

## Reexamining Customer Values - A PMV Webinar Review

Posted on Feb 10, 2012, Posted by [Val Workman](#) Category [Product Management](#)

This webinar ran as part of Grandview's Product Management View (PMV) webinar series. It is available on-demand [here](#).

Susan Phillips Bari, President and CEO of the Leader to Leader Institute (formerly the Drucker Foundation) presented a webinar on Peter Drucker's book "[The Five most important questions you will ever ask about your organization](#)"

". Turns out that most of these 5 questions involve the Product Management team:

1. "What is our Mission?"
2. "Who is our Customer"
3. "What does the customer value?"
4. "What are our results?"
5. "What is our plan?"

**MISSION:** Yes, from a general product management point of view, our mission is to increase the organization's competitive advantage through product initiatives. This is accomplished by increasing product differentiation, and/or improving relative cost-position. Susan points out that the PM team's mission must have three components, or what Peter Drucker calls "the three musts":

- **Competence:** Look at the PM Team's strength and performance levels and do better what you already do well . . . if it's the right thing to do. Ask yourself:
  - What does this PM team, or can this PM team, do really well?
  - What are this team's competencies?
  - How do these competencies contribute to changing lives?
  
- **Opportunities:** As a team, we must identify where we can make an impact: where can we, with the limited resources we have [our core competence], really make a difference, really set a new standard?
- **Commitment:** Finally, as a PM team, we look at what we believe. What is it about our products that we're committed to?

By asking these questions, our product management team is in a better position to act upon a focused mission. Without a sense of mission we each go in different directions, undercut our effectiveness as a team and as an individual, confuse our internal and external customers, and generally impede progress.

Just recently I experienced the need for this on a team that I'd been working with for years. It shows you that the mission must not be ignored, and must be maintained. It wasn't till the words of a wise lady came back to me and said: "Never attribute to malice what you can explain by ignorance". Not that these people are ignorant; in the general case, they are not, but as a team we had become ignorant of each other's mission.

Now the rest of these "musts" are easier to map into the daily life of the product management team. The values of our fickle customers are constantly changing, and that's our own fault. Perhaps on some other posting I'll be able to address this strange paradox. For now, the point is that value-based pricing is critical if you're going to stay competitive. This type of pricing is not dependent upon your values, but that of your fickle customers.

Yes, our customers and their values change. It's our duty to understand these changes. Good

market sensing, and validation points throughout your innovation process helps. Keeping our eyes on the five questions helps. Practicing the activities of the Seven Pillars helps. Listening to these webinars helps.

I once told my wife that I loved her, and that if this ever changed I'd let her know. You can guess how that worked for me. Yes, people's values change and our customers are people. In the webinar, Susan quotes Jim Collins, "The great paradox of change is that"...Product Management Teams..."that best adapt to a changing world first and foremost know what should not change". This is a portfolio management problem, and we know how to address it.

With that I'll leave you to this great webinar.

Tags: Tagged in: [CRM](#) [Customer relationship management](#) [PMV](#) [Product Management](#)