the PMwheel

a Product Manager (self-) assessment

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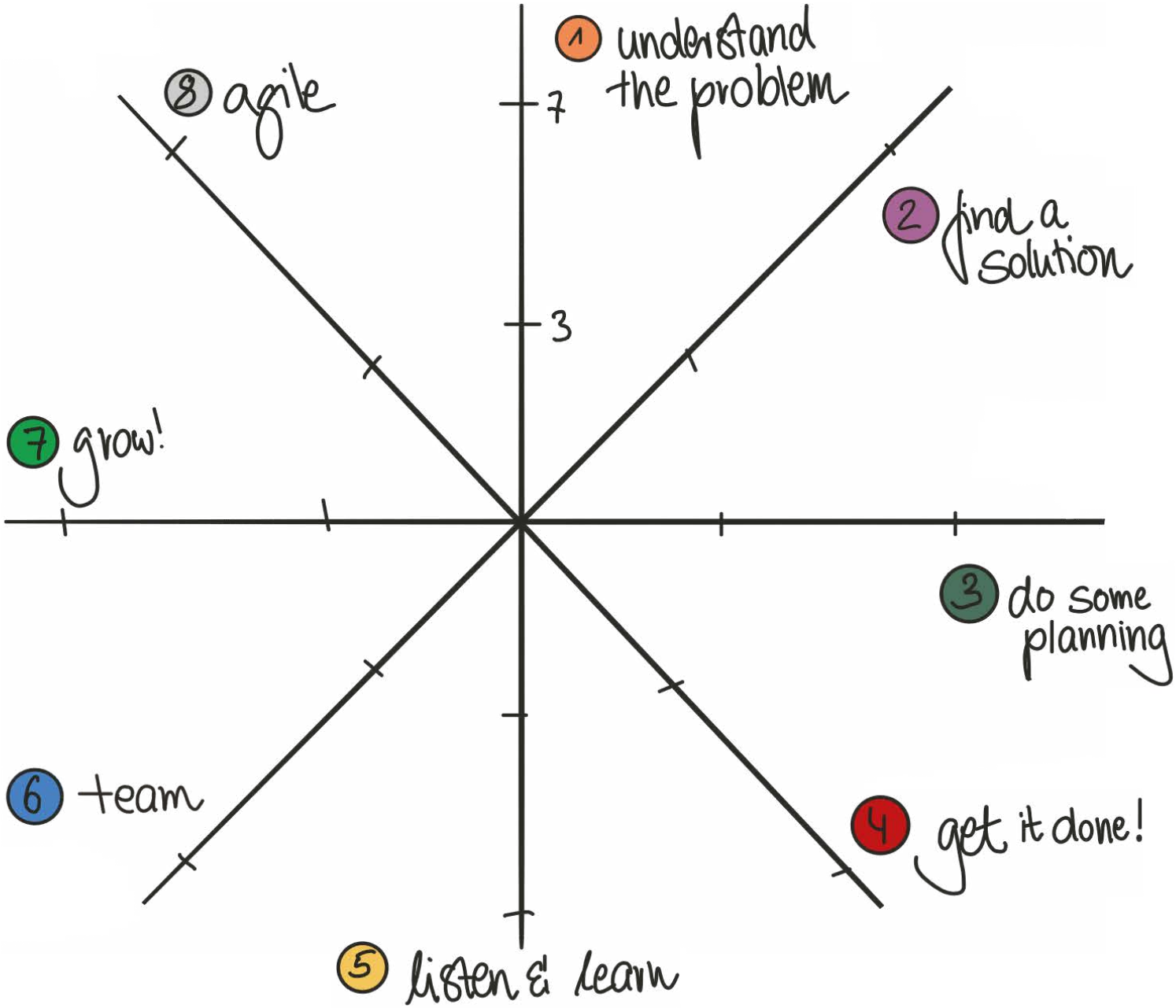
Version 1.4 2020



Petra Wille @loomista

understand the problem

Notes

Does she understand the value of understanding the “why” before talking about the “what”? (Discovery vs. Delivery)

Is she an expert on the existing product?

Is the PM able to explain what the target audience is that she is looking into?

Can she explain the behaviors, believes and challenges of her target group in detail?

Is she capable of assessing behaviors, believes and challenges in a structured way with the right methods (e.g. the right interview technique, the right experiment) at hand?

Is she understanding the risk within her assumptions while doing this user research work?

Has she invested time to understand the industry, market & competition?

Is she dedicating a decent amount of her time to making sure she (and her team) are not building the wrong thing in a beautiful way?

Is she planning the appropriate experiments to limit this risk?

Notes

Has she involved the right people and is she striving for a collaborative discovery approach? (lead designer / tech lead / dev team / BI / finance / ...)

Is all of this “discovery” work transparent to the company/team?

Does she make sure the things she has/they have learned about the user can be shared as stories and does she make the results of the discovery work visible to the team and the company?

Is she able to stay in the problem space for the time being and is she able to make sure other people do, too?

Is she able to project the user needs onto product value onto potential revenues made? (business case)

Can she conduct insightful user interviews? Does she know about the things you CAN and you CAN’T figure out with interviews?

Is she aware of user biases and the psychology of people?

Is she the trusted party when it comes to “being the advocate of the user“

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

find a solution

Notes

Once the PM understood the "why", can he come up with a product strategy for his own product that is in line with the overall product strategy & the user needs?

Is he constantly refining the related business case?

Has he thought about how the product/solution can be made known to customers/users and what the big arguments for selling the solution to them are? (marketing)

Do colleagues/stakeholders feel they have a true partner in product that is dedicated to their business success?

Does the PM come up with various solution hypothesis and an experiment/test/learning plan for those?

Can he describe various methods for testing hypothesis (from fake door testing, to usability testing, to split testing to.....) and what they are for?

Is he planning enough time for experiments/ learning phase?

Is he keen to deliver user value with every release/ sprint/step even in the beginning of building the product?

Notes

Has he collaborated closely with his dev team/ tech lead on all of this to make sure to create the best possible solution for the user?

Is his tech know-how up to date? Does he understand the underlying technologies of his product and can he facilitate tech decisions in the right way?

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

do some planning

Notes

Can he clearly show/talk about how his product will grow in the next 1/3/9 month(s)?

Does he maintain various versions of a roadmap to address different Stakeholders information needs (detailed for the team, high level for the management....)?

Is he able, at any given point in time, to talk about the current status and the next steps?

Is he aware of agile planning techniques?

Is he able to handle fixed deadlines and fixed scopes setups (fixing both is not a good idea btw ;-))

Is his planning detailed enough, w/o too much sandbagging (e.g. taking holidays into account, dev team availability, seasonal issues like people being sick in autumn and spring, ...)

Can he talk about the goals for each of the iterations and how they are tracking success? When would they consider something to have failed?

Does he come up with a solid go-to-market / roll-out strategy that is gentle towards the user/customer base and allows the customer-facing colleagues (e.g. marketing) to plan their work accordingly?

Is he reflecting on the impact of his plans on the whole product portfolio? Is he seeking alignment with his product peers?

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

get it done

Notes

Is she able to inspire her dev team so that they are motivated and aligned behind common goals and a shared product vision?

Does she know how to deliver working software in increments (agile approach)?

Does her team deliver working software with every sprint/iteration?

Can she describe her team's take on software quality? How do they make sure everything works well?

Is she striving to improve her work with the team constantly so that they get more efficient over time?

Is she building personal relationships with the team members?

Is she maintaining a positive work environment for her dev team?

Can she explain how she balances bugs, support requests, ad-hoc requests and product development work?

Can she explain her prioritization framework(s)?

Can she explain how decisions in her team are made? (agile decision making techniques)

Notes

Is she delegating wisely? Is she involving her agile coach in an efficient way?

Can she show/explain her backlog? Is it short and sweet - can she describe how she keeps it clean?

Can she describe how she keeps the stakeholders in the loop while developing things?

Does she care about how customers/users will understand the value of the product? Is she in close contact with marketing to make sure the product/ solution will be visible in the market and people understand its value?

Is she maintaining a positive attitude and never losing her cool? "Never give up"

Does she know when to escalate things?

Does she know how to handle critical situations that require "all hands on deck"? Is she staying on top of such situations?

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

listen and learn

Notes

Is he constantly measuring the success of his product?

Can he talk about the current performance of his product at any given time?

Is he interested in the performance of each new feature launched?

Is he interested in how the people/users/customers are using the product?

Is he reading/listening to a lot of user feedback and making sure this informs/influences future developments?

Is he aware of the current status of his product in the overall product lifecycle, is he asking appropriate research questions and is this reflecting in his work?

Can he describe experiments and quick testing methods to improve and refine his product in short cycles?

Does he care about product optimization and innovation for his field?

Does he care about things like renewal, referral (the ultimate measure of customer satisfaction) , ... ?

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

team

Notes

Is he aware of team dynamics like e.g. the Tuckman stages / tribal thinking?

Does he wrap his head around how to motivate a team?

Does he foster an innovative, creative, fun and positive work environment?

Does he make sure the team owns decisions on the HOW – how things are going to be implemented.

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Notes

Is she aware of her lateral leadership responsibility/ challenge and is she working on improving her leadership skills?

How well is she managing her time and is she improving her time management / prioritization constantly?

Is she asking for help if needed?

Is she reading blog posts / articles and books?

Is she sharing her learnings with colleagues / the product team / the DevTeam?

Is she asking you/other for feedback?

Is she able to give feedback to others in a constructive way?

Is she taking feedback in a good way and does she try to work with it?

Is she proactively doing things that foster her personal development (giving talks, writing blogposts, any other activities not directly related to her current work) within the company or even outside of the company?

Is she involved in the worldwide product community to a certain extent (e.g. attending meetups once in a while)?

Notes

Is she keeping her tech know-how up to date?
Is she keeping her user experience design know-how up to date?

Is she keeping her business know-how up to date?

Is she keeping her competitor/industry know-how up to date?

Is she working on her relationship with senior management?

Is she aware of the impact of her own work decisions on the world? (Keyword: Discriminating Algorithms, Political Ads, Habits to Addiction, ...)

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

agile

Notes

Does she know about the agile values, principles and manifesto? Is she trying to make them a lively culture for her team?

Does she know how to run a good backlog refinement / estimation meeting?

Does she know how to run a good sprint planning?

Does she know how to run a good standup?

Does she know how to run a good review meeting?

Does she know how to run a good retrospective?

Overall rating

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Future Self

As-Is
~300-900 Words

To-Be
~300-900 words

May to Oktober
Period

Actions
1-5 main points

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

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Role Name

Purpose

Why have we created this role in our organisation?

Goals & Mission

What goals do I pursue with my work?
Which key figures or indicators can be used to measure the success of my work?

Responsibilities

For which products and results am I responsible?

Not responsible for

What am I not responsible for?

Decisions

What decisions do I make?

Main Tasks

What tasks does my work involve?

Tasks that are not part of my role

Things that are explicitly not part of my role.

Skills & Know-how

Knowledge, skills and precious experience that are essential to perform this role.

Sharing with

With whom are you working a lot, with whom do you need to talk a lot to share information. Stakeholders, commitees, ...

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