

The Product Boss: the fastest route to general management

An open call to future Product Bosses

Most careers at a semiconductor company teach you one discipline deeply. One role teaches you the whole business: the customer, the market, product development and engineering, and manufacturing, all at once, on programs shipping to hyperscale customers at billion-unit scale. That role is the Product Boss, and we are building a bench of people ready to step into it.

You run a business, not a function

The Product Boss is the CEO of a product. You own the P&L, the COGS targets, and the yield economics. You own the relationship with the customer, translating what they need into what we build. You own the technical trade-offs across silicon, package, module, test, and supply chain, and you own the schedule that carries the product from concept through qualification to a billion-unit ramp. Nobody hands you a lane. The product is the lane.

The authority is real

80% of product decisions are made by you and your core team, a dedicated group of functional leads who take their direction from you, not from their departments. You operate at Freedom Level 1–2: act first, report after. When two engineering teams disagree, you decide. You clear the obstacles the team cannot clear for itself, and you provision people, budget, and decisions before the lack of them becomes a delay.

The general management apprenticeship no rotation program can match

Executive general management requires exactly four literacies: customers, markets, engineering, and operations. Most people collect them one job at a time over fifteen years. The Product Boss exercises all four every week. You will negotiate with a hyperscale customer in the morning and arbitrate a silicon-package trade-off in the afternoon. Nothing builds, or reveals, a general manager faster.

You will not do it alone

Product Bosses run inside the FTTM operating system: a dedicated Program Manager who drives the integrated schedule as your COO, weekly refresh planning that keeps the gap visible, a fortnightly product boss forum with your peers, coaching from lateralworks, and a Product Boss in Training path that lets you step in with support before you carry a product alone. The Product Director, the boss of Product Bosses, has your back for anything that crosses products.

Who we are looking for

Expert generalists who make decisions with incomplete information and own the outcome. People who command respect from senior engineers without pretending to out-expert them, and who feel the cost of a late product in their gut. If you have been waiting for the role where the company finally hands you the whole problem, this is it. Talk to your manager or the Product Director about the Product Boss in Training bench.

Hiring the Product Boss: requirements and interview guide

For hiring managers and interview panels

Requirements

- Product line management experience in semiconductor modules or power electronics, with NPI through volume production at scale (above 100M units).
- Cross-functional authority: has led teams where functions reported to the product leader, not just coordinated across them.
- Customer-facing capability with Tier 1 hyperscale or automotive OEM accounts.
- The five competencies: speed orientation, expert generalist range, trade-off decision-making under pressure, the respect and authority that make a team follow, and before-the-fact urgency.

Ten interview questions

Every question asks for a specific past event, not a philosophy. Push for what the candidate personally did, decided, and paid.

Question	What a strong answer sounds like
1. Walk me through a product you took from concept to production. Where did you personally change the outcome?	Specific interventions with dates and consequences, not a tour of the team's work. Owns the failures too.
2. Tell me about trading scope, cost, or risk to protect a market window. What did the trade cost you?	Treats time as the scarcest resource. Can name what they gave up and who was unhappy about it.
3. A functional manager redirects one of your team leads' priorities. What do you do the same day?	Acts immediately and directly with the functional manager; protects the lead; doesn't open with escalation.
4. Tell me about a problem you saw coming months before it hit. What mitigations did you put in place, and what happened?	Watches leading indicators, acts before the pain arrives, and logs contingent actions with owners. The best answer is a crisis that never made news because the mitigation worked.
5. Describe a call you made that your own specialist disagreed with. How did you decide against deeper expertise?	Comfortable deciding as a generalist: weighed the system, listened to the data, made the call, owned it.
6. Your customer asks for a commitment you are not sure you can meet. Walk me through your next 48 hours.	Neither reflexive yes nor defensive no: models the gap, finds what would make it true, returns with a real answer.
7. Tell me about an obstacle your team could not clear itself. What authority or relationship did you spend?	Sees obstacle-clearing as the leader's job. Spent personal capital, and the team felt the path open.
8. What did your last team never have to wait for, because you had provisioned it? What did they wait on too long?	Thinks in terms of provisioning ahead of need. The honest second half matters as much as the first.
9. When did you kill work people were attached to? How did you keep the team with you?	Has actually killed low-value work, tied the decision to the critical path, and kept the people whose work died.
10. Your schedule shows eight weeks behind target. The team wants the target moved. What do you do first?	Uses the gap to force trade-offs and pull-in before touching the target. Resets targets from evidence, not fatigue.