

Project Management Series

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS CONSULTING



FALL 2024

Tammy Snook

B.Comm.(Co-op.) (Hons.) '20, CAPM

Chief operating officer and partner
Paskwâw Harbour Strategies Inc.

Education: B.Comm.(Co-op.) (Hons.) '20 (Memorial University), Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)

Experience: Tammy began her career across the Northwest Territories, supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs to bring their dreams into reality. She began as a project co-ordinator with EntrepreNorth and quickly rose to the role of program manager. After nearly three years of supporting over 45 entrepreneurs, Tammy started Snook Consulting, a N.L.-based event planning business, and co-founded Paskwâw Harbour Strategies Inc., an Indigenous and women-led consulting firm, where she currently serves as a partner and chief operations officer.



TAMMY SNOOK

“In August 2020, I received my Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) certification. It was from that education that I had the knowledge and skills to identify process gaps and take a solutions-led approach to problem-solving for the organizations I support.”

Following this role, I began consulting nationwide to advance the rights and interests of Indigenous communities and build mutually beneficial partnerships. From these rich learning experiences, I co-founded Paskwâw Harbour Strategies Inc. with my business partner and friend, Jennifer Laewetz, a member of George Gordon First Nation, Treaty 4.

How did you first get involved in project management? What inspired you to take formal education in the field?

The project management course I took at the business faculty played a significant role in sparking my passion for project management. When I started at Memorial, I knew I didn't want to be an accountant because I disliked math. Initially, I pursued marketing but after a work term in that field, I realized it wasn't the right fit for me. My journey took several turns. I considered nursing because I wanted to help people, but I knew my heart would not be able to withstand it. I later switched to wealth management, hoping to help people avoid financial stress, but that wasn't the path for me either.

LET'S TALK ABOUT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

How did the project management education you received help shape your career?

My background in business consulting began shortly after I graduated from Memorial University. I started working with EntrepreNorth as the program manager, guiding several initiatives for the Indigenous-led charity that offers programming to empower Indigenous and community-based entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses and livelihoods across Northern Canada. During my time there, I had the privilege to travel across all the territories and found my passion for community engagement, facilitation and bringing visions to life. Drawing on the project management skills I gained at the Faculty of Business Administration, I led several internal projects, including an office construction, app development and an organizational growth plan. I also managed the flagship nine-month incubator program and ideation workshops.

“In the final year of my five-year degree, I took a project management course and fell in love with it. I’ve always been hyper organized and enjoyed planning, but this course formalized those skills and showed me I was on the right track.”

During the project management course, our team conceptualized an app called Food to Go, which allowed university students to order food in advance on campus. Although we didn't actually build the app, the project was a significant learning experience. I graduated in May 2020 and by August 2020, I obtained my Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) certification, thanks to the knowledge I gained in that course. I plan to complete my Project Management Professional (PMP) certification before the end of 2024, but as many say, life and work often get in the way.

How did the internships you took as part of the co-op program at the Faculty of Business Administration contribute to your career and prepare you for challenges in project management?

The co-op program at Memorial is 10 out of 10, and I recommend it to everyone. The work terms enable you to discover yourself before the world finds you. They give you the chance to explore your interests and learn what you don't like so you don't end up in a career post-education that you realize isn't for you. I had the chance to work in various sectors, including the private, not-for profit and new venture creation. However, through the various experiences, I learned that my niche and happiness lie in startup culture and supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit advance their inherent rights.

“I’m the first in my immediate family to attend university. My father is a successful fisherman, and my entrepreneurial drive comes from being raised by parents with an entrepreneurial spirit who relied on community collaboration and innovative problem solving.”

What skills are crucial for you as the COO at Paskwâw Harbour Strategies Inc.?

As a business partner and COO, the most essential skills I need are empathy and patience. Paskwâw Harbour Strategies is a First Nations and women-owned business that challenges the status quo of mainstream consulting with a human-

centered approach. Our goal is to create synergy and bridge cultural and ideological divides between Indigenous worldviews and Western perspectives. My role requires understanding and empathy, listening to the stories of those on our team, First Nations members and industry partnerships, and ensuring their voices are integral to our shared efforts. Project management in this industry is very different as there is an added emphasis on building trust and relationships. The needs of First Nations are often still dictated by the federal government, requiring us to create innovative solutions and maintain flexibility to navigate or collaborate with existing regulations. Our goal is to foster a pathway toward genuine First Nations sovereignty. At Paskwâw Harbour, project management involves leading a team of strategic empaths and ensuring we consult with First Nations as we work together to achieve objectives.

What is the most important skill that you find useful as a project manager?

The most crucial skill as a project manager is effective communication, both written and verbal. You need to be able to be able to clearly convey your goals. Equally important is the ability to listen attentively. Making sure our team feels heard, understood and valued means more to me than providing direction.

“My grandparents always told me, ‘You have two ears and one mouth because you should listen twice as much as you speak.’”

What advice would you give to someone considering pursuing a career in project management?

My biggest advice is to not to be afraid to ask questions. Over time, I learned that if you have a question, someone else likely does too, and it's better to get clarification than to make a mistake and redo the work later. Always ask questions, and don't hesitate to explore possibilities. Just because you're unsure if something will work doesn't mean it can't happen or isn't possible!

Contact us

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