



Product Launch Plan Template

The Product Launch Plan is essentially a project plan that helps the product team identify the critical resources, activities, and timing required to carry out a product launch. It evolves from the early phases of *New Product Planning* and should be ‘just about’ final when the product investment (or the product ‘project’ investment) is authorized. With this context, it may be useful to synchronize the Launch Plan with the Business Case as well as the Marketing Plan for the product.

The Launch Plan will probably need to be updated as product design and development activities commence. As suggested, the Launch Plan can be prepared as an independent document or it can be embedded in the Marketing Plan and/or Business Case for the product. The reason for establishing these linkages is to avoid re-work and having to craft another lengthy document. You will use content from other documents to set the strategic context for the launch and describe the market environment (industry, competitors, and market segments).

The most important factor is to make sure that launch planning starts early enough so that the plan can be carried out on time, within budget, with enough forethought to achieve the goals set out in the plan.

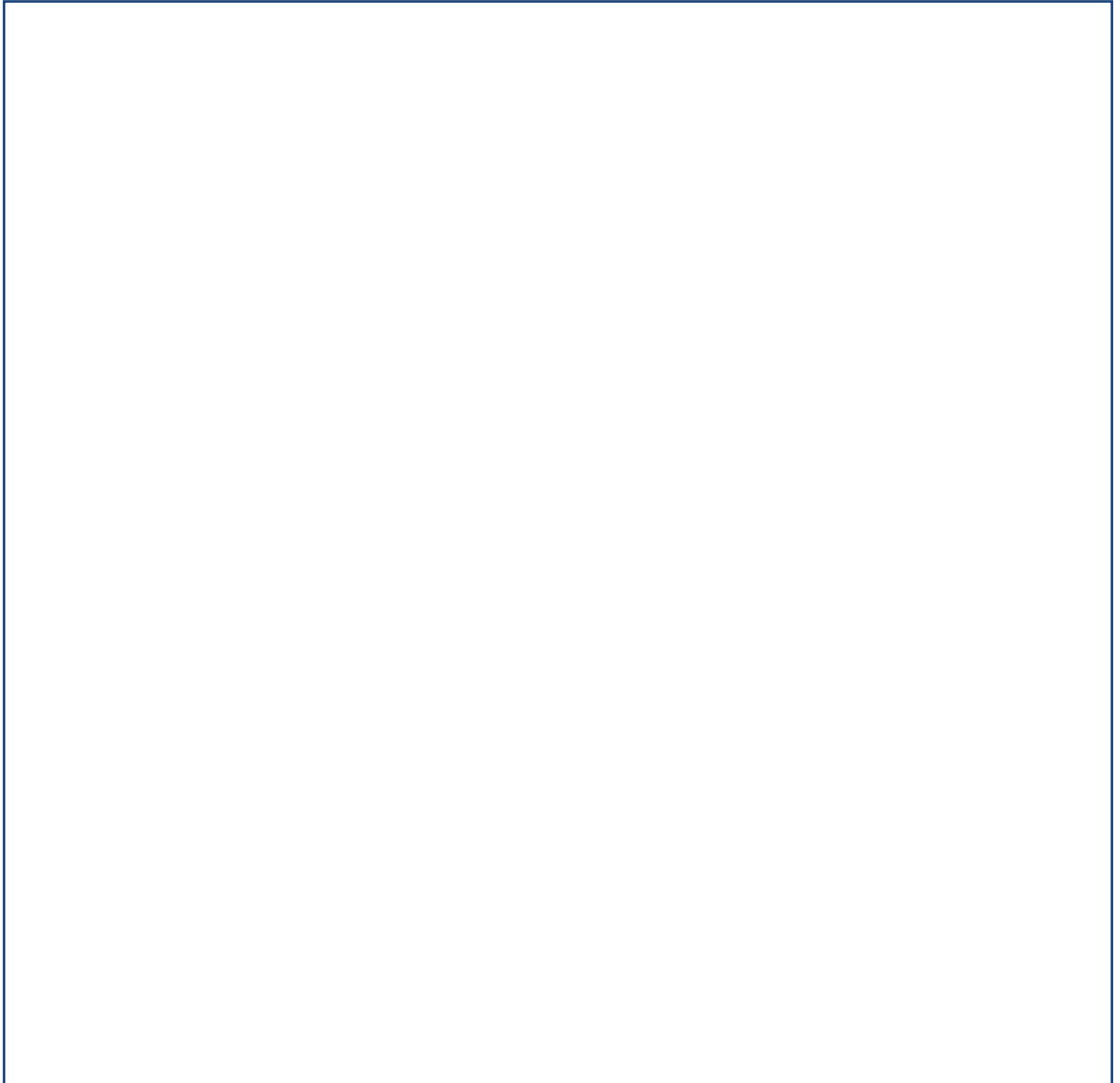
This template provides you with a context for planning and carrying out a product launch. Unlike other templates in this category, this template focuses on two dimensions: planning for the product launch and carrying out the product launch (executing).

STEP 1: Define What is Being Launched. Describe the Goal or Desired Outcome for the Launch

In this section, it should be clear as to whether this is a new product or enhancement to an existing product. The product description can be used here, as well, or it should be referred to in the appropriate planning documents. Further, the launch goal should be articulated such that its linkage to the overarching strategy can be clearly understood by all launch team members, and to management as well.

STEP 2: *Define the Market Window*

The plan should identify the time period when the product must be available for purchase by the intended customers. For some industries, a 'buying season' sets the stage. For others, a key industry event or trade-show may be the right time.



STEP 3: Identify the Launch Team and Launch Leader

The Launch Plan is a cross-functional initiative that requires a team leader (a product manager, product marketing manager, or other project manager). An executive sponsor or champion is important, especially if this is an extremely critical product launch, or, if the launch is being bundled in a launch of several products. The launch team membership list can use a table such as the one that follows:

Launch Team Role	Launch Team Name / Contact Information
Executive Sponsor	
Launch Team Leader	
Product Manager	
Marketing Manager	
Marketing Communications	
Creative Manager	
Market Testing Manager	
Legal / Compliance	
Manufacturing / Supply Chain	
Operations	
Finance	
Sales	
Intellectual Property	
Human Resources	
Customer Change Management	

STEP 5: *Establish Launch Metrics*

Launch metrics are important to ensure that the product can and will be sold. Sales related metrics are typically most important, although operational metrics will be important as well. Sales metrics might include the number of new sales leads generated, the time it takes from order to shipment, the number of new customers purchasing, the time it takes from getting an order to getting paid, the amount of each sale (to make sure the pricing is right), advertising effectiveness, etc.

Carrying out the Product Launch (Executing)

When the Business Case for a new product or an enhancement is approved, the design and development of the product commences and the launch team begins its work. These work activities are aligned with what was agreed to in the Launch Plan. The following activities, as a minimum, should be carried out during launch execution. You should also work closely with any existing launch organizations, processes or procedures used by your company, to ensure that your plan integrates well with the “normal way of doing business” in your company. Think of launch execution as a multi-step process:

Early phase launch execution:

- Meet with executive sponsor to make sure that you’re aligned on the launch plan
- Confirm the market window with the cross-functional launch team
- Synchronize all activities with Development (e.g., on testing or trials – timing, etc.)
- Review/update other important documents (Business Case, Marketing Plan, PRD, Value Proposition, Positioning, etc.)
- Align with any creative groups that need to be engaged

Carrying out the Product Launch (Executing)

Middle phase launch execution:

- Prepare sales training
- Assemble sales 'kits' or equivalent documents
- Arrange sales training dates
- Get marketing materials written
- Make arrangements for specific events
- Carry out market tests
- Get product codes
- Make sure the supply chain organization is carrying out its work
- Check factory production schedule (if needed)
- Assure that all regulatory or standards testing is completed
- Finalize pricing (if needed)
- Put together any demonstration kits or 'demo' packages
- Load ordering & billing systems
- Make sure that distributors or re-sellers are trained and ready
- Make arrangements for industry analyst meetings or PR
- Re-check documents
- Review status with executive champion
- Set the final announcement date

Carrying out the Product Launch (Executing)

Later phase launch execution:

- Carry out sales training
- Train customer service agents
- Train distributors and re-sellers
- Carry out internal announcements
- Distribute marketing materials
- Finalize market tests
- Verify that all regulatory approvals have been secured
- Assign product availability ratings
- Load up internal websites
- Turn up all operational support systems
- Carry out executive final go/no-go for the launch
- Make the announcement



For more information or further guidance, contact Sequent Learning Networks at contact@sequentlearning.com or 212.647.9100.