

Product Management Interviews

Asking the right questions

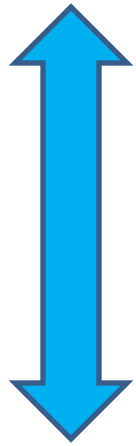
Giving great answers

1. Product Manager

2. Questions

3. Books

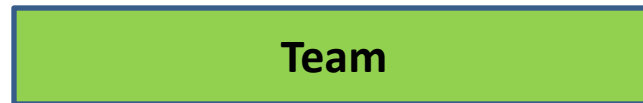
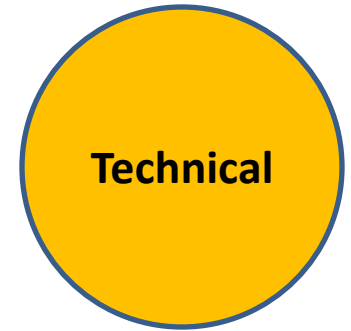
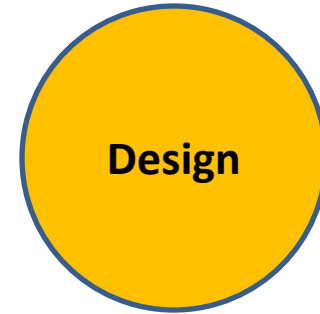
****on-line software***



Vision

Strategy

Execution



Product Design

Execution

Business

Customer Discovery

Planning / Strategy

How would you improve my product?

Interviewer wants to know

- You are prepared
- You can research effectively
- You understand my value proposition, customers, competitors
- You can prioritize
- You are OK with limited info

Candidate should respond with

1. Who is the customer
2. What are their goals and context
3. What business goals / metrics are in play?
4. What strategy should be selected
5. Identify users and use cases
6. Select one pragmatic, one impactful, and one out of the box idea
7. How do you gather user info?
8. How would you test and validate your solution?

How would you design product X?

Interviewer wants to know

- You are passionate about product design
- You are curious
- You can solve problems on your feet
- You can work on multiple levels
- You know how to organize your thoughts and communicate on complex topics
- You know how to find and focus on the core value proposition

Candidate should respond with

1. Who is customer / persona
2. Identify goals & metrics
3. Identify use cases
4. Create feature options
5. Select feature option
6. Validate assumptions
7. Include business strategy
8. Ask questions
9. Color outside the box
10. Think about the whole product

Other Design Questions

- What is the most difficult product problem you have solved?
- Give me an example of an innovation you introduced to your company
- _____?

How do you prioritize features / manage stakeholders?

Interviewer wants to know

- You have a framework
- You don't always say "yes"
- You don't panic
- You can communicate and negotiate effectively (especially with executives)
- You have a plan, strategy, and goals to guide decisions
- You aren't in love with your ideas

Candidate should respond with

1. Describe your framework
2. Give an example of a tricky tradeoff
3. Talk about using data
4. How do you communicate decisions?
5. Focus on goals and strategy
6. Focus on customer benefit

Have you taken a product/feature from concept to release?

Interviewer wants to know

- You have driven a product all the way from ideation to production
- You understand the product lifecycle
- You can speak to the details
- You learned and adjusted
- You aren't looking for perfection

Candidate should respond with

1. Say "I" not "we"
2. Spend equal time on each phase
3. Describe deliverables, process, handoffs, communication
4. Include GTM activities
5. Describe outcomes and metric impacts

Other Execution Questions

- Describe the product development lifecycle you have used (working with UX + Engineering)
- Stressful situation: Last minute Customer / Executive / defect
- _____?

Describe a customer insight you turned into a feature/product

Interviewer wants to know

- You learned something about your customer
- You were able to advocate for the solution and successfully get it into the product
- You validated your assumptions and solution
- You did not just take a request and execute

Candidate should respond with

1. Focus on the customer need
2. Describe how you found and validated the problem
3. Describe how you validated the solution
4. What alternatives did you consider?
5. What's next?

How do you elicit customer feedback and test your assumptions?

Interviewer wants to know

- You are keeping close to your customers
- You focus on their problems
- You are not just responding to requests

Candidate should respond with

1. Data
2. Ever ignored your customers?
3. How do you run tests?
4. Give an example of when you were surprised or had wrong assumptions
5. How do you tell when you've heard enough

Other Customer Discovery Questions

- Tell me about your customers
- Describe a time you said no to a customer
- _____?

What is the value proposition of my/your product?

Interviewer wants to know

- My product: you did your homework
- Your product: you understand the value your product provides
- You can see beyond features
- You have a basis for adjusting strategy and validating assumptions with customers

Candidate should respond with

1. *For (customer), Who (purchase motivation), Our product is a (customer language), That (benefit), Unlike (competitors), Ours (differentiators), At a price (vs. competitors). [RocketWatcher]*
2. (B2B) Talk the value proposition in terms of financial benefit to your customers
3. Give the context: competitors & alternatives

Describe my/your company's business model

Interviewer wants to know

- You know what a business model is
- You know how your product contributes
- You know how your company makes money
- You can speak concisely about your business

Candidate should respond with

1. Value proposition
2. Customers
3. Source(s) of revenue
4. Financial metrics
5. Cost Structure
6. Partnerships
7. Channels
8. Describe opportunities / challenges
9. Market overview
10. Contrast with competitive business models

Other Business Questions

- Example of identifying and reaching new market / channel
- How do you differentiate yourself from your competitors?
- _____?

How do you create/present roadmaps?

Interviewer wants to know

- It's interesting!
- You tailor your communication to audiences
- You use roadmap presentations to gather feedback
- You are not just presenting a Gantt chart
- You can get customers excited about your plans

Candidate should respond with

1. Talk about audiences, goals not features
2. Describe your process
3. Describe strategic vs. customer projects
4. Link roadmap to corporate and product strategy
5. Describe your planning cycle
6. How do you learn and adjust?

How do you align your product with corporate/product strategy?

Interviewer wants to know

- You align your product with corporate / product strategy
- You don't get lost in the details
- You are ready to lead
- You are focused on customers and revenue
- You keep an eye on your market dynamics

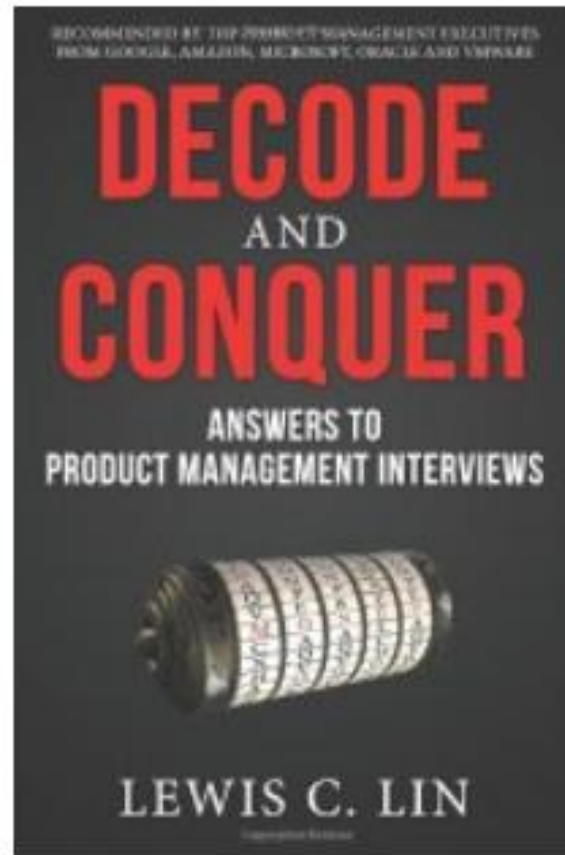
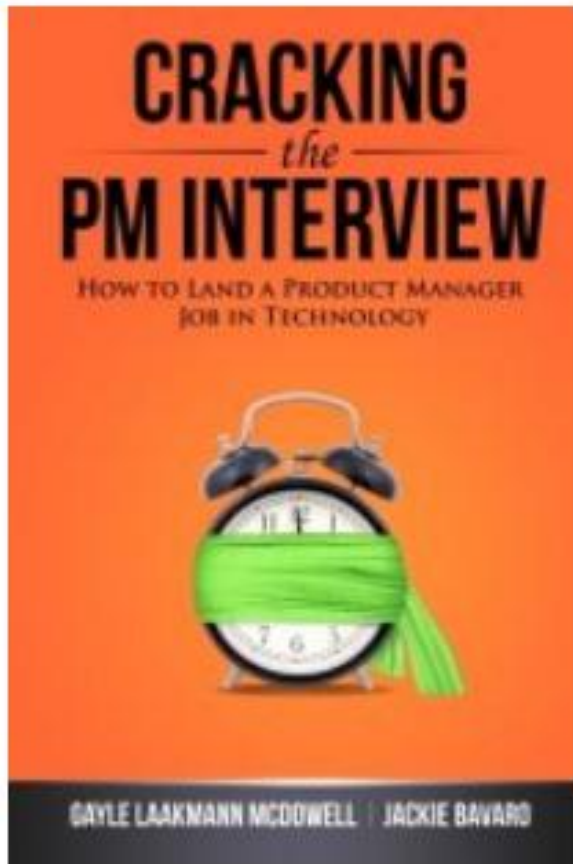
Candidate should respond with

1. Talk about revenue, financial metrics, customer success
2. Explain how your product helped meet a corporate / product goals
3. What process / deliverables / timing do you use?
4. Give an example of a misalignment
5. What has changed in your market?

Other Strategy/Planning Questions

- You are the head of company / product – what would you do?
- What have you learned from your competition?
- _____?

Books



Thanks!

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Sr. Product Manager / Director

- Team leadership
- What do you look for when you hire people?
- New initiative
- Process
- Partnership / business development
- Metrics → Market segments
- P&L responsibility
- New market opportunity
- Where will you take us?
- Team/product turnaround
- 1+ year product strategy
- Where do you get new ideas from?