

9.21: What Do Marketers Do?

A product manager is the keeper of a brand. Their job is to develop the product strategy—the what, where, when, and how much of a product. Then, a product manager coordinates a cross-functional team of professionals from marketing, development, finance, legal, operations, manufacturing, supply chain, and more to bring the product to market successfully and shepherd it through its life cycle. Product managers understand how strategy underpins a product’s success in the market and serves as a path to grow the brand.

Interview a product manager to determine the following:

1. What is their philosophy on successful product management from launch through the product life cycle?
2. What does their job entail? Who are the key members of their product ecosystem?
3. What is the career path that led them to this role?

Product managers can be found at companies of all sizes, including both B2B and B2C. You can use your network on LinkedIn or your professor to source an interviewee.

Considering that “70% of small businesses are operated and owned by a single person,” the question arises: Who is doing the marketing? (Georgiev, 2024).

Find at least two small service businesses, one that you know to be successful and one that might be hanging on by a thread (hair salons, dry cleaners, mechanics, party planners, florists, etc.). Call and see if you can arrange a time, either on the phone or in person, to ask questions about their marketing efforts. You might want to do a bit of homework before you do. Here are questions that will help you gather information:

1. Do they consider what they do to promote their business as marketing?
2. Do they have someone who helps them?
3. Do they have a website or Facebook page?
4. What are the main activities that they do to market their business?
5. Do they have a formal business plan? A budget?
6. How do they figure out what their budget should look like?
7. Are there efforts they consider successful and anything that seriously did not work?
8. Do they respond to the marketing of their competitors?

Of course, there are additional questions that you can ask as time permits. The idea here is to get a good look at the challenges of marketing a small business. Is this something you see yourself doing—perhaps even as a business of your own?

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