

**New Product Launch: 10 Proven Strategies**,  
by Joan Schneider with Jeanne Yocum.  
Deerfield, Illinois: Stagnito Communications,  
2004. 246 + xviii pages. US\$ 24.95.

*New Product Launch* defines *launch* as “A powerful, multidisciplinary process that successfully propels a new product or service into the marketplace... and sustains it over time” (p. 12). Further, it declares, “The process of planning and executing an effective new product launch has never been more difficult nor the stakes higher, for both the companies launching the new product and the people involved in the launch” (p. 2).

Joan Schneider provides a public relations (PR) perspective, and her seasoned advice comes from more than 35 years of experience. Reading *New Product Launch* will help launch practitioners such as product managers and team members avoid common launch mistakes that relate to PR and advertising when planning a market launch. The book’s conclusions are based on interview results from ten launch experts and survey results from 91 product executives at US-based companies that had annual revenues between \$10 million and \$10 billion. The companies represent food and beverages goods (61 percent), sporting goods (16 percent), and apparel and shoes (13 percent) (p. 45).

Schneider presents “10 strategies” as seasoned advice. They are the following:

- Treat launch as a separate phase
- Have a plan

- Don’t carve your plan in stone
- Learn to live with the inevitable delays
- Spend money on products that are “new”
- Assemble an expert launch crew
- Brand/product managers make the best team leaders
- Bigger budgets fuel success
- Consumer-focused spending prevents crash landings
- Don’t overlook PR

These 10 items were derived from the self-reported measures of market performance of “highly successful” and “less successful” launches (p. 45). The 10 items are not differentiated by relative importance, and these conclusions apply to most industries. Individuals with strong backgrounds in areas such as engineering, business, or sales that have new responsibilities for product commercialization will find valuable cross-functional lessons in *New Product Launch*.

Starting in chapter 13, the book shifts from a summary mode to a “how to” mode. Schneider recommends changing the classic Stage-Gate® model to include a market launch Stage-Gate (p. 106). The first component of the market launch Stage-Gate is launch plan development. Schneider reports that the more successful launches began launch plan development as much as two years before final product shipment.

Chapter 17 begins with a traditional paradigm for developing a new product launch plan and then presents potential flaws in the traditional path. “Creating a launch plan often isn’t an integrated team effort, because two or more teams are working separately – the client, the ad agency, the PR firm, and others” (p.138). *New Product Launch* reports that “The best launch plans are developed by a healthy

mix of internal people (including marketing, sales, R&D, operations, finance, and PR) as well as external consultants (advertising, PR, Web, promotions, and other agencies) and consumers of the potential product (whether they be adults, teenagers, or children)” (p. 140).

*New Product Launch* is a practical book offering advice on many topics that you might encounter in a launch. The book is punctuated with short discussions on topics such as the history and implications of slotting fees (Chapter 5) and product positioning (Chapter 20). Chapter 23, titled “Hot Items in Your Launch Tool Kit,” include word-of-mouth, blogs, experimental marketing, and product placement. The Appendix (pp. 232-236) presents a launch start-up checklist that includes categories such as advertising agency items, marketing communications collateral, and metrics in the appendix.

Although *New Product Launch* does not provide any revolutionary advice on the market launch of products such as foods and beverages, R&D and marketing specialists can learn from it about contributions from PR and advertising specialists in a new product launch.

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