



**THE  
RDCL TOOLKIT  
FOR VISION-DRIVEN PRODUCTS**

v2.2.0  
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# WHAT'S INSIDE



## The Vision Worksheet

*Use once per product*

Define your product vision using a simple "fill-in-the-blanks" worksheet. You'll learn what makes a good vision, and lay the groundwork for your product strategy.



## The RDCL Strategy Canvas

*Use every 6-12 months*

Build out your cross-functional product strategy by defining your "RDCL": Real Pain Points, Design, Capabilities, and Logistics. You'll learn how to evaluate trade-offs between vision fit and business sustainability, and come up with a strategy to achieve your vision.



## The Integrated Roadmap

*Use and update every 3-6 months (or more)*

Visualize your strategic milestones across time, and assign them to initiatives centered around the right teams and individuals. This isn't your standard product roadmap — it can also include sales, marketing, customer support, and other teams to ensure alignment across all contributors.



## The Execution Model

*Use and update every month (or more)*

Finally, collaborate with your managers and functional area team leaders to break down your strategic goals into concrete activities and measurable outcomes. Each metric is tied to a specific hypothesis of change — no hand-waving allowed! This results in a detailed execution plan, guiding your team toward achieving the vision and building a truly radical product.

PART 1

# DEFINE YOUR VISION



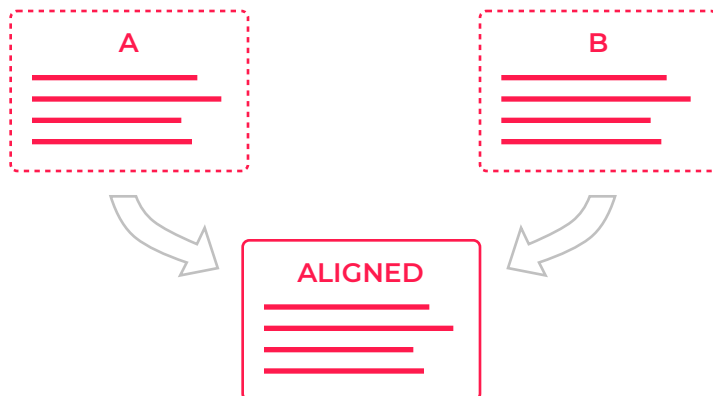


# DEFINE YOUR VISION

## INSTRUCTIONS

There are three **Vision Worksheets** in this section. The first two are meant to be completed by separate individuals or teams. When both individuals or teams have completed their own Vision Development Worksheets, compare notes and use the third Worksheet to capture a single “aligned” version of your vision to move forward with. Focus on big ideas over exact wording — you can always polish it later.

If you’re working alone, that’s OK too! Try to generate two separate versions of your vision on your own, then pick and choose the aspects of each that resonate most with you.



### WHAT’S A “GOOD” VISION?

A “good” vision is **not about you** — it’s about the change you want to see in your corner of the world. A good vision brings your leadership, your team, and your customers into alignment. A great vision will meet all of these criteria:

#### It’s **PROBLEM-CENTERED**:

A good vision **starts with a problem** you want to see solved in the world. You should even be (a little bit) happy if someone else solves it!

#### It’s **SHARED BY CUSTOMERS**:

A good vision should be able to be **shared between your team and your customers**. “To be the world leader in...” is not a good vision, because your customers don’t care. They just want the problem to be solved!

#### It’s **CONCRETE**:

A good vision **visualizes a concrete end state** in which the problem is solved. Be as specific as you can about what that world looks like.



# VISION WORKSHEET

TEAM A

Today, when

customer segment

want to

desirable activity/outcome

they have to

current solution(s)

This is unacceptable,  
because

shortcomings of current solutions

We envision a world where

shortcomings are resolved

We're bringing this  
world about through

broad technology/approach



# VISION WORKSHEET

TEAM B

Today, when

customer segment

want to

desirable activity/outcome

they have to

current solution(s)

This is unacceptable,  
because

shortcomings of current solutions

We envision a world where

shortcomings are resolved

We're bringing this  
world about through

broad technology/approach



# VISION WORKSHEET

## ALIGNED VISION

Today, when

customer segment

want to

desirable activity/outcome

they have to

current solution(s)

This is unacceptable,  
because

shortcomings of current solutions

We envision a world where

shortcomings are resolved

We're bringing this  
world about through

broad technology/approach

PART 2

# DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY







# DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY

## INSTRUCTIONS

Use the **RDCL Strategy Canvas** to guide you in identifying the “RDCL” components of your product strategy:



**Real Pain Points:** What validated problems will your product solve for your users or customers?



**Design:** What will be the most important outward-facing parts of your product? What experience and emotions will your product and brand convey?



**Capabilities:** How will you deliver on the promises made by your product's design? What technology, expertise, data, partnerships, or other capabilities must you develop?



**Logistics:** How will your product get into your customers' hands? How will you support it? How will people pay? Is there a subscription or upgrade model?

As you come up with your RDCL strategy items, position them within each section of the canvas based on:



**Vision Fit:** Would doing this move you closer to your vision, or further away?



**Sustainability:** Would doing this give you more or less financial security and sustainability?

## THE VISION VS. SUSTAINABILITY TEST

### VISION INVESTMENT



Good vision fit, but unsustainable. Lots of items in this quadrant may mean you need to raise funding if you don't have the cash on hand.

### IDEAL



Good vision fit **and** sustainable. If you're lucky enough to have lots of items in this quadrant, you've probably found a winning strategy.

### DANGER!



Poor vision fit **and** unsustainable. Only accept items in this quadrant if they unlock valuable opportunities in the future.

### VISION DEBT



Poor vision fit, but sustainable. Items in this quadrant represent vision debt that will eventually have to be paid back.

Once you have captured your product strategy on the Canvas, step back and take a look how many items landed in each “**vision vs. sustainability**” quadrant. Ensure that you are striking the right balance between vision fit and sustainability for your current situation. If you are cash-poor and far from raising funds, err on the side of sustainability. If you have already drifted from your vision and are at risk of losing sight of it entirely, err on the side of vision fit.

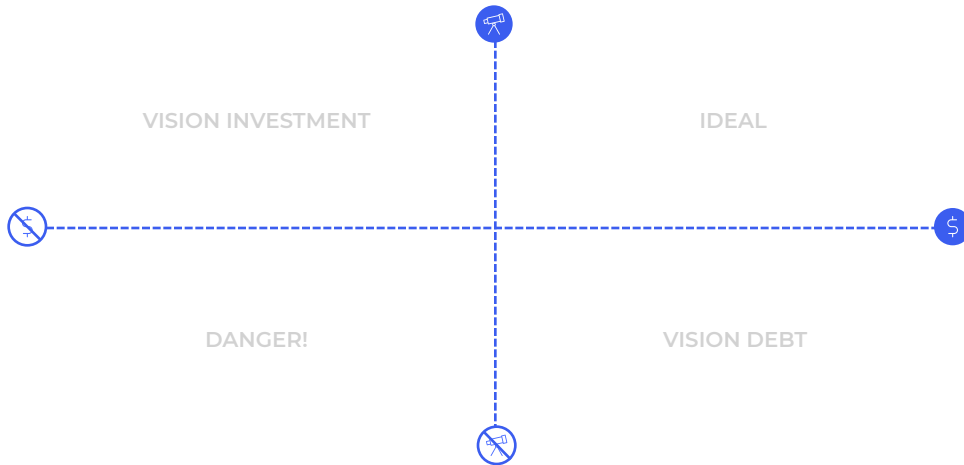


# RDCL STRATEGY CANVAS



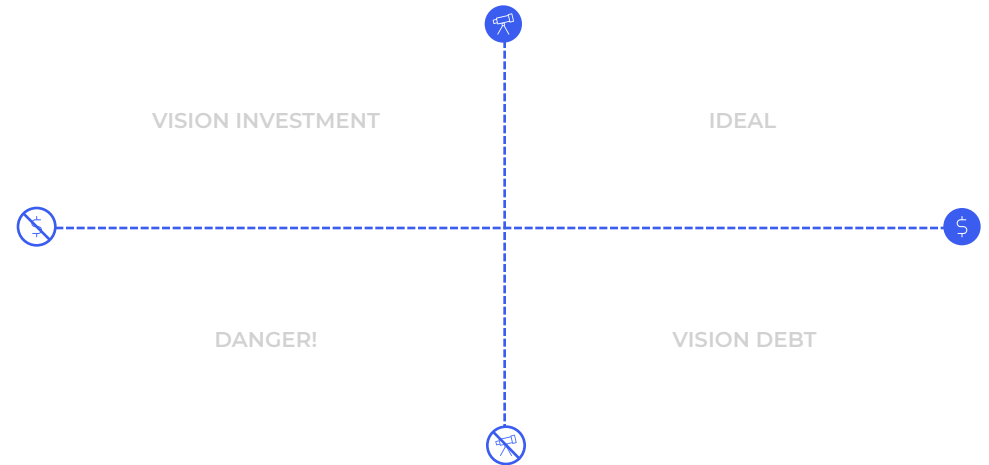
## REAL PAIN POINTS

Validated problems that your product will solve



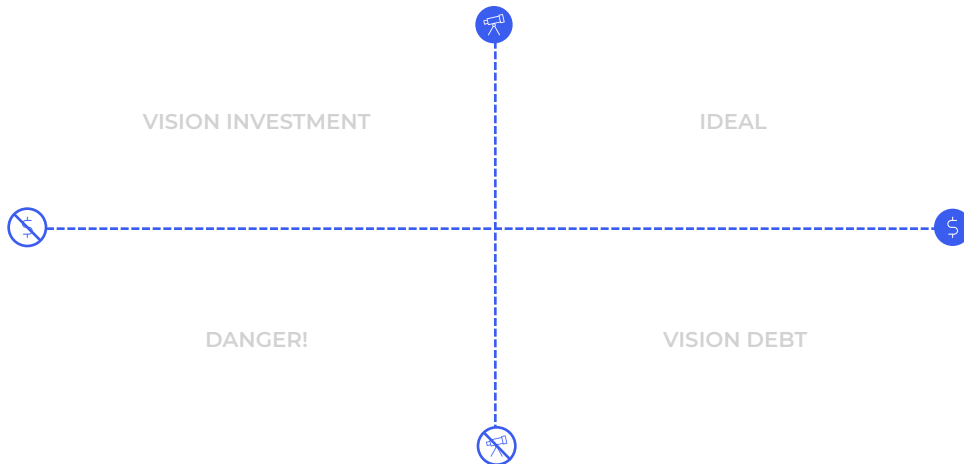
## DESIGN

Key outward-facing product components, branding, voice & tone



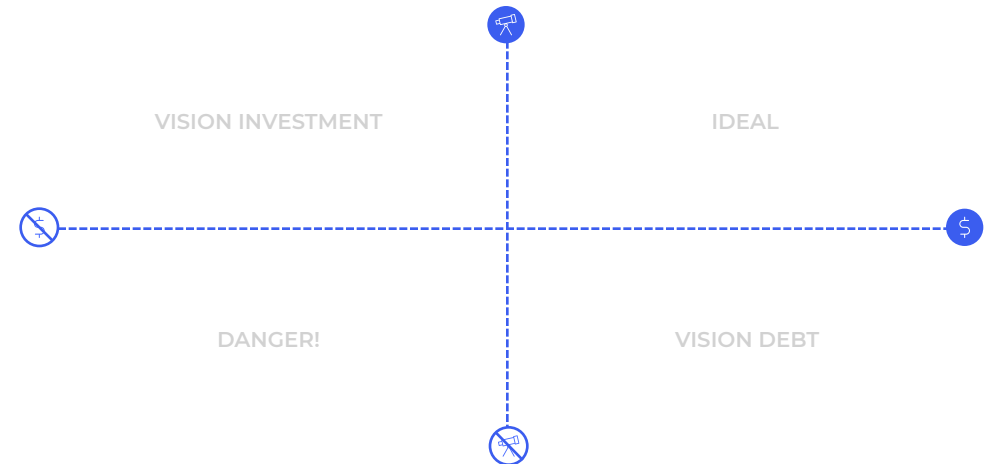
## CAPABILITIES

Enabling assets (technologies, content, patents, data, relationships)



## LOGISTICS

Last mile and beyond (pricing, delivery, installation, support)



## PART 3

# CREATE YOUR ROADMAP





# CREATE YOUR ROADMAP

## INSTRUCTIONS

Group together items in your RDCL Strategy Canvas into “**Initiatives**” and assign them to specific responsible individuals and teams. Some examples of common Initiatives and their usual associated teams are:

Initiative	Team
Pricing Strategy	VP Marketing + CFO
Customer Outreach	Head of UX + Head of Sales
Technology Development	Engineering
Product Design	Design + Engineering
Branding	Marketing + Copywriter

Once your Initiatives have been assigned, identify key milestones for each. A milestone represents a concrete step toward achieving the Initiative as a whole. Use the past tense to help visualize the milestone as a concrete moment in time, such as: “Initial product launched to 100 pre-sales customers.”

Use the **Now**, **Next**, and **Later** columns to capture your future milestones over the appropriate timeline. In a large enterprise with long development cycles, “Now” may represent the next several quarters. For a smaller startup, “Now” may be a matter of a few months, or even weeks.

As you evaluate your Integrated Roadmap, ensure that the timelines make sense across all Initiatives and responsible teams. This is your opportunity to align and coordinate different teams to help them execute most effectively on your RDCL strategy.

### WHAT IF I'M NOT SURE WHAT MILESTONES WE SHOULD SET?


That's OK! Your Integrated Roadmap is a high-level view of the expected milestones needed to achieve your strategic goals **based on your knowledge at the time**. As you go about achieving these milestones, you are likely to learn new things, run into unexpected roadblocks, and develop a deeper understanding of the issues.

While your vision should **never** fundamentally change, and your strategy should evolve only with great deliberation, your roadmap needs to respond to changing conditions. **You should plan to revisit the Integrated Roadmap on a regular basis.**

We recommend revisiting your Integrated Roadmap once every two or three months — or even more often, if there are major uncertainties in your planned milestones.



# INTEGRATED ROADMAP

INITIATIVES (FROM RDCL CANVAS)	RESPONSIBLE TEAMS & INDIVIDUALS	MILESTONES		
		 Now _____ TIMELINE	 Next _____ TIMELINE	 Later _____ TIMELINE

## PART 4

# EXECUTE AND MEASURE





# EXECUTE AND MEASURE

## INSTRUCTIONS

It's time to translate your milestones from your Integrated Roadmap into measurable **activities**, **hypotheses**, and **expected results**. This is the final step toward developing an actionable, vision-driven product plan.

First, transfer your Now, Next, and Later milestones from your Integrated Roadmap to the **Execution Model**, using one Execution Model page per Initiative in your Integrated Roadmap. Each of these Initiatives should be clearly assigned to a responsible individual or team. Then, for each set of milestones, discuss and answer the following questions:



**Activities:** What actions do we think this team need to take to achieve these milestones within the expected timeframe?



**Hypotheses:** What is the expected result of our activities? How, specifically, will these activities lead to the milestone being achieved?



**Key Metrics:** What can we measure to ensure that our hypothesis is correct, and that our activities are having the desired impact?

For Key Metrics, **favor leading metrics over trailing ones** — that is, try to seek measurements that will show success or failure as early as possible, so you can test your hypotheses and adjust your planned activities if necessary.

## DON'T WORK IN A VACUUM!

Among all of the exercises in this Toolkit, the Execution Model is the most important to collaborate on with the rest of your team. **Do not try to complete this exercise without involving the individuals named on the top of each page.**

This is not just important for getting buy-in. You need the input of individuals with deep, domain-specific implementation knowledge to understand how certain activities will help achieve the product strategy goals, as well as to identify which leading metrics are most likely to predict success.

Congratulations! You've completed one iteration of the Radical Toolkit, and have brought your product and team closer to being truly vision-driven.







Remember to revisit each of these exercises on a periodic basis to ensure you are still on track. Recommended usage frequency for each can be found on the **What's Inside** page of this toolkit.



# EXECUTION MODEL

INITIATIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSIBLE TEAM / INDIVIDUAL: \_\_\_\_\_

ROADMAP MILESTONES	 <b>ACTIVITIES</b> What do we need to do?	 <b>HYPOTHESES</b> What is the expected result?	 <b>KEY METRICS</b> How will we know we are on track?
 <b>Now</b> _____ <small>TIMELINE</small>			
 <b>Next</b> _____ <small>TIMELINE</small>			
 <b>Later</b> _____ <small>TIMELINE</small>			











# EXECUTION MODEL

INITIATIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSIBLE TEAM / INDIVIDUAL: \_\_\_\_\_







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 <b>Next</b> _____ <small>TIMELINE</small>			
 <b>Later</b> _____ <small>TIMELINE</small>			



# EXECUTION MODEL

INITIATIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSIBLE TEAM / INDIVIDUAL: \_\_\_\_\_

ROADMAP MILESTONES	 <b>ACTIVITIES</b> What do we need to do?	 <b>HYPOTHESES</b> What is the expected result?	 <b>KEY METRICS</b> How will we know we are on track?
 <b>Now</b> _____ <small>TIMELINE</small>			
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