

Building a Promising Tech Product: The CredPad Experience

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It's quite shocking. With an abundance of coding skills has come an abundance of copycat apps. Building a tech product for the international market requires much more than coding skills. It requires three areas of expertise or steps:

- Step 1: Innovate a solution to a problem
- Step 2: Design business and product integrally
- Step 3: Develop software

The first two are creation steps that must precede development. The copycat apps missed the creation steps and instead started with development. How did I get all three steps done?

Step 1: Innovate a solution to a problem

The product must solve an existing serious problem that individuals or organizations are struggling with – and do it in a unique way. Also, the problem should be something that a large number of customers care about.

Let's look at a problem. Take the achievers of the world – the top talent, the contributors, or whatever you call them. Those among the achievers who rely on a resume to promote themselves are probably stuck in the crowd – with jobs and paychecks that aren't consistent with the relatively bigger value that they contribute. The resume can't differentiate them. Competing resumes have similar content. Worse, the resume isn't even trusted. Even the best-written and best-looking resume is still only a list of alleged achievements.

Here's how CredPad – a personal digital showcase – solves the problem for achievers. Let's look at CredPad's primary output called "Contribution Chart." CredPad generates this chart based on your responses to a questionnaire. CredPad gets you to demonstrate your contribution in a business-savvy way. You present your contribution in the context of what matters to the recipient of your contribution (say, your employer). You structure it in a business format and write it using business language. Employers can instantly relate to it. Besides providing information, you also add evidences such as customer emails and awards that support your claims, which ensure the chart's credibility. In summary, the chart gives employers the most accurate sense possible of your true value, thus differentiating you.

The chart is based on a strategic alignment framework called AlignWay™ that I created by drawing from my works on strategy and transformation. Besides the contribution chart, CredPad has other features that make it a complete platform for achievers. CredPad differentiates achievers and sets them up to win bigger jobs and paychecks that are consistent with their bigger value.

By design, CredPad brings benefits to employers as well. Organizations can now complete their hire/retain processes significantly faster. Instead of conducting multiple pre-hire checks or a complicated annual assessment, they can take a look at an individual's 1-page contribution chart, view evidences, and instantly know the individual's value and proven capability.

Whether or not your product solves an important problem is important not only for your customers, but is also at the top of the list for investors and acquirers.

Step 2: Design business and product integrally

You have seen multiple specialist groups working in a project. Each one is great individually, but the overall value is often diminished or worse – there's conflict and chaos. That's the opposite of what you want if your goal is to build a great tech product. Business model, marketing, sales, customer experience, process design, technology, onboarding, user experience, content, and visual design must all come together to produce blended or integrated architectures and designs.

The CredPad business succeeds when customers get jobs and paychecks consistent with their value. This principle helps me to keep focus on the design of the customer success journey. In reality, a product typically can only take customers so far – not all the way to success. For example, your email software helps deliver your message, but it can't ensure that your recipients read it. The CredPad journey too is only a subset of the customer success journey. There are gaps between the two. Holistic or integral design helped me to identify product features and services that can close those gaps.

While designing the CredPad journey, I used what's now called a product-led approach, where we integrated onboarding and some sales into the product. I was able to do such integration because I have created and used integrated methods in hundreds of projects executed for global organizations.

As for the user interface, I got the architecture right, but the visual design wasn't good. In fact, some reviewers who saw the Sign-In page didn't go further thinking that the product wasn't ready for review. I hired a professional visual designer to improve the look of the UI.

Now you see why and how several disciplines and factors must come together.

Step 3: Develop software

Most founders of today's software startups seem to be coders. I'm not. So, I hired a small app development firm. The firm helped choose the latest technologies and used some really efficient coding techniques. They had one strong fullstack expert who had a few folks working for him and he could also easily do the integrations with the cloud service provider, the payment gateway, etc. Apart from these advantages, there was one problem: there were big delays at every milestone. You should make sure that your vendor team has reasonable project management and process capabilities to deliver on time. Better yet, non-tech founders should get a tech cofounder and also hire their own team as soon as it becomes feasible.

We're now planning for tech support and for upgrading with features. Any further software changes will be done only based on error reports and customer suggestions. It's important to seek and use customer feedback rather than keep improving the product in an isolated way.

Marketing and sales matter for eventual success

We have innovated, designed, and developed a tech product – not perfect, but promising. It is promising because we first got steps 1 and 2 done right and then we made sure that the app has no known bugs.

Yet, an app is not a company. Our marketing and sales must now reach the right audience, win them over, and help bring them success. An important and early marketing task is positioning. For decades I've been a fan of the book "Positioning" by Ries & Trout, but I also learned from April Dunford's recent positioning book "Obviously Awesome." Positioning influences your business model, messaging, and pretty much everything. It's crucial to get this right. As for CredPad, I earlier talked a bit about positioning elements such as current alternative, customers, and value. Another essential marketing task is a content campaign. I created over 100 social posts before we launched the campaign. Here's one of our posts.



Proof

Does Elon Musk drive a Tesla? Does a creator use his or her own product? For two decades, I maintained a website to show all the content I had about my career achievements. I have now moved my profile to CredPad. My four contributions, the supporting evidences, and an upgraded resume all look concise and compelling in CredPad. I'm super excited and I look forward to making a lot of customers happy.

References

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About the author



Mr. Pradeep Henry is globally recognized for bringing business and human perspectives to technology-intensive initiatives. Since the mid-80s, Pradeep has contributed to the success of Cognizant, TCS, the Indian tech industry, and the technical writing profession. He is the Founder of, CredPad. His contributions are showcased in CredPad.