external knowledge bases for clients, and create guided templates for those resources.

E. Aha! Develop

Aha! Develop⁶ is a software agile project management tool. Agile is an umbrella word encompassing techniques to build software that follow the goals and principles agreed upon by The Agile Alliance. If you employ an agile development technique, you will need a method to plan, organize, and report on your job inside a simplified user interface. An agile project management tool allows you to select the agile approach that your team wants, as well as establish a consistent backlog so that the team understands what to work on first.

Aha! Develop differentiates itself by its ability to integrate with various tools, both in the Aha! suite and others. It also has the ability to showcase the “why” behind features and it offers the possibility to choose between different methodologies such as Scrum, Kanban and SAFe. Finally it is also able to showcase progress by generating reports,

III. TOOL DEMONSTRATION

Upon logging into Aha!, you’re greeted with a highly customizable workspace. The interface of Aha can be seen in Figure 1. At the top, a navigation bar provides access to the suite’s primary tools: Roadmaps, Ideas, Whiteboards, Knowledge, and more. These tools provide a variety of ways to help you. This section provides insights on the optionality of the primary tools together with a step by step guide on how to use them.

A. Building a Roadmap

1) *Set Strategic Goals and Initiatives:* Start by defining your product’s strategic goals. For example, a goal might be to “Increase user retention by 20%.”

- Navigate to the Goals tab and create measurable objectives.
- Link these goals to initiatives, such as “Improve onboarding flow” or “Launch loyalty program.” It is also possible to position the goals based on their work intensity and value.

2) *Visualize the Roadmap:* Move to the Roadmaps section, where you can plan the progression of features and releases.

- Use the drag-and-drop interface to schedule releases, assign tasks, and align them with your goals.
- Customize your roadmap to show dependencies, team responsibilities, or high-level timelines.

3) *Share the Plan:* Once the roadmap is complete, share it with stakeholders. Export it as a PDF, or create a real-time link to allow others to interact with it online.

B. Capturing and Managing Ideas

Switching to Ideas, let’s simulate collecting feedback from customers:

- 1) Open a branded ideas portal and invite users to submit suggestions. For example, a user submits the idea: “Add a dark mode option.”
- 2) Inside Aha!, categorize the idea, linking it to the “User Experience” initiative.
- 3) Use AI-powered idea discovery to identify similar suggestions, helping prioritize the dark mode feature based on frequency and customer impact.

C. Brainstorming on Whiteboards

Move to Whiteboards to collaborate on a solution:

- 1) Open a blank whiteboard and invite your team to join.
- 2) Add sticky notes for brainstorming—“Adjust color palette,” “User toggle settings,” etc.
- 3) Create a quick workflow diagram to outline the development process.
- 4) When the concept is refined, convert it directly into a feature on your roadmap.

D. Building a Knowledge Base

In the Knowledge section, set up documentation to support the new feature:

- 1) Create a new knowledge base article titled “How to Enable Dark Mode.”
- 2) Use a pre-designed template to ensure consistency in formatting.
- 3) Assign team members to review and publish the document to your customer-facing portal.

E. Integrations and Workflow Extensions

Finally, connect Aha! to external tools to streamline your workflow:

- 1) Link Aha! to Jira to send the dark mode feature to the development team.
- 2) Use Slack integration to notify the team of updates.
- 3) Synchronize design files with Figma to incorporate mockups into the roadmap.

F. Monitoring Progress

Return to the dashboard to track progress:

- View which features are in development and how they align with your strategic goals.
- Use real-time reports to identify bottlenecks or evaluate the team’s alignment with overall objectives.

IV. USE CASES

In this section we will describe Aha! use cases with some examples of known companies that use Aha!.

⁶<https://www.aha.io/develop/overview>

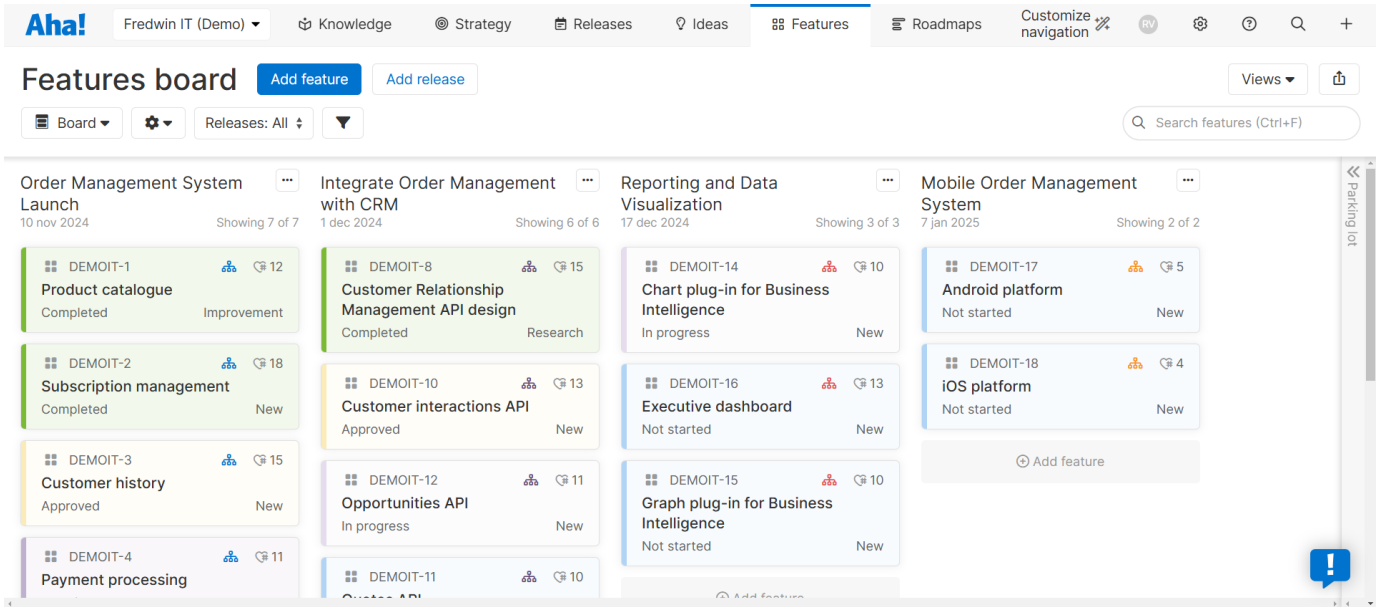


Fig. 1. Aha! workspace.

A. Strategic planning

Aha! Roadmaps may be used by product managers to establish strategic business objectives clearly and match them with their product features. The roadmap display can guarantee that the team is in line with the objectives and focuses on crucial tasks.

B. Idea Management

Aha! Ideas can be used by marketing teams to gather feedback from stakeholders. As a result, features can be efficiently organized and prioritized, ensuring that they meet the user needs.

C. Real-time Collaboration

Aha! Whiteboards can be used by developers to do a collective brainstorm in real-time, where they refine ideas and discuss product concepts and features. This collaboration reduces miscommunication and accelerates the ideation phase.

D. Documentation

Teams can use Aha! Knowledge to manage and organize all product documents in a centralized place. This makes it simple for teams to share and get the information they want and not waste unnecessary time searching for it.

E. Development

Aha! Develop can be used by teams to create detailed sprint plans, monitor progress, and manage iterations effectively with a chosen agile methodology like Scrum or Kanban.

F. Examples of Companies Using Aha!

Companies use Aha! to enhance their product management and strategic planning methods. While several organizations use Aha!'s features, this subsection focuses on two examples: Siemens⁷ and Redhat⁸.

1) *Siemens*: Siemens product teams faced errors and inefficiencies in the maintenance of product roadmaps, communication, and idea management using other tools [1]. In general, with Aha!, the company improved efficiency and reduced maintenance and R&D costs. They utilize Aha!'s Ideas Portal and Idea Lists to submit ideas, a features board for daily updates, and notebooks for stakeholder reports. Salesforce.com was also integrated.

2) *Red Hat*: The Red Hat team responsible for strategic IT initiatives that support global sales struggled to communicate their strategy and coordinate plans efficiently using other tools [2]. They turned to Aha!, which mainly provides robust project management, better roadmap visualization, program-level visibility, detailed implementation plans, and real-time updates on development progress.

V. ADVANTAGES

When starting Aha!, the founders' main purpose was to create a tool that would help businesses with their strategies and improve communication and organization within the company in order to realize those strategies [3]. Accordingly, Aha! is a relatively high-level tool where the whole company can share information, knowledge, and planning all in one place [4]. This improves efficiency by making everything available to everyone without the need for more emails or meetings than

⁷<https://www.siemens.com/global/en.html>

⁸<https://www.redhat.com/en>

necessary, and it also means it can do a job that otherwise might require several different tools.

The roadmapping tool, which was the first thing the company developed and originally the whole product, is still one of the most central features [3], [5]. It is also among the most prominent strengths of Aha!, thanks to it being so refined and powerful compared to many similar alternatives on the market [6]. One of the more specific advantages of the roadmaps is the three different levels of detail that they can be made on, visualizing either a feature, a release, or the whole strategy [7]. Aha! adapts the view to fit that specific level, but it can also be customized further by choosing what information to show. This allows the people making the roadmaps to use the appropriate amount of detail for each audience when presenting, while still maintaining consistency between them thanks to the linkage between them. This connection between the roadmaps also saves work when making changes.

Another advantage of Aha! is the highly customizable nature of the tool, which makes it flexible and able to fit the needs of many different businesses [8]. The software is intended to be used in a wide range of product areas, and they have therefore tried to make sure that it is possible to adapt it to the specific demands of each project [9]. An obvious way of achieving this is the fact that most features of Aha! can be customized to better suit the user [8]. Another aspect is, however, the company's attentiveness and willingness to take in feedback and accommodate based on it, something that they also enable the customers using their product to do through Aha! Ideas [4], [10]. The frequent upgrades and additions of functions is also a strength that ties into that [7]. Another facet of the flexibility of Aha! is the pricing model, where each company can decide what they need and only pay for that since the different parts of the Aha! product are subscribed to individually [11]. The fact that the service is cloud-based and does not require heavy downloads can also be considered an advantage in this regard [8].

Aside from these benefits, Aha! also has many more capabilities to make it a competitive tool for product management [6]. The aforementioned Ideas portal is one of the most praised ones alongside the roadmaps, but the management and prioritization of features, initiatives and epics are also noted [4], [6], [7]. It also facilitates traceability of requirements through a dependency map with which these relationships between features can be visualized and handled in a highly adept way [7]. Lastly, Aha! offers integration with many other tools in order to smoothly extend the workflow beyond the scopes of the tool itself, which will be more deeply explored in section VII. The option of using an API to add more integrations to the ones already available enhances this functionality and further contributes to the flexibility of the tool [6].

VI. LIMITATIONS

Of course, like any tool, Aha! is not capable of doing everything. Like previously stated, the main purpose of it is to assist companies in defining and following their business strategy and to ensure efficient, goal-aligned work. This means

it is meant to be primarily used on an organizational level and less by the people further down in the development structure [12]. Although it does have some requirements management, it is not the primary focus of the tool, especially not on the more detailed level [7]. Instead, according to the CEO, Aha! should help with the “why”, “when” and “what”, while the specific “how” of implementing the features is mostly handled elsewhere [12]. To accommodate this, Aha! offers a bi-directional integration with more engineering-focused tools like Jira⁹, but it does mean another tool is needed for this.

Another drawback is the relatively high price compared to similar products, at least if all features are wanted [6]. While the modular structure as mentioned increases flexibility and freedom to choose, it results in a high cost to get access to the whole suite of tools, especially considering that subscribing companies have to pay for each employee using it [4]. The software can also require a considerable investment of time to learn for new users [6]. Even though it is logical and relatively easy to use once accustomed, people with limited prior experience of product management tools can struggle to learn it in the beginning. Aha! offers extensive and helpful customer support and demonstrations in order to assist the adoption process, but a commitment in terms of time and energy is still needed for unfamiliar users. Along with the fairly high price, this initial hurdle means that Aha! might not be the right tool for small companies or startups.

VII. INTEGRATIONS AND COMPLEMENTARY TOOLS

Even though Aha! has a large area of application and should provide most of the desired features for product management, the company is aware that other tools will be needed and used alongside it [14]. To make this as easy as possible, the tool has integrations with over 65 other tools and programs for other aspects and parts of the process, such as development, communication, and design [15]. The one already mentioned is the integration with Jira, which is also the most prominent and referred to, but there are also other similar tools like Azure DevOps¹⁰ and Rally¹¹ for which the same kind of link exists [7], [12], [14]. After features are created and managed in Aha!, they can be sent to one of these tools where the software engineers work on them and update their status [14]. This is then visible in Aha! so managers and product teams can keep track of the progress being made and communication in both directions can be improved. Similar links can be established with version control tools like GitHub¹² to see updates about new versions.

Apart from just the developers, general communication with the rest of the company is also supported in Aha! through integrations with Slack¹³, Microsoft Teams¹⁴, Google Chat¹⁵ and

⁹<https://www.atlassian.com/software/jira>

¹⁰<https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/products/devops>

¹¹<https://www.broadcom.com/products/software/value-stream-management/rally>

¹²<https://github.com/>

¹³<https://slack.com>

¹⁴<https://www.microsoft.com/pt-pt/microsoft-teams/log-in>

¹⁵<https://workspace.google.com/products/chat/>

TABLE I
FEATURES COMPARISON

	Aha!	Jira Software	ProductPlan	Monday.com
Roadmapping	Robust	No (Jira Product Discovery ^a)	Specialized in roadmapping	Limited
Idea Management	Robust	No (Jira Product Discovery)	Yes [13]	Yes
Project Management	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portfolio Management	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Collaboration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reporting	Robust	Robust	Basic	Limited
Customization	High	High	Limited	High (no-code/low-code)
Integrations	Over 65	Over 3000	Limited	Over 200
Supports Agile Development	Yes	Excellently	Yes	Yes, but lacks some important features

^a<https://www.atlassian.com/software/jira/product-discovery>

Flowdock¹⁶ [15]. These include functions like shortcuts and automatic messages to minimize the switching back and forth between different programs [16]. Design tools like Figma¹⁷ are also integrated to make resources and mockups easy to access directly in their related features in Aha! [17]. The customer input aspect of Aha! Ideas is also enhanced with connections to CRM tools like Salesforce to make it easier to gather the requests [18]. Some other examples of tools that can be integrated are Google Drive¹⁸ or OneDrive¹⁹ for file storage and Google Calendar²⁰ or Outlook²¹ for planning, while effortless log-in can be ensured with a variety of SSO providers [15]. For even more compatibility, Aha! also offers a RESTful API, which enables access to the data programmatically with any language [19].

VIII. ALTERNATIVE TOOLS

In this section, we will compare Aha! to Jira, ProductPlan²² and Monday.com²³ [20]. The choice between Aha! and these alternative tools depend on the team goals and needs. All tools have advantages and disadvantages, and Table I provides a broad comparison of all the mentioned tools.

A. Jira Software

Jira is a project management tool, but unlike Aha!, it primarily focuses on bug reporting and issue tracking, as well as agile project management. Therefore, Jira does not have the strategy and roadmap capabilities that Aha! has. Aha! is used by many teams for planning and Jira for execution. Jira offers significantly more integration options than Aha! [21], [22].

B. ProductPlan

ProductPlan has an intuitive and simple design and focuses on creating and sharing roadmaps easily. However, it doesn't have feedback collection and has limited customization options. Compared to more complex tools like Aha!, ProductPlan

might not be suitable for some teams because they may find it too basic [23], [24]. Additionally, ProductPlan is cheaper than Aha! but has significantly less features.

C. Monday.com

Monday.com has robust project management tools like Aha!, but it is not only designed for project management but also for more use cases [25]. Due to the broader scope and audience it has more capabilities when it comes to areas like sales, marketing and HR onboarding. It is also cloud-based platform, highly scalable and customizable, and has more collaboration and automation features. One of the thing it lacks compared to Aha! is a feature dedicated to knowledge management, like Aha! knowledge.

IX. CONCLUSION

In this article, we looked at the Aha! suite of tools for product management from a number of different perspectives. We provided an overview of the tools' functions and usage, real-world instances of their applications, discussed strengths and flaws, and provided examples of integrations with third-party tools that can address some of these shortcomings. It can be concluded that the tool seems a useful one for many businesses and offers a wide range of capabilities in the area of product and project management, including requirements management. From a specific requirements perspective, it is however noted that while Aha! can be used for those on a high level, it is not the main purpose and the tool offers much more.

REFERENCES

- [1] M. Loiacono, "Review: Why siemens pti uses aha! roadmap," Available at <https://www.aha.io/customers/siemens> (No date).
- [2] T. Kruger, "Review: Why redhat uses aha! roadmap," Available at <https://www.aha.io/customers/red-hat> (No date).
- [3] Aha!, "Aha! company history," Available at <https://www.aha.io/company/history> (No date).
- [4] ClickUp, "An honest aha! review for product managers in 2024," Available at <https://clickup.com/blog/aha-review/> (2024/02/22).
- [5] Aha!, "Introduction to the aha! suite of product development tools," Available at <https://www.aha.io/support/suite/suite/introduction/aha-product-overview> (No date).
- [6] H. Clark, "Aha! product development software in-depth review 2024," Available at <https://theproductmanager.com/tools/aha-review/> (2024/08/13).
- [7] G. Heller, "Aha! more than a roadmapping tool," Available at <https://pd7.group/2017/aha-more-than-roadmapping> (2017/02/23).

¹⁶<https://www.flowdock.com/>

¹⁷<https://www.figma.com/>

¹⁸<https://drive.google.com/drive/my-drive?hl=pt-br>

¹⁹<https://www.microsoft.com/pt-pt/microsoft-365/onedrive/online-cloud-storage?market=pt>

²⁰<https://calendar.google.com/>

²¹<https://www.microsoft.com/pt-pt/microsoft-365/outlook/email-and-calendar-software-microsoft-outlook>

²²<https://www.productplan.com/>

²³<https://monday.com/>

- [8] L. Cruz, “Aha! product management review (features, pros, cons),” Available at <https://clickup.com/blog/aha-product-management/> (2021/05/28).
- [9] Aha!, “Receive concierge support,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/product/concierge> (No date).
- [10] —, “A bold approach to business growth,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/company/the-responsive-method> (No date).
- [11] —, “Pricing for aha! products,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/pricing> (No date).
- [12] B. de Haaff, “As a product manager, how does using aha! help versus just using jira?” Available at <https://www.quora.com/As-a-product-manager-how-does-using-Aha-Help-versus-just-using-Jira> (2019).
- [13] ProductPlan, “Why is idea management important?” Available at <https://www.productplan.com/learn/idea-management/> (No date).
- [14] Aha!, “Aha! roadmaps — integrations overview,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/support/roadmaps/videos/aha-roadmaps-overview/aha-integrations> (No date).
- [15] —, “Connect with the tools you love,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/product/integrations> (No date).
- [16] —, “Integrate with slack,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/product/integrations/slack> (No date).
- [17] —, “Integrate with figma,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/develop/extensions/figma> (No date).
- [18] —, “Integrate with salesforce,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/product/integrations/salesforce> (No date).
- [19] —, “Aha! rest api,” Available at <https://www.aha.io/support/suite/integrations/api/api-integration> (No date).
- [20] B. Lawlor, “Top alternatives to aha,” Available at <https://www.getguru.com/reference/top-alternatives-to-aha> (2024/08/16).
- [21] —, “Jira product management tools review for 2024,” Available at <https://theproductmanager.com/tools/jira-review/> (2024/10/17).
- [22] R. Nucci and D. Sevilla, “Jira vs aha,” Available at <https://www.getguru.com/reference/jira-vs-aha> (2024/08/16).
- [23] H. Clark, “Productplan in-depth review 2024,” Available at <https://theproductmanager.com/tools/productplan-review/> (2024/01/21).
- [24] K. Mayan, “Aha! vs productplan comparison: Which product management tool is better?” Available at <https://www.savio.io/blog/aha-vs-productplan/> (2023/04/28).
- [25] R. Nucci and D. Sevilla, “Monday.com vs aha,” Available at <https://www.getguru.com/reference/monday-com-vs-aha> (2024/08/16).