

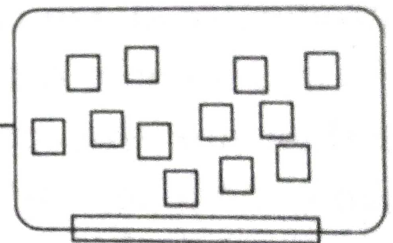
Creating a Product Roadmap

A common agile practice

Stage 2: PRODUCT ROADMAP

FIGURE 7-4:
The product
roadmap as part
of the Roadmap
to Value.

Description: Holistic view of product features that create the product vision
Owner: Product owner
Frequency: At least biannually



To create your product roadmap, you do the following:

1. Identify stakeholders.
2. Establish product requirements and add them to the roadmap.
3. Arrange the product requirements based on values, risks, and dependencies.
4. Estimate the development effort at a high level and prioritize the product's requirements.
5. Determine high-level time frames for releasing groups of functionality to the customer.

Step 1: Identifying stakeholders

- » **Marketing department:** Your customers need to know about your product, and that's what the marketing department provides. They need to understand your plans, and may have input into the order in which you release functionality to the market, based on their experience and research.
- » **Customer service department:** Once your product is in the market, how will it be supported? Specific roadmap items might identify the person you'll need to prepare for support. For instance, a product owner may not see much value in plugging in a live online chat feature, but a customer service manager may see it differently because his or her representatives can handle simultaneously only one phone call but as many as six chat sessions.
- » **Sales department:** Make sure that the sales team members see the product so that they start selling the same thing you are building. Like the marketing department, the sales department will have first-hand knowledge about what your customers are looking for.
- » **Legal department:** Especially if you're in a highly regulated industry, review your roadmap with legal counsel as early as possible to make sure you haven't missed anything that could put your project at risk if discovered later in the project.
- » **Additional customers:** While identifying features on your roadmap, you may discover additional people who will find value in what you will create. Give them a chance to review your roadmap to validate your assumptions.

Step 2: Establishing product requirements

The second step in creating a product is

The second step in creating a product roadmap is to identify, or define, the different requirements for your product.

DECOMPOSING REQUIREMENTS

Throughout the project, you'll break down requirements into smaller, more manageable parts using a process called *decomposition*, or *progressive elaboration*. You can break down requirements into the following sizes, listed from largest to smallest:

Themes: A *theme* is a logical group of features and is also a requirement at its highest level. You may group features into themes in your product roadmap.

Features: *Features* are parts of products at a very high level. Features describe a new capability the customers will have once the feature is complete. You use features in your product roadmap.

Epic user stories: *Epics* are medium-sized requirements that are decomposed from a feature and often contain multiple actions or channels of value. You need to break down your epics before you can start creating functionality from them. You can find out how you use epics for release planning in Chapter 8.

User stories: *User stories* are requirements that contain a single action or integration and are small enough to start implementing into functionality. You see how you define user stories and use them at the release and sprint level in Chapter 8.

Tasks: *Tasks* are the execution steps required to develop a requirement into working functionality. You break down user stories into different tasks during sprint planning. You can find out about tasks and sprint planning in Chapter 8.

Step 3: Arranging product features

After you identify your product features, you need to arrange them in a way that makes sense to your customers. This is where you decide which features to highlight and how to present them. You can use a variety of techniques to arrange your product features, such as grouping related features together, using visual aids like diagrams or charts, and creating a clear hierarchy of features. The goal is to make it easy for your customers to understand the value of your product and how it meets their needs.

After you identify your product features, you work with the stakeholders to group them into *themes* — common, logical groups of features. A stakeholder meeting works well for grouping features, just like it works for creating requirements. You can group features by usage flow, technical similarity, or business need.

Here are questions to consider when grouping and ordering your requirements

- » How would customers use our product?
- » If we offered this proposed feature, what else would customers need to do?
What else might they want to do?
- » Can the development team identify technical affinities or dependencies?

Common activities		Reduction in call volume	
Authenticate and access my accounts	Pay bills	Order checks	Order a copy of a statement
View balance	Transfer money between accounts	Put a stop on a check or range of checks	Open an account
View pending transactions	View a statement	Change password	
View bills			
Find a branch/ATM machine	Call customer service		

FIGURE 7-5:
Features grouped
by themes.

Step 4: Estimating efforts and ordering requirements

You've identified your product requirements and arranged those requirements into logical groups. Next, you estimate and prioritize the requirements. Here are a few terms you need to be familiar with:

- » *Effort* is the ease or difficulty of creating functionality from a particular requirement.
- » An *estimate*, as a noun, can be the number or description you use to express the estimated effort of a requirement.
- » *Estimating* a requirement, as a verb, means to come up with an approximate idea of how easy or hard (how much effort) that requirement will be to create.

- » *Ordering, or prioritizing*, a requirement means to determine that requirement's value and risk in relation to other requirements, and in what order you will implement them.
- » *Value* means how beneficial a product requirement might be to the organization creating that product.
- » *Risk* refers to the negative effect a requirement can have on the project.