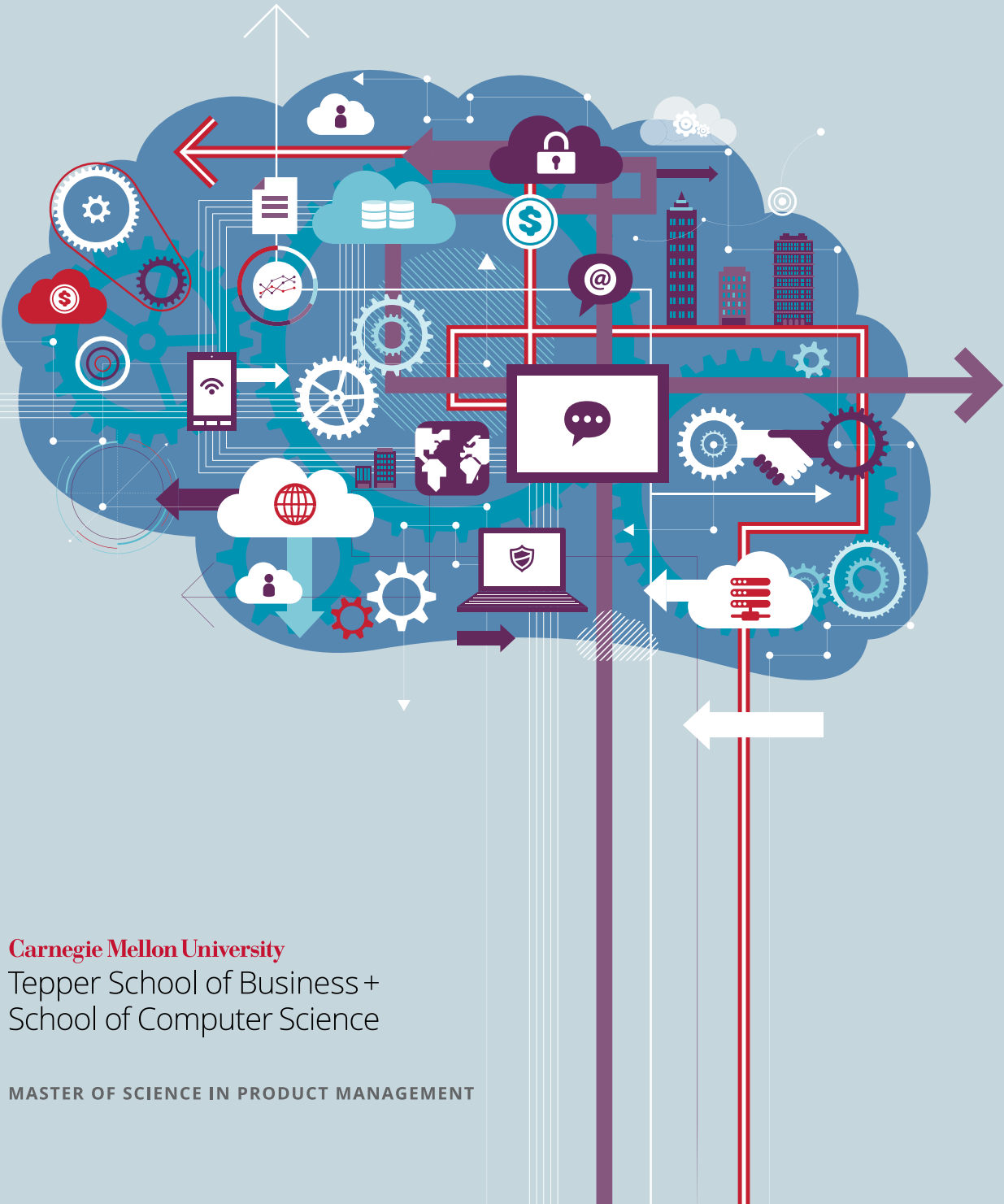
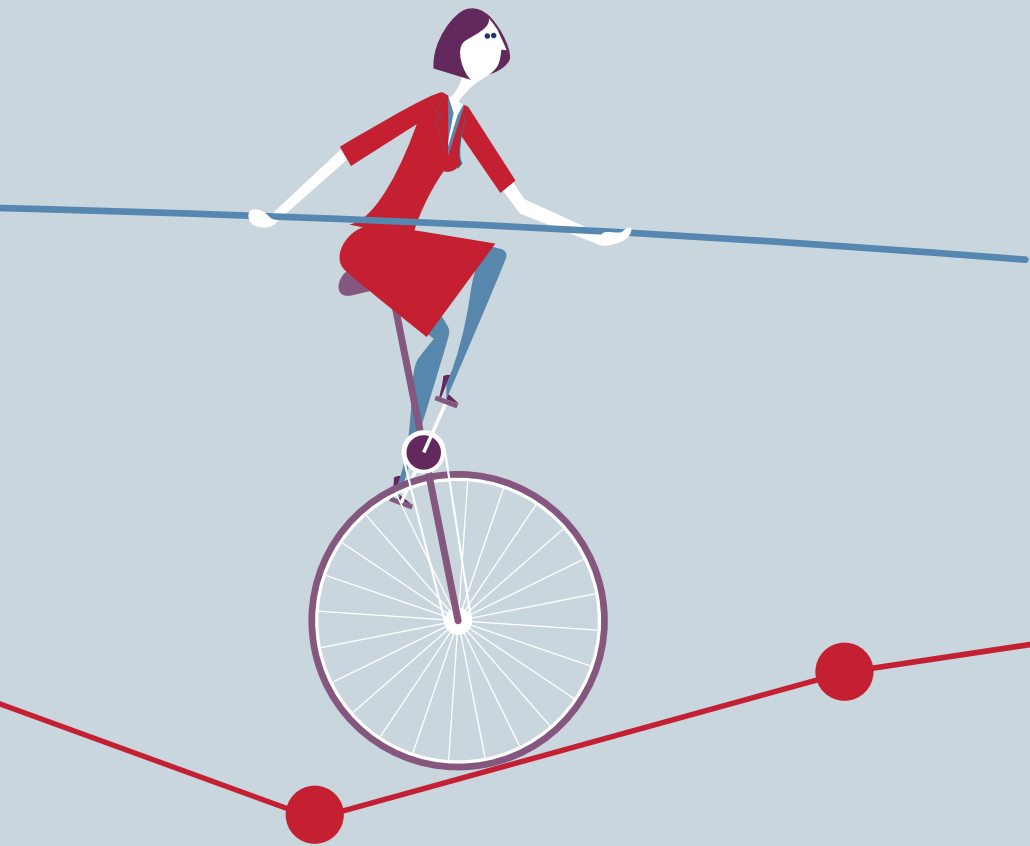


# Would-Be Product Manager's Instruction Manual



**Carnegie Mellon University**  
Tepper School of Business +  
School of Computer Science

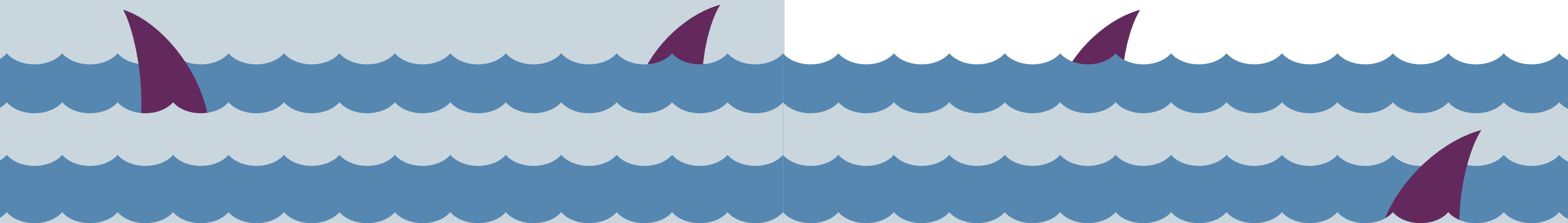
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT



**P**eople often describe a product manager as “CEO of the Product.” This sounds appealing, but the reality is that product managers don’t have a CEO’s level of authority over everyone who contributes to making a product successful.

Being a product manager is actually more of a high-wire act — managing multiple disciplines and personalities — so you will need a cool head and a chill disposition.

Yours is a bigger-picture opportunity. As a product manager, you have the chance to make an amazing industry-disrupting product that people will love.



## Before you start: Let's learn a little about the job.

**A**s a product manager, you'll oversee product development from cradle to grave. You'll work with many departments and people, — developers, marketers, designers, sales team members and the C-suite. Most importantly, you'll interact with customers.

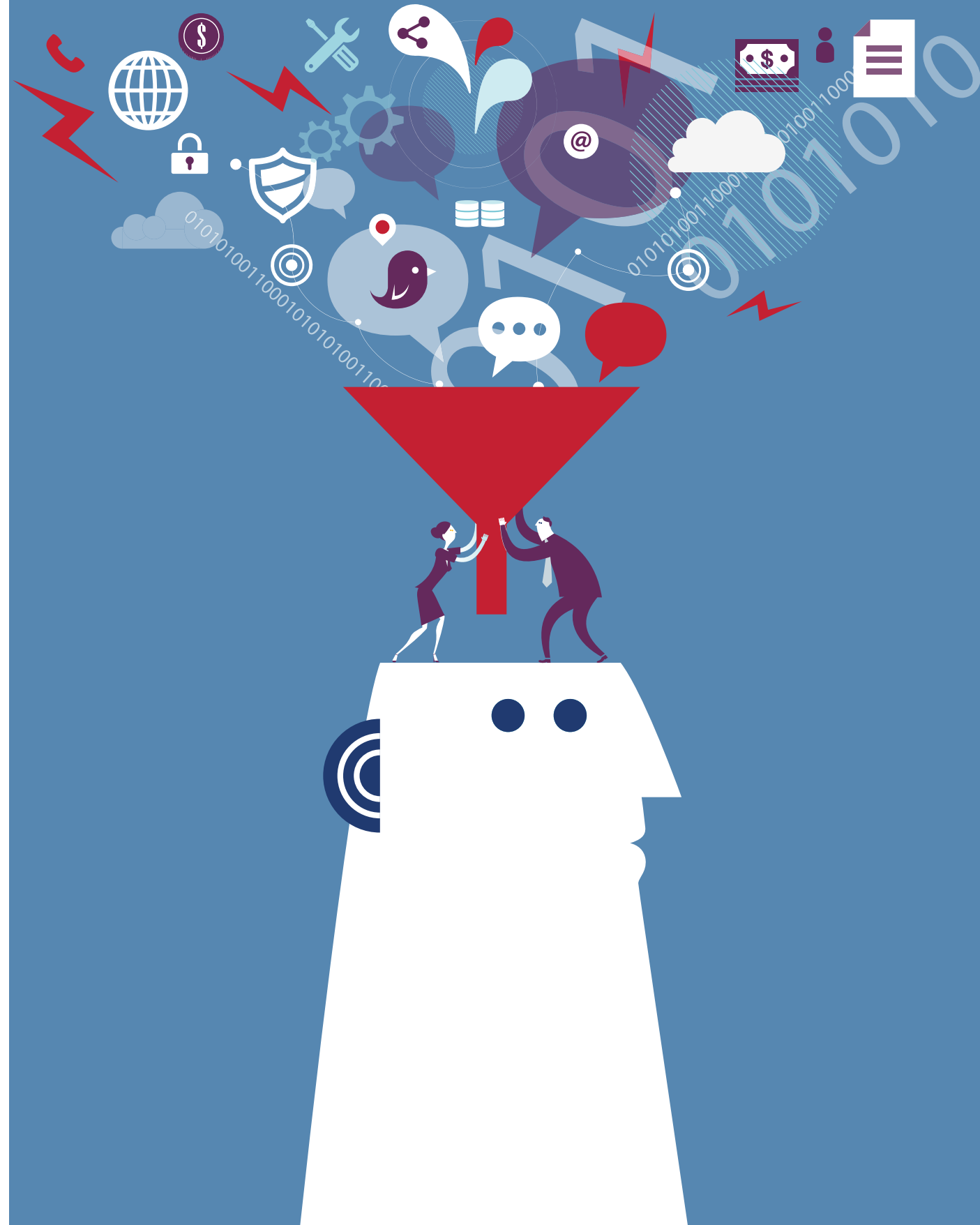
You'll find the job requires both strategic and tactical acumen. Here's what your responsibilities might be:

### People

- Conduct market research on user needs
- Gain consensus and secure organizational buy-in
- Communicate your product's business case
- Communicate improvements
- Provide direction to product development team and oversee progress
- Provide marketing support to sales

### Product

- Perform competitive analysis
- Build the strategic vision for your product
- Monitor and report on product performance
- Develop and manage the product road map
- Coordinate the creation of prototypes and concept testing
- Document product requirements, user stories and artifacts to support product development
- Develop pricing models and facilitate pricing decisions
- Ensure that product specifications are met, and delivered on time and on budget
- Develop product-launch plans



## The skill sets you need: Have you got what it takes?

### 1 You must have technical know-how.

No, you don't have to be a software engineer. In fact, a recent Pendo study revealed that 60 percent of product leaders actually come from a business background. But when a software engineer tells you something, it helps if you can do more than nod your head and pretend to understand.

### 2 You must have a keen business sense.

Much of what you'll do every day involves knowing your customer, competition and users. A marketing mind is essential — one that allows you to grasp the thought processes and feelings of others, and understand product strategy and positioning. Having good sales instincts helps too, because you'll spend a good bit of your time persuading people and getting their buy-in.

### 3 You must have social and emotional intelligence.

You'll have to read between the lines and understand your customers' body language, feelings and concerns. You need to know what they're not saying. You'll have to build trust and learn to surrender your ego to the preferences of users. And despite the intensity of the people, projects and your own emotions, you'll have to stay calm.

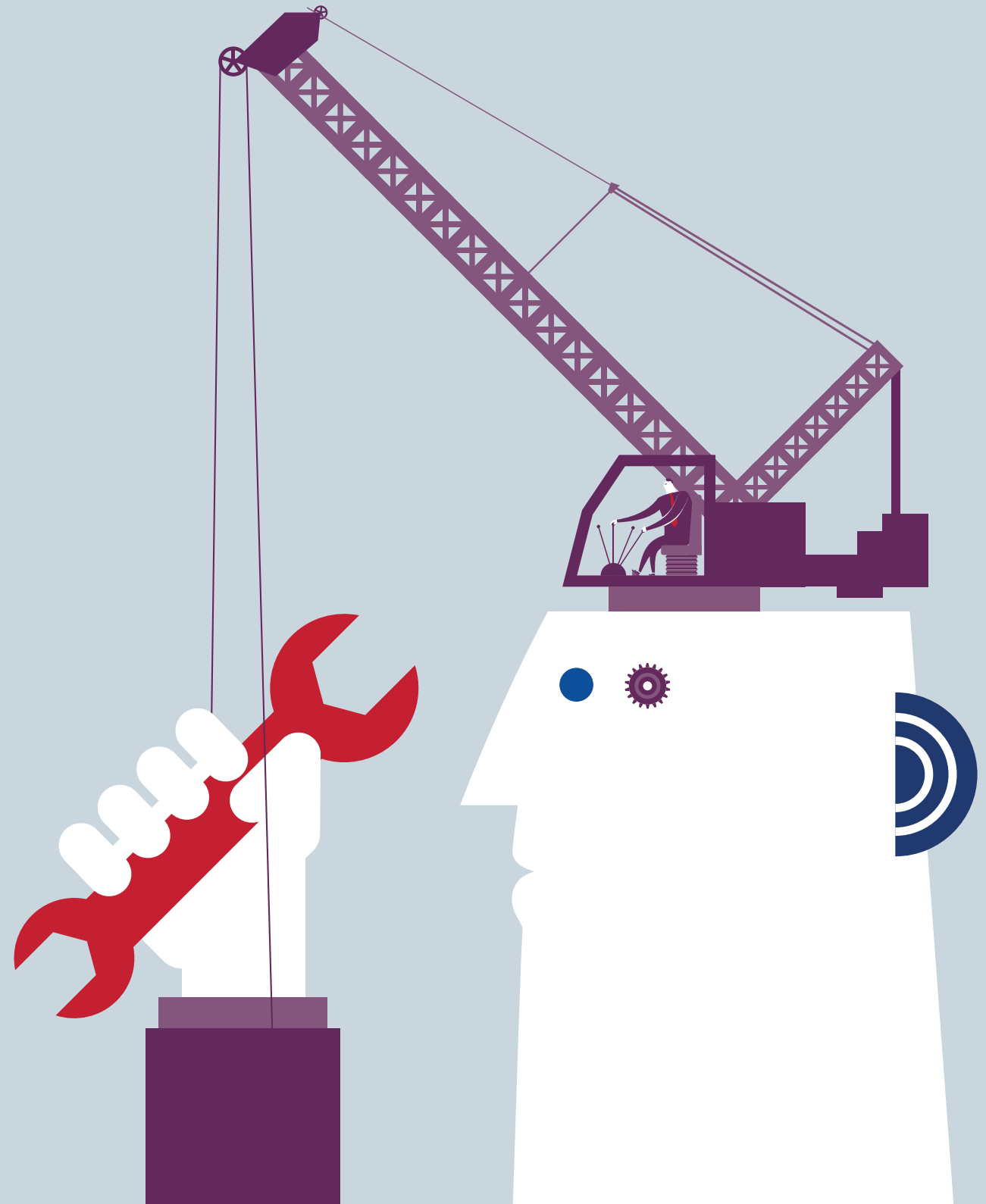


## Some assembly required: Product managers are made, not born.

**W**ith some tech careers, people head straight from their undergrad program to their full-time job. Not so with product management. Like their products, product managers develop and improve over time, merging marketing savvy with technology prowess.

Some larger companies, such as Google and Microsoft, groom product managers through specialized training programs. Other would-be product managers seek out certificate programs. More often than not, product managers work their way into the job from the technical-development or marketing-strategy side of their companies.

There's high demand for highly qualified, technical product managers, which is why Carnegie Mellon University recently built the first-of-its-kind Master of Science in Product Management program. The program is a collaboration between two of Carnegie Mellon's renowned schools — The Tepper School of Business and School of Computer Science. In one year, students become deeply immersed in the realities of product management, complete an internship and engage in a capstone project.



## The rewards of a job well done: You'll earn more — and be more.

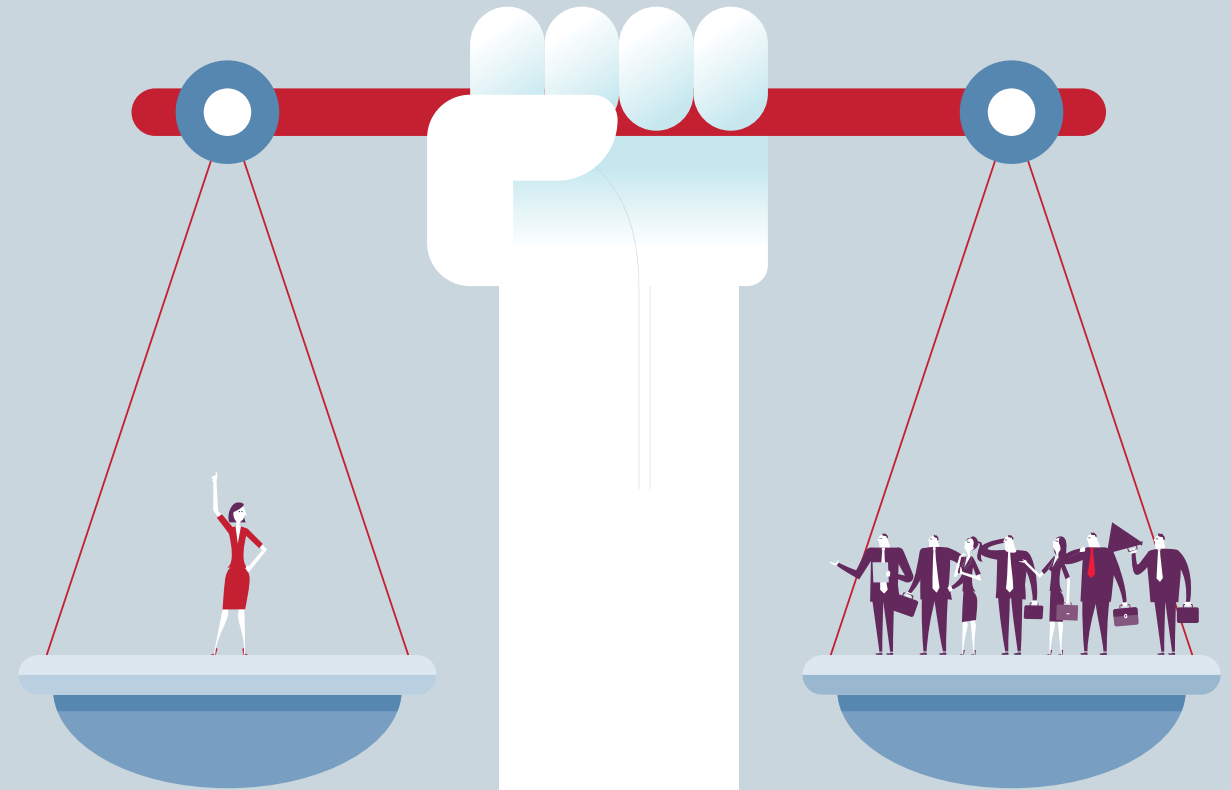
**G**reat product managers command high pay because their hard work directly impacts profitability and the destiny of their companies. A product manager's average starting salary is \$127K.

It's a big job with a boatload of responsibilities — product visioning, customer and competitor research, strategy, design, user experience, development, pricing, sales support, go-to-market planning and execution, and managing the product road map. Ultimately, you'll be held accountable for the commercial success of your products. So you've got to bring your A game and act like an owner.

Eventually, you'll find there's a great psychic reward that comes from knowing your users, your customer's business, and your own business so completely. Over time, a lot of people and revenue will come to depend on you.

You're in for quite a ride. Buckle up.

To learn more visit us at [ms-product-management.cmu.edu](https://ms-product-management.cmu.edu)



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