When Building Becomes Cheap, Product Judgment Becomes the Filter

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The central shift is from AI-enabled building to deliberate product curation: protect cross-functional judgment, start with behavior, and make the launch bar explicit. The brief also covers design-partner validation, Neko Health's integrated care model, billing trust, PM job search, and a lightweight research tool.

Big Ideas

AI has changed the PM bottleneck from building to choosing. Hiten Shah argues that engineering scarcity once filtered out weak ideas; now a credible prototype can exist before anyone decides whether it deserves a meeting. His first discovery question is behavioral—what should somebody do differently if we get it right?—and he recommends looking for value that compounds with repeated use, such as context, learning, or trust, rather than copying a rival's UI. [1]

Ravi Mehta and Matthew Mamet show why this is an operating-model shift, not just a productivity gain. AI helped produce a nonprofit platform's North Star document and wireframe in two days rather than at least a week, but invented features were exposed in review and collapsed trust in the process. The old handoffs between PM, design, and engineering were also checks and balances; AI has made them optional. [2]

Application: replace "what can we build?" with an explicit curation bar. Ravi's team added a small internal product review with technical leads before stakeholder review and says it restored cross-functional vetting. Their release rule: every release must materially advance the customer outcome. [2] Aakash Gupta translates the same shift into PM work: discovery, strategy, roadmaps,

and a short spec paired with an AI prototype; coding skill is a multiplier, not the job definition. [3]

Tactical Playbook

Design partners: decide what you are validating before asking for money. A founder wanted paid three-month LOIs for both customer feedback and eventual conversion. The sharper question is whether the team is refining a largely validated product or still testing the market/core direction; those are different partnership jobs. [4, 5]

A practical sequence from a developer-tool builder: build the smallest version that solves one real pain, put it where target users already complain, and let interested users opt in. If you use a paid LOI, specify the satisfaction test, feedback cadence, and named user; early money can select for people willing to gamble on a promise rather than people who will actually use the product. [6, 7]

Case Studies & Lessons

Neko Health is selling an integrated care experience, not just a scan. For its US launch, Neko says its NYC site opens September 24 at $499; a one-hour visit combines skin, body-composition, EKG, blood-pressure, vascular, and lab assessments, followed by an in-person clinician review, without third-party imaging centers or send-out labs. It reports direct life-saving interventions in about 1.2% of scans and a 25,000-person NYC waitlist. [8] For PMs, the implication is clear: when the promise is preventive action, operations, turnaround time, and the human handoff are product surfaces too. [8]

Billing defaults are also product decisions. One user reports that an AI-platform promotion silently changed a $0 monthly spend limit to $2,000 so a $100 credit could be used, noticed only after $17 was consumed; the same post cites other users' surprise charges, so this is an anecdotal signal, not a verified platform-wide pattern. [9] A practitioner adds that billing APIs were immature and that spend buffers had historically been requested by enterprise IT, while consumer use is different. [10] Make spend caps, credits, and default changes part of launch review even when billing sits outside the PM org.

Career Corner

Lenny's Jobs turns PM job search into a curated workflow. The new directory focuses on PM, engineering, design, and growth/marketing roles; it vets companies and filters ghost roles and generic staffing-agency posts. It also adds unlisted community roles, a prioritized "Lenny 100," role-level AI tools for fit, interview preparation, outreach, and resume customization, plus company data and 100+ filters. The site is free; paid subscribers get higher limits and

proactive job alerts. [11] Use it to build a shortlist and a role-specific outreach plan rather than defaulting to application volume.

Tools & Resources

Free transcript-synthesis template for discovery work. A qualitative researcher with 30 years' experience built a Google Sheet that pairs transcripts and research questions with ChatGPT to produce per-interview summaries; a 22-interview project had previously taken a full day of rereading before coding. The template is free, but requires your own OpenAI API key and usage budget. [12]

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