

Product Roadmapping

Structuring a launch sequence

Once we understand what a product is supposed to do and how it will feel, we need to organize how it launches.

Through ability-to statements and positioning exercises like box on the shelf, we've shaped what the product does: we understand the value it will provide to a user, and why that value is important.

Now we need to organize the sequencing of the various capabilities so that we can define when it launches.

Structuring a launch sequence

Product roadmapping is a balancing act between feature richness and the need to ship.

It's a best practice to ship product as frequently as possible, whenever there is a complete set of functionality ready, so that you can test your work with real people.

"Ready" relies on an understanding of:

- Capabilities
- Sequencing
- Dependencies

Revisiting capabilities

We've moved from ideas to capabilities:

Design idea

Recall the top design idea from your 2x2 prioritization activity, and the corresponding goals.

A tool that helps students connect with alumni in order to get feedback on school work and gain tutoring and mentorship.

User goals

- A student wants to get help with their school work
- A student wants to gain confidence in their choices
- A student wants a supportive mentor
- An alumni wants to give back to their university
- An alumni wants to act as a mentor

Key questions

For each goal, ask yourself these questions:

- In order to achieve this goal, what behaviors need to change?
- In order to achieve this goal, what emotions need to change?
- In order to achieve this goal, what actions need to take place?
- In order to achieve this goal, what attitudes need to adjust?

Capabilities

- The ability to find an alumni that matches their interests and passions
- The ability to reach out to an alumni and ask for help
- The ability to explain the types of help they need
- The ability to volunteer to be a mentor
- The ability to learn how to be an effective mentor

Prioritization

Now, we'll organize the capabilities into *hero flows*—a story of how a user uses the product to achieve their goals.

Step 1

Jim is a student who is interested in getting help. He creates an account, and then sets up his profile.

Step 2

He explains what kind of help he is looking for, and then requests to be matched.

Step 3

Matt is an alumni, looking to help current students. He volunteers to be a mentor, and while he's waiting for a match to be made, he learns about being an effective mentor.

Step 4

The system matches Jim and Matt, and then gives them an easy way to chat and send messages to one-another.

Prioritization

Organize the individual capability statements in order of the story; add or remove capabilities as necessary.

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Step 4

The system matches Jim and Matt, and then gives them an easy way to chat and send messages to one-another.

The ability to create an account

The ability to create a profile

The ability to browse potential alumni matches

The ability to reach out to an alumni and ask for help

The ability to volunteer to be a mentor

The ability to learn how to be an effective mentor

The ability to find an alumni that matches their interests and passions

The ability to communicate between student and alumni mentor

Prioritization

Determine which of the capabilities are critical to the story, and which are “nice to have.”

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The ability to communicate between student and alumni mentor

These capabilities are critical, because without them, the user can’t achieve their goals.

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The ability to communicate between student and alumni mentor

These capabilities are nice-to-have: we can create a way around these features and still deliver on our core value promise.

Roadmapping

Create the core of the roadmap with the critical capabilities. Revise the story as necessary.

Jim browses through potential alumni mentors. When he finds one, he requests a match.

Matt volunteers to be a mentor.

The system makes a match, and sends an email to both people.

The ability to browse potential alumni matches

The ability to reach out to an alumni and ask for help

The ability to volunteer to be a mentor

The ability to find an alumni that matches their interests and passions

Roadmapping

This is the first part of the roadmap; it's a phase of work. Give the phase a descriptive name.

Phase 1: Mentor Matching

The ability to browse potential alumni matches

The ability to reach out to an alumni and ask for help

The ability to volunteer to be a mentor

The ability to find an alumni that matches their interests and passions

Roadmapping

Extend the roadmap. Add back in the next most important capabilities; don't forget about dependencies.

Phase 1: Mentor Matching

The ability to browse potential alumni matches

The ability to reach out to an alumni and ask for help

The ability to volunteer to be a mentor

The ability to find an alumni that matches their interests and passions

Phase 2: Account and Profile

The ability to create an account

The ability to create a profile

Phase 3: Communication

The ability to communicate between student and alumni mentor

Roadmapping

Extend the roadmap. Add back in the next most important capabilities; don't forget about dependencies.

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The ability to browse potential alumni matches

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The ability to volunteer to be a mentor

The ability to find an alumni that matches their interests and passions

Phase 2: Account and Profile

The ability to create an account

The ability to create a profile

Phase 3: Communication

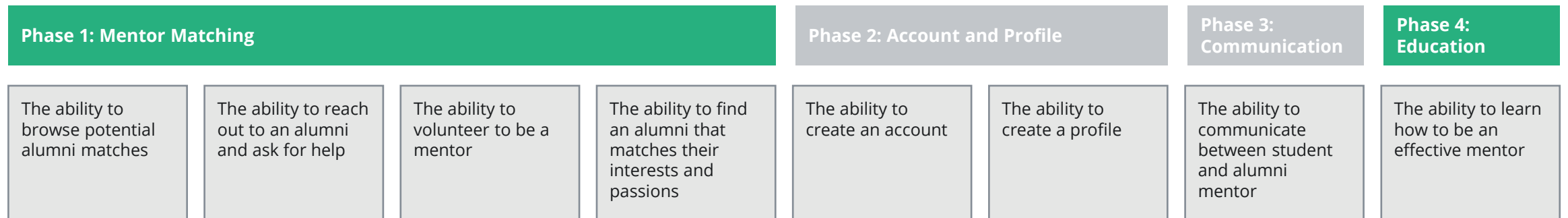
The ability to communicate between student and alumni mentor

Phase 4: Education

The ability to learn how to be an effective mentor

Roadmapping

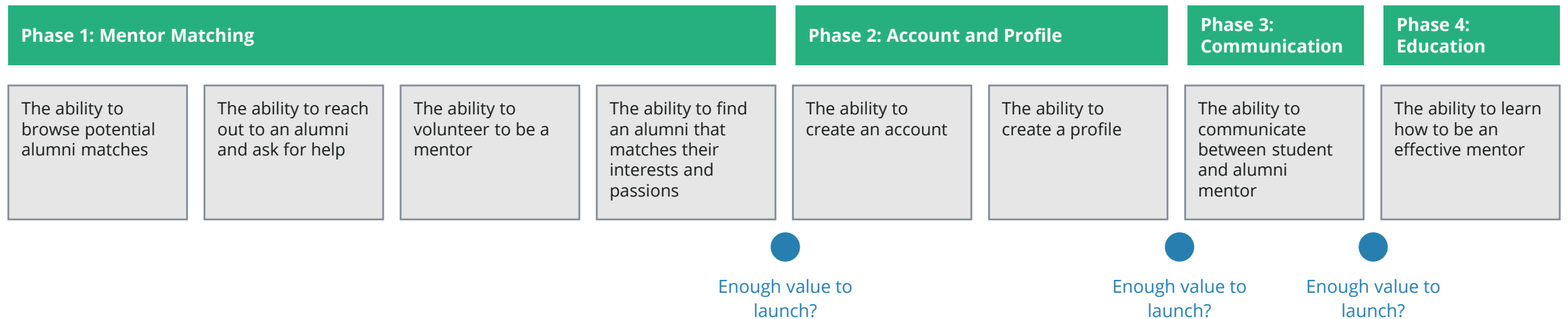
The sequencing of the roadmap implies a judgement on the relative importance of an item.



This roadmap says "Mentor Matching is **more important** than Mentor Education."

Roadmapping

The phasing shows when you have enough value to help a user achieve a new goal, or improve how they achieve existing goals.



Summary

Why are we doing this?

The product roadmap is a tool that helps define sequencing, dependencies, and priority. It's a living document; it's created, but then refined as priorities change and the product evolves. By creating the document and then owning revisions of it, a product manager defines buckets of value, and is in charge of supporting user and customer wants, needs, and desires.

The product roadmap is the main point of alignment, giving the whole team an understanding of what is being launched, when.

Thank you!

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