

# Introduction

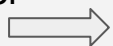
All participants, answer the poll things about yourselves-

1. Education qualification- Btech/BE; MBA, others
2. Current role - Software Developer/ Product manager/ product related role/others
3. Total exp (in yrs): 0-3, 3-5, 5+



## About me

Product manager  
(Smart factory)



Tech Product  
manager (IoT)



Senior PM



Principal PM



**BOSCH**



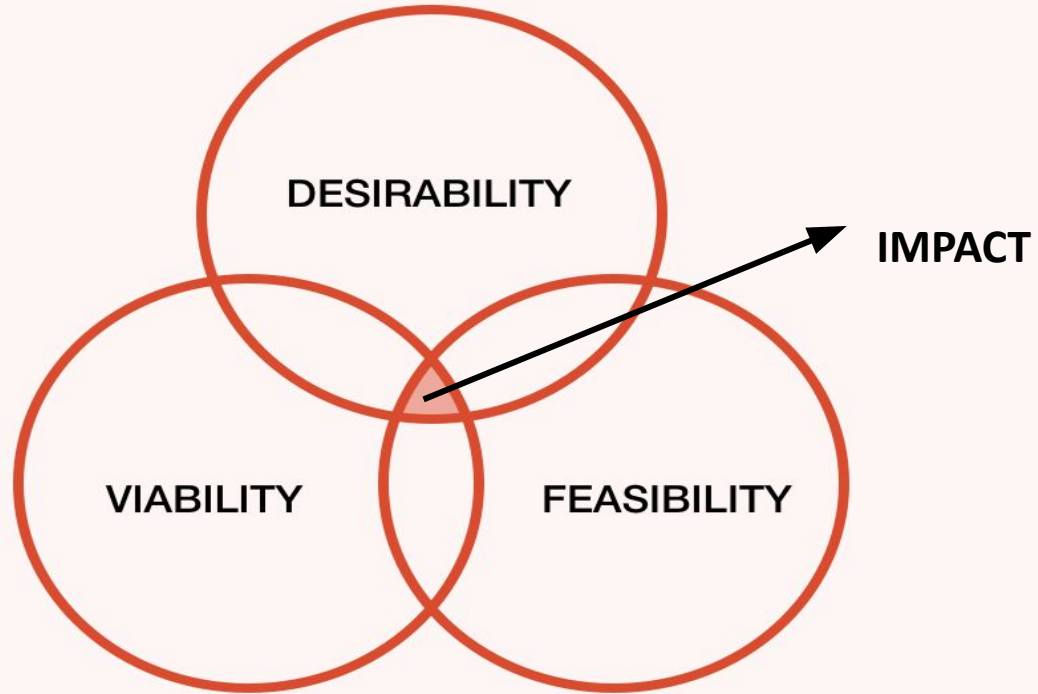
**~10 years of PM experience across consumer tech and B2B**

# Agenda

1. The Product Manager role
2. PM mindsets
3. Skillsets v/s mindset
4. Lessons from industry

# What is product management

Let us answer it via- VDF



# Frameworks are just common sense put in structure

Let us understand it via industry example



# What kind of product is Spotify

Mention your comments in chat

## Desirability: "Do people want this?"

Spotify addressed **clear user desires**:

- **Access** to vast music libraries without purchasing individual songs/albums
- **Discovering** new music easily with personalized recommendations
- **Listening** across devices without interruption
- **Creating** and **sharing** playlists with friends

Desirability signs: Rapid user adoption, high engagement metrics (daily active users, time spent in app), and social sharing of playlists demonstrated strong market demand.



## **Feasibility: "Can we build this?"**

Spotify had to solve several technical challenges:

- Building a platform that could stream music instantly with minimal buffering
- Creating recommendation algorithms that truly understood user preferences
- Developing a library system to manage millions of songs
- Designing an interface that made huge music catalogs navigable

Feasibility considerations included available technology, engineering talent, and the ability to scale infrastructure as users grew.

## **Viability: "Can this be a sustainable business?"**

Spotify's business model had to address:

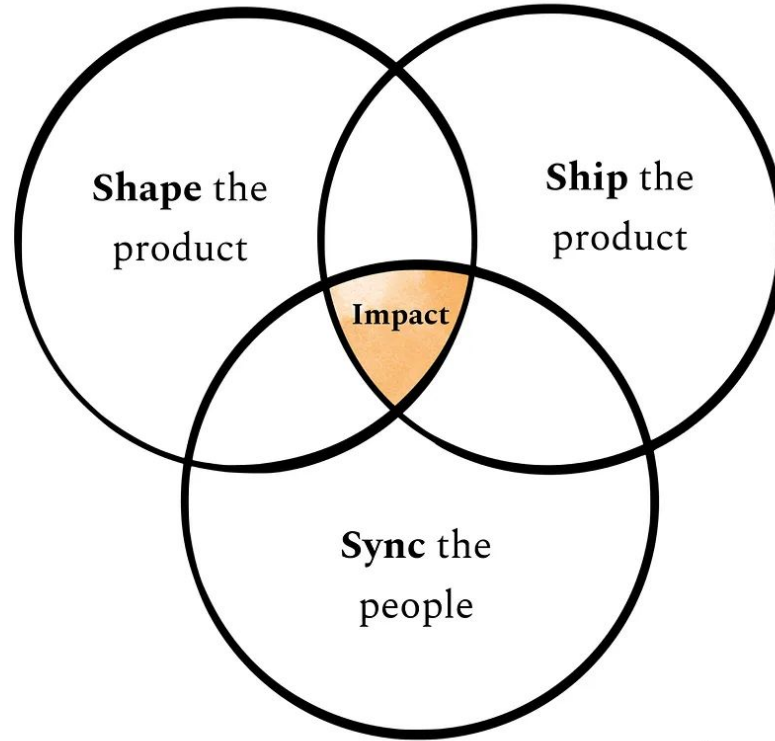
- Licensing costs for music (their largest expense)
- User acquisition costs vs. lifetime value
- Free tier conversion to premium subscriptions
- Revenue sharing with artists and labels
- Infrastructure costs as they scaled globally

Viability was proven through their freemium model, where free users experienced the value proposition but premium subscribers gave them the sustainability.

How is this framework  
lynchs to





**Jobs of a  
Product Manager**



# To be an effective Product Manager

**One needs Mindsets and Skill sets**

**What is the difference?**

Aspect	Skillset 	Mindset 
Definition	The <b>technical, functional, and analytical abilities</b> required to perform a job.	The <b>way you think, approach problems, and make decisions</b> in your role.
Focus	<b>Execution &amp; Performance</b> – What you do.	<b>Thinking &amp; Approach</b> – How you do it.
Developed Through	Training, experience, courses, practice.	Experience, self-awareness, exposure to challenges.
Changes With	New tools, methodologies, technologies.	Personal growth, company culture, leadership.
Example in Spotify PM Role	Knowing <b>A/B testing</b> , data analytics, personalization algorithms, and monetization strategies.	Being <b>customer-obsessed, first principle thinker, and ownership</b> in making decisions.

# 1. **Customer Obsession** over Stakeholder Management

## The Netflix Streaming Pivot Example

Netflix's transition from DVD-by-mail to streaming provides a powerful lesson in choosing customer needs over stakeholder concerns.



## Stakeholder Concerns:

- **Investors:** Worried about the massive infrastructure costs of building streaming capabilities
- **Finance team:** Concerned about cannibalizing their profitable DVD business
- **Content partners:** Resistant to new licensing models for streaming rights
- **Board members:** Questioned competing with tech giants like Apple and Amazon
- **Existing customers:** Many were satisfied with the DVD model and had slow internet connections

## Customer Obsession in Action:

Despite these powerful stakeholder objections, Netflix:

1. **Invested heavily in streaming technology** before most customers even had broadband capable of good streaming quality
2. **Created a separate streaming catalog** starting with just 1,000 titles (compared to 100,000+ DVDs)—knowing it was initially inferior but would improve
3. **Spent billions on content licensing and later original production** despite shareholder concerns about profitability
4. **Redesigned their entire UI and recommendation system** to optimize for streaming discovery

**This mindset also requires you to be empathetic with customers**



## 2. Bias for Action over Analysis Paralysis

- Example: Instagram launching Stories in 8 months to counter Snapchat.



1. **Made a decisive call:** PM team openly acknowledged they needed to address the ephemeral sharing trend that Snapchat had pioneered
2. **Set an aggressive timeline:** Instead of planning a multi-quarter rollout, they committed to shipping quickly
3. **Focused on core value:** They identified the key elements that made Snapchat's format appealing (disappearing content, chronological narrative, low pressure to be perfect) rather than trying to copy every feature
4. **Executed with urgency**
5. **Iterated rapidly post-launch:** Instead of waiting to build a "perfect" version, they shipped a basic implementation and then quickly added features based on usage data

## The Impact

- Within just 8 months, Instagram Stories had 200 million daily active users (exceeding Snapchat's entire user base)
- The format later expanded across Facebook's platforms (WhatsApp Status, Facebook Stories)
- Snapchat's growth rate declined significantly

### 3. First Principles Thinking over Best Practices Copying

First principles thinking means solving problems by starting with the most basic, proven facts and building up from there—rather than following what everyone else does.

#### In Simple Terms:

Imagine you're cooking dinner:

**Best Practices Approach:** "I'll follow this popular recipe because everyone says it's good."

**First Principles Approach:** "What ingredients do I have? What flavors work well together? What cooking methods would work best for these ingredients? Let me create something based on these fundamentals."

# Real-World Example: SpaceX

**The Problem:** Rockets were extremely expensive (>\$150 million per launch from established providers)

**Best Practices Approach:** Accept high costs as normal because "that's how the industry works"

**First Principles Approach:** Elon Musk asked:

1. What are rockets actually made of? (Primarily aluminum, titanium, copper, carbon fiber)
2. What do these raw materials cost? (Only about 2% of the typical rocket price)
3. Could we build rockets from scratch instead of buying from suppliers?

This thinking led SpaceX to manufacture most components in-house and eventually create reusable rockets, reducing launch costs to about \$15 million (90% reduction).

## Why It Matters for Product Managers:

First principles thinking helps you:

- Find breakthrough innovations competitors miss
- Solve problems others consider "impossible"
- Create truly unique products rather than slightly better versions of existing ones
- Build genuine understanding rather than following trends

## Other important mindsets

### 4. **Systems Thinking** over Short-Term Execution

### 5. **Adaptable & Ownership** over Task Execution

- Story: PM at Airbnb who reimaged the entire guest-host messaging system during COVID.
- Mindset: When the plan fails, own the outcome and adapt.

Airbnb faced a fundamental challenge that perfectly illustrates systems thinking: how to create trust between complete strangers so they would feel comfortable staying in each other's homes.

### **The Traditional Approach (Non-Systems Thinking):**

A linear approach might have focused on just adding:

- User verification
- Reviews
- Safety guidelines

# What did



# do

**Identity Verification:** Government ID verification, email verification, phone verification

**Review System:** Two-way reviews where hosts and guests rate each other, creating accountability on both sides

**Secure Payments:** Holding payment until check-in, creating financial protection

**Messaging Platform:** Allowing communication before booking to establish rapport

**Host Guarantee:** Insurance protection for property damage

**Profile Completeness:** Encouraging detailed profiles with verified social media connections

**Professional Photography:** Initially offering free professional photography to ensure listing accuracy

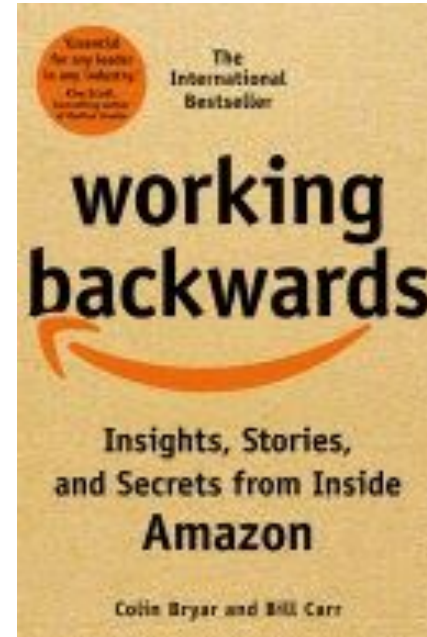
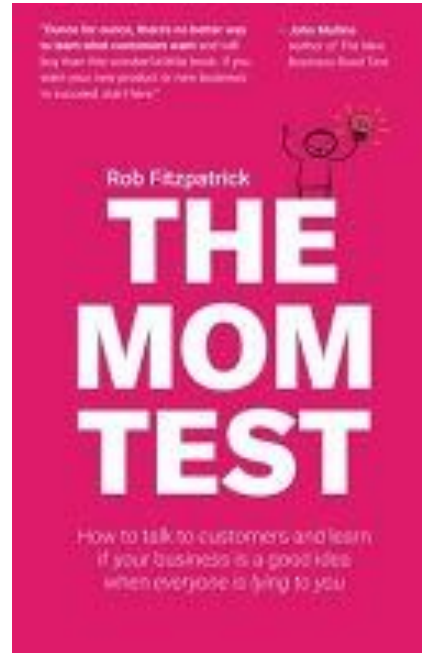
**Community Standards:** Clear guidelines about expectations and behavior

# When switching from non- PM to PM roles

From	To
"What do I need to do?"	"What needs to happen?"
Task ownership	Outcome ownership
Execution comfort	Strategic discomfort
Clear scope	Ambiguity tolerance



# Some books (free pdfs available online)



Q&A