

91. Where Has Project Management Gone?

## **91. Where Has Project Management Gone?**

with Galen Low

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**Announcer:** From the Washington DC chapter of the Project Management Institute, this is PM Point of View®, the podcast that looks at project management from all the angles.

**Kendall Lott:** Hello, PMs, and welcome back to the every-other-month of Elevating the Conversation here on PM Point of View®. It's me Kendall Lott, once again, out on the road as a digital nomad recording in a small hotel outside of Nashville, Tennessee. So shout-out Nashville chapter; I see you. With me today, once again, the innocuous innovator, the lean master of portfolio prowess, co-host Mike Hannan. Welcome, Mike.

**Mike Hannan:** Ah pssh-ah.

**Kendall Lott:** How you doin', man?

**Mike Hannan:** Doing well.

**Kendall Lott:** Well, it's, as I drove, and it was cold today—30 degrees colder than last time I was out driving and talking to you—it's turned us another season since we last recorded, so my question is, what topic's gotten your goat of late since we last talked? Where's the burr in the saddle this month that we need to throw out there for PMs to get all riled up about?

**Mike Hannan:** I was thinking about how great and refreshing it was to see the 7th edition to the PMBOK really focus hard on business value and making sure business outcomes are attained and trying to slim down a lot of the hundreds of pages of content that had kind of bloated it up over the previous editions. But I thought they didn't start at the beginning, and they're still operating on poor definitions. The definition of project still doesn't include the word *investment*, so how can you talk about *return on investment* and *business value*, if the definition itself doesn't mention things like *value* and *investment*? You know, we're still focused, or at least PMI is focused on the temporary aspect is, if that were so important, which is it really? And the uniqueness aspect, which again, is that really so important?

If we're really just undertaking these risky investments sometimes to generate what we hope could be dramatic, dramatically higher returns, I think there's a lot that we have to go back to the basics on and start building this edifice from the foundation up, to make sure we really are encouraging the right kind of thinking about all this.

**Kendall Lott:** Well, and I think that's gonna speak to the conversations we've had before leading up to this around this role between project and product management and where it all fits in and to where we wanna go today, which I've already [thought] the title is, “Where has project management gone?” Not in terms of what new journey it's taken, but actually, has it disappeared? What are we actually dealing with here? And I like 7<sup>th</sup> too, but I'm questioning that.

So, we were gonna get some input today from a different part of the industry than we've been working with, so not unlike our last conversations, we're gonna push more into one of these roles here today, so we got a chance to talk before with Mr. Galen Low—that's the Digital Project Manager Association, the DPM. Galen, I got it right? DPM?

**Galen Low:** Absolutely. The DPM dot com.

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**Kendall Lott (03:11):** So he's been on here before, listeners, someone let him... I let you go see his bio there, because if you've seen, or heard rather, Episode 77, "Virtual PM: 2020 and Beyond," he was our lead interlocutor there as he organized all the folks that we got to talk to there. These digital project managers have been doing the virtual dance long before COVID, folks, because they were working on products and projects that actually were just basically digital, and to do that, they worked virtually. So they've been playing that game for a while; we have a whole episode on it and, uh, yeah, we predated COVID with it. We were all over that. And so, like stink on a pig, as my grandfather would say.

Anyway, so he writes to me and he says he wants to share on what he's seeing institutionally from the world of digital projects—think marketing here, folks—and that's interesting because he's picking up some lessons, so I thought, "Well, Mike and I will challenge whether those are real lessons or not." Pssh-ah, as Mike says. But then he freaks me out a little bit because there's a question: where has project management gone? I mean, this is a question. Where does it reside? Who's doing it? And I keep thinking we gotta chew this thesis up here a little bit, so we've challenged the conventional role of the project manager, but here's what I heard in our kind of a pre-brief the three of us did, and I wanna put out there. One take that I heard you two talking about is: what happens when the evangelists for PM have won and now everyone's a PM or it's embedded everywhere, and yet we still don't even have the definition right... I don't know. Talk amongst yourselves. Well, I'll intervene a little bit.

So let's rock this a little bit... How does this fit in, Galen? So the first thing I'd like to hear is where are you coming from, your journey that got you in this a little bit. Just briefly, why should we listen to you about this, that you're gonna claim you've learned something?

**Galen Low:** I'm gonna take Mike's angle and say because I've thought about it a lot.

**Kendall Lott:** Do you get paid to think about it?

**Galen Low:** I do get paid to think about it. So the digital project manager dot com, we are a supportive community for project managers who are passionate about finding the best ways to deliver impact and value within an ever-changing digital landscape, so I'll let you chew on that for a little bit. What do we mean?

**Mike Hannan:** I wanna get paid doing that.

**Galen Low:** Yeah, okay. This is actually kind of a job interview for Mike, actually, we're gonna poach him. We would love to have your expertise and let me explain why as well, okay. Because where we came at it from in the beginning was we were a crew, my co-founders and I, we were a crew that came into project management rather haphazardly, one might say accidentally. We were working in a digital agency, so a small company that was basically doing web work for organizations that did not have the in-house capability to do web work. This is when everyone was learning to do web design in their college dorms, in their closet, at home, on their spare time, no one was going to school for it.

No one knew how to hire for it, no one knew how to build a team to do it, and therefore no one knew how to do it except these digital agencies who had kind of figured it out by the skin of their teeth. So as you can imagine, a couple things happened there. One, we got thrown into this business

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with zero training, all the responsibility and zero training. Just get the project done. Just land the plane. Just, that's your job. You communicate well. You're organized. Let's go for it.

**Kendall Lott:** So is that why all my websites back then suck?

**Galen Low:** Yeah, absolutely, yeah. Talk to me about idea cities, everything was under construction. It was always an acclimated gift somewhere. Yeah, it was a [...]. Exactly, yeah. We went through the flash craze, we built experiences there, but I think the main thread of this was listen, hey, 'cause we're talking about definitions, right, Mike, like we have to redefine what project management was and how we delivered some of these things, and everything looked Waterfall at the beginning, alright. We do design and we do the bill, we do some testing, we release it, we release a full shebang. But really, what we were doing is actually finding out new ways of working, new ways to deliver work, and you have things... And I'm not just gonna say that Agile is only for software or Agile is only from software, but that was what we had to think about, we had to think about iterations, we had to think about navigating complexity and a critical path for building a digital product that is different than building a physical product.

And just to kind of level-set around what Kendall said earlier, what we're talking about here is web-based applications, websites, we're talking about native app development, we're talking about digital marketing campaigns, things with ones and zeros, but not just done for fun, not just those brochure websites that we had in the '90s and early, early, early noughties, but things that actually had a function for a business, so I'm coming at it from an angle where a lot of my clients back in the day and today are in healthcare, are in transit, are in government, are in non-profit, are in retail. So these are businesses that are fundamentally operating their businesses using digital tools, and we need to put that level of rigor into what we're building, but we also need to come at it from that, for lack of a better word, geeky angle of figuring out new ways of working, innovating, always trying to be creative and always trying to quote-on-quote land the plane, even though we're always reinventing how to fly. So that I think is kind of the perspective that we're looking at this from we're looking at it from doing project management on an ever-changing landscape. The ground is always moving underneath us, and that changes the way that we approach the problem, the way we think about things.

**Kendall Lott (08:50):** Galen, hasn't your customer changed though? That's what struck me was that it's like, look, they're taking all in-house 'cause everybody can do it now.

**Galen Low:** 100%. Well, okay, well, [...] this is a whole ball of wax. This is such a ball of wax. Okay, so let me take a running start at it and say...

**Kendall Lott:** I see it from your market though, right, I think that's the thing that I don't see in the government, for example, in my market. It doesn't work the same way like that.

**Galen Low:** And I wonder if it's happening. I'm here. I'm based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and I will credit the provincial government here, the Province of Ontario, they've got the Ontario Digital Service, they are building capability, very strong capability and bringing on the right talent so that they can do some of these things themselves because it's germane to what government is now. In other words, digital government, building citizen services, being able to report a pothole online or report domestic abuse online, these are important things; these aren't websites anymore, or the way we started building this at the beginning when it was like, "Okay, I need a fancy animated brochure

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website, so with our phone number on it so people can call us, that's gone. That's many decades away. So in terms of how the customer has changed, I would say that there are a lot of organizations, this is not necessarily that recent, but over the past decade, a lot of organizations, insurance companies, banks are the ones that kind of jump out at me. They've been building internal capabilities to do this. They've actually been attracting talent that would otherwise have gone to an ad agency or a digital agency or a management consultancy by building an agency culture within their organization. They made some mistakes, which I have opinions about, which we can get into, but in terms of the transforming customer, yeah, we start seeing this shift from, "Hey, I need a set of hands that can do this because I can't do it," to... "Listen, we've got a small team, but we don't have capacity or there's a certain capability that we're lacking and we need to augment." Right, so then we have an augmented or more collaborative environment.

These days, what I see most often, and I see most often is the collaboration almost to the level of partnership where you've got an internal team. Yes, they are to the brim with other operational work, it's not all project-based work, they need an extra group to come in, maybe a different perspective, maybe a different set of talents, but they're gonna work together as one team, and that also changes things.

**Kendall Lott:** That's not funny more because I thought for a second you were headed to disintermediating all of us as consultants. That wasn't gonna be good news, but now we're talking partnership again, so I'm back happy at it. Mike, you're laughing about that. Tell me about what we might do as partners in this environment, what do you see there?

**Mike Hannan:** Well, as a long-time career consultant, I like to say that, I like to say that too often we consultants are the problem. Not only adding to the problem, but we are the problem. In fact, I think it was you, Kendall, who introduced me to the line that unfortunately I have experience over and over again in some of the large consultancies I used to work for, and it was, "Your whole goal is to bite like a tick and spread like a cancer."

**Kendall Lott:** That's what I had the big companies say.

**Mike Hannan:** I think really often that's unfortunately true. One of the reasons I decided to just stay small, I guess... But bottom line is, something Galen said really resonated with me. He was talking about how they sort of had to figure it out as they went along, and it was also in this sort of fast-paced industry with a lot of really tight deadlines and discovering things you can do in the digital world that can be much faster and more iterative and all that kind of stuff, that was also being learned in all the movements that led up to the Agile Manifesto, right. And interestingly, Galen, I won't ask you how old you are, but let's just say you don't look over 40, and I would say that anyone over 40 kinda went through something you described, but not in the digital world, which was there were no degree programs in project management, right.

There was a certification, but I'd never heard about it until the early aughts. It'd been around how long by then, Kendall? Probably 15 or 20 years? And I think there's a three or four-year period and around 2004-2005 where the number of PMP-certified professionals like doubled, so it had been around for however many decades, but within just a few years, it doubled, so it kinda started to become more well-known, a bit more codified, people recognized standard practices now, whether they were best practices or the best emerging practices is another debate of course. But at least we had some way to talk about things, we didn't have to invent it every time as we went, at least maybe

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that gave us some place to start. Just imagine Galen and his environment like trying to figure out as I go along, but the pace is way faster, the demands are pretty severe, and I don't know, Galen—I imagine that you're constantly having to do read the minds of your customer to figure out exactly what they want.

**Galen Low (13:51):** Absolutely, yeah. There was not necessarily even a shared vernacular for some of these things, and we joke in our community, we have a thread on our forum of just buzzwords things that people say, and it has a million different meanings. I'm blanking on all of the good ones, but even something as simple as managing expectations, right. Even something as simple as just a re-skin, like for like functionality, it means all of these different things to different people, and I think that's really something that is intrinsically embedded in at least the digital PMs that I work with, it's this notion of being the translator from business to technology to design and otherwise, and just being this bridge, whilst sprinting so like running with trays of water, translating for people what the needs are like a server in a restaurant. Yeah, exactly, right. Figuring out what the requirements are...

**Kendall Lott:** But Galen, how is this different than the past? I mean, part of it, you were talking about them bringing it in-house, and I think the ball I wanna bounce pass over to you... Well, I wanna highlight the best word I've ever heard is the dirty noughties, I gotta... I used to talk about the [aughts], and nobody knew what I was saying. With the early noughties, the little noughties. [...] I lost it. Had to get my headset back on.

**Kendall Lott (15:25):** But here's the thing that I think we hit on this a little bit, you were saying it, now it's in a partnership, and they were able to bring it in-house. Things have gotten more sophisticated. One of them, I think, is the relationship with IT I think will be interesting as well, that might even be generational... I don't know. And where that will go, we could plunge into that. But you talk to me about something I thought of as the binary star system, which is you're saying product, project, program managers, we're gonna need to talk about some definitions *maybe* there, but you were talking about this real partnership that they need to have, because what we have had on this very podcast a couple of times now is when you extend value all the way through the delivery of return on investment, you begin to get into things that start smelling like product managers, who are now responsible for actual revenue in the full life cycle of things, and where does it begin and end? I'm back to where has project management gone? Have we made it something else? Or how does that work together? You threw out they should work in tandem. Talk to me.

**Galen Low:** Yeah, okay, so first of all, I have to go out and say that folks in digital agencies and the modern management consultancies, we've taken a butcher knife to some of this terminology. I see program managers that are really just project managers, I see product managers that are really just program managers, I see everything in between. Coming back to what Mike was saying, sometimes it's just we gotta leverage the flavor of the day to get the business, we're consultants, we're client services [...] We're always selling, so we'll call our role, whatever we need to call it, to describe how we are positioning it, right, so you will have an agency where there is a product owner who is fundamentally a project manager and working with the client, but is of a product mindset and as sort of charged with that business value, not just getting the job done, but making sure that it's the right thing to achieve the goals, which, you know, Mike was touching on with the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the PMBOK, which I think we'll probably circle back around to anyways. But coming back to your partnership model, we're gonna mince words here aren't we? But the way I see it is this. And I

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have it written down here indelicately as, project manager, sometimes we're guilty of treating them as guns for hire. It's like hiring a hitman. It's just like, who's available for this project that's gonna start and stop this temporary, the temporary investment of time and energy and... Yeah, someone who can just exercise that project management skill set, and like I keep saying, land the plane. That's a skill set that's seen as so general, and when you talk to folks, especially folks in my community, people who are very passionate about project management, very passionate about the impact and the value that they deliver and what they all wanna be is a little bit more strategic. And the question is, what does that really mean?

And what I think it really means is, listen—you can't just have a project manager come in for, or a program manager for that matter, for little slices of a product life cycle. You have a product manager or a product owner who is going to span iterations of a product, and then you've got the depth underneath, right, so you've got... Okay, well, this iteration of the product needs some software development, it needs some hardware design, it needs some kind of marketing program, and these are all seen as a program of projects, and then you get it let's get a different project manager for each one of these projects or maybe a program manager who's just managing this slice, but then the next iteration isn't necessarily the same group of project managers, and isn't necessarily the same group of program managers. The only common thread you have is this product owner, this product manager, and that creates the cohesion between the products, but it doesn't create the knowledge accumulation that you would need to become more and more efficient as that product develops.

**Kendall Lott (19:11):** Where does that accumulation need to happen inside deep the company and that's getting the product or with the consulting firm trying to provide to them, 'cause that's what you're wrestling with, right? You're wrestling with people trying to provide services largely, I think, or maybe not. I don't know what your membership looks like.

**Galen Low:** Well, I mean, it's changing, alright, because my customer is changing because in-house teams are changing, and actually a lot more people in my community that were agency people are now in-house people.

**Kendall Lott:** So they're asking, "How can I get promoted?" Not "How do I get a client?"

**Galen Low:** Well, exactly, and I think that's probably exactly it... Let's take it from a career standpoint, okay. So you're a program manager in an in-house team, the product is almost always the same, let's say you work for a bank and it's the specific mortgage product that you work on, how are you gonna get promoted? How are you gonna deliver true value... Yeah, you can do that increment version 2 of the mortgage product and then go and do something else, but then your success story is only about delivering stuff, delivering a thing. But if you wanna be more strategic and can go across this product life cycle, hand-in-hand with the product manager, these executional and strategic partners that are thinking of, "Well, what worked last time? How is this knowledge accumulating? How are we taking the lessons that we learned and pushing them forward so that the product gets easier and easier to increment and evolve?" Well, then it's a different story, that's a different level of value that you're delivering, and when people say, "Oh, I wanna be more strategic as a project manager," I think that's part of what they mean. Because when you think about product managers or product ownership, and [...] we've dabbled in this a little bit in our conversations, but the way I'm thinking about it is that, yeah, you have a product owner who is sometimes gonna be quite involved and fixated on the customer research, market research, figuring out what product we

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should be building, how to increment the product, not necessarily about delivering stuff in a critical path and what sprint are we on and did we achieve the velocity that we needed to achieve in the last sprint. Those are different mindsets.

But then when you start thinking about them as a Venn diagram, as a bit of a blend it a product owner and let's say a program manager, they're seeing the forest for the trees together to probably bickering a little bit the different priorities kind of like an account manager and a project manager in a more traditional digital agency configuration or management consultancy, and they're going to together find that balance both being strategic and both being executional, just varying degrees of that in order to actually get the product to where it needs to be. That push-pull of what do people want and what is feasible to deliver against our business constraints, against our timing constraints, against the market constraints, and I think that is a pretty strategic role there, but I think it only comes together when they're kind of this... This duo. This dynamic duo running across the product life cycle, which is continuous, which doesn't really end, but that life cycle is made up of iterations and iterations, other projects. So that's where I think the strategic value of a project/program manager comes in for an in-house team especially, because I think you're right—the accumulation of knowledge and the knowledge transfer can stay within that institution, and we all know that in agencies and consultants, consultancies is like trying to get the same resource across multiple projects, that's a challenge in and of itself, it's a rarity in and of itself.

**Mike Hannan (22:36):** But you know, everything I heard you say, Galen, I heard so many little pieces woven throughout your entire message there of, “Hey, this is actually a continuous value delivery engine.” Which flies in the face of the normal definition of projects as temporary, and you can just have this hired gun that shows up, and we don't really need to know the details of what the assassin does. In fact, we don't wanna know; we're just paying for the result or the outcome, and it's just this once, presumably.

But at least if you believe the movies, these assassins have regular customers, right? They go through the process more than once. I think back this past summer, I did a project that I hope I never do again, it was just truly a one-time deal for me, where I ripped up the sod in my Utah home, which is a high desert climate, right, and replaced it with rocks and a few native plants.

**Kendall Lott:** Very opposite of a digital product. But go ahead.

**Mike Hannan:** However, I did have to design everything digitally ahead of time so that I had a good plan, and I had to consult people that have done it before because it is a continuous value thing for them, and I'd be foolish not to tap into their knowledge.

**Kendall Lott:** You hit on something here with this, to extend the hitman model, not that any of us actually know anything about being wise guys, and I don't want anyone listening to think that we do, but actually... Let me dig there for a second. The reason that might be happening, if we're to believe the movies, is there's a risk mitigation concept in there, right? Because perhaps an organization is not sure what it needs to build it in-house and bring it in-house, but you're saying that's what you've seen the market actually moving to, and we're seeing the changes with it, so there might be a question here around risk.

But again, I'm hearing a little bit about this, the end of the consulting side, I think they would in your story, your journey, you talked about, we were hired to be the builders of fixers, to come in

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and you get it done for them because they can't afford to do it, or they just need it down faster or with someone who knows. Now, I'm wondering where the expertise is gonna lay because you just went to—like we all like to do—let's talk strategy. Strategy is where the money is. I'm gonna be strategic.

You just told us in your observation and you're thinking, 'cause you've thought about it because you've seen it, that the strategy is internal, that the knowledge required to be maintained and to see the big picture in fact is internal and people are getting it now. So if they don't need me to build, and they don't need me to be smart and strategic, where does that leave this marketplace of the PM for hire or the product manager even for hire? I'm wondering, are we questioning that? I don't think PM is so special that nobody gets it anymore, at least in the kinds of firms that we're dealing with here.

**Galen Low (25:18):** I mean, you know, listen. I did my stint with a couple of larger management consultancies. And the thing that struck me is the opposite strategic value, which is that you're pulling knowledge from everywhere. You're pulling knowledge from that project where it was whatever AI, quantum computing, really heavy analytics, you're pulling from industries like mining, you're pulling from industries like transit, and you're taking what you know about all of these things as a consultant and funneling it towards an adjacent industry like government, so it's like... Either way, I think the big limiting factor on the in-house side, generally speaking, is going to be capacity because these teams are set up a certain way, and again, not all project teams. These are fundamentally in-house operational teams. Sure, there might be this iteration, the cycle to it, but fundamentally, there's still things that need to get done on a day-to-day basis that compete as a priority against like project-based work.

So I think the most cynical part of me says, okay, well, this guns for hire thing, these consultants, at the very least from a capacity valve standpoint, there will always be a market for this because someone's always gonna need it to get done faster or cheaper, or just get a team together that has the right capabilities to deliver something. I think that's always gonna be the case. But I think the strategic value of pulling from other markets and other experiences, whether that's an individual consultant who has their own sort of lived experiences, or if it's a management consultancy that has pulled its knowledge in such a way that it is informing that the way that they are approaching other work, well then, yeah, I think there's strategic value that is worth a lot of money there.

**Mike Hannan:** So let me have a little fun with you on this, Galen. So, imagine I'm one of your clients and I only have sort of a rough sense of what your typical client might be like, but so just be kind and play along here...

**Kendall Lott:** Or his membership's clients.

**Mike Hannan:** Sure, yeah, there you go. So if I'm listening to this episode here, I'm getting the takeaway that, okay, there's something usually strategic, but whether strategic or not, it's definitely driving the value delivery of my entire enterprise, and you're saying that I don't have direct control over it. In fact, I'm investing in an external entity to gain all that knowledge, who can then hold me hostage with all that knowledge for however long. And then my entire value proposition as an organization is outsourced; why would I want that?

**Kendall Lott:** That's what consulting's been all these years though, right? Everyone knows you spend all of your time as a client training your consultant, right? Because they gotta know the

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context of what's going on.

**Mike Hannan (28:04):** But let's take the classic thing, the hitman thing again. Like if I'm, I don't know, I don't know. Who hires hitmen? Beats me, right? Let's say the mafia or whatever.

**Kendall Lott:** Who hires an expert, let's just go with that now.

**Mike Hannan:** The point is they're not in the business, I hope, of killing people. That's not the value delivery engine. That's this inconvenient thing that they have to do occasionally, or they feel they have to do, and that's not really gonna drive our success or failure in the future. It's the perfect thing to outsource. Highly specialized. Hopefully, rarely needed.

**Kendall Lott:** No, you've just hit it. No, you just hit it. If we're gonna go into this market, it better be highly specialized and rarely needed. Now that's two interesting characteristics. I don't know if that's true, but I'm saying when you just said that those are two key characteristics if we're thinking about people in their careers, where they might wanna aim their career. 'Cause if you're gonna get entrenched in it, you gotta get in-house, is what I think you're saying you're seeing in your industry, but go ahead, Mike. You were challenging something there.

**Mike Hannan:** Yeah, bottom line is if you're doing this project work and doing it cyclically and managing product life cycles which are cyclical, and you have the ongoing value delivery engine that has to run it a certain cadence, and you'd like it to run at an ever-faster cadence, right. It would be the dumbest thing in the world to ever outsource it, right. If it's, hey, I don't know, I run a bunch of shoe factories, and I guess I need some people on staff that know a thing or two about real estate, because my factories have to be on land and I might buy or I might lease, but that's a real estate thing, or I might have a real estate guy at external or internal. In my mind, that seems sort of less crucial whether you outsource or not, but if it's outsourcing the actual assembly line for your shoes, that's your whole value delivery engine—why would you do that?

**Galen Low:** Listen, that is like the entire motivation for the whole thing, so... Yeah, it's coming back around to where we started... Yeah, a consultant's job is to get their hooks in, and a client's job is to not be so dependent that their business continuance relies on that, but it was a necessary evil. And I think part of it was what you're saying, which is that, okay, maybe projects don't happen all that often. We just need an operations team, and when we need a project like a big initiative, a transformation, that's when we need to bring in some extra help from people who have done this before, maybe in our industry or maybe others.

**Kendall Lott (30:34):** My entire listenership just was like, "Wait, what did you just say? Maybe projects don't happen that often?" but I think you're onto something here because it's something you guys said earlier... Yeah, I don't think projects don't happen anymore... What I understand, and there were some concurrence with Mike on this, is the nature of projects has changed so much because we have to look at value and their interlocking pieces. You have to look at it as a suite of product, suite of projects around a product, and ultimately you're part of that. It's not that projects don't happen, it's just that they don't stand alone. We can't say, "Oh, there's this mysterious thing. It's a project. And there's somebody trained to go do it." That's kind of our pitch in our non-profit, right.

**Mike Hannan:** I would argue that's always been that way. I don't think it has to do with the digital

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era.

**Kendall Lott:** I don't know, I think there was a theory that it was specialized and you had to have a specialized person to handle it, and I'm wondering now if... Well, PMBOK for six generations, six versions of it, defined it—well actually seven, your point—still continues to identify as these temporary endeavors, and we're saying there is really no such thing. Or that there are very few of them. There are fewer of those that are interesting than you might think; the things are connected.

**Mike Hannan:** If you come back to the beginning of the modern PM era, it was basically in the U.S. defense contractor industry. They did projects, that was their core business, and those projects had pretty massive consequences. If you build a jet fighter that crashed, that was a problem, right. And literally like hundreds of thousands of lives would hinge. Same with a lot of the early NASA programs that advanced, what I'll call modern project management. It was this notion that, yes, this is core to our value proposition, it's core to our ongoing value delivery engine, and we're in the early Dark Ages, which I still think we are, but especially in the '50s and '60s when we were learning, inventing PERT charts or whatever. Yeah, it was this notion of, "We need to make a discipline out of this, it's too central to what we do for a living." It's too central to the value we lend to society, but we can't do this haphazardly, and it shouldn't be a one-and done kind of thing, this is ongoing.

**Galen Low (32:46):** Well, I have this in my notes. I'm glad you brought all those things up because I have it in my notes, it says, "The demand for delivering projects is higher than ever." Okay, so hold on, let's dig in there. I'm like, okay. "Digital transformations are happening everywhere with no signs of slowing." So again, a focused effort to play catch up, it's an initiative. We were in the Dark Ages, we need to zoom forward into the next stage of the Dark Ages, that is a project today that's happening with a lot of businesses, especially because of the pandemic, people are having to digitize, they have to transform, they gotta rethink about work from home or hybrid work environments, things like that, 5G infrastructure, that's a project that's probably one of the nation's biggest projects that's happening right now in terms of rolling out all the infrastructure, that's for sure a project. A whole vaccine and booster roll out all over the world, and that's a project.

**Kendall Lott:** I'm hearing hypersonic weapons might suddenly become a project, as of the news today.

**Galen Low:** Is that the Havana Syndrome?

**Kendall Lott:** No I think this is the, um, Sputnik Syndrome. It's that "oh shit" moment that somebody else built it.

**Galen Low:** Weaponized flatulence is where I thought you were going. We're going all over the map here.

**Kendall Lott:** No, no, no, no. Check the news there. But we've gone from projects are kind of specialized and rare to, well, maybe they're always happening. But I think it's 'cause we're changing the definition of how they work in there. And so how do we get aligned to that, is what's important.

**Galen Low (34:19):** I think, not to zoom out too far, but if you zoom... Take your iPhone, go to photo roll, zoom all the way up. If you zoom out far enough, these moments in time that are temporary, are measurable, are these focused start and finish things. You zoom out into an ocean

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that is just your life, your time scale is different when you look at it as this operational cadence that is repetitive in some sense but is made up of these moments. And I think that the new world is products are made up of projects. You might not see exactly where they start and finish, you might be on sprint 29, but I bet you within there, there were probably two or three releases, these milestones. Value delivery moments. Yeah, now that you said that actually, I feel like we're actually more onside than I thought we were, because I do think that there are still like... I have it down here like project management—it's still listed as one of the top 10 in-demand skills, and depending on who you ask, it's still within that top 10. It's a thing that people should know how to do. Which coming back to what you said, Kendall, earlier, should everyone just need to know how to do this, right? It's so specialized, it's so core to our business that everyone should be able to be a project manager.

**Kendall Lott:** But you're observing that, right? People are learning that just because even if that's not their main role, people recognize its value now. I'm back to my opening statement. To me, I think to me one of the interesting questions is, what happens when you win? What happens when you've been pushing an idea, PMI, and it worked?

**Galen Low (35:55):** And is that winning? Right, and I think it's a very sort of apt discussion to have. I'm seeing in my community, right, I see folks coming in and yeah, they wanna learn more about how work is delivered because in some cases, they're working on a lean team, they probably work for a consultancy, they're expected to do the project management, even though that's not their title or their sole role. And at a certain scale, that probably works. I see it happen more on these smaller teams, five to 10 people, relatively self-managing, and they didn't need that skill set to be able to communicate to their clients or communicate amongst one another, what's happening when, much time it should take, whether things are on track or off-track, whether it's still hitting the goal.

So yeah, from that standpoint, I'm super grateful. I think that everyone should learn something of project management, just like every digital project manager who was involved in building a digital experience should learn something about user experience design, and that's something that the folks in my community we're doing all the time, we're acting as this bridge in between these teams, in order to speak the language, we need to know some of the words too, we need to be able to have that conversation about with our technical architect, with our lead UX designer, with our service design team, and we need to be able to know enough about what they do to make sure that what we do is well-informed and we can land the plane. And I think the opposite is true. Just thinking that it's actually a great idea for anyone in a cross-functional team who is not a PM to learn something about project management, if for no other reason than to have that shared understanding and empathy for what the craft is.

**Kendall Lott (37:37):** Talk to me about the value delivery moments there in that context, Mike, because I'm trying to see how it sounds like we're supposed to be narrowing our timeframe, 'cause I'm intrigued by this time span notion by the way. That's gonna be whole podcast player about this role of time span and the zooming in and zooming out and more that value falls, but with what Galen was just talking about, how do you see these value-delivering moments that you talked about? Who's seeing that and how?

**Mike Hannan:** So if you start with painting a couple extremes, just to reframe this in a way we can all understand, this term *value delivery moment* might be a bit too vague or conceptual, but we know that if we're 99% done with a bridge, we haven't arrived at the value delivery moment yet

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where cars can actually drive over it, right. Now, you could argue, well, but it could be valuable as a fishing pier, and that might be true, but it's not really gonna be the ROI for all the costs that was put into that just for some fishing. Maybe if you like fishing a lot, you'd pay a lot of money for that bridge, but...

**Galen Low:** That's earned value right there, right.

**Kendall Lott:** That sounds like something that came out of a brainstorming session: "Well, fishing pier. Oh, good. Let's run with that."

**Mike Hannan:** Well, if you can get the same amount of toll revenue from fishermen, maybe it's worth looking at. But then let's say the bridge is built, but we haven't painted stripes to mark the lanes, and we haven't figured out how to collect tolls yet, which is kind of important to the value proposition as well, we have to get some cost recovery on this. Right, so these things, you might bundle them up in the minimum viable product before we even open the bridge to traffic, but it's a choice. The fact you have a bridge that can actually connect two sides of a river, right there is valuable. And now, take the other extreme where we've all heard by now, I bet, especially in your world, Galen, these notions that companies like Amazon make 10,000 software changes a day, so that's 10,000 value delivery moments, and by the way, not all of them deliver profit. Some of them are just experiments designed to teach them something, and a failed experiment might deliver value in the terms of some lesson learned it, and now we can iterate forward from there.

So how do you talk about value delivery moments in sort of a project management context with 10,000 of them a day? It's kind of hard to. So somewhere in the middle is this, there must be an inflection point between when are we just sort of running 10,000 value delivery moments a day versus a true big one where all of a sudden we're working at it, investing, investing time and money for weeks, months, years, perhaps, and then all of a sudden, we finally hit a point where we're gonna get value from it, right. Well, what if we could shrink that to from two years to six months, or from six months to two months, or from two months to two weeks, and I think that's what we've done by... Every industry that's gone to an assembly line model that the project managers think doesn't pertain to them, that's operations, that's not project... That's shoe cobblers, that's automobile craftsman. And all of them said, "There's no way you could ever automate this, there's no way you could ever build an assembly line to do something that requires so much craftsmanship." And we're finding over and over again throughout history, not only is it possible, but it's inevitable.

And I would actually say our job as project managers is to make that the new reality, right, make the two-year value delivery moment, get down to six months, make the six months one down to two months, make the two months down to two weeks, and get to the point where you're doing 10,000 a day, if that's relevant to your industry.

**Galen Low (41:37):** I mean, listen, I think it's a fascinating concept for me. Where I go in my head is like—okay, do you remember when you would upgrade your web browser? You went from version 3 to version 4; next year it's gonna be version 5. And I think we're at version 100s were like my Chrome version. If I were to look at it right now, I don't even... It's a very high number with a dot and then another high number and a dot and another high number...

**Mike Hannan:** Quick little insertion—let's call them updates. Not upgrades.

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**Galen Low:** Okay, let's call them updates. I'm actually gonna go look right now and just for, just to date this episode. My Chrome version is version 94.0.4606.81, and that's the official build. So I'm imagining that there are some unofficial builds, experiments and things happening. For me, that's the time scale, right... Version 94 seems like if I wanna make a big sort of leap, it's gonna go to version 95, it's a major version increment or 94.5, right, but when you're talking to me about 94.0.4606.81, 4606.81, those are these smaller value increments which, yeah, actually, when you've zoomed out and you're looking at it, that's not a project necessarily, but it is probably a release, so I'm following along what you're saying, maybe you're not a project manager and you look at even to Scrum Agile, and there's no project manager officially listed, right?

**Kendall Lott (43:02):** Well I was actually gonna come in after that. When you started talking about these long rolling waves of products and value over a longer period of time, and we have these increments, and so now I understand where you're going with your value moments, Mike. It wasn't that there are a lot of little moments necessarily. It's just that there is a moment. I heard two things from you: recognizing that and getting that to be shortened and realizing that that could come in earlier.

I don't know if project managers can drive that, but that would be a call to be an expert and to have expertise, and getting humans to be able to do that, to be able to absorb the information to bring those distances in closer, not just landing on time, on budget, but landing simply faster and now. Right, I think is what I just picked up out of this conversation, and I don't even know how to learn that skill or where that would come from, but having said that, I got, I got a burr in my saddle that I don't know is applicable here, but when you started talking, when you opened, Galen, about, look, there's a bunch of sub-projects inside a product and somebody has to see how they interlink.

I'm thinking Legos almost, right, one's connecting kind of the other one before it, just as you finish, you already realizing as part of a larger thing, you were saying that you're seen that on the in-house side, because they hold the knowledge. They're the ones that need to hold the knowledge and understand what they've been asking to get support in. My minimal lens on this has been, I think the Agile revolution has taught some technique, but I believe it has detrimentally affected our mindset in that everything's gotta be short. Now, I agree with this idea about this faster value proposition, but I think we're losing a longer time scale subject, but I think they're both true. We have to figure out what we're talking about here.

But when you flagged that value is this rolling thing that keeps happening, it's really the product management, the project manager, all programs working around that. I think too many of us have gone from, "Oh, I'm not old-school project manager, I'm gonna learn this Agile way." And I think that has shortened our horizons. So maybe the two come together, Mike, by saying, "You damn well better deliver that moment fast because you've only got three weeks or three months or three days." But I'm concerned that Agile works very well at one level, but does not work when we start talking about products in the way you look at value.

**Mike Hannan (45:20):** And I'll go and say that's, in my opinion, due to a fundamental definitional flaw in the beginning of Agile. If you look at the four value statements of Agile, right, note they call them the value statements or the value pillars, right. Even saying things like, "We value working software or working product, ('cause it's gonna be on software now), over comprehensive documentation." Well, if you're building Teslas, the documentation for the many millions of lines of software that go into that car is a crucial part of the value proposition, and making sure the local

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service center knows how to work with that software and all the changes, and when there's glitches and how to help a customer get back on the road so they have a valuable experience with the product you sold them, that comprehensive documentation is absolutely core to the product.

And so this notion that nowhere in the value statements does it say, "We value what customers value," and that's like what the PMBOK 7<sup>th</sup> edition finally turned around to say, "Hey, maybe that's kind of important." Again, to say we value things that make our lives easier as I was kind of the Agile Manifesto, we value the things that empower us so that we can deliver value to you, but they don't come out and say that, they just say, "Get out of our way, let us self-manage and let us collaborate and let us not worry about all the documentation and stuff," when I think that steered us the wrong way on value.

**Galen Low:** Well, I think it's funny, there's a couple of words that have come up. I'm gonna sort of center in on the word *manifesto*, right. There's something that needs to happen in order for you to write a manifesto, it is a call to arms, it is a revolution. I heard the word revolution. It needs change. It's didactic, it's these extremes, it's this...

**Mike Hannan:** With a dose of petulance as well.

**Galen Low:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. It's like, "Yeah, back off. We can do stuff. Don't make us write the business architecture document don't... Don't make us write all of the functional requirements as full paragraphs. Let us do our thing so that we can deliver value. And it's almost... It's like rocket propulsion you to get out of the atmosphere in order not to get pulled back down by the gravity, but then we kept going with it, and a lot of people, because of their value statements, I think they're very much open to interpretation, but the way the way I interpret them is that, here are the things that we're prioritizing, here's the things that we're choosing to prioritize and think that's a fair point, Mike, about the sort of value to end users, and we tell you what customers value.

**Mike Hannan:** We value what customers value. If they value speed, let's value that. If they value quality and they don't mind waiting for it, let's value that.

**Galen Low:** But I almost wonder if in its origin, like you said, the Agile, the principles, the value statements, the manifesto, was about a way of working, not necessarily, not necessarily what we deliver, but how we deliver, if that makes any sense. It's like, "Let's not get bogged down with stuff so we can actually get to a product," and I don't think it necessarily keeps beyond that to say, "Here's what the product ought to do or be." I think it's just about... Listen, here's how we ought to work as a team, and we can self-manage, we can move fast, we can be as nimble as we can and get a thing out, and then I think you're right, I think that the PMBOK 7<sup>th</sup> edition is about... What is that thing that comes out... And I think the other question that keeps... Here's the burr in my saddle, it's like in my experience as a project manager, I didn't get to sit around and wait to see that value get realized, we launched next project... I was like, next project, next project, next project, five projects at a time. Seven projects at the time. I was very much a gun for hire, I didn't get a chance to see that value, I got a chance to see the Tweet that said, "Your website looks good."

**Kendall Lott:** Hey, Mike doesn't want you just to see it, he wants you accountable for it.

**Galen Low (49:20):** Well, yeah, exactly, and that's where that continuous-ness comes in, and I think if I were to circle all the way back around, I would say that thing you said, right? Project

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management or value delivery, let's call it value delivery is core to a business, so we can't treat project management as this guns for hire model anymore, where it's like in and out, get the job done. It's just a temporary endeavor, you don't need to be strategic. I would say let's flip that on its head. One thing I did see was organizations that created in-house teams using an agency model, they copied too many things from agencies, and I could go at length, I could talk about them.

**Kendall Lott:** Say what you mean by that. What do you mean by that though?

**Galen Low:** They're like, "Listen, we need to attract agency talent, we need to build a small agency within our company, it's gotta have the same culture, work hard, play hard, ping pong tables, whatever, right. And it's also got to have a certain sexiness to the projects, we're gonna be innovators, we're gonna do the big pushes, we're gonna do the exciting work." And then how they modeled it, 'cause I brought in agency people too to lead it, and having models like, okay, cool, guns for hire PMs, shared service, project management, just like PM office, not to mention enterprise has been making as a modeling based on this as well, it PMO or something like that. We're just bringing a project manager who knows how to manage a project and just get it done, and then off to the races, but I think they also copy things like, "Well, okay, so in our project manager who has no authority necessarily, I'm not the direct line manager of my team, I'm managing based on influence." They didn't have to do that.

In fact, project manager should probably, if I was a project manager today, I would say really focus on your people management skills, and I don't just mean your project team, I mean career management, because I think that's where it should go next. If this is part of how businesses work, delivering value, and someone whose title is project manager today, their function is to deliver value, well, I think sooner or later they're gonna have a team, a dedicated team, and it's happening in agencies right now with dedicated pods of people who are accustomed to working together, accumulating knowledge together, delivering together, being strategic together because they are iterating on a product, or at least iterating on a way of working, and why wouldn't the project manager also become that team's manager?

You'll be doing more performance reviews, not sharing resources anymore. Why wouldn't you be the manager of these people? Why do we have to manage our influence? That's not... It's not intrinsic in the art of delivering a project. It's a by-product of how we structure project management to begin with.

**Kendall Lott (51:55):** We spend a long time having to learn how to do it that way too. I think that's pretty common. The idea of the lateral controls, the coordinating function in a certain sense, I know the techniques now of the things, 'cause it's viewed as Jacobian. I remember years ago when I was at under a USAID contract working overseas, project managers, very akin to a chief of party. They're captain on the ship and they were directing everything then very, very clearly, and it's almost like your suggestion seems to be, if we get to delivering value, that's what's gonna happen, is that we're gonna... This pods of team is the next thing I'm hearing the pods to this what you're observing, that's new to me that that's happening.

**Galen Low:** Yeah, definitely agencies are following that model because resourcing is a pain in the butt. To be able to say like, "Oh well, so and so has two and a half hours for you on Thursday, let's just [get] in some work." That's not how value gets delivered, that's how a box gets ticked, and then when you think about context switching for that resource, it's falling apart, the whole model is

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falling apart. The right model is to have a dedicated team SWAT team executing on stuff.

**Mike Hannan (52:58):** So I'll go further on this and say, all of this really in my mind is put in a project portfolio context or a product portfolio, whatever term you want, but the portfolio was the thing that drives value.

**Kendall Lott:** I was gonna say... When is portfolio gonna come in, right?

**Mike Hannan:** And if you go back to definitions again, like the first clause in PMI's definition of project portfolio is "a collection of projects..." Something about aligning a strategy, and that's it, and I think that's when Galen talks about flipping that on its head and say, "No, it's the people, dummy." It's not a collection of projects, it's a collection of people driving the value delivery engine that almost always will include some kind of flow of project completions or flow of value delivery moments or whatever. So I think... I'm glad to hear that some organizations are recognizing that, "It's the people, stupid." To say it's a collection of projects almost like, it's like pulling it away from the human context that's actually driving the value.

**Kendall Lott:** Well, that's gonna change the profession somewhat here too though because what you're really getting into is they're becoming what would be seen as line managers, and this is knowing your organizational culture, not to be able to float along in it, but because you're embedded in it, you are now having to climb it. Which is gonna speak to—what is the career progression ultimately of senior executive project manager? I mean, those words don't even fit together in my mouth, I can hardly get them out. 'Cause it doesn't make any sense to me, and I don't think it should either. I don't think that's what we're after, because I think you're on a value delivery is ultimately what you do in this as you grow out of it, so let me ask this.

We don't know... We talked about some of the nature of those skills, we don't know what all the roles will be, had seen an interesting thing at University of Maryland's Symposium where they were looking at titles and the title of project manager has shifted a lot. A lot of project managers don't call themselves that anymore, but then interestingly, a lot of other fields are saying they're project managers because so there's like this shifting around as people need it, which is kind of interesting. Let me ask you guys this. In fact, I'm gonna take a role with PMI, one of the chapters here pretty soon, and so back in the board, the PMI Board, they're gonna help lay out all this stuff. Join us and be part of this. So everybody should be a chapter member. But you deal with an association as well, an organization. What should we be training then? Because to me, this is a call to not just say, well, I hope PMs are different. I see where I come from. One of my things to run, how organizations design and how people develop in them, What are we gonna do? What is to be done about the training on this?

**Galen Low (55:38):** We've been talking about like... I don't think we've used the words, but we've talked about generations of project managers, we talk about old school and kind of new school models. I think that there is an old school mentality that there are some things about the job that are un-trainable, you just have to learn them on the job, you have to make your mistakes... Yes, it's probably true, but we also haven't really tried that hard, so the whole centering around people, the whole sort of... I don't wanna say social engineering, but I do wanna say leading with emotional intelligence, I wanna say just ways of... Collaboration models, methodology. That's fine. Nobody knows what that means. Nobody has either. A manager really cares. How are we working together? What is our way of working? How are we collaborating? That I think is the skill set. But we don't

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even have names for it, I don't think yet, I don't think you can go and take a course right now about collaboration management. I don't think it exists, but I think it's the future. I think it is. I think project managers, whether they're called project managers or not, become the custodians and the guardians of ways of working, whether that is on a temporary scale of a start and finish, or whether that is something that is ongoing continuous value delivery, continuous deployment, continuous integration.

Either way, the way that we lead to people to accomplish something, frankly, quite amazing. I think that is the art. I think that's the last thing that will be replaced by AI. I think if you're taking every course out under the sun right now about how to create a status report, I would say pause; think about it. Think about what skill won't be replaced, think about where you deliver value, what does a project manager really do? Yes, PMBOK 7<sup>th</sup> edition is hitting on it, right, and we help enable the delivery of value, but I think the other thing that's sort of intrinsic in what I'm reading there is, it's also about this dynamic between people, because you're gonna have stakeholders always, you're gonna have an executive sponsor or a client, always, you're gonna have a team, always... None of these projects aren't necessarily getting executed by one entity or one single individual in a vacuum, that's the stuff that is complicated and people... We did this whole session in my community about just... It was PMs react to savage opinions about project managers because they're out there... There's a lot of people who hate project managers. They're like, "You just stand behind me and breathe down my neck, and they just worry about timelines, and I have to send them reports and then what a pain in the butt."

A., there's a good example of the fact that people don't know what project managers do, it's also a good example of a fact that we haven't been good at communicating the value that we deliver, we say things like, ah, scope, timeline, budget, and expect everyone to understand and get it... And to them, they're just three other words in the English language, and they're like okay.

**Kendall Lott:** Plus who would disagree with that?

**Galen Low:** Right, exactly.

**Mike Hannan:** Uh, actually I would.

**Galen Low:** Well, there you go.

**Kendall Lott:** But you have a person who's like, "Do the things I wanted with the amount of money. And do good, yes."

**Mike Hannan:** But also every project manager worth his or her salt knows that sometimes these deadlines that executives put down for this or that project are completely arbitrary and pulled out of thin air and really only are done to try and challenge people to do something soon.

**Kendall Lott:** Yeah, I was gonna say, if by sometimes you meant Pareto inefficiency, 80% of the time they're made up.

**Mike Hannan:** Yeah, and the project managers among us who are like, "Oh well, there's my schedule constraint, I better execute to that," without questioning the business value. Like maybe there actually is gigantic business value being one day earlier than whatever deadline you gave me,

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an enormous value lost if I'm one day late, but most PMs in my experience don't even ask that question. So that's the thing Galen was describing about the guy breathing down my neck and asking me about timelines... Well, either the timeline matters a lot and the PM hasn't done a good job of explaining that to the team, or it's arbitrary and made up, and therefore it really is just breathing down my neck on stuff that's taking me off focus.

**Galen Low:** And therein, I think, lies the whole thing, which I think is that... How do I take this? Where do I take this?

**Mike Hannan:** The art of asking the right business question.

**Galen Low (1:00:04):** It's about... It's about, yes, and in order to do that, you can't be the executive and you can't be the person delivering the work. The reason why I think the project manager role, whatever we decide to call it in the future, will or should still exist is because you need that balance there to challenge, to challenge from all sides to say: Is it really gonna take that long to set up the network infrastructure and also challenge, do we really need the network infrastructure up by September 7th or... Is that arbitrary? And finding that balance, and I think that's the real value. It's finding the balance between all of the various value and all the various opinions of people collaborating, and I think that should not get compressed into a hybrid.

**Kendall Lott (1:00:47):** I agree with you, and in fact, I one time went in and saw that at an agency, what they were talking about it, and I actually used the idea that the PMs are the ones caught between a rock and a hard place, and they literally are... And when you think of it that way, that makes... What do you do when you put something under pressure and heat? It's diamonds, baby. We're the diamond layer when we get it right, right?

Because the other big pieces of the organization are much bigger than the small part that we're holding, where the pressure comes together and creates a diamond layer. I'm also liking what you're saying 'cause my own background now where I'm pushing out is in organizational work styles, the questions of how people actually interact in typical behaviors where you can engage with that is different than just pure personality. This is a question about: what is an organizational style of work? And it's something that I've been reading, thinking a lot about and actually starting to deliver to clients, so I love what you just said because I think you just said, I'm the one that's gonna need to get in front of a collaboration management.

**Kendall Lott:** So today, here's what I heard: collaboration management, the noughties, and value delivery moments. So I learned something today, I hope my listeners did too, so PMs, we've crashed into our latest stop time here, so we're gonna have to leave it there. PDUs have been earned across my listenership, so thank you gentlemen.

**Mike Hannan:** Wait is that a value delivery moment?

**Kendall Lott:** Well, only when they hit submit. They still gotta hit submit on that. Hey, so Galen, I've really enjoyed it. I've always enjoyed your thinking on that, I enjoy what you guys have been able to put out, and in fact, I think we might need to have you back to talk about some of what you're seeing in terms of the interactions of folks, but for now, let's go with how can folks either get a hold of you or get in a line with what you're learning or share, 'cause I'm sure your scope is pretty broad?

## 91. Where Has Project Management Gone?

**Galen Low:** Yeah, no, absolutely, and if you're digging conversations like this, this is what we do at the digital project manager dot com, check us out. Find us on Instagram. We're on Instagram, the digital PM, also Twitter. We're just trying to push out knowledge and share what we're learning and what we're seeing... Part of that is training, the training that we don't really talk about, the non-technical training, the people training, some of it's just about what we're seeing in the industry, what we're seeing from our lands, and again, a digital lens and working in a world that's ones and zeros, but working in a world that is ever more complex and that increasing complexity, and I think the increasing stakes of these projects that we're running, I think that's something that everyone can relate to right now, and I don't think there's a single person out there who is thinking about it going, no, I don't even touch digital in day-to-day life or in my project or my work, so that's what we're trying to navigate, but we really want the people, the right people around us to elevate the conversation to figure this out, to figure out the future of project management digital or otherwise.

So come check that out. I'm not very active on social media, but you can come hang out on our site, you can send me an email at Galen at the digital project manager dot com. We've also got a podcast as well, the DPM podcast, you can check that out on our site, and yeah, I would be happy to hear from y'all.

**Kendall Lott:** Mike, you've always told us LinkedIn is the way to get a hold of you. Anything that people need to follow on you that you're putting out tracking anything right now?

**Mike Hannan:** You know, I've been a bit dormant with what I put out except for this elevated discourse here, Kendall, so I'll just tell people to follow us here.

**Kendall Lott:** Yeah, well, I think they should. So listeners, if you need to send in some questions or if you have any guest topics. So one thing I will let everyone know is next month's production is the last of the UMD PM Symposium 2021 excerpts. That episode is "Project Management Forward," so we had a couple of speakers in made that to give us some ideas about where project management was going, which did not include collaboration management as an actual technical in this sense. We always call it soft skills, but I think you're on to something there. And yeah, call us, right.

**Mike Hannan:** Hey Kendall, quick plug. The University of Maryland is designing a new master's degree program that is about program and portfolio management heavy on this collaboration stuff.

**Kendall Lott:** Yeah, yeah, I forgot about that. That's still moving forward. Are you advising in that still, or are you engaged at all?

**Mike Hannan (1:04:59):** I am.

**Kendall Lott:** You are. Yep, so that's a great university and a great graduate program there to work with at the University of Maryland, and it's available to everyone... You don't gotta live in Maryland, so I'll plug for them.

**Mike Hannan:** It'll be an online... All online. So you can talk about that next month.

**Kendall Lott:** There you go, folks. So hit subscribe on your pod app, get this thing downloaded.

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Listen for more PDUs. And with that, gentlemen. That's a wrap for us. Goodnight.

**Kendall Lott:** And so that's one for the leadership talent triangle PMs. If you listened to this whole podcast, you can submit a PDU claim for one PDU in PMI's online system. Go to CCRS dot PMI dot org slash claim and scroll to the fourth banner on the left column, online or digital media. Yep, that's what a podcast is. Manually enter provider code number 4-6-3-4 and select M Power Strategies, and manually enter the name of the episode, PMPOV0091, "Where Has Project Management Gone?" Remember: friends don't let PMs lose their cert. So hey, share this convo with a friend and help them get their PDUs, and of course, connect to us on LinkedIn and tell us what episode you listened to. Toss us a topic, hit us up with a question, suggest a guest idea. Meanwhile, focus on your project, product, or program. And keep it in scope and get it done.

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