HIGH ACHIEVER

WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU: UNLOCKING LEVEL FIVE IN THE PRODUCT MATURITY MODEL

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Key Takeaways in This Report:

What Your Customers Don't Know Can Hurt You: Unlocking Level Five in the Product Maturity Model

Customer success, at its core, is about helping customers use your product to its fullest potential. But that's the catch: many customers don't even know what their potential is. They don't see the bigger picture. They're focused on the immediate. The requests. The needs. The surface-level outcomes.

Here's the thing—meeting those needs isn't enough. It's table stakes. If your customer success team's focus is only on fulfilling customer requests and hitting immediate goals, you're missing out on something much bigger. You're missing out on the opportunity to unlock level five of the Product Maturity Model. And that's where the real value lies. The real growth.

Who Should Be Involved in the Task Force and Why

Building level five of the Product Maturity Model isn't something that happens in a vacuum. It's not just about customer success teams pushing customers forward —it's a company-wide initiative. This task force needs the involvement of product, engineering, sales, marketing, and customer success. Why? Because product maturity isn't just about how the customer uses the product—it's about how the product evolves to meet the highest vision of success. Everyone plays a role.

Product teams need to understand the customer's growth potential, sales needs to speak the same language, and customer success must be the bridge between them all. If all these teams are not aligned, it will be difficult for the maturity model to reach its full potential.

The Importance of Storytelling: Creating the Vision

At level five, the customer's journey isn't just about numbers or milestones; it's about storytelling. It's about painting a picture of what peak maturity looks like. This is the vision you have to create—one where the customer isn't just satisfied but **transformed**.

When you show a customer this vision of their full potential, it's not about features. It's about them seeing themselves in the future, with your product fully embedded in their organization. It's about telling a story where their business is running smoother, faster, and more effectively, all thanks to the way they've matured in your product.

This is where the narrative starts. It's the story that links their success to your product's peak performance. And oncethat story is clear, you've laid the groundwork for everything that follows.

Defining the Ultimate Use Case: Dream Big

We're talking about imagining what the full potential of your product looks like. Not just in terms of what's measurable today but what could be possible. What would the ultimate use case look like if the product were perfectly integrated into the customer's workflow?

This is where you let go of the constraints of the present and imagine the ideal scenario. Think about the customers who are close to that ideal today — what are they doing right? These are your north stars. But be warned: this might reveal gaps in the product. It might show you areas that need to be improved or features that are superfluous. You have to beokay with that. The goal is to define the future, not to make do with the present.

Start with the End in Mind: Be Aspirational

At this stage, it's easy to get bogged down in the small details. But the key to success here is to start with the end inmind. Picture what the final product will look like when customers are using it at its peak maturity. Where does that take them as an organization? What does their success look like?

Be aspirational. Don't limit the vision to just what's feasible now — let the possibilities take shape and give your teams something to strive for. When you paint this aspirational picture, it becomes a beacon. Everyone — from product to engineering to customer success — knows what they're working toward.

Creating the Rough Shape: The Sculpture Analogy

Once you've defined the end goal, it's time to get your hands dirty. Think of it like sculpting a piece of clay. When youstart, it's a formless block. But as you work, you start to chip away and form the rough shape of what's to come. That rough shape is the product. But the fine details come later.

Here's where it gets tricky: the fine details of the product — how the customer interacts with it on a granular level — are the small elements that bring the vision to life. How the customer uses certain features, which features they use most, and what steps they take to realize the broader vision you've set for them.

It's at this stage that you start to look under the covers of the product. Break it down. See how the elements connect. Are there places where customers get stuck? Or areas where they breeze through because the product is intuitive? These details will help you refine the picture you've been sculpting.

The Fallacy: Customer Success Isn't Just About Meeting Outcomes

Here's where the fallacy comes into play: too many customer success teams fall into the trap of thinking their job is just to meet the customer's desired outcomes. It's a well-worn belief. But the problem with this mindset is that it limits thepotential of the customer and the product. The truth is, customer success isn't about meeting expectations — it's about exceeding them. It's about showing customers that their success is bigger than just meeting a checklist of outcomes. It's about helping them reach a higher level of maturity, where the product is so deeply embedded in their operations that they can't imagine life without it.

The fallacy is thinking that if you meet the customer's stated needs, that's enough. **It's not**. Your job is to push thembeyond their comfort zone, to show them what they can become if they fully embrace your product. And to do that, you have to help them see the bigger picture. You have to guide them to that level five.

The Importance of Articulating the Vision: Can Your Team Tell the Story?

For level five of the Product Maturity Model to be unlocked, it's not just about creating the vision — it's about making sure everyone in your organization can clearly articulate that vision to customers. Whether it's the customer success manager, the sales team, or the product team, everyone who interacts with customers needs to be able to tell a compelling story about what the customer's organization could look like at peak performance and how using your product at peak maturity gets them there.

But here's the hard truth: **Can anyone at your company tell that story today?** Perhaps a seasoned sales engineer or a tenured product manager? If you can't, you're not alone. In fact, I've found this to be true at nearly every company I've worked with. The reality is that most companies lack the clear, cohesive messaging that links their product's capabilities to the customer's ultimate goals. Without this, it's impossible for customers to see how they can fully realize their potential through your product.

The Critical Gap: Understanding the Customer's Maturity

Studies show that nearly **85%** of customers make a purchasing decision without a solid understanding of what their own organizational maturity should look like. They come into the conversation without a vision of what success could be. Add that almost **100%** of those customers will buy your product without fully understanding how it will help them reach that ultimate organizational maturity (that they can't even define for themselves) and that is one Grand Canyon of a major gap.

The problem is, if customers don't understand how your product will help them evolve toward their ultimate goal, they're unlikely to fully embrace it or see its true value. This is where your team must step in. Customer success, sales, and product teams need to be aligned in communicating how your product helps customers achieve that ultimate goal of organizational maturity. If your team can't paint that picture, you're opening yourself up to churn and leaving potential on the table.

Conclusion: Creating the Future

Building level five of the Product Maturity Model is not a linear process. It requires vision, teamwork, and a willingness to challenge what's possible. It's about looking at your product and your customers through a new lens — one that focuses on maturity, not just immediate outcomes.

When you create that vision, when you start with the end in mind and build the shape of what's to come, you're not just meeting customer needs—you're unlocking their full potential. You're sculpting the future, and you're showing your customers a version of themselves they didn't even know was possible.