

# Eight Important Facts about Product Line Strategies and Roadmaps

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## Interested in Product Line Strategies or Product Line Roadmaps? Consider these important facts:

1. The biggest mistake companies make regarding product line strategies is to do nothing at all. Orientation toward one-off product development seldom beats a competitor's "proactive" multi-generation product line strategy, no matter how good innovation techniques, portfolio management, and project execution may be. Because one, if not all, of your competitors will be proactive with their product line strategies, expecting a "default" strategy to win is very risky.
2. Rolling up project plans into a single roadmap does little to make a product line strategy effective. Product line teams first need to address the core "essence" of their product line strategy and then craft a roadmap to execute that strategy.
3. The predominant cause of decline and failure for product line strategies is that product line teams and their organizations hold on to prevailing assumptions for far too long. All assumption eventually lose their truth. The questions that product line teams should address are: What are the key assumptions being carried throughout a product line approach? When will this assumption lose truth? And, will the product line be hurt if the assumption is no longer true?
4. Creativity and critical thinking are perhaps more important to product line strategizing and roadmapping than they are to developing individual products. That is because, couple with future-oriented strategic thinking, creative and analytical insights are the fuel of product line strategies... enabling greater customer satisfaction, stronger competitive positioning, and improved cash flows.
5. Understanding and clarifying the core platform(s) of a product line is requisite to gaining "leverage" within a smart product line strategy. Platform leverage enables a "vector of differentiation" for a product line - a far more powerful force than a single product "point of differentiation." Failure to gain agreement on platform definitions is a surefire approach to lackluster in-market performance.
6. Product line strategies with objectives and roadmaps are essential inputs to portfolio management because prerequisite to good product development portfolio management. The two fundamental question of portfolio management should be: Does the portfolio of projects enable product lines to execute their roadmaps successfully? Are people working on projects that are not critical to any roadmap?
7. Effective execution of product line strategies require proficient front-end concept generation, rapid experimentation, and meaningful investments. Front-end serendipity should influence these activities, not be these activities.
8. The linkage and alignment of product line strategies to other non-product strategies are as important to the success of a product line as the product offering to the customer. Notable consideration of actions and organizational change must be given to such non-product functions and strategies as sales, operations, finance, human resource, branding, and intellectual property. The risk to product lines from misalignment with other non-product strategies can be fatal to the product line... totally independent of the performance of the product.

**Want to learn more about how to gain the enormous power of smart product line strategies and roadmaps? Consider our in-depth, 2-day Workshop. Or, find out about a customize Seminar held on-site, specific to your organization its product lines. <http://adept-plm.com/>**

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