



eBook

***Smart Launch: How to
Manage your Product in 80:20
More Effectively***



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Introduction: **It's all about speed**

“I Feel The Need. The Need for Speed.”

‘Maverick’ – Top Gun

Product management has changed drastically in the Agile age. The central focus right now – the one that will more often than not determine the success of your product with customers – is speed. I refer to speed in the sense of how fast you develop each new version of the product, how fast you optimize new features, how fast you get your product in the hand of customers, how fast you get customers to adopt the product and new features, how fast you receive and respond to feedback, and of course the speed in which the cycle begins again and again.

The concept of 80:20, the Pareto principle, states in just about anything, a few (20 percent) are vital and many (80 percent) are trivial. In Pareto's case it meant 20% of the people owned 80% of the wealth. There are a few ways to translate the 80:20 rule towards product management. One can either look at 80% of customer complaints comes from 20% of the product's defects. Or that 20% of the work on the takes up 80% of your time and resources. Or “80% of your sales come from 20% of your most loyal clients”.

What it teaches you, of course, is to focus your attention. To succeed in the world of speed, focus, time management, resource allocation and rapid response are critical factors. They help point the arrow upwards or downwards in overall business growth and success. Yet, this realization makes product management far from simple. Just where *do* you focus your efforts? Furthermore, *how* can you respond quickly and most effectively to pressing customer needs and concerns?

This eBook will examine how product managers can easily adapt in order to meet the demands of this new speed world. Each chapter will focus on a different stage of the product lifecycle,

from development through marketing and sales and customer support. I will provide specific advice on how to best lay the groundwork for flexibility, productivity and rapid-fire interaction with customers. I will also explain how a unique software product, [WalkMe](#), can aid product management teams in helping them to quickly onboard users, promote new features, and create long-term value among customers.

It is my sincere hope that this eBook will provide you with insight and value and help your product succeed. Yet before we get started, let's look at how we arrived to where product managers find themselves today.

Chapter 1:

Mixing the Agile evolution with the cloud revolution

There are many different types of software out there, and the evolution of technology has forced developers to change how they design their products. In the past, developers worked to create a rigid structure in which everyone would work and obey the rules. However, changes made within the software industry have proven this is not a logical (or likely) possibility. Instead, programs have become tweaked to each user experience, which in turn provides a faster, sleeker, and more efficient product. The basic term for this is Agile software development.

As the name suggests, Agile software development has an approach which is flexible and simple. Instead of focusing on just the long term, Agile emphasizes using short goals that can be attained in a simple manner. Programmers who work in an Agile system aren't focused on what they need to do for the coming years, but more about how to accomplish the tasks in the here and now; for the next two weeks, week or even the day itself. This gives them the opportunity to really fine-tune their product and make it the best possible.

However, there are some pitfalls which come with the Agile software development. Some developers are not able to work with this type of setting because it is so short-sighted. In addition, if staff members only look at what needs to be addressed immediately, teams may go past their delivery time or surpass their budget. Other arguments critical of Agile development cycles include a lack of structure and necessary documentation, claims of inefficiency or simply it requires a level of organizational change too high to adapt.

These potential problems are overcome with the right team and by setting proper goals. Implementing Agile methods gets rid of unnecessary practices and cuts down on the need for big marketing or outside funding.

Smaller companies tend to have an easier time implementing Agile development. It is also a great way for them to step up and

get noticed. They don't need to pay for the high startup costs like companies did before; having a leaner approach to software development means resources are never spent on features or items that aren't needed. Companies can also use customer feedback to alter and evolve the software with speed.

Another big advancement is with the development of the cloud. The cloud has drastically altered how people communicate with one another and exchange information. It has enabled programmers to instantly update their product and gain access to features that they were never able to before. The cloud is being used by companies all over the world, each one finding the best ways to utilize the cloud to move their business forward. The cloud has allowed cooperation among teams never before possible.

Pairing the cloud with Agile software development was inevitable, and now that vision has become a reality. The two were essentially made for each other. They are built with the same ideology in mind. The cloud gives users access to unlimited power and data. The cloud provider and cloud user are able to adapt and evolve instantly. This new technological advancement results in developers being able to finally create the perfect software for their customers. (Not to mention that this union drastically cuts down costs).

Given how much has changed with development, there are many questions people have about using both the cloud and Agile software development.

- Are companies keeping up with the evolution of technology?
- Will users be able to adapt to the changes? How fast is the learning process?
- How can you guide your customers quickly and properly without confusing them?

The answer to all three questions lies in [WalkMe](#). The WalkMe software is an interactive online guidance platform that not only addresses the issues a customer can face, but shows them exactly how to solve them - step by step. Buttons are highlighted and text boxes provide clear directions on where to go next. It's similar having someone there on the other side of the screen helping the customer with their problem. WalkMe can be

integrated into any site and software, guides users on where to go next and how to move things along. If the user is confused, they click on the WalkMe guide, and a pop up balloon appears to help them complete the task. WalkMe assists your customers in keeping up with changing technology. It ensures that even if you are moving at the speed of light, you'll never have to worry about leaving your customers behind.

WalkMe works well on many levels because it can be applied to any software or business. These guides can be as in-depth or general as needed, meaning novices and advanced users can both benefit.

Developers have a lot of power at their fingertips right now, and the possibilities are truly limitless. By understanding how to use Agile software development and the cloud together, they can reach new standards and see levels of success that were never imagined before.

However, Agile is not perfect. Like any new strategy, it contains its own unique risks. But don't let this stop you from embracing all Agile has to offer; the key is learning how to quickly and efficiently, identify address and overcome these problems.

Chapter 2:

Overcoming the problems of the Agile development cycle

Many companies and developers are adopting an Agile approach to their development strategy. Although this strategy is new and different, it is quickly being embraced by the more established companies in the tech scene.

Agile development strategies have a number of characteristics which make it a formidable force in the industry. Although, there are some challenges to be addressed before a person is able to perfectly utilize Agile tools and the software surrounding it. By understanding what could go wrong, companies will be better able to 'prepare for battle.'

For starters, Agile development requires proper planning. Developers need to have a starting plan and short goals -- they will be lost otherwise. Those who have worked with Agile development are aware of the phrase "done means done."

Once a product manager accepts a proposal, it's ready to be taken to the next level. The proposal will go through automated testing and then move on to further processing. Developers are in control of laying down the framework for a proposal, while designers work within that framework to bring the proposal to life; combining aesthetics with features.

This is where we encounter the first challenge; the planning phase. Too many developers go into a project ill prepared. They think features can be adjusted and changed later on by designers if there are disappointing results. But that is not always the case. Think of it this way: if too many features are problematic from the get go, this will affect the entire production line. The project may need to be entirely scrapped and restarted. You can avoid this mess with teamwork. Each team needs to work together to understand the basic design and technology. Otherwise too many variables are in play and the project simply won't work.

Developers also need to create user-facing code while considering output. It is important to take the time to think about all the issues a customer may face and how to address them. Creating mock-ups of problems or planning user sessions is a great way to help alleviate this type of problem. However, problem solving needs to go a step further. The developers and designers need to sit down together and brainstorm how these issues can be solved. Together, they are able to create a framework aimed at customer resolutions.

Another common problem facing Agile development teams is being over-budget and over-schedule. Some developers get tunnel-vision when working on a project. There is a tendency to think there is enough time to fix the minor details later and then rush to meet a deadline. Or developers may actually get too caught up on the minor details. This pushes everything back -- teams don't meet their deadlines and the company loses money.

As with anything else, people don't work for free. Some developers simply don't think about the big picture. Companies are supplying the funding and will question where all the money is going if there is nothing to show for it. Investors may pull the plug. The payroll is set and there is only so much overtime a team can be paid before they start to put a strain on the checkbook. When projects fall too far behind, especially with start-ups, these teams may need to sacrifice pay or even lose out on seeing a project to completion.

So what's the solution to budget and time issues? It's all about planning. There will always be issues in the development and design cycles, but having the right plan means that you are already prepared with solutions. Communication between team leaders is critical to effective planning as well. Collaborate, communicate, and coordinate – certainly keys to success.

While there is definitely room for freedom in the agile development cycle, if people are left to their own devices, nothing will get done. The key is careful planning and teamwork. Don't suffocate the team, but don't go into the creation cycle without any plans whatsoever. Plans should be clear but they should also be adaptable.

Now that you've executed a plan and designed a product, where do your customers fit into the picture?

Chapter 3:

Giving your customers the power to utilize new features in a fast and friendly manner

There's been a bit of a fork in the road when it comes to software development lately. On one hand, designers want to make something new and exciting, but are worried that the advancements could push the general public away. On the other hand, other companies are moving forward and implementing different ideas and strategies that will leave them in the dust if they don't change soon. This dynamic has put many companies in a tough spot, but there is a way to make it out alive and improve from it.

In a world where upgrades are nothing new, Agile developers can tweak and adjust features on the fly, keeping up with the current trends and times with perhaps might be seen as less effort (I would characterize it as simply as a more focused and guided effort). The ability to discard of certain features while streamlining others, ensuring that only the tools necessary for your company are retained and upgraded, and that all others are simply eliminated. This relatively simpler approach also ensures you never have to worry about overwhelming your customers with unnecessary features or specs.

Older models used a much more rigid framework, one that couldn't be tweaked or adjusted in a day or two. This is because the original vision for software development was to create one system that all companies and designers would be able to utilize. Having one unified framework meant everyone would follow the same rules and there would be no problem moving from one company to the next. However, this vision is quickly fading as Agile software development takes hold of the general market. Instead of one big framework, several smaller ones have appeared with much more user-friendly advancements.

While Agile software enables a site or service to quickly evolve and change, humans are not as flexible. People are creatures of habit, and some often complain when their schedule is changed, even for the better. Customers don't want to spend the time needed to learn about something new when they can navigate through everything on their own just fine. Companies are put in a tough situation then, because there is the risk of being outdated if they don't evolve, or losing their customer base if the product moves too quickly

So, how does a company address both of these issues in a quick and efficient manner?

I would call it the 'Power of Certainty'. Put it this way; while there is often a level of resistance to a change in features, customers are not unwilling to move forward if there is a feeling of confidence in doing so. Think of the example of a child learning how to ride a bike. It's not that the child is traumatized by falling. He will get back up. Yet they are looking for guidance (whether it be from a parent, older sibling, or another source) to make the road a little bit smoother. To "be there" with them. It isn't *that* different when you are a user of a certain software. Sure, unfamiliarity breeds a certain level of discomfort, but you generally do understand the need to progress and always move ahead.

The value of an online guidance software like [WalkMe](#) is that it empowers product managers to give customers a helping hand when introducing new features. To restore – and maintain – the power of certainty when exploring the unfamiliar. You want to avoid customer confusion, or even worse, frustration? Simplify things a bit. Not simplifying or lowering the functionality of your software, but reducing the burden of orienting your customers. Empower, and encourage, customers to explore and discover new features but give them the confidence they need to perform and succeed.

Chapter 4:

Please allow me to introduce myself: How to increase sales & aid marketing

Ok, let's move to the next step. It's come to my attention you have successfully managed to get yourself out into the industry and release your product. Please allow me to congratulate you on your big accomplishment. However, I'd like to take this moment to bring some key points to your attention. While you may think the biggest challenges are far behind you, there are still some uphill battles you must face. Getting noticed in this big industry is something that can be very difficult to do, but having the right knowledge and tools at your disposal can ensure you get the maximum amount of exposure and drastically increase your sales in the process.

As of right now, your product is only visible to a very small group of people. Perhaps some of your friends and family have made a purchase. A select few may have stumbled across your product or caught wind of it somewhere, but it's not nearly enough make back what you've put into it or profit from it. There are a few ways that you can get yourself noticed out there, and each one will have a very different range and demographic.

(This section does not only apply to a SaaS startup or SMB. Large enterprises as well release new products that are at the time unfamiliar to their existing customers and potential prospects. While their name recognition is most certainly an advantage, each new product still needs to gain visibility and adoption rates, thus sales and marketing is still very much a key factor.)

The first thing is to visit boards and sites where you think potential customers visit. Post topics or advertise so people know about what you have to offer and how to use it. Get them excited about your product and sell them on the points that will excite them most. Once these people are talking about your product, word of mouth will help spread your name like wildfire.

It's a very small and easy step that you can do in order to broaden your reach and get new users.

Another way to bring people in is to offer a free trial version of your product. If you are confident enough to stand by your product and let people have a sample, there is a big chance they will end up purchasing your product and using it even more. What you need to do is convert those trial users into purchasers, which you can do by limiting the trial period or listing premium features that weren't offered in the smaller version. This method can bring in new users and people who are not typically associated with your product. They may be people that are just seeing what all of the hype is about, but it's your job to show them why they need your product in their lives.

No matter how well you promote your product and how great it is, you won't get anywhere if people don't know how to use it. What you see as basic or common knowledge may be over the heads of many users. If too many people get confused or frustrated with your product, they may end up leaving or complaining about it online. Just like word of mouth can work for you, it can also work against you. As a designer, you need to be aware of the issues people are having regarding your product and think about how to fix it. Don't just assume they'll get used to it over time, because most people have very short attention spans and will just move onto a different product, even if it is less powerful than the one that you have.

Take the time to read the feedback you are given and look at what seems to be common issues for everyone. You won't be able to foresee every issue a person is going to encounter, which is why feedback is crucial. Look at e-mails and forums to find out what the problems are and think about how you can address them in a quick and efficient manner. Making changes not only prevents future users from encountering the same problems, but also shows your community you care about their feedback and want to make a better product for them.

[WalkMe](#) can help your sales team in providing potential targets with clear guidance in how use your product. A common frustration among marketing and sales teams is that many people are visiting your website or app page, but not enough people are actually registering or downloading. WalkMe can help strengthen call-to-actions, and help focus customer attention on where you want them to go.

Beyond that, think about the complexity of the internal enterprise software your sales team uses. Take Salesforce for example, the most used CRM platform. Anyone who has used this software can testify to its complexities, and how it creates frustration and confusion among your team.

WalkMe alleviates these burdens, by providing critical in-work performance support and guidance in the moment of need, both for your team and for the sales target as well. Put quite directly, it makes software much simpler to use, by providing a “helping hand” at every turn.

Chapter 5: Making something out of customer feedback

Using the Agile philosophy means you must be able to adapt to customer needs at all times. You must accept your product is not going to be as polished as you want it to be, but listening to your customers gives you a chance to make right what is currently wrong. Don't get a big head about customer complaints. Take the time to take a step back and see what the complaints are and how you can utilize the information to your benefit to not only serve your customers, but have a better product.

Without customers, you have no product. With no product, you have no business, and ultimately nothing at all. While you may forget about it from time to time, your customers are the ones signing your paychecks and keeping you in business. If they get the feeling they are not valued or that you could care less about their thoughts, customers will switch sides and go somewhere where they feel more accepted. In this day and age, it's much easier to say goodbye to one company and hello to another. In fact, many companies offer incentives for new customers that draw them over to another business.

This being said, customer loyalty is something you should never underestimate. If a customer supports your product and how you run your business, they will stand behind you no matter what. The key factor is the same: respect. People want to feel respected and valued, because that means they can make a difference. If customers have a sense of belonging, they're more likely to stick with you through the tough times. If you are a smaller company, this is how you can separate yourself from the bigger corporations and make your mark in the industry.

So, how do you create the best customer-centric environment? The first thing is to have a network which encourages feedback. Have support lines and sources of communication open so everyone knows where to go when they need to be heard. Give them more than one way to reach you, such as chat options, callback numbers, and e-mail addresses. Let your customers

choose how they want to reach you, so it's more convenient for them.

The next thing you need to address is how quickly customers see results. It's not enough to just tell them you are working on a solution -- you need to show some results. Don't just tell them what they want to hear and then continue on your day. Look at what they are telling you and see if there are any common issues with other complaints or types of feedback. If there is something big that needs to be addressed, you need to get on it as soon as possible. With the Agile framework, it's easy to make changes and tweak different aspects, meaning you can quickly address a situation before it becomes a full-blown issue. The sooner your customer sees the results, the sooner they will feel like you listened to their feedback and did something with it.

While it's nice to address the issues as they arise, it's even better if you can prevent them from happening. Maybe there is something the community simply isn't grasping or your users don't know is available. Most people turn to complain or provide feedback when they simply don't know what to do. They are lost and confused and need someone to give them guidance. Thankfully, there is a program that can help you solve a customer's uneasiness and build them into more confident people.

[WalkMe](#) was designed with customer service in mind. This program doesn't just help customers out, it guides them every step of the way. What WalkMe does is highlight the desired areas where your customer needs to click in order to progress to the next step. It serves as an interactive help guide, addressing their problems and providing a personalized solution that is quick and easy. New customers who are having trouble setting up an account, for example, can be provided with the fastest and most efficient way to speed up the process and move along.

When you are building with WalkMe, you can create the exact text boxes you want and choose what buttons to highlight and point out. You can even use WalkMe to introduce new features you have just implemented and want your customers to know about. When you use WalkMe, you are creating a personal experience with customers, even if they don't know it at the time. They are getting the guidance needed in a helpful manner that

doesn't make them feel stupid, and they'll appreciate you for that.

It's been said providing solutions for the 20% who need help will end up helping 80% of the population. This essentially means if you address the problems people are being most vocal about, you'll be doing much more good than you realize. Customers like to be in control and don't want to ask for help, so eliminate the need for it. Combine WalkMe with customer feedback to create a product that is not only helpful, but is something that your customers look forward to using.

Conclusion:

Learning how to ride a bicycle

So you see, throughout the development and marketing of a product, there are always challenges and solutions to overcome those challenges. In the Agile world, speed is of the essence. Yet it is for this EXACT reason why you need to always stay a step ahead.

WalkMe can be of immense value for your product management team, your sales and marketing team, and to your customer support team. There is a need in every direction for a solution which makes software easier to use, both for internal team members, as well as existing and potential customers.

Change in technology is something to be embraced, not feared. As Albert Einstein famously wrote, “life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you have to keep moving.”

Yet it is *how* you rise to meet the challenges of the Agile age in product management. This is what will separate those who move full steam ahead, and those who remain behind.

So yes, speed moves fast, that’s the point. Provide a helping hand to guide those important for you to help keep their balance.

About WalkMe

WalkMe™ helps product managers to quickly introduce new and advanced features, accelerate customer orientation, reduce support costs and improve overall customer experience and loyalty. Leveraging the *WalkMe*™ interactive self-guidance technology, product managers can ensure their customers have a simple, smooth & burden-free experience, eliminating customer confusion and frustration.

WalkMe™ enables you to create and overlay interactive and detailed instructions – through a series of tip balloons overlaid on-screen – so that your product features are broken down into short, step-by-step guided actions. These instructions allow to customers act, react and progress throughout their experience with the product.

Think of it like a GPS, but instead of giving driving directions, *WalkMe*™ provides step-by-step, real-time guidance for your prospects and existing customers to get the most from your software.

As a result, product managers can ensure their product is instantly usable with customers, while also allowing for rapid-fire updates. Moreover, *WalkMe*™ simplifies the customer experience, reduces your customers' frustration of familiarizing themselves with complex tasks, and creates the smoothest path to customer satisfaction.

About the Author

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