

# Taking Products to Market

Code for America delivers value today through services and solutions. Included in some of those solutions are software that could, under the correct circumstances, be sold as a product offering (by CfA, a partner or other).

Running the play of developing a product for market requires thinking about the process and deciding what the size of the endeavor is. This document is meant to provide an overview of what to think about, how to think about it, and some examples of how to execute it. Scale the suggestions to the project at hand. Use what works and ignore what does not. Share your work broadly and seek continuous input.

## Selling a Product = Mini-business

So, you've got this thing (idea, code snippet, Fellowship project, identified customer need) and you think that lots of people/governments/citizens could benefit from it. What next? These steps are meant to be a broad checklist of what to think about and do, and in what order. Sample documents are available below and in the "Undertaking Chime" document graveyard.

- Conduct **customer research** (who needs this, what are they using now, how much are/will they paying, what is their pain).
- **Make a plan** with clear success criteria ("I am building X, selling it to these customers, solving this problem, competing with these other products, with a goal of XX customer/XX revenue by YY).
- Do more **research** with the plan.
- **Iterate your idea.**
- **Decide if it makes sense** to proceed (are customers saying "if you build this I will buy it"). If yes, commit to staying the course through a specific evaluation point/milestone.
- Decide on project management, communications, code management and other **systems**.
- Create a **project plan** (actions, owners, timeframe, milestones).
- Create a **prototype/alpha** of the product.
- Get **user feedback** on the alpha.
- **Iterate your product** based on user feedback. Continuously.
- Create **simple financials** (3 page spreadsheet - Expenses, Revenue, Summary).
- Create a **competitive landscape** graph/table.
- Create a **4-6 page market summary/business plan**.
- **Pitch the plan to power** (bosses, investors, stake-holders).
- Secure **funding and/or support** to get to a logical evaluation point (2nd milestone, end of first round of customer testing and validation, etc)
- **Iterate your plan.**

- **Decide if it makes sense** to proceed. If yes, commit to staying the course through launch.
- Write the **full business plan** (more detail, more grounding, complete financials)
- **Hire/engage resources** for completing the product (engineering).
- Create a **product roadmap** (depending on dev style, this will have varying levels of specificity).
- **Build the product**, continuously engaging with customers to validate the direction & deliverable.
- **Hire/engage resources** for selling the product (sales, marketing, customer success).
- Expand on the **Go To Market plan** (marketing and sales).
- **Create a 30-60-90 day sales/customer acquisition plan** (be specific, who are the first NN customers you are going after, what are their names/contact info).
- **Identify potential partners** (technology, govt, marketing).
- Create the **legal paperwork** (license, terms and conditions for use, partner agreements, trademarks, maintenance and service agreement, etc).
- Create **branding** (logo, fonts, style guide).
- Create **marketing/visibility** (website, social media, blog).
- Conduct additional **user testing**/beta program. Include sales and customer success in this testing.
- Write **product documentation/help/support**.
- Create **onboarding and support** strategy/program for customers (sales & customer success involved).
- Identify and **cultivate launch partners** (X number of customers who will participate in your launch activities)
- **Launch planning** (press, event, online/website launch, etc).
- **Launch** the product.
- Selling commences. **Secure the first customers**.
- **Onboard** the first customers. **Learn** from the experience. **Improve** the process.
- Relentlessly **support your customers**. **Gain insight** into the product and the process.
- **Evaluate success against clearly articulated success metrics**.
- **Iterate** the product and process.
- **Decide if it makes sense** to proceed.

## Guides, Templates, Sample documents

- [User Research Guide](#) (general guideline on conducting User Research)
- [Customer Research](#) (folder from Chime project)
- [Top Down & Bottoms Up Financial Modeling](#)
- [High Level Plan](#) (Chime)
- [Project Timeline](#) (Chime)
- [Market Summary](#) (Chime - one version of a short business plan)
- [Alpha Product \(Screen Shots\)](#) - Chime
- [Hiring](#) - esp engineers
- [Beta Program Outline](#) (draft form - included as example)
- [User Survey](#) (results)
- [Competitive Landscape](#) (incomplete feature comparison doc -included as example)