

# CRACKING THE P M SKILLS

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## Design a ...

1. Ask questions.
2. Provide a structure.
3. Identify users.
4. Describe use cases & goals.
  - ▶ If altering existing product, how well does it meet user needs?
5. Design the product.

## Estimation Questions

*How many golf balls can fit in a 747? How many keyboards are sold in a year?*

1. Clarify.
  2. Think about what you know.
  3. Make an equation.
  4. Consider significant edge cases.
  5. Solve components.
  6. Sanity Check.
- ▶ Use nice, round numbers.
  - ▶ Don't get too detailed. You're only going for a ballpark estimate.

## Improve ...

1. Identify product goal.
2. Describe product issues.
  - ▶ Put users first!
3. Explore possible solutions.
4. Describe implementations of solutions.
5. Explain how you would validate implementations are successful.

## Favorite product and why

1. What problems does it solve?
2. How does the product accomplish these goals? Why do you love it?
3. How does it compare to the alternatives?
4. How would you improve it?

## Product Questions

### Preparation

- ▶ Analyze your favorite physical product, website, and mobile app.
- ▶ Understand metrics: users, traffic, referral, engagement, retention, revenue, costs, etc.
- ▶ Analyze company's product: users, goals, strengths, challenges, competitors, tradeoffs.

★ FOCUS ON THE USER! ★

## Case Questions

### Marketing

- ▶ First analyze the company, competitors, customers, and landscape.
- ▶ Then design your marketing plan to fit goals.

### Launching a Product

1. Discuss vision for product.
2. Determine goals of launch.
3. Design overview of launch.
4. Plan pre, during, & post-launch.

### Strategy

- ▶ Macro: What is the product's strategy?
- ▶ Micro: How does the product align with company strategy?
- ▶ Think: mission, goals, strengths, weaknesses.

### Problem Solving

1. Isolate the problem.
2. Diagnose the cause.
3. Solve the problem.
4. Consider tradeoffs.

**Frameworks:** Customer Decision Making Process, Marketing Mix (4 P's), SWOT Analysis, Situational Analysis (5 C's), Porter's Five Forces. Rarely directly useful, but good inspiration to create your own framework!

### Pricing and Profitability

- ▶ Calculate with: cost-plus pricing, value pricing, competitive pricing, experimental pricing.
- ▶ Structures: ad-supported, freemium, tied, a la carte, subscription, free trials, razor blade model.

### Brainstorming: How many things can you do with a paperclip?

- ▶ Don't worry about a stupid idea. Be creative!
- ▶ Strengths and Key Assets: A paperclip is thin, bendy, metal, light, pokey, etc.
- ▶ One vs. Many: What can you do with one paperclip? What if you had many?
- ▶ As-Is vs. With Modifications: What can you do with a paperclip as-is? What if you can modify it (melt it down, etc.)?

**D** **Drive.** Don't make your interviewer ask a bunch of follow-ups. Take charge. Drive, don't ride.

**I** **Instincts:** Show good instincts. Your interviewer is testing how you'd perform without all the research.

**F** **Framework:** Structure is key. Come up with your own framework to tackle each problem.



Books by  
Gayle

## It's always about ...

- ▶ **Structure:** Demonstrate that you can break down a problem and discuss it in an organization fashion.
- ▶ **User-Focused Thinking:** Put yourself in the user's shoes and think about what they want.
- ▶ **Problem-Solving Ability:** Companies want smart people.