Innovation Fallacy #4 - Innovation Cannot be Scheduled

by Bill Poston

While it is true that certain technological breakthroughs come with a high degree of schedule uncertainty, the vast majority of our innovation initiatives deal in the realm of known science. When I hear engineers say “we don’t know how long it’s going to take… could be a month, could be a year”…it sounds like a cop-out.

Every innovation initiative should have a well thought out plan based on assumptions and constraints. It is the job of the team to systematically eliminate the unknowns and narrow the range of uncertainty. This includes the variability in the development schedule itself.

Once upon a time I worked with a well-known consumer electronics company that everyone holds up as an exemplar of innovation. They launched products twice a year at major, company-produced events. The events established the deadlines and the development teams were always ready to launch.

There are a number of development methodologies that are designed to mitigate schedule risk including critical chain planning and agile development. These approaches can help, but will not replace a strong link between marketing requirements, technical feasibility, time-to-market goals, and a dedicated team.

Never underestimate the motivation of the time crunch. Invent to schedule; set time constraints; define success; and hold people accountable. Diamonds can be made with a little time and a lot of pressure.

More Reading
Innovation Fallacy #1 - Risk Drives Reward
Innovation Fallacy #2 - Spending Drives Output
Innovation Fallacy #3 - Failure is Spectacular
Innovation Fallacy #4 - Innovation Cannot be Scheduled
Innovation Fallacy #5 - Structure Slows Innovation
Innovation Fallacy #6 - Process Inhibits Creativity
Innovation Fallacy #7 - Success Is Getting To Launch
Innovation Fallacy #8 - Disruption Happens Fast
Innovation Fallacy #9 - We’re The Apple Of…
Innovation Fallacy #10 - The U.S. Is Losing

Originally published on www.thechiefinnovationofficer.com
About the Author

Bill Poston
bill.poston@kalypso.com
For the past 30 years, Bill has helped executives in technology-driven industries transform their competencies to deliver results. He is a highly regarded consultant, speaker, and writer on the topics of innovation strategy, product development, portfolio management, technology commercialization, and the software systems that enable innovation. Keep up with Bill's latest research and thoughts on innovation and the rising role of the Chief Innovation Officer at www.TheChiefInnovationOfficer.com.