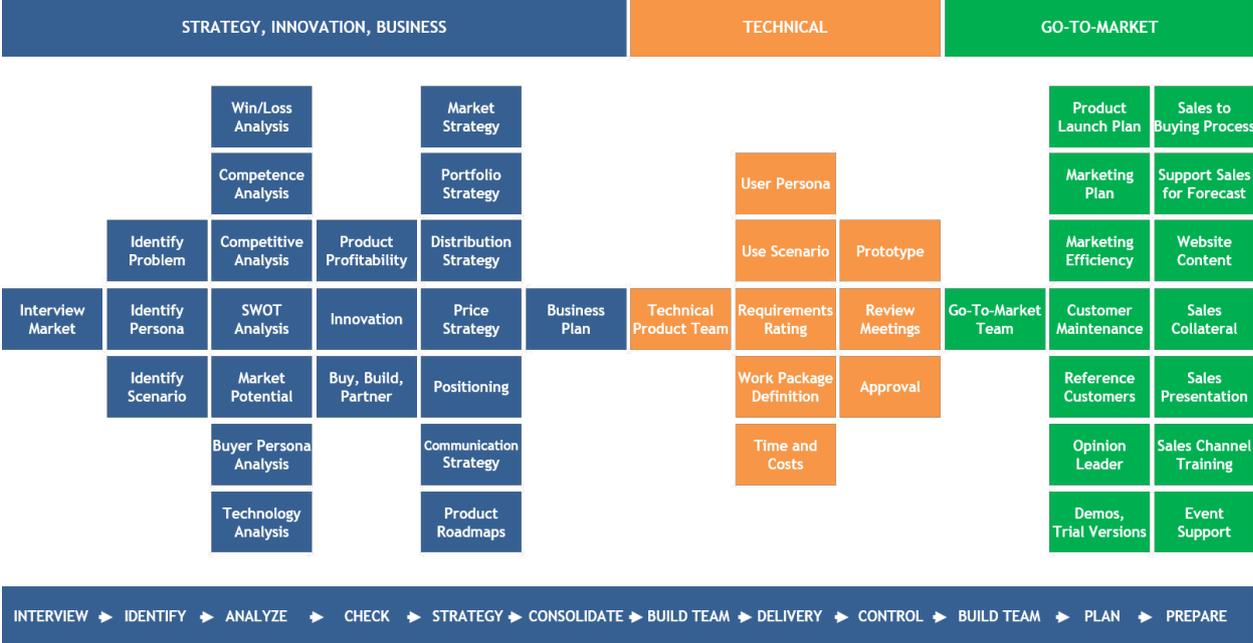


# Strategic Product Management

according to Open Product Management Workflow™



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Congratulation and thank you!

You are reading, the world's most read book on  
Strategic Product Management.

I wish you personally much success in Product Management.



**Frank Lemser**

Many thanks also to you.

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## PREFACE

This book is designed to help you understand your everyday work as a Product Manager, to show you the individual work steps, the need for them and their relationships with each other so that you become a professional manager of your product.

In order for you and your colleagues to have a common understanding and ensure that you as a team also speak the same language, we would be very happy for you to hand this book around free of charge.

This book will be used as a textbook within the framework of our Product Management training, in which we teach you in accordance with the Open Product Management Workflow™ method and according to the teaching principles of the Flipped Classroom.

The following textbooks are available:

- Strategic Product Management
- Technical Product Management
- Successful Go-To-Market

[www.pro-productmanagement.com/books](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/books)

## DOWNLOAD OPEN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT WORKFLOW™

So that you are always able to understand all the steps, it is recommended that you download Open Product Management Workflow™, print it out and add it to your learning materials.

You can download Open Product Management Workflow™ here:

[www.pro-productmanagement.com/opmw](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/opmw)

## USE FOR FREE - PRODUCT MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD FOR JIRA - SOFTWARE

As an additional teaching aid, you can use the Product Management Dashboard for JIRA, the world's most widely used software for complete comprehensive product management, free of charge for 3 months.

You can **start immediately**, as the product is available as a cloud version and local installation.

The software provides you with an even simpler, step-by-step, practice-oriented traceability of the course material, as it is also based on the Open Product Management Workflow™ and contains a complete sample product.

After learning, you can continue to use the software for daily work.

You can learn more about the Product Management Dashboard at the end of the book or on the website:

[www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software)

## THE COURSE TEACHING METHODS - FLIPPED CLASSROOM

“The course has taught me a lot, I’m impressed by the Open Product Management Workflow method and I now really have to have more interviews with customers to practise this and much more.” This is what participants have said again and again over the last few years upon finishing our training course.

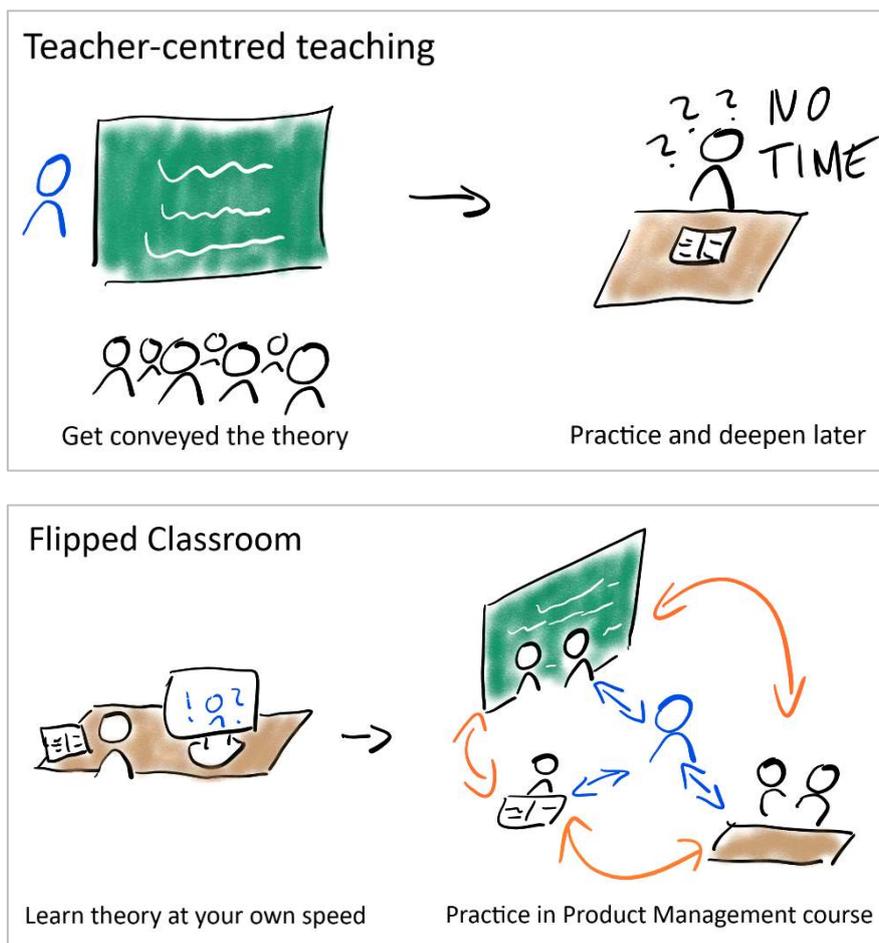
Since Product Managers are pulled straight back into normal working life after the training, from experience there is little time for them to practise and expand on what they have learned. We have therefore considered how we can help participants to spend the time we have together during the course to help them to get even more practice.

The solution is the Flipped Classroom teaching method.

### FLIPPED CLASSROOM, INSTEAD OF TEACHER-CENTRED TEACHING

Instead of teacher-centred teaching, the theory is to learn things yourself in peace and quiet and then to practise their practical implementation during the time you are all together on the course - that’s the idea behind the Flipped Classroom teaching method and how we convey our teaching content.

Trainees work at home and assimilate the theoretical principles at their own pace. They then get to practise them in the classroom using different methods and tasks and the trainees receive individual support. The trainees move from a passive role into an active one. As such, the trainees reach the highest level of the teaching methods as the learning content is optimally consolidated and the participants are immediately capable of implementing them in their daily work.



## BENEFITS FOR YOU AS A PARTICIPANT

For you as a participant, Product Management training based on the Flipped Classroom teaching method offers the following benefits:

1. You as a trainee can learn the theory at your own speed and in peace and quiet, since you can read our textbooks long in advance of attending the course because there are freely available copies.
2. During the course, as a participant you will not be bombarded with new ideas, but rather your questions will be answered and you will strengthen and deepen the knowledge you have previously acquired.
3. The use of the tools needed for Product Management is learned during your time on the course.
4. The implementation of the Product Management activities will be carried out jointly and under professional guidance.
5. As a participant, you are immediately able to incorporate the new things you have learned into your daily work, since your confidence in your own actions will be strengthened.
6. You save time on time-consuming, expensive reworking.

## BENEFITS FOR YOUR COMPANY

The following benefits for your business result from Product Management training based on the Flipped Classroom teaching method:

1. You save time and money because you don't have to free up time for your employees to learn the theoretical material, nor pay for their study time.
2. You save money because you pay only for the time in which we work with the participants.
3. With your investment, you will get colleagues who are both trained in the theory and practice, who use their Product Management tools and who have achieved results which are necessary for the manufacture and marketing of successful products.
4. You benefit immediately from your Product Manager's modified working methods as your colleagues can get started immediately after the course without them having to carry out time-consuming subsequent work on the teaching content.

What can you expect before the course and during the course?

Before the course:

- (1) You can download our textbooks which are available free of charge and accessible on our website
- (2) We will provide you with a schedule
- (3) You can acquire the theory in peace and quiet and according to your own schedule
- (4) Write down any questions that we will then answer in the course
- (5) Prepare yourself beforehand for the tasks and familiarise yourself with the material

During the course:

- (1) Questions about the understanding of the theoretical knowledge are answered
- (2) Products are developed together
- (3) Situations from the everyday working life in Product Management are implemented using practical exercises
- (4) Product Management tools and their uses are learned
- (5) Participants are supported right away and will get direct feedback

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES TO MAKE THE VERY BEST OF YOURSELF

For each course and for each topic there are defined learning objectives, i.e. it is clearly defined exactly what the participants should have mastered by the end of the course. This is the only way that it can be individually determined for each participant where potential for their own optimisation lies.

The learning objective that stands above everything is:

The participants are familiar with all the steps and can use the corresponding tools that are needed to produce a market-driven product, as well as market this product and control its success.

Examples of learning objectives for individual topics from Strategic Product Management:

- a) Participants can explain the importance of market orientation
- b) Participants can identify the tasks of the PMs and compare them with the current state
- c) Participants can identify interfaces with which they work and show who they have to pass which information to and in what form

## PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AS AN ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Imagine developing innovative products that are sustainable and save a lot of resources such as raw materials, materials, energy, water, labor and time.

Imagine that you need only 50% of the previous time for development and marketing and at the same time your company becomes up to 31% more profitable.

All the tasks you need to do are clearly defined and many of them are automated or can be done in minutes using the Product Management Dashboard, our product management software.



What else you need to do: *talk to your customers, conduct interviews.*

This way you develop products that are sustainable because you solve problems that are widespread as well as satisfy real needs of customers. At the same time, you avoid costly, time- and resource-consuming misdevelopments. And incidentally, you'll make your business up to 50% faster and 31% more profitable.

Product management has the ecological future of all of us as well as the economic future of your company in its hands.

You have this future in your hand.

Get started today with Green Product Development™.

We provide you with the tools and training to do so.

Hint:

*All of this also applies to existing products and can be applied there as well.*

More information: [www.pro-productmanagement.com/green-product-development](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/green-product-development)

## INTRODUCTION

Even when I, Frank Lemser, was studying Business Information Technology, I always had the feeling that there was a conflict within me. On one side, there was this business administration specialist who was all about business management with its wonderful tools; On the other side, there was this computer scientist who liked information technology, where everything is logically structured and interconnected.

The business management professors were not able to get across to us students how the results, which were obtained with the help of business management tools, could be transported into everyday working life. They told us just as little about how the results related to each other and what dependencies and interactions there were - something which didn't sit well with the computer scientist in me.

Over the course of the years, I have repeatedly and intensively grappled with this problem. In the course of this, I have come to the realisation from experiences from my working life that many of the problems that exist in Product Management, as well as because of it, result from the unstructured recording and transfer of information.

Consequently, the image of an assembly line came to me, on which you place ordered information at the front and the individual departments receive the relevant pre-assembled information. All other departments could then use the pre-assembled information at their work station and install their part in the product. At the end, a clearly arranged product would exist which customers need and which has generated few discussions and little pain within the business.

In addition to the image of the assembly line, I developed the idea of a funnel into which all information on the product is collected at the beginning, and then prioritised in line with market requirements to then be sorted to land on the appropriate part of the assembly line.

From the images of the funnel and the assembly line, we have now created numerous tools, the Open Product Management Workflow, these textbooks and our software for Product Management to simplify the daily work for you and all other Product Managers, so that you save time and a lot of hassle and create products that other people want to buy.

When I began in Product Management at SUSE Linux in 2000, I was really lucky that some of my colleagues were able to explain to me what Product Management actually is. Most Product Managers who I meet tell me that their responsibilities are not really clear and that they see themselves as a "Jack of all trades".

There is often just one position created in a company which is then called Product Management. When you start working there and ask what you should actually be doing, everybody around you just shrugs their shoulders around and says: "Just get on with it." So you start to improvise and feel your way around.

In practice, colleagues can have a wide variety of job titles on their business cards, but in the end all activities which come under the topic of Product Management are usually given to those with job titles such as:

- Product Manager
- Product Marketing Manager
- Technical Product Manager
- Business Development Manager
- Portfolio Manager
- Product Line Manager
- etc.

People try to get to the bottom of the responsibilities that these employees have because there is so much confusion.

Most Product Managers come from other areas, usually from Sales or Marketing or Technical. Initially, they are thrown in at the deep end with nobody telling them what they should be doing, because no one really knows. And when you consider that Product Managers often make decisions involving hundreds of thousands, or even millions of euros or have an influence on how the money is invested in the future....

An example:

A large German turbine manufacturer laid off a huge number of employees some time ago and even entire plants were closed. As the message got through to the news, the public railed against the company's upper management. But what had really happened?

The manufacturer had developed the largest and most powerful turbine ever built, which took around 10 years.

As the turbine came onto the market, it didn't sell. But why?

In order to understand this, it's necessary to know about the purchasing process for turbines.

From a customer point of view, it's always sensible to have more than one vendor for a product so that there is an advantage for the buyer in a competitive environment. In the case of public invitations to tender, it is even mandatory to have several quotes. Because our manufacturer now always offered the most powerful turbine, there was therefore no comparable offer from the competition. Thus, the unique feature became the problem. Consequently, significantly fewer machines were sold, there were therefore no testimonials to convince new customers, the investment costs were not paid off and the capacity utilisation of the plants was too low. Ultimately, it ended with employees being dismissed and plants closed because the development of a new turbine would take at least 10 more years and a short-term course correction was not possible.

Upper management made the decision to dismiss employees, the cause of which was the lack of knowledge about the purchasing process. Had they known how the purchasing process is specified at the customer, i.e. that there have to be comparable quotes, it would never have come to redundancies and closures.

What do you think, who is responsible for knowing the decision-making criteria for the purchasing and the entire procurement process?

It is the responsibility of Product Management to know the purchasing process and the decision-making criteria of the people involved in the purchase. As such, Product Management is also responsible for everything that happened at the turbine manufacturer.

In this example, it is easy to illustrate that we as Product Managers have a large influence on the future of the company, but also implications for our colleagues. It is therefore all the more surprising that there is no professional training for Product Managers.

That there is a lack of training for Product Managers is also confirmed by the results of the "Challenge Olympics". Their results show which challenges currently exist for Product Managers:

1. Lack of training
2. Lack of understanding of roles
3. Poor knowledge of how to get to information
4. Micro-management by top management
5. Lack of common understanding of Product Management tasks

The "Challenge Olympics" was, among other things, something held at ProductCamp 2014 in Nuremberg. ProductCamp is an event which is organised by Product Managers for Product Managers. You can find more information about ProductCamp in Germany at [www.productcamp.de](http://www.productcamp.de).

Product Management works with almost all departments in a company. It should therefore know and speak the special language used in the various departments and groups such as Marketing, Sales and Engineering, as well as be able to understand their function and responsibilities. It is also essential for the success of any Product Manager to be aware of the Senior Management's objectives, as well as the criteria that these are based on. Only then can the information and resources be made available to achieve this.



The customer, the market player, should always take centre stage. Because only if Product Management regularly listens to them and recognises and understands the problems will the product team deliver 100% market-oriented products.

What we are experiencing today is something else. We see that Product Management often speaks with the Engineers from Development and Production. If Marketing then asks about the new developments and the unique added values of the product, they are simply only given technical information. Product Management sometimes attempts to somehow translate what the Engineers are saying, but often no added value line of reasoning materialises. In the end, Marketing cannot present any added values, which means that Sales also doesn't know what argument they can use to convince the customer and therefore ends up only selling based on price.

Senior Management also doesn't understand what it is that Product Management actually wants and how to justify their claims. The cause of the dilemma lies in the fact that Product Management is too often busy at their place of work in the company and hardly brings in any market information from outside into the company.

## PRODUCT MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As already described at the beginning, it is often not clear in practice what the responsibilities of Product Management are. In this case, we recommend that you find out what the responsibilities of the neighbouring departments in the company are in order to ensure a better distinction for your own activities.

What is the task of Senior Management?

And what are the respective tasks of the Technical department, Marketing, Sales, Controlling and the Legal department?

Listen, ask your colleagues in Product Management or speak directly to the staff from the relevant departments.

If you have been provided with an overview of the responsibilities, it comes to the question of who in the company is actually responsible for creating business proposals, and therefore for:

- a) Product strategy
- b) Portfolio strategy
- c) Pricing strategy
- d) Market segmentation

We have already heard various answers for this in our course.

In order to understand who is responsible for deriving the strategies in the business plan and to better understand which tasks are the responsibility of Product Management, we'll take a short trip back in time.

In 1927, the Procter & Gamble (USA) developed a new care product and brought it to market. The targets set for sales and market shares were missed. After the internal analysis, it was recognised that there had been difficulties with the prioritisation of tasks and in the processes. Furthermore, there was an inconsistent implementation of market requirements.

Consequently, it was decided to define one person who was responsible for the collection as well as the coordination of the market requirements, and for all further activities for the product.

After just a short time success came, and they reached the targets set for this product.

Because of the success, this role as the coordinator responsible for the product was introduced throughout the entire company for all products. The role of the Product Manager was thus born and there was a first definition for the tasks taken on by Product Management:

1. Product Management is the market expert of the company:  
They provide information and facts from the market, derive strategies for the product with the help of economic analysis which is presented to the management board in a business plan.
2. Product Management provides prioritised market requirements for Production:  
From the facts about the market, requirements are generated as well as market-oriented requirements evaluated and defined for Production.
3. Product Management provides arguments for market communication:  
For the communication with the customer, Product Management prepares arguments based on market facts, as well as the unique advantages, which result from these analyses.

4. Product Management coordinates the product teams and bears overall responsibility:  
The formation as well as the coordination of technical product teams and the Go-To-Market teams is the core task of Product Management. If there are barriers to achievement of objectives, Product Management takes over the responsibility in order to draw up and implement solutions with the teams.

Only when there is someone with total responsibility for the product, who has a complete overview of the market as well as Production and market communication, can problems be identified and solved together with the teams so that, in the end, it results in success of the product.

Now that we have a first definition of the responsibilities of Product Management, there's another question: What is the aim of Product Management?

One answer to this is given in a quote from Peter Drucker. Peter Ferdinand Drucker (1909-2005) was an American economist of Austrian origin. From the 1940s onwards, he published many influential works on the theory and practice of management.

He was named as the Guru of Management Gurus and shaped what we today call "Management" like no other. Some even say that he invented it.

Peter Drucker ascertained:

*"The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself."*

So many things which at that time were classified under the concept of marketing, are tasks for modern Product Management today, so much so that Peter Drucker would probably say today:

*"The aim of Product Management is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself."*

What Peter Drucker's quote reflects is not just theory, but it also works in practice. This is illustrated by the example of Dampsoft, whose founder Wolfram Greifenberg was a dentist and stumbled upon the problem of a lack of electronic patient management. Consequently, he developed a software which established itself as the market leader over the years. One reason for his success was close contact with other dentists. When I became acquainted with Dampsoft a few years ago, Sales colleagues were saying that their product was so right and fitted so well for customers that they wouldn't have to talk them into buying it, but that the product almost sold itself.

This is confirmed by Peter Drucker's assertion: if direct contact with the market and customers exists, product and service can be developed so that both almost sell themselves, which lowers effort on the part of Sales.

The most important task for Product Management results from this, namely having an ear to the ground in the market, collecting and sorting information from the market to then pass it on within the company and to prepare it so that it fits for each department.

The Management must get the information in such a way that they understand it and it can be further used. To this end, all market information, analyses, derived strategies and figures (business case) are consolidated in the business plan. From this information, a decision proposal is in turn created. You can find out more about the precise content of this in the 'Business Plan' chapter.

Engineers, Developers and Technicians will also have a very different input. They want to know what problems which people have and when they occur so that they can develop a solution for them.

For Marketing and Sales, the market information is made available so that ultimately this can be understood by the end customer. That's why the resolved problems and their unique added value, the differentiation from competitors, as well as a decision aid for the individual people involved in the purchase are all required.

Therefore, the first task is to find out what unresolved problems exist in the market.

- What disrupts or annoys the market players?
- What does it cost the market players in time and/or money?

Product Management now needs to do the following:

1. Identify market problems
2. Consolidate all market problems, from the market and the company
3. Quantify how often these market problems occur
4. Determine whether the market players are ready to pay for a solution to the problem
5. Communicate market problems in your own company in the form required by the other respective departments



The Engineers are then asked to solve the problems technically. Marketing is in turn responsible for communicating the solution to the problem to the market. Sales sells and supplies the customer with the solution to the market problems.

The other departments also need information from the market about what the problems are in the market and are therefore prepared so that they can work independently.

To make things a little more visual, simply picture a relay race. They pass the information on in the form of a baton to the respective department. Only if the passing-on of the baton works very well will you master the relay race successfully.

If things that are conceived at a desk are passed on rather than the market information, as most of the Product Managers we meet say, then there is a great danger that the product will not be successful and will result in high costs.

Practical example:

A good friend and Product Manager at an automotive company told me the following incident:

Before a medium-sized SUV model was developed, a corresponding target group was defined: amateur athletes, mountain bikers, hunters and golfers.

As the car was finished and came onto the market, it was advertised precisely for these people. Interestingly, the target group for which the car had been aimed at in the planning stages did not buy the car. Surprisingly, it was so-called "Helicopter Mothers" who provides the hoped-for sales figures, which nobody had expected. The automotive company was lucky that this product didn't turn out to be a mistake, but by chance found a new target group.

Less luck was had by Microsoft with its product. It is common knowledge that its product Windows 8 flopped because it had new user guidance which was primarily designed for touch input. As such, only a small portion of users were reached and its main clientèle, desktop users, missed the beloved and familiar start menu. The start menu was then later re-introduced with Windows 10.

The managers responsible were dismissed shortly after the release of Windows 8. This example shows that even large corporations from time to time conceive products at their desks.

Ferrero provides a positive example that products succeed if you are proactive in the market. The founder, Pietro Ferrero, contributed to the breakthrough of numerous Ferrero products by creating a person named Signoria Valeria. All products developed at Ferrero had to be accepted by Signoria Valeria, i.e. if she didn't like the taste or it wasn't right for her and her family, the product would not be put on the market. Signoria Valeria represented a virtual person, an average customer, who was used for all products, so, for example, for children's products such as Kinder Surprise or as a customer for Mon Chéri.

Further throughout the course, you will get to know this type of virtual person by the term 'persona'.

Therefore, if you wish to develop products that customers want to buy, you should develop products from the market. This means leaving your desk to collect information in the market. This significantly increases the likelihood that a product is successful.

This is also proven by investigations by George S. Day in his book: "The Market Driven Organization."

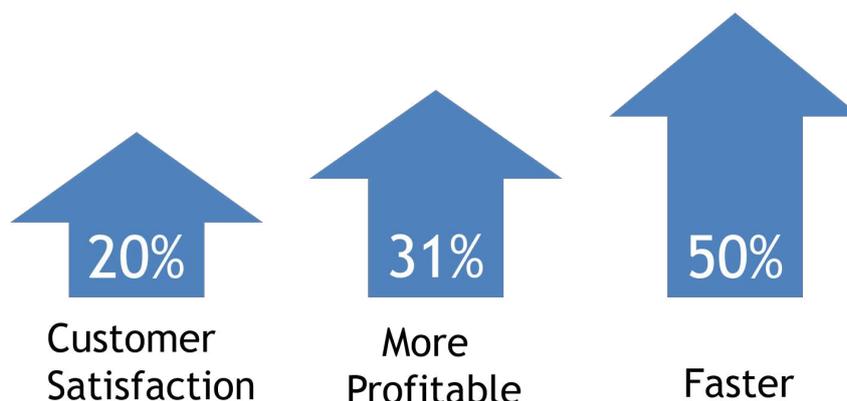
George S. Day is now a Professor of Marketing. He was previously a consultant in a variety of companies such as AT&T, Eastman Kodak, General Electric and IBM.

George S. Day stated in his studies that companies that work in a market-oriented manner show a 20% higher customer satisfaction level. At the same time, these companies are 31% more profitable than those that are driven by other factors. The most important result of his studies is that market-oriented companies are 50% faster than those that are led by other factors.

At the present time, where everything always has to be faster and faster, this number is surprising since it shows the potential of working in a market-oriented manner.

Why are market-oriented companies actually 50% faster? Review your working day as a Product Manager. Where do you spend a lot of time?

Most of the time is spent in discussions about decisions and on constant requests from colleagues from the adjoining departments. We therefore often hear from Product Managers who only let ideas conceived at their desks be incorporated into the product. They get annoyed that supervisors or the management board come in with other proposals whilst their own ideas are always difficult to enforce with the management.



If we enquire about the market facts, we will often get similar answers. Both sides usually take action without facts and then ask themselves: why is one idea better than the other? It is then often discussed for a very long time or more and more new meetings are scheduled until a decision can even be made at all.

Practical example:

A company that we support spent two years in discussions about whether they should offer customers a webshop or whether their clientèle even had any interest in online shopping. They discussed the enormous costs of linking the webshop to their own ERP system and to the supplier's production systems. During these two years it would have been advisable and easy to ask a handful of customers whether they would order via a webshop.

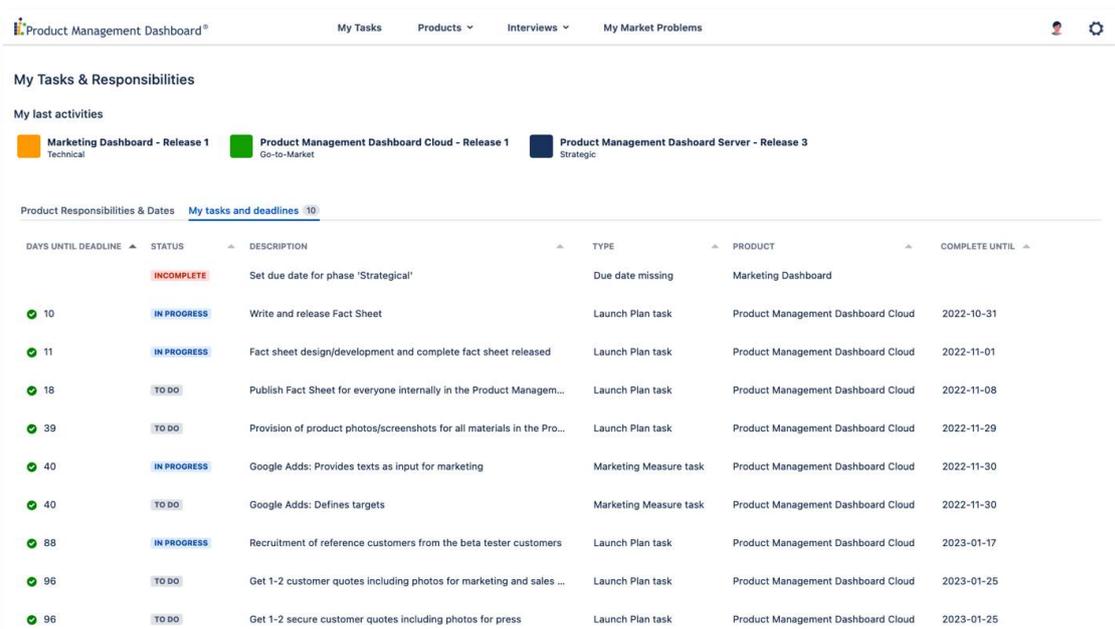
So, get out of your office and speak with the customers, find unresolved market problems, things that annoy the market players or cost them time and/or money and communicate this to your colleagues in the company. Only then will you be working with facts and have fewer discussions, earn trust with colleagues, make your product more profitable, increase customer satisfaction and operate up to 50% faster.

## CLEARLY PRIORITIZED TASKS, ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DEADLINES

Product management teams worldwide, repeatedly mention the following product management problems to us:

- Unclear tasks and deadlines as well as no overview of deadlines
- Prioritizing one's own tasks and meeting deadlines is difficult
- Unclear roles and responsibilities as well as demarcation to other departments
- No time for strategic work in product management
- Prioritization of requirements takes a lot of time
- Collaboration with other department and handover of information is difficult
- Lack of transparency in product development etc.

As a solution to these and many other product management problems, you can use the Product Management Dashboard for Jira, which is available as a cloud version as well as for local installation.



The screenshot shows the 'My Tasks & Responsibilities' section of the Product Management Dashboard. It features a table of tasks with the following columns: DAYS UNTIL DEADLINE, STATUS, DESCRIPTION, TYPE, PRODUCT, and COMPLETE UNTIL. The tasks are listed with their respective deadlines and statuses.

DAYS UNTIL DEADLINE	STATUS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	PRODUCT	COMPLETE UNTIL
	INCOMPLETE	Set due date for phase 'Strategical'	Due date missing	Marketing Dashboard	
10	IN PROGRESS	Write and release Fact Sheet	Launch Plan task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2022-10-31
11	IN PROGRESS	Fact sheet design/development and complete fact sheet released	Launch Plan task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2022-11-01
18	TO DO	Publish Fact Sheet for everyone internally in the Product Managem...	Launch Plan task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2022-11-08
39	TO DO	Provision of product photos/screenshots for all materials in the Pro...	Launch Plan task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2022-11-29
40	IN PROGRESS	Google Adds; Provides texts as input for marketing	Marketing Measure task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2022-11-30
40	TO DO	Google Adds; Defines targets	Marketing Measure task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2022-11-30
88	IN PROGRESS	Recruitment of reference customers from the beta tester customers	Launch Plan task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2023-01-17
96	TO DO	Get 1-2 customer quotes including photos for marketing and sales ...	Launch Plan task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2023-01-25
96	TO DO	Get 1-2 secure customer quotes including photos for press	Launch Plan task	Product Management Dashboard Cloud	2023-01-25

**MyTasks Dashboard™: Always know what needs to be done. Automatically prioritized tasks, by deadlines, in the Product Management Dashboard.**

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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## PRODUCT MANAGEMENT IN THE ORGANISATION

Where should Product Management be placed in the organisation and why? This is a question which we are frequently asked.

Before we answer the question, we need to know something more fundamental to get a common understanding. Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon Inc., once said:

*“If we have a good quarter it’s because of work we did three, four and five years ago. It’s not because we did a good job this quarter.”*

Which department in the company is measured when we measure the work from the last quarter?

If you thought of Sales, then you’re confirming your and our experience from practical experience.

In Jeff Bezos’ quote, which department did the work three, four or five years ago which has now led to the success?

Did you think of Product Management? Then we agree with you.

The work and the actions of *Sales* are usually based on the *short-term*.

Work done by *Product Management* on the other hand is usually oriented to the long term, since it is concerned with the analysis of the market and the resulting strategic planning for the next three, four or five years. After the planning, Product Management is tasked with the implementation of this planning. Eventually, Product Management provides Sales with its findings as support.

This scenario shows how opposite Sales and Product Management are and the sequence in which they work.

So, let’s come back to the initial question: Where should Product Management be placed in the organisation and why?

The easiest way to answer this question is to sit and think about the following questions and answer them quietly on your own.

1. What happens if Product Management sits in the Sales organisation?
2. What happens if Product Management is pegged on to Engineering or Development?
3. What is the result when Product Management is located in Marketing?

We will work through the answers together with the participants in our seminars. Over the years, the following conclusions have taken shape:

## Product Management in the organisation

### Advantages and disadvantages for the allocation to different departments

#### Advantages

- + Good customer contact
- + Selling points are known
- + Market (and product) knowledge

#### Sales

- Often shared role with a focus on selling instead of strategy
- Many individual customer solutions
- Large product portfolio
- Focus lies on existing customers
- Focus is on market launch date and less on strategy

#### Disadvantages

#### Engineering

- + Many ideas
- + High level and deep product knowledge

- No customer contact
- If there is customer contact, customer is consulted on-site and a solution developed instead of listening to pick up on problems
- Products are developed outside of Engineering
- Without market facts
- Very technical communication
- Product specification instead of problem, solution and product description
- Often more individual solutions

#### Marketing

- + Direct customer feedback
- + Customer dependence
- + Communication is the focus

- No customer proximity
- Less listening
- Simple arguments are communicated at first, instead of problems that have been solved
- No technical understanding
- Little product knowledge
- Focus on market launch dates, marketing campaigns, instead of controlling the product

#### Management of the company

- + Support
- + Acceptance in the company
- + Neutrality and 360° view of product, customers, market, finances
- + Product Management has its own budget like other departments
- + Neutrality towards all other departments

- There may be no acceptance of other departments in team work

As you can see from the above table, advantages and disadvantages are clear.  
One recommendation which results is:

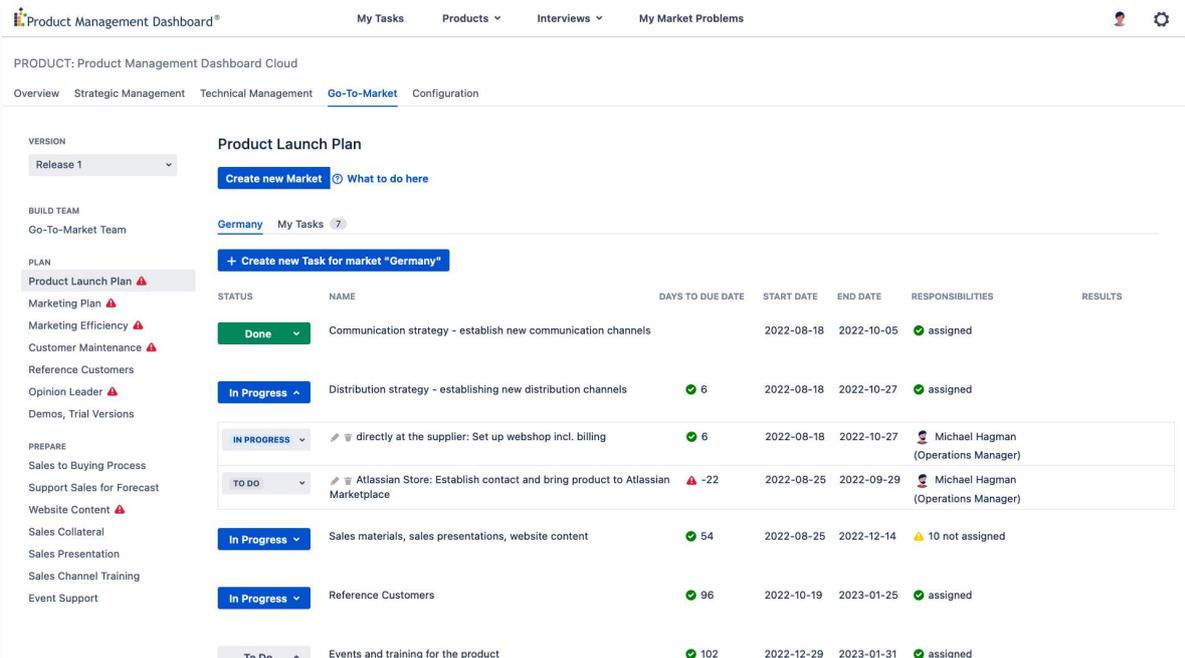
*Ideally, Product Management is best directly 'pegged on' to the Management of the Company, as every other department is, incidentally.*

Product Management is a central function in a company from which almost every department needs something. Product Management can provide a lot, and has to provide a lot, if the product is to be successful.

*Product Management can raise the company to the next level and have a boost effect.*

In order to do that, it's vital that:

1. The Product Managers know what they have to do to produce market-oriented products
2. The Product Managers have mastered the necessary tools
3. There is a budget, as there is for any other department, which is used for:
  - a. Travel to customers, conferences and trade fairs
  - b. Special tools such as software, models
  - c. Further training
4. The responsibilities within Product Management are defined, and are divided if necessary
5. Product Managers are directly affiliated to the Executive Management, just like any other department!



STATUS	NAME	DAYS TO DUE DATE	START DATE	END DATE	RESPONSIBILITIES	RESULTS
Done	Communication strategy - establish new communication channels		2022-08-18	2022-10-05	assigned	
In Progress	Distribution strategy - establishing new distribution channels	6	2022-08-18	2022-10-27	assigned	
In Progress	directly at the supplier: Set up webshop incl. billing	6	2022-08-18	2022-10-27	Michael Hagman (Operations Manager)	
To Do	Atlassian Store: Establish contact and bring product to Atlassian Marketplace	-22	2022-08-25	2022-09-29	Michael Hagman (Operations Manager)	
In Progress	Sales materials, sales presentations, website content	54	2022-08-25	2022-12-14	10 not assigned	
In Progress	Reference Customers	96	2022-10-19	2023-01-25	assigned	
To Do	Events and training for the product	102	2022-12-29	2023-01-31	assigned	

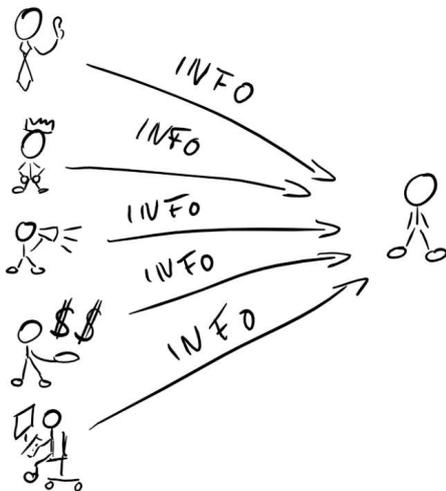
**Work together as a team. Distribute tasks and immediately have the full overview, such as with the Product Launch Plan.**

## THE PRODUCT MANAGEMENT DILEMMA OR HOW PRODUCT MANAGEMENT SHOULD BUILD THE FUTURE WITH A HAMMER AND CHISEL

When you start as a Product Manager, you have a job where often barely anyone in the company knows what you actually do or what your responsibilities are. You are completely on your own.

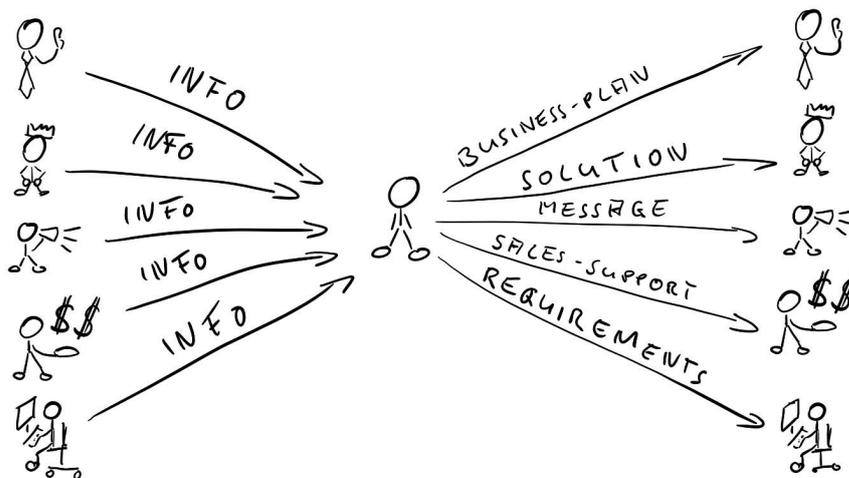


Suddenly, you've got colleagues from all directions with information from the Management, from Marketing, from Sales and Engineering coming to you and the customer, who is king, is also being passed on to you.



At some point you get the feeling that everyone is just chucking their stuff at you.

At the same time, everyone wants you to create order from all this information and then to compile it in such a way that they can then reuse it themselves.



So, the Management expect a decision proposal and a business plan.

King Customer hopes that his problems will be solved.

Marketing wants a market message that customers understand and that illustrates the unique added value.

Sales want materials and selling points which will assist them in doing business as easily and as quickly as possible.

The engineers want to have the requirements prioritised, so that it results in a market-driven product which they can then develop in peace.

Not only that, but we are at the beginning of our job as a Product Manager and haven't received an exact job description or even at least training from which we could learn our role and get the tools that would be able to help us. No. We are just expected to get on with it, using Word and Excel as our tools - our hammer and chisel - to bring order to all the information so that all our colleagues and customers get what they need. With Word and Excel we have to hammer and chisel product strategies and as such help to shape the company's future.

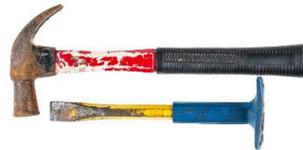
 The tools for building the future of the company in product management are:



Word and  
Excel

=

your



Hammer and  
chisel

***Product Management today still work with hammers and chisels, i.e. with Word and Excel, to create the products of the future as well as to design the long-term company strategies.***

All other departments today use special tools to make their work more efficient, time-saving and to complete it successfully.

For example, Sales have a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) System and/or an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning), i.e. SAP or a similar system to supply the best services.

The accounting department also uses ERP and accounting systems for a more efficient organisation of its work. Engineers and Developers use CAD systems, development environments for software, project planning software etc. as their tools. Customer Support uses a ticket system order to be more effective.

But ask your manager if the following points are expected from you as a Product Manager:

- To consolidate information from customers, Sales, Management, Engineering, Customer Support, partners and to then prioritise these at the end
- To collect and evaluate market information from the competition, the analysts and from studies
- To carry out various business analyses and bring their results together
- Identify risks and opportunities
- Derive proposals for strategies from the market
- To deliver decision proposals that are based on market facts so that bad investments can be avoided
- To sort market and product requirements such that they lead to a market-oriented product
- To create a market message which Marketing can communicate such that customers understand it, Sales can close sales faster and sales costs are reduced
- Control the product's success using KPIs and, if necessary, introduce the right measures
- Set up and implement the go-to-market with launch plan, marketing plan
- Create marketing and sales materials including web pages or provide the content

If you have asked your manager and you have found many commonalities with the instances above, you can point out once again that you currently only work with a hammer and chisel - Word and Excel - to fulfil all of these complex tasks.

You might have experienced one or the other points before. In numerous discussions with Product Managers over the years, we have learned:

- The completion of Product Management tasks using Word and Excel is very time-consuming
- Several Product Managers working together on one product is not possible today with Word and Excel
- The consolidation of all the information about the product in one central location is difficult and a great deal of effort is needed for this
- Working on several products at the same time is usually chaotic
- Word and Excel are suitable only to a limited extent for the management and the merging of all the information that a Product Manager receives and has to evaluate
- Conducting analyses and the merging of the analysis results are possible but incredibly time-consuming
- The review and evaluation of product requirements means a lot of time has to be invested
- All documents about the product for sales, marketing, engineering, customers, etc. are spread everywhere and it takes a lot of time to find the right one.
- It is unclear what all needs to be done for a successful Go-to-Market.
- Whether our marketing efforts are successful is unclear.
- (The list could go on)

As we work as Product Managers ourselves and are often at different companies, we have faced these exact problems outlined above. That's why we initially developed the tools for Product Management for our work - which are also available to you.

1. Product Management Dashboard® is a product management software that provides a fully automated Open Product Management Workflow™, with clear tasks.
2. Product Management ToolBox™ as about 25 Word and Excel templates, which you will receive and learn in the corresponding trainings.

## PRODUCT MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX™ – TRAINING

In our textbooks, we repeatedly refer to documents and tools. These tools are part of the Product Management ToolBox™, which consists of about 25 templates for Word and Excel.

These tools have been developed to enable you in product management to perform all the necessary tasks for successful economic and ecological product development as easily as possible.

*You will get the tools exclusively in the corresponding trainings.* There you will learn how to use them and how their interaction works.

The Product Management ToolBox™, i.e. the Word and Excel tools, have been automated in the Product Management Dashboard® software. The software also offers clearly prioritized tasks as well as a delimitation of roles and tasks plus many other advantages.

If you would like to continue learning the tools of the Product Management ToolBox™, i.e. the Word and Excel tools, you are welcome to do so in our training courses.

**Information on training with ToolBox™:** [www.pro-productmanagement.com/training-toolbox](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/training-toolbox)

## PRODUCT MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD® FOR JIRA – TRAINING

Clearly prioritized tasks, delineated roles and tasks and to have a common thread in product management with automated tools, there is the Product Management Dashboard for Jira.

Now there is one place where all product information from different sources is consolidated.

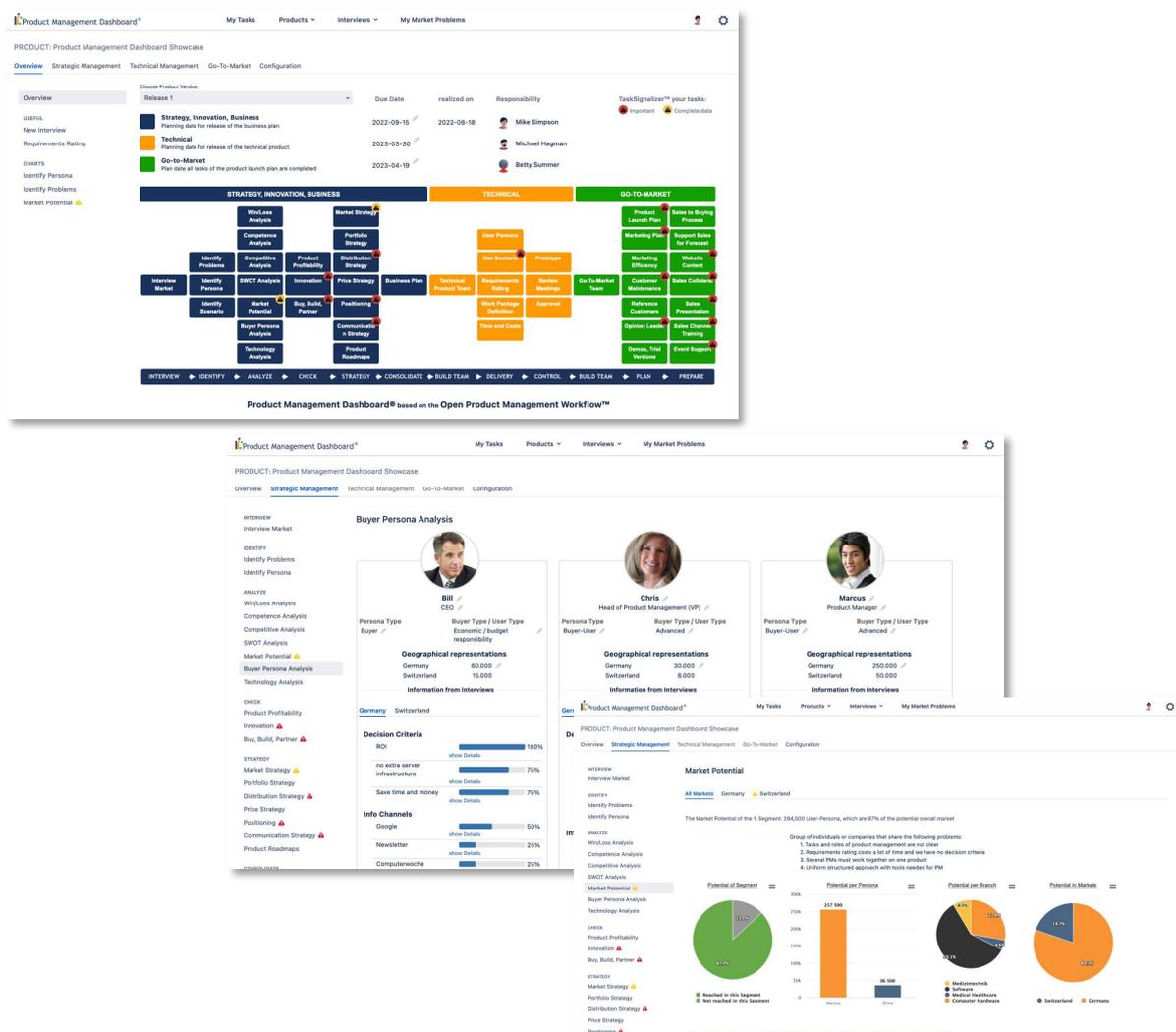
Many things such as analyses, Business plan creation and backlog prioritization. The Go-to-Market is planned in the team with clear tasks and the tasks are distributed. Likewise, all materials can be stored in the Product Materials Library™ so that anyone can find them in seconds.

**Information on training with Dashboard:** <https://www.pro-productmanagement.com/training-dashboard>

## USE PRODUCT MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD® FOR JIRA IMMEDIATELY

So that you can immediately accelerate your work as a product manager in an orderly manner and professionalize it in line with the market, the Product Management Dashboard is immediately available to you in addition to the textbooks, which works together with systems such as JIRA. You can start immediately with the cloud version or the local installation.

More information about the free download and the Product Management Dashboard can be found at the end of the book or on the website [www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software).



Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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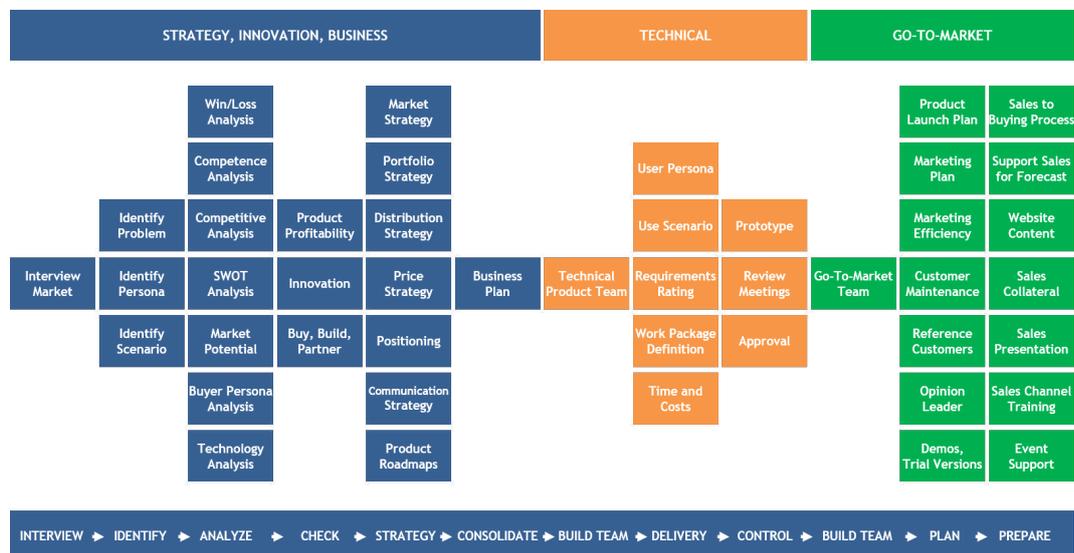
## OPEN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT WORKFLOW™

In all my years as a consultant in the area of Product Management I, Frank Lemser, have been asked time and time again by Product Managers which steps to do in which sequence, where to begin and what to do next. From my own practical experience, I have developed step-by-step instructions for Product Managers - the Open Product Management Workflow. I published this under a free licence so that everyone can use the Open Product Management Workflow free of charge and is free to change it.

The unique thing about the methodology of the Open Product Management Workflow is that with the help of our templates and tools, a data stream is created based on market facts which is also analysable. This data stream is used in various places with the product management tools we created, such as the Positioner, Agile Business Plan™, Requirements rating formula etc.

You can download and print out the Open Product Management Workflow here:

[www.pro-productmanagement.com/opmw](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/opmw)



How is the Open Product Management Workflow structured and understood?

At the very top there are the different areas of product management: the Strategy, Innovation and Business section, the Technical section and at the end the Go-To-Market section. These are followed by the individual work steps which Product Management carry out.

Then at the very bottom there are the individual phases of Product Management, such as the Interview phase, the Identify phase, the Analyse phase, the Review phase and the Consolidate phase which pulls all the previous information together into a business plan, and so on.

When all phases have been completed, you will hopefully have documented all work steps in order to make any improvements later on. In this way, any improvements or optimisations you make can be incorporated during the next iteration of the product life cycle.



We read the Open Product Management Workflow from left to right, so the strategic tasks are on the left-hand side. This means that these tasks are necessary for strategic planning. The further to the right we move, so into the Technical area and ultimately to the Go-To-Market area, the more it becomes about the tactical implementation, meaning that the strategic planning is implemented here.

It's about realising that the better you work in the strategic section and ultimately derive the strategies, the easier it is for you to do the implementation in the Technical and Go-To-Market areas.



source snail: ©prt art/fotolia.com

Or in other words, without strategic planning you'll move along like a snail in a hamster wheel.

Product Managers always tell us that they are like the fire brigade and are always only there to put out fires. If you are one of these Product Managers, then you've neglected to do your job in fire prevention. Because the real fire brigade is actually mainly concerned with preventive fire protection measures, and therefore only deals with putting out fires in the worst-case scenario.

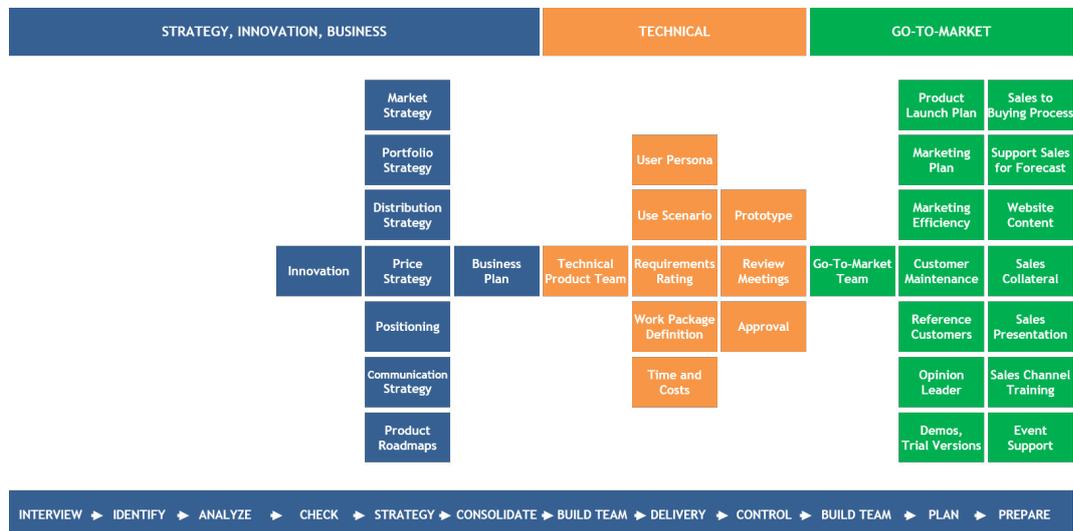
When you invest more time in preventive fire protection measures, in your case in strategic product management, then you need to spend less time on putting out fires on the tactical side of things.

Without strategic planning...

- No basis for decisions -> infinite discussions
- Failure to comply with the time-to-market -> loss of time and money
- Frequent changes in the project -> reputation of the PM suffers
- Micro-management of top management
- Incorrect marketing communication
  - Only features
  - No added values
  - Wrong target group and channels
  - High costs, low return

## INNOVATION

Almost all companies want to be innovative nowadays, that's why we experience again and again that they start at exactly this point, without carrying out the above steps beforehand. Often in a room you will see index cards filled out and stapled to pinboards. Would they develop market-oriented products in such a way?



Look at the Open Product Management Workflow and start right at the Innovation point... How do you know which is the problem to solve? How do you know who you're solving this problem for? i.e. Who will create the innovation? Is the market potential sufficient? Are there already competitors that dominate the market?

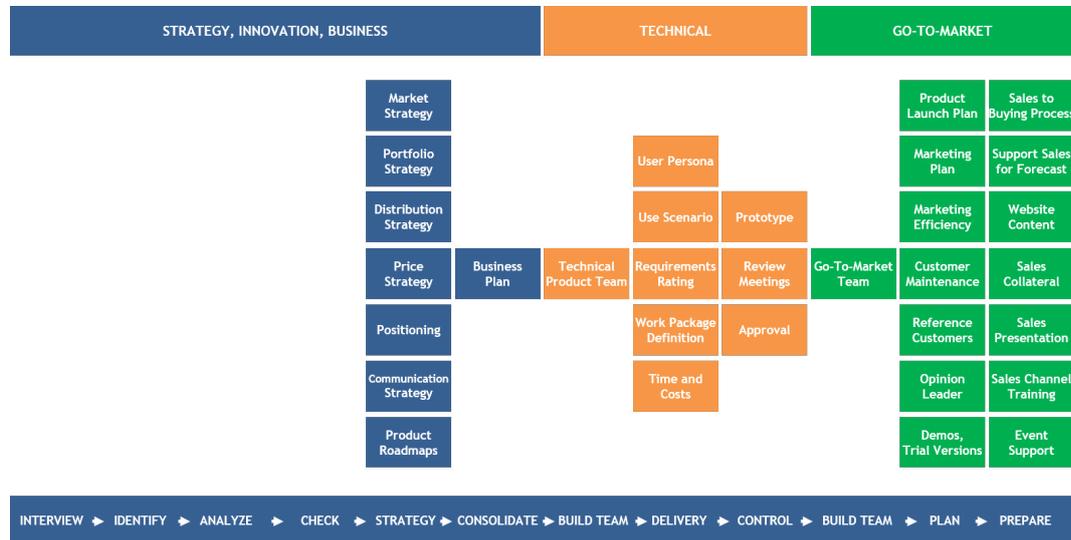
You are therefore very unlikely to be successful with a product if you start directly at the point of innovation.

Definition:

*Only if you know the problem can you think about the problem and develop an idea for its solution. And if nobody has solved this problem, the solution is automatically an innovation.*

## STRATEGY

What we also experience again and again are companies that start with the subject of strategy, without having carried out the previous steps from the Open Product Management Workflow. This is similar to the procedure on the subject of innovation. Index cards are filled out and stapled to pinboards.



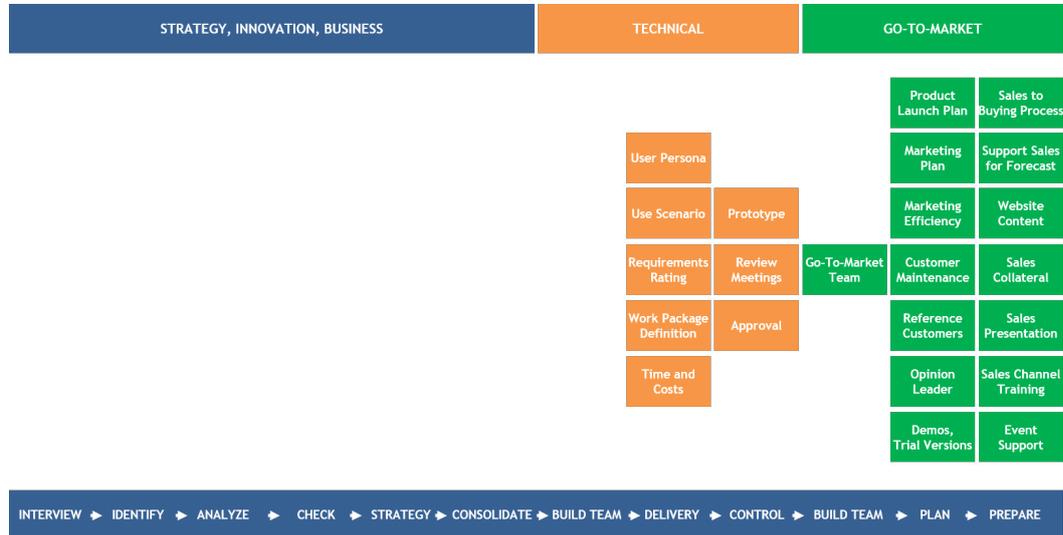
Without the initial information it is impossible to derive product strategies, because it is very difficult to answer the following questions:

- What does the market message look like? i.e. hard to communicate which problems the product will solve for customers
- Who is the target group, actually?
- How big is the market potential and is it worth the investment?
- Where and over which channels does the target group buy?
- Where and in which media are the target group informed?
- How is the price perception or is the product worth it for the target group?

At this point we would like to point out that we always talk about deriving strategies. How they are derived and what relationships there are between the individual points, we will illustrate later in the "Strategy" phase.

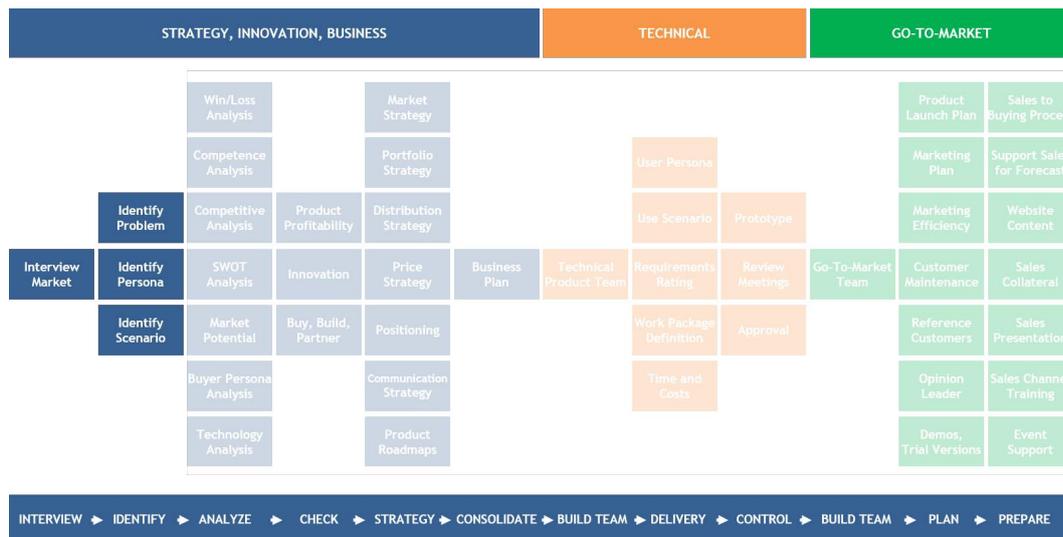
## PRIORIZE REQUIREMENTS, ESTIMATE TIME AND COSTS

Of course, there are also the really hard cases. These start in the Technical phase, which means you develop the products first and look for a market afterwards. This is not a joke, unfortunately we have experienced such practices.



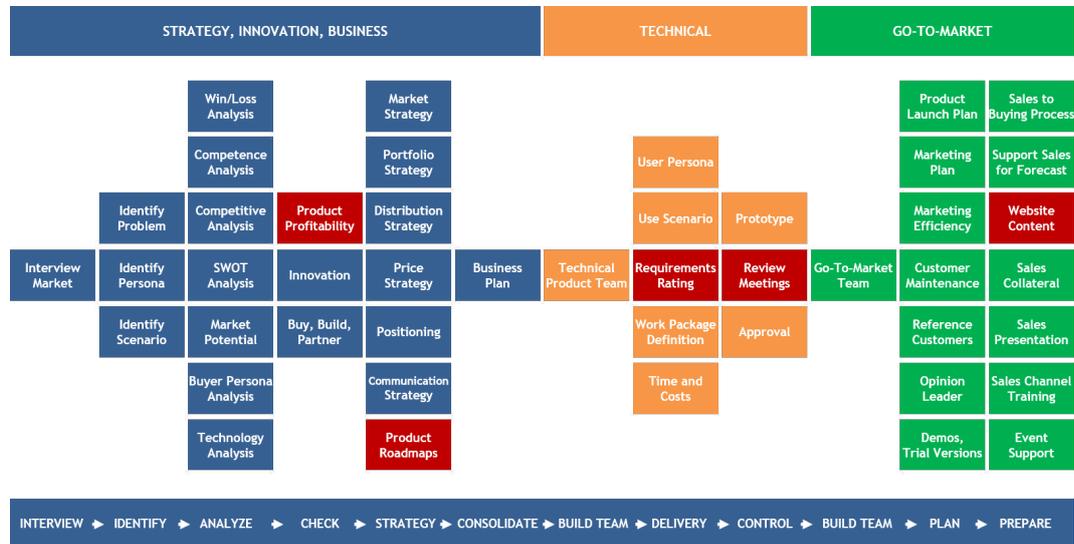
We are then always asked whether there could be a market for the finished product. It is certainly possible to save something here and to carry out so-called reverse engineering in the area of product management, but it is very difficult and also very expensive. Because in such cases, we are missing, as previously shown, the problems, the scenarios in which the problems occur or even also the persona for which we are developing the product.

Therefore, you should always start with the interview and then identify the market problems, the persona and scenarios.



## TYPICAL APPROACH OF PRODUCT MANAGERS

Very often we see in practice that Product Managers take care of the following points from the Open Product Management Workflow during their daily work.



If we are lucky, Product Managers check the product profitability with the help of KPIs, which we will look at later in more detail.

One point which Product Managers very often take care is the roadmaps, i.e. the plans of what will be delivered when. We have met Product Managers who have an insane dedication to this step.

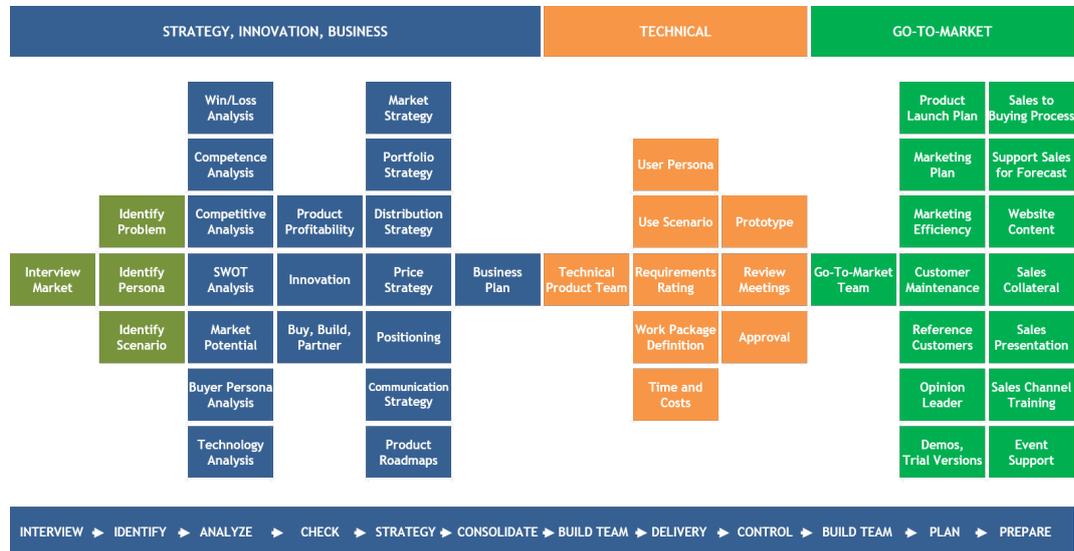
A further aspect of the workflow which is very time-consuming is the Requirements Rating, because it sparks many discussions. Several weeks can go by here in which the manager from Development, as well as the Product Manager, shut themselves away in rooms and heatedly discuss the topic. This really does cost a lot of money and can be a real pain.

In the subsequent review meetings, it is then often hotly discussed and they try to correct the errors of the lack of strategic planning, without knowing any real market facts.

Right at the very end, when the product is already finished, the Marketing department wants texts for the website or brochures, but it is only then that they are bothered about it. Isn't that right?

## WHICH ONE OR WHICH FEW?

We are often asked which one or which few in this whole "box" should be done, because going through all the steps is very time-consuming. Our answer is always: "Start first with the interviews and then the problems, personas and scenarios can automatically be identified."



Once you have conducted a certain number of interviews and passed the results to managers and the Senior Management, you will notice how positively it catches on. Then you will automatically perform all the other things, such as analyses, to prove that the insights from the market are correct.

At the same time, points will in turn arise which will verify that certain things are correct. In practice it is very often the case that Senior Management will ask whether you could manufacture a particular product. That's when the interviews, the check, help to see whether a market problem exists which should be solved by the future product and which person has this problem. Furthermore, it counts to find out whether there is a possible solution within the framework of the core competencies in your own department, or in the company. With a brief analysis it can be checked whether there are already solutions available from potential competitors. Thus, it quickly becomes clear whether it is actually makes sense to enter a market. If there are already a number of potential competitors with a similar solution, we recommend refraining from entering the market.

If, however, you are still thinking about entering the market, then a clear strategy can be derived from the results of the competitive and SWOT analyses that describes how to beat the competition.

Of course, the market potential also needs to be checked, because this is required for the rough calculation of the investment and the anticipated profit. Figures can also therefore be added to the argument. These figures can easily be prepared with the newly acquired knowledge and a little market experience.

## PRODUCT MANAGEMENT VS PRODUCT MARKETING

We are often also asked: "What actually is the difference between Product Management and Product Marketing?". This question is easy to answer because all the strategic work in the blue area of the Open Product Management Workflow, as well as the work in the technical (orange) area, belong to Product Management.

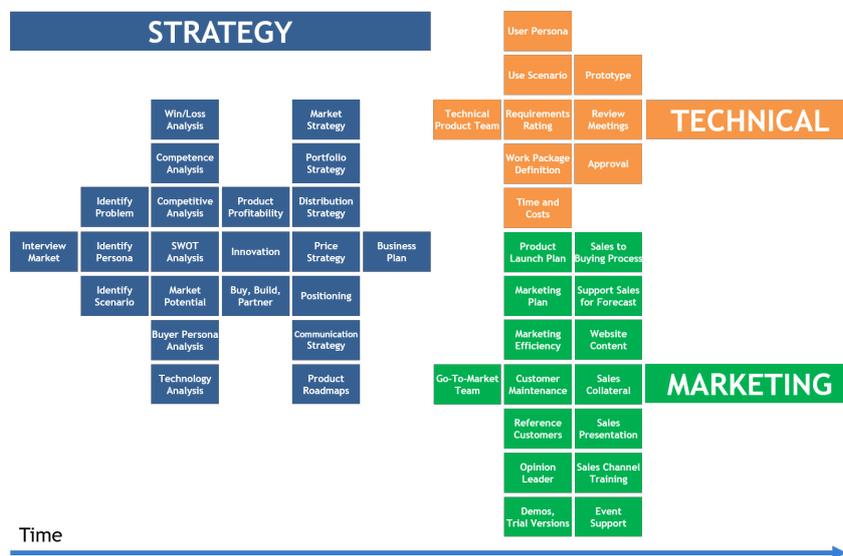
The green area of Go-To-Market are the tasks of Product Marketing, if these roles are divided in your organisation. In simple terms: The Product Manager has the ear to the ground in the market and Product Marketing communicates in the direction of the market.



### DISTRIBUTION OF TASKS

Many Product Managers do all three areas of Product Management, i.e. strategy, technical and Go-To-Market in one. Experience shows it is usually the strategic part and the Go-To-Market that fall by the wayside, since many Product Managers predominantly move about in the technical area. The technical Product Managers then frequently take on the strategic part and the Go-To-Market. In our experience this is almost impossible, since support of the technical product is very time-consuming.

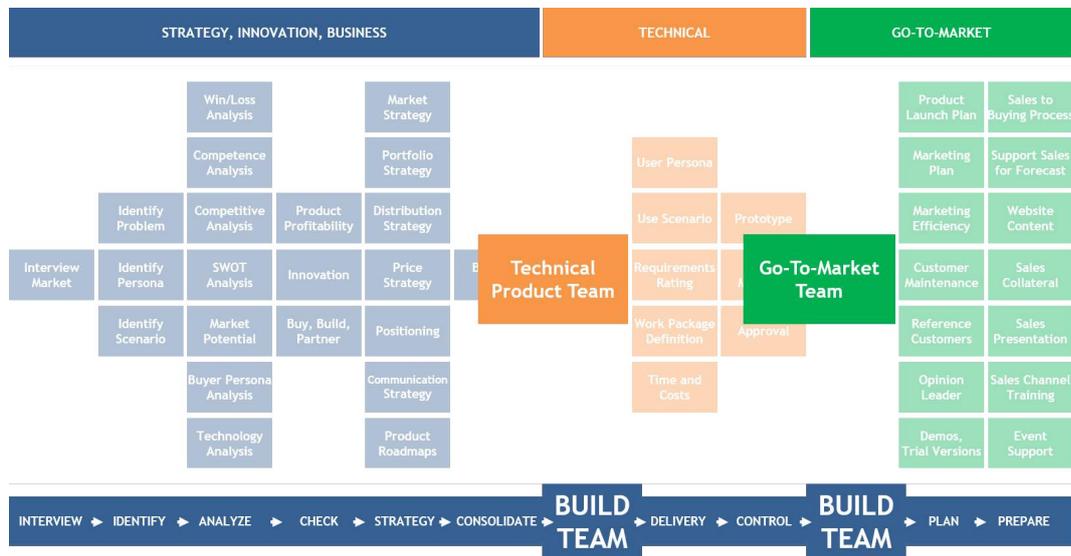
We therefore recommend The Product Manager who handles the strategy part can take on the Go-To-Market section at the same time. The role of the technical Product Manager should be taken on by a separate person.



For a chronological sequence, the strategic part can be completed first. The technical and Go-To-Market parts can run in parallel. It should not be underestimated just how much time is required for a successful Go-To-Market. You can learn more about a successful Go-To-Market in our course: “Successful Go-To-Market”.

## MANAGER OF VIRTUAL TEAMS

The Product Manager themselves are not responsible for any staff. It is therefore difficult for them to give direct instructions to colleagues in other departments. As you have already learned in the “Responsibilities of Product Management” chapter in the Procter & Gamble (USA) example, Product Management was created so that there was a coordinator responsible for the product. For this reason, the Product Teams in the Open Product Management Workflow are of particular importance.



As you can see on the diagram, there are two of these so-called Product Teams for whom the product manager is responsible.

So, there is the Technical Product Team and the Go-To-Market Team, both of whom are called on by the Product Manager.

Note:

*Experienced Product Managers know that they don't manage any products, but that it is a very important task of the Product Manager to form, inform and to manage virtual product teams.*

Do you know, incidentally, what the word “manage” means or from where it is derived? The word “manage” is derived from the Italian word “maneggiare” and means “to guide”, “to lead”, “to take by the hand”.

A product is difficult to guide or lead. Whereas the members of the virtual team are often grateful for the fact that someone is taking them by the hand and taking over the overall co-ordination.

## TECHNICAL PRODUCT TEAM

The Technical Product Team is made up of the following roles:

- Strategic Product Manager
- Technical Product Manager/Product Owner
- Project Manager - Development
- Product Architect/Requirements Engineer
- User Experience/Designer
- Quality Control

If you have defined other roles in your organisation which you consider necessary, simply add these colleagues to the Technical Product Team.

You can find more detailed information about Technical Product Teams in our "Technical Product Management" course.

## GO-TO-MARKET TEAM

Your Go-To-Market Team can consist of the following roles:

- Product (marketing) Manager
- Operations Manager
- Marketing & Communication
- Sales
- Website Management
- Customer Care/Customer Support
- Technical Support

You can find detailed information about the roles and tasks of the Go-To-Market Teams in our course "Successful Go-To-Market/Product Marketing".

The Product Teams have the following in common:

1. They are convened by the Product Manager
2. They meet regularly in the product phase
3. They work to the same objectives, review them and adapt them if necessary on a regular basis

## OPEN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT WORKFLOW™ – GAP ANALYSIS

So that you can coordinate the teams successfully, you should know which department actually does what and which tasks they take on in a business.

It has been shown time and again over the years that in many companies there is a different understanding of the distribution of tasks.

The following should be found out:

- Who does which tasks?
- Has everyone got the same knowledge and understanding of what the tasks
  - of the different departments are?
  - of Product Management and Product Marketing are?
- How important are the individual tasks assessed as being?
- The priority by which the tasks are worked on?

It is for these reasons that we have developed the tool (1) the Open Product Management Workflow – Gap Analysis (1) for you. This will help you and your colleagues gain a common understanding of the tasks and roles. It helps you to solve a problem which is very often named by Product Managers and companies.

In a Product Management team, an analysis (1) should initially be completed by everybody. Compare the results and you will be amazed at how different these are from each other.

As a second step, the gap analysis is given to the surrounding departments such as Sales, Marketing and Development to complete. If you have already introduced Product Teams, ask your colleagues to carry out this analysis together with them. The result can then be evaluated and corrected accordingly.

The gaps which open up when this analysis is carried out are amazing, and you can see that some tasks are presumed to be done in departments other than the ones where they are really done. It is important that each task, each box of the Open Product Management Workflow is executed with the least exceptions, no matter who does these within the company.

Use the gap analysis if roles and tasks and their prioritisation are unclear in your business.

### Summary

Let us briefly summarise what the tasks of a strategic Product Manager are:

- Regularly carry out interviews
- Identify and quantify problems, scenarios, personas
- Analyse the entire market
- Ongoing review of business success
- Derive strategies & market message
- Form, inform and manage the virtual teams

## BUSINESS PLAN

Before we look at any further points of the Open Product Management Workflow™, we come to the business plan, because all other analyses and evaluations are consolidated at this point.

The objective of the business plan is to create a basis for the decision proposal which we need to make to justify investments and strategies for the management, typically the funders.

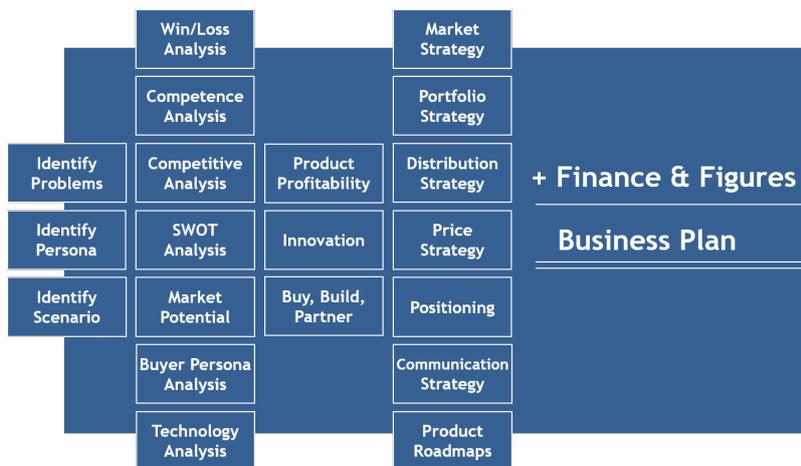
Henry Ford once said:

*“If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person’s point of view and see things from that person’s angle as well as from your own.”*

On the one hand we can get this from our market players, i.e. the customer relationship. But on the other hand, also from those for whom we are creating the decision proposals, so that we can then act based on these. In most cases it concerns the management or investors.

The decision-makers need a decision-making aid, because they need to understand what the chances of success are for our product. The business plan should illustrate the strategic market orientation and planning. Problems, analyses, potential and strategies, as well as the prospects of the business development, must be presented in an understandable and fact-based way because the decision-makers need to plan investments and understand and assess the risks. That is why we should also illustrate the dependencies on the market and identify other competitors.

The following graphic shows the results of the strategic work incorporated into the business plan.



As you can see, all the results of the analyses, the evaluation of the interviews as well as the strategies and figures derived flow into the business plan.

From the business plan, a compact decision proposal is created, usually a PowerPoint presentation for the management.

## GATE PROCESS

In many companies the release of a business plan and a product is divided into several stages, into so-called gates.

We have seen companies in which there are seven or more of these gates, i.e. steps up to the final product launch.

For the creation of a business plan we use two gates (steps) here as an example.

In step 1:

1. We identify the problems of the market
2. Quantify the frequency of these market problems with approx. 6 interviews
3. Identify the persona
4. Find out whether there is a willingness to pay for a solution to the problems
5. Check whether a solution belongs to our core competencies
6. Perform a rough analysis of the competition (number, strengths, significance)

From the results above, you create a so-called business proposal (17), submit it and then await the decision as to whether this business proposal is accepted or rejected.

For the business proposal you will receive a template from us - Document 17.

The reason for the creation of a business proposal (17) in the first step is that the creation of a complete business plan with all of the necessary analyses costs time and money, which in turn must be invested. So, for example, the time you have to invest for a full competitive analysis as part of your daily work is about 4 weeks.

If the business proposal is examined and the initial release for the completion of the business plan is issued, then comes:

Step 2:

7. Carry out more interviews
8. Conduct and complete all of the analyses
9. Derive the strategies
10. Add figures to the business plan

At the end you create a short decision proposal which is usually in the form of a PowerPoint presentation.

## CLASSIC BUSINESS PLAN - DOCUMENT 18

The classic business plan (18) is a document which already exists in many companies. It usually consists of several headings and a lot of gaps. The Product Managers write their results under these headings.

The classic business plan (18) is often structured as follows:

1. Summary or Executive Summary
2. Business Plan, i.e. Analysis and Results
3. Problems/Requirements
4. Go-To-Market strategy
5. Attachments

Document 18 gives you our template of such a classic business plan.

## AGILE BUSINESS PLAN™ – DOCUMENT 19

Over the years we have talked with many managing directors who have told us the following things about their Product Managers' business plans:

- The proposed decision templates do not provide the reasons and justification for investment
- A lack of confidence in the business plans because there is a lack of market facts and real market figures
- The market message provides customers with no real added value and it's difficult for customers to understand

The heads of Product Management departments have also told us:

- The decision templates are insufficient, because there is a lack of facts and market figures
- Investments and resources cannot be planned and cannot be justified for the management with the business plans submitted
- They have little confidence in the work of the Product Manager, since they lack market knowledge
- All this together leads to the motivation of the Product Management team not being at its best

As a cause for this dilemma we have found over the years that it is the form of the classic business plan which is to blame. Because of its form - headings with gaps - it encourages Product Managers, who have no market facts, to be able to write a lot of prose in the gaps.

This writing takes time and therefore money. Added to this is the fact that nobody really likes writing such a business plan.

And reading this classic business plan is also very time-consuming. And who enjoys reading the Product Manager's prose?

Since they only possess a few facts, they don't create any trust on the part of the reader.

But why do we still write business plans today? Because they are the necessary basis for decisions. That is why they are still required.

Since we knew about the problems of Top Management and the Head of Product Management, we decided to develop a different form of business plan which solves all of the problems. The result was the so-called Agile Business Plan - Document 19 - which you will receive during our training.

You will receive from us the Agile Business Plan (Document 19) to use as a tool, which provides the following benefits:

1. You write only brief, fact-based stories
2. The business plan is based on real market data, which can also be quickly checked by management
3. You only fill out specifications and no longer have to write out pages of prose
4. It's quick to complete because you answer questions, tick things off or fill out short tables
5. The Agile Business Plan can be reused and further developed
6. Adjustments are possible in just a few minutes, meaning that you can write a business plan within a very short period of time which can also be read quickly too
7. All the facts and open points are quickly recognised
8. If employees change, everything remains traceable because the data and facts are documented here
9. Trends can be derived even with small amounts of data, since the Agile Business Plan is 100% based on market facts
10. Top management can determine the level of confidence themselves because the database is visible

The Agile Business Plan template, which you will receive from us as Document 19, contains red text passages. These are the instructions for the completion of the template and you can delete them. Enter your information at the appropriate points in the document and then these are automatically transferred into the Executive Summary. Have a look at Document 19 in your own time in peace and quiet. You will notice that you can adjust all of the information to fit in with your current daily work. If you get new information, this can be added on and stored securely. The Agile Business Plan is your database in which you store all important business and strategy decisions and which can be adjusted at any time, i.e. it is flexible and agile. Which is incidentally how the Agile Business Plan got its name.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY FOR MANAGEMENT):

The Executive Summary, i.e. the summary and overview of the business plan, constitutes a challenge for most Product Managers. The executive summary is needed by top management as they prefer a short summary instead of a multi-page business plan.

The following are the points which an executive summary should contain.

These questions should be answered:

- What problem does the persona have? What bothers them, what annoys them?
- How and how much does the persona lose in time and money?
- Is the persona ready to pay for a solution to their problem?
- Why is it our particular expertise to create a solution?
- Who are our competitors and how many competitors are there?
- What is our strategy to beat competitors?
- How big is the market potential and what share do we expect?
- What are the risks and opportunities for the company?
- How is our sales and communication strategy and does it fit in with the information and purchasing behaviour of the purchase decision makers?
- What are the expected figures for the next few years?

## FINANCE AND FIGURES

When the business plan is created, it is expanded to include financial information and figures. The following figures should definitely be included:

- All relevant costs
- Company-specific cost allocations
- Prices, quantities and turnover
- Sales figures by sales channel
- Costs/margin per sales channel
- Profit and Loss per month
- Total of Profit and Loss
- Total investment required
- Time and duration until real profits are made

As an example you will receive an Excel table in the digital documents that you can download, which contains such a calculation of numbers.

We developed this Excel document for the so-called business case of a business plan for you together with

experienced top managers from German industry. The Excel table is based on many years of practical experience.

## SUMMARY OF BUSINESS PLAN

Let's summarise the topic of the business plan:

A business plan should always be a story with facts. An understandable story about a person which describes how this person loses time and/or money and what problems they have. It should also describe how urgent the problem is and how often it occurs. It should also clarify whether the person is ready to pay for a solution.

*Practical tip:*

Some hints for the presentation of the business plan:

Never use words like: "I believe", "I think", because these provide an opinion or presumption and give the impression that you do not possess market facts.

Use instead phrases such as: "Experience of the market has shown ..." or "In 25 of 30 customer interviews I have learned..."

Show the results of the analyses. The detailed analyses themselves serve as proof of their derivation, as evidence of where the results originate from.

Present the derived strategies. Show how the strategies were derived and where the findings come from. Go briefly into the figures of the business case and give a short outlook for the next few years.

If you have followed these points and used the Agile Business Plan for your work, then the confidence of the management increases in the decision proposals and the likelihood of success. Or to put it in the words of Jeff Bezos, CEO at Amazon Inc.:

*"The great thing about fact-based decisions is that they overrule the hierarchy."*

With just one click, you will receive a decision template as a presentation for management with the help of the Product Management Dashboard for JIRA.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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## PRODUCT VS. PROJECT

Again and again, we encounter a problem of understanding among product managers, but also in general in companies, which can best be formulated with the question: What is the difference between a product and a (customer) project from a Product Management perspective?

The following simple definitions reflect the difference:

*If you create or manufacture something specifically based on a customer's requirements, it is called a project.*

Definition product:

*Products are things that solve problems that are widespread as well as urgent in the market and for which there are several customers willing to pay for the solution.*

Conclusion:

A project is more like a commissioned work, for which it does not need a business plan. Likewise, it does not require further marketing of the result created for the customer.

In the case of a product, on the other hand, the entire market must be analyzed in detail, problems identified and their distribution determined. The results of all analyses must be presented and consolidated in a recognizable and comprehensible way. A business plan is typically used for this purpose. After deciding whether all necessary investments will be made, manufacturing *and* marketing take place.

## DEVELOP A "PRODUCT" FOR ONE CUSTOMER AND NOW SELL IT TO MANY CUSTOMERS, IS THAT POSSIBLE?

Time and again, product managers tell us that a "product" was developed by their company for a customer according to the customer's requirements. After successful completion, the company decides that it now wants to sell this "product" to a large number of other customers.

They then spend a while trying to sell the "product". In the end, the product managers then come to our training and want to learn from us how this "product" can now be successfully marketed.

You have learned about the definition of projects and products in the previous section.

Please briefly answer the following questions for yourself:

1. Is what is described as "product" a product or a project?
2. Why does the sale of the "product" to many other customers fail?

Have you answered these questions for yourself?

Good, now we will answer the questions together and you can check your answers.

If you answered in the first question that it is a project and not a product, then your answer is correct.

The reasons for the failure to sell to many other customers are as follows.

1. For successful marketing of a product, it is necessary to communicate which problems the product solves. The problems that are solved for the one customer are unknown, because one has only received requirements from the customer.
2. Based on these requirements the project was manufactured/developed for the customer.

3. Since the solved problems are unknown, *it is not possible to check* whether these problems are widespread.

To make it easier to understand, let's use the following example:

What the company made as an order for the one customer corresponds to a made-to-measure suit. Now the company tries to sell this tailor-made suit to many customers. Which would mean that all other market participants have the same measurements as the one customer.

We know from our experience that not all market participants have the same clothing size.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SELL THE PROJECT AS A PRODUCT AFTER ALL?

If the project absolutely must be sold as a product after all, here's what to do:

1. Find out which problems have been solved for this one customer.
2. Now find out whether these problems are widespread in the market.
3. Quantify with closed questions in the market if possible potential customers have these problems and how often.
4. Ask the potential customers if they would be willing to pay for a solution to the problems.

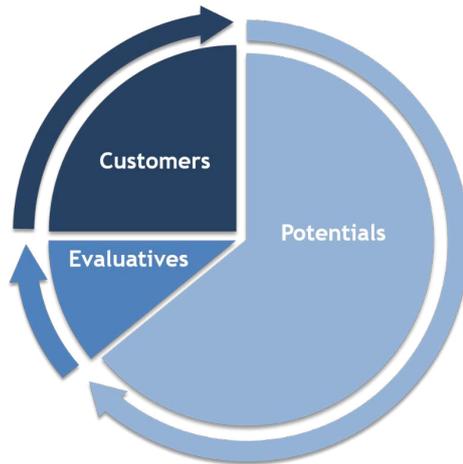
If it turns out that the problems are widespread and potential customers are willing to pay for solving the problems, then perform all further steps of the Open Product Management Workflow™ that follow the item "Identify Problems".

And please really do all the steps first before you try to sell the project as a product.

## DEFINITION OF CUSTOMER TYPES

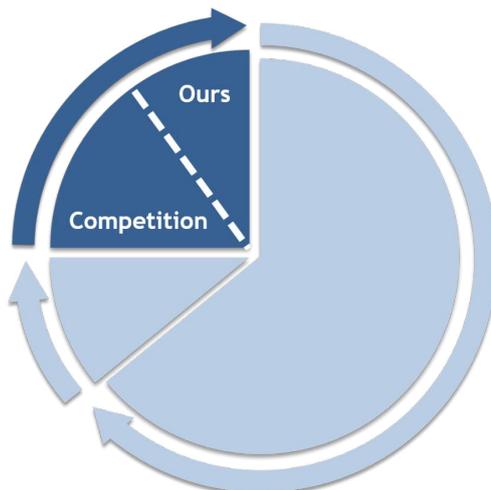
We usually speak about customers in our working life. But do we always mean the same customer? In the following section we will look again at the types that there really are. This definition is a prerequisite for the understanding of many things which are yet to be discussed. They are the prerequisite for the entire strategic and technical product management but also need to be understood for the Go-To-Market according to the Open Product Management Workflow.

According to our definition, there are three types of customers. First, we have the potential, the evaluative and finally the customer.



## CUSTOMERS

Let's start with the customers. According to our definition, they are our customers, but also those of the competition. Both have a common characteristic, namely that an existing market problem has been solved. Either their problem has been solved by us which has made them our customers. Or the market problem was solved by one of our competitors, which in turn makes them our competitors' customers.



With regard to the customer, there is always the question of which new problems we can solve for them in order to get new revenues. For our competitors' customers, the question is how we can help them to change over to us. It is important to note that in the event of a change, investments from our side may be necessary, i.e. if we help a customer to switch over to us, data may have to be migrated or entire systems will need to be replaced.

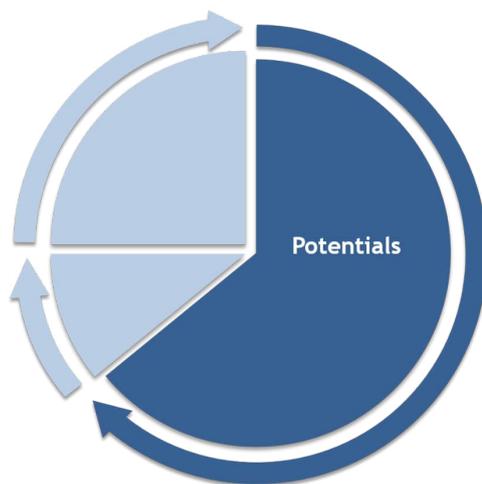
A simple example is the change of the telephone service provider for a mobile phone. Previously, you had to pay the new or the old mobile phone provider to port your number over. Nowadays, the new provider offers the option to take on these costs in the form of a credit note. Costs therefore arise for the new provider that they take on for the customer. As such, you should always ask the questions: is it worth the investment? Is it worthwhile for us to allow the customer a change or is it more interesting to for us to reach so-called potential customers?

We know our customers well. Sales always maintains active contact with them. Customers also get in touch with Service and thus provide information on our existing products. Depending on the business model, customers are the turnover of the past or the current turnover.

But there are also cases in which existing customers can become potential customers again, such as when they experience changes which create a problem that has not yet been resolved. Such a change could be, for example, a work process which has changed over the years.

## POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS

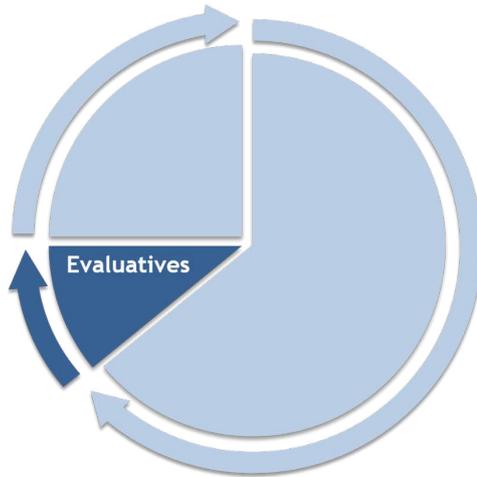
Potential customers are the type for whom neither we nor the competition have solved a market problem, or the possible solution to their problem is not yet known by the potential customer. Here the following questions arise: do we know their problems, and do we solve them? Do they know about our solution? And why aren't they buying it?



The potential customers are still anonymous, i.e. neither Sales nor Service speaks with them. It is therefore the task of Product Management to find these types of customers and talk to them as they are the best source of information for future products. They are the sales of the distant future. The proportion of potential customers makes up the largest share in most markets.

## EVALUATIVE CUSTOMERS

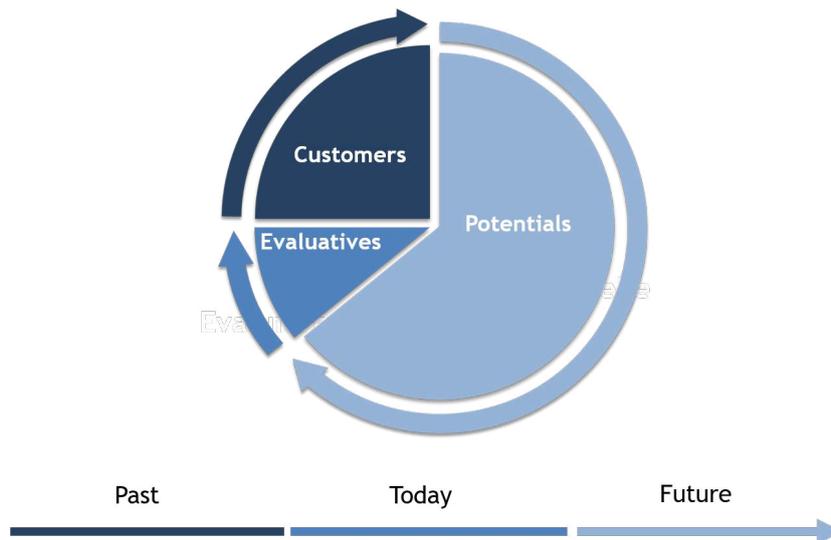
The third group are the so-called evaluative customers.



This group already knows what their problem is, they are looking for a solution and evaluating various solutions - hence the name evaluative customers. Often, our Sales teams are in contact with them. Since these customers are still reviewing which of the products they will buy, they are also a good source for a later win/loss analysis because here the question arises as to why they bought from us or even why they didn't. We can also learn from them what problem our product solved for them or what it didn't. They can also tell us whether the solution that our product offers is worth the price being charged. Since our Sales are in contact with this type of customer, we find the contact data is often in our CRM under Interested Parties. As the evaluative customers have not yet bought, but are considered Interested Parties shortly before the decision is made, they generate sales in the near future. Evaluative customers are the smallest of the three groups.

Marketing activities of companies frequently only address existing or evaluative customers.

A correlation that we need again later is the dependence of the turnover of the type of customers.



To repeat: customers are, depending on the business model, the turnover of the past or of the current turnover. Evaluative customers are today's turnover or the turnover of the near future. Potential customers are the sales of the distant future.

So if you want to shape the future, then conduct interviews with potential customers.

## CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS (INTERVIEW MARKET)

The interview is the first and most important building block in the Open Product Management Workflow™. The most important task of a Product Manager is to conduct interviews with every type of customer. If you don't do that, all future further steps will only be based on conjecture, which in turn leads to numerous discussions and time-consuming meetings.

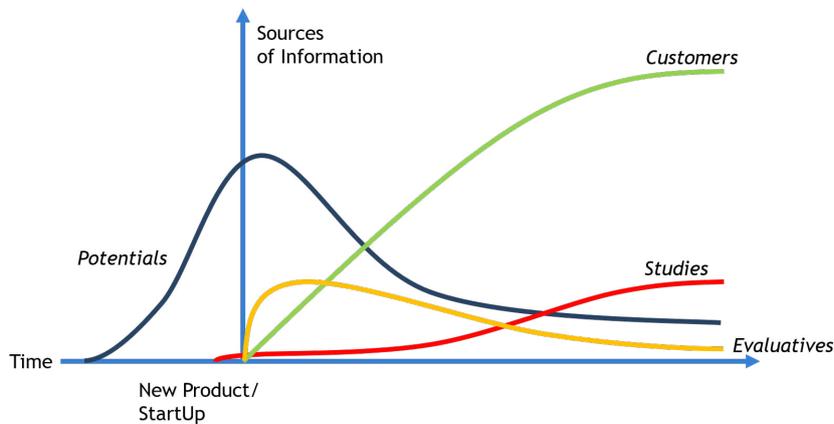
Interviews are important in order to generate market facts, which enhance your reputation and your credibility as a Product Manager in the business.

Over the years we have observed that Product Managers use events to talk, however the information received is not recorded. Often there is no structure in the questioning because the majority of Product Managers do not know what information they need to evaluate this later so that strategies can be derived.

What we have also observed in the last few years is that companies establish so-called feedback channels but that these aren't used by Product Managers, i.e. the Product Managers have a look at them now and then but don't use the opportunity in turn to get into contact with these customers from their side, even though these customers willingly got in touch and are a good source of information.

## TYPICAL SOURCES FOR INFORMATION FROM COMPANIES

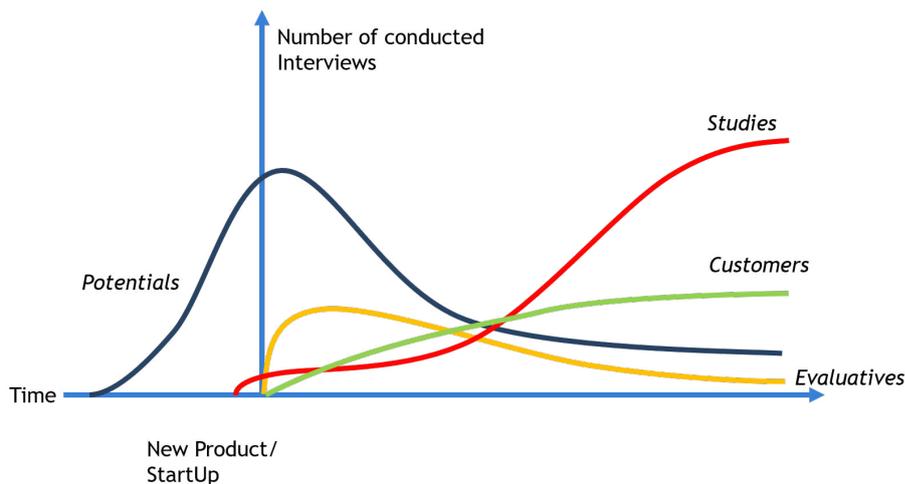
The following diagram shows how the information is typically used in a company.



In a startup, you often talk with a lot of potential customers at the beginning. Later, a share of the potential customers converts to evaluative customers who are testing the product. Of these, in turn, a certain number is in contact with Customer Service, therefore in contact with us. This often means that more and more people talk to the customers because the other departments in our company also talk mainly with customers or evaluative customers, as we have just learned. So, Sales communicates with customers or evaluative customers. Customer support and Customer Service speak to existing customers as the majority of them get in touch about service requests. If Product Management also spoke to both of these two groups, it would become 'over engineering' and we would not generate any significant increase of market share.

## TYPICAL SOURCES OF PRODUCT MANAGERS IN ESTABLISHED COMPANIES

The following graphic shows how the typical information sources for Product Managers look in established companies.



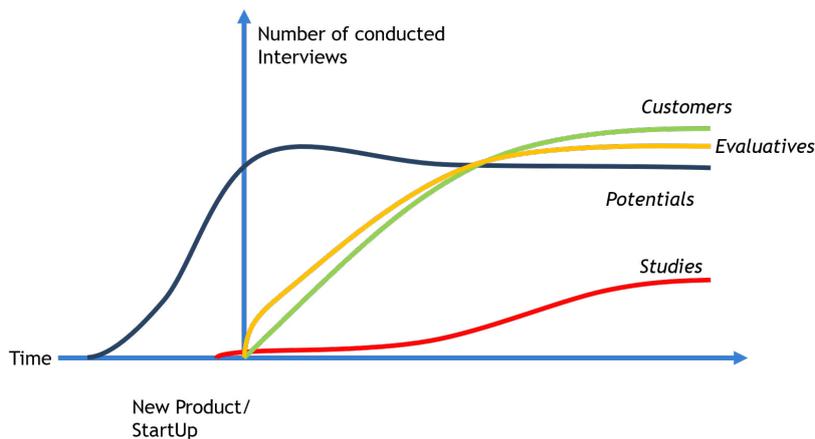
Here is what it looks like when Product Managers join a company. They will talk with some customers, less with evaluative and even less with potentials. Often the Product Managers depend on studies or complain when the company can't provide any studies. These Product Managers often have the problem of determining the size of the market potential which most strategies can usually not explain and certainly can't derive

anything from. Within the company, they struggle to communicate to other departments and the management what they see as being unclear positioning, for example on websites and in advertising.

We agree with Adrian Slywotsky, who writes in his book "The art of profitability":

*"You'll learn more from a one-hour meeting with a customer than you can from 50 research studies or analyst reports."*

The optimal distribution of the sources of information should therefore appear as shown in the following graphic, i.e. a balanced relationship between conversations with customers, evaluative customers and potentials, but studies can also be incorporated into our results.



## HOW DO I FIND OUT AND LEARN SOMETHING FROM THE MARKET?

Product Managers always want to know from us: How and what should I actually ask about? Should I enquire directly about the customers' wishes, so just ask what they want to have?

Our simple answer here is: Give the customer what they want, what they wish for and then something happens which Henry Ford once put so wonderfully:

*"If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses."*

You have to find out what bothers customers, what annoys them and, above all, what costs them time and/or money. Customers enjoy telling you - if you listen to them attentively, you'll be able to discern these points. Further questions could be: "Why is that?", "How did that come about?" as well as "Please tell us more about it." You should also begin to monitor the situation to see how things are going.

When you carry out interviews on the market:

Appear confident as a Product Manager!

Introduce yourself as a Product Manager, because Product Managers are welcome. Say truthfully: "I'm not selling anything.", "I'm just researching the market ..., that's why I'd like to understand how or what ....." The customer then knows that you are not a salesperson and will talk to you openly.

**Therefore, whenever possible, go to such discussions without Sales being present.** With potential customers that's not a problem because our Sales department only speaks to our existing and evaluative customers.

Occasionally, participants from our training courses tell us that Sales have reservations if Product Management goes to see "their" customers.

1. Explain to Sales that it will help them in the future and make the sales process easier if you as a Product Manager can understand the customers' problems as well as possible, because then you can find the optimal solution and the unique added value can be communicated to the customer more clearly.
2. When you speak to potential customers you will never be in conflict with Sales because, as we have already learned in the definition of the types of customers, Sales speaks with existing customers and evaluative customers.

## THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - DOCUMENT 2

If you hold discussions with market participants, you should without a doubt write down what you find out. Use our interview protocol which you will receive as Document 2.

Refer to the points in the interview protocol (Document 2) as you will need this information for all further steps.

The interview protocol is the basis for everything beyond here.

Here are a few tips for the interviews:

- Prepare well and always start with an open agenda
- Let your interview partner tell you what they want to say and listen well so that you can find out the things they find annoying and/or time-consuming.
- Question the exact situation so that you better understand the interrelationships because this information must later be passed on to your colleagues.
- If necessary, drill down further to understand further problems or the core issue and document the findings. Ask open questions so that your interview partner is in a narrative mode
- Always remember: The conversation is not a sales conversation and/or consultation!
- Be open and don't specify any solutions
- Avoid influencing questions, such as: "Do(n't) you agree that..."
- Never link questions in a sentence using "and", e.g. "Did you think our restaurant was great and did the food taste good?" What should the response be if the restaurant was great but the food wasn't?
- Avoid asking for values in percentages, but instead ask questions in whole numbers, e.g. instead of "What percentage of your working day ...?", ask "How many hours of your working day....?"
- Do not discuss if the product is criticised or if the competition is praised, just listen carefully as this is a real market opinion!
- Do not advise the customer and don't immediately think about a solution to the customer's reported problem. Listen instead to the issue to properly understand it. The problem will be solved later because you are not a consultant, adviser or engineer, you're a Product Manager!
- It is essential to write down what you experienced
- Make notes during the interviews on a piece of paper
- After the interview, transfer the important things onto the interview protocol (Document 2), which you have received from us
- If there is any initial uncertainty, two of you should go to such discussions so that one asks the questions and the other writes down the answers. You can therefore also review and coach each other!

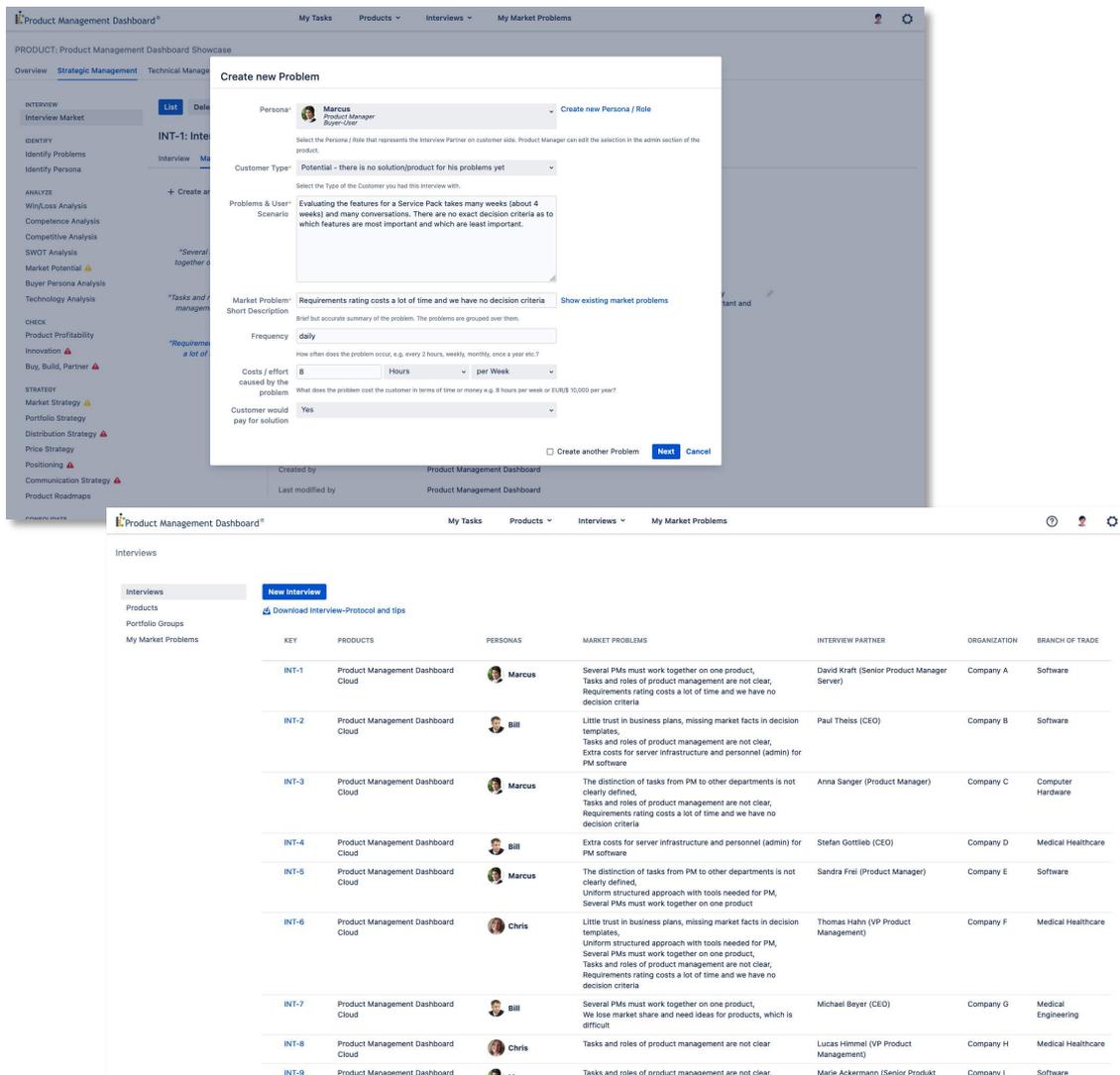
What you can find out from questions as well as listening and what information can help you further:

- Are there time-consuming and/or annoying things and if yes, what are they?
- How is the problem being resolved today?

- How often does the problem occur?
- How much time and/or money is the problem costing?
- Is the interview partner ready to pay for a solution to their problem?
- How does the purchasing of new solutions take place?
- Who is involved in the purchasing process and who influences it directly?
- What criteria has every person involved in the purchasing process got?
- Does the interview partner know our company/product?
- What is the difference to our competitors?
- What do they find is good about our company/product and what isn't?
- What does the interview partner think about our competition?

Important: Write down the results of your conversation and transfer the information into the interview protocol (Document 2), which you have received from us.

In order to file away the information from the various interviews in an organised manner and for easier and time-saving further processing of the information from the various interviews, the software we developed can also be used.



Structured input of interviews and list of interviews as well as market issues stored in the Product Management Dashboard for Jira.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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## SOURCES FOR CONVERSATION PARTNERS

You can find interview partners for the different customer types under the following sources:

Potential customers:

- Trade fairs and specialised conferences
- Events of professional associations and trade guilds
- Friends and Family
- Anywhere where there is a potential market

Existing and evaluative customers:

- Feedback channels, support and service requests
- Customer database, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software
- Customer training courses
- User groups and round tables
- Trade fairs and specialised conferences
- Events of professional associations and trade guilds

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## USING THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

A cost-effective way to collect information is the feedback from customers, therefore allow customers to give feedback on the product or service.

The benefits of customer feedback are:

- Obtaining cost-effective information
- More uncomplicated contact
- Increased customer loyalty when customers see that their feedback affects the products

The feedback channels should be designed in such a way that proposals can also be submitted by category. The establishment of a clear structure makes the evaluation much easier. An example is the website [www.userresponse.com](http://www.userresponse.com), which many companies use so that customers can store their feedback in a structured manner.

When contacting customers who have given feedback, please note:

- Ask questions and listen
- No sales talk or consultations
- Accept criticism and be friendly when doing so
- Also, thank them for criticism: "Thank you, your feedback certainly helps us."

Try to ask for information in the interview which is mentioned above and in the interview protocol (2).

Record the results again in the interview protocol.

## SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

If you want to conduct surveys via telephone or via the web, the following steps should be applied:

- Before you create a survey or poll, answer the following questions:
  - What will we do with the information obtained?
  - What will the results change?
- When preparing the questions, think about what you want to achieve with the results of the responses, i.e. how you want to and will be able to further process the information received.
- Test surveys/polls in a small environment and check whether you learn what you want to know through the answers you are given. Tip: First, test internally as it's quick and requires little effort.
- Bear in mind the tips used for interviews here too, such as avoiding influencing questions, linking questions with "and", as well as asking for percentage-based answers rather than whole-numbered values.

Only good questions generate good data.

SelfBackup example:

At this point we would like to introduce our example product, "SelfBackup", which we have been developing for our persona Claudia and we want to show you how the product came about.

Further throughout the course, you will learn more about the market problems which will be solved with the product, as well as about our persona, Claudia.

We conducted 30 interviews over six months in the market for SelfBackup. How would it look with your own product? How many interviews have you conducted? Enter your own values under "Your Product".

## Interviews



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of interviews:	30 (1/2 year)	

## IDENTIFYING THE MARKET PROBLEMS (IDENTIFY PROBLEMS)

The aim of this section is to show you how to identify the current market problems and review them.

In order to identify market problems, the following requirement applies:

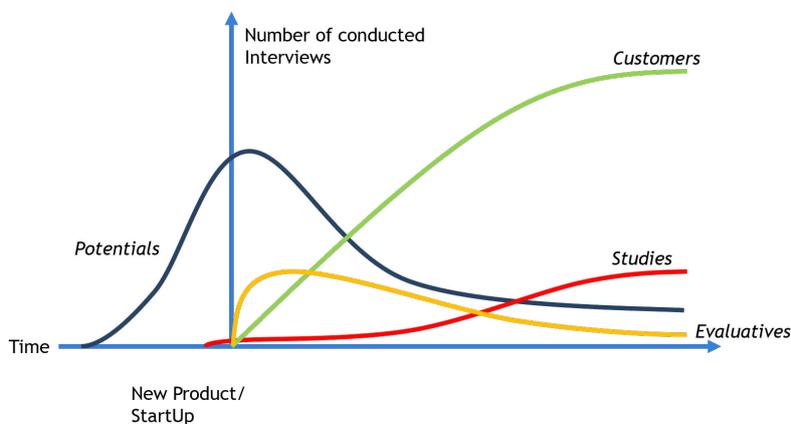
*Get out of your office and conduct interviews! You won't learn about the current market problems if you're sitting at your desk!*

Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that the information you get from them is evenly distributed and comes from the three different types of customers.

### OVER-ENGINEERING

In practice, we experience again and again that most of the information comes from existing customers. This is due to the fact that they get in touch with Support/Service and that Sales also usually speaks with existing customers. We as Product Managers also speak to these types of customers, for example at in-house fairs. If existing customers make up the overwhelming majority of our sources of information for identifying problems, then it leads to so-called "over-engineering". The product is therefore enriched with additional functionalities that the customers want which they have already bought and paid for (of course depending on the business model). It is usually only a few existing customers who need these additional functionalities and a lot of extra effort is expended for this.

The graph below shows what leads to over-engineering depending on the distribution of sources of the three customer types.



The Interview Matrix tool (Document 4), which we will provide you with, will help you to incorporate a relatively uniform integration of the three different customer types in the identification of market problems and to avoid 'over-engineering'.

### INTERVIEW MATRIX - DOCUMENT 4

The Interview Matrix (Document 4) which you receive in our training helps you to:

- Question the market in a balanced way and avoid 'over-engineering'
- Get an overview of who you have already asked
- Show the market segments in which interviews were conducted

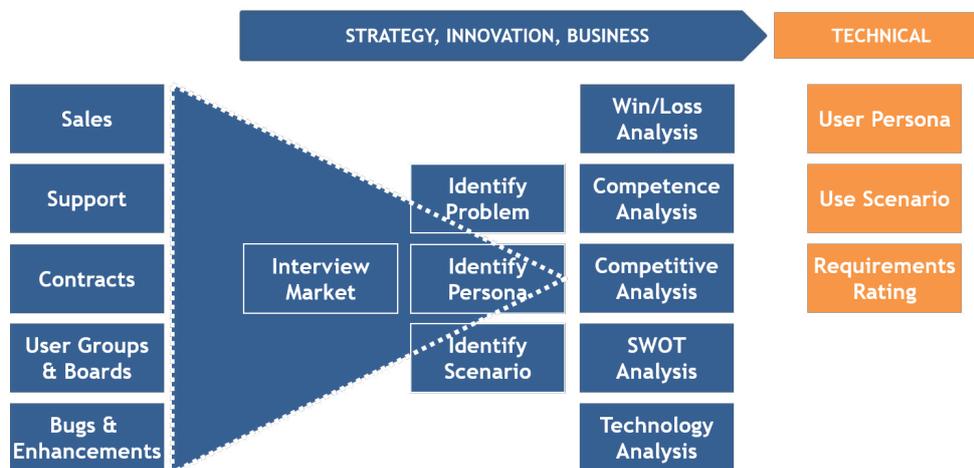
## IDENTIFY, CONSOLIDATE AND REVIEW MARKET PROBLEMS

To identify market trends and problems you have various options. You can use all of the listed options and sources for interviews from the Interviews section to review market problems. For trends, you can rely on surveys, studies and market research results.

Identify	How?
Problems	Interviews, Feedback, Focus Groups <b>Open questions! What? Why is that? ...</b>
Trends	Market Research, Studies

In addition to the problems that you identify as a Product Manager for (potential) customers, with the help of *open questions*, there are also numerous reports of problems from another department in your company or from Sales and Technology partners. So, for example, Sales reports requirements or problems from (existing, evaluative) customers. Support also notifies you of things where customers have a problem with your product. Figuratively speaking, you can say that all the problems and requirements that exist anywhere should be tipped into a funnel and be assessed when they come out of the bottom in line with market requirements.

## Sources of Problems



You can learn in our course "Technical Product Management" how you assess and sort problems in line with market requirements.

Now that market problems and trends have been identified and consolidated, the results need to be reviewed. You need to find out how often problems as well as trends are found and how urgent these have been classified as, because our objective is:

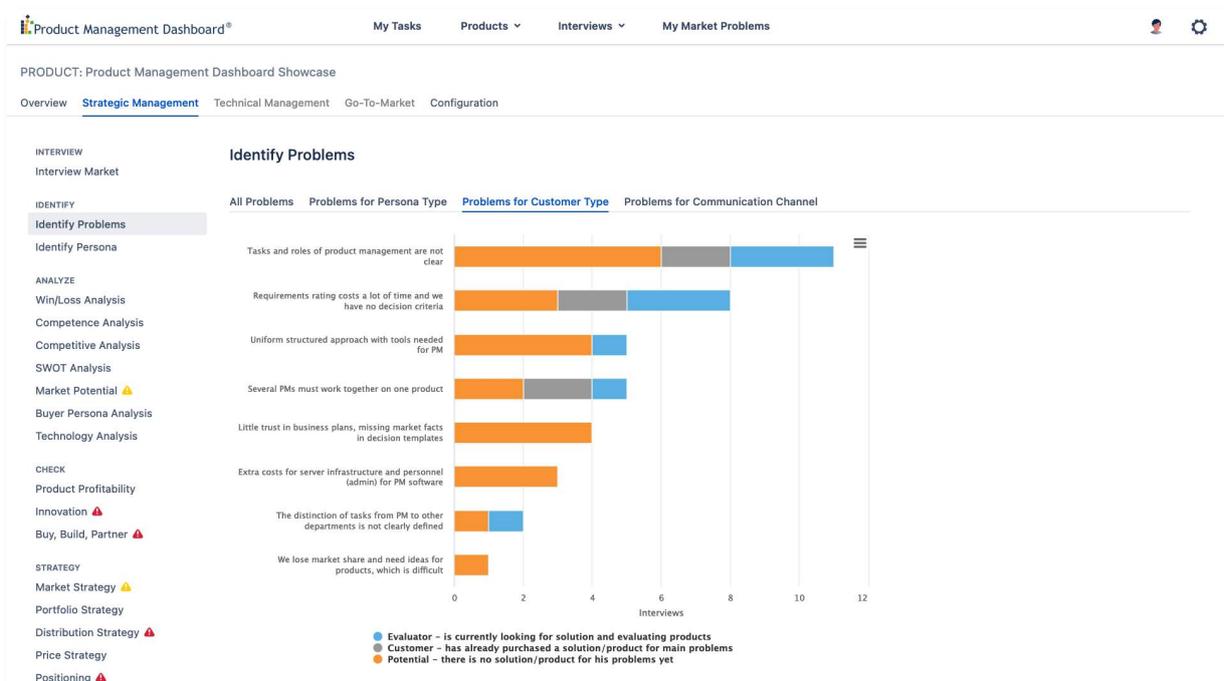
To only solve market problems,

1. Where there is a widespread distribution
2. Whose solution is urgent
3. Where there is a willingness to pay for their solution

In order to examine whether problems occur often, if they are widespread and/or urgent, we use, for example, telephone or web-based surveys as methods. To see whether trends from studies are real trends, we can in turn find out using interviews, surveys or with so-called prototypes. (You can learn more on the subject of prototypes in our course "Technical Product Management".)

Check	How?
Frequency, Urgency	Surveys, Web Polls <b>Closed questions! Do you have the following problem? ...</b>
Trends	Interviews, Surveys, Pretotype

The circulation and distribution of market problems can also be evaluated using product management software.



Evaluate market issues by various criteria using the Product Management Dashboard e.g., evaluation by customer type.

## QUANTIFY - HOW MANY INTERVIEWS?

We are often asked how many interviews you should conduct. In practice it has been shown that very good trends already begin to appear after 6 interviews. Our experience is confirmed by UX specialists (User Experience) through studies, because their results arise from only 5 interviews which reveal a very good, rough trend.

You should therefore note:

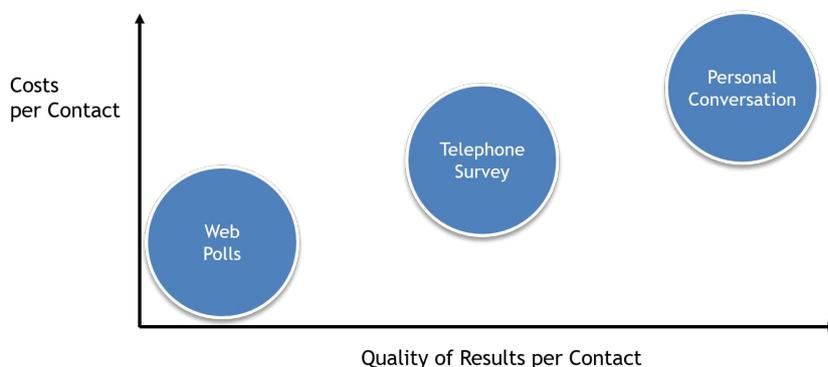
1. Interview some customers, approx. 6-10, but balance them out well; use the Interview Matrix (Document 4)
2. Identify new market problems from these interviews
3. Verify and quantify the result of the interviews by polling a large number of people using surveys

As a Product Manager, you will only be successful if:

1. Regular interviews are carried out
2. Market problems are identified from the interviews
3. The results are checked on the market

## TYPES OF SURVEY VS QUALITY

As already mentioned, there are a variety of options in surveying, such as web polls, telephone surveys or the personal conversation, for example. In the following section we will briefly show you what the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of survey are.



## WEB POLL

### Advantage

- Many people are polled at as low a cost as possible

### Disadvantage

- Difficult, few questions and getting the right information
- By default, you rarely get the true "Why?"
- "You don't know what you don't know."

## TELEPHONE SURVEY

### Advantage

- Many surveys possible
- Call centre can record questions/feedback, fast improvement possible

### Disadvantage

- More elaborate preparation
- Difficult, few questions and getting the right information
- By default, you rarely get the true "Why?"
- "You don't know what you don't know."

## PERSONAL QUESTIONING

### Advantage

- Question, conduct and listen
- Immediate response and enquiries possible
- Information
- More precise
- Opportunity: Learn something you hadn't thought of until now

### Disadvantage

- Lower number of respondents

Practical tip for quarterly and annual targets and budget:

Embed a certain number of interviews in the quarterly or annual targets so that you always link back to them. For example, if colleagues react strangely to frequent business trips or when it comes to Product Management getting a budget for travel and tools.

SelfBackup example:

From the interviews for our SelfBackup product, the following detailed descriptions of the market problems arose:

*Claudia's laptop was faulty and all her pictures and other data were lost forever. Until now, she hadn't had a data backup because it took too long and was laborious and to copy photos she always had to connect a USB hard drive to her laptop. She does not understand technologies such as NAS and finds this too complicated. Claudia's wish is for an automatic regular backup of her pictures and data as soon as her laptop is opened.*

*Photo software from CEWE crashes very often and the photo albums she created previously can no longer be used and edited. That's why Claudia saves the album every hour under several names.*

*A restorable backup which is created automatically every hour would save Claudia a lot of time.*

*With most of the programmes for data backup, we have the following problem: if you want to restore individual files, you can only do this by selecting by file name. The pictures are not recognised in the file name. So you have to first restore all the pictures and then re-delete the superfluous images.*

*Claudia would buy a fully-automated data backup immediately, but at the moment there is no solution.*

The following top market problems arose from the interviews:

## Top Market Problems



### Product: SelfBackup

1. Regular automatic Backup
2. Wireless Backup (no NAS)
3. Backup starts as soon as laptop is open
4. Space saving of more data versions
5. Data preview (images, Word-documents) before restoration

Here is the image for our checklist:

## Identify Persona



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of interviews:	30 (1/2 year)	
Top-5 problems known & documented?	Yes	
How many people have that problem?	24	
Persona:	Claudia: User-Buyer	

## IDENTIFYING PERSONAS (IDENTIFY PERSONA)

Another thing which is identified in interviews and which is required for many other steps is the persona.

What actually is a persona? What is the Persona Concept?

A persona is a stereotype for a group of people with specifically distinctive characteristics and specific behaviour.

Personas are created using features which are identified in interviews, for example, or in other observations made by customers. *As many personas as necessary and as few as possible* are developed to cover the appropriate behaviours.

The persona concept helps:

- To get a better understanding of the different types of market participants.
- To summarize the different characteristics of a group of people and to reflect them in an exemplary person (persona).
- To simplify the communication considerably, because with the persona I also transport all characteristics without having to express them.

## BUYER AND USER PERSONAS - DOCUMENT 5

Both types of personas which are important to us for the course are the buyer persona, the user persona and buyer-user persona.

Buyer Persona:

By buyer persona we mean all those personas who are involved in the decision on the purchase. We must therefore present the benefits and added values for the respective buyer persona. In the chapter Buyer Persona Analysis, we will go into this in more detail.

User Persona:

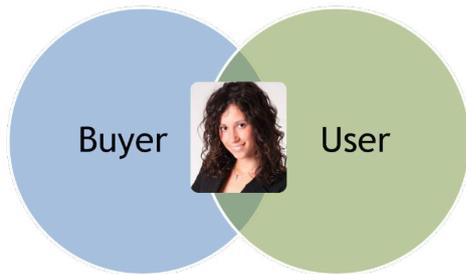
The user persona is the persona for whom we are solving the problem and who will later use our product or our service.

Buyer personas and user personas can be different. For dog food, for example, the person is the buyer persona as they are the one buying the food. The dog is the user persona as it is the one that eats the food, and therefore is the one that uses it. As you can see, animals can also be used as a persona.

Buyer-User Persona:

But there are also situations in which the buyer persona and user persona are one and the same person. If the persona Claudia goes to buy herself some shoes, for example, she makes the decision about the purchase. As Claudia is also the one who will be using the shoes, she is therefore also the user persona.

Claudia decides on the purchase and also uses the product, she is therefore the buyer persona as well as the user persona. As such, we call her a Buyer-User Persona.



Definition:

*Solve the problems for the user persona. Explain the added value for the buyer persona.*

Persona - Document 5:

You will receive Document 5 in our training as an example of a persona. It shows you a user buyer-persona from the B2C environment.

---

## TYPICAL PERSONAS IN THE BUSINESS TO CONSUMER (B2C) ENVIRONMENT

In the B2C environment, the roles are generally clearly assigned which leads to numerous buyer-user personas as seen in the example above. In families, on the other hand, there are often clear divisions between parents and children. All the members of the family are usually user personas of the usual things in the household, like the TV for instance. Whereas the buyer persona of a TV is rather limited to the parents unless the children are those who earn the money and decide the budget.

But it is important that the user persona is included in the decision-making process because if they cannot use the product, it becomes a poor purchase.

Practical example:

The microwave in our house broke. This appliance sits on a small table in our kitchen which has a relatively smooth wood veneer surface.

After a short search I, the father of the family, bought a new microwave and simply exchanged it for the old one. Shortly afterwards, I heard from the kitchen: "The new microwave doesn't work. We can't use it because we can't get it open."

Now, what was going on? The kids were pulling on the new microwave's door handle and the appliance almost slipped from the table because the surface underneath it was too smooth.

Our old microwave didn't have a handle to pull, it opened at the push of a button. As such, the microwave did not move because it stood against the wall and the door just sprang open.

The new appliance was packed back up again and replaced by one in the design of the old microwave. Had I as the buyer persona better observed the user personas of the kids and involved them in the decision in good time, we would have been spared this poor purchase.

---

## TYPICAL PERSONAS IN THE BUSINESS TO BUSINESS (B2B) ENVIRONMENT

In the B2B environment it is usually quite clear with the persona, because they go out of the house every morning to work and slip into their role in the company, for example as the CEO, CTO, in Sales, in Controlling, in Engineering etc. These roles are comparable and present in most companies and their tasks are also similar in most businesses.

A user persona in the company is any employee who uses the product.

A buyer persona in a company is every person who is a co-decision maker in the purchasing process. These can be technical departments such as IT, but also economic decision-makers such as department heads or management. This is dependent on the financial volume or on the scope of the decision for the company.

## IDENTIFY ALL PERSONA INVOLVED

Personas are an important method for us product managers. It is important to understand:

1. What roles and types of people are using the product and are involved in the purchase decision throughout the buying process?
2. Who is the user of the product?
3. Who has influence on the purchase decision?
4. Or who is user and at the same time has influence on the purchase decision?

Therefore, we introduce a simple and highly effective tool, a table that helps you identify all the personas for your product.

First, create the following table, whether on paper or on the computer, it doesn't matter.

Envision the entire sales process of the product, including all influencers, middlemen, assemblers, etc. up to the end customer.

Now put yourself in the role of the potential customers and look at the purchasing process from their point of view. If necessary, add new roles and personas.

Second, assign the roles in the relevant row in the table.

It is recommended to do this with the entire product management team, to ensure that everyone has the same understanding and nothing has been forgotten.

For example, for a product management software, this may look like this:

Buyer (has influence on purchase decision)	User
Product Management	
Head of Product Management	
Management	Marketing
IT Department	Sales
Purchasing Department	Development

If you work as a supplier, this table lengthens because for each company that sells or installs your product, the personas must be broken down into personas that.

- a) **Process, install or otherwise use** the product (User Persona).
- b) Are involved in the decision-making process to buy the product. This can be a technical, legal, price or processability, installation and usability evaluation (Buyer Persona).
- c) To who points **a) and b) apply** (Buyer-User Persona)

### Example:

The Hörmann company offers an additional part for the remote control of its garage doors, a WLAN gateway. This WLAN gateway is used to integrate the garage doors from Hörmann into the SmartHome concept of a house.

We have introduced the Persona method with Hörmann and analysed their entire buying process with users, influencers and buyers.

The end customer is the homeowner, usually a private person.

There are various ways for the homeowner to get the WLAN gateway for his garage door.

1. The homeowner buys the WLAN gateway himself on the Internet and installs it himself.
2. He commissions an electrical company to buy and install a WLAN gateway.
3. He buys a new garage door from a metal dealer who installs it including the WLAN gateway.
4. He hires an architect and planner to design and build a new garage, including the garage door and its WLAN gateway.

The entire buying process must be considered.

Hörmann distribution sells to -> wholesaler. Wholesaler sells to -> metal dealer and electrical company.

Architect and planner commission -> metal dealer and/or electrical company.

Now all persons are listed who:

- a) Influence the purchase by the end customer.
- b) Influence the purchase of the WLAN gateway in the respective company.
- c) Install and set up the WLAN gateway.
- d) Use the WLAN gateway to open and close the garage door.

Buyer (has influence on purchase decision)	User (uses or install)
Homeowner/End Customer	
Hörmann Sales	
Purchase manager from internet retailer	
Purchase manager from wholesaler	
Purchase manager from metal dealer	
Installer at metal dealer	
Purchase manager from electrical company	
Installer at electrical company	
Architect	
Planner	

The task is then to set up the personas, either with our template Document 5 or within the Product Management Dashboard.

With interviews, the following must be found out and assigned to the persona:

- 1) User-Persona: problems and use scenarios
- 2) Buyer-Persona: decision criteria, information channels, purchasing channels, payment methods
- 3) Buyer-User Persona: all points under 1) and 2)

SelfBackup example:

You will find a detailed description of the persona Claudia, who is used as an example, in the document provided in our course material.

Here is the image for the checklist:

## Identify Persona



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of interviews:	30 (1/2 year)	
Top-5 problems known & documented?	Yes	
How many people have that problem?	24	
Persona:	Claudia: User-Buyer	

The screenshot shows the 'User Persona' section of the Product Management Dashboard. It features two profiles: Chris, Head of Product Management (VP), and Marcus, Product Manager. Both are categorized as 'Buyer Type / User Type Advanced'. Chris's main goals include creating a successful product portfolio, motivating the team, and increasing the company's reputation. Marcus's main goals focus on manufacturing and marketing successful products, bringing products to market that excite customers, and maintaining a balanced work-life balance.

### User-Persona in Product Management Dashboard



Evaluation of the interviews conducted per month and customer type in the Product Management Dashboard.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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## IDENTIFYING THE SCENARIOS (IDENTIFY SCENARIO)

Another important component for our ongoing work is the scenario. We especially need it in the "Technical Product Management" section where we also go into more detail.

The scenario describes exactly when a problem occurs. In physics lessons we called it "the description of the design of the experiment", i.e. the environment in which everything happens.

In the Persona section I cited the example with the microwave. I described the structure or the scenario in detail - with the kitchen table, the slippery surface and the kids who pulled the handle. It was therefore understandable when and how the problem occurred.

At this point it is important to understand that the scenario must be described as accurately as possible in the interview protocols, because this leads to fewer queries later on and helps the engineers to understand the problem exactly.

SelfBackup example:

You will find a detailed description of the scenario for our example product SelfBackup under the point "Identifying market problems".

### Identify Scenario



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of interviews:	30 (1/2 year)	
Top-5 problems known & documented?	Yes	
How many people have that problem?	24	
Persona:	Claudia: User-Buyer	
Szenario known & documented?	Yes	

## WIN/LOSS ANALYSIS – DOCUMENT 6

The aim of the win/loss analysis is to understand *why customers do or don't buy* the product and which marketing and sales materials were used for it. With that we want to find out whether our communication to the market was understood or whether our market message, as well as the materials, must be adapted accordingly.

When we ask the participants in our training sessions: "Who does the win/loss analysis in your company?", the response we often get is: "Sales".

Is Sales really the right department to be finding out why business was won or lost?

What happens when we ask Sales why they have or haven't won some business? What will they say?

Participants in our training courses very quickly come to the answer Sales gives, because they know them from their day-to-day working lives. What do you think?

Colleagues from Sales always have the same arguments as to why they haven't won business:

- a) Our price is much too high. We are too expensive.
- b) Our product is crap. We have a lot less to offer than the competition.

If Sales has won business and has to explain how it came about, we often hear: "Because I'm such a great salesman."

Do the above answers help you in analysing why you have or haven't won business? Of course not. That's why Sales is not the right department to carry out the win/loss analyses.

Objectives of the win/loss analyses are the task of Product Management.

Optimal results for win/loss analysis are obtained by interviewing evaluative customers after they have decided for or against the product. Which customers have been won or not are something we can learn from Sales.

So ask Sales Management and the sales channels:

- Which product it is
- For the contact information and a customer contact
- What was the "superficial" justification and what sales materials were used
- In order not to jeopardise business, wait until the negotiations are completed

Practical tip:

If you are carrying out a win/loss analysis for the first time, begin with the acquired business. That makes things simpler because it deals with customers. Sales would also rather give out the contact data for these.

In general, the topic of Product Management at the customer is an often hotly debated topic in our training courses, because it often seems that Sales want to keep their colleagues away from the customer. Simply because they see them as *their* customer and not as that of the company.

Our tip: Speak to your colleagues in Sales and explain the advantage they will get from a win/loss analysis. Explain that you want to check whether the added values as well as the reasoning currently communicated is understood on the market, and that you want to improve these, where appropriate, in all marketing and sales materials. As a result, Sales can sell faster without having to answer lots of queries.

As a second step, contact the evaluative customers and use our template of a win/loss analysis to document your findings - Document 6. Answer the following questions with the help of the customer statements:

- Why did we win or lose?
- What problem did the customer want to solve?
- Were we able to solve the problem for the customer?
- What does the customer see as the strengths and weaknesses of our product and company?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the competition from the point of view of the customer?
- Who influences the decision-making and purchasing process at the customer and who are the key decision-makers?
- What are the main criteria for the decision-makers?
- How does the decision-making and purchasing process look at the customer and how does it work?
- How long does such a decision-making process typically take?
- What are the sources of information used by the individual decision-makers?

- Are the added values as well as our arguments used in our communications and sales materials understood?

Note:

*Review the sales process and not the work of your colleagues in Sales!*

Please note: With Document 6 you will receive a normal and short version of a win/loss analysis. If you would like to carry out a detailed win/loss analysis, you can put together questions from Document 6a. Document 6a contains many more questions which we ask you to please not use in its entirety, but only use in excerpts as analysis.

In the case of Win/Loss analysis, the type of survey you choose also has an influence on the quality of your results. You can find more details about this in the section "Identifying problems".

SelfBackup example:

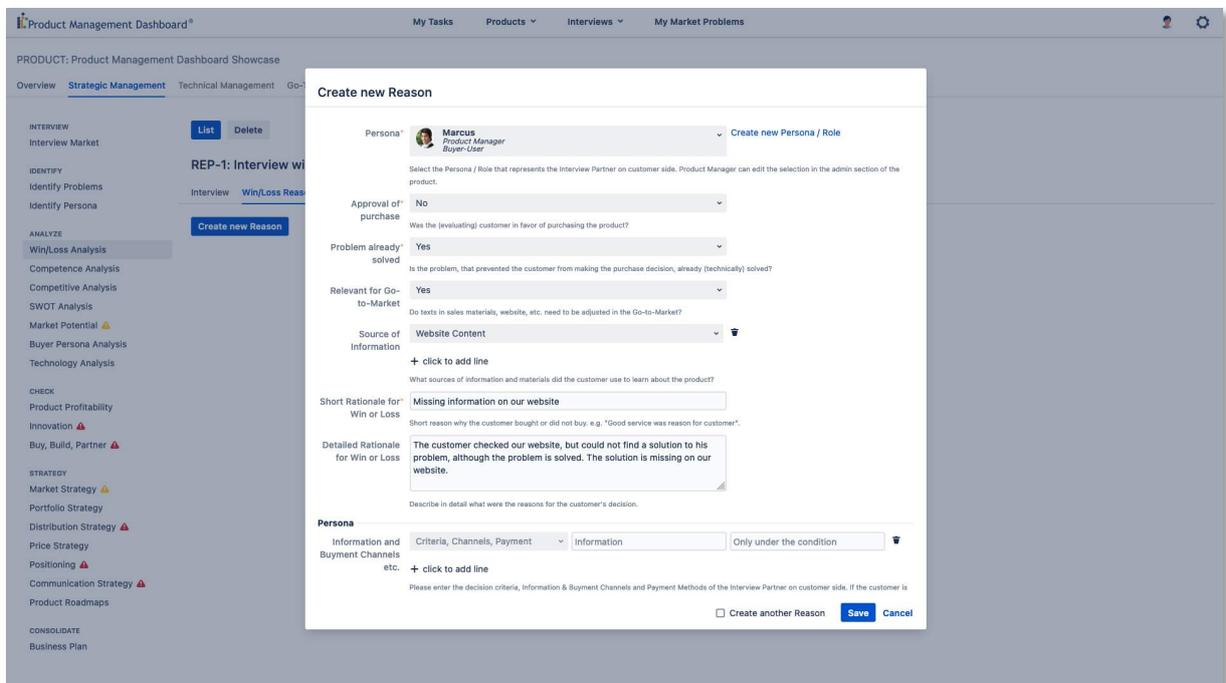
As the product has not yet been sold, we can't carry out a win/loss analysis.

Checklist:

## Win/Loss-Analysis



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of Win/Loss-Interviews:	0 (currently no Sale)	



The screenshot shows the 'Create new Reason' form in the Product Management Dashboard. The form is titled 'Create new Reason' and is set for the persona 'Marcus Product Manager Buyer-User'. The form includes several sections:

- Approval of purchase:** A dropdown menu set to 'No'.
- Problem already solved:** A dropdown menu set to 'Yes'.
- Relevant for Go-to-Market:** A dropdown menu set to 'Yes'.
- Source of Information:** A dropdown menu set to 'Website Content'.
- Short Rationale for Win or Loss:** A text area containing 'Missing information on our website'.
- Detailed Rationale for Win or Loss:** A text area containing 'The customer checked our website, but could not find a solution to his problem, although the problem is solved. The solution is missing on our website.'
- Person:** A dropdown menu set to 'Criteria, Channels, Payment'.

The form also includes a 'Save' button and a 'Cancel' button.

**Control your success with the help of Win/Loss analysis. Find out why you win or lose deals and solve frequently mentioned issues. Have you found new market issues or need to improve sales materials?**

**Tasks are automatically sorted for development or Go-to-Market team and can be handed over.**

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

This book is teaching material of proProduktmanagement GmbH - Deuschherrnstrasse 6 - 90429 Nuremberg - Germany

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## COMPETENCE ANALYSIS - DOCUMENT 7:

*“Whoever does a thing best ought to be the one to do it.” - Henry Ford*

The aim of the competence analysis is:

- To find out what unique ability our company, department or product team has to deliver unique added value to the market
- To determine the attributes, benefits and added values which differentiate us from the competition in the long-term

The result of the competence analysis helps in the formulation of the market message (positioning box) and the communication of the unique added value for the customer.

To make it clear to you what we mean by unique attributes, benefits and added values, here are a few examples:

What is in your opinion the special competence of Google?

In our training courses we immediately get this answer to that question: “The best results when searching on the Internet.”

What is the special competence of Amazon?

This is answered with: “Very good logistics”, “High level of confidence and very good customer relationship”, “Very good service”, “Huge product selection.”

Although there are different answers, all the answers are correct because it is the perception of individual market participants, and every customer can identify a range of added values for themselves. As a result, this therefore means they can also offer various special added values, which in the case of Amazon also explains why this company is so strong in the market.

Other examples of unique attributes, benefits and added values are:

- Innovation
- Product leadership
- Product quality
- Customer relationship and trust
- Expertise
- Logistics
- Quality of service and support
- Price leadership
- Product selection
- Management vision
- Sales channels
- etc.

Practical tip:

Very often, Product Managers struggle to determine the specific attributes, benefits and added value of their company. In such cases, we recommend speaking to the existing customers whom they trust. They can give an outside perspective and are often helpful with their answers. At least 10 customers should be questioned.

For your competence analysis, use Document 7, which you have received from us, and proceed as follows:

- Ask your customers what they see as a special feature of your company
- Use information from sales partners as to what they report from customers as added values
- Look at your business from outside, from the point of view of the customer
- Write down the things that have been determined together
- Discuss in the group which results are unique compared to the competition
- Review whether these things:
  - Are unique in your market
  - Have existed for a long time and will continue to remain in the longer term (more than 12 months)

Once the analysis is complete, the results should then be reviewed on the market with the customer. Are the results perceived by the customer as unique attributes, benefits and added values and are they accepted as credible? Adjust the results with the feedback from the market again if necessary. Finally, record the results in Document 7.

Note:

*Only when you know your unique attributes, benefits and added values can you also communicate them.*

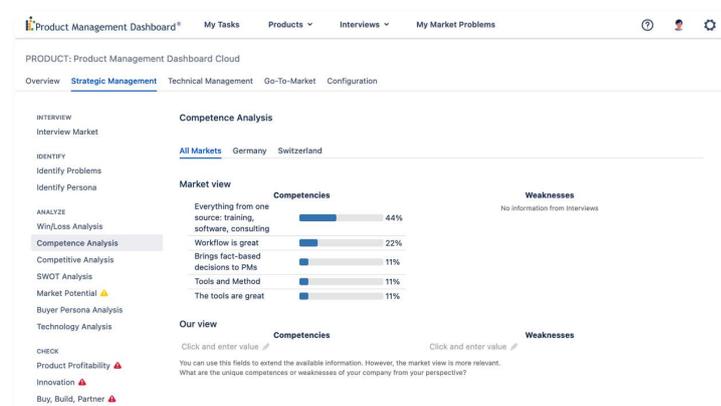
SelfBackup example:

We have the following results for our product:

## Competence-Analysis



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of Win/Loss-Interviews:	0 (currently no sale)	
Solving problems our special competence?	Yes (market experts Home Backup)	



Competence analysis is automatically evaluated from the interviews, with the help of the software.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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## COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS, SWOT ANALYSIS - DOCUMENT 8

In the following section we will go through the competitive analysis and the SWOT analysis together, because our experience has shown that both analyses require each other to achieve the best results.

In practice, when we are shown competitive analyses by Product Managers, we often discover two versions of this analysis.

- a) Long Excel tables in which their own product is compared with the competitors' product based on features
- b) Excel tables in which the prices of their own product or service are compared with those of the competitors

Does this kind of analysis sound familiar to you? If it does, then we have the following words of Wilhelm Busch for you:

*"He who walks in the footsteps of others, leaves no trace of his own." - Wilhelm Busch*

If you want to differentiate yourself by the features of your product, there is always the risk of the "over-engineering" mentioned above, i.e. costly product development without significant added value for the broad masses of customers.

And who is even telling us that Product Managers from the competition speak with customers? Or do they just sit in the office and think about the features at their desks?

Practical example:

One of our customers wanted to install a solution in their web portal which customers could use to contact employees online via chats in order to be able to ask them about the different products. They had seen the function used by their main competitor and market leader. It was clear that this feature and the associated service were very expensive, which is why it was discussed for a very long time in the company.

At this time, a Product Manager switched from the market leader to work at our customer. As the new colleague realised what was being considered by the team at our customer, he stressed that the development of the functionality and setting-up of the planned service infrastructure would incur high costs. Nevertheless, the company launched the function and noted after a short time that the customers used neither the new function nor the associated service. In addition, the new colleague reported that no one had spoken with customers beforehand and that everything was just thought up at a desk. On the question as to why the function can still be found on the market leader's website today, it turns out that it is simply way too expensive to remove it.

A note on the above point b) "Excel tables in which the prices of their own product or product features are compared with those of the competitors."

It can be a target and a strategy to always be the one with the lowest price. So, for example, the strategy of the company Öttinger is to always supply the cheapest beer. To this end, the company has optimised the entire cost structure, the sales and supply chain as well as advertising expenses in terms of costs. Öttinger is currently the market leader when it comes to the quantities of beer and beer-like beverages sold.

The objective of the competitive analysis (Document 8):

The objective of the competitive analysis is to discover a wide range of gaps in the following points:

- Problems solved for the market
- Unique attributes, benefits and added values

- Market segments and target groups
- Portfolio
- Sales channels
- Business model and pricing model
- Market message (positioning)
- Communication channels

in order to derive the various strategies later on with the help of these results.

To compare features, in addition to the excel tables you should consider adding in our example of the competitive analysis - Document 8.

Start initially with your own company. Use the result of your competence analysis (Document 7) to create the competitive analysis (Document 8).

Recommended sources for the analysis:

- Interview Protocols (2)
- Win/Loss Analysis (6)
- Competence Analysis (7)
- Trade fairs, conferences, guild meetings
- Websites
- Product and company brochures, white papers
- Publications, blogs and social media
- Job advertisements for new employees and management biographies

The last point especially lets you identify long-term strategy changes at the competition.

Practical example:

Until the beginning of 2007, the market leader for Linux operating systems, Red Hat from the USA, only sold its products via direct sales, i.e. no distributors or partners but directly to the customer. In January, the company published a press release with the announcement that Petra Heinrich had been hired as "Director of Channels and Partners in EMEA". In the biography published in the press release it became clear that Petra Heinrich already had many years of experience in the development of partner organisations in different companies, was very successful at it and was one of the best and most experienced managers in Germany for partner sales. For the market and the competitors it was now clear that Red Hat had a new long-term strategy for the sales channels and wanted to implement this with a competent manager.

The new sales strategy led to success, so that Red Hat today makes over two billion US-dollars in sales every year.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

As was initially explained in the competitive and SWOT analysis section, both are closely linked. You will therefore find both analyses in one template, Document 8. In the following section, we explain the SWOT analysis generally only once before we move on to their special design.

The word SWOT analysis is made up of the English terms Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. They are known in German as a Stärken, Schwächen, Chancen and Risiken Analysis.

The aim of the SWOT analysis is to identify the strengths and weaknesses.

- Our company or product has
- Companies or products of the individual competitors have

Other aims are to identify the opportunities and threats:

- What opportunities, so what gaps/niches, exist for our company or products
- What threats exist:
  - What is the worst thing the competitors can do to us?
  - Which market dependencies could change in the worst case scenario?

The classic SWOT analysis is always represented using four quadrants.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

In practice we have seen time and again how the SWOT analysis has been used incorrectly using the classic presentation shown above and has been drawn up without market facts, which in turn has led to erroneous results. Also, the results in the classic form are difficult to transfer to everyday working life and build into strategies.

Since there was a typical "desk" analysis done without market facts, the following problems frequently arose:

- General lack of objectivity
- People often hid their light under a bushel, i.e. strengths weren't named
- Strengths were often not known without real market impact
- Little honesty when it came to their own weaknesses and the weaknesses of the competition
- Resulting opportunities and threats were barely based on market facts

To change the points made above and to create a version which is usable in practice, we have combined the SWOT Analysis with the Competitive Analysis (Document 8).

You now have a total overview of all competitors, you can compare the results line-by-line, determine the strengths and weaknesses at the end and enter them all.

Furthermore, the way we have represented the point around special competence, i.e. the point about competence analysis for every competitor, has been expanded.

	Our Company	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3
Special competence				
Strengths				
Weaknesses				

By using this form of a complete overview of the competencies, strengths and weaknesses by competitor, it is now also possible for us to derive the opportunities and threats in relation to the competition.

In the case of threats especially, all macroeconomic factors such as demographic, social, economic and political changes should all be taken into account.

Opportunities	
Threats	
What is our strategy to win against the competitors?	

The most important result of the competitive and SWOT analyses is the answer to the question: "What is our strategy to win against the competitors?"

Only if we have a strategy to win against the competitors can we assert ourselves on the market.

## STRATEGIES TO WIN

Here are some examples of strategies that allow us to win against the competition:

- Find market segments which are large enough to handle and that no one is yet serving
- Use segments which above all appreciate your own special competences (competence analysis)
- Deliver solutions with unique added values, such as additional services, for example
- Avoid a feature war, in any event, because only the market leader often wins in these
- Find weaknesses in the strengths of the competition

We would like to illustrate the last point: “Find weaknesses in the strengths of the competition”.

In 9 A.D., the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest took place, which was won by the Teutons led by Arminius against the supposedly stronger Roman army. How did that happen?

The Romans got their strength from their formation, which they could make excellent use of when fighting out in the open fields and which they were very successful with over many years. Arminius, who grew up under the Romans and was trained by them as an officer, knew about the strength of the Roman troops. That is why he and his comrades-in-arms lured the Romans to unanticipated Germanic terrain, into forests with narrow gorges.

Here, the Romans could not use their strength of the formation and were beaten by the outnumbered underdogs, the Teutons. It was during this that an eighth of the Roman Empire’s total army was destroyed.

So, if you want to win, you shouldn’t just look at what the competition is doing in order to imitate them, because then you always just respond and can never be the market leader.

*“It is impossible to overtake someone if you step into his footprints.” - François Truffaut*

Analyse the competitors, find the gaps in their strategies and draw up your own strategy in order to beat the competition.

SelfBackup example:

The following resulted from the competition and SWOT analysis:

## Competition/SWOT-Analysis



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of Win/Loss-Interviews:	0 (currently no sale)	
Solving problems our special competence?	Yes (market experts Home Backup)	
Competition/SWOT-Analysis	Yes (no competition)	
Strategy to beat the competition	Yes (no competition)	

The screenshot displays the 'Product Management Dashboard' interface. The top navigation bar includes 'My Tasks', 'Products', 'Interviews', and 'My Market Problems'. The main content area is divided into two primary sections: 'Competitive Analysis' and 'SWOT Analysis'.

**Competitive Analysis:** This section features a sidebar with various analysis tools like 'Win/Loss Analysis', 'Competence Analysis', and 'SWOT Analysis'. The main area shows a table of competitors with columns for 'Competitor 1' and 'Results'. Key findings include 'Relevant from PM-Perspective' (Yes) and 'Solved Problems' (No clear message). A 'Portfolio / Price' section lists products like 'Product Management Software (1200 €)' and 'Training Strat-PM (1495 €)'. A 'Business Model' section notes 'Annual payment for update service'.

**SWOT Analysis:** This section provides a structured overview of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths include 'PM and development in one Tool' (44%), 'Saves a lot of time with requirements ratings' (33%), and 'Integration in JIRA' (22%). Weaknesses are listed as 'No information from interviews'. Opportunities include 'First and only PM software as JIRA plugin' and 'JIRA offers an extremely widespread platform as the basis'. Threats include 'Software is attached to OPMW and the method of operation must be understood'.

Knowing unique added values with the help of competitive and SWOT analysis is the prerequisite for naming them to the customer.

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## MARKET POTENTIAL AND MARKET SEGMENTATION (MARKET POTENTIAL)

The topics market segmentation and market potential are repeatedly in practice large stumbling blocks for many Product Managers. Therefore, we are often asked: "How do I get to the correct numbers to determine the size of the markets and especially for my market segments and target groups?"

To proceed systematically here, we have developed the 3-step segmentation. With the help of the 3-step segmentation, we will develop the following topics and results:

- 1) Definition of market segments based on identified problems
- 2) Determine the size of market segments and derivative calculation of market potential
- 3) Determination of target segments on the basis of obtained results

## DEFINITION OF MARKET SEGMENTS

Our recommendation and the ultimate goal is:

Find a market segment in which you dominate and don't participate.

Let's begin with step 1, the definition of the market segments. First of all, let's look at how most Product Managers segment their markets today.

The following segmentations are widely used for "Company size":

- DAX companies (companies listed on the German stock exchange)
- Enterprise Businesses
- SMB companies (Small & Medium Business)
- SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises)
- Private customers

This kind of segmentation brings several problems:

- a) In practice, there is a different understanding of the size of companies in SMB companies, for example; so some companies specify that an SMB company has up to 1,000 employees, others define them as having up to 5,000 or even up to 10,000 employees.
- b) It is difficult to find figures for the company sizes listed in a), i.e. it is not easy to answer the question: How many companies of the defined size are there in the various geographic markets?
- c) This segmentation approaches advances towards a result without market facts, which brings a high level of uncertainty with it. It is often assumed that all customers of a segment, e.g. SMB companies, have similar problems, which is in fact only very rarely true. For example, if you tried to sell red cups to all SMB companies. It should not be forgotten that you can sell only sell to those customers who actually need something. But who would want red cups? This type of segmentation does not give this answer.
- d) It creates artificial silos, which in practice means that potential customers of other segments with the same problem remain overlooked, even though the same solution would be just as interesting for them. For example, if you only sell to enterprise companies even though there are SMB companies out there that want the same solution.

Segmentation by industry:

The next form of segmentation, which is frequently applied in practice, is segmentation according to industries. Here, it is at least easier to come by reliable figures, because, for example, the U.S. Census Bureau, provides figures for companies and employees listed by the various industries.

**Table 4.1: Employment, Annual Survey of Manufactures**

NAICS	Description	2018	2019
311	Food manufacturing	1 494 203	1 487 229
312	Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing	221 186	218 916
313	Textile mills	90 474	87 668
314	Textile product mills	102 395	102 880
315	Apparel manufacturing	78 525	73 739
316	Leather and allied product manufacturing	26 035	26 082
321	Wood product manufacturing	402 450	391 148
322	Paper manufacturing	328 768	332 660
323	Printing and related support activities	420 133	394 834
324	Petroleum and coal products manufacturing	107 735	106 669
325	Chemical manufacturing	761 701	751 137
326	Plastics and rubber products manufacturing	775 936	768 886
327	Nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing	401 203	390 998
331	Primary metal manufacturing	365 673	368 190
332	Fabricated metal product manufacturing	1 391 265	1 384 342
333	Machinery manufacturing	1 042 126	1 042 185
334	Computer and electronic product manufacturing	797 788	789 468
335	Electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing	344 926	346 043
336	Transportation equipment manufacturing	1 569 237	1 552 433
337	Furniture and related product manufacturing	384 369	360 820
339	Miscellaneous manufacturing	527 166	531 085
		11 633 294	11 507 412

Data Source: Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). "Annual Survey of Manufactures." <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/asm/data/tables.html>

In industry segmentation, the exact same disadvantages exist as with points c) and d) for the segmentation according to "company size", i.e. mistaken assumption: The same problem for all market participants in an industry as well as the creation of artificial silos.

## DEFINITION OF MARKET SEGMENTATION ACCORDING TO MARKET PROBLEMS

Our aim is to find a type of market segmentation which breaks down the disadvantages of the classification according to company size and industry, as well as being based on market facts.

To do this we use our facts previously obtained on the market. As we have learned, we will only sell red cups to those customers who want to buy such cups. Transferring this to our market information, this means: you will only sell a solution to someone which helps them to eliminate their problem or fulfil their wish. The following can be derived from this.

Definition:

*A market-oriented segmentation describes a group of individuals or companies who all share a set of the same identified market problems and is willing to pay for a solution to the problems.*

Here are a few examples which are intended to illustrate how the description of such market segments may look:

- People who want to travel for the lowest price in comfort and for whom travel time only plays a minor role
- Every company that requires completely flawless and entirely smooth painted surfaces for its products
- Companies who do not want a full-time administrator and are willing to outsource their server infrastructure
- People who have low technical knowledge and want to regularly save their data with a wireless connection from their laptop

Due to continuous further developments, market segments can arise which until recently were still non-existent. So, market segments which are neglected by the market leader can be new segments for your business.

Practical example:

As you know from your own experience, mobile phones have evolved in recent years. The majority of people now use smartphones. They are small, complex computers which are not always intuitive to operate and are, for example, too complicated for a good portion of the elderly or they are too uncertain as to how to use them. As a result, there became a niche in the market because the classic manufacturers of mobile phones have switched to producing smartphones.

The founder of the company emporia from Austria, Mr Fellner, recognised this.

It all started a few years when Mr Fellner gave his mother a mobile phone and had to explain to her every weekend how she should use it to make calls. After some time, he realised it was not due to the fact that his mother had not understood, but because of the phone and its multi-functionality that she was barely able to make a call.

So Fellner came up with the idea to develop a mobile phone which is tailored specifically to the needs of people who just want to talk and place no value on numerous functions, small displays or internet access. In the meantime, there are a lot of people - and not just older people by a long way - who want alternative solutions in an increasingly complex and technical world. In other words, devices that are easy and intuitive to use and do not get carried away with countless options. emporia recognised this trend early on and committed

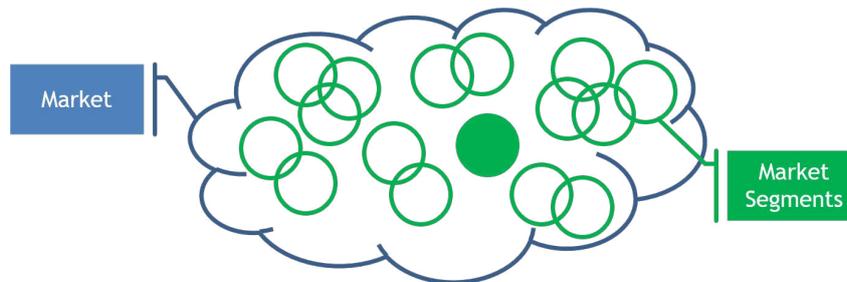
themselves to barrier-free communication.

Today, emporia is the market leader and operates in more than 30 countries.

Let's briefly summarise the characteristics of a good segmentation.

There are market segments to be found:

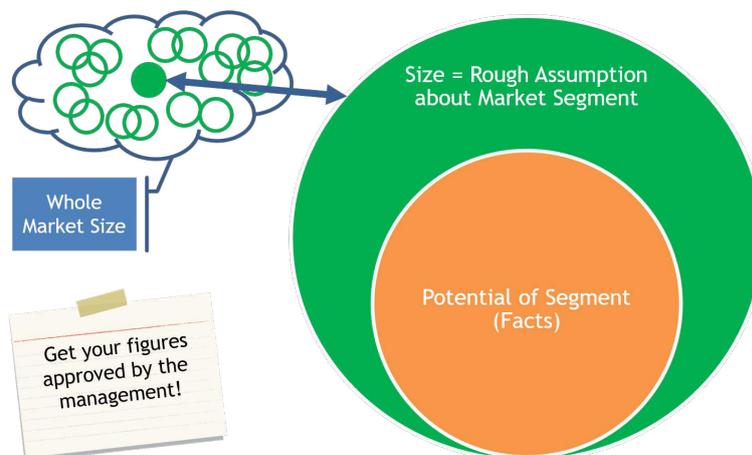
- in which similar problems occur that are widespread and for which customers are willing to pay
- in which you can deliver unique added value
- which you can occupy alone; "dominate instead of participate"



## DETERMINING THE MARKET POTENTIAL

We now come to step 2 of our 3-step segmentation, in which we determine how large the potential of a market segment is.

The following graphic shows how we proceed here:



1. We make a rough assumption about the size of our defined market segment, e.g. 100, 1,000, 10,000, 100,000, 500,000 or millions. The power of ten is sufficiently accurate for our purpose here. Figures from the Federal Statistical Office can also be used here, for example.
2. We sort the interview protocols of the market participants initially by region, persona and segment. We then determine from the interview reports the percentage of those market participants who have named the problems for us, are willing to pay and are also stored in our defined segment.

## CALCULATION OF MARKET POTENTIAL

The formula for the calculation of market potential is as follows:

$$mp = p_{markt} * a_{markt}$$

$mp$  = Market potential for a market segment

$p_{markt}$  = Percent of market participants from segment,  
who have the same problem and are willing  
to pay for a solution

$a_{markt}$  = Number of market participants in the segment as an estimate  
e.g. accurate to the power of ten

So, we come then, as an example, to the following potential as a result: 77% of approximately 50,000 companies who do not want a full-time administrator and are willing to outsource their server infrastructure.

SelfBackup example:

To clearly illustrate the exact procedure, let's use our example product SelfBackup. We will now answer the following four questions:

- 1) What is the definition of the market segment?
- 2) How many people have the problem?
- 3) How many Claudias are there?
- 4) How big is the market potential of the Selfbackup product for Claudia?

First, we define the market segment as we learned how to:

1. People who have low technical knowledge and want to regularly save their data with a wireless connection from their laptop

The defined market segment represents our persona Claudia

2. Defined market segment = Claudia persona

We conducted a total of 30 interviews with people that correlated with our persona Claudia. 24 people have had problems like Claudia.

3. 24 out of 30 had problems like Claudia
- 24 out of 30 = 80% of all Claudias had the problems

Now we need an answer to the question: "How many Claudias are there in Germany?" We estimate roughly to a power of ten and surmise that there are about 1 million people who are similar to Claudia.

4. Claudias in Germany ~1 million

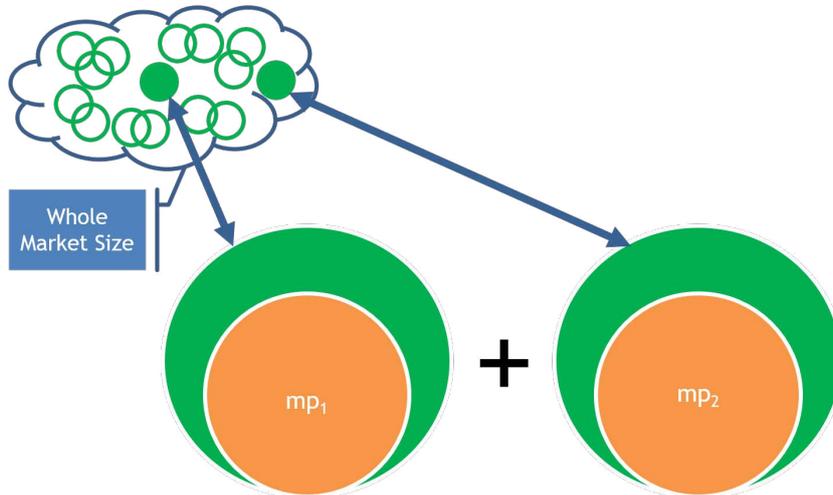
Now we calculate the market potential with the formula above and the existing values.

5.  $mp = p_{markt} * a_{markt}$
- $800,000 = 80% * 1 \text{ million}$

Our market potential corresponds to 800,000 Claudias.

## TOTAL MARKET POTENTIAL

We have found that there are other personas than Claudia who have similar problems. We must therefore calculate the individual potential of the individual market segments which in our example also correspond to individual personas. The following graphic is designed to illustrate this:



This results in the following formula for the calculation of the total market potential:

$$\sum_{k=1}^n mp_k = mp_1 + mp_2 + \dots + mp_n$$

## DETERMINING TARGET SEGMENTS

Now that we have completed the first two steps of the 3-step segmentation:

1. Definition of market segments based on identified problems
2. Determine the size of market segments and derivative calculation of market potential

we now come to the last point:

3. Determination of target segments on the basis of obtained results

We use the following criteria to determine target segments:

- Select target segments with the greatest market potential
- Use market potentials which require the least effort and therefore costs
- Start where you know and where existing infrastructure can be used, and where the problem is most urgent and widespread for the customers
- Make sure you pay attention to the following:
  - Regional factors
  - International technical and legal differences
  - Demographic and economic data
- Take into account the fact that internationalisation and industry experience cost time and money

## ALWAYS FOCUS ON THE TARGET SEGMENT!

Colleagues from product management are always telling us that it has been decided in their companies to suddenly do business in other target segments, because there are larger sums of money in them. All of a sudden everything goes haywire and it can only be managed with an incredible amount of effort, which often costs customers.

Consider:

Business 1 is in our target segment:

- It focuses on the strategy and should therefore be taken into consideration

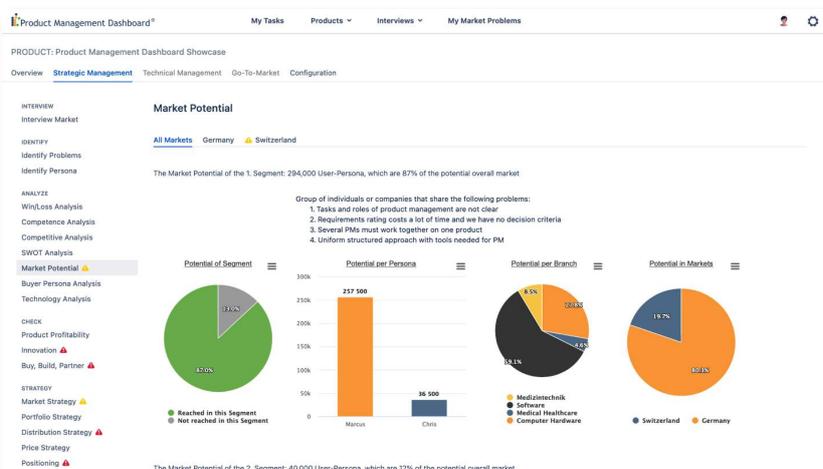
Business 2 is outside our target segment:

- If we go into this target segment, we take the focus away from our strategy
- It costs us resources from our target segment and weakens us in the target segment
- This means **additional investments**, which also must be deducted from sales when the profit is calculated
- **Should be ignored** for the above reasons!



Other advantages make it quite clear why you should focus on a target segment:

- We are more successful because we can
  - Optimise the portfolio
  - Sharpen the market message, therefore the product positioning
  - Narrow down the sales & communication channels
- We save time and money
  - Because we are not developing any unnecessary features
  - Due to more effective solution development for the most frequently identified problems
  - For Sales, Communication and Marketing because we deliver and communicate what helps customers



Get support in the segmentation and the calculation of the market potential with one click in the Product Management Dashboard.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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SelfBackup example:

The definition of the market segment, the calculation of the market potential as well as everything else is described in detail in the section above. The checklist:

## Market Segment & Potential



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of Win/Loss-Interviews:	0 (currently no sale)	
Solving problems our special competence?	Yes (market experts Home Backup)	
Competition/SWOT-Analysis	Yes (no competition)	
Strategy to beat the competition	Yes (no competition)	
Determined market segment?	Yes	
Market potential	at least 800.000 Claudias	

### BUYER PERSONA ANALYSIS - DOCUMENT 5

As already mentioned in the section on identifying the personas, there are two types of persona, namely the User persona and the Buyer persona. In this section we will specifically go into the Buyer persona.

Let's have a brief reminder of what a persona actually is.

A persona is a stereotype for a group of people with specifically distinctive characteristics and specific behaviour.

Personas are created using features which are identified in interviews, for example, or in other observations made by customers. Often not just one persona is created, but several. As many personas as necessary are developed to cover the appropriate behaviours.

As Buyer personas we refer to personas which influence purchase decisions in any way.

We distinguish between the following types:

1. Economic Buyers and/or those responsible for budget
2. Technical experts or subject matter experts
3. User-Buyers, i.e. a user who also has an influence on the purchasing decision

To note:

Some people may also have multiple roles, e.g. User-Buyers and those responsible for budget (Economic Buyer)

The aim of the Buyer Persona Analysis is to find out:

- Who influences the purchase decision
- Who are the decision-makers for the purchase
- What criteria the individual decision-makers have
- What is the problem a product solves for each individual decision-maker

- What the preferred sources of information are for the decision-makers are and why
- What the preferred purchasing channels are and why they are
- What the preferred method of payment is

To obtain this information, you can proceed as follows:

- Interview your colleagues from Sales in individual interviews
- Ask all types of customers in the interviews
- Ask colleagues who have the same position in their company

Practical tip:

We have already learned that Sales staff often do not know the true purchase decision-makers or consider the wrong people as being the decision-makers. Get an impression of the market yourself and ask your interview partner.

The decision-makers for the purchase also depends on whether they are:

- Private buyers
- Purchase decision-makers in companies.

In companies, the decision-maker is also often dependent on what impact Purchasing has within the company. Therefore, the effect on:

- The entire company
- Several departments
- Individual department
- Individual employees

The purchase of a customer management system is decided by the top management, whereas the purchase of stationery is controlled by a central Purchasing department or the head of department.

Decision-making criteria for the Buyer Persona:

- Price, savings, ROI
- Security
- Technology, interfaces
- Sustainability
- Usability
- Service, etc. ...

Your task is to find out the exact criteria and document them. Develop your own Buyer Persona with the help of our template (Document 5).

Also document here the preferred:

- Purchasing channels (on-site consultancy, online shop, directly in the shop ...)
- Payment methods (invoice, credit card, direct debit ...)
- Sources of information (newspaper, social media, trade magazine, guild meetings...)

## BUYER PERSONA AND MARKETING-MIX

In business management there is a tool called Marketing-Mix, which is often also called the 4Ps or more recently the 6Ps. We'll restrict ourselves to the 4Ps in the following section.

They stand for the words: Product, Price, Placement and Promotion. In German they are known as: Produkt, Preis, Vertriebskanäle and Kommunikation(skanäle).

The aim of the Marketing-Mix is to capture the relationship between the 4 factors of Product, Price, Placement and Promotion and to also make it consistently comparable.

While we ourselves are convinced by the results of this classic marketing tool, again and again in practice we experience how difficult Product Managers find it to disseminate the results of the classic Marketing-Mix. That's why we have thought about how to convey these findings to make them understandable for everyone in the company and therefore we have converted and integrated the results of the Marketing-Mix into the form of the Buyer Persona.

If you have read the objectives of the Buyer Persona as well as all the subsequent points carefully, you will have noticed that we have also been able to determine the 4Ps (Product, Price, Placement and Promotion) with the Buyer Persona Analysis for the respective persona.

Example: Importance of Buyer Persona

The following example shows how the Marketing-Mix is reflected in the Buyer Persona and what impact its results, as well as the Buyer Persona Analysis, have on the purchase of a product.

Thomas is one of our personas, he is both a Buyer and User.

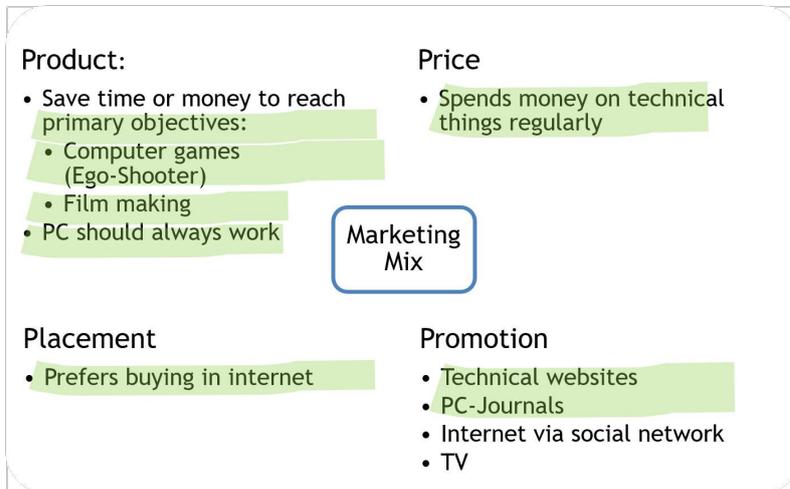
### Persona Thomas (Buyer-User)

- Makes films:
  - › Holidays
  - › Parties
- **Primary objectives with PC:**
  - › Computer games (Ego-Shooter)
  - › Film making
  - › Social network, e-mail



The Marketing-Mix for the Buyer User Persona Thomas looks as follows. The important things are highlighted in green.

## Persona Thomas - 4P's



The product TuneUp is sold and communicated as follows:

## PC-Tuning

- **Product:**
  - Speeds up and repairs the PC
- **Promotion:**
  - PC journals
  - Technical websites
- **Placement:**
  - Online stores (Amazon)
  - Saturn Technic
- **Price:**
  - EUR 39,-



Product image: TuneUp Utilities Image source/rights: TuneUp GmbH

In the next step, we review whether the product, the communication channels, the sales channels and the price are right for Thomas.

## PC-Tuning



- **Product:**
  - › Speeds up and repairs the PC
- **Promotion:**
  - › PC journals
  - › technical websites
- **Placement:**
  - › Online shops (Amazon)
  - › Saturn Technic
- **Price:**
  - › EUR 39,-



- **Product:**
  - › Save time or money to reach primary objectives:
    - Computer games (Ego-Shooter) ✓
    - Film making
  - › PC should always work
- **Promotion:**
  - › technical websites ✓
  - › PC-Journals ✓
- **Placement:**
  - › Prefers buying in internet ✓
- **Price:**
  - › Spends money on technical things regularly ✓

Product image: TuneUp Utilities Image source/rights: TuneUp GmbH

As you can see, all 4 Ps fit perfectly for Thomas.

Now let's look at a second persona - our Claudia persona.

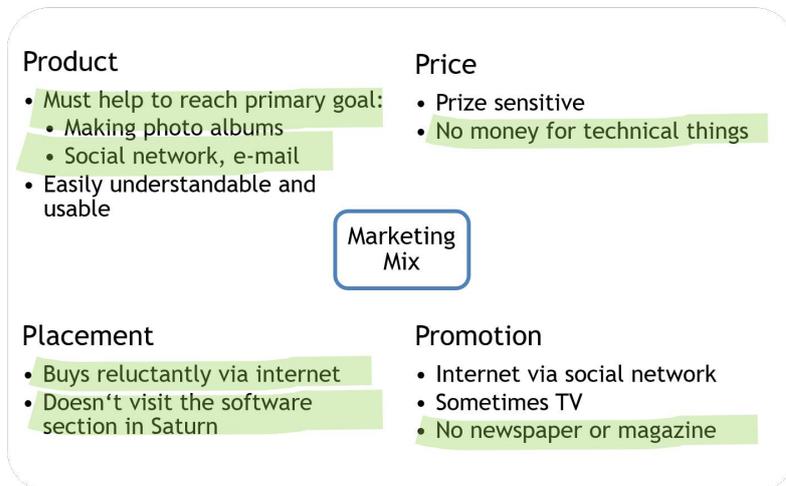
## Persona Claudia (Buyer-User)

- **Makes photos und films:**
  - › Holidays
  - › Weekend trips
- **Primary objectives with PC:**
  - › Making photo albums
  - › Social network, e-mail



Let's establish the marketing mix for Claudia.

## Persona Claudia - 4P's



In the next step, we review whether the product, the communication channels, the sales channels and the price are right for Claudia.

## PC-Tuning



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Product:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Speeds up and repairs the PC</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Promotion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› PC journals</li> <li>› technical websites</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Placement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Online shops (Amazon)</li> <li>› Saturn Technic</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Price:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› EUR 39,-</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Product:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Must help to reach primary objectives:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photo albums</li> <li>• Social network, e-mail</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Promotion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› No newspaper o. magazine <b>✗</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Placement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Doesn't like online shopping <b>✗</b></li> <li>› Doesn't visit software department of Saturn <b>✗</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Price:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› No money for technic <b>✗</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Product image: TuneUp Utilities Image source/rights: TuneUp GmbH

As you can see, the 4 Ps are unsuitable for Claudia, i.e. we cannot sell the product to her because neither the product nor the other Ps are the right fit for Claudia. If your Buyer Persona reveals something like this in conjunction with the marketing mix, then don't fight it, just be happy with your results and with the fact that you will save time and money.

So, go ahead, use our template (Document 5) and create your own Buyer Personas for your company.

Please note:

Our template (Document 5) is a little more detailed and contains more information. This is because our example persona, Claudia, is a Buyer User Persona. For the section on User Personas, more detailed information is needed so that we are able to put ourselves in her position better.

Your Buyer Personas can have less content, the main thing is that the results of the Buyer Persona Analysis are included.

SelfBackup example:

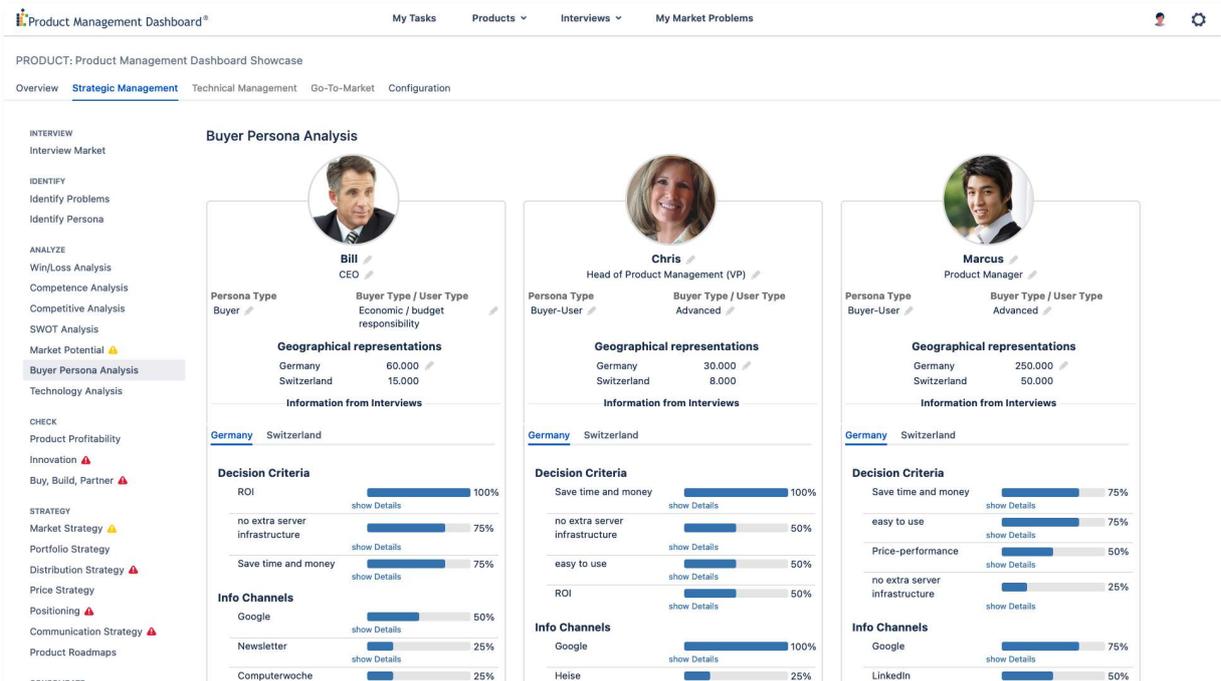
The detailed example personas for the product can be found in Document 5. Here is the checklist:

## Buyer-Persona



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number of Win/Loss-Interviews:	0 (currently no sale)	
Solving problems our special competence?	Yes (market experts Home Backup)	
Competition/SWOT-Analysis	Yes (no competition)	
Strategy to beat the competition	Yes (no competition)	
Determined market segment?	Yes	
Market potential	At least 800.000 Claudias	
Analysed and set up Buyer Persona?	Yes/Claudia	

Comprehensive and detailed evaluations for your Buyer Personas are created automatically with the help of our product management software.

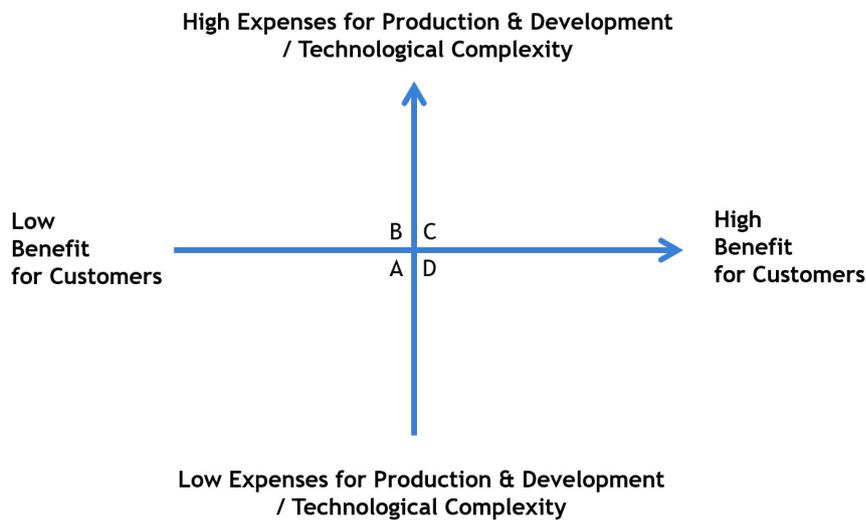


Buyer Persona analysis is automated and detailed with the aid of the Product Management Dashboard.

**TECHNOLOGY BENEFIT ANALYSIS (TECHNOLOGY ANALYSIS) - DOCUMENT 10**

The Technology Benefit Analysis is a very simple analysis whose results can be immediately transferred to the Agile Business Plan.

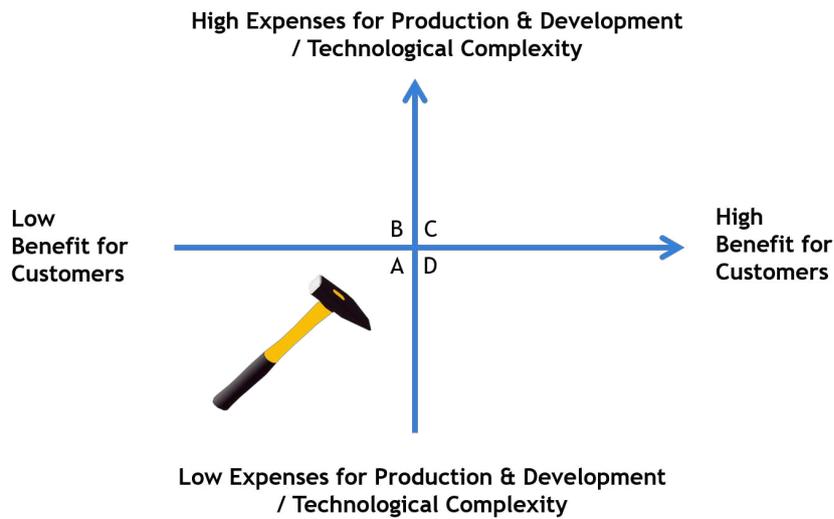
We have chosen a simple diagram as a tool for this analysis.



The aims of the Technology Benefit Analysis are:

- To review the relationship between technological, productive costs and benefits
- To find out if the product benefits are worth the cost
- To find out whether the sales channels sell this product technology
- Consideration of the risk of investments for technology development and production
- To determine the height of the barrier to entry for competition
- Determining the customer benefit analysis since this determines the length of the product life cycle

Let's have a look at Sector A:



Sector A are simple tools.

The advantages are:

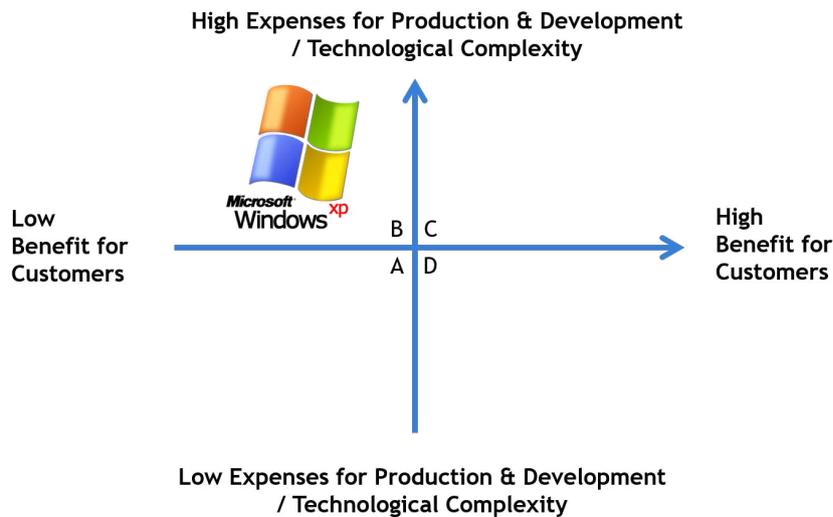
- Easy to use
- Easy to buy
- Simple production
- Widespread distribution, i.e. mass market
- Low risk and few expenses in the development and production

Disadvantages are:

- Low margins
- Boring
- Low barrier to entry for competition

Examples: Normal hammers - therefore mass products, hosting and webspace

Let's come to sector B:



Microsoft Windows XP logo image rights: Microsoft Inc.

Advantages are:

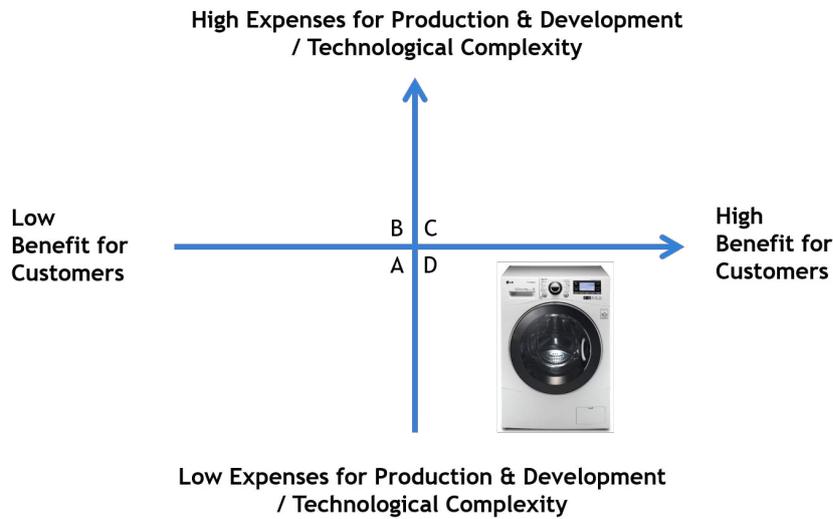
- High barrier to entry for competition

Disadvantages are:

- Customer sees little benefit for themselves, e.g. Windows is required in order to launch MS Word or Excel. Only very few users use 90% of the features of Windows
- High investment for technology and production
- High risk for investment
- Benefit is very difficult to argue
- More costly and lengthy sale because the benefits are not clear
- Special knowledge is necessary for Sales
- Very long product life cycle, see Microsoft Windows XP for example, which is still used today in 2016, even though we are already 5 versions further on and Windows 10 now exists
- Such products are very expensive to develop, manufacture and for sales as they are very complicated to sell

Examples: Infrastructure solutions, operating systems

Sector D has the following advantages and disadvantages:



Advantages are:

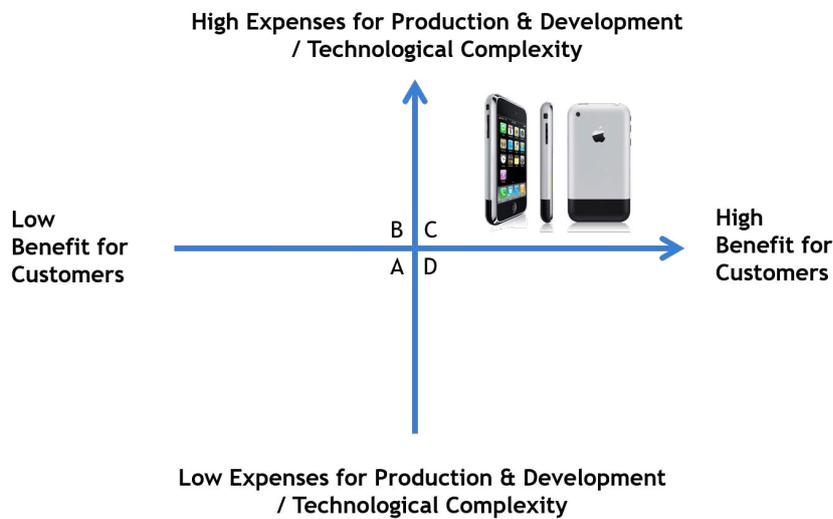
- Low risk and few expenses in the development and production
- Solution is easy to communicate and therefore easy to sell
- Arouses interest from the press and analysts
- High customer benefit, therefore a higher price is possible, as long as there are no competitors
- Good profit opportunities as long as you are a technology leader; note: Have a strategy for subsequent products/versions if the competition follows suit

Disadvantages are:

- Easy to copy, therefore low barriers to entry for the competition
- Leading edge only for a short time

Example: Washing machines, TVs, internet property sites and used car websites

If we ask participants in our training courses at the beginning of the Technology Benefit Analysis which sector they see their product in, the overwhelming majority answer with sector C as they initially believe that sector C is the best one. Let's have a look at Sector C.



Advantages are:

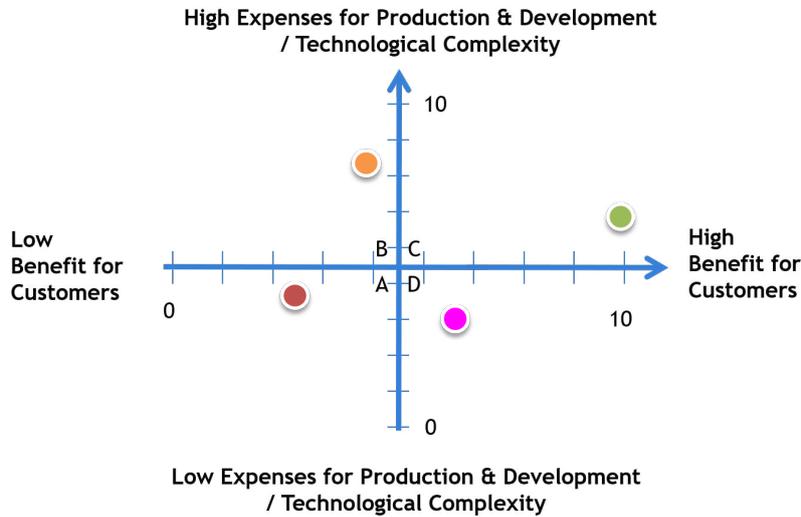
- High benefit for the customer, therefore a high price can be charged
- Solution is easy to communicate and therefore easy to sell
- High interest among journalists and analysts
- Long Product Life Cycle
- High barrier to entry for the competition
- Over time, a D product comes out of a C product, i.e. a mass product, because the technology or production becomes more widespread and cheaper at some point (see smartphones)

Disadvantages are:

- Long development times
- High financial investment in technology and production, therefore increased risk
- Danger that through over-engineering a B product comes out of a C product

Use the Technology Benefit Analysis in customer discussions and ask your customers to plot where your product sits as well as the competitor's product. You will receive the tool (Document 10) from us.

Please note that you should use the tool (Document 10) with the customer without numerical values, as these influence the customer and then grade it with points. Add the points afterwards.



Finally, calculate the mean value from all the Technology Benefit Analyses and transfer the results into both tables in the Agile Business Plan (Document 19).

	Expences for Production and Development 0 = Low; 10 = High										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Our Product											
Name Competitor 1											
Name Competitor 2											
Name Competitor 3											
Name Competitor 4											
	Low	Investment									High
		Time & Costs Selling Expenses									
		Risk									
		Market Entry Barrier for Competitors									
		Length Product Lifecycle									

	Benefit for Customers 0 = Low; 10 = High										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Our Product											
Name Competitor 1											
Name Competitor 2											
Name Competitor 3											
Name Competitor 4											
	Low	Possible Price									High
		Interest of Press und Analysts									
		Effect of Arguments									
		Interest in Derivatives									

The aim should always be to create solutions for the customer with as little technology as possible, as technology is expensive and also entails high risk. We will take a closer look at what possibilities there are for solution innovations other than technology in the Innovations section.

Please note: The form of this analysis can also be used for other analyses, i.e. examining any dimensions, such as: Price vs Performance, Cost vs Benefit etc.

SelfBackup example, checklist:

## Technology-Benefit-Analysis



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
Number Win/Loss-Interviews:	0 (currently no sale)	
Solving problems our special competence?	Yes (market experts Home Backup)	
Competition/SWOT-Analysis	Yes (no competition)	
Strategy to beat the competition	Yes (no competition)	
Market potential	At least 800.000 Claudias	
Buyer Persona analysed & set up?	Yes/Claudia	
Technology-Benefit-Analysis	Benefit yes/Tech yes	

## PRODUCT PROFITABILITY, KPI'S (PRODUCT PROFITABILITY)

The aim of this section is to show how the success of a product is measured, but also how it can be controlled. In the first part we deal with the general product profitability.

Product profitability is an important indicator as it shows us whether the investments in our product have paid off and how big the profit made is.

The profit and the so-called Return on Investment, ROI for short, are important key performance indicators for the management and investors. As such, you, as a professional leader of your product, should always know the values for these indicators.

$$\frac{\frac{\text{Revenue} - \text{Investments}}{\text{Profit}}}{\text{Investments}} = \text{Return On Investment (ROI)}$$

So that profit and ROI can be calculated, the values for the sales and the investment are required according to the formulae listed above. In Product Management's normal day-to-day business, you can use the running costs as the basis for the investment. Should the investment amount actually exist, you can use this to calculate.

The value for the revenue of the product can be obtained from Controlling or from Sales. Now you need the values for investments or cost. Please identify the costs incurred for your product yourself. Here are some examples:

Determine the cost per product:

- Development & Technology
- Customer Support
- Finance and Administration
- Product Management
- Marketing and Communication
- Sales
- etc. ...

Once revenue and total costs are determined, the profits and ROI can be calculated. It is best to provide the data for revenues and costs for example monthly, quarterly or annually, in order to be able to present the results to the management or the investors.

## CONTROLLING PRODUCT SUCCESS WITH KPIS (DOCUMENT 11)

As previously mentioned, we as Product Managers have the ability to control the success of our product. Key Performance Indicators, KPIs for short, help us to do that.

From experience we know that the success of a product can be measured and controlled with the help of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Unfortunately, either no or way too many indicators or values are measured. We have only very rarely seen a happy medium in practice.

In order to keep the costs for the determination of the values for the KPIs as low as possible and to get results that are as accurate as necessary, you must first answer the following questions:

- What data is crucial for our product?
- Where do we get the data?
- When and how often do we measure?

When it is difficult to find answers to the first two questions, the following example from everyday life might help:

What are the most important parameters when driving a car, i.e. which control instruments are definitely needed, what information do they provide and what do you try to control or avoid with it?

Have you got it?

Have a think about it before we give you the answer.

Ok, here's the solution.

The most important control instruments in a car are the speedometer and the fuel gauge. These provide information relating to the speed or how much fuel is still available. With this information you can control whether you get a speeding ticket for going over the speed limit or if you're left with an empty tank.

The success of a product is dependent on external as well as internal criteria. These should therefore be measured. Here are some examples that you can find in the tool (Document 11):

		Data Source	Start Point	Frequency*	Limits
<b>EXTERNAL CRITERIA</b> (Product Performance)	New Customers				
	Lost Customers				
	Revenue				
	Profit				
	Market Shares				
<b>INTERNAL CRITERIA</b> (Operatives)	Product Quality				
	Technical Support				
	Development Cycle				
	Marketing Programs				
	Sales Support				

\*for example weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual

The external criteria are easy to measure and are very often also known because they measure the direct profit and loss.

The internal criteria are rarely measured, but are typically the places where money simply disappears, and no one knows because they are hidden costs.

- Product quality can be measured with errors reported about the product.
- Technical support can be measured by the number of requests received by Support.
- The development cycle can be measured through the comparison of actual and planned states from the roadmap.
- Marketing programmes can be measured by the response rate (more on this in our "Go-To-Market" training)

Once you have defined the data required, you can start by contacting Controlling, because most of the data in a company is consolidated here. If some information is not available, you can ask the specialist departments. If this data is still not available from them, explain what you need the data for and ask for it to be collected. Always remember that this will create extra work/expense for your colleagues! Is this data therefore really needed?

Enter all values in the template which you will receive from us (Document 11).

It is important to note:

1. For every measured value of a KPI, the threshold values and the frequency of the measurement (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) have to be defined.
2. If these threshold values are exceeded, you must have defined beforehand which analysis must be initiated in order to investigate the cause of the exceedance of the threshold value.
3. It should then be decided how to deal with the results of the analysis, i.e. if and what measures can be initiated.
4. If there is no willingness to go to point 3, then you can save the measurement of this KPI.

In order to actively control the success of the product, you must, as described above, complete points 1-3 for the KPIs.

Only if the causes for exceeding the threshold values are known can suitable measures be initiated, and countermeasures taken, like with the control instruments in the car in our previous example. Only when you know that you're going too fast for the specified speed can the braking measure be initiated in order to avoid a speeding ticket.

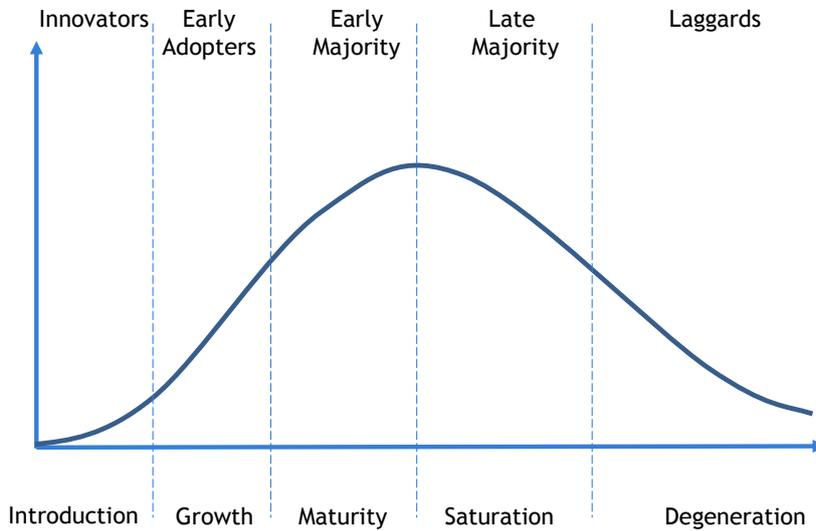
Transferring this to everyday life in Product Management: If you, for example, have lost customers and the defined threshold value is exceeded, it should be analysed as to why the customers were lost. The Win/Loss analysis is suitable for this. If you have determined the cause for the loss of customers, you can take countermeasures.

Pass the results on quietly internally because you will then gain the trust as well as the recognition of colleagues, and it is then clear to everyone why you need certain measured values from them.

## KPI IN THE PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE

In the various phases of the product life cycle, KPIs have an important significance.

When launching a product, KPIs can be used to check and control the success of the launch. KPIs also help to decide when we need to take a product off the market.



Why don't you answer the following questions for yourself?

1. Which KPIs do you monitor when launching a product?
2. On the basis of which KPIs do you decide when to take the product off the market?

You can find answers to these questions in our book "Successful Go-to-Market".

SelfBackup example:

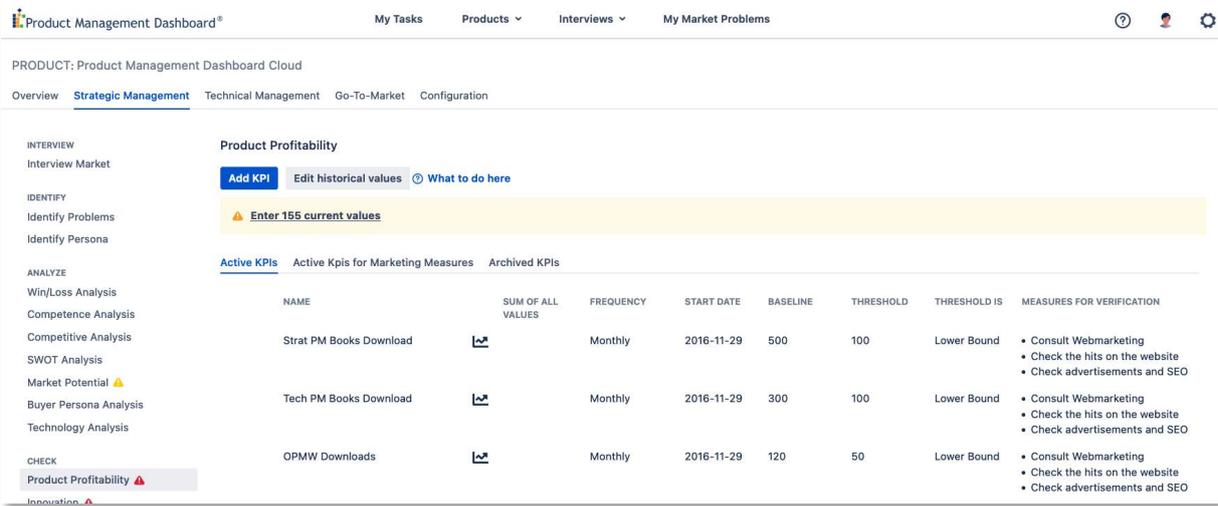
## Product Profitability - KPIs



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
KPIs defined:	Yes	
KPIs analysed:	Not possible yet	
KPI-Measures initiated:	Not necessary	

## KPI MEASUREMENT WITH THE HELP OF SOFTWARE

All KPIs for the product in one central location and an overview of the product with the aid of product management software. The KPIs can be measured and entered by various colleagues and departments with upper and lower limits at freely chosen intervals.



PRODUCT: Product Management Dashboard Cloud

Overview **Strategic Management** Technical Management Go-To-Market Configuration

INTERVIEW Interview Market

IDENTIFY Identify Problems Identify Persona

ANALYZE Win/Loss Analysis Competence Analysis Competitive Analysis SWOT Analysis Market Potential Buyer Persona Analysis Technology Analysis

CHECK Product Profitability Innovation

### Product Profitability

Add KPI Edit historical values What to do here

Enter 155 current values

Active KPIs	Active Kpis for Marketing Measures	Archived KPIs					
NAME	SUM OF ALL VALUES	FREQUENCY	START DATE	BASELINE	THRESHOLD	THRESHOLD IS	MEASURES FOR VERIFICATION
Strat PM Books Download		Monthly	2016-11-29	500	100	Lower Bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult Webmarketing</li> <li>Check the hits on the website</li> <li>Check advertisements and SEO</li> </ul>
Tech PM Books Download		Monthly	2016-11-29	300	100	Lower Bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult Webmarketing</li> <li>Check the hits on the website</li> <li>Check advertisements and SEO</li> </ul>
OPMW Downloads		Monthly	2016-11-29	120	50	Lower Bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult Webmarketing</li> <li>Check the hits on the website</li> <li>Check advertisements and SEO</li> </ul>

Further information about the product management software can be found at <https://marketplace.atlassian.com/apps/1217916>

An evaluation of the KPIs is carried out automatically. The measures to be taken for exceeding or going below the limits are stored with the parameter.



PRODUCT: Product Management Dashboard Showcase

Overview **Strategic Management** Technical Management

INTERVIEW Interview Market

IDENTIFY Identify Problems Identify Persona

ANALYZE Win/Loss Analysis Competence Analysis Competitive Analysis SWOT Analysis Market Potential Buyer Persona Analysis Technology Analysis

CHECK Product Profitability Innovation Buy, Build, Partner

STRATEGY Market Strategy Portfolio Strategy Distribution Strategy Price Strategy Positioning Communication Strategy Product Roadmaps

### Report for KPI

Strat PM Books Download (Sum.)

Lower Bound

MEASURES FOR VERIFICATION

- Consult Webmarketing
- Check the hits on the website
- Check advertisements and SEO
- Consult Webmarketing
- Check the hits on the website
- Check advertisements and SEO
- Consult Webmarketing
- Check the hits on the website
- Check advertisements and SEO

An evaluation of the individual values, such as marketing measures over a long period of time, for example, with the aid of Product Management Dashboard

## INNOVATION

Today, almost all Product Managers want to be innovative and often equate innovation with new technologies. There are many more possibilities for Product Managers to be innovative and creative.

The aim of this section is to show the possibilities of innovation, as well as to convey the fact that it is possible to repackage the same product several times in a new way and simply sell it as a newly polished product several times over.

*“Innovation is the changed way of looking at the same things.” - Markus Wolf, Innovation Manager*

Before we look at what things we can have a changed way of looking at, let's refer to our definition of innovation once again:

Definition:

*Only if you know the problem can you think about the problem and develop an idea for its solution. And if nobody has solved this problem, the solution is automatically an innovation.*

So that you are the first one to solve a problem, you need to know about the problem. You will find out about new, unsolved problems in your interview protocols (2).

1. Conduct interviews in the market in order to find unresolved market problems.
2. Review whether your company's competence matches the requirements of the solution and whether you can deliver unique added value.

You should then check whether the following elements can be combined in a new way to find a new solution:

- Products
- Services
- Portfolio
- Business models
- Technology
- Packaging
- Sales channels
- Communication channels

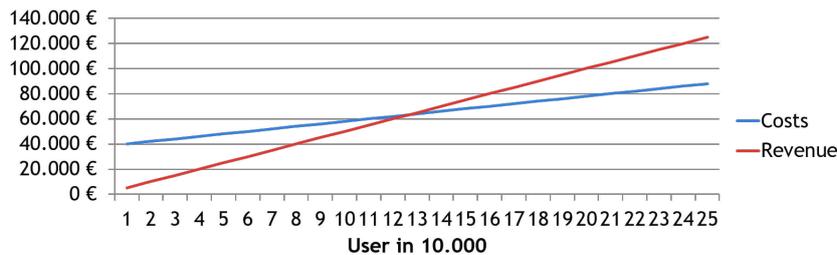
You should also include ideas from other industries and look beyond the horizon.

Some examples:

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### BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

In the last few years, the "Freemium" business model has established itself in the market in some industries. In the Freemium model, a product or service up is offered for free up to a certain point as an entry-level variant. Other parts of the product or service are only obtained for payment. Only when the users use the advanced product/service is revenue generated at the customer. A proportion of the users will only use the entry-level variant, i.e. they must be included in the calculation.



- At the beginning: a growing number of users, which means higher costs
- Later: some users pay for extended service, which means rising revenues
- At some point: the revenue exceeds the costs, i.e. break-even

Prominent examples of companies which have chosen the Freemium model as their business model are:

- Dropbox with approximately 5% conversion rate, i.e. 5% of users pay for additional service - Source FAZ.net
- Skype with conversion rate 7-8.5% - Source: skypejournal.com
- Xing with conversion rate 7% - 11 million users and 769,000 paying customers - Source: heise.de
- Numerous games on smartphones and tablets

## SALES CHANNELS INNOVATION

In supermarkets, chemists or petrol stations we are increasingly seeing gift cards from vendors such as:

- IKEA
- Amazon
- H&M
- C&A
- Google
- etc.



Why are online shops selling in supermarkets and chemists? Because the Buyer Persona is often different to the User Persona, so, for example, a grandma buys an Amazon voucher so her grandchildren can choose something for themselves. And suddenly Amazon doesn't just sell on the Internet.

Why does IKEA sell vouchers in supermarkets or chemists? IKEA is often located on the edge of town or even further out and people don't go there very often. So grandma can get a voucher for here for her grandchildren who want to do up their rooms, since IKEA also sells online today, i.e. IKEA has expanded its sales channels to online sales, supermarkets and chemists.

## PORTFOLIO INNOVATION

The company Dr. Scholl is well-known for its footcare products which are sold in chemists.

At the beginning, Dr. Scholl made a simple plaster for feet. Later, the portfolio was extended by offering different plasters for specific places on the feet. So, in addition to the 'Pressure sore plaster', there was now a 'Ball of foot cushion', which was a round ring. The centre of this ring, the 'ball of foot cushion' was punched out but not disposed of as waste, but was instead sold for the toe as 'Scholl corn foam cushions'. As such, we now

have plasters for all parts of the foot - outer foot, inner foot and at the top of the toe. Each product costs approximately EUR 3.50.

### COMBINATION OF SEVERAL PRODUCTS INNOVATION

For the insulation of houses, the principle of blow-in insulation is increasingly being used. In this system, a granular insulation material is blown into the cavity with the help of a blowing machine. The cavity is lined with an insulating protective film.

The companies that carried out these blow-in insulations found it pointless to always order the three things individually, which is what the Product Manager of the home improvement chain BayWa AG found out when he visited an event at the trade work guild. BayWa AG combined these three individual products into one new product range which still sells incredibly well today.

### COMBINATION OF SEVERAL SERVICES INNOVATION

At the beginning, Amazon only offered one faster delivery with its Amazon Prime Service. Over the years, they added many different services to it. So, Amazon Prime customers these days get:

- Free premium shipping
- Free next-day delivery (only in certain regions)
- Unlimited streaming of videos as part of the Prime Video Service
- Unlimited listening streaming of music in the Prime Music Service
- Borrowing of books

With this combination of services, Amazon distinguishes itself from many of its competitors which usually only offer individual services.

### COMBINATION OF SALES AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS INNOVATION

For our example product, SelfBackup, that we are developing for our persona Claudia, we are using new sales and communication channels.

Through our interviews we have found out that people like our persona Claudia have their photos developed online by the company CEWE, or order photo books from CEWE.

Since we know that Claudia goes onto the CEWE homepage, we can reach her here and inform her that "My photos are always automatically backed up". By clicking on this item, you will receive further information and can order the product right away.

The screenshot shows the CEWE website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Produkte, Kundenbeispiele, Software, Schulung, Service, Community, Forum, Über uns, and a search icon. Below the navigation bar, a headline reads: "CEWE FOTOBUCH - Ihre Fotos als echtes Buch. Mit unserer Software Ihre Fotobücher gestalten und bestellen." There are two main promotional banners. The left banner is for "Unsere kostenlose Bestellssoftware 5.0" with a "DOWNLOAD STARTEN!" button and a link to "Haben Sie Fragen? Wir helfen Ihnen gern!". The right banner is for "Mein cewe fotobuch Mein Leben" featuring a woman holding a photo book, with a price tag of "ab 7,95 €\*" and buttons for "HIER INFORMIEREN" and "ZUM CEWE FOTOBUCH".

Source: [www.cewe.de](http://www.cewe.de), Rights CEWE Stiftung & Co. KGaA

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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Please note: The image of the original CEWE homepage was enhanced by us for the SelfBackup example product to include the point: My photos are always automatically backed up > Find out more information here. Until now, this type of product which consists of software as well as a medium for backing up, was not communicated or sold over this or similar channels.

If you have found an innovative solution, then validate it on the market first with:

- Individual surveys of potential customers
- Start with low costs for customer tests with:
  - Pretotyping
  - Prototyping
- Ensure that you have built the right thing before the final product is created

A pretotype is a very cost-effective model which does not yet work but gives an idea of how something could work. With a pretotype, you can firstly answer the questions:

- Would I use it?
- Would others buy and use it?

You can arrange the pretotype in the sequence as follows: Idea - Pretotype - Prototype - Product

The idea for this is as follows: Before you even invest any money in the development of a new product, you should first be aware of whether you would even use it yourself. This is done by creating as simple a "thing" as possible and pretending to use it for a while as you would use it. You can learn more on the subject of pretotyping in our course "Technical Product Management".

Note:

Strive to solve market problems with little or no technical development.

SelfBackup example:

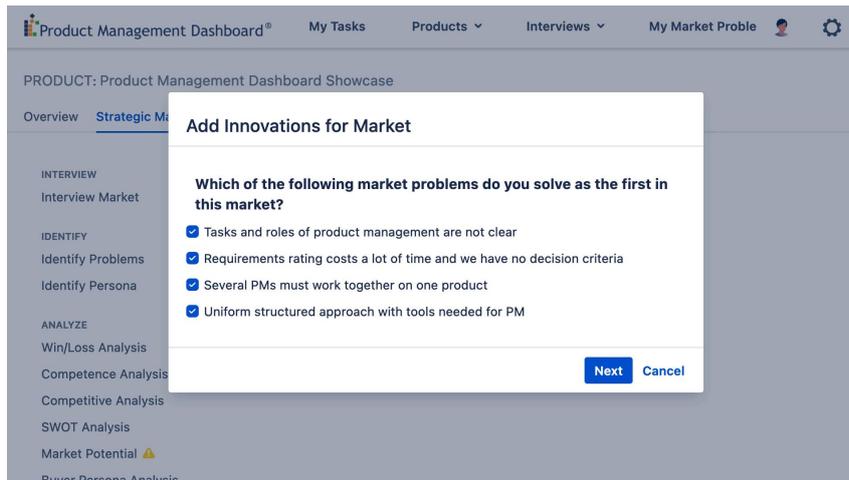
Underneath the point: 'Combination of sales and communication channels Innovation', we already touched upon our example.

Here is the checklist:

## Innovation



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
KPIs defined:	Yes	
KPIs analysed:	Not possible yet	
KPI-Measures initiated:	Not necessary	
Innovation:	Technic/Sales Channel/ Communication Channel	



Find innovations for different markets with just a few clicks, thanks to InnoWizz™.

## BUY, BUILD OR PARTNER

The Buy, Build or Partner decision, i.e. the decision to buy something in addition to the product, make it yourself or go into a partnership has a significant impact on investments, resources and your long-term strategy. Before we move on to the decision-making criteria, we would like to raise your awareness of the fact that you should tackle the decision steps in the correct order.

Practical example:

In a larger organisation the management had the idea to offer a product which sells its services. But the prerequisite for this was an additional technology which this company did not have themselves and which also wasn't part of the company's competences. So, they went off in search of suitable partners who were able to supply the technology they were lacking. After selecting the potential partners, these partners were invited to meetings. This whole phase lasted for more than six months, during which the potential partners had to travel back and forth to the company and submit new proposals.

At some point, a Product Manager came up with the idea to draw up a short competitive analysis and found that there were already over 80 providers with clear market leaders for the same combination of service and technology.

As a result, it was decided to end the matter internally.

In summary:

They and their potential partners had been pointlessly working on this for more than half a year. Had they initially analysed the competition and then made further decisions, all involved would have saved a lot of time and money.

The following order should be strictly adhered to:

1. IDENTIFY the problems
2. ANALYSE
  - the market (competition, SWOT, potentials)
  - your own company's competences
3. DETERMINE the optimal solution
4. ONLY NOW decide whether to buy, build or partner

With partnerships, you can extend the following things for a product:

- Technologies
- Communication channels
- Sales channels
- Services and service offerings in which you have no competence

Practical example:

One of our customers develops products for business process management in the banking sector. These products enable process automation in companies. Such products are based on so-called business process engines. These business process engines are now offered by various manufacturers on the market. Our customer has consciously chosen to save the effort needed to develop such an engine. Instead, they use an existing engine, because our customer realised that their own competence did not lie in the area of the development of such a business process engine, but in the field of processes and process automation at banks. Here you have an example of buying additional standard basic technology, i.e. a buy.

Practical example:

A German car manufacturer has not developed the technology in-house for the injection systems of its petrol and diesel engines. Instead, they had a partner develop and produce the equipment for their vehicles. This partner's expertise lay exactly in this area. As such, the car manufacturer consciously decided to partner. The car manufacturer always decides to buy in standard products when it comes to tyres.

Whether you buy something for the product, make it yourself or go into a partnership, our template (Document 12) can help you decide with the aid of a few short questions which will help you to find the correct answer.

Here are our decision-making aids:

1. BUY when it comes to basic technologies available on the market or basic services. E.g. You would buy the plastic granules for the production of toothbrushes instead of building a plant of your own which manufactures plastic granules.
2. BUILD if it corresponds with your particular competence. As a toothbrush specialist, you would make this yourself.
3. PARTNER if you, for example, would require a sales partner to sell the toothbrushes. Or if the production should be outsourced due to cost reasons.

With partnerships, always keep in mind:

- Time is needed for the guidance and support
- Partnerships mean increased effort in, for example, the development, in product management and in sales
- Attention should be paid to appropriate contracts
- Do 'special economic activities' or 'golf' partnerships really help us to go forward?

Our template (Document 12) can be used as a decision-making aid and to document the decision.

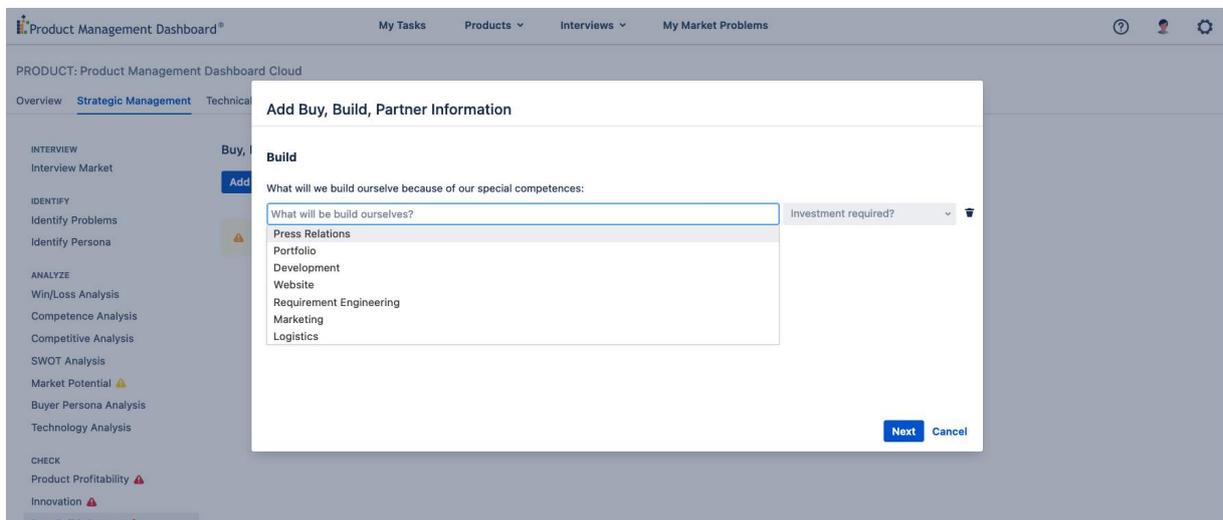
SelfBackup example:

Overview and checklist:

# Buy, Build, Partner



Product:	SelfBackup	Your Product
KPIs defined:	Yes	
KPIs analysed:	Not possible yet	
KPI-Measures initiated:	Not necessary	
Innovation:	Technic/Sales Channel/ Communication Channel	
Buy, Build, Partner	Yes/Yes/Yes	



The decision for Buy, Build, Partner is made in a few seconds and documented transparently.

## MARKET STRATEGY

As already mentioned at the beginning, we derive all the strategies, including the market strategy.

Before we go into details concerning the market strategy, let's refer to a short example from history to point out how important it is that you also communicate the strategies to your colleagues once you have derived them.

Example:

Napoleon won numerous battles in the course of history, even when he fought against multiple armies at the same time. He always had the same strategy in his battles. This was that he always fought the enemy armies individually and never allowed enemy armies to unite.

In his last battle in which he fought against the British, the Dutch and the Prussians, Napoleon had hired new generals but obviously hadn't shared his strategy with them. One of his new generals was to fight against the Prussians, who came from the east. However, Napoleon himself entered into battle with the British and the

Dutch, who came from the west. Napoleon won his first battle and forced the British and Dutch troops towards the west and following this to Waterloo.

The new general also won his first battle, but let the Prussians escape in the direction of the north, where he met them again and fought against them. But because he attacked the Prussians from the east there, they were able to flee to the west where they ultimately united with the British and the Dutch. In the end, Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo.

Had the new general known and followed Napoleon's strategy, it would certainly not have come to this defeat for Napoleon.

Colleagues from neighbouring departments should therefore always know your strategies, so that you are all working towards the same goal and you ultimately succeed together.

We now come to the details of the market strategy.

The aim of the market strategy is to:

1. Determine the order of the target markets according to the following criteria:
  - The solution to the problem is urgent, costs time and money and the problem is widespread in its target market
  - Take into account the size of the potential
  - Does the current organisation fit?, e.g. Sales, or must it be invested in?
2. Achieve maximum success with the existing resources:
  - Where do you need to invest the least and still win the most customers?
  - Where are the greatest margins?
  - Which markets are the easiest to win?

In order to answer the above questions and to make the decision as to which order the markets need to be addressed in, use of the results of your work to date. Take a look at which of the points established so far the market strategy can be derived from:



You shouldn't start without knowing what problem exists in which market. Just as important is how often this problem occurs, i.e. whether it is widespread.

Without knowing which persona has the problem, it's difficult to develop a solution. You should also know the decision-making criteria of this persona if it is a Buyer Persona.

Will our special competence be appreciated in the markets, i.e. do we have any credibility? Can we deliver

unique benefits and added value for these markets?

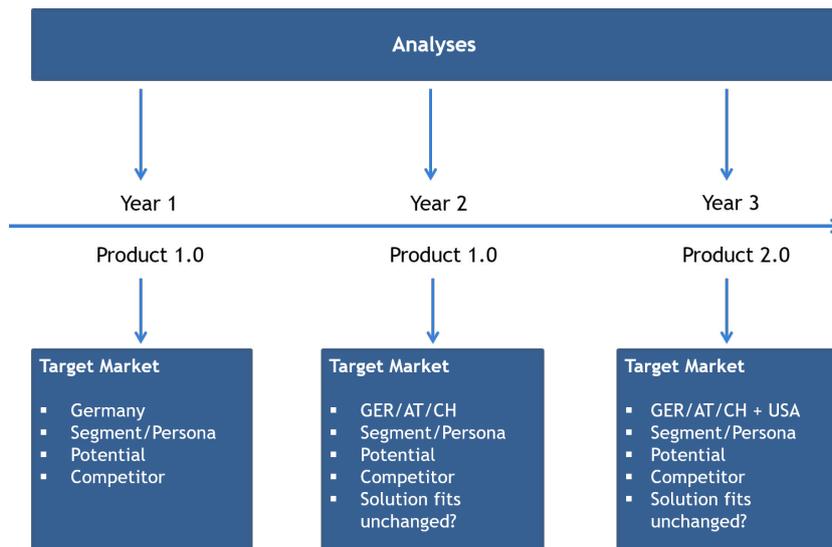
Is it worth entering the market or are there already too many competitors? Do we have a strategy to beat the competitors?

How big is the potential in the various markets? And is this big enough?

You will see a whole lot of questions that can only be answered if you have determined the results of the individual points from the Open Product Management Workflow with the help of our tools.

*Strategies that are not based on facts from analyses are not very successful!*

We believe that you have the results and it is possible for you to derive the market strategy according to the above-mentioned criteria, i.e. tackle the order according to the various markets. This may look as follows:



For our example product, SelfBackup, the results are as follows:

## Market Strategy SelfBackup



Interview Places:	Germany	USA
Number of interviews:	30	5
Persona:	Claudia	Claudia
Urgency:	Very high	Intermediate
Potential:	~1 Mio	~3,8 Mio
Organisation:	Existing & Fitting	None
Investments:	Product	Organisation; Product
Market knowledge:	Good	Very low

Which market would you approach on the basis of the results? A tip - it's not the one with the greatest potential.

If possible, strategies should be derived which are long-lasting and can be constantly executed in a relaxed manner. An example of how long-lasting strategies can be derived:

In an interview Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, gave the following answer:

I am regularly asked: "What will change in the next 10 years?"

I am never asked: "What won't change in the next 10 years?"

... the second question is the more important one. Because you can build a business strategy around things that are constant over a long period of time.

What is meant by that? What won't change for Amazon in the next 10 years, i.e. which criteria or things will remain constant for the next 10 years for Amazon?

Have a think about it.

Here is the answer from Jeff Bezos himself:

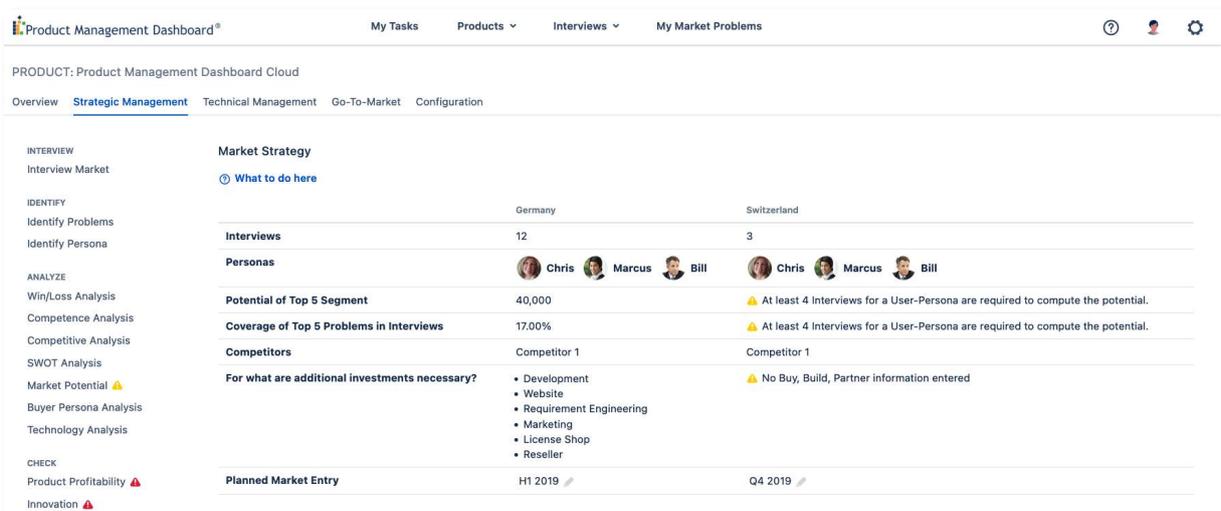
"In our retail business, we know customers want low prices. And I know that it will be the same for the next 10 years. They want fast delivery and a huge selection.

It's impossible to imagine a future in 10 years time where customers come to me and say to me: 'Jeff, I love Amazon, I wish the prices were a bit higher' - 'I love Amazon, I wish that you delivered a bit slower' - Impossible!"

Participants from our training courses always remark at this point: "Amazon are no longer the ones with the lowest price."

That is correct. But Amazon offers people more unique added values, such as trust in the product evaluation, in the logistics, reversed transactions, payment methods and customer service. Amazon also offers a huge product selection and much more.

As you can see, you don't always have to sell at the lowest price, because the marketing mix has 4 Ps, with the price being just one of them. You should think about the other 3 Ps and ideally offer the customers further unique added values. It is your responsibility as a Product Manager to find these and to communicate them to your colleagues in Marketing and Sales, as well as customers.



The screenshot shows the 'Product Management Dashboard' with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area for 'Market Strategy'. The dashboard is split into two columns for 'Germany' and 'Switzerland'.

	Germany	Switzerland
<b>Interviews</b>	12	3
<b>Personas</b>	Chris, Marcus, Bill	Chris, Marcus, Bill
<b>Potential of Top 5 Segment</b>	40,000	⚠️ At least 4 Interviews for a User-Persona are required to compute the potential.
<b>Coverage of Top 5 Problems in Interviews</b>	17.00%	⚠️ At least 4 Interviews for a User-Persona are required to compute the potential.
<b>Competitors</b>	Competitor 1	Competitor 1
<b>For what are additional investments necessary?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development</li> <li>Website</li> <li>Requirement Engineering</li> <li>Marketing</li> <li>License Shop</li> <li>Reseller</li> </ul>	⚠️ No Buy, Build, Partner information entered
<b>Planned Market Entry</b>	H1 2019	Q4 2019

**Plan fact-based market strategy in seconds and identify missing information instantly.**

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

This book is teaching material of proProduktmanagement GmbH - Deuschherrnstrasse 6 - 90429 Nuremberg - Germany

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## PORTFOLIO STRATEGY

As already shown in the market strategy, the portfolio strategy is derived from the results of the previous work. The following points can be derived from the portfolio strategy:



Yet again we start here with the results of the interview.

What are the problems on the market? Are there different personas with different problems? Can these problems be solved with a product or do they need different solutions?

Win/Loss: Will our portfolio and our communication on it even be understood on the market?

Can we push into markets with an expanded portfolio where there is as yet no competitor, can we differentiate ourselves with it? Then what is our strategy? How big is the potential in the individual markets?

What are the decision-making criteria for the Buyer Persona? May we have to expand the portfolio on the basis of different Buyer Personas and in order to facilitate communication?

Are the benefits still even understood by the customer and can Sales even sell so many different products?

Does the whole thing still turn out to be profitable?

Are we delivering an innovation with our portfolio?

What is the market message for each of the products and what is the message for the portfolio? Can the message clearly differentiate the products so that the customer can also understand it?

The current portfolio should be checked on the basis of the questions above, as well as asking the customers if they understand the current portfolio.

We often see portfolios on the market that:

- a) Consist of a single product
- b) Consist of too many products

If the portfolio consists of only one product, then:

- The market is limited, and you only have one foothold
- There is the absolute risk of "over-engineering" and with it the loss of the core market

- This is quickly imitated and there is a risk of losing to the competition, if you know you can't protect the uniqueness of the product

A portfolio which is too large has the following risks:

- Increasing product maintenance costs
- Potential buyers can find it difficult to decide between the different products
- The communication to the market is too detailed and incomprehensible
- Only a few of the products in the portfolio are appreciated and can become the market leader

With their mobile phones, Nokia typified a portfolio that was too large. By 2007, Nokia had about 150 mobile phone models on the market. But only a few of them were real market leaders, such as the Nokia 6310 for example, the typical business mobile phone of the 2000s.

Tips for a large portfolio:

- Check to see if there are multiple products which can be combined into one new product
- Try to set up such product combinations for the target groups
- Formulate the market message for the different product combinations and then test these on the market

Microsoft Office example:

Previously, we purchased Word, Excel and PowerPoint individually. Today, Microsoft offers the Office products in a bundle for certain target groups, such as Office Home & Student, Office Business and Office Professional. On the Microsoft homepage, you are directed towards the respective product bundle according to your target group.

Brand portfolio:

What do the car brands Lexus, Subaru, Toyota, Isuzu, Daihatsu, Scion and Hino have in common?

They all belong to the Toyota Group or Toyota has large shares in them.

Brand	Main segment/Target Group
Toyota	Cars
Lexus	Premium/Sport
Scion	Younger customers
Daihatsu	Kei-Car (supermini)
Hino	Commercial vehicles
Isuzu	Pick-up
Subaru	4-wheel drive

Obviously, Toyota has their sights on a single market segment with each of their brands. Toyota has therefore built up a portfolio of brands.

A brand portfolio has the following advantages:

- Clear target groups
- Targeted and comprehensible approach possible
- Clearly defined image which will be conveyed
- Low risk of diluting the brand if you want to tackle new target segments and markets

With various brands, each brand is treated as its own product and in accordance with the points:

- Strategically
- Economically
- Tactically & operationally

Some tips on successfully building a product or brand portfolio:

- Always build the portfolio from the market
- Are there different personas with different problems?
- Check whether the same solution fits for all the personas
- Does each persona really need a different solution, or would an altered communication be sufficient?
- Does each persona understand the same market message for the same solution?
- Regularly review the understanding of the portfolio on the market
- Split up the product into several editions for different target groups instead of "over engineering"
- Remove products:
  - That are unprofitable and only a few are sold (often arise from projects)
  - That are not understood on the market
- Combine different products into a new product (a suite)

Important:

Only complete positioning (market message) by persona and target segment!

- If there are significant differences: Product split
- If there are minimal differences: One product

A market-oriented portfolio is a portfolio which is understood on the market.

As many products as necessary, but as few products as possible!

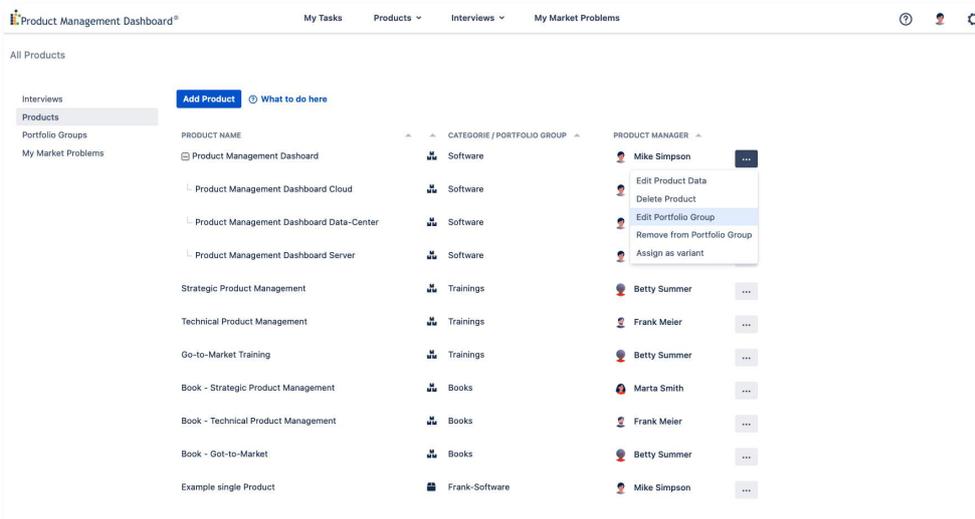
SelfBackup example:

Through further interviews, we have found out that there are also several personas who have similar problems with data backup as our persona Claudia does. This persona, Frank the professional photographer, has higher demands with regard to the data security of the data backup. He therefore needs a system in which the photos are backed up twice.

# Portfolio Strategy SelfBackup



<b>Product:</b>	<b>SelfBackup</b>	<b>SelfBackup Pro</b>
<b>Persona:</b>	Claudia	Frank photographer
<b>Technology:</b>	1 Hard Disk	2 Hard Disks RAID



The screenshot displays the 'Product Management Dashboard' interface. It features a navigation menu on the left with categories like 'Interviews', 'Products', 'Portfolio Groups', and 'My Market Problems'. The main area shows a list of products with columns for 'PRODUCT NAME', 'CATEGORIE / PORTFOLIO GROUP', and 'PRODUCT MANAGER'. A dropdown menu is open for the 'Mike Simpson' product manager, listing actions such as 'Edit Product Data', 'Delete Product', 'Edit Portfolio Group', 'Remove from Portfolio Group', and 'Assign as variant'.

The portfolio including portfolio groups, products, variants and subvariants can be recorded and managed.

## DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

The distribution strategy is the strategy with which you decide where and how the product will be sold. This is also market-driven, and we use the results of our work to date to derive the distribution strategy.



The aim of the distribution strategy is:

- To sell the product in such a way that it fits for buyers
- To identify distribution channels
- To specify payment options
- If our current Sales cannot sell the product, because they, for example, have no experience in selling via business partners, it must be made clear to the management that investment is needed here, because otherwise we cannot sell the product

As already shown, the Sales team must also fit the sales channel. There are the following types of distribution:

- Direct
  - e.g. own shops, factory outlet stores, own website ...
- Indirect (sales partners)
  - e.g. distributors, specialist trade, chain stores, shops, online shops ...

The decision on where we sell depends first and foremost on the purchasing behaviour of our Buyer Persona, as well as some other things. You should therefore always use the Buyer Persona and their behaviour to decide on the distribution strategy.

- Sell where the Buyer Persona usually buys
- Supply where the customer needs the product
- Offer the Buyer Persona the most familiar way to pay
- Enable the simplest way to purchase; for example the usability of an internet shop, advice and guidance before buying, service when exchanging etc.

Before you can start deriving the distribution strategy, it is advisable to check the results of the work to date to see whether the following questions can be answered with it:

- Do we know the "Buyer Persona" involved?
- Do we know the *entire* purchasing process?

- Do we know where our target segment shop?
- Do we know where the competition sells?
- Do we know where the competition doesn't sell, but our Buyer Persona buys?
- Can our Sales sell the product?
- Can our Sales sell via the channels of our Buyer Persona?
- Are investments for the expansion of sales necessary?
- What is the cost of the sales via the respective channels, i.e. which margin remains above?
- Can we supply products in such a way that it fits for the customer?
- Can the customer order as simply as possible and as normally as possible?
- Can the Buyer Persona use the familiar means of payment?

If you were able to consider all the previous points and answer the questions in the last points, it is possible to derive, document and justify the distribution strategy.

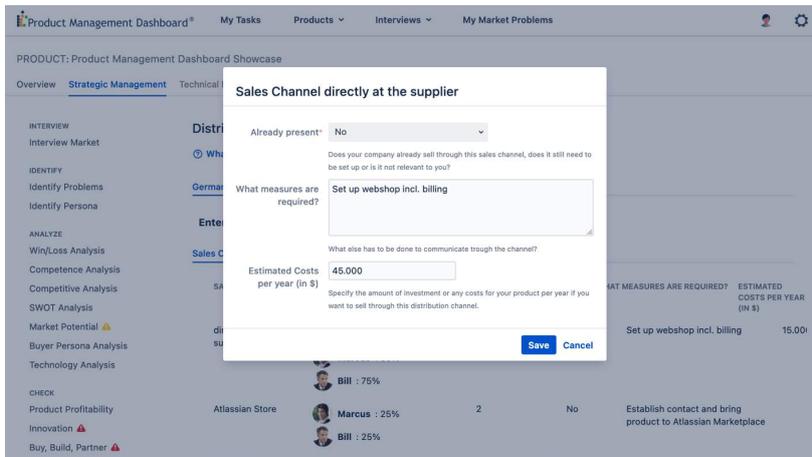
SelfBackup example:

We must select different distribution channels and means of payment for both our personas and products.

## Distribution SelfBackup



Product:	SelfBackup	SelfBackup Pro
Persona:	Claudia	Frank photographer
Technology:	1 Hard Disk	2 Hard Disks RAID
Distribution:	CEWE	Amazon, online-shops, technic markets
Payment method:	Invoice	Debit, PayPal, credit card



The screenshot shows the 'Product Management Dashboard' with a modal window titled 'Sales Channel directly at the supplier'. The modal contains the following information:

- Already present:** No
- Does your company already sell through this sales channel, does it still need to be set up or is it not relevant to you?** (Question)
- What measures are required?** Set up webshop incl. billing
- Estimated Costs per year (in \$)** 45.000
- Specify the amount of investment or any costs for your product per year if you want to sell through this distribution channel.** (Question)
- WHAT MEASURES ARE REQUIRED?** Set up webshop incl. billing
- ESTIMATED COSTS PER YEAR (IN \$)** 15.000

The background shows a sidebar with navigation options like 'Strategic Management', 'Interview Market', 'Identify Problems', 'Identify Persona', 'ANALYZE', 'Win/Loss Analysis', 'Competence Analysis', 'Competitive Analysis', 'SWOT Analysis', 'Market Potential', 'Buyer Persona Analysis', and 'Technology Analysis'. The main area shows a table with columns for 'Sales Channel', 'Person', 'Status', and 'Action'.

Decide the distribution strategy in seconds based on facts in the Product Management Dashboard.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

This book is teaching material of proProduktmanagement GmbH - GmbH - Deutschherrnstrasse 6 - 90429 Nuremberg - Germany

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## PRICING STRATEGY

As participants in our training courses tell us again and again, there are outright price wars in their company. This is not a price battle in the true sense of the word, but a fight about who in the company has sovereignty over the definition of prices. The discussions usually take place between Sales and Product Management, but Top Management would probably also like a say here more often.

First of all, it is a basic thing that everyone works together in a company and should work together on its success.

As a Product Manager, you derive the pricing strategy which is then presented in a business proposal, which is generated from the business plan. The prices are also part of this decision document, i.e. as a Product Manager, you propose a price that is determined based on market facts.

When we ask the above-mentioned training participants whether they have done all their preliminary work in accordance with the Open Product Management Workflow in order to justify and represent their price proposal with good arguments, then it often goes silent. Because it then becomes clear to our colleagues why Sales with their statement: "We speak to the customers and know our way around the market." always wins.

A well-founded price proposal and a credible pricing strategy will only be delivered if the preliminary work has been completed properly. Using this image, you can see what preparatory work must be completed before the pricing strategy can be derived.



The aim of the derivation of the pricing strategy is:

*To determine the value of the solution for customers.*

To do so, you need to find out:

1. How much time and/or money the customer saves
2. Whether an expected price exists, based on:
  - The self-detected savings potential
  - The recognition of the time saving
  - Perceived added values (if so, what are they?)

When asking for an expected price, you should also use the product positioning, i.e. the market message that was previously created. At this point, you can use the Technology Benefit Analysis (Document 10) as a tool for the survey.

In addition to the value of the solutions for the customer, these should also be taken into account:

3. Possible different market segments and geographic markets
4. The prices of the competitors' products and the reasoning for the added values
5. Alternative pricing and business models
6. Internal specifications for return on investment (ROI)
7. Customer specifications for return on investment

The formula for the calculation of the ROI helps here. The primary ROI for capital goods in years:

$$ROI_{primary} = \frac{\text{Investment costs}}{\text{Saving per Year}}$$

There are industries in which, when purchasing products, special attention should be paid to when the ROI occurs. For example, in Germany's automotive supply industry, an ROI of a maximum of 2 years is specified.

When a product is created with whose solution the mass market is happy, whose price is accepted and with which you can assert yourself on the market, but for which you have developed further unique features for other customers, it pays off to bring a premium product with a premium price onto the market.

	W1 Basis	W2 Basis	Our Basis	Our Premium
Contact-Info	x	x	x	x
Encryption	-	-	-	x
Backup/Restore	-	-	-	x
Web-Access	-	x	x	x
Price	€100	€100	€100	€500

At the end of the pricing strategy, the derived prices and reasoning have to be understood by the following people:

- Customers
- Management
- Sales and sales channels
- Investors
- Analysts

SelfBackup example:

We sell our standard product for a price that we have determined from our discussions and our Price-Benefit-Analysis with the market participants. We have also been able to determine the price for our product in such a way.

## Price SelfBackup



<b>Product:</b>	SelfBackup	SelfBackup Pro
<b>Persona:</b>	Claudia	Frank photographer
<b>Technology:</b>	1 Hard Disk	2 Hard Disks RAID
<b>Distribution:</b>	CEWE	Amazon, online-shops, technic markets
<b>Payment method:</b>	Invoice	Debit, PayPal, credit card
<b>Price:</b>	EUR 159,-	EUR 259,-

**INTERVIEW**

Interview Market

**IDENTIFY**

Identify Problems

Identify Persona

**ANALYZE**

Win/Loss Analysis

Competence Analysis

Competitive Analysis

SWOT Analysis

Market Potential

Buyer Persona Analysis

Technology Analysis

**CHECK**

Product Profitability

Innovation

Buy, Build, Partner

**STRATEGY**

Market Strategy

Portfolio Strategy

Distribution Strategy

**Price Strategy**

Positioning

Communication Strategy

Product Roadmaps

**CONSOLIDATE**

Business Plan

### Price Strategy

[What to do here](#)

**General development and production costs**

Total non-recurring investments and development costs: 200.000 \$

Production costs of the individual product incl. material input per unit: 0 \$ per product unit

**Country-specific costs & prices**

Germany Switzerland

Customer Side Germany

**Time and Money Loss caused by the Problems in the first Market Segment in Germany**

<b>Chris</b>	Average costs per hour of the Persona	100 \$
<b>Marcus</b>	Loss of time from Interviews	924 hours per Year
	Monetary loss from Interviews	0 \$ per Year
	Average loss of money from Interviews	92.400 \$ per Year
	ROI for Customer at our target price	4,36 Day(s)

**Our Product Side for Germany**

**Price for Germany**

Target Price in Germany: 1.200 \$ yearly

Comment on price: [Click here to enter value](#)

**Calculation of the cost-effectiveness of our product in Germany**

For the calculation of the economic efficiency of the product it is sufficient to indicate very rough costs, i.e. no exact expenditure and/or numerical values of e.g. the technology, production, marketing as well as selling must be determined.

Maximal Revenue Germany		Costs for Market Germany	
Total market potential of the first segment in Germany	236.000	Rough Marketing and Communication Costs in Germany	13.000 \$ per Year
How many percent of the overall potential might buy the product?	10 %	Rough selling expenses in Germany	51.000 \$ per Year
Number of sold units over life cycle in Germany	23.600	Production Costs of the products for Germany	0 \$ per Year
		Rough adaption costs for Germany	0 \$ per Year
		Rough Service & Support Costs in Germany	20.000 \$ per Year
		Accruals for Germany	5.000 \$ per Year
		Other Costs in Germany	10.000 \$ per Year
<b>Estimated maximal revenue in Germany</b>	<b>28.320.000 \$ per Year</b>	<b>Rough overall costs for Germany</b>	<b>99.000 \$ per Year</b>

✔ The estimated yearly contribution margin in this market will be 28.221.000 \$.  
According to the current data entered in the Product Roadmap, the one-time development costs

Develop prices & pricing models in a short time based on market facts, costs, ROI and contribution margin with the Product Management Dashboard.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

This book is teaching material of proProduktmanagement GmbH GmbH - Deutschherrnstrasse 6 - 90429 Nuremberg

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## PRODUCT POSITIONING, MARKET MESSAGE (POSITIONING) - DOCUMENTS 13, 14

Product positioning is, from our point of view, one of the most important points in the Open Product Management Workflow. Even if a product was the most innovative in the world and the engineers had developed the best product there had ever been, you would struggle to sell it if you didn't explain to the potential customers what it helps with and what added value it offers. Unfortunately, we see this situation very often in practice. Good products and a lack of communication of the added value.

Before we begin with the positioning or market message, the graphic shows which points results are needed for:



By now it should be clear to us when it comes to the communication of the solution or the unique added values: Only if you know the market problems can you make the assertion that these exact problems would be solved with the product. And that is precisely what the positioning is about.

The aim of the positioning or market message:

- To communicate the benefits for the respective Buyer Persona
- To make assertions on how much time and/or money will be saved, which added value the solution provides
- Show how it can help the customer

A good and effective positioning (message):

- Makes the market communication and sales materials more understandable
- Provides a consistent communication across all materials and channels
- Simplifies the sales process for Sales
- Attracts attention and provides talking points for the press and analysts
- Helps to argue the pricing strategy
- Helps all colleagues to understand the product vision

At this point in our training course, from time to time we get a comment that this is all the task of the Marketing and Communications Department.

No, this is the task of Product Management, because positioning communicates facts.

## Product Management

- Is an expert on the market and provides the facts and thus the content
- Focuses on "WHAT is communicated content-wise"
- Is responsible for the positioning process

## Marketing and Communication

- Is an expert in communication and presentation
- Focuses on "HOW the content is communicated"
- Is responsible for market-wide campaigns

As you can see, working as a Product Manager is the prerequisite for the Marketing and Communications Department and later good campaigns for the product. In places where the Product Manager provides the positioning, Marketing will change little. The following examples show what kind of featureless text bubbles result when Product Management provide 'modest' positioning, which we see again and again in practice:

Our product is ...

... The best, scalable, flexible, easy to use, user-friendly, portable, extendable, outstanding, elegant, robust, database-independent, double-neutral, tested several times, next-generation technology, the best of the best ...

These featureless text bubbles result when the Product Manager has neither the market facts, nor knows the market problems which should be solved. Whether the Product Manager is providing these text bubbles or Marketing is generating such text bubbles using the Product Manager's mostly technical jargon, is an open question. The reason for this definitely lies with the Product Manager who acts without facts.

When I, Frank Lemser, moved into Product Management back in the day, I was initially asked by Marketing to make a list of the feature-function-benefit for my product. This means that I had to take each feature of my product, describe its function and finally highlight an added value (benefit) for this feature.

You can probably imagine the result.

Looking back on it today, I would say that it was very cruel, because this way you disregarded the market problem completely and focused from the start on the technical side of things.

Even today, every now and again I come across the Feature-Function-Benefit procedure in practice. Here are two brief examples of sentences of a market message which resulted from this method:

"... Enterprise 11 is the platform with the greatest possible interoperability for business-critical computing in classical client-server, virtual and cloud environments."

Everything clear?

Then here's another example:

"RAS delivers faster responses thanks to JBOSS BRMS."

Everything clear....

No, these are not isolated events, but rather confirm the rule, even if it is not always so extreme. Have a look at your surroundings and scrutinise advertising statements about products and their added value for yourself. You should then consider your own products with the same critical view. Here, you can quickly make a large and positive impact.

*“Don't tell people how good you make the goods; tell the how good your goods make them.”*

*Leo Burnett*

You should take what Leo Burnett says to heart because it is the basic rule for good positioning, for an understandable market message.

Apart from that, Leo Burnett understood something about marketing and advertising, because in 1935 he founded the eponymous advertising agency which invented characters such as the Marlboro Man or Tony the Tiger (Kellogg's). Time magazine counts him as one of the top 100 people who influenced the 20th century.

## THE POSITIONING PROCESS

As already mentioned, a Product Manager is responsible for the positioning and thus also for the following positioning process.

First of all, a team should be built up of:

- Strategic Product Manager
- Product Marketing
- Marketing and Communication
- As far as possible without engineers, as otherwise technical aspects are communicated again

For the positioning process:

- For the first time, schedule approximately 1 day
- For recording and sorting/grouping the market problems it is best to use index cards as well as a notice board

At the beginning:

- Determine the top 10 of the most commonly cited problems depending on the Persona
- Try to summarise similar problems, i.e. problems that aim towards the same solution
- Describe the problems or use the words of the customers: What bothers and what annoys?
- Are there values that can quantify e.g. time/money saved, sizes for product information, qualities in comparison to etc.?
- Highlight which additional and unique attributes, benefits and added values can be provided

For the following steps, the Positioner tool (Document 13) is required. The Positioner helps to establish the positioning (message) in such a way that the added values are formulated for the respective Buyer Personas.

We will show you how the Positioner works in the following example of a product which you will know from the movie "Back to the Future". This product would solve one of the most commonly cited problems in industrial nations, namely:

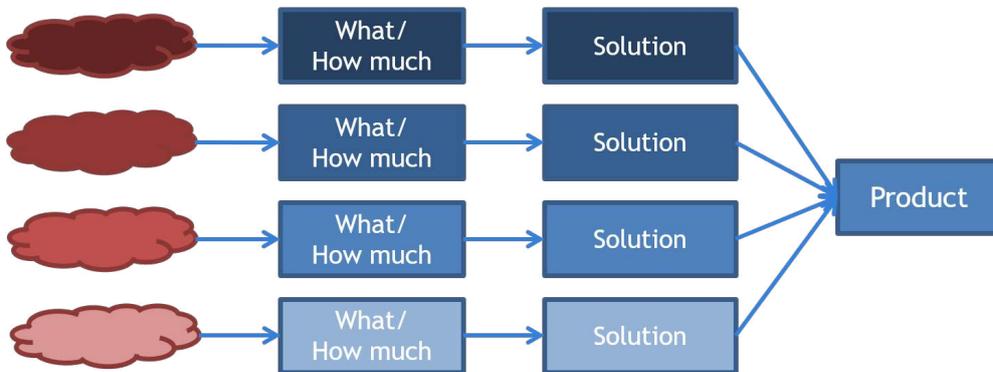
*“I have too little time.”*

Market problems,  
how customers  
described them.  
**What:** annoys customers?  
**(How much) does it cost:**  
Time and/or money?

Just reverse the  
problem into a  
solution.  
**What:**  
Result for customers  
**How much:**  
Time/money saved?

Protected technology  
or protected name  
or how/with what you  
have solved the problem.

Optional:  
**Yes:**  
In one phrase for  
product message  
**Rarely:**  
in 3-5-headwords in  
Pos.-document



1. The problem “I have too little time” is written in the first field under the point about market problems.
2. Now turn the problem around and describe it as a solution for the customer. In the second field you explain:
  - a. The result for the customer or where they will be helped  
*or*
  - b. How much time and/or money they save
- In our example: “You’ll get more time.”
3. In the third field you briefly describe how the problem is solved so that the customer understands and trusts in it. If you have developed something that you have legally protected or have patented, at this point you can also use the name of this thing.  
For our example, we would write: “through the time creator”
4. You write the name of the product in the fourth field. This should be in the main statement as well as in the product description of the positioning document (14). In the special added values, the four key points of the positioning document (14) can have the name of the product, but not in every point because otherwise it sounds ugly.  
In our example, the product would be the “flux capacitor”.

Our main statement for the positioning document (14), for the market problem: “I need more time.” is:

“You’ll get more time with the help of the time creator™ of the flux capacitor.”

At the beginning we already stated that you should summarise similar market problems. We’ll now show you here how this works when positioning with the positioner.

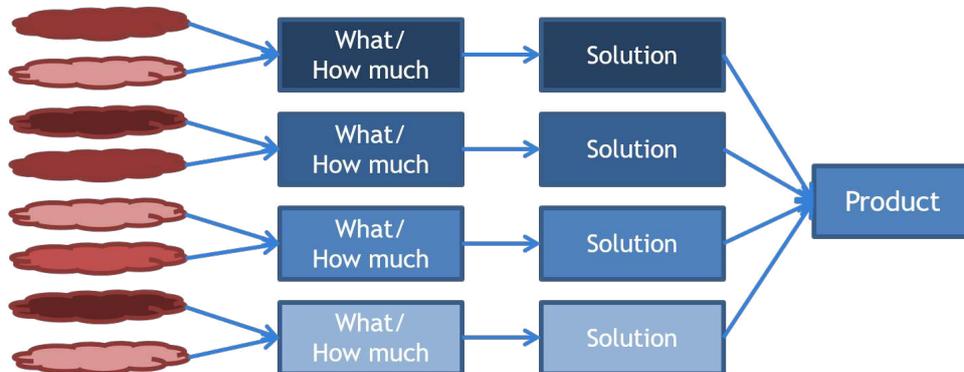
Market problems,  
how customers  
described them.  
**What:** annoys customers?  
**(How much) does it cost:**  
Time and/or money?

Just reverse the  
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**What:**  
Result for customers  
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Protected technology  
or protected name  
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have solved the problem.

Optional:  
**Yes:**  
In one phrase for  
product message  
**Rarely:**  
in 3-5-headwords in  
Pos.-document

13



Initially we have two market problems:

1. "I have too little time for my friends and family."
2. "I have too little time to do all my work."

These problems belong in the first two fields in the first column under market problems.

It's easy to recognise that both statements share a common basic problem: "I have too little time.", which is why their problem solution is the same.

In the second field (What/how much box) comes the wording: "You'll get more time."

The last two points are the same as above, so that at the end the main statement is: "You'll get more time with the help of the time creator™, of the flux capacitor."

We can reach all people with this statement who have named both of the problems above.

If we were looking at each problem individually, we would provide a separate main statement for each one, namely:

- a) "You'll get more time for friends and family with the help of the time creator™, of the flux capacitor."
- b) "You'll get more time for your work with the help of the time creator™, of the flux capacitor."

To communicate these two statements means increased costs. We would also no longer reach a good proportion of people, because with our actual statement: "You'll get more time with the help of the time creator™, of the flux capacitor." we reach all people who, for whatever reason, would like to have more time. Exactly what is described here at the end, is reflected in our definition for market segments:

*A market-oriented segmentation describes a group of individuals or companies who all share a set of the same identified market problems and is willing to pay for a solution to the problems.*

For our example product, SelfBackup, we have also formulated a main message:

“SelfBackup is the easiest and most innovative backup for data.”

This message should be right for our persona Claudia, shouldn't it?

Have a think about what Leo Burnett said...

And what did you learn in school? Do you 'shoot first (and ask questions later)?' No, you don't.

Please don't ever do what is shown above. Never put the product name at the front. Firstly, speak to the customer and tell them which problem was solved for them! Consider and take advantage of the positioner.

One main message for our example product SelfBackup, that our Persona Claudia understands and that makes it clear to her that there is a solution for her problem, is:

“Your pictures are safe at all times with the wireless, automatic backup with SelfBackup.”

Note:

*It is only once the positioning is complete that you begin to develop the product!*

Finish the positioning first and communicate this to your colleagues who work with the product, then everyone has the same idea of what the product should solve for the customer and everyone knows which direction they're travelling in.

## POSITIONING DOCUMENT

The Positioning document has already been mentioned several times in the previous section. The Positioning document, which you will receive from us as a tool (Document 14), is the most important document for the Go-To-Market. The various materials for customers and Sales, such as brochures, presentations, texts for web pages, will be generated using the contents of the Positioning document.

To note:

1. A Positioning document is required for each Buyer Persona.
2. It is necessary to check whether the message is valid for all industries. If necessary, you should formulate the message for these industries.

*If Product Management doesn't provide a message, Marketing cannot communicate genuine added values.*

## PRODUCT NAME

Initially, the Positioning document is created before you search for a product name. Ideally, the product name corresponds to a positioning statement so that it speaks for itself.

Here are a few additional tips:

- The name is ideally a positioning statement
- Meaningful names will explain the product
- Search for similar and descriptive words
- Check the name and its meaning for each country
- Watch out for legal factors
- You can also rent or buy names
- The number of syllables should be 3 or less, because long names are abbreviated to nicknames
- Avoid using the project name chosen as the product name

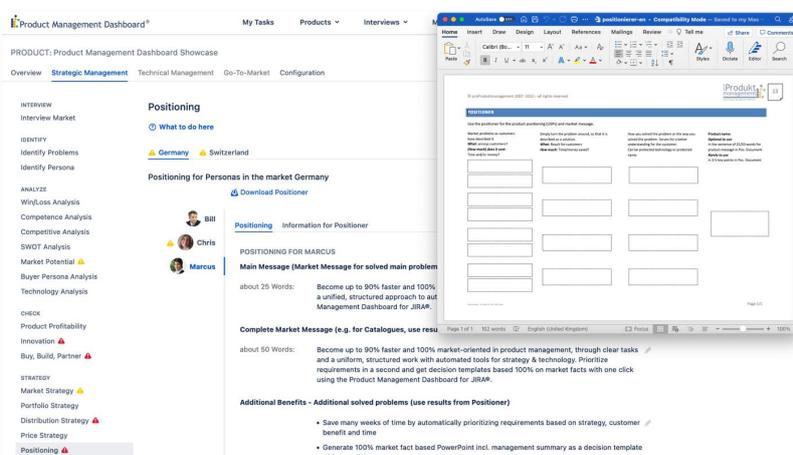
SelfBackup example:

We have already touched upon our example product within the chapter. Checklist:

## Positioning SelfBackup



Product:	SelfBackup	SelfBackup Pro
Persona:	Claudia	Frank photographer
Technology:	1 Hard Disk	2 Hard Disks RAID
Distribution:	CEWE	Amazon, online-shops, technic markets
Payment method:	Invoice	Debit, PayPal, credit card
Price:	EUR 159,-	EUR 259,-
Positioning Document:	Yes	No



The screenshot shows the 'Product Management Dashboard' with a sidebar on the left containing various management tools. The main window displays the 'Positioning' section for 'MARCUS'. It includes a 'Main Message (Market Message for solved main problem)' and 'Additional Benefits' section. The main message states: 'Become up to 90% faster and 100% a unified, structured approach to our Management Dashboard for JIRA®'. The additional benefits section lists: 'Save many weeks of time by automatically prioritizing requirements based on strategy, customer benefit and time' and 'Generate 100% market fact based PowerPoint incl. management summary as a decision template with one click'.

Deliver market messaging and positioning that customers understand directly to the Go-to-Market team.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

This book is teaching material of proProduktmanagement GmbH - Deuschherrnstrasse 6 - 90429 Nuremberg - Germany

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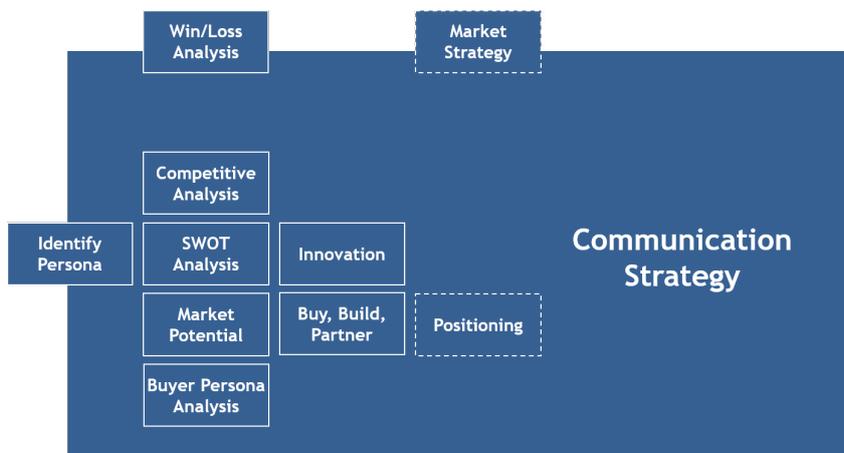
## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Now that an understandable market message has been established for the customer, this should also be communicated to the market at some point.

*Ducks lay their eggs in silence,  
while hens cluck like crazy. What is the consequence?  
Everybody eats hens' eggs.*

*Henry Ford*

In order to communicate to our target group in a targeted manner and with optimal costs, you derive the communication strategy from the previous work carried out and from the results of the following points.



The aim of the communication strategy is to define the best communication channels for each individual Buyer Persona. This is done by taking into account the following criteria:

- Communicate to your defined segments
- Derive from the information channels of the Buyer Persona where you have to communicate
- Then prioritise afterwards: "How many market participants will I reach and at what price?"
- Avoid the 'Watering can principle', since widespread scattering is expensive (e.g. television advertising)

Look where the Buyer Persona obtains information, for example:

- Daily newspapers
- Trade journals or magazines
- Internet, search engines, specialist portals, news portals, social media, YouTube etc.
- Trade fairs, conferences or guild meetings
- Television and radio
- etc.

Find out what type of content the Buyer Persona uses depending on the information channel:

- Specialist articles
- Advertisements
- Product information in paper or digital format
- White papers

- Product presentations
- Films
- etc.

When all of the information is compiled, and the results are compared, the communication strategy can be defined for each market and Persona.

The more precisely the work is done here, the more effectively the resources and the finances are used, the greater the success will be.

Later in "Go-To-Market", the results of the communication are defined and measured. You will learn more on the following points:

- Target segment and its Buyer Persona
- Channels and planned coverage and response rate
- Budget
- What are the interrelationships between the communication and sales process? (Push-Pull)
- How can Sales skim and follow-up?
- Measuring the success of the campaign:
  - e.g. special web pages
  - Social Media: new fans and followers
  - Product orders and sales

in our course "Successful Go-To-Market".

SelfBackup example:

We have derived the communication strategy from our respective personas:

## Communication SelfBackup



Product:	SelfBackup	SelfBackup Pro
Persona:	Claudia	Frank photographer
Technology:	1 Festplatte	2 Festplatten RAID
Distribution:	CEWE	Amazon, online-shops, technic markets
Payment method:	Invoice	Debit, PayPal, credit card
Price:	EUR 159,-	EUR 259,-
Positioning Document:	Yes	No
Communication Strategy:	CEWE (Partner), Facebook (ad)	Photo magazine, news (articles & ads)

## PRODUCT ROADMAPS

Product roadmaps are a type of map that show us on a timeline what things are planned for which time.

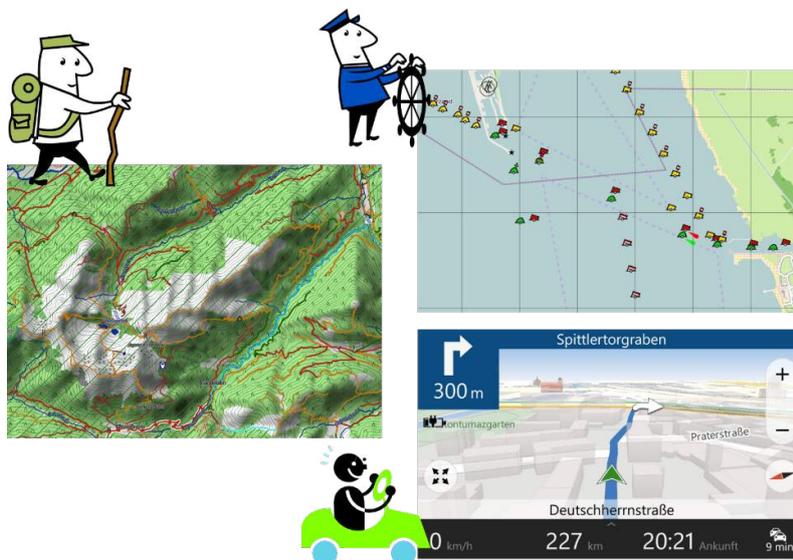
Product roadmaps are used for:

- Schedule
- Internal communication of the dates and resource planning
- Ability to plan for management and partners
- Investment planning for customers

We have seen in practice in many companies that Product Managers time and again are constantly busy modifying their product roadmap. In these companies, we have often not understood the content of the product roadmaps, because there were often small details (features) listed here.

The management at these companies also found the content of these product roadmaps incomprehensible, which in turn frustrated both sides.

In order to understand this issue in greater detail and to create solutions, let's take a look outside. Let's take the word "Maps" and look at what types of maps there are.



There are hiking maps. What information does a hiker take from them?

- Paths and crossings
- Elevation data and steepness of the ascent or descent
- Rivers, streams, lakes, buildings
- And the most important information - where is the nearest country pub where you can get a beer and a snack

There are also nautical maps which contain the following information:

- Country, place and sea markings
- Depth indications
- Buoyage for waterways, danger areas, restricted areas ...
- Lighthouses and beacons
- etc.

Street maps on sat navs give us this information:

- Where I am exactly
- Distance to the nearest junction where I should turn
- Current speed
- Total mileage, and mileage left to destination
- Arrival and congestion times
- etc.

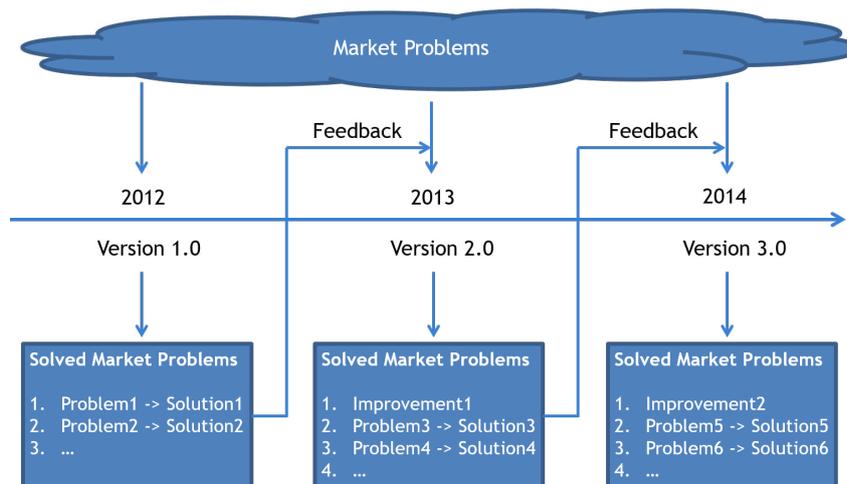
These three different maps contain different information for three different personas, namely hikers, ships' skippers and car drivers.

Likewise, for the product roadmaps. There are different roadmaps with specific content for the different personas which our company deals with.

We distinguish between three types of product roadmaps:

- Strategic roadmap
- Internal roadmap for resource planning
- External roadmap

In order to build roadmaps based on the market, we proceed as indicated in the graphic:



1. Always write down what market problems are to be solved and not features
2. At the next iteration of the product, incorporate feedback and show this as well as the new problems to be solved
3. In the roadmaps (see below), always start with short time intervals and then quickly make them less clear and a little blurry, because you know often plans get postponed  
Tip: First quarterly, half-yearly, then full years

**STRATEGIC ROADMAP:**

The graphic shows an example of how a strategic roadmap could look:

Q1 2012	Q2 2012	Q3 2012	Q4 2012	H1 2013	H2 2013
Product 2011.0 - read CD data	End of Maintenance for Product 2005	Product 2011.1 - CD Cover	Planning Product 2013 - convert to MP3	Servicepack 1 Product 2011	End of Life Product 2005
Revenue 3.500.000	Revenue 3.400.000	Revenue 2.600.000	Revenue 3.800.000	Revenue 7.100.000	Revenue 6.800.000
Σ Customers 70.000	Σ Customers 72.500	Σ Customers 73.400	Σ Customers 76.100	Σ Customers 80.300	Σ Customers 86.600

The strategic roadmap contains all the things that are interesting for management and investors. You will learn what information this needs to be in discussions with the management.

A strategic roadmap is also for all those who are involved in product development and marketing, which is interesting, because that way all your colleagues can also use the schedule. You should also regularly present this strategic roadmap in addition to the numbers.

**INTERNAL ROADMAP:**

The internal roadmap is used for the planning of resources. Each department can use it to find out when they are needed in a project. You will receive an example of an internal roadmap from us as Document 15.

The following points should be included:

- Time, i.e. quarter, half-year, year
- Product name or project name
- Departments required
- Affected markets
- Aim of the step for the product
- The necessary steps of the departments (press release, sales training...)
- Platforms
- etc.

**EXTERNAL ROADMAP:**

Often, colleagues from Sales enquire when the next version of the product or a specific functionality is coming. If every colleague from Sales asks for their customer, it would start to get annoying at some point and takes time.

Your colleagues don't do this out of boredom, but because customers want to know for their own internal planning when they should expect investments.

As such, we help the customers and communicate openly to the outside world. Rough periods are sufficient for customers' own planning if these are known in a timely manner. The type of information that customers need for their planning is also very rough. What the customers do need are so-called milestones:

- New product versions

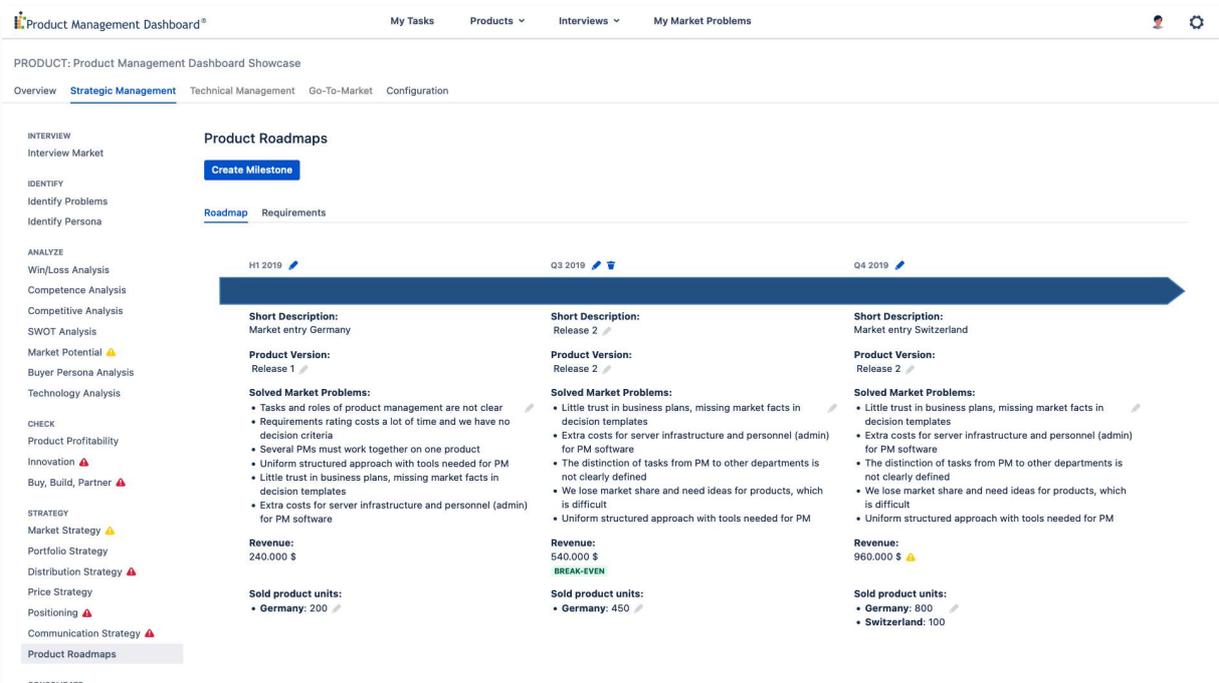
- Planned updates
- The end of the further development of the product
- The end of the product support
- The end of the product line support

At the same time, you should also publish a precise definition of what you mean by 'The end of the product support', for example.

You will receive Document 16 from us to help with this, which gives examples of an external roadmap as well as the external definition of milestones,

If you publish external roadmaps and the definition of your terms, Sales and customers can always refer to them which will save you time.

An external roadmap and its active communication to the customers and Sales is a prerequisite for a smooth product discontinuation.



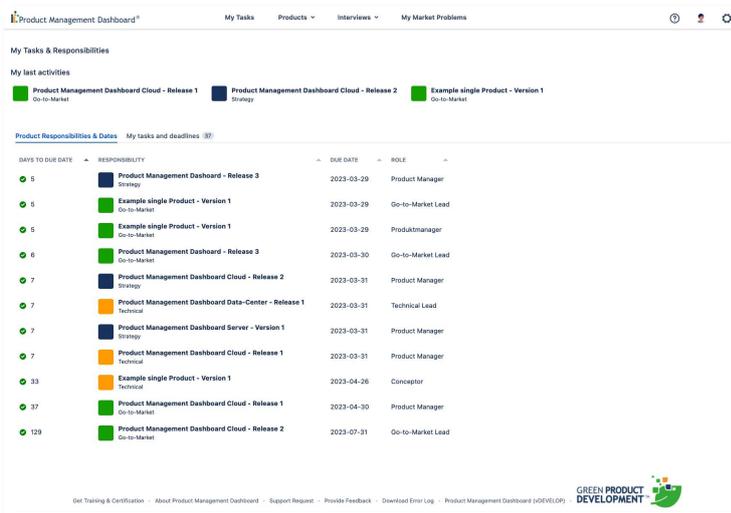
For management, create strategic roadmaps incl. break-even with a few clicks from market problems.

## PRODUCT MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD® - PRODUKTMANAGEMENT SOFTWARE FOR JIRA®

The Product Management Dashboard® is the world's most widely used software for complete comprehensive product management, consisting of strategic and technical product management as well as Go-to-Market/marketing.

**Your business will be up to 50% faster, 31% more profitable by:**

- 100% market-driven & strategic product management, development and marketing
- Clear tasks & responsibilities through fully automated agile Open Product Management Workflow™
- Uniform and structured working as a team with a tool for strategy and technology
- Get in only 2 hours your strategies & Agile Business Plan™ as PowerPoint
- Automatically prioritized requirements backlog with Requirements Backlog Prioritizer™
- Find in seconds all product materials and info in the Product Materials Library™
- The entire product development and marketing in one system from strategic to technical product management, development and marketing



The screenshot displays the 'My Tasks & Responsibilities' section of the Product Management Dashboard. It features a table with columns for 'DAYS TO DUE DATE', 'RESPONSIBILITY', 'DUE DATE', and 'ROLE'. The table lists various tasks such as 'Product Management Dashboard - Release 3 Strategy', 'Example single Product - Version 1 Go-to-Market', and 'Product Management Dashboard Data-Center - Release 1 Technical'. Each task is associated with a specific role like 'Product Manager', 'Go-to-Market Lead', 'Produktmanager', 'Technical Lead', and 'Conceptor'. The interface also includes navigation tabs at the top and a footer with contact information and a logo for 'GREEN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT'.

DAYS TO DUE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE	ROLE
5	Product Management Dashboard - Release 3 Strategy	2023-03-29	Product Manager
5	Example single Product - Version 1 Go-to-Market	2023-03-29	Go-to-Market Lead
5	Example single Product - Version 1 Go-to-Market	2023-03-29	Produktmanager
5	Product Management Dashboard - Release 3 Go-to-Market	2023-03-30	Go-to-Market Lead
7	Product Management Dashboard Cloud - Release 2 Strategy	2023-03-31	Product Manager
7	Product Management Dashboard Data-Center - Release 1 Technical	2023-03-31	Technical Lead
7	Product Management Dashboard Server - Version 1 Strategy	2023-03-31	Product Manager
7	Product Management Dashboard Cloud - Release 1 Technical	2023-03-31	Product Manager
33	Example single Product - Version 1 Technical	2023-04-26	Conceptor
37	Product Management Dashboard Cloud - Release 1 Go-to-Market	2023-04-30	Product Manager
129	Product Management Dashboard Cloud - Release 2 Go-to-Market	2023-07-31	Go-to-Market Lead

### CLEAR TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Become faster through clearly defined tasks and responsibilities for Strategic Product Management, Technical Product Management and Go-to-Market.

### ALWAYS KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYTASKS DASHBOARD™

"My Tasks & Responsibilities" as well as all deadlines until completion at a glance and complete immediately with the help of the right tool.

### FULLY AUTOMATED AGILE WORKFLOW AND DATA-POOL

Your strategies, development and marketing fully agile and 100% market-driven with the Agile Business Plan™. Fully automatically prioritized requirements backlog and all information, documents and materials for a successful Go-to-Market in one place.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

This book is teaching material of proProduktmanagement GmbH GmbH - Deutschherrnstrasse 6 - 90429 Nuremberg

+1 716 800 7312 info@pro-productmanagement.com www.pro-productmanagement.com



### Unique advantages for Product Management:

Become up to 50% faster and 100% market-oriented in product management with clear responsibilities, tasks and a unified, structured work with automated tools for strategy, technology and marketing.

- "My Tasks & Responsibilities" as well as all deadlines until completion at a glance and finish immediately with the right tool.
- Get in 2 hours your 100% market fact based strategies and Agile Business Plan™ as a PowerPoint incl. management summary
- Prioritize all requirements automatically in 1 second based on strategy, customer benefit, revenue and time
- Product Management teams can work together on one or more products
- You will find all information about the product in seconds, because everything about the product is in one place
- Consolidation and automatic evaluation of all ideas and market information from a variety of sources such as customers, Sales, Management, Technical, Support in one central location
- 100% facts, less discussions due to automated support for strategy derivations and the creation of business plans
- Direct transfer of market requirements as product requirements to Development in one system, Development-JIRA®
- View the overall project status at any time from the strategy to the technology through JIRA as a common point of reference
- Implement a successful Go-to-Market together as a team, i.e., distribute and complete tasks and monitor results



### Unique advantages for Management:

Your business becomes up to 50% faster and 31% more profitable through 100% market fact based strategies, Agile Business Plans™, product development and marketing and immediate response to changing market conditions.

- 1 click and compact business plan incl. management summary received as PowerPoint, 100% based on market facts
- ROI in 1.5 hours for your organization using the Product Management Dashboard (per month)
- Avoiding bad investments and increasing corporate success through long-term strategic product planning
- Various sources such as sales, product management, management or technology can dump ideas and market information into a funnel which automatically evaluates the information
- Reduce meeting time, fewer discussions, but make more confident decisions with more market facts
- No costs for additional server infrastructure or administration since everything runs on the JIRA project management software
- The entire product development takes place in one system, from strategic and technical Product Management to production
- Knowledge remains comprehensible for everyone in the long term, even when employees leave the company, as all knowledge is transparently documented

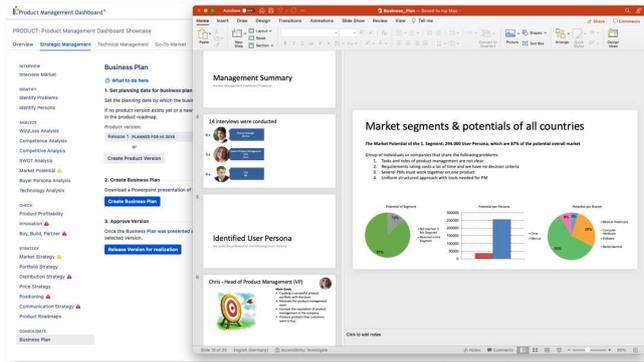
All colleagues can store conversations or interviews with customers on various products. Various evaluations of the interviews are made by the system.

## STRATEGIC PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

Become market-driven, react immediately to market changes with the automatic alert system for analyses and strategies and make your strategies fully agile.

### GET IN 2 HOURS YOUR AGILE BUSINESS PLAN™ INCL. POWERPOINT

Get your 100% market fact based Agile Business Plan™ as PowerPoint in 2 hours, with market potentials, all strategies, prices, costs, market-message and strategic roadmap.



## STRATEGIC ROADMAPS™ IN SECONDS BASED ON FACTS

With just a few clicks, you can create a fact-based Strategic Roadmap™ that your management understands.

## TECHNICAL PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

Team management, User-Persona, automatically prioritized requirements, project status, time & cost overview and workpackages handover to JIRA in one place.

### REQUIREMENTS BACKLOG AUTOMATICALLY PRIORITIZED

Save weeks and get your requirements automatically 100% market-driven and strategically prioritized with the Requirements Backlog Prioritizer™.

The screenshot shows the 'Requirements Backlog Prioritizer™' interface. It features a table with columns for 'MARKET PROBLEMS', 'PRIORITY', 'REQUIREMENTS COVERAGE', and 'RELATED REQUIREMENTS'. The table lists several issues, such as 'Mandatory requirements\_JIRA', 'Tasks and roles of product management are not clear', and 'Requirements rating costs a lot of time and we have no decision criteria'. Each row includes a priority score and a brief description of the related requirements.

MARKET PROBLEMS	PRIORITY	REQUIREMENTS COVERAGE	RELATED REQUIREMENTS
Mandatory requirements_JIRA	799992	Already covered add Requirement	The product must work with JIRA.
Tasks and roles of product management are not clear	23	28 of 11 Problem(s) mentioned in interviews add Requirement	Definition of strategic product management tasks Definition of technical product management tasks
Requirements rating costs a lot of time and we have no decision criteria	17	38 of 8 Problem(s) mentioned in interviews add Requirement	Prioritizing requirements costs a lot of time
Uniform structured approach with tools needed for PM	11	3 of 5 Problem(s) mentioned in interviews add Requirement	There is no uniform procedure for PMs and no tools
Several PMs must work together on one product	9	5 of 5 Problem(s) mentioned in interviews add Requirement	Several PMs must work together on one product Store the data of the common product centrally in one place
Little trust in business plans, missing market facts in decision templates	8	create Requirement	
Extra costs for server infrastructure and personnel (admin) for PM software	6	create Requirement	

## FULL DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW PROJECTTRACKER™

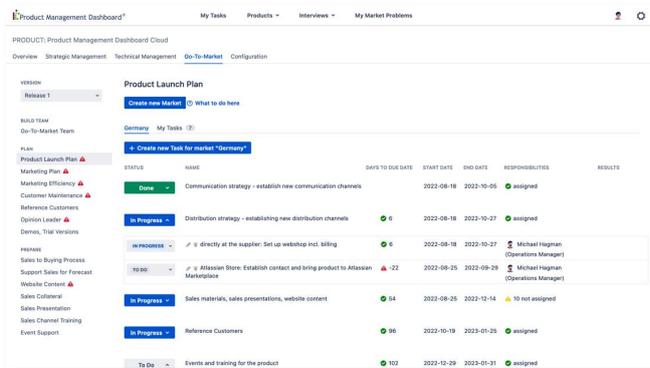
You always have an overview of development progress, costs, times, the plan and deviations.

Author: Frank Lemser - Last updated December 2023

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## GO-TO-MARKET & MARKETING

Create your product launch plan and marketing plans as a team in minutes. Become more successful and get greater marketing success with the same budget, through 100% market facts based planning and through individually standardized tasks, responsibilities and due dates.



## ALL MARKETING & SALES MATERIALS IN ONE PLACE - PRODUCT MATERIALS LIBRARY™

Save hours of time for searching, because all marketing and sales materials can be found immediately in the Product Materials Library™.

## 1 CLICK: SALES & CHANNEL TRAININGS PRESENTATION

Save weeks and get your sales presentation and sales channel training presentation in 1 click.

## MORE ECOLOGICAL, FASTER, MORE PROFITABLE, MORE SUSTAINABLE

Imagine developing innovative products that are sustainable and save a lot of resources such as raw materials, materials, energy, water, labor and time.

Imagine that you need only 50% of the previous time for development and marketing and at the same time your company becomes up to 31% more profitable.

All the tasks you need to do are clearly defined and many of them are automated or can be done in minutes using the Product Management Dashboard, our product management software.



What else you need to do: *talk to your customers, conduct interviews.*

This way you develop products that are sustainable because you solve problems that are widespread as well as satisfy real needs of customers. At the same time, you avoid costly, time- and resource-consuming misdevelopments. And incidentally, you'll make your business up to 50% faster and 31% more profitable.

Product management has the ecological future of all of us as well as the economic future of your company in its hands.

You have this future in your hand.

## FREE 3 MONTHS – SAMPLE PRODUCT INCLUDED

You can use the Product Management Dashboard for JIRA, the world's most widely used software for complete comprehensive product management, free of charge for 3 months and start immediately, as there is a cloud version and a locally installable version. Also included is a complete sample product, the Product Management Dashboard Showcase.

[www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software)

## MORE INFORMATION

Detailed information about the Product Management Dashboard can be found on the website:

[www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software](http://www.pro-productmanagement.com/pm-software)

and the associated subpages.

## FURTHER SUPPORT FOR YOU

If you would like to carry out training in your company or require support for your Product Management department, simply get in touch with us.

Furthermore, you can also get support for the following topics:

- Coaching & Mentoring
  - Your Product Managers are accompanied throughout their day-to-day work in order to put what they have learned into practice
- Broaden, practise and implement your topics in workshops, e.g.:
  - Conduct and evaluate interviews as well as Win/Loss analyses
  - Derive strategies and product positioning
  - Create business plans & business cases
  - Technical PM including requirements evaluation
  - Plan and implement Go-To-Market

## CONTACT OUR TRAINERS

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