Portfolio Question #9 - Which projects should we accelerate, delay, or kill completely?

by Bill Poston

Last week in our ongoing series of questions that should be asked and answered during innovation portfolio reviews, we talked about identifying constraints and bottlenecks that would prevent us from delivering the portfolio. With the constraints identified, we can now work on optimizing the value we can pull through the innovation pipeline. We do that by looking at individual initiatives and asking which ones should be accelerated, delayed, or killed completely.

Rather than looking at the portfolio as a static set of plans, the review should include a number of “what-if” analyses that seek to maximize the value we can deliver through the pipeline. These analyses are based on the ability of the organization to shift resources around by changing priorities and delaying or outright cancelling certain projects.

There is a tendency in innovation portfolio management to treat approved projects and plans as sacrosanct. This will almost always lead to a portfolio that is not optimized for value. Stuff happens. Competitors move. Value propositions and resource assumptions change. Market windows shift. Investment decisions and project plans should be revisited in the context of the entire set of initiatives during portfolio reviews. It is a difficult but very valuable conversation.

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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What’s your view? Add your question or comment
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