

The Need for a Product Vision

Posted on Mar 14, 2012, Posted by [Catherine Constantinides](#) Category [Product Management](#)

Throughout a development cycle, product management and R&D teams spend countless hours trying to figure out how to build and release products that will make a significant impact in the market and be loved by customers. In other words, the game changer. This elusive game changer often has people caught up in deciding which cool feature to add to the product, instead of focusing on a well-defined product vision and direction. No matter what you might think, there is rarely a single magical feature that makes a product a success. Even worse is to think that Marketing will find the right twists on how to hype a product release once it has been developed.

The bottom line is that you need a clear vision for the product. Before you start investing all of your resources, it is imperative to put pen to paper and identify who your intended users are, what their needs are, and how your product will satisfy these needs. Most importantly, you need to ask what you want your product to represent and define the essence of what you will market. If this is not clear from the beginning, it's likely that you will get bogged down in techno-babble specs and suffer from feature creep.

A Vision Needs to Start with a Direction

All too often, we associate a vision with something that will happen in the distant future. While somewhat true, a vision is really about capturing the true nature of the product you're building and defining the direction on how to get there.

For example, our mission at Ryma is to be the leader in product management by developing tools that will enable our customers to develop better products. We want to touch the lives of every Product Manager out there. So what's our product vision? We want to offer a solution that will not only be powerful but that is also simple to use and empowers each stakeholder in the

product management process to be better at their job. We want to give them the tools that will make their lives easier and will allow them to focus on what's important: making great products for their customers.

In order to achieve this product vision, we have set a clear direction for the product development team. We want each and every new feature of our product to make life easier for our customers, while giving them access to the power of our platform. We will shortly announce new capabilities for FeaturePlan that will demonstrate this new focus on simplicity combined with power.

A Direction is a Path to Follow

When a company is building a new game changer, it's important to stay focused on the intent and not to get lost on feature creep. Achieving a minimal viable product is very much about choosing the right features while making sure you still are on the right path for your product vision. Remember the first iPod? While it pales in comparison with today's version, you can already understand the product vision and the path that Apple was about to embark on. Having the right product vision, and ultimately releasing a game changer, is very much about that. Again, taking Ryma as an example, our next release will be very much like the first iPod when it comes to a new component named Document Center that's being added; but the direction will be both clear for our development and our customer and partners.

Clarity in a Product Vision Does Not Make it Easier for Competitors

Recently, many people have been left disappointed by Apple's product releases. It's not that they aren't great or highly successful in the market, but rather that people are now envisioning product ideas ahead of the market and are assuming that Apple will be moving at the pace of their imagination. We often forget that the bad years for Apple were when people had no clue about what would be coming next in terms of their products. Today, we can all see their product vision and can easily guess some of the steps that are coming from them. But even so, it does not make it easier for competitors to beat Apple at that game. I am sure that there are a few manufacturers right now that are scrambling because of the recent release of the new iPad. Companies should not be afraid of having a clear product vision and direction. You should only worry if you can't execute properly.

Bottom line, if you seek clarity with your product vision and direction, your business will only be better off – and if you execute well, you'll leave your competitors in the dust.

Tags: Tagged in: [Focus](#) [product de](#) [product development](#) [Vision](#)