

## TEN COMMON PITFALLS

In addition to all the externally-focused activities required to ensure a successful product launch—marketing, advertising, PR—there are a number of activities that companies need to focus on internally. Possessing internal discipline has a huge impact on the success or failure of a new launch, as it is common to encounter numerous pitfalls when preparing to operationally support new products and services in the market. Here are the pitfalls we have seen again and again...

- 1 NOT HAVING STANDARDIZED TOOLS AND TEMPLATES**  
Planning a product launch is infinitely easier if there are project management and product management tools and templates in place to help the team...
- 2 NOT INVOLVING THE RIGHT PEOPLE**  
Involving a cross-functional team at the early stages of planning will bring with it the buy-in and accountability required to get things done and ensures the momentum you need to be successful...
- 3 NOT APPRECIATING IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT PLANNING AND SCHEDULING**  
Any successful product launch hinges on everything coming together at the right time, not just product development completion—this can't happen without cross functional preparation, scheduling, *and* contingency planning...
- 4 NOT RESOLVING ISSUES OR TRACKING DECISIONS**  
1 or 2 unresolved issues can bring a launch to a screeching halt – issues need to be resolved in sync with the project schedule. Also decisions tend to get made and remade as the product development lifecycle proceeds—to eliminate rework and misunderstandings, decisions need to be tracked and owned...
- 5 NOT MAPPING OUT PROCESSES IN ADVANCE**  
Process mapping enables the whole organization to truly understand their roles in supporting the new product or service—it helps identify which systems, tools and documentation will need to be changed or created...

Product Management and  
Product Marketing Services

“Process mapping contributed significantly to the development, planning, and launch of our new line of services. Bringing the cross-functional team together in order to define the processes and identify challenges and issues was an invaluable investment. We couldn't have launched successfully without taking those steps.”

*Karie Starrett*  
Director of Services, CommScope

## TEN COMMON PITFALLS CONTINUED

Product Management and  
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### 6 **NOT HAVING THE RIGHT TOOLS AND SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO SUPPORT LAUNCH**

New products often require different levels and types of infrastructure and support; developing requirements for the infrastructure in advance makes a big difference...

### 7 **NOT PUTTING CUSTOMER SUPPORT IN PLACE**

Customer support can be a big expense and is often viewed as a place to cut corners on costs; inadequate customer support can cause huge customer dissatisfaction at launch and dictate product success or failure...

### 8 **NOT UNDERSTANDING TRUE PRIORITY OF LAUNCH**

Product Launch should be viewed as a distinct project phase; priorities are most often dictated by \$\$—know where your launch falls into the larger picture of corporate priorities...

### 9 **NOT TESTING THAT THE PRODUCT CAN BE SUPPORTED**

Comprehensive testing can help detect those small oversights which can bring the whole launch down...

### 10 **NOT COMMUNICATING ENOUGH**

Product launch requires communication across multiple groups; communicate, communicate and over-communicate with the launch team...

Process mapping enables the whole organization to truly understand their roles in supporting the new product or service. It ensures you have the right infrastructure in place for launch including people, systems, tools and documentation.

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#### WANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY?

If you want to share your success story or challenges with Phase Forward, please contact us at [info@phaseforward.net](mailto:info@phaseforward.net).

Article by Noël Adams, President, Phase Forward [www.phaseforward.net](http://www.phaseforward.net). Phase Forward is a product management and product marketing firm in San Francisco that helps companies build and launch new products. Projects range from new product research and market analysis to writing product requirements to outbound product marketing and product launch. Phase Forward team members also deliver workshops on a variety of new product topics like innovation and process mapping for product launch.

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