

# Product Operations - GDC India

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## Overview

### Product Operations: What it is & why It is important?

Product Operations is a cross-functional role that facilitates successful collaborative work among all teams connected to the product life cycle.



At Conde Nast, the Product Operations team helps the global data team to operate with maximum efficiency. The team's specialists have come up with several behind-the-scenes initiatives like:

- Managing communication, roadmapping, user-onboarding, project monitoring, etc
- Developing business processes
- Streamlining critical and routine tasks and processes
- Setting goals for teams and individual contributors
- Owning and developing strategies for the teams' priorities
- Analyzing and manage resource and stakeholder feedback lifecycle

## Product Operations Team - GDC India

At GDC India, the Product Ops unit manages an agile portfolio and improves the global data organization's cross-functional capabilities and communication. The team focuses on processes, alignment, communication, and scale.

Here are some ways the Product Ops team enhances the tech teams:

1. **To gain visibility:** by making the work visible in backlogs and demos
2. **To figure out what works:** the PO team reviews the incremental output to assess progress towards outcomes
3. **To optimize resources:** allocating the right resources to maximize successful product releases

### Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Project roadmaps
2. Project Phases
3. Team utilization
4. Agile Ceremonies
5. Mitigation Plan
6. Tools Management: JIRA, Confluence, and Worklog

### Project Roadmaps:

The project roadmap serves as an ongoing reminder of the project's strategic objectives. We create a quarterly strategic overview of the major elements of a project for all tech teams.

The roadmap includes the following:

- Project goals and objectives
- A timeline indicating the schedule
- Important milestones and deliverables
- Priorities and dependencies on the milestones
- Details of resources

### Benefits of project roadmaps:

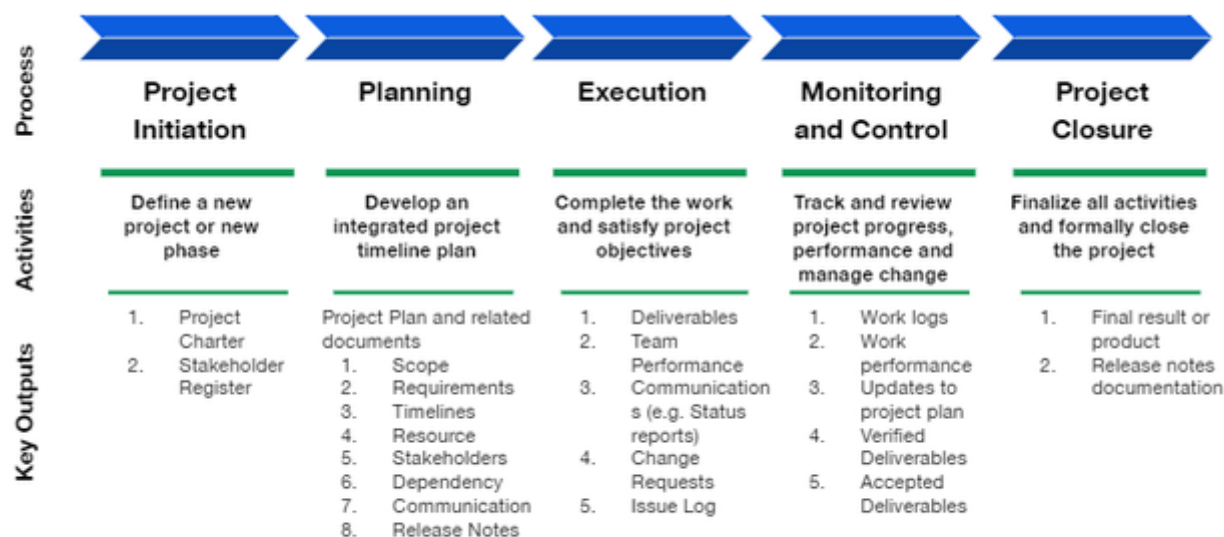
- Monthly and quarterly roadmaps improve team organization and reduce ambiguity
- Displays the clear vision and goal
- Minimizes risk
- Promotes transparency with the team and helps in effective communication within as well as across teams

### Project Phases:

The product operations team ideally works closely with the tech teams during each stage of the project. The chart below gives an overview of the responsibility of the product operations manager.

### Overview of PO responsibilities:

*(Feel free to connect with us for a detailed explanation of the process)*



Main responsibilities include project initiation and planning, resource management, cross-team communication, project monitoring and control, work log management, documentation, and project release.

However, based on the delivery framework we have the roles and responsibilities defined for GDC Projects and Hybrid Projects also:

## Responsibilities in GDC Project:

| Roles & Responsibilities - GDC Model (Strategic & Enhancement) |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  | PO Team  | Tech Managers  | US/UK  |
| Initiation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding Business case document</li> <li>Develop Project Charter (Initial Discussion)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inputs on Development Product Features</li> <li>Technical inputs</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Case Document</li> <li>( Scope, Assumptions, Risk, Metrics Acceptance Criteria), Scope Signoff</li> </ul>                                |
| Template   | Project Charter  |  | Business Case Document (Scope & Acceptance Criteria)   |
| Planning   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating Project Charter</li> <li>Planning on Resources</li> <li>Creating Milestones &amp; Deliverables in Phases</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Inputs</li> <li>Inputs on Resources needed</li> <li>Time to complete on task/story</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Case Document</li> <li>Knowledge Transfer</li> <li>Func &amp; Tech Spec</li> <li>Stakeholder Sign Off</li> <li>Current status</li> </ul> |
| Template   | Project Charter<br>Resource Planning, Milestones, Deliverables   | Work Breakdown Structure   | Business Case Document<br>Functional & technical specs   |
| Execution and Monitor  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource Mapping</li> <li>Creating Work Schedule</li> <li>Agile: Epics/User Stories creation</li> <li>Agile Ceremonies : Standup/Grooming/Sprint Planning</li> <li>Progress Monitored (Validated with Business case &amp; Metrics)</li> <li>Weekly status/Monthly status reports</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inputs on Epic &amp; User stories</li> <li>Technical Validation on Tasks/User stories</li> <li>Acceptance Criteria &amp; Signoff</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retrospective feedback</li> </ul>   |
| Template   | Backlog & Sprint Meetings, Status meeting<br>Status reports, Retrospective Report  |  |  |
| Delivery   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validate Scope, Project Release: Release document</li> <li>Measure: Success/Failure</li> </ul>  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback on Release</li> </ul>  |
| Template   | Release Notes  |  | Feedback Form  |
| GDC Model (Operational, Research & Support)                    |  |  |  |
|  | US / UK  | Tech Managers  | PO Team  |
| Planning   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create Epics and User stories</li> <li>Scope, Acceptance Criteria, Owner</li> <li>Timeline Planning</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Inputs</li> <li>Time to complete on task/story</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource Planning</li> </ul>  |
| Execution and Monitor  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource Mapping, Creating Work Schedule Deliverables</li> <li>Agile: Create Task</li> <li>Comments / Progress Monitored, Retrospective</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Validation on Tasks / User stories</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standups</li> </ul>   |
| Delivery   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments - Update</li> <li>Close Story / task</li> </ul>  |

## Responsibilities in Hybrid Project:

| Roles & Responsibilities |   |  |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
|                          | US/UK Team  | PO Team  | Tech Manager   |
| Initiation               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource Requirement Initiated</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate the Resource</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Capabilities review</li> </ul>            |
| Planning                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Project / Tasks for Resources</li> <li>Creating Milestones &amp; Deliverables</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| Execution and Monitor    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource Mapping</li> <li>Agile: Epics/User Stories creation</li> <li>Agile Ceremonies : Grooming/Sprint Planning</li> <li>Progress Monitored (Validated with Business case &amp; Metrics)</li> <li>Feedback &amp; Capability Development</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standups</li> <li>Resource Utilisation Monitoring</li> <li>Retrospective</li> <li>Feedback</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capabilities</li> <li>Skills Development</li> </ul> |
| Delivery                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Release: document</li> <li>Measure: Success/Failure</li> </ul>   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback on Resource Performance</li> </ul>         |
|                          |   |  | Feedback Form  |

#### Agile Ceremonies:

We are responsible for conducting the Agile Ceremonies for all the teams at GDC India, understanding these being an important part of agile development. The Agile Ceremonies conducted frequently are:

- Backlog Grooming
- Spring Planning
- Daily Scrum (Standups)
- Retrospectives

#### Benefits of conducting Agile Ceremonies:

- Grooming and refining the product backlog
- Understanding the development team's velocity to have a sense of when backlog items may be ready for release
- Communicating frequently with the stakeholders
- In the sprint review meeting, helping the team demonstrate new features and facilitating conversations with the stakeholders on the direction of the product and the product backlog

#### Team Utilization:

Team utilization reports give an overview of resource engagement for each project. These reports are incredibly useful while allocating priorities and resources while planning multiple projects.

The team utilization reports help to centralize demand intake and optimize project groups as well as resource ability to deliver planned milestones.

We create monthly and quarterly team utilization reports and share them with the senior management.

*The internal tool used to get utilization reports: Worklog*

#### Benefits of Team Utilization reports:

- Lowered risk of overcommitting resources according to their availability

- Greater ability to match employees to the right projects based on their skills
- Increased organizational efficiency that minimizes bench time
- Ability to strategically reallocate resources in cases of lower project volume
- Optimized skillsets according to project pipeline
- Increased ability to deliver on-time and stakeholders satisfaction

### Mitigation Plan

Since strategic initiatives are complex and layered, any possible project disruptions could result in severe and costly consequences. The product operations team identifies such risks that may negatively impact the achievement of project objectives and creates mitigation plans to counter these risks.

A mitigation plan consists of the following strategies:

- **Assume and Accept:** Acknowledge the existence of a particular risk, and make a deliberate decision to accept it without engaging in special efforts to control it. Approval of project or program leaders is required.
- **Avoid:** Adjust program requirements or constraints to eliminate or reduce the risk. This adjustment could be accommodated by a change in funding, schedule, or technical requirements.
- **Control:** Implement actions to minimize the impact or likelihood of the risk.
- **Transfer:** Reassign organizational accountability, responsibility, and authority to another stakeholder willing to accept the risk.
- **Monitor:** Monitor the environment for changes that affect the nature and/or the impact of the risk.

### Tools Management: JIRA, Confluence, and Worklog

- Jira is a flexible issue tracking tool that helps teams plan, manage, and report on their work. There are different versions. PO manages Jira for all the teams and responsible for the Project Initiation, user story creation, task creation, handling cross-team communication, and manages the agile development.
- We manage the product documentation on Confluence and this leads to greater cross-team collaboration and gives clarity in project scope.
- Worklog is our internal tool to manage the project hours log. It is linked to Jira and displays the project hour report for the team and employee on daily, weekly, and monthly levels. It also helps in creating the team utilization reports on a monthly and quarterly level for the senior management.

To summarize, **Product Ops: A Systematic Approach to Product Excellence**

**For more details contact us:**

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