**Speaker 2**

**Louise Bernstein**

**Project Management Insights**

Louise is a Senior Project Manager for a company called **Altify**, talking about her experience and what it feels like to work in this role.

Being a Project Manager means that you are part of a team, everyone has their own responsibilities but everybody owns the project that they are working on.

A project manager is in between the user, the technology and business marketing, it’s a middle term between those three parts of production. A Project Manager needs to take insights of the customer, of the end user’s point of view, then bring to the technology team or development team. They also goes to the marketing team, meaning that the Project Manager is involved in every step of the process.

A Project Manager is responsible for the general overview of the entire project, from start to end. Rarely there will be two Project Managers in the same project, unless we are talking about a very big company and a very big project. But most of the companies have only one Project Manager for each project.

To give an example about a product - on how it should be developed, how it should be marketed, and how to make it grow. Sometimes if you are lucky to have a really good product, and if you have a good team working with you already, and your product is solving a popular problem, the marketing can be done by the users. People love recommendations, and when your product is good it will be recommended by users to users, using your very own customers to do all the marketing for you. And that’s the best advertisement you can get in the market. As example she used a conversation she had with a friend of hers. Her friend uses an app called “Pocket” and she kept going on to Louise that this app is so good because it does this and that, and convinced Louise of using it, and now she does recommend to other people as well.

Also a Project Manager has to consider what’s the competition out there for the product you are working on, you need to ask questions like:

Is my product faster? Is it easier to use? Does it offer more solutions or options to the user than of what is out there at the moment?

Also mentioning that a Project Manager doesn’t have to be a specialist about one area, but a bit of every area, so it will give the skills to float between one process and another of the product development.

Marketing team uses one language to talk about this product, while development team will use another, and users also will talk about it in their own way. So a Project Manager needs to know a little of every side, then it will be easier to manage this project, once you know how to talk with everyone about the same thing in their language.

**Louise’s Day as Project Manager**

Usually the days are all different, depending on the project you are working on it. Also things are changing all the time, but that’s an example of a Project Manager day, she works on a release cycle management, doing an average of 3 releases per year, and things change a lot especially in the technology world. Using an example of how things change, Louise was talking about how drag and drop are changing things around. End users those days are so used to drag and drop and it became expected in applications. So she tried to add this in as much as she can on her products, not that she may think is the best but that’s what is expected so it is important to adapt.

Every Product Manager prioritizes their day, you have to be ruthless, you have about two hundred things to do in a certain amount of hours per day, so you need to make sure you are focus on the right things and she uses tools like Trello, Slack, etc for helping her. Trello is a free app where is easy to move things around making her life a bit easier, that way she knows what’s going on and how to keep track of everything that she has to do.

Then she does scrum stand up meeting, so the team talks about what they have done on the day before, what the plans for the current day are and what the potential “road blocks” are of the day. That’s really a critical check in and that keeps the float going, because whenever they have a road block they have someone to help and remove those road blocks out of the. And if you miss one of those stand up meetings, is incredible how things can get back-logged.

She needs to be on hand for answering questions existing in work, this questions can be a little ones or complicated ones, and based on those questions we probably have to re-think the way of working.

Also she works with Sales Force, Hubspot, SmartSheet, Jira and other tools. Very important for her is a lot of clients communication, strong relationships are extremely important, you don’t want the sales team to be the gate keeper. In the future you can see the result of maintaining this close relationship. That’s sort of a shift in Altify .

**Experience**

**2004 – 2006:** Product Marketing manager for[MSDS Solutions](https://www.linkedin.com/company/8315772?trk=prof-exp-company-name)**.**

**2007-2011:** Product Development Manager for 3E(Canada).

**2010-2015:** Product Manager – International for 3E Company (Ireland).

**2015 – Present:** Senior Product Manager for Altify

**Questions & Answers**

Q: How did you career started? And how did you fall in love with it?

A: I fell in love when i did one subject in computers informations systems, it was only one term in a thing called transition year. That’s was the only subject that I loved in school, so she started with support management in UCD, then discovered this management information system course and just loved it. From there into product marketing in Montreal and then product management. So after falling in love I feel like I am married to it.

Q: So I guess I don’t see yourself divorced for a long time?

A: No “some laughs”,

Q: If you are to put a team together, and if you don’t have the technical background, what would you be looking for as for product manager?

Definitely you need to solve problems, need to be able to look for problems and think about ways of solving it, so you need to put your feet in the user’s shoes. Communication skills and a very good facilitator, being able to translate information from one group to another, especially between groups that don’t agree with one another.

Q: At the start did you find hard to organise everything? Is there anything you found easier?

A: You can easily get overwhelmed when you start, because you have over two hundred things to do, certain amount of the time, before the end of the day, before the end of the process of your product, you are the person who knows the most about this product, so you can end up doing everything on it easily. You need to know how to work *with* people not work *for* people.

Q: Do you work with many project managers? Or usually each project manager is responsible for each project?

A: It depends how big is your company, if you are lucky enough there will be more project managers in your company where you all share ideas, but usually there is one project manager for each project, but again it depends how big the company and the project is. Rarely you can have more than one project manager working on same project.

Q: Does being involved in the workplace makes you bring work home?

A: When you first start a product manager job, or a product and because you need to understand the company or the project you do need to put in more hours into your day, once you are on top of that and have resources you can have normal days. So you might have about a month where you are working late a lot. But once you like what you are doing then it is not so bad.