

This is a draft version. The course instructions will post an updated version in December.

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MOR-599 (3 units)
Strategic Leadership in Product Management

Spring 2024

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Tuesday, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m (with break) [Tentative]
Class meets 3 hours / week (for full semester)
Classroom: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Developing new products and optimizing existing ones serve as a crucial lifeline for firms, enabling them to sustain and enhance their profits. The responsibility for achieving successful product outcomes falls on the product manager role. This course focuses on the role of product managers within organizations, which includes aligning teams, liaising with a variety of stakeholders, identifying product-market fit, leading diverse stakeholders, and driving the highest return on investment (ROI) outcomes. In addition to complementing existing courses in product development (e.g., MKT-530 New Product Development) and technology commercialization (e.g., BAEP 557 Technology Commercialization), this course highlights the leadership role of product managers and the critical managerial challenges they face during the stages of product conception, commercialization, and everything in between.

By utilizing readings, case studies, and particularly guest speakers and their real-world product examples, we will showcase best practices in product leadership, with a specific focus on technology-oriented firms. Our course will demonstrate how product managers must adopt a high-level strategic perspective, encompassing various domains such as technology, design, finance, and marketing, similar to that of a CEO. However, unlike a CEO, they lack formal authority to command key stakeholders within these domains. Instead, they must effectively manage a diverse team of engineers, designers, financiers, marketers, and executives to bring the product to fruition. Successfully navigating this process requires developing a strategic viewpoint and acquiring skills to address managerial and organizational challenges.

This course distinguishes itself through the following key features:

(a) Strategic and Managerial Focus:

While we cover essential aspects of new product development and commercialization, our primary emphasis lies in exploring strategic and managerial issues related to these challenges. We delve into the nuances of overseeing diverse domains and effectively managing stakeholders throughout the entire product development process.

(b) Technological Innovation Emphasis:

In today's dynamic landscape of modern digital industries, technological advancements play a pivotal role in product management strategies. While the knowledge shared in this course applies to both tech and

non-tech products, we place particular emphasis on technology development, preparing you for the ever-evolving digital era.

(c) Integration of Generative AI:

The rise of generative AI, exemplified by tools like ChatGPT, has revolutionized the field of product management. Recognizing its significance, we incorporate hands-on experience with this cutting-edge tool throughout the course. You will develop practical skills and gain insights into leveraging generative AI as a valuable assistant in your product management endeavors.

(d) Speakers from industries

We will invite multiple product managers and associated stakeholders to deliver presentations, sharing best practices and real-world case studies. During the sessions when we invite speakers, we conduct case studies of the organizations that these speakers lead or represent. This allows us to delve deep into specific topics and examine the practical implementation of strategies and decision-making within the organization. The speaker's insider view provides a unique perspective and complements the outsider analysis typically conducted in academic settings. Students gain a firsthand understanding of the challenges, successes, and lessons learned directly from industry experts.

By the end of this course, you will possess the strategic vision, managerial acumen, and technical proficiency needed to navigate the complex landscape of new product development and successfully drive commercialization efforts.

In summary, this course delves into the evolving role of product managers, emphasizing their growing influence across diverse sectors such as technology and beyond. Ideal for students with a background in or pursuing coursework in strategy, marketing, engineering, and design, this course equips individuals with the necessary skills to align teams and foster the development of innovative and profitable products. By blending theoretical frameworks, real-world case studies, interactive exercises, and practical applications, students will acquire both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience vital for excelling in product management—a highly sought-after career path post-graduation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of product management strategy and its application in the digital era, while providing them with hands-on experience. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in leading and collaborating with cross-functional teams, such as engineering, design, marketing, and sales, by utilizing effective communication tools and facilitating streamlined workflows.
2. Utilize strategic frameworks and analytical tools to assess market dynamics, identify key stakeholder needs, and formulate well-informed product strategies aligned with business objectives and market opportunities.
3. Apply learned management techniques to facilitate team alignment around product priorities
4. Utilize strategic analysis, data, dashboards and prototyping to facilitate rapid decision making and product optimization.
5. Participate in simulations involving stakeholder management, team alignment, prioritization setting, agile development and go-to-market frameworks to gain practical experience in various aspects of product management.
6. Ensure entire product team utilize a common, customer-centric mindset and insights driven approach to achieve successful product results.
7. Practice methodologies for fostering innovation within product management, including rapid prototyping and agile and lean development approaches to generate successful product solutions

within quick turnaround cycles. Apply AI tools to improve the efficiency, productivity, and innovation of the product teams' output.

By the end of this course, students will have gained theoretical knowledge and practical experience, enabling them to make informed decisions, drive innovation, and create value as effective product managers in today's dynamic and technology-driven business environment.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Harvard Business Publishing Course pack [Link TBA]

Highly Recommended books:

- Olsen, Dan. *The Lean Product Playbook: How to Innovate with Minimum Viable Products and Rapid Customer Feedback*. Wiley, 2015.
- Cagan, Marty. *Inspired: How to Create Tech Products Customers Love*, Second Edition. Wiley, 2017.
- McDowell, Gayle Laakmann and Jackie Bavaro. *Cracking the PM Interview: How to Land a Product Manager Job in Technology (Cracking the Interview & Career)*. CareerCup, 2013.
- McDowell, Gayle Laakmann and Jackie Bavaro. *Cracking the PM Career: The Skills, Frameworks, and Practices to Become a Great Product Manager (Cracking the Interview & Career)*. CareerCup, 2017.

Blackboard (BB): Other course materials may be posted to BB, including additional required and supplemental reading. Students are responsible for having sufficient technology to access BB. If you have any questions or need assistance with Blackboard, please contact the Marshall Help Desk at 213-740-3000 or HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu.

GRADING

The components of the final course grade will be weighted as follows (subject to change pending addition / deletion of assignments which will be clearly conveyed to the class):

Individual in-class participation	10%
Guest Question Submittals (via Blackboard)	15%
Individual Assignments	30%
<i>Assignment #1: Case Analysis: Adobe Systems – Working Towards a “Suite Release” (Stakeholder management, Getting consensus, Dealing with Missed Deadlines) (due Week 3)</i>	10%
<i>Assignment #2: LiveCase Move Simulation (Managing product delays, team issues, and underperforming lead engineer) (due Week 5)</i>	10%
<i>Assignment 3: Develop Value Proposition Map (due Week 7)</i>	10%
Group Project(*)	35%
<i>Deliverable 1: Present Value Proposition Maps, Negotiate, and Agree on Best Value Proposition Map to Develop Write-up of Negotiation.</i>	5%%

<i>Deliverable 2: Agile Management Simulation / Generate Prioritized User Stories for Chosen Project (due Week 12)</i>	10%
<i>Deliverable 3: Final project presentation of Value Proposition Map, User Stories, and Key Learnings (Friction Points, Solutions) (Week 16)</i>	5% (may be 10%? See comment above)
<i>Deliverable 4: Final project report (Week 16)</i>	100%
<i>Deliverable 5: Reflection of the use of ChatGPT/AI in Project (Week 16)</i>	5%
Final Assessment (Individual Work) Final Case Analysis: US Department of Education: Launching the College Scorecard (Dealing w/bureaucracy, prioritization, sprints)	10%

(* Note: your Group Project score will be informed by a peer survey where your own group members evaluate the participation and engagement of fellow members. The instructor, at their discretion, may choose to incorporate this peer feedback into an individual's final grade.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (10% of total grade)

A course that incorporates the frequent use of case analyses to illustrate the practical application of concepts and practices requires the student to thoroughly prepare cases and actively offer the results of the analyses and conclusions as well as recommendations during each class session. Our expectation and that of your classmates is that you are prepared for all classes and will actively participate in and meaningfully contribute to class discussions.

In-class participation is also a critical part of this course's learning experience. Cold calling may take place to encourage active participation and to gain multiple perspectives and points of view, thus lending itself to the richness of the learning experience. In-class participation grading will be based on students' demonstrated willingness to participate and the quality of the comments expressed, rather than quantity. While some students are far more comfortable than others with class participation, all students should make an effort to contribute meaningfully.

The evaluating of in-class participation is based on relevance, quality of analysis, value to the discussion, and clarity.

During class sessions, we will frequently assume the role of a facilitator to encourage a discussion that includes perspectives from a variety of viewpoints and, also, to help pull together prevailing analyses and recommendations. The direction and quality of a discussion is the collective responsibility of the class. In some classes, we will have guest speakers to provide their firsthand perspectives on crisis they have faced and managed.

GUEST SPEAKER CASE STUDY QUESTIONS (Via Blackboard) (15% of total grade)

Several Guest Speaker Discussion Board assignments posted to Blackboard will be used to engage students. These assignments provide opportunities for students to prepare for the guest speakers' topic and stimulate more engaging discussion in class.

Submitted answers to both Guest Speaker Case Studies as well as Individual Case Study assignments will be graded with the following rubric.

Quality & Persuasiveness of Analysis / Response (30%); Comprehensiveness of Response

(25%); Incorporation of Class concepts (20%); Support & References (15%); Writing Clarity / Logic: (10)%

Assignments posted after the deadline but before the start of the next class session will receive a reduction of 20%. Students with extenuating circumstances should notify the Professor to obtain approval for any late submittals.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS (30% of total grade)

Background and Process

In this course, individual and group projects are interrelated, fostering collaborative learning and personal development. The project process is outlined below:

- Group Formation: By Week 3, students will be assigned to groups.
- Individual Projects: Before the spring break (Week 10), each student will learn key product management principles through Case Study analysis (assignments #1), a live product management simulation scenario (assignment #2), and the development of a value proposition map as a solution to an assigned case problem/opportunity (assignment #3). Further details on these assignments are provided below.
- Negotiate and choose the best “value proposition map”: After the spring break (Week 10 and beyond), each group will assess the value proposition maps developed by its members and select one that best addresses the case study problem / opportunity. The chosen solution will serve as a focal point for the group that will be used in the agile development simulation and the creation of user stories and project plan.
- Group project: Utilizing the diverse skills and perspectives of the group, the group will collectively work on the chosen project. More details on the group project requirements will be provided below.
 - ChatGPT has become an important tool for product managers. Students and groups are strongly encouraged use it, particularly for ideation purpose. The third component of the group project is a reflection memo of the experience of using ChatGPT in completing the group project.

Explanations of Individual Assignments

- **Assignment #1:** Case Analysis - Adobe Systems – Working Towards a Suite Release. This case illustrates how to manage through a product crisis using the example of Adobe’s integration of new mobile functionality into Creative Suite 3. Students will analyze lessons in achieving stakeholder alignment, seeking allyship, and negotiating solutions among parties with different interests all within a constrained timeframe.
- **Assignment #2:** LiveCase Move Simulation – Students will participate in a product management simulation where they will attempt to overcome a major product delay and team performance issues through situational analysis, scenario planning, and stakeholder management.
- **Assignment #3:** Develop Value Proposition Map. Class will be assigned a case study involving a company with an established product looking to grow by launching a line extension. Students will be asked to create a Value Proposition map based on the provided case details. There are several ways to interpret the provided data and several recommended line extension options that could achieve the company’s goal.

GROUP PROJECT (35% of total grade)

Explanations of Group Project and Group Assignments

<i>Deliverable 1: Present Value Proposition Maps, Negotiate, and Agree on Best Value Proposition Map to Develop Write-up of Negotiation.</i>
<i>Deliverable 2: Agile Management Simulation / Generate Prioritized User Stories for Chosen Project (due Week 12)</i>
<i>Deliverable 3: Final project presentation of Value Proposition Map, User Stories, and Key Learnings (Friction Points, Solutions) (Week 16)</i>
<i>Deliverable 4: Final project report (Week 16)</i>
<i>Deliverable 5: Reflection of the use of ChatGPT/AI in Project (Week 16)</i>

- **Group Deliverable #1: Present Value Proposition Maps, Negotiate and Agree on Best Value Proposition Map. Write-up Recap and Learnings from Negotiation. [2-3 pages]**
 - Group members will present their respective value proposition maps based on the assigned case. To sway the group’s decision in the favor of their value proposition map, each member must effectively convince their peers of the value and merit of their assessment and proposed value proposition. This involves skillfully sharing logical reasoning, providing compelling evidence, and engaging in negotiation and salesmanship techniques. By articulating their ideas with clarity and passion, group members strive to persuade others to support their project, highlighting its potential benefits and aligning it with the group's objectives. Ultimately, the success of the process relies on the ability of individuals to present their projects persuasively and engage in constructive discussions to reach a consensus.
 - As part of this group project, students will submit a written overview reflecting on their negotiation experience within the group, regardless of whether their own product was chosen by the group. They will discuss the dynamics of the negotiation process, including challenges, compromises, and lessons learned from competing with other projects. This reflection enables students to gain insights into their negotiation skills, teamwork, and adaptability.
- **Group Deliverable #2: Agile Management Exercise and Delivery of User Stories and Product roadmap. [2-3 pages; Use the following outline as a template]**

Reminder: To develop this interim report, groups should utilize Week 9 Session at the Experiential Learning Center (ELC) for the agile management exercise.

In this group deliverable, each group summarize the outcome and deliverables from their group agile management exercise including:

- Project Initiative Summary including overall stated goal of initiative, the corresponding epic(s) and user stories.
- Product Backlog: Team will create a list of key tasks that need to be done for their chosen product solution. Note that it is not expected for the groups to have these tasks prepared in a format for “software coding”, but instead, to have it written in a understandable format for all stakeholders to comprehend. .
- User Stories: Groups will work together to break down their project into “user stories”, i.e., short requests reflecting a user requirement / need. The user story should include narratives that demonstrate how the solution addresses user requirements. These user stories can generally be accomplished in a standard 1-2 week sprint timeline that is used

- in agile.
 - Utilize ChatGPT and/or other AI tool as a valuable resource for ideation in addressing each point above, leveraging its capabilities to generate ideas and insights. Upon completing the deliverable, critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this tool and explore opportunities for its optimal utilization. Reflect on the experiences and learnings derived from using ChatGPT or other AI tools. The group will document their thoughts in the reflection memo of the group project (Deliverable 3, see below).
- **Group Final Deliverables:**

The final deliverable for the group project consists of three components:

- **Component 1: Simulated Presentation to Senior Management** (5% of total grade): Each group will prepare a 15-minute presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session. The presentation should be tailored to simulate a pitch to senior management, effectively communicating the group's value proposition map and agile development product plan. The presentation should be concise, compelling, and persuasive, capturing the attention and interest of the senior management audience.
- **Component 2: Group Project Report:** The group project report will be a comprehensive document that supports and supplements the presentation, including:
 - A one-page "P&G memo" (to be introduced in class) summarizing the key highlights and recommendations of the project
 - Heavily annotated slides, providing detailed explanations, justifications, and insights into the content presented. The annotations should clarify any assumptions, methodologies, or data sources used in the analysis.
 - (Optional) the report may include an appendix section for any additional work conducted, such as market research findings, prototypes, or user feedback. This section is optional and can be included based on the group's discretion.

The final group project presentation and report should fulfill the following requirements:

- Refined Value Proposition Map Product-Market Fit: The presentation should provide a comprehensive understanding of the target segments within the market, highlighting the specific unmet needs that the project aims to address. It should clearly articulate the value proposition of the product or service, emphasizing its unique selling points and competitive advantages. Additionally, the presentation should cover the essential product features and user experience (UX) considerations that contribute to its overall appeal.
- Supporting Business Models and Financials (optional): The presentation should outline the initial business models considered for the project if applicable. This includes explaining the revenue generation strategies, potential pricing structures, and monetization plans. It is crucial to highlight the alignment between the business model and the identified target segments, emphasizing how it supports the value proposition and sustains the project's growth. The presentation should touch upon the high-level financial aspects of the project, providing an overview of the expected financial performance. This may include projections for revenue, costs, and profitability, giving an indication of the project's financial feasibility and potential return on investment.
- **Component 3: Group Reflection: The Use of ChatGPT / AI in Product Management [1-2 pages]**

- Background: In completing these tasks, utilize ChatGPT and/or other AI tool as a valuable resource for ideation in addressing each point above. Upon completing the deliverable, critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this tool and explore opportunities for its optimal utilization. Reflect on the experiences and learnings derived from using ChatGPT/AI. The group will document their thoughts in the reflection memo of the group project.
- Please discuss the following in this reflective memo.

Reflect on the usage of GPT / AI for initial ideation at each stage of the group project and evaluate the responses provided by GPT / AI. What parts are you satisfied with? What are the weaker parts with which you disagree or find room for improvement?

Explain the steps you took to verify and further develop the weaker part identified in GPT's/AI's response. Describe any additional research, analysis, or discussions conducted to enhance and strengthen that particular aspect. Did the class discussions enrich GPT's/AI's initial suggestions for your project? Did GPT/AI provide any new ideas or directions that have not been extensively covered in class?

Notes: instructor reserves right to modify assignments and associated point totals in an effort to enhance the class effectiveness – note, ample notification will be given of any changes. Final grades represent how you perform in the class relative to other students. Your grade will not be based on a mandated target.

Late Submissions: By default, for all assignments, the point total for late submissions will be reduced by 20% for each day late. However, special circumstances can be considered with prior approval by the professor.

Peer Feedback: Each member of every group will be given a survey to assess their engagement and contribution to the final paper and presentation. The feedback gathered from the survey will play a crucial role in determining each student's final project score.

INDIVIDUAL FINAL ASSESSMENT (10% of total grade)

For the final assignment, students will apply their product management learnings to a case study provided at the beginning of the course. The case study will feature several case questions designed to assess the students understanding and application of product management leadership, stakeholder management, product-market fit, and other important product leadership skills.

Case: US Department of Education: Launching the College Scorecard. This case covers the revamping of the College Scorecard website which assists high school students with their college decisions. Involving a cross-governmental team, this case illustrates several product management concepts including: 1. Identifying and resolving organizational and bureaucracy frictions through appropriate stakeholder management; 2. Understand how discovery sprints and stakeholder engagement are used in digital product development; 3. Understand application of PM concepts including agile development, metrics, product roadmaps, feature prioritization, and design tradeoffs.

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Blackboard

BB is the primary method of communicating with you. In addition to course materials, I will post any syllabus updates and information about class sessions, including preparation requirements. E-mails sent to the class originate from the Blackboard system. You should check BB daily for any new information posted relevant to upcoming sessions.

Please be sure your e-mail address and account settings in Blackboard are correct and that your BB account settings forward your messages to your preferred internet provider (IP) account such as your USC e-mail address, AOL, G-Mail, Hotmail, etc.

You can access BB by going through the “My Marshall” portal <http://mymarshall.usc.edu>. You will need your UNIX password. If you have any questions or need assistance with the Blackboard Course Pages, please contact the Marshall HelpDesk at 213-740-3000 or HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu

Technology policy

Please do not use personal communication devices, such as cell phones, during class. Cell phones should be turned “off” or placed on “vibrate”. Personal videotaping faculty lectures is not permitted due to copyright infringement regulations although our goal is to have recordings of our sessions available. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for the USC students registered in this class.

No Recording and Copyright Notice

It is a violation of USC’s Academic Integrity Policies to share course materials with others without permission. No student may record any lecture, class discussion or meeting without prior express written permission. The word “record” or the act of recording includes, but is not limited to, any and all means by which sound or visual images can be stored, duplicated or retransmitted whether by an electro-mechanical, analog, digital, wire, electronic or other device or any other means of signal encoding. I reserve all rights, including copyright, to my lectures, course syllabi and related materials, including summaries, PowerPoints, prior exams, answer keys, and all supplementary course materials available to the students enrolled in my class whether posted on BB or otherwise. They may not be reproduced, distributed, copied, or disseminated in any media or in any form, including but not limited to all course note-sharing websites. Exceptions are made for students who have made prior arrangements with DSP and me.

Retention of Graded Coursework

Final projects and any other graded work which affected the course grade will be retained for one year after the end of the course if the graded work has not been returned to the student.

OPEN EXPRESSION AND RESPECT FOR ALL

An important goal of the educational experience at USC Marshall is to be exposed to and discuss diverse, thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial ideas that challenge one’s beliefs. In this course we will support the values articulated in the USC Marshall “[Open Expression Statement](#).”

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental

health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Outline of Class Sessions

Module I: Product Management Overview & Stakeholder Management

Week 1 (January 9): Overview of Product Management and Roles of Product Managers

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What are the objectives of this course?
- What is an overview of the product management function?
- What are the key responsibilities of a product manager?
- Why is product management important in organizations?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Understand the objectives of the course and the professors' expectations of the students Describe an overview of the product management function.
- List the key responsibilities of a product manager.
- Explain the importance of product management in organizations.
Differentiate different roles in the domain of product managers: project managers, program managers, product managers, and technical product managers

Readings:

Ho, G. *Blu-ray Combo Pack Product Management Example Presentation* (See Blackboard)

ProductPlan, What is Product Management Retrieved from <https://www.productplan.com/learn/what-is-product-management/#what-is-product-management>

Horowitz, B. (2021). Are You a Good or Bad Product Manager? <https://productcoalition.com/are-you-a-good-or-bad-product-manager-version-2021-a6eb528bd97e>

Gil, E. (2018). High Growth Handbook, Scaling startups from 10 to 10,000 people. Chapter 7: Product Management overview, p. 248-253 (See Blackboard)

Cagan, M. (2020, November 3). Product Manager Job Description Retrieved from <https://www.svpg.com/product-manager-job-description/> [a 1 page job description -- it does say Bachelor's degree or equivalent]

Cagan, M (2022, September 12). *Pledge to Customers, An Empowered Product Team's Pledge to Customers* Retrieved from: <https://www.svpg.com/pledge-to-customers/> [Talks about Promises to Customer, Product Discovery, and Product Delivery]

Gnanasambandam, C; Harrysson, M; Schneider, J and Singh, R. (2023, January 20). *What separates top product managers from the rest of the pack* McKinsey Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/what-separates-top-product-managers-from-the-rest-of-the-pack>

Week 2 (January 16): Product-Market Fit: Shared Goal of Stakeholders

Guest Speaker: [Ritu Narayan, CEO/Founder of Zum] TBD

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What is product-market fit and why is it important for the product team and a successful product?
- What are some management strategies to rapidly achieve product-market fit?
- How to lead diverse teams to achieve the best product-market fit scenarios?
- How to manage teams for rapid prototyping and delivering a Minimum Viable Product (MVP)?

- How to achieve team consensus on the market opportunities and best value propositions?
- What are some ways to measure product-market fit?
- How to manage an organization through a product pivot to achieve better product-market fit?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Explain the importance of product-market fit for a successful product
- Apply different management strategies to rapidly achieve product-market fit
- Lead and motivate diverse teams to optimally achieve product-market fit.
- Manage disagreements and achieve consensus on potential market opportunities and best value propositions.
- Evaluate different methods for measuring product-market fit.
- Manage an organization through a product pivot
- Understand the role of rapid prototyping and the Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

Readings & Videos:

Andreesen, M. (2007, June 25). *The only thing that matters*. Retrieved from <https://pmarchive.com/guide-to-startups-part4.html> [Classic post from Marc Andreesen about importance of product-market fit and relative importance of team, product and market, where market is most imp't per Marc as #1 killer is lack of mkt]

Olsen, D. (2017, July 13). *The playbook for achieving product-market fit* 43:36 [Video file] and summary text. Retrieved from <https://www.mindtheproduct.com/the-playbook-for-achieving-product-market-fit/>

Hayrapetyan, H (2022, August 25). *Measuring the product-market fit*, mind the product website Retrieved from <https://www.mindtheproduct.com/measuring-the-product-market-fit/>

Jackson T and Narayan, R. *Zum's Path to Product-Market Fit - How the Student Transportation Company Found Product-Market Fit Twice*; First Round, Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/zums-path-to-product-market-fit>

Zhang, J. *Don't Serve Burnt Pizza (And Other Lessons in Building Minimum Lovable Products* First Round Capital Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/dont-serve-burnt-pizza-and-other-lessons-in-building-minimum-lovable-products>

Week 3 (January 23): Stakeholder Management and Negotiation: R&D/engineering

Guest Speaker: Hans Yang (GM, Microsoft)

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What is stakeholder management, and why is it important in product management?
- How can we identify and prioritize stakeholders for a given product?
- How can we communicate and collaborate effectively with R&D personnel and engineers to agree on key customer needs and jobs to be done?
- How product managers can best enhance the engineering agile software development process through an MVP that achieves product-market fit.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Understand the importance of stakeholder management in product management
- Learn how to identify and prioritize stakeholders for a given product
- Understand different stakeholder perspectives and how to manage them effectively to achieve strong value propositions and product solutions, with a focus on R&D and engineers
- Develop a topline understanding of Agile software development methodologies, specifically the engineering sprint cycle, and its application within product management. More focus on agile development is covered in Week 8. .

Readings and Videos:

Beram, S. (2022, July 21). Stakeholder Management: An Introduction and Beginner's Guide for Product Managers Medium Retrieved from <https://medium.com/codex/the-ultimate-guide-to-dealing-with-stakeholders-for-product-managers-35732ad2a83>

Cagan, M. (2023, June 21). *Pledge To Stakeholders*. SVPG.com Retrieved from <https://www.svpg.com/pledge-to-stakeholders/>

Ury, W. (2007). Getting Past No: Negotiating in Difficult Situations. Bantam Books. Part I. Overview "Breaking Through Barriers to Cooperation" p. 3-14 in paperback edition.in Blackboard]

Cagan, M (2007, October 31). *Product Management vs. Engineering* Retrieved from <https://www.svpg.com/product-management-vs-engineering/>

Bavaro, J (2017, Oct 19). *How we develop great PM / Engineering relationships at Asana* Retrieved from <https://jackiebo.medium.com/how-we-develop-great-pm-engineering-relationships-at-asana-e83b3aa9eb04>

Jackson, T *Top Hacks from a PM Behind Two of tech's Hottest Products First Round*, Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/Top-Hacks-from-a-PM-Behind-Two-of-Techs-Hottest-Products>

Week 4 (January 30): Stakeholder Management and Negotiation: Founders/executives/finance/ marketing/designers

Guest Speaker: Julie Zhuo (former VP of product design Facebook; founder of Inspirit) TBD]

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- How can product managers effectively communicate and align with founders and executives to ensure strategic alignment and support for product initiatives?
- What are the key considerations and strategies for managing stakeholder expectations within the finance domain, such as budgeting, cost analysis, and return on investment (ROI)?
- How can product managers collaborate with marketing teams to develop and execute successful product launch plans, market positioning, and customer acquisition strategies?
- What approaches can be used to foster effective collaboration and communication between product managers and designers, ensuring a seamless integration of user-centered design principles into the product development process?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to develop and implement stakeholder management strategies that align with organizational goals and foster support from founders and executives.
- Apply financial analysis techniques to evaluate and communicate the financial viability and value proposition of product initiatives to stakeholders, including finance teams.
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of marketing principles and techniques, and effectively collaborate with marketing teams to develop and execute product launch plans and marketing strategies.
- Foster effective cross-functional collaboration and communication with design teams, integrating user-centered design principles into the product development process and delivering superior user experiences. Understand the importance of stakeholder management in product management

Readings and Videos:

Kagan, Marty (2018) *Inspired* Chapter 56: Testing Business Viability [on Blackboard]

Pichler, R. (2023, March 6). *Stakeholder Management Tips for Product People* Retrieved from <https://www.romanpichler.com/blog/stakeholder-management-tips-for-product-people/>

Product HQ *Product Manager vs. Product Marketing Manager: What's the Difference?* Retrieved from <https://producthq.org/career/product-marketing-manager/product-manager-vs-product-marketing-manager/>

Zhuo, Julie (2013, August 15). *How to Work with Designers* Retrieved from <https://medium.com/the-year-of-the-looking-glass/how-to-work-with-designers-6c975dede146>

Our 6 Must Reads for Cutting Through Conflict and Tough Conversations First Round Capital, Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/our-6-must-reads-for-cutting-through-conflict-and-tough-conversations>

Note: Individual Assignment 1 is due before class starts in Week 4

Module II: Product Management: Processes and Strategy

Week 5 (February 6): Achieving Team Alignment Around Customer Needs and Product Differentiation

Guest Speaker: Felicia Curcuru (CEO of Binti) TBD

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- How can the identification of customer needs be effectively integrated into the framework of product management?
- How to achieve team alignment around customer needs and your product proposition utilizing a value proposition canvas and other tools
- How to conduct appropriate competitive analysis and incorporate learnings into the team's product strategy?.
- \How to manage and prioritize the creation of competitive differentiation within the product team?What is the "Jobs to be Done" framework and how it can be applied to the product management process?
-

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Lead a product team to identify customer needs and their integration within the framework of product management
- Manage the creation of a value proposition canvas to achieve alignment within the entire product team
- Lead and manage competitive analysis and differentiation in developing a successful product strategy.
- Evaluate different methods for conducting competitive analysis and identifying opportunities for differentiation.
- Managing and prioritizing team goals to achieve competitive differentiation
- Apply the concept of the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) by leading teams to create and iterate on different prototypes
- Utilize the "Jobs to Be Done" JTBD framework to enhance organization alignment around Develop a framework for considering pricing and business models in the context of customer needs analysis

Readings and Videos:

Saladi, S. (2023, June 22). *5 strategies to conduct effective customer interviews for better product insights* mind the product website; Retrieved from <https://www.mindtheproduct.com/5-strategies-to-conduct-effective-customer-interviews-for-better-product-insights/>

Mishra, C. *A Product Designer's Guide to Competitive Analysis* Toptal Retrieved from <https://www.toptal.com/product->

[managers/freelance/product-designer-guide-to-competitive-analysis](#)

Strategyzer's Value Proposition Canvas Explained 3:12 Video Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReM1uqmVfP0>

Jackson, T and Curcuro, Felicia. *Binti's Path to Product-Market Fit – Lessons in Immersive Research* First Round Capital; Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/bintis-path-to-product-market-fit-%E2%80%94-lessons-in-immersive-user-research>

Mohanty, S. *Build Products That Solve Real Problems with This Lightweight JTBD Framework* First Round Capital

Christensen, C; Hall T; Dillon, K; Duncan, D. (2016, September) *Know Your Customers' "Jobs to Be Done"* Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2016/09/know-your-customers-jobs-to-be-done>

Class Week 6 (February 13): Product Management Simulation -- Achieving Team Alignment

Location: Experiential Learning Center (ELC)

Learning Outcomes: Develop proficiency in managing diverse stakeholder perspectives and getting aligned around product priorities.

Setup: Teams will be divided into groups of 4 representing product management, engineering, design, and marketing. Each member will be given a shared set of information as well as individual starting interests & POV on product priorities.

Simulation: During the simulation, additional information and events will be provided. Additionally, participants will be given decision opportunities with resultant outcomes impacting the simulation.

Deliverable: Teams will be expected to deliver a Value Proposition Canvas, Initial Set of Product Priorities, and a Summary of the Discussion including agreements and friction points

Week 7 (February 20): Managing Effective Technology Development Using Customer Journey Maps & Other Tools

Guest speaker: TBA; Presentation, Interpretation & Alignment of a real company journey map

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- How product managers can utilize journey maps to help uncover user pain points and opportunities for product improvement?
- How to facilitate discussion, alignment and takeaways from different customer journey maps?.
- How to Manage and Apply a User Story Mapping Process within organizations?
- What is "confirmation bias" and how to manage product teams to minimize various bias ?
- How to facilitate team innovation through joint understanding of customer journeys and behaviors?

\Learning Outcomes:

- Understand how to utilize journey maps to improve product strategy
- Analyze and define use cases and jobs to be done to ensure team product alignment
- The benefits of a User Story Mapping process to a product management team
- Recognize and manage confirmation bias and other bias that can occur in product teams
-

- Apply effective management techniques to facilitate productive concept development, prototyping, and validation within product teams

Readings:

Gibbons, Sarah (2018, December 9) *Journey Mapping 101* Nielsen Norman Group Retrieved from <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/journey-mapping-101/>

Cagan, M. (2007, October 1). *Prototype Testing* Silicon Valley Product Group. Retrieved from <https://www.svpg.com/prototype-testing/>

Alvarez, C. *Build Your User Base with These Human Behavior Hacks* First Round Capital. Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/build-your-user-base-with-these-human-behavior-hacks>

Mangold, B Loves Data (2023, May 22) *Check out the new funnel reports in Google Analytics 4* Video 6:13 Loves Data. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7zZZKLZNV0>

Patton, Jeff (2014) *User Story Mapping*, O’Reilly Media. Chapter 5, You Already Know How p 67-88, paperback vers. In Blackboard. [steps on creating a Story Map]

Note: Individual Assignment 2 is due before class starts in Week 7

Module IV: Product Design and Development

Week 8 (February 27): The Product Manager’s Role in Managing an Agile Development Process

Guest Speakers: speaker from Scrum or users of Scrum

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What are the principles of agile development methodologies, and the role of a product manager?
- How can we use rapid prototyping and iteration to quickly test and refine product ideas?
- How can we incorporate prototyping into our agile development process?
- How can we measure and track the success of a rapid prototyping and experimentation process?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Understand the principles of agile development methodologies
- Learn how to use agile development methodologies to rapidly prototype and iterate on a product
- Understand the importance of experimentation in product development
- Learn how to measure and track the success of a rapid prototyping and experimentation process

Readings:

Notes to Students:

Please be aware that some of the videos included in this course may contain commercials. It is advised to disregard the commercials and concentrate on the content itself.

Matthews-El, T; Watts, R. (2022, December 6th). Kanban Vs. Scrum: Which is Right For You? Forbes Advisor. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/software/kanban-vs-scrum/>.

Stedman, Steve (2014, July 26) *Introduction to Scrum* Video 7:00 Uzility Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TycLR0TqFA>

Shojaee, H. (2012, February 20) *Intro to Scrum in Under 10 Minutes* Video 8:52 Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU0IIRItyFM>

Intro Kanban in Under 5 Minutes (2013, May 13). Video 4:08 Axosoft, Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/R8dYLBjITUE>

Rapid Prototyping Product Plan, Retrieved from <https://www.productplan.com/glossary/rapid-prototyping/>

Week 9 (March 5): Practice Agile Development (Role Play)

Location: Experiential Learning Center (ELC)

Important note: This exercise will serve as an opportunity for groups to work on their Agile development report as an interim report. The exercise should aim to achieve the following learning outcomes:

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Students will gain a deep understanding of Agile principles, such as iterative and incremental development, customer collaboration, and responding to change. They will also learn how to apply Agile methodologies, such as Scrum or Kanban, in practical settings.
- Students will develop skills in managing Agile projects, including creating and maintaining project plans, managing sprints or iterations, conducting daily stand-up meetings, and tracking progress using Agile metrics.
- Students will enhance their communication and collaboration skills within Agile teams. This includes facilitating effective meetings, conducting retrospectives, resolving conflicts, and promoting a culture of transparency and trust.
- Students will strengthen their problem-solving abilities and adaptability by working on real-world scenarios and adjusting their approach based on changing requirements or feedback from stakeholders. They will also learn techniques for ensuring product quality and customer satisfaction throughout the Agile development process.

Process:

- Groups will work on the product of their choice.
- Group members will engage in role play. Members will be assigned to act in the capacity of engineers, product managers, design teams, and marketing/sales representatives, who collaborate and simulate their respective roles to promote cross-functional communication and decision-making.
- Groups will develop an Agile project plan, including the identification of user stories, creation of a product backlog, and prioritization of tasks. Emphasize the importance of breaking down work into manageable iterations or sprints.
- Groups then proceed with executing their Agile project plan, working through iterations or sprints. They should utilize Agile artifacts, such as user stories, task boards, and burn-down charts, to track progress and manage their work.
- Groups will conduct Agile ceremonies within their group, including daily stand-up meetings, sprint planning sessions, sprint reviews, and retrospectives. These ceremonies should be documented and shared as part of the exercise.
- Communication and Collaboration: Promote effective communication and collaboration within teams, encouraging regular interaction, knowledge sharing, and decision-making. Monitor and provide guidance to ensure teams are practicing Agile principles effectively.
- Problem-Solving and Adaptability: Encourage teams to tackle challenges and solve problems that arise during the Agile development process. Emphasize the importance of adapting to changing requirements and feedback, making adjustments to their plans and approaches as necessary.

Week 10: NO CLASS on **March 12**: SPRING RECESS

Module V: Product Leadership

Week 11 (March 19): Strategic Management of Pricing and Business Models for Product Success

Guest Speaker: Dropbox TBA

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What are management techniques to understand customer's willingness to pay?
- How can teams ensure pricing strategies that are aligned with the value delivered to customers?
- How to manage your product teams to incorporate pricing consideration early in the prototype phase?
- How to lead strategic evaluation of different revenue models, such as subscription-based or usage-based pricing?
- What are the management challenges and opportunities associated with dynamic pricing and personalized pricing approaches?
- How to organize teams capable of frequent and productive experiments around business models, pricing, marketing and other strategic decisions?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Manage teams to achieve critical price and business model decisions
- Understand how teams can incorporate pricing strategies early in the product development phase.
- Lead team analysis of different revenue models
- Organize teams which can design and execute frequent experiments around business models, pricing, marketing and other decisions.

Readings and Videos:

Tidhar, Ron and Kathleen M. Eisenhardt, "Get Rich or Die Trying...Finding Revenue Model Fit Using Machine Learning and Multiple Cases, *Strategic Management Journal*, 2020

**Notes to Students:*

Please prioritize your focus on the discussion of different revenue models and the findings presented. You may choose to disregard the specific methods used in the analysis.

It's Price Before Product. Period. First Round Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/its-price-before-product-period>

Our 6 Must Reads on Pricing a Product First Round Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/our-6-must-reads-on-pricing-a-product>

How to run a pricing study in market research Qualtrics. Retrieved from <https://www.qualtrics.com/experience-management/product/how-to-run-pricing-study/>

Eisenmann, T.; Pao, M; Barley, L. (2014, October 24). *Dropbox: "It Just Works"* Harvard Business School. Blackboard.

Note: Individual Assignment 3 is due before class starts in Week 11

Week 12 (March 26): Developing a Go-to-Market Strategy Framework for the Product Team

Guest Speakers: Amazon/Kindle TBA

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What is a go-to-market strategy, and why is it important?
- How to manage and implement a go-to-market strategy framework?
- What are the key roles and responsibilities for a go-to-market strategy?
- What internal and external factors influence the go-to-market strategy decision?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Understand the importance of a go-to-market strategy framework for product teams
- Learn how to develop a go-to-market strategy framework for a given business and organization
- Understand the different roles & responsibilities associated with different go-to-market strategies
-
- Apply strategic analysis of internal competencies and external market conditions to develop a go-to-market strategy

Compass, L. *A Framework for Go-To-Market Strategy* First Round Capital. Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/leslies-compass-a-framework-for-go-to-market-strategy>

Rosansky, E. *The most Common Go-to-Market Questions This Expert Gets from Early Founders*. First Round Capital. Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/the-most-common-go-to-market-questions-from-founders>

Supan, J. *What I Learned From Developing Branding for Airbnb, Dropbox, and Thumbtack*. First Round Capital Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/what-i-learned-from-developing-branding-for-airbnb-dropbox-and-thumbtack> Case: Sawhney, M; Owens, J; Goodman, P; (2014, April 25) *Kindle Fire: Amazon's Heated Battle for the Tablet Market* **Harvard Case Pack**

Note: Group Project Deliverable 1 is due before class starts in Week 12

Week 13 (April 2): Team Metrics for Measuring Product Success

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What are some common team KPIs for measuring launch success?
- How product managers can set up effective dashboards to measure both product and team success??
- What are some effective processes that management can implement to gather key stakeholder feedback?
- How leading organizations are utilizing AI to improve data, metrics and user feedback gathering and actionability?

How to set up appropriate response plans to post-launch metrics ? **Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Understand how to measure launch success and track key performance indicators (KPIs)
- How to set up effective dashboards to measure product and team success
- Understand and implement processes to gather key stakeholder feedback
- Utilize AI to improve the gathering of data, metrics and feedback to improve team success.

Set up appropriate post-launch action plans based on stakeholder feedback and KPIs **Readings and Videos:**

Aggarwal, Tarush (2022, June 2). *The Three Dashboards Every Startup CEO Needs* Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/06/02/the-three-dashboards-every-startup-ceo->

[needs/?sh=65f093933156](#)

Jordan, J; Hariharan, A; Chen, F.; and Kasireddy, P. (2015, August 21) *16 Startup Metrics* Andreesen. Horowitz. Retrieved from <https://a16z.com/2015/08/21/16-metrics/>

Richardson, A. *The Four Cringe-Worthy Mistakes Too Many Startups Make with Data* First Round Capital Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/the-four-criinge-worthy-mistakes-too-many-startups-make-with-data>

Gotthilf, G. *The Tenets of A/B Testing from Duolingo's Master Growth Hacker* First Round capital Retrieved from <https://review.firstround.com/the-tenets-of-a-b-testing-from-duolingos-master-growth-hacker>

Week 14 (April 9): Managing Teams through a Pivot

Guest Speaker: Kevin Chou, Founder of Kabam

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What are the common situations or factors that can lead to products missing expectations and failing, and how can product managers proactively address them?
- In the event of product failure, how should a product manager effectively position and explain the failure to stakeholders, customers, and the team, while maintaining trust and credibility?
- What strategies and techniques can product managers employ to effectively lead their teams after a below-expectation product launch, fostering motivation and driving improvement?
- How can product managers determine whether to pivot or stay the course when faced with challenging circumstances or market shifts, and what considerations should be taken into account?
- What are the key responsibilities and approaches that product managers should adopt to successfully lead their teams through product pivots, ensuring alignment, managing stakeholders, and minimizing disruption?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Understand the factors and situations that can contribute to products missing expectations and failing, enabling product managers to identify and mitigate potential risks early on.
- Learn how to effectively position and explain product failure to stakeholders, customers, and the team, while maintaining trust, credibility, and fostering a culture of accountability.
- Develop effective leadership skills and strategies to inspire and guide teams after a below-expectation product launch, fostering resilience, learning, and continuous improvement.
- Gain a framework for evaluating whether to pivot or persevere in the face of challenging circumstances, equipping product managers with the ability to make informed decisions and navigate uncertainties.
- Acquire practical techniques and insights to lead teams through product pivots, including communication strategies, stakeholder management, and maintaining team morale, resulting in smoother transitions and increased chances of success.

Readings

Prentice, David, 2022, 5 Types of Product Pivots and When to Make Them. Available here: <https://productsthatcount.com/5-types-of-product-pivots-and-when-to-make-them/>

Pivot Survival Tactics from Kabam's 3 Near-Death Triumphs. Available here: <https://review.firstround.com/pivot-survival-tactics-from-kabams-3-near-death-triumphs>

What Pivoting is, When to Pivot, and How to Pivot Effectively. (2023, April 26). Insight Founder Institute Retrieved from <https://fi.co/insight/what-pivoting-is-when-to-pivot-and-how-to-pivot-effectively>

Cagan, Mary (2013, February 3) *Vision Pivots vs. Discovery Pivots* Retrieved from <https://www.svpg.com/vision-pivots-vs->

[discovery-pivots/](#)

When It's Time to Pivot Your Product Product Plan Retrieved From <https://www.productplan.com/learn/pivot-your-product/>

Week 15 (April 16): Reflect, Recapitulate, and Prepare: Wrapping Up the Product Management Course and Final Project Readiness"

***Gordon will introduce the P&G one-page memo**

Questions: This class session will explore the following questions:

- What were the most significant concepts, frameworks, and methodologies learned throughout the product management course?
- How can these key concepts be applied to real-world product management scenarios?
- What are the specific requirements and expectations for the final project deliverables?
- What challenges did groups encounter during the final project, and what strategies did they employ to overcome them?

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this class session, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the key concepts, frameworks, and methodologies covered in the product management course.
- Apply the acquired knowledge and skills to analyze and solve real-world product management challenges.
- Effectively collaborate within groups to prepare and deliver a comprehensive final project that meets the required standards and addresses the stated objectives.
- Reflect on individual and group learning experiences, identify areas of personal growth, and articulate plans for further professional development in product management.

Week 16 (April 23): Team Presentations

Final Examination Week: Final Assessment Case Assignments Due on Day of Final Exam.

Note: Group Project Deliverables 2, 3 and 4 are due on May 1, one week after team presentation

Note: individual assessment is due on the day of final exam [date TBA]

Appendix I. MARSHALL GRADUATE PROGRAMS LEARNING GOALS

How MOR-599 Contributes to Marshall Graduate Program Learning Goals

Marshall Graduate Program Learning Goals	MOR-599 Objectives that support this goal	Assessment Method*
<p>Learning Goal #1: Develop Personal Strengths. Our graduates will develop a global and entrepreneurial mindset, lead with integrity, purpose and ethical perspective, and draw value from diversity and inclusion.</p>		
1.1 Possess personal integrity and a commitment to an organization’s purpose and core values.	2, 4, 5	Class discussion
1.2 Expand awareness with a global and entrepreneurial mindset, drawing value from diversity and inclusion.		Class discussion, case analyses
1.3 Exhibit awareness of ethical dimensions and professional standards in decision making.	1, 2, 6	Discussions, reading, case analyses
<p>Learning Goal #2: Gain Knowledge and Skills. Our graduates will develop a deep understanding of the key functions of business enterprises and will be able to identify and take advantage of opportunities in a complex, uncertain and dynamic business environment using critical and analytical thinking skills.</p>		
2.1 Gain knowledge of the key functions of business enterprises.	1, 3, 4	Discussions, Project
2.2 Acquire advanced skills to understand and analyze significant business opportunities, which can be complex, uncertain and dynamic.	1, 3, 4	Readings, Discussions
2.3 Use critical and analytical thinking to identify viable options that can create short-term and long-term value for organizations and their stakeholders.	1, 4	Readings, project

<p><i>Learning Goal #3: Motivate and Build High Performing Teams.</i></p> <p>Our graduates will achieve results by fostering collaboration, communication and adaptability on individual, team, and organization levels.</p>		
<p>3.1 Motivate and work with colleagues, partners, and other stakeholders to achieve organizational purposes.</p>	<p>2, 6</p>	<p>Discussions</p>
<p>3.2 Help build and sustain high-performing teams by infusing teams with a variety of perspectives, talents, and skills and aligning individual success with team success and with overall organizational success.</p>		
<p>3.3 Foster collaboration, communication and adaptability in helping organizations excel in a changing business landscape.</p>	<p>2, 5, 6</p>	<p>Project, discussions</p>

