Grace Bakalag

Senior Program Manager | Product Operations

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Summary

Senior Program Manager with 10 years across enterprise technology, product delivery, and startups. Builds product operating processes with leadership buy-in and leads change through cross-functional influence. Experience supporting five pods totaling approximately 50 people, reviewing OKRs, and improving visibility across projects. Uses Jira, Rovo, and Claude to support prioritization, dependency management, and internal product development, with experience taking a marketplace through public launch.

Core capabilities

Product operations, cross-functional program management, ways of working, operating cadences, Program Increment (PI) planning, formal OKR reviews, portfolio visibility, roadmap prioritization, dependency management, leadership reporting, release planning, process improvement, AI and automation, and stakeholder alignment.

Experience

Solovis

Senior Program Manager | Dec 2025 - Present

- Designed AIPDLC, an AI-enabled product development lifecycle from ideation through measurement, with product management decision gates. Secured leadership buy-in and led adoption through cross-functional influence.
- Helped establish five delivery pods of approximately 10 people each, using Loom and AI-assisted facilitation to support communication and coordination.
- Served as Product Manager for an internal collaboration tool used across teams, leading ideation, prototyping with Claude, and handoff to engineering. Improved operational visibility and communication, helping teams surface issues earlier.
- Used Rovo agents and Jira workflows to surface cross-project dependencies and route issue alerts to relevant teams, improving portfolio visibility and enabling earlier coordination.
- Conducted formal objectives and key results (OKR) reviews covering delivery predictability, idea-to-decision speed, and release efficiency; used findings to refine AIPDLC gates and cross-pod release coordination.
- Used operational reporting to inform leadership discussions on what to build next and where processes needed improvement; connected delivery findings to prioritization and ways of working.
- Built roadmap-informed prioritization skills in Jira and a product-insights skill to help colleagues identify what to build and guide discovery decisions.
- Streamlined release processes to accommodate the faster pace of agentic development, adapting coordination workflows to support AI-assisted software delivery.

Experience continued

D2Soft-Intel

Senior Director of Product | Jan 2025 - Present

BakOme - diaspora-focused delivery marketplace startup | bakome.com

- Led BakOme from discovery and MVP requirements through public launch; the marketplace now serves 300+ users and approximately 20 merchants in Maryland.
- Sequenced roadmap priorities and release scope with business, operations, and technical partners; clarified requirements and communicated delivery milestones through launch.
- Defined product catalog and image-management workflows for merchant uploads, internal review, and matching images to products and stores for display in the app.

Accenture Federal Services (AFS)

Product Owner | Sept 2021 - Jan 2025

Client: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

- Led quarterly and Program Increment (PI) planning across teams, coordinating priorities and dependencies; used dashboards to communicate progress, capacity, and risks for release decisions.
- Owned backlog priorities, user stories, and acceptance criteria for energy software and data ingestion tools; supported pod delivery of two major features per quarter and accepted completed functionality against requirements.
- Partnered with technical teams on ingestion-health visualization across approximately 100 data feeds, improving visibility beyond daily manual checks while following DOE data policy.

Northrop Grumman

Scrum Master | Dec 2016 - Feb 2021

- Improved delivery predictability by approximately 30% through Agile ceremonies, blocker resolution, and continuous improvement across up to three Scrum/SAFe-aligned teams.
- Configured Jira Service Management workflows, queues, SLAs, automations, and dashboards; reported backlog health, aging work, and service trends to guide prioritization.

Education and professional development

MBA, Project Management, Innovation & Technology | ESG Paris | 2024-2025
MIT Professional Education, Applied AI and Data Science Program | In Progress
B.S., Biomedical Engineering | The George Washington University | 2015-2017

Certifications

ACP-120, AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner, CIPP/US, CSM, PSM, CompTIA Security+

Tools and languages

Jira, Confluence, Jira Service Management, Azure DevOps, Loom, Atlassian Rovo, Claude, Figma Make, AWS, REST APIs, ScriptRunner, JQL, Python, JavaScript, Groovy
Languages: English and French