Date: Saturday, 01-24-2009, 9:15am session

Session Title: What makes a good Product Manager: A development perspective

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What should I take away from the session? (Summary):

* understand focus & context differences between PMs & Developers

* understand the dev team, who is part of this, how to communicate with them (work language barrier, etc.)

Notes (key points, book suggestions, website suggestions, etc):

PM engagement occurs across the organization, through multiple levels. Likewise, development may be spread across an org, and even externally influenced/extended by customers.

PM is "what it is, how to position it", Dev is "how it is designed/implemented". Need to leverage a symbiotic relationship between these two functions. Must meet together to think through innovative ideas and determine whether it makes sense from business, engineering, and support perspectives – "holistic" concept. Language barrier – Dev talks in more engineering terms, PM in business terms, but usually have the same ultimate meaning – adding value, reducing cost, improving productivity, etc. Understand the organization and its core values.

Dev Team: roles include Innovators, Designers, Developers, and Maintainers/supporters. The hidden Dev teams include: test/certification, support/service, channel partners, customers, third parties who evaluate your products, etc. Need to understand where the revenue is counted in the business; does it come under Dev or Mktg/PM org? This can affect perceived ownership.

If you can articulate the Dev POV and reconcile it to PM POV, then discussions can be more productive. Identify the "main" drivers, for dependencies (e.g. partner integration), customers (e.g. "simplify stuff"), business (e.g. "strategic play"), and competition (leader vs. responder). Communicate the product agenda – what you want to achieve with the next release: value, leadership, revenue, profitability, competitive differentiation – and agree on the goal. Proactively work with the Dev team: co-lead, advocate, engage, educate, and lead from behind.

Request to post slides to ProductCamp wiki.