



A Guide to Help You Prepare for Your Product Manager Interview at Flipkart

Product Managers play a pivotal role in leveraging technology for providing a superior customer experience. Thanks to their analytical and problem-solving mindset, they can get deeper in to the function/problem space, work with stakeholders and partners to develop wider perspective, take Outside-In view of the problems and create a vision, strategy and roadmap of how software can solve immediate needs/wants, setting the stage for the right disruptions/innovations of the future. Once envisioned, they inspire and align stakeholders - business, operations and finance, and through engineers transform their vision into reality.

Interview Process

Phase 1

- Exploratory Discussion
- Phone Screening - Product Thinking

Phase 2

- Problem-solving
- Product Thinking
- Business Understanding
- Engineering Understanding
- Team Fitment
- Culture Fitment

PHASE 1:

Exploratory and Phone Screening Rounds

ROUND 1.1: EXPLORATORY DISCUSSION (30 MINUTES)

This is the stage when you'll be interacting with your potential Hiring Manager. As soon as your CV is shortlisted, your recruiter will set up an exploratory discussion based on your availability. The intent of this round is to understand your past experience, expectations and aspirations for the future.

This round is typically conducted over phone/Hangouts. Please ensure that you're comfortably settled in a quiet space for a fruitful discussion. You will be expected to introduce yourself, your past work experience, strengths and aspirations in this round - be concise, clear and prepared.

Take this opportunity to ask as many questions as you want in order to get a holistic picture of the role. Make sure that you clearly understand the charter, scope, kind of work involved in the role offered by us. Have a constructive and open discussion on your eligibility, aspirations and other concerns that you possibly have.

Note: Exploratory discussion with the Hiring Manager depends on a case-to-case basis. Your recruiter will walk you through the detailed hiring process.

ROUND 1.2: TECHNICAL PHONE SCREENING (60 MINUTES)

Before you come for an onsite interview, you'll have a discussion with one of your potential recruiters. This is a technical screening round which is primarily focused on past work experience, role-eligibility and a few problem-solving questions relevant to the role you're being interviewed for.

This is a telephonic/Hangout discussion. You can expect questions about your past experience, major projects that you've worked on depending on the role you're being evaluated for. The interviewer may deep dive into one of your projects that you have executed in the past to understand your strengths and weaknesses.

Please ensure that you are available for the call in a quiet place. Be well-versed with everything mentioned in your resume. Have a brief introduction of your experience ready. Go in-depth if interviewers ask you details about anything specific.

Note: You may or may not have this round depending on a case-to-case basis. Your recruiter will walk you through the detailed hiring process.

PHASE 2:

Onsite Interview

ROUND 2.1: PROBLEM-SOLVING ROUND (60 MINUTES)

You will also be evaluated on structured thinking, comfort with numbers and metrics, and your ability and intent for problem-solving.

You will be given a real-world problem statement where the interviewer will judge you on how you use structured thinking and frameworks to understand a problem on the macro level and break it down into deeper and smaller areas. The problem statement can be from any domain/industry/business/context. You can also expect non-based questions on metrics and guesstimates can also be part of this interview round.

The interviewer will evaluate you on the breadth and depth of your thought process through this exercise. Be as exhaustive and thorough as possible.

Here are a few sample questions for you:

- Guesstimate number of potholes in Bangalore.
- How do you increase engagement on Flipkart?
- What suggestions would you give to improve the profitability of Flipkart?
- Which is your favorite product? As the Chief Product Officer for this product, which will be the 3 most important metrics that you will track?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ROUND:

Always internalise the problem statement given before jumping to an answer.

Get sufficient clarity on the problem/question asked. The interviewer may use terms which can be unfamiliar to you, therefore don't hesitate on getting complete clarity on what is asked.

Do not answer the problems immediately. Think thoroughly, ask clarifying questions, use a whiteboard to make structures or for raw notes.

ROUND 2.2: PRODUCT THINKING ROUND (60 MINUTES)

You will be evaluated on customer empathy and orientation, vision and strategic thinking, and roadmapping.

The interviewer will give you a problem statement and will ask you to create the product strategy and roadmap around it. You can expect the problem to be hazy. Which is why you need to try and look deeper into the problem, and figure out the exact customer problem that needs to be solved before starting on product solutions. Never lose focus from the customer or what you are trying to achieve for him/her. The interviewer may ask you to explain your version 0 in depth, with more clarity around capabilities and UIs through wireframes. You're expected to have clarity around success metrics of products and versions you lay out during the interview.

Here are a few sample questions for you:

- Launch grocery on Flipkart.
- Launch videos on Flipkart
- What are the philosophies for any marketplace product?
- How is Netflix different from YouTube from the product philosophy perspective?
- Create a product solution to increase delivery speed on Flipkart.
- Which is your favorite product? Name one feature enhancement you will want to add to it and why?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ROUND:

Focus on customer understanding and empathy during product strategy and roadmap discussion.

You can expect questions around the consumer internet domain - cab aggregators, online ticketing, content streaming or e-commerce. Have a good understanding of these domains, it will come in handy.

"Why" of the problem statement and complete clarity on its "customers" is paramount for coming up with good solutions.

Always have a long-term view and strategy, before coming up with v0 or v1 versions of your solutions.

ROUND 2.3: BUSINESS UNDERSTANDING ROUND (60 MINUTES)

Business Function is one of the critical stakeholders for Product Managers at Flipkart. You are expected to understand and contribute to business strategies as you move up the ladder. Having a strong sense of, both, short-term and long-term business goals and adding them to product roadmaps is a critical job which PMs at Flipkart do.

You can expect questions around business strategy, industry landscape, and competitors from industries you have previously worked on. The interviewer may also give you a business problem from any other domain and ask you to come up with suggestions.

Here are a few sample questions for you:

- Explain the ad tech market - the key players, what drives customer stickiness,
- what is a revenue model, and where are the profit pools.
- How do you measure selection gaps on Flipkart and how to solve the issue?
- Comment on the future of e-commerce and payments in India.
- Will you suggest any new e-commerce player to enter the Indian market? If yes, what should be its strategy?
- What is the future of content in India?

ROUND 2.4: ENGINEERING UNDERSTANDING ROUND(60 MINUTES)

Flipkart builds complex software with great functional depth and scale. The intent of this round is to evaluate your expertise or learnability in being part of a complex engineering journey like ours.

This round is for understanding your past experience, and how deeply you understand engineering implementations. The interviewer will nudge you around a few engineering calls and enquire on why certain decisions were taken. She/he will look out for qualities which engineers look up to in Product Managers. Which are:

- 1) Vision, strategy and long-term thinking
- 2) The right balance between tech hygiene vs. functional growth
- 3) Understanding of PDLC and SDLC practices

Here are a few sample questions for you:

- What are the typical challenges with the engineering team?
- Create a Google Photos like product with mobile and web backup.
- Create a functional view of the product you worked upon.
- Draw the system diagram for the last product you worked on while laying out the data flow and interactions.
- What is the difference between platform, product and feature?
- How do you prioritize between tech debt, defects and functional enhancement?
- Design an E2E URL shortener system.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ROUND:

Try to brush up on the basic concepts and best practices of SDLC/PDLC before this interview.

Be thorough about system understanding of products you have worked on in your career, and what were the trade-offs and critical system design decisions taken during their development and why.

ROUND 2.5: TEAM FITMENT (60 MINUTES)

The intent of this round is to evaluate your team fitment based on your experience, interests and strengths demonstrated across other rounds. In this round, you'll be interacting with your potential team leader/hiring manager who will try to get to know you better in order to make an informed choice that we hire the right person for the right job.

The interviewer will try to understand your aspirations, inspirations and motivations, self-awareness, leadership ability, stakeholder management, strengths and weaknesses, etc.

You can also expect questions around some of the competencies which you would have been evaluated for in previous rounds. Think of this round as a summary of all the discussions that you have had during the day.

ROUND 2.6: CULTURE FITMENT ROUND (60 MINUTES)

We are a proud community of Flipsters. All our decisions are deeply rooted in our values, and they have made us into what we are today - successful and confident. Our core values define our identity and form the basis of our actions and reflect in everything that we do at Flipkart. These values enable us to shape the desired organization culture in which each Flipster can thrive and be at their best.

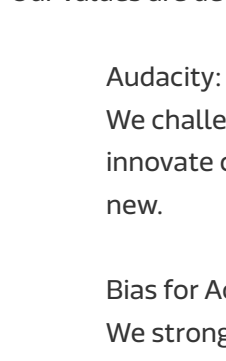
In this round, you are being evaluated for your cultural fitment at Flipkart. The round is meant to assess whether you would be a good fit in the world of Flipsters or not. There are no right or wrong answers. Be honest and think thoroughly before you answer. There may be questions around your past experiences, career aspirations, hypothetical scenarios, your strengths and weaknesses, etc. We highly recommend that you invest some time in preparing yourself for the interview.

- Read up about our values and what makes you a great fit for us
- Be honest about your success and failures
- Invest some time in preparing yourself for the interview
- Be candid and help us understand you better

Please note that the interview preparation document is applicable for all PM roles at Flipkart. The core competencies which you are being evaluated for as a Product Manager remains same across levels at Flipkart. However, the expectations from a PM to GPM significantly differ.

Therefore, for senior roles, problem solving discussion will get more and more abstract and cover a broader horizon. For instance, a junior PM may be asked to solve engagement problems on Flipkart vis-a-vis an SPM/GPM can be asked questions around increasing market share of Flipkart. A junior PM will be tested on competencies like collaboration, drive and ownership, while an SPM/GPM will be evaluated on broader stakeholder management, team building, hiring and mentorship abilities. Product thinking interviews for junior PMs will be around discussing smaller features and customer focus, and senior PMs will be interviewed around functional views of bigger product areas and long-term product strategies.

In short, across all competencies, the discussion will tend to move towards abstractness, strategic thinking, team building, and inspiring leadership as the interviewing levels increase.



NERVOUS? DON'T BE.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR A SMOOTH INTERVIEW:

Be prepared:

Needless to say, we want to hire the best talent. Prepare well, understand what we do as a business, the position you are interviewing for, learn how your role will contribute in achieving our vision and brush up your basics as much as possible. At Flipkart, we strongly believe that our highest leveraged time should be applied to hiring and helping onboard the absolute best talent that we can scout around the world.

Pique our interest:

Tell us something about yourself that prompts us to know more about you. Flipkart is a great mix of people with various talents and skill sets and so, we'd like to know how and why you stand out from the rest.

Think things through:

We don't necessarily look for absolute solutions. Instead, we'd like to know how you approach a problem. Therefore, make sure you think through your answers. It's okay if you need a few minutes to collate your thoughts. You can help the interviewers understand your thought process by thinking out loud.

Be authentic and candid:

Nobody is perfect. It's okay to openly admit past failures - if any. At Flipkart, we place intent and commitment over success. And, being honest about yourself will help us identify those traits in you.

Show your passion:

It's not an interrogation, it's a discussion. Blend in a lot of passion and energy in your interactions. Ours is a fast-paced and challenging workplace and therefore, there's no room for someone who takes it slow.

Ask questions:

We are open to all kinds of questions. It's the easiest way to get to know each other better. So, ask away!

Understand how we work:

Get yourself acquainted with our values: Audacity, Bias for Action, Customer First and Integrity. Our values are deeply rooted in all our major decisions at Flipkart.

Audacity:

We challenge established standards and keep pushing the boundaries. We innovate continuously and find disruptive solutions. We are fearless in trying anything new.

Bias for Action:

We strongly believe in taking initiative and driving results with impact. We make speedy decisions and believe in failing fast.

Customer First:

We continuously strive to understand our customers' needs. We validate our success through customer actions. We go deep into customer issues and resolve the root cause.

Integrity:

We strive to do the right thing, in the right way, at all times. We do not compromise on our values

If you are someone who believes in these values, and you're able to exhibit these values, you are a great fit for us. Reflect on your past experiences and prepare yourself well before the interview. Spend some time on identifying instances from the past when you exhibited these values.