



User Experience and Digital Product Management

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COURSE SHORT DESCRIPTION

Creating a great user experience is essential to any business, and technology startups are using it as a secret weapon to usurp incumbent players in almost every industry. Traditionally, companies have competed on the quality of their products and services, pricing, and distribution. User experience adds a new dimension that emphasizes not the product or service itself, but instead the consumer's experience of using that product or service. It is a subtle and often misunderstood distinction with profound implications. Product management is a growing field born out of the need for someone within an organization to own the user experience and with it the entire end-to-end production process. Product management is particularly well-suited to those who want to play at the intersection of technology, business, and management and is often referred to as the "CEO of the product". This course is aimed at those without a strong technical background who want to develop knowledge and skills to get a leg up when founding or joining a technology company.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. User Experience Tools

You will learn what user experience (UX) is as well as examples of, common attributes of, and ultimately how to create a great UX with tangible and practical tools of the trade. UX creation is generally regarded as a design discipline, but it can and should be practiced by everyone within an organization in order to bridge business objectives with customer needs.

2. UX as a Business Differentiator

UX is not only "nice to have" but can be a meaningful business differentiator. We will examine specific cases where UX has allowed companies to rise above the competition and how they were able to achieve those results.

3. Digital Product Lifecycle

The product manager must manage the process of creating a digital product from front to

end, and as any product manager will tell you: there is no end. You will learn how digital products get built from conception to launch and the role of the product manager at each stage.

4. Product Management Fundamentals

The field of product management encapsulates not only UX, but any and all parts of the product creation process. You will learn the essentials of product management and actionable ways to drive not only a product, but a team.

COURSE ROADMAP/SCHEDULE

Session 1: Defining User Experience

- Course overview
- Defining UX
- Principles of great UX
- User-centered design process

Session 2: UX as a Business Differentiator

- Review case studies
- Optimizing for customer loyalty
- Differentiation in luxury vs. commodity markets
- Balancing UX goals with business goals
- Creating a UX-centric strategy

Session 3: UX Tools

- Research
- Personas
- Journey Maps
- Prototyping

Session 4: Digital Product Lifecycle

- Product lifecycle overview
 - Research
 - Planning
 - Design
 - Development
 - Quality Assurance
 - Deployment
 - Iteration
- The product manager's role

- Estimating timelines, resources, etc.
- Common pitfalls

Session 5: Product Management Fundamentals

- Defining product management
 - Managing the product
 - Managing the process
 - Managing the team
 - Managing stakeholders
- Minimally viable products
- KPIs and measuring success

Session 6: Final Presentations

- Group presentations
- Expert panel feedback
- Open Q&A with each group
- Closing remarks

ASSIGNMENTS/METHOD OF EVALUATION

Your grade for this course will be based on the following:

35% of your grade will be based on the individual assignment outlined below.

Prototyping (individual assignment)

You will create a persona for a certain type of Columbia student and a corresponding journey map. Identify one pain point that you want to solve. Write a hypothesis statement for your solution and devise an experiment to test it. Using a paper prototype, run your experiment with at least three students on campus. Then write a one page summary about whether you proved your hypothesis right or wrong and what you learned in the process. Further details to be disclosed in class.

35% of your grade will be based on the group presentation outlined below.

Final Presentation (group assignment)

Groups of five will create and present a presentation to the class about a theoretical product of your choice. The presentation must outline the product, the target market, the user experience, and a proposal of how to produce the product and UX. All group members must participate in the presentation. There will be a panel of industry experts (startup founders, VCs, etc.) in the classroom. The panel will provide feedback and ask questions, and there will be an open Q&A from other students. Further details to be disclosed in class.

30% of your grade will be based on active participation, attendance, and attention during class lectures, discussions, and activities.

Participation

Coming to class, being attentive, and actively participating are expected and will account for half of your grade. User experience and product management are participatory disciplines. Asking questions, challenging assumptions, and inspiring others are all part of the process. An active classroom will simulate what it is like to work on a product team.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Throughout the sessions, various case studies, articles, videos, podcasts, and other materials will be assigned as required content.

CLASSROOM NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

Because of the small number of sessions, attendance at all six sessions is required. As they will take place in the evening, eating in class is allowed. No use of phones, tablets, wearables, computers, or other internet-enabled devices allowed in class. Active participation is encouraged.

INCLUSION, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

At Columbia Business School, we believe that diversity strengthens any community or business model and brings it greater success. Columbia Business School is committed to providing all students with the equal opportunity to thrive in the classroom by providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bias on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability. Students seeking accommodation in the classroom may obtain information on the services offered by Columbia University's Office of Disability Services online at www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html or by contacting (212) 854-2388.