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Summer 2016
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**BACK
TO BASICS**

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revisit project management's
most basic skills

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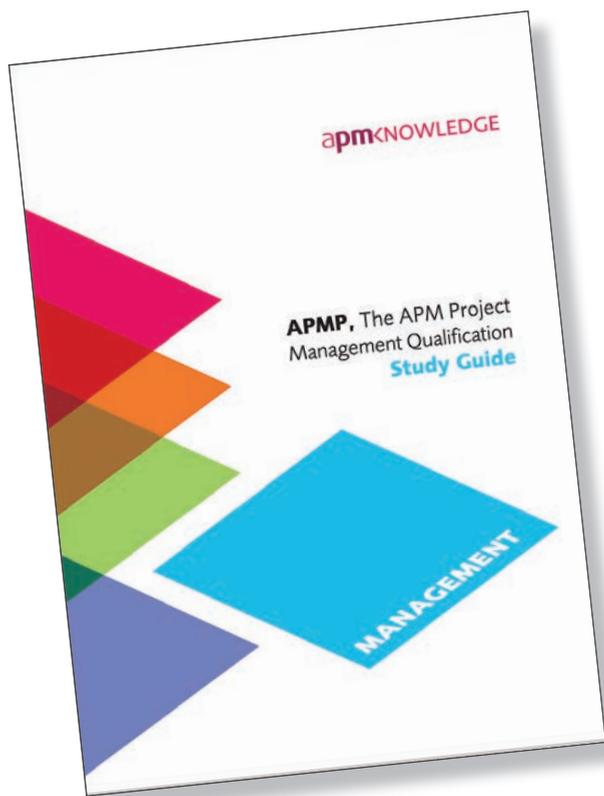
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Welcome

While attending my first APM Project Management

Conference in April, I came to realise what the project management community is truly about: collaboration. By working together – within project teams, with clients and with stakeholders – project managers are able to lay the all-important foundations for success.

The conference's closing speaker, Tony Meggs, the chief executive of the government's Infrastructure and Projects Authority, called this 'front loading', and encouraged the audience to ensure that plenty of time is spent in the planning and foundational stages of projects. This helps to avoid having to play catch-up later on in the execution stage. Read the full coverage of the conference on page 34.

Laying a firm foundation is what keeps a building from toppling over. The underpinning is vital, and the same goes with projects.

In this issue, we go back to basics. One way to ensure that you have the right skills in place is education. Our special report on education (page 43) looks at different forms of learning – from university courses to APM's newest professional qualification and on-the-job education – and how these can help you set yourself and your projects on the right path.

Former *Project* editor Sally Percy also investigates the basic skills of project management and how to use them successfully (page 24). She found that repetition is important: once you have discovered the right formula, use it over and over, and constantly refine it to improve project outcomes. This is how you achieve success.

Collaboration has a role to play, too. Just look around you, at your colleagues and your team. Without their support, knowledge and skills, the projects that you work on together would be a struggle.

This applies to every project or organisation, including this journal. Editors, sub-editors, contributors, designers, publishing managers, photographers... putting this issue together has been the work of many people, who have collaborated together to create the best possible outcome. No project can be successful without getting the right people on board.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *Project*, and wish you a pleasant summer.

Jason Hesse



ROCCO BAVIERA/IKON



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KICK-OFF

Half of private companies looking to hire project managers

Project managers are in high demand in the private sector as businesses undertake transformation projects

Close to half – 46 per cent – of private-sector CFOs and FDs are looking to hire interim project managers to cope with business transformation projects in the next 12 months, according to a report published by Robert Half Management Resources. This strong demand is driven by the need for the highly specialised skills that project professionals can provide during periods of transition.

In particular, the focus on digitisation across all aspects of business is leading to a need for interim managers with specific skills to help with business transformation. Management and leadership enhancement, business continuity and change management are other initiatives that will prompt CFOs and FDs to hire interim project managers over the next year.

Interim project professionals are a valuable resource for businesses that require specialist skills for key projects, and are rated highly by CFOs and FDs for both efficiency (82 per cent) and cost-effectiveness (84 per cent) in achieving specific business goals.



“With increased scrutiny of financial expenditure, it is not surprising that so many CFOs and FDs plan to engage interim managers to help deal with these demands,” says the report, which is based on interviews with more than 200 UK senior finance executives.

Interestingly, the research demonstrates that interim

project managers are not just being evaluated on their ability to manage a specific project or improve the efficiency of a business, but also on softer skills like mentoring and knowledge transfer (25 per cent), and having a successful, hands-on approach (10 per cent).

“Businesses across the UK are preparing for change in managing their governance, compliance and operational risk, and preparing for business transformation,” the report explains. “Bringing project professionals in during the scoping phase will allow for the greatest benefits.”

■ *View the research report on interim managers at goo.gl/U4p8BG*

REPORT STATS: HOW IS A PROJECT MANAGER'S SUCCESS MEASURED?

38%
cost savings

37%
increased efficiency and performance

34%
successful project or change implementation

25%
increased revenue

25%
knowledge transfer and mentorship

10%
hands-on approach

COMMENT

“The benefits that highly skilled project professionals can provide also indirectly benefit the existing employees of businesses through mentoring, sharing current best practices and bringing in a new perspective or solution”

LUKE DAVIS vice president at Robert Half Management Resources



Crossrail launches learning legacy

Crossrail has launched its learning legacy, aiming to share insight from Europe's largest construction project. With more than £400bn of infrastructure projects identified in the government's National Infrastructure Plan, it is hoped that Crossrail's learning materials will collate knowledge and share best practice with the wider industry.

"Passing on the lessons and good practice that we have learned at Crossrail is an absolutely essential part of raising the bar in the delivery of major projects," said Crossrail chief executive Andrew Wolstenholme at the legacy's launch event. "With an unprecedented number of infrastructure schemes around the corner, now is the time to start sharing what we have learned, so that the UK can build on its reputation for delivering safely, on time and on budget."

APM is one of Crossrail's learning legacy partners and will lead on the theme of project and programme management. Other associations and professional bodies will share lessons learned on other topics, ranging from health and safety to procurement, engineering and the environment.

"Getting a project's legacy right is one of the major conditions of success," said Steve Wake, chairman of APM. "Without that bedrock of information, it's almost impossible to achieve long-term results. This is a tremendous opportunity to teach, set an example and take our expertise out to the rest of the world."

Some of the early lessons from the Crossrail programme are already being shared in the first tranche of learning legacy materials. This includes technical papers, peer-reviewed case studies and procedures, all of which are available to view on a dedicated website. Further material will be published every six months during the rest of the project.

■ View the Crossrail Learning Legacy website at goo.gl/BCvzLx

CROSSRAIL'S LEGACY IN NUMBERS

100m

working hours have been completed on Crossrail so far

4,443

new jobs have been created to date

3m

tonnes of material is being recycled to create a nature reserve in Essex

10%

more rail capacity is being added to central London, the largest increase since the Second World War

AROUND THE UK

PARTNERS ANNOUNCED FOR HEATHROW EXPANSION

Turner & Townsend, Arup, CH2M and Mace have all won bids to assist in Heathrow Airport's £16bn expansion programme. With the programme's client partners now on board, Heathrow's expansion plans are set to go ahead as soon as the government gives its green light.

The expansion is predicted to boost the UK economy by up to £21bn, while creating 180,000 jobs and 10,000 apprenticeships.

"We now need the government to stop stalling and give Heathrow permission to build an airport the country can be proud of," said Turner & Townsend CEO Vincent Clancy.

WABOSO TO LEAD DIGITAL RAILWAY

David Waboso, APM president and programmes director at London Underground (pictured below), has been appointed to lead Network Rail's Digital Railway directorate, including the Digital Railway cross-industry scheme to boost the capacity of Britain's rail network using digital technologies.

"The single biggest challenge for Britain's railways is how to provide the capacity we need for the future," said Mark Carne, Network Rail chief executive. "Attracting someone of David's talent highlights the progress we have made and our determination to use technology to unlock capacity."



THREE-QUARTERS OF PROJECT MANAGERS NOT SURE THEIR WORK MATTERS

It is a question that many employees in large organisations will ask at some point in their career: what does my job contribute to the enterprise as a whole? Research conducted by Changepoint suggests that many project managers are simply not sure. A worrying 76 per cent of project managers question whether their projects are truly aligned to business objectives, and 17 per cent believe their projects are not aligned at all.

This is partly due to performance not being monitored correctly, according to the research. Half of those interviewed said that they still rely on spreadsheets to report on their performance, and 36 per cent rely on informal meetings. As a result, it is impossible for them to see how their work fits into the larger picture. "Transparency into business insights both from the top down and the bottom up is no longer a luxury, it is a requirement," said Changepoint director Alan Shefveld.

AROUND THE WORLD

ATKINS ESTABLISHES AFRICAN FOOTHOLD



Atkins has acquired an east Africa-based multidisciplinary consultancy as its first step towards expanding operations into the African market.

Howard Humphreys East Africa Limited Group, the company acquired by Atkins, employs 200 people in Kenya and Tanzania. It has operated in the region since 1931 and focuses on providing engineering consultancy and project management services in the transportation, water and property markets.

Paul Shepherd-Smith (pictured) will lead Atkins' operations in Africa as part of an enlarged Middle East and Africa business.

Uwe Krueger, Atkins' chief executive, said: "Africa is experiencing major investment in transportation, infrastructure and energy, presenting strong demand for multidisciplinary design and consultancy services. This provides an excellent platform to develop our presence in the region and is in line with our strategy of targeted expansion into new geographies."

ARUP TO DESIGN HONG KONG SMART CITY

Arup has been appointed to develop Hong Kong's first smart city district, following the government's strategy to develop it into a digital city.

The district, Kowloon East, includes the decommissioned Kai Tak Airport and the surrounding industrial areas. These are to become part of a new central business district, made sustainable by using smart data and technology, creating a low-carbon green community and enhancing walkability and mobility.

Arup's role is to formulate a smart city framework, proof of concept trials, an implementation study and a business model. The consultancy is supported by IBM and Ericsson to fulfil the smart city's technology requirements.

OECD: More global investment in projects needed

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has called for developed countries to tone down austerity and increase spending on quality infrastructure projects in order to boost flagging economic growth.

Weak trade and investment, declining commodity prices, low inflation and poor wage growth is hindering growth across the global economy, and a collective response focusing on investment-led spending is required, the OECD's chief economist Catherine Mann said, while presenting the organisation's Global Interim Economic Outlook in February.

Richer countries ought to take advantage of cheap borrowing to spend more on infrastructure projects. Spending more on such projects has a high multiplier effect that, the OECD believes, will in turn have a strong impact on overall growth rates.

Quality infrastructure, believes Mann, would bolster future growth and make up for "the shortfall in investment following the cuts imposed across advanced countries in recent years". The OECD recently reduced its 2016 global growth forecast by 0.3 points to three per cent, leaving it unchanged from 2015, which was the weakest year for global activity in five years. It also cut 0.3 points off its 2017 forecast, reducing it to 3.3 per cent.

With growth prospects worsening in the past three months for every member of the G7 group of leading industrial nations – the US, the UK, Germany, Japan, Italy, France and Canada – solutions led by monetary policy alone are no longer sufficient, the OECD said.

"THE TIME IS RIGHT TO INVEST NOW IN OUR FUTURE IN MUCH-NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE, SO THAT WE AVOID PAYING MORE AT A LATER DATE FOR MISSING THIS OPPORTUNITY"

Investment in quality infrastructure projects is required to bolster the global economy.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell MP welcomed the OECD's comments: "The OECD is correct to advise that we need to increase investment. The time is right to invest now in our future in much-needed infrastructure, so that we avoid paying more at a later date for missing this opportunity."

■ Watch Catherine Mann present the OECD's Global Interim Economic Outlook at goo.gl/QrVMkC





National Infrastructure Delivery Plan outlines £100bn spend

The government's new National Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been published, outlining all of the government's infrastructure priorities over the next five years. It outlines parliament's plans to support large-scale housing and regeneration, as well as investment in new local schools, hospitals and prisons – more than £100bn worth of investment in total.

The plan follows the creation of the National Infrastructure Commission in October 2015, overseen by chancellor George Osborne, to invest in British infrastructure.

Investment is being targeted to bring benefits to local economies and communities. For example, the plan highlights the government's commitment to building a 'northern powerhouse'.

"This plan sets out details of infrastructure investment by government and the private sector across all sectors and regions," said Tony Meggs, chief executive of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority. "It describes not only what we are going to build, but also how we will prioritise investment, and work with industry to improve delivery."

The new plan also incorporates the latest version of the National Infrastructure Pipeline, which highlights more than £425bn worth of planned investment in more than 600 major projects and programmes across the UK to 2020 and beyond.

Since 2010, around 3,000 individual infrastructure projects have been completed across the UK, including major new road improvements, local transport schemes, improvements to rail stations and more than 20 gigawatts of new electricity generating capacity.

■ *Read the National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016–2021, at goo.gl/Y8kzbs*

IN NUMBERS

£210bn

the size of the combined economies of the city regions in the north

40%

the potential decrease HS3 would bring to journey times between Leeds and Manchester

11m

people living in northern cities would have access to HS3

Lord Adonis: Build HS3 now

The chair of the National Infrastructure Commission, Lord Adonis, has called for kick-starting HS3, a high-speed rail link between Manchester and Leeds, the two largest economies of the north of England.

HS3 could cut journey times between the two cities from 49 minutes to just 30 minutes. The high-speed line would need to be integrated with HS2 and would also require so-called 'gateway' stations, such as Manchester Piccadilly, to be redeveloped and modernised.

"If the north is to become a powerhouse, it has to be better connected," said Lord Adonis. "Leeds and Manchester are just 40 miles apart, but there is no quick and easy way to travel between the two. In rush hour it can take more than two hours by car; by train it can be almost an hour. So we should kick-start HS3 across the Pennines and slash journey times to just 30 minutes. But we must not wait decades for change – journey times should be cut to 40 minutes by 2022."



90 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF

Project meets Caroline Lindsay-Clark, client partner at Harmonic

How long have you been in your current role and what do you like about it?

I have been in my current role for approximately two years, although I have been at Harmonic for marginally longer.

What I love about my role is the diversity and also the variety of clients that I deal with on a daily basis. Two days are never the same, and it's such a privilege to be part of some pretty amazing client journeys.

What have been your biggest professional challenges over the past 90 days?

Stakeholder management, particularly at a senior level, can be tricky. This is due in part to the politics that invariably exists within organisations.

Also 'decision by committee' is far too common, and it sometimes takes vast numbers of people to make a decision. Getting

everyone on board can be very time consuming.

What is the most important lesson you have learned over the past 90 days?

To let people help! This might sound obvious, but allowing people to support opportunities within my clients' organisations, rather than trying to do everything myself, has really paid dividends.

I am fortunate to work alongside some true 'best of breeds' in business-winning; project, portfolio and programme management; and systems engineering – and they have added real value to developing and delivering opportunities.

Looking ahead to the next 90 days, what will be the biggest challenges facing you?

Turning the mass of speculative projects into real, tangible results. This is always a massive challenge,



but seemingly a lot of opportunities are maturing in parallel. Each will need prioritising, scoping and resourcing to ensure that we have the right solution ready to deploy immediately.

If you could spend 90 days with anyone – living or dead – who would it be?

Karren Brady. I can't help being inspired by Karren and have always admired her, not because she was catapulted into the public eye through *The Apprentice*, but for what she achieved in her role in a male-dominated environment at such a young age. What an inspiration.

“I am fortunate to work alongside some true ‘best of breeds’ in business-winning; project, portfolio and programme management; and systems engineering”

DIARY DATES

13–17 June 2016

EVA 21 – Bringing Projects to Life, Armourers' Hall, Moorgate, London

20–22 June 2016

Institute of Asset Management Annual Conference, Edinburgh International Conference Centre

23 June 2016

Benefits Summit 2016, DoubleTree Hotel, Victoria, London

29 June 2016

Thinking Differently – Introducing the concept of the energised projects organisation, Waitrose, Bracknell

29 September 2016

APM National Conference for Women in Project Management, Park Plaza Victoria, London

6 October 2016

Governance SIG Annual Conference, venue TBA, London

See the full list of diary dates and booking information online at apm.org.uk/events

Hinkley Point delays continue

Delays to the approval of the multibillion-pound Hinkley Point nuclear power station call into question whether the project will hit its expected 2025 deadline.

While EDF chief executive Vincent de Rivaz has confirmed that the group is “completely committed” to the £18bn project in Somerset, the French government – which owns 85 per cent of EDF – has delayed its final decision to fund the project to September,

having previously said the decision would happen by May.

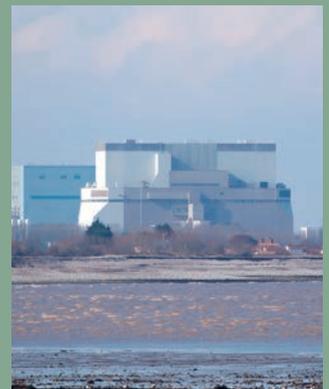
The project has already successfully passed regulatory, political, commercial and operational milestones. EDF has invested more than £3.4bn in the project and continues to spend £55m per month on it.

“If Hinkley Point does not go ahead, it could have huge implications for our future energy security and efforts to cut climate-changing emissions,” said Angus

MacNeil, chairman of the Energy and Climate Change Committee. “We will therefore be watching progress closely.”

Turner & Townsend, which has provided project controls for EDF Energy's design team in Paris for the past three years, is the preferred sole provider of project controls and project management.

Hinkley Point will have a 3.2-gigawatt capacity and, when built, will produce seven per cent of UK electricity.





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NETWORK

KEEPING
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APM celebrates women

Women in project management were celebrated by APM at an event held on 8 March – International Women’s Day.

APM’s Women in Project Management Specific Interest Group (SIG) collaborated with WeAreTheCity, a professional women’s portal, to host the event ‘Is that your final offer? Exploring negotiation and decision-making’.

During the event, Teri Okoro, chair of the Women in Project Management SIG, was joined by APM CEO Sara Drake, Wellington managing director Vince Hines and former UK diplomat turned consultant Claire Smith to look at the importance of negotiation in women’s personal and professional lives.

Recent research by Robert Half Management Resources shows that, on average, women earn £300,000 less than men over their working lives. Addressing a packed house of nearly 100 attendees, Drake noted that there are multiple factors behind the gender pay gap. “Despite a good start being made, more needs to be done. We all have a responsibility,” she said.

Drake said that it was vital to promote good practice in the project management profession, which can be achieved through improved sharing of parental leave, making flexible working visible at senior levels and increased transparency in pay and rewards.

The event concluded that there are three key elements for success in negotiation: (1) be prepared: know what you want to achieve and how much you are willing to sacrifice; (2) don’t overlook opportunities to negotiate and always use facts to make a good case; and (3) learn from every experience: becoming good at negotiation requires practice and a level of confidence that is enhanced over time.



**“DESPIITE A GOOD START
BEING MADE, MORE NEEDS
TO BE DONE. WE ALL HAVE
A RESPONSIBILITY”**



Sara Drake (left) and Teri Okoro (below) speaking at the Women in Project Management SIG’s event

CHARTERED STATUS UPDATE

In July 2013, a committee of the Privy Council unanimously recommended that a Royal Charter should be granted to APM. This decision was challenged in the courts. The Court of Appeal handed down judgment in January 2016 rejecting the Project Management Institute’s (PMI’s) appeal. The Court of Appeal also refused permission for PMI to appeal further to the Supreme Court. The time period for PMI to apply directly to the Supreme Court for leave to appeal has now expired. This means that the current judicial process has been concluded.

APM’s focus is now on the processes required to be granted, and to implement, a Royal Charter. *Project* will continue to keep readers updated.



ALAMY: GETTY

STRATEGY UPDATE

APM is bringing its strategy up to date within the overall vision and mission of its existing Strategy 2020. The aim is a strategy for how APM delivers its vision: what it does, how it does it and how it influences the profession.

APM will show how it helps professionals secure the right skills, qualifications and capabilities; and also how it improves the context and environment for them to succeed.

The profession needs people who strongly influence the delivery of projects and programmes. We must take the opportunity to get people to recognise that what project professionals do is important for the delivery of change. For example, we need boards to understand how to commission and support projects, programmes and portfolios. For further information, email external.affairs@apm.org.uk.

EVENTS ROUND-UP

Thirteen APM specific interest groups (SIGs) gathered in Coventry on 17 March to attend a day-long APM event geared towards project professionals that have recently joined the profession. Each SIG presented an introductory session three times throughout the day, and each session gathered around 20 delegates at a time. Attendees were able to attend up to six different SIG presentations, where they were welcome to ask questions and learn from the specialist practitioners. Attendees rated the event as a 'great success', and the groups welcomed the opportunity to present to potential new members.

Members of the APM South Wales and West of England branch hosted a networking event for newcomers to project management in March.

The guest speakers for the evening were Rebekah Rice and Sophie Edwards, both of Bristol Water, who were also part of the 'Helping Hands' team that won the 2015 APM Project Management Challenge. They spoke of the benefits of the challenge and being involved in the profession.

Alongside more traditional project management tools and techniques, they identified thinking outside the box and utilising your existing contacts as being of equal importance.

North West branch hands out student prizes

APM's North West branch has once again sponsored a prize for the best student of the year in the Management of Projects MSc course at the University of Manchester. Awards were handed out on 16 March by Phil Hardy, North West branch chairman, at the evening event.

This year's winner of the £100 prize was Irma Socola Kcomt from Peru, who has an architectural background. Mohammad Syafiq from Malaysia was the runner-up, and Farah Sajwani came third in this year's competition; both received £50.

The top three finalists are the students who receive the highest mark on their course module based on the APM Body of Knowledge. The university's assessment method is based on the students' group coursework, which accounts for 70 per cent

of assessment, along with essays and exams.

At the award presentation, each finalist presented their background, how they chose the project management path, the main findings of their coursework and how the course and APM have been beneficial to their professional future.

THE TOP THREE FINALISTS ARE THE STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE THE HIGHEST MARK ON THEIR COURSE MODULE BASED ON THE APM BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Professional membership is "kitemark of competence"

Membership of a professional body can give candidates an edge in the project management job market, creating better prospects and commanding up to £20,000 a year more than those with no affiliation.

The *Salary and Market Trends Survey 2015* carried out by APM shows that, on average, its members earn more than non-members working in the profession. In the

mid-salary range, 34 per cent with no professional project management qualifications earn £20,000–£39,000 per year, compared with 44 per cent with qualifications, who earn £40,000–£59,999.

Membership not only shows that you have the formal qualities to do the job; it also demonstrates that you do so to high ethical and professional standards and are continually

improving and expanding yourself and your skills.

"The job of any professional body is to set, maintain and develop the standards of the profession and the technical and ethical competences, through examination and continuing professional development (CPD)," said Rob Denny, head of research at the Professional Associations Research Network.



"Membership is a kitemark of competence. As a member of your professional body, you go through a CPD process, refreshing your skills. Employers recognise this."

Benefits management 'highly relevant'

The APM Benefits Management Specific Interest Group (SIG) has published its second annual survey of how benefits management is viewed in members' organisations.

Respondents suggested that, although benefits management is 'highly relevant' to the project challenges facing organisations, in many cases it has had limited impact on organisational practices.

This is due to a lack of understanding of benefits management or a lack of rigour in the approaches used.

With regard to the most-used approaches to benefits management, the results show that Managing Successful Programmes® and the APMG *Managing Benefits* guidance and certification scheme are popular, as well as specific techniques, such as benefits mapping.

Discussing the results, the Benefits Management SIG committee will continue research into why benefits management has not had more impact, including what the barriers are to its adoption and integration into wider organisational cultures.

BIM WORKING GROUP LAUNCHES

APM's Planning, Monitoring and Control Specific Interest Group (SIG) has kicked off a building information modelling (BIM) working group.

While there are many definitions of BIM – and even differing ideas about what the acronym should stand for – it is the process by which digital information is used to manage the building process and subsequent operational and maintenance aspects.

In 2011, the government published its construction strategy, identifying a requirement for collaborative BIM on all centrally procured government projects by 2016.

BIM IS THE PROCESS BY WHICH DIGITAL INFORMATION IS USED TO MANAGE BUILDING

The BIM working group set up by the Planning, Monitoring and Control SIG hopes to answer a range of questions for project managers: What is BIM? How can it help you if you are involved in project management? How can the maturity model be applied to projects in both the public and private sectors? How can we distil all the information from within the various BIM publications into a concise project management guide? And what can APM do to assist the project management profession in applying BIM methodologies, processes and tools?

These questions will be answered through a range of media: white papers, contributions to the APM Body of Knowledge, and articles in *Project*. Membership to the working group is open to anyone able to commit to at least four meetings per year and contribute to the above outputs.

Profile of an APM volunteer



Name: **Lynn Newman**
 Membership grade: **Member**
 Volunteer role: **Lead of the Norwich chapter and East of England treasurer**

Why did you decide to become a volunteer with APM?

When I first heard of APM, meetings happened only once every four to five years, as it was hard for both speakers and members from across the region to come to Norwich for an after-work event. The east of England is a big area, and Norwich is the most easterly city!

I decided that I wanted to change things and have more happening locally, so I got involved to set up a chapter in Norwich.

The group has been running for more than seven years now and, with a small committee, I organise six events per year that feature a mixture of local-interest projects and talks from the APM circuit. For example, a recent talk on the unique, 20-year project to save and improve the Norfolk Broads gave insight into long-term planning, while circuit speaker John Chapman taught us about the benefits of using social media in project management.

The group has grown steadily and last year we achieved one of our goals by having a home-grown speaker invited to talk to a group in another part of the country.

What benefits have you gained from being an APM volunteer?

Volunteering has a number of benefits. I've learned more about advertising and marketing since running the Norwich chapter, and I've met some great people. Being part of a wider group gives a good framework for developing new contacts and ideas, too. A personal benefit was when, following a chance conversation at an event in Norwich, I was given the opportunity to contribute to a book – *Project Resilience: The Art of Noticing, Interpreting, Preparing, Containing and Recovering* (Routledge, £45) – written by academics Elmar Kutsch, Neil Turner and Mark Hall. This was a rare opportunity that was fun and also furthered my personal development.

What would your top tip be to an APM member looking to become a volunteer?

My top tip to anyone thinking about volunteering is to get stuck into something that you feel passionate about, rather than trying to dabble in several things. This way, you can make a difference – you never know what other benefits you might find.

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Your view



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Letters may be edited for publication

OPTIMISING THE PMO

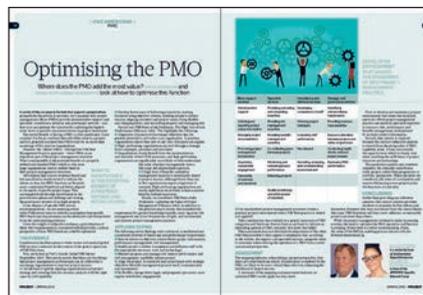
The most important thing about a PMO is its permanence. In the dynamic world of project management, the PMO provides consistency and stability. Projects generate a wealth of knowledge and experience for organisations; a PMO helps to ensure this isn't lost when a project ends.

Many project managers have had the frustrating experience of completing endless documents 'because the PMO says so'. A good PMO should be the project manager's best friend, not a taskmaster. It should balance project management rigour with flexibility of approach.

Once the right balance has been struck, organisations with PMOs can enjoy shorter start-up times, more realistic plans and better benefit realisation. And who wouldn't want that?

Rob Kidd, director at Rubikon Consulting

The amount of people who don't know or appreciate what a PMO does, or understand its concept, continually



amazes me. In a large PMO, with buy-in from senior stakeholders, you usually have the luxury of highly skilled personnel for each discipline: risk, governance, financial control, reporting, resourcing and planning.

However, if your department is small, with finite resources, then the PMO is expected to be a 'jack of all trades'. Above all, I find our main remit is to bring about cohesive control and structure into an environment that can easily slip into chaos if not managed properly.

Vanessa Ropiha APMP, PMO specialist



LINKEDIN

DO PROJECT MANAGERS NEED TO ADAPT TO THE DIGITAL AGE?

THE ISSUE

APM president David Waboso wrote an article to say that digital technology is fundamentally changing how projects are executed. On APM's official LinkedIn Group, we asked whether this is true: do project managers need to adapt to the digital age?

THE REACTION

"This question has the same answer as the question, 'Did dinosaurs have to adapt to the changing environment?' Most project managers are

already leaders in the use of digital technology, and its development."

Paul Spice, president, International Association of Commissioning Engineers

"I find it funny that people who manage projects forget that project management is about processes. Whether using a hammer and chisel or a PC, the process remains the same. Until they implant a chip in my head that tells me what to do, I'll manage projects the

same way I always have – with my mind."

Jim Devine, senior project manager, Verizon

"We must adapt. I've been using tools such as the iPad to make my workflows more efficient and information more easily accessible, especially when away from the office and on site. It's allowed me to improve the response times and reduce the amount of time spent in the office on the laptop."

Neil Addyman, director, Restaurant Design

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ELIZABETH HARRIN

@pm4girls

How to prioritise projects across teams: <http://fb.me/4vJ8WqNG1>



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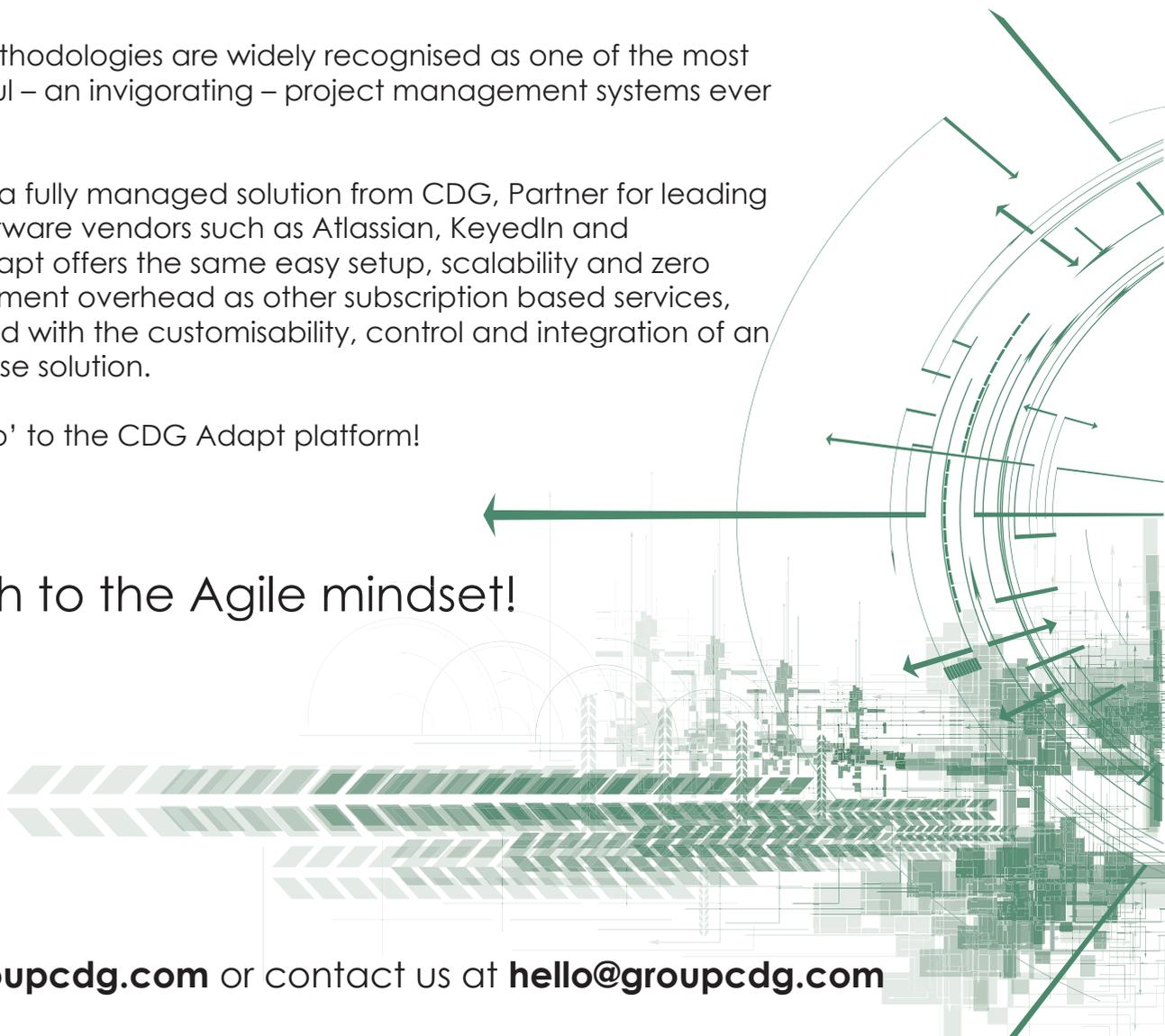
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DON'T LET PIG-HEADEDNESS SPOIL A PERFECTLY GOOD IDEA

Posted by Colin Parker on 23 February 2016

I have a rather pig-headed approach to navigation, and I suspect it might also be reflected in my work. In a moment of honest reflection, would you admit to the same thing? As project professionals, we are paid to solve problems in the most efficient way possible for our sponsors, but this often turns into 'coming up with a new solution to every problem'.

According to an obscure verse in the Bible, in Ecclesiastes 1:9 (NIV), "There is nothing new under the sun". And isn't this true? So why, oh why, do we maintain a stubbornly resistant pig-headedness towards the reuse of perfectly good ideas?

There are a number of different forces at work.

First, the 'poker' effect. As the late Terry Pratchett explained in *Unseen Academicals*, it's a short step from 'adopt, adapt and improve' to 'steal, use and look innocent'. To create an atmosphere in which lessons are shared and learned, we need to make sure that people are properly credited, otherwise they won't share again.

Next, the 'goldfish' effect. Corporate and personal forgetfulness has the consistently repeatable effect of allowing the same mistakes to be made over and over again. Learning lessons is not something that can just happen by chance; it needs to be systematically pursued both personally and corporately. How many of us keep a personal log of lessons, as opposed to relying upon our (perfectly recalled) memories to not repeat the same errors?

Finally, pig-headedness. This is a very human quality whereby, even faced with clear evidence to the contrary, you continue to maintain that you know best.

Ladies and gentlemen, the power is in our hands. How about a future in which we can avoid the pitfalls that others have had, at the same time helping others avoid our personal collection of bear traps? If there is an established, well-worn methodology for a problem that we need to solve, let's use it.



COLIN PARKER is a freelance project manager and a member of the APM Programme Management Specific Interest Group Committee



GETTING FLEXIBLE: HOW TO PROJECT MANAGE NON NINE-FIVERS

Posted by Jade Attwood on 15 March 2016

We are increasingly seeing more workers abandon the nine-to-five daily grind in favour of flexible hours. Whether it be on a flexi-time, part-time or home-working basis, more people are utilising their paid hours to suit the times of day during which they are more productive. What does this mean for project managers?

Flexible working could be seen to threaten the foundations of project management. But, with the right strategies in place, you can ensure that not only does your project run smoothly, but the outcome could even surpass anything created within the restrictive nine-to-five structure.

Key to project managing teams with variable working hours is one basic principle: planning. As with any project, it is essential to start out with a clear set of aims and key performance indicators that need to be met. Make these clear in an initial, compulsory meeting with all of your team. In this meeting, you should also, as far as possible, outline the exact tasks for each person.

Depending on the timescale of your project, you should enforce several compulsory face-to-face meetings or catch-ups with your team members.

Despite the advantage of having independent focus when working remotely or at their most productive hours, having actual contact is essential to keep your team motivated. These team meetings will allow you to set smaller deadlines and create a timeline for progress. This will also allow you to measure the success of the project so far, and ensure that anyone who is not pulling their weight can be made accountable.

The nine-to-five structure is not set to completely disintegrate any time soon. But times are changing, and flexible working hours are becoming a frequent practice in many of our biggest industries.

Rather than resent this shift, project managers should take advantage of the potential gains in their teams' productivity, efficiency and morale that flexible working hours can afford. Flexible hours do not have to result in a weak end result, but could actually benefit you and your team.

JADE ATTWOOD is a content marketing executive at The Formations Company

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Rather than simply acquiring knowledge and theory on topics such as Project Cost Management, Commercial and Procurement, and Planning and Resource Management, the course focuses on the practical aspects of managing projects in a 'real-world' environment. This facilitates the development of critical thinking and reflective practice, which adds value to students and their companies.

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That one fundamental thing

Project managers need to get better at stakeholder engagement and make it a core part of their jobs, argues **MIKE CLAYTON**



At a recent seminar, someone asked me, “What is the one thing in project management that is most fundamental?”

What a good question. And yet, at the same time, what a rotten question to put someone on the spot with. After all, can there truly be just one thing? I wonder what your answer would have been. Lots of things went through my mind, of course.

My first thought was scoping. That is clearly fundamental, but it didn't seem like the right answer to that question. After all, for years, I have been telling people from various platforms that scoping is the hardest part of project management. The need

CONTROL IS THE ONE THING THAT PROJECT MANAGERS CRAVE ABOVE ALL ELSE IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL LIVES. BUT IT IS NOT FUNDAMENTAL IN THE SENSE OF FOUNDATIONAL

to negotiate different wants and needs with an array of stakeholders, and then balance these against pressures on resources, makes this a particular challenge.

My next thought was control – the one thing that we, as project managers, crave above all else in our professional

lives. But, in an instant, I realised it is not fundamental in the sense of foundational. Rather, control is the wrap-around we try to apply to everything.

A similar problem arises with scheduling, planning and programming. They are certainly at the heart of the project management process, but, by being at the heart, they can hardly be at the fundament, too. I reluctantly dismissed those.

So, it must be governance. Surely we build all our project management processes upon a bedrock of governance? Well, no. By now you will be seeing a pattern: the meanings of words matter to me. Governance is about setting direction and steering your project. So, again, it was not quite the right concept.

This was proving a trickier question than it should have been, but I mentally soldiered on. Where do we start? We start with a simple question, asked of our sponsor, client or boss: ‘What do you want?’ That leads us to our project goal. Now we're getting somewhere.

But no; sadly not. I teach project managers to think strategically and creatively, and to ask the further question: ‘For what purpose?’ This question leads upwards from the goal to a higher level of abstraction: the purpose. And there you have it.

Or do you? How can a higher level of abstraction be fundamental? We need to go down to the lower levels. But that, sadly, leads us back towards scope, and then downwards to the specifications.

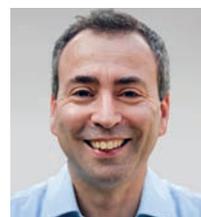
I was mentally spiralling out of control. I needed a new approach.

Another thing I often tell people is that it is stakeholders who will determine the success of your project. If this doesn't make stakeholder engagement fundamental to project management, I am not sure what does. But stakeholders are a challenge because of their different perspectives on scope, schedule and goals.

They also introduce risk, and if there is one thing that characterises the difference between projects and business as usual, it is risk. Risk arises from time pressures, novelty, interconnectedness and the multitude of stakeholders. Did I mention interconnectedness? I was going around in circles.

One last shot then. Let me forget logic and ask: ‘What do I rely on most to understand and deliver projects?’

When I put the question to myself, the answer seems obvious. There is one idea that dominates. It will never solve any of your project management problems, nor provide the answer to any of your questions, but it will make your choices absolutely clear. It is the pyramid of balance: time, cost, quality and scope. That is my one thing. 



MIKE CLAYTON is a speaker and trainer, the author of several project-management books, and the founder of **OnlinePM Courses.com**

Turbocharging efficiency

What lessons can project managers learn about successful, large-scale infrastructure projects? Crossrail's **SIMON WRIGHT** shares his top tips

With the only two sources of funding for public rail infrastructure being taxation and user charging, project investment needs to be carefully managed. In recent years, the infrastructure industry has benefited from significant levels of investment. Taking a look at the National Infrastructure Plan, there are £411bn worth of projects allocated over the next five years. Interestingly, a significant 91 per cent of this has been allotted to the energy and transport sectors, and more than 60 per cent is said to be privately financed.

In the context of project-delivery management, there are a number of practical steps leaders can take to help bolster project outcomes and make the most of infrastructure investment.

Lay the foundations for success

Large, complex programmes should be delivered by a special project organisation with a clear organisational structure, which needs to be defined from the inception. This helps to isolate risk and allows the development of a purpose-built corporate culture, while also avoiding distractions from 'business as usual' departments when executing the project.

Process, process, process

The next step is to establish a comprehensive set of project processes. Start with the establishment of a clear vision and objectives. Comprehensive governance must be established to manage budget, schedule, quality, risk and change.

A project's success hangs on the relentless application of these processes.

Tell the story

A strong and authentic culture, led from the top, should be created and widely communicated throughout the client, delivery and supplier teams. This culture needs to be underpinned by a clear vision



and a strong set of values, which can help empower managers at every level, inspiring loyalty and trust.

For instance, at Crossrail, we have the Little Pink Book, which is issued to all new starters and sets out our values of safety, inspiration, collaboration, integrity and respect. This approach will foster strong individual and team performance.

Support network

A project needs a collaborative environment, and this can be difficult in the rail industry, due to the sheer number of people and organisations involved.

Take Crossrail. We have more than 10,000 people on site, as well as more than 450 apprentices and many hundreds of organisations involved. The scale and complexity of the supply chain is often eye-watering, yet alignment must be achieved. Leadership qualities and proactive human resource management are crucial to ensure trust is built throughout the supply chain.

Learning from experience

Last but not least, it is important to consider the adoption of a formal lessons-learned programme to capture what is learnt on every project. This knowledge needs to be made readily available going forward. During London 2012, we created the Olympic Delivery Authority's

Learning Legacy website, which is still available to all. Data and conclusions can form part of the input into further generations of major programmes and projects. We are creating what we hope will be an even better knowledge platform at Crossrail, launched in February this year with APM as a legacy partner.

Ultimately, project success can never be guaranteed. However, giving attention to these key steps will significantly increase the chance of meeting the objectives and

delivering benefits.

The UK population is set to rise by 10 million by 2039, meaning there will be an urgent need for additional transport capacity. The launch of the National Infrastructure Commission should help foster detailed, evidence-based plans for us to prepare. This should allow for cross-party working and better integration between road and rail.

Investment has been lacking over many years, but the opportunity now exists to take a long-term approach to invest in skills development and new technology to improve safety and efficiency.

Indeed, we must take these steps to increase the probability of project success, improve value for money and ensure benefits are realised on our current projects so that this investment will continue.

If we get it right, we could be in the midst of a new golden age for infrastructure in the UK. **■**



SIMON WRIGHT
is programme
director at Crossrail

It is time to rethink the 'iron triangle' of project management

Two industry commentators argue the case **for** and **against**



The classic iron triangle has been useful but, even as long ago as 1999, Dr Roger Atkinson of Bournemouth University argued that measuring project success on the basis of time, cost and quality was outdated and insufficient

FOR

Project management has matured, and current thinking is that projects need to deliver value. Value changes as the project progresses and coalesces around what is important to the most significant stakeholders at that time. To my mind, this means that, for many people, measuring success in terms of time, cost and quality is outdated and very probably redundant.

Value can be a problematic concept, due to the different sets of stakeholders. There can be many stakeholders in even a simple project, and the perceptions of those stakeholders will change over the project life cycle. Some of the indirect stakeholders do not care about time, cost or quality, but they are concerned about what the project will do for them.

I live in Boston, and the 'Big Dig' project that completed here in 2007 is often used as a case study on overrunning costs, unmet deadlines and political issues in the project domain. However, local 'downtown' residents, who hated the 15 years of inconvenience, dirt and noise, now love the finished project, because it diverts traffic away from where they live, and has opened up the waterfront to them. They certainly didn't care about the cost – they just wanted the project completed, and their view as stakeholders has gone from hate to love.

Projects are complex, and our understanding of the interlinking of programmes and portfolios of projects has ensured that, although tools and techniques are useful, keeping interlinked networks of interested parties satisfied is vital. That means finding out what they value and delivering that. Often, value to those myriad stakeholders does not mean time, cost or quality.

DR STEVE LEYBOURNE is an assistant professor at Boston University



It is not time to rethink the time-cost-quality triangle. It is incredibly simple to make it work: get the three constraints documented up front, understood and signed off with all of the key stakeholders, then slap robust change control around it all

AGAINST

By robust, I mean you must ensure that all risks are identified and have owners, and also have mitigation strategies to stop them becoming issues that could then morph into changes that would impact on your triangle.

If you do not get down to basics and control your project in this way, it will succumb to the kind of free fall that you may never recover from. The requirements must be unambiguous, measurable and testable from the start.

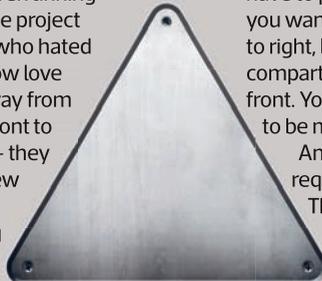
Let me give you an example. You want a car – a blue hatchback with a sunroof and refrigerated compartment. You order it and pay up.

When you take delivery of it, it is dark blue. You wanted the lighter blue, but you didn't specify – so you have to pay for your own re-spray. It won't drive off the forecourt because you did not ask for a full tank of diesel – you have to pay to fill it up. The sunroof is fixed glass, but you wanted one that opens. The hatchback opens left to right, but you wanted a lift-up door. Your refrigerated compartment is in the boot, but you needed it in the front. You have to pay for each of these components to be modified.

And so there you have it. To keep the quality that you required, you had to pay more and it took more time.

This is simply because the car that you thought you had specified at the beginning had, in fact, not been correctly specified, so it cost extra. It had to go back to the factory for modifications, and you did not get it for another two months. And all of this was because the requirement was not clear and managed.

Leave the iron triangle as it is: projects need to focus on getting the requirements right at the very beginning, not on different constraints.



JACQUIE COBB is a programme manager at WA Consulting

BACK TO BASICS

Project management is just a matter of finding out what works and doing it over and over again. Or is it? **SALLY PERCY** investigates

“Repetition is the mother of learning, the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishment.” This observation by the late US motivational speaker Zig Ziglar applies as much to project management as it does to art, music, sport, writing and many other activities.

The theory is that, if you repeat the same task or sequence of tasks over and over again, eventually you will excel at them. “Look at professional athletes,” says Adrian Dooley, lead author of the Praxis Framework, a free, online project management resource, and a book (£49.95) published by APM. “In their training, they practise the basics over and over again. They make these basics instinctive. In a game situation, they then improvise around those basic skills.

“If they didn’t spend so much time doing the ‘boring stuff’ and getting it right, they would never have a platform from which to launch their creativity.”

For example, footballer David Beckham revealed in 2013 that his mastery of the free kick was the result of “tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands” of practice free kicks in the local park when he was growing up. If only it were that simple...

REPETITION

In the world of project management, repetition does not relate to the process of landing a ball in a goal from a distance of 30 yards (although some project managers might argue that, actually, metaphorically it does). Instead, it relates to the process of getting the basics right – repeatedly.

So far, so good. The challenge, however, is defining exactly what those basics are, and here the opinions of the experts differ. “If you ask 100 people this question, you’ll get 101 different outcomes,” jokes Alan Macklin, director, government acquisition and support programmes, at CH2M.

He cites the seven perspectives outlined in the Office of Government Commerce’s Portfolio, Programme and Project Management Maturity Model as being a good starting point for anyone trying to define the basics of project management. These perspectives are: organisational governance, management control, benefits management, financial management, stakeholder engagement, risk management and resource management.

His caveat is that these basics need to be interpreted in the relevant technical context of the project – for example, education, engineering or health. He says: “I would argue that there are eight basic principles of project management: the seven perspectives, and then principles based on the technical field in which you’re working.”

Someone else who keeps a comprehensive list of the basic principles of project management is Mike Clayton, a project management trainer and author, and founder of OnlinePMCourses.com.

“Projects involve doing new things, usually in an environment where there is flux, pressure to get things done and constraint on resources,” Clayton says. “Therefore, the nature of a project is risk, and the basics are the things that respond to that.”

He identifies the basics as good planning and stakeholder engagement, as well as the ability to actively manage and control risk and lead a team of people.

In addition, projects usually have a deadline and a budget. “When you do a project, you are spending somebody’s money,” observes Clayton.

“Therefore, your ability to estimate costs from which to build a robust business case, and your ability to manage those costs, are very important.”

Other experts prefer a very simple definition of the basics: emphasising the human element of project management. ▶

“PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES PRACTISE THE BASICS OVER AND OVER, TO MAKE THEM INSTINCTIVE. IN A GAME SITUATION, THEY THEN IMPROVISE AROUND THE BASICS. IF THEY DIDN’T SPEND SO MUCH TIME DOING THE ‘BORING STUFF’, THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE A PLATFORM TO LAUNCH THEIR CREATIVITY”



APM'S CONDITIONS FOR PROJECT SUCCESS

In 2015, APM published *Conditions for Project Success*, a piece of independent research that sought to identify the core factors leading to the successful delivery of projects, programmes and portfolios. It found that five factors have the strongest and most consistent relationship with the traditional measures of project success: time, cost and quality. These are:

1 PLANNING AND REVIEW

Pre-project planning should be thorough and considered, with monitoring and review throughout the project.

2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the project should be clearly specified and recognised by all stakeholders involved in the project.

3 EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

The project needs to have clear reporting lines and regular communication between all parties.

4 COMPETENT PROJECT TEAMS

The project professionals leading, or forming a core team, need to be fully competent to carry out their duties.

5 COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS

All parties involved in the project must be, and remain, committed to the project's success.

For example, Dooley sees the basic principle as “working with others to define and achieve beneficial outcomes”, while Carole Osterweil, director at OMQ Consulting, argues that project management is a “people endeavour”. She says: “Over the years, we’ve made huge advances in methods and processes. With that has come a tendency to dehumanise projects. The people dimension has got lost – we need to bring it back into focus. You can’t achieve without people.”

SAME CHALLENGE, DIFFERENT PROJECT

People have been tackling projects since time immemorial. The evidence of this can be seen in ancient wonders such as the Great Wall of China, the pyramids and Stonehenge. It seems that, while experts may differ in their opinions of what constitutes the basics of project management, they tend to hold the view that, whatever their opinions are, the basics themselves have not changed over time.

“I don’t think they’ve changed since the pharaohs hired a project manager to stick a pyramid in the middle of the desert,” says Clayton. “I’m sure that the pharaohs would have said: ‘Can you assure me that this will be done before I’m dead? Can you assure me that this won’t bankrupt my treasury? Can you assure me that my people will be mightily impressed by what you’ve put up?’ Those are just schedule management, budget management and stakeholder management. I doubt that the pharaohs’ project managers would have drawn a Gantt chart in the sand, but I bet they would have drawn something similar.”

He does point out, however, that there has been a growth in multi-site and multinational projects: “Projects are spread all over the globe. Teams have to collaborate with other teams that are not in the same office, not in the same time zone and not talking the same language.” Technology has therefore become a way of implementing the basics and allowing long-distance collaboration to take place so that projects can run 24 hours a day.

Dooley says that projects are operating in an increasingly complex society, thanks to advances in technology. “Life is getting more complex and projects reflect life,” he says. “The interconnected world is ready to jump on you the minute you make a mistake. Managers are often very nervous of making a decision in case they get it wrong.”

THE PROJECT MANAGER’S TOOLKIT

So what do project managers need in their toolkits to help them get the basics right? Clayton advises that every project should have a risk register, a project-initiation document, a business case and a plan. He cautions against being overly reliant on Gantt charts, however, saying that, while these popular project management tools suit big projects, they are not necessarily right for smaller projects, since they can overcomplicate matters.

Dooley homes in on the key behaviours of bravery, confidence, honesty and realism. “Tools and techniques, such as those set out in bodies of knowledge and methodologies, are important for laying the foundations of good project management, but it’s the behaviour of project managers and those around them that build on those foundations,” he explains.

“Project managers need to have sharp people skills,” comments Osterweil. “They need to understand why people behave the way that they do.” She argues that technology will develop in a way that enables project managers to more effectively read and predict social dynamics: “Collaborative

EXPERTS’ TOP TIPS FOR GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

MIKE CLAYTON:

- Value your stakeholders and engage with them positively. Don’t take their resistance in a negative way. It’s a sign that they understand the issues and care about them.
- Make sure you are crystal clear about what your client or organisation expects from the project in terms of goals, costs and time. Make sure the baseline costs and scope are signed off.
- Things will inevitably go wrong, so you need to be constantly thinking about risk.

ADRIAN DOOLEY:

- Relax! Stop letting yourself be pressurised by unrealistic expectations (often your own), the constant stream of information about the latest big thing in project management or the ‘top 10 things you must do to succeed’. Take time to reflect on the common-sense elements of managing projects that never change.
- Be honest. If you don’t think an objective can be achieved, say so. If you need help, ask. If people are causing problems

for your project, find out what it is that drives them.

- Be focused. There will be conflict and there will be problems. You can’t always please everybody. Sometimes, you have to act on instinct to do what you believe to be right.

ALAN MACKLIN:

- Pick the trusted framework that you will use and stick to it.
- Project management is about people and relationships between people. It’s also about getting other people to pull their weight.

CAROLE OSTERWEIL:

- You can’t separate project delivery from project leadership. The way we behave – what we say, think and do on a daily basis – will dictate what is delivered.
- Be real; be grounded. Think about your own behaviour as well as the behaviour of other people.
- Invest in developing self-awareness. Learn to distinguish what is happening today from what happened in the past.

tools are really important. But if we want project managers to get the best out of collaborative tools, we need them to have an understanding of their own and other people’s behaviour.”

WHEN IT GOES AWRY

According to research by professional services firm PwC, a tiny 2.5 per cent of companies successfully complete 100 per cent of their projects. So, if project management is really as simple as determining the basics and doing them over and over again, why do so many projects fall down?

Dooley blames project managers who lose sight of the big picture and spend so much time answering the questions ‘who?’, ‘what?’, ‘how?’ and ‘when?’ that they forget to step back now and again to reflect on the ‘why?’

“Every now and then, we need to have a sanity check on why we’re actually doing something,” he explains. Dooley has a good friend who once described a project problem as follows: “I was digging this hole so deep, I couldn’t see over the top to check if I was digging it in the right place.”

Meanwhile, Osterweil highlights the risk of organisations not recognising project management as a people endeavour. This mindset then invariably filters down to individual project



“COLLABORATIVE TOOLS ARE REALLY IMPORTANT, BUT IF WE WANT PROJECT MANAGERS TO GET THE BEST OUT OF COLLABORATIVE TOOLS, WE NEED THEM TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR OWN AND OTHER PEOPLE’S BEHAVIOUR”

managers. “Of course, methods and tools are important, but we have to use them in a way that demonstrates we believe that people are central to achieving the project outcomes and benefits,” she says.

Clayton emphasises the role of sponsorship and governance. “A lot of organisations are very poor at appointing sponsors who take their roles seriously, and they do little to prepare them for project sponsorship,” he says. “Poor sponsorship leads to weak governance.”

Macklin believes that success in project management largely depends on how you define success, and argues that it should be specified upfront. “Was Heathrow Terminal 5 a success? Public perception recalls the fiasco of its opening, but if you remember back to its construction, the project to build the terminal was, and still is, recognised as a benchmark of modern, progressive innovation that was remarkably successful.”

STARTING OVER

But to return to where we started, can we assume that, if a project manager has just completed one successful project, all he or she needs to do to ensure triumph on the next one is to repeat everything exactly?

The answer to that is yes – and no.

“Yes, if people are at the centre,” comments Osterweil, “but also no. Getting the basics right and repeating them again and again could imply that we’re not coming to it fresh each time. We need to approach every project, every situation and every group of people within the project with a fresh perspective and ask: ‘What is different this time?’”

She continues: “We’re learning from neuroscience that humans are very good at unconsciously bringing echoes from past situations and relationships into the present. We have to be careful not to do that. For example, if I’m at a client meeting, it’s quite possible that the tone of the client’s voice momentarily transports me back to a difficult meeting with a previous client. Without realising it, I may respond as if I were in the other meeting.”

“Success is linked to repeating the basics and repeating them well,” remarks Macklin, “but projects are about people and every project is different. So if you do things in precisely the same way next time, you will not be guaranteed the same result.”

SALLY PERCY is a freelance business journalist and a former editor of *Project*

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INTO THE WILD

Bringing superfast broadband to the most remote areas of Scotland is a complex but rewarding project, **MATT SCOTT** discovers

It is one of Europe's last great wildernesses, covering an area greater than half of Scotland and incorporating almost 100 inhabited islands. Home to the Loch Ness monster and the highest mountain in the British Isles, the Highlands and Islands of Scotland stretch from Shetland to Argyll, and from the Outer Hebrides to Moray.

Despite covering such a wide area, the number of people living in the region make up just eight per cent of the Scottish population – making it an incredibly rural and remote area. Under such conditions, staying connected to the outside world is of paramount importance, but access to telecommunications, particularly internet access, has been a longstanding issue for inhabitants of this remote region.

In 2001, broadband coverage in Scotland was just 43 per cent – compared with 63 per cent for the UK as a whole. Coverage has since improved. Today, 95 per cent of premises in the Highlands and Islands have access to broadband through their

phone line. The remaining five per cent are able to receive a service through Highlands and Islands Enterprise's (HIE's) Connected Communities project in the Outer Hebrides, and the Scottish government's Broadband Reach project using wireless and satellite technology.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

To further improve broadband provision in Scotland, HIE took the decision to roll out superfast broadband across the region in a £146m project aimed at bringing the fastest download speeds to even the remotest areas. An in-depth tender process from HIE chose Atkins as the procurement and project management organisation to deliver the scheme. Atkins project director Neil Watt says his company benefited from a pitch that highlighted the wealth of experience it has built up over many years of managing rural broadband projects.

"We have been involved in broadband projects, especially rural ones, for more

than 15 years," he says. "We have a track record of delivering broadband provisions in remote, rural areas, particularly in the Highlands and Islands. Our pitch was made via the normal public-sector procurement portals and processes, and it was essentially about the experience and skill set that we have and that we would be able to bring to the table to accurately match our client's requirements."

Watt is also well aware of the importance of the project, given the impact it has had – and will continue to have – on rural communities. "Superfast broadband is now seen as something that is as vital as water and electricity, and its importance to the UK economy is well documented," he says.

"It is exceedingly important in these locations, where it is often much more difficult to run a business and attract people to the area because there's no superfast broadband. This project will attract people to this remote, rural area – ▶

people who can experience a completely different lifestyle, with no commute to work, in a very safe and beautiful environment, while exploiting the best aspects of superfast broadband and the digital economy.”

The project started with a procurement process managed by Atkins that detailed all of the objectives of the project, as well as the technical specifications that would need to be met for the project to be a success. “Our role was to provide procurement and commercial support, and technical consultancy,” Watt says. “Once we were promoted, our job was to manage the procurement process on behalf of our client. For a £146m project like this, there was an EU-mandated procurement process we had to go through. We managed that process; wrote the pre-qualification documentation and invitation to tender; led the contract negotiations with the client; and, particularly important with a project like this, provided the technical support for this highly complex project in a very difficult area.”

The procurement process was a lengthy affair. After almost 18 months of negotiations, BT finally signed off on a contract to implement the project and provide the infrastructure for the roll-out of superfast broadband across the region.

The project involves the laying of 1,200km of fibre-optic cables, including 400km of subsea cables, to provide superfast broadband access to the islands that stretch out from Scotland’s coastline, making it the single biggest civil-engineering project that the telecoms provider has ever undertaken.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

One of the difficulties of providing superfast broadband to such rural areas in the past has been a lack of appropriate technology able to deal with the vast distances required to connect the remote communities in the Highlands and Islands. To conquer this problem, BT was tasked with introducing technology that had not been used anywhere else in the UK.

“The biggest technical issue was the sheer fact that there was no infrastructure in many parts of the Highlands and Islands that could support the provision of superfast broadband,” Watt says. “Infrastructure needed replacing and brought into the 21st century. That was achieved with the provision of fibre-optic cabling, which didn’t exist in these rural areas. The distances involved [were a

THE PROJECT INVOLVES THE LAYING OF 1,200KM OF FIBRE-OPTIC CABLES, INCLUDING 400KM OF SUBSEA CABLES, TO PROVIDE SUPERFAST BROADBAND ACCESS TO THE ISLANDS THAT STRETCH OUT FROM SCOTLAND’S COASTLINE, MAKING IT THE SINGLE BIGGEST CIVIL-ENGINEERING PROJECT THAT THE TELECOMS PROVIDER HAS EVER UNDERTAKEN

problem], and BT came back to us with some technical innovations that had never been done on its network before to enable us to push the provision of superfast fibre even deeper into the region.”

These innovations included removing copper cabling, which is traditionally used to transfer broadband signals from the exchange to communities, with fibre optics to increase the bandwidth available for transmitting the signal.

“To get greater broadband speeds, you need greater capacity in your infrastructure. In the case of the UK, that was historically copper based,” Watt says. “These copper cables could only deliver so much bandwidth – it was dependent on how far you were away from the exchange.

“The provision of fibre-optic cables from the exchanges as far out into local communities as possible does away with a lot of the copper aspect, and its signalling is such that it can cater for much greater bandwidth – in essence, it moves the exchange closer to your house, and it does that via a local green street cabinet, from which the broadband is then carried into your premises.”

He adds: “BT provided equipment and technology to enable the signals that deliver superfast broadband to the green street cabinet to go further than is normal in the rest of the UK. Previously, the distance between your house and the exchange was the major factor, now it is the distance between you and that green cabinet.”

CONSULTING STAKEHOLDERS

But before any work could begin, an in-depth consultation was required to ensure the multitude of stakeholders affected by the project had their needs considered and were kept constantly up to date with project developments.

“There was a lot of negotiation,” Watt says. “To manage it effectively, it was about consultation. Rather than just going to a local planning authority or banging in



a planning application to stand a green cabinet on the side of the road, there was a lot of negotiation and consultation with various stakeholders to discuss all of that before the official application stage.”

Watt says that it was this management of the various interested parties that was the most difficult part of the implementation of the project: “The stakeholder management was highly sensitive. Provision of superfast broadband in remote, rural areas is very emotive and a very politically active subject area. We were talking to everybody, from individual citizens, community groups, public-sector agencies, suppliers, academia, councils, MSPs, MPs, MEPs... all of these people were actively involved.

“The key to managing that was timely and consistent communications. We were fortunate, in that the communications manager at the client was very good, and we were able to work effectively as a team to manage that.”



Fibre-optic cabling innovations enabled broadband to be rolled out in the furthest reaches of the Highlands and Islands

This 'consistent communication' was provided by HIE, and made use of factsheets, newsletters, a dedicated website, social media, newspapers, community groups, radio and the Scottish Gaelic-language BBC Alba.

COMPLEXITIES

Despite the breadth of the communication programme, Watt says, managing expectations was still a complex procedure: "Once we announced the project and everybody was happy, people started asking 'When am I getting it?' But this is such a huge project over such a long timescale, meaning you can't give it all at once. In partnership with Digital Scotland and BT, we came up with a portal on the website called Where & When. You can type in your postcode and it will tell you when broadband is coming to your area."

Atkins also met with local communities and organised public meetings in

conjunction with BT to get the message out about the complexity of the project in such a rural area – the key message was: we are going as fast as we can.

One of the major stakeholder-management considerations was the environmental impact of laying the subsea fibre-optic cables.

"There is a major civil-engineering project involved in the laying of ducts and fibre, and we obviously reviewed the client's submission and requirements for environmental issues," Watt says.

"The biggest environmental consideration was the subsea fibre-optic cables, and that involved working with Marine Scotland, the Crown Estate (which exercises ownership over the seabed), fisheries groups and local communities."

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

To effectively manage the complexities of implementing such a major project, Atkins worked with BT and HIE to develop a

phased approach to installing the new network, as well as a quarterly reporting schedule to ensure key milestones and metrics were being successfully adhered to.

"It was a highly complex project and implementation plan," Watt says. "The region is split into phases, and the provision of broadband is delivered into each area on a phased basis, with some of the phases running concurrently."

Now that the project is into the implementation process, Atkins is dealing with the technical governance oversight, working with the client to review milestones.

"This is done under a national UK-government scheme, which is managed by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport. There is a department within that called Broadband Delivery UK, which has an extensive milestone achievement record, all implemented on a monthly and quarterly basis."

CAREER PINNACLE

The close project management exerted by Watt and Atkins means that the roll-out of superfast broadband is working to deadline and on budget, with the project set to be finished on time before the end of 2016.

"The reactions to the project have been positive from pretty much everybody," Watt says. "The provision of superfast broadband in remote, rural areas is vital for communities in terms of economic growth; promoting new skill sets; and access to vital services, telehealth and educational content for skills."

In recognition of the success of the project, Watt was awarded a Silver Medal by the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2015, something he says marks the pinnacle of his career.

"I am an engineer at heart, so to be recognised by the Royal Academy of Engineering is personally unbelievable," he says. "For your royal academy to recognise you for something you have done is probably the pinnacle of anyone's career. For me, personally, it is incredibly important, and for Atkins I'd say the same thing."

"The Highlands and Islands form one of Europe's last great wildernesses. It's a beautiful place and a remote place. Trying to deliver such a project in such a tight timescale with things like subsea cables is very complex, and the award is in recognition of that." ■

MATT SCOTT is a business and data journalist

TACKLING DENGUE

Dengue is a disease historically associated with developing, mostly rural countries, but it now impacts a larger swathe of the globe, due to travel, urbanisation and climate change. Up to 400 million infections occur annually, data from the World Health Organization shows, and about 500,000 of those infections present in the disease's most deadly form: dengue haemorrhagic fever. As such, dengue fever has become a public health priority in more than 100 countries across Africa, the Americas and Asia.

There are no treatments available to address dengue. Instead, the focus is on prevention and exposure. A vaccine to prevent its spread has been a priority for pharmaceutical companies and health authorities for decades.

Sanofi Pasteur, the world's largest company devoted entirely to vaccines, started to work on developing a vaccine against dengue more than 20 years ago. In December 2015, its work came to fruition. It received approval for the world's first dengue fever vaccine in Mexico, Brazil and the Philippines. In February, El Salvador became the fourth country to approve the vaccine.

CLINICAL TRIALS

To carry out the complex, international clinical-trial programme required for these regulatory approvals, the company sought a contract research organisation partner that had experience in the emerging markets of Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

In 2007, Sanofi Pasteur selected Quintiles to supervise clinical trials. It has been a large-scale, complex programme to manage. Sylvie Dupin, clinical project management director at Quintiles, was responsible for it.

"Sanofi Pasteur wanted a partner that was willing to set up a dedicated and trained team up front and before the start of the studies. This was one of the key requirements," she says.

Quintiles oversaw 25 studies for the dengue vaccine programme in the Asia-Pacific and Latin America regions. The data from these studies formed a significant portion of the package of clinical-trials data required by regulatory agencies for marketing approval of the vaccine. It was important that the clinical trials unequivocally demonstrated the efficacy and safety of the vaccine in the prevention of dengue infection.

"Throughout the process, we collaborated closely with Sanofi Pasteur. This wasn't work that was simply outsourced to us; we built a strong and transparent relationship across the two companies, working together on the multiple aspects to start the studies, including to find,

Children account for many of the 500,000 cases of dengue haemorrhagic fever each year



"WE BUILT A STRONG AND TRANSPARENT RELATIONSHIP ACROSS THE TWO COMPANIES, WORKING TOGETHER ON THE MULTIPLE ASPECTS TO START THE STUDIES"

Dengue – sometimes known as 'breakbone fever' – is a painful, debilitating, mosquito-borne viral disease that threatens four billion people worldwide

equip and train at the local sites," Dupin explains. Quintiles was responsible for the project management, as well as the clinical trials and activities. The primary activity was around monitoring.

"When working in clinical research, you need to monitor that the activity being conducted at the sites follows the protocol and is done within timelines. The quality and the data is continuously monitored," Dupin says. "We brought in people who were very experienced to help train at the local sites, putting together teams in the emerging countries to ensure the right level of expertise to manage the studies."

Clinical studies are unlike any other project – the human impact can be huge, and conducting such large trials can involve vast amounts of people. The programme has involved more than 40,000 volunteer study participants aged between nine months and 60 years.

"These are very long-term studies, and it was so important to get them right, as this is the first vaccine for dengue. That means managing tens of thousands of people over multiple years, ensuring the participants visit the clinical sites on a regular basis to have assessments completed as per protocol," Dupin explains.

Variability in healthcare systems and standards of care, as well as logistical difficulties associated with adhering to the strict protocols at the right times, can be challenging. Many sites in the emerging countries were inexperienced in conducting clinical trials, and it was often necessary to put into place the correct infrastructure to conduct such a large-scale study.

A key aspect of Quintiles' role in the programme was, therefore, to mentor local medical professionals and help build their skills to ensure they could run the clinical trials in accordance with protocols and regulatory requirements.



“DENGUE THREATENS BILLIONS. THIS VACCINE CAN HELP TO CHANGE THAT. PLAYING A ROLE IN THIS PROGRAMME, AND COLLABORATING WITH SANOFI PASTEUR, HAS MADE ME AND THE REST OF MY TEAM VERY PROUD”

STRONG GOVERNANCE

At the heart of the programme, and key to its success, according to Dupin, was the strong governance system, which included professionals from both Quintiles and Sanofi Pasteur. The oversight team members were working both in situ in Asia-Pacific and Latin America, and also from offices across Europe and North America.

A governance team was created to ensure that the programme was being delivered correctly, as well as to take lessons learned from one study to another.

“This really helped us to make rapid decisions,” Dupin says. “Any decision that needed to be taken – whether it was about budgets, resources or the delivery of the programme – could, through the

governance team, be made very rapidly. It worked really well.”

During the peak of the programme activity, in excess of hundreds of team members were involved across Sanofi Pasteur, Quintiles and site staff – which included doctors, nurses and laboratory technicians.

In addition, each site had a dedicated clinical research associate (CRA) who acted as Quintiles’ primary contact and was responsible for the quality of the data collected and the timelines for delivery. For high-enrolling sites, or during peaks of activities, teams of CRAs were assigned.

Being able to manage resources effectively was one of the biggest challenges of the programme, Dupin acknowledges, as the number of people needed to work on it fluctuated depending on the stage of the trials.

“Working so closely with Sanofi Pasteur throughout the studies helped a lot. There was a lot of transparency between us, which helped to make sure that we were aligned for resource needs. I cannot stress enough that we worked as one team

– not two companies. This was one team working together as a true partnership.”

GREEN LIGHT

The pooled study results from the Asia-Pacific and Latin America studies were published online in July 2015 in *The New England Journal of Medicine* by Sanofi Pasteur. Overall efficacy was 65 per cent of nine- to 16-year-olds against dengue disease of any severity caused by any of the four dengue serotypes. Protection against severe dengue reached 93 per cent, and prevention of hospitalisations due to dengue was 81 per cent in this age group.

Soon after publication of the study, the vaccine gained regulatory approval in four key countries, showcasing the programme’s success.

“Dengue threatens billions of people around the world, and this vaccine can help to change that,” Dupin says. “Playing a role in this programme, and collaborating closely with Sanofi Pasteur, has made me and the rest of my team very proud.” 

JASON HESSE is the editor of *Project*

BECOMING WORLD CLASS

What does it take to become a world-class profession? **JASON HESSE** reports on this year's APM Project Management Conference

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While there is no silver bullet for building a world-class profession, more than 400 delegates converged at Kings Place in London on 21 April to discuss the idea at APM's annual conference.

The 2016 APM Project Management Conference, sponsored by 20|20 Business Insight, welcomed 15 speakers across 20 individual streams and talks. The event is a highlight of APM's calendar, offering attendees the opportunity to meet, network and discuss the key themes surrounding the project management profession.

At last year's event, project professionals were challenged to question their assumptions and myths about the profession. How could a change of philosophy open more possibilities? What could a change in mindset towards projects, programmes and portfolios mean for the economy, environment and society?

This year, the APM Project Management Conference pushed the envelope even further, exploring how the project profession can transform itself into one recognised as being world class.

With hundreds of billions of pounds entrusted to project managers for the delivery of projects right across the UK, the need for dependable, reliable people who have the right ethics and commitment to the profession is absolutely key. This was emphasised throughout many of the streams during the day.

Conference chairman Sue Kershaw, who is UK head of infrastructure programme and project management at KPMG, opened the conference by welcoming delegates and explaining the event's theme. After outlining the three different streams – profession, organisation and individual – for the day's talks, she asked the audience, "How do you want to change your lives and become world class?" She added: "We want to help you reflect on how you can make that happen."

CHALLENGING THE PROFESSION

The first speaker of the day was David Waboso, newly appointed head of Network Rail's Digital Railway directorate and APM president. His presidential address centred on four key challenges that the profession faces: delivery, collaboration, capability and the digital revolution.

Project management is moving towards a greater stage, with greater prominence, he said, but the profession must adapt and respond to the challenges of successful delivery.

"The holy grail of project management is the assured delivery of projects," Waboso explained. "Offering certainty, whereby you can embark on a project knowing that it will come out on the other end, is what we must do as project professionals."

Increasing collaboration is one way to achieve this, Waboso said. In an increasingly globalised world, it is difficult to do things in isolation. Furthermore, it is counterproductive. Working collaboratively towards the same end goal – successful delivery – means working together within projects, but also with other institutions. "We need to work across organisations, national boundaries and cultures," he explained. "The complexity of what we deliver has never been greater. That means that collaboration has to be at the core of our values."

This was a theme that was echoed throughout the day. In her talk about the role of politics in project management, Isabel Dedring, global transport leader at Arup and the former deputy mayor for transport in the Greater London Authority, emphasised that collaborative working is the optimal way of pushing projects forward.

"It's basic stuff, but it's about getting the right people in the room together. Bring key people from stakeholder organisations ▶



Addressing the conference, APM president David Waboso (pictured above, centre), the newly appointed head of Network Rail's Digital Railway directorate, paid tribute to the dedication and achievement of project professionals tasked with delivering on an ever-grander scale. There has never been a better time, he argued, for APM and its members "to look with confidence to the future, and to embrace the challenges that come with it"



and government together to create conversations and get projects delivered. That is how you get things done,” she explained.

Speaker Marc Woods, a four-time Paralympic gold medalist, also spoke of the importance of collaborating with others to meet your goals. His talk was a highlight of the day, taking the audience on a remarkable journey of challenges and success, and inspiring each person to do the best they can professionally and personally.

BUILDING CAPABILITY

Capability is another recurring issue that the conference addressed. Increasing the number of capable project managers is essential to building a world-class profession.

Waboso explained: “There are not enough good people coming to the profession to service the demand that is growing. We have to think about how we attract, retain and assess as competent those people coming to the profession.”

This is a major concern for APM and, as a professional association, it is part of its role to build and maintain competence in the profession.

The role of professional associations in recruiting, educating and developing industry professionals was examined by Jon Prichard, chief executive officer of the Engineering Council.

A key aspect is qualifications, which are integral to building trust in the profession. Qualifications and formal accreditation, he said, allow you to ascertain credibility when looking for a project manager. “How can you authenticate the person in front of you?” Prichard asked.

He then outlined how his own profession, engineering, has developed itself: defining competence in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude. By delving into the history of regulations and standards, he exposed the need for a code of conduct and

professional development across project management. This is needed to ensure that competence and professionalism are maintained.

Prichard left delegates with a key takeaway. He explained that, for professionals – be they engineers or project professionals – to become world class, it is important to develop the right state of ‘MIND’: motivation, initiative, nimbleness and decency. “This means displaying enthusiasm, learning to excel beyond threshold standards, demonstrating agility and flexibility, and doing the right thing, with integrity and ethical behaviour,” he said.

“SITTING IN THIS ROOM ARE PROJECT, PROGRAMME AND PORTFOLIO MANAGERS THAT ARE MANAGING HUGE AMOUNTS OF WEALTH, COMPLEXITY AND BUSINESS CRITICALITY, NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY”

SOFT SKILLS

During the rest of the day, industry experts and leaders gave interesting talks in their respective streams. Talks around ‘soft’ skills – attributes that enable people to interact effectively and harmoniously with others – were popular, with many of the sessions oversubscribed.

Michele Owens’ discussion in the ‘organisation’ stream, sponsored by ProjectPlace, focused on how organisations can become world class through great people strategies.

Owens, formerly the head of HR for the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), explored the tools used by the ODA during the build-up to London 2012, explaining how building manager capability through learning, coaching and mentoring can help to transform organisations. Small things can make a big difference to people, she said.

Elsewhere, David Gurteen, the founder of Gurteen Knowledge, made the case for conversational leadership.

“This is a style of working whereby you understand the transformative power of conversation,” he explained in his ‘individual’ stream session. “You take an open, conversational approach to the way that you work and interact with

#APMconf: A social conference

Attendees were encouraged to tweet and discuss the conference on social media channels throughout the day using the hashtag #APMconf. In the main hall, a Twitter feed projected related tweets onto a wall so that delegates could see how their colleagues were responding to the day’s events as they occurred. What did they share?



LUCIDUS CONSULTING

@LucidRus

It looks like the theme of World Class must somehow tie into ‘a world where all projects succeed’ #APMconf

JULIAN SMITH

@apm_xa

We have officially launched the @APMProjectMgmt Project Professional Qualification (PPQ) at our annual conference this morning. #APMconf

JO STANFORD

@jo_stanford_pm

#APMconfWow! Marc Woods’ stunningly brilliant motivational speech at the conf. Powerful, moving, inspiring and incredibly relevant!

KIRSTEN BIRD

@KirstiBird

#APMconf Accelerate incremental learning to transformational – PM can embrace this step change

PETER DIRKEN

@PeterDirken

HS2 is one of the first public projects to use detailed BIM2 to deliver it on time and to budget #APMconf

NATACHA REDON

@NatachaRedon

Soft skills presentation by far the most popular one this morning at #APMconf APM members understand challenges of PM profession

HELEN CUREL

@CurelH

Clear frustration around the lack of investment and prioritisation given to major infrastructure projects in the UK – Steve Elliott #APMconf

ROY MILLARD

@RoyMillardUK

Tony Meggs: “The hardest job that a programme/project leader has to do is speaking truth to power.” #APMconf

people, purposefully nurturing and stimulating the natural conversations that take place within your organisation.”

Being a ‘conversation architect’, Gurteen said, helps you to be a leader by learning to identify the strategic conversations that need to take place, the questions to trigger them and how to design the processes to initiate them.

WORLD CLASS

Throughout the day, delegates were actively encouraged to ask questions, and were challenged to discuss with one another the issues that affect the project management profession.

There were also exhibits by leading industry organisations, such as headline sponsor and training provider 20|20 Business Insight, stream sponsor ProjectPlace, defence and aerospace group BAE Systems and enterprise software provider Deltek, among many others. These gave attendees a chance to discover the latest products and services available to project managers.

Delegates left the three different streams with their heads full of thought-provoking ideas from the diverse speakers.

By the end of the conference, after Infrastructure and Projects Authority chief executive Tony Meggs gave his closing speech (see right), it was clear that Waboso’s opening presidential address was prescient in encapsulating the main theme of the day, which was to understand where project management sits as a profession, where it is going and how it can achieve world-class professionalism.

“Sitting in this room – here in London – are project, programme and portfolio managers that are managing huge amounts of wealth, complexity and business criticality, nationally and globally,” Waboso said.

“APM is what pools the profession together – there has never been a better time for APM and its members to look with confidence to the future, and to embrace the challenges that come with it.”

For readers unable to attend the conference, all of the speaker presentations are available at apm.org.uk. 

JASON HESSE is the editor of *Project*



TONY MEGGS: “SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER”

Tony Meggs, chief executive of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, was the closing speaker of the APM Project Management Conference 2016

As the chief executive of the newly created Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA), Tony Meggs spoke on behalf of the government to explain how the IPA is working to help projects succeed. In front of a captive audience of influential project management leaders, he did not disappoint, and he was not afraid to answer tough questions.

Meggs set a challenge for the audience to “speak truth to power” – that is, to stand up and not be afraid of challenging the government on project delivery.

“A successful project is about being in the environment for success, and the key is to get projects set up in the right way from the very beginning,” he explained. “We need to make sure that we know what we are going to do before we say we’re going to do it.”

Breadth and width

Equally, Meggs – who comes from a private-sector background, including a role as BP’s head of technology – said that the scale of projects that the government is undertaking is staggering.

“As an outsider, what happens in government is breathtaking. Every morning, I come into the office and have to decide if I will work on nuclear submarines, HS2 or transforming the justice system. The scope and the scale are breathtaking, as is the ambition.

“When I look across government at the 100-plus major transformation programmes we have under way, I realise that there is no corporation that would undertake such an



extraordinary set of activities in every single part of its business, at the same time. But that’s what we are doing.”

Infrastructure is a large part of the government’s programme, and Meggs said he believes the UK could be entering a golden age of infrastructure.

“There is increased investment and increased confidence. For the government to invest all of our money into huge and important national projects, there has to be a degree of confidence that the projects will be delivered. There is a growing sense that they will.”

However, he emphasised that, to achieve success, change is necessary. Planning projects early so that they are not committed to unreasonable expectations is essential. Measuring performance and having clear benchmarks is key. And developing capability across government is needed.

“I would like to get us to a point where all of the departments are so good at project design and execution that there is very little need for central support and intervention.

“Building capacity and capability at the front end, where the work actually gets done, is our foremost duty.”

SHINING A LIGHT ON MAJOR PROJECTS

Project catches up with the National Audit Office's
GERALDINE BARKER, whose role is to shine a light on how major projects are being delivered by government

Delivering large-scale infrastructure and transformation projects is a struggle for any organisation, whether public or private. A report from the National Audit Office (NAO), published earlier in 2016, took a deep dive into the government's delivery of major projects.

Delivering Major Projects in Government was published by NAO director Geraldine Barker and her team, following a comprehensive review of the government's Major Projects Portfolio. The report was a wake-up call for government, highlighting that project delivery must improve.

There are currently 149 projects in the Major Projects Portfolio, and these have a combined whole-life cost of £511bn, of which £25bn is expected to be spent in 2015–2016. Getting these projects wrong would be disastrous for the public purse. The role of Barker's team is to identify what the systemic issues affecting the projects may be, and to ensure that public money allocated to major projects is well spent.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The public sector has improved at delivering projects successfully, but further enhancements are needed. While the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) – formerly the Major Projects Authority – and government departments have taken steps to develop capability and provide assurance on improving project delivery, it is vital to improve the consistency and reliability of data surrounding project success.

One third of projects that are due to be delivered in the next five years are rated as 'in doubt' or 'unachievable' if action is not taken to improve delivery.

The success of these projects is paramount if government is to become more efficient at delivering services.

Indeed, nearly 80 per cent of the major

projects due to be delivered by 2019–2020 have a transformation or change agenda for how services are delivered or accessed.

Barker, who has spent the past 16 years at the NAO, knows that the key to improving these projects is better data, which, in turn, can help identify weak areas that need to be addressed.

"With the start of the new parliament, we thought that it would be useful to get some context on projects, given how integral project delivery is to the activities of government, as well as highlighting the issues and weaknesses," she explains.

While positive steps have been taken around accountability, the changes have not gone far enough.

"The IPA has done a lot to try to address issues around accountability – establishing the owners for projects – and there has been a lot more assurance than there was at the start of the last parliament," Barker says. "But the data provided by departments isn't transparent enough."

One example is costs. "Quite rightly, the IPA wants major risky projects to go into the portfolio at an early stage, but the costings are uncertain," she explains. "They might know how much money is required to prepare and plan the project, but the detailed whole-life cost will not

have been entirely worked out, as the data is incomplete."

The assessment of costs is an important mandate for the NAO, so understanding how much projects will cost – and how the money will be spent – is important.

"Parliament votes large sums of money for projects. Our role is to make sure that those delivering the projects are spending the money in the way that parliament intends it to be spent, and that it is delivering value to the taxpayer," says Barker.

She has identified planning as a key lesson for this, and says that project managers ought to spend more time planning: "Do not start making early announcements about projects before having had the chance to plan them through properly. We need to see more emphasis on what it is that the project is trying to solve, instead of just jumping to a solution.

"Have a good, long think about why the project is necessary, and the different ways that you could meet those objectives."

Having a good challenge function in place can help with this. Taking a little more time at the early stages of the project to challenge your thinking can pay dividends.

"We saw this with Crossrail," Barker explains. "[Project managers] spent a long time on planning, and they got a lot of challenges back from the Major Projects Review Group. Despite it being a painful process for them at the time, the project ended up benefiting from this."

DATA CHALLENGE

Accurate, reliable data is at the heart of successful project delivery, and the complications of collating this data in the Major Projects Portfolio is one of the root causes for the NAO's challenging assessment in the recent report.

"PARLIAMENT VOTES LARGE SUMS OF MONEY FOR PROJECTS. OUR ROLE IS TO MAKE SURE THE MONEY IS SPENT IN THE WAY THAT PARLIAMENT INTENDS, AND THAT IT DELIVERS VALUE"



“WHENEVER WE DO DEEP DIVES INTO PROJECTS, GETTING GOOD DATA IS CONSISTENTLY AN ISSUE. WE NEED TO TAKE A MUCH CLOSER LOOK AT HOW DATA IS COLLECTED AND REPORTED”

“There are still many gaps in the information that the IPA holds,” Barker explains. “It is doing a lot to try to improve how benefits are articulated, but we feel that there is still a lot that needs to happen around the data more generally.”

When asked why there are such weaknesses in the data, Barker is unable to give a full answer. “I’m not really sure that we’ve got to the bottom of it,” she says. “Whenever we do deep dives into projects – HS2 or Crossrail, for example – getting good data is consistently an issue. Sometimes there are time lags, which are entirely understandable, but

we need to take a much closer look at how data is collected and reported.”

The standardisation of data is an issue. Project managers are always able to answer specific questions posed by portfolio managers and government departments, but the questions – and the data that is requested – are often posted in different ways, which makes it hard to compare data sets.

TRANSPARENT COSTS

This all leads to the most important issue: cost. The challenge of improving portfolio management at departmental

and governmental level has often led to difficulties in assessing, in the planning stages, what will be the project’s full cost.

The general point, says Barker, is how this affects transparency.

“How can we ensure that decision-makers know what the cost will be of what they are agreeing to? How can parliament better understand what it is voting for when allocating money to projects?”

This does not mean having to come up with one final figure for any given project, she adds. There is currently a lot of pressure on the public sector to come up with figures, and taxpayers rightfully want to know how much a project is costing them, but coming up with one specific figure is unrealistic in major projects.

Instead, says Barker, why not encourage departments to educate and explain the uncertainty that surrounds major projects, and come up with a range of costs? “That would be a much healthier discussion, as it would help everyone understand the variables and risk involved,” she says.

The NAO’s role in assessing projects – by uncovering how money is being spent and looking at how waste can be avoided – is not easy. The lack of data and the difficulty in accurately determining a project’s likelihood of being delivered successfully, on time and on budget, is a challenge. Yet, clearly, improvements are required for success rates to rise.

But, for Barker, the job of shining a light is done. “Given the scale and length of major projects, it is important to review them periodically, instead of just waiting to the end, when it is too late to fix them.” □

JASON HESSE is the editor of *Project*

International superstar

A career across the globe has been Faisal Mahomed's passport to project management success, **MATT SCOTT** discovers



Now a global telecoms giant, BT has come a long way from its humble origins as part of the General Post Office, a UK government department.

One man benefiting from this growth is Faisal Mahomed, a young programme manager rising rapidly through the ranks at BT. His career to date has taken him from London to Latin America via Africa and back again.

Mahomed's first big break came little over a year after joining BT's graduate scheme, when his potential was spotted by one of the corporation's managing directors.

"When I started, I initially worked in a transformation role within one of our lines of business, with responsibility for a specific product," Mahomed explains. "Over the course of the first year, we managed to turn the performance of that product from decline to double-digit growth. A structured, carefully managed plan was key to the strong turnaround. From that point on, I moved, as one of the managing director's high performers, to the Global Telecom Markets consulting team. That's really where things started to kick off for me."

GLOBAL LEADER

Mahomed's first international role was leading the transformation of the front-end installation operations for one of the major telecoms operators in Ghana, as part of a wider transformation agenda involving process redesign and operations management. This was followed by a move to Cameroon, to lead a product transformation project aimed at redesigning a local operator's product roadmap and go-to-market strategy.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Mahomed looked at ideas for how he could grow BT's business in new ways, and develop his career at the same time.

"One of the key areas that the consulting team did not support at that time was Latin America," Mahomed says. "I put together a business case of market opportunity in Latin America, as well as a clear plan of how to achieve it. The managing director signed it off and I was told to go and deliver it, so I packed my bags and had to quickly turn my fancy PowerPoint into a mini business venture."

Mahomed was helped in this ambitious endeavour by his love of travelling, which had previously led to a spell backpacking around the Americas, and a passion for languages – he is fluent in English, French and Spanish.

"One of the trust factors in launching these propositions in Latin America was the fact that I was from the UK hub and I was able to speak the language and understand the culture on the ground in these countries," he says. "It was also a time when BT was looking to grow in that particular region, so an opportunity to do that was very welcome. But what really helped was my language skills. I would never have been able to work in Cameroon without speaking French."

CHARLIE BEST

Once in Latin America, Mahomed was responsible for selling and delivering transformation projects to other telecoms operators in countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica and Argentina. These projects included sales-channel redesign, the landing of a submarine cable and a field transformation project.

The unknown quantities involved in setting up brand-new operations made for an exciting time: "When you are starting up something new in a different area, you wake up every morning and get out of bed knowing there is no structure in place. You have to go out and make something happen. That's quite exhilarating."

BIGGEST SAVINGS

Now back in the UK, Mahomed is responsible for group cost transformation projects. During the past year, he has delivered one of the largest transformation savings as a result of forensic commercial reviews, coupled with meticulous programme management of the unit. He says his career path, involving many different departments, business partners and even continents, has helped shaped his professional development and make him more rounded and credible with senior colleagues.

"In my view, you can go up in quite a linear way in your career, whereby you specialise in one function and rise quite fast," Mahomed says. "But there's another way, by which you get diversity of experience and an understanding of a number of different functions around the business, that gives you a more generalist path. Although it may take longer to progress, it makes you a lot more rounded and, in some cases, more flexible."

"I personally subscribe to the latter path. I've spent time in marketing, operations and programme management; all those experiences are helping me progress quite quickly now. It's good for the individual, but it also gives credibility. I believe it's good for the individual and the company. Senior stakeholders trust you more, while you can use the knowledge and experience to drive real change."

So what next for this rising star?

"BT has recently completed the purchase of EE and is reorganising its lines of business. This year, I want to make sure that the new organisation within BT is operational," he says. "Beyond this, I plan to continue to strengthen my experience, each time delivering even bigger transformations."

"That's where I'd like the direction of my career to continue: an even wider portfolio of transformation, covering full end-to-end business change."

And with the way his career has developed so far, no one will be betting against him doing just that. **■**

MATT SCOTT is a business and data journalist

 **FAISAL MAHOMED**

Age: 31

Organisation: BT Group

2007: Joined Mars Chocolate as trade marketing manager

2009: Joined BT as channel manager

2011: Moved to Ghana for a fixed network transformation project

2012: Lead consultant for sales and marketing project in Cameroon

2013: Lead consultant for a channel redesign project in Costa Rica

2014: Lead consultant in PMO office and submarine cable landing in Colombia

2015: Back in the UK as a senior programme manager in BT Group's Cost Transformation unit

"IN MY VIEW, YOU CAN GO UP IN QUITE A LINEAR WAY IN YOUR CAREER, WHEREBY YOU SPECIALISE IN ONE FUNCTION AND RISE QUITE FAST. BUT THERE'S ANOTHER WAY, BY WHICH YOU GET DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS AROUND THE BUSINESS, THAT GIVES YOU A MORE GENERALIST PATH"



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PROJECT SPECIAL REPORT EDUCATION

Education forms a vital part of a project manager's development. Whether it is learning and acquiring the basic skills needed to deliver projects successfully or deepening your skills in a particular industry, education never stops throughout your career.

There is no 'right' way to acquire an education in project management. For some, attending a course at a university will be the best way; for others, learning on the job will be more effective.

Formal qualifications and recognition should play a role throughout, however. Incorporating a mix of tools, techniques, processes and skills, they offer a progressive structure that demonstrates your project management achievements. Obtaining a formal qualification enhances confidence and builds on your professional status, which enables you to work towards the project jobs that you want.

In this special report, *Project* explores three different streams of education: university courses, professional qualifications and learning from and educating others at work.

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BACK TO SCHOOL

Is there merit in obtaining a university qualification in project management? **JO RUSSELL** investigates

A university qualification in project management is not something to be undertaken lightly. There is a significant cost involved – fees for a one-year MSc are in the region of £12,000 – and then there is the time commitment, whether you take a career break to study, or study part time while juggling a full-time work role.

Despite these considerations, project management university courses are gaining in popularity. At Southampton Solent University, the MSc programme started two years ago in response to demand. Without having to embark on a marketing exercise to promote the course, it has proved to be one of the most popular masters in the business school from the outset.

Senior lecturer Serkan Ceylan says that the course attracts a range of people: “I have students who have been doing project management for the past 30 years, but who find that people are now asking for qualifications. And I have students who have come from a bachelor’s degree through which they were unable to find work, and who have now secured project management roles.”

A lot of the interest is from small- to mid-sized companies that are waking up to the role of project management, but have no in-house expertise.

“People are moving away from the times when you found someone who was good at their normal job and then said, ‘Can you take on this project now?’” continues Ceylan. “They are seeing that, where that has happened in the past, their success rate has not been great. They now see it is important to have skilled people who have done some form of project management course.”

Part of the popularity may be down to course content. Ceylan explains: “Southampton Solent is the only university in the UK that delivers PRINCE2® and agile project management foundation and practitioner accreditation as part of the course, plus the course is aligned to the APM Body of Knowledge.”

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The course is taught by ex-industry people rather than academics, he continues, meaning that the emphasis is on practical application rather than theory and blue-sky research.

A similarly practical approach is adopted at Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG), part of the University of Warwick, where short courses and full- or part-time MSc qualifications in programme and project management are available.

“After each module, we have post-module assignments in which the learning is applied against a work-based project, so you take the learning back to the project,” says Julian Amey, principal fellow and acting director for professional and executive education at WMG.



“Students doing a full master’s do a dissertation that is typically a work-based project. The ethos here is not theoretical academia, but applying the learning in a practical way,” he explains.

Amey sees that a key advantage of a university education over in-house training or learning on the job is a university’s ability to draw from numerous sources in order to teach best practice, and ensure the content is relevant and innovative by continually refreshing or renewing it. WMG, for example, has created a new module on collaborative leadership.

“Collaborative working is becoming a key theme for a number of organisations. On many projects you effectively have a value chain of companies needing to work together. Organisations like Network Rail are insisting that supply-chain partners are certified to the standard on collaborative working. We are trying to teach managers to operate and lead in that new kind of environment, rather than adopting the traditional command-and-control approach,” says Amey.

Course leaders remain on the lookout for new and best-practice examples, and are able to call in external experts or practitioners

“STUDENTS DOING A FULL MASTER’S DO A DISSERTATION THAT IS TYPICALLY WORK BASED. THE ETHOS IS NOT THEORETICAL ACADEMIA, BUT APPLYING THE LEARNING IN A PRACTICAL WAY”



from other companies who can give real-life case studies that a standard training provider would not be able to.

REAL-LIFE RELEVANCE

The vast majority of students at WMG have been sponsored by their companies, several of which have longstanding relationships with the university. WMG is able to tailor the short courses to suit their needs and make them as relevant as possible.

The short course was the route initially taken by Pretee Patel, commercial manager at UTC Aerospace Systems.

In 2012, Patel undertook a company-specific postgraduate programme, which incorporated three modules that were effectively MSc modules. At the end of the course, she put the three modules towards an MSc, believing that it would not only be interesting, but would further her career prospects. The fact that it was part time (over two years) meant that it fitted around family and work commitments.

Patel says that the MSc has given her skills that she has been able to take back to the workplace.

“I feel that I am more resilient and can look at things more objectively. I can look for solutions more instinctively, and am more proactive in trying to sort things out and look for the lessons that can be learnt,” she says. She does not believe that the MSc could be substituted for in-house training.

“The two are quite different. The MSc talks about change management and leadership. It references articles and different businesses’ experience. You couldn’t learn those things in house. Also, with an MSc, you are constantly looking at the arguments as to why things are done and developed, and considering the

“THE COMPANY HAS A VIEW ON HOW PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS POSITIVELY ON EMPLOYEES, BUT THERE IS A DISJOINT BETWEEN THAT VIEW AND THEN DELIVERING THE BENEFIT BACK INTO THE COMPANY”

pros and cons. In house, you are learning something that has already been predefined,” she says.

The frustration since graduating is that, despite the company being fully supportive of and financing the course, there has been little attempt to maximise that investment.

“From a business point of view, the MSc probably hasn’t been recognised as much as I would like. My role hasn’t changed, which is a frustration,” states Patel. “The company has a view on how personal development impacts positively on employees, but there is a disjoint between that view and then delivering the benefit back into the company.”

There are mutual benefits to completion of a university course, including greater skill attainment for both employee and employer. The trick lies in the subsequent use of those skills to best effect. 

JO RUSSELL is a business writer and editor

THE ROUTE TO SUCCESS



Professional qualifications offer project managers a structured pathway into their career, APM's **SCOTT WALKINSHAW** explains

At the launch of Crossrail's Learning Legacy programme in February, Tony Meggs, chief executive of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, said that the UK is in the midst of a golden age of infrastructure building.

It's a claim that is difficult to disagree with, as it came in the same week that the new Elizabeth line was launched, and Crossrail itself passed the 70 per cent complete mark. Meanwhile, HS2 is well under way, and the Thames Tideway Tunnel – a multibillion-pound scheme to modernise London's sewer network – has also started in earnest.

But the growth in project delivery is not limited to infrastructure. Public-sector projects in the UK are valued at £500bn, according to the Major Projects Authority's 2015 annual report; if that level of investment is extrapolated across the whole economy, the figure rises to £1.25 trillion. To put that in context, the GDP of the UK in February 2016 was valued at £2.2 trillion. The total value of projects and programmes in the UK is equivalent to the UK's entire economic output for seven months.

But, according to APM's *Conditions for Project Success* research, only 22 per cent of projects are currently considered to be wholly successful. The picture isn't quite as bleak as some commentators might suggest – another 21 per cent view their projects as 'moderately successful', but what is undeniable is that there is a lot of room for improvement in the world of project delivery.

SKILLS GAP OR SKILLS SHORTAGE?

It is widely recognised across the profession that we are suffering from a skills shortage, that there are too few project professionals available to address the challenge of delivering such a vast portfolio of work.

Is this true? Maybe. APM's *Salary and Market Survey 2015* found that 69 per cent of employers are growing and plan to recruit in 2016, and yet we regularly hear how difficult it is to recruit capable professionals in the sector.

We live in a time when the popularity of the profession has never been greater. Increasing numbers of people select project management as their first choice of career, but research

INCREASING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE CHOOSE PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS THEIR CAREER, BUT RESEARCH SUGGESTS UP TO 30 PER CENT DO SO WITHOUT ANY FORMAL QUALIFICATION

suggests that up to 30 per cent of people do so without any formal qualification.

The reality is that most project professionals hold no more than a relatively low-level knowledge qualification, or no qualification at all. So, the problem is not necessarily the quantity of people working in the profession, but the quality.

THE RISE OF THE PROFESSIONAL

How do we address the gap in quality that the profession is suffering? Instead of following the unsuccessful lead of England's football team in recent decades by simply hoping that a golden generation of uniquely talented professionals might just happen to emerge when we need it, we could increase the chances of success considerably by putting in place the structures to generate a regular supply of professionals into the market at both the quality and quantity needed.

In April, APM took a significant step in that direction with the launch of the APM Project Professional Qualification, a unique award designed to thoroughly examine and recognise project professionals with the capability to deliver successful projects, programmes and portfolios.

The qualification is made up of six modules, with candidates required to pass four: three core modules covering governance, leadership and project controls; and one of three elective modules that examine the combination of competencies required to manage projects, programmes or portfolios.

The qualification offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate a much deeper understanding of the profession than ever before, and extends beyond project management into the area of programmes and portfolios, reflecting the profession's broad application.

EVALUATE, NOT REPLICATE

Each module is assessed through a three-hour examination in which candidates are asked to evaluate a case study and apply their knowledge appropriately to the given scenario.

The qualification tests a candidate's ability to understand, evaluate and apply professional practice to any project, programme or portfolio they are presented with. The four-module structure allows candidates to demonstrate a deep understanding of their subject. It is not enough simply to replicate what they have been taught; they will also be required to evaluate the scenario they are presented with and appropriately apply their knowledge, ensuring the best outcome for their project, programme or portfolio.

Rather like learning to drive a car, the essential knowledge – changing gears, making the car go forwards and backwards,



FOR CANDIDATES, THE QUALIFICATION PROVIDES A STRUCTURED PATHWAY INTO THE PROFESSION. MEANWHILE, FOR EMPLOYERS, IT PROVIDES ASSURANCE OF CAPABILITY

and using indicators and mirrors – can be grasped fairly quickly. The candidate is then expected to apply that in a variety of different scenarios to show a level of capability that allows them to pass their test.

The new qualification recognises a much wider application of project management competence. Its modular approach also allows candidates to be supported by training and development programmes over a period that suits them and their employer.

For both candidates and employers, this provides the benefit of an accelerated path to developing professional capability in a way that is structured and clear. Going back to the analogy of learning to drive a car, it is possible to learn through a process of trial and error – and in the hope of meeting the scenarios that truly assess capability – but this is an uncomfortable and potentially long-winded approach, with no guarantee that you'll ever achieve what you need to.

The APM Project Professional Qualification removes that uncertainty. For candidates, the qualification provides the structured pathway into the profession that they are looking for. Meanwhile, for employers, it provides assurance that candidates have been provided with a robust assessment of capability. For

the profession, it is the next step in providing the talent pipeline required to address the vast portfolio of work currently being undertaken in the UK and beyond.

FROM CAPABILITY TO COMPETENCE

The qualification provides the foundation for candidates to take their understanding on from capability through to competence.

Successful candidates will be eligible to apply for full membership of APM, which provides the foundation for individuals to progress through to APM Registered Project Professional standard. The latter requires candidates to demonstrate APM's FIVE Dimensions of Professionalism: breadth of knowledge, depth of understanding, a track record of achievement, commitment to professional development, and accountability through a code of professional conduct.

The introduction of the APM Project Professional Qualification bridges the gap between APM's knowledge-based qualifications – Introductory Certificate: The APM Project Fundamentals Qualification and APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification – and APM Registered Project Professional, a pan-sector standard recognising success in complex projects.

This structured qualification route into the profession, along with existing experiential routes, provides a career framework that will make a significant step towards addressing the challenge of delivering projects, programmes and portfolios that benefit individuals, employers and the economy alike, thereby raising the standard of project management. 

SCOTT WALKINSHAW is head of marketing and communications at APM

SPREADING THE WORD



Project management is not just for project managers. **VALENTINA LORENZON** explores how to educate business about the value of the profession

There's no question about it: project management skills have become an essential tool for all professionals. Even though many do not formally label or run their work tasks as projects, many non-project managers work on a daily basis on assignments that could be considered project work. Project management methodologies are useful even when carrying out general management activities that entail dealing with stakeholders, managing teams and resources, delivering quality outputs, optimising performance and managing risk.

As a result, even those who are not project managers benefit from learning more about project management tools and how they could be useful in their main roles. But what is the best way to gain this knowledge and integrate it with their primary skill set effectively? And how can project managers help convey the importance of the profession?

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

In the past, one of the main challenges was that project management was not well defined as an independent discipline, and was mostly associated with a limited number of sectors, such as construction and engineering.

Thanks to industry bodies, training providers and the wider project management community, the profession has now spread across a wider spectrum of industries, and its role and importance are significantly clearer – even for those who are not industry professionals.

However, although this has resulted in an increased awareness among organisations about the value of having in-house managers with project management skills, many find some of the methodologies too complex for their requirements or consider them overly difficult for combining with general management skills.

TOOLS FOR EDUCATING NON-PROJECT MANAGERS

Best practice: Based on their experience with a variety of projects across different organisations and sectors, professional project managers have the expertise to share the best and most suitable practices depending on the requirements of the organisation.

Lessons learned and case studies: Non-project managers need to understand the mechanics and logic behind the different processes and methodologies and there are no better tools

for this than looking at previous projects or initiatives. Both lessons learned and case studies can be very powerful to show what has worked and what has not in specific cases.

Body of knowledge and competence framework: Industry-specific body of knowledge and competence frameworks are essential to educate non-project managers about the essential tools and standards. These are particularly useful for organisations to

overcome this perception, it is essential that – when educating non-project managers – the practices are approached as more than a series of processes and methodologies that automatically guarantee satisfying outputs. The most significant message to convey is that the real benefit of project management lies in understanding the main principles well enough to apply them efficiently to specific projects or activities across different sectors and organisations. As a result, non-project managers who are able to grasp the real essence of the discipline are able to select the processes and methodologies that work best for their specific needs, rather than getting bogged down in practices that might look too daunting or unsuitable.

However, this approach presents a big challenge: every project is different, and a real understanding of the project management principles comes only through experience and the practical application of its methodologies.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Three main stakeholder groups play a major role in educating non-project managers about the discipline: industry bodies, training providers and project management professionals. These groups all have knowledge and first-hand experience in the field.

1. Industry bodies

These are the most authoritative and reliable sources of information about the industry. Project management professionals remain their main focus, but these organisations can also extend their reach even further. Non-project managers can benefit from project management skills, as these can improve both their own and their organisation's performance.

Industry bodies should also work as a bridge between organisations and industry professionals.

benchmark against their peers, as well as to identify the skills they require, any gaps in knowledge and what training might be useful.

Shared knowledge with the wider community: Thanks to online professional platforms, practitioners can easily share knowledge and opinions on project management-related topics and issues. Exchanging thoughts and notes can be a very useful way to learn more about the subject.



EVEN IF ORGANISATIONS DO NOT SEE THE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT DISCIPLINE AS A WHOLE, THEY MIGHT CONSIDER SOME OF ITS ASPECTS – TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY – TO BE HIGHLY VALUABLE IN THEIR WORK

way will they appreciate the beneficial impact of project management on their work and become its champion within their organisation.

It is also essential to define benefits and added value clearly, showing how the use of certain methodologies can result in improved performance. Non-project managers must first understand how adopting project management skills translates into better

outputs, and how specific tools can be used to allocate resources more efficiently.

This can be achieved by integrating project management as much as possible into 'business as usual'. Some organisations often decide not to adopt project management processes, because they feel that such processes could disrupt their business-as-usual operations significantly. Project managers, therefore, have a responsibility to show how their methodologies and techniques can be combined with general management processes easily, so that they can make everyone's job more efficient.

Finally, processes and methodologies must be broken down into specific actions aimed at individual requirements. Indeed, the real value of educating the wider business community is that it will enable organisations to pick and choose the most suitable tools and techniques for their needs. Even if organisations do not see the immediate benefits of the discipline as a whole, they might consider some of its aspects – taken individually – to be highly valuable in their work.

Both organisations and professionals are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of having in-house project management knowledge and how it can be applied both to project work and general management.

By sharing best practice and providing non-project managers with the tools and skills to use project management, we can help others become more efficient and get better results in their day-to-day work. 

2. Training providers

The training offered within the project management industry has widened significantly during the past few years in order to meet the increased demand for specific knowledge on the subject.

As a natural development of this offering, the focus will shift even more towards tailored programmes that not only look at project management as a whole, but also at specific aspects, such as risk management or quality control. These niche skills can be adopted and used by non-project managers, too, as a way to improve their performance at work. Training providers should therefore strengthen their ties with industry organisations as well as employers, in order to provide both theoretical and practical expertise.

3. Project management professionals

Project managers are, without a doubt, the key stakeholders that can help educate non-project managers, as they have both the knowledge and the technical expertise to share.

Working in or consulting for an organisation, they are best placed to understand the specific requirements and, consequently, the most suitable way to share knowledge and convey value. Similarly, thanks to the many online project management groups and platforms, professionals can easily exchange knowledge and discuss industry-related issues and practices.

WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

When educating non-project managers, who might not be familiar with the tools and technical aspects of the discipline, project management professionals need to put the emphasis on how specific departments or individuals would benefit from gaining and using these skills.

This translates into several needs, such as showing practical applications. Project management is more than a series of processes and methodologies, and non-project managers will only truly understand its importance and value when they have seen it 'in action', applied in typical work situations. Only in this



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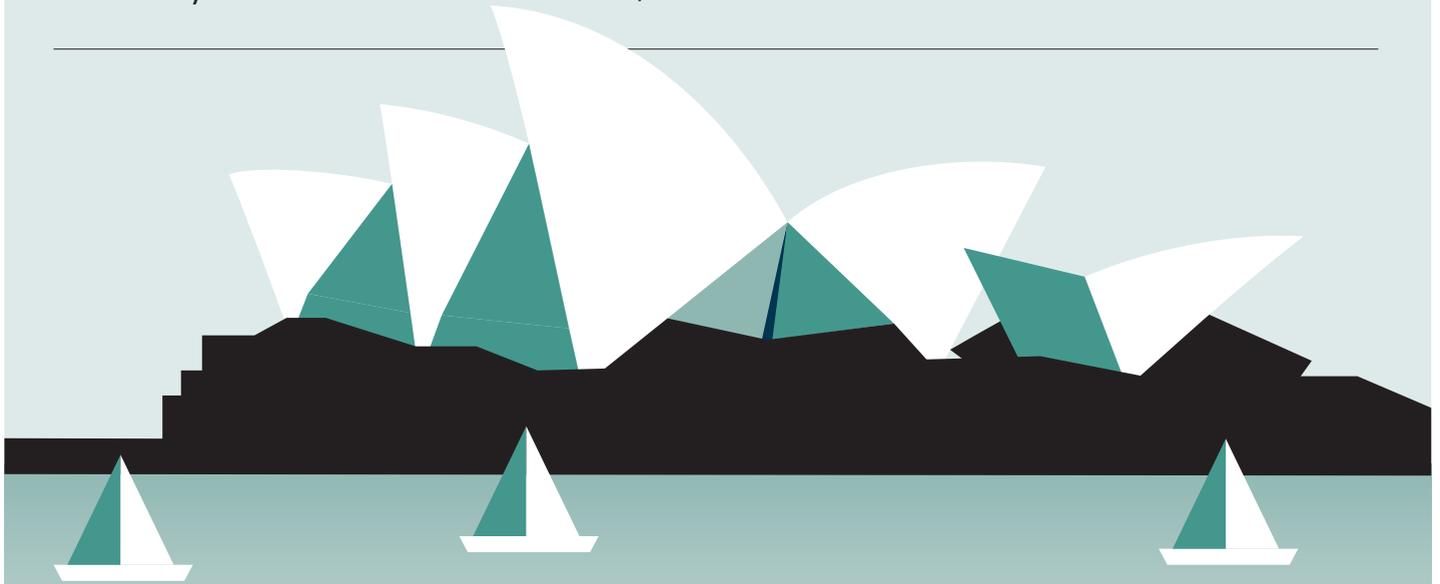
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Look into the future

To determine your project's success, begin to think about its legacy before you've even started work, write **PAUL HODGKINS** and **ESIL ONAL INAM**



Our world faces a series of complex issues and a host of ever-increasing challenges. Whether it be the impact of globalisation, volatility caused by political and economic uncertainty, the demands on healthcare created by an ageing population, or the effects of climate change on our weather systems, one thing is certain: the next set of challenges is just around the corner.

Here is another certainty: projects and programmes are being used as the instruments of change to address emerging challenges. It will be their legacies that determine whether or not they were considered successful. Therefore, what happens after project delivery is not just important – it must become the reason we undertake the project in the first place.

APPROACHING LEGACY

It should not matter whether these projects are the instruments of change needed to address global challenges, or simply voluntary work within our local communities; the topic of legacy should be uppermost in our minds from the moment the project is conceived.

However, as a profession, can we honestly say that we all think deeply about what we wish our project legacy to be? Or is it that – in a world where our approach to projects tends often to be short term, delivery oriented and focused on ‘getting the job done’ – legacy is not something we are concerned with?

Littered throughout history are projects that were delivered immaculately to time, cost and quality, and yet have been

considered failures. We must, therefore, think seriously about how to approach the task of creating our intended legacy, so that we gain new knowledge and insight, which can, in turn, help us improve rates of project failure and address regular challenges.

It is interesting that, while the tools and techniques used to manage projects have stayed essentially the same over many years, the environment in which our projects are managed has become ever more complex, and uncertainty is the only thing we can be sure of.

To consider, from the beginning, what may occur after a project is delivered allows us to think in novel ways. For example, if the main aim of projects is to support the achievement of strategic and operational objectives, then each project undertaken will create incremental shareholder and stakeholder value and contribute to a shared legacy. If it does not, then should we start or continue that project at all, even if ▶

WE MUST THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT HOW TO APPROACH THE TASK OF CREATING OUR INTENDED LEGACY, SO THAT WE GAIN NEW KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT, WHICH CAN HELP US IMPROVE

the business case is viable? Or should we provide more resources to those projects that expand our organisational future?

Addressing legacy as part of our project planning can also help the stature of our profession by demonstrating that we are contributing to something much bigger than the project alone. This will ensure that we are not viewed simply (and incorrectly) as 'executors of planned tasks', but as the custodians of the future.

The legacy of projects can inspire people to do things more effectively in the future. Thus, the legacy of one project will directly or indirectly impact on the success of another. Project legacy can help create an identity. Organisations can therefore use legacy as part of their marketing strategy, or as a characteristic to differentiate themselves.

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

'Legacy' can have many meanings and can be dependent on many things – such as our own perceptions, judgments and view of the world. Legacy can be visible or invisible, permanent or temporary, real or perceived, with a short- or long-term impact.

There are 'hard' legacies, such as the 'afterlife' of a built venue; 'soft' legacies, such as lessons learned; and 'emotional' legacies, such as the feeling of togetherness and pride that the UK felt in hosting the 2012 Olympic Games.

But one thing that none of us can control – and yet contributes significantly to how a project's legacy is perceived – is the dimension of time.

The best example of this is the Sydney Opera House. In the 1940s, Sydney was overshadowed by a rival city, Melbourne, and one of the ways to put Sydney 'on the map' was to design and build the Sydney Opera House. In that aim, no one can deny that it has been a resounding success.

Designed by the Danish architect Jørn Utzon, its immediate legacy, however, included the sacking of its project manager, Utzon's resignation part way through, continual political interference, persistent changes in scope, spiralling costs, street protests and an opening that came 10 years later than planned.

When the Sydney Opera House eventually opened in 1973, in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen, Utzon was not even invited to the opening ceremony, nor was his name allowed to be mentioned in Her Majesty's presence. Perhaps the saddest legacy was that Utzon garnered a reputation as a 'one-building architect'.

With the passage of time, the Sydney Opera House enjoyed a growing reputation, sitting proudly against the backdrop of

ADDRESSING LEGACY AS PART OF OUR PLANNING CAN ALSO HELP THE STATURE OF OUR PROFESSION BY DEMONSTRATING THAT WE ARE CONTRIBUTING TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN THE PROJECT ALONE

Sydney Harbour. In 1999, Utzon was invited back to act as a guide for future design changes.

In 2003, he was awarded the highest honour in international architecture, the Pritzker Prize. In 2004, the reception hall was renamed the 'Utzon Room', and when he died in November 2008, the flags on the Sydney Harbour Bridge were flown at half mast. Perhaps his legacy – and that of the Sydney Opera House – is best captured in the words of the American architect Louis Kahn: "The sun did not know how beautiful its light was, until it was reflected off this building."

LEGACY QUANDARY

All projects leave legacies and, as such, we must think about legacy at a strategic level and recognise it as a strategic enabler. When thinking about legacy, it is important to consider it as carefully as we do risks, opportunities, stakeholders or schedules. But, while we may be able to influence the perceptions and judgments of others through our stakeholder engagement and management strategies, we cannot plan for what cannot be controlled – such as changes in political systems, developments in culture or environment, adaptations in community values and ethics, or the dimension of time.

Legacy is not just about doing the project right, but about doing the right project. Project managers must plan for what we wish our legacy to be, and then review, recalibrate and re-plan at every stage. Nonetheless, plans may be rendered worthless by things that we cannot control.

When it comes to guidance as to what we should consider when thinking about project legacy, our current methods, tools and techniques seem to have little to say. It is time, therefore, to break the silence.

Project professionals have stayed in their comfort zone for too long by not thinking meaningfully and deeply about project legacy and what the real purpose of our projects actually is.

We must be able to envisage the 'bigger picture', and be able to do so now. Why? Because tomorrow is too late; it is already the future. 

KEY MESSAGES

- What happens after you have delivered a project should be the reason that you begin the project.

- Project legacy is about inspiration, creating an identity and being the difference that makes the difference.

- Each project undertaken within a portfolio creates incremental shareholder and stakeholder

value, and contributes to a shared legacy – whether you like it or not.

- Project legacy is about seeing the 'big picture' and thinking beyond the project life cycle.

- Grasping the project's legacy will help you manage projects more effectively, decrease project failure and create a better project future.

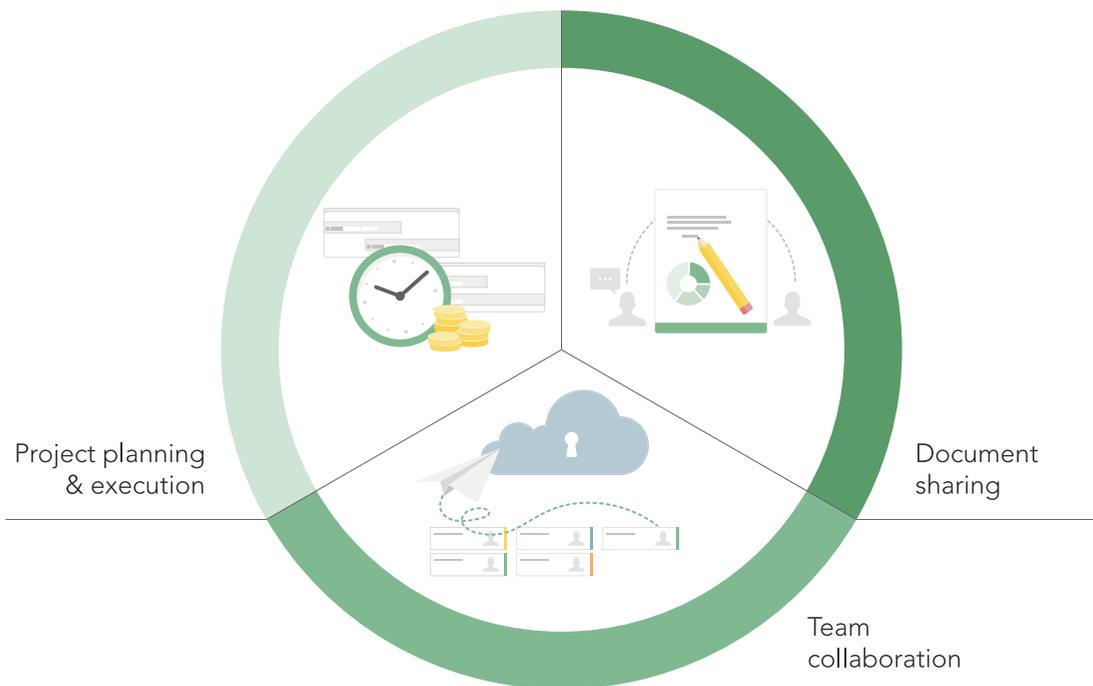


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ESIL ONAL INAM is a project specialist and a graduate of University College London's Strategic Management of Projects MSc

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Health check

Monitoring how teams work together can benefit project knowledge-sharing. **ELISABETH GOODMAN** offers a way to improve success

Many project professionals will have heard of Tuckman's stages of team development model, designed to help achieve high-performance teams at work, be they operational or project teams. But can this, or should this, apply to teams of volunteers?

The reality is that volunteer teams are no different from any other. They should and can find the right balance between the three key aims of high-performance teams: to pool members' intellectual thinking in support of clearly defined goals; to build strong relationships within the team that draw on the individual strengths of each member within it; and to develop operational practices that enable the team to work as effectively and efficiently as possible.

An example of a volunteer team is APM's own specific interest groups (SIGs). The Enabling Change SIG, of which I am a part, recently agreed to take part in a team diagnostic – also known as a 'health check' or 'temperature check' – which yielded positive results.

Simply having the time to reflect and discuss different issues that had been on people's minds helped to bring the team closer together.

The exercise as a whole helped the team not only to celebrate what it does well, but also provided the group with a greater focus on its goals and how to work together to become a high-performance team.

This approach is one that can be tailored and adapted for all types of volunteer groups and committees in other organisations.

IDENTIFY THE THEMES

It is important, when designing the health check, to give team leaders and members the opportunity to explore the aspects of team working that are important to them.

The Enabling Change SIG identified 14 themes, grouped under the three key aspects of high-performance teams. Other teams might choose a variation on these topics and groupings.

THINKING:

- **Purpose and goals:** Share and commit to a mission that provides focus and direction.
- **Leadership:** Each person plays an effective leadership role for their area of responsibility, taking ownership and accountability.
- **Roles and responsibility:** Know what is expected of you and each other and how you can best contribute to team success.
- **Creativity and innovation:** Use the experience and expertise of every member within the team to exercise thought leadership, be creative and innovate.

- **Monitoring performance:** Have mechanisms in place to evaluate and demonstrate how well you are delivering on your purpose and goals.

RELATIONSHIPS:

- **Trust in each other:** Respect and believe in one another. Recognise that you will each have your own values, beliefs and motivators for your work within the team.
- **Support each other:** Work for each other's success; know that you can count on each other; respond to and offer support for and input to each other's tasks.
- **Open communication within the team:** Continually share information, ideas, opinions, concerns, skills and knowledge.
- **Diversity:** Recognise and value differences in styles, ideas, cultures, backgrounds and expertise.
- **Task and relationship balance:** Balance the need to get work done with the need for strong, healthy relationships.

OPERATIONS:

- **Decision-making:** Exercise effective, clear, structured decision-making, with control of project scope.
- **Meeting management:** Hold effective meetings for the right – and stated – purposes, at the right time, with the right participants and desired outcomes.
- **Timely follow-up on actions:** Deliver all tasks to schedule.
- **Manage internal information and documents:** Effectively manage plans, actions, issues, risks, agreements, quality and other documents.

GATHER INPUT

What is working well and what can be improved? Team members should be given the opportunity to express their views as fully and openly as possible. An anonymous pre-workshop questionnaire, with well-structured questions, is often the best way to do this (SurveyMonkey works well).

The pre-workshop questionnaire we used was in three parts. The first part enabled the team to rate itself on its performance. This provided a useful 'at a glance' comparison of performance against the different themes. It also became a baseline against which to assess the impact of improvements in future iterations of the survey.

The textual questions in the second part of the questionnaire gave people the opportunity to elaborate on their ratings, and make suggestions. Note that the emphasis was positive and forward-looking, encouraging people to identify what would



SIMPLY HAVING THE TIME TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS DIFFERENT ISSUES THAT HAD BEEN ON PEOPLE'S MINDS HELPED TO BRING THE TEAM CLOSER TOGETHER

make the team stronger, rather than dwelling on what was not working. Part two also included an 'any other aspect of our work' theme in case the 14 aspects had missed something important.

The third part encouraged people to highlight successes and opportunities for improvement that stood out for them and so might help the team establish priorities.

REVIEW RESULTS

A combination of time for individual reflection and face-to-face discussion can draw out people's individual thinking and build consensus. How a team chooses to do this will obviously vary, but the following was the approach used by the Enabling Change SIG.

The leader of the health check produced an objective summary of the results, and reviewed this and the detailed results first with the committee chair – it is good practice to do this with any team leader. Some of the feedback may relate to their performance and they might like to reflect on this ahead of sharing the results with the rest of the team. It might also be useful to remember that any feedback – good or bad – is the expression of individuals' perceptions, and so you should not become defensive about it. After all, an individual's perception is their own reality.

The summary and detailed results were then shared electronically with the rest of the team, and they discussed them in a face-to-face workshop.

As there were three main aspects, and six team members, pairs of committee members elected to work together on one of the three aspects, and to prepare recommendations: first, a summary of the key findings for their allocated team aspect, and then a set of recommendations to address them.

Each pair of committee members talked through their outcomes to aid understanding and enable any further input from other committee members.

The result was a list of around 30 recommendations, which was circulated after the workshop and voted upon. Each

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the case of the Enabling Change SIG, the recommendations from the health check were a mixture of short-term and longer-term actions. Examples include:

- Having a standing agenda item to include discussion on change management, thought leadership, white papers, etc.
- Considering how to more effectively communicate the outputs from the SIG.
- The chair (and others, as opportunities arise) seeking opportunities to strengthen relationships and influence within APM.
- All committee members to share objectives for being on the committee.
- Ensuring induction and on-boarding of new committee members.

member had 10 votes that they could distribute as they wished: they could vote on 10 individual recommendations, or put several votes on fewer recommendations.

The final shortlist of priorities was again reviewed with the committee chair, and then agreed and designated as actions at a subsequent committee meeting.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE, AND REVIEW

Next, of course, the recommendations should be put into practice. Those that are short-term actions can be tracked as part of the committee's meeting-related actions, while longer-term actions may require a different form of review, perhaps as a standing agenda item.

The final step is then to carry out a further health check after several months go by, to assess the impact of the improvements and identify any other necessary changes. 



ELISABETH GOODMAN is a committee member of the Enabling Change Specific Interest Group, with special responsibility for internal collaboration with other SIGs and branches

Point of law

DR JON BROOME and ROB HORNE explain what every project manager needs to know about offer and acceptance, and look at the common legal pitfalls

Whether entering a multimillion-pound contract to deliver a substantial project or buying some off-the-shelf components, a project manager increasingly cannot avoid having to advise on and deal with the formation of contracts.

Entering a contract with 'eyes wide open' is essential to ensure neither you nor your client is exposed.

While there are six criteria that have to be satisfied for parties to enter into a contract, this article will focus on the two that tend to generate the most problems: offer and acceptance.

The fundamentals of offer and acceptance are:

- **An 'offer' is a promise made by the offeror to be bound by a contract if the offeree accepts it.**
- **The offer must be sufficiently clear and contain, either directly or by reference to standard documents, the basic terms of the agreement: what is to be supplied, by when and for how much.**
- **The offer can be revoked – or 'withdrawn' in plainer English – any time before acceptance, but otherwise stands for a 'reasonable' period of time.**
- **The acceptance takes effect from the time it is communicated.**
- **The offeree has to accept the offer in its entirety and unconditionally. They cannot pick and choose the bits they like.**
- **A counter-offer revokes the previous offer, so that the previous offer no longer exists.**
- **The offer matures into a legally enforceable contract once the offeree accepts it (and when other formalities not discussed here are met).**

It is not quite as simple as this, however. There are a number of pitfalls to avoid.

PITFALL 1

THE OFFEROR AND/OR OFFEREE DO NOT HAVE THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO NEGOTIATE AND/OR ENTER INTO A CONTRACT ON THEIR ORGANISATION'S BEHALF

If you are negotiating a contract on an organisation's behalf, you are holding yourself out as having authority to do so. If you are an employee and you exceed the authority given to you, then, by either inadvertently entering into a contract on behalf of your employer (see pitfall seven), or entering into it on unfavourable terms, you could end up in disciplinary proceedings. If you are an external consultant, you or the consultant organisation you work for could be sued for the same reasons.

Key lesson: Be clear about your authority to negotiate and enter into a contract on behalf of the organisation you represent. Do not exceed it.

When it gets to signing the contract, if the other person or persons that you are negotiating with do not have the authority to enter into a contract, then, for the offer you are making to be accepted, they will have to refer it to someone else – another department or their boss, for example. At a minimum, this can cause delay. It could result in a significant waste of time as the contract is renegotiated with the person who does have the authority. It is therefore always a good idea to set out the ground rules for concluding the contract early in the negotiation process.

Key lesson: Ask whomever you are negotiating with (or whoever is intending to sign the contract) to confirm their capacity to negotiate on an organisation's behalf, and to explain the internal procedures before a contract is signed. Even company directors may not always have sufficient authority for substantial contracts, so a board resolution delegating authority to a particular director or, slightly more unusually (except in an international context), a power of attorney, may be required.

Key lesson: If you have the authority to negotiate, but not enter into a contract, mark every communication 'subject to contract'. This indicates that you do not intend to create a legally binding obligation until a formal contract has been entered into, usually in writing and signed by both parties. Even if you have the authority to enter into a contract, it is still a very good idea to do this. However, the words 'subject to contract' are not a magic get-out-of-jail-free card, either. If, in fact, a full agreement has been reached, then a court may well find that a contract has been concluded.

PITFALL 2

DETAILS ARE MISSING OR VAGUE, BUT THERE IS STILL A CONTRACT, AND HENCE LIABILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

If details are missing from an offer, you may assume that it is not a complete offer, or that a term of the contract does not apply – ie you do not have to do something or are not liable for something that is only vaguely outlined or not agreed in the contract.

In *Drake & Scull Engineering Ltd v Higgs & Hill Northern Ltd* (1994), all terms had been agreed except for labour rates for additional or changed works. The rates originally put forward by Drake & Scull had been rejected, pre-contract, as being too high, but agreement was never reached on what they should be.



Higgs & Hill argued that there was no contract as a result. The courts decided otherwise, and that Drake & Scull were entitled to a 'reasonable sum' for the labour involved. There are other similar court cases in which something unwanted but foreseeable happened – such as a change or late delivery. With no procedure or basis for agreement stated in the contract, a big argument results.

Key lesson: Think through the 'what ifs' and make sure that the contract is clear enough on what happens for those that are most likely and have the highest impact – ie apply risk management to the contract. When thinking about whether you have sufficient content, it is worth considering a very simple contract, say for the purchase of a chocolate bar in a supermarket. What terms, conditions and requirements are necessary there? Yes, a contract for part of a project is more complicated, but though there is a way of working out time for completion, price and even quality, these details not being present will not necessarily prevent acceptance occurring.

PITFALL 3

YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED AFTER YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT

An offer lapses after a 'reasonable' period of time. This can be after you have forgotten about it and the world, including your organisation, has moved on. For example, you have won other new business and do not have the capacity to deliver the contract, or the cost of your raw materials has increased, so you cannot fulfil the contract profitably. But what is a 'reasonable' period of time?

Key lesson: Always state how long your offer is open for acceptance; specifically, state the day upon which it will lapse.

PITFALL 4

ACCEPTANCE HAPPENS WHEN IT IS COMMUNICATED, BUT A REVOCATION ONLY BECOMES EFFECTIVE ONCE IT IS RECEIVED

It is a quirk of English law that an acceptance, if posted, takes effect at the moment of posting, as long as post was a valid and appropriate method of communication.

However, both an offer and a revocation need to be actually received before they are effective. The defining case on this is *Byrne & Co v Leon Van Tienhoven & Co* (1880), in which Van Tienhoven – based in Cardiff – offered to sell 1,000 tin plates to Byrne on 1 October and sent its offer by post. Byrne – based in New York, US – received it on 11 October and immediately telegraphed its acceptance. Meanwhile, Van Tienhoven revoked its offer on 8 October, again by post. Because Byrne had not received the revocation by the time it accepted the offer on 11 October, a contract was formed on this date.

Key lesson: If you want to revoke an offer, always do your utmost to ensure that a revocation is actually received. If done verbally, make a note of it in a diary and follow up in writing. If by post, ensure that it is sent via recorded delivery. If by email, tick the box on Outlook that records whether it was received by the other organisation's server. ▶

ALWAYS STATE HOW LONG YOUR OFFER IS OPEN FOR ACCEPTANCE; SPECIFICALLY, STATE THE DAY UPON WHICH IT WILL LAPSE

PITFALL 5

YOU CANNOT PICK AND CHOOSE WHICH PARTS OF THE OFFER YOU ACCEPT. YOU EITHER ACCEPT AN OFFER IN ITS ENTIRETY OR NOT AT ALL

If you say, 'I like these aspects of your offer, but not these', but then either forget to resolve the differences or continue to negotiate, you might inadvertently enter into the contract including the terms you do not like.

Key lesson: Be a good project manager and keep an issues log for areas of the contract that are unresolved. Ensure they are resolved before you enter into the contract, and keep up the use of 'subject to contract' until everything in the log is closed out.

PITFALL 6

YOU MAKE A COUNTER-OFFER TO WHAT IS A VERY GOOD OFFER

By making a counter-offer, you are revoking the original offer. That means if they do not accept your counter-offer, you cannot go back in time and accept the previous good offer. Making a counter-offer is different to asking a question or seeking clarification.

Key lesson: Don't be too greedy. If the other party makes you a good offer, you may want to accept, even if there is a possibility of a better deal – because, otherwise, you could end up with a worse deal.

Key lesson: Be careful how you phrase your communications when discussing terms of a contract. If you are having a wall built, and receive a tender, you can say, 'Is that brick work or block work?' as a clarification, which keeps the original offer alive. However, if you say, 'I want it to be brick work, not block work', that would be a counter-proposal if the offer had been based on block work.

PITFALL 7

YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE A SIGNED DOCUMENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT. DON'T BE THE LOSER IN THE 'BATTLE OF THE FORMS'

If both parties start acting as if the contract is in place, then there is a contract in place by conduct. This pitfall often comes about when, in construction for instance, a contractor wants to get started on site and the employer wants work to start, so they just get on with it, waiting for the paperwork to 'catch up'.

A variation on this, related to pitfall six, is that the last bit of documentation that was sent over becomes the offer that, by action, is accepted. This is known as the 'battle of the forms'. However, no one is quite sure when both parties started acting as if a contract was in place and hence which 'documentation' is the contract. The situation is further complicated – typically in more complex procurements – when different parts of the

IF BOTH PARTIES ACT AS IF THE CONTRACT IS IN PLACE, THERE IS A CONTRACT IN PLACE BY CONDUCT – FOR INSTANCE, WHEN THEY WANT WORK TO START, SO THEY GET ON WITH IT, WAITING FOR THE PAPERWORK TO 'CATCH UP'

DON'T BE TOO GREEDY. IF THE OTHER PARTY MAKES YOU A GOOD OFFER, YOU MAY WANT TO ACCEPT, EVEN IF THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF A BETTER DEAL – OTHERWISE, YOU COULD END UP WITH A WORSE DEAL

contract documentation have been sent backwards and forwards for clarification and amendment.

Key lesson: As action-oriented people, project managers want progress. But be very careful about starting to act as if a contract is in place when none is signed, especially when there has been much back and forth of contract documentation. Keep using the words 'subject to contract'.

Key lesson: For more complex procurements, where there has been a lot of back and forth, ensure the final terms have an 'entire agreement' clause. This helps ensure that only referenced documents are part of the contract. You then need to reference all the final agreed documents. 

KEY POINTS

- Make sure you have the authority to negotiate and/or enter into a contract on your client organisations' behalf. Understand what authority the person you are negotiating with has.
- Mark all correspondence as 'subject to contract' until you are happy to enter the contract.
- Apply risk management techniques to the more likely and higher-impact scenarios. To avoid future disputes, make sure the contract covers the 'what ifs'.
- Phrase clarifications as questions rather than counter-offers.
- Always state the date on which your offer will expire.
- Ensure a revocation of an offer – or 'withdrawal' in plain English – is received.
- As contractual issues are identified, log them and ensure that they are resolved before you enter into a contract.
- A counter-offer revokes a previous offer.
- Beware of the 'battle of the forms' and do not inadvertently, by conduct, enter into a contract on the other party's terms.
- Include an 'entire agreement' clause in the terms, and reference all the latest agreed documents.



DR JON BROOME is a trained civil engineer and chair of the APM Contracts and Procurement Specific Interest Group

ROB HORNE is a partner in the engineering and construction and dispute resolution teams at Simmons & Simmons

Within our grasp

The Institution of Civil Engineers' new GRASP methodology prioritises people in projects. **BENEDICT PINCHES** looks at why it should be embraced

David Waboso's inaugural message as APM

president gave the project management community a lot to think about, in particular that project management is increasingly about more than the rusty iron triangle of time, cost and quality. As a profession, we need to expand this paradigm to deal with the growth of complexity and pace.

Productive collaboration across organisations, countries and cultures is a must-have requirement, and digital technology will need to be harnessed more effectively to help project managers succeed in harsh economic environments.

For Waboso, Network Rail's new managing director of Digital Railway, a man with a solid engineering background, to ask practitioners to focus on the so-called 'soft' side of project management reinforces a movement that is making waves across the infrastructure and IT project community, and helping to push the UK to the forefront of project management thought leadership.

Underpinning everything, said Waboso, is people. It is time to accept that projects exist to satisfy human desires and needs, and we have to better understand these drivers before we can hope to improve our success statistics.

Unfortunately, to date, there has been a lack of practical tools and models to assist the project manager in this journey.

The standard techniques of stakeholder categorisation and prioritisation are well known and certainly necessary, but where are the methodologies to help with the practicalities of decision-making and intervention?

The publishing arm of the Institution of Civil Engineers has recently produced a book that may just be what project managers are crying out for to help them with this murky world of human relationship management.

Going by the catchy title of *Global Risk Assessment and Strategic Planning (GRASP)*, this newly documented methodology captures the thinking of a hugely experienced team of practitioners and academics, and provides step-by-step instructions for managing multi-stakeholder perspectives in an effective and clear way. The methodology has systems thinking as a backdrop, but brings it to life via a six-step approach that is easy to understand. Although the book is newly published, the practice has been developed over a number of decades by



consultants working on real projects. The fact that the HS2 project has incorporated GRASP into its processes reflects its provenance.

Simply put: without the careful consideration of multiple stakeholder perspectives, your project is unlikely to be successful. With my 20 years of experience in complex programme delivery, I am pleased to see this emphasis, and welcome the discussions on diversity that support this thinking.

Despite the growth in the number of large projects being commissioned, the research shows that our historic focus on time, cost and quality has not produced significant performance improvement.

By combining multi-stakeholder perspectives, the GRASP methodology enhances both the management team's

knowledge base and its awareness of a project's situation. It facilitates not only the identification of potential risks to projects, but also provides an effective process for managing such risks.

Plus, in keeping with project management tradition, there is even a 'GRASP triangle', although I am pleased to say that this triangle is less prescriptive and more thought-provoking than its iron cousin. It's about people.

There are a number of interactive ways of engaging with this methodology. Events have been organised, which will allow the methodology to be presented and discussed across the project management community. This initiative is a significant step forward for the 'soft' project movement. Anyone interested in improving the way that projects are delivered ought to sign up and take part. **■**



BENEDICT PINCHES is the founder of Oxford Major Programmes

Better portfolios, better projects

JOHN EDMONDS explains how to use strategic portfolio management to bring about transformational change

As the rate of change increases, organisations that have learned how to transform themselves through effective leadership and strategic control are more likely to survive and prosper. Portfolio, programme and change management are increasingly being recognised as key approaches to enable organisations to deliver their strategy and manage that transformation.

One example is a client of ours – a university with high ambitions in terms of change, but very stretched resources. There was a lot of project activity taking place, but it lacked focus or control across the campus, and project management capability was quite variable and dispersed. It had many so-called ‘strategic projects’, but there was little in the way of corporate control or direction. It therefore decided to implement a portfolio management strategy across the

TOGETHER WITH THE CLIENT, WE HAD TAILORED THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURE TO MEET ITS REQUIREMENTS. THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN ENGAGING SENIOR MANAGERS

organisation and introduce programme management to ensure a focus on delivering the transformation required.

The university told us it had 130 major projects, involving approximately 70 project managers, plus project directors and sponsors – and it needed to engage with them all. Change like this brings huge challenges for everyone, but let’s focus on two roles – sponsors and project managers. The university was aware that, to make the change successful, support was needed from senior management, who needed to know exactly what was expected of them (this is important, as many organisations do not engage senior management in these situations).

So, as part of our involvement, we started to tackle role-based learning requirements and develop bespoke training for programme directors and senior responsible owners.

FINDING A CHAMPION

Prior to this, important engagement occurred when the chief operating officer decided to attend the first major training that we delivered – a Managing Successful Programmes (MSP®) practitioner course. Arranging for such a high-level delegate to commit to this was quite a coup for the internal change

team, and created a ‘champion’ for the activity to follow. He subsequently attended the opening of each MSP® course and opened the events with a talk that positioned the training in the wider corporate strategy. Better still, he also acted as a change champion among his peers in senior management. This put the new portfolio/programme approach squarely on the ‘agenda’ of senior management’s discussions – and, interestingly, many other members of the senior management team attended later MSP® training courses.

This could have been counterproductive. Many times we have witnessed senior managers becoming frustrated by a lot of the detail contained in frameworks such as MSP® and PRINCE2®, resulting in them becoming detached from the perceived bureaucracy involved.

However, in this instance, there was a good deal of positive energy within the organisation, and, after all, it was an educational establishment, so we avoided this potential pitfall. Of course, it also helped that we were already planning follow-up events to tackle specific role-based learning requirements.

Together with the client, we had tailored the programme structure to meet its requirements by using the roles of programme director and senior responsible owner. Tailoring the method or framework is an essential element in engaging senior managers. An unthinking implementation of MSP®, PRINCE2® or any external standard would simply alienate, leading to its ultimate rejection.

We have always found that it is wise to remember that senior management already has experience, knowledge and wisdom about its organisation and the challenges it faces. We consider it essential to allow senior management a voice to express this in a time of change.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

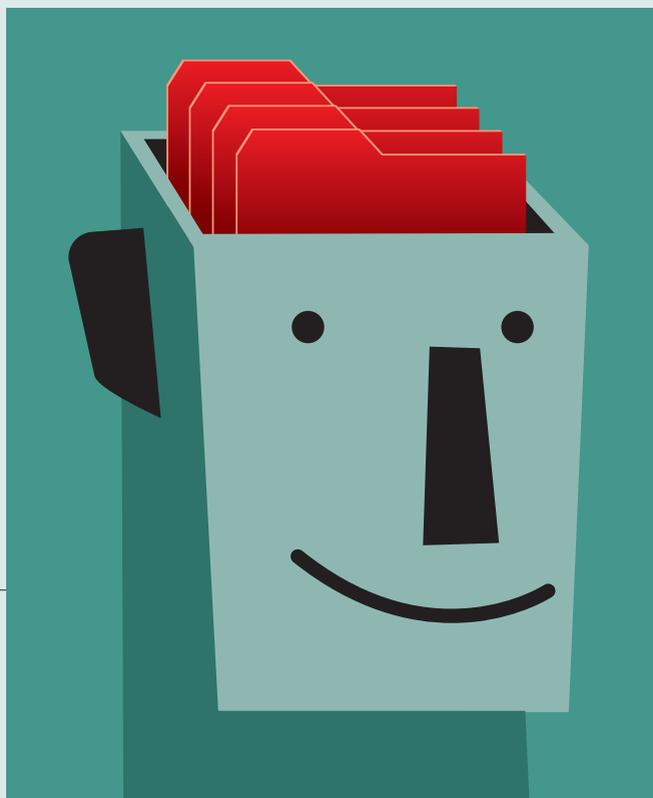
The workshops we designed were as much about engagement as education. In his book, *Practical People Engagement*, Patrick Mayfield set out a series of principles for good engagement. Here are four that were valid in this instance:

Seek first to understand, then be understood. We ensured that we listened first to the experience of those senior managers.

Effective change is always led. Without the buy-in of senior management, the initiative will eventually falter.

Recognise and minimise the pain of change. They are all busy people and change means increased busyness. Our interventions must be thoughtful and helpful.

Meaning trumps authority. Their favourite question is ‘Why?’



THE WHOLE POINT OF A PROJECT IS TO INTRODUCE CHANGE IN AN ORGANISATION. WHILE THE PROJECT MANAGER MAY NOT BE A PART OF THE DESIRED FUTURE STATE, THEY ARE A CATALYST FOR THE TRANSITION

OUR ANSWERS MUST BE MEANINGFUL

Now it is time to discuss project managers themselves. Quite simply, the whole point of any project is to deliver something that will introduce change to one or more organisations, and while you, as project manager, may not be a part of the desired future state, you are a catalyst for the transition, and many people may be looking to you for guidance, ideas, expertise and advice about that process.

However, whereas project management is a series of relatively well-defined processes and concepts, the ideas behind portfolio, programme and change management are rather more equivocal. For project managers who thrive on certainty, the uncertainty and ambiguity of transformational change is a challenge.

Yet however vague transformational change might seem when compared with the relative discipline of project management, we have no choice but to recognise its vital part in organisational transformation. What characteristics would enable project managers to become better catalysts, and how can they develop the skills and knowledge required? The characteristics can be summarised as follows:

ENACT

A project manager needs to act as a role model throughout an organisation. This involves setting a positive and meaningful example of how to lead change successfully. Two particular audiences for this 'role modelling' are senior managers and middle managers. Both groups in turn need to be encouraged to become role models themselves, and project managers can be instrumental in making this a reality.

This 'upward engagement' is important as the programme moves on from the initial defining stages. The danger is that senior management becomes a little detached. Project managers need to maintain the momentum and keep the profile high.

ENGAGE

Stakeholder engagement is so often the weak area of any project. In a recent survey, three-quarters of organisations stated that

they defaulted to a top-down approach to communication, and less than 10 per cent encouraged dialogue around change initiatives.

Project managers must begin to prioritise engagement and communication, as people need to understand and buy into the case for the change if that change is to succeed. All stakeholders need clear answers to the 'why?' questions around change. Once again, if project managers set an example in this area, others may well follow.

The sense of collaboration that was created at the university we were working with was a very positive element in moving things forward. Project managers must avoid the 'us and them' relationships that can be created in many project environments. The university asked us to design change-management workshops that project managers and business managers alike could attend. These were hands-on, pragmatic events that encouraged collaboration and joint working practices, thus raising the levels of engagement further.

EMPOWER

Ultimately, change happens within the organisation; projects 'simply' deliver the products that allow it to happen. Therefore, the need to empower others is paramount. Change leaders at all levels in an organisation need to be recognised, equipped and supported so they are empowered to play their part in successful change.

The workshops gave people skills, ideas and approaches that they could use. This gave them practical tools in their hands and demonstrated that their organisation was actively empowering them to make a difference.

Successful business transformation calls for leadership from all levels – sponsors and senior managers, project managers and business managers – all of them collaborating and fully engaged. 



JOHN EDMONDS is head of training and director of strategy and marketing at pearcemayfield

Friends with benefits

Why it is important for project and programme managers to translate benefits management into their organisations

Most commonly, we think of translation as taking place between different languages, but in management theory, the term has a wider meaning in relation to the specialist concepts and vocabularies that we use in our activities.

Key to the process of translation are actors, the people who make things happen, and objects, the different types of documentation that the actors produce, disseminate and use, such as guidance from professional associations.

Project management is full of interconnected management ideas at different levels (project, programme and portfolio) and covering different themes (value, benefits, costs, risks and quality).

In many organisations, they are interwoven with other management ideas, popular examples being agile, lean and big data. Large organisations often develop their own frameworks, consciously drawing on different management ideas. An example is GlaxoSmithKline's accelerating delivery and performance approach (see *Project*, December 2014, page 30), which draws on organisational development, lean sigma and project management principles.

BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

Benefits management emerged as a distinctive management idea about 25 years ago but, despite evidence that a focus on benefits improves the success rate of projects and programmes, it seems to have had a limited impact so far.

There are many reasons why this might be the case, ranging from the multiple meanings of the term 'benefits' to discomfort among senior decision-makers at the increased accountability, transparency and formality that benefits management brings to the evaluation of investment decisions.

There is very little evidence as to why benefits management is adopted by some organisations, but fails to make headway elsewhere. Furthermore, some that have embedded it into their management practices do not call it 'benefits management'. Translation would address such questions directly.

Much of the recent research on benefits management has been concerned with the incidence of its practices. However, this research is susceptible to different interpretations as to what is involved in undertaking a particular benefits management practice, and hence may fail to capture variations in the quality of the management processes involved.

EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

The focus on these practices needs to be combined with questions on how the organisation came to be using them,

which specific benefits management tools and techniques are used, and the extent to which benefits management is embedded across different parts of the organisation. There is increasing recognition among researchers that more attention needs to be paid to the adoption of benefits management, which reinforces the case for translation as a theoretical lens.

Our initial investigation has looked at the evidence available on the translation of benefits management, as a precursor to primary research on translation processes. We traced its development at a global level, to identify the changes in translation processes over time, and the current geographical patterns of usage at a macro scale. This analysis is used in conjunction with the limited evidence available on translation processes at an organisational level – the micro scale – to identify key factors for the future adoption of benefits management.

Our macro-scale analysis identified different stages in benefits management's development, in which additional layers have built up over time.

BIRTH OF THE DISCIPLINE

Benefits management emerged from the onset of new types of projects in the 1990s: business-related IT investments, which were increasingly complex and high risk. Pioneering consultancies and universities, working largely independently,

DESPITE EVIDENCE THAT A FOCUS ON BENEFITS IMPROVES THE SUCCESS RATE OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES, IT SEEMS TO HAVE HAD A LIMITED IMPACT SO FAR

developed frameworks for managing benefits that were qualitatively different from previous investment appraisal techniques in the rigour attached to the conceptualisation of benefits and the integration within a project, programme or portfolio management context.

This first stage was followed by the incorporation of benefits management into project management and IT guidance in the late 1990s and early 2000s. By the mid 2000s, many countries had incorporated it into the central project management guidance sponsored by governments and professional bodies.

In the late 2000s, a third layer emerged, as networks began to develop to share experiences and promote the practice,



such as APM's Benefits Management Specific Interest Group (SIG).

Alongside this, organisations began to benchmark their usage of it against models to assess organisations' capabilities and maturity. Surveys of the use of benefits management practices have consistently identified a low level of uptake and found that, even when they are accepted within an organisation, there may be limited application, or the approach may be watered down.

The fourth layer is the accreditation of expertise through bespoke qualifications, such as the APMG-International foundation and practitioner certificates in benefits management.

WIDE BUT THIN

The evidence suggests that benefits management has spread widely but thinly. Many of the developments in the field have been led by the English-speaking world, but it now has a global reach, with language and cultural barriers being overcome.

Surprisingly, the limited evidence available suggests little difference in the uptake of benefits management practices among newcomers, such as Brazil, compared with countries at the vanguard, such as the UK.

At the macro scale, there are many possible scenarios for the future of benefits management, ranging from limited spread beyond existing users to spectacular expansion once a 'tipping point' has been reached. More likely is something in between these two poles.

USE OF EVIDENCE

As researchers have started to recognise the importance of the factors influencing the adoption of benefits management, an evidence base has started to develop on the transfer of the practices between and within organisations. Much of this research is being undertaken in mainland Europe, and particularly in the public sector in Scandinavia.

One piece of research identified the key factors for the adoption of benefits management as cultivating an

organisational culture conducive to it, finding the additional resources and time required for the processes, and identifying tools that were easy to learn and use. However, there is limited empirical evidence on the introduction and subsequent embedding of benefits management to verify this.

The APM Benefits Management SIG committee has undertaken its own small-scale surveys of SIG members (see *Project*, Spring 2015, page 14), aiming to add to the evidence on the barriers affecting the translation of benefits management. These surveys suggest that benefits management is highly relevant to the challenges faced by organisations, but turning that initial interest into action is problematic. It may be difficult to fit into existing management routines, leading to resistance from some quarters. This can hamper its usefulness, particularly if there is a continuing lack of consensus about its role and scope.

What are the implications of a translation lens for practice, particularly for those of us who wish to promote benefits management's uptake? The main lesson is that translation needs to be actively managed, from overcoming the initial hurdles in achieving adoption to eventually building it into organisational routines and processes.

Actively managing the translation process may mean striking a balance between a willingness to adapt benefits management to fit into organisational practices and a willingness not to compromise on the key principles. These points are particularly important, given the barriers to its translation, but could apply to the adoption of any management idea. 

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Risky business

How legal professionals are using project risk management techniques to improve their approach to due diligence

Due diligence is carried out during a transaction. Whether an individual is buying their first house or a major corporate entity is undertaking a complex merger, it will be necessary for them to engage lawyers to carry out a legal due diligence process.

There is inherent risk in the due diligence process that works on the principle of 'buyer beware'. The responsibility rests on the buyer to discover defects or other factors that may affect price or, at worst, prevent the deal from proceeding.

Legal due diligence is a form of project risk analysis. Lawyers carry out the analysis in an uncertain environment. Deals are subject to challenging timescales and emerging information that may not be available at the initial due diligence scoping phase.

Lawyers will begin to identify risks that create a concern or present an opportunity on a transaction. They will alert their client and advise what action (if any) they should take. The client will then implement this advice. The process is arguably no different to project risk management on any other form of project.

IMPORTANT ISSUES AT A GLANCE

By its very nature, the due diligence process presents practical challenges. Tight timescales and poor, incomplete information moving between the seller's lawyers, the buyer's lawyers, the buyer and the funder requires careful coordination and proactive communication.

There can sometimes be ambiguity between the lawyer's approach and the client's desired outcomes. For example, the lawyer will try to prove value for money by reporting on as much as possible. This is also often carried out to provide protection from a liability.

Where lawyers report to their client on every issue, they are transferring the risk of interpretation over to the client rather than taking judgment on what is relevant to the particular project or client. Lawyers can sometimes talk in legalese and not communicate with their client clearly in concise, commercial language. The third issue is budgeting. A client may request a

quotation based on limited information and require immediate resourcing on a tight deadline. Any scoping phase tends to be light touch, with an estimation given on stated assumptions. Invariably, the due diligence exercise uncovers issues that then need to be addressed, and the final bill will exceed the original estimation.

PROJECT RISK MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The deals that are the subject of due diligence have many parallels with projects and may, in themselves, be part of a bigger project or programme. They are temporary, unique endeavours, focused on delivering an output (in this case a transaction), and are driven by a desire to realise benefits.

By its very nature, legal due diligence is concerned with illuminating those aspects of a deal that are unknown or uncertain. Congruent with this, risk management is aimed at increasing our knowledge about uncertainty that could affect our objectives, using this knowledge to make decisions and direct purposeful action in response.

Thus, an iterative risk management process, such as that recommended by ISO 31000:2009 (see box) or APM's *Project Risk Analysis and Management Guide*, helps to increase understanding as the deal progresses, articulate sources of uncertainty and propose effective courses of action. The result is assurance and confidence in decision-making with respect to the deal.

BENEFITS OF A DEFINED METHODOLOGY

Application of a defined risk management methodology in legal due diligence provides a consistent overall process and a toolbox that assists with:

- understanding and articulating the deal context;
- systematic identification of sources of risk;
- analysis and prioritisation of risks, based on magnitude, urgency and/or controllability;
- selecting and evaluating potential response actions;
- progressive review of risk status; and
- curating and reporting the key information that the client and other stakeholders need for decision-making and assurance.

Predictability and reliability are core principles for delivering a valuable service, and this is particularly the case in risk and assurance services.

A well-implemented risk framework provides a dependable structure, reduces subjectivity in analysis and introduces a common language, all of which engender confidence. With

THE DEALS THAT ARE THE SUBJECT OF DUE DILIGENCE HAVE MANY PARALLELS WITH PROJECTS AND MAY BE PART OF A BIGGER PROJECT



FOR ADOPTION OF A RISK FRAMEWORK TO BE SUCCESSFUL, FIRMS NEED TO ENGENDER A POSITIVE RISK CULTURE

a guiding structure in place, clients can receive the full benefit of the lawyer's knowledge and experience, as it is focused on the content of the deal.

CHALLENGES FOR PROFESSIONALS

When introducing risk management frameworks, it is easy to focus on process and neglect behavioural aspects. For implementation to be effective, there needs to be a harmony between process, data, tools, and people's knowledge, skills and experience.

Risk management cannot be followed as a 'recipe'. To enhance the practice beyond the 'tick-box', it needs to be skilfully applied in context. For adoption of a risk framework to be successful, firms need to engender a positive risk culture, characterised by, among other things, leadership support, openness, appropriate accountability and continuous improvement.

For the necessary behavioural changes to take place, each contributor in the process, including the client, should perceive a benefit of their participation. It is essential to implement a framework that is proportionate for the activity, marking it as a useful tool rather than an administrative burden.

UNDERSTANDING ISO 31000:2009

■ ISO 31000:2009 is an international standard that provides generic principles, a framework and processes for managing risk in a wide variety of activities.

■ The principles in the standard include how to create and protect value, how to make risk management part of the decision-making process, and how to tailor it to your environment, among others.

■ It was published in November 2009, and provides a standard on the implementation of risk management. Its purpose is to

be applicable and adaptable for any public, private or community enterprise, association, group or individual. In other words, it was not developed for a specific industry, but to provide best-practice structure and guidance to all operations that are concerned with risk management.

■ APM's *Project Risk Analysis and Management Guide* provides guidance on managing risk in a project and programme management environment, and is a good start to addressing risk in projects.

In a due diligence environment, understanding the context of the client's business, its objectives and risk appetite is integral to excellent advice on the risks in any deal. Combining systematic analysis of the risks with intuitive interpretation of the bigger picture is what enables firms to provide genuine insight and added value. □

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Jargon buster

BRIAN WERNHAM defines 'interest/influence matrix' and explains why your project should have one

A project interest/influence

matrix (IIM) quickly and intuitively categorises stakeholders that need close attention during communications planning, and those that need less attention. A stakeholder is any individual or group that has an interest in a project's outcome. An IIM has two simple axes:

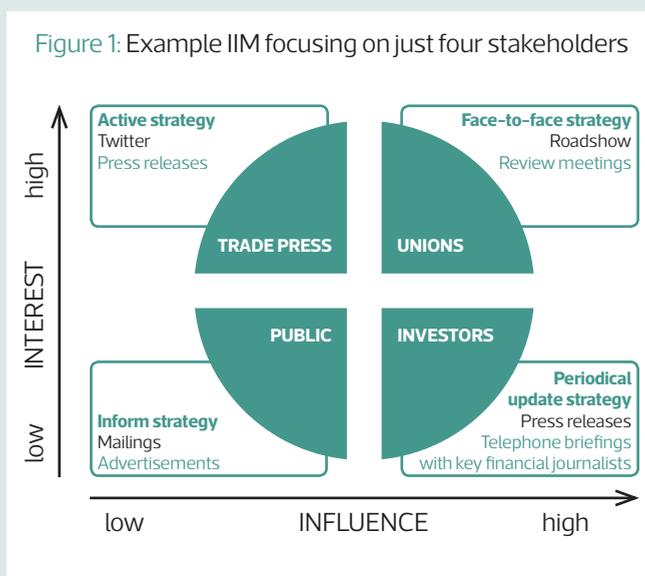
Influence: How much power does a specific stakeholder have over the governance of the project?

Interest: How much attention is the stakeholder likely to invest in listening to and responding to project communications?

The use of an IIM is now expected in well-run projects. Major project guidance frameworks, such as the *APM Body of Knowledge*, the UK Government's *Managing Successful Programmes* guide and the DSDM AgilePM framework recommend the creation and maintenance of an IIM as an essential part of project stakeholder management.

AN EXAMPLE IIM

A major German supermarket chain started a programme to decentralise its warehousing operations. The programme comprised three major sub-projects. One project was to build seven new regional warehouses, another project aimed to upgrade the IT systems, and the final project was to implement new



working practices and a new organisational structure.

The programme was initially run as a purely technical operation. The technical coordination between the civil engineers, IT geeks and organisational change experts went well – there was a realistic, integrated programme plan. However, the programme board members found themselves tied up in extensive requests for project information from journalists, trade unions, suppliers and government officials.

The programme manager therefore held a workshop with the programme board to create an IIM. There were 32 stakeholders identified. For the

purposes of illustration, we can focus on the four that were prioritised for special attention in the programme communications plan: unions, investors, retail consumers and trade press (see Figure 1).

The programme manager convinced top management that an integrated communications plan was required, and all 32 stakeholders were allocated an engagement strategy.

For example, we can see in Figure 1 how an 'active' but non 'face-to-face' strategy was a suitable form of stakeholder engagement for journalists in the trade press, whereas an 'inform strategy' was suitable for the supermarket chain's public retail customers.

HOW DOES AN IIM FIT INTO AN OVERALL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY?

It is important that the IIM is not treated as 'shelfware' (a term from the days when strategy reports were left unread to languish on dusty shelves).

A stakeholder profile should be drawn up for each stakeholder, with a communications plan that implements the engagement strategies identified as optimal in each quadrant of the IIM. A communications plan should contain the dates and content of each planned interaction.

Not every stakeholder may be enthusiastic about the project. Sometimes, the best that can be hoped for from an engagement strategy for an antagonistic stakeholder may be to reduce any hostility and try to build bridges if possible.



BRIAN WERNHAM is a main board member of APM and founder of nooLearn.com. His book, *Agile Project Management for Government*, is published by Maitland & Strong

“ I am new to project management and have taken a number of qualifications to boost my knowledge. As there is so much information to take in, I would like to know what the most essential elements are ”

SUSANNE'S ANSWER

Projects vary hugely in size and complexity, and need different levels of control and management oversight. If you are running a smaller project and need a quick steer to get started, here are items to keep in mind.

WHAT NEEDS TO GET DONE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

To deliver a project, you first have to understand what you are expected to deliver and why it is needed. Many project managers jump straight into delivery without validating the project's purpose and value. As a newcomer, you may feel uncomfortable asking basic questions, but don't let that hold you back. Ask the question: in what ways will this project help the company and the end user in the short, medium and long term, for example to be more effective, profitable or achieve strategic objectives? You might also ask yourself if you'd be comfortable investing your own money in it! When you understand the project's business case and vision, it will make it easier for you to inspire the team and help it deliver a great outcome.

WHO CAN HELP YOU MOVE THE PROJECT FORWARD?

As you and your team set out to add value and deliver what your clients really need, you need to engage the end users, the executive sponsor and anyone else who can help you move the project forward. Meet with them on a one-on-one basis to establish their needs and requirements and what they would like to get from the project. Ask them: what would make you say that this project was a success? How would you like me to communicate with you and keep you



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updated as the project progresses? How would you like me to escalate to you? The backing of senior decision-makers is essential, so engage them, listen to them and treat them like valued customers. Draw on what you know about the business and make use of your people skills.

CREATE A MILESTONE PLAN

There is a widespread belief among project managers that they have to do the planning on their own behind their desk because they are ultimately responsible for it. Don't make that mistake. Instead, create a milestone plan in collaboration with the team and use it as an engaging and motivating activity that unites the team around a common goal. Gather the project team, bring a pile of sticky notes and brainstorm everything that needs to get done on the project – capturing one task per sticky note. Group the notes into eight to 12 milestones, sequence them and place them on a timeline flowing from left to right. Finish off by assigning one owner to each milestone so that everyone is in agreement about who does what.

SIX BASIC CONTROL DOCUMENTS

In addition to the milestone plan, you will need some further control documents to keep track of the work and communicate progress along the way. As a starting point, I recommend you make use of: a project charter or definition document; a milestone plan; a risk and issues list; a requirements traceability matrix; a status report; and a steering committee presentation. Good project management should never be about filling in templates or following a defined process. It is, above all, about delivering value and benefit to your clients, and about engaging the wider team to help you do so. ■



MANY PROJECT MANAGERS JUMP STRAIGHT INTO DELIVERY WITHOUT VALIDATING THE PROJECT'S PURPOSE AND VALUE

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR SUSANNE TO ANSWER? PLEASE EMAIL HER AT MAIL@SUSANNEMADSEN.COM

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Tech watch

Each quarter, we highlight the top products to look out for in the fast-moving world of project software

Open-source tools

Open-source software offers an alternative to traditional types of software, in that the coding is published openly, free to all. This means that anyone can modify, improve or adapt the software – instead of the code being held exclusively by the company that created it, such as with 'proprietary' or 'closed-source' software.

In the spirit of open source, this 'community' software is usually free to use, with fewer licensing restrictions. Open-source project management software is available to all, and is a viable alternative to the more popular closed-source tools. Here, we review the top five free open-source project management tools.

PLATFORM: PROJECTLIBRE OPEN SOURCE

Cost: Free

Available at: www.projectlibre.org

More information: ProjectLibre is an award-winning tool that has been downloaded more than two million times in 200 countries. Its tagline explains its purpose clearly: 'ProjectLibre does to Microsoft Project what Google Docs did to Microsoft Word'. The tool is multiplatform and multi-user, is able to open Microsoft Project documents and works on Linux, Mac and Windows.

Key features: Support for task management, resource allocation, tracking, Gantt charts, network diagrams, earned value costing.

PLATFORM: MYCOLLAB

Cost: Free

Available at: community.mycollab.com

Key information: MyCollab comes in three editions, including a free, open-source community edition. The platform supports agile development models through a Kanban board.

Key features: Gantt charts and milestones, time tracking, task and issue management, mobile readiness.

PLATFORM: LIBREPLAN

Cost: Free

Available at: www.libreplan.com

Key information: LibrePlan is an open-source, web-based application for project planning, monitoring and control. The tool can also make projects available to the entire project team, as well as to clients. It provides a modern design and balanced user interface, as well as complete documentation, built-in reporting and professional support.

Key features: Web based, resource allocation, Gantt charts, time and progress tracking, financials, mobile apps for Android.

PLATFORM: PROJECT-OPEN

Cost: Free

Available at: www.project-open.com

More information: Project-Open is an enterprise project management tool that has been downloaded more than one million times over the past 10 years. The core of the software – which includes project planning, portfolio management, CRM and financial controlling as standard – is open source, but there are additional modules available under a commercial licence. It runs on Windows and Linux.

Key features: Agile, Gantt editor, portfolio planner, timesheet tasks and management, HTML5 charts.

PLATFORM: OPENPROJECT

Cost: Free

Available at: www.openproject.org

More information: OpenProject is designed to support project teams through the whole project life cycle. Aspects of the tool that make it stand out are its user interface, extensive documentation and rich feature set.

Key features: Collaborative project planning, timeline reports, task management, time and cost reporting, scrum, synchronisation with Microsoft Project.

WHICH PRODUCTS AND GADGETS ARE YOU USING? GET IN TOUCH AND LET US KNOW WHICH PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS YOU HAVE TRIED AND TESTED. EMAIL EDITOR@PROJECT-JOURNAL.CO.UK

Video games

Technologies we have been discussing for the past five to 10 years are now becoming a reality, writes **MARCO LANDI**. Welcome to the office of the future

Cloud, social, video, mobile and more are part of the everyday reality for most workers. However, if you really want to know about the workplace of the future, you need to look to the people, not the place. The psychology of the average worker is changing, and it's the individuals who are driving and shaping the environment of tomorrow.

The biggest shift in the modern enterprise has been the uptake and adoption of new technologies by the workforce – and this is certainly the case when it comes to project management.

Changing attitudes are being ushered in by the younger generations, including millennials, but are increasingly being supported by baby boomers and 'generation Y' (those born between 1980 and 2000). According to the UN, the median age of the world's population will increase by around 10 years between 2000 and 2050. Now – more than ever – organisations have to meet the demands of multiple employee age ranges, including an increasing desire for flexibility, autonomy and ease in working practices.

Flexibility

Flexible working isn't just about hours; it's about location and style, too. In a globalised world, project management teams are often spread across time zones. To remain efficient, you may need to have an early-morning call with a client in Asia, and a late-evening session with your boss in the US.

That does not mean you need to work 12-hour days. The rise in remote working, improved connectivity and collaboration means that you can dial in to calls, join video meetings and present to colleagues or clients from anywhere.

"Technology is our enabler" when it comes to workplace flexibility, according to Sir Cary Cooper, professor of organisational psychology and health at Manchester Business School. A Dell study found that,

in the past year, 76 per cent of workers feel that technology has had an influence on the way that they work and Virgin Media Business has predicted that 60 per cent of office-based employees will regularly work from home by 2022.

Young project professionals entering the profession expect choice and flexibility over their physical workspace. Remote and flexible working enables employees to meet their needs, such as childcare, as well as the employer's needs. Happy employees are hardworking employees, and ultimately derive better value for the business.

Improving morale, staff retention and recruitment are three main reasons that employers across all industries – not just project management – give for providing employees with flexible working opportunities. That is because the average cost of turnover per employee is £8,200, rising to £12,000 for senior managers or directors, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

On the flip side of staff recruitment and retention, a UK government survey found that 41 per cent of employees say the availability of flexible working was important or very important when they

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Young project professionals entering the profession expect choice and flexibility over their physical workspace. Remote and flexible working enables employees to meet their needs

made their decision to work for their current employer. Members of generation Y, who have grown up almost entirely in the digital age, will further drive this trend, with 92 per cent identifying flexibility as a top priority when selecting a workplace, according to another government study.

Autonomy

The modern project manager demands more control over their workplace, patterns and productivity. Project managers are seeking out consultancies and businesses that empower them to achieve maximum efficiency. This means creating an experience of autonomy, whereby you can choose the technologies that best suit you and your role.

But some employers are letting employees down. A Polycom study found that up to one third view a lack of investment in appropriate mobile technology as the biggest barrier to flexible working, and 23 per cent of workers say that their desire to collaborate more freely is inhibited by a business culture resistant to change or new technology adoption.

The average worker expects control over the kind of mobile device they use,





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A Polycom study found that 56 per cent of business leaders and managers expect video to be their preferred collaboration tool by 2016. Ninety-six per cent say it helps companies break down cultural barriers

hence the increase in 'bring your own device' (BYOD) policies among firms. Indeed, 54 per cent of companies globally are allowing BYOD, according to Dell. Project managers also want to be able to choose when to see their colleagues face to face, regardless of geographical location. Business leaders recognise this, and say that video collaboration contributes to a flexible working strategy by improving the productivity of remote workers by as much as 39 per cent, the Polycom study says. In fact, two-thirds also say that flexible working has a bigger financial impact than cutting operational costs.

Ease

Technologies such as video collaboration used to be isolated to meeting rooms, difficult to book and complicated to launch. This is no longer the case. The biggest driver of technology adoption has been ease of use. This has two parts to it.

First, the user interface has been a focus of the whole technology industry. From the iPhone to Skype for Business, the heavyweights are focusing on simple, intuitive software and hardware.

Second is a focus on integration. For example, users who are comfortable with Microsoft Lync do not want to have to step outside of that comfort zone to make a video call, so the seamless integration of video into Lync is key to video's raised profile in the enterprise.

Looking forward

Ultimately, the way that we think and feel about work has changed drastically over the past 10 years, and it will continue to shift over the next 10. Geographically dispersed workforces are becoming the norm. According to CEB, 57 per cent of employees have seen an increase in the amount of work done with colleagues based in another location over the past three years. This is reinforced by the Polycom study, which found that 56 per cent of business leaders and managers expect video to be their preferred collaboration tool by 2016. Ninety-six per cent say that it helps companies defy distance and break down cultural barriers to improve productivity.

In an increasingly connected world, this cultural part is significant, and those three key expectations – flexibility, autonomy and ease – are more prevalent than ever.

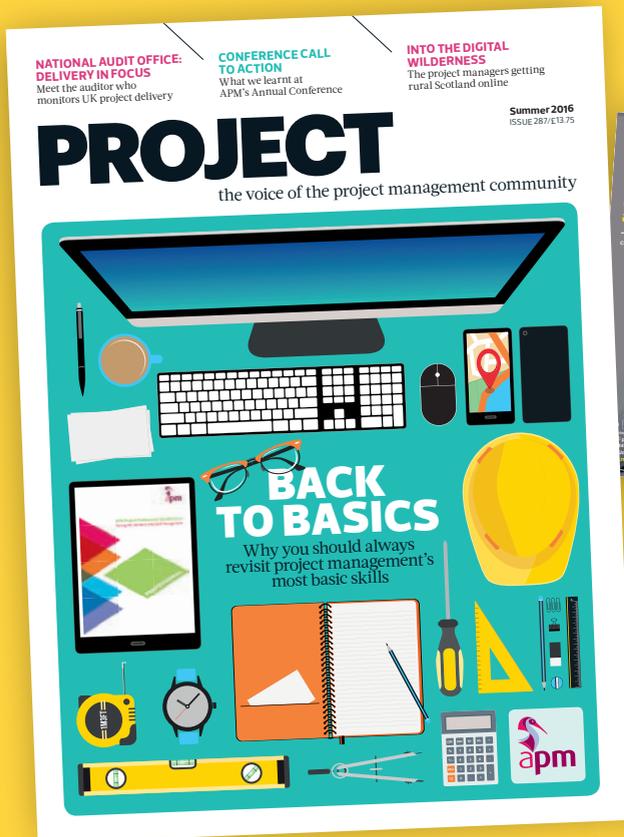
Visual technologies are becoming the standard, thanks in large part to the changing psychology of workers, driven by the consumerisation of visual communications technologies.

From Snapchat to Twitter, FaceTime to Google Hangouts, every social and consumer application is jumping on the real-time communications bandwagon, which means that unified collaboration is becoming increasingly integral to the enterprise. The project management workplace of the future is one in which we can see each other more easily.

Project managers don't just want unified communications; they are demanding high-quality mobile and cloud solutions that are woven into their business functions and help them deliver projects more successfully.

MARCO LANDI is president EMEA at Polycom

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PROJECT the voice of the project management community

From the bottom up

Projects never go exactly to plan, says WYG's **PAUL HAMER**, but this does not mean that you cannot ensure a long and successful career

As part of my early career, I spent a significant amount of time on site, assisting the project and construction management teams. It was clear to me that working in projects – as opposed to a mechanical engineering career – would allow me to watch designs physically take shape.

Project management seemed to be at the very core of shaping and delivering outcomes, which is my passion – I am very action- and goal-oriented.

Today, I am chief executive officer at WYG, and am responsible for group performance, strategy and delivery of ongoing shareholder value. The restructuring and reshaping of WYG into the highly profitable and growing global

IT'S ATTITUDE, NOT APTITUDE, THAT DETERMINES ONE'S ALTITUDE. THERE IS NO REAL SECRET TO SUCCESS. I LISTEN MORE THAN I SPEAK AND AM ALWAYS LOOKING TO LEARN AND DEVELOP

consultancy business that it is today is one of the major high points of my career.

The collective effort to conclude a debt-for-equity deal, followed by a successful capital raise, onward balance sheet and business restructuring was tremendous.

I love the diversity of my current role, which can involve everything from meeting shareholders in London one day to meeting an important client in Afghanistan or Libya the next. I also enjoy leading and working with such talented people and teams within WYG and our partner organisations. I'm very proud and humbled to lead such a terrific group of people.

There is another key point in my career that stands out: managing the creation and ultimate sale of a new, market-facing nuclear consultancy business in the private sector from the then government-owned British Nuclear Group. The changes required in business techniques and internal culture were immense.

Two key individuals have influenced my career to a large extent. First, my father, whose footsteps I followed in from both an engineering and business perspective. He keeps my feet firmly on the ground.

Second, Sir John Armit, whom I worked with at Costain and latterly via the Association for Consultancy and Engineering. John and I both believe that the UK would benefit from long-term infrastructure planning and funding, and this seems to be closer than ever to becoming a reality with the 'northern powerhouse' and Britain's Energy Coast.

KEY LESSON

The most important thing that I've taken away from my career to date is always to remember that, just as in life, projects never go to plan. Therefore, having a plan B and plan C ready to implement is critical to your ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Be prepared and always expect the unexpected; this should ensure that you stay ahead of the curve.

The best advice I could give to all young professionals is to be bold, confident and get involved. You can achieve anything with focus, determination and sheer hard work. Look for a respected mentor and listen intently to the knowledge imparted.

Remember that it's attitude, not aptitude, that determines one's altitude. There is, in my view, no real secret or recipe to success. I listen more than I speak and I am always looking to learn and develop.

My approach to projects and business has always been the same: surround yourself with talented individuals and



PAUL HAMER is chief executive officer at WYG

ensure that you are all aligned to the same core objectives, and that each individual understands their role and that of the other team members.

Clarity, purpose and a collective will to succeed is what underpins my career to date. As an avid sportsman, I am highly competitive. I hate losing and I want to be the best that I can possibly be. I also take great pleasure from developing high-performing teams and then standing back as they deliver success after success.

This drive to lead and watch others develop and blossom is what makes my job so compelling and exciting. It's a great industry and project management is such an exciting and varied profession. Carpe diem every day! 🎯



Do you have an interesting career story that you would like to share with readers of *Project*? Email editor@project-journal.co.uk

Improve your networking and win clients

Networking is a simple, fun and effective way to showcase your brand and win clients and projects. But don't expect immediate success; it is a long-term strategy and one that you must be patient with.

Meaningful connections are key to how you run your project management business and grow relationships. The goal of networking should always be to develop genuine and authentic relationships with long-term objectives. So, how do you create that network of colleagues, clients and associates that you know, like and trust?

KEEP IT REAL, AND LISTEN

The key ingredient for authentic networking is sincerity. Like you, most people want genuine conversations and real relationships. It is always better to have a meaningful conversation with a handful of people, rather than spread yourself too thin across a number of insincere 'networking conversations'.

When you meet someone, listen and understand how you can help them.



WHEN YOU MEET SOMEONE, LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN HELP THEM

Nobody likes being talked at or being sold to, so avoid these at all costs. Consider and ask people relevant questions about their projects with genuine enthusiasm. Only talk about your own business when the opportunity arises. Make sure you have something to offer and do so with sincerity. Follow up on this, too. This sets you apart as accountable, as well as authentic.

CREATE GENUINE VALUE – BECOME A 'CONNECTOR'

Smart networking is about understanding your value, comprising your experience, the opportunities you can offer and your contacts. Your authenticity lies in understanding how you can help contacts and connect them in a meaningful, relevant way. It's creating this value for other people that helps them become more successful. Equally, raising your profile in this way is what will help your own brand and will ultimately lead to you winning more business.

GIVE WITHOUT EXPECTATION

This is what sets authentic networkers apart: don't approach networking with a mindset of 'what can I get?' Focus on what you can give. A positive outcome for you will be building your reputation, developing your expertise and giving you that personal purpose beyond your own business. It's good karma and it will come back to you.

INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS

The goal of networking goes beyond building LinkedIn contacts. It is developing genuine relationships with like-minded people. As with everything in life, what you put in is what you get out. Investing time to network – be it at an APM event, over a coffee or more informally – enables you to connect with other people who are aligned with your business goal or vision. Surrounding yourself with a network of other motivated people opens you up to wider sources of advice,

Establishing and developing a professional network should be high up on the list of priorities for any project manager worth their salt, says **PAUL MACBETH**

support, inspiration and mentorship, and opportunities inevitably follow.

AFFIRM YOUR OWN NETWORKING STYLE

What kind of networker do you want to be? In many ways, it's like leadership – authentic networking is something you have to want and demonstrate. This is your personal brand, so create your own style and mindset, and understand how it works for you. What's the impact you want to make through networking?

Authentic networking is an incredibly powerful accelerator for business growth. At the core, it's about sharing success in a sincere and meaningful way. When you help those around you become more successful, you become more integral to their own networks and businesses.

TRAIN YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE ART OF NETWORKING

Make sure that you pass on your knowledge and passion to others you work with by demonstrating massive enthusiasm. Becoming a good networker won't happen overnight, and it won't come naturally to most, so you need to ensure your team understands the strategy and recognises its value in winning projects.

Look at their training needs and adapt their personal development programme to include reference to networking. Show, not tell, is key here; the energy and commitment must come from the top and filter through the entire organisation.

And remember, when the investment and hard work starts to pay off and new projects begin to flow, be mindful that your introducer is putting their own reputation at risk by recommending you – so make sure that you provide an outstanding service and don't let them down. **■**

PAUL MACBETH is managing director at professional advisers Macbeth

Five reasons to get away from your desk

Anyone working in an office needs space to think and do.

LOUIZE CLARKE proffers five reasons why you need to get away from your desk right now

As we trap ourselves in a constant cycle

of 'busyness', there's an urge to stay permanently connected to our desks, head down, cracking through an endless to-do list.

Too much desk time can ultimately impact on your outcomes, be it efficiencies, creativity, meaningful connections or wellbeing. Here are five compelling reasons why you need to take a mini-break from your desk, right now.

1 YOU WILL BOOST YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Project professionals are not machines – everyone has mental and physical limitations. While many of us feel compelled to plough through task after task, this can be counterproductive. The longer you try to focus on any one topic, the tougher it can become to stay truly focused on the task at hand.

We all know the benefits of the 'little and often' principle but, increasingly, evidence shows micro-breaks do not always do the job when it comes to recharging our brain power. Longer breaks – popping out for a coffee with a colleague or going on a proper lunch break – are better at giving your mind a real rest and letting it focus on things. This keeps you refreshed and boosts performance levels when you're back at work.

2 YOU WILL SUPER-CHARGE YOUR CREATIVITY

Chances are that your best ideas do not hit you when you're slouched over your laptop. They come to you while you're out running, in the shower or making dinner.

That's because you are freeing your brain up to consider new and fresh ideas, rather than furrowing over a problem to the point where you cannot see the wood for the trees. When you take a break, go on a walk, quickly pop into a gallery, browse around a local bookshop – just be. Letting your mind wander will allow new ideas to flow as you temporarily distance yourself



PROJECT PROFESSIONALS ARE NOT MACHINES – EVERYONE HAS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS. WHILE MANY OF US FEEL COMPELLED TO PLOUGH THROUGH TASK AFTER TASK, THIS CAN BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE

from the limitations and noise channelled through screens.

3 YOU WILL EXPAND YOUR NETWORK

While tapping out emails or blitzing LinkedIn in a 15-minute free window can help, stepping away from your desk and making personal connections will take you so much further than online networking or social media. Networking in person is alive and well (see page 74, opposite, for tips on becoming a better networker). Invest time in face-to-face meetings, get a different perspective, connect with

a new associate, explore collaboration opportunities or work out how to help a client. The chances are that, in this hour, you will make a greater difference to your day – or someone else's – than an hour of screen time ever would.

4 YOU WILL GET A LITTLE BIT HEALTHIER

While nipping out for lycra-clad action may not be your bag, it's a truth that the sedentary lifestyle of the workplace is not doing anyone's health any favours. Project professionals are guilty of not taking that time to give themselves a proper break.

While everyone waits for the standing desk to go mainstream, there is a strong argument to just grab a 20-minute walk to break up the whopping five hours and 41 minutes that you spend stationary, sitting at your desk every day (according to the British Psychological Society). Better still, team up with a colleague or client and go for a walking meeting, take in a change of scene and a fresh perspective – even if it's just a walk around a project site.

5 YOU'LL GET A BETTER SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE

Working on a project can be isolating; spending hour after hour in front of a screen even more so. Keeping your head down means that you may not be aware of your surrounding environment – shifts within your team back at the office, client needs or even an emerging issue on a project.

Stepping away from your desk means you can quite literally zoom out to get a good look at the bigger picture. Away from the distraction of email and newsletter updates you've forgotten you subscribed to, you can refocus your energy on the priority tasks with a fresh pair of eyes. **■**

LOUIZE CLARKE is co-founder of **GROW@GreenPark**

TEAM TOGETHER WHEN MILES APART

How can project leaders create a ‘team together’ approach when working miles apart? **EMMA AVERY** shares her expertise

It’s an age-old question: ‘Would you be able to continue to provide the same great service, but do it for less cost?’

For some firms, the answer to this is to save costs by transferring activities to a cheaper labour market. It’s not a new concept; we’ve all been using nearshoring software support for years, so it’s not surprising that international centres of excellence are emerging for all manner of back-office processes, such as HR and day-to-day finance transactions.

However, with the integral operational processes involved, it is not just a matter of writing a statement of work and hoping for the best. How can you ensure that service quality is not impacted?

Here is how we took a successful – but expensive – back-office service and worked with stakeholder groups across six different countries to transition the service to nearshore operation centres that are set to become centres of excellence in their subject matters.

First off, what is it that we needed to achieve? The desired outcomes of our project in this real-life case study were to maintain the existing high quality of

service; decrease the operational costs year on year; and create a template that other companies could follow.

We already knew what it was that enabled us to enjoy a great level of service at that time, and it was mainly down to the teamwork and camaraderie that existed between those people carrying out the tasks.

Our challenge was how to replicate that when those tasks would be distributed across several countries, rather than all being carried out within the same building.

Early on, we recognised that we could not simply write a set of key performance indicators (KPIs), service level agreements (SLAs) and work instructions – we needed to engage hearts and minds and bridge the cultural gaps, too.

FIRST STEPS

The usual first step of an international conference call was abandoned. Instead, we organised a series of tele-presence video calls. We were able to see in real time how the team interacted at the other end of the video link and could better judge the level of understanding for what we were asking.

We discussed the tasks that were going to be required and were able to put together an outline plan, plus decipher the key ‘undercurrent’ elements to be addressed in a one-off, face-to-face workshop.

The service was to be split across several topic-specific centres, so a workshop was held for each. For these, the team leader and important team members from each centre were invited to spend a few days at our headquarters.

Through these face-to-face meetings, we were able to show how the service was currently run, and could examine in detail the processes and hand-off points, as well as make the documented KPIs and SLAs come alive.

But, perhaps most importantly, we all went out together. We laughed and joked,

and discussed family life and workplace legends – in short, we started to build a team of humans and to see each other as more than just clauses on a contracted statement of work. From that point on, we were able to offer mutual support and guidance, and to actually have it accepted.

WAS IT REALLY THAT EASY?

Of course not. There were systems-development problems. There were politics and changes in scope but, as soon as we started to act as one team together, it was so much easier to address the issues and get them resolved.

Don’t get me wrong; it’s not all sunshine and flowers. We still have work instructions that must be followed and contracts with penalties attached. We have standard procedures that must be followed and still need to have difficult conversations to make sure that the quality is achieved at every opportunity.

The difference is that the teams delivering the day-to-day service know who they are delivering to, and we know who we are talking to when we have any issues to sort out together.

CULTURAL DIFFICULTIES

There were a number of cultural lessons that we learnt and adapted to as we went along.

For instance, in one centre, we realised that we hardly ever got any response when we asked, ‘What issues or concerns do you have at the moment?’ The culture in that particular centre was to only address concerns via the team leader, and for the team leader to sort them out in the background.

We needed them to be more open so that we felt comfortable that we were getting the full picture, so we changed our question to, ‘What are your top three concerns this week?’, thereby requiring answers. Suddenly, we were able to generate an open conversation.

IT WAS IMPORTANT TO US THAT THE OVERSEAS TEAMS WERE ABLE TO FIT IN CULTURALLY WITH THE EXISTING UK TEAMS AND INTERNAL CUSTOMER BASE, SO WE INSISTED ON BEING PART OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS FOR NEW TEAM MEMBERS



Conference calls can often be a dry affair and messages can easily get lost in translation. We always ensured that an interactive screen share was available so that meeting attendees could see and hear the messages.

We also injected some fun, with random photos of team members, and sometimes a bit of tongue-in-cheek music appropriate to the mood of the day, while we waited for everyone to join. Again, for us, it was about people achieving results, not paperwork driving tasks.

As a mostly female UK project team, it was interesting to see the difference in unconscious gender bias across some of the centres, and to adapt our stance and language to ensure that we remained in control and to recognise and counter any preconceptions that existed.

It was important to us that the overseas teams were able to fit in culturally with the existing UK teams and internal customer base, so we insisted on being part of the interview process for new team members.

In some instances, this meant a UK manager visiting the centre in person and running interviews for the whole day; in other instances, we were able to arrange tele-presence interviews with the candidates.

This was all conducted in support of the in-country team leaders. We were able to not only test professional/technical expertise, but also cultural understanding.

WHAT ABOUT LETTING IT FLY?

When it was time to go live, we decided that continuing with the ethos that we had adopted the whole way through would be the best approach. We would act as one team, rather than as a customer.

We arranged for subject matter experts and managers from the UK to attend and walk the floor at key points in the process. They took a large tin of Quality Street and were prepared to roll up their sleeves and give practical support as needed.

Did we achieve our outcomes? Yes; we have maintained the level of service and

are projected to achieve a cost saving of one third over the first three years. We have also changed the way in which the nearshore centres of excellence will recommend approaching future projects.

This will ultimately benefit us. More customers for them means more expert knowledge is available to us, and the economies of scale will result in more savings further down the line.

Business is business and culture is culture, but, at the end of the day, we are all people with mortgages and families. Recognising this was the key to bridging the diversity in our global teams. 



EMMA AVERY is strategic projects manager at T-Systems

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Career clinic

Are you banging the wall rather than beating the drum?

Forty-five per cent of project management professionals are 'somewhat' or 'very' dissatisfied with the current level of project management maturity in their organisation, according to *The State of Project Management Annual Survey 2016*, conducted by Wellington and the APM Project Management Office Specific Interest Group. This can be a serious source of frustration. Project success is often a stretch target, without compounding the complexity of the mission with poor governance, methodology and process.

When I talk to project professionals that fit into this category, they often spend a great deal of time spinning wheels, trying to establish process, or 'fighting the machine'. In these situations, senior managers are often uneducated about best-practice project management; they simply impose end dates and want it done.

You have a choice. You can either muddle on, stand firm and fix it – or look

elsewhere. These aren't great choices, but there we are.

For now, let's focus on the 'look elsewhere' option. If and when you are at an interview for any project professional role, ask about project management maturity. For example: does the organisation have a project methodology? Does it have a clear understanding of the role of project sponsor? And (my favourite), how many live projects is it running? It's a simple question, but nothing is more telling than when a bunch of senior people can't give an exact figure or indeed have no common source for this type of information.

Make sure you really know what you are letting yourself in for when looking to join an organisation. Will you join a great community of practitioners or be set adrift to battle on your own? Maybe you enjoy the challenge, and maybe you can be the catalyst for improvements. But, whatever



your preference, make sure you go into a new role with 'eyes wide open'. Ask questions at the interview. The interviewer's responses will be more telling than anything else. How frustrated are they? 📌



VINCE HINES is managing director of Wellington Project Management, the APM career development partner

Appointments

New UK MD at T-Systems



Christoph Rode has been appointed as the new managing director for T-Systems in the UK, replacing Casper Malig, who is the new vice president of Northern Europe and vice president for sales and service management EMEA at T-Systems International. Rode started his career at T-Systems in 2001 as a project manager in the company's strategy and business development team. He joins T-Systems in the UK after several years heading up the company's US business centre. "I am excited about steering the business on its course to meet our business goals," said Rode. "We will continue to focus on servicing the market with leading-edge cloud solutions and our world-class network operation."

Turner & Townsend appoints two directors



Turner & Townsend has appointed two new directors in its Newcastle office. David Hern (pictured) joins as cost management director, and Mike Lamb as project management director. Graeme Braithwaite has been promoted to director, and will continue to lead a team of 20 project managers in the north east. "These hires and promotions reflect Turner & Townsend's commitment to the region, while recognising that our clients require us to provide solutions that involve a variety of skills and experience," said Darren Laybourn, director and strategic lead for the Newcastle office.

New aviation director at Mott MacDonald



Mott MacDonald has appointed David Beare as divisional director for aviation, responsible for managing the consultancy's UK aviation business, as well as coordinating the group's strategic development in the sector globally. Beare joined the company in 2002 and has held a number of roles, most recently acting as head of transaction and business advisory, where he advised on more than \$73bn of airport infrastructure assets in 17 countries worldwide. He currently also sits on Airports Council International Europe's economics committee, and previously sat on the board of Constructing Excellence, the industry body set up to share and promote best practice in construction.

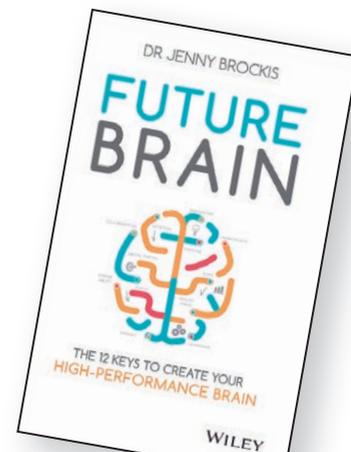
National Infrastructure Commission gets CEO



Chancellor George Osborne has appointed Phil Graham as CEO of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC). Graham joins from the Department for Transport, where he led the development of the government's high-speed rail strategy. He also worked on London 2012 and was secretary of the Airports Commission. "Phil Graham is supremely qualified to be the first CEO of the NIC," said Lord Adonis, the commission's interim chair. "The NIC will provide expert, independent advice to the government on pressing infrastructure challenges."

Bookshelf

Find out which books should be top of your reading list this summer



MEET THE PANEL



Nicola Caswell-Thorp is a project manager CV specialist with experience managing projects and recruiting project professionals



Jason Hesse is the editor of *Project*



Bryan Morgan is a seasoned contract/commercial manager with extensive UK and international experience



Mike Rowley is a programme manager for Rolls-Royce, with 40 years' experience in the aerospace industry



Sheilina Somani is an international project and programme manager with more than 25 years' experience

FUTURE BRAIN – THE 12 KEYS TO CREATE YOUR HIGH-PERFORMANCE BRAIN

Author: Dr Jenny Brockis
ISBN: 978-0-7303-2250-4
Price: £14.95
Publisher: Wiley
 ★★★★★

REVISIT YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE

In *Future Brain*, Dr Brockis summarises facts, experience and observations to help professionals manage their choices – and, therefore, their consequences – more effectively. For many, these insights will help with influencing a team's behaviours and the environments in which we work.

The 12 keys are a mixture of common sense, scientific study and anecdotal input, which may cause many readers to revisit their own knowledge and perspectives on health and wellbeing. The combination of appropriate diet, behaviour and lifestyle choices are all broken down in easy-to-follow content, allowing the reader to see benefits to the brain.

For example, "sitting is the new smoking" is one phrase used to shock readers out of complacency and encourage them to focus on movement and activity, and reduce sedentary lifestyle choices.

The reader is encouraged to reflect upon individual and collective potential to manage change, create innovation, secure collaboration and provide essential leadership. The benefits include healthier, more productive and more successful individuals, and therefore teams.

Having spent considerable time learning and practising mindfulness, I appreciate the subject being brought to the fore.

Through a combination of information, questioning and reflective summaries, Dr Brockis encourages us to take individual responsibility and make conscious choices about ourselves.

Reviewed by Sheilina Somani

STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS ANALYSIS

Author: Karl A Cox
ISBN: 978-1-472-4747-28
Price: £75
Publisher: Routledge
 ★★★★★

CLEAR AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND

For anyone who needs to model business or technical requirements, this book advises a structured approach that concentrates on interview planning, management and analysis. It differs from the plethora of business analysis texts in describing how you can effectively elicit and gather requirements from your client.

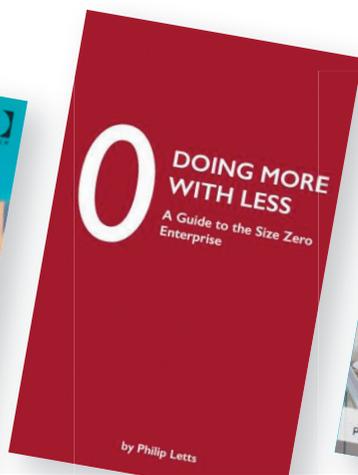
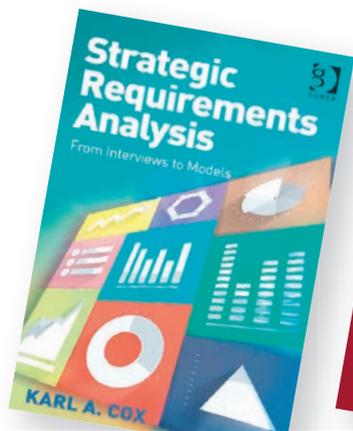
After opening with an introduction explaining why interviews are one of the most useful tools, author Karl Cox devotes more than half of the book to passing on his useful insights on how to prepare for and conduct these interviews, what questions to ask and what to say. He then illustrates how to analyse the interview findings to quickly identify recurring goals, strategies and tactics, and then leads you through a step-by-step guide to creating a graphical strategic model.

The book closes with a couple of pages of concluding remarks, which summarise the 19 'rungs of opportunity' – these are the useful learning points to take away from the book.

Aimed at business analysts, IT consultants and contractors, and supported by case studies, Cox succeeds in delivering a practical illustration of requirements capture, analysis and results presentation. While the book admits it is not a comprehensive study for business analysts, it can help you sharpen your techniques. It has a clear and easy-to-understand writing style, with each of the chapters well supported by case studies.

Reviewed by Mike Rowley

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW A BOOK FOR *PROJECT* THEN PLEASE CONTACT EDITOR JASON HESSE AT editor@project-journal.co.uk



DOING MORE WITH LESS

Author: Philip Letts

ISBN: 978-0-9933218-0-1

Price: £8.99

Publisher: blur Group



PRACTICAL TIPS AND ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES

Philip Letts is a seasoned entrepreneur who has built a publicly listed technology company, and his experience of running a business is obvious in this book.

Doing More With Less looks at how technology and economic necessity have spawned a new way of doing business that is both smarter and more efficient than anything previously done. As a successful practitioner, Letts is eager to share learnings about his company's ruthless pursuit of efficiency and his own management approach.

In fewer than 100 pages, Letts looks at companies such as Tesla, Apple, Uber and Unilever to show why success is not about size, but about the intelligent deployment of resources. Some of his heroes include Ryanair, Foxconn and Nike – clearly these are not warm and cuddly employers, but they are extraordinarily efficient in supply-chain management and utterly focused on the difference between core and non-core activities.

The management principles of 'size zero' are not new, but this book offers practical tips and 10 essential strategies to re-engineer your business practices so that they become fitter, leaner and smarter.

This is not a book about downsizing, but about reshaping your business practices to create more value. This book helps confirm a lot of theory around zero-sized businesses through practical case studies and examples. It will be an enjoyable read for any transformation expert.

Reviewed by Jason Hesse

BIM FOR CONSTRUCTION CLIENTS

Author: Richard Saxon

ISBN: 978-1-85946-607-0

Price: £40

Publisher: RIBA



A FIVE-STAR REFERENCE BOOK

Richard Saxon's book explains the background to, the application of and the future of building information modelling (BIM) to those who have experience using it and those who are new to it.

Anyone involved in construction will look for the first opportunity they have to learn more about BIM, whether it be through further study or, preferably, by getting involved in a project that puts BIM into practice.

The strength of the book is the clarity with which it describes the thought processes that brought about BIM, the ways in which it can help all parties to a construction project benefit from its application, and the way forward in introducing it to a wider audience.

The book would benefit from the inclusion of a glossary. Many terms are defined at the end of the chapter in which they first appear, but there are many other terms and phrases that are obviously in daily use by the BIM community, but that newcomers might not be aware of.

BIM for Construction Clients would benefit anyone involved in construction, be that as client, consultant or contractor. BIM is a relatively new concept in the UK, and as such there are not that many books of a similar standard to this one. It stands on its own as an authoritative reference, written by an author who is highly respected in his field. As the use of BIM spreads, we can hope that Saxon will write further books to keep us up to date.

Reviewed by Bryan Morgan

THE SOCIAL PROJECT MANAGER

Author: Peter Taylor

ISBN: 978-1-47245-222-1

Price: £35

Publisher: Routledge



NEW WAYS TO DELIVER CHANGE

Having read other books by Peter Taylor, I opened this book with high expectations – and I was not disappointed. The book is about change. Although it is an uncomfortable practice for some, project practitioners must consider and embrace new ways to deliver change.

Taylor takes an informal approach to explaining how change comes about and how it affects users. It is this approach that makes me believe that he is, in fact, a good change manager himself – one who can break down the complexities and make them manageable and less scary for aspiring project professionals.

The book takes a thesis approach to format, with many quotations and references. At first, I found this a little tedious. However, for those that require definitions without going away and reading an entirely different text, these citations could prove rather useful.

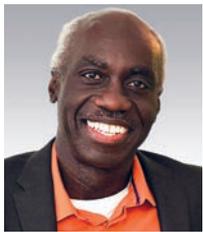
Each section of the book is rounded off with a useful, short case study, which puts the theory into a relatable scenario. Linking back to previous practices versus newer suggestions also helps the reader to recognise the need for change.

My only reservation is perhaps around the deep dives into the tools and governance, which I didn't feel were that necessary. The work around the social element and the need for it is well executed, though, and I would have relished a little more depth around this.

Reviewed by Nicola Caswell-Thorp

Digital transformers... assemble!

'Doing' digital transformation does not mean a whole lot without the right tools,
EDDIE OBENG reports



PROFESSOR EDDIE OBENG is an educator, TED speaker and author of nine books including *Perfect Projects*, published by Pentacle Works, and *All Change! The Project Leader's Secret Handbook*, published by the *Financial Times*. Reach Eddie on Twitter @EddieObeng or read his blog: ImagineAFish.com

I was recently invited to speak at a company conference, at which an official from the sponsor explained it had just 'done digital transformation'. I asked him to explain. "We've taken away all the managers' desktops and laptops," he said, "and replaced them with mobile devices so they can be more digital."

Not long ago, I overheard the head of one of the UK's significant information bodies announce that he had finally understood what big data was. "Big data," he announced, "is when you have more information than will fit on a single computer."

In another instance, I was interviewed for an article on artificial intelligence and digital transformation. The journalist asked me if computers – or even more scarily, robots – will take over all our jobs.

All this tells us that there is a deep lack of understanding of what 'digital' means. In confusion, people are equating digital with 'mobile', 'data mining' or 'robots replacing humans'.

In recent years, we have seen digital disrupters shake entire industries, from Uber with taxis to Airbnb with hotels. Digitisation makes it possible to extract, share and manipulate information from any connected resource. Like a solution looking for a problem, success arises from working out the best vision. If digital transformation means turning the Hyatt hotel chain into Airbnbs, that would definitely be a 'lose' for Hyatt. Airbnb has a huge head start.

Instead, for Hyatt, digital transformation is about using digitisation to reduce its disadvantages compared with Airbnb. It is also about using digitisation to find ways to extract value from the assets that Hyatt alone possesses.

In our complex, fast-changing world, your role as a project manager has changed. It is no longer just about delivering what you are asked to, but, instead, to sense-check – that is to interrogate and confirm the real benefits of the project, and ensure the project



scope covers all the activities that mean benefits will be realised. You will need to be more vigilant in: checking the benefits of digital transformation projects; interrogating the full benefits of the proposal; and establishing the 'value at stake', which is the difference between continuing with the status quo and the results of the digital transformation. Check that the benefits are worth the risks of transformation. You also need to road-test the final vision to ensure that it works as a process. And, in addition, you need to establish the critical aspects of 'business as usual' so that there is no interruption.

What are the risks of transformation? Is there really a difference between a change, a project, a programme and transformation? Does it matter? Can't we use the same skills to succeed at all of them?

I'll use a simple (but imperfect) analogy to explain. You add a new piece of furniture to a room: change. You restyle the room: project. You remodel the front of the house, knocking through rooms and relaying the lawn and drive, buying part of the neighbour's plot: programme. You convert your bungalow to a four-storey apartment/shopping complex with a swimming pool in the basement while living in it: transformation.

Transformation is when the change is so severe that you need 'scaffolding' and interim living arrangements to keep going.

So what's the difference? To deliver projects, you need to have good ways of engaging stakeholders; planning; coordinating and eliminating risk; leading and organising; and learning and reviewing – all wrapped around the best method for the type of project in question. To deliver transformation, you need to be able to do all this plus more. You must plan not just for the project, but also the 'scaffolded' interim stages. You need to be able to road-test the final vision and all the interim stages. You need to be able to deliver excellent change management as you keep changing what you need stakeholders to do to carry on 'business as usual'.

So now, when you hear your executives announce their intentions to 'digitally transform' your organisation, you'll smile confidently, because you'll know what to do. ■

YOUR ROLE AS A PROJECT MANAGER HAS CHANGED. IT IS NO LONGER JUST ABOUT DELIVERING WHAT YOU ARE ASKED TO



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