




# SO YOU WANT TO BE A PROJECT MANAGER??

OBSERVATIONS FROM A PM MANAGER ON INTERVIEWING - I'VE BEEN ON  
BOTH SIDES OF THE INTERVIEW TABLE

# AGENDA

- The Persona's that I see in the strongest candidates that I believe are critical to demonstrating your success as project manager
- The Questions
  - What I ask.....
  - What I have been asked .....
- The Discussion
  - What have you experienced?
  - What is the Best Question you have been asked?
  - What are the questions that have surprised you the most?
  - What have you learned from your interviewing process?



# SECTION DIVIDER SLIDE

THE PERSONA'S

# PETER PARKER “SPIDERMAN”

Demonstrates the "Spidey Sense"....know when the your project is in trouble before anyone notices. There are really 4 kinds of people

1. Those who see what needs to happen – before anyone else does.
2. Those who “Make” things happen (NMB)
3. Those who “Watch” things happen (NMB)
4. Those who say “What Happened” (NMB)

Nicholas Murray Butler (NMB)



# DR. PHIL “THE MEDIATOR”

How is that working for you?

Conflict, tension, personality conflicts, internal and external pressure will all impact the people interactions on your projects.

How do you go about addressing these challenges says a great deal about how you will succeed as a project manager



# NELSON MANDELA “ THE NEGOTIATOR”

Robert H. Mnookin in his seminal book, *Bargaining with the Devil, When to Negotiate, When to Fight*.

In his chapter on Mandela, Mnookin cites Mandela’s patience, tenacity, pragmatism, and strategic thinking: “He rejected the simple-minded notion that one must either negotiate with the Devil or forcibly resist. He did both. He was willing to make concessions, but not about what was most important to him. With respect to his key political principles, he was unmovable.”

Stakeholder management is essential and it is the negotiation process for a project. Every Stakeholder will ask for what they WANT. You must give them what they NEED.

- How do you negotiate?
- What is the most important thing to you as a project manager that is not up for negotiation?
- Do you have the Mandela skills of patience, tenacity, pragmatism, and strategic thinking?



# THOMAS ALVA EDISON “THE PROBLEM SOVLER”

Demonstrate your experience with problems and problem solving. If it is your problem, you will be able to tell your story with passion and details.

Do you have a history of working “closely” with complex problems?

Do you have an approach to putting your arms around problems that are:

- Sustainable ?
- Repeatable ?



# TONY LA RUSSA“THE COACH”

## Teambuilding

- What can you do with the talent that you have been given?
- How can you grow and leverage the talent on your team?
- How do you keep spirits up in the most challenging times in your project?
- How do you keep extended and “virtual” teams engaged and connected?






# BRETT FAVRE THE QUARTERBACK

## Leadership and Resiliency

- How do you lead your team in stressful times?
- How do you lead your team to victory after a series of interceptions (Failures)?
- How do you demonstrate “calm” in the huddle?
- What do you do when you as the leader or your team encounter setbacks ..... Do you have the Quarterback's short term memory?





# SECTION DIVIDER SLIDE

- THE QUESTIONS

# • THE QUESTIONS WHAT I ASK.....

## 1. Project Management:

1. What is the one skill that you think is most important for a PM to have and why?
2. How can you tell when a project or program you are working on is off Track/ Task?
3. What do you like most and least about your job. I've asked this question and it's interesting the responses I've heard.

## 2. Relationships:

1. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a peer or subordinate on the project
  1. What was the issue?
  2. How did you resolve it?
  3. What did you Learn from this?

## 3. Teambuilding:

1. What types of teams have you managed?
2. What are some things that you do to keep your teams engaged and connected?

- THE QUESTIONS  
WHAT I ASK.....

- 5. Stakeholder Relationships:

1. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a project stakeholder
  1. What was the issue?
  2. How did you resolve it?
  3. What did you Learn from this?

- 6. Problem Solving:


1. Tell me about a time when had a business or technical problem
  1. What was the problem?
  2. How did you approach solving it?
  3. What did you Learn from this?

- THE QUESTIONS  
WHAT I'VE BEEN  
ASKED.....

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1. What is one job that you have taken that you immediately knew was not the right fit
  1. What was the reason?
  2. What did you do?
2. Why did you leave your last position?
3. There are “Starters” and there are “Finishers” ----- Which one are you and why?



# SECTION DIVIDER SLIDE

- THE DISCUSSION

# • THE DISCUSSION

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- What are the questions that have surprised you the most?
- Have you been on an interview panel? - What did you learn from asking the questions that changed how you approach answering them?
- What is the Best Question you have been asked?
- What have you learned from your interviewing process?