



# The Product Lifecycle Framework



This framework has been designed to support individuals with competing responsibilities in managing and growing their products

# Introduction

## SETTING THE SCENE

Many professionals are driven to bring their innovative ideas to life, but the **journey from concept to product** can be challenging, especially when managing a full-time job or running a business.

Traditional product frameworks often assume complete focus on the product itself, an assumption that doesn't align with the realities faced by most entrepreneurs and business leaders.

This framework acknowledges those constraints, offering a **practical, step-by-step approach** that breaks down the process into manageable stages.

It helps you prioritise essential actions, stay organised and steadily progress your product without sidelining other commitments, turning your vision into a viable offering over time.

## ABOUT THE DOCUMENT

The **Product Lifecycle Framework** provides a comprehensive blueprint for developing a product from an initial idea through to long-term growth and sustainability, tailored specifically for busy professionals who are balancing other commitments.

Unlike traditional product frameworks that assume full-time dedication to product development, this approach acknowledges the realities of juggling multiple responsibilities, like running a consulting business or managing a full-time job.

The framework has **four stages** aimed to be completed over a **12-week** period, each with defined tasks, actionable steps, tools and key deliverables. This structure allows individuals to make consistent progress on their product while keeping other obligations on track.

Each stage includes specific tasks that guide users through essential steps, from validating an idea and building a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to scaling user acquisition and optimising operations.



### 3 GROWTH STAGE | Budding

*Is your product gaining traction and ready to scale?*

#### FEATURE EXPANSION

- ? What new features do users want?
- ✓ Develop additional features based on feedback
- ⚡ Google Analytics, Mixpanel, direct feedback

#### OPERATIONAL SCALABILITY

- ? Are your processes ready for growth?
- ✓ Streamline operations and ensure product scalability
- ⚡ Zapier, Airtable, business process modelling

#### ACQUISITION STRATEGY

- ✓ Implement marketing campaigns
- ⚡ CRM (eg. HubSpot), MailChimp
- ? How can you grow your user base?

#### FEEDBACK ITERATION

- ✓ Refine MVP based on what users need most
- ⚡ Feedback analysis, Kanban (Trello, Asana)
- ? What changes are critical to progress?

#### EARLY USER TESTING

- ? What do users think of your MVP?
- ✓ Gather feedback from users to validate your product
- ⚡ UserTesting, Google Forms for quick feedback

#### RAPID MVP DEVELOPMENT

- ? What's the simplest version that solves the core problem?
- ✓ Create MVP to test your idea before full build
- ⚡ Figma, Adobe XD, Bubble.io (no-code tools)



### 2 DEVELOPMENT STAGE | Sprout

*Have you developed a basic version of your product?*



### 4 MATURITY STAGE | Harvest

*Is your product optimised for long-term success?*



#### OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

- ? How can you maximise your product efficiency?
- ✓ Refine operations and reduce costs for profitability
- ⚡ Power BI, Tableau, process automation

#### INNOVATION EXPLORATION

- ? What's next for your product development?
- ✓ Explore new features, products or market segments
- ⚡ R&D workshops, brainstorming sessions

#### CUSTOMER RETENTION

- ? How will you maintain your customer loyalty?
- ✓ Create programs to keep users engaged
- ⚡ CRM for loyalty programs, Intercom

## The Product Lifecycle Framework

Helping companies and busy professionals identify, grow and mature their products

#### START HERE

Begin by assessing where your product stands in its lifecycle. Whether you're just planting the seed of an idea or ready to scale a growing product, this framework will guide you through each stage with key questions and tools to help you make informed decisions and drive progress. Let's get started!

? Question   ✓ Task   ⚡ Tool

#### PROCESS EVALUATION

- ? Can internal processes be standardised into a product?
- ✓ Identify repeatable processes to be productised
- ⚡ Business analysis tools, team brainstorming

#### CUSTOMER DISCOVERY

- ? What are your customers' biggest pain points?
- ✓ Conduct customer surveys to gather feedback
- ⚡ Typeform for surveys, SurveyMonkey, interviews

#### MARKET FIT ANALYSIS

- ? Does the market need this product?
- ✓ Analyse trends and compare competitors
- ⚡ Google Trends, market reports & analysis



### 1 DISCOVERY STAGE | Seedling

*Is your idea / product worth pursuing?*



# Stage 1 Discovery

***Determine if the idea or process has market potential and is worth pursuing***

The Discovery stage is all about uncovering the potential of your product idea. In this phase, you'll validate whether there is a **genuine need** for your concept by analysing market demand, gathering customer insights and assessing any processes that could be standardised into a product.

This stage is essential for understanding if your idea has the roots to grow. By focusing on quick, targeted research, you can confirm the problem your product will solve and establish a strong foundation before committing resources.

## QUESTIONS

- ☐ Does the market need this product?
- ☐ What are the biggest pain points for potential users?
- ☐ Can any internal processes be turned into a product?

## STEP-BY-STEP

### Task 1.1 - Market Fit Analysis

Week 1

Use quick market research tools like **Google Trends** or **industry reports** to gauge demand. Conduct competitor analysis to see if similar products and how they perform.

- ☐ *Identify if there's a market gap or unique need that your product can fulfill.*

### Task 1.2 - Customer Discovery

Week 2

Talk to potential customers using brief surveys or interviews. Tools like **Typeform** allow you to create simple, easy-to-distribute surveys that can quickly gather insights.

- ☐ *Understand the key problems your product can solve and ensure there's enough interest to move forward.*

### Task 1.3 - Process Evaluation

Week 3

Look at existing processes within your business that can be standardised and turned into products. Business analysis tools or team **brainstorming sessions** can help you identify repeatable processes that could be marketed.

- ☐ *If you have a solid process that could help others, consider it for productisation.*

# Stage 1 | **Discovery**

## EXAMPLE

### **Sarah, a Full-Time Consultant with a Product Idea**

Sarah is a full-time business consultant who often finds herself using a custom project management template that her clients love. She's considering turning this into a digital tool for other consultants, but with her demanding schedule, she can't commit to full-time development.

Using the Discovery Stage, she begins by researching whether there's market demand for project management tools specifically tailored for consultants. She conducts quick surveys with her clients and colleagues and uses market research tools to analyse competition.

Through this streamlined process, Sarah validates that there's a gap in the market for a product like hers, allowing her to confidently move forward with her idea without over-investing time upfront.

## DELIVERABLES

### **Task 1.1: Market Fit Analysis**

- Market Research Summary
- Competitor Analysis Report
- Target Audience Profile

### **Task 1.2: Customer Discovery**

- Customer Survey Results
- User Persona Profiles
- Pain Point Analysis Document

### **Task 1.3: Process Evaluation**

- Process Inventory List
- Process Feasibility Assessment
- Team Brainstorm Summary

# Stage 2

## Development

***Build a basic version of the product (MVP) and gather early feedback***

In the Development stage, your idea begins to take shape as you develop a Minimum Viable Product (MVP). This phase focuses on building a **simple version of your product** that addresses the core problem identified previously.

Early user testing and feedback loops are crucial here, as they help you understand how users interact with your product and reveal areas for improvement. This stage is about refining the MVP and ensuring it meets basic needs of your target audience before moving toward growth.

### QUESTIONS

- ☐ What's the simplest version that solves a core problem?
- ☐ What do users think of the MVP?
- ☐ What improvements are critical before moving forward?

### STEP-BY-STEP

#### Task 2.1 - Rapid MVP Development

Week 4

Start building an MVP that provides core functionality without overwhelming development time. No-code tools like Bubble.io or Figma for quick mockups are ideal.

- ☐ *Create a version of your product that solves the main problem you've identified (avoid unnecessary features).*

#### Task 2.2 - Early User Testing

Week 5

Get early feedback on your MVP from a small group of users. Use platforms like UserTesting or Google Forms to gather insights on usability and core functionality.

- ☐ *Ensure you understand how users interact with your MVP and identify areas that need improvement.*

#### Task 2.3 - Feedback Iteration

Week 6

Refine your MVP using Kanban boards or task management tools like Trello or Asana to keep track of iterations. Prioritise changes that are critical to improving user experience.

- ☐ *Make adjustments quickly based on feedback and prepare for the next round of testing.*

# Stage 2 | Development

## EXAMPLE

### Mike, an IT Manager Building a Side Project MVP

Mike works full-time as an IT manager and has an idea for a simple app that helps small businesses manage cybersecurity tasks. With limited time, he decides to create an MVP using no-code tools like Bubble.io.

After mapping out the core features, he quickly builds a basic version of the app with essential functions only. Mike recruits a small group of users, mostly friends and colleagues in small businesses, to test his MVP. He gathers their feedback and identifies minor adjustments that could improve usability.

By the end of this stage, Mike has a functional prototype, validated by early users, allowing him to move forward without needing to develop a fully featured app upfront.

## DELIVERABLES

### Task 2.1: Rapid MVP Development

- MVP Requirements Document
- Wireframes or Prototypes
- Basic Analytics Setup

### Task 2.2: Early User Testing

- Test Plan and Scenarios
- User Feedback Summary
- Usage Analytics Report

### Task 2.3: Feedback Iteration

- Prioritised Feedback List
- Updated MVP Features Document
- Iteration Test Results

# Stage 3 Growth

*Scale your product and expand its features to gain more users*

The Growth stage is where your **product gains traction**. With a validated MVP, the focus shifts to expanding features, scaling operations and attracting a larger user base for the product.

This stage involves implementing a user acquisition strategy, adding value through additional features, and ensuring your operations can handle growth. Growth is about establishing a strong market presence and preparing your product to meet the demands of a growing audience.

## QUESTIONS

- ☐ *How can I grow my user base and improve retention?*
- ☐ *What additional features do users want?*
- ☐ *Are my operations scalable?*

## STEP-BY-STEP

### Task 3.1 - Acquisition Strategy

Week 7

Focus on bringing in new users and retaining existing ones. Use CRM systems like **HubSpot** or **Salesforce** to manage your customer relationships and marketing automation tools like **MailChimp** for email campaigns.

- ☐ *Implement strategies to attract new users while nurturing the existing ones through consistent engagement.*

### Task 3.2 - Feature Expansion

Week 8

Use analytics tools like **Google Analytics** or **Mixpanel** to understand how users interact with your product and identify new features they're asking for.

- ☐ *Expand your product based on what your users need most, focusing on features that add the most value.*

### Task 3.3 - Operational Scalability

Week 9

Streamline your internal processes using automation tools like **Zapier** or **Airtable** to ensure your operations can handle growth. Review your current operations to ensure they are optimised for a larger user base.

- ☐ *Make sure your processes are efficient enough to support the product's growth without increasing overhead.*



# Stage 3 | Growth

## EXAMPLE

### Lisa, a Small Business Owner Scaling Her Product

Lisa owns a small bakery and recently launched an online platform where customers can place orders for custom cakes. She's noticed early interest but wants to expand her user base.

With limited time to focus on marketing, she sets up a simple referral program, encouraging existing customers to refer friends in exchange for discounts. Lisa also uses an email marketing platform to share regular updates and promotions. To enhance the platform, she adds a few new features, like order tracking, based on customer feedback.

By focusing on targeted user acquisition strategies and gradual feature expansion, Lisa grows her customer base significantly while continuing to run her bakery.

## DELIVERABLES

### Task 3.1: Acquisition Strategy

- Target Audience Segmentation Document
- Marketing Campaign Plan
- Campaign Performance Report

### Task 3.2: Feature Expansion

- Feature Roadmap
- Feature Requirements Document
- Beta Test Results

### Task 3.3: Operational Scalability

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Automation Implementation Plan
- Support Scalability Checklist

# Stage 4 Maturity

***Optimise product performance and explore new opportunities for growth or innovation***

The Maturity stage is the time to **optimise and sustain** your product. Now that your product is established, the emphasis is on maximising operational efficiency, retaining customers, and exploring new growth or innovation opportunities.

This phase is about refining processes, introducing loyalty programs, and strategically planning for the future. The Maturity stage ensures your product remains relevant and profitable, setting it up for long-term success.

## QUESTIONS

- ☐ *How can I maximise operational efficiency?*
- ☐ *What's the next innovation or feature for my product?*
- ☐ *How do I retain and engage customers long-term?*

## STEP-BY-STEP

### Task 4.1 - Operational Efficiency

Week 10

Focus on refining and automating processes to maintain profitability. Tools like **Power BI** or **Tableau** can help you visualise performance metrics and optimise costs.

- ☐ *Reduce inefficiencies in operations and streamline workflows by automating repetitive tasks.*

### Task 4.2 - Innovation Exploration

Week 11

Stay ahead of competitors by holding **innovation workshops** with your team or stakeholders to brainstorm new features or explore adjacent markets.

- ☐ *Identify new growth opportunities or features that will keep your product relevant and competitive.*

### Task 4.3 - Customer Retention

Week 12

Build long-term relationships with customers by offering loyalty programs or personalised engagement strategies using **CRM systems** and communication tools like Intercom.

- ☐ *Keep your customers satisfied and engaged by offering ongoing value and support.*

# Stage 4 | Maturity

## EXAMPLE

### Tom, a Corporate Executive with a Side SaaS Product

Tom, a corporate executive, created a SaaS platform for scheduling team-building activities, which has now gained a loyal user base. With his full-time job and family commitments, he needs to optimise the platform for long-term sustainability without extensive involvement.

Tom begins by streamlining customer support through a self-service help center and automating common tasks with Zapier. He introduces a loyalty program to keep users engaged and conducts a customer survey to gather feedback for potential improvements.

By focusing on operational efficiency and customer retention, Tom maintains his platform's growth while ensuring it continues delivering value without constant oversight.

## DELIVERABLES

### Task 4.1: Operational Efficiency

- Process Audit Report
- Resource Allocation Plan
- Performance Metrics Dashboard

### Task 4.2: Innovation Exploration

- SWOT Analysis
- Prototype Feedback Summary
- Product 'Innovation' Roadmap

### Task 4.3: Customer Retention

- Customer Retention Strategy Document
- Customer Satisfaction Report
- Churn Analysis Report

# 12-Week Action Plan

## Weeks 1-3: DISCOVERY STAGE

### Stage Goal

*Validate your idea's market fit and customer needs.*

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### Week 1

Conduct market research and competitor analysis.

→ Output: **Market Summary**

### Week 2

Run customer surveys and interviews.

→ Output: **User Insights**

### Week 3

Identify productisable processes.

→ Output: **List of Core Features**

## Weeks 4-6: DEVELOPMENT STAGE

### Stage Goal

*Build an MVP and refine based on feedback.*

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### Week 4

Define and create the MVP using no-code tools.

→ Output: **Basic MVP**

### Week 5

Test the MVP with early users.

→ Output: **User Feedback Summary**

### Week 6

Implement prioritised feedback.

→ Output: **Refined MVP**

# 12-Week Action Plan

## Weeks 7-9: GROWTH STAGE

### Stage Goal

*Expand user base, new features and ensure scalability.*

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#### Week 7

Launch a user acquisition campaign.

→ Output: **Acquisition Plan**

#### Week 8

Add key user-requested features.

→ Output: **Feature-Enhanced MVP**

#### Week 9

Automate operations and create SOPs.

→ Output: **Scalable Setup**

## Weeks 10-12: MATURITY STAGE

### Stage Goal

*Optimise operations, retain users and future growth.*

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#### Week 10

Streamline processes and automation.

→ Output: **Optimised Operations**

#### Week 11

Identify new growth opportunities.

→ Output: **Innovation List**

#### Week 12

Launch a retention initiative.

→ Output: **Customer Loyalty Plan**



## Final Thoughts

By establishing clear deliverables for each stage and task, you create accountability and transparency in your **product development process**.

Using this framework, you can confidently grow your product from an idea to a sustainable, successful offering without compromising your day job or business.

# The Product Lifecycle Framework

## About Scalised

At Scalised, we help businesses overcome product growth challenges with expert strategies and leadership.

With decades of experience in **digital transformation** and **product management**, we provide the guidance and support needed to optimise processes, scale products and ensure long-term success.

## Ready to scale your digital success?

Contact us today to explore how Scalised can help you achieve your digital transformation and product goals.



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