

Building a Technical Writing Roadmap: A Practical Planning Framework



Explicit roadmap replaces ad hoc writing and reactive ticket-chasing



Three layers: strategic goals, content portfolio, delivery cadence



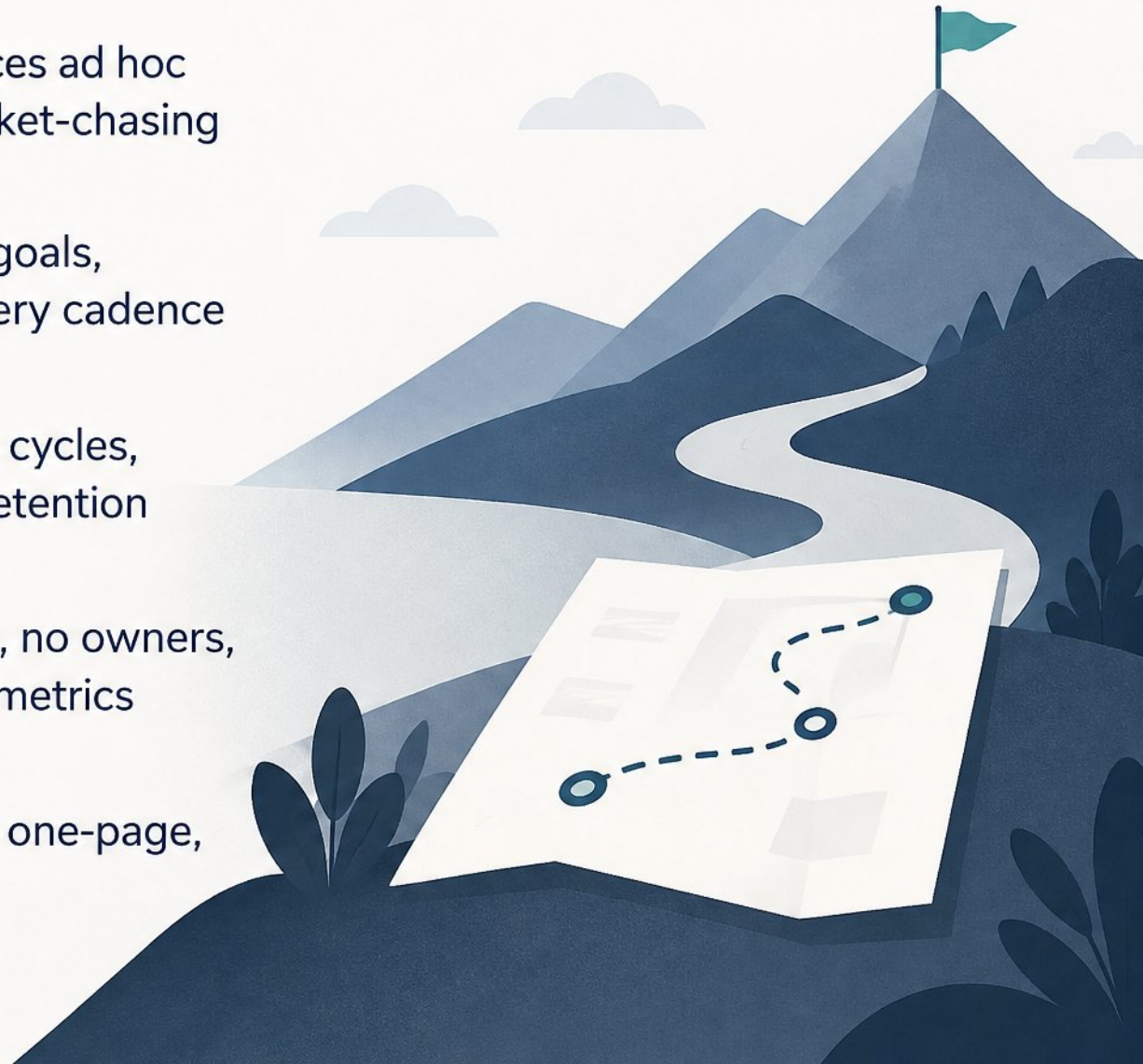
Align docs with release cycles, deflection, activation, retention



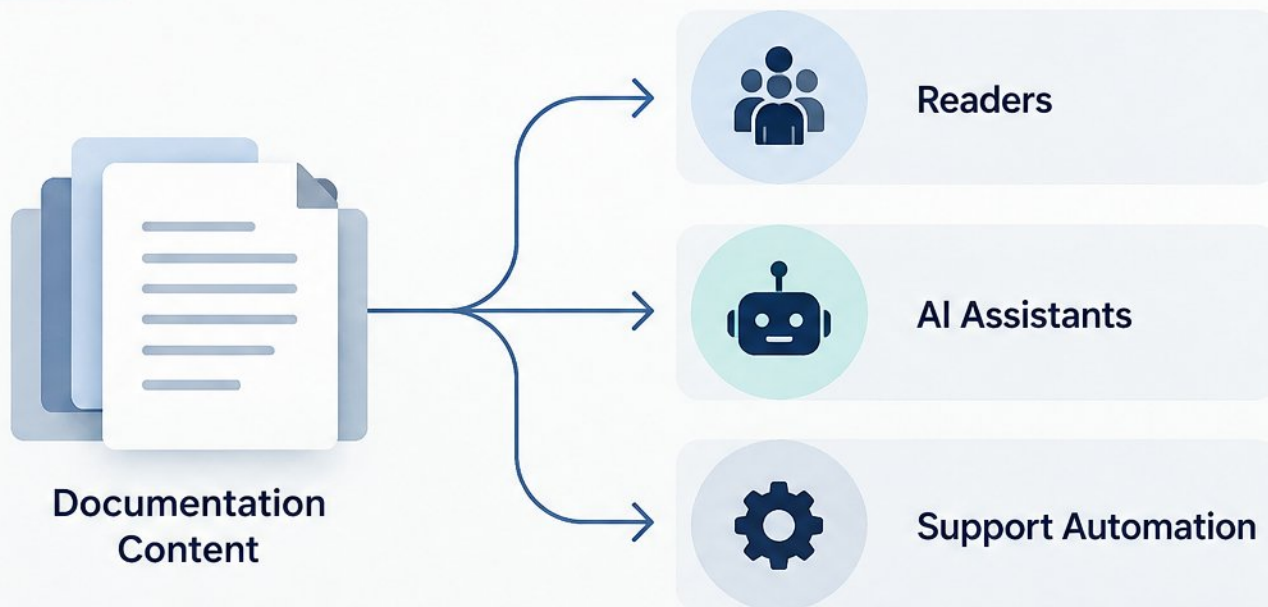
Failure modes: wish list, no owners, no review cadence, no metrics



Workshop goal: draft a one-page, defensible roadmap



Why Documentation Planning Breaks in 2026



One source.
Three consumers.
A more complex future.



Docs now serve three consumers at once: readers, AI assistants, and support automation



~35% of documentation discovery happens through AI-powered search



Keeping docs in sync with the product is the #1 reported challenge



Writer-to-PM ratios reach 1:11, so small teams cover huge surfaces



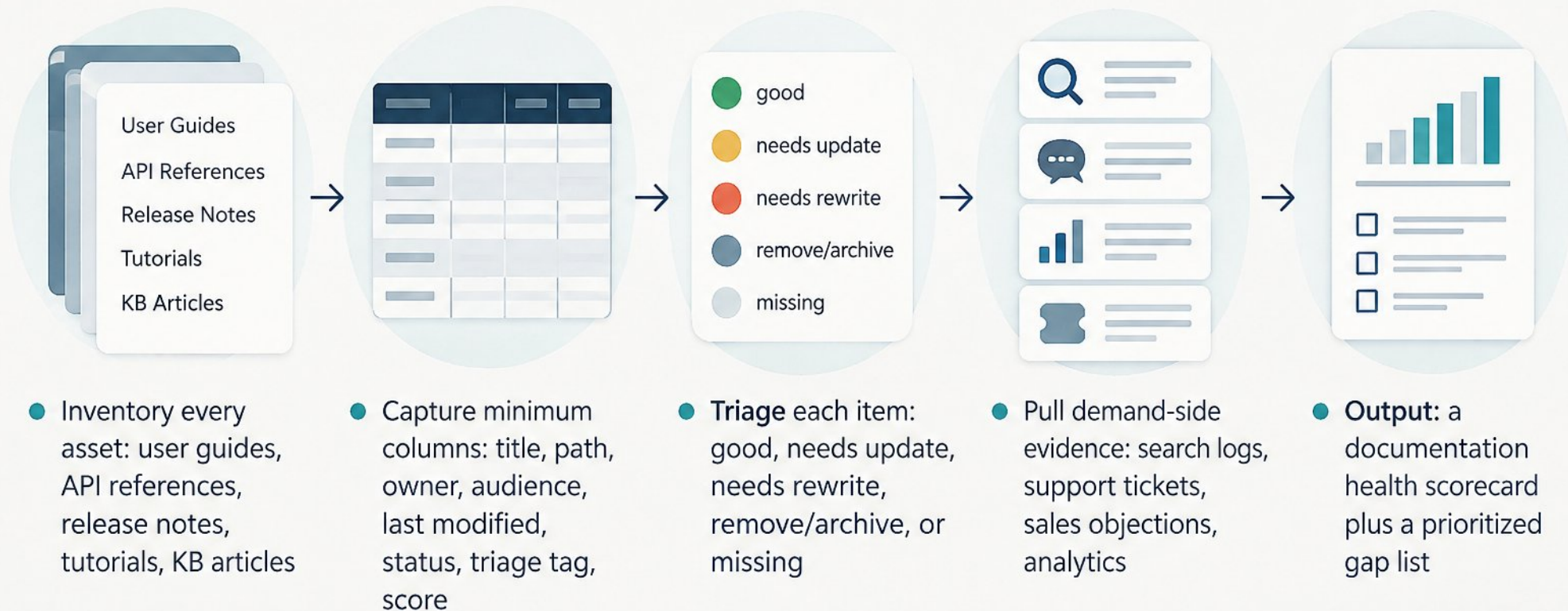
Only ~35% of the docs workforce is trained technical writers



Roadmap horizons: quarterly, half-year, or annual, matched to release velocity

Baseline Assessment: Where Documentation Stands Today

Take stock. Understand what's working. Identify what to improve.



Scoring Content Health at Scale



- Five dimensions: accuracy, completeness, consistency, clarity, navigation and structure
- Score each dimension 0–2; roll up into a total percentage
- Thresholds: 85–100% good, 60–84% needs update, below 60% needs rewrite
- Weight criteria by document type — API references, how-tos, release notes, READMEs fail differently
- Prioritize reviews by traffic, support-ticket correlation, last-updated date, and negative feedback

Content Health Scoring	
Dimension	Score (0–2)
Accuracy	○ ○ ○
Completeness	○ ○ ○
Consistency	○ ○ ○
Clarity	○ ○ ○
Navigation and structure	○ ○ ○
Total (percentage)	

Health Score Thresholds

85–100% good

60–84% needs update

below 60% needs rewrite



Document Types (weight criteria differently)



API references



how-tos



release notes



READMEs

Defining Audiences, Jobs, and Content Types



End users

“When I am an end user, I want to learn how to use it, so that I can be productive.”

Tutorials



Developers

“When I am a developer, I want to integrate it, so that I can build solutions.”

How-to guides



Admins

“When I am an admin, I want to configure it, so that I can manage it effectively.”

Reference



Partners

“When I am a partner, I want to understand its value, so that I can recommend it.”

Explanation



Internal teams

“When I am on an internal team, I want to understand the bigger picture, so that I can align and support others.”

Explanation

- Segment audiences: end users, developers, admins, partners, internal teams
- Job statement: when I am [persona], I want to [job], so that I can [outcome]
- Diátaxis four types: tutorials, how-to guides, reference, explanation
- Match content type to the reader's moment of need, not product structure
- Validate audience assumptions with research, support data, and search logs



Setting Goals and Choosing Documentation KPIs

ALIGN • MEASURE • IMPROVE

BETTER DOCS
BRIGHTER OUTCOMES



**Ticket
deflection**



**Re-contact
rate**



CSAT



**Search
success**



**Article
effectiveness**



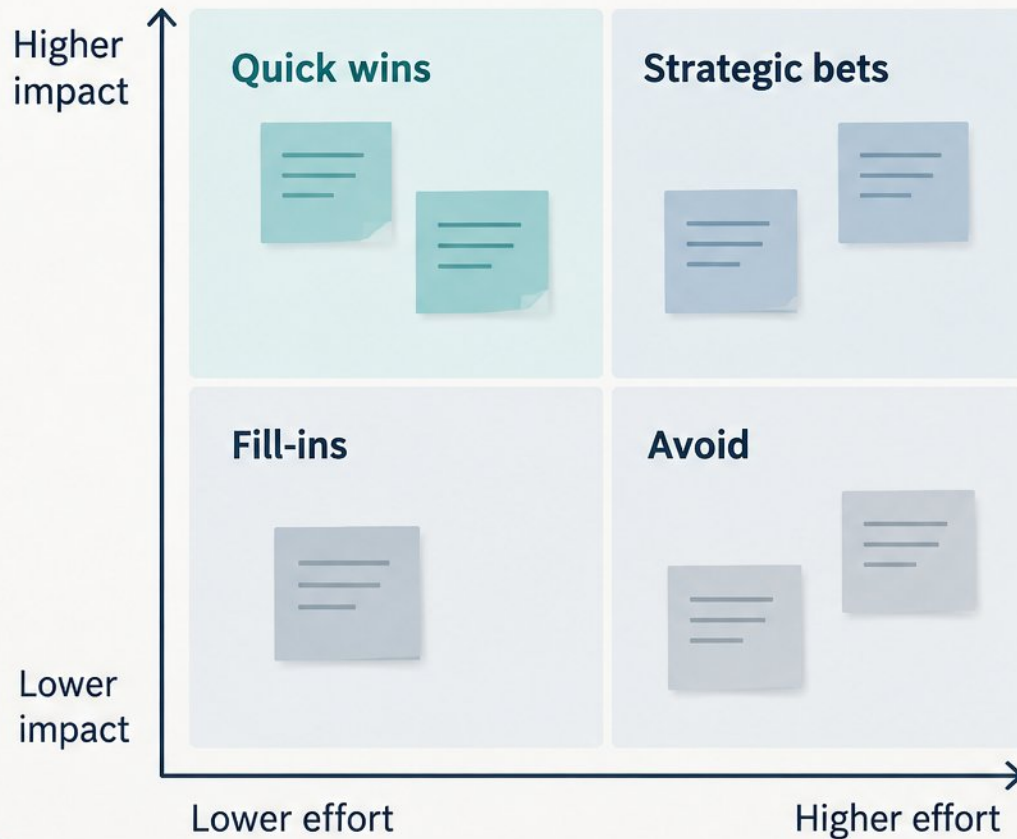
**Content
gap rate**



Freshness

- Translate business goals into docs outcomes: less support load, faster onboarding, higher adoption
- Core KPI set: ticket deflection, search success, article effectiveness, content gap rate, freshness
- Pair deflection with re-contact rate and CSAT so fewer tickets never hides unresolved issues
- Track leading indicators like time from product change to doc update alongside lagging metrics
- Freshness signals — stale articles, broken links, outdated screenshots — predict ticket spikes early
- Publish only three to five metrics; more than six becomes a dashboard nobody reads

Prioritization: Choosing What to Do First



RICE: $(\text{Reach} \times \text{Impact} \times \text{Confidence}) \div \text{Effort}$

Impact scale:

3 / 2 / 1 / 0.5 / 0.25

Confidence:

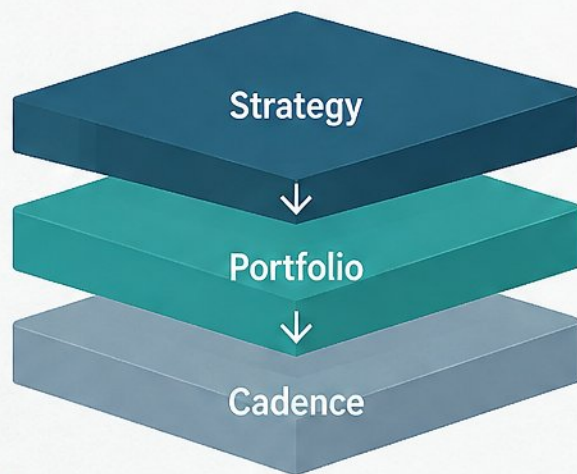
100% / 80% / 50%

- 1 Impact vs effort matrix: quick wins first, avoid low-impact high-effort work
- 2 Use MoSCoW when RICE deprioritizes critical compliance work
- 3 Balance new content against maintenance and debt reduction
- 4 Plan real capacity: one to two major writing projects per quarter
- 5 Document what you are consciously deferring, and why

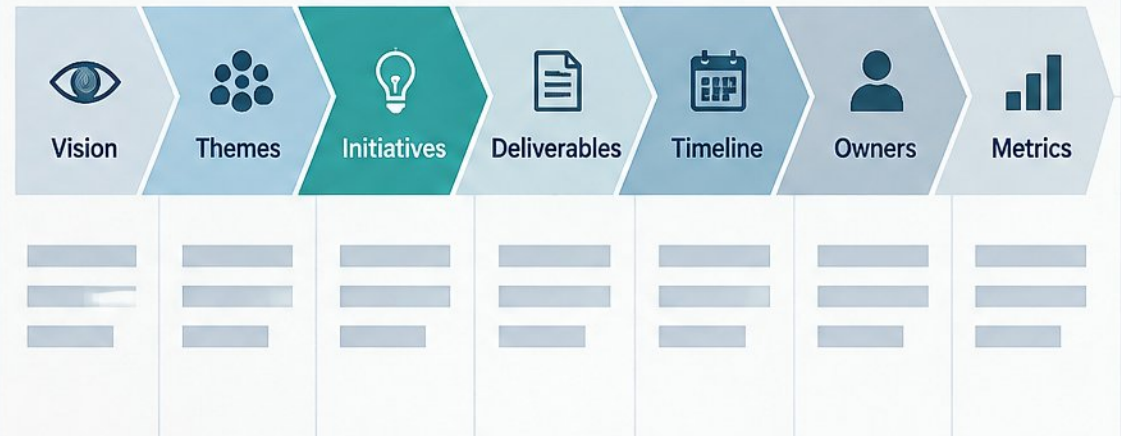
FOCUS
CREATES
PROGRESS

Roadmap Structure and Format

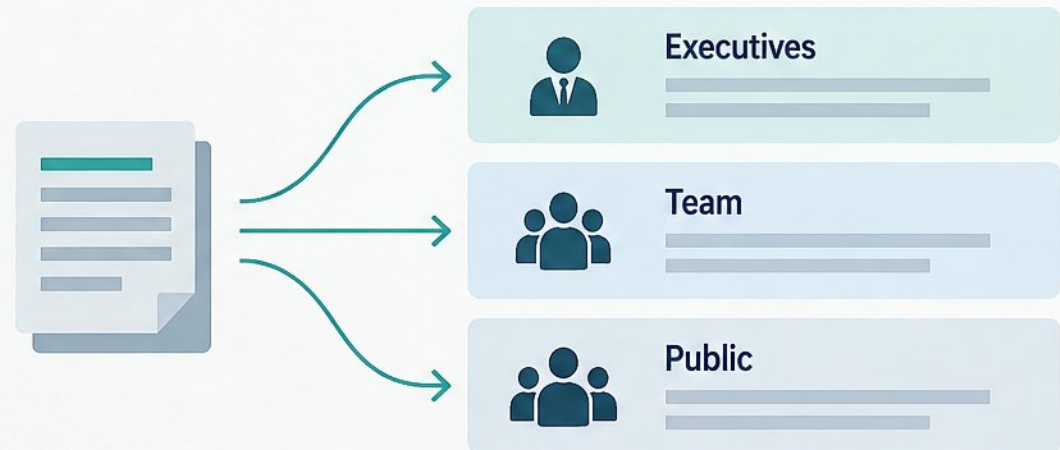
- Core components: vision, themes, initiatives, deliverables, timeline, owners, and metrics
- Now/next/later favors adaptability; quarterly milestones signal commitment
- Adapt one roadmap for three audiences: executives, team, and public
- Keep leadership version to one page; push task detail into the tracker
- Version the roadmap like a living document, with change control



Roadmap Skeleton

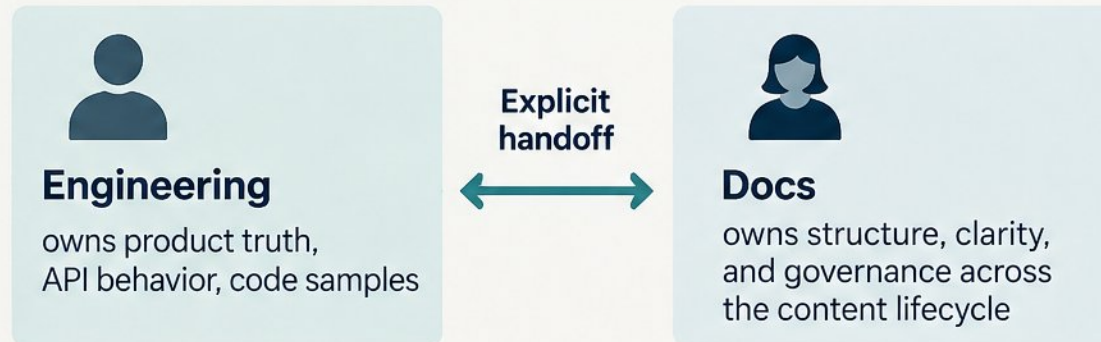


One Roadmap, Three Audiences

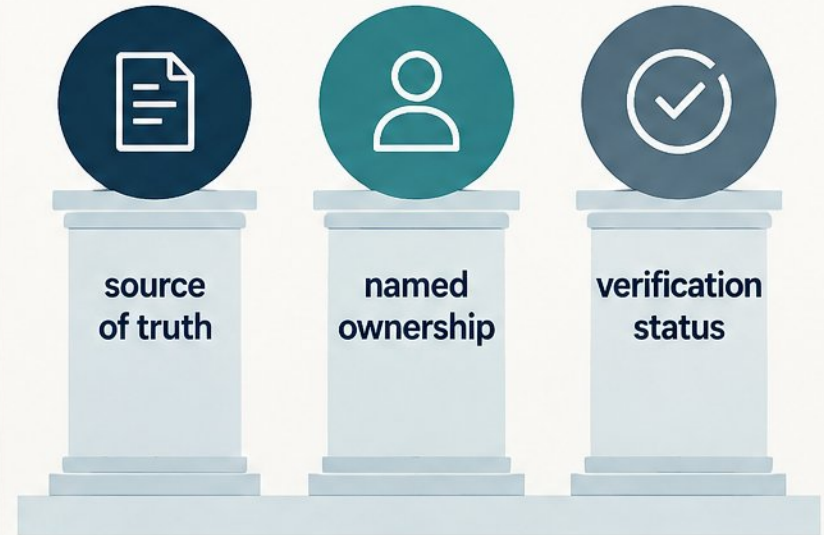


Contracts for Reliability and Teamwork

- Three pillars of the docs contract: source of truth, named ownership, verification status
- Every page carries one named human owner, never a team or channel
- Automation detects gaps and drafts; a human accepts, edits, or rejects every change
- Explicit handoff: engineering owns product truth, API behavior, code samples
- Docs owns structure, clarity, and governance across the content lifecycle
- Start small: one docs owner, one engineering reviewer, ten high-risk pages
- Capacity model 60-20-20: core work, identified projects, professional development



Three pillars of the docs contract



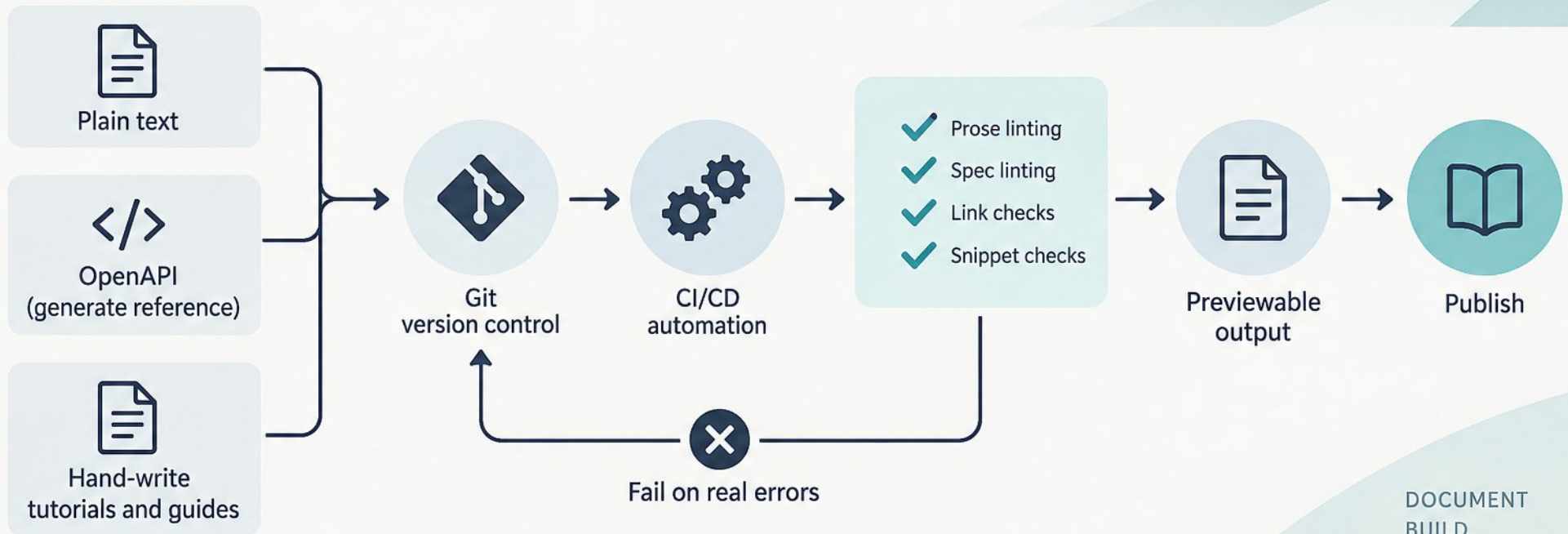
Capacity model 60-20-20



Executing the Roadmap: Docs-as-Code and Automation

- Three pillars: plain text, Git version control, CI/CD automation
- Ship docs changes in the same pull request as product changes
- Generate reference from OpenAPI; hand-write tutorials and guides
- Automate prose linting, spec linting, link and snippet checks
- Wire CI to fail on real errors and require previewable output
- Define a definition of done: no feature ships without reviewed docs

BETTER
PRODUCTS
THROUGH
GREAT DOCS



DOCUMENT
BUILD
SHIP TOGETHER

Tracking Progress, Reviewing, and Adapting



Report theme progress and outcomes, not just tasks done



Run monthly or quarterly reviews with product, support, engineering



Separate planned from unplanned work to protect credibility



Review health metrics: drift rate, PR cycle time, stale pages, time to publish



Use retrospectives to validate or revise roadmap goals



Turning the Roadmap into a 30/60/90-Day Action Plan

From priorities to progress, in three focused phases.



Every 61–90 goal needs a number, deadline, or named deliverable



Schedule 30-, 60-, and 90-day review checkpoints before week one ends



Keep the plan to one page; push task detail into a separate tracker



Map key stakeholders and needed resources across all three phases

Workshop: Drafting a One-Page Roadmap

ALIGN PLAN PRIORITIZE VALIDATE COMMUNICATE

1

Draft one page:

vision, themes, initiatives, owners, metrics

2

Score top five initiatives
with RICE or impact/effort

3

Attach three metrics;
name baselines or
establish them

4

Peer review:
credible targets, named
owners, real capacity,
deferrals

5

Close with a stakeholder
communication plan

One-Page Roadmap

Vision

Themes

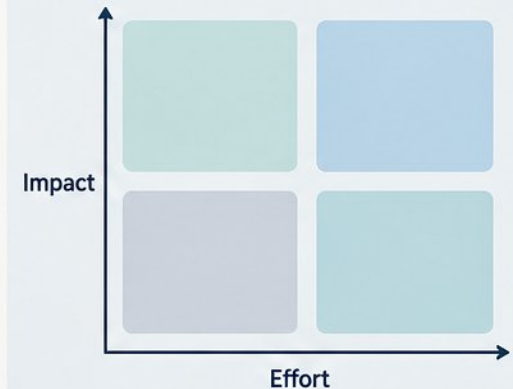
Top Five Initiatives (RICE or impact/effort)

Metrics (with baselines)

Owners

Next Steps / Communication Plan

Impact vs. Effort



Peer Review Criteria



Credible targets



Named owners



Real capacity



Deferrals

Risks, Dependencies, and Next Steps

Surface risks, align on dependencies, agree on contingencies, and move forward together.

CLEARER
PLANS
STRONGER
OUTCOMES



Roadmap Risks

- Roadmap risks: wish-list scope, no single-threaded owner, no review cadence, no baseline data



Dependencies

- Map dependencies: SME availability, API spec stability, localization, tooling migrations



Contingency Triggers

- Set contingency triggers: which unplanned work justifies pulling scope, and who decides



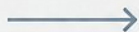
Re-score Priorities

- Re-score priorities quarterly — reach, confidence, and effort estimates shift with the product

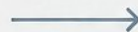
Next Steps



Complete
the health scorecard



Lock top ten
initiatives



Name one
governance owner

Named Owner

Accountability turns plans into progress.

OWNERSHIP + VERIFICATION



PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform



Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/2bbadb45/public