

Product Experience Map Template

Formats: Markdown (canonical) | Word (DOCX) | PDF **Updated:** 2026-03-22 **License:** CC BY 4.0 -- Kate Makrigiannis / k8mak.com

A template for mapping a user's full lifecycle with your product -- from first hearing about it through becoming a power user or churning. Broader than a journey map (which follows one goal), an experience map captures the end-to-end relationship between a user and your product over time.

When to use this

You need to see the big picture of how users experience your product across their entire lifecycle. Use this when onboarding feels disconnected from core usage, when retention is dropping at a specific stage, or when your team is designing a new product and needs to think through the full arc from awareness to advocacy.

Setting the stage

Before mapping, align the team on scope and context.

```
## Product Experience Map: (Product name)

**Persona:** (Primary persona this map represents)
**Lifecycle scope:** (First awareness → [End state: Power user / Churn / Renewal])
**Map type:** Current state / Future state
**Date:** (YYYY-MM-DD)
**Team:** (Who created this map)
```

Key questions to answer before starting:

- What does "success" look like for this user? (Active daily user? Renewed subscriber? Completed a course?)
- What does "failure" look like? (Churned, abandoned, never activated?)
- Where does our product fit in this person's broader life or workflow?

Template

Experience maps typically have 5-7 lifecycle stages. Each stage captures the user's relationship with the product at that point.

Lane	Awareness	Evaluation	Onboarding	Core Usage	Advanced Usage	Renewal / Advocacy
User mindset	(What's driving them to look for a solution?)	(What questions are they trying to answer?)	(What do they need to get started?)	(What does daily/weekly usage look like?)	(What are they trying to do that the basics don't cover?)	(What would make them recommend this or leave?)

Lane	Awareness	Evaluation	Onboarding	Core Usage	Advanced Usage	Renewal / Advocacy
Actions	(How do they discover the product?)	(What do they try, compare, or test?)	(What steps do they take to set up?)	(What tasks do they perform regularly?)	(What features do they explore beyond basics?)	(What triggers a renewal decision or referral?)
Touchpoints	(Marketing, word of mouth, search, social)	(Website, demo, free trial, reviews)	(Welcome email, setup wizard, first-run experience)	(Core app screens, notifications, support)	(Advanced features, integrations, community)	(Renewal email, referral program, NPS survey)
Success criteria	(They know the product exists and what it does)	(They can explain why this product vs. alternatives)	(They've completed setup and achieved first value)	(They use the product regularly for their primary goal)	(They've adopted features that deepen engagement)	(They've renewed, referred, or become a champion)
Drop-off risks	(Never hears about it; message doesn't resonate)	(Confused by pricing; can't tell how it's different)	(Setup too complex; first-run doesn't show value fast enough)	(Gets stuck; hits a wall; finds a workaround outside the product)	(Advanced features are hidden or poorly documented)	(No compelling reason to stay; competitor makes a better offer)
Emotional arc	Curious / Skeptical	Cautious / Hopeful	Overwhelmed / Excited	Confident / Frustrated	Empowered / Stuck	Loyal / Indifferent
Opportunities	(How to improve discovery and messaging)	(How to make evaluation easier)	(How to accelerate time-to-first-value)	(How to reduce friction in daily use)	(How to surface advanced capabilities)	(How to earn advocacy and prevent churn)

Worked example: Project management SaaS tool

Persona: Alex, a team lead at a 50-person startup, managing 8 engineers **Lifecycle scope:** Hearing about the tool from a peer → Becoming the internal champion who rolls it out to the whole company

Lane	Awareness	Evaluation	Onboarding	Core Usage	Advanced Usage	Advocacy
User mindset	"We're outgrowing spreadsheets. There has to be a better way."	"Does this work for engineering teams? Is it worth switching from what we have?"	"I need my team using this by next Monday."	"I check this every morning. It's where my team lives."	"Can I automate our sprint reports? Can it connect to GitHub?"	"My VP asked what we use for project tracking. I'm recommending this."

Lane	Awareness	Evaluation	Onboarding	Core Usage	Advanced Usage	Advocacy
Actions	Peer mentions it in a Slack community; googles it	Signs up for free trial; imports one project; invites 2 teammates	Creates team workspace; sets up first board; imports backlog from old tool	Creates sprints, assigns stories, runs standups from the board, checks burndown	Sets up GitHub integration, creates custom dashboards, builds automation rules	Presents tool to VP; writes internal "how we use it" doc; refers to peers
Touchpoints	Slack community, Google search, product website	Free trial signup, product tour, comparison page	Welcome email, setup wizard, help docs, onboarding video	Sprint board, notifications, mobile app, weekly digest email	Integrations marketplace, API docs, community forum	Referral program, NPS survey, customer success check-in
Success criteria	Knows the product exists and associates it with "team project management"	Has used it for one real project and can compare to alternatives	Team is using it daily; first sprint planned and tracked	Replaced previous tool for daily work; team adoption at 80%+	3+ integrations active; custom reporting in use	Company-wide adoption; Alex recognized as internal champion
Drop-off risks	Message sounds like every other PM tool	Free trial is 7 days -- not enough time to migrate a real project	Import from old tool fails; team resists switching	Burndown chart doesn't match their sprint cadence; notifications are noisy	API docs are sparse; automations break silently	No recognition for internal advocacy; competitor offers migration discount
Emotional arc	Curious	Cautiously optimistic	Stressed but motivated	Confident	Empowered	Proud / Invested
Opportunities	Testimonials from engineering teams (not just generic "teams")	14-day trial; one-click import from Jira/Trello/Asana	Guided onboarding path for "engineering team lead" persona	Customizable notification rules; flexible sprint length settings	Integration health dashboard; automation templates gallery	Champion program; internal rollout kit; co-marketing

How this differs from a journey map

Dimension	Journey Map	Experience Map
Scope	One goal, one task flow	Full product lifecycle
Time span	Minutes to days	Weeks to months

Dimension	Journey Map	Experience Map
Focus	Completing a specific task	Evolving relationship with the product
Best for	UX improvements to a specific flow	Retention strategy, lifecycle marketing, product strategy

Use journey maps for depth on a specific interaction. Use experience maps for breadth across the full relationship.

Facilitator tips

- **Start with the ends.** Define what "success" and "failure" look like at the final stage before mapping the middle. This gives the team a clear destination.
- **Don't overload the stages.** 5-7 stages is the sweet spot. More than 7 and the map becomes a wall of text nobody reads.
- **Drop-off risks are the most actionable lane.** Every drop-off risk is a potential project. Prioritize them by severity and frequency.
- **The emotional arc tells a story.** If the arc trends downward from Onboarding onward, your product has a retention problem disguised as a feature problem.
- **Experience maps are strategy tools.** Don't use them for sprint planning. Use them for quarterly roadmap discussions, go-to-market planning, and retention strategy.

How did it go?

- ☐ The map covers the full lifecycle, not just the "happy path" stages
- ☐ Drop-off risks are specific and evidence-based
- ☐ Success criteria are defined for each stage (not assumed)
- ☐ The emotional arc is plausible and grounded in research
- ☐ Opportunities are captured for every stage, not just the ones that are broken
- ☐ The team can point to this map when making prioritization decisions

Part of the [k8 Agent Toolkit](#). Download other formats at k8mak.com/resources.