The Soft Skills of a Product Manager

**by**[**upGrad**](https://www.upgrad.com/blog/author/upgrad/)

A Product Manager has to be a cross-functional leader, who has to get involved in all aspects of the product. From the operations and analytics, engineering, and design, to legal and other functions of the company. Your role involves taking decisions which are driven by data, user-behavior, as well as marketing.

According to Aha! – a product manager is often considered the CEO of the product, who is responsible for the strategy, roadmap, as well as for defining the features of the product.

Product Managers may need to undertake marketing, forecasting, and even profit and loss (P&L) responsibilities.

Along with the hard skills, you will also need to work very hard to foster in yourself a number of soft skills.

**The following Soft Skills will help you perform your role as a Product Manager to the best of your ability:**

**1. Leading without authority**

In order to collaborate with various departments, you need to build credibility to earn the respect and confidence of the internal stakeholders, without being domineering.

Leading without authority can be mastered by perfecting three things –

(i) Collaborative work such that no one person or team is a one-man-army and sufficient contribution is made across functions, in a harmonious manner.

(ii) Your convincing ability will really be put to test in the role of a Product Manager. Hence, you may want to work on this – you will constantly need to propose and back up your ideas with sound reasoning including data, etc. In such a way that the person you are trying to convince understands your point of view while getting a chance to voice their opinion.

(iii) Your skills of persuasion will also be put to test. Just as you need to be convincing, you need to be persuasive if you want your ideas to be accepted without hitting major roadblocks. The role of a product manager is a tough one in the sense that plans you will propose may be outside the comfort zone of many in the organization. But if it is important for the product’s success you need to soldier on to change status quo.

**2. Communicating effectively**

Product managers are always interacting with other people. In fact, their core responsibilities are centered around cross-functional communication and their work dependent on many others. This is why, clarity of thought enables you to communicate with different stakeholders like internal departments, senior management, as well as the users of your product.

You will be expected to conduct open-ended interviews, make presentations to senior management, and hold discussions with different teams.

**“Communicating effectively as a Product Manager doesn’t just mean speaking eloquently, but being able to break down the problem, talking to engineers, etc.”**

*– Mangesh Dalvi, Director, Product Management at Myntra.*

**3. Negotiating**

Balancing the needs of the product with the schedules and priorities of different teams requires carefully honed negotiation skills. You also need to keep in mind that the success of the product is shared with all the team members, while you alone need to accept its failure.

**4. Pushing back requirements**

Developing a product means prioritizing certain ideas and tasks above others — this means saying no to a lot of good ideas that may not fit into your vision. You need to establish a framework to ensure that time and resources are spent on building a product that users actually want.
So what do you need to do to push back? Learn to say no.

**5. Empathy**

People around you will forget what you did and how you did that. But they will always remember how you made them feel. It is not what you say,

but how you say it.

**6. Integrity:**

This is the most valuable asset that we have.

**7. Perseverance:**

There is a fine line between a vision and a hallucination. Know where that line is and do not cross it. Stay healthy and learn when to walk away. Stress can kill you !!!

[The Hard Skills of a Product Manager](https://blog.upgrad.com/the-hard-skills-of-a-product-manager/)

**In the end, successful product managers are those who manage to perfect the right combination of soft and**[**hard skills**](https://blog.upgrad.com/the-hard-skills-of-a-product-manager/?ref=Blog_content_soft_skills_pm)**.**

From negotiating effectively and leading without authority to employing strategic communication tactics depending on the situation; product managers have a challenging task cut out for them. These soft skills will ensure that utmost attention and effort is paid towards building and improving the product.