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Making It Right: Product Management For A Startup World



Synopsis

Product management is one of the most exhausting, exhilarating, stressful, and rewarding careers out there. It's not for the faint of heart. It's for people who want to move mountains. It swallows some whole, but others derive endless invigoration and passion from the pace and the impact and the glory and the huge potential for failure as well as success. There's no other job like it, and this is a book to help you make it your job. The role of a product manager goes by many different names and if that's not reason enough to be confused, some companies define product manager completely differently from how it's understood elsewhere. We sometimes get stuck in our quest to define the damn thing, but in the case of product management, it's effort well spent, because it's quite the jungle out there. So with that as background, this book wants to accomplish three goals:- Define the roles and responsibilities of product managers in the software development context. - Explain why product management is an essential role in any organization, and what characteristics managers should look for when they hire product managers.- Provide a framework and practical guidance for strategic product management; a framework that details the elements of product planning and product execution that make up a product manager's day-to-day work.

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Customer Reviews

This book is jam-packed with practical guidelines. It is kind of eclectic without being contradictory by logically drawing on a vast collection of sources. It also shares generously from the author's personal experiences rather than dictating best practices off the bat. It undoubtedly succeeds in its goal of presenting a systematic approach to effective product management, but does so without losing the all-important human touch. As a designer of UI interactions, code, and pixels on a screen, the book left me with the feeling that product managers are designers of a different sort â “ that of human craft, and business objectives, and how these two areas play out with one another during the very human (and therefore sometimes messy) process of adding something of value to the world.

The thing that struck me immediately was the way the book STARTS OUT by focusing on the character traits and people skills that a PM needs. Usually these skills are treated as an afterthought in books like this, if they're even dealt with at all. The author continues to highlight the importance of these skills throughout the book, in a practical, useful way. The book is an easy read, but by no means simplistic. It's written in a conversational style, and really, it feels a whole lot like having a mentor to help you along. I finished the book with a clear understanding of what a product manager is (I'm not one myself, although as a content strategist, I do work with them from time to time), and what role they fulfil. The other thing that stood out to me was that the book is incredibly balanced. Time is spent highlighting all the elements of the digital product environment: user needs, business goals, and technical constraints. There's a sense that the author is realistic and positive, but not idealistic about what can be achieved by a PM or digital team. The author cites plenty of resources throughout the book, giving the reader ample additional material to work through from a wide range

of fields, not just digital design. Plenty of these resources are going to be useful in my own work, so their value is not limited to product managers. I recommend this book, not just for product managers and aspiring product managers, but also for those who, like me, work under the leadership of PMs. You will gain an appreciation for the entire process they are facilitating, and you'll pick up a bunch of useful tools and resources as well.

What does it take to get a product right? Not only when you're the sole developer/designer/mind behind it, but when you've been hired or need to hire someone to manage the product because it's simply bigger than you can run. What if you have many products and need to have them all run well? That's where a product manager comes in to play, and this book is all about what it takes to be a good product manager. It starts by walking us through the personality traits and demeanour that should be in evidence in a good product manager. Of course not everyone is well suited to the positions (just as not anyone can be everything) so this start is a great way to help you establish what it's going to take to find a good product manager. The second section is all about what it takes to build a good product plan from wireframes, to when you get developers involved (hint: the same time as the designers and UX people), to how you build a roadmap and balance all the competing voices as you decide on feature priority. The third section walks you through how to execute that roadmap by being productive. One of my favourite parts here is the stance on meetings which, according to the author, should not just be to update someone down the chain. Updates are what Wikis, blogs, or project management systems are for. The book finishes off with a roadmap of what you should be doing for the first 90 days as you start a product management position. It breaks this up into 3 sections of 30 days, and gives you the tools to hit the ground running as you start that new position. In short, this is a great book for anyone working on a product even if you're not the product manager. At least you'll know how things should be running after reading it.

For someone entering a new chapter of a career as a professional product manager, this book is perfect. Key ideas to remember, strategies for success, key areas to reduce risk; each gives insight into how to build product that users will actually want to use. Then, to sum it all up, a 90 day roadmap to get started. An excellent work from a leader in the product management world.

Rian's book gives an excellent introduction and overview to Product Management as a role and as a lifestyle choice. There's lots of good, solid, practical advice on many topics. The book is

peppered with two very important things: practical advice on how to make your company and your job better; lots of links to more resources that can help you do the same. One of the important themes of the book is strategy. Rian quite rightly emphasises the importance of tactical and long-term decisions in the software development life cycle, and reminds us of the importance of a clear focus on what to do next. This is clarified through the lens of product / market fit, and that we should keep a strong focus on the value we are providing to users and to the business. As a developer, I was very pleased to see lots to talk about continuous, iterative, processes, which I think are at the heart of agile software development. The focus on providing the right environment (physical and mental) also made me very happy, as did the discussion around Responsive Web Design, and designing for the multi-device world. I learned a lot for this book, and I'm looking forward to finding ways of implementing these ideas. The discussions around building a good product rang particularly true; avoiding dark patterns and doing a combination of what's best for the users and what will make them happy in the long term feels like the right thing to be doing and focussing on. The case study on Kalahari.com is really, really, great. It builds on the practical advice with specific, concrete, examples of how and when to apply the principles in the book, for User-Centered Design principles as well and Product Management. Final word: Seriously, uninstall Microsoft Word. Best. Advice. Ever.

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