

TU-EV0009 Introduction to Product Management (3-5 ECTS)

Period II

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Overview: Product management is one of the most crucial competencies for startups and scale-ups. Combining customer needs and realities of production during fast growth call for a strong vision and ability to coordinate the requirements of customer needs, software development, and business development. While designers, developers, and business functions are specifically working on each of these individually, the ability link and balance all these aspects is what makes it or breaks it for growing companies.

Creating and maintaining a shared vision for the product increases the speed, efficiency, and outcomes in all aspects related to product development and company growth. This importance of product management has made capable product managers, heads of product, and chief product officers a sought-after talent, to the extent that the lack of competent product managers is seen as a limiting factor to the growth and success in startup ecosystem.

The course is designed as an introduction to product management to aspiring founders, to those that have interest in exploring a career in PM, and to those looking to work in growth companies in a role overlapping with product management, such as software development, design, business development or marketing.

Learning objectives: The course provides an introduction to the product leadership in software startups / scaleup firms. After the course, student is able to

- Identify the domain of product management and how it relates it to design, business development, product development, and other connected domains
- Understand how product management - both as a function and as a professional role - contributes to the integration of customer needs, business development, and product development in a growth-oriented technology company
- Understand how the three key areas (customer, business, development) vary in different business models and at different stages of growth, and how it affects the role of product management
- Use basic frameworks to structure customer needs, business requirements, and product development
- Identify and use the key concepts of product management
- Identify different types of roles and goals of product management in different types of organization and in different stages of organization

Prerequisites:

The course is targeted to MSc-level and advanced BSc-level student with basic familiarity business and management, e.g. BSc-level minor in Industrial Engineering & Management.

Content:

The course consists of a series of lectures by visiting experts, complemented by supporting assignments and readings related to the weekly topic.

The course is offered as 3-credit and 5-credit versions.

3 credits: Lectures, readings and assignments

5 credits: Lectures, readings, assignments and case sessions

Grading and assessment:

The course is graded on a scale of 0-5. The grading is based on the attendance in lectures and completion of assignments. These award points that count towards a grade:

- **Each lecture equals one point.** A lecture is counted as attended if you are either present on the online lecture or view the recording of the lecture afterwards through Panopto. Verifying the attendance (zoom or recording) is based on logs. We do not sum up participation and viewings for one lecture from different sources, so make sure that either one you use, you follow it through.
- **Each assignment equals two points.** Each completed assignment, submitted successfully and in time, awards two points. If the initial submission is not of sufficient quality, you'll have until Friday of the same week to revise your submission. The revised submission is evaluated with points 0, 1 or 2, depending on the quality. If you submit late, the maximum points available that week is one (with no possibility to resubmit if failed).

The points from lectures and assignments count towards a grade. Maximum number of points is 24 and to pass with grade 1, you need 12 points. The grading is based the following scale:

Grade	Points needed
1	12-14
2	15-17
3	18-20
4	21-22
5	23-24

Assignments

Purpose and style: The course includes six assignments, one each week. Each assignment ties to the theme of the week, typically asking you to apply or deepen the concepts. Completing the assignment requires familiarising with weekly readings and lectures and also to materials addressing specifically the aspects of the assignment.

In addition to refining the course concepts, the assignment are designed to hone your skills in concise and informative visual presentation. Assignments contain usually multiple elements and steps that are essential to the completion. However, the results are (typically) presented as a single graph, figure, or illustration. For this excel and powerpoint are to large extent sufficient tools, but feel free to use what ever tools with which you can produce the desired outputs.

Submission and grading: Assignments become available on Mondays each week (at 7:00 AM), and the DL for each assignment is the following Monday (23:59 PM).

None of the assignment is required, but each completed assignment is worth 2 points in course grading.

- **Assignment are evaluated with pass/fail:** If assignment is completed, it's a pass, and you get two points toward your grade.
- **Failed assignments can be resubmitted:** If the assignment doesn't pass on first try, it can be resubmitted by next Friday, 23:59. Assignments are checked on Tuesdays/Wednesday (no guarantees on which), so timing of results will vary. Resubmitted assignments are graded on scale 0/1/2, depending on how well they are augmented.
- **Late submissions:** If the assignment is late less than 24 hours, the maximum available points for the assignment is reduced to one. After this, the assignment is not graded at all. Also, with late submissions there's no second chance to resubmit if failed. What counts, is the recorded timestamp of the submission in MyCourses, with no exceptions.

Readings

Key reading are:

- Perri, Melissa. Escaping the Build Trap : How Effective Product Management Creates Real Value . First edition. Beijing: O'Reilly, 2019. [Available online in Aalto](#)
- Cagan, Marty. Inspired : How the Best Companies Create Technology-Powered Products and Services . Second edition. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2018. [Available online in Aalto](#)

In addition to the books, there will be weekly readings on more specific topics.

Theme	Day	Topic	Speaker	Assignment	Case (in 5cr)
Introduction					
1 Products and people around them Why companies need product management competence?	Tue	What is a product and why it needs managing? How to complete the course?	Marko Oksanen	PM competence analysis	
	Fri	What is the role of product manager? Three interfaces of product management	Kaisa Salakka		
The three interfaces of product management					
2 Users How to know what to build? (How to build products that create value for users?)	Tue	What tools and approaches firms can use to understand what users value and how markets are segmented?	Sonja Ängeslevä	Job-to-be-done	User journey (Kone)
	Fri	How to communicate the customer need to others and how to validate new solutions, in small & large org.s?	Terhi Hänninen & Maria Petrova		
3 Business requirements How to build products that create business value?	Tue	How to build business on product & ensure the value of investment on product development	Timo Herttua	Revenue/profit - model (TBC)	
	Fri	What CEO needs from PM? Product Strategy	Tommi Forsström		
4 Product development How to build right product fast?	Tue	Routines of development Organizing and software architecture	Otto Hilska	For story to tasks (TBC)	Roadmaps (Unity)
	Fri	Prioritizing development Keeping User & business context available	Tiina Nieminen		
Managing products					
5 Tools and routines of product manager How to keep process on tracks?	Tue	Routines of PM in startups and larger product organization	Kaisa Salakka & Osma Ahvenlampi	Product strategy (TBC)	
	Fri	How to measure and analyze success of a PM Product metrics - what constitutes success	Marko Oksanen & Maria Petrova		
6 Product organization How to keep process on tracks?	Tue	Organizing PM Assessing performance of PM	Tiina Nieminen	Personal PM skills roadmap	Go-to-market (Wolt)
	Fri	Getting on a career and being a PM in different org's Future of PM as a role and competence	Terhi Hänninen, Markus Järvinen, Ville Riola		

