

ARE YOUR PRODUCT MANAGERS DOING THE RIGHT THING?



20 Signs of Success

1. They are late to the meeting because they were on the phone with a customer
2. They are shoulder to shoulder with tech support taking calls from users
3. They don't roll their eyes when a sales rep calls in with a question
4. They are in the office before the lights are on to talk to "international"
5. Their flights are booked before "sales" tells them there is a customer problem
6. They use their own product and can take it apart and put it back together
7. When the account is at risk, they are the ones you want on the customer call
8. They smile when they talk about their product and their customers
9. They talk about their accomplishments in terms of the product, not themselves
10. They always have one more question for the customer
11. The most successful salespeople have their number on speed dial
12. They eat lunch with the developers when they are not on the road
13. They have little to learn from industry analysts, analysts learn from them
14. They know that small product teams move mountains, committees make meetings
15. They prefer phone calls and face to face meetings over email and IM
16. They know the product financials off the top of their head
17. They can explain their product in a way that everyone understands
18. Their meetings end with a "to do" list for each participant
19. Everyone returns their phone calls, from the CEO to the administrative staff
20. The buck stops with them

20 Warning Signals

1. Their days are consumed with product requirements documentation and jumping "gates"
2. They can't come up with customer anecdotes to prove their point
3. The answer to market segmentation is small, medium and large-size companies
4. They are too busy with meetings to actually do what's important
5. They don't look you in the eye when they talk about their product
6. They can't explain the product in a way you can understand
7. They roll their eyes when you ask a question and somehow manage not to answer it
8. Their eyes glaze over when asked to calculate gross margin
9. The sales pipeline consists of a bunch of "one-off" projects
10. Their primary career goal is to have more people reporting to them
11. Someone else creates their slide deck and their name isn't even on the front cover
12. They can't tell you how they'll make the numbers for their product
13. They are confident that a bug-free product equals a quality product
14. They come in at 10:00 and go home as close to 4:00 o'clock as possible
15. They tout their own accomplishments, not the accomplishments of their product
16. Their competitive analysis looks like a feature matrix
17. Ask for a review of the requirements document, and you get grammar and punctuation edits
18. Their first response to a problem is to blame the customer, tech support, sales, or management
19. They come up with reasons not to get on a plane and visit with the user
20. They would rather not be on the front line

Successful product managers have a common list of attributes that apply across industries and market sectors. Look for Energy, Enthusiasm, Intelligence, Organization fit and Understanding of the domain when you hire. You'll find these qualities matter more than industry expertise or years of experience.