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How product definition changes when people and agents build together, why faster cycles still need judgment, Paul Graham’s case that agent bans open the door to competitors, and practical notes on PMM and support.

### Product definition is now context engineering

Ravi Mehta has renamed the “Feature Specification” competency in his PM toolkit to “Product Definition.” The job, he says, was never just writing a spec. It was making clear what to build and why, and that clarity can now come from a prototype, a document, or both evolving together [1]. In his framing, PMs were “the original context engineers,” and that context now guides agents as well as people [1].

His most useful point is that the problem has flipped. Thin specs used to give teams **too little context**. Now teams often have **too much**: long PRDs, several prototypes, review feedback, and hundreds of AI-generated decisions, with no way to tell intent from incidental detail [1]. Too little context has a cost too. Agents fill the gaps with defaults, and unexamined defaults produce “slop” [1]. His fix is one concise definition that covers the story, why the product should exist, what success looks like, how it works, and what’s in, out, or undecided. That definition should keep evolving rather than serve as a one-time handoff [1].

He disputes the idea that the PM role is dying. Companies are “shifting dollars from talent to tokens,” but more people building means product thinking is in more demand [1]. AI also “doesn’t flatten that ladder.” At VP or CPO level,

Product Definition becomes a system of standards and review processes that give every team and agent the context it needs [1].

Aakash Gupta makes a related argument about speed. Each handoff from spec to design to engineering adds drift and about a week. When a PM can prototype in the codebase, a 2–4-week cycle shrinks to days, because the first version exists before the spec does [2]. This depends on an AI-friendly codebase: Tailwind, smaller separate services, and less code overall [2]. He estimates that a 3-day cycle runs about 120 tests a year, against 17 for a 3-week cycle [2].

### **A skeptic’s view: faster isn’t better**

Linear CEO Karri Saarinen, quoted by Lenny Rachitsky, took a summer off from following AI and found “nothing has really changed.” Building great products and growing revenue are still hard [3]. The tools let teams do more, faster. But on whether teams are making better things, “I don’t think that answer is clearly yes.” He warns against putting so much weight on toolmaking that it displaces making something great [3]. That’s a useful check on Gupta’s numbers: more tests per year only help if the tests are good ones.

Julie Zhuo offers a design question that applies to AI products. She quotes Alpha School co-founder Joe Liemandt on the paradox that AI sharpens kids’ brains in one hour and shortcuts their goals the next [4]. Her deciding question is what the user wants to get good at. If they want a skill, they should resist the shortcut; if they just want unwanted work done, the shortcut is “exactly what I need” [4].

### **Paul Graham: agent bans signal demand**

Graham calls Amazon’s ban on agents the first opening he has seen since Amazon was founded for a startup to compete with it. People will want agents to shop for them, and they won’t want Amazon’s own agent [5]. He generalizes the point: if a business has to ban agents, people must want to use them, so there’s demand for a competitor that allows them [6]. For PMs, the implication is that agent-access policy is now a competitive decision, not only a trust-and-safety one.

He also says founders always wish they had hired fewer top managers from outside, and he has never met one who wished they had promoted fewer people from within [7]. One founder told him outside hires’ “loyalty is to their career, not to the company” [8].

### **Competitive and PMM craft**

- **Pricing objections are two jobs.** Hiten Shah separates “What should I say?” from “Should we change our pricing?” because each needs different evidence [9]. On Friday at 10 AM PT he plans to run his 16 competitive

skills on one B2B product, with and without each skill. No results yet [10].

- **AI-native demos.** A mature B2B vendor keeps losing first impressions to one-prompt demos, while its own sales team ends up listing controls and permissions [11]. One reply argues those tools look great until someone needs audit logs or role permissions [12].
- **Getting customer access as a PMM.** A practitioner offered to sit in on two sales calls and write up notes for the head of sales, under his name. Six months later they were invited by default. Without that access, PMM becomes “a slide factory” [13].
- **Outsourcing support.** Ticket volume alone is a weak reason to outsource. Keep escalations, churn-risk conversations, and the weekly review of why tickets happen in-house. If you can’t write the handoff boundary and QA rubric yet, “you’re outsourcing ambiguity, not support” [14].

## Community mood

In a r/ProductManagement thread about the sub’s decline, one commenter said PMs are struggling with “slow hiring and what the heck to do with AI” [15]. Another said the product meetups they attend are now 70% job seekers [16]. On tooling, one PM reported AI credits as their org’s only enforced tool budget, about \$1,200 a month each, of which they use about \$25 [17].

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## Sources

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