Portfolio Question #6 - Is the portfolio balanced by phase and by expected launch date?

by Bill Poston

A few weeks ago we wrote about many different dimensions of balance in innovation portfolio management. Ensuring a healthy mix of initiatives that vary by risk and reward, technology, and geography are all important. Another key balance question is that of the timing of your innovation initiatives.

During your next portfolio review, you should create two views of your development pipeline. One is initiatives by development phase. A bubble chart of this view will allow you to use bubble size and colors to show investment levels, expected revenues or product lines. The second chart is initiatives by months away from expected launch date. This one is arguably more important than the first because it shows the expected cadence of new products hitting the market.

The visual depiction of these analyses often look like sine waves. That will cause problems for the business functions downstream that execute launch and support the innovation in market. It is easy to spot bottlenecks early and make adjustments to expected launch dates and associated business cases.

By continually monitoring your portfolio to ensure that it is balanced by development phase and expected launch date you can help ensure a steady stream of innovation that will drive growth without over taxing your organization.

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.