Google Interview Prep Guide
Product Manager

What's a Product Manager (PM)?

One of the many reasons Google consistently brings innovative, world-changing products to market is because of the collaborative work we do in Product Management. As a Product Manager, you'll work closely with our engineers to guide products from conception to launch. You'll bridge the technical and business worlds as you design services that our customers love, working with teams across Google such as Engineering, Sales, Marketing and Finance. You'll be responsible for guiding products throughout the execution cycle, focusing specifically on analyzing, positioning, packaging, promoting and tailoring our solutions to all the markets where Google does business. With eyes focused squarely on the future, you'll work closely with creative and prolific engineers to help design and develop technologies that improve access to the world's information. You'll have a bias toward action and can break down complex problems into steps that drive product development at Google speed and scale.

What product would I work on?

Our Product Managers are hired as product "generalists" who fit any of our evolving product lines. In the later stages of the hiring process, we identify a team that matches your interests and background. We have openings across all of our product lines like Consumer, Mobile, Apps, Enterprise and Infrastructure.

General PM Interview Prep

Product Design: Begin by thinking about user experiences from the customer's perspective. Recognize the importance of even the smallest product details in producing great results. You should be as comfortable with sketching a wireframe for a designer as you are with explaining your reasoning from a business standpoint.

Example interview questions:
- How would you improve restaurant search?
- If you were to build the next great feature for Google Search, what would it be?
- How would you monetize a certain product more effectively?

Product Strategy: Get very familiar with Google's competitive landscape and vision for the future, the mobile market, the ad market, and internet and technology in general. Be able to discuss long term product roadmaps and strategies to increase market share.

Example interview questions:
- If you were Google's CEO, would you be concerned about Microsoft?
- Should Google offer a Stubhub competitor? That is, sell sports, concert and theater tickets?

Analysis: Our Product Managers are fluent with numbers, and are able to validate and effectively present data and articulate their analyses. They are comfortable using metrics and data to make decisions. This role may require decision-making from A/B test results, writing SQL queries, or running scripts to extract data from logs.

Example interview questions:
- How many queries per second does Gmail get?
- How many Androids sell in the US each year?
- How do you know if the product is successful?

Technical Fundamentals: In order to prepare, you should review basic algorithms and computer science fundamentals, a large part of your credibility with engineers will be rooted in your technical competence.

Example interview questions:
- Write an algorithm that detects and alerts meeting conflicts.
- How is a set different from an array?

General Interview Tips

Explain: We want to understand how you think, so explain your thought process and decision making throughout the interview. Remember we're not only evaluating your technical ability, but also how you approach problems and try to solve them. Explicitly state and check assumptions with your interviewer to ensure they are reasonable.

Clarify: Many of the questions will be deliberately open-ended to provide insight into what categories and information you value within the technological puzzle. We're looking to see how you engage with the problem and your primary method for solving it. Be sure to talk through your thought process and feel free to ask specific questions if you need clarification.

Improve: Think about ways to improve the solution you present.It's worthwhile to think out loud about your initial thoughts to a question. In many cases, your first answer may need some refining and further explanation. If necessary, start with the brute force solution and improve on it — just let the interviewer know that's what you're doing and why.

Ask Questions: At the end of the interview, your interviewers will ask you if you have any questions about the company, work environment, their personal experiences, etc. This is your chance to learn more about the role, the projects and the type of work you'll be doing. Take advantage of the opportunity and be sure to bring questions.

Resources

Books
Cracking the Coding Interview
Gayle Laakmann McDowell
Business Model Generation
Alexander Osterwalder, Yves Pigneur
The Algorithm Design Manual
Steven S. Skiena
The Design of Everyday Things
Don Norman
Cracking the PM Interview
Gayle Laakmann McDowell

Product Manager Resources
Cracking the PM Interview
The Product Manager Interview
How to Ace the Engineering Interview

About Google
Company - Google
The Google story
Life @ Google
Google Developers
Open Source Projects
Github: Google Style Guide

Interview Prep
How we hire
Interviewing @ Google
CodeJam: Practice & Learn
Technical Development Guide

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