Portfolio Question #10 - How can we shift key resources around to deliver the portfolio?

by Bill Poston

The dynamic allocation of resources to portfolio priorities is an advanced practice that requires careful analysis and consideration by the portfolio review team. Shifting resources based on changing market dynamics, project status, or different business case assumptions may be the best way to optimize the portfolio for delivered value. The incremental benefits of these decisions must be weighed against the cost of churn and the inefficiency of context shifting for key resources.

The benefit of asking this question is that it implies that the portfolio is not static and the allocation of resources to an initiative is not an irreversible or permanent decision. Lower priority projects may be forced to sacrifice people in order to ensure that the most important work gets done. This is a healthy way to view and manage an innovation portfolio.

Between portfolio reviews, the team can provide advance instructions to resource managers to reassign people when necessary by clearly communicating priorities and defining success as delivering top priority projects even if it means stealing resources from other initiatives.

If we don't view the allocation of people to projects as a dynamic process, then we are almost certain to misallocate our most precious resource over time. All project resource plans are not sacred. If something is not going to get done, we should make clear choices about what that is going to be.

More in this series:

- Portfolio Question #1: How are our recently launched innovations performing in market?
- Portfolio Question #2: Will our current portfolio deliver our organic growth goals?
- Portfolio Question #3: Does the portfolio reflect our business strategy? By business unit?
- Portfolio Question #4: Does the portfolio contain a diverse mix of innovation types?
- Portfolio Question #5: Is the portfolio balanced? More than just risk/reward?
- Portfolio Question #6: Is the portfolio balanced by phase and by expected launch date?
- Portfolio Question #7: Have we clearly defined and communicated the portfolio priorities?
- Portfolio Question #8: What are the constraints to delivering the projects in the portfolio?
- Portfolio Question #9: Which projects should we accelerate, delay, or kill completely?
- Portfolio Question #10: How can we shift key resources around to deliver the portfolio?
- Portfolio Question #11: What is the impact of loading proposed projects into the pipeline?
- Portfolio Question #12: What's missing from your portfolio?

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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.