

Getting started with product management in software startups

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

A – VENTURE INFORMATION

Name: _____

Year incubation started: _____

Current stage (pre-incubation, incubation, graduated, terminated): _____

Number of founders: _____

Current number of people: _____

Problem (or need) that gave rise to the idea: _____

Brief description of the product or service offered: _____

B – FOUNDING PARTNERS

Name of founder “X”: _____

Academic background: _____

Roles: _____

C – INTERVIEWEE

Name: _____

D – EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE

Product Management: This organizational function is responsible for ensuring that each product the company brings to market is as successful as possible, both in the short term and the long term. It manages and coordinates all product-related issues throughout the entire life cycle in alignment with corporate-level objectives.

D1. Can you describe how the need for product management arose in your startup from the beginning?

D2. What factors or circumstances prompted the adoption of product management practices in your company?

D3. In the context of your venture, how has your approach to product management changed over time?

D4. Can you provide examples of experiences from your startup that influenced the emergence and development of the product management role?

D5. At what point in the venture was the Product Manager role formally established?

E – ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROLE OF PRODUCT MANAGER

E1. Activities

E1.1 Which of the following product management activities were carried out in the early stage of your venture, and how relevant do you find them?

Activity	Not required Not done	Rarely required	Occasionally required	Frequently required	Always required
Advertising					
Approve the product concept					
Communicate product learnings					
Concierge Testing					
Cost optimization and control					
Create a general project charter					
Create a Preliminary product management plan					
Create a Story Map					
Create and maintain documentation					
Create the Business case					
Create the Business plan					
Create the product concept					
Create the product development plan					
Coordinate a Customer Discovery program					
Customer Interviews					

Customer Letter					
Define improved versions of the product					
Define product and marketing strategy					
Define product and marketing strategy					
Define product development checkpoints					
Define product requirements					
Develop a strategy for product end-of-life					
Develop a Product roadmap					
Establish a Cross-Functional product concept team					
Expansion into new markets or territories					
External Consulting					
Financial Analysis					
Hack Days or Hackathons					
Identify opportunities and threats					
Identify opportunity and threat					
Market Research					
Monitor, assess, and refine release tasks					
Participate in product prototyping					
Participate in product verification					
Participate in software testing					
Refine product requirements					
Sales team training					
Solutions Research					
Stakeholder management					

E1.2. Are there any other activities that you consider relevant but are not listed?

E2.1 How do you assess the following (soft) skills for effective product management?

Activity	Not required	Rarely required	Occasionally required	Frequently required	Always required
Active listening skills					
Analytical skills					
Autonomy					
Change management					
Collaboration					
Commitment / Responsibility					
Communication skills					
Conflict management					
Creativity					
Critical thinking					
Customer orientation					
Data analysis					
Data visualization					
Decision-making					
Empathy					
Ethics					
Fast learner					
Adaptability / Flexibility					
Initiative / Proactive					
Innovation / Creativity					
Interpersonal skills					
Leadership					
Methodical					
Motivation					
Negotiation skills					
Organizational / Planning skills					
Presentation skills					
Problem-solving					
Results orientation					
Strategic thinking					
Stress management					
Team management					
Teamwork					

Time management					
Vision of the future					
Willingness to learn					

E2.2. Are there any other skills that you consider relevant but are not listed?

F – LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

F1. Can you describe your startup's current product management process? How has product management influenced strategic and tactical decision-making at your company?

F2. How has it contributed to its success? Are there any specific instances where product management has been especially crucial in overcoming a challenge or reaching a significant milestone?

F3. Based on your experience, can you share any important lessons learned from your startup's product management process?

F5. Do you think it would have been helpful to have a guide on product management activities specifically designed for software startups when you started product management in your startup?