Software Product Management, a practical Studio
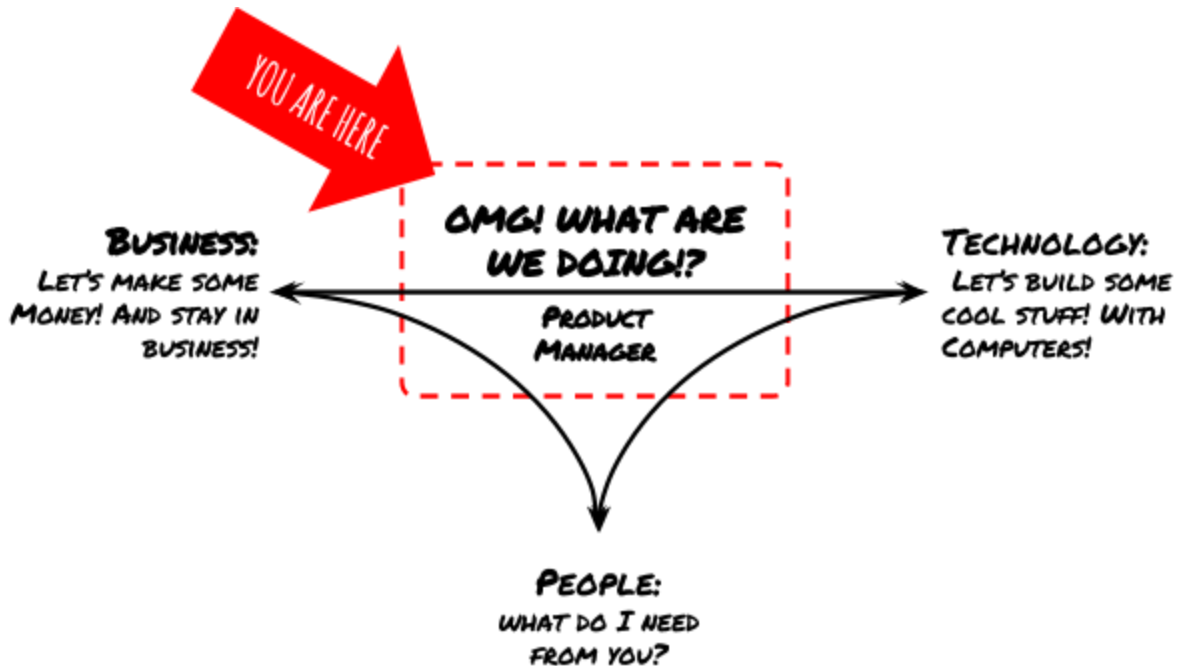
ATLS 4519-090/091   4:00 - 5:50   MW   ATLS 1B25   Bacus, J.

On a software product team, the Product Manager is an important role but also among the most complex to learn how to do effectively. Product Managers are often referred to as the "CEO of the product", responsible for determining what the product is, who it is for, how it should work, how to get it successfully to market and how to keep it growing and developing over time. We will explore the role and function of product management with a practical, studio-oriented method. In other words, you'll build a real product and get it to market over the course of the semester. There's no better way to learn than by actually doing.

●   Come prepared to work hard in a studio environment. Class time will be reserved for group meetings and 1:1 product reviews throughout the semester, with outside reviewers from the local startup community at mid-term and semester end to provide additional perspective on the student's products.

●   This is a student product lead class: Expect to work outside of class hours if you want to make progress. Students will be responsible for designing and implementing (all the way to market) a simple software product of their own invention over the course of the semester.

●   Students should have some prior experience building or designing simple software apps, or should be willing to learn that independently along the way. Programming will not be a focus of the class, though it is obviously relevant. Our work together will focus on design, strategy, market, vision, roadmap and… execution!

●   A rudimentary understanding of basic business practices, particularly practical prior experience with software startups will give you a leg up in this studio, but it is not required.

●   We will be working collaboratively using Google Docs, Hangouts and other cloud-based tools specific to the Product Management process. You'll want to have your own laptop.

The studio will be led by **John Bacus, Director of Product Management for Trimble, Inc.** and long-time leader of the SketchUp product management team. Over the last fifteen years, he has built a half dozen successful software products, including SketchUp— the most widely used 3D modeling program in the world. As a member of SketchUp's Boulder local startup company (@Last Software), John has seen startup cultures, grown with those to a sale and six-year career at Google followed by an unusual divestiture from there to Trimble- where he and the SketchUp team still work today.

Spring 2017