

William Hurley

MGMT270 Summer 2015

Project Manager Interview

My field of study is Web Application Development. For this assignment, I searched online for Project Managers in Information Technology or Web Development and even messaged a Google Project Manager whose contact information was listed in an article about the Google+ social media application. I did not receive a reply from the Google Project Manager, nor other professional contacts I have, and I was unable to obtain contact information online for Project Managers from prominent local companies such as Microsoft. I also reached out a local professional to which I was referred, Kathy Disney, and was unsuccessful in making contact.

Because I was unable to connect with a Project Manager in my field of study, I chose to interview my father, William M. Hurley. My father has worked for the King County Sheriff's Office since 1999, starting out as a Deputy and working his way to a Sergeant position in the Metro Transit Police division. While in this position, he became a pseudo-Project Manager, creating the Joint Transit Anti-terrorism Team (JTAT for short). The JTAT, funded by Homeland Security, is a unit within Metro Transit Police with specially trained officers who work to deter and recognize potential terrorist activities and conduct joint operations with FBI and other federal agencies. After establishing this JTAT team, he saw a need for additional training and resources that would support his mission. He successfully applied for and received federal grant funding for three additional projects:

1. Addition of an Explosives Detection Canine Team
2. Dedicated training funds to provide hands-on training for all Officers assigned to Metro, along with awareness-level training for a large portion of the civilian workforce
3. Dedicated funding to support overtime for additional Officers on the street during times of crisis and increased vigilance

### **Answers to Interview Questions**

#### **1) Describe the nature of your organization...product or service.**

I work for the King County Sheriff's Office, which of course is primarily a large-scale law enforcement organization with over 1300 employees – our product/service is protection of the citizens and property of King County. My agency also has divisions with various responsibilities ranging from human resources, budget and accounting, Communications, Information Technologies, civil issues, animal control, and traffic safety to name a few.

**2) What is your role in project management activities in this organization?**

My job as a Sergeant with King County includes numerous duties, one of which is as project manager for our grants program within our Metro contract. I manage five current federal grants with a budget of 1.7 million dollars per year. Some of my responsibilities are budgeting and accounting, verifying compliance that all monies are expended in accordance with grant guidelines, quarterly reporting, applying for new grants as appropriate, etc. Additionally project management for this includes working closely with members of other local and federal agencies for planning and appropriate training.

**3) What trends are emerging in project management, or how projects are managed in organizations, that are different from 3-5 years ago?**

One of the trends that I see is a shift away from hiring within an organization, and bringing in the best-qualified person to run a project even if that person does not necessarily have the requisite background to work the hands on needs of a particular project. The skills of a successful project manager will allow that person to quickly become familiar with the needs of an organization and coordinate the appropriate resources to manage any given project.

**4) What are the three greatest challenges of being a project manager in your industry?**

Time management is always a challenge, both personally and for team members. Next I would have to say that it's always a challenge working with outside vendors and other organizations who are typically critical to the success of your project, but do not always share your priorities. Lastly, budget and accounting issues are always hanging over your head – you need to prove the value of your project to the organization.

**5) Specifically what you are doing to meet those challenges?**

I set priorities and goals for my team and myself and routinely check our progress. I set short-term goals that can be accomplished in days to weeks, mid-term goals that will likely be achieved within the next 2-12 months, and long-term goals for where I want my project and team to be in 3-5 years. I hold myself, and my team, accountable for assigned action items being done on time and within budget. Additionally I take every opportunity to provide training for my team, and attend appropriate training for myself when available.

**6) What do you see as the fastest growing career opportunities in project management?**

Flexibility! Of course the medical field is growing by leaps and bounds, as is information technologies. But I believe a successful project manager needs to get out of their comfort zone and seek opportunities wherever they are, regardless of past experience with a particular field of expertise, a successful project manager can succeed in virtually any organization.

**7) For a career in project management, what are the most essential skills, abilities, education and experiences a person needs to be competitive?**

In my experience, a positive attitude and great work ethic will take you a long way – in addition to that excellent time management and interpersonal skills are critical to your success. I believe that a solid education in almost any field will provide the basics for project management, but the majority of what you need to learn can best be learned by stepping up and volunteering to take on additional duties in whatever organization you find yourself employed.