Product Strategy Canvas

Strategy | Original synthesis | Portfolio version 1.0

A one-page strategy model connecting vision, target customer, problem evidence, value proposition, differentiation, choices, capabilities, economics, measures, and risk.

Problem it solves

Strategy becomes a list of ambitions when teams do not make explicit choices about customers, value, differentiation, capabilities, and what they will not pursue.

When to use it

- A product or product area needs strategic alignment.
- Teams are preparing a major investment or repositioning.
- Roadmap debates reveal unclear strategic choices.
- Leaders need a concise strategy narrative.

When not to use it

- As a substitute for underlying research and analysis.
- When leadership is unwilling to make exclusions.
- When every statement remains generic enough to fit any product.

Inputs

- Company strategy
- Market and competitive context
- Customer research
- Product performance
- Technical and organizational capabilities
- Business and economic constraints

Process

1. Vision - Describe the future state the product aims to create.

2. Target customer - Define who has the important problem and context.

3. Problem and evidence - State what is not working and what proves it matters.

4. Value proposition - Explain the customer benefit and reason to choose the product.

5. Differentiation - Clarify the distinctive advantage or system of advantages.

6. Strategic choices - State what the product will and will not do.

7. Capabilities and economics - Identify required capabilities and how value is captured.

8. Measures and risks - Define progress signals, success measures, assumptions, and threats.

Decision points

- Which customer segment matters most?
- What problem is important enough to solve?
- What will we deliberately not pursue?
- Which capability creates defensibility?
- What assumption could invalidate the strategy?

Outputs

- One-page strategy
- Strategic-choice statement
- Capability gaps
- Outcome measures
- Risk and assumption register
- Roadmap themes

Success measures

- Strategic alignment
- Choice clarity
- Roadmap traceability
- Outcome movement
- Differentiation evidence
- Assumption validation

Portfolio application

I use strategy canvases to create shared language before roadmap planning and to connect customer problems, product missions, capabilities, and measurable outcomes.

Common pitfalls

- Writing slogans instead of choices.
- Listing every customer as a target.
- Confusing features with differentiation.
- Ignoring required capabilities.
- Leaving risks and exclusions unstated.

Skills demonstrated

- Product strategy
- Market analysis
- Customer segmentation
- Value proposition
- Strategic choices
- Business alignment

Interview discussion prompts

- What makes a product strategy actionable?
- How do you decide what not to do?
- How do capabilities influence strategy?
- How should strategy connect to the roadmap?