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The Critical Path
February 2023

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Editor's Note
Himadri Chowdhury

Dear readers, welcome to the first Critical Path issue of 2023. I hope it has been a great start to the year for you. Although, it's almost unbelievable that we are at the threshold of March already and that the first two months of the year went by so fast. This has been a good summer and the long sunny days and clear skies have pulled people outdoors at lot more than the last two years. Business at the cafes and pubs at the CBD are booming and the regional towns are seeing huge tourist footfalls. As moths drawn to a bonfire, this summer has seen A-list celebrities flock to Down Under for events. From Dave Chappelle to Elton John, and Ed Sheeran to Sting and Red Hot Chili Peppers, everyone is criss-crossing the country, making the most of the lovely weather and great crowds at the sold-out events. After 2019, this is the first time we have seen so many overseas musicians and comedians perform in Sydney. This summer, Sydney is also celebrating Australia's brilliant and diverse LGBTQIA+ community at the Sydney WorldPride event from 17 February to 5 March 2023, with the famous Mardi Gras Parade held at the CBD on 25 February.

While we are enjoying the summer days, the Australian National Cricket team is in India, gearing up for the final two tests of the Border-Gavaskar series against the Indian Cricket team. India is currently up by 2-0, however, Australia, led by Steve Smith in the absence of Pat Cummins, will be looking to make it 2-2 by the end of the four-test series. Talking about cricket, do you know how many cool projects the premier Cricketing body of New South Wales is involved in? From the development of their huge facility Cricket Central, to planning community events and championships, Cricket NSW is developing the sport at the grassroots level. The Critical Path spoke to Cricket NSW CEO Lee Germon, who provided a sneak peek of everything the organisation is involved in. This will be an interesting read!

In our February issue, we have our returning columnists Ibrahim Dani speaking about purposeful, collaborative, and positive Stakeholder Management, Leo Coco discussing the facets of building an effective team, and Louis Taborda highlighting a controversial topic – does the evolving PMBoK really help us to gain PM knowledge – in their respective articles. We have two new columns starting this year – the first one by Jess Tayel, who will be focusing on Change Management and the importance to PM, and the second by PM Partners on specific project management practices. Jess talks about the balancing act of projects and large transformation initiatives in this issue while Grant Bridger from PM Partners discusses project red flags and how to recognise them.

We are curating additional content from the next edition onwards, including voice of members. If you want to be featured, reach out to me at the email IDs below.

The Sydney and Canberra PMI Chapters recently concluded their Strategy Workshop with our Region 10 partners and Mentor at Kiama in NSW. It was two wonderful days of activity, brainstorming, networking and fun. See a picture from the workshop in the newsletter.

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*.

Hope you enjoyed reading the newsletter as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you.

Best,

Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury

Editor, The Critical Path

Interview
Lee Germon, CEO, Cricket NSW

Introduction

Cricket NSW CEO Lee Germon is a former cricketer, wicket-keeper and captain. He played for the provinces of Canterbury and Otago and is the most successful Canterbury cricket captain of the modern era. He was made captain of the New Zealand Cricket team on his Test match debut and captained the team in all of his 12 Tests. He is the former Sydney Thunder General Manager and has been the CEO of Cricket NSW since 2019.

Lee talks to PMI Sydney Chapter Marketing Director Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury about how Covid impacted Cricket NSW, key recent projects undertaken by his organisation, and how Cricket NSW is looking to the future.

Lee Germon
CEO, Cricket NSW

This is your 5th year as Cricket NSW CEO. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate yourself overall? Do you feel you have achieved what you had planned to do in the last 4 years?

It's difficult to rate myself – that's really a job for others! It has been a very interesting period. We have developed a new, ambitious strategic plan and had to operate during Covid. As there was a need to be reactive to the challenges Covid provided, much of our response was certainly not planned. Strategically we have identified a clear purpose, vision and strategic objectives. We have structured our organisation to achieve these goals and are about a third of the way through. I feel we have achieved lots of things and also feel we need to accelerate in a number of key areas to achieve our ambition.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit all of us in different ways. Can you tell our readers about how Cricket NSW weathered the pandemic amidst the lockdowns and the uncertainties?

In a way we were better placed than many other organisations and our winter sport colleagues because the first wave hit us out of season. We developed and implemented our critical incident plan, focused on our people, looking forward and retaining hope and direction for everyone. Many of our funding streams were impacted negatively, however our board and senior management made the decision to retain our staff and after a period of restoring and defending our business we decided to look at how we could attack the challenges. A strong balance sheet enabled us to weather the storm financially and having great people who retained hope and positivity meant we worked through Covid with minimal organisational disruption. We focused on communicating

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regularly and consistently with our people, always intent on achievement and not just survival.

2022 was the first year coming out of the shadow of the pandemic. Was the organisation ready for the challenges of the post-pandemic world? Would you have done anything differently?

As we continued to develop and focus on our strategic plan we also ensured we were ready to attack our way out of Covid. We were as ready as we could be but of course everyone was thinking on their feet to a large extent both during and post Covid. I am very proud of the way our people and Cricket NSW emerged from Covid. If we were to look at doing anything differently, I would have focused even more on ensuring we had a robust change management plan in place.

What were the key projects for Cricket NSW in 2022? What would you categorise as your top three projects and how do you think the organisation performed under your leadership?

We had a number of key strategic objectives in 2022. Our top three projects would have been building and moving into our new home of cricket, the development of our Wildly Important Goal (WIG) and beginning the transformation to a customer centric organisation. We had a mixed year achieving some of our key goals and not others. Generally, I was happy, but not fully satisfied with my and our performance.

Transitioning to the new Cricket Central facility was a huge undertaking. Would you like to talk about this project and explain how important it is for Cricket NSW?

This is the first time Cricket NSW has a home that includes administration offices, high performance facilities and a ground. We were determined that it would be a true home for cricket, connecting our community to our elite cricketers. We selected and worked with some incredible partners and many of our team did a great job designing and delivering the facility. It wasn't easy due to Covid challenges such as supply chain issues and cost escalation. We have ended up with what I believe is the best cricket facility in the world. It is a Centre of inspiration and hope. Our community cricketers can see and train alongside their heroes and the workspace has been designed with principles of collaboration and openness incorporated. I believe it is a game changer for our organisation and our sport.

Photo from inauguration of Cricket Central in 2022

What is the commercial viability of the Cricket Central and how are you planning on recovering the investment?

Cricket Central was not built to necessarily be profitable. Most head offices of businesses aren't. However we do want to mitigate any operating deficit as much as possible so our resources can be utilised by investing directly back into Cricket. We have a number of commercial opportunities and revenue streams associated with Cricket Central. We have already started to hire out the facility to cricketers and corporates and the facility will provide a springboard for strategic partnership discussions with potential domestic and international partners.

The T20 World Cup 2022 was a massive project done in collaboration with Cricket Australia and the other states. How was Cricket NSW involved in the planning, execution and monitoring of this huge exercise?

Our role was to support Cricket Australia and the Local Organising Committee as much as we could. A number of discussions were held to assist in the alignment of the World Cup's objectives with our objectives, e.g., how can we utilise the World Cup to grow the number of children playing cricket and provide an impetus for infrastructure development.

Did you believe this project was a success? In retrospect, would you have done anything differently?

The project was definitely a success. Attendances exceeded budget and the coverage of the tournament was excellent. It engaged parts of our population who hadn't been engaged in attending cricket before. Having seen the huge number of South Asian members of our community attend to support their teams, if I had my time again, I would look more closely at how we can connect with them to a greater extent.

Play HQ gained a lot of publicity last year and not for the right reasons. Have you resolved the issue? How can you ensure this will not happen again?

Play HQ is a new player registration and competition management system implemented this season across most of the States in Australia and driven by a partnership between Cricket Australia and PlayHQ. Despite a significant amount of training and testing when it was first implemented, some issues arose that hadn't been fully foreseen or tested. This required a major shift from Cricket NSW to reallocate resources and people to get closer to our customers to understand what the issues were and how it was affecting them. We then drove engagement with both Cricket Australia and PlayHQ to address these issues. It caused frustration for our volunteers which is very painful to us because we strive to relieve the burden on our volunteers. Many of those issues have been resolved and we will continue to work closely with our direct customers and Cricket Australia and Play HQ to make the experience better. There are still some ongoing issues for the user, but I do think we are making progress, and that in time, this will be a system that helps our volunteers.

What are your focus areas in 2023 – personnel, infrastructure, sponsors, collaboration with CA and other state associations, etc.?

Our key focus areas in 2023 are centred around our strategic priorities to:

- Transform to a customer-focused organisation
- Simplify the way cricket is delivered to support and energise our volunteers
- Unify our key partners to make NSW and Australian Cricket as strong as possible

- Protect the long term security of high quality facilities at all levels of the game

Under these priorities we have 14 strategic objectives:

1. Live the CNSW culture
2. Develop effective leadership
3. Build our capabilities
4. Offer a compelling people experience
5. Uplift our risk management culture
6. Improve our customer focused marketing & offerings
7. Develop the best High Performance system in world cricket
8. Support our volunteers to grow cricket together
9. Grow opportunities for more people to play and be involved in cricket
10. Deliver the best fan and participant experience in Australian sport
11. Produce the best players, coaches, umpires, teams and administrators in Australia
12. Continue to invest in growth (facilities & programs)
13. Grow CNSW revenue and produce surplus
14. Activate and sustain Cricket Central

Can you talk about the stakeholder engagement plans for Cricket NSW – Councils, Parents and Carers, State Government, Staff, Volunteers?

Our ambition to be a customer-focused organisation is reliant on us understanding who our customers are and listening to their needs. We did go through identifying who our stakeholder or customer cohorts are and we ended up with a very long list! Cricket is a sport and Cricket NSW is an organisation that has a significant amount of diversity in regard to the type of cricket, our organisational responsibilities and the number of stakeholders we directly or indirectly have contact with. We have started implementing a Voice of Customer program that is enabling us to hear about the experiences our customers are having. Within our Shared Services and Customer and Consumer Squads we have teams each with the responsibility to lead the engagement with these cohorts. This includes developing specific plans that suit the respective customer group – how to communicate, how frequently, what to communicate, alongside trying to receive as much real time feedback from them, e.g., live NPS (Net Promoter Score).

What are your top three projects in 2023?

1. To Grow the number of 5-12 year olds playing our game – we have a "going to the moon" goal of doubling this number by the end of the 2026 season and it is our WIG (Wildly Important Goal). We continue to execute this using the Franklin Covey discipline of 4DX.
2. Develop and implement our Leadership Development Program.
3. Developing strategic partnerships especially with UTS and Major League Cricket in the USA.

What is your message for cricket volunteers who are championing the local associations, clubs and leagues? What can they look forward to in 2023?

My message is one of appreciation and respect. Our sport would be far worse off without our wonderful volunteers. They have had some incredibly challenging times over the last few years with climatic and Covid issues. They have done an amazing job to keep our sport going and in numerous cases grow our sport. We can look forward to the end of the 2022/23 and start of the 2023/24 seasons with great hope. This season is

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finishing well – we have grown the number of 5 – 12 year olds playing and the Big Bash ended on a successful note. We have a new home that is starting to be a home for all of us. We look forward to an unaffected start to the 2023/24 season and a heightened focus from us as to how we can support our volunteers and lessen their burden.

How is community cricket's popularity today? If you had a crystal ball, what would you predict its future would be in the next three to five years?

Part of developing our strategic plan and our Wildly Important Goal was understanding the relevancy of cricket in our current society. The Australian national teams (both men's and women's) are hugely successful and popular, however the number of children choosing to play our game as a percentage of our population has gotten smaller. Our sport will continue to develop and evolve and our communities will choose to play the sport in very different ways. Time is becoming more scarce and our families and players are looking for more effective ways to use their leisure time. In the next 3 – 5 years we will see cricket being played by many different groups in many different ways – different formats, different times of the week, different structures etc. With our focus on increasing the number of young children playing our game we are aiming to build the funnel for the future.

With a huge employee and volunteer base, how do you manage DEI within the ranks of Cricket NSW?

We have a wonderful People Experience Team who help lead us in this space and our people strive to connect with others by exhibiting our values of humility and

relationships. We launched our Reconciliation Action Plan last year and continue to increase our awareness of cultural and general differences in our employees, volunteers and participants. We continue to seek to understand how we can create a culture of belonging for all people who work, play and love cricket.

How is Cricket NSW managing the enhanced cybersecurity challenges of today?

As part of a federated model this is an area that is led and managed by Cricket Australia.

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How to recognise red flags and avoid project failure
Grant Bridger

Despite advances in project processes and organisational maturity, project failure is more common than many would like to admit. So how can you avoid the key pitfalls and ensure your next project is a success? Here PM-Partners Client Engagement Director Grant Bridger explains how to recognise and respond to red flags, and why early identification and intervention are so key.

With decades of experience across a range of industries, Grant strives to solve business problems, provide advice and execute strategy via successful programmes and transformations. His expertise includes design and implementation of frameworks, way of working uplifts and PMOs, large business case development and execution of transformations.

Project failure is far more common than organisations will admit. Three in five organisations fail to deliver most or all the benefits of their projects; more than 70 per cent struggle to deliver projects on time; and almost 60 per cent do not complete their project within budget. What's more, less than half of project managers feel their organisation manages projects and programmes effectively.

Fortunately, there are many warning signs that precede failure. These will differ depending on the project type, complexity, the size of your team and the industry in which you operate, but there are several common red flags that can crop up regardless of context.

Being aware of these signs and spotting them early, gives you a chance to avoid project failure, rescue the initiative and salvage the benefits.

Let's have a look at three of the most notorious warning signs to keep on your radar:

RED FLAG NO.1: The project plan is superficial and key details are absent

Warning signs: There's a lack of understanding and clarity about the purpose and intent of the project, for instance:

- You have a hard time describing the project goals, its business case, outputs and benefits, to others.
- Project team members find it difficult to proceed because next steps are not clear.
- Key resources, from experienced personnel to funds, are unallocated or allocated incorrectly.

Cause: Poor project planning.

'Poor planning' and 'vague goals' are two of the most significant factors in project failure. Two in five project managers cite 'poor requirements gathering', one in three cite 'poor upfront planning', one in five cite 'inexperienced project manager' and 20 per cent point to 'limited/taxed resources' as key reasons for failure. A common failing of organisations is to cut short planning in their rush to secure funding.

Remedy: Start as you mean to go on; a thorough plan is essential to avoid project failure. Before developing a plan, the organisation must address the business case and requirements upfront, including outlining success criteria, before realistically examining its resources, including time, budget and suitable personnel. Already commenced the project? An expert remediator should be able to reshape the project plan to make it feasible given your resources. This may mean an overhaul of scope, budget and schedule. Effective assurance can also work to cut through any cultural and cross-department issues, re-aligning the organisation behind the initiative by allocating the appropriate resources and re-injecting the velocity required.

RED FLAG NO.2: Stakeholders are confused about their roles

Warning signs: Progress may be haphazard. Behaviour to look out for includes:
- Clashes between more than one set of stakeholders who believe they are responsible for particular activities or outputs.
- Neglect of an area of responsibility with no one committed to it.
- Stakeholders not prioritising key activities or outputs, or prioritising the wrong things.

Cause: Lack of ownership.

Poor accountability can often be attributed to unclear ownership and a lack of understanding about how different stakeholders fit within the project ecosystem. This results in key stakeholders – including team members and sponsors – getting lost along the way. The same issue can also apply to governance members, and projects with multiple sponsors – a sure-fire recipe for confusion!

Remedy: Be direct about roles so that all stakeholders understand their place in the wider project. Foster ownership through active conversation; an independent remediator can help you gather feedback and incorporate responses into the project going forward. Even if you can't always act on feedback, it's important to show you've listened.

RED FLAG NO.3: The project always seems like it's on the edge of failing

Warning signs: Regular requests to extend the project parameters, or signs that risks have been overlooked, for example:
- The project team keeps asking for more funds or more time to pull the project back

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- from the brink.
- Changes are often a complete surprise rather than planned-for and managed.
- Small snags have the potential to grow into major failure points.

Cause: Insufficient contingencies.

[More than one in four project managers cite ineffective risk management as a cause of project failure](#). In particular, large projects tend to suffer from over-optimistic [risk management](#) where mitigation strategies and contingency planning is inadequate.

Remedy: Take a realistic look at your risk exposure. To prevent poor risk management from derailing your project, [risk plans](#) need to specify early indicators that prompt when contingencies need to be used. If necessary, seek expert advice to assess whether the contingencies are realistic, sufficient and acceptable to the project owner.

Keeping projects on track

Being cognisant and alert to these common red flags will help you identify issues before it's too late. In most cases, with the right expertise and approach, failing or stressed projects can be salvaged if action is taken as early as possible.

Remediation may include realigning projects to deliver their original outcomes, which could mean an overhaul of scope, budget and schedule, or a plan to salvage benefits to secure some return on investment even if the original aim of the project falls by the wayside.

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Beyond Project Management
Ibrahim Dani

Stakeholder Management: Deliberate Relationship Building

Stakeholder Management is one of the key pillars of effective project management. Managing their expectations and keeping them in the know of project progress and status are good practices that work well with committed and already engaged stakeholders. However, to surpass good project management towards making a real difference by delivering long-impacting projects, you need to go beyond merely managing your stakeholders: you need to deliberately build a **purposeful**, **collaborative**, and **positive** relationship with your stakeholders — particularly the difficult ones.

Melanie McBride in her PMI Global Conference 2012 Paper "A PM, a bully, a ghost, and a micromanager walk into a bar — difficult stakeholders and how to manage them" (https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/basic-stakeholder-management-relationship-techniques-6082) provided an innovative description of effective stakeholder management: "the **purposeful crafting** of a **collaborative** and **positive** relationship that truly separates the very good project managers from the superb project managers." Let me explain the impactful words in this interesting definition:

- **Purposeful:** deliberate and planned stakeholder management and relationship building. Doing it 'on purpose', not by chance or as a by-product of other Project Management activities. Devise a clear plan for relationship building.
- **Crafting:** An excellent use of the word 'crafting' rather than 'building'. It is important to 'craft' the relationship with art and innovation.
- **Collaborative:** A good relationship is always a two-way relationship built on collaboration — give and take.
- **Positive:** Always look for the positive side of things: search for the 'silver lining' and promptly address any potential setbacks.

To build such an effective relationship, you should be aware of the characteristics of your stakeholders. The more 'difficult' your stakeholders are, the more effort you need to put in crafting the relationship. Here are some examples of difficult stakeholders and few suggestions on how to deal with them.

The Bully, that stakeholder who dominates you and others through aggressive force of will. There aren't many around, but they derail your project while they are thinking they are doing the

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.

right thing. For bullies, you need to establish a strong 'first impression'. Don't hesitate to confront, explain with confidence, and persuade. The important thing is to keep the discussion professional and avoid being dragged into a "winners vs losers" game. Look them in the eye (or in the camera if it's a virtual meeting) and be ready to call 'timeout' and regain your position if needed. One way you can deal with a bully is to give them an assignment to produce data to support their argument. If they are unable to produce supporting data, they are likely to notice the flaw in their argument.

The Ghost, the stakeholder who doesn't return your calls, emails, or messages and are ambivalent to your project status. You should aim to limit your project's dependence on their input and direction. Agree with them on how far you will run without their direct input, knowledge, or approval. Ensure that they remain happy and be extremely concise and direct in your communication with them. One thing you can do is consider whether they can delegate their authority to another, more engaged, stakeholder.

The Visionary, the stakeholder who has the 'big picture' of what they want, but they can't explain it. You have to be patient with their long talks and twisted tales. They are usually happy with the project, and they acknowledge how it is important to their future. Ensure that you drive the discussion into deliverables that will achieve their vision. It would be good if you can develop early prototypes to review them and discuss them with the visionary stakeholder. Make sure you are conclusive and explicit about the deliverable and what can and can't be done – or what is in or out of scope, otherwise you will be dragged into an endless list of amendments and new features.

The Micromanager, the stakeholder who looks for the tiny details and undermines the Project Manager authority. To satisfy the 'micromanagement' desire of your stakeholder, provide consistent, regular, and concise status updates. Show them "here is how you can help up" in your updates and provide them with actionable items they can work on. With the current move into 'virtual' ways of working where the stakeholder is not physically close to 'stop by and see how things are going', a consistent and regular update with actionable items is more important than ever.

The Prisoner, one of the more toxic stakeholders: they don't want to be on your project, but they are "nominated" (forced) by their managers. Your main strategy is to see how you can get them off your project – peacefully. Have a candid discussion with their direct manager and see if they can be assigned somewhere else. If you are lucky and the prisoner is not disrupting the team dynamics, let them be there. However, if they are 'sucking the joy out of the room' then you need to think seriously about removing them – make them aware that you are going to escalate about them.

In conclusion, do your homework: don't manage your stakeholders in an ad-hoc manner – have a structured and deliberate plan to deal with them. A well-crafted email is not enough, you should own and drive the conversation.

The Bully   **The Ghost**   **The Visionary**   **The Micromanager**   **The Prisoner**

Projects and Transformations
Jess Tayel

The Balancing Act of Projects and Large Initiatives

Large change initiatives, such as organisational restructuring or implementing new technology, can often be hindered by the quality of the many projects that make up the initiative. This is because these initiatives are composed of multiple smaller projects that must be completed successfully to achieve the change initiative's overall goal.

One major issue that can arise is that the focus on individual projects can lead to a lack of line of sight to the larger initiative. For example, a project team may become so focused on completing a specific project that they miss out on how the project outcome fits into the larger change program. This can lead to delays or even failure of the change initiative.

Another challenge is that each project may have different goals and priorities, leading to conflicting or competing demands. This can cause confusion and inefficiency as resources are pulled in different directions. Additionally, it can be challenging to ensure that the projects are aligned with the overall goals of the initiative, which can lead to wasted efforts and resources.

To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to clearly understand the big picture and how each project contributes to it. This can be achieved through effective communication, change leadership, and coordination between project teams and the initiative's leadership. Additionally, a solid project management framework can help ensure that each project achieves the right outcome while aligning with the initiative's overall goals.
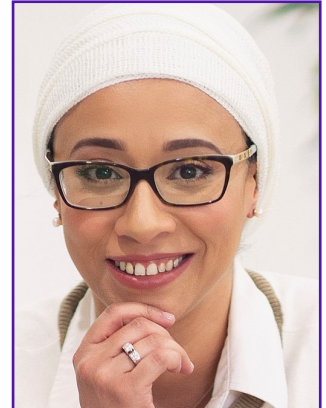
Jess Tayel is a global thought leader in Business transformation, an executive coach and mentor. Her mission is to elevate the transformation practice and enable leaders to be the best version of themselves. Jess is also the founder of the People of Change Community, a global community for leaders and professionals in change, transformation, program management and experience design.
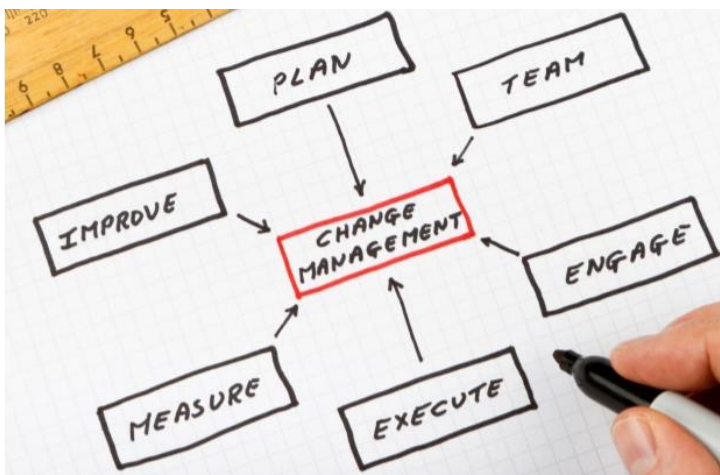
However, it is also vital to ensure that the projects are done right and not just done fast. This means that teams should be focused on delivering high-quality and high-value work that meets the requirements and expectations of stakeholders. This can be achieved through effective planning, proper change management, and a healthy team culture and dynamics.

One major obstacle in delivering value in most projects and PMO structures is the cumbersome governance structure design that drives the wrong behaviour and intent.

In many organisations, the governance structure focuses primarily on pure status reporting, holds the stick to those red and amber projects and lacks effective and timely decision-making capabilities.

Those governance structures will rarely enable projects to succeed, leaving the project managers to figure things out themselves while avoiding looking "bad" in those governance meetings.

In summary, large change initiatives can be hindered by the quality of its many projects. Therefore, the balancing act of seeing and linking to the big picture while also ensuring that we are doing things right at the project level is crucial to the initiative's success. Effective communication, coordination, project management, and change leadership help to overcome these challenges and ensure that the change and transformation initiative is completed successfully.

Coco's Corner
Leo Coco

Building an Effective Team

Firstly, you would think that building an effective team should not be so hard right... or is it?

It's no secret that when you build any type of team there is a level of commitment required from its members. As Project Managers, if you really want it to be a healthy team, then you will need the entire team to share the same level of commitment.

When you have worked with a High Performing Team, you will definitely feel it! And more importantly, I think organisations significantly underestimate the power of a great team and how this could be turned into a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Over the last 25 years, I have worked with many organisations across Australia and fundamentally, teamwork has almost always been lacking within organisations that fail and there seems to be a level of chaos that also follows too.

Why do we overlook such a simple element of the organisational ecosystem – teamwork – as a means to making an impact to the bottom line?

Delivering projects is about a team of people in an organisation coming together and setting aside their own needs for the good of a common cause or objective which sometimes may seem impossible. But fundamentally, they get things done, sometimes because they eliminate or don't get involved in office politics which is common in many organisations.

There is nothing more important than teamwork when it comes to helping people find fulfillment in their work. As a team member, it gives you a sense of belonging and connection which can flow through other parts of your life too.

The true measure of a team is that it actually accomplishes the result it set out to achieve. For a team to achieve this they need to overcome what most of you have likely already heard of as "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team":
1. Absence of Trust
2. Fear of Conflict
3. Lack of Commitment

Project Management Authority, Trainer, Entrepreneur and Speaker, there are many facets to Leo Coco. 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.

4. Avoidance of Accountability
5. Inattention to Results

As we move into a new normalised way of working (Hybrid – Home/Office) in 2023, are you feeling some imbalance and uneasiness forming within your teams?

It's important to note that team-building efforts can be effective, BUT before you start with these activities, ask these two questions to your teams this year, and see what their thoughts are. Use the questions below in a meeting you can schedule with you team and have an open discussion, allowing each person to share their thoughts:

Question 1 – Are we really a team?

Sometimes team improvement activities are set for failure from the beginning because those attending are not "really" a team…well not in the true sense of the word. For this question, if the team do not share common goals as well as reward/responsibility for achieving those goals and readily set aside their own individual or personal needs for the greater good of the group, then maybe the group is just a collection of people who might be reporting to the same manager.

Take the time to really get agreement and perspective from the team on this question and see what comes up… Ultimately, this feeds into building trust within the team to openly share their thoughts as well. Use the team's responses to agree if you have a REAL team, otherwise you may need to make some changes within the team.

Question 2 – Are we ready for heavy lifting?

I am hoping that the responses you received from the team for question 1 are positive and they actually all do meet the criteria of a real team as the advantages of being a real team are huge! Yet, this can still be difficult to achieve as team members will need to also invest not only a considerable amount of time but also emotional energy to become an effective team.

Ask yourself, are you fully invested, and will you do what you need to do, even if it means some HEAVY LIFTING to show your commitment to the team?

Note: Teams go through different stages as they develop. You have likely already heard of the most commonly used framework which was developed in the mid-60s by Bruce W. Tuckman for a team's stages of development and his descriptions of Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing which also provide a useful framework for looking at your team's working effectiveness.

This is a great starting point from my perspective for building an effective and high performing team that I hope you find useful.
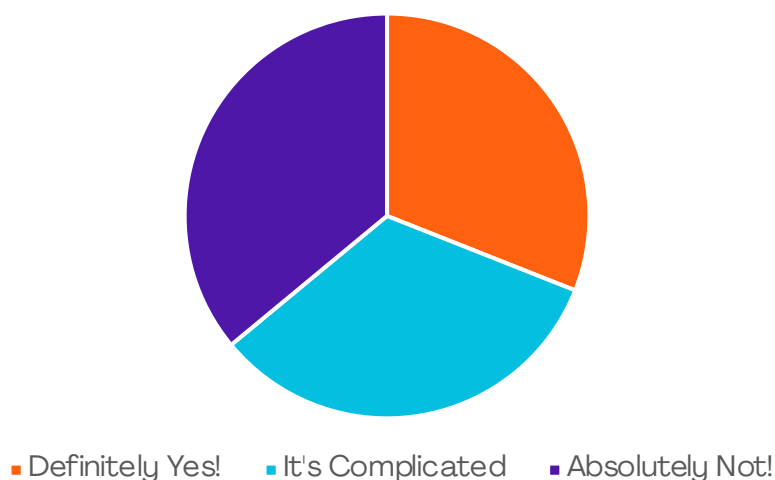
To Your Success!

Leo Coco

Can We Learn from the Evolving PMBOK?

Louis Taborda

In my last column for 2022, I posed a simple question: Is the PMBOK the best way to learn Project Management? I posted the same question as a poll on LinkedIn and received 42 votes with the results shown in the figure below.

Is the PMBOK the best way to learn project management?

■ Definitely Yes!   ■ It's Complicated   ■ Absolutely Not!

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.

If you did not participate in the poll, have a quick think about what your answer might be. Not just because it is an interesting question but because it is vitally important that we form a consensus on how best to learn or teach our discipline and develop future project managers.

To start with (and to give you some time to make up your own mind) we should consider what the PMBOK represents. PMI defines our BOK as a "consensus standard" meaning that a group of practitioners got together to determine what represented good project management practice. The latest 7th edition of what I loosely am calling the PMBOK is actually a PM Standard followed by a Guide to PMBOK, which we all should know by now has undergone significant restructure from the previous "process-based" editions.

Instead of describing "how" project managers might do to initiate, plan, execute, monitor and close a project, the new PMBOK7 takes a "principle-centric" view of projects that looks at the motivation (the "why") we need to do some of these things. That makes it less prescriptive and flexible, but it also has left those who teach/ learn PM with a challenge: there is less guidance on exactly what a

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project manager might actually do and a lot more if-then-maybe type choices that have to be made. For all of the limitations that a prescriptive approach to projects might suffer from in the real world, it was nice to have a simple "how to" structure for a project - at least for the student or rookie who is new to the PM discipline.

And that takes us back to the question at hand: Is the PMBOK the best way to learn Project Management?

Maybe you are having second thoughts about your answer and personally, everything is pointing to "It's complicated" being the best answer. The fact is that the "version tree" of recent PMBOK editions (and their companion documents) has blow-out to be complicated in their own right. Even before we start to learn about our discipline, we need to understand how this knowledge is represented - which is great, but it won't help you deliver a project!

PMI has always recognised the value of the process-based approach and until recently suggested both PMBOK6 and PMBOK7 were relevant – which is a little confusing - particularly to those who wanted to study for the PMP certification exams. But now a new PMI publication (Did you know?) titled Process Groups: A Practice Guide will act as a companion to PMBOK7, and released in October, 2022 it is a repackaging of PMBOK6 process groups without the original ten "Knowledge Areas" which are no longer mentioned.

If you have persisted with this argument thus far, you may have noted that I have not given my personal view on learning/teaching project management from PMBOK. And what I see is a risk that the formalisation of our discipline, and the knowledge we are developing, is becoming increasingly complex and that complexity is in danger of confusing future students.

The way we can improve how we teach/learn PM is not simply related to how we structure project management knowledge. I prefer to go back to the very origins of the discipline and the original purpose for collecting the knowledge of experienced project practitioners. That I believe (remember!) was to create a repository of good practice for fellow practitioners. It was designed to be a useful reference for other (maybe less experienced) project managers to avoid the pitfalls that other practitioners had discovered. It was never designed to be a way for a newbie to learn about the discipline!

Maybe our PMBOK is less relevant to students than we think?

What my teaching experience has demonstrated is that it depends on the student and where they are in the career journey. A student who is keen to learn project management but lacks any real work experience (for example, has never participated in a project) can will struggle to understand the PMBOK because they lack the context. While we may use the PMBOK as a framework for our courses, without the appropriate guidance it can become a theoretical construct ripe for rote learning.

So, can the PMBOK (the standard, along with the guide and its many-fold companions) which is designed to serve as a reference for a PM professional, also serve as an introduction for a newcomer to the discipline?

The answer is definitely complicated!

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Chapter News – February 2023

Women in Projects Australia's International Women's Day event
Wednesday 8th March 2023

Sponsored by PMI Sydney Chapter and Escient

Reserve your place to join us discuss this year's International Women's Day theme for 2023: #EmbraceEquity

We'll have a panel of speakers answer what Embracing Equity means to them & their experience, some nibbles, and a great opportunity to meet new faces and re-connect with familiar faces. Everyone is welcome!

- 6:00pm to 6:15pm – Networking & Nibbles
- 6:30pm to 7:30pm – Welcome & Panel Event – speakers to be announced this week, so RSVP to see the announcements!
- 7:30pm to 8:00pm – Networking & Close

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Women in Projects Australia's February event - New Year Kick Off: Your Game Plan for Restarting in 2023

Our February event was very well attended, hearing from our Speaker, Mal Anderson, researcher and writer about adaptive organisations and the future of change. He is passionate about helping people and organisations become adaptive through resilience and collaboration.

Mal prompted us to think more future focused and set ourselves up for success in 2023. There were some really great questions from the group and some great ideas shared.

PMI Mentoring returns in 2023!

PMI Sydney is excited to announce the re-launch of the chapter's mentoring program – and that applications are now open for the program's first intake in 2023!

Applications for the 1st round intake close at 5pm on Friday 3rd March 2023.

Follow the link below to learn more

Applications close this Friday!
Register at https://pmisydney.org/professional-development/mentoring2023

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Upcoming PM Partners Courses

FEATURED COURSES

PMI-ACP Exam Preparation Workshop

📅 13-15 March

📍 Sydney & Virtual Classroom

SUPER SAVINGS
$1,516

Learn more →

Coaching Agile Teams

📅 29-30 March

📍 Sydney

SUPER SAVINGS
$1,500

Learn more →

Running an Effective Hybrid PMO

📅 16-17 March

📍 Sydney & Virtual Classroom

SUPER SAVINGS
$1,195

Learn more →

MELBOURNE IS ON SALE

Save 40% on Project Management, Business Analysis, and Agile training courses!

VIEW COURSES

Hurry sale ends soon. T&Cs apply.

40% off all Melbourne in-classroom courses until 31 March

Register for courses via the links below:

- https://www.pm-partners.com.au/course/project-management-institute-agile-certified-practitioner-pmi-acp-exam-preparation/

- https://www.pm-partners.com.au/course/coaching-agile-teams/

- https://www.pm-partners.com.au/course/running-agile-hybrid-pmo/

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 2023 events and participate in panel discussion. Please submit your interest at the following link:
https://forms.gle/Ai6eLJE6U4gxMcPh8

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 in January or February 2023. We thank you for your association, support and advice.

PMI Sydney Member	Years of Membership
January 2023	
Onur Gerksar	3
Margaret Ogston	3
Karthik Ramamurthy	3
Harsha Bangalore Subramanya	3
Juliana Karen Jamal	3
Jean Laval Chue Him	3
Chen Kang	3
Nathan Hilder	10
Sarah Husselmann	10
Ethan Taylor	10
Jeroen Lubbers	10
John Gesouras	20
Donlet Pedro	25
February 2023	
Robert Bolton	3
Diana Cardona	3
Amirmehdi Edraki	3
Derek Hamilton-Gibbs	3
William Mangimela	3
Sean Mullin	3
Tushar Patkar	3
Syed Abid Rizvi	3
Stephen So	3
Sylvester Pious Vellaithurai	3
Michelle Wilson	3
Anna Zolotukhina	3
Pat Belcastro	5
David Cater	5
George Dobson	5
Robert Emmerson	5

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.

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PMI Sydney Member	Years of Membership
February 2023 (continued)	
Mirel Gogic	5
Conrad Hilder	5
Drew Logie	5
Jonathon Mann	5
John Morley	5
McDonald Obi	5
Darian Saba	5
Ilan Bloom	10
Brad Burrows	10
Boris Gole	10
Michael Murray	10
Bronwyn Orsatti	10
Ravi Kokirala	15
Yerchan Giragosian	20

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Photo of the Month
PMI Sydney

About the image

The PMI Sydney and Canberra Board Members participated at a joint Annual Strategy Workshop at Kiama on 25 and 26 February. The sessions were led by YeYoon Kim and Xing Ying Lee from PMI Singapore, while Region 10 mentor James Dobson guided and channelled the discussions.

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