

# Product Manager 101: What Does A Product Manager Actually Do?

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# What Is A Product Manager?

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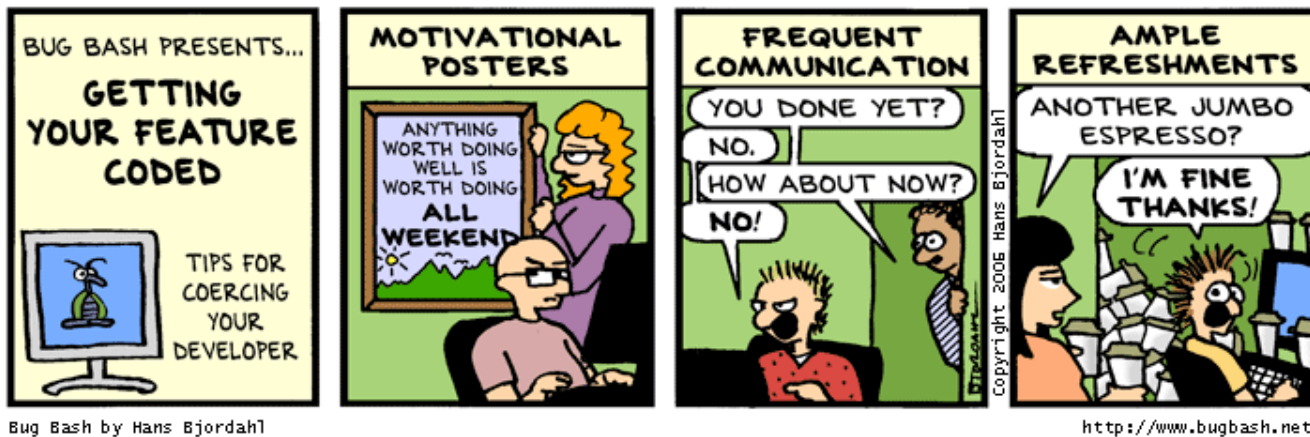
Product Management is a **strategic and business-oriented role**, focused on delivering solutions to market needs.

Product Managers...

- ▶ **Identify profitable opportunities** that meet market needs
- ▶ **Launch** products into the market
- ▶ **Oversee** products already in the market
- ▶ **Wind down** products that longer meet market needs

# What Does A Product Manager Do?

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No, seriously. What does a Product Manager actually do?

# Understands The Market

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- ▶ Communicates with customers & prospective customers
- ▶ Conducts usability tests
- ▶ Surveys
- ▶ Keeps an ongoing record of compliments/complaints
- ▶ Actually uses the product regularly



# Develops Market-Based Product Strategies

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- ▶ Research, research, research
- ▶ Is aware of, and understands, the competition...
- ▶ ... but is not just slavishly copying their feature sets
- ▶ Don't feed The Blob by creating bloatware!



# Creates Relevant, Usable Documentation

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- ▶ BRD: Business Requirements Document - Identifies business problems, solutions
- ▶ MRD: Market Requirements Document - Functional, non-functional requirements
- ▶ PRD: Product Requirements Document - Feature details, user interface, flow
- ▶ FSD: Functional Specifications Document - Engineers, screen by screen
- ▶ Note: Not every company uses these acronyms--or docs--in the same way!

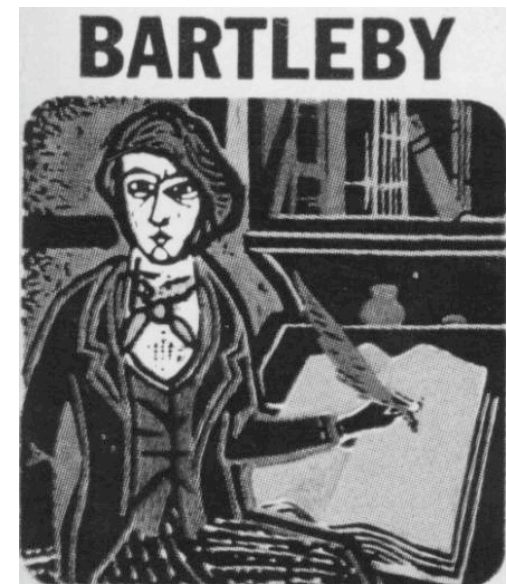


Image source: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/eng185dwb.html>

# Brings Products Into (And Out Of) The Market

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- ▶ Your job is to meet market demands and actually make it to market
- ▶ Realize that pioneering doesn't always pay...
- ▶ But understand the importance of not falling behind the curve
- ▶ Timing is crucial
- ▶ Examples: Xerox's Star computer ('81), Lycos TV ('99)

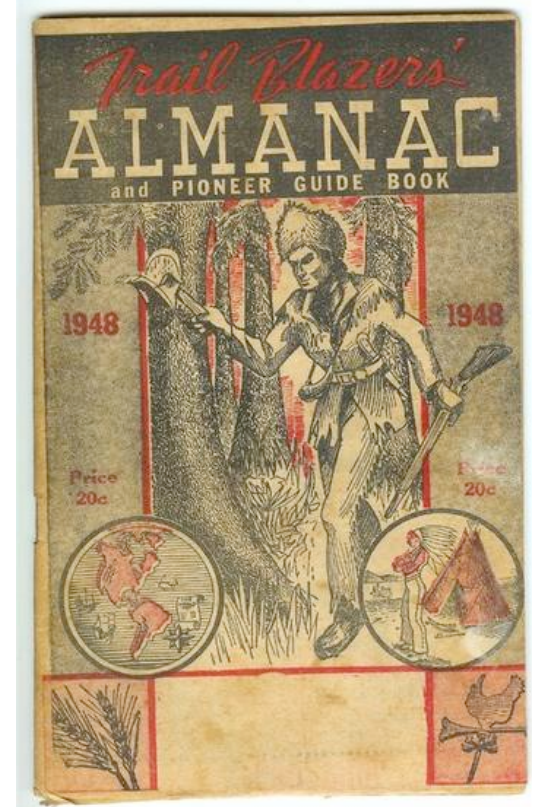


Image source: <http://www.ioffer.com/selling/daylily120>

# Develops Customer Relationships

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## The Means...

- Face to face
- Email
- Blog
- Telephone
- Social networks

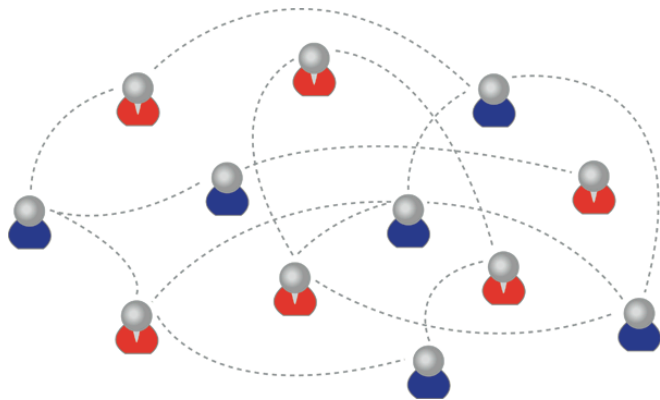


Image source: <http://www.relnet.com/>

## The 5-C Method...

- Clear, not jargon
- Concise, not convoluted
- Confident, not weasel words
- Courteous
- Completely understands the issue



Image source: [http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/01/04/nytfrofrontpage/20070104POD\\_index.html](http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/01/04/nytfrofrontpage/20070104POD_index.html)



# Bridges Every Department That Touches Product

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- Sales
- Marketing Communications
- Engineering
- Design
- Customer Service
- QA
- Operations



# The Product Manager's Role: To Avoid This

## What The Customer Really Wanted

Create your own cartoon at [www.projectcartoon.com](http://www.projectcartoon.com)



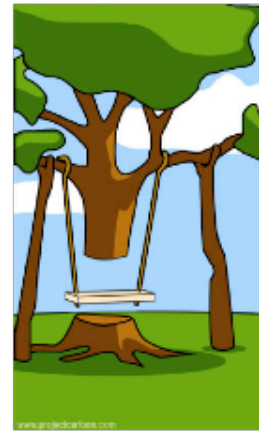
How the customer explained it



How the business consultant described it



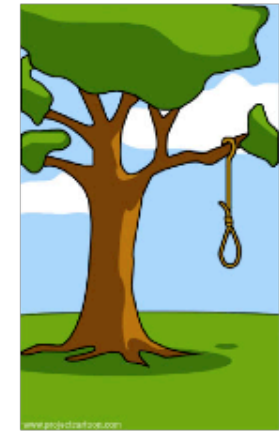
How the project leader understood it



How the analyst designed it



How the programmer wrote it



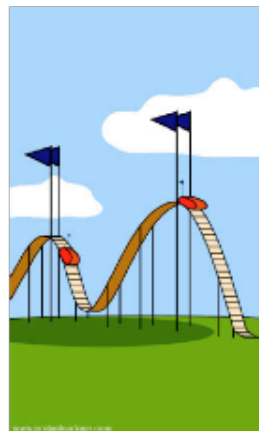
What the beta testers received



How it performed under load



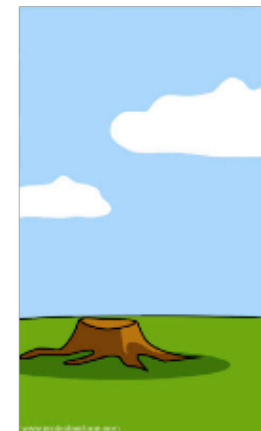
How the project was documented



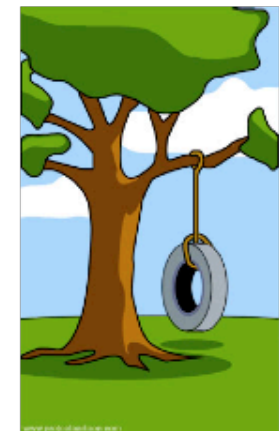
How the customer was billed



When it was delivered



How it was supported



What the customer really wanted

# What Else Does A Product Manager Do?

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- ▶ Manages the brand
- ▶ Generates sales leads
- ▶ Responsible for the profit & loss of the product
- ▶ Brings new products to life... maximizes profits in existing products... winds down unsuccessful products
- ▶ Champions the product, internally and externally



# In 20 Words Or Less?

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Product Managers analyze market data to make intelligent decisions, chart the course, and **captain** the product toward its intended destination.



# Bonus! 5 Tips For Success

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- ▶ Don't define HOW things are done; focus on WHAT needs to happen and WHEN
- ▶ Ask targeted questions, challenge assumptions, gather useful data
- ▶ Leverage the knowledge of experts inside and outside the company
- ▶ Shield your development team from the slings and arrows of outrageous demands
- ▶ Don't be all talk--be ready to jump into the fray and lend a helping hand



# Resources

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- How To Be A Good Product Manager:  
<http://www.goodproductmanager.com>
- Pragmatic Marketing:  
<http://www.pragmaticmarketing.com>
- All Top Product Management:  
<http://product-management.alltop.com>
- The Cranky Product Manager:  
<http://crankypm.com>
- On Product Management:  
<http://onproductmanagement.wordpress.com>