



Canadian Digital Service  
Service numérique canadien

Canada

# Digital Product Roadmaps:

## *Key components & Practical Advice*

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# Bonjour!

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# Hello!



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# Agenda

- Key components of a digital product roadmap
- Practical advice & examples

# Before we get started...

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## *They are NOT*

- × Project or Release Plans
- × Lists of solutions
- × Committing to specific dates

## *They ARE*

- ✓ Versatile and living documents
- ✓ Focused on outcomes
- ✓ Based on timeframes

# Key components of a good roadmap

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What does your product roadmap *need to have* ?

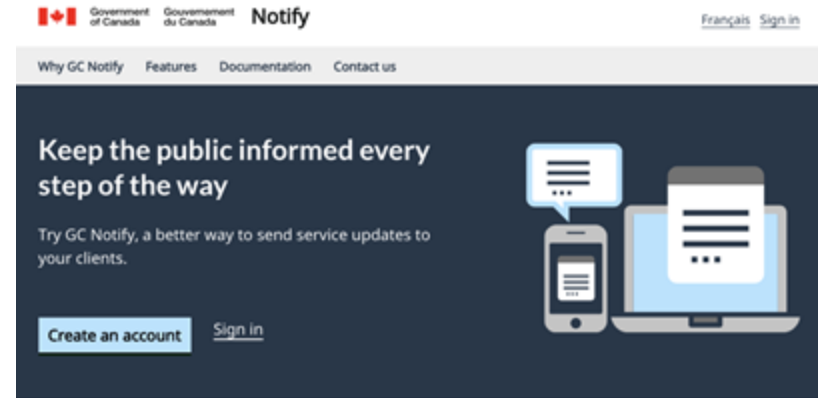
1. Product Vision
1. Objectives
1. Timeframes
1. Themes
1. Disclaimer



# Real-world example : GC Notify

## What is GC Notify?

- It is a flexible cloud based **self service** platform for **sending email and SMS messages**.
- Developers can automate the delivery of email with an open **API**
- People can send mass messages easily to **set lists**.



### Built for the Government of Canada

- Send consistent and accessible email messages from a trusted domain.
- Personalise your messages, while protecting personal information.
- Reduce the time, effort, and cost of correspondence.

[How GC Notify meets government needs](#)

<https://notification.canada.ca/>



# Product Vision

# Product Vision

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## What is *product vision* ?

- A clear vision articulates **why** the product exists, i.e. **outcome you are seeking**

## Why do you need it on the roadmap ?

- It is the **basis** of your roadmap that sets the **context**
- It acts as the **north star** and fosters **alignment**





# Product Vision

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## Practical advice :

- Make sure you have a keen understanding of the problem space with **inputs** gathered
- **Prioritize** high-level goals based on the vision statement
- **Don't do it by yourself**
- Use [templates](#) that help frame vision statements.

## **GC Notify Vision**

*Empower  
the Government of Canada  
to help people by providing timely,  
relevant updates to the public  
as they progress through  
a service or process.*



# Objectives

# Objectives

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## What are *product objectives*?

- The **goals** your product is aiming to achieve in the context of your organization.

## Why do you need them on the roadmap ?

- They set the **strategic direction**
- They create **focus in execution**
- They allow you to track the **success of your roadmap**



# Objectives

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## Practical advice :

- Think 360 (*people, process, experience, technology*) when defining your goals
- Keep repeating them and tie them to the outcomes you want to achieve
- Make sure they are specific, time-bound and measurable!



<https://mint.intuit.com/blog/planning-2/okr-f-ramework>

# Objectives

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## Practical advice :

- Track and update them regularly
- Strike a balance between “too aggressive/conservative”
- Adjust your level of granularity based on your audience

## Examples of GC Notify OKRs

Objective :

- *Adoption*

Key results :

- *Hire full time employee dedicated to market growth*
- *Increase conversion of trial users by 15%*

Objective :

- *Stabilize service reliability*

Key results :

- *100% of service incidents are captured and documented*
- *Service-level objectives are defined*



# Timeframes

# Timeframes

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## What are *timeframes*?

- Time horizons; not based on specific dates
- **Quarters** and/or **Now, Next, and Later**

## Why do you need them on the roadmap?

- They avoid **OVERCOMMITMENT**
- They support that product development is an iterative and uncertain process

# Timeframes

## Practical advice :

- Tie a level of confidence to your timeframes to manage expectations
- Define further what is in “Now”; the scope for “Next/Later” should be at a higher level.  
*Remember, you are learning along the way.*







# Themes

# Themes

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## What are *themes*?

- They are high-level **user needs** that once met will help achieve your objectives.
- They are about **outcomes**, not outputs.
- They are the **main** component of your roadmap.



## Why do you need them on the roadmap ?

- They **put users first** in your approach!
- They create alignment towards perceived benefits, the “**why**”
- They **guide** the team when ideating about solutions

# Themes

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## Practical advice :

- Use formats that put users and outcomes first like Job Stories :
  - ◆ *When... (Situation)*
  - ◆ *I want to (Motivation)*
  - ◆ *so I can (Expected Outcome)*
- Create user journeys and experiences maps to uncover themes
- Make sure your themes are based on data insights, i.e. evidence

### *Example of a GC Notify theme using the Job Story format :*

- ***When*** my trial account is created,  
***I want to*** know how to use this new service,  
***so I can*** send messages quickly and confidently.

(Objective: Adoption)

(Key result : Increase conversion of trial users by 15%)

# Themes

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## Practical advice :

- Tie your themes to their related objectives and key results
- Beware of putting solution/features tied to your themes
- Adjust the level of granularity of those themes to the audience that will be using your roadmap

### *Example of a GC Notify theme using the Job Story format :*

- **When** my trial account is created,  
**I want to** know how to use this new service,  
**so I can** send messages quickly and confidently.

(Objective: Adoption)

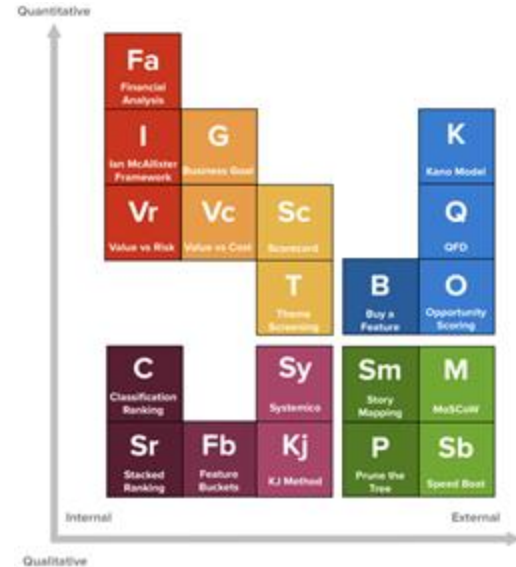
(Key result : Increase conversion of trial users by 15%)

# Themes

*But which themes should you prioritize first?  
... and how to avoid scope creep?*

## Practical advice :

- There are many [prioritization techniques](#)... use the one that fits best your context and adapt it.
- Define a set of prioritization guidelines and share them with your stakeholders and team
- Getting pre-alignment on how to use the prioritization guidelines will help you say “no” more confidently.



The Periodic Table of Product  
Prioritization Techniques  
by *Folding Burritos*



# Disclaimer

# Disclaimer

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## Why do you need it on the roadmap ?

- It protects you by stating that everything is subject to change!
- As pointed out earlier, product development is an iterative and uncertain process

## Practical advice :

- Add versioning and date of publication to your roadmap
- Establish a regular cadence for roadmap reviews to ensure validity



# Summary, Examples & Resources



# Summary

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A great roadmap:

- States the context by focusing on the why
- Includes objectives that are measurable and time-bound
- Clearly expresses the outcomes to be achieved

***“Great roadmaps inspires buy-in and over-delivery”*** (Product Roadmaps Relunched)

# Examples

## GOV.UK in numbers

From 1 April 2020 to 31 January 2021\*

**303**  
million users



**3.5**  
billion page views

\*We can only count visits to the GOV.UK website if users give us permission to.

## What we're working on

Users should be able to access government services and re-use their information so that they don't have to start from scratch each time

Trial account functionality on GOV.UK

### Recently shipped

- Work with users to find out what they'd want from an account on GOV.UK
- Pilot adding [accounts functionality](#) to GOV.UK
- Audit government services to find the number of services that require an account

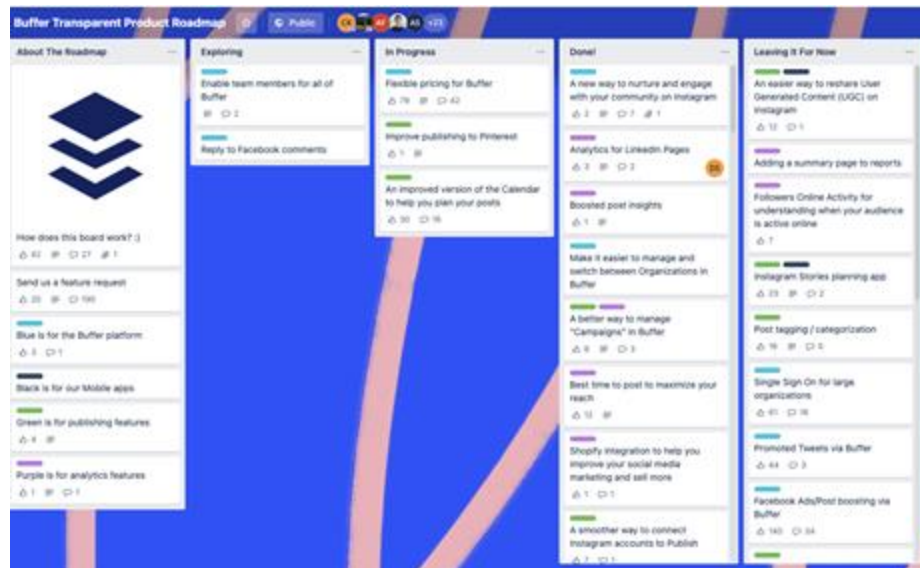
### Up next

- Review how users interacted with the new account functionality on the transition checker
- Integrate accounts with another service to expand research into their use

### Exploring

- Find out where a GOV.UK Account would be useful in other government services
- Further integration with other parts of GOV.UK
- Think about how to [tag and categorise content segments](#) to support personalisation work

<https://www.gov.uk/roadmap>



<https://trello.com/b/PDIV7XW3/buffer-transparent-product-roadmap>

# (A few) Resources

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## On Product Management :

### → *Authors*

- ◆ Marty Cagan (search for his books and conferences!)

- ◆ John Cutler (newsletter/blog)

### → *Product Management Community*

- ◆ Mind The Product (they have a loads of resources!)

### → *Podcast*

- ◆ This is Product Management

## On Roadmaps :

### → *Books*

- ◆ *Product Roadmaps - Re-launched* by Lombardo, McCarthy, Ryan and Connors

- ◆ *Strategize* by Roman Pichler



**Merci!**

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**Thank you!**