

# S4E32: Ann Campea

## **SPEAKERS**

Peter Margaritis, Ann Campea

### **Peter Margaritis**

Hey, welcome back everybody. My guest today is Ann Campea, and she and I met a few weeks ago when I was on her podcast, the PM Podcast. PM? Does that stand for Pete Margaritis? It's Project Management, and we hit it off big time. I mean, I had a blast on her podcast. I said you must come on mine. And through a series of technical difficulties, we'll finally able to have this today, and I'm so excited to have you on the podcast. Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to spend some time with me today.

### **Ann Campea**

Peter, I'm so excited to see you again. Peter Margarita, Peter Margaritis. Peter Margaritis.

### **Peter Margaritis**

Oh, you remembered. Thank you.

### **Ann Campea**

I'm honored. Thank you for welcoming me onto your podcasts.

### **Peter Margaritis**

So, it was it was interesting when you have me on your podcast, you're a Project Management Professional. You get certifications in the world of project management. And before we get started working, I failed to do a little additional research. I'll call myself out. I searched Apple podcasts, to see how many project management podcasts are out there. And you said.. well, I'll tell you what. Your words are better than mine.

### **Ann Campea**

There's a few. There's quite a few. Look, I started my. The Everyday PM, about less than a year ago, and I did not even look at what the apple podcasts listing would be. You know, you don't really get into the data and the metrics of your podcast until after you've been doing it for a little bit. And there are a few. I'm very surprised by it. At least 100 podcasts on Project Management.

### **Peter Margaritis**

Wow.

**Ann Campea**

Yeah. You'd be surprised. There's things about the theory of project management, case studies on project management. There is the official PMI so the Project Management Institute has a podcast, I believe. So, it's just coming from all different directions. It really speaks to the diversity of the industry, I think.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, what's your angle on it? There's 100 podcasts out there on project management. How do you differentiate your podcasts on the others?

**Ann Campea**

Well, the tagline is Project Management Principles for Your Everyday Life. And one thing that I really wanted to do was connect people to the fact that we are all project managers in some way shape or form, whether you have the title or not. And a lot of the things that we practice in project management, whether it be working with cross functional teams, learning you're... tapping into your emotional intelligence, learning how to schedule and budget and all of those things that kind of go into being a successful project manager. We're also doing that in our everyday lives. Aren't we, Peter? I think you've had to plan your budgets. You've had to look at your schedules, I think we were just chatting about how your schedules are colliding for the next book that you're coming out with. So, there's a lot of things that we do that are practical in our personal lives that are also things that translate if you are a professional in the project management field.

**Peter Margaritis**

Absolutely. I was sharing with Anne beforehand that I am going to launch a workable improv workshop again this fall, and wish to be a part of it, and I said well I was planning on like a launch it that Wednesday after Labor Day, but my publisher, Kate Kolbert, I'm calling you up Kate, contacted me last week 10 days ago and said, Can we move your date of release of your book up probably about a month, and see if we can get it out that right after Labor Day? Yes, and...

**Ann Campea**

She's project managing you very well, because she got her stakeholder to say yes,

**Peter Margaritis**

Yes.

**Ann Campea**

And it's going to drive to that schedule.

**Peter Margaritis**

I can't say no to her. I mean, actually my manuscript was really due around this time of the year, but she said to me on July 4th.

**Ann Campea**

She's good.

**Peter Margaritis**

She's really good, and she is so good I have so much trust in her that I'm willing to move my schedule around in order to meet her schedule so we can get this thing done. And I think it comes down to that trust, because she worked with me on my second book so we've kind of got this relationship now. And she does a wonderful job. She makes me sound smarter than I really am, which is, you know, easy to do.

**Ann Campea**

Also a good project manager trait. We can do that to people.

**Peter Margaritis**

Right. Thank you. So, I'm not, I mean we all do it, but it's kind of like when we were talking on your podcast, we all improvise. And my goal is to get people recognize that we're improving. Your goal is to get people to recognize that we already do, we already are project managers. We just need to get better at. Would that be.. Yes.

**Ann Campea**

Exactly. If there's being a project manager in your everyday life, where you again it goes back to the practical guidance the things that we've learned. Then there's the idea of being a very successful professional project manager, if you are working in the role with the title or trying to achieve that. There are a lot of nuggets in a lot of the episodes that I put out where you have people who have been in the industry for much longer than I have, who have accumulated such knowledge and experience that they're, they want to tell their story and share it with other people in the field because again that's how we learn and that's how you grow. And that's really what the podcast is trying to promote is growth and like-minded people who can really just learn from each other and understand that project management is not a one size fits all. It's, it's a very diverse community. A lot of diverse experiences. The industry itself is growing and expanding. I think 30% in the next few years is going to expand even more. So, again a lot of things that you can use for your everyday life as well as your professional life.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, talk to me about being certified, and from the Project Management Institute. Is that correct?

**Ann Campea**

Yes, yes.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, how do you become a member? How do you become certified.

**Ann Campea**

Sure. So, we have this kind of all-knowing body. It's the Project Management Institute, PMI. They are the industry or the institute that deems you certified as a project manager. Now, there's other, I believe, there are other certifications you can get, but PMI really is that entity that gives you the opportunity to

be a professional project manager, and that it comes in the form of the PMP. So, if you obtained the PMP that certification is actually recognized globally, which is very nice.

**Peter Margaritis**

Project Management Professional is PMP?

**Ann Campea**

Correct. Not Peter Margaritis, or whatever you want to say a professional. But yeah so, it's definitely recognized globally, which is very nice. So, if you are working in America and you want to work internationally or vice versa, you know, there's something to be said if you have the letters PMP after your name. Now, there are other certifications you can get as well that are also recognized, but that again is indicative of how the industry is expanding. You can get specialized certifications through PMI, right? So, they offer other certifications if you are a scrum master, which is a very fancy title for somebody who... I see your face, Peter. A very fancy title for somebody who works in the tech or software industry, and you are essentially a project manager but the ideology behind being a Scrum Masters a little bit different than being a PM, but again that's reserved for another podcast for another time. But there are other cert.. what I'm trying to say is there's a vast amount of certifications now that PMI has put out, so you can go as wide and as global as the PMP certification or you can go as niche as being a scrum master, an agile or somebody in Lean and so there's other different certifications that you can also obtain on top of the PMP.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, what qualifications, does one have to have in order to even join PMI.

**Ann Campea**

I think that's a great question. You don't necessarily have to have your PMP to join PMI, right? So, even you, Peter, not being a project manager I believe you can join PMI. Obviously, I don't work for PMI so I don't want to speak to them but I think you're welcome a diverse community, right? So, PM, title or not, you can join project management if even if you're just interested in the industry. You could be in an engineering role, but be very closely related to what a PM does, therefore you've got a passion for it and join as a member. Now, what PMI has to offer to its members is a lot; There's a lot of resources that you can, you can obtain. There's access to some of the official books like the Project Management Body of Knowledge the PIM Bok, that everybody talks about, right? Which, again, it's the Bible of PM. It has all of your principles in there. All of the processes and the way that the PMI deems, you know, how you would work through and execute your project. So, there's access to all of these resources that you would typically have to buy individually. If you become a member, you can actually have digital downloads of these resources and books and there's networking and other things that the that PMI offers if you become a member. But I do think it is open to everybody.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, what is dri..., I mean I hear it in your voice. What drives that passion in you? I mean, you're excited. You're in. You're all in. You've started your podcast. You're all project management. What has been the ultimate driver of that of that passion for you?

**Ann Campea**

Great question. I believe it stems from the fact that the way I approached project management is from an emotional intelligence standpoint. What I fell in love with is the fact that there's a level of altruism in being a PM. You're able to put the needs of others before yourself, and you're able to help people. And I've always wanted to be in a role where I can do those things. Now, my parents, being from their backgrounds wished that I became a doctor or a nurse or a lawyer or, you know, your parents have aspirations for you to go into these roles where that is the number one thing that you're doing is you're saving lives or you're helping people. I fell into the role of project management, and I think a lot of people do. You realize at some point in your career, you're doing a role that's not the title of project manager but you've accumulated all the skills of a project manager. And where I'm going with that is what I really fell in love with is working with all the different types of people you get to collaborate with. You have people on your own, individual teams, right? But then you have the cross functional teams and the stakeholders. You have leadership that's above you, and you have people who are kind of below you doing all the work. And there's just this level of being able to expand the amount of people that you get to impact and collaborate and work with that I really, really love and am passionate about. And project management presents that to you. Whereas there's some roles that you're a sole contributor, right? You're individual contributor on the project. You kind of stay in your bubble, which is fine because there's people who thrive in that environment. Whereas I like to know everything that's going on, I like to be able to communicate with all the people on the project, understand how their work is done, not necessarily do their work for them, but have a level of understanding so that when I have to speak about the project, I know what's going on. And so, those are the things I love is those interactions, and that's ultimately why I fell in love with project management.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, at what point in your career, because you worked for some very large brands you currently work for a very, very, very large brand.

**Ann Campea**

Just a little bit.

**Peter Margaritis**

They're called Orange. No no no. Apple. That's right. Right. So, what, at what point in your career that you were that light bulb went off and said wait a minute, this is more than really what I'm doing. This is something special, and I need to pursue it because you said something. You want to help people. Remember when that happened at that point in time?

**Ann Campea**

I was very uncomfortable at this moment in time where I had this epiphany, because I thought I was going to work for the government sector for a very long time. I had aspirations to run for political office, Peter. I thought I was going to be a politician. And in all the experiences I had before I made this kind of pivot to project management, I figured out that the common thread was helping people, soft skills, again going back to emotional intelligence. And I was in a role that was doing some of it but not all of it. There

was a role that opened up as a project manager. I kind of knew what it was because I had talked to some folks about it, and they thought, Oh, you might be a good fit, but it was in this space where I was not comfortable at the time, being so new to ask for something I wanted. And the role was under a PMO, which is a project management Office, and some, some corporations will have it and some don't. Where really they kind of they manage all of the projects within the portfolio. That's what a PMO is, right? And so, they, they're able to diversify the portfolio and kind of assign project managers, based on the need for each of the projects. I was working at a company where the head of the PMO was very strict, and if I did not approach this person, and demand that I get this role, I would have missed out on being a project manager. And my personality is not one to march to somebody and say, 'Hey, give me this thing.' You know, I, I am very kind of reserved and quiet and humble, and that I feel that people will recognize my work, and then give me the title when they see that I'm contributing value. In this particular instance, the reason why sales uncomfortable to ask for my first role as project manager you can imagine having this type of personality that it just wasn't in in me to walk up to somebody and say, 'Give me this role. Give me this title,' but I did it, and I got the, I got the role. I've been doing it ever since, and I'm happy that I made that effort to do so.

**Peter Margaritis**

Wow, that's a great story. But politician? I can't...

**Ann Campea**

You're stuck on that, aren't you?

**Peter Margaritis**

Yes, this is just this little bit.

**Ann Campea**

Think about it though, right? There's a common thread there. When I was growing up, I graduated with a degree in political science, public service emphasis, I worked in every level of government trying to get my footing as to where I wanted to start my career. And the common thread there is being in a position of somewhat power to affect change through policy and impact people's lives.

**Peter Margaritis**

Right.

**Ann Campea**

And there's something there that kind of carry through, even after I decided, politics is not for me. It's very disheartening, by the way, in many, in many of my experiences I think I've my bubble was burst there. But that was the common thread that carried through to me being so passionate about project management,

**Peter Margaritis**

Wow. I could see you as a politician from that perspective. Very much so.

**Ann Campea**

Thanks.

**Peter Margaritis**

But I think some of the aspects of being a politician. And I think it'd be a very disservice to your personality, and the way you look at life.

**Ann Campea**

Yes, I think that was a harsh reality to also take in when I had that epiphany that I wasn't going to go down that path anymore because I said so many years of my, the beginning of my career, trying to get my footing and in that space. But nonetheless, I carried through kind of what you're saying is much more of what my personality is. I carried through that common thread to what I'm doing today, which I'm super happy about.

**Peter Margaritis**

Really? I can't tell. I will eventually put this up on like my YouTube channel. Great smile. I mean, just a lot of passion and can tell that you love what you do, and the impact that you're having on people.

**Ann Campea**

Yes, that's that's what it comes down to, Peter, and I think that's also why I, in many ways, was very happy to jive with you is because I feel like you have that impact as well and everything that you're doing.

**Peter Margaritis**

I try, you know, someone said are you in this for the money. No, I've never really been into it... I've been into it for the impact.

**Ann Campea**

Yeah.

**Peter Margaritis**

Well, how can I how can I how can I serve others and serve organizations. Not saying that I don't want to get paid.

**Ann Campea**

Everybody wants to get paid.

**Peter Margaritis**

Everybody wants to get paid. That's right. But I want to earn a good income, but have a bigger impact on organizations and people than most others that I might know. And, I don't know. I just... I don't know if it was the way I was raised or what I just developed over time, but it's a lot of fun.

**Ann Campea**

Yeah.

**Peter Margaritis**

I love it when people ask me what do I do, I say I switch on lightbulbs. They go, 'What do you mean?' I go, 'Well, you know, I switched on your light bulb to recognize the fact that improv is a leadership skill.'

**Ann Campea**

Right.

**Peter Margaritis**

I switch on your light bulb to have you recognized that accounting is really not hard. We just make it hard. It's simpler than you think, but both of those two things have a connotation to it. That ability to convince someone and have them change their mindset and look at it differently, that in itself is just fulfilling all the way around.

**Ann Campea**

I love that. Yeah, it's... I believe in it.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, my question to you is part of what you've done in order to do that is just spread that knowledge through your podcast to your growing audience. What's next?

**Ann Campea**

What's next? Peter, I told you this in my podcast. I want to be in your position where you're, you're impacting more people, right? Your, your growth and kind of your your reach is more, and the community of project management, like I said it continues to grow, and I just really want to be a value add to that community. I think there are a lot of lessons that I'm learning and I'm still considered very young in the industry, even though I've been working as a PM for 10 years. There are people who have been in this industry for much longer than me, and I do think that there continues to be this opportunity for us to kind of bridge the gap between those who have been doing project management for that long versus the people who are now. Which, interestingly enough, I met a lot of people now who actually say I want to be a project manager and are going to school to be project managers, which I think is blowing my mind still. Because the way I've described project management is how many people, at least in my generation, my age, have come into it as we kind of stumbled into it. Now you've got an entire generation after me that is going to school specifically for project management. Graduating with a degree, and trying to enter the industry with that goal in mind. And so, it's very different than what I've experienced and what many others in the industry I've experienced. So, I think there's this opportunity for my podcast, and the hundreds of others to really tap into this new generation of project managers who are hungry and eager to learn from the experiences of those who have been around for quite some time, and to pass on that knowledge and to share our, you know, thoughts and, and where we think the industry is going to trend to and continue to be passionate with each other about project management,

**Peter Margaritis**

Correct me if I'm wrong but you also have a blog that,...



**Ann Campea**

Yes, yes.

**Peter Margaritis**

And do you provide content to it as much as possible?

**Ann Campea**

I do, and you know, I kinda...you get heavy on the podcast because it's just fun and you like having those conversations. So, when I do have a chance to sit down and actually write some of my thoughts down, it's either based on experiences I've had, or it's based on lessons that I've learned from the program that I was in, which was I took a master's program in project management. So, there's a lot of learnings that came out of there. I have a community of us that who still stay in touch after graduating from that program. So, there's a handful of us who continue to be in touch and just chat and talk about what's going on in our particular PM roles, and share those experiences. So, when I do have a chance to write, it's tips, its guidance, it's things that are on my mind about what's happening in the industry. So, definitely check out the blog as well,

**Peter Margaritis**

The Blog is?

**Ann Campea**

Yes, it's TheEveryday PM.com.

**Peter Margaritis**

Oh, and by the way, as you're telling that story, I remembered a conversation we had on how the podcast started.

**Ann Campea**

Yeah.

**Peter Margaritis**

And it started with this group of people, your friends, just, it started during the pandemic that you guys are just having these conversations and you said, 'Hey, we should get recorded for your podcast,' and you've being the ultimate project manager in taking on that role and creating this podcast. And your friend has kind of faded away a little bit but yeah, it didn't start out the way it is now, but, but that's how you got to started.

**Ann Campea**

Yeah, it has to come from, from some piece of, you know, you wanted to, we wanted to have a platform to share our thoughts. We would get together over Zoom, just chat, you know, have happy hour. That was the way we were connecting in the pandemic, and there were just so many good nuggets, so many good stories coming from people. Projects they were working on. People they were working with. I had this idea to start blogging, and then focusing on more on the professional side and having a podcast was kind of secondary to having a blog and to offering mentorship services and career counseling and

things like that. You just never know, right? I had that idea and kind of look at where it is, has evolved, it's now. I enjoy the podcast so much, to your point, I've kind of taken it beyond the community because what happens when you try to schedule with 10 project managers, you never get a meeting on the calendar. So, ultimately I said okay this is my project. I was thinking about it even before I I wanted this to be a community kind of a project for all of us, and they still continue to contribute. I have many of my cohort come in as guest hosts. They have something on their mind that they want to talk about it. I'm always happy to host them. But yeah, I've kind of taken it on as my own project and opened it up to more than just that cohort, but the entire project management community as well.

**Peter Margaritis**

Being a podcaster, I'm not sure where you get your statistics from. There's a lot of different places. But have you come to realize that you have a global reach that just a California or US reach?

**Ann Campea**

It is interesting, right? When you look at that data. I did look at it the other day because I was curious and some of the things that stood out to me were the age that I was hitting with the podcast is early 20s to 40. So, it's a nice bell curve there were I think I'm hitting, even within my generation, which is nice. Because those are the project managers I described to you, right? Those ones that are now going to school, getting a degree in project management and going into the field, which is very new. The diversity and the gender was interesting. Still a little bit skewed towards males, but I think that's driven by the fact that project management overall is still heavily male dominated, I think we'll see that shift in the next few years, hopefully. And then, globally, like you said the global reach is interesting as well. I have people in India and Asia and right like all over that are listening in on the podcast, which is great. Which means that what we're talking about and what we're saying is resonating with not only project managers in the US, but there's something that's translating to project managers that are global, which is great.

**Peter Margaritis**

Yeah, that was one of my big eye openers when I first pulled up some statistics, and went, 'What?'

**Ann Campea**

Anything that surprised you when you look at yours? Because there were some things that I was like, 'Oh, interesting. I didn't think of that, but...'

**Peter Margaritis**

Canada was the second market, you know, kind of North America was one, two and three. I was getting picked up in Europe, and I believe Putin listens to me too, because I got some downloads in Russia. I don't know. Brazil was my largest growing market last year.

**Ann Campea**

Number one fan. Wow.

**Peter Margaritis**

And, I, in the US...this doesn't, I mean California is my biggest state of download. Rolling down into California, Silicon Valley. Not in California,. Silicon Valley is the number one area that downloads my podcasts. And for the life of me, I'm thinking what... For those of you who are listening Silicon Valley, please send me an email and tell me what is it about the podcast that resonates with you all, because I'll continue to add more content around that but it was just very interesting. Every time I pull my stats, I learned something new. I've learned something new. So, as we begin to wrap up, what advice would you give someone like a CPA, whether they're in a public firm, or working for corporation, or anybody in the finance world, about benefits or about thinking about becoming a Professional Project Manager?

**Ann Campea**

Oh wow, if you want to make that shift into project management, I highly encourage you to consider it. There's nothing wrong with dual pathing, right? What you do professionally, maybe you were a CPA, like you're saying, Peter and, but you are interested or you are already doing some things that are project management related. I always encourage people I speak with that are on the fence about seeing if they could do it to just try. Now, I'm also cautious because there are people who would not make very good product managers, and that's really just the reality of it. So, there you have to draw the line somewhere and what I say is, try it. And you yourself might realize it's not what you thought it was. And I think for a lot of people they do have that eye opening experience of, oh well I just, I thought I was already doing it. I didn't realize there was this whole other aspect of it where I had to actually understand the ins and outs of the project, and know the end to end schedule and understand how to communicate concisely. You know, there's these eye opening moments for people who look at project management and may not understand the true value of the profession. And so, when they tried to make the jump into project management, they are humbled by it. And I just want to be sure that I'm speaking to the audience of, I am very much saying try it if you're passionate about it, if you have an interest in it. Try it. Now, just be cautious, though, that it may not be for you and that is just okay as well. At least you can say, hey I gave it go. I now I understand the grit, and everything that goes into being a successful project manager, and you kind of just, you know, wipe it off and say go back to your regular profession. But I think project management is for some. It's not for most and I think that's, that's my real guidance there.

**Peter Margaritis**

And I was actually hoping you would say something along those lines, because earlier in our discussion, you mentioned emotional intelligence. We've talked about communication, and those two, in essence, are a big part of project management, and it's, it's a series of skills set that some people chose not to develop.

**Ann Campea**

Yeah.

**Peter Margaritis**

And which is, which is perfectly fine.

**Ann Campea**

Yeah, exactly. It's fine.

**Peter Margaritis**

If you want to manage, if you want to manage a project, whether you're maybe a little bit more introverted or whatever but you're still at a manager level, senior manager level within, within an organization, you are managing a project. So, recognize that fact work on your communication, work on your arti... I mean, artificial intelligence.

**Ann Campea**

I hope not! I still want a job.

**Peter Margaritis**

Work on your emotional intelligence, and consider about the Project Management Professional. Ann, I can't thank you enough. It's an absolute blast. I'm glad Jennifer Elder put us in contact, and actually your name came up yesterday. And she goes, 'Have you done that podcast?' 'Yeah, I've done hers and she's doing mine tomorrow.' So, she got she got a big kick out of that.

**Ann Campea**

I've gotta tell her Hello again.

**Peter Margaritis**

So, I thank you very much and I look forward, maybe someday our paths will cross and we'll get a chance to have a cup of coffee, and just talk for hours.

**Ann Campea**

That's life, Peter. I do think that will happen and, again, I'm taking your improv class .I'm there.

**Peter Margaritis**

Okay, Cool. You all heard it. She in. I just need to formulate the dates and times. So, thank you so very much.

**Ann Campea**

You need a project manager, Peter.

**Peter Margaritis**

Maybe I could hire you to project manage this process.

**Ann Campea**

That might not be a bad idea.

**Peter Margaritis**

We'll talk about it off air. Thank you very much.

**Ann Campea**

Thank you, Peter.

**Peter Margaritis**

I'd like to take Ann for her time and discussing the profession of project management, and her advice on becoming a Project Management Professional. I'm going to conclude with an improv quote that's fitting for this interview has been fitting for many of my interviews. "There are people who prefer to say yes. And there are people who prefer to say no. Those who say yes are rewarded by the adventures they have, and those who say no, are rewarded by the safety, they obtain." Be safe.