

Product Management for The Enterprise

Product Management for The Enterprise

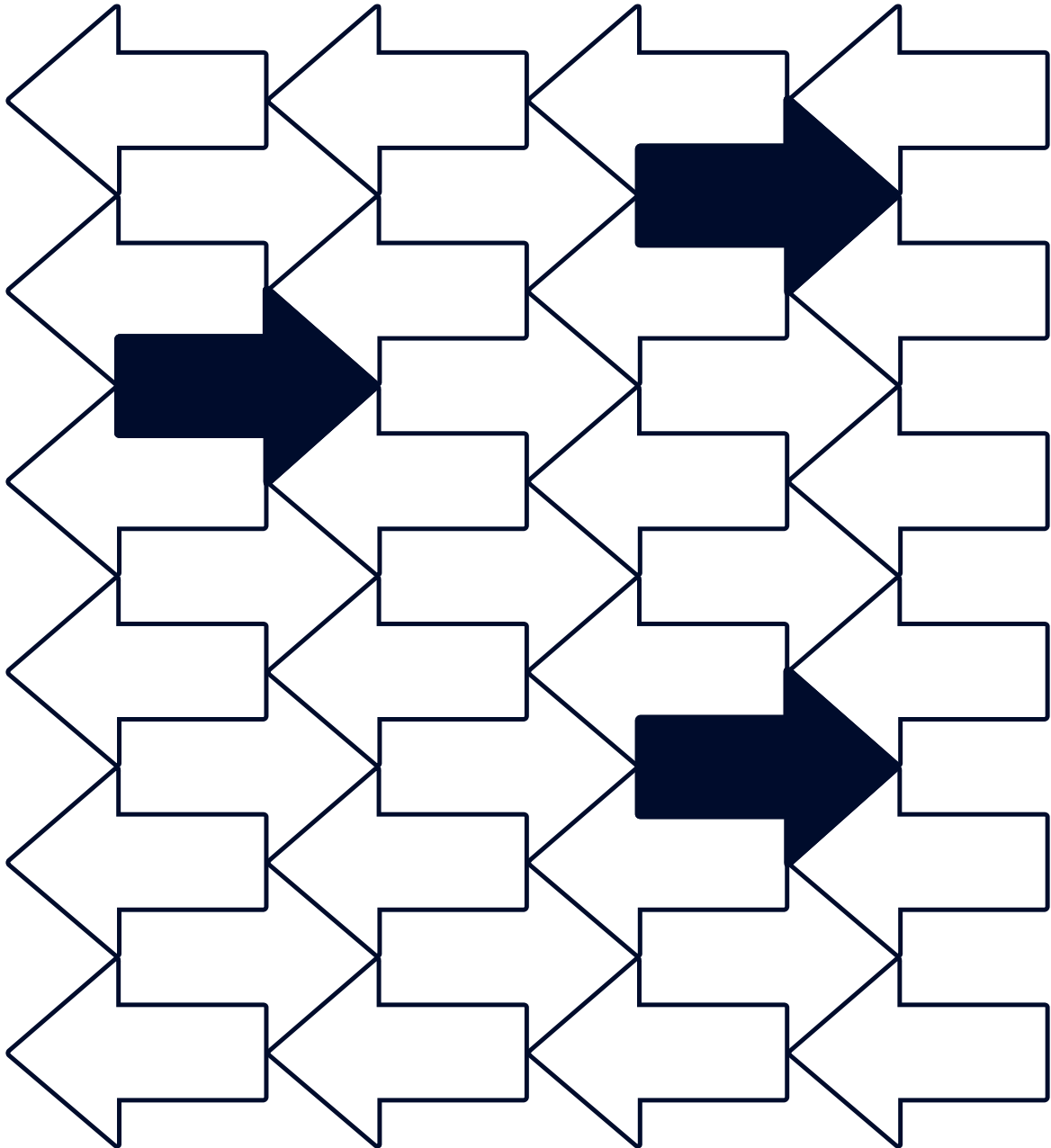


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Product Management Software: An Imperative, Not a Luxury	03
---	----

CHAPTER 1

Why “Product” is the Operative Word	05
--	----

CHAPTER 2

Types of Product Management Software	08
---	----

CHAPTER 3

Key features	16
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER 4

Tools to Get You Started	21
---	----

CONCLUSION

Future Trends and Developments in Product Management Software	37
--	----

INTRODUCTION

Product Management Software: An Imperative, Not a Luxury

Product management is, to put it simply, hard. Consider this:

- Over 50% of all product launches fail to hit business targets.
- 38% of product managers have an unwieldy backlog, with 40% indicating that “we deliver value, but lack consistency” best describes their product org’s performance.
- The number one reason startups failed in 42% of cases were due to tackling problems that were interesting to solve rather than those that serve a market need.
- Only 35% of product managers and leaders say their initiatives meet deadlines most or all the time.
- 75% of product managers and leaders say they spend more than 20% of their time on unplanned work or unforeseen issues.

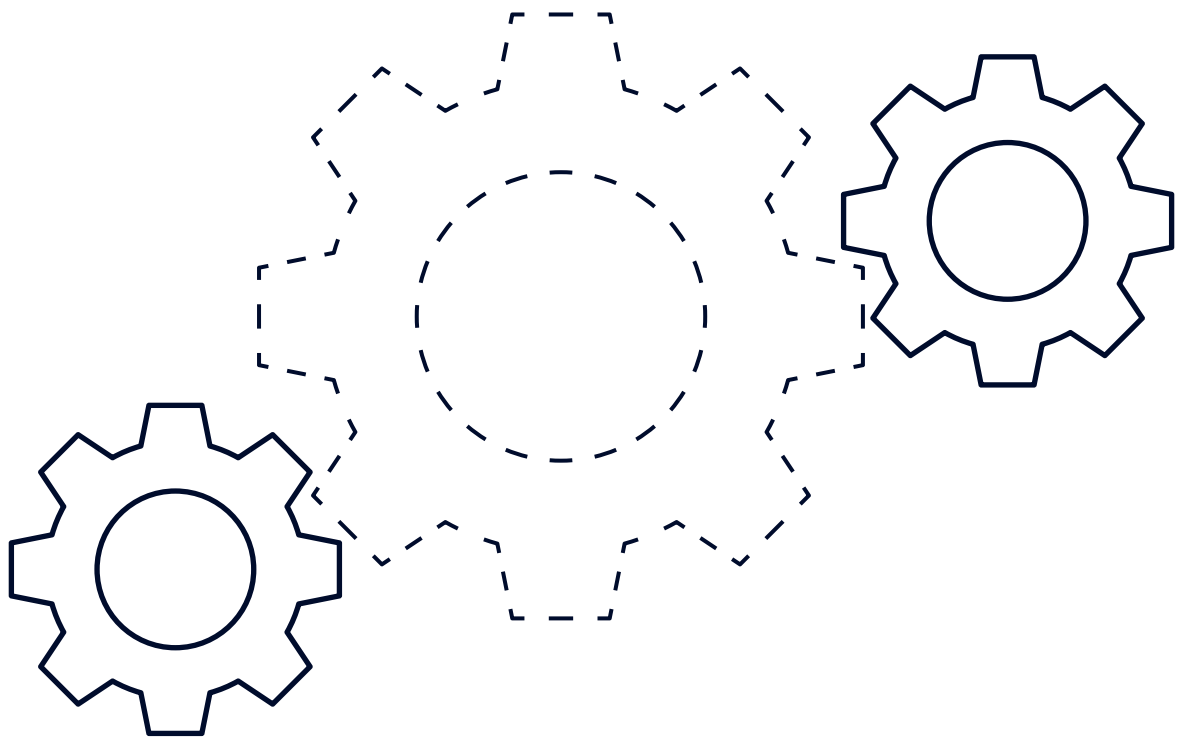
Successful product management improves alignment between product features and customer motivations—the product team has identified and developed something that a customer wants to pay for or adopt.

At its core, product management software is a suite of tools designed to streamline and enhance the end-to-end processes involved in bringing a product from ideation to market. These solutions encompass a wide array of functionalities, from idea generation and feature prioritization to development tracking, collaboration, and performance analysis. As businesses strive for agility and innovation, leveraging the right product management software becomes instrumental in orchestrating the intricate dance between ideation, development, and delivery.

The use of dedicated product management software is no longer a luxury but a strategic imperative. The right solution can serve as a force multiplier for your teams, fostering collaboration, aligning stakeholders, and ensuring

a cohesive product strategy. By centralizing communication and providing real-time visibility into project statuses, these tools empower leaders to make informed decisions based on actual customer needs, mitigate risks, and iterate when necessary.

The benefits extend beyond internal efficiency to directly impact the quality and success of the products themselves. Product management software enables a customer-centric approach that is vital in today's market for not just competitive differentiation, but survival. It facilitates cross-functional collaboration, breaking down silos and fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.



CHAPTER 1

Why “Product” is the Operative Word

Before diving into the different product management solutions out there and evaluating their use cases, let’s take a step back and explain why we’re referring to these solutions in terms of product management as opposed to project management.

When your organization struggles with its go-to-market strategy—like an inability to get products to market faster or wasting time on building the wrong features based on faulty assumptions—it's typically seen as a process problem as opposed to a technology one. After all, you have all the tools in your tech stack, so it must be the process that's wrong.

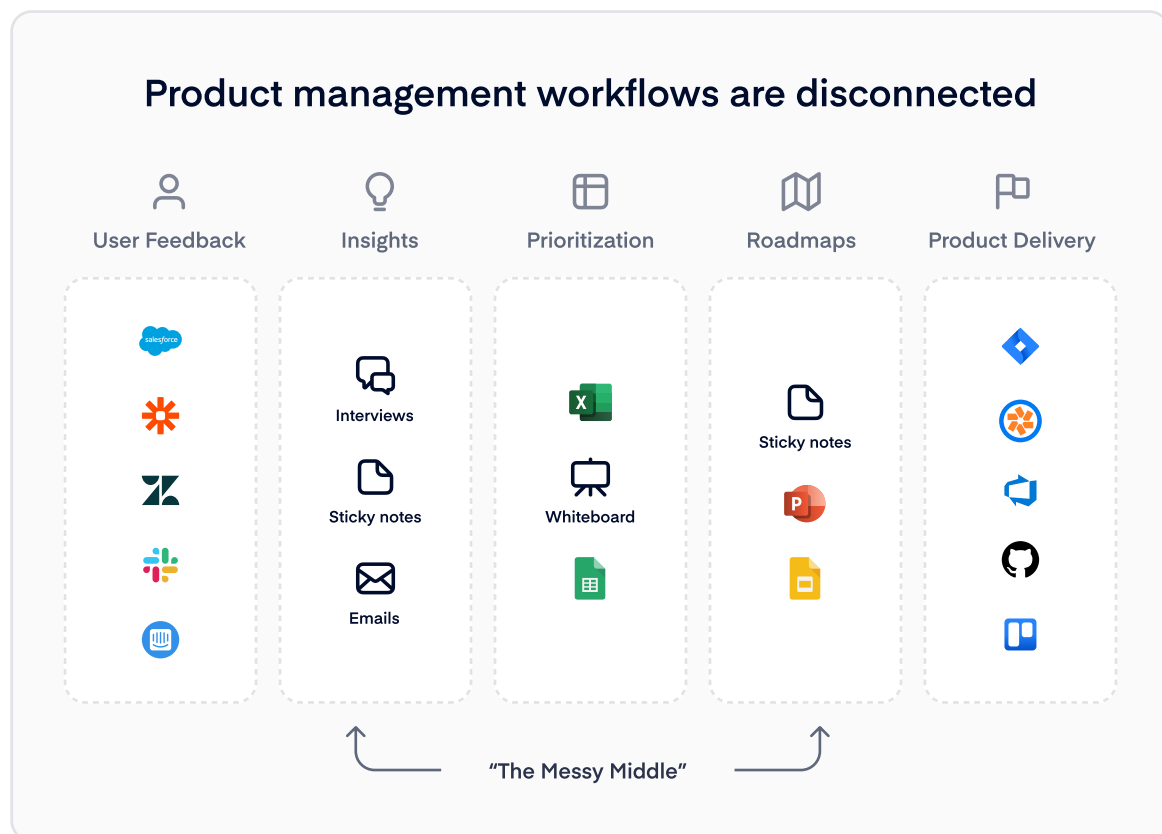
When it comes to ensuring your team stays aligned with the product vision, you should not refer to it as "project management". Instead, it should be seen in a different light: **Product Management**.

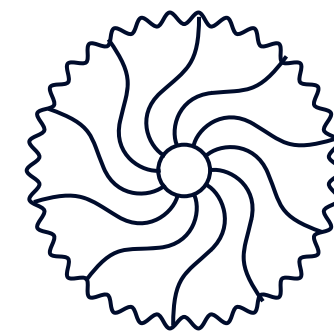
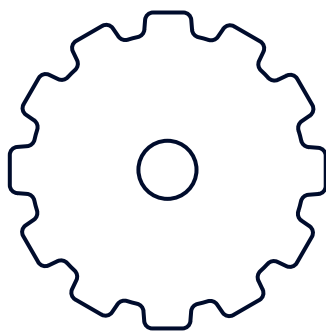
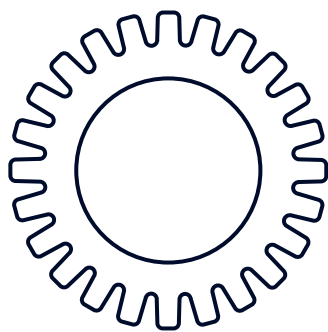
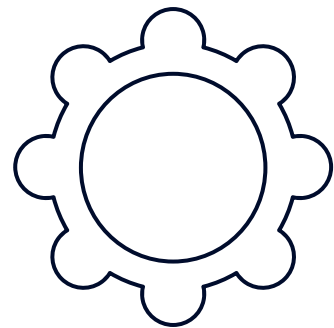
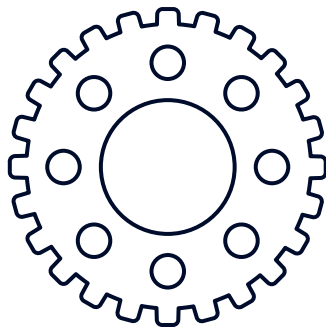
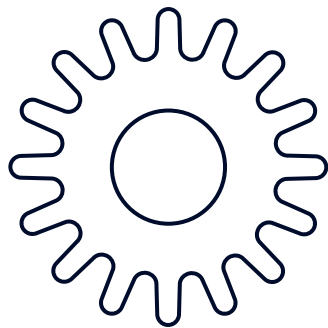
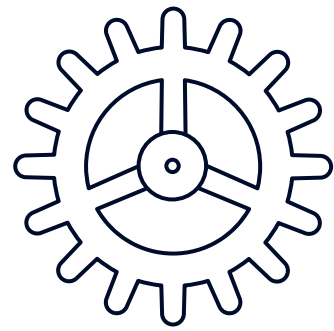
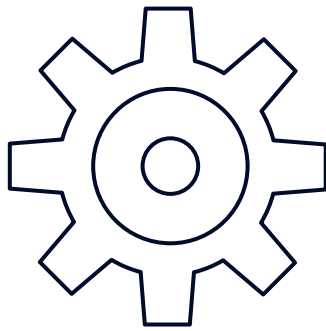
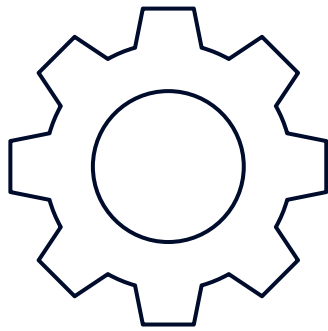
Project management revolves around the execution of specific, well-defined tasks with a clear beginning and end. It is a discipline that focuses on planning, organizing, and overseeing the successful completion of a project within predefined constraints such as scope, time, and resources. Project managers are tasked with ensuring that the project's objectives are met efficiently and on schedule. The emphasis is on delivering a tangible output within the specified constraints.

Product management, on the other hand, is oriented towards the continuous development and enhancement of a product throughout its lifecycle. It involves strategic planning, market analysis, and the ongoing optimization of a product to meet customer needs and achieve business goals. Product managers are responsible for defining the product vision, setting priorities, and aligning the product roadmap with overall business objectives. Unlike projects, products are ongoing entities, and product management is a holistic approach that spans from ideation to delivery and beyond.

These workflows are disconnected. How much more agile would your team be if you could go from scattered to centralized feedback; faulty assumptions to validated user insights; missed opportunities to fully identified trending user needs?

What if gathering user insights, prioritizing the features and tasks associated, and creating the product roadmap was more centralized and automated, allowing your team to cut through the noise and deliver the right products faster? **This requires a dedicated tool purpose-built for enterprise product management, one that can be utilized remotely and at scale.**





CHAPTER 2

Types of Product Management Software

Navigating all the different options requires thoughtful consideration of the needs of your org.

Comparing All-Purpose Tools, Point Solutions, and Dedicated Software

All-purpose tools are widely-used collaboration tools like spreadsheets that can be adapted to meet various needs.

When to Use

Tight timelines: Organizations that prioritize adaptability and need a tool that can serve various purposes without extensive training may choose all-in-one solutions.

Familiarly: When ease of adoption is critical, especially in scenarios where diverse teams with varying technical expertise need to collaborate.

Lean startups: The small organization that operates on as little overhead as possible requires something basic just to hit the ground running.

✓ Benefits

Versatility

Serves as a multi-functional tool that can be customized for diverse use cases within an organization.

Familiarity and user adoption

Reduces the learning curve and facilitates widespread adoption across teams.

Basic collection

Provides a place to copy/paste customer feedback and share other information.

✗ Constraints

Limited specialization

While all-in-one solutions are versatile, they are not built with product management in mind and cannot handle specific, complex tasks.

Scalability challenges

As organizational needs grow, they may grow out of their use for these tools and look to ones dedicated for specific product management functions.

Dependency on general features

Organizations with highly specific needs may find these tools insufficient in addressing nuanced requirements.

Point Solutions are specialized tools designed to address specific challenges within the product management process.

When to Use

Niche requirements: The organization has specific, niche requirements that can be best addressed by a specialized tool.

Budget constraints: Cost considerations are a primary concern and the organization wants to invest selectively in addressing specific pain points.

Incremental adoption: The organization prefers an incremental approach to tool adoption and wants the flexibility to scale tools based on immediate needs.

✓ Benefits

Specialized functionality

Offers targeted features, providing organizations with precise tools to address specific challenges within the product management lifecycle.

Focused efficiency

Enhances efficiency in particular areas such as ideation, feedback management, or roadmapping, allowing teams to streamline and optimize critical processes.

Cost-effective solutions

Improves specific aspects of your product management workflow without investing in a comprehensive suite.

✗ Constraints

Limited scope

Focusing on specific functionalities can lead to gaps in coverage for organizations with diverse and comprehensive product management needs.

Integration challenges

Using multiple point solutions may cause disjointed workflows, as they may not seamlessly communicate with each other.

Scalability issues

As organizations grow and their needs evolve, point solutions might struggle to scale efficiently, requiring additional investments or transitions to more robust platforms.

Dedicated product management software provides an end-to-end solution covering the entire product lifecycle.

When to Use

Need for visibility: The organization is looking to establish a product source of truth that helps both leadership and business teams get visibility into product planning and progress.

Cross-functional collaboration: A unified platform is needed to ensure effective communication between different departments.

Strategic alignment: Recently flopped features or a failed launch has made it an imperative to align product management activities closely with overall business strategy.

✓ Benefits

End-to-end coverage

Ensures a unified platform for all stages of product development.

Streamlined collaboration

Enables seamless communication between product managers, developers, marketers, customer experience, and other stakeholders.

Holistic decision-making

Aligns product team's output to business objectives (e.g., increased adoption rates, upselling current customers, etc.) with one centralized platform.

✗ Constraints

Fear of complex implementation

The required time and resources for training and onboarding may disrupt existing workflows.

Costly investment

A higher upfront cost can be a barrier for smaller organizations or those with budget constraints.

Internal ownership

Behavior change is needed to get full value out of the solution, so it's important to have a dedicated "champion" or advocate and product management leadership buy-in.

Comparing standalone and integrated solutions

Standalone solutions operate independently and do not require integration with other business tools.

When to Use

Startups and small businesses: The organization is both small and has limited (or specific) product management requirements, so they don't require a dedicated tool with intricate features.

Rapid deployment: There's a need for a fast and efficient solution without the complexity of integrating with other business systems.

✓ Benefits

Simplicity and focus

Offers straightforward, streamlined tools without the complexities of integration.

Quick implementation

Reduces the extensive setup process since they don't require integration with other business systems, making them ideal for fast-moving orgs.

Independence

Allows organizations to use dedicated tools for product management without being dependent on additional software, offering autonomy and control over their specific workflows.

✗ Constraints

Isolated functionality

Lacking certain functionalities found in integrated platforms will limit the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the product management process.

Integration challenges

As organizational needs evolve, standalone solutions might face challenges when integrating with additional tools required for other business functions.

Limited collaboration

Standalone solutions may hinder collaboration between different departments, leading to communication gaps and potential inefficiencies in cross-functional processes.

Integrated solutions seamlessly connect with other business tools such as project management, collaboration, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

When to Use

Large enterprises: The organization has multiple teams relying on interconnected tools, and a unified platform is needed to streamline operations.

End-to-end visibility: There is an imperative to have full visibility into cross-departmental operations because data-driven decision-making is crucial for the organization's success.

✓ Benefits

Cross-functional collaboration

Connects product management with other business tools, promoting enhanced understanding across the org around the product vision and associated tasks.

Holistic data insights

Consolidates data from various sources, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the entire business process and facilitating data-driven decision-making.

Streamlined workflows

Reduces manual data transfers between different tools, promoting efficiency and minimizing errors in the product management process.

✗ Constraints

Complexity and training

The integration of various features can introduce complexity, requiring extensive training for users to fully leverage the capabilities of the integrated solution.

Cost of integration

The initial setup and integration process can be resource-intensive, involving additional costs for customization and ensuring seamless connectivity between different modules.

Vendor dependency

Organizations using integrated solutions may become dependent on a single vendor, potentially limiting flexibility and making it challenging to switch to alternative tools in the future.

Comparing cloud-based and on-premise solutions

Cloud-based solutions are hosted on remote servers and can be accessible as long as you have internet access.

When to Use

Distributed teams: Hybrid or fully remote teams require flexible collaboration tools that can be accessible from different locations.

Scalable requirements: The organization anticipates growth that requires a flexible product management solution that can grow alongside them.

✓ Benefits

Accessibility and flexibility

Offers remote accessibility, enabling teams to collaborate from anywhere and accommodating the needs of distributed or remote teams.

Scalability

Allows organizations to easily expand their usage as business needs grow, without the need for significant infrastructure investments.

Automatic updates and maintenance

Reduces the burden on internal IT teams and ensures that the software is always up-to-date.

✗ Constraints

Internet dependent

Relying on internet connectivity can be a drawback for organizations in areas with unreliable or limited internet access.

Security concerns

Some organizations may have concerns about data security in the cloud, especially in highly regulated industries, despite advancements in cloud security measures.

Subscription costs

While cloud solutions often follow a subscription-based model, the cumulative cost over time may surpass the upfront cost of on-premise solutions, especially for long-term usage.

On-premise solutions are installed and operated from an organization's in-house server and computing infrastructure.

When to Use

Highly regulated industries: The organization operates in industries like healthcare or finance where data control and security are top priorities.

Customization needs: There is a need for a high level of customization to align the product management tool with specific internal processes and workflows.



Benefits

Data control and security

Provides organizations with direct control over their data, addressing security concerns and ensuring compliance with specific regulatory requirements.

Customization

Let's organizations tailor the software to align with specific internal processes and workflows.

Offline access

Ensures continued functionality of critical tools and data even in situations with limited or no internet connectivity.



Constraints

High initial costs

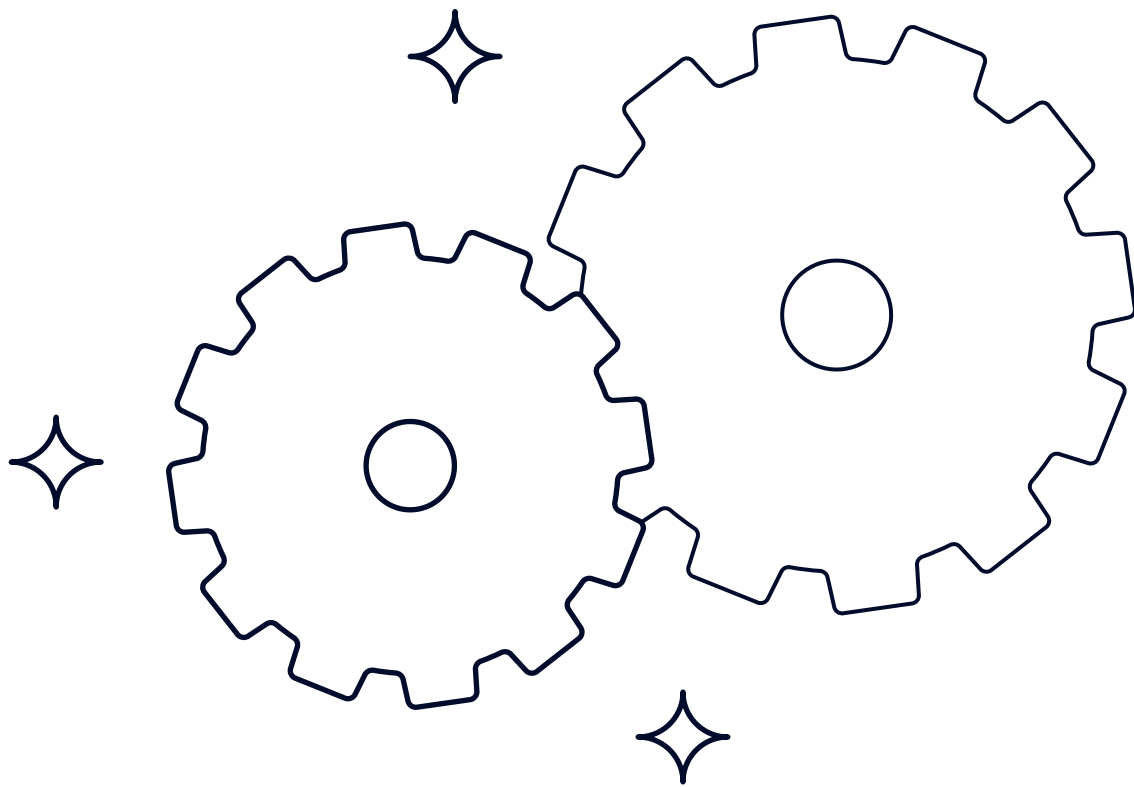
Typically involves higher upfront costs for infrastructure, hardware, and software licenses, making them less suitable for organizations with budget constraints.

Limited accessibility

May lack the flexibility of remote accessibility, limiting collaboration for distributed or remote teams.

Maintenance responsibilities

Organizations using on-premise solutions bear the responsibility of maintenance, updates, and security, potentially requiring dedicated IT resources and time.



CHAPTER 3

Key Features

Here's what to look for when evaluating which product management platform is right for your business.

Collaboration & Workflow

The solution should allow many different teams to collaborate effectively within the same shared workspace. It should also offer an intuitive UI with the ability to configure views for activities like feature prioritization, roadmap visualization, and customer insights collection.

Why?

This functionality is crucial because it fosters seamless communication and coordination among different customer-facing and product and dev teams working towards a common goal. Providing a shared workspace ensures that teams can collaborate in real-time, share insights, track milestones and dependencies, and collectively contribute. With customized and configured workflows that adapt to each business unit's processes, teams can easily see the status of (and strategy behind) the entire product portfolio.

Prioritization & Planning

You must be able to prioritize product ideas, features, or opportunities based on customer impact. In regards to effective planning and backlog management, the solution should be able to break down high-level ideas and opportunities into smaller sub-ideas visualized in a flexible product hierarchy.

Why?

By breaking down high-level concepts into smaller, manageable tasks, teams can allocate resources more efficiently and execute product development initiatives with more strategic precision. This feature ensures that the product roadmap aligns closely with customer needs and business objectives—stop wasting time on low-value tasks for features customers don't even want.

Roadmapping

Roadmaps need to be shareable to deliver the most impact. They should indicate the status of features and objectives.

Why?

Roadmapping is crucial in a product management platform as it ensures effective communication and alignment across departments by providing shareable visual representations of the product development plan.

By indicating the status of features and objectives, the roadmap keeps all team members on the same page, ensuring transparency and enabling collaborative decision-making. This feature becomes a strategic tool for ensuring that stakeholders from different departments—not just the product and delivery teams—have a clear understanding of the product journey, timelines, and milestones.

Customer Engagement

The solution you pick will ideally have the ability to ingest feedback from multiple sources—support tickets, transcripts from calls, feature request forms, customer emails, feedback surveys, and more—and consolidate it into one central repository. Having the ability to directly engage with customers within the platform is a bonus.

Why?

By consolidating this information in one place, product teams can glean actionable insights, identify trending feature requests and challenges, and align product development strategies with customer needs. The added ability to directly engage with customers within the platform further enhances communication and strengthens the relationship between the product team and its user base. Ultimately, this will enhance adoption of underutilized features and help reduce churn.

Analytics & Reporting

It's important to have transparency into critical metrics like internal resource allocation reports and external customer usage reports.

Why?

How else would you know that the team's efforts are being invested properly according to the product strategy? Or that blockers are measured across the product life cycle so that inefficiencies can be fixed? With these insights into these key performance indicators, product managers and teams can make data-driven decisions like optimizing resource allocation and aligning product strategies with customer behaviors.

Integrations

The ideal solution will have integration capabilities. Particularly, the solution should provide public APIs for integrating with other systems for enhanced knowledge share and connectivity.

Why?

A standalone solution is very limiting and cannot "communicate" with the tools you (and other departments) already rely on, creating silos. Effective product management requires cross-departmental knowledge share so that product teams are working off of valuable insights shared by customer-facing teams (e.g., sales, marketing, customer support and success, etc.). Integrations streamline data consolidation from diverse sources, fostering a holistic understanding of the complete business process and enabling data-driven decision-making. By minimizing manual data transfers between tools, they enhance efficiency and decrease the likelihood of human error.

Support, Services, & Education

Professional services should be offered. This can include a dedicated client manager or account team, services to help with process architecting or product operations, or even resources that can be leveraged by global consulting partners trained on your chosen solution's onboarding and implementation.

Why?

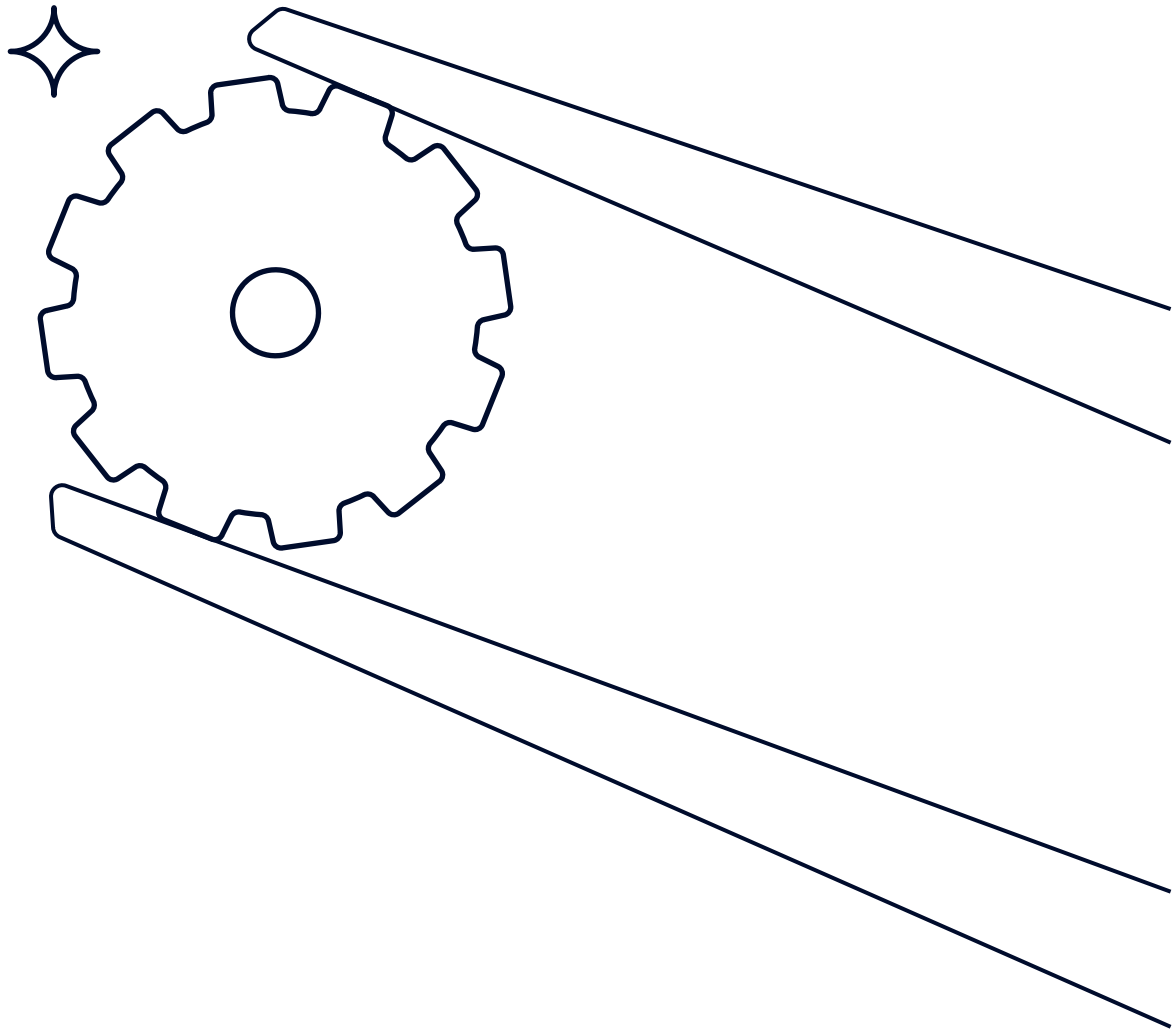
A comprehensive support ecosystem enhances user proficiency and ensures a smooth and effective utilization of your chosen solution. This enhances scalability and adaptability in agile product development by providing dedicated support, optimizing processes, and ensuring continuous learning. It enables organizations to efficiently scale their usage, swiftly adapt workflows to changing requirements, and maintain agility through ongoing education and collaboration with consulting partners trained in the platform's implementation.

Security & Data Privacy

Your solution must be able to prove compliance to regulatory and industry protocols with the right certifications (e.g., SOC 2, ISO 27002:2013 controls, etc.). You should be discerning what type of user administration, access control, and permissioning controls the product management tool has.

Why?

Safeguarding sensitive information is paramount, so any cloud-based tool you use should mitigate risks and maintain the integrity of your organization; you wouldn't want a data leak of personally identifiable information to cause customers to lose trust in your solution. Robust cloud security protocols will ameliorate any concerns that stakeholders have, especially if you sit in a highly complex, regulated industry.



CHAPTER 4

Tools to Get You Started

In this section, you will find some preparation resources for product management best practices and assessing all the platform options available to you.

Product Requirements Document (PRD)

If you are about to create a new product or make significant updates to an existing one, a PRD will help keep everyone aligned from the beginning.

A PRD serves as a blueprint of your product's core features, outlining its functionality and specifications. It provides a clear guide for development teams and ensures alignment with the overall vision. PRDs are best left concise. A PRD should include the following sections.

Outcomes

Answers the following questions:

- Why are you building the product in the first place?
- What problem is the product going to solve for your customers?

User Personas

Answers the following questions:

- For whom are you solving problems for?
- For whom are you NOT solving problems for?
- Are there significant differences between each of the personas identified so that each one represents a different challenge that needs to be addressed?

Key Stakeholders

Answers the following questions:

- Which key people are involved with the development of the product?
- Which product team is working on the product?
- Which subject matter experts (SMEs) are also involved, despite not being full-time product team members?

Measures of Success

Answers the following questions:

- What metrics can you use to gauge when you've achieved the outcome?
- How does the user derive value from this?

Design and Wireframes

Answers the following questions:

- What is the big-picture visual view?
- How big (or small) is the scope?
- How will users flow through the product?

Scope Items

Answers the following questions:

- How many smaller parts can this end-to-end dev project be divided into?
- How does each part deliver value (outcomes) to your user?
- What does the release plan look like?
 - Which scope items are absolutely necessary for the first iteration?
 - Which scope items can be delivered later?
 - Which scope items are optional “nice-to-haves” that may not need to be delivered at all?

Release Details

Answers the following questions:

- What do you, in an ideal scenario, plan to deliver in each sprint?
- How should the scope items be organized?

Assumptions

Answers the following questions:

- What do you believe to be true that factors into your decisions about a product?
- What efforts do you need to take to validate that those assumptions are true?

Risks

Answers the following questions:

- What uncertainties do you have in the product?
- How likely will this risk event occur?
- What impact would it have if it does?
- How do you reduce the likelihood of a particular risk event occurring?

Constraints

Answers the following question:

- What restrictions will impact your product that you cannot mitigate for?

Dependencies

Answers the following questions:

- Which activities or initiatives rely on another activity or initiative to be done first?
- Does the release plan prioritize activities or initiatives that have few, if any, dependencies to be completed first?

Request for Proposal (RFP) Matrix

An RFP is a formal document that organizations use to solicit bids or proposals from potential vendors, providing detailed information about the project's requirements, specifications, and desired outcomes. It serves as a structured communication tool to help organizations select the most suitable vendor for a particular project or initiative.

We discussed the 8 key features your potential product management vendors should have. Now that we know why these 8 features are critical, here's an RFP matrix you can use to evaluate potential vendors against each other.

Collaboration & Workflow

Does the solution offer the ability to...

- ☐ Allow many product teams to collaborate within the same shared workspace
- ☐ Collect feedback from stakeholders
- ☐ Provide automated updates regarding specific feedback, release details, and feature requests
- ☐ Enable product teams and stakeholders to add comments/notes to features and ideas
- ☐ Configure views for activities like planning & prioritization, roadmap visualization, and collecting customer insights
- ☐ Centralize core product processes (e.g. planning, roadmapping, customer engagement) in one place
- ☐ Manage the entire product portfolio in a centralized location
- ☐ Show current status/phase of each feature and its progress
- ☐ Show any risk surrounding the timely delivery of each feature
- ☐ Automate routine product management tasks (e.g., feature spec writing)
- ☐ Use customizable templates and workflows
- ☐ Support multiple stages of the product lifecycle
- ☐ Manage, track, and communicate product launches and release notes

Prioritization & Planning

Does the solution offer the ability to...

- ☐ Prioritize product ideas, features, or opportunities by customer impact
- ☐ Prioritize based on the needs of customer segments (e.g., by ARR, industry, product usage, etc.)
- ☐ Add customer insights to each feature
- ☐ Create larger initiatives that contain multiple products and linked features
- ☐ Sort ideas, backlog items, and planned releases based on multiple variables
- ☐ Prioritize initiatives and feature ideas based on how well they support key objectives
- ☐ Visualize the value and effort of different features
- ☐ Compare and prioritize features based on these value and effort scores
- ☐ Break down high-level ideas and opportunities into smaller sub-ideas visualized in a flexible product hierarchy
- ☐ Cascade product strategy and objectives down to the level of individual ideas
- ☐ Analyze and prioritize strategies across the entire product portfolio
- ☐ Align individual team's work to bigger company strategies, initiatives, objectives, etc.
- ☐ Define product objectives that span across multiple products
- ☐ Contain initiatives that require multiple products and linked features
- ☐ Organize and manage a complex portfolio of problems and solution ideas

Roadmapping

Does the solution offer the ability to...

- ☐ Customize roadmaps for different stakeholders and use cases (e.g. granular date-based planning, strategic, outcome-focused, region-based, etc.)
- ☐ Group features and initiatives into customizable swimlanes representing objectives or themes
- ☐ Sync with product plans and prioritization data to create up-to-date roadmaps
- ☐ Indicate the status of features and objectives
- ☐ Track risk/health of each feature within the roadmap
- ☐ Plan timeline roadmaps catered to product managers with specific dates
- ☐ Convert specific dates to broader time horizons (e.g., weeks, months, etc.) when sharing with non-product stakeholders
- ☐ Customize the data fields that appear on roadmap cards
- ☐ Visualize the progress being made on features/work items directly on the roadmap
- ☐ Create roadmaps that link strategy to execution
- ☐ Track dependencies between initiatives, features, or other work items
- ☐ Leverage various roadmap layout templates (e.g. Gantt chart, now-next-later column roadmaps, sprint column roadmaps, release timeline roadmaps, etc.)
- ☐ Create multi-product portfolio roadmaps displayed in a single view
- ☐ Create multiple roadmaps to represent different scenarios
- ☐ Filter roadmaps based on a variety of fields (e.g. product area, status, owner, tag, objective, segment, customer)
- ☐ Share roadmaps with specific groups of stakeholders logged in to a secure environment

- ☐ Share roadmaps by embedding in other websites and web applications
- ☐ See analytics that show how the roadmap is being consumed by stakeholders (e.g., recent visitors with timestamps, top 5 visitors, etc.)
- ☐ Share roadmaps externally by link with the option of password protection
- ☐ Show release plans/timelines with customers and update them when features have been delayed, deployed, or updated

Customer Engagement

Does the solution offer the ability to...

- ☐ Automate the collection of customer feedback and product/feature requests from a range of integrated sources
- ☐ Automatically analyze and summarize customer feedback
- ☐ Provide trending topics across feedback collected and enable teams to analyze them by segments, product area, etc.
- ☐ Collect customer feedback via surveys
- ☐ Automate customer feedback categorization to identify trends (e.g., by theme, feature, customer, or sentiment)
- ☐ Link customer insights within a piece of feedback to one or more feature ideas
- ☐ Automatically connect insights to product/features ideas
- ☐ Automatically create feature specs/ideas based on customer feedback
- ☐ Let product teams, business stakeholders, and executives input their own ideas into the system
- ☐ See all the feedback that a specific customer or segment of customers has submitted alongside the status
- ☐ Automatically route/tag incoming requests or feedback to the correct product colleagues for review
- ☐ Regularly send updates to customers regarding product feedback submitted, planned features, and release timelines
- ☐ Update customers about product releases to gather feedback on new features
- ☐ See all past requests for specific customers and what progress your team has made on those requests
- ☐ Create external-facing and private portals to share product ideas and release plans with customers and collect feedback

Analytics & Reporting

Does the solution offer the ability to...

- ☐ Provide resource allocation reports
- ☐ Provide reporting that measures efficiencies in the product process across every stage of the product lifecycle
- ☐ Identify blockers in the product process across every stage of the product lifecycle
- ☐ Provide usage reports to help improve processes

Integrations

Does the solution offer the ability to...

- ☐ Bi-directionally sync with delivery platforms (e.g. Jira, Azure DevOps, etc.)
- ☐ Leverage out-of-the-box integrations with third-party applications to help automate customer feedback data collection (e.g. Gainsight CS, Intercom, Slack, Salesforce, Gong, Zendesk, etc.)
- ☐ Integrate with product analytics platforms (e.g. Mixpanel, Amplitude, etc.)
- ☐ Support embedding of live content
- ☐ Connect with iPaaS or integration automation platforms (e.g. Zapier, Tray.io, etc.)
- ☐ Leverage public APIs for integrating with other systems
- ☐ Offer support for customers that want to build new integrations or customize existing ones

Support, Services & Education

Does the solution offer the ability for...

- ☐ A dedicated Client Manager or Account Team
- ☐ Services to help with process architecting, program management, and product operations
- ☐ Team-level trainings
- ☐ Onsite workshops
- ☐ Agile coaching services
- ☐ Strategic consulting services
- ☐ A trial period to evaluate functionality, workflows, and capabilities
- ☐ An online learning hub for self-paced learning
- ☐ Educational materials for different role types
- ☐ Continual educational programs
- ☐ Global consulting partners trained on the solution's onboarding and implementation
- ☐ A global consulting partner program

Security & Data Privacy

Does the solution offer the ability for...

- ☐ User administration, access control, and/or permissioning protocols
- ☐ Product reliability protocols
- ☐ Cloud security protocols
- ☐ Application security protocols
- ☐ Compliance protocols
- ☐ Outlined privacy and data protection policies
- ☐ Information regarding legal and privacy terms

Cost Considerations

What works best for one organization may strain the budgets of another, so here’s everything you need to take into account when determining your product management solution investment.

Subscription Fees

First, consider the structure of subscription fees, weighing the pros and cons of monthly versus annual plans.

	Monthly	Annual
Benefits	Flexibility Monthly subscription plans allow organizations to adapt their usage based on changing needs.	Cost savings By committing to a one-year term, organizations often receive a discounted rate per month, resulting in lower overall expenses.
	Lower initial commitment Organizations can start using it with a lower financial commitment to start.	Price stability Annual plans shield organizations from potential price increases during the agreed-upon term.
	Easier scalability Monthly plans typically enable organizations to increase or decrease the number of subscriptions as the team size or project requirements evolve.	Incentives and features Vendors often provide additional incentives, features, or premium support to customers opting for annual subscriptions, enhancing the overall value and experience.

Constraints	Higher total cost Over the course of a year, monthly plans tend to be more expensive than their annual counterparts, which typically offer discounts for a longer commitment.	Upfront financial commitment Organizations need to be confident in their long-term need for the product management platform to justify this initial investment.
	Potential for price increases Monthly plans might be subject to price fluctuations or increases, which could lead to higher costs in the long run.	Less flexibility It may be challenging to adjust their subscription levels mid-term based on changing requirements.
Best For	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller businesses • Tight budgets • Projects with fluctuating or short-term requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid to large-size companies • Budgetary predictability • Long-term strategic initiatives or product development projects

Then, evaluate whether a per-user pricing model is more or less cost-effective than a flat-rate pricing strategy.

	Per-User	Flat-Rate
Benefits	<p>Cost efficiency Only pay for active users.</p> <p>Scalability and fairness Scales proportionally with team expansion, ensuring fair costs aligned with usage.</p>	<p>Cost predictability Aids in accurate budgeting for organizations with stable teams.</p> <p>Administrative simplicity Simplifies administrative processes, reducing the need for frequent adjustments.</p>
Constraints	<p>Cost variability Costs can fluctuate based on user additions or deletions, leading to budgetary unpredictability.</p> <p>Potential for overpayment Organizations with intermittent or seasonal users might pay too much for inactive users.</p>	<p>Potential for overpayment Not cost-effective for small teams or those with sporadic user engagement.</p> <p>Less resource allocation Offers less granularity, limiting the ability to allocate costs based on individual user needs or usage patterns.</p>
Best For	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small number of users• Variable user engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larger teams• Stable or predictable team size

Implementation Costs

Here are some potential additional costs associated with implementing your product management platform of choice. There may be costs associated with:

- **Training expenses:** Programs and training materials.
- **Onboarding resources:** Personnel and onboarding tools.
- **Workflow adjustments:** Process analysis, optimization recommendations, and workflow modification.
- **Consultation and customization:** Change management fees.

User support: Support infrastructure (e.g., communication channels for addressing user queries) and support staff (e.g., dedicated client manager).

Setup Fees

Take into account any upfront setup fees associated with configuring the product management platform for your specific organizational needs. Be mindful of these initial costs in your budget planning:

- **Onboarding personnel:** Hiring or allocating personnel specifically for the onboarding process, including trainers, consultants, or support staff.
- **Customization services:** Configuring the product management platform to align with specific organizational needs and workflows.
- **Workflow adjustments:** Analyzing existing workflows to identify areas that need adjustment or optimization during the setup phase.
- **Testing and validation:** Allocating resources for testing the setup and configuration to ensure it meets predefined criteria.
- **Post-setup support:** Addressing any issues or concerns that may arise after the initial setup.

Customization

We've mentioned customization costs a few times, so here are some more specific examples:

- **User interface (UI):** Designing and implementing a customized UI to enhance usability and align with organizational branding.
- **Reporting and analytics customization:** Developing bespoke reporting tools or customizing existing reporting features to meet specific data analysis needs.
- **Permission and access controls:** Configuring and customizing role-based access control (RBAC) to define user roles and permissions based on organizational hierarchy and needs.
- **Localization and language customization:** Supporting multiple languages or dialects to accommodate a diverse user base.

Integration

Integrating the product management platform with existing systems, such as CRM or ERP tools, will usually come with an added cost due to:

- Licensing fees
- Compatibility testing
- Extra dev time

Data Migration Costs

When migrating existing data into the new product management platform, consider costs related to:

- **Data analysis:** Analyzing existing data structures, formats, and sources to facilitate a smooth migration process.
- **Data mapping and transfer:** Mapping data from legacy systems to the new platform and ensuring accurate and secure data transfer.
- **Data cleansing:** Using data cleansing tools or services to ensure data accuracy and consistency before migration.
- **Downtime:** Consider the impact downtime has on your org, including potential loss of productivity or revenue during the transition period.
- **Data backup and recovery:** Creating backups of existing data to mitigate the risk of data loss during migration.
- **Data privacy and security:** Implementing security measures to protect sensitive data during the migration process.
- **Post-migration support:** Establishing or enhancing support infrastructure to address any issues or concerns that may arise after data migration.

CONCLUSION

Future Trends and Developments in Product Management Software

The beginning of this Buyer's Guide explained that a tool purpose-built for enterprise product management, one that can be utilized remotely and at scale, was what will set product orgs apart from their competitors.

The solution should:

- Be a dedicated end-to-end product management software
- Easily integrate with your existing tech stack
- Be cloud-based
- Allow many different teams to collaborate within the same shared workspace
- Have configurable views for activities like feature prioritization, roadmap visualization, and customer insights collection
- Let you prioritize product ideas, features, or opportunities based on customer impact
- Visualize a flexible product hierarchy of sub-ideas
- Allow you to create visually-pleasing shareable product roadmaps
- Be able to ingest customer feedback from multiple sources
- Provide a centralized repository for all product-related feedback
- Let you engage with customers directly in the platform
- Provide critical metrics like resource allocation and customer usage reports
- Offer professional services and dedicated client managers
- Provide proper user administration, access control, and permissioning controls to stay compliant with regulations

Productboard is the only product management software of its kind that can answer “yes” to every point in the RFP matrix.

With Productboard, product managers can automate the gathering and analyzing of user insights, prioritizing the features and tasks associated, and creating visually pleasing product roadmaps that are relevant for different stakeholders—in one central location.

This can all be supercharged by Productboard AI. Automate the summarization of customer feedback to zero-in on the most helpful pieces of feedback on lengthy customer insights or long conversations. Analyze feedback at scale, work faster, and deliver what customers really need.

Try Productboard for free to see how we help you get the right products to market, faster.



Productboard is the customer-centric product management platform that helps teams get the right products to market faster. Over 6,000 companies, including Microsoft, 1-800-Contacts, and UiPath, use Productboard to understand what users need, prioritize what to build next, and rally everyone around their roadmap. With offices in San Francisco, Prague, and Vancouver, Productboard is backed by leading investors like Tiger Global Management, Index Ventures, Kleiner Perkins, Sequoia Capital, and Bessemer Venture Partners.

Learn more at productboard.com and follow [@productboard](https://twitter.com/productboard).

