

”Shipping is table stakes”: PM leaders say a launch only counts when the rest of the company is ready

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A r/ProductManagement debate on how PMs get credit for coordination work, plus practitioner reports on “live PRD” tooling, pilot metrics for hard-to-prove value, and a four-way split of AI PM jobs.

Is coordination work part of performance?

A r/ProductManagement thread asked whether the “behind the scenes” coordination work PMs do counts at review time. Most replies said outcomes are what count. The most useful answer came from a product leader who redefined the outcome. For them, being able to ship is “table-stakes.” They evaluate a “successful market launch,” and a launch is a miss if sales can’t sell the feature, professional services can’t help customers use it, support can’t help, or the docs aren’t updated [1]. Because a PM can’t control whether other teams finish their part, this leader looks for two things. The PM should make the effort to get those teams ready, and any escalation should never come as a surprise. They also run 360 reviews and ask PMs to “work out loud” in written progress reports so good work gets noticed [1].

Other commenters disagreed that weak adoption means sales or marketing failed: “product revenue is YOUR responsibility,” so the PM has to find out why and fix it with those teams [2]. A platform PM told to tie their outcomes to revenue offered a practical step for when another team is blocking you: escalate quickly and put a number on the loss [3].

“Live PRDs” still don’t work out of the box

A PM asked whether any off-the-shelf tool makes PRDs live objects that generate test plans, docs and tickets. Practitioners said no. One said nothing does it end to end “in a way that holds up outside a demo.” Teams stitch it together with Claude Projects or custom prompts and review every downstream artifact by hand, because the link back to requirements “breaks the moment requirements shift” [4]. One team that does run such a system said it is “not that magical.” It defines rules and quality standards for each artifact, sets a process for creating and updating it, and runs a plan/do/verify agent loop. It also needs customization and upkeep [5]. Their main lesson is that work has to be split deliberately into small local edits or larger structural rewrites. A generic “do the documentation” task fails, and an LLM can sometimes take 20 iterations to make real progress [5].

Four kinds of AI PM jobs

Aakash Gupta reused his 1,177-posting dataset to sort AI PM jobs by what the PM actually shapes. **Applied AI** PMs add AI to existing products (297 openings, \$222K median base). **AI-native** PMs build products at AI-first companies (79, \$258K). **AI platform** PMs build APIs and tools for other teams (140, \$231K). **Model** PMs decide what the model learns and when it ships (46, \$345K) [6]. What’s new is the engineering requirement, which runs opposite to what many expect. It appears in 34% of platform PM postings but only about one in four model PM postings. Evals show up in all four role types [6].

Getting to value: pilots, distribution and differentiation

- **Proving prevention.** A founder selling software that stops construction firms from repeating mistakes said avoided losses are hard to show in a short pilot, especially when the team supplying the information, the team benefiting and the buyer are all different people [7]. Suggested pilot metrics: a count of fixes that reached another project before the problem hit there, with the budget holder agreeing on the target count up front [8]. Another option is whether lessons reached the right people in time, which can be shown “in weeks, not months” [9].
- **When the constraint is the product.** One company built a survey-based way to measure AI adoption so it wouldn’t need client approval for Jira or GitHub integrations. A commenter called that constraint “the feature” and named delivery leadership as the buyer [10]. Another said to ask trial firms what decision they would make differently after seeing the report [11].
- **AI wrapper tests.** A founder whose AI finds import-tax overpayments got 1 meeting from about 65 cold calls [12]. A commenter advised walking one real case through a partner and checking whether that partner is actually allowed to share the files [13]. Another proposed a blunter test:

if ChatGPT does 80% as well, “you actually don’t have a product” [14].

- **Reddit as competitive intel.** Product marketers called it a lead, not a source. Use it to find complaints and workarounds worth investigating, then confirm the issue still exists before it goes into a battlecard [15, 16]. Competitors’ pricing pages, changelogs and docs are what you can cite [17].

Quick hits

- **Early adopters.** Dan Shipper says employees who experiment with AI tools on weekends can be “a massive f*cking distraction.” He says product leaders need a way to harness them without distracting everyone else [18].
- **Defaults are becoming suggestions.** Someone used Claude Code to remove 25 Xiaomi packages and write a new launcher for a TV that showed an ad before Netflix [19]. Hiten Shah’s takeaway: “The default experience is becoming a suggestion” [20].
- **Agent UX patterns.** Gupta’s guide to Meta’s Muse agent describes several design choices: an editable SOUL.md rules file, a list of active goals instead of one long chat, approval cards before it spends or sends anything, and a Library that stores finished outputs [21].
- **Specs for AI.** At YC Paper Club, Clark Barrett said that once code is easy to write and verify, the specification is the hard part left. Agents can help write specs, but checking that a spec matches what the developer intended is still an open research problem [22]. Another speaker advised starting with the simplest interpretable method and adding complexity only when the performance gain justifies it [22].

Sources

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