




PRODUCT SKILLS ASSESSMENT

A free framework to help you assess your product skills and take the next step on your product learning journey to building great products



Welcome to your Product Skills Assessment

There's no time like the present to start focusing on moving onwards and upwards in your product career and we're so pleased that you're here!

About the Skills Assessment

This assessment is designed for product managers. If that's you then great, you're in the right place! By working through this PDF, you'll be able to assess your existing product skills, identify gaps in your knowledge, and start building a development plan so you know exactly where to go next on your product learning journey. If somebody has shared this PDF with you or you've stumbled upon it by chance, we suggest that you sign up for our [Product Skills Toolkit Email Series](#) in order to get the most out of the assessment.

This is a self-assessment. So be honest with yourself about your own strengths and weaknesses so that you can focus on improving where you need it most.

Get a second opinion. It can also be helpful to ask some colleagues to assess you on these same questions so you can see where your perception and theirs differ.

The spider chart at the end is optional but can help you visualise your skills, how the overall picture matches up to the perception of your peers, and highlight the key gaps you might need to work on.

Assessment Authors



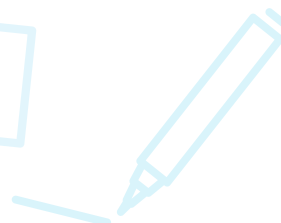
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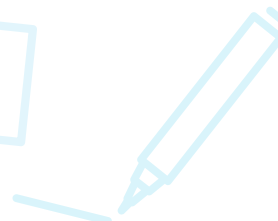


Human Skills

Critical Thinking	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
<p>The most important skill for a great product manager is to be able to think critically about any situation - whether it's questioning assumptions, challenging processes, knowing when to use which skill or tool, or even managing your own time to make sure you are balancing the core elements of the job.</p>	I follow processes or best practices set by others and don't really spend time thinking about whether there are better ways to do things.	I spend some time thinking about the best way to do something when we start a new initiative or process but otherwise don't tend to mess with what seems to be working.	I make time to continuously question the status quo and see if there is a better way to do things. I also think critically about how I'm spending my time to ensure I'm balancing all aspect of the product role.			

Empathy	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
<p>This is a critical skill for a Product Manager, whether it's empathising with our customers or our colleagues. It's a muscle we can exercise and learn to get better at.</p>	I make decisions without taking other views into account - either because I don't have time or I feel I know what they need anyway.	I look at some data and consider some people's views when making decisions, but regularly find myself falling into doing things without.	I understand my customers, stakeholders, and teams. I consider their perspectives, contexts, and biases by proactively seeking different inputs and perspectives, and consider them when making decisions. I regularly practice active listening, empathy exercises, and immersion techniques.			

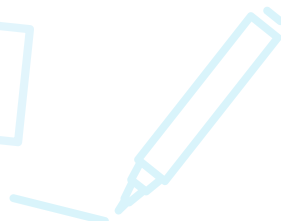
Curiosity	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
<p>Always question the status quo - this is the desire to fully understand a problem from all angles, to want to gather information from a diverse range of sources, and to understand how outcomes would have an impact on success.</p>	I do what I'm told.	I like to understand the motivations behind an initiative, question assumptions, and look for new ways of doing things.	I always question every assumption, challenge ways of working, and set aside time to keep an eye on market trends, competitors, and industry news.			



Strategic Thinking	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
<p>At its simplest, strategic thinking is an ability to plan for the future. For product managers it is about thinking beyond the work currently in progress to what comes next, and ensuring that all our work aligns with company goals, strategy, and vision.</p>	<p>I'm focused on execution and delivery.</p>		<p>I use my quarterly goals to ensure my tactics are achieving their intended outcomes and taking my product work in the right direction.</p>			<p>I proactively step back from my day to day work to ensure we are headed in the right direction, question leadership to ensure our goals stack up to our strategy and vision, and always bring the discussion back to strategic goals.</p>

Facilitation	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
<p>As generalists in a room full of specialists one of the product manager superpowers is to bring together our team and stakeholders to bring out their insights, get everyone on the same page, and drive to decisions.</p>	<p>I let people argue and do what the senior person decides.</p>		<p>I have a few facilitation tools but still struggle to get everyone on the same page or to contradict senior leadership when we disagree.</p>			<p>I have a toolkit of workshop formats and facilitation techniques and I know when which each is relevant. I facilitate 1:1 and group conversations to ensure maximum productivity in any meeting.</p>

Communication	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
<p>Communication is critical to product management so that we can make sure our team and stakeholders know what we're doing, why we're doing it, and whether we're achieving the goals we've set out or not.</p>	<p>I wait for stakeholders to come to me for updates.</p>		<p>I update the team periodically, but often forget about my stakeholders until there is a problem.</p>			<p>I schedule regular updates with my team and stakeholders across multiple channels and customise the content and cadence of my updates for each audience.</p>



Leadership

n/a

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For product managers, leadership is about setting a direction and getting everyone to rally around that goal. We can't rely on authority, but instead need to be able to influence.

I manage my team's work directly - they don't know what I know.

I make sure our work always ties back to higher order company goals and vision.

I set a vision for my product area together with the team based on our company vision, strategy, and goals. I work with them to execute towards our shared goals, always reminding them of the vision and stories behind why we're doing what we're doing.

Coaching

n/a

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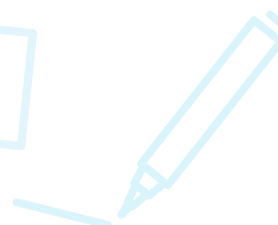
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Helping other product people excel is at the core of being a product leader but something all product managers should practice.

I can explain basics to others, but have trouble teaching complex concepts or really conveying why.

I know how to train other product managers on our team's exist processes.

I am able to unlock the potential in other product people, helping them in their growth and development, and working with them to be the most effective product manager they can be.

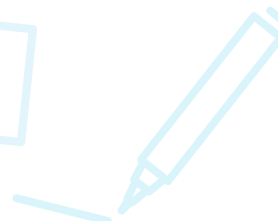


Technical Skills

Metrics	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Everything we do as product managers should be driven by evidence, so understanding our metrics and how to use them to make decisions is critical.	I use basic metric and KPIs that are given to me by leadership.		I understand how to develop metrics that are specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and timely.			I understand how to segment customers, use cohort analysis, statistical significance, correlation vs causation, leading vs lagging indicators, and more in order to answer the questions I have.

Hypotheses & Testing	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
One of the best ways to become evidence driven and outcome focused is to start thinking about our work as a series of hypotheses and how to test them. Formulating hypotheses, identifying assumptions, and creating plans to test them is therefore another key skill.	I focus on delivering new features and priorities instead of testing.		I do some evaluative testing of ideas like A/B testing, and watch the metrics of features I've built to see if they're working.			I understand how to formulate good hypotheses and how they help us test assumptions and focus on outcomes. I also know how to plan experiments to validate those hypotheses, and which types of experiments are the most useful in different scenarios.

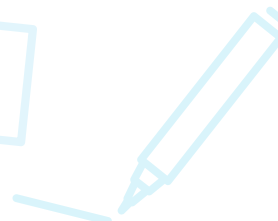
User Research	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
The best evidence comes from user research, and even if you have researchers on your team product managers need to understand how to do this research ourselves if we want to understand our customers.	I don't have time or access to users in order to do research.		I do user research on an ad-hoc basis.			I understand how to balance generative user research with evaluative experiments in a continuous process throughout the product development lifecycle while minimising bias in that process.



Prioritisation	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
It is critical for product managers to make sure that we are working on the most important thing at any given moment, balancing effort vs impact in alignment with company goals.	I listen to what my stakeholders want and let that drive the priority.	I have a preferred prioritisation framework and use it for everything.	I understand how to develop a prioritisation framework as a tool for alignment with company goals within my team and with my stakeholders, when to use which of the many prioritisation tools out there, and how to clearly and effectively communicate those priorities.			

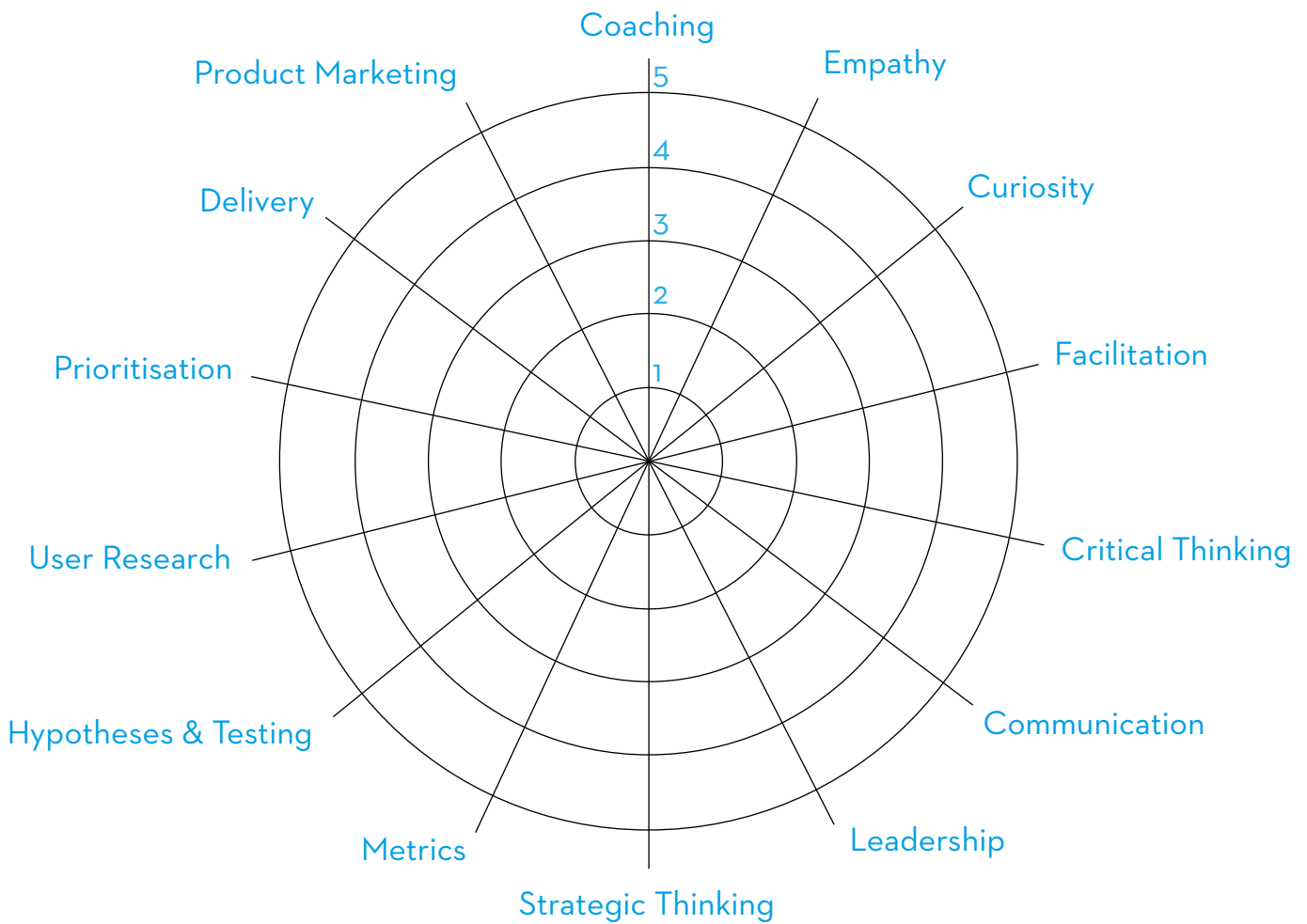
Delivery	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Knowing what to build is just half the battle - we also need to know how to build it and how to best work together with our designers, engineers, etc in order to do that.	I don't get involved in delivery and leave that to the engineering lead or scrum master.	I use Scrum, Kanban, XP, or similar and feel it's important to follow the rules of those frameworks.	I understand the pros and cons of Scrum, Kanban, etc and work together with my whole team on how we want to work together, how we document decisions and stories, etc. I use retrospectives and other tools to constantly iterate and test if there are better ways for us to do so.			

Product Marketing	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
In today's crowded market, it's important to know how to position and price your product for success, and work together with marketing to communicate new features, product launches, and why your product is right for the customer.	I leave it up to Marketing to drive customers growth and adoption.	I work with Marketing on how best to prepare comms for any product launch but let them lead the process.	I proactively make positioning and pricing part of the product process, think about how the market will find and buy my product, and work closely with Marketing on launch plans, copy, and comms plans.			



How to Visualise Your Skills

This spider chart is optional but can help you visualise your skills, how the overall picture matches up to the perception of your peers, and highlight the key gaps you might need to work on.



Unlock the full *Assessing your Product Skills* module

This PDF is just a small part of our larger *Assessing your Product Skills* module from Mind the Product's self-paced, online Training Library, where you can also dive into other invaluable topics designed to guide you through the core skills that every product manager should have.

Whether you're an experienced product leader or in your first product job, **we can all do with an easy way to brush up our skills and remind ourselves of first principles.** Through these modules, you'll gain the confidence you need to lead more effectively, find solutions to problems with ease, and ultimately build better products.

How do I get access?

Our Training Library is **available exclusively to Prioritised and MTP Leader members.** By becoming a member, you'll get instant access to every single training module, plus all the perks that come with a Mind the Product membership - **premium product content**, regular **access to product experts**, and **a place in a community of engaged product professionals** ready to learn with you and share their experiences, helping you to tackle your problems together.

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I WOULDN'T BE
WHERE I AM IN MY
CAREER IF IT WASN'T FOR
MIND THE PRODUCT

JACOB CHRISTIANSEN
PRIORITISED MEMBER



BEING ABLE TO
ACCESS REALLY HIGH
QUALITY CONTENT AND
LEARN FROM TOP PRODUCT
LEADERS ON A REGULAR
BASIS IS INVALUABLE

ELI MONTGOMERY
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