Product Management Program Syllabus

Course Description

The UC San Diego Extension Product Management program offers a comprehensive look into the elements and skills necessary to manage a successful product management process from product strategy to specification, execution, launch, and growth.

Students will discover real-world tools to enhance their product management practice and broaden their understanding of best practices. Coursework includes group work, field trips, and lectures by experienced professionals. Projects draw on student's real-world work to maximize productivity.

Key takeaways

Student will learn to:
1. Gather and use customer insights to guide product strategy.
2. Analyze the financial, competitive, and growth prospects for a sector.
3. Define and prioritize a minimum viable solution.
4. Use best-practice frameworks to organize, prioritize, and communicate work.
5. Use a deep understanding of what buyers care about to create a compelling go-to-market plan.
6. Develop confidence to lead product teams and inspire stakeholders and collaborators.

Course Prerequisites

This program is for experienced professionals looking to sharpen their skill sets and learn best practice product management techniques. To be accepted, students must currently be in a product management position and have at least one year of work experience.

Students in a role which that enables them to complete assignments will:
- be able to contact customers.
- have access to view key performance and financial data for their product.

Professionals include current product managers across multiple industries including manufacturing, biotech, software, consumer products, and services.

Course Details

Enrollment is by application only and limited to 20 students. Applications are due by **April 5, 2019**.

https://extension.ucsd.edu/courses-and-programs/product-management
Fee: $5,450.00

Instructor Information

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Time Commitment

This course is 11 credits over two quarters, so students should expect 110 hours of direct instruction and around 220 hours of out-of-class work. Students are encouraged to apply concepts to their work, and may find assignments can be completed within the context of current work responsibilities during work time.
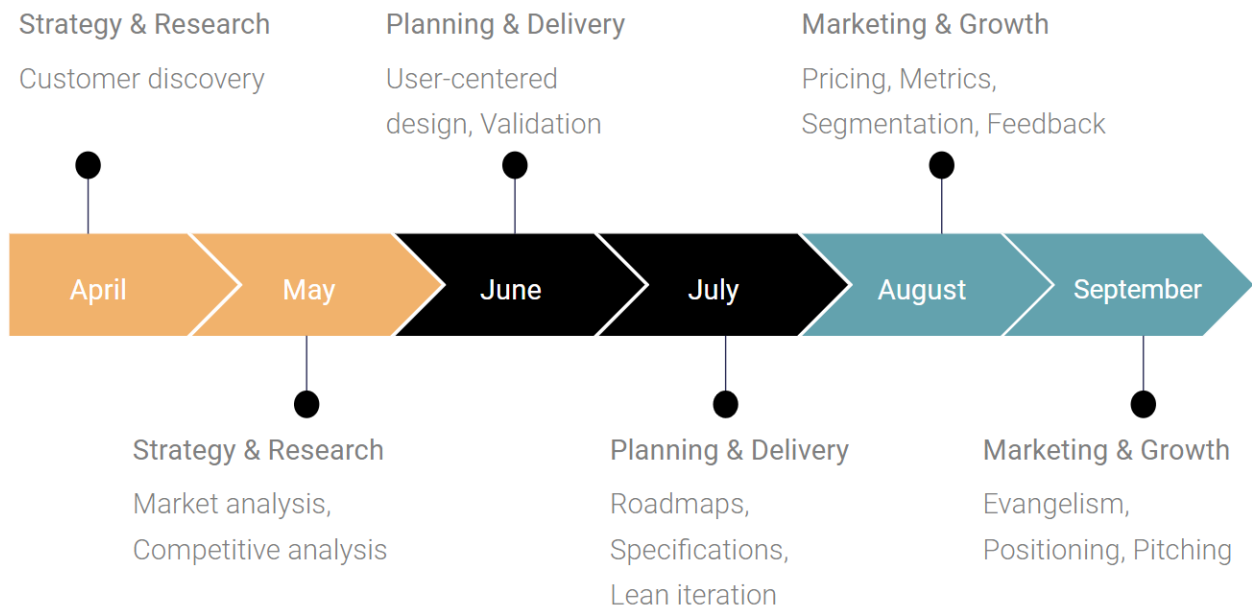
This course meets every two weeks, so the *approximate* time for coursework and instruction in **each two-week segment** is:
- Course meetings: 9 hours (3 hours on Mondays, 6 hours on Saturdays)
- Online instruction: 2 hours
- Reading: up to 4 hours
- Podcast review: 1 to 2 hours, depending on podcast length
- Online discussion: 4 hours
- Assignments: 8 hours or more, depending on segment

Attendance at Saturday and Monday class meetings is mandatory. Class time will often be spent in workshop exercises, which students cannot easily participate in remotely.

Field trips to area companies will be scheduled approximately monthly. I will attempt to schedule during usual course meeting times. Field trips scheduled at other times during the week are extra learning opportunities for students and will not count against participation and attendance if a student is unavailable.

Course Overview

Strategy & Research

Customer discovery

Planning & Delivery

User-centered
design, Validation

Marketing & Growth

Pricing, Metrics,
Segmentation, Feedback

| April | May | June | July | August | September |

Strategy & Research

Market analysis,
Competitive analysis

Planning & Delivery

Roadmaps,
Specifications,
Lean iteration

Marketing & Growth

Evangelism,
Positioning, Pitching

Weekly Topics & Learning Outcomes

* Subject to changes and additions

Week 1: Getting to know your customers!

Saturday 20 April & Monday 22 April
Strategy & Research: Customer Discovery
- Professional introductions and learning objectives
- Explain the role of user and buyer research in product planning.
- Conduct and document an ethnographic interview using best practices for contextual inquiry.

Week 3: If we have data, let's use that. If all we have are opinions, let's use mine!

Saturday 4 May & Monday, 6 May
Strategy & Research: Customer Discovery
- Use jobs-to-be-done theory to understand and explain user behavior.
- Design and field a survey to gauge the scope of customer attributes.

Week 4: Summarize the world on a spreadsheet!

Saturday 18 May & Monday 20 May
Strategy & Research: Market analysis
- Research and analyze the financial prospects for a sector.
- Use key customer, growth, and revenue metrics to evaluate and plan product initiatives.
- Access diverse sources of information about key competitors.

Week 5: As simple as it can be, but not simpler!

Saturday 1 June & Monday 3 June
Planning & Delivery: User-centered design
- Define a minimum viable solution for a user problem
- Create a persona and journey map to describe a user to stakeholders

Week 6: Your opinion, although interesting, is irrelevant!

Saturday 15 June & Monday 17 June
Planning & Delivery: Validation
- Test user behavior with prototyping tools

Week 7: Where we're going, we don't need roads!

Saturday 13 July & Monday 15 July
Planning & Delivery: Specification and Roadmaps
- Use a framework for prioritization to organize work
- Define specifications and a roadmap.

Week 8: Talk like a pirate day - AARRR!

Saturday 27 July & Monday 29 July
Marketing & Growth: Metrics
- Use a framework to identify and test channels to market.

Week 9: How much does it cost? How much do you have?

Saturday 10 August & Monday 12 August
Marketing & Growth: Pricing & Positioning
- Define buyer and user segments
- Analyze and evaluate multiple pricing strategies

Week 10: Up, Up, and Away!

Saturday 24 August & Monday 26 August
Marketing & Growth: Product Launch
- Plan a comprehensive, phased new product introduction.

Week 11: The stories you tell!

Saturday 7 September & Monday 9 September
Marketing & Growth: Evangelism
- Use deep understanding of what buyers care about to create an amazing product demonstration video.

Week 12: Excelsior!

Saturday 21 September
Career Development & Leadership

Course Showcase

Monday 23 September
- In the final course meeting, students' supervisors and other product executives are invited for a get-together with students and each other. Students will present the results of their coursework, and we will celebrate the successful completion of the course.