




All Sharp Blades, No Handles

HOW TO UNLOCK YOUR PRODUCT
CAPABILITY

The Caveats



A large, dull metal blade, possibly a cleaver or a similar tool, is shown against a dark background. The blade has a hole at the top and a curved handle. The surface of the blade is textured and appears to be made of metal. The text "The Problem Statement" is written in white on the right side of the image.

The Problem Statement

We focus a great deal on honing the product capability...

... and we do our best to dull it at the same time.

Pre-Agile Organizational Setup

Business

dictates

IT department as
a service

Project driven

Traditional
top-down
idea flow

Late-stage
team
involvement

Yearly
budgeting

Three Major Stifling Factors



Product capability
begins to grow



IT Adopts Agile

Core conflict not solved

Agile in teams is not enough

Enter the 'Business PM'

The need for IT
and Business to
interact on a
daily basis

The desire to have
stronger influence
on what the teams
work on, more
transparency, and
accountability for
ROI

Pros

- More direct communication with relevant stakeholders
- Teams are more empowered.

Cons

- Politics
- PMs are not united
- PMs do not know the function
- Teams are unprepared for direct demands



The Critical Juncture



Single Voice

Connect teams

Handle chaos


PMs must
stand together

The True Solution

Collective ownership of
global business
needs

Apply global
needs locally





PMs are measured
on local success,
not global

Leadership
Failure

It can work

Holding tension is
exhausting and
unrewarded

The Rock & The Hard Place

Formalize

Legitimize

Function

The Formal Product Structure



Legitimacy

Empowering
Teams

Accountability

The Remaining Core Conflicts



We can't know how
much money we will
make with a product

We can't know
how much
building this
product will cost

Half of our ideas
won't work at all
once they are
delivered

Those that work
will need many
iterations to
realize the value

The Inconvenient Truths



"I don't care how you work, so long as we still get these things at this date for this cost and realize this value"

"We will work on moving these needles as defined by these company goals, which we are betting will deliver this value, while monitoring the running cost, and adapting along the way."

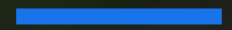
The Accountability Shift

Sharpening the blades

Legitimizing and formalizing your product function will give your product capability space to grow

Dulling the blades

Classic accountability measures will inhibit your product capability.



Find a different way

The Key Take-aways