

# HIRED

## How to Get a Product Management Job



Land Your First PM Job with This Practical Guide



# The guide to help you get your first Product Management job.

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## HIRED: HOW TO GET A PRODUCT MANAGEMENT JOB

Software engineers are the key to building a product's foundations. Marketing experts need to gain and nurture leads. User Interface and User Experience teams need to know and define the product from top to bottom. And Sales have to close as many deals as possible.

If any of these processes fail, then all other efforts are in vain.

Product Management has only become a popular term within the last few years. While they may seem expendable on paper, they have become a critical part of all successful technology firms.

And you may wonder, "Why are Product Managers now in such high demand?"

Go back to that first paragraph. And now imagine an individual able to contain all those skills into one. And more. The ability to work within and through different disciplines while keeping the big picture in sight is what makes Product Managers special.

The Google Associate Product Manager program is, currently, one of the most successful avenues to tech leadership. Companies as diverse as Apple or Uber are seeking Product Managers to take their services to the next level. Compensation for Product Managers is on the rise.

Now, you could be thinking, "but I have no technical/commercial/user knowledge, there is no way I can get into product."

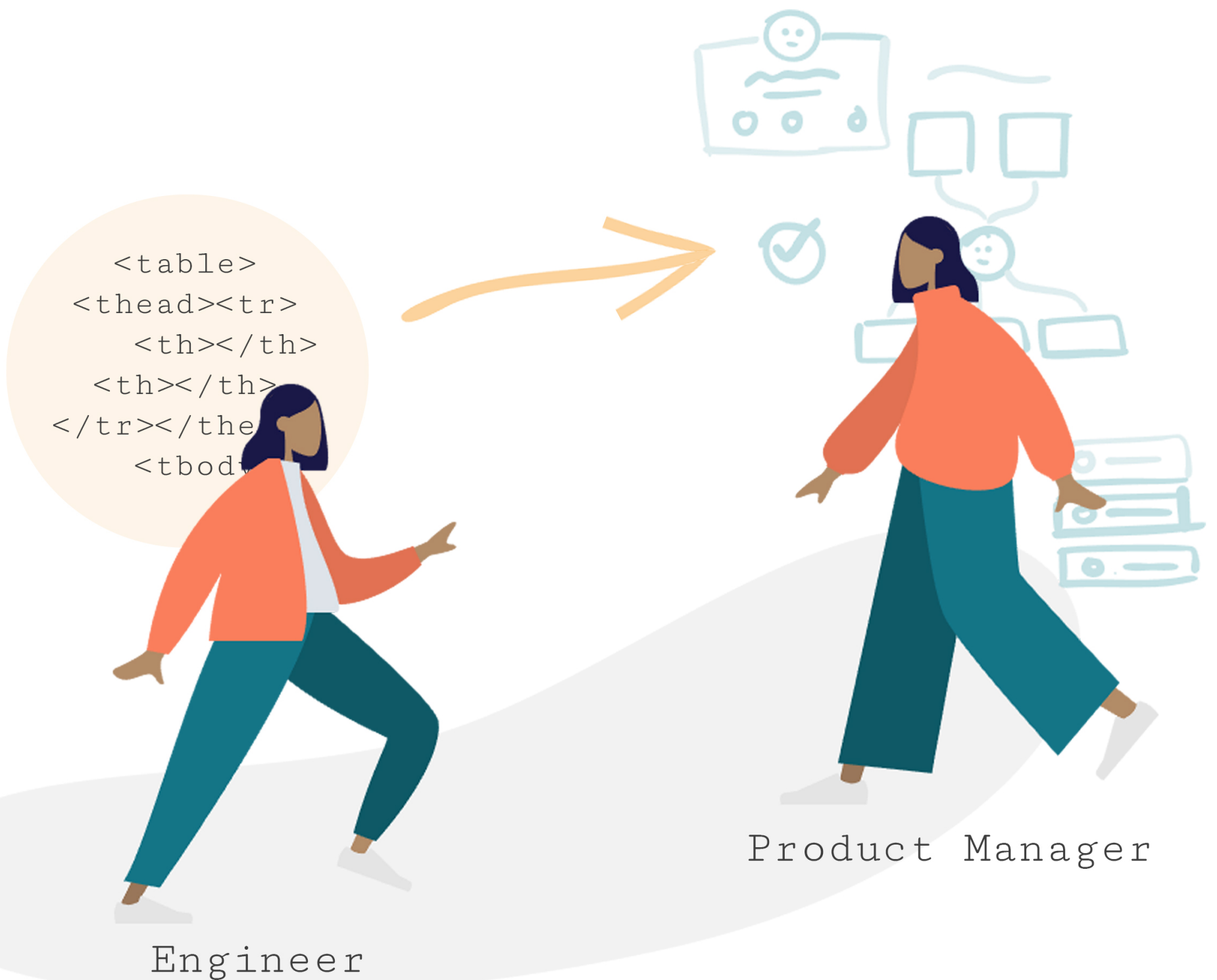
Wrong. As this book will show you, some of the most successful product transitions originated from people in music production or finance, with full-time jobs or with no prior experience. Our collection of stories of Product Management transition will show you how it's done. You'll discover exactly how to get to the interview stage and smash it!

Keep reading to discover tailored guides to go for Product Management positions in companies like Facebook, Amazon and Uber. You'll also find some tips to help you survive and thrive during your first few months as a freshly hired Product Manager.

Ready? Let's go!

# 1.

## Transitioning to Product Management



# Transitioning to Product Management

— Think back on your career. Think ahead, lay out your future. Think for a second that you are not interested in Product Management. Just reflect on your professional experiences and those of your peers. Is there a common pattern?

Surely, you have noticed that your career is always changing. Any professional who started working in the last couple of decades is aware of this. Every few years (for some, it's just a matter of months!), you could switch company. Sometimes you even switch function, department, or profession.

Of course, “tech” is the reason: the more connected we are, the quicker technology makes some careers obsolete and others promising.

Seeing that you will have to switch at some point, your best bet is to choose a path that is adaptable by definition. Product Management is one of the most versatile disciplines out there. This is because its core skills (technical expertise, stakeholder management, commercial awareness) are fully transferable.

In the digital world, being open to change your mental frameworks is everything. Accept this, and you will start the PM road with the right mind. Note down these general thoughts to push you in the right direction.

- **Where do you want to be in the next couple of years?** Be realistic and precise. Something like becoming an established Product person in the field of FinTech, for example, would be a good one. If you perceive yourself as a product, with various features and services, it will be easier for you to identify possible gaps.

- **Training to fill these gaps** should take you closer to the product arena, and the movers and shakers who decide on hires. But never accept less than what you expected. You should work on products you're excited about! Some Product Management techniques, such as roadmapping, can assist you in your endeavor. Of course, adding KPIs to your goals might be exaggerating, but it is very useful to define your steps on a single document.

– **Developing a public profile** is not fundamental. But, when you are getting started in the scene, it can help you a lot. Certain social media tools are particularly useful: microblogging (Twitter), long-form articles (Medium), podcasting... Remember, PMs are keen communicators. Your continued engagement with product communities, such as the Product School Slack Community, will help you “learn the language” of your favorite companies. Who knows: you might even meet an eventual recruiter!

Now, let’s look at actual examples of successful transitions to extract some useful wisdom.

## **Learning from Conventional Product Transitions**

What do we mean by “conventional” product transitions?

Product Management emerges to fulfill a gap which is very real. In a digital world of increased competitiveness and decreased costs, you need somebody who is both technically and commercially proficient in your team.

Someone who is **the voice of the user but understands the limitations of engineers, designers and marketing teams.**

It is precisely from these latter positions that many Product Managers have emerged. But it is not a path as direct as many believe. In fact, [pay attention to this advice](#) to avoid the common pitfalls that block you from overcoming selection processes.

## **Engineers to Product Managers**

Beginning with **engineers**, it is true that employers trust they will have what it takes to assume the role. However, their familiarity with building and maintaining digital frameworks does not guarantee success.

First of all, **some engineers have unrealistic expectations.** They think they can move smoothly from a junior or mid-management position in engineering in one company to a product management position in another one. Actually, it is much more common to occupy intermediate positions such as Technical Program Manager, Sales Engineer and Project Manager.

Why? As you can see, they all add an edge. An employer values exposure to the content or customer-side of the business, **because they prove that the engineer can survive outside the world of code and programming.**



However, **do not assume that you need an MBA to prove this**. These educational programs can be really costly and distract you from practical experience in product. Short and hands-on practical courses like Product School's are an efficient alternative.

An additional mistake many engineers make is relying too much on their technical acumen. Their resumes and interview answers focus too much on their achievements in programming; however, they actually need to show diversity of skills and interests. Some easy solutions are to join courses, attend events and take part in community activities.

Janko Bazhdavela is currently Head of Product & Engineering at The Corcoran Group. He began as Software Developer, moved onto Technical Lead of the Products Division, Production Management and Head of Engineering. His next position: Senior Product Manager at Amplify in New York.

As you can see, Janko worked his way up: he did not transition straight to product. His first piece of advice is logical: the first opportunities can be found in your own company.

Many managers are happy to notice enthusiasm for an expanded commitment, and your colleagues in

those departments will normally be keen to share their insights. If your dream really is product, **you should be happy even to accept a more junior position as a Product Manager than the one you hold as an engineer**.

One of the shared principles involves the “solving problems” mentality. However, Product Managers have a larger degree of choice: it's important to understand priorities and justify **how and why you are picking a particular challenge**.

Additionally, as an engineer, you are allowed (even encouraged) to get lost in the details: after all, the machines you build must be as close to perfection as possible. But Product Managers cannot afford that: they must keep their eye in the big picture and long-term.

There is also a different way of approaching targets. Outcomes are much more important than output. Emptying your Trello Board is not as important as the overall value you are generating to customers and stakeholders.

Besides, **your language needs to adapt to the task**: while internally you might rely on technicalities to drive your efforts; your external stakeholders need language and visuals understood by the general public.



One word of warning coming from Janko's personal experience: keeping one foot in tech and another one in Product Management is a recipe for disaster. This is because **setting up the roadmap and executing it are two completely different processes.**

Some other initiatives we mentioned and Janko undertook include going to conferences and other events; this is very important for two reasons. First, the obvious one: networking. Meeting people in the business is fundamental.

But, on a secondary level, these relevant events will get you thinking **as if you already were a Product Manager.** Pay attention to how other Product Managers (like Janko!) tell their own stories, and start learning the art of narrating your own personal experience. This will help you in the later stages of a recruitment process.

In this PM's case, he had several reasons to make the transition. He wanted to limit the distance between his work and the customer; he sought a more dynamic participation in the entire lifecycle; and appreciated becoming more involved in product strategy. **What are your reasons? Come up with some!**

## Designers to Product Managers

People without experience might think that design is just about how things look. But for anyone wanting to make it in this industry, they are fully aware that it implies much more.

In the case of Product Managers, **it is the user experience that matters most of all.** Indeed, it is often said that PMs are the voice of the user. There is a cottage industry of tips and tricks on building user journeys, understanding their psychology, building empathy.

**Designers have the perfect combination of creative artistry and technical prowess** that makes them the perfect candidates for a Product Management position.

Senior Product Manager at Xero James Taylor is a good example of a transition. Originally from Sydney, James began the product path through a casual conversation with a new manager. The manager wanted to learn what he did in the company in his role as Product Designer. So he first started explaining the usual; then he started listing extra stuff: running a pilot program for an Android app, introducing product analytics and more. **The manager**

stopped him saying “I thought you were just a designer!”.

Chances are, if you are a designer at a small or medium-sized company, you have done some of these. Many UX managers find it difficult to distinguish their tasks from Product Managers. This is because the role involves **research to understand customer pains and preferences**, iterating, running sprints... But there are some differences too!

**PMs have an added insight which is market acumen:** not limiting themselves to the individual user, but also the dynamics of multiple users across time (even those who prefer the competition!). This also means that you are gathering data from all parts of the business: you are in close contact with teams at both ends of the funnel. **Designers can be just too reliant on users’ perspectives.**

You need to know which other products and actors would be ready to solve the same problem as your team. A release is not something inscribed on a roadmap; you must take into account the whole environment. Not just external rivals: chances are, if you are in a big company, there are other product teams wanting to release their own features.

How do they all fit together? What is the right launch sequence to obtain maximum exposure and a warm welcome from your target consumers?

This latter point is actually very important. **Designers have to leave their personal creation bubbles and face large audiences.** Whether you are in B2C or B2B, you will be required to attend some public engagements: conferences, presentations, webinars or workshops. You have to polish your influencer skills, raise your profile and build a community.

Every Product Manager wants to make evangelizers out of their users: well, what about starting with yourself?

James Taylor has one particular example of a mistake they made when they were starting as a team in a company. They delivered their presentation employing the usual “designer” speak during a meeting. Rather, **it is in the nature of Product Managers s to speak and learn the language of other colleagues.**

If you are coming from design, **one trait you should show is your curiosity and ability to understand other functions in the company.** Remember: every person has a unique life trajectory, just like yours! **Make mental notes of what internal**

**stakeholders care about:** it is certainly not that simple in real life, but think logically. Finance teams will care about revenue. Marketing teams will care about lead generation. Engineers will care about product life cycles.

Indeed, as a designer, you are in a prime position to start developing many of these attitudes.

It is likely that **your design research will force you to sit down with different groups. Start by learning what they do.** Are there any extra tasks you could complete by going the extra mile? If engineers see in you a trusted mediator, you are already becoming an unofficial Product Manager! This is called influence-building, and it is fundamental. PMs are not likely to have direct executive control, so it is really important that their authority originates in strong informal ties.

**Are you lucky enough to share space with Product Managers at your company? Then shadow them!** Show that you are keen to learn, ask about skills, courses... whatever can help to complement your gaps.

As always, be advised: becoming a PM is accepting a challenge not everyone can handle!

## Marketers to Product Managers

On principle, it is clear what conventional marketers are missing: coding skills. They should be able to figure markets out; and, depending on experience, they should more or less understand design principles.

However, this is becoming increasingly ancient history as the most successful marketing techniques involve a reasonable degree of technical awareness.

Mid-level or Senior Marketers have probably led campaigns that involved a combination of yes, their market insights: but also their familiarity with the possibilities of engineers and coders. With new tools emerging every day, they need to be up to date.

Now, the intersections between marketing and product are clear. After all, product is usually the first of Ps listed as the discipline's essentials!

Amazon's Ashwini Lahane, responsible for Product Strategy, Marketing & Growth at Amazon Web Services is an **engineer turned marketer**. In her case, she has traveled the opposite path! However, she can help clarify the intersecting and diverging aspects between the disciplines.

There are skills which are not necessarily transferable on their own. The art of preparing alpha versions for digital applications, or developing pricing strategies, are only useful for either engineering or marketing.

However, in their intersection, is where many commonalities emerge: beta testing, demo developing, project planning, product training, use case drafting, roadmapping, revenue analysis... **they are the perfect marriage between developing and marketing.**

In fact, according to Ashwini, **if traditional PMs relied mostly on product intuition and data-led planning, successful product people are now including marketing and growth in their top priorities.** That is, combining the need to explain your product and expanding user adoption are as important as your creative product vision.

As Extrahop Product Marketing Lead Isaac Roybal explains, **product might be seen to create and marketing to communicate value.** But, in reality, they both collaborate in processes like product launches, market research, customer interviews, sales enablement, and competitive research. The overall goal is to deliver the message.

Certainly, **any good marketer is aware that one reason to justify hiring PMs is to avoid misalignment** between all the teams concerned with the customer, including sales. A marketer going into product should keep in mind their role as conflict-solvers; this might be applied literally, as PMs are often the last hope of a peace between departments.

And think of this as a task beyond the office: **friction is the Product Managers enemy.** Features must be conflict-free, as users must have a smooth experience to be converted into recurring customers. This is where marketers should remember their customer experience lessons, and share their insights with more technically-focused PM colleagues.

Coming back to Ashwini, she argues that **Product Management today starts backwards: from the customers.** You need to understand, empathize and validate their needs.

Indeed, **validation is fundamental, and data-led strategies are something many marketers can bring to Product Management.** There are plenty of sources which engineers or designers will not be aware of, like popular publications or industry reports. It is likely that marketers are acquainted with tools like Salesforce, Excel, and Tableau.

What to make of that particular kind of marketer, the growth hacker? Well, they are definitely in the product orbit. Their skills spread from viral to blogs and seek to spur awareness, adoption, retention, and revenue. An experience with this quick and dirty approach to enlarging your user base is an asset for a future product career.

Finally, Ashwini closes with one of the foundational ideas for both marketing and product management: applied psychology. **You need to tell the story right and tell the right story.** This is something both have in common, and can help you as a marketer transitioning to product.

## Other Common Transitions

There are some other well-traveled paths to product. **Entrepreneurship** is, of course, a common point of departure. If you have been involved in setting up your own business in the past, you are familiar with many of the challenges that product involves.

Certainly, not all founders and CEOs have the same degree of involvement. But many have started projects at university or other environments which included many challenging stages that mirror the product roadmap. Everything from conception,

design, market, user and design research, marketing, launch, sales... **Even if you were in charge of a relatively small product, what matters is to reflect on your challenges and build a coherent story.**

Consultants like Jordan Sumerlus, current Product Manager at Two Sigma, have also managed the transition. He began as Technical Consultant, then moved to Technical Consultancy for Deloitte to finally progress onto Product Management at Google. How did he make it?

**The obvious overlaps involve expertise in communicating and presenting strategies and visions.** Of course, consultants are constantly in touch with customers and must be adept problem-solvers and negotiators.

But there are many differences; particularly the ones **connected to the “negative” stereotypes associated with consultants.** Product Management is not a “Boy’s Club”, riddled with office politics and lacking transparency. Rather, it is a role where you have to delegate and build up your team. No silos are allowed!

There are even more distinctions below the surface. Not all offices in tech are cool, open and colourful spaces that encourage creativity; but they are definitely a step above the



usual cubicles that populate large consultancies. **Relationships are different, probably of a more informal character.**

Depending on your former role, it was possible that you were used to dealing with clients and then your office colleagues in a very hierarchical way. No more: **Product Managers are in the middle of a storm, and need to treat any stakeholder as a possible saviour.** They are on a more equal footing with everybody, which can be good and bad.

In terms of approaching tasks, consultants usually look at the bigger picture. **PMs are the opposite: details matter a lot.**

Also, agility is fundamental: depending on projects, consultants can count on medium-term time windows. This ends the moment you join product! All in all, consulting is good training, but keep in mind that in exchange of more autonomy you will be losing a lot of direction. You need to build your own vision.

Which other positions surround product? Business Analysts and Project Managers have similar transitions to consultants. Product Marketing Managers are similar to general marketers, and Product Designers to overall designers.

If you occupy any of these, your way to product is clear. What about other backgrounds?

## **Unconventional Choices, Product Successes**

There are so many ways of making it to product that even more heterodox background can undertake the transition. We have collected some notable experiences across the years that should inspire you.

Ryan Cunningham is Product Strategist & Operations at Uber Elevate, the company's current venture into air transport. But he actually began as Business Analyst and Chief Investment Officer at different financial bodies. **Coming from finance**, how did he get to a top Product Management position at one of the leading tech companies?

Tech, thanks to the promise of financial apps and solutions, has slowly become more welcome to finance backgrounds. In fact, there are many across banks and funds who would like to enjoy **the autonomy and creativity that a Product Manager position can offer.**

According to Ryan, those who consider the jump have the right intuition. A Product Manager's main goal is to make a solution happen

which can provide value and usability to consumers. While you can always learn tools and design skills, **an innate business sense is more difficult to train.** And, by working with numbers, you are showing that you are quite comfortable among spreadsheets and quarterly reports.

Next, neither data nor statistics are strangers to you: they are your main tools! And the fact that you have dealt with something as sensitive as personal or business investments implies that you know **how to build a story with them for your clients.** Is this not the same as the type of tales you must build to increase your influence over stakeholders?

Equally, **you are more than comfortable with tight and conflicting deadlines.** With digital products, launch dates do not mean anything: features are in constant iteration and review.

Competent product management implies juggling different time requirements by external and internal stakeholders. Flexibility through sprints and careful planning with your team are essential requirements to avoid fatal mistakes. Sounds familiar? Yeah, exactly like the world of money.

Finally, **a banking business acumen is simply unparalleled.** Think back to the countless hours gathering data

from various sources, running simulations, staying up to date with sectors relevant to your investment portfolio... A techie simply has had no time to develop the same sound knowledge of various industries, and this you should show and highlight during an eventual interview.

Let's check out another, even more, unconventional profile. Jason Robert Trikakis is the co-founder of HelloSugoi, a blockchain-based ticketing system. But he started in music production!

After writing and producing music for bands and different media, Jason realized he wanted to do something else with his life. **But traditional paths tend to be expensive:** from law school to business school, all options are a bit out of reach for the many. It was after assessing his traits and preferences that he figured out that Product Management was a suitable career path.

Coding was his entry drug: Python, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript led him to know enough to understand engineer-talk. In fact, **once you begin learning, you start joining.** Because most of the available workshops are actually delivered in groups. Look around: it is almost certain that there will be some sort of tech community around you that delivers lessons or at least meets with a certain frequency. Jason



actually found out about PMing through these! Something that you will read across this guide over and over again (and this is trying to spell in capital letters) is that almost anyone can become a Product Manager. As long as you have **people skills, intellectual curiosity, some degree of creativity and a forward-looking perspective**; you can make it in product.

A word of advice: not everyone in music, or film, or book production will be as dynamic as Jason. In his role as a company founder, he was practically in charge of everything: making the music, promoting it, addressing clients' concerns, booking venues... This type of **exposure to what constitutes managing a product is something you need** to experience before launching into tech from a different professional arena.

Jason is also a Product School alum, a member of the first LA cohort. **Taking a course focused on the real-life challenges that Product Managers face**, taught by people in the industry, is one of the most solid avenues into product.

These two examples are great inspiration and should help you look horizontally at the advantages that other backgrounds might have. All in all, the best advice for people from

different disciplines is simple. **Staying up to date with industry tendencies and the surrounding community is fundamental.** Join a group, such as the weekly events we host.

As you get inspired, you should start building things on your own. Even small add-ons to existing products should help. If learning code is necessary, take it as a productive challenge!

## **No Such Thing as a Straight Line**

As you can see from these examples, Product Management is a discipline open to everybody. Well, not everybody: to those who are willing to put in the work.

People with engineering, marketing, and user design backgrounds are halfway there because they have at least one of the essential set of skills for PMs. However, their transition is no guarantee either.

This is why **the path is actually open to professionals from other disciplines.** The most important skill to have is passion for product. Then, there are some logical steps: make an inventory of your current skills, learn how to present them positively, lay out a career plan, benefit from being close

to certain industries... A path well  
planned feels like your own escalator  
to success.

# 2.

## Get Hired at Your Dream Company



# Get Hired at Your Dream Company

— If there is one thing true about passionate product people, is that all of them hold a particular product in high regard. Chefs just love certain food joints. Painters have their predilection for an Old Master.

Perhaps it was the app they could never drop, or the utility that saved them a lot of time, or the service that arranged the perfect holiday. **But everyone in tech has their favorite product and, by extension, their favorite product-maker.**

Check out these guides to working for some of the most dynamic product teams in Silicon Valley and beyond.

## Getting a Product Position at Google

Former Google PM Luis DeLeon got his position offered just after graduating from Product School San Francisco. This is why we are in a perfect position to understand his transition.

Prior to making the switch to product management, Luis was doing consulting and product development for Accenture. As we have seen on the

previous chapter, consultants like him who focus on the technology sector have a better chance at becoming PM. He also did a project that involved Google.

All of them focused on either **process improvement or identifying where the value chain is within product development**, and helping clients get more efficient in their operations. Sounds like a good start, right?

Google really wants to see people like Luis, who **seek to move up front in the value chain** and understand how products even come up in the first place, how problems are identified and how you go about identifying potential solutions for the customer and then finally, execute on that product.

Since Luis took the course, he had the chance to conduct the practical exercise on an existing product. He picked Sense, a sleep monitoring or environment monitoring system to basically help you sleep better. It was a good way to apply some of the skills learned during the course.

So, just going through the process of understanding what a product is, and who the key customers are and coming up with a new user feature; it is an interesting exercise to prepare for a prospective interview.

Whether you join Product School or take another path, you need to **show that you can work on the execution level of things** and helping the execution be more efficient. You need to have a perspective on what the end-to-end product life cycle is and absorb different questions in different ways to measure things, measure your success by applying those sort of frameworks or skills in a real-life situation.

On your resume and in your interview, **you need to show an ability for implementing a system and also changing processes** and defining policies of how people should work together throughout the product definition stage and how they would:

- How they would implement their product information
- How they would manage it
- how they would change their process when things all of a sudden failed in the field, or somebody had some sort of support issue or a customer issue with the product.

For example, Luis' team was working at Google Fiber, an attempt to disrupt a market in terms of Internet and TV. You should come up with an equally ambitious project as a mental exercise, to show the kind of ambition a Google hiring team would expect.

In terms of how the process goes, it is **similar to other tech companies**. So you go through the normal HR interview, you go through your interview with the hiring manager, and then more of a Round Robin with different people on the team, and finally equal subcommittee.

Luis did tell us that they make you feel more comfortable than you expect. It was more like “Tell me about a time when this happened” or “Tell me you know what would you do in this situation,” so a lot of those questions, not a lot of case studies questions. It was more about they are really trying to get to know you it was a lot more comfortable than the most interviews.

Thus, **Google favors having a macro view of the product itself** so, making sure that you study well how the department you are going to join fits into an overall market. Which role would you seek to play in the actual product lifecycle? Asking follow-up questions to the person who is interviewing you is something they

love. That is the kind of bravery and commitment they commend at the big G.

In short, **you should feel confident to apply frameworks even at the speculative stage, during recruitment.** So, try to be innovative and try to use those frameworks in other parts of your work. Even if you have not had a straight product management position, I think it is something that you can apply to other things.

Finally, another option is to **start a conversation with your current manager.** Of course, do not tell them you want to switch companies! But let them know about your overall aims.

If it goes well, they will basically create a path for you to get there. Definitely being open about that or having your goals discussed with your manager to make that transition, is definitely another thing that people should do and Google would value.

## **Getting a Product Position at Facebook**

In 2018, Facebook stole the number one spot of Glassdoor's list of "best places to work." Its outstanding workplace reputation, vision and values, and of course employee

benefits, make Facebook one of the most coveted places to work.

**It's no wonder that it is also one of the most competitive places to land a job.** Facebook has its eye out for a certain type of person that can fit in with the company culture, share its core values and will be dedicated to "bringing the world closer together."

So how can you snatch yourself one of these positions in over 60 locations worldwide and become Facebook's next employee?

You need to be able to **demonstrate that you have proven product management experience.** Depending on which role you are going for (Product Manager of Advanced Networking planning, Product Manager of Network Insights, to name a few), you may need anywhere from 3 to 5 years of experience in a similar role. For some Product Management roles, they ask for more than 10 years of experience.

Apart from experience, there is a **minimum qualification to become Facebook's next PM, and it varies greatly depending on the position.** For some Product Management roles, you need to hold a bachelor's degree in a technical discipline like Computer Science, Technology, Engineering or Math.

However, for other PM positions, it isn't exactly necessary as long as you have the right amount of relevant experience.

Of course, holding a bachelor's degree in a technical discipline helps, but **candidates are sometimes asked to have a specific technical background as well.**

Depending on the Product Management position, you could be asked to have experience in technical architecture of web applications and media products, designing user interfaces, or experience creating examples through wireframes and mockups.

Fitting in with company culture and attitude is a big deal for Facebook, and they want to make sure that you have what it takes on a personal level. When selecting candidates, Facebook looks for people who are **bold, focused on impact, fast, open and looking to build social value.**

It's important to demonstrate that you are ready to make bold decisions quickly for the right reason and motivations. Read more about Facebook's core values [here](#).

Additionally, Facebook looks for **talented people who are considered to be builders**, have diverse backgrounds, and fit into the culture.

According to an interview with Miranda Kalinowski, Facebook's global head of recruiting, a candidate typically goes through four to five interviews before being hired, and the whole process can take about three months. All potential Facebook hires go through the same first three interviews. The following interviews depend on the position that you are applying for.

A typical interview process will look something like this:

The **first interview is a phone interview** with a recruiter whose aim is to determine if the candidate has the appropriate professional experience and drive to work at Facebook.

The **second interview is another phone interview**, but this time it is more technical. The interview is held by a Facebook employee that currently has the position the candidate is applying for. So, at this stage of a Product Management interview, you will be interviewed by a Product Manager.

The **third interview is when the candidate is invited onsite** to partake in a series of interviews. While onsite, the interviewee takes a tour of the office and then has multiple interviews with different panels.

It's no surprise that you will be presented with challenging questions.



These usually include hypothetical questions and logic questions to gauge how the candidate thinks. The questions will test if you have what it takes to create innovative products (product sense), make critical decisions (execution), and if you have the leadership and drive to thrive at Facebook (leadership).

### Some example questions:

- As a PM on the Facebook Birthdays team, how would you make it better?
- What do you dislike about a Facebook feature of your choice?
- We've outsourced a critical mobile app to a third-party developer. How do we decide when to take that development in-house?
- How would you decide between showing more ads on the Facebook News Feed vs. showing a What's your favorite project where you played a leadership role?

## Getting a Product Position at Amazon

Amazon has some of the most sought after opportunities in tech. Some time ago, Orkun Özbatur told us about what they are looking for. As Senior Product

Manager for Seller Onboarding & Experience for Amazon EU, he should know!

First of all, Amazon looks for people who can **drive products from ideation all the way to the delivery**, strong analytical understanding, and huge stakeholder management. Amazon's hiring system particularly focuses on its principles and candidates are asked to share their experiences around those principles.

If you have a tech background, you may already have a competitive advantage in some areas. **You may need to improve the understanding of the customer and business needs**; as well as stakeholder management.

Eventually, you should be able to capture the market needs, convince relevant decision-makers, and convert them to development requests. Additionally, in Amazon, UX research (or user research) is crucial: you cannot do anything without quantifying your hypothesis. This also highlights carefully taken steps in ideation.

That said, Amazon has both technical and non-technical PM roles. That is **depending on a product's core requirement**. One good way to prepare for the role is to focus on the STAR technique; identify great examples,

quantify the results and study them well.

The way the company works is they develop a vision and strategy, and then those are turned into leadership level goals. The business areas feed into leadership goals and, depending on the department/team structures, almost all individuals should have personal goals.

They are all calculated based on the potential impact of product improvements and new features. Of course, return on investment is one of the most important elements. Eventually, **all goals are tracked every week, so you have a constant review of the progress.**

You need to be prepared for that. But also show a keen interest in tasks like customer interviews and usability studies are also as important to on-site behavioral data. Both are conducted very frequently to support quantitative data.

In the case of Orkun, he had both a “coding kitchen” and a business background. **Understanding the customer is a very important element for a PM and conveying that message to developers is also an absolutely required skill.**

This also includes development methods (such as agile delivery, scrum, etc), how to capture customer insights (primary market research) and some UX/UI elements.

His suggestion: improving your basic coding understanding and attain technical insights. There are many great free online resources!

Then, the best way of showcasing the value you bring is to show the impact you’ve had. Online portfolios may not be as easy as for a non-designer, however, you should be able to talk about how you improved the product you managed; for example, a year-on-year increase while launching new features.

A great Product Manager should see the customer in the middle of everything before anything else. A sustainable product or product feature should take the roots from the user and the PM should identify it no matter what!

You should even leave business goals aside when needed. That builds the vision! **A great PM should also be persistent when he or she needs to convince others.**

It is all about how you position and equip yourself. Both business and

tech are very valuable to launch and to drive strong products.

Gaining a 360-degree knowledge, like Product School's PM certification, is a good start. Getting a software engineering degree will definitely help you to understand the development process better; but don't forget, you won't really code when you're a Product Manager.

## Getting a Product Position at Microsoft

What about Microsoft? Working for this company was the shared dream of a whole generation that wished to enter tech. And it still is for a lot of people! Senior PM Richa Rai has worked in the Digital Transformation department at Microsoft. She will shed a light on candidate requirements for this position.

First, the key expectation of a Product Manager at Microsoft is to be the leader (without direct authority of course). Bring stakeholders together, keep leadership informed, highlight and resolve issues and risk. Basically, **own the success and failure of the product/program.**

Different teams use different methods as there are vast customer segments that the teams interact with –

internal, external, direct, indirect, partner, channel etc. Some glue is necessary!

In the old Microsoft world, regional leaders were representative of customer pain points. Now, regional leads are involved, however, there is a subset or group of customers that are identified and made part of the early stages of pain point definition, leading to scope/MVP definition and included in milestones for feedback in the product development cycle.

**Earlier Product teams didn't necessarily have direct access to the customer. Now you need to have some people skills.**

However, lack of hard tech skills is not always a deal breaker. A lot of times you do not need any development experience. It depends on the team, product and program. What is most important is your **curiosity about technology and your ability to learn and understand technology on the fly.**

Product Managers are folks who are not defined by their title but by their approach to their work. Richa always looked for opportunities in whatever role she was: gaps, problems, common goals, improvements... This can organically move you to Product Management.

**Highlight the skills that show how you bring relevancy to data. Also, how to catch trends in data.** What were the unnoticed business problems you solved through insights that you brought to the table? Have you streamlined the dashboards to better serve your customer?

Tell a story around that. If you haven't done any of these then I would advise you to pick up a business problem in regards to analytics and solve it for them. Take that story to your interview. **That journey will speak volumes about you.**

Candidates that share a story of passion, that share how they went out of the way to fix something that was a pain point for the customer, how they creatively solved the problem, how they solved the problems that came along the way, what they were thinking throughout, **how they walk-through a real-life problem, will stand out.**

The most difficult thing for a Product Manager is to **be in the driving seat but not being the actual driver.** You are the leader without direct authority, keeping teams that are under different management aligned for a common goal. Your product has a dependency on its team and likewise, on various other

teams that do not fall under your chain of command, or under your management.

**Interviewed candidates should discuss how they recognized a problem** that everybody else on the team was living with, how they built a business case, sold it to management, got it prioritized, secured resources and managed the delivery and outcome. Interviewed candidates miss telling such a story and they get entangled in their resume when storytelling is the crux of Product Management.

Ultimately, **let Engineers do the work for which they are hired!** As a PM, you stay curious, trust their expertise and work with them to build and validate different hypotheses to solve a problem.

What Richa learned was that you need to draw a line in the sand. As a PM, you have to be the person to create the rough draft of the vision/road mapping/feature list and give teams something tangible/real to noodle and comment on.

Take an idea from the conference room to the discussion to paper and to a live product. **But it all starts with your vision. You are the creator. As PM you need to LEAD.**

## Getting a Product position at LinkedIn

They say that LinkedIn is the dream employer. They put a lot of time and effort into each person's success in the company and care about everyone's well being. They motivate their employees to reach their goals and they have very few bad managers in the company.

**The culture within the company is young, trusting and vibrant, and they embrace diversity because it's what makes them unique.**

If that wasn't enough to reassure you to apply for a job at LinkedIn and see it for yourself, they also hold monthly InDays where they “encourage their employees to explore new ideas, volunteer for special causes and invest in whatever inspires them.” If you want to join this awesome and diverse team, here's how you can do it.

First, you must prove previous experience. Depending on the job you want the required experience in a Product Management or equivalent role is **somewhere between 4 years (for a Product Manager role) and 10+ years (for a Group Product Manager role)**. Make sure that you are also experienced in building web products

and have the ability to drive product planning, development, and launch.

In addition to possessing really good communication skills, LinkedIn wants the applicants to understand technical subjects and emerging technologies and their relevance to the marketplace. You should hold a BS degree in a technology-related field.

Because the Internet is fast moving and always changing, LinkedIn wants the applicants to understand the most recent trends in consumer web usage. They should be experienced in social media and be informed of the Internet, emerging web technologies and community building.

You should be capable of **managing and leading highly cross-functional teams** and to communicate to both technical and non-technical audiences in a clear manner.

If on top of everything you're also passionate with a good sense of humor, like collaborating and are driven to deliver results go ahead and apply for LinkedIn.

Obviously, when applying for a job at LinkedIn it is an advantage to **be a LinkedIn user yourself** and follow the news and updates related to LinkedIn. If you are not a user, then at least do your research and find out what their

mission, vision, strategy, culture, and values are.

Here are some **examples of interview questions at LinkedIn**:

- **A/B testing** – How would you test a LinkedIn feature when you don't have any data to justify your decision?
- **Acquisition** – Describe how would you pitch Microsoft CEO that LinkedIn is a good acquisition.
- **Experience** – What are your two main product management principles? How would you use your experience in Business to help LinkedIn? (If you have an MBA.)
- **Improvements** – What improvements would you make to the site? How would you improve the signing process of LinkedIn?
- **Insight** – What is the LinkedIn feature that you love?
- **Metrics and KPIs** – What are some main KPIs for project X?
- **Production** – At what point is the product ready for production?

Over 80,000 job applications are sent to LinkedIn every year but not all of

them are qualified to go forward. However, it is important to **know what to expect** before starting the whole process.

The interview process roughly takes 1-3 months. It starts with an online application, then phone screening with the recruiter, an interview call with the hiring Product Manager and finally an on-site interview with the team members such as the Engineering Manager, Data Science Manager, and Product Managers from various teams. This last one can take a few hours!

Because LinkedIn was built for professionals to connect, network and achieve more in their careers, the best thing you can do in terms of resume is to **update your LinkedIn profile**. Use it as your resume and make it great. Here are a couple of tips on how to do that best:

Set a professional looking picture of yourself

- ✓ Fill in your full job history.
- ✓ Add your education.
- ✓ Build your connections network (the more robust the better).
- ✓ Interact with your connections in the comments area.



- ✓ Post small blog posts, project, presentations or even short videos to show off your knowledge and skills.'
- ✓ Follow LinkedIn to show interest in them and keep updated with the latest news.

## Getting a Product position at Spotify

Want to get a product management job at Spotify? The company needs no special introduction. Everybody knows that it is a cool company that changed the way we listen to music. **Originally from Sweden, they now have offices in 20 countries.**

Because it's such an international company the culture within the company is very diverse and always changing. If you want to become one of the legendary Spotify PM's, here's how.

To apply for Spotify make sure you know how to use their main product. Applicants are expected to be at least engaged Spotify users or understand the basics of the streaming music business.

Besides being awesome, the applicants need to have some previous experience in product. Depending on the role that

they are applying for, they need to have previous experience either working in cross-functional teams, know iterative development principles and practices or be experienced in managing and developing software products.

**Remember that in Spotify they are agile.** Technical background is not necessary if you can compensate it with other qualities. Understanding the importance of data as the most powerful tool in decision-making is required as well as some knowledge of agile methodologies. **If you are knowledgeable and passionate about the music they can overlook your lack of technical background.** It's required that you know one of the two.

Finally, Spotify wants to **hire people with different backgrounds and experiences** because they bring diversity into the teams. They believe this will create a better environment for the employees which will result in a better product.

They also want people to be curious, hardworking, passionate, **compelling storyteller** and possess good instincts, as well as a critical mind. They are always open for ideas and changes so you should have the ability and desire to truly impact Spotify.



Prepare to discuss these following topics in the interview:

- **Experience** – Talk about the one role in your entire career that is most applicable to this role.
- **Spotify as a product** – Give us real-world examples about our product.
- **The media space** – Give us real-world examples about the digital media space.
- **The music industry** – Give us real-world examples about the music industry.

**Spotify receives thousands of resumes a year**, and most people put lots of effort into their applications so if you do not hear back from them in a few days it is okay. They have not forgotten about you. Here's what you can expect from the interview process.

It takes a couple of months (5+) so be prepared. Send out an online application that leads to HR screening(s) over the phone. Then, multiple video calls with hiring manager, service delivery lead, peer, and clients. And, finally, the in-person interview.

As much fun as it is to come up with creative and exciting ways to present your **resume** keep in mind **the main**

**rule: Keep it simple.** Yes, you do want to make your resume stand out, but it's better that you let the words speak for themselves.

Make sure to check out these when putting the application together:

- Don't hide what you're capable of and what your best achievements are. Get to the point and present it the way it is.
- Make it easy to read. Maybe it's not a bad idea to ask your friend read it through before sending it out.
- Make it look good but put more effort into the words than the design.
- Leave out the things that are not relevant to the position you're applying for.

## **Getting a Product Position at Airbnb**

Airbnb Product Manager Helen Sims is also a top Product Management instructor. So, she has not just been on one side of the fence: training others to succeed in product is part of her skillset.

On the whole, the most important traits to show potential interviewers

at Airbnb include **leadership, adaptability and a strong product mindset.**

When she first knocked at the rental platform's door, she could count on a wealth of experience at gaming company Zynga. One example you should follow from her is how she benefited from **the company's training program.**

Look around where you are working now: are there any similar opportunities you could take? This sort of proactivity is welcome at a dynamic environment like Airbnb.

The company works like a big product community, where business units actually overlap and cooperate. Product Managers are expected to **navigate these structures and understand where their decisions are impacting other teams.**

For instance, one-pagers are a common tool to communicate with internal stakeholders whether a new development will affect their duties. There are also live documents that are constantly updated where different teams communicate achievements and challenges.

Helen makes an effort to have one-to-one lunches with every other PM in the company, which is an even tastier way of building a cohesive community!

Some of the most common backgrounds at Airbnb include:

- **Technical prowess**, such as having a degree in Computer Science or experience as an engineer.
- Being a startup **founder.**
- Attend business or **professional schools**, such as Product School.
- Transfer from a different but close role in your company.

Helen, however, advocates for a different approach. If you locate a company or product you simply ADORE, just follow your dreams.

Learn as much as you can about the company (check out the other guides on this very same book!) and try to find an entry point: becoming an influencer, attending conferences, learning about required skills... **Everything works! Just get closer.**

Take it from Helen. She was really happy at Zynga, as she had a really good understanding of their users (herself being a gamer!). It was later, when Airbnb slowly became part of her holidays and business trips, that she realized the company's motto (belong anywhere) deeply resonated with her.

In both cases, **she was extremely passionate and this supported her transition from junior to senior PMing.**

The great thing is that the PM skillset is amazingly **easy to transfer between companies and sectors.** Picture this: a professional with business acumen, technical skills and customer knowledge (which almost feels like a superpower!).

This is not an easy combo to manage! In particular, some of the things you should emphasise on your application materials and interviews include **communication skills, opportunity sizing, and customer empathy.** But make sure to show, don't tell!

When meeting managers at Airbnb, you should be aware of career trajectories for PMs. In the first couple of years, you should only really focus on learning to work without supervision; according to Helen, most of your projects will have monthly rather than yearly targets.

After that, you will slowly gain autonomy and become sole owner. For the first five years or so, these two positions, of junior and mid-level PMs, are the best platform for later senior and even C-level opportunities. If you are not aware of timings and

limits, you might come across as too forward during your interview!

If you manage to get your foot in the door, make sure to meet everyone you encounter; try to learn their names and motivations. Attempt to understand the main thrust behind current projects, and observe with attention.

Can you show awareness of the competition? For companies like Airbnb, with so many different services offering rival solutions, **it is fundamental that the PM understands what they are up against.**

## **Getting a Product Position at Twitter**

The blue bird company is such a commonplace communication tool with such a simple structure that we often forget those working in the background to make it function. It takes a certain kind of approach to product to **be effective without being too flashy,** and this is something an aspiring Twitter Product Manager should take to heart.

Alex Shih used to be Head of Mobile Products at Twitter. His profile is one of the “common approaches” we mentioned above: a former founder, with a couple of years of PM experience.

Like Helen Sims, he has been a Product School instructor and understands the challenges involved with the transition.

For Alex, the transition took place inadvertently. He did not even have to become a PM as a goal. **His aim was really to solve important problems:** international development, access to education, providing tools to improve productivity...

He first worked on Google Apps, saw its potential; and then joined Twitter international initiatives during graduate school. As you can see, he was able to **connect his personal passions to company initiatives**, thus making his applications seem genuinely interested in joining a particular team.

This is something they really valued at the microblogging site. Another skill that he showed was an ability to draft impactful Product Requirement Documents (PRDs) How? Well, **everybody in product should act as a storyteller.** Your documents, however technical they might seem, should generate a narrative that promotes your product vision.

One of the lessons that Alex learned about PRDs is to avoid proposing a solution straight away. You need to get on well with your engineering team: make sure that you do not step

on their toes. **The PRD is the beginning of a conversation**, aiming to build a general direction which the team can sign up to.

It goes without saying, **to work at Twitter you should be able to show excellent communication skills!**

Beware of difficult interview questions. Some pitfalls they will ask you about will cover the prevention of conflict between teams.

Learn a little about **avoiding issues like schedules that are too tight; features that cannot actually be implemented; lack of roadmap visibility...** And expand your selection of tools: you might be really used to Trello, but what about Jira? Can you show that you are able to switch between different apps and obtain equally positive results?

One of the benefits of joining a company this size is the amount of training and resources that you get. Thus, on a prospective application you should explicitly lay out what your expectations are in this area: the company should not feel that they are wasting training materials or improvement opportunities on anybody!

Alex has continued his commitment to expanding education by becoming a product management instructor.

His final advice: read as much as you can, but if you can focus on one thing, **focus on knowing users!** Who knows, with time, maybe someday you will join him and train the next generation of product people.

## **Getting a Product Position at Apple**

In terms of **visual appeal and design**, Apple is one of the leading companies. Its key players lie in the physical products category, so any aspiring PM worth their salt should show some awareness of the differences.

What can an experienced Apple PM tell us about the company's priorities?

Former Apple Global Brand Manager Thomas Cho has an exhaustive knowledge of the history of products. From the Ford T to the iPod, each innovation has been connected to social changes and led transformations of their own. Thus, any applicant should know about the company's history.

An important point is to **focus on the coexistence of two souls within Apple**: its original start-up like structure; and its current transformation into one of the largest corporations in the world.

In fact, their image has always been to a deep knowledge of a particular type of consumer. Their whole appeal is based on looking exciting and new: if you are a PM coming from quieter pastures, you might need to work harder at fleshing out your risky character. Think of their marketing material and the way they created and dominated the smartphone market: hustling trumps tradition, indeed.

Depending on the task, you might be part of a slick, small team of daring entrepreneurs. Or, as Apple has grown, you might join a department that is firmly established. You should be able to navigate both, as both spirits co-inhabit the half-eaten fruit giant.

This applies to everything, according to Thomas. Traditionally-minded operators at Apple will approach new products from a more process-oriented perspective. Startup-inspired product people will rather be guided by innovation. What is the smallest amount of time and effort I need to put in to launch this? Can I launch, test and re-launch when I have results? More than process, **for this new generation of product leaders Apple is searching for performance-oriented individuals.**

Besides, Apple has long-since abandoned the year-on-year improvement mentality that still plagues some of the traditional hardware companies.

They are all in for the kind of disrupting spirit that startups have brought in the last decade: from revolutionizing transportation, to the world of dating.

Secondly, **you must know about the interplay between digital and physical products.** In these times, phenomena like ‘unboxing’ videos show us the marketing and customer engagement rewards for working hard at packaging design.

In the past, we have had many contributors and PMs who have been able to live between both worlds. The secret? Do not see them as separate worlds!

Hardware and software, physical and digital; they are both to be thought in conjunction. As an Apple PM, **you will be expected to create sustainable products that consider this factor from the start.**

During your interview, it is likely that you will be asked on how you will prevent pitfalls that have to do with asynchronicity. Apple’s generations of mobile products are closely linked to their digital forays; make a note of

the interrelations you notice to impress your interviewer.

Finally, let’s discuss your philosophical orientation to product.

Who would not want to work for Apple? Well, you might be surprised: the emergence of younger, slicker firms has aged the company really quickly. One way to **differentiate yourself in whatever selection process you are involved is that you understand the company’s legacy.** It is based on its origins at the first computer revolution, when these technologies were seriously thought of as an expansion of human freedoms.

Things like these might not seem hip anymore; however, if you show an alignment with the company’s ethos, you are almost certain to make an impression at later stages in the selection process.

Keep in mind the startup-big company dual soul, the importance of physical product and design, and having the right mindset; and **you should be on your way to joining Apple operations.**

# Getting a Product Position at Netflix

Netflix has grown from “**solving a problem**” (providing films by mail) to **disrupting the whole media sector**. Any PM seeking employment within this trendsetting giant will have to share the same approach.

Rohan Thakkar, former PM at Microsoft and Expedia, is Senior Product Manager at Netflix, with the mission of “entertaining the world”. That’s a strong statement! Let’s dig deeper into what it takes to join a team like his.

His background is quite diverse but firmly centered in tech: from Test Engineer to Program Manager and finally Product Manager. This journey has taken him to work in different departments, and gather many lessons along the way.

First, what is a product personality suitable for a company like Netflix? You should have a firm vision, but be ready to change if evidence changes. Decisiveness and responsibility go a long way: remember, you are responsible both for mistakes and successes.

Product Managers will lead to very diverse teams and are charged with identifying and defining opportunities within the strategy. This is important

because you cannot simply choose all use cases or all methods to deliver your preferred strategy. Simplicity is of the essence!

Secondly, remember that **PMs are not born, but made**. You need to unlock your growth mindset, apply some discipline and (yes!) be patient.

There are certain steps you need to prioritize.

- First, make sure to acquire as much **knowledge** as you can. There are many free resources, including blogs, e-books, videos, and podcasts; which can help you feel like you belong in the product world.
- Secondly, **try something new**. Find a relevant project or gig that involves identifying a user need and attempting to solve it. Hackathons, for example, are a good opportunity to try this.
- Thirdly, **network!** Utilizing your community is fundamental to find that special connection that might lead you to your favorite company (this applies to Netflix or other companies that you like).
- Finally, **prepare, prepare and prepare for your interview!** Books like Cracking the PM Interview



and this manual get you ready for that scary situation. Make sure to be honest but play up your strengths: tell compelling stories, absorb the company's ethos, prepare assignments and learn from your experience.

As you can see, Rohan's advice can help you get a product position in Netflix or any other of your favorite companies.

## Getting a Product Position at Slack

**Slack is such a cool tool** we often take it for granted. Instant communication which is fun to use and accepts endless personalization. What's not to like?

Kenneth Berger, startup advisor, has the honor of having been Slack's first official Product Manager. As such, he can tell you a lot about the company, what they are looking for and what they would like to see if you became an acting product manager in their offices.

Kenneth actually became a PM for the first time by "leaning in": there was a gap in the team after a product colleague left, and **he made a case for transitioning into the role.**

But, in between, he ensured that management knew him and the fact that he also knew as much as he could about the products and the customers they were targeting. It is all about trust!

Secondly, remember that **networking towards your favorite company is never a bad choice.** Kennet first heard about the offer through a friend who had previously talked to Slack.

Knocking on their door with a personal introduction already put him ahead of the competition. In his case, he had more UX experience, which is something Slack really wanted to work on. In any case, what they really valued is his **attitude and loyalty to the company's users** (remember: a PM is the user's advocate!).

One of the lessons he learnt is how quickly initial situations can change. When he first joined the company, it felt like a small startup. Soon, they became popular and, of course, challenges enlarged (along with the rewards!). So, as PM, you should **reassure potential interviewers that you are ready to accept a challenge even if conditions should change along the way.**

Keep this in mind: job titles matter very little. Focus on descriptions, and you will realize that there are many

more entries into product than you thought. It is on you what you make with the opportunities provided by Slack or other companies.

Keep in mind that **established operations will teach you more about generating agreements and projecting influence**; startups will expose you to a wider variety of tasks and responsibilities.

Kenneth also wants you to **avoid red flags** at potential interviews: disrespecting other teams is a no-no. Take ownership of your mistakes, showing responsibility is more important than a making up a stellar track record. Interviewers want to know what type of PM you are, not if you are good or bad. It's a matter of fit!

Plus, constrain your wish to “manage”. Yes, it is in your job title, but you still work within a hierarchy. **Think of yourself as an influencer**, a navigator: someone who steers the ship but who must respond to the captain. This can be difficult, but rewarding all the same! And it prepares you for management in the long run.

At places like Slack, they do not require an MBA. **Backgrounds can be very diverse, as long as they show promise**. So develop a good relationship with the product team, if you can transfer

within a company; or network with people from other firms.

The vital thing is to do PM tasks, even if it involves unofficially taking care of tasks not strictly pertaining to your role. Changing companies is not always necessary.

The final word of advice from Kenneth is: **find your superpower**. The easiest way for a PM to boost their profile is to really find a function where they make a huge difference. Think hard, and think again, and then invest in making this trait your unique selling point. You will not regret it!

## **Getting a Product Position at Salesforce**

Jared Long has been Product Manager at Salesforce for some time. This company is a really good example of a successful product operation in the B2B sphere. Learn how to attract their attention.

In the case of Jared, he had a marketing background and managed to secure a position at TripAdvisor as his first exposure to product management. As you know from this guide, **marketing and product are closely connected**.

However, you should make sure that your first opportunities afford you the

chance of getting to know other departments so you can quickly expand your skill set.

One surprising feature of his Salesforce experience is that quantitative prowess or technical skills were not an essential requirement to accept the role. Of course, spending time side-by-side with technical teams you will absorb some of this knowledge.

But never feel discouraged but your difficulty with numbers. **Improvising, learning on the spot; is something that hiring teams value** and you should be able to show during an interview. Take it from a Salesforce guy!

One thing about the company is that, while large, it does not function like traditional giants. It has organized teams through scrum to increase efficiency and information sharing. Many departments used to be independent companies that were absorbed, so showing a **welcoming attitude to diversity and learning from other teams** is a good asset.

According to Jared, Salesforce is a company that loves autonomy and trust. As long as decisions are substantiated, you do pretty much have free reign to make decisions. There are always cases where your manager has lined up a couple of

projects for you, though. That will almost always happen.

You should also **show adeptness to data research**. This is because you have to learn how to ask the right questions, and not be afraid of continuing to ask until you have the information you need to make bold decisions. In previous roles that are more user-facing, studying up on design guidelines and case studies helped form Jared's intuition.

Salesforce product teams are structured around high-level product grouping, and then gradually become more granular as you get into specific departments and products within that department.

Product Managers and Engineering Managers will typically work together to ensure that skills mesh together well when assembling a team. **So make sure that you have prior teamwork experience with engineers!**

You HAVE to know how to work well in a team. The interesting thing about product managers is that you rely on the output of people you don't directly manage. **This means you have to be a good communicator.**

Salesforce wants their PMs working six months ahead of the current development, so they have tons of

processes for reviewing roadmaps, updating departments on statuses leading up to releases, etc. As an individual, they must define why they want to move forward with a project and describe what it is they are trying to achieve.

If looking externally, **look for associate product manager roles (or product manager roles) and network via LinkedIn** to get your foot in the door. When you get to an interview, stress your training in understanding user behavior and understanding the methods of finding out what user pain points are.

What are the dos and don'ts for a PM interview?

- **DOS:** Research the company, look at all of their products, evaluate the products, know what you like, know what you would change – and **have a very good list of reasons for why you would make these changes.** Ask how they make their money, understand how much revenue your product is responsible for. Be vocal about teamwork, and you **MUST** demonstrate knowledge of who their customer is.
- **DON'TS:** Say that their product is perfect. Say that you like working alone. Say that you don't like talking to customers. **Say that you**

**don't like learning.** Just apply to jobs online, or have someone at the company refer you. That's the best way to get in the door.

Salesforce Product Marketing teams are more sales focused and communication focused. They align the sales teams on the product terminology to use with customers, which ways to speak with customers, and they also focus on the presentation of information to the customers. Product Managers are solely focused on the product lifecycle.

The biggest difference for **B2B companies is that you have to work harder to get in front of your users and understand that the people you sell to are different** than the people who use your product. They care about different things.

With enterprise software, there's also typically bigger demand from sales to be supported on customer calls, so it's very important in the enterprise that you communicate efficiently internally so everyone can speak about the product values the same ways.

These are important because it's just like playing telephone, the more people between the PM to the user, the more likely information is going to get jumbled. You still want to make sure the buyers are buying for what

they like, and your customer's  
business sees the benefits they need.

# 3.

## General Tips & Advice



# General Tips & Advice

— Now that you have picked your dream company, we can share with you some general tools and techniques to find a job in product. Make sure to apply as much advice as you can from this chapter!

## Treat Your Resume as a Product

Building your resume can be an overwhelming task. From the layout, design, font styles and your list of experiences. What are the most important factors?

Shanea King-Roberson used to be Senior Technical Product Manager at eBay, and she advises you to treat your resume as a product. Shanea is currently the Director of Product at Cloudflare.

Before this, she worked at Google from 2013 to 2017 holding multiple positions including Technical Product Manager and Product/Program Manager.

According to her, Product Manager job descriptions are always very similar, and LinkedIn is just like Google search. Check the keywords and SEO in a job description and put

those things on your resume. You have to start thinking of your resume as a product. Tools and 1-2 skills aren't the right questions.

The right questions are what is going to make me stand out among all of the other Product Managers? **Do I have something to highlight?** **Should I get skills on my own?** What features do I need to add so that it can compete in the marketplace? What research do I need to do? Recruiters are lazy, make their job easier.

Do not worry about lacking some coding experience. It is possible to get a job without a technical background. Absolutely. But you are competing with everyone else that also don't have a tech background.

If you do have a tech background, the numbers of jobs you qualify for increases. It's just a numbers game. Shanea thinks it's only important if you want a job at a traditional tech company, the Googles and Facebooks of the world.

Your resume should be tailored following the advice above. Get a job at the company you want and then transition into Product Management.



Build a product and learn to scale. Even if it fails to talk about what you learned. Expertise, they need a PM, you were the best person for the job.

Remember, your resume is your first point of contact with a potential employer. It is important that you **prove that you are ready for a Product Management** job. Not just by presenting valuable experiences, but also by applying Product Manager skills when writing your resume.

According to experienced recruiters and hiring managers, **you only have a few seconds to capture their interest or be put aside**. Think of them as Google's crawler looking for relevance in your resume. Therefore, it is important that you find out what keywords they're looking for in a PM resume. This way, you can find and optimize your content accordingly.

Show that you're data-driven! As a Product Manager, you are expected to make decisions based on data. You can display your capabilities by **quantifying the accomplishments** that you decide to put in your PM resume. Additionally, this will help the reader estimate the impact of your accomplishments.

You should also be lean. In Product Management, if it does not generate a quantifiable value it might as well be

considered waste. The same goes for Product Manager resumes. **Avoid using buzzwords** to make yourself or your statements seem more impressive, recruiters can see right through that and won't hesitate to discard your resume if there's ambiguity about your capabilities to perform.

Finally, use influencers. Customers put more trust in recommendations by acquaintances than those by brands. So do recruiters. **Send your PM resume through a current employee** of the company you're applying to. That way, you won't be just an anonymous applicant. They will associate you with the person you used as a messenger. Finally, they might even put up a good word for you!

It seems counter-intuitive that a document that receives such a limited attention from recruiters requires so much work from your part. Yet, think about it as **giving hiring managers the best possible customer experience with your resume**. Everybody wins: they easily find what they want and you get a call for an interview.

# Starting a Side Project

Getting a job in Product Management is a unique process. It's one of the few roles in the tech industry where the need to show your capabilities surpasses the need to show off your degrees. In short, you have to prove that you can do the job.

If you want a job as a Product Manager **start doing the job of a PM before you walk into an interview!**

You don't need to build a startup, it can be a small side project that's as simple as starting a blog all the way to the complexity of building an application.

The main goal of the side project is to show you can:

- Take action
- Put together a plan
- Finish what you start

Not only will having a side project make you stand out – but it will give you **a lot of references and conversation points during the interview.**

For example, if you get the popular question, “How would you prioritize multiple features?” You will be able to use your own experience as a

reference and answer it more clearly and confidently.

Some Ideas:

- **Start off with a blog and write about products** in an industry you want to be an expert in. Talk about how you would market a new or existing product, write product tear-downs, discuss what features you would add to a product and why. You can even talk about what user experience changes you would make to a product.
- **Create a product.** Come up with a problem you want to solve, decide on the Minimum Viable Product (MVP), then interview potential users, write user stories and build mock-ups. All this will go into a product roadmap.
- **A tangible product will increase your interview game**, but even simply having gone through the process with documents to prove it, and put you ahead of the rest.

## Earning the Respect of Technical Teams

Knowing how to code is essential to being a successful Product Manager at a software company in the US. **Prepare in advance for this tough challenge.** Here is some essential advice:

- If you don't have a coding background, you'll need to develop one ASAP.
- If you are already a developer without any iOS experience and looking to join a mobile team, try to learn about apps and the differences with desktop software.
- If you want a more comprehensive understanding of coding, check out Product School's 8-week part-time Coding for Managers course and others.
- **Familiarity with the various coding languages** such as Python, Javascript, PHP and Ruby will help you solve technical problems and give you the confidence to push back on the Marketing and Design teams' requests.
- Also, and most importantly, you'll earn the respect of the development team that you will be leading.

## Leaving Your Comfort Zone to Practice Public Speaking

Public speaking is difficult and intimidating for most people, especially for coders who typically have less outward-facing interactions.

**Find a Meetup where you can practice presenting in front of a group.** This will push you out of your comfort zone and give you a low-stakes opportunity to make mistakes, learn from them, and gain confidence speaking and presenting your ideas and projects. PMs need to be able to communicate internally and externally, so practice this as much as you can.

## Build Your Product Manager Job Pipeline

Networking and building a career pipeline will be the most important step to take to land a Product Manager job. Go to coffee with co-workers, reach out to product peers at other companies, and **focus on finding great mentors.**

Personal introductions to job listings are the key to starting the process and finding a new role. Even with the above tactics, you will still need an

active job pipeline and strategy to be successful.

Finally, you need to trust yourself, **understand why and what you are doing this for**, manage your expectations, and push yourself because landing a Product Manager job can be very challenging.

## **Utilize Your Product Community**

Jonathan Lai has advanced a lot in his product career thanks to the network he has built over the years. Before becoming a Founder of Tribe of Five, Jonathan worked for American Express as Product Manager.

Both there and in Goldman Sachs, he gained experience in the world of financial products. As with many other environments, prospering in the product universe has a lot to do with who you know. Make sure that you note down his tips and tricks to make the most of your product community.

Every PM has one specific skill they are brilliant at Data Analysis. Knowing their customers. Conducting amazing experiments. They do not need to cover it all. There is, however, one thing that all PMs need to know: **utilizing their product community to**

**the fullest.** We're not talking just about job opportunities here.

What is a community? And how is it different from a network?

- A community has **common interests**. That is, PMs, for instance, are defined by their common goals to understand and improve products.
- These shared values lead to trust-building. Helping each other is only possible where trust is shared among participants.
- We belong to multiple communities based on our different interests. They can be online, or offline. There can also be sub-communities within larger groups of similar people.
- A network, by definition, is your particular reach within a community. That is, your position and ability to extract value from your shared interest group.
- This is **not the same as your LinkedIn count!**

Every time you try something new, you follow a process. First, you suck. Then, you make mistakes. Suddenly, you manage to do something right! And that's when you get better. A common rookie PM mistake is

neglecting your network. Try with a better way to do things. For starters, think of adding value to your network.

Don't go crazy, **keep it small and sustainable**. For example, why don't you share a good article with someone in your network tomorrow?

Once you begin sharing and helping others in your network, you might be tempted to do too much. Remember, quality beats quantity. This is because real connections are the secret. You should be doing simple things and playing the long game, focusing on relationships rather than transactions.

Some examples include: inviting someone to an event, and limiting your meetings to 1-2 people. This will allow for **meaningful interactions**.

Make sure to avoid some common mistakes. If you try too hard to be interesting, the more it works against you. Don't force it! If you're interested, people will notice. By keeping stakes low, you risk no disappointments. This means that you should **respect the journey from stranger to friend**.

Of course, remember to be actually interested by putting in the work ahead of time: research your network, read what they read about and speak in their language.

At the intersection of software engineering, design, and business, the next generation of Product Managers, self-taught or otherwise, must build, measure, test, and iterate on their own skills in each discipline in order to succeed. **Let's review general skills all aspiring Product Managers should have.**

## 1. Technical Background

You don't need to be a software engineer but you need to understand how a software works and be able to earn the respect of your engineers.

Those who know how to code have a definite leg up in the process, but if you don't, you can still **build something to prove your curiosity and expertise**. Similar to designers who have a portfolio to showcase designs, an aspiring Product Manager needs to be prepared to showcase side projects such as wireframes, websites or mobile apps; some of them can be done with tools that don't require any coding skills whatsoever.

## 2. Industry Domain

You have to care about the product that you want to manage. The best way to prove that you understand a market, its customers, its problems and what needs to change is to **have experience working in the same**

industry, even if it wasn't as a product manager.

Let's say you were a marketing manager in an e-commerce company, you can use that expertise to apply to another e-commerce company, as a Product Manager. Being a PM requires deep industry knowledge and it's incredibly difficult to switch industries and jobs at the same time.

Once you get your first Product Management job in an industry you are an expert in, it will be easier to find a Product Management job in a different industry (if you that's what you ultimately want.)

### 3. Communication Skills

You are going to spend most of your time communicating instead of doing. That's what Paul Graham, Founder of YCombinator coined as the manager's schedule. As a Product Manager, you are responsible for defining the what, and your team is responsible for defining the how.

**You don't need to be a public speaker or a book author.** However, every Product Manager needs to be an incredibly fast learner so you can keep up with industry trends and team needs in order to be able to share a clear vision of the product with every single stakeholder.

# 4.

## Interview Advice



Bring new ideas



Passion is golden



Solve problems





# Interview Advice

— Job interview. Is there anything more scary than that? You walk into a room, talk about yourself and your abilities and answer their questions the best way you can. When it's finished, you wait for them to contact you and hope for the best. We've all been there but fear it no more. Here are the keys on how to rule a PM job interview.

## An Overview of Product Management Interviews

Former Facebook Product Manager of Enterprise Product, Randy Edgar, has done hundreds of job interviews. He does not lack experience in that field. Previously he worked six years at Facebook and is now the Group Product Manager at Uber. He studied Business Administration and Management and ended up in product about ten years ago.

The main thing to remember is **“never say no to an interview because you never know how it's going to work out.”**

In an interview, they will ask you questions about a product. They

might ask, for example, why are you building it. The right way to answer to this is not to say that you want to do it for the consumers but to specify what exactly are the goals and metrics that you are after. On the other hand, if they ask you what you would like to build for their company the **response has to be tied to the company's goals and missions.**

The perfect answer, according to Randy, would start with “I want to build product X for your company because the company's goal is Y.” The sentence would continue with “And how I would measure that is with the key metric Z.”

If this is unsure to you then Randy suggests “answering a question with a question to find out what they're looking for and that's how you nail an interview.”

Decision making in Product Management has to be data-driven. Always. The reason that the product you want to build “is cool” is not good enough. The argument needs to be supported by data and you need to mention this fact in the interview.

Every hiring manager values innovation. What they want to know is what you are bringing into the company and to the team. When asked what you would want to build for their company all you need is “one good idea.” Randy’s advice is not to be afraid of getting up and using the whiteboard for brainstorming and innovating on site. The person interviewing you might even join you for brainstorming!

Depending on the company you are applying for, the level of the technicality of the job varies a lot. **If you apply for Google, you’ll know that the job will be technically tough and, therefore so is the interview,** but if it’s some smaller company and you’re not sure about it, ask.

The reason behind this is that you want to know how high the bar is set. It’s useful not only for the applicant to know but also for the company.

A pro-tip that Randy gives is to do your research on the company before the interview. When you do it, you know what to expect. Also, you will know what or who has succeeded and what or who hasn’t, and you know the things to avoid from saying in an interview.

What is essential for a Product Manager is to have the ability to be a leader in the team, have a vision on

what direction the product is going and be able to execute plans. “What does this product look like in two years?” is one of the questions that a product manager needs to be able to answer at all times. They need to have a somewhat clear vision in their mind about the product.

Also, a part of leadership is the ability to get along with the designers and engineers in the team. This is a crucial part of getting things done, and in an interview, you need to be able to prove that you can do it. Randy’s suggestion is to make a three-minute speech that proves that point. An important note is that it doesn’t necessarily mean that you can get things done but that you can get your team to execute your vision.

**“Never talk for longer than two minutes without asking questions!”.**

The most asked question in interviews is “tell us about yourself.” Plan ahead what to say in two minutes and practice it. Nobody wants to listen to you talk about yourself for 15 minutes. Companies want communication and to know that you have the skills it requires. They want to hire someone they like so the most important thing is to communicate and smile.

Communication within the team is very important for a Product Manager,

whether it's about getting along with the designers or the engineers. You need to make compromises and be collaborative. It's a two-way street and requires mutual respect.

## **The Ultimate Interview Checklist by a Top Recruiter**

Valentine Aseyo is the SVP of Product at Bandsintown. Before Bandsintown, he spent 8 years working at Facebook in Ireland, India, and the US spanning many roles from User Experience to Product, as well as Advertising, Marketing, and Sales.

Prior to that, he worked at IBM and Colgate & Palmolive. This unique background covering multiple geographies and departments made him an expert in all cycles of Product Management.

Valentine is also an Olympic recruiter; he interviewed over 2,000 candidates throughout his career and loves sharing his tips & tricks on how to score your dream job in Product Management.

### **#1: Do your homework**

This is the most important rule. If you have the perfect prep, not only will you be able to answer all the questions but it will also boost your

confidence before and during the interview. Make sure to digest the company website and all internet sources perfectly to align with their mission, vision, values, and culture. Google is your best friend: **read all the recent articles, market research on the topic and industry news.**

### **#2: Get very familiar with their products/services and competitors**

Spend a ton of time using their product/services and exploring all the features available. In addition, **you should definitely check out their competitors** to get a better understanding of the ecosystem. This will help you identify areas of improvement and position them in the market.

### **#3: Brevity is a virtue**

PMs need to have killer communications skills. **Being succinct is the #1 quality an interviewer expects.** Elevator pitches are always the winner rather than a convoluted proposal with lots of details. If you can't elaborate your idea in 2 minutes, then you know it's not a good idea. If you find yourself talking and talking for over 5 minutes, you're probably rambling and not being articulate.

#### #4: Focus on impact

As you talk about your work experience, **it's key to quantify the impact of past accomplishments**: what were the success metrics and KPIs? How many people used your product/services? How was the product acknowledged by authorities? How much revenue did you bring? How did it change people's lives? Basically, after you clearly (and briefly) explain the project, make sure to follow up with the quantitative impact.

#### #5: Demonstrate applicable experiences and skills

Interviewers like to hear how your past experiences are relevant to the job position you're applying for. Giving many examples (and of course, their impact) is always very helpful to show how relevant your background and skills are. **Explain your past roles, the skills you acquired** and how you could use them in this new endeavor.

#### #6: Bring new ideas

No matter what job you apply for, you'll be hired to make a change in the company. **You're expected to look at the existing business with fresh and critical eyes** in order to generate dozens of ideas and take the team to the next level. If you can't surface several things to improve or give me a

few million dollar ideas to innovate, then there is no value of hiring this person.

#### #7: Solve problem-solving problems

Interviewers are interested in knowing **how you tackle daily problems and how you'd approach to improving their product**. They try to probe into the creativity, scalability, measurability and feasibility of your answers by asking problem-solving (aka critical thinking) questions. So make sure you review their product critically.

Think about the most important thing to fix/improve on their platform, have a couple million dollar ideas to build on their platform ready to share with them, think about strategies they can use to expand their user base or other primary metrics they care about such as engagement, revenue, or cost.

#### #8: Stay true to the role

Remember what you're interviewing for and what the team does. If you're interviewing for a product role but you give examples of marketing initiatives to improve their business, then you're not on the right track. **Don't answer the questions from the domain of your past expertise but answer them from the domain of your future role.**

## #9: Curiosity feeds the cat

You think you did a good job and now ready to end the interview? Not quite yet! The questions you ask at the end of the interview may make it or break it. Make sure to brainstorm a variety of question in advance to show your interest and curiosity. Refrain from asking questions that can be googled to get answers. **The questions you ask will reflect your intelligence**, critical thinking, and investment in the process.

## #10: Passion is golden

You may not check all the boxes. No one ever does! This is where your passion comes into play. **Show them why you care about the mission of the company.** Give them examples of things you learned on the job so that they know you're coachable and have the ability to learn quickly. Tell them how you'd go about improving yourself in the areas that you lack experience if you were to get this job. Make sure you have a plan.

# Product Management

## Interview Specifics

The interview process starts by submitting the resume or sending out the LinkedIn profile followed by an interview with the recruiter. Take

into consideration that the recruiter might not be a Product Manager.

- After passing the second phase, a candidate will take part in an interview with the hiring manager (usually in person).
- Don't expect an offer until after two more on-site interviews.
- Learn how to answer a question about your background.
- Prepare for a question about your technical background.
- Learn what to say and not to say if asked about your favorite product.
- Learn how to answer a question about prioritizing features.
- Get tools to answer a question about how to run A/B tests.

### Tips for a job interview:

- Put time into preparing for the interview to show how committed you are.
- Do your research about the company (not just the website – go deeper.)
- Talk about the product management frameworks – the recruiter will be expecting that.

- Don't be too technical and bore the interviewer.
- Present yourself shortly but informatively – tell the three most important things about your background (not everything).
- Set yourself for success.
- Smile and make contact.

**“Getting a job is kind of a job itself.”**  
Realizing this as early as possible makes the job hunt much easier.

An example of a Product Management interview question

To get a Product Manager job you might send 50 applications and only get two offers. Knowing how to answer the most common questions will help you get you the job you want.

**Here are some typical interview questions:**

- Tell me about yourself
- How do you measure the success of a product?
- Product X's usage is down, what would you do next?

– Pick a product and tell me a feature they should build next. Why?

– What would be your process for prioritizing features on your roadmap?

– Tell me about a product that's well designed, or that's not well designed

Undoubtedly, **the most difficult challenge is the quantitative PM question**, such as – How many dishes get broken per month in San Francisco?

With this question, the interviewer will assess your analytical skills. Don't worry too much about getting the right answer because you'll likely not even be in the ballpark. What matters the most is the process through which you solve difficult problems.

Start by thinking out loud and asking questions. Choose which ones you'll ask and which ones they expect you to figure out. Maybe a good starting point is the number of people in San Francisco, do you know the population of the city? What is an approximate ratio of people to dishes? **What kind of dishes are used in a household? Which situations cause a dish to get broken?** Do men break more dishes than women?

Take a step back and catalog what you know or wish you knew. The interviewer told you that San Francisco has a population of around 800,000. You can figure out the number of dishes per person by taking yourself as a benchmark. You are not sure about whether there's a difference in terms of gender for this problem so you will not consider this variable.

Use the information you've gathered and come up with an equation.

Broken dishes = Average monthly dishes used in SF \* Probability of accident

" dishes = Monthly dish-washing accidents per person \* Population of SF

"" dishes = Unit sales of dishes in SF \* % sales due to broken dishes

Estimate, or find ways to estimate the variables in your equation. You think that the dishes to individuals ratio is 5:1. You assume that the main cause of broken dishes is accidents during the washing of the dishes which occur once every 2 months.

Think about corner cases and adjustments. Maybe there is an important Greek population in San Francisco; will Greek weddings impact

the final result? Is the incidence of broken dishes higher in households with children?

Break out your math skills and calculate!

Double check. Think about the number that you've gotten as a result. Do 600,000 broken dishes per month make sense? Did you under or overestimate something?

That was tough!

It might seem challenging to attempt to solve this kind of questions on the spot in a stressful situation. We recommend that you **challenge yourself with similar questions and follow these 7 steps.**

## **Checklist: Prepare for the Product Manager Interview**

The important thing is to jump in prepared. Build the most for your future opportunities and hit the ground running. Before you begin, make sure you double-check these critical points:

- Buy a domain if you don't have one this week. Use sites like Squarespace to get a personal website and blog up quickly.



- Add at least 5 blog articles over the next 5 weeks.
- Update your resume.
- Include the product management tools you are familiar with.
- Publish your resume on your personal website.
- Make your LinkedIn scream “Product”.
- Publish any articles you wrote about product on LinkedIn and Medium and share them on LinkedIn.
- Ask for recommendations from your Product School instructor.
- Include an article or post about your features project during the course at PS.
- Fill in your description about your passion and why you want to work in product.
- Clean up social media accounts.
- Build a product and be ready to discuss your processes in depth.

- Network with fellow students and in Slack Channels.

## **Before the Product Manager Interview:**

- Collect, study and practice your response to interview questions
- Become a product manager – make yourself the product
- Clean up any portfolios or mockups you plan to bring with you

# 5.

## Your First Few Days as a PM



# Your First Few Days as a Product Manager

— Congrats. You made it!

If you have followed this guide, you will have covered all corners to work in Product. Look back: general principles, common and less common transitions, tips to shine at particular companies and direct interview advice. Of course, you can come back to each section if you ever need it again.

And you probably will go back. This is because becoming a PM never really ends. **You are constantly improving, re-learning processes, methods and approaches.** Your work will suffer if you are not open to new influences, and the fact that your natural home is in tech will force you to stay up to date. There is no way you can succeed in product without attending talks, reading more and exposing yourself to the work of others.

One good way to get used to this upwards journey to digital wisdom is making the most of your first weeks in the job. Let's finish this book by sharing the essential tips for a novice PM.

Make the Most of Your First Product Management Experience

For all the lessons contained in this book, we have relied on actual experiences from Product Managers. This time, let's hear from Anand Arivukkarasu, Product Growth Manager for AI, Machine Learning and marketing automation at Facebook.

First of all, you should establish a timeline. When will you stop being new? For some, they are ready to march into battle after a week. Others need at least a year until they feel firmly attached to their roles. Pick some sort of time reference that makes sense to you and your experiences. If you are someone who spends a lot of time getting used to things, probably several months is a good timeframe to go by. In the case of Anand, he picks 90 days as his reference.

You should divide this period in three. **First, the time when you try to understand** as much as you can from your new environment. **Then, when you develop and position your product vision.** **Finally, when you are concerned with execution** and leadership: how you will implement your initiatives.

When you are understanding, you should first think of the product. If it is an existing service or line, get an idea through active research. Use it, force it, share it... **Gather as much research as there is both inside and outside the company.** Remember: you must cover all that your position entails. This includes value proposition, target markets, preferred users, personas, competitors... That is, you should know this product as if it were a family member!

If you have been hired to develop a new product, try to reflect on other companies' properties that offer similar services. Rely on your own notes from before accepting the job, understand how previous products have been developed in the company. You need to get a feel of the process even if you are starting from scratch.

In both cases, you should identify potential gaps between market and product. Additionally, immerse yourself in company culture. Try to identify people's likes and dislikes, and see how your individual experiences can contribute something to the operation. Finally, get an idea of how much autonomy you have, what are your lines of communications with executives and what are the role divisions across teams. In short: what do you have to navigate to get things done over there?

For the middle period, Anand emphasizes getting closer to product development and positioning. There are methods you can use to locate strategic needs, where you can actually make efforts to avoid future pitfalls. For instance, discovery workshops with the team can help you identify problems across concepts like the user. Then, a good diagram should to encapsulate this information and have it as a reference going forward.

At this point, **you must encourage your team to speak up.** We are in the development phase: brainstorm, hold relaxed and open meetings and champion creative ideas. Then, once you start seriously drafting the product development roadmap, you will be able to detect which contributions are more attractive. The roadmap is a fantastic tool because it distributes tasks, generates consensus and can be used as a reference point in the future.

This is the right moment to **start thinking about Key Performance Indicators and other metrics.** These are not to be set in stone, but the best point to set them up is right after you have all the information you need but before you actually start developing. Also, make sure that you are aware of the lifecycles attached to the project: you must know when other teams will have to come in for a specific task (engineers, marketers); and when do

preparations end, development starts and an idea of your endgame.

The last third of this period is all about showing leadership. After collecting all that information about the company, you should know about the best avenues to move things forward. This sort of “informal” knowledge will constantly adapt during execution. Do not worry about changing more “formal” information, like your research papers or your roadmap: they should allow flexibility provided you do not abandon your product vision.

Bit by bit you should also focus on collecting metrics that show your impact. At this point, **you are making a case for yourself and the product.** Communicate to your teams and your superiors how you are doing; in both senses: what is the specific process you are undertaking, and how well do you think you are approaching your set goals.

**Finally: RELAX AND ENJOY!** You are where you wanted to be, and are taking the first steps in a surely successful product career. Make sure to pass on your wisdom to future aspiring Product Managers like yourself, just like these top PMs are doing right now.

Good luck!

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