



**Project
Management
Institute.**
Sydney, Australia

The Critical Path

September 2022



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Editor's Note

Omer Iqbal

“You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep Spring from coming.” - Pablo Neruda

The season of spring brings a message of growth and new life. The blossom in every nook and corner tells us that no matter how long the autumn is, a golden sunny day will shine for us, and we will grow again.

I personally take a lot of motivation from the blossom of spring. No matter what, if we intend to grow and fight back, we will always win. Like the good old saying, “if life knocks you down 7 times, get back up 8”. A few months ago, a viral image on the internet showed a tree that grew through a traffic sign pole. The traffic sign pole was constructed on top of a seed. The weight of the pole and its concrete foundation didn't stop the tiny seed from sprouting into a tree over time. It didn't happen like the good old bedtime story ‘Jack and the Bean Stalk’ (we wish), but it was the time and resilience!



We at Sydney Chapter take a lot of pride in our efforts of resilience shown by our membership and leadership through the last couple of years. We indeed have a story to tell, but for another day. For now, I would like to personally request you to take note of the **‘Elections Campaign PMISC 2022’**. We planned to start this election early September 2022 (Man plans, God laughs). However, we are aiming to kick it off soon. Many of you would think, “Should I participate in elections?”. YES! This opportunity comes with a shiny title of a Board Director, which bestows lifelong bragging rights in every meeting.

In case you think you are not ready for the Board role, then join us as a volunteer in the 2-day workshop **‘Future of PMI Sydney Chapter’**, I am planning to schedule in October or November. In this workshop, we will have past, current and prospective volunteers, including Board Directors, Associate Directors, and Volunteers. So, keep an eye out for that weekend full of action.

We have successfully planned our first of its kind (at least as far as I remember) **PMI Sydney Chapter Event in Parramatta**. I got some support from Western Sydney University to sponsor their venue in Parramatta CBD and Australian Transformation and Turnaround Association to help us set up a rhythm of events in Western Sydney. The event is scheduled for 13th October 2022. Also, there is the opportunity to attend the Parramatta Lanes festival afterwards.

On 30th of September 2022 we are kicking off **“PMDOK 2022”**. This research summit will be a great opportunity for our academic and research fellows, to network and share their knowledge. We aim to continue this summit for a couple of years in future. So if you want to participate and not really sure at the moment, then come along at this event and feel the vibe. If it is something you would like to participate next year, we will do our

best to assist you in making it a memorable experience for you.

In this edition, you can find out more about the PMI Region 10 Meeting. In Beyond Project Management, Ibrahim Dani tells us why pausing will help leaders create vision. Leo Coco explains the 7 High-Level Characteristics of a leader in Coco's Corner. Dr. Louis Taborda provides insight about why there may be more generic PMs leading multi-disciplinary projects. Our Membership Director Sydney Mudau congratulates our members reaching membership milestones with the Chapter.

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

For any general inquiry with me, please do not hesitate to reach out at president@pmisydney.org

Best regards,
Omer Iqbal
President PMI Sydney Chapter

September PMI R10 Event

Malong Dong

You might have seen quite a lot of photos on social media talking about the PMI R10 meeting we had on the 3rd and 4th of September. Region 10 or R10 is a group of PMI chapters operating in Sydney and New Zealand.

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.

The first part of the meeting was for R10 to brief us on new tools and systems available to provide a better understanding of our membership demographics and marketing campaigns. Thanks to Xing Ying Lee, YeYoon Kim and James Dobson for sharing these updates from PMI and Region 10 updates more broadly. We also played a unique team building game called 'secret recipe'.

This second part was 'full on' with a collaborative session between the PMI Melbourne Chapter, PMI Canberra Chapter, PMI Queensland, PMI Western Australia, PMI New Zealand, and the new upcoming PMI Tasmania Chapter. The group of chapter leaders were brought together to build meaningful relationships, share knowledge, and learn of updates in PMI.



In this part, we discussed how we can resolve the issues and explore opportunities with volunteering, events, membership engagement and governance. It was refreshing to see how we can continue the journey towards excellence. All chapters are at various stages, and there was so much to learn from each other.

PMI Sydney Chapter leadership and its team of volunteers did agree on some new initiatives, particularly in terms of rewarding and engaging volunteers, and engaging the Sydney chapter membership. You will all see some actions around these two areas soon.

As the President of PMISC Omer Iqbal pointed out, the team invested their time on the weekend (and Father's Day) to discuss how best we can serve our membership. Now let's put together words to actions - we are always here to serve and support our members.



Beyond Project Management

Ibrahim Dani

Stop. Revive. Survive.

When you drive around countryside New South Wales, Australia, you will undoubtedly notice the many billboard signs with a 'Stop. Revive. Survive.' message. These signs urge drivers to take a break during long drives to refresh and rejuvenate.



You might think it is 'common sense' to stop and revive during long drives. However, as [Shawn Achor](#) says in his book *[The Happiness Advantage](#)* "Common sense is not common action... The fact of the matter is, positive habits are hard to keep, no matter how common-sensical they might be." Achor states as evidence for his claim that 44% of doctors are overweight despite the fact they know more than anyone else the importance of exercise.

So, why we ignore the 'Stop. Revive. Survive.' advice? Apparently, we focus on the 'goal' to reach our destination as quickly as we can. While it is a good thing to arrive at our destination early, it is certainly better to arrive more relaxed and energetic to enjoy the destination, not to mention the risk of not arriving at all.

[Kevin Cashman](#) provides a similar advice to business leaders in his book *[The Pause Principle](#)*. Cashman clearly articulates that today's leaders should take enough time to deeply pause before acting. He argues that we need to pause not only to grow as leaders, but also to develop others and foster a culture of innovation.

You may say that we don't have time to pause because we are living in an agile world where we need to maintain a fast pace. Cashman responds to this argument by asserting that pausing will help leaders create vision, understanding, clarity and agility; and



[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.

therefore deliver better results, faster. Leaders who intentionally and consciously step back and go deeply into themselves and the world they touch, usually lead forward with deliberate purpose. This will give leaders and their teams the ability to stop the speeding train of business before it derails. In other words, it is a sort of ‘*Stop. Revive. Survive. your Business*’.

[Dr Robert Holden](#) in his interesting book [Success Intelligence](#) promotes the same idea from a different perspective. Holden claims that Permanent Busyness is not intelligent. Holden stresses the importance of taking time out of your busy schedule to *punctuate* your business. Holden demonstrates in his book the value of White Space: the 20 minutes that busy people should take every day as a thinking time for vision, re-evaluation, and making sure they are living and working wisely. In other words, ‘*Stop. Revive. Survive. your Business*’.

‘*Stop. Revive. Survive.*’ is not just a slogan, it might literally help you survive while driving long distance or running your business. Allan McDonald tried to do that but failed. If McDonald was successful in stopping the ‘speeding train of business’, he would have prevented the [Challenger disaster](#) back in 1986. Those who watched the disaster live on television on 24 January 1986 will never forget how a mission that was supposed to reignite a passion for space exploration turned into a horrific event in just 73 seconds and claimed the lives of seven astronauts including a schoolteacher.

McDonald worked for the company that NASA hired to make the shuttle’s solid-engine rocket boosters. But a crucial component of the boosters, the dividers known as O-rings, had never been tested at ambient temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius. If the O-rings didn’t seal the joints of the boosters properly, the boosters would explode and kill everyone on board the shuttle.

On the evening before the launch, the weather forecast in Cape Canaveral, Florida, called for temperatures below zero degrees Celsius. McDonald was concerned about the O-rings not working properly and warned NASA about the dangers of proceeding, but NASA wanted to move forward anyway. McDonald strongly protested this decision and refused to sign the document that would have allowed the launch to proceed. His boss signed for him – in order to not stop the *speeding train of business*. The launch proceeded as planned, with fatal consequences.

Stop. Revive. Survive. Or as Mahatma Gandhi said, “There is more to life than increasing its speed.”

Coco's Corner

Leo Coco

What is a Leader?

There is so much information available on the topic of Effective Leadership, so let's make sure that we're all on the same page regarding what a Leader actually is. There are a thousand definitions of Leadership, and we want to ensure that we're all speaking the same language here.

Generally speaking, a Leader is someone who motivates others to act toward achieving a common goal. A leader is able to rally people around a cause and move them to take action toward achieving a particular objective.

A Good Leader INSPIRES people to do something bigger than themselves. To work together to accomplish key objectives. To pool their strengths and resources to achieve great things. A Good Leader helps their team members become the absolute Best Version of themselves. I wonder if this is how your teams are seeing you when you are managing projects?

Winston Churchill is long remembered as one of the greatest leaders in modern history. He was tasked with the daunting task of leading Britain and the allied powers to victory against the Nazis during the Second World War. His wisdom, upright character and inspirational leadership, led Britain from the brink of defeat to victory in the most brutal war of the 20th century by inspiring the people of England to keep fighting in WWII, is a great example of Leadership.

A Leader is different to an Organiser. An Organiser gathers resources and deploys them in the most effective manner. Yes, an organiser brings people together, but they don't inspire them to take big, bold action. Organisers are about Efficiency while leaders are about Vision.

So as Project Management Professionals & Corporate Leaders, what traits and talents characterise a Good Leader?

Here are 7 High-Level Characteristics that you can focus on as you continue to refine and build your skills as a Leader:

Vision. An effective Leader has a clear vision of where they want to go and how they're going to get there. They understand where they currently are and are very clear on what it's going to take them to get to where they want to be. A Leader must be able to communicate this vision clearly to their team. This means helping



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.

your team understand the importance of the project they are delivering and what part it plays in the overall outcome for the bigger picture for the business, company or client you're working for.

Motivation. An effective Leader is highly skilled at motivating people and teams. They know their people and what makes them tick and are able to tap into those emotional triggers. Through their words and combined with actions, they are able to motivate people to actually do things they maybe wouldn't do otherwise.

Service. Some of the best Leaders are those who serve their followers. They seek to serve their team and make their team as highly effective as possible. They support their team members in whatever ways they can rather than constantly focusing on their own agenda and what they want to accomplish. Ask yourself if you are serving you team/s as you should be?

Empathy. A Leader must be able to place themselves in the shoes of others. If they want to create consensus among their team, they must be able to understand the concerns of others and effectively respond to those concerns. How much empathy are you showing your team, and could this be the cause of you not being as connected with them as you could be?

Creativity. Highly Effective Leader are creative when it comes to achieving their outcomes. They use their imagination to look beyond what is directly in front of them to see what's truly possible. They're able to see how they can effectively leverage the skills of their followers or teams for the maximum good. Is your logical approach to things impacting your creativity and or your teams?

Demanding. The best Leaders demand the BEST from their teams. They don't settle for mediocre results or half-hearted efforts. Rather, they set an example of passionate work for their team, and they expect their team to follow their example. What example are you setting for your team and more importantly are you setting the bar LOW for your team instead of stretching them beyond their current capabilities to bring out the best in them?

Management. A leader must be able to manage those who follow/work with them. They must be able to strategically guide their team through complex processes, effectively resolve challenges they encounter, and control the resources available to their team so as to be deployed to provide the most good. Is your management style being received in a positive manner by your team and are you helping guide the team in the right direction?

Let's be clear here, none of these characteristics mention on their own makes for a good leader. The best leaders possess a combination of some, if not all of these characteristics. They are able to be both creative and demanding at the same time. They can manage effectively while also expressing empathy for their team members. They can provide vision while serving their followers at the same time. It's important to understand that Leadership has nothing to do with your particular position, title, or personal attributes. Just because you're an Executive or part of the Senior Management Team in an organisation, this doesn't mean you're a leader by default.

your team understand the importance of the project they are delivering and what part it plays in the overall outcome for the bigger picture for the business, company or client you're working for.

Also having the fancy corner office doesn't mean that you're good at leadership either. And having a charismatic personality also doesn't make you a Leader.

The good news is that Leadership is NOT something you're born with. Rather, it's something you can Learn and refine over time through lots of practice. And you can become a better leader than you currently are or think you could be. If you're not an Effective Leader now, you can grow and become an effective leader. You can learn the skills and techniques necessary, leveraging your role in Project Management to practice and apply what you learn to have the influence on your teams to do great things.

By implementing these principles consciously into your own life, you can become a powerful, passionate, and inspirational leader to others. You have this wonderful opportunity to also help others become the best version of themselves and to achieve great things.

Lead them in accomplishing your vision.

If you are interested in reading and learning more about Leadership, I recommend reading one of my personal favourite books by John C Maxwell – “The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership”.

To your success,

Leo Coco

Time for the Generics?

Louis Taborda

Here is one simple way to start an argument in a group of project managers - ask them if they think if domain expertise is needed to be a good project manager (PM). It is indeed a vexed question and one that newly trained PM have to grapple with - especially when they are given a "generic" course in project management such as the one I teach.

Creating this new breed of generic PM is of course relatively new. There was a time not long ago, before university courses, when the PM role was a promotion for those who had worked and excelled in a technical discipline such as engineering. Then, management skills were an add-on to the their technical skills. Not surprisingly that resulted in a different problem with managers who possessed little in the way of what is often termed "soft-skills" and instead resorted to micro-managing their teams rather than looking after their people. These technical managers often had little appreciation of the business and could become focussed on technical excellence at the expense of business success.

Business Schools invented the MBA for this market. But now, students can graduate with business and project management degrees without any technical underpinnings. Now, we are in the opposite situation where these graduates can supposedly manage anything but in reality they "specialise" in an industry and have to gain precious experience in "the business" before they are fully competent to manage any significant project. So the necessary technical skills (which may not every attain great depth) become an add-on to their managerial skills.

The question up for discussion is whether we better off now with more generic managers, then we were with more technical managers.

If you believe in market forces, then the answer may lie in the number of students wishing to learn how to be project managers without necessarily having a technical foundation. Taking Arts and Project Management double major is now a possibility, and who's to say that the resulting philosophical PM is not a bad thing. Maybe we would not want them to be building a bridge but there are plenty of other types of projects they could be delivering.

I am reminded of an engineering manager who once told me that he found from experience that every time he intervened in making



[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.

a technical decision, he found he created problems for his projects – he realized it went a lot better when he left technical issues for the team to resolve. In a world in need of greater innovation and creativity maybe our generic PMs can lead the multi-disciplinary projects that need all kinds of expertise in the delivery teams and just need a good manager to facilitate a successful outcome.

PMI Sydney 2022 Elections

2022 Elections – Coming soon

It is fast approaching the time 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 – September 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 – September 2022

PMI Event – 27th October

Case Study: *Project Assurance in an Agile Environment* - Presented by Louise Gardner

Louise Gardner has been supporting large organisations and government agencies with PMO and Project Controls for more than 20 years. Passionate about ensuring the Project Management Office is a value adding function, Louise established Pledge Consulting in 2012.

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 Membership Director Sydney Mudau has also completed his 3-year association with the PMISC.

PMI Sydney Member	Years of Membership
Danielle da Costa Pereira	3
Mulalo Mudau	3
Arvin Arikathota	3
Lauren Farmer	3
Gopi Chand Paladugu	3
Manoj Pattanayak	3
Muhammad Rohail Iyaz	3
Santosh Purohit	5
Magdalena Herceg	5
Andrew Boon	7
Said Alameddine	7
Matthew Adler	7
Corinne Avaline Smith	7
Claudio Di Orazio	10



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

The Queen Victoria Building at dusk, as we transition from winter and into the longer days of spring.