



**Project  
Management  
Institute.**  
Sydney, Australia

# The Critical Path

October 2023



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# Editor's Note

## Himadri Chowdhury

Returning to Sydney after four days at the PMI Global Summit 2023 in Atlanta, I have a mixed bag of emotions – a part of me revels in the fact that I could attend something in the scale and grandeur of the Global Summit with a chance to meet people from so many countries and cultures, while another part heaves a huge sigh of relief that this is finally over and I can get back to a quieter life. The Global Summit is a culmination of PMI's best of the best, a showcase of the year's effort in every field, and with 3500 people moving in and out of conference rooms and exhibition halls to attend multiple tracks running in parallel, it is a massive adrenaline rush over the four days.



This year, there were three representatives from the Sydney Chapter, me, our Membership Director Sydney Mudau, and our Volunteering Director My Tran Le. We were joined by several others from the Region 10 Chapters, including PMI Melbourne, PMI WA, PMI ACT, PMI NZ, PMI Tasmania, PMI Japan, PMI Mongolia, PMI South Korea, PMI Singapore, PMI Taiwan, PMI Malaysia and PMI Lahore and Karachi. The PMI Asia Pacific team comprising YeYoon, Ben Breen, Kelvin, Raphael, and others did a fantastic job of managing and coordinating this diverse group of people and helping out at various venues inside the conference halls.

Apart from the R10 Chapters, it was an absolute privilege to meet the honourees of this year's PMO and Project of the Year, the finalists and winners of the Chapter of the Year, the awardees of the various PMI awards, and the venerable PMI fellows. The PMI Board was well-represented, while the CEO, Pierre Le Manh, led from the front in the opening and closing keynotes and the award night. We have some photos to share in the Chapter News section. A dedicated write-up from Sydney, My and me will come next month where we will talk about our perspectives on this year's focus PMIXAI.

Earlier this month, Melbourne hosted the PMI Region 10 meeting attended by all the Region 10 Chapter representatives, including our Secretary Eric Liaw and Sydney. There were some very interesting discussions on a lot of strategic leadership issues plus better ways of working together across the region. Eric has summarised his thoughts in the Chapter News section. We also had three very successful Academic roadshows with the University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney, conducted by the PMI Region 10 team with the active engagement of the PMI Sydney Chapter. More details in the news section.

As the year draws to a close, the PMI Sydney Chapter volunteer teams are curating some interesting events for the membership. We are hosting our next in-person Project Management Day of Service (PMDoS) event for 2023 on 9 November, where we are inviting PMI members, volunteers and partners to join us. We have a volunteer event on 18 November, Women in Projects on 21 November, and the PMI Sydney Christmas event on 14 December.

The PMI Sydney Chapter Board elections have just ended and we have announced the names of the incoming Board Members. Thank you to all who participated and congratulations to the winners. A big thank you to all members who voted.

In this month's Critical Path, Ibrahim Dani describes how emotional awareness can lead to emotional agility, which in turn helps us unhook from destructive patterns. Corporate Training Consultant at PM-Partners, Brooke Barclay, talks about project leadership and the different traits for the same. Also refer to the Chapter News for upcoming events and occurrences.

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

Best,

Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury

Editor, The Critical Path

# Project leadership: leading projects and teams to success

## Brooke Barclay

*Brooke Barclay, Corporate Training Consultant at PM-Partners, delves into the topic of project leadership and how managers and leaders can hone their leadership skills and bring out the best in their teams.*

The quality of a project's leadership is often the difference between success and failure, which is why project managers must arm themselves with the right skills to ensure their team hits every predefined goal – preferably on time and under budget. Poor leadership can cause projects to become directionless and even negatively impact the team's collaborative qualities and productivity.

Findings from [LinkedIn's Workplace Learning Report 2023](#) highlight the critical importance of leadership skills to today's organisations, particularly in the project sphere. Of the skills companies need most right now, leadership abilities were ranked fourth out of ten across business functions and second for project and programme managers.

By training yourself to be an adaptable leader – one who can adjust their leadership style according to both the project and your team's unique personalities – you will be able to identify and mitigate risks, manage changing stakeholder demands, and ultimately guide your team towards a common goal.

Here's how to take your project leadership to the next level by acquiring the traits and skills of an effective leader.

### **The difference between project leadership and management**

The effectiveness of a project leader's skill set has a direct influence not only on the project's final outcome, but also the team's morale, risk management, stakeholder interactions, the employee experience and more.

Importantly, while project management focuses primarily on the planning, organising and controlling of resources, project leadership is more about motivating and guiding your team throughout the entire project's lifecycle.

### **Leadership skills required for effective project leadership**

[Effective project leadership](#) involves a combination of hard (or



Brooke Barclay

Corporate Training  
Consultant at PM-  
Partners

interpersonal effectiveness) skills. And it is the latter which are most influential to becoming a competent leader. From communication and collaboration, to emotional intelligence, keen decision-making and [conflict resolution](#), project leaders must possess a variety of soft skills in order to build and manage high-performing teams over the long term.

## Traits of effective project leaders

If you are looking to progress your career and move into more of a leadership position, there are some innate traits you may already possess; others you may be able to adopt with the right training and professional development.

The bottom line is that modern project leaders must be strategic business partners who are [fully committed to the organisation's success](#). Here are some of the traits that effective project leaders possess:

- Visionary
- Decisive
- Resilient
- Empathetic
- Collaborative
- Communicative
- Innovative
- Trustworthy

## How to improve your project leadership skills

Building a high-performance team is just as much down to the leader as it is the individuals working on the project. Here are some ways you can improve your own project leadership skills:

### 1. Profile your team members

Project leaders should take the time to get to know every team member, working to better understand their strengths, communication preferences and overarching goals. Behavioral profiling is particularly useful here to give an overview of all team members, with the aim of ensuring they are working to the best of their ability towards a common vision and goals.

### 2. Provide context

Good leaders are able to provide clear context around their expectations to help team members understand their role within the project. Team members who are able to see the 'bigger picture' will make better decisions and take greater ownership of their work, which can supercharge project results and potentially lead to a more motivated team.

### 3. Lead by example

What do you expect from your team members? Then you should model that same behaviour for *them*. Solid leaders hold themselves accountable and are transparent about their decision-making. Leading by example means setting a positive tone – whether that's encouraging teamwork, recognising the contributions of individuals or

[promoting a culture of continuous improvement.](#)

#### 4. Provide opportunities for growth

Providing growth opportunities can help your team feel more valued and invested in the project's success. Training, mentoring, coaching and career development opportunities can all improve team members' skills and knowledge. By investing in their development, you are telling them you are invested in their *future success*, leading to a more motivated and high-performing team. Tapping into PM-Partners' [Capability Hub](#) is a great place to start in this regard, providing a clear picture of where to focus your uplift efforts. Or, better still, allow our experts to create an [in-house capability uplift program](#) tailored to your needs.

Ultimately, successful project management relies on good project leadership. When leaders possess a combination of hard and [soft skills](#), and have the capacity to adopt the most appropriate leadership approach for any situation, they can build high-performing teams that boost project outcomes.

*Whether you're looking to enhance your project leadership skills or strengthen your team's delivery capabilities, PM-Partners can help. In addition to our portfolio of training courses, our proven [capability uplift framework](#) draws on data and analytics to identify areas of weakness and build a customised program to drive measurable improvements. To find out more, [contact our expert team](#) online or call 1300 70 13 14 today.*

*This article is an abridged version of the original – [read the complete text here.](#)*

# Beyond Project Management

## Ibrahim Dani

### Emotional Agility for Project Managers – A Path to Success

We are increasingly bombarded by a huge number of bits of sensory information every day. The human mind works tirelessly to make sense of the humongous amount of information it is getting every second, and to respond with the right decision. This is exacerbated in the high-stakes world of project management, where deadlines loom, teams need to be guided effectively, and stakeholders demand results. Dr. Susan David, a renowned psychologist and author, has championed the importance of emotional agility in personal and professional life. In this article, I explore the concept of 'Emotional Agility' developed by Dr. Susan David and how it enables project managers to navigate the complex landscape of project leadership with greater ease and success.

#### The Project Manager's Balancing Act

Project managers shoulder a myriad of responsibilities. They must lead their teams, allocate resources, maintain clear communication with everyone, and ensure the project stays on course. These demands often lead to high levels of stress, clouding their judgement and forcing them to react quickly.

Emotional agility begins with self-awareness—a cornerstone of Dr. Susan David's philosophy. Project managers must recognise and understand their own emotional responses to effectively lead and manage their teams. By becoming aware of emotional triggers and understanding when they are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or frustrated, project managers can proactively address these emotions to make better decisions.

#### Unhooking from Destructive Patterns

Dr. Susan David's concept of being "hooked" by emotions is a crucial component of emotional agility. Being hooked refers to becoming entangled in unproductive, often destructive, emotional patterns. For project managers, this might involve getting stuck in negative thought loops, dwelling on mistakes, or becoming paralysed by fear.

Emotional agility helps project managers recognise when they are hooked and provides them with the tools to unhook from these patterns. By developing emotional agility, project managers can



[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.

break free from counterproductive emotional cycles, enabling them to make better decisions and lead more effectively.

### **The Power of Emotional Awareness**

Emotional awareness empowers project managers to make thoughtful and informed decisions. For instance, if a project manager acknowledges that unforeseen delays are causing mounting frustration, they can pause, reflect on their emotions, and choose a more constructive response. This may involve revising timelines, transparently communicating challenges with the team, or seeking additional resources.

Moreover, self-awareness helps project managers avoid impulsive, emotion-driven reactions that can lead to conflicts or suboptimal decisions. By understanding their emotional states, they can detach from the immediate emotional response and make rational choices, maintaining composure in challenging situations.

### **Leading with Authenticity**

Another important aspect of emotional agility is authenticity. Authentic leadership involves being true to oneself and one's values while also being attuned to the needs and emotions of others. Project managers who lead authentically inspire trust and confidence in their teams.

Authenticity in leadership requires project managers to embrace vulnerability, admitting when they don't have all the answers or when they've made a mistake. This fosters a culture of openness and trust within the team. When project managers demonstrate emotional authenticity, it encourages team members to do the same, leading to stronger connections and better collaboration.

### **Adapting to Changing Circumstances**

Project managers often encounter unexpected challenges or shifts in project dynamics. Emotional agility enables them to adapt to these changes effectively. This adaptability is especially important in today's rapidly evolving business landscape.

Instead of clinging to a rigid plan, an emotionally agile project manager can pivot and adjust the project's course as needed. This flexibility not only prevents roadblocks but also allows for innovation and creative problem-solving. It's about being open to new ideas and approaches, even if they weren't part of the initial project plan.

### **Emotional Agility in Communication**

Project managers who are emotionally agile can attune to the emotions of their team members, comprehending their concerns and motivations. This enables them to tailor their communication to be more supportive and encouraging. Emotional agility also aids in conflict resolution, as project managers can navigate challenging conversations with empathy and composure.

Furthermore, when project managers are emotionally agile, they can anticipate and address potential communication breakdowns before they escalate. This proactive approach saves time, prevents misunderstandings, and fosters a more harmonious working environment.

### **Resilience in the Face of Setbacks**

No project unfolds without setbacks and obstacles. An emotionally agile project manager

possesses the resilience to weather these storms and emerge stronger. Resilience entails learning from setbacks rather than succumbing to them.

When a project manager encounters a setback, emotional agility allows them to process their emotions and thoughts in a healthy manner. They can analyse what went wrong, glean lessons from the experience, and adjust their strategies for future projects. This resilience not only benefits the project manager but also sets an example for the team, encouraging them to adopt a growth mindset and view setbacks as opportunities for learning and improvement.

### **Emotional agility – a path to success**

In the field of project management, emotional agility is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Project managers who develop emotional agility can lead with authenticity, make more informed decisions, adapt to changing circumstances, communicate effectively, and exhibit resilience in the face of setbacks. These skills not only enhance a project manager's performance but also contribute to a healthier and more productive work environment.

Emotional agility is not a static trait but a skill that can be cultivated and honed over time. Project managers can start by practicing self-awareness, embracing authenticity, and being open to personal growth and development. As they become more emotionally agile, they will find themselves better equipped to handle the challenges and complexities of modern project management, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes and happier, more engaged teams.

# Chapter News – October 2023

## PMI Sydney Chapter 2023 Elections Results

The election process for the PMI Sydney Chapter Board in 2023 has now closed.

Thank you to all nominees who applied for board positions, your willingness to contribute your skills and expertise to PMI Sydney Chapter is greatly appreciated.

In addition, thank you to all the PMI Chapter members that voted in the election process.

We are pleased to welcome our incoming board members for 2023, who will have a two-year term:

- Ibtihal Alhabashneh
- Luc Legret
- Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury
- Mulalo Sydney Mudau
- Wayne Smithson

The incoming board members, and the allocation of roles, will commence and be determined at a Chapter Board meeting in December 2023.

The Board sincerely thanks our Nominating Committee – Ibrahim, Leo and Dean – for facilitating this process.

# Chapter News – October 2023

## 2023 PMI Region 10 Meeting Melbourne

On 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October, our Board Secretary Eric Liaw attended the annual PMI Region 10 Meeting in Melbourne. This is an annual meeting where PMI Chapters in Australia and New Zealand gather to discuss, learn, share, and network with all the Chapter Leaders. This meeting was facilitated by YeYoon Kim, Regional Head of Community Asia Pacific from Singapore, and James Dobson, Region 10 Mentor from New Zealand.

The keynote speaker was George Liacos from SPARK who facilitated the Strategic Workshop. The key themes were The Ethical Relationship between Board and Chair, and The Values Based Board.

YeYoon provided an update on PMI Global and PMI Culture. She also talked about Psychological Safety and the TERA Model.

James explained The Role of the Mentor and shared six opportunities for all Chapter Leaders.

Finally, The Melbourne Chapter hosted a dinner at The Wharf Hotel, a great opportunity to relax, network and build long lasting relationships.



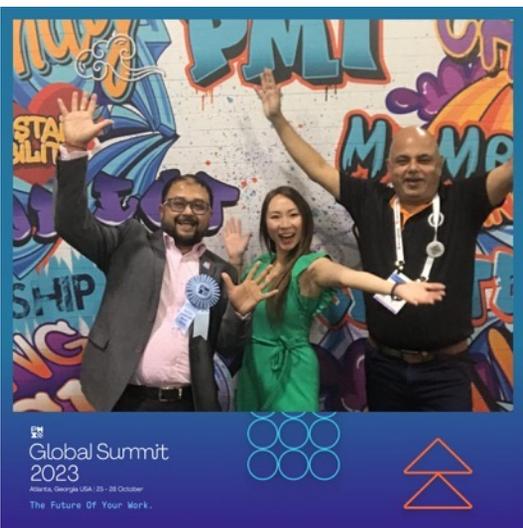
# Chapter News – October 2023

2023 PMI Region 10 Meeting Melbourne



# Chapter News – October 2023

The PMI Global Summit, held in Atlanta, USA



# Chapter News – October 2023

## Chapter Event, 17 October 2023 Diversity in Project Management

Jen Dolden, PMP and Renai Platts, co-founders of Women in Projects Australia, delivered an extremely important talk on challenges and discrimination women regularly face in the workplace, while a huge amount of questions and comments from the audience additionally highlighted the significance of this topic. Thanks to everyone for your active participation!



# Chapter News – October 2023

Chapter Event, 17 October 2023  
Diversity in Project Management



# Chapter News – October 2023

## PMI Sydney End of Year Event

PMI Sydney's End of Year Party will take place on the **14th of December** at the Four Seasons Hotel.

Spots are limited, and registrations are now open. Make sure to keep an eye on an email from PMI Sydney in your inbox for more details.



## AGILE SYMPOSIUM 2023

Navigating the Future: Agility at Every Level

From 10:30am AEDT | 5:00am IST | 2 November  
Virtual on Zoom (free) & Live in Melbourne (ticketed)



**Mark Lines**  
Keynote speaker



**Dr. Jen Frahm**  
Session chair



**Galen Townson**  
Session chair



**Peter Lam**  
Session chair

### Organising Partners



[www.pmiagilesig.org](http://www.pmiagilesig.org)

# Project Management Day of Service

Calling all Sydney-based Project Management professionals!

**Project Management Day of Service (PMDoS) is back and happening live on Thursday, 9th of November 2023!**

## What is PMDoS?

PMDoS is an exciting event which brings together PMI Sydney members, volunteers, and partners for a day of collaboration, learning, and helping the community, including charities and non-for-profit organisations.

By sharing your time, experience and expertise as a consultant, you will:

- Give back to the community while enhancing your project management skills
- Develop solutions and strategies to move current initiatives and projects forward for various charities and not-for-profit organisations in need
- Expand your networks and benefit from relationships with other like-minded professionals

Make your career more fulfilling and productive by volunteering at PMI Sydney PMDoS.

Visit PMI Sydney Chapter's PMDoS page at <https://pmisydney.org/pmdos> for more details, or via the QR code below.



# Membership Updates

## Sydney Mudau

### Message from the Membership Director

#### Successful Academic Outreach Roadshows at USYD, UWS, and UTS

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the incredible R10 team members, Xing, Reza, Nanthida and YeYoon, for their unwavering support and dedication in making our Academic Outreach Roadshow a massive success.

Their hard work, expertise, and collaborative spirit were pivotal in achieving our goals and creating a positive impact on the academic community.

I'm thrilled to have such a dynamic team, and I'm looking forward to more exciting projects and collaborations in the future.

Thank you, Xing, Reza, and YeYoon, for your outstanding contributions. You are all true assets to our mission.

Navigating Your Future kicked off on the 9th October at The University of Sydney, thank you to Fatima Afzal, Lois Taborda, Ken Chung and the School of Project Management.

Our panellists for the event were Annie Sheehan, Mike Boutel, Emitt Mayson and Hamza Arshi, and moderated by YeYoon Kim from PMI.



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.



# Membership Updates

## Sydney Mudau



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# Membership Updates

## Sydney Mudau

On the 10th October at Western Sydney University, Thank you to Dr Sean Jin and Dr Ali Srinath, Ibtihal Alhabashneh (AD PMISC) and **Reza** - Youth and Academic Lead, PMI Asia Pacific for a great presentation.



# Membership Updates

## Sydney Mudau

The final event was held on the 12th October at the University of Technology Sydney, thank you to Dr Leila M Naeni.

Our panellists for the event were Steven Brat, Danny Jakitsadaparp, Zoe Ogden and Ilia Vasiliev, and moderated by Annie Sheehan. Thanks to all for their participation!



# Photo of the Month

Rory Wilson



## About the image

It's that time of year again, when the weather starts to warm up and the jacarandas around the city come into full bloom, to give us notice that Christmas is just around the corner – as the newsletter is written, it's just under two months until December 25!