



Breakout Session



Building PM Career Paths that Align with Development Needs



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Meet The Speaker



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Part 1

From Talent Gap to Competitive Advantage

Talent Landscape

1. High demand for skilled PMs
2. Talent shortages and competition
3. **Talent Development Cycle:**

Acquire

Develop

Retain



Not enough engineers. Not enough PMs. The talent gap is real — and growing.



39%

Only 39% of technical professionals say career paths are clear

69%

69% of leaders say the same

96%

96% want clearer definitions from leadership



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Figure 2 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TURNOVER



Q: What factors do/would influence you to consider leaving your current employer?
(Shown as %.)

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Competitive Advantage

Invest in Career Pathing

For Employees:

Clarity and Direction

Motivation and Engagement

Skill Development

Recognition and Reward

Job Satisfaction and Retention

For the Organization:

Talent Attraction and Recruitment

Employee Development and Succession Planning

Performance Management

Employee Engagement and Productivity

Organizational Agility and Adaptability



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Part 2 The 3-Step Career Path Framework

3 Steps for Career Path Design



Create the Big Buckets or Categories

01



Create the Sub-categories

02



Create a Progression for Each Subcategory

03



Core Structure

Create Big Buckets

*Technical, PM,
Leadership,
Biz Dev*

Create Subcategories

*Associate PM
→ PM → Sr PM*

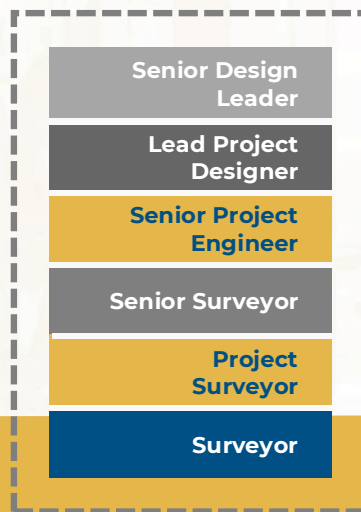
Create a Progression

*skills, titles,
certifications*



Consider Flexibility

Engineering Career Path



PROJECT MANAGEMENT OVERLAY



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How Dewberry Did It

1. ~30 different job families; focused on top 5 by headcount
2. Engineers as the primary example: 3 linear tracks — **Technical, Operational, Client-Focused**
3. Each HR job code defined by: FLSA category, degree/experience recommendations, responsibilities, direction given/received
4. Built "*guidance documents*" for each role showing: area of focus, recommended training, licenses/certifications, internal and external opportunities
5. Key lesson: "***There's no perfect. Start somewhere. You will adjust.***"



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The Titling Problem (Real Talk)

1. Spent weeks debating title order within job families
2. "**Project Manager**" means different things across regions and clients
3. What works for one region may frustrate another
4. Advice: Don't let perfection be the enemy of progress — paralysis by analysis is real



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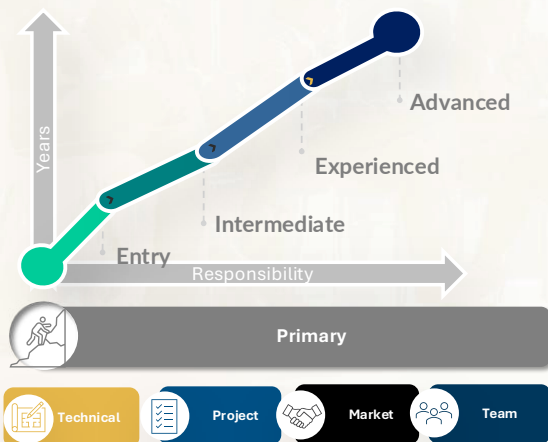


CAREER PATHS & JOB SUMMARIES

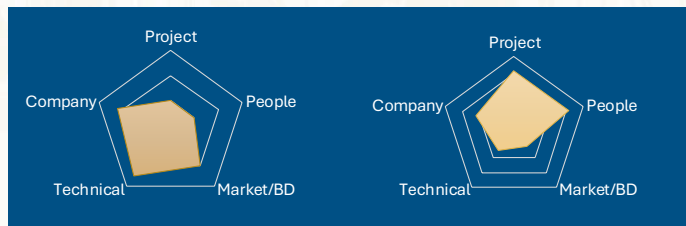
H 2
M

Primary Career Path

H2M's primary career path is the underpinning of all our practice areas, as it provides career growth from entry level to advanced levels within your career. Since H2Mers represent many professions, a listing of the titles in the primary career path and descriptions can be found in the Job Titles and Job Descriptions sections.



It is within these job titles where employees will find their daily tasks, roles and responsibilities to be based on the fundamentals of their specific area of study/practice area (examples: engineering, architecture, finance, construction services, etc). In many roles, as experience evolves, we find four core responsibility areas emerge: **Technical, Project, Market** and **Team**. A fifth area of responsibility, **Company**, may emerge when the requirements of one's primary responsibilities are met and performance meets expectations.



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Leadership in Career Paths

Additional leadership responsibilities may also emerge for some employees in one (or multiple) career paths. Stepping into one of these roles does not necessarily mean you will no longer have responsibilities in the other key areas. It does mean, however, that your role and responsibilities will be much more focused.



Part 3

Key Components for a Successful Pathway

Key Components

- Job Titles and Descriptions
- Competency Frameworks
- Training & Development Plans
- Performance Evaluations
- Mentorship and Coaching
- Promotions and Salary Ranges



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Career Pathing *vs.* Career Planning

Career paths = what the organization defines (the framework)

Career planning = what the employee does with it

- *"If you don't give someone a path at your firm, they'll career plan somewhere else"*
- Paths enable smarter planning: employees can see what competencies and opportunities to pursue — not just more work, but the right work
- **Tie to performance reviews:** career paths make those conversations actionable



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Non-Traditional Paths — The Future of AEC Talent

- Not enough engineers or traditional seller-doers
- Firms now looking for non-engineers who are strong project managers
- **Shift:** removing burden from engineers rather than adding to it
- AI will continue to change what engineers produce and how
- Career paths must evolve as the industry evolves — they are never done



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Wrap-Up and Commitment Setting



Considerations for Designing Career Paths

1. Flexibility
2. Diversity and Inclusion
3. Alignment with
Organizational Goals



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Group Discussion

Biggest Takeaways and Action Plan

***What's your biggest insight
from today?***

Share: **"The first thing I will build or update
when I return to my team is _____."**



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QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

**CLEAR CAREER PATHWAYS:
A GAME-CHANGER FOR AEC
EMPLOYEE AND GROWTH**



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