I HAVE QUESTIONS.
Who holds the title “Digital Project Manager” (or something similar)?
Who came into their career straight out of university as a DPM (or is a student)?
Who would consider themselves an Accidental DPM?
YOU ARE NOT AN ACCIDENT!
A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF THIS DPM
AGE: 5
CAREER GOAL: DOCTOR
SKILLS: ART, PLAY, ORGANIZING TOYS
AGE: 13

CAREER GOAL: DOCTOR

SKILLS: ART, READING, WRITING, SCHOOL TO-DO LISTS, ORGANIZING CDs
AGE: 21
CAREER GOAL: ???
SKILLS: ART, WRITING, SOCIALIZING, QUESTIONING EVERYTHING
AGE: 31-CURRENT
CAREER GOAL: DIGITAL PM
SKILLS: WRITING, PLANNING, LEARNING, SOCIALIZING
ORGANIZED. CURIOUS. COMFORTABLE BEING UNCOMFORTABLE. HELPFUL. COURAGEOUS. DETAIL ORIENTED. COMMUNICATOR.
YOU ARE NOT AN ACCIDENT!
WE’RE HERE BECAUSE WE ARE NEEDED
DO OUR TEAMS AND STAKEHOLDERS REALIZE THEY NEED US?
“WHAT DO YOU DO?”
NON-INDUSTRY PERCEPTIONS
“A Digital PM manages, coordinates, **executes and implements** the development and sometimes maintenance of digital projects such as websites.”

**VANESSA BURK**
EXECUTIVE CHEF
“So what kind of projects do you manage then?”
“You help teams organize their work.”

SUSAN HARNED
(MY MOM)
“YOU’RE FIRED!”

DONALD TRUMP
REALITY TV “STAR”
HAS PUBLICLY FIRED MANY “PMS”
THEY KINDA GET IT...

BUT THEY DON’T REALLY.
INDUSTRY PERCEPTIONS
“DPMs keep projects moving. They maintain a clear grasp of the big picture, while noticing (and addressing!) little issues before they turn into headaches. They’re experts at articulating what’s happening, who’s responsible for it, and when it needs to get done, so no one—team, clients, stakeholders—leaves a conversation unsure what they’re supposed to be doing.”

SARA WACHTER-BOETTCHER
CONTENT STRATEGIST
AUTHOR, CONTENT EVERYWHERE
DESIGN FOR REAL LIFE
@sarawb
“As far as I can tell project managers do nothing. But if they stopped doing it then I am pretty sure everything would fall apart.”

PAUL BOAG
UX CONSULTANT
AUTHOR, DIGITAL ADAPTATION
@boagworld
“Digital project managers are the stage managers of the Internet. They keep productions running smoothly, from the first rehearsal to the final bow. As the communications and organizational hub for all things creative and technical, they ensure that all disparate parts are working in unison, overseeing the cast and crew and pitching in when necessary. Without them, the director's vision would never become reality, and all of us would be out of work.”

WHITNEY HESS
EMPATHY COACH
CO-HOST, DESIGNING YOU
@whitneyhess
“A project manager captains the ship. Pilots the aircraft. Conducts the orchestra. Mans the torpedoes. Drives the bus. Alone they are nothing—but with the right process and team and resources—they are vital. They are everything.”

NANCY LYONS
CEO, CLOCKWORK
AUTHOR, INTERACTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT: PEOPLE, PROCESS, PIXELS
@nylons
“Project management is like sweeping up after the elephants, only less glamorous.”

JEFFREY ZELDMAN
FOUNDER, HAPPY COG, A LIST APART, A BOOK APART, AN EVENT APART
AUTHOR, DESIGNING WITH WEB STANDARDS
@zeldman
THEY KINDA GET IT...

BUT WE CAN DO BETTER.
WHAT IS OUR PLACE WITHIN THE GREATER PM COMMUNITY?
We're talking Digital Project Management on #pmchat today! Is it really different? #dpm #pmot

9:21 AM - 21 Aug 2015
Brett Harned @brettharned · 21 Aug 2015
Not sure when anyone said DPM is different. Maybe I am missing something. We’ve built a strong community in our industry though.
#pmchat

Brett Harned @brettharned · 21 Aug 2015
A8. DPM is only 4 years old. We have no standards across projects, but we are eager to learn and continue to grow the community.
#pmchat

Brett Harned @brettharned · 21 Aug 2015
No matter how you slice it, "DPM" is not going anywhere. You can embrace is or reject it. We’re happy either way. #pmchat
WE’RE SOMEHOW RELATED.

BUT WE DON’T GET IT.

AND THAT IS OUR FAULT.
I WILL FIND ANSWERS
HOW DO WE MAKE OUR MARK?
WE NEED
STANDARDS
7 DPM PRINCIPLES
WE ARE ...
CHAOS JUNKIES
WE THRIVE ON PROBLEMS BECAUSE WE KNOW WE CAN SOLVE THEM
WE BREAK PROCESSES TO MAKE NEW ONES
WE DON’T SIMPLY FOLLOW TEMPLATES.
WE ASK QUESTIONS.
WE SEEK ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS.
WE MAKE OUR OWN TEMPLATES IF/WHEN WE NEED THEM.
STAKEHOLDER DECISION MATRIX

Check these out & adapt them
brettharned.com/blog

Sample Stakeholder Questions

As a project manager, it’s your job to set expectations and work with your team and clients to establish good communication patterns. A simple conversation can help you to wrangle the info you need to set everyone up for success.

Set aside some time with your main client contact and ask them some questions about process, organizational politics, and general risks. Doing so will only set up your team to handle any type of difficult personalities or situations, it shows that you care about the project and want it to run smoothly. Here are some questions that could help you:

- Has your team discussed how you will gather feedback?
- Who is the final sign off? Or who owns the project?

Sample Deliverable On-boarding Sheet

Deliverables: Site HTML Wireframes (thumbnail to the left)

Accessible at: CURL

Goal: To define site content hierarchy on home, landing, and detail pages. These are not intended to provide direction on graphic design or final content.

Description: The Agency delivered 8 wireframes with variations on each page. These variations helped team to make decisions on.

Date of delivery: January 4, 2014; Final approval on February 5, 2014

History: Our team revised this deliverable 3 times and presented it twice in person to the core team and the executive committee. Major points of feedback were about navigation and representation of blog content on the homepage. Arnold Stakeholder was the final approver of this deliverable.

Impacts: This deliverable details decisions that are critical to the entire project. Changes to any details would affect graphic design, content, front-and-back-end development efforts, resulting in timeline and scope adjustments.

Current status: Approved on <DATE>
WE MANAGE WITH OUR MINDS, NOT WITH TOOLS.
MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATORS
WE SPEAK: MARKETING, IT, FINANCE, LEGAL, DESIGN, UX, CONTENT STRATEGY, CODE, AND MORE
WE SPEAK WITH:

EXPERTISE. EMPATHY. CONSISTENCY.
WE CREATE ROUTINES:
STATUS. CHECK-INS. ONE-ON-ONES.
EMAIL. PHONE. SLACK. BASECAMP. MEETINGS.
WE LISTEN AND TAKE CUES FROM OUR TEAM AND CLIENTS
LOVEABLE HARDASSES
BUILD TRUST:

1. Be Honest
2. Be Reliable
3. Communicate
4. Admit Fault (when it’s yours to admit)
WE ARE ACTIVE MEMBERS OF OUR TEAMS.
I'M NOT YOUR SECRETARY.
CONSUMMATE LEARNERS & TEACHERS
WE LEARN ON THE JOB
WE LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER
WE TEACH SO WE CAN:

1. Build Trust
2. Gain Predictability
3. Gain Consensus
4. Test New Ideas
TEACHING = WIN-WIN-WIN
LASER-FOCUSED
FACT: PEOPLE COMPLICATE PROJECTS
WE FOCUS ON PROJECT GOALS
“A goal is a dream with a deadline.”

-NAPOLEON HILL, AMERICAN AUTHOR, 1883-1970
WHAT IMPACTS PROJECT GOALS?

Evolving Business Needs
Feedback (or lack thereof)
Brilliant Ideas!
Uninformed Stakeholders
Shrinking Budgets
Missed Deadlines
New Requirements
Poor Communications
IT’S OKAY,
GOALS CHANGE,
I PROMISE
DON’T FORGET ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL GOALS
It’s too easy to forget about yourself when you’re responsible for everyone and everything else.
BE SURE TO:

- Set achievable goals
- Discuss them with someone
- Plan for them
- Check in on them regularly
- Adjust as you see fit
HONEST, ALWAYS
CULTIVATE A REPUTATION FOR STRAIGHT TALK
THIS CAN MAKE FOR:

- Difficult conversations
- Outcomes you might not be prepared for
- Not being liked immediately
“Sometimes telling the truth will not make people happy, or make you the winner of a popularity contest. In some cases you may suffer from ‘loss of grace’ for telling the truth or for standing up for what is right.”

-THOMAS M. CUNNINGHAM, US NAVAL ACADEMY FIRE DEPT.  
Leadership 101: Integrity
We don’t cover up mistakes; we illuminate them with the intent of not repeating them.
We stay transparent when it comes to scope, budget, and timeline changes.
We resolve conflict by remaining neutral and honest about causes and solutions.
“When they go low, we go high.”

—MICHELLE OBAMA, FLOTUS
PATHFINDERS
BUDGET & TIMELINE

STRATEGIC PATH & SUCCESS
ACHIEVE SUCCESS WITH PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF DELIVERABLES, PROCESS, TOOLS & EXPERTISE.
BE CONFIDENT.
BE A LEADER.
MAKE WORK FUN.
WHERE WILL YOU TAKE US?
WHEN YOU GET A MINUTE...
WE ARE...
AWESOME

#weareDPM