

MATTHEW POHL

PRODUCT MANAGER · AI PRODUCT BUILDER

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SUMMARY

Product builder and operator with 20+ years turning ambiguous, real-world problems into shipped solutions people adopt and own. I design, build, and deploy AI agents and LLM-driven tools end to end: customer discovery, LLM-assisted development, evaluation, and handoff. I pair hands-on technical fluency and product thinking with two decades of frontline, customer-facing operations; I learn fast, and I do my best work where the path isn't drawn yet.

PRODUCT EXPERIENCE

Travel & Hospitality Operations Platform | Independent Product Builder 2025–2026

- Owned the full product lifecycle for a travel & hospitality operations platform: staff interviews, separating underlying needs from requested features, prioritization, LLM-assisted development, launch, adoption, and repeated iteration.
- Shipped role-based workflows (timekeeping, expense and check requests, resource discovery) and an AI-assisted publishing tool backed by an LLM research engine over a curated source list, for a non-technical staff all over 60; reached weekly use across the whole team at handoff.
- Outcomes the owner reported: receipt management moved from monthly-or-later to daily; payroll has been on time since automated reminders went in; after an AI-assisted publishing workflow launched, articles went from zero in six months to at least one a week, and lead generation more than doubled.

AI Product & Data Collaboration | CarMax | Buyer / Vehicle-Data SME Apr 2025–Present

- Owned the go/no-go evaluation of a generative-AI vehicle-optioning dataset for field use: reframed the test around the live user's decision and prompted a layered-profile prototype whose join/layer concept reached the field flow and enabled the SME group's accuracy endorsement.
- Partnered with a machine-learning team on human-labeling for a recommendation model, reframing the standard from mathematical similarity to customer substitutability; the team adopted it as its go-forward method.
- Identified and pitched a self-service customer-offer concept to director-level stakeholders, framing the user problem, value, and build needs; earned alignment across both a technical and an executive audience.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CarMax | Buyer | Sacramento, CA Dec 2021–Present

- Evaluated roughly 1,500 appraisal offers and purchased 422 vehicles over a rolling three-month period, including Wholesale Auction Manager work, making unit-level pricing decisions from \$200 to \$125,000 across wholesale and retail channels.

Wholesale Auction Manager (Assignment) | Sacramento, CA Apr 2023–Apr 2026

- Designed and piloted a part-time wholesale support staffing model that became the standing method; three participants advanced into higher roles.
- Built a three-phase arbitration workflow for repeatable handoff; a successor took it over after a single orientation session, preserving partner continuity through the transition.

Sales Manager | Houston, TX & Sacramento, CA Jun 2015–Dec 2021

- Managed and developed 9–15 sales consultants through monthly feedback and targeted coaching; led recruiting, onboarding, and weekly training for the broader team.

LEGO Brand Retail | Store Manager | Houston, TX Apr 2010–Jun 2015

- Managed a \$2.2M budget and 13+ associates; delivered ~5% annual sales growth and led all U.S. stores in customer-satisfaction (NPS) and associate-satisfaction results two years running.
- Rebalanced receiving after isolating timing as the true constraint: shifted pricing into nightly inventory work and cut receiving labor ~30% after a two-week validation.

Build-A-Bear Workshop | Progressive Roles | St. Louis, MO Sep 2002–Apr 2010

- Advanced from associate to Community Relations and Interim Workshop Manager; built an Access application that cut in-kind review meetings roughly in half, and stabilized manager vacancies for a 12+ person team and \$1.4M budget.

EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION & TECHNICAL

- AIPMM Certified Product Manager (CPM), 2026
- AI & Technical Product Building: LLM-assisted full-stack development, AI agents and multi-agent systems, prompt and context engineering, persistent-memory architectures, evaluation and systems thinking, and reusable dev infrastructure; built independently.
- Curious Intersect: 30+ published essays translating ML and LLM concepts for non-technical readers.
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