

The Importance of Connecting Your Organization to Your Product and Users (and How to Do It)



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When you first launch a startup, you, along with your small initial team, are able to build something incredible from the ground up – and that's because everyone is intimately connected to the company vision. As your company grows to 100 employees, 500 employees, and beyond, maintaining that connectivity gets a little harder. But I believe that when all employees are aligned with the company vision and culture, and they truly understand the value of the product they're building, that's when you get an amazing impact.

This is how it's done:

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Connecting to your company, connecting to your product

Your company and your product are entirely codependent – one cannot exist without the other.

A product's development and evolution is hugely influenced by the company's culture, vision and core values. When teams within a company feel connected to its primary goals, they're more motivated, engaged and creative.

A positive company culture is one of the most important things you can create. Understanding the company's culture fosters a sense of purpose and drive among employees. It gives your workforce a roadmap to help direct their actions, aligning them towards one common goal. This alignment not only improves the product development process but also creates a positive and empowering work environment where creativity thrives.

This is important from day one. That's why I personally make the time to meet with all our new hires as part of their onboarding process to discuss the company values and mindset.

Understanding the competition

To create a product that stands out in the market, experience has shown me how crucial it is to fully understand the competition. Getting a sense of the visions and cultures of similar companies can offer valuable insights into their strategies and areas of focus. By doing so, you can then identify your company's unique edge and really zero in on the areas where improvements can be made to better serve your

users. It's important to not only *meet* industry standards, but understanding your competitors allows you to go *beyond* them as well.

Using competitive analyses to map industry standards, help set benchmarks and strategize the unique selling proposition – this understanding also positions your business to develop the best possible product for the user. When launching a new product, subscription tier or feature, I work with my teams to first do a competitive analysis and deep dive into the value proposition.

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Understanding the user

There's not a day that goes by that I don't look at user feedback. Having a close understanding of your users is one of the best ways to be connected to your product. It's important to look at the user and their experience from all angles: needs, pain points, workflow and skill level. By doing so, you can tailor your products to provide real solutions and even exceed customer expectations.

To further help understand the user, I've found that diving into the voice of the customer is one of the most valuable and insightful ways to guide product development. User surveys and sentiment analysis allow businesses to collect feedback directly from their customers, enabling them to gauge customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

Customer support interactions are also an invaluable source of information. Analyzing customer support data can reveal recurring issues and pain points experienced by users. This information empowers you to proactively address problems and foster increased customer loyalty.

Lastly, A/B testing is a powerful tool that helps compare

different versions of a product to determine which resonates best with users. Through A/B tests, you can make data-driven decisions and continuously enhance your products based on user preferences.

Directly engaging with users and gathering real-time feedback ensures that the user, and delivering the best possible product, is at the center of all decisions. A customer-driven approach creates trust and loyalty.

Becoming your own customer

Every single person who joins our company has to complete a task where they use our product to create some content. This is because to fully grasp every last detail of your product, employees need to not only think like customers but become them.

By using the product as their clients do, teams gain first-hand insights into its functionalities, flow and user experience. This exercise allows employees to identify potential bottlenecks, fine-tune the product to enhance the user experience, understand which features are most useful, how best to market the product and so on. There's no end to the valuable insights that can come from becoming your own customer.

Ultimately, your product and organization are mutually inclusive – to have the best product on the market, your company has to have the clearest understanding of why they do what they do, who it's for, and feel personally connected. I believe that by stressing the importance of aligning goals and making customer-driven decisions, both your organization and product will feed off one another and thrive.

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