

AI-First Product Management

Redefining How We Build Products

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AI-First Product Management



AI is no longer an add-on; it is becoming the core driver of product strategy.



We are entering a world where products behave like learning systems, not static software.



This talk explores how Product Leaders can shift mindsets, methods, and organizational capabilities to build AI-first products

Why AI-First, Why Now

The global inflection point:

- AI capabilities (reasoning, vision, language) have reached *near human-level* in many domains.
- GenAI adoption exploded—e.g., ChatGPT hit 100M users in 2 months.

The business mandate:

- 85% of enterprises call GenAI “critical or important” over the next 24 months.
- Gartner: By 2028, AI-first firms will outperform peers by 25% on business outcomes.

The readiness gap:

- Only ~1/3 of companies are investing meaningfully in AI today.
- This creates a *massive opportunity for Product Leaders* to set the direction.

What AI-First Really Means (Myths vs Reality)

AI-First ≠ adding AI features

- Not “AI sprinkled on top.”
- Not replacing every workflow with AI.
- Not experimenting in isolated pockets.

AI-First = redesigning the product around intelligence

- AI is the default lens for solving user problems.
- Products continuously learn, adapt, and optimize based on real-world usage.
- Ask upfront: “How can AI transform this experience?”

Key distinction:

- *AI-First* ≠ *AI-Always* — use AI where it drives superior outcomes, not everywhere.

Evolution of Product Thinking

Stage	What It Looks Like
Traditional	Human intuition defines features; static rules
Data-Driven	Decisions informed by analytics, but still deterministic
AI-Augmented	ML enhances parts of the workflow (e.g., recommendations)
AI-First	AI becomes the foundation—systems are adaptive, learning, personalized

The New Product Manager Mindset

PMs move from *designing artifacts* to *designing systems that evolve*.

Traditional PM	AI-First PM
Define Requirements	Define problems with cognitive friction
Ship features	Ship intelligence & learning loops
Measures adoption	Measure correctness, quality, impact, time saved
Static UX workflows	Adaptive, assistive UX
Human-driven insights	AI-scaled insights, experimentation and decisioning

Move from AI-Aware to AI-First

PMs should evolve from AI-Aware → AI-Enhanced → AI-Enabled → AI-First.



AI Aware - Teams and leaders understand the power and limitations of AI. Awareness builds trust, fosters ethical use, and prepares orgs to adapt responsibly



AI Enhanced - Elevate existing processes with AI to make them faster, sharper, and more impactful without disrupting what already works.



AI Enabled - Design solutions seamlessly integrating AI into the workflow, powering smarter decisions and automation while keeping humans in control.



AI First - Build with AI at the core - as the very foundation of products and strategies. Thinking starts with: How can AI fundamentally transform this experience?



AI-First

AI-Enabled

AI-Enhanced

AI-Aware

Core AI-First Product Principles

1. Problem-first, not feature-first:

- Frame problems around cognitive friction, not UI gaps.

2. Intelligent, adaptive experiences

- Design systems that learn from user behavior—"learning products, not static products."

3. Outcomes > features

- Success = correctness, usefulness, time saved, autonomy—not clicks or screens.

4. Data + models as product assets

- Treat data quality, labeling, telemetry, and feedback loops as part of product DNA.

5. Human + AI Collaboration

- Balance agency, safety, oversight and automation.

How AI changes the Product Lifecycle

Discovery:

- AI mines user conversations, sentiment, unmet needs at scale.
- PMs move from manual research → automated, multi-agent insights. (e.g., Grain AI, Perplexity, Notion AI)

Design:

- Storyboarding AI user flows (before → after).
- Prompt-driven wireframes and prototypes reduce cycles (Figma AI, Galileo AI).

Build:

- PRDs include prompting logic, hallucination handling, fallback flows, guardrails.
- PMs collaborate deeply with ML/AI engineers; think in iterations, not releases.

Delivery & Improvement:

- AI features require continuous evaluation → correctness rate, workflow completion, time saved.
- Real-time learning loops matter more than feature launches.

AI-First Opportunity Mapping

How to identify AI-first opportunities:

1. Where users do repetitive cognitive tasks

- Summarizing, searching, toggling between data sources.

2. Where there is friction, complexity, or decision fatigue

- Prioritization, analysis, multi-step decisions.

3. Outcomes > Where personalization matters

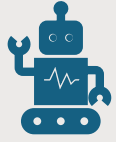
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Case Studies (Before → After)

From “Applications of AI-First.”

Case 1: Supply Chain Transformation

- **Old (AI on tasks):**
 - Demand forecasting, logistics optimization → siloed improvements.
- **AI-First (Agentic system):**
 - Predicts demand
 - Adjusts procurement
 - Reprices SKUs
 - Manages routing
 - Books carriers
 - Detects anomalies
 - Self-corrects deviations
- **Outcome:** An autonomous, self-balancing supply chain beyond human capacity.



Case Studies (Before → After)

Continued..

Case 2: Hiring & Talent Acquisition

- **Old (AI on tasks):**
 - Resume screening
 - Scheduling assistance
- **AI-First (Agentic hiring pipeline):**
 - Defines job requirements
 - Sources candidates
 - Screens + engages them
 - Conducts adaptive skill assessments
 - Produces ranked recommendations
- **Outcome:** The *entire hiring funnel* becomes outcome-driven and AI-led.

What Leaders must do next

1. Create an AI-First North Star

- Define what a “10× smarter product” looks like.

2. Build Organization-Wide AI Literacy

- Move teams from AI-Aware → AI-Enhanced → AI-Enabled → AI-First.

3. Invest in Data + Infrastructure Foundations

- Data pipelines, feedback loops, telemetry, evaluation frameworks.

4. Overcome structural blockers

- Legacy systems
- Skill gaps
- Weak governance
- Fragmented data
- No cross-functional AI operating model

5. Shift culture toward continuous learning

- AI-first products *learn every day*—so teams must, too.

Closing thoughts & Call-to-Action

Next 12-24 months will define which companies lead in the AI era.

- Start with one mission-critical workflow and redesign it AI-first.
- Treat data, models and feedback loops as strategic assets.
- Empower PMs to operate with AI as a teammate, not a tool.
- Build products that adapt, evolve and improve continuously.

Final message:

AI-first is not about building AI features. It's about building a new kind of product.

Helpful Resource:

Book: [Building AI-Powered Products](#) by Dr. Mariyl Nika