

Exercise Roadmapping

Objectives:

- Understand how to create a product roadmap.

You are a software product manager and are leading the following roadmapping workshop in your company.

Your software product is one of the following (same product as for previous exercises):

- A product that you manage in real life in your real-life company (preferred 1)
- A product that you might want to develop in real life with your real-life team and key stakeholders (preferred 2)
- Any other product that you admire that you develop alone or in an imagined organization (shortly characterize the size and number of employees in research & development, in marketing & sales, and in services & support). Try to find as much information or even roadmaps on Internet about the product and company.

Tasks:

1. Prepare an internal product planning roadmap as follows (adjust to your case):
 - Define market, product, and technology layers. Expand with sub-layers according to the SPM reference model (market layer), stable product themes (product layer), and components (technology layer) if meaningful.
 - Define a layer with resource requirements.
 - Define a 3-year planning horizon (plus 1 year into the past if possible).
2. Define first contents of your roadmap based on your product vision and strategy (product positioning, QFD analysis, etc.):
 - Key milestones: where do you want to be at given moments? Which customers to you want to serve? What needs do you want to be able to satisfy? What external trends (uncontrollable economic, social, political conditions) will work in your favor?
 - Product themes: what are the key features that should be implemented in your product? When should they be implemented?
 - Technology: what development frameworks, components, and technologies do you need to have developed or acquired at given moments?
3. Identify your needs for resources.
 - How many developers do you need at given moments to make your roadmap reality?
 - How much monetary investment do you need at given moments in time to make your roadmap reality?
4. Identify ways to reduce your resource needs by iterating tasks 2-4.
 - Can you postpone development or balance human resource needs over time?
 - Can you reduce product scope while achieving the same or reduced ambitions?
5. Define a public roadmap by defining key information that you would use to inform your customers about future product plans and by creating an appropriate legal disclaimer.
6. Reflection: What are the benefits of such a roadmap? What are the challenges? How could you make roadmapping work in your environment? When should you start roadmapping?