Introducing the Product Roadmap Wall
Building alignment and buy-in at all levels of your organization

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THIS IS MY FRIEND...

Don
(not Don's real picture)

Don's Office
(not Don's real office)

Don's Product
(not Don's real product)

@chrisshinkle
DON WAS HIRED AS VP OF PRODUCT...

He was excited:
• The company historically had done well financially
• They had gone through a recent Agile transformation…
• …and teams were now Agile with all the Agile roles and ceremonies
DON HAD SOME CHALLENGES…

• Stakeholders were extremely frustrated and impatient with infrequent and incorrect deliveries
• Delivery teams faced constantly changing priorities
• NO ONE was happy and no one was winning
1. Stakeholders ask for something new
2. Delivery teams aren’t clear about what is needed or why
3a. Nothing delivered
3b. Wrong thing delivered after a long time
4. Because stakeholders lack visibility into progress
5. Grow impatient

STOP THE CHURN CYCLE
Don didn’t know…

Where they were going? How they’d get there?
Many people would attempt solving this by building a “better” Product Roadmap
A ROADMAP IS...

A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TOOL

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- Bruce McCarthy, C. Todd Lombardo, Product Roadmaps Relaunched
A ROADMAP IS...

A STATEMENT OF INTENT AND DIRECTION

@chrisshinkle

- Bruce McCarthy, C. Todd Lombardo, Product Roadmaps Relaunched
Dear Roadmap,

I’ve been putting so much energy to get this relationship working, but it feels like I only give and never get any value back from you!

- You are always out of date

- There is no way to get all the info in and keep it looking nice and readable

- You are all about solutions and not about the needs and problems

- You are never good enough for all the different stakeholders.

This is it! I’M GOING BACK TO MS PROJECT!

- C. Todd Lombardo, Roadmaps Are Dead, Long Live Roadmaps! MTPC 2018
PROBLEMS WE IDENTIFIED:

- Fuzzy high level business and product strategy - no clear direction
- Poor communication between teams and the business
- Team morale low - don’t know why they’re building or if they can be successful
- Engineering and UX team members brought into process too late
- Obsessed with delivering features, not generating value
- Too much work in progress

- Team throughput (and velocity) is low and unpredictable
- Can’t make or meet time based commitments
- For items we ship, quality needed improved
- Work halts after it starts because teams lack clarity
- Continuous shifting priorities
- Low visibility into team progress
WITH ALL THOSE PROBLEMS, WE NEEDED TO...

DEFINE THE PRODUCT ROADMAP AND STRATEGY
The Big Lie of Strategic Planning
STRATEGY

noun  |  strat·e·gy  |  \'strad-ə-jē\ 

True strategy is about placing bets and making hard choices. The objective is not to eliminate risk but to increase the odds of success.

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- Harvard Business Review, The Big Lie of Strategic Planning
1. Keep the strategy statement simple
2. Recognize that strategy is not about perfection.
3. Make the logic explicit.

- Harvard Business Review, The Big Lie of Strategic Planning
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<td>The only sure way to improve the hit rate of our strategic choices is to test the logic of our thinking. To do that, we had to make our assumptions explicit and review these after completion.</td>
</tr>
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@chrisshinkle - Harvard Business Review, *The Big Lie of Strategic Planning*
1 KANBAN SYSTEM
6 Practices of KANBAN

1. Visualize
2. Make polices explicit
3. Manage flow
4. Implement feedback loops
5. Limit WIP
6. Improve collaboratively
OBJECTIVES & KEY RESULTS (OKRs)

Objective: a single sentence that’s qualitative and inspirational.

Key Result: quantitative measure of progress toward achieving the objective

—Christina Wodtke, Radical Focus
KANBAN SYSTEM
KANBAN SYSTEM
KANBAN SYSTEM - PRIORITY QUEUES

Only replenish at current rate of flow
KANBAN SYSTEM - SWIM LANES
KANBAN SYSTEM - IDEA VALIDATION
KANBAN SYSTEM

“BETS”

Objective

Team

Target

Timeframe

KR1

KR2

KR3
Bets capture that perfect interplay between assumptions, desired outcomes, experimentation, risk, and reward.

- adapted from John Cutler blog post “Place Your Bets”
WHY DOES THE WORD “BET” WORK?

1. A bet can be tactical or strategic, prescriptive or descriptive.
2. Bets can be loose or strict.
3. Bets are by definition outcome focused. We bet that something will happen, and ask “how is the that bet working out?”. But they also suggest experimentation and learning.
4. By calling it a bet, we are admitting that “losing” the bet is an option.
5. Bets have odds.
6. There are big and small bets.
7. Timeframe matters. When will we know if the bet paid off?
8. Talking about bets will inevitably trigger good discussions around risk, information availability, learning, validation, and outcomes.
9. By placing small bets (with a short timeframe) we can “buy” information that clarifies the odds for larger bets.
10. You can have a “portfolio” of bets, each with different risk profiles, hedges, etc.
11. We consider the ideal number of concurrent bets (“bets in progress”).

- adapted from John Cutler blog post “Place Your Bets”
We believe that if we deliver [solution name] for [target customers & users] we’ll observe [these specific outcomes] that we could measure by [specific metrics]
KANBAN SYSTEM
KANBAN SYSTEM

• Created transparency across the organization
• Forced testing our strategic choices (bets)
• Provided focus by limiting WIP
• Encouraged prioritization
• Helped us focus on flow

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WE GOT THIS CHRIS
OPPORTUNITY SOLUTION TREES

@chrisshinkle
It’s a simple way of visually representing how you plan to reach a desired outcome. It helps you to **make your assumptions explicit**.

-Teresa Torres, *Why This Opportunity Solution Tree is Changing the Way Product Teams Work*
OPPORTUNITY SOLUTION TREE

**OBJECTIVE**
(desired outcome)

**OPPORTUNITIES**
(customer problem, needs, or wants)

**FEATURES**
(solutions that deliver on these opportunities and desired outcome)

Experiments
(what things do we need to go learn or test)

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**OBJECTIVE**  
(desired outcome)

Business strategy happens here.

**OPPORTUNITIES**  
(customer problem, needs, or wants)

How we frame the problem. This is where product strategy happens.

**FEATURES**  
(solutions that deliver on these opportunities and desired outcome)

Discover solutions that deliver on these opportunities and drives outcomes.

**EXPERIMENTS**  
(things we need to learn)

Execute experiments to increase confidence and reduce risk.
ALL FEATURES, NO CONTEXT MAKES PRIORITIZATION DIFFICULT
ADDING CONTEXT HELPS

Prioritize these, to prioritize these
ALL FEATURES SHOULD CONNECT
WALKING THE TREE
WALKING THE TREE
WALKING THE TREE
WALKING THE TREE
WALKING THE TREE
WALKING THE TREE
As a table, select one idea that you’ll use for the exercise:

1. App for teachers, parents and grade schooler to manage homework
2. Way to help riders feel more secure when using a ride-share app
3. Ensure rented scooter battery doesn’t die in dangerous locations i.e. busy intersections, freeway, etc.
4. A tool for tracking a user’s energy level through the day
1. Identify the **business goal** or **objective** the idea you picked.

2. Find **one user problem, need or want** that will help you reach the business objective from #1.

3. List **multiple features** you could deliver to satisfy the user problem identified in #2.

4. Consider other **opportunities** that might also achieve the business objective from #1.

5. Identify **features** associated with those opportunities.
• Communicates “Where we will play” & “How we will win”
• Makes our assumptions explicit
• Ensures whatever we’re building is tied to a business need or opportunity

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3 FEATURE STORY MAPS

- Jeff Patton
STORY MAP

- Check Balance
- Check History
- View Balance
- Select Account
- View History
- Search
- Download History
- View Click Map
- Add Tags
- View Fees
- Click Funds on Box
- View Ledger
- View Ledger
- Click on "Balance"
- Expand Account to view balance
- Quick: 3, 10, 30, 60 days
- By check #
- Default: 30 days
- CSV
- Show maps
- Tag a transaction
- View payment purpose description
- Last 30 accounts
- Latest balances
- Edit balances
- QIF
- CIF
- By tag
- TIF
- By account
- Import
- Export
- Transfers
Sign-In → Feature
This is just a label. It doesn’t create shared understanding.
This is just a label. It doesn’t create shared understanding

Take a 30 seconds... what do you think this feature includes?
Did you include:

• 2 Factor Authentication?
• Touch ID? Face ID? Password fallback?
• Password reset?
• Passcode?
• Captcha
• Handle lock outs?
• "Remember this device"?
Balance Investments vs Confidence

Confidence

Investments
**Estimating Slice by Deliverable**

- Use Monte Carlo forecasting to predict release dates for deliverable (MVP, feature, release, etc.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
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<th>M</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forecast Completion Date</strong></td>
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<td>1. Start Date</td>
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<td>2. How many stories are remaining to be completed? (enter the range estimate of stories. Tip: start wide and narrow as certainty increases)</td>
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<td>Low guess</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>Highest guess</td>
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<td>3. Stories are often split before and whilst being worked on. Estimate the split rate low and high bounds. (often the throughput in the backlog is pre-split, but captured throughput post-split. Adjust for this here)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low guess</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Highest guess</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Throughput. How many completed stories per week or sprint do you estimate low and high bounds? Throughput/velocity data or estimate is for 2 weeks</td>
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<td>14 days</td>
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<td>Use historical throughput data OR enter a low and high estimate below. Use:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Throughput Forecaster, Troy Magennis, Focused Objective</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Feature Story Map

## Feature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USER ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DETAILS/SUB-TASKS</th>
<th>Risks/Spikes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90 days</td>
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<td>6 months</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**USER TASK**

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**FEATURE STORY MAP**

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*created using [CARDBOARD](https://cardboardit.com)*
Estimating Slice by Capacity

- Use Monte Carlo forecasting and historical data to forecast throughput for upcoming work/sprints

**Forecast Story Count Completion by Time Period**

5. How long? 4 2 weeks

(To forecast story counts, enter the how long.
To change unit, change input 4. above.)

<table>
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<th>Result: Total Pre-split Stories in 4 2 weeks</th>
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<tr>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
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--- Tip: This is your forecast.

- Throughput Forecaster, Troy Magennis, Focused Objective
FEATURE STORY MAPS:

- Gives the business options for bettering their odds
- Helps make the bets explicit
- Avoids haggling over story estimation or story size

@chrisshinkle
DON SMASH!!!
### Users & Customers
What types of users and customers have the challenges your solution addresses?
Look for differences in users' goals or uses that would affect their use of the product. Separate users and customers into different types based on those differences that make a difference. It's a bad idea to target “everyone” with your product.

### Problems
What problems do prospective users and customers have today that your solution addresses?

### Solution ideas
List product, feature, or enhancement ideas that solve problems for your target audience.

### User Value
If your target audience has your solution, how can they do things differently as a consequence? And, how will that benefit them?

### Users Metrics
What user behaviors can you measure that will indicate they adopt, use, and place value in your solution?

### Solutions Today
How do users address their problems today?
List competitive products or work-around approaches your users have for meeting their needs.

### Adoption Strategy
How will customers and users discover and adopt your solution?

### Business Problems
What problem for your business does building this product, feature, or enhancement solve for your business?

### Budget
What's it worth to you?
How much money and/or development would you budget to discover, build, and refine this solution?

### Business Metrics
What business performance metrics will be affected by the success of this solution?
These usually change as a consequence of behavior metrics changing.

---

- Jeff Patton
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### Release Strategy
How do you intend to release the project? As an MVP followed by smaller releases, as a single released, etc.
COMMON OBJECTIONS:

• "I can’t do this at my company”
• “I don’t have the authority to make these changes”
• “They won’t let me”
• “I’ve already tried it and it doesn’t work”
TAKEAWAYS

• Use Story Maps to promote clarity, communication, and collaboration

• Use Opportunity Solution Trees to make assumptions explicit and link Features to Business Objectives

• Use a Kanban system to create visibility and manage flow + WIP

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