

The Development of a Decision Support Model for Product Accessories at Axis Communications

The accessory product portfolio at Axis has grown significantly in later years and this comes at a cost. Increased complexity of operations now forces them to make better decisions regarding accessories. To help with this, a decision support model has been developed.

The decision to develop new products is one of the most critical within a company. Many new products fail to deliver and it is therefore paramount that the right products are developed. Of certain interest is the decision to allow a product to proceed into development. This is taken early on in the product development process and is the “point of no return”, as a majority of resources are consumed after this point. Allowing the right product to pass this decision point is therefore critical for a successful product portfolio.

Academic literature has focused much on describing this decision point for a company’s main product but almost nothing is written about product accessories. While these are not the main focus, they contribute to costs for development and operations during their life cycle. Decisions regarding accessories are therefore important as well. To develop a decision support model for accessories we first developed one for main products. This by combining findings from literature and practice through a literature review followed by a multiple case study at Axis, Husqvarna Group, Thule, Alfa Laval and Sony Mobile. The resulting model can be used to improve product development decisions for companies’ main products.

The first model was then adapted to better fit Axis and their accessories. For this, a condensed version of the first model was chosen. To increase the chances of success, our recommendations were integrated into their current decision making process for their main product, their cameras. In short, our suggestions served to increase awareness of accessories early on to thereby make more informed decisions. We also suggested introducing a post-launch review to learn from previous decisions and make better ones in the future.

Hopefully our research can contribute with valuable insights to Axis and to the academic world. For Axis, the model can help them control their accessory portfolio which frees up resources to use for other important projects. For academics, our study presents these product development decisions from both a theoretical as well as practical perspective.

This article is only a glimpse of the study, to view it in its entirety, please refer to the full thesis named *Accessory Portfolio Planning Model at Axis Communications* by Gustav Nyström and Rasmus Wellander.