

Q. IT SOUNDS EXPENSIVE. EXACTLY HOW DOES PROGRAM MANAGEMENT ADD VALUE?

A. A program management approach is scalable to the needs identifying risks, using project controls tools, and maximizing get missed without a programmatic approach. That upfront effectiveness. It helps the project team see challenges before they happen.

South Mountain Freeway in Phoenix is a great example where our program management team collaborated with the owner on an approach that allowed the freeway to open three years earlier than if it had been built using a traditional approach, with a cost savings of more than \$100 million. Our team co-located with a core group of Arizona DOT staff, working as a seamless extension of their staff through all phases of the program. We fostered an environment where, at each critical junction of the project, we had the right people making the right decisions at the right time. The team had a robust project controls system, communicated through dashboards, and the owner embraced the information, using it as the basis for weekly team meetings. We could see the challenges before they became full-blown problems so we could mitigate most issues before they resulted in a claim. We had information easily presentable to executive leadership and to FHWA. It was a clean way of managing the inevitable challenges.

Q. WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME AND WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS AN OWNER SHOULD TAKE TO INITIATE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT?

team as early as possible to help determine the components and structure of the program as well as delivery methods. At the beginning you need a few people who are very strategic — who have the experience of delivering large or complex programs — to help you develop the plan and approach. As you develop the plan you can selectively add people who bring value on key elements to help you deliver.

A great example is our work as technical advisor for the CA\$10.9 billion Ontario Line Subway in Toronto — a

16-kilometer line involving three public-private partnership contractor teams. We're setting up and managing an integrated program management approach in collaboration with the owner, providing information/data to support kyoudaboratRøp the

integrated teams, co-located with an owner, were all working for the good of the team and the program and the community. A very strong element of our approach is this attitude that

to keep your program moving forward while managing the risks at every step of the way. We've proven many times that together, we make great things possible.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN PROGRAM MANAGEMENT?

A. I've always been fascinated by bridge engineering, especially growing up near the infamous Tacoma Narrows Bridge, and I remember riding across the replacement structure as a kid. I studied structures in college, interned on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge when they added the second span, and was on a career path to be a bridge engineer. I got the opportunity to work for the Seattle Popular Monorail Authority and realized I really enjoyed the exposure to all the parts and pieces of a major project — from negotiations with contractors to conversations with the public.

From that, I realized that understanding the bigger picture was a compelling way to bring value to projects. While I could have been perfectly happy being a great bridge engineer, rather than focusing on the details of bridge design, I preferred to be the bridge between the engineers, environmental scientists, attorneys, stakeholders, and so on. I realized I was developing a

Q. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ANYONE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN PROGRAM MANAGEMENT?

A. A lot of people can be intimidated by a billion-dollar-plus program and I understand why delivering a big program can feel scary; you're helping a group of people make complicated decisions so it's not like getting out your manuals and analytically working a design problem. What's exciting is leaning into those unknowns and working through them to achieve the overall goals of the program.

A billion-dollar program is a completely different skillset than even managing smaller projects. The best way to learn to deliver these large programs is through experience gained on the job.

on how instrumental they have been in my growth. They tapped me on the shoulder for opportunities, made sure I felt supported, invited me to experience and participate in things that might have been "above my pay grade." I can think of so

About the Author
