TOOL: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT - COOPERATION CHECKLIST

Abstract
The guideline Innovative product development and its corresponding checklist tools Product development – customer checklist, Product development – cooperation checklist, Product development – marketing strategy checklist and Product development – product checklist support internal processes within utilities when developing well-aligned smart energy product and service innovations. The guideline will focus more on the process and what steps to take, while the information and questions within the checklists will help you to set up a process for information and support gathering within several departments of your utility.

Target Group:
- Product developers
- Product Launch
- Finding Allies and Cooperation

Recommendation for Usage

The cooperation checklist is part of the larger guideline on product development. The guideline and its corresponding checklist tools support utilities to facilitate internal processes for developing well aligned smart energy product innovations. The checklists for the topics product, customer, cooperation, and marketing strategy are useful tools for structuring a (series of) workshop(s). Additionally, the checklists can support the work of an individual or a team in a utility in the internal process of developing a new product in dealing with different departments within the company. The checklists contain useful tips on how those different departments can work together and identify topics which so far have not played an important role for product development and product launches.

Have a look at the checklist, decide whether they have to be adapted for your specific purpose and try to fill them together with your colleagues based on the processes delineated in the guideline. The filled out checklists will help you formulate your concrete product or service and to anticipate challenges and chances. You need the answers to "make your case" for the new product and service you would like to offer in front of your CEO etc. and to get to a successful launch of the product. The exact way how to arrive here, is up to you.

What is it?

Cooperation is an important aspect during several steps of the product development process. However, it is within the task of the product developer to decide whether and for which aspects of the product-bundle cooperation partners within and outside of the utility can facilitate the development process. In the development of "classic" energy products (purchase of energy quantities), cooperation mainly serves the purpose of developing a marketing and sales strategy. However, this cooperation usually has little to no impact on the development of the product itself, but rather serves the assessment of the product's monetary benefit. Only in very few cases, the cooperation is connected to a follow-up process for the product; in some cases, a cooperation partner with better and more regular contact with the customer is involved. This cooperation is aimed at influencing the customers' decision to buy rather than at development and follow-up processes.

In the development of new smart energy service products, cooperation is often not only reasonable, but a necessity in order to make a successful and efficient business case. The list of control questions in the checklist below is not exhaustive and can be added to and adapted according to the needs of the user.

Area	Question	Yes / No	Affected corporate process	Advice and practical tips	My remarks
Cooperation	Are there companies that are possible cooperation partners for which product development (bringing the product to market maturity) would be "easier" (in terms of improved efficiency, use of resources, speed)			If yes, why – e.g.: - Because of experience (core business?) - Because of certain knowledge that is needed to develop the product - Further reasons, e.g. facts regarding return assumptions, readiness to assume risk - Because of company-specific or cultural differences (if that is the case, those differences should be specified here!) If yes, can you collaborate with them or are there company-specific reasons, why a collaboration would be impossible or difficult?	
Cooperation	Are there companies that would be better suited for product marketing? (Sales and Marketing processes until contract with the customer is achieved)			If yes, why – e.g.: - Because of experience (core business?) - Because of certain knowledge that is needed to develop the product - Because the customer relationship is better suited (how positive/ negative can the influence of a certain brand be?)	
Cooperation	Are there companies better suited to handle the service? (including after-sale)			If yes, why – e.g.: - Because of experience (core business?) - Because of certain knowledge that is needed to develop the product - Because the customer relationship is better suited (how positive/ negative can the influence of a certain brand be?)	
Cooperation	Do other companies have structural advantages that I don't have in equal measure, but that would increase the value of the product?			- e.g. funding	

If a demand of cooperation is identified, it should be defined clearly to avoid follow-up processes being hindered by subjective reservations of the involved stakeholders. How to find possible cooperation partners is not part of this guideline. For more information on this topic, please refer to the S3C guideline [How to identify regional stakeholders](). In general, however, the following questions have to be answered: Do I have criteria for the selection of cooperation partners at hand? (nature and level of cooperation, service provider or partner, role of the partner in relation to the customer, readiness to relinquish part of the revenue, distribution of risk and profit, etc.) Did I check existing cooperation partnerships for suitability?

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