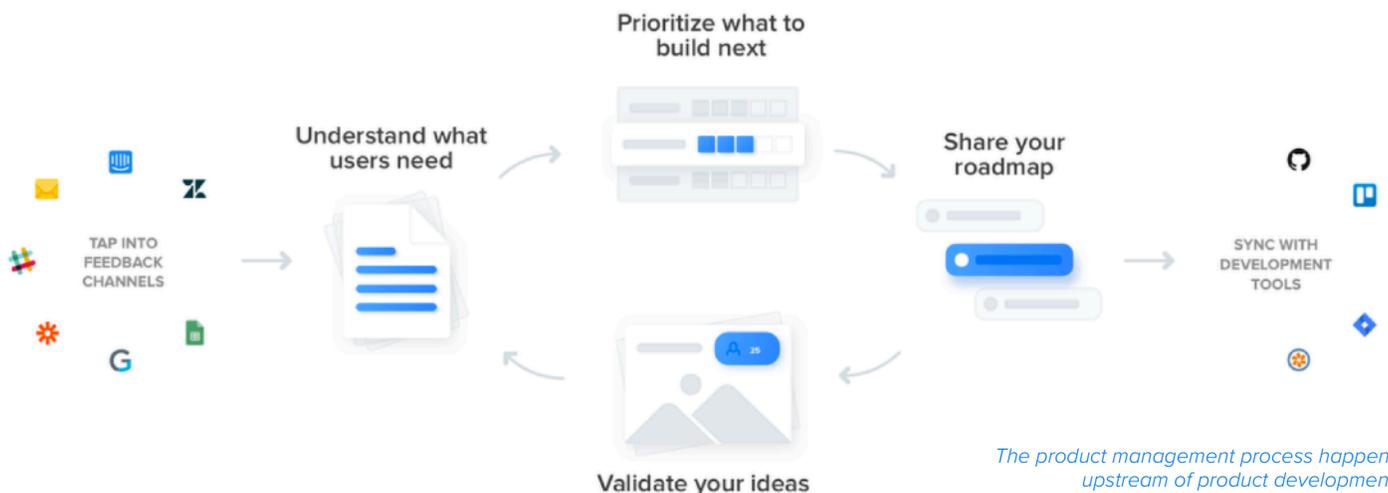


# The difference between product development and product management tools

and why you need both



Product *development* and **product management** are fundamentally different functions — but they're both equally essential when it comes to developing products that users love.

For many teams, though, the line between product management and product development can become blurry. Product managers shoehorn their work into a tool not built for the job.

Engineers struggle with a large task list that is not prioritized by strategic criteria.

*Product development tools aren't designed for product management*

Don't get us wrong. Product development tools

like Jira and Microsoft's Azure DevOps platform are important for keeping projects on track. The problem is that these product *development* tools aren't designed for product management. That's why top product teams are increasingly turning to dedicated product management tools to manage their workflow — this way, both types of tools can be used in tandem to make life easier for everyone.

## The intersection of product development & product management

The product manager's function is a necessary intermediary between customer-facing teams and stakeholders across the business. Product teams are tasked with:

- Collecting and organizing feedback from inside and outside the organization;
- Understanding **what users need**;
- Ensuring that product and feature ideas align with **company objectives**;
- Assessing whether proposed ideas are technically feasible; and
- Prioritizing what to build next.

This entire process can be managed within a dedicated product management system, and the primary output is a **product roadmap** — the near-term and long-term vision of where a company is headed via its products, features, and solutions. The roadmap flows smoothly into the development process, forming the basis for the development team's work.

These projects and feature ideas are then broken down into technical tasks. Product development tools help the dev team manage these tasks as they go into production.

At least, that's how the process works in an ideal world. Problems arise when product and development teams try to use the same tool to manage their individual processes. And for most organizations, this tool is dictated by what the development team is already using.

## The drawbacks of keeping everything within a product development tool

Product development tools are great for their intended purpose of managing development-related tasks, but they aren't built to support the product management process.

### Product development tools overlook customer pain points in favor of solutions

Because product *development* tools are built for just that — *development* — it's easy to skip the important step of **identifying and validating customer pain points and instead jump straight into designing a solution**. And when a solution is based on assumptions instead of on data and true customer needs, teams end up wasting time on products that miss the mark.

## Product development tools are built for execution, not planning

Product development tools like Jira aren't designed to help understand users or prioritize what to build next — they're optimized for delivery. Another shortcoming for product managers is a lack of a clear way to visualize and share a high-level roadmap of releases.

While Jira works well for keeping development on schedule, it's not flexible enough to determine what gets on the roadmap in the first place — a crucial part of the product management role.

## Keeping everything in a single tool overwhelms everyone

Last, but certainly not least, dumping everything in a product development tool overwhelms everyone involved.

Developers bump heads when all their tasks are spread across different stages of ideation, validation, and design without clear indicators of what's ready to be worked on. Product managers struggle to prioritize and plan given the limitations. And stakeholders have no way to [track the status of work taking place](#), slowing down development and increasing the risk of building the wrong solution.

## A dedicated product management tool complements existing development tools

At the end of the day, a product development tool like Jira is great for developers, but not for product managers.

The good news is that you can have the best of both worlds — without giving up any tools. A dedicated product management system is a perfect partner for existing product processes, acting as a filtering layer that comes before tasks are funneled into development tools:

- Ideas flow into your product management tool.
- These ideas can be validated, categorized, and prioritized effectively into a product roadmap.
- The product roadmap is pushed into production and syncs downstream into your development platform automatically.

Instead of product development *versus* product management, both tools and teams can work together to deliver products that people use and love.

## Product managers benefit from increased visibility and control of their roadmap

It can be difficult to gain visibility into the status of a feature or idea when everything is tracked in the same product development tool, and adding additional states for research, discovery, validation, and [backlog grooming](#) can quickly overwhelm everyone involved.

Instead, a dedicated product management system gives product managers the control they need to deliver great products. Product teams can score and prioritize tasks and stories more effectively, defining product objectives and drivers around common [product prioritization frameworks](#). The value of these individual

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drivers can then be rolled up into a true prioritization score, weighted according to exact needs.

Product managers can have a home of their own to think about high-level customer needs and objectives. And when they're ready to pass the torch to the development team, features can be [automatically synced between the two tools](#) with minimum fuss.

## Developers can focus on the highest-value tasks without distraction

Developers benefit, too. From their perspective, product management systems act as a big filter that keeps their tool from getting cluttered. From now on, the only things that get pushed into their workflow are prioritized features aligned with company objectives.

Developers also gain access to the "why" behind every idea and feature. Each task in their

workflow is linked back to the product management system where customer feedback, notes, and more are accessible with just a single click. Understanding the problem behind what they're building helps unlock the creativity of engineers and motivates them to design the best possible solution.

## Get the right products to market, faster

With a dedicated product management system, product managers finally have a home of their own. Product managers get to use a dedicated project management solution for their process, and developers can continue using the tools they love for day-to-day project management.

It's time you nixed the messy and overwhelming backlog. [Sign up for a free productboard trial today](#) and see why top product teams use productboard.

*Developers can tap directly into user feedback when designing solutions.*

The image shows a screenshot of the Productboard interface. On the left is an 'Inbox' sidebar with filters for 'Processed' (129), 'All' (152), and 'Archived' (14). Below are various tags like 'usability', 'general', 'improvement', 'love', 'inbox', 'payments', 'marketing', 'calls', 'ux', 'competition', 'roadmap', and 'request'. The main area displays a list of user feedback items, including one from 'Belfalas group' about signing up for intercom, one from 'Apple' with tags 'feature-request' and 'must-have', and one from 'Iron Hills' about tasks in Zick. A 'Share your screen' overlay is visible over the Apple feedback item, showing the 'feature-request' and 'must-have' tags. On the right, a detailed view of an 'Intercom conversation' is shown, featuring a message from 'JERRY IVE' that says: 'We moved from our previous tool to have one place for all communications, and screen sharing is essential for our team workflow. It gets really time consuming to sync with the team without it.' Below this is a response from 'HUBERT' and a 'PROCESS' button.