How Meta's Muse team gated launch on trust and used agent swarms in place of dashboards

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Mona Sarantakos, Muse's head of product, explains how her team handled launch gating, evals, activation and the PM role. Also: a paid-acquisition kill rule replayed against two years of data, and PMs on job security.

Muse: trust as a launch gate, agent swarms in place of dashboards

Mona Sarantakos is head of product for Muse and VP of product at Meta Superintelligence Labs. The project started when she ran OpenClaw on a Raspberry Pi with access to her email and calendar, and by Monday it had pulled together her kids' school week. The team then spent seven months making it "safe and simple enough for everyone." Lenny Rachitsky calls Muse the fastest-growing AI consumer product ever [1].

Takeaways from the interview that PMs can use:

- **Hold launch on quality.** The end-to-end product worked by spring. Most of the remaining time went to reliability, safety and security, measured against an eval bar the team wrote itself because industry benchmarks felt insufficient for an agent that holds personal context and can buy things [2]. Each new feature, such as the browser, opened new security vectors [2]. Instead of one launch, they let in larger and larger groups of internal dogfooders and external alpha testers [2].
- **Let usage revise the roadmap.** An external UX research panel ran from March, and stories from it went to leadership almost weekly [2]. Shopping, which Sarantakos didn't predict, became a top use case and got its own evals. Home automation turned out smaller than expected [2].

- **Agent swarms over dashboards.** The team had little production data for long, multi-turn conversations outside coding. Swarms of agents reviewed conversations and data, generated synthetic data for evals, and checked whether a suspected issue was real [2]. They return specifics, such as "10 people… got blocked" shopping on a site, not just metric movements. Sarantakos makes all her PMs use them to build empathy [2].
- **Rank your evals.** Priority evals such as safety and prompt injection must always pass. Capability, behavioral and use-case evals can trade off slightly, and feature-level evals belong to individual teams [2]. People must review all the data, and the system prompt and behavioral spec must be written by hand, not by AI [2].
- **Activation is still unsolved.** The strongest lever is word of mouth from someone the user relates to. Advertising messages didn't land [2]. The second lever is getting past the frozen first prompt, which the Ideas tab's starter packs address [2]. Later cohorts ask how Muse differs from chatbots they already use, so the team is moving to tiered onboarding. Sarantakos says "I don't think we figured it out" [2].
- **The PM bar is now taste.** Prototypes let the team argue over working versions instead of specs and sunk costs [2]. With product-minded engineers on the team, the PM's job is to speak for the customer and hold a quality bar, because "AI slop is very easy to put out." Taste is the first thing she looks for when hiring [2]. Four PMs built the product. Early zero-to-one work often needed a builder more than a PM, and PMs mattered most once work moved toward integration and launch [2].

David Cancel makes a related point about agents in general: building the agent is easy, keeping it doing the job a month later is the real work, and "whoever owns that owns the customer" [3].

Deciding to cut ad spend after two weeks

A team that has shipped 15+ apps replayed two years of ad spend and made a keep-or-stop call on each week using only what was known two weeks in. Flagged weeks returned $0.55 per dollar by day 90; kept weeks returned $1.51 [4]. The signal was new paying customers above the app's normal level, valued at what they actually paid, and compared with earlier weeks at the same age [4]. None of the 27 flagged weeks broke even by day 90, against 33 of the 36 kept weeks [5]. The result is less clean at one year: 3 of the 15 flagged weeks old enough to check had paid back, and the flagged group returned $0.84 against $1.89 [6]. Slow weeks got a "behind" call rather than a cut, and all six paid back by day 90 [7].

Do PMs feel safe?

Many in an r/ProductManagement thread reported layoffs or reorgs. The more useful comments were about where PM value holds. One PM sees sales leads

and company owners skipping the PM to vibe-code features for a single client [8]. Another says they'll worry when AI can turn customer feedback into valid requirements and unspoken needs [9]. A health IT PM says their organization grew its PM team about 25% and trimmed engineering for an AI-based development lifecycle, because "faster code won't do any good" if PM and QA remain the bottleneck [10]. Immad Akhund, whose post Hiten Shah endorsed, says small startups now have people managing agents that do ops, sales and support [11, 12].

Briefly

- **Users before investors:** Paul Graham says users are "the ultimate gatekeepers." If users don't like the product, impressing investors won't save it [13].
- **Interview follow-ups:** For any feature you propose, name one primary metric and one guardrail. Commit to a single priority, and state the riskiest assumption and a cheap way to test it [14]. When a metric drops, first check whether the drop is real, how it's measured and which segment it affects [14].
- **Validating B2B demand:** Find out who controls the budget and ask for a small paid pilot. That's a stronger signal than "sounds interesting" [15].

Sources

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