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An End is to make a beginning

Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury

As I sit back to write this editorial, it brings back bittersweet memories of the past three years. When we planned to restart The Critical Path as a monthly newsletter in 2022, we had zero volunteers, a grand dream, and not a lot of content to fill the pages. We had a vision to do something that has likely not been attempted before and provide a unique benefit to all our members and passionate project management professionals alike.



Three years and 30 editions later, I can safely say that we have created something worthwhile that we can be proud of. Whether the founding editorial team stays or moves on, this legacy for PMI Sydney Chapter will continue. This will be my last editorial for The Critical Path, having relinquished my duties to the very capable

and passionate Marketing Director Luc Legeret, who, I am sure, will take this newsletter to newer heights.

We had such wonderful contributors during this time, and I thank everyone for being a part of our journey and giving us the opportunity to showcase their work to the world. Let me also thank the wonderful team I had on this journey, Rory Wilson, who single handedly created the design of the newsletter, Eric Liaw, whose strategies and planning kept us on track, Malong Dong, who gave those bright ideas and followed them into execution, Kristy Dong and Emily Liaw, the dynamic duo who painstakingly collected inputs from the portfolios and got them ready for the newsletter. Last, but not the least, Victoria Rende and Shikha Vaidh, the newest volunteers, who will have a great time making the newsletter better with Luc.

The world has gotten a tiny bit more eccentric over these three years. We have seen conflicts erupt, passions burst forth, sabres rattled, and unpredictability assume centre-stage. None of these show any signs of slowing down, and I don't believe we would have normality, or at least a sense of it, soon. The only constant in these troubled times, ironically, seems to be Aussie property prices, which have kept steadily creeping upwards since the Covid lockdowns ended. Oh, and how can I forget the supermarkets, with their domination over what we are calling today "the cost-of-living" crisis.

Nevertheless, as project managers, we know how to keep calm amidst the chaos, manage our stakeholders, coax, cajole and convince our peers, and deliver what we need to within budget, by the deadline, and with acceptable quality. Even with AI knocking at our doorsteps, we know our relevance will not decrease, at least not tomorrow. It might make us even better project managers though! Or so I wish.

I would like to end with a profound sense of gratitude and a quote from T. S. Eliot:

What we call the beginning is often the end / And to make an end is to make a beginning. / The end is where we start from.

Thank you for your patronage and keep on reading The Critical Path for years to come!



From all of us in the Marketing and IT Portfolio:

Thank you for your vision and dedication to bring The Critical Path to life each month Himadri!

We'll miss you! ♥

A Personal Note from our new Marketing & IT Director

Luc Legeret

I wanted to take a moment to thank the incredible team of people who've helped shape PMI Sydney's distinctive voice throughout 2024. Through the leadership of Himadri, all of your dedication and creativity have built something truly special.



For those who haven't met me yet, I'm Luc, a Senior Project Manager with a background across government, NGOs and Defence. I truly believe that project management is like orchestrating a symphony, each section has its unique part to play and when we all work in harmony, it becomes something beautiful that no one could create alone (pun-intended as a reformed classical pianist).

During my time directing the PMI Sydney's Professional Development portfolio, I've had the privilege of working across diverse streams, from mentoring to Agile workshops and supporting our members in earning their PDUs. I've loved seeing how sharing knowledge creates real impact among our project professionals, and there's something deeply fulfilling about seeing others prosper through collaborative learning. What makes PMI Sydney Chapter special isn't just our professional expertise, it's the human connection we build and the genuine support we provide. I'm proud to be a part of a community that helps each other to flourish.

As we step into 2025, I'm genuinely excited about the changes ahead. I'm particularly looking forward to championing new marketing strategies and IT initiatives that will elevate our chapter's profile and better serve our members. You might find me "orchestrating" ideas across various teams while helping build a community that's truly in "harmony" (another pun...will be the last one).

Speaking of things that we look forward to, I'd love to connect with you directly! Have questions or ideas to share? Find me on LinkedIn and let's continue the conversation.

A Message from Our President

Sydney Mudau

Dear Member,

2025 is here, which means new beginnings for us in the Project Management community at PMI Sydney Chapter. With this fresh vibrant year, there is a positive motivation that ensures promise of innovation, collaboration and excellence. In 2025, there is a lot of energy that ensures launch of new projects and initiatives that aim at not only project skill enhancement but also inter community relationship strengthening. It renews our hope to achieve set goals in a very systematic manner which will result in great sense of satisfaction. Our core goal will only be attained if every member contributes towards it and I am confident that the new enriching year awaits for us with wonderful challenges.



As we begin this remarkable journey, I take joy in mentioning the increased collaboration with Canberra, Melbourne and Malaysia Chapters. Integrating our efforts enables us to combine different ideas and skills to form a strong network across the regions. This collaboration will help us improve the best practices, create new initiatives, and host events that all members of the greater project management community will appreciate. Guided by our values, Make It Easy, Aim Higher, Be Welcoming, Embrace Curiosity, and Together We Can, we are ready to achieve incredible outcomes and raise the standards of success.

A BA's Guide to Effective Facilitation Skills in a Hybrid World

Stephen Howard

As one of the core competencies of every capable business analyst (BA), effective facilitation is even more important in the hybrid world. PM-Partners Senior Consultant Stephen Howard discusses what facilitation means for BAs and how they can enhance their skills to meet the changing nature of the new workplace.

What does facilitation mean for business analysts?

Facilitation is the process of helping groups collaborate more effectively. BAs often act as facilitators of meetings, strategy sessions, or other collaborative settings where employees need to problem solve and agree a way forward.

Unlike decision-makers, facilitators act purely as 'process leaders', guiding discussions and helping to enhance the group's productivity.



Stephen Howard is a Senior Consultant, Facilitator and Business Practice Lead at PM Partners

pm-partners



How hybrid work has reshaped BA facilitation

Before COVID-19, a BA's role as facilitator would typically take place in a structured, face-to-face setting, where the group could address the topic without distractions and work together until they achieved their objectives.

With the shift to hybrid and remote work, however, BAs facilitating in this new work environment are facing a raft of challenges, such as:

- **Poor quality communication** – without non-verbal cues, it's harder for BAs to engage and empathise with participants.
- **Lack of structure** – when you're not all in the same room, it's easier for participants to lose focus.
- **Home office distractions** – noise and interruptions, such as children arriving home from school, or nearby construction, can derail discussions.
- **Technology issues** – connectivity problems can disrupt the flow of meetings and hamper good facilitation.

Despite these barriers, BAs must still be able to ensure their virtual and hybrid meetings are as productive and constructive as they are when everyone's in the office. Some smart ways for BAs to do this include:

- Shortening the length of meetings and keeping them segmented
- Sharing a meeting outline/agenda in advance to set clear expectations
- Using visual collaboration tools to keep everyone aligned and focused on the core topics.

Essential components of remote facilitation

To support teams effectively through hybrid and remote settings, a good facilitator should consider:

- **Technology:** Ensure all participants are comfortable using video conferencing, chat, and collaboration tools, particularly if the organisation has relied on more traditional systems and processes.
- **Group size:** The larger the group the harder it is to facilitate, especially in the online world. Aim for 10 (or under), allowing more time for everyone to contribute.
- **Preparation:** Take the time to understand the dynamics of each session so you can make it as inclusive as possible, and set the objectives and level of collaboration you expect.
- **Tools:** Consider how you'll integrate tools like Kanban boards and videoconferencing so they're unobtrusive but help to fulfil a specific purpose.

The role of AI in BA facilitation

With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) – and more specifically Generative AI – BAs now have new tools they can tap into. AI-powered transcription services allow BAs to focus on engagement instead of note-taking, while AI-driven sentiment analysis tools help assess participant engagement in real-time, enabling facilitators to adjust their approach dynamically. Virtual whiteboards enhanced with AI suggestions can boost brainstorming sessions, leading to more effective ideation.

AI and large language models like ChatGPT can support BAs in structuring meetings, managing time, and even summarising key takeaways, reducing administrative overhead and allowing facilitators to concentrate on guiding discussions. As AI tools continue to evolve, they will become invaluable in overcoming hybrid facilitation challenges, ensuring more efficient communication and collaboration.

Benefits of strong facilitation skills

When BAs apply effective facilitation techniques, teams experience:

- **Higher engagement:** Participants feel more invested in discussions and outcomes.
- **Improved results:** Collaborative efforts lead to better decision-making.
- **Increased productivity:** Well-structured meetings increase participation and efficiency.
- **Better conflict resolution:** A more structured approach helps resolve misunderstandings smoothly.
- **Employee satisfaction:** When all group members can contribute, they naturally feel like more valued team members.

Facilitation skills for 2025 and beyond

Facilitation is crucial not only for managing meetings but also for guiding organisations through digital transformation. From being well prepared and adaptable to knowing how to set guidelines and manage time, BAs play a pivotal role in driving digital adoption.

An effective BA is always learning and looking for ways to improve themselves. Given the increasing relevance of AI in business analysis, this includes learning how to leverage Gen AI to enhance their facilitation capabilities.

PM-Partners' new [Generative AI for Business Analysts](#) course is the ideal starting point. This hands-on program gives participants the opportunity to work directly with AI tools to streamline tasks, enhance decision-making and refine their prompt engineering skills, helping BAs improve their effectiveness in both physical and virtual domains.

To enhance your facilitation skills and learn how to integrate AI into your workflow, consider PM-Partners' [Generative AI for Business Analysts](#) course, or [contact](#) our expert team for advice.

This article is an abridged version of the original – [for more comprehensive insights, read the full article here.](#)

PMBOK 8 vs PMBOK 7 vs PMBOK 6: Key Differences and Insights Modern Project Managers

Mansoor Mohammed

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®) has long been a cornerstone for project managers seeking to excel in their craft. With each new edition, PMBOK evolves to address the changing landscape of project management, ensuring relevance in an ever-dynamic world. The release of PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition has sparked discussions about how it compares to its predecessors, PMBOK® Seventh and Sixth Editions. Let's explore the key differences and insights that each edition offers.

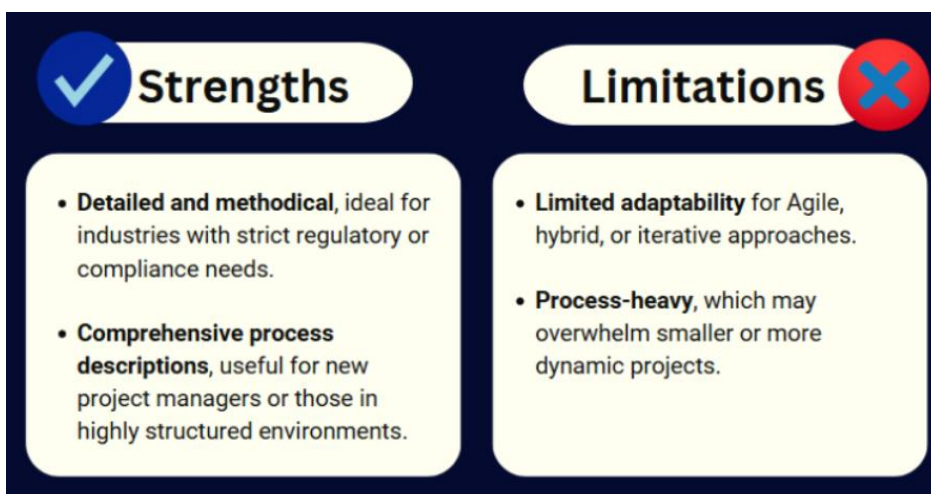


Mansoor Mohammed is an experienced Enterprise Agile Coach, PMO Consultant, and Change Management expert with 20+ years in strategy execution, Agile transformations, and business agility across industries like finance, banking, IT, and telecommunications.

PMBOK 6th Edition: The Traditional Framework

Key Features:

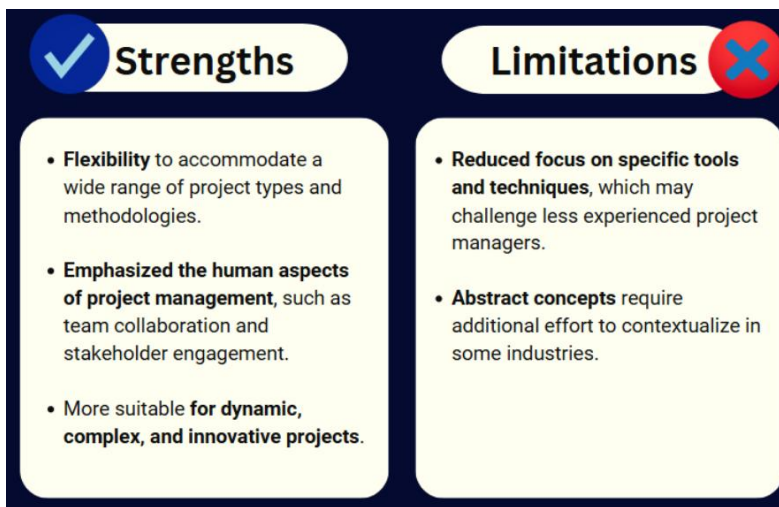
- **Process-Oriented Structure:** PMBOK 6 focuses on 49 processes grouped into 10 knowledge areas and 5 process groups (Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring & Controlling, and Closing).
- **Prescriptive Approach:** It emphasizes a step-by-step guide to managing projects, suited for traditional, predictive (waterfall) methodologies.
- **Tools and Techniques:** Comprehensive guidance on tools like Earned Value Management (EVM), critical path analysis, and other quantitative methods.
- **Focus on Deliverables:** Strong emphasis on producing tangible outputs through structured processes.



PMBOK 7th Edition: A Paradigm Shift

Key Features:



- **Principle-Based Approach:** Introduced 12 principles of project management, shifting focus from processes to outcomes and value delivery.
- **Performance Domains:** Replaced knowledge areas with 8 performance domains, emphasizing collaboration, value, and adaptability.
- **Focus on Outcomes:** Encouraged tailoring to meet specific project needs rather than adhering to rigid processes.
- **Inclusion of Agile Practices:** Acknowledged the growing influence of Agile methodologies and hybrid frameworks.



PMBOK 8th Edition: The Evolution Continues

Key Features:

- **Greater Emphasis on Value:** PMBOK 8 elevates the concept of value creation as the central theme, ensuring projects align with organizational strategy and deliver measurable benefits.
- **Expanded Focus on Sustainability:** Integrates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into project management practices.
- **Enhanced Digital Tools:** Addresses the integration of AI, data analytics, and other emerging technologies in project management.
- **Global Relevance:** Broader application across cultures and industries, reflecting global project management trends.

 Strengths	 Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights the strategic role of project management in achieving organizational goals. • Promotes sustainability and ethical practices in projects. • Encourages continuous learning and adaptability in a technology-driven world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require significant upskilling for practitioners unfamiliar with digital tools and strategic frameworks. • Emphasizes broad principles over detailed processes, which might require supplementary resources for execution

Key Comparisons

Aspect	PMBOK 6	PMBOK 7	PMBOK 8
Approach	Process-oriented	Principle-based	Value and strategy-driven
Focus	Deliverables and outputs	Outcomes and adaptability	Strategic alignment, ESG
Framework	Knowledge areas and processes	Performance domains	Value streams and sustainability
Adaptability	Low	High	Very High
Technology Integration	Minimal	Recognized	Deep integration
Sustainability	Limited	Acknowledged	Integrated

Choosing the Right Edition for Your Needs

- **PMBOK 6:** Best for traditional, compliance-heavy projects requiring structured processes.
- **PMBOK 7:** Ideal for dynamic projects needing flexibility and stakeholder collaboration.
- **PMBOK 8:** Perfect for organizations aiming to align projects with strategic goals, sustainability, and digital innovation.

Final Thoughts

Each PMBOK edition builds upon the previous one, reflecting the evolution of project management as a discipline. Whether you're a seasoned practitioner or a budding project manager, understanding the differences and leveraging the strengths of each edition can empower you to navigate the complexities of modern projects with confidence and clarity.

Mansoor can be contacted at - mansoor@paradigminnovations.com.au

Welcome to the 2025 Board: PMI Sydney Chapter's Newly Revealed Board Members

Get to know the passionate and dedicated individuals who will be steering PMI Sydney through an exciting year.



PMI Sydney Chapter Board 2025

The Board Members for the PMI Sydney Chapter this year have been revealed. Your support for them in driving initiatives to enhance engagement within our Project Management community is greatly appreciated. Let's make this year a success together!



Sydney Mudau
President



My Tran Le
Vice-President & Secretary



Himadri S Chowdhury
Treasurer



Luc Legeret
Director, Marketing, IT



Ibtihal Alhabashneh
Director, Volunteering



Julia Checchia
Director, Events



Laetitia Callegari
Director, Academic Outreach & Prof. Development



Naivasha Safaya
Director, Special Projects



Demi Stefanova
Director, Membership



PMI Sydney Chapter Events Portfolio: A Year of Learning, Networking, and Growth

Julia Checchia

Greetings PMI Sydney Chapter members!

I am delighted to introduce myself as your PMI Sydney Chapter Events Director for the 2025-2026 term. For those who do not know me, I have been part of the PMI Sydney Chapter community since 2004 and a board member from 2006 to 2018. Returning to the board was an easy decision—I genuinely missed the camaraderie, the professional networking, and the personal and professional growth that come from being an active and engaged member of this incredible chapter. It is an absolute privilege to inherit a team of passionate volunteers eager to roll up their sleeves and create a calendar of events designed to elevate your careers and expand your professional networks.



What's in Store for 2025?

We have an exciting lineup of events planned from March through November, including:

- **Seven Evening Events** – Covering a diverse range of topics that will inspire, educate, and challenge you in your project management journey.
- **Two Breakfast Sessions** – Perfect for those who like to start their day by charging their brain and soul with insightful discussions and networking before heading to work.
- **Annual General Meeting (AGM) and End-of-Year Celebration** – Key events where we reflect on achievements, recognize contributions, and celebrate our thriving community.
- **Special events supported by Events Portfolio** – Project Management Day of Service, University partnerships and more.

Kicking Off 2025 with a Powerful Celebration

Our first event of the year is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 12**, and it promises to be an inspiring one! This special evening is a collaboration with **Women in Projects Australia** (formerly Women in Project Management, led by the incredible Jen Dolden, Renai Plats, and their dedicated volunteers). While the event celebrates the resilience of women in the industry, it is **open to all** who wish to join in this meaningful discussion and networking opportunity.

We are looking forward to a fantastic year filled with opportunities for learning, networking, and professional growth.

Why Attend PMI Sydney Chapter Events?

Our events provide unparalleled opportunities for learning, networking, and career development.

Whether you are an experienced project leader or just beginning your journey, attending these events will:

- Keep you informed about industry trends and best practices.
- Connect you with like-minded professionals and potential mentors.
- Offer fresh perspectives from accomplished speakers and industry leaders.
- Help you earn valuable PDUs to maintain your certifications.

We are now actively seeking **partners, presenters, and sponsors** who share our enthusiasm for fostering professional growth and community engagement.

Why Present at Our Events?

Are you an industry expert with valuable insights to share? Presenting at PMI Sydney Chapter events is a fantastic opportunity to:

- Showcase your expertise and thought leadership.
- Expand your professional network.
- Give back to the project management community by sharing your knowledge.
- Gain visibility among key decision-makers in the field.

Why Sponsor Our Events?

PMI Sydney Chapter events attract a diverse group of professionals, including project managers, executives, and business leaders across various industries. As a sponsor, you will:

- Gain direct exposure to a highly engaged professional audience.
- Showcase your brand's commitment to professional development and leadership in the project management community.
- Build relationships with potential clients, employees, and partners.

Why Volunteer?

Our Events Portfolio thrives on the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers. If you are passionate about event planning, networking, and contributing to the growth of our chapter, we welcome you to join us. Volunteering is an excellent way to:

- Develop leadership and organizational skills.
- Work alongside a dynamic and driven team.
- Make a tangible impact on the PMI Sydney community.

- Make a tangible impact on the PMI Sydney community.

Get Involved!

If you are interested in volunteering, presenting, or sponsoring an event, we would love to hear from you (events@pmisydney.org) from you! Let's work together to make 2025 a year of impact and inspiration for PMI Sydney Chapter members.

Looking forward to seeing you all at our events!

Reflecting on a Transformative Journey: Leading People, Culture, and Social Good (PMDoS) Programs

My Tran Le

As I reflect on my journey over the past two years as a board director of Volunteering (People and Culture) and the Special Project (Project Management Day of Service – “PMDoS”) for our PMI Sydney Chapter, I am filled with gratitude for the experiences and opportunities that have shaped our Chapter, the members and the communities we serve.

During this period, we successfully launched several key initiatives aimed at fostering a positive and inclusive culture. Our Volunteering program focused on the volunteers’ journey, their engagement and well-being, professional development, and diversity and inclusion. We introduced new processes, volunteer opportunities, check-in’s, volunteer recognition programs and events that have significantly enhanced our volunteer engagement and satisfaction; growing our community from 6 to 76 volunteers and sustaining it for the following year. A shout out to Talent International for being the key partner for our Volunteering-centric events for our PMI Sydney Chapter community.



Volunteering Community 2024



Project Management Day of Service 2024

Our Special Project – PMDoS has also made remarkable strides. We partnered with Atlassian Foundation for the past two years, relaunched the PMDoS program after a two-year hiatus, and have grown to 10 charity projects, and 58 professional consultant volunteers for the day. Projects varied from developing fundraising campaigns for cancer research, building a Legacy organisation KPI framework, to empowering older women (over 50) through targeted programs. Our efforts have made a tangible difference in the lives of many.

Gratitude to Our Volunteers

I am immensely grateful for the amazing volunteers who are the heart of our Chapter. Their dedication, passion, and hard work have been the driving force behind our success. Without their support, none of our achievements would have been possible, including all those who've been involved, even those which we had to say goodbye to (for now).

Volunteering (People & Culture)

- **Associate Directors:** John Yap and Svetlana Nevskaya
- **Current Volunteer team:** Paul Chazhoor, Sandra Tong, Aqsa Khan, Poornima Veeragurunageshwaran
- **Past Volunteers:** Aimee Green, Lusia Kiroyan, Nafizul Chowdhury Nayan, Parth Agarwal, Praj Jetty, Palani Veerappan, Vani Anjanappa, Yonda Surianto

Project Management Day of Service (PMDoS)

- **Associate Directors:** Humera Ferreira (2023 & 2024), Mohammed Alsadeq (2025)
- **Volunteer planning team:** Akhil Patthi, Eran Brill, Kiran Narayan Annamdas, Rosemarie Santos, Roksana Jahan Tumpa, Zil Damania
- **Past Volunteers:** Ivan Ramirez, Aashna Khosla, Amol Parab, George Mathew, Harish Kumar Kunnath Pulliyankode, Michelle Cheng, and University of Sydney's Capstone team led by Ruolin Tian

We have a number of openings. If you are passionate about giving back to the community, please check out the available roles via the [PMI Volunteer Engagement Platform \(VEP\)](#) or complete our **PMI Sydney Chapter Volunteer Expression of Interest** available on our website, and a member of the team will reach out to you.

Handing Over the Baton and Looking Ahead

As I transition and hand over, I am confident that the foundation we have built will continue to thrive under the capable leadership of Ibtihal Alhabashneh (Director of Volunteering) and Navisha Safaya (Director of Special Projects). Both have exceptional dedication and expertise in their respective fields, and I am excited to see how they will further advance our mission.

Although my role as director of these portfolios is coming to an end, I am honoured to have been re-elected for another two-year term and will be stepping into the new role of **Vice President and Secretary** this year. My commitment to our PMI Sydney Chapter organisation and its values remains steadfast. I will continue to support our initiatives and contribute to our community in the best way I can. I am grateful for the opportunity to have led such meaningful programs and to have worked alongside such passionate and talented individuals.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey. Together, we have achieved great things, and I am confident that even greater accomplishments lie ahead for PMI Sydney Chapter.



Project Management Day of Service 2024



Project Management Day of Service - Planning team 2024

Photo of the Month

Victoria Rende



About the image

Robertson's Park, Watson's Bay