



**A TORQ GUIDE FOR DIGITAL PRODUCT PROFESSIONALS**

# **CHARTING A SUCCESSFUL COURSE FOR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**





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# INTRODUCTION



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## CHARTING A SUCCESSFUL COURSE FOR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Embarking on a product development journey can feel akin to setting sail in uncharted waters. However, the key to successfully navigating this process lies in clear planning, preparation, and a steadfast vision. The initial stages of this journey - product inception and vision - play a vital role in determining the ultimate trajectory of your product development adventure.

What follows is a guide that provides a practical roadmap to follow, detailing two crucial aspects of the process: Making the Product Work and Building a Strong Business Case. Whether you're setting forth with a brand-new idea or redefining an existing product, understanding these elements can mean the difference between smooth sailing and unanticipated roadblocks.

This guide is designed to help and support the digital product community; whatever way it benefits you. We hope you find it useful!



# PAVING THE WAY

## VISION AND PRODUCT INCEPTION

Product inception and vision are the critical first steps in product development. They lay the foundation for all the subsequent activities that transform a mere concept into a tangible, market-ready product. We divide this phase into two core activities: Product Enablement and Business Case Development.

### PRODUCT ENABLEMENT

Product Enablement is a combination of aligning and strategizing. It begins with defining a clear product strategy, a blueprint that outlines what the product aims to achieve and how it plans to get there. The strategy is not just about identifying the end goals, but also about outlining the journey, marking the potential pitfalls, and creating mechanisms to navigate around them.

Next, we tackle the crucial task of Executive Alignment. It involves aligning the product's vision and strategy with the broader goals of the organization and ensuring buy-in from key stakeholders. This alignment forms the bedrock for the product's success, ensuring that everyone on the team, from developers to executives, shares a common understanding and is working towards a shared goal.

Following strategy and alignment, Epic Identification is our next focus. We identify and outline the large bodies of work, or 'epics', that will later be broken down into smaller, manageable tasks. These epics are prioritized based on their relevance to the product strategy, the organization's objectives, and user needs.

The last element of Product Enablement is establishing a robust Technical Foundation. It involves selecting the right tech stack, ensuring a scalable and robust architecture that aligns with the product's nature and future growth plans.

### BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT

Next, we venture into the second core activity, Business Case Development. Here, we delve into the financial and market justifications for the product. A well-structured business case outlines the anticipated costs, expected returns, target market, and potential risks. It serves as a financial and strategic guide throughout the product lifecycle, from inception to launch and beyond. You can leverage our example framework below.





# UNDERSTANDING THE USER

## DISCOVERY AND MARKET STUDY

In this phase, we shift our focus outward to understand the broader market context and the users that our product will serve. It's all about acquiring an in-depth understanding of the competitive landscape, understanding our users, and outlining the tasks that will create our product backlog. We do this through six key activities: Competitive Landscape Analysis, User Personas Development, User Research, Backlog Generation, Market Research, and Journey Mapping.

### COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

We kick off with the Competitive Landscape Analysis. This involves identifying the key players in our market and understanding their strategies, strengths, and weaknesses. It gives us a panoramic view of the current market trends, allowing us to identify potential opportunities and threats.

### USER PERSONAS DEVELOPMENT

Next, we turn to User Personas Development. This activity involves creating fictitious, yet realistic, profiles of our target users. Each persona represents a significant user group for our product and includes details about their demographics, behaviors, needs, motivations, and goals.

### USER RESEARCH

The third activity, User Research, deepens our understanding of our user personas. It involves techniques like interviews, surveys, and observation, and aims to uncover the underlying needs, wants, and pain points of our users. This knowledge is vital in creating a product that truly resonates with our users.

### BACKLOG GENERATION

Once we understand our users and the market, we move to Backlog Generation. In this activity, we transform our user needs and product requirements into a list of tasks to be done, forming the basis of our product backlog. This backlog forms the heart of our development efforts, guiding the team's work throughout the product lifecycle.

### MARKET RESEARCH

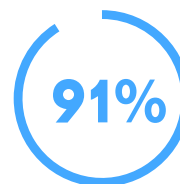
Simultaneously, we undertake Market Research to understand the broader market context in which our product will exist. This involves studying market trends, identifying potential opportunities, understanding customer needs, and predicting future growth areas. It helps us align our product with market realities and user expectations.

### JOURNEY MAPPING

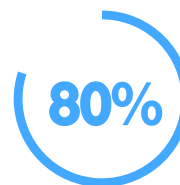
Finally, we engage in Journey Mapping. This activity involves creating a visual representation of our user's journey with our product, from the first interaction to the last. It helps us understand and optimize the user's experience, ensuring that our product provides value at every touchpoint.

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### BOTTOM LINE: THE USER IS IMPORTANT



of customers agree that a **positive customer experience** makes them **more likely to purchase again\***



of customers now consider their **experience** with a company to be **as important as its products\***

\*SOURCE: <https://www.salesforce.com/ap/blog/2021/04/customer-journey-mapping-explained.html>



# CRAFTING THE BLUEPRINT

## DESIGN AND FRAMEWORK

The design phase is a critical step in the product development process where we transition from understanding our users and their needs to creating tangible representations of the solution. This chapter involves six key activities: High-Fidelity Mockups, Prototypes, Technical Architecture, Design System, Style Guide, and Integration Map.

### HIGH FIDELITY MOCKUPS

Firstly, we embark on crafting High-Fidelity Mockups. These detailed designs provide a visual representation of the product's features, interface, and interactions, providing a close-to-final look at the product's appearance. It enables us to visualize and iterate on the design before any code is written.

### PROTOTYPES

Following the mockups, we create Prototypes. This step involves creating an interactive model of the product that showcases its functionality and design in a realistic manner. Prototyping allows for user testing, enabling feedback to be gathered and improvements to be made before the final version is developed.

### TECHNICAL ARCHITECTURE

As we create visual and interactive representations of our product, we also need to consider the Technical Architecture. This is the backbone of our product, outlining the software components, the relationships between them, and the infrastructure that will support our product. Having a clear and robust technical architecture ensures that our product can scale and evolve over time.

### DESIGN SYSTEM

Next, we create a Design System, a set of standards that guide the design and development of our product. This system encompasses everything from components and patterns to typography and color schemes. A comprehensive design system ensures consistency across the product and speeds up the design and development process.

### STYLE GUIDE

Subsequently, we develop a Style Guide. This is a document that details the visual language of the product, including colors, fonts, layouts, and iconography. It ensures that all elements of the product have a consistent look and feel, creating a unified brand experience for users.

### INTEGRATION MAP

Finally, we create an Integration Map. This outlines how our product will interact with other systems and platforms. By understanding these connections, we ensure seamless interoperability, enhancing the user experience and maximizing the product's utility.





# NAVIGATING THE COURSE

## AGILE PRODUCT DISCOVERY

Agile Product Delivery is the keystone of modern product development, embodying the importance of flexibility and responsiveness to changing requirements and market conditions. This chapter involves six key activities: Project Management, Product Ownership, Backlog Refinement, Scrum Master, Roadmap Development, and SAFe Coaching.

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Firstly, we delve into Project Management. This role is pivotal to ensuring that all facets of the product development are proceeding in unison, maintaining a consistent pace, and staying on track. It involves coordinating different teams, managing resources, overseeing timelines, and mitigating any risks that may emerge during the development process.

### PRODUCT OWNERSHIP

Next, we explore the role of the Product Owner. The Product Owner is the torchbearer of the product vision, ensuring that the product's value proposition aligns with market needs and business objectives. They prioritize tasks, collaborate with stakeholders, and define the product's feature set to maximize its impact.

### BACKLOG REFINEMENT

Following this, we delve into Backlog Refinement. This process is crucial in agile development as it involves constantly evaluating and prioritizing the product backlog to ensure that the team is always working on the most valuable features. Refinement includes breaking down complex tasks into manageable user stories, estimating effort, and aligning tasks with the broader product goals.

### SCRUM MASTER

In tandem with these roles, we recognize the importance of the Scrum Master. This individual ensures that the team adheres to agile practices, facilitates communication and cooperation among team members, and removes any obstacles that might impede progress.

### ROADMAP DEVELOPMENT

Simultaneously, we tackle Roadmap Development. This strategic document charts out the product's journey, outlining key milestones and deliverables. It provides the team with a high-level view of the product's trajectory, aligning the team's efforts with strategic objectives.

### SAFe COACHING

Finally, we discuss SAFe (Scaled Agile Framework) Coaching. As organizations scale their agile practices, SAFe coaching provides guidance and support to ensure consistency and efficiency in scaling agile processes. It promotes alignment, collaboration, and delivery across large numbers of agile teams.

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### WHY IS AGILE SO POPULAR?

+ 16%

per the Project Management Institute (PMI), **agile projects achieved a +16% success rate** compared to their traditional projects counterparts.



# ENGINEERING THE SOLUTION

## CROSS-PLATFORM SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Cross-Platform Software Development is the keystone to building flexible, versatile solutions that provide a consistent user experience across various platforms and devices. In this chapter, we traverse the path of constructing the technical aspects of a product, covering Front-end Development, Back-end Development, Mobile Development, Scalable Architecture, Technical Documentation, and Unit Testing.

### FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT

First, we venture into Front-end Development, the interface that users interact with. It encapsulates the design, interactivity, responsiveness, and performance of the application on different browsers and devices. The goal is to ensure an intuitive, efficient, and engaging user experience, aligning the interface design with the user's needs and expectations.

### BACK-END DEVELOPMENT

Next, we tackle Back-end Development, the engine that powers the application. It focuses on server interactions, data management, application logic, and ensuring the security and integrity of the application. We look into aspects like server scripting, database interactions, and API development that provide the application with the necessary functionality and robustness.

### MOBILE DEVELOPMENT

From there, we transition to Mobile Development. As users increasingly rely on mobile devices for their digital interactions, it's essential to build applications that are optimized for mobile platforms. This includes developing apps for various mobile operating systems, ensuring responsiveness, managing data usage, and optimizing performance.

### SCALABLE ARCHITECTURE

Scalable Architecture then comes into play. It involves designing the system in a way that it can handle increasing amounts of work by adding resources. The architecture should be robust and flexible, capable of scaling horizontally or vertically to handle increased user demand or data volume without impacting performance.

### TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION

After architecture, we dive into the creation of Technical Documentation. Comprehensive, clear documentation forms the backbone of any robust development process. It includes everything from architecture diagrams, API documentation, code comments, to user manuals. This documentation serves as a reference for the development team, easing the onboarding process for new developers and assisting in troubleshooting and maintenance.

### UNIT TESTING

Lastly, we take a close look at Unit Testing. It's an integral part of software development that validates each piece of code performs as expected. This proactive measure helps detect and resolve issues early in the development cycle, ensuring the stability and reliability of the final product. The data below is the proof in the pudding.

TESTING  
IMPACT

+42%

Quality &  
Speed

+43%

Customer  
Experience

-38%

Risk





# STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

## VALIDATION AND TESTING



**JONAH TRAHAN**  
Subject Matter Expert

**IN MY DAY-TO-DAY, TESTING IS AN INDISPENSABLE PART OF THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT LIFECYCLE. IT'S AIMED AT ENSURING THE DEVELOPED SOLUTION MEETS THE REQUIRED SPECIFICATIONS AND PERFORMS OPTIMALLY UNDER DIVERSE CONDITIONS.**

### **AUTOMATED TESTING**

We start this practice with Automated Testing, a technique that uses software tools to execute predefined tests on the product, thereby streamlining the testing process and significantly increasing its accuracy. It involves creating test scripts that can run automatically to check specific functionality within the product and provide quick feedback.

### **ENTERPRISE TEST STRATEGY**

Next, the discourse moves to Enterprise Test Strategy, a comprehensive plan outlining the testing objectives and processes needed to ensure product quality. It takes into consideration various elements like resources, schedule, testing tools, risk management, and mitigation plans to provide a roadmap for the testing journey.

### **PRODUCT SPECIALIST**

Then, we bring the role of Product Specialists to the fore. These individuals hold in-depth knowledge about the product's features and functionality and play a crucial role in verifying the product meets its intended goals. Their expertise is paramount in aligning the product's functionality with user expectations.

### **REGRESSION TESTING**

Our exploration proceeds to Regression Testing, a type of testing carried out to ensure that previously developed and tested software still functions correctly after changes have been made. It helps detect bugs or issues that may have inadvertently been introduced during the development or updating process.

### **UAT BUSINESS TESTING**

Following regression testing, the discussion proceeds to UAT Business Testing. This involves the end-users testing the system to validate whether it can handle required tasks in real-world scenarios, conforming to predetermined acceptance criteria. It is a crucial stage in the development process to gain user approval and ensure the product's readiness for release.

### **INTEGRATION TESTING**

Lastly, we address Integration Testing, a phase in the software testing process where individual units are combined and tested as a group. The main aim of this process is to expose faults in the interaction between integrated components and verify the system as a whole.



# LAUNCH AND REACH

## ACHIEVING PRODUCT LAUNCH SUCCESS

The key to a successful product launch lies in addressing several pivotal activities: Pre-Launch Marketing, Launch Execution, User Onboarding, and Post-Launch Support.

### PRE-LAUNCH MARKETING

Effective pre-launch marketing establishes a product's place in the market even before its official release. This includes strategies such as crafting an enticing narrative around the product, creating hype through social media campaigns, or leveraging influencer partnerships. It also involves Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to ensure the product is easily discoverable online. It's about creating a robust marketing strategy that suits your product and targets your audience aptly.

### LAUNCH EXECUTION

This activity involves the technical aspect of making your product live. For mobile applications, it means ensuring adherence to platform-specific guidelines like the App Store's review process for iOS and Google Play Console for Android, thereby confirming the app's acceptance. It includes activities like app metadata management, privacy policy setup, and adherence to user interface guidelines. For web applications, selecting a reliable hosting platform, implementing efficient content delivery networks (CDNs), and securing the right domain names become critical.

### USER ONBOARDING

Onboarding is an integral part of product launch activities. The focus is on creating an intuitive and engaging first-time user experience. This includes developing easy-to-understand user guides or tutorials, offering real-time assistance, and simplifying user registration processes. Activities could also involve creating in-app messages to guide the users through the initial stages of using the app and providing immediate value to ensure users have a favorable initial experience.

### POST-LAUNCH SUPPORT

After the product is live, maintaining open lines of communication with the users is a crucial activity. This can be achieved through monitoring user feedback, responsive customer support, and regular product updates based on user requirements. It also involves community building activities that help in fostering product loyalty and advocacy. Post-launch support determines the long-term success of a product and ensures its continued relevance and utility to users.





# OPTIMIZE AND SUSTAIN

## ENSURING CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT AND SUCCESS

As the product makes its way into the market, continual evaluation and optimization become paramount. The key activities of this stage include Campaign Management, Feedback / Sustainment, Sales Enablement, Incident Management, Marketing Strategy, and Value Capture / ROI.

### **CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT**

This activity focuses on organizing, executing, and tracking the performance of marketing campaigns to promote the product. This could involve running advertisements across various channels such as social media, email newsletters, or content marketing platforms. The objective is to increase product visibility, attract new users, and retain existing ones. Metrics such as reach, engagement, conversions, and customer acquisition costs are tracked meticulously to measure campaign effectiveness.

### **FEEDBACK / SUSTAINMENT**

Ongoing user feedback is an invaluable resource for continuous product improvement. This includes collecting, analyzing, and acting upon user feedback and reviews. It could involve maintaining an open feedback channel within the product, monitoring online reviews, or conducting user surveys. The insights gained from these activities help to identify user pain points, which in turn guides product enhancements and developments.

### **SALES ENABLEMENT**

This encompasses equipping the sales team with the necessary tools, content, and information to sell the product effectively. This might involve creating product specification documents, competitor analysis, sales scripts, and training the sales team on product features and benefits. Sales enablement helps the sales team to communicate the product's value proposition convincingly to potential buyers.

### **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

This activity pertains to identifying, analyzing, and resolving product-related issues that impact the user experience. This involves maintaining a responsive support team, tracking incident reports, prioritizing issues based on severity and impact, and working closely with the product development team to address them. The goal is to minimize the impact of incidents on product performance and user satisfaction.

### **MARKETING STRATEGY**

Continuous product marketing is integral to maintain its relevance in a dynamic market. This involves regularly revisiting and refining the product's marketing strategy based on market trends, competitive landscape, user feedback, and campaign performance. It might also include exploring new marketing channels, refining the product's unique selling proposition, or running promotional offers to increase product adoption. [Our marketing practice](#) is great at partnering with us to accomplish these things.

### **VALUE CAPTURE / ROI**

The ultimate measure of a product's success is the value it delivers, both to the users and the business. This activity involves tracking and analyzing key performance indicators such as user growth, retention rate, revenue generated, and the return on investment for the product. This helps to understand the product's profitability, influence future product strategy, and justify continued investment in the product.



# WRAP UP

## FROM IDEA TO ACTIONABLE BLUEPRINT – YOUR ROUTE TO PRODUCT SUCCESS

In conclusion, transforming a promising concept into a successful, market-ready product requires meticulous planning and a unified vision. The process we've outlined here offers a practical, user-friendly approach to product development. From sketching out a clear product strategy and aligning with your executive team, to identifying the main work areas and securing a robust technical foundation, Making the Product Work ensures you have a strong and adaptable roadmap to success.

But the journey doesn't end there.

Building a Strong Business Case is a critical second step that equips you with a thorough understanding of the financial implications, market necessities, and potential risks associated with your product. This stage transforms your roadmap into a comprehensive GPS, guiding your product from conception to launch.

Remember, a successful product development journey begins with a solid plan and ends with a product that fulfills both the company's objectives and users' needs. This guide serves as your compass to navigate that journey. Armed with a strong vision, a clear strategy, an understanding of the work ahead, and a compelling business case, you're now ready to embark on your product success story.

Safe travels!



# TORQ – DIGITAL PRACTICE

**TORQ'S DIGITAL PRACTICE HAS A RANGE OF OFFERINGS AND SERVICES THAT ARE FOCUSED ON GUIDING AND SUPPORTING BUSINESSES IN REACHING THEIR CRITICAL DIGITAL INITIATIVES.**

**PRODUCT VISIONING & STRATEGY**

**PRODUCT DISCOVERY**

**PRODUCT DESIGN**

**PRODUCT BUILD**

**PRODUCT TESTING & VALIDATION**

**PRODUCT MANAGEMENT**

**PRODUCT/PLATFORM SECURITY**

**PRODUCT/PLATFORM MAINTENANCE**

**PRODUCT LAUNCH**

