

EMPOWERED

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Results

MARTY CAGAN with CHRIS JONES

MARTY CAGAN is the founder of the Silicon Valley Product Group, a product development consulting company. He previously held senior-level leadership positions with eBay, Netscape, and Continuous Software Corp., as well as being a software engineer with Hewlett-Packard. He has more than 25 years experience building and leading product teams, and today acts as an executive coach and advisor to leading Internet companies. He holds multiple patents, and is a graduate of Stanford University and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

CHRIS JONES is a partner at Silicon Valley Product Group. He has more than 25 years experience building and leading product teams. He has worked with everyone from startups to Fortune 500 companies, including Lookout, Symantec, and Vontu. He also holds multiple patents in consumer and enterprise mobile, web, data, and platform services. Chris Jones is a graduate of Stanford University.

The Silicon Valley Product Group website is at: www.svpg.com.

ISBN 978-1-77687-048-6

MAIN IDEA

How do the top tech companies – like Apple, Google, Netflix, Tesla, Amazon, etc. – keep on coming up with consistent innovations? Most people assume it's because they recruit top talent, but the real advantage these companies have is not so much who they hire, but how they enable their people to work together.



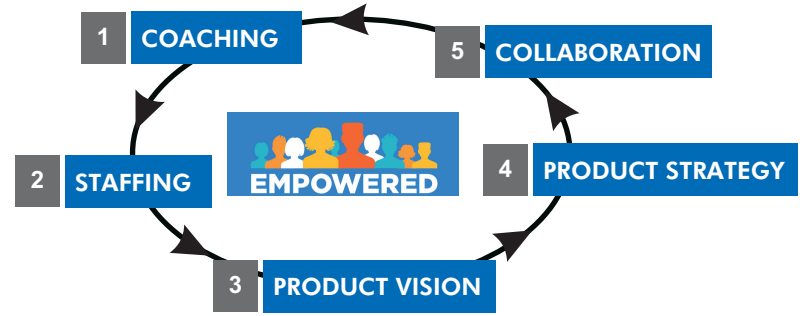
What they do differently is the top companies create an "empowered environment" – where great products and ideas can emerge from a team of otherwise ordinary people working together exceptionally well.

If you want to come up with great innovations in the future, don't look for Superman. Create an empowered environment which genuinely leverages the potential of your people. Help your people work together well, and they will solve hard problems for your customers, and create extraordinary products.

"Leadership is about recognizing that there's a greatness in everyone, and your job is to create an environment where that greatness can emerge."
 – Bill Campbell, Silicon Valley coach

"In most companies, the technology teams are not empowered product teams, they are what I call here feature teams. The feature teams get to work first designing the features on the roadmap, maybe doing a little usability testing, and then proceeding to building, QA testing, and deploying the features (known as delivery). In contrast, in strong product companies, teams are instead given problems to solve, rather than features to build, and most important, they are empowered to solve those problems in the best way they see fit. And they are then held accountable to the results."
 – Mary Cagan

The five elements of empowered teams



Element #1 – Coaching Pages 2 - 3

Coaching is something that rarely occurs in many companies, but is more essential than ever. The key to having a successful product development team is to use coaching to turn ordinary people into members of extraordinary product teams.

Element #2 – Staffing Pages 3 - 4

Coaching and developing your people is important, but so too is finding the right people to begin with. The best product companies hire people of character, and then coach and develop them to become great team members. Staffing and coaching go hand in hand.

Element #3 – Product Vision Pages 4 - 5

Most companies have some kind of mission statement which encapsulates the purpose of the business. The product vision states how you plan to deliver on this mission by developing this specific product. A good product vision inspires, compels, and empowers.

Element #4 – Product Strategy Page 6

Product strategy is all about deciding which customer problems you are going to solve. This is often hard to develop, because people will be hoping to solve all the customers problems, but that's unrealistic. Product strategy is your overall approach and rationale.

Element #5 – Collaboration Pages 7 - 8

Strong product leaders and empowered product teams are great, but they're usually not enough. To develop great products, you also need company-wide collaboration happening. This will only become feasible if you move from a subservient business model to a collaborative business model.