

# Positioning Maps

## Chart Your Path to a Meaningful Career

Competitive positioning is how you differentiate yourself from other job candidates and create value for your employer. It's about how you carve out a niche in the marketplace. These customized guides, by position title, help you achieve this.

October 2024

### Your Guide to Becoming a Product Manager

Are you interested in becoming a Product Manager when you graduate? You are not alone. Many students and graduates within TRSM are interested in this field and have found work as Product Managers within different industries.

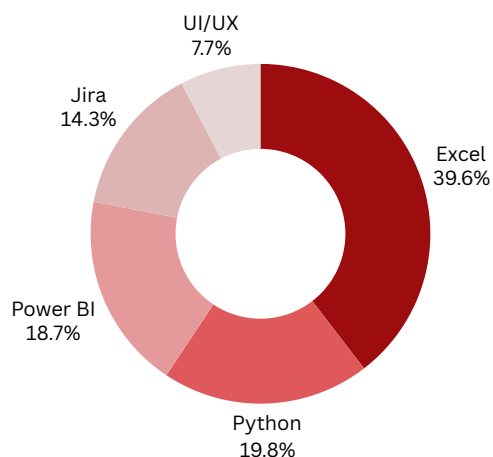
A Product Manager is responsible for identifying customer needs and the larger business objectives that a product or service will accomplish. They will focus on the success of the product and lead a team of individuals to turn that vision into a reality.

#### STEP 1 - Understand the Skills Expected of a Product Manager

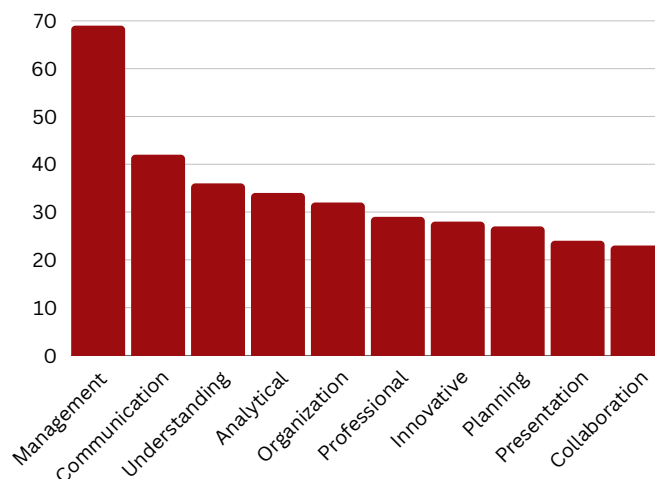
We analyzed 100+ postings in our job portal for Product Manager roles, for the period of September 2017 to September 2024, and identified the most cited technical and professional skills across these job descriptions. Highlighted below are the skills employers are seeking when recruiting for this role.



**Top 5 Technical Skills for Product Managers**



**Top 10 Professional Skills for Product Managers**



## STEP 2 - Develop a Product Manager Skillset

| Program                             |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><b><u>Register for Bootcamps:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excel Levels 1-3 - Business Fundamentals + Challenge</li><li>• Python Levels 1-3 + Challenge</li><li>• Power BI Levels 1-2 + Challenge</li><li>• UX Design - 2 Levels and Agile/Scrum</li><li>• Complete Bootcamp challenges in technical areas that you aren't able to generate through your academics - you'll receive a badge to display on your LinkedIn to formalize your learning!</li></ul> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><b><u>Attend Prep Programs:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Product Management Prep Program</li><li>• CPG Prep Program</li><li>• Project Management Prep Program</li><li>• Ace This Case - Consulting - attend this to enhance your professional skills in problem-solving</li></ul>   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><b><u>Join Student Groups:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student groups often invite professionals from many industries to network with students and offer their insights!</li><li>• <a href="#"><u>Information Technology Management Student Association (ITMSA)</u></a>, <a href="#"><u>Global Management Students' Association (GMSA)</u></a>, <a href="#"><u>TRSM Student Groups</u></a>, <a href="#"><u>TMU Student Groups</u></a>,</li></ul>             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><b><u>Participate in Case Competitions/Conferences:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#"><u>TRSM Sales Club</u></a></li><li>• <a href="#"><u>TRACE</u></a></li></ul>  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><b><u>Ted Rogers Co-op:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you are a BTM student, you would apply for Co-op at the end of your first year by June 1st</li></ul>  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p><b><u>Hub Insights reports:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#"><u>Product Management</u></a>, <a href="#"><u>Product Manager: Day in the Life</u></a>, <a href="#"><u>Habit Building</u></a></li></ul>  |

## Why Professional Skills Are Important To Employers



### Time Management

As a Product Manager you will constantly be splitting your time between different products and projects. Developing your ability to prioritize, delegate, and adjust to shifting needs will be essential. You will have multiple deadlines for product launches so being able to plan ahead will allow for successful launches.



## Problem Solving

Products are meant to help solve problems, for businesses, customers, and consumers. Product Managers need to be able to support in developing products that help achieve this. They also need to work with their team to help support them through creation of a product to launch by predicting and solving any problems that may arise.



## Data Analysis

Conducting and analyzing market research is essential for Product Managers. It will allow you to know whether or not there is a market for the product and what areas and elements can help your product improve and survive in the market.



## Strategic Thinking

Being able to see the long-term vision and then determine the path to reach that goal is an essential skill for Product Managers. Setting clear and achievable goals that lead to the broader vision and align with business objectives helps to ensure every update released contributes to the overall improvement of the product.

## STEP 3 - Prepare for the Interview

### Typical Interview Questions for a Product Manager Role

Here are some examples of interview questions, paired with answers to guide you when preparing for your next interview. Keep in mind interview questions can vary depending on the industry and level of the role.



#### Tip #1

Employers want to ensure that you have researched their company and product. This is your time to convey both passion and advertise your research.

**How would you describe our product to a customer?**

“

*Since this product helps identify XYZ info for users and works best on smartphones, I would have our customers download the app on their phone and have them use it in their own life. I would ask them what problems they have that relate to the product and specifically show them how product XYZ would support them in making their life easier.*

”



### Tip #2

Highlight your ability to assess and overcome challenges. Interviewers want to see how well you know the industry and if you can assess foreseeable challenges and come up with solutions.

**What do you think is the biggest challenge Product Managers face?**

“

*From my experience, I have seen a lot of Product Managers struggle with reacting to problems instead of trying to anticipate them and be proactive in solving them. What I do to mitigate this is work both my team and customers to identify any concern and solve for them. Having focus groups to receive feedback helps to get perspectives more similar to what our customers may inquire about. Using this collective information I would have insight both on the back end from our team and from the user perspective and prepare accordingly. I also have open channels for feedback post soft launch and official launch dates and create buffers within the plan for any problems that may arise.*

”



### Tip #3

Showcase your ability to work with people in different circumstances, especially managing multiple streams of a project. This demonstrates your ability to communicate, empathize, and proactively reach a solution even in times of conflict.

**What strategies do you use to manage a product launch?**

“

*I work with my team to develop a launch plan. Working backwards from the launch date and collaborating with all teams involved ensuring everyone has enough time to efficiently and successfully contribute. Then including extensive research into competitor products and the market and input from stakeholders and customer demands, I work with our Project Manager and Marketing Manager to get feedback from our teams and audience to stay on task and ensure demand for our product is high for when we launch.*

”



### Tip #4

It's important to be able to demonstrate your research and other areas of innovation. Knowing the product you would be managing and thinking of areas for improvement is always valuable for interviews.

**How do you know which features to include in a product?**

“

*Through extensive research across multiple streams. I look at competitor products and the feedback they receive from current users to see what areas users enjoy about their product and where there is room for improvement. Additionally, I will seek feedback from our customers and stakeholders to see what would be best for our client base and match our timeline, budget, and stakeholder needs. Seeking out and collecting as much research and data as possible in order to gain as much buy in from our team and customer ensures that the features included are best supporting our company.*

”

## Some of the Top Employers Hiring Product Managers



### STEP 4 - Update LinkedIn and Resume - and Apply

Now that you have better positioned yourself for this role, make sure to update your LinkedIn profile, your resume and cover letter to reflect how aligned you now are with this type of role.

Check out these Hub Insights resources for best practices on doing just this!

1. [LinkedIn](#)
2. [Resumes, Cover Letters](#)
3. [Interview Tips: Behavioural Interviews, Behavioural Interviews In-depth](#)

## Meet a Ted Rogers Alumni in the Product Management Field



“ Ata Yilmaz is a Product Manager at SOTI, a proven innovator and industry leader for simplifying business mobility solutions. He has been with the company for 5.5 years, starting as a **BTM Co-op student**.

Throughout his undergraduate journey, Ata gained diverse experiences, securing an internship in his second year and progressing from a Product Intern to a Product Owner, and ultimately to a **Product Manager**.

Product Manager,  
SOTI

**ATA YILMAZ**

His career in product management has spanned roles at TELUS, Bell, and currently SOTI. As a Product Manager at SOTI, Ata's responsibilities encompass maintaining roadmaps for various stakeholders, participating in web application design meetings using tools like **Jira**, and acting as a liaison between business and development teams.

He collaborates with a diverse group of professionals, including developers, sales, marketing, and design teams. Ata emphasizes the importance of strategic communication, advocacy, and leadership, focusing on team involvement and transparency rather than mere delegation.

He notes that product management is evolving towards more **market-oriented** approaches, with automation tools becoming increasingly valuable. For students aspiring to enter the field, Ata advises engaging in **extracurricular activities**, developing skills beyond program requirements, building **meaningful networks**, crafting targeted resumes, and being prepared to **demonstrate** claimed skills. He highlights that the BTM program provides excellent preparation for product management roles, with involvement in technology clubs offering additional value.



## Learn More for Free



### Product Management Guide

Coursera provides online courses for careers in high-demand fields. Click [here](#) for a guide into their overview of what a Product Manager looks like and the skills you need to be a successful Product Manager.



### The Art of Product Management

Need more resources? Check out Medium's [Free Product Management Course](#). It covers key topics for both new and experienced product managers, offering valuable insights and strategies to help enhance their skills and stay competitive in the field.



### LinkedIn Learning:

Certain courses on LinkedIn Learning are available for free. Also explore LinkedIn posts highlighting valuable resources curated by industry authors. This particular [post](#) showcases free resources provided by a current Product Manager.

## Visit the Business Career Hub

### Employer Events

The BCH hosts several employer events to prepare you for your professional career. Refer to your weekly BCH Careers Newsletter for a list of upcoming [events](#).



### Bootcamps/Prep Programs

Advance your technical skills like Excel and Tableau, earn digital badges, and gain an advantage in today's workforce through Bootcamps. [click here to register for current bootcamps](#).

### Coaching & Mock Interview

For career coaching, interview prep and more, [schedule a 1:1 appointment](#) with a Career Consultant or a Co-op Coordinator.



### Career Consultant Contributor Alysha Chin

Alysha is a Career Consultant with Ted Rogers School of Management. She is a graduate from TMU with a Bachelor's in Psychology, and has had the opportunity to work in many roles across multiple industries including HR, operations management, recruitment and career services.



### Student Contributor Suleman Bulbulia

Suleman is a Law and Business student currently working as a Project Coordinator at the BCH. Suleman is passionate about supporting people, learning new things and sharing knowledge. He is also always up for an adventure.

### Data Sources

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3. Romanchuk, J. (2023, September 12). *16 product management skills you'll need (according to experts) in 2023*. HubSpot Blog. <https://blog.hubspot.com/service/product-management-skills>
4. Villaumbrosia, C. G. D. (2024, April 8). *The top 18 product manager skills to master*. Product School. <https://productschool.com/blog/skills/product-manager-skills>