

Spring 2022: Product Management

SCET - Sutardja Center for Entrepreneurship & Technology

Course: INDENG 186
Instructors: Ken Sandy (ksandy@berkeley.edu)
Derek Chan (derekschan@berkeley.edu)
Credit: 3 units
Format: 3-hour lecture / discussion / team projects / industry speakers
Time/Location: Thursday 5-8P, 310 Jacobs Hall
Course Coordinators: Pedro Repsold de Sanson (pedrosanson@berkeley.edu)
Shreya Khandewale (shreyakhandewale@berkeley.edu)
Seats: 65: ***All applicants are wait-listed and must complete a survey.*** You will be notified of admission. Preference given to seniors and above.

Overview:

Product Managers play an increasingly critical role in modern technology companies. They are charged with ensuring an organization is laser focused on creating valuable and highly usable products and services, to address pain-points and unmet-needs for their target customers. Good Product Managers develop a deep empathy for the end-user. They identify and define solutions which will create new business opportunities. They build effective relationships across all levels in an organization. They know how to motivate cross-functional teams and manage complex development processes to deliver world-class products. They are highly data and metrics driven; to validate products, measure performance, and iterate on improvements.

In this class, you will learn essential Product Management skills by putting theory into practice, on a product or idea of your choosing. You will learn techniques to accelerate product success and avoid common mistakes. You will work in a team comprising of students from engineering, design, business and other backgrounds. This will simulate real-world cross-functional environments where people with different skills collaborate to build a successful product.

The course is recommended for any student who wants to explore life as a Product Manager, may work in a related field closely with Product Managers, or is interested in exploring a career that spans many aspects of business and technology.

Attendance:

The course is designed around teamwork and participation. Mandatory class attendance is to your benefit. If you miss three or more lectures without advanced permission from a Course Coordinator you will not pass.

Grading:

Group Assignments: 50%

(5 submissions)

Around the 3rd week, you will form groups of five and stay in these groups for the remainder of the semester. You will study a product or idea of your choosing throughout the semester. Each assignment builds upon course material and previous assignments. Prompts – including instructions, due dates, and a rubric – will be provided when the assignment is set. Assignments and their grade weighing are noted below. Feedback and grading are performed via an interactive team walk-through with the instructor.

Individual Assignment (“Stay Current”): 20%

(13 submissions)

You will complete a small amount of weekly research, self-learning, reflection, online collaboration, and surveys. Creativity is encouraged – written posts, videos, podcasts – critically analyzing what you are learning through the course.

Participation: 30%

(active class involvement)

Your participation grade is based on quality of contribution you make each class – including active discussion, preparation for in-class exercises, asking thoughtful questions, providing other class members feedback, and overall engagement. Special class activities are noted in the syllabus below. You will receive a zero for any week you are absent without prior permission.

All assignments will be submitted digitally on bCourses. Deadlines will be outlined in assignment handouts. Late submissions receive a mark-down or may not be accepted.

Instructors:

Ken Sandy is a technology Product Management veteran based in San Francisco Bay Area. He has led Product Management teams at an executive level at both fast-growth, early-stage companies, and for larger companies attempting digital transformations amidst industry disruption. Ken was Vice President, Product at Masterclass – transforming online education by enabling anyone in the world to learn from the very best – and Vice President, Product at Lynda.com – a premier online learning company acquired by LinkedIn. Prior, he worked for companies developing content and advertising platforms for independent publishers, startups creating mobile messaging and social networking solutions, and led business units based in the US and China. Ken is an Industry Fellow and Lecturer at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology at University of California, Berkeley, and is an alumnus of University of Melbourne. www.linkedin.com/in/kensandy

Derek S. Chan values empowering each other and has been an Artificial Intelligence (AI) product leader, helping Bill.com and Automation Anywhere reach their highest-ever customer satisfaction and/or revenue growth, plus #1 AP Automation 2020-21 and the IT World Award 2018. He now explores greater personal challenge and meaning through his own startup. Derek has mentored people on Product Management skills, including validating the root of user problems before, during, and after development. He is an alum of UC Berkeley’s Master of

Information and Data Science program, co-receiving the Hal R. Varian Award followed by an informal Google partnership.

www.linkedin.com/in/derekschan0

Office Hours:

The instructors are available for video-based meetings late afternoons and evenings on any course-related or professional/career topic. Please email at least 48-hours in advance to schedule an appointment. Group feedback sessions will also periodically be scheduled.

Required Texts:

Once your enrollment is confirmed, you will be required to purchase *"The Influential Product Manager"*. Course Chapters and exercises will be assigned weekly.

Course Structure & Status:

The course is designed around a highly participatory model. Lectures will include the following:

- interactive lecture or special guest (aided by a short presentation)
- class activity or discussion to apply the skills being learned
- group-work and mentorship on group assignments

The typical workload of group and individual work outside of class is 6 hours per week.

Schedule:

This is a broad outline of the expected dates and course material, which is subject to change.

Jan 20: Introducing Product Management (Week 1)

Introductions. The role of Product Managers. Product Manager skills. Working in teams.

Activities: "SnapChat vs. Insta vs. Tiktok"; "Getting to Know You"; *Individual Assignment:* "Stay Current"

Jan 27: Product Ideas: Think Like a Product Manager (Week 2)

Four Mindsets to making ideas robust. Common pitfalls. Value Propositions and Differentiators.

Activities: "Making Ideas Robust", "Product Proposals"

Feb 3: Understanding Your Customer (Week 3)

Target Customers. Problem Statements. Competitors and Alternatives. Risks. Team allocations.

Activity: "Five Key Questions"; *Group Assignment 1:* "Understanding Your Customer" (10% of grade)

Feb 10: What WALL-E can Teach us about Product Management (Week 4)

The Product Specification. Steps to define a product solution.

Activity: "Building Wall-E"; *Group Assignment 2:* "Scoping Your Product" (5% of grade)

Feb 17: The Product Organization (Week 5)

Guest Panel discuss their experiences. Cross-Functional Teams. Leading through Influence.

Activity: "The Situation Room"

Feb 24: Don't Just Build the Product Right... Build the Right Product! (Week 6)

Product discovery and validation. Mock-ups, Prototypes. In-field research and usability testing.

Activity: "Interview Questions"; Group Assignment 3: "Product Discovery and Customer Validation" (10%)

Mar 3: Effective Product Development Processes (Week 7)

Iterative (Agile) Development. SCRUM roles, ceremonies, artifacts, estimation, velocity. Pitfalls.

Activities: "Agile Ace Card Game"; "Practicing Agile"

Mar 10: Customer Interviews "Field Trip"

No class – time for Assignment 3 customer interviews and prototypes. Attendance taken.

Mar 17: Making Scope-Time-Quality Tradeoffs (Week 8)

Scope-Time-Quality Framework. Handling scope creep. Delivery commitments. Ensuring quality.

Activity: "The Time-to-Market Game Show"; "Making Tradeoffs"

(Mar 24: Spring Recess – no class held)

Mar 31: Mastering Product Requirements (Week 9)

User Stories and Attributes. Breaking down stories. Acceptance Criteria. The Product Backlog.

Activity: "Moon Vacations"; Group Assignment 4: "Build Your Product Backlog" (10% of grade)

Apr 7: Three-Two-One... Launch (Week 10)

Types of Launch – deployments, betas. Rapid Response. Partnering with Product Marketing.

Activities: "Launch Strategies", "Stop-The-Press: PR Competition"

Apr 14: Measuring Product Performance (Week 11)

Recommended metrics and tools – value/vanity, LTV, funnels, NPS. Attributes of useful metrics.

Activities: "Five-key Metrics"; "Business Model Brainstorm"; Prototype Demos

Apr 21: Product Planning and Optimization (Week 12)

Product Strategy. Prioritization techniques. A/B Testing. Business Models.

Activities: "Collaborative Prioritization"; Dry Runs for Final Presentations

Apr 28: Putting It All Together (Week 13)

Finals with Special Guest Judges. Winning team represents 186 at Collider Cup.

Activities: Awards Ceremony; Group Assignment 5: Final Presentations (15% of grade)