

Product Manager Tasks

A PM is the person on a product team who is responsible for choosing the right problems to go after, defining what success looks like, and guiding their team to achieve successful outcomes.

DISCOVER

This is a process called product discovery—when you figure out what problem you should go after. You're looking for a problem that's large enough to be worth solving, while feasible enough for your team to be successful.

- Reading through feature requests
- Analyzing funnel metrics
- Interviewing customers
- Testing concept mocks
- Discussing long-term strategy
- Researching competitors
- Doing market analysis
- Holding brainstorming sessions
- Running design sprints

DEFINE

The define phase is when you narrow down the problem space to a specific, feasible slice, and frame it so it's ready for the team. You might have a hypothesis for a solution at this point, but it's just an illustration, not something you're committed to. During this phase, you'll be shaping the outcomes you're going after, and outlining the big picture so your team understands where this project fits in.

- Prioritizing the problems identified in discovery
- Picking a target customer
- Mapping the customer journey
- Defining success metrics
- Creating a product vision
- Proposing a high-level roadmap
- Drafting an initial timeline

DESIGN

The design phase is not just about putting your ideas into pictures; it also includes expansive thinking and validating your ideas with real people. This includes both the user experience (e.g., mock-ups and visual prototypes) and the technical solution (design docs and technical prototypes)

- Writing a spec
- Deciding what functionality is in or out
- Negotiating dependencies with other teams
- Whiteboarding with designers and engineers
- Giving feedback on design
- Running usability studies

DEVELOP

Development is where you turn the ideas into working code.

- Writing stories or tickets for engineering
- Determining which metrics to instrument and track
- Triaging bugs
- Checking in with teammates regularly to unblock them
- Trying out each feature as it's being built and giving feedback
- Keeping stakeholders and approvers up-to-date

DELIVERY

Delivery is where you roll out the solution to users. Some changes are quietly shipped without any fanfare, while others have a full go-to-market campaign

- Setting up validation phases such as internal dogfooding, beta testing, A/B tests, and stability tests
- Organizing the quality assurance (QA) process
- Working with launch partners to ensure everything is ready for launch (including gathering approvals)
- Partnering with marketing on the go-to-market plan Training salespeople and customer support
- Celebrating with the team.

DEBRIEF

After the launch, it's important to measure how it went and learn from the project. Often, insights from the launch will drive the next round of product innovation.

- Running a retrospective on what went well and what didn't
- Analyzing launch metrics
- Reading customer feedback on the launch
- Prioritizing "fast follow" work based on customer feedback
- Evaluating the launch success
- Sharing launch results with the company
- Planning for the next iteration

OTHER ACTIVITIES

These tasks might include:

- Pitching and interviewing candidates
- Mentoring other PMs
- Writing high-quality peer feedback
- Participating in company processes like goal setting and status reports
- Reviewing specs from other PMs
- Answering incoming questions from other teams
- Presenting to important customers
- Meeting with customers regularly
- Sharing best practices and lessons learned
- Running company-wide processes
- Presenting at all-hands
- Participating in strategy discussions
- Attending industry conferences
- Staying up-to-date with PM best practices