

## As a Woman in Project Management

### Interview with Amanda Anders, PMP<sup>1</sup>

Project Manager, Siemens Mobility



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Amanda Anders is currently a project manager for Siemens Mobility, a provider of transportation vehicles, systems and solutions. She is responsible for managing multi-million dollar budgets on company projects with some of the largest transit agencies in the country.

While she started work as a manufacturing engineer, she soon realized that she enjoyed working with, and leading teams on specific projects in her work. It was clear she was well-suited to this type of work and was encouraged to pursue a path specializing in project management. Having started in the energy sector, she soon found herself working in transportation, and made it a point to hone her skills while on the job, and in separate classes to become certified as a project manager.

Amanda got her PMP certification in 2018, and became a Project Manager at Siemens in September 2019, where she continues today as the youngest member of Siemens Mobility's project management organization.

Amanda graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor of Science in Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology. She is also a member of PMI and a member of the Tau Alpha Pi Engineering Society. She and her family reside in the greater Pittsburgh area in Pennsylvania, USA.

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Amanda, thank you for accepting the invitation for this interview with PMWJ. Would you please share with our audience a little more about yourself?

**Andrea Anders (Anders):** I am 31 years old. I attended Penn State University and have a bachelor's degree in electro-mechanical engineering technology. I have always had a passion for computer science and robotics. When first out of college, I worked for the power industry. After working in the power industry, I made the switch over to the transportation/rail industry. I have been in the rail industry for almost 6 years. My experience throughout my career has been a mix of Reliability, Safety, and Project Management. I am a wife and mom to 4 children, ages ranging from 11 years old to 4 years old.

**Q1: Describe your journey as a project management professional.**

**Anders:** I would describe my journey as prosperous and adventurous. Prosperous because since I started this journey it has continued to grow and flourish. Adventurous because every day is something new, sometimes exciting, and may even involve taking risks.

**Q2: How did you start to get involved with project management?**

**Anders:** My first position out of college is where I got my first taste of project management. I really did not know much about the role and career path. My manager, and really mentor, at the time mentioned the role to me and thought it would be a good route for me to take. I then explored what a PM role would look like by doing some personal research and attending a PMI meeting.

**Q3: Why did you choose to become project management professional?**

**Anders:** Once I started exploring what a PM role entailed and what my career path would look like, I fell in love and I just knew that this was the path I wanted to take. A PM role fits me and who I am.

**Q4: How did you do to break the ceiling? Where were any barriers that you can share with the audience?**

**Anders:** Well, it really came down to proving myself and what I am made of.

**Q5: What kind of challenges have you experienced (if any) as a woman in the PM field?**

**Anders:** One of the challenges I have faced is that not only am I younger than the average PM in my company, I also happen to look younger than my age and often I

sense I get underestimated. People assume that a woman my age is inexperienced, not tough enough, or unable to handle the challenges of the job. However, I have overcome many challenges in my lifetime that has caused me to have a thick skin, confidence, and gain determination to persevere. I guess, I would say: one should never assume and as the old saying goes, do not judge a book by its cover.

**Q6: What is your vision with PMI and COVID for the years to come. How PMI will help to overcome current world or regional issues.**

**Anders:** There will always be world and regional issues and I can see there being a need for more project managers in the years to come; as with any problem or challenge, there is a solution to be implemented. Usually, the implementation of this solution is done by a project which opens the need for project managers.

**Q7: How do feel about taking the lead as a strong woman and being an example of a great professional manager?**

**Anders:** Every day I strive to be better than I was yesterday. In order to do so, I must have an open mind to learning and learning new things, as well as being humble enough to recognize my faults and be able to strengthen them. One large focus of mine in all areas of my life is relationships. I believe this is very important to being a successful manager. If you can master good relationships any challenge faced can be overcome.

**Q8: What do you want to share to the audience as an example of being successful in a man's world?**

**Anders:** I think things are changing, and women are more represented than ever before. At least in my company, we now have 9 women in my organization working in project management. 10 years ago, there were none. I know there are a lot of older women who have had a different experience, but I also work with a lot of older men, many of whom are fathers to daughters, and I think they have worked hard to evolve as well. I look forward to the day when we can just look at everyone as individuals, and not be identified by whether we are women or men in this role.

**Q9: Something else you would like to add?**

**Anders:** Take some time to figure out who you are and understand your strengths and weaknesses. This is very important because if you know who you are – what you do well, and importantly what you don't do well and need to manage for -- then your confidence will grow and nothing that may try to come against you will tear you down or stop you.

Thank you for allowing me to share my experience as a PM.

## About the Interviewer



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**Angelica Larios**, MBA, PMP, is a project manager with more than 20 years of experience in implementing software projects related to business intelligence, planning and budgeting, and financial consolidation solutions based on software applications to support the business decision process. She is the owner of ALACONTEC, an I.T. consulting company founded in Latin America. She has held several professional positions in private and public organizations, such as the Health Ministry in Mexico as I.T. director, and as a business manager for several firms in Mexico.

She holds a master's degree in business administration and a bachelor's degree in computer science from National University of Mexico (UNAM) in addition to her studies in project management and her Project Management Professional (PMP)® certification, which have helped her to consolidate her career and have a better understanding of what businesses and projects need nowadays. She is a doctoral student in strategic leadership at Regent University, VA, USA; she is a PMI volunteer since 2007, starting in the local Mexico chapter, being Past President. At a global level, she has been part of the Chapter Membership Advisory Group (CMAG), the Board Volunteer Advisory Committee (BVAC), and the Ethical Membership Advisory Group (EMAG).

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