Release Plan - Template

Template Guide

Purpose of This Document

The **Release Plan** defines the **WHEN** and **HOW** of launching a product or feature. It serves as the coordination document for:

- **Timeline**: When will each phase occur?
- **Rollout Strategy**: How will we deploy to users?
- **Risk Management**: What could go wrong and how do we handle it?
- **Success Criteria**: How do we know the release succeeded?
- **Communication**: Who needs to know what and when?

> **Key Insight**: A good Release Plan ensures all teams are aligned and prepared, minimizing surprises and enabling quick response to issues.

How to Use This Template

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE                        │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                             │
│  STEP 1: COPY & RENAME                                      │
│  ─────────────────────                                      │
│  Copy this file and rename it:                             │
│  • Format: RP-[PROJECT]-[VERSION]-[DATE].md                │
│  • Example: RP-ATCS-v2.5.0-20241222.md                     │
│                                                             │
│  STEP 2: COORDINATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS                       │
│  ────────────────────────────────────                       │
│  Gather input from Engineering, QA, DevOps, Support, Marketing. │
│  Align on dates and responsibilities.                       │
│                                                             │
│  STEP 3: FILL IN DETAILS                                    │
│  ───────────────────────                                    │
│  Complete all sections with specific dates, owners, and criteria. │
│  Include rollback procedures and escalation paths.          │
│                                                             │
│  STEP 4: REVIEW & APPROVE                                   │
│  ────────────────────────                                   │
│  Get sign-off from all stakeholders before release begins.  │
│  Ensure everyone has a copy of the approved plan.           │
│                                                             │
│  STEP 5: EXECUTE & UPDATE                                   │
│  ────────────────────────                                   │
│  Use the checklists during release.                         │
│  Update status in real-time during launch.                  │
│                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
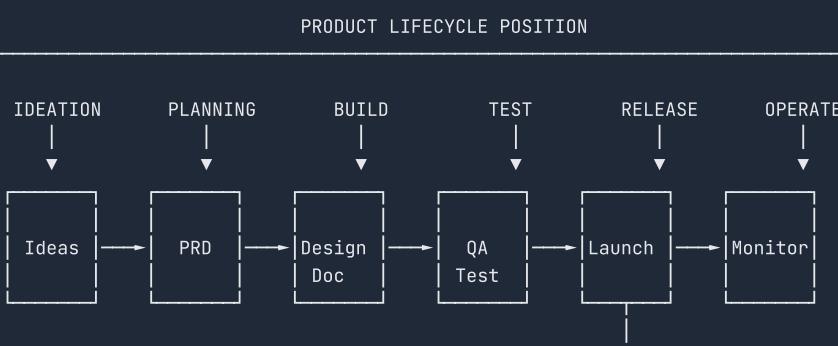
Product Lifecycle Position

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              PRODUCT LIFECYCLE POSITION                      │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                             │
│  IDEATION    PLANNING    BUILD     TEST     RELEASE   OPERATE│
│     │           │          │         │          │        │   │
│     ▼           ▼          ▼         ▼          ▼        ▼   │
│  ┌──────┐   ┌──────┐  ┌──────┐  ┌──────┐   ┌──────┐  ┌──────┐│
│  │Ideas │──▶│ PRD  │─▶│Design│─▶│  QA  │─▶│Launch│─▶│Monitor││
│  │      │   │      │  │ Doc  │  │ Test │   │      │  │      ││
│  └──────┘   └──────┘  └──────┘  └──────┘   └──────┘  └──────┘│
│                                                │            │
│                                                │            │
│         ┌──────────────────────────────────────▼─────┐      │
│         │        ★ RELEASE PLAN IS HERE ★            │      │
│         │                                            │      │
│         │   The Release Plan is created during TEST phase and executed │
│         │   during RELEASE. It coordinates all launch activities.      │
│         │                                            │      │
│         │   Created AFTER development complete, BEFORE deployment begins. │
│         └────────────────────────────────────────────┘      │
│                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Key Stakeholders

Role	Responsibility	Involvement
Release Manager	Author and owner of Release Plan	Coordinates all activities
Engineering Lead	Technical readiness	Confirms code complete, deployment ready
QA Lead	Quality validation	Confirms testing complete, no blockers
DevOps Engineer	Deployment execution	Performs deployments, monitors infra
Support Lead	User impact management	Prepares support team, monitors tickets
Product Manager	Business readiness	Coordinates marketing, comms
VP Engineering	Final approval	Go/no-go decision

Who Works on This Document

Phase	Contributors
Drafting	Release Manager (primary), with input from all stakeholders
Review	All stakeholders listed above
Approval	VP Engineering, VP Product
Execution	Release Manager coordinates; all stakeholders execute

Release Plan Template

1. Release Overview

1.1 Release Summary

Field	Value
Release Name	[Project Name] v[X.X.X]
Release Type	Major / Minor / Patch / Hotfix
Target Date	[YYYY-MM-DD]
Release Manager	[Name]

1.2 Release Description

> [2-3 sentences describing what this release includes and why it matters]

Example:
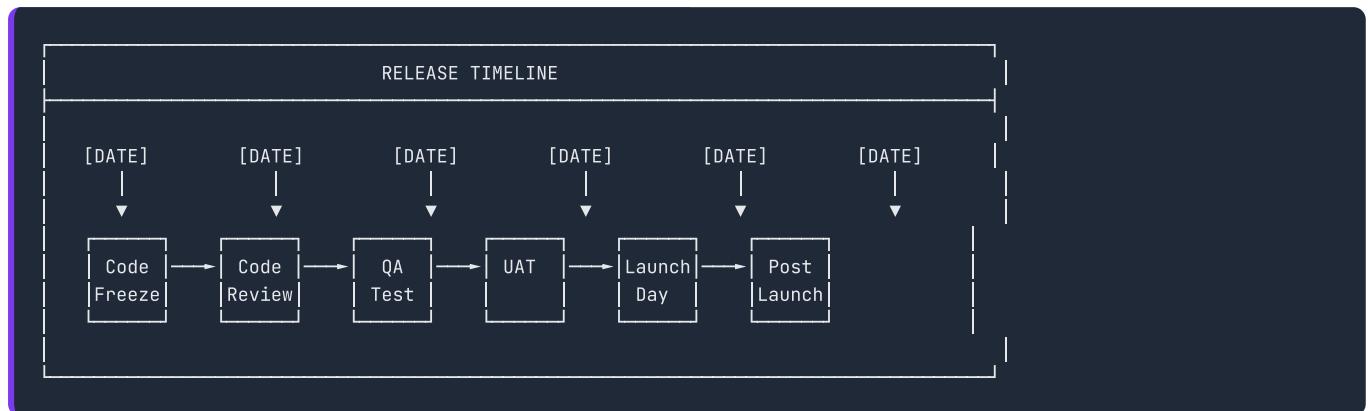
> This release introduces the Hero Mode feature for automated aircraft management during crew incapacitation scenarios. It also includes Google Cloud TTS integration for improved audio narration.

1.3 Key Features

Feature	Description	Impact
[Feature 1]	[Brief description]	[User impact]
[Feature 2]	[Brief description]	[User impact]
[Feature 3]	[Brief description]	[User impact]

2. Release Timeline

2.1 Milestone Schedule

```
                        RELEASE TIMELINE

   [DATE]       [DATE]       [DATE]       [DATE]       [DATE]       [DATE]
     |            |            |            |            |            |
     ▼            ▼            ▼            ▼            ▼            ▼
  ┌──────┐    ┌──────┐    ┌──────┐    ┌──────┐    ┌──────┐    ┌──────┐
  │ Code │───▶│ Code │───▶│  QA  │───▶│ UAT  │───▶│Launch│───▶│ Post │
  │Freeze│    │Review│    │ Test │    │      │    │ Day  │    │Launch│
  └──────┘    └──────┘    └──────┘    └──────┘    └──────┘    └──────┘
```

2.2 Detailed Milestones

Milestone	Target Date	Owner	Status	Exit Criteria
Code Freeze	[Date]	[Name]		All features merged to release branch
Code Review Complete	[Date]	[Name]		All PRs approved
QA Sign-off	[Date]	[Name]		All test cases passed, no P0/P1 bugs
UAT Complete	[Date]	[Name]		Stakeholder approval
Staging Deploy	[Date]	[Name]		Staging environment validated
Production Deploy	[Date]	[Name]		Production deployment complete
Release Announcement	[Date]	[Name]		Users notified

3. Rollout Strategy

3.1 Deployment Approach

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                ROLLOUT STRATEGY                    │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                    │
│  Choose your rollout approach:                     │
│                                                    │
│  [ ] BIG BANG                                      │
│      Deploy to all users at once                   │
│      ┌──────────────────────────────────┐          │
│      │          100% Users              │          │
│      │         ┌──────────┐             │          │
│      │─────────│  Deploy  │             │          │
│      │         └──────────┘             │          │
│      └──────────────────────────────────┘          │
│                                                    │
│  [ ] PHASED ROLLOUT                                │
│      Deploy to increasing percentages over time    │
│      ┌──────────────────────────────────┐          │
│      │  5%  │  25%  │  50%  │   100%     │          │
│      │──────│───────│───────│──────      │          │
│      │ Day 1│ Day 3 │ Day 5 │  Day 7     │          │
│      └──────────────────────────────────┘          │
│                                                    │
│  [ ] CANARY RELEASE                                │
│      Deploy to small group first, monitor, then expand │
│      ┌──────────────────────────────────┐          │
│      │┌───────┐   ┌─────────┐  ┌───────────┐│        │
│      ││Canary │─→ │ Monitor │─→│Full Release││        │
│      ││  1%   │   └─────────┘  │   100%    ││        │
│      │└───────┘                └───────────┘│        │
│      └──────────────────────────────────┘          │
│                                                    │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

3.2 Rollout Phases

Phase	Target	Duration	Success Criteria	Rollback Trigger
Phase 1	[X]% of users	[Duration]	[Metrics to meet]	[When to rollback]
Phase 2	[X]% of users	[Duration]	[Metrics to meet]	[When to rollback]
Phase 3	100% of users	[Duration]	[Metrics to meet]	[When to rollback]

4. Success Criteria

4.1 Go-Live Criteria

Category	Criterion	Threshold	Status
Quality	Zero P0 bugs	0	
Quality	Zero P1 bugs	0	
Performance	Response time	< [X]ms	
Performance	Error rate	< [X]%	
Security	Security scan	Pass	

4.2 Post-Launch Success Metrics

Metric	Target	Measurement Period	Owner
[Metric 1]	[Target]	[Period]	[Owner]
[Metric 2]	[Target]	[Period]	[Owner]
[Metric 3]	[Target]	[Period]	[Owner]

5. Risk Assessment

5.1 Risk Matrix

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                   RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX                     │
│  ──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────  │
│                                                              │
│                         IMPACT                               │
│          │    Low        Medium       High      Critical     │
│  L       ──────────────────────────────────────────────      │
│  I    H  │  Monitor     Mitigate    Mitigate   Escalate      │
│  K    i  │                                                    │
│  E    g  │                                                    │
│  L    h  │                                                    │
│  I       ──────────────────────────────────────────────      │
│  H    M  │  Accept      Monitor     Mitigate   Mitigate      │
│  O    e  │                                                    │
│  O    d  │                                                    │
│  D       ──────────────────────────────────────────────      │
│       L  │  Accept      Accept      Monitor    Mitigate      │
│       o  │                                                    │
│       w  │                                                    │
│          ──────────────────────────────────────────────      │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

5.2 Identified Risks

ID	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	Owner
R1	[Risk description]	Low/Med/High	Low/Med/High	[Mitigation plan]	[Owner]
R2	[Risk description]	Low/Med/High	Low/Med/High	[Mitigation plan]	[Owner]
R3	[Risk description]	Low/Med/High	Low/Med/High	[Mitigation plan]	[Owner]

6. Rollback Plan

6.1 Rollback Triggers

Trigger	Threshold	Action
Error rate spike	> [X]% for [Y] minutes	Initiate rollback
Critical bug	Any P0 bug	Assess for rollback
Performance degradation	> [X]ms response time	Initiate rollback
User reports	> [X] critical issues	Assess for rollback

6.2 Rollback Procedure

```
                    ROLLBACK PROCEDURE

    STEP 1: DECISION (5 min)
    ────────────────────────
    ☐ Release Manager confirms rollback is needed
    ☐ VP Engineering approves (if available) or delegate
    ☐ Notify stakeholders that rollback is starting

    STEP 2: EXECUTE (10-15 min)
    ────────────────────────
    ☐ DevOps executes rollback command: [command]
    ☐ Verify previous version is running
    ☐ Verify database is compatible (or run down-migration)

    STEP 3: VALIDATE (10 min)
    ────────────────────────
    ☐ Run smoke tests on rolled-back version
    ☐ Check error rates returning to normal
    ☐ Verify user-facing functionality

    STEP 4: COMMUNICATE (5 min)
    ────────────────────────
    ☐ Notify stakeholders that rollback is complete
    ☐ Update status page / user communication
    ☐ Schedule post-mortem

    TOTAL EXPECTED TIME: 30-35 minutes
```

6.3 Rollback Commands

```
# Example rollback commands - replace with actual commands

# Option 1: Revert to previous container image
[deployment-command] --image=[previous-image-tag]

# Option 2: Revert deployment
[deployment-command] rollback --revision=[previous-revision]

# Option 3: Traffic shift (for canary/blue-green)
[routing-command] --route-to=[previous-version]
```

7. Checklists

7.1 Pre-Launch Checklist

Category	Item	Owner	Status
Code	All features merged	[Owner]	☐
Code	All code reviews complete	[Owner]	☐
Code	Version number updated	[Owner]	☐
Testing	All unit tests passing	[Owner]	☐
Testing	All integration tests passing	[Owner]	☐
Testing	QA sign-off received	[Owner]	☐
Testing	UAT complete	[Owner]	☐
Security	Security scan passed	[Owner]	☐
Security	Secrets rotated if needed	[Owner]	☐
Infrastructure	Staging deployment successful	[Owner]	☐
Infrastructure	Monitoring dashboards ready	[Owner]	☐
Infrastructure	Alerts configured	[Owner]	☐
Documentation	Release notes written	[Owner]	☐
Documentation	User documentation updated	[Owner]	☐
Support	Support team briefed	[Owner]	☐
Communication	Stakeholders notified of timeline	[Owner]	☐

7.2 Launch Day Checklist

Time	Item	Owner	Status
T-60m	Final go/no-go meeting	[Owner]	☐
T-30m	All stakeholders on standby	[Owner]	☐
T-15m	Backup verified	[Owner]	☐
T-0	Deploy initiated	[Owner]	☐
T+5m	Deployment complete	[Owner]	☐
T+10m	Smoke tests passed	[Owner]	☐
T+15m	Monitoring checked - all green	[Owner]	☐
T+30m	First batch of user feedback reviewed	[Owner]	☐
T+60m	No critical issues - proceed with rollout	[Owner]	☐
T+4h	Extended monitoring complete	[Owner]	☐

7.3 Post-Launch Checklist

Item	Owner	Due	Status
Monitor error rates for 24 hours	[Owner]	[Date]	☐
Review user feedback	[Owner]	[Date]	☐
Update documentation if needed	[Owner]	[Date]	☐
Send release announcement	[Owner]	[Date]	☐
Schedule retrospective	[Owner]	[Date]	☐
Archive release artifacts	[Owner]	[Date]	☐

8. Monitoring & Support
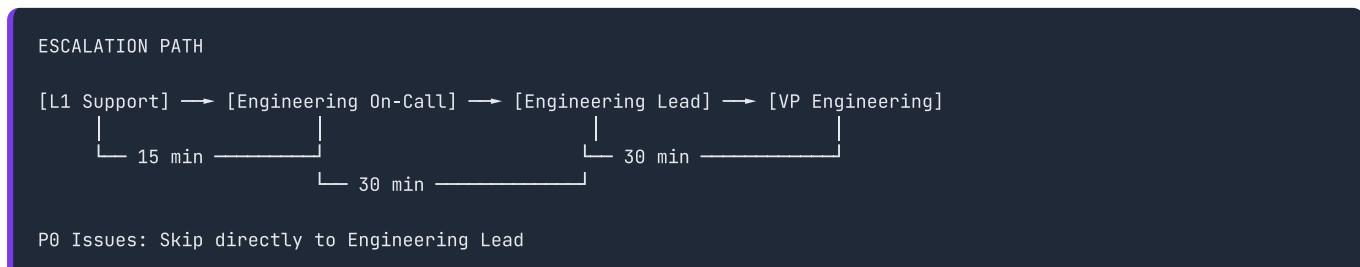
8.1 Monitoring Plan

Metric	Dashboard	Alert Threshold	Escalation
Error rate	[Dashboard link]	> [X]%	Page on-call
Response time	[Dashboard link]	> [X]ms	Page on-call
CPU utilization	[Dashboard link]	> [X]%	Notify DevOps
Memory usage	[Dashboard link]	> [X]%	Notify DevOps

8.2 On-Call Schedule

Role	Primary	Backup	Contact
DevOps	[Name]	[Name]	[Contact info]
Engineering	[Name]	[Name]	[Contact info]
Support	[Name]	[Name]	[Contact info]

8.3 Escalation Path

```
ESCALATION PATH

[L1 Support] ⟶ [Engineering On-Call] ⟶ [Engineering Lead] ⟶ [VP Engineering]
      |                    |                     |                    |
      └─ 15 min ───────────┘                     └─ 30 min ──────────┘
                  └─ 30 min ───────────┘

P0 Issues: Skip directly to Engineering Lead
```

9. Communication Plan

9.1 Internal Communication

Audience	Channel	Message	Timing	Owner
Engineering	[Channel]	Release starting	T-15m	[Owner]
All hands	[Channel]	Release complete	T+30m	[Owner]
Leadership	[Channel]	Status update	T+1h	[Owner]

9.2 External Communication

Audience	Channel	Message	Timing	Owner
Users	[Channel]	Scheduled maintenance	T-24h	[Owner]
Users	[Channel]	Release notes	T+1h	[Owner]
Users	[Channel]	Feature announcement	T+24h	[Owner]

9.3 Communication Templates

Pre-release:

> [Subject]: Scheduled release - [Product] v[X.X.X] We will be releasing [Product] v[X.X.X] on [Date] at [Time]. [Brief description of impact]. No action required from your end.

Post-release:

> [Subject]: [Product] v[X.X.X] released successfully We have successfully deployed [Product] v[X.X.X]. New features include: [Feature list]. Full release notes: [Link]

Issue notification:

> [Subject]: [Product] - Service Issue We are aware of [issue description] affecting [scope]. We are actively working on a resolution. Expected resolution: [Time]. We will provide updates every [interval].

10. Appendix

10.1 Related Documents

- PRD: [Link]
- Design Document: [Link]

- Technical Specification: [Link]
- Test Plan: [Link]

10.2 Contacts

Role	Name	Email	Phone
Release Manager	[Name]	[Email]	[Phone]
Engineering Lead	[Name]	[Email]	[Phone]
DevOps Lead	[Name]	[Email]	[Phone]

10.3 Change Log

Version	Date	Author	Changes
0.1.0	[Date]	[Author]	Initial draft

hanaML Template *This template is maintained by the Release Management Team.*

hanaML

Generated on 2025-12-22 17:09:35