

## Interview guide for product managers in software startups

All the interviews followed a semi-structured script and were conducted using a video platform (Zoom). Semi-structured interviews encourage interviewees to freely share their thoughts and enable researchers to follow up and explore interesting topics that might emerge. We recorded each interview, transcribed them, and coded using procedures of Grounded Theory. The interviews were conducted following the script, as we present below. The script was validated through a pilot interview which was included in the final dataset. We are focusing on understanding the role of product managers in software startups.

**Goal:** Understand the role of product managers in software startups

**Define the Research questions:**

**RQ1: What are the responsibilities of this role?**

**RQ2: Which knowledge is required for this role?**

**RQ3: How do practitioners differentiate the product manager from other leading roles, such as team leader, project manager, and product owner?**

**Introduction and Rapport:** Good day! First of all, thank you for being part of this research study. The purpose of this research study is to understand the role of product managers in software startups. Your participation is voluntary and highly appreciated. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time. We are going to protect and make all data anonymous. Only the professionals involved in the project will have access to it. If you feel uncomfortable about answering any question, you can ask me to skip it, and even leave. You have total control of your data. During the interview, if you don't mind, I'll record the interview and also make notes, so I don't lose any detail of your story. The interviews and the interviewees will be anonymized in our publications, meaning that you will not be personally identified.

Questions about the individual

1. Do you have an academic degree? In which area?
2. What have you worked on before joining this company? What were your roles? For how long?
3. Have you worked as a product manager in other companies?
4. Did you have experience with business/technology/UX or UI design (ask about the topics not mentioned before)?
5. Could you mention at least three characteristics from you that you believe are important for your role at the company?

### Questions about the company

6. What is the product your company develops about?
7. Who are the (potential) customers and users?
8. For how long does the company exist?
9. What is the current stage of the company? Only an idea/ developing an initial version/ few customers or users/ mature stage?
10. What is the size of the company? And the team? What is the composition of the team(s)?

### Questions about the role

11. What are your duties and responsibilities as product manager? (Business, technical, and design)
12. What are the most important duties and responsibilities?
13. What is your daily routine?
14. Do you have weekly or monthly duties that are not included in your daily routine?
15. Does the team follow a defined development process? How was this process defined?
16. Do you have management duties?
17. What are the tools you use?
18. What are the challenges you face?
19. Have you worked in other companies as a product manager? If yes, what are the differences and similarities to your current role? What were the other companies about? Stage, product, etc.
20. What are the differences between your role and others at your current company or at your previous jobs, such as project manager, technical leader, designer, etc?

### Concluding questions and feedback

21. Is there any other information you would like to add about your job?

22. Comments and feedback?