

AEC PM CONNECT 2026
KANSAS CITY
Connecting AEC Project Managers to Share Knowledge and Drive Success

AEC PM CONNECT

KANSAS CITY 2026

Advancing Project Management in the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Industry

EngineeringManagementInstitute.org

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Welcome to

AEC PM Connect Kansas City

October 22, 2026

Johnson County Community College Regnier Center
12345 College Blvd, Overland Park, KS 66210

	PM Track	PM Development Track
8:30 AM	Welcome and Introduction	
9:00 AM	Leading Projects, Leading People: The Future of the AEC Project Manager	
9:30 AM	Leadership Is Influence: Building People, Winning Business, and Leading Through the Hard Conversations	
10:30 AM	Break	
10:45 AM	AI Agents in Practice: What Every AEC PM Can Start Doing Immediately	
12:15 PM	Lunch	
12:45 PM	One Project, Two Worlds: Navigating Public-Private Collaboration in AEC	
1:45 PM	Break	
2:00 PM	10 Tips Every Project Manager Should Know About Managing Contracts	The ROI of Project Management Training: What Are We Really Buying?
3:00 PM	Break	
3:10 PM	The Client-Inclusive Project Kickoff: How to Run an Interactive Planning Session	From Our Journey to Your Roadmap: Building Career Pathing at Your Organization
4:10 PM	Closing, Goal setting and Accountability	
4:30 PM	Closing Networking Reception	

Session Descriptions and Objectives

Opening Keynote - Leading Projects, Leading People: The Future of the AEC Project Manager

- **Terry Dunn**, (Retired) JE Dunn Construction

Terrance P. Dunn led JE Dunn Construction from a third-generation family business into a multibillion-dollar, employee-owned enterprise, experience he's also brought to leadership roles at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and the Greater KC Chamber of Commerce. He opens AEC PM Connect with the question every firm here is wrestling with: what does it take to develop PMs who can lead, not just schedule? Drawing on his own path from the field to the C-suite, Dunn shares what actually separates PMs who grow into firm leaders from those who plateau.

Leadership Is Influence: Building People, Winning Business, and Leading Through the Hard Conversations

- **Craig Casey, PE, LEED**, Burns & McDonnell

Craig Casey spent three decades at Burns & McDonald building an aerospace design-build practice from the ground up before moving into corporate risk management. In this session, Craig unpacks the framework he actually used to grow people, win repeat business, and manage performance — not leadership theory, but the specific moves: the "challenge and support" balance that grows a PM five years in one, the span-of-care math that keeps a leader connected to the market instead of becoming an administrator, and the way he structures a hard performance conversation so it lands as help instead of a threat. Every segment pairs his story with a short activity so attendees apply the idea to their own team before the next topic starts.

AI Agents in Practice: What Every AEC PM Can Start Doing Immediately

- **Nicholas Heim, PE**, Engineering Management Institute
- **Markus Weidner**, STV
- **Frank Lazaro**, Terracon

EMI's 2026 Present and Future of Work report puts it plainly: engineers and architects haven't felt the urgency yet because most haven't experienced the latest generation of AI tools — including agentic AI. That's the gap this session closes. Nick Heim walks PMs and people-leaders through what an AI agent does, how it differs from traditional chatbot-based AI tools, and what a real agentic workflow looks like from end to end. The session will also feature practical examples and case studies from AEC firms already exploring or applying agentic AI, helping participants understand how these tools can support real-world project management workflows.

One Project, Two Worlds: Navigating Public-Private Collaboration in AEC

- **Dana Giesy, PE**, CDM Smith
- **Michelle Kratzer**, GFT
- **Jeff Hardy, PE**, Missouri Department of Transportation
- **William Yord, PE**, The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

Infrastructure projects increasingly require collaboration between AEC project managers in the public and private sectors. Despite differences in expectations, processes, and priorities, these teams must work together to deliver successful projects. This session explores key dynamics PMs must understand and strategies to bridge cultural and procedural gaps. Participants will gain practical insights to improve collaboration and achieve outcomes that meet both public mandates and private-sector goals.

10 Tips Every Project Manager Should Know About Managing Contracts

- **Todd Oppeau**, Black and Veach
- **Anthony Fasano, PE, AEC PM, F. ASCE**, Engineering Management Institute

Contracts are at the core of every successful engineering project, yet many civil engineers, whether new graduates or seasoned professionals, receive little formal training in how to manage them effectively. The speakers will provide engineers and project managers with practical insights into contract management, liability issues, expectation setting, and strategies for avoiding costly mistakes. Based on John Lowe's book, A Guide to Managing Engineering and Architectural Design Services Contracts: What Every Project Manager Needs to Know.

The Client-Inclusive Project Kickoff: How to Run an Interactive Planning Session

- **Kevin Reene, PE**, Burns & McDonnell
- **Brett Holthaus, PE, MBA**, Burns & McDonnell

Interactive Project Planning Meetings (IPPM) challenge the traditional approach of developing schedules in isolation. Instead of publishing schedules without collective buy-in, the IPPM concept brings the project team, clients, and key decision-makers together to build alignment around critical scope, risks, dependencies, and execution strategy in real time. Through facilitated collaboration, participants surface assumptions early, develop shared ownership of project commitments, and create project roadmaps that are more realistic, predictable, and executable.

The ROI of Project Management Training: What Are We Really Buying?

- **Lynn Browning, PE, PMP**, Henderson Engineers

When leadership invests in project management training, one question inevitably follows: What return should we expect? While there are real financial metrics that help justify PM development investments, measuring ROI is more complex than tracking attendance or course completion. In this interactive session, Lynn Browning, who leads the PMO at Henderson Engineers, explores the difference between education, training, coaching, mentorship, and capability development—and why organizations often struggle to achieve the outcomes they expect from PM training. Attendees will leave with a practical framework for evaluating PM development investments using quantitative, behavioral, and strategic indicators that leadership can understand and support.

From Our Journey to Your Roadmap: Building Career Pathing at Your Organization

- **Molly Mapes**, Dudek

Dudek had career paths, they just weren't visible, consistent, or clear across practices, supervisors, or HR. Molly Mapes, who leads Talent and Development at this 1,000+ employee engineering firm, shares how they fixed it: new levels and three ways to grow, plus simple tools (a road-mapper, IDPs, career-conversation prompts) that got managers and employees actually using them. In this hands-on workshop, attendees assess their own organization, work through Dudek's real roadblocks and lessons learned, and leave with a completed one-page Career Pathing Action Plan.

Session Notes

Use this space to jot down notes or key points from each session.

Session 1:

Session 2:

Session 3:

Session 4:

Session 5:

Session 6:

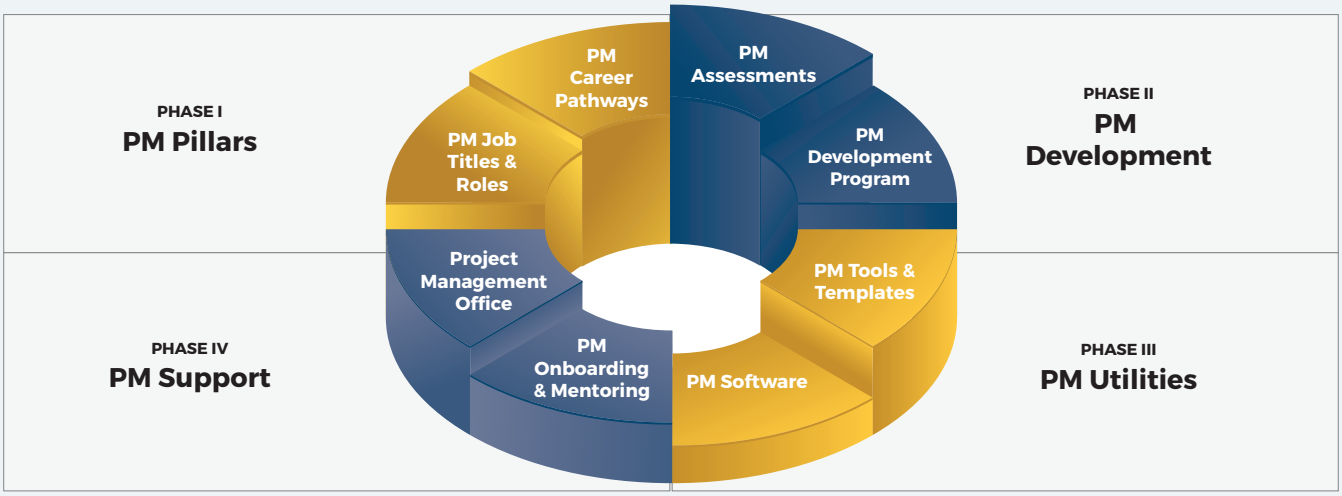
Top 3 Take-Home Goals

Review your notes above and choose three key goals and actions you plan to take home and apply from what you've learned.

AEC PM Ecosystem™ Goals

Instructions

Write your goal(s) for each topic area below. Leave blank if not applicable right now.



Phase I - PM Pillars

Topic:

Goals:

Phase II - PM Development

Topic:

Goals:

Phase IV - PM Support

Topic:

Goals:

Phase III - PM Utilities

Topic:

Goals:

Focus Area

Which area do you want to focus on first?



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Have a story, challenge, or insight to share?

One of our goals at AEC PM Connect is to spotlight the brilliant professionals driving change in the AEC industry and we want to feature YOU on one of our leading podcast channels. Whether you're a seasoned project manager, emerging leader, or passionate about tech and innovation in AEC, we invite you to join us as a guest or interviewer on an upcoming episode.

Explore Our Podcast Channels





Big News: Our Podcasts Are Evolving

We're excited to announce an important evolution in our podcast lineup.

The **AEC Leadership Podcast** and the **AEC Project Management Podcast** are joining forces to become one powerful show: **The AEC Leadership & Project Management Podcast.**

This new podcast will bring together the best conversations on leadership, project management, career growth, business strategy, team development, and industry innovation—all in one place. By combining these two flagship shows, we'll be able to deliver even more valuable insights, practical lessons, and inspiring stories from AEC professionals who are shaping the future of the industry.

Stay tuned for the official launch and upcoming episodes of the new AEC Leadership & Project Management Podcast!

Want to Be a Guest?

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Reflection & Development Plan

Reflection

Reflect on what you've learned today. What stood out most? How has your thinking shifted?

1. What was the most valuable insight or idea?

2. What challenges or questions do you still have?

My Personal Development Plan

Use this space to start mapping out your plan for applying what you've learned.

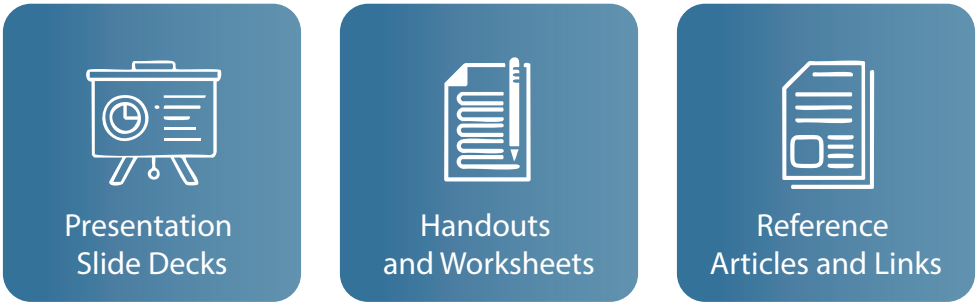
Identified Goals	Action Steps	Resources or Support Needed	Target Date for First Step

How will you share progress on these goals within your company?

Access Event Materials

Thank you for attending the 2026 Kansas City PM Connect Event!

To support your continued learning and application of the content, we've made all related resources available in a dedicated cloud-based storage folder. This includes:



How to Access the Materials

1

Complete the Seminar Evaluation Form

Your feedback is essential! It helps us refine future experiences and ensures we continue meeting your professional needs.

2

Receive Instant Access

Upon submitting the form, you will automatically be directed to the cloud-based folder containing all conference materials.

Note: Bookmark the link for future access.

Scan this QR code to begin

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