



**Project
Management
Institute®**
Sydney, Australia

The Critical Path

May 2022



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Editor's Note

Himadri Chowdhury

Misty mornings, shorter days, and the deciduous trees around my neighbourhood turning picture-perfect yellow and red, all indicators to a nice and crisp winter. Although, going by the latest Bureau of Meteorology climate outlook released on 12 May, the June to August rainfall and maximum temperatures are very likely to be above median for much of mainland Australia, including most parts of New South Wales. Overall, it looks like more spells of rain in the coming months, and fewer cool blue skies.



The temperatures have also remained high around the country in the past few weeks for a different reason altogether.

The long election campaign is drawing to a close and is getting messier every day with personal attacks, message leaks, leader gaffes, and general running down of each other's policies. There are piles of election promises and extensive dissection of previous decisions, and some very genuine issues for voters to consider.

From the first Federal election held in 1901 to the last one in 2019, Australia has come a long way in representative democracy. As always, the government we get depends on the people we choose to represent us after thoroughly reviewing their policies and what values these policies hold. So, let's go ahead and exercise our right to vote, if we haven't done it yet.

The end of April, beginning of May was interesting for some of us PMI Australia Chapter Leaders as we got a chance to participate in a training conducted by the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) in Brisbane for Non-for-Profit (NFP) Directors. This not only gave some of the new Directors a better perspective of running a NFP Board, but also a chance to meet the PMI's Global Board of Directors and Executives, who were meeting in Brisbane at the same time. The entire event was well-organised by the PMI Queensland Chapter in collaboration with PMI Singapore staff.

The PMI Global Virtual Leadership Institute Meeting 2022 (LIM) was also held this month on May 14 and saw a huge turnout of Chapter Leaders and volunteers. It was great to hear the PMI Board Members and Executive Leadership talk about the challenges, changes and go-forward plans for the organisation. Apart from the keynotes and strategy sessions, there were very interesting tracks in the breakout sessions. If you had registered but could not join, you can still view the recordings on the PMI LIM [microsite](#). Give it a go.

In this issue of The Critical Path, highly-experienced leadership consultant Patricia Hill talks about Leadership and how the change begins with you. An interesting article by Malong Dong discusses the impact of rate hikes on projects. Leo Coco is back with a highly relevant topic for today, how to reduce stress at work by changing our approach; and Ibrahim Dani focusses on Joy this month, particularly the Art of Living with Joy.

We also have a new column starting this month, ProjectizeMe, where veteran educator Dr Louis Taborda talks about the crossover of project management and academia citing real-life examples. There is also news from the Chapter and the PMI community and an invitation to participate in our photography contest.

We would love for you to contribute to the future issues of our newsletter. Please connect with us at newsletter@pmisidney.org or marketing@pmisidney.org.

Best,
Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury
Editor, The Critical Path

Leadership and Me

Patricia Hill

“Become an effective leader in our 6 week program, leadership 5 step program, become a great leader 4 hour program.....”

If it were that easy, we would be surrounded by great leadership and all be great leaders ourselves. I am all for learning and development in all its forms, but sometimes when I hear that ‘quick fix’ approach, I’m wondering if people are disappointed and feel less, when the outcomes are not achieved.

Working in the leadership field for over twenty years, I believe leadership is complex. It is less about having the ‘5 magic secrets to success’, and more about understanding ourselves and those around us. Knowing how to leverage that knowledge to make work a place where we all thrive and support each other. Reminding ourselves that we are not defined by our job but rather, whether we inspire others to be part of a team that values each other as much as the results we, as a team, produce.

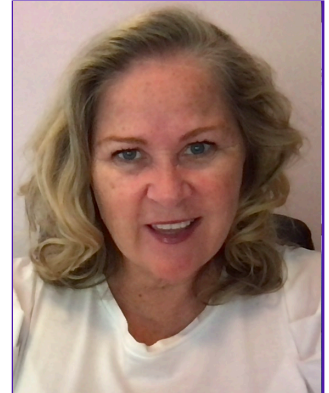
People often question the difference between management and leadership and there are many versions of this. I’ve always liked the view that management is about managing day to day operations and leading is about leading and inspiring people.

From a Project Management perspective this is interesting, as the focus is often the management of the project life cycle. However what we really understand that to mean is leading people to deliver the business outcome and vision.

Leadership is multi-dimensional. In part, it is about me as an individual, how I lead myself. Then it is how I lead and inspire others. Then we need to create and lead a culture where people thrive. So it’s not just what I do, but who I am. My personal strengths and vulnerabilities, the unique characteristics of the specific group of people I am currently leading and of course the culture of the organisation I am working with.

If we think about all the ways people can be different, have competing priorities and pressures, it is the complex interplay of all these factors which can challenge us in a leadership role.

And we need to give ourselves grace, that leadership is not easy. Nor expect ourselves to get it right every time.



With a focus on positive psychology practices, [Patricia Hill](#) works with leaders to enhance performance at individual, group and organisational levels and is committed to sustainable transformation.

Her expertise is in the areas of leadership, creating and leading culture, coaching and program design and delivery.

But this is absolutely what I believe and have witnessed over and over and over. That when individuals lead with good intention, kindness and wisdom to understand these complexities, we are more likely to see effective leadership, than not.

I believe that when we change the lens with which we look at leadership, we change our reality of what great leadership is.

Leading myself

Here is the good news...we don't have to be anyone but ourselves!

But who is that person? Do I know what is important to me? As Simon Sinek asks, do I know 'my why', my purpose? Do I understand my strengths and vulnerabilities? Am I kind and do I lead with good intentions, believing that if I provide the right environment and support, we are more likely to bring out the best in each other?

There is much being written and talked about this and it is valuable. As leaders we need to understand that if we are to lead then we must know what that means for ourselves. All the obvious things, getting enough rest, exercise, making time for family and friends, and for ourselves.

And the less obvious and often less discussed, finding time for the things that bring us joy, contentment and personal growth. That when I wake up and look in the mirror, I like that person, I am proud of them and here is an interesting question..... would I be keen to follow that person?

What about when things are not going well? Who is that person? How do I lead myself then and help myself out of those tougher times?

As with many of us, I am inspired by the leadership of the late, great Nelson Mandela. His ability to lead himself, so he could lead and inspire others, to then lead a nation and change the world.

For ten years he sat in prison under the most horrific of circumstances telling himself he would never see freedom, never get out.

Then one day he asked himself...'what if I could get out of here?' Once he asked himself that question, he changed his belief and his actions changed. It then became, 'how can I get out of here?' He started writing letters, communicating with the US government, educating people on apartheid....and people were inspired.

Once people were inspired, he realised the country would need leadership and then he asked himself the most fundamental of self leadership questions 'who would I have to be to lead this nation?'

Here was a great leader who truly understood he needed to lead himself before he could lead his country.

Leading individuals and teams

Effective leaders understand that everyone is unique and that the value of these differences add, not detract from the team. That means finding ways to allow others to operate at their most effective. How do I need to support this individual, which may be different to the person who sits next to them? This doesn't mean pandering, but rather understanding what makes them thrive. Depending on where individuals are in their own development, they will require varying levels of management and leadership, again understanding the two are different skills.

Effective leaders also understand that their leadership style will not suit everyone so are more likely to spend time on their own leadership development. In this way we discover there may be other qualities and skills that I have yet to discover.

Leading a culture

Culture...the way we do things around here. If we were to ask your team to describe the culture of the team or business, what might they say? From a task and results perspective? From a people perspective? Would you be happy with those answers?

Are we creating a culture where expectations are clarified and understood? Is there an understanding and practice that people are treated with respect and honesty. That trust is given not expected to be earned. That there is a genuine kindness in how we treat each other?

Any of these suggestions would be a great start, but there is no perfect culture. It has to reflect the vision and goals of the client and the business. What is our intent? The culture of a military group will differ from that of an intensive care unit which differ from that of an IT start up project team.

But there will always be some core values which most people will be inspired by and look to the leader to not just create, but maintain and grow.

When individuals lead with good intention, kindness and wisdom to understand the complexities that exist when in the presence of humans, we are more likely to see effective leadership, than not.

That is the role of leadership.

Is an Interest Rate Hike Bad for Your Project?

Malong Dong

The Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) bit the bullet at last and called for the first interest rate hike in more than a decade amid a federal election campaign. The rise has been broadly expected, banks have been raising their retail lending rates slowly. However, the velocity of the first rise has caught many off guard.

Once lenders pass on the rise onto mortgage borrowers, there is no doubt that cost of living will become a popular topic around the kitchen table. The RBA has hinted at more rate hikes on the way. This has a chance of influencing the economic policies substantially, regardless of the party in office post the election.

If we speak exclusively of projects, what does higher interest rate mean for your project or a business case you are working on? Is it bad for projects?

The RBA governor Dr. Philip Lowe explains that the combination of very high inflation and wages growth is the reason behind the decision of interest rate increase. For capital-intensive and/or labour-intensive projects, the inflation and higher wages lead to higher input costs as goods and services become more expensive. Other projects may experience the ripple effect to certain extent. Project finance professionals may also point out that higher interest rate makes the hurdle rate, which is used to calculate investment return and breakeven point, move higher.

If the interest rate keeps rising, it will gradually impact implementation costs and financial benefit measures. As I mentioned in the [April Newsletter](#), project work as an investment for business will be under greater scrutiny from a Return-On-Investment (ROI) standpoint.

The inflation is caused by global supply chain constraints and geopolitical tensions. We are not looking at an overheated economy that requires pulling the handbrake. Projects that are transformational are still the drivers for innovation and productivity improvement. When a new business case is presented for funding submission, the difference this time is that the investment committee is likely to have a closer look at the numbers.



[Malong Dong](#) has extensive global and local portfolio management and delivery experience in Fortune Global 100 companies across multiple industries in Asia-Pacific and Europe. As a long-term member of PMI and a regular contributor for members' education, Malong shares his insight on best practice of project management, industrial trend and career advice to the global project management community.

The rate hike may not initially be a cause for concern for project managers. However, a serial of substantial and prolonged rise that leads to increasing cost of capital and diminishing returns are sure to put a dampener on fundings for new projects.

Beyond Project Management

Ibrahim Dani

The art of living with joy

People intrinsically seek joy. And joy connects people more powerfully than almost any other human experience.

Take sports for example. When a team wins or just scores a goal, every player and most spectators experience a brimming ecstasy that lifts the team even further. Success sparks joy. Joy fuels further success.

[Alex Liu](#) in his HBR article [Making Joy a Priority at Work](#), argues that sports joy can be replicated in business. Joy at work arises from a combination of **harmony**, **impact**, and **acknowledgement**.

Harmony. Having a harmonious team with diverse skills strengthens team culture. It feels great when the team 'click' together.

Impact. Team harmony leads to good result. This positive impact fuels joy and encourages the team to generate more positive impact.

Acknowledgement. When you immediately acknowledge good work you power the joy-success-joy cycle.

Alex Liu asserts that leaders who engender harmony, impact and acknowledgement, they actually spark joy in the environment which fuels success.

On a personal level, when I feel less joyful I turn to a book which I keep at my desk: [Living With Joy](#) by [Sanaya Roman](#). The book highlights that everything happens is meant to help move you into your greater self.

The beauty of this book is that it has a long list of affirmations in every chapter. These affirmations help me regain joy in my daily life. Here are some of these affirmations that will help you maintain more joy in your life.

- I **choose** to live joyfully.
- I **love** feeling joyful, and I feel this way often
- I am free to be around **joyful people**, and I am!
- I **deserve** to have a wonderful, joyful life of abundance, good friends, and meaningful activities, and I **do**.



[Ibrahim Dani](#) is an accomplished business leader with extensive experience in managing programs and leading people. Ibrahim had a colourful career journey including speaking at PMI EMEA Congress and training aspiring Project Managers. He is an advocate for excellence, a trusted adviser, and a thought leader in project delivery and related human capital management.

- I love and **appreciate** people for who they are. I have positive thoughts of others.
- I choose to **focus on the good** in the world, and by doing so I help bring about a better world.
- I have lovely memories. I remember times when I **succeeded**.
- I am the **authority** of what is good for me.
- I **forgive myself**, knowing I am always doing the best I know how.
- I **believe** in myself.
- I take **responsibility** for how I feel.
- I **trust** my inner wisdom.
- I believe in my **unlimited capacity** to create whatever I want.
- I **consciously** look for and acknowledge the goodness in others.
- I am grateful for all the **love** I have in my life.
- I am the director and producer of **my life**.
- I am open and **receptive** to experiencing new situations, people, and activities.
- I am growing, expanding, and evolving in ways that are **joyful** and balanced.
- I embrace the new, knowing that my life is always **getting better**.
- **I love growth.**

And always remember this: I am responsible of how I feel. And today, I choose to feel happy.

Coco's Corner

Leo Coco

Reduce Stress at Work by Tweaking Your Project Management Style & Approach

Being a Project Manager is a highly visible role that can be both satisfying, rewarding, and STRESSFUL at times. From my own experiences over the last 20 years, I know that adopting an effective approach to not only managing projects but also to support our own needs, allows you both to enjoy your craft while also delivering the required outcomes for your client/s or employer.

Consider the following steps which you may take inside and outside of the workplace to help you keep your COOL under pressure....

Inside the Workplace

Define the Scope. Nail down what you need to do. Analyse how your plans fit in with the outcome you're delivering. Be clear about the details of what the project is delivering, otherwise, a project can keep growing through expectation, eventually becoming overwhelming for you to manage.

Focus on Quality. Successful organisations put Quality first. Cutting back on costs and labour can only go so far. Thinking in terms of Value and Quality as this drives more inspiration and less tension within yourself and your team/s.

Consult Experienced Experts. Reach out to colleagues who have done similar work to what you're doing. They'll know what you'll be going through and will probably have some good advice to share. This is where being a member of a community like PMI Sydney Chapter comes in handy

Limit Conflicting Activities. Maybe you're already working at full capacity when you take on a new project. Establish priorities so you concentrate on the most urgent or critical matters first and stick to a sustainable schedule. Always make sure your management team is aware of your workload.

Assemble a Strong Team. Know the skills you require for your projects and the roles each team member will fill. Build a collaborative & supportive culture by being generous and authentic with your praise and thanks.



Project Management Authority, Trainer, Entrepreneur and Speaker, there are many facets to [Leo Coco](#), our PMISC Director. He has seen it all – from fast-paced corporate environments, to public enterprises touching millions. Decades of experience have given him an almost uncanny ability to home in on the latest trends in the market and predict changes that are coming. In this column, Leo gives our readers a ringside view of how the world of Project Management is changing around us.

Commit Adequate Resources. Ensure your team has the tools they need to succeed. Do your research and planning so you can justify your costs to senior management and customers. This will lessen friction and increase their confidence in you to deliver the required outcome.

Share Information. Be transparent with your team. Let them see the proposed schedule and show them frequently how actual performance is comparing with projections. ***Greater knowledge, engagement and participation leads to not only better solutions but gives your team buy in on the adventure you are all embarking on together.***

Communicate with Stakeholders. Mid-delivery corrections are sometimes needed. Inform customers, management, and other stakeholders as soon as possible of events like schedule slippage and issues. Frequent communication works wonders in build support and confidence in a Project Manager.

Perform Evaluations. Learn from every experience. Audit your activities along the way and at completion of a project. ***Assess your strengths and the areas you want to improve. This introspective on yourself, could one of the most powerful tools available to you.***

Outside Your Workplace: Rejuvenating for Your Best Work Performance

Go Offline. Get into the habit of disconnecting! Tell people what hours they can reach you and reserve the rest of the time for yourself, friends, and your family.

Exercise Regularly. Physical activity gives you more energy. It's also one of the most constructive ways to manage your stress levels. Play music you love to make working out even more enjoyable, but basically get a healthy sweat going.

Eat Well. You'll feel more resilient, focused, and confident when you eat a nutritious diet. Consume plenty of vegetables and fruit each day along with lean proteins and healthy fats. Carrying around a water bottle to sip all day so you stay hydrated is critical to maintaining optimal brain activity. Yes, your brain thrives on good nutrition and hydration from water which keeps you sharp.

Get Adequate Rest. ***You need sufficient sleep to function at your best.*** Try taking a brief nap during the day if you have difficulty setting aside enough time at night. Power naps work for some and there is science to prove its effectiveness too. Sometimes just getting to bed early and starting fresh the next day is more effective than pushing through and working into the night.

Develop a Relaxation Practice. Select a soothing activity that works for you. You may prefer daily meditation, mindfulness or even a weekly massage. Welcome yourself home by playing gentle music or take a warm bath before bed. You deserve it and your body and mind will also thank you for it.

Practice Breathing. Correct breathing is an instant stress buster you can use anytime and anywhere. Slow down and inhale deeply through your nostrils from your diaphragm. Let the air slowly release through your nostrils. Repeat several times and allow the oxygen to flow through your body.

Rely on your Support Network. *Warm and loving relationships are the best antidote for stress.* Spend time laughing and sharing meaningful activities and conversations as often as possible. Find comfort and strength in your family, friends, and spiritual community. Remember we have spent the last couple of years separated physically from many of our usual support networks, so its time to get connected again as a way to energise our souls and support us to perform at our optimal levels

Using the tips above to tweak your project management style and approach which will enable you to not only enjoy what you do but will allow you to produce better results for yourself, your clients or employer, while ultimately helping you feel more at ease with the things that play out while delivering projects. Foster collaboration, leverage your networks and take care of your health. To Your Success!

Project Management and Experiential Learning

Louis Taborda

Few would argue that project management is a field that benefits from experience. While we have the PMBOK that provides a basis for the discipline, that is all they can be: a foundation to work from. The wide range of projects executed and the variety of environments in which they have to be managed challenge any attempt at codification.

As a late-entrant to academia, I find myself answering many student questions with the catch-all, “It depends!”. We then discuss what the “correct” answer depends on but then comes the rude shock that there are no definitively correct answers. When the students protest and want to know what to say in the exam, my defence is that Project Management is not mathematics! There is no one right-or-wrong answer and like all management, it is part of the social sciences so there is no one truth!

That’s when I realise that I am not being helpful to my students and while what I say is absolutely true, it can be unsatisfying for someone wishing to enter the profession. So what if projects are a social construct, we still need to be successful! Knowing that project management is a complicated and dynamic series of decisions and feedback loops, even understanding exactly where the hazards lie in the project lifecycle, does not provide sufficient guidance to a rookie project manager who wants to be successful.

Teaching project management must not be the equivalent of providing a book entitled “How to Ride a Bicycle?” The theory of riding is not particularly useful (although those that buy the book may not know that!) when you want to start riding to work. Clearly there are a lot of people who are comfortably riding their bikes, so the question we need to answer is: What the best most expedient way for students to join this fraternity.

For a practical discipline like project management, the answer appears quite clear to me – we need to provide what is termed “experiential learning” opportunities for students looking to enter the profession. When we focus on making experiences the on-ramp to our discipline, a number of interesting and somewhat revolutionary (but also bleedinly obvious) concepts become evident. I hope to expand on these in future articles but for now let me couch them as questions that might stimulate those interested in the future of our discipline to contemplate.



[Dr Louis Taborda](#) is a project professional and passionate educator at the School of Project Management at the University of Sydney. Dr Taborda has over twenty-five years of diverse delivery and consultancy experience across business and IT, and has held senior positions that span the entire solution delivery life-cycle.

- How can practitioners take an active role in the education of future project managers?
- How might we (re)structure project management education to incorporate experiential learning?
- What life experiences do students already have of project management that can be leveraged?

I hope you will join me in exploring these topics by following [Projectize.Me](#) on LinkedIn.

(The views expressed in this article belong to the author and do not reflect PMI's views.)

Chapter News - May 2022

Photography Contest

Send us your photos taken in and around Sydney for a chance to win a cool mug with the PMISC logo. You have a better chance of winning if the photo celebrates any facet of project management. Five best entries win every month. All entries to be sent to marketing@pmisysdney.org with the subject line "PMISC Photography Contest". Remember to send high-resolution photos in JPG or PNG.



Creating, Coaching, and Coordinating Lean-Agile Teams



SEMINAR 6

Creating, Coaching, and Coordinating Lean-Agile Teams

26 May, 2022 | 12:00 pm AEST | 2:00 pm NZST

Agile has spread through the world. Yet tales of challenge outnumber those of success. Much of this is because what's been learned in the last decade or so has yet to be incorporated into our popular frameworks. This talk will discuss how Flow, Lean, and the Theory of Constraints can provide guidance into deciding on how to solve your challenges as well as how to decide which practices will work best for you.



Al Shalloway

Founder and CEO of Success Engineering

Al Shalloway is a recognized thought-leader in Lean, Agile, Kanban, SAFe, Scrum, technical Agile practices, design patterns and emergent design. He is the creator of FLEX - FLOW for Enterprise Transformation - the first Agile at scale approach that is truly based on Lean and Flow Thinking.

Register Here:



DASIG@melbourne.pmi.org.au
PDU: 1 Technical

DASIG Volunteers Wanted

The DASIG is growing and looking for volunteers to join us. Please visit the link below for more information, and check VRMS for Volunteer Opportunities:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/da-sig-australasia_volunteers-dasig-communitybuilding-activity-6907850128590528512-HqdP?utm_source=linkedin_share&utm_medium=member_desktop_web



We're Growing!

Join us on the journey in growing the Disciplined Agile community in Australasia!

Explore volunteering opportunities that fit your skills and interests today.



DASIG@melbourne.pmi.org.au

Speaking at PMI Sydney

Are you ready to inspire others? Tell us what you're passionate about. PMI Sydney Chapter is looking for volunteers to be speakers in 2022 events and participate in panel discussion. Please contact Mulalo Mudau at membership@pmisydney.org and Omer Iqbal at events@pmisydney.org to take part in 2022 events and panel discussions.

Contributions Wanted for the Newsletter

The PMI Sydney Chapter Newsletter Editorial Team is requesting your contributions for our monthly newsletter, The Critical Path. News, Views, Opinion Pieces, or Articles, all are welcome. We would also be happy to hear about the content you'd like to see in the newsletter.

Please reach out to marketing@pmisydney.org with your contributions or suggestions.

Membership Updates

Sydney Mudau

Following is the list of members who celebrated either 3, 5, 7, 10, 15 or 20 years of association with the PMI Sydney Chapter between April and May 2022. We thank you for your association, support and advice.

PMI Sydney Member	Years of Membership
Md Arifur Rahman Khan	3
Xing Ying Lee	3
Arturo Norbury	3
Wayne Scott	3
Sanghamitra Bhoi	3
James Langstaff	3
Joseph Dbais	3
Alexandra Cifone	3
Yannis Karoumpas	3
Franklin Wang	5
Stephen Lacy	5
Farhan Khan	5
Kate Hilton	5
Gabriele Di Marco	5
Ian Devaney	5
Danny Tomic	5
Victor Batorijs	5
Amanj Goran	7
Avril Royds	7
Simon Vasquez Gutierrez	7
Yojan Sada	7
Nikhil Bharadwaj	7
Megha Kanth	10
Alexei Beliak	15
Joyce Brown	15



Sydney is a self-driven and motivated individual with a passion for learning and growth. Sydney enjoys steering the membership portfolio to serve PMI Sydney Chapter members.

He is a firm advocate for continuous improvement and passionate about sharing project management best practices with the wider Project Management network.

Photo of the Month

Rory Wilson



About the image

It may not look like much, but the top photo was taken on the original site of the first road over the Blue Mountains, joining the nascent colony of New South Wales to the plains on the west of the mountains. As shown on the plaque below, 28 men completed the work over six months – one of Australia's early and historically important projects!