**RACHEL PATTERSON**

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**IT and Product Management**

***Commercial Product Management ~ Business Relationship Management ~ Strategic Planning & Analysis***

*Analytical and innovative senior executive with 25 years’ comprehensive experience in business and technological leadership. Track record of managing IT functions, product strategy and change programmes, maximising service delivery and aligning operations with business strategy. Demonstrated success in strategic analysis and introducing business process improvements to raise product quality and customer satisfaction while reducing costs. Outstanding interpersonal, communication, organisational and problem solving skills.*

**AREAS OF STRENGTH AND EXPERTISE**

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| * **IT Product Management** * **Creative Problem Solving** * **Presentation Skills** | * **Strategic Planning & Analysis** * **Innovation** * **Relationship Building** | * **Software Product Ownership** * **Managing Change** * **Financial Literacy** |

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Head of Product Management, Orchard Information Systems Oct 2017 – July 2019**

*Orchard is the leading independent supplier of software systems to the UK social housing sector, with a portfolio of B2B and B2B2C products spanning housing, finance and asset management and data analytics.*

Originally employed on a 12 month interim contract but made permanent after 5 months. Left amicably under a settlement agreement due to reorganisation. Responsible for a team of Product Managers and Product Owners spanning Orchard’s full portfolio, delivering a development programme with a team of 80+ to achieve challenging sales targets, as well as managing key products directly.

***Key Accomplishments:***

* Restructured the team and drove them to create a product strategy and roadmaps to steer the company towards market leadership. Sales exceeded targets in FY1819, with enough clear potential for growth that the target was increased by 30% for FY1920.
* Established Product Management as a central function in the company with key relationships to all other commercial and delivery teams, and with strong links to the customer base.
* Set up partnerships with customers for new product developments, and worked closely with account management teams to deepen customer links. Met executive level customers to understand their business drivers and discuss how our company strategy could support them, in order to help maintain and improve our relationships and win additional business. Also set up and led customer workshops to explore requirements, manage expectations for delivery timeframes and solicit feedback on new ideas and designs.
* Directly product managed the conceptualisation and early development of a brand new cloud-based product, created with a SaaS commercial model, using Domain Driven Design with a Kafka microservices architecture, optimised for mobile working and targeting a model of Continuous Integration and Continuous Delivery. This product was designed to provide the base platform for a whole new generation of products to be sold separately or combined flexibly with legacy products to reach new markets. Management included driving the product choice, market research, forming partnerships with key customers, defining high level scope, MVP, epics and priorities and working closely with a Product Owner and Scrum team to drive development, as well as planning a marketing campaign, setting pricing with the sales team and pitching to customers to assist with advance sales.
* Also directly product managed the internal development and soft launch of a critical mobile working web app to replace a third party solution attached to the legacy core product. My involvement included the commercial aspects of creating propositions and pricing, identifying ROI measures, managing beta testing with customers and preparing internal teams for launch, and writing prioritised themes and epics for the Product Owners to break into stories.
* Increased product knowledge and confidence among sales, marketing and other teams through ongoing product education, by introducing a tool to document information about products, competitors and strategy and a portal to capture ideas for enhancements, and by improving competitor research so that the sales team could target their pitch better.
* Created a unifying product strategy for the company to achieve market leadership and grow its own IP significantly for long term growth, and sold it to the exec team, customers and other internal teams.
* Delivered keynote speech at customer conference to 250 delegates and regularly presented the vision and roadmaps to internal and external audiences.
* Identified and introduced a company to fill a significant product gap in workforce scheduling, then led product due diligence on the potential acquisition.
* Trained the team to write more impactful tender submissions and product propositions. Also trained the Product Owners and Scrum Masters in using better user stories to improve communication and efficiency.

**Operations Director, ADVAM Feb - July 2017**

*ADVAM are a leading provider of payment solutions and parking management applications with a global B2B customer base. Head office is in Australia with a second hub in Manchester.*

Accountability for IT service and DevOps including AWS infrastructure maintenance and optimisation of hosting costs, SaaS application releases, service desk and 24/7 technical support for UK, European and US customers, and compliance with PCI DSS data security standards.

***Key Accomplishments:***

* Re-engineered the change management process for better control and global visibility.
* Introduced Agile Kanban processes for managing the DevOps team effectively and prioritising project, support and maintenance work concurrently.
* Developed closer relationships between the Manchester office and the Australian head office in order to drive the corporate strategic vision into implementation.

**PIMSS Data Systems 2011** *–* **2016**

*PIMSS develops asset management software and supplies data services to the social housing market across UK. It is based on the Wirral and employed 18 staff, with a turnover of approximately £1m.*

**Managing Director, PIMSS Data Systems, Nov 2012 – June 2016**

***Strategic Leadership:***

* Developed a new product and corporate strategy to grow the company through a partnership with Growth Accelerator, analysing the opportunities and obstacles and securing buy-in from the Board.
* Identified a gap in the market for a new software product to diversify the company offering, conducting competitor analysis and communicating with customers and influencers to determine requirements and potential market size. Developed the business plan and financial profitability KPIs, then secured external grants and bank funding for the investment.
* Created and ran the tendering process to appoint a third party supplier for delivery of a new cloud-based B2B SaaS product and mobile apps, and ensured that their software development lifecycle procedures met the critical goals of security, ease of use and flexibility alongside the core functional requirements.
* Oversaw the transition from Microsoft web technologies and SQL databases to new cloud development technologies with no-SQL Mongo, in order to support long term corporate growth.
* Reviewed the corporate operating model, and as a result established strategic business processes across the company to increase customer satisfaction and reduce business complexity.

***Operational Management:***

* Senior management of all software business functions, reporting to the Board, with full P&L and personnel responsibility for the whole company.
* Product management for the company software, managing the development team using Agile methodologies to balance priorities for support and development within the roadmap. Software included both in-house bespoke development and management of external suppliers for business-critical applications. Accountable for complete lifecycle of all projects from conception to onsite delivery.
* Senior account manager for all key customers to drive ongoing satisfaction and additional sales of software and data services, and oversight of all customer relationships.
* Senior supplier role on multiple projects to deliver complex software implementations across multiple departments of housing associations and local governments, and direct management of projects involving customisation of the flagship software product.
* Pre-sales support for major bids including oversight and sign-off of tenders and cost proposals as well as senior supplier representation at presentations and demonstrations.

***Key Accomplishments:***

* Delivered 107% turnover in 2016 year to date target, increasing the target by 57% against the 2015 achievement, with operating profit of 162% of target. This reflected improvements in customer satisfaction leading to more upsales as well as winning new customers through tenders and direct sales.
* Acquired Investors in People Silver certification and the company was shortlisted for the Wirral Chamber 2015 People Development Award, due to improvements following new investment in training and performance management with very positive staff feedback. Created a productive management team from existing staff, training and mentoring each member to perform their duties efficiently and effectively.
* Fostered a culture encouraging cross-team working and innovation, where all staff felt empowered to suggest and deliver changes. This drove numerous improvements, such as reducing the average time for one key process from 10 hours to 3 hours while simultaneously reducing human error.

**Operations Director, PIMSS Data Systems, July – Nov 2012**

* After promotion to run all IT development projects, proved instrumental in strategic direction of the company by ensuring processes and systems were aligned with business goals.
* Ongoing responsibility for software implementations and support alongside new role. Introduced Agile methodologies, improved software quality through better testing, formalised change management and drew up a software development roadmap.

**IT Support & Implementation Manager, PIMSS Data Systems, 2011 – July 2012**

* Redeveloped the company processes for implementation management to ensure accountability and transparency. Led complex implementation projects lasting 6-18 months for new customers.
* Ascertained serious shortfalls in the procedures to invoice maintenance within the first month of employment, which led to a 44% increase in maintenance income over the following two years.
* Drove the direction of product enhancements based on customer needs and competitor analysis.

**Project Manager & Team Leader, Accenture Services 2004 – 2010**

*Accenture is a global company ranked as the top outsourcing service provider from 2006-2010 by the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals. Continued working on the RSA account in an outsourced application delivery function.*

Managed a portfolio of enhancement projects and service delivery, for 15 employees in Liverpool and India to ensure the efficiency of work and delivered projects on time and within given budget using multiple suppliers.

***Key Accomplishments:***

* Managed the team that maintained SAP HR & Payroll for RSA, consistently meeting SLAs for cost and quality, through process efficiencies, software improvements and ongoing knowledge transfer to the offshore staff. Reduced cost of ongoing maintenance of software systems in 6 out of 7 years (one year by 38%).
* Saved £1m per year in ongoing pension costs by delivering a 200-day customization project to add new interfaces to an external supplier on time and to budget.

**Programmer, Business Analyst & Team Leader, RSA Insurance 1994 – 2004**

*RSA is a FTSE100 company underwriting general insurance products for personal and commercial customers.*

Mainly Microsoft VB6, Access and Excel. New developments and application support for 80 undocumented systems which were both complex and business-critical, across home, motor and commercial insurance product lines for policies, renewals and claims. Excelled in problem resolution in challenging circumstances.

**EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS**

**BA in Japanese &** **Linguistics** 2:1, Sheffield University, 1993

**MSc in Machine Translation**, UMIST, 1994

**Prince2 Practitioner**, 2010 **–** 2015

**PGCE in Secondary Education (ICT)**, Edge Hill University, 2011

**Certificate in Company Direction**, Institute of Directors, 2014

**ITIL Foundation**, 2016