

# From PMO/PPM to AI: What ‘Getting My Hands Dirty’ Means!

**"Why are you building AI tools? You are a PMO professional, not a programmer!"**



I've heard this question repeatedly over the past months as colleagues discover have been focused on CrewAI, Python, and SQL, building AI agents and experimenting with local LLMs. It's a fair question. After 20+ years in transformation management, why am I suddenly writing code?

The answer reveals something crucial about where project management is heading, and why the smartest PMO professionals are already evolving.

## The Business Case for Technical Fluency

Here's what people miss: I am not becoming a programmer (although I was one at some point in my career). I am becoming a new breed of PMO professional who can build and deploy AI solutions rapidly because I understand both the business need AND the technical reality.

I asked Claude Code recently to give me feedback on the interactions taking place during the creation of features, and it validated this approach in their feedback to me: I operate as a "business analyst/project/product manager" who uses AI agents to handle the actual coding.

*"This session demonstrates effective product management in an AI-assisted development environment. The user identified user friction points, proposed solution options, made decisive architectural decisions, and guided implementation through two major UX enhancements—all while maintaining production quality and comprehensive documentation."*

This isn't about switching careers or speciality; it's about evolving my existing one.

## Why Every Strategic PM Should Experiment with AI

### 1. You Can't Manage What You Don't Understand

Throughout my career, I've believed in being hands-on. When I introduced agile methodologies to senior management, I didn't just present PowerPoints, I ran sprints myself. I trained teams. I understood the friction points.

With AI, the stakes are even higher. The gap between what executives think AI can do and what it actually delivers, is massive. By building actual solutions, I can:

- Set realistic expectations with non-technical stakeholders
- Identify genuine **ROI opportunities vs hype**
- Spot implementation pitfalls before they derail projects
- Bridge the communication gap between technical teams and business leaders

## 2. The Economics Have Shifted

Yes, there's talk of an AI bubble. The Bank of England and ECB warn about stretched valuations in AI stocks. But here's what they are really saying: the bubble is in **infrastructure-heavy** investments, not in **application-focused** innovation.

As Derek Thompson notes, US firms are spending hundreds of billions on AI infrastructure with uncertain returns. But while they are building massive data centres, I am achieving around 60% of the value with local LLMs running on standard hardware (MacBook Air M1). The shift from infrastructure-heavy to application-heavy is already happening, and hands-on experimentation puts anyone ahead of this curve.

## 3. MVPs and POCs in Days, Not Months

Here's the game-changer: Using AI agents, I can now build functional prototypes in days that would have taken months and six-figure budgets. Recent examples:

- A market analysis tool that pulls data from multiple sources and generates reports
- An automated job application assistant using multi-agent workflows
- A business case creation pipeline that maintains consistent quality

I am not writing every line of code. I am orchestrating AI agents to do it for me. **This is the future of product management, rapid prototyping powered by AI orchestration.**

## 4. It's Actually Fun

Let's be honest: After decades of managing projects through others, there's something deeply satisfying about building something yourself. Those ideas that died in feasibility studies? That automation you always knew would save thousands of hours. Now you can build them over a week or two.

## The New PMO Skill Stack

The modern PMO professional needs:

- **Strategic thinking** (unchanged)
- **Stakeholder management** (unchanged)
- **ROI analysis** (unchanged)
- **AI orchestration skills** (NEW)
- **Rapid prototyping capability** (NEW)
- **Technical fluency** (NEW)

You don't need to become a full-stack developer. You need to become fluent enough to:

- Direct AI agents effectively
- Understand technical constraints
- Build proof-of-concepts that demonstrate real value

- Speak credibly with both developers and executives

## The Reality Check

MIT research suggests 95% of generative AI projects deliver no ROI. Why? Because they are led by people who either: a) Don't understand the technology's limitations, or b) Can't bridge the gap between technical capability and business value.

By combining PMO discipline with hands-on AI experimentation, we can flip that statistic. We know how to measure value. We understand change management. We just need to add technical fluency to our toolkit.

## Next Step

We don't need to quit your job or become a programmer. But we do need to start experimenting. Pick one process in your organisation that frustrates you. Spend a weekend trying to automate it with AI. You'll learn more about AI's real capabilities, and limitations, than any strategy deck could teach you.

The future belongs to professionals who can bridge the technical-business divide. For the ones involved in projects (PPM/PMO/PM), that means getting our hands dirty with the tools that will define the next decade of project delivery.

**And yes, it's more fun than another steering committee meeting!!!**

---

**What's your take? Are you experimenting with AI in your project role, or still watching from the sidelines? Share your experience, I'd love to hear what's working (or not) in your organisation.**

#ProjectManagement #AITransformation #DigitalStrategy #PMO #FutureOfWork #AIImplementation

## Disclaimer and Disclosure

**Third-party Content and AI Assistance:** This article references tools and software that are publicly available and proprietary to their respective creators. The author does not claim ownership or affiliation with these third-party products. This article was written by the author with assistance from Generative AI Language Models.

**Transparency Notice:** While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, readers should verify information independently and consult official sources or documentation for the mentioned tools and software. The use of AI in the writing process is disclosed in the interest of transparency, but all opinions and analyses are the author's own unless otherwise stated.