

Strategy 2 Market Presented Exploratory Product Development (ExPD) at the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Conference at the University of Michigan

The presentation included an overview on the differences between ExPD, an adaptive product development process, and the traditional structured phased-and-gated process.

Chicago, IL ([PRWEB](#)) March 16, 2017 -- Mary Drotar and Kathy Morrissey of Strategy 2 Market presented Exploratory PD® (ExPD) at the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Conference held on the University of Michigan campus. Participants included a mix of engineering students and practitioners.

The discussion included an overview on the differences between ExPD, an adaptive product development process, and the traditional structured phased-and-gated process.

ExPD is an adaptive process that explicitly identifies and drives down the risks that can result in product failure. By organizing product development activities focused on resolving the most important risks, the process readily adapts to the nuances of each project as it evolves over time while eliminating unnecessary activities and paperwork. This translates into speed.

Conversely, the phased-and-gated process is a very structured approach that seeks to control risk and ensure that the appropriate work is completed through a structured sequence of prescribed activities, deliverables, and decisions. The process also attempts to minimize risk through up-front planning by setting a detailed budget, and timeline. These elements are not easily adapted when unexpected changes are encountered during project execution, resulting in project delays.

Two key questions asked by the participants:

“Is ExPD best used for breakthrough products, and the phased-and-gated approach best used for simple product revisions?”

ExPD is an excellent process for breakthrough products. However, Strategy 2 Market is finding that there can be project uncertainty with product revisions. They suggest that the project team determine the level of uncertainty for all project types and they may find ExPD to be a better fit.

Strategy 2 Market recently worked with a company that had a product stalled in development, wasting millions of dollars. The core issue was the company thought their project was a simple product revision. They did not recognize the uncertainty associated with incorporating a new technology.

The project experienced repeated delays as unexpected problems arose. If this technology was identified early in the process as having uncertainty (like you do in ExPD), the team could have reduced this uncertainty, before entering heavy spend in development.

Companies are finding that the phased-and-gated process does not work well for many product development projects, such as entering global markets, creating new product categories and tackling new technologies.

“How do you ensure that uncertainty is properly reviewed by the project team members?”



Strategy 2 Market developed a tool called the Business Fit Framework™ (BFF) that prompts the project team through four lenses of uncertainty; including external environment, internal infrastructure, technical and commercial feasibility. These prompts help the team to determine what areas they need to focus on for resolving project uncertainty and risks.

[Read more about ExPD](#)

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