

Ten Reasons to Roadmap

In today's vastly complex business environments, where do successful corporations turn to define long-range goals and identify the technologies needed to achieve them? They turn to roadmapping – the practice of visualizing strategic planning information to communicate market, technology and product needs. Through the roadmapping process, organizations achieve increased visibility across the enterprise, providing decision makers with information necessary to make more accurate and informed decisions about the future. Here we highlight the top ten reasons to share a roadmap.

1. When you're searching for a new idea.

One of the best resources for new ideas is your own employee base. Sharing roadmaps between employees and decision makers opens up that line of communication by providing visibility into your organization's capabilities. Roadmaps can also show various drivers to help formulate ideas, like regulatory trends, technology breakthroughs and industry trends. By revealing this information to your employee base, you make it easier to identify new opportunities and new revenue sources.

2. When you want to justify an investment.

If you don't have the ability to see and understand your organization's long-range plans, all justifications for an investment are pure speculation. With roadmapping, however, you can lay down plans against future scenarios. By doing so, you're essentially linking an investment to an outcome, resulting in an accurate return on investment projection. By sharing that information with key decision makers, you allow them to make decisions based on dependable projections, not guesswork.

3. When you want to create and communicate future scenarios.

Roadmapping is the best method for gaining visibility into future scenarios. Sharing a

roadmap with other colleagues in your organization, however, is the optimum method for achieving a collective perspective on what the future could be, or will be. It's that collective perspective that will build consensus and promote greater collaboration across multiple business segments.

4. When combining future views to create a unified strategy.

Creating and communicating future scenarios is important in identifying challenges. But it doesn't leave you with a strategy of how your organization is going to achieve those goals. Sharing a roadmap with colleagues allows you to create a unified strategy, where you detail the best ways to address those scenarios. The strategy is based on the decision of where the organization wants to be, and outlines what the company is going to do, and where it's going to focus.

5. When you want to prove you have a solution.

When it comes to meeting the needs of a customer, whether that customer is internal or external, you need to provide them with a complete solution that will satisfy their needs. Sharing your roadmap will convey which approach your solution will use.

- 6. When there are multiple paths to the goal.** Sharing a roadmap with your colleagues provides visibility to different perspectives and enhances the collaborative process. It's this process that alleviates risk when determining which path is the best one to choose. Depending on your organization's resources, several paths can be supported until the time comes to choose the best one. Roadmapping allows you to decide when that decision needs to be made and which path is the best choice.
- 7. When a challenge appears too complex to understand.** Technology has become so complex that it's virtually impossible for one group of individuals to fully explain, or even anticipate, all the parts needed to build a product. But by building a roadmap and sharing it with key stakeholders, an organization can convert a very complex situation into an easy-to-visualize series of steps needed to meet the challenge.
- 8. When you want suppliers to meet your future needs.** The products and services your organization provides are often dependent on the materials you get from your suppliers. In many instances, an organization has much to gain by strengthening the supplier relationship and having them create innovation that will ultimately support your plans. Building a roadmap and sharing it with your suppliers is the best way to achieve that.
- 9. When you want customers to see your future capabilities.** Just as there are times when it's advantageous to share roadmaps with suppliers, there are times when it's a good idea to share your roadmaps with your customers, like when you want your customers to see your future capabilities with timelines. Sharing roadmaps with customers is also ideal when you want to plant new ideas into your customers' heads as to what the future could hold.
- 10. When changes to any of the above occur.** When dealing with complex technology, there will be kinks in the plan. When these changes occur, roadmapping allows your organization to adapt to those changes and share new strategies with colleagues. Altogether, roadmapping is the most effective process for effectively communicating longrange planning strategies. The judicious sharing of roadmaps will help you build consensus about your organization's needs, identify the technology that will help meet those needs and build the alignment needed to succeed at meeting those needs.

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