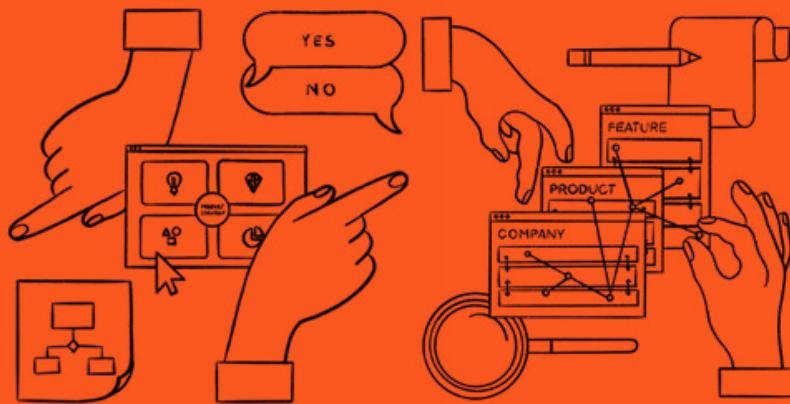


# A Hands-on Guide to Product Strategy Foundations



In this hands-on guide, I will summarize the essential practices required for Product Teams to own and shape their Product Strategy to guide the activities of defining product roadmaps, Product OKRs, and Product Discovery.

These approaches help Product Teams to go from “we build whatever the users ask for” to taking an evidence-informed stand for the Product Strategy choices they prioritize to create a better future for their users and the business.

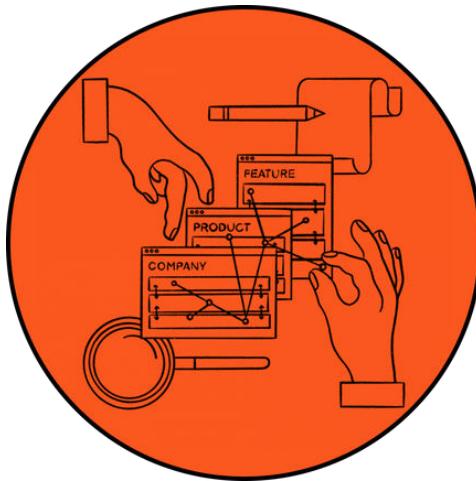
In this guide, you’ll learn the following:

- The fundamental patterns of Product Strategy and how Strategy compares to Product Vision and other Product domains
- Why OKRs are a powerful tool to execute Product Strategy Choices and why OKR Cycles need to be aligned with Product Strategy
- Deep Dives into some specifics of Product Strategy in B2B vs. B2C and Product Vision creation

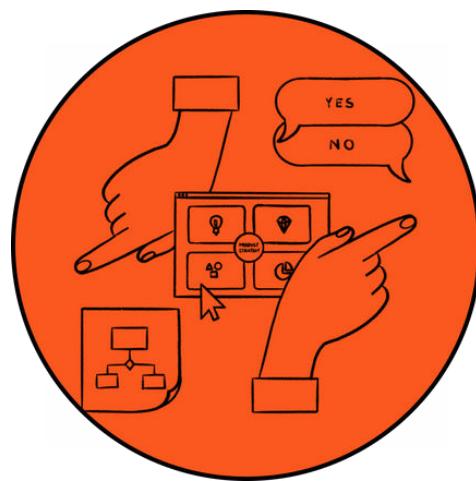
If you’ve ever wondered howto create a Product Strategy that truly serves your users and your business’s vision, then you’ve come to the right place.

Let’s get started.

# Content Overview



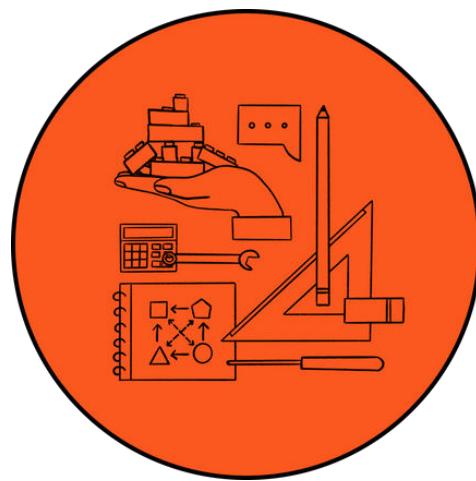
A Practical Primer on  
Product Strategy



Putting Product  
Strategy into Action



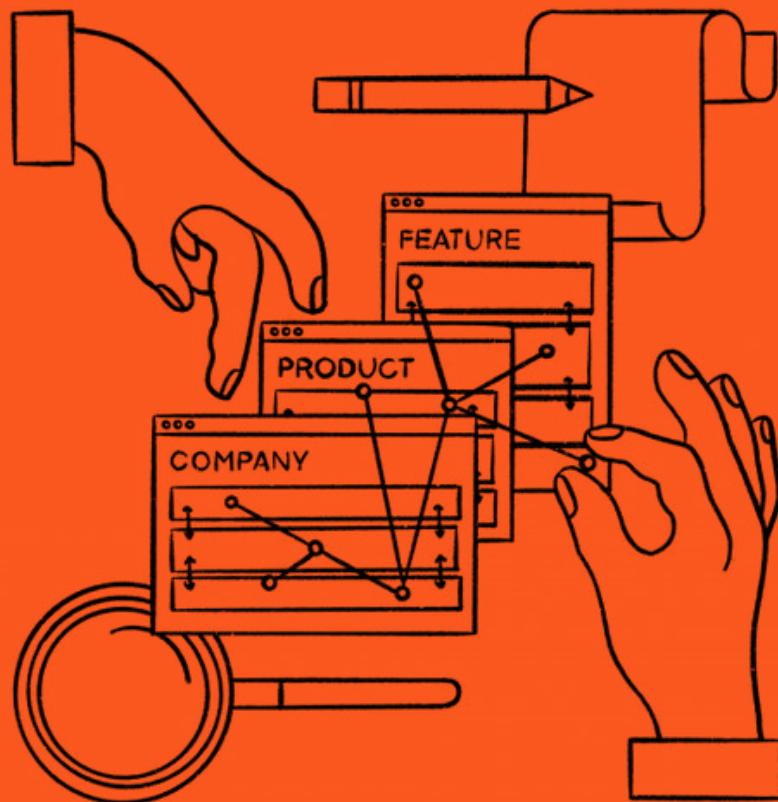
Product Strategy  
Deep Dives



Extended Product  
Strategy Resources

## CHAPTER 1

# A Practical Primer on Product Strategy



In this chapter, I want to establish a shared understanding of the importance and role of Product Strategy.

Your Main Takeaways:

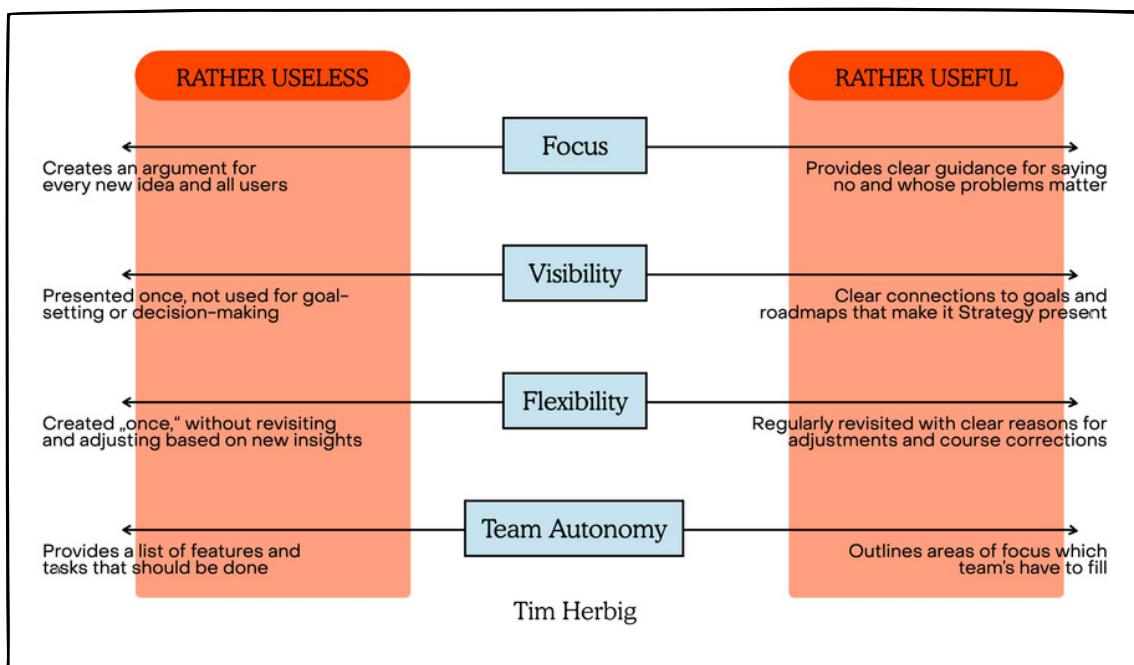
- Why Good vs. Bad Product Strategy might be the misleading
- How to focus on Product Strategy Patterns, instead of Templates
- How to align Product Strategy across Company and Product levels
- The difference between Product Vision and Product Strategy

# How to Focus on Product Strategy Patterns, Not Templates

“Creating Product Strategy isn’t a set of questions you answer on a piece of paper or a series of exercises you complete in one 2-hour workshop. Instead, it’s a range of activities and iterations that have to be developed through ongoing work. But where should you start? And how do you know whether your strategy is working?

## Good vs. Bad Product Strategy might be the wrong perspective

“Good” and “bad” are notoriously slippery terms. In Product Management, there are no set standards that apply across the diversity of product teams, business models, company strategies, skills, and management systems. However, it is still crucial to make some order out of the chaos. To do that, it helps to understand common patterns that make Product Strategy more useful or more effective in specific environments. These Product Strategy patterns can help you avoid the trap of assigning subjective values like “good” or “bad” to every step of your process. Instead, you can focus on the most useful Product Strategy for right now.



Understanding what makes Product Strategy more or less useful in a given environment and context

You will know that your Product Strategy is useful if you see clear reasoning behind rejected feature ideas. You will also know it “works” if product teams can use it to set and adapt their Discovery priorities and when colleagues can talk about strategic priorities without checking their notes.

## When Product Strategy templates fall short

Looking for patterns can also help you identify what is universal in the big picture of your company’s current situation. For example, you will always want to pay attention to articulating focused user segments, prioritizing the most pressing jobs within that segment, and differentiating your product from the alternatives in a given market. You may have tried using Product Strategy Templates to discover these insights, but a template can only express what you already know. It can’t help you figure out what you need to know now.

## Strategy Templates

### Prescribed and Rigid:

Fill-in-the-blanks structure is simple but leads to "strategy by post-it."

### Finite:

Filling in elements in a workshop may feel satisfying but can lead to the illusion that you're finished.

### Linear:

Step-by-step completion only offers one path to setting strategy.

## Strategy Patterns

### Flexible:

Non-linear format can feed into multiple outputs, from templates to canvasses to statements.

### Iterative:

Continuous process offers many opportunities to understand gaps and undertake messy work.

### Non-linear:

Multidimensional elements can interact and influence each other in any order.

Tim Herbig

### The differences between Product Strategy Patterns and Product Strategy Templates

Product Strategy Templates encourage filling in the same type of information, in the same order and way of working, without questioning their necessity or relation to each other. Product Strategy has many shapes and forms, and you shouldn't limit your efforts to one defined by others. Looking for common Product Strategy patterns encourages a more flexible, iterative, and non-linear process.

## Identifying Product Strategy patterns

So which Product Strategy patterns will help you define an effective Product Strategy? One useful starting point is based on Roger Martin's definition from Playing to Win:

“Strategy is an integrated set of choices that positions you on a playing field based on vision and goals in a way that you win.”

Defining your Product Strategy comes down to understand the overarching patterns that form it independent of your industry or product. From there, it depends on what Product Strategy components are required to outline your choices across these patterns the best. This graphic shows one way to visualize this concept:



Connecting the individual domains to overarching Product Strategy patterns

The Strategic Narrative tells you why you are targeting a specific market opportunity, or Playing Field. What problems are you trying to solve? For whom? Why? Vision and mid-to-long-term goals provide this context.

The Playing Field describes that market itself, including your possible choices and your competition. (Note that these choices must be specific and real—so you can actually say no to them.) Your playing field is composed of particular user, stakeholder, or buyer segments, as well as the relevant jobs you want to help them pursue in the light of your Strategic Narrative. In addition, your playing field consists of alternatives that users and buyers are comparing you against.

The Winning Moves outline the choices you need to make to position your product to best advantage.

To win on the Playing Field and avoid, like Roger Martin says, "playing to play." you have to articulate what offerings and value propositions will address the jobs and through which channels you can deliver them. In addition, how do you differentiate between alternatives?

All of these structural steps influence each other. Shifting user or buyer segments can lead to competing against different alternatives. Choosing different jobs requires different values and channels. And so on...

Your Product Strategy should emerge from the Product Strategy patterns you find in these three domains. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do we have a Strategic Narrative? What is it? What might be missing?
- How clear is our Playing Field? What might be missing?
- Do we know what our Winning Moves are, beyond a list of features? What might be missing?

This high-level check will illuminate where your company stands on the three fundamentals of Product Strategy—Independent of it's B2B or B2C nature.

## Aligning Product Strategy across all levels

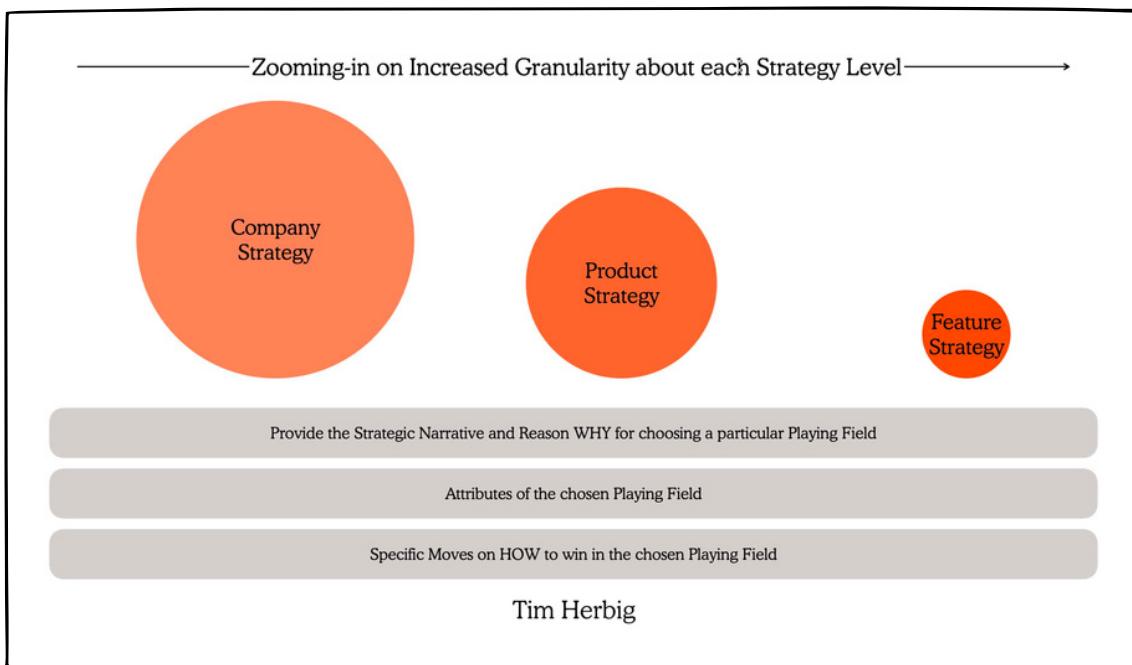
Identifying these patterns will also help you differentiate and prioritize between different levels of strategy goals (sometimes also called a Product Strategy Stack).

Company Strategy describes where the company wants to go, based on the Company Vision and high-level strategic narratives. It outlines details around fundamental shifts like entering new markets or abandoning business models.

Product Strategy provides overarching guidance for tactical design and execution on a given playing field. In early stage companies, Company Strategy IS the Product Strategy.

Feature Strategy aims at driving metrics that would tell you if you have won on your playing field through chosen differentiation and targeted jobs worth solving. Features are individual, but often bundled, pieces of value that solve user/customer/stakeholder problems but contribute to the product's core use case. Which Casey Winters calls Feature/Product Fit.

Each level has its own internal context for a given team and external context in the marketplace. Each level has its own short-term and long-term action items. Once you can see these distinct levels and how they interact you can focus on defining and executing the Product Strategy that best serves your company at any given moment.

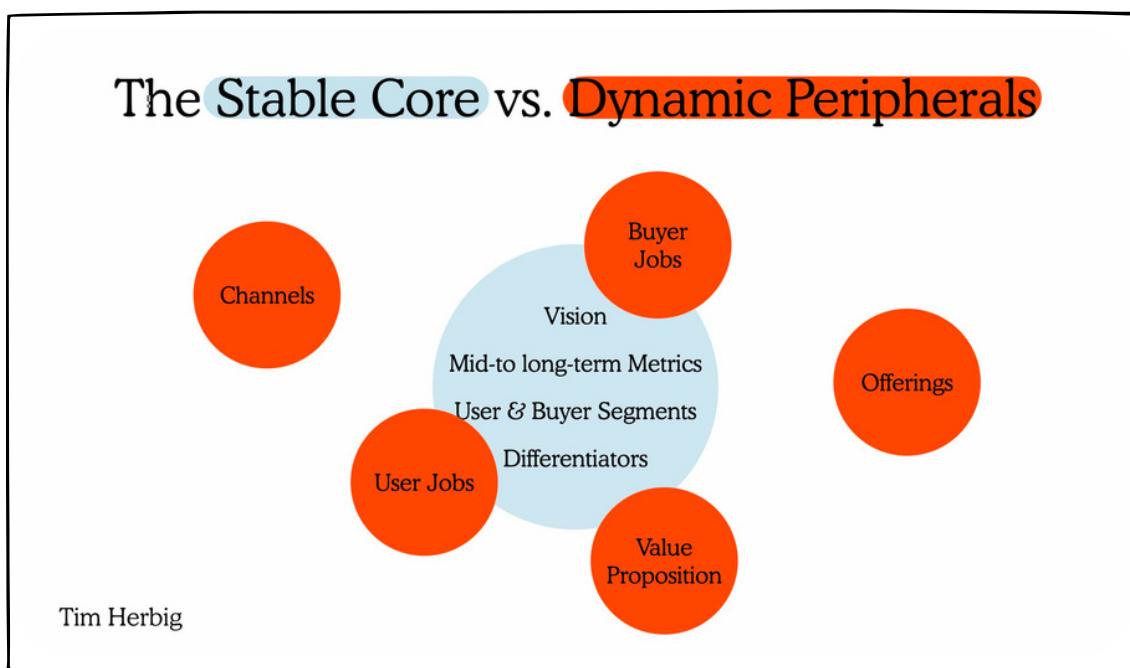


Aligning Strategy across the levels of Company, Product, and Features can rely on the same Product Strategy patterns, but requires zooming-in and -out

For a large company, this strategic thought exercise is probably nested across many departments and teams. Focusing on the fundamental cornerstones of Product Strategy choices helps.

# The different cadences of Product Strategy

Your Product Strategy must be flexible enough to change and respond to new conditions, but paying attention to these patterns will help you stay attuned to your core values. That stable “core” consists of vision, mid-to-long-term goals, user/buyer segments, and differentiators. You shouldn't feel like you have to revise these every quarter. In contrast, “dynamic peripheral” patterns feature the jobs of your chosen segment, distribution channels to reach your audience, and the offerings/value propositions that address the most pressing jobs.



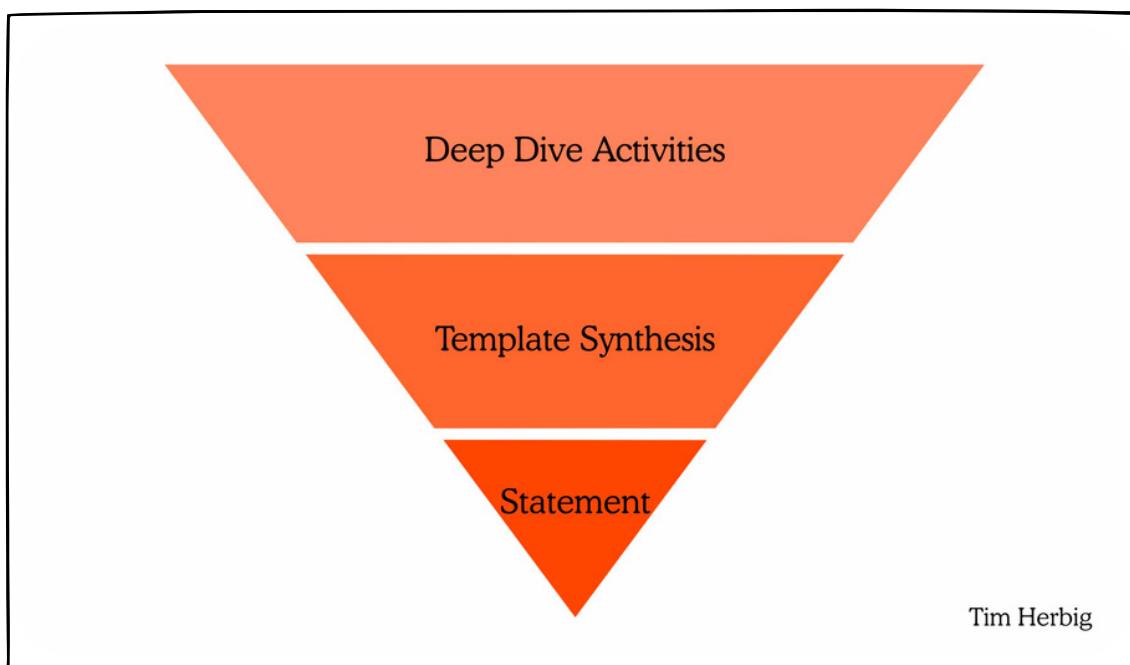
Differentiating the cadence of individual Product Strategy patterns

A Product Vision is part of the core because it should be so stable that it withstands the impact of external forces. But a Product Strategy as a whole can't be that inflexible. Instead, use the cadence of something like your OKR cycles to check in on the progress of your explicit Product Strategy choices and course-correct, if and when necessary.

# Transforming messy insights into clear Product Strategy

As I said above, filling out templates is never going to replace the hard, messy work of identifying a dynamic and effective Product Strategy. Product development always begins with uncertainty: a question or a problem that you need to solve. Templates can only express or communicate that strategy once you've found useful patterns across your company, product, and features. Patterns are a way of moving from chaos to order, which an effective template can then communicate across teams and domains.

Turning the high-level patterns of Product Strategy into substantial guidance for product teams requires messy work. Teams usually start with a nice-and-easy gap text template when that should be their end point. Here's an overview of the process:



Inverting the pyramid of how most teams approach Product Strategy

The synthesis of these patterns *\*might\** fit the artificial structure of a gap text or canvas. Still, these should only serve as an endpoint for communication, not the starting point of your Product Strategy efforts.

## Seeing Product Strategy as a journey, not an activity

In short, you cannot design an evidence-based Product Strategy in one workshop session. Don't try to cut corners by starting your strategy with the current trendy template! By focusing on the patterns emerging across your Strategic Narrative, Playing Field, and Winning Moves, you'll discover the right-now strategy that keeps your product aligned to your company's core values while moving you forward.

# Product Vision vs. Product Strategy: What's the Difference?

Product teams often lump together terms like vision, mission, strategy, and values. Maybe they don't know the difference. Maybe their management, company, peers, and stakeholders want them to "get to work" and "produce results" fast.

These teams have forgotten the value of vision-driven strategy in favor of quick wins and boilerplate tools and processes. It's tempting to download generic templates from the web, but filling in the blanks and checking off boxes won't cut it. You'll end up with incremental changes instead of higher impact results. In this article, I'll clearly differentiate Product Strategy and Product Vision and show how they relate to each other.

If you understand the difference between Product Vision and Product Strategy you can use Product Vision to help drive bold choices in Product Strategy. [Jeff Bezos' famous quote](#) on being "stubborn on vision, but flexible on details" is only useful if you have created and committed to a Product Vision that's worth reaching for.

## What's the Difference between Product Vision and Product Strategy?

[Differentiating Product Vision from Product Strategy](#) is not just about semantics but about the impact each element has on a team's way of working. These terms are hard to put into a one-size-fits-all box, but they can be clearly distinguished.

The main difference between Product Vision and Product Strategy is that Product Vision describes the future state for your users, which emerges from the value provided by your product, while Product Strategy is about the set of choices you need to achieve your Product Vision.

A Product Vision describes the future state for your users, which emerges from the value provided by your product. It's a big, aspirational goal: it should inspire others and, at the same time, be the foundation for your Product Strategy Choices. In short, a Product Vision defines where you are going.

A Product Strategy outlines the most promising direction for reaching that future state. For example, which problems will you solve? Who will use your product? Which business objectives will you aim for? In short, a Product Strategy defines how you will get there.

In other words, Product Strategy describes the set of choices needed to achieve your Product Vision.

Product Vision	Product Strategy
<b>Describes an Aspirational Future</b> Synthesizing the experienced value for people or things that is drastically different than the status quo into an easy-to-communicate statement.	<b>Outlines a Set of Choices</b> Methodically approaches the composition of internal and external circumstances to derive promising choices to win.
<b>Focuses on Changes for Users</b> What is the difference between behaviors, feelings or looks in the future, compared to today and through what 'vehicle' will your product create this difference?	<b>Provides a Holistic Perspective</b> Isn't limited to the aspects from 'within' but also acknowledges immutable aspects and market dynamics to identify gaps worth acting on.
<b>Enables Ambitious Strategy</b> Not the sole deciding factor of how useful and effective Product Strategy is, but the lack thereof makes ambitions fall short.	<b>Relies on Forward-looking Vision</b> Strategic choices about offerings, markets, and user segments depend on the appropriate ambition level to not get sucked into iterative baby steps.

Tim Herbig

How Product Vision and Product Strategy compare side by side

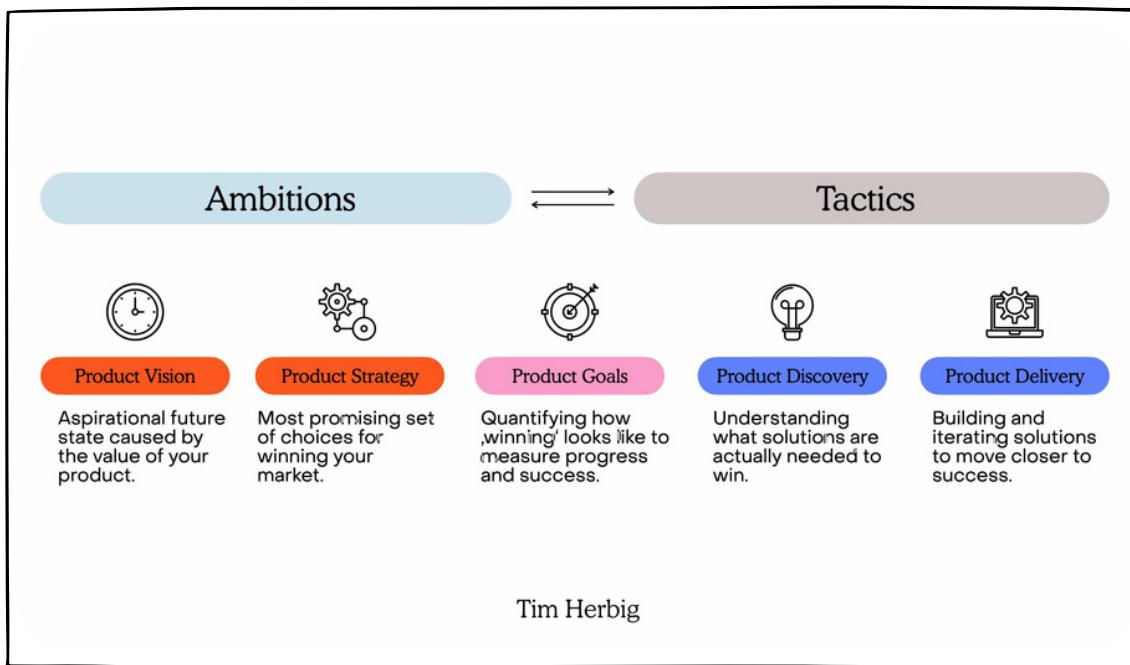
Some people have argued for further differentiating Company Vision and Product Vision. But getting into the nuances of that would go beyond this article. Besides, there are good reasons for product-first companies not to differentiate them. Depending on your company's size, team slicing, and complexity, your Product Vision will vary in scope, scale, time horizon, and risk-level.

For a more visual differentiation of Product Vision vs. Product Strategy, check out this in-depth video from my YouTube channel:



## Which Comes First?

Product development is a dynamic process. This chart shows how Product Vision and Product Strategy relate to other core domains of Product Management like Product Discovery or Product Management OKRs.



How ambitions like Product Vision and Product Strategy connect to tactics like OKRs or Product Discovery

So, which comes first: Strategy or Vision? These relationships must flow in both directions: just as Product Strategy and Vision must trickle down, insights and learnings from Discovery and Delivery must also trickle up.

But even before you start shaping any of the other Product Strategy patterns, your initial Product Vision probably relies on some kind of user insights. Start there. Envisioning a user-centered future and delivering value that leads users towards that future should be key to your Product Vision and then inform your Product Strategy.

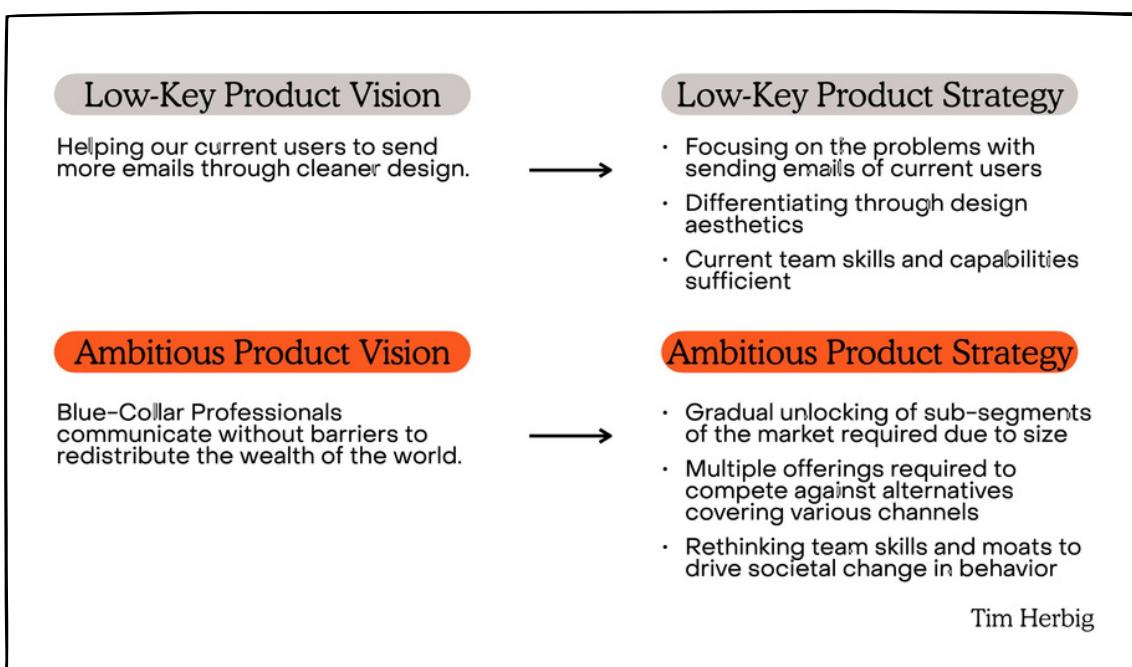
The relationships between ambitions and tactics must flow in both directions: just as Product Strategy and Vision must trickle down, insights and learnings from Discovery and Delivery must also trickle up.

Without real insights and first-hand knowledge about the market you want to play in and the users you want to serve, your Product Vision about the future lacks grounding. If your Product Vision isn't based on your users' experiences your features and business goals will be disconnected.

Remember, you can't create a truly user-centered Product Vision in a vacuum, or copy it from another company. It depends on discovering and valuing your users' needs.

## How Can Product Vision Help with Product Strategy?

This chart outlines some of the ways different Product Visions can generate different Product Strategies. By "low-key," I mean visions and strategies that stay close to the status quo. By "ambitious," I mean more disruptive visions and strategies that change the status quo. Neither path is right or wrong. Your choices will depend on your own product, company, marketplace, and tolerance for risk.



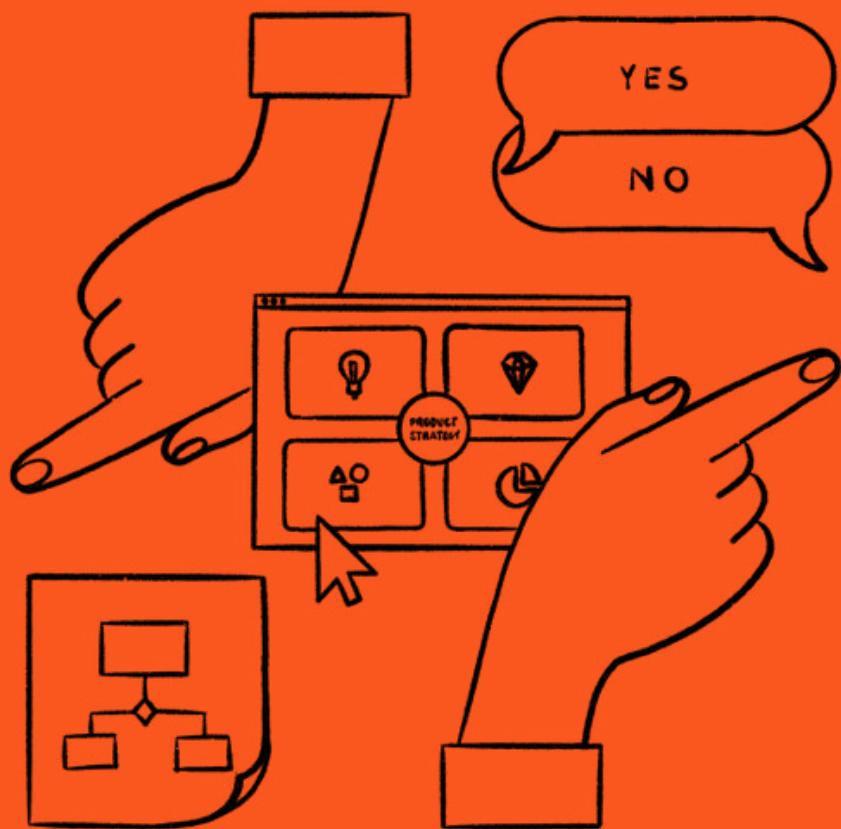
Product Vision can help drive the scale and scope of Product Strategy, whether it is low-key or ambitious.

## Connecting the Dots Instead of Filing in the Blanks

But how can you develop the best user-centered Product Vision to drive the best strategy for your product? That's what I explore in [How to Define an Ambitious Product Vision to Drive your Product Strategy](#). Continue reading for more hands-on guidance on your next steps.

## CHAPTER 2

# Putting Product Strategy into Action



In this chapter, I will cover the specific connections that are required to move from an articulated Product Strategy to real-life changes for users and the business

Your Main Takeaways:

- How to set explicit Product Strategy Choices
- Translating individual choices into Proxy Key Results to frame Discovery
- Aligning OKR cycles with Product Strategy

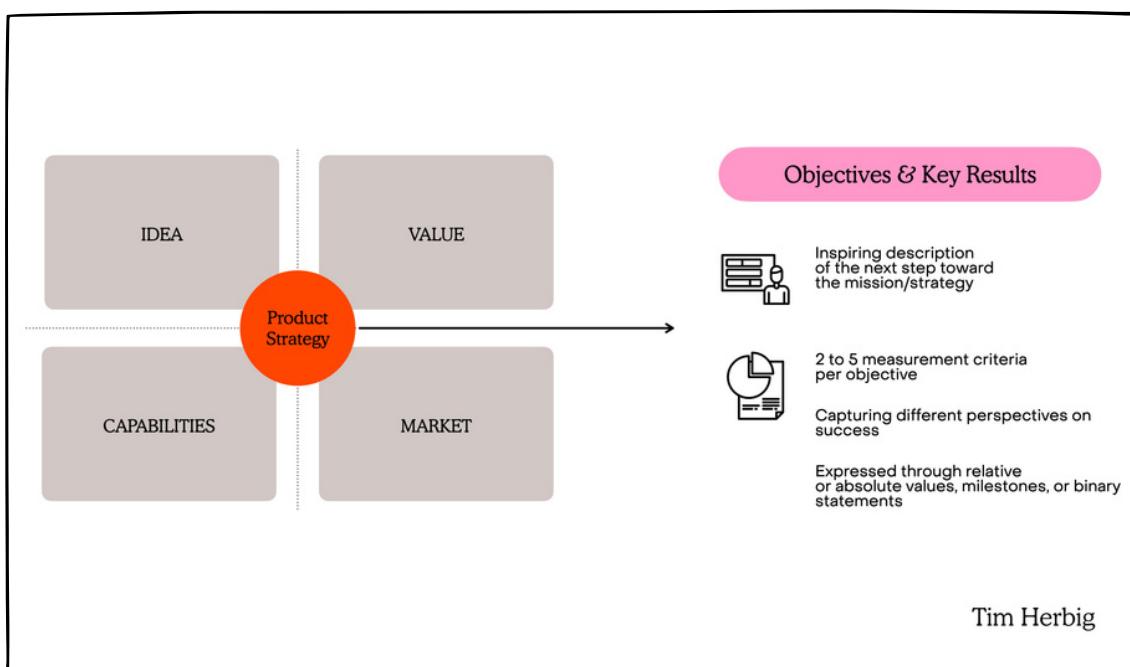
# Product Strategy Choices: Pursuing Explicit Priorities as a Product Team

Does your Product Strategy tell you to “make the product better” and to “be more like Spotify”? If yes, it’s probably not that useful. That’s because effective Product Strategy is about articulating explicit choices and making sure they get translated into action.

In this article, I’m going to show you how to arrive at Product Strategy choices for your product and how to translate them into action using OKRs.

Too many Product Teams create Product Strategies by utilizing fill-in-the-blanks statements without considering the needed deep dives. Pretty but generic words might be easy to communicate, but they don’t help Product teams to say yes or no to opportunities or frame their problem and solution space perspectives.

The core of Product Strategy patterns is about capturing the holistic perspective of the market you want to play in and articulating and measuring the explicit choices that will help you win.



The Execution of Product Strategy has to be structured through Goal-setting Systems like OKRs

# Understanding the Responsibility of Product Strategy

The first thing you need to know is where Product Strategy sits in your repertoire of Product Management responsibilities and what inputs it requires. One of the most needed clarifications is about Product Vision vs. Product Strategy.

A Product Vision describes the future state for your users, which emerges from the value provided by your product. In short, a Product Vision defines where you are going.

A Product Strategy, on the other hand, outlines the most promising direction for reaching that future state. In short, a Product Strategy defines how you will get there.

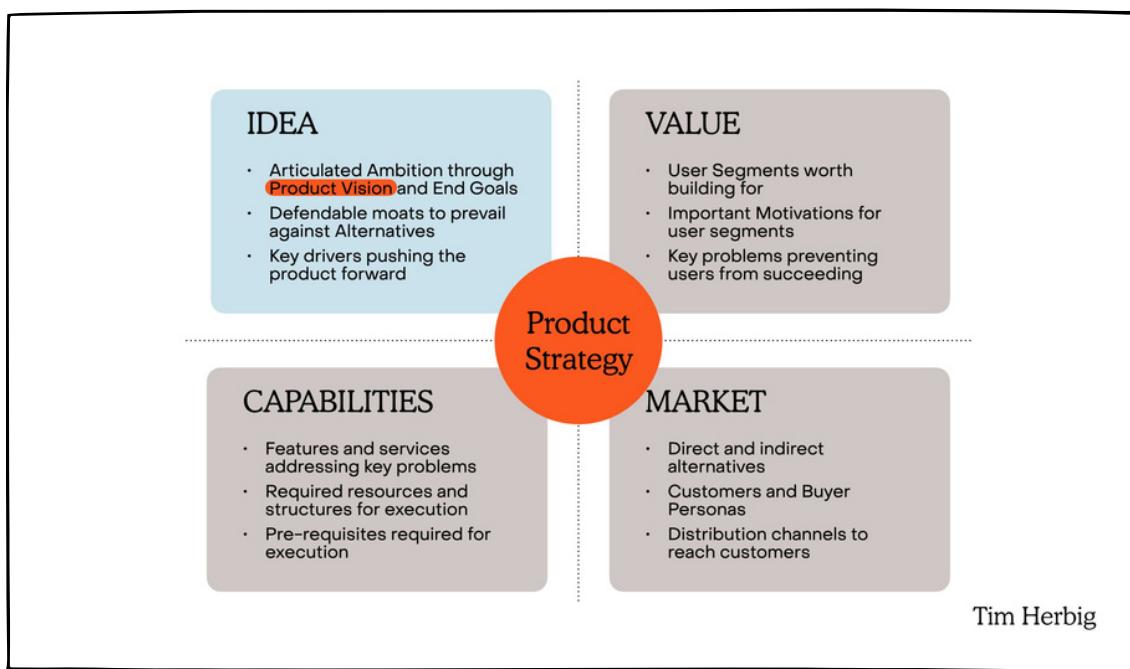
For a continued deep dive on this differentiation, check out this in-depth video from my YouTube channel:



But just because Product Vision and Product Strategy are different, it doesn't mean they are not deeply intertwined. In fact, I consider Product Vision one of the key inputs to building an ambitious Product Strategy.

Considering the holistic nature of an effective Product Strategy, you want to look at the four key pillars of Product Strategy:

1. The Idea driving the Strategy (part of your Product Strategy Narrative Pattern)
2. The Market you want to play and win in (also often described as your "Playing Field").
3. The Value you need to provide to succeed.
4. The Capabilities needed to manifest the idea, create the value, and differentiate yourself from other players (Part of the "Winning Choices" win on your "Playing Field")



The Key Pillars of Product Strategy and the relation to Product Vision

And Product Vision is the most important input for the Idea pillar of your Strategy, as it articulates the long-term changes you seek to create.

An articulated Product Strategy using any kind of framework is often the over-simplified summary of many tactical deep dives into each of these domains. However, this doesn't mean that your Strategy should consist only of generic statements like "drive revenue" or "build useful products."

That's where Product Strategy Choices come in.

# Product Strategy Choices are about Explicitness

Roger Martin, author of Playing to Win, has a great and straightforward way to separate generalized intentions from real strategic choices. He writes:

“My test for whether a stated choice is actually a strategic choice is whether or not the opposite of the choice is stupid on its face.”

The problem with generalized Product Strategy statements is that they fail the intent of Product Strategy and lack guidance for prioritization and decision-making for product teams.

Looking at the statement “make the product better,” for example, leaves a team with way too many options to get there. Sure, it might be different from a statement like “Redesign the homepage” or “Have an iOS app,” but is it an explicit choice that narrows a product team’s options for Product Discovery and Delivery?

Probably not. Instead, it will lead to many clarification questions. Better for whom? For everyone? So we can make no trade-offs in terms of platforms and use cases to support? What’s the actual end to the means of making something better?

You can clearly see how this might lead to a product team being all over the place and investing in misguided efforts. There are simply too many paths you could take to achieve the goal. That’s where a well-articulated Product Strategy comes in.

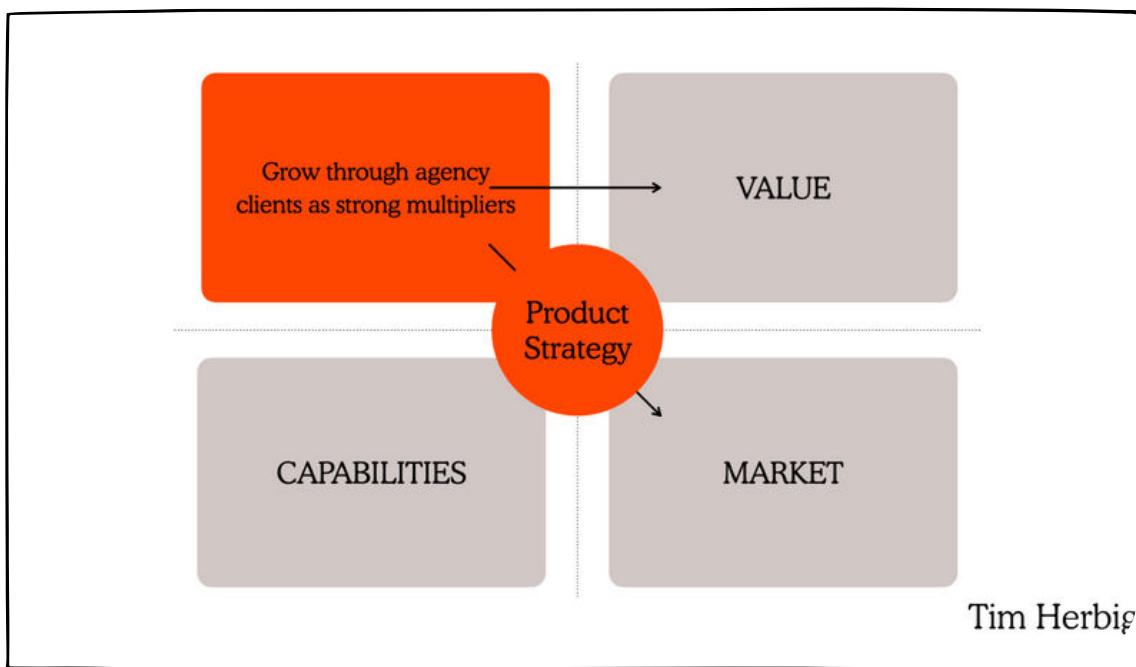
# Avoiding Generic Product Strategy Choices

So, what are the guiding questions for checking your Product Strategy against generic and, as Roger Martin would put it, “stupid on the face” choices?

First, ask yourself what is something only you can do, but your competitors can't or won't. This often leads to specific choices in the strategy area of uniqueness and alternatives.

Ask yourself what is something only you can do, but your competitors can't or won't. This often leads to specific Product Strategy Choices in the Strategy pillar of uniqueness and alternatives.

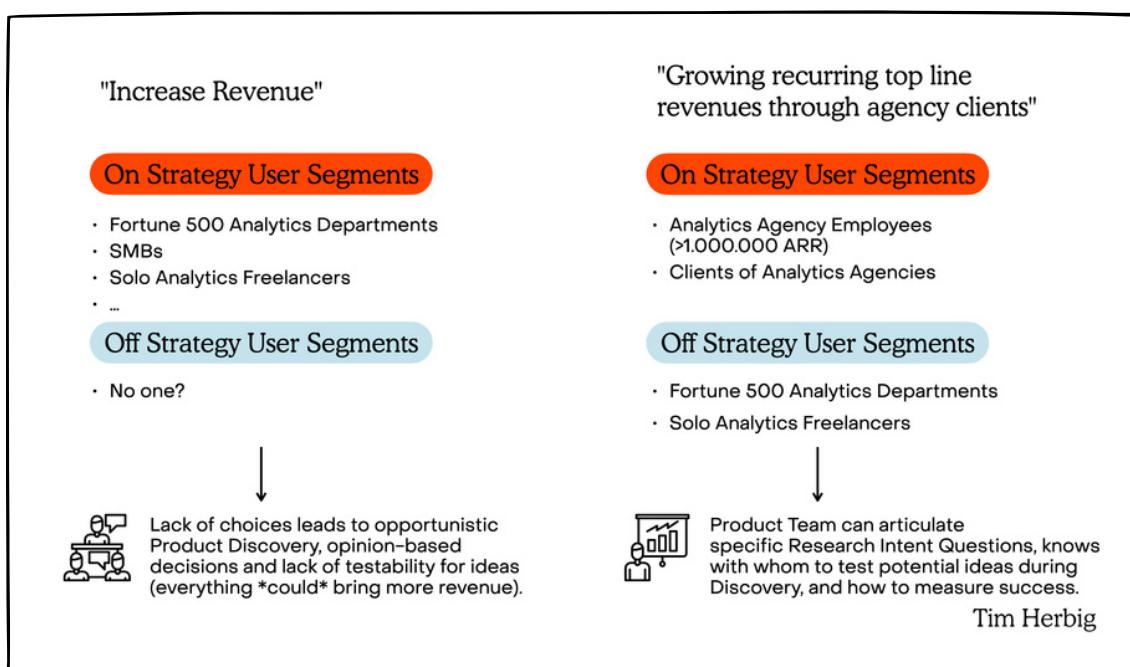
Like stating that you want to grow SaaS product through agency clients as strong multipliers, which helps you “get rid” of comparing yourself to enterprise-only alternatives and requires new product differentiators to serve new buyer personas, as well as additional features to serve agency use cases.



How Product Strategy Choices in one Pillar influence the rest of your Strategy

Or check your Product Strategy against gaps based on proven insights. Are certain problems of a user segment you want to continue to focus on brought up over and over again? If so, there's probably a gap in either your understanding of the actual Job your users are trying to hire you for or the missing capabilities of your team to deliver it.

Let me break it down even further as to how explicit Product Strategy Choices help teams to focus and prioritize their Product Discovery efforts in this graphic.



Implicit Product Strategy Choices don't allow Product Teams say no to user segments and Discovery opportunities

But even well-articulated explicit Product Strategy choices won't automatically lead to results. That's why it's crucial to establish practices that help you with translating Product Strategy choices into action.

One of the most effective ways to execute Product Strategy choices is to translate each choice into tangible proxy metrics and use them to set goals, for example in the form of Product Management OKRs.

# Executing Product Strategy Choices through Product OKRs

Achieving goals for the sake of doing so should not be confused with real progress and success. Getting a Key Result to 100% is only meaningful if it is part of an overarching strategy and connected to clear choices.

Tactics and Goals are the means, but your Strategy and the Vision it contributes to, are the end.

When it comes to turning selected choices into tangible OKRs, the metrics you choose should be explicit expressions of what success would look like. Stay away from reactive generic evergreen KPIs and don't try to map the success of every Product Strategy choice to aspects like conversion rates, NPS, or activation. That's why we make explicit choices — to stay away from doing business as usual.

Reactive KPIs	Proactive Key Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Overall indicators of business or product health</li><li>— Monitored continuously on the side without time</li><li>— Car fuel: You care about it only once it dips below a</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Derived from strategic priorities or user problems</li><li>— Explicitly chosen as a focus during a specific period</li><li>— Like the highway share of a long car ride or money spent on</li></ul>

Tim Herbig

Product Strategy is expressed through explicit proactive Key Result metrics.

For example, the previously mentioned strategic choice to “grow through agency clients as strong multipliers” as an analytics SaaS company, could be translated into Key Results like “\$200,000 of opportunity value from agency prospects in our sales pipeline” or “12 client projects have been created on our platform.”

For a different strategic choice like “Scale client growth through onboarding automation,” we could measure the success of this choice through Key Results like “Reduce onboarding time spent by the support rep department by 40%” or “Increase the number of customers onboarded by 30%.”

Strategic Choice	Proxy Key Results	Leading Team-level OKRs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grow through agency clients as strong multipliers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 200.000€ of opportunity value from agency prospects in our sales pipeline</li><li>• Agency customers have created 12 client projects on our platform</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Product Discovery Priorities</li><li>• Delivery Priorities</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scale client growth through onboarding automation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce onboarding time spent by the support rep department by 40%</li><li>• Increase the number of ‘customers in onboarding’ by 30%</li></ul>	

Tim Herbig

Lagging Proxy Key Results are a great way to make Product Strategy Choices explicit in framing the tactical execution. Inspired by Gibson Biddle's 'Strategy/Metric/Tactic Lockup'

Depending on the nature of your product and the flight level of your Product Strategy, you might want to go through the exercise of deriving more leading team-level OKRs from these directly linked proxy Key Results. They enable the team to measure their progress and allow them to answer the question of “How might we...?” through specific Discovery and Delivery priorities.

For more practical tips on transforming your Objectives and Key Results using Leading Indicators, check out this video on my YouTube channel:



## The Cadence of Adjusting Product Strategy Choices

Some of your Product Strategy choices will likely stay fixed for longer periods of time. You shouldn't feel like you have to revise them every quarter. Instead, use the cadence of your OKR cycles to check in on the progress of your explicit Product Strategy choices and course-correct, if and when necessary.

# The Product Strategy-Metrics Sandwich: How North Star Metrics influence OKRs through Product Strategy

OKRs are one of the most helpful ways for product teams to prioritize their work and evaluate success. But what if a Key Result reads like a great Outcome, yet still measures progress toward the wrong destination? Then people end up optimizing for the metric, rather than the value it's supposed to represent.

In this article, you'll learn how to move from long-term, value-driven strategic metrics to actionable quarterly Key Results, with Product Strategy bridging the two. While different, these terms have a very dynamic relationship with each other.

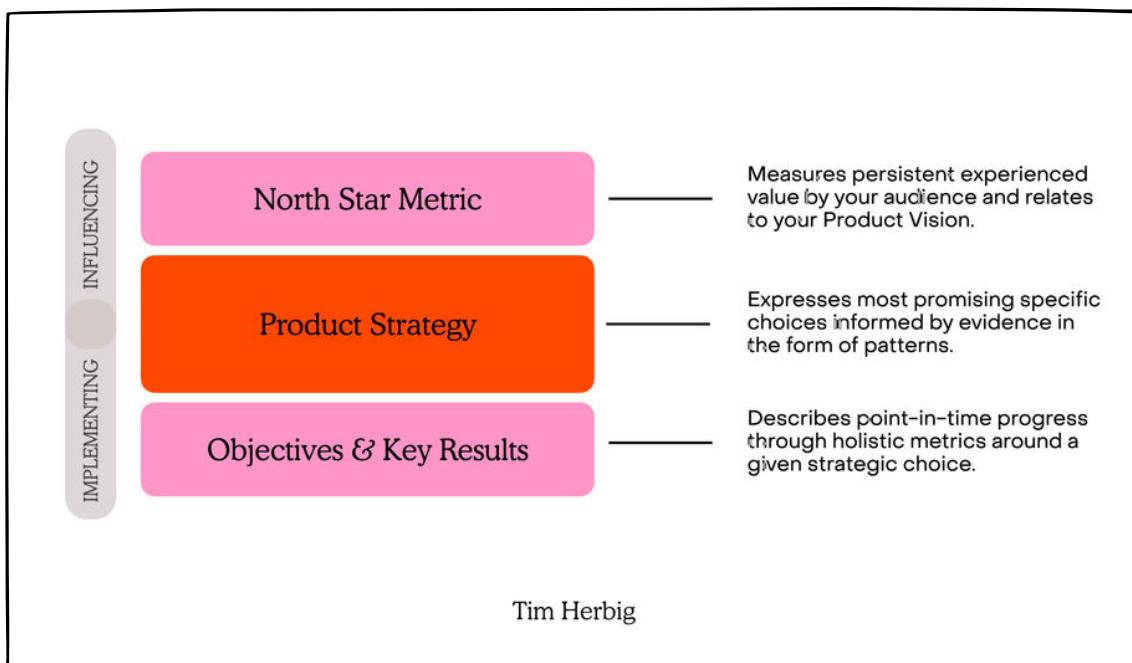
## Where to Begin?

As a Product Manager, you may be experiencing one of these common situations right now when it comes to the relationship between Metrics and Product Strategy:

- Your Product Strategy feels uninspired or misguided because it lacks a Product Vision.
- Your Product Strategy is hard to implement because your OKRs represent generic priorities.
- Your OKRs feel random because they are not connected to clear Product Strategy Choices.

How to address these problems depends on where you stand in your process and what you should revisit: Should you redefine your North Star Metrics (NSMs) or Product Vision? Clarify your Product Strategy? Reconnect your OKRs to your Strategy? It all depends on the relationship between metrics like NSMs, Product Strategy, and OKRs. I like to call these connections the Product Strategy-Metrics Sandwich.

How to address these problems depends on where you stand in your process and what you should revisit: Should you redefine your North Star Metrics (NSMs) or Product Vision? Clarify your Product Strategy? Reconnect your OKRs to your Strategy? It all depends on the relationship between metrics like NSMs, Product Strategy, and OKRs. I like to call these connections the Product Strategy-Metrics Sandwich.



The Product Strategy-Metrics Sandwich concept connects quantified, persistent value with quarterly OKRs to implement your Product Strategy

A Product Strategy-Metrics Sandwich can come in a variety of “flavors”:

Without enough focus on the NSM, you won’t have an inspiring narrative “on top.”

Without enough attention to Product Strategy, you won’t know what you are doing and what you are explicitly not doing.

Without enough structure from OKRs, you will struggle with implementation when connecting Strategy to tactics.

# The Difference between North Star Metrics (NSMs) and OKRs

In brief, NSMs are persistent goals that influence Product Strategy, whereas OKRs are point-in-time goals that implement that Strategy.

NSMs are persistent goals that influence Product Strategy, whereas OKRs are point-in-time goals that implement that Strategy.

Use these questions to understand if you're looking at a NSM or an OKR:

- Is there a specific timeline attached to a given figure of this metric? Then it's probably an OKR.
- Does it require more than one cross-functional product team to significantly influence and move this metric? Then it's probably a NSM.
- Is it "only" directly linked to your long-term Product Vision or to a more specific strategy choice? If Vision, then it's a NSM. If initiative and strategy choice, then it's an OKR.

Let's walk through each of these elements and look more closely at how they relate to each other.

## The Anatomy of a North Star Metric

To ensure OKRs can be loosely aligned with the overarching Product Vision, product teams first need to differentiate which NSMs influence their Product Strategy, before choosing how to implement them through OKRs.

North Star Metrics are widely discussed, but how do you identify them for your specific product? Your North Star Metrics shouldn't be set backwards from a KPI dashboard but develop forwards from your Product Vision. If you have a genuinely user-centered Product Vision, your North Star Metric should almost "automagically" flow from it.

Let's consider an example from a hypothetical digital fitness company focused on parents:

## From Vision to NSM Example

„Parents can get closer to the best version of themselves on their own time. Anytime and anywhere.“



No. of Weeks Spent in Fulfilling Shape

Tim Herbig

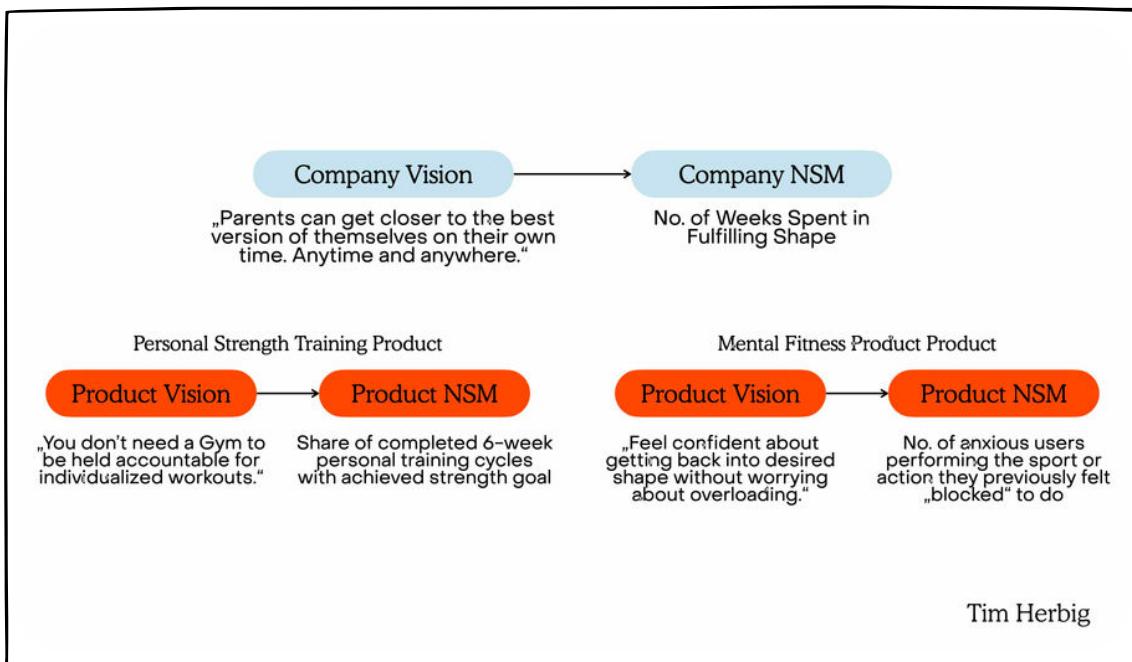
How the Vision of a digital fitness company can turn into a quantification of experienced value by their users

At the highest level, this is how a North Star Metric could tie in with their users' experienced value and help quantify their experienced success. Just like the overall vision statement, the NSM can feel fairly fluffy. And, by design, it relies on multiple driving metrics, which represent the value experienced by users or customers through individual product functions. That is why there are also different levels of NSMs, and a company NSM can guide the product-level NSMs.

# The Levels of North Star Metrics

Many organizations differentiate Company Vision and Product Vision. Similarly, it makes sense to develop a persistent metric like the NSM for each product area or team.

Here's how this might look in the example of the aforementioned digital fitness company:



How Company-level Vision and NSM can connect to Product area-level Vision and NSMs

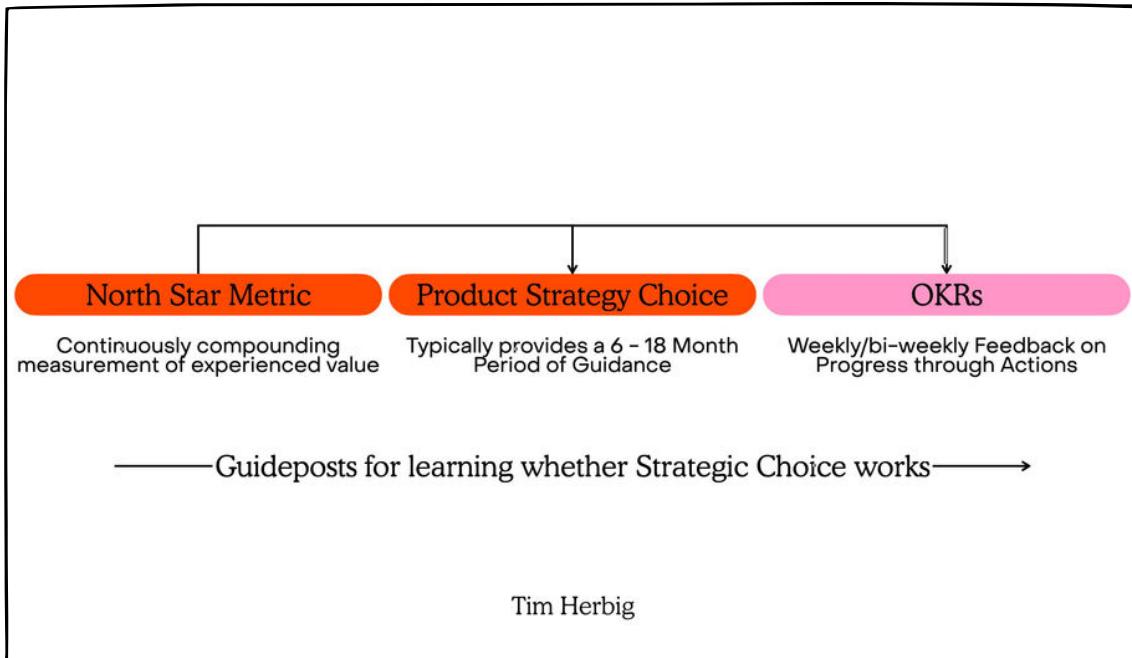
Understanding that Product-level NSMs are true drivers of the company NSM requires a fair amount of work. Tools like KPI trees can be helpful visual aids, but the process requires actual quantitative insights through Product Discovery into which actions lead to which changed behaviors. It would have been easy to slap a business-first metric like "No. of purchased personal trainer engagements" or "Rehabilitation patients registration growth" onto each of the product areas.

But, independent of their level, Product Vision and NSMs serve an inspirational purpose in describing the future: not the future of how your product might look but the value created for and experienced by your audience. The focus on value unites these two, making them act as the qualitative AND quantitative side of this aspirational future. In other words, the North Star Metric is the Quantified Sibling of the Product Vision, which both sit within the Strategic Narrative Pattern as inputs for defining your Product Strategy.

The North Star Metric is the Quantified Sibling of the Product Vision.

## The Timelines of NSMs, Strategy, and OKRs

It's difficult to define an exact timeline, but Vision and NSM are about the (potentially) infinite product development journey, whereas Strategy has a (varying) time horizon. In a recent conversation, Stephanie Leue, Chief Product Officer at Doodle, told me that "finding that balance in your Product Strategy is challenging. I think you need to clearly articulate what's the risk of that bet, what's the evidence behind it, and how big are the risky bets over the next 12 to 18 months." OKRs, in contrast, typically have a quarterly (sometimes even annual) horizon, to implement Strategy.



Approximate timelines influencing the elements of a NSM, Product Strategy and OKRs

So to shape Product Strategy you want to rely on the NSM as a key influence. Or, as Daniel Schmidt has summarized:

“By modeling a strategy that’s independent of time-based goals, you get a lot of the same benefits as OKRs. You clearly articulate the “why?” behind your work.”

And though the word “sequence” can have a bad ring to it in Product Management, it is what differentiates metrics from goals as product teams measure real progress toward meaningful destinations in their never-ending journey toward their Product Vision.

# How to Move from Product Strategy to Quarterly OKRs

Your Product Strategy should not just emerge from a 2-hour workshop; it needs messy, deep dive work. Still, there comes a time where you have to synthesize it for easier communication, whether that's through the canvas of your choice or concise statements. Depending on the company-/product-/feature-level, you need to consider different levels of granularity. Make sure these are real choices and not just repeating business as usual.

To inform company-level or annual team-level OKRs, you can turn the specific choices into proxy metrics. These aim to answer the question of how you would know that you have “won” (or that your choices were successful).

Strategic Choice	Lagging Proxy Metrics
<p>Company Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expanding beyond in-app exercise instructions to meet different segments wherever they are – physically or mentally</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20% of „Very Fit People“ (VFPs) have completed two workouts in one local partner studio</li><li>• Brand association as „fitness app“ only at 60% among existing users</li></ul>
<p>Mental Fitness Product</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enable inexperienced users to tackle more ambitious physical challenges by preparing them mentally to step outside their comfort zone through inspiring mental fitness content and programs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No. of inexperienced users meditating 3-times for 6 weeks in a row</li><li>• „Mental Readiness Score“ of X among inexperienced users for starting a new discipline or competition</li></ul>

Tim Herbig

How to link Product Strategy choices from different company- and product-level perspectives to Lagging Proxy Metrics. Inspired by Gibson Biddle's 'Strategy/Metric/Tactic Lockup'

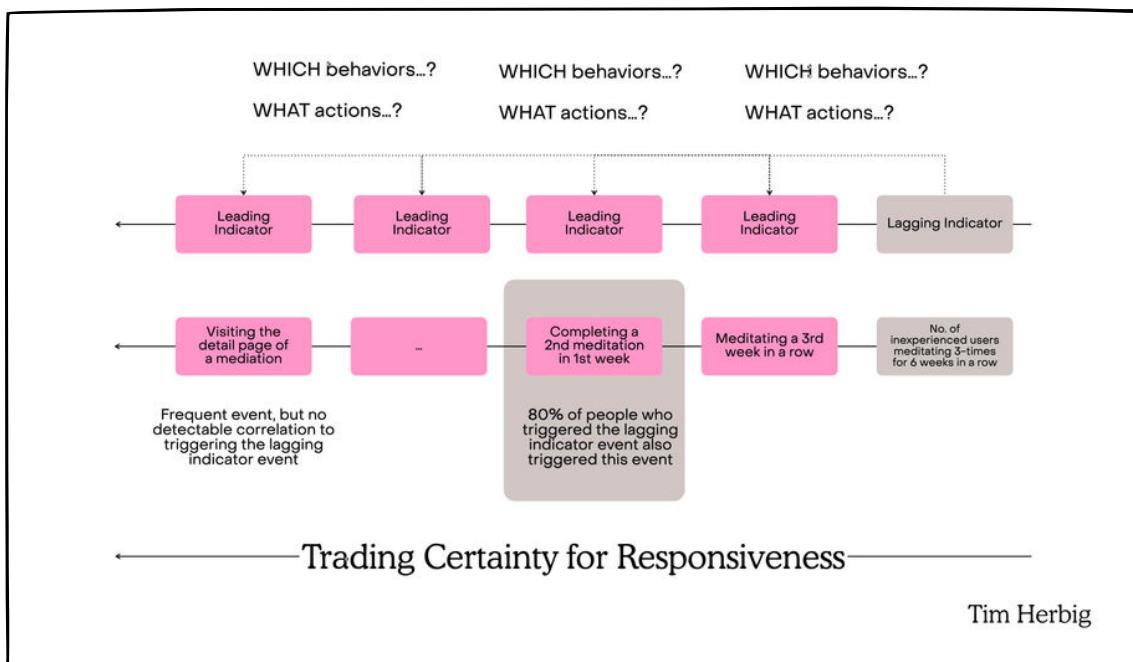
By design, these proxy metrics are lagging indicators: they move rather slowly, their results can only be detected in hindsight, and they can't be influenced by one cross-functional product team alone. This is pretty much the opposite of what you want an actionable and useful Key Result to look like.

# Turning Lagging Proxies into Leading Indicators

To identify more leading indicators, you need to reverse-engineer the customer journeys from the segments your Product Strategy prioritizes. Ultimately, you're looking for the common denominators among the „successful“ users. What patterns do they have in common?

Since leading indicators are about trading certainty for responsiveness, consider two criteria in particular: How autonomously can you influence these metrics, and at what pace will you be able to detect changes?

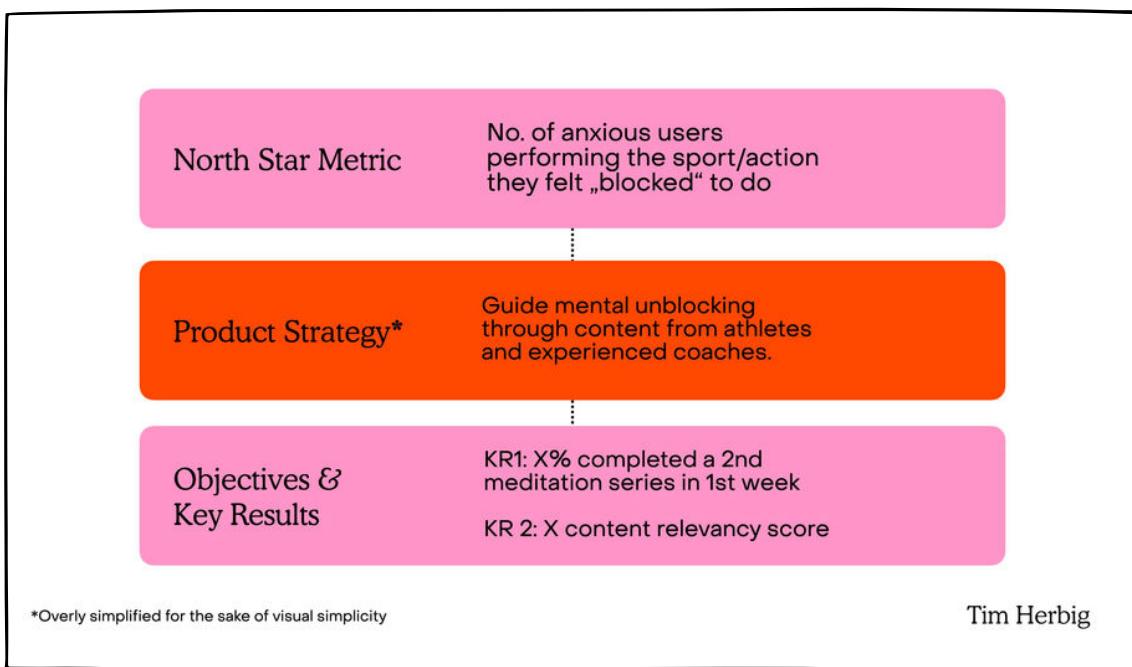
The lagging proxy metric representing success for the Mental Fitness Product area of our example might be useful for an annual OKR Set, but not for the week-over-week prioritization throughout a quarter. Based on the qualitative and quantitative insights available to them, their reverse-engineering of leading indicators might look like this:



Reverse-engineering leading indicators responding to a team's actions from lagging proxy metrics

The connection between a quarterly OKR and a NSM might not always come in the form of straight lines and clear KPI trees— and that's ok. As long as the team owning the Product Strategy did the work to ensure their strategy choices are influenced by a NSM and can loosely connect to it, they are headed in the right direction.

Bringing the digital fitness company full circle, here's what a Product Strategy-Metrics sandwich could look like for the Mental Fitness Product area for the digital fitness company example:



An exemplary Product Strategy-Metrics Sandwich using the previous inputs of the hypothetical fitness company

**Product Strategy is the Substance of the Sandwich, but requires NSMs and OKRs to have the right Impact.**

I hope this article shows how NSMs, Product Strategy, and Product OKRs all work together; they are all interdependent and influence each other. NSMs don't matter without Strategy. Strategy won't work without OKRs. Understanding their relationships helps turn vague ambitions into directed action.

CHAPTER 3

# Product Strategy Deep Dives



In this chapter, I will share practical frameworks that will allow you to synthesize Product Strategy choices and to perform the required deep dives that Product Strategy relies on.

Your Main Takeaways:

- The Similarities and Differences between B2B vs. B2C Product Strategy
- How to define an ambitious Product Vision to drive your Product Strategy

# B2B vs. B2C Product Strategy: Similarities and Differences

Approaching Product Strategy for B2B vs. B2C is often perceived as vastly different. But they are more similar than most product teams think. The first time I switched from working in B2C to B2B, I had to unlearn a lot of things. But those were all tactics, not strategies.

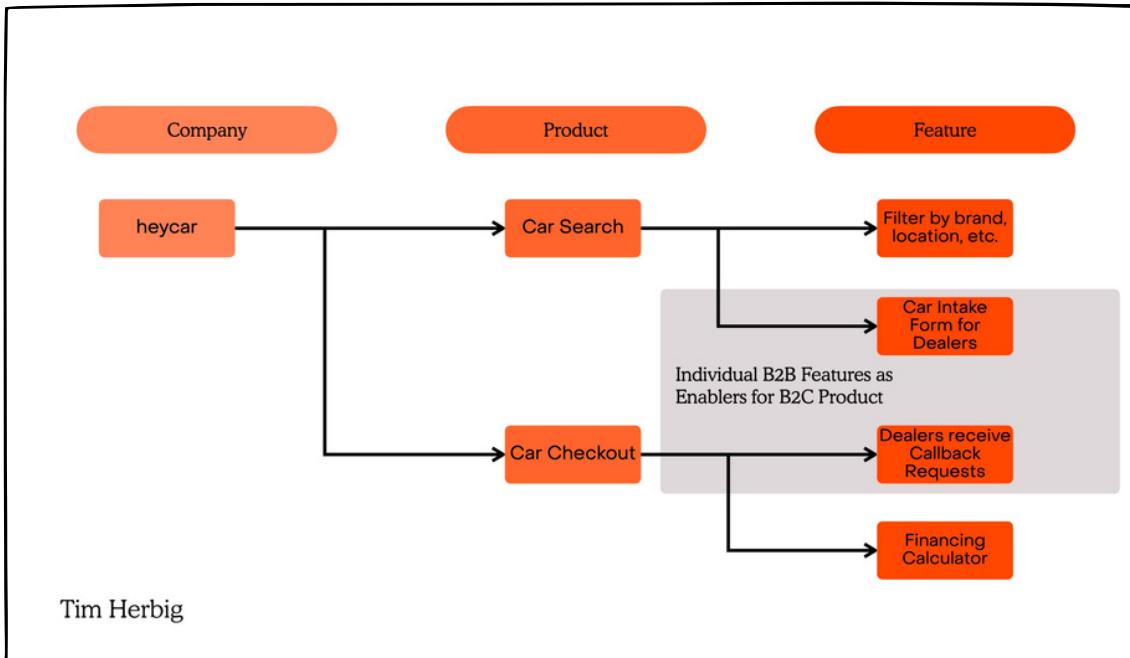
The approaches to shape Product Strategy in B2B and B2C share fundamental patterns, you just need different tools to implement them. Differences mostly originate from company-specific practices, not from the strategy approach. In this article, I'll map some of the similarities and differences I've seen, and consult with B2B and B2C product leaders about their experiences.

## Similarity #1: Even B2C Companies have to consider B2B-like behaviors—and vice versa.

Even if you're a "regular" B2C product company, some parts of your strategy have to consider B2B audiences and their needs. This is true every time the delivery of your B2C product experience involves B2B enablers.

A great example for this is [heycar](#), which sells second-hand cars to consumers. When I talked to [Hannah Zambrano](#), a Senior Product Manager at heycar about this, she gave the example of having to involve local car dealers to create the supply for B2C purchases.

While the vast majority of heycar's product experience is aimed at B2C audiences, they have to plan on serving their B2B audiences as well: for example, actually offering a car from a dealership or paying for direct purchases from dealers. Hannah also experienced a similar challenge in her previous role at [Blinkist](#), a company that packages summaries of books. There the product was about a B2C-oriented delivery of curated knowledge for B2C end users. But the company also paid attention to relationships with publishers as the original owners and creators of the content they were summarizing.



How B2B features serving car dealers enables B2C-facing features as part of  
heycar's Product Strategy

B2B products sometimes have to deal with a similar issue, just in the opposite direction. In B2B companies there are customers, users, and there is the champion who is a regular user but also an internal ambassador with higher influence. The challenge is how to approach this potentially diverse range of segments in your audience.

Lucas Bremer, CPO at Quantilope, a research insights automation platform, explains that “having champions as users definitely adds a new variable to the equation. In our case, we are building a platform whose future capabilities our end users can't really imagine at the moment. So we are also testing this idea with executives and industry leaders just to see how they see this. In B2B, champions function more like early adopters in B2C-like situations.”

“In B2B, champions function more like early adopters in B2C-like situations.”

This approach influences what jobs might find their way into a B2B Product Strategy. You need to consider value propositions and offerings for the tactical challenges of users, who might behave a bit more B2C-ish, as well as the more high-level expectations of customers and champions. That really brings more traditional B2B expectations and needs into the mix.

## Similarity #2: The Product Strategy process emerges from recognizing patterns, not filling in templates.

To avoid getting stuck in a rigid template structure, it's vital to understand the common denominators of strategic thinking that apply to a lot of different business models, industries, and product lifecycle stages. For Hannah and heycar in the used car market, strategy starts with prioritizing the value proposition of supply, before drawing in demand: when they roll out into a new country they first must understand what businesses they can rely on to acquire the used cars before they can approach the demand side for their consumers. Then they go into the new market with a pilot to help find and define their users.

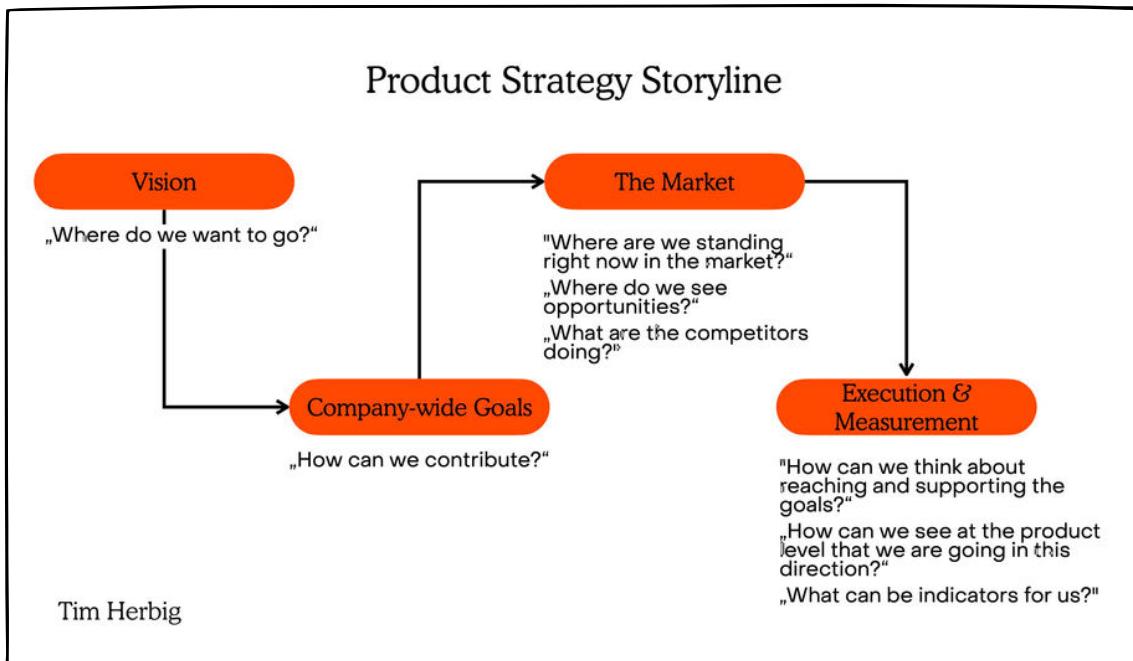
This illustrates that even B2C products can't work with one-dimensional strategic audiences. As mentioned before, they have to consider the potentially needed B2B-like enablers of B2C experiences.

That the steps to developing a useful Product Strategy is essentially the same across most companies doesn't necessarily make anything easier. There is still plenty of variation that Product Strategy templates and frameworks can't accommodate. Stephanie Leue, CPO at Doodle, doesn't use one particular framework at all. She explains that "none of these frameworks really work properly. It's always a combination of 10,000 different things. You need to summarize and synthesize and understand and challenge and kind of bring together a concept. But from my perspective, there is no one size fits all nor a best practice approach to strategy."

“None of these frameworks really work properly. It's always a combination of 10,000 different things. You need to summarize and synthesize and understand and challenge and kind of bring together a concept. But from my perspective, there is no one size fits all nor a best practice approach to strategy.”

A useful Product Strategy should leave room for interaction and flexibility. Lucas says that “at Quantilope, we try to structure strategy as a conversation so we can build what we call a storyline: the questions that we need to answer to really get closer to our goals.”

A Product Strategy might begin with a question like ‘where do we want to go? what's our company or product vision?’ Then move on to ‘how can we now contribute to these overarching company-wide goals? Where are we standing right now in the market? Where do we see opportunities? What are the competitors doing?’ Finally, ‘how can we now think about reaching and supporting the goals? how can we see maybe at the product level that we are going this direction? What can be indicators for us?’



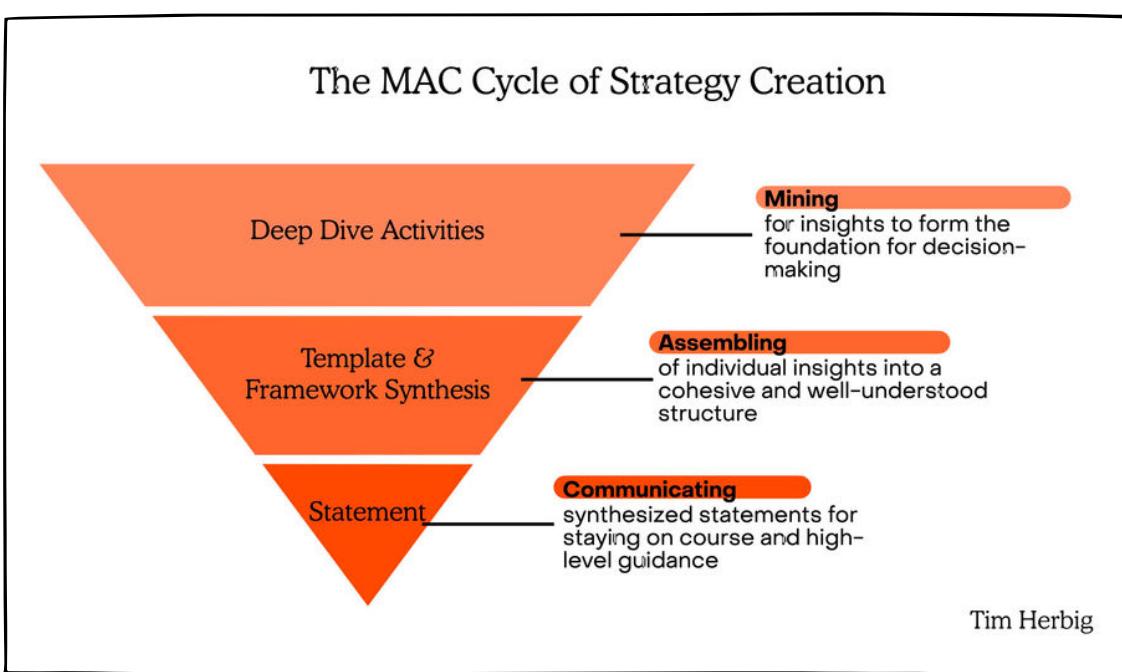
Using a narrative-driven Product Strategy storyline to shape internal conversations to support collaboration

Lucas's idea of a "storyline" acknowledges that Product Strategy emerges from recognizing patterns. If you ask the right questions, then you know what to say no to and how to communicate your strategy with a "custom" structure. Making the Product Strategy process "conversational" is a great way to use whatever Product Strategy patterns you need to engage others and build alignment internally. A Canvas or template won't do that.

## Similarity #3: A clear Product Strategy requires collaboration.

You will know that your Product Strategy is useful if you see clear reasoning behind rejected feature ideas. You will also know it "works" if product teams can use it to set and adapt their Product Discovery priorities and when colleagues can talk about strategic priorities without checking their notes. Lucas keeps his Product Strategy written down somewhere in a compact form of two or three sentences or three pillars: "We try to focus on a high-level description so that it's catchy and easy to remember."

To get the best buy in, a useful Product Strategy has to emerge from the top-down and the bottom up. Lucas calls it the Ikea effect: “if you build the furniture together, you will really love it, even though it's not the most beautiful one. It's important that strategy is not just top down, but we really developed it together. I get all the input and thoughts from the teams to make sure that it's really helpful for them.” In my conversation with Stephanie she also mentioned that this level of collaboration means that Product Strategy can add new challenges. “You need to get buy in from everyone,” she says, “and as soon as you do have buy in, your strategy is kind of outdated again.”

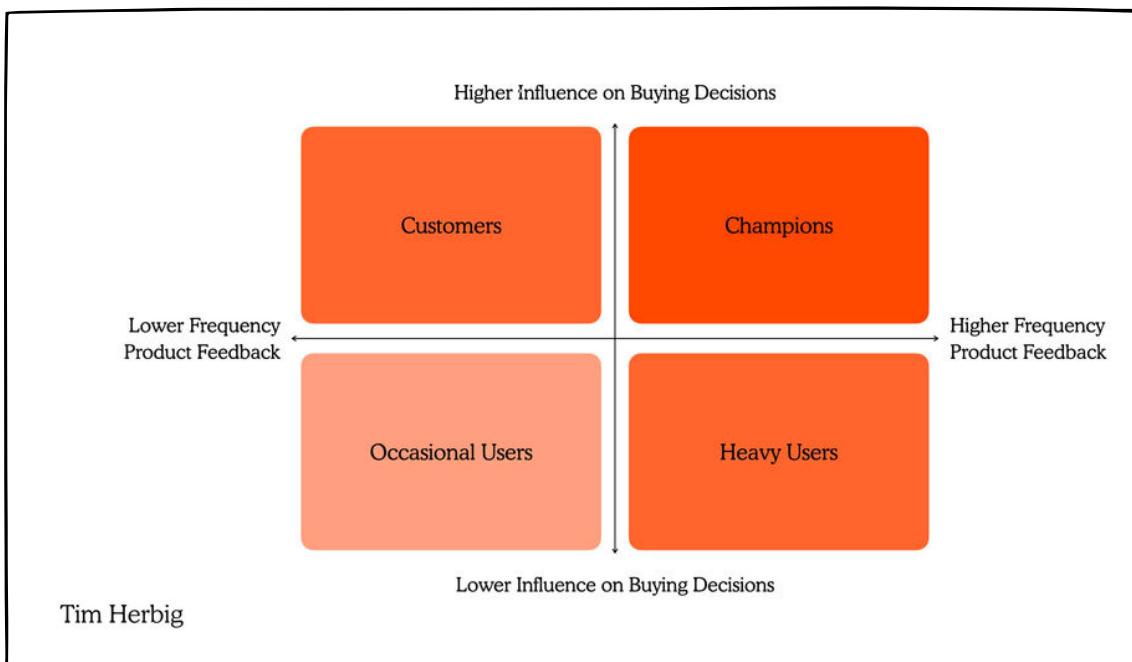


The MAC Cycle of Product Strategy Creation: Mining, Assembling, and Communicating as a repetitive loop

## Difference #1: B2B and B2C audience inputs diverge.

Despite all these similarities, there are a few key differences between B2B and B2C companies. One of the biggest is how to work with the inputs of their chosen strategic audiences.

In B2B, it's common to have a lot of qualitative interactions with either your users, champions, or customers. At Quantilope, Lucas mentioned how close the interaction is with their audience. They closely collaborate with the heavy users and champions to figure out how to address tactical concerns like generating insights efficiently. In addition, the nuances within their B2B audience might be more subtle: While the needs of agency-type customers are not that different overall from those of corporate and enterprise customers, the ranking of priorities can be completely reversed. In Quantilope's case, they make the conscious decision to focus on the Insights departments in corporate and enterprise markets as part of their strategy.



The different dimensions of treating users, champions, and customers in strategic B2B audiences

In contrast, for B2C companies segmenting users is often the main challenge: there are so many dimensions to consider, and you need the quantitative data to support your decision-making.

How, then, do you use more “distant” user inputs in B2C settings when creating your Product Strategy? Hannah perfectly captures the different situations when dealing with B2B and B2C Inputs. Sometimes, B2B users are internal and thus much closer and easier to hear. “That voice can really scream in your ear,” she says, whereas “the B2C customer can seem very, very far away. The only way they can reach you is maybe send an email or give you a bad review in the App Store, right?”

“Sometimes, B2B users are much closer and easier to hear. That voice can really scream in your ear, whereas the B2C customer can seem very, very far away.”

The B2C end user is very important, but much harder to quantify than the voice of the often-talked-to B2B heavy user or champion. So it becomes very difficult to advocate for that voice when it comes to Product Strategy. If you want to make qualitative data a stable input for your Product Strategy, you need to think about how to capture and measure these intangible metrics.

One tactic that Hannah used at Blinkist was to aggregate those customer voices: she established an NPS-like score that aggregated all the various qualitative data points from users into a metric. That allowed her and her team to measure and account for those quieter voices that are further away—and thereby made focusing on them a viable option for Product Strategy choices.

## Difference #2: Strategy choices in B2B and B2C come with different risks.

The different natures of strategic audiences lead to different levels of risk. Changing course in B2C is often simpler than in B2B. When it comes to strategy, you may have a couple of different target segments. You can build a product for them and change a target persona fairly easily (as long as you understand it). B2B is more complex. You have longer sales cycles and different approaches to marketing so deciding to change course in B2B product strategy is way more challenging. You might have to invest upfront in reaching a (new) set of users, champions, and customers, and establish specific distribution mechanisms to deliver a solution to them—before seeing it adopted in their organizations or learning more about the struggles they face in their daily work.

“The path to recognizing when you have to change course in B2B product strategy is way more challenging.”

In B2B, if you take a risk, you are committed for a longer period, and a longer time frame raises the stakes for your company. “In B2C a user is a user,” Stephanie says, “and if their needs change, you probably don’t have to shift your entire organization into a different setup. While in B2B, if you make certain decisions it also means that you have to reorganize your team, so the impact of your decision is bigger and riskier, and the evaluation takes longer. So until it pays off, it might take more time.” That means that experimentation is probably a little easier in B2C, because testing and piloting is faster.

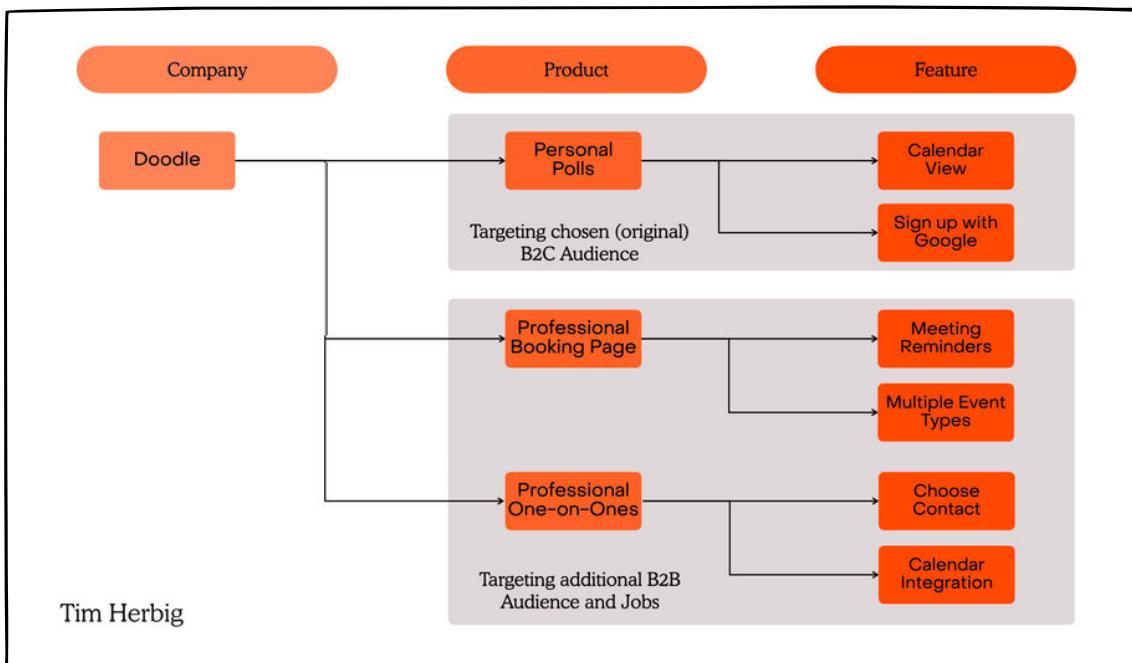
How much risk your company should take on in your Product Strategy is hard to gauge. If your company is running smoothly and meeting growth expectations, then you might take on more risk. If your company is struggling to fit in your market, then you might want to delay taking additional risks. "Finding that balance is challenging," Stephanie says. "I think you need to clearly articulate what's the risk of that bet, what's the evidence behind it, and how big are the risky bets over the next 12 to 18 months. That discussion needs to happen: how much risk do we really want to take and how much risk do we want to avoid as an organization looking at our current setup and at our current business growth?"

"You need to clearly articulate what's the risk of that bet, what's the evidence behind it, and how big are the risky bets over the next 12 to 18 months."

### Difference #3: B2C products can expand to B2B from their proven strategy core.

There's a lot of talk about the "consumerization" of business. While that mostly applies to the design of user interfaces and acquisition channels, it can also be applied to unlocking new business models by bringing proven B2C products into a B2B market.

A great example of this is Doodle, an online meeting scheduling tool. When I talked to Stephanie, she quickly pointed out how difficult it was to categorize Doodle strictly on a traditional B2B vs. B2C scale. Doodle might still be widely perceived as a B2C solution due to the origins of its brand. But five years ago, they made the decision to become a subscription-based service and therefore also address B2B users. This leads to a blend of business models: "We're doing both B2C, which is more monetized for advertising, and B2B, which is monetized through subscriptions," she explains.

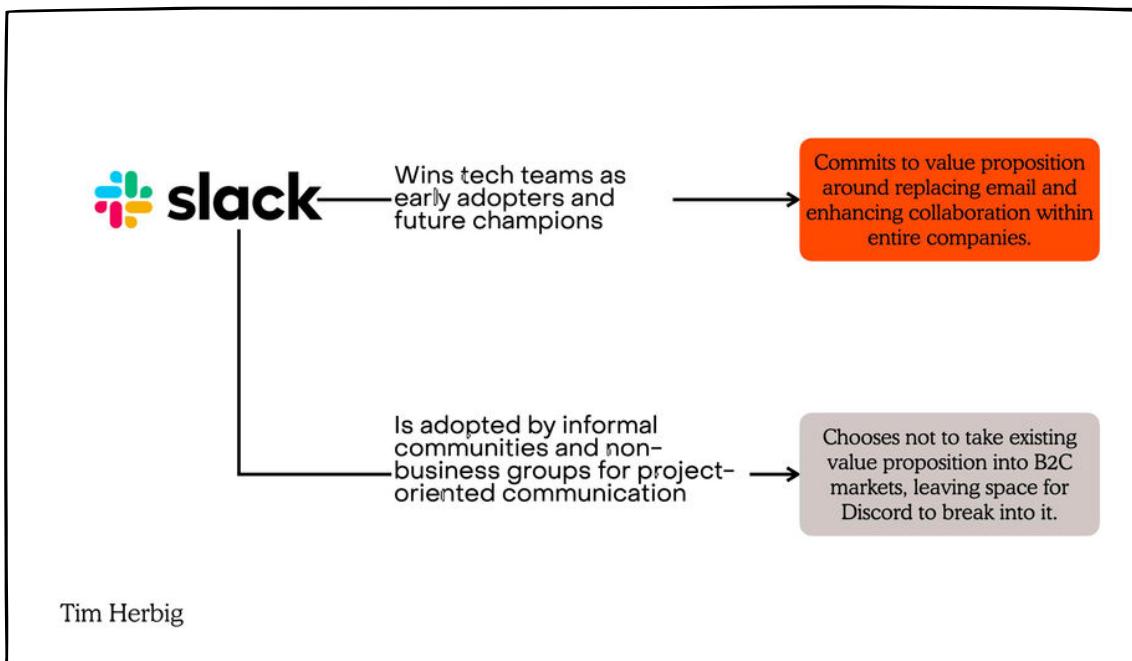


Doodle's strategic audience expansion from B2C to B2B

Another example can be observed at Hannah's previous company, Blinkist. While traditionally a B2C product, they have expanded their offering into a Blinkist Business product that allows companies to offer structured upskilling to teams.

Both Doodle and Blinkist expanded from B2C to B2B by offering their established and proven offerings to a new market with similar needs. They only had to repackaging the offerings and add B2B-specific strategy elements like high touch sales or onboarding for Enterprise clients, as well as single sign-on and administrative functionalities.

The reason this direction of expansion works is that nearly every consumer is part of a business where they bring their "B2C-ized" behaviors with them that influence selection and usage. But the opposite is not true. Needs relevant in a professional business context don't necessarily translate into private consumer life and choices.



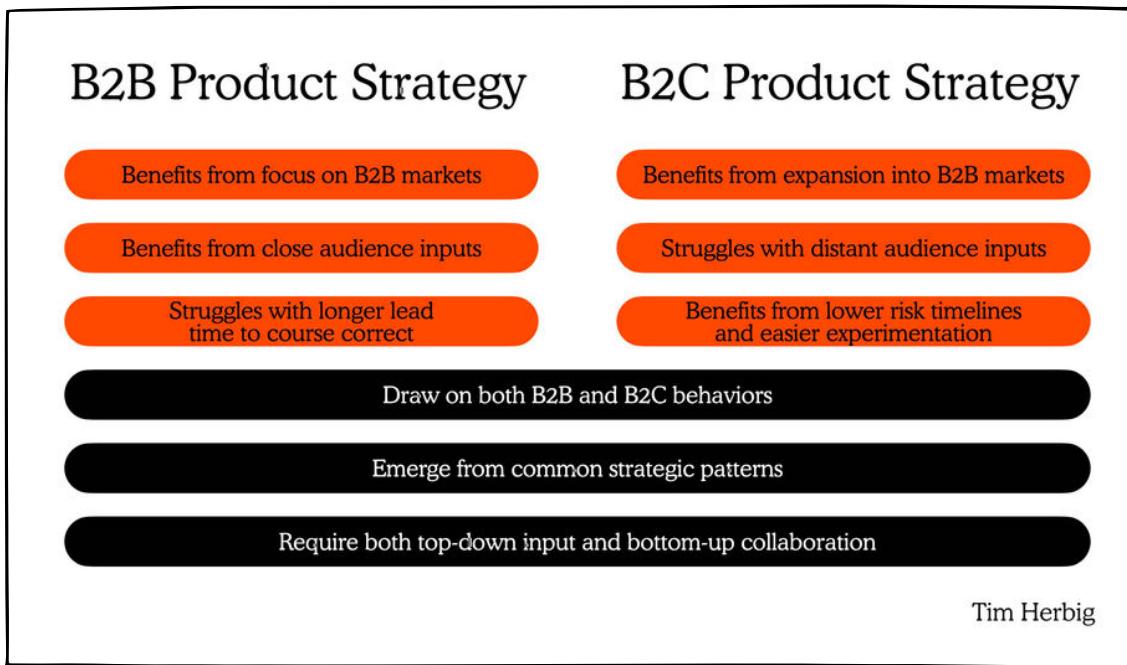
Saying no to B2C opportunities as Slack's clear Product Strategy choice

A prominent example of this is Slack, which started as a product for business teams, but saw their solution getting adopted by communities as well. However, instead of leaning into this new opportunity to monetize from a community-specific offering, Slack stuck to its B2B focus and even deliberately encouraged Discord to break into the B2C space. When asked, Slack CEO Stewart Butterfield said that he regularly said “no” to people who suggested moving into the B2C market for community software because “we can only do so many things well.”

For B2C companies, expanding proven offerings and value propositions into a B2B market might be a viable strategic choice to (continue to) grow, but for B2B companies, expanding into B2C markets can be a deadly distraction.

# The main difference between Product Strategy for B2B or B2C is in the tactical execution, not the fundamental patterns.

As Stephanie concludes, “strategy is freaking hard! No matter how experienced you are, and no matter how many companies you have seen, you always start from scratch. You might have your preferred frameworks. You might have your structure on how to approach strategy. But in the end, it always depends on so many different factors: the environment of the organization, the state of the organization, the success of the organization, the growth, the organization itself, the mindset, the people. There is no one size fits all approach, nor is it done in a week.”



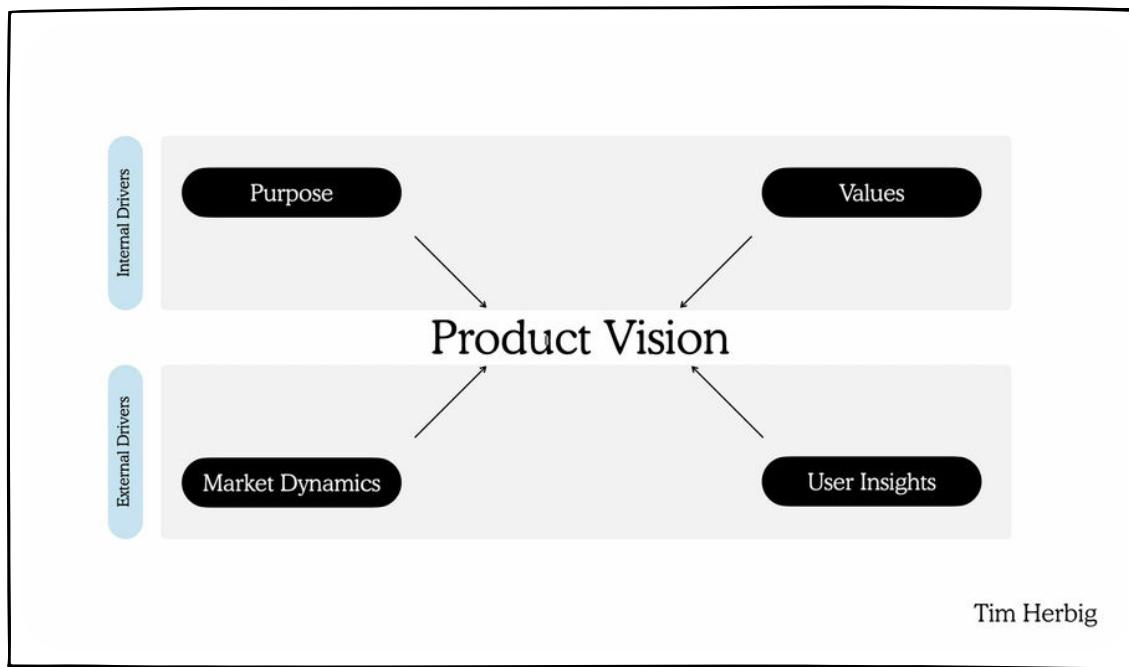
## The Differences and Similarities of B2B Product Strategy and B2C Product Strategy

Starting with Product Strategy Patterns can address these challenges and find the commonalities among the variations. The key insight from my conversations with these colleagues was that Product Strategy across all companies begins with the same question—what does the company want?—but you have to rethink the tooling, so to speak, about how to answer this question in a given environment.

# How to Define an Ambitious Product Vision to Drive your Product Strategy

Using features to describe your Product Vision is like trying to convince fellow hikers to join you on an ambitious route by listing the capabilities of your boots. It explains what's in front of you, but won't get anybody excited about where you want to go. To avoid a disconnect between your ambitions and your user's expectations, you need to balance internal and external inputs to collaborate with your team on Product Vision.

As discussed in [Product Vision vs. Product Strategy](#), Product Vision is an aspirational future state for your users. Your Product Vision should drive your [Product Strategy Choices](#). So make sure you've developed a clear and actionable Product Vision. As the following diagram shows, your Product Vision will have both internal and external drivers.



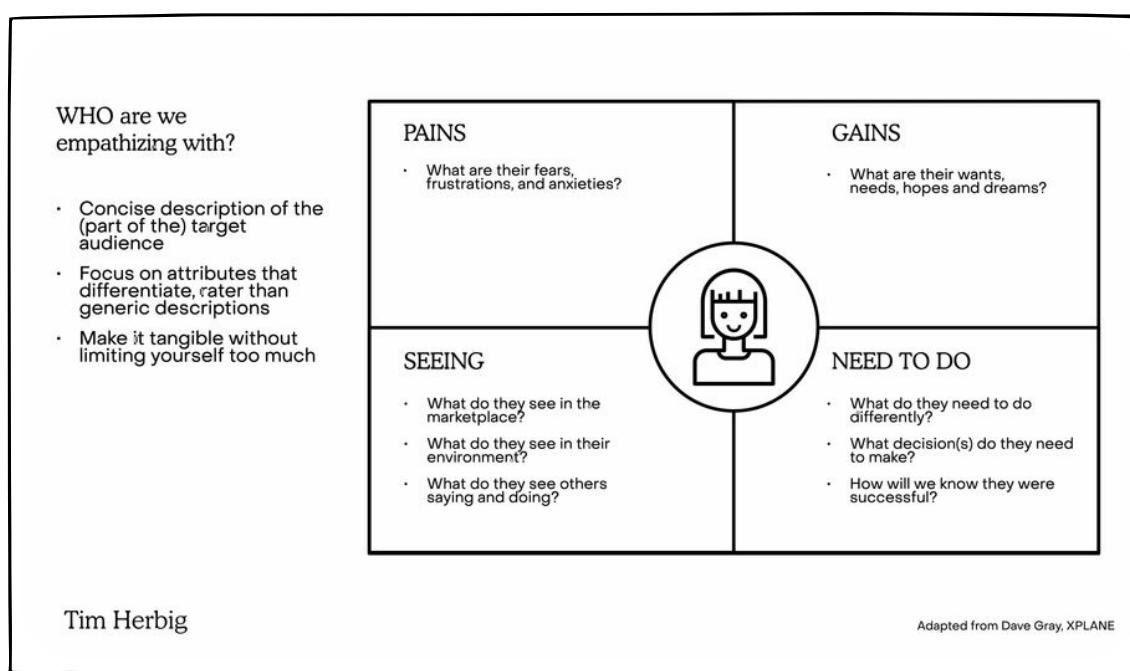
The internal and external Drivers of Product Vision

# Structuring your Approach to Product Vision

Defining your Product Vision from scratch can feel like navigating in the dark. You have to stay true to what matters to your company and the users you want to serve. And while the generic vision statements you can find on the internet look clean and straightforward, in practice they are hard to achieve.

The generic vision statements you can find on the internet look clean and straightforward. But they are hard to achieve in practice.

To be broad and impactful a Product Vision covers a lot of ground and draws on many sources. It's helpful to start by providing structure for what you already know, so set up one or more workshops in house. Consider including tools you already use, like an Empathy Map.



Simplified Empathy Map concept to structure Product Vision creation

An Empathy Map is an effective way to structure the conversation about your users' future needs. While it was initially developed to generate user-centered insights about current patterns, it can also illuminate future states.

My favorite aspect of the Empathy Map is that it keeps the conversation away from features and products. It's all about the user's experience, desired value, and activities. This structure helps steer the (facilitated) group work in the right direction from the start.

An Empathy Map keeps the conversation away from features and products. It's all about the user's experience, desired value, and activities.

By encouraging participants to fill out an Empathy Map with an (aspirational) user state in mind, your discussion about your Product Vision becomes more tangible— and it will be grounded in existing user insights. The future state needn't be too detailed, so the Empathy Map can be simplified.

Depending on the number of participants and their roles, you may want to experiment with your Product Vision workshops. But whether you split people up into groups or engage the entire group together, make sure to give individuals enough time to think and express their perspectives.

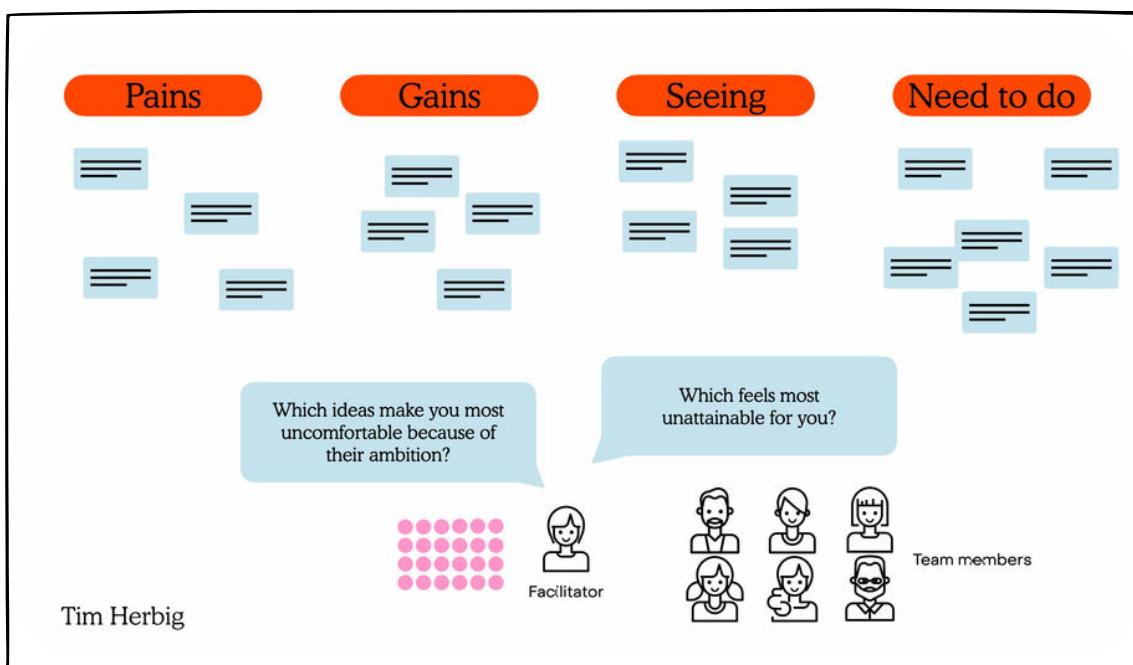
Here's one way to set up an effective Product Vision workshop:

- Decorate your virtual or physical workshop environment with mood boards containing inspiration for the future or quotes from recent user interactions.
- Encourage a “together alone” way of working where there's a couple of minutes of quiet time in which participants map out a user's future state.
- Compare notes and synthesize. This is the moment where the magic happens. The primary purpose of the exercise is to voice everyone's perspectives and spark a conversation between the people who will support your Product Vision over time.

# How to define your Product Vision Statement as a Product Team

Synthesizing all the responses to the Empathy Map into a clear and coherent Product Vision is much like narrowing down the results of a general ideation session. Naturally, similar tools can come in handy.

One option is to lay out all the categories from the Empathy Map and give every team member dots for voting within every area. Pay attention to the framing of the voting. People shouldn't just vote for their "favorite." Use prompts like "which ideas make you most uncomfortable because of their ambition?" or "which feels almost unattainable for you?"

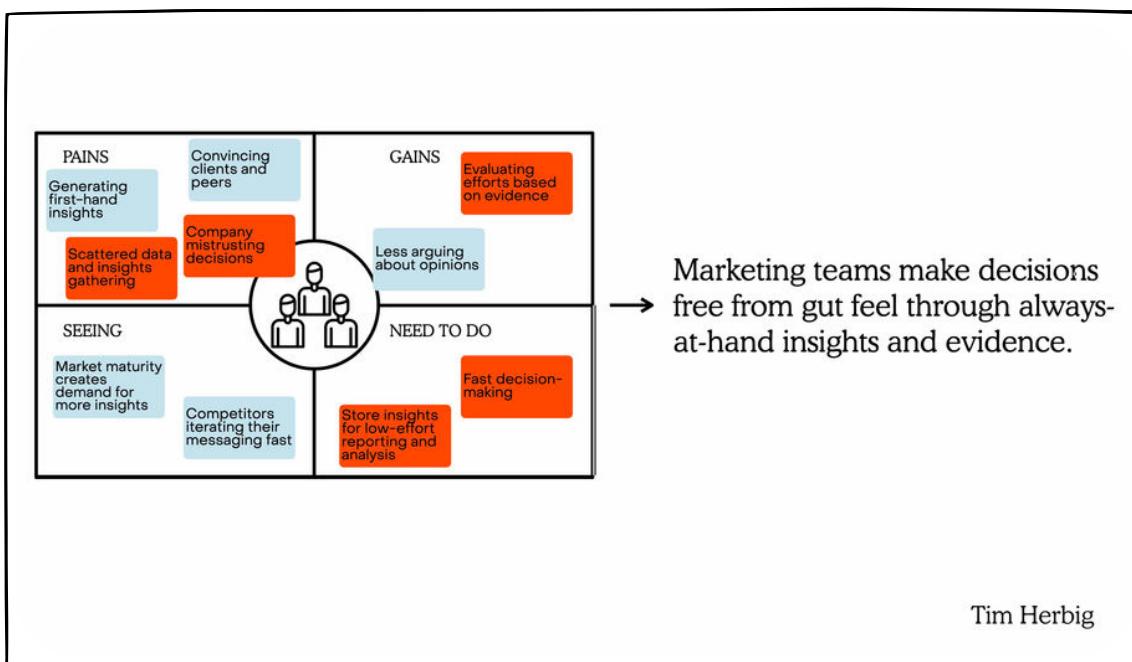


Converging as a group on collected Product Vision inputs

You could also use word clouds to surface some trends and narrow down large results to a more manageable size. After synthesizing your Empathy Map(s), start drafting your Product Vision statement. Don't worry about the format. Concision and aspiration are far more important than the exact number of sentences or words you're using.

And don't get bogged down by other companies' examples. Instead, focus on the essential ingredients of your Product Vision and use your Empathy Map insights to translate them into a statement you can get behind. Be sure to answer these questions:

- Who are your intended users?
- How will they behave, feel, or look in the future compared to today?
- How will your product create this difference?



Defining a Product Vision Statement based on the future state Empathy Map inputs

Remember that your Product Vision should serve as an easily accessible guide. Create, disseminate, and maintain it with that in mind.

# Testing Your Product Vision

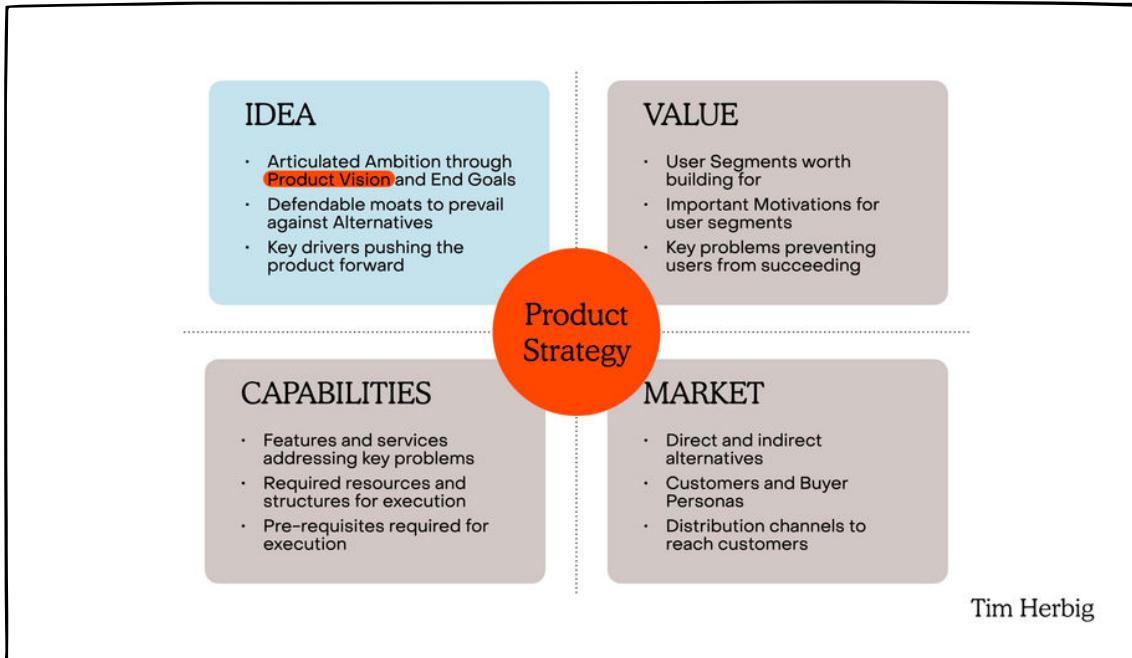
It is often productive—if risky—to test your Product Vision statement by sharing it with peers and stakeholders who were not involved in the initial drafting but are still invested in your success. However, don’t test for general approval or opinions—test for ambition, or comfort-level.

There are multiple ways you can borrow from the testing phase of Product Discovery to get additional feedback at this stage. For example:

- Present readers with your Product Vision and use a 5-ish second test to capture ad-hoc associations.
- Share the vision through a survey and have people rate it on a comfort-level scale to quantify their impressions.
- Share it during an all-hands meeting. After the meeting, ask people to vote or react to it, or ask whether they would come on board to work towards that vision.

## Moving from Product Vision Toward Product Strategy

As I’ve shown, Product Strategy patterns rely on a clearly defined Product Vision. From there, these four pillars can help you develop your Product Strategy: Idea, Values, Capabilities, and Market.



The core pillars of Product Strategy and how they connect to Product Vision

You can start with any pillar. Ultimately, this work should reveal blind spots and potential gaps. If, for example, you're struggling to describe your Market that could reveal a lack of clarity in your Product Vision or missing end goals (for example, IPO vs. Exit vs. Lifestyle Business vs. X).

And if, on the other hand, you're struggling to name your (intended) offering or the needed team skills and structures to deliver them, you may have to create a deeper understanding of your users' problems and motivations.

For more context on the topic of making Product Strategy Choices, check out this video from my YouTube channel:



Regardless of your workflow, your inputs from each pillar should shape your Product Strategy. Understating your Product Vision should keep you focused on existing users.

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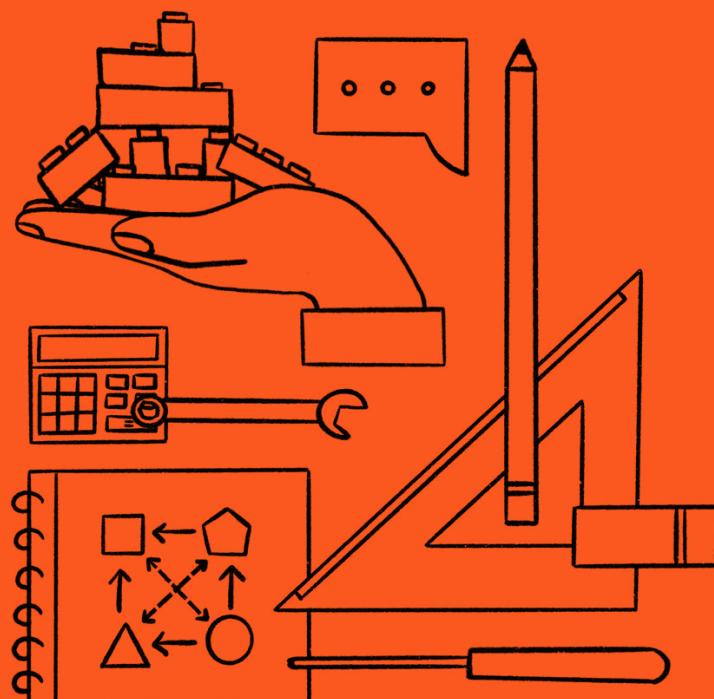
This is not to say that one Product Strategy is, per se, better or more correct than the other. As so often in Product Management, considering the consequences of your choices and responding accordingly is more important than trying to get something right from the get-go.

# Ambitious Product Vision Requires Creativity, Insights, and Structure

Make sure to invest the time and effort in capturing the different perspectives on your team, including your accumulated user insights (i.e. from ongoing Product Discovery and proven Outcomes).

Combine creativity and structure to develop a workflow that works for your product team. Avoid getting distracted by over-simplified templates that discourage ambition.

# Extended Product Strategy Resources



In this chapter, I will share advanced materials that help you connect more aspects of Product Strategy into practice.

Including materials from:

- Ravi Mehta
- Maggie Crowley
- Lenny Rachitsky
- Amy Zima
- Martin Eriksson
- ...and more

# Extended Product Strategy Resources

- The Product Strategy Stack - [Reforge.com](#)

## The Product Strategy Stack

The diagram illustrates the Product Strategy Stack as a vertical flow. At the top are two white rectangular boxes. Below them is a horizontal black bar containing two blue circular nodes with double-headed arrows between them. This is followed by a cross-shaped structure made of four white rectangles, representing a branching or iterative process.

**Product Strategy Stacks vs Product Strategy Frameworks**

Ravi Mehta and Zainab Gadiyali have brought together product leadership experiences from Tinder, Facebook, TripAdvisor, Airbnb, and more to develop the Product Strateg...

- [Maggie Crowley](#) - Twitter.com

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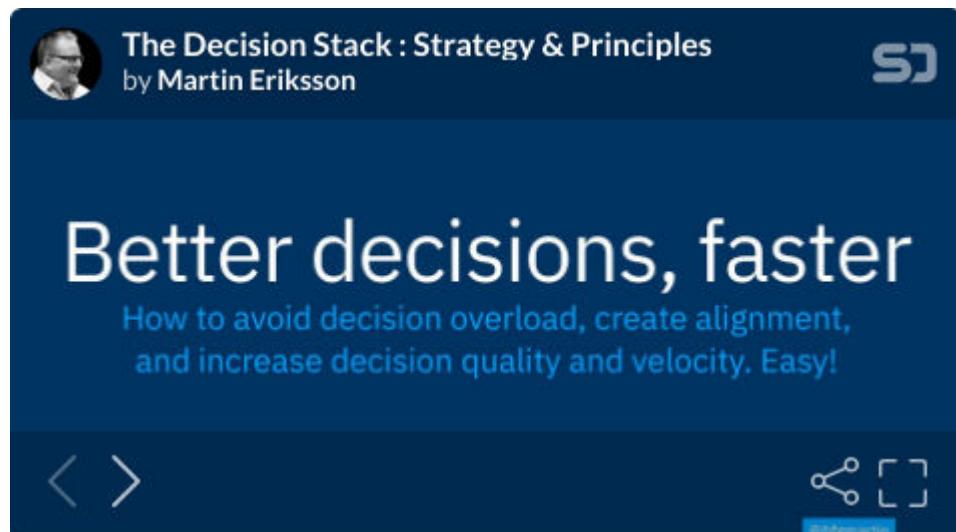
Put another way: strategy is a coordinated a set of decisions, a set of constraints, within which your team will have to make bets.

6:01 PM · Sep 29, 2020

37    Reply    Copy link

Read 1 reply

- The Decision Stack on [speakerdeck.com](#)



- Getting Better at Product Strategy – [Lenny's Newsletter](#)



### Getting better at product strategy

A few years into my tenure at Airbnb, we became increasingly alarmed that a large percentage of booking requests were being rejected, or worse ignored, by hosts...

 Lenny's Newsletter / Sep 8, 2020

- Demystifying Product Strategy - [Amy Zima](#) for Turingfest



### **Demystifying Product Strategy**

Product strategy is a phrase that inspires awe and fear in many Product Managers — yet having a strategy in place is key for growth.

- A Plan is not a Strategy - [Harvard Business Review](#)



- Product Strategy Framework: Offense vs Defense - [Reforge.com](#)

product-strategy-framework-offense-vs-defense  
[Click here to visit the page.](#)

- Beating the Drum of your Product Strategy Tune – Megan Murphy – [mindtheproduct.com](#)



### **Beating the drum of your product strategy tune by Megan Murphy**

In this keynote talk, Megan Murphy, shares how she communicates and enforces Hotjar's product strategy in

- Why Figma Wins - [kwokchain.com](http://kwokchain.com)

## Sequencing Loops

**Why Figma Wins**

Companies are a sequencing of loops. While it's possible to stumble into an initial core loop that works, the companies that are successful in the long term are the...

kwokchain / Jun 10 2020

- A Product Strategy is not just a Vision and Roadmap - [productcoalition.com](http://productcoalition.com)