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Defining value stream management for SEO agencies business owners

30-second summary:

- Value stream management is the practice that helps businesses to determine the value of the software development process.
- By managing value streams, you can improve the flow of value to your SEO agency and monitor the software delivery lifecycle.
- Mapping value streams will help you improve visibility throughout the whole software development cycle.
- You can enable value stream management by defining real-time metrics, creating a value stream map, enabling cross-team collaboration, connecting different processes, and automating the workflows.

With the scope of the competition on the market, the delivery of SEO options is becoming harder than ever. To stay competitive, all processes within the software development cycle must be optimized to their best.

If you’re looking to improve the workflows in your SEO agency, consider implementing value stream management. To help you get started, we’ve created this ultimate guide to value stream management. After reading, you’ll get a better idea of what is a value stream and how you can start managing your value streams by creating maps.

What is value stream management (VSM)?

To define the concept of value stream management, it’s important to understand the fundamentals. Let’s cover the basics and define key terms before moving further to discuss value stream management for SEO businesses.

A value stream refers to every step of the software delivery lifecycle (SDLC), from the product idea to the production and tools required to deliver your software to the customers. To help you visualize the concept, here’s an example of a value stream for product (not software) development.

Source: Dragon1

In other words, a value stream is a series of activities that build up the value of your SEO software. Value is defined by something a customer gets, like high-quality software, in a fair period of time for a fair price.

Source: Maaw info

Value stream management (VSM) refers to the process of optimizing processes from the very point when you conceptualize an idea to the time when this idea is in production and generating revenue. To put it simply, VSM allows you to manage your SEO software development process from idea to cash.

The benefits of value stream management for your SEO agency

Value stream management enables SEO software companies to

deliver higher quality products faster and more efficiently than their competitors while significantly reducing risks. Besides, proper implementation of VSM enables the following benefits.

- VSM helps you find and address the limitations of your workflows. By mapping out all stages of the software development process, you can identify potential limitations and blunders.
- VSM enables you to deliver higher quality SEO solutions. By optimizing development processes, you can deliver better quality products.
- VSM allows the continuous development of your agency. By investing in optimization and VSM, you can guarantee the success of your business in the long run.
- VSM helps you to make the overall flow of information across the entire process visible to people who normally manage separate functions, processes, and departments.

How does value stream mapping work?

By now you should understand that value stream management allows optimization of all development processes, from the first time an idea of a product is conceptualized to the moment when the product is produced and launched in the marketplace.

Within value stream management, many capabilities feed that process. Value stream mapping one of these capabilities.

A value stream map refers to the visualization of all critical steps in the SEO software development process. Value stream maps include a description of each stage and information, like the time, the volume of work, and spendings dedicated to each of the stages.

By creating value stream maps, you can analyze the current state of your processes and improve your product based on the

series of events that take your SEO solution from the initial concept to the finished product your customers receive. To put it simply, value stream mapping allows you to identify where you're adding value and where you're wasting it.

Besides, creating value streams allows you to categorize activities into high priority vs. low priority items. This way, you can prioritize and triage some processes in favor of others.

How can you enable VSM?

In order to optimize your SEO software development practices and tools, you need total visibility throughout the whole development cycle. Likely, you can achieve this by mapping value streams.

Not particularly sure where to start? Follow these five steps to enable value stream management for your SEO agency.

1. Defining real-time metrics and objectives

Defining real-time metrics is the first step toward enabling value stream management. Unfortunately, many businesses fail to define metrics which leads to misleading results and inability to assess the effectiveness of their VSM efforts.

Choosing the right objectives allows you to understand what's happening in the development and identify where value is "leaking" in the process.

Here's a list of metrics to help you get started:

- The development cycle time
- The overall volume of change (before and after VSM)
- Lead time (LT)
- Process time (PT)

- Percent complete & accurate (percept of time when the software is received by users in the correct and ready-to-use form)

Collecting these metrics is paramount for the successful evaluation of your VSM efforts.

2. Creating a value stream map

After you've defined the key metrics and objectives, you can start studying your workflows. Create a map (either physical or digital) that explains each step of the software development process, from conceptualizing an idea to delivering the final product to customers. This way, you can see the distribution of resources within your software development cycle.

Here's a great example of a value stream map.

Source: ipinimg

3. Enabling cross-team collaboration

Value stream management requires you to enable cross-team collaboration. Rather than testing business analysts separately from developers and other teams, you want to optimize the workflow across all of these teams.

4. Connecting multiple processes, teams, and tools

Now, as you've created opportunities for all teams to work together, you should find a way to answer the following question. How do you make sure that all of the work that your employees are doing, the value streams of their development, map to your priorities?

To answer this question, you have to evaluate the workflows and roles of each team regarding your objectives and priorities.

5. Coordinating and automating workflows

VSM tools allow you to embed governance into existing system development cycles. In other words, some platforms allow you to automate the value stream management processes.

Tom Hayes, a VSM advisor at the Guerrilla Agency shares his expertise,

> *"By coordinating and automating workflows, you can continually improve your SEO solution and ultimately achieve better results."*

The bottom line

Value stream management is different from other approaches because it's focused on the idea that everything that happens to your customers, from the idea to the delivery, is important and needs to be managed in a holistic manner.

By implementing VSM in your SEO agency, you can better understand your system development cycles and workflows.

Implementing value stream management is easier than it may seem. You can start by mapping value streams and defining your

main objectives. Moreover, there are many platforms that will make the VSM process easy and personalized for your SEO agency.

Connie Benton is a chief content writer, guest contributor, and enthusiastic blogger who helps B2B companies reach their audiences more effectively. You can find her on Twitter at @ConnieB34412379.

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