What is ProductCamp?

ProductCamp is a participant-driven, collaborative (un)conference on topics related to Product Management, Product Strategy, and Product Marketing. All participants should come prepared to present a topic or run a group discussion. On the day of ProductCamp, all attendees cast their votes for sessions and presentations they'd like to attend. Most popular wins – sessions with the most votes will be presented throughout the rest of the day. ProductCamp has its heritage in BarCamp which is an international network of user-generated conferences (or unconferences). They are open, participatory workshop-events, whose content is provided by participants.

Most important of all, it is FREE to you! Your only cost is your participation – bring your ideas, lead a session in your area of expertise, facilitate a roundtable discussion, network, or volunteer.

How many ProductCamps are there?

ProductCamp is a worldwide concept. The first ProductCamp was in Sunnyvale California on March 15th, 2008. Since then there have been ProductCamps in Austin, Silicon Valley, Washington, DC, Atlanta, Boston, Toronto, Amsterdam, Melbourne, Berlin, and many more.

This is a first such initiative in Hyderabad.

Who comes to this event?

ProductCamp Hyderabad is for anyone who wants to learn more about Product Management, develop their craft, learn from each other and network in meaningful ways.

At ProductCamps across the globe, we've had Product Managers, Digital Marketers, Product Planners/Strategists, Program Managers, Project Managers, Business Analysts, Executives, people from Business Development/Sales, Product Developers, Market Researchers, User Experience Designers and startup professionals.

So the attendees present the sessions?

Yes, and usually the attendees come from far and wide for the opportunity. People who attend ProductCamp not only love product management and all its cousins but tend to be innovators and influencers themselves. They ooze great ideas and look forward to sharing them with others in their industry. These are typically people who have the real world experience to back up what they'll talk about. It's also a fun group of people so you're in for a good time!

Where did this idea originate?

ProductCamp has it's heritage in BarCamp which Wikipedia describes as an international network of user-generated conferences (or unconferences). They are open, participatory workshop-events, whose content is provided by participants. Read more on the history here.

How can I prepare?

Talk about experiences you've had in the field of creating and delivering products to market. Do you know something about managing product development teams, identifying new trends in marketing a product, or maybe an innovative pricing strategy? Or maybe you know the fundamentals of gathering competitive intelligence or writing business cases.

Not all sessions are presentations – maybe you have a problem you would like to get solved and want feedback? Perhaps you have a product idea but need help taking it to market? Or maybe you are recruiting and want to find candidates. Anything goes.

Then, Use our session idea toll to propose your idea and get feedback on it.

ProductCamp guidelines

Several common themes have emerged from ProductCamps held to date, though the flow and tenor may change from city to city. Since it's an unconference, there are very few rules. The general guidelines (adapted from BarCamp) are:

- ProductCamps are free, but there is a "cost" to attend. There are no passive attendees. Instead, everyone is referred to as a "participant" and expected to contribute in some way: presenting a session, coordinating sponsors, managing the venue, volunteering for setup and teardown, or sitting in a discussion panel—there are many ways to participate.
- Information sharing is expected and encouraged. Everyone is urged to share event information and experiences, both live and after the fact, via blogging, photo sharing, social bookmarking, tweeting, and wiki-ing. This open encouragement is in deliberate contrast to the "off-the-record" and "no recording" rules of many conferences.

- The "2-foot" rule applies: ProductCamp typically features concurrent sessions. If you feel you'll get more out of a different session, use your own "two feet" to move—no one should feel tied down.
- Networking is good! ProductCamps are held on a weekend and go all day, so participation is a commitment. The sacrifice in time and energy means only those who are really interested attend.

How does a ProductCamp-Day look like?

A typical day begins with attendee registration and breakfast. Then participants are led to a "main-tent" session that explains the format, rules, and introduction of ProductCamp planners—but, more importantly, the opening session sets the tone that ProductCamp is by and for attendees, open and discussion-oriented, and most importantly, fun.

In today's economy, several ProductCamps have offered a few minutes for anyone who has job openings to present a very short overview of the position/company.

ProductCamps use an "Open Grid" to set the agenda. Presenters and roundtable facilitators submit topics prior to the event, or sometimes even on the morning before the event starts. A final agenda is created real-time, by and for attendees. Session leaders are sometimes given 30 seconds in the welcome session to introduce themselves and their topic. Then it's time to vote! One popular technique is to give each participant three sticky notes as they arrive. Volunteers post session topics in a central area and ask everyone to place the sticky notes under their top three choices. Sessions receiving the most votes are plotted on an "agenda sheet" in such a way to minimize topic conflicts. Based on interest level and available time slots, some topics may not make the agenda. It's open, it's participant-driven, and it really works!

Sessions usually run 45-50 minutes with a break for lunch and plenty of "slack time" for informal networking. Most ProductCamps reserve a few meeting rooms for parallel sessions and list four to six time slots. The best ProductCamp sessions are facilitated roundtable discussions—leveraging participant knowledge. Notes, videos and photos are posted or linked to the ProductCamp website. It's always fun to bring everyone together at the end of the day for a quick summary and to award prizes for best sessions. By this time, the group is comfortable and can get rather lively celebrating the hard work and start planning the next ProductCamp.