Date: Saturday, 01-24-2009

Session Title: Product Management and Leadership within the organization

Presenter: Scott Sehlhorst and John Milburn

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

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

Why is it important for PM to have leadership skills?

- drive strategy
- navigate the political waters of the organization

PM see both sides (customers & engineering), PMs bridge the gap

PMs are the CEOs of their product

- but, you don't always have the authority like a CEO does
- need to sell your ideas, manage by influence - cant always dictate
- build credibility

Most PMs (in the room) don't have direct reports

Different leadership styles
   Servant Leader
   deliver value to their needs (such as needs of an engineer)
   give them the info they need to do their job better
can use social tools to interact with engineers, marcom, etc.
develop relationships! Connect with development, marcom, sales, etc.

trend: establish accountability between other group leaders

how do you do it?

- being collaborative
- involving others in the decision making process

- being assertive when necessary
- explain your decisions - be transparent
- being generous with sharing your successes
- food
- alcohol
- build personal relationships helps build credibility
- show that you've done your homework
- working with remote developers yields a lot higher bar to gain credibility

Leadership and management are different

if you've built credibility, you can dictate when necessary

successful product more important than team building

roadhouse (the movie) rule - be nice until it's not time to be nice

define your team values!

Cultural immersion can be especially important in foreign environments

Know what the goal is - and keep beating that drum!

Have the vision.

There are about12 different leadership styles
all have their place.
your style should be authentic for who you are

need to be able to identify your culture you're working in (especially in global organizations)
need to be able to pivot your leadership style when necessary

influence other people with credibility
sometimes capturing the trouble makers, and having 1-on1 pre-meetings with them can be useful

leadership with executives:
    find a "fox" - a person (exec) who is sympathetic to your cause. Get him on your side. Use him to assist in spreading the message. (pre-sales)
    1-on-1 pre-meetings can be useful - align with their interests
    "pre-wiring"
    1-to-1 selling is easier than 1-to-N
    anchor their perceptions

pre-wiring:
    more of a tactic to get things done, as opposed to a leadership trait

present/act/think of yourself as a CPO - Chief Product Officer

give execs what they need to make better decisions:
autonomy
information
confidence

balance passionate thoughts with facts

how good is your noise filter?
figuring out who to listen to

themes:
leaders use influence
PM as a CEO, but it has its shortcomings
take on a leadership role
focus on team, your goals, your teams style (collaborative, etc.)

long term affects of your leadership
need to consider how this affects others, and yourself

ending question that didn't get answered:
The PM invests in the organization - how much is the org willing to invest in the PM?