

# **Exploring Go-to-Market Strategies for Operational Technology Products**

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#### Abstract

This paper explores the nuances of building a Go-To-Market (GTM) strategy for Operational Technology (OT) products using the example of a salvage auto auctioning company, where operational efficiency, asset tracking, and system reliability are paramount. By examining challenges, market segmentation, value proposition articulation, and deployment strategies, it demonstrates how tailored GTM strategies can drive adoption and long-term success in high-stakes OT environments.

Keywords: Go-To-Market Strategy (GTM), Operational Technology (OT), Internal Technology Deployment, Title Processing System, Product Strategy, Change Management, Value Proposition, Blue Ocean Strategy, ADKAR Model, Ideal Customer Profile (ICP), Market Segmentation, Firmographic Segmentation, Technographic Segmentation, Workflow Automation, Agile Product Development

# 1. Introduction

As industries adopt strategic digitization of operations, the success of technology-based solutions hinges not only on innovation but also on how effectively they are brought to the users. Operational Technology (OT) products, from a simple digital form to intricate IoT systems, serve as critical infrastructure in sectors like manufacturing, energy, logistics, and transportation. These solutions enable safe, efficient, and continuous operations by bridging physical systems with digital intelligence, often in harsh, latency-sensitive, or mission-critical environments where downtime is not an option[1]. However, the complexity of processes, security demands, and integration challenges of OT solutions make the GTM process significantly different from that of consumer or SaaS products.

# 2. Definition of Go-to-Market Strategy

The success of any technology solution significantly depends on the foundation of a strong go-to-market (GTM) strategy. A well-defined GTM strategy is a framework that outlines how an organization will introduce its product to the marketplace. It harmonizes the product's distinct value proposition with the demands of the market by approaching the target audience at the right time and with optimal pricing. Its goal is to enhance customer acquisition and retention strategies, and ultimately propel revenue augmentation. The efficacy of a GTM strategy can profoundly impact a technological product's market infiltration and its enduring success.



Point of departure	Analyse	Design	Deliver	
Business Unit Strategy	Identify the most attractive customer segments and their needs	Design a differentially better value proposition	Optimize sales, ma distribution channels target cu	rketing, pricing and to serve and acquir Istomers
	ය[ද A Market segmentation	-o- Target segment	Brand and marketing	Pricing
•	Competition and demand	<b>⊚</b> ← Value proposition	Sales	Customer
Resource allocation	Customer journey			support

Below diagram depicts the key components of go-to-market (GTM):

#### Fig 1: Key Components of GTM [2]

An example of an effective go-to-market (GTM) strategy within the supply chain sector is exemplified by Project44. This strategy is predicated on their unequivocal positioning as "the visibility layer for global supply chains," which directly addresses the significant challenge posed by fragmented visibility within supply chains. They strategically focused on the **target segment** of large enterprise shippers and logistics providers operating within the retail, manufacturing, and automotive industries, and a **value proposition** that emphasized cost efficiency, enhancement of customer experience, and fortification of operational resilience. Their **acquisition strategy** was characterized by the integration of a highly skilled direct sales team, strategic partnerships with Transportation Management Systems (TMS), targeted digital marketing initiatives, and participation in industry events. Complementing this approach was a versatile tiered **subscription model** that considers both the volume of shipments and the transportation modes used along with a dedicated **customer success team** that ensured the prompt delivery of value, an essential determinant for customer retention in the highly competitive landscape of logistics software.

#### 3. Importance of Go-to-Market Strategy for Operations Tech Products

GTM (go-to-market) is usually associated with consumer-facing or SaaS technology products. However, technology-powered products that improve operations absolutely need GTM strategies, even when they're deployed internally in the company. Here, the customers are the employees or contractors that form the foundation for seamless and compliant operations of the company. Products for these customers encompass solutions to enhance existing workflows, digitize processes, design new processes, or redesign legacy systems. Which eventually leads to serving the clients or partners of the company better. These external stakeholders, though not end-consumers in the traditional sense, are critical to the overall product's success and seamless adoption of technology solutions.

The primary difference is that internal operational products have a more targeted audience and distribution channel than customer-facing products, nevertheless they still require strategic positioning



and messaging to succeed. Before adding these products to the technology team's roadmap, it is essential to define the value they will potentially bring when deployed to the operations department. Additionally, tweaking the format of the traditional GTM strategy and incorporating the concepts Spiral Agile Process Reengineering Approach (SAPRA) can help accomplish this goal. This agile-based approach has been developed to emphasize iterative and incremental improvements, increasing the likelihood of success.[3]

#### 3.1 Operational Context - Title Processing in Salvage Auto Auction Industry

For understanding this concept in an operational context, this paper designs go-to-market strategy for a product that enhances Title Process for the Salvage Auto Auction industry. The automobile auction sector has existed since the 1930s. Throughout the decades, this sector has transformed into a digital auction format, one particular aspect of which is the salvage vehicle auction. Salvage auto auctioning companies primarily deal with vehicles deemed as total loss by insurance carriers. The entire lifecycle, from vehicle assignment, title processing, yard logistics, online bidding, to transportation, is dependent on complex operational workflows. Traditionally, much of this has been managed by fragmented systems, spreadsheets, or manual inputs.

The rise of OT-based solutions in this space aims to modernize yard operations, vehicle tracking, asset routing, and integration with IoT devices for real-time inventory status. These advancements not only enhance efficiency but also improve accuracy in managing the vast array of vehicles, ultimately leading to better decision-making and increased profitability for auction companies.

# 4. Steps to Design Go-to-Market (GTM) Strategy for Operations Tech Products

For this analysis, each GTM component outlined below considers both internal and external stakeholders of product delivery in high-complexity, B2B2C environment of operations while drawing parallels with salvage auto auction industry.

However, first, a successful GTM strategy is build on strong foundation. This foundation defining the business objective. This is also part of broader product strategy, however, clearly defining it as the GTM is being build, helps guide the strategy in correct direction.

Business objective focuses on the value to which the product must align to create tangible results. This can be defined using various frameworks like 5 whys, Problem-solution-impact, OKRs, SMART goals, among many. In context of deploying product that enhances title process in salvage auto auction industry, business objective can align with bringing efficiency and accuracy to this process, which in turn accelerate the revenue realization timeline. Hence, it not only impacts internal operational processes but also provides competitive edge for retaining and acquiring more clients. In this scenario, business objective can be defined as "Reduce average title processing turnaround time by X% in high-volume states by 20YY, through automation and improved validation workflows."

# 4.1 Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) and Operational Personas

Identifying the Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) in simple terms means WHO is this product for. It can be interpreted as understanding which operational roles, departments, or partners are most likely to benefit from technology evolution and are best equipped to adopt it. Rather than focusing purely on buyers in a commercial sense, this section emphasizes the workflow stakeholders and functional users whose jobs



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are directly supported by the product. In this context includesyard management staff, vehicle processing staff, title processors and contractors.

- Jobs To Be Done (JTBD) Framework: This approach focuses on the practical tasks that each operational role is trying to complete. For instance, a title processing team may be "hiring" a new platform to automate lienholder verification, while a dispatch coordinator might seek to reduce time spent manually matching transport providers. Understanding these "jobs" ensures the product is scoped and delivered to address specific workflow inefficiencies, rather than generic business needs[5].
- <u>Empathy Mapping</u>: This framework helps product teams understand the daily friction points of frontline users—what they experience while interacting with legacy systems, physical paperwork, or disjointed tools. For example, a yard general manager may feel overwhelmed by the volume of incoming vehicles and struggle with real-time updates, while a transporter may be frustrated by inaccurate lot release authorization. Mapping these emotional and behavioural cues helps humanize the implementation process and reduce resistance to change.[6]
- <u>Operational Persona Development</u>: Developing detailed personas for each operational stakeholder ensures that communication, training, and feature design align with their unique responsibilities and expectations. These personas go beyond job titles, they outline pain points, information needs, communication styles, and influence within the organization. Examples might include:
- Claims Workflow Analyst Prioritizes product efficiency and document compliance
- $\circ$  Yard Manager Focused on vehicle movement, real-time data access, and employee onboarding
- Title Specialist Needs clarity on jurisdictional rules, lienholder forms, and error reduction
- Regional Buyer Relies on accurate vehicle data and intuitive bidding features for bulk procurement

Hence in operations, GTM success depends on meeting the specific, contextual needs of functional users. Products should be designed and delivered with a deep understanding of who is executing the workflow, how they interact with systems, and what outcome matters most to them.

#### 4.2 Market Segmentation and Targeting

Market segmentation is not only about classifying external customers, but also about recognizing a companies' operational environments, both internal and partner driven. Once categorized, it help find specific environment/ department that are best suited for introducing and scaling new technology. The salvage auto auction industry has multiple operational ecosystems, such as insurance claims teams, vehicle procurement, yard operations, and title processing units. Hence, market segmentation and finding target customers involve classifying these operational ecosystems based on their current workflows, digital maturity, and adoption potential. This can be achieved through following techniques:

• <u>TAM-SAM-SOM Analysis</u>: This framework helps estimate a market segment where product deployment efforts should be prioritized. The Total Addressable Market (TAM) - Serviceable Available Market (SAM) - Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM) framework is not entirely be applicable in operational context, however its concepts can be used. In the example being discussed, Total Addressable Market (TAM) will be all states for which the company does title process. However, realistically the title process is very complex and custom to a state, so leveraging Serviceable Available Market (SAM) concept, next step is to identify one state with least complex process. To further narrow down for first release, it is beneficial to understand SAM's resource



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availability, change readiness, and alignment with strategic goals in various segments. In the example being discussed, if there is a group of yards in the selected state that have lower volume, are enthusiastic to try new technology and infrastructure is easier to install, then that group of yards can be used to do first pilot for the new title process[6].

• <u>Firmographic and Technographic Segmentation</u>: In simple terms, firmographic segmentation is identifying industry segments based on regions, branches or department size. And Technographic segmentation relies on factors like network readiness and hardware and software setup to define the segments. For instance, a salvage yard with high vehicle throughput, dedicated title team, and robust Wi-Fi and document management infrastructure may be more equipped to adopt a new title processing system. Conversely, a yard where operations have very low volume, don't have many titles processed and are still stabilizing basic operations is not a good fit to rollout complex technology solution to.

Operational segmentation ensures that rollout strategies are based on actual usage potential and organizational readiness. This allows product teams to prioritize regions or partners where the technology can quickly demonstrate impact, reduce friction in adoption, and build internal momentum.

#### 4.3 Value Proposition and Positioning

A compelling value proposition isn't just about selling features; it's about articulating how the product improves the day-to-day execution of critical workflows. Especially in the salvage auto auction space, where operations are time-sensitive, compliance-driven, and labor-intensive, the technology solution must clearly communicate how it supports key activities across title processing, vehicle intake, transport coordination, and buyer engagement. This can be achieved using following frameworks:

- <u>Value Proposition Canvas</u>: This framework ensures that product capabilities are mapped directly to operational pain points. For instance, if title clerks are struggling with incomplete lienholder documentation, the platform could provide pre-validated forms and automated reminders that reduce rework and turnaround time. Similarly, for transport coordinators dealing with inefficient dispatching, built-in scheduling tools that sync with lot release times provide immediate, tangible value. The key is to make the user's job smoother, not more complex[7].
- <u>Blue Ocean Strategy:</u> In an industry one problem has many different or similar solutions, differentiation often comes from addressing unmet needs that are beyond feature level optimization. Blue Ocean thinking in operational contexts means finding ways to reduce complexity or expand access. This can be accomplished by leveraging ERRC (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, Create)Grid. In the context of example that is being discussed –

Eliminate	Raise			
• Manual classification of uploaded	<ul> <li>Accuracy of title process</li> </ul>			
documents	<ul> <li>Real-time visibility into backlog</li> </ul>			
• Double data entry between systems				
Reduce	Create			
• Training time for new hire	<ul> <li>Dashboard to track each yards</li> </ul>			
Auditing process time	efficiency			
	• Auto-suggestions based on history data			
Table 1: ERRC Grid				



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• <u>Eisenberg's Hierarchy of Optimization</u>: This model emphasizes starting with core functionality before adding advanced tools. In operational environments, reliability is non-negotiable. A platform that automates title submissions but occasionally misroutes VIN data will erode trust. Ensuring foundational needs, like uptime, data accuracy, and clear status tracking, are met consistently and this sets the stage for users to explore higher-level features like predictive salvage value estimators or smart routing algorithms.

In operations, value is measured in minutes saved, errors avoided, and processes streamlined. Positioning should always focus on how the product enables smoother execution, clearer visibility, and faster decision-making for people working in high-volume, high-stakes environments.

#### 4.4 Customer Journey Mapping

The "customer journey", in operational product management, is more accurately described as the user experience through a functional workflow. In the auto salvage auction industry, this journey involves multiple operational stakeholders who interact with the product at different points in the vehicle lifecycle. These could include field teams scanning inventory, back-office staff handling titles, or insurance processors managing assignments. Mapping this journey is critical to ensuring adoption, minimizing friction, and optimizing value delivery.

- <u>Service Design Blueprints</u>: These tools allow product teams to visualize every stage of user engagement—both visible actions (e.g., submitting title documents) and backend operations (e.g., syncing with lienholder or DMV systems). For example, if a yard operator enters a vehicle's status but the backend fails to update the auction listing in real time, the blueprint helps pinpoint that breakdown. By outlining both frontstage and backstage processes, teams can reduce operational blind spots that cause confusion or delay.
- <u>Onboarding Frameworks</u>: In operational environments, onboarding is more than just account creation. It includes hands-on training, change management, and system walkthroughs that address role-specific needs. For instance, title processors may need jurisdiction-specific flowcharts and document templates, while yard leads may require mobile device training and lot tagging instructions. The goal is to reduce time-to-competence and build confidence in daily use through tutorials, SOPs, and in-person or remote coaching.
- <u>Touchpoint Matrices</u>: These provide a detailed view of every interaction a user has with the product—from login screens and email notifications to support chats and data exports. In salvage operations, these touchpoints include auction scheduling alerts, buyer confirmation emails, real-time title updates, or SMS reminders for pickup deadlines. Identifying and optimizing these touchpoints ensures that no part of the experience feels disconnected or unintuitive[8].

A seamless operational journey builds user trust, accelerates process adoption, and reduces dependency on support teams. When workflows are clear and technology blends into the daily rhythm of operations, satisfaction and retention follow naturally.

#### 4.5 Channel and Distribution Strategy

Once the target user, specific value proposition and customer journey are defined, distribution is less about mass marketing and more about ensuring the solution is deployed at the right place, at the right time, and in the right hands. For the auto salvage auction industry, where multiple internal and external teams depend on synchronized workflows, a strong distribution strategy must account for integration



into daily operations, not just delivery to an end user. Following are few frameworks used to define this strategy:

- <u>Porter's Value Chain Analysis:</u> This framework helps identify exactly where a product fits within the broader operational lifecycle. In the salvage auction process, this includes steps like vehicle intake, lot preparation, title verification, sale, and transportation. Understanding this chain allows product teams to identify when and where users will benefit most. For example, introducing a mobile inventory scanning tool is best timed during the yard check-in stage, while digital lienholder tracking aligns more with back-office title processing workflows.
- <u>Sales Channel Mapping Tools</u>: Though the term "sales" is traditionally used in business development. However, in operations, this tool is more about mapping stakeholder touchpoints. These diagrams clarify who interacts with the product and when, whether it's a dispatcher using scheduling dashboards, a claims partner submitting documents, or a yard lead reviewing lot status. By visualizing these interactions, product teams can ensure that training, support, and rollout efforts reach all key operational users, not just decision-makers in a head office.
- <u>Ecosystem Canvas:</u> Operational products must integrate with existing tools and infrastructure. The ecosystem canvas helps teams map out all the systems the product depends on or complements, such as state DMV APIs, legacy ERP systems, auction management platforms, or mobile yard equipment. In the salvage auction space, seamless integration is especially important in states with strict title processing workflows or where vehicle movement is highly regulated.

A product's success depends not just on what it offers, but how well it fits into the broader operational landscape. In complex environments like auto salvage auctions, understanding when and where people interact with the system and ensuring it works alongside existing tools is key to meaningful adoption.

# 4.6 Launch Planning and Enablement

The success of a product launch depends less on marketing hype and more on internal readiness, crossdepartment alignment, and frontline enablement. A well-planned launch ensures that both the organization and its operational partners are equipped to adopt the solution with minimal disruption to ongoing workflows. In the auto salvage auction industry, where title compliance, vehicle flow, and claims timelines are tightly interlinked, any disconnect can cause costly delays or errors.

- <u>Operational Readiness Checklists</u>: These checklists ensure that all functional areas are prepared for deployment. They cover technical integration (e.g., ensuring the product is synced with title or auction platforms), legal compliance (e.g., verifying process updates with DMV regulations), training readiness (e.g., documentation for title staff or transporter roles), and facility preparedness (e.g., tablets charged and Wi-Fi tested in the yards). For example, launching a digital lienholder interface would require coordination between legal, IT, compliance, field training, and customer support to ensure a smooth rollout across multiple states.
- <u>RACI Matrices</u>: In the operational context, RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) helps prevent role ambiguity during rollouts. A launch may involve the operations team training local yards, IT managing user access, the legal team ensuring documents meet jurisdictional requirements, and customer success monitoring rollout feedback. Without clearly defined responsibilities, delays or inconsistencies in execution are almost inevitable.
- <u>Change Management Models</u>: Operational users often have deeply embedded processes, especially in environments where paperwork and manual approvals have been the norm for decades. Frameworks



like ADKAR (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement) help structure the behavioral shift required to adopt new tools [9]. For example, when rolling out a mobile check-in tool at high-volume yards, the team must first build awareness (why it matters), then train for ability (how to use it), and reinforce success through metrics (e.g., reduced check-in time or fewer lost vehicles).

A well-designed product can still fail if operational teams aren't prepared to use it. Successful launches depend on early alignment, clearly assigned responsibilities, and training that empowers every user, not just those at the top, to confidently adopt the change.

#### 4.7 Feedback Loops and Continuous Improvement

Product delivery doesn't end at launch. In environments like auto salvage auctions, where systems are used by diverse roles across title processing, yard operations, and buyer engagement, continuous improvement is essential. Effective feedback loops help product teams uncover real-world challenges, identify new opportunities, and ensure that tools evolve alongside the changing needs of the operation[10].

- <u>AARRR Metrics (Acquisition, Activation, Retention, Revenue, Referral)</u>: Originally designed for SaaS products, this model can be adapted to operational use cases. For example, after launching a title-processing automation tool, teams can measure Acquisition (how many users adopted), Activation (how quickly they completed their first process), Retention (whether they keep using it), and qualitative Referral (whether sellers or insurers request it across other regions). In a salvage context, this framework highlights usage trends and pinpoints drop-off points in adoption.
- <u>Closed-Loop Feedback Systems:</u> In operations, feedback often comes from support tickets, field reports, or conversations with customer-facing teams. A closed-loop system ensures this feedback is not just collected, but systematically reviewed and acted upon. For instance, repeated complaints about inaccurate VIN decoding can trigger changes in data sources or prompt training sessions with field users. Tools like internal surveys, in-app feedback prompts, or regular operational reviews provide structured channels to capture these insights.
- <u>OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) and Post-Mortems:</u> These tools support goal-setting and reflection in operational product teams. OKRs define what success looks like, "Reduce title processing errors by 30% within two quarters", while post-mortems help identify what contributed to or hindered that success. For example, after releasing a mobile auction listing app, teams might discover that adoption was slower in certain regions due to outdated yard equipment or Wi-Fi instability. These findings inform future rollouts and infrastructure planning.

Operational environments evolve and so should the products that support them. Continuous feedback is not just a maintenance tactic; it's a strategic imperative that ensures technology keeps pace with frontline realities and drives long-term process transformation.

This structured GTM framework, when applied to the auto salvage auction industry, can guide operational technology products from concept to user adoption. Through detailed segmentation, tailored messaging, channel alignment, and ongoing feedback, product teams can ensure they are solving real problems in practical, scalable ways.

# 5. Conclusion

As operational technology continues to transform asset-intensive industries, the role of a structured and context-aware Go-to-Market (GTM) strategy becomes increasingly critical. In the auto salvage auction



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industry, where the coordination of user segments is central to business success, adapted version of GTM is not just about launching a product; it's about enabling process change across an entire operational ecosystem.

This paper has illustrated how GTM strategies must be redefined when applied to operational environments. Through rigorous segmentation, stakeholder-centric persona development, and tailored positioning, organizations can align technology with real-world needs. Furthermore, successful implementation depends on thoughtful distribution planning, continuous user enablement, and adaptive feedback loops that keep the product relevant as conditions evolve.

Ultimately, a well-executed GTM strategy in OT settings is not a one-time event, but a continuous journey, one that begins with a deep understanding of operations and ends with scalable adoption, sustainable value delivery, and long-term process improvement.

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