

PMPOV118 – Game On!

00:00:00 Kendall

Hello my PMs. Long time, no speak. Shout out to those of you who've let me know you were regular downloading listeners and we're wondering. So, where's the next episode? So, thanks for your attention. I do these episodes as a labor of love, and frankly, even more than just running out of time. I began to run out of guests and topics none of you ever sent me anything. Send me some topics my people.

That's why I appreciated getting to interview the UMD symposium speakers over the spring this year and take them a bit out of their presentation comfort zone have guests will record if you have other symposia, you'd like me to have their presenters get interviewed, let me know.

And that brings us to today, with Galen Lowe of the digital project management company and former two time PM point of view guest who reached out to me with some of the topics that are well as I interpreted it, topics that are getting his goat being a burr in your saddle. So, with co-host Mike Hannon, once again back with us, we are here to hear, ponder and pontificate, and perhaps even elucidate and educate each other, and you let me know how that works on LinkedIn. So, on with the show.

00:01:12 Announcer

This is PM point of view, the podcast that looks at project management from all the angles. Here's your host Kendall Lott.

00:01:19 Kendall

Galen, how you doing? And welcome back.

00:01:21 Galen

Thanks for having me on the show again two time going for a third. I must be doing something OK-Ish.

00:01:27 Kendall

Yeah, yeah, yeah, we're going to hit this one out of the park this time. Where are you calling from Galen?

00:01:30 Galen

Oh, yeah. I'm in Ontario Canada. It is sunny and well stuffy. We had some, some hurricane fallout, but we survived.

00:01:39 Kendall

And Mike, how you doing man?

00:01:41 Mike

Doing great and lovely. Hot, dry Utah.

00:01:45 Kendall

Oh, nice for you.

00:01:46 Mike

Off to do some off roading in the next week will be super fun.

00:01:50 Kendall

Nice. Well, I'm up in Vermont, which has finally cooled off to the.

00:01:54 Kendall

Two days.

00:01:55 Kendall

Point of being cold.

00:01:55 Mike

By the Lake Galen you know, Saturday live gives guest hosts some special jacket. When they've done it 5.

00:02:01 Mike

Times. If you want to go.

00:02:02 Galen

Oh, yeah, yeah. Gotta start bringing out the merch.

00:02:06 Kendall

There I was going to say, swag, I haven't done merch and swag well, I don't even have any listeners. How am I going to get them to buy anything? Maybe if I sold something, they'd show up.

00:02:14 Galen

If you had swag, yeah, there you go

00:02:15 Kendall

First time caller you get a flag and there we go. So, there we are with some questions that are driving us nuts. So, since we last talked literally a few weeks afterwards, AI happened as it were large language models and it's been about three years since we talked. I believe ours since we had you on a show here. So, we had some interesting coverage before, but you hit me with a key question there, which is where do project managers fit in a world?

00:02:36 Kendall

Where most projects are led by non-PM, so we're going to call this when PMS encroached. We feel assaulted from everywhere. So Galen.

00:02:44 Kendall

Open the doors to this. Let's get this Burr out of your saddle.

00:02:47 Galen

Man, what's hurting? Well, listen, I'll open with it. There is a sort of trigger moment that's been happening with the folks that I talked to in project management and beyond. Of course, that's AI, right? AI has been just progressing really quickly into our daily lives and it's triggering those existential questions of like, will I still be found?

00:03:05 Galen

Valuable. What do I do in a world of AI? All these moments of question and deliberation. And when you peel back the onion.

00:03:12 Galen

Very few of these conversations are underpinned by AI, actually, and a lot of it circled back around to conversations that you and I had years ago about. What does a PM do? How can PMS understand their own value? How can we support projects that are being led by folks who haven't been trained in project management? And how can AI support?

00:03:32 Galen

Some of what's changing, so it's kind of like this split note, even though it's a subject line, it actually ends up being a footnote in the conversation. And I was like that's needs to be talked about because everywhere I go, every conference I go to every speaking opportunity, I go to every podcast, I listen to every conversation I'm having is all about.

00:03:49 Galen

AI, and I think we're kind of missing what the actual question is in the world of project management by talking about AI and how to use it and you know implications.

00:03:59 Galen

Of.

00:03:59 Galen

It actually I think it's spiraling down into a problem that's got nothing to do with AI in my world, but that's kind of.

00:04:05 Kendall

The bee in my bonnet right now. Yeah. The not the not uncommon problem of a new.

00:04:06

I.

00:04:06

Bought it.

00:04:09 Kendall

Technology is actually.

00:04:10 Kendall

While it makes it all new and interesting, it's just covering the core questions. It doesn't actually resolve core questions. You still have to resolve core questions and find real value in whatever the new technology is. But actually, you know, you remind me of something you talked about podcasts and conferences.

00:04:24 Kendall

Would you remind the listeners here what you do and what your firm does?

00:04:28 Galen

Perfect. Yeah. So I'm I'm a digital project guy. I'm the co-founder of a Knowledge sharing community called the Digital Project Manager where we help project professionals get skilled, get connected, get confidence so that they can deliver complex digital projects better and by digital projects, I mean.

00:04:44 Galen

Mostly projects that involve people, pixels and code. We're talking things like website web application development. We're talking things like digital marketing campaigns.

00:04:52 Galen

Things that move fast and are complex and are on the bleeding edge of technology which all make a recipe for really fun projects and a really challenging role. So I head up a community there, we compare notes, we help train each other, we support one another just to help us stay relevant. Currents and vocal vocal advocates for what we do.

00:05:13 Kendall

Bye.

00:05:14 Mike

Love our conversations, GAIL and you always said more and more insights whenever we talk, but I'm very. I'm very curious. Why did you choose the word relevant there? Do you think that there's a risk of falling or sliding into?

00:05:24 Galen

Irrelevance. This is the viral eye of the twister, right? The eye of the storm for me is that it's always been about relevance. I don't think it's new.

00:05:34 Galen

I just think it's been.

00:05:36 Galen

That constant existential question for project managers in my space A because of technology, because a lot of the folks that I deal with, they work in agencies, right, they're in a client services world. They are working for agencies that came up as ad agencies. They are working for agencies that are getting consumed by larger agencies, right acquired by some of the big groups.

00:05:56 Galen

And there's a lot of these waves in the ocean that constantly force them to question whether or not they're relevant. And I would say this is the other sort of piece of my thesis, which is that.

00:06:07 Galen

They are fundamentally misunderstood and always fighting for showing what their value is like. They have to constantly prove their value. That's the conversation I normally have. Usually it's like my boss has no idea what I do. You know, I get paid under markets. They're talking about delegating some of my project work to A's or, you know, offshore or robots. And now I guess. But I think it's always kind of underpinned it because of a.

00:06:28 Galen

General misunderstanding of what a project manager does in this context of digital agencies in a client services and cons.

00:06:37 Galen

World.

00:06:38 Mike

And you know, Galen, if you take this back roughly 30 years with the advent of scrum, if if you're old like me, you might remember that scrum predated the edge of manifesto as it would have to have done right by almost a decade. We don't, basically, we don't need no stinking project managers. We can self manage. And I, you know, we still see organizations fighting that like well.

00:06:59 Mike

To say we don't need project managers may well be true, but to say we don't need project management is really dangerous in my view. What do you what?

00:07:06 Mike

Do you think about that?

00:07:08 Galen

We've been getting into this a little bit in some deeper vibrant conversations in our community and I don't disagree on a certain scale where I see project managers being really, really important is when you reach a point of complexity, you know when your scrum of Scrum or you know you're you're you're dealing with you know, scale, agile or something is is sort of a large.

00:07:28 Galen

Your puzzle that you need to kind of keep an eye on all of the.

00:07:32 Galen

Moving.

00:07:33 Galen

Parts and you might not have space anymore to also do another job, right? So if you're a team, the development team right now, if I'm sort of writing code or doing UI design, at least in my world, right? Like then I might not have time.

00:07:48 Galen

To do everything I would need to do to keep a project on rail. So in that regard I see train project managers who are, you know self identified as project manager.

00:07:57 Galen

I could see them being really useful for stitching all of these initiatives together, you know, and people would say program management, portfolio management. You know, I think there's huge value.

00:08:05 Galen

In that but.

00:08:06 Galen

I also have to agree with you in a sense, and you know like talking about encroachment and not necessarily in a bad way, but we're talking about, yeah, projects are getting done by teams. And to your point for 30 plus.

00:08:16 Galen

Years it's been the sort of we can self manage and we can deliver by collaborating and I fundamentally believe in that. I do not think that someone has to be the project manager for whatever planning that bachelor party or, you know, organizing dinner in three months or, you know, developing the next release of a known piece of software or you know.

00:08:37 Galen

Doing exploration, you know, and whatever, like aerospace, I think there are a lot of great minds that can just intuitively work together and understand and you know, give them a framework and they should be able to produce value. And then I think there's also another layer on top of that when you're like, OK, but what if I need all of those brains on the team, you know, almost full time.

00:08:57 Galen

Doing the thing that they do, doing the thing that they see as their craft, you know how much can I expect them to also be project managing, even if it's within their skill set? So I guess it's kind of a resource capacity.

00:09:08 Mike

Thing for me, I take it even one step further.

00:09:10 Mike

And.

00:09:10 Mike

Say you know if if you take Scrum as our continued example here.

00:09:15 Mike

Well, the product owner is responsible for making the trade-offs between cost, schedule and.

00:09:19 Kendall

No.

00:09:20 Mike

And some strict scrum guide adherents would even say, Oh no, we keep at least one of those fixed pivot all day on.

00:09:27 Mike

Scope.

00:09:28 Mike

But we have this dedicated team that just keeps going and their cost is just.

00:09:31 Mike

A function of how long we have been working on it been iterating.

00:09:35 Mike

And I've seen so many examples of product owners in that role, they've never been trained to make a trade off decision like that, and they may well have great insights on the competition. And oh, we just got new Intel. The competition might beat us the market.

00:09:48 Mike

By.

00:09:48 Mike

A month. You know, we'd better accelerate, but how?

00:09:52 Kendall

You're describing the down input that decisions Mike. I actually want to ask you about that. When you mentioned the scrum teams, go back that far because it may speak to what we're seeing currently with with the ossification in the whole scrum proach which we talked about before, right, people have like a set pattern now that's the new religion or not even more new anymore. But you know that's what they own and what they want to act like back when you saw that before, was it a rejection?

00:10:12 Kendall

At that time of project manager or of project management techniques because what I've run across was this idea that we don't need project manager, but I'm wondering how far.

00:10:23 Kendall

Agile and Scrum has gotten so we don't even need those techniques. Was it about the discipline or the title which is?

00:10:27 Kendall

Kind of the thing we need to talk about still.

00:10:29 Mike

I think it's the question because I don't think they ever really talked about the techniques. They just sort of threw the baby out with the bath water without realizing. And I understand the reasons why, because I was switching to the software engineering field, you know, in those days. And it was actually kind of an exciting time that, you know, we don't need a bunch of bosses telling us what to do. We're actually competent professionals.

00:10:49 Mike

We we have some idea on what we're doing. We're we have our thumb on the pulse of the thing that actually is going to deliver value.

00:10:55 Mike

Right. We don't have patience for the politics and the noise and the silliness and the dumb decisions and the things that slow us down, and then we.

00:11:02 Mike

Get.

00:11:02 Mike

Blamed for it. So I view it as a rejection of project managers that were never in service to the objective.

00:11:08 Kendall

But see, the decisions still have to be made, and those inputs about the Intel and all that still has.

00:11:12 Kendall

To be made right, they're.

00:11:14 Kendall

Still useful, you can still. Yeah, the functions.

00:11:16 Kendall

Really exists to me, that's always the interesting thing with organizations is we argue about project versus product and all of these things and program is these. It's platonic. These things actually exist. They just may not be instanced in your environment. Your detriment.

00:11:31 Kendall

Like decisions actually happen. I'm sorry. There's still scope, scale and cost, right? I mean, like, in, in time. But things have to happen to be valuable in the market, hence the Golden triangle that we talk about sometimes, right, you know about instead of the iron triangle, the Golden Triangle. So that's real that exists. You can choose to agree with it, acknowledge it, use tools to help you get with it.

00:11:52 Kendall

Design around it or not, but it exists.

00:11:54 Mike

I even say that whether you do or do not achieve the desired business objectives of any initiative. It is a downstream effect of how well the team flowed, work to completion in a way that actually mattered.

00:12:05 Mike

To somebody who?

00:12:06 Kendall

Owens that and I'll take us over there, Galen, because one of the things is a lot of the people and other disciplines are leaking into that. So who would end up owning?

00:12:13 Kendall

Driving that flow or monitoring that flow, or understanding that flow or making decisions?

00:12:18 Galen

I wonder if Mike, you want to take that one first.

00:12:22 Mike

Yeah, I guess you're saying time to pack it up, Kendall. No, no need for this podcast anymore. I think what we're really talking about here and the way I interpret your question is we've been taught that we're not very relevant, right. We've been taught that our value lies in the nitty gritty critical path analysis results.

00:12:38 Mike

And, you know, drawing a bunch of boxes and arrows and taking meeting notes and nagging people when they're behind on their tasks, right like that is a glorified administrator. And I think the problem is too many. PM's believe that's what they are. And I think we've done a very big disservice 2.

00:12:57 Mike

EMS.

00:12:58 Mike

Example like the first six pinball guides kind of reinforced that, right? It wasn't until the 7th that said the word PM is actually a system for value delivery and therefore is a serious discipline that we all need to up our game and get our, you know, get away from all the nitty gritty details, which can sometimes be quite useful. The the techniques and and all that.

00:13:20 Mike

To like what's our real purpose here? There's even exam questions on the P&P exam where you're forced to choose between is my job as a PM really to manage the baseline or to drive value delivery from my organization?

00:13:33 Mike

And the wrong answer was to drive value delivery.

00:13:36 Mike

Here.

00:13:37 Mike

Like you'd get dinged for that. Like that was not the answer they wanted. If you're going to.

00:13:41 Mike

Pass the exam and.

00:13:43 Mike

Side note, Full disclosure, I'm on the Pinball 8th edition authorship team and there's 11 colleagues working with me who are similarly motivated to kind of help.

00:13:54 Mike

Especially junior PMS like, let's get him early.

00:13:56 Mike

Right, this is.

00:13:57 Mike

A really important thing that you're embarking upon or exploring or checking into to see if it might be for you, and if we can train them to take the mindset. This is one of the most important things that drives our entire global economy.

00:14:11 Mike

Right. I mean, there's more and more trillions of dollars being invested in projects. Note the word invested.

00:14:17 Mike

Which means there's risk we're not guaranteed we're going to get the bang for the buck we want, but sometimes we'll get extraordinary returns and therefore it's still worth investing more and more money in it.

00:14:27 Mike

Well, if that's not a clue that being a key player in that engine might be a really important, valuable thing for you and your career.

00:14:35 Mike

Well, then, shame on us for not having really made that.

00:14:37 Kendall

Clear in the past, so it may not be about being called the the PM. Then again, I'm thinking of a subordinate question that Galen had you called it driving value there and value delivery, Galen, you referred to it as business savvy PM it, it seems to be about the business savviness to cause value, whether or not we call them PMS or not.

00:14:53 Mike

I trade Umbridge with the term business savvy, business savvy PMS because it's like saying the obvious right like.

00:15:01 Kendall

Or should be the obvious. That's the problem. Well, is that the problem?

00:15:04 Mike

It was obvious business unsavvy PM.

00:15:04 Kendall

I have this.

00:15:07 Galen

Actually, you know, like that's a really it's a really good point to hit on. We do, but we don't think we do because of what you know how you define business heaviness. And I agree, it's like not the best term because you can interpret it any which way. Fundamentally all the triangles we talk about is business, right. We're talking about financial constraints. We're talking about resource constraints.

00:15:24 Galen

We're talking about risk. It's all business stuff. But the note I have here actually is like we can probably afford project managers in general, we can afford to switch our lens from being project managers who understand the business.

00:15:36 Galen

To business strategists who understand project delivery and value delivery, and I think that's the flip because I think.

00:15:44 Galen

You know, I I went through my career going like I understand business and luckily I did have some like business development background. You know, I I did the account management thing. I was sort of like in an agency leadership role. I I saw how all the like you know the COGS turned but without that I was just like yeah, I understand business I need to deliver this project on time, on budget and I can't have any scope group. I'm a business person.

00:16:04 Galen

Because that's how businesses work and I'm like, wait.

00:16:06 Galen

In it, I don't know if I understood what the overall strategy of my business was. What am I trying to do? I am a ACOG that operates through, you know, business mechanics, but I am not looking at the business in terms of like what we're trying to achieve. The bigger picture, I wasn't even looking at the bigger picture of what my clients were trying to achieve. I was just like you have this one initiative to do a thing.

00:16:28 Galen

And I'm gonna give it to you. And that was value for me. But I realized as time went on, that wasn't really the value it was, but the real value was me understanding the bigger picture it was trying to, we were trying to move the big needle. We're trying to move not the.

00:16:41 Galen

The needle and I think that's the lens that really starts adding value and then Kendall back to your question like I'm like, you know, in a world where I'm going to try and tie it all back in a world where the world has kind of spent, you know, 3 decades pushing back against project managers who maybe were the naggy administrative project manager for the most part, that may have been actually the case.

00:17:03 Galen

Now we've kind of responded, I think as project managers to kind of be like, yeah, OK, we were we were kind of crappy sometimes. Let's try and be better. So we spent the past three decades trying to be better at how we deliver value, how we create high performance, how we support our teams and like empower sort of the delivery of value. We still don't see ourselves as fully relevant and the world still kind of pushing us out.

00:17:24 Galen

In a way. And then Kendall back to your question about, well, who is responsible then for value delivery?

00:17:30 Galen

Sorry.

00:17:31 Galen

I interpreted it as in a world without PM's and I was like, well, OK, can only go two ways, really. Either you have the executive leadership layer of an organization that is project savvy, right, to your point about project management versus project managers and they have to be savvy enough about how those techniques get applied, what those risks are.

00:17:51 Galen

And how all of the delivery mechanics lead to value and or you need project teams who are collaborative and flat and hierarchy with no project manager who really understand.

00:18:02 Galen

And what the strategy is? And then it comes back to old problems, right, which is that it's really hard to explain the high level strategy and vision that the executive team is sort of wrangling with and coming up with and distill it down to the other layers of the organization so that they get it. You know, the organizations who are nailing that, they're like, automatically.

00:18:23 Galen

Have an advantage in my opinion, because it's not easy to do.

00:18:26 Kendall

I think your comment about it flipping at that is the topic of your statement. There was interesting to me when I was reflecting in part of our pre conversation.

00:18:33 Kendall

On business schools.

00:18:35 Kendall

If we flip it around, then that means instead of trying to find PMS that we're constantly exhorting to, like learn the business because we sit in a PMI meeting with all PMS in there, it might be that the.

00:18:46 Kendall

People who are training in business need to be trained in this.

00:18:48 Kendall

Discipline. Not occasionally. Not. Perhaps not per chance, but by explicit you know need and statement. Because I know when I look at MBA, everyone's like, oh, did you study business before we became CEO's? Like, why would I have ever studied business to be a CEO? Because at the size of well, at a consulting side, why do I need to go take the four tracks? Here's how you do accounting. Here's finance.

00:19:09 Kendall

Here's marketing. And then here's this vague thing called Leadership and strategy.

00:19:13

Hmm.

00:19:13 Kendall

I mean, sure, I can take courses in that or I can outsource that and hire people who do most of that. But I have to do strategic thinking, but I have to get things done. Something actually. I mean, I think Elon Musk said this once his his comment was somebody actually has to make something somewhere, right? Like eventually somebody actually has to do something. So whether you like him or not. But my point is, is at some point.

00:19:33 Kendall

As a CEO, I don't get an invoice out the door until someone does something and I call it admiring the problem. So you know when instead of actually doing it, our clients do that sometimes too.

00:19:43 Kendall

Of course, but to this.

00:19:44 Kendall

Point I'm wondering if it really is more about an integration that this discipline is meaningful and relevant, and it doesn't matter how it gets executed so much, but that you cannot be good in business unless you have these discipline as opposed to taking the formalized role and saying you can't be good unless you learn this other stuff. I don't know. It's an argument for breaking away from project managers.

00:20:06 Kendall

And then right before I let you go, Mike, I will say then to your earlier comment, I guess we need to wrap up these podcasts and be done. Actually, no. I might have been pressed it.

00:20:15 Kendall

Project management point of view. The problem is my audience shouldn't be project managers, it should be all the business people who need to start hearing about a project management point of view, not a project manager one of them.

00:20:27 Mike

Yeah, maybe we.

00:20:27 Mike

Should call it a better lens, a better lens?

00:20:30 Kendall

We need to sell it to the other, sell it to the different audience, because this is the problem. I think the disciplines matter. At some point. I don't know.

00:20:36 Kendall

Anyway.

00:20:37 Kendall

We may also be on the wrong disciplines, cause you want to talk.

00:20:39 Kendall

About the value side even more.

00:20:40 Mike

Yeah. And you know, if you think back to the business savvy PM like you know wet water, right, like I'm aware that their PM's who are not just like they're accountants who are not and marketing experts who are not and on and on, right. And there's of course the natural career progression that we all would like a chance. Yeah, we're not all going to be instant CEO's when we start our careers.

00:21:01 Mike

We think you'll understand the trees sometimes before the forest, and so all.

00:21:03 Mike

That's.

00:21:04 Mike

Normal natural fine.

00:21:07 Mike

What I think is unnatural and abnormal and not fine is this notion that these things are divisible.

00:21:14 Mike

Right, that they don't come integrated like that. This notion that somehow the PM techniques are divorced from the purpose.

00:21:21 Mike

Right. So like if you look at the essence of the thing, whatever The thing is we're talking about like what's the essence of.

00:21:27 Mike

Accounting.

00:21:28 Mike

Well, it's to help businesses understand whether their decisions are working and helping the organization thrive or not. They might not teach that in accounting class, but that's.

00:21:36 Mike

The essence of it, right?

00:21:38 Mike

What's the essence of project management to create a better world? In fact, even PMI now just I.

00:21:42 Mike

Think.

00:21:43 Mike

Six months ago, maybe they changed their tagline and it's something like our purpose is to help elevate the world.

00:21:49 Mike

I'll go look up the exact, you know, mission statement.

00:21:52 Kendall

Well, but hold, I challenge that real quick. I'm not sure that's very helpful, because who isn't doing that? How does that make me around this discipline and bringing any kind of rigor to anything as opposed to any other?

00:22:02 Mike

Job well, I think it it lends an extraordinarily valuable amount of clear thinking when you really understand the essence of what it is. I'm.

00:22:10 Kendall

But I think all of us need.

00:22:11 Kendall

That whatever our.

00:22:12 Kendall

Role is is all I'm saying. It doesn't help me discriminate into the space that we're saying. So therefore, here's some things we need to do.

00:22:20 Mike

Well, so for example, if we did a better job training PM's to understand that all projects are investments and that therefore their investment managers and that when they're talking about risk management they're talking about.

00:22:27

OK.

00:22:30 Mike

Risk and when when we're talking about businesses taking risks and you know like we we pocket all of our profit and just cut a bigger dividend to all our shareholders or we could take some of the money and and take a risk and invest in something that might help us all thrive even more and genuinely elevate our world like it's not just this sort of dreamy, vague unicorns and rainbows.

00:22:51 Mike

Conversation here. It's like that's the essence of what we're here to do.

00:22:55 Mike

We need to do a better job just thinking clearly about, like, the the core essence of what we're here.

00:23:00 Mike

To.

00:23:00 Galen

Do I'd like the aspect of taking a risk to elevate the world. I know it doesn't make it as sexy of a tagline, but that for me is like that. Sort of. You could call it like bravery, which in my world is not always a good thing, right? Bravery could be really stupid, but you're taking a risk.

00:23:15 Galen

To try and do something that's going to make a difference in some way, shape or form.

00:23:18

And.

00:23:19 Mike

And oh, by the way, it was only, you know, a few 100 years ago maybe that taking any risk to do that would have been just completely stupid.

00:23:28 Mike

Right. The notion that we could.

00:23:30 Mike

Have you know a growing pie for us all? To get a bigger slice rather than I'm gonna pillage your city. What you have so that I have more because I'm I used to have less.

00:23:42 Mike

Like all of human history, until the until very recently was about, I'd better get mine or else somebody's going to get theirs.

00:23:50 Mike

Now, now we have a different game here where we can invest and actually have genuine reason to believe it might turn out.

00:23:58 Kendall

I guess what I was challenging here is not that the idea that we could see how we could walk up to that goal that you just referenced about making the world elevating the world. I'm I'm not challenging that. In fact, this is classic strategy, right? You have your top line thing and the different subordinate divisions or disciplines or careers have their version, how they attach to that, how we call alignment.

00:24:18 Kendall

Right, so I want to know how that's any different than the accountant. The accountant also should be involved in elevating the world. So given that, I'm just saying, I think that I would expect a better refinement underneath that. In other words, in order to elevate the world, we as PMS or we who promote this discipline do the following things because to me.

00:24:36 Kendall

Two things pop out.

00:24:38 Kendall

We heard actually Mike, you queued me up with a guest many years ago and I love where you just went, Galen. He boiled it down to when you're actually a good PM when you kind of got learned all the tools and techniques and you're embedded what you really become is a risk manager. All the rest is just methods of understanding. There is a future we are not there yet. I have some resources.

00:24:58 Kendall

We may be wrong. We may be right. I'm trying to get us there and there's pitfalls along the way. Right. And so it's this idea of ultimately value, right? But he said ultimately, a real PM is actually a risk manager. And I took it as we're future seers, right? We're trying to predict the future and help people get to it, is how I interpret more.

00:25:15 Kendall

Critically.

00:25:16 Mike

And take something real simple and basic that was ground into our brains for decades until very recently. Just deliver on scope, on schedule, on cost. And if you fail to do that, you're a failure as a as a project manager.

00:25:30 Mike

But nowhere in there does it say like, you know, you could do all that and have it exceptional ROI.

00:25:36 Mike

Or you could miss it and have maybe even more ROI or you do it perfect and get zero or negative ROI.

00:25:44 Mike

Right. It's just sort of divorcing this sort of very strange, unnatural divorcing of the essence of what it's all.

00:25:50 Kendall

About, I mean, they came to the second tool that I think we have, which is decision making. I think we're risk managers and decision makers.

00:25:56 Kendall

And we need it for the purpose of creating value such that we are elevating. You see, I'm saying that's how I'm beginning to see this. I think that's where it sits. But yeah, you're right. We get trapped by processes. People love that right. It's the ceremony.

00:26:07 Galen

We forget why the ceremony existed. So if you want to take it all the way back to the stud, I think one of the biggest not problems, but sort of diversions that I see along the way is that projects are temporary by definition. That for a project manager's role is seen as temporary by definition and therefore you can only measure them on how they delivered. You can't measure them on the impact.

00:26:28 Galen

After that, not easily, at least right and or not traditionally. And now I think that's changing and I think that's probably part of the. You know there's still confusion around that. It's like OK, how do I know if I delivered value as a project manager, I just said here you go. Here's that thing you asked for.

00:26:42 Galen

And then I go on to my next project. So how do I know if I got like major ROI? How do I know if that project that went \$2,000,000 over budget actually made \$4 million more than they thought they would? I walk away thinking it's a failure. Somebody else along the way realizes is a success and never tells me.

00:26:57 Mike

And right in there you're talking about it after the fact and we're doing like the post mortem to see whether we got good ROI.

00:27:05 Mike

What if we could have taken action Midstream to have driven it way higher, but if we're not even taught to ask the question right, we go to the PM, the PM review the status reviews and we asked about cost, schedule and scope. We're not asked about has the value proposition fundamentally shifted that might cause us to take?

00:27:21 Mike

Dramatic.

00:27:22 Mike

You know, change in.

00:27:23 Kendall

Course, yeah, you're calling them out as decision makers.

00:27:25 Kendall

There, but I and and then that's the key function, but I would go back even farther, which is was it thought of as an investment when it was originally planned or under.

00:27:33 Kendall

Stood by the person who's delivering now the PM and that translation from the executive layer to the PM. If they're not trained that way, particularly, and I'm going to quote a friend of mine from 2020 who said part of the problems is PM's are seen as a general resource to get projects done and organized way. It's like hiring a hit man who's available right now to get this job done.

00:27:53 Kendall

So that was Galen way back in the day. So this is a problem, right? I think from what you just said, I actually supported the Hitman notion in a certain context, but you just said something interesting. It gets to what Mike was going at, which is.

00:28:05 Kendall

If they're brought in short term, how are we obligated to let them know what this investment really is and how can they make the decisions that could have been done

midstream? Like you said, it's all after the fact. So this hitman attitude, this temporary attitude, does make it hard, doesn't.

00:28:19 Galen

It I think like you said it earlier, when it came to techniques that you know, perhaps we have forgotten about or separated.

00:28:25 Galen

You know erroneously, but sometimes you do need a fixer. A hit man, right? Sometimes you do have that project that you know isn't going the way you want it to, right? You're looking at it from a risk management point standpoint. And you're saying I need someone who can just really apply all of the sort of project management to.

00:28:40 Galen

Music to get this through the gates now and then, they can walk away because for me, the decision I'm making is if I just watch it go or wrong, it'll go really wrong. If I bring in someone to fix it, then even if I haven't given them all the context and even if they won't be around after the project sort of realize its value, I still have, you know, managed that risk.

00:29:01 Galen

Back towards success and I think that's OK. I think there can be, you know, hit people project match, I don't know.

00:29:10 Galen

Anyway, it's like yeah, the gun for hire mentality. I don't think it's the wrong thing. A lot of EM's I know work that way where they're like, yes, please step in either because we know this project that hasn't started yet is a big deal and we needed to go right or that project we started without you is going wrong and now we need. We need you to fix it. Like I think that's a valid new. But maybe what we're saying is that.

00:29:30 Galen

Project management doesn't describe both really our project manager. Uh, like what? A project manager does doesn't describe both in terms of a temporary kind of get in there and fix it, gun for hire, or a strategic person who you know understands and will be involved in some way, shape or form in the realization of value from their project.

00:29:50 Galen

And maybe that a blend in between, right? I'm not saying that the guns are hired. Don't get that. But we end up describing two different things, perhaps.

00:29:56 Mike

Yeah, you made me think of a quote, the A colleague says when he's trying to channel the typical executive perspective.

00:30:02 Mike

It's.

00:30:03 Mike

I don't care if it's a girl, duck or a boy duck. I just want.

00:30:05

Right.

00:30:06 Kendall

So I'm back to the Burr in the saddle to see what we're getting at here, then. So the comment was, how do you fit in with people who can be non project manager, certainly not titled are somehow driving projects, leading projects and we're talking about projects in the context of being good decision makers that they understood it in terms of being an investment. So Mike is hitting us with the investment side. You asked the question, how do they fit in?

00:30:26 Kendall

So what's our solution? What does the listener need to take away from this?

00:30:29 Kendall

Who's getting ready to take the test has taken the test, has been doing a job as a PM, has been told they were a PM, was invited to realize that they could label themselves a PM. They didn't know all these kinds of people we run.

00:30:40 Galen

Across in this environment, let's run the lens that we started with this encroachment thing. And we said, listen, are we under attack and there's two responses, at least in my notes. I said, yeah, we could like.

00:30:49 Galen

And down the hatches and go to war.

00:30:51 Galen

Like bite, you know, at at Mike, to your point, like play it like it wasn't post industrial revolution side of things and we're just like fighting for territory and we can just say no my projects and we can hog them and we could try and trash everyone else's projects so that they don't go well so that they have to call us and we have to fix it. That's one way to do it or the other conversation which I think is happening is that it's not encroachment.

00:31:11 Galen

Blending because we need people to understand project delivery in order for products to go well, everyone wins. If projects go well by the way and the well, I mean everyone involved in the project unless the project wants to like take over some territory, then maybe not everyone.

00:31:25 Galen

But I would say that the opposite also needs to happen, which is project manager needs to be taught. You need to let your project manager, then a little bit too as much as they need to share project management techniques and and their craft with business leaders and with project team. I think it's it becomes more of a conversation and what's exciting to me this is my optimistic take.

00:31:46 Galen

That I hope people will take away from this.

00:31:49 Galen

Is that yes, AI is here. Yes, it can do a lot of project management stuff, including risk identification. Actually, it's pretty for that sort of thing. We have informal project managers. There's lots of projects getting delivered by people who have never thought of themselves as a project manager and probably have never been taught to manage a project. But they're just delivering stuff because as part of their role. And then you've got project managers who have been delivering prop.

00:32:11 Galen

Always felt like they had to justify their own relevance. Are a bit afraid now and don't understand where they fit in, but I think where they fit in is that somebody needs to drive that conversation, that education and advocate for ways to deliver a project well, so that

we're not all just like stumbling over ourselves trying to figure it out, building the plane as we fly it.

00:32:31 Galen

There is a sort of responsibility, I think now for project managers to be like project management ambassadors. I love that and you know, it really is sort of a a different kind of call to arms, right? It's a call to invest in.

00:32:44 Mike

Yourself and up your game, right? If you've always hang your hat.

00:32:48 Mike

On well, I'm the person that keeps the meetings organized and I'm I'm the person that checks in and makes sure the work's getting done and I'm I'm always diligent about sending meeting notes out afterwards. Well, most of those tasks don't really require a human anymore. If you refuse to up your game and elevate your value proposition in a way that project management is asking you to.

00:33:08 Mike

Has always asked you to right your organization. May not have.

00:33:12 Mike

The the pinball guides in the past may not have encouraged it.

00:33:15 Mike

I don't know, right?

00:33:16 Mike

But the point is, it's there now clears day. If you didn't see it before, and I think that's a phenomenal opportunity. In fact, somebody a good friend of mine who's on the board of PMI came and guest lectured one of my graduate level classes. And the question from one of the students was, do you think AI will take our jobs?

00:33:32 Mike

And she said yes and no. It will take the way PM jobs of the PM's that refuse to embrace.

00:33:38

Yeah.

00:33:39 Kendall

Yeah. And I think that was actually almost like a mic drop right there. That was the call to action, right? It's become PM ambassador. So I and I want to take it to the AI conversation that lurking elephant here. But right before we go there, I would suggest to our listeners, you 2 might be very good sources of that kind of resolution for them. Meaning we just said they need to become project ambassadors. It's incumbent on them to learn and the executives to open the doors to them at some point.

00:34:02 Kendall

Where will they learn that?

00:34:04 Galen

I'll take a first step here.

00:34:06

And.

00:34:07 Galen

I mean, yes, I know this is not a practical solution, but really the training needs to change as well. And we're seeing that happen. I will do a shameless plug, which is that we built a course and we took a gamble because we're like, you know what, it's so easy to like, read up on like project manager techniques, right. And and I see people do it in our stats all the time. But we took a gamble on our course. We called it mastering digital project management. And yes, it's about digital.

00:34:28 Galen

We've decided that it shouldn't really be about project management techniques. It should really center around instinct and judgment and leadership skills. And through that we kind of try and really hammer home the ROI thing because most of my audience is like, you know, they're in agencies, so profit margins do matter. That's how people will get paid in your agency. And as long as you understand that and your role within these projects.

00:34:50 Galen

And everything after that point actually starts to click a little bit differently. So and and I'm I'm not the only one. I'm sure there's many courses out there that are starting to.

00:35:00 Galen

Apply at least that ROI lens and that risk management lens and prioritize it above you know is your, you know, do you know all the inputs and outputs and processes and what have you like in book five and six stuff and above things like you know I don't know like just like creating a a project plan or you know estimating and things like that it's all important stuff but it.

00:35:21 Galen

You know, it's quite commodified now. It's sort of known stuff, but the real game changer is going to be like finding training that is aligned to value.

00:35:29 Kendall

Delivery. I love what you just said there, Galen. It's about becoming decision makers and actually learning something about your intuition and being able to use intuition to become that ambassador that you need to be. Mike, what are your thoughts on that?

00:35:40 Mike

I love the framing. Uh Galen of of the class as you described it, because if you learn the techniques first and then the why?

00:35:48 Mike

It's kind of backwards, right? If you learn the why and then you're like, you know, there should be a technique to help me assess whether.

00:35:55 Mike

Spending another 100 grand to accelerate this thing by month might actually be worth it, and I shouldn't just have to, like, stick my thumb in the air and guess OK, Now I'm going to look up critical path analysis and acceleration premiums and delay cost and all these things. And whereas if I just taught those without any purposeful context.

00:36:14 Mike

It just falls on deaf ears and people forget it and they don't understand why it's important anyway. So I think that's a great start. And I also do think shameless plug for PMI and PINBOX 8 which will be out next spring probably once us through all the review cycles and graphics.

00:36:27 Mike

And all that.

00:36:28 Mike

I of course I'm investing my volunteer time.

00:36:31 Mike

Along with eleven other talented folks who really want to help up the game for the whole community, especially for the junior folks that haven't had a chance to understand. You know, what is the essence of it? And like, I'm just trying to get a job, be promoted and be viewed as a valued team player.

00:36:47 Kendall

Well, it's back to executives actually from, well, I will take it from my lens, which is about organizations, and I believe organizations are designed by managers and the framework for them is set by the executives. I separate the two.

00:36:58 Kendall

So it's going to be incumbent on executives who say this stuff matters around here because the question ultimately is what matters around here and in this case, what is the enabler we need and they're going to have to set the environment that allows this to happen or demands that happens or expects it to happen. And so we're back to the world will be better. I heard years ago when PM's become the CEO, I don't think that I do believe that's when CEO's understand the discipline of.

00:37:19 Mike

Yeah. And you know, Kendall, I think this was a quote from you, but I don't know if you got it from some other management guru before you that the outcomes of any organization are driven directly by their design.

00:37:19

Because.

00:37:30 Kendall

Oh, absolutely. Yeah, that's not my.

00:37:31 Mike

You don't like the ad?

00:37:32 Mike

Plumbs then redesign it. You're getting what? What it was designed to give.

00:37:37 Kendall

You I don't want to tiptoe around AI, but I don't want to ask quite the same question we we had here a a concept of a question we were talking about before, which is how to use AI to.

00:37:46 Kendall

How you can use AI right to supercharge your PM's or your PM discipline and the other one? Why the converse, which is why is uh replacing PMS with AI? Not a good plan. I believe a lot of us have struggled and are learning that we have to use AI and there's a lot of ways to do it. So I actually would like not to go over the litany of all the ways we can use AI because I don't know it can do your Gantt charts. You can do a lot of stuff.

00:38:06 Kendall

And that's going to change by the time we publish. I like the second question in a way, which is why is it a bad?

00:38:12 Kendall

Idea to replace PMS.

00:38:15 Kendall

Question. What is it that we still provide through the discipline that is not supercharged to buy new tools and automation, even if they are deep thinking, as it were automation. What is that that we need to be thinking about? Because that's what I think we have to lean into to help provide value.

00:38:23

Hmm.

00:38:31 Galen

No, I love that. And honestly, for me, I think it's maybe an obvious answer, but all the human interfacing.

00:38:36 Galen

For the time being is where we deliver value for now. But you know, I mean, until I have to negotiate, I mean maybe I do negotiate with that BT every day I need to negotiate scope.

00:38:47 Galen

With ChatGPT, then I still need a set of skills that can drive that conversation, and I still need the tools that give me the courage to enter that conversation and I still need to understand why it's important that I get the outcome that I need from all of these tough

conversations. And yeah, not just negotiating scope, but you know, like finding a path forward when there's a conflict within your team.

00:39:09 Galen

Rights and there are sort of multiple options and we do need to weigh things and sure, like you know, some of the AI tools will have probably more data than we have at their fingertip. But there is this sort of still that bigger picture idea and you know, doubling down on why it's important for us.

00:39:24 Galen

To at least be able to ask the right questions to get a better understanding of the bigger picture so that we can drive those human interactions in a way that leads our project towards its goal of delivering value. Probably too many words to describe the simple thing which is just like human stuff. The human is the chaos actually, and much of the risk.

00:39:44 Kendall

When you got the chaos and risk, I think you started to answer it because when you say the human stuff, I want to challenge that. I mean, I get, I get where you're going, but I actually want challenge that the human.

00:39:52 Kendall

Death is always what's left over after some sort of technology comes in. So what was the human stuff in 1500? Is not the human stuff anymore and the same. I mean, it includes the human stuff we have now, but it included a lot of stuff that we don't have as human stuff anymore. Right? So to say, the human stuff is almost not helpful because it means whatever we haven't solved with the technologies.

00:40:13 Kendall

We have around us, but we know there's something hiding in there. But you just said it at the end. It is handling the chaos. To me, that was one of the fascinating things about being a being a PM and and I've tried to talk to groups of PMS about which is I think the role is that we help bring order to chaos.

00:40:29 Kendall

We could be wrong, but we try and bring order.

00:40:32 Kendall

Could be a bad bet.

00:40:34 Kendall

But we try and bring order because others need that order. This is back to the roots around discipline.

00:40:39 Kendall

You've mentioned courage a few times. That's that feels very much like a human trait, doesn't it? And having intuition, which we still think is is a human trait, I don't know. Mike, what are you?

00:40:48 Mike

Thinking and I would lean in intuition and and couple it with critical thinking. It certainly is possible that AI can develop intuition and critical thinking ability.

00:40:57 Mike

Time. I think we're a long way from that. Yet even with the rapid pace that it's evolving and just as one example, give a lecture on the topic of organizational change and the difficulty of getting all the humans aligned and you know, and and all the opinions on overcoming change resistance and all this sort of stuff.

00:41:15 Mike

And I made the point that, you know, and I'm not the first to make this point for sure.

00:41:20 Mike

That humans are not actually resistant to change. We're the most adaptable species on the planet.

00:41:25 Mike

That doesn't mean we always choose to be, or that we choose to leverage the skills that that come with that. But this notion that we will always face resistance because people are inherently resistant and therefore we need a basket of techniques to overcome the resistance. I I call that out as fundamentally flawed. And one of my students synopsized the course as they're all required to do.

00:41:46 Mike

For the class session and posted something about the importance of overcoming change resistance. She had consulted AI to synopsized my class and I had made the exact opposite point because I'm trying to encourage critical thinking.

00:41:59 Mike

But if the large language model that they are based on doesn't have those conversations, or they're, you know, 1% of the conversation that it's pulling from, it will give you a bunch of standard stuff that doesn't have a whole.

00:42:11 Kendall

Lot of critical thinking in it yet, so I took this question and I asked AI how to answer that question in in defiance of everything we're saying here. And it mentioned four top things here that I think you may find interesting.

00:42:22 Kendall

Human judgment and.

00:42:24 Kendall

Which is related to complex decision making and understanding empathetic understanding. So that's interesting, may have something we've hit on already adaptability and creativity which is driven by flexibility and concepts of innovation, relationship building just because they're not human, there's no one to build a relationship with. And then fourthly, ethical consideration.

00:42:44 Kendall

That ethical decision making is not something that it's going to be helpful with. I don't know what all that means, but to the extent that human things are ethical things, I think automation has never addressed that. It's only exacerbated our ability to be unethical, right?

00:42:57 Mike

The class example that's now becoming more and more real is autonomously driven cars right where.

00:43:03 Mike

If my only choice is to run myself off a Cliff or knock over a woman with a baby stroller.

00:43:08 Mike

What choice do I make and how do I train AI to make that choice? That's like an impossible choice and so. And there's a lot of those in Traffic Safety. Of course, there's a lot of those, that particular one might.

00:43:17 Mike

Be an extreme one, because it's not always a Cliff.

00:43:19 Kendall

Well, let me tell you where I run across it. That's less the big drama and the ethicists that posed those questions.

00:43:25 Kendall

You're in an organization when you're a manager of some sort. It means that you have some ability or some agreement or some covenant. We've all made some groovement of our culture that I have some power over you in some way. Something I do has the ability to cause a change in your behavior or make you have feelings about what you think the behavior is going to be. You may not.

00:43:46 Kendall

Make the change.

00:43:47 Kendall

Right.

00:43:48 Kendall

That's what a manager is doing, right? We have an ethical decision making every time we engage in a communication with someone who, based on our society, our culture and our organization, we have the ability to, you know, let's say it really simple to ruin their day or make them happy. And that can happen in every conversation we make, and it can't be hidden. I feel that this issue around ethics.

00:44:08 Kendall

Does matter to the extent that we are engaging with people, we are influencing people, specific influencing people. To me, that's an onus that has to come back to values and ethics and an understanding of the environment you're in. But Caitlin, let me go back to you. How does this play out when you see your membership talking about AI, how are they feeling, the parts that they?

00:44:27 Kendall

Not is it like just account managers like I'll do the sales sales will always be in my personal bailiwick and that's how it's gonna work. How are you experiencing this real conversation in real time?

00:44:37 Galen

Yeah. No, that's a that's a really good question. I mean, here's the way I kind of see the conversation because for years, project manager, especially those working in an agency space have come to me and said I want to be more strategic. How can I be more strategic? And my usual answer was first to find a strategic come back.

00:44:52 Galen

Talk to me. But you know, here is a real opportunity now to take away some of those things using AI that are considered non strategic, even though they probably are strategic anyways. More on that later. But you know like, OK, I spend so much time doing status reports and like looking through my risk register and, you know, emailing people like I never have.

00:45:12 Galen

Time to be strategic and now at the very least, the real reality that people are facing is that OK?

00:45:18 Galen

Game on how are you going to up your game now that this layer is taken care of? So yes, spend some time, learn the tools right to your point. You need to embrace AI in order to stay relevant in an AI world. And so to do that. But then you also have to be thinking about the other thing that you do and I think so. The biggest shift I see is the folks who.

00:45:41 Galen

You know Kendall, to your point, did think that their value was that they can be super organized with the meeting notes and the project plans and everything across many, many projects. And that's why they're valuable to the organization.

00:45:53 Galen

They've got a little bit more work to do because those are the things that are kind of changing and getting disrupted like very quickly. Yeah, that I'm that I'm seeing sort of in in that space. And then you know there is other layer of like, OK, the folks who were like I wanted to be more strategic now they need to really figure out what being more strategic is the folks who do understand what being more strategic.

00:46:13 Galen

It needs to start opening those doors and getting an education that was fundamentally not part of the way that project managers have been educated, whether they became project

managers on purpose or by accident, they never really got the training that will help them be more strategic. In this post AI future, I don't even.

00:46:30 Galen

Anyway.

00:46:31 Kendall

I like something you just said there that you mentioned earlier, by the way. Again, I wanted to jump on that because you said look, the imposition of AI makes this all seem more dramatic and different. But actually it's just another tool on top of the underlying problem we've always had. If you're literally telling me my job is supposed to be the one who's designing the strategy, and I can't believe I'm doing it and I'm like, so why are you like, it's a choice and this tool.

00:46:52 Kendall

It's simply highlighted. We're taking away the struts. It's. It was always a choice. I would say it should be an easier choice now, although this may open the door more for more AI whisperers until they figure out how to make that easier for us. But you also said something else. That's an implication in there is, you know, where did these leaders learn all this strategy?

00:47:10 Kendall

Because I don't really think there's an honestly a lot of courses that are just how to be a strategist one day, leadership thing in fact don't like people who do often because I've maintained it's not about rising through the ranks to it. There's no course to take. I don't think in the same way. So what you just said made me go to the next level of the leadership layer which is.

00:47:30 Kendall

I would love to hear an executive actually explain what they think. They know that they have to tell a PM and not because they don't. But I'm curious. Would someone write that?

00:47:37 Galen

Down again, it comes back to the transparency and secret sauce and ethical dilemma, right? The Charlie problems and things like that.

00:47:43 Galen

We almost don't want to write it down. The fact that we have to program AI to make that decision.

00:47:47 Galen

Heart of our resistance is that we had to write it down. However, I mean, I know that probably commercial and fighter pilots like it's in the manual. It's like if you're going to crash, don't crash into the school, right. It's written down somewhere. But we have a resistance to it. And I think likewise for, you know, leaders and kiddos where they're like, I can't tell them that I can't tell them that, you know, if we don't hit this margin because my shareholders are putting pressure on me, that I have to fire a bunch of people.

00:48:08 Galen

And I. But you know, I might not have a choice other than to do it on masks via zoom, but they don't want to say these things cause in some ways, not necessarily. They're not proud of it, but maybe right. It's like it's just part of the job. My job is hard. It's hard to explain.

00:48:22 Galen

But when you do explain it, I think it's insight, to be honest with you, whether or not it's damning. But I think that's the cross talk problem that I have, you know right now where you know, project managers don't want to listen to that because they're like, that's exact stuff, don't even talk to me about that. My job is just to look at this project, you do all the hard decision stuff, OK. And then the exec team is going like.

00:48:42 Galen

You do project stuff OK? Like I don't want to burden you with all this stuff that I have to do. When I worked at one of the big management consultancies, I sat on the floor next to a bunch of managing directors. I saw the conversations and I've been lucky enough in my career that I've gotten exposed to it. But I've also been smart enough to know that I need to keep my ears open and I pay attention to this because it matters.

00:49:00 Galen

And I think that's the barrier to the the cross talk is that is like not my problem, don't want to hear it in this day and age is not good enough if you want to level up your game, you need to be listening to everybody. You need to be understanding what's important to you and everything you hear. And yeah, in some ways seeking it out, it's not going to be as easy.

00:49:17 Galen

As buying.

00:49:17 Galen

A course you just triggered.

00:49:18 Mike

Go ahead.

00:49:20 Mike

The memory of something a.

00:49:22 Mike

The mentor of mine once said he said, you know, everyone talks about the importance of focus and that's proper, right? Well, sometimes the best way to focus is to zoom out, not zoom in. And so what you just described was you realize the opportunity you had to zoom out, right? I got my day-to-day job where I'm I'm zooming in and I gotta focus on my things and do my tasks and deliverables, whatever.

00:49:43 Mike

But these guys are talking about something that is far more zoomed out and I can tune it out as like above my paid rate or diluting my focus on my day-to-day tasks or whatever. But if you choose to zoom out and learn what that zoomed out picture looks like and what are the dilemmas and the challenges and the the arguments and the debates and and all that and how do I meld?

00:50:03 Mike

My own view of that zoomed out picture that's a great initial.

00:50:07

Yeah.

00:50:08 Mike

Uh, I think then we need uh, Step 2, which is too many organizations rely on this hierarchical model where there really is only one person.

00:50:16 Mike

That actually has the system view and is responsible for the system performance, and so if I've not even given my people like any at bass on how to get good at helping the system improve, then I'm only training myself and all the succession planning in the world. If I don't

stick someone in there and says all right now it's real. These are tough questions and challenges.

00:50:37 Mike

We have a very complex system. None of us actually.

00:50:40 Mike

Stands all the facets about this system. It's too big, complex, but yeah, here we are. We're going to make a decision. Go. That's how leaders are grown, right? The zoom out and then the actual opportunity to learn.

00:50:51 Kendall

I was thinking about how I would try and be practical about what you guys.

00:50:54 Kendall

Said then listeners.

00:50:56 Kendall

This is what I learned from today. This idea about how is that barrier crossed it really bringing the value.

00:51:02 Kendall

I was trying to think how I would address this. I would tell all executives or I would tell all project managers to to challenge themselves on this.

00:51:09 Kendall

I view it as collaboration.

00:51:11 Kendall

And I don't mean that. It's like some big, fancy word. I very specifically was thinking of the people wear this exposure of the information like, you know, and if we don't sell anything like mumble, mumble, I don't want to mention it Thanksgiving's going to suck, you know, like whatever. Right, because people aren't stupid. But the other thing is you don't want to show a lack of confidence and direction, right? We get trapped in that. So there's a whole bunch of stuff going on in there.

00:51:34 Kendall

My point is this. I have chosen as an individual based on my own value that I like to work with people as collaborators, like I invite them into my brain as a collaborator like some other doors, but that's the door I have. It's like I do seek collaborators and when I can bring a.

00:51:51 Kendall

Subordinate, let's say as an executive, the person charged with a PM base and say, collaborate with me. Let us think together. In this space, we are both thoughtful people doing something. And when I do that, that is probably how I'm beginning to share how I'm seeing the world, how I react to the world, how I emotively react to some of it.

00:52:12 Kendall

And also how I'm trying to be thoughtful about it and they don't have to do it the same way, but they could.

00:52:16 Kendall

See that?

00:52:18 Kendall

But to everyone out there, that's how I found I.

00:52:19 Mike

Can work around that and what I heard there, Kendall was collaboration around solving a specific system level problem.

00:52:25 Kendall

I'm sorry, you're absolutely right. It wasn't like, let's just collaborate. It was because we're working together, by the way to now, you guys got the pitch. I'm gonna pitch. That's how I handle the organizational coaching side, working with leaders, to work with their managers is I won't go in and do team building and collaboration because.

00:52:40 Kendall

We don't have a good team and we're not collaborating. We need more team building. The other one that I get in my world is we don't have enough trust around here. We need to trust building outside. So we're gonna all trust each other on Friday at the end of the workshop.

00:52:51 Kendall

We'll have trust on Friday at 4:00.

00:52:54 Kendall

Unless I get a little behind it, maybe 410, right? So what I found is to this point, doing work is what produces this trust building. What I heard here today that I'm taking away doing this kind of work together on a specific problem, the way you stated it might on a complex and run a complex system is how we build the information exchange. They're learning and growing.

00:53:15 Mike

And maybe even invite AI to the problem solving session.

00:53:18 Kendall

Well, what new ideas? But those are just the ideas we get to play with, right? Well, listen, guys, thank you very much for your time today. Galen, what's up next for you in in the world? You got some conferences.

00:53:27 Galen

Coming up or some webinars anybody needs to know about. I'm speaking at the Bureau of Digital's Ham Summit in Austin in October. I'm excited about it because it's.

00:53:35 Galen

Another rare opportunity for me to get out of the house I live. I work too much right here where you see me or where you hear me. So that'll be fun again to talk about some of the topics that we're talking about today.

00:53:45 Galen

And you know, if you're into or intrigued by this notion of what I've been talking about in visual project management in that space, we've been trying to do a lot more of just like.

00:53:56 Galen

Online events and we're trying to do something a.

00:53:58 Galen

Little bit different and.

00:53:59 Galen

Get to the root of things, because there's just so many webinars out there that are like high level. We're trying to do more hands on with AI tools. We're trying to do more tough discussions with people who are thinking about some of these challenges, you know, on a

day-to-day basis. And my plug there is that that's another great way. If you're not going into the office and sitting next to a bunch of, you know, executives or managing directors every day and.

00:54:18 Galen

And over here these converse.

00:54:19 Galen

Guess what? Great way to do it is to like. Yeah, listen to podcasts that aren't meant for you, right. That are maybe meant for executives. Get that perspective, that POV and also, like, come hang out at some of these events where you know, you can hear someone who trying to tackle this problem, trying to find collaborators to solve a problem and just listen. Check us out at thedigitalprojectmanager.com.

00:54:40 Galen

We've got a members based community as well with with some extras, but fundamentally it's this conversation we just want to get that cross talk going with project professionals. Whether you call yourself a project manager or an executive or someone on the project team or none of those things, we're just trying to to sort of.

00:54:43

Alright.

00:54:56 Galen

Spread the word. Get on.

00:54:57 Kendall

The same page and highlighting that was the digital project manager. You can remember that the.

00:55:01 Galen

Right. Thank you. Yes. And and I rushed by that. I was like, oh, normally I should slow down there. Yes, thedigitalprojectmanager.com.

00:55:09 Kendall

Mike and where? Where are you headed? Are you speaking anywhere? You just told me you were on a panel producing.

00:55:14 Kendall

The next pinball and that's crowded.

00:55:16 Mike

Some of my extracurriculars, but I still do a couple of webinars a month and I might post some some stuff on LinkedIn here or there, so maybe.

00:55:23 Mike

Just follow me on LinkedIn to to see if there's anything interesting. I'm up.

00:55:26 Kendall

To excellent. Well, and I ask everyone else if you have any new topics or guests bring it on and if you have any challenges to any of this, let me know. We are always ready to fire up another podcast episode when.

00:55:36 Kendall

We need to.

00:55:37 Kendall

So with that, I will say goodbye.

00:55:41 Kendall

Well, you may not be a fact.

00:55:43 Kendall

Epm, a government project manager but for those of you who are PMPS and who have listened through this whole episode, you can continue your certification by collecting a PDU at EMIS PDU Reporting Center and select online or digital media and manually enter provider code number 4634 and select empowered strategies and then the full name of the episode.

00:56:04 Kendall

EPO V 0117. EM discipline. Integration in.

00:56:08 Kendall

The federal government.

00:56:10 Kendall

And select ways of working in the talent triangle.

00:56:14 Kendall

I am your host Kabbalah, hoping to see you at the 2024 UMD symposium. But whether we meet or not until next time, keep it in scope and get it done.

00:56:29 Announcer

This has been a final milestone production sponsored by empowered Strategies.

00:56:33

Final milestone.