

Product Strategy Templates

What each strategy is, why it matters, and a fill-in template to write your own

1 • Product Vision

Vision, mission, pillars, north star

2 • Product Lifecycle

Stages, gates, feature lifecycle

3 • Platform Thinking

Readiness, architecture, ecosystem

4 • Go-To-Market

ICP, positioning, pricing, launch

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Prompts in [brackets] are placeholders to replace with your own answers.

How to use these templates

These four templates turn product strategy into documents a team can act on. Each section explains what the strategy is, then gives a fill-in template with prompts in [\[brackets\]](#). Replace every bracket with your own answer and delete any prompt that does not apply.

The four documents answer four different questions, and they build on each other in order.

Document	The question it answers	Time horizon	Primary audience
Product Vision	Why does this product exist, and what future are we creating?	3 to 5 years	Whole company, leadership, investors
Product Lifecycle	Where is the product today, and how should our priorities change as it matures?	Stage by stage, reviewed quarterly	Product, engineering, leadership
Platform Thinking	How can value compound through others building on us, beyond our own features?	2 to 5 years	Product, engineering, partnerships
Go-To-Market Strategy	Who buys first, why, and how do we reach and win them?	6 to 18 months	Product, marketing, sales, customer success

How they connect. The vision sets the destination. The lifecycle tells you which part of the journey you are on and what success means right now. Platform thinking decides whether you travel alone or build roads others can use. Go-to-market decides how you win customers at each step.

Writing tips that apply to all four

- Lead every section with the decision or answer, then the reasoning.
- Use numbers, names and dates instead of adjectives. "Cut drive time 15%" beats "improve efficiency".
- State what you will not do. Strategy is as much about trade-offs as goals.
- Label assumptions as assumptions, and say how you will test them.
- Keep each document short enough to read in one sitting: 3 to 8 pages.

1. Product Vision

What is a product vision?

A product vision describes the future a product creates for its customers, usually 3 to 5 years out. It explains why the product exists and where it is going, not which features it will ship. A good vision is ambitious enough to inspire, specific enough to guide trade-offs, and stable enough to last through many roadmap changes.

Why it matters. Without a vision, roadmaps become a list of customer requests and teams optimize locally. With one, every team can ask "does this move us toward the vision?" and get the same answer.

Term	What it is	Example shape
Vision	The future state for customers	"Every [customer] can [outcome] without [pain] "
Mission	What we do every day to get there	"We give [users] [capability] so they can [result] "
Strategy	The chosen path and trade-offs	Pillars, target segment, what we will not do
Roadmap	The sequence of bets over time	Now, Next, Later themes
North-star metric	One measure of customer value delivered	A rate or count that moves within weeks

Template: Product Vision

1. Vision statement

[One sentence describing the future for your customer. Avoid feature names and your own company's goals. Test: would a customer be excited to live in this future?]

2. Mission

[One or two sentences on what the product does every day to move toward the vision.]

3. Market context and timing

- Market today: *[How customers solve the problem now and why that falls short]*
- Why now: *[2 to 3 shifts in technology, regulation or behavior that make this the right moment]*
- Market size: *[Target segment size, with your source and assumptions]*

4. Problem statement

Pain	Who feels it	Cost to them today
<i>[Pain 1]</i>	<i>[Persona]</i>	<i>[Time, money or risk lost]</i>

Pain	Who feels it	Cost to them today
[Pain 2]	[Persona]	[Time, money or risk lost]
[Pain 3]	[Persona]	[Time, money or risk lost]

5. Target customers and personas

Persona	Role in the purchase	Job to be done	What success looks like
[Name, title]	[Buyer, user, approver, influencer]	[The outcome they hire the product for]	[Observable result]
[Name, title]	[Role]	[Job]	[Result]

6. Strategic pillars

[3 to 4 themes that together deliver the vision. Every roadmap item should strengthen at least one.]

1. [Pillar 1] : [What it means and how it serves the customer]
2. [Pillar 2] : [Meaning]
3. [Pillar 3] : [Meaning]
4. Foundation: [The shared capability, such as data or platform, that every pillar relies on]

7. Product principles

[4 to 6 rules that guide decisions when two good options conflict. Format: "We prefer X over Y".]

- [Principle 1]
- [Principle 2]
- [Principle 3]

8. North-star metric and inputs

- North-star metric: [One metric that captures value delivered to customers]
- Why this metric: [How it reflects customer value and business value]

Input metric	Pillar it belongs to	How it drives the north star
[Input 1]	[Pillar]	[Link]
[Input 2]	[Pillar]	[Link]

Guardrail metrics: [Metrics that must not get worse while the north star rises, such as quality or satisfaction]

9. Three-year horizon

Horizon	Theme	What the customer experiences
Year 1	[Theme]	[Experience]
Year 2	[Theme]	[Experience]
Year 3	[Theme]	[Experience]

10. What we will not do

- [Segment, feature area or business model we are deliberately saying no to, and why]
- [Another no]

Common mistakes

- **Writing a feature list.** "An app with AI scheduling" is a solution, not a vision.
- **Describing company goals.** "Become the market leader" says nothing about the customer.
- **Picking a vanity north star.** Sign-ups or page views can rise while customers get no value.
- **No trade-offs.** A vision that excludes nothing guides nothing.

2. Product Lifecycle

What is the product lifecycle?

The product lifecycle is the sequence of stages a product moves through, from first idea to maturity and eventual renewal or retirement. Each stage has a different goal, so the right priorities, metrics and team shape change as the product moves forward. A lifecycle strategy names the current stage, sets evidence-based gates for moving to the next, and prevents the team from acting like a growth-stage product before it has found fit.

Why it matters. The most expensive mistakes come from stage mismatch: scaling sales before customers retain, or polishing a mature product while a new competitor resets the market.

Stage	Core goal	What to optimize	Typical metrics
1. Discovery and validation	Prove the problem is real and worth paying for	Learning speed	Interview insights, problem severity, willingness to pay, pilot sign-ups
2. Introduction (MVP)	Prove the solution delivers value	Depth for a few customers	Activation, retention by cohort, outcome achieved, conversion of pilots
3. Growth	Find repeatable acquisition and expand use	Repeatability and scale	Net revenue retention, CAC payback, logo growth, time to value
4. Maturity	Defend position and improve margin	Efficiency and defensibility	Gross margin, expansion revenue, market share, churn
5. Renewal or decline	Reinvent or retire	The next S-curve	Revenue from new products, cost to serve, migration rate

Two levels of lifecycle. The whole product has a stage, and so does every feature. Track both: a mature product can still have beta features, and a growth-stage product can carry features that should be retired.

Template: Product Lifecycle

1. Current stage and evidence

- Current stage: *[Discovery, Introduction, Growth, Maturity or Renewal]*
- Evidence: *[The 2 to 3 data points that prove you are in this stage, such as cohort retention or growth rate]*
- Confidence: *[High, medium or low, and what would change your view]*

2. Stage-by-stage plan

Stage	Goal	Product focus	Key metrics	Gate to move on
Discovery	<i>[Goal]</i>	<i>[Research and prototypes]</i>	<i>[Metrics]</i>	<i>[Measurable exit criterion]</i>

Stage	Goal	Product focus	Key metrics	Gate to move on
Introduction	[Goal]	[MVP scope]	[Metrics]	[Exit criterion]
Growth	[Goal]	[Expansion areas]	[Metrics]	[Exit criterion]
Maturity	[Goal]	[Efficiency and moat]	[Metrics]	[Trigger for renewal]
Renewal	[Goal]	[Next bets]	[Metrics]	[Invest, harvest or sunset decision]

3. How priorities shift in the current stage

- We will prioritize: [2 to 3 focus areas for this stage]
- We will deprioritize: [What waits until a later stage]
- Team shape: [Who is needed now, such as researchers early or growth engineers later]

4. Feature-level lifecycle

Tag	Meaning	Action	Review cadence
Beta	[Definition]	[What you do]	[How often]
Invest	[Definition]	[What you do]	[How often]
Maintain	[Definition]	[What you do]	[How often]
Sunset	[Definition]	[What you do]	[How often]

Sunset rule: [The threshold that makes a feature a retirement candidate, such as usage below X% for a quarter]

5. Warning signals

Signal	What it means	Response
[Sales up, retention down]	[Scaled before fit]	[Pause acquisition, fix the core]
[Signal]	[Meaning]	[Response]

6. Review cadence

[When and by whom the stage and gates are reviewed, such as a quarterly business review with leadership]

Common mistakes

- **Gates tied to dates, not evidence.** "Launch in Q3" is a plan; "8 of 10 pilots convert" is a gate.
- **Skipping discovery.** Building first and validating later is the costliest order.
- **Never retiring features.** Each one adds support, testing and complexity cost.
- **Treating maturity as the end.** Mature products need a protected team exploring the next bet.

3. Platform Thinking

What is platform thinking?

Platform thinking is designing a product so that others, such as partners, developers, suppliers or customers themselves, can create value on top of it. A product creates value through its own features. A platform creates value through the interactions and extensions it enables, so its value grows faster than the team that builds it.

Why it matters. Platforms build the strongest moats in software: data that improves with use, integrations that raise switching costs, and network effects where each new participant makes the product better for everyone else.

Concept	What it means	Simple example
Core	The capability or data everything else depends on	A shared customer and transaction data model
Interfaces	How others plug in	APIs, webhooks, SDKs, embedded app frames
Ecosystem	The participants who build on or trade through the platform	Integration partners, app developers, suppliers
Network effect	Value rises as more participants join	More sellers attract more buyers, and the reverse
Data flywheel	Usage improves the product automatically	More completed jobs train better predictions
Governance	Rules that keep the ecosystem healthy	API versioning, partner certification, security review

Product versus platform. Not every product should become a platform, and timing matters. Open too early and a small team supports partners with no customers to sell to. Open too late and a competitor owns the ecosystem.

Template: Platform Thinking

1. Platform thesis

[One paragraph: what others will build on you, why they will choose you, and how that makes the product more valuable for every customer.]

2. Readiness: product or platform today?

Question	Our answer today	Platform-ready answer
Who creates value?	[Answer]	Our team plus partners and developers

Question	Our answer today	Platform-ready answer
What is the moat?	[Answer]	Data, integrations, switching costs
Is there unmet integration demand?	[Number of requests per month]	More than the team can build
Is the core stable and well modeled?	[Yes or no, and evidence]	Yes

Trigger to open the platform: [The measurable condition, such as customer count plus integration demand]

3. Architecture layers

1. Data layer: [The shared data model and who owns it]
2. Intelligence or services layer: [Shared capabilities that apps reuse]
3. Application layer: [Your own products, built on the same interfaces partners use]
4. Ecosystem layer: [APIs, marketplace, partner integrations]

Design rule: [For example, "our own apps use only public APIs"]

4. Ecosystem participants and value exchange

Participant	What they bring	What they get	How we attract them
[Customers]	[Data, usage]	[Value]	[Hook]
[Partners]	[Integration]	[Distribution]	[Hook]
[Developers]	[Apps]	[Revenue]	[Hook]

5. Network effects and flywheel

- Flywheel loop: [A leads to B leads to C leads back to A]
- Type of network effect: [Direct, cross-side, data or benchmark]
- Data trust commitments: [How customer data is protected, shared or exported]

6. Partner program and monetization

Tier	Requirements	Benefits	Commercial model
[Tier 1]	[Requirements]	[Benefits]	[Free, revenue share, fee]
[Tier 2]	[Requirements]	[Benefits]	[Model]

7. Governance

- API versioning and deprecation: [Notice period, versions supported]
- Quality and security bar: [Review process for partners]
- Conflict resolution: [What happens when a partner competes with your roadmap]

8. Platform metrics

Metric	What it tells you	Target
<i>[Accounts using 3+ integrations]</i>	<i>[Depth of embedding]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>
<i>[Share of API traffic from partners]</i>	<i>[Ecosystem activity]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>
<i>[Time to first successful API call]</i>	<i>[Developer experience]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>
<i>[Revenue attributed to the ecosystem]</i>	<i>[Monetization]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>

Common mistakes

- **Calling an API a platform.** An API with no ecosystem strategy is just an integration.
- **Private shortcuts for your own apps.** If your team cannot build on the public interface, partners cannot either.
- **Opening before the core is solid.** Partners inherit every weakness in your data model.
- **Ignoring governance.** Unreviewed partner apps can damage customer trust in the whole product.

4. Go-To-Market Strategy

What is a go-to-market strategy?

A go-to-market (GTM) strategy is the plan for bringing a product to customers and winning them. It defines who you sell to first, what problem you promise to solve, how you price and package the product, which channels reach buyers, and how you measure success after launch. Product, marketing, sales and customer success all execute from the same GTM plan.

Why it matters. Many good products fail because they target everyone, price on cost instead of value, or launch without a repeatable way to reach buyers. A GTM strategy forces those choices before money is spent.

Building block	Question it answers
Ideal customer profile (ICP)	Which companies or people get the most value and buy fastest?
Segmentation and sequencing	Which segment do we win first, and which come later?
Positioning and messaging	Why us, compared with every alternative the buyer has?
Pricing and packaging	What do we charge, on what unit, and in which bundles?
Channels	Where do buyers find us and decide?
Sales motion	Self-serve, product-led, inside sales, field sales or partner-led?
Launch plan	In what phases do we release, and what gates each phase?
Retention and expansion	How do customers succeed, stay and grow their spend?
GTM metrics	How do we know the engine works?

Template: Go-To-Market Strategy

1. GTM summary

[Two or three sentences: who we sell to first, the outcome we promise, the land motion, and the first-year goal.]

2. Ideal customer profile

Attribute	Ideal fit	Disqualifier
Company size or user type	<i>[Fit]</i>	<i>[Not a fit]</i>
Industry or vertical	<i>[Fit]</i>	<i>[Not a fit]</i>
Current solution	<i>[Fit]</i>	<i>[Not a fit]</i>
Buying signal	<i>[Trigger event]</i>	<i>[Not a fit]</i>

3. Buyer map

Role	Title	What they care about	Their objection
Economic buyer	[Title]	[Priority]	[Objection]
Champion	[Title]	[Priority]	[Objection]
End user	[Title]	[Priority]	[Objection]

4. Segmentation and sequencing

Segment	Priority (launch, year 2, not targeted)	Motion	Why now or later
[Segment 1]	[Priority]	[Motion]	[Reason]
[Segment 2]	[Priority]	[Motion]	[Reason]

5. Positioning statement

For [target customer] who [need or pain], [product name] is a [category] that [key benefit]. Unlike [main alternative], we [key differentiator].

Alternative the buyer considers	Its strength	Our counter-position
[Doing nothing or status quo]	[Strength]	[Why switch]
[Competitor]	[Strength]	[Why us]
[Build it in-house]	[Strength]	[Why us]

Messaging pillars: [3 short phrases that every campaign repeats]

6. Pricing and packaging

- Pricing unit: [Per seat, per usage, per outcome, flat fee] because [value scales with this unit]

Package	Who it is for	Includes	Price
[Entry or land]	[Buyer]	[Features]	[Price]
[Core]	[Buyer]	[Features]	[Price]
[Premium or expand]	[Buyer]	[Features]	[Price]

7. Channels and sales motion

Channel	Role in the funnel	Share of pipeline target
[Product-led trial]	[Role]	[%]
[Outbound]	[Role]	[%]
[Partners and referrals]	[Role]	[%]

Channel	Role in the funnel	Share of pipeline target
<i>[Content and events]</i>	<i>[Role]</i>	<i>[%]</i>

Customer journey: Attract → *[how]* · Prove → *[how]* · Close → *[how]* · Onboard → *[how]* · Expand → *[how]* · Advocate → *[how]*

8. Launch plan

Phase	Timing	Objective	Exit criteria
Private beta	<i>[Dates]</i>	<i>[Objective]</i>	<i>[Criteria]</i>
Limited availability	<i>[Dates]</i>	<i>[Objective]</i>	<i>[Criteria]</i>
General availability	<i>[Dates]</i>	<i>[Objective]</i>	<i>[Criteria]</i>

Launch readiness:

- ☐ Positioning and messaging approved
- ☐ Pricing page and trial or demo flow live
- ☐ Sales enablement: playbook, demo script, objection handling
- ☐ Support documentation and help center ready
- ☐ Success metrics and dashboard agreed
- ☐ Reference customers with quantified results

9. Retention and expansion

- Customer health score: *[Signals that predict renewal]*
- Value reviews: *[When and how realized value is shown to the customer]*
- Expansion trigger: *[The signal that a customer is ready to buy more]*

10. GTM metrics

Funnel stage	Metric	Target
Acquire	<i>[Conversion rate, CAC payback]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>
Activate	<i>[Time to first value]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>
Retain	<i>[Gross revenue retention or churn]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>
Expand	<i>[Net revenue retention]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>
Advocate	<i>[Referrals, references]</i>	<i>[Target]</i>

Common mistakes

- **Targeting everyone.** A narrow first segment wins faster and teaches you more.
- **Pricing on cost.** Price on the value the customer gets, using a unit that grows with that value.

- **Launching once.** Phased launches with exit criteria reduce risk and build proof.
- **Ignoring post-sale.** Retention and expansion are part of GTM, not an afterthought.

5. Final review checklist

Run every strategy document through these checks before you share it.

- ☐ The first sentence of each section states the answer or decision, not background.
- ☐ Every bracketed prompt is replaced or deleted.
- ☐ Goals and gates use numbers, units and dates, not adjectives.
- ☐ Assumptions are labeled, with a plan to test each one.
- ☐ There is a clear "what we will not do" list.
- ☐ Metrics link back to customer value, with guardrails against gaming them.
- ☐ The four documents agree: the GTM segment matches the vision's target customer, and the lifecycle stage matches the GTM motion.
- ☐ Someone outside the team can read it in one sitting and explain the strategy back in two minutes.