

More patterns for Technology Companies

Product development

Allan Kelly - allan@allankelly.net

1 Introduction

Many patterns have been written concerned with the design and architecture of software systems, e.g. (Gamma et al., 1995, Manolescu et al., 2006, Buschmann, 1996) to name a few. Other patterns have been written describing the organizational development of software organizations, e.g. (Coplien and Harrison, 2004, Marquardt, 2004, Bricout et al., 2004) among many. The patterns presented here are concerned with product development, business strategy and the operations of software companies.

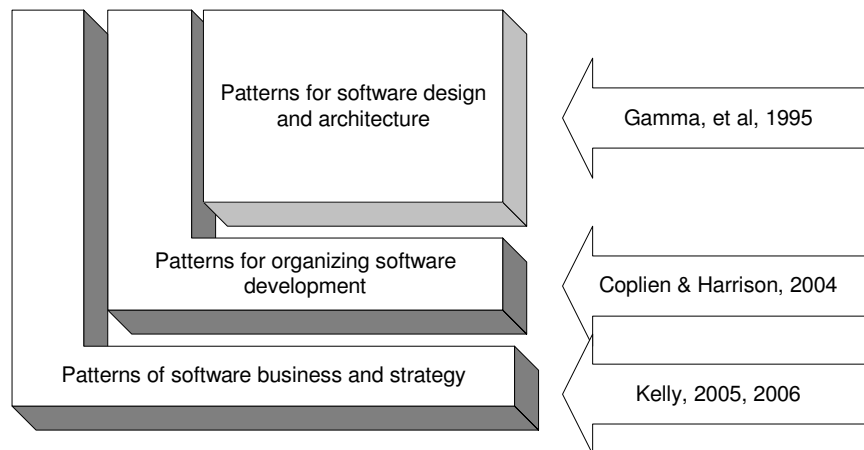


Figure 1 - Patterns for all aspects software

The patterns in this paper describe product development techniques common in software companies. These patterns build on the authors' earlier work on business patterns (Kelly, 2006a, Kelly, 2005b) within the business pattern framework previously described (Kelly, 2006b, Kelly, 2005a).

2 Audience

These patterns are intended to codify several common business practices in a pattern language so that they may be communicated and studied more clearly.

The patterns given here are intended for those interested in how corporate strategies may be applied. Specifically this group includes students of business, managers and those seeking to develop products.

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3 The Patterns

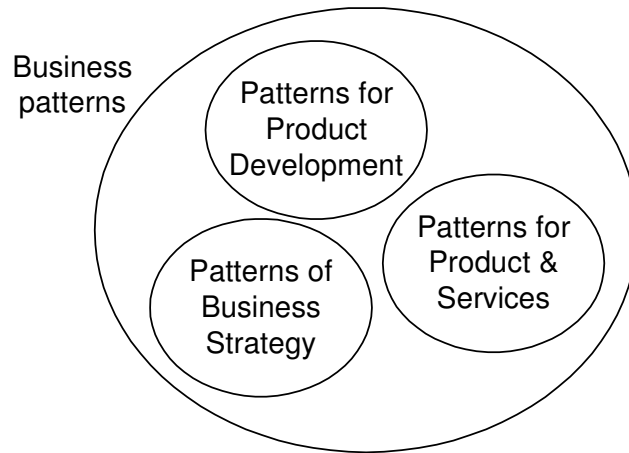


Figure 2 - Emerging themes of business patterns

HOMOGENOUS CUSTOMERS Page 4	Producing one product will save you time, money and allow you to exploit economies of scale.
SAME CUSTOMERS, DIFFERENT PRODUCT Page 6	It is easier to sell to existing customer than it is to find and sell to new customers. Therefore have new products you can sell to your existing customers.
SEGMENTED CUSTOMERS Page 10	Customers want different things so segment your customers into groups and address the needs each group separately or not at all.
POACHER TURNED GAME KEEPER Page 13	It is difficult to get an in-depth understanding of customer so hire an ex-customer and have them help you design your products.
CUSTOMER CO-CREATED PRODUCT Page 16	Ensure your product will do what your customers want by enrolling customers in your development process. This gives them an opportunity to influence the product design and implementation.
SIMPLER PRODUCT Page 18	Making a product radically simpler to use can change the entire nature of the product. You can create new markets and find new customers.

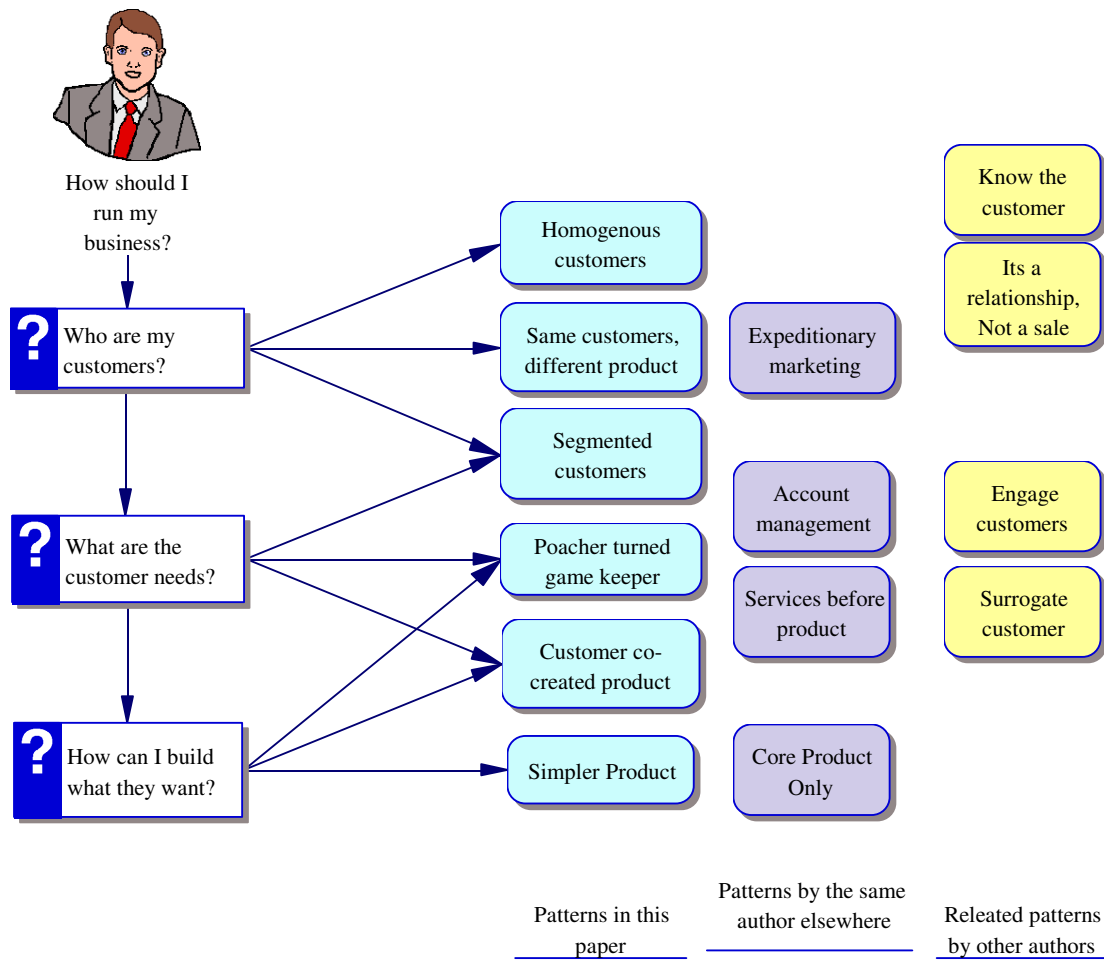


Figure 3 - Patterns map

There are a number of pattern sequences for the patterns in this paper, the author's previous patterns and future work, e.g. VikingPLoP 2007. A future paper will consider these sequences in more detail.

3.1 Homogenous customers

Microsoft MS-DOS was an early PC operating system. It ran on IBM compatible computers based on the 80x86 line of CPUs. Home users and corporate customers all used the same software which came in the same boxes with the same utilities and sold at the same price. At one time it was pre-installed on every PC whether the customer wanted it or not.

Context You are establishing a new, probably innovative, product. There is little competition in your market place.

Problem **How do you get a product to market quickly and cheaply when you have limited understanding of your customers?**

Forces Producing more of your product allows you to exploit economies of scale but such savings are lost if you introduce product variations.

There is little competition in your market, your product may be innovative or difficult to copy.

A short time to market is important to you. The market may be growing fast or you may be short of money and need to generate revenue.

You know your there are many potential customers for your product but you don't have the time and/or money to segment them or study them in depth.

You convinced there is a market for your product but you don't know who the customers will be. Until you get your product into the market you don't know who will be buying it.

Solution **Assume customers are homogenous and generalise about their needs and requirements.** Select a few potential customers at extrapolate from their needs. Try not to choose people who are too close to your product already (e.g. developers and other employees.)

This is a risk strategy because you lack understanding of customers and the market. A less risky option would be to wait, watch and learn.

Consequences Standard products with no variations produces the maximum economies of scale.

You do not understand who your customers really are. By entering the market quickly and at low cost you can start to learn about your customers. Moving fast may provide you with first-mover or fast-follower advantage.

Without proper customer understanding and segmentation you are taking a risk. Not knowing who your customers are might well be a sign of you don't understand the market. Money spent developing a product to enter the market may be entirely wasted if you discover

that there are no customers after all.

If you do not act to understand your customers you will not really know why they are buying your product. Successful development of future products and features is depends on intuition and lucky guesses rather.

If successful you will save time, money and maybe even secure *first mover advantage*. Still competitors may exploit your position by better understanding your customers and creating new products.

Variations

Examples

Also known as -

Related patterns

HOMOGENOUS CUSTOMERS differs to CORE PRODUCT ONLY (EuroPLoP 2005) in timing and focus. HOMOGENOUS CUSTOMERS is typically used at the start of a products life to get to market quickly while the former helps use to reduce costs on mature products. Between times SEGMENTED CUSTOMERS is used. In any given market different companies may be using different patterns at the same time.

Sources Author's observation.

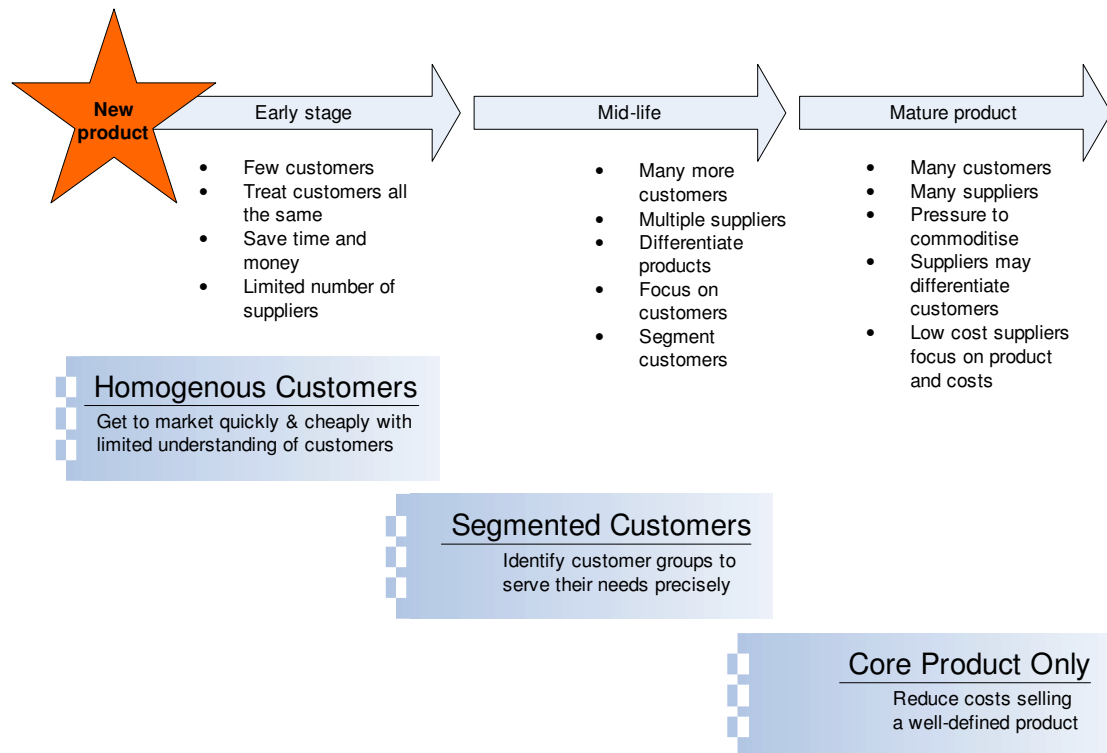


Figure 4 - Patterns apply at different stages of the product life cycle

3.2 *Same customers, different product*

Once you have a relationship with your customers they will trust you and your brand. You are in a good position to understand their needs and wants. Growing your market need not mean acquiring more customers (which can be expensive); growing your market may mean selling more products to your existing customers.

Context	You are seeking to expand an established business with a number of customers.
Problem	How to you maximise your return from existing customers?
Forces	<p>Satisfied customers have a positive image of your company and your sales staff already has a relationship, but such customers eventually get saturated with your products and can't buy any more.</p> <p>Existing customers already have your product(s) but new customers are expensive and time consuming to obtain.</p> <p>You could sell new products to your existing customers but in order to do so you need products to sell.</p> <p>In some markets there may only be a limited number of customers. Even where there are many potential customers there may be a "long tail" with a few big customers buying lots of products and many small customers buying a few products. But there may still be rich pickings in the long tail, neglecting smaller customers misses opportunities and risks opening the door to future competitors.</p> <p>Big corporations like dealing with innovative firms because big companies often lack innovation themselves. Conversely innovative firms are often small and have few products, maybe just one. But it is expensive for big firms to deal with many different suppliers. More suppliers results more administration, more sales people visiting, more relationships to deal with - more time and more money.</p> <p>Buying important technology is more than just a transaction. The purchase to know how the product will be supported, whether the supplier will still exist in a year and maybe who they could sue if it goes wrong. But small companies, especially new ones, find it hard to give such assurance.</p>
Solution	<p>Expand your product offering so you have more products to sell to your existing customers. You might be able to add services to existing products (as in the patterns PRODUCTS WITH SERVICES (Kelly, 2006a) and CONTINUING SERVICES FOR PRODUCTS (Kelly, 2005a) or you might be able to sell add-ons to existing products.</p> <p>Once you have a relationship with a customer they can be a great source of information. Getting to know your customer, the problems</p>

and opportunities they face, their business strategy and growth plans will help you enhance existing products and illustrate opportunities for new products.

You may source products from in-house development or look to resell products from other companies, either as a distributor or as under your own name - so called "badge engineering". Alternative you could partner with or another supplier or buy another company outright and add their products to your portfolio.

You could offer individual customers a specially tailored version of the product to better match their needs; or integrate your product with third party systems in use by the customer.

Consequences Selling more products to existing customers will help deepen your relationship and create more opportunities for sales and information gathering. Customers may welcome the opportunity to reduce the number of suppliers they deal with - buying is costly for them too.

Producing add-ons and enhancements for a product can provide useful revenue sources. However if they are bundled with the product to sweeten a sale they will generate no extra revenue.

Focusing on the customer rather than the product will help you serve the customer needs better. Since selling to existing customers is cheaper than finding and selling to new customers so you should save money too.

It is not always easy for firms with a history of focusing on the product to re-orientate to a customer focus. Changing focus from product to customer can be difficult, you will need to change your practises and culture. You will need to get the customers voice heard within your organization. Staff will need to think less about "cool technology" and more about customer needs. Back office staff may not want to meet customers, technical staff may prefer to

Reducing focus on products carries the risk that you might miss some technology advance. Competitors may use new technology to produce a superior product, or redefine the market in novel ways.

Concentrating efforts on a few big customers should be more cost effective for both you and the customers. However you should look at ways of exploiting the long tail; you may choose to use an alternative distribution channel, or to offer a different version of your product.

Selling multiple products to the same corporations will entrench your position making you less likely to be squeezed out and opening opportunities to lock customers into your product.

Tailored versions of your product may result in improvements you can feedback into your main product line, or insights you can use in developing the next product.

Variations

Examples Restaurant dining is still a new to many people in the Russian regions where few people visit restaurants as often as they do in America or even Moscow. The author had dinner with a Russian restaurant entrepreneur who knew he had 470 regular customers in a city of 1.5 million people. The slow growth in restaurant dining meant his main challenge was keeping existing customer supplied with a steady stream of fresh products (new dishes and new restaurants) to keep them spending money.

Also known as -

Related patterns This pattern builds on ITS A RELATIONSHIP, NOT A SALE (Rising, 2002) which describes the ongoing relationship between a vendor and a purchase.

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT (Kelly, 200X) and CUSTOMER CO-CREATED PRODUCT may be used to help implement this pattern.

Sources Research supports the view that repeat business from satisfied customers is cost effective: “a customer that generates £1,000 for a supplier in its first year is likely to generate a total profit of £50,000 if retained as a satisfied customer over 10 year.” (Doyle, 2002)

Product or Customer focus?

Technology companies often focus on creating the best product possible. This is natural, many of these companies come into being to commercialise a piece of technology. University spin-outs are a classic example of this, having developed some technology in the academic environment companies are formed to create products around the technology.

Product focused companies aim to produce the best product and develop their technology. Armed with technology they seek problems that can be solved by the technology. Such companies are often technically led and rich on innovation.

This approach stands in contrast to customer focused companies where the customers are paramount. Such companies focus on their customers needs and produce products using the most applicable technology whether it is cutting edge or well established.

In many ways these two approaches represent opposite ends of a spectrum. In order to be product focused a company needs technology, with technology they can seek to create the best product. Initially these companies have technology and products but no customers. This mode is typical of start-up enterprises.

Conversely, in order to be customer led a company generally needs to have customers so such companies tend to be more mature and have an existing customer base. In the service sector such companies may not even have products. Those companies that do sell products may offer a portfolio of products that change gradually over time. For example, motor companies offer a range of cars, models change incrementally each year and occasionally an entire model is replaced. Technology is used but only to satisfy customer needs.

It is intrinsically difficult to focus on more than one thing at a time and changing focus is hard. A company that starts life focused on technology may find it hard to acquire a customer focus as it grows but this may be exactly what is needed if growth is to be maintained. Changing focus requires a shift in culture and structure. For example, switching from product to customer focus means:

- Getting to know your customers in depth rather than finding the customers to match the product.
- Product changes need to be customer led not innovation led: Innovation for the sake of innovation is less important.
- Selling to the same customers again and again rather than selling to new products to new customers. Consequently customer care and the after sales experience are increasingly important.
- Supplementing your product offering with services and add-ons rather than creating new products.
- Inbound marketing proceeds rather than follows research and engineering.

The focus and the customer/product spectrum represents one dimension of strategic positioning. In *The Delta Model* from Hax and Wilde (1999) propose three dimensions of positioning: customer solutions, best product and system lock-in. In this model companies position themselves in relation to these three apex.

Many of the patterns here, and in the author's other work, attempt to show how product focused companies can create better products and improve their customer focus.

3.3 Segmented customers

A software product often has multiple customers. Staff from many different departments will use a warehouse application: goods in, goods out, supply clerks, shipping arrangers and the warehouse workers themselves. Then there is the manager who authorised the software purchase but never uses the software.

Context	You make a technically complex product that is used by a variety of different people with different objectives in mind.
Problem	Your customers all seem to want different things, how do you know what features to provide? What documentation to write? And services to offer?
Forces	<p>Trying to satisfy everyone is worthy but is likely to mean nobody is completely satisfied.</p> <p>Potential customers are not equal. Your product may be useful to different types of organizations, say hospitals and airlines, but they have different usage patterns and different needs.</p> <p>Even when the organizations are the same industry sector they are different organizations and have different ways of working and different needs. What works well for Lufthansa isn't necessarily what British Airways wants. Regional and legal differences can make organizations even more different.</p> <p>Within a single organization there are multiple user roles who will have different demands on your product. Users will have different requirements because they fill different roles and because they will have individual preferences.</p> <p>Developing products, especially new and innovative products, involves making judgements and guesses about how your product will be used. Many of scenarios (or <i>use cases</i>) you imagine sound reasonable but you can't do everything. Some scenarios will contradict one another making it difficult to do both. Doing all cases would be expensive and consume time.</p>
Solution	<p>Segment your customers into different groups and address the needs each group separately. Groups are defined on discernable attributes and characteristics that allow you to differentiate one group from another. Working with definable groups avoids generalisations that do not accurately describe any one group. You may choose not to meet the needs of some groups if doing so would compromise the needs of another, or if you do not have the resources to do the work properly.</p> <p>Segmenting your customers allows you to understand the needs and usage of each segment in more detail. With a little imagination segmenting a market can go on almost indefinitely.</p>

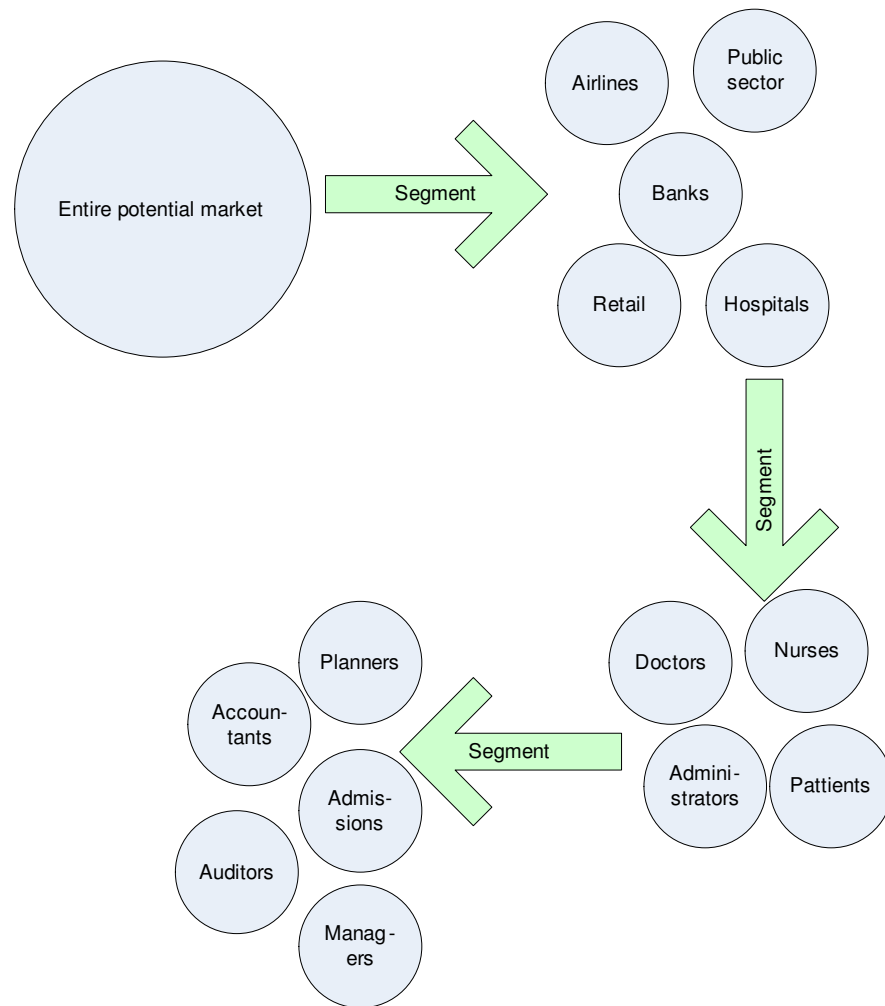


Figure 5 - Break the market into ever smaller segments

Marketing people have long recognised that all customers are not equal. Sometimes segmentation can result in different products for different customer segments (e.g. small cars for twenty something single people, large cars for families and luxury cars for successful executives.) Other times it can mean emphasising different aspects of the same product to different groups, e.g. SUV safety features are emphasised to soccer moms and off-road abilities to their husbands.

Start by identifying your groups and what differentiates them from one another. Generally segments are larger than one individual but in some cases you might want to identify a particular individual or organization. Sometimes one person can be an important customer.

Next determine the size your groups and prioritise those you are interested in. Then you can study the groups that most interest you and determine their needs in depth. Over time you may want to subdivide groups or merge them together as your understanding grows.

Once you understand your potential customers and users you can decide whether you need to develop different products for each group or market the same product to different groups.

Consequences	<p>Your customers will be served better because they will get a product that more specifically fits their needs. A deliberate choice not to serve some groups allows you to serve others better.</p> <p>The choice of who to serve reflects your corporate priorities and strategy. This helps avoid sidetracks where more attention is paid to a particular customer who may not be very important overall. Just because they shout loudest does not mean they are the right customer to serve.</p> <p>It is acceptable for a team to concentrate on an individual customer as long as this is a conscious decision for valid business reasons.</p>
Variations	<p>Segmentation can also be applied to pricing and distribution of a product.</p> <p>An extreme form of segmentation is micro-segmentation in which companies focus on small groups.</p>
Examples	<p><i>The Inmates are Running the Asylum</i> (Cooper, 2004) describes the creation of user personas that can be used to help design user interfaces. The same technique is used by groups such as product management and marketing departments to better understand customers.</p>
Also known as	-
Related patterns	<p>CORPORATE CERTIFIED EXPERTS (Kelly, 2006a) and SIMPLE PRODUCT VARIATIONS (Kelly, 2005b) are both forms of customer segmentation.</p>
Sources	Various

Salt

Once upon a time salt was a cheap commodity. Everyone bought the same salt. Today we can buy table salt, cooking salt, sea-salt, organic sea-salt, rock salt, salt crystals, reduced sodium salt and more.

When a market is young or unsophisticated one product can satisfy all needs. Having the basic product is worthwhile. Such an approach allows economies of scale to reduce costs and provide the product to many people who would otherwise not be able to afford it.

Yet this also creates opportunity for innovation and market segmentation. Understanding what is possible with the product -see SIMPLE PRODUCT VARIATIONS – and the customers – as described in SEGMENTED CUSTOMERS – can reveal new opportunities for differentiation.

3.4 Poacher turned game keeper

Former poachers know the how poachers think, they know the poachers techniques and motivations. This makes them effective at catching poachers.

Hiring someone from an customer organization can be a quick way to learn about the customers problems and needs in depth.

Context	You are a technology company making products and selling products to multiple businesses with multiple employees each.
Problem	How do you get an in-depth understanding of your customer, their needs and the pressures they work under?
Forces	<p>You need a deep understanding of your customer, the problems they face, and how they use current product and opportunities for new products. But, you can only learn so much from observing and questioning the customer.</p> <p>Acquiring an in-depth understanding can take a lot of time and effort but in a competitive market place time to market is important. Spending time understanding the customer costs more money and delays work on the product.</p> <p>Customers may be willing to help you develop your product but they will have limits to how much time they can spend working with you, after all they have their own jobs to do.</p> <p>To really understand your customer and their needs you need to live the customer's life. But, you have your own life to live and your own job to do creating products.</p> <p>Some sources of information should not be used because they breach ethical and legal boundaries. To do so may make your company and yourself liable to prosecution and damage the company reputation.</p>
Solution	<p>Employ (ex)customers who have experience and knowledge of the application domain you are targeting. These people may be employed as subject matter experts, product managers, analysts or hired on a consultancy basis for the duration of the project.</p> <p>While your new employees will know your customer domain very well they may not understand your business or what is now expected of them. In their last role they were not business analysts or product managers so it is wrong to assume they can take on such a role overnight. Arrange suitable training and mentoring so they quickly master new skills and understand what they need to do.</p> <p>For example, an expert hired from a telecoms firm to work as a software product manager will know a lot about telecoms technology, issues and opportunities. However, they will not know much about software development and product management. It may</p>

be wise to pair them with an experienced employee while they learn the new role.

Once hired take these people see your other customers so they can generalise about the domain and identify common opportunities and differences.

Do not expect your new hires to disclose confidential information; this would be unethical and possibly illegal – breaching their contract with their former employer.

Be careful not to overstep the mark and breach ethical or commercial boundaries when hiring staff from corporate customers. Boeing made this mistake when it hired Darleen Druyun from the United States Air Force. Consequently Boeing's CFO was sacked, the CEO resigned and Druyun spent nine months in prison.

Consequences Customer knowledge and understanding now exist within your organization. However such knowledge may cost a premium so make sure you make the best use of this experience and share insights.

You have bought yourself in-depth knowledge and understanding of one individual from one corporate customer. Few customers will have identical environments and needs so be careful not to extrapolate from one to many without other checks.

The knowledge and understanding you have bought is a snapshot taken from the moment your expert leaves his previous employer. Things will change with time.

Some of the people keenest to work for your company will be your product champions inside the customer. Hiring them may remove your products greatest advocate and opening opportunities for competitors.

Variations Hiring similar staff from corporations that are not currently customers can provide many similar benefits with fewer ethical dilemmas.

Examples

Also known as

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Related patterns

SURROGATE CUSTOMER (Coplien and Harrison, 2004) suggests a role with “someone who will try to think like a customer.” Obviously someone who was once a customer will find this role easier to play. Both SURROGATE CUSTOMER and POACHER TURNED GAME KEEPER patterns are forms of ENGAGE CUSTOMERS (Coplien and Harrison, 2004).

In contrast CUSTOMER CO-CREATED PRODUCT tackles the same problem by actually bringing customers into the development environment. With Poacher turned game keeper the intellectual property belongs to your organization, some partner-customers may

seek to retain ownership of such knowledge.

This pattern is one means of achieving the *Onsite customer* practise from *Extreme Programming* (Beck, 2000).

Sources

Authors experience and observation.

3.5 Customer co-created product

“The design phase of the 777 differed from previous Boeing jetliners. For the first time, eight major airlines and their passengers had a role in the development of the plane. The "Working Together" philosophy, as Boeing called it, meant that the 777 was their most customer oriented aircraft yet.” Wikipedia

Context	You are developing a technically complicated product with many design choices
Problem	How do you ensure your product does what your customers want?
Forces	<p>You know the customers general requirements but there are many specific issues that still need to be decided. Some requirements will change during your development process and addressing some will reveal more issues to be specified.</p> <p>The opportunity (or problem) your product addresses is understood (more or less) but the solution is not so clear. In creating a solution you explore both the opportunity and the solution at the same time, consequently, your design choices multiply and knowing what the customer wants becomes more difficult.</p> <p>You have the ability to create a solution but you lack specific knowledge of the problem domain; e.g. a software firm can create software but the firm lacks knowledge of other domains.</p>
Solution	<p>Enrol one or more or customers as partners in your development process. Give them an opportunity to influence the product design and implementation. Make the product development process a <i>win-win</i> situation for you and your customers.</p> <p>Talk to your customers - talk to them a lot, share problems and solutions, share documentation, share as much as possible. Have your people work at their sites and their people work at your sites.</p> <p>Show your customers mock-ups, prototypes and models of the product. Spend time with customers and models working through usage patterns, operations scenarios and variations to models.</p> <p>When customers do co-operate you will need to respect their intellectual property (IP). Customers may be prepared to share some IP but they may also want to restrict access to other IP or ensure it is not made available to competitors.</p> <p>Using a customer as a co-create partner combines elements of bespoke product development and elements of generic product development. It is an opportunity to create a product that fits many customers needs, it is also a challenge to avoid creating a product that fits one customer’s needs.</p>

Consequences	<p>Working with customer's results in a better understanding of the opportunity, solution and technical aspects. This may require several iterations as the correct solutions emerges from the design process.</p> <p>Design and development times are shortened because your relationship is close and you can simply ask the customer. Without a close partner you may waste time second-guessing or researching a decision. Relying on your own past experience or making an arbitrary choice risks not matching customer requirements so closely.</p> <p>You win when you produce a better product that more closely matches customer needs, potentially in a reduced time frame and at lower cost. You will also gain insights into the customers future needs and direction.</p> <p>Customers win when they get products that more closely match their needs, when products perform better and when they get early access to new products before their competitors. Co-operation will entail costs to both parties, done right it can also save more money than it costs.</p> <p>However co-creating a product also means your partner's competitors may have access to the same product. If the product offers customers a competitive advantage, or contains confidential IP they may prefer to develop their own custom solution even if this costs more.</p> <p>Pricing a co-created product may be difficult. Offering the product for free or at a discount to partners may encourage some to join your programme but such partners may not really value the product. At some point you need to know customers will pay cash for the product you are developing.</p>
Variations	
Examples	<p>A London based telecoms software house worked with major customers in Europe, USA and Australia to develop products later sold to many operators world-wide.</p> <p>Military systems like Euro-fighter Typhoon are often developed by contractors and armed forces and later sold to third parties.</p>
Also known as	-
Related patterns	<p>This pattern can be used to help implement KNOW THE CUSTOMER (RISING, 2000) and EXPEDITIONARY MARKETING (KELLY, 2004).</p> <p>The Extreme Programming practise of <i>Onsite customer</i> is a variation on this pattern.</p>
Sources	Authors experience and observation.

3.6 *Simpler product*

Blogging isn't anything new: you don't need Blogger or Typepad to create webpages, to publish your thoughts, an HTML editor can do just as well. You don't need RSS, you can check the webpages you care about often, publishers can simply list their changes on page 1. But, bringing these technologies together, radically simplifying them actually creates a new product.

Context Your product is useful and capable but there are barriers to using it.

Problem Barriers prevent more people from using your product and prevent those who do use it getting more from it.

How do you remove the barriers to maximise uptake and sales?

Forces Your product is quite capable of doing what customers want but it is time consuming to use. Simply making the product go faster isn't enough; it takes time to actually use the product.

Using your product requires a degree of skill. Maybe customers can master these skills themselves but this takes time, effort and motivation. To get the best results from your product may require professional (paid for) help.

Competitors produce similar products with similar complexities requiring skill and time. Traditionally you compete by adding new features, making it go faster and bundling extras like training or consultancy.

Solution **Make the product radically simpler to use.** Have your designers and engineers completely rethink the product and interface. Look at how customers are using the product and focus on *what they are using it to achieve* rather than *how they do it*.

Eliminate options and extras, apply the *pareto principle* to find the 20% of product that is used 80% of the time. Consider applying CORE PRODUCT ONLY (Kelly, 2005b) to your product and service offerings.

Segment your customers and potential customers so you can better understand who buys your products and what they are doing with your products. Offering different products to specific customer groups will help target functionality. (SEGMENTED CUSTOMERS describes this activity in more detail.)

Look for customer segments that your product(s) could serve better. A simpler product should appeal to more customers allowing you to sell more products. Although reaching a bigger market may mean reducing your price.

Consequences Removing the skills barrier will open your product to new customers and new markets. Many existing customers will also benefit from

the changes.

Eliminating the need for costly professional advice will reduce the ownership costs of your product and accelerate payback for customers on their investment. However, elimination of professional advice will remove consulting fees if you have been supplying advice as well as the product. You may choose to exit the consultancy aspects of your business - thereby simplifying your business model - or concentrate advice on higher value assignments.

In the short run you may gain an advantage over your rivals by breaking the existing model of competition. They may respond in kind or they may choose to compete on features. In the longer term you face the challenge of adding new abilities without complicating the product.

Some of your customers will not value the simplified product, such customers will have already overcome the barriers to use and see value the advanced features. By segmenting your customer base you can provide a different products to different customers. However such an option might be costly and detract from your focus on a simpler product, therefore it may be better to accept the loss of these customers so you can concentrate you product on a bigger market.

Conversely, a simpler product may bring you new customers who in time may want more advanced features. You may exploit this effect by deliberately excluding certain features from the simpler product in order to encourage upgrades. Again, you need to segment and understand your customers and know your own objectives.

Variations

Wizards and other interface devices may simplify your product but will only hide complexity. Sometimes you need to go further.

Examples

Blogger made it radically easier to create a web-page and consequently changed the way many people use the web. Tools like BlogJet simplify Blogger further still.

Amazon is catalogue shopping made easier and faster.

Apple's iPod combined simplicity with styling to reinvent the MP3 player and redefine the market.

Also known as

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Related patterns

CORE PRODUCT ONLY (Kelly, 2005b) describes a similar approach aimed at reducing costs to allow for price reductions. While this differs from SIMPLER PRODUCT which aims increase sales by simplifying the product the two patterns are complementary.

Sources

Author's observation.

4 Thumbnails for related patterns

Onsite customer	<p>At the time of writing I am unable to find <i>Onsite customer</i> written as a pattern or presented to a PLoP workshop. It is not contained in the <i>EPISODES pattern language</i> (Cunningham, 1996) or <i>Organizational Agile Patterns of Software Development</i> (Coplien and Harrison, 2004).</p> <p><i>Onsite customer</i> is listed as a pattern on the <i>Agile Process Adoption</i> wiki (http://agileprocessadoption.com/wiki/index.php?title=Onsite_Customer). However this description is more of a thumbnail than an actual pattern e.g. it lacks a problem statement. No author is given for this pattern neither does it appear to have been workshopped at a PLoP.</p>
CORE PRODUCT ONLY	Reduce costs by only supplying the core product, anything extra should be billed separately. (Kelly, 2005b)
PRODUCTS WITH SERVICES	Technically complicated products are not commodities; they can be hard to use. Therefore, offer services to help the customers in addition to the product, e.g. a support desk and training courses. (Kelly, 2006a)
CONTINUING SERVICES FOR PRODUCTS	Complex products often require ongoing maintenance and support. The company that makes the product already knows a lot about the product so well positioned to do this activity too. By sharing knowledge between services and products operations both can be improved. (Kelly, 2005a)
ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT	Continue to actively work with customers even after a sale has closed, this will allow you to identify future opportunities and sell more products. (Kelly, 200X)
CORPORATE CERTIFIED EXPERTS	You and your customers want to know who is competent to work with the product in depth. Your staff can't do all the work. Therefore, segment the user base by offering to certify those experts who know the product in depth. (Kelly, 2006a)
SIMPLE PRODUCT VARIATIONS	Product variations allow you to differentiate your product from competitors and provide your customers with a choice they value. But variations can be expensive to produce and support; therefore, offer simple variations on the product, e.g. choice of colours. (Kelly, 2005b)

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6 History

Date	Event
June 2007	Shepherding ends
March 2007	Shepherding begins
January 2007	Submitted to EuroPLoP 2007
December 2006	First draft

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