



White paper

We need a spinning weasel!

Technologists don't always know what the customer wants

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Scoutwest, Inc.

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Some product ideas are just not grounded in customer need. For instance, have you ever used the “Scroll Lock” key on your keyboard? Software companies may have a more difficult time with this because new technologies are so tempting to engineers, and pressures to keep skills current sometimes cause technology companies to jump the gun and create products, based on those technologies that their customers don’t really need. Watch out when your technology wonk comes back from a conference and says, “we need a spinning weasel icon in our app!” That’s the difference between being a technology-driven company and a market-driven company. Features are chosen for their “coolness” factor rather than their value to customers.

Technologists think customers don’t know what they want, so why listen to them. They get frustrated talking with customers because they’re always a generation or two behind the bleeding-edge and they can’t readily tell you how the latest hyped-up technology could help them. How could they possibly know what they want when they don’t even know the latest terminologies?

Being a market-driven company is not about having a lot of features; it’s about having the right ones. It’s not about spending time learning technology; it’s about spending time learning customers. Are customers willing to pay for your solution? Do they perceive your product to have the perfect mix of features just for them? The ideal product is the one that has the “magic” that tells customers that it’s the right one for them. The lights go on, and they can’t stop themselves from buying, and then telling others about it. If customers aren’t raving, then you haven’t got the right mix yet. Seeking the magic means seeking the customers. Spinning weasel ideas come from people distanced from customers.

About Us

Scoutwest, Inc. develops and publishes project management and time tracking products for consulting, manufacturing, government, and general business applications.

Thousands of small to large businesses, in dozens of countries worldwide, trust their mission critical business processes to Scoutwest products. Standard Time® and Standard Issue® work together to offer well-rounded project management solutions.

We specialize in packaged software for timesheets, project management, time tracking, defect tracking, and issue tracking. Standard Time is a web-based timesheet that also runs on Windows, Palm OS, and Pocket PC. It can be used for client billing and task management. Standard Issue is used for bug tracking and general issue tracking.

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