The Product Coaching Growth Wheel

Version 7
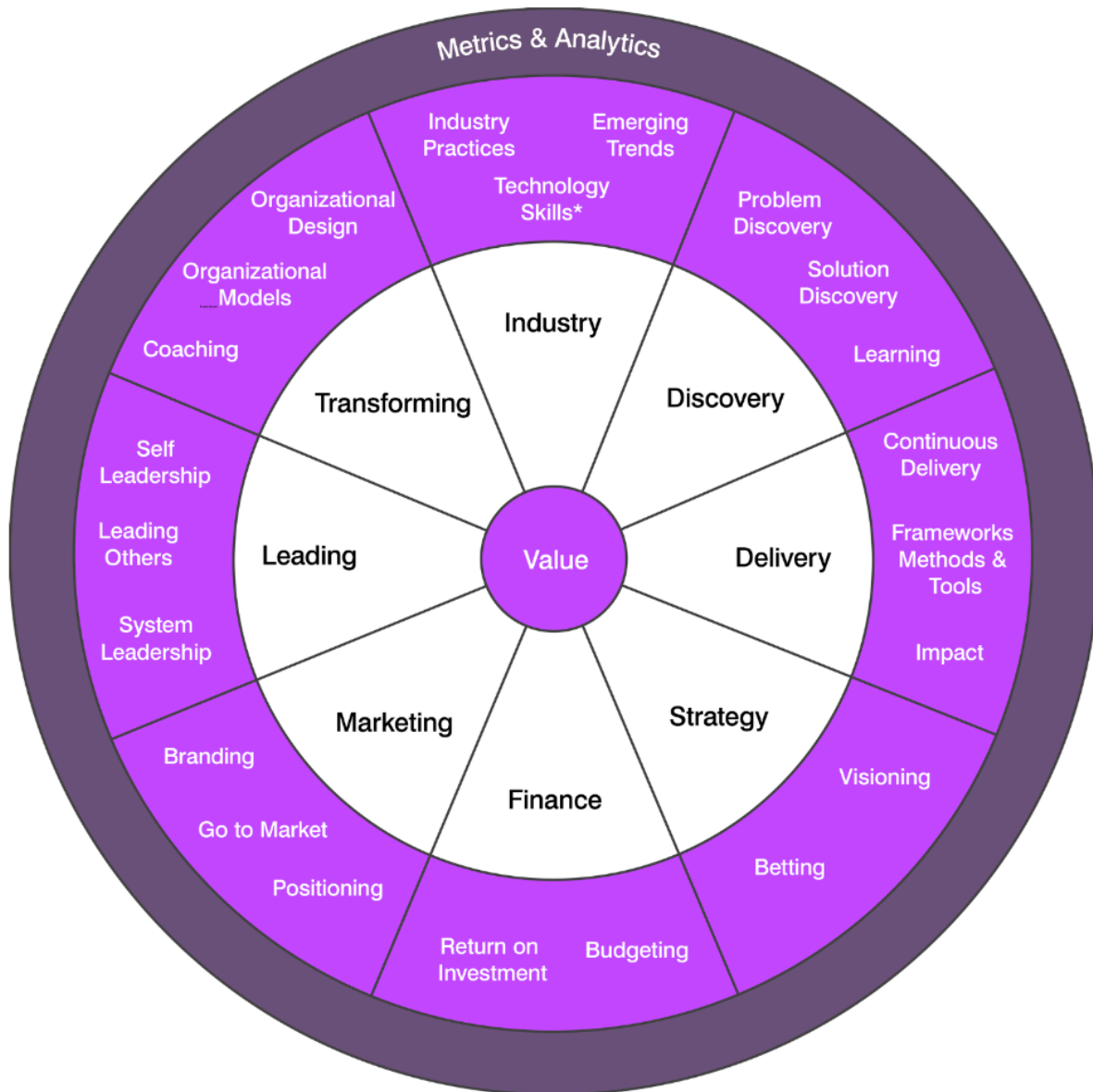
Introduction

Product Coaching helps individuals and teams navigate the complex landscape of product development and management to become more effective and successful.

When we use the term "product" in this context, we are referring to the holistic approach to creating, delivering, and evolving solutions that provide value to customers and businesses. This encompasses various philosophies, frameworks, processes, and techniques that contribute to successful product outcomes. These include, but are not limited to, Design Thinking, Lean Product Development, Jobs-to-be-Done, Agile methodologies, Growth Hacking, and Customer Development.

Product Coaching aims to enhance the ability of Product Managers, teams, and organizations to identify opportunities, validate ideas, prioritize effectively, and deliver impactful products in rapidly changing markets. It focuses on developing the skills, mindsets, and practices necessary for continuous learning, adaptation, and value creation throughout the product lifecycle.

What is the Product Coaching Growth Wheel?

The Growth Wheel

The Product Coaching Growth Wheel is a tool for aspiring Product Coaches.

The wheel has eight segments or spokes, representing eight competency skills areas built around a hub of value. These are knowledge areas that in turn support the skills of the main competency areas. The tread around the outside of the wheel represents the knowledge of supporting metrics and analytics.

Why did we create this wheel?

At the 2023 Agile Coaching Retreat in Brisbane, a group of experienced coaches convened to address the critical question: "What skills are essential for effectively coaching teams and organizations in Product?"

As Product Management has evolved and gained prominence, the fundamental definition of effective Product Coaching skills has remained loosely defined. This lack of clarity has led to individuals presenting themselves as Product Coaches with limited

experience and competence, creating uncertainty for organizations seeking to select the right people with appropriate skills for their needs.

The Brisbane retreat resulted in the creation of the first iteration of the Product Coaching Growth Wheel, an initiative aimed at addressing these challenges and providing a structured framework for Product Coaching competencies. This tool serves as a guide for Product Coaches to assess their skills, identify areas for growth, and for organizations to better understand the expertise required in Product Coaching roles.

We celebrate the people who inspired us

At the 2018 Agile Coaching Retreat in London, a collection of coaches came together in an effort to tackle the question "what are the skills needed to successfully coach teams and organizations in agile?". They inspired us to create the Product Coaching Growth Wheel.

- Shannon Carter
- Martin Lambert
- Rohit Ratan
- Stacey Louie
- Tom Reynolds
- Andre Rubin
- Kubair Shirazee
- Mark Summers
- Rickard Jones

Where are we going?

Defining the Product Coaching journey through the Product Coaching Growth Wheel will enable coaches and leaders to better support the development of Product Coaching competencies in individuals. This will be achieved by creating targeted learning and development programs and aligning competencies with existing formal Product Management and Product Owner certifications. The Growth Wheel will also build confidence in the industry around the future profession of any job roles that involve the use of Product Coaching skills. We are making it easier for product-led organizations to select the right person for the right job with confidence.

The next step is to complete the Product Coaching Growth Wheel with all core competencies fully defined and aligned to the skill progression path. Once this is

accomplished, the intent is to develop resources that will guide learners in developing specific competencies to the level they need or desire.

Major organizations have expressed interest in using the final Growth Wheel as a foundation for updating their coaching and Product Management certifications. It is hoped that other Product Management bodies will recognize the Wheel as a new standard in Product Coaching, and the entire community can move towards professionalizing the world of Product Coaching.

This initiative aims to elevate the practice of Product Coaching, ensuring that coaches possess the necessary skills to guide teams and organizations in creating valuable, customer-centric products in today's rapidly evolving markets.

Who is the wheel for?

An aspiring Product Coach, that can be further defined in these four ways:

1. **Product Coach, as a career coach** - these Product Coaches are employed to upskill Product Managers, usually adding the additional duties that are not detailed under Scrum for Product Owners. These typically include product strategy and product discovery.
2. **Product Coach, as an executive coach** - these Product Coaches are employed to upskill product leaders. Product leadership responsibilities are well discussed in the book *Strong*.
3. **Product Coach, as an enterprise coach** - these Product Coaches are employed to implement a Product Operating Model through an enterprise transformation. See the book *Transformed* for more information on how the Product Operating Model differs from an agile operating model like SAFe.
4. **Product Coach, as a trainer** - these Product Coaches provide training either through onsite workshops or online courses. See the book *Inspired* for more information.

How to use the wheel and guidance?

The purpose of the Product Coaching Growth Wheel is to facilitate self-reflection or guided reflection with a coach, mentor, or colleague. The objective is to help you understand your current competencies and identify areas for further development in your Product Coaching journey.

Step 1: Identify an area of improvement

Review each of the competency areas (the core competencies, value hub, and the outer ring of metrics and analytics). Use the provided guidance to gain a high-level understanding of each area. Since it's not feasible to improve everything simultaneously, select an initial area of focus for development.

Step 2: Reflect on a competency area

For each competency within your chosen area, review the guidance and assess your proficiency against the 5 levels of assessment. Challenge yourself to accurately evaluate your competence levels. Remember, the goal is not to reach level 5 in every area, but to understand your current position and determine your next steps for growth.

Step 3: Brainstorm options and generate actions.

Use the insights from your reflection to brainstorm growth opportunities and formulate an action plan. This process is most effective when done in collaboration with a coach, mentor, or colleague who can provide additional perspectives and support.

Step 4: Inspect, Adapt, Repeat

The provided guidance is intended to stimulate reflection rather than serve as a rigid checklist. You may find that some aspects at a particular level don't fully apply to your context or needs. As you explore the guidance, you may discover more relevant or beneficial paths for your development as a Product Coach.

Remember, the Product Coaching Growth Wheel is a tool for continuous learning and improvement. Regularly revisit your assessments, adapt your goals, and continue to evolve your product coaching skills to meet the changing demands of the product development landscape.

The Ten Core Skill Competencies

Value: the hub of value represents a Product Coach's deep understanding and articulation of value for the customer, the business, the technology, and the team. It encompasses the ability to define, measure, and communicate value effectively, ensuring that product development efforts are aligned with delivering meaningful outcomes. This core competency enables product coaches to guide teams in prioritizing and optimizing product initiatives that maximize impact and create sustainable growth.

Industry: a Product Coach has a deep understanding of industry-specific practices, emerging trends, and technological skills relevant to particular sectors. This competency requires coaches to stay abreast of developments like AI-driven productivity enhancements and automation. Product Coaches must also be adept at guiding teams in adopting and implementing product strategies that align with evolving market demands and technological advancements.

Discovery: a Product Coach's ability to guide teams through effective problem and solution discovery processes, fostering a culture of continuous learning and experimentation. This competency involves facilitating techniques such as customer interviews, user testing, and data analysis to uncover deep user needs and pain points, while also encouraging teams to explore innovative solutions through rapid prototyping and iterative development. A skilled Product Coach in this area helps teams balance the art of asking the right questions to validate assumptions with building the next iteration of product to learn and get feedback from real users, ensuring that product decisions are grounded in real-world evidence and insights.

Delivery: a Product Coach's ability to guide teams in implementing efficient and effective product development and release processes while maintaining transparency so that every party involved is aligned on the when, what and why. This competency encompasses expertise in continuous delivery practices, proficiency in various frameworks, methods, and tools (such as Agile, Scrum, Kanban, and DevOps), and the skill to measure and maximize the impact of product releases. A Product Coach excelling in this area helps teams optimize their delivery pipeline, reduce time-to-market, and ensure that each release delivers tangible value to users and the business, while continuously improving the delivery process based on feedback and metrics.

Strategy: a Product Coach's ability to guide teams and organizations in developing and executing compelling product visions and strategic bets. This competency involves facilitating the creation of long-term product roadmaps, identifying and prioritizing high-impact opportunities, and making informed decisions about resource allocation and product direction. A skilled Product Coach in this area helps teams balance visionary thinking with pragmatic execution, encouraging calculated risk-taking through strategic betting while ensuring alignment with overall business objectives and market dynamics.

Finance: a Product Coach's ability to guide teams in understanding and optimizing the financial aspects of product development and management. This competency includes expertise in calculating and communicating return on investment (ROI) for product initiatives, effective budgeting practices for product development, and strategies for

maximizing resource allocation. A proficient Product Coach in this area helps teams make data-driven financial decisions, balance short-term costs with long-term value creation, and align product investments with overall business financial goals.

Marketing: encompasses a Product Coach's ability to guide teams in effectively positioning, branding, and bringing products to market. This competency involves expertise in developing compelling product narratives, crafting differentiated positioning strategies, and orchestrating successful go-to-market plans that resonate with target audiences. A skilled Product Coach in this area helps teams align product features with market needs, develop strong brand identities, and create integrated marketing strategies that drive product adoption and growth across various channels and customer segments.

Leading: encompasses a Product Coach's ability to inspire and guide at multiple levels: self, team, and organizational systems. This competency involves demonstrating strong self-leadership through continuous personal growth and self-awareness, effectively leading others by fostering collaboration, empowerment, and skill development within product teams, and exercising system leadership by navigating complex organizational dynamics and driving holistic product-led transformations. A proficient Product Coach in this area serves as a role model for adaptive leadership, balancing personal integrity with the ability to influence and align diverse stakeholders across the product ecosystem.

Transforming: focuses on a Product Coach's ability to drive and facilitate organizational change to support product-led growth and innovation. This competency encompasses expertise in organizational design principles, knowledge of various organizational models that promote product-centric approaches, and advanced coaching skills to guide individuals and teams through transformational processes. A skilled Product Coach in this area helps organizations redesign structures, processes, and cultures to become more adaptive, customer-centric, and product-driven, while employing coaching techniques to overcome resistance, build new capabilities, and embed sustainable change across the organization.

Metrics & Analytics: serves as an overarching competency that applies to all nine areas of the Product Coaching Growth Wheel, providing a data-driven approach to measure progress, effectiveness, and impact across each competency. This competency involves the ability to identify, collect, analyze, and interpret relevant metrics that offer insights into product performance, team productivity, and organizational success. By integrating metrics and analytics into each competency area, Product Coaches can make informed decisions, demonstrate value, and

continuously improve their coaching practices while helping teams and organizations achieve measurable outcomes in their product development efforts.

Measuring Your Competency

Proficiency in a product coaching competency is not a simple binary state, but rather a continuum of growth and mastery. The Product Coaching Growth Wheel recognizes this progression by incorporating five distinct levels of skill development, inspired by the Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition.

Skill Level Definitions

Stage	Description
Beginner	A beginner in Product Coaching practices typically possesses theoretical knowledge but lacks practical experience. They often adhere closely to established guidelines and work under the guidance of more experienced coaches. With focused learning and opportunities to apply their knowledge, beginners can progress to higher competency levels relatively quickly. Beginners usually start developing their skills by working with a single product team, often with support from a more experienced coach or mentor, especially in complex organizational contexts. The transition from Beginner to Advanced Beginner in the Product Coaching Growth Wheel is marked by demonstrating comprehension of the core competencies, attempting to work independently on coaching tasks, taking on broader responsibilities, consistently applying learned concepts and achieving repeatable results, and showing a strong desire to understand the wider context of product development and management.

Advanced Beginner	An advanced beginner in Product Coaching practices has gained practical experience in applying the competencies outlined in the Product Coaching Growth Wheel. At this stage, they can independently implement straightforward Product Coaching techniques with minimal guidance from more experienced coaches or mentors. They are also capable of collaborating on more complex tasks when paired with others. While advanced beginners can identify complex issues in product development and management, their ability to resolve these challenges independently is still limited. They may struggle to prioritize effectively, often finding it challenging to determine which aspects of a situation are most critical. This level represents a significant step forward from the beginner stage, with the coach demonstrating increased confidence and autonomy, but still developing the nuanced understanding required for more sophisticated Product Coaching interventions.
Practitioner	A practitioner in Product Coaching demonstrates a comprehensive working knowledge of all aspects of the Product Coaching Growth Wheel. They can independently analyze and apply various solutions, navigate complex issues, and resolve conflicting priorities without close supervision. Practitioners use repeatable procedures to produce consistent results and plan towards longer-term goals, making them valuable assets in guiding product teams and organizations towards success.
Guide	A guide in Product Coaching possesses in-depth knowledge of the Growth Wheel competencies and can synthesize coaching solutions from various product and related disciplines. They excel at tailoring these solutions to specific scenarios in all but the most complex or exceptional situations. Guides are adept at effectively directing the work of others, serving as a beacon for less experienced coaches and product teams navigating challenging product development landscapes.

Catalyst	A catalyst in Product Coaching demonstrates a profound, intuitive understanding of the Growth Wheel competencies. They possess the ability to adapt existing standards and create innovative approaches to address unique challenges in product development and management. Catalysts consistently deliver exceptional results and can articulate a compelling vision of future possibilities, inspiring transformative change in product teams and organizations.

The Competency Areas

As Product Coaching professionals, we center our practice on a core of value creation, leveraging the nine competency areas of the Growth Wheel to enhance our effectiveness. It's crucial to understand that these competencies are interconnected, working in harmony rather than isolation. Our journey of learning and improvement is continuous, with no upper limit to the knowledge and skills we can acquire. While the Growth Wheel defines five levels of competency progression, the potential for growth and mastery in Product Coaching is boundless.

Value

The Value hub in the Product Coaching Growth Wheel represents a fundamental competency that underpins all aspects of effective Product Coaching. It emphasizes a Product Coach's comprehensive understanding and articulation of value across four key dimensions:

1. Customer Value: This involves deeply understanding customer needs, pain points, and desires. Product Coaches with strong value competency can guide teams in creating products that genuinely solve customer problems and enhance their experiences.
2. Business Value: This dimension focuses on aligning product initiatives with organizational goals and financial objectives. It includes the ability to identify and communicate how product decisions contribute to revenue growth, market share expansion, or cost reduction.
3. Technology Value: This aspect involves understanding how technological choices and innovations can create competitive advantages and enhance product capabilities. Product Coaches need to guide teams in leveraging technology effectively to deliver superior value.

4. Team Value: This dimension recognizes the importance of creating value for the product development team itself. It includes fostering a positive work environment, promoting skill development, and ensuring that team members find meaning and satisfaction in their work.

Product Coaches with a strong grasp of the Value hub can effectively:

- Define and articulate clear value propositions for products and features
- Develop and implement metrics to measure value creation across all dimensions
- Guide teams in prioritizing initiatives that offer the highest value potential
- Facilitate decision-making processes that balance different value considerations
- Communicate value effectively to stakeholders at all levels of the organization

By centering their coaching practice around this multifaceted understanding of value, Product Coaches can ensure that product development efforts remain focused on delivering meaningful outcomes. This approach helps teams avoid the pitfall of pursuing features or projects that may seem attractive but don't ultimately contribute to customer satisfaction, business growth, technological advancement, or team well-being .

The Value hub also enables Product Coaches to foster a culture of continuous value assessment and optimization. By consistently evaluating and re-evaluating value creation, teams can adapt their strategies and tactics to changing market conditions, emerging technologies, and evolving business priorities.

Competency Level Definitions:

Level	Reflection
1 Beginner	TBD
2 Advanced Beginner	TBD
3 Practitioner	TBD

4 Guide	TBD
5 Catalyst	TBD

Industry

A Product Coach's deep understanding of industry-specific practices, emerging trends, and technological skills is essential for guiding teams effectively across various sectors. This competency involves:

- Industry Knowledge: A comprehensive grasp of market dynamics, competitive landscapes, and customer behaviors unique to specific industries.
- Emerging Trends: Staying updated on shifts in consumer behaviors, business models, and market dynamics to help teams anticipate opportunities.
- Technological Skills: Familiarity with relevant technologies and their applications in product development, including AI-driven productivity enhancements.

Product Coaches must guide teams in adopting these advancements by:

- Facilitating change management processes
- Creating roadmaps that incorporate new technologies
- Balancing innovation with practical implementation

By aligning product strategies with evolving market demands and technological advancements, Product Coaches ensure that development efforts remain focused on delivering impactful products that meet both business objectives and customer needs.

Industry Practices

Industry practices refer to the common procedures, methods, standards, and behaviors that are typically adopted by companies operating within the same industry. These practices are often shaped by collective experience, accepted strategies, regulations, and industry-specific standards. They can span various areas such as operations, human resources, marketing and sales, finance and accounting, regulatory compliance, and environmental sustainability. Industry practices provide useful benchmarks for companies but should not stifle innovation; businesses may choose to deviate from these norms when strategically beneficial.

Competency Level Definitions:

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Emerging Trends

Emerging trends refer to patterns, behaviors, or preferences that are gaining popularity and influence within specific industries or niches. These trends can be driven by technological advancements, cultural shifts, social media influences, or customer feedback. Identifying emerging trends is crucial for businesses as it allows them to anticipate future market movements and adapt their strategies accordingly. By leveraging these trends effectively, companies can innovate products and services that meet evolving customer needs, stay ahead of competitors, and drive business growth through strategic decision-making and resource allocation .

Competency Level Definitions:

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1 Beginner	TBD

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Technology Skills

Technology skills in the context of Product Coaching involve a deep understanding of various technologies and their applications in product development. This includes proficiency in software development methodologies, data analytics tools, cloud computing platforms, and emerging technologies like AI and machine learning. Product Coaches with strong technology skills can guide teams in selecting the right tech stacks, integrating new tools into existing workflows, and leveraging technology to enhance product features and user experiences. By staying updated on the latest technological advancements, Product Coaches can help teams innovate and adapt quickly to changing market demands, ensuring that products remain competitive and aligned with evolving customer needs.

Competency Level Definitions:

Level	Reflection
1 Beginner	TBD
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Discovery

The Discovery competency in the Product Coaching Growth Wheel can be broken down into three key areas:

1. Problem Discovery:
   A Product Coach guides teams in uncovering deep user needs and pain points through techniques such as:
   - Facilitating customer interviews and user research
   - Teaching methods for effective market analysis
   - Encouraging teams to challenge assumptions and create problem hypotheses
   - Guiding the use of tools like empathy maps and customer journey maps
2. Solution Discovery:
   In this area, the Product Coach fosters a culture of innovation and creative problem-solving by:
   - Facilitating ideation sessions and design thinking workshops
   - Encouraging rapid prototyping and MVP development
   - Guiding teams through solution evaluation and prioritization
   - Promoting an agile mindset for iterative solution development
3. Learning:
   The Product Coach instills a culture of continuous learning and experimentation by:
   - Teaching teams how to design and conduct effective user tests
   - Guiding the creation of experiments to validate key assumptions
   - Encouraging data-driven decision-making based on user feedback and behavioral data
   - Fostering a mindset that views failures as valuable learning opportunities

- Facilitating the establishment of feedback loops for ongoing product improvement

By excelling in these three areas, a Product Coach ensures that teams can effectively navigate the discovery process, making evidence-based decisions that lead to products that truly meet user needs and business objectives.

Problem Discovery

Problem discovery is a critical phase in the product development process where teams aim to identify genuine user needs and pain points. This involves conducting thorough market and customer research using techniques such as user interviews, field studies, surveys, and competitor analysis. The goal is to uncover unsatisfied user needs or opportunities that align with business goals. By engaging directly with users through these methods, teams can gather insights into real-world problems and challenges faced by customers. This information serves as the foundation for developing solutions that address these issues effectively. Effective problem discovery minimizes the risk of building products that fail to resonate with users, ensuring that development efforts are focused on creating value for both customers and the business.

Competency Level Definitions:

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1 Beginner	TBD
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Solution Discovery

Solution discovery is a critical phase in product development where teams focus on identifying and validating potential solutions to previously identified problems. This process involves brainstorming multiple possible solutions, leveraging techniques such as ideation workshops, prototyping, and design thinking to generate diverse ideas.Teams then prioritize these solutions based on feasibility, market potential, and alignment with business objectives. Solution discovery can also involve improving existing products by addressing gaps or opportunities missed by competitors. By engaging in this iterative process of idea generation and validation, teams can ensure that their proposed solutions effectively meet user needs while aligning with broader business strategies.

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Learning

The learning phase in product development is a continuous process where teams gather insights and feedback to refine their solutions. This involves designing experiments, conducting user testing, and analyzing data to validate assumptions about the product. By embracing a mindset of experimentation and iteration, teams can learn from both successes and failures, using these lessons to improve future product iterations. Effective learning also involves establishing feedback loops that allow for ongoing refinement based on real-world user behavior and market responses. This approach ensures that products evolve based on evidence rather than assumptions, leading to more effective solutions that meet genuine user needs over time.

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Delivery

The Delivery competency in the Product Coaching Growth Wheel can be broken down into three key areas:

1. Continuous Delivery:
   Product Coaches guide teams in implementing continuous delivery practices,

which involve automating the entire software production process from integration to deployment. This approach enables teams to:
- Release software to production at any time, reducing cost, time, and risk of delivering changes
- Implement CI/CD pipelines for rapid, reliable, and repeatable pushes to production
- Adopt practices like continuous integration, automated testing, and gradual rollouts

2. Frameworks, Methods, and Tools:
   Product Coaches provide expertise in various methodologies and tools to optimize the delivery process:
   - Agile frameworks such as Scrum and Kanban for iterative development and visual project management
   - DevOps practices to foster collaboration between development and operations teams
   - Project management and collaboration tools to streamline workflows and track progress
   - Automation tools for continuous integration, testing, and deployment

3. Measuring Impact:
   Product Coaches help teams define and track key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of product releases:
   - Setting clear goals and objectives using frameworks like OKRs (Objectives and Key Results)
   - Implementing dashboards and reports to visualize and communicate data effectively
   - Tracking metrics such as product trials, customer usage, and user retention to evaluate product success
   - Analyzing results and applying insights to improve future product iterations and processes

By excelling in these three areas, Product Coaches help teams optimize their delivery pipeline, reduce time-to-market, and ensure that each release delivers tangible value to users and the business.

Continuous Delivery

Continuous Delivery (CD) is a software development practice that automates the process of preparing code changes for release to production environments. It enables teams to produce software in short cycles, ensuring that new features and updates can be reliably deployed at any time. CD extends the principles of Continuous Integration by

automatically building, testing, and preparing code changes for release after they are integrated. This approach accelerates time-to-market, enhances developer productivity, and improves software quality by enabling frequent, small releases that can be easily tested and validated. By implementing CD, organizations can respond more quickly to market demands and customer feedback, while reducing the risks associated with large, infrequent software releases.

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Frameworks Methods & Tools

Frameworks, methods, and tools in product development provide structured approaches and resources for implementing Agile principles effectively. Popular frameworks like Scrum, Kanban, and Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) offer specific processes and roles to guide teams through iterative development cycles. These frameworks are often complemented by Agile methods such as continuous integration, test-driven development, and pair programming. Teams also utilize various tools to support Agile practices, including project management software, version control systems, and automated testing tools. The choice of framework, method, and tools depends on

factors like team size, project complexity, and organizational needs, with many teams customizing their approach to best suit their specific requirements .

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Impact

Measuring impact in product development involves assessing the effectiveness and value of product releases to both users and the business. This process includes defining clear goals and objectives, tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) such as user engagement, retention, and revenue growth, and analyzing feedback from customers. By evaluating these metrics, teams can determine whether their products meet user needs and align with business objectives. Effective impact measurement also involves using insights gained from data analysis to inform future product decisions, ensuring that development efforts remain focused on delivering tangible value to stakeholders. This iterative approach helps teams refine their strategies over time based on real-world outcomes rather than assumptions.

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Strategy

The Strategy competency for Product Coaches encompasses two key areas: Visioning and Betting. These skills are crucial for guiding teams and organizations in developing and executing compelling product strategies.

Visioning involves creating a clear, long-term direction for the product that aligns with organizational goals and market opportunities. A Product Coach skilled in visioning:

- Facilitates the creation of inspiring product visions that resonate with stakeholders and teams
- Guides the development of long-term product roadmaps that translate vision into actionable plans
- Helps teams articulate the "why" behind product decisions to build alignment and reinforce strategic vision
- Encourages teams to think beyond functional boundaries and consider cross-functional impact

Effective visioning requires:

- Understanding market trends and customer needs to identify emerging opportunities
- Aligning the product vision with the company's mission and values
- Communicating the vision clearly to inspire and motivate teams

Strategic betting involves making informed decisions about resource allocation and product direction. A Product Coach adept at strategic betting:

- Guides teams in identifying and prioritizing high-impact opportunities
- Encourages calculated risk-taking through strategic bets while managing potential downsides
- Helps teams balance visionary thinking with pragmatic execution

Key aspects of strategic betting include:

1. Defining strategic bets:
   - Identifying big business decisions aimed at reaching important, long-term goals
   - Focusing on bets that challenge assumptions and offer the highest impact
2. Risk assessment and contingency planning:
   - Evaluating potential risks associated with strategic bets
   - Establishing risk tolerance levels and developing contingency plans
3. Resource allocation:
   - Analyzing available resources (budget, talent, technology) to make informed strategic choices
   - Ensuring strategic bets align with organizational strengths and capabilities
4. Balancing bet types:
   - Maintaining a mix of incremental optimizations and bold innovations to keep teams motivated and products evolving
   - Considering different levels of bets: strategic, product, and feature bets
5. Alignment with business objectives:
   - Ensuring strategic bets contribute to overall organizational goals
   - Using frameworks like OKRs to align product strategy with business objectives

By excelling in both visioning and betting, Product Coaches help teams navigate the complex landscape of product development, balancing long-term aspirations with short-term execution. This approach enables organizations to make informed decisions about product direction, allocate resources effectively, and pursue strategic opportunities that drive growth and innovation.

Visioning

Visioning is a strategic process of defining a compelling long-term direction for a product that aligns with organizational goals and market opportunities. It involves creating a clear, inspirational statement that articulates the product's purpose, target customers, and future potential. A strong product vision serves as a north star for teams, guiding decision-making and providing motivation by answering fundamental questions like "Why does this product exist?" and "What value will it deliver to users?" Effective visioning requires deep market research, understanding customer needs, and the ability to translate broad aspirational goals into a concrete, actionable framework that can inspire both internal teams and external stakeholders.

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Betting

Strategic betting in product development involves making informed, calculated decisions about resource allocation and product direction. It requires identifying high-impact opportunities, prioritizing them based on potential return and risk, and allocating resources accordingly. Product Coaches guide teams in evaluating strategic bets by

assessing market trends, customer needs, and competitive landscapes to determine which initiatives are most likely to drive growth or innovation. This approach encourages teams to take thoughtful risks while managing potential downsides through contingency planning and continuous evaluation of outcomes. By balancing bold bets with incremental improvements, organizations can foster a culture of innovation while ensuring alignment with overall business objectives.

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Finance

The Finance competency for Product Coaches focuses on two key areas: Return on Investment (ROI) and Budgeting. These skills are crucial for guiding teams in making informed financial decisions in product development and management.

ROI is a critical metric for evaluating the effectiveness of product initiatives. A Product Coach skilled in ROI calculation and communication:

- Guides teams in defining and tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) that contribute to ROI, such as revenue, market share, and customer satisfaction rates
- Helps teams perform "before and after" analyses to measure the impact of product development activities
- Teaches teams to calculate ROI
- Encourages consideration of both quantitative and qualitative factors in ROI assessment, including customer feedback and industry perception

Effective ROI analysis involves:

- Identifying all costs associated with a product initiative, including direct and indirect expenses
- Estimating potential returns, considering both short-term gains and long-term value creation
- Balancing financial returns with other strategic objectives

Budgeting is essential for effective resource allocation in product development. A Product Coach proficient in budgeting practices:

- Facilitates the creation of comprehensive product development budgets that account for all aspects of the project, from ideation to launch
- Guides teams in estimating costs across various categories, including infrastructure, team resources, and operational expenses
- Helps teams allocate resources effectively, prioritizing high-impact initiatives while maintaining flexibility for unforeseen challenges
- Encourages the use of agile budgeting approaches, allowing for iterative allocation of resources as product development progresses

Key aspects of effective budgeting include:

- Defining clear project scope and objectives to inform budget allocation
- Estimating costs and benefits of product features to prioritize investments
- Incorporating contingency planning to manage risks and uncertainties
- Regularly reviewing and adjusting budgets based on project progress and changing market conditions

By excelling in both ROI analysis and budgeting, Product Coaches help teams optimize their financial decision-making, ensuring that product investments align with overall business goals and deliver maximum value. This approach enables organizations to balance short-term financial constraints with long-term growth objectives, fostering sustainable product development practices.

Return on Investment

Return on Investment (ROI) is a critical metric used to evaluate the financial effectiveness of product initiatives. It measures the return generated by an investment compared to its cost, helping teams assess whether their efforts are yielding sufficient value. Calculating ROI involves quantifying both the net gains and costs associated with a project, often using metrics like revenue growth or cost savings. A Product Coach skilled in ROI analysis guides teams in defining relevant KPIs, tracking outcomes over time, and interpreting results to inform future investment decisions. By focusing on ROI, organizations can ensure that product development efforts are aligned with business objectives and deliver tangible financial benefits.

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Budgeting

Budgeting in product development involves creating and managing financial plans that allocate resources effectively to achieve strategic objectives. A Product Coach proficient in budgeting helps teams define comprehensive budgets that account for all project costs, from personnel and infrastructure to operational expenses. This includes

estimating costs accurately, prioritizing investments based on potential impact, and maintaining flexibility for unexpected expenses or changes in market conditions. Effective budgeting also involves regular review and adjustment of financial plans as projects evolve, ensuring that resource allocation remains aligned with business goals while maximizing the return on investment for each product initiative.

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Level	Reflection
1 Beginner	TBD
2 Advanced Beginner	TBD
3 Practitioner	TBD
4 Guide	TBD
5 Catalyst	TBD

Marketing

The Marketing competency for Product Coaches focuses on three key areas: Branding, Go-to-Market, and Positioning. These skills are crucial for guiding teams in effectively marketing and launching products.

A Product Coach skilled in branding helps teams create a consistent brand identity that resonates with the target audience. This includes developing a brand voice, visual identity, and guidelines for consistency across all touchpoints. Key aspects include crafting a compelling brand story and ensuring brand consistency.

In GTM, the coach guides teams in planning and executing product launches. This involves creating comprehensive launch plans, marketing campaigns, and engaging stakeholders. Effective GTM strategies define clear objectives, tailor messaging for different segments, and coordinate cross-functional efforts.

Positioning involves defining how a product is perceived in the market. The coach helps teams create differentiated positioning statements, identify unique value propositions, and align product features with market needs. This includes conducting market research, identifying differentiators, and crafting clear messaging.

By excelling in these areas, Product Coaches help teams create strong brand identities, execute successful launches, and establish clear market positions, driving product adoption and growth.

Branding

Branding is the strategic process of creating a unique identity for a product or service, setting it apart from competitors and resonating with target consumers. It involves combining design, messaging, and experience to build a recognizable brand that evokes specific emotions and perceptions. Effective branding can create emotional connections with customers, fostering loyalty and trust. For instance, brands like Apple and Coca-Cola are instantly recognizable due to their distinctive logos, packaging, and messaging, which have become synonymous with quality and reliability. By developing a strong brand identity, businesses can differentiate their offerings in crowded markets and drive customer preference.

Competency Level Definitions:

Level	Reflection
1 Beginner	TBD
2 Advanced Beginner	TBD

3 Practitioner	TBD
4 Guide	TBD
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Go to Market

A go-to-market (GTM) strategy is a comprehensive plan for launching a product or service into a specific market. It outlines how a company will reach its target customers, communicate its value proposition, and gain a competitive advantage. Key components of a GTM strategy include market analysis, target audience definition, product positioning, pricing strategy, and distribution channels. An effective GTM strategy helps businesses align their product offerings with customer needs, optimize resource allocation, and maximize the chances of a successful launch. By carefully considering factors such as market demand, competition, and customer pain points, companies can create a roadmap for effectively introducing their product or service to the intended market.

Competency Level Definitions:

Level	Reflection
1 Beginner	TBD
2 Advanced Beginner	TBD
3 Practitioner	TBD

4 Guide	TBD
5 Catalyst	TBD

Positioning

Positioning is a strategic marketing exercise that defines how a product fits into the marketplace and differentiates it from competitors. It involves understanding the target audience's needs and wants, and crafting a clear message that communicates the product's unique benefits and value proposition. Effective positioning helps businesses create a distinct identity for their product, making it more appealing to potential customers and increasing brand visibility. A well-crafted positioning statement typically includes the target market, product category, key differentiators, and the payoff or benefits that address customer needs. By positioning a product correctly, companies can attract the right audience, enhance customer loyalty, and ultimately drive business growth.

Competency Level Definitions:

Level	Reflection
1 Beginner	TBD
2 Advanced Beginner	TBD
3 Practitioner	TBD
4 Guide	TBD

5 Catalyst	TBD

Leading

The Leading competency for Product Coaches focuses on three key areas: Self Leadership, Leading Others, and System Leadership.

Self leadership involves continuous personal growth and self-awareness. This includes setting a strong example, practicing self-reflection, and maintaining a growth mindset. Key aspects include identifying strengths and areas for improvement, setting personal development goals, and balancing work and personal life.

Leading others involves fostering collaboration, empowerment, and skill development within product teams. A Product Coach skilled in this area provides clear direction, offers constructive feedback, and encourages innovation. Effective leadership includes creating a positive team culture, facilitating conflict resolution, and recognizing team achievements.

System leadership focuses on navigating organizational dynamics and driving holistic transformations. This involves understanding and influencing the broader ecosystem, aligning product strategies with business objectives, and building cross-functional relationships. Key elements include identifying systemic issues, championing change, and balancing short-term goals with long-term vision.

By excelling in these areas, Product Coaches inspire and guide at multiple levels, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Self Leadership

Self-leadership is the practice of intentionally influencing one's thoughts, feelings, and actions to achieve personal and professional goals. It involves developing self-awareness, setting goals, and motivating oneself to reach them. Effective self-leadership requires skills such as decision-making, motivation, and self-regulation, enabling individuals to take ownership of their life and career. By leading themselves effectively, individuals can become role models for others, fostering a culture of empowerment and collaboration within organizations. This personal leadership approach is essential for career growth and organizational success, as it enhances productivity, engagement, and overall well-being.

Competency Level Definitions:

Level	Reflection
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Leading Others

Leading others involves guiding and empowering teams to achieve shared goals. Effective leaders foster collaboration, encourage open communication, and empower team members by delegating responsibilities and providing opportunities for growth. They create a positive and inclusive team culture that promotes innovation, creativity, and calculated risk-taking. By offering constructive feedback, recognizing achievements, and addressing challenges proactively, leaders help teams navigate complex projects and overcome obstacles. This approach not only enhances team performance but also builds trust and loyalty, leading to higher job satisfaction and better outcomes for the organization.

Competency Level Definitions:

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System Leadership

System Leadership is an approach that recognizes the interconnected and complex nature of modern challenges, emphasizing collaboration across organizational boundaries. System leaders catalyze collective action by engaging diverse stakeholders, fostering shared vision, and empowering networks to drive systemic change. They combine a deep understanding of system dynamics with collaborative leadership skills to navigate complexity and uncertainty. Unlike traditional top-down approaches, system leadership focuses on creating conditions for innovation, learning, and adaptive problem-solving across multiple levels of an organization or society. This approach is particularly relevant in addressing complex issues like sustainable development, where no single entity can provide all solutions.

Competency Level Definitions:

Level	Reflection
1 Beginner	TBD

2 Advanced Beginner	TBD
3 Practitioner	TBD
4 Guide	TBD
5 Catalyst	TBD

Transforming

The Transforming competency for Product Coaches focuses on three key areas: Organizational Design, Organizational Models, and Coaching.

Organizational design involves restructuring the company to support product-centric approaches. This includes breaking down silos, creating cross-functional teams, and aligning processes for rapid iteration and customer feedback. Key aspects include implementing flexible structures and designing roles that support product ownership.

Product Coaches need to understand models like agile and lean methodologies, and frameworks such as SAFe or Spotify's squad model. Effective implementation involves aligning strategic planning with product-centric principles, shifting from feature delivery to business outcomes, and establishing product-specific funding models.

Coaching is essential for guiding teams through transformation. A Product Coach uses techniques to overcome resistance, builds new capabilities, and facilitates cultural shifts towards customer-centricity and innovation. Coaching approaches include executive coaching for leadership alignment, team coaching for collaboration, and addressing unconscious biases that hinder change.

By excelling in these areas, Product Coaches drive organizational change, helping companies become more adaptive, customer-centric, and product-driven.

Organizational Design

Organizational design is the strategic process of structuring a company to align its resources, processes, and culture with its overall business objectives. It involves creating systems and structures that enable efficient operations, effective communication, and optimal resource allocation. Key aspects of organizational design include defining roles and responsibilities, establishing reporting relationships, and developing mechanisms for coordination and decision-making. By implementing principles such as work specialization, unity of command, and adaptability, organizations can enhance their ability to respond to market changes, foster innovation, and improve overall performance. Effective organizational design is crucial for businesses to remain competitive, as it directly impacts how teams collaborate, how information flows, and how quickly the company can adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

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Organizational Models

Organizational models are frameworks that define how a company structures itself to achieve its strategic objectives and operate efficiently. Common models include functional, divisional, matrix, and team-based structures. Each model offers unique

advantages depending on the organization's size, industry, and goals. For example, a functional structure groups employees by specialization, while a divisional structure organizes units around products, markets, or geographic regions. More modern approaches, like the product-centric model, focus on aligning teams around specific products or customer outcomes, emphasizing agility and continuous delivery. The choice of organizational model significantly impacts communication flow, decision-making processes, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Competency Level Definitions:

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Coaching

Coaching is a transformative process that empowers individuals and teams to achieve their full potential. In the context of organizational transformation, coaching helps guide teams through change by addressing resistance, building new capabilities, and fostering a culture of innovation and customer-centricity. Effective coaching involves using techniques such as active listening, open-ended questioning, and feedback to enhance self-awareness and motivation. By focusing on both personal and professional growth, coaching enables individuals to adapt to new roles and responsibilities, leading to improved collaboration, decision-making, and overall organizational performance. This

approach is particularly valuable in driving sustainable change and embedding new practices within an organization.

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Metrics and Analytics

The Metrics and Analytics competency is a crucial overarching skill that applies to all areas of the Product Coaching Growth Wheel. It provides a data-driven foundation for measuring progress, effectiveness, and impact across each competency. Here's a more detailed look at this competency:

Purpose and Importance

- Enables data-driven decision making in all aspects of product coaching
- Provides objective measures of progress and success
- Helps identify areas for improvement and optimization
- Supports the demonstration of value and ROI of product coaching initiatives

Key Components

1. Metric Identification:
    ○ Selecting relevant KPIs for each competency area
    ○ Ensuring metrics align with organizational goals and product strategies
2. Data Collection:
    ○ Implementing systems and processes to gather relevant data
    ○ Ensuring data quality and consistency
3. Analysis:
    ○ Applying statistical and analytical techniques to derive insights
    ○ Identifying trends, patterns, and correlations in the data
4. Interpretation:
    ○ Translating data into actionable insights
    ○ Contextualizing results within the broader product and business landscape
5. Visualization and Communication:
    ○ Creating clear, compelling data visualizations
    ○ Effectively communicating insights to stakeholders at all levels

Application Across Competencies

- Visioning: Measuring alignment of product vision with market needs and business goals
- Betting: Evaluating the success rate and ROI of strategic product bets
- Finance: Tracking financial metrics related to product development and performance
- Marketing: Measuring the effectiveness of branding, positioning, and go-to-market strategies
- Leading: Assessing leadership effectiveness through team performance and engagement metrics
- Transforming: Tracking progress and impact of organizational change initiatives

Tools and Techniques

- Analytics platforms (e.g., Google Analytics, Mixpanel)
- Business intelligence tools (e.g., Tableau, Power BI)
- A/B testing frameworks
- Customer feedback and survey tools
- Performance management systems

Continuous Improvement

- Regularly reviewing and refining metrics to ensure relevance

- Adapting analytical approaches based on changing business needs
- Staying updated on new analytics tools and methodologies

By mastering Metrics and Analytics, Product Coaches can provide data-backed guidance, demonstrate the impact of their coaching, and drive continuous improvement across all areas of product development and organizational transformation.

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References

Value

- TBD

Industry

Industry Practices
- TBD
Emerging Trends
- TBD
Technology Skills
- TBD

Discovery

Problem Discovery
- TBD
Solution Discovery
- TBD
Learning
- TBD

Delivery

Continuous Delivery
- TBD
Frameworks Methods & Tools

- TBD

Impact

- TBD

Strategy

Visioning

- TBD

Betting

- TBD

Finance

Return on Investment

- TBD

Budgeting

- TBD

Marketing

Branding

- TBD

Go to Market

- TBD

Positioning

- TBD

Leading

Self Leadership

- TBD

Leading Others

- TBD

System Leadership

- TBD

Transforming

Organizational Design

- TBD

Organizational Models

- TBD

Coaching

- TBD

Metrics & Analytics

- TBD