

Get Hired as Product Manager

△ Traditional PM brain teaser questions

- estimation questions
- product design questions
- analytical questions
- product creation questions

△ Product Management is about

- real life humans
- empathy
- problem solving
- creativity
- teamwork

△ Product Management is a mindset, not a skill

△ what recruiters are looking for

- Are you who you say you are?
- Have you actually done what you said you did on your resume?

- what's your timeline for starting the job?
- what are your salary expectations?

A what hiring managers are looking for

- your interest of the role
- general PM qualities
 - communication
 - leadership
- specific PM skills
 - critical thinking
 - presentation skills
 - product vision
 - wireframing
 - data analysis
 - Agile / Scrum
 - stakeholder management

A what engineers are looking for

- questions about how you work with engineers
- you need to emphasize collaboration & context sharing

⚠ why PM interviews are so challenging

- PMs make a lot of money & have a lot of responsibility
- longer and more in-depth processes
- they're different everywhere
- it's hard to prove you can actually do it

⚠ PM mindset : Asking for specifics

⚠ When you give an answer, explain how you came to that conclusion

- ↳ don't forget to ask clarifying questions

⚠ Answering using the PM method

- what you think
- why you think that
- how your opinion could change given more info

⚠ branding yourself

- website
- social media
- blogging

A types of research to do

- understand the company and the product
 - use the product
 - see company blog post
 - see company industry news & competitors
- know your answer to the most common interview Qs
 - Tell me about yourself
 - why do you want to work here
 - what's your greatest strength / weakness
- research the people you'll talk to
- learn about the latest technology trends

A tips to polish your resume

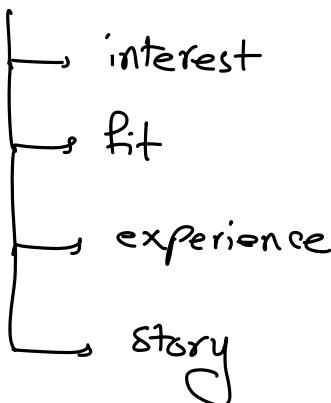
- identify any experience that aligns with what a PM does
- quantify anything

A cover letters are considered optional but highly recommended

- you can only say so much in a resume or CV
- WHY → it's an easy way of telling how interested you are

→ can show your interest and effort

⚠ Cover letter should demonstrate



⚠ Cover letter structure

- ▶ Top left of the page:
 - date
 - your full name
 - your email address
 - your LinkedIn profile or website
- ▶ Next block of text:
 - the name of the company you're applying to
 - the role you're applying to
 - the hiring manager's name (if you know it)
 - a link to where you saw the job application (optional)
- ▶ Dear [name]/hiring manager,
- ▶ Paragraph #1
 - answer the questions "Why this position?" / "Why this company?"
 - show interest by telling a story of how the company and its products have impacted you in a positive way
 - if the product hasn't changed your life, but you have a story or anecdote about it, say that
 - tell them you'd be excited to tackle the problems they're trying to solve
 - tell them why you think the space they're in has a huge potential
 - tell them why you're passionate about the role, the company, the space
- ▶ Paragraph #2
 - establish why you are a good fit for the company
 - analyze the job posting to see exactly what they're looking for; use the phrases and terminology they used in their post (this shows that you actually read it)
 - give them the best 2 reasons why that job description was written for you
 - fit in what you consider to be your best and most relevant job highlight, using this format:
"I accomplished X as measured by Y by doing Z"
 - say what the quantitative accomplishment was, how you measured it to know it actually happened, and then how you did it
 - connect what you've done to what they're looking for and give examples of your accomplishments
 - if there's nothing you can connect, then put in a generically impressive accomplishment
- ▶ Paragraph #3
 - focus on why you are great at your role, or are ready for the role of a PM
 - you can tell a story of how you started and where you are now
 - include a couple of interesting accomplishments that don't fit anywhere else
 - highlight that you do have the experience and skills they're looking for (check job posting)

A tips for cover letters

- don't copy and paste your entire cover letter
- try not to just re-hash your resume or CV
- highlight what's important for the specific role
- imagine you're writing this like a cold email
 - brevity
 - personalization
 - impact

A understand yourself

- take a personality exam
- know your talents and flaws

A How to answer questions step by step

- tell them your answer
- tell them why that is your answer and what assumptions you've made
- tell them how that answer could change based on other variables or data that could be available

A How to tell story step by step

- describe the situation, the problems, and the limitations
- tell them about the action you took
- tell them what you learned from that experience

A Most common PM interview questions

Product creation questions

Talk through creating or designing a fictional product

Example: Design an ATM for international airports

GOAL

To see if you are able to:

- identify the issues
- organize your thoughts
- ask for the right clarifying information
- defend your answer

Estimation questions

Put your analytical skills to work

Example: How many golf balls would fit in a school bus?

GOAL

- To give you a stress test
- To understand your ability to effectively break down and work through a problem about something you probably don't have deep knowledge of

Instructional questions

Teach the interviewer how to do something

Example: Teach me how to make scrambled eggs

GOAL

- To assess your communication skills
- To assess your ability to empathetically explain a concept to someone / write great documentation

Personality & behavior questions

Talk about your previous experience

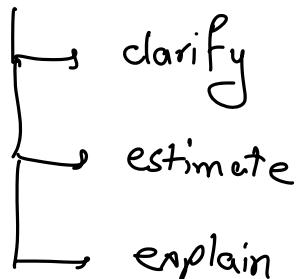
Example: Tell me about a time when you did X

GOAL

- To assess your PM experience
- To assess your ability to describe a good or bad experience you've had in a coherent and mature way

⚠ if a company give you a take home exercise before the interview, it's a RED flag!

⚠ How to answer estimation questions



⚠ mention things you might be assuming

⚠ explain calculations as you make them

⚠ The goal is to show your thought process

⚠ Estimation example



⚠ The goal of product creation questions

- think through the problem in-depth
- gain the proper context
- think outside the box
- present solutions in a way that shows you're aware of the assumptions you're making
- work under pressure

A How to answer product creation questions

- understand
- brainstorm
- prioritize
- explain

A Ranking Criteria

- cost to the consumer
- convenience of use
- cost/ease of development

A The goal of instructional questions

- ↳ to demonstrate that you can describe a process or concept to someone else in an empathetic and effective way

A How to answer instructional questions

- tell them what you're going to tell them
- be specific
- make sure they understand

⚠ The goal of behavioral and personality questions

- to see that you have actually experienced & succeeded in situations that you're likely to face as a PM
- to see if you tend to accept responsibility for mistakes or if you blame anyone else
- to see that you learned from those experiences

⚠ The best way to answer behavioral questions

- be honest
- tell a story
 - describe the specifics of the situation
 - have you made it work
 - alternative solutions
 - why you chose one solution over others
- expect follow-up questions

⚠ PAR framework

- Problem: what the problem was
- action: what you did to address the problem
- resolution: what the cause of action was (quantitative)

PROBLEM

Establish the context

- *the nature of the issue*
- *how big the problem was*
- *what had been tried before to fix it*
- *who you were working with*
- *why you thought it was worth solving*

Problem :

what the problem was

ACTION

Explain what you did

- *what you proposed doing*
- *what you alternatively considered*
- *why you decided on that specific plan of action*
- *how you did it*
- *what bumps in the road you might have run into*
- *any pivots you made along the way + reasoning*

action :

what you did to address the problem

RESOLUTION

Explain the outcome

- *what key metrics you improved*
- *what the overall impact of your action was*
- *did you hit your expectations or exceed them?*

resolution :

what the cause of action was (quantitative)

⚠ tips for answering behavioral questions

- don't state the steps as you answer them
- prepare these answers in advance
- give them details but be concise
- ask if you can answer it for a similar situation
- don't ever say you "told someone to do something"

⚠ tips for take home work : best practices

- ask for clarification
- show your thought process
- add extras to standout

⚠ How to ask good questions

- ask questions that show you're knowledgeable about the product, the competitors and industry news
- ask questions that you can use to your benefit during subsequent interviews at that company or others

⚠ what to ask about them

- organization structure
 - ↳ where the product management team fits in
- upwards mobility
- why they're hiring
 - ↳ make sure they need product manager, not project manager
- your manager

⚠ what makes a PM happy

- the ability to make decisions
- clear expectations
- value

⚠ red flags for companies

- executive led, not product led
 - ↳ ask: who determines the roadmap?
- the company is a feature factory
- the company has a fuzzy definition of success

⚠ tips for improving your presence in virtual meetings

- choose between using your phone or your webcam
- pick the right room to film in
- Pick your composition (what shows up in the frame)
- use whatever audio you have + try to improve sound distortion
- finishing touches

⚠ each failure = an increased chance to get the next job

⚠ certifications are needed in highly specific environments

⚠ what you can conclude in your side project

- description of the research
- the approaches i would consider
- technical limitations
- wireframes of potential solutions
- A/B tests
- competitive overviews
- user feedback from friends

A Things to do after you've landed the job

- schedule a one-on-one with everyone on the team
 - ↳ ask about their goals and challenges
- start talking to users
 - ↳ find out what is important to them
- read all the available internal documents
- look at the data
- meet with the boss