Rob's Advice for New Project Managers
(In no particular order)

1. Being a Project Manager is not a recorder of history. Your job is to see the obstacle in the road ahead and steer around it.

2. Your job is not just to avoid, identify, and overcome problems, but also see and capitalize on opportunities.

3. The superintendent’s job is to look 1-2 weeks ahead. Your job is to look 1-2 months ahead.

4. The superintendent’s job is to run the day-to-day activity of the job; let them do their job so you can do yours.

5. Work with your superintendent. If you don’t, the only guaranteed outcome is a bad job.

6. Maximize profit on every job, but never at the sake of safety, quality, reputation, or long-term customer relationships.

7. Profit is not a bad thing.

8. Being 10 minutes early is on time; on time is late. Being late is disrespectful to others you are meeting, as you are not valuing their time.

9. Never show up to a meeting without something to take notes. If you are taking notes on your phone or iPad, be sure to make that clear so people do not think you are just texting during the meeting.

10. Always take notes at a meeting.

11. Do not read “tone” into emails, texts, etc. People tend to read unintended tone into emails depending on their current mood or personal opinion of the sender.

12. “Whatever anybody says or does, assume positive intent. You will be amazed at how your whole approach to a person or problem becomes very different. When you assume negative intent, you’re angry. If you take away that anger and assume positive intent, you will be amazed. Your emotional quotient goes up because you are no longer almost random in your response. You don’t get defensive. You don’t scream. You are trying to understand and listen because at your basic core you are saying, "Maybe they are saying something to me that I’m not hearing." So "assume positive intent" has been a huge piece of advice for me.” - Quote from Indra Nooyi; PepsiCo CEO.

13. Most people (including yourself) are only defensive when they know they are wrong.

14. When someone starts a sentence with "I don’t mean to complain" or some other similar statement, they are getting ready to complain.

15. You will always have many things to do. Prioritize your work and time and delegate when it makes sense. Don’t be afraid to say you didn’t get to something because it wasn’t a high enough priority vs. you didn’t have time.

16. The best tool for success at your disposal is between your ears; use it!
17. Don't be afraid to make a decision. All won't be right but the job paralysis of not deciding is usually worse than the wrong decision.

18. 90% of issues on a project are communication related. Between any and all parties, PM to Supt, PM to Owner, PM to sub, Supt to craft, Architect to PM, etc. Don't assume people know what you want or expect; tell them!

19. If you need to send more than two emails to someone to explain something, pick up the phone and talk to them.

20. If you need to deliver bad news to anyone, do it in person.

21. Be specific on when items are needed or due. Say "Monday the 12th by 2:00". Not ASAP, "when you get a chance", or other vague statements. Everyone has a different definition of "right away".

22. You can learn more from a craftsperson than any textbook, but you need to introduce yourself to them and talk to them.

23. If there is a problem, address it right away and ask for help if needed. The only guaranteed outcome of not addressing a problem is that it will get worse.

24. Keep all correspondence professional in tone and language regardless of the medium used (i.e. phone, email, text, etc.)

25. Slow down and reread correspondence (emails, text, etc.) prior to hitting send. Be sure to correct spelling and grammar errors which reflect poorly on you and the company.

26. Do not send emails or text when you are angry. You will regret it and once it is sent you can't take it back.

27. If you need an answer or action from the reader of your correspondence be sure to make what you need or what you are asking is clear. Most correspondence rambles on with no clear indication of what you want.

28. Treat everyone (supt., craftsmen, owners, architects, engineers, subs, suppliers, EVERYONE!) with respect whether they deserve it or not.

29. Be professional to everyone you meet. You are representing your entire company when you interact with the president of an organization as well as the janitor. They both deserve equal respect and courtesy. The janitor may be the president some day and vice versa.

30. Someone always cares about how much something costs even if the person you are dealing with says they don't. Always track, know, and communicate costs, changes, and potential over runs because the person that told you not to worry about costs may be fired before the job is done.

31. Always do the math and communicate the results. An owner will tell you to do something and know it is two guys two days, but they don't think of that being several thousand dollars.

32. People only like to be surprised on their birthday. They don't like surprises when it comes to cost and schedule over runs. Be sure to communicate often to avoid surprises.
33. If you have a difficult decision to make and you have two choices, pick the tougher choice. It is most often the correct one.

34. Anytime you present an issue or problem to someone, always try to offer multiple solutions to overcome or correct the problem. Anyone can point out problems and issues. A valued business partner offers solutions along with the problems.

35. Treat people as you would like to be treated both personally and professionally.

36. Develop your own personal organizational systems and stick to them.

37. It's ok to become friends with co-workers, subcontractors, suppliers, owner, engineers, and architects.

38. Be proud of the company you work for and convey that pride to the owner and all others in everything you do.

39. Have fun. The job is hard enough, no need to make it no fun too.

40. Business development is everyone’s job. If the company doesn't have work you don't have a job.

41. Schedules are generally useless without the input and buy in of the companies and people actually doing the work.

42. If you are on schedule, you are behind schedule. If you are only on schedule the smallest item will put you behind. Always strive to be ahead of schedule so you have built in capacity to handle the inevitable issues that will arise.

43. If you have a conversation with someone that involves cost or schedule, always follow up with an email to confirm your understanding of the conversation. People have selective memories when it involves cost and schedule.

44. Before the project starts, find out what the owner’s representative's project keys to success are and communicate those with the superintendent, craftsmen, subs, etc. If you can make the owner's rep look good, it makes your job a lot easier.

45. If you see an issue or problem and catch yourself saying, “someone should fix that”, always remember that you are that someone.