PURPOSE

Expertise

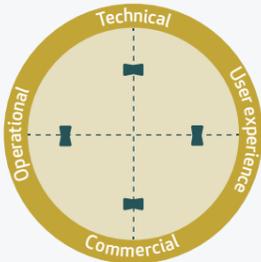Market — Product

Over time most product managers become experts on their product but the business also looks to them to decide what goes on the roadmap. This means also knowing about their customers, competitors and markets.

Balanced View

Technical, User experience, Commercial, Operational

Product management needs to have a balanced view across all the different aspects of the product. This allows them to make unbiased decisions and recommendations for the business. It's not about being expert on every detail but about having the best "helicopter view'" of the product.

Role

Tactical — Leading

For most product managers, there is too much focus on the tactical. It's about firefighting and responding, rather than being strategic, longer-term and proactive. We believe the role should also be about leading within the business. Driving the product forward in support of the company strategy. A foot in the present and a foot in the future.

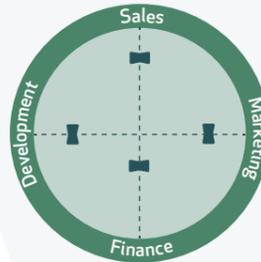# ORGANIZATION

Business Model
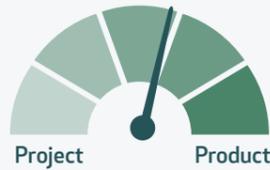
Project — Product

Many B2B companies do too much project work. It's about delivering tailor-made customer projects rather than reusable products. These unique solutions cost more to build and support than using off-the-shelf products. They lose the economies of scale, chance to build Intellectual Property (IP) and resulting profitability of a product approach. That's why there is often a push to "productize" a solution. The goal is to build once and sell many times.

Bias

Sales, Marketing, Finance, Development

What product management does is strongly influenced by the overall bias within a business. In a Sales-led company, product managers can find that the roadmap is always driven by the latest customer discussions. In a Development led company, the focus is on supporting the developers. This is even more marked when product management reports to one of these teams.

Development Approach

Waterfall — Agile

The development approach used in a company has a significant impact on product management. Whether it's Agile, Waterfall or some hybrid of the two — product management can get caught in a clash of cultures. And if the product manager is also a Scrum Product Owner, they can be too busy to do the rest of the role.

Product Activity Split

Product Management, Product Marketing, Product Development, Senior Mgmt, Commercial, etc.

Product activities are typically split across a number of departments within a business. Problems arise when it's not clear who owns what, or when there are gaps or overlaps. Most companies have issues in this area and we recommend using our Product Activities Framework to help think this through.

WAY OF WORKING

Tools and Process
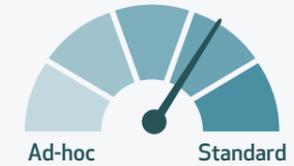
Ad-hoc — Standard

Many product managers do things in an ad-hoc way, but it's much more efficient if everyone uses the same tools and processes. Using standard approaches means all the stakeholders understand what's going on, work can be reused and things can be improved over time. It's even better if they are industry best practice.

Decision Making

Gut feel — Data-driven
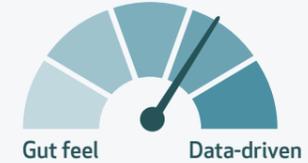
Many companies have terrible product reporting and poor market insight. That means that decisions are often made by gut-feel rather than by analyzing whatever data is available. Gathering the data takes effort, but without it, decisions are hard to defend and easily overturned.

Product Management Dashboard

Each dial on our dashboard represents a key issue that can impact the success of product managers and the product management team or department.

Use it to discuss what's going on with product management in your company.

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