



**Project
Management
Institute.**
Sydney, Australia

The Critical Path

August 2022



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Editor's Note

Himadri Chowdhury

In the small excuse of a garden next to my home office, this tree had lost all but a few of its leaves over Autumn and Winter. The ones still clinging in some desperate hope had shrivelled up and yellowed. It didn't at all seem likely that it will ever get back the leaf cover it had provided us all through summer. And then, suddenly, in the course of a week, new leaves started appearing and this morning the tree was all but covered in a veritable jewellery of young bright green leaves soaking up the late winter sunlight.



Nature works in mysterious ways. Someone must have said Spring is here and the cherry blossoms noticed. Why else would there be be rows upon rows of pink flowers blooming on leafless branches in proud defiance of the weather? Driving by this riot of pink and white blooms, I was suddenly reminded of the theme of Chapter's 25th Anniversary Celebrations, Resilience. This resilience is physical as well as mental, and we display that in so many different ways.

Resilience is in the DNA of Australians, or how could we explain the proud smiles on the faces after saving the last memorabilia from a family home swallowed by the bushfire, or after the umpteenth clean-up when the flood waters decide to leave? It is precisely why a Chapter built 25 years ago by some like-minded individuals still stays relevant, because the members stood by it and refused to let go, even after the probably the most tumultuous two years in the history of the Chapter. So, Members, take a bow! You are the real heroes of our story!

After a successful Anniversary event, your Chapter is already planning for the next big one. PMISC is hosting the PMI R10 Summit this year. This is the first time since 2019 that Chapters Leaders from the Region 10 family are coming together face-to-face in Sydney for two days of strategising and planning for the future. You will find more details in the News section, along with other news and events from the Chapter and the PMI community.

In the August issue of ***The Critical Path***, we bring you some memories of the Anniversary event captured by Malong Dong. In *Beyond Project Management*, Ibrahim Dani discusses a very interesting concept, how we can refresh and hit the reset button to unlearn, from at which point we generate new learning. In the persistently difficult world, Leo Coco provides us easy to follow guidelines on how to deal with negativity from people, and how to turn around and respond with positivity. How an imaginary Pacific nation deals with a cycling problem and how that leads to interesting discussions in the classroom is the subject of Louis Taborda's column this month.

There is an announcement on the upcoming Board elections in the newsletter. Further information would come soon. We are also extending our photography contest. Please do participate and encourage your peers. And do think about volunteering for the Chapter. There's a lot you can give back to the profession.

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

Best,
Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury
Editor, The Critical Path

PMI Sydney – 25 Year Anniversary

PMI Sydney Chapter (PMISC) celebrated our 25-Year Anniversary on Friday, August 12 at Pullman Sydney Hyde Park. The current Board of Directors and President invited all PMI Sydney Chapter Members to celebrate the milestone achievement.

PMISC Professional Development Director Leo Coco, the designated emcee for the evening, formally opened the event, welcoming everyone and identifying the contributions of the past and current Boards and the volunteers, who have been and remain the cornerstone of the Chapter. Leo then welcomed Omer Iqbal, current President of PMISC Board, to acknowledge the long-standing members present in the room. The members who have been with PMISC for the past 10 years or more were called to the stage and felicitated with a crystal memento celebrate their association with the Chapter.

One of the long-term members, Mr. Jürgen Oschadleus, recalled a PMISC session that he hosted in 2013. A colleague had brought several of Australia’s most venomous snakes into the auditorium and illustrated how differently they reacted to stimuli around them. The snakes provided the platform to look at how we engage with different types of stakeholders, and how we should always consider how our actions influence the responses and behaviours of others. The session was called “Snakeholder Management”, which is a perfect analogy to visualise the important people management concept.



The highlight of the event were the two keynote speakers – Galen Townson, member, PMI Global Board of Directors from Australia, and May Samali, Leadership Coach. While Galen talked about Resilience and how important it is for the project manager, May

focused on building Mental Resilience. Both of their addresses focused on how resilience has become a critical survival skill in a constantly changing environment. Their speeches were inspiring, and the audience felt empowered to overcome these challenges. After his talk, Galen was available and moved around the room interacting with the PMISC members.



The talks were followed by wonderful live music performed by Rossella and Eleonora of Jazz Amore, and a wholesome buffet. The atmosphere of the event became more relaxed and members spent a good time socialising, for many the very first opportunity to meet with other PMISC members in person post the peak of the pandemic. Lots of group photos and selfies were taken to record this precious moment.

At the closure of the ceremony, Omer announced the upcoming Elections for the executive team and called for members to come forward and participate. This is exactly what Mr. Mark Ferguson, another long-term member of the Chapter, encourages our members to embrace. Mark ran the Mentoring program between the years 2016–2019, which was a great learning and networking opportunity for him personally and for everyone involved. His message is that members should make a personal commitment to volunteering at least once in their career as a way to pay forward to the organisation and the profession. Well said, Mark!

Overall, it was a fun evening, filled with music and laughter and mindful discussions at the PMI Sydney Chapter.

Happy Anniversary, PMI Sydney Chapter!

- Malong Dong



Beyond Project Management

Ibrahim Dani

Replenish Your Smarts – Unlearn and Relearn

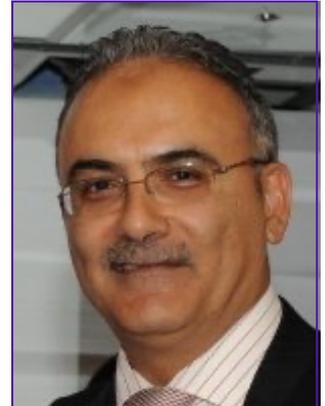
In a rapidly changing world, experience can become a curse while inexperience can be a blessing. Experience becomes habits and dogmas trapping us in old ways of thinking, knowing and doing; while inexperience frees us to learn, improvise and adapt quickly to changing circumstances.



I'm sure you've heard stories about experienced drivers who repeatedly failed their driving tests after moving to a new country, particularly if they were driving on the other side of the road, while new or novice drivers pass their driving tests more often. This appears to be counterintuitive, but [Liz Wiseman](#), in her insightful book *[Rookie Smarts](#)*, states that according to studies and researches "inexperience can work to your advantage: It can spark a dazzling performance and help you compete with, if not surpass, even the most talented, experienced players."

Wiseman explains that experience creates dangerous blind spots. People form habits out of experience, and with habits, our brain stops working. We become desensitised to the world around us, we stop seeking feedback and we stop exploring new domains and paths.

Similarly, [Jonah Sachs](#), in his thought-provoking book *[Unsafe Thinking](#)* cited a research concluding that while expertise can make us enormously efficient at playing an established game, it can also make us slower to realise when the game has changed and less able to respond to those changes. For example, imagine that the rules or the size of the Tennis court has changed, certainly there will be new names who will defeat the top seeded international Tennis players.



[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.

Sachs admits that it feels good to be an expert. It is a mark of accomplishment, intelligence and hard work. It brings us esteem and makes us feel needed. That's all good. The problem starts when the expertise leads us, unwittingly, down the path of overconfidence. When we are overconfident of what we know, our identities and our egos become attached to the unique knowledge networks that confirms our beliefs. This will lead us to defend our expertise from any challenges, whether from new information that runs contrary to our accumulated knowledge or from people questioning our views.

In addition, we generally tend to credit ourselves with having more expertise than we do. Many studies have documented this "better-than-average" phenomenon. For example, 93 percent of US drivers rate themselves as above average behind the wheel. Even drivers currently laid up in the hospital for accidents they themselves had caused were similarly found to overestimate their abilities.

The trio of overconfidence in our expertise, our conformity network ego, and the "better-than-average" phenomenon, all of this do limit and frame our thinking and actions, both in the social and professional worlds. This limitation constrains us in a certain path that celebrates what we believe in and disregards (or worse, devalues) everything else. The endpoint of such a path is closed-mindedness.

Hit the refresh button

To break away from the path of closed-mindedness we need to hit the refresh button in our thoughts and beliefs and adopt a 'keep learning' mindset: continuously explore new thoughts and opportunities. Adopting a 'keep learning' mindset does not mean we ditch the experiences we built along the way. On the contrary, we need to build the skill of knowing when to play the role of the experienced veteran and when to act as inexperienced novice and seek new ideas and knowledge. We do need the experience to decide whether to see the world through the eyes of the expert or the beginner. We need to know when it is time to hit the refresh button to **stop, unlearn and relearn.**

The good news is that 'keep learning' mindset is something that can be learned. 'Keep learning' mindset can be built by being curious, humble and deliberate. Start by embracing curiosity and inquiry. Challenge your own thoughts, knowledge, traditions and convictions. Build a belief that what you don't know is more interesting than what you know – it is probably right most of the times. Continuously seek and explore. Think outward, build new networks and learn from people around you.

A curious mind avoids pre-judgement traps and makes you ready to learn. This is where humility comes in where you will seek guidance and remain open to correction without regard for expertise or position. This allows the development of coachability and teachability. A humble person with a non-judgemental state of mind is a coachable person, ready to learn, contemplate and understand everyone and everything else.

To make the best out of your 'keep learning' mindset you have to deliberately be curious and humble. You have to approach this with a great deal of intentionality and conviction that you want to learn, unlearn and relearn. Don't just wait until things happen. You need to deliberately become a perpetual learner.

Replenish your smarts

When the world is changing fast, you want people who can free themselves from the past, mobilise the expertise of each other, and forge ahead into new territory. In other

words, you want people who can learn and continuously replenish their smarts with insatiable curiosity, a humility that makes them lifelong students, and deliberately adopt an open mindset of continuous learning. Or as [Pocahontas](#) said:

*You think the only people who are people
Are the people who look and think like you
But if you walk the footsteps of a stranger
You'll learn things you never knew, you never knew.*

Coco's Corner

Leo Coco

Five Ways to Deal with Negative People

One thing I have found is that no matter what your occupation, we will all at some stage come in contact with negative or difficult people. Our primal instinct is to fight back, defend ourselves, and generally react to the persons negativity. The fact that we are not animals in the jungle fighting for survival (although it feels like we are sometimes in the corporate world) means we do have the ability to control our responses in these situations.



Fighting anger with anger merely depletes our own energy and brings us down to the same level as the person being negative or difficult.

So why are people difficult?

When people act negatively, it's a reflection of what's going on inside THEM. It's not necessarily about you; it's about them. It may be a complicated situation they find themselves in at work and are under a lot of pressure or sometimes it may relate to a past experience which is similar to where they find themselves today or could even be something as simple as a bad day that might be making that person angry.

People who are bored, dissatisfied, or unhappy with their own lives or work situation will seek out conflict to boost their egos

Our ego will then have you respond by thinking, "I have to be right. If I don't respond, I'm conceding defeat." Then we find ourselves engaged in a conflict that hurts us emotionally, mentally, and maybe even professionally.



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.

Some Ways to Deal with Difficult People

Here are some ways in which you can deal with these difficult people. They may not ALL be easy (actually, none of them are easy!), but they will give you peace of mind that you're doing the right thing in these situations.

1. Wait before responding. Our first instinct is to immediately react and retaliate. However, reacting to another individual's negativity usually only adds fuel to the fire and eggs them on. You may even realise that a response is not even needed. Maybe the other person was merely venting and needs to simply be ignored because the attack was not personal at all.

If you spend some time away from the situation and cooling off before you respond, you will gain perspective on the situation. If necessary, remove yourself from the room or situation when confronted with a difficult person. Go for a walk outside or walk up a flight of stairs to collect your thoughts and vent your frustrations with what just happened if required.

2. Stop rehashing the situation. This is especially a problem in an office environment where gossip can sometimes spread like wildfire. There will always be someone ready to listen to bad things about another person. This is a waste of your time and energy. It's highly recommended to drop the subject and move on.

The longer you dwell on a situation and talk about it with others, the more negativity and anger you will hold. Take the high road and step away from those who continue to gossip or speak up and tell others you don't want to listen to it anymore and want to move on.

3. Express your feelings. If you simply need to get your emotions out and off your chest, try writing them down on paper. Vent all your thoughts, feelings, frustration, and anger onto that piece of paper. Let it all out until there's nothing left to say. Then crumple up the paper and throw it away and as such imagine your negative feelings being thrown away with it at that point.

Try not to let your partner or spouse prevent you from speaking your mind. A true partnership and strong relationship is one in which the ideas and thoughts of each partner can be heard without judgement.

4. Put yourself in their shoes. This can be very difficult to do but try and observe the individual who is being difficult or negative. What's going on their life right now? Maybe they are under a lot of pressure at work, or they could be having some family issues or a maybe even a health crisis.

Try to look at each situation as an objective observer that is detached from the situation. This can help give you some compassion or empathy for the difficult person that is in your proximity right now.

Mindfulness can help keep you grounded, calm and allow you to see the situation differently. Consider some quiet time for yourself and think about the difficulties the difficult person might be facing at work, personally or life generally and think about how

you would handle a similar situation yourself.

5. Respond positively. This may not always be possible and certainly won't be easy to do. But, after looking over the situation and trying to understand where the difficult person was coming from, find something positive to say about them.

Have you heard the phrase, "Kill 'em with kindness"? ***Very often responding calmly, politely and with a friendly tone can do wonders in diffusing a difficult situation.***

Unfortunately, negative people are everywhere! Don't let them take the joy away from the work you do with projects or stop you from being in the happy mood you're normally in. The above tips take some conscious effort to implement, but with some focus these can be some of the most powerful tips which will make you UNSTOPPABLE.

Teach these difficult people indirectly by leading by example, by responding calmly, and by showing kindness. As a result, you'll bring more happiness to others in your team and find that you feel a greater happiness yourself.

To Your Success
Leo Coco

Debating Project Scope

Louis Taborda

As a firm believer in experiential learning, I create realistic and accessible scenarios as part of my course assessments with the aim of giving students a taste of what real-world project management (PM) entails. One simple scenario has led to some interesting and somewhat unexpected discussion about the potential clash between our personal views and philosophies, versus our professional responsibilities as a Project Manager.

It involves a fictitious holiday town coming to terms with the influx of (undocked) shared bicycles - something that most of us are familiar with even though that business model came and went in a few short years. I named the town Pacificano (because writing these scenarios can be tedious and getting a little creative makes them less so) which is a past "Tidy Town" award winner with the local Town Council struggling to make a decision on how best to address the sudden appearance of these unwanted bicycles. The exercise is a lot of fun as we look at different stakeholder views: the elderly residents may consider these bikes as cluttering the town's footpaths and constituting a safety hazard for pedestrians, while local shopkeepers might consider them a boon to tourism.

But there was a surprise reaction from students when I introduced this simple scenario to students by asking them to consider the pros and cons of these shared bicycle schemes. These young people largely saw the good side of shared bicycle schemes focussing on their green credentials and environmental sustainability. This came to a head when my scenario had the council deciding to initiate a project to remove and impound all the offending bicycles in the town - not so popular with my students!

My more outspoken students strenuously disagreed with the negative premise of the scenario that shared bicycle schemes were necessarily bad. They objected to Pacificano Council's short sightedness and went into solution-mode to try and find a compromise decision. It was good to see some passion in a class discussion and their engagement in a scenario they understood gave rise to a valuable teaching/ learning opportunity.

We went on to explore what actions a Project Manager could legitimately take to modify the project scope to better utilise shared bicycles? What is within the Project Manager's sphere of control? These are fundamental questions that might give all PM professionals cause to reflect.



[Dr Louis Taborda](#) is a project professional and passionate educator at the School of Project Management, University of Sydney. He is also founder of [Projectize.Me](#) a start-up Social Enterprise. All the views expressed here are his own.

The natural extension of this discussion is a very simple yet personally challenging question:

Would you take the job if a project required you to do something you fundamentally did not believe in?

PMI Sydney 2022 Elections

2022 Elections – Coming soon

The time is fast approaching when all our chapter members get to have their say in the PMI Sydney Chapter (PMISC) Board Elections. But have you considered going a step beyond that and being a representative for all chapter members as a member of our Board?

The “Call for Nominations” for the election of the chapter members who will join the PMI Sydney Chapter Board in 2022 is coming soon.

Joining a board and representing your membership is an exciting but demanding opportunity and requires a significant commitment from all Board Members – it’s not for everyone.

The Elections and Nominating Committee (hereafter referred to as the Nominating Committee - or NomCom) role is to ensure that they present candidates at the election that are ready to dedicate the time and effort to their role on the Board. These candidates need to demonstrate to the NomCom that they will work with the Board, for our current and future members and partners, and represent the interests of PMI Sydney Chapter, and PMI.

An important reminder to members: to be eligible to nominate, and to vote in the next election, you must be a member in good standing (a member who has paid both PMI® and Sydney Chapter dues for their current annual membership period) at the time the call to nominations occurs.

To assist all interested members, an Election Information Pack will be made available for all interested candidates and will be available here - <https://pmisydney.org/about-us/chapter-elections>. The nominating form will be available on request from the Nominating Committee nc@pmisydney.org.

Please take the opportunity to read and understand the requirements of Nomination before requesting the Nomination Form. This includes completing the self-assessment provided in the Election Information Pack.

The Nominating Committee will be accepting applications once the Call for Nominations is open. The members of the Nominating Committee are:

- Chair: Red Newstead <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rednewstead/>
- Tim Kinchington <https://www.linkedin.com/in/tim-kinchington-100/>
- Cath Graham <https://www.linkedin.com/in/catherinegraham/>

Naivasha Safaya, PMI Sydney Chapter Board Secretary secretary@pmisydney.org is the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the Board and will facilitate communications between the NomCom and Board on election matters.

If, after reviewing the Election Information pack, you are more interested in volunteering with the PMI Sydney Chapter in another capacity, we encourage you to reach out to Jasmin Craufurd-Hill, Volunteers Director volunteering@pmisydney.org

Chapter News – August 2022

PMDOK2022 Project Management Research Summit

The PMDOK2022 Project Management Research Summit aims to follow-on the pre-COVID19 tradition of hosting an annual gathering of Australian academics.

Sponsored by PMI Sydney Chapter and the School of Project Management at University of Sydney, this year's summit brings together engaged project management professionals with researchers and educators from academia with the shared goal ***Develop Our Knowledge***.

PMDOK2022 will be a hybrid event held on the 30th September 2022 – Australia-wide on Zoom and physically hosted at the University of Sydney.

We aim to rebuild our community of engaged project scholars over the next few years with PMDOK2022's one-day program having something of interest to practicing project managers, leaders and academics while offering a unique opportunity for the exchange of experience and knowledge.

Access the following link to register for the event: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pmdok2022-tickets-387818805487>



Chapter News – August 2022

PMI Region 10 Meeting - Sydney



3-4
SEP
2022 | REGION 10
MEETING



The 2022 PMI Region 10 meeting is happening in Sydney on 3-4 September 2022 at Novotel Sydney on Darling Harbour.

For registrations, please contact the Chapter.

What is a PMI Region Meeting?

A PMI Region Meeting is an annual meeting hosted by the Region Mentor and PMI's Chapter Engagement team exclusively for PMI chapter leaders in each micro-Region. Chapter leaders are brought together to build meaningful relationships, share knowledge, and learn of updates in PMI.

Who should attend the Region Meeting?

Any PMI Chapter volunteer is invited to join us for the meeting. As travel may be required and sponsored by your home chapters, chapter approval may be required. Region Meetings are opened only to chapter volunteers from the specific region. For example, the Region 10 Meeting is opened exclusively for chapter volunteers from chapters across Australia and New Zealand.

Chapter News – August 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@pmisydney.org with the subject line “PMISC Photography Contest”. Remember to send high-resolution photos in JPG or PNG.



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 this month. We thank you for your association, support and advice.

Our Professional Development Director Leo Coco has also completed his 3-year association with the PMISC.

PMI Sydney Member	Years of Membership
Manoj Pattanayak	3
Muhammad Rohail Iyaz	3
MohmadImran Sheth	3
Mustafa Younes	3
Habib Malikapurayil	3
Leo Coco	3
John Mackey	3
Ahmedi Azra	3
Frederik Gouws	3
Sumaya Hasan	5
Sunjoo Jahajeeah	5
Jyoti Prakash Swain	5
Gaurav Wadekar	5
Matthew Adler	7
Corinne Avaline Smith	7
Aaron van Althuis-Jones	7
Don Prasanna Kollura	7
Hendrick Lorentz	7
John Torresan	7
Jenny Dolden	7
Amir Jahanmahin	7
Wijayakumara Weerasinghe	10
Ethann Castell	10
Ivan Ramirez	15
Antonio Martin	15
Katherine Anne Gardner	20
Matthew Boot	20



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

PMI Sydney



About the image

Attendees at the PMI Sydney Chapter 25 Year Anniversary event on Friday 12th August at the Pullman Hotel Hyde Park, Sydney.