

Customer Voice: Problems To Be Solved (PTBS) Framework

Context: As the number of paid and prospective customers grows at [Acme], it will help you sort out signal from noise and better prioritize efforts to have a shared framework for customer requests between your Product/ Design/ Engineering (PDE) and (GTM) Go-To-Market teams. Without a suitable framework, customer requests tends to be anecdotal and incomplete and you run the risk of resourcing low-impact work. The below is a system we used at Intercom to create a shared language for customer requests between PDE & GTM, and helped us better prioritize engineering efforts and manage customer expectations.

Sample PTBS Framework

PTBS	Detail	Blocker/ Hurdle/ Nice to Have	Customer (s) requesting	\$ARR Impact	DACI
Customers aren't able report on magic email links and their impact on signups in common BI/ Analytics tools	Customers who use analytics and BI tools are looking to report on magic link usage and tie this to signup completion over time. A more robust Tableau integration has come up in recent weeks.	Hurdle	Plaid, Brex	\$300k	D - Julianna A - Reed C - Pete Est Date: Q3 2017
Upmarket customers require additional compliance certifications to buy Stytc	Enterprise InfoSec teams require ISO 27001	Blocker	IBM, JPMC, Workday	\$1,000+	D - Reed A - Julianna C - Pete Est Date: ???

Notes

- **“Problems to be solved” should be laid out in a way that describes the problem from a customer perspective instead of a feature request.** Instead of “metadata filtering on email magic links” being the request, your GTM team should add “Customers want more granular reporting into email magic links to understand common user trends.” This helps all parties better understand the impact of a problem to a customer’s business and avoid the “building a faster horse” fallacy
- **Adding the blocker/ hurdle/ nice to have and Customers requesting column will help you prioritize work that will actually unblock deals.** Also, this keeps GTM teams honest if they’re pushing for a one-off request.
- **Adding a “DACI” (or RACI) column with rough timing will help with accountability and ownership for different projects, and will help GTM teams manage customer expectations.** In early days both PDE and GTM team members tend to underestimate the scope and turnaround time for this work, so encouraging realistic timelines and expectation-setting is a good habit to get into. This doesn’t have to be DACI, but having some system to track ownership and progress is important at your stage.

- **There will be more questions and conversations around feature requests, and debate around prioritization - all of which is healthy.** At Intercom we had a cadence of GTM teams collecting and updating these requests weekly, and leadership from PDE and GTM teams meeting quarterly to discuss these requests in greater detail and re-prioritize roadmap as a result. This was a pretty heavy meeting and was at a time when we were 300-350 FTEs, it might be better for Stytlch to do something more lightweight and have a standing monthly meeting to review this in the near term.
- **Adding Gong video links to customer calls will increase the PDE team's understanding and empathy for customers (and your GTM team).** Encourage your sales team to record snippets of calls that describe customer requests and catalog them in the PTBS reporting, this is incredibly helpful and will decrease the amount of pre-work needed to wireframe and start work on different requests.