Earmark Executive Summary

1. Earmark Overview

In a landscape where artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming product delivery, we recognize that the ability to inspire, energize, and unite product teams around a shared vision remains uniquely human.

Product Managers (PMs) are at the center of this movement. Our mission is to empower Product Managers to be inspired, energized, and customer centric by making meetings, generating documents, and managing team and customer communication easy.

We envision a future where PMs can effortlessly deliver customer value, effectively communicate with stakeholders, and make the right bets for their products. Earmark exists to augment human capabilities, not replace them. We believe that by providing PMs with the knowledge of a room full of experts, we can help them become more effective, confident, customer-obsessed, and inspiring leaders.

2. Founder Backgrounds

Mark Barbir, CEO of Earmark, brings a wealth of experience in technology leadership, product management, and scaling high-growth companies:

- **Proven Executive Leadership**: 20+ years of experience in senior leadership roles, including SVP of Engineering at Mindbody and CTO at ProductPlan, demonstrating ability to lead and scale technology companies.
- **Startup Success**: As CTO of ProductPlan, helped the product deliver business growth from $2 million to $10 million in ARR, leading to successful acquisition in 2023.
- **Large-Scale Engineering Management**: At Mindbody, scaled the engineering department from 100 to 250 people in three years, integrating six acquisitions and building a platform serving 60,000+ businesses and 30M+ active consumers.
- **Product Development Expertise**: Extensive experience in product management and development across various industries, including SaaS, wellness, and community-driven platforms.
- **Innovation and Problem-Solving**: Successfully navigated complex challenges, such as saving Mindbody's $20M branded app business through high-level negotiations with Apple.
- **Award-Winning Products**: Led teams that developed award-winning applications, including Webby winners and App Store featured apps.
- **Diverse Industry Experience**: Background spans various sectors including wellness (Mindbody), neurotechnology (SenseLabs), and product management tools (ProductPlan).

- **Entrepreneurial Drive**: Founded Earmark, demonstrating continued commitment to innovation in the AI and product management space.

Mark's combination of technical expertise, product vision, and proven ability to scale businesses positions him ideally to lead Earmark in revolutionizing product management through AI.

Sanden Gocka, Co-Founder and CTO of Earmark, brings a strong blend of technical expertise, leadership experience, and entrepreneurial spirit:

- **Proven Technical Leadership**: Most recently served as Director of Software Engineering at ProductPlan, where he led the engineering transition from project-led to product-led approach, contributing to the company's $50M acquisition.
- **Mobile Development Expertise**: As iOS Software Engineering Manager at Mindbody, led the world's largest app store publisher with over 8,000 templated and branded applications.
- **Full-Stack Capabilities**: Demonstrated versatility by quickly mastering React and securing a Senior Full Stack Engineering position at ProductPlan, showcasing ability to adapt to new technologies rapidly.
- **Startup Experience**: Co-founded Earmark, taking on the CTO role and responsibilities for product development, rapid iteration, and customer engagement.
- **Innovation in Health Tech**: At SenseLabs, led iOS engineering for neurofeedback applications, demonstrating experience in cutting-edge technology applications.
- **Problem-Solving Skills**: Successfully navigated complex challenges, such as reconfiguring Mindbody's app deployment strategy to comply with new Apple guidelines, preserving a $20M annual revenue stream.
- **Interdisciplinary Background**: Holds a BA in Physics from UC Santa Barbara, with research experience in material science and cosmology, bringing a unique analytical perspective to software development.
- **Product Development Acumen**: Created various applications, including a mobile app for ProductPlan and an iOS stress-reduction app, showing ability to identify needs and develop solutions independently.

Sanden's combination of technical expertise, leadership experience in high-growth environments, and ability to rapidly learn and adapt makes him well-suited to drive the technical vision and execution of Earmark's AI-powered product management solutions.

3. Market Overview and Problem

The global product management software market was valued at approximately USD 3.6 billion in 2026, expanding at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.6% during this period.

Projected Growth: Another report estimates the market size to reach USD 30.3 billion in 2024, with a forecast to grow to USD 52.85 billion by 2031, reflecting a CAGR of 7.2%.

Additionally, a different analysis anticipates the market will hit USD 6.92 billion by 2027, with a higher CAGR of 12.4% during the forecast period. This stems from:

- Increasing complexity of product development in the digital age
- Rising demand for data-driven decision-making tools
- Growing need for efficient collaboration in remote and hybrid work environments

Problem: Product Managers are overwhelmed by data, struggling to make swift, informed decisions, and battling to communicate effectively across diverse teams. The rise of AI threatens to automate aspects of the PM role, creating uncertainty about the future of product management.

Recent data highlights the severity of the time management challenge faced by Product Managers:

- 50-60% of their time is spent in internal meetings
- 20-30% is devoted to documentation
- 10-15% is consumed by meeting notes and constant updates

This leaves Product Managers with little time for critical activities such as talking to customers or maintaining a customer-centric focus. The lack of customer interaction can lead to misaligned product decisions, a loss of product-market fit, and missed market opportunities.

These statistics underscore the urgent need for a solution that can:
1. Streamline and automate internal communication and documentation processes
2. Elevate PM influence to effectively lead teams
3. Enhance the efficiency of meetings
4. Automate routine tasks to free up time for strategic, customer-focused activities

Earmark's AI-powered assistant directly addresses these pain points, offering Product Managers a way to reclaim their time and focus on high-value, strategic work.

4. Solution / Product

Earmark is an AI-powered assistant that amplifies the uniquely human skills of Product Managers. During meetings, Earmark analyzes discussions in real-time and quietly feeds PMs relevant data from various sources, as if they had a security specialist, UX designer, and financial analyst all whispering in their ear. This enables faster, more informed decision-making, accelerating product development cycles. Key features include:

1. Real-Time Meeting Guidance: Provides instant insights, summaries, and action items during meetings.
2. Instant Artifact Creation: Generates key documents such as product narratives, product requirements, technical requirements, competitive analyses, go-to-market resources, and user stories.
3. Multi-Perspective Analysis: Offers diverse viewpoints on product decisions through AI-generated personas.
4. Audience Interpretation: Translates technical jargon and generates compelling narratives for various stakeholders.
5. **Data Integration:** Seamlessly pulls relevant data from various sources (e.g., analytics, customer feedback, market research) to inform discussions and decisions.

5. Big Vision

Earmark aims to redefine product management for the AI age. By 2028, we envision Earmark as the indispensable AI companion for every Product Manager worldwide, driving a new era of innovation, influence, and efficiency in product development.

6. Go-To-Market (GTM) Strategy

1. Initial Profile: Product Management IC's and leadership
2. Initial Target: Mid-sized tech companies (50-500 employees) with established product teams.
3. Channel Strategy:
- Founder-led sales for mid-sized enterprise clients
- Self-serve model with freemium offerings for individual PMs and smaller teams

4. Partnerships: Integrations with popular PM tools (Jira, Asana, Slack) to drive adoption
5. Content Marketing: Thought leadership content positioning Earmark as the authority on AI in product management

7. Traction

Since our company formation in February 2024 (six months) we've recruited a dozen product design partnerships to help develop nascent fit using First Round's PMF framework. This outlines the stages and timeline for each PMF level:

1. **Nascent (0-18 months, 3-5 Design Partners) - we are here.**
    - Focus on validating the problem and initial product concept.
    - Test different customer personas and solutions.
    - Short sales cycles with high customer churn.
2. **Developing (18-36 months)**:
    - Refine the product based on user feedback.

    - Improve product-market fit with more stable, repeatable demand.
    - Begin developing customer retention strategies.
3. **Strong (36-48 months)**:
    - Establish clear repeatability and efficiency in sales.
    - Retain customers effectively and scale operations.
    - Mature product offering and market position.
4. **Extreme (48+ months)**:
    - Achieve dominant market position with loyal customers.
    - Optimize operational efficiency and expand market reach.
    - Focus on long-term sustainability and growth.

For detailed insights, the full framework is on the First Round website here.

8. Team

Engineering, Product Design: Sanden Gocka, CTO
Engineering, Sales, Customer Success, Marketing, Research: Mark Barbir, CEO

9. Competitive Landscape

Traditional PM Tools (ProductBoard, Aha!): Lack advanced meeting-based AI capabilities
General AI Assistants (ChatGPT, Claude): Not specialized for PM workflows
DevOps-focused AI Tools: (Jira, Azure DevOps) Comprehensive feature set for product development, focus on aspects of the software development lifecycle, not data air pockets like meetings and artifact creation.

Earmark's competitive advantage lies in its comprehensive, PM-centric approach and advanced AI capabilities tailored specifically for product management workflows.

10. Deal Dynamics

- Raising: $500,000 Seed Investment
- Use of Funds:
    - 80% Engineering
    - 20% Sales & Marketing

11. Market / Customer Diligence

- Recently sold ProductPlan, a SaaS company that provided solutions to 30,000 Product Managers
- Interviewed 70 product leaders and individual contributors from target market companies

- 55/70 expressed strong interest in Earmark's value proposition
- Key feedback: Need for seamless integration with existing tools, concerns about AI privacy/security
- Major pain points confirmed: information overload, difficulty in quick decision-making, communication challenges across teams

12. Contact Information

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13. Exit Strategy

None