

Executing Well: An Introduction to Product Development

Susan Mernit

KDMC News Entrepreneur Boot Camp

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“In business and engineering, new product development (NPD) is the term used to describe the complete process of bringing a new product or service to market.

There are two parallel paths involved in the NPD process: one involves the idea generation, product design and detail engineering; the other involves market research and marketing analysis.

Companies typically see new product development as the first stage in generating and commercializing new products within the overall strategic process of product life cycle management used to maintain or grow their market share."

--Wikipedia entry--”

Founders Room

be the best in the world
(and be quiet, please)

Ideas are cool; execution is
everything



So, how do we make it happen?

What are key elements of putting together and managing a low-cost, boot-strapped news start up?

6 stages in execution

- Planning
- Building product & team
- Social Media launch
- Building capacity & operations
- Metrics & Revenue focus
- Looking ahead





PLANNING & DISCOVERY STAGE (3 months)

- What is the mission?**
- Who are the core team?**
- What can we do with our budget?**
- Can we secure domain?**
- Concept development & market analysis**
- Value proposition—for community, for partners**
- Product & editorial plan: critical elements**
- Revenue strategies**
- Audience acquisition & engagement strategies**

Planning stage

Question we asked

- What is the mission?
- Who are the core team?
- What can we do with our budget?
- Who is the competition?
- How do we differentiate?
- What are the risks?

Tools we used

- Interviews & research
- Market analysis: Google, Compete.com, Quantcast, Alexa
- Preliminary 12 month budget projections
- LOTS of white papers, outlines, narratives, talks

Useful tools: Google docs, Basecamp, G-talk

Next: Building the product

Deliverables

- Wrote product requirements document (PRD)
- Wrote editorial plan
- Wrote navigation & Taxonomy
- Researched local blogs & local non-profits & community orgs
- Wire-framed the site
- Logo

Next steps

- RFP, hired developer
- Planned content types, sources, editorial flow, taxonomy
- Created plans for Oakbase & blog directory
- Developer set up Basecamp
- Created logo
- ENGINEERING!

Building capacity & team

Tasks

- Defined roles of core team
- Secured partners
- Planned publishing schedule
- Planned types of content
- Finalized taxonomy
- 3 month budget
- Research on funders/
pipeline for new funds

Outcomes

- Assigned responsibilities
- Identified partner content sources
- Defined frequency
- Defined focus
- Had \$8,000 to spend over 5 months
- Applied for 4 more grants

How about the money?

Revenue possibilities

- Google Ad words
- 3rd party ads
- Local ads/monthly
- Sponsorships
- Donor/memberships
- Training
- Merchandise
- Events
- Print SIPs

What could work for us?

- 3rd party ads
- Local ads
- Donors/membership
- Training
- Merchandise

12 month metrics for success

Traffic & web metrics

- 110,000 page views month
- 40,000 unique visitors
- 2.62 minutes per visit
- 50% returning visitors

Social media goals

- Twitter: 1,000 users
- Facebook: 500 fans

Engagement metrics

- 5 comments day
- 500 registered users
- 15 active bloggers

Referrals

- 30% Facebook referrals
- 20% syndication partners
- 40% returning traffic
- 10% search engines

Launch & Going Live

Marketing

- Planned social media marketing campaign
- Held live meet-ups & trainings
- Time-boxed launch: 1,400 visitors on Day 1, 3 media stories
- Active on Facebook, Twitter, video sites, flickr

Distribution/Syndication

- Indexed in Google News, Yahoo! News by month 2
- Content-sharing with Wire Tap Magazine, Youth Outlook, NAM, Terrain
- Developed stories with Spot.us
- Syndicated stories to Sharable, KALW, others.



Engaging your audience is critical to success—and you have to listen

Actual metrics: 7 months

Traffic & web metrics

- 109,000 page views month
- 32,000 unique visitors
- 1.97 minutes per visit
- 50% returning visitors

Engagement metrics

- 1-5 comments day
- 400 registered users
- 12 active bloggers

Social media goals

- Twitter: 1,500 users
- Facebook: 3.090 fans

Referrals

- 10% Facebook referrals
- 5% Twitter referrals
- 5% syndication partners
- 50% returning traffic
- 30% search engines

Challenges

Challenges

- Forgot to get an operating budget: No paid staffers=instability
- Under-served communities & historic legacy media need assistance
- Don't have sales & marketing teams in place yet; need'em

Solutions

- Seeking funding to stabilize organization with 2 hires FTE
- Reaching out to partner with more groups
- Hiring folks, stream-lining sales process

Where we are: May 2010

- What we have done well
 - Touched an audience that needed an outlet
 - Given voice to more food/environmental issues
 - Transparency
 - Diverse views & voices
 - New model
- What we can do better
 - Pay staff: need to raise operating budget
 - Increase diversity across class as well as race
 - Publish bilingually

2 H 2010 GOALS

Areas of focus for
2010:

Operating revenue

Mobile first/lean
mobile

Extending
trainings/capacity
building

Quality storytelling
& reporting



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LOCAL

APPENDIX/BONUS SLIDES



Case study: Oaklandlocal.com

Launched: October 2009.

Built in Drupal for \$3,000 by cogmotive.com ;
market value: over \$15,000

Started by 3 volunteers: Susan Mernit, Kwan
Booth, Amy Gahran

Initial funding: \$17,000 New Voices/J-Lab 2009
Award.

Mission: The mission of Oakland Local is to democratize access to new media and web social media skills. We do this by partnering with community organizations to provide them with the skills, resources, and awareness to tell stories and make their voices heard through publishing on Oakland Local and on the web.

Writers, Editors, Partners & Volunteers=Oakland Local



Revenue & Entrepreneurship

- ❖ Paid staff works part/time
- ❖ Volunteers are trained & supported
- ❖ Partnerships with local non-profits
- ❖ produce blogs, articles, videos, photos
- ❖

Emphasis on user guidelines, quality,

- ❖ diversity

Partners include

- ❖ Ella Baker Center, Bay Localize, Urban Habitat, EBASE
- ❖ New America Media, Center for Investigative Reporting, KALW,
- ❖ Spot.usraffic, uniques

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LOCAL

Baristanet

West Seattle
Blog...

theloopsm

Some examples

Oakland Local: New news non-profit with 35 non-profit community partners

West Seattle Blog: Definitive local media for West Seattle, WA

Baristanet: Montclair, NJ community news & advertising

CityLimits.org “progressive civic lifestyle in New York City”

The loop: Westchester’s town square

Chicago Current: Local politics and news

CITY LIMITS

**CHICAGO
CURRENT**

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LOCAL