



ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR NEW PROJECT MANAGERS

Project HEADWAY Webinar Series

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Webinar Objectives

Explore The Challenges We Face As We Learn Project Management

Rethink How We Approach Project Management

Define The Principles That New Project Managers Really Need To Understand

Webinar Process – Things to Know

This Is A Zoom Webinar Presentation

- PowerPoint
- Computer-based audio stream

Problems or Help?

- Contact Heather using the Q&A box

Questions?

- Submit a question in the Q&A box
- Questions will be answered during the Q&A session
- We may not be able to answer all questions

This Presentation Will Be Recorded for Future Reference

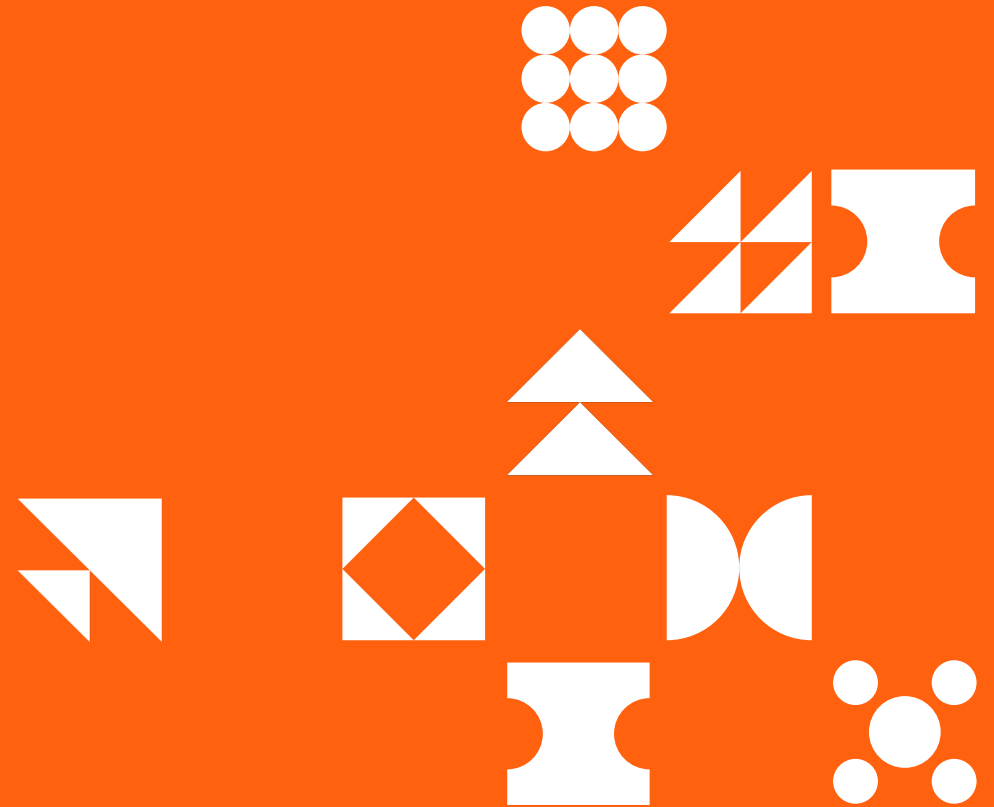
PDU's

Agenda

- Introduction
- Defining Our Terms
- Challenges Of Learning PM
- Rethinking Our Approach
- Begin With Intent In Mind
- Question & Answer Session

DEFINING OUR TERMS

New



Defining 'New'

'New' Means:

- Having recently come into existence : recent, modern
- Having been seen, used, or known for a short time : novel
- Being other than the former or old
- Having been in a relationship or condition but a short time

Source: merriam-webster.com

- Definition taken on 13 September 2022

Defining 'Beginner'

'Beginner' Means:

- One that begins something
 - To come into existence
 - To have a starting point
- Especially : an inexperienced person

Source: merriam-webster.com

- Definition taken on 13 September 2022

Exploring Beginner's Mind

'Beginner's Mind' Means:

- A concept from Zen Buddhism known as 'Shoshin'
- Having an attitude of openness, eagerness and a lack of preconceptions
 - Even when studying a subject at an advanced level
- Counter to the hubris and closed-mindedness often associated with thinking of oneself as an expert
 - Becoming accustomed to a certain way of doing things
 - Not considering or acknowledging new ideas or approaches

Source: wikipedia.org

- Definition taken on 13 September 2022

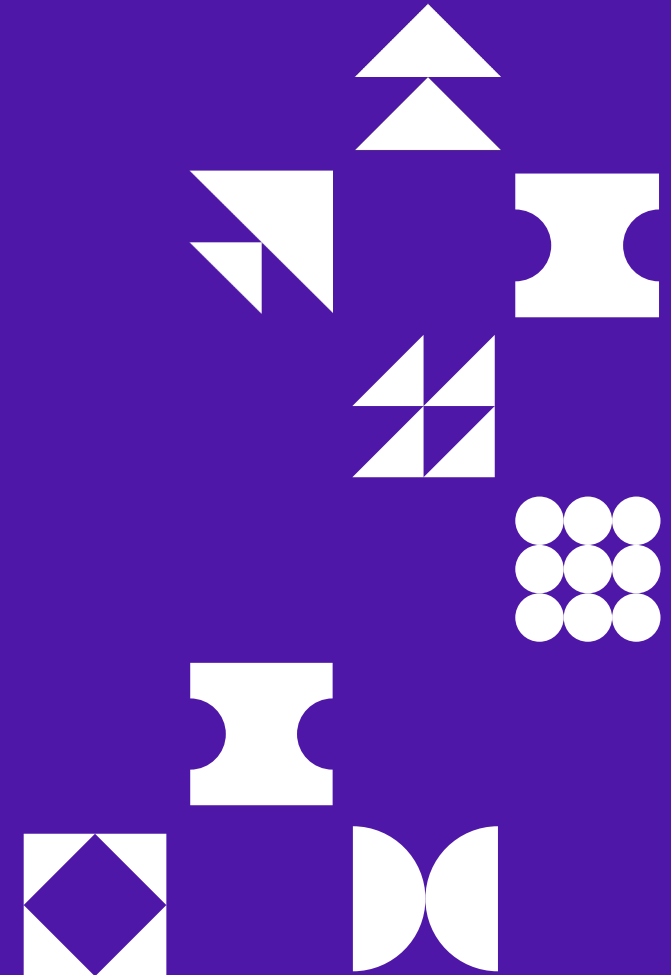
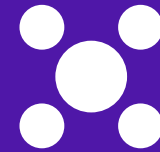
What Does The PMBOK Have To Say?

On This Subject, Surprisingly Little

Consulting The Seventh Edition:

- The word “new” appears 147 times, on 79 pages
 - They speak of new situations, new projects, new capabilities, new processes, and sometimes “Newtown Square”
 - None of those references speaks to being a new project manager
 - The word “beginner” appears exactly zero times (and “begin” appears 21 times)
 - Overall, there is minimal guidance—or even sense—of what the new project manager needs to know
-
- Source: PMBOK Guide, 7th Edition

CHALLENGES OF LEARNING PM



Where We Start

As We Have Noted In Earlier Webinars, Many Of Us Start As ‘Accidental Project Managers’

- Trying to get stuff done
- Working to figure out strategies to do that
- Striving to juggle all the balls
- Wanting strategies and approaches that will make a difference

Some Discover Project Management As A Concept, A Process And A Structure

- It is defined
- It seems to offer clarity and certainty
- It addresses challenges and offers potential solutions

What We Bring In

There Are Perceptions About Project Management That Quickly Get Formed

- Presumptions and expectations that we take on board and adopt

Foremost Among Them Are Perspectives Of Structure And Clarity

- It is big
- It is robust
- It is proven
- It provides clarity on what to do and how to do it

That Can Be Intimidating

- Project management can seem to be complicated and intricate
- You can feel like you have a lot to learn in order to do it well

How Project Management Is Defined

Project Management Looks Intimidating On The Surface

Books About Project Management Are Often Long And Intricate

- They describe a broad array of practices
- They feel prescriptive
- Many of them run to hundreds of pages

Practices Are Often Described In Their Entirety

- They are often represented as being robust and detailed
- There can be a perception that what is described is what is expected

How Project Management Is Taught

Project Management Courses Are A Frequent Gateway

- Getting instruction in the underlying principles and practices

Introductory Courses Are Focused on Explaining

- They emphasize clarity
- They often adopt a process approach, defining a sequence of activities
- There are clear boundaries and expectations
- There is a described flow from start to finish

The Perceived Expectation Is That The Process Is To Be Followed

- And if you do perform the steps in the order described, then success is guaranteed

How Project Management Is Certified

At Some Point, Certification Shows Up On The Radar For Many

- Getting recognition for the work that we do and the role that we play

Previously, Certification Was An Outcome That Was Worked Towards Over Time

- It reflected and acknowledged a journey of learning and accomplishment

Now, It Is Very Often Where People Start

- It is the presumed entry point to being a project manager, and getting work in the role

The Emphasis Is On What Gets Tested, Not How You Manage

- What gets amplified in testing is the hard stuff, mostly because there are clear rules, formulas to remember and defined examples of right and wrong
- It is also what people find the most intimidating, and therefore what they focus on most

How Project Management Gets Perceived

What Gets Taken On Board Is That Project Management Is Hard

- There is a perception that it is overly detailed, rigorous and bureaucratic
- This is something that gets reinforced by actual viewed behaviors of project managers

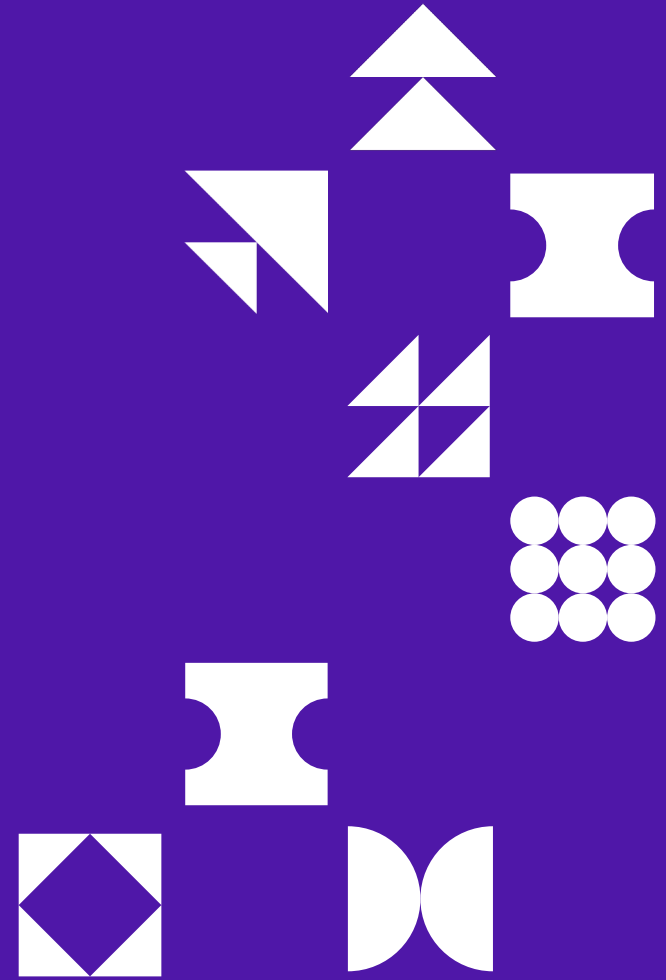
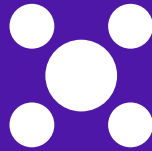
There Is A Perception That There Is A Right Way To Do Project Management

- That all of the practices need to be employed
- That not using all of the practices is in some way inadequate or a failing
- Even in the face of evidence and advice that guidance and tailoring is necessary

The Consequence Is That We Feel The Need To Do All The Things

- Getting audited and cited for not doing all the things is a further negative reinforcement

RETHINKING OUR APPROACH



Calling Out The Learning Approach

The Way We Learn Is Not The Way We Do

- Learning is where we experiment and try
- We practice where there aren't consequences, so we can perform when it's real

That Is Not To Discount Learning, Or The Way That Project Management Is Taught

- There is a lot of complexity
- That has been layered on and added to progressively
- Presenting clear, defined processes helps the understanding process
- There is also little discussion of the ways that reality and demands adaptation

Sifting Out The Essence Is Hard, But It Is Necessary

- Understanding what is essential
- Differentiating that from what is extra

Demystifying What This Means

Learning Modes Are Different From Doing Modes

- Learning is deliberately structured to break ideas down and present them in a structured, comprehensible way.
- Doing requires figuring out what is needed to successfully deliver

Neither Is Inherently Wrong Or Incorrect

- They serve different purposes
- In doing so, they involve different abstractions of the same underlying content

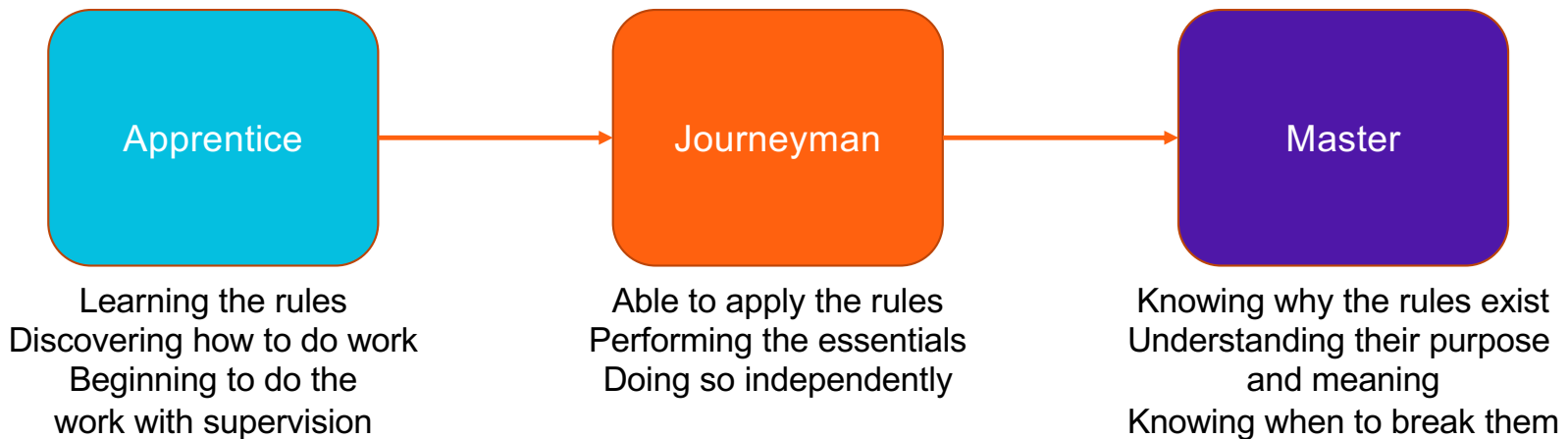
The Project Management You Learn Is An Idealized Version Of What You Actually Do

- Reality of how projects get managed is often—and often needs to be—different
- That isn't a bug, it's a feature

Acknowledging The Journey Of Learning

A Particularly Useful Model To Reinforce This Is How We Progress To Mastery

- Recognizing where we start, as beginning learners
- Understanding how we progress
- Appreciating why the progression works the way that it does



Every Project Has Challenges To Confront

Projects Are Unique; That Is In Fact What Makes Them Projects

- That makes every project a journey into the unknown on some level
- First we need to figure out the project and what it actually entails
- From there we can figure out how to approach and manage the work

As A Consequence, Every Project Involves A Leap Into Uncertainty

- There is always a period of figuring out “what’s really going on here?”
- Accepting and embracing this is a necessary part of the journey

What This Means In Practicality Is That Projects Themselves Are Learning Opportunities

- We need to take the measure of the project and understand what’s at stake
- We need to figure out what our approach needs to be to respond

Few Projects Are Actually Managed “By The Book”

To Read A Book, Take An Advanced Course Or Get Certified, We Often Take On Views Of Project Management As Being Very Formal And Highly Structured

- Reality very seldom actually looks like this

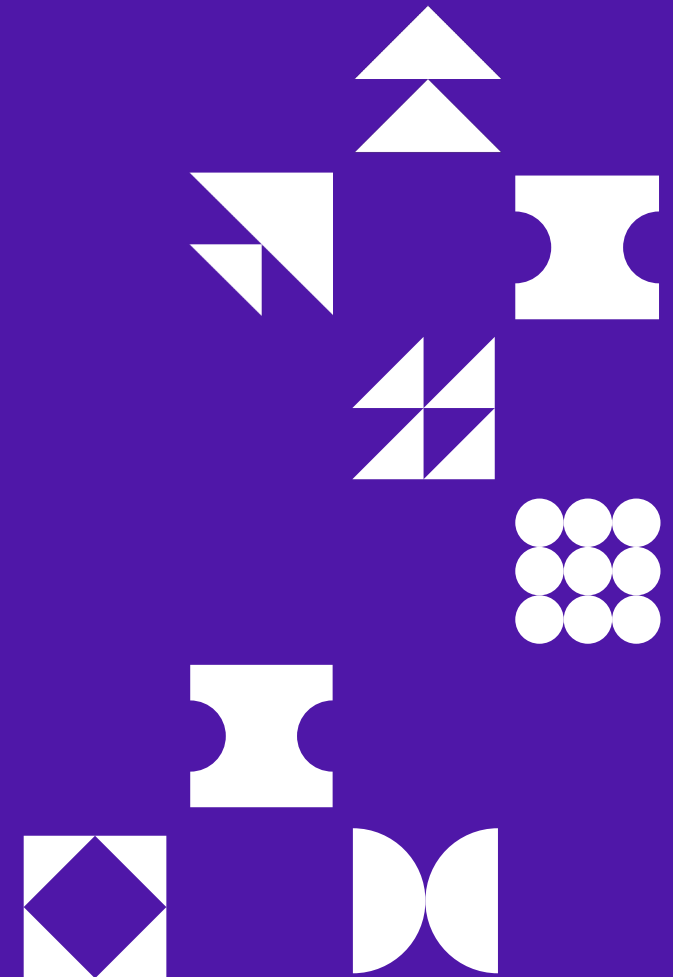
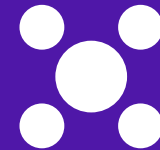
There Are A Host Of Perceived “Essential” Tools In How Project Management Is Defined

- Earned value
- Risk management
- Quality assurance and quality management (particularly as certified)
- Outcome realization

While Some Projects Use Some Of These, It Is Rare For Any Project To Use All Of Them

- Nor should you
- What works needs to be appropriate for the needs of the project at hand
- The approach that works depends significantly on what is really going on

BEGIN WITH INTENT IN MIND



Get Clear About Success

What Matters In Any Endeavour Is Being Clear About What Success Looks Like

- This doesn't happen nearly often enough in general
- It is particularly problematic in projects

This Isn't An Exercise In High-Level Platitudes Or Generic Outcomes

- You aren't looking for "delighted customers" or "higher productivity"

This Should Be Specifically Clear, Relevant And Appropriate To The Project

- That does not necessarily mean it is quantifiable—many important outcomes are not
- It should, however, be specific, concrete and directly related to the project
- You should be able to clearly test for and satisfactorily answer, "Were we successful?"

Know What You Are Trying To Accomplish

This Might Seem A Statement Of The Obvious

- After all, projects are designed to deliver results
- It is presumed that we know what those results should be

This Is Where Some Of The Most Focused Early Work Needs To Occur

- Understanding what the actual result of the project needs to be
- Being clear about “what will be different afterwards?”
- Knowing how that result will be utilized (and how it links back to the identified success)

In The Context Of Project Management, We Typically View This As The Objective

- We also often allow this statement to be vague and high-level, and not specific
- It should specifically and clearly describe the actual result that will be produced
- It will ultimately feed into defining boundaries (scope) and deliverables that get produced

Understand Where It Came From

To Accept Success And The Results We Seek To Accomplish, We Need To Know The Origins

- How did this situation come to pass?
- What are the circumstances that led to here?
- What needs to get addressed and responded to?

What We Are Looking To Understand Is The Origins Of The Project

- What has happened so far
- The experiences around the area being addressed
- How the desired results got requested

In Project Management Contexts, This Doesn't Have A Specific Place Or Home

- At best, it might be described as “background” in a charter or plan document
- It is an essential part of the history that needs to be actually understand

Get Clear On The Real Problem

This Is A Final But Important Test Of Everything That We Have Talked About To Date

- We need to clarify the problem that we are trying to solve

This Is Often Not Straightforward, And It Is Frequently Non-Obvious

- What gets presented as the problem very often isn't
- The deeper problem is often ignored, avoided, not talked about or glossed over
- This reflects the “elephant in the room;” the reality everyone sees but doesn't talk about

There Can In Fact Be Unwillingness To Even Address And Consider This

- Doing so is essential, although discovering the true problem can take time and work
- This exercise is very often enormously valuable, and rarely represents time wasted
- There are occasions when the stated problem is actually the real one; not often though

Figuring Out Your Overall Approach

This Involves Thinking About The General Approach To Delivering The Project

- What you need to do in order to get from where you are to where you need to be
- The major chunks of work to be done, and what those will look like
- Reflecting everything that needs to be accomplished to realize results and attain success

Also Consider What Is Needed To Align With Your Sponsor Or Client

- What they need from you to have confidence and awareness
- What you need from them in order to successfully and sustainably deliver

In Project Management Terms, We Are Largely Exploring “Strategy” Here

- We are exploring it in a few different ways
- There is the general approach that needs to be adopted
- There is also conscious consideration around how to effectively work together

Decide What You Need In Terms Of Management

Once You Know Where You Are Going, How To Get There And Have Clarity Of Expectations, You Can Think About Management

- The essential steps of planning, managing, tracking and reporting

A Default Orientation Should Be To Identify An Approach That Is As Simple As Possible

- It needs to be clear and relevant
- It needs to be usable and deliver meaningful results
- It will partly be influenced by how visible your management approach needs to be
- Ultimately it needs to deliver meaningful value; it needs to support being successful

This Is The Slide That Gets Closest To Project Management As Traditionally Defined

- It also very specifically asks for concrete and deliberate choices and trade-offs
- There is no one right way to manage projects; choosing requires intention and care

Essential Dimensions Of Management

Essential Things To Think About In Figuring Out Your Management Approach Include:

- How do you need to define your overall commitments?
- What does a relevant plan for all of this look like?
- How much visibility of schedule is needed, and how do you best manage that?
- Do you need to worry about budget, and if so to what detail?
- What might go wrong, and what would you meaningfully do about it?
- What is needed to track progress and know where you are?
- What do you need to be communicating along the way, and to whom?

This Is The Slide That Gets Closest To Telling You What To Do

- You still have a lot of choices you need to make and consider about what works for you

Put People Before Process

People Are What Is Going To Make You Successful

- They are the essential ingredients in delivering on success and doing it well

What Gets Put In Place Needs To Serve Them, And Serve Them Well

- Having awareness of what is going on, why and what it means
- Understanding their role, their commitments and appropriate expectations
- Being aware of progress, current challenges and immediate next steps
- Believing that they can be more successful than what they have in place today

Much Of This Relates To The Idea Of Project Organization, Roles & Responsibilities

- It is far more nuanced than boxes on an org chart or R's, A's, C's and I's in a matrix

Recognize Politics For What It Is

We Don't Do A Very Good Job Of Recognizing, Acknowledge And Addressing Politics

- Many people prefer to avoid the subject entirely as being distasteful and messy

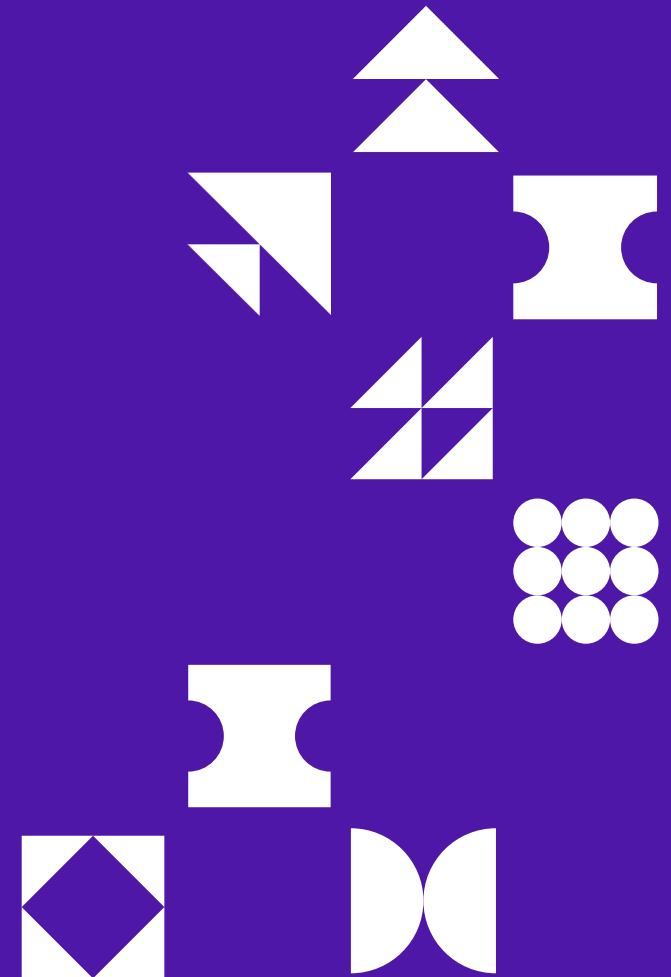
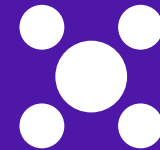
Politics Are The Essential Means By Which Actions Are Taken And Things Get Done In Organizations (And Amongst People)

- People are political beings
- Every action where we engage with someone else to get things done is political
- Understanding politics and how to engage with them well is absolutely essential

The Art Of Politics Is About Reciprocity

- Finding, offering and accepting exchanges of value
- This can take the form of information, assistance, resources or awareness
- It is the essence of identifying benefits and consequences as a means of motivation
- Formal project management doesn't speak to this nearly as much as it should

IN CONCLUSION...



In Conclusion...

How We Teach And Define Project Management Creates Structure That Isn't Real

- It is designed to help define concepts and separate and clarify actions
- In doing so, artificial boundaries and processes get created that in creating clarity look very formal and well-described

What Is Actually Done In Terms Of Project Management Varies Massively

- This is in fact entirely appropriate; it should vary depending on what is actually needed
- Few projects are anywhere near as formal as is described on paper
- Many projects still adopt far more structure and formality than is necessary

Revisiting How To Explain Project Management Well Can Open New Perspectives

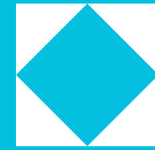
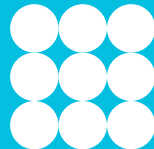
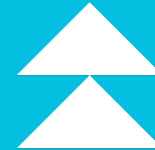
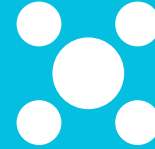
- That is certainly true—and should be helpful—for new project managers
- Hopefully it also provides meaningful insights and relevance for seasoned ones

Managing Well Is A Choice That Should Put People First

- Define and implement what creates success
- Above all—and in all things—avoid process for process' sake

Q&A

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR
NEW PROJECT MANAGERS





In Conclusion...

Quick Review:
Process to Pose a Question

Questions?

PMI PDU Information

Your PDU Registration Will Be Automatically Submitted

- It will be recorded to your projectmanagement.com account within 24 hours
- PDUs will be batch submitted to PMI (usually by the following Monday)

To Be Eligible For One PDU:

- You must be present and in attendance for at least 90% of the webinar

If After Two Weeks You Don't See The PDU On PMI's PDU Credit Recording Web Site:

- Please contact CommunitySupport@pmi.org

Webinar Survey

➤ Feedback Survey

- A feedback survey link is being provided in the chat section
- Please input your feedback and let us know what you think
- It only takes about 3 min to complete

Mark Your Calendars!

Project HEADWAY

Confronting Biases and Ethical Nudges

Thursday, 20 October 2022
@ 3:00 PM EDT

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS FOR THE PRESENTER?

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