

Advertisement for Teaching, Learning & Portals

Product Lead at OPENCOLLAB

Job Description

OPENCOLLAB is currently seeking a Teaching, Learning & Portals Product Lead to give input to numerous teaching, learning & portal products. These products can be delivered to any industry. OPENCOLLAB currently specialises in the post-secondary education sector.

OPENCOLLAB has evolved into an international brand that embraces and supports the development and implementation of primarily, but not exclusively, open source technology solutions. OPENCOLLAB is passionate about post-secondary education and its role as knowledge incubator in society. Our aim is to contribute to effective backend systems that allows focus on teaching, learning and research at an institution. Our staff members share our vision and passion.

The Product Lead pro-actively and efficiently contribute to the strategy, development and growth of the portfolio of Teaching, Learning and Portal services and products at OPENCOLLAB. The Product Lead has a broad view on the education sector, understands the impact of teaching and learning from a user perspective and knows how to effectively map the needs in the education sector into viable technical solutions or existing products.

The Product Lead confidently engages with his / her users / clients / OPENCOLLAB partners / communities and shares ideas and knowledge to assist OPENCOLLAB in building a successful company.

The Product Lead engages with the Managing Director, Business Development Manager, Software Development Manager and other Product Leads within the company to share knowledge, ideas and strategies to enable OPENCOLLAB to successfully respond to client requests or to enhance existing product and service offerings. The Product Lead contributes knowledge gained through engagement with clients / potential clients / OPENCOLLAB partners / communities with the OPENCOLLAB Business Development team to allow that team to build a holistic body of knowledge (client profile, requirements, communications, etc) around the client / potential client.

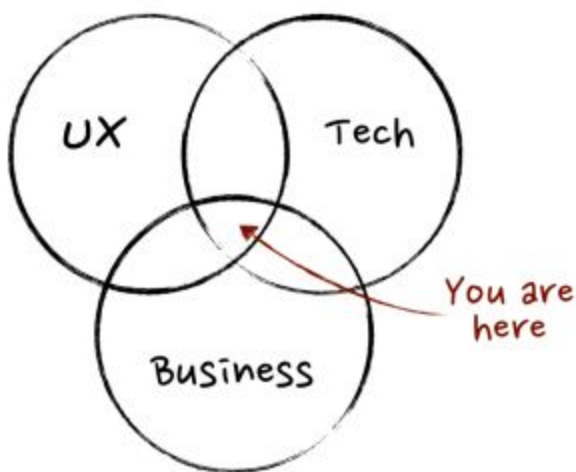
The Product Lead remains engaged with the client throughout a project by giving frequent and relevant feedback. The Product Lead understands the basic concepts of Project Management and how to balance those to ensure sustainable profit margins: Time, Money, Resources, Requirements and Risk.

The Product Lead leads his / her team(s) with confidence, guiding them to deliver the solutions that OPENCOLLAB clients require, whilst managing the budget of the project(s) in collaboration with the Team Lead and Service Delivery Manager.

Ideally the Product Lead may have a number of teams reporting to him / her. The team leaders and their team members generally take responsibility for delivery of requirements to clients, where the product lead facilitates and oversees the teams, their delivery, resource management, budget and operations.

A step by step approach to this role may not always work, as the Product Lead may be overseeing more than one product or product features at any one time. This will require the Product Lead to deploy his / her ability to effectively and timeously switch from strategy to tactics.

The Product Lead's role in more detail:



The Product Lead must be experienced in at least one, passionate about all three, and conversant with practitioners in all.

Business

Product Management is a business function, focused on maximising the business value of a product. Product Leads should strive to optimise a product to achieve the business goals while maximising return on investment.

- a. Understand the functional offering and how those solve real world user problems of a growing suite of Teaching, Learning & Portal products, including, but not limited to: Sakai, Moodle and One.
- b. Managing various team leaders to deliver client requirements;

- c. Oversee and manage team hours, budgets to ensure a profitable project.

Technology

The incumbent needs to understand technology - to know from a technical perspective how a software solution must be built or enhanced and integrated using industry best practices. This Product Lead does not (always) have to be able to sit down and write the actual code himself but must understand the technology stack and most importantly understand the level of effort involved that is crucial to making the right decisions.

- a. Advise team on technical solutions to some of their problems or solutions architecture questions;
- b. Work alongside other teams in the company to build a complete set of products that can support the company's sustainable income vision;
- c. Assist in proposal writing or the implementation and support of eLearning & portal products from a technical and functional perspective.

User Experience

The Product Lead is passionate about the user experience, and needs to be out there testing the product, prompting users pro-actively about the product and how it can be improved.

- a. Stay abreast of ways to improve the product through technology and enhanced features;
- b. Solving project delivery problems as they pop up and closely managing scope so OPENCOLLAB can deliver on time and within budget;
- c. Research the target market, the customer and the problem they have that you're trying to solve on their behalf. Assimilate available information – feedback from clients, quantitative data from your web analytics, research reports, market trends and statistics;
- d. Contribute to the product vision from all aspects of the product to drive adoption;
- e. Assist in building an actionable plan to reach that vision. A roadmap of incremental improvements and iterative development that take OPENCOLLAB closer to that final vision;
- f. Encourage the team(s) to throw themselves into researching and implementing better designs, better code and better solutions to the customers / potential customer's problem;

General

- The Product Lead assists in
 - focussing on the execution of the company's overall strategy,
 - must be able to effectively contribute to strategy and strategy execution.
- Can multi task effectively;
- Is a leader of Team Leads;
- Is a good communicator;
- Supports, encourages and participates in cross team communications;

- Functional knowledge of products in the portfolio is required;
- Technical understanding of solutions architecture is required;
- Willing to travel and give presentations – more so than other staff members.

People

- Will participate in resolving resource issues across all teams reporting to the Product Lead;
- Leave management;
- Participates in appraisal process;
- Project resource planning and allocation across solutions portfolio;
- Team leave and timesheet management.

Service Delivery

- Ensure product teams stay within service delivery guidelines (budget, processes, etc.);
- Has mechanisms in place through which his / her clients are informed of progress, risks, scope adjustments and impact at all times;
- Insures that the team delivers what the client requires;
- Oversees and coordinates the work of the products that is within his / her portfolio of products;
- Ensures contingency in his / her product portfolio group;
- Ensures teams reporting to him / her adheres to set standards in all areas (operations, technical and functional).

Client, Potential Clients, Sales and Marketing

- Coordinate actions with clients and communities;
- Assist with proposal writing;
- Stay abreast of the industries and products his / her solutions serve;
- Knowledgeable in products in his / her solutions portfolio.

Requirements:

- This position requires 6+ years of related experience in implementing applications preferably with experience in the post-secondary domain;
- A Bachelor's degree or similar qualification;
- Full understanding of the software implementation lifecycle and experience with industry standard methodologies for managing complex development and implementation projects;
- Prior experience as technical resource or business analysis on a project team is preferable;
- Exceptional written and oral communication is compulsory with direct experience in managing communications with senior leadership, clients and team;
- The ability to effectively facilitate and lead complex and mission critical focus group in varying types of sessions is essential;

- The ability to contribute to the establishment of project standards and manage the teams according to those standards;
- Must have a clear and demonstrable understanding of the challenges the client faces and must be comfortable leading discussions and setting the direction for implementation projects within a particular domain;
- Ability to manage time effectively and work under tight deadlines is essential;
- Should be highly-motivated, a self-starter, detail-oriented, able to handle confidential matters with discretion, have excellent prioritisation, problem-solving and decision-making skills;
- Should be adaptable to shifts in prioritisation of projects and still be able to keep projects going;
- Should be outgoing and approachable with a professional demeanor;
- Experience of the Scrum methodology is preferable;
- Proficient in speaking and writing English;
- Able to read and understand Afrikaans.

Product teams

Numerous product teams may report to the Product Lead.

The Product team roles and responsibilities @ high level can be seen as

Product Team Lead

- Oversees and coordinates the technical and functional group;
- Facilitates client priorities and makes sure that the project stays within budgetary and PMO guidelines;
- Team leave and timesheet management.

Product team responsibilities:

- Client training programmes;
- Internal/External on-boarding/mentoring programs;
- Product development and enhancements;
- Implementations;
- Outcome management – delivering what the client requires;
- Give input on proposals (scope and hours);
- Peer and upward appraisals.

Some credit for this JD goes to:

<http://www.mindtheproduct.com/2011/10/what-exactly-is-a-product-manager/>