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New hiring data shows PM demand rising as AI skills become standard in PM job descriptions. Also covered: what AI-era PM interviews test, Teresa Torres asking whether continuous discovery has product-market fit, and Webflow's plan for staying relevant after AI builds version one.

PM demand is rising, and the job description is changing

Lenny Rachitsky's latest job-market report goes against the "AI replaces PMs" story. Open PM roles are at their highest in nearly four years, up 75% from the March 2023 low. PM openings have grown 56% since the start of 2023, against 43% for engineering [1]. Actual hiring is a different picture: it has been flat or falling for every core product role. PM hiring has held up best, though, and PM's share of hires rose from 16% in 2021 to 21% [1]. Lenny reads the gap between openings and hires as growing demand combined with more difficulty landing great PMs [1].

Other product roles are shrinking: - There are now 3.8 open PM roles for every open design role, up from 1.9 in early 2023 [1]. - U.S. user-research hiring is down 66% from 2022, the steepest drop of any role in the report. Lenny thinks teams now learn after launch instead of through research, and that better tools let people outside UXR run studies themselves [1]. - Open mobile and front-end engineering jobs have nearly halved in a year, while forward-deployed engineer (FDE) roles are growing [2].

For PMs, it may matter more that discovery work traditionally done by researchers and designers is moving onto the PM. Required skills have shifted too. "LLM" is now the most-mentioned skill in PM job descriptions. "Claude" is third, Cursor, OpenAI and MCP are in the top eight, and "evals" is in the top ten [1]. Even in designer job descriptions, Claude is now the second most-mentioned skill, although demand for Figma has also grown [3].

What AI-era PM interviews test

Aakash Gupta adds his own hiring data. Hires of PMs from outside the company are down 45% since 2022. 48.3% of first AI PM jobs went to people who had held a PM role without "AI" in the title. Career switchers have better odds in healthcare (37.0%) and finance (36.5%) than in tech (29.5%) [4]. Agent PM grew from 2.1% to 9.5% of AI PM hires [4]. He also found that 40–45% of job seekers faced a take-home or past-project presentation. Companies that use them include Anthropic, OpenAI and Stripe. Because every candidate has AI help, the assignments now test whether your judgment adds something AI can't produce for everyone else [5].

Hiring managers in r/ProductManagement disagreed about vibe-coded side projects. One 15-year PM likes them as a chance to show real PM skills instead of a scripted product-sense exercise [6]. Others care only about users or revenue [7], or about "what broke when real users touched them" [8].

Does continuous discovery have product-market fit?

Teresa Torres and Petra Wille treated discovery habits as a product, with the organizations that buy training as the customer. The habits work for individuals and teams [9]. The demand is real: companies want better discovery and will pay for it. What fails is follow-through: reserving the time, keeping going through busy weeks, getting customer access [10]. Boards reward predictable results, and executives are rewarded for certainty and for dictating solutions [11]. Change rarely survives a leadership change [12]. Torres's reframe: treat those constraints as fixed and adapt the method to fit quarterly incentives [13]. Wille's counter is that partial adoption still has lasting value [14].

SaaS strategy after AI builds version one

Webflow's argument is that AI is good at version one, so most of its business comes after a customer hits publish. Its three bets: build what AI is bad at, go deep on one buyer, and use AI tools as an acquisition channel [15]. Its PMs code the first prototype, and each product area is staffed by two or three engineers, a designer and a PM [15]. There is no separate AI PM title, because every PM is expected to be one [15]. HubSpot's Dharmesh Shah offers a related rule: anything a structured query can answer deterministically should not be answered by an LLM [16]. HubSpot is pairing its system of record with a "system of context" for unstructured data [16].

Validation and other news

- **Paid pilot vs. pivot.** A founder had 20 conversations, and only 2 agreed to a pilot, both for a minor feature [17]. One commenter's advice: agree a small, fixed scope and a review date, and see whether they'll pay to keep using it. Treat the feature as a wedge into the bigger product only if the need recurs across unrelated buyers [18].
- **Stripe closed its OpenRouter acquisition** to help businesses explore models and optimize token routing [19]. Patrick Collison says OpenRouter now serves about 125% more tokens per week than when the deal was announced in August [20].

Sources

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