



# Product Management Leaders Checklist

**Congrats! You're officially leading a team of product managers. Big step. Big opportunity.**

Your experience as a PM got you here, but leading a team is a whole new game. Now, your success depends on how quickly you assess the landscape, build relationships, and start delivering impact.

This checklist will help you balance learning with action—so you can hit the ground running and show value fast.

# First 30 Days: Listen & Learn

## ASSESS YOUR TEAM & PROCESSES

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
Meet with each team member 1:1—learn what’s working and what’s not			
Review the current product roadmap, backlog, and key projects			
Evaluate existing product management processes and tools			
Identify gaps in team capabilities, structure, or workflow			
Get a sense of the team’s culture and ways of working			

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
<b>Set up intro meetings with key stakeholders</b> across engineering, marketing, sales, finance, and customer support—use the <b>Stakeholder Engagement Plan</b> to identify the most influential players, understand their priorities, and build alignment early.			
Understand how product management is perceived in the org			
Gather insights on what’s working and where PM can improve			
Align on executive expectations and team goals			
Attend company-wide meetings and events to build visibility			
Identify key internal champions and influencers—titles don’t always tell the full story			

## CLARIFY BUSINESS STRATEGY & PRODUCT EXPECTATIONS

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DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
<b>Dig into the company vision, mission, and strategic objectives</b> —use the <i>Product Strategy &amp; Roadmap Review</i> to assess how well these align with product initiatives and ensure you understand the “why” behind key strategic decisions.			
Learn the company’s revenue model, key business drivers, and financial targets			
Pinpoint how product contributes to business success			
Review OKRs/KPIs tied to product performance			
Analyze past product wins and failures to avoid repeating mistakes			

## UNDERSTAND THE MARKET & CUSTOMERS

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DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
Review customer personas, user research, and journey maps			
Get familiar with key competitors and industry trends			
Meet with sales and customer support teams—understand real customer pain points			
Identify top customers and connect with them directly			
Dig into product analytics and user engagement metrics			

# Next 30 Days (Days 31-60): Deep Dive & Strategy Alignment

## ENHANCE MARKET & CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
<b>Conduct a deeper competitive analysis and refine market positioning</b> —use the <b>Customer Journey Mapping</b> prompt from <i>A Smokejumpers Survival Kit for Product Leaders</i> to uncover competitor strengths, market gaps, and strategic positioning insights. This will help refine your understanding of customer behavior and how your product stands out in the market.			
Identify common themes in customer feedback			
Have more direct conversations with customers			
Start forming hypotheses for product innovation or improvements			

## REFINE BUSINESS & PRODUCT ALIGNMENT

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
<b>Ensure the product vision and roadmap align with company strategy</b> —use the <i>Team Values &amp; Vision Template for Product Leaders</i> to clarify how your product strategy connects to the broader company vision.			
Map product initiatives to revenue and business impact			
Assess and refine product KPIs where needed			
Define a clear framework for prioritizing product opportunities (new features, enhancements, and big bets)			

## ASSESS & STRENGTHEN TEAM CAPABILITIES

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
Identify skill gaps and create a team development plan			
<b>Clarify team roles and responsibilities for smoother collaboration</b> —use the <b>DACI Matrix Mapping</b> prompt from <b>A Smokejumpers Survival Kit for Product Leaders</b> to define who drives, approves, contributes, and needs to be informed on key product decisions. This ensures clear accountability and alignment across your product team.			
Optimize product management processes—or propose changes to improve efficiency			
Set expectations for communication, collaboration, and decision-making			
Ensure every PM understands the org’s goals and aligns their product strategy accordingly			

## STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
<b>Use the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to align with engineering and design leads</b> —establish clear priorities and ways of working that ensure smooth collaboration.			
<b>Deepen relationships with marketing and sales</b> —leverage the <b>Stakeholder Engagement Plan</b> to clarify roles and responsibilities in go-to-market strategies, ensuring alignment from product development to launch.			
Participate in or lead strategic product discussions			
Start fostering a culture of transparency, risk-taking, and data-driven decision-making			

# Final 30 Days (Days 61-90): Execute & Deliver Impact

## DEVELOP & SOCIALIZE A CLEAR PRODUCT STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
Use the <i>Product Strategy &amp; Roadmap Review</i> to finalize a strategic product vision and roadmap—ensure it aligns with business goals and customer needs.			
Leverage insights from the roadmap review to secure buy-in from execs and cross-functional teams—present a clear connection between product outcomes and business objectives.			
Define short-term and long-term priorities for the product team—use the <b>Outcome-Based Roadmap</b> framework to ensure focus on delivering measurable impact.			
Start executing key initiatives that drive early wins—validate the roadmap’s effectiveness by prioritizing high-impact, achievable outcomes.			

## MAKE DATA-DRIVEN ADJUSTMENTS TO TEAM & PROCESSES

DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
Implement process improvements to boost efficiency and alignment			
Start coaching and mentoring team members			
Define (or refine) product team metrics to track performance			
Establish a structured process for cross-team collaboration and product execution			

## DRIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & BUY-IN

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DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
Present key findings and recommendations to leadership			
Ensure all stakeholders understand the product strategy and direction			
Establish a regular communication cadence with key stakeholders			
Align on how success will be measured company-wide			

## DEMONSTRATE EARLY WINS & DELIVER VALUE

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DESCRIPTION	PENDING	ACTIVE	DONE
Identify and execute quick wins to show immediate impact			
Deliver an updated roadmap or prioritized backlog with stakeholder alignment			
Share early success stories with leadership, cross-functional partners, and your product team			
Establish a culture of continuous improvement, learning, and experimentation			

# Final Thoughts

Your first 90 days set the tone. Whether you're refining the roadmap or leading a full-on strategy shift, this checklist will keep you focused on what matters most: **building trust, aligning strategy, and delivering results.**

Now, go ahead. Make an impact.



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