

Listener Questions Revealed!

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0:00:00.0 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. Here is your host, Kendall Lott.

0:00:15.4 Kendall Lott: Hey, hey, PMs. Today, a twist to our show, where we want to elevate the conversation on ourselves. Yes, this episode starts our ninth year at PM-POV. Our first show was 12 minutes long on April 22nd, 2014. And there we asked the questions, what are the real skills needed for real PMs, and was there a future for project management in supporting federal government activities?

0:00:40.3 KL: So here we are nine years later, and in fact, there are still federal government PMs working, so we must have called that one right. But things have changed, including this is our second anniversary of our Elevating the Conversation format that we started during the pandemic with co-host, Mike Hannan, who I have here today. You with me Mike? Can you hear me?

0:01:01.7 Mike Hannan: Yeah, fresh back from Central Mexico.

0:01:04.4 KL: Oh, okay. And calling in from?

0:01:07.0 MH: The Washington, DC area. Probably is filmed here wherever you are.

0:01:10.8 KL: Probably right back where we are. Okay. Well, today the twist is that we are going to be taking some listener feedback. Some feedback that challenges some of our take on the topics that we've covered in the last two years, and so thus, here we are with episode PM-POV 0109, Listener Questions Revealed and presumably answered. So you ready to answer some questions, Mike?

0:01:31.6 MH: Yeah, hit me, man.

0:01:32.9 KL: Hit you, hit you, hit you. Okay, so we got this, I think it was called a treasure trove of questions. And I've found a running theme, that's been one that's been aching on my soul as well, and I think it throws our guests, which is the number of times we've talked about what the PM's role is and we've gotten into some definitions. And there's a lot of challenge around that when we're trying to decide I think the scope that has come up.

0:01:55.7 KL: So one of the questions is, fundamentally, do we need to, and if we did, how would we clarify the terms for example, "project manager", "product manager", and "program manager"? We've answered that question in different ways, I think. So I was gonna say, what do you delineate from one to the other, how do you delineate from one to the other?

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0:02:12.7 MH: So I bet if you looked the definitions up in a dictionary, which I haven't bothered to do, but since I am familiar with these terms in lots of different contexts, well, I think I could probably guess.

0:02:23.3 MH: A project manager is somebody who manages all the work that includes product work, but also other work, like for example, there could be some documentation requirements or there could be work in managing certain stakeholders, or getting usage, adoption and uptake of that product, right? Things beyond just building the product.

0:02:42.8 MH: So PMI loves to use the example of the bicycle, and if you break down all the work from the bicycle, you start with all the component parts of the product itself, the bike. But then you also talk about all the integration requirements, because there's work there. Again, maybe there's distribution requirements to get it to market, right? And maybe there's documentation requirements to make sure it's maintained properly, and so on, right?

0:03:05.9 MH: And so the notion is, in order to get that one bicycle to deliver the business value we want, we manage it as a project. A product manager would look at that and say, "Well, but what about all the design stuff? Is that assumed to already be done before the project manager shows up? Because that's certainly part of the product life cycle that, yup, I would wanna be concerned with and manage."

0:03:28.4 MH: "And by the way, what about all the little enhancements to that product? What about the different variants that we might wanna produce off of that product for slightly different customer requirements? Each one of those might be an independent project, but for me, it's all just part of the product life cycle."

0:03:44.9 MH: And that might live on for years, decades to go on quite some time. Certainly in software, we might enhance the product, sometimes multiple times per day. So the notion that we should have a life cycle perspective as product managers that goes beyond the sort of one and done focus that a lot of project management tells us to focus on, is where I see the sort of key differences there.

0:04:07.9 KL: Wait, you're extending the product manager in a longer life cycle, but it has in a certain sense, less depth or less stacking of verbs because it may not be handling all the extra, what you called other services that a project manager has to deal with.

0:04:20.9 MH: Possibly. And that's, interestingly, where a program manager comes into play. In fact, I had a colleague that argued 'til he was blue in the face, and I think he actually convinced me at least 90% of the way, that there is no such thing as a project that's not part of a program context.

0:04:38.8 MH: Maybe some examples I just offered would make his point for him. You know, the marketing stuff, that might be a project. The distribution aspects might be a project. The design of the bicycle might be a project. The build of the bicycle might be a project. But in order to get all those things to happen in a way that actually delivers value, you have to do them all together as a program.

0:05:01.4 MH: So now we can contrast program manager and product manager, which is, there's still some differences, right? Where the program manager might well be concerned with a much

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longer time horizon, but probably still not as long as the product managers. It still might be, "Look, I'm just here to get the darn thing launched to market on the first go-round." As far as who keeps it up after that, a lot of program managers find that kind of boring.

0:05:24.5 KL: Well, what do you define as program manager in this context, or what is its purpose, content?

0:05:28.0 MH: To make sure that all the individual projects, or maybe if you prefer workstreams, that are associated with driving value are coordinated in a way that actually goes and gets that value.

0:05:39.6 MH: I think you and I have both seen cases, Kendall, the scope of the project is very tightly defined and well-defined, well managed and then done, but the value hasn't been obtained yet, and there's sort of nobody there to take it to market, so to speak. Or as you've said, to make sure it gets the usage adoption and uptake that was intended from the get-go.

0:06:00.1 KL: Yeah.

0:06:01.4 MH: Right? So to just say like, "Well, the software is developed. It's not my problem to make sure users actually use it." Well, but if you care about business value, then it is your problem.

0:06:10.0 KL: Well, so let's dig into that just a little bit. I'm reminded that on episode 80 and 82, I interviewed a bunch of CEOs on how they viewed project managers, and in fact, the general take for those that were really kind of clear, that were more product oriented, like produced things as opposed to services, were pretty clear that they saw project managers as multiple types of people or multiple functions supporting the product manager who actually owned the whole problem. They viewed their product manager as more senior to the project manager in that context.

0:06:43.4 MH: Yeah and I've seen that work. And work well.

0:06:47.6 KL: And I just saw that at a federal agency as well, where they shifted to a product orientation to actually eliminate some of the coordination problems that they had at a different level around the strategy, which takes me to the next question related to this.

0:07:01.5 KL: One of the questions we had said during the Beauty of AHP, episode 102, was there's a mismatch between the way people think about projects and the intent of those projects, your value point, right? The strategy of the organization and the goals of the organization, there's a mismatch.

0:07:17.2 KL: So the question is, isn't that a top-down problem and not something that I face as the PM? In other words, to what extent do PMs have to perform to what they were handed to execute?

0:07:25.5 KL: And I think that's where we get into a challenge where we, I agree with some of our values, management issues, or like you need to think about how to maximize the value of the investment that you're now kind of an owner of to help create, but I think given a finite role without having to challenge all of that?

0:07:45.6 MH: So PMI would certainly have us subscribe to that philosophy, and indeed, there was

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a question on a test that a colleague of mine late in his career, I think he's over 60 years old, he just felt like he really wanted a PMP certification, just 'cause... I don't think he wanted the PMP certification so much as he didn't wanna keep going without having one.

0:08:07.5 MH: And I told, I coached him along the way and I said, "Listen, here's what you need to keep in mind to pass the test," and we went through the of the hit list from my having taught the PMP exam prep a few times over the years.

0:08:20.7 MH: And one of the things I said was, "Whenever they ask you a question like, the job of the project manager is, A, to ensure that the value of the project is obtained, so that the business might thrive? B, to deliver on the scope schedule and cost baseline?"

0:08:38.3 MH: Of course, the answer PMI wants is B, just like stick to your knitting, do the scope, schedule, cost stuff that I handed to you, and they don't want A, help maximize the value delivered to the organization to help it thrive.

0:08:49.6 MH: But I figure the real world, it's a key question, because it may well be, I think especially if you're a technical project manager, not just an IT, but in any technical field, you might come more from an engineering background, you might be a lot closer to the solution side of things, and you're not a business person, you don't wanna become a business person, I don't wanna be a leader of this organization or some executive in a business context, I like the technical stuff.

0:09:18.2 MH: Can't you give me a role that just lets me do my thing with scope, schedule, cost as a technical PM and just deliver on that and trust that that will help the organization thrive?

0:09:28.0 MH: And the answer is maybe, right? Because as long as somebody does care about that and knows how to have the conversation with the PM about, "Hey, the schedule I gave you, how do we know it's still gonna give us the optimum value delivery? If we invested say, 50 grand to accelerate the schedule, would that pay off? Or would that just be a waste of 50 grand?"

0:09:50.7 KL: I think...

0:09:53.2 MH: Business leaders don't often know the answers to those questions, and they certainly won't know the answer if they're not looking at the critical path schedule, right? [chuckle]

0:09:58.8 KL: Yeah, yeah. And that's when we get Stephen Devaux's work on the golden triangle. Right? Being able to actually calculate and intervene as you need to, and I think it just... I just had an insight here when I look at these readers' questions on this and my own questions, I think there's two different concepts of value that we're using here.

0:10:13.3 KL: I agree with you in how you just framed that. We need to make sure that we are maximizing the value of the investment as it was handed to us. Which is different than another one we saw in value integration podcast episode 104, which is, we imply almost that we should be second guessing the business about what they selected.

0:10:32.4 KL: So it's not about knowing, it's not about selecting that your product is... Your output is valuable. It's given that you have an output, how can you maximize its value? It's not the selection, but it's optimizing and maximizing for the work you've been handed. 'Cause I think that's

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where we get into trouble.

0:10:53.6 KL: I get nervous, and this goes back to when I first started even speaking and starting with some of the podcast work, frankly, for those listeners that wanna go back to the nascent agency podcast that we did, is this.

0:11:07.8 KL: The project managers are often being pushed to be told they're leaders and executives, and I think there is a role for project managers to deliver on what has been determined by the organization to be important. I don't think we have to constantly push outside of our role in order to validate our... In fact, I view it is a form of, I won't say large helplessness, but definitely an inferiority complex.

0:11:30.9 KL: It's like, "Well, I guess we must be leaders." I'm like, "No, I need you to deliver this value we'd outlined." And I think where we've gotten tripped up is watching project managers just focused on scope, schedule and cost. Right? Instead of saying, "How do I maximize the value of this investment I've been told to deliver?"

0:11:48.1 MH: Essentially, I think the reason you hear a lot of people advocate for all PMs are leaders and should become better leaders, right? Not necessarily business leaders though. I think some of the confusion rises in the healthy conversations to make sure that that baseline as it was set six months ago is still the right baseline to give us the value we want, and/or what was selected.

0:12:11.8 KL: Six months...

0:12:14.2 MH: Yeah, and six months ago long we set the baseline, we didn't just kind of pull it out of thin air and take our best guess, we actually value optimized it.

0:12:20.7 KL: Right.

0:12:21.2 MH: Which is another thing that most business people don't quite know how to do, they need to help from a PM to try.

0:12:26.7 KL: And they won't know unless we tell them what, essentially what the cause and effect is of these inputs.

0:12:33.7 MH: I think so, I think the disciplined PM and doing triple constraint trade-offs is something most business people were never trained in. I think organizations that have gone full on Scrum and had product owners and no project managers are still asked to do the triple constraint trade-offs, even if they don't call it that, and they're not trained to do it.

0:12:53.7 MH: And so they guess or they fall into some deep thoughts about, "Well, we'll just keep iterating until we get it," even though that consumes schedule. That could drive a huge loss in business value potentially, right?

0:13:05.7 KL: Yeah.

0:13:06.1 MH: I just read a book on this topic, fascinating book, we should have the author on as a guest in the future. He calls it Project To Product, by a gentleman named Mik Kersten, who led a

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software company that helps solve some of the problems he talks about his book.

0:13:22.4 MH: And the notion is, if we're not thinking in product terms and product life cycle terms, and we're only thinking of things as temporary endeavors where we're one and done and then we kind of hand it off and walk away, boy do we miss a whole lot of business value.

0:13:35.2 KL: Yeah.

0:13:37.4 MH: And I don't think it's always true, but I do think there's some notion here that we've created an unnecessary rift between the project and product worlds, when they're obviously so overlapping and intertwined. And some of the skills, like setting the right baseline by doing good old-fashioned triple constraint trade-off analysis, right?

0:13:57.9 MH: Doing some critical path analysis, if we actually know what the flow of work before us should look like and how it should be sequenced, etcetera. I think doing those sorts of things is huge for a product owner. And these are techniques that come from traditional PM.

0:14:15.1 MH: And so this notion that traditional PM is old school and it's basically a dinosaur and it's not useful anymore, I think it's dangerous thinking because to say, "Well, maybe we batched things too much in Waterfall and had too many good reviews and it didn't really serve us," that's probably fair.

0:14:32.0 MH: But to say, "We'll never know what we'll do until we iterate 15 times through it," that might not be true. In fact, I don't think it's true 80% of the time, even in software.

0:14:41.7 KL: I think to put a final point on it from my perspective, my general change management approach is to boil an organization down into some very simple things, so I know where to start working, start looking. And for me, things are nouns, verbs or the relationship of things.

0:15:00.4 KL: And to me, product managers are about the nouns, project managers are about all the verbs that have to happen, and the relationship of things is what the program manager is managing. To map a completely different management concept onto this role-based thing. That's just how I keep getting around it in my head, is like what are all the things that have to be done, versus what it is that the organization is selected had to be produced, versus who's coordinating and reporting out on all of this stuff and making sure that the many nouns and verbs are connected.

0:15:30.4 MH: In my mind, what is the mix of skills that has to be there, whether it's present in one human brain or we need a business person in a program, product project person, or all three, or all five or whatever it is. [chuckle]

0:15:45.2 MH: As long as we have that conversation about, in fact, even if all we do is say say, "Hey, six months ago when we set the baseline and optimized it for maximum ROI. And we did such a great job on that. But now we know more. There were some unknowns, we had to iterate forward, to learn some additional things. We actually did make a pivot or two along the way."

0:16:06.3 MH: "But now are things different? Did our competitors do something that changes the math for us? Are we even in the right product direction or should we completely abandon it?"

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0:16:14.8 MH: I think those kind of conversations are crucial and I think project manager, many of us have had this experience where the world changed during the course of our project execution, and we were so heads down just doing, managing our baseline, that when it was done and we pat ourselves on the back for having done such a great job, we realized it's not valuable anymore. The work we just did was a waste.

0:16:40.1 MH: Or at least half the work. Somewhere along the way, it went from being a good idea to not such a good idea, and nobody told me. [chuckle]

0:16:46.3 KL: I just read a Drucker quote on this, "There's nothing so useless as doing something highly efficiently that should not have been done at all."

0:16:55.4 MH: Or it should have been done when we decided to do it, but something changed.

0:17:00.4 KL: In hindsight. Well, you just took me to something interesting on another question we got from a listener on this actually, related to skills. You just said, you know what it's really about is let's forget the name of the labels for a second, but it's really about what skills need to be arranged.

0:17:12.6 KL: And it comes down to me is, is every project new or is it really that project teams are new? And maybe our focus should be less on scope, schedule and budget, as much as how do we get these skills interacting quickly? Back to 90% of a project manager's job is communication or engagement.

0:17:30.3 KL: So one of the ones we talked about was cognitive PM and military planning, I don't know if you remember that one, we were looking at biases...

0:17:34.9 MH: Yeah, it was a fun one.

0:17:35.4 KL: And how that's triggered inside the military world or not. But in one of those for military listeners, right? The comment was, as a person coming out of the military, they're often trained in SOPs, right? So they have lots and lots of SOPs, so they're able to deploy and execute against any new project or requirement, because they've seen it before. They've trained on it.

0:17:58.7 KL: But you hop into a civilian job, even in support of civilian federal government, my space, and the project team is transient, they're assembled sometimes over a month or many months, as I've run into. And you end up with some people that are probably more junior than others, and the key is the relationships aren't there, they haven't worked in the past at all.

0:18:18.5 KL: So anyway, they land and they're supposed to follow what we're just talking about, get on that value, execute on day one. And guess what? They start out at a deficit.

0:18:28.8 KL: So the question would be, how can the civilian world incorporate team-based training in an environment where mistakes are made into learning opportunities?

0:18:38.7 MH: Bottom line, I don't think any or any project-centered or product-centered organization has ever achieved true excellence without having a stable team. Whether you buy into that model or not, we're human beings, it takes us a little while to learn how to play with each other,

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right? How to do the behind the back passes and the alley-oops. You know, it's a team sport.

0:18:58.6 MH: No team starts off on day one as excellent, no matter how good the individual players are. Right? And so I think the most successful organizations find a way to keep that, I'll call it a resource pool, but let's call 'em human beings, teams of people.

0:19:14.3 KL: Yeah. Yeah.

0:19:17.7 MH: To keep that resource pool stable. That doesn't mean it never changes and we can't move people in and out, and we can't grow, we can't upscale, we can't recruit out of college or whatever we wanna do. But there has to be a stable core or else's it just chaos.

0:19:30.2 KL: That's two levels in, we need the stable core at the organizational level that the PMs and the project teams are pulled from, but then to the extent that PMs can continue to work with what, some similar teams, that's how we get the skills we need, who can then interact.

0:19:45.4 MH: Yeah, yeah. And in the same breath, there's absolutely a time and a place for like the Apollo program or like the Manhattan project, where you're gonna assemble a bunch of people, sometimes at a massive scale, throw 'em all in a room or in a lab or in a bunch of different rooms and give them this same objective. And they're gonna have to learn how to gel as a team, and we as stakeholders and leaders are gonna have to help them accelerate through that. And you can't just push it.

0:20:17.6 KL: So that's probably the skill we need to most focus on because most organ... So most PMs are not situated where they can tell the organization how they should construct their resource pools, although that would be an interesting call out for our PMs to think about. I need to work in an environment, we can improve across this portfolio if we had that pool.

0:20:36.1 KL: And I know from having worked in a large IT company myself, they love to claim they have the pool and do matrix project management and resource swapping. And then when there's a downturn, guess what goes first? Training. What goes second? The pool. Which are the two things we're talking about here, right?

0:20:52.0 MH: Yeah. In my mind, when I hear the term "project portfolio", I think resource pool, I think teams of people.

0:21:00.5 KL: Yeah, that's a great way to go.

0:21:01.1 MH: I don't really see the distinction. Certainly there's people, which are the inputs, and then there's the value delivery moments we're hoping to achieve by the work the people complete and maybe those are the project's delivery moments, and they might call it a portfolio. But the reality is you don't have a project portfolio without that resource pool.

0:21:21.0 KL: It's funny, you just mentioned that, 'cause that's a system. I just read a Deming quote, which is, "A bad system will defeat a good person every time." So it doesn't matter if you're a great PM, if you don't really have that pool. And so the listeners put their finger on a real problem here. It's about the newness of teams, it may be as risk-producing as anything else.

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0:21:40.6 MH: Yeah, but I wanna own offer a counterpoint to all that. 'Cause, well I'm a huge believer in the stable core. If you're gonna do lots of projects over time, you wanna do 'em better and better, and deliver more and more on your corporate strategy, your organizational strategy, you can't do it if you're constantly building up and tearing down your teams.

0:22:02.1 MH: We have a... I just saw this at a large organization that's a client of mine, they went through a rough spot, couple of bad quarters, they laid off thousands of people. Boom, demand recovered pretty quickly. Now they gotta hire a bunch of new people and they're gonna lose a step or two or five in that whole process.

0:22:23.0 KL: That's right.

0:22:25.3 MH: No question. But I do want to point out that there's... I personally, I think many PMs out there listening to this, hopefully have had this experience too.

0:22:33.9 MH: Some of my most rapid learning experiences as a PM or working on project teams in my career have been when completely new and different teams are formed really quickly for some new spot need or a new client that just showed up and dumped a nice hefty check on the table for us, and we had to pool people, like, "Who do we have in this company that has financial industry experience, and who has the IT experience, and who has start-up experience, and who has..."

0:23:05.3 MH: And every single person on the team was completely new to working with every other member on that team, and we delivered some amazing work. And I think the key there was we knew what the end objective was, we knew the importance of having each person with their unique skill on the team, and we just got right to work.

0:23:24.0 KL: So the communication of the common objective may even trump the relationships or the strength of the network of the team members themselves, we might put that second in?

0:23:33.6 MH: I'll say it's definitely a powerful force. Now maybe the times I've experienced that we also got lucky because the chance that only one of the 10 people on the team could have been a real jerk or a sociopath or trying to claim all the credit for themselves or whatever, right?

0:23:49.7 KL: We know from our cognitive bias, we often don't think of it as lucky when we thought we did it well, right?

[laughter]

0:23:55.2 MH: Right.

0:23:56.8 KL: Well, let me take you to another question, we got. Back on episode 102, The Beauty of AHP: The Analytic Hierarchy Process. The question came in, lovely ideas, but is this helpful at the project level? Isn't that a tool that's used to work at the organization, somewhere above where I work as a project manager, and even may pre-date my project existing?

0:24:17.0 KL: Comment: Did we just trick our listeners into having them learn about some management that wasn't directly project management?

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0:24:22.2 MH: Well, so I absolutely believe that the largest use case for AHP is at the portfolio level to choose the best projects. I think that's sort of its sweet spot.

0:24:35.4 MH: But I love this question because it just happened the other day, where I've been coaching an R&D project team, and they're working through multiple technical solution pathways and trying to figure out which one might be the best for their company.

0:24:51.5 MH: And they got to decide quick because competitors aren't standing still, but they've got five excellent candidates. And they think they know what the top two or three probably are, but they still aren't sure, they still want to do some exploratory work to gather more information so we could do a more informed assessment.

0:25:11.5 MH: So within the next month, they're going to have to make a decision and different business... It's a billion dollar decision. Different business unit executives have different stakes in the outcome, whichever direction they choose, so there's definitely technical efficacy, but also things like, well, if we have to contract out some of the manufacturing, which contract manufacturers are better at keeping our secrets than others. So we have to protect our IP.

0:25:40.2 KL: Yeah.

0:25:40.9 MH: We have to scale up quickly, so we have to go with a manufacturing approach that can scale faster, and if it takes six months, that might miss the window and compared to an approach that might take one month, but not be a better product per se.

0:25:54.4 MH: So it's a real struggle, they're wrestling with this. And AHP is a great solution for them. They're able to put all the criteria in, the way we discussed back in that episode. They're able to get the right decision makers to weight them, even though they have very different perspectives on what the weights should be. And then they have the technical folks basically sharing what they know.

0:26:12.6 KL: You just hit something there I wanted to ask about that I had forgotten in AHP, which is the whole level of risk analysis in that. 'Cause it's looking at input, do we probability adjust those values by using a risk matrix? Or do we do an AHP on risk itself, like look at relative risk weights themselves?

0:26:30.0 MH: I've seen both work. The way I would coin it is, no matter which approach you use, and I think sometimes AHP can be better, you do need to understand that you're coming up with a risk adjusted ROI.

0:26:44.3 KL: Yeah, there we go then.

0:26:45.0 MH: So if I think this option A is twice, will generate twice the profit of option B, but option A has double the risk of option B, well, it's probably... They're probably pretty equivalent. Then you see, you gotta break the tie with some other criteria, right? [chuckle]

0:27:01.1 KL: Well, I was glad to hear your case study of that, so there you go listener, you heard that. My gut reaction when I saw that question was, "Good point, I don't mind teaching more about

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different management sciences that might be meaningful for a manager, a project manager," so looking broadly.

0:27:14.7 KL: But I responded also with, as a consultant, I was like, "No, I would like to use AHP to create the consulting project," which actually is kind of where you went.

0:27:25.2 MH: Yeah, that could work.

0:27:26.3 KL: It's slightly go larger level. And I was able to use it to help look at how to staff an organization, in terms of... We were able to use AHP in terms of impact of the different functions of the organization, and therefore when you have limited throughput on hiring, where do you hire first?

0:27:43.4 MH: Love it.

0:27:46.6 KL: In my world it was, I don't think that's what most people thought it would be used for, but fundamentally, it's asking a question of senior stakeholders, what matters around here?

0:27:54.3 MH: Yeah, yeah. And when we disagree, can we have a way to structure a healthy conversation rather than let it devolve into something personal or emotional. [chuckle]

0:28:05.2 KL: Yeah. So there's a point. So any of you out there listening to this, if you need help with that, Mike and I are available. There you go. So You Wanted Agile, episode 107. I love this question because I get so lost in Agile, so fix me Agilista you. How do I Agile on a firm fixed price contract?

0:28:20.3 KL: This has been a running debate in the government. I remember people talking 10 years ago about, "People say you can't do it." Of course you can do it. And then like, "Well, you can do it, but you're gonna cheat, you can't really figure it out."

0:28:31.6 KL: So what do you do when you have no control over scope? And an interesting comment for those of us in the federal space, perhaps, maybe commercial as well, but people work hard, but the contracting office often is not included in the process through the Agile group, the people who actually wrote the contract.

0:28:50.4 MH: Yeah, and you may remember back in one of the core values of Agile is we value collaboration over contracts.

0:29:00.4 KL: Yeah, but you're missing the people that set the rules.

0:29:04.2 MH: Right, and so you could argue that the way that government work is set up, it violates a core value of Agile, so maybe it's not...

0:29:09.5 KL: You mean that government's not really doing Agile? Is that what you're suggesting there?

[laughter]

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0:29:13.1 MH: But that's the easy... I don't wanna dismiss it so easily because there's definitely some, there's a bunch of real questions underneath the surface here.

0:29:22.4 KL: Let's elevate the conversation. What else is going on in there?

0:29:25.3 MH: Yeah, so if you take the example that Agile was really designed for, which is we're trying to get something new developed and to market here and in place, none of us knows exactly what form that's going to take, although we can maybe generally agree it might be a software solution. So we have software engineers working it.

0:29:44.3 MH: But we don't know... We don't know if it's gonna be a mobile app, we don't know if it's gonna be an enterprise system, we don't know if it's gonna be a set of APIs, we don't know really what it's gonna be. And we're gonna need the freedom to experiment and iterate and basically knock out a lot of the questions.

0:30:00.1 MH: So number one, is the business outcome achievable? Well, we might need to test some things before we can answer that question. If the answer is no, maybe we just... We need to stop. So that's like canceling a contract, maybe. Hopefully not, but... But if you keep going, then it's like, well, is there demand for that?

0:30:22.6 MH: Well, we know there's some, but is there enough to warrant a multi-million dollar initiative? Maybe not, right? And then we have to run some tests on that. If you get past that, then it's like, well, is the solution feasible or do we have feasible solution options that we can experiment with? Sometimes not.

0:30:40.1 MH: So a lot of the things that Agile is designed for so that you have a whole notion of failing fast, if we get to a no answer in any one of those, let's abandon it quickly. And in fact, even better, let's design the work we have right in front of us to be the minimum necessary to get that answer. Because if it's no, we don't wanna expend any unnecessary time or energy on this.

0:31:02.7 KL: In the lean world, I think they call that "minimum business increment". It's not about the viable product, it's the minimum business increment and like, "Oh, we're hitting a wall here, this should be bailed out on now."

0:31:14.8 MH: Yeah, it makes sense. And at fixed price government contract, I think the reality is they'll put something down there that they probably have a bit more clarity on what they want, not just the business objective they're trying to achieve, but we know what we're trying to achieve.

0:31:30.7 MH: We know that it's gonna be a mobile app, we know it's gonna be targeted this user base, we know there's demand for it, we know that it's technically feasible, and we just need you, Mr. Contractor, to go build it.

0:31:42.0 MH: Now do we know exactly what the UI is gonna look like? Maybe not. Do we know exactly what color schemes are gonna resonate with users and establish the right mood and all that kind of stuff? Maybe not. We need some freedom to iterate forward. But what I like about the fixed price approach to government contracts for Agile is if we don't fix something, the tendency for overly zealous Agile scrum teams is to iterate forever.

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0:32:10.0 KL: You have mentioned that before in a number of podcasts actually, episodes.

0:32:13.6 MH: Well, it's a real problem that a lot of organizations...

0:32:15.5 KL: Because they keep going, don't they?

0:32:17.0 MH: A lot of my clients... That's probably 50% of the time, well, a key reason why a client will call me is, "I'm not getting the business results I need, and everyone's telling me, you need to be patient, you need to get out of the dates, the deadlines and the dates, the due dates, get away from that and just let us iterate 'til we get there. But I never get there."

0:32:39.0 KL: They're worried about outcome.

0:32:41.0 MH: So that's no good. The paychecks clear for the employees, but the profit dollars never come in for the company.

0:32:49.6 KL: But these employees on these scrum teams is one implementation of Agile here. One of your questions was, so Mike do you have any further insights into managing a scrum team that exists in a matrix world with shared resources? Now, the challenge here was scrum teams are supposed to be self-managed, but in fact the resources float around.

0:33:09.7 MH: Well, I'll go further and say scrum talks about the importance of having a fully dedicated team. Again, if I'm in startup mode and I've got five guys and I'm working on one product to get to market to see if our company might take off, maybe that makes total sense.

0:33:27.5 KL: Is it that scrum is too idealized then? Is that what's happening here?

0:33:32.7 MH: I would say not idealized, I think it's appropriate for a startup.

0:33:36.0 KL: With the core stable team, though? We're back to this team.

0:33:36.5 MH: Yeah, yeah. I think a large organization that has lots of highly specialized skills needed in lots of different parts of different projects or product initiatives, the reality is some of those guys are too valuable to just keep on one team forever. It's just, not only is it a luxury the organization might not be able to afford, it's stupid. It would actually slow them.

0:34:01.2 KL: I'm trying to think of your flow... Your flow stuff says that people need to be able to pick up and go where they see the next piece of need even. It's self-organized almost across teams.

0:34:09.7 MH: So an example I like to use is, if you look at the way a large airline is run, you might say, "Well, the beauty of the cross-functional team is one guy gets sick, somebody else just swaps right in." There is no thread over the wall saying, "Well, I don't... I only develop, I don't do testing. That's the tester's job. I'm sorry if the tester is not up to snuff or they're out sick, or whatever." And no, we all just have to pitch in and do it.

0:34:33.3 MH: So the spirit is cool, but imagine that for an airline. Imagine if you told all of your pilots that you wanted them to cross-train to also be flight attendants. That wouldn't go over so well probably with most, and even if they loved it, they loved the idea, you're now paying far more for

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flight attendants.

0:34:53.5 MH: Pilots get paid way more than flight attendants, like five times more or even more than that. Sometimes 10 times more. So why would I use an expensive resource to do something that I can readily train and have available for a lower cost?

0:35:06.8 MH: But does that mean cross-functionality for an airline makes no sense? No. Because I may well want to cross-train that pilot on multiple different types of aircraft, so I have that kind of flexibility. Similar for the flight attendants. I might wanna train them on how to be flight attendants across multiple airframes.

0:35:23.6 MH: So I think we have to be careful when we talk about cross-functional teams, that it's suitable to the context and then it makes business sense too. And too often when you get to a large scale, you have highly specialized skills that often cost a lot of money, you don't want them doing anything other than the thing that they're uniquely skilled to do.

0:35:42.4 KL: You and I ran across this earlier. You left me with an open question. So we won't resolve it here today, but one of the things that I pushed on to help my clients in my own organization, specifically in my company, and I would do it with the Chapter if I had time for it in my volunteer role, is this question about what is accountability, accountability to work specifically focused on key results, getting those outcomes that are required at any role that a person has, at any role there is some outcome that is required.

0:36:12.7 KL: And to do that at any role. It's not just about seeing your people here. The definition that I have found very helpful to be a focusing comment is, work equals problem-solving and decision-making. You may have activities, but the part I'm paying you for is whatever level of autonomy that is, that you get to decide something, whatever that is in any role.

0:36:33.6 KL: In that context, it helps us design organizations to know, I'm getting outputs in different places, then you could have multiple roles 'cause of a... Multiple versions of the same role because different people have some portion of replicating that, right? Different parts of the bicycle that you have to produce.

0:36:49.4 KL: But you own some sort of accountability to that. And your challenge was, you challenged me with, "Well, what happens when you need the team to swarm and coalesce around problem solving?" And it's a legitimate question, where they say, "No, that's not my role, I'm not responsible for that."

0:37:03.6 KL: And I think what you just hit on was another way of looking at the same thing. I have still found that approach to be helpful with working with clients to stop the stepping on everyone else's toes and finger-pointing. This approach, I have seen absolutely reduces finger-pointing. But the bigger question is it may be that it depends, and it may be about layers, some level of similarity of work, I'm not sure.

0:37:28.2 MH: Well, let me throw an example out that might shed some light on it. I'll stick with my pilots and flight attendants. And I did a bunch of work for a large airline, so this is sort of... I had some "aha" moments doing that work. This particular airline analyzed its whole customer survey data, and major airlines, they've got tens of thousands of customers per month or whatever

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they're analyzing the survey feedback on.

0:37:54.2 MH: And two things emerged very quickly. One was when the pilot steps out of the cockpit at the end of the flight and just waves at us and smiles and says, "Thank you," that the customer experience was way higher.

0:38:10.9 MH: Now, you would think that the pilot flying the plane really well would be the most important thing that you wanted, right? Especially if there's turbulence or some other challenge, we wanna make sure the pilot knows what they're doing as technicians really, specialists. I don't need to meet you, I don't need to see your smile, I just need you to land the plane and hopefully on time and all that.

0:38:34.4 KL: In truth, they are not accountable to customer service in the same way, right?

0:38:39.6 MH: Well, that was the original mindset, but when they found that some pilots just liked doing that. And initially didn't understand the correlation 'cause they were like, "Well, why are these... Why are all the flights with that pilot rated so much higher than the other pilots? They're all good pilots." And they finally pin pointed, "That guy likes to stand in the little cockpit doorway and smile and wave at you. And people like that."

0:39:06.8 KL: You just walked into another whole space that we haven't covered on this podcast, which is the whole idea around, for example, strengths. Natural tendencies and talents that people have, that they need to be able to elaborate and use at work, and when that happens, you may start seeing outcomes that are not part of the role of definition.

0:39:24.2 MH: Right.

0:39:24.5 KL: Right? Because they flourish in role.

0:39:26.5 MH: But you know what, today that's absolutely part of the role definition for that airline.

0:39:30.7 KL: Yeah, well they solved that.

0:39:32.8 MH: Even if you don't like doing it, even if you're not good at doing it, fake it, man. Stand there and wave and smile for five minutes. It's really not that hard. [chuckle]

0:39:43.0 MH: Similarly, the customer experience ratings correlated with one other thing that was huge, and this is gonna be far less surprising, it was whether you felt the flight attendants showed genuine care and concern for you.

0:39:58.1 MH: Again, you might think, "Well, there's like three flight attendants and 200 people on the plane, just give me my snacks, give me my snacks and drinks, and we're good. We don't need to become best friends. I don't need want to hear your life story."

0:40:12.4 KL: That's totally backwards because everybody doesn't like the fact that they're so abrupt, right? We love that they're serving.

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0:40:20.4 MH: And so the airline, and I think this is probably all airlines that recognize this, 'cause it's sort of obvious, the people that have the most contact with customers who are gonna influence the customer experience the most, and that's flight attendants, but... Well, unless it's the reservation desk, which is another problem, right? But anyway...

0:40:39.8 KL: Well, who uses reservation desk anymore, right? That's when it happens for 'em.

0:40:45.2 MH: Well, if you're like, your flight is cancelled and you're already stuck at the airport and anyways. But back to the flight attendant. No, it was something that they had a very difficult time pinpointing and quantifying, but they knew the individuals, certain flights get rated much higher because that flight attendant was on it.

0:41:04.8 MH: And so they tried so in many ways to see if they could pinpoint it and quantify it, kind of like they did it the pilot just standing there and waving it, and they couldn't. They tried so many things that there must be a pattern here. And in the end they realized the pattern is they just have a knack for it.

0:41:21.0 MH: So we just have to get those people to train all of our new flight attendants, and some of it's authentic to your personal style, and it's kinda like if I try to copy Abraham Lincoln's oratory style, it won't be the same 'cause I'm not Abraham Lincoln. Not my unique, doesn't fit my time, my stature, my history, my anything. It's not authentic. So that's part of it is the authenticity, which of course is a very individual-based.

0:41:51.8 MH: Anyway, the point is, it wasn't about the technical execution of delivering snacks and drinks or about flying the plane. Of course, those things have to happen. Those are the minimum expected. Right?

0:42:02.7 MH: But the difference makers for the customer experience went beyond that, and I think the lesson for us project managers and product teams for cross-functional teams is understanding that what do you think your job is might just be the minimum expected, and the real thing that differentiates the customer experience on whatever product you're working on, may be something you don't even understand yet. But if your competitors find out before you do, that's a problem.

0:42:34.5 KL: We hire for skill, for fit. And we've talked about organizational culture being even stronger, but I don't even think it's that. I think we hire humans for fit, and what we get is an expression of their interaction. And that's where value is created, when you are talking about relationships, when you're talking about engage with customer service, for example.

0:42:56.1 KL: I'll expand it further for PMs. When you're engaging with stakeholders. And so the stakeholder could be a final customer, when I'm working in the government, the final customer may actually ultimately be a citizen who I don't get to get to. My customers are the government people that are needing to get this stuff built, get it out the door, get it budgeted, get it planned, get it risk assessed, whatever part that we're playing in that, right?

0:43:19.1 KL: So they become our customers, but they have multiple stakeholders and networks of stakeholders, in the salience model. And what I've found is this, and I heard a great quote the other day that I'm now incorporating and using constantly, so you're gonna hear on another podcast here,

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right?

0:43:31.3 KL: We hire for a role, a position, we publish it. We put the skills if we're lucky, if we've got the skills and duties as assigned. We hire for all that, and then a human shows up.

0:43:43.4 KL: So the problem is a person shows up, right? Which does two things. I think one thing I was just talking with another business owner yesterday about... Or last week about this rather. Which is this. I think the core problem when we're trying to create teams is that actually those of us who have to hire or fill the teams, we don't actually know our requirements.

0:44:05.2 KL: We know our technical requirements, we may grind out pages of things that make it look like this organization is well designed, but so much of that value comes from the human who shows up and we don't know our requirements. Do we all flag, "Oh, I need a nice person in this role."? Whatever "nice" means. Right?

0:44:22.3 KL: I complain about the government not knowing their requirements when they hire contractors to support them, it's so hard, but I'm certainly realizing, I think... And in fact, it goes back to our early question on this very episode, I think it's all about the team construction.

0:44:35.9 KL: I think the problem isn't new projects and new requirements, it's new teams and understanding who have you just put in the room. So I'm in a quandary about this, so listeners, maybe you understand how to hire better than me.

0:44:48.1 MH: If you think about it, in a way you just simplified things, we're back to square one. Where just if you take any Management 101 class, they don't talk about that.

0:44:56.4 KL: But I don't think we get it right.

0:45:00.4 MH: It's a hard one, right? But the fact that it's... The fact that we can put our finger on it in a pretty straightforward way is helpful. But you know, it reminds me of a scenario I had a few months ago where I had a client that wanted to put me on something a little bit different than what I'd been working on.

0:45:19.9 MH: I said, "Okay, that sounds great," and it was a much bigger higher impact challenge for the company. Great, love it. "But we might need you to work some overtime, Mike, and it might burn some cycles. We've got some time zone issues around the world, and you're gonna have to work sometimes at 02:00 in the morning," and all this other stuff.

0:45:41.5 MH: And I thought about that for bit, I thought, "Well, I could probably deal with that. This is interesting enough to me, I'm willing to give it a shot."

0:45:48.7 MH: And then one guy, the final interviewer came in and I hadn't worked with him very much before, he had heard about me through reputation, so he was favorably disposed, but we got into a conversation, he went right to the point. It's this exact point.

0:46:03.6 MH: He said, "You got some very senior people as stakeholders on this, that are not just like herding cats, but just very big personalities in the room. They can make or break your job, just if they wake up on the wrong side of the bed. And you need to corral them. You need to sometimes

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assert yourself as the commanding presence in the room, or else these guys will eat you alive."

0:46:31.2 MH: And I said, "Okay, I get that. I've worked in military environments and with three-star generals, and I think I know what you're saying, and I don't really... I don't find it the least bit daunting."

0:46:44.0 MH: An he basically said, "Well, let's run through a roleplay right now," and long story short, I failed. I wasn't establishing the commanding presence in the way that he thought was gonna be necessary for me to succeed. And so he basically said, "I don't know if we'll find that, but I know that it's not you."

0:47:07.2 KL: Ouch.

[chuckle]

0:47:07.2 KL: Especially what that roleplay is. I have a client faced with this very problem, the clients themselves engage in stakeholders who elicit requirements and to actually any number of things related to change management ultimately. And one of the things they wrestle with is, "What do we do when they're strong personalities?"

0:47:24.7 KL: Now, Kendall being Kendall, I always interpret that as that's a power dynamic you're probably facing with, it's not just a personality, it's a strong application of power. And so that's where you can fail so easily, right? What do you do?

0:47:38.6 MH: And basically he said, he's like, "I know you're tough, Mike, and I know people underestimate your toughness all the time, but at the end of the day, I still think you're just too nice of a guy for this role." [chuckle]

0:47:50.0 KL: So there we go. Behaviors matter, natural talents matter, perhaps even strengths matter. If you have a question on strengths and talents, you know you can contact us. We're ready to talk to you about that.

0:48:00.6 KL: Okay we just got a few minutes left. I'm gonna ask you a technical question that I don't fully understand, or rather I should say this, I am not in a position to answer it. So tell me what you think here.

0:48:10.3 KL: So someone says, "We've just adopted in our company the Agile continuous development, continuous integration methodology. But they see an increase in trouble tickets after they changed the UI to improve functionality. The rest of the organization doesn't do real-time training, right? And it feels like the changes are disruptive." I faced this with a client, by the way. I'm seeing the same thing happen via another vendor.

0:48:31.2 KL: "Is it better to try and change the organization? Or just bundle the releases in a conventional or a different way?"

0:48:38.2 MH: I would probably opt for a third option.

0:48:42.1 KL: Oh okay, there's a third one, there was no "or" there.

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[laughter]

0:48:46.6 MH: Well, let me explain why I don't like those two options. One, the bundling and batching is going to infect the whole spirit of continuous value delivery that their continuous development approach is trying to spur. So that's a step backwards, and I think within six months that will probably turn into all of the old things we don't like about technical debt being allowed to build up and big bang things that...

0:49:18.6 KL: To you it's surrender. To do that is to surrender.

0:49:22.6 MH: I think it's the first step on a slippery slope, yeah. The change management stuff, again, feels to me like we're forcing change on people rather than bringing people along.

0:49:34.1 KL: Isn't that above our pay grade too though? Isn't the question it's time for you to make that happen?

0:49:37.5 MH: It may well be. It may well be, but if that's the reality, then you will... If you choose to do nothing about it or choose to wait for someone else to solve it because it's not your job, or at least don't sound the alarm bell to whoever you think should solve it, you're gonna have problems.

0:49:53.3 MH: Because you're gonna be pushing out more and more things that you think are valuable, and the usage, uptake and adoption is gonna be less and less, meaning it's actually less valuable. So you're pushing more and more change on the organization that has less and less value. Nobody wants to be in that spot.

0:50:10.2 MH: So usually the answer to this kind of question is, get user engagement adoption, have them pull the changes rather than feeling like they're having them pushed on them. Make sure they actually want them. And if they don't, maybe we need to scale back our, the size of our teams. Right?

0:50:28.7 MH: Sometimes small teams can get very, very fast at getting lots of cool features released all the time. And that's wonderful, but again, not if it's not driving the value delivery cadence, it's just the software release cadence. That's two different things, right?

0:50:45.1 KL: Yeah.

0:50:46.1 MH: So if we're not really aligned with the usage, uptake and adoption for value, you're gonna have to...

0:50:51.3 KL: You're gonna slow the throughput. You're gonna slow the throughput. It's essentially a new form of constraint.

0:50:53.4 MH: Well maybe. Maybe, right? Because I think... Because how many times have you gotten an update to a software and felt like it was actually a downgrade?

0:51:01.8 KL: Every third time.

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0:51:04.6 MH: Right? And so you're having these updates pushed on you that you didn't ask for. Now, if some of them are security oriented and all that, I get it. But if it's like fundamentally rewiring the user interface and now I'm lost and I can't even use your product anymore, and I never asked for it, I liked it just the way it was, then tinkering with user interface with whatever new function or features, if users didn't ask for it, then why did you do it?

0:51:29.8 KL: Oh listeners, I had that problem this month about my liberated syndicate podcast release. They changed the interface and I have lost a lot of my data. I didn't ask them to do that. They made it very pretty, but not very helpful.

0:51:44.1 MH: Yeah, and by the way, I'd blame Gene Kim, the fascinating, awesome, brilliant guy who's done a lot of good, but he also has focused the entire DevOps movement on frequency of software releases as the proxy for business value.

0:52:00.7 KL: Yeah, at this point, the proxy is the problem isn't it?

0:52:03.4 MH: The proxy is the problem.

0:52:06.9 KL: Yeah. Well, we can probably ride with that a lot. We have to use proxy to be able to label and have communication, but I think so often the proxy is a problem in any number of change management. For example, actually business process re-engineering. Organizational design, I think we run into this all the time.

0:52:21.3 KL: A role is essentially a named proxy for a functionality. We just talked about that. For a set of skills. And then we end up moving the roles around. But the skills are different and then a human shows up. Right?

0:52:32.5 MH: Yup. Putting us back to square one. [chuckle]

0:52:34.5 KL: Back to square one, aren't we? Okay, we're gonna have one more question here that came out of the AI space, which I think we're gonna have to clearly dig into more. Because every time we get on to record, it's already changed on us.

0:52:45.3 KL: This was a good one that you left us hanging, this came back to you, Mike. Because I remember feeling this when in episode 108, we were told that AI was used to generate critical path and it was wrong. And the way it needed, the resolution to that was that the AI must understand the architecture dependencies and level of the effort.

0:53:06.7 KL: So question them was, well if it has to understand all that information, why would you have a PM anyway? To which you responded, "I think we have to have PMs rethink their value proposition."

0:53:16.9 MH: Yes.

0:53:18.2 KL: But we didn't actually say what that might be. [chuckle]

0:53:20.8 MH: Yeah, so it could be a few different things, right? But I think back early in my career when I knew I had mastered all the blocking and tackling aspects of project management and

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doing critical path analysis and getting good estimates of level of effort at the task level without too much sandbagging and all of that sort of stuff, right?

0:53:45.0 MH: And maybe even having like a database of, "Hey, when we do this type of task, here's the average duration it takes," so we don't even have to ask people anymore, we just know. We've done this enough times, we just know.

0:53:56.0 MH: Well then why not automate that? And I remember, I was so proud of my ability to put all that together, that I was spending all my time on that and not enough time on some of the stakeholder management stuff, that I didn't know was already about to really become a problem.

0:54:12.4 MH: And once I woke up to the fact that that was about to really become a problem, I had to switch so that all of my time was spent on stakeholder management and I couldn't do any of the blocking and tackling anymore. So what do I do?

0:54:23.9 MH: Well, I got the client to pay for a deputy project manager that I could hire to do it all for me. Now, if that were AI, so much the better, right? I don't even have to ask the client to pay for it, it's free. Or it's as free as ChatGPT is, which I think still for most of us is free.

0:54:40.3 MH: So that aspect, basically be my servant, do the hard time-consuming analysis for me, especially if we have good data sources, you can mine for it, right? Because I don't think ChatGPT or any AI yet is good at understanding when a subject matter expert is sandbagging their estimates. Maybe we'll get there soon, I hope we do.

0:55:04.0 MH: And oh, by the way, what if we actually did a better job of giving that to me all of the inputs they need before they start so they can get it right the first time and didn't disrupt them at all, they could probably get it done 10 times faster than whatever the estimate is in the database, right?

0:55:17.0 KL: I'm curious if what it actually scrapes is itself sandbagged? I'm wondering if it actually will...

0:55:23.3 MH: Of course it is. Of course it is.

0:55:24.2 KL: Right. So it may be that the expert chat is actually just telling us what most people do, which is sandbag.

0:55:31.0 MH: Right. [chuckle]

0:55:33.2 KL: It may be a common prac... As we say, as you and I have both noted in different worlds about PMBOK, it ain't best practices, it's just common practices, which probably means you should be careful.

0:55:42.2 MH: Exactly. [chuckle] And by the time we have harvested it all and it's been published in Harvard Business Review 15 times, everywhere else, it's 20 years old.

0:55:52.3 KL: So we've gotta find more and more guys that haven't even bothered to publish yet, we need to catch them while they're still writing their transcript. So with that, we need to tell our

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listeners, if you're thinking about writing a book, maybe you need to be a guest on our podcast. Where we can get on the cutting edge, take a point of view, PM point of view and elevate the conversation.

0:56:09.4 MH: Learn it.

0:56:12.0 KL: So with that, that brings us gliding into a landing on those wings of the airline industry you said there, right? Gliding to a landing to the end. From fast balls to soft balls. I hope our listeners have enjoyed this conversation, and the ones we had that we generate the questions from, and whether we answer the questions to your satisfaction or not, we don't ask for a customer survey actually, do we?

0:56:30.7 KL: We hope that you've gotten something to think about. That's actually what elevating a conversation is about. So as PMs, we continue to plot, maybe plod, but hopefully just plot our way forward.

0:56:41.8 KL: So Mike, thanks for being a reasonable and reasonably humorous host, as you always are. And for fun, the word "host" and the word "guest" actually have the same root, and so today, we were both the host and the guest. Weren't we?

0:56:55.4 MH: Yeah.

0:56:58.7 KL: In the European word, they're the same word.

0:57:01.7 MH: I learn something new every time we do one of these, Kendall.

0:57:04.9 KL: I've got all the esoteric knowledge. So with that, PMPs, if you've listened to the whole episode, go get yourself a PDU at PMI's PD Reporting Center, selecting online or digital media, and you'll be entering provider code 4634 and selecting Powered Strategies. Name of the episode is PMPOV 0109, Listener Questions Revealed. And select the business acumen, a new talent triangle.

0:57:29.5 KL: I am your co-host Kendall Lott and co-guest I guess, inviting you and those 260 of you that are going to show up in person at the 2023 UMD Symposium next week to come up and reveal yourselves to me and to Mike, who will be there, and bring a comment or a topic for us to wrestle with in another episode. And in the meantime, keep it in scope and get it done.

[music]

0:57:55.2 Announcer: This has been a Final Milestone Production sponsored by M Powered Strategies.