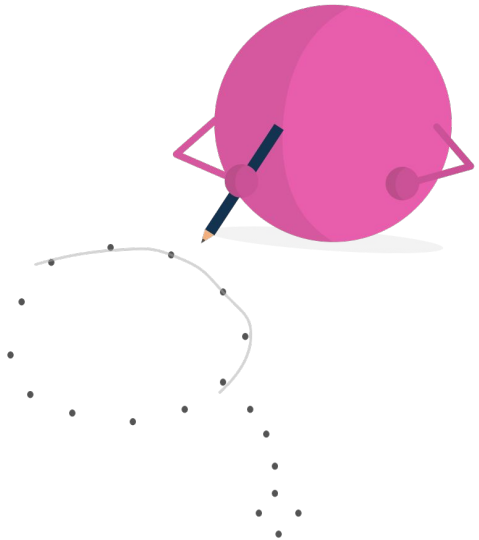
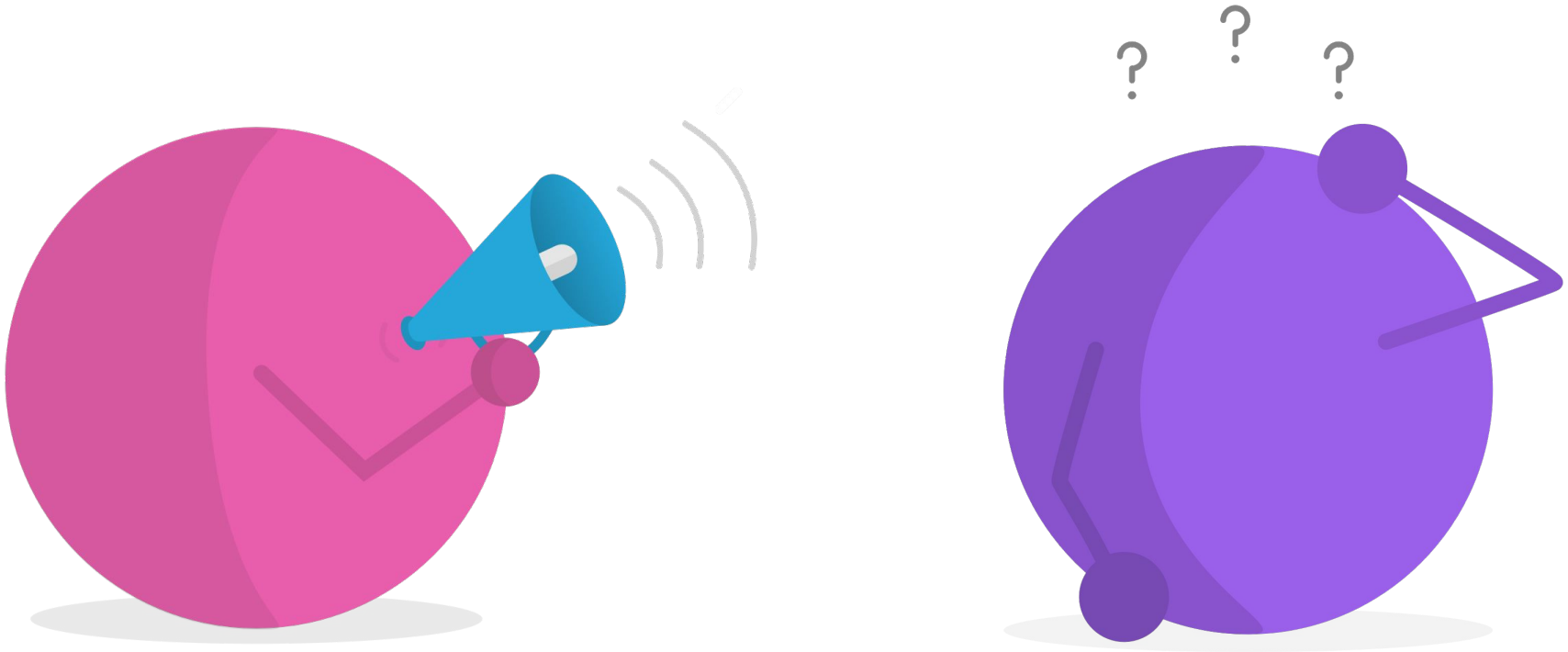
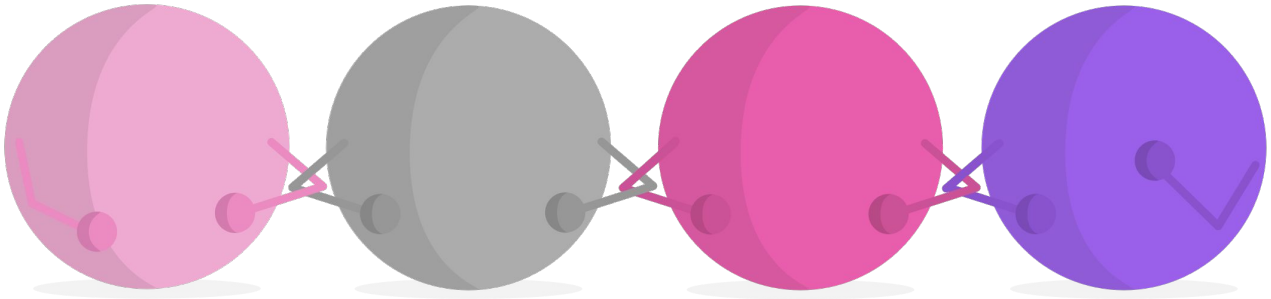
Joining the dots: Managing Strategic Dependencies



Why are PMs asked about dependencies?

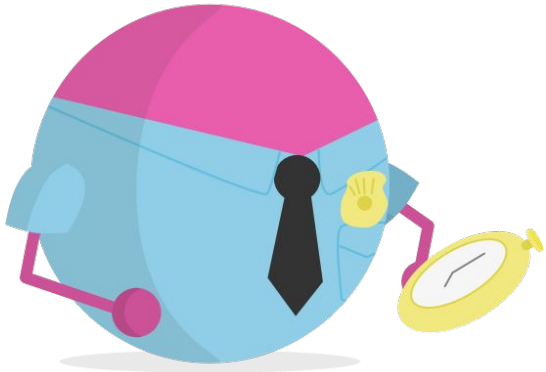


"A dependency is **strategic** if the way the product is delivered affects the ability to solve the problem"

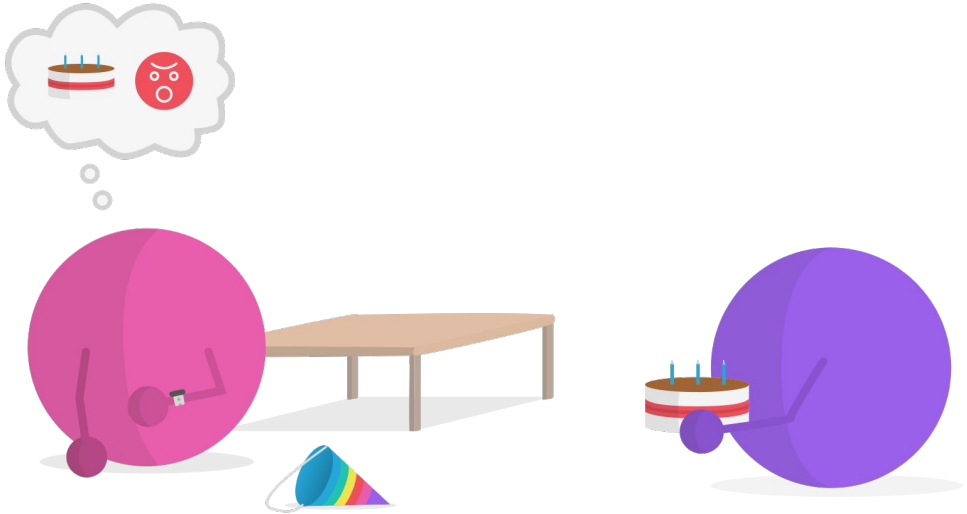


Strategic time-based

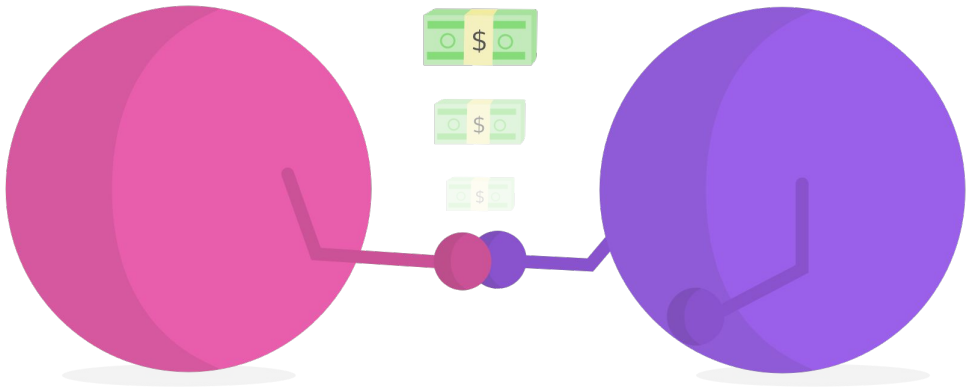
Regulatory Compliance



Time Dependent Value



Promised
(boss, investor, customer)



Promised
(bo s, i estor, cust mer)

Ask why…….

Short term gain from sales opportunity?

Ask why…….

Short term gain from sales opportunity?

Highlight long term pain of “**Frankenstein product**”

Ask why…….

Control/comfort?

Ask why…….

Control/comfort?

Highlight how **discovery reduces risk**

Ask why…….

For planning?

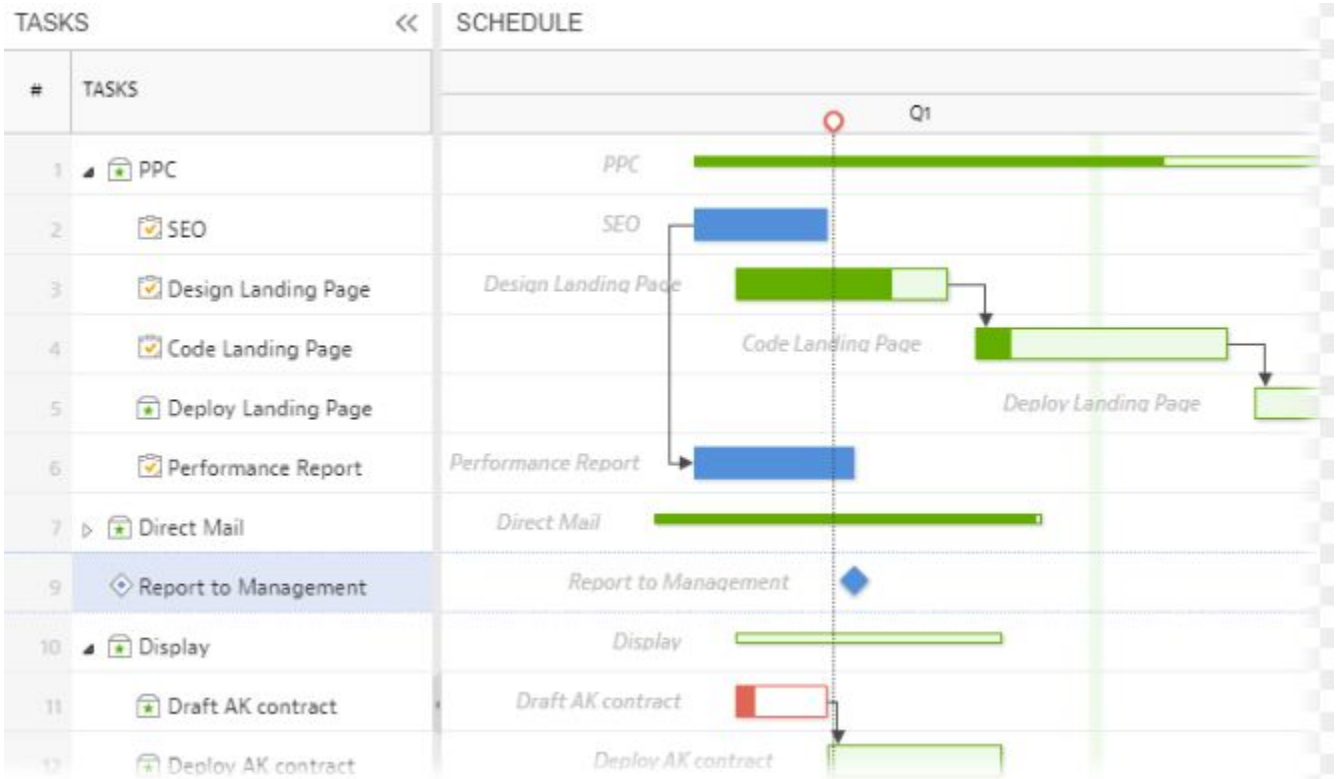
Ask why…….

For planning?

Create a release plan for high confidence changes

What if the date IS strategic?

How not to do it.....



This works!

User Growth Mobile

Support mobile usage

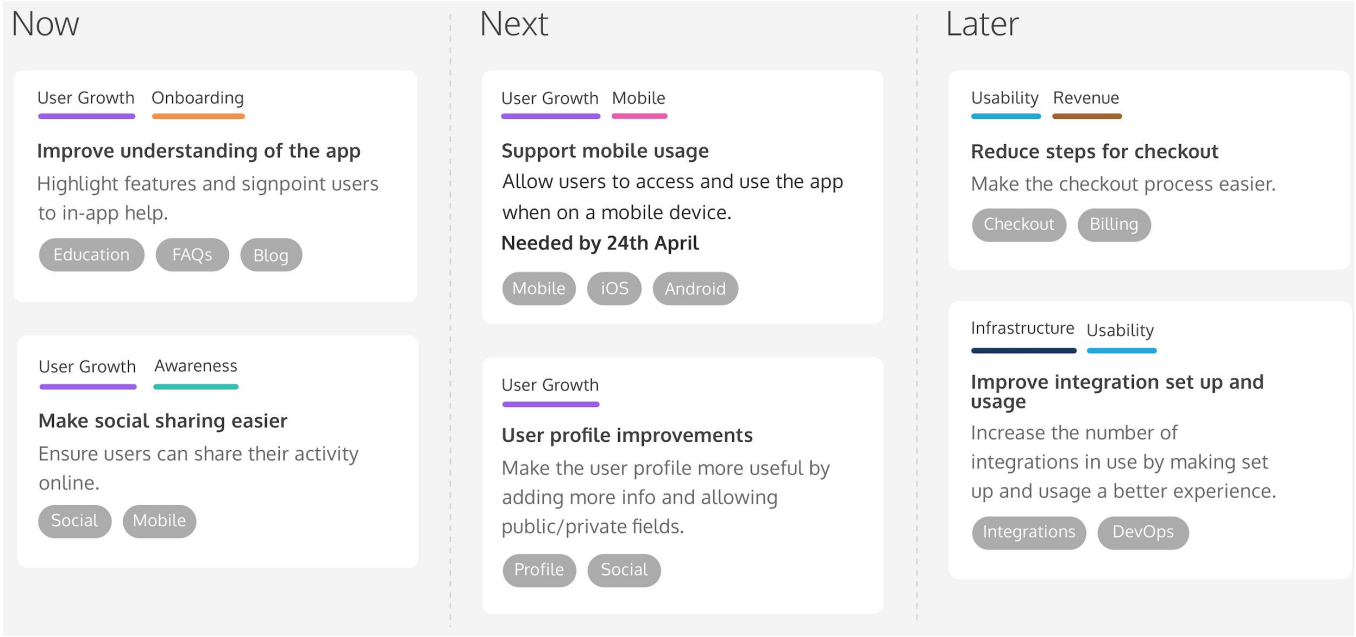
Allow users to access and use the app when on a mobile device.

Needed by 24th April

Mobile iOS Android

- Easy to understand
- Theme-specific
- Tied back to objectives

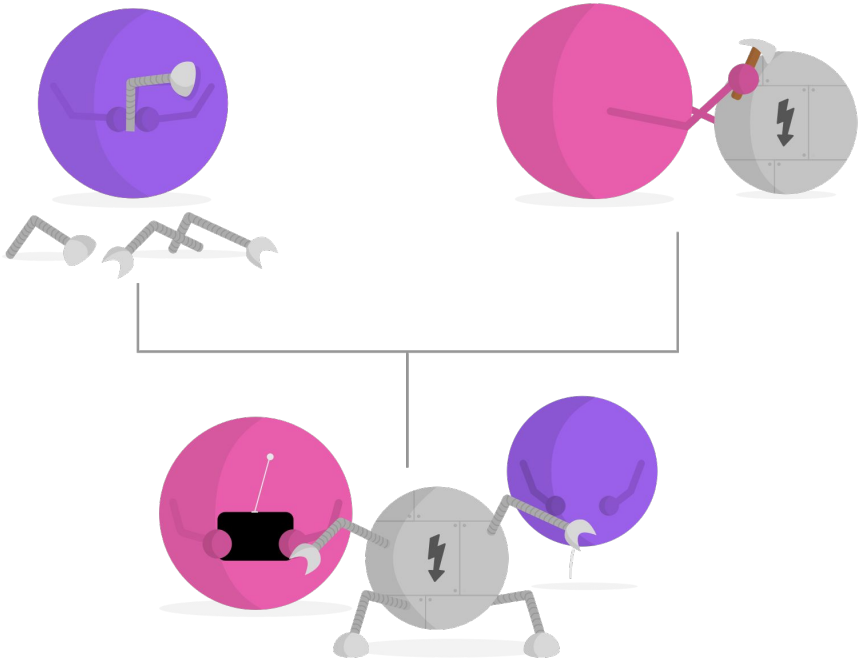
This works!



Doesn't imply other dates

Logistical Dependencies

Multiple actions required to deliver value



Why do logistical dependencies happen?

Platform Products

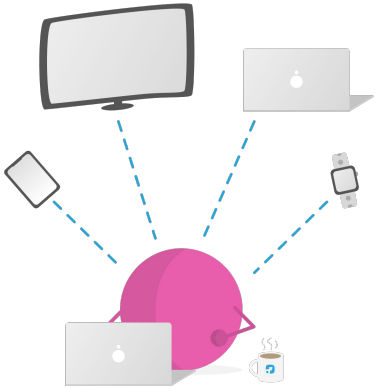
"A platform is a product which provides value by **enabling** other products to exist, or by introducing **standards and consistency**"

Example: Sponge cake!

- Created as a standalone product
- Provides value by combining with other products
- Brings consistency

Platform Benefits

- Consistency (functional and UX)
- Reusable components



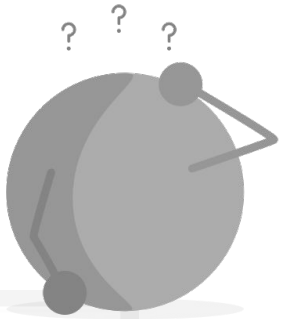
- Enables multiple modalities

How do I show platform dependencies?

How do I show platform dependencies?

Separate Strategy from Execution

Execution-based



Enterprise User Growth

Analytics dashboard

Provide a view of all data in an actionable form

Dependent upon BE initiative "Backend Upgrade"

▾ **Hide specs** (3 Ideas)

Custom dashboard	QA [Dev]
Analytics	In Developmen...
Widgets	In Developmen...

data/analytics ⭐ Conference

Public

Infrastructure

Upgrade backend

Currently underway

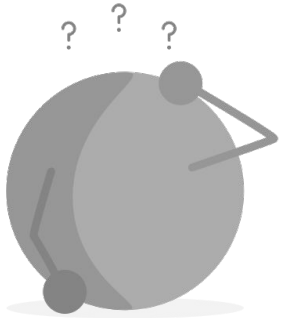
Required for Analytics Dashboard.

▾ **Hide specs** (3 Ideas)

Add additional prometheus exporters	Released and L...
Expand daily statistical calculations of activity	Released and L...
Upgrade to Symfony 4	Released and L...

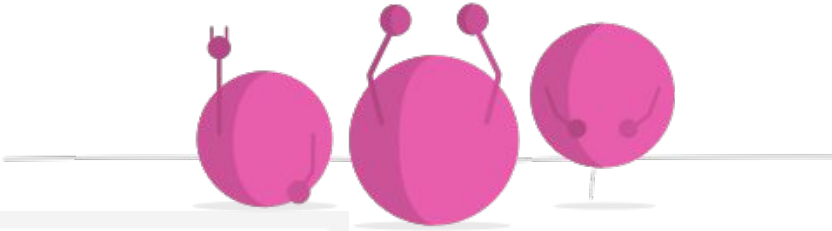
Internal

Execution-based



- Multiple roadmaps required to show details
- Need to show dependencies in multiple places
- Difficult to see all detail in a single view
- Difficult to reprioritize

Strategy-based



Enterprise User Growth

Analytics dashboard

Provide a view of all data in an actionable form

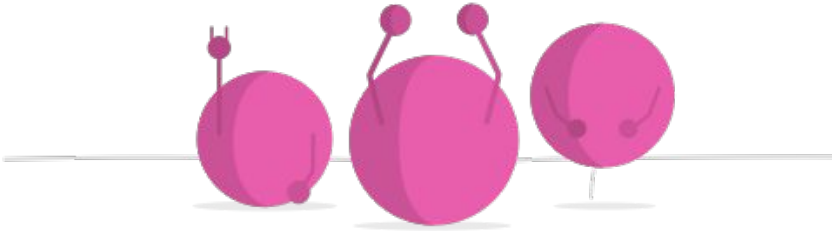
▾ **Hide specs** (6 Ideas)

Custom dashboard	QA [Dev]
Analytics	In Development [Dev]
Widgets	In Development [Dev]
Add additional prometheus exporters	Released and Live [Dev]
Expand daily statistical calculations of activity	Released and Live [Dev]
Upgrade to Symfony 4	Released and Live [Dev]

data/analytics ⭐ Conference

Public

Strategy-based



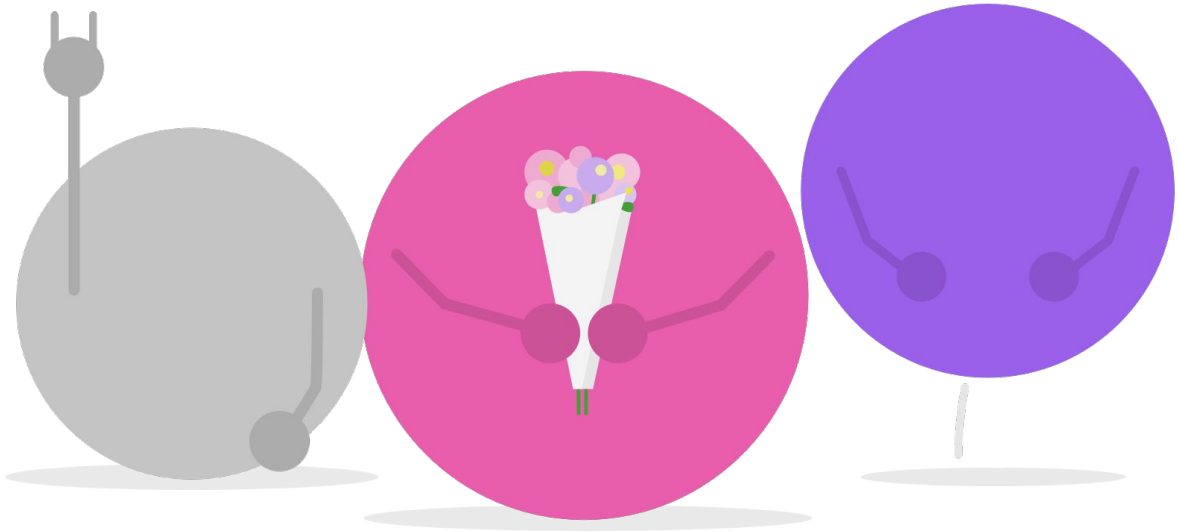
- User value easy to understand
- All ideas required are visible in a single place, regardless of the teams involved
- Easy to re-prioritize
- Execution managed separately, once plans are fixed

Advantages

- Changes to project funding/approvals are easier to manage
- Value-driven, single roadmap
- Lean/agile/flexible
- Add/remove scope without large-scale roadmap changes
- Easy to spot potential issues

Summary

- Dependency is only strategic if delivery affects value
- Lean (theme-based) roadmap inspires strategic conversations
- Focus on strategy, not execution - easier to plan, reprioritize, and adapt



@lizzielove

liz@prodpad.com