

# From poet to program manager at Google

*How non-tech program managers can quickly build credibility with any audience*

**Brittany N. Crosby, PMP**

What can you  
do with an  
English  
degree?



# Health IT Program Management

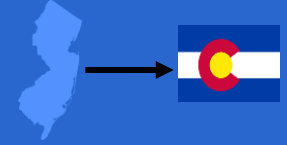
*...and quickly  
learning 3 languages*

# What We'll Cover



- **Crank up your credibility**  
With stakeholders who have different industry knowledge or skills
- **Cut through the chaos**  
Establish alignment among cross-functional teams, with measurable outcomes
- **Corral competing goals**  
Leverage your most valuable asset

# An Overview of my Career Journey



**Epic**

Implementation Specialist

Madison, WI

1

2

Project manager

Austin, TX



Project Manager (PMO)

Austin, TX

3

4

Health IT consulting

Chico, CA;  
London, UK;  
Portland, ME



Program Manager

Palo Alto, CA

5



English BA (2009)



PMP (2017)



LEAD Certificate program at Stanford (2021)

# Tip #1

Crank up your  
credibility



“When someone  
shows you who they  
are, believe them”  
-Maya Angelou



# Crank up your credibility

## Prove your value

- Critical for networking
  - The benefits of weak ties
- First Impressions
  - Judgements can be made in 1/10 of a second
  - Halo Effect (Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow*)

## Relationships are everything

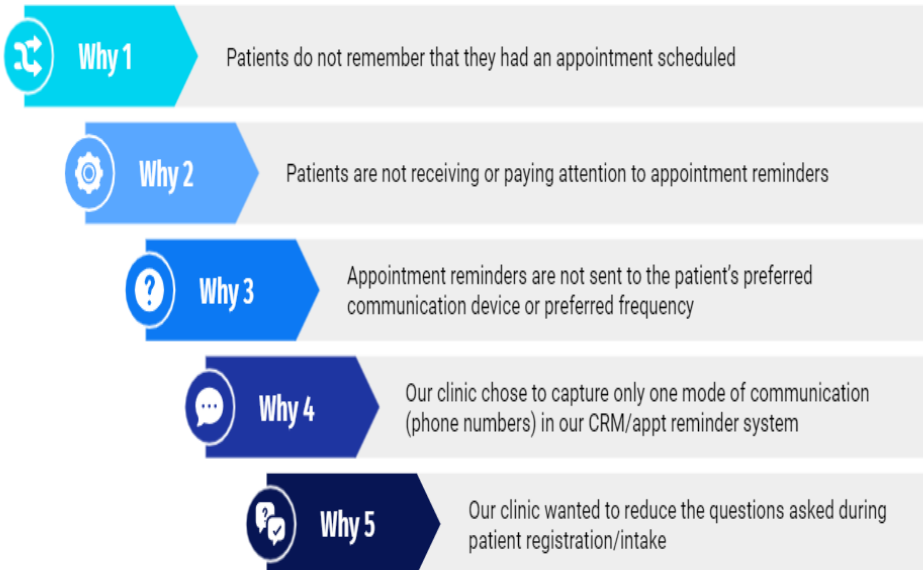
- Stakeholder mapping
  - RACI Matrix (responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed)
- Beware of the scope creep!

1 *The Strength of Weak Ties* - Mark Granovetter 1973

2 First Impressions: Making Up Your Mind After a 100-Ms Exposure to a Face - Janine Willis, Alexander Todorov, 2006



## Problem: The “Patient No-Show” Rate at our clinic is 35%



# Prove your value

## Have your elevator story ready

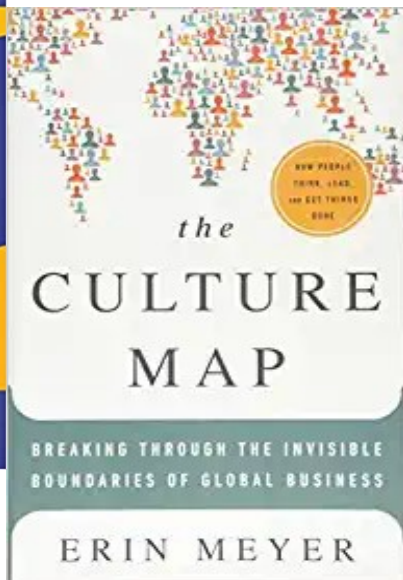
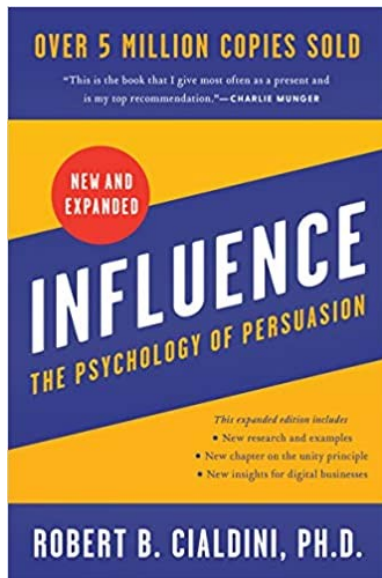
### (90 seconds)

- ◆ Who you are (role)
- ◆ What you do (skills)
- ◆ What are your goals

## Continue to question

- ◆ Bring in a fresh perspective
- ◆ 5 whys exercise

# Relationships are everything



## Learn the landscape through listening

- ◆ Find a problem and solve it
- ◆ Dr. Robert Cialdini's first principle of influence: Reciprocity


## Change your communication style based on your audience

- ◆ Written comms and the tl;dr
  - Explore: Chat, email, video conference, shared documents
- ◆ High-context vs low-context communication

# Tip #2

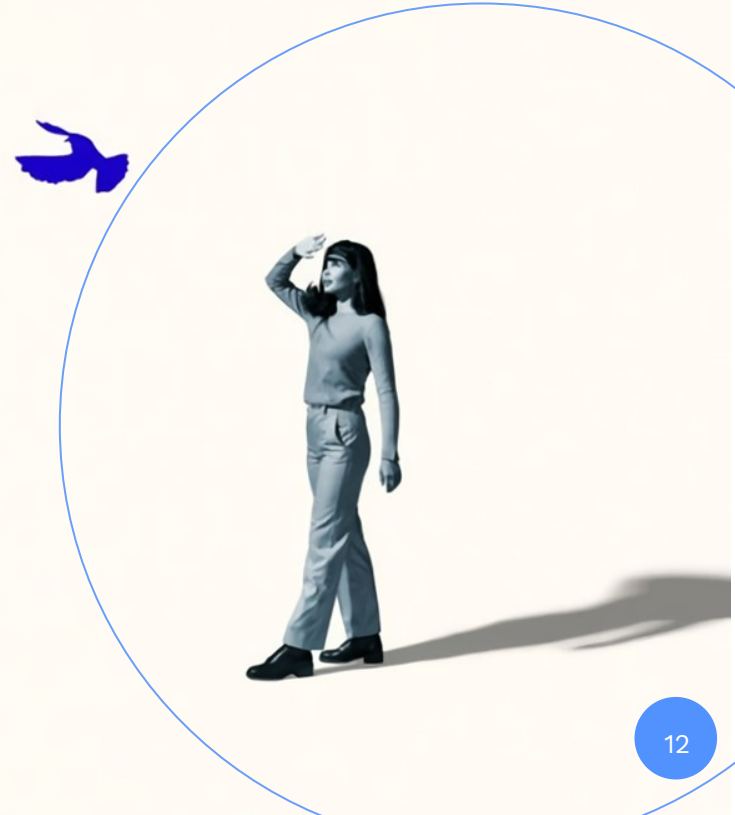
## Cut through the chaos



A large blue circle is positioned in the top left corner. Numerous blue silhouettes of birds in flight are scattered across the top half of the page, some overlapping the blue circle and the text box.

“Do I contradict myself?  
Very well then I contradict  
myself,  
(I am large, I contain  
multitudes.)”

**-Walt Whitman**



# Cut through the chaos

## Motivations

- What are the incentives in the environment? How are people rewarded?
- When you have a request, always have an answer for “What’s In It For Me?”

## Influence with evidence

- “What gets measured gets managed”
  - Wells Fargo’s \$3 billion dollar mistake

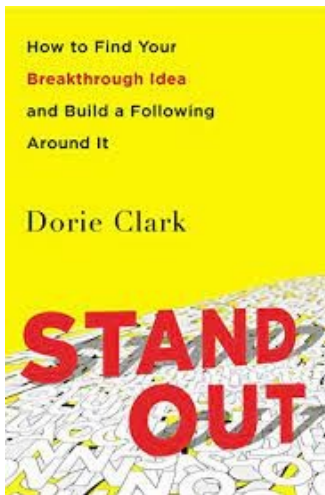


Comic by XKCD

# Motivations

“In today’s competitive economy, **it’s not enough to simply do your job well.** Developing a reputation as an expert in your field attracts people who want to hire you, do business with you and your company, and spread your ideas. It’s the ultimate form of career insurance.”

*Dorie Clark, “Stand Out How to Find Your Breakthrough Idea and Build a Following Around It”*



## Make it personal

- ◆ Leverage 1:1s and “gap time” between meetings
- ◆ Remote teams: Reviving Ice breakers
  - *If you were paid \$1 million a year to do any job, what would you choose?*

## Focus on psychological safety

- ◆ Most important factor in creating effective teams
- ◆ Cultivate an environment of sharing lessons learned, good and bad

2 re:Work publication on Project Aristotle (2016)

# Influence with Evidence



## Good decisions boost your credibility and reputation

- ◆ Beware of your cognitive biases ([thedecisionlab.com/biases/](http://thedecisionlab.com/biases/))

## Promise with a pilot

- ◆ Start small, launch, and iterate

## Data is good but stories are better

- ◆ Include the context, provide both qualitative and quantitative data

# 3. Corral competing goals





“Life is short, though I keep  
this from my children.

Life is short, and I've  
shortened mine in a  
thousand delicious, ill-  
advised ways”

**-Maggie Smith**



# Corral competing goals

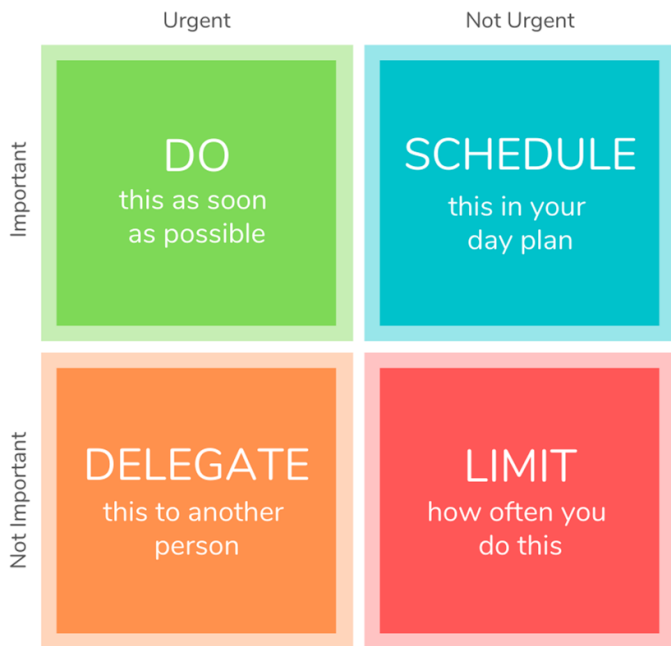
## Use your team's time wisely

- “Trust is a currency”
- Prioritize against the big picture

## Use your time wisely

- Understanding the tradeoffs: every time you say yes to something, you're saying no to something else.

# Use your team's time wisely



## “DUET principle”

- ◆ Difficult for Us, Easy for Them

## Separate what's urgent from what's important

- ◆ Schedule “Focus Time” to plan

## Art of negotiation

- ◆ Chris Voss’ technique of inviting people to say no

*“He who has learned to disagree without being disagreeable has discovered the most valuable secret of negotiation.”*



# Use your time wisely

## No traction? Take action.

- ◆ Borrow from others when you can (info, templates, etc)

## Timebox everything

- ◆ Pomodoro Technique
- ◆ Commitments on calendar

# Key Takeaways



→ **Crank up your credibility**

- Have your elevator story ready
- Use the right communication

→ **Cut through the chaos**

- Understand the incentives of the environment
- Share your statistics with stories

→ **Corral competing goals**

- Negotiations need empathy
- Use the Eisenhower Matrix and Pomodoro technique

# Thank you!

Let's connect

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