**Driving Innovation**

Steering your goal-oriented product roadmap to success.

| Type | Meeting |
| --- | --- |
| Purpose | Planning and strategy |
| Topics | Product roadmap, goal alignment, prioritization, decision-making, brainstorming, consensus building, OKRs, collaboration, engineering |
| Audience | Engineers |

## **About this activity**

According to ProductBoard in their “State of Product Management” report, 82% of organizations find that having a clearly defined product roadmap helps in aligning their teams toward common goals. When engineers use their knowledge and skills to develop an effective product roadmap, they make better data-driven decisions and allocate resources more effectively to achieve the organization’s goals.

In this two-part product roadmapping workshop, participants will first use the RICE framework developed by Sean McBride of Intercom to score and rank projects and features based on Reach, Impact, Confidence, and Effort. Second, participants will develop a Goal-Oriented Product Roadmap based on the work of product management expert Roman Pichler in which timeframes, names, goals, features, and metrics are defined and prioritized with the help of the RICE score.

This activity is designed for engineers and works best with small groups of 3-8 participants in an in-person setting, hybrid, or group setting.

#### Important details

| Best for groups of | 3-8, up to 80 participants |
| --- | --- |
| Preparation time | 15 minutes |
| Duration | 120 minutes |
| Required materials | * RICE Template * Goal Oriented Product Roadmap Planner * Pen/pencil * Timer * Meeting platform, if virtual |
| Required location | * Indoors * Table with writing surface |
| Noise level | Medium |

## **How it works**

#### Instructions

Before conducting the activity (15 minutes):

The facilitator will coordinate with the meeting organizing to determine how engineers should be grouped based on the products they are working on. For hybrid and virtual participants, participants should be divided into meeting rooms.

The facilitator will review the instructions and make copies of the RICE Template and the Goal Oriented Product Roadmap for each participant. If conducting the session virtually, the facilitator should email worksheets ahead of the session.

Conducting the activity:

Introduction (10 minutes):

The facilitator should inform participants that they will be working individually and together in small groups to create a goal-oriented product roadmap. The first part of the session will use the RICE framework developed by Sean McBride of Intercom to score and rank product/rollout features based on Reach, Impact, Confidence, and Effort. In part two of the session, participants will then use their RICE scores to prioritize goals and resources, establish rollout timeframes, and define success metrics using product management expert Roman Pichler’s Goal-Oriented Product Roadmap.

The facilitator will divide participants into their pre-assigned small groups.

RICE Prioritization Framework and Scoring Template (30 minutes):

The facilitator will introduce the RICE prioritization framework as a tool to prioritize projects, features, or tasks based on four key factors: Reach, Impact, Confidence, and Effort.

* Projects/Features: The facilitator will distribute the RICE Template to all participants and ask them to individually write down 4 projects or features they will be working on for an upcoming product rollout.
* Reach: Once the facilitator sees that everyone has selected 4 features, participants will then be asked to think about and record product reach. Reach defines audience size and puts a number to how many users will be affected by the project or feature. For example, if it is anticipated the reach of the software update will be one million users, one million should be the reach number. The larger the reach, the higher the number.
* Impact: Next, participants will consider and write down impact, which is the potential impact or benefit to your users or customers of the project or feature. Think in terms of user experience and satisfaction here. This number is simpler to calculate. Assign a 1 for low impact, a 2 for medium impact, or a 3 for high impact.
* Confidence: In this step, participants will estimate and write down their confidence level in their reach and impact scoring, with 0% representing no confidence and 100% representing complete confidence and so on.
* Effort: Finally participants will estimate and record the effort and resources in terms of development, design, testing, etc. needed to rollout the project or features. The number should represent estimated days (or for smaller projects, hours) to completion.
* Total: Once every column is filled in, participants should calculate their RICE score for each project/feature using the formula at the bottom of the worksheet, which is Reach x Impact x Confidence / Effort. The highest scored projects or features should be prioritized when developing the product roadmap as they are the most significant in terms of overall impact.

RICE Wrap-Up and Break (10 minutes):

The facilitator will ask participants if they found the exercise to be beneficial and why, allowing for a few responses.

The facilitator will wrap up this part of the session by highlighting the benefits of this framework, which are:

* To narrow focus from a wide range of compelling projects and features to those with the greatest impact.
* To prioritize which items to include in your product roadmap or other strategic or project plans.
* To help team members align on priorities through healthy debate and discussion when done in a group setting.
* To generate ideas when facing a new product launch or retool.

The facilitator should offer a quick five minute break before moving on to the second part of the session.

Introduction of Goal Setting Product Roadmap (15 minutes):

The facilitator will lead off the second part of the session with an overview of product management expert Roman Pichler’s Goal-Oriented Product Roadmap. The facilitator will explain that this tool differs from a traditional product roadmap by focusing on the outcomes associated with the features that the product will deliver: a better user experience, increased customer engagement and satisfaction, decreased expense, etc. This roadmap method best aligns to an organization’s objectives and key results (OKRs) and is perfect for agile methodologies.

The facilitator will pass out the Goal-Oriented Product Roadmap Planner to all participants and review each element of the roadmap:

* Date or Time Frame - This is the schedule that customers and stakeholders should expect for seeing key milestones in the product development/release cycle. Start with high level dates for now - Q1 for example - and drill down to more specific milestones as you work through the roadmap process.
* Name - Simply, the name of the new product or release version. This can be the front-facing user name for the product release or the internal, working name during the development process, or both.
* Goal - The outcome or benefit of the new product that is measurable and achievable within a timeframe. The goal should connect the product’s strategy with its vision and be ambitious but realistic.
* Features: The high-level capabilities or deliverables of your product. Think back to the RICE score and select 3-4 features that offer the most product impact.
* Metrics: The measures that help you gauge the success of your product release to its intended outcomes.

Goal-Oriented Product Roadmap Discussion and Completion (30 minutes):

The facilitator will instruct groups to discuss and complete at least one column of each participant’s roadmap together, brainstorming the five elements of the selected project or feature. Once all participants have had a chance to work with the group to complete a column, participants should use the remaining time to fill in additional projects or features using the remaining columns of their planning worksheet.

Wrap-Up (10-15 minutes):

The facilitator will ask participants the following questions and allow time for responses:

* Was it easier to work on your roadmap together with the group or individually and why?
* Did you find this tool to be different from other product roadmap tools you have used in the past? If so, how?

The facilitator will wrap up this part of the session by highlighting the benefits of a goal-oriented product roadmap, which are:

* Greater focus on solving user problems rather than feature building.
* Closer alignment of feature benefits to product outcomes.
* Easier to get a first draft on paper and add details later in the process.

To wrap up the session, the facilitator should instruct participants to share their roadmap with their project manager for planning and follow up.

#### Rules

There are no “wrong answers” and all input is welcome in the brainstorming stages. Ideas will be evaluated by consensus as the exercise progresses.

#### Example

Not applicable

## **Materials**

#### For facilitator

Timer

Access to meeting platform, if hybrid or remote

#### For attendee

RICE Template

Goal-Oriented Product Roadmap Planner

Pen/Pencil