TECHNOLOGY
Phase II: Expanding and Integrating

Activity: How We Retire Features

Activity Instructions

Part 1: Small group together

Note: If a specific feature is already under consideration for retirement, you may move directly to Part 2 of the activity.

1. Discuss/brainstorm together a list of features/functionality that may be suitable for sunsetting. Plotting features on an effort/impact matrix (sample on page 3) may help identify elements that are difficult to maintain but do not provide a huge value to users.

2. If there are several, select 1-2 features for further assessment.

3. Determine a timeline for the remainder of the activity, who will be responsible for its completion, and who will be accountable.

Part 2: Small group asynchronously

1. Gather and review data on each of the selected features:
   a. User data
      i. How many users will be affected?
      ii. What percentage of overall users use the feature?
      iii. Did they try it once or did they use it all the time?
      iv. What percentage of users do not use the feature?
      v. Why did those users not use it?
   b. Data on alternative workflows
      i. What specific workflows is the feature supporting? When asking users about how they're using specific features, beware the XY problem; or asking about a user’s solution rather than the problem they’re trying to solve.
      ii. What alternatives are there to complete the workflow?
c. Data on organizational effort
   i. What resources (engineering, support) does the feature require?
   ii. What percentage of product use and/or revenue comes from the feature?
   iii. What is the expected cost of keeping it vs. the potential loss of removing it?
   iv. Is the product adding or distracting from our program mission?

2. Make a recommendation to retire/not retire features based on the data and information gathered.

If, after the above elements are complete, the decision is made to sunset a feature, move on to:

3. Gain approvals from the appropriate governance/leadership representatives.

4. Develop a sunset communication plan
   a. See Technology Activity: Developing an End-of-Life Communications Plan

5. Communicate
   a. Internal
      i. Ensure all program team members are aware of the change and the key details - why, when, alternatives
      ii. Update support documentation to clarify that a feature is no longer available, and what alternative workflows are available.
   b. External
      i. Reach out to affected users with a simple, concise message - enough detail so that nothing is unclear, dates and times the feature will be discontinued, and recommendations for alternative workflows.
      ii. Reach out via different channels: emails, in-application messaging if available, phone calls, social media.
      iii. Monitor feedback in the days/weeks following the announcement.
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