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About me

Pawana Burlakoti
Senior Vice President- Product Management & UX

Pawana Burlakoti serves as the Senior Vice President- Product Management & UX at Ryan, where she leads the Product team to drive product vision, strategy, and execution to deliver innovative, client-focused solutions with excellence, often requiring complete transformation.

Pawana brings a deep knowledge base and vast experience as a product portfolio leader across diverse industries. Most recently, Pawana served as Head of Product for the Global Intelligence and Analytics division at **S&P Global**, leading strategy for Economics Forecasting, Country Risk, and Maritime & Trade analytics. Additionally, leading Fixed Income, Buyside, and Cross Asset Services portfolios, along with UX and Research functions at Market Intelligence (formerly **IHS Markit**).

Throughout her career, Pawana has championed customer-centric innovation, implemented best-in-class product management frameworks, and launched successful go-to-market strategies. Her background also includes product leadership roles at **LexisNexis**, **SciQuest**(now **Jaggaer**), **PeopleFluent**, and **IBM-Kenexa**.

Pawana holds a Master of Arts in Economics and Bachelor of Business Administration and Economics from University of Massachusetts. In addition to Pawana's business experience, Pawana is passionate about the success of the individuals on her team who bring product visions to life, providing team member mentorship and encouraging individuals to expand their skill sets.

Pawana is based in North Carolina with her husband and two sons.

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Building AI-First Teams Starts by Empowering Your People

The future of product development isn't just about adopting AI tools—it's about transforming how your teams think, experiment, and deliver value. Success begins with empowerment, not mandates.

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Let's Take a Quick Pulse Check



Question 1

How many of you use GenAI tools in your daily life?

Think ChatGPT, image generators, AI assistants...



Question 2

How many of you use GenAI tools at work?

For product specs, design mockups, code generation...

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Innovation Requires Intentionality



The Reality Check

Innovation doesn't happen magically. It emerges through deliberate action:

- **Focused effort** on strategic priorities
- **Measured experimentation** with clear metrics
- **Calculated risk-taking** within boundaries
- **Smart guardrails** that enable, not restrict

Your job as a leader? Create the conditions where innovation can **THRIVE**

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Enable Tool Experimentation

In this era of rapid AI adoption, **your teams needs to explore**. Different challenges demand different tools—what works for customer research may not work for prototyping.

01
Identify Use Cases

Map product and design challenges across teams

02
Run Design Sprints

Give teams focused time to test AI tools in real scenarios

03
License Strategically

Invest in tools that prove their value through experimentation

When teams venture into uncharted territory, flexibility beats standardization. Let them discover what works.

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Set Clear, Actionable Goals

Don't Say This

"Everyone needs to innovate with AI."

Vague directives create confusion and inaction.

Say This Instead

"For our services team: reduce manual document processing by 95% using AI-powered recommendations by Q4."

Specific, measurable, tied to outcomes.

Make It Part of OKRs

Structure objectives that balance learning and application:

- **Learning goals:** "Complete 3 AI tool evaluations with documented findings"
- **Application goals:** "Ship 1 AI-enhanced feature that improves user task completion"
- **Impact goals:** "Reduce support tickets by 20% through AI automation"

Articulate what AI innovation means for each product leader based on their product's maturity and strategic goals.

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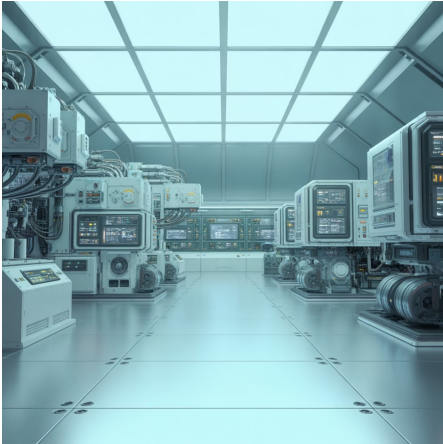
Balance Top-Down and Bottom-Up Innovation

Top-Down Strategy
 Executive vision sets AI priorities aligned with business objectives.
 Provides resources, removes blockers, and defines success metrics.

Bottom-Up Insights
 Teams closest to customers identify pain points and opportunities.
 They experiment, learn fast, and bring proven solutions upward.

The sweet spot? **Where strategic direction meets frontline innovation.**
 Identify these opportunities, give them air cover, and watch impact multiply.

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Visible AI vs. Invisible AI

AI as a feature: Users see and interact with AI directly

- Chatbots and assistants
- AI-generated content tools
- Smart recommendations

Builds trust through transparency

AI under the hood: Powers experiences without being obvious

- Search relevance
- Fraud detection
- Personalization engines

Creates magic without friction

Think critically about AI presence in your product areas. The right approach depends on user needs, not technology trends.

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AI Product Management is Product Management

 **Articulate Value Clearly**
AI isn't the goal—solving customer problems and growing the business is. Every AI feature must answer: *"What value does this create?"*

 **Stay Mission-Focused**
Your mission to serve customers and drive business outcomes hasn't changed. AI is a powerful tool in your toolkit, not a replacement for **product thinking**.

 **Measure What Matters**
Define **success metrics** before building.
Track adoption, engagement, and business impact—not just "AI usage."



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Cultivate Continuous Learning Habits



Study Your Customers
How are users' expectations evolving with AI? What new behaviors are emerging? Regular user research keeps you ahead.



Monitor the Market
AI capabilities advance weekly, not yearly. Track competitor moves, new tools, and shifting best practices.



Invest in Yourself
Hands-on experimentation beats passive observation. Try new tools, build prototypes, fail fast, and learn faster.

☐ **The cost of standing still is higher than the risk of moving forward.** In this landscape, continuous learning isn't optional—it's survival.

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Don't Miss the Train

- Empower Your Teams**
Give them tools, time, and permission to experiment
- Set Clear Goals**
Make AI innovation concrete and measurable
- Stay Customer-Focused**
Let value drive adoption, not hype
- Keep Learning**
Build habits that compound into competitive advantage

The AI-first revolution isn't coming—it's here.
Your move as a leader determines whether your teams lead it or follow it.

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Q & A

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