

**WORKING HAND IN
HAND WITH ROBOTS**

Why you shouldn't fear the
advance of the androids

**CASE STUDY:
ENGLISH HERITAGE**

What does it take to split
one public body into two?

**FIVE KEY QUESTIONS FOR
PROGRAMME SPONSORS**

How to find out whether your
project is set for success

PROJECT

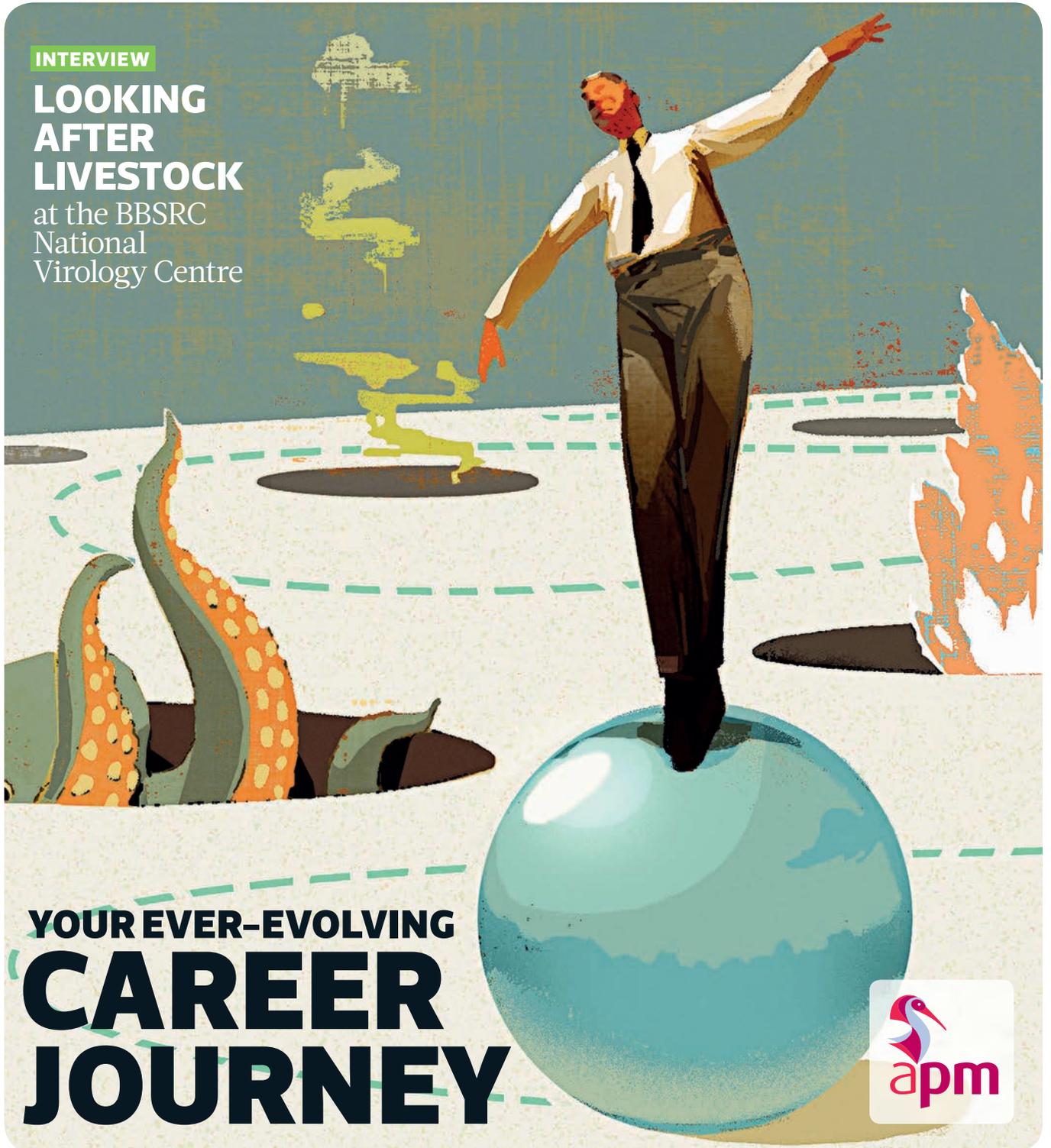
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the voice of the project management community

INTERVIEW

LOOKING AFTER LIVESTOCK

at the BBSRC
National
Virology Centre

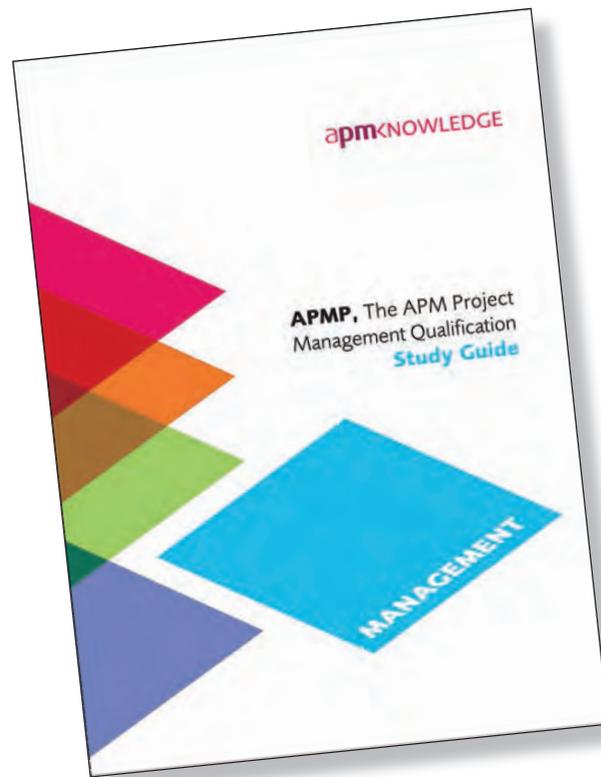


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CAREER
JOURNEY**



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Welcome

One thing that most of us have in common, regardless of the field in which we work, is a commitment to developing our careers. That's why this issue of *Project* is focused on how you can grow in the project management profession.

Career progression matters greatly, not just because of the financial rewards and status that it brings, but also because human beings naturally crave variety, the opportunity to tackle new and complex problems, and the achievement of mastery in their given field.

It is clear that project professionals have a thirst for stretching themselves. They are constantly breaking new boundaries, exploring new ideas and finding faster, more efficient and more effective ways of working. For them, doing what has not been done before is commonplace. Yet, despite the fact that they play a crucial role in driving society as a whole forward, it is not always clear to them how they can advance in their chosen career.

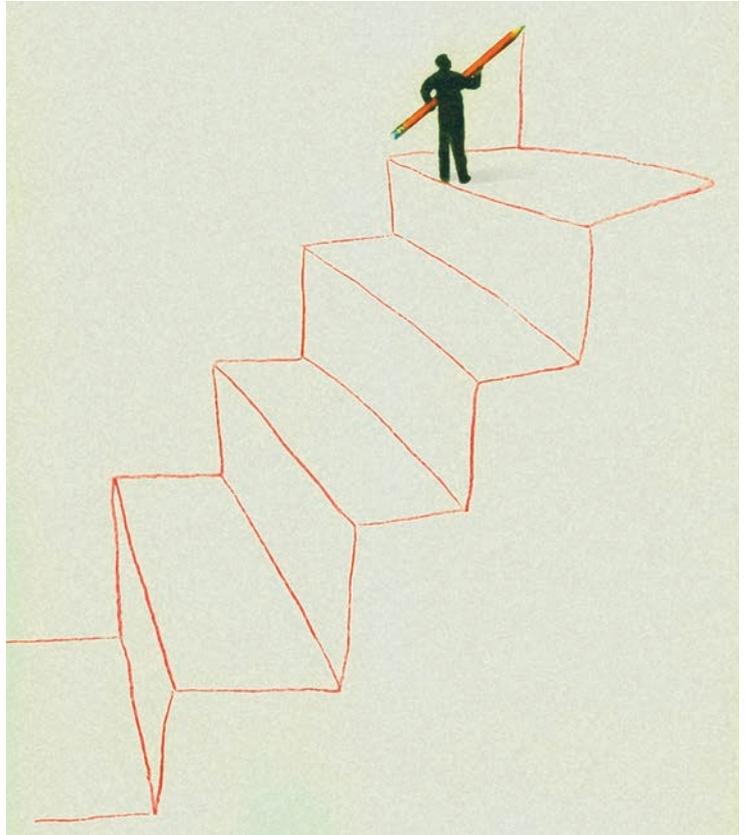
Career development is where membership of a professional body such as APM comes into its own. APM gives you myriad options for self-development and career progression. Obviously, there are the qualifications and publications that it offers. Then there are the conferences, networking events and the specific interest groups.

Attending an APM event is a great way to find out about best practice from industry leaders, and to meet and exchange views with your peers.

Furthermore, APM has also created a Competence Framework – a comprehensive benchmarking resource available to everyone in the project management profession, whatever stage they are at in their careers. It will help you to identify the gaps in your development that need to be filled if you are to move ahead on your chosen path. We examine the framework in depth, on page 48.

I am sad to say that this will be my last issue as editor of *Project* because I am about to move onto the next stage in my own career journey. But I leave you in the very capable hands of Jason Hesse, an experienced business editor. Editing *Project* has been a wonderful experience and I have enjoyed working with you all. I wish you the very best for the future, and hope that you enjoy long and fulfilling careers.

Sally Percy



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GARY WATERS / IKON; COVER IMAGE / GETTY

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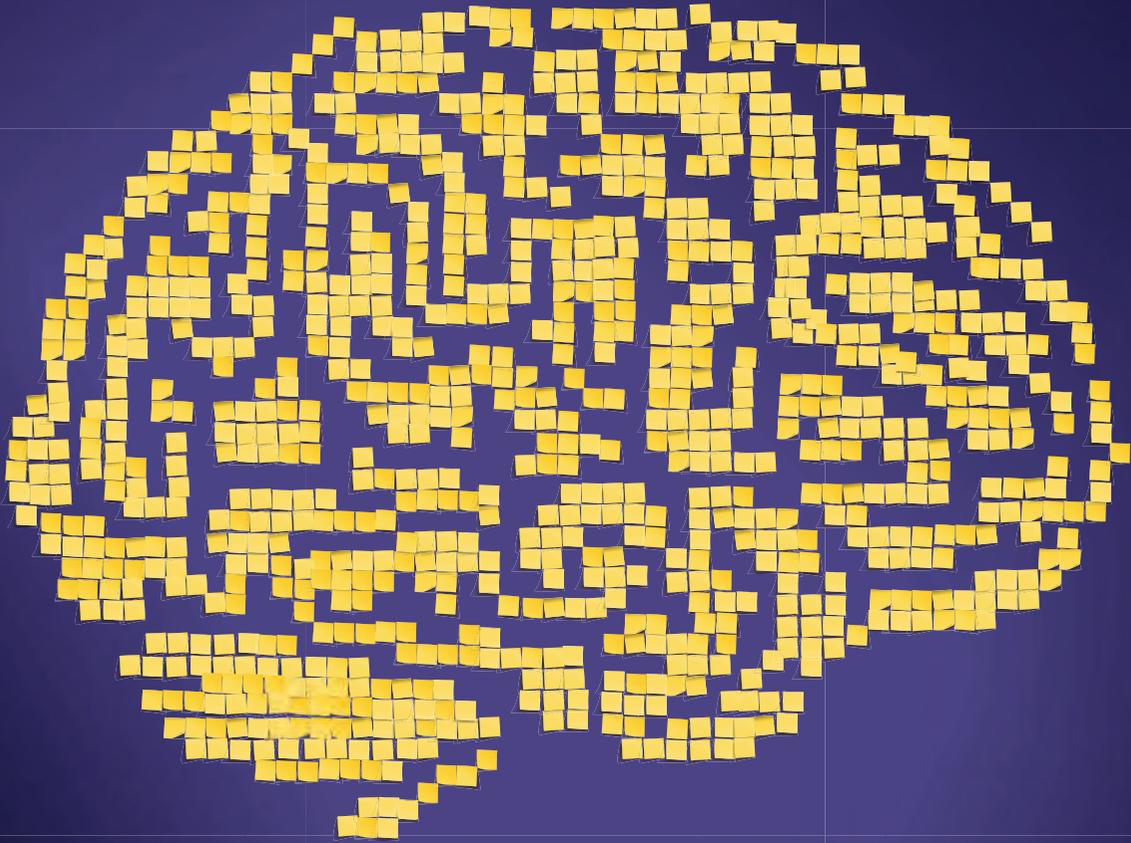


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IT'S A BIT OF A CLICHÉ, BUT IT REALLY IS A JOURNEY AND WE'RE PART-WAY THROUGH. IT'S GREAT TO SEE MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES ALREADY SHOWING VALUE

Jess Anison, head of the OU's portfolio office

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KICK-OFF

Project managers must help to save the planet

Professor Peter Morris calls on profession to tackle climate change

A leading academic has challenged the project management industry to get serious about tackling climate change.

Speaking at a conference in London in June, professor Peter Morris, from the Bartlett School of Construction & Project Management at University College London, argued that project managers need to mobilise themselves to save the planet.

Addressing delegates at the APM-sponsored International Research Network on Organizing by Projects conference, he observed that, while countries are taking action at a national level in order to tackle climate change, there is "a lack of coordination in developing responses towards implementation, particularly within and across the global, national and regional levels".

He added: "Humanity is ill-equipped and ill-coordinated in its response to one of the most

significant challenges ever to face its future."

Morris suggested that portfolio, programme and project management (P3M) offers practical tools and approaches that can help us to make sense of the planning, organisation and control responses to climate change. But he said that P3M potentially needed to be adjusted to tackle the challenge of climate change.

Climate change and project managers' role in addressing it is one of the topics to be discussed at the ITER Fusing the Project World conference, taking place in the south of France early in September.

At the conference, a line-up of influential speakers, including Morris and professor Steven Cowley from the UK Atomic Energy Authority, will explain the importance of fusion energy in a world rapidly running out of resources, and how project professionals can help to deliver the projects that



are needed in a changing world. ITER is a large-scale scientific experiment that aims to demonstrate the technological

and scientific feasibility of fusion energy.

■ To find out more, see: www.iter.org

COMMENT

“The research shows [that meetings] are a huge waste of valuable resources, tying up the time of key people responsible for the success of businesses in meetings where too much of the time they are achieving nothing”



BLAIRE PALMER CEO of That People Thing

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RESEARCH BY CONSULTANCY THAT PEOPLE THING INTO THE USEFULNESS OF MEETINGS

- 44% of meeting time helps the business, say senior employees.
- 56% say the meetings they attend are too long.
- 35% admit to daydreaming in work meetings.
- 36% of meeting time helps senior staff members with their jobs.
- 1/10 has planned their evening meal during meetings.
- 1% of senior personnel are on dating sites or looking for other jobs during meetings.



OIVIND HOVLAND/IKON

GOVERNMENT RECRUITS THE PROJECT ACADEMY TO LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

The UK government has enlisted APM-accredited consultancy The Project Academy to help with its new Project Leadership Programme (PLP). PLP will develop programme management leadership skills across government departments, combining theory with hands-on learning. PLP aims to help civil servants deliver large, complex projects on time and to budget.

Cranfield School of Management will be the lead contract party, with The Project Academy and PA Consulting Group fulfilling other roles as delivery partners. Around 300 senior project and programme management staff will be enrolled on the programme annually.

The Project Academy and PA Consulting team will provide senior project managers to act as coaches for civil servants and to ensure a learning programme is incorporated in the delivery of a project.

Paul Erricker, managing director of The Project Academy, said the consultancy is "looking forward to working closely with government project leaders to really understand the challenges that they face, to identify their development needs and to coach them to enhance their project leadership skills".



Inefficiency rife across construction and engineering

Around two-thirds (66%) of UK workers waste time in their jobs due to insufficient business systems, new research has revealed.

Most alarmingly for project managers, 75% of respondents from the construction and engineering sector said they waste time due to inefficient systems – more than any other sector. Those who waste three or more hours per day (which includes 36% of respondents from the construction and engineering sector) cost the average UK business over £28,000 annually – more than a full-time employee would earn in a year on the average UK salary.

Almost one-third (32%) of all respondents to the study by software company Access Group have considered changing job because of frustration over wasted time, while 51% of respondents weren't confident in the accuracy of data in their company's internal systems. The survey of 2,000 UK employees also revealed that submitting expenses, scheduling work, filling out timesheets and billing finances are the tasks causing the most inefficiency due to poor internal systems. Steve Sawyer, divisional director at Access Group, said: "It is staggering to see how much time and money the average UK business throws away because of inefficient systems. Something so easy to change shouldn't be having this impact on businesses or their staff."

■ *The full report, Time, Money & Talent: The Black Hole of Professional Services, can be found at: tinyurl.com/nm8nmfg*

KEY FINDINGS OF ACCESS GROUP'S RESEARCH

£28,000 is the annual cost of inefficiency to the average UK business.

36% of people in the construction and engineering sector said they spend more than three hours a day working with inefficient systems.

66% of UK workers believe they waste time in their day-to-day role at work due to insufficient business systems.

13.2% of respondents said they get frustrated with rekeying information.

AROUND THE UK

McEWEN LEADS ON CO-OP CONSTRUCTION

APM member Jason McEwen is leading the team charged with managing the large-scale construction, refit and retro-fit projects underway within The Co-operative's food business. McEwen, who is head of portfolios, programmes and projects delivery at The Co-operative Group, is leading the team, operational process and supply chain to enable delivery. His responsibilities also cover construction, refurbishment and retro-fit projects to the other trading, logistics and corporate estate businesses across the group. This year, The Co-operative Food is actively pursuing 100 new convenience stores and will undertake 255 store refits.



ARTELIA TO TELL STORY OF ROBIN HOOD

Engineering firm Artelia will breathe life into Nottingham Castle after being appointed to deliver a scheme that will showcase its 1,000 years of rich history. As part of the project to transform the castle, there will be a new interactive and participative gallery, which will enlist 'Robin Hood' to lead visitors through the history of Nottingham and its castle. The gallery will explore national and international issues around protest, rebellion and democracy in an exciting way.

Commenting on the appointment, Artelia director Ian Bailey said: "It is a story that has captivated generations and is best told from the original place. Beyond this landmark project, there is the additional benefit to the local community in terms of regeneration and job creation, and it is a privilege to be part of that."

Functionality pushes the right buttons for US professionals



Functionality is the most important factor for project professionals looking to invest in new project management software, research has shown.

A US study by software comparison company Capterra found that two-fifths of project management software users rated functionality as their top priority, followed by ease of use (24 per cent), price (9 per cent), support (9 per cent) and implementation/training (8 per cent). Just 5 per cent of respondents were swayed by company reputation, and an equal proportion were influenced by the popularity of the software.

The research found that file sharing, time tracking, email integration and Gantt charts were among the features most used in project-management

software. Video chat, real-time chat, social media, integration and mobile access were less likely to be used.

As the research pointed out, the relative unpopularity of such tools is ironic, as they are primarily for communication. Notably, respondents overwhelmingly claimed that their project management software helped most with communication, followed by increasing the number of projects completed on time, on budget and to higher standards.

But the research suggested that organisations have not yet worked out how social media can improve project productivity while users are more likely to rely on their desktops than a

mobile device unless they work in an industry that requires a lot of site work, such as construction.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) said that they used their project management software to communicate with clients and most project managers communicate with more than 10 clients at a time.

Microsoft Project was overwhelmingly the most popular software, used by 67 per cent of project professionals. VersionOne was second with 7 per cent.

When looking for project management software, 55 per cent of buyers just trialled two options, while 17 per cent tested three. A brave 6 per cent chose to forgo a demo of their new system altogether.

■ *For more on technology, see pages 75-77*

AROUND THE WORLD

QATAR KICKS OFF WORLD CUP STADIUM CONSTRUCTION

Qatar is pressing ahead with preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup despite the ongoing corruption scandal over the host-bidding process that has consumed football's governing body.

The oil-rich Gulf state has hired Italian firm Salini Impregilo Group to construct the Al Bayt Al Khor stadium for the tournament – a 70,000 seat arena that will be built in Al Khor, a city 50 km north of Qatar's capital, Doha. The contract is worth €770m, with €716m covering construction and €53m allocated to operation and maintenance.

Salini Impregilo will work in a joint venture with Oman-based contractor Galfar and another Italian firm, Cimolai. It beat competitors from France, Austria, India and Asia to the job.

ATKINS TO FIRE-RISK ASSESS FUKUSHIMA NUCLEAR PLANT

Atkins has been awarded a contract by Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) for fire-hazard services at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station in Japan.

The consultancy will prepare a fire-hazards analysis for the entire Fukushima Daiichi site. This will involve a thorough review of plant documentation and on-site inspections to identify fire hazards, and determine consequences in relation to site nuclear safety goals and radioactivity release to the environment. It will also make recommendations for the prevention, detection, suppression and containment of fire.

The power station was severely damaged when an earthquake and tsunami hit Japan in March 2011. The disaster disabled the reactor cooling systems, leading to the release of radioactivity into the environment. A 20 km 'no go' area surrounds the plant and it may only be entered under government supervision.

INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The next global president at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the editor of the Women in Leadership section of *The Guardian* are the keynote speakers at this month's Women in Project Management National Conference.

Amanda Clack, a partner at professional services firm EY, will take over the helm of RICS next year. She is a specialist in portfolio management and one of the founding members of the Women in Project Management Specific Interest Group.

Journalist Harriet Minter writes on a wide range of issues that affect women and the workplace, and is a regular speaker on women's rights, the future of work and digital media.

The conference takes place in London on 24 September. It is organised by APM and sponsored by BAE Systems. Its aim is to reinforce the importance of women in project management and their contribution to the economy.

■ For full details and to book, go to: www.apm.org.uk/events

NUMBERS

53

The number of major government projects that have improved over the past year, according to the Major Projects Authority's report for 2014-15

£1.7bn

The value of the North York Moors potash project, which will involve digging a mile-deep mine shaft under heavily protected moorland

5.6%

Of UK energy came from renewable and waste sources in 2013, says the Office for National Statistics

Half-price access to Gower library for *Project* readers

Publisher Gower is offering *Project* readers fully searchable online access to its library of more than 120 project management titles for the same annual cost as one printed book.

By taking out a subscription to the newly launched Gower PM book portal and Community of Practice, GpmFirst, *Project* readers will be able to enjoy Gower's entire catalogue, representing 48 years of project management publishing. Among the subjects covered are benefits realisation management, complexity, culture, earned value, ethics, finance, leadership and strategy measurement, methodologies, people and roles, and planning.

Readers can claim a half-price discount until 31 October 2015 of £6 a month or £72 a year. The normal cost of a year's access to Gower's entire library and associated content in the Community of Practice is £12 a month or £144 a year.

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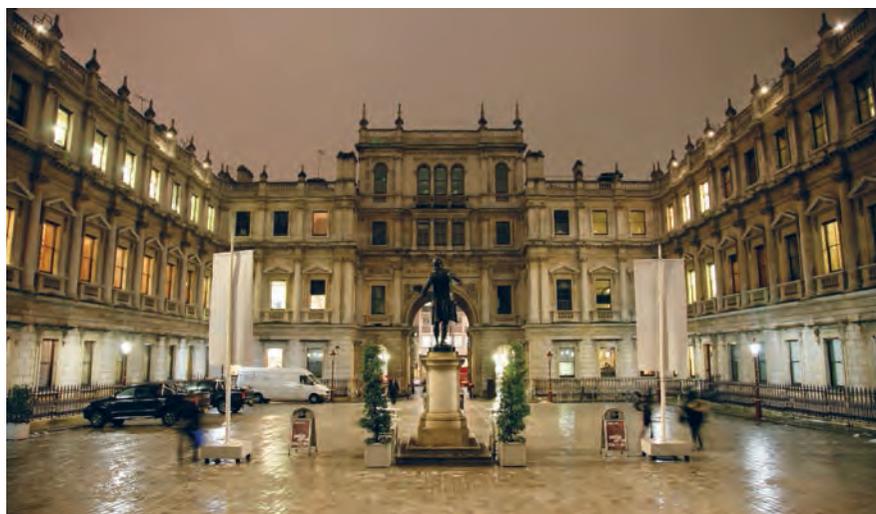


Buro Four to manage Royal Academy of Arts transformation

The world-renowned Royal Academy of Arts (RA) has called on consultancy Buro Four to manage a major redevelopment in honour of its 250th anniversary.

The Piccadilly-based gallery will be revitalised to include new spaces for exhibitions and displays, a double-height lecture theatre with more than 260 seats, a new learning centre and new spaces for the RA schools, using designs by architect Sir David Chipperfield. A link bridge from Burlington House to Burlington Gardens will also be completed as part of the renovations, creating a new route from Piccadilly to Mayfair.

The redevelopment project is being funded by a £12.7m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as support from private individuals, trusts



and foundations. Buro Four has been appointed to provide project management services, including design team management, statutory authority liaison, party wall and rights of light, neighbour liaison, procurement of demolition and construction, planning and programming, and tenant liaison.

Charles Saumarez Smith, secretary and chief executive of the RA, said: "The physical transformation of the site will fundamentally change our 247-year-old institution. This is not just a major building development – it is an undertaking that will transform the psychological, as well as the physical, nature of the academy."

90 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF

Project meets James White, support partner and project manager at CH2M



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

I have spent the last 18 months working on the management of nuclear-powered submarines in production for the Submarine Operating Centre to support the Ministry of Defence's capability. It has been a busy and extremely exciting time.

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

The governance arrangements have been challenged in relation to performance, cost and time measures as a result of the size of the project.

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

I have had to understand and continually remind myself of the importance of the Ministry of Defence as the customer, the Royal Navy as the end user, and BAE Systems as the

prime contractor, designer and ship builder. This can become out of focus on occasions.

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

It will be making timely decisions in the context of performance, cost, time and risk, supported by appropriate information because of the high demands placed on the Ministry of Defence for Operation Handover of the third Astute class submarine.

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

Her Majesty the Queen. She must have so much interesting information on so many different countries, people and philosophies.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO FEATURE IN 90 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF?

Email editor@projectmagazine.co.uk

DIARY DATES

10 Sept 2015

APM's Scottish conference, Edinburgh

11-12 Sept 2015

Underground Design and Construction Conference, Hong Kong

24 Sept 2015

National Conference of Women in Project Management, London

1 Oct 2015

Achieving Change Successfully: Why Good Governance Matters, London

5 Oct 2015

Project Delivery – More for Less – No Pressure Then? Reading

6-7 Oct 2015

Project Challenge Expo 2015, London

2 Nov 2015

APM Project Management Awards, London

12 Nov 2015

Project Controls Expo 2015, London

17 Nov 2015

ECITB Conference 2015, Aberdeen

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

FOCUS ON...

Innovation

The UK manufacturing industry will be heavily focused on innovation going forward, thanks to the support it gets from attractive UK corporation taxes such as the Patent Box, research suggests.

Responding to the latest KPMG *Global Manufacturing Outlook*, nearly half (48 per cent) of UK manufacturers revealed that their company's strategic focus is on innovation and just 2 per cent felt that UK taxes will be a challenge to their

business over the next 12 to 24 months.

Manufacturing businesses are set to invest heavily in research and development, and innovation over the next two years, the survey of manufacturing executives found.

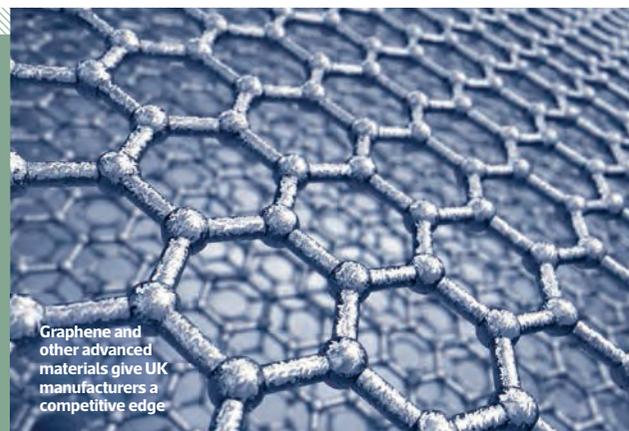
Encouragingly, half of the UK respondents said that they plan to spend more than 6 per cent of revenue on research and development, and innovation over the next two years – an

increase of 21 per cent from what they spent in the past two years.

Product development cycles are shortening from years to a few months as a result of innovations such as 3D printing, which are changing manufacturing.

Nevertheless, nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of UK manufacturers said that their time horizon for an innovation roadmap was one to five years.

Commenting on the report, Stephen Cooper, head of



Graphene and other advanced materials give UK manufacturers a competitive edge

manufacturing sector at KPMG UK, said: "The UK has always been viewed as a leader in manufacturing innovation and there are clear signs that this will continue to be the case.

"Encouraging tax rates, stable markets and growing investment in new technologies and advanced materials – such as graphene – continue to provide competitive advantages for UK manufacturers."

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Vote for APM board members in 2015

You may have seen the recent promotion asking for candidates to stand for the APM Board of Trustees. The board is APM's governing body and its members are both our company directors and charity trustees. Being a board member is a critical role and full members of APM can have their say over who is elected. This is a key opportunity for you to influence the stewardship of APM and its future direction.

Full members of APM have until noon on 31 October to cast their vote, and the results will be announced at the APM Annual General Meeting on 9 November 2015.

To help you find out more about the candidates, and even have an opportunity to ask them questions, visit: apm.org.uk/election2015.

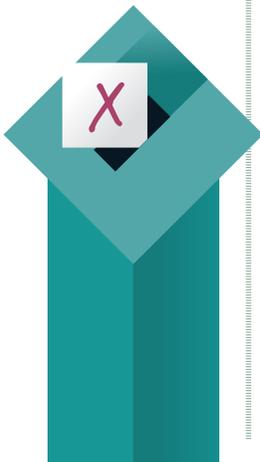
Voting is managed by Electoral Reform Services and remains very simple. There are now three ways to cast your vote:

■ **Online:** the quickest and easiest way is to vote online at www.votebyinternet.com/apm2015 – all you need is your unique security code printed on your ballot paper.

■ **By SMS:** simply send a text message from your mobile phone as instructed in the voting pack.

■ **By post:** return your completed ballot paper in the pre-paid envelope.

Last year, APM enjoyed a record election turnout of nearly 18%. Thank you to all who voted. Have your say again this year.



Helping Hands: The award-winning team from Bristol Water pictured from left to right, Sophie Edwards, Mark Conlan, Stephen Boyle, Ben Menear and Rebekah Rice, with Alan Watson from sponsor Group IT, Lloyds Banking Group (right)

Round of applause for the Helping Hands team

Bristol Water's 'Helping Hands' team has won the inaugural 2015 South Wales and West of England (SWWE) Project Management Challenge competition.

The team, which launched the One25 drop-in night shelter for vulnerable sex workers in Bristol, also took home the 'Values and Behaviours' award at the finals night held earlier this year.

Three other teams competed in the competition. There was a combined team from aircraft manufacturer Airbus and the University of the West of England, which delivered a range of options for an improved inventory management system for St Peter's Hospice in Bristol. Meanwhile, a team from defence contractor General Dynamics UK had delivered laptops and software to Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School in Blackwood, south Wales. Finally a second team from Bristol Water helped the Avon & Somerset Search and Rescue service to improve its day-to-day operations.

Each year, the Bristol charity One25 provides vital support to around 300

women who are vulnerable to, or trapped in, street sex work. The 'Helping Hands' winning entry stood out because it showed enthusiasm and commitment to deliver support to the recruitment and training programme required for staff and volunteers; the initiation of a promotional and stakeholder campaign; a range of security upgrades to the drop-in shelter; and raising of additional funding. The shelter opened on 10 April 2015.

Bruce Phillips, the SWWE Branch committee member who led and managed the competition, said: "The project board was unanimous in its praise for the significant effort shown by all entries in the branch's competition."

He added: "The standard was high and the range of projects selected by the teams, based on the theme of delivering benefits to community services, was diverse. All team members should be justifiably proud of their achievements in delivering real benefit to the wider community and the development of their personal and professional competence."

Project professionals top up portfolio skills at conference

Nearly 100 portfolio managers and change professionals attended the Portfolio Management Specific Interest Group's (SIG's) conference in April. They heard how practitioners from various sectors make portfolio management work.

Opening the conference, Stephen Parrett (SIG chair) highlighted the aims of sharing portfolio management experiences, encouraging cross-professional collaboration and contributing to the development of best practice.

PwC's global lead for portfolio and programme management methods and tools, Karl Reilly, presented an analysis of PwC's 2014 *Global Portfolio and Programme Management Survey*. He emphasised the need for portfolio managers to understand corporate strategy, be flexible in delivery and use business language with stakeholders. Julie Black, associate director in the project management group at Ofgem, followed, giving a comprehensive description of the slimline portfolio management unit at the utility regulator, which connects the portfolio to operational performance and decision-making.

Paul Morgan, head of demand and portfolio management, Europe Information Systems at SABMiller, described the brewer's approach to portfolio management. He said that it linked projects to strategy using a prioritisation framework and stressed the importance of cultural awareness in a multi-country business.

Andrew Brown, head of project management at defence company MBDA, also offered an international perspective.

He demonstrated the merits of strategic portfolio leadership alongside extensive multinational collaboration.

Tim Hopkins, portfolio office lead at Westminster City Council, illustrated why – with cost reduction a major driver of change for the council – portfolio management adds value by helping stakeholders to understand projects. A similar stakeholder-oriented approach drives the Yorkshire Building Society portfolio. Julia Hodkin, the building society's head of change portfolio management office, highlighted how its risk-based process required active engagement with stakeholders to retain their commitment.

Consultant Adrian Pyne completed the line-up by examining how Gatwick Airport is generating success, and explained the role of organisational project management in that.

Overall, the range of examples at the conference demonstrated how taking 'local factors' into account, having good communication skills and adopting a simple approach can lead to effective portfolio management.

Delegates also discussed key portfolio management topics with colleagues and presenters during a workshop. The findings from the workshop will be analysed by the SIG committee during the course of 2015.

■ *To find out more, visit: apm.org.uk/news/portfolio-management-making-it-work-you-and-your-organisation*

■ *SABMiller's Paul Morgan writes about a local-to-regional approach to portfolio management, on page 70.*



EVENTS ROUND-UP

RECENT APM EVENTS FROM ACROSS THE UK

Helen Gamlin, head of the programme management office at Heathrow Airport, shared her insights on developing the governance of programmes with the **APM Governance Specific Interest Group** in June. Heathrow is the busiest airport in the UK, the busiest airport in Europe by passenger traffic, and the third-busiest airport in the world by passenger traffic. In 2014, it handled a record 73.4 million passengers and 470,695 transport movements. Gamlin outlined the key developments that the airport has taken in recent years to improve its flexibility regarding the governance of projects and to increase business accountability for realisation of programme benefits.

Members of the North East Branch spent an evening discussing how social and environmental responsibility fits with modern project management with APM president Tom Taylor in April. Taylor described a fast, demanding, regulated, value-for-money society with multiple diverse interests, where managers of projects and programmes have their work cut out to deliver the necessary outputs and achieve the best outcomes. He explained how their job becomes more complex when a whole new range of criteria are thrown into the mix – covering sustainability, the environment and green issues – which in themselves are not clear, complementary or consistent. Expanding on issues raised in his book, Taylor encouraged project professionals to consider how and when they might address sustainability opportunities during their project life cycle (or at least during the stages in which they are involved). Attendees to the event were able to share the sustainability-related challenges and triumphs that they have faced during their projects.

FOR A FULL LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS, VISIT APM.ORG.UK/EVENTS

To find out more about the APM branches and SIGs, visit: apm.org.uk/groups

Launch event for women in project management video

In June, APM's Women in Project Management (WiPM) Specific Interest Group held its first screening of a video that aims to attract new talent and address under-representation of women within the project management profession.

The video features several female project managers from different industries who discuss their roles, skills and entry routes into the profession.

Present at the screening were some of the featured project managers, along with the film company. The WiPM video can be viewed at: tinyurl.com/olr3gas.



NEC3 is addressed in Hong Kong

APM's Hong Kong branch enjoyed a presentation entitled 'What is NEC3?' at the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club in April. Dr Jon Broome, chair of the APM Contracts and Procurement Specific Interest Group, presented with the support of John Rayner, a quantity surveyor at construction company Balfour Beatty.

Broome explained that the NEC family of contracts facilitates the implementation of sound project management principles and practices. Its collaborative approach has resulted in time and money being saved on some of the biggest projects in the public and private sectors around the world.

He told attendees that each contract is characterised by its flexibility to promote easy selection of the 'best-fit' contracting strategy for project circumstances. The contracts can also be used in a variety of commercial situations in any location. The modular structure within each contract allows for the best-fit procurement arrangement without the need for expensive legal input. Sometimes critics argue that a contract does not cover the particular needs of their sector, he said, but he suggested that the contract could be easily adapted.

■ For more on NEC3, see page 72

Profile of an APM volunteer



Name: **Innocent Chimagwu Ebulu**
 Membership grade: **MAPM**
 Volunteer role: **Committee Member – Yorkshire & North Lincolnshire Branch**

Why did you decide to become a volunteer with APM?

I have been a member of this branch since 2010 and have actively attended most of the events, activities and programmes. After a time, I became very passionate and wanted to get directly involved as part of the team to continue the excellent work – shaping the future, creating strategies, and making positive decisions for the branch. I wanted to contribute my knowledge and experience to enhance the strength, development and running of the branch.

Following a call for volunteers, I contacted the chairperson of the branch to express my interest in volunteering as a committee member. I was encouraged to join and so I did. To date, it has been rewarding.

What benefits have you gained from being an APM volunteer?

The opportunity to have regular meetings with project managers within Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, whom I couldn't have known otherwise. Also, the interactions and knowledge sharing, especially around various APM activities. I have also enjoyed learning new skills, such as organising events, lectures, seminars and workshops, including how to identify a selection of suitable speakers for a particular topic and how to choose the right location for the event. Finally, it has been good to be part of a team that is involved in supporting students and higher education institutions within Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire.

What would be your top tip to an APM member looking to become a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) ambassador and APM volunteer?

Please find the time to get involved. It is a worthy experience to contribute to the continuous development of the profession. You will be happy that you did.

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APM Awards – the journey continues



“Winning an APM Award in front of the project management elite was the highlight of my career – it doesn't get much better than that”

Linos Davies
from Magnox,
winner of Programme
of the Year 2014



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Your view



Please send your letters to editor@projectmagazine.co.uk
Letters may be edited for publication

STAR LETTER

A TOUCH OF HUMOUR

This is just a note to congratulate you on the new *Project*. Thanks to the smaller typeface, the matt pages and the layout, the magazine feels far more professional.

The first impression is excellent and, as we all know, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

If I can be picky, *Project* could do with a cartoon or two, maybe a series on the developing history of project management and something on future trends.

Although I work in the construction industry, I think information systems are of interest to everyone. Obviously your article on building information modelling

was welcome. And it would be nice to see the odd article from project managers from outside the UK and Northern Ireland.

In relation to the request for more humour, here's something I made up: *An architect visits a site office to find that the walls are plastered with Gantt charts.*

"Nice wallpaper," says the architect.

"Yes it is," says the site manager, "but it's terribly hard to keep clean."

"Why's that?" asks the architect.

"Well, for one thing, the client keeps coming here and scribbling on it."

Martin Jordan, director, Conroy Crowe Kelly Architects & Urban Designers, Dublin

DIVERSITY IS WELCOMED

I commend you on the new format of *Project* and extend appreciation to all of the team.

The second issue is as engaging – if not more so – than the first.

I have particularly noted that there are diverse images, and a range of project managers and projects are featured. There were many nuggets of valuable info and takeaways, too.

Teri Okoro, chair, Women in Project Management Specific Interest Group



EXPERIENCE FIRST?

As a long-time member of APM, may I congratulate you and your team on the new-look *Project*. The focus on fewer but deeper articles is very welcome for me.

I hope there will be more about how we, the project management industry, can genuinely mature. The rush to 'get people qualified' has not always produced sound, experienced practitioners. In discussions with colleagues, I find a desire to correct this. One method is to insist that new entrants to our own teams gain meaningful experience first, then look at qualifications.

Luke Reader, IT end user technologies director, CEB

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The Most Common Communication Mistakes Project Managers Make
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@colindellis

Great post by @begeland: 5 signs you probably don't want that project management job
www.cio.com/article/2935360/project-management/5-signs-you-probably-dont-want-that-pm-job.html #pmot

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▷ Project management – a necessity not a nice-to-have
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▷ How does poor project planning create potential problems? bit.ly/1JFgOQF #pmot

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LINKEDIN / TECHNOLOGY: A HELP OR A HINDRANCE?

THE ISSUE

On APM's official LinkedIn group, Ben Rael-Brook, enterprise account executive at software company Clarizen, asked an interesting question: "I've worked for several enterprise organisations and still the collaboration

tool of choice remains plain old email and meetings. I'm dumbfounded at the slow adoption of messaging and collaboration tools available for project teams. Are collaboration tools promoting or hindering project teams?"

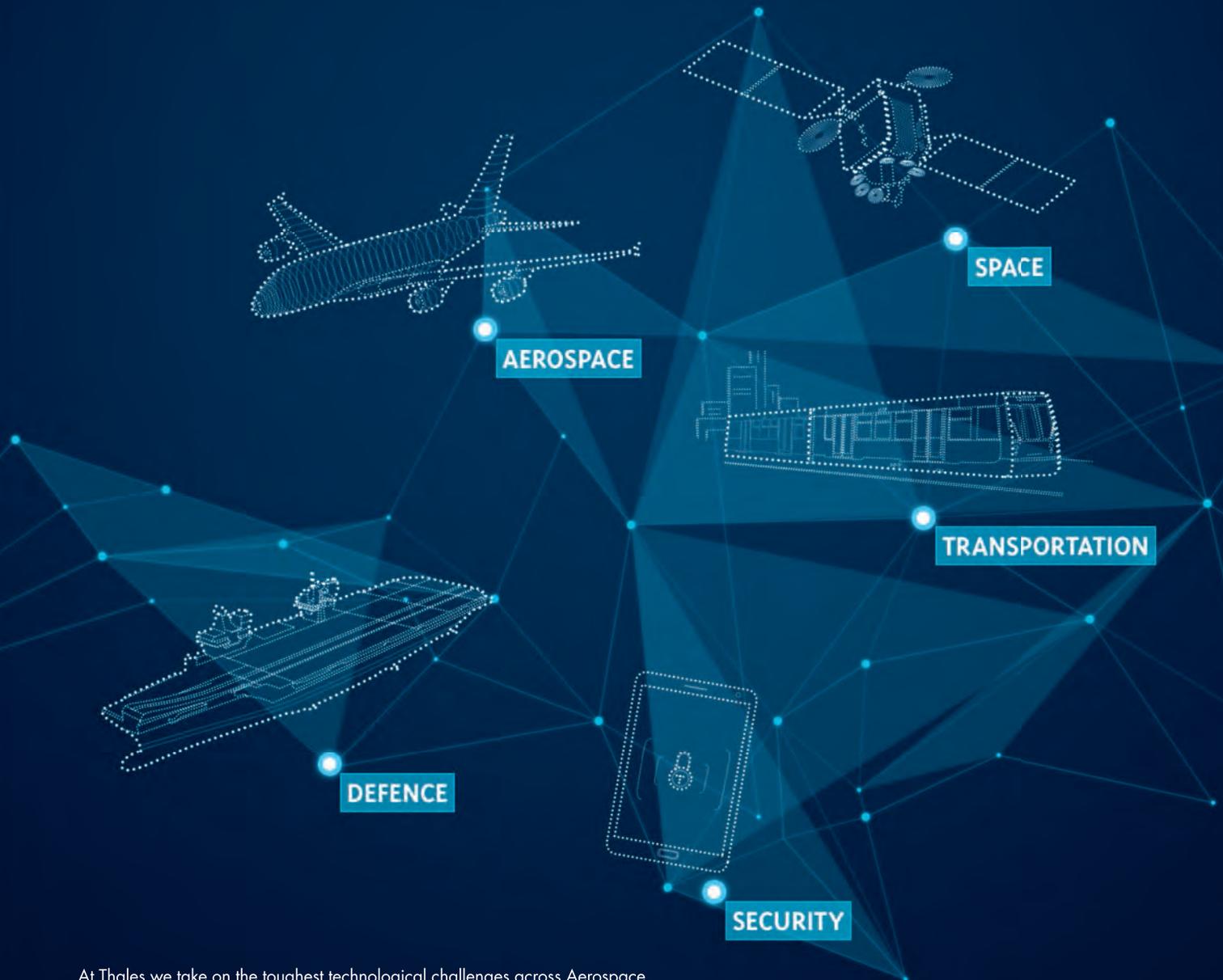
THE REACTION

Isn't the technology just a channel for collaboration? We are well versed in the old technologies, but not in the newer tools. We should learn to use them before we need to use them.

Cathy Barwick, IT audit manager

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Project learns what APM's experts have been debating in these excerpts from their blogs. Read the blogs in full – and many more – at apm.org.uk/blog

BEST NOT TO BE TOO SCIENTIFIC ABOUT BENEFITS

Posted by Jonathan Norman on 16 June 2015

There's always a risk when you're working on projects that you assume that the detail generated in a benefits map is an indication of the accuracy and authority of the process. Benefit mapping is ostensibly a wonderful tool for demonstrating causality, and providing sponsors and stakeholders with a tangible picture of what you are going to deliver.

The trouble is that you need an experienced and sophisticated sponsor to be able to interpret and question the map, rather than take it at face value.

For other, less sophisticated sponsors, I suggest there are just three questions you need to ask and answer to make sense of benefits.

1 Benefits are dependent on people changing their behaviours. So you need to spend time understanding what the desired behaviours are and how your project will encourage users to adopt these behaviours. Ask yourself: "What am I expecting people to do as a result of my project? How am I expecting them to behave?"

2 Only users (customers, citizens, employees) can realise benefits. So you need to demonstrate rigorously the logic of your benefits map. Ask yourself: "Why will people change their behaviour as a result of my project and what happens if they don't?"

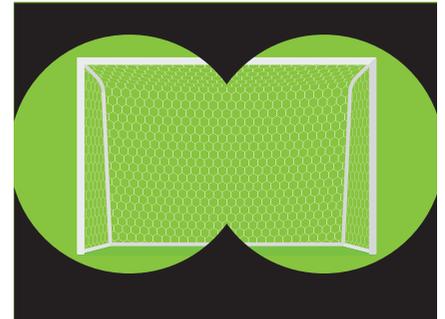
3 Project sponsors are responsible for benefits. Your sponsor needs to be asking the project team the kind of questions I have indicated above. If you hold your sponsors to their responsibility, it makes project governance considerably easier.

Don't get me wrong. Benefits mapping is extremely useful, particularly in large and complicated projects, where different individuals and users may influence different behaviours.

These apparently simple questions will not necessarily help you with the process, technology, raw materials and cost of your project, but they are useful check questions to help you avoid over-scoping your project and delivering outcomes without benefits, and for understanding whether you are still on course.



JONATHAN NORMAN is publisher at Gower Publishing, which has published more than 100 books relating to project, programme and portfolio management



DON'T BE SEDUCED BY THE DRIVE TO COLLABORATE

Posted by Jim Dale on 6 June 2015

Who could possibly take issue with a word such as 'collaborate', which, my online dictionary says, denotes: 'The action of working with someone to produce something'?

There now appears to be an inexorable drive to collaborate across all organisational sectors, in what has been coined 'the age of alliances'. In austerity Britain, collaboration is often promoted as a panacea, an ingenious way of delivering more for less. Yet reality often paints a different picture.

Organisational collaboration takes many forms and can include joint ventures, outsourcing, sharing services, private finance initiatives and a multitude of other alliances.

The relevance to us in the project management community is, that most, if not all, of the responsibility for delivering the desired product of these 'collaborations' rests upon our shoulders. We are, after all, the 'experts' in delivering projects.

Now let's look at the harsh reality. We know around 70 per cent of normal projects end up delivering a suboptimal outcome.

When we look at the track record for inter-organisational initiatives, the 'failure' rate is truly alarming.

The Institute of Collaborative Working indicates a figure of 80 per cent, but research by respected academics Shirley Sagawa and Eli Segal suggests an even higher failure rate, of 90 per cent.

Collaboration may be a 'nice' word and it may just provide a solution that is right for your organisation. But before embarking upon your next collaborative project, please take time out to make sure it constitutes a 'good' collaboration and that you can demonstrate sackfuls of 'synergy'.

Do this by ruthlessly focusing on and nailing those benefits. Available evidence suggests that the highest levels of project management competence are demanded to minimise the risk of a project joining the ever-increasing number of failed collaborative ventures.



JIM DALE is an independent project management consultant, mentor and adviser

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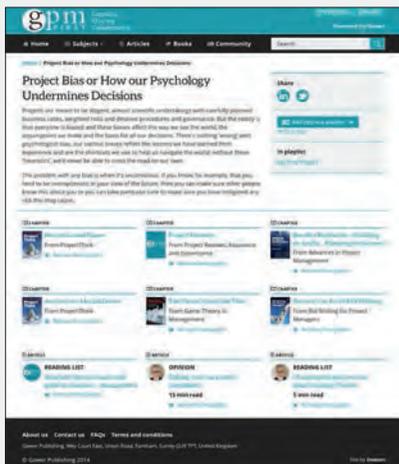
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A lively and collaborative community of project professionals from across industry

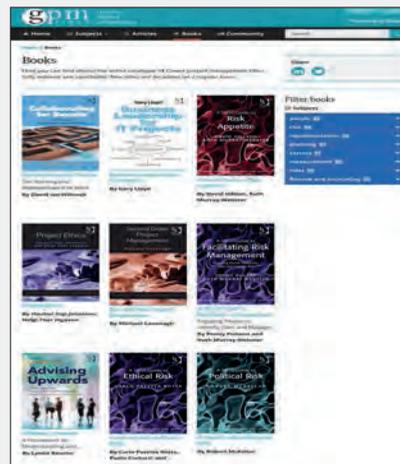
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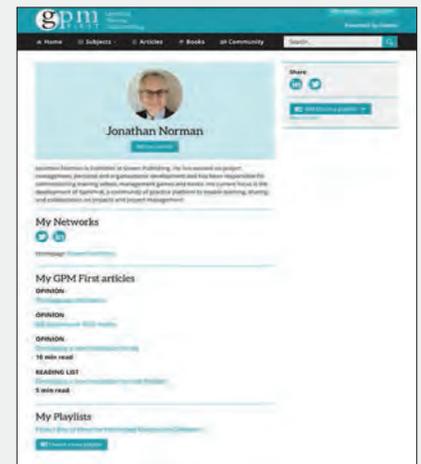
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What use is project management?

You possess one of the most important professional, business and life skills that anyone can ever have, argues **MIKE CLAYTON**

What use is project management?

This seems a foolish question to ask a readership of project managers in the UK's premier project management journal. Clearly, its utility is in delivering projects effectively and efficiently; and we need projects to create the assets and changes that drive growth and prosperity.

Job done: end of article. Or is it? I still think of myself as a project manager although, truth be told, I haven't managed a 'proper' project for years. So what use is it to me? I have been wondering.

The mental block that I had for a long time was that it all seemed too obvious: my skills are self-evidently essential. But then, surely that is the point?

Project management is an exceptional career platform for whatever you choose to do next: whether it is in developing deeper project and programme delivery skills, focusing on related disciplines such as risk management or stakeholder engagement, or moving away, into other areas of business, public service or voluntary work. When I think of all of my experiences as a project manager, I can see that they provided a phenomenal platform for learning almost everything I apply daily in my work.

Consequently, my business today is built on the foundation of skills I gained as a project manager. In the winter issue of *Project*, I will look at the learning opportunities I was able to create for myself. But my thoughts about what use project management has been for me went even deeper than that.

Project management hasn't just given me skills: it has honed my attitudes to

everything. I approach pretty much anything I do with a project management mindset. I fundamentally believe that this makes the dominant contribution to my productivity, my effectiveness and, therefore, to my success.

The seeds of this were sown early. Among the most popular of my blog posts on project management were four I wrote in memory of my father¹: a man who was not a project manager, but a shopkeeper. And there's the thing: we learn our first lessons in project management at home and at school.

WE LEARN TO MANAGE PROJECTS AT A YOUNG AGE, BECAUSE OUR LIVES ARE FULL OF PROJECTS

Project management is not a business skill, it is not a professional skill, it is not a workplace skill: it is a life skill. While I had been busy observing the ever-increasing number of managers, supervisors and staff members who are called upon to manage projects in their workplace, I had been neglecting the reality that we need to manage projects in all areas of our lives.

And the very backgrounds that make participants on my courses so open to project management methods, and so familiar with its core ideas – even with no prior training – prove the point. We learn to manage projects at a young age, because our lives are full of projects.

Education is a political and professional issue, so I am cautious in suggesting we add to an already crowded curriculum. But, just as the best schools find ways to ensure children learn social skills from the earliest age, they also find ways to teach project skills.

I'd like to see a subtle shift of schools bringing project management to the fore of their teaching methods. I want children to learn the formal skills of project management as they do their educational projects. And I want this for a simple reason: when I think about what use project management is, I can only conclude that we can use it for everything.

If we want our children to build and live in a world that delivers more, with finite resources, while taking a mature approach to the risks involved, there is nothing more valuable that we can teach them. **■**

1. Project Management Lessons from my Father: <http://wp.me/pxbtF-5z>



DR MIKE CLAYTON is a speaker, trainer and author, specialising in project management and personal effectiveness www.mikeclayton.co.uk

In the pipeline?

The world depends upon the skills of good project managers, but where will the next generation come from?

MARK HOLMES has some ideas



Ask any client to list what makes a successful project and it's likely that a good project manager will feature somewhere near the top of the list.

From assembling a team, through to managing project partners and overseeing on-site safety, all the way through to the final stages of project completion, project managers play a pivotal role in the smooth running of any major project.

Attracting, developing and retaining the next generation of project managers is, therefore, crucial to the long-term health of the industry. But one of the biggest challenges that it faces is the shortage of highly trained people. According to the Office for National Statistics, from February–April 2013 to March–May 2015, the number of vacancies in construction, for example, rose by 133 per cent – from 12,000 to 28,000.

Given the growing demand and competition for experienced project managers, we need to be looking at innovative ways to attract and develop people from outside the sector. Not only will this help to address the shortage, it will also bring new ways of thinking.

ENCOURAGING DIVERSITY

Businesses that fail to build a diverse workforce risk missing out on a broader skill set and new ways of thinking, all of which can add value to their business.

So it's good to see the industry taking proactive steps to improve the retention and development of female employees.

Last year, the Women into Science and Engineering (WISE) Campaign and the

Royal Academy of Engineering launched a 10-point action plan to improve the development and retention of female employees that was signed by more than 20 engineering, science and technology firms. Besides being a signatory to WISE, Mace has also launched its own Women of the Future programme to help develop female talent across the business. But these are all first steps and, as an industry, we should be doing more to recognise and celebrate the benefits of greater diversity in the sector.

DEVELOPING LEADERS

One of the most exciting developments in our industry has been the use of technology, which offers enormous opportunities to undertake even more complex projects. Future leaders have a big role to play in evolving this technology and applying it to all aspects of project management.

A focus of graduate programmes should, therefore, be to immerse graduates in the full spectrum of project management, exposing them to a wide variety of technologies and, in doing so, providing them with the broader experience that will enable them to become more balanced professionals.

Offering graduates a clear career development path is important for motivating the next generation of project managers.

If graduates have an opportunity to develop their skills and experience at an early stage in their careers, then they are far more likely to pursue a long-term

IF GRADUATES HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE AT AN EARLY STAGE IN THEIR CAREERS, THEN THEY ARE FAR MORE LIKELY TO PURSUE A LONG-TERM CAREER AS A PROJECT MANAGER

career as a project manager. That's why initiatives such as The 5% Club, which is focused on addressing high levels of youth unemployment and tackling the UK's skills shortage, make sense on both a social and business level. Membership commits businesses to ensuring that 5 per cent of their workforce consists of either apprentices, graduate trainees or sponsored students by 2020.

It is essential that we attract talented individuals to project management at an early stage of their careers and help them to develop their skills, knowledge and capability. That's the only way we will take the industry forward and develop the next generation of industry leaders. **▶**



MARK HOLMES is chief operating officer for consultancy at Mace. He also leads Mace's talent development board

The project management profession is failing women (and projects are failing as a result)

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



There are two persistent myths that I feel restrict the diversity of individuals who are attracted to project management, most noticeably women.

FOR

The first is that the required career path into project management is via a technical route supported by a relevant Chartership. The second is that project management is an all-or-nothing career.

Myth one reduces the recruiting pool to experienced technical individuals, who are Chartered – a pool that already has significantly fewer women in it. Myth two promotes the heroic image of the project manager always on call, with little room for agile or flexible working.

The skill set required for project management is distinct from that required for a technical career, however. Project professionals work as facilitators between the different elements of the project, integrating them into the whole and driving the team forward towards a common goal. This requires skills including the ability to coach, connect, listen, motivate and plan.

So who would we attract to the profession if we were to focus on the skills required to manage projects rather than the experience?

The image of the heroic project manager, while appealing, is out-dated. Transport for London's Michèle Dix programme-managed the implementation of Oyster through a pragmatic form of job-sharing. With examples such as this, there is scope to rethink how individuals can deliver in more flexible ways.

The project management profession has a part to play in busting these myths. It should provide a narrative and an environment to attract the truly diverse workforce that is required to deliver the unprecedented level of infrastructure projects in the UK. It would be a failure to do otherwise.

JO LUCAS is director at Newington Management Consultancy



For years now, the role of women in project-based industries, particularly at a senior level, has been a hot topic of debate.

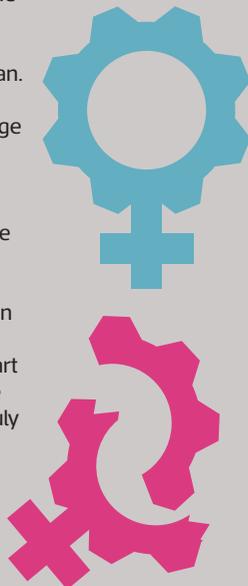
Against

Countless articles, blogs and letters of opinion have been penned, stating the different attributes that men and women have to offer to the role, and subsequently surmising whether male or female project managers deliver the more successful projects. Now, I am partial to a good, healthy debate, so this would be the point at which I would frustratingly declare: "What has gender got to do with it?"

Since embarking on my career from work experience through to my current role as a senior engineer, the opportunities available to me have been far from sparse. I believe the key is how you develop those opportunities to shape the career that you aspire to have. If you possess the skills, abilities and drive to be a project manager, then, irrespective of gender, this career goal is achievable. I have had the privilege to work with many colleagues, both male and female, who possess these attributes, and the support and guidance at project-management level has been in abundance.

So no, I don't believe that the project management profession is failing women. The failure is the continuation of the significant shortfall in women with the attributes required to become successful project managers, which is mainly caused by a general lack of knowledge and understanding of the variety of careers available at school level. To overcome this, teachers and career advisers need to have a knowledge and understanding of the career opportunities that exist within project-based industries so that they are equipped to identify the natural abilities of young women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects.

KATIE SWANICK is a senior engineer at Costain



ENJOY THE TRIP

YOUR CAREER IS A JOURNEY THAT WILL LAST A LONG TIME AND INVOLVE YOU STOPPING OFF IN LOTS OF EXCITING PLACES. **EMMA DE VITA** REVEALS WHAT YOU NEED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL SUITCASE



A successful career, however you might define it, requires a combination of smart planning, a degree of risk-taking and honing a set of skills that will take you from your early 20s to your 60s.

But such a strategy must also be complemented by an understanding of what really motivates you, plus a mindset that helps you to unearth opportunities that will help you to build a suitable career. Not every project professional longs to move up the career ladder in order to tackle bigger and more complex projects or programmes.

The trick is to keep a draft career plan at the back of your mind while staying vigilant for ways that can help bring it to fruition, whether that's a stretching project, the chance to speak at a conference or a new job.

FOUNDATION STAGE

The foundations of your career, from your 20s to your mid-30s, should be about "gaining experience in the standard tools of project management, risk, reporting, planning, communication and cost management", says Vince Hines, managing director of Wellington Project Management. It is also important to get the basic qualifications, such as APM's Introductory Certificate, followed by

the full APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification.

Eddie Kilkelly, founder and managing director of insynergi, agrees: "In the early stages, when taking on a project-related role, a project manager will focus on developing their process and technical skills in order to understand how projects are structured, together with techniques such as planning, risk management and progress monitoring."

Lindsay Scott, a director at recruiter Arras People, advises undertaking a competency assessment against an industry standard. "This, at least, will give a project practitioner an idea of where they are in relation to an industry standard and highlight some skills gaps to think about," she explains.

It is also never too early to start thinking about which specialisms you would like to pursue. For example, if you work predominantly on IT and software projects, then perhaps agile is something you could develop. Conversely, you will also need to start improving your managerial and people-related skills. "Presentation skills, managing people, influencing and negotiation are the classics," says Scott.

These so-called 'softer' skills will become increasingly important as you ▶

TOP 10 TIPS FOR GETTING AHEAD IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- 1 Collaborate. Engage with the project management community.
- 2 Share knowledge. Work hard on building a network of contacts who can provide you with personal support and open up new opportunities.
- 3 Learn to build a good-quality schedule, not a to-do list.
- 4 Embrace responsibility. Accept the challenge!
- 5 Good communication skills are a must.
- 6 Be interested in project management – keep learning, keep reading.
- 7 Manage your own career – don't just let your organisation do it for you. Become recognised as an industry expert, as it can help you to secure more challenging roles.
- 8 Work with a project management and leadership coach. At the very least, find a mentor who will help guide you.
- 9 Ask for feedback.
- 10 Always be curious and remain open-minded about potential career opportunities.

gain experience as a project manager, taking on larger and higher-risk projects. “As responsibility grows, it’s much more about communication,” explains Hines. “Getting people to do what you want when, often, they don’t report to you and have other competing priorities. It’s also about being able to take on more responsibility and making sure there are opportunities to do this.”

Invariably, this might mean taking a side-step or moving organisation. Hines adds: “Project managers should think about what type of projects they want to manage, and gaining experience across a number of organisations is the strongest way to quickly build that. There is less benefit working for many years in the same organisation that never changes its approach. Project managers need to look outside and see how projects are being run elsewhere.”

Measuring your success can be tricky and, ideally, you should have internal and external components. “There is the external assessment of success in the team, organisation or sector moving from project support to project delivery, or from managing smaller schemes to higher-profile or larger schemes,” says Teri Okoro, chair of APM’s Women in Project Management Specific Interest Group.

PROJECT MANAGERS SHOULD THINK ABOUT WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS THEY WANT TO MANAGE, AND GAINING EXPERIENCE ACROSS A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS IS THE STRONGEST WAY TO QUICKLY BUILD THAT

“Experience and achievements are often rewarded with this and it can be used as a yardstick to review oneself against peers. But the internal view of success should also reflect your own preferences.”

She suggests asking yourself the following questions: “Do you prefer project delivery on challenging schemes to managing programmes or portfolios? Are the opportunities within your firm limited, but the culture ideal for you at the moment? Are you a people person, a techie or a budding leader who is already navigating the office politics? Where are you in relation to your career plan and have circumstances caused you to revise it?”

THE KEY TO BEING AUTHENTIC IS KNOWING IN YOUR HEART AND IN YOUR HEAD WHAT YOU STAND FOR, WHAT YOU WILL AND WILL NOT COMPROMISE ON, AND THEN BEING TRUE TO THAT

IN THE MIDDLE

Answering these questions honestly will leave you in a strong position for the middle part of your career, from your mid-30s to around the age of 50. “As responsibility grows and projects become higher on the corporate radar, then senior managers get more interested,” says Hines. “Therefore, the key skill at this point is stakeholder management – being able to keep a wide range of opinionated people on your side.” All this, of course, must be backed up with a deep understanding of planning, risk management and general best practice.

Okoro says: “As careers advance, other certifications such as MSP [managing successful programmes] and risk-specific qualifications should be considered.

Many project offices use agile concepts and some knowledge in these areas can be useful. Other qualifications exist for

project-office and project-support roles. In addition to qualifications, I urge project professionals to consider evidence- and competence-based accreditations, such as APM’s Registered Project Professional.”

It’s the time in your career when your understanding of general business strategy, procurement, contracts, finance and change management should be

deepened, which means that you should invest in an MBA or leadership courses.

Kilkelly says: “As you progress, taking on more senior roles and more complex projects, the role will subtly shift. Management is focused on getting things done at the right time, to the right standard, by the right people. This will involve a day-to-day awareness of the tasks being undertaken, their status and any issues arising.”

Leadership, on the other hand, focuses more on strategy, organisation and engagement, and moves away from detailed ownership. “Project managers should work on this ability as early as they can, as there is a natural tendency

to want to make every decision and to constantly measure performance,” advises Kilkelly.

In fact, now is a useful time to start to understand what type of leader you are, and how you can develop a style that remains authentic to how you naturally work.

“The key to being authentic is knowing in your heart and in your head what you stand for, what you will and will not compromise on, and then being true to that,” explains leadership coach Susanne Madsen.

“As a project or change manager, it is not unusual that, from time to time, you will feel pressured to respond to challenging requests. These pressures, and your need to please others, may cause you to detour from your authentic self or from what is in the project’s or client’s best interests. When you get too far off course, your internal compass will tell you that something is wrong, and if you take the message seriously, you will be able to make a correction. It requires strength of character, courage and determination to resist these pressures and take corrective action when necessary,” she says.

SENIOR LEVELS

From age 50 onwards, you normally have three primary avenues if you want to stay in project management: maximising the opportunities that you already have in your current workplace, switching to another organisation or perhaps another sector, or starting your own business.

Maximising opportunities in your current workplace could mean promotion out of project management as, by this time, your ability to lead teams and manage complex projects will make you a great bet for other operational roles.

Switching to work in another sector as a project manager presents some challenges, according to Scott. “The problem is there is already competition for those jobs from the project managers who already have experience in a particular sector,” she says. “Some organisations are also not very keen on seeing project practitioners with no prior experience in their sector.” For those who want to move sector, it might be preferable to choose a sector that might be more open to you, for example, moving from finance to retail. “No retraining is needed, just a good interview technique to convince them you’ve got what it takes,” Scott explains.

Meanwhile, being self-employed requires learning a host of new skills, from bookkeeping to sales. While this is challenging, it can also be very exciting. Brenda Hales worked for one of the first consultancy-led project organisations, Syntegra, before switching to smaller consultancies in her early 40s. Now the founder of her own firm, Hales Consulting, and with an MSc in Gestalt Psychotherapy under her belt, she is channelling her energy into helping other organisations to create positive people environments.

Hales firmly disputes the stereotype that more mature project professionals face the greatest risk of career stagnation. "It's not a problem for older project managers," she insists. "It's a problem for all project managers. I meet so many highly intelligent, deeply experienced and hugely frustrated project people. I'm very motivated to help change this."

She suggests that project professionals should look to improve how they work with people in other functions in their organisations so that they are not so frequently perceived as "pedantic, plan-fixated technicians, which restricts their influence and their opportunities for career progression".

She also wants to see more senior project personnel on company boards and hopes that the importance of organisational project management practices (the creation of organisations that are focused on enabling projects) will become more recognised. While many senior people know that organisational project management practices could revolutionise their projects' chances of success, they are still more talked about than implemented in most organisations.

Ultimately, what you perceive as career success depends on your own personal ambitions. "Many project managers talk about a specific project that they were involved with as having brought them the greatest satisfaction in cases where it was something physical, such as a flagship building, or a major event, like the Olympics," says Hines. "Yet it's not always the biggest projects that bring this level of satisfaction but, rather, knowing you have made a difference and that difference was directly linked to your efforts." □

■ See our career special report, starting on page 37.

Improving how you work with people in other functions in the firm can prevent you getting pigeonholed



WOMEN IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The career obstacles articulated by women in project management include getting sound support from managers, securing the right work experience and not being able to achieve a good work/life balance.

"Different obstacles are likely to predominate or have a higher impact at different career or life stages," says Teri Okoro, chair of APM's Women In Project Management Specific Interest Group. The best way to counter them is to take control of your career progression and to have a plan – no matter how vague. Other tips to help female project managers advance in their careers include:

- Be a team player. Contribute as well as support.
- Be visible. What do you do outside of your role? Who do you know outside of your team or division who is championing you?
- Evidence the value that you add to the team, project and business.
- Be authentic and continually reflect on your achievements and where you want to go next.
- Be confident in your abilities, skills and experiences. Don't listen to the 'imposter syndrome' – that voice in your head that tells you you'll be found out.

GRAND DESIGN

The Plowright Building is the eye-catching deliverable from a project that aimed to provide world-class scientists with world-class facilities. **DR MIKE JOHNSON, ALEX HEWITSON** and **MARK HALSTEAD** explain

WORDS: Jo Russell PHOTOGRAPHY: Will Amlot

Nestled in the green and leafy Surrey countryside stands a modernist building, sympathetically clad in Siberian larch timber, with large glass windows and bold frames providing a bright, light and airy feel. It looks like the head office of a buzzing internet company. But it is, in fact, the newly created Plowright Building, a state-of-the-art, high-containment laboratory that deals in some of the deadliest livestock diseases.

The BBSRC National Virology Centre: The Plowright Building forms part of The Pirbright Institute, which, for more than a century, has delivered research into viruses affecting farm animals and zoonotic viruses, such as avian influenza, which can spread from animals to people. It is important work. The Institute's role in eradicating bluetongue from the UK saved the economy an estimated £450m. But, with no significant investment for years, its facilities were outdated – a fact highlighted during the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and exacerbated by its recurrence in 2007.

The £135m funding for the build came from the government in 2009, via the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). From the BBSRC's perspective, a state-of-the-art facility was of paramount importance, acting as part of the UK's national defence capability regarding agricultural food security. It would also enhance R&D

throughout the UK, furthering scientific knowledge, job creation and wealth.

"The aspiration was to have world-class scientists with world-class facilities. To attract the best, you need the best," says Alex Hewitson, programme director for BBSRC.

BLUE-SKY THINKING

From the outset, a radical approach was taken to the design of the building. Traditional high-containment facilities work on a 'box within a box' principle – with the highest levels of containment in the centre of the building. The Plowright Building works in reverse.

High-containment areas are located on the outside of the building, with floor labs benefiting from floor-to-ceiling glass windows. Open areas within the high-containment space allow scientists to meet and eat together, separated from the rest of the building by a glass wall, which adds to the sense of a normal working environment.

Dr Mike Johnson, director of capability at Pirbright, says: "The concept was for an environment that generates a free-thinking, blue-sky approach. Letting light into the building was a mechanism for having a great working environment rather than working in a concrete, monolithic box, where you spend all day inside and don't know whether the sun has been out or not."



(L-R) Mark Halstead, Alex Hewitson and Dr Mike Johnson at the world-class virology facility

BRING VALIDATION AND COMMISSIONING FORWARD

“THAT ENABLED US TO BUY TIME ONCE WE HAD HIT PRACTICAL COMPLETION (PC). WITH PHASE TWO [BUILDING A SECOND LAB] WE HAVE BROUGHT IT EVEN FURTHER FORWARD. WE HAVE MADE IT MORE OF A CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION THAT PC IS ALSO MEASURED AGAINST SOME OF THE VALIDATION AND COMMISSIONING ACTIVITIES,” SAYS HEWITSON.

Behind the scenes lies an unprecedented level of technical ingenuity, as well as state-of-the-art biosecurity systems. Above the laboratories, two floors are dedicated to air filtration systems. The 12 HEPA filter air-handling units, which process air going in and out of a laboratory three times, would fill 132 hot-air balloons an hour.

CHALLENGES OF HIGH CONTAINMENT

Meeting the dual needs of creating a pleasant workspace while satisfying the most stringent regulations surrounding high-containment buildings was a huge challenge. The level of design detail required was immense, and led to the team taking the unique step of spending 1 per cent of the budget on a mocked-up R&D facility in which every system, process and finish could be tested.

Take the walls, says Mark Halstead, head of science and innovation EMEA, at AECOM, the project manager and consultant for the project. “We needed something appropriate to give the levels of containment required and to ensure they were fumigable and cleanable. That required a seven-coated, fibre glass-reinforced glaze finish, which allows the concrete to move and settle without it splitting the containment coat.”

All aspects of the lab were tested in situ, including pressure testing. The testing

demonstrated that very low leakage rates would be achievable, and that the engineering solution as designed would work. In fact, the building has set a new technical standard, with air-tightness levels 1,100 times tighter than UK building regulations, at four times the pressure.

Constructing the R&D facility proved beneficial on many levels. The institute could learn operational procedures, such as changing a window in a high-containment environment without breaching security. It was also able to mock up positions of benches, even down to heights of trunking for plugs. Contractors could sequence services in a room to a very detailed level and collaborate on design elements.

MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

“BUY-IN TO A SINGLE VISION FROM THE VERY TOP TO THE OPERATIVES; PRIDE IN THE QUALITY OF WORK; WORKING IN A GENUINELY OPEN AND COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT; SETTING OUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO ACHIEVE AND STICKING AT IT. I’LL TAKE THOSE THINGS FORWARD,” SAYS HALSTEAD.



CV: MARK HALSTEAD

2010 Director of project management and head of science and innovation, Europe, at AECOM following Davis Langdon’s acquisition by AECOM
2005 Partner, Davis Langdon
2003 Joined Davis Langdon, after 10 years working in design and management contracting, predominantly in the science, pharmaceutical and healthcare markets

For example, says Halstead: “All the services come through one cable box, which is the one penetration for all the cabling going into the lab. We went through a number of different configurations for that box with the individual supply chain subcontractors, who could approve it in the mock-up.”

Contractors could also identify suppliers that were able to meet the stringent requirements of the project – not all could, when it came to testing.

Another innovation that the team has already re-implemented was bringing the validation process forward. Construction company Shepherd, the contractor, gave possession of part of the building back to the institute team and a validation consultant during the construction phase in order to conduct fumigation tests.

“You wouldn’t normally want formaldehyde near a construction site, but that stress test gave us the confidence in our workmanship, and saved time post-contract,” says Halstead.

Johnson agrees: “This is a complex building. To be fully trained and competent on every system, so that when everyone walks away we can manage and operate it, is an enormous uplift in skill level. We got there nine months after practical completion. I know of other facilities that are still not there after four years.”

CULTURAL CHANGE

From the outset, it was clear to all involved that this was a different kind of project. The ongoing work of the institute could not be compromised by the build process, meaning that contractors were given a separate entrance onto the site via a newly created road.

As soon as the structure was erected, the site was made a clean environment. All operatives and site management changed into clean, white scrubs emblazoned with Team Pirbright logos. “It had a live factory feel, rather than the feel of a construction site,” says Johnson.

The project team was committed to driving a single team ethic and constantly engaged with contractors to ensure that key messages were understood. Regular induction and update films emphasised the importance of the institute and the



CV: DR MIKE JOHNSON

2008 Head of laboratory at Pirbright, and currently director of capability and senior responsible owner
2005 Research programme leader for the diagnosis, surveillance and response group and manager of diagnostic services, CSIRO Australia
2004 CSL, Australia - led a project to develop a hepatitis C vaccine

project in terms of delivering national security for the UK.

“We wanted everyone to understand why this was something quite special, and how much we valued them. It helped them to understand why they were in whites, why tools came from a central point and why each and every person was accountable – for themselves and each other,” explains Hewitson.

Over the course of the four-year-plus build, there was a huge turnover in workforce, which meant constant reinforcement of messages. “There were around 7,000 contractors as the trades moved through, so whoever came on as new crew needed to understand,” says Johnson.

That the message did get through is exemplified by the quality of the workmanship, believes Halstead.

“Each penetration into the concrete walls – for windows, doors and services – was cast and not drilled. That meant taking the entire engineering design through to completion and working back within a finite amount of detail to ensure each window or duct could be bolted to the castings and air-tightness ensured. Out of the 2,812 castings, we got all but six right,” he states.

TEAM LEADERSHIP

To ensure quality was maintained, monitoring performance was important.

**HAVE FUN**

“WE HAVE ENJOYED EACH OTHER’S COMPANY AND HAVE BEEN CONSCIOUS OF PEOPLE WORKING ALONGSIDE WANTING TO ENJOY IT AS WELL,” CONCLUDES HEWITSON.

“Our original procurement decisions were based on a price/quality-driven assessment, with 80 per cent on quality. But how do you keep that going for years?” says Halstead.

The answer was to run a performance system through the construction and design phase that went beyond economic, social and environmental performance. It analysed how the teams were working, their communication and collaboration, and levels of innovation. Everyone was measured, from client to contractor, and from the core group of principals to operatives on site.

“The involving process of performance management helped no end. It meant that we could be candid with each other and have mature discussions,” says Hewitson. It was supported by a solutions-driven ethic, rather than a contract-driven one, from the principal team of Hewitson, Halstead, Johnson and David Crampton, construction director at Shepherd. “The priority was to come up with the right answer and if we then had to have the

**CV: ALEX HEWITSON**

2011 Programme director for the development programme at Pirbright and head of campus development for BBSRC

2007 Project director for the Pirbright development programme

2003 Technical specialist and subject matter expert for construction operations across the Crown Estate for the Ministry of Defence

discussion about the commercial or contractual position, we would have that afterwards,” says Halstead.

“It’s testament to that leadership that you can count on one hand the formal exchange of letters we had. We all realised we may never get the opportunity to deliver a legacy project like this again. It’s very special and has been incredibly enjoyable,” agrees Hewitson.

Special is one word. “Incredibly impressive” was the phrase used when the Pirbright team was presented with the British Construction Industry Judges’ Award in 2014. The judges recognised the technical ingenuity involved and noted that the building is already attracting worldwide scientific interest.

Headlines are easily made by overspends on government contracts; how refreshing to report on one that is not only award winning, but was also delivered ahead of time – and on budget. **□**

JO RUSSELL is a business writer and editor

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Project management could be a significant boost to the SMEs that are the backbone of the UK economy, so why isn't it used more widely?

VALENTINA LORENZON explains

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

account for 99.3 per cent of all private-sector businesses in the UK, according to the Federation of Small Businesses, and they contribute significantly to the economy of the country.

While big corporates often hog the limelight, SMEs constitute the backbone of the country's production system: they generate wealth and are great implementers of innovation to support future growth. During the most recent economic crisis, many small businesses sprang up – often as an alternative to unemployment – offering a source of new ideas and practices. Key to the success of many SMEs are their flexibility and adaptability, as these enable them to be competitive and stand out in the market.

From a business management point of view, this suggests that, at least in theory, SMEs should be great users of project management methodologies to implement change and support development. Yet, SMEs are actually less inclined to use formal project management than their bigger counterparts. So, what are the reasons for this?

INFORMAL PROJECTS

The majority of the strategic activities that SMEs carry out in order to develop their

business, expand their market presence or increase their efficiency and productivity could be considered as projects.

In many cases, they are not perceived that way by the organisation itself, however. As a result, they are managed internally in an informal way, which often results in the lack of a structured approach and planning.

More formal tools are usually used when it comes to 'external' activities whose outputs are mainly created for the benefit of clients and/or stakeholders outside the organisation. This entails the development of more structured project plans and communication strategies to report and monitor progress. Similarly, the need for specific technical or strategic expertise is also a reason for using more formal project management methodologies. Nevertheless, most of the time SMEs run projects as part of their business-as-usual activities without feeling the need to use formal project management techniques.

In many cases, the reason for this is that, having never used project management practices and tools before, SMEs might not see how they could benefit from them. From their point of view, formal project management methodologies can appear quite complex

and costly. An organisation might not have the budget and the resources to hire an external project manager or to train internal staff. Time is another issue: implementing a more structured process feels like overburdening the organisation with even more work that might interfere with the performance of daily tasks. SMEs prefer small-scale, short-term, one-off initiatives to long-running, costly and time-consuming projects. The latter are perceived as highly disruptive and a waste of resources that could be allocated more effectively to other activities.

BENEFITS TO SMEs

If used properly, however, project management could be key to the successful development of an organisation. By definition, an SME is characterised by its ability to easily adapt to market changes and by its lean organisational structure. This results in the creation of a more dynamic environment and a quicker decision-making process, both favourable elements for the implementation of change.

Still, flexibility and adaptability often lead to a lack of a formal strategic plan and to an inability to quickly convert ideas into action. Failing to implement change could be detrimental for SMEs





and getting a project wrong could have serious long-term repercussions for the organisation. Project management tools can be instrumental to introducing key elements such as formal planning and risk and resource management, and to give a structure to otherwise scattered activities. In these cases, it would be very useful for SMEs to use project management tools and methodologies and/or have professionally trained individuals within the organisation.

Overall, the opportunity for SMEs to capitalise on the benefits offered by project management is substantial. The challenge, however, is to find a way to make project management more readily accessible to SMEs. **P**



VALENTINA LORENZON is an independent project manager and consultant

HOW TO MAKE PROJECT MANAGEMENT MORE 'SME-FRIENDLY'

Greater use of project management would be beneficial for SMEs. For formal project management methodologies to be effective, however, they should be adapted according to the size and nature of the organisation, as well as the sector it operates in. All projects benefit from these elements, but they are even more essential for smaller organisations.

SET ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES IN LINE WITH STRATEGY

SMART objectives are one of the best-known rules of project management. These are objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. SMART objectives are even more important when it comes to SMEs,

find simplified solutions that are not more onerous than business-as-usual activities. Using 'agile' project management processes will reduce cost and time within the budget and planning requirements of an SME. When it comes to relatively bigger projects, a good idea is to carry them out in manageable phases that will not disrupt the routine activities of the organisation.

FOCUS ON KEY AREAS

In many cases, there is no need to use a variety of methodologies. Focusing on key areas of the project – such as planning, monitoring, risk management/mitigation and communication – will reduce the amount of time and workload involved. Within SMEs, the planning, decision-making and communication processes are usually quicker and involve fewer stakeholders. It is one of the strengths of SMEs that decisions are made and implemented more easily, while reporting and communicating involve a smaller group of individuals who are directly involved in running the project.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Projects are not only about processes; they are mainly about people. This is even more the case within SMEs. In general, the fewer the stakeholders, the greater their involvement in the project. As a consequence, ongoing engagement and communication are key for the success of the project. Directly related to engagement is the necessity to manage expectations. At times, it can become difficult to separate project tasks from business-as-usual ones within SMEs. This means that it is essential to clearly define from the start of the project what to expect, not only in terms of outputs and benefits, but also in terms of resources allocation and the expected impact on business-as-usual activities.

FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY OFTEN LEAD TO A LACK OF A FORMAL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TO AN INABILITY TO QUICKLY CONVERT IDEAS INTO ACTION

because a project failure would have a significant impact on a smaller organisation. Underestimating risks and costs, as well as allocating resources incorrectly, could compromise not only the success of the project but also the financial well-being of the whole organisation. This means that the project objectives need to be realistic and achievable with the resources – which may be limited, at times – of the organisation.

USE A LEANER APPROACH AND ADAPTED TOOLS

In order to make project management methodologies more suitable for SMEs, it is important to

A NEW ERA

Splitting English Heritage into two separate bodies was a complex and challenging task, explains **CAROLINE CREWE-READ**

As part of the 2013 Comprehensive Spending Review announcement, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, a non-departmental public body known as English Heritage, was awarded a one-off capital lump sum of £80m for repairs and enhancements to the National Heritage Collection. Comprising more than 400 sites and monuments in public ownership, the Collection is home to some of our best-loved places including Stonehenge, Dover Castle and parts of Hadrian's Wall.

At the same time, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) gave approval to the devolution of the management of the National Heritage Collection to a new charity, to be licensed by the Commission. Certain functions of the existing non-departmental public body were to be retained by the Commission and established under a new corporate identity and structure, with services provided to the new charity under a shared service arrangement. Effectively a de-merger, the new charity would sit outside of government and become self-funding within eight years.

The success criteria set by DCMS and HM Treasury for the de-merger were clear: to establish the new charity, and for it to be in a position to take receipt of the £80m by the end of March 2015

and operational from 1 April 2015. It was later agreed that the new charity would retain the name English Heritage and the non-departmental public body would be renamed Historic England.

All de-mergers are complex but, for an arms-length government body, this was also innovative, and there were few previous parallels from which to draw lessons. While this provided a blank canvas and an opportunity to go back to basics and apply sound programme management principles to the implementation of the 'new model', it also presented a number of challenges.

1 Governance

While the implementation was managed on a day-to-day basis by the team at English Heritage, it was led by a senior responsible officer from within the DCMS and required close liaison with HM Treasury. Another key stakeholder was the English Heritage Foundation (the fundraising arm of English Heritage and the charity intended to become the new home of the National Heritage Collection).

Given the multitude of programme 'owners', it was essential for clear lines of accountability to be established between the bodies involved in the implementation and for a sound governance structure to be established as a primary objective.



2 Timescale

There was no room for manoeuvre over the timescale within which the de-merger had to be achieved. HM Treasury stipulated the £80m capital sum had to be drawn down by the end of the 2014/15 financial year, meaning the new charity had to be established prior to this.

Multiple approvals were required to reach every programme milestone. Internal sign-off by officers and the English Heritage Commission preceded discussion with the trustees of the English Heritage Foundation. Government approvals involved both DCMS and HM Treasury, and often the Cabinet Office, which all added complexity to the timetable and a significant degree of risk to dependent activities.

3 Assurance

The programme was also subject to scrutiny by the Major Projects Authority (MPA), which works with government departments to provide independent assurance on major projects.

The English Heritage and DCMS teams benefited from a Gate 0 strategic

LESSONS LEARNED

- Ensure that sufficient contingency is included in the programme schedule to account for lengthy and complex approval processes.
- Establish a clear governance structure from the outset, with clear lines of accountability between delivery partners.
- Identify all stakeholders early, and ensure engagement is timely and relevant, with responsibilities defined.
- Agree the scope of the business case at the outset to avoid the requirement for late changes and the delay and frustration that this can cause.
- Don't be afraid to ask for support from others.

MENTORING SUPPORT

Throughout the course of the implementation programme, I benefited from the support of a mentor who acted as a vital external sounding board, and who helped me to navigate a complex stakeholder environment and explore how to tackle the challenges that arose throughout delivery. This was an invaluable experience and I would highly recommend the approach to others.



Left: King's Cross Station, London, and (above) Stonehenge, Wiltshire

7 Recruitment

As a result of the new model, two new chief executives were required to lead Historic England and the new English Heritage Trust from the outset. This necessitated a twin-track recruitment exercise that could not commence until the government had announced the outcomes of the consultation with the historic environment sector, thus confirming the de-merger. This dependency created a challenge in terms of the programme schedule. As a result, recruitment could not be completed in time for the vesting day of 1 April, and the new chief executives joined the two organisations in early May. Mitigation was agreed to ensure that there was no gap in leadership in the intervening period.

Delivery

Establishing Historic England and transferring the National Heritage Collection to the English Heritage Trust on 1 April 2015 has been acknowledged as the first successful example of a 'new model' for public-sector delivery within the remit of the DCMS. While the benefits will be realised under business-as-usual operation between now and the new charity's target date for self-sufficiency in 2022/23, the programme has established a sound structure and reporting framework within which delivery of these benefits will be closely monitored. 



CAROLINE CREWE-READ is head of corporate projects and programmes at Historic England

For more information about the two bodies, visit www.historicengland.org.uk and www.english-heritage.org.uk

assurance review conducted in early 2014. Five key recommendations were made by the MPA which, although anticipated, became easier to implement once endorsed by an external authority. Early lessons identified were also quickly captured and integrated within the programme, and risk mitigation actions were added to the schedule to ensure active monitoring throughout.

4 Stakeholder management

An early task for the programme team was to initiate a comprehensive stakeholder analysis exercise across both English Heritage and DCMS, drawing the outputs from this into a robust stakeholder management strategy.

"We had two key stakeholder groups – the government and the historic environment sector – both of whom had significant vested interest in the success of the new model," explains Deborah Lamb, director of national advice and public engagement at Historic England. "Formal consultation on the new model proposals for English Heritage lasted for two months and this was a key opportunity for the government to hear the views of colleagues across the sector."

One of the important communication messages throughout the new model programme was that the sites in the National Heritage Collection would

remain in public ownership. The Commission was simply licensing the new charity to manage the collection on its behalf, and on behalf of the nation.

5 Business case

The full business case was required to follow the government's five-case model, outlining the strategic, financial, economic, commercial and management cases for change. After months of preparation and subsequent modification as part of a two-way dialogue with DCMS, scrutiny by HM Treasury at a Treasury Approval Point followed. Later, a summary of the full business case was shared externally.

6 Contractual framework

The contractual framework between the future Historic England and the English Heritage Trust, the formal name for the new charity, was complex. Constituting four key elements (the articles of association for the new charity, a property licence and operating agreement, a funding agreement and a shared services agreement), the framework took 18 months to agree. It also needed approval from the English Heritage Foundation, DCMS, HM Treasury and the Charity Commission. Contracts were 'exchanged' in December 2014, at which point the 1 April deadline was assured.

90% EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

70%
WORK
BASED
LEARNING

20%
LEARNING
WITH
OTHERS

10%
FORMAL
KNOWLEDGE
BASED

Developing organisational capability is essential for improving change management performance.

Experience shows that capability development using a 70:20:10 framework which emphasises experiential learning is by far the most effective way to enhance capability, accelerate performance and increase return on investment.

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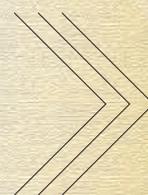
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From the bottom up



Open to learning

The UK's largest academic institution is enhancing its project management capability so it can deliver change successfully. This case study explains how

The close relationship between The Open University (OU) and APM dates back 30 years. In 1975, the university became one of the association's first two corporate members and today its external project management postgraduate module carries APM academic accreditation. It was also the first higher education institute to receive accreditation for its own training and development pathway for project and change staff.

STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

Along with the rest of the higher education sector, the university is going through a period of significant change. Since 2012, there have been major changes to the way universities are run, with the most significant being the shift in funding from government to the end users – in this case to students. This reduction in central funding, and the subsequent rise in tuition fees, has been accompanied by the emergence and growth of massive open online courses (MOOCs).

The part-time higher education sector has been in decline across the UK, with the loss of potential economic benefits to businesses and individuals since it presents a flexible way of developing people's skills. As the UK's largest provider of part-time education, this decline is of particular concern for the OU.

The new vice-chancellor, Peter Horrocks, is determined to make part-time higher education a greater priority for government, industry and universities – and it makes the university's ability to innovate and adapt more important than ever.

The university's strategic plan identifies the priorities that will help it to thrive within this new, more complex higher education environment across the four nations of the UK, as well as internationally.

The primary focus through to 2017 will be aimed at helping students to achieve their study goals. In particular, the university is focused on providing coherent and supported routes to qualifications – including certificates, diplomas and degrees – alongside its more traditional, modules-based offering.

THE OU RECOGNISED THAT ITS ABILITY TO DELIVER ITS STRATEGIC PLAN HINGED ON ITS CAPACITY TO DELIVER CHANGE SUCCESSFULLY AND EFFICIENTLY

MY STORY

David Vince, product development manager, OU learning and teaching solutions unit



David Vince came to The Open University with a background in commissioning learning materials for higher education. His current role involves working with OU academics and media specialists to design and produce materials for a range of different media.

"I work on increasingly more innovative and complex projects that support OU strategic initiatives," he says. "The higher education environment has become more challenging and we have to respond with materials that are fit for learners using emerging technologies.

"This means we have to be increasingly responsive and more

agile in the way we manage these projects, which contribute to, and have interdependencies with, other projects across the university."

Vince had some practical project management experience but no formal qualification or training before joining the OU. On his own initiative, he undertook – and passed – the university's postgraduate project management module and is part of the pilot professional pathway, achieving APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification in early 2015.

"The programme has helped me develop as a project manager.

I now have greater confidence in leading project teams and the mentoring programme has given me a fresh perspective on career development at the OU. The learning and teaching solutions unit has recognised that this approach helps to support the successful delivery of strategic projects. Also, when collaborating with external partners, it provides reassurance that projects are properly managed."

As well as providing him with a solid base for his future project management career, Vince is applying his project skills to his studies for a master's degree in online and distance education.



Another key development has been the university's leadership in informal learning (MOOCs), with the launch of FutureLearn and the continued development of OpenLearn, both of which extend free, high-quality learning opportunities to a wide-ranging audience.

The OU recognised that its ability to execute its strategic plan hinged on its capacity to deliver change successfully and efficiently and, as a result, improve outcomes for its students. The organisation already had an established project management methodology, which set out common project processes and good practice. But, as with many large organisations, delivering change often seemed to take longer – or cost more – than it should, and it wasn't always clear that the change would lead to the desired benefits.

In response, it has embarked on the Building Change Capability programme, with delivery supported by the portfolio office.

Six complementary projects and activities are under way:

- **Providing project and change management staff with a suite of competency and development tools.**
- **Building a change community.**
- **Streamlining the project management secondment process.**
- **Implementing Microsoft Project Server across the university for project and programme management activities.**
- **Widening the use of the OU project management methodology and driving continuous improvements to it.**
- **Evaluating and tracking maturity in change management.**

Together, these activities are intended to support teams across the university to deliver change more effectively, efficiently and confidently.

As Guy Mallison, the OU's director of strategy, explains: "Like many universities, this is a complex institution operating in a sector that is experiencing significant change. Our efforts to

IT'S A BIT OF A CLICHÉ, BUT IT REALLY IS A JOURNEY AND WE'RE PART-WAY THROUGH. IT'S GREAT TO SEE MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES ALREADY SHOWING VALUE



build our change capability reflect the importance we place on maintaining and strengthening our unique capabilities and distinctive ways of working.

"We have been teaching great project management for many years, and we're applying the same high standards to how we manage change within the organisation to best help our students achieve their goals."

Good progress is being made, but the university recognises that there is still some way to go.

Jess Anison (inset above), head of the OU's portfolio office, adds: "It's a bit of a cliché, but it really is a journey and we're part-way through. It's great to see many of the activities already showing value.

"We have more than 400 members in our change community, many of whom participate through regular events. And our enterprise project management system is being used to manage more than 100 live projects, which is driving greater consistency in how we work."

Establishing a clear project management development pathway and processes, and fostering a real feeling of community among project staff, will contribute to improving the level of skill within the organisation, and help to attract and retain project management expertise in-house.



ALL ABOUT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Open University (OU), which was established in 1969, was the world's first successful distance-teaching university. It was founded on the belief that technology could bring high-quality, degree-level learning to people who had not

had the opportunity to attend traditional universities.

The OU adopted a radical open admissions policy to all who wished to realise their ambitions while attaining the highest standards of scholarship – a model

that proved popular with the public. Most undergraduate courses have no formal entry requirement.

When the OU accepted its first students in 1971, 25,000 people enrolled and 20,000 registered on a course – at a time when the total

student population in the UK was only about 130,000.

The OU is the largest academic institution in the UK today with around 200,000 students of all ages and backgrounds studying in the UK, Europe and worldwide.

PILOT FOR PROJECT PROFESSIONALS

Until July 2014, the only central project management training offered to staff was a three-day introductory course, which was not externally accredited.

Individuals could be funded to attend a public course if their manager agreed, but this was paid for by the unit in which they worked, and didn't reflect the specific needs of the OU.

The new learning and development pathway, developed in conjunction with the HR department, is set to change this. The pathway includes APM-accredited courses and in-house training on the OU's project management system and methodology, as well as mentoring and online learning.

More than 60 members of staff with various project and change management roles are currently piloting the new approach, with a view to evaluation in summer 2015 and, potentially, a wider roll-out as part of the staff development process across the university.

The *APM Competence Framework* forms the basis of the OU's own project management competency framework and reflection (assessment) tools. The levels of competency have been matched with the appropriate development activities, aligned to International Project Management Association levels.

The competency framework and reflection tool were used by staff members to apply to be part of the pilot. This enabled the portfolio office to identify skills or knowledge gaps and help the individual and line manager to develop a tailored development plan based on the development guide.

"We reviewed the qualifications available in the market and the APM qualifications most closely matched our need for a

focus on softer skill development, not just technical project management skills," explains Annison.

Different training delivery methods and suppliers are being tested during the pilot in order to identify which are the best matches for the university. The long-term view is that as individuals gain experience, they will move up through the pathway's levels and the relevant development activities.

Regular networking events, workshops and an annual project and change management conference add further opportunities for continuing professional development alongside the more formal learning.

Support is being provided by the portfolio office for managers and employees throughout the process and the pilot is being monitored regularly through online questionnaires, telephone interviews and face-to-face discussions before the wider, wholesale review in summer 2015.

"The pilot will be judged successful if it allows us to identify the best-fit project management development pathway for the university," says Annison. "We have designed the pilot to maximise this opportunity for testing and evaluating how best we can develop our project management staff."

Exam results will only be part of the success criteria – improvement in an individual's performance and skills will also be taken into consideration.

Assuming the pilot is successful, and contains the right development tools and activities, the plan is for the competency framework and reflection tool to support the annual performance review process for those who have a full-time project management role. 



APM AND THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Open University was one of the first organisations to become a corporate member of APM and it encourages its staff to become individual members.

The university's bespoke competency framework has been based on the *APM Competence Framework*, with levels mapped to appropriate APM qualifications. The association's publications,

including the *APM Body of Knowledge*, are essential core references available to all members of staff working to deliver change. APM events are highlighted on the Change Community intranet and there are sessions hosted jointly with APM Specific Interest Groups.

"As a university, we offer life-changing learning to our

students," says Guy Mallison (left), the OU's director of strategy. "Our ability to do that requires us to adapt, innovate and improve. Receiving APM accreditation for our capability-building programme is a great endorsement that we take change and project management seriously, and that we're on the right track."

Beyond Training



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Back to school

An academy can be a great way to develop the capabilities of project professionals. **DONNIE MACNICOL** explains why

As a reader of this journal, you will know the importance of capable and energetic project and programme leaders and team members in delivering success. Yet, are organisations doing everything they can to develop this capability?

We believe it is critical to centralise support and to invest in multiple mechanisms to develop capability, not rely on a single, silver-bullet solution. A positive change in behaviour only comes about when individuals have the opportunity to apply newly acquired skills in a timely fashion and to gain feedback and support while doing that. They also need to have access to knowledge when they need it and to understand how delivering success will benefit their career.

This is supported by research, the study cited most often being the 70:20:10 model developed by Morgan McCall, Michael Lombardo and Robert Eichinger (see also page 51), which states that development comes primarily from on-the-job experiences, followed by feedback and, finally, courses. Academies, acting as a hub that drives individual and collective development, are increasingly popular and aim to capture these principles.

Academies should work closely with two other functions:

- **PMO (in all of its many incarnations including executive project management office) – owns the single source of the truth and the control of the portfolio with the opportunity to influence who works on what.**
- **Centre of Excellence – font of all knowledge and support in pursuit of a consistent means of delivery across the organisation.**

An academy may be centrally staffed or coordinate resources under a central brand, the key being that the community perceives it as a coherent entity that is there to support them. The reasons for creating an academy vary but typically include:

- **Capture and provide a brand for organisational development efforts, hoping for synergies from disparate functions and development initiatives – for example, the academies at oil giant Shell, engineering company Amec Foster Wheeler and NASA.**
- **Drive the development of a particular capability – for example, ‘programmification’ – where the academy acts as a mechanism to introduce the new ways of working.**
- **Provide a ‘value-add’ service to clients or the supply chain – for example, we are supporting a global consultancy to test how an academy will offer value to its clients.**
- **Industry collaboration to pool resources – for example, the National Skills Academy for Nuclear or the Major Projects Leadership Academy.**

FRAMEWORK

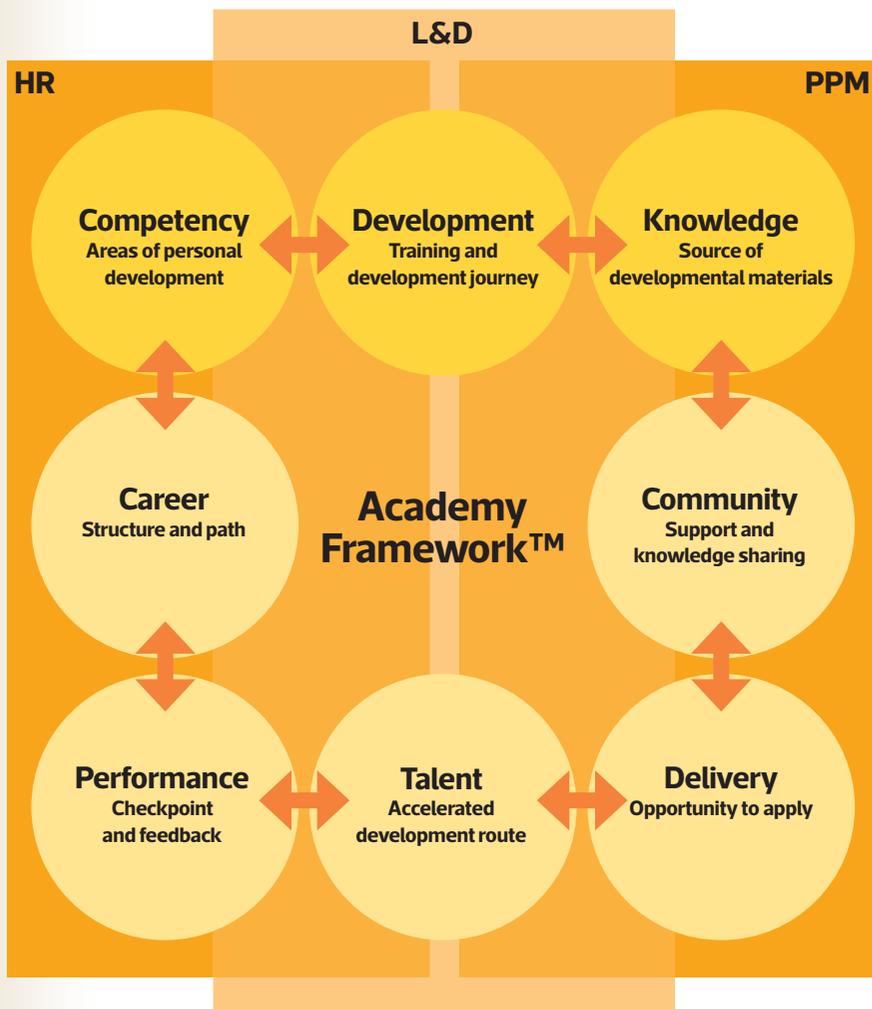
In partnership with Aspire Europe, we have created an Academy Framework™ based on client assignments, 10 years of research and insights from more than 150 maturity assessments. The diagram, right, shows the three primary elements and five support elements, as well as the key relationships between them and the primary organisational functions that deliver success.

Each organisation has different needs but the elements that need to be considered when developing capability are broadly the same. The career, competence and development elements are the building blocks of any academy and are typically developed first. We have found that organisations can gain real value from training, a key part of development, if they support professionals through investing in the other elements in parallel.

The career and performance elements provide professionals with the necessary clarity as to where they are going and how well they are meeting the organisation’s expectations. The community element provides the opportunity to share

TIPS FOR SETTING UP AND SUSTAINING AN ACADEMY

- **Success** – ensure you know what you are trying to achieve and for which stakeholder.
- **Expectations** – don’t over-promise, most importantly to the community.
- **Engagement** – brand, marketing and communications are critical since people will only engage if the academy is perceived as professional.
- **Prioritisation** – consideration should be given to which element is invested in and when to add maximum value to the community.
- **Justification** – produce a robust business case, laying out the benefits and deliver these to ensure sustained support.
- **Sponsorship** – until embedded into the fabric of the organisation, strong leadership is required from the person leading its implementation and providing backing to the senior management team.
- **Vision** – identify the capabilities needed in the future to meet the organisation’s needs and focus on these as they take time to develop.
- **Road map** – develop blueprints of what the capabilities of the community will be in the future and what is required to achieve these.



ACADEMIES CAN PROVIDE CONSIDERABLE VALUE, BUT THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BY THOUGHTFUL DESIGN, SMART INVESTMENT AND LEADERSHIP

and gain knowledge. Meanwhile, the delivery element enables project professionals to apply newly gained skills on the right project, at the right time, for personal development. This is only possible where there is a strong link between the academy and PMO. When all other elements are in place, then a highly effective talent programme can be implemented. Without such a programme, there is the danger that these talented individuals are left as an island, with both knowledge and motivation but no support mechanisms to apply these. Alternatively, some organisations start with talent since this is the driving force for developing other elements, primarily knowledge and community.

The underpinning resources of any academy are typically split across multiple functions as shown, with overlapping interest, expectations and responsibility between human resources (HR), learning and development (L&D) and project and portfolio management (PPM) functions. Leadership is critical to ensure that resources and energy are directed either through a central function or through careful coordination between each.

Academies can provide organisations with considerable value, but this can only be achieved by thoughtful design, smart investment and leadership. An academy should act as a demonstration of the commitment of the organisation to the development of people. So you should only start on the journey if you have the energy to see it through. 



DONNIE MACNICOL is a director of Team Animation and academy director of Aspire Europe

CASE STUDY: ARCADIS

ARCADIS is a leading global natural and built asset design and consultancy company.

The ARCADIS Academy was set up in 2013 to empower our people and to deliver on our strategy of sustainable growth, performance and collaboration. We have the ambition to be recognised as being the best in everything we do and that means training and developing our people to be the very best, by realising their potential. The ARCADIS Academy brings talent from across the globe together to develop key competence areas, increase collaboration and contribute to the development of best practice, which, in turn, can be drawn on for the benefit of our clients.

Each academy pillar focuses on a particular strategic growth area for the business, for example, our Programme and Project Management Academy. The academy offering ranges from best-practice information and learning that is readily available online to everyone, through to targeted, top-talent, multi-module flagship programmes that operate on a nomination basis.

The result is that our clients have access to best-in-class programme and project managers, who are qualified in industry-recognised best-practice tools such as Managing Successful Programmes (MSP), combined with leadership qualifications developed in partnership with leading business schools.

The academy works because the business lines are engaged and involved in the development of each module. Real-life case studies of, for example, major infrastructure or building programmes play a key part in the training, with the business owner for the client relationship present to make the learning both powerful and impactful.

The case studies mean that the participants have the opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills immediately, producing 'value-add' output and stimulating challenging discussions; for example, producing programme blueprints, project plans and client recommendation presentations. In addition, the business case owner gains new and insightful ideas to bring straight back to the client.

Marie Oliver, director, ARCADIS Academy

Star attraction

How can organisations recruit and retain talented project professionals? **DENNIS SHEEHAN** and **CHRIS JONES** explain

The demand for project professionals continues to rise and millions of new project management jobs are set to be created globally between now and 2020.

This has led to a war for talent, so organisations need to prepare to do a lot of recruiting, training and engagement work if they are to win and retain the best project managers. Unfortunately, however, many organisations are failing to make the most of the project managers they already have.

HOME-GROWN TALENT

There is a widespread lack of recognition of home-grown project management talent – people who are not only good at their jobs but understand the organisation's business environment and contribute effectively to strategic plans.

Great project managers are hard to find, yet there is a risk that organisations are letting their star project managers slip through their fingers as a result of a failure to recognise and reward exceptional performance.

A decline in support from management and sponsoring groups who are initially motivated by a new project but become distracted by other important issues often results in project managers feeling isolated and can even lead to project failure with the loss of a clear steer from the top. Project managers who are sidelined will soon look for a more supportive environment.

A failure to recognise there is a new generation in the workforce also leads to retention issues in the project

management world. A multi-generational approach to recruitment and engagement should recognise the very different motivations of the generations. At a more senior level, 'baby boomers' (born before 1964) and 'generation X' (born between 1964 and 1980) might respond to more traditional inducements of salary, benefits and bonuses.

The younger 'generation Y' (1980-1995) and the soon-to-be-qualified 'millennials' (born since 1995) respond much more to peer and management recognition in the form of public praise. They also like to be involved with senior level decision-making rather than being constrained by traditional hierarchies. If organisations can create a culture that engages the younger generations, that can go a long way to retaining the emerging stars of project management.

It is vital to strike the right balance when coaching fledgling project managers. Expect new and inexperienced project managers to manage any project, regardless of size or strategic importance, and they may run scared.



STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING PROJECT TALENT SUCCESSFULLY

- Take an intelligent approach to recruitment. Don't just blindly fill vacant posts but consider whether to recruit at a lower level and train junior project managers in the ways of your organisation as well as develop their project management skills. Or, use the budget to hire a top-level, charismatic project manager who can lead from the top.

- Sell the organisation to potential recruits. Project managers are in a buyer's market.

Good project managers will have a choice of jobs and will want to accept a post that offers something specific to them. That is not just about salary and benefits, although they need to be attractive, but it may also be about company culture and structure, opportunity to travel, and flexible working. Make sure you paint a clear picture of the type of organisation you are.

- Engage professionals with training and development. Project

managers are conscious of the need to keep abreast of best practice and to keep their skills fresh. Yes, there is a risk they will do the training and take their new-found knowledge elsewhere. But if the training offered is poor or non-existent, project managers will almost certainly move on.

- Foster home-grown talent. Too often organisations buy in expensive consultants when they have the skills and talent in-house or could develop those skills with

the budget they are spending on a week's consultancy.

- Maximise the impact of rewards and recognition to retain staff. Acknowledgement for a job well done need not break the budget. A good starting point is a simple 'thank you' in front of peers and management. Professionals may welcome recognition in the form of promotion to a new and more challenging project or the opportunity to lead a project in another country.



CANDIDATES NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN OFFER YOU, AND ARE IN A STRONG POSITION TO ASK WHAT YOU CAN OFFER THEM

Conversely, not providing challenging projects to more experienced project managers will create difficulty in retaining home-grown project manager talent, as these people will seek more demanding and rewarding positions elsewhere.

BEST PRACTICE

Project managers will welcome the opportunity to keep their skills up to date and keep ahead with best practice. Organisations face a challenge in identifying which best-practice skills and methodologies their project managers need to develop to achieve the desired outcome. Many organisations are building on basic capabilities by providing further training and development in agile project management and Managing Successful Programmes methodologies.

Senior management teams and key decision makers also need to familiarise themselves with the range of methods, tools and techniques available, and agree with their project managers those that fit best within the context of the organisation's business environment. Selecting the correct approach in this way will also help to ensure that project managers address the principles of project governance in the most appropriate way in all projects assigned to them.

Organisations should also appreciate not only the method that would be appropriate to use in each situation but also that there is a degree of synergy between the methods. They

CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

- Define a model for change that suits your company culture, and make sure that the existing and new project managers fit this profile. The Kotter model, for example, asks if it is appropriate for an organisation to operate as an organism or a machine? Are projects delivered organically from a flat organisational structure or is there a top-down chain of command? Will that suit potential new recruits?
- Create a dream team. A project professional is only as good as his or her team. If new teams aren't gelling, consider using personality-profiling tools such as Belbin and Myers-Briggs to work out how to best to build effective teams from the people you have.
- Train the big bosses in project management. Make sure top-level decision makers have at least a basic grounding so that project managers feel supported through a common language and approach.

are not – and never were – mutually exclusive. Unfortunately, most organisations, and even some project management professionals, fail to recognise and take advantage of this.

There are simply not enough project managers out there to meet the rising demand for talent, so organisations that want to attract and retain project managers must take an intelligent approach. In this market, simply advertising and recruiting for bog-standard project management roles is not enough. Organisations need to recognise that, if they want to buy in core project management skills, they must understand candidates' motivation for changing jobs.

Global organisations should not expect to attract the best talent by asking people to move sideways, either in terms of role or salary. Yet so many companies' hiring policies are still designed for a candidate-surplus model that might have been relevant for 2009 but will certainly not work in today's market. The recession is over and your competitors are growing. Candidates need not worry about what they can offer you, and are in a strong position to ask what you can offer them. **□**



DENNIS SHEEHAN MAPM, MCMI, is a senior training consultant at the ILX Group, and **CHRIS JONES** is managing director of Progility Recruitment

Pursuit of happiness

Long contracts, pay rises and booming business... APM's *Salary and Market Trends Survey* shows why project managers are smiling. **JAMES SIMONS** reports

According to the latest Gallup Positive Experience Index, the mood of the world is upbeat, especially in Latin America, where you are most likely to experience positive emotions on a daily basis. So if you want to find happiness, you could move to Paraguay. Alternatively, you could become a professional project manager.

APM's *Salary and Market Trends Survey 2015* reveals that project managers are feeling increasingly positive about the market in the months ahead. Around 70 per cent note that their organisation is experiencing growth, while a further 47 per cent expect to recruit additional staff. More strikingly, of the 2,700 project professionals who took part in the study, 77 per cent reported high levels of job satisfaction. Which begs the question: why?

If we look at why project managers are such a contented lot, the research reveals common 'happiness' factors. First, it pays to be a member of a professional body. On average, those holding APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification tend to earn more than respondents with no formal project management qualification. In the early-to-mid-salary range, for example, 34 per cent of respondents with no qualifications earned £20,000-£39,999, compared with 44 per cent with qualifications who earned £40,000-£59,999. Moving up the pay scale, 8 per cent of MAPMs (Full members of the Association for Project Management) earn £100,000 or more compared with 4 per cent of those who hold APMP qualifications.

In fact, we can say with confidence that being a member of APM not only improves your earning potential, but also your job satisfaction. Simply put, you're far more likely to be satisfied

with your job if you're a member of APM. This is good news for both employees – and employers. The data reveals that MAPMs tend to stay put, which in turn contributes to retention and saves employers around £5,000 in recruitment costs – not a bad return on the annual membership fee of £156.

Second, the pay is pretty good. On average, a project manager can expect to earn £40,000-£49,000 a year, which is considerably more than the national average. On a regional basis, 78 per cent of respondents from Wales earned £49,999 or less, compared with 48 per cent of respondents in the south-east of England. Meanwhile, 13 per cent of respondents from Greater London earned £80,000 or more, compared with only 2 per cent of respondents from the Midlands. The top earners, taking home £100,000 upwards, were predominately located in and around the capital.

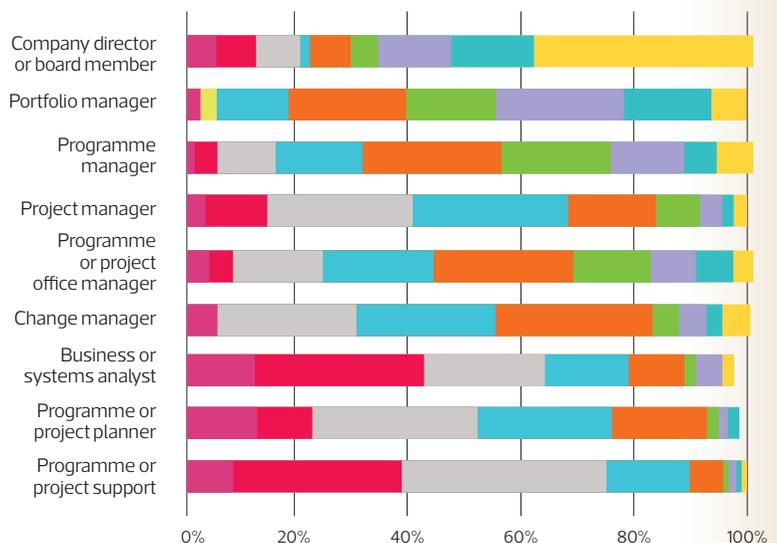
FREEDOM BECKONS

But it's not all about the money. Diversity at work is huge pull factor. When asked for their reasons for going it alone or taking up contracting work, 88 per cent cited career choice ahead of the average £300-£500 day rate. The freedom to move between jobs – and even sectors – for contractors is made more attractive by extra security. More than three-quarters said their average contract length was more than six months, and 42 per cent revealed their average contract length was more than 12 months. Notice periods, too, are on the rise. Nearly half (47 per cent) reported having two weeks or more for their notice period, compared with 13 per cent having less than one week's notice.

BASIC SALARY BY ROLE

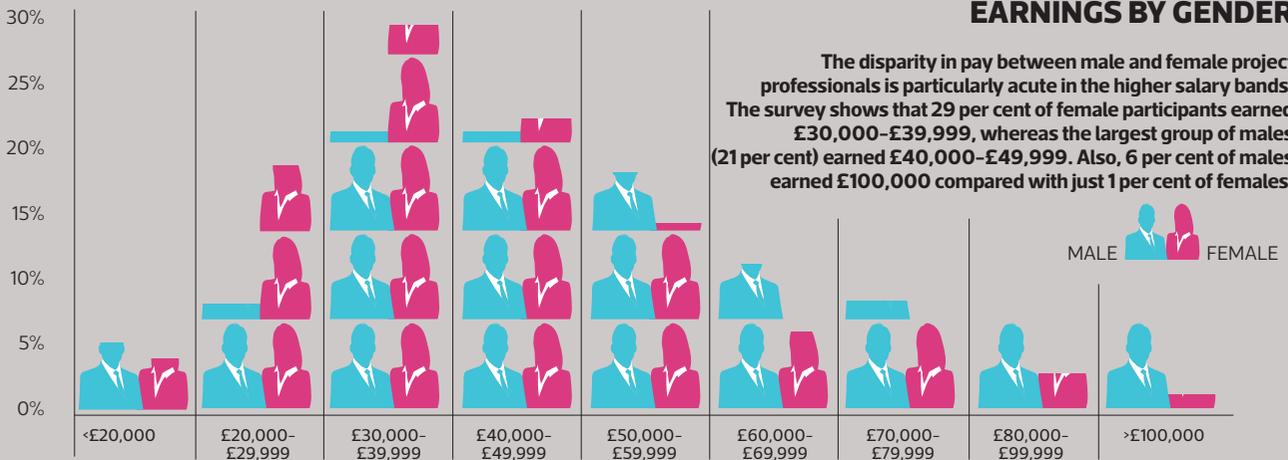


At programme- or project-support level, 75 per cent of respondents earned less than £39,999, whereas 39 per cent of all board members earned more than £100,000 a year. The variations in pay between each role may reflect levels of experience, qualifications and location, among others.



EARNINGS BY GENDER

The disparity in pay between male and female project professionals is particularly acute in the higher salary bands. The survey shows that 29 per cent of female participants earned £30,000-£39,999, whereas the largest group of males (21 per cent) earned £40,000-£49,999. Also, 6 per cent of males earned £100,000 compared with just 1 per cent of females.



For those in full-time employment seeking new job opportunities, diversity again ranks highly. The main criteria were diverse work (37 per cent), followed by career progression (21 per cent) and salary (15 per cent). The number anticipating a move within the next 12 months was relatively small: just 16 per cent. Only 4 per cent stated that they were not satisfied in their role.

This may have something to do with financial incentives: more than a third of respondents (36 per cent) expects an increase in their pay and benefits in 2015/16. Or it may reflect the upbeat mood of the profession in general as it rides the wave of the economic recovery: only 1 per cent of individuals are likely to leave the profession as a result of current market conditions.

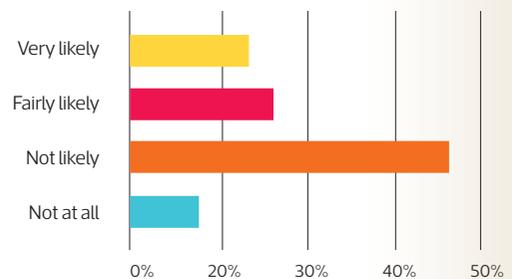
Either way, the APM survey gives an insight into a profession on the up, where standards and professionalism pay handsomely, and where managing projects delivers a whole lot more in the way of personal benefits. **■**

The APM Salary and Market Trends Survey 2015, sponsored by career development partner Wellington Project Management, is available to download for free from apm.org.uk.

JAMES SIMONS is publishing manager at APM

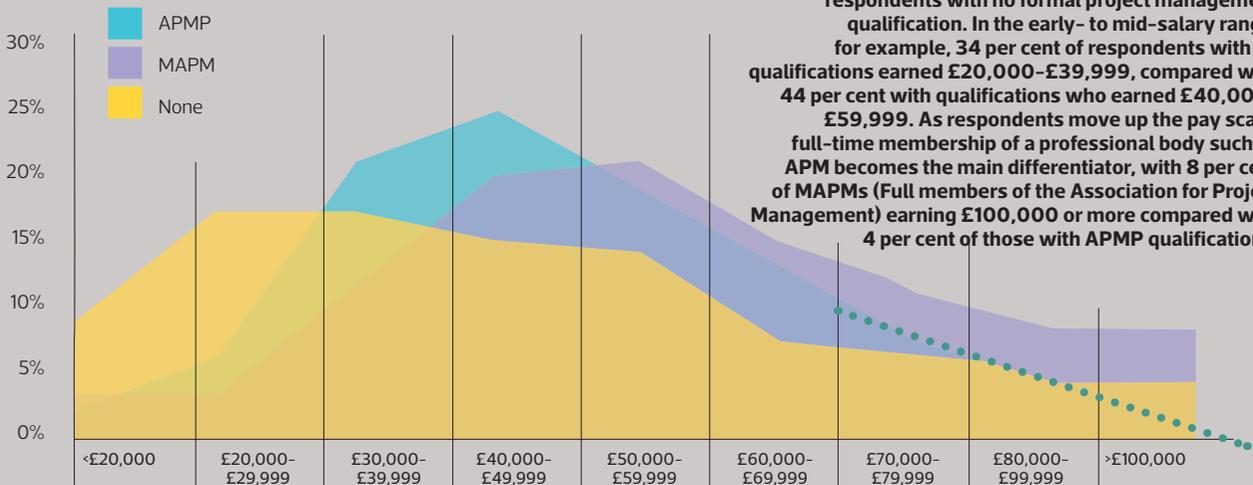
HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO CHANGE EMPLOYER IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

57 per cent of respondents said they were unlikely to change employer in the next 12 months, compared with 16 per cent who said they were very likely to move.



HOW DO QUALIFICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP LEVEL AFFECT SALARY?

On average, those holding APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification tend to earn more than respondents with no formal project management qualification. In the early- to mid-salary range, for example, 34 per cent of respondents with no qualifications earned £20,000-£39,999, compared with 44 per cent with qualifications who earned £40,000-£59,999. As respondents move up the pay scale, full-time membership of a professional body such as APM becomes the main differentiator, with 8 per cent of MAPMs (Full members of the Association for Project Management) earning £100,000 or more compared with 4 per cent of those with APMP qualifications.



Plot your course

The new APM Competence Framework, designed for you... and you... and you too... **GILL HANCOCK** reveals all

APM's recent research, *The Conditions for Project Success*, asked 850 participants to identify a number of critical success factors in achieving project success. Chief among them was the competency and skills of project professionals.

Intriguingly, when asked to rate the competency of their team on its most recent project, nearly half (47 per cent) said they were only 'moderately good' at best, with 8 per cent saying it was either poor or absent.

So the challenge is laid down for both individual project professionals and the organisations they work for. How do you identify and benchmark the knowledge and experience that you have and the areas that need to be improved? And what benchmark do you measure those skills and capabilities against? The release of the refreshed and updated APM Competence Framework has come at the right time for individuals and organisations.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

It's an exciting time to be a project professional. The profession is growing, and your skills and expertise are highly valued and respected. Whether you are a project, programme or portfolio manager, or you have a role to play in a PMO, it is important to manage your personal development for your role now and for any roles you want to take in the future.

It has never been more important to be able to measure and evaluate your skills and knowledge, and this serves two purposes. First, to understand the areas where you might want to improve your knowledge and skills, and, second, to assess the fit you may or may not have with a role. The framework provides an independent professional body view for you to do just that. It can be a really useful tool when considering the needs of a specific project, a promotion or a job application. The benefits of this include:

- Quick assessment of your skills and competences saves you time.
- Clear identification of your training needs to help with your professional development.
- Identify skills gaps quickly, to aid career development.
- A professional body benchmark provides assurance to your assessment.

APM'S NEW COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK IS EVIDENCE OF A BIGGER STORY – IT'S ABOUT SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROFESSION BY PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK THAT CAN LEAD TO GREATER PROFESSIONALISM



BENEFITS FOR ORGANISATIONS

The changes that have been made make the framework more accessible, easier to use and provide greater coverage of roles. It's been developed around a higher level of outcome-based, more generic performance indicators, making it a particularly useful tool for organisations assessing their resourcing requirements and building their future professional development plans. The licensed materials available to organisations include 14 new role profiles, matched to the framework, which help to identify individual development needs.

Organisations adopting the APM Competence Framework can gain a competitive advantage – in bidding, in the recruitment marketplace and in organisation development planning. With coverage of project, programme and portfolio management and project office, the tool

IN A NUTSHELL: THE NEW APM COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

Why has it been updated?

The original APM Competence Framework was released in 2008, so a refresh was timely. In addition to extensive external research, a thorough and robust consultation process was undertaken. This included feedback from existing users of competence frameworks and individuals who plan and procure professional development qualifications. Changes in organisational practices were also taken into account, as well as the rapidly changing nature of the project management profession in recent years.

This research identified a number of clear requirements:

- An all-encompassing, flexible self-assessment resource that better reflected the professional qualification needs of the modern profession.
- A resource that extends coverage across the projects profession, beyond project managers, to include programme, portfolio and PMO roles.
- A solution that recognises the difference in job roles and project complexity.
- A resource that works as well for the public sector and not-for-profit organisations as it does for commercial organisations.

How was it updated?

This consultation and the direct involvement of the project profession has been a key feature of APM's approach when developing the new Competence Framework. This included online surveys, face-to-face meetings and practitioner workshops, giving the project a real sense of being designed by the profession and for the profession – resulting in a truly customer-led proposition.

What is new?

The new APM Competence Framework is based on functional mapping, which has allowed much of the original duplication to be removed. The scope of the framework has been extended beyond just project management to include project, programme, portfolio and PMO management.

- Number of competences reduced from 47 to 27.

- 14 new role profiles matched to the framework, to help identify individual development needs.
- Now relevant for project, programme, portfolio and PMO roles.
- An editable framework that can easily be integrated into existing frameworks and assessment methods, or used in its entirety 'out of the box'.

One strand of a lifetime of support

APM's new Competence Framework is evidence of a bigger story – it's about supporting the development of the profession by providing a framework that can lead to greater professionalism. It is part of a larger toolkit that APM can provide to aid professional development, improve project delivery and support the APM's vision of a world where all projects succeed. There is more information and free downloads available to project professionals. There are also dedicated web pages for organisations and training providers. For more, see apm.org.uk/competence-framework

provides a consistent framework for the development of project professional knowledge and skills at all levels in your project management community.

It is so easy to use, you can quickly identify the skill sets in your project management community, making the most of your capability and identifying opportunities for upskilling. It will help you assess your organisation capabilities in delivering major new initiatives. The new APM Competence Framework can be a key tool in planning for greater accountability and transparency in project management.

The benefits of successful adoption for an organisation could include:

- Improved project delivery success.
- Better recruitment and staff retention.
- A competitive advantage that sets you apart.
- Better value for your customers and stakeholders.
- Increased efficiency from the output of your project managers.
- Support for the transformation or improvement of your organisation

HOW WILL THE NEW ROLE PROFILES HELP ORGANISATIONS?

■ The 14 new role profiles are incorporated into the licensed framework materials for organisations and bring flexibility to the framework. Some of the competences will be relevant to everybody, but roles differ to reflect the setting, as does the level of competence required. Other competences may be specific to just a handful of roles. The profiles show which competences are applicable and at which level they should be demonstrated.

■ They help organisations and their project management community understand how they compare not just to their current role, but to potential future roles. The gaps identified can then be developed into training and development requirements. They can be used by organisations to benchmark project professionals across their organisation, for individual career development, talent gap analysis, or for developing your own internal competence framework.

■ The new APM Competence Framework has been developed in such a way that additional role profiles and competences can, and will, be added, over time. 



More information and free downloads are available to project professionals, in order to help you find out more about the competencies. There are also dedicated web pages for organisations and training providers.

To find out more, visit apm.org.uk/competence-framework or scan the QR code (right).



GILL HANCOCK MAPM is head of professional standards and knowledge at APM



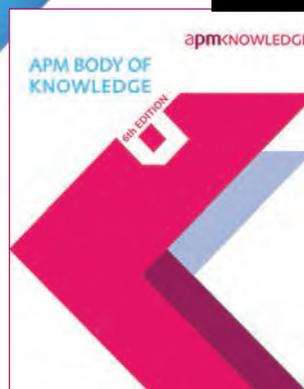
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* Books will only be distributed once the membership application has been approved by the Association for Project Management.

All down to experience

Further your development by seeking out opportunities to learn on the job and from others' successful behaviours. **JANE MARSHALL-NICHOLS** explains

We all know that knowledge is critical in the early stages of our development. For career progression it is important to learn through face-to-face courses and via the internet to gain those vital accreditations. There are some other questions that we need to consider, however. These are: Are we making that learning work for us? Are we really applying our learning in the most effective way? And, of course, are our projects more successful as a result?

For the past 25 years CITI has been researching, assessing and supporting the development of project managers. The findings are unequivocal: there is a 'best approach' to developing capability.

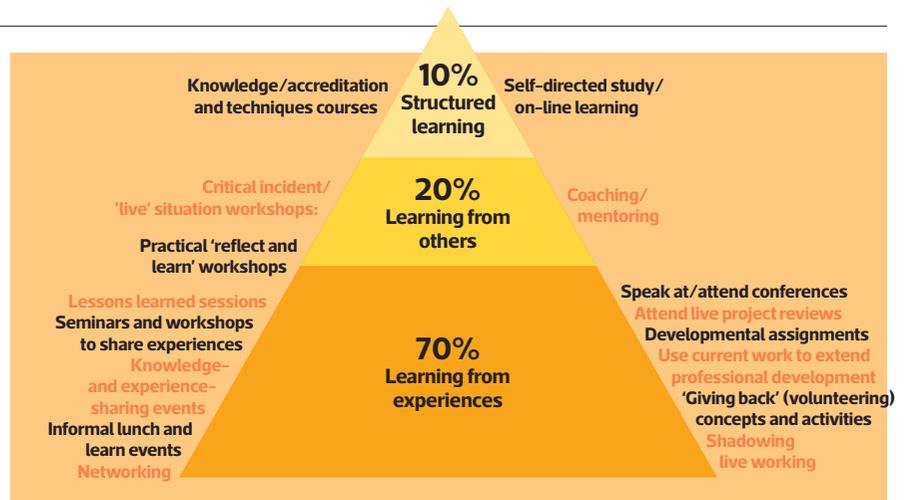
Learning involves four components: knowledge, observation, interaction and feedback. All are necessary, but there is best weighting and sequence.

Work by Princeton University's Morgan McCall, Michael Lombardo and Robert Eichinger (1980) led them to suggest a development framework, often called the 70:20:10 model. It says that learning is best achieved where 10 per cent is directed (online or classroom); 20 per cent involves learning from others; and 70 per cent is learning from work-based experience.

Experiential learning is not a way to reduce the training budget. To be effective, the experiences need to be properly sequenced and present opportunities for exploitation of new skills. The launch of APM's new Competence Framework offers a perfectly timed stimulus for each of us to consider our own development, and how best to make use of the money and time set aside for increasing our own capability.

Each of us has different learning needs and learning styles. The 70:20:10 model both recognises and accommodates this. The diagram shows some of the learning interactions that have proved particularly successful in the project environment. It is up to you to select an approach or intervention that will be effective.

The 70:20:10 approach seems particularly suitable for developing project professionals, as the day-to-day working



environment – with its crises, highly visible performance and need for action – offers perfect opportunities. A project initiation, risk or planning workshop are all potential learning situations where we can observe, offer suggestions and practise core skills in a 'live' environment.

REAL-LIFE STORIES

The amount of experience that you have does not matter and neither does your level of seniority. For example, at defence company BAE Systems, the top 150 project managers regularly engage in cross-project peer reviews, extending their range of experience and exposure to different business environments.

Within investment firm Old Mutual, project managers are seconded to the project management office for three to six months, where they act as project consultants, using coaching and experiential learning to reinforce their qualification-based training.

Although observation is good, being involved and playing a meaningful role in the tasks is even better. In some organisations, this has led to moving high-potential individuals from department to department, giving them exposure to new experiences and practices. One government department even swapped project managers with rail operator

Eurostar to gain and share experiences across organisational boundaries.

So what can you do to further your own development?

- **Actively reflect (not introspectively).** Seek ways to share and discuss activities and events.
- **Seek relevant experiences.** Consider what you need to know and want to understand. Seek out opportunities to reinforce and extend your competence.
- **Encourage review.** Share issues and solutions. Feedback is a gift – even, or perhaps especially when it challenges your assumptions.
- **Structure your development.** Too many opportunities become distractions. The wrong type of experience is unhelpful and experiences that occur in the wrong sequence can be damaging. Talk with colleagues and your managers and discuss your 'plans' – just knowing often influences decision-making in subtle, positive ways. ☐



JANE MARSHALL-NICHOLS is chief operating officer at CITI. For more on APM's Competence Framework, see page 48

Rules of engagement

Getting the most out of the people who work for you requires you to fully connect with your team, says **DR DOMINIC GETTING**

Like many professions, project management is not a precise science. There are some exacting tools and techniques, but no project team can use mathematical methodologies to generate strong interpersonal relationships.

Projects can be both exhilarating and brutal in many ways: the schedule, the scope, the budget – to name but a few of the key elements. Project professionals can use these indicators to measure team performance from a commercial or reputational perspective. But project teams that lack positive team chemistry can be perilous because, with the slightest error of judgement, they can jeopardise project success by accommodating misunderstanding and discontent, which then amplifies poor performance.

Arguably, most people invest a great deal of personal and professional equity in going to work, and the real world can impose a vast array of pressures and behaviours on people that they don't necessarily enjoy or know how to manage. It is vital that project management team members understand the emotional characteristics of their people to optimise harmonious working, high performance and loyalty.

How often is this subject promoted in project management textbooks or training material, though? The answer is: infrequently. It may be mildly covered in some places, but the missing 'soft skills' chapter is likely to be found in a leadership theory book rather than a project management manual.

VALUED RELATIONSHIPS

After many years of observing projects, I have concluded that the most resilient project teams are normally defined at the outset by not only the technical and commercial quality of the project management team, but also by their strong commitment to values and behaviours, and them taking the opportunity to instil these into the wider team at every opportunity.

The best organisations operate by values that they vigorously promote, and I have been struck by the potency of these when they are instilled in a project team from top to bottom. Once more, the impact of behavioural values being championed by both corporate leaders and clients should not be underestimated. It means that the project team is flanked on each side by highly influential allies beyond the immediate limits of the project management team.

Day to day, the best project managers have the ability to observe people under their jurisdiction managing various

THE MOST RESILIENT PROJECT TEAMS ARE NORMALLY DEFINED BY THEIR STRONG COMMITMENT TO VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

INSPIRING ROLE MODEL

A few years ago, I met a very personable project manager called Olav who had served in the Royal Norwegian Navy as a special forces commando – a highly likable Viking James Bond, if you will. We were discussing the scenario of when the 'going gets tough', and how his project had made it through.

Although I didn't work on his project, I knew many colleagues who did and I was consistently struck by the camaraderie of the team. When enquiring about his

career, he recounted his military experiences, stating: "Whatever the mission, everyone goes down at some point – even me. We have to pick up our colleagues and get each person up and running again."

It was a really subtle point, because both of us knew that in projects, team members can 'go down' and never recover. He was referring to professional mental endurance, as well as personal emotional resilience. A simple mistake or a misunderstanding

can ignite a powder keg of professional despondency and mistrust, and even trigger resignation. If project and personal pressures cause a team member to 'go down', a good project manager can use his or her prized re-set key to recover the situation, namely, their relationship with the employee.

Delivery failure didn't happen on Olav's project because he worked to the same principles as he did during his military career. Yes, he was there to lead, but

most importantly to listen, to support and to motivate. People wanted to work with him, they would stay late in the office to see the task through, and they would come in early when the schedule targets required it.

Olav's integrity meant that he understood his people and his people understood him. These relationships underpinned the loyalty and resilience of the project execution team, and helped to correct the difficult moments in his team's journey.



A PROJECT MANAGER WHO MAKES TIME TO LISTEN AND OFFER NON-INQUISITIVE OR LIGHT-TOUCH MORAL SUPPORT WILL, RIGHTLY, GAIN THE RESPECT AND LOYALTY OF ANY TEAM MEMBER, REGARDLESS OF THE INEVITABLE BAD WEEK OR MONTH THAT EVERYONE EXPERIENCES

workloads, or juggling either challenging professional or personal circumstances. The finest project managers comprehend that it is normally possible to lift their colleagues to a better place emotionally by simple engagement: “How are you doing?” or “Is there anything I can do to help you?” This behaviour creates empathy, solidarity and mutual respect.

Reassuring interpersonal engagement is what many people need to hear to reinforce their personal esteem or craving for professional perfection. Many project personnel are inspired and inclined to deliver more than they thought they could achieve, because the project manager is making his or her own investment in the relationship and wider team performance.

Ironically, this strength of relationship also aids the project manager when he or she needs to address mediocre or poor performance in team members, because the instruction to ‘pull your socks up’ is often more potent coming from someone to whom team members relate and respect. After all, most project managers will concede that acceptance of mediocre performance rarely achieves first-division results.

LISTEN AND LEARN

Then there’s the tool of choice that many project managers inadvertently forget: the capacity to listen. By listening and remaining emotionally ‘tuned in’ to the team, a good project manager can gauge positive emotions, but also negative sentiments and mitigate or manage them if necessary.

With regard to the latter, often there are contributory personal factors: a healthcare issue, bereavement, a house burglary – any kind of depressing circumstance that amplifies a behavioural risk in team members. It’s all very well holding a view that people shouldn’t bring their personal baggage into the project office, but it doesn’t always work like this in the real world, and that’s before the stress ramps up on a project.

A project manager who makes time to listen and offer non-inquisitive or light-touch moral support will, rightly, gain the

respect and loyalty of any team member, regardless of the inevitable bad week or month that everyone experiences.

Positive and demonstrable values in action can also be infectious. They can help make a team far more resilient because the positive ‘can-do’ and ‘we-can-fix-this’ culture is something that the team finds itself actually wanting to forge. Anyone reading this may be thinking: “Well, of course they do.” But, in reality, does it really happen by itself? The answer is no. Project managers need to be constantly aware of the value of reassuring their team members, encouraging them, sensing their frustrations, and promoting co-operation and mutually beneficial problem solving, among other practices.

WHAT’S YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

Some authors will view this as ‘side matter’ for the project management profession. I disagree. The differentiator is not only the values system of the project management team, but how this values system is communicated within the wider team.

So how are your team? Have you made time to find out and see if you can help them? Do they know your values? What will you instil in them? Let’s ensure this is a major chapter in future texts and training manuals. 



DR DOMINIC GETTING
is project engineer at
Wood Group Mustang

Mind matters

What do project professionals need to know about managing mental illness in a high-risk environment? **ZEE HUSSAIN** explains

Good mental health is the state in which we feel we are able to cope with the day-to-day stresses of life. Mental illness, however, means we can't cope and it can come in many forms – some of which are clearly evident, while others can remain perfectly hidden. It is a condition that appears to have become more common in today's society and can range from feeling 'down' to disorders such as anxiety and depression or even more severe disorders, such as bipolar disorder. Given its prevalence in our societies, it is surprising that mental illness is still very much considered a taboo subject, with many people feeling too ashamed or embarrassed to even admit they have a problem.

Poor mental health in the workplace affects us all. For project professionals and those working in high-risk environments, it can be very difficult to deal with. As an employer, it is not your responsibility to diagnose illness but, when you sense that there could be an issue, it is essential to address it by establishing which adjustments or assistance may be required.

If mental illness is not addressed and managed appropriately, there could be substantial financial and personal repercussions for both the business and its employees. The proactive management of employees' mental health can produce a range of benefits, including fewer absences due to sickness, greater staff engagement and productivity, and reduced staff turnover, recruitment and costs.

AS AN EMPLOYER, IT IS NOT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DIAGNOSE ILLNESS BUT, WHEN YOU SENSE THAT THERE COULD BE AN ISSUE, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ADDRESS IT BY ESTABLISHING WHICH ADJUSTMENTS OR ASSISTANCE MAY BE REQUIRED

Mental health problems, on the other hand, can cost employers billions through lost production and absence.

SAFETY

Safety among employees is clearly of the utmost importance. It is essential that employers remain alert to mental illness to ensure that employees receive the right treatment, as well as appropriate workplace accommodation to carry out their tasks effectively and safely.

The Health and Safety Executive recommends that a mental health policy should be an integral part of any organisation's health and safety policy. Many of the larger organisations in the

UK have successfully developed such policies and have even gone as far as setting up well-being centres on site. Not only do initiatives such as these show a commitment to mental health, they also serve as a guide and raise the importance of good mental health to everyone in the organisation.

Although employees who work in a high-risk environment are used to working with strict policies, project professionals must take great care to ensure that they obtain explicit consent from the employee concerned rather than trying to impose anything on them against their will. Taking the latter course can merely exacerbate the problem.

COMMUNICATION

When employees are working in high-risk environments, stress can occur easily and quickly. To deal with this effectively, it is important to address the causes as early as possible. Obviously,

SUFFERING IN SILENCE

A recent study by health provider Priory Group emphasises just how big the issue of mental health in the workplace actually is. Among the most significant findings were:

91%

of those awaiting a mental health diagnosis feel the stigma around mental health would lead, or has led, them to consider self-employment.

79%

of those polled, who did not have a mental health problem, would worry about telling their employer if they did have one.

75%

of women would worry about telling their employer about mental illness, compared with two-thirds of men.

38%

of 18- to 24-year-olds felt that they could tell their employer about a mental health condition. The second most likely age group who felt willing to tell were the 25- to 34-year-olds.

there are certain factors that influence an individual's mental health that their manager cannot control. Issues such as personal relationships, finances and conditions at home are areas that you may not be able to help your employee with. As a manager, however, you will need to be on top of any problems. It is key to communicate with employees to create awareness of issues. You need to work towards creating a culture in which employees feel able to discuss their problems with you.

PUT THE EMPLOYEE FIRST

Putting the individual at the centre of the discussion is vital for agreeing workplace adjustments in order to understand and meet their specific needs. Using the advice and guidance of other professionals, such as the individual's GP, or asking for support from occupational health or human resources can also be invaluable in helping to find solutions.

PROMOTE AWARENESS

It is important to promote awareness of mental health issues in the workplace and create a culture where employees feel that they can talk to you about any mental health concerns they might have. Effective communication and consultation is important, coupled with an appreciation of mental health problems and a willingness to help employees. It can help to raise any concerns with the employee. Keeping communication channels open is critical.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Dealing early with issues concerning mental illness will put you in a favourable position in terms of the law. It is important to be aware of your legal obligations because if a manager fails to spot the signs of ill health and treats an employee less favourably, they can find themselves in breach of their legal duty and at risk of potential claims of discrimination.

The Equality Act 2010 considers a mental health condition to be a disability. A person is defined as disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial long-term (ie more than 12 months) effect on their normal day-to-day activities. Managers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities, in order to ensure that they have the same access to the tools that are necessary to getting the job done as non-disabled employees. Therefore, businesses are under a positive and proactive duty to take steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles that a disabled worker faces.

Aside from being aware of the signs and knowing what your legal obligations are as a manager, it's also important to be practical about it.

Ensure that line managers are well versed in the importance of dealing with employees who are exhibiting signs of mental health issues. Management must be prepared to take swift,



MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS COST BUSINESSES BILLIONS OF POUNDS EACH YEAR. THEREFORE, PROJECT PROFESSIONALS NEED A STRATEGY TO DEAL WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ADEQUATELY AND FAIRLY

effective and sympathetic action when an employee reports mental health problems. Adequate training in this area can help to ensure that senior members of the team are properly equipped to do so. This can also play an essential role in promoting a culture of tolerance and openness in the workplace.

Mental health problems cost businesses billions of pounds each year, adversely impacting productivity and morale. Therefore, project professionals need a strategy to deal with mental health issues adequately and fairly. By taking proactive steps such as the ones listed above, everyone within the business can reap the rewards. **■**



ZEE HUSSAIN is partner and head of the employment department at law firm Colemans-ctts

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From the bottom up

While at BAE Systems, **STEVE CROWTHER** set up a foundation scheme that was among the UK's first project management higher apprenticeship schemes

My career journey started in 1981. I had graduated from the University of Cambridge with a degree in engineering. I had a passion for cars, which I still have, and my original plan was to go into the motor industry. The early 1980s were not a good time for opportunities in the UK motor industry, however, so I accepted a role as a graduate trainee in the military aircraft division of what was then British Aerospace and is now BAE Systems.

I spent my early career in the company's cost-estimating department, preparing cost estimates for complex aircraft development programmes, compiling prices for export proposals and developing estimates to completion for ongoing projects. This was terrific experience. To develop realistic estimates, you need to have an understanding of how the business works, what drives the effort involved in accomplishing tasks, how they are sequenced, which risks and dependencies exist, and so on.

MY AIM IS TO HELP OTHER ORGANISATIONS, POTENTIALLY INCLUDING SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES, TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

I worked on some fascinating projects, including the Tornado fighter/bomber, the Hawk jet trainer, the Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft and the early feasibility phase for what became the multinational Eurofighter Typhoon.

By the mid-1990s, with the help of some great career mentors, I had progressed to being head of the estimating department, responsible for about 130 staff.

Around that time, the company went through a major organisational change, essentially moving from a functionally driven, matrix structure, to one where

multi-disciplinary teams are organised around a particular project or product deliverable. The change became known as Project Axis, and was intended to increase focus and accountability on project and product delivery.

I was asked to head up a small team to develop a consistent capability in project management and to ensure its application across various projects. We started by creating the Standard for Project Control, which captured the key methodologies to be adopted across the organisation. This was followed up by the Bidding Standard, which did the same thing for the proposal preparation phase of the project. These documents would probably seem unremarkable today, but, at that time, they provided an early step in terms of systemising the practices of project management so they could be consistently deployed across diverse projects.

Of course, effective process is only part of the journey. The key to effective management of projects is people. Over the following years, I was involved in the development of a comprehensive capability development framework, incorporating role profiles, competency frameworks and a suite of training options aligned to APM's accreditation structure.

As an example of the scale and success of this, more than 1,000 staff have since gone on to achieve the APMP Qualification.

My proudest achievement was probably establishing the Project Control Foundation Scheme. This is an innovative early-career scheme developed in partnership with Blackpool and The Fylde College, where A-Level school-leavers undertake demanding project control roles within the business, while studying for foundation and degree-level qualifications. With APM's support, this scheme became one of the first project management higher apprenticeship schemes in the UK.



STEVE CROWTHER is director at Avenham Consulting
pscrowther@talktalk.net

At the start of 2015, I retired from BAE Systems and set up my own company, Avenham Consulting. My aim is to help other organisations, potentially including small and medium-sized enterprises, to establish a sustainable project management capability. Key to this is creating a supportive environment. I have benefited from the support of some great people – managers, mentors and others – especially early on in my career.

It's the same for capability. Organisations will only become good at something if it is sponsored from the top of the organisation, nurtured by those in the middle and sustained by new talent to move it forward. That is the essence of any journey. 



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Reaping the rewards

Does your organisation create or destroy value from the investments it makes in projects? asks **PIP PEEL**

High-performing companies create tremendous value from their investments in transformation and change. But many others waste time, money and opportunity – and they destroy shareholder value by investing in the wrong initiatives or in executing those initiatives poorly. Do you know how your company performs? And if it is the latter, where is the value lost?

In February 2015, P2 Consulting published the results of a survey that focused on the value that companies derive from project and programme management. The survey was conducted with over 1,000 industry leaders and project management practitioners from more than 300 enterprises. The survey sought to discover how good organisations are at delivering shareholder value from the investments that they make in business transformation projects.

The findings highlighted a huge discrepancy in the returns that companies gain from their strategic investments. They also illustrated where in the programme life cycle companies are failing. This article assesses the results of the survey and goes on to categorise common features of investment portfolios.

The survey focused on the four key phases of the investment life cycle:



Back the right ideas

Selecting the right strategies and opportunities.



Set up for success

Planning, mobilising and organising these ideas into solid, tangible initiatives.



Execute with excellence

Executing these initiatives/projects well.



Reap the rewards

The results that an organisation derives from these initiatives and how they drive out the value to the business.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMANCE

High-performing organisations will be adept in all four of these investment life-cycle phases. They systematically identify, size up and prioritise the best investment strategies, and ensure that the organisation has the capability and capacity to deliver.

They are robust in taking these ideas, planning their implementation, and establishing the right team and

management infrastructure to guide them to success. Their project execution skills are second-to-none and project delivery rates are typically very high. Importantly, on delivering a project, the business is geared up to drive out the benefits and derive the maximum possible value from each initiative – this is a key differentiator of high-performing enterprises.

Although this is the utopian ideal, however, it is rare for all but the highest-performing companies to achieve anywhere near this level of competency.

WEAK SPOTS

Most organisations are strong in one or two areas across the investment life cycle. In areas where they are not strong, it is imperative that they understand and accept their ‘weak spots’ with a view to improving these competencies as a priority.

Most importantly, organisations need to understand the end-to-end picture, and spend time and effort improving the areas that will provide the best improvement in return on investment.

This may not be simply improving project delivery capability. In fact, many organisations would drive up shareholder value by stopping any further investment in project management skills and infrastructure until they have raised the bar across

Figure 1 Measuring the organisation’s capability across the four areas of the investment life cycle (example for illustrative purposes only)



<< FIVE DIMENSIONS >> STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

the other phases of the investment life cycle, especially with regards to project selection.

Most notably, the majority of organisations are poor in backing the right ideas. The majority of those surveyed are trying to undertake too much change at one time without the capacity, or the management mechanisms, to effectively control these initiatives, let alone drive out the full business benefits capacity.

By measuring the organisation's effectiveness across all four areas of the investment life cycle, senior management can start to determine where investment value is being eroded and take action. An example is shown in Figure 1 (see page 59).

The organisation in Figure 1 is clearly astute at determining the right opportunities for value creation. Yet it is mediocre at then turning these opportunities into sound initiatives that are properly constituted, designed, planned and resourced. It displays below-average capability in project management/delivery and, more significantly, is poor at realising the potential benefits from whatever is eventually delivered. Executing poorly and failing to drive out the benefits detract from shareholder value in this example.

There are, of course, multiple theoretical types of organisation, according to this framework. The results of our survey suggest, however, that most organisations fall into one of six types. These are described further in Figure 2, right.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The P2 Consulting survey indicates the most common profile to be the Down-Grader. Many of the survey's respondents would admit that project management capability across their organisation could be improved but they cited the lack of business engagement, capability and capacity to drive out value from projects as being of greater importance.

Organisations taking on too much change activity, without understanding the ability of the enterprise to deliver outcomes, is the biggest inhibitor to value creation.

There is almost universal acceptance that project and programme management is a critical capability for organisations to survive and thrive in today's corporate climate.

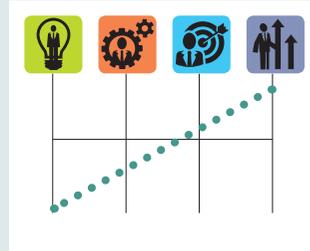
The majority of companies are good at backing the right ideas that align with and – on the face of it – drive them towards strategic goals. Indeed, individual projects seem to be well supported at senior executive level. The big challenge for organisations, then, is how to manage the complexity of a multi-project environment. Strong portfolio governance is a prerequisite, not just in taking the ideas and turning them into winning outcomes, but in prioritising the most valuable initiatives and taking the bold decision to trim the project portfolio to meet the capacity of the enterprise – turning the Down-Grader into a high-performer. **P**

The results from P2 Consulting's survey are available to download from www.p2consulting.com



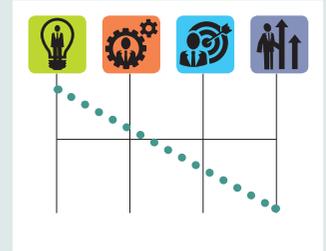
PIP PEEL is founder and director at P2 Consulting, a specialist project and programme management company. Contact him at: pip@p2consulting.com

Figure 2 Most organisations fall into six categories when assessed for their performance in delivering value from strategic investments



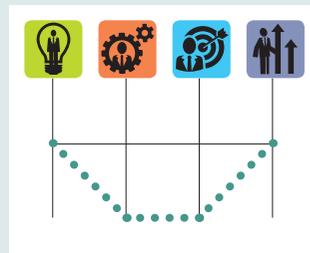
MIRACLE WORKER

Yes – they do exist! Despite poor project selection, set-up and mediocre delivery, the business drives value from change, but this is rarely sustainable and usually has a major impact on day-to-day operations.



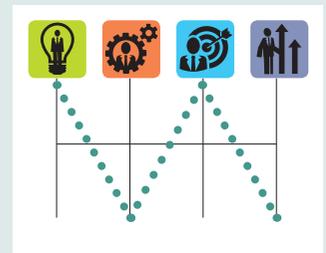
DOWN-GRADER

The strategy is good but value leaks through poor execution and even worse business readiness and benefits delivery. Action is required to prevent good money being thrown after bad.



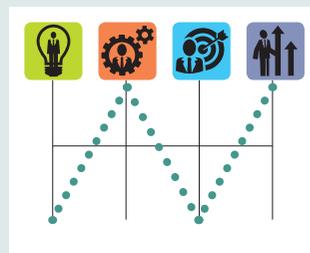
LATE FLOURISHER

With poor project set-up and pathetic project management, the business backs the right opportunities and snatches victory from the jaws of defeat – marginally better than the Miracle Worker.



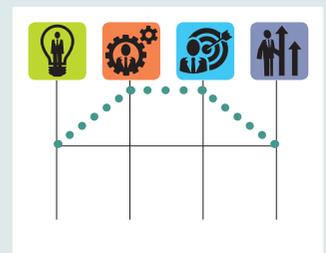
PATCHY LOSS-MAKER

If only projects were designed, planned and mobilised better and the business geared up to generate value from investments... if only!



PATCHY HERO

Despite its woeful strategic planning department, the party doesn't end in tears thanks to strong corporate governance and heroics from the operations teams.



POOR FINISHER

Strategic thinking is average, but the project team makes the best of a poor start. Without the right business leadership and accountability, however, the Titanic still sinks.

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Health check

What are the five key questions that programme sponsors should be asking about the condition of their project? **PETER OSBORNE** poses them

Systematically gauging the health of a project on a regular basis is a relatively simple and inexpensive exercise to ensure that the programme adheres to the principles of delivery. Waiting until something has gone wrong before taking action can be damaging in terms of scope, time and cost.

Here are five key questions that all programme sponsors should regularly ask themselves to ascertain the health of their project and to pinpoint where processes have gone wrong.

1 Are the right leaders, with the right skills, behaviours and attitudes, in place?

Leadership is primarily responsible for enabling team members to contribute effectively and efficiently towards specific programme objectives. This often goes far beyond task-related deliverables, however. It requires the leader to have a clear vision, clarity in reason, a practical approach in scheduling achievable milestones, and the ability to attract, inspire, and manage a talented team.

If a leader isn't suitable, the team may well underperform, miss strategic opportunities and become disengaged with the project. This often culminates in failure to deliver project objectives and the programme then dissolves into disarray.

Successful programmes, then, require the right individuals with the right skills in the right decision-making roles. This includes having appropriate breadth and depth of experience related to the project, as well as the ability to allocate resources, analyse and identify goals, plan and estimate, and be highly result-orientated. But, most importantly, leaders must be able to inspire confidence at all levels of delivery processes, otherwise poor engagement – and low motivation and productivity – may result. Essentially, the leader is the core of the programme.

2 Does the team describe objectives and business benefits in the same way?

Possessing clarity of purpose enables a team to focus on how to achieve specific project objectives within constrained resources. This requires excellent communication so that all team members understand the obvious and underlying business benefits and expected scope of a programme.

In addition, performance reviews must be agreed, assessed and communicated regularly to ensure consistency of, and commitment to, project objectives, as well as verification of targets. Failing to systematically assess these objectives and how to achieve them can result in major communication and performance gaps opening up.

Regular assessment can also increase clarity of purpose and enable project aims to be realigned to current business needs. Communication is essential for effective business operation, and clarity of purpose leads to better, more effective communication. This structure can be imposed internally through top-down authority from leadership, or through a third party with specialist project-delivery knowledge. Both methods require the right leaders to be in the right decision-making roles, however, to ensure consistency of business objectives throughout the team and project life cycle.

3 Are decisions made quickly and results achieved on time?

Large companies need to have a robust corporate structure, underpinned by good conduct and sound judgement from senior personnel, in order to facilitate decision-making within the programme and the wider organisation. This environment enables successful strategic governance that increases accountability, avoids business crises and inspires confidence in the team for achieving milestones to schedule.

Yet these practices and control mechanisms must be tailored to each project, and agreed and established at the very beginning, as well as reviewed regularly throughout the programme's duration, if they are to be effective.

Leadership must be able to manage the project with the right level of oversight, handle any emergency that might occur and create value for programme sponsors through sound investment and innovation. Nothing should affect the project delivering to schedule.

4 Does the team do what it says it will, in the time agreed?

Consistent success in programme delivery is only achieved when the entire culture of a company supports project delivery capability and programme performance goals. If the organisation does not have a delivery culture and the right management in place, then leadership will be lacking.

A culture of delivery should cascade from the leadership. Team members must take accountability for actions and tasks, as well as execute responsibilities in a timely manner, but this initiative must come from the leadership. If people don't see project processes as being priorities for senior personnel, then they will become disinterested and disengaged. When the culture is missing, it is very hard to get something delivered within that organisation.



SPONSORS FAIL TO PERFORM

APM's recent report, *Conditions for Project Success*, highlighted capable sponsors – those who play an active role in the life cycle of the project and assume responsibility and accountability for its outcomes – as one of the 12 project success factors.

The findings also identify gaps in performance, however. Of the top-five critical perceived success factors, 'capable sponsors' ranked joint first, with 28 per cent of the vote. At the other end the scale, 23 per cent of respondents rated the same factor

as 'moderately important/not important'. In terms of effectiveness, the report suggests that in nearly one in six recently completed projects, capable sponsors were either poor or absent altogether. Furthermore, among the subsidiary success factors, 'sponsors staying for the life of the project' recorded a lowly 7.5 on the scale (10 being most important).

This fragmented view of sponsor performance was aired by industry leaders at an APM roundtable event, held in April. It was noted that more should be done to ensure

that sponsors have a "full understanding of the role" and are fully focused on the "delivery of outcomes".

Summing up proceedings, APM deputy chairman and business development director at engineering firm CH2M, Alan Macklin, said: "A lot of talk around the table focused on removing ambiguity and uncertainty upfront, particularly on the client side."

APM's *Conditions for Project Success* report can be downloaded from apm.org.uk/conditions-for-project-success

5 Do team members do things in the same way and use their time effectively?

All programmes need a clearly defined set of processes for planning, monitoring and decision-making, all underpinned with the appropriate control, direction and use of resources. These processes need to add value and support for the team. Therefore, they must be personalised and reflect the requirements of the business that they serve.

Businesses cannot afford to make bad decisions. Effective leaders must be able to understand, justify and rapidly change their decision-making processes, due to the demand for business agility, in order to deliver a programme. In addition, team members must be able to quantifiably measure their progress and performance against a control group. By having smart processes in place, people can transparently understand which phases are not being optimally handled and where quality of work is slipping due to resource constraints. The alternative results in short-term divergence and long-term delivery delays.

DIAGNOSIS

A programme health check is a reflective learning exercise that examines a snapshot status of activity in order to identify which areas are going as planned and which need attention. These include objectives, scope, approach, plans and management, as well as quality of resource, programme governance and team commitment. A health check enables programme sponsors, among others, to determine how well the programme is performing in terms of objectives, to identify

issues that can be lost amid day-to-day activities and to assess the actions necessary to resolve any concerns.

The five questions above highlight common issues that often arise when a project health check is being conducted. While they can be performed when a programme is in trouble in order to identify what needs to be fixed, by systematically carrying out these checks, programme sponsors can detect any underlying discrepancies that may otherwise go undetected or ignored.

A programme health check can also reveal non-task deliverable issues such as personnel non-compliance, identification and analysis of best practices used, and project manager competence development. It is also much more cost- and time-efficient to pre-emptively identify problems before they occur, thus ensuring that all elements of the project are kept on track for successful project delivery. All of this knowledge can then be applied to future projects. **■**



PETER OSBORNE is managing director of **LOC Consulting**, a specialist management consultancy, which partners with its clients to deliver complex business change and IT projects and programmes. www.locconsulting.co.uk

Three magic words

What is the difference between collaboration, interfacing and integration on a construction project? **CLARE BELSEY** explains

I should like to begin this article by saying that I'm not reinventing the wheel, being particularly clever or claiming to revolutionise these areas of project delivery. What I hope to do here is put forward my understanding of the key differences between collaboration, interfacing and integration, so that it may help others who are dealing with these strangely tricky concepts.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration seems an obvious, natural action that any project professional should be involved in. Working 'with' the client rather than 'for' the client is a big step in the right direction but it is a behaviour that many do not feel comfortable with. It is vital that all sides participate, however, or it will fail.

The primary skill for a project consultant is one of the most basic skills that exists: communication. Talk to the client and, with their approval, engage with their other consultants, contractors and designers. As long as you keep your client informed, involved and responsible for final decisions, this should not be a problem and may even relieve them of a lot of headaches, especially since the client may not necessarily have a technical understanding.

If design is involved, the project consultant may need to challenge their client, which some may find difficult. But bear in mind that the reason the client has employed you is for your knowledge and experience. If you don't, it can damage the client's perception of you and make for some very uncomfortable conversations.

Having an understanding of the effect that change can generate across any number of disciplines is vital but not always achieved. Here, a project professional with a holistic approach and a broad base of technical knowledge is an immeasurable help. The project professional can be a jack of all trades without needing to be the master of one.

THE PRIMARY SKILL FOR A PROJECT CONSULTANT IS ONE OF THE MOST BASIC SKILLS THAT EXISTS: COMMUNICATION. TALK TO THE CLIENT AND – WITH THEIR APPROVAL – ENGAGE WITH THEIR OTHER CONSULTANTS, CONTRACTORS AND DESIGNERS

Remember that once works commence on-site, any contractor worth their salt will try anything to claim extra work, time and money and accuse you of delaying them. We have all heard it far too often: "The design was wrong." Be clear with your client throughout on any queries that you have regarding buildability, maintainability, physical fit, assumed condition of adjacent assets/structures and unknown obstructions. Set out a clear issues and risk register, and keep a thorough record of any issues and whether they were closed out or not. Do not be afraid to look silly or nitpicky – these are the very points that a claim is built upon.

INTERFACING

We will suppose that you have collaborated effectively and that everybody knows who is doing what, when, why and how. This, however, does not necessarily solve the problems of interfacing and integration.

Interfacing and integration could be seen as one activity and they are definitely linked, but I see interfacing as being more relevant during the design stage and integration as being more relevant during construction.

Interfacing is particularly important where systems or equipment are being installed that are adjacent to your project, or even connecting to it. Will the two pieces connect successfully and be able to 'talk to each other'? Does one have a major maintenance regime whereas the other doesn't? Can the maintenance be aligned time-wise to reduce access requirements and disruption? Is there sufficient capacity in the cable runs and distribution boards for any dual-running? Is there a need to close/switch off one bit of kit in order to maintain the other? The list goes on.

These issues should all be addressed throughout the design phase, so that when it comes to construction and installation the relevant systems and equipment integrate seamlessly. If only it were that simple, I hear you cry! Even with the best planning, foresight and experience, things can still go wrong. Key to successful project management is understanding the potential problems, and carrying out due diligence and research in an attempt to mitigate. You also need to consider adjacent project requirements. Again, this can be addressed through design.

INTEGRATION

To my mind, integration is the physical putting together of the various systems, equipment and processes in a successful, efficient, cohesive way. Nobody wants any surprises during



HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF COLLABORATION, INTERFACING AND INTEGRATION

First – always first – communicate clearly.

Consider how the client would perceive your performance. What would you think if you were them?

Make realistic promises. Deliver on them and, preferably, exceed them. It is easy to fail in this area and we all need to do better.

OVER AND ABOVE EVERYTHING, I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT FINDING YOUR OWN WAY TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS, AND GETTING THE BEST (AND MOST) OUT OF PEOPLE, IS FUNDAMENTAL

a commissioning or possession – of new signalling equipment, for example, which is often programmed hour by hour. Making the most out of the design phase is critical in an attempt to iron out any issues that have potential to disrupt the programme on the night. From a practical point of view, be sure the right people are on-site at the time and that the site teams are fully informed.

A lot of integration issues can be demonstrated by using 4D modelling. This is a contentious issue, even in the realms of 3D, but 4D does have value. I find it astonishing that so much rail work is still designed in 2D, despite 3D being a standard requirement for many years. It also makes 4D modelling possible on the assumption that the programme is sufficiently detailed and correct. These are fundamental basics of project work and can provide a very useful real-time picture, as well as meeting legislative requirements that are due to come into place in 2016.

Regardless of the quality of your design and the preparation work carried out, all projects have external stakeholders that you have absolutely no control over. These can be local authorities, residents, businesses, train-operating companies, emergency services (changes to routes and access during and after construction), local businesses and passengers, to name but a few.

There may also be issues with heritage (local authority or railway heritage) as well as listed building status, which applies to many railway sites or parts within them, right down to the tiles on the wall. Be sure the contractors on-site know of any assets that need protecting.

Again, work with the stakeholders, not against them. Make sure they feel involved and included all the way along. From my experience, they are far more likely to help you in terms of having a more flexible approach if you do that. Involve them, give them an idea of what you are aiming at and where you foresee issues, use their expertise and get their input. Try to find a solution before the event. I strongly believe from direct experience that it will have a tangible impact, as a bad relationship can be ruinous.

SOME LAST WORDS

I have only barely touched on the issues of collaboration, interfacing and integration in this article, but I have hopefully triggered a few useful thoughts. Over and above everything, I strongly believe that finding your own way to build and maintain relationships, and getting the best (and most) out of people, is fundamental. 



CLARE BELSEY is a project professional with more than 10 years' experience of project delivery gained across rail, commercial and residential projects in the UK

From good to great

How can you enable exceptional delivery performance through improved project management and engineering collaboration? **ANDY COOKE** explains

Project teams are comprised of different disciplines working collaboratively to deliver a successful outcome. Often the most challenging relationship on a project team exists between the engineering and project management disciplines, with both focused on ensuring that they have the right approach to delivery, and their risks under control.

Where this works well, the results are truly impressive. Most would agree that the London 2012 Olympic Games successfully delivered a spectacular event. Equally, however, there are examples where the results have been less successful. Upon opening, Heathrow Terminal 5 was quickly engulfed in difficulties with its baggage-handling system, resulting in 68 flights being cancelled on the first day of operations.

Is adopting industry-standard methods enough?

The engineering and project management disciplines have been steadily maturing, in part to avoid failures such as those at Heathrow. The project management community has now widely adopted industry-recognised standards such as APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification. Meanwhile, the engineering community typically uses approaches such as systems engineering and the Rational Unified Process.

The wide adoption of these methods and approaches has significantly improved project delivery performance, to the point where, in many cases, project teams do a good job of delivering against their objectives. Consequently, the risks of recurrence of the sort of incident highlighted earlier should have reduced. But is this good enough? And if it is not, then what more could be done to move from generally good performance on our major projects to really great delivery performance?

One of the hindrances to this potential improved performance is that the industry-standard methods associated with the different disciplines have matured independently. The result of this is that they all provide limited guidance on how to integrate with other methods and approaches – the implications of which can be significant.

Projects are invariably started in response to an urgent need and those in lead positions are expected to deliver within constrained environments. The consequence can be that the project managers and engineers typically look to quickly establish ways of working and, in so doing, bring their areas of responsibility under control. This can result in each ‘putting the blinkers on’ to focus on what they are contracted to deliver using the established methods that they know and trust. This is default behaviour that is hard to avoid in pressured environments.

It is, therefore, very much left to the skill and experience of the project management and engineering leads on a project to recognise the importance of finding the right way for their specific project to integrate the work within the disciplines so that one integrated team delivers against the objectives.

Understand the strength of each discipline

Unlocking this potential for greater delivery performance by improving collaboration is critical to enable project teams to achieve really great performance and avoid the friction, inertia and risks associated with the alternative, siloed behaviour that can so easily occur. To achieve this requires a focus on four things:

1. UNDERSTAND THE AREA OF FOCUS THAT EACH DISCIPLINE BRINGS

The focus of the two disciplines is to build the right solution, as well as to build it correctly. To achieve this, both disciplines recognise the importance of delivering within the performance, cost and time envelope. What is more subtle, however, is the focus of each discipline: engineering tends towards ensuring the performance characteristics are met, whereas project management would typically draw on its expertise in financial and schedule management to drive progress, and ensure control. It is the awareness of the differing but complementary areas of focus that is important to lay the foundations of successful project working.

Figure 1 The focus of each discipline is different

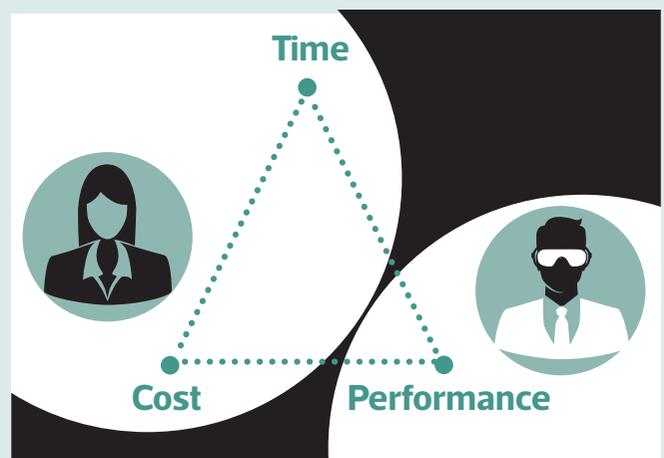
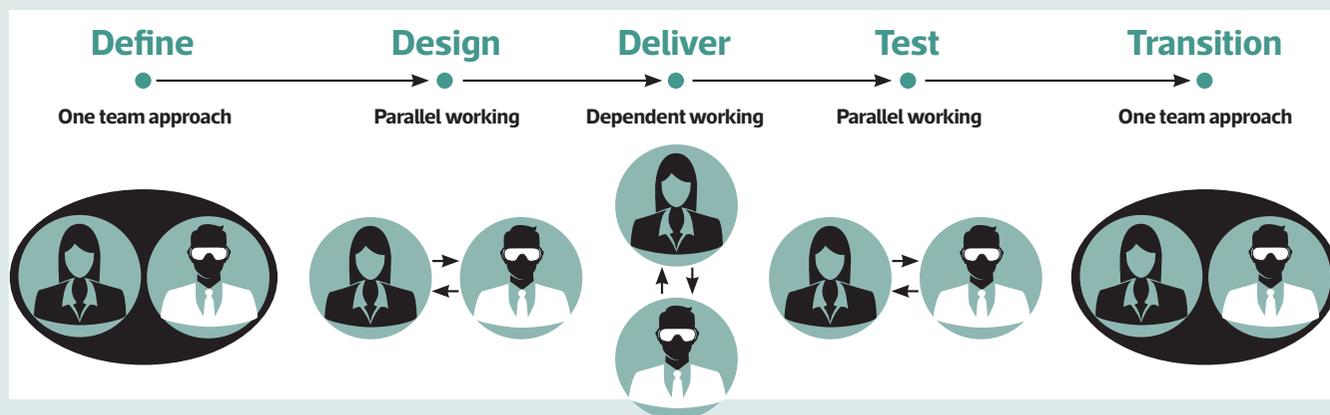


Figure 2 The changing relationship during the different stages of the project



2. SEQUENCE DELIVERABLES ACCORDING TO WHAT THE PROJECT REALLY NEEDS

Each discipline has responsibility for producing project deliverables during the different stages of the delivery life cycle. Still, the starting point must be to collectively understand what the project needs, to successfully manage the overall risk. Only then is it possible to determine the right set of deliverables and the necessary sequencing for the project.

For each deliverable, clearly define who is responsible, who contributes to it, what it is dependent on and what is dependent on it. Building this deliverable set collaboratively creates the sense of focus and single-team ownership that can ensure the project progresses efficiently. This is fundamentally different to the traditional independent discipline approach that we typically develop our teams to be skilled in, but it is critical to deploying a successful, practical approach to project delivery.

3. BUILD AN ENVIRONMENT WITH HEALTHY TENSION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

There is always a degree of tension in project teams, born out of the difference in focus between the disciplines. The challenge is to build the environment where this tension is helping, and not hindering, the overall progress of the project.

It's like a fine watch. It works best when there is perfect tension between the different parts, keeping everything in balance – when the tension is too high or low, the performance quickly deteriorates. For example, on a typical project, engineering assurance should be pulling back just enough, and project progress reporting pulling forward just enough, to keep the project steadily moving towards its goal, while ensuring that the overall risks are being managed in the process. This is most evident when everyone can openly challenge perspectives and actions with the confidence that due consideration will be given.

4. PLAY TO THE STRENGTHS OF EACH DISCIPLINE DURING THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE LIFE CYCLE

How the different disciplines work together changes through a project life cycle. During the definition stage, both disciplines are working closely together to reach collective agreement on the overall approach for the project, to define what is required, and how they deliver, manage and govern the work as one team.

Once the project is established, the design stage is like a professional football team: everyone knows their role and how they contribute to the phase's overall success. Project managers are focused on managing stakeholder commitment, finance and

the schedule, while engineering develops a coherent solution, and both sides are collectively managing the risks of the project.

Once the design is complete, engineering determines how it can be built and integrated, and project management commissions the workstreams to deliver it. At this point, the project manager is managing the progress and delivery expectations, and is reliant on engineering for technical assurance that the workstreams are delivering the right thing and delivering it right.

During testing, engineering ensures that solutions are fit for purpose and can be integrated. Meanwhile, project management ensures that the business is ready for, and committed to, the forthcoming changes and de-risking the environment ahead of implementation.

In the final transition stage of the project, migration to a sustainable position typically requires more of a one-team approach, collectively focused on what it takes to hand over change to the business in readiness to realise the project objectives and benefits.

The more those responsible for leading major projects understand and use the strengths of each discipline, the greater will be their ability to deliver in more efficient and effective ways, and, in so doing, move from good to great delivery. Experience shows that more collaborative working between project management and engineering disciplines leads to:

- Better understanding of the problem and the real requirements, resulting in ultimately the right solution.
- More comprehensive risk-planning and mitigation activities, leading to higher confidence in the final cost and schedule.
- Better planning and progress reporting of cross-functional work, enabling more accurate assessment of the project's status and ability to respond to change.
- Greater stakeholder engagement and commitment to approach and functionality, leading to a more successful product launch. 



ANDY COOKE is an expert in the delivery of major transformation programmes at PA Consulting

Playing the long game, well

Schedule risk analysis is a useful way to manage the uncertainty associated with multi-million-pound projects, say **MARTIN GREGORY** and **ANDY ABU-BAKAR**

Picture the scene: An under-prepared and over-confident golfer steps up to the tee and blazes away recklessly, paying scant regard to the course or conditions. The ball crashes off the fairway, ending up in the rough, the bunker, or, worse still, the water. There is no option but to play out the hole and try to salvage the situation.

You do not need to be a golfer to understand the problem. In the same way, you do not need to be a project manager to recognise that setting off on a long and complex multi-million-pound scheme without a clear understanding of the way ahead or the potential outcome is a recipe for delay, overspend and project failure. The difference, of course, is that the first scenario is only likely to ruin a round, whereas the latter may well damage professional reputation and business confidence, and cost investors or the public purse.

Sadly, the track record in the UK for delivery of long-term, high-profile and complex projects is historically poor. Many schemes have conformed to what Professor Bent Flyvbjerg of Oxford University refers to as the iron law of megaprojects: "Over budget, over time, over and over again." This is mainly due to systematic underestimation of uncertainty in cost and timescale in the early stages of the project.

It does not have to be this way, though, as it is possible to rehearse even the most complex of projects to understand the range of potential outcomes and the main inhibitors to delivery. Assessing this uncertainty early can ensure that it is managed

rather than experienced, and thus greatly increase the chances of project success.

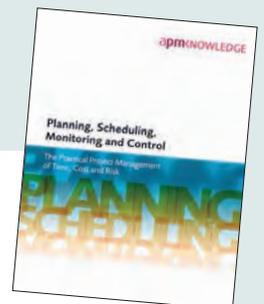
QUANTIFYING PROJECT UNCERTAINTY

A successful project is usually defined as one that satisfies the planned measures of performance, quality, time and cost – ie, it delivers the intended outputs on time and within budget.

In many cases, however, time is often the main determinant of project success. A large proportion of costs are often time-related and delay may render performance obsolete where a specific event or market introduction point is being targeted.

Understanding potential project duration and confidence in achieving a deadline is, therefore, one of the most important factors for investors, and the established technique for assessing this on large projects is schedule risk analysis (SRA). SRA can be used to quantify the effect that uncertainty and risk events may have on the project in order to estimate a duration range in which the project could be delivered. The approach also identifies the main drivers for potential delay, allows confidence-based milestones to be set and can be used to assess the effectiveness of potential mitigation activities.

There is little point conducting SRA, however, unless it is done correctly. When it is done well, it is an extremely powerful tool and can help organisations to increase



PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PROJECT PLANNING

Setting up projects properly is fundamental to success, yet research shows that best practice in this area is still lacking.

Recent findings from APM's *Conditions for Project Success* report revealed that effective planning is a critical project success factor, but only 4 per cent of respondents rated it as excellent, while 14 per cent said it was either poor or absent from their last project.

In response, APM has published a new guide entitled *Planning, Scheduling, Monitoring and Control: The Practical Project Management of*

Time, Cost and Risk, which is aimed at bridging the gap between planning theory and practice.

Written to be accessible to all levels – from students to senior project managers – the guide gives practical guidance on all planning aspects of preparing to undertake a project, executing a project, controlling its delivery to budget, time and quality, and delivering it safely.

According to the guide's authors, the APM Planning, Monitoring and Control Specific Interest Group, it is intended to be a "practical guide to best practice in planning".

Among the main topics covered are:

- **planning techniques and approaches;**
- **budgeting and cost control;**
- **scheduling practices;**
- **management of baselines; and**
- **performance reporting and record-keeping.**

There are also sections on emerging control subjects, such as agile project management. Buy the guide from apm.org.uk/publications



WHY BOTHER? THE BENEFITS OF SCHEDULE RISK ANALYSIS

INITIATION

Decisions on whether to proceed with a project are informed by an impartial view of the likelihood of success, the range of potential outcomes and the influence of key project risks.

IMPLEMENTATION

Periodical updates allow the project manager to address the causes of any forecast deviation from plan, assess the effect of emerging risks and target mitigation funds effectively.

the likelihood of selecting, and then delivering, successful projects. As with golf, practice improves performance, and SRA allows organisations to rehearse their projects and compare alternative options before committing to investment, delivery dates or subcontracts. Once in the implementation phase, SRA can be used for trend analysis, providing early warning of the need for intervention.

FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Schedule risk analysis can be described in four key steps:

- **Creating a schedule risk network;**
- **Assessing the uncertainty related to project activities;**
- **Identifying and applying risk events; and**
- **Reviewing model behaviour and producing outputs.**

While these steps are widely understood, the approach and rigour of implementing them varies wildly – with a direct impact on the validity of the results.

The temptation on large and complex projects is to develop large and complex analytical models to match, but, in reality, this complexity will often directly inhibit the value of the analysis. A simple representation of the project – which nonetheless captures all the main elements of scope and interdependencies – will be easier to develop, explain and adjust. Critically, it will also allow a focus on the quality of supporting inputs.

The principle of 'rubbish in, rubbish out' applies to all analysis techniques, and it is far more important than the issue of which of the available SRA tools is used to host the analysis. The manner in which inputs are gathered is key: care must be taken to avoid individual bias and assumptions, which may artificially constrain the analysis, and a rigorous approach to estimating is needed to ensure that the results are both valid and can be properly interpreted.

Similarly, the process of deriving a suitably high-level network from the detailed project schedule usually involves a significant amount of detective work to capture hidden logic, relationships and assumptions.

GETTING RESULTS

The way in which results are presented is critical in getting them accepted and used to help inform decisions. Early buy-in from senior stakeholders is essential to secure the level of engagement required to support the process. Meanwhile, an iterative approach to reviewing elements of the analysis can be a useful way to build understanding and confidence in the overall results.

It is the analyst's job to elicit the required quality of information to support effective SRA, challenging inputs where necessary to ensure that the results represent an accurate and unbiased assessment of the potential project duration.

The impartial and robust approach that is essential for analysis success comes through practice and experience – which makes it a key consideration for any organisation considering using SRA for the first time. 



MARTIN GREGORY (far left) is head of risk management and **ANDY ABU-BAKAR** is a risk assurance services lead at Rhead Group

The perfect brew

Robust portfolio management is achieved by blending agreed priorities and targets at a local and regional level, explains **PAUL MORGAN**

A successful company relies on sound portfolio management to provide the right information in a timely fashion to achieve the highest return on investment. This article gives you the guiding principles on how to operate a robust portfolio that works well, both locally and regionally.

IS YOUR PORTFOLIO SOUND?

First things first. On your organisation's journey from local to regional portfolio management, there are six questions you need to ask yourself to determine whether your portfolio is sound. You need to be able to measure and prove your answers, and ensure any improvements do not compromise these six areas.

1. Are you doing the right things to get to where you want to be?

Ensure that all portfolio investments are aligned to the regional business objectives. This will maintain traceability from strategy to projects. It can also lead to cross-country projects being commissioned (based on similar needs across countries), thus saving money and standardising processes or technology.

2. Is the business likely to get the desired outcomes?

Agree a common investment prioritisation methodology with your responsible management team. For example, evaluate each proposed investment based on value delivered (net present

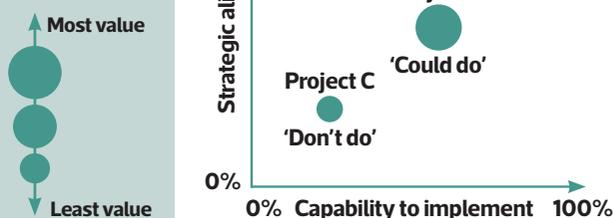
GOVERNANCE WITH AGILITY

The right organisational structure and management routines are key to operating an effective and integrated regional portfolio within an organisation. At SABMiller we use business and information systems committees to engage senior business and information systems stakeholders on a quarterly basis for joint strategic decision-making.

These committees validate the portfolio-management priorities, approve projects and make decisions on in-flight projects.

The groundwork happens in monthly forums run by the portfolio management team and country information systems managers to review the country portfolio items, both demanded and in-flight. Country-level committees approve country priorities and low-value country projects. Then one regional-level business and information systems committee validates regional priorities and approves above-threshold country projects or cross-country projects. This governance structure is underpinned by delegated levels of authority (approval rights) to reduce bureaucracy and to keep decision-making agile.

Figure 1
An example of a portfolio prioritisation matrix



value), strategic contribution (weightings) and capability to implement (deliverability). This gives an overall prioritisation score per portfolio investment and enables comparison (Figure 1).

3. Are you delivering your portfolio within the agreed tolerance levels? To provide confidence and predictability, measure performance consistently against agreed portfolio-level key performance indicators. Risks need to be managed to realise the desired portfolio outcomes.

4. Is the portfolio run cost-effectively?

Running an effective portfolio management function needs due consideration of its overall management costs. Provide the right resources – a team of staff and technology – so that, if the portfolio is to scale up or down, you can adjust appropriately.

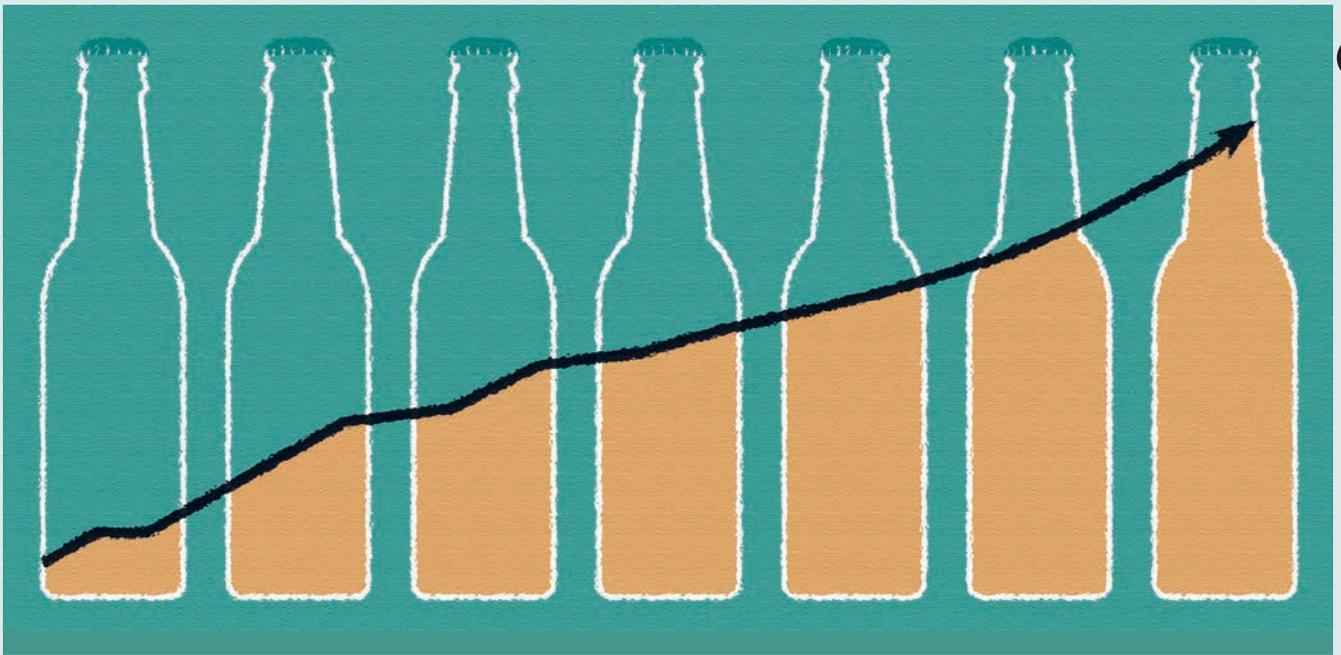
5. Is your process adhered to?

Sound portfolio management is underpinned by a flexible and simple process. This can be broken down into three stages:

- Demand.** This includes the prioritisation, as well as developing an idea into a project, culminating in an outline business case for approval.
- In-flight delivery.** Here progress is reported on projects and any exceptions managed, and there are appropriate escalations where decisions are required.
- Value realisation.** Where benefits are tracked and lessons learned are captured for continuous improvement.

6. Is your governance fit for purpose?

Having a portfolio process is fine, but you also need the right organisation structure and management routines to enable it.



WHEN BEER MEANS BUSINESS

SABMiller is the second-largest beer brewer by revenue in the world and a FTSE 20 company. Traditionally, SABMiller has operated as a federated set of successful businesses.

Over the last five years it has been on a rapid globalisation path, standardising business functions in order to benefit from economies of scale, particularly in its information systems function. Critical success factors have been:

- **Regional leadership buy-in and ongoing support to establish robust**

- **portfolio management foundations – efficient and effective process and governance – as a way to execute the SABMiller group’s regional business strategy.**

- **Country information systems managers now report into the regional chief information officer, rather than their local finance directors, and are set regional goals rather than in-country targets.**

- **The information systems function increased in size during an intermediate phase to achieve the right standardisation and coordination across the region first, before reducing to an optimal size, enabled by matrix reporting lines. So now the function sits next to the voice of the business within the countries, working as one virtual integrated team across the region.**

IS YOUR PORTFOLIO ROBUST?

So, you know the elements that will make up a sound portfolio management function. But ticking the above boxes alone will not suffice. Chaos is part of running portfolios and, to run a robust portfolio that stands both locally and regionally, you and your team are key to setting the rhythm in this grand symphony.

To transition from local to regional portfolio management effectively, I urge you to do something counter-intuitive. My guiding principles on how to avoid a cacophony in a multicultural portfolio management context are as follows:

1. Instead of telling them, listen

Get to know your customers and colleagues intimately. Understand what drives them and listen to them carefully. This will help you to make important calls on investing your team’s time and resources to deliver the highest value for the business.

I love beer and I enjoy drinking it with the people who make it. I use this social time to engage with the people behind the brands we manage and consider this a serious part of my job.

2. Instead of just being strategic, get into the detail as well

I spend around 50 per cent of my time getting into the nitty-gritty of our portfolio. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the individual investments and teams behind my portfolio items enables me to plan, and support them as necessary throughout their life cycle. For my immediate team, this means I can empower them to rise up to their responsibilities, but I can also keep in touch with the effort required for them to deliver against local and regional expectations.

3. Instead of entitling countries, get them innovating to compete

I see portfolio management as a delicate justice system. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle described justice as this: unequal for unequals; equal for equals.

Our two biggest markets contribute more than 50 per cent to our profit regionally – they are able to get their projects approved with good business cases, but they don’t get a fixed entitlement based on their value to the region. This helps to keep them efficient and fit, meaning that other countries can get their projects approved.

Big countries don’t always get their way. As a portfolio management function, we mediate the investment of competitive and innovative ideas for our company’s growth.

To me, the ‘art of portfolio management’ is to engage, to understand and to respect human nature. □



PAUL MORGAN is head of demand and portfolio management, Europe information systems at SABMiller

Jargon buster

Don't get caught out by commitment accounting,
 warns **BRIAN WERNHAM**

Here begins a true story. "What did you say?" screams the CFO. "We entered into a five-year contract for software maintenance, even though the project is now cancelled?"

The project manager protests: "Well, we have raised a delivery order every time we've paid the monthly licence costs so far."

"But your project was never authorised to commit to operational expenditure for future years," fumes the CFO.

What is it?

Commitment accounting is an accounting convention

to ensure that future project expenditure to which an organisation has committed is recorded, within budget, and is also transparent to top management.

Why bother?

Modern framework contracts can often include commitments to spend minimum sums of money. So, in these cases, having a 'commitment to spend' should be accrued for future months on the project accounts bought ledgers, even if a purchase order has yet to be raised.

How to do it?

Ensure that your project budget tracking includes amounts that are committed to under all framework contracts and purchase orders – even if the goods or services are not yet delivered.

Watch out...

As soon as your project board approves expenditure and requisitions are signed off, then a record of the financial commitment needs to be made.

Be careful to take into account contingent supply termination clauses that you

may not invoke, but that leave you exposed. Your CFO will look carefully at discounts and special offers, or quotations that are contingent on further related orders. Remember, don't sweep committed future expenditure under the carpet – future expenditure must be accounted for when a project contract (implied or explicit) has been signed. **■**

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

NEC3 AND COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT

Why project professionals need the skills to develop business objectives

Sound commercial management skills should be a crucial component of any project professional's toolkit. These are the skills that project professionals need to ensure that their projects achieve business objectives and are delivered using a smooth, collaborative framework, on time and to budget.

Key to commercial management is the use of a contract framework, such as the NEC3 suite of contracts. Within an NEC3 framework, the role of the commercial manager is to maintain a commercial plan that includes managing contracts and finances,

identifying and managing risk, and resolving disputes.

Furthermore, a solid commercial management plan is essential in order to provide a robust governance framework and associated assurance that commercial aspects of the NEC3 Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC) are managed correctly.

As Dr David Hancock, head of construction at the Cabinet Office, recently told the NEC Users' Group Seminar with regard to the UK Construction 2025 strategy: "Poor contracts will inevitably lead to poor outcomes." He added: "Once the contract is in place,

behavioural competencies are at the forefront of many successful projects, promoting collaboration at all levels of the supply chain."

Education and the ECC

Recognising that many project professionals would benefit from training in how to use the ECC, NEC3 has launched a one-day training programme that focuses specifically on the commercial elements of an ECC project.

Importantly, the course is designed to equip delegates with the skills necessary to be able to professionally manage commercial contracts and relationships using the ECC.

Delegates will come away with an understanding of how to develop a commercial management plan in practice.

Commenting on the course, Rekha Thawrani, general manager for NEC, said: "NEC3 is used globally to successfully deliver some of today's most renowned infrastructure projects and the use of NEC continues to rise. Therefore, it's vital to ensure that the people responsible for seeing through the contract have the support and training they need."

To find out more about the course, see: www.neccontract.com/commercialmanagement

“ We would like to grow the capabilities of our project managers to take on more responsibility and deliver better projects. How do you suggest we best do that? ”

SUSANNE'S ANSWER

I'm pleased that you want to develop your project managers as we often expect them to excel without giving them the support they need. As a first step, we need to consider what your project managers are really good at and what they are not so good at – and which symptoms you are experiencing. Are your projects delivered late, for instance, are they over budget or do your projects not add sufficient value to the organisation and the end customer?

Second, we need to identify the root cause of these symptoms. Projects often run into difficulties because of unclear scope and objectives, lack of business focus, poor estimation, inadequate risk management and lack of engagement from key players, including the project sponsor and senior decision makers.

Tellingly, APM's *Conditions for Project Success* report shows that, despite sponsors being a top driver of project success, fewer than one in 10 respondents rated sponsors in their most recent completed project as 'excellent'. Research also shows that more than 80 per cent of high-performing organisations believe that the most important skill required by project managers for managing complex projects is leadership. Mastering project management processes is necessary, but insufficient, when it comes to delivering successful projects.

Are your project management issues related to a lack of tools, techniques and processes, or are they concerned with poor leadership (by the project manager or sponsor) and insufficient influencing, engagement and stakeholder management skills?

Depending on your answers, you will need to invest in a programme that addresses several of



SUSANNE MADSEN is an internationally recognised project leadership coach, trainer and consultant. She is the author of *The Project Management Coaching Workbook* and *The Power of Project Leadership*. For more information, see www.susannemadsen.com



the above aspects. Traditional classroom training is good for conventional project management disciplines such as planning, estimation and risk management, but less efficient when it comes to people skills and leadership.

If a project manager is to become better at leading people, overcoming resistance to change, motivating the team and influencing stakeholders, you must work with deeply rooted behaviours. This is best done with small action-learning groups and one-to-one coaching.

You may also need to train senior management as part of the programme, as project sponsors need to understand the importance of their roles and what good sponsorship looks like.

My overall answer to your question is, therefore, to design a development programme for your project managers and sponsors that contains the following elements:

Classroom training to improve your project managers' competence around defining, scoping, planning, estimating, tracking and managing the risks of projects. Remember that the techniques used must be practical and user-friendly if you want people to adopt them.

Small group and one-to-one coaching to improve your project managers' people skills and leadership behaviours.

Sponsor workshop to improve senior management's understanding of what it means to be a sponsor and how they can best contribute to successful project delivery.

Ongoing mentoring for continued support from inside the organisation.

When you are able to implement this powerful development programme, you will find that your project managers' abilities to lead successful projects increase – not least with the support and buy-in from senior decision makers. ■

MASTERING PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES IS NECESSARY, BUT INSUFFICIENT, WHEN IT COMES TO DELIVERING SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

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

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PROJECT the voice of the project management community

Tech watch

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



Workfront

This cloud-based tool makes the processes of project management easier at every stage, from conception to completion.

OVERVIEW

Workfront is a tool that helps to simplify project and portfolio management. Whether you're a senior manager or a junior team member, it aids collaboration in projects of all sorts.

The messenger system cuts out the need for pointless meetings, emails, phone calls and catch-ups. Meanwhile, Workfront centralises projects by logically ordering and arranging information in a single space. As well as getting rid of piles of paperwork, this gives project managers the time to get on with tasks such as planning a new project, budgeting, assigning tasks and identifying problems, all of which can be logged and troubleshoot using Workfront. Since the software stores data relating to projects in the cloud, it can be used without fear of data breaches or security threats.

USER REVIEW

"At The Great Run Company, we organise mass-participation sporting events. Workfront has been particularly helpful for IT development projects, such as when we introduced a new mobile app. The templates, in particular, have been a great resource. With annual events, around

80 per cent of the organisational tasks are repeated year on year, so it's useful for us to return to a standard template."

EMMA ELLISON is group planning manager at The Great Run Company

USER REVIEW

"Workfront has been vital in helping us to manage the high volume of work in our project pipeline. As it is cloud-hosted, it offers the potential to easily collaborate across different time zones and locations.

"Before we started using it, most of our work was done using spreadsheets, which

Workfront has been vital in helping us to manage the high volume of work in our project pipeline. As it is cloud-hosted, it offers the potential to easily collaborate across different time zones and locations

created a huge amount of paperwork – and more than a little confusion. Fortunately, implementing the software was relatively straightforward and we have a team of about 250 people using it now.

"The portfolio optimisation aspect of the software will be increasingly useful for us since it allows a business to prioritise projects based on factors such as return on investment, risk and budget."

PHILIP STRAW is IT portfolio manager at Interserve



USER REVIEW

"We have 50 to 60 projects running at any one time and Workfront has enabled us to marshal our resources effectively. Before we installed the software, it was difficult to work out who was working on what at any one time and at over-capacity or under-capacity. Workfront has changed all that – it's joined up our workflow.

"The only problems that we have had have been with the planning and reporting functions. It probably isn't as comprehensive a tool as some others, particularly when it comes to organising schedule information and compiling Gantt charts, for example."

STEVE PRIOR is PMO lead at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

USER REVIEW

"After introducing Workfront in 2012, FirstGroup is now using it to run projects from the beginning right through to the end. It's proved a huge help when it comes to planning, assessing risks, managing documents and compiling reports.

"Part of the major appeal for us is how easy and intuitive it is to use. It has the look and feel of social media, meaning our users were able to get to grips with it almost immediately."

LIAM GENT is UK rail information systems programme manager at FirstGroup

Advance of the androids

Smaller, more flexible robots designed to interact with humans in the workplace are changing the way that automation projects are managed, says **PAUL GOLDEN**

▷ **Automation affects an increasingly wide range of activities, from automated warehouses through to self-driving vehicles.**

A good example is the British Library's National Newspaper Building in Yorkshire. This purpose-built facility houses more than 60 million newspapers. The newspapers are stored in high-density racking 20m high and retrieved by robotic cranes, which transfer them via an airlock to a retrieval area, enabling the storage environment to be strictly controlled.

A report published by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in February predicted that investment in industrial robots would accelerate over the next decade, with annual growth rates rising from 2-3 per cent today to around 10 per cent by 2025.

Meanwhile, almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of respondents to a BCG survey of US-based manufacturing executives at companies with sales of least \$1bn said that their companies would invest in additional automation or other advanced manufacturing technologies over the next five years.

Heavy duty

Robots have become a familiar sight in car-manufacturing facilities since General Motors installed a robotic arm to assist in the assembly line in the early 1960s. These very large, multifunctional machines are used to perform the functions that could possibly put a person in harm's way and often involve tasks such as moving heavy materials and spot welding.

As a result, robots are becoming extremely important to ensure the safety

of workers on production lines and in fabricating cells, explains Ola Svanström, global product manager for large robots at industrial robot supplier ABB Robotics.

Meanwhile, advances in vision sensors, gripping systems and information technology are driving improvement in price and performance, making robots smarter, highly networked and capable of being used for a wider range of applications.

▷
 Using robots in conjunction with human workers, or collaborative robotics, is perhaps the most exciting recent development in the field of automation

Modern industrial production often means full automation, with humans primarily involved in the planning and maintenance of the machines but not in the actual production process. According to industrial robotics manufacturers such as KUKA, a variable degree of automation – where some of the tasks are performed by flexible industrial robots and others by humans – is a sensible approach.

Using robots in conjunction with human workers, or collaborative robotics, is perhaps the most exciting recent development in the field of automation. These robots are designed to be easier to programme and manage, making it possible for humans to 'grab their arm' and show them how to fulfil a task. This enables workers to concentrate on more cognitive tasks rather than the dull, dirty and dangerous jobs so often associated with manufacturing and assembly.

Collaborative robotics has effectively created two types of automation – 'hard' and 'soft'. Hard automation is typically found in car-manufacturing facilities, where the early stages of production are fully automated. When vehicles move up the production line, for example, to where the interiors are fitted, the process becomes entirely manual.

Implications for projects

Soft automation refers to a third stage, where robots and humans work in close proximity, says Yassine Serhrouchni, project director for robotics components and services at sensor manufacturer HumaRobotics. "For the past 20 years, there has been discussion of how to deploy robots and people in the same environment. Collaborative robotics makes it possible for people to work in the same space as robots and it is predicted that within a few years they will be routinely working on the same task at the same time."

This has obvious implications for project management, he continues: "There are a number of individuals involved in the implementation of robotics solutions, from



GETTY

HELP OR HAZARD?

A report published by the European Commission in February revealed that universities are finding it hard to keep up with the pace of change in robotics, which has led to companies taking on teaching to fill the skills gap.

It is recommended that academia-industry cooperation could be extended to the skills domain and that robotics companies and research institutions could form partnerships.

"We see companies struggling to find individuals with the necessary skills to programme and operate robots," says Robotic Industries Association communications director Bob Doyle.

Risk management is also an issue in terms of how mistakes are handled. "Robots are definitely a technology risk, primarily because many project managers don't have much experience with the technology," says Melonee Wise, CEO of Fetch Robotics. "That is why we demonstrate the technology and provide them with a better understanding of what is 'easy' or 'hard' for the robot to do."

The risk management challenges presented by the use of robots are constantly changing, adds Robert Ussher at Hanley Automation. "We used to have a machinery directive that dictated the removal of all energy sources from a machine in the event of a safety trigger. Now, thankfully, common sense has taught us to maintain energy sources but use them to bring everything to a full stop as quickly as possible.

"As always, whenever any automated machinery is used, a full risk assessment will identify specific challenges."

the people who design the technology and manufacture the hardware to the technicians who integrate the systems into the workplace.

"In the hard automation environment, the role of the project manager has changed little since the early implementations, but deploying robots to work alongside people requires a more agile environment and project managers need to develop new skills to effectively manage this workplace."

The relatively low cost of collaborative robots makes automation technology accessible to small and medium-sized businesses, thus generating additional demand for project professionals according

to Stijn Muller, coordinator at robot-planning company AMS Robotics. He describes robotics project planning as a considerable challenge, however.

"It really is creating a different way of managing projects," adds Serhrouchni. "Project managers will be less inspired by 'traditional' mechatronics methods and skills, which are usually heavy and long processes, and will rely more on the skills of software development to be adaptable as product lifecycles continue to shorten."

Most of the experts interviewed for this article doubted that robots could ever replace human project professionals, although Grant Collier from the British Automation and Robot Association suggests that advances in artificial intelligence could impact the role in the long term and should be managed carefully.

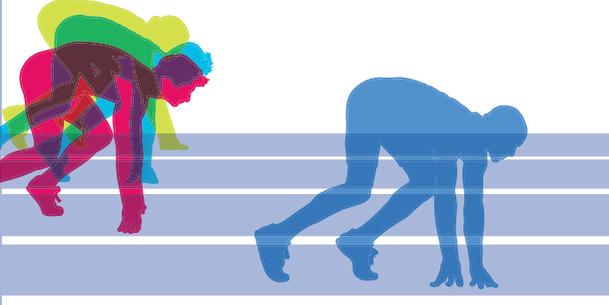
Serhrouchni feels that project professionals are rising to the challenge. "Recent developments in robotics and automation have been described in some quarters as a new industrial revolution," he says. "While it is a little early to say if this is the case, it is also true that those involved at the start of a technological revolution are rarely aware of it."

▶
Deploying robots to work alongside people requires a more agile environment and project managers need to develop new skills to effectively manage this workplace

PAUL GOLDEN is a freelance business journalist

MANAGEMENT

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Career clinic

Project managers should take the opportunity to measure their competency against a clear benchmark, says **VINCE HINES**



Naturally, you want to develop your career.

So it makes sense that you should be interested in developing your project management knowledge and experience. And, if we combine these together, we can talk about competency.

As part of developing your career, you would ideally measure your competency. Having the ability to measure your competency against a benchmark is great, but it is not an option for most people in many professions. Fortunately, however, this option is very much open to you.

The new APM Competence Framework, launched in June 2015, allows you to do just this. It describes APM's new view of the competencies necessary to be effective in project, programme, portfolio management and PMO roles in today's environment. It has been created by professionals for professionals and it provides a common reference for all

individuals and organisations engaged in project activities – regardless of their size, sector or geographic location.

So how does it work? There are 27 competencies that make up the full framework. Review each competency and score yourself (be honest!) on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'aware' and 5 is 'expert'.

You are likely to score low on some competencies. This is fine. You don't need to be an expert in everything. APM has defined a series of 14 role profiles that are available to all corporate members. For example, a project manager (intermediate) should achieve a score of 'proficient' in conflict management, but only needs to score 'aware' for asset allocation.

APM has provided a handy self-assessment form on which you can record your scores; you can even ask your manager to complete a scoring as well. It's important to be honest and recognise

that you will have gaps in your knowledge and application, but that's the point. Knowing your areas of weakness, assuming they are relevant to your role, gives you a clear focus for improvement.

So, the key to developing your career is developing your competency. To develop your competency, you need to benchmark. Visit apm.org.uk/competence-framework and get the ball rolling.

For more on APM's Competence Framework, see page 48.



VINCE HINES

is managing director of Wellington Project Management, the APM career development partner

Appointments

Atkins appoints Bradley



Engineering and project management consultancy Atkins has appointed

Catherine Bradley as a non-executive director. Bradley has 30 years' experience as an investment banker, advising corporates and other clients in the US, Europe and Asia for banks such as Merrill Lynch, BNP Paribas, Credit Suisse

and Société Générale. In 2014, she was appointed as a non-executive member of the board of the Financial Conduct Authority, the UK financial regulator.

Allan Cook, Atkins' chairman, said: "Catherine's international experience in assisting companies to achieve their strategic objectives will be a great asset to Atkins as we continue to develop our business internationally."

Clutch Group recruits Doolan



Legal services firm Clutch Group has recruited James Doolan as associate vice president and head of consulting. Doolan joins Clutch from the Royal Bank of Scotland, where he held a number of roles, including, most recently, head of portfolio analytics, corporate banking. At Clutch, Doolan will be responsible for designing and implementing enterprise-wide risk and consultancy services for clients.

"As a former client, I witnessed Clutch's focus on, and passion for, helping clients put their risk management front and centre through data and analytics," said Doolan. "I'm looking forward to harnessing my experience in risk, asset and portfolio management, and analytics to further drive Clutch's growth and the success of its clients."

Moorhouse hires Edmonds and Hebb

Business consultancy firm Moorhouse has appointed Frances Edmonds and Andrew Hebb as non-executive directors. Edmonds is an author of best-selling books on subjects including sport, politics and marketing, as well as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Hebb has a history of working in consultancy at the highest level, having previously been employed by KPMG and PwC. Richard Goold, partner at Moorhouse, said: "Frances' and Andrew's experience will be invaluable as we grow the firm in a way that builds capability and capacity to support our clients with their most strategic challenges."

Adams joins CPC



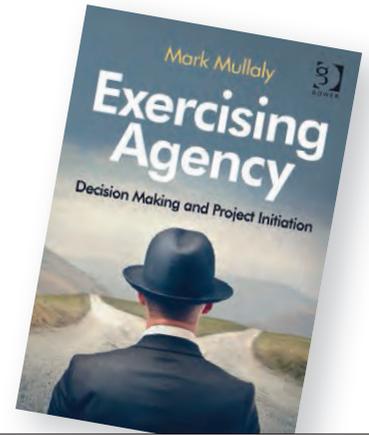
Duncan Adams has joined project management consultancy CPC Project Services as a partner in its property and construction division. He is a former board director at refit company ISG Europe and a board

member of the British Council for Offices.

Tim Barber, CPC founding partner, said: "He will play a major part in growing our property and construction team, developing long-term relationships and broadening our client base with investors and developers."

Bookshelf

Which books should be top of your reading list this autumn? *Project* readers find out



MEET THE PANEL



John Murphy is principal consultant at Chaucer Consulting and has headed up several projects for the Crown Estate



Sheilina Somani is a senior project manager based in London, running several global IT projects



Dr Martin Graham is a project management practitioner and postgraduate lecturer



Dr Edward Wallington is a committee member of the APM Programme Management Specific Interest Group



Ommara Hussain is an experienced project manager who has worked with British Gas and Legal & General

EXERCISING AGENCY

Author: Mark Mullaly
ISBN: 978-1-472-42788-5
Price: £65
Publisher: Gower
★ ★

DIDN'T PROVIDE ANY INNOVATIVE OR NOVEL IDEAS

This book seeks to show how individuals can use 'agency' (the ability to influence others to achieve their objectives) in order to help organisations make better decisions when initiating projects in the event that formal processes or rules are not in place. The data comes from a study done by the author in how effective decision-making is.

The study found that the three main themes in the decision-making arena are: process formality; the political environment; and the participant's ability to influence outcomes (using principles of agency).

Value was evident in the identification and importance of a 'project shaper' role. The study found that organisations generally benefited from such a role, even if it was implicit rather than explicit. It's recommended that the role be formalised to gain the greatest value from it, especially in environments where political influences are widely used in decision-making. The project shaper can use agency to support and reinforce the decision-making process, especially where explicit rules are absent.

Personally, I didn't feel that the study provided any innovative or novel ideas in the topic area as many of the findings are generally understood variations in how organisations operate.

For those starting out in a project environment and attending a tailored course, the information contained in this book would be of use.

Reviewed by John Murphy

CULTURE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Author: Omar Zein
ISBN: 978-1-4724-1382-6
Price: £70
Publisher: Gower
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Omar Zein provides a well-constructed approach to culture and uncovers some of the key dimensions that we all need to understand in the complex world of working with other people. While focused on the project context, his accessible writing style makes the content useful for everyone, including those studying across any discipline.

It is a refreshing read that combines established theory with anecdotal reference to the impact of childhood, education, location, organisation, home and religious influences on the shape of cultural preferences.

DEFINES AND ARTICULATES CULTURAL ASPECTS FROM A PRAGMATIC AND EMBRACING PERSPECTIVE

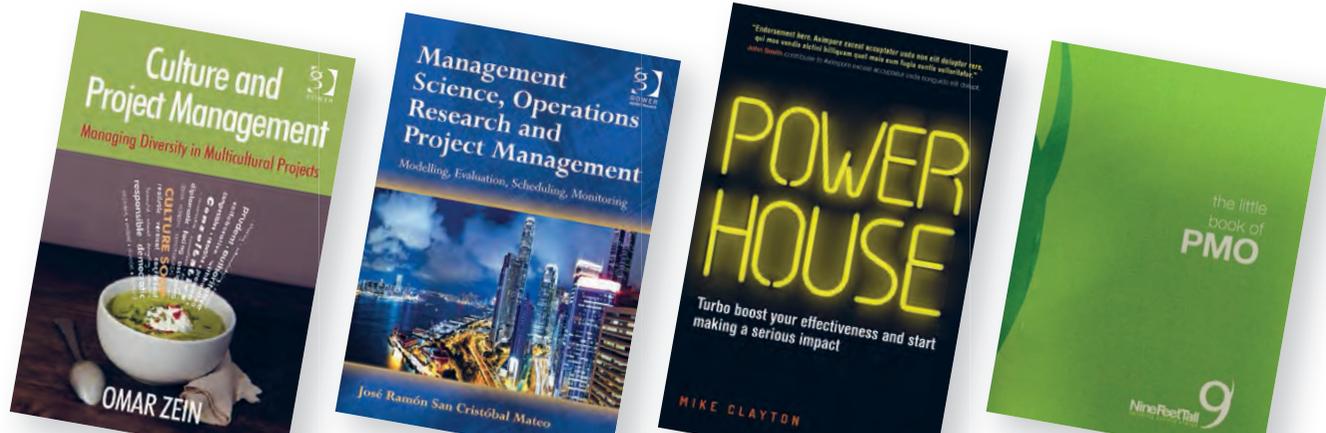
Zein also takes an interesting approach by providing an 'afterword', which restates his position and perspective.

Often books on culture are overly academic, whereas this publication enables each reader to gain knowledge and ideas on recognising, responding and applying that awareness. This is probably one of the most accessible and practical books available, which defines and articulates cultural aspects from a pragmatic and embracing perspective.

Of particular use to project managers is the chapter 'Gantt, What Gantt?', which provides amusing, yet insightful, commentary on planning and tracking projects, with content relating to motivation, quality and process.

Reviewed by Sheilina Somani

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW A BOOK FOR *PROJECT*, PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR
editor@projectmagazine.co.uk



MANAGEMENT SCIENCE, OPERATIONS RESEARCH AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Author: José Ramón San Cristóbal Mateo
ISBN: 978-1-4724-2643-7
Price: £70
Publisher: Gower
 ★★★★★

THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED AND PRESENTED IN A READABLE STYLE

The declared aim of this book is to provide project managers with the tools and methods necessary to make sound decisions in the complex environments that they face today. It certainly does do all of that, and more, and it supports that aim with numerous examples of the tools that it provides.

Project management, the author says, is an academic discipline discussed in both management science and operations research circles. Whereas the former tends to focus on quantitative tools and soft skills, the latter's focus is on the development of models and algorithms. This book seems to have a foot in each camp, but is it necessary?

Notwithstanding, it is very academic in nature. Its contents include data envelopment, decision-making, forecasting, Markov, network and simulation models, as well as game theory and dynamic programming. Each subject area is introduced gently before being explained in detail, but it is pretty much all about the underlying theory.

This does all lead to the conclusion that the book will be primarily of interest to postgraduate students and other academics. It is, however, thoroughly researched and presented in a readable style. As such, it is also recommended, as a book of more general interest, to a wide range of practising project managers.

Reviewed by Dr Martin Graham

POWER HOUSE – TURBO BOOST YOUR EFFECTIVENESS AND START MAKING A SERIOUS IMPACT

Author: Mike Clayton
ISBN: 978-0-857-08556-6 (Paperback)
Price: £12.99
Publisher: Capstone
 ★★★★★

The book covers a range of topics including judgement, leadership, perception, productivity, relationships, resilience and self-control to achieve effectiveness.

It includes a lot of common-sense approaches to time management and productivity, which we all are probably aware of, but are unlikely to be effective at implementing. Providing a series of simple tools, it is in an easy-to-read and digestible format, and, therefore, readily accessible to implement. I managed to read the book in a couple of evenings, and look forward to revisiting sections to refresh myself periodically.

THE BOOK HAS JOGGED ME TO RE-APPRAISE MY APPROACH TO WORK

My only, and probably personal, gripe is that there are mentions throughout the book to studies or other books, but no references provided. It would be useful for readers interested in finding out more detail of techniques or studies to have the references to hand.

This does not detract from the book, however, as a quick internet search will provide the references.

The book has already benefited me by jogging me to re-appraise my approach to work, and making small tweaks to how I operate. So, I feel the small number of hours spent reading have paid off.

There are lots of books on similar topics, but many of these get quite detailed and are lengthy. This book is easy to access and a worthwhile read.

Reviewed by Dr Edward Wallington

THE LITTLE BOOK OF PMO

Author: NineFeetTall
ISBN: N/A
Price: Free (see ninefeettall.com/survey/little-book-of-pmo)
Publisher: NineFeetTall
 ★★★★★

CLEARLY AND CONCISELY WRITTEN, THE BOOK ALLOWS THE USER TO QUICKLY UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF A PMO, AS WELL AS HOW TO SET IT UP

This little book focuses on how project management offices (PMOs) are an integral part of a modern organisation regardless of size and market, and how they drive businesses towards success.

The different types of PMOs are highlighted, including the portfolio programme and project office. The book also explores the issue of where the PMO should ideally feature in the organisation's hierarchy.

The book examines how there can be resistance to the establishment of a PMO, which is why it is important to ensure senior management buy-in at each stage, and to communicate the purpose and benefits of the PMO.

Clearly and concisely written, the book allows the user to quickly understand the nature of a PMO, as well as how to set it up, the key stakeholders who need to buy into it, and how it can add value to an organisation. As this is a pocket book, I believe it covers the topic in the best possible detail. Individuals learn in different ways, however, so case studies and in-depth examples might better suit some readers' learning styles.

This is a good go-to guide for when project managers are busy and adhering to tight schedules – which is the nature of most of our work.

Reviewed by Ommara Hussain

Hero or zero

If we want to create a world ‘where every project succeeds’, we need to address mindset and culture rather than just skills, techniques and governance, says **EDDIE OBENG**



PROFESSOR EDDIE OBENG is an educator, TED speaker and author of nine books including *All Change! The Project Leader's Secret Handbook*, published by Financial Times. He runs open enrolment events monthly for forward thinkers to share ideas. For more information, go to http://Pentacle.co.uk/QUBE_IM_2015.htm Follow him on Twitter @EddieObeng or read his blog <http://ImagineAFish.com>

It's been a smooth month and you did a great job.

You started green and ended green. The end users didn't complain about changes because you engaged them ages ago and no one so much as contemplated dragging you in front of the steering group.

As you walk down the corridor, feeling rather triumphant, you see the chief operating officer coming towards you. You're not expecting thanks – that would be too much in this company culture – but at least you should get a nod and a smile.

Ten feet away, you look up for eye contact and smile. Two feet away, you start to feel worried. And then it happens: you've been blanked.

At home, your other half notices that you're not your usual self. Having denied that anything is wrong about half a dozen times, you finally open up and the emotions spill out. You've done everything right – caused no worries. There were no unpleasant surprises and you achieved full buy-in. Your faultless list of project excellence is almost endless. It was the ultimate zero-defect, perfect project!

Your other half looks at you with a puzzled expression, then gently suggests: “Well, you probably made it look too easy, so no one recognises how hard it was and what a great job you've done.”

You feel like you've been slapped. Your brain reels. They can't be that stupid. And then slowly it dawns on you. No crises = no senior stakeholder mindshare. No mindshare = project not important.

Well, you're starting your next project on Thursday so this time you'll have a plan.

You'll succeed again, but this time you'll be a hero. When anything goes wrong, you'll make sure that everyone knows about it and then you'll work noisily, making sure that everyone knows that you fixed it.

You're not unethical. You won't start the fires yourself but you'll let them get big enough to notice and then fetch the fire extinguisher. The thought makes you feel guilty; you're not a gangster, you want to do the right things and not manipulate the situation for your own ends. If only there was a way to demonstrate to everyone that the work you had

IF ONLY THERE WAS A WAY TO DEMONSTRATE TO EVERYONE THAT THE WORK YOU HAD DONE HAD PREVENTED ISSUES WELL IN ADVANCE

done had prevented issues well in advance. You don't want another metric or someone else to control you – what you need is a ‘grown-up’ self-assessment where you could monitor and record your own effectiveness, patting yourself on the back when you ‘preliminated’ things going wrong.

So, at the end, you could provide evidence of all the work you had done to eliminate problems that never arose. You would be a hero even though zero had gone wrong. What you would need is the equivalent of one of those envelopes that magicians always tape to the bottom of the chair at the start of the trick. So that they can open it at the end of the trick and say: “Before I asked you to choose a random bank note, I wrote the number I predicted and sealed it in this envelope, and now I can reveal...”

Who are the real project heroes? Do our cultures encourage action after the event or wisdom before it? How should we educate our senior stakeholders so that they can encourage pre-elimination (elimination of risk before the problem) and calm competence over frenetic post-event management?

That is the big question facing the project management community today. 

ACHIEVING PROJECT PERFECTION

Do you want a challenge? Pentacle's global project management challenge will pitch teams against project managers from around the world in the Perfect Projects game. To find out more, go to: <http://PentacleTheVBS.com/ProjectChallenge.htm>



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