Twitter Thread by John Cutler

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the product manager is responsible for the product's success...

simple. But....wait....

1/n There are many $ successful products that are terrible for humans (both inside/outside a company). Is that success?

2/n Conversely, what about "great products" that end up being "not successful" ?

Did the product manager do their job? Where does their role begin and end?

3/n Success over the lifespan of the product? next quarter? until they leave? while company exists?

There are many ways that short term success can come at the expense of mid/long term impact

4/n Success can mean very different things depending on the stage of the company, and the maturity of the product.

In an early startup, company/product are inexorably linked. In a more established company "the product" may be one of a dozen bets, most which will fail.

5/n What if a company has very low product aspirations?

What if it doesn't believe that their products can be a source of differentiated, sustainable mid/long term growth?

Is the role responsible for success *insofar as success is defined*? Something else? Who decides/defines?

6/n Some companies believe that a product manager should "define what needs to be built"

...while others believe that the PdM should frame context/opportunities and let passionate problem solvers do the rest.

There are examples of both doing well in context.

Is one "right"?

7/n .... some orgs are all about defined roles (e.g. you define the right thing, and you build the right thing right)

...while others are about spreading the "responsibility for product success" to everyone.

There are examples of both doing well in context.

Is one "right"?

8/n ..note how these two orgs "split up" responsibility. Many more overlaps on the right... is one "right" ?

9/n ... this bring up an important question. Say you have two ways to reach success:

1) team members as equals, sense of agency & impact

2) treating the team like a feature factory

assume an equal outcome (a stretch).

are both approaches equally "successful" ?

10/end ... anyway, this is all to say that to define product management...you really need to start with how you define product success, and success overall in terms of the work experience.

this is the "it depends".