



BEST PRACTICES

A Collection of Best Practices for:

Product Development

Includes Detailed Best Practices for:

- Idea Generation
- Research & Development
- Engineering & Design
- Product Packaging
- Product Quality & Safety
- Product Testing
- Product Management



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Idea Generation

Product Development

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Research & Development

Engineering & Design

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— The Idea Generation Function is tied closely to R&D and is responsible for identifying market problems and devising ideas (concrete or abstract) to overcome the identified market gaps. Many companies have started to include job roles dedicated solely to the development of market ‘disrupting’ ideas. Idea Generation, or Innovation, team members assess and present ideas to company leadership in hopes of capitalizing on, or identifying, the ‘next big thing.’ After an idea has been selected for further development, other Product Development team members get to work designing prototypes and performing market testing to further assess the viability of the concept.

Idea Generation

Product Development Best Practices

Best Practice 1-A

Use Front-Line Staff and Customer Feedback to Generate New Product Ideas and Product Solutions

Cast a wide net when searching for both new product ideas and solutions for problems in new product development, or issues with existing products/services. Use both internal staff members (even those that are not in the product development and/or engineering and design functions) and customers to solicit feedback and gather ideas. Rather than using a “blue ocean” method to solicit ideas in this manner, provide targeted questions, constraints, anecdotes and problem descriptions related to the company’s new product development efforts; this will ensure that submissions are at least generally in line with the problems that must be addressed. Develop a formal process to aggregate data received through these submissions and assign a team to combine submissions and develop more formal idea treatments and specifications.

Typical Practice (the Status Quo): Task product managers and other senior management staff with developing new product ideas and outlining solutions to issues that the product development function is facing. Allow them to present new product ideas and potential solutions to executive management, who will then determine which items to devote additional resources to.

Benefits of this Best Practice: Involving customers and front-line staff in the search for new product ideas and related solutions will help in both identifying new ideas and building consensus on certain ideas that may have previously been floated by product managers and/or executive team members. This method may also mitigate risk related to the concentration of decision-making authority within a small group of managers or executive team members, who at times may be out of touch with the issues of the end users (i.e., customers) and/or the teams who sell and service the company’s products.

 **Related KPIs:** Market Potential, Cycle Time: Concept to Business Case, Cycle Time: Business Case to Feedback

Idea Generation

Product Development Best Practices

Best Practice 1-B

Use Practical Product Development Constraints in Ideation Efforts to Ensure New Product Concepts are Viable

Provide employees with a summary of constraints surrounding new product development efforts. This list should include parameters defined by management and those with knowledge of the company's current operating environment, including time constraints, resource availability, regulatory issues and budgetary requirements. Individuals working on idea development should also be provided with any relevant reports or data regarding the current competitive landscape, as well as the current performance of any related products.

Typical Practice (the Status Quo): Encourage employees to "think outside the box" when developing new ideas. Do not allow constraints (lack of time, budget, resources, excessive regulatory approvals, etc.) and other potential issues to hamper the generation of potential new product ideas.

Benefits of this Best Practice: Ensuring that ideation efforts are informed by practical product development constraints may

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