Team Training, Real Results

How Esri Operationalized Pragmatic Institute Training

Industry: Geospatial Software
Company: ESRI
Focus: Product Team Building Trust, Strategic Alignment, Role Clarity, Systems Integration
Pragmatic Solution: Multi-Year Training Commitment + Integrated Product Framework

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Overview

Esri is the global leader in mapping and spatial analysis software. Powering everything from FEMA disaster response maps to the geolocation engines in Microsoft and Salesforce platforms, Esri supports thousands of organizations across virtually every sector, industry, and region of the world.

With over 140 products and countless user personas, Esri's product team faced a challenge common to complex enterprises: how do you scale consistent, market-driven product management across dozens of teams, and earn internal trust in the process?

The answer began with Pragmatic Institute. But it didn't stop there.

Challenge

While Esri's software development organization has a 55-year history, like many software companies, product management's role was less formalized for much of that time period. This led to several persistent challenges:

▸ A lack of standardized practices or clear expectations between product and engineering counterparts

▸ Less-than-optimal prioritization of new product features and enhancements

▸ Disparate documentation of decisions and no centralized system of record for product strategy

▸ Requests from engineering teams to support recommendations with data, but with no easy way to do that company-wide

"Product managers did market research, but customer feedback was being tracked in Excel files or in systems designed for developers, not for product managers. Our market information was in many different locations, so understanding requirements across teams was also difficult."

These issues limited product management's effectiveness and made it harder to prioritize work based on market data, undermining the full value of prior Pragmatic training.

Solution: Embedding Pragmatic Principles into Esri's DNA

Recognizing these obstacles, Esri's product leadership took a transformative step:

They created the Esri Product Management Framework (PMF), an internal methodology grounded in Pragmatic Institute best practices and tailored to Esri's needs.

This shift went far beyond classroom learning:

▸ Mapped Pragmatic tools into Esri's internal processes

▸ Created instruction documents for every part of the product lifecycle that are grounded in Pragmatic principles and training

▸ Defined who owns what, and when, with customized RACI charts

▸ Incorporated Pragmatic workflows into their product management system of record

▸ Created Pragmatic training plans tailored to individual roles and years of experience.
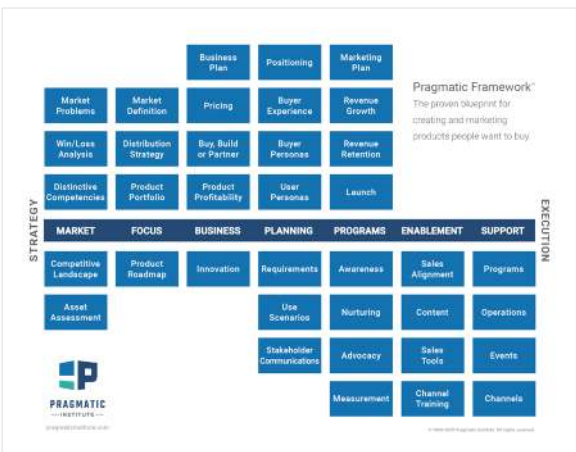
"We're not making it up as we go along. Our framework is built on Pragmatic best practices, it's our way of showing that product managers are credible, strategic, and aligned with industry standards."

Results

This integrated approach yielded a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities between Product Managers and Marketers, including:

▸ More consistency in how product teams approach markets and requirements

▸ Increased internal trust in product management from development and business stakeholders

▸ Streamlined onboarding for new product team members

▸ Greater ability to prove strategy with documentation and systems

▸ A lasting structure for turning Pragmatic training into action

"We've trained people for a decade, but without a framework, it didn't always stick. Now we have a system that reinforces the training and helps teams apply it in real ways."

Esri has been training product teams with Pragmatic Institute for over a decade, building a foundation of shared knowledge that continues to scale through their internal framework.

Conclusion: More Than Training - A System for Sustained Product Success

Esri didn't just attend Pragmatic Institute courses, they built a scalable system to bring the training to life. By embedding Pragmatic's principles into its internal framework and product tooling, Esri created a product management culture grounded in strategy, trust, and alignment.

It's a case study not only in best practices, but in true organizational change.

Source: Tripp C., | Principal Portfolio Manager

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