David Barbella
Agency Veteran | Project/Program Delivery,
Cross-Functional Team, and Operations Leadership

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Agency Veteran: PMO, Delivery Execution, and Operations leader with 20+ years of experience building and scaling Project Management teams, cross-functional teams, and the operational ecosystem that drives efficient, drama-free delivery in a highly positive and facilitative environment.

Relevant Experience and Capability:

Project, Team, and Operational Leadership:

- Building, growing, and leading Project Management teams, cross-functional teams, and operations. Establishing team and cross-functional workflows, processes, performance expectations, KPIs, communications and documentation management
- Championing the adoption of Artificial Intelligence **(AI)** across agency business and delivery operations, balancing efficiency gains with security and protection of intellectual property
- Founding member of https://mightyhumans.org/ . A not-for-profit organization dedicated to AI education and empowering people to learn and utilize AI throughout their professional and personal lives.
- Leading geographically distributed teams, partners, and vendors, on and offshore
- PMI-certified hands-on Senior Project Manager, team guide, and player-coach. Adept within traditional/Waterfall, Hybrid, and Agile/Scrum frameworks
- Successfully leading hundreds of projects annually, of various sizes and scopes, from opportunity scoping through delivery
- Maintaining detailed project, program, and portfolio documentation, including project plans, work breakdown structures, risk management, resource allocation, budget vs. actual reporting, and financial management
- Managing utilization, productivity, profitability, and value
- Coordinating and communicating clearly across multiple projects, internal and external teams, and stakeholders
- Leading continual improvement (Kaizen) across processes, workflows, execution activities, and ceremonies, including retrospectives
- Experience in several Project and Operational Management software platforms, including organization onboarding and training on new systems and related processes
- Facilitative team leadership, guidance, and coaching, continually fostering team and individual growth
- Driving a positive culture, fostering a motivating atmosphere of communication, collaboration, camaraderie, passion, and growth

Partnership and Operational Leadership:

- Cross-functional execution teams
- Strategic and tactical planning teams
- Account / Client teams, New Business / Sales teams and Business leadership
- Specialty partners, vendors, and contractors, on and offshore
- Clients, customers, end users, and stakeholder committees

Client-focused and client-facing, representing our team, services, and reputation by instilling trust and confidence, with a genuinely motivational and enthusiastic personality.

Proactive, highly positive, and good-natured, leading with clearly communicated expectations and holding ourselves accountable. A facilitative leadership coach bringing out the best in others as we work together to succeed and grow.

The Charles Group - Director of Program Management and Operations 2023 – August 2026

Led the PMO, cross-functional teams, and delivery operations as a hands-on facilitative coach and mentor, managing select projects directly while guiding 50+ globally distributed employees and contractors (8 direct reports), plus vendors, to perform their best in a highly positive, collaborative environment. Delivered 50 to 80 projects a year ($50K to $800K, ~$10M annually).

- Built the PM department and the agency's operational workflows, SOPs, and frameworks, lifting output ~20% while holding 75% billable and ~95% value-add utilization.
- Championed AI adoption and modernized systems: retired tools, rolled out Adobe Workfront and Claude Team, built custom AI-enabled tools, and trained every team.
- Established continual improvement via retrospectives and AI-enabled program, portfolio, financial, and client sentiment dashboards.
- Mentored an early-career PM team into a strong, caring group; 75% moved into higher roles. Promoted to lead execution operations.
- Served as a trusted advisor to executive leadership, aligning delivery operations with business strategy and supporting organizational scalability during rapid growth.

Relevate Health - Director of Project Management and Delivery Operations 2020 - 2023

Led the PM team, cross-functional teams, and delivery operations as a hands-on facilitative coach and mentor, managing select projects directly while guiding 35 globally distributed employees and contractors (10 direct reports), plus vendors and department leaders across a matrixed organization in a highly positive, collaborative environment. Delivered 100+ Pharma and Healthcare (HCP and DTC) projects a year, $16M+ in agency services revenue.

- Built the agency's operational and cross-department delivery workflows, SOPs, and frameworks, adding the first performance dashboards: 80% billable and ~95% value-add utilization.
- Upgraded software, tools, and systems for rapid growth, including Adobe Workfront and dashboards. Introduced early AI use in development (websites, CMS, apps) for internal tools and client work.
- Served on the integration committee for 3 acquisitions, unifying teams, systems, and workflows.
- Grew the PM team and upgraded its talent, mentoring people in the Agile mindset and into the roles that fit their goals, including promotions and moves into product development.

Conduit Digital - Managing Director: PMO and Delivery Operations 2018 - 2020

Led the PMO and delivery operations as a hands-on facilitative coach and mentor, managing select projects directly while guiding 25 employees (6 direct reports) in a highly positive, collaborative environment. Delivered 50+ projects a year as the agency grew ~50%, supporting its rise to AdWeek's 2nd fastest-growing agency group.

- Built the PM team and the workflows across Creative, Content, and Web Development, then aligned them with the wider agency, holding 75% billable and ~95% value-add utilization.
- Built Google Looker Studio dashboards across multiple data sources for execution teams and leadership.
- Improved quality and speed to delivery by streamlining workflow within and between departments.

Highlight

Recipient of the 2018 “Driver of the Year” award: The Driver award embodies the spirit of proactive, game-changing leadership geared towards driving innovation and evolution in business, productivity, culture, and growth.

Lanmark 360 - Vice President, Agency Services 2015 - 2018

Reported to the owner as part of the leadership team, advising on strategy and company decisions. Led the PMO and delivery operations as a hands-on facilitative coach and mentor, managing select projects directly while guiding 25 employees and contractors across the US (8 direct reports), plus vendors, in a highly positive, collaborative environment. Delivered 50+ projects a year (~$10M revenue), about 70% for Healthcare and Medical Device clients.

- Created the PMO and the agency's operational workflows, SOPs, and frameworks, introducing modern execution and delivery methods, Kaizen, and the agile mindset.
- Led a stalled in-house project management software to completion, with financial, project health, and team utilization dashboards tracking 80% billable and ~95% value-add utilization.
- Led change management that digitized an antiquated environment, mentoring company leadership in agile-mindset operations.
- Mentored 4 team members into bigger roles.

Ripen - Managing Director: PMO and Delivery Operations 2013 - 2015

Led the PMO and delivery operations as a hands-on facilitative coach and mentor, managing select projects directly while guiding 22 employees and contractors (8 direct reports), plus vendors, across Project Management, UX, Creative, Paid Media, Web and Application Development, and SEO to perform their best in a highly positive, collaborative environment. Delivered ~40 projects a year (~$8M revenue).

- Built operations where none existed, turning independent resources into one team with SOPs, workflows, frameworks, and an environment of continual improvement.
- Implemented project management, time tracking, and resourcing software, plus KPI dashboards and retrospectives for continual execution and delivery improvement.
- Raised billable utilization to 80% with ~90% value-add utilization, improving efficiency with revenue steady.
- Grew and mentored an early-career PM team into bigger roles, and built vendor and partner relationships to expand production services.

Zeta Global - Vice President, Agency Services 2008 - 2013

Built and led the PM department, cross-functional teams, and delivery operations as a hands-on facilitative coach and mentor, guiding 45 globally distributed employees and contractors (10 direct reports), plus vendors, in a highly positive, collaborative environment. Delivered 100+ projects a year (~$18M agency services revenue), about 50% for Pharma and Healthcare clients.

- Took over Project Management to stabilize troubled active projects, then built the cross-functional team operations and the process from project intake through execution and delivery, including how new business is reviewed and scoped into SOWs.
- Built operational workflows, SOPs, and frameworks for a newly merged agency of four companies, with KPIs, reporting, dashboards, and retrospectives, reaching 80%+ billable and ~90% value-add utilization.
- Promoted to Vice President, Agency Services, directly leading UX, Creative, Development, SEO, and Social.
- Mentored several people into higher roles or into new types of role.

Epsilon - Director of Project Management, Digital, and Creative Operations 2001 - 2008

Joined the creative print agency Big Designs to build out its digital creative and development services under a newly established PMO group. Digital quickly became the majority of business revenue, attracting an acquisition by Epsilon's Interactive division.

Built and led the PM team and delivery operations as a hands-on facilitative coach and mentor, guiding 20 employees (4 direct reports) across Project Management, UX, Creative, and Development in a highly positive, collaborative environment. Delivered 50+ projects a year, small to large.

- Built the missing PM team and created the team-level and cross-department workflows, SOPs, and frameworks for a group that had been self-managing.
- Introduced most of the project management systems and tools, improved the rest, and added performance dashboards.
- Restructured a 20-person team from 8 direct reports to 4 with a smarter matrix org chart, empowering team leads and upgrading talent while headcount held steady. Mentored people into bigger roles.

Recent Recommendations - More available on Request

Beth Bainbridge
Director of People Operations

I had the pleasure of working closely with David during his time at The Charles Group, and I can genuinely say he is one of the most thoughtful and dependable leaders I've had the chance to partner with.

David led our Project Management department, and what stood out most was how he built it. He established the structure, processes, and standards the team runs on, and he coached his people every step of the way. From where I sit, that kind of leadership shows itself quickly: teammates who grow into bigger roles, a team that stays steady under pressure, and a department that other groups actually want to work with. He became a true source of truth across the organization, partnering closely with operations, vendors, and our teams to keep everything connected and moving.

Beyond the operational side, David is simply a pleasure to work with. He's collaborative, approachable, and genuinely invested in the people around him. Any organization would be lucky to have his leadership and his people-first approach on their team.

Megan Orfield
Project Manager Group Supervisor

I highly recommend David for his exceptional leadership and strategic acumen in the digital marketing and agency space. As a leader in our agency's Project Management group, David has consistently demonstrated a people-first approach, ensuring the success of our teammates, clients, and the organization as a whole.

David is a highly engaged team leader, coach, and an invaluable teammate in various domains, including Project Management, Omni-Channel Strategy, User Experience, Creative, Copywriting and Editorial, SEO, Paid Media, Social Media, Development & Engineering (Web, CMS, and In-house SaaS Products), Quality Assurance, and Business Operations Partnership.

David played a pivotal role in authoring and implementing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and key performance indicators (KPIs) that have significantly improved our agency's processes and performance. His commitment to continual improvement has not only boosted productivity but also contributed to higher overall profitability.

Furthermore, David has been a valuable partner in multiple acquisitions, where his expertise in unifying and harmonizing newly joined groups has been instrumental in our growth. He has also successfully led the onboarding of new organization systems, platforms, and technology, adapting to our fast-growing environment and evolving business needs seamlessly.

What sets David apart is his nimble-minded strategic thinking, his knack for solving complex issues, his passion for continual improvement, and his strong business acumen. They consistently maximize the success of our team, projects, clients, and the organization as a whole.

If you're seeking a dynamic leader with a proven track record of driving success, fostering collaboration across disciplines, and ensuring the highest level of performance, David is the ideal candidate for any organization looking to excel in the digital space.

Buddy Harris
Associate Creative Director, Art/UX at Relevate Health | Creative Strategist

Dave was the driving force behind our project management team. His meticulous attention to detail and unwavering commitment to deadlines have consistently impressed me. Dave created a seamless workflow, ensuring our projects ran smoothly and efficiently. His respect and empathy for internal and external stakeholders was exemplary. His ability to keep us on track and within budget was second to none. For anyone looking to add an example of project management excellence to their team, Dave would be an invaluable contribution to their projects and process.

Jennifer Taylor
Senior Digital Producer

David exemplifies the qualities of an inspirational, agile servant leader who consistently motivates our project management team to pursue excellence. His commitment to nurturing a positive mindset and fostering a collaborative, inclusive and caring culture is truly commendable. His leadership has been instrumental in achieving our department objectives; improving efficiency and utilizing best practices to standardize processes. I have grown significantly in my career under his mentorship. David's creativity and solutions-oriented approach make him a valuable asset to agency operations.

Rudy Gonzalez
Senior Project Manager and Producer

David is an exceptional Director of Project Management. He is great at developing new processes and finding ways to improve the current programs and systems. As an Agile promoter, he helped our PM Department embrace the Agile process, which now is used on a daily basis.

He is always ready to lend a hand to teach, not only to Project Managers but to everyone in the organization. David has been my mentor for the past two years and I personally have grown in my career, taking on larger and more complicated projects, because of him. His easy to talk to nature and worldly experience make him an asset to Project Managers, team members and companies alike.

Grace Maselli
Senior Copywriter/Content

Dave Barbella is a consummate leader in project management. He is fully committed to best practices and generously guides team members through new platforms and workflow procedures, always apprised of important overarching steps and the details in between. He steps in to support all agency brand work, consistently updating the team with specific and necessary information to meet vital deadlines. I never feel more secure than when Dave is on the job!

Mitchell Kayden
Associate Creative Director

I had the great opportunity to work with Dave on several Pharma accounts. He is the consummate director and project management professional, who is goal oriented and manages all the details while never losing sight of the big picture. He is dedicated to exceptional communication for any team he manages, resulting in professional team relations and team planning that keeps everyone on track towards long term goals. He has a great respect for the collaborative effort and has a way of bringing out the best in everyone. I would gladly work with Dave again and he would be a great addition to any agency that needs an intelligent and capable project management professional.

Mark Browning
Delivery Manager (Technical Project Manager)

I had the pleasure of working with David, as a new member of the Technical Delivery Manager team supporting his team's projects. When you're new to an organization, seeing how people share information and work together is a good way to discern how collaborative your work environment will be.

I really appreciated that David embodies a positive and encouraging spirit and culture. He led collaborative discussions around improving processes, helped train me on products, and even introduced me to tools in WorkFront before they were officially being used by our department.