PRODUCT OPERATIONS PLAYBOOK

Product Management Toolkit

Integrated templates for Discovery, User Story Mapping, Big & Little Bets, Agile Road mapping, and Launch Execution.

by Duncan Malcolm • Expanded Edition

13 EDITABLE TEMPLATES + FRAMEWORKS

END-TO-END WORKFLOW

How This Toolkit Connects Discovery to Launch

01 • DISCOVERY

Understand Context

Stakeholder Grid, Business Model Canvas, Interview Wall of Pain, and User Story Map.

02 • BETS & RISK

Place Focused Bets

Opportunity One-Pager, Big Bets vs. Little Bets Portfolio, and Interactive Risk Cube.

03 • DELIVERY

Align & Build

Now/Next/Later Board, Roadmap Readiness, Feature Definition, and Service Dependencies.

04 • LAUNCH & LEARN

Ship & Validate

GTM Launch Readiness Checklist and Post-Launch Experiment Readout.

TEMPLATE 01 • DISCOVERY

Stakeholder Map: Power vs. Interest

Map internal and external stakeholders in your first 2 weeks to tailor communication cadence and decision sign-offs.

HIGH POWER • HIGH INTEREST

Manage Closely

Weekly syncs, co-creation workshops, and formal sign-off on scope shifts.

People: VP Product, Tech Lead, Key Launch Customers, Sponsor

HIGH POWER • LOW INTEREST

Keep Satisfied

Concise executive summaries, early compliance reviews, and milestone approvals.

People: C-Suite, Legal, InfoSec, Head of Finance

LOW POWER • HIGH INTEREST

Keep Informed

Sprint demos, early beta access, release notes, and enablement training.

People: Customer Support, Sales, Account Managers, UX Research

LOW POWER • LOW INTEREST

Monitor

Monthly product newsletters, all-hands updates, and self-serve dashboards.

People: Adjacent Squads, General Staff, Recruitment

TEMPLATE 02 • DISCOVERY

Business Model & Lean Canvas

Click any open block below to add your product's details.

1. Problems

Top 3 customer pains & existing alternatives...

4. Solutions

Core capabilities solving each problem...

8. Key Metrics

North Star & leading activation indicators...

3. Unique Value Proposition

Clear, compelling promise why you are different and worth buying...

9. Unfair Advantage / Partners

Defensibility, key suppliers, or integrations...

5. Channels

Inbound, outbound, and distribution paths...

2. Customer Segments

Target personas & early adopters...

7. Cost Structure

Customer acquisition cost, hosting, engineering squad run-rate, support overhead...

6. Revenue Streams / Benefits

Pricing model, LTV, transaction fees, or internal cost savings...

TEMPLATE 03 • DISCOVERY

Wall of Pain (Synthesized from User Interviews)

Built directly from 1-on-1 user interviews: group recurring customer frustrations by journey stage and tag mention frequency (xN) alongside severity.

Stage 1: Booking Jobs

x6 INTERVIEWS • HIGH SEVERITY

Unclear shift timing & last-minute schedule changes

x6 INTERVIEWS • HIGH SEVERITY

No way to verify if employer is reliable & friendly

x4 INTERVIEWS • MEDIUM

Confirming valid contractor insurance coverage

Stage 2: Completing Job

x6 INTERVIEWS • HIGH SEVERITY

Slow access to onboarding credentials & site data

x4 INTERVIEWS • MEDIUM

Unclear point of contact when blocked on-site

Stage 3: After Job

x6 INTERVIEWS • BLOCKER

Chasing managers for timesheet sign-off

x6 INTERVIEWS • BLOCKER

Delayed & unpredictable invoice payouts

x2 INTERVIEWS • LOW

No structured feedback loop after contract ends

TEMPLATE 04 • DISCOVERY & SLICING

User Story Map: Foreign Currency Invoice Workflow

Reference: Jeff Patton — *User Story Mapping* (Book & YouTube Talks)

BACKBONE (Activities)	**1. Receive Invoice**	**2. Get FX Quote**	**3. Authorize & Pay**	**4. Reconcile Ledger**
USER TASKS (Steps)	**Forward PDF email** **Verify currency & amount**	**Compare live FX rates** **Lock spot rate**	**Route 2nd sign-off** **Trigger bank transfer**	**Match receipt to bill** **Sync to Xero / ERP**
RELEASE 1 (MVP) 100 Gmail beta users • Measure quote rate	Gmail PDF auto-ingest & OCR extraction	Instant email reply with top 3 FX quotes	1-click approval link + manual bank export	Downloadable CSV settlement report
RELEASE 2 Automation & multi-inbox	Outlook & dedicated forwarding address	Forward-contract hedging alerts	Direct Open Banking payment injection	2-way Xero & NetSuite auto-reconciliation

TEMPLATE 05 • FRAMING

Opportunity One-Pager (Lightweight PRD)

Complete with Design and Tech Leads before committing engineering capacity to define the problem, metrics, and hard boundaries.

1. Problem Statement & Audience

Finance managers processing >50 foreign invoices/month spend 4+ hours manually comparing broker rates via phone and email, causing delayed vendor payments.

2. Proposed Solution (Hypothesis)

If we auto-ingest emailed PDF invoices and reply with top 3 live FX rates, quote conversion will rise because friction drops to zero.

3. Strategic OKR Alignment

Q2 Objective: Increase active SME repeat FX volume by 25%.

4. Success & Guardrail Metrics

Primary Metric: Reduce time-from-invoice-to-quote by 60%.

Guardrail Metric: OCR parsing error rate must stay below 1.5%.

5. Scope Boundaries (In vs. Non-Goals)

In Scope (MVP): Gmail PDF ingestion, EUR/USD/GBP quotes, email reply.

Out of Scope (Non-Goals): Multi-currency split invoices, automated bank settlement, Outlook support.

PART II • DECISION MAKING

Prioritization & Risk Management

Replace rigid scoring theater with balanced Big & Little Bets and proactive risk mitigation.

TEMPLATE 06 • PORTFOLIO PRIORITIZATION

Big Bets vs. Little Bets Approach

Balance your squad's capacity between fast, low-cost discovery experiments and high-conviction strategic builds.

~30% CAPACITY • 1–2 WEEKS

Little Bets (Explore & Validate)

Time-boxed prototypes, concierge tests, and smoke tests designed to de-risk assumptions cheaply before heavy engineering.

Example 1: Concierge email FX quote test (1 week)

Example 2: Fake-door button for forward hedging (3 days)

~70% CAPACITY • 4–6 WEEKS

Big Bets (Scale Proven Value)

High-conviction initiatives backed by evidence, committed with a fixed time appetite to move a core business KPI.

Example 1: Full automated invoice ingestion & FX API (6 weeks)

Example 2: Self-serve multi-currency wallet onboarding (5 weeks)

The Graduation Rule: Never start a Big Bet without evidence. Run a Little Bet first — only promote ideas that prove user demand into a Big Bet.

TEMPLATE 07 • RISK MANAGEMENT

Interactive Risk Cube (Likelihood vs. Impact)

↑ HIGH LIKELIHOOD

LOW IMPACT ← → HIGH IMPACT

MITIGATE PROBABILITY

No alert if OCR parser slows down

+ Copy above to add your own

RESOLVE BEFORE BUILD

Partner FX API rate-limit blocks peak quotes

+ Copy above to add your own

MONITOR

PDF summary formatting on legacy printers

+ Copy above to add your own

CONTINGENCY PLAN

Primary liquidity provider outage

+ Copy above to add your own

How to Use

Run this live with your squad during story mapping. Click any dashed slot to add your own risks.

Resolve: Must spike or de-risk before writing production code.

Mitigate: Add monitoring, retries, or guardrails to cut frequency.

Contingency: Prepare a fallback playbook if an outage occurs.

Monitor: Accept for now and revisit after launch.

PART III • EXECUTION & LEARNING

Delivery, Architecture & Launch

Outcome-oriented roadmaps, cross-functional technical alignment, and structured post-launch learning.

TEMPLATE 08 • OUTCOME ROADMAPPING

Now / Next / Later Roadmap

Communicate strategic priorities without fake calendar deadlines. Add your own initiative cards inside each column.

Now

Committed work currently in delivery with clear scope and OKR targets.

OKR: ACTIVATION

Automated Gmail PDF Invoice Ingestion

OKR: TRUST & SPEED

Instant Top-3 FX Rate Email Quote

+ Add initiative card...

Next

Validated problems actively in discovery, prototyping, or technical spiking.

OKR: RETENTION

Streamline 2-Step Signatory Approval Flow

OKR: EXPANSION

2-Way Xero & QuickBooks Ledger Sync

+ Add initiative card...

Later

Strategic themes and longer-term opportunities awaiting customer evidence.

THEME: TREASURY

Automated Forward-Contract Hedging

THEME: ENTERPRISE

Multi-Entity Approval Permissions

+ Add initiative card...

TEMPLATE 09 • LIFECYCLE VISIBILITY

Roadmap Readiness Board

Track where every bet sits in the product lifecycle and enforce clear Definition of Done exit criteria between stages.

1. Backlog

Raw ideas aligned to OKRs awaiting triage.

- Multi-currency wallet

+ Add card...

Gate: Problem & OKR agreed

2. Discovery

Testing prototypes & running Little Bets.

- Xero 2-way ledger sync

+ Add card...

Gate: Validated + tech spike done

3. Ready

Scoped, designed & sliced for sprint.

- 2nd signatory mobile sign-off

+ Add card...

Gate: UX, API & metrics defined

4. Building

Active squad engineering & QA.

- Gmail PDF auto-ingest

+ Add card...

Gate: Tested & behind feature flag

5. Done

Live in production & measuring impact.

- Top-3 FX rate email reply

+ Add card...

Gate: Readout & KPI verified

TEMPLATE 10 • TECHNICAL ALIGNMENT

Expanded Feature Definition Canvas

Map UX, architecture, analytics events, edge cases, and people across each user step before sprint kickoff.

Journey Step	UX & Wireframes	Architecture & APIs	Analytics Events	Edge Cases & NFRs	Team Needed
1. Ingest Invoice	Drag-and-drop PDF dropzone + status toast	Gmail Webhook, AWS S3, OCR Parser API	invoice_uploaded	Reject >10MB files; parse latency <2s	Backend, Frontend, Data Eng
2. Review & Quote	Editable fields + low-confidence highlights	FX Pricing Engine, Audit Log DB	fx_quote_viewed	Handle multi-currency line items	Frontend, UX Designer
3. Authorize Pay	2FA confirmation + signatory approval modal	Auth0, Payment Gateway, Email Service	payment_approved	Fallback approver if signatory is OOO	Security Lead, Backend

TEMPLATE 11 • SQUAD TOPOLOGY

Service Dependency Map

Visualize which microservices, databases, and specialist engineers each feature touches to prevent cross-team bottlenecks.

Lifecycle Stage	Acquisition	Activation	Core Transaction	Retention
Feature	**Get Instant FX Quote**	**KYB Business Onboarding**	**Book & Settle Trade**	**ERP Auto-Reconcile**
APIs & Services	FX Pricing API OCR Parser Service	Identity/KYB API Customer DB	Liquidity Gateway Fraud & AML Engine	Ledger DB Xero / Webhook API
Owning Squads	Pricing Squad	Growth & Risk Squads	Payments & Compliance	Integrations Squad
Key Specialists	ML / Data Engineer	Compliance Officer	Treasury & InfoSec	Partner API Lead

TEMPLATE 12 • GO-TO-MARKET

GTM & Launch Readiness Checklist

Review 2 weeks before general availability so engineering, commercial, and support teams launch in lockstep.

Product & Engineering

- ☐ Feature flag active in production (default off)
- ☐ Phased rollout schedule set (10% → 50% → 100%
- ☐ Analytics funnel & guardrail alerts verified
- ☐ Load testing & security review signed off

Marketing & Sales

- ☐ Customer value proposition & positioning approved
- ☐ In-app announcement & customer email drafted
- ☐ Sales pitch deck & pricing tier rules updated
- ☐ Demo environment seeded with realistic data

Customer Success & Ops

- ☐ Help center guides & FAQ articles published
- ☐ Support team trained on edge cases & escalation
- ☐ CRM feedback tag & post-launch survey live
- ☐ Beta cohort notified ahead of public release

TEMPLATE 13 • OUTCOME VALIDATION

Post-Launch Experiment Readout

Close the loop 2–4 weeks post-launch by comparing actual telemetry against your initial hypothesis.

01 • THE BET (HYPOTHESIS)

We believed that auto-ingesting Gmail PDF invoices would cut quote turnaround time by 60% and increase FX quote requests by 25% over 4 weeks.

02 • THE REALITY (QUANT & QUAL DATA)

Telemetry: Quote turnaround dropped 68%; quote volume rose +31%.

User Feedback: High satisfaction, though 18% requested multi-file batch uploads.

03 • THE VERDICT

☑ **Ship to 100%** ☐ Iterate & Retest ☐ Kill & Clean Up

04 • NEXT STEPS

Roll out to 100% of Gmail users Friday; scope batch PDF upload as a Little Bet.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCES & CRAFT

Further Reading & Modern Product Stack

Core Books & Frameworks

- **Marty Cagan:** *Inspired* & SVPG Articles (svpg.com)
- **Jeff Patton:** *User Story Mapping* (Book & Talks)
- **Higham & McFarland:** The Hypothesis Kit
- **Product Focus:** PM Maturity Model (productfocus.com)

Modern Product Stack

- **Whiteboarding & Mapping:** Miro, FigJam
- **Roadmaps & Docs:** Linear, Productboard, Notion
- **Product Analytics:** Amplitude, Mixpanel, PostHog
- **Event Pipelines & Flags:** Segment, LaunchDarkly

Build what users love • Solve what the business needs • Ship what engineering sustains

END OF TOOLKIT