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- Question asked by [Donna Mitchell](#)
- [Strategy](#)
- 14 replies
- 3 years ago

Where do you look for new product ideas?

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14 Replies

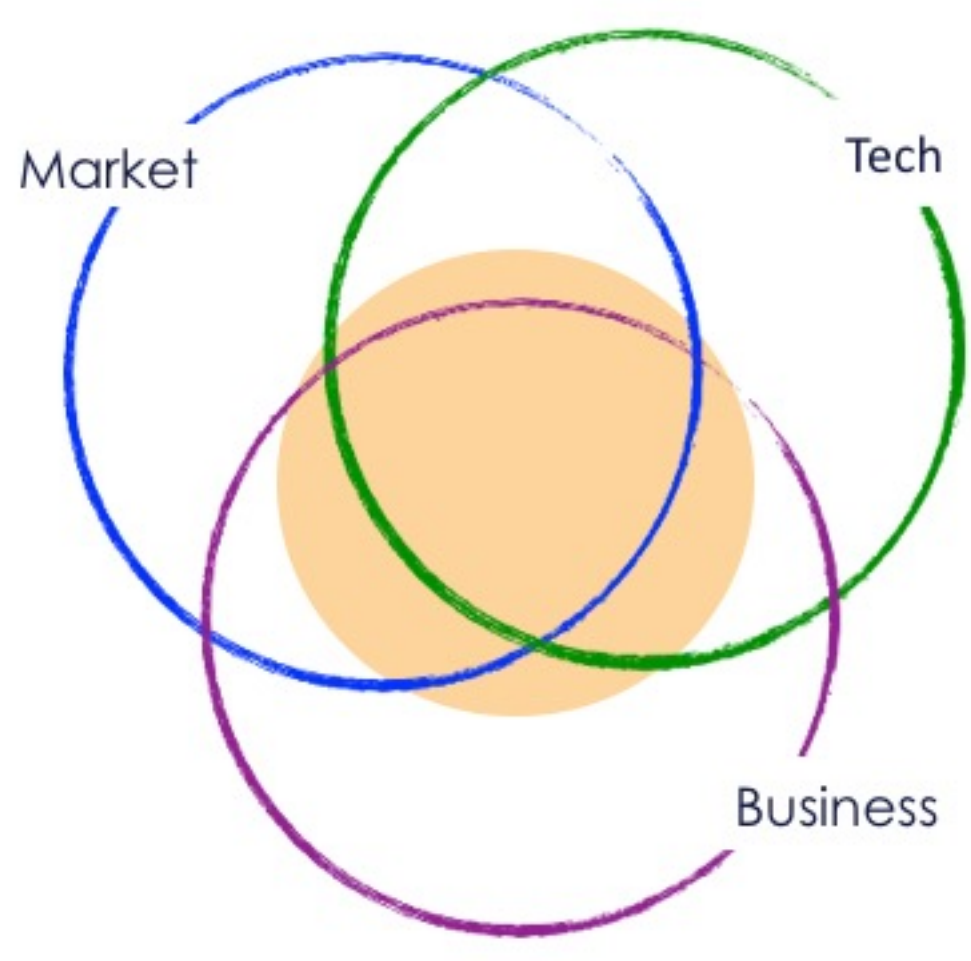


[Steve Johnson](#)

Helping teams apply the best practices of product management. Author, speaker, consultant, guitar player.
3 years ago

The best ideas come from the market and its problems. (BTW, sales people have the worst ideas for products. They tell you about features without the underlying understanding of the customer and his/her problem).

A METAPHOR FOR PRODUCT LEADERS



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Successful products are at the intersection of technology, market, and product. Once you have an idea, you need to evaluate whether it is technically feasible and whether it achieves your profitability goals. Some product ideas can't be solved; some product ideas don't result in a business value.

For more on the roles of product management, see "Expertise in Product Management" at <https://under10playbook.com/ebooks/expertise-in-product-management>

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[Wael Salman](#)
Co-Founder & VP Products at Switri - Entrepreneuru
3 years ago

you are explaining and talking about the fields that can combine the process after finding an idea.

Ideas do not come from abstract technologies

Ideas comes from needs and these needs are translated to technical solutions

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[Daniel Elizalde](#)

Product Management for the Internet of Things

3 years ago

I agree with Steve. Product ideas should come from understanding your customer's needs.

There's often a desire to be "innovative" and therefore come up with random product ideas that are not focused on any particular customer pain. The goal is not to be innovative in the problem statement. Innovation comes from the specific way your company implements the solution (i.e. product idea). That's where the real innovation and differentiation happens.

Also, it's important to align any new product idea with your product strategy. Some customer needs might be outside your area of focus and therefore might take you in a direction that is not aligned with the company's strategy and vision. In this case, even though the pain is real and you could address it, the misalignment with strategy makes it a poor product idea.

In a nutshell, good product idea come from:

- Understanding and solving real customer problems
- Alignment with your product strategy

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[andrea saez](#)

Head of Customer Success at ProdPad

3 years ago

The correct answer to this should be: **everywhere.**

You never really know where the next big idea lies. It could be with your sales team member, support team member, even someone in your IT department! And of course, let's not forget your customers.

Best practice should be open product management to everyone. Have everyone involved in conversations, discussions, and feedback. There are a lot of great ways of doing this, especially if you have a tool like Slack that allows you to foster those conversations. The most important thing is to let everyone know it is ok for them to send ideas your way, and have the understand what that process looks like for you.

Now validating ideas is a whole other topic!

- Comment
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[Namrata Datta](#)
Coach, SAFe Program Consultant, CSPO
3 years ago

Can't agree more ☺

- Comment
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[Sean Flaherty](#)
Partner at ITX, A firm that makes software products powerful
3 years ago

I agree with Andrea Saez in principle" "Everywhere." But it is better to put some structure around it and I have some ideas to share.

I created this model and [wrote it up on Medium awhile back](#) and it works pretty well for our team:

Building great products that people will actually spend their valuable time and their hard earned money on comes from a combination of things that I believe most great leaders embody. The best, most successful entrepreneurs (like Steve Jobs and Henry Ford) have:

1. The Power of Observation. The keen ability to observe their customers in real life situations translate needs into ideas. [Tony Fadell \(from Apple\) says that: “The first secret of design is to notice.”](#)
2. Empathy for Their Customer’s Pain. The ability to sense and sniff out sources of frustration. They can see things that

others can't and have the ability to identify which frustrations matter; which frustrations people are willing to pay to eliminate from their lives.

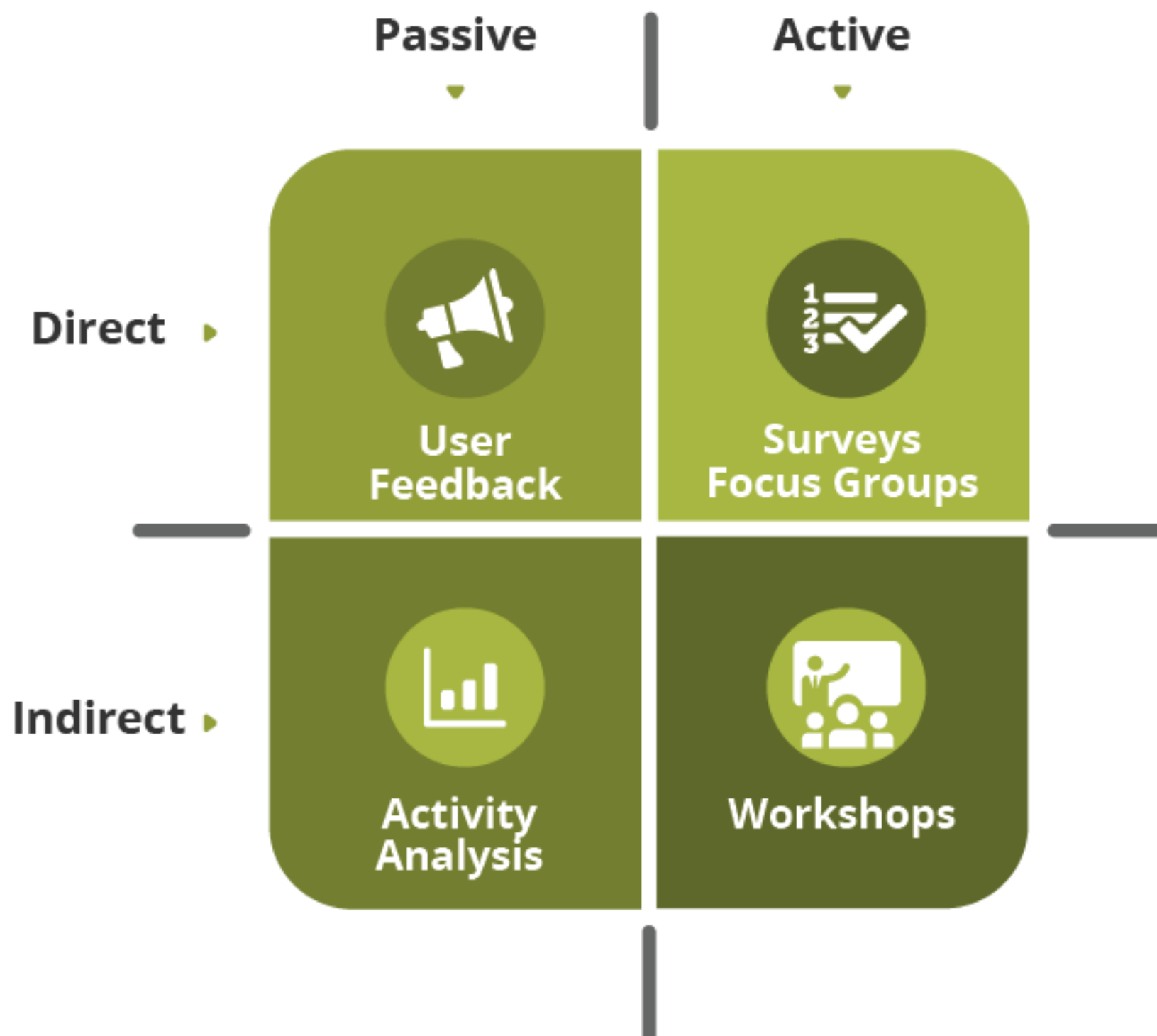
3. A Passion for the Details. The kind of passion that is unrelenting, focused and purposeful. They recognize that nuance is the subtle difference between good enough and amazing.
4. A Hyper-Focus on a Purpose. They understand that people connect with products and brands for what they stand for beyond the profit that they are trying to generate and they demonstrate their purpose through their products or services.

The truth is that customers are rarely (if ever) able to articulate what they want.

“It isn't normal to know what we want. It is a rare and difficult psychological achievement.”— [Abraham Maslow](#)

Does that mean that we shouldn't ask our customers for feedback? Of course we should, but at the right time and in the right context and we should listen to their feedback with the intent to understand it.

We desperately need to find ways that we can better observe our customers to find inspiration for micro-innovations that will move the needle on customer satisfaction, engagement and loyalty. Here are some of the ways it's been traditionally done. This simple diagram shows the 4 ways to derive insights about what your customer wants. You can either actively solicit context or you can passively observe for it and you can get it either directly from your customers or indirectly from the environments surrounding your customers:



Great Product Managers master looking for insights and ideas from all four of these quadrants.

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[Shravan Kumar](#)

Cofounder at PotApp

3 years ago

Although, your users, sales/marketing/consumer success teams are good sources for new product ideas, as a Product Manager, one good source for new product ideas is yourself. Re-imagine your product's vision and give a reality check. Is this how you imagined the world using your product? If not try to question yourself on whats going off track. You might have compromised on few things while building the product because of some practical challenges. Ask yourself on what would the best company on earth according to you, have done to address such problems. That can give you a new direction of thought for ideas.

A product is designated to solve a problem but not every user facing the problem is in a similar frame of mind while using your product. Most people generalize user behavior based on their demographics and certain other parameters. However, A single user can behave in many different ways depending many external factors. Be an extensive user of your product. Every time you use the product, take up a different persona of one of your users and try to use the product. A lazy user, a user who is scared of too much text, a user who is trying to use your product while jogging (if applicable. like a music app), a first time user who doesn't have any idea on what your products gonna do, probably even a stoned user and try to find what could make your product better for that user.

Think of yourself as the one who is financing your company. Analyze where your money is going out in different operations involved in your company. Think of solutions, that could save some money if something is changed/improved/optimized in your product. This will give you direction for some crazy new ideas.

Most of the times every new idea seems to be the best idea ever. Be careful in evaluating your ideas before planning them in your product road map.

- Comment
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[Jeff Spitulnik](#)

Product Management and Strategy, User Experience, and Data Sciences

3 years ago

One tension I like to play out when looking for product ideas is How much should my products improve the way people do their current work/tasks/goals vs. How much should my products change the work/tasks/goals altogether. The first question

typically looks at existing categories and models in the market and so I'm looking at current products and tools there, whereas the second attempts to define new categories and new models so I'm looking at adjacent categories, tasks, and work, or even at things completely outside the domain for inspiration. Regardless, it's always critical to look at and spend time in the context for which you intend your products -- with the users, with the business, with the financials, etc.

-- J.

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[Wael Salman](#)
Co-Founder & VP Products at Switri - Entrepreneuru
3 years ago

Great answer

I agree with you

- Comment
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[Namrata Datta](#)
Coach, SAFe Program Consultant, CSPO
3 years ago

I feel a great product manager is one who try to solve the problem and then ofcourse new product ideas come from that. If you are able to look and find the issues or problems your customers are facing then ur innovation can build a product who can solve it. Next is vision and curiosity, product manager should never sit idle and keeps of finding what's new coming in market and how I can use it in my product strategy roadmap. Third is new idea 💡 , I belive innovation workshops like hackathon can help you to create something new experience.... Try calling some new team friends and ask them to get involved with u.... Real user experience and their needs. I was working with a low budget aviation client as program manager, we actually did a ideation calling different users that uses their flights regularly that what they would like to see more...

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[Roei Soudai](#)
3 years ago

I think the best way is to actually live a day or two with your customers, meaning not only to solve their issues, since they can have processes that they use to have and maybe these processes can be improved by your Product.

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[Joost Pisters](#)
3 years ago

Best way in my opinion to get product ideas for an existing business is to:

- Work for a couple of weeks with the product your company produces as a customer
- Go "undercover" and work for several weeks for the people who support your customers (support department, complaints, etc)
- Work/try competitors products

Then combine what you learned with your own ideas and create a roadmap based on that.

- Comment
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[David Fradin](#)
Product Management and Marketing Courses Author, Boot Camp Facilitator and Consultant
3 years ago

Start with observing what your prospective customer wants to "do", then interview and survey. That will tell you exactly the problem(s) they are trying to solve. Then get your designers and development team involved in identifying innovative ways to help them do it faster and better.

- Comment
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[Casey Allen](#)

Director of Product at ZirMed

2 years ago

Your customers!! They should be the source of your inspiration and ideation. If you are looking for solution inspiration, here is a short list of tools for coming up with, collecting, and managing ideas:

<https://www.productmanagementtoolkit.com/ideation>

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