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The Process of Product Development by Angie Turner

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What is Product Development?

This is the creation of new products with new or different characteristics, which offer new or additional benefits to the customers. This may involve the modification of an existing product, its presentation or the formulation of an entirely new product that satisfies a newly defined customer want or niche.

There is nothing simple about the process. It requires keen attention to competitors, customer needs now and in future, the ability to finance prototypes, manufacturing processes, a creative marketing, and communications plan.

The Process:

Though the processes are unique to each product, the basics are outlined below.

â€¢ Idea: The idea starts with a need-this product should be beneficial to potential customers .This idea becomes a sketch or a set of sketches. The visualization is critical in evaluating, communicating and documenting the specifics of the idea. All notes, specifications and concerns about the direction of the product need thorough documentation.

â€¢ Patent and Market analysis: It is critical to meet a patent attorney at the onset of the project for the following reasons:

1. Filing a patent with the products unique features protects one from others who may try to use this idea.

2. Existing patent concepts that need to be avoided during the product development process.

Understanding facets of markets such as similar products, market size, production costs and financial projections are also critical.

â€¢ Product requirement document: This is a list of all documents necessary for a fully functioning product such as intended users, buyers, selling cost, production, schedule and many more.

â€¢ Industrial Design: This is where the product begins to take shape.

â€¢ Mechanical design: CAD files of the product are created.

â€¢ Prototypes and evaluation: Prototypes are made of various materials and are tested for safety purposes.

â€¢ Final Mechanical Development.

â€¢ Tooling and component sourcing .This is done to manufacture high quantities at low costs.

â€¢ Pre Production: Parts are fabricated and assembled.

â€¢ Production: Mass production begins.

â€¢ Sales, marketing and distribution.

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