

Product Manager Screener and Scorecard Overview

Given that product management is a relatively new discipline, roles and responsibilities are not standardized, and product managers transition into the role from a variety of backgrounds, hiring can be a challenge and there may not be candidates that fit all your ideal requirements. You'll need to determine your top priorities and weigh the candidates' different skills and experiences against your needs. No fear - to support the hiring process, we have a screener and scorecard to address the following roles:

- Product Manager
- Technical Product Manager
- Growth Product Manager

The scorecard captures the key product management competencies desired for our company. The screener lists a series of behavioral questions to assess skills and experiences as well as sample good and great candidate key words in answers.

When using the screener and scorecard, keep in mind:

- Best practice is to ask the **same set of high-level questions** for each candidate - this will help you levelset the candidates against each other
- Use **open-ended questions and deep dive in areas**, when needed. Not all candidates will answer the questions in the same way and the soft skills may not be apparent in the examples. You'll want to give the candidate opportunities to demonstrate their experiences by asking direct questions relevant to his/her background
- **Validate and revalidate** experiences by asking for detail and assessing the experiences from various points of view
- The screener and scorecard only addresses product competencies and do not address for cultural fit, as that was to be assessed in a separate process. **Cultural fit should be evaluated for not only our company but for the individual teams** that the candidate is being considered for.

Product Manager Candidate Screener

- Tell me about yourself and why you are interested in the position.
 - *What is the extent of the candidate's product management experience?*
 - *formal training (e.g. Bootcamp)?*
 - *how many years?*
 - *transition from another discipline (e.g. design, eng, customer success)?*
 - *types of products managed previously?*
 - *roles and responsibilities in prior roles (e.g. backlog management, roadmap, documentation, etc.)?*
 - *Does the candidate have a logical and clear communication style?*
 - *are the roles and responsibilities clearly articulated?*
 - *does the candidate highlight relevant points to the role (e.g. role, responsibilities, domain, projects)?*
 - *Is there interest/experience in working with remote teams?*
 - *Is s/he interested in our company's products? Mission? Goals?*

Key Words

Good Candidate	Great Candidate
<i>What is the extent of the candidate's product management experience?</i> • 3+ years of PM experience ○ TPM - May have transitioned from Eng. Was previously a TPM ○ Growth PM - Was previously in Product Marketing or a PM • Worked in B2B or B2C • Previously managed product in our market space ○ TPM - product was an API, integration, re-architecture project etc. ○ Growth PM - product/feature was part of the conversation funnel (e.g. awareness, acquisition, adoption, retention) • Managed and prioritized backlog ○ TPM - Reviewed partner and customer documentation to identify	<i>What is the extent of the candidate's product management experience?</i> • 5+ years of PM experience ○ TPM - May have transitioned from Eng. Was previously a TPM ○ Growth PM - Was previously in Product Marketing or a PM • Worked in B2B or B2C • Previously managed product in our market space ○ TPM - product was an API, integration, re-architecture project etc. ○ Growth PM - product/feature was part of the conversation funnel (e.g. awareness, acquisition, adoption, retention) • Owned prioritization and product strategy ○ TPM - Reviewed partner and customer

opportunities • Partnered with Design on Discovery. Met with customers and users • Wrote user stories • Participated in Agile ceremonies (i.e. stand ups, demos) • Drafted product documentation (e.g. Q&A) <i>Does the candidate have a logical and clear communication style?</i> • Shared career progression into product management • Provides rationale for exploring new opportunities • Explains interest in our company <i>Is there interest/experience in working with remote teams?</i> • Worked in remote companies before • Interested in remote <i>Is s/he interested in our company's products? Mission? Goals?</i> • Aligned with interest in our problem space	documentation to identify opportunities • Managed and prioritized backlog • Partnered with Design on Discovery. Met with customers and users • Wrote user stories • Participated in Agile ceremonies (i.e. stand ups, demos) • Managed product documentation (e.g. Q&A) • Partnered with cross-functional teams on go-to-market • Was given increasing responsibility by leading larger features / more products / more teams <i>Does the candidate have a logical and clear communication style?</i> • Shared linear career progression into product management • Demonstrates progression in career with expanded responsibility and scope • Provides rationale for exploring new opportunities • Explains interest in our company <i>Is there interest/experience in a remote company?</i> • Worked in remote companies before • Interested in remote <i>Is s/he interested in our company's products? Mission? Goals?</i> • Researched company • Aligned with interest in our problem space • Entrepreneurial
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- Tell me about your current role on your team, who else you work with, and how you work with them. [\[If more detail needed after previous question\]](#)
 - *Is the current role in product?*

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- Does s/he work directly with Eng and Devs?
- How does s/he engage in Discovery? In Development? In Go-to-Market?
- What type of product is s/he working on? Is it B2B?
 - For Tech PMs, is the role an API or integration?
 - For Growth PMs, is the role focused on the conversion funnel?
- What does s/he own (e.g. backlog, prioritization, roadmap, go-to-market, etc.)
- How does s/he describe the role (e.g. collaborate, support, project management)?
 - For Tech PM, does the role involve breaking down technical work into releases, planning, and tracking?
 - For Growth PM, does the role involve targets for conversions and features to move prospects and users through the funnel?
- How does s/he support Devs? Design?

Key Words

Good Candidate	Great Candidate
<i>Is the current role in product?</i> ● Product Manager ○ TPM - Was previously a TPM ○ Growth PM - Was previously a Growth PM, PM <i>Does s/he work directly with Eng and Devs?</i> ● Collaborates closely with Eng and Design as part of one team and daily ● Incorporates feedback in backlog prioritization ● Shares roadmap and updates with the Eng and Design regularly (at least quarterly) ● Reviews research plans with Eng Lead for thoughts and feedback ● Includes Eng in Design sessions ● Works with Eng on a technical review session, when needed, during Design <i>How does s/he engage in Discovery? In Development? In Go-to-Market?</i> ● Partners with Design on Discovery ● Daily engagement in	<i>Is the current role in product?</i> ● Product Manager, Senior Product Manager ○ TPM - Was previously a TPM ○ Growth PM - Was previously a Growth PM, PM <i>Does s/he work directly with Eng and Devs?</i> ● Collaborates closely with Eng and Design as part of one team and daily ● Incorporates feedback in backlog prioritization ● Shares roadmap and updates with the Eng and Design regularly (at least quarterly) ● Reviews research plans with Eng Lead for thoughts and feedback ● Includes Eng in Design sessions ● Works with Eng on a technical review session, when needed, during Design <i>How does s/he engage in Discovery? In Development? In Go-to-Market?</i> ● Partners with Design on Discovery

Development. Participates in Agile ceremonies (e.g. stand ups, grooming, retros) - Partners on go-to-market with cross-functional partners <i>What type of product is s/he working on? Is it B2B?</i> - Feature is SaaS scalable - TPM - feature an API, integration, re-architecture project etc. - Growth PM - feature part of the conversation funnel (e.g. awareness, acquisition, adoption, retention) <i>What does s/he own (e.g. backlog, prioritization, roadmap, go-to-market, etc.)</i> - Owns backlog, prioritization, and roadmap - Partners on go-to-market with cross-functional team members <i>How does s/he describe the role (e.g. collaborate, support, project management)?</i> - Represents the customer and business - Works with Eng and Design; collaborates on product delivery - Product is the “what”, Eng is the “how”. Shares business goals and provides context to the team - Unblocks Eng and Design - Participates in ceremonies (e.g. stand ups, grooming, testing) - Partners with Design on Discovery - Writes user stories and accepts stories - Writes and updates documentation for shipped features - Trains internal teams - Partners with cross-functional teams (e.g. Support, Marketing, Sales)	- Daily engagement in Development. Participates in Agile ceremonies (e.g. stand ups, grooming, retros) - Partners on go-to-market with cross-functional partners <i>What type of product is s/he working on? Is it B2B?</i> - Feature is SaaS and in our market space - TPM - product was an API, integration, re-architecture project etc. - Growth PM - product/feature was part of the conversation funnel (e.g. awareness, acquisition, adoption, retention) <i>What does s/he own (e.g. backlog, prioritization, roadmap, go-to-market, etc.)</i> - Owns backlog, prioritization, and roadmap - Partners on go-to-market with cross-functional team members <i>How does s/he describe the role (e.g. collaborate, support, project management)?</i> - Represents the customer and business - Works with Eng and Design; collaborates on product delivery - Product is the “what”, Eng is the “how”. Shares business goals and provides context to the team - Unblocks Eng and Design - Participates in ceremonies (e.g. stand ups, grooming, testing) - Partners with Design on Discovery - Writes user stories and accepts stories - Writes and updates documentation for shipped features - Trains internal teams
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<i>How does s/he support Devs? Design?</i> • Works with Design on Discovery (e.g. research plans, tests) • Unblocks the team	• Partners with cross-functional teams (e.g. Support, Marketing, Sales)' <i>How does s/he support Devs? Design?</i> • Works with Design on Discovery (e.g. research plans, tests) • Unblocks the team • Meets with cross-functional stakeholders on a regular cadence (e.g. bi-weekly, monthly) to share roadmap
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- Take me through how you managed a feature from conception to launch.
 - *What was the feature?*
 - *For Tech PM, is the feature an API, integration, re-architecture project etc.?*
 - *For Growth PM, is the feature part of the conversation funnel (e.g. awareness, acquisition, adoption, retention)?*
 - *What was the process for discovery? did s/he lead it, with support from Design?*
 - *What was the rationale for prioritization? Was there a business case and/or determinants for success? Was there a need for buy-in from other internal teams?*
 - *How did s/he partner with design and eng? How did s/he break down work?*
 - *How did s/he work with cross-functional partners on go-to-market?*
 - *What were the results and lessons learned? What data was used to assess the result*

Key Words

Good Candidate	Great Candidate
<i>What was the feature?</i> • Feature is SaaS ○ TPM - feature an API, integration, re-architecture project etc. ○ Growth PM - feature part of the conversation funnel (e.g. awareness, acquisition, adoption, retention) <i>What was the process for discovery? did s/he lead it, with support from Design?</i> • Leads Discovery	<i>What was the feature?</i> • Feature is in SaaS in our market space ○ TPM - feature an API, integration, re-architecture project etc. ○ Growth PM - feature part of the conversation funnel (e.g. awareness, acquisition, adoption, retention) <i>What was the process for discovery? did s/he lead it, with support from Design?</i>

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- Shares roadmap and updates with the Design regularly (at least quarterly)
- Partners with Design on research backlog and plans
- Works with Design to execute research plans, customer/user interviews, and tests
- Collaborates with Design on designs
- Incorporates Design's thoughts and feedback into product backlog

What was the rationale for prioritization? Was there a business case and/or determinants for success? Was there a need for buy-in from other internal teams?

- <See following question>

How did s/he partner with design and eng? How did s/he break down work?

- Shares business goals regularly with Design and Eng (e.g. quarterly)
- Collaborates with Design and Eng to break down work

How did s/he work with cross-functional partners on go-to-market?

- Regularly shares updates with cross-functional partners (i.e. Sales, Support)
- Partners with Marketing, Sales, and Support on Go-to-market plans
- Shares training documentation and trains teams

What were the results and lessons learned? What data was used to assess the result

- Reviewed product engagement metrics and gathered feedback from customers/users and cross-functional team members

- Leads Discovery
- Shares roadmap and updates with the Design regularly (at least quarterly)
- Partners with Design on research backlog and plans
- Works with Design to execute research plans, customer/user interviews, and tests
- Collaborates with Design on designs
- Incorporates Design's thoughts and feedback into product backlog

What was the rationale for prioritization? Was there a business case and/or determinants for success? Was there a need for buy-in from other internal teams?

- <See following question>

How did s/he partner with design and eng? How did s/he break down work?

- Shares business goals regularly with Design and Eng (e.g. quarterly)
- Collaborates with Design and Eng to break down work

How did s/he work with cross-functional partners on go-to-market?

- Regularly shares updates with cross-functional partners (i.e. Sales, Support)
- Partners with Marketing, Sales, and Support on Go-to-market plans
- Shares training documentation and trains teams

What were the results and lessons learned? What data was used to assess the result

- Had identified the metrics for success and measured it (e.g. # of users increased, decrease in tickets, revenue, etc.)
 - TPM - # of support tickets, questions on

	- documentation - Growth PM - increases in conversion in the funnel - Reviewed product engagement metrics and gathered feedback from customers/users and cross-functional team members - Tracked learnings
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- Tell me about a time you used data to make a decision.
 - Was there an identified goal (e.g. customer pain point, revenue, engagement etc.)?*
 - What was the depth and breath of data used (e.g. testing, product engagement metrics, etc.)?*
 - What tools were used?*
 - Was there a deep dive on the data to fully understand benefits and potential tradeoffs, risks?*
 - What was the prioritization process?*
 - What was the outcome of the decision?*

Key Words

Good Candidate	Great Candidate
<i>Was there an identified goal (e.g. customer pain point, revenue, engagement etc.)?</i> - Shares a situation and context for a new feature - Identifies goal - such as growth, retention, addressing a customer pain point, solving a technical need - TPM - goal may be new partner integration - Growth PM - goal should be getting conversion or funnel optimization - Identifies target customers / users - Discusses assumptions and considerations for validating feature	<i>Was there an identified goal (e.g. customer pain point, revenue, engagement etc.)?</i> - Shares a situation and context for a new feature - Identifies goal - such as growth, retention, addressing a customer pain point, solving a technical need - TPM - goal may be new partner integration - Growth PM - goal should be getting conversion or funnel optimization - Identifies target customers / users - Discusses assumptions and considerations for validating feature - Shares potential alternatives

<i>What was the depth and breath of data used (e.g. testing, product engagement metrics, etc.)?</i> • Reviews product engagement data and metrics applicable to his/her product • Conducts customer interviews; perhaps has a customer product council • Plans research studies, executes tests, reviews post-test results <i>What tools were used?</i> • References workflow tools and internal wiki (e.g. Jira, Confluence) • Uses dashboards and product engagement tools (e.g. Amplitude, Tableau, Looker) <i>Was there a deep dive on the data to fully understand benefits and potential tradeoffs, risks?</i> • Reviewed data and determined approach <i>What was the prioritization process?</i> • <See following question> <i>What was the outcome of the decision?</i> • Shares the outcome of the decision (go, no-go)	<i>What was the depth and breath of data used (e.g. testing, product engagement metrics, etc.)?</i> • Reviews product engagement data and metrics applicable to his/her product • Conducts customer interviews; perhaps has a customer product council • Plans research studies, executes tests, reviews post-test results • Leverages data from other cross-functional team, such as support tickets, salesforce data, etc. • Researches market and competitive trends for data • Discusses deep diving into data for insights specific to his/her situation <i>What tools were used?</i> • References workflow tools and internal wiki (e.g. Jira, Confluence) • Uses dashboards and product engagement tools (e.g. Amplitude, Tableau, Looker) • Leverages other internal tools for data (e.g. Salesforce) <i>Was there a deep dive on the data to fully understand benefits and potential tradeoffs, risks?</i> • Reviewed the product engagement data • Gathered other data to assess • Considered benefits, risks, and tradeoffs <i>What was the prioritization process?</i> • <See following question> <i>What was the outcome of the decision?</i> • Shares the outcome of the decision (go, no-go) • Discusses metrics for success to assess any feature shipped
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- How do you prioritize your backlog?
 - Does s/he align the prioritization to the product vision, strategy, and goals?
 - Does s/he reference customer / user needs and the opportunity?
 - Does s/he get inputs from various data sources and/or cross functional partners (e.g. product engagement data, tickets, user success)?
 - Was there a partnership with Design on discovery and research?
 - How does s/he collaborate with Eng on technical discovery?
 - Does s/he have a roadmap?

Key Words

Good Candidate	Great Candidate
<i>Does s/he align the prioritization to the product vision, strategy, and goals?</i> • Discusses process for prioritization • Starts with aligning to company vision and goals • Shares product goals	<i>Does s/he align the prioritization to the product vision, strategy, and goals?</i> • Discusses process for prioritization; owns the product strategy and process • Starts with aligning to company vision and goals • Shares product goals
<i>Does s/he reference customer / user needs and the opportunity?</i> • References customer/user segment • Speaks to core user(s), pain points and needs	<i>Does s/he reference customer / user needs and the opportunity?</i> • References customer/user segment • Speaks to core user(s), pain points and needs • Provides an overview of product, how it solves the need, key differentiators, and potential gaps
<i>Does s/he get inputs from various data sources and/or cross functional partners (e.g. product engagement data, tickets, user success)?</i> • Considers near-term goals • Uses customer data such as interviews, test results, product engagement data, etc. • Leverages information from cross-functional partners	<i>Does s/he get inputs from various data sources and/or cross functional partners (e.g. product engagement data, tickets, user success)?</i> • Considers company goals, such as OKRs • Uses customer data such as interviews, test results, product engagement data, support tickets.etc • Considers market trends and competitive data • Leverages interviews and data
<i>Was there a partnership with Design on discovery and research?</i> • Leads Discovery • Partners with Design on research backlog and plans • Works with Design to execute	

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research plans, customer/user interviews, and tests • Collaborates with Design on designs <i>How does s/he collaborate with Eng on technical discovery?</i> • Shares roadmap, context, and updates with Eng regularly (at least quarterly) • Proactively gets feedback from Eng lead on feasibility for development activities • Works with Eng on a technical review session, when needed, prior to development • Incorporates Eng's thoughts and feedback into product backlog <i>Does s/he have a roadmap?</i> • Owns and manages backlog and prioritization • Develops and manages the roadmap	from team and cross-functional partners <i>Was there a partnership with Design on discovery and research?</i> • Leads Discovery • Shares roadmap and updates with the Design regularly (at least quarterly) • Partners with Design on research backlog and plans • Works with Design to execute research plans, customer/user interviews, and tests • Collaborates with Design on designs • Incorporates Design's thoughts and feedback into product backlog <i>How does s/he collaborate with Eng on technical discovery?</i> • Shares roadmap, context, and updates with Eng regularly (at least quarterly) • Reviews research plans with Eng Lead for thoughts and feedback • Proactively gets feedback from Eng lead on feasibility for development activities • Works with Eng on a technical review session, when needed, prior to development • Incorporates Eng's thoughts and feedback into product backlog <i>Does s/he have a roadmap?</i> • Owns and manages backlog and prioritization • Develops and manages the roadmap
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- Tell me about a time when you influenced a team.
 - *How does s/he describe the need for influence, conflict, and/or setbacks?*
 - *What is the process for alignment? Is it ongoing or as needed?*
 - *Which stakeholders are addressed? Does s/he influence not just execs but also cross-functionally?*

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- What data is used (e.g. company goals, targets, product engagement, support tickets, competitive landscape, business case)?
- What tools are used (e.g. roadshow doc, roadmap, confluence)?

Key Words

Good Candidate	Great Candidate
<i>How does s/he describe the need for influence, conflict, and/or setbacks?</i> • Influence is part of the PM role • Example is from current or previous PM role <i>What is the process for alignment? Is it ongoing or as needed?</i> • Has a process for communicating and socializing new initiatives and updates • Meets with cross-functional partners on an ongoing basis <i>Which stakeholders are addressed? Does s/he influence not just execs but also cross-functionally?</i> • The core team includes Eng and Design • S/he meets with cross-functional partners when conducting a research study or when there is a significant release shipped <i>What data is used (e.g. company goals, targets, product engagement, support tickets, competitive landscape, business case)?</i> • Considers company goals, such as OKRs • Uses customer data such as interviews, test results, product engagement data, support tickets, etc • Leverages interviews and data from team and cross-functional partners <i>What tools are used (e.g. roadshow doc, roadmap, confluence)?</i>	<i>How does s/he describe the need for influence, conflict, and/or setbacks?</i> • Influence is part of the PM role • It is not about conflict but understanding the others' point of view (i.e. empathy) • Example is from current or previous PM role <i>What is the process for alignment? Is it ongoing or as needed?</i> • Meets with cross-functional partners on an ongoing basis to go over updates • Shares roadmap and prioritization process regularly <i>Which stakeholders are addressed? Does s/he influence not just execs but also cross-functionally?</i> • The core team includes Eng and Design • S/he meets with Marketing, Sales and Support and Sales regularly and on an ongoing basis <i>What data is used (e.g. company goals, targets, product engagement, support tickets, competitive landscape, business case)?</i> • Considers company goals, such as OKRs • Uses customer data such as interviews, test results, product engagement data, support tickets, etc • Considers market trends and competitive data • Leverages interviews and data from team and cross-functional

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• Owns and manages backlog • Manages the roadmap • Writes and shares product and training documentation	partners <i>What tools are used (e.g. roadshow doc, roadmap, confluence)?</i> • Owns and manages backlog • Develops and manages the roadmap • Manages product and training documentation • Shares out product updates with an internal wiki, blog, slack channel etc.
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- Talk to me about how you learn new things...
 - *Who do you learn from?*
 - *Teach me something you learned recently (from anywhere in your life)*
 - *What do you do when you make mistakes? Or learn that your decisions (even though made with the best intentions) were wrong?*

Good Candidate	Great Candidate
<i>Who do you learn from?</i> • Hopefully, everyone. They believe everyone has something to teach them • They talk excitedly about learning • They read <i>Teach me something you learned recently (from anywhere in your life)</i> • They do this in an engaging way and walk you through what was their original assumption and how they learned it was wrong. <i>What do you do when you make mistakes? Or learn that your decisions (even though made with the best intentions) were wrong?</i> • They admit to a mistake they have made and have a clear story of what they learned from it and changed in the future.	<i>Who do you learn from?</i> • Talks about key people they admire and follow and what they've learned from them • Talks about mentors and mentees that they learn from • Provides concrete examples <i>Teach me something you learned recently (from anywhere in your life)</i> • They ask you if there's anything you're interested in learning about • They check for your interest and understanding <i>What do you do when you make mistakes? Or learn that your decisions (even though made with the best intentions) were wrong?</i> • They tell an applicable story about a mistake, how they measured it was wrong, how they promoted the issue and took ownership of it and helping with the solution.

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	• They talk about systems they put in place to help others not make the same mistake.
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Product Manager Scorecard - Candidate

Competencies	Score (rank 1-5, 5 highest)	Assessment Criteria
Product Management Experience (SaaS, market space)		• 3 - 6 years in product management • Experienced in owning backlog, writing user stories, participating in Agile ceremonies, testing, and shipping features • Experience in discovery - identifying hypothesis, conducting customer research, executing tests etc. • Domain expertise in our market space • <i>For TPM - API, integrations; Engineering training or background preferred</i> • <i>For Growth - focus on conversion and funnel optimization</i>
Strategic Planning / Product Prioritization		• Led and partnered on Discovery • Owned backlog and prioritization • Owned and managed roadmap, developing it in partnership with team (e.g. Eng, Design), cross-functional team members • Communicated roadmap across organization. Owned processes to ensure alignment (e.g. post on internal wiki, regular check-ins, demos)
Launch Implementation		• Manage release plans. Identify and confirm readiness for launch • Partners with Marketing, Sales, and Support for go-to-market plans • Own and drafts training documentation. Trained team members, as needed • Reviews post-launch metrics for improvement opportunities

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		• <i>For TPM - Experience creating and updating technical documentation (e.g. readme, diagrams)</i>
Data-Driven (e.g. data to inform decisions)		• Utilizes various sources of data - quantitative and qualitative - to inform decisions. Data sources include product engagement, support tickets, customer interviews, etc. • Identifies hypotheses and assumptions. Develops frameworks for understanding customers, users, and market. Works to validate needs • Reviews data on a regular cadence (e.g. daily). Gathers data as needed to deep dive on questions and track towards targets
Strong Communicator		• Logical communicator • Highlighted key points for questions, with answers relevant to role • Clear with details sufficient to support story and answer questions • Strong written communication