

Deciding What to Build, Preventing Emotional Churn, and Navigating a Slow PM Market

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PM judgment is getting more valuable as building becomes easier. This issue covers domain expertise in B2B, a practical playbook for spotting emotional churn and prioritization theater, a self-improving AI workflow case, and concrete signals from the senior PM job market.

Big Ideas

1) Deciding what to build is becoming the bottleneck

“when anyone can build, the person who decides WHAT to build becomes the bottleneck” [1]

Andrew Chen says he is bullish on the PM role quietly becoming the most important role in tech again, and Lenny Rachitsky agreed [1, 2].

- **Why it matters:** If building is easier to access, the choice of *what* to build becomes more consequential [1].
- **How to apply:** Treat deciding *what* to build as the core constraint in the role, not an afterthought to execution [1].

2) Consumer product strengths transfer to B2B only when paired with domain depth

Shreyas Doshi argues that product people with deep consumer experience plus user empathy and creativity often do very well in B2B, **as long as** they commit to acquiring deep domain expertise [3]. He adds that AI is making it easier to acquire and leverage domain expertise, but PMs still need to appreciate its importance [4].

- **Why it matters:** Consumer instincts and creativity are portable; domain knowledge is not automatically portable [3, 4].
- **How to apply:** If you are moving into B2B, make domain learning explicit and use AI to acquire and leverage team expertise rather than trying to bypass it [3, 4].

3) Emotional churn is a B2B risk that healthy dashboards can miss

“Emotional Churn: when users are psychologically checked out but still in contract” [5]

Run the Business describes emotional churn as the silent killer of B2B products [5]. A key signal is that dashboards can look healthy while customers are already shopping for alternatives [5].

- **Why it matters:** Contracted revenue and surface-level product health can hide weakening customer commitment [5].
- **How to apply:** Look for poor onboarding, workflow friction, and integration gaps, then fix around faster time-to-value and re-engagement [5].

Tactical Playbook

1) Run an emotional-churn review before renewals surprise you

1. Monitor core flows by cohort instead of relying only on top-line health metrics [5].
2. Watch feature adoption for signs that engagement is thinning out [5].
3. Treat silence as a signal; no feedback can be a warning sign [5].
4. Investigate root causes such as poor onboarding, workflow friction, and integration gaps [5].
5. Fix around time-to-value: re-onboard disengaged users, empower power users, and show customers you are listening [5].

Why this works: Emotional churn often appears before contractual churn, while standard dashboards still look fine [5].

2) Audit your real prioritization process, not just the documented one

1. Ask the hard questions earlier; one PM/founder says many failures had the same shape because those questions came too late or not at all [6].
2. Put the documented process and the real process side by side [6].
3. Check whether decisions are actually being driven by HiPPOs, the biggest customer, or the CEO’s latest mention rather than the official framework [6].
4. Watch for the opposite failure mode too: good ideas can get strangled in process before they get a chance to prove themselves [6].

5. Close the loop with data on shipped features the team did not believe in [6].

Why this works: The problem is not only bad ideas getting through. It is also good ideas being blocked by process theater or post-hoc justification [6].

3) Use a self-improving AI skill on one recurring PM workflow

1. Start with a repeated task such as competitive monitoring [7].
2. Install Hermes and drop the toolkit into `~/hermes/skills/` so skills load automatically [7].
3. Let the agent rewrite the workflow every 15 tool calls based on what worked in the session [7].
4. Use the self-rewriting behavior from the last 10 sessions to keep improving the workflow over time [7].
5. Keep the prompt constant and compare time and output quality over several weeks [7].
6. Use the included files—`SKILL.md`, `SOUL.md`, `USER.md`, and the 30-day roll-out plan—to structure the rollout [7].

Why this works: In the cited example, the workflow improved materially without changing the prompt itself [7].

Case Studies & Lessons

1) Hermes competitive monitoring improved without a prompt rewrite

In one PM workflow, a competitive monitoring briefing using the same prompt every Monday fell from **20 minutes** in week one to **12 minutes** in week four and **8 minutes** by week six [7]. By week six, the briefing was surfacing competitor patterns the author had not caught during three weeks of manual work, while the underlying skill had rewritten itself four times [7].

- **Lesson:** For recurring PM work, a learning workflow can improve results even when the prompt stays fixed [7].
- **How to apply:** Pick one repeated PM task and measure week 1 versus week 4 versus week 6 with the prompt held constant [7].

2) Community field report: prioritization theater creates bad ships and tired teams

A PM/founder collecting stories says many failures shared the same pattern: hard questions were asked too late or not at all [6]. Teams often had a documented prioritization process—RICE, ICE, weighted scoring, Aha!, Productboard—but a different real process driven by HiPPOs, the biggest customer, or the CEO’s last all-hands mention [6]. PMs were described not as cynical, but as tired after shipping things they did not believe in and then

seeing the data confirm their doubts later [6]. The opposite pattern also appeared: good ideas getting strangled in process before they could prove themselves [6].

- **Lesson:** Better prioritization is not about adding more framework language. It is about surfacing the real decision logic early [6].
- **How to apply:** Ask the hard questions sooner, make leadership overrides explicit, and preserve room for promising ideas to earn proof [6].

Career Corner

1) Domain depth is showing up as both a product advantage and a hiring filter

Shreyas Doshi's point on B2B success depends on deep domain expertise [3], and one senior PM candidate used the same logic in the job market by targeting only B2B domains where they already had depth and skipping B2C roles entirely [8].

- **Why it matters:** Domain depth appears to improve both product effectiveness and search efficiency [3, 8].
- **How to apply:** Narrow your search and your bets to areas where you can show real domain understanding, and make domain learning explicit if you are crossing over [4, 8].

2) Senior PM hiring is slow enough that silence is not always signal

A Principal/Staff PM candidate applied to **89** postings, about **30 per week**, using Claude to match skills and generate tailored resumes, and only applied after vetting roles at roughly **80% fit** [9]. That produced about a **3%** application-to-full-loop conversion rate [9]. The largest bucket was no response, and recruiters sometimes came back after about 3 weeks while still reposting the role [9, 10].

- **Why it matters:** A slow or quiet funnel can still be normal for senior PM searches right now [9, 10].
- **How to apply:** Source recent roles, tailor aggressively, filter for fit, and do not overread early silence [9].

3) AI leverage is being discussed in recruiter and hiring-manager screens

The same candidate said almost all recruiter and hiring-manager calls asked how they leverage AI in day-to-day work, so they began including that in tailored resumes even when the job description did not mention it [8].

- **Why it matters:** AI fluency is showing up as a practical evaluation topic, not just a keyword in the JD [8].
- **How to apply:** Be concrete about how AI changes your daily PM workflow and make that visible in your resume and interview examples [8].

Tools & Resources

- Hermes starter kit (PM-built): A self-improving PM workflow system with model-agnostic runtime, support across Telegram, Slack, WhatsApp, Discord, and Signal, plus a toolkit containing SKILL.md files, SOUL.md, USER.md, and a 30-day rollout plan [7].
 - Emotional Churn: A useful B2B retention diagnostic for spotting psychologically checked-out users before contract churn shows up in the numbers [5].
 - Many product ideas ship that never should have: A strong discussion prompt for PM teams that want to examine late validation, prioritization theater, and the risk of over-processing good ideas [6].
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Sources

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