

***Take Charge Product Management:
Time-Tested Tips, Tactics, and Tools for the
New or Improved Product Manager***

Greg Geracie. Chicago, IL: Actuation Press, 2011. 230 pages. US\$25.

Take Charge Product Management is a short, easy-to-read narrative following a newly minted product manager named Sean through his first 12 months on the job. Sean works for a small to mid-sized firm which had no formal product manager role prior to his appointment.

Sean learns (quickly) that a product manager needs to focus on both strategic and tactical levels, managing short-term and long-term plans and visions, all the while building interpersonal and cross-functional relationships across department boundaries. Along his 12-month journey, Sean implements standard new product development (NPD) and portfolio management business practices, as well as learning about the market for his product line.

Though “the roles and responsibilities of product manager vary greatly by industry and company size” (p. 20), Greg Geracie’s text is useful particularly for people first finding themselves in a product manager role. Whether they themselves, or others in a large organization, perform the tasks and functions described, it is beneficial for all those working in NPD to understand the scope of product management.

After a good discussion of the importance of strategy, Chapter 3 addresses an initial market assessment using tools such as Voice of Customer, Workflow Analysis, and Outcome-Driven Innovation (Ulwick, 2005).

The book focuses on high-level concepts, such as developing a vision, product roadmap (Chapter 7), priori-

tized decision frameworks, and product life-cycle management. Several examples are included to help clarify product vision: roadmaps, decision matrix framework, and a product plan calendar. All of these tools are useful for a new product manager starting with a blank slate.

Take Charge Product Management is a quick introduction to a complex and growing business function. Use it as a starting point to learn more about product manager roles and responsibilities.

Reference

Ulwick, A. W. 2005. *What customers want: Using outcome-driven innovation to create breakthrough products and services*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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