Product Optimization Strategies

Summary Results  April, 2012
Observations and Conclusions

- A third of responders report that **keeping track of changes** and **making sense of informational input** are top challenges in planning & delivering products.

- Responders rely most on Microsoft Office/Project to manage their product planning. 70% report that the tools they use have some sort of positive impact in managing the planning process.

- In term of getting products that customers will buy to market, responders report **competing interests** & **incorporating customer/market preferences** as their top challenges.

- Failure to meet the challenges of getting products to market takes several forms for responders – no one dominates. Poor product quality is the least common. 60% of responders have recently had some sort of high visibility product failure.

- More than half of responders report that **reducing cost-to and time-to market** is the most important thing in terms of achieving ROI goals.

- Competitive pressure to be a technology leader & length/frequency of release cycles contribute most to complexity of product delivery efforts.
In March 2012, Gatepoint Research invited 1412 selected executives to participate in a survey themed *Product Optimization Strategies.* Candidates were invited via email and 100 executives have participated to date.

- 68% of responders are at the Director Level or above with 21% at VP level.
- 75% of responders are executives working for companies generating at least $500 million annual revenue
- 100% of responders participated voluntarily; none were engaged using telemarketing.
What best characterizes the challenges you face when planning and delivering products?

- Keeping track of all changes; making sense of information that informs the product (requirements, ideas, customer and market demands) [34%]
- Having too many products in planning, not yet delivered [24%]
- Ensuring management has visibility into changes, at any time (and making sure priorities are honored from start to finish) [21%]
- Keeping products aligned with the company’s strategy [13%]
- Communicating to the product team the impact of changes (i.e., new, good ideas, shifts in market needs) [9%]

A third of responders report that keeping track of changes and making sense of informational input are top challenges in planning & delivering products.
How much do you rely on the following to manage your product planning process?

- Microsoft Office/Project: 3.41
- Defect tracking: 2.95
- Homegrown/Internally developed software: 2.84
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM): 2.40
- Requirements Management Software (RMS): 2.33

**Responders rely most on Microsoft Office/Project to manage their product planning.**
How would you rate the impact of these tools in terms of effectively managing the planning process?

- They have a slightly positive impact: 44%
- They have a significantly positive impact: 26%
- Hard to tell if they have any impact at all: 10%
- They have a neutral impact: 8%
- We don’t really use them in the planning process: 8%
- They have a slightly negative impact: 3%

70% of responders report that the tools they use for planning have some sort of positive impact in managing the planning process.
What significantly challenges getting a product that customers will buy to market?

- Collaborating between too many teams and competing interests: 25%
- Incorporating customer and market preferences: 21%
- Balancing top-down plans with development’s processes: 19%
- Too many voices prioritizing features: 13%
- Appealing to sales prospects’ demands: 11%
- Geographic dispersement of resources used: 11%

In term of getting products that customers will buy to market, responders report competing interests & incorporating customer/market preferences as their top challenges.
What can failure look like if the above challenges aren’t countered?

Failure to meet the challenges of getting products to market takes several forms for responders – no one dominates. Poor product quality is the least common.
Has there been a high visibility product failure recently (not delivered on time, not selling)?

- Yes, but mild/tolerable: 31%
- Yes, but being fixed: 23%
- No: 22%
- No, but nearly so: 18%
- Yes, devastating: 7%

60% of responders have had some sort of high visibility product failure.
Which of the following are most important for achieving a positive ROI?

- Reducing cost-to or time-to market: 52%
- Improving planning and budget approval cycles: 24%
- Reducing # of market failures: 15%
- Reducing # of products that are killed before delivery: 8%

More than half of responders report that reducing cost-to and time-to market is the most important thing in terms of achieving ROI goals.
How does each of the following contribute to the complexity of your product delivery efforts?

- Competitive pressure to be a technology leader: 3.23
- Length/frequency of release cycles: 3.16
- # of releases/upgrades to accommodate change: 3.00
- Short market window: 2.45

Rate 1 to 5: 1 = minimal impact on complexity; 5 = Greatly adds complexity

Competitive pressure to be a technology leader & length/frequency of release cycles contribute most to complexity of product delivery efforts.
What is your organization’s propensity to try new approaches?

Nearly 40% of responders report that their organizations are either early adopters or fast followers when trying new approaches.
68% of responders are at Director level or above.
75% of responders are employed by companies with annual revenues exceeding $500 million.
About Accept

Accept Software provides companies with product planning software that enables them to accommodate constant change, coordinate teams and manage product scope, no matter how large or complex, enabling them to align their products to market opportunities.

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SimplyDIRECT helps you identify, engage and qualify prospects with maximum precision through custom database building and survey-based lead generation into your target accounts. We specialize in account penetration by developing qualified warm opt-in leads from Director, Vice President and C-level decision makers.

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