

Build, Buy or Partner

HOW TO SPEED YOUR TIME TO MARKET
OR
So Many Choices, So Little Time

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Build, Buy, or Partner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary1**
- 1. The Challenges of Product Management1**
 - Business Need: Creating Competitive Differentiation 2
 - Business Need: Fill Gap in Technology 3
 - Business Need: Offer A Complete Solution 3
- 2. Build/Buy/Partner: *Benefits and Tradeoffs*3**
 - BENEFITS AND TRADEOFFS4
 - Build Decision 4
 - Buy Decision..... 4
 - Partnering Decision/Resale Decision..... 5
 - BEA CASE STUDY5
 - CHOOSING THE CORRECT STRATEGY6
 - Why Companies Choose to Build 7
 - Why Companies Choose to Buy 7
 - Why Companies Choose to Partner 7
 - HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR STRATEGY8
- 3. Situation Analysis: *What to do When*.....9**
 - THE WHOLE PRODUCT OFFERING9
 - Elements of the Whole Product 10
 - Whole Product Case Study - The Database Wars..... 11
 - PRODUCT ADOPTION LIFE CYCLE13
 - Buyer motivation affects product decisions..... 14
 - Partnering Requirements 16
- 4. Recap.....19**

Build, Buy, Partner

Executive Summary

Product marketing, management and development departments have pressure from all sides to add competitive differentiation to product, fill in product line gaps and offer a complete solution to customers. Product groups have three strategies they can choose from to solve these issues: Build products or components from scratch, buy components, product, product lines or companies, or partner with companies to meet these product development needs. Companies must always start with the customer to choose their strategies. Using two types of tools, the whole product approach and the product adoption lifecycle model, product groups can analyze which strategy will work best. This white paper reviews the benefits and tradeoffs of each strategy, the objectives to analyze to determine which strategy fits the company's situation and the customers needs, and how to use the whole product approach and the product adoption lifecycle model to assess the best strategies.

1. The Challenges of Product Management

"We need a CRM product"

"We need security features to be competitive"

"We need a whole product solution; not point products"

"My customer won't buy unless we have management tools"

"The product needs an analytical tool"

"We need it now!"

These are the realities and challenges of product marketing, management and development in a rapidly changing environment. Product developers and managers hear all of these demands and more. Customers demand enhancements; management wants innovative solutions to establish technological leadership and dominate the market; competitors are making inroads in share of market. And time is of the essence!

Product development has pressure from all sides.

- Competitors may offer unique features that put the company at a disadvantage
- Customers demand features and the company can leapfrog ahead by offering them.
- Marketing executives become cognizant of a need for a new product or product line functionality and want it now.
- Analysts may tell company leadership that customers demand a more comprehensive solution which extends beyond the company's core product
- Strategic planners project that a high value, risk reduced whole product will offer a sustainable market position.

With so many competing demands and priorities, the product development and management organization must look for strategies to manage the various demands on their resources.

Product Management can impact corporate strategy in three ways by developing products to:

- Create competitive differentiation
- Fill a gap in product technology
- Offer a complete solution to meet customer needs

Companies have followed many different strategies to reach the three objectives. Some build, some buy and some partner. Let's look at some examples of meeting each of these objectives:

Business Need: Creating Competitive Differentiation

Companies build, buy or partner to gain product innovations and competitive differentiation.

- Vocollect builds proprietary Voiceprint Authentication solutions
- HP Buys Compaq to have broader computer line and more services to compete with IBM
- Network Associates partners with Internet Security System to combat hybrid security threats on the Internet and the network.
- MarketFirst OEMs Business Objects to add Analytics to Marketing Campaigns

Business Need: Fill Gap in Technology

Companies often partner or acquire to fill gaps in technology when speed to market is of concern. Building happens when owning the intellectual property is crucial and speed is not a concern.

- PC Manufacturers buy and assemble OS, chips, storage, etc. PC manufacturers use Microsoft OS/Intel chips/Quantum and Seagate disc drives rather than investing in building superior or differentiated components, as was the practice with earlier computers. Market leaders are always sourcing the best components to use within their products and concentrating on other core business competencies to achieve market primacy. Strong supplier partnerships are mandatory to meet the customer delivery demands and control inventory costs.
- HP OEMs Canon printers because it allowed quicker entry into the printer business as opposed to the time required to build their own.
- BEA partners with WebGain for application development tools. BEA chose to partner with tool companies because valuation of platform companies was higher. As it became clear that tools had to be part of the platform, BEA strategically partnered with WebGain, but eventually acquired Crossgain.

Business Need: Offer A Complete Solution

Companies may need to acquire a range of applications to fill out their product offerings. Companies often buy or partner to offer a complete solution, again to speed time to market and because they do not have the expertise and skills in-house.

- PeopleSoft has initiated a series of eleven acquisitions since 1998 to fill out functional applications in its product strategy and has also acquired vertical applications to expand their reach into different market segments.

As these examples demonstrate, there are several strategies that product development can follow to provide competitive differentiation, fill in product gaps or offer a complete solution. Let's delve into each strategy to better understand the benefits and tradeoffs of each.

2. Build/Buy/Partner: *Benefits and Tradeoffs*

The critical issue product marketers and managers face is to choose the appropriate product development strategy to follow. Product Development and Management organizations have three choices.

- Build proprietary technology and products
- Buy components or entire products or product lines or even companies
- Partner with organizations to build or resell existing products

BENEFITS AND TRADEOFFS

The strategy choice depends on a mix of business objectives, market demands and financial considerations. Each option offers a tradeoff between risks and rewards

Build Decision

Building is defined as in-house development. Building a product internally allows the most control over the attributes and architecture of the end product and allows a company to own the intellectual property. Keeping control over the go-to-market strategy and product positioning is another benefit. Finally, because product development is completely internal to the company and all profits remain with the company, this option potentially offers the most profit opportunity.

Conversely, choosing to build a new product internally is riskier. It usually means a longer time to market, increasing exposure to competitive risks or that customer preferences may shift before the product is ready to launch. This choice also carries the highest development costs and highest switching costs (if market or competitive scenarios change, the cost to switch to a different product development scheme is highest of all options).

Buy Decision

Buying a product refers to the acquisition of technology or even whole products or companies. This option can significantly shorten the time to market while still providing intellectual property rights and control over the product. While there are costs of acquisition, they may not be higher than product development, and if buying an established product or company, may bring already developed distribution and marketing channels.

There are risks to buying a product. While sometimes less expensive than building products, acquisition costs can still be high. Without serious due diligence, the product technology may not be proven or an appropriate solution. Once a product is acquired, integration of the product to ensure it works seamlessly with other products can be costly and time consuming.

Partnering Decision/Resale Decision

A hybrid model is the resale model, which combines aspects of technology acquisition and partnering. In a resale model, a company simply agrees to distribute another company's product using its own sales organization and current channels. The costs and technology risks are much less and switching costs are moderate. However there is less control over the product features and architecture and the product may change without notice. Furthermore, vendor terms and processes must be established, the sales force must be trained to sell the product, and a sales support plan and materials must be developed.

Alliance partnering is the low cost, low risk model with potential for the shortest time to market. It may enable a company to be first to market, catching the market as it emerges and grows, thus allowing the company to become the market leader with all the benefits that position brings (market awareness, premium pricing, lower sales costs, analyst attention). It conserves resources, affords access to needed technology and provides immediate credibility. Switching costs are the lowest. Sales and support can be provided through the company that owns the product, meaning that the other partner company's internal sales department will not have to learn the product in full detail. Finally, because the partner companies remain separate entities, they can test the waters before making any deeper commitments.

However, partnering offers drawbacks. It offers the least control over the product development future. There is the risk that due diligence may fail to uncover issues with the partner company or its products. Finally, the profit opportunity is the lowest of the three options, due to shared gross margins.

BEA CASE STUDY

BEA Systems's evolving product strategy is a case study that embraces all of the product development strategies we have discussed. In the beginning, BEA bought itself into existence, buying products, engineers and distributors of Tuxedo, a transaction monitor and a precursor to what is known today as an application server. They continued to develop and enhance Tuxedo but then realized objects were going to change the landscape of application development.

In early 1998 BEA released a product of magnificent engineering, an object oriented application server based on the proven technologies of Tuxedo and the Corba standard. But it soon became clear that Java was fast becoming the object-programming paradigm of choice among developers. While BEA offered a "web extender" and loosely partnered with the new style Java web application servers, it was clearly not how customers wanted to develop software in the Internet age.

BEA was faced with some tough decisions: retool and retrain their engineers in Java and start over, continue with the partner strategy, or acquire the new technology. Since the application server market was clearly BEA's technical

domain, they had to own the intellectual property and while their engineers were certainly smart enough, there wasn't the time to train them and start over. So they followed an acquisition strategy.

In late 1998, BEA acquired WebLogic and over time, it became the core of BEA's product offering. To extend it, BEA loosely partnered with complementary ISVs, for development tools, and other functionality.

In early 2000, BEA repositioned the products as a **platform** offering a completely integrated solution to web application development. Enterprises needed to connect with legacy applications and they needed to extend their applications to include customers, partners, and employees. BEA had developed some of the portal and an integration server technology in house but had to heavily rely on partners to complete the offer. In the security area BEA chose to OEM and embed technology from RSA.

Over time, the "whole product" partner portfolio has changed as BEA moved up the value chain. Early partners are designed out or acquired and new partners added to extend the platform functionality. BEA has followed build, buy and partnering strategies and continues to reevaluate those decisions based on various market factors that we will now discuss.

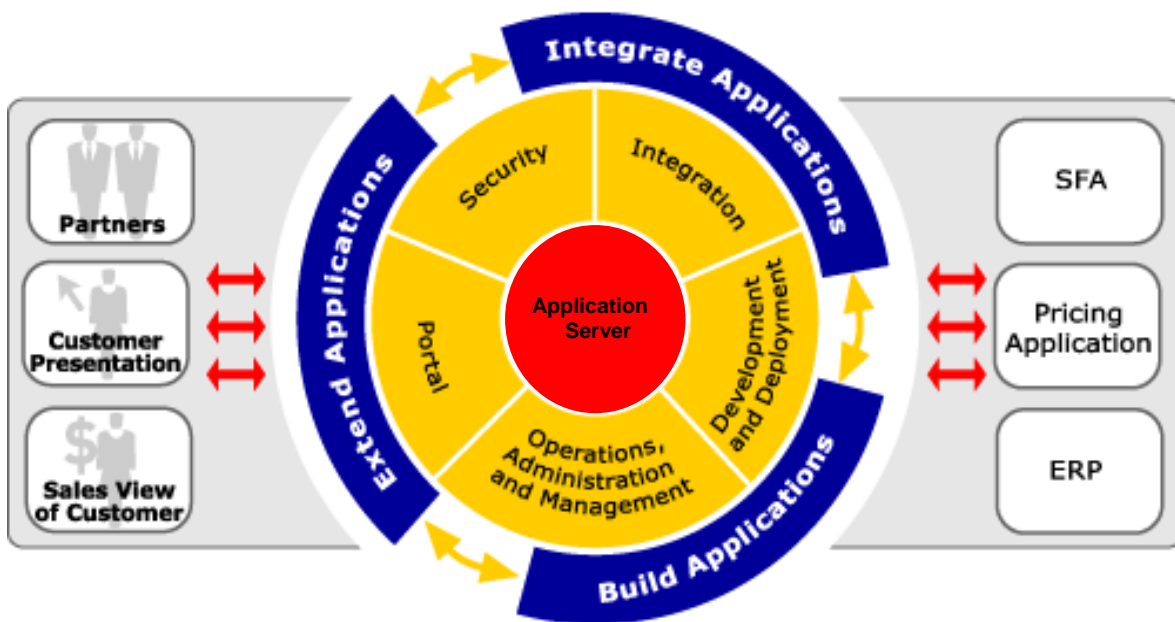


Figure 1: BEA Whole Product Model

CHOOSING THE CORRECT STRATEGY

Following an evaluation of the company's business objectives, strategic driving force, market situation, competitive arena, financial needs, customer demands, and stage of product lifecycle, a company determines the most appropriate product development strategy. As the BEA example demonstrates, a decision to build a product at one time does not preclude a decision to buy or partner at a different time. Many companies use all three strategies at different times and to meet different needs.

Why Companies Choose to Build

Companies whose core business strategy is Technology Leadership usually choose to build products internally or at most, buy components of the products, but integrate and build the final product. Typically, their innovative concepts are so revolutionary that no other company has what they plan to develop. They must become pioneers, building what they envision.

When a technology is core to a business, ownership of intellectual property is imperative for competitive advantage. Building and owning the intellectual property gives the most control and the most profit opportunity if there is time to get to market. After surveying the competitive arena, companies that choose to build perceive that they have time to build the product internally, either completely or incrementally, and take it to market before competition. Usually, companies that choose to build have the in-house expertise necessary to build the technology. Occasionally, joint development, a form of partnering, is used within the build strategy, when a company needs to supplement its own staff with expertise, technology or capacity.

Why Companies Choose to Buy

Buying a company makes sense when a product/technology is core to the business and ownership of intellectual property is a distinct competitive advantage, yet in-house expertise is not available and time is of the essence. If a company that has already invested time and resources in creating an appropriate technology solution is available for purchase, this can be an ideal way to gain leadership and expertise in the market quickly and cost-effectively. When companies note that the market is starting to grow quickly, buying is the best way to maintain control but enter the market in time.

Why Companies Choose to Partner

Companies that need to respond quickly to market demands for product enhancements or additions that are not core to their business, choose to partner. Partnering makes sense when a company does not need to own the technology to remain competitive. Partnering also allows a company to claim space in a market

it may not currently be in or establish a competitive positioning while evaluating the benefits of buying or building. It may reduce risk, especially if industry standards are in flux and the company is not the standard setter, or when market leaders are not clear, which makes an acquisition bid risky. Finally, when customers in a market buy best of breed solutions, a company may need to partner with competitors to offer a full suite of products that fulfill customer buying preferences and maximize customer satisfaction.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR STRATEGY

As discussed, the choice of product development strategy relates to the relative importance to the organization of the following variables:

- Does the company have leadership
- What is the Core Business
- How Important is Time to Market/Speed
- Risk

If a company’s objectives are to establish technological leadership and the product or technology is core to its business, and speed is not of the essence, then Building is a fitting strategy. If a company is pursuing a product which is core to its business, but time to market is crucial, then a Buying Strategy is the direction to take. If a company is building a product platform and adding products which are not core to the business, and the expertise is not available in house, if time is of the essence, and risk needs to be reduced, then a Partnering Strategy is the fastest, lowest risk strategy to go-to-market.

Figure 2 illustrates the most appropriate choices based on the company's determination of key objectives.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY →	BUILD	BUY	PARTNER
COMPANY OBJECTIVE ↓			
LEADERSHIP			
CORE BUSINESS			
TIME TO MARKET			
REDUCED RISK			

Figure 2: Build, Buy, Partner Grid

3. Situation Analysis: *What to do When*

How do companies assess what strategy they should adopt? Product development strategies start from the same point as any other strategies: with the customer. By understanding their needs and how they use your product, you can determine what strategy is best.

Let's review two tools that can be used in assessing the customer's requirements: whole product offering and product adoption lifecycle.

THE WHOLE PRODUCT OFFERING

In most industries, but especially in the IT industry, the core product is not likely to be the entirety of the end-user's purchase. Typically, customers want complementary products such as software and hardware or services such as consulting and integration assistance. Additionally, for complex products, pre- and post-sales support may also be needed to ensure that the product is properly configured to meet the client's needs and upgraded as required. Services that support the purchase transaction, such as financing, delivery and billing, may also be expected. See Figure 3.

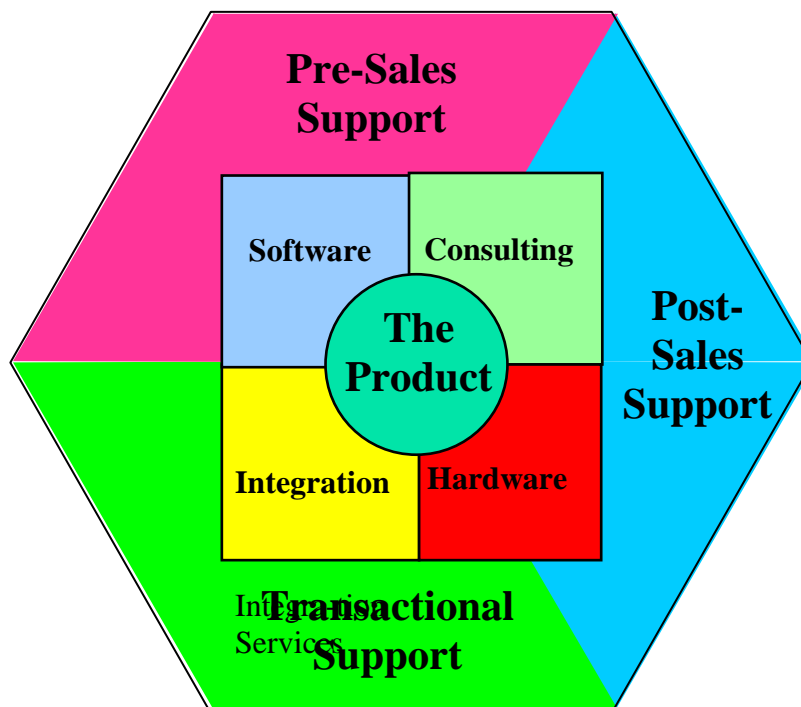


Figure 3: The Whole Product Model

These final components are added to the core product to make what we call the "whole product offering" or the solution stack. Since no company has the capability

to economically and competitively deliver the entire offering by itself to all customer types, one or more of the product development strategies (build, buy or partner) are chosen to round out the product offering. Companies need to assess each of these potential product elements and ask questions such as:

- Which would be a drain on company resources?
- Which would slow time to market?
- Which would be easy or difficult for sales to understand and sell?
- Which do we have expertise in or which needs external expertise?

Elements of the Whole Product

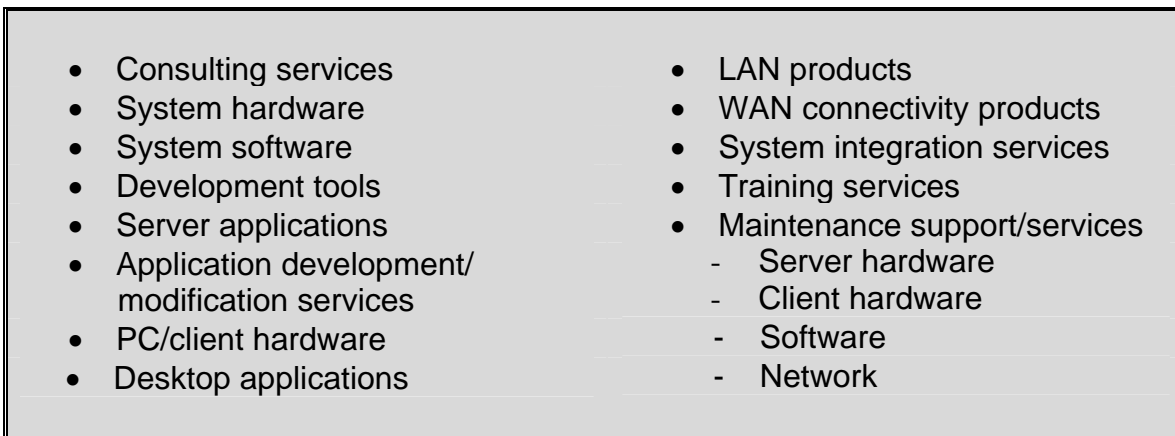


Figure 4: Whole Product Elements

Elements of the whole product offering are listed in Figure 4. Companies may provide some of the whole product components, but in many cases will buy or partner with other companies to provide the components needed. If buying or partnering is the choice, then in each market segment and for each product category, a company must understand its channels and potential alliance partners to bring the most competitive offering to the market. Segmenting the market, analyzing buying behavior and identifying the types of companies that best "fill the gaps" is essential, so the best offering can be delivered in each segment.

Whole Product Case Study - The Database Wars

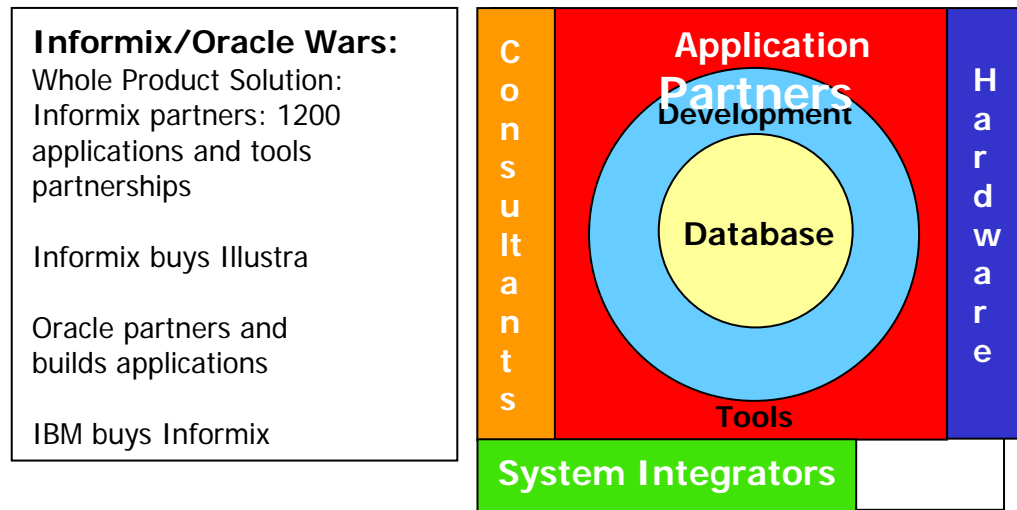


Figure 5: Whole Product for Database

The following example illustrates the analysis that a company performs to develop a whole product strategy.

In the mid-90s, after growing quickly, Informix and Oracle faced the following problem: Databases only have data; when applications are using them, you have information. People want information.

Informix and Oracle had to ask questions such as:

- Do customers need application development tools to build their own applications or to customize their applications?
- Who is influencing customer sales - hardware companies, application tool companies, consultants?
- Are consulting services needed to improve the performance of the database?
- Will IT staff need training?
- Will customers prefer to purchase packaged applications with an embedded database?

Each of these questions address potential areas involved in a solution. Each area could represent a requirement in order to sell the new product to a market segment. If Informix tried to solve all these issues alone, it would drain the

resources from the company's core business. Instead, the company chose to acquire technology (buy) or partner to complete the whole product offer. Companies other than Informix could more economically provide an element of the whole solution or had the expertise necessary to supply the solution.

Informix 's core business was changing. One solution was to partner with tool vendors to provide application development tools to the database. As the market evolved, they found customers desired packaged applications, rather than developing their own. They then partnered with hundreds of application partners. Partnering with influencers and hardware manufacturers for reference sales was another strategy. Another crucial decision for Informix was buying an object oriented database. Informix bought Illustra. At the time, relational databases did not seem like a good choice for objects. People thought objects would use inheritance, a design technique that is difficult to store in relational databases. However, database design turned from inheritance to inclusion, and relational databases were fine with that technique. Unfortunately, the market moved away from Informix's choice, illuminating a key challenge of building in emerging markets: standards may change. In the end, IBM acquired Informix to gain market share and to mount a competitive challenge to Oracle.

Oracle, on the other hand, pursued both a partnering strategy, while also building their own applications, recognizing that the database was secondary in the decision-making process for applications. (Since all the major applications must be compatible with an Oracle database, they find themselves being both partners and competitors.) It took longer and more resources, but Oracle partnered to stay in the game, while building a proprietary solution. In this case, building gave them the technological leadership they needed as the game changed.

Other examples of whole product strategies include:

- Intuit, who has gone beyond accounting software to provide small business services. Recently, they've partnered with Verisign to offer secure Website solutions to small businesses.
- Sun seeking to capture more of the storage business, which adds margin and up-sell revenue to its high-end servers, chooses an OEM strategy with Veritas included in its products for storage management, creating a higher value offer for its customers.
- As the hardware server market becomes saturated, companies such as HP, IBM and Unisys expand their services business; realizing customers needed system integration help to connect all their various systems, software and web applications.

PRODUCT ADOPTION LIFE CYCLE

The second tool we can use to determine whether to build, buy or partner is the Product Adoption Lifecycle model. The model can be used to determine where a product is in the cycle, what are the customer motivations at each stage and how customer needs and requirements change as the product moves through the lifecycle. By studying customer needs and requirements, the decision can be made as to build, buy or partner. Sometimes a product isn't introduced at the beginning of the cycle; for instance, a company may enter the market during the early adopter stage and go through the cycle or a company may enter during the majority stage, when the market is booming, to get a piece of the pie. A product developer must assess which stage the market is in as a product is developed, how "whole" the product must be and consider what type of partners are needed, if any, to match customer desires. The product lifecycle model has implications for product development and for the decision to buy/build/partner.

Let's take a look at the lifecycle: what stages are in the lifecycle, how buyer needs and motivations change through the cycle, and how it affects product development decisions.

Everett Rodgers developed the technology adoption life cycle in the late 1950's to describe how communities respond to *discontinuous innovations*.

In 1964 Ted Leavitt turned it into the "Product Life Cycle".

Geoffrey Moore popularized the model in the early to mid 1990's with three books: Crossing the Chasm, Inside the Tornado, and The Gorilla Game.

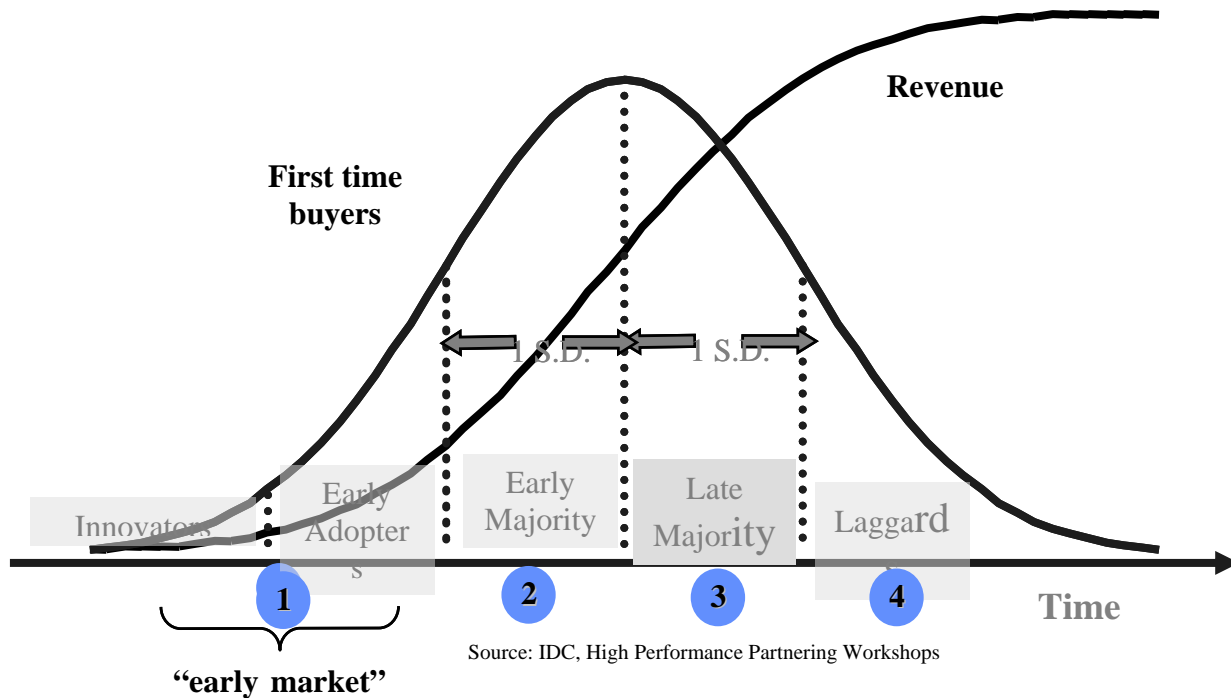


Figure 6: Product Adoption Lifecycle Curve

Geoffrey Moore, used the idea to demonstrate the stages of interest and adoption of technology products. In his definition, the first group to adopt product technology he called Innovators, Technology Enthusiasts who at the earliest stages, think that they can gain, through innovation, a dramatic advantage over their competition. The next group are called Early Adopters; Visionaries in companies who will take early versions of technology and envision the competitive benefits. The Early Majority, or Pragmatists will next adopt the technology, seeking to build advantage. The Late Majority, the Conservatives are another large group who will adopt the technology to catch up. Finally, the Laggards or Skeptics, a smaller group that has lagged behind will gradually see the opportunity to use the technology, once all problems have been solved and the price has dropped to its lowest level.

The transition from “early adopters” to “early majority” is the place that Moore calls “the chasm” - the point at which a company either takes advantage of the technology's rapid adoption, or cedes the market to it's competitors and/or a better technology or marketing strategy. The chasm applies to both products and technologies. In the technology world, a competitor frequently comes along and takes the high-growth part of the life cycle from the company that introduced the innovation.

Your strategy **must** change as the life-cycle progresses and so must your choice of partners. To understand how your strategy must change, the buyer motivation at each stage of the cycle must be understood. Because of the different buyer characteristics, the requirements of the whole-product tend to be different, so the partner mix will need to be different.

Buyer motivation affects product decisions

Figure 7 relates product stages in the cycle to buyer needs and motivations.

Innovators buy product in the early stages of the lifecycle. These buyers are motivated by the chance to gain a big advantage through innovation. The buyer is willing to assume a larger risk in return for a large potential reward. Innovators are comfortable with technology. They are willing to help build a product, working with the vendor and partners to develop truly innovative products. Products need not be completely finished or stable. These buyers are BETA testers.

What Innovators want from vendors:

PRODUCT CAPABILITY, FLEXIBILITY, TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Early Adopters want a more developed, stable product but are willing to go with early proven products. They will work with the vendor and partners to be competitive. They search for new technologies and products to build competitive advantage. Because the product must be stable, technical partners who can

provide integration and technical support are an important part of the product mix at this stage.

What Early Adopters want from vendors:

REFERENCES, EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS, TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The Early Majority is a larger group of buyers who are willing to adopt technology as it proves its worth to gain business advantage. They want "whole" products". Companies finding themselves at this stage are in the process of market building, with intense competitive pressure to deliver products to market quickly with new features. Companies at this stage must partner for new features/functionality and don't have the time to spend building major new features. In addition, customers want proven products, with strong support.

What the Early Majority want from vendors:

PACKAGED SOLUTIONS, CHOICE OF SUPPLIERS, GOOD SERVICE, EASE OF INSTALLATION AND USE, PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES

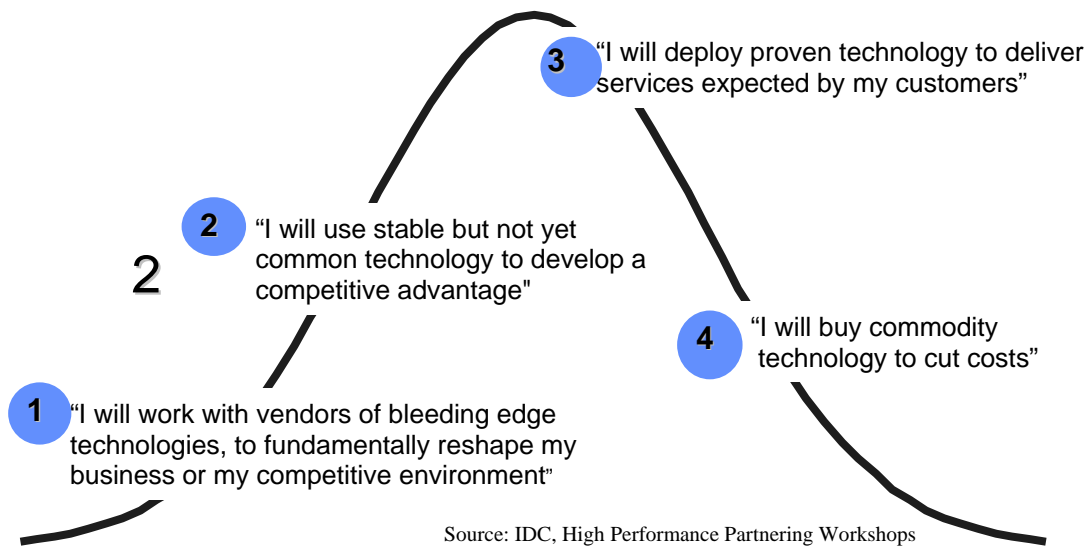


Figure 7: Buyer Motivations

Once the technology is well accepted, another large group will adopt the technology out of fear of losing business to their competition The **Late Majority** demands a packaged product. It must be complete and integrated seamlessly with partner products and be easily installed and supported by distributors for business-to-business sales or mass merchants for Business to Consumer sales.

What the Late Majority want from vendors:

LOW COSTS, EASE OF USE

The **Laggard** category adopts the technology once it becomes ubiquitous, low cost, and simple. This generally requires that the product itself be an almost turnkey, commoditized solution.

What Laggards want from vendors:
 LOWEST COST, TURNKEY, SIMPLE

Partnering Requirements

Partnering requirement trends move from the need for technical partners at the early stages of the cycle to logistics-driven partnerships at the mid to end of the cycle.

As Figure 8 shows, at the beginning of the cycle, partnering tends to be of a technical nature while towards the end of the cycle, partnering tends to be for logistical reasons. Over time as companies design in more technical functionality, more ease of use to create a product that is attractive to the majority customer, they will in effect design out many of their early technical partners. They will also need to acquire partners who can provide efficient volume distribution to reach broader customer base and to reduce the cost of sales of their products.

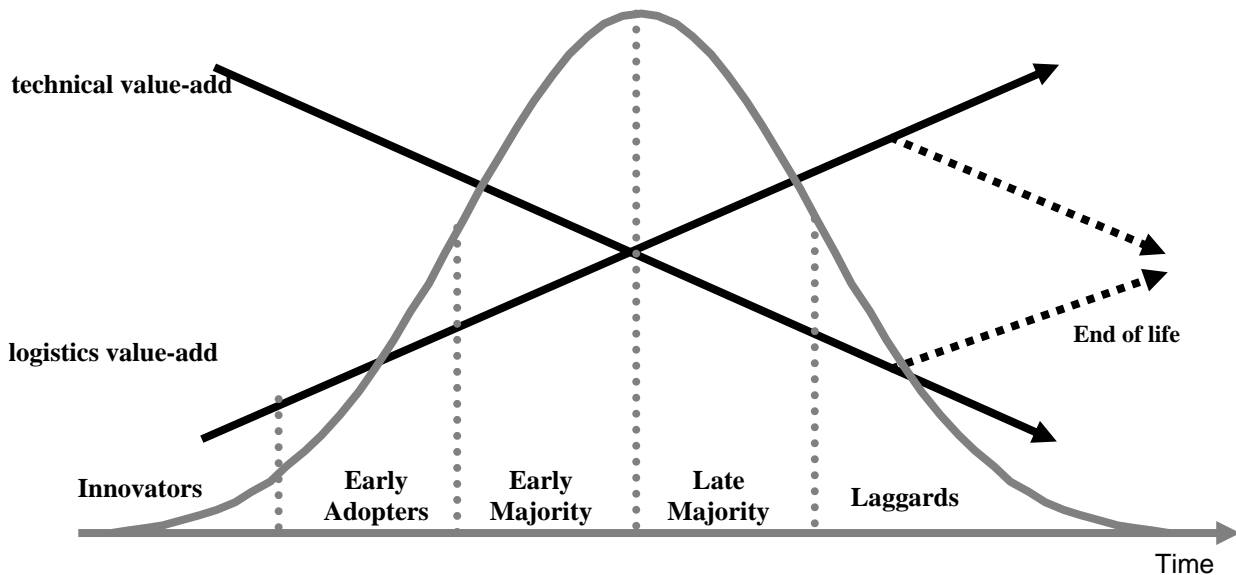


Figure 8: Partnering Trends

As Figure 9 details, at the beginning stages, companies are building products and looking for partner expertise in the technology. Integration with complementary products is important and will drive a large services component.

As the cycle progresses into early adopters, companies continue to build new features, however, these customers demand technical assistance to put the product into use. Partnering at this stage can include technical development and

technical implementation partners such as System Integrators and Value-Added Resellers As a product moves through the life cycle, it tends to become better understood, and easier to use. This lowers both the sales and technical expertise required in the whole product. In addition, as the cycle progresses, companies must build technology assistance into a product. Products must be easier to use and support.

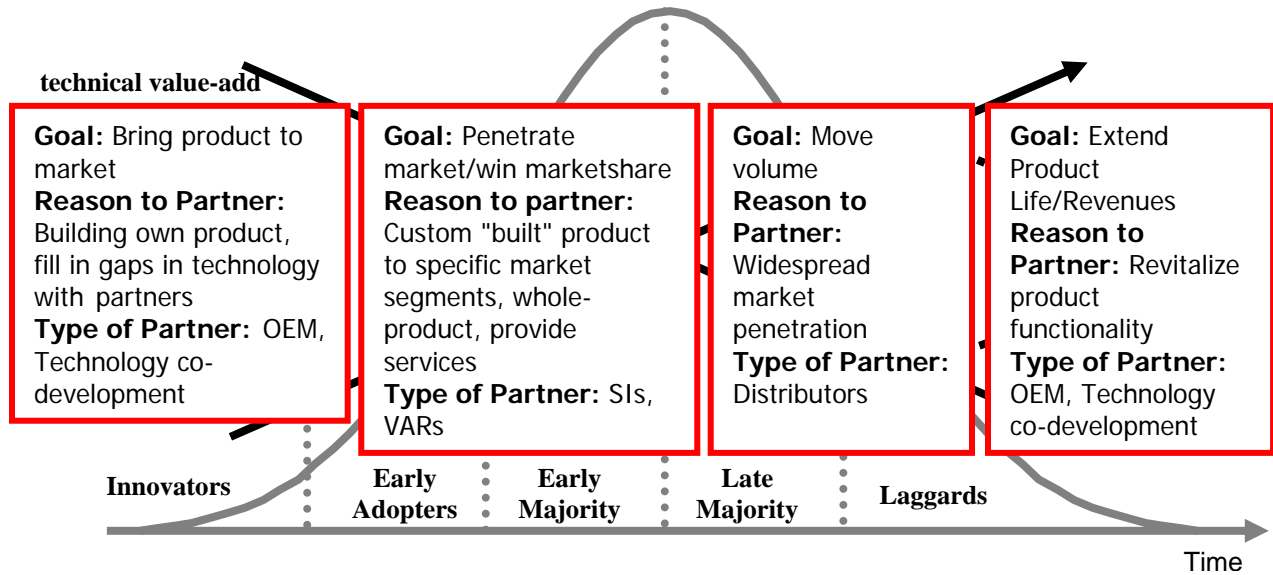


Figure 9: Partnering Requirements

Partners provide customized solutions around a company's product, rather than the company building custom features for each market. Partnering moves from the technical side to solution providers: independent software vendors, applications vendors and VARs provide customized applications and solutions. VARs are also often used to provide customer intimacy and a local presence to smaller accounts. In addition, when new features are needed, partnering or acquisition tends to speed time to market versus a build strategy.

Late in the cycle, moving volumes of product efficiently becomes the dominant strategy. As the Late Majority and Laggards become prevalent, partnering becomes logistics and distribution focused, moving standardized products in volume.

By early/late majority, product development must begin to ensure that the product is channel-friendly. It must build in features to make the products easy to distribute and support. Whereas early in the process, partners were technically astute, late in the process, the partners will be experts in distribution, but need solid, easy to sell and support products

Interestingly, products which become "legacy" (that is, users depend on them but there is declining sales volumes) may end up moving into the "caretaker" mode, where the degree of services and support begins to rise again to maintain aging

systems within customer environments that have not moved on to new technology. There is also an opportunity in the late phases of product adoption to engage new technology partners to introduce new functionality that will extend the life of the product and sustain revenues.

The following case studies illustrate the scenarios that can occur at each stage of the product adoption lifecycle. (Figure 10)

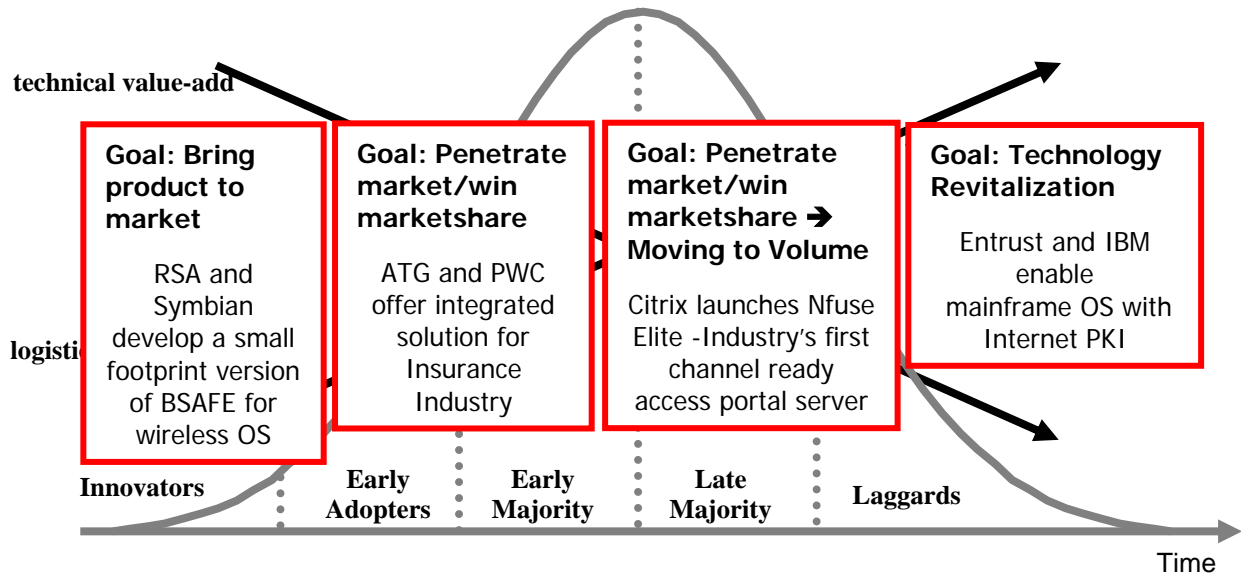


Figure 10: Partnering Examples

Innovators: Technical Collaboration

Symbian was formed 1998 by Ericsson, Motorola, Nokia and Panasonic to set standards enabling a mass market for mobile operating systems. Marc Wice, VP of Product Management at Symbian recalls, " We knew from the onset that selection of a security vendor in the wireless space was critical to the success of our mission."

Challenge: full-strength encryption in a small footprint. By technical collaboration, RSA and Symbian enable secure data access to web information with precisely the code size needed for performance without compromising security.

Adopters/Early Majority: Partnering with Solution Integrator/Consultant

By partnering with **PWC**, **ATG** gains access to a new market segment. PWC provides vertical industry access and expertise, integration services and the ability to work with large clients in complex deals.

Late Majority: Out of box product

Citrix claims that with simple, wizard-driven, installation and pre-configured roles, themes, and templates, Nfuse Elite will deliver on the promise of an “out-of-the box access portal. The product is available through 7000 Citrix VARs, SIs, ISVs and Distributors. Richard Schroeder, VP Consulting Services for Vector ESP, a Citrix solution provider, noted, “ To date, best of breed portal products have imposed implementation complexities and pricing models which impeded Vector’s recommended approach: start small, gain incremental value, then accelerate.

Laggard: Revitalizing legacy technology

Entrust and IBM enable mainframes to keep up with the Internet by authenticating users and secure transactions from the web. This is an example of revitalizing and refreshing legacy technology to extend its useful life. IBM has repositioned the mainframe as the secure Enterprise e-business server.

4. Recap

Product Development needs require that companies use one of three strategies depending on a variety of variables including the company's strategy, competitive scenarios, product needs, and financial situation.

In summary, companies:

- Build products for technology leadership
- Buy if product is core to business and time is critical
- Partner if a fast time to market and reduced risk is most important

Assessing capabilities of the company and the needs of the customer are key to determining which strategy makes sense. The Whole Product Approach provides insight into all the components of the product that customers expect to purchase including product, services and support. The Product Adoption Lifecycle is useful for understanding the stage in a market that a product fits and what customers’ expectations are at each stage.

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