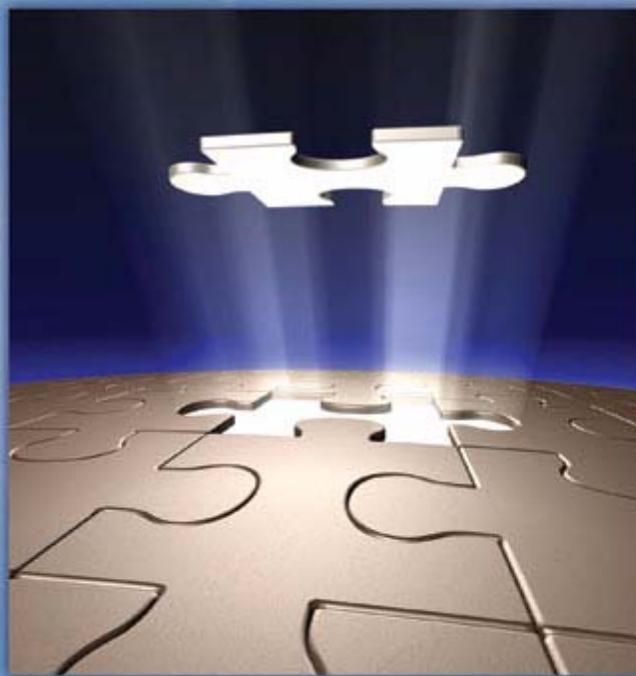


THE PHENOMENAL PRODUCT MANAGER

The Product Manager's Guide to Success,
Job Satisfaction and Career Acceleration

BY BRIAN LAWLEY



HappyAbout.info



“The Phenomenal Product Manager” Book Excerpt

By Brian Lawley

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WHITE PAPER Table of Contents (included here)

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Please contact us for quantity discounts sales@happyabout.info or to be informed about upcoming titles bookupdate@happyabout.info or phone (408-257-3000).

C o n t e n t s

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Introduction

There are many books, white papers and reference materials that teach Product Management and product marketing techniques and best practices. If you want to learn to write excellent market requirements, build a business case, position a product or do a full-scale launch you can learn how to do so in a variety of ways.

However, learning these skills is not nearly enough. During my 25-year career in Product Management and product marketing I have seen hundreds of smart, capable people who had the skills described above yet either failed or were mediocre at what they did. Many of these people could not understand why they couldn't rise up to the next level and be highly effective.

This book is about learning the other fifty percent that makes a Product Manager or Product Marketer incredibly successful. It is based on my observations of excellence in others as well as strategies and tactics I have personally used to succeed. It is also about getting more enjoyment out of the profession of Product Management and about how to move your career forward in a systematic and planned way.

My hope is that this book will help the hundreds of thousands of Product Managers and Product Marketers throughout the world to be more successful in their careers, more satisfied in their jobs and to create products that truly delight their customers and are highly profitable to their companies.

phe-nom-enal (adjective)

- extraordinary; highly remarkable

pro-duct man-a-ger (noun)

- Someone with all of the responsibility and little or no authority
- A person who loves bringing great products to life
- The one person who has the ability to dramatically affect a product's success or failure

1

Product Marketing versus Product Management

Before we begin we need to clarify the terms we are using and the roles and responsibilities that we will be talking about.

From here on out we will be using the term Product Manager to refer to both Product Managers and Product Marketers. The titles are used in a variety of ways and definitions vary greatly across different companies. All of the skills in this book can be applied to both positions, but it is important to understand how we view them, as some skills will be more important depending on how the roles are defined.

The easiest way to think about the difference between these two is to think of them as **inbound** and **outbound**. Inbound (Product Management) spends most of their time with engineering teams and customers, making critical decisions and ensuring that everything gets done to bring customer-focused products to market. Outbound (Product Marketing) makes sure that once these products are ready, they get launched and marketed effectively to the target customer base.

Here's a summary of the typical duties under each role:

Product Management

- Market Analysis, Business Cases and Profit and Loss Investigation
- Customer and Market Research
- Writing Marketing Requirements Documents (MRDs)
- Working with Engineering to finalize functional specifications
- Competitive analysis for use internally at the company
- Analysis of technology trends
- Running alpha/beta programs and capturing early customer feedback
- Making feature, schedule and cost tradeoffs as the product nears completion

Product Marketing

- Writing product launch plans
- Product Messaging, including Positioning, Features and Benefits and Unique Selling Proposition (USP)
- Developing sales tools: white papers, presentations, collateral, competitive analyses for external use with customers
- Working with PR to manage launch tours and product review programs
- Setting product pricing
- Working with beta sites to generate customer success stories
- Running product launches
- Working with sales, channel marketing, corporate marketing, marketing communications, technical support, finance, operations and other departments to ensure the product is effectively introduced to the market and continues to be successful

Some companies make a clear distinction of the roles and responsibilities in each of these areas, and have dedicated employees for each. They may have dedicated Product Managers, whose entire role is to work with engineers to make sure that the products being built meet customer needs and requirements. They may also have dedicated Product Marketing Managers who become involved as the product nears completion, managing the launch, messaging, training of the sales force, and ongoing support to ensure continued success (briefing customers and the channel, working with press and analysts, etc.).

In other companies one individual wears both hats and performs all of the tasks above. That person may be called a Product Manager or a Product Marketing Manager. Many times the title given has little to do with what they are actually doing. It may be politically incorrect to have the word "Marketing" in their title, particularly if they report into engineering or another functional area. Or, the word Marketing may be left out if their engineering team has a strong bias against working with "Marketing people."

One item to note: it's a rare breed of person who can effectively manage and enjoy doing all aspects of both these positions. When you are choosing what role you want for your job, make sure that you pick one that fits your strengths.

There are many people who are incredibly good at, and happy doing, Product Management who would fail miserably at Product Marketing, and vice versa. If this is the case for you then doing what you are good at will lead you to much success. If you do decide to take a job that has a hybrid model (where one person owns everything) make sure that you get the training you need to beef up your areas of weakness.

If you are particularly strong at one area and do not have an interest or aptitude for the other, don't worry. I have known many people who went the Product Management or the Product Marketing route and have done great in their careers. Just make sure that you are suited for and interested in the role you agree to take on—otherwise you may find yourself delivering sub-optimal performance and having a miserable time.

A The Product Management Manifesto

I am a Product Management professional.

I am dedicated to bringing great products to market. Products that delight my customers. Products that are massively profitable for my company. Products that help change the way people work and live.

In the course of managing my products there are thousands of small decisions that must be made and tasks that must be accomplished. The sum of these can add up to a phenomenal product. I choose to own the responsibility for making this happen.

I am an expert in all areas regarding my products, customers, the market, technology, competition, channels, press, analysts, trends and anything else that must be taken into account in order to win.

I have a strong vision for my products and develop winning strategies that align with my company's goals and ensure that our investments of time, money and energy are well spent.

I am committed to using the best methodologies, tools, templates and techniques available to be more efficient and effective at my job.

I have a plan for my career and I will further my professional status by attending training courses, becoming certified and reading books, blogs and newsletters to learn best practices.

I am the voice of my customers and represent them in every critical decision that is made.

I am a leader. I develop strong alliances with everyone that I need to in order to ensure the success of my product. This includes sales people, engineers, support, customers, channel and business partners, management, the Board of Directors and anyone else necessary. Some of these people will be very difficult to work with, but I will find a way to make everyone successful as a team.

I refuse to settle for mediocrity and I will be tenacious and professional in my approach to getting the best possible results.

I believe that Product Management is one of the toughest, yet most rewarding jobs in the world. Though I will face great odds and challenges I refuse to become jaded or negative.

Though I have all of the responsibility, it is highly likely I have little or no formal authority. Therefore I will do whatever it takes to persuade others to do what is right for customers and my company.

This manifesto may be downloaded at
<http://www.280group.com/pmmanifesto.pdf>.

B Product Management Resources

The 280 Group website is constantly updated with the latest Product Management and Product Marketing Resources including:

- Free templates, samples and white papers
- Product Management Blogs
- Product Management & Product Marketing Books
- Product Management Associations
- Product Management Software Comparison
- Product Management Job Listing Sites
- 280 LinkedIn Product Management Group

Visit <http://www.280group.com> and check the "Resources" section for the most up-to-date listings. Also, be sure to subscribe to our free Product Management 2.0 newsletter at <http://www.280group.com/newsletters.htm> and via RSS to our "Product Management 2.0" Blog located at <http://www.280group.com/blog.html>.

C Product Management/Marketing Templates

The 280 Group also offers Product Management & Product Marketing Toolkits, which include templates, narrated training presentations and samples. The toolkits can be purchased at <http://www.280group.com> and cover the following topics:

- Product Roadmap Toolkit™
- Product Launch Toolkit™
- Product Manager's Toolkit™
- Beta Program Toolkit™
- Product Review Program Toolkit™
- Developer Program Toolkit™

The 280 Group also makes a number of templates available free for download on the 280 Group website in the "Resources" section under "Free PM Tools," including the following:

- MRD Outline
- Feature Prioritization Matrix

- Beta Program Bug and Feature Database Tools
- AdWords ROI calculator
- Sample Product Roadmaps
- Developer Program Roadmap
- Developer Program Cost Estimator Tool
- Evangelism Timeline
- Competitive Feature Matrix Comparison Chart
- Product Launch Plan Marketing Budget
- Press Release
- Google AdWords Tips and Strategies

About the Author



Brian Lawley is the CEO and founder of the 280 Group. During his 25 year career in Product Management and Product Marketing he has shipped more than fifty successful products. He is the former President of the Silicon Valley Product Management Association, won the 2008 AIPMM award for Excellence in Thought Leadership for Product Management and is the author of the best-selling book, *Expert Product Management*. Mr. Lawley has been featured on CNBC's World Business Review and the Silicon Valley Business Report and writes articles for a variety of publications including the *Product Management 2.0* newsletter and Blog.

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- 42 Rules™ of Employee Engagement:
<http://happyabout.info/42rules/employee-engagement.php>
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<http://www.happyabout.info/42rules/successful-collaboration.php>
- 42 Rules™ to Jumpstart Your Professional Success:
<http://happyabout.info/42rules/jumpstartprofessionalservices.php>
- I'm on LinkedIn -- Now What???:
<http://happyabout.info/linkedinhelp.php>
- Twitter Means Business:
<http://happyabout.info/twitter/tweet2success.php>
- Blitz the Ladder:
<http://happyabout.info/blitz.php>
- Internet Your Way to a New Job:
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