

TECHNOLOGY

Phase II: Expanding and Integrating



Activity: How We Retire Features

Goals

1. Identify elements of the platform that can be retired
2. Develop a plan for communicating retirement plans with the community
3. Communicate the retirement decision to the community

Prerequisites

Example: None

Who Should Participate?

Program management (tactical thinkers), Program staff (operational experience). This activity is best kicked off with a small group together (in-person or virtually), and then moved to asynchronous work.

Length

X minutes

Activity Instructions

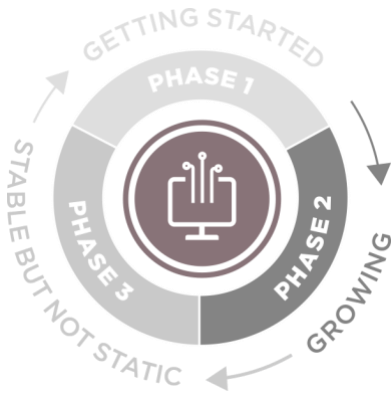
Part 1: Small group together

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?



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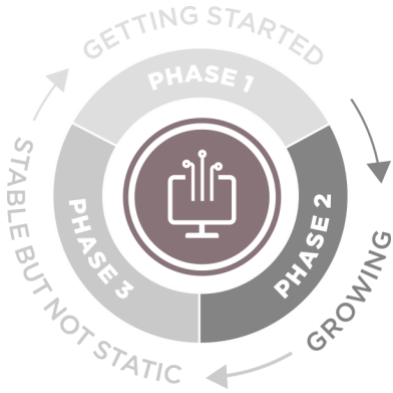


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- c. Data on organizational effort
 - i. What resources (engineering, support) does the feature require?
 - ii. What percentage of product use and/or revenue comes from the feature?
 - iii. What is the expected cost of keeping it vs. the potential 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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