

## The Great Migration

Posted on Oct 18, 2012, Posted by [Val Workman](#) Category [Product Management](#)

Is it a melting pot? Is it a unified group who stay true to their origins? It's too early to say.

Really kind of an exciting period to be alive.

One thing for sure is that the roles surrounding product innovation are changing. All industries are being impacted, and the world landscape will never be the same. Old business objectives for these roles are merging with objectives of other roles. Yes, in some ways there is a melting pot, in other ways differences between the roles seem to never change. Over the last 30 years, my colleagues and I have observed this migration of roles. Some of the great leaders of the last century were able to predict this migration, but whether you saw it looking forward as they did, or if you are now seeing it for the first time, this is a global migration.

You don't want to see this migration in hind sight; having been left behind, not even recognizing it as it passed you by. In this migration, disciplines coming from very different backgrounds come together to form what predicted would be the 'Knowledge turns out that there are at least two types Specialists', involved in product innovation today.

There are those who take enterprise data and using analysis break down the data into its basic form and then with statistical analysis, simulation, and animation help interpret that data into meaningful and useful ways. People who come from asset management, financial management, document management, access management, resource management, demand management, client management, project management, performance management, change

management, business information, and portfolio management are now migrating into this new product innovation support role. This is one of two destinations within the great migration. Even within each of these disciplines, the original starting point can be all over the map. As IT organizations become more centralized, they are able to leverage information and resources across the enterprise, product-lines, and product assets to gain cost-efficiencies.

The other type of 'Knowledge Specialist' who is now called an 'Information Specialist' focuses on the synthesis of information and insight provided by the Knowledge Specialist. This person takes the available information, adds to it by making decisions that produce various product information assets. People who come from business analysis, systems engineering, product management, product marketing, product owner, product strategist, operations manager, field marketing, customer support, and client services are now migrating into this new primary role of product innovation. As the second destination of the great migration, the original starting point maybe slightly more focused than the one mentioned above, but the training and experience of these people is just as varied and different. These 'Information Specialist' tend to cluster around one product as opposed to the 'Knowledge Specialists' who is leveraged across the enterprise. The other difference between these two roles is that where as the 'Knowledge Specialist' focuses on cost savings, the 'Information Specialist' is about product differentiation and increased value. Not always, but most of the time, investors find these two objectives pulling on each other, and requiring a balance.

Tags: