

Roadmap

Phase 1 - Vision + Scope

A roadmap is a strategic, living document that **aligns and communicates a project team's future work and the problems to be solved**. It is intended to serve as a **communication tool** between designers, researchers, developers, and stakeholders to **define, organize, prioritize, and communicate future work** on the project team's vision.

The roadmap places the project goals and key deliverables (tasks, milestones) **on a timeline**. It is thus crucial to clarify the connection between short-term tasks and long-term business goals.

Benefits

A well-designed roadmap helps organizations and project/product managers **make thoughtful decisions about what they commit to**. By aligning each element of work with the overall goal, roadmaps ensure that **time and effort are invested wisely**. In addition, they provide a strong foundation in terms of:

- **Clarity**
By answering the question «What are you working on and why?» a roadmap clarifies strategic goals and how the work is linked to the overall strategy.
- **Communication**
By sharing a strategy for an initiative, the roadmap shows direction, visualizes timing, and helps manage challenging conversations with key parties.
- **Coordination**
By identifying bottlenecks and tracking dependencies, a roadmap can improve interdisciplinary collaboration within an organization, especially in complex projects.
- **Accountability**
Sharing orders and their deliverables, respectively what needs to be delivered and when, makes it easier for all parties to follow the plan.
- **Orientation**
A roadmap clearly states the vision and goals of a project and aligns teams and their areas of responsibility.
- **Impact**
By visually depicting progress and its impact, roadmaps help keep the project members on track. Further, they show how each area is linked to an overarching goal.

- **Prioritization**

A roadmap help project/product managers to focus on what is important, trade-off decisions, and prioritizing tasks to deliver the most value.

Key Elements

There are countless different roadmaps and tools for creating roadmaps and they all look different. Recommended tools are: Asana, JIRA or Office Timeline. However, regardless of the visual appearance, all roadmaps have the same basic structure:

- **Goals and Initiatives**

Defining the product/project value and how it will achieve the pre-defined business goals.

- **Releases and milestones**

Show when work will begin and by when it will be delivered.

- **Features**

Show efforts that are prioritized based on their overall value.

- **Dependencies**

Highlights how tasks are interrelated with one another and how they impact deployment.

How to Create a Roadmap

In order for an effective roadmap to be created, the following five steps will help:

1. **Define the strategy**

In this step, the overall vision, goals, and initiatives must be outlined. The documents previously developed in the sprint, such as personas, product vision, problem statement, user stories and current-state journey map help to develop a project-based strategy.

2. **Review and evaluate potential functions**

To do this, evaluation criteria will be used to weigh potential features and decide which ones provide the most value to the initiative and the product. The future-state journey map helps with prioritization and decisions.

3. **Prioritize and identify requirements**

The activities that best support the strategy should be broken down into smaller units of work.

4. Divide the work into phases

Group the ranked list of functions or main tasks into main versions or phases and define a duration for them.

5. Choose the roadmap view

This step is to determine the level of detail and how the elements above will be illustrated over a period of time. Certain functions or cross-functional dependencies that affect the flow of your plan should be visually highlighted.

After all the above steps have been performed, the actual visual creation of the roadmap can be proceeded with. A roadmap template or a roadmap tool can be used for this purpose.

Other sources

- <https://www.officetimeline.com/de/roadmap>
- <https://www.atlassian.com/de/agile/product-management/product-roadmaps#:~:text=Beim%20Erstellen%20einer%20Roadmap%20sollten,Epics%20in%20der%20Roadmap%20priorisieren.>
- <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-roadmaps/>