Info 6215

**HW-Week 2: The Product Manager Note**

(2 p)

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Read the note and write the concise answers to these questions (3-page max, TNR 12, single space, 1 inch margins) and upload to Bb**.**

1. What are the PM responsibilities?

Ans. A PM has 2 primary responsibilities[1]

1. Defining new product
2. Managing its development, launch and ongoing improvement.

The responsibilities are not only limited to the above points mentioned, but also include:

1. Identifying and evaluating new product opportunities
2. Specifying product requirements
3. Developing prototypes and stories
4. Making Product Requirements Document
5. Setting requirement priorities and negotiating resources to build it
6. Describe the product team and organization structure

Ans. A product team is a group of individuals in a company, that are responsible for the development, engineering, sales, marketing of the product. These individuals can consist of CEO, Product Manager, VP of Marketing, Chief Technology Officer, VP of Engineering and other executives. As new products are added, or new features are added to the product, more product leaders and junior PMs are added to the product team. An Organization structure in an organization is the hierarchy of the individuals mentioned above and also including other employees working under the executives such as Developers, Engineers, Sales persons, etc.

1. How PM role and product organizations differ based on company size, product focus and other differences?

Ans. In an Organization structure, the role and hierarchy of PM can vary depending on the size of the organization structure and product focus. In a smaller organization, only one individual may be able to play many roles, such as a PM may be also be responsible for the marketing of the product or UX. In bigger organizations, each of the roles are crisply defined and thus make up an entire department. But, there may be several other factors on which the PM role differs, these can be:

* Startup vs Mature companies. The basic difference as mentioned above was that in a startup, the decision making is centralized unlike a consensus-based decision in a mature company. Many Product development processes will be in place for a startup, which is the responsibility of a PM. But with a mature company, these processes are very well defined and understood, so the PM’s ability to influence these processes are very limited.
* Enterprise vs Consumer Focus. The type of customer also impacts the role of a product manager. The customers can have diverse requirements and they want custom solutions to meet their needs. So the PMs role here is to determine which features that were requested by some early customer can also be sold to additional customers, and which features are idiosyncratic or have to be customized to a single account.
* Level of Decision-making Centralization. Product oriented founders often tend to take decisions centrally with a few executives, while other tech companies give PM’s higher degree of autonomy to decide product features.
* Scale of deployments. Smaller organizations deploy smaller products iteratively. Bigger tech companies deploy complex products and requires PM to spend more time planning the product.
* Development philosophy. Tech companies usually take two philosophies when approaching product development. It can be a Waterfall development model, in which PM takes more time specifying product requirements and Agile development model, in which PM is also the product owner and all available to specify product functionality.
* Business vs Engineering Emphasis. A company can prioritize and allocate resources based on different parameters such as engineering, business, sales, marketing, It majorly depends on the CEO or the executive’s background.

1. What are the attributes of strong PMs?

Ans. The most common and strong exhibits a PM exhibit are:

1. Ability to influence and lead across the organization, including all engineers, customer and company’s senior leadership.
2. Resilience and tolerance for ambiguity, in regard to the high risk decision making and highly visible failure.
3. Business judgment and market knowledge of the customer’s needs, pain points and latest market trends.
4. String process skills and detail orientation, a PM should have a clear vision of the product and also be able to pay attention to the minutest details that have significant impact.
5. Fluency with Technology and its implications on product design and business
6. Design/UX instincts. The best PM’s have strong design sensibility that can avoid unnecessary help of outside designers.
7. What are the key principles of agile development?

Ans. Agile Development stands for the ability of software development cycle to quickly adapt to changing environments through quick iterations with shorter but complete development cycles. The agile manifesto has 12 key principles[2]:

1. Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery  
   of valuable software.
2. Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.
3. Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.
4. Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.
5. Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need and trust them to get the job done.
6. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.
7. Working software is the primary measure of progress.
8. Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.
9. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.
10. Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential.
11. The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.
12. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

References:

[1]. The Product Manager. Jeffret Bussang, Thomas Eisenmann, Rover Go.

[2]. http://agilemanifesto.org/principles.html