

## HW18-Team: Opower Case

### Instructions

Team number: Team 11

Names of students who actively worked on this assignment:

- Student 1: Akash M Dubey
- Student 2: Shiqi Yu
- Student 3: Rutuja
- Student 4: Dhrakshayani Priyanka
- Student 5: Divyank

As a team, discuss the case and write the answers to the assignment questions below. Make sure to keep the questions above your answers. Be as detailed as practical. 2-page max for the entire assignment (not including Instructions page). Save as pdf.

Grading: each question is 20% of total score. 10% penalty if not following the instructions (for each incident).

**1. What customer needs does OPOWER address? What is the product that addressed those needs? Who are the target customers and why?**

(1) The first thing to emphasize is that OPOWER has proposed the SAAS solution. The energy supplier directly utilizes OPOWER's customers. Customers need a way to analyze usage on a regular basis. In order to improve customer satisfaction, in order to get active digital communications, they let these customers join the platform. Reduce the cost of services there while reducing the load on the power plant.

(2) The function of OPOWER's product is to help customers analyze the power usage of the entire family to meet their basic needs. The platform provides energy reports, a customizable dashboard, and smart meters that can alarm in real time.

(3) OPOWER's target customers were initially consumers operating in the state-owned and private utility industries. Because the demand of these customers is to save energy, but they lack the resources to improve performance.

**2. What was their approach to product management in early days and how did it change with time? What is the product management process and metrics now?**

1. OPOWER in time had improve its product design & product management scaling process
2. Early Stages of Product Management for OPOWER was focused on Strategy and vision and product definition ,
3. But as the features grew, Product management became more complex with respect to incoming feature requests and focus shifted from product vision to delivering feature requests. Later in timeline, OPOWER switched to Agile development process for product development
4. Metrics at OPOWER developed into common metrics for pm and engineering teams which included direct measures for quality and productivity such as number of bugs, number of roadmap features developed in time, and market driven metrics like utility RFPs won

**3. Describe the Token System. What are the pros and cons?**

1. One of the difficulties that OPOWER was facing was to maintain a roadmap due to the pressure to develop custom solutions for customers involving large and long-term contracts. To overcome this, a Token System was introduced.
2. This system helped in resolving the tension between OPOWER's sales team to win bids and product teams to maintain discipline by optimizing the delivery of products.
3. Keeping the feature requests in mind, the came up with 3 types of visual depictions of product roadmap which are color coded:
  - a. Blue Features: These were already on the roadmap and could be completed on time without any major development priority changes.
  - b. Green Features: That is supposed to be on the roadmap and these needed to be accelerated to meet the customer specifications.
  - c. Yellow Features: These were not on the roadmap and will be added if requested by the customer.

**Pros:** Token system number cannot be made up like ROI system. Therefore the security is high. Also, product teams can set the priorities in the token system.

**Cons:** Everytime they add a feature, the development of the next feature becomes more difficult as the new feature takes into account the old one. Also, the product team might declare any feature as yellow as the sales team pays for that as they approach the deadline.

**4. Should they accept the ABC Power REF? Defend your answer.**

According to me, OPOWER should accept the ABC power REF as they just started with the business and the organization is in the initial phase of development. The main goal behind ABC Power REF is to keep a simple generalized format or platform which can be used multiple times, we can change it according to different requirements. If they modify or change their product requirements for the ABC, also if they have a higher cost of development in future but in comparison building the structure in the future from scratch will be more expensive for them, and that time it might become a need for all the services. To achieve a long-term goal I think, OPOWER should accept ABC Power REF to avoid the ambiguity and extra cost of revised data structure in the future.

**1. Three most important things you learned from this case? Instructions: each team member to come up with three things, list them below.**

**Shiqi Yu:**

- (1) Any company needs a rigorous, product development team that understands customer needs and does not deviate from the company's culture. This team must be flexible while meeting customer needs, and make timely adjustments in line with market needs according to the market.
- (2) The design of a product does not mean that it serves only one class of people. Maybe over time, a limited product will be eliminated.
- (3) For the selection of the target customer group of the product development team, which type of people have the most specific needs and are closely related in life, choose which type of people. It is also very important to choose the restrictive methods of competitors. It is necessary to understand the opponents and proceed from their root problems.

**Akash M Dubey:**

- (1) Change of phase of Product Management from initial phase to adopting Agile based approach is important learning factor to manage chaotic challenges
- (2) Early stages of Product development can be fixated around vision and strategy of product, however with further progression, agile becomes an essential framework to implement
- (3) Choice of common metrics like rate of roadmap features completion over time etc. served well to maintain balance agreement between development team and product development team

**Rutuja:**

- (1) As a product manager adding more innovative features or adding customer's requirements to the product components will help to achieve the product goal.
- (2) A product must have a long-term goal but also have a roadmap to achieve it. Always welcome all requirements and changes required according to customers and teams at the time of development.
- (3) If the company is in its initial phase, the product manager has to be creative and take initiatives that can make the design and development easy for the product team as the product manager is handling both customer and product teams.

**Priyanka:**

- (1) This case explained the pros and cons of implementing Agile software development.
- (2) I understood the difficulty in managing the customer specifications and the pressure in resolving the tension between the product and sales teams.
- (3) As a PM, you must choose to structure around either product components that have a benefit of clear ownership or initiatives which can make the development easy to pivot and experiment.

**Divyank:**

- (1) In this case we learnt that when product design is changed and accepted by many types of people when it was originally designed, such a product will not be eliminated.
- (2) Root analysis is always necessary for eg. targeting specific needs for customer segments
- (3) Agile Framework, long term goals, customer requirements & choice of metrics are important