

Why is Product Management the 4th Most Valuable Corporate Job?

By

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Interactions and Influence of a Product Manager Spans Across the Organization

Behind every great product, there is a dedicated, business savvy product manager who is empathetic to customer problems while shrewdly grasping competitive and market trends.

According to CBS News MoneyWatch, Product Management is considered the 4th most valuable corporate jobs, ranking right behind CEO, senior executive, and general manager (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/10-most-valuable-corporate-jobs/>). However, it is a new concept for many organizations.

Many think of this role as either marketing, project management, or sales. While product managers do work closely with these functions, they have challenging responsibilities that expand beyond these functions. Here is our best effort to provide an overview of product management at a high level.

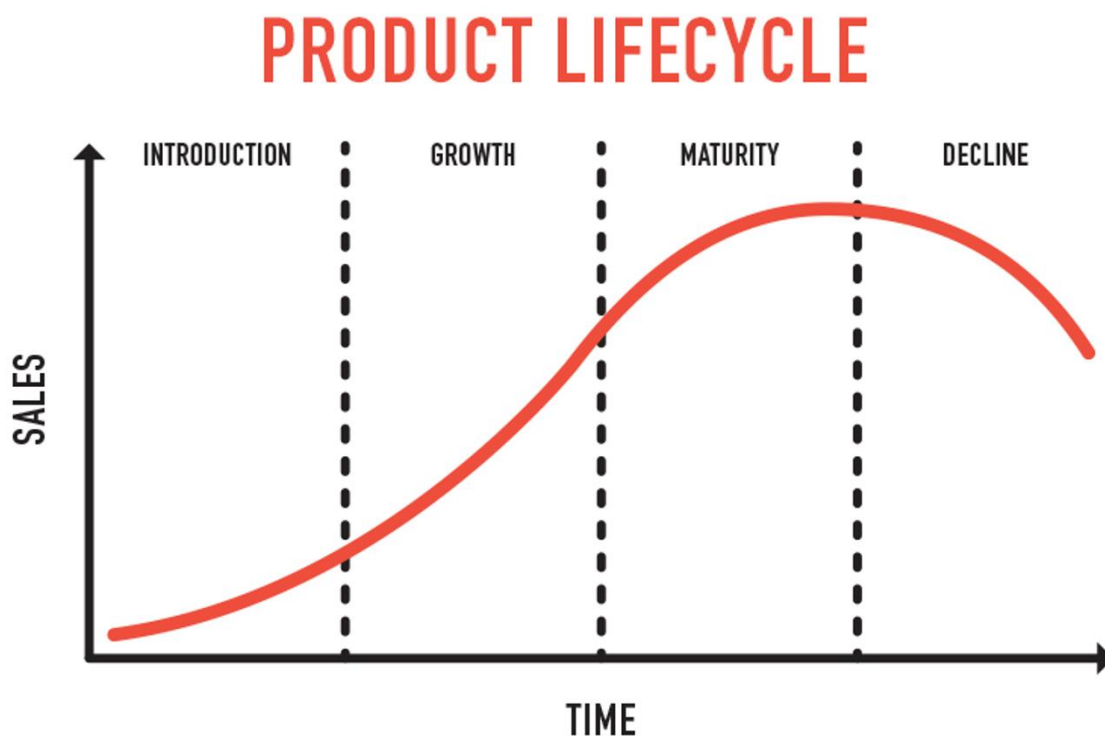
Balance the Portfolio

Portfolio management is a crucial task to ensure funds and resources are allocated to develop the right products. Product managers identify the minimum viable product with a keen understanding of the value it provides to the customer. They are responsible for selecting the right project strategically with clear selection criteria to approve or abandon project ideas. Product managers have a clear vision of where their products will be in short-term and long-term and make nimble tradeoffs between technology availability, schedules, features and development resources.

Guide through Product Lifecycle

Product Managers are responsible to prudently guide their products through each stage of the product lifecycle.

"If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else. - Yogi Berra"



Stage 1 Introduction – Build market awareness and launch the product. Educate the customers about the value of the product.

Stage 2 Growth – Ensure the market share is steadily increasing. Support sales and marketing to take the product to its maximum success.

Stage 3 Maturity – While the product has an established market presence, product managers plan the next technology and evaluate the best time to launch.

Stage 4 Decline – When the timing is right, product managers must make the tough decision of taking the product off the market. Product managers carefully plan the gradual product sunset with least impact to customers.

Assess Industry and Competition

Product Managers assess the business landscape where their product is used. Product managers are aware that their competitors are not standing still, and they familiarize themselves with competitor products' pros and cons. They have the foresight of where the industry is moving so that the organization can design, build and introduce the right product at the right time.

“Product Managers are responsible to release the right product at the right time”

Analyze Financial Success of the Product

Product managers are responsible for the overall financial success of their product lines. Before launch, they forecast the sales potential for a product. They own the most crucial responsibility of pricing the product right for its value.

After launch, they set the right metrics and key performance indicators to track product sales revenue and profit and gauge the product growth and expansion.

Product managers constantly analyze the product's financial success and pivot their product direction as needed to take the product to its peak success.

Influence Cross-functional Team

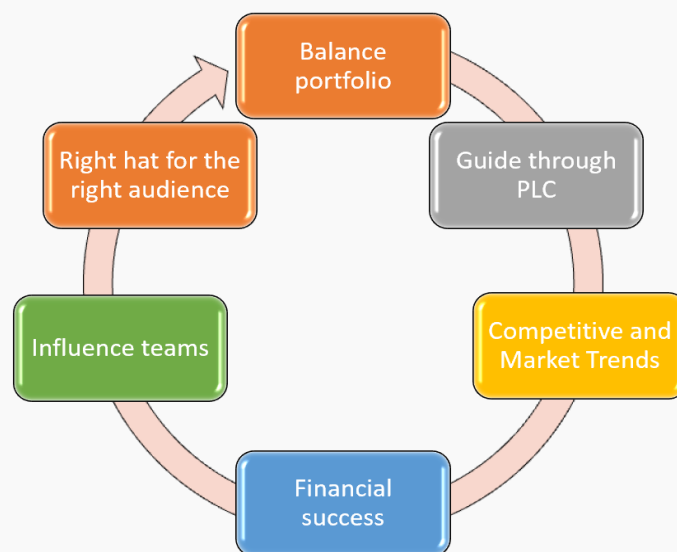
Product managers keep their eyes on everything that impacts the product. They lead, collaborate, and influence the cross-functional team from across the organization to ensure

- product's vision and strategy align with the company's vision and strategy
- engineering develops the right product
- manufacturing builds a high-quality product and delivers on time
- marketing prepares the best marketing collateral
- sales and customer support are well-trained
- purchasing has enough inventory to meet demand
- the product provides profitable growth to the company
- there is an continuous increase in product awareness in the market by visiting customers and attending conferences.

Wear the Right Hat for the Right Audience

The product manager is the product expert to the sales team and the customers; customer's representative to engineering team; market segment and product positioning expert to sales and marketing team; owner of product's success to the executives. Product managers are referred to as CEO of the product as they are responsible for everything about the product just as the CEO is responsible for everything about the company. Note they accomplish all this without the CEO's positional authority.

Product Manager – CEO of the Product



Summary

Behind every great product, there is a dedicated, business savvy product manager who is empathetic to customer problems while shrewdly grasping competition and market trends. In some organizations, these above-listed responsibilities are shared between the product owner and product manager, while in some it is shared by multiple product managers and in some it is shared between market and product managers.

Irrespective of how your company is organized, it is essential that we all understand the significance of the product management role and its importance for the product's success and thereby the organization's success. All of this is often achieved by product managers with no positional authority and by solely using persuasive and influential skills. Now you know why product management is the 4th most valuable corporate job.

About the Author



Monika Murugesan has an executive MBA, a Master's in computer engineering, and a bachelor's in electrical engineering. She is a keynote speaker and a visiting lecturer at local state universities. She has been in product management and business globalization for over a decade.

Monika has launched many technology products in the B2B market and helped businesses expand globally. She has trained many individuals in the product management discipline and helped them grow into great product managers.

It is her passion to help businesses and individuals thrive in today's market.

Monika founded APEX Specialist LLC to help individuals and businesses succeed. She will help you to Analyze - Position - Expand (APEX) your capabilities to maximize your success.