

100%

of respondents either Strongly Agreed or Somewhat Agreed that they learned new skills applicable to their current or next role.

How a Major US Regulated Utility Began Building Product Management at Enterprise Scale

ENGAGEMENT

Optimal Product Management · Oct 2025

01 Executive Summary

What does it look like when a regulated public utility works to put customers first as an operational discipline? This utility's Customer Team found out.

In October 2025, Productside delivered its **Optimal Product Management** course to approximately 15 product managers within the utility's Customer organization in the US. Within months, product development became a core strategic pillar in the Chief Customer Officer's transformation plan, supported in part by the team's improved ability to articulate customer and business value using Productside's framework.

The results went far beyond skills development. In the months following the training, the team used Productside's frameworks and templates to run cross-functional innovation workshops, conduct customer interviews, and begin prioritizing a pipeline of potential product solutions. Key elements of product management language and methodology had found its way into executive-level strategy decks, helping shape how one of America's largest regulated utilities thinks about serving its customers.

This case study reflects early progress in building product-first, customer-centric capability inside one of the most complex, regulated, and consequential business environments in the US.

02 About The Organization

This Customer Team at the large utility is one of the largest investor-owned energy companies in the United States, delivering electricity and natural gas to more than 20 million people across multiple US states. The company operates across those states.

As a regulated public utility, they do not compete in a traditional market. Its obligation is to serve (affordably, reliably, and equitably) under the oversight of state utility commissions. That context shapes everything: how problems get defined, how solutions get approved, and how customer value is measured.

INDUSTRY

**Regulated Electric
& Gas Utility**

SERVICE TERRITORY

Multiple US States

CUSTOMERS SERVED

PARTICIPANTS

**~15 Product
Managers**

Millions of
customers

TRAINING DELIVERED

October 2025 — Optimal Product Management

03 The Challenge

For years, the organization's product and customer teams had used the phrase 'customer centric.' But as the product team lead within the utility's US Customer organization, acknowledged candidly:

“

It's easy to say 'customer-centric' but it's harder to actually ensure we're living that. Customer expectations are changing and we need to meet the moment.

PRODUCT TEAM LEAD

The challenge wasn't motivation. It was method. The team needed shared language, structured tools, and a repeatable approach to translate well-intentioned values for environmental concerns into concrete action. Several specific gaps were driving the need:

01

Lack of common framework across the org for identifying and prioritizing customer problems before jumping to solutions.

02

Difficulty connecting individual team efforts to broader business outcomes and executive strategy.

03

A large customer organization with innovation sometimes happening in siloes, lacking a reference model for structured product development.

Compounding these challenges was the unique complexity of operating as a regulated monopoly. Standard product management frameworks (built for markets with competition, pricing flexibility, and rapid iteration) didn't map cleanly to the world the organization operates in. As one participant noted in the post-training survey:

“

As a regulated utility, we don't face the same market dynamics as organizations that compete aggressively for customers. The biggest gaps are due to that nature of the business.

TRAINING PARTICIPANT

The team needed a product management approach that could be adapted for their regulatory environment, one that treated regulators as critical stakeholders, not barriers.

04 The Solution: Productside's Optimal Product Management Course

Productside delivered its flagship **Optimal Product Management** course to ~15 of the utility's product managers in a live, instructor-led format over three days in October 2025. The training followed Productside's six-unit blueprint covering the full product lifecycle.

The course was customized to reflect the Customer Team's regulatory environment, treating utility regulators as primary stakeholders alongside end customers, by adjusting language, examples, and stakeholder frameworks without altering the core methodology.

Participants worked through hands-on exercises using Productside's **20+ template playbook**, collaborated in cross-functional teams, and applied frameworks to realistic product scenarios. The methodology emphasized outcome-first thinking: start with business outcomes, then investigate customer problems, then define solutions (not the other way around).

As the team's Product Operations Lead described after the training:

“

We worked with the templates that you guys provided — we tweaked them a little to align to our needs. But it all comes back to that training. That's the process we're at.

PRODUCT OPERATIONS LEAD

05 Implementation Journey

The training was designed not as a one-time event, but as the foundation for a sustained capability build. What happened in the months that followed demonstrated how the learning took root.

1

PHASE 1

Grounding in Outcomes

Before diving into customer discovery, the team first worked with leadership to define two key business outcomes they wanted to drive: customer affordability, and speed to power. These became the lens through which all downstream problem investigation was filtered, a direct application of the course's outcomes-first methodology.

2

PHASE 2

Customer Discovery at Scale

Armed with the Productside framework, the team launched a structured discovery process. They identified 30–40 candidate customer problems through internal workshops, then conducted more than 20 interviews with both internal and external customers to validate and narrow the list down to 10 top problems, ultimately converging on 4 priority problems with the highest customer, regulatory, and business impact.

3

PHASE 3

Cross-Functional Innovation Workshop

In the months following the training, the team organized a full-day workshop (their quarterly team gathering) bringing together approximately 20 participants including product managers, subject matter experts from other customer program teams (energy efficiency, EVs, demand response), the utility's Partners Innovation team, and other internal innovators.

Four teams, each working on one validated customer problem, used Productside's solution hypothesis templates to develop and pitch potential solutions. The goal: leave with 2-4 viable solutions ready to move forward.

The Product Operations Lead described the moment the training came to life in the room:

I'm literally going to be sharing a slide where it shows the solution hypothesis template, branded at the bottom... That's the process. We're going to do solutions. We're going to be pitching them, getting feedback, and finding ways to move forward.

PRODUCT OPERATIONS LEAD

4

PHASE 4

Executive Alignment

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the training wasn't in the workshops. It was in the Director's and VP's offsite. In parallel with the Productside engagement, the organization ran a major internal strategy initiative, aimed at defining how the company should serve customers in the future.

The conclusion from that initiative (delivered to the Chief Customer Officer) explicitly called for embedding product development capabilities in the utility's core strategic pillar offerings. Their product team lead credits the training with helping his team push that narrative credibly:

We now have an entire organization that agrees at the executive leadership level that this is the way in which we need to develop new products for our customers.

PRODUCT TEAM LEAD

Product development is now integral to the Chief Customer Officer's transformation plan, a testament to how a training investment can ripple outward into organizational strategy.

5

PHASE 5

Applying Product Thinking to New Domains

One standout moment illustrated how the product approach was being applied to new contexts. Josh and his team pitched a new initiative to senior leadership: reimagining how the Customer Team designs energy rate structures for customers; treating rates as a product, not just a regulatory compliance exercise.

In the pitch deck to leadership, they included a screenshot of Productside's 23-step product development process and the five core framework buckets, using the methodology as a credibility anchor.

In the pitch deck to our leadership, we had a screenshot of the Productside steps and said, 'Here it is, here are the 5 buckets. What does that mean for how we think about time-varying rates from a customer experience perspective, not just an academic exercise?' That's very significant for a regulated utility.

PRODUCT TEAM LEAD

30-40

Candidate problems

20+

Customer interviews

10

Validated problems

4

Priority problems

06 Results & Impact

While the team's product solutions are still in progress (the nature of regulated utility development means longer timelines) the organizational impact is already clear and meaningful.

A Shared Language for Customer Centricity

Perhaps the most immediate impact was giving the team a common vocabulary and methodology. Survey responses consistently highlighted this:

"The overarching framework was helpful for structuring our thinking around new product development."

TRAINING PARTICIPANT

"I've reinforced best practices for some things I'd had to learn on my own, and I've gotten useful reframing to correct poor

practices — and context to reframe them effectively to others."

TRAINING PARTICIPANT

Validated Customer Research Pipeline

From roughly 30–40 raw problem ideas, the team executed a rigorous discovery and validation process: 20+ customer interviews, 10 validated problems, 4 priority solutions in active development. This is not a theoretical exercise; it's a repeatable method now being applied to real customer and business challenges.

A Reference Model for the Broader Organization

In the organization's customer organization, the team that went through training is acting as proof of concept, demonstrating what structured product development looks like so it can be scaled.

As the Product Operations lead put it:

“

We're the guinea pigs of how we do product development in an organized manner, and then how we can scale that across other orgs.

PRODUCT OPERATIONS LEAD

Participant Satisfaction

Post-training survey data from 13 respondents showed strong outcomes across the board:

23

Exemplary NPS score of 23, 77% of respondents rating the course 9 or 10 out of 10.

100%

of respondents either Strongly Agreed or Somewhat Agreed that they learned new skills applicable to their current or next role.

92%

said they would recommend the course to colleagues.

100%

said they would recommend the instructor to colleagues.

Participants highlighted Kenny Kranseler's delivery as a standout:

"Kenny is adept at responding on the fly and using effective anecdotes."

TRAINING PARTICIPANT

"You have great energy and enthusiasm throughout the course and your personal anecdotes helped a lot."

TRAINING PARTICIPANT

"Ken is a gem."

TRAINING PARTICIPANT

07 Lessons Learned & Future Outlook

The utility experiences surfaces several insights for other large, regulated organizations considering product management training:

01

Start with outcomes, not problems.

Before a single customer interview was conducted, the team worked with leadership to define two specific business outcomes they wanted to drive: customer affordability and speed to power. This gave every downstream discovery effort a strategic anchor, and made the team's work immediately legible to senior leadership. The problem investigation followed the outcome definition, not the other way around.

02

Include regulators as key stakeholders in the process.

Standard product management frameworks are built for competitive markets. The organization operates as a regulated monopoly, and adapting Productside's stakeholder framework to place regulatory bodies alongside end customers, rather than outside the process, was what made the methodology actionable in practice rather than theoretical.

03

Build in application time.

The training did not stay in the classroom. Within months, the team was running full-day cross-functional innovation workshops, conducting more than 20 customer interviews, and pitching a new initiative to senior leadership with a screenshot of Productside's 23-step product development

04

Use shared language as organizational glue.

Before the training, the team acknowledged that phrases like "customer centric" were used widely across the organization without a shared understanding of what they meant in practice. What the training provided was not just tools, but a common vocabulary that

process embedded directly in the deck. Frameworks stick when they are applied to live business decisions immediately after training.

made cross-functional collaboration more efficient and leadership conversations more credible. That shared language is now showing up in executive strategy decks and the Chief Customer Officer's transformation plan.

Looking ahead, the utility's team is planning to continue the product development process and building next steps to validate the ideas, and, in parallel, expand the approach across additional groups within its customer organization, using the initial cohort's work as an internal reference model. The rate-redesign initiative (treating energy rates as a product) is also in active development and could become one of the most high-profile applications of product management thinking in the regulated utility sector.

Build the Product Muscle Your Organization Needs

Most large organizations have "customer first" written into their values. Far fewer have a repeatable method for what that means on a Monday morning, when a team is deciding which problems to investigate, which solutions to prioritize, and how to bring leadership along.

That is the gap Productside closes.

If your team knows what it wants to stand for but is still figuring out how to operationalize it, the Optimal Product Management course gives product teams the frameworks, templates, and shared language to move from intent to action. Whether you are navigating complex stakeholder environments, regulatory constraints, or simply an organization where "customer centric" has become a phrase without a practice, we build the product muscle that turns values into results.

[LEARN MORE](#)

www.productside.com

