Leadership Vision for 2022
Top 3 Strategic Priorities for High Tech Leaders
From Rishi Sood, GVP, Technology & Service Providers

As we continue to navigate through and emerge from the global COVID-19 pandemic, business leaders are recognizing the possibility of long-lasting changes in how we do business, even after the immediate threat of COVID-19 has waned.

When, where and how we work is forever altered. As a result, the process for decision making — rooted in content consumption, collaboration and consensus building — has fundamentally shifted.

Accelerated digital technology innovation, changing buyer behavior and new business models add complex dimensions to how technology service providers think about every part of the organization. Technology spending is democratizing and is increasingly driven by business leaders seeking to accelerate digital initiatives. The market has changed, so technology vendors need to adapt.

Demand for digital transformation will fuel double-digit growth in spending on enterprise applications, infrastructure software, and managed services and cloud infrastructure services with enterprises investing ahead of revenue expectations in areas such as analytics, cloud computing, customer experience and security.

For large enterprises, this means nearly every company is becoming a tech company and every market will be even more competitive in 2022. Successful leaders will update their storytelling and key points of differentiation, obtain deeper insight on new buying behaviors, drive continuous product management practices, outperform competitors across the entire customer life cycle, plot their future ambitions/ transformation strategies and overcome the talent crunch.

Gartner Leadership Vision provides top-level guidance to leaders and their teams on where to focus — based on our data-driven research. We’re providing detailed insights to our clients across dozens of roles, and we’re now excited to share excerpts with the business community beyond our clients. We hope this will help you to focus discussions with your teams, peers and other leaders, so you can more quickly and effectively diagnose priorities and actions, especially as you solidify your strategic plans for 2022.

Rishi Sood
Gartner Research & Advisory
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The “Postcrisis” World Presents a Generational Opportunity and Challenge for High Tech Leaders

Navigating these issues determines your positioning in 2022 for growth and success.

Every Opportunity Is a Digital Opportunity

68% of companies are actively accelerating their investments in digital transformation.

Separate the Signals and Noise in a Dynamic Market

General managers must plan for five signals shaping the technology products and services landscape.

Drive the Future by Raising Effectiveness

General managers focusing on effectiveness project a 1.4x higher growth rate than less effective competitors.

Source: Gartner
Leadership Vision for 2022: Top 3 Strategic Priorities for High Tech Leaders

Forces and Actions for the Technology General Manager

**Anywhere, anytime operations drive success**

Anywhere, anytime operations business strategy goes beyond enabling a workforce with mobile devices and remote access alone. It describes an organization that uses technology, team structures, processes, skills and tools to empower a dispersed workforce, harness a distributed infrastructure and serve a ubiquitous customer base.

**Companies expect more of providers**

A business that leads with technology also has stronger preferences for the way providers work, rather than the features, functions or cost of any particular product. These businesses expect providers to work with them and value their ability to do so.

**The fall of globalization: Technology zones**

As interest in economic nationalism grows, the focus of the technology general manager will shift from efficiency gains in spaces between business operations across countries to when and how to exploit the distinctions within balkanized technology zones.

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**Actions for the technology general manager**

- Pick and exploit your spots in the anywhere GDP. Avoid chasing the trend.
- Increase focus on innovation, analytics and situationally specific solutions, generating value by increasing services engineering and other resource flexibility.
- Support digital national sovereignty in product plans and service operations, know your markets and serve the markets you know as global consistency declines.
Embrace Anywhere, Anytime Operations

By 2023, 40% of organizations will blend virtual and physical experiences, leading to increased workforce productivity and customer reach.

Prerequisites

• Digital first, remote first. Make digital the default experience and remote, the default delivery model.

• Digitally enhanced physical spaces. Where physical spaces are required, provide digital enhancements to services.

• Distributed business capabilities. Deliver capabilities seamlessly across multiple physical and virtual spaces.

Source: Gartner
Prepare for Higher Customer Expectations

When a company puts technology at the core of its business model, its expectations of high tech providers change from what the product does to how the provider innovates and works with the company.

Source: Gartner

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**IT Enables Business**

**Leads With Technology**

![Chart showing the difference between IT Enables Business and Leads With Technology in various business metrics.](chart)

Source: Gartner
Optimize for Increased Nationalism

In response to growing pressure from citizens and businesses to address the rapidly increasing negative aspects of globalization, governments are focused on explicitly nationalist regulation, trade and tax policy. As a result, citizens and businesses in different countries or “technology zones” will have increasingly different commercial, regulatory and digital environments through which tech and service providers will have to navigate to do business.

Source: Gartner
Leadership Vision for 2022: Top 3 Strategic Priorities for High Tech Leaders
Challenges and Actions for the Technology Product Manager

**Overcoming a lack of data-based decisions**

Today, most product managers are held back by a lack of data — with their insights being confined to whatever they get from sales, financial and operational data. In today’s product markets, reliance on such lagging data sources can be extremely limiting. Product management leaders must begin to capitalize on the new wave of near-real-time usage and behavioral data.

**Actions for the technology product manager**

Strengthen the decision-making culture among product managers by encouraging hypothesis-based problem solving and discouraging preconceived use of data.

**Changing buyer behaviors**

The challenges for product management come from the pace and scope of technology innovation. As markets become more and more global, and as competition intensifies in either fragmented or consolidated technology markets, product management leaders and their teams must identify new ways to differentiate their products and services.

**Actions for the technology product manager**

Develop an outcome-driven mindset that guides all phases of product planning, development and validation — especially when looking to differentiate the product, build compelling product and customer experiences, and prioritize product investments.

**Focusing on what’s most important**

The 2020 Gartner Product Management Survey revealed that product managers evenly split their time across at least 10 activities — strategic, tactical and collaborative — with no single activity accounting for more than 15% of their estimated allocations.

**Actions for the technology product manager**

Achieving specialization becomes the way that product managers can focus on activities essential to delivering valuable solutions to customer problems. This allows product managers to lead complex responsibilities such as continuous product management.

Source: Gartner
Drive Data-Led Behavior Throughout Product Management

Whether the objective is to be data-driven, data-informed or data-inspired (or some combination of all three), product management leaders and their teams must start prioritization and efforts around enhancing their decision-making processes with available and real-time data.

Source: Gartner

Recommended Next Steps
1. Design training programs to encourage data-led mindsets in product management tasks.
2. Capture and communicate examples of successful data usage in product management decision making.
3. Explore available datasets to improve customer experiences.
Focus on Outcomes Throughout the Product Life

The focus on outcomes is one of the significant changes in the outside-in approach. Product management leaders have, in the past, recognized the importance of customer requirements and feedback — turning these into integral inputs to the early planning, development and introduction phases of a product’s life cycle. The outcomes mindset keeps the focus on the business value and impact of the technology.

**Recommended Next Steps**

1. Establish guidance within the organization as to what defines customer business outcomes.
2. Communicate the outcomes in the value proposition.
3. Design product experiences around defined outcomes.
4. Know your specific customer outcomes.

Source: Gartner
Create Specialization in Product Management Teams

As engines of growth and deliverers of continuous product management, product management organizations and their leaders and teams must grow, not only in numbers but also in specialization.

Recommended Next Steps

1. Establish and strengthen three product management specialty roles.
2. Develop the “architect of outcomes” mindset (in product management role).
3. Identify skills needs and gaps within the team.

Source: Gartner
Being a Strategic Partner Demands a Shift in Marketing Focus

Marketing, which engages with every customer-facing function and each external stakeholder group, is radically impacted by the monumental change in the process for decision making. Tech marketing is accountable for preparing the organization but challenged by the need to respond to this shift through well-targeted and dynamic content and campaigns.

Marketing tech products for growth in a postpandemic world demands that marketing teams seize the opportunity to be strategic partners within the enterprise. Failing to do this risks relegating these teams to a marketing services model.
Challenges and Actions for the Technology Product Marketer

Marketing is short-term-focused

Tech product marketers will need to hone their skills at balancing short-term campaign planning cycles with longer-term strategic planning and resource allocation for those strategic priorities. This means creating a long-term vision informed by data — specifically a forward-looking view of target market segments, ideal customer profiles and buyer personas.

Managing the expanding channel mix

Post-COVID-19, tech product marketers are now managing an ever-expanding set of channels. For many, the broader the universe of channel options grows, the more complexity they must manage. Amid uncertainty about which channels to select, tech product marketers face the added challenge of needing to allocate resources, plan marketing campaigns and create content to satisfy the needs of an even greater number of channels.

Renewals are really buying decisions

The Gartner 2021 User Influence on Software Decisions Survey shows that 22% of workers are only using the minimum application capabilities. Of respondents, 34% are likely to disparage a solution to their peers or publicly. These vocal detractors undermine even the best tech marketing efforts and have the potential to negatively impact renewals.

Actions for the technology product marketer

Revise marketing metrics to better align marketing with corporate objectives, such as retention rate, and connect short- and long-term marketing priorities.

Embrace a range of marketing channels based on where your customers spend their time, how they prefer to learn and how they are influenced.

Market across the customer life cycle by partnering with customer success to drive adoption and retention, using account-based marketing to enact account plans and engage current customers.

Source: Gartner
Balance Short- and Long-Term Priorities

The ability to balance short- and long-term priorities starts with a balanced view of marketing’s impact on strategic business outcomes. Account for long-term success metrics like share of wallet, market share, customer success metrics and customer retention rate, but link outcomes to KPIs used to measure short-term tactical and operational marketing execution.

Source: Gartner
Align Marketing Channel Mix to Audience Behavior

Activities Most Likely to Catch Attention and Inspire Exploration
Sum of Top 3 Ranks and Rank 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Sum of Top 3</th>
<th>1st choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploring the website of a known vendor for new products or services</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly marketing to you (email, phone, social, regular mail) by vendor</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A partner directly marketing to you (email, phone, social, regular mail)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor participation in third-party events (in-person)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor-sponsored events (in-person)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor participation in third-party events (virtual)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine (ads or placement)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor-sponsored events (virtual)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence on social networks (ads, pages or posts)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print, TV and radio advertising</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather than simply utilizing more marketing channels, tech product marketers must adapt to where buyers want to engage, how they prefer to learn and what channels they’re likely to use to inform decisions across the buying and owning journeys.

n = 1,500, aware of enterprise technology buying activities
Q. Which three vendor activities are most likely to catch your attention and inspire you to explore their products or services further?
Source: Gartner 2021 Technology End-User Buying Behavior Survey
Formalize Retention Programs

Establish a relationship with the customer success team that transcends individual projects and instead creates a cycle of reviewing customer feedback to understand gaps in adoption and utilization across the entire account team.

Retaining, and growing, current customers is increasingly a top use case for account-based marketing (ABM).

Source: Gartner

Q. Please rank the top 3 ABM use cases (by priority importance) that your organization runs? Top 1 Rank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prospects</th>
<th>Customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 (n = 232)</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 (n = 217)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 (n = 193)</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Source: Gartner 2021 Technology Marketing Benchmarks Survey

Customer Success Management Focus

- Using data for a comprehensive view of customer throughout life cycle
- Proactively guiding customers to value
- Continuously monitoring customer health to drive action

Establish a relationship with customer success teams to understand gaps in adoption/utilization.

Source: Gartner
Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for high tech leaders:

Webinar
The Technology General Manager Agenda: Priorities and Best Practices for 2022
Discover what is required to be successful in 2022 and beyond.

Webinar
The Gartner 2022 Leadership Vision for Product Management Leaders
Maximize product management efficiency and effectiveness.

Webinar
The Gartner 2022 Leadership Vision for Product Marketers: 3 Emerging Trends
Deliver and demonstrate marketing’s value.

Webinar
The 7 Disruptions That Will Most Impact Tech Providers in the Next 5 Years
Take advantage of the coming disruptions.

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