Cracking The PM Interview: How To Land A Product Manager Job In Technology
Synopsis

How many pizzas are delivered in Manhattan? How do you design an alarm clock for the blind? What is your favorite piece of software and why? How would you launch a video rental service in India? This book will teach you how to answer these questions and more. Cracking the PM Interview is a comprehensive book about landing a product management role in a startup or bigger tech company. Learn how the ambiguously-named "PM" (product manager / program manager) role varies across companies, what experience you need, how to make your existing experience translate, what a great PM resume and cover letter look like, and finally, how to master the PM interview questions (estimation questions, behavioral questions, case questions, product questions, technical questions, and the super important "pitch").

CONTENTS:

The Product Manager Role
What is a PM? Functions of a PM
Top Myths about Product Management
Project Managers and Program Managers
Companies

How the PM Role Varies
Google
Microsoft
Apple
Facebook
Yahoo
Twitter
Startups

Getting the Right Experience
New Grads
Making the Most of Career Fairs
Do you need an MBA?
Why Technical Experience Matters
Transferring from Engineer to Product Manager
Transferring from Designer to Product Manager
Transferring from Other Roles

What Makes a Good Side Project?
Career Advancement Tips and Tricks

Q & A: Fernando Delgado, Sr. Director, Product Management at Yahoo
Q & A: Ashley Carroll, Senior Director of Product Management, DocuSign
Q & A: Brandon Bray, Principal Group Program Manager, Microsoft
Q & A: Thomas Arend, International Product Lead, Airbnb
Q & A: Johanna Wright, VP at Google
Q & A: Lisa Kostova Ogata, VP of Product at Bright.com

Behind the Interview Scenes

Google
Microsoft
Facebook
Apple
Yahoo
Twitter
Dropbox

Resumes

The 15 Second Rule
The Rules Attributes of a Good PM Resume
What to Include
Real Resumes: Before & After Cover Letters
Elements of a Good PM Cover Letter
The Cover Letter Template
A Great Cover Letter
Company Research
The Product
The Strategy
The Culture
The Role
The Questions
Define Yourself "Tell Me About Yourself" (The Pitch)
"Why do you want to work here?"
"Why should we hire you?"
"Why are you leaving your current job?"
"What do you like to do in your spare time?"
"Where do you see yourself in five years?"
"What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
Sample Strengths and Weaknesses
Behavioral Questions
Why These Questions Are Asked
Preparation Follow-Up Questions
Types of Behavioral Questions
Estimation Questions
Approach Numbers
Cheat Sheet
Tips and Tricks
Example Interview Sample Questions
Product Questions
About the Product
Question Type 1: Designing a Product
Question Type 2: Improving a Product
Question Type 3: Favorite Product
Preparation Tips and Tricks
Sample Questions
Case Questions
The Case Question: Consultants vs. PMs
What Interviewers Look For
Useful Frameworks
Product
Metrics Interview Questions  Coding Questions  Who Needs To Code What You Need To Know
How You Are Evaluated  How To Approach Developing an Algorithm  Additional Questions &
Solutions  Appendix  Top 1% PMs vs. Top 10% PMs  Be a Great Product Leader  The Inputs to a
Great Product Roadmap  How to Hire a Product Manager

Book Information

Paperback: 364 pages
Publisher: CareerCup; 1st edition (December 2, 2013)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0984782818
Product Dimensions:  6 x 0.8 x 9 inches
Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review:  4.6 out of 5 stars  See all reviews  (129 customer reviews)
Best Sellers Rank: #6,349 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)  #1 in Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Project Management > Technical  #5 in Business & Money > Marketing & Sales > Marketing > Product Management  #6 in Business & Money > Job Hunting & Careers > Interviewing

Customer Reviews

This book is the missing manual for understanding the PM role. It’s the role that I had the most
questions about when I first learned of it, and is the most difficult for me to describe to others. This
book is a thorough and complete look at how this role works; from the resume all the way through
what it takes to climb the corporate ranks. Each section covers an exact question I had about the
role or interviewing for the role. The resume tips are useful for any role not just the PM role. I was
pleasantly surprised by the tips about transitioning from the development role to the PM role as this
is the exact situation in which I find myself. The only negative is that at times the book can come off
a little elitist. For example, looking through the example resumes will make you wonder if you can
become a PM if you didn’t go to an ivy league school and work at 5 of the top startups of the last 10
years. I can’t tell if this is simply the harsh reality of this role requiring you to be in the top 10%, or
the selection bias of the people the author knows/people willing to contribute.

This short book is a wealth of information for product managers. I recommend reading it whether
you plan to interview or not! You will learn some new skills and techniques that will help you improve
your own practice, enjoy your work and enhance your career. This alone is the best reason to read this book! It is refreshing to read a book that speaks very specifically and very intently to its intended audience. Many of us in product management have been on both sides of the interview process sometime in our career and so recognize and can relate to many of the specific examples given with new appreciation. While there is a definite bias towards software driven products and companies (Google, Apple, Microsoft, Yahoo, Facebook, Twitter), many of the principles discussed are more broadly applicable. Given that these companies continue to lead the way, this book also provides insight into the workings of these specific companies and the different emphases each brings to their development process. A must read if you desire to move to Silicon Valley, but still a great read if you are looking to play in the sandbox in your own backyard.

I ordered the book, which costs around 3x as much as the Kindle version. I don't see any advantages of getting the book version, so I recommend the Kindle version. This book is worthwhile to the target audience who are trying to land a position as a product manager. It provides detailed insights on how to get a job as a product manager and what type of background different companies are looking for (it covers Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, and among others) in a product manager. The book also provides a list of most commonly asked questions for a product manager. It even has a chapter on programming (algorithm) questions. Overall, I don’t think this book is groundbreaking. In my view, no book will make an unqualified person more qualified for a product manager role. But if you already have the right background (engineering/science/programming+MBA), then this book can help you to elevate your chances to a little higher level.

Pros: 1) Good book for the target audience. Fairly useless for the rest. 2) Covers a good list of questions you would be asked. It even has a chapter on programming (algorithm) interviews. 3) Provides an overview of a role of a product manager. 4) Provides insights into each of the most popular companies that are hiring product managers.

Cons: 1) Not the deepest book. The coverage is somewhat cursory. 2) Useless if you aren't looking for a product manager job. Don't mistake this book is a general book on post-MBA interviews.

I have never written a review. Like, literally never. That fact alone speaks volumes (book pun intended) as to my feelings about this book. If you are expecting to go on a PM interview, or even thinking about switching to a PM role, buy this book. I currently work at, have worked at, or have immediate friends that work at, all of the large companies listed in the book, and I can say that their observations about the differences in corporate culture and desired skills are spot on. If you’re
interested in what Google//Apple/Microsoft/etc. are looking for - this book is for you. As far as the book’s approach to interview prep, it is thorough, clear, and useful. Is there anything in this book that is utterly groundbreaking? The answer is no, you could probably get a lot of this information online. But why would you spend all that time finding, collecting, vetting, and analyzing a bunch of random internet opinions when you can have Jackie and Gayle do it for you? Spend your time prepping for the interview, not figuring out what you should prep! Oh yeah, did I mention that 2 days after reading and applying the principles of this book I got an offer for an awesome PM job? Obviously I know that I haven’t mentioned this because immediately above this paragraph is a written record of what I’ve said so far. Nonetheless, this book is great, I'm giving a copy to a friend that is in the process of interviewing for a PM role, and I would highly recommend it.

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GET THAT BODYGUARD JOB NOW: HOW TO LAND A LUCRATIVE BODYGUARD JOB IN TODAY’S JOB MARKET

PM Interview Workbook: Over 160 Problems and Solutions for Product Management Interview Questions

Take Charge Product Management: Time-tested tips, tactics, and tools for the new or improved product manager

The Agile Product Manager: A practical and straight to the point guide to agile product management

Agile Product Management: Product Owner: 26 Tips to Manage Your Product and Work with Scrum Teams

Agile Product Management: Product Vision:: 21 Steps to setting excellent goals for your product (scrum, scrum master, agile development, agile software development)

Agile Product Management: Release Planning: 21 Steps to plan your product releases from a product vision with Scrum (scrum, scrum master, agile development, agile software development)

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