



PEOPLE SCOPE

Management Consultancy
Management Development
Training • Coaching

Must-do Tips No 76 - Bridging The NPD Gulf

It is no coincidence that there are few, if any people currently working in the professions with the words "New Product Development" or "New Service Development" in their title. Quite simply, NPD has not been on the agenda for most firms - until now.

Traditionally the professions have survived, indeed prospered on a diet based predominantly on "give them what we've got". Any service developments that have occurred have usually been piecemeal exercises driven by individual or small groups of partners - and thus with limitedly successful results over time. However, the combined impact of new technology, economic stricture, and more demanding clients is creating a new environment: one in which, increasingly, firms must differentiate their offering to complement better operational efficiency.

We believe that to implement this "new game" successfully is going to require greater expertise than many firms currently possess and the adoption of some distinctly new ways of working. So this month we offer three tips to help your firm in beginning to bridge the NPD gulf.

Tip 1 – networking & team working - new!

The successful development of new services demands a combination of **business savvy, collaboration, and creativity** - i.e. something that is stretching but by no means impossible. Partners and professionals at all levels have to *delve* even deeper into what clients do and what *frustrates* them about running their businesses or organisations properly.

Then, they need to get to know and work, hand-in-glove, with colleagues in other departments or practice groups AND with external co-providers, because the bulk of new services often come from creating and packaging up combinations of existing services in new forms to solve a problem.

This is a long way away from the narrow technical focus and inter-departmental 'turf' wars that traditionally prevail in some firms.

Tip 2 - an INVESTMENT with RISK

Just like NPD, the professions have not prioritised investment in Research & Development either - in fact, many don't do anything. Both require a different *mind-set* and approach to their business that must now catch on if firms are to be successful. We must see the *commitment* of significant *money* and *time* from the top (consistently over time not just as a one-year 'fad') and the realisation that, like most investments, some will fail or underperform.

And when these projects do not work out we do **not** simply hit the button marked 'blame', but learn from what went wrong and continue to invest in NPD projects because the rewards can be significant.

Tip 3 - get the right people and processes

Embedding new ways has to have subject-matter experts to guide change, particularly at the beginning. Firms must begin to employ NPD specialists, either internally or externally, who have experience of DOING IT. These experts will bring with them activities, processes and best practice - for ideas generation, risk assessment, product testing etc. - that help bring more products to market successfully, enable the firm to learn quicker, and thus reduce the uncertainty inherent in such investment.

We have significant experience of NPD work within and outside of the professions. Hit 'Reply' and type **NPD** if you want to know more. For fuller information on us, what we do, and who we work with, go to our website at www.peoplescope.com.

"The Vital Dozen - 12 Steps to Managerial Excellence in the Professions" is a recently published, two-part briefing paper. Both parts are available now to view and download for free by going to: <http://www.peoplescope.com/articles.php>.

And to access also for free, we have a wide selection of previous issues of Must-do Tips offering practical, real world advice: just go to <http://www.peoplescope.com/must-do-tips.php>.

Finally, if you do NOT wish to receive "Must-Do Tips", [unsubscribe]click here to unsubscribe[/unsubscribe]. Or press 'Reply' and type 'Unsubscribe': we will do exactly that.

Best regards.

JAMES NEWBERRY

People Scope, 6 River Court, Chartham, Canterbury CT4 7JN, United Kingdom. Telephone: 01227 730411.

This message contains information that may be privileged and confidential and is the property of People Scope. It is intended only for the person to whom it is addressed. If you are not that person, you are not authorised to read, print, retain, copy, disseminate, distribute, or use this message or any part thereof. If you receive this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies of this message. Our computers are virus-protected on a regular and ongoing basis. We hope that you don't catch anything from us, but we can't accept any legal responsibility if you do.

Copyright People Scope 2010