Inspired

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Have you ever wondered how and why certain products are successful? How do some brands gain so much market dominance even though they have so many competitors? Or, even more, why so many great products and services don't get the recognition and receptivity it should?

The answers to all these questions are found in product management (or lack thereof), the area responsible for product development from initial idealization to post-sales. In the summary of author Marty Cagan's book, "Inspired", we will see that there is no recipe for producing a successful product.

Despite this, Cagan promises to offer alternatives to create a culture to develop successful technological projects, dealing with the set of discoveries and techniques so that the best tools can be used in each specific problem to be faced.

Are you curious to discover Marty's teachings and apply them to your projects, raising your level of competence, productivity, quality and management? You will find that you don't need great strategies to put them into practice, just be committed and open to changes!

Main ideas of the book

You will learn how to...

- Many bad ideas and failures will emerge until the ideal is implemented and generates business value;
- The success of a product depends on many variables besides the product's own quality;
- Doesn't matter how good your development team is if they're not given something worth developing;
- A great product is the result of combining technology and design to solve real customer problems in a way that meets the needs of the business;
- Investing in user experience, design, marketing, and customer service is just as important as product research and development.

To whom is this book indicated?

The book "Inspired", by Marty Cagan, is indicated for product managers or aspirants, especially those in the technology field. It is also recommended for development team members such as those responsible for marketing, sales, design, engineering, and user experience.

Overview of the book

Lessons from Top Tech Companies

According to Marty Cagan, there is a big difference between the way the best companies produce products and the way most companies do it. And, behind the greatest successes, there are always those responsible for making the necessary combinations to meet the needs of customers and the business.
The author uses lessons learned from large technology companies, highlighting that the most important things are:

1. Have a well-defined purpose;
2. Have a product that is worth developing: that solves a problem, creates value and is usable by the customer;
3. Have a quality, unified and well-led development team;
4. Have adequate processes for product development.

Products Development in Different Levels

According to Marty Cagan, the way in which products are developed must be adapted to the different circumstances of each company, taking into account factors such as the size of teams, available resources, presence of supply and demand, its condition in the market, current and future objectives, etc.
Therefore, the author listed the companies at three levels: Startups, Growth-Stage Companies and Enterprise Companies, dealing with the peculiarities of each one individually.

Inconvenient Truths About Products Development

The author of “Inspired” brings in his book two facts that he calls “inconvenient truths”, from which product development teams cannot avoid, but rather, learn to deal with them.
The first refers to the relationship between the number of proposed ideas and those that are successful. According to Marty, at least half of our ideas will not work and this can happen for several reasons.
Ideas may not prosper because customers don't receive it as well as its creators; or sometimes they want to use them but the product's operation turns out to be extremely complicated; another possibility is that the idea is very good, but its progress turns out to be much more complex than expected.
Cagan's second truth is that even with ideas that do prove to have potential, it typically takes several iterations to get it implemented until it delivers business value.
This means that, most likely, an idea will not follow a linear path to success, ending up facing problems and impediments that can lead to a lot of waste of time in its development, and, consequently, loss of money.

The Right People

It is known that every product is based on integrated knowledge from different areas, and the way in which this integration and collaboration takes place is what defines the success or failure of a product or service.
Based on this, the author cites the “principles of strong product teams”, which encompass motivation, composition, empowerment, team size, hierarchical structure, collaboration, location, scope, stability and team autonomy.
So the right people are:

- The Product Manager;
- The Product Designer;
- The Engineers;
- Product Marketing Managers;
- The Supporting Roles.

The Right Product

Marty Cagan makes it very clear, in his book"Inspired", that the main focus of product development must be on results, and not on deliveries. Okay, but what does that mean? This means that generating a quality final product is more important than the bureaucracy, deadlines, goals and fixed methodologies.
Therefore, Cagan bases his work on models of empowered product teams, which means that, since teams have essential skills, they should be presented with problems and receive the autonomy to find solutions in the ways they deem most efficient.
In addition, product teams also need to be in context with the necessary business, which means they must have a solid understanding of the company's current and future goals and comprehend how they can contribute to achieving them.
In this way, teams are able to understand their roles and feel part of a greater purpose and, above all, they feel more motivated by believing that their work is valued to the point of being given the freedom to innovate in the way they do their services.

The Right Process

Marty Cagan makes it clear that there is not an unique process that can be applied to all products and that, thus, will ensure their prosperity. As such, he ensures that the right process can be defined as a combination of techniques, mindset and culture.

The Right Culture

The right culture is based on good teams, which the author brings their characteristics and their disparities in relation to bad teams. The main characteristics of good teams are that they have a persuasive product vision, in addition to working with passion and direct dedication to the customer.
Other aspects of good teams are: getting inspiration from insights, observation and analysis; constant search for innovation; knowledge of users and customers; possess well-developed testing and experimentation techniques; share opinions and information and work together, even in different areas.

What do other authors say about it?

In "**Power Play**", Tim Higgins tells the story of Tesla's development and the challenges faced at each stage of growth, mentioned by Marty, from its foundation as a startup to its consolidation as one of the largest and most valuable ventures in the world.

In the book "**No Rules Rules**", authors Reed Hastings and Erin Meyer bring the main reason for the success of Netflix: management based on freedom and autonomy in the work environment, which provides initiatives to innovate, through which the CEO himself calls it "the culture of freedom".

Finally, Eric Berridge's book "**Customer Obsessed**" addresses methods that can be applied to provide the best customer experience, providing excellent products and services.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

- Keep your team together and make clear its importance and the roles of each member;
- Ensure that, in addition to solving a customer's "pain", your product can also be used intuitively by the user;
- Encourage the sharing of information among the team, this helps in solving problems and optimizing processes;
- Teams must work integrated with each other, but, at the same time, have autonomy so that they are not too dependent on each other;
- Become an expert on your customers and/or users;
- Allow freedom for each employee to carry out its work in the way they deems most effective;
- Remember that all the parts that make up a product are important.

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