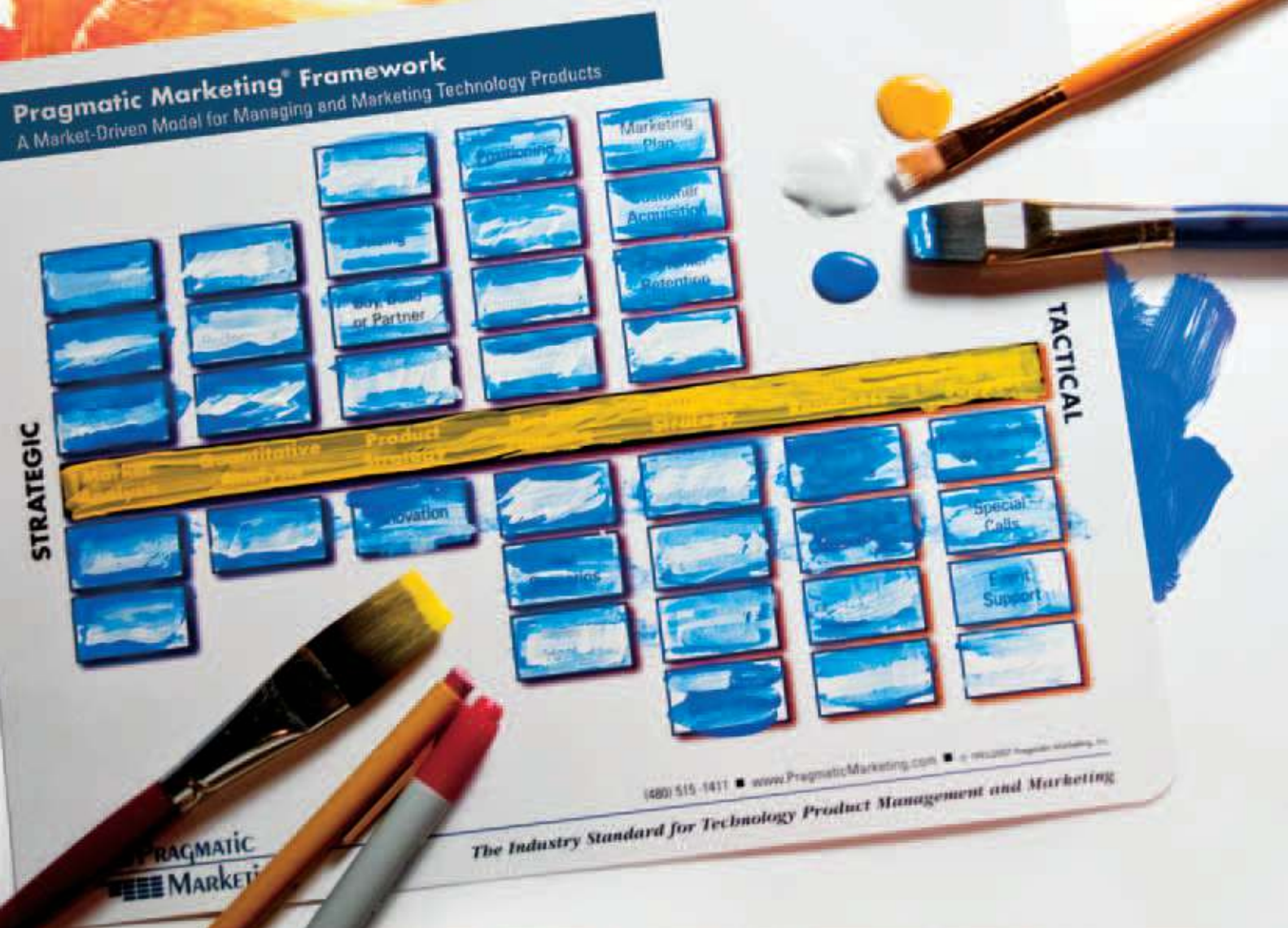# The Pragmatic Marketer™

The Product Management Triad

Top 10 Tools to Measure User Experience

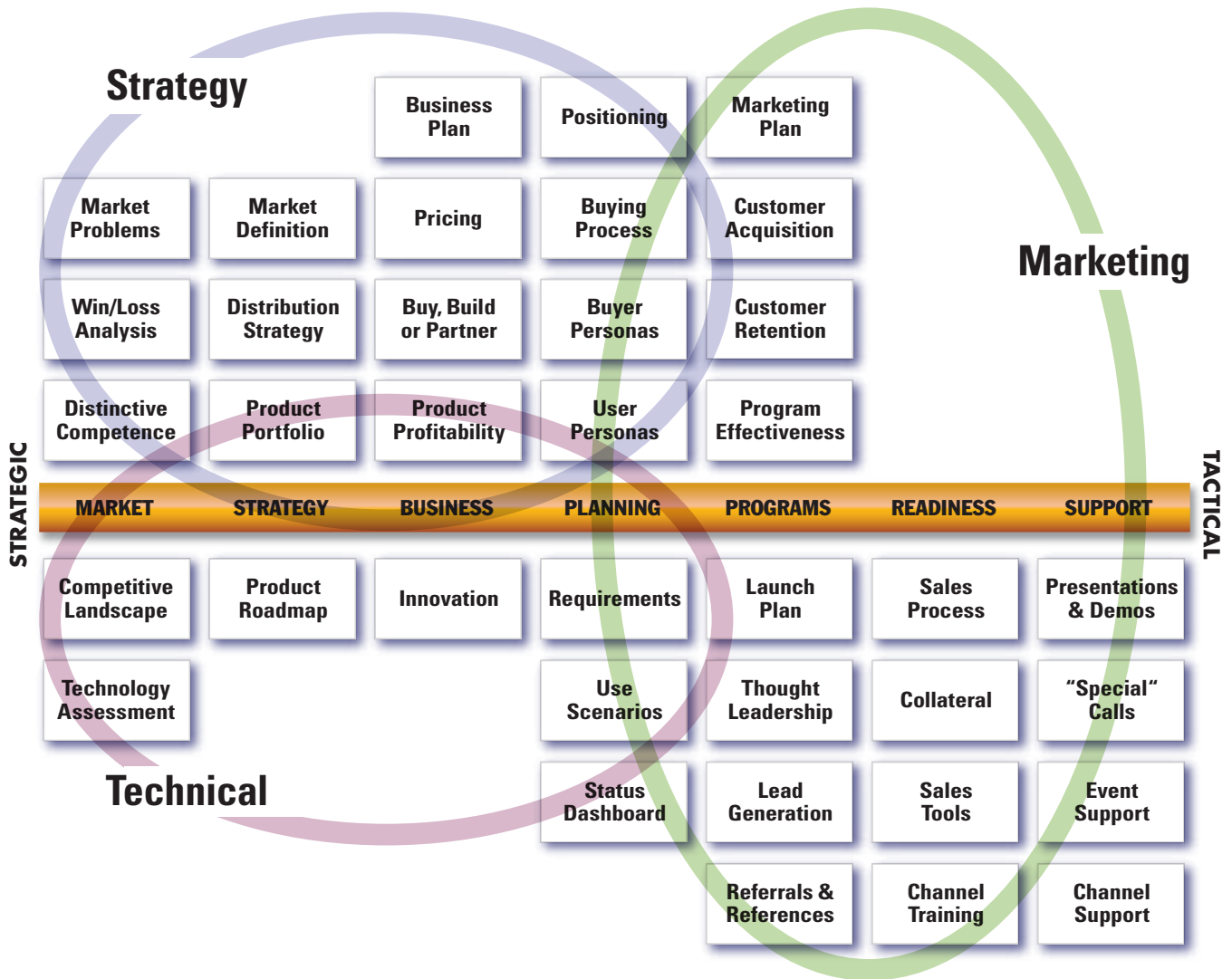**The Strategic Product Manager and the CFO**

Updating the Pragmatic Marketing Framework

The Product Management Triad

By Steve Johnson

Some product managers have a natural affinity for working with Development, others for Sales and Marketing Communications, and others prefer to work on business issues. Finding these three orientations in one person is an almost impossible task. Instead of finding one person with all the skills, perhaps we should find three different people with more specialized skills and have them work as a team.

Strategy

Marketing

Technical

STRATEGIC — TACTICAL

MARKET	STRATEGY	BUSINESS	PLANNING	PROGRAMS	READINESS	SUPPORT

Business Plan	Positioning	Marketing Plan

Market Problems	Market Definition	Pricing	Buying Process	Customer Acquisition

Win/Loss Analysis	Distribution Strategy	Buy, Build or Partner	Buyer Personas	Customer Retention

Distinctive Competence	Product Portfolio	Product Profitability	User Personas	Program Effectiveness

Competitive Landscape	Product Roadmap	Innovation	Requirements	Launch Plan	Sales Process	Presentations & Demos

Technology Assessment			Use Scenarios	Thought Leadership	Collateral	"Special" Calls

			Status Dashboard	Lead Generation	Sales Tools	Event Support

			Referrals & References	Channel Training	Channel Support

How do you organize product management when there are multiple people involved with varying skill sets? How any product managers do you need? What are their roles in the company? Is product management a support role or a strategic one? How do you use the various product management titles such as product manager, product marketing manager, program manager, or product owner?

Titles are poorly understood and defined differently by many organizations. Every year, participants in Pragmatic Marketing's Annual Product Management and Marketing Survey identify hundreds of different titles for those conducting product management activities. An ideal solution for many companies is the "product management triad."

Some product managers have a natural affinity for working with Development, others for Sales and Marketing, and some prefer to work on business issues. Finding these three orientations in one person is very difficult. Instead, perhaps we should find three different people who each possess one or more of these skills and have them work as a team.

The product management triad includes a strategist, a technologist, and a marketer. Start with a business-oriented senior product manager responsible for product strategy. Make this person a director of products or product line manager (PLM). Now add a technology-oriented technical product manager (TPM) and a marketing oriented product marketing manager (PMM).

Let's look at an example of how applying the triad had success for a company of nine product managers and nine products, one product manager per product. The salespeople disliked some of the product managers and loved others. The ones the salespeople loved were hated by developers. Applying the triad, they created three product lines with a PLM for each and then assigned a TPM and PMM to each

product line. Now, for each product line, one person concentrates on product strategy and the business of the product line, while another works with Development to build the best product, and another takes the product message to the channel by working with Marketing Communications and the sales team.

Warning: Some companies attempt to put these three people in three different departments. They put the PLM into Sales to do business development; they put the TPM in Development and the PMM in Marketing Communications. This always fails. To work as a team, they must actually be a team. Having the TPM and PMM report to the same person, the PLM, minimizes conflict and overlap, giving the team a common objective. It has the added benefit of giving a new director the chance to learn to be a good manager of two people before getting five or ten people to manage.

Product management teams provide career paths from entry-level positions to director, all within the product line.

Execution vs. ownership

As shown in the graphic on the previous page, these three positions overlap. This is deliberate. Execution of these tasks must be collaborative in order to succeed. For example, Win/Loss Analysis is an excellent data source for Positioning and the Buying Process. Your PLM and PMM ought to perform win/loss visits together to ensure you gain the most value.

But do not confuse execution with ownership. Ownership of a task equates to accountability. As the executive leader of a team structured this way, the PLM is held accountable for win/loss analysis even when the TPM and PMM gather the win/loss data.

Does this model make sense for you? ➤
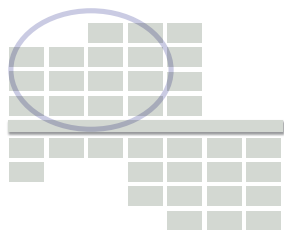
Director, Product Strategy

The director of product strategy has a business-orientation and is responsible for the development and implementation of the strategic plan for a specific product family. They maintain close relationships with the market (customers, evaluators, and potentials) for awareness of market needs. This includes identification of appropriate markets and development of effective marketing strategies and tactics for reaching them. This person is involved through all stages of a product family's lifecycle.

The director of product strategy must:

- Discover and validate market problems (both existing and future customers)

- Seek new market opportunities by leveraging the company's distinctive competence

- Define and size market segments

- Conduct win/loss analysis

- Determine the optimum distribution strategy

- Provide oversight of strategy, technical, and marketing aspects of all products in the portfolio

- Analyze product profitability and sales success

- Create and maintain the business plan including pricing

- Determine buy/build/partner decisions

- Position the product for all markets and all buyer types

- Document the typical buying process

- Approve final marketing and go-to-market plans
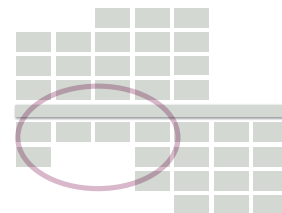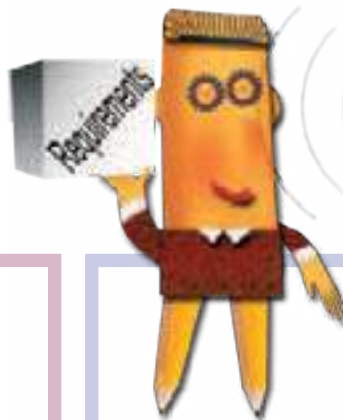
Technical Product Manager

The technical product manager is responsible for defining market requirements and packaging the features into product releases. This position involves close interaction with development leads, product architects, and key customers. A strong technical background is required. Job duties include gathering requirements from existing and potential customers as well as recent evaluators, writing market requirements documents or Agile product backlogs, and monitoring the implementation of each product project.

The technical product manager must:

- Conduct technology assessments

- Analyze the competitive landscape

- Maintain the product portfolio roadmap

- Monitor and incorporate industry innovations

- Define user personas for individual products

- Write product requirements and use scenarios

- Maintain a status dashboard for all portfolio products
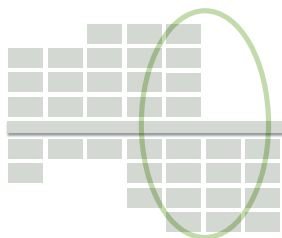
Product Marketing Manager

The product marketing manager provides product line support for program strategy, operational readiness and on-going sales support. This position requires close interaction with Marketing Communications and sales management. Strong communication skills are a must. Duties include converting technical positioning into key market messages and launching new products into market.

The product marketing manager must:

- Define buyer personas and determine market messages

- Create the marketing plan including methods for customer acquisition as well as customer retention

- Measure effectiveness of product marketing programs

- Maintain product launch plans

- Deliver thought-leading content via events, blogs, e-books, and other outlets

- Identify best opportunities for lead generation

- Create standard presentations and demo scripts

- Identify product references for industry and customer referrals

- Align sales tools and the ideal sales process to the typical buying process

- Facilitate channel training including competitive threats and related industry news

How you implement the product management triad depends on your organization and the skills of your team. Also consider having a role for your base technology or architecture for issues that span product lines. The "architecture" product manager can own acquisitions, third-party partnerships, and common tools needed across all product lines.

Take inventory of the skills of each of the product managers. Create an organization chart of one triad per product line with no names assigned. Now try to move the business-oriented staff (usually your senior product managers) to the PLM positions, development-oriented product managers to TPM and sales-oriented ones to PMM. The remaining holes in your organization chart represent your new hiring profiles.

TPM

Steve Johnson is a recognized thought-leader on the strategic role of product management and marketing. Broadly published and a frequent keynote speaker, Steve has been a Pragmatic Marketing instructor for more than 10 years and has personally trained thousands of product managers and hundreds of company senior executive teams on strategies for creating products people want to buy. Steve is the author of the Product Marketing blog. Contact Steve at sjohnson@pragmaticmarketing.com
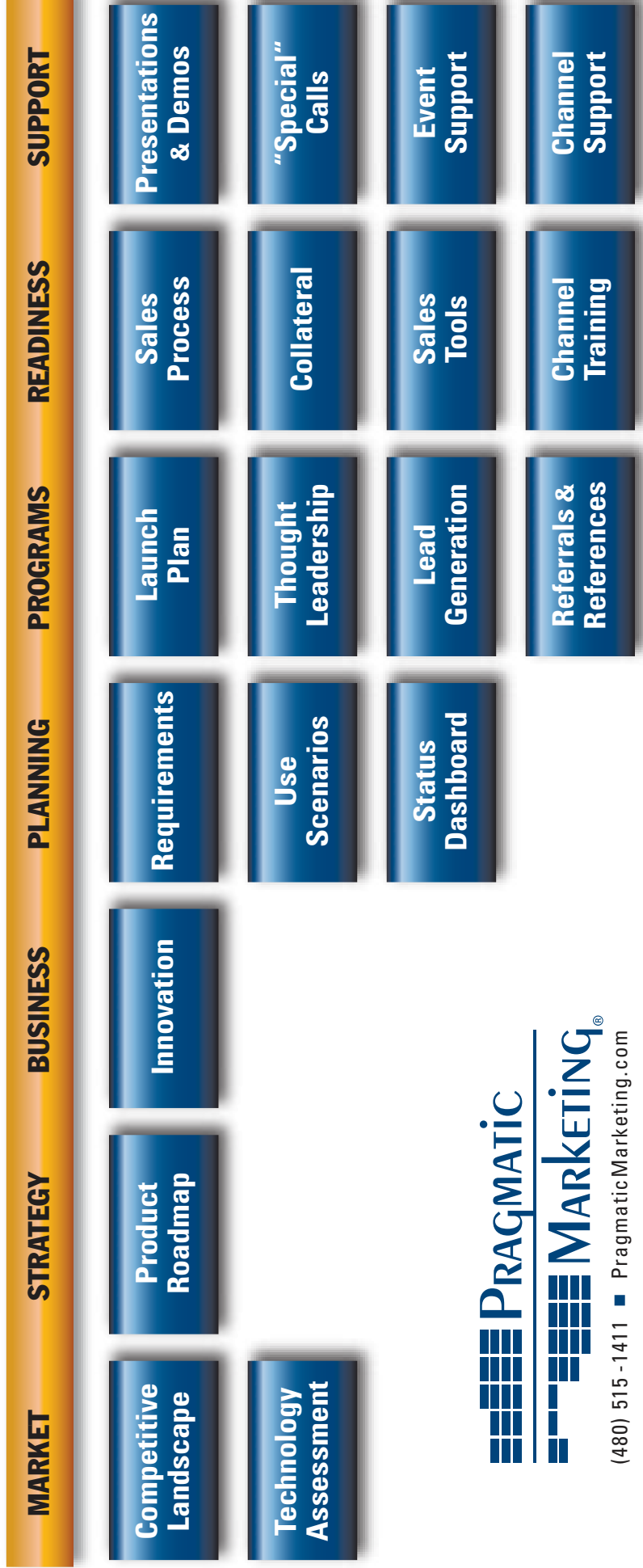
Pragmatic *Marketing* **Framework**™

A Market-Driven Model for Managing and Marketing Technology Products

TACTICAL

STRATEGIC

	MARKET	STRATEGY	BUSINESS	PLANNING	PROGRAMS	READINESS	SUPPORT
							Presentations & Demos
							"Special" Calls
							Event Support
							Channel Support
						Sales Process	
						Collateral	
						Sales Tools	
						Channel Training	
Marketing Plan				Launch Plan			
Customer Acquisition				Thought Leadership			
Customer Retention				Lead Generation			
Program Effectiveness				Referrals & References			
Positioning			Requirements				
Buying Process			Use Scenarios				
Buyer Personas			Status Dashboard				
User Personas							
Business Plan		Innovation					
Pricing							
Buy, Build or Partner							
Product Profitability							
Market Definition	Product Roadmap						
Distribution Strategy							
Product Portfolio							
Market Problems	Competitive Landscape						
Win/Loss Analysis	Technology Assessment						
Distinctive Competence							

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