

The Art of Self-Advocacy: Crafting Your Brag Document

Introduction

Having recently encountered Julia Evans' insightful article titled "Get your work recognized: write a brag document," I was reminded of the often overlooked yet immensely powerful tool that can elevate our project management careers—the **brag document**. As project managers, we often find ourselves immersed in a whirlwind of tasks, deadlines, and deliverables. Our work is essential, yet it can easily slip under the radar. How can we ensure that our efforts are recognized and rewarded? In this article, we'll delve into the significance of this unassuming document, explore its differences from a portfolio, and discuss which one project managers should prioritize.

What Is a Brag Document?

A brag document is not about vanity or self-promotion; it's about capturing your professional journey. Imagine it as a personal log—a place to record your achievements, no matter how small. It's your backstage pass to the highlights of your career.

Why You Need a Brag Document

1. **Memory Aid:** Our memories are fallible. A brag document ensures you don't forget the milestones you've achieved. It's your memory aid, preserving the details of your wins.
2. **Advocacy Tool:** When performance reviews or promotions roll around, your manager needs evidence of your contributions. The brag document provides that evidence, advocating for you when words alone fall short.

Brag Document vs. Portfolio: Decoding the Differences

Brag Document

- **Purpose:** To track every accomplishment, no matter how seemingly insignificant.
- **Format:** Simple bullet points or a concise list.
- **Content:** Capture it all—mentoring a colleague, resolving a critical issue, or streamlining a process.
- **Use:** Regularly update it and share it with your manager.

Portfolio

- **Purpose:** To showcase your best work.
- **Format:** More elaborate—includes case studies, project details, and visuals.
- **Content:** Highlight major projects, skills, and outcomes.
- **Use:** Tailor it for specific opportunities—job interviews, client presentations, or networking events.

Prioritizing: Which Document Deserves Your Attention?

1. **Brag Document:**

- **When to Prioritize:** Always! It's your day-to-day companion.
- **Why:** It captures the nuances—the behind-the-scenes efforts, the incremental wins. It's your secret weapon during performance evaluations.

2. **Portfolio:**

- **When to Prioritize:** When showcasing your best work matters.
- **Why:** The portfolio is your public face—the polished version of your achievements. Use it strategically for job applications or client pitches.

Conclusion

In the words of Benjamin Franklin, “Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.” Your brag document bridges the gap—it ensures your accomplishments are both written and worth reading. So, project managers, start documenting your journey today. Celebrate your wins, advocate for yourself, and watch your recognition soar.

References:

1. Julia Evans, “Get your work recognized: write a brag document”.
2. Jeff Humble, “Keeping Track of Your Accomplishments with a Brag Document”.