

How the Seven Pillars facilitate Product Management

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In short, Product Management is a team sport. Players come from sales, marketing, communications, product marketing, technical product management, research, product strategy, services, customer support, channel managers, and development to name a few. Most of these sources have different agendas, and even use different languages centered around a different set of performance objectives.

It's not chaos, but the patterns can seem more complicated than fractal geometry sometimes.

To facilitate matters, Ryma's Seven Pillars of Product Management does the following:

- Helps us get our heads around which activities belong to the Product Management team, and which do not (talk about boiling the ocean for a lobster cookout, this scope can seem like the entire universe!).
- Identifies which product management activities are priorities, enabling incremental and adaptive product management capability.
- Finally, the Pillars help us store and access information, and create a knowledge management system that is critical in developing a common language and behavior across the innovation processes.

If we were to take a look at the 37 activities found in the Pragmatic Marketing Framework, you'd quickly discover that new business processes and "best practices" are being developed somewhere in these activities on a monthly bases. Many factors determine which practices are right for your organization at any one time. This isn't the fault of the Framework, it's a fact that innovative people innovate. The challenge is to know when and how to leverage this new capability, and when to leave it alone.

The practitioner of the Seven Pillars believes that process is overhead, and required processes weaken our relative cost-position. This in turn, lowers our competitive advantage. We only add process to break a system constraint. Yes, the Seven Pillars are viewed as a system of systems, and can be managed to optimize system performance by identifying constraints, and breaking those constraints with additional process when the expected improvement is higher than its cost. When this is the case, we increase competitive advantage.

The Seven Pillars of Product Management provide a knowledge management system with real boundaries that a culture can adopt in small adaptive increments. In the end, it's all about how to take a set of existing ad-hoc capabilities, and slowly and purposefully, transforming into that formalized organization that you had envisioned when you were in the Pragmatic Training program.

For more information on the Seven Pillars, I recommend having a look at the 7 Pillars of Collaborative Product Management eBook, which can be found [here](#).

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