



Business Insights

Making Better Decisions Faster

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Who We Are

- Bold, new experienced-based consulting practice
- Focused on top-line growth
- Deliver high-quality products to market fast
- C-level business executives, engineers, and product developers ourselves

What We Do

- Created the development process currently in use by Apple Computer
- Work with leading firms such as HP and Cisco
- Help clients improve product definition
- Apply predictive metrics, dashboards that demonstrate we make a difference

How We Work

- Focused on delivery and making a lasting difference
- Flexible and adaptive to your needs
- Approach combines both experience and judgment with contemporary best practices
- Proven change management expertise and rigorous metrics to important processes

Representative Clients

Abbott	Apple
Bose	Cisco
HP	IBM
NetApp	Westinghouse
Xerox	3M

Many midsized & startups too

What's New? Replacing the typical stage or "gate" review process, one major high-technology firm has implemented a new approach, yielding positive results. This "sprint" approach during the early stage review involves senior people working iteratively and intensely, providing coaching, feedback, collaborative input with the product development core team to quickly define the product concept. The core team works intensively, and iteratively, for a minimum of two weeks and maximum of six weeks, until both Engineering and Marketing agree how the work will be done, then creates a five-page proposal for review and input by other key functions.

What are the benefits? Benefits to this approach include:

- Driving innovation early in design
- Establishing a more collaborative working relationship with leadership and the core team
- Achieving better decision-making, producing a more viable product concept, more quickly
- Avoiding surprises late in the process
- This process has been applied to a more than 1,000-person Silicon Valley engineering organization resulting in significant improvements in the quality of the product concepts and is now being expanded to other parts of the organization.

What business problem was solved? This firm found it was bogged down by cumbersome, large-scale reviews with every function in the room simultaneously. Core teams worked in isolation and, by default without direct access to function heads, creating lag times and sluggish product development.

In addition to time-consuming delays, core team members found the staged or gate product proposal review a somewhat punitive experience. Senior staff spent time correcting mistakes, giving critical comments and providing a "yes/no" decision as opposed to working on the solution together with the team.

What are some considerations? Potential risks to this approach include more senior leadership time being invested in early product development. Also, because other functions are excluded early on, valuable input that might make a difference in development does not come to light until later.

By investing a bit more senior leadership time early in the process, more time is saved later on, and the ideas are better. Isn't that what it is all about?