



Know what
features to
build first.



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Headway

Headway partners with startups and corporate innovation teams to create software and applications through product strategy, design, and development.

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Have a question?
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01

Don't waste
investment
on features
nobody will
pay for



When building software, it's easy to think that more features, bells and whistles equate to more value for your customers. But that's rarely the case.

The old adage "less is more" rings true here (as it does in so many other areas). When more features are added into your product, it can become too many things to too many people - adding to confusion and overwhelming your customers during onboarding.

At Headway, we know that you want to launch and grow products that customers love so that your business will thrive. In order to do that, you need to make the right decisions. There are a lot of them, and you're afraid of making the wrong ones.

We're here to help you make the right decisions so your product can be successful.

This guide will help you:

- Not waste time and money on features that don't create results
- Think about how to peel back layers of the features and vision you have
- Take an outcome-driven approach to product creation, instead of trying to pick a use-case for the features you've created
- Think more holistically about your customers and the journey they're on through your application

Create clarity to reveal the value

The first step to clarity is gaining an understanding of who your customers are, what journey they're on, and what they are looking to achieve by hiring your product. Once you've identified the problems to solve and opportunities to make their lives better, you can start proposing potential solutions. From there, validation can begin.

It's far better to focus on doing one, maybe two things, really well - and focus on solving those better than any competitor or substitute. As you deliver on your product or brand's value and promise, you can observe your customer needs, understand their behavior, and identify better ways to add more value.

Build the most valuable features first

Establish a foundation

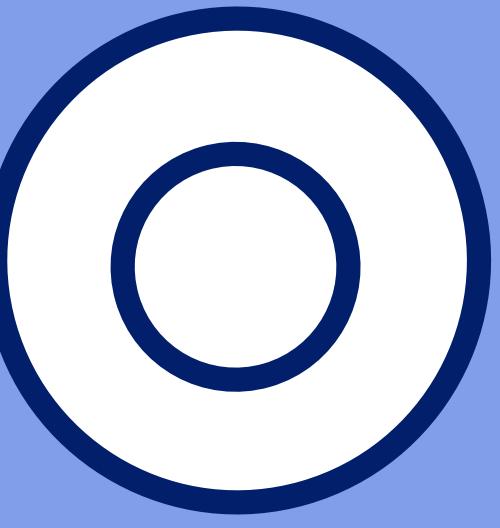
As we build new software products, it's often for dual purposes. The first and most important is prioritizing which features provide the most value. While showing value to potential customers and helping sell and validate prototypes, we help cast the vision that the product could have 1, 3, or 5 years down the road to potential investors or internal stakeholders. Both are important - one sets you up for short-term success, the other helps you get essential buy-in for funding, support, and dissemination.

The whole concept is simple:

Keep your product lean and focused.

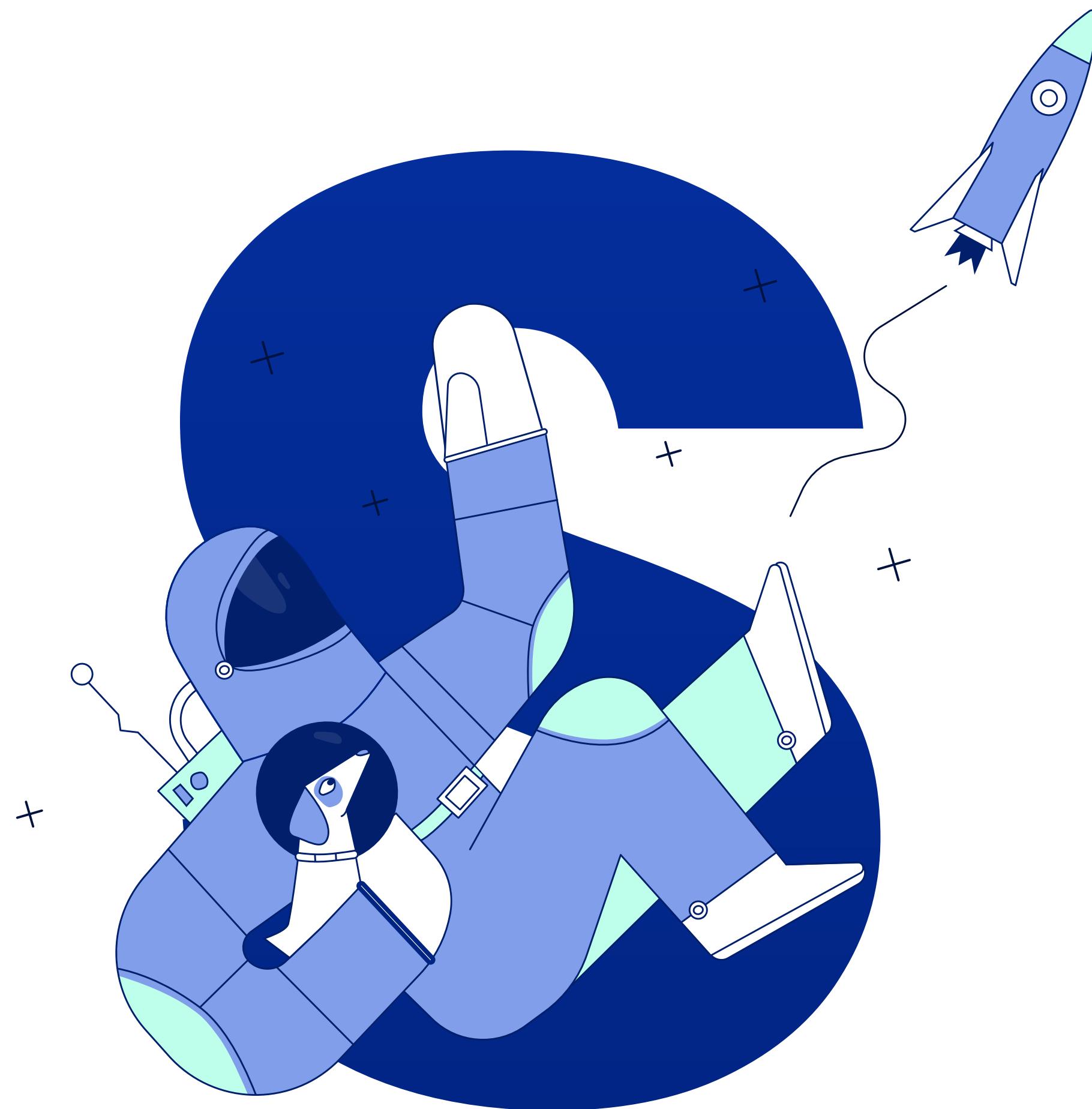
Build what you're most confident will provide valuable outcomes for your customers. As your product is alive in your customers' hands, you can observe their behavior, have conversations with them about what's working and what's not, and analyze usage metrics to see if you're delivering on your promises.

Part of the lean startup methodology is paring down your grand product vision into one that can focus on the highest point of pain, most reduction of risk, and deliver the most value or time savings



02

The only
constant
is change



The whole concept is simple: keep your product lean and focused.

You may be familiar with more traditional methods of placing priority - based on High, Medium, or Low. These tags and discussions can be helpful, but miss the mark when it comes to looking at them from a customer's perspective.

One framework and method we use with our clients throughout the product life cycle is **MoSCoW Prioritization**.

MoSCoW is an acronym for Must have, Should have, Could have, Won't have.

When having your discussions around priority, keeping a customer-centric lens is essential. Without it, your priorities will most likely represent your team's preferences - not the end experience you're creating.

03

The MoSCoW method





The MoSCoW lens helps organize thoughts and features - and lower the risk of building the wrong thing.



M

Must Have

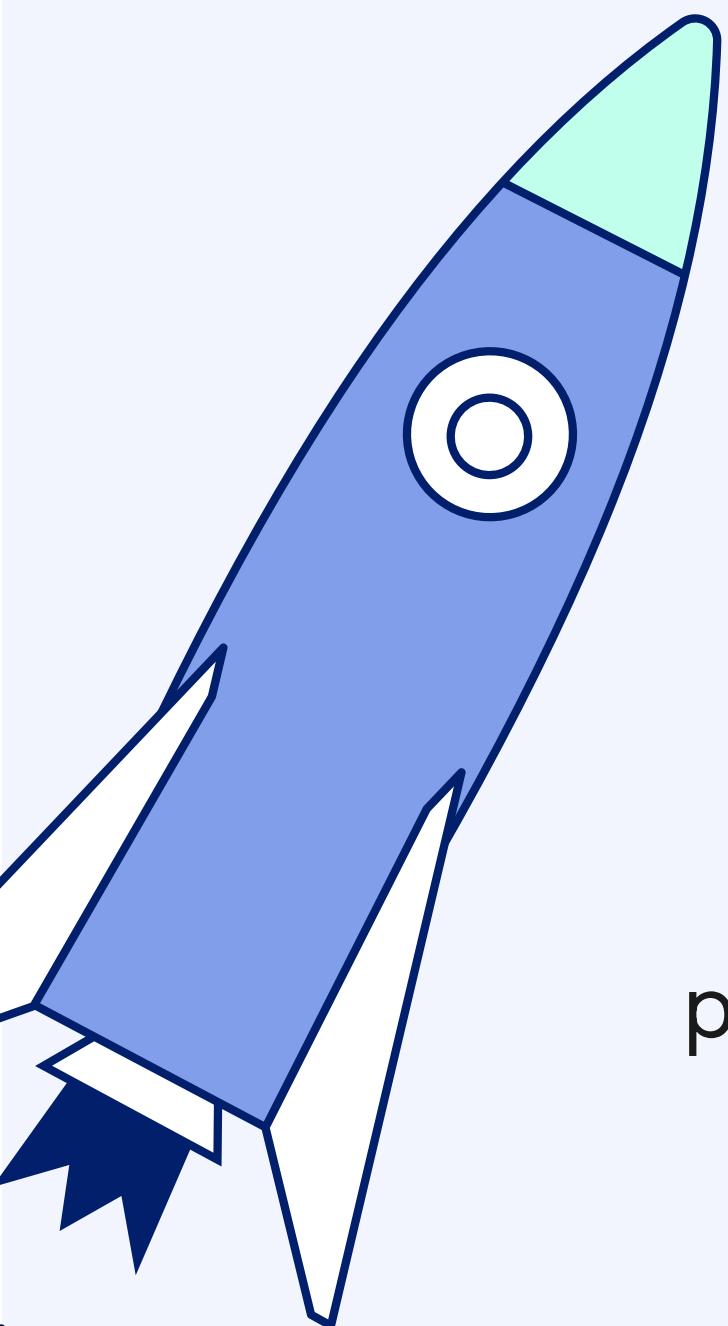
Must have features are ones that need to perform and look the best. These are your non-negotiables.



S

Should Have

Should have features will provide value to your company and user - but the level of fidelity, polish, and UX is flexible. There is room for negotiation here.



C

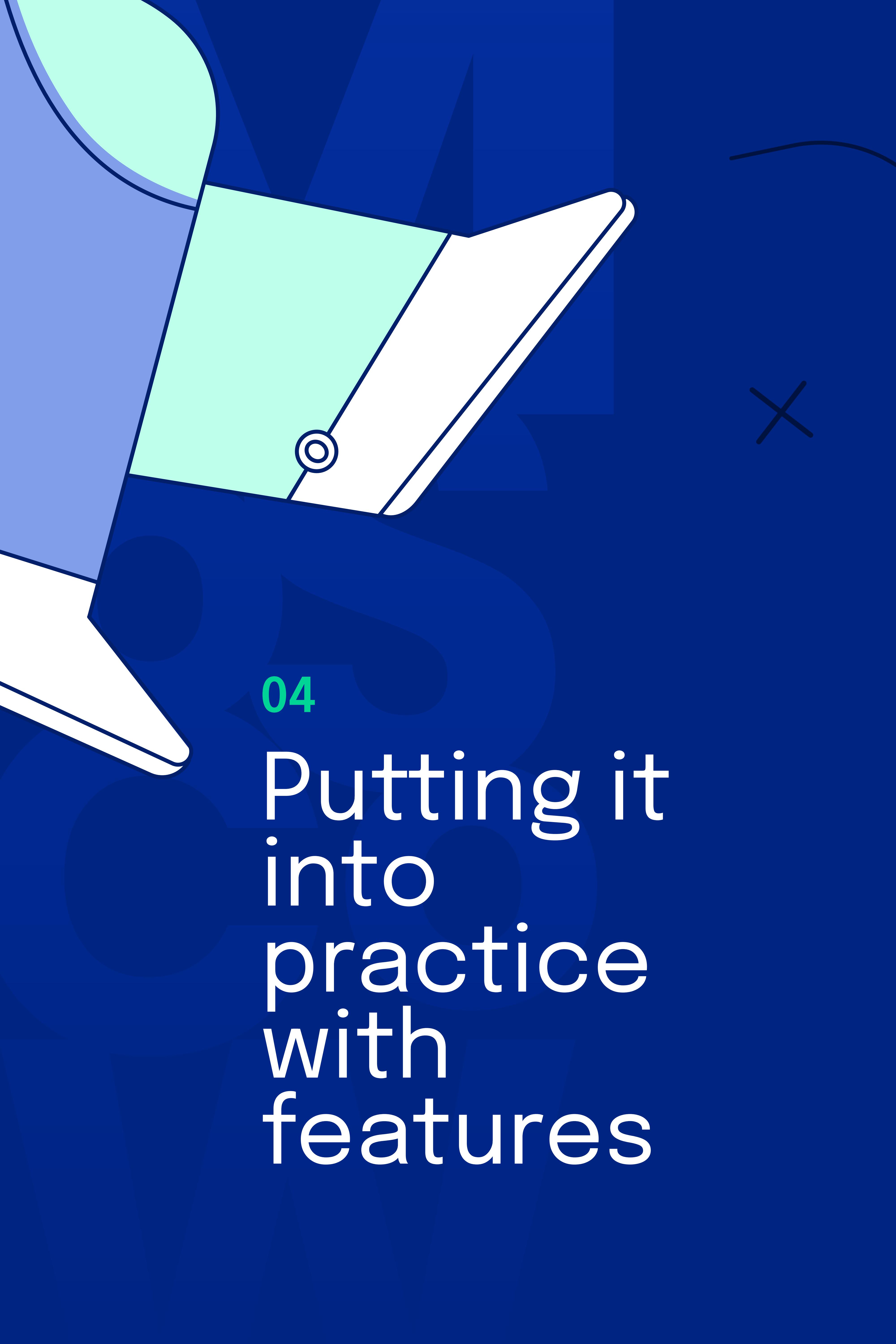
Could Have

Could have features are ones that might make it into your product. They are the “nice to haves” and provide some value – but not enough to be your product’s core.

W

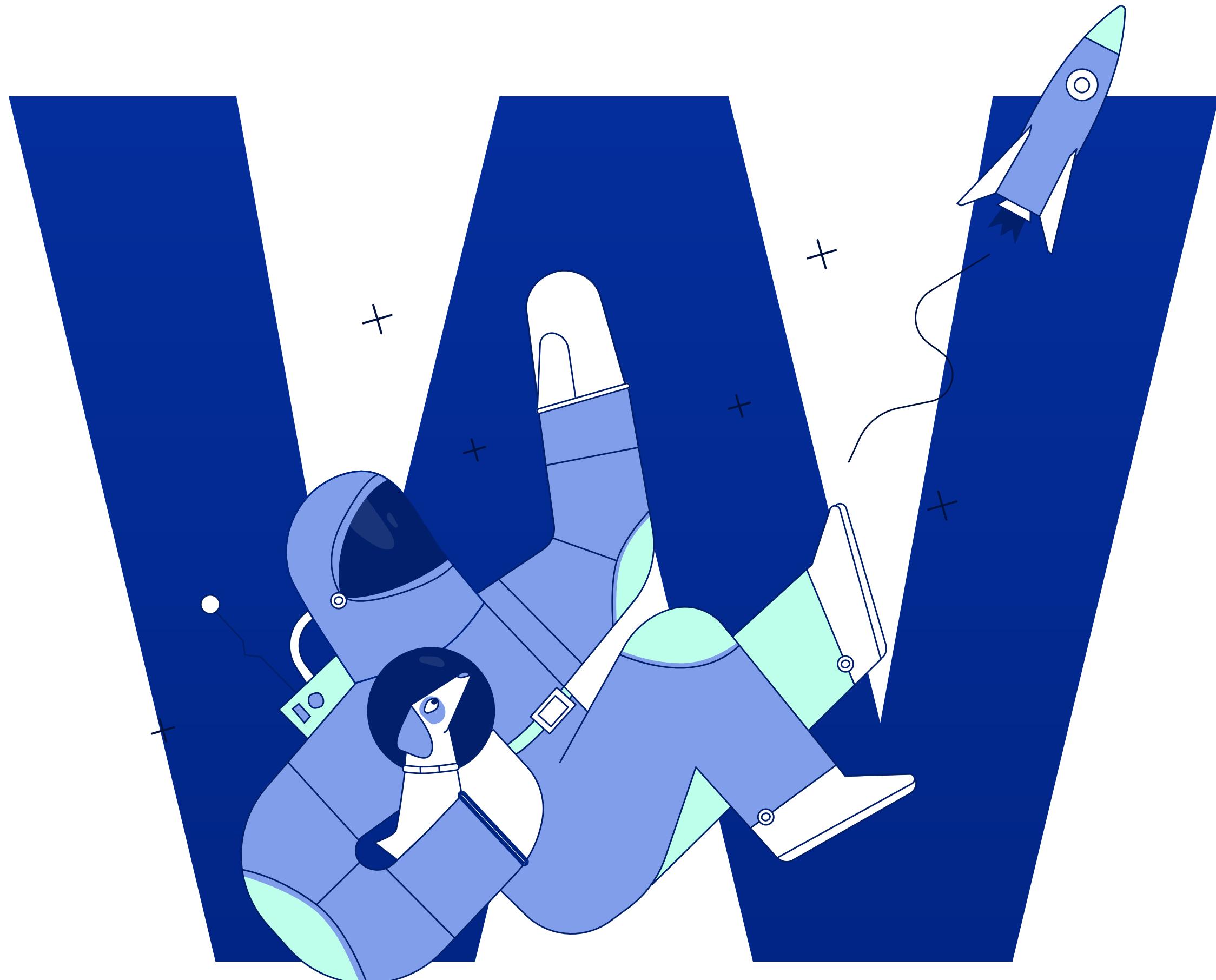
Won’t Have

Won’t have features are ones the team agrees should be in a future phase of the product, should the data hold up. These won’t be a part of the first version.



04

Putting it into practice with features



MoSCoW is not only beneficial for launching products with the most valuable features first. You can also use the process to prioritize the next features or improvements you should make to a product.

What improvements can you make to a feature that will take less effort and create excellent outcomes?

While high effort features and improvements can be impactful, when budgets and resources are limited, it is wise to tackle low effort tasks that still create more value for your customers.

One core feature could deliver the most valuable outcome to your customers, while a thousand smaller features and tweaks could go unnoticed.

A common pitfall to avoid is adding “one more feature” because “it’s so quick and easy” and “we have time left.” Practicing discipline with prioritization and execution will add up over time and help you build a leaner, more valuable product.

Here are some examples of how the MoSCow method could be used for launching or improving a particular feature.

Login

When developing a login or onboarding process for a minimum viable product, your budget may not allow you to create a fully polished experience with all of the bells and whistles you'd like. Here is how the MoSCoW method could be applied to your login experience.

Must Have

Basic login functionality with standard email and password so customers can access the platform.

Should Have

Two-factor authorization (2FA) with SMS and email to confirm a user has access to the assets they added in their account.

Could Have

Allow users to have social login and oAuth with Google account, Twitter, or Facebook.

Won't Have

Two-factor authorization with software and hardware capabilities.

Reporting and stats

When creating dashboards with data, it can be easy to make it look pretty and have incredible customization. Just because you can, doesn't mean you should. What is the most valuable information to provide to your customers first? As they use the product in the real world, you'll start to uncover what you can build next to keep making the product more valuable to them. That's how you get customers to stay.

Must Have

Basic reporting graphics and broad statistics show users their performance in the last 7, 14, and 30 days. Show the data on simple tables.

Should Have

Charts, graphs, and data should be showcased in an exciting way that aligns with brand standards, with customizable time frames.

Could Have

Custom views of data based on filter sets, ability to export data from tables.

Won't Have

Automatically deliver custom reporting each week to the team and stakeholders via email.

Scoping MoSCow in sprints

Backlog tasks and stretch goals

Let's say you have some backlog tasks that you wish to tackle for your product. MoSCow can help you decide which tasks can help you make the most significant impact.

With MoSCoW, you could either use it to dedicate valued time to the backlog or to define which tasks would fit nicely into a stretch goal for your team.

Considerations:

- Consider low effort, but high value to your customers first
- Improve your current product and features before digging into new ideas
- If high effort and high value are worth the immediate investment based on new data you have collected (customer feedback, market shifts, industry news, etc.), consider a more significant dedication to it as a regular sprint item and remove it from the backlog

Using MoSCoW as your product matures

The beauty of this framework is that it works as well on day one as it does on day one thousand of your product. Your teams may split and specialize in parts of your product instead of the whole - but you can gain clarity across your organization and features through one product journey.

Tools and resources

Stories On Board

We use and recommend Stories on Board for roadmap prioritization. While not the greatest user experience in some cases, it's a great tool that helps bring the product, design, and development together. You can create multiple swim lanes for questions, future/nice-to-have features, and have conversations around how your features deliver the outcomes your customers desire.

[Get Started with Stories On Board](#)

storiesonboard.com

Notion Template

Before we get started with a project, we like to have conversations with founders and prospective clients around their expectations for how they will deliver valuable outcomes to their users. In this, we've created a table-based notion template that you can use to start thinking about the different phases of your product.

[Access Notion Template](#)

<http://bit.ly/moscow-template>

It's time to launch your product with confidence

Are you still not sure what to do next?
That's okay.

You have a lot of important decisions to make for your business to succeed.

We're here to help.

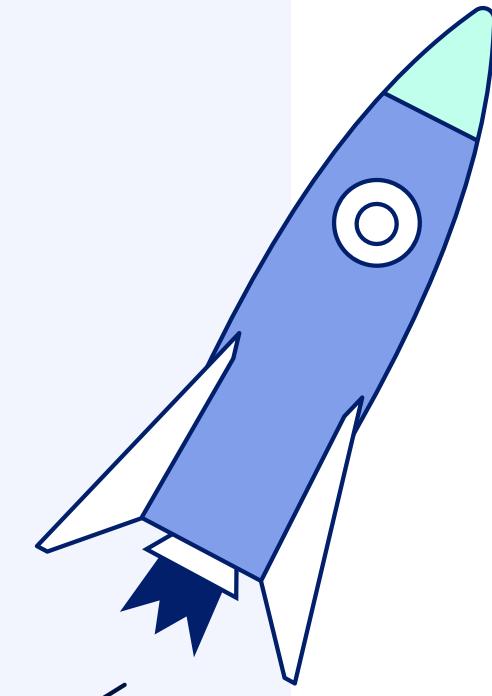
We've helped over 50 companies just like you bring their products to market and keep them there.

With our startup mindset, we will help you create the best strategy to successfully launch your product and reduce your risk of failure.

If you're ready to start gaining traction...

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We can't wait to see how we can help you move forward.

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