Leadership

Checklist

- Is there a link between product plans and the company strategy?
- Are objectives for the PM team clear and aligned?
- Is the role of PM agreed across the business and its value evangelized?
- Is portfolio analysis conducted so that resources are allocated appropriately across all products?
- Is there a plan to improve the product management team or department, i.e. a Roadmap for PM?
- Is there a clear ongoing business planning process that locks into product and portfolio plans?
- Are PMs encouraged to see themselves as leaders within the business?
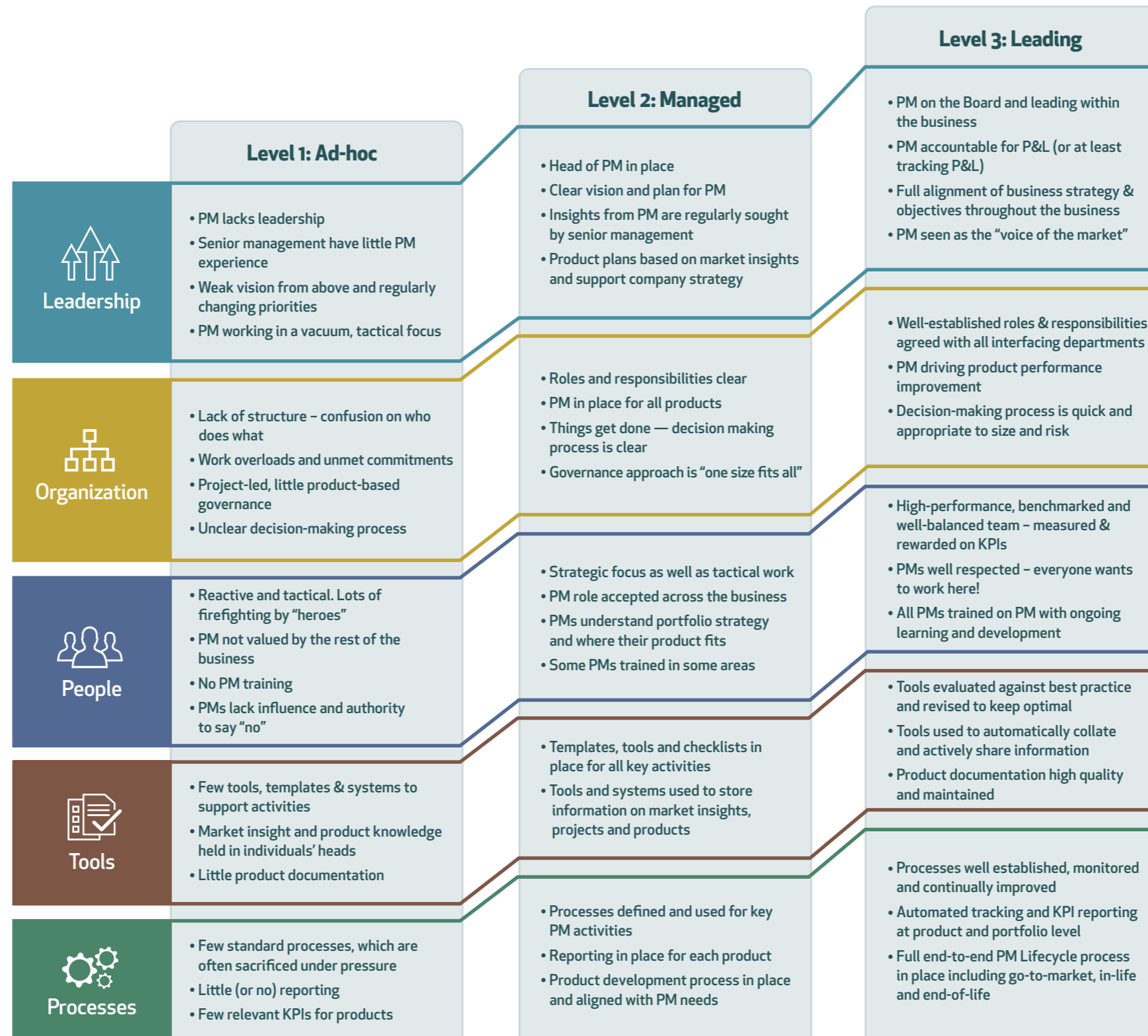
Organization

Checklist

- Is PM reporting to a functional team or is it independent and reporting directly to the board?
- Is governance fast and effective?
- Are PMs encouraged and able to meet customers?
- Are resources aligned and sized to deliver on plans?
- Is PM done consistently across the organization?
- Does every product activity have a home?
- Is there a product community for PMs to share best practice?
- Does every product have a PM?
- Are there clear role definitions agreed between PM and adjacent teams or departments such as Technology?

People

Checklist

- Do PMs have the necessary balance of skills, knowledge and experience?
- Is there a career path into and within PM?
- Is PM the place that people want to be?
- Do PMs know where to go for help?
- Is there a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for each person?
- Is there a PM onboarding process in place?
- Is the company culture "in it together" or "finger pointing"?
- Do PMs feel they own their products?
- Is the distinction between the Scrum Product Owner role and the PM role clear?

Tools

Checklist

- Do PMs have the systems, tools, templates and checklists they need to work through all stages of the lifecycle, e.g., roadmap, propositions, launch, requirements?
- Are tools appropriate for the size or riskiness of work?
- Are there standards for reporting to management or are there lots of ad-hoc requests?
- Is data available to manage and report on products?
- Is there a single master-reference location for product information in the business?
- Are software tools used to improve efficiency in areas such as roadmaps, requirements management and business planning?
- Is product documentation standard across the business?

Processes

Checklist

- Do PMs have standard processes for all stages of the lifecycle?
- Is feedback used to improve processes to make them more efficient and effective?
- Are PMs trained in the processes?
- Is there a consistent language used for products and product management across the organization?
- Are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established for every product?
- Is there reporting on product profit and loss (P&L), revenue, sales, performance vs. target?
- Is it clear to the rest of the organization how to engage with PM?
- Is there an owner for each process?
- Is the product development process benchmarked and performance tracked?
- Is there a clear process to support and foster innovation from across the business?

Maturity Levels

Leadership

Level 1: Ad-hoc
- PM lacks leadership
- Senior management have little PM experience
- Weak vision from above and regularly changing priorities
- PM working in a vacuum, tactical focus

Level 2: Managed
- Head of PM in place
- Clear vision and plan for PM
- Insights from PM are regularly sought by senior management
- Product plans based on market insights and support company strategy

Level 3: Leading
- PM on the Board and leading within the business
- PM accountable for P&L (or at least tracking P&L)
- Full alignment of business strategy & objectives throughout the business
- PM seen as the "voice of the market"

Organization

Level 1: Ad-hoc
- Lack of structure – confusion on who does what
- Work overloads and unmet commitments
- Project-led, little product-based governance
- Unclear decision-making process

Level 2: Managed
- Roles and responsibilities clear
- PM in place for all products
- Things get done — decision making process is clear
- Governance approach is "one size fits all"

Level 3: Leading
- Well-established roles & responsibilities agreed with all interfacing departments
- PM driving product performance improvement
- Decision-making process is quick and appropriate to size and risk

People

Level 1: Ad-hoc
- Reactive and tactical. Lots of firefighting by "heroes"
- PM not valued by the rest of the business
- No PM training
- PMs lack influence and authority to say "no"

Level 2: Managed
- Strategic focus as well as tactical work
- PM role accepted across the business
- PMs understand portfolio strategy and where their product fits
- Some PMs trained in some areas

Level 3: Leading
- High-performance, benchmarked and well-balanced team – measured & rewarded on KPIs
- PMs well respected – everyone wants to work here!
- All PMs trained on PM with ongoing learning and development

Tools

Level 1: Ad-hoc
- Few tools, templates & systems to support activities
- Market insight and product knowledge held in individuals' heads
- Little product documentation

Level 2: Managed
- Templates, tools and checklists in place for all key activities
- Tools and systems used to store information on market insights, projects and products

Level 3: Leading
- Tools evaluated against best practice and revised to keep optimal
- Tools used to automatically collate and actively share information
- Product documentation high quality and maintained

Processes

Level 1: Ad-hoc
- Few standard processes, which are often sacrificed under pressure
- Little (or no) reporting
- Few relevant KPIs for products

Level 2: Managed
- Processes defined and used for key PM activities
- Reporting in place for each product
- Product development process in place and aligned with PM needs

Level 3: Leading
- Processes well established, monitored and continually improved
- Automated tracking and KPI reporting at product and portfolio level
- Full end-to-end PM Lifecycle process in place including go-to-market, in-life and end-of-life

Product Management Maturity Model

- Review the maturity of your product management (PM) team or department.
- The level required depends on the size and complexity of your business.
- Most businesses find their PM maturity varies across the different areas.
- Use this model to create an action plan to improve your PM team or department.

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