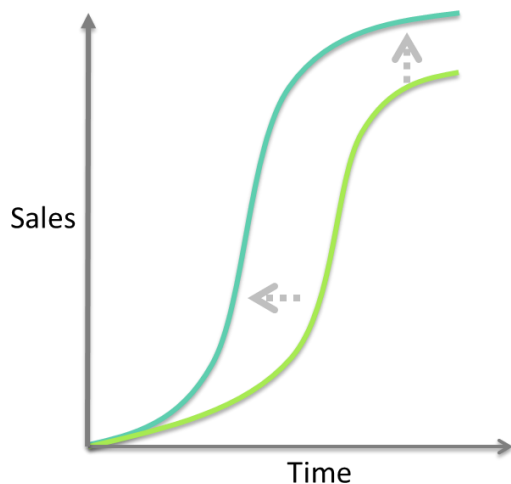# Launch planning

We want ***impactful launches*** to…
- Pull forward the sales ramp
- Increase total lifetime sales
  - *Versus a quiet whimpering launch*

Technology companies often ***underinvest*** in product launches

Requires ***significant upfront planning***
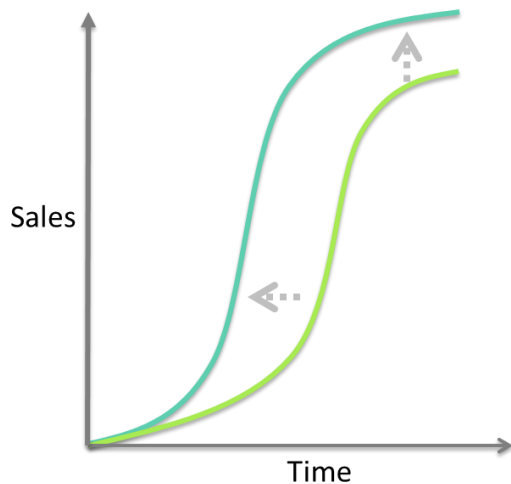- More than lean, Agile teams are used to

The ***payoff*** can be large

Often tied to ***launch windows***
- Might only be once/year
- Major tradeshows or industry events

As a product manager, you might be the first to ***identify an opportunity*** for a major launch
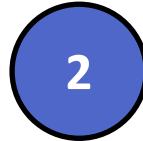
Launch planning
Step-by-step

1. Start by ***identifying a Priority 1 launch opportunity.*** You should work with the other product managers on your team and determine if you have a major launch opportunity over the next year. You should also talk to your marketing and sales teams and get their input.

2. If you are feeling confident that you have a major opportunity – then ***get buy-in from your management*** and executives.

3. Next ***charter a launch team.*** Note that you might be doing this 4-6 months prior to a major launch (this type of planning takes time). Include 1-2 people from your marketing team, and maybe someone from your sales, customer success, and technical support groups.

4. ***Develop a launch plan.*** You can use the outline I've provided as a starting point.

5. ***Set clear expectations with your development team*** about feature and new product release timing. If we are planning a major launch, we need to have predictable new product development timing (not "whenever we are ready")

6. ***Run the plan.*** Have monthly reviews with your management team.

7. ***Launch and track*** your success via key metrics.

8. ***Learn and get better.*** Do a retrospective. What went well? What could be improved for next time?

Launch priority

1
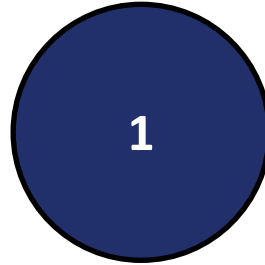
Major strategic launch
High company priority. Big news for the market, strong competitive advantages, solid revenue/profit growth potential. A "big play" for company.

2

Supporting launch
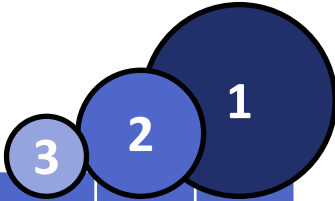*New features, product enhancements, line extensions*

3

Maintenance launch
Bug fixes, quality improvements, cost-reductions

Launch deliverables
By launch priority

Item	3	2	1
Planning — Launch plan			◆
Budget management			◆
Marketing — Basic marcom: Website updates, sales brochures, social media		◆	◆
Advanced marcom: launch videos, whitepapers, launch events			◆
Press & key opinion leader outreach / press release			◆
Marketing programs and promotions			◆
Sales & account management — Communication to sales reps & other internal teams	◆	◆	◆
Communication to channel partners		◆	◆
Communication to clients (existing + trial)		◆	◆
Sales tools and presentations for sales teams		◆	◆
Training of sales teams on product, key benefits, how to demo, how to sell, etc.			◆

Launch plan

For Priority 1 launches

	Launch plan - outline	
1	**Market environment**	Target customers and their needs, market trends, competition
2	**Product**	Description, value proposition, competitive differentiation, pricing
3	**Launch planning**	Top level approach and timing, budget, goals & metrics
4	**Messaging**	Compelling messaging around the product benefits
5	**Awareness, interest, preference**	Guiding customers through the buyer's journey with targeted content. Launch events, social media, tradeshows, ads, marcom. Press and key opinion leaders
6	**Sales and channels**	Promotions, sales tools, demos & trials, training of sales reps and channel partners
7	**Technical support**	Training and preparation