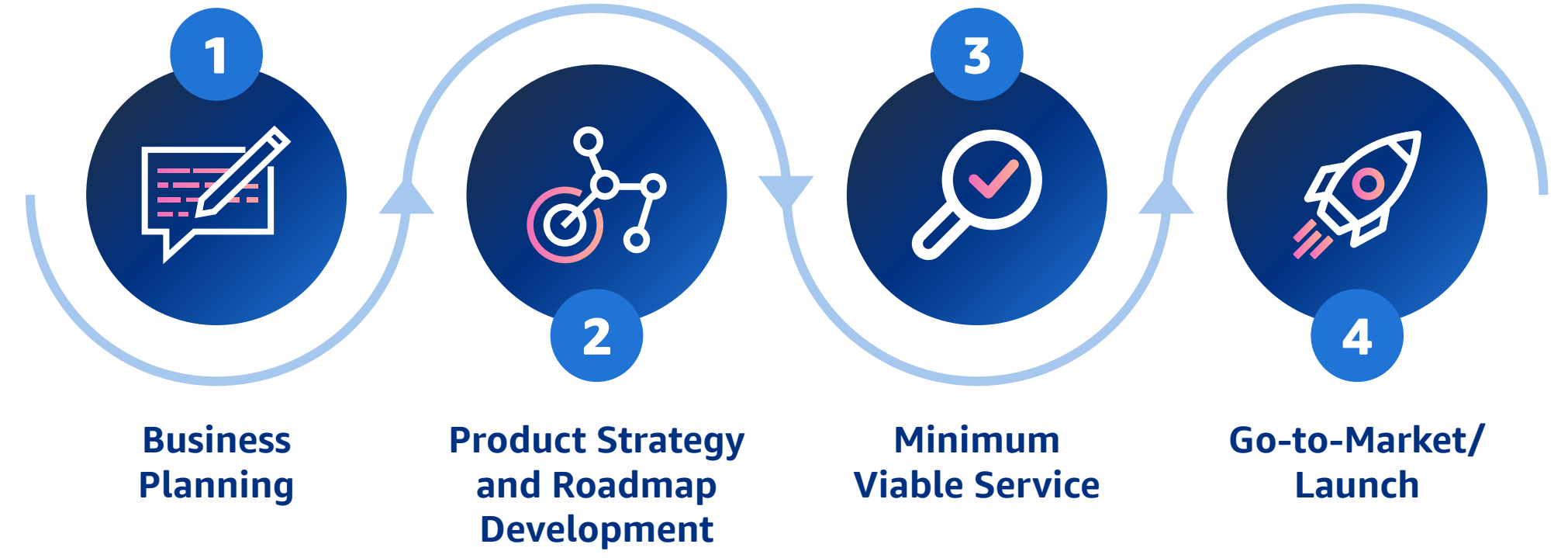# The Journey to SaaS

Whether you're taking the first steps toward planning your Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) journey, or about to launch your first product, this guide is designed to help drive your journey as you build, migrate, secure, and optimize SaaS solutions on Amazon Web Services (AWS). Use this roadmap to identify which stage you're in and review the corresponding actions, motivations, questions, pain points, and AWS SaaS Factory resources. To learn more about the **AWS SaaS Factory program**, subscribe to **AWS SaaS Insights**.

1 Business Planning → **2** Product Strategy and Roadmap Development → **3** Minimum Viable Service → **4** Go-to-Market/Launch

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1 Business Planning

Actions	Motivations	Questions	Pain Points	Resources
• Create unique buyer and user personas based on target market segments	• Desire to inform tiering strategy with SaaS customer personas	• Is our future portfolio SaaS-only or just SaaS-sometimes?	• Lack of funding	• AWS SaaS Factory Insights Hub
• Complete competitive analysis (inc. pricing, market penetration)	• Financial model should provide funding justification and path to profits	• When will the growth and financial benefits offset the cost and effort?	• Limited time and resources for meaningful research and development	• SaaS Competency Partners
• Prepare pro forma budgets (design/build/sell/operate)	• Ensure budgets and commercial plan include SaaS-specific attributes	• How will this impact existing on-prem customers? Will they migrate to SaaS?	• Lack of skilled resources to design/build/sell/secure/operate	• AWS Cloud Adoption Framework
• Prepare commercial projections with SaaS-specific revenue metrics	• Capture business requirements to inform architecture decisions	• Do we need Systems Integrators (SIs) for staff augmentation?	• Ambiguous or unrealistic profitability objectives	• Forrester TEI Study: The Partner Opportunity For Building SaaS On Amazon Web Services
• Assess the SaaS-specific experience of existing in-house resources	• Determine capabilities to build in-house or outsource	• How will we fund the up-front investments required?	• Lack of relevant benchmarking in alignment with tiering strategy	• AWS Executive Briefing Center
• Explore training opportunities and partner benefit programs for SaaS	• Size the total addressable market	• What security certifications, standards, and regulations should be considered based on customer base?	• Executive friction, confusion, or conflict over future SaaS posture	• Whitepaper: The Journey to SaaS
• Survey focus group	• Understand potential customer lifetime value (CLV)	• Are there information security standards or management frameworks that could give us a competitive edge?	• Verticalized competition with more agility and faster time-to-market	• GSCA Program Overview and GSCA Partners
• Align business practices with security compliance objectives	• Accelerate growth into new markets and meet security requirements		• Evolving regulatory requirements and requirements unique to geography	

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2 Product Strategy and Roadmap Development

Resources	Pain Points	Questions	Motivations	Actions
• APN Innovation Sandbox Credits	• Lack of data from customers and prospects to inform feature design	• What does Product Market-fit look like for each unique tier? Will there be a free trial tier?	• Enable agility and efficient release cycles	• Design services to enable value recognition experiences for customers
• AWS Training and Certification	• Missing feedback loops between technical and business teams	• What is the customer expectation for the onboarding experience?	• Understand the natural boundaries (functional, performance, isolation, etc.) of tenant profiles	• Package services and features in alignment with tiering model
• AWS SaaS Boost	• Few resources to guide research and development (R&D), point of contacts (POCs), and minimum viable service (MVS) design and development	• How will we design and measure value experience and time-to-value?	• Map a frictionless, automated, and standardized onboarding experience	• Build a Customer Journey Map for each tier of service, spanning the customer lifecycle
• Blog: Building a Multi-Tenant SaaS Solution Using AWS Serverless Services	• Insufficient tools for builders and operators	• How will we approach the multi-tenant aspects of our solution?	• Prioritize observability—fuel a plan to capture tenant-level activity and costs	• Define feature/service roadmap, set time-bound release cycle objectives
• Blog: Building a Multi-Tenant SaaS Solution Using Amazon EKS	• Ambiguous product release cycle timelines	• Will we be able to correlate tenant-level activity with the costs we will incur?	• Identify KPIs that reflect agility, innovation, and operational efficiency	• Profile security, geographic, and data protection requirements
• Whitepaper: SaaS Architecture Fundamentals	• Too much focus on feature, function and not enough on value design	• Should there be consumption-based options in our pricing model?	• Ensure that cost-effective architecture decisions are made	• Identify relevant unit economics to inform cost models and pricing model
	• Observability challenges—performance, product adoption	• How do we know that customers truly want to buy these features and services?		• Create analytics views to observe tenant-level resource consumption
		• How will we measure agility?		

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3 Minimum Viable Service

Actions	Motivations	Questions	Pain Points	Resources
• Launch with representative participation from all tiers	• Validate hypothetical forecasts (e.g., costs, resources, time-to-value)	• Who should participate and what features should be included in this release?	• Inadequate representation from key market segments	• SaaS Lens for the AWS Well-Architected Framework
• Measure tenant-level resource consumption patterns, correlate these with costs	• Realistic assessment of organizational capabilities	• Can the participants recognize value from the MVS experience?	• Friction, slow value recognition and time-to-value, inaccurate cost models	• AWS Data Lab
• Solicit and evaluate customer feedback	• Identify risks, bugs, and weaknesses/potential points-of-failure	• How do we measure tenant-level resource consumption and costs?	• Lack of visibility and observability into tenant-level resource consumption	• AWS Application Cost Profiler
• Formalize pricing, packing model, tiering strategy for General Availability (GA)	• Demonstrate ability to land onboard customers and drive successful adoption	• Do we have the right tools and operational process in place?	• Operational capabilities are incomplete	
• Test product-led-growth (PLG) frameworks	• Establish product adoption KPIs that indicate risk and opportunity	• How will we capture data and feedback from participants?	• Too much hand-holding and manual tasks required to integrate/onboard	
• Draft playbook for customer success and professional services	• Finalize organizational structure before GA release	• What goals should we set for GA release?	• MVS features unable to deliver measurable value experiences to customers	
• Measure operational performance		• What compromises should we make for the MVS relative to the GA release?		

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4 Go-to-Market/Launch

Resources	Pain Points	Questions	Motivations	Actions
• AWS Marketplace	• Misaligned compensation incentives, or conflicted by incentives to sell legacy solutions	• What lessons were learned during the MVS stage?	• Establish commercial and operational frameworks for customer acquisition and/or migration	• Define, land, expand, and renew sales and marketing motions
• AWS Partner Marketing Central	• Ineffective sales enablement resources	• How will we meet new business targets in Year One of GA?	• Develop profitable sales motivations spanning the entire customer lifecycle	• Set compensation models to reward adoption and renewal
• Marketing Development Funds	• Inadequate demand and lead generation	• Should we sell this in the AWS Marketplace?	• Recoup initial investments (payback) and realize economies-of-scale quickly	• Finalize budget for customer acquisition, expansion, and retention
• AWS ISV Accelerate	• Ad hoc discounting allowed to hit quarterly quotas, leading to low-profitability	• How can we incentivize and reward successful product adoption and renewals?	• Ensure SaaS-specific forecast accuracy	• Update the Customer Success playbook and Customer Journey Map
	• Inefficiency in sales motions and channel partnerships, or lack of experience selling SaaS	• Will product design and development teams deliver enough new features to support cross-sell quota?	• Close profitable deals with customers most likely to succeed	• Develop product marketing campaigns emphasizing value recognition
	• GA solution not delivering on value proposition promised in demo or marketing collateral	• When should we allow pricing discounts, and for whom?		• Create pre-sales qualification checklist
				• Determine the role of the channel partners