

The background is a dark navy blue. In the top-left corner, there are two overlapping geometric shapes: a blue parallelogram and a light green parallelogram. In the bottom-left corner, there is a circular inset showing a close-up of a printed circuit board (PCB) with various electronic components. In the top-right corner, there is a faint, stylized pattern of white lines and squares, resembling a circuit or a data grid.

The Intangible Side of Product Management

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Who the heck is this guy?

- I've been in Product Management for 12+ years
- I've been knocked down, beat up, kicked around and left for dead as a PdM
- I've also been part of some really great product teams and managed some really cool products
- Success in Product Management, as in life, is a journey.

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts- Winston Churchill



Help Wanted: Product Manager

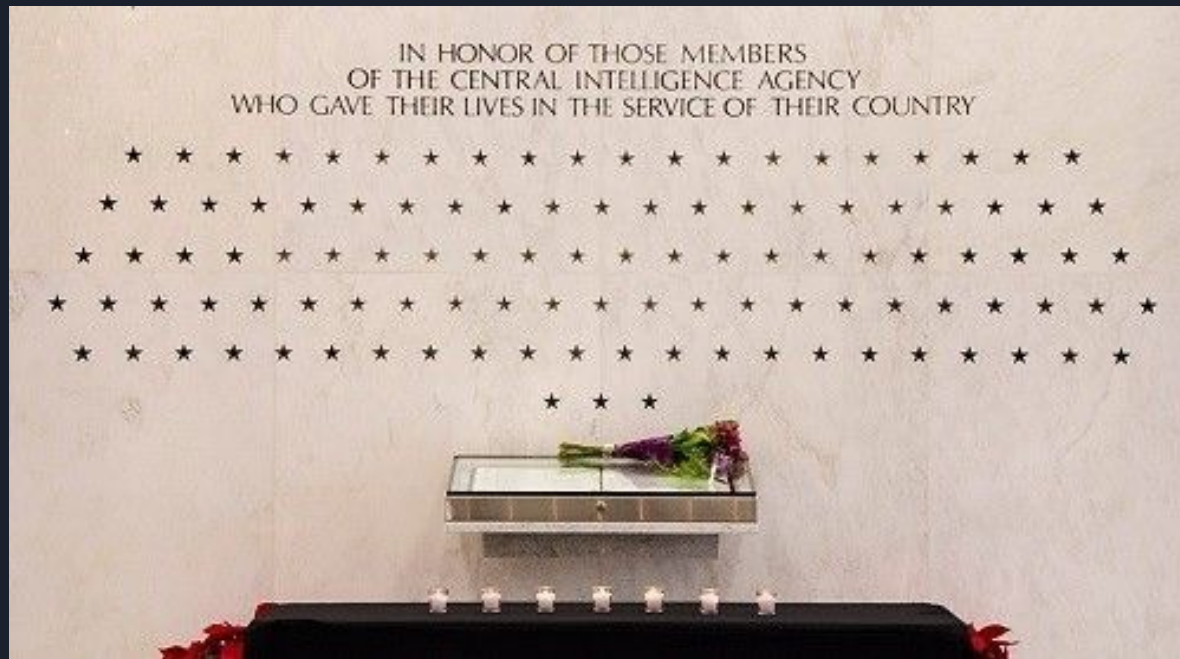
- 01 Act as the entrepreneurial owner of the Product and drive an exceptional user experience
- 02 Manage the product lifecycle from product definition through ideation, development, rollout, maintenance and phase out.
- 03 Drive cross functional activities related to business development, strategy, training, documentation, sales, marketing, engineering, UX and support



Help Wanted: Product Manager cont'd

- 04 Create and maintain pricing structures and ROI impacts
- 05 Stay abreast of new technology trends, competitors and how they will deliver values to users and the company
- 06 Don't screw it up....but if you do.....

Memorial for the Fallen PdM





Let's break this down though

- While the job descriptions can seem exciting, overwhelming and vague all at the same time, great product management always comes down to Execution. (no, not getting hung)
- In 12+ years, I've learned that the difference between a good PdM and a great PdM is relationships
- Great PdM's maintain a relentless user first focus
 - This does not mean
 1. The user is always right
 2. The user always knows what they want
 3. You should only listen to any one voice to drive this
 4. You should listen to the guy/gal that has been at the company for 15+ years to get this. That person WILL find you

Heed these words....





Requirements Execution

- Deliver a constant flow of requirements/EPICs. Keep the pipeline full or people will work on what they feel like
- Requirements definition has no end. You are always maturing them
- Tailor your requirements to your audience and provide as much detail as you possibly can. Don't be afraid to make your own template
- Socialize your requirements with EVERYONE
- Learn to wireframe, at all costs.
- Be prepared to defend your position but also to change your mind. Have data and facts.
- In the small meetings you think don't matter, make the decision



Relationships

- Your 4 most important INTERNAL relationships are:
 1. Sales
 2. UX
 3. Engineering/QA
 4. Support
- Never have just one “go to” person on each team
- But DO have someone who is your sounding board

Internal Relationships

TEAM	WHAT THEY ARE JUDGED ON	WHAT THEY HATE	TIPS TO WORK PRODUCTIVELY
Sales	\$\$\$\$\$	Not getting the deal, Bugs that have users sending them hate mails that keep them from \$\$	Spend a good portion of your time here. Help them sell. Talk about problems users have and how product helps
UX	# of designs delivered and quality of work	700 people telling them what they don't like about their designs	Be a filter. Take the hits for them. Not all of them but a good majority/
Engineering/QA	Product Quality. Release delivery on time and on scope	Scope Creep	Defend them to the organization. Take up your issues with them on the side, not in front of team. Hold the line on what you said scope would be
Support	# of cases resolved	Getting beat up over something else they can't control	Get on calls with them. Spend time hearing customer frustration. Yes, it will suck but will be your biggest learning opp,



QA

- I'm a huge believer in quality of product above all else
- If users put your product down once, they will likely never pick it back up again
- QA is the last line of defense and a good PdM needs to understand this at their core.
- QA's voice often becomes suppressed by Engineering
- Find a go to QA contact and spend lots of time with them. Get in the weeds with them
- And for heaven's sake, use and test your own product. Always have the latest build + the current shipping version ready to show.



Customer and User Relationships

- Build your own relationships with users and customers
- Don't rely on sales to set up every call with them
- Don't let your only contact with them be when something is wrong
- Keep sales in the loop but pick up the phone yourself. Share ideas
- Build a good win/loss analysis process and DO IT!
 1. Never let sales/support set up or join a win/loss call. It's not personal but it will skew conversation



Relentless User First Focus

- Customers and users are your products lifeblood. Treat them as such. Obsess over them
- That said, users are a funny breed and will often want and demand the shortest route to resolve their problem with your product.
- Talk to them. Often. They will give you subtle hints about what to build and why it's valuable to them if you listen. What they find valuable they are likely willing to pay for
- Run ideas by them
- Be blunt with them. They will appreciate it because often no one else does



The Lost Art of Being Humble

hum·ble

/ˈhʌmbəl/ 

adjective

1. having or showing a modest or low estimate of one's own importance.
"he was humble about his stature as one of rock history's most influential guitarists"
synonyms: meek, deferential, respectful, submissive, diffident, self-effacing, unassertive; [More](#)
2. of low social, administrative, or political rank.
"she came from a humble, unprivileged background"
synonyms: lowly, working-class, lower-class, poor, undistinguished, mean, modest, ignoble, low-born, plebeian, underprivileged; [More](#)

verb

1. lower (someone) in dignity or importance.
"I knew he had **humbled himself** to ask for my help"
synonyms: humiliate, abase, demean, lower, degrade, debase; [More](#)



Be Humble

- I've seen a lot of good products and PdM's fail because they come into the role thinking they are the end all be all for the product
- They take a combative position with each cross functional team with the mindset they are the only sane person.
- While sometimes true, it's not the way to build great products
- Show each team member they are valued, take feedback. Do so publicly.
- Understand that each person in a cross functional team is an expert in a certain field (not always :-)) . Use that.



Final Tips and Advice

- Don't show a business case to an engineer and don't show a detailed bug list to an executive
- Focus on requirement pipeline and delivery of those requirements. Everything feeds to and from that
- Release and validate quickly above all
- Don't sweat stuff that doesn't matter (OMG, we haven't translated the user manual to Swahili)
- Don't be afraid to say no and make the little decisions
- Ask "Why?" all the time
- Look out the window to give credit and in the mirror to take responsibility