

Characteristics of High Performers

Selected lateralworks Best Practices: Fast-Time-To-Market (FTTM) Leadership Competencies

lateralworks have compiled a composite list of successful practices of new product development managers called FTTM Leadership Competencies. These practices are documented in lateralworks' ongoing study of successful new product development teams in Silicon Valley.

FTTM managers...

1. Are systems thinkers. They can “step outside” the problem/situation to discover solutions.
2. Have the ability to think and manage outside their functional/professional paradigm.
3. Have the ability to “drill-down” technically, while holding focus on the project vision (e.g. macro-micro versatility).
4. Understand customer's value structure and priorities: a) have high customer consciousness and b) they understand the customer's business issues (problems today, and downstream markets)
5. Command respect from both Host (functional organization that supports the team) and Team which enables acceleration of the project cross-functionally.
6. Have the strength and versatility to maintain the discipline of team accountability for milestone accomplishment.
7. Looks for and takes complete ownership of the project (e.g. as if it were their own business).
8. Have a broad-based knowledge of the business segment (e.g. comprehensive understanding of the market place, historical and predicted trends, directions and drivers).
9. Have the ability to sell key decisions, action ideas, and changes that facilitates speed.
10. Have the ability to learn and adapt in real time: they apply the “do-it, try-it, fix-it...learn, recycle” process instead of taking time to make sure everything is “right.”
11. Continually push the “envelop” of the development effort to the edge (e.g. knows where it is and has been there before).

12. Have the confidence to break the rules, yet know how to “work within the system” (e.g. continually stretch the cultural/organizational envelop).
13. Understand the techniques and the value of detailed scheduling (i.e. critical path) and recognize it as the key driver of team performance.
14. Have operational experience in engineering, marketing, manufacturing, and finance.
15. Have the ability to infuse and maintain a “mindset” for speed.
16. Are End-in-Mind thinkers.
17. Gain “grasp” quickly; know what it takes to produce the desired result.
18. Don’t compromise on tradeoff decisions involving development speed, product functionality, product or development costs, customer requirements, and product quality.

Self Assessment:

Do a self evaluation using the 18 characteristics. Using this scale rate yourself;

- **9 = doing now**
- **3 = aware of it, but not doing**
- **1 = not aware, not doing**