

# Beyond Senior PM: Designing a High-Impact Product Career

Many Senior Product Managers reach a point where the next step isn't obvious.

With flatter teams, changing career ladders and the rise of AI, product careers are becoming less linear than they once were.

At our Product Leadership Roundtable, PMs shared practical insights on navigating influence, progression and long-term impact beyond Senior PM.



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## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO EARN PROMOTION

Progression often depends on company structure. Some organisations have clear ladders, while others expect individuals to define their next step.

### Be intentional about your career goals

Don't assume good work will lead to promotion automatically. In reality, the next step usually requires clear conversations.

- Ask directly: "What would I need to demonstrate in the next 12 months to earn that promotion?"
- Set expectations early with your manager
- Revisit goals regularly rather than waiting for review cycles

### Document your impact

This makes performance reviews, promotion discussions and job interviews much easier.

- Maintain an experimentation log to track hypotheses, results and learning
- Keep a running list of product launches and measurable impact
- Revisit projects months later to update the long-term results

### Find advocates in the room

Promotions are often decided in conversations you're not present for. Identify a sponsor who understands your impact and can represent you in promotion discussions.

## NAVIGATING THE IC VS LEADERSHIP PATH IN AN AI-DRIVEN FUTURE

AI tools are already helping PMs move faster & more efficiently, helping to:

- Synthesise large volumes of customer interviews
- Structure performance reviews and impact documentation
- Generate hypotheses or ideas

AI is great to speed things up, but prioritisation, product judgment and deciding what not to build remain key human skills.

## INFLUENCING STAKEHOLDERS

### Pre-wire important decisions:

Speak with key stakeholders individually before major meetings. Help yourself to understand concerns early, tailor your messaging & build alignment before presenting to the wider group

### Map stakeholder motivations:

Understanding what drives different stakeholders can significantly improve influence. Identify what success looks like for each stakeholder, which metrics they care about most & their preferred communication style.

### Communicate in the format that works:

Different stakeholders absorb information differently. Use prototypes instead of long documents, condense complex ideas into clear headline metrics & deliver information in a format leaders can process quickly.

### Build trust through honest conversations:

Influence also depends heavily on trust. Being able to challenge respectfully and understand the pressures others are under often builds stronger long-term working relationships.

*"Influence usually happens before the meeting, the room just confirms it."*

### Increase your scope, not just your title:

Progression often comes from owning bigger problems rather than waiting for a new role.

- Offer to take ownership of cross-team initiatives
- Focus on commercial outcomes, not just delivery
- Be seen to step into ambiguous problems others avoid

### Progression isn't always a clear ladder

Some companies have clear product career frameworks, others don't. Focus on increasing the size and complexity of problems you own, so you're not stuck waiting for a role to potentially open up.