bottle rocket

DO MORE WITH LESS

digital product optimization in a down market

Optimize Your Digital Strategy to Boost Your QSR's Performance in 2023

foreward

BY: TIM DUNCAN

PRINCIPAL PRODUCT MANAGER
OF GROWTH, BOTTLE ROCKET

As we navigate the ever-evolving digital landscape of 2025, the pressure on digital professionals to maximize the impact of their investments in customer-facing web and mobile applications has never been greater. The "Year of Optimization and Efficiencies," a concept championed by industry leaders like Mark Zuckerberg a few years back, has matured into a sustained imperative. While the initial drivers – shifting financial realities and the rise of first-party data – remain relevant, the context has deepened and broadened.

The era of readily available capital has given way to a more discerning investment climate. While interest rates may have stabilized somewhat, the scrutiny of digital ROI remains intense. Companies can no longer afford to fund projects based on speculative growth; every digital initiative must demonstrably contribute to the bottom line. This pressure has forced a reckoning, exposing organizations that prioritized rapid expansion over sustainable value creation.

Furthermore, the conversation around data has evolved. We've moved beyond simply collecting first-party data to mastering its strategic application. The challenge now lies in transforming raw data into actionable insights that drive meaningful improvements in user experience, engagement, and ultimately, revenue. The focus is no longer just on having data, but on using it intelligently to predict user behavior, personalize experiences, and optimize every touchpoint. This includes navigating the increasingly complex landscape of data privacy regulations and consumer expectations around data usage.

In this environment, digital teams are transitioning from feature factories to value factories at an accelerated pace. Boards and leadership teams are demanding data-backed justifications for every roadmap decision. Intuition alone is no longer sufficient. Organizations are expected to leverage analytics to identify unmet needs, prioritize high-impact features, and continuously refine their digital offerings based on real-world performance.

The journey toward optimization and efficiency is unique for every company, influenced by factors such as leadership vision, competitive pressures, and technological capabilities. However, the underlying principle remains constant: data-driven insights are essential for success. Consider a company like Starbucks or Chick-Fil-A. In today's competitive market, they must meticulously analyze their customer data to identify opportunities for enhancing loyalty programs, personalizing offers, and optimizing the in-app ordering experience. Every feature must be tied to a measurable improvement in key performance indicators.

We consistently hear from our clients that while they recognize the importance of first-party data, they struggle to translate it into strategic action. They're drowning in data but starved for insights. At Bottle Rocket, data is not just a tool; it's ingrained in our DNA. We leverage it across every discipline to inform our decisions and drive tangible results for our clients.

In this ebook, I've collaborated with my colleagues – the experience experts at Bottle Rocket – to share our unique perspectives and actionable insights. We'll explore what our most successful customers are doing right and provide you with a framework for applying the same principles to your own business. We'll delve into the strategies and tactics that can help you unlock the full potential of your data, optimize your digital investments, and thrive in the demanding landscape of 2025.

Let's dive in and discover how you can transform your digital operations into a true value engine.

I've tapped into my colleagues and the experience experts at Bottle Rocket to share their unique perspectives with insights that can help any business drive optimization and efficiency in even the most challenging times. What are our most successful customers doing right? And how can you leverage this same thinking for your business? Let's dive in.

table of contents

To create this ebook, we tapped a cross-functional group of Bottle Rocket experience experts to discuss the importance of optimization and efficiency in today's marketplace and the impact that this focus can have for businesses.

The Power of Qualitative and Quantitative Data in Driving Efficiencies

JOEL VAUGHAN, DIRECTOR, USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN AND RESEARCH

> **Quantitative data may reveal drop-off points or performance metrics, but qualitative research helps answer the crucial question of "why."'**

In the world of data analysis, there are two main approaches: qualitative and quantitative. While they often operate on opposite sides of the equation, both play a crucial role in understanding and optimizing business processes. Let's explore the dynamic between qualitative and quantitative data, highlighting their significance in driving efficiencies.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative data offers valuable insights into the "why"' behind a problem or a phenomenon. When quantitative data alone fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of customer behavior or performance gaps, qualitative data fills in the gaps. By delving deeper into user research, businesses can uncover the emotions, opinions, and unmet needs that quantitative data may not capture.

bottle rocket

QUANTITATIVE DATA AND INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS

Quantitative data, on the other hand, provides a snapshot of user behavior and enables businesses to establish industry benchmarks. These benchmarks serve as reference points for assessing performance and setting goals. For instance, if a restaurant brand wants to evaluate its digital sales, it can compare its figures with industry leaders like Domino's or Chipotle. This quantitative benchmarking helps businesses identify their position and progress relative to industry standards.

THE POWER OF CONTEXTUALIZING QUANTITATIVE DATA

Contextualization is where qualitative data becomes invaluable. By layering qualitative insights onto quantitative data, businesses gain a deeper understanding of the customer experience. Quantitative data may reveal drop-off points or performance metrics, but qualitative research helps answer the crucial question of "why." It enables businesses to identify the root causes of friction, understand customer expectations, and uncover unaddressed needs. This context enhances the efficiency of problem-solving and solution design.

THE ROLE OF QUALITATIVE BASELINE

At the start of a project, businesses can establish a qualitative baseline to understand what customers are saying about their product or service. This qualitative baseline can include customer feedback, common inquiries, and the most sought-after features. By gauging customer sentiment and expectations, businesses can align their strategies with customer needs from the outset. This qualitative perspective complements the quantitative benchmarking against competitors and aids in designing customer-centric solutions.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

While data analysis has become more accessible and advanced, challenges still exist. Siloed data within organizations can lead to incomplete quantitative information or blind spots in understanding the customer journey. Incentivization structures can further contribute to these challenges as different departments focus on specific metrics. Additionally, the expertise required to analyze quantitative data accurately may be limited within a company.

To address these challenges, businesses can leverage the expertise of user experience professionals and user researchers. These professionals can fill the gaps in quantitative data with qualitative testing and uncover insights that drive efficiency. Collaborating with experts in user research and data analysis bridges the knowledge and skill gaps, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions.

THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF USER RESEARCH TOOLS

Over the past decade, there has been an explosion of user research tools and platforms. These tools offer innovative ways to conduct qualitative testing and gain deeper insights into user behavior. However, the strategic use of these platforms varies depending on the needs and resources of mid-market and enterprise companies. While these tools can enhance the efficiency of user research processes, their adoption should align with each organization's specific goals and priorities.

Combining qualitative and quantitative data will give companies a deeper understanding of where they're headed in the future and smarter goals to achieve. Investments in this understanding can pay off in far more profound ways than companies may initially expect.

The Power of Data-Driven UX Personas: Understanding Customer Needs

EMMA CARNES, SENIOR USER RESEARCHER

WHAT ARE DATA-DRIVEN PERSONAS?

Data-driven UX personas are a communication tool that helps companies and the design team empathize with their users and comprehensively understand their needs, pain points, and expectations, which is paramount to success. Personas help us to prepare for the future and allocate resources more effectively by enabling us to spot new opportunities and identify emerging trends.

UX personas are grounded in qualitative data, usually from interviews with real customers or whoever is the primary user of the product or service. This data is more powerful when we can triangulate it with quantitative data provided by our clients. Let's say we are working on a project with a client whose goal is to increase membership enrollment online. One of the things the personas developed would need to highlight are barriers in the enrollment process. Quantitative data, such as how many people are abandoning a flow or where they are in the process, can offer us a fuller picture of the issues at hand. Our qualitative interviews to create personas would explore why.

THE ROLE OF DATA-DRIVEN PERSONAS IN PROJECTS

It is important to be prepared for qualitative interviews by knowing which questions to ask. For example, suppose we have a project where the customer is the primary end user. In that case, we might conduct stakeholder interviews with employees who engage with customers directly and can share what feedback they have heard from customers and uncover new areas to probe with customers.

Ideally, data-driven personas should be created early in a project once the project's objectives have been defined. Establishing personas at the outset can be utilized throughout the engagement, offering a lasting impact. These personas act as a reference point for the team, facilitating discussions and enabling focused problem-solving. In our interviews, we ask about user experiences, device preferences, and future expectations, which is data that not only informs our personas, but directly plugs into customer journey map as well.

Personas help us to prepare for the future and allocate resources more effectively by enabling us to spot new opportunities and identify emerging trends."

THE TACTICAL USE OF DATA-DRIVEN PERSONAS

Data-driven personas empower design teams to strategically address user needs and enhance user experiences. When redesigning a website or developing a new technology, personas can guide the decision-making process. By identifying themes around pain points and unmet needs, design teams can tailor their solutions to address these specific issues. Personas can help guide us on where to focus improvements and generate ideas for changes leading to a more efficient and user-friendly experience.

However, it is important to note that while personas can inform general design strategies, they may not cater to every individual experience. Niche experiences and unique user characteristics may not align perfectly with personas, as they tend to represent generalized sentiments. Because of this, it is still vital to think about inclusivity when making changes. Personas can help us to understand different goals customers might have when using a product or service, which creates an opportunity for personalization. This may not yield desired results because it could lead to customers feeling alarmed if they feel their privacy is being infringed upon or frustrated if they are unable to complete a task, if their needs change over time and if they are being flooded with CTAs that don't align with what they are looking for.

THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF DATA-DRIVEN PERSONAS

To ensure their effectiveness, data-driven personas should be updated regularly to reflect evolving customer behaviors and preferences. Market trends, external events, and technological advancements can significantly influence user expectations. For example, Covid-19 led to an increase in the adoption of curbside pickup in QSR and video visits in healthcare. Neglecting to update personas can result in outdated insights that hinder effective decision-making. Therefore, personas should be treated as living artifacts that adapt and evolve alongside customers' changing needs.

A Focused, Yet Flexible Plan Around Product Analytics: Insights from a Product Manager's Perspective

LUKE ROSE, PRINCIPAL PRODUCT MANAGER

As a product manager with a decade of experience building and launching digital products, I've seen a few things change in that time. I know what you're thinking, "of course, technology has changed over that timeframe," and of course, you are correct. But one of these things that deserves a deeper conversation is:

How to shift to becoming more data-driven in your product strategy

Organizations are indeed becoming more data-driven. But before data can shape your roadmap, where should you start when it comes to looking at your own product data? This doesn't just happen overnight. How do you begin to make that shift? What should you measure? What are you trying to learn?

bottle rocket

By selecting three to five key metrics that align with your business objectives, you can avoid data overload and focus on the most meaningful insights."

ALIGNING ON KEY METRICS: STAY FOCUSED

In the past, analytics was often an afterthought – sure, we wanted to increase downloads, page views, and active users, but we were happy to celebrate the launch of some shiny new UI and were pleased when nothing broke. Today, the marketplace is crowded with highly functional digital experiences (across industries), and particularly over the last two years, there has been a significant shift in how analytics for a given product or feature is used.

Data is now the key driver of what's on the product roadmap and digitally mature organizations are measuring how each and every feature may be moving the needle. But when it comes to product analytics, there is no shortage of data to look at. Where should you start?

First, you don't have to measure everything! One strategy that consistently fails is adding event tags to each interaction in a given application, with no real plan on how to synthesize the data.
The product launches, and you don't know what to look at. Theresa Torres, in her book "Continuous

Discovery," emphasizes the significance of focusing on a select few critical metrics rather than overwhelming ourselves with an abundance of data. This approach helps product teams stay focused on what's most important.
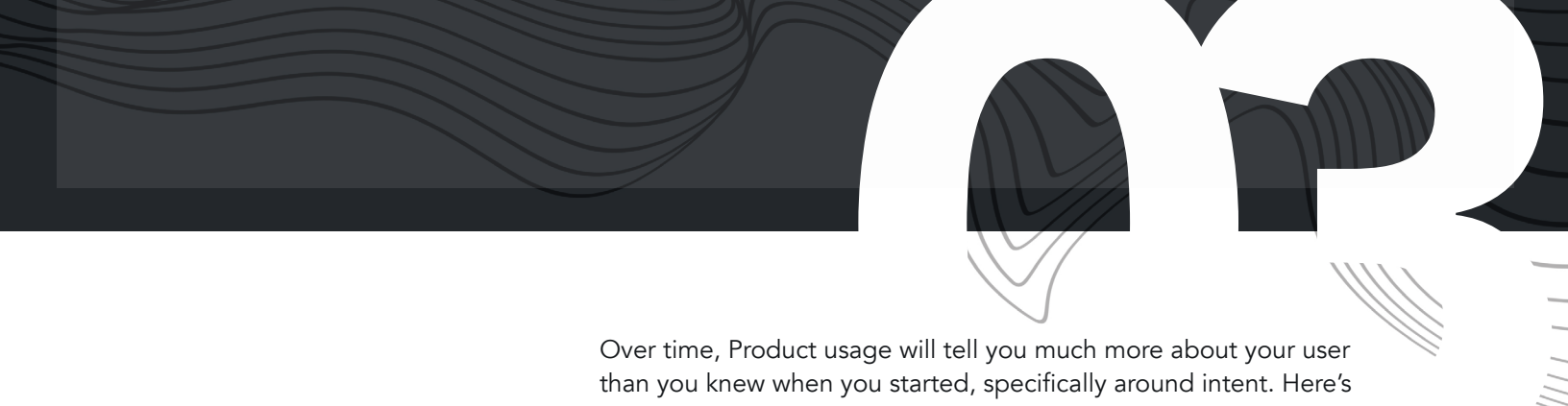
Instead of indiscriminately applying tags to every interaction within the app or website, it's crucial to identify the most critical aspects of functionality that require measurement. By selecting three to five key metrics that align with your business objectives, you can avoid data overload and focus on the most meaningful insights. This approach ensures clarity and facilitates effective post-launch analysis as we know exactly which data points to evaluate. Ask yourself (and your team) the following questions to get the conversation started:

- What are our top-level business objectives?
- What aspects of these objectives can our product influence?
- What are some leading indicators of success (not revenue) that may tell us if we're succeeding or failing?
- Can we measure that? If not, how might we measure it in the future?

THE CONTEXT OF THE DATA MATTERS: BE ADAPTABLE

Aligning on what to measure is an important part of considering what shapes your roadmap, but the context of that data matters too. Be willing to accept that how users are using your product may be different than you assumed. In a lot of my work across the loyalty and restaurant space, ordering conversion rates and revenue reign supreme. There are two problems with just focusing on conversion rate and app-generated revenue:

1. It's a short-sighted approach
2. Revenue is a lagging indicator

Over time, Product usage will tell you much more about your user than you knew when you started, specifically around intent. Here's an example:

A restaurant ordering mobile application designed to optimize the user's ordering of food to be delivered to their home. After a while, you start to see that each new release isn't really increasing conversion rate as you'd hoped. However, app usage is up, and in-store revenue is up. Eventually, you discover a sizeable segment of users using the store locator feature to check hours and get directions to a store. Maybe they even engage frequently with your engagement campaigns. This is a simple example, but the point remains: just because one high-level business metric isn't being achieved, your product could still be moving your business forward! You need to understand more than just direct revenue. Once you have a significant learning like the one in the example above, you need to be agile enough to adapt your product strategy.

In summary, start with a small yet focused KPI plan for your product while also being prepared to learn from the data about the context and intent of your user. By keeping your list of KPI's small and focused, you don't lose sight of what's most important to your business, and you don't get overwhelmed by data overload. Pair that with an understanding that you will learn new information about your user's intent and context when they use the product, which will shift your priorities. With this focused and adaptable mindset, you'll be well-positioned to become more data-driven in your product strategy and roadmap for the future.

04

Navigating the Martech Landscape: Choosing the Right Tools for Digital Growth

RAGHID EL-YAFOURI, TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

For a business to excel in digital experiences and customer reach, technology plays a crucial role in enabling growth and sustaining success. The Martech landscape will continue to rapidly change in 2023. Organizations must lead with a sound technology strategy and drive thoughtful execution to maintain a well optimized digital ecosystem. This article delves deeper into Martech principles and provides insights into making informed decisions on selecting tools, eliminating redundancy, supporting scalability, and configuring connectivity.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASELINE OF TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

There are three essential technology systems that should be part of the baseline for a marketing platform. The first is a Customer Data Platform (CDP) to manage customer engagement, aggregate different datasets, and generate actionable clustering and targeting insights. Comprehensive systems like Segment or more niche Customer Relationship Management (CRM) like Salesforce fit this category. The second essential tool is a Content Management System (CMS) to manage the production and distribution of marketing content across platforms. Those include Adobe Enterprise Manager (AEM), Sitecore, and Optimizely. The third essential technology system that must be part of a marketing platform is Voice of Customer (VoC). Those systems are targeted to manage customer feedback, service requests, complaints, and satisfaction. Qualtrics, HubSpot, and Medallia are few of the many tools available for that purpose. When used right, the VoC loops back learnings to the CDP.

OPTIMIZING A MARTECH PLATFORM FOR EFFICIENCY AND GROWTH

When assessing the fit of an organization's marketing toolset, it is important to prioritize reducing redundancy, bridging gaps, and supporting scalability. It is natural to have tools with overlapping functionalities and capabilities. A comprehensive platform rarely starts from nothing. It is usually merged from systems individually adopted by different departments, teams, or regions. However, it is not natural to keep the redundancy because it leads to multiple sources of truth and hampers decision-making. Proper audit of each system use, purpose, and reach helps surface up the overlaps. Comparing the findings to best practice and industry standards will also highlight gaps. Those gaps are operational functions needed by the organization that are not systemized,

automated, or supported by necessary tools. Lastly, any recommendation for introducing a new tool or expanding the toolset must be validated with the lens of scalability—how effective is the tool in responding to the organizational changes. This ensures a more systematic and holistic approach to technology utilization.

EVALUATING AND DECIDING ON THE RIGHT TOOLS

The marketplace is flooded with a vast number of tools for the different functions of customer data management, content management, service management, or analytics. The options can be overwhelming, and they create a challenge for organizations. To overcome this challenge, it is important to understand that there may not be a clear single option even after deep analysis and review. The technology platform market is competitive and most vendors in single category offer similar features and services. After a due diligence of narrowing options, multiple systems can satisfy 80 percent of the organization's needs. Selecting either of those systems can be a reasonable approach. Committing to a tool and ensuring its widespread adoption and acceptance within the organization is more advantageous than spending excessive time in the selection process.

CONSIDERING SEAMLESS INTEGRATION AND USER ACCEPTANCE

As mentioned above, some tools are introduced to the organization by a single department, or market, or working team to solve a particular pain point. Then they get adopted by the overall organization and get infused into the overall technology ecosystem. While this is a common approach—due to quicker procurement and simpler onboarding—it overlooks the broader organizational needs when selecting tools. What the sales department may urgently need can conflict with the service department protocol, neglect their needs, or add

a burden on their operations. It is worth the extra effort to share priorities and align goals across business units when committing to a tool. If it is not to have a shared decision, awareness alone will help with wider adoption and seamless integration. A less performing tool that is widely accepted is more effective for the organization than a better performing tool that is narrowly accepted.

DECIDING ON BUILD VS. BUY AND CUSTOMIZABILITY

The need to build applications and tools from a blank slate is becoming less and less favorable. There is a variety of software options in the market today for most organizations, regardless of industry or size. Software as a Service (SaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) offerings make getting started easy with readily available off-the-shelf features, simple setup, and manageable cost. Buying makes a better choice for smaller organizations. Even larger organizations with special needs for their operations can still benefit from buying tools. However, that doesn't eliminate the build choice all together. That is because most customizations need buy and build rather than buy or build. While SaaS solutions can meet most of the requirements, middleware for connecting multiple systems can call for custom development. Many platforms come with built-in integrations, but to meet unique nuances for specialized organizations custom microservices and Application Programming Interface (API) are needed to facilitate integration, connectivity, and scalability.

> **A less performing tool that is widely accepted is more effective for the organization than a better performing tool that is narrowly accepted."**

INDUSTRY TRENDS: AI AND CROSS-BRAND INTEGRATION

It is hard to overlook the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the impact it has and will continue to have. AI holds immense potential in streamlining decision-making and simplifying processes. From segmenting customer base and generating content to managing customer service and driving strategic insights, AI will have a primary role. However, as of today, AI is not a blanket solution for all problems at once. AI works best with a deep but narrow focus. Organizations must do the work of identifying AI opportunities and make available the right data for that purpose. Data is what builds AI's accuracy. Organizations that want to generate distinctive decisioning from AI should invest in data curation, cleansing, and overall management.

Another growing trend is cross-brand integration. Delta does it really well. They are focusing on convenient and comfortable mobility, even beyond airfare. For that, they are partnering with Lyft, Starbucks, and more. In each partnership, there is required system integration, connectivity, and data sharing between brands for the purpose of an optimized and personalized experience for the customer. This trend will continue to expand as brands truly put the customer at the center.

Making Informed Decisions about Tech Stacks for Improved Efficiency and ROI

JOE RUTHERFORD, TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

> "Hiring or developing resources that bridge the gap between marketing and technology is crucial for leveraging the full potential of a tech stack."

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations are constantly seeking ways to optimize their operations and drive return on investment (ROI) through the strategic use of technology. Tech stacks, or the combination of software tools and technologies used by a company, play a crucial role in enabling efficient processes and maximizing productivity. However, choosing the right tech stack and leveraging it effectively requires careful consideration of various factors. In this article, we will explore the importance of tech stack decisions, the impact of AI trends, and the need for aligning marketing and technology teams to drive ROI improvements.

CONSIDERING ROI IN TECH STACK DECISIONS

When evaluating tech stacks, we must look beyond the immediate costs associated with a platform. While the financial investment is undoubtedly a significant consideration, it is equally important to assess the human capital required to utilize the chosen tech stack effectively. This involves evaluating the skills and expertise of existing employees, determining the need for additional resources such as data scientists or developers, and estimating the cost of training and onboarding.

UNDERSTANDING THE TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

To achieve an accurate assessment of ROI, organizations must consider the total cost of ownership (TCO) of their tech stack. This includes not only the platform costs but also factors like infrastructure expenses, data management, and transaction costs. Neglecting these aspects can lead to inaccurate ROI projections and hinder the success of marketing campaigns or other initiatives.

INTEGRATION AND INTEROPERABILITY

While evaluating tech stacks, it is crucial to assess the capabilities and compatibility of different platforms. The rise of AI and data science has opened new opportunities for businesses, but it also requires considering the integration of Martech platforms with existing systems. Organizations must determine if their current developers can interact with the chosen platforms or if additional training is necessary. Moreover, assessing data storage, analytics, and third-party vendor options is vital to ensure seamless operations and effective campaign management.

THE ROLE OF MARKETING AND TECHNOLOGY ALIGNMENT

To drive successful outcomes and maximize ROI, organizations must foster strong collaboration and alignment between marketing and technology teams. It is not enough to invest in cutting-edge tools; companies must also prioritize the resources and skills necessary to utilize these tools effectively. Often, marketing teams lack expertise in specific channels or technologies, leading to a significant gap that hampers success. Hiring or developing resources that bridge the gap between marketing and technology is crucial for leveraging the full potential of a tech stack.

CHALLENGES WITH LEGACY SYSTEMS

Many organizations struggle with legacy tech stacks that have become burdensome and no longer align with their evolving needs. Legacy systems, while functional, may lack the flexibility and integration capabilities required for today's dynamic marketing landscape. Moving away from legacy platforms can be challenging due to the fear of losing valuable campaigns and the costs associated with transitioning to new tools. Assessing the competitive landscape, considering the need for cloud support, API integration, and advanced analytics are essential when evaluating the viability of legacy systems.

BALANCING INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS AND ROI

The decision to transition from a legacy system or adopt a new tech stack depends on industry-specific factors. Highly competitive industries that rely on marketing advancements to stay ahead may benefit from investing in new platforms that offer more extensive capabilities. On the other hand, industries that are less dependent on cutting-edge marketing technologies may find value in maintaining existing systems that adequately meet their needs. Evaluating the costs, exportability of data and campaigns, and the readiness of employees to adapt to new platforms are essential considerations.

Efficiency and ROI improvements in the digital era heavily rely on well-thought-out tech stack decisions. Organizations must go beyond surface-level costs and consider the total cost of ownership, integration capabilities, and alignment between marketing and technology teams. While legacy systems may be functional, they can hinder progress in highly competitive industries.

06

Breaking Down Silos:
Creating Efficiency and Optimization within Teams

CIM EFRAIMSSON, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, STRATEGY

In today's fast-paced business environment, organizations strive for seamless collaboration and integration across teams to maximize their potential. However, the presence of silos, both vertical and horizontal, continues to hinder progress and leave valuable opportunities untapped. This article will explore the prevalence of silos within organizations, the reasons behind their existence, and strategies to break them down. We will also discuss the role of leadership in fostering a collaborative culture and highlight success stories where organizations have effectively dismantled silos.

THE PERSISTENT CHALLENGE OF SILOS:

Silos are the isolation and lack of communication between different organizational departments or teams. Large organizations often struggle significantly with silos, preventing the full potential of cross-functional collaboration.

These silos can lead to several factors, including:

1. **Inadequate Focus during the Hiring Process:** Organizations may not prioritize assessing candidates' collaboration skills during the hiring process. By overlooking this critical aspect, they inadvertently perpetuate a siloed culture.

2. **Lack of Cross-Functional Training:** Organizations tend to provide training that focuses primarily on vertical expertise, neglecting cross-functional collaboration. This omission reinforces the silos and prevents employees from developing a holistic understanding of the organization's operations.

3. **Promoting A Competitive Nature between Departments:** A competitive mindset among managers and departments can lead to a protective environment that hampers collaboration. When ownership is departmentally guarded, power struggles arise, leading to delayed launches and increased friction within the organization.

4. **Leadership's Role in Silo Creation:** Leadership plays a significant role in the existence of silos. If leaders do not demonstrate collaborative behavior themselves, or incentivize collaboration, employees are unlikely to prioritize it within their own teams. Additionally, in resource-constrained environments, the scarcity mindset may discourage sharing efforts due to fear of resource allocation reductions.

Check out our full-suite of product growth offerings

STRATEGIES FOR BREAKING DOWN SILOS:

To break down silos and foster a collaborative culture, organizations can adopt several strategies:

1. **Early and Inclusive Collaboration:** It is important to involve cross-functional team members early in projects. By bringing key stakeholders together from the beginning, roadblocks and potential issues can be identified and addressed proactively, resulting in cost and time savings, improved team morale, and enhanced trust.

2. **Organize Workshops and Cross-Functional Meetings:** Conducting half-day or full-day workshops with leaders and cross-functional representatives can be highly beneficial. These sessions allow for open communication, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas. By involving decision-makers from different departments, organizations can experience accelerated speed-to-market by eliminating unnecessary communication barriers and discuss potential blockers early on.

3. **Emphasize the Value of Research and Strategy:** Organizations should ensure that research and strategy teams have a major influence on decision-making processes. By integrating research insights early in the product development cycle, teams can create solutions that better meet customer needs. Leadership should be made aware of the positive outcomes and return on investment achieved through research-driven decision-making.

4. **Top-down communication in terms of vision and revenue goals is extremely beneficial.** If leadership is not clear or communicative about where the company should be heading, it creates a trickle-down free-for-all effect where mid-level management will create their own individual pathways (which inevitably leads to silos).

5. **Create bridge-style meetings.** This strategy could ensure people stay close to other departments' efforts, which will help in identifying potential risks as well as opportunities. Instead of siloing meetings in terms of vertical, promote cross-functional participation by asking questions such as "what do the goals of dept X have in common with our objectives?". Intentionality in bridging between various teams can be a much more collaborative approach than regular stand-ups or quarterly touchpoint

6. **Shared KPI's.** Create at least a few shared metrics that directly speak to collaboration between various teams. Utilize a SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to continually assess the level of collaboration in the form of company-wide surveys. Metrics should be focused on level of collaboration as well as the influence of said collaboration on the success of product development and launch.

ADDRESSING "BAD APPLES":

In some cases, individuals who exhibit negative behavior can contribute to the existence and perpetuation of silos. Handling such "bad apples" requires a nuanced approach:

- **Find Connection Points:** Instead of avoiding or marginalizing difficult team members, efforts should be made to find common ground and create a connection. Involving them and highlighting their contributions can decrease their negative impact.

- **Be specific in requests.** Due to the lack of training in collaboration, approaching it with an empathetic mindset is beneficial to all organizations. Certain team members have never had to collaborate consistently before. Being specific and straightforward with requests can help inexperienced collaborators to understand what is expected of them.

conclusion

Our Experience Experts highlighted a shift in company priorities, focusing on long-term sustainable growth and profitability rather than pursuing growth at any cost. This transition drives process improvements and system enhancements to increase value while trimming the waste.

To succeed, digital teams must transform from feature factories into value factories. Intuition-based decision-making is no longer sufficient, and organizations are encouraged to prioritize features and enhancements based on their potential to generate impact.

Although the pace and direction of optimization and efficiency may vary for each company, the long-term trend is clear. Organizations must support their roadmap decisions with critical data-driven insights. Successful companies are carefully analyzing their roadmap features, ensuring that each development is supported by analytics-based insights to address gaps and challenges.

Businesses seeking similar growth must leverage data as a strategic tool. Enhancing decision-making capabilities is critical for driving optimization and efficiency in the digital landscape of 2023 and beyond.

6 WAYS TO DRIVE OPTIMIZATION AND EFFICIENCY IN YOUR BUSINESS

1. Use both qualitative and quantitative data as both play a crucial role in understanding and optimizing business processes. **– Joel**

2. Consider creating data-driven personas that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data to help guide and focus business improvements and to generate ideas for a more efficient and user-friendly experience. **– Emma**

3. Use data as the key driver of what's on the product roadmap. To become a more digitally mature organization, measure how each and every feature may be moving the needle. **– Luke**

4. Lead with a sound technology strategy and drive thoughtful execution to maintain a well optimized digital ecosystem. **– Raghid**

5. Evaluate and optimize your existing tech stack, or the combination of software tools and technologies used by your company, as it plays a crucial role in enabling efficient processes and maximizing productivity. **– Joe**

6. Break down silos within your organization to help foster a more unified culture, cross-functional collaboration, and collective success. **– Cim**

bottle rocket

If you are interested in learning more about successful strategies for product growth in 2023 and beyond or believe your organization has an opportunity to harness optimization and efficiency to gain competitive advantage, the experience experts at Bottle Rocket are here to help.

Drop us a line at hello@bottlerocketstudios.com and reference this Trend Analysis eBook to start the conversation with the experts on our team.

BOTTLEROCKETSTUDIOS.COM

Let's connect. ›