

Product Management Frameworks

A practical guide for product managers



Product management involves making decisions about customers, markets, products, priorities and opportunities, often with incomplete information and competing demands.

That's where product management frameworks can help.

A framework provides structure for approaching a particular problem or decision. It can help product managers ask the right questions, organise information, compare options and make decisions more consistently.

But frameworks aren't magic formulas. The right framework depends on the problem you're trying to solve, the information available and the context you're working in.

This guide explains what product management frameworks are, how they are used and some of the most commonly used frameworks across different areas of product management.

UNDERSTANDING FRAMEWORKS

What is a product management framework?

A product management framework is a structured approach that helps product managers work through a particular type of product challenge.

Frameworks can be used for activities such as:

Understanding customers; Exploring opportunities; Developing product strategy; Prioritising ideas and features; Defining products and propositions; Planning launches; Setting objectives; Measuring product performance; Making strategic decisions.

Some frameworks are specifically associated with product management, while others come from areas such as business strategy, innovation, UX or Agile ways of working and are commonly used by product teams.

The important thing isn't knowing every available framework. It's understanding which framework might help with the problem you're trying to solve and when not to use one.

Why do product managers use frameworks?

Product managers often have to make decisions without having all the answers. A framework can provide a useful structure for working through a problem rather than starting from a blank page.

For example:

- You need to prioritise a long list of opportunities → a prioritisation framework can help.
- You need to understand what customers actually need → a customer insight framework may help.
- You need to explore potential solutions → a discovery framework can provide structure.
- You need to define a product strategy → a strategy framework can help connect customer and business needs.
- You need to set measurable objectives → an objectives framework can provide a common structure.

Frameworks can also create a shared language within product teams.

However, a framework shouldn't replace product judgement. Two teams can use the same framework and reach different conclusions because they have different customers, markets, data and business objectives.

CHOOSING A FRAMEWORK

Product management frameworks by purpose

One of the easiest ways to understand the range of frameworks available is to group them by what you're trying to achieve.

The right choice depends on the question you're trying to answer.

If you're trying to...	Frameworks to consider
Understand customer needs	Jobs to Be Done, Kano Model
Explore customer problems	Double Diamond, Opportunity Solution Tree
Prioritise opportunities	RICE, MoSCoW, Value vs Effort
Develop product strategy	Product Vision Board, SWOT
Explore a business model	Business Model Canvas, Lean Canvas
Set objectives	OKRs
Assess opportunities	Concept assessment and validation approaches
Manage the product lifecycle	Product lifecycle frameworks and continuous product planning

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FRAMEWORKS IN PRACTICE

Customer and discovery frameworks

Jobs to Be Done

Jobs to Be Done (JTBD) is an approach for understanding the underlying job or outcome a customer is trying to achieve.

Instead of focusing solely on the product a customer says they want, JTBD encourages product teams to understand the situation, motivation and desired outcome behind their behaviour.

When might you use it?

JTBD can be useful when you're:

- Trying to understand why customers choose a product.
- Exploring unmet needs.
- Developing customer insight.
- Looking for opportunities for new products or features.
- Trying to understand why customers switch between solutions.

What should you watch out for?

JTBD isn't simply a template for writing a sentence about what a customer wants. It works best when supported by genuine customer research and evidence.

Kano Model

The Kano Model is used to understand how different product features or attributes can influence customer satisfaction.

It distinguishes between different types of customer needs, including basic expectations, performance-related attributes and features that can create additional satisfaction.

When might you use it?

It can help when you're:

- Prioritising customer needs.
- Evaluating potential features.
- Exploring what customers value.
- Trying to distinguish basic expectations from potential differentiators.

What should you watch out for?

Customer expectations change. Something that once delighted customers can eventually become an expected part of the product.

The Kano Model should therefore be treated as a way to support thinking and research rather than a permanent classification.

FRAMEWORKS IN PRACTICE

More customer and discovery frameworks

Opportunity Solution Tree

An Opportunity Solution Tree is a visual approach to connecting a desired outcome with customer opportunities and potential solutions.

It can help product teams avoid jumping straight from a problem to a feature.

When might you use it?

It can be useful during product discovery when you need to:

- Define the outcome you're trying to achieve.
- Explore customer opportunities.
- Identify potential solutions.
- Compare different ways of addressing a problem.

The approach encourages teams to explore multiple possible solutions rather than automatically building the first idea that comes to mind.

What should you watch out for?

Explore more than the first solution that comes to mind, and check that opportunities reflect customer evidence rather than untested assumptions.

Double Diamond

The Double Diamond is a framework for approaching problems through stages of divergence and convergence.

It is commonly represented through four stages: Discover; Define; Develop; Deliver.

The approach encourages teams to explore a problem before narrowing down the problem definition, then explore potential solutions before selecting and delivering an appropriate one.

When might you use it?

It can provide useful structure for: Product discovery; Design challenges; Understanding customer problems; Exploring potential solutions; Innovation work.

It is particularly useful as a way of thinking about the balance between exploring possibilities and narrowing decisions.

What should you watch out for?

Use the stages to support exploration and decision-making. Do not rush to a solution before checking that you understand the problem.

FRAMEWORKS IN PRACTICE

Prioritisation frameworks

Prioritisation is one of the most common areas where product managers use frameworks. The challenge is familiar: there are more possible things to do than the team has time or resources to deliver. A prioritisation framework can help make the decision-making process more transparent.

RICE

RICE is a prioritisation method that considers four factors: Reach × Impact × Confidence ÷ Effort. It can help teams compare opportunities using a consistent set of criteria.

When might you use it?

RICE can be useful when:

- You have multiple competing opportunities.
- You need to make prioritisation decisions transparent.
- You have enough information to estimate the relevant factors.
- You want to compare opportunities using a consistent approach.

What should you watch out for?

The numbers aren't objective truth. Estimates of reach, impact, confidence and effort can all be subjective. The value of RICE comes from creating a structured conversation, not pretending that a score removes judgement.

MoSCoW

MoSCoW is a prioritisation technique that categorises requirements or features as:

Must have; Should have; Could have; Won't have.

It can be particularly useful when teams need to establish what is essential and what can wait.

When might you use it?

MoSCoW can help with:

- Scope discussions.
- Release planning.
- Requirements prioritisation.
- Stakeholder conversations.

What should you watch out for?

If everything becomes a "Must have", the framework stops helping. The value comes from having a meaningful discussion about what is genuinely essential.

FRAMEWORKS IN PRACTICE

Prioritisation and measurement

Value vs Effort

Value vs Effort is a simple prioritisation approach that compares the potential value of an opportunity with the effort required to deliver it. Opportunities can then be considered according to their relative value and effort.

When might you use it?

It can be useful when you need a straightforward way to start a prioritisation discussion. It's particularly helpful when a team needs something simple and visual rather than a more detailed scoring model.

What should you watch out for?

"Value" and "effort" still need to be defined. Without a shared understanding of what those terms mean, different people may place the same opportunity in very different places.

Objectives and measurement

OKRs

OKRs stands for Objectives and Key Results. An Objective describes what you want to achieve, while Key Results provide measurable indicators of progress towards that objective. OKRs can help connect product activity with wider organisational goals.

When might product teams use OKRs?

They can be useful for:

- Setting product objectives.
- Aligning product and business teams.
- Creating measurable outcomes.
- Communicating priorities.
- Reviewing progress.

What should you watch out for?

The important distinction is between measuring activity and measuring outcomes. For example, delivering ten new features is an activity. Understanding whether those features improved an important customer or business outcome is a different question.

FRAMEWORKS IN PRACTICE

Strategy frameworks

Product Vision Board

A Product Vision Board is a visual way of describing the product vision and the key elements surrounding it.

It can help connect: The target customers; Their needs or problems; The product or solution; The value proposition; Business objectives.

When might you use it?

It can be useful when:

- Developing or communicating a product vision.
- Aligning stakeholders.
- Starting a new product initiative.
- Connecting customer needs with business objectives.

A clear product vision can help teams understand the direction they're working towards without prescribing every detail of what needs to be built.

What should you watch out for?

A completed board does not validate the vision. Review its assumptions as you learn more about customers and the market.

SWOT analysis

SWOT stands for: Strengths; Weaknesses; Opportunities; Threats.

It is a strategic analysis tool that can help teams consider internal and external factors affecting a product, proposition or business.

When might you use it?

It can provide a useful starting point for:

- Strategic reviews.
- Market discussions.
- Competitor analysis.
- Product planning.
- Understanding the current position of a product.

What should you watch out for?

A SWOT analysis can become a list of generic statements if it isn't supported by evidence. The useful part is what you do with the findings afterwards.

FRAMEWORKS IN PRACTICE

Business and proposition frameworks

Business Model Canvas

The Business Model Canvas provides a visual structure for considering the key components of a business model.

These include areas such as: Customer segments; Value propositions; Channels; Customer relationships; Revenue streams; Key resources; Key activities; Key partnerships; Cost structure.

When might you use it?

It can be useful when:

- Exploring a new business model.
- Reviewing an existing proposition.
- Developing a new product or service.
- Discussing how different parts of a business model connect.

What should you watch out for?

Treat the canvas as a set of assumptions to investigate. Filling every box does not demonstrate that the business model will work.

Lean Canvas

Lean Canvas is an adaptation of the Business Model Canvas designed around the needs of startups and new business ideas.

It focuses on areas including: Problems; Customer segments; Unique value proposition; Solution; Channels; Revenue; Costs; Key metrics; Unfair advantage.

When might you use it?

It can be useful when testing or communicating a new business idea and making assumptions visible.

What should you watch out for?

As with any canvas, its value comes from the thinking and discussion around it rather than simply completing the boxes.

APPLYING FRAMEWORKS

Which product management framework should you use?

There isn't one product management framework that is right for every situation. Start with the problem you're trying to solve.

For example:

Your challenge	Frameworks to consider
You need to prioritise features or opportunities	RICE, MoSCoW or Value vs Effort
You need to understand customer motivations	Jobs to Be Done or the Kano Model
You need to explore a customer problem and potential solutions	Opportunity Solution Trees or Double Diamond
You need to clarify product direction	Product Vision Board
You need to explore a business model	Business Model Canvas or Lean Canvas
You need to establish measurable objectives	OKRs

The framework should serve the problem, not the other way around.

Can you use more than one framework?

Yes. In practice, product teams often use different tools and frameworks at different points in the product lifecycle.

For example, a team might:

- Use customer research to understand a problem.
- Use Jobs to Be Done to explore the underlying customer need.
- Use an Opportunity Solution Tree to explore potential solutions.
- Use a prioritisation approach such as RICE to compare opportunities.
- Develop a product vision and strategy.
- Use OKRs to define measurable outcomes.
- Use product metrics to monitor performance after launch.

The frameworks aren't necessarily competing with each other. They can provide different types of structure at different stages of the product management process.

THE TARIGO APPROACH

How Tarigo approaches product management frameworks

Tarigo uses its 5D Product Excellence Framework to provide a consistent approach across the product lifecycle.

The five stages are:

Direct Set direction through research, market understanding and product vision.

Discover Understand customer needs, identify opportunities and assess potential ideas.

Define Turn validated opportunities into propositions, business cases and clearly defined product requirements.

Deliver Work with teams to build, launch and bring products to market.

Drive Measure performance, gather feedback and continuously improve products and services.

The framework is designed to provide structure while allowing product teams to use different tools and techniques according to their circumstances.

Tarigo's training also uses practical exercises, real-world examples and hands-on learning to help product managers apply frameworks rather than simply learn definitions.

How should you choose a product management framework?

Before reaching for a framework, ask:

1. What problem am I trying to solve?

Be specific. "Improve our product" isn't a problem that a single framework can solve. "Decide which three opportunities we should investigate next" is much clearer.

2. What information do I have?

Some frameworks require estimates, research or customer insight. If you don't have reliable information, be careful about creating false precision.

3. What decision needs to be made?

Are you exploring, prioritising, defining, planning or measuring? Choose a framework that helps with that particular decision.

4. Who needs to be involved?

A framework can also help structure stakeholder conversations. Think about who needs to contribute, who makes the decision and what needs to be communicated afterwards.

5. What will you do with the output?

A framework should lead somewhere. If completing it doesn't help you make a decision, test an assumption, identify an opportunity or agree an action, question whether you need it.

CHOOSING WITH JUDGEMENT

Frameworks, tools and techniques: what's the difference?

These terms are often used interchangeably, but they aren't necessarily the same thing.

A framework provides a structure for approaching a problem or area of work. A tool is something you use to carry out a particular activity. A technique is a particular way of performing an activity.

There can be overlap between the three.

For example, RICE can be used as a structured prioritisation framework, while a prioritisation matrix might be used as a practical tool to compare options.

The terminology matters less than understanding what you're trying to achieve and whether the approach helps.

Are product management frameworks necessary?

No. Product managers can and do make decisions without formally applying a named framework. Frameworks are useful because they can provide structure, create a common language and help teams approach recurring problems consistently. But using a framework simply because it's available doesn't automatically improve a decision.

Good product management still depends on: Customer understanding; Product and market knowledge; Business context; Evidence and data; Communication; Critical thinking; Collaboration; Judgement.

A framework should support those things rather than replace them.

Can AI help product managers use frameworks?

AI can help product managers work with frameworks, but it doesn't remove the need for product judgement.

Depending on the framework and the task, AI could help with things such as: Structuring information; Generating initial ideas; Summarising research; Identifying themes; Challenging assumptions; Creating first drafts; Exploring different scenarios; Turning information into a structured framework.

However, the quality of the output depends on the quality and context of the information provided.

For example, asking AI to prioritise a set of features doesn't mean the resulting ranking is automatically correct. A product manager still needs to understand the customer, business and technical context and challenge the assumptions behind the output.

The most useful approach is often to treat AI as a tool to support product thinking rather than as a replacement for it.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Product management frameworks FAQs

What are product management frameworks?

Product management frameworks are structured approaches that help product managers tackle common activities and decisions, such as product strategy, customer discovery, prioritisation, planning and measurement.

What is the most commonly used product management framework?

There isn't one universally used product management framework. Different frameworks are used for different purposes. For example, RICE and MoSCoW are commonly used for prioritisation, while Jobs to Be Done can support customer understanding and OKRs can help teams define measurable objectives.

What framework should I use for prioritisation?

It depends on the decision and the information available. RICE, MoSCoW and Value vs Effort are examples of approaches that can help teams structure prioritisation decisions.

What is the RICE framework?

RICE is a prioritisation method based on Reach, Impact, Confidence and Effort. It provides a way of comparing opportunities using a consistent set of factors.

What is Jobs to Be Done?

Jobs to Be Done is an approach to understanding the underlying outcomes customers are trying to achieve, helping product teams explore customer needs and motivations.

What is the Kano Model?

The Kano Model helps product teams consider how different product features or attributes can affect customer satisfaction and expectations.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Product management frameworks FAQs continued

Are product management frameworks the same as Agile frameworks?

Not necessarily. Agile describes values and principles for working adaptively, while Scrum provides a framework for organising complex work. Many product management frameworks address specific activities such as discovery, strategy or prioritisation.

Scrum, for example, is defined as a lightweight framework that helps people and teams create value by adapting their approach to complex problems. See the [Scrum Guide](#).

Can product management frameworks be used together?

Yes. Different frameworks can support different stages or activities within the product lifecycle. The important thing is to use them purposefully rather than applying frameworks simply for the sake of it.

How do I learn to use product management frameworks effectively?

Learning the theory is a starting point, but applying frameworks to realistic product problems is important. Practical exercises, case studies, feedback and experience can help product managers understand when to use a framework, how to adapt it and when not to use it.

Product management frameworks are tools, not answers

There are hundreds of frameworks, models and techniques that product managers can use. You don't need to memorise all of them. The more useful skill is knowing what problem you're trying to solve, what information you need and which approach could help you make a better decision.

Frameworks can give product teams structure and a shared language. But they don't remove uncertainty, replace customer insight or make difficult decisions for you.

Used well, they provide a starting point for better product thinking. Used badly, they can simply create more boxes to fill in. The skill is knowing the difference.

Want to develop your product management skills?

Tarigo's product management training combines practical product management frameworks, tools and techniques with real-world examples and hands-on learning.

Explore [Tarigo's Product Management Courses](#) or discover practical tools and resources through the [Tarigo Resource Hub](#).

