Product management in the high-tech industry has always experienced varied interpretation as to its character and internal structure. Often product management is performed informally or in a non-standardized form, and organized differently in each company – commonly located in the marketing department or sometimes in the engineering department. In addition, although the product management profession has existed for many years, there has not been a product management best-practice or standard that has been globally adopted. This book offers a holistic methodology as a solution to these concerns.

Product management is a discipline responsible for product planning (articulating the market problem) and product marketing (generating awareness, differentiation, and demand). Companies have come to appreciate the organizational value of other well-defined professional disciplines, such as project management, quality management, and business analysis as well as the results achieved by the orderly implementation of these disciplines. Accordingly, standardized product management done consistently well can greatly increase the probability of product success and profitability.

Product management practitioners frequently perform a broad spectrum of roles with varying responsibilities and skill sets, and communicate with both internal and external stakeholders like sales, marketing communications, engineering, customer support, customers, partners, and suppliers. Identifying the various roles and responsibilities in the product management domain is imperative to understand what needs to be accomplished in order to deliver a successful product. Product management is not a role performed in the interest of one or more product lines; it is a distributed set of roles and related responsibilities covering definitive aspects of the product delivery process.

Defining roles and responsibilities in product management is a very preliminary step. One also needs to understand how to do what needs to be done – creating deliverables that can be successfully used in the delivery of a product. In addition, a repeatable process that creates successful products needs to be documented, followed, audited, and improved upon. The product management models and templates in this book are intended to help facilitate the implementation of that process.
For over seven years I have assisted Gabriel Steinhardt in his development of the Blackblot product management body of knowledge, including the “Blackblot Product Manager’s Toolkit™” (PMTK). I have met few people as dedicated to defining and standardizing the product management profession as Gabriel Steinhardt, who has made it his professional goal. The primary purpose of the PMTK methodology is to help companies and their product management teams become more successful in their product delivery efforts. With the release of this book it is hoped that product management will mature further and be viewed as a structured and well-defined critical business function.

This book will help students of product management, product management practitioners, product management organizations, and corporations understand the value of product management and the distinct roles and responsibilities in product management. It will aid in the efforts to clarify role definitions, identify responsibilities, define processes and deliverables, and improve the ability to communicate with stakeholders.

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