

A background image showing a close-up of a person's hand holding a silver pen, poised to write on a document. The image is overlaid with a dark blue gradient.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

HOW AI IS REVOLUTIONIZING PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

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Picture this: You are the CEO of a software company, and a new market opportunity opens up. You approach your head of product management with an ambitious request to create a new SaaS product. This task typically involves two or three product managers conducting comprehensive customer and market research studies, followed by strategic planning and detailed product documentation for the software development team. Traditionally, you'd expect to hear, "Give my team two to three months."

Instead, your product leader confidently responds, "With my new AI-powered product management process, I can have everything planned out and ready for development in 14 days." This isn't science fiction; it is the emerging reality of AI being used in a product management process, a process I termed ACID + Product Management or AI Context Informed Decisions + Product Management.

AI-driven product management processes have transformed traditional workflows. What once required weeks of research, strategy, vision development, feature brainstorming, documentation and execution planning can now be compressed into a much shorter timeframe. This shift maintains quality while making product managers more productive and better able to focus on higher-level strategy, creativity and decision making without being bogged down by tedious busy work.

The Blistering Rate Of Corporate AI Integration

AI is fundamentally transforming business. Major technology companies like Meta and Google have demonstrated AI's transformative impact by integrating it into their software development processes.

Now, product management is the foundational discipline that informs and directs software development. Given that its practitioners are fairly technologically savvy, it represents the next logical frontier for heavy AI integration.

The Accelerating AI Advantage

AI capabilities have advanced exponentially, even within recent months. Foundational models like X.ai's Grok are setting new benchmarks, achieving a 44.4% score on "Humanity's Last Exam" and demonstrating sophisticated reasoning abilities.

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These aren't just incremental improvements; they are quantum leaps in AI's capacity to handle complex and nuanced tasks. AI agents now function as powerful workforce multipliers, capable of processing vast amounts of information and generating actionable insights.

Product management, which fundamentally combines information gathering, strategic decision-making and creative problem-solving, aligns well with AI's strengths. In my experience, AI excels at the first two components and continues to improve rapidly at creativity.

Understanding Product Management Functions

Having led the product management function for 25 years, I break the discipline down into four major processes: gathering customer, market and competitor insights; creating strategies and visions for successful products; forming and defining the product; and launching and iterating based on feedback.

Traditionally, the product management process demands significant time investment. Those deeply embedded in specific product areas develop an intuitive understanding, a rich repository of often unwritten knowledge about products, customers and market dynamics. This tacit knowledge has historically been a challenge for AI, as it exists in human experience rather than documented form.

However, with careful planning, I have found that AI systems can be provided with extensive vital context, enabling them to understand this unwritten knowledge and integrate it into their tasks, making them highly capable.

1. AI-Powered Insight Generation

At my firm, we've revolutionized how we extract actionable intelligence from diverse data sources. Social media comments, support tickets and customer service calls are now synthesized weekly into comprehensive product and customer insights through AI agents. Industry analysis reports, competitor announcements and news articles are automatically evaluated for their strategic implications.

This continuous analysis compiles into detailed monthly insight reports. More importantly, these insights are reconstituted into comprehensive contextual documents, typically 50 to 100 pages, providing any AI with holistic background knowledge about the market, customer base and competitive landscape for each product. This contextual foundation is loaded into the AI each time we open a new chat, instantly providing the necessary background to enable valuable and productive product discussions.

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2. Strategic Vision Development

Additionally, for key products, we generate contextual strategy documents, typically 20 to 40 pages, for the AI to ingest. These documents outline the key analyses and decision models and assumptions that led to that product's strategy. This allows us to discuss new marketplace changes or hypothesized product gaps with the AI, which can then retrospectively re-evaluate our strategic models and assess the implications of potential actions. Think of it as high-level strategic planning with an AI assistant.

We have found this to be extremely valuable, both for analyzing the impact of new market developments on the product and for completing foundational tasks such as creating quarterly product strategy reviews.

However, one downside is that human product managers face a steep learning curve in guiding AI-driven conversations in a way that aligns with best practices in product management.

3. Product Formation And Definition

Next, forward-thinking leaders are already leveraging AI to create product documentation and technical requirements. Beyond written definitions, I have seen AI systems generate graphical prototypes 1,000 times faster than traditional graphic designers, fundamentally accelerating all aspects of the product documentation process and giving developers a valuable starting point for their designs and code.

4. Execution And Iteration

Finally, AI systems can now translate product requirements into agile software feature tickets complete with user stories and comprehensive unit tests. I have seen software programmers praise these AI-generated items over the human-made versions, as they tend to be clearer, better documented and—ironically—free of simple errors.

Practical Advice For Product Managers And Companies

Every product management task carries unique nuances and requirements, making hands-on experimentation essential. Product managers can begin immediately with cutting-edge AI models, feeding them relevant data and contextual documents, then systematically testing how these systems respond to different requests and scenarios.

Learning through doing remains the most effective approach: Start with low-risk tasks, and gradually expand AI's role as you understand its capabilities and limitations. Typically, the more context you provide, the better the results. In closing, AI is rapidly becoming an integral part of product management. The more context and experience product managers build with it now, the better positioned they could be to accelerate and enhance their efforts in the future.