



The Path to Product Greatness: Pairing Engineering and Go-to-Market for Product Success

Podcast Episode 09: Show Notes

Welcome back to another episode of the Allison J. Taylor LIFT Podcast. How do you oversee or bring to life highly valued products and services? What does it take to succeed as a product manager (PM) or divisional leader in charge of solutions? The path to greatness is not just about building solid products, but also about leadership -- piloting people, processes, and change. In this episode, Allison J. Taylor speaks with co-author and Northwestern University advisor Chris Naunheimer about two sides of product success: building and making products (engineering), and connecting products to markets for monetization or awareness (go-to-market).

They discuss critical job skills and the use of AI, drawing from their substantial work, *Power Up Product Management, A Quick Start Guide*, a book published by one of the top global academic publishers in the world, Routledge, Taylor & Francis. Speaking from their experiences in varied types of companies, delivering hardware and software solutions from their complementary backgrounds, Allison and Chris cover common misperceptions about product management and share practical advice for new and seasoned product managers. They explore why the path to product greatness is rarely linear, but more chaotic. They also delve into the customer, whoever is going to either use, buy, or influence the product, and how critical it is to manage your key product stakeholders.

Finally, they discuss often-overlooked skillsets that product managers should have – emotional intelligence and the ability to communicate well with others. The reality is that you must sell people on your idea and persuade others to invest – whether it's with their physical funds, emotional energy, or time and effort. Their book delves into what product managers need to



know to perform successfully, as well as what leaders need to guide and foster product-centric company cultures, as a primer for those new to product. Tune in now!

Key Points from This Episode:

- Understand the role and job scope of product managers, especially in tech
- Learn how AI can be a tool within product management and what it cannot replace
- Discover why product management is about more than just the product itself
- Explore why stakeholder mapping is a critical skill for product managers to learn
- Learn why product development is rarely linear and the importance of embracing flexibility
- Find out what a common misperception is surrounding the Agile framework and how Agile may be more disciplined than the Waterfall framework
- Unpack why EQ and persuasive communication are essential skills
- Hear ways technology has impacted the development of products and processes
- Hear a real-world example of a simple tool that delivers great value and how
- Find out what Chris and Allison hope to achieve with their book

Chris Naunheimer

Guest Biography:

Chris Naunheimer is an adjunct faculty member and a capstone project advisor at Northwestern University. Along with a Master's of Product Design and Development Management, Northwestern University, and a bachelor's in mechanical engineering, University of Illinois, Chris has more than 30 years of experience at multi-national Fortune 500 industrial companies with leadership roles in engineering, R&D, strategic marketing, new product ventures, and user-centered design. Chris has been named inventor on 25 patents and brings this innovation and continuous improvement mindset to his work as co-author of *Power Up Product Management, A Quick Start Guide*, a Routledge, Taylor & Francis publication.



Chris is passionate about design and has a deeply held belief that we can use design to develop insights and solutions that can change people, cultures, and the world.

Tweetables:

“One of the most common misperceptions about product management is that product management is all about the product.” — [Chris Naunheimer](#) [0:01:59]

“The user, the customer, or whoever is going to either use, buy, or influence the product; those stakeholders are critical. And if you want to be a good product manager, that’s part of what you have to manage.” — [@allisonthought](#) [0:05:01]

“Product and product development can be very, very chaotic. It doesn’t always follow a linear path.” — [Chris Naunheimer](#) [0:06:45]

“Agile adds complexity as much as it is helpful for pivoting in smaller increments.” — [@allisonthought](#) [0:12:54]

“One of the motivations for us even writing this book is to be able to help other people. And that’s why we created it. I like tools like that.” — [Chris Naunheimer](#) [0:26:50]

“We put the stakeholder map in the book to make sure product managers were aware of what potential bumps could occur. Who is the team that you’re going to work with and make sure they’re inspired, they’re understanding why, and they’re motivated, not just informed.” — [@allisonthought](#) [0:15:20]

Links Mentioned in Today’s Episode:

[Chris Naunheimer on LinkedIn](#)

[Thought Marketing LLC](#)

[Power Up Product Management](#), A Quick Start Guide

[Strava](#)



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Email Listener feedback to info@thoughtmarketing.com

[Allison J. Taylor on LinkedIn](#)

[Allison J. Taylor on X](#)