

Defining the Product Vision and Product Roadmap

- » Planning agile projects
- » Establishing the product vision
- » Creating features and a product roadmap

Agile Planning

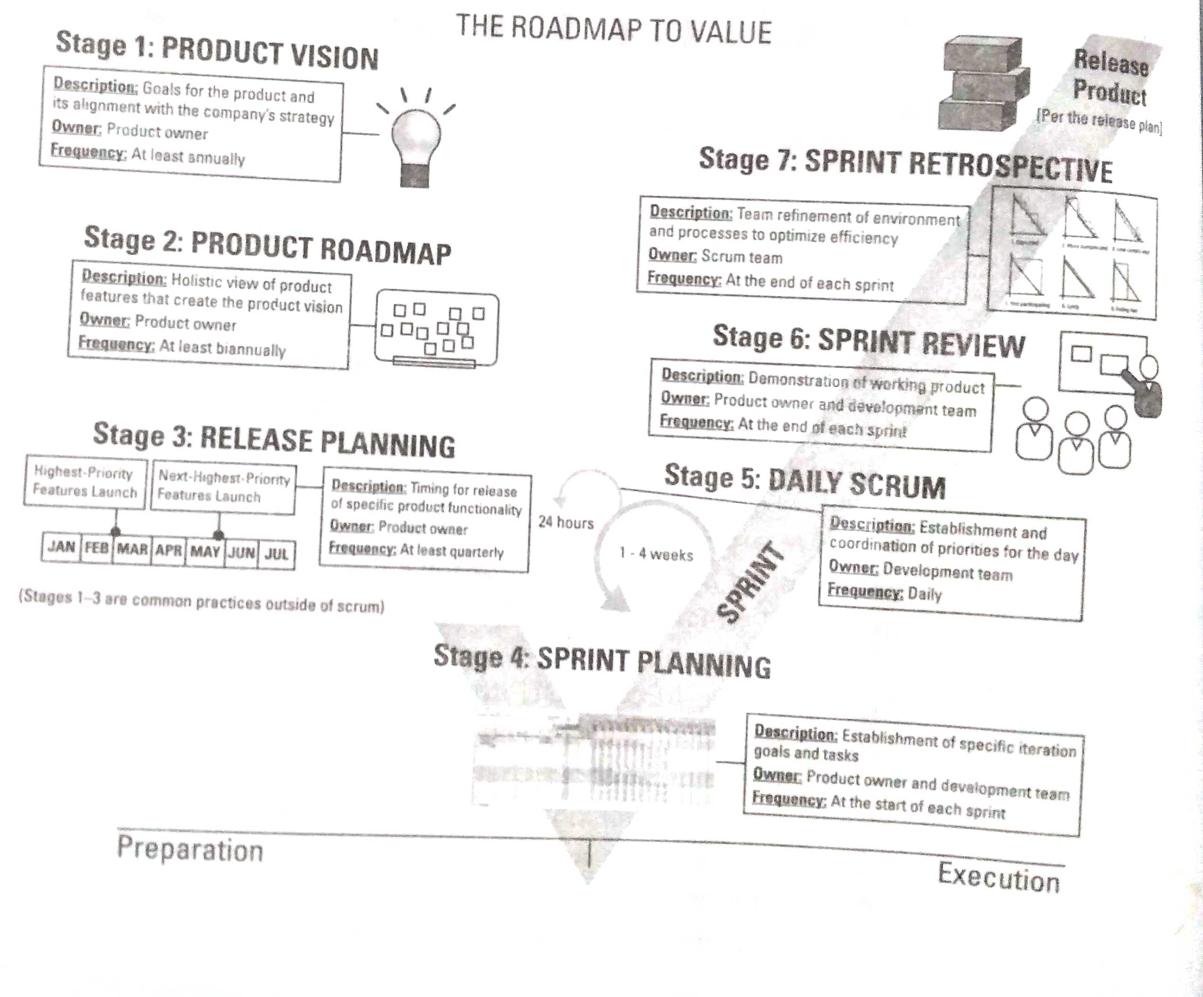


FIGURE 7-1:
 Stages of agile planning and execution with the Roadmap to Value.

The Roadmap to Value has seven stages:

- » In stage 1, the product owner identifies the *product vision*. The product vision is your project's destination or end goal. The product vision includes the outer boundary of what your product will be, how the product is different from the competition, how the product will support your company or organization's strategy, who will use the product, and why people will use the product. On longer projects, revisit the product vision at least once a year.
- » In stage 2, the product owner creates a *product roadmap*. The product roadmap is a high-level view of the product requirements, with a general time frame for when you will develop those requirements. It also gives context to the vision by showing the tangible features that will be produced during the project.
 - Identifying product requirements and then prioritizing and roughly estimating the effort for those requirements allow you to establish requirement themes and identify requirement gaps. The product owner, with support from the development team, should revise the product roadmap at least biannually.

- » In stage 3, the product owner creates a release plan. The *release plan* identifies a high-level timetable for the release of working functionality to the customer. The release serves as a mid-term boundary against which the scrum team can mobilize. An agile project will have many releases, with the highest-priority features appearing first. You create a release plan at the beginning of each release, which is usually at least quarterly. Find out more about release planning in Chapter 8.
- » In stage 4, the product owner, the development team, and the scrum master will plan iterations, also called sprints, and start creating the product functionality in those sprints. *Sprint planning* sessions take place at the start of each sprint. During sprint planning, the scrum team determines a sprint goal, which establishes the immediate boundary of work that the team forecasts to accomplish during the sprint, with requirements that support the goal and can be completed in the sprint. The scrum team also outlines how to complete those requirements. Get more information about sprint planning in Chapter 8.

— — — — — Daily stand-up meetings during each sprint

- » In stage 5, the development team has *daily scrum* meetings during each sprint to coordinate the day's priorities. In the daily scrum meeting, you discuss what you completed yesterday, what you will work on today, and any roadblocks you have, so that you can address issues immediately. Read about daily scrums in Chapter 9.
- » In stage 6, the scrum team holds a *sprint review* at the end of every sprint. In the sprint review, you demonstrate the working functionality to the product stakeholders. Find out how to conduct sprint reviews in Chapter 10.

- » In stage 7, the scrum team holds a *sprint retrospective*. The sprint retrospective is a meeting where the scrum team discusses the completed sprint with regard to their processes and environment, and makes plans for process improvements in the next sprint. Like the sprint review for inspecting and adapting the product, a sprint retrospective is held at the end of every sprint to inspect and adapt your processes and environment. Find out how to conduct sprint retrospectives in Chapter 10.

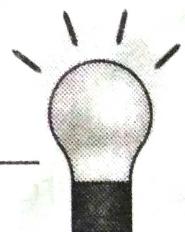
Defining the Product Vision

A common agile practice

Stage 1: PRODUCT VISION

FIGURE 7-2:
The product
vision statement
as part of the
Roadmap to
Value.

Description: Goals for the product and its alignment with the company's strategy
Owner: Product owner
Frequency: At least annually



When creating a product vision statement, follow these four steps:

1. Develop the product objective.
2. Create a draft vision statement.
3. Validate the vision statement with product and project **stakeholders** and revise it based on feedback.
4. Finalize the vision statement.

Step 1: Developing the product objective

- » **Customer:** Who will use the product? This question might have more than one answer.
- » **Key product goals:** How will the product benefit the company that is creating it? The goals may include benefits for a specific department in your company, such as customer service or the marketing department, as well as the company as a whole. What specific company strategies does the product support?

- » **Need:** Why does the customer need the product? What features are critical to the customer?
- » **Competition:** How does the product compare with similar products?
- » **Primary differentiation:** What makes this product different from the status quo or the competition or both?

Step 2: Creating a draft vision statement

Vision Statement for Product

For _____ (target customer)
who _____ (needs)
the _____ (product name)
is a _____ (product category)
that _____ (product benefit, reason to buy)
Unlike _____ (competitors)
our product _____ (differentiation/value proposition)

FIGURE 7-3:
Expansion of
Moore's template
for a vision
statement.

Using our expansion of Moore's template, a vision statement for a mobile banking application might look like the following:

For XYZ Bank customers

who want access to banking capability while on the go,

the MyXYZ

is a mobile application

that allows secure, on-demand banking, 24 hours a day.

Unlike online banking from your home or office computer,

our product allows users immediate access,

which supports our strategy to provide quick, convenient banking services,
anytime, anywhere. (**Platinum Edge addition**)

Here are a few extracts from vision statements that should ring warning bells:

- » Secure additional customers for the MyXYZ application.
- » Satisfy our customers by December.
- » Eliminate all defects and improve quality.

- » Create a new application in Java.
- » Beat the Widget Company to market by six months.

Step 3: Validating and revising the vision statement

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After you draft your vision statement, review it against the following quality checklist:

- » Is this vision statement clear, focused, and written for an internal audience?
- » Does the statement provide a compelling description of how the product meets customer needs?
- » Does the vision describe the best possible outcome?
- » Is the business objective specific enough that the goal is achievable?
- » Does the statement deliver value that is consistent with corporate strategies and goals?
- » Is the product vision statement compelling?
- » Is the vision concise?

Vision Statement

When all answers are yes, move on to reviewing the statement with others, including the following:

- » **Project stakeholders:** The stakeholders will be able to identify that the vision statement includes everything the product should accomplish.
- » **Your development team:** The team, because it will create the product, must understand what the product needs to accomplish.
- » **Scrum master:** A strong understanding of the product will help the scrum master remove roadblocks and ensure that the development team is on the right path later in the project.
- » **Agile mentor:** Share the vision statement with your agile mentor, if you have one. The agile mentor is independent of the organization and can provide an external perspective, qualities that can make for a great objective voice.

Step 4: Finalizing the vision statement

After you finish revising the vision statement, make sure your development team, scrum master, and stakeholders have the final copy. You might even put a copy on the wall in the scrum team's work area, where you can see it every day. You will refer to the vision statement throughout the life of the project.

If your project is more than a year long, you may want to revisit the vision statement. We like to review the product vision statement at least once a year to make sure the product reflects the marketplace and supports any changes in the company's needs. Because the vision statement is the long-term boundary of the project, the project should end when the vision is no longer viable.)