

# How To Select The Right Prioritization Framework For Your Product?

Long gone are the days of gut-feeling and messy prioritization spreadsheets. The most impactful way of approaching the decision-making process is to have a defined framework in place. This will enable prioritization to become a standardized process, and will yield the most impactful decisions for your product.

Putting a framework in place will empower your product team to filter out data points or requests that aren't of significant value or are simply gut-based, leading to objective decision-making.

## Let's expand on these benefits

- A framework creates clarity to decide what to build next for your team by replacing subjective guesswork with highly informed product decisions based on smart scorings.
- It will allow you to see the big picture and set the right priorities.
- You'll be able to focus on the right things by visualizing the importance of each initiative and feature. Ultimately this will help you to make high impact prioritization and tradeoff decisions.

In turn, this will create confidence in the decisions the team is making and will foster a data-driven process, rather than one that's plagued by emotional, time consuming meetings that become hard to track.

# There's no wrong prioritization framework.

but there are wrong applications.

The following parameters will determine which framework should work best for you:

- 1** The strategic level of items you are considering
- 2** The lifecycle stage and complexity of your product
- 3** The size of your team and company
- 4** The company culture and organizational structure, for example, if you have remote teams

# Managing prioritization

from your vision to your features

Prioritization needs to be done from the highest to the lowest level of product management.

“If the team doesn’t agree on the big picture, then they certainly won’t agree on a single feature.”

Richard Banfield Author of “Product Leadership: How Top Product Managers Launch Awesome Products and Build Successful Teams”

## PRODUCT VISION AND STRATEGY

It all starts with the product vision and strategy, which establishes the overall direction of where you’re going and what the product aims to accomplish. The product strategy will define the main audience, which of their needs you plan to satisfy and which pain points to relieve.

This is the point where you or the people above you start by saying “no” (...a lot). You’ll need to say “no” to all initiatives and features that simply do not help to reach your strategic goals.

## PRODUCT INITIATIVES

A very helpful method for keeping your team focused on what is truly important is to define high-level product initiatives. These should link the overarching strategy to lower level product features.

Setting your initiatives starts with breaking down your strategy into the high-level efforts needed to reach your strategic goals.

Let's use the following example from the VOOM Video App to demonstrate what this breakdown might look like in practice. It's part of VOOM's strategy to make their platform enterprise ready within the next 12 months. So they start the initiative "Enterprise readiness".

### **The following epics and features are part of this initiative:**

- Single sign-on (SSO)
- Reportings
- User roles and permissions

# Qualitative or quantitative prioritization?

A prioritization framework, be qualitative or quantitative, will provide a set of guidelines to create products that deliver value to both the customer and the business, while allocating your limited resources most efficiently.

For very high-level prioritization, in most cases a qualitative approach makes sense. This can be a qualitative framework such as story mapping or —as simple as it sounds— in some cases brainstorming or discussions, and some idea sparring.

When the high-level decisions have been made and the strategy is set, it often makes sense to go with a quantitative approach using a prioritization framework to prioritize features and initiatives.

Ultimately it should be a scalable, repeatable and standardized process to resolve what features to work on next and in what sequence, while answering questions like:

- Does it align with our company vision, strategy and goals?
- How do we get the overall maximum value out of our limited resources?
- Are we correctly addressing user needs and delivering value?

- Will it yield the highest business value?
- How can we generate enough buy-in to get to market, and to get teams & stakeholders onboard?
- What features will we prioritize for the next release?

# Final thoughts

There's no wrong prioritization framework so choosing one for you is a matter of figuring out what matters to you the most. A good place to start would be to take a good look at the strategic items you are considering, the complexity of your product, the size of your company and the company organization structure.

## TAKING PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORKS WITH A GRAIN OF SALT

We say this because, although prioritization frameworks shed objective light on the features and initiatives you'd like to measure, they are blind to all external criteria that are not considered within the framework. This includes things such as dependencies, the dynamics of the competitive landscape and budget cuts or limitations, to list just a few examples.

These limitations should be taken into account when prioritizing, and could be reasons to decide to break from the solutions your framework offers. Though veering from the framework may sound unintuitive, it is still essential in providing the opportunity-cost of making such a decision.

### ! Please note

Prioritization frameworks are completely blind to all criteria that are not considered within the framework

Learn more about frameworks with our [curated list](#) of the seven best methods used by thousands of product professionals.



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