

## Leadership Manifesto

My work in technology is more on the side of design and implementation. I am not the person that builds a software; I am not the person that will use a software. I am that go between for the two parties. In my work, I must understand technology: how things work, what is a large item to implement, what is a small ask for developers, and how to explain items in technological terms. I also have to be an expert in the area of customer needs: what are they looking for, what industry best practices are, and what sort of rules and regulations do they have to follow regardless of what software is being used. Because of this, Product Managers have many areas that they must master in order to be affective as a technology innovator. This manifesto is to serve as a roadmap for the qualities needed for an affective product manager in the technology space. What this personal manifesto is not is a roadmap to creating the perfect product or project management plan. Many people in the technology space often confuse product managers with project managers. While there are similarities among the two, the goal of my manifesto is to concentrate on the product side of technology and not to discuss the key areas for individual projects even though they may still apply.

### Be an industry expert

[12 Ways to Become a Recognized Expert](#) By Donald Todrin

A product manager must demonstrate that you understand the customer base that you are trying to solve for with your software. This may vary on who you are designing software for, but you should always know your audience. Todrin outline 12 easy steps to ensure that a leader is an industry expert through research, writing, and speaking on the subject.

[Tips for Becoming a Respected Business Industry Expert](#) By Carol Roth

Product managers need to be the “go to guy” for all questions related to how a product should function. When a software is being developed, enhanced, or maintained, you should be the industry expert that has the answers for what your industry thinks for a particular problem. Roth gathers tips from over 100 industry experts on how they have become experts in their field. These business owners, advisors and entrepreneurs all offer ideas for how an individual can become their own industry leader.

What neither of these sites will do is the actual work for you. While these pages are helpful for ideas on how to become an industry expert, they will not give you the individual information for the industry that you want to be known for. That work requires more specified research within your own distinctive field.

### Speak Engineer

[This is why you need to learn how to talk to developers](#) By Blake Callens

In the technology world, the developer is king. Without the developer, all of the requirements,

ideas, and plans will go absolutely nowhere. Callens points out that “rise in adoption paired with a decline in comprehension presents a major dilemma for software companies: How do you address public demand for short learning curves and simplified experiences while performing increasingly complicated tasks?” (2013). The need to be able to communicate a customer need to an engineer is critical to the success of a product. Engineers often do not have the open communication line with the end user. They are merely getting requirements from a product manager who don’t get the “under the hood” view of how a system actually operates. Knowing how to speak to a developer is key to the success of a product and the success of the product manager to accomplish their goals.

[How to Speak Engineer](#) By Andrew Graspas

Graspas points out that learning how to speak engineer can be seen as a “recipe for manipulation” (2014). This is not to be the intent of a product manager. Learning to speak engineer is not so that you can get your way. The purpose is to help you do your job well. Graspas points out four very easy steps to learn to speak engineer. As with learning any new language, however, practice and time are always needed.

## **Write Effectively**

[How To Write a Good PRD](#) By Martin Cagan

No product manager will go through their career without having to write a PRD (Product Requirements Document). As Cagan points out, and all product managers will agree, “The PRD describes the product your company will build. It drives the efforts of the entire product team and the company’s sales, marketing and customer support efforts. It’s hard to come up with a more important, higher leverage piece of work for a company” (2005, p. 1). Every product manager must know how to effectively communicate through a PRD. Each company may have different formats for this, but the essentials of a PRD are the same regardless of the template used.

## **Manage projects**

The Art of Project Management by Scott Berkun

While product managers and project managers vary greatly in their roles and responsibilities, a product manager must know how to manage a project just the same. It is not enough to simply come up with the requirements and deliver them to engineers. A product manager must be able to stay on top of projects and ensure that they are going according to plan. A basic understanding of time management, budget planning, and dependencies are needed for any product to come to completion. Scott Berkun outlines many of these principles through his own experience in the IT industry.

A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) Fifth Edition

The PMI (Project Management Institute) is probably the most recognized in its field for being the experts on project management. In fact, many companies will not even hire you as a project manager without PMP (Project Management Professional) certification. Their guide book goes through all principles of project management. This read is a bit drier than Berkun's book, but it does give practical help and ideas for running a project. For the people that need to have the certification because of a job or just to prove that they learned the material, there is a certification test that can be taken, though it is not a necessary component for the typical product manager.

## **Be a salesman**

The Little Red Book of Selling By Jeffrey Gitomer

The first time I was handed this book, I was actually insulted. I'm not in sales! I was quickly reminded that we're all in sales. The first time I explained to a sales director that I used to teach second grade, he immediately replied with "oh, so sales to eight year olds." Most people don't want to or sometimes even like to think of themselves as salespeople. However, we are always selling. Whether we are selling our engineers on a new idea and how you want to get it done, or selling a customer on why the new enhancement was implemented one way over another, we are constantly selling to others. And as Gitomer points out our job is "to create an atmosphere where people want to buy."

## **Manage your time**

### [Time Management Skills](#)

Product managers will constantly be pressed for time and resources. There is no way to get around this. However, learning how to effectively manage time is key to success for the project manager. To understand the priority matrix of what must be done first, next, later and not at all is necessary just to weed through the barrage of action items put on the product manager. This site gives the reader tips on how to manage time as well as case studies to back up the importance of each of these time management tips.

### [Personal Time Management Guide](#)

As I already mentioned, time management is key to every product manager's success. The Personal Time Management Guide provides users with helpful links and ideas for managing time. For me, one of the most helpful sections was on team work and team building essentials. However, that may not be an area of struggle for all product managers. What works about this site is that readers can select the topics that they want to focus on and ignore the others if they so choose.

## Market your product

Most product managers have a marketing team that is in charge of their product. However, this is not always the case and product managers must know how to market their products. Even with a team of marketing professionals, a product manager must know how to communicate effectively to a marketing team what they are developing, why it is important and how it will be used.

[The 10 Commandments of Product Marketing](#) By Scott Lang

Scott Lang developed 10 ideas for how to serve the entities for which product marketing is essential. Whether a product is being presented to sales, the press, customers, or other stakeholders, these 10 commandments are must have for all products. Whether a product manager must create them, give information to a team for their creation, or simply review what a team has created, a product manager must know what these commandments entail so that they have these marketing pieces for their products.

[Product Management vs. Product Marketing](#) By Marty Cagan

As with project management, the lines between product management and product marketing often gets blurred. It is important for all product managers to understand the difference of where their job stops and the marketer's begins. Cagan outlines these differences within the article and discusses the issues with having both roles filled by one person. As I mentioned previously, the product manager may not have a choice but to fill both roles, so it is important to understand the differences and challenges with both jobs.

## Understand the data

[The Strategic Role of PRODUCT MANAGEMENT](#) By Pragmatic Marketing

Pragmatic marketing points out that "a company's products need to be grounded in a strategy that is driven by the market" (2013, p. 2). Every product manager must understand what the market is telling them. This is how decisions are made for what to do next. In order to understand the market, product managers must therefore collect and understand data of what is going on in their field.

[Data Driven Product Management](#)

Now that the product manager knows that they need to understand data, they need to know how to get and process data. Data Driven Product Management is an archive of articles and tips on how to gather and analyze data as well as product reviews for various data software that are available.

## Adapt to change

Change is inevitable. I don't believe that I have ever worked on a product where the roadmap hasn't changed at least a handful of times before the product is released. Being able to handle change and "go with the flow" is a necessary trait for any product manager.

[Change Management and Product Management](#) By Jock Busuttil

Busuttil gives product managers three different perspectives on change management within a product manager's life. These are followed by lessons learned and ideas to take away from how change can be managed better. While these tips are on a large scale, they can be utilized throughout all change management within a product manager's work.

[Tools for Managing Change](#)

This site allows the product manager to find best practices articles, survival guides, and toolkits for change management. What I think is especially helpful about this resource is that the reader can gain reports, as well as hardcopy and web-based tools.

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