

18F Product Manager Performance Profile

Position summary

As a Consulting Product Manager, you'll collaborate with cross-functional teams within 18F and the partner agency to deliver user-centered products using agile methodologies and modern software development practices while building capacity for product innovation in government. When you build products with a partner agency, you'll coach them on modern product development practices so they're set up for success in the long term.

Product managers on our team are:

- Strategic thinkers who are comfortable defining a compelling vision and designing a measurable strategy to achieve that vision.
- Decisive leaders who know how to motivate cross-functional teams to build the right thing.
- Comfortable working in a consulting capacity as well as running a product directly.
- Empathetic coaches, mentors, and advocates who pair with the partner agency staff and help develop the skills to manage their own products.

Key objectives

Objective #1: Own or steward the product vision and lead end-to-end product development

You are an experienced product manager who can identify the most important problem to be solved, unite towards a unifying and executable vision, and to guide an interdisciplinary team in delivering the right value to the right people. You're skilled at defining a meaningful end goal to galvanize your team, whether that means enabling

your team to generate a product vision and strategy or helping agency partners articulate and focus their vision and strategy.

Successful product managers:

- Establish a vision and ensure all members of the organization and partner teams have a shared understanding of product objectives, goals, and metrics.
- Analyze market demand and market fit, do competitive analysis, and guide build vs. buy or reuse approaches.
- Create a product strategy and roadmap and develop a communications strategy supporting product goals.
- Identify and proactively monitor and address product risks, pressure test assumptions, and prioritize risk mitigation strategies (e.g. prototyping).
- Work with a cross-functional team of researchers, designers, and engineers to ensure the right product is delivered to the right audience, and identify opportunities for, and prioritize user research in order to bring the voice of the user into decision making.
- Work with the team to set and meet quality standards for any product you build.
- Ask “why?” a lot, and use data and evidence to make product decisions.
- Energize and motivate the team by recognizing successes and learning from failures.
- Ensure your product complies with federal regulations such as Authority to Operate, the Paperwork Reduction Act, and Section 508.

Objective #2: Work with agency partners to make sure they’re set up for success

As a product manager, your job isn’t to deliver software; your job is to create sustainable outcomes that benefit the public. You’ll help your partners adopt a modern product development mindset and make sure they have the right team to sustain their product once the engagement with them is done. You’ll also coach and mentor agency staff, helping them develop into capable product managers in their own right.

Successful product managers:

- Strategically align and communicate with partners and key stakeholders to understand the connection between the project scope and problem space, and where to start together.

- Gather an understanding of the problem space (user needs, policy, organizational constraints, etc.) and provide clarity and context for the team to find a clear path forward despite ambiguity.
- Help partners understand how to deliver value, rather than features, to their users.
- Help partners navigate complex bureaucratic relationships to bring stakeholders together around a common product vision and strategy.
- Work with partners to establish in-house product ownership, to ensure they have the right team to continue iterating on the product beyond the engagement.
- Coach the partner in agile, open source, and user-centered principles so they understand the value these practices bring.
- Work with partners to establish relationships with their security, operations, IT, and stakeholder teams that will help sustain the product in the long term.
- Work with partners to develop communications strategies to sustain the product during and beyond the engagement.

Objective #3: Build institutional expertise around product management

You'll share best practices and tools with your peers across the organization. You'll collaborate and share insights and opinions with other product managers, contributing to our growing culture of product management. You'll share lessons learned from your work with peers and leaders to help guide our approach to digital transformation.

Successful product managers:

- Keep abreast of product management best practices and bring them back into the organization.
- Stay on top of new technologies and how they could help solve government problems.
- Speak at conferences to talk about the organization's work and share our mission.
- Contribute to the culture of transparency by publishing accounts of your successes and failures.
- Drive conversations that people are avoiding: what's being left unsaid about the product or practices.
- Continually seek out new product management tools that could improve the way we work.

- Pay attention to well-supported open source product offerings that can be reused in a government context to solve common problems (so that we help agencies not build custom tools if not needed).