

# Product Marketing Versus Product Management

*An Overview and Comparison of Roles and Responsibilities*

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## Marketing & Product Management for Silicon Valley Companies

### **About the 280 Group...**

The 280 Group LLC provides consulting, contracting, training and coaching services in the areas of Marketing and Product Management to high-tech companies in Silicon Valley. For more information or a free consultation call 408-832-1119 or visit their website at [www.280group.com](http://www.280group.com).

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Oftentimes clients will ask us what the difference is between Product Marketing and Product Management. The two terms are used in a variety of ways and definitions vary greatly across different companies.

The easiest way to think about the difference between these two is to think of them as *inbound* and *outbound*. Inbound (Product Management) spends most of their time with engineering teams and customers, making critical decisions and ensuring that everything gets done to bring customer-focused products to market. Outbound (Product Marketing) makes sure that once these products are ready that they get launched and marketed effectively to the target customer base.

Here's a summary of the typical duties under each role:

#### Product Management

- Market Analysis, Business Cases and Profit and Loss investigation.
- Customer and Market Research.
- Writing Marketing Requirements Documents (MRDs).
- Working with Engineering to finalize functional specifications.
- Competitive analysis for use internally at the company.
- Analysis of technology trends.
- Running alpha/beta programs and capturing early customer feedback.
- Making feature, schedule and cost tradeoffs as the product nears completion.

#### Product Marketing

- Writing product launch plans.
- Product Messaging, including Positioning, Features & Benefits and Unique Selling Proposition (USP).
- Developing sales tools: white papers, presentations, collateral, competitive analysis for external use with customers.
- Working with PR to manage launch tours and product review programs.
- Setting product pricing.
- Working with Beta sites to generate customer success stories.
- Running product launches.
- Working with sales, channel marketing, corporate marketing, marketing communications, technical support, finance, operations and other departments to ensure the product is effectively introduced to the market and continues to be successful.

Some companies make a clear distinction of the roles and responsibilities in each of these areas, and have dedicated employees for each. They may have dedicated Product Managers, whose entire role is to work with engineers to make sure that the products being built meet customer needs and requirements. They may also have dedicated Product Marketing Managers who become involved as the product nears completion, managing the launch, messaging, training of the sales force, and ongoing support to ensure continued success (training and helping the sales force, briefing customers and the channel, working with press and analysts, etc.).

In other companies one individual wears both hats and performs all of the tasks above. They may be called a Product Manager, or they may be called a Product Marketing Manager. Many times the title they are given has little to do with what they are actually doing. It may be politically incorrect to have the word “Marketing” in their title, particularly if they report into engineering or another functional area. Or, the word Marketing may be left out if their engineering team has a strong pre-bias against working with “Marketing people”.

One item to note: make sure that when you are assigning roles and responsibilities and creating your organization that you play to your employee’s strengths, weaknesses and personalities. There are many people who are incredibly good at, and happy doing Product Management who would fail miserably at Product Marketing, and vice versa. And if you do decide to do a hybrid model where one person owns everything take your time and find the right person who can do the job – it’s a rare breed who can effectively manage and enjoy doing all aspects.