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Product Manager expectations by level

These are the key areas of performance that are most important to product manager roles at Intercom along with the competencies and expectations for each.

Here's how to use this doc and get the most out of it:

- Review the competencies and expectations for your level and (at least) the level above yours
- Develop opinions about how your practice of each competency aligns with our expectations and where/how you can grow
- Discuss with your manager and, together, create a plan for improvement over each performance period
- Assess your performance in growth areas with your manager regularly
- Share this document with your peers to help them understand what to expect and how to involve you. Ask them to give you feedback based on these expectations.

The role of PM at Intercom

There are many elements and facets to being a PM at Intercom, but ultimately it comes down to:

“Identify the most valuable problems to solve, enable your team to ship and iterate high-quality solutions quickly, and validate market impact.”

Underpinning this, there are **5 Skill Areas** that we explicitly set expectations for and judge performance against. These are

1. [Insight Driven](#)
2. [Strategy](#)
3. [Execution](#)
4. [Driving Outcomes](#)
5. [Leadership Behaviors](#)



Skill Area 1: Insight Driven

Associate PM	PM	Senior PM	Principal PM
<p>Customer focus PMs represent customer needs accurately and fairly to create the best possible value for Intercom. They use customer insight to ensure that they deeply understand our customers' problems, define the correct priorities to tackle and create a clear brief.</p>			
<p>Customer informed. Talks to customers using their area of product and has some understanding of their needs.</p> <p>Relies on Research guidance to understand how research insights might impact product direction. Effectively partners with Research to validate decision-making.</p>	<p>Customer focused. Talks to customers using their area of product, always looking for deeper insight. Understands their needs and uses this insight to effectively create the best possible value in their product area.</p> <p>Partners effectively with Researchers, helping to define the problems we should be seeking to understand and to validate decision-making</p>	<p>Customer focused. Talks to a range of customers using their area of product and beyond, always looking for deeper insight. Is recognised internally as an expert in customer needs for their area of product. Is able to use this insight to effectively create the best possible value in their product area.</p> <p>Anchors decisions in research. Uses research as a key input into problem and solution definition. Proactively defines the problems for their area of product we should be seeking to understand and partners effectively with Research to execute these.</p>	<p>Customer focused. Talks to a range of customers, across target segments and use cases, always looking for deeper insight. Is recognised internally and externally as an expert in customer needs for a range of use cases. Is able to use this insight to effectively create the best possible value across a range of use cases and anticipate future product needs or opportunities.</p> <p>Research driver. Can effectively define the research we need across a range of product areas. Uses research as a key input for product strategy for their product area and relevant use cases. Partners effectively with Research to uncover new insights that help drive product strategy.</p> <p>Drives improvements in how we work with Research.</p>
<p>Analytics focus PMs use data to inform decision-making and uncover new product opportunities for Intercom.</p>			
<p>Relies on Analytics guidance to anchor decisions in data. Needs support to evaluate and inform the story they tell from the numbers. Relies on Analytics guidance</p>	<p>Anchors decisions in data. Uses data insights to evaluate and inform the story they tell. Partners effectively with Analytics to understand how data insights might</p>	<p>Anchors decisions in data. Uses data insights to evaluate and inform the story they tell. Uses data insights to inform product strategy and partners effectively</p>	<p>Data driven. Can effectively define the analysis we need, independently seek and evaluate data insights to inform product strategy. Partners effectively with Analytics</p>

<p>to understand how data insights might impact product strategy. Needs support to seek data insights.</p> <p>Needs support to understand FUARE metrics for all areas of their product/use case and use that data to inform decision-making.</p> <p>Needs support to define success metrics for Intermissions</p>	<p>impact product strategy. Can independently seek basic data insights.</p> <p>Understands FUARE or similar usage metrics for all areas of their product/use case and uses that data to inform decision-making.</p> <p>Proactively identifies metrics to track and measure customer and business benefit for Intermissions. Partners effectively with Analytics to refine these.</p>	<p>with Analytics to define the analysis we need. Can independently seek and evaluate their own data insights.</p> <p>Is recognised internally as the 'go to' person for analytics insight for their area of product.</p> <p>Understands FUARE metrics for all areas of their product/use case and uses that data to inform decision-making.</p> <p>Defines metrics to track and measure customer and business benefit for Intermissions. Proactively identifies relevant Winning Strategy or relevant strategic metrics and partners effectively with Analytics to refine these.</p>	<p>to uncover new insights that help drive product strategy.</p> <p>Is recognised internally as the 'go to' person for analytics insight for their area of product.</p> <p>Drives improvements in how we work with Analytics.</p> <p>Understands FUARE metrics for all areas of Intercom and actively uses that data to identify new opportunities.</p> <p>Defines metrics to track and measure customer and business benefit for Intermissions and relevant Winning Strategies.</p>
<p>Competitive Insight PMs understand the competitive landscape and industry trends and use this understanding to identify sustainable competitive advantages for Intercom.</p>			
<p>Awareness of what's happening with our competitors and within our industry for their use case area.</p>	<p>Aware of what's happening with our competitors and within our industry for their use case area. Is able to analyse the problems our competitors are solving and use this to inform product strategy.</p>	<p>Understands the competitor landscape and industry trends for their use case and is the 'go to person' for competitor insight. Uses this insight to inform product strategy and identify sustainable competitive advantages for their use case.</p> <p>Is deeply curious about their product area - not because they have to but because they want to.</p>	<p>Understands the competitor landscape and industry trends across a range of use cases. Thinks proactively about this competitor insight to uplevel the team's thinking and to inform product strategy. Can identify sustainable competitive advantages across a range of use cases.</p> <p>Is deeply curious about a range of product areas - not because they have to but because they want to.</p>





Skill Area 2: Strategy

Associate PM	PM	Senior PM	Principal PM
Strategy definition & influence PMs set strategy and influence others to think big about where we are headed and how we will get there.			
<p>Seeks to understand product area strategy. Typically works alongside a PM on a part or component of product strategy.</p> <p>Contributes and influences at the team level.</p>	<p>Responsible for shaping product area strategy with close support from a manager.</p> <p>Can create/clarify strategy within unambiguous areas with guidance.</p> <p>Contributes and influences at the group level.</p>	<p>Responsible for shaping product area / use case strategy with light support from a manager.</p> <p>Can create/clarify strategy within ambiguous areas with limited guidance.</p> <p>Contributes and influences across groups of teams.</p>	<p>Responsible for shaping the most ambiguous & impactful strategies across teams, decomposing them and giving teams dedicated remits</p> <p>Can create/clarify strategy within very ambiguous areas with no guidance.</p> <p>Contributes and influences at company level.</p>
Roadmap creation & rationale PMs are responsible for taking in a range of inputs and perspectives and clarifying and prioritizing problem focus areas for their teams. Why we are pursuing one set of priorities versus another should be clear from the rationale (both for readers and roadmap review participants.)			
<p>Contributes to team’s roadmap.</p>	<p>Owner of the team’s roadmap. Develops a point of view based on our roadmap inputs.</p> <p>Creates a clear & logical rationale that’s in line with product area strategy and is easy to consume.</p>	<p>Owner of team’s roadmap. Develops a confident point of view from roadmap inputs and other insights.</p> <p>Creates a top class, compelling rationale that drives product area / use case strategy forward and inspires.</p>	<p>Reviewer of teams’ roadmaps. Ensures that roadmap rationale is clear and in line with strategy.</p> <p>Support teams’ roadmap creation when there is significant ambiguity.</p>
Alignment & Evangelism As important as creating strategy & roadmaps is ensuring that these are understood and internalised by all. PMs are responsible for driving this alignment			

across teams & stakeholders.

Creates alignment **within the team.**

Understands the strategy for their product area, and can describe this clearly.

Creates alignment within the team and with critical stakeholders (**cross functional partners & manager**)

Gets team buy in on strategy & roadmap rationale.

Understands each stakeholder's perspective and ensures that they have been appropriately considered in strategy setting & roadmap creation.

Creates alignment across teams and with a broad range of stakeholders (**cross functional partners, manager, R&D leaders**)

Inspires and motivates the team and related teams on strategy & roadmap rationale.

Understands each stakeholder's perspective and ensures that they have been appropriately considered in strategy setting & roadmap creation.

Creates relationships and builds trust with a broad range of senior stakeholders across the business (**managers, R&D leaders, cross-functional leaders**)

Co-creates strategy with these stakeholders.

Drives alignment across R&D teams and throughout the organisation.



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Skill Area 3: Execution

Associate PM	PM	Senior PM	Principal PM
<p>Start with the problem: PMs are most directly responsible for ensuring their teams live and breathe this principle. To do it well, you must have a stubborn focus on understanding, refining, articulating the problem (or opportunity) your team is solving. When done well, the whole team is oriented around the problem and able to explain it themselves. And the PM ensures this understanding and articulation is continually evolved and improved.</p>			
<p>Gathers inputs to define a problem. Able to create simple problem statements.</p> <p>Contributes to, rather than drives, problem articulation and alignment.</p>	<p>Synthesises inputs from various sources to craft a single narrative.</p> <p>Demonstrates clarity when articulating the problem and aligning the team to the problem.</p> <p>Meticulously ensures Intermissions are up to date.</p>	<p>Articulates a problem statement, including complex ones, with exceptional clarity.</p> <p>Continues to refine understanding of the problem as we learn more.</p> <p>Meticulously ensures Intermissions and Winning Strategies are up to date.</p>	<p>Clearly articulates the most ambiguous problem spaces, across a range of product areas and use cases into coherent narratives</p> <p>Continues to refine understanding of the problem as we learn more.</p> <p>Meticulously ensures Intermissions and Winning Strategies are up to date.</p>
<p>Think big, start small. PMs are most directly responsible for ensuring teams constantly fight to scope smaller to learn faster, balancing an ambition to think expansively about the opportunity.</p>			
<p>Actively contributes to the exploration of multiple solutions to the problem statement.</p> <p>Needs support to make strong scoping decisions.</p>	<p>Actively contributes to the exploration of multiple solutions to the problem statement.</p> <p>Effectively represents various inputs & tradeoffs to drive accurate scoping decisions.</p> <p>Facilitates effective scoping sessions with team, clearly documents decisions made.</p> <p>Ensures teams are focused by default on scoping small.</p>	<p>Steers team explorations of multiple solutions to the problem statement efficiently</p> <p>Anchors explorations to a clear understanding of the problem area.</p> <p>Challenges the team to question their assumptions about what's actually needed and sharpens the entire team's thinking about what's essential, and when.</p> <p>Consistently integrates the story and GTM input into scope.</p>	<p>Facilitates concept explorations with high ambiguity and complexity.</p> <p>Works across multiple teams to form coherent think big and start small approaches.</p>
<p>Ship to learn. PMs identify the biggest assumptions and risks to build clear hypotheses for learning. PMs are hungry for insights, open to proving themselves wrong, and most of</p>			

all, <i>share</i> and <i>act</i> on the learning to deliver valuable product.			
<p>Understands what we need to learn.</p> <p>Can effectively run a beta and gather learnings.</p> <p>Shares learnings with immediate team.</p> <p>Needs support to define actions emerging from learnings.</p>	<p>Defines what we need to learn and the best way to learn that.</p> <p>Consistently runs efficient and effective betas.</p> <p>Gets teams to quickly adapt to results, both quant and qual.</p> <p>Consistently creates close-out reports, shares them with the team, and makes decisions based on them.</p>	<p>Creative at figuring out quicker ways to learn faster.</p> <p>Particularly strong at exposing hidden assumptions and product risks.</p> <p>Uses hypotheses to focus a team on what and how to run a beta (or equivalent).</p> <p>Actively shares relevant learnings across teams and with product leadership.</p>	<p>Applies this skill to most ambiguous and complex problem areas.</p> <p>Able to think coherently across multiple teams work to define what we need to learn and how best to learn it.</p>
<p>Ship the <i>whole</i> customer experience. PMs need to drive not just the development of a new feature or improvement, but the entire experience that surrounds it. This includes working across the business to determine: how new & existing customers find out about it, what the monetisation approach is, how sales will sell and how CS will support it...</p>			
<p>Understands the Interstory, launch plans, pricing and packaging approach.</p> <p>Needs support to identify and consider the broader customer experience beyond their immediate area of focus.</p>	<p>Collaborates with PMM to define the Interstory, launch plans, pricing and packaging approach.</p> <p>Defines new and existing customer feature onboarding.</p> <p>Ensures docs are updated and CS + Sales are sufficiently enabled.</p>	<p>An influential and early collaborator with GTM, where there is a fluid exchange of how GTM considerations impact product decisions.</p> <p>Defines impactful new and existing customer feature and use case onboarding.</p> <p>Very proactive with enablement to ensure the product has the best chance of success.</p>	<p>Helps shape our GTM approach for significant product releases, working in partnership with GTM stakeholders.</p> <p>Defines our onboarding strategy for significant parts of the product.</p>





Skill Area 4: Driving outcomes

Associate PM	PM	Senior PM	Principal PM
<p>Shipping is our heartbeat. There can be no changed outcome and limited learning without shipping. Great product teams demonstrate a consistent shipping cadence; PMs help drive this. But it's not just the speed at which we ship, it's also the quality of the product.</p>			
<p>Adapts to existing team shipping rhythm</p> <p>Facilitates and contributes to QA of core features</p>	<p>Establishes and drives a consistent shipping cadence.</p> <p>Ensures product quality is high, with few bugs and issues. Contributes to QA of product features.</p>	<p>Ensures the team has a consistent, reliable shipping momentum, PM really drives this. As a result, the team is humming with efficiency and progress, and demonstrates this with demos and in high team morale.</p> <p>Spots product quality risks across the broader Intercom system, not just the local product area.</p>	<p>Motivates multiple teams to find creative ways to continue to ship frequently even for complex, high-dependency projects.</p> <p>Inspires and encourages multiple teams to push for a higher bar for quality across the broader Intercom system.</p>
<p>But outcomes ultimately are all that matter What impact did your team have? All teams don't have to demonstrate bottom-line (ie revenue) impact, but teams should be hungry to uncover and react to actual customer and business impact.</p>			
<p>Needs guidance to deliver outcomes at a project level.</p>	<p>Can demonstrate meaningful impact to customers and our business.</p> <p>Aligns the team around outcomes they're fighting for.</p>	<p>Consistently delivers meaningful impact to customers and our business.</p> <p>Delivers impact at a winning strategy level (aggregate impact of multiple projects).</p> <p>Aligns the team and key stakeholders around outcomes they're fighting for.</p>	<p>Motivates multiple teams to deliver significant impact to customers and our business.</p> <p>Aligns multiple teams, key stakeholders and R+D leadership around outcomes they're fighting for.</p>



Skill Area 5: Leadership behaviours

Associate PM	PM	Senior PM	Principal PM
<p>Communication PMs inspire and motivate others to work towards a clear, compelling vision. They communicate clearly, concisely and assertively. And by building confidence, through being opinionated and persuasive.</p>			
<p>Communicates with the team frequently and consistently. Ensures the team are aware of initiatives and priorities. Pro-actively seeks information that might help the team communicate more effectively.</p>	<p>Communicates with the team, product leadership and key stakeholders frequently and effectively. Can take a variety of diverse inputs and synthesise these into a compelling story. Ensures all involved are aware of the team strategy, initiatives and priorities.</p> <p>Actively works to ensure their product team is aligned and engaged.</p>	<p>Communicates with the team, product leadership and key stakeholders frequently and effectively. Can clearly, concisely and assertively articulate the problems being solved, the roadmap, its benefits and tradeoffs. Can take a variety of diverse inputs and synthesise these into a compelling vision and goals. Able to anticipate common feedback and address it proactively.</p> <p>Actively works to ensure teams are aligned and engaged.</p> <p>Develops an opinion and can argue persuasively without being defensive or combative.</p>	<p>Crafts a clear narrative to gain buy in and inspire others. Sets clear context and framing, shares thinking, uses reasoning, rational, and enthusiasm when communicating. Takes a strong stand and builds confidence.</p> <p>Actively works to ensure teams are aligned and engaged.</p> <p>Improves how we communicate and helps others to improve how they communicate through defining best practices.</p> <p>Expresses their opinion externally, through writing for the blog and speaking regularly.</p>
<p>Collaboration PMs build engaged, high-performing collaborative and inclusive teams, ensuring that they fully leverage the best from those around them.</p>			
<p>Collaborates effectively within the team. Is open to, and reacts well to, feedback and looks for opportunities to improve how to work well together within the team.</p>	<p>Collaborates effectively with team, peers and stakeholders. Is warm and empathetic and communicates openly. Consistent and predictable, which means they're easy to work with because there are no surprises.</p> <p>Looks for opportunities to improve how to work well together within the team. Proactively seeks feedback to improve</p>	<p>Collaborates effectively with all colleagues across the business. Is a role model for collaboration and creating alignment across teams. Is warm and empathetic and communicates openly. Consistent and predictable, which means they're easy to work with because there are no surprises.</p> <p>Proactively looks for opportunities to</p>	<p>Acts as a role model for collaborative and inclusive behaviour. Proactively finds the barriers that slow people down and systematically removes those barriers.</p> <p>Shows the path for others to collaborate well and invests in others to help them collaborate effectively.</p> <p>Helps leadership collaborate more</p>

	how they work.	improve how to work well together within the team and across teams at Intercom. Proactively seeks feedback to improve how they work.	effectively.
Ownership PMs own it - for their product area, for their team, for Intercom. They grind it out, constantly looking for a way forward to deliver value.			
<p>Consistent and reliable ownership of the problem through to the solution within the team.</p> <p>Can be trusted to deliver on promises and follow up on next steps.</p>	<p>Consistent and reliable ownership of the problem through to the solution within and across teams, peers, and partners.</p> <p>No excuses. Accountable and positive in all conditions. Takes ownership of problems and challenges within their remit and doesn't apportion blame to others.</p> <p>Identifies risks and issues and proactively finds solutions to any obstacles.</p>	<p>Committed ownership of the problem through to the solution within and across teams, peers, and partners.</p> <p>No excuses. Accountable and positive in all conditions. Takes ownership of problems and challenges within their remit and outside their domain and doesn't apportion blame to others. Thinks about how to help Intercom succeed, not just their specific team.</p> <p>Identifies and anticipates risks and issues and proactively finds solutions to any obstacles.</p>	<p>Own it for Intercom - expansive, committed ownership of our problems, processes, and opportunities.</p> <p>No excuses. Accountable and positive in all conditions. Takes ownership of problems and challenges within their remit and outside their domain and doesn't apportion blame to others. Thinks about how to help Intercom succeed, not just their specific team.</p> <p>Identifies and anticipates risks and issues and proactively finds solutions to any obstacles.</p>
Decisiveness PMs are decisive. They quickly and assertively make meaningful decisions that enable us to deliver value for our customers at speed. They also help others make decisions faster by being appropriately inclusive but persuasive. They thrive in ambiguity and create clarity for those around them.			
<p>Can assess options effectively and make a recommendation on the route we should take. Escalates issues appropriately.</p> <p>Needs support to make meaningful decisions quickly.</p> <p>Doesn't procrastinate. Optimises for constant progress, aims to make progress</p>	<p>Decisive and assertive. Creates clear escalation paths to resolve issues within the team and validate meaningful decisions quickly.</p> <p>Is not consensus driven. Strong opinions, (mostly) weakly held.</p> <p>Doesn't procrastinate. Optimises for</p>	<p>Decisive and assertive. Resolves issues within the team and makes meaningful decisions quickly. Doggedly drives others to make decisions quickly too.</p> <p>Expertly handles ambiguity by being flexible and by creating clarity for those around them. Comfortable not knowing and acting with incomplete information as</p>	<p>Decisive and assertive. Resolve issues across teams and functions. Makes meaningful decisions quickly. Doggedly drives others to make decisions quickly too.</p> <p>Expertly handles ambiguity by being flexible and by creating clarity for those around them. Comfortable not knowing</p>

every single day.	constant progress, aims to make progress every single day.	long as the team is unblocked and directionally correct. Doesn't procrastinate or over-analyze. Is a living example of our 'Progress over Perfection' value. Ensures the team are unblocked, making constant progress.	and acting with incomplete information as long as the team is unblocked and directionally correct. Doesn't procrastinate or over-analyze. Is a living example of our 'Progress over Perfection' value. Ensures teams are unblocked, making constant progress.
Core values PMs live and breathe Intercom's core values			
Learns what we value and starts consciously applying these	Consistently applies our core values	Role models our core values	Role models our core values, influences their evolution and guides others as they evolve



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