

# PROJECT

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The voice of the project management community



Association for  
Project Management

# THE APM PROJECT MANAGEMENT AWARDS 2022 *meet the winners*

**INSIDE**

Levelling up or levelling off? / The Big Interview: Birmingham 2022's Annie Hairsine

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# Let's get active

No, I'm not going to admonish you for overeating this Christmas. This is about getting active in another sense. Carmel McConnell MBE is the founder of food charity Magic Breakfast, which provides free healthy breakfasts to school children. I recently interviewed this self-styled 'change activist' about what this means.

"A change activist is someone who takes action, in line with values, even when that means going outside the comfort zone. Change activists take action first, then start to feel better," she explained. "Without change activists making the moral case as well as the business case, there would be less dissent, less push to move towards a fairer society. For those of us who believe change is possible, change activism is the mindset to sustain and energise us to claim our power in the workplace – and the world!"

**Project management and change are close bedfellows.** How many of you are involved with change or transformation programmes? Isn't every project about effecting change? Just take a look at the APM Award winners we showcase (congratulations!). Isn't every project professional a change activist of some kind, whether it's at work or beyond? I would consider Loraine Martins OBE, who writes about race equality this issue, to be a change activist. Her words are powerful; change must happen.

"Sharing these stories of racism is exhausting, particularly if there is no change, so the task now is for colleagues,

leaders and businesses to be more responsible and eradicate such behaviour, rather than simply being appalled," she writes. "The changes needed are not the fixing of black colleagues; remember, they tend to be overqualified. The real work is that we fix ourselves as programme and project leaders; we stop making assumptions, and we create inclusive environments."

**Another brave project professional** wrote about her return to work following maternity leave in our Perspectives section. It was awful, and like she says, a more common experience than you may think – change is urgently needed. People come to work expecting to be treated fairly, so why isn't this happening? Dr Christine Unterhitzberger, Associate Professor in Project Management at the University of Leeds, has made fairness in projects an area of research – see page 45.

"Fair and unfair treatment does not currently receive sufficient attention within our profession, with very little published on the topic by professional bodies. This article is a very welcome first step towards this," she told me. Further research is needed but APM may wish to build on this study and incorporate findings into future guidelines for the profession, she suggests.

What change would you like to happen in 2023? And are you going to get active about it? Let me know at [emma.devita@thinkpublishing.co.uk](mailto:emma.devita@thinkpublishing.co.uk)

**Emma De Vita is Editor of Project**

**Project management and change are close bedfellows. How many of you are involved with change or transformation programmes? Isn't every project about effecting change?**



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# Contents 54

From governance to Gremlins, this issue of **Project** at a glance

## Perspectives

### 9 **No more greenwashing**

How to put sustainability at the heart of your projects

### 10 **5 lessons learned**

With Annie Hairsine, former Director of Strategic Programmes for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham

### 10 **Myth buster**

What do we mean by equality, diversity and inclusion?

### 11 **The Chief Project Officer**

Why this seat at the top table must be filled

### 12 **Psychological safety**

Advice to project leaders from the Ministry of Defence

### 13 **Nudged into action**

Using behavioural psychology to make teams more successful

### 14 **Back to the office**

The trials of returning from maternity leave

### 14 **Behind the scenes**

Manchester Airport's baggage handling system

### 16 **Professor Adam Boddison**

'Trial by media' and the bias against project successes

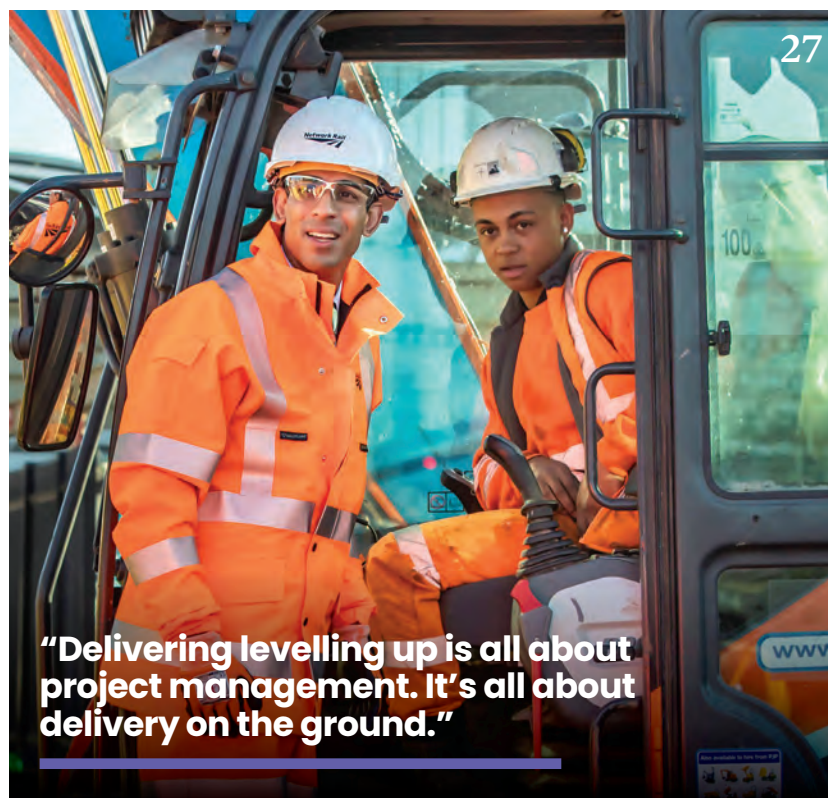
### 17 **Q&A**

With Milla Mazilu, APM's new Chair



36

40



27

**"Delivering levelling up is all about project management. It's all about delivery on the ground."**

PAUJ WARD; LOUISE HAYWOOD-SCHIEFER; ALAMY

## Features

### 6 **In the picture**

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault at a glance

### 18 **APM Project Management Awards 2022**

Find out who took the accolades for project excellence this year

### 27 **Levelling up**

What next for the flagship policy after a year of political and economic turmoil?

### 32 **Big Interview**

Annie Hairsine on delivering the Birmingham Commonwealth Games

### 36 **Accelerating black inclusion**

It's time for action on race equality, urges Loraine Martins OBE

### 40 **Disaster zones**

Project management in areas riven by conflict or natural disasters

### 74 **Eddie Obeng**

Why we love to win, but why it's so hard to do



18



62



32



66

## Peer to peer

### 45 How to...

... make your projects a fairer environment to work in

### 48 Ukraine

Gareth Watkins' take on the unfolding crisis (and where projects fit in)

### 52 APM roundtable

Sector focus: life sciences, pharmaceuticals and healthcare

### 54 Sustainability

A blueprint for success in sustainable project management

### 58 Project me

Readers tell us what their biggest challenges of 2023 will be

### 59 Susanne Madsen

Risk management advice beyond the risk log

### 61 ChPP

The latest cohort of APM's Chartered Project Professionals

### 62 Rising star

Introducing Bel French, APM's youngest ever ChPP

### 66 Beyond the job

The challenge of launching and running a Sikh martial arts group



69

## Offline

### 69 Gremlins

Project management lessons from our favourite Christmas movie

### 72 Books and podcasts

Recommended reading and listening this winter

## Svalbard Global Seed Vault

In an abandoned coal mine deep within the Arctic Circle lies the world's largest collection of seeds. The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, one of APM's selected '50 Projects for a Better Future', is an international project financed and run by the Norwegian government and NGO The Crop Trust. It is an effort to protect the genetic diversity of key plant species from around the world against the threats posed by climate change, natural disasters, disease, drought and human mismanagement.

Governments, indigenous communities and other gene banks are entitled to deposit and withdraw seeds as they see fit, providing a valuable agricultural resource and

also safeguarding the world's food supply for the future.

Depositors in 2022 included Spain, Lithuania, Peru, Taiwan and Côte d'Ivoire. "The crop diversity in these boxes is an invaluable source of diversity in the efforts to adapt crops to rapidly changing climatic conditions," said Luis Guasch Pereira, Director of the Spanish Plant Genetic Resources Centre about the first-ever Spanish deposit. "These seeds are part of our collective human heritage, and this is our first contribution."

The Spanish deposit includes 111 samples of maize, 60 samples of tomato and "crops that have nearly disappeared from our farmers' fields, like grasspea and black chickpeas", added Guasch Pereira.

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# Perspectives

The Chief Project Officer • Psychological safety • 'Trial by media' • The power of nudges

## It's time to say: enough with the greenwashing

**Kristina Bull on how to put sustainability at the heart of your projects – and really mean it**



**Kristina Bull** is a Partner at QSA Partners, a B Corp consultancy with a mission to help organisations implement circular economy business models. A project professional with a focus on sustainability, she currently advises clothing brands and retailers on how to become more sustainable.

### **Q How have you come to work in sustainability?**

**A** I joined WRAP (the Waste and Resources Action Programme) in a legal capacity. The more I found out about the business, the more I realised that they were doing some incredible work to change the way businesses operate and getting them to work collectively together on sustainability. There were reorganisations and I applied to be project manager. The work I was doing was about bringing industries together. That meant getting the construction industry in its entirety – architects, designers, construction, builders – to improve the way in which they collectively do business so that everyone is working in the same direction, rather than an architect designing something that the builder can't build and therefore wasting significant resources. The work was built around creating voluntary agreements, so setting targets for the industry and then collectively getting them to work together to reduce those impacts on a project, business and then industry level. Once that first business stepped over the line and said, "Yes, we're going to do this", it had a domino effect.

### **Q How did you then shift from WRAP?**

**A** I set up my own business doing project management within sustainability. For example, one of our clients is HSI. We wrote their sustainability strategy, which was very well received by industry. Off the back of that strategy development, they were invited to run workshops at COP26. Lots of the other work we do is very much focused around implementing circular business models with clothing brands or retailers. Cotton Lives On is a programme that fits within the circular economy in that it repurposes cotton once it's not able to be



repaired or resold. The project takes cotton clothing that's donated from either brands or consumers. Then it goes through processes and that product is turned into a roll mat, which is then donated to a charity or humanitarian project.

### **Q Do you have any lessons for project professionals who want to do more on sustainability?**

**A** Ask questions about what your company or project is doing about sustainability. Be really difficult and

ask those questions, because if they aren't asked, then we will continue going on blindly. And look to see if there are any opportunities to build in sustainable improvements through the work you do. If you're involved in procurement, can you set policies to ensure that a contractor or a project has to meet certain requirements? Procurement is a great catalyst for change but once something is procured that opportunity is gone. If you can do it at the contract level, then you have such an amazing opportunity to make systematic changes.

### **Q There's been so much greenwashing, so how can we get past that to effect real change?**

**A** It's about creating sustainability KPIs within the C-suite. If those KPIs are focused on actually changing and changing early, then you're going to absolutely focus minds so there's no opportunity for greenwashing because that director or vice president has that KPI on their head. I'm really optimistic about the pace of change. We're at a canter and we really need to get to a gallop, but we are changing, and the change is moving much more radically. By being challenging and continually asking questions, the next generation have a real opportunity to fundamentally change the way business operates.

**To listen to the full interview with Kristina Bull, search 'APM Podcast' on your preferred podcast app**

## Myth buster: Equality, diversity & inclusion

ED&I ensures fair treatment and opportunity for all. It aims to eradicate prejudice and discrimination on the basis of an individual's or group of individuals' protected characteristics. APM defines ED&I as the ability to build and maintain an inclusive environment that embraces a diverse culture. Diversity and inclusion need to be considered, as workplace environments are increasingly made up of individuals with different backgrounds, needs, abilities and ways of working. There is an opportunity within change initiatives to proactively address the institutionalised inequalities that may exist by being aware and treating people fairly.



5 lessons learned

### Annie Hairsine, Birmingham 2022



**What did the Director of Strategic Programmes and Executive Office learn from programme managing the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games? And what will she take with her in her new role as Project Lead at the Commonwealth Youth Games Trinbago 2023?**

- 1 Understand and agree roles and responsibilities.** This is especially important at the interfaces of a complex stakeholder environment.
- 2 Ensure you have an easy and regular reporting system.** This must apply across the whole programme and should give sufficient clarity of current status, any issues and risks without putting an undue burden on teams and projects. Automate it as much as possible.
- 3 Face unpredictability.** Where there is uncertainty, ensure you have considered possible scenarios and outcomes and have respective contingency plans in place.
- 4 Introduce smart governance and assurance to avoid duplication of effort.** Scheduling activities and meetings while deconflicting across the programme is fundamental to reducing the burden across all teams. They will thank you for it.
- 5 Be clear on what's required.** Ensure expectations of delivery and service levels are understood, tried and tested before implementation. Build close working relationships with delivery teams to ensure understanding, capability and capacity are in place for delivery.

**For an in-depth interview with Annie Hairsine, turn to page 32, or listen to her APM Podcast (out in December) wherever you get your podcasts.**

Comment

# It's time for the Chief Project Officer to step forward

**Andy Murray, Chair of APM's Governance SIG, on why this seat at the top table must be filled**



**Regardless of whether an** organisation is in the private sector, public sector or a charity, its respective governance code will be consistent on the duties of the board: to provide stewardship and direction by setting purpose, values and strategy and then delegating to management to deliver the strategy and holding them to account for delivery. This requires the board to be future-thinking about what the organisation's environment could look like in three, five or perhaps 10 years' time and what the organisation will need to look like to advance its aims and fulfil its purpose in the context of its changing environment.

A good strategy is likely to describe a different environment and organisation than exists today, hence will determine the changes required of the organisation. Therefore to "hold management to account", the board needs to understand not just the organisation's operational capability and performance but also its change capability and performance so it can ensure management has sufficient resources for them.

And here is where we have a problem. Boards are easily and too often drawn to performance measures over capability measures and to the operational activities over change activities. The tendency to focus on the here and now rather than the future was the central theme of an excellent joint conference of several APM specific interest groups held recently, which explored why our dashboards, reports and plans have a bias to the past and present rather than the future. Among the many reasons, two stood out for me.

The first is that people generally like certainty over uncertainty and definiteness over ambiguity and the past and present is much more certain and definite than the future. The second is that behaviour is driven top-down. The C-suite mimics the behaviours of the board, senior leaders mimic the behaviours of the C-suite,



**While the rise of the CPO is a welcome trend, it is not a panacea. The board is failing in its duty if it believes appointing a CPO is 'job done'**

middle management mimic senior leadership, and so on. Many boards and C-suites will have a majority of members who have risen to the top through their operational or functional expertise, such as finance, HR, legal. Unfortunately this can lead to a scarcity of change expertise and behaviours in the very place that it is most needed.

**What can be done to help the** boards fulfil the duty their governance codes expect regarding future

thinking? Step forward the role of the Chief Project Officer (CPO). There is an emerging and welcome trend of C-suites having a CPO with a seat at the top executive table reporting to and advising the board on the capability and performance of the organisation's project portfolio – the aggregation of the changes required

to deliver the strategy. It is perhaps long overdue when we consider the projectisation of organisations. Since the Management of Portfolios framework (2011) described management activities as either "run the organisation" or "change the organisation", we have seen an increasing shift towards change. Business as usual isn't as usual as it used to be! This phenomena and the increasing value of appointing CPOs is explored in detail in an

HBR report from April 2022, *The Rise of the Chief Project Officer*, by Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez.

While the rise of the CPO is a welcome trend, it is not a panacea. The board is failing in its duty if it believes that appointing a CPO is 'job done'. The other executives and board members also need to understand their organisation's project management capability and performance, otherwise the CPO could be drowned out. Perhaps the initial focus of the CPO should be on the capability of their peers rather than the projects within the organisation.

**Andy Murray is Executive Director at the Major Projects Association. Read and download APM's white paper *The Chief Project Officer: An essential part of the future C-suite* at [bit.ly/3AGu8J2](http://bit.ly/3AGu8J2)**

Research

# 10 tips on creating psychological safety

Advice to project leaders from the Ministry of Defence

**Psychological safety is the** idea that we can be candid and raise issues without fear of reprisal, explains a recent report, *Psychological Safety in MOD Major Projects*, by the UK's Ministry of Defence (MOD). Without it, people will struggle to feel empowered to experiment, innovate, learn from failure or even challenge established or outdated ways of working. The report is drawn from a major study of projects and professionals within the MOD, comprising more than 240 surveys and 23 interviews with senior responsible officers and programme directors, and gives practical advice on how any project leader can encourage psychological safety in major projects. Here are 10 tips drawn from its findings:

**1 You should initiate engagements with your team to discuss progress.** Proactively create the environment where individuals have the opportunity and feel comfortable to raise issues and concerns.

**2 You should be available to the team.** Ensure your team knows that you are open for consultation when needed by them.

**3 You should also provide an ongoing presence.** Provide a constant route for conversation and escalation.

**4 Clearly present the hierarchy of goals for your team.** Clarify how the strategic direction of the organisation connects with the work that the



## Proactively create the environment where individuals feel comfortable to raise issues and concerns

team is undertaking and how their objectives contribute to the delivery of the project.

**5 Invest in the objective setting process.** Ensure that the goals the team is working towards are both clear and easy to understand and appropriate to their capability.

**6 Regularly reaffirm team direction.** Frequent discussion on this inspires a sense of purpose and stability, and places a renewed focus on the 'art of the possible'.

**7 Proactively establish positive working relationships with contributing teams and organisations.**

Project leaders should seek out opportunities to build relationships between teams through establishing an environment of trust and respect, and shared values that unite individuals across boundaries.

**8 Reaffirm the role and importance of the project in delivering the broader capability.** Mobilise your teams to see how their work helps to build the big picture. This challenge is compounded by

post-pandemic ways of working; however, there is significant value in bringing your teams together to demonstrate what is being achieved through their collective efforts.

**9 Enable your teams to achieve their goals.** Empower them with the authority, resources and skills they need to make decisions.

**10 Celebrate the successes.** Take the time to widely communicate and celebrate the achievement of benefits, or milestones towards these, no matter how busy the team is or the proximity of the next milestone. Individual contributions towards benefit delivery should be recognised and rewarded.



The full report can be found at [bit.ly/3AqKDZq](https://bit.ly/3AqKDZq)

Comment

# Nudging for project performance and resilience

**Dr Teslim O. Bukoye and Professor Jens Roehrich on how to use behavioural psychology to make project teams more successful**



**Project professionals** are frequently measured on their ability to deliver on time, to budget and quality specifications, as well as respond to disruptive events. But can projects be delivered in a more nuanced and effective way to enhance a project team's performance? A project professional needs to seek a subtle way to effectively manage a project team through uncertainties and ever-changing demands, and this calls for more attention on the behavioural aspects of project management.

The concept of 'nudges' might help project managers and teams to meet performance targets. Seeking to explore the influence of nudges, we conducted an in-depth study building on rich interviews with project managers across many sectors.

## What are nudges in projects?

The nudge concept began in behavioural economics and public

policy, but can be adopted more widely, from encouraging healthy eating or pension savings, to using speed cameras to subtly ensure drivers stick to speed limits. Around the world, public and private organisations have set up so called 'nudge units' or 'behavioural insights teams' to understand the benefits and limitations of nudges.

Nudges are interventions – they can be big or small – focused on getting individuals to behave a certain way. Within projects, nudges can be useful in managing teams for the benefits of project delivery. Nudges can optimise fast thinking and unconscious (positive) behaviour of a project team in line with a project's goals and measures. In contrast to 'hard' project management tools (e.g. Gantt charts, organisational systems), a nudge is an intervention that maintains freedom of choice (for the individual), but steers them in a particular direction.

## How and when to use nudges

Nudging for projects works in various ways. We identified over 20 different nudge tools that project professionals can use to address a range of challenges. For instance, if they are concerned about delays and quality issues, they should actively deploy nudges such as 'message framing', 'giving quality feedback' and 'changing layouts'. With 'message framing', project professionals need to configure messages using the right words, expression and structure to influence their team. Such framing affects how individuals/teams think and feel about an issue, based primarily on how the choice or option is described to them. For instance, using phrases like 'not to worry, we are on track but keep an eye on our risks'.

Another successful nudge was 'giving quality feedback'. Here, project professionals let team members know what and/or when they are doing well or making mistakes. This motivates and increases awareness through detailed, customised feedback for team members, rather than general team feedback. Lastly, we also observed project professionals changing layouts in meeting rooms to facilitate easier decision-making. They often placed key information such as maps and timelines at eye level to increase awareness.

Project professionals have started to unconsciously use a range of nudges, but a more systematic understanding of their usage and effects is needed.

**Dr Teslim O. Bukoye and Professor Jens Roehrich are from the University of Bath School of Management**

## Why not try the following nudges?

- 1** Map out the range of nudges available to you (our study, 'Using Nudges to Realize Project Performance Management', may be a good starting point). During our work with project professionals, we noticed that nudges were more commonplace than expected.
- 2** Do not abandon 'hard' project management systems and processes, but you should always keep in mind that these are nothing without the individuals who are supposed to use them. Nudges complement systems and process, and at best enhance their effectiveness.
- 3** Consider when to use nudges and to what end. Nudges are not a 'one size fits all' solution. During project delivery, for example, nudges may support you to design feedback and reflective systems in a way that individuals perceive them positively, make beneficial decisions on that basis, and thereby contribute directly to improved project performance and resilience. Please keep in mind that some nudges are better positioned to drive certain project measures than others.

# It's time to talk about returning to work

One project professional learnt the hard way about coming back to the office after maternity leave. Unfortunately, her concerns are common to many parents, so how can we do better?

**Returning to work** after a year on maternity leave was hard, and unfortunately my disappointing experience has been echoed by many I've since spoken to. Before taking leave, I led a busy programme, managing a large team to deliver digital projects. However, my new role was a demotion that I had knowingly taken to enable me to ease back into work in a role that was familiar so I could better balance my commitments at home.

My first weeks back were tough. It was hard enough to leave my barely one-year-old at nursery when all they'd ever known was me: hugging, laughing, playing and watching them grow. But I was treated with such hostility that I cried every day. What should have been a gentle easing-in period turned into my worst nightmare. On my first day back, I was asked to recommend a new governance structure by the end of that day to a senior leader. I was undermined by team members, which broke what little confidence I had. I was kept out of key conversations because my working pattern meant

that I needed to leave at a set time, so meetings were arranged purposely after I had left.

When I announced I was leaving for a new job after two months in the role – having created structure and new processes – no one in the team cared. It was heart-breaking and that's when I knew that something needed to change so that other people should not experience the same as I did. It was the positive experiences that lifted me out of this

awful situation and enabled me to return to my former confident self.

These included my fantastic support network. My project delivery colleagues rallied around me to offer their support, by listening and helping me to get up to speed, and championed me. A colleague reminded me that my past self would not have let these negative experiences get the better of me. This conversation gave me the power to take back control of the situation.

## Tips for individuals returning to work

**1** **Speak to your manager or team leader about the expectations of your return to work. Do you need support to get up to speed? Can you work flexibly if you need to?**

**2** **Create a support network. It is an excellent way to**

**create a sounding forum, feel valued, build confidence and keep up to date.**

**3** **Use your strengths. Working in a role that plays to your strengths will help you ease back into work quickly and builds confidence.**

**4** **Know that you are not alone. There are so many people that have gone through this journey and will be able to support you. A helpline or a network are both incredible resources designed to help you.**

## Behind the scenes...

### Manchester Airport

As part of its ongoing £1bn MAN-TP transformation programme, Manchester Airport has brought in logistic process automation specialist Vanderlande to deliver a new baggage handling system.

Phase 1 of the £83m project has already

completed, with a self-service passenger bag-drop area now operational within the newly extended Terminal 2.

Two further bag-drop areas are under construction, part of Phase 2 – due to complete in mid 2024 – which will implement further

elements of the baggage handling system, to ensure passenger luggage enjoys a more seamless transition from check-in to destination.

Once checked in, bags will be picked up by Vanderlande's collector conveyors, then taken through one of three brand-new, state-of-the-art Hold Baggage Screening machines,

scanned from different angles, then analysed by a computer to identify whether there is any threat, which can then be escalated to another round of screening and, ultimately, a human security operative.

Following screening, bags will be taken to one of two 6,000-capacity Helix tilt-tray sorting loops, and then



I realised this was a problem many people encounter, yet choose not to speak about

### Tips for managers and team leaders

- 1** Create a supportive and encouraging environment. An absence from work, no matter how long, affects people in different ways. Some may need weeks, and others months, to get up to speed.
- 2** Use empathy especially when discussing work patterns or flexible working. No one comes to work to do a bad job – we’re all trying.
- 3** Create diverse and inclusive teams so that those with caring responsibilities are not being singled out. A good mix creates a positive working environment where everyone feels valued and can be themselves.
- 4** Encourage support networks, groups and buddies – signposting to teams as and when needed.

I also sought opportunities at work that would best utilise my skills and experience. I now head up a new programme management office. While the role can be demanding, I still have a good work-life balance. I am being valued for my contributions, which has increased my confidence. I am lucky to now be in a team that is diverse and inclusive. Having a team that includes others with caring responsibilities has given me flexibility in responding to needs at home and at work. Colleagues are understanding and respectful, which has created a positive and welcoming environment that I really enjoy working in.

During my first few weeks, I contacted a helpline to talk about mental health and wellbeing, which I found extremely helpful. Having someone listen to me, placing no judgement on me or my situation, helped me to accept and face the

situation I was in. I realised this was a problem many people encounter, yet choose not to speak about.

What I didn’t need was to be questioned about my work-life balance choices. Having to leave at a certain time to pick my child up from nursery should not have to be justified. I also didn’t need to be undermined at work. My more than 10 years’ experience in project delivery appeared to have been judged by the few weeks I was in a fast-paced, demanding role having returned to work after a year out. I was in a toxic environment where bad behaviour was unchallenged, and speaking up caused more harm. Hearing from other new parents, my experience certainly isn’t isolated. I hope the tips I share (see boxes) will be helpful to those going through something similar, and to managers and team leaders.

ANASTASIA KAMYSHEVA / SHUTTERSTOCK



automatically directed down a chute to one of several outbound carousels, where operatives will be on standby to load baggage for transfer to the aircraft.

Every bag gets a bar code, allowing it to be tracked throughout its journey, so at every stage the automated system knows the location of the bag.

With nearly 2km of conveyors, the finished project is designed to operate mostly in the background, unseen by the passengers whom it benefits. Flying under the radar is nothing new for the project profession, but next time you pass through Manchester Airport, keep an eye out for the upgrades made by Vanderlande.

Comment

# Because when projects succeed, society benefits

APM Chief Executive Professor Adam Boddison on media bias against success



In November 2021 I attended the UN climate change conference COP26 in Glasgow. APM hosted two tables at the conference dinner and we invited some guests from our volunteer community and our corporate partners. The key message from the conference was clear. Countries are not doing enough to combat climate change, and the projects and programmes that they have in place are not always successful or sufficient. There was also some discussion about the projects and programmes that are successful. However, it struck me that the discussions about project failures were disproportionately high compared to those about project successes.

One of APM's guests at COP26 was Jo Stanford, an experienced portfolio manager working in the healthcare sector. Jo and I discussed this over-representation of project failures within discussions, which is when she pointed out to me that the issue is much broader. Jo described it as 'trial by media', which is essentially the notion that project successes are too often deemed as invisible and un-newsworthy, while project failures seem ripe for amplification and tend to be broadcast far and wide.

To this day, I remain frustrated that project successes do not get the level of media attention they deserve. This is not just about celebrating project successes and the individuals who make this happen, but also about ensuring that the general public have a good understanding of the

impact that projects are having on their day-to-day life. As it stands, the general public only tend to hear about projects where there are problems, such as going over time or budget.

As a registered charity, a core part of APM's mission is to ensure there is public benefit from projects. This requires us to make an explicit link between



The next step is to ensure we are 'loud and proud' about successful projects so that we can all be more ambassadorial

project success and its impact on society, and we have sought to do this as part of the APM rebrand. The strapline associated with the rebrand reads 'Because when projects succeed, society benefits'. The next step is to ensure we are 'loud and proud' about successful projects so that we can all be more ambassadorial for the profession.

Highlighting world-beating projects, and sharing positive stories of project success, plays a

vital role in inspiring even greater success in the future. It will attract talented people to the project profession because they can see the impact they could have on improving society. It will further encourage the public and private sectors to increase investment in projects and to design them in ways that maximise societal benefit. It will give the project profession the status it deserves. Ours may not be a regulated profession, but it certainly needs to be a recognised profession.

APM is doing its part by fostering collaboration and encouraging communities of practice to come together. Whether it be through our specific interest groups, the APM Community app or our events, the reality is that sharing project successes within the project community is equally as important as sharing them beyond the project community. Knowing you are having a positive impact on society encourages retention within the project profession. Similarly, sharing those impacts allows them to be replicated in other projects.

Collaboration between individuals and organisations in the project delivery environment is important, but it is also important that this takes place at every level of the profession. APM is the most significant body for the project profession in the UK and it is the most mature organisation within the federation that is the International Project Management Association. We collaborate with our equivalent organisations around the globe





**Milla Mazilu**  
**APM's new Chair; and Principal Programme Controls Manager, Network Rail, Wales and Western Region**

We collaborate with our equivalent organisations around the globe because we understand that we are one project profession

because we understand that we are one project profession. It is incumbent on us to work in partnership and collaboration for the good of the profession, because this means that projects can benefit society on a global scale. Whether it be climate change, poverty or food security, the problems are global and the solutions are global, so the projects also need to be global, and this is underpinned by effective collaboration.

**Looking ahead**, it is sensible for us to think about benefits realisation. Projects have pre-determined benefits that they are trying to achieve, but we need to be much more proactive at what I call 'closing the loop'. This means checking several years after a project is formally complete whether the intended benefits actually materialised and had the anticipated impact. In practice, it may be there are some unintended consequences from projects, perhaps even some unexpected benefits.

Ultimately, it is about combining the benefit of hindsight with the luxury of insight to provide the privilege of foresight to improve project outcomes. Why? Because when projects succeed, society benefits.



**Milla Mazilu** has been appointed as Chair of APM, taking over from Debbie Lewis. Milla began her railway career in 2005, initially working on the Channel Tunnel and then with Network Rail. In her current role, she leads initiatives in project data analytics across the portfolio. She was awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2022 New Year's Honours list for her vital work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Q How do you feel stepping up into the Chair's role?**

**A** I feel fantastic. It is a truly exciting time in the project profession and I am thrilled to play a part in leading the organisation through the next steps of our journey. My priority is to bring together the different generations of project management skills. We have a diverse range of skills, from more experienced project professionals to young project professionals with new technological skills and techniques. If we can find a way to bring all these generational skills together, we can take APM to another level.

**Q What advice do you have to APM members looking to volunteer?**

**A** Do it. Volunteering gives you an opportunity to exercise your professional curiosity, get exposure to things you wouldn't see during your day-to-day work, experience another side of the profession, and make connections with a varied and interesting group of people. I have relished my years of volunteering with APM; it really opens doors and I hope that APM will grow in being able to create more of these opportunities for project professionals.

**Q You've spent your career working in rail. What have been the biggest project management lessons you have learned so far?**

**A** Project management is really about people – understanding people, understanding teams, understanding how organisations come together to deliver one goal: the project. We have great techniques, processes, tools; and yet, across many projects, none of these work when the people don't come together to focus on the same goal. Perhaps our next step as an association is to merge the techniques, processes and tools with that core understanding that we still really need it to be about the people.

**Q What is the biggest challenge that worries you and the biggest opportunity that excites you for the profession and your industry?**

**A** Clearly the challenge is in bringing people together, but also doing this in the fastest-changing project data environment there has ever been. The data side of project work is changing so fast, with oodles of information being generated across all aspects of project work, from team communications to planning, scheduling, BIM, document control and, of course, when interfacing across organisations. Things have changed dramatically over the last two decades, and this is only accelerating. Our challenge is to embrace this and find ways of harnessing these innovations, while not forgetting the core issue, which is that projects are about people.

Headline sponsor



# Meet the APM Project Management Awards 2022 winners...

Change and transformation are the name of the game for this year's impressive winners. Fearless innovators, the project professionals behind each award deserve congratulations for going the extra mile under extremely challenging circumstances. From defence projects to post-disaster recovery, and retail to technology, the winning projects and professionals demonstrate just how critical their work is to all of us. Congratulations! And thanks to headline sponsor RPC.

The winning team from Sellafield Ltd with the evening's host, comedian Hugh Dennis (pictured far right)



## **Engineering, Construction and Infrastructure Project of the Year & Overall Project of the Year** **Firemain Replacement Project, Heathrow Airport**

Heathrow Airport has an extensive firemain system with 115km of pipework across the airport. Its purpose is to provide firefighting water to the runway, terminals and the businesses/facilities surrounding the airfield. Installed in the 1950s, some of the pipes and components had life-expired. As a result, the resilience of the firemain was reduced and caused disruptions to the operations.

The replacement project was allowed an eight-week firemain isolation during which all the works required had to be completed. Meticulous planning on work activities and sequences was carried out among the teams. This was the first time in 70 years Heathrow had to carry out a full isolation on the firemain system. Coordinating with over 30 internal and external senior business colleagues to execute the contingency plans was a major



**Contribution to Project Management: Company or Consultancy**  
**Project Delivery Directorate, Sellafield Ltd**

Managing the UK’s nuclear legacy underpins the future of the industry, providing employment opportunities for generations to come. Project delivery is vital for Sellafield – ensuring new assets are available on time, fit for purpose and represent value for money, while maintaining nuclear safety and security. Sellafield’s project professionals comprise some 1,800 people internally and a further 4,000 in the supply chain. Sellafield continually strives to improve project performance. From individual professional development to client capability, it is raising standards and growing the next two generations of project professionals to come.

Sellafield provides a pathway from HNC to PhD through courses, professional qualifications, mentoring, professional

accreditation and chartership. It has also been awarded APM Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) ‘Accredited Assessor’ status, meaning it is among a select few businesses able to deliver high-level training and experience in project management. With the establishment of The Project Academy, with the support of APM and the University of Cumbria, this landmark achievement means Sellafield can now develop its project professionals, from entry-level apprentices through the APM Project Management Qualification and APM Accredited PM Level 1 Certification, all the way through to chartership. Sellafield currently has 68 ChPPs, and this is set to increase by 10 people a year.

The judges commented that there is a “well-structured development of the project profession in Sellafield. It covers the whole life cycle with career paths and with the supply chain. There is great training with internal staff and the supply chain to maximise the value and ensure the retention of good, well-educated and professional staff.”

achievement. The success of this complex and high-risk project is the outcome of effective governance, strong project leadership and the ‘can do’ attitude of the project team.

Risk management played a key role in the success of the project. The team was proud of the level of undertaking in the planning, mobilisation and deployment of the many contingencies across the multiple facilities to allow the firemain to be isolated. The project team and operational team worked together to collect information and identify all the affected parties. A contingency working group was set up with over 30 internal and external contingency leads to coordinate the individual contingency plans for eight months. Each individual plan was reviewed on its suitability and some of them had to be tested and proved before the execution.

The judges commented that “the focus on risk/contingency planning was excellent” and that “it is clear that the very challenging project stressed project management to its limit”.

**Heathrow Airport, winner of Engineering, Construction and Infrastructure Project of the Year and Overall Project of the Year**



## Contribution to Project Management: Small to Medium Enterprise

### 3PM

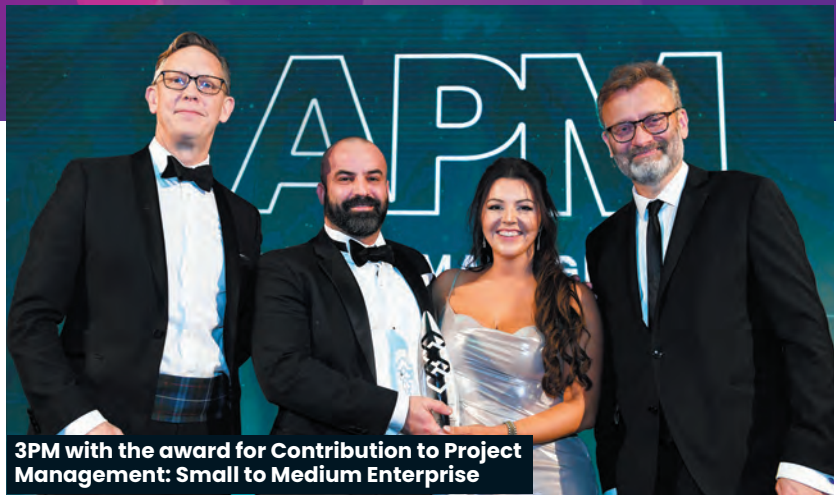
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Project and programme management consultancy 3PM manages the life cycle of projects of varied complexities across all stages and many sectors. It operates a flat structure that encourages every member of staff to become a trusted adviser to clients and enhance the value on its commissions through combined experience. The firm says that it is proud to have delivered many projects and change initiatives that have actively contributed to make the world a better place, including vaccines and cancer drug development facilities, world-class health facilities and two of the Green Building Council's top greenest buildings in the world.

Its project managers have responsibility for the day-to-day management and accountability for their projects and are empowered to make decisions. "We are all accountable to each other and run regular project reviews and lessons learnt to ensure that this is done successfully," it says. 3PM has created its Leadership Development Programme for its future project leaders and sponsors. Through training, mentoring and internal business projects, this programme rewards the stars of its business and helps it develop talent. The programme not only develops the talent of the individuals engaged in the process, the 'ripple effect' improves the organisation as they put lessons they have learned into practice. Project leadership at 3PM is outstanding because every team member is entrusted and encouraged to lead projects. Rather than assuming a single hierarchical structure, its circular approach means it is continually supporting and developing its talent and getting the most from its teams.

The judges were impressed by 3PM's commitment to developing its people, right from apprentices up to supporting APM's chartered status, and for "sharing their insights that contribute to academic research".



3PM with the award for Contribution to Project Management: Small to Medium Enterprise

## Contribution to Project Management: Not-for-Profit

### Defence Equipment & Support

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Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) equips and supports the UK Armed Forces, managing an annual programme of work worth around £1bn and employing 3,000 people in project delivery. DE&S is accountable for delivering 36 projects in the Government Major Projects Portfolio. These include complex projects such as the delivery of the *Queen Elizabeth*-class aircraft carriers, delivery of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft and spearheading the ventilator programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, DE&S working with its industry partners delivered £5.8bn in savings in the equipment plan 2015–2020, releasing

much-needed funding to support wider government challenges.

DE&S also reacts with agility and pace to new and emerging priorities. This has been demonstrated with DE&S's response in the fight against COVID-19, where it delivered over four million items to the NHS, including personal protective equipment, 6,000 ventilators and 215 staff members to support other government departments and the NHS. DE&S has been able to respond to these priorities due to the maturity and talent of the organisation in its project delivery; and having the right people in the right place at the right time, with robust tools and project techniques. For example, in just 12 weeks, it delivered £170m of military capability to Ukraine alone.

The judges found that DE&S is "well established from a project delivery perspective and worthy of an APM Award". They were impressed by the "sound vision of the importance of green issues, digitisation and social consciousness in project management".



Defence Equipment & Support took home the award for Contribution to Project Management: Not-for-Profit

**PMO of the Year**  
**Openreach Fibre and**  
**Network Delivery PMO**

Fibre and Network Delivery (FND) is Openreach’s largest business unit and aims to connect 25 million UK homes with fibre broadband by 2026. The FND Transformation team is responsible for transforming its processes, people and systems to enable the business’s key objectives of improved service, reduced cost to serve, and improved customer and colleague experience. In 2020, FND mobilised a business critical transformation programme with the key objective of reducing the business cost base by £500m. To ensure its success, it developed a brand-new PMO capability.

Its 18-strong PMO has six programmes and over 200 projects in delivery. Over the past two years, it has been on a transformation of its own, mobilising a minimal viable product



**PMO of the Year winner, Openreach Fibre and Network Delivery PMO**

service offering for one programme and, once established and proven, evolving its maturity, increasing both its service offering and widening its coverage. A priority action for the PMO was to mature its delivery life cycle, resulting in the Projects & Change Execution (PACE) framework for delivering transformation in a professional and standardised way. It defined the key stages, gates, deliverables and team engagement and codified Openreach knowledge and lessons. Each project requires up to 15 matrix teams

to work together, and PACE ensures this consistently happens.

The judges commented on the “great journey” the PMO has been on, while “taking the change community with them as well”. The PMO was praised for how it “tackled the challenges of bringing more process by working on relationships and on accessible ways to bring benefits” and “finding the right team and generating joy in the work itself through bringing value and improving the organisation’s projects.”



**Collaboration between Openreach and Accenture saw them win the accolade of Programme of the Year**

**Programme of the Year**  
**Partners in Transformation:**  
**Openreach and Accenture**

Openreach, part of BT, is rolling out fibre-optic broadband across the UK. Its goal is to connect 25 million homes by 2026 – and Openreach’s 12,000-strong Fibre and Network Delivery (FND) unit is responsible for making it happen. To help meet this target, and reduce

costs, FND and Accenture forged a unique collaboration in 2020 to create Rubix, a two-year, organisation-wide digital transformation.

Though implemented at the height of the pandemic, Rubix led to a doubling of connected homes, without needing extra engineers. It reduced costs by over £140m annually. Employee satisfaction increased, while complaints went down 90%.

The first objective of Rubix was to reduce costs to serve, including reducing failure points, streamlining processes and redesigning support functions. Its second objective was to create greater certainty for customers through smarter and more consistent ways of working to minimise the lulls between each stage in the ordering process; and by providing tools to enable a smarter field force able to resolve issues in the moment. Underpinning Rubix was a common set of enabling capabilities, including data science and visualisation, engineering, programme management, governance and change management. A value creation office was devised, charged with assessing and quantifying the anticipated benefits at every stage.

The judges found the programme to be “very well structured with great controls and measures to deliver the required benefits”. There was also a “novel use of a combination of waterfall and agile methods” and “uplift in productivity, business continuity and efficiency were clearly demonstrated”. Overall, this was “a highly successful digital infrastructure programme which will serve multiple stakeholders for a long time”.

## Social Project of the Year Anguilla Health Recovery – Post Hurricane Irma, Health Authority Anguilla

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Anguilla has faced two formidable challenges within the past five years: the catastrophic category 5 hurricane Irma and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. By May 2018, the UK and Anguilla governments had signed a memorandum of understanding that established a £60m grant to 'build back better' over three years. Known as the Anguilla Programme, its aim was to deliver 24 projects by April 2021. The ministries of health, education and infrastructure identified projects to be funded, including the major refurbishment of Princess Alexandra Hospital's main building.

Conloyd Gumbs, Local Project Manager, Health Authority of Anguilla, explained that "the adoption of new practices that were inspired by APM was instrumental in guiding our project management team... Its methodological approach to guide funding bodies, project managers, health professionals, customers, the public, contributing departments, etc, was a crash course for an entire nation on the importance of project management. As a result of the benefits derived from the knowledge and skills obtained from the Anguilla Programme, our team now uses procedures to develop mini projects around the organisation. This includes the clear outlining of a project's scope of works, financial forecasting, early warnings, project manager's instructions, the use of educational resources (supplied by APM), and the adaptation of lessons learned from previous projects to carry forward and ensure the success of the projects and their sustainability within the organisation." The health project was delivered on time and within budget.

The judges said that the "establishment of the project board and committees was very well done", and that "great methodologies" were used to achieve the goals.



Health Authority of Anguilla took home the award for Social Project of the Year

## Technology Project of the Year Heathrow Airport Terminal Drop-Off Charge, Heathrow Airport

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**BAE SYSTEMS**

In 2021, Heathrow Airport launched its Terminal Drop-Off Charge (TDOC), a charge for drivers using the forecourts outside the terminal buildings to drop passengers off. Its purpose was to support Heathrow's environmental objectives, encourage a shift towards sustainable forms of transport, improve air quality and contribute to decarbonisation. The TDOC was delivered from concept to launch over a 12-month programme. With technology at its core, the project required the installation and integration of multiple systems, including roadside infrastructure, back-office data processing systems,

and digital tools to support operations and customers.

The TDOC was designed to maximise the use of technology, automation and data across the vehicle detection, customer channels, payment reconciliation and enforcement systems. Its aim was to improve the customer experience while minimising manual operation. As the project influenced a diverse range of external entities, the team had to engage with them and ensure all stakeholders involved were aware of potential impacts TDOC might have on their business and operations. It organised monthly workshop sessions and prepared bespoke engagement materials to key external stakeholders. Extensive internal stakeholder management was also conducted.

The judges commented that there was a "clear understanding of project management methodologies in a challenging set of circumstances" and that it was a "strong example of stakeholder management".



Technology Project of the Year was awarded to Heathrow Airport for its Terminal Drop-Off Charge

## Project Professional of the Year Alexander Darvill, Integrated Project Team Leader, Project Orpheus, Rolls-Royce

Project Orpheus was a two-year collaborative experiment between Rolls-Royce and the Ministry of Defence with the aim of demonstrating a radically transformative approach to the delivery of complex technology programmes. The project was launched in 2020 and delivered by Rolls-Royce Defence. To prove a totally novel approach to product development, the team was challenged to deliver a real project in half the time and half the cost of a typical programme. Two years on and Orpheus exceeded its original goals with key programmatic innovations being shared across Rolls-Royce and UK industry.

Darvill was responsible for line management and programme

management of the team, as well as leading the development of the 'Orpheus Agile Operating Model'. "Orpheus was set up as an independent project team consisting of 50 members selected from across the business. I selected all team members and sought out individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences and personalities. The result was a small, motivated and inherently creative team," he explains. The project was co-led by Darvill, a Programme Executive and a Chief Design Engineer, who ran it as "an internal start-up".

"A mindset change towards 'agile' ways of working was the most important factor in the success of the project... Everyone was able to have their voice heard and trusted they would be listened to," says Darvill. "The outcome I am most proud of is proving to the team that we could overcome any challenge. Whether it be national COVID-19 lockdowns, supply-



**Alexander Darvill (right)  
with APM Chief Executive  
Professor Adam Boddison**

chain issues or organisational headwinds, we beat them as a team."

The judges found "good evidence of personal growth and development, and bringing in new ways of working".



**Rolls-Royce picked up the award  
for Transformation Project of the  
Year for its Project Orpheus**

## Transformation Project of the Year Project Orpheus, Rolls-Royce

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**QINETIQ**

As the MOD and UK industry starts development of the sixth-generation Tempest fighter aircraft, the MOD is challenging industry to find new ways of working to deliver substantially reduced costs and timescales. Project Orpheus

was set up to answer this challenge – a two-year collaborative experiment between Rolls-Royce and the MOD with the aim of demonstrating a radically transformative approach to the delivery of complex technology programmes. The team was challenged to deliver a real project in half the time and at half the cost of previous performance. The project was the delivery of a working demonstrator for a new gas turbine that offers the best efficiency in its market segment. Orpheus exceeded its original goals with key programmatic

innovations being shared across Rolls-Royce and UK industry.

The team was treated as an "internal start-up", empowered to define its own processes. Roles were redefined to match the needs of the project rather than legacy assumptions, and the team was allowed to cross-skill and upskill to solve problems. A mindset change towards more agile ways of working was the most important factor in the success of the project. An adaptation of Scrum Agile was deployed from the start of the project. This resulted in the Orpheus Agile operating model, which combined Rolls-Royce best practice and adaptations of Scrum@Scale, Scaled Agile Framework and Rapid Learning Cycles. Orpheus was successful in validating not only engineering design methods, but also that agile methods could be applied and adapted to the development of a complex hardware system.

Comments from the judges included: "A terrific explanation of how Rolls-Royce tore up the rule book... freeing their team to think differently and deliver amazing results." It created "a clear legacy of a new way of working across the organisation".

**Young Project Professional of the Year**  
**Rose Young,**  
**No7 Beauty Company**

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As Portfolio Delivery Manager, Gift, Rose Young is responsible for the No7 Beauty Company Holiday Programme, which encompasses nine individual projects, spanning global markets and comprising 50 million unit components. The programme is renowned internally for its complexity and siloed processes. Young shows tenacity and enthusiasm in her leadership of the programme, driving for simplification, challenging norms and engaging the full team.



**Young Project Professional of the Year Rose Young with her award**

The ‘Golden Quarter’ of retail for Christmas falls between September and December, and the 2021 programme was the most challenging yet, impacted by Brexit and the pandemic. Issues included logistics challenges, labour shortages, double-digit cost inflations, extended raw material and component lead times and continued lockdowns, compounded by manufacturing capacity challenges. The objective was to deliver over three million finished gift items. For 2021 the programme successfully delivered \$3.4m

over-target revenue and \$5m over-target profit, and Young was key in keeping the programme on track.

Young joined the company via the graduate scheme in 2019, eventually becoming a Project Delivery Manager before quickly progressing to Portfolio Delivery Manager within less than a year. At only 24, she gained her own team to lead, stepping up to bridge communications between the operational, commercial and customer teams at a pivotal point in the programme.

The judges found that Young demonstrated “a thorough understanding of project management methodology” and praised her “understanding of the challenges faced as part of the programme, mitigation strategies adopted to overcome them and good awareness of lessons learned”.

**Safe Project Management Award**  
**Greater Tortue Ahmeyim**  
**Quarters and Utilities**  
**Platform, BP**

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GTA Quarters and Utilities Platform was designed and built by Yantai CIMC Raffles Offshore, the first time BP had awarded an engineering, procurement, construction and commissioning contract directly to a Chinese contractor for an offshore facility. Greater Tortue Ahmeyim Phase 1 megaproject is a multibillion-dollar integrated gas development hub off Mauritania and Senegal, consisting of deep-water wells, subsea infrastructure, a floating liquefied natural gas production facility and more.

The project was used as a demonstrator for new ways of working to elevate safety standards on-site. The project team nurtured a safety culture that evolved from an initially pathological to a truly generative one that delivered the project without any lost time incidents. BP formed an integrated project management team with KBR to manage the project



**BP's Greater Tortue Ahmeyim Quarters and Utilities Platform was the winner of APM's Safe Project Management Award**

and, following contract award, it became apparent that achieving the zero harm goal would require significant collaboration.

The BP Project Delivery Manager, based on-site, was also the designated Site Safety Leader, accountable for safety performance for the project. Focusing first on transforming compliance and enforcement of safety rules, a process of contractor self-verification and client oversight was established to ensure the project safety procedures

were being implemented by everyone on the project. During three years, there were no lost time injuries and no uncontained environmental releases. The project achieved a total recordable injury rate of 0.09, making the project result an exceptional achievement in a Chinese shipyard.

The judges commented that the project showed an “excellent result in a challenging environment” and “courage to do the right thing”.





**Innovation in Project Management  
Cyber Resilience Programme,  
Atkins, a member of the  
SNC-Lavalin Group**

*Sponsored by*



The Ministry of Defence (MOD) established the Cyber Resilience Programme (CRP) to reduce cybersecurity risk, protect critical assets and systems, and improve cyber culture and awareness across defence. Atkins secured an 18-month contract to help establish the 10-year programme.

Encouraging agility, each project was empowered to adopt ways of working to suit the nature of their topic – with overall coherence provided through programme controls. Using innovative methodologies including behavioural science techniques, the team delivered effective quick wins. Working closely with governance areas, the team developed an efficient and tailored approvals strategy which ultimately achieved a delegated strategy

to enable the programme to progress rapidly and achieve incremental risk reduction in parallel. CRP governance was formalised to guide performance management practices, including change control processes, board/review meetings and escalation routes.

Creating blended teams with different backgrounds and skill sets not only within Atkins, but across the supply chain, the CRP encouraged an innovative culture resulting in the development of a variety of creative and high-profile initiatives. Individuals were given the freedom and support to think outside the box and take ownership of projects. In a first for the MOD, the CRP implemented a 30-day bug bounty programme to expose vulnerabilities in one of its applications before they could be exploited by UK adversaries. Although just two years into the 10-year programme, key outputs and results have been delivered on time, on budget and to the required standard.

The judges said that: “The need for this programme is very high, and not just in the special areas of the MOD, but in all society. This was a great example of how a response to this threat can be mobilised and organised.”

**APM Outstanding Achievement Award  
Nick Smallwood**

There are no formal criteria for this award, but the expectation is clearly that the individual needs to have delivered something extra special for the profession. The winner of this highly prized accolade is debated and decided by the APM Board of Trustees. This year, they recommended Nick Smallwood, Chief Executive Officer of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) and head of the government’s Project Delivery Function, who has worked tirelessly to enhance the role and understanding of projects at the highest levels of UK government, and who exemplifies the power of projects to benefit society.

In his role at the IPA, Smallwood has overseen the launch of its ‘Transforming Infrastructure Performance: Roadmap to 2030’ strategy, as well as the launch of the Government Projects Academy, which is dedicated to improving project delivery skills for professionals across government, to increase the capacity and capability to improve the delivery of public projects. These measures and more are helping to create a world where government projects succeed and those delivering them can be at their best. Smallwood’s work at the IPA has also seen its biggest ever Government Major Projects Portfolio, while simultaneously improving on deliverability, with more amber and green projects.



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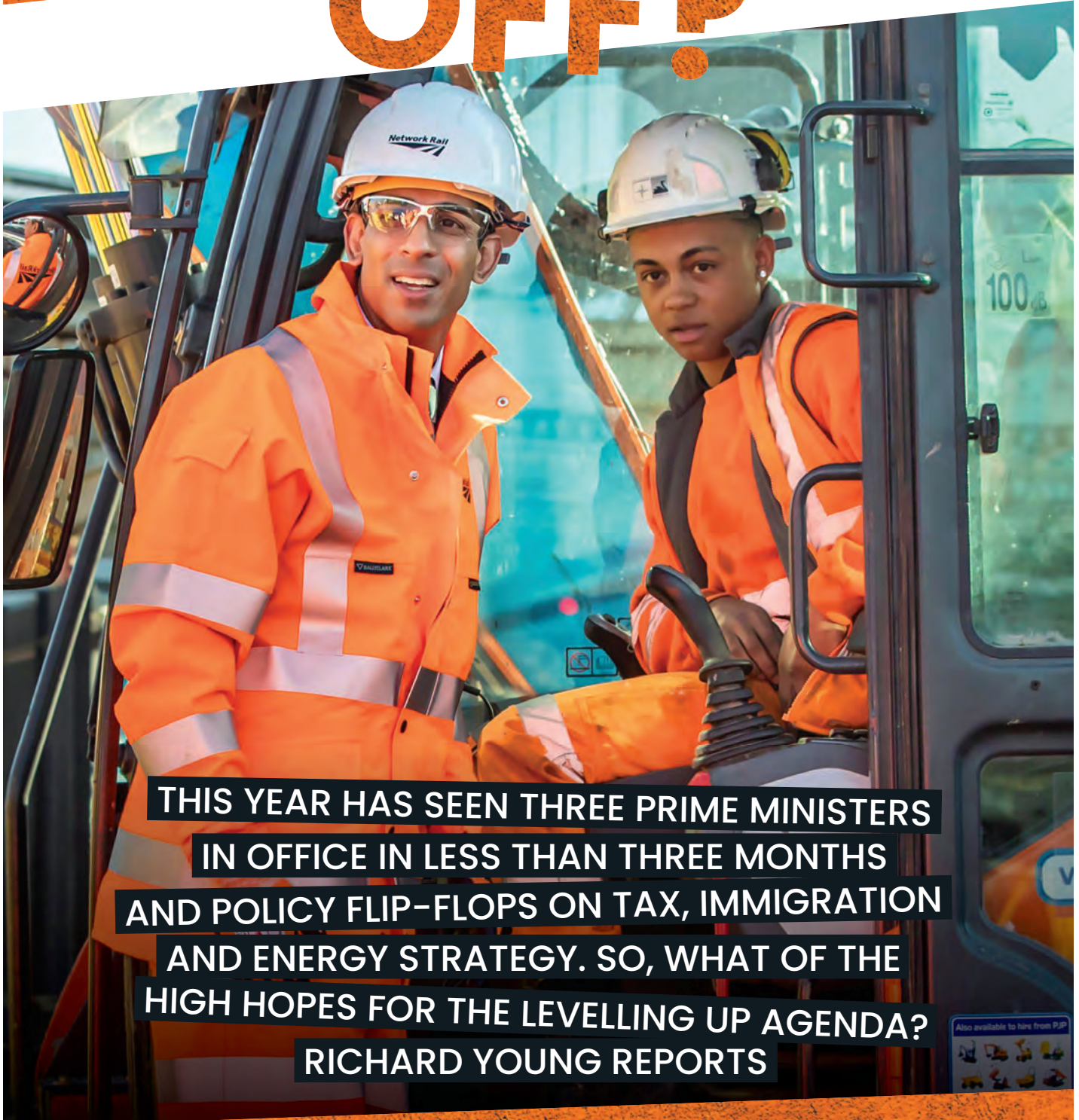
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# LEVELLING OFF?



**THIS YEAR HAS SEEN THREE PRIME MINISTERS  
IN OFFICE IN LESS THAN THREE MONTHS  
AND POLICY FLIP-FLOPS ON TAX, IMMIGRATION  
AND ENERGY STRATEGY. SO, WHAT OF THE  
HIGH HOPES FOR THE LEVELLING UP AGENDA?  
RICHARD YOUNG REPORTS**



**“It’s the economy, stupid.”** Thirty years after the slogan was used to great effect by Bill Clinton’s election team, the phrase has fresh relevance for the UK government’s levelling up agenda. The parallels are clear: growing inequality, a cost-of-living crisis, a recession and a right-of-centre government 12 years into its rule.

Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s flagship policy for addressing regional inequalities is also now in the balance, in the face of some harsh economic realities facing Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. For project managers involved in levelling up bids – or infrastructure programmes that underpin community projects – the next couple of years promise to be interesting.

There are some positive notes. Michael Gove, reappointed as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, is known as a ‘doer’ in government circles – someone who likes to have command of his brief and make things happen. And the reappointment of ‘red wall’ young gun Dehenna Davison as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Levelling Up hints at a degree of continuity for the policy – and an ongoing voice for the north.

And November’s autumn statement did aim to strike a positive note. Infrastructure is important, the Chancellor said, in connecting wealth to every corner of the country. Capital cuts would be “an easy option... that limits our future”. So Sizewell C will retain some government funding; Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Manchester HS2 link will be funded. ‘Levelling up’ remains a watchword. APM’s Chief Executive, Professor Adam Boddison, said: “The key words the Chancellor used when presenting this budget were ‘balance’, ‘stability’ and

‘growth’ and it is clear to see that the power of projects to deliver economic and social benefit has been recognised.”

### Pitching your projects

The main Levelling Up Fund is “designed to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK... The £4.8bn fund will support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets.”

‘Levelling up’ also encompasses a range of other programmes. In the first round of bidding, £1.7bn was awarded to 105 projects. Restoring castles, redeveloping shopping centres, converting redundant community facilities into business hubs – the range of projects in the 2021 first round was diverse and national. But as with any project tender process, bidding has not been straightforward. Bidders have to fully cost their plans in line with a host of regulations, and there are limits on

## Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s flagship policy for addressing regional inequalities is now in the balance

**Above: a motorway junction under construction on the M55, Lancashire. Inset: (top) Tees Valley’s Mayor at the signing ceremony for a new freeport wind project; and (bottom) a CrossCountry Voyager diesel train. Opposite page: Boris Johnson looks at plans for the Sizewell C nuclear power station; and (inset) an aerial view of homes being built at Stafford.**

how many projects, and of which type, authorities can enter for consideration.

The second round of bids opened on 15 July 2022 and closed just two weeks later, leading many local authorities to complain that even just putting together project bids was a massive drain on resources. And bids are competitive, pitting projects against one another. No wonder most authorities and businesses engaged on levelling up projects have called for a massive simplification of the process – and more local autonomy on spending. So, while the second round should be funded to the same £1.7bn level, challenges endure.

### What gets measured, gets managed?

Complicating matters is the National Audit Office’s (the NAO’s) report on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, published in February. It criticised the government for a lack of results from spending on the regions between 2011 and 2020 – including £12bn from the Local Growth Fund and £3.2bn in Regional Growth Fund grants – that had left the UK with “regional disparities in economic performance that are among the largest in the OECD”. The report went on: “The Department... lacks evidence on whether the billions of pounds of public funding it has awarded to local bodies in the past for supporting local growth have

## THE LEVELLING UP PATCHWORK: FUNDS EXPLAINED

Levelling up covers much more than just the £4.5bn Levelling Up Fund. How is the rest of the patchwork of initiatives doing?

### UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND (CRF)

£220m ahead of the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF, the replacement for EU structural funds) in 2022. By November 2021, 225 projects worth £125m had been announced by 52 councils. The Local Government Association (LGA) was concerned about the time and resources needed to “prepare, promote, assess and work with partners to strengthen project bids”. Inconsistencies in project management across authorities and patchy budget control hurt rigorous CRF project evaluation, too. The LGA did conclude that a less competitive bidding process and more budget flexibility has been built into the UKSPF, launched in April and offering £1.5bn per year “by 2024/25” (compared to £2bn per year from comparable EU funds, according to parliamentary estimates).

### UK COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND (CUF)

£150m over four years to help communities buy assets in support of social wellbeing. By May (when the second-round prospectus was published), the CUF had funded 38 projects totalling £10m. Bidding in the new rounds has been simplified, but the qualification process remains complex – and centrally administered.

### FREEPORTS

Regional hubs for global trade and investment, featuring lower taxes, customs concessions and limited capital investment. The first eight freeports (from 18 bidders) were announced in 2021, with Teesside and Thames facilities being the first to operate under the new rules. Project opportunities will be almost exclusively commercial (as with enterprise zones).

### UK INFRASTRUCTURE BANK (UKIB)

Financing for local authority and private infrastructure projects around climate change and regional economic growth. It will administer £22bn in “loans, credit enhancement and equity investments” as well as offering advisory support for project development and delivery to local authorities. Project managers working with local authorities, in particular, might benefit from using UKIB project evaluation standards: can you spin a low-carbon, high-return project case?

### TOWNS FUND

£3.6bn for regeneration of deprived towns, *Project’s* favourite manifestation of levelling up. Why? It has an entire section of its website devoted to project and programme management, including advice on pitching projects, making submissions and transitioning from business case to development to execution. Check out [townsfund.org.uk/project-and-programme-management](https://townsfund.org.uk/project-and-programme-management). Sadly, it’s now smaller than planned. Some funds were diverted into the Levelling Up Fund after the first tranche of ‘winning’ town projects was selected in summer 2021.



**The government states that one objective of levelling up is to “restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging”**

had the impact intended. And it has wasted opportunities to learn which initiatives and interventions are most effective.” No wonder the levelling up select committee launched its own formal inquiry into how funding is allocated – and whether projects are offering value for money – in October.

But one problem is that, in many cases, it’s hard to quantify the outcomes of a project. In the 2022 Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, the government itself states that one of the four objectives of levelling up is to “restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging”. That’s hard to measure. And a survey by think-tanks UK in a Changing Europe (UKICE) and The Policy Institute found that the public’s top priorities for improving their local area were crime prevention (36%) and healthcare access (32%). Infrastructure projects such as faster broadband (13%), public transport (18%) and even housing (20%) were much lower down the list.

“For project managers, that means being very clear on the strategic case in project proposals,” says Emma Willson,

## THE DESIRABLE DOZEN

Levelling up might have many funds and some challenging project proposal processes, but the starting point for pitching projects – and standing up their business case – is the 12 stated levelling up missions:

- 1** Increase pay and productivity across the UK.
- 2** Boost public investment in R&D outside the South-East by 40%.
- 3** Wipe out illiteracy and innumeracy – focus education spending on the most disadvantaged areas.
- 4** Increase participation in high-quality skills training.
- 5** Get public transport around the regions closer to the standard seen in London.
- 6** National gigabit broadband by 2030; 5G coverage for most households.
- 7** Increase first-time homebuyers in all areas; halve “non-decent rented homes”.
- 8** Narrow life expectancy gap between areas.
- 9** Improve well-being across the UK.
- 10** Boost civic pride – in town centres, local culture and community.
- 11** Reduce violent and neighbourhood crime, especially in the worst-affected areas.
- 12** Devolve power to regions that want it, with simplified, long-term funding.



Major Project Delivery Hub Director at the NAO. “Yes, ideally everything would be quantified, with a clear link to specific increases in investment in any given area. But you need to be realistic. In many levelling up projects, it’s the qualitative, wider impacts and outcomes that are just as important.”

### Sweating the big stuff

In all, about £11.4bn will be allocated through the various levelling up funds over five years. But the most important projects to create “opportunity for those furthest behind” may be the big-ticket items funded from other pots: major transport infrastructure, new energy projects and investment zones. “Major programmes are essential to achieve the UK government’s ambition to level up,” says Daniel Armanios, BT Professor of Major Programme Management at Oxford University’s Saïd Business School. “Not only do they physically improve the area by building on infrastructure and resources, they also provide scope for social and economic empowerment at scale.”

There has to be balance, according to Sir John Armit, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission. “Infrastructure isn’t a magic wand for levelling up,” he warns. “You have to see a balance of initiatives. Skills are key, for example. Yes, infrastructure can make a region more

**“Infrastructure isn’t a magic wand for levelling up. You have to see a balance of initiatives.”**

**Above: an engineer and an apprentice inspect a forged steel part. Inset: facilities at University Hospital of North Tees have been deemed not fit for purpose. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Year 5 schoolchildren in Yorkshire; police officers on the beat, Northampton; a new residential estate on a rural site in Otley; the government is pushing to bring high-speed broadband to all areas.**

attractive to inward investment. But the priorities need to be set at a local level.”

This point is echoed by academics from The Productivity Institute, who point out that “growth tends to be stronger... with higher levels of public investment in education and human capital, where there is consistent support for R&D to spur innovation”, as well as investing in infrastructure. The stumbling block is that cancelled or frozen infrastructure projects mean fewer opportunities to widen the skills base and keep workers busy in the regions most in need of their income and with less need for R&D.

It’s a catch-22. To invest in economic regeneration (via civic pride, regional skills development or infrastructure), you need economic growth. But a crucial way to deliver that growth is to address regional underperformance. With every government department expected to find “efficiencies” to address the deficit, extension of the existing levelling up funds is unlikely. “Tackling geographic inequalities in health, wealth and life chances across the country will require more than changes to public spending,” said David Phillips, Associate Director at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, at the launch of its report into levelling up in October. “But how spending is allocated between places does clearly



matter, especially for those typically more disadvantaged people most reliant on public services. Council, police and public health funding bear less relation to estimates of spending needs each year, with no way to account for how changes in local circumstances can affect spending needs.”

### Local heroes, national leadership

The most viable approach is to empower local authorities to green-light projects more quickly. “We’ve always argued against the competitive bidding approach,” says Armitt. “It’s more efficient to have a stable allocation of funds that allows local authorities to decide what they can invest in in their areas.” The UKICE survey of public attitudes to levelling up bears this out: people don’t like ministers or even local politicians deciding allocations very much. “The most popular option amongst respondents was a needs-based formula for allocating investment,” says their report. “The second most popular option was a bidding process judged by independent experts.”

Experts? That opens the door for project consultants and others to make

the case for investments with real rigour. Yes, qualitative rationales can be part of the picture, and local sentiment must be respected, but the professional project manager clearly has a huge role to play. “Delivering levelling up is all about project management,” former cabinet member the Rt Hon Justine Greening told Professor Boddison in September. “It’s all about delivery on the ground.” And, she added, it’s important that projects designed to deliver social mobility are retained in the broader, regional levelling up agenda.

“What we have heard consistently from government is that they believe infrastructure is extremely important,” says Armitt. “They recognise the need to accelerate the planning process, which is not going to be easy. But a lot of the discussion around infrastructure is positive.” Sustaining that positivity during a tough 18 months for spending departments – and in projects on the ground – is going to be key.

## The prize is a fairer, more growth-oriented economy that is better able to tackle long-term challenges

Does levelling up have a future, then? “We have a Levelling Up Minister; a Tory Northern Research Group keeping this on their agenda; and a policy slate that’s currently going through Parliament,” says Dr Lawrence McKay of the University of Southampton. “So it does have a future – but its priorities remain open to question.”

Project discipline, efficiency, accountability and outcomes will be essential to guide levelling up through the new bout of austerity. The prize is a fairer, more growth-oriented economy that is better able to tackle long-term challenges such as net zero and social mobility. No pressure then...

ALAMY





# Annie Hairsine

The 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham exploded in a riot of colour and energy this summer. Annie Hairsine, the Games' Director of Strategic Programmes, speaks to Emma De Vita about how the job was a culmination of all the things she loves most.

**Who knew Ozzy Osbourne was still alive?** Making a surprise appearance on stage in his home city of Birmingham to close out the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the weathered Black Sabbath singer brought the 11-day international competition to a spectacular close. "We knew there was a surprise at the end," says Annie Hairsine, who was kept in the dark about Ozzy's performance, "but that was brilliant," she laughs.

From day one, the Games tapped into a positive vibe, and the final consensus is that it was a big hit both locally and internationally, as well as claiming to be the most diverse and sustainable Commonwealth Games yet. Whether Birmingham can continue to capitalise on the sporting and cultural kudos it gained on a global stage this summer is a matter for the legacy planners – but more on that later.

Ozzy wasn't the only surprise for the folks of Birmingham. The city's bid for the Games came as a surprise too, with Birmingham stepping up only after the planned host, Durban, was forced to drop out. It meant that the usual seven years of planning time was condensed into just four-and-a-half. Hairsine, who'd taken a sideways move into the role, joined

the Organising Committee in December 2019. "All my life I've been involved in sport in one way or another, so having the opportunity to combine my professional career with sport and be a part of such a big event was something that I couldn't turn down," she explains.

Having spent 25 years in project and programme management across tech, science and engineering, and before that as a Captain in the British Army working as an engineering workshop manager, being offered the role was clearly an opportunity not to be missed. As Director of Programme Management and Integrated Planning, Hairsine was focused on establishing programme management principles during the planning phase through a central project management office (PMO) that was responsible for reaching out to the whole organisation to make sure they could monitor and track the programme, but also work with the team so that they understood the plans.

"I had a team of five, and it was fair to say I was picking up a lot of the stuff that had been done, but it was then about implementing it as the wider organisation was growing. Imagine, we had about 90 people when I arrived, and by the time we delivered the Games we were pretty

# The Big Interview

close to 2,000 people. You go from being an SME to being a pretty impressive organisation in a very short period of time,” she says.

After dealing with a considerably reduced planning time, the Games faced its second challenge three months later when COVID-19 hit. Working remotely meant recruiting, inducting and training a rapidly growing team (from 90 people before lockdown to 450 when it was lifted). But one of the objectives set for Birmingham was to make sure that the Games were being delivered by the West Midlands. “So, it wasn’t a group of ‘Gamers’ as we might refer to them, coming in – we were recruiting locally. But when you do that with people who have not worked in Games before and have not necessarily worked in sports, it’s a steep learning curve, and trying to address that during lockdown was incredibly difficult,” Hairsine says.

These difficulties were compounded by the pressure to make up for lost planning time. “Part of the ethos is: how do we do things more efficiently, more effectively? Looking at resourcing, planning, budgets and our overall ambition and making sure that it fits within a shortened timeframe. The ambition was there but it was obviously a little bit challenging then to do that through COVID-19,” she says.

**But the relentless zeal for being as effective and efficient as possible led to greater innovation, believes Hairsine.** “This is all about: how do we encourage more people or enable more nations to be able to host Games like this and make them more affordable? So looking at innovative ways to deliver the Games and the accommodation and the transport solution, that was all a part of it,” she says. High-level strategic objectives were set very early around being the most sustainable Games, but also being the most diverse. “We set some pretty high bars that we wanted to address despite the shorter timeline, and the team have worked incredibly hard to achieve those,” she says.

When it came to housing the athletes, the original plan had been to locate them centrally in one purpose-built village that was being accelerated for the Games,

## “I believe there’s the appetite and the opportunity for women to be themselves, to flourish and make their mark”

and that would become a legacy project. The onset of COVID-19 put paid to that idea, says Hairsine – the programme was no longer achievable. “We had to look for alternative accommodation and then you have to be quite smart, and you have to be thinking on your feet. So, we ended up with a split-village model whereby we used university accommodation and hotels.

“If we look forward to Victoria (host of the 2026 Commonwealth Games), which is just about to start the planning process, they’re going for a regional delivery model... so they will have to go for that sort of split village model again. Maybe it wasn’t our original plan, but it’s worked incredibly well,” she says.

At the start of 2022, Hairsine’s team shifted from its planning phase into

### CV: ANNIE HAIRSINE

**1972** Born to a farming family in North Lincolnshire  
**1995** MPhil, electrical engineering, University of Cambridge  
**1995–2001** Captain, British Army  
**2001–2013** Director, OTM Consulting, working predominantly in tech  
**2013–2017** Head of Oil & Gas, then Head of Operations, Sagentia  
**2017–2019** Senior Project Manager for technology projects, British Rowing  
**2019–2022** Director of Programme Management & Integrated Planning, then Director of Strategic Programmes and Executive Office, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games  
**2022** Project Lead, Commonwealth Youth Games, Trinidad and Tobago 2023

the readiness phase, running everyone involved through different scenarios that could happen at Games time, including partners like West Midlands Police and Birmingham City Council. When the Games started in July 2022, the programme then moved into operational mode, with the team responsible for overseeing delivery in the Games Operation Centre.

“We’ve got to be really agile on our feet and be able to respond to things as they arise. It reminds me of my military days when you’re in the operation centre and you’re listening and observing – thinking on your feet and responding immediately.

“By the time you get to the point where the athletes arrive, there’s a sense of, ‘OK, there’s no stopping now.’”

She found the opening ceremony “really quite emotional because you think of the amount of work, everything that the teams have gone through to deliver that opening ceremony. The success we had in the delivery was just phenomenal.”

### All eyes are now on the legacy the

Games will deliver to Birmingham and the West Midlands. Hairsine says that work began on legacy plans and programmes two years ago, working with local partners (primarily Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority and West Midlands Police) to make sure that “it’s not the Organising Committee that owns the legacy but the local community”, she says. The focus has been on raising the profile of existing social projects and putting a youth programme in place, sporting projects and the upskilling of people for the Games.

The Sandwell Aquatic Centre, purpose built for the Games, will be handed over to the local community as a state-of-the-art swimming and fitness centre once it has been through its transition phase. The refurbished Alexander Stadium, where the athletics events were held, is now ready for any international sporting event. “Everybody has seen on screen that we in Birmingham now have got the capability to deliver international-class facilities and events. Having that capability opens up the opportunity for the city to host future games,” believes Hairsine.

Birmingham lags behind on its employment rate and the skills of the



local population. The city has struggled to shake off its post-industrial ‘depressed’ demeanour and the hope is that the lasting creative buzz of the Games will reignite the city, as happened in Manchester and Glasgow. “The Games have changed the image of Birmingham,” she says. “Just getting people to the city centre and realising what Birmingham has to offer – I think it’s put Birmingham on the map.”

Comparison with the Commonwealth Games held in Manchester in 2002, which were hailed as catapulting the city into a more confident and ambitious version of itself, is inevitable. Hairsine had alumni from the Manchester, Glasgow and Gold Coast games on her team, and she’s been sure to learn every lesson and borrow every innovation that this library of knowledge gave her. But there was something unique about Birmingham, too. “There’s been a natural synergy between the diversity of Birmingham and the diversity of the Commonwealth,” she says.

**It’s been a personal revelation for her, too.** “I openly admit that I’ve come on quite a journey over the past two years working with different types of people, different communities... Just seeing the value of being able to listen to different opinions and perspectives. And while you might not agree, actually just listening to them gives you the opportunity to see things in a different light and challenge yourself,” she reflects.

It’s a long way from the elite Army officer academy at Sandhurst. Hairsine joined the Army on graduating from Cambridge. She saw it as a career that combined her studies in electrical engineering, her passion for sport and adventure training, and the opportunity to go on the Army’s officer training

### **“By the time you get to the point where the athletes arrive, there’s a sense of, ‘OK, there’s no stopping now!”**

at Sandhurst and understand its leadership model.

The Army helped define her leadership style. “The one thing that stayed with me was the motto at Sandhurst, ‘Serve to lead’... as I’ve gone through my career, you understand how you can’t just expect people to do things that you tell them to do. You’ve got to pull up alongside them, coach them, mentor them, work with them to deliver.” She likes to roll up her sleeves, get her hands dirty and get stuck in. It’s partly because she grew up on a farm, the eldest of three girls, where she was expected to help out with the animals and tractors from an early age.

“A lot of people refer to that as being one of my traits here in Birmingham –

that there might be a lot going on, but it takes quite a lot to see the stress in my eyes. Military training teaches you to deal with a lot of things going on at once – having that capacity to scout out everything that is going on and then prioritise accordingly,” she says.

**As a girl, Hairsine loved running and swimming,** and it was her grandmother who inculcated in her a life-long love of hockey, first playing and most recently as a Games official. At Cambridge, she rowed in the Women’s Blue Boat. “There’s nothing like the teamwork in a rowing eight, where everybody has to be in sync,” she says. Team sport has given her valuable experience to draw on in her work. The most important things to get right in project teams are “communication, being able to listen, but also being able to give them direction when needed – or an objective or a vision, something to buy into.”

Hairsine stumbled across project management after joining a tech consultancy on leaving the Army, where she was focused on delivering projects for clients. What she enjoys is “having the visibility of the whole project from start to finish but being able to understand how everything fits together”. She finished her role with the Birmingham Games at the end of September, spending the final weeks handing over to the team running the Victoria Games. By the time this is published, she’ll be getting stuck into her next role looking after the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Games in Trinidad and Tobago.

As a female senior leader in the project profession, Hairsine knows that she’ll be a role model to those coming up. It’s a responsibility she is happy to assume.

“To any young female, I would just say dare to dream, don’t hold back. When I was going through my younger career I saw a lot of women hitting a ceiling and we have to just smash through it. Women should be encouraged to really aim high and keep pushing and keep asking. I really do believe there’s the appetite and the opportunity for women to be themselves and to flourish and make their mark.”

Just like Hairsine continues to do.



# Delivering race equality

IT'S TIME FOR ACTION, URGES LORAINÉ MARTINS OBE,  
NICHOLS GROUP'S DIRECTOR FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION, AND A 2019 APM AWARD WINNER

## **The past two years have seen**

increased attention on diversity and inclusion generally. This has been precipitated by COVID-19 – its disproportionate adverse effects on people from minoritised communities in terms of health; the significant increase in working from home, which for many women meant added pressure; and forced changes in working arrangements, be they remote, flexible or agile. There has also been a greater focus on health and wellbeing, ranging from mental health to menopause.

Add this to the murder of George Floyd, which engendered a more specific focus on racism, and we witnessed a greater reflection at individual, organisational and societal levels and increased engagement on issues related to race and inequalities – albeit in some cases at a surface level. Nevertheless, the result was an impetus to do better; to go from a passive 'I'm not racist' position to exploring and to make sustained and meaningful change by being active anti-racists. Similarly, with this increased attention on discrimination comes an enhanced desire for data about minority communities and a desire to understand better what that data tells us.

## **Facing into the numbers**

The data about diversity and inclusion in the project management space is similar to that of other sectors and professions, in that there is a distinct lack of ethnic diversity, and specifically black talent. There are myriad explanations for this. People do not come upon project management professionals in schools and colleges, so it is a profession that people stumble upon. We need then to increase engagement with schools and colleges.

Gathering data on diversity and inclusion can be challenging. We know that people hesitate or decline to share their ethnicity and other aspects of their identity for a number of reasons, such as a fear of the data being used against them – for example, not getting shortlisted for jobs – and a lack of confidence in how the data is used and stored. Or some white people asserting that black people were only appointed because of their ethnicity, which most times is inaccurate and is always insulting.

We know too that people with non-Western and non-European sounding names are at risk of being less likely to be shortlisted for a role.

Underpinning all of these features, we know that we tend to appoint people in our own image, those with whom we have an affinity. So it can be no surprise that the project management sector, like others, looks as it does – majority white, in part because white people are making the hiring and firing decisions and in part because not enough minority communities are aware of and are applying for roles – although this is changing. Added to this mix, some people from minority ethnic communities perceive their ethnicity as limiting access to career opportunities, including promotions and secondments, and experience ethnicity (i.e. not being white) as a barrier to 'traditional' networks. All these factors contribute to the low numbers in project management and low numbers in leadership positions.

In October, APM held its first ever event marking Black History Month, and the theme of the session was 'Accelerating Black Talent', stimulated by APM's *Salary and Market Trends Survey 2021*. The results of the survey indicate that 15% of the professionals in the project management sector are from ethnic minority communities. So, where has all the black talent gone and

why are we so under-represented in the project management arena?

The numbers need to improve, yet addressing under-representation and inequality is not solely or primarily a numbers game. It is about a cultural and systemic transformation and creating working environments where people can thrive and grow. The data is a snapshot at a point in time that can inform the cultures that we want to create. The numbers help tell the story of the deficit. What we also need to do is gather and listen to the anecdotes that give the numbers light and shade – talking to black people who have had multiple applications rejected or are regularly pipped at the post. Or colleagues who anglicise their names to get a foot in the door. Or those who experience the daily throwaway racism and micro-aggressions.

These stories bolster the perception that there is a dearth of black talent. The truth is, if work is an uncomfortable place or you discern that you're being given lesser treatment and fewer, if any, opportunities, why would you stay in what can be deemed a hostile environment that affects your health and wellbeing, and that of your family and social circles? Sharing these stories of racism is exhausting, particularly if there is no change, so the task now is for colleagues, leaders and businesses to be more responsible and eradicate such behaviour, rather than simply being appalled.

### **If you build it, we will come**

As a discipline, there's work for us to do to give greater visibility to our profession – project management and its place in delivering big and small change; its coordination, anticipation, preparation, and proactive mapping of each phase of a project. We consider who's affected, who needs to be involved, the interdependencies, what competing demands there are, risks and mitigations, the costs, the communications, the sponsors – all facets that help people deliver good outputs and outcomes.

From managing local initiatives through to delivering global programmes, the world of project management is exciting and impactful. And do we sell it? Not well enough. Ours is a profession which is crucial and yet invisible, like

## **We need to build our own competency and confidence and challenge ourselves and each other to do better and be better**

infrastructure – you notice it when it's not there! So, if we're not engaging with minoritised communities, they'll have little if any knowledge that this sector exists.

One of our tasks is to be more intentional about reaching out to a wider audience. Using community engagement/outreach and stakeholder mapping – tools that are part of our project management armoury – is just as useful and important in our efforts to attract greater diversity. Alongside fairs at the top universities, we can extend/expand our reach to other universities and further

### **THE APM SALARY AND MARKET TRENDS SURVEY 2021 SHOWED THAT:**

# 27%

of Gen Z respondents were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background

# 35%

of BAME professionals say that revising recruitment processes and policies will drive diversity and inclusion

**And while BAME project professionals are increasing in number, their average salary is slightly lower than the overall average (£45,000 v £47,500) and falls well below the average for white professionals (£45,000 v £52,500)**

education colleges; we can increase apprenticeships. And this doesn't mean that we are diminishing our standards, but that we are opening our doors wider, so that we're more confident that we are reaching a breadth of talent.

We also have to be more open to the fact that talent is not monolithic; it comes in many guises. Nor are black communities and ethnic minorities homogenous – there is much diversity within ethnic minorities – and this is important, because one of the ways that we tackle racism is to notice differences among individuals. We need to see individuals – rather than use a default position of grouping people together for our ease. Recognising and respecting difference is a fundamental part of being inclusive and being an active anti-racist. Denying that you notice race, when we as humans are hardwired to notice difference so quickly that we don't even think about it, can be seen as disingenuous. You probably would have noticed but feel awkward. Now, in 2022, we need to get over the discomfort, as it is perpetuating negative impacts on black people or anyone who is deemed 'different'.

We need to build our own competency and confidence and challenge ourselves and each other to do better and be better, if we're ever going to eradicate racism and any form of discrimination. We need to build a movement in project management using the rigour of its approach and apply it to removing racism and all forms of inequality.

### **What gets in the way**

Part of what can inhibit leaders and decision-makers in creating better, more open and equal access to opportunities is the fear of difference. The fear of saying or doing the wrong thing, and the fear of being called out for racist behaviour. This fear leads to a tacit complicity with the status quo. So those of us in leadership positions are now tasked with moving from being high on commitment and delegation, to being high on commitment, delivering and role-modelling.

We, as leaders of big teams, small teams or huge programmes, need to do the work, to educate ourselves on the barriers, the systems and processes that maintain and reinforce built-in biases and inequalities. For instance, we can



## **It is time we get on with the work. The data, evidence, anecdotes and experience of minority communities are not new.**

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challenge ourselves and be explicit and intentional about creating a team that is diverse. We can reject homogenous shortlists and limited choice. We can train hiring managers to recruit in inclusive ways. And we can work in an inclusive way.

We can also review our processes and policies to take out bias – in the qualifications we say we want, the academic institutions that we favour or the length of experience we prefer. We can look at performance review data, disciplinarys, grievances and dismissals and identify likely discrepancies. We can create and reiterate the narrative about why anti-racism supports our projects, programmes and businesses. All the evidence indicates that there is profitability in having ethnic diversity – so why would we not want to benefit?

We need to acknowledge the lived experiences of black professionals.

**These inequalities are a consequence of traditional systems and behaviours that... have served a few and disengaged many**

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They are often overqualified and underemployed, less likely to have access to major projects and therefore less likely to gain experiences that might stand them in good stead for future projects or programmes. Some cultural norms by way of interacting and networking may be different and therefore go unrecognised. And ways of contributing may also be different, and these features require team leaders to be open to working in different ways; be more culturally competent; use more emotional intelligence; and still the judgments that we may make automatically and be prepared to give people a chance.

These inequalities do not happen by chance and the sooner we take responsibility for them, the better. They are a consequence of traditional systems and behaviours that persist today and have served a few and disengaged many.

### **Time to do the work**

The changes needed are not the fixing of black colleagues; remember, they tend to be overqualified. The real work is that we fix ourselves as programme and project leaders; we stop making assumptions, and we create inclusive environments. We build a better understanding and appreciation of different people from

different backgrounds. We become more proactive in seeking out diversity and being inclusive. We initiate conversations about difference, demonstrating an empathetic, positive curiosity. We enable and encourage those around us to do the same. And we challenge those whose actions militate against what we're trying to achieve. It is and has always been in our gift – and now it is time that we share that gift of opportunity more widely and access the talent that often goes ignored.

The work includes taking responsibility for the decisions we make; and owning the areas that we need to develop in if we are to genuinely create more level playing fields without unnecessary barriers and impediments.

We need to do the self-development work as inclusive leaders. We can read, we can talk to people – there is a wealth of resources available to help us improve our individual approach. We need to reject limited shortlists and systems that reinforce inequality. We need to encourage those who have traditionally and systematically been excluded to take up the opportunities, and we need to be inclusive when creating project teams and notice who is and isn't there.

It is time we get on with the work. The data, evidence, anecdotes and experience of minority communities are not new. We need greater ownership of when we as individuals have not acted at our best and the consequences for those around us. Working hard to address racism and the skills required will benefit all people. Because when we do that, we will hit that sweet spot of people feeling valued, being able to be more creative, finding solutions and tapping into innovation and alternative ways of work, and discretionary effort, where people are more efficient and effective and drive even better project and programme delivery.

# STEPPING INTO DISASTER ZONES



'HOW DO WE START A HUMANITARIAN PROJECT IN A PLACE STRUCK WITH DISASTER?' ASKS APM'S ANNIE MIRZA. FOR HER, IT'S A PERSONAL STORY, AS SHE SEES HOW THE DEVASTATING FLOODS IN PAKISTAN HAVE AFFECTED HER FAMILY THERE. PLUS, HOW A TIMELY APM REPORT PRESENTS THE LATEST THINKING ON WORKING IN DISASTER ZONES.



As the world moves on from climate disasters, people on the front line remain; this time, hip-deep in literal and metaphorical murky water. If the project is 'aiding those in crisis', where do we start? People remain steadfast and accepting of the difficulties life throws at them, adapting with optimism. But from rebuilding a few homes to a country's entire infrastructure, tackling a crisis like this is frustrating. The 2022 floods in Pakistan came in catastrophic proportions – like a scene from *The Day After Tomorrow*, only my relatives were FaceTiming their reality. Monsoon rains come every year, floods happen every year – this time it was different.

My relatives live in different regions of Pakistan; houses I played in as a

child evolve almost every time I visit. One household, not prone to flooding until the last few years, has added flood steps and 'lifted' their front door from the outside so you step down into the main house; the doorframe inevitably gets shorter. The outdoor steps receive a new top step, so they rise high enough to be above the floodwater levels. Then the doorway is cemented from the ground up to meet the new highest step. It worked again this year, but they're planning on adding more steps just in case.

Villages have drowned and aid workers struggle to find the means to reach them, and once they do, there are hundreds of urgent and complex humanitarian issues. People must choose what to prioritise depending on their

circumstances. Once the flood waters drain away (if they do) and makeshift homes are found, fears turn to starvation and disease. Food remains scarce, farmers have lost their crop and livestock have drowned, so where food is available, it's expensive, or there is nothing to sell or trade. It's essential to have basics available, but also to think ahead: how can we begin to rebuild and grow food?

## Home births and dirty water

Clean water is another urgent issue. A few relatives always say they're 'unaffected by flooding' because their streets and homes aren't filled with water, but their water tanks are infiltrated with sewage and livestock carcasses. They have no clean water available and





Main: a flooded road at Badami Bagh vegetable market, Lahore. Below: a doctor gives medical assistance to a flood-affected girl with malaria. Bottom: people affected by floods receive relief aid.

services to clean tanks can't get through flooded roads. Planning ahead, they rely on water dispensers they saved and filled with clean water months ago.

Many don't have the luxury of water tanks or storage space. People are forced into poor conditions with dirty water that spreads deadly diseases like malaria, cholera and dengue.

How are they meant to prepare safe food or stay hydrated? Urgent issues grow: medical supplies, makeshift hospitals and medicine distribution – sick patients who need urgent care are stranded, either because there isn't a hospital anymore or roads are blocked. Some of my relatives who are pregnant mentally prepare for the possibility of home births.

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## People are forced into poor conditions with dirty water that spreads deadly diseases like malaria, cholera and dengue

The electricity and gas supply has been more erratic too. Pipes and electricity lines have collapsed, cutting off power, and bad planning (inner cities have messy wiring going into the ground) means electricity is switched off for weeks. So, what happens in hospitals, let alone homes, when electricity isn't working and back-up generators fail? If flood victims



are offered uncooked rice, do they even have the means to cook it?

### **Complex, expensive, chaotic**

The focus shifts daily to the most pressing needs. The time to sort this out is short; it's a complex, expensive and chaotic environment. Monsoon season will start again, so how do we rebuild in a few months? How do we ensure that electricity and phone lines won't be cut? How can farmers rebuild and prepare? If people can afford to plan ahead, where do they store food so water won't seep in? Do we focus on dealing with the damage done, or do we prepare to avoid damage recurring?

This goes beyond repairing a house and dealing with the immediate issues. Entire villages have been wiped out. We can't stop the flooding and the rain, but we can rebuild in an adaptable way that allows growth. Making the right decisions at the right time is vital, and good project management can bring life-saving benefits.



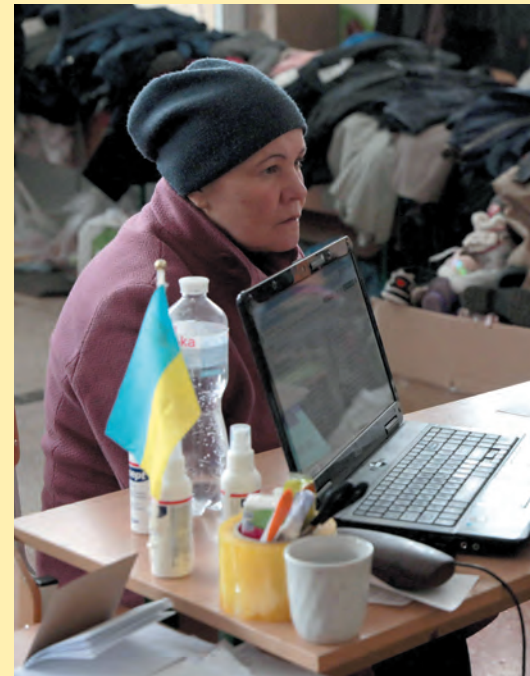
**We can't stop the flooding and the rain, but we can rebuild in an adaptable way that allows growth**

## **MANAGING PROJECTS IN POST-CONFLICT AND DISASTER ZONES**

**In a new report, APM shares advice on managing humanitarian projects in extreme and uncertain environments that have lessons for all project professionals. Read on for an edited extract.**

**On Thursday 24 February 2022,** when Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine, the invasion triggered a humanitarian emergency on a scale that hasn't been seen in Europe for decades. According to the UN, some 7.7 million people have been displaced within the country, and an estimated 13 million people are stranded in areas directly affected by the conflict. The response has also been massive. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says that at least 250 organisations – more than 60% of them Ukrainian – have been actively delivering aid, comprising local, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, volunteers and faith groups. Many of those already present in Ukraine before the conflict have since pivoted towards emergency humanitarian work.

In March, the Ukrainian government created the Coordination Headquarters for Humanitarian and Social Affairs, a new entity designed to coordinate aid from foreign governments, international organisations and large businesses, and to channel it through local agencies. Nevertheless, Ukraine highlights many of the issues that frequently arise in emergency situations: lack of capacity; security risks; difficulties of access; sometimes poor coordination between agencies; and even corruption. For the vast majority of the agencies involved, some form of project management framework is an intrinsic



part of their ability to respond and to deliver a positive impact in situations where uncertainty is the defining characteristic – be it a conflict, earthquake, famine, flood or pandemic, or the challenge of extreme deprivation.

### **Being effective in an emergency situation**

It can be argued that different aspects of uncertainty are the hallmark of any project-based work. Trends such as globalisation and digital transformation have been disrupting whole industries and compressing the time over which change takes place. The enormous investment gambles that sparked the 2008 financial crisis have bequeathed an air of volatility and incipient crisis in economies around the world; the COVID-19 pandemic provided a crash course in living with uncertainty on a day-to-day basis.

It's clear that many of those working in humanitarian fields consider managing projects to be an important role. Humanitarian training provider Bioforce, in a study of more than 1,500 humanitarian professionals, found that when asked to select a single profession that they most closely affiliate to, 16% of all respondents chose project management – the highest for any professional group.

Many NGOs and humanitarian agencies have long since developed their own framework for managing projects on the ground. There's also



Above: a volunteer speaks with a displaced person in Kyiv. Above right: a Ukrainian civilian views the damage following a rocket attack. Right: a child shelters from the bombardment in her basement.



## “All of the credit lines were cancelled... they shot the vice president of the organisation in front of his family”

at least one generic tool that is widely used: Project DPro, which provides a guide to best practice and certification to individual humanitarian workers and is owned by the organisation PM4NGOs. It is focused more on development work than emergency response, but has been used to train more than 30,000 professionals around the world. As anti-poverty charity CARE International explains in its *Management Toolkit*: “The humanitarian sector largely operates on the basis of projects. Funding proposals are made on the basis of projects, and what we do meets all the classic criteria of a project: it has a set duration; it has set resources (budget, staff, others); it tries to achieve a particular objective.”

### Life-or-death challenges

Managing projects in disaster zones, conflict zones and other extreme circumstances requiring humanitarian relief presents different challenges to those of a conventional workplace.

governance systems may not necessarily be as robust as ours, identifying people in X area, or having the decision-making data you need at your fingertips is quite difficult.” She adds: “After an earthquake has happened, you have an absence of information for a few days, and then it starts to come in, and it’s only then that you can start to say: ‘OK, now we know the scale of it.’”

### Dealing with exceptional pressures and uncertainty

Other significant factors in emergency response are difficulty of access and breakdown in communications. The Community Action Nepal project faced the challenge of remote locations, with many of the villages affected by the 2015 earthquake located up to eight days’ walk from the nearest road. It may be dangerous for humanitarian relief workers to get to the scene, especially in conflict zones. And it’s common for telecoms infrastructure (including internet) and electrical power to be shut down during such events, meaning that it is even more difficult to obtain a reliable picture on the ground.

Lt Col Langley Sharp, who ran the Centre for Army Leadership and is author of *The Habit of Excellence: Why British Army leadership works*, says: “Uncertain environments can mean different things in different contexts, but ultimately, it’s about not having certainty over the outcome. Ambiguity is resonant throughout much of what you do, and there’s a lack of full understanding of the picture.” Uncertain environments are also characterised by putting people under exceptional pressure, he adds. “As leaders, one of our primary roles is to consistently understand the context in which we’re operating. And that becomes very difficult when you’re in an uncertain environment. We have to understand the context to the best of our ability, and translate that to the people we are leading, so they have an understanding of how they need to act and to adapt.”

One of the biggest differences is the possible consequences. John Cropper, Co-founder of Pyramid Learning and former Chair of PM4NGOs, who ran Oxfam GB’s worldwide project management for five years, explains: “In normal office situations in developed countries, the worst thing that can happen is that someone gets fired, or the very worst, that a company closes down. In both development and humanitarian projects, people get killed.”

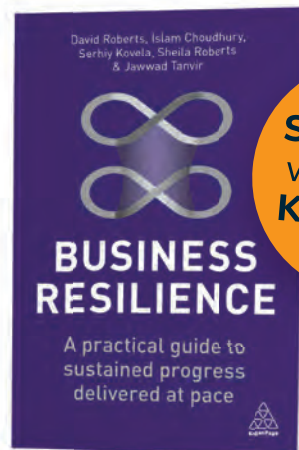
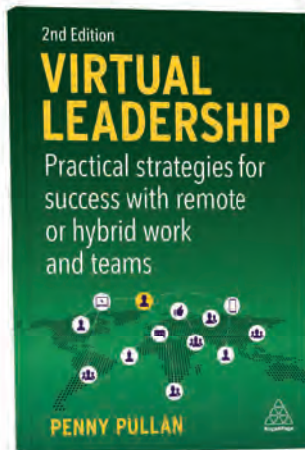
Most obviously, they could be the victims of a disaster, but what’s at stake can be equally serious outside emergency response. Cropper cites a coffee programme in Honduras he was involved in that pioneered a new business model in which the many middlemen who took most of the profit were cut out, and small producers were given a direct line to the retailer. When it was scaled up, “all hell broke loose. All of the credit lines were cancelled from the bank overnight, and they shot the vice president of the organisation in front of his family”.

Jo de Serrano, Chief Executive of NGO RedR, which provides training and capacity-building for humanitarian emergencies, says that a lack of information is one of the key differentiators. “The fundamentals are VUCA – volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. In these operating environments, you’re not necessarily sure of what your baseline is, and gathering that information at the start can be a challenge. In countries where

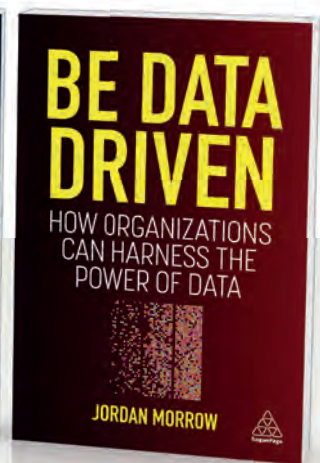
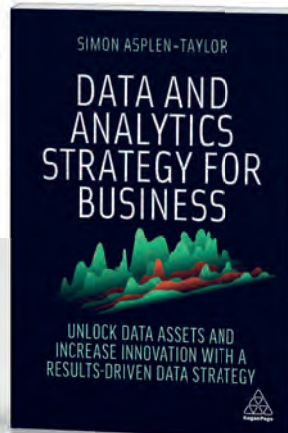
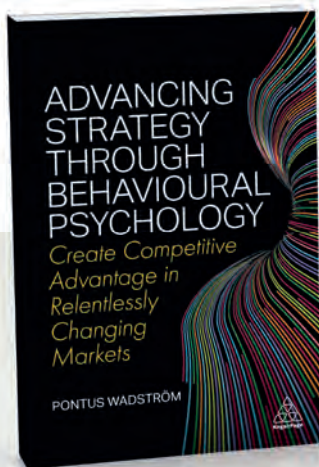
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# PEER TO PEER

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR PROJECTS FAIRER

**CHRISTINE UNTERHITZENBERGER AND KATE LAWRENCE ON HOW TO MAKE YOUR PROJECTS A FAIRER ENVIRONMENT TO WORK IN**

**As a project professional**, you need to know how to make your projects fairer because the individuals you are working with care about fairness – and here is why you should care about fairness too. If individuals in a project are treated fairly, the project is more likely to be successful; they are more committed to their work and willing to put in extra effort; and they are more likely to help and support others.

You can expect positive outcomes for organisations and individuals if fair treatment, processes and procedures are adopted. This has been shown through a number of studies and the positive outcomes range from extra-role engagement to improved acceptance of change and enhanced satisfaction with decisions. Below, we outline some starting points on how you can make your projects fairer.

### **1 Seek to understand what fairness in projects means**

Fairness is not an abstract construct. We know what criteria individuals use to evaluate if their treatment is fair or not. They typically perceive fairness

along the three dimensions of organisational justice:

- **Distributive justice**, which is concerned with the perception of fairness regarding the distribution of resources and rewards. This relates to the fair and equitable allocation of rewards including benefits packages, pay, professional development and promotion opportunities, as well as to the fair and equitable allocation of resources including workload, contribution, risk, responsibility, tools and equipment.
- **Procedural justice**, which is focused on the fairness of policies, procedures, processes, rules, regulations, standards and systems that are established in an organisation or project. They are perceived as fair if they are accurate, bias free, clear, consistent, correctable, ethical, non-discriminatory, representative and transparent and provide opportunities for input and influence during decision-making and enable fair resolution of disputes.
- **Interactional justice**, which relates to interpersonal treatment and informational exchange. Interpersonal



**Studies demonstrate that positive outcomes for the organisation as well as the employee can be expected if 'justice rules' are adopted**

treatment perceived as fair is non-accusatory/without blame, polite, respectful, truthful and leads to individuals feeling appreciated, valued and held in high opinion. Informational exchange that is open and honest, timely and explanatory, that provides justification for decisions from competent, reliable and truthful sources, is perceived as fair.

## 2 Understand what factors influence justice judgments

Fairness in projects is subjective and context specific. Individuals make fairness judgments based on their own circumstances. A number of factors influence how individuals evaluate their fair or unfair treatment in projects. These factors contribute to justice judgments and influence how acute and relevant the treatment is perceived as being.

First, the **source** of the treatment matters. Treatment from a source such as the line manager and the employing organisation is generally felt more acutely than treatment from an external source, although treatment from an external source such as a project manager, and the project as the temporary organisation, also plays a role.

Second, the **temporality and frequency** of the treatment impact fairness judgments. Treatment in the project is regarded as temporary. Individuals appear somewhat more tolerant to treatment in the project, which will likely end once the project comes to an end, compared to treatment received from their employing organisation. Also, frequency plays a role, with an infrequent act of unfairness sometimes regarded as tolerable, while frequent acts of unfairness are not.

Third, an individual's **authority and accountability** make a difference. Individuals with authority and accountability experience fewer issues with unfair treatment than individuals who only have accountability, but little authority to change or influence things.

Fourth, **reflection** influences how justice judgments are made. An individual's reflection on their own actions, and prior experiences, as well as reflections on the reasons the sources of treatment acted as they did, can provide contextual information or explanation, which impacts on whether, or to what extent, some treatment is perceived as fair/unfair.

## As a project manager you need to be aware of the enabling power fair treatment of your project team members has

### 3 Be aware of the impacts of fair and unfair treatment in projects

Fair and unfair treatment has an impact on individuals, organisations and projects. All actions from leaders have consequences, and as a project manager you need to be aware of the enabling power fair treatment of your project team members, contractors and consultants has and the damaging impact unfair treatment can have.

At an **individual level**, fair treatment enhances ways of working such as personal and professional development, career and work opportunities and interpersonal working relationships. An individual's feelings will be more positive in the sense that they feel appreciated, confident, supported, valued, happy and respected with a sense of enjoyment. Fairness also positively influences their health and wellbeing, although on occasion unfair treatment negatively impacts ways of working, relationships, feelings and wellbeing, on occasion, unfair treatment acts as a stimulus for change.

At an **organisational level**, fairness has been described as the glue that holds together individuals and their employing organisation. It is the basis for a

## HOW TO ENSURE YOU MAKE YOUR PROJECT FAIRER

Here are some useful questions you can ask yourself to assess if you are making your project a fairer place for everyone involved.

### Distributive justice

- Are resources and outcomes allocated according to contributions?
- Are resources and outcomes allocated equally?
- Are resources and outcomes allocated to need?

### Procedural justice

- Do procedures provide an opportunity for a voice for individuals/organisations involved?
- Do procedures provide individuals/organisations involved an influence over outcomes?
- Are procedures consistent across persons and time?
- Are procedures neutral and unbiased?

- Are procedures based on accurate information?
- Do procedures offer opportunities for appeals of outcomes?
- Do procedures take into account the concerns of subgroups?
- Do procedures uphold standards of morality?

### Interactional justice

- Is the enactment of procedures respectful, sincere and polite?
- Does the enactment of procedures refrain from improper remarks?
- Are the explanations about procedures honest?
- Are the explanations about procedures thorough?

You need to ensure a holistic approach towards these questions. Even if you can answer half of them positively, the absence of the other half will lead to perceptions of unfairness.



## Each and every individual working in projects can make a difference in creating a fair and equitable working environment

that perception of fairness often varies between how fairly a source perceives their treatment of others and how fairly the receiving individual perceives the treatment. This means you need to actively seek feedback from individuals if your actions are following justice rules and, hence, if you are improving justice perceptions in projects. These can be simple considerations of how your treatment could add excessive workload/stress to others, or how something that is 'important' for one team member is not 'urgent' for another team member, or how able team members are to voice their opinions and influence the project.

Overall, each and every individual working in projects can make a difference in creating a fair and equitable working environment for the other project team members. However, this effort should not stop at the individual level and needs to be supported by organisations working on projects, ranging from client to contractor to supply chain organisations, and also requires commitment from thought leaders in the profession.

trusting relationship and influences an organisation's reputation. Unfair treatment can lead to missed deadlines and unfinished tasks, resulting in the non-delivery of outputs and outcomes.

At a **project level**, feelings of fairness develop bonds of trust between project team members, whereas unfairness impacts negatively on the project delivery in terms of cost and viability. Overall, a project is more likely to be completed successfully if project team members are treated fairly.

### 4 Build skills and capabilities

Organisations need to invest in building the skills and capabilities of project managers and project team members in how organisational justice can be adopted in projects. This requires organisations to train leaders and senior project professionals in the relevance and application of fairness in projects. It also necessitates embedding fair principles and procedures in project team working and enabling individuals to implement fair processes and procedures within their own authority.

Justice in projects requires organisations to have an open and

### Organisations need to ensure that learning from past organisational injustice is captured and understood

transparent culture that provides a psychologically safe environment for individuals to speak up. This should also be facilitated through the implementation and sustainment of appropriate governance arrangements such as fair project governance and includes considerations of an appropriate balance of authority and accountability across project roles and clarity over roles and responsibilities. Organisations also need to ensure that learning from past organisational injustice is captured, understood and not repeated.

### 5 Take responsibility

As a project manager, you need to think about and be aware of the impact your actions have on subordinates, contractors, peers and project team members. We know from previous research

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# UKRAINE: MY FRONT ROW SEAT AT CHERNOBYL



**GARETH WATKINS, CHIEF PROGRAMME OFFICER AT DBD INTERNATIONAL, REFLECTS ON HIS TIME WORKING IN CHERNOBYL, HOW THE RUSSIAN INVASION IS AFFECTING THINGS THERE, AND WHAT HIS INTERNATIONAL CAREER HAS TAUGHT HIM ABOUT WORKING WITH TEAMS**

**Between 2013 and 2018** I lived in Ukraine, close to the Chernobyl site, working on European Bank for Reconstruction and Development projects to help make safe the stricken unit 4, which had failed catastrophically on 26 April 1986. During my time in Ukraine, I travelled extensively, visiting Crimea before its annexation by Russia and many cities in the south and eastern regions of the country.

The Soviet-era infrastructure in Ukraine was heavily decaying and the country was moving toward a more Eurocentric focus after the Maidan protests in central Kyiv (sparked by the Ukrainian government's sudden decision not to sign up to an EU cooperation agreement), but everyone had an optimistic outlook on life, excited by the prospects of the heavy influx of overseas investment that was delivering a brighter future. I was in the country during the Maidan protests and travelled into Kyiv on a number of occasions during the troubles. I witnessed a large militia presence and burnt-out military vehicles on the streets, but never felt intimidated as the friendliness of the Ukrainians was unwavering.

My time spent in Ukraine was always a joy and I called it home for several years. I still call it my second home and would happily return tomorrow if the climate was somewhat different.

Russia's invasion deeply saddened me. I still have friends and colleagues trapped by the conflict and I receive disturbing updates from them regularly. Unfortunately, Ukraine no longer commands the column inches it used to as more local events are receiving media focus, but the war continues unabated. Power cuts are now commonplace, as they were in the post-Maidan era when Russia first flexed its energy muscles. I would leave home one morning without electricity and return home the following evening with the lights on as Slavutych, my home town, was subject to alternate half days of power cuts.

These are now returning with less prospect of ending as the infrastructure has been destroyed and the fuel sources removed. Winter in Ukraine is very cold. A lot of people will suffer tremendous hardships so, if at all possible, I would ask you to see if there

**Being deeply involved in a culture that had been largely developed during the Soviet era of my youth was fascinating and frustrating in equal measure**

is anything you can do to help the people suffering far more significant hardship than any of us here in the UK.

**Hard-won tips on managing teams remotely**

Working in a different regulatory environment and being deeply involved in a culture that had been largely developed during the Soviet era of my youth was fascinating and frustrating in equal measure, adding to the challenge of the delivery of complex engineering solutions.

Overcoming these challenges gave me a deeper understanding of why they were there in the first place and allowed me to navigate around them later in the projects. I gained a lot of experience and gathered some hard-earned tips, particularly on the management of remote teams, that I can pass on here.

Prior to deploying to Ukraine, I had gained significant remote project management experience on diverse projects in the Middle East, Germany, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Lithuania. Projects included oil and gas measurement systems, procuring raw materials for the development of Qatar's infrastructure for the FIFA 2022 World Cup and the design, manufacture and supply of the spent fuel storage casks for the decommissioning of the





**Gareth Watkins:**  
"I had gained significant remote project management experience on diverse projects in the Middle East, Germany, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Lithuania"

## When teams are operating in different time zones it is imperative to have total clarity of work splits, roles and responsibilities

Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant at Visaginas in Lithuania.

Delivery of these disparate scopes of work was by teams comprising a small number of expat specialists located on the project site who were supported by a local admin, contract and design team with additional remote design and manufacturing capability. When the project delivery and supply chain teams are separated by significant distance and often operating in different time zones it is imperative to have total clarity of work splits, roles and responsibilities, as there can be significant portions of the working day or week when

the teams are effectively working in isolation.

Skills and techniques learned managing design teams split between countries and time zones have proved to be very transferable to managing remote workers with different working patterns during lockdown and into the new era of hybrid working. Working days are often topped and tailed by school runs or carer responsibilities and the office is now the spare room or dining room table. These have become the new 'time zones' and remote locations for working.

### Transferable skills

I now use these techniques in DBD International where, as Chief Programme Officer, I head up the Programme Delivery and Mission Optimisation capability. We have a significant number of work sites across the UK and North America that benefit from my previous experience.

The following are my tips for working on international projects.

### First, engage local support but build local knowledge within the expat team.

It is important that you closely manage the support network to ensure they are delivering your real requirements, not just their interpretation of your requirements. Do not let the local supply chain manage you! It will almost certainly be necessary to engage with local specialists to help navigate different regulatory frameworks, licensing bodies and work across linguistic barriers.

While most regulatory frameworks share a common basis (e.g. EU or US standards) there will inevitably be some localisation that will catch out the unwary. Having some local knowledge within the expat team at the end of the project will provide an advantage for future projects in similar regions.

### Second, spend extended time in-country to build your network and learn the culture.

Learning some of the language may seem something of a cliché but



## 5 TOP TIPS ON REMOTE WORKING FOR INTERNATIONAL TEAMS AND HYBRID WORKING LOCAL TEAMS

**The techniques used to manage internationally diverse teams have found new relevance in managing remote or hybrid teams post COVID-19. The following points can seem quite obvious but are easily overlooked or fall by the wayside as the pressure of delivery builds.**

**1 Have clarity of purpose.** Everyone on the team has to understand what the team is delivering but, more importantly, why they are delivering it. Some team members may never actually meet other than online so it is really important to have a simple statement that reminds them why they need to get up and log on in the morning. It's all too easy to lose the sense of purpose when the routine seems to be simply reading and responding to emails or logging into

online sessions. Understanding the underpinning drivers of the project and the benefits it will bring will help to ensure the team remain engaged even through long periods of remote or isolated working.

**2 Have clear scopes and requirements.** Both the in-country/head office and remote working teams need to be absolutely focused on the scope and requirements. They also need to have the same understanding of the scope!

Mission creep can occur by simple misunderstandings of translated documents or where the language is overly complex. Emails lack the subtlety and nuance of the spoken word so must be unequivocal when discussing scope and requirements.

Any room for different interpretations will lead to confusion. Ensuring everyone has fully understood requirements and actions assigned during online discussions is essential. A simple technique to ensure understanding of all parties is 'Three-Way Communication'. The 'Sender' of the message has to be sure they have the attention of the 'Receiver' and then sends the message. The 'Receiver' repeats back their understanding of the message and, finally, the 'Sender' confirms the understanding is correct.



The new protective cover over the destroyed nuclear reactor No 4 at Chernobyl

## Learning some of the language may seem something of a cliché but it undoubtedly leads to better relationships with the local team

It undoubtedly leads to better relationships with the local team and can often be a great icebreaker when you mess up completely. It is far more difficult to build strong relationships with your delivery team and support

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network via a Teams call. There is no substitute for spending time together chewing over issues and solving problems around a table but this doesn't need to be the primary method of working. It is time consuming, costly and potentially

risky due to the amount of travel required. Group together meetings and spend enough time in-country to allow a more relaxed visit rather than flying in and out for a meeting. Extended trips also provide a better face time/environmental impact balance.

### Third, use a form of contract that is familiar to all parties.

Internationally recognised forms of contract are easier to manage as the supply chain is more likely to be familiar with them. Complex, bespoke terms and conditions can easily lead to confusion and conflict. Contract disputes are better avoided rather than having to commit significant funds and time defending contract positions or rebuilding relations when issues have occurred.

In summary, by ensuring clear communications, clarity of scope and a shared understanding of the mission objectives you will stand half a chance of delivering your required outcomes. Remember... it's good to talk.

**3 Have an up-to-date RACI matrix.** As the team members may never have met or may not even speak the same language, the RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed) matrix gives a clear indication of who is responsible for each part of the project. When working in different time zones or schedules it is far easier to see whom you need to send information to or request data from if the responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined. Avoiding the same team members working on the same thing will reduce nugatory work and assigning clear responsibilities will ensure nothing falls through the gaps. "I thought they were doing it" isn't a great thing to hear about a critical document on the day before a submission deadline. It's vital to

communicate the RACI and maintain its relevance to the organisational breakdown structure and work breakdown structure.

**4 Establish a regular meeting cadence.** I am sure most of you have diaries that fill up very quickly with updates, catch-ups, briefings and project panic meetings. These lead to massive distraction and disjointed and inefficient ways of working as people are tied up in long sessions in which only a small section of the discussion is relevant. There will always be some last-minute sessions required but the core meetings of the week and month should fit within an agreed meeting cadence and ad hoc sessions should be questioned rather than simply accepted. All sessions need a clear structure, agenda, objectives and outputs. Defining quorate attendees

removes the number of people sitting in the background. It's easy to hide on Teams. It is also a really good idea to have some clear space in the week to allow your team to actually work rather than talk about work. Define a meeting moratorium on a Wednesday afternoon, for example.

**5 Talk to each other!** Electronic seems to be the default method of communication now. I am bombarded constantly by comms on different channels but hardly anyone phones me to discuss issues or even for a chat. We seem to have forgotten the good old phone or if we are in the office just having a chat by the coffee machine. The number of messages I receive means it is impossible to read them all. It is very easy to miss something important. I now tell my team: if it's important, call me.

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN LIFE SCIENCES, PHARMA AND HEALTHCARE

ANDREW SAUNDERS REPORTS ON APM'S SECTOR-FOCUSED ROUNDTABLE

## Project management as a

profession may have developed in the construction and infrastructure sectors, but its influence is spreading. And when it comes to the wider benefits, few sectors have delivered so much in such a short time as life sciences, pharma and healthcare. Millions of lives have been saved by vaccination projects in particular, conducted at great speed and with exemplary safety, in recent years.

Furthermore, APM's *The Golden Thread* research in 2019 identified that projects in the healthcare sector were worth £17.5bn (GVA) to the UK economy and sustained almost 224,000 full-time employees – and that, of course, was before the huge pandemic-related acceleration in activity that has seen this arena become a stand-out bright spot of the UK economy.

So what better time to take a look at the nature of project management in these sectors? APM recently convened a roundtable session to explore similarities, differences and specific challenges facing project professionals in life sciences, pharma and healthcare. Featuring an array of senior

contributors from some of the UK's leading companies, the session was conducted under Chatham House rules and presented a fascinating insight into the state of project management in these vital sectors. Here is a brief summary of some of the key points that emerged.

## Different...

Some fundamental differences arise from the simple fact that building a bridge or a railway is not the same as creating a new drug or vaccine. Every bridge built has to stay standing or it's a disaster in the making, but 29 drug development projects can fail, because if the 30th is a new blockbuster treatment, it will more than compensate for the rest.

Agile project approaches, data-driven insights and the ability to fail fast are key in this environment. But internal competition between project teams means that objective portfolio management can end up being neglected – tools and processes that provide a company-wide overview of ongoing projects are still far less commonplace than they are in the construction industry.

A less zero-sum view of failure may also account for reports that

project management and project managers are often not regarded as key assets in these sectors. Drug, life science and healthcare firms may employ thousands of project professionals, but the brands they present – and the decisions they take – are generally built around scientific and clinical excellence rather than the mastery of project delivery.

That lack of recognition results in boards that don't fully appreciate what project professionals can do for their organisations, or what the criteria for project success really are. It also leads to a proliferation of 'accidental project managers' – scientists or subject matter experts who end up administering projects despite lacking the experience or training to do so. It's like asking the violin soloist to conduct the orchestra – being a brilliant player doesn't mean they will be able to lead the ensemble effectively.

**Agile approaches, data-driven insights and the ability to fail fast are key**



The sectors are also hugely diverse in size and maturity, ranging from biotech start-ups with a handful of employees through to pharma giants and even the NHS, the largest employer in Europe. The levels of project management proficiency represented naturally reflect that diversity, with pockets of genuine excellence but a need for systematised knowledge-sharing to spread best practice. There might even – whisper it – simply be too much money sloshing around in some parts of life sciences in particular at present, having an adverse impact on project efficiency.

### ... but also the same

Many of the issues encountered will be familiar to project professionals from more traditional sectors, however. The rise of ‘accidental project managers’ is also a symptom of the industry-wide lack of experienced project professionals on the job market, felt more acutely than ever at present.

Growing stronger in-house project management skills and explicit rather than accidental career paths is part of the answer, but it can be difficult to secure

## There is a role for APM in bringing these diverse sectors and organisations together

the necessary resources without C-suite support. There is the same catch-22 here as in other industries – project professionals can’t fully demonstrate their value without C-level buy in, but without demonstrating their value, they can’t secure C-level buy-in.

Maintaining the flow of younger people into the professions calls for organisations to recognise that today’s graduates no longer aspire to a job for life, and thus require career paths that are more flexible and less linear. They are also much less inclined to leave their social consciences at home, and increasingly demand that employers should live up to their personal values around ethics and sustainability in particular.

Unlocking project value is increasingly about collaborative working across different disciplines and organisations. Science-based teams may possess strong collaboration skills, but also often

require support to scale them up to the organisational level.

The challenges of digitalisation and data are also a universal theme. Automation of lower-value activities may be the key to the perennial push to achieve more with fewer resources, but it calls for cutting-edge data and analytics capacity that many organisations don’t currently possess. Data around project success or failure, if it is collected at all, may be a low priority when it comes to being analysed and generating insight in comparison to data that is more immediately commercially valuable, or required by regulators.

The panel also concluded that there is a role for APM to play in bringing these diverse sectors and organisations together with more traditionally project-based industries to raise the profile of project professionals, share best practice and shine a light on what it takes to be a successful project manager in 2022 and beyond. It’s not simply a case of life sciences, pharma and healthcare copying more established sectors, but of how each can learn more effectively from the best work of the others.

# A BLUEPRINT FOR SUSTAINABLE PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES



**EXPERIENCED PROGRAMME MANAGER AND APM FELLOW DAVID STEWARD ChPP IS ON A MISSION TO DEVELOP PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES TO ACHIEVE NET ZERO. HERE'S HIS PLAN FOR HOW IT COULD BE DONE.**

**Project professionals** are at the vanguard of delivering sustainable development goals. However, to achieve maximum impact, projects must integrate the full value chain and employ processes that are also sustainable. If project professionals are going to step up to help meet ambitious net-zero targets, then a clear blueprint is needed, and that starts with implementing sustainability in everything we do.

Sustainability is ultimately good for business. It is also an essential part of our ethical duty as project professionals. The challenge is to integrate sustainable processes into the project life cycle.

## **Put sustainability at the heart of the system**

Sustainability requires organisational responsibility to ensure that the products, outcomes and benefits of all projects are sustainable over their life cycle. All members of a project team have an influence on sustainability and may therefore be expected to think creatively and act responsibly in their day-to-day work. Project professionals have a responsibility to ensure that their work minimises environmental impact or, ideally, positively affects ongoing sustainability.

If project outcomes are defined to be sustainable, the products and



processes that engage significant resources must also be contained or integrated into our project processes. There is significant reliance on technology to solve our escalating resource needs, but this alone is unlikely to resolve the shortfall in the near term.

### Guidance for professionals

Currently, only limited guidance is available to the project professional. The *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* defines the three pillars for sustainability, namely economic, social and environmental. This is represented by a Venn diagram that adds a fourth dimension, termed administrative. However, the model defines little in terms of the process or controls that are needed. Dr Martin Barnes, one of APM's founding members, introduced the concept of the triple constraint (time, cost, quality). Perhaps the Barnes triangle should now include a further dimension, or alternatively 'quality' could be defined in terms of sustainable outcomes and biodiversity.

In 1994, John Elkington coined the term 'triple bottom line', defined as people, planet and profit, in his vision for 21st-century business. This has been further expanded by various authors. However, the GPM global network established its Projects Integrating Sustainable Methods (PRISM) approach nearly a decade ago to help projects align to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

GPM created the GPM P5 Standard for Sustainability in Project Management, which includes processes for sustainable delivery and a template for a sustainability management plan. This standard has added two perspectives to the three pillars, namely sustainable project delivery (i.e. project processes) and sustainable project deliverable (i.e. product impact). This defines the five 'Ps' as people, planet, profit, product and processes. Profit can be substituted with prosperity; however, the three main pillars remain similar.

Another commonly used tool at the outset of a project is PESTLE: political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental. This approach contains the three pillars of sustainability, namely, economic, social and environmental, but also highlights the need to understand the legal impacts, which could be interpreted as the standards, laws and governance by which a project must abide to support sustainability.

### Embed sustainability into governance

Sustainable project management processes and practices will be determined by the governance set in place through project control systems. The project management office (PMO) can configure sustainability into the tools it uses to monitor and manage project performance and must be embedded into the project control reporting cycle. Richard Samworth, in a 2020 APM blog, states that: "Financial measures within project management processes and practices, for example earned value, are well understood and documented. Sustainability measures do not enjoy the same level of maturity however." We need to establish a method to measure sustainability of the processes to get us to the end goal. These arguably should be of equal importance as financial or be converted to value. Samworth suggests defining sustainability as a project tolerance and embedding sustainability in the business case. Project management tools could be configured to measure and manage sustainability tolerances and make small changes to the way we work.

The challenge for project organisations, including the PMO, is to develop and apply consistent and meaningful sustainability tolerances to all their projects. This highlights further the need to embed sustainability into corporate governance to control the process. Sustainability and

## 7 IMMEDIATE ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PROJECT PROCESSES

- 1 A systemic approach is needed to understand and establish the root cause of sustainability impacts using techniques such as Ishikawa diagrams.
- 2 Consider the whole value chain. Use sustainability measures when establishing procurement, partnering and collaboration. Organisational governance has a major impact on sustainability.
- 3 Consider a root-and-branch review of how an organisation is structured – its hierarchy, roles and responsibilities. Project management frameworks may require an overhaul to look at more appropriate life cycle models. Gate reviews should incorporate sustainability impacts and configure sustainability in project management tools.
- 4 Biodiversity should be considered an asset, no matter what the project, so objectives must be defined to achieve or improve biodiversity targets embedded into processes.
- 5 Raise the bar. All project team staff must receive an appropriate level of training to ensure they fully understand the project impact on sustainability.
- 6 Quick wins should include minimising travel through use of virtual meetings, flexible working patterns and locations, and less use of office resources and energy consumption.
- 7 Hold a 'sustainability moment' at the start of each meeting to promote sustainable thinking.



Process	Action plan	RAG now	RAG target
Project life cycle	Tailor the project life cycle model to support sustainability and the value chain, ensuring it is efficient and effective.	■ Amber	■ Green
Risk and opportunities	Identify sustainability risks and opportunities, quantify, and set up risk action plans.	■ Red	■ Green
KPIs	Include sustainability targets that measure the effectiveness of the processes.	■ Red	■ Amber
Procurement	Apply favourable weighting for suppliers with a good sustainability culture. Evaluate the full value chain.	■ Amber	■ Green
Milestones	Use sustainability goals as milestones as well as the usual time/cost bases.	■ Red	■ Green
Progressive assurance	Set realistic, achievable assurance levels to optimise resources and minimise rework.	■ Red	■ Amber
Reporting	Rationalise the need for face-to-face meetings; optimise use of virtual meeting tools and locations.	■ Amber	■ Green
Change management	Evaluate sustainability impact as part of the process; minimise changes where feasible. Consider a better level of delegation as part of the process.	■ Red	■ Amber
CPI	Integrate sustainable benefits into cost performance measurements.	■ Red	■ Amber
Collaborative working	Use a collaborative approach with suppliers and stakeholders to identify and maximise sustainability opportunities throughout the value chain.	■ Amber	■ Green

**Table 1: Sustainability RAG status chart**

biodiversity should be integral to the design process and reviewed at each stage gate. Where targets are projected to be missed, then it must be possible to redefine the goals with the sponsor and stakeholders to ensure the outcome is sustainable. This suggests the need for more flexibility on scope and a collaborative approach with the client and stakeholders.

### Sustainable methodologies

According to the International Project Management Association, achieving sustainability requires project managers to apply systemic thinking, taking various interrelationships and reciprocal transactions into account. To analyse the project, its context and all influencing factors and their interrelations, a variety of methods and tools are available, including:

- context analysis, PESTLE analysis, functional flow analysis
- interrelationship and Ishikawa diagrams, system dynamics analysis
- scenario planning

PESTLE has some merit, in that it reinforces the three pillars of sustainability and introduces a fourth. This could be interpreted as standards, administration or governance. This also supports the APM sustainability model in the *Body of Knowledge*.

It is, however, clear that a systematic viewpoint is important, and a simple cause-and-effect diagram (Ishikawa) could shed light on other controlling factors. This approach is consistent with the fourth pillar and suggests that if project processes are to be more sustainable, it should be embedded within corporate governance. Investigation of an organisation and its governance will undoubtedly reveal the need for changes to the framework for project processes and life cycle models.

### Measuring the sustainability of project processes

To measure the impact of the project process, it is possible to establish tolerances using a simple RAG status chart. Elements

of the process can be assessed qualitatively for its current sustainability status as either red, amber or green. By defining an action plan for improvement, a target RAG can be forecast. This is similar to a risk and opportunity matrix – an example is shown in the table above.

RAG assessment of the project processes can be developed over the life of the project and reviewed periodically like many other controls and reporting. Along with a risk and opportunity plan, a sustainability opportunity plan should be produced. As part of the blueprint, a framework should be established for managing a sustainable approach to project delivery that takes a systemic approach and embeds the ideas discussed into the project governance of the organisation or programme/portfolio.

**David Steward is Director of Sustainable Project Management Solutions**



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Because when projects  
succeed, society benefits



# PROJECT ME

**WE ASK PROJECT PROFESSIONALS WHAT THEIR BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF 2023 WILL BE, AND HOW THEY PLAN TO OVERCOME IT**

## Do I love what I do?

**Ewelina Kruk, Associate Director, Incendium Consulting**

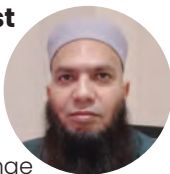
There are many aspects to consider when planning your next career step, but for me the most important question I ask is: do I love what I do? The beauty of being a project professional is that there are opportunities to change focus and pivot. Continued development gets me out of the echo chamber of what I think I know, often inspiring me for the future. I manage my career as a set of sprints allowing myself to be curious and shift gear, ready to effectively respond to the professional landscape.



## Making the most of resources

**Muhammad Naeem, Project Director, UMDS**

The biggest challenge would be the optimisation and utilisation of project resources. Due to many complex and sudden changes in scenarios, e.g. COVID-19, Brexit, Ukraine and the climate emergency, there has been a real gap in the available resources and competencies as per the project need. My focus will remain on team-building, integration, skills and capacity-building of the team members, and creating a level field to enhance their competencies and skill set on a varied scale. I will also tackle this challenge using servant leadership.



## Making sense of hybrid

**Chris Haigh, Head of PMO, Digital Services (Interim), University of Wolverhampton**

One of the biggest challenges will be the differing approaches to hybrid working. With a return to 'normality' to some extent, I'm seeing increasing pressures on my team to be physically present for meetings – and I need to balance that against a workforce that is seeing so many benefits of working remotely, where being asked to come into the office is seen as an inconvenience. Culturally, we need to take hold of those assumptions and norms; if we don't get that balance right, then our teams will take advantage of the growing number of remote opportunities elsewhere.



## What's next?

**Charlotte Bethell, Sub Project Manager, Sellafield**



Having recently completed a well-structured four-year apprenticeship with a clear end goal, the biggest challenge for me is to now balance the requirements of a new career path while embedding myself within my project team, and to gain the necessary experience to achieve my own development and progression goals. The key is to make a conscious effort to think, 'What's next?' I am creating a SMART development plan for the short, medium and long-term goals for my career, but with an understanding that this development plan may change as opportunities present themselves, and to not close myself off to things that may stretch or challenge me.

## Mentoring a graduate team

**Spencer Hobbs, Senior Project Manager, Turner & Townsend**



My biggest challenge is mentoring a Turner & Townsend graduate team entering APM's SWWE Branch PM Challenge. It's new territory presenting personal challenges, including the need to curb my natural tendency to get too involved in the team's efforts. They need to drive the project (and even learn from mistakes), so I need to step back and provide advice, guiding them down the best path. My preparation has been supported by joining APM's mentoring scheme (as a mentor and mentee). If you haven't yet, I would recommend joining.

## Why do so many projects fail?

**Greg Krawczyk, Senior PMO Consultant, i3Works**

My biggest challenge is to focus on the question of why so many projects, programme and portfolios fail to deliver against their success measures. Data-enabled planning is held by many as a solution, but the question of how we ensure data is not misrepresented is key. I have recognised that effective governance and accountability will be a big part of the solution. So, I recently joined the APM Governance SIG where, with others, I am planning blogs and events to generate insights on this topic.



# DEAR SUSANNE

*I always start a risk log at the beginning of a new project, but as the project progresses, we often get delayed by issues I had not foreseen. What am I doing wrong?*



**Susanne Madsen is an internationally recognised project leadership coach, trainer and consultant. She is the author of *The Project Management Coaching Workbook* and *The Power of Project Leadership* (second edition now available). For more information, visit [www.susannemadsen.com](http://www.susannemadsen.com)**

**Risk management** is such an important part to get right on any project. Doing it well is less about logging risks in a register and more about your way of thinking and the culture of the project. I have noticed that many project managers take ownership for the risk management process without really involving the team. They may also forget to continuously identify and monitor risks as the project progresses, and they sometimes ignore risks that relate to people, strategy and 'unknown unknowns'. The underlying problem is that risk management is seen as a mechanical process instead of really engaging with it and ensuring that it adds value.

## A team effort

Risk management works best when all team members collaborate and share their knowledge and insight. When risks are identified, analysed and planned in collaboration, the depth and quality of the process improves, and it reinforces accountability and ownership. I would encourage you to set up a meeting with the sole purpose of identifying and dealing with risks. Ask your team what they worry about and what could prevent them from delivering on their promises. Deliberately discussing risks on a regular basis helps you create a risk-awareness culture, enabling the team to better spot risks going forward.

As you brainstorm risks with the team, consider different scenarios and viewpoints, and examine each part of the project. Remember to include risks that relate to organisational strategy, the political

and economic environment and interpersonal conflict. Examples could be changes to the client's strategy, the possibility that client and supplier will interpret the contract differently, the risk that trust breaks down between different teams, that one or more stakeholder groups will be opposed to the change, or that the global supply chain will be interrupted. If you assume that people problems will occur, you can be proactive and put in place techniques ahead of time to manage relationships and communication.

## Expect the unexpected

Another aspect to bear in mind is to appropriately deal with 'unknown unknowns', i.e. risks that you aren't easily able to foresee. I still remember my conversation with Elmar Kutsch, Associate Professor at Cranfield School of Management, when I met him years ago. Kutsch said that project managers in general pay very little attention to unexpected risks. It seems there is a tendency to focus on familiar and measurable risks as opposed to those that the project team cannot predict. One of the ways you can get around this is to involve people from outside the project. People who think in unconventional ways and have a different viewpoint may be able to spot the unknowns that you and your team cannot spot yourselves. Some risks, however, cannot be identified either by your team or by outsiders, as they are inherently unknown. An example would be the global pandemic. All you can do is build in resilience and flexibility so that you can cope

with the impact of the unexpected, wherever it comes from.

Lastly, remember not to assign yourself to all the items in the risk register. Despite your good intentions, taking sole ownership doesn't leverage the team or create a shared sense of responsibility. Find the courage to assign the right owners – even if they are more senior than you – and to gain their buy-in and acceptance for fully managing a risk. You need to be able to involve the steering committee and draw on their experience when needed. Encouraging a discussion around the project's main risks at a steering committee level can be a great benefit to all parties.

**Do you have a question for Susanne?**  
Email [mail@susannemadsen.com](mailto:mail@susannemadsen.com)

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The following individuals make up the latest cohort to achieve Chartered Project Professional status with APM. Congratulations to you all, from those based in the UK and the Netherlands to those in Qatar and Australia! Full details of the criteria for achieving chartered status and the routes to get there can be found at [apm.org.uk/chartered-standard](http://apm.org.uk/chartered-standard), where you can also view the full Register of Chartered Project Professionals.



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<b>Geoffrey Conroy</b>	<b>QAT</b>	<b>Adrian Jeffery</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Omoh Osigbemhe</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Jonathan Walker</b>	<b>UK</b>
Sara Cooper	UK	Philip Jeyaseelan	UK	Alison Panners	UK	Emily Walters	UK
<b>Stephen Cooper</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Emily Johnstone</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Kevin Parsons</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>David Watson</b>	<b>UK</b>
James Craddock	UK	Amy Jones	UK	Salim Patel	UK	Damian Wheeler	UK
<b>Alex Crichton</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Julie Jones</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Colin Paterson</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Harvey Whittaker</b>	<b>UK</b>
Paul Danks	UK	Sarah Jones	UK	Dawn Patient	UK	Andrew Winmill	UK
<b>David Davies</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Aris Kapsanakis</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Adedayo Phillips</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Neil Workman</b>	<b>UK</b>
James Doble	UK	Steven Kaul	UK	Patrick Phillips	UK	Christopher Wright	UK
<b>Ben Dodds</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Daniela Kellett</b>	<b>AUS</b>	<b>Barry Pilkington</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>James Wright</b>	<b>UK</b>
Michael Donnington	UK	Wayne Kelly	UK	Roy Potts	UK	David Yates	UK
<b>Emma Downey</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Jacinda Kemps</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Neil Poulton</b>	<b>UK</b>		
Coetzee du Toit	AUS	Marjan Kheradmand Fard	UK	James Pugh	UK		
<b>James Ducker</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Alice Kimmitt</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>David Quince</b>	<b>UK</b>		

# HOW TO BECOME THE YOUNGEST CHARTERED PROJECT PROFESSIONAL EVER (AND PROVE ALL THE NAYSAYERS WRONG)

**BEL FRENCH, PROJECT MANAGER AT GLEEDS, WAS TOLD SHE WAS THROWING HER CAREER AWAY BY SKIPPING UNIVERSITY, BUT SHE HAS BEATEN ALL THE RECORDS ANYWAY. CHARLES ORTON-JONES FINDS OUT MORE.**

## Everyone loves a record breaker.

In 2021, APM hailed the youngest ever project manager to become a Chartered Project Professional (ChPP). Stacey Bishop of Babcock International ran through the curriculum at warp speed to win the accolade at the age of 24. Now, a year later, the record has been smashed by Bel French, who achieved chartered status at just 22. Talking to French, it's easy to see why she's made rapid progress. Calm and eloquent, she's also a devoted project manager who simply loves the job.

"I actually struggled quite a bit with studying at school," she admits. "Project work was different. I got really excited at school when there was anything to do with projects. I'd get competitive and loved to get involved," she says. Her desire to escape the classroom meant she wanted to skip university and

go direct to a job. She researched her options and stumbled across the vocational route. "I looked at apprenticeships and thought, 'Oh my gosh, no way can you do that as a career!'"

## Real responsibility right from the start

Even better, with project management she could plunge into major works from day one. "I swayed towards construction and infrastructure. I thought, if I'm going to work on projects I want to work on the biggest and most interesting ones, which have the biggest effect on people's lives. A lot of people use railways or airports, but how many of them actually get to go behind the scenes and see how they work?"

She began at Turner & Townsend, which has a terrific record of working with young project managers, and French

found her career accelerated:

"I was 18 years old and they put me to work with the graduates," she says. "My first team were amazing. They never made me feel like an apprentice. The directors made sure I got the maximum amount of experience. At that age you expect your first duties to be a bit boring, but within a couple of months they were giving me areas to support and manage and allowing me to liaise with the client. It was exciting for me from very early on. It's such a vital time in your career. I feel I got a far greater depth of knowledge than other apprentices get, so I am very grateful."

## Taking residence at the British Library

She got her APM Project Management Qualification (PMQ) and then set her sights on full chartered status. She knew



## BEL FRENCH CV

**2017** AgilePM Foundation examination

**2018** APM Project Management Qualification

**2019** NVQ Level 4

Associate Project Manager apprenticeship; APM Associate

**2022** Member of APM

**2022** APM Chartered Project Professional

**Hobbies:** "I have a fascination with Claude Monet. It began when I did French A-Level and wrote essays on his influence on modern art. I started every presentation when I was an apprentice with a picture by Monet, and tied it in. Now people get disappointed if I don't."

### "I thought, if I'm going to work on projects I want to work on the biggest and most interesting ones"

she'd need to leverage her best qualities – namely her ability on the job and aptitude – and to minimise studying. "I did the long route," she says. "I did Route 3, which is both technical knowledge and professional practice. The professional practice I felt comfortable with, as it was projects I'd lived and breathed for years at a time. The technical knowledge I found challenging. And the way I got round that was over-studying," she explains.

The reluctant scholar went all in. "I over-studied. I had two

ring binders of revision notes for every competency. I had multiple arguments about each issue in my head. I spent a lot of time in the library so I could do extra reading and pull the original reference documents up. And when the *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* suggested something to read, I'd find that book and then find the ones referenced there and get hold of those too." The task was made a little easier by her choice of study location. "I was really lucky, as at the time I lived close to the British Library. It's free to join as a reader. You can order books to the reading rooms, you just can't take them with you. It means you can read as much as you want."

It's a terrific tip. The unaware may also appreciate the British Library's Business and IP Centre, which stocks a vast number of books on trade and

intellectual property, supported by free databases and an entrepreneur-in-residence. It's also totally free.

A switch to a new job at the property and construction consultancy Gleeds kept her career moving upwards, and she received strong support for her chartered quest. French is candid about the hard work she needed to put in. "I struggled. I actually retook my interview. I did. I failed on one competency, and it was on my technical knowledge." The pain of the setback causes her a brief grimace, followed by a smile in the recollection she overcame it. "It was annoying but I went back and just did it again."

### A test of self-belief

The emotion on achieving her remarkable goal? "Just relief," she recalls. "I'd been working for

three or four years for it. At the back of my mind I was always thinking, 'What do I need? What experiences do I need to add?'" And discovering she was the youngest ever Chartered Project Professional? "Yeah. That was a pretty cool moment!"

Her accomplishment also gave her the perfect rebuttal to critics. Bizarrely, despite a growing consensus that career paths can take many forms, she encountered snobbery against the vocational route. "When I was 18 and 19 I had people tell me I was throwing my career away by not going to university. Some people had very strong opinions about it, and it's

hard to deal with that when you are very young," she says.

French is now committed to a career as a project manager and loves the job more than

### **"I had people tell me I was throwing my career away by not going to university"**

ever. "My strongest suit is when I'm busy. I like working at pace in real environments where things are always moving and there are complexities to take into account." She now promotes project

management as a career to other young people as an Education Ambassador for APM. "I've done a lot of talking at events and careers fairs to parents and children to help them make a decision."

One final lesson French wants to impart is how performance is linked to motivation. Find the right role, one that really resonates, and career progression can go ballistic. "I really enjoy the job," she says. "I love seeing the end result, especially in construction. You see the trains and think: 'I contributed to this.' I've been so lucky with my job. Project management is a career I wish more people knew about."

## BEL'S TOP TIPS FOR YOUNG PROJECT PROFESSIONALS



### **1 Research your options**

When it comes to developing your career, don't just take recommendations. Do your own research and explore what is out there. I didn't want to do a degree, so I had to find my own career path. I looked into the different ways of progressing and considered the pros and cons. That's my advice to others: research your options and don't just take other people's word for what you can do.

### **2 Learn as much as you can early on**

When you first join a

company, you are easing yourself in. But there will be opportunities to extend yourself. I don't do well being bored, it makes me nervous. So I spoke to people and asked if there was anything I could do. One of the project managers asked me to help him write a project execution plan. At the time I was 18 and had no idea what it was. Seek out those early experiences and you'll grow much faster.

### **3 Trust your instinct**

I say it's important to take opportunities and to learn. But it's also necessary to trust your instincts and stand up for yourself. You'll know whether you are ready to take something on. And if you are not ready, and get a bad vibe, then it's OK to say no to things. You'll get a feel for what is right. It's a little contradictory to my last tip, but I think it makes sense.

### **4 Courtesy costs nothing**

This is something my old PE teacher Mrs Bishop told me when I was younger. Not directed at me, I'd like to point out. She said if you can't turn up to a lesson for any reason, just let her know. That's courteous. You can always take a moment to be polite. It's the same in a work environment. If you can't make a meeting, or something's happened, it costs nothing to phone and let people know. It means a lot when you give people the respect they deserve. I won't stand for any nonsense, but there's no reason to be unkind.

### **5 Learn your strengths and weaknesses**

This is one of the best things for me. I know I'm not academic. I've over-compensated for that. I've really had to make an effort. There are other areas where

I'm stronger, such as managing stakeholders and working with people. Being aware of your strengths and weaknesses means you can get support. It also means you are more alert to feedback and you can build a skill in an area you aren't so good at.

### **6 Build your network**

Networking is useful, especially within your own company. It's too easy to get stuck in a bubble with your project team, but when you are looking for your next project or need help, then your network will be able to give recommendations. My tip? Offer tea. Ask people who sit near you if they'd like a cup. It's a great way of starting conversations and helps you get to know people. Social events are great too. APM runs young professional networking events. I've met a lot of people that way too.



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# PROJECT: TO OPEN A MARTIAL ARTS CLUB

**AMERJIT WALIA, DIRECTOR OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES AT AK OPTIMIZE, WORKS WITH CORPORATE CLIENTS TO IMPROVE PROJECT DELIVERY. HE ALSO RUNS THE BFS GATKA AKHARA SIKH MARTIAL ARTS CLUB IN WEST LONDON.**

## **I have always been a great**

believer in the link between sport and mental wellbeing and note the positive impact sport has had on both my personal and professional life. In my early 30s, I was introduced to Sikh martial arts (Gatka). Having already learned karate, it seemed to be a natural progression because of its links to spiritual wellbeing and physical development encouraged by the Sikh gurus.

## **Engaging stakeholders**

Having mastered Gatka quickly from Master Uptej Singh, in 2005, I decided to open the West London centre in Hounslow to teach children and adults Gatka. This involved my project management skills: setting up and securing the centre and location, marketing, promoting and championing the benefits of Gatka. Also, I had to think through the stages of development and the associated curriculum, as well as safeguarding issues involving young people. Then there was the issue of risk and quality standards to be considered by consulting with Master Uptej, Herman and Baljit Singh. Once the scope had been agreed together with the infrastructure for delivery, which

included agreements around timeline, costs and standards, we were able to move the project along. The other main stakeholders were the community, parents and young people.

## **From plans to execution**

As this was a project involving volunteers, I often found myself working alone with lots of stops and starts, because of people having other commitments. Keeping emotions in check and being flexible was key when moving meetings, getting feedback if people could not make the meetings, or asking for verbal feedback if written feedback wasn't forthcoming. Where activities during execution were falling behind, I had to either step in or motivate people in the team to complete them and take responsibility; if necessary, I reallocated the tasks to someone else. This was a huge learning curve for me personally, as I had

## **This was value-based leadership in action, promoting Sikh values in a modern setting**



not managed volunteers and understanding that they needed space for their own needs and requirements was important.

## **Making our own equipment**

Another big challenge was to get hold of training equipment. Gatka originates in India and therefore we found ourselves asking for favours from India to supply us with good quality training equipment. On some occasions this was not possible, and we ended up making the equipment ourselves by going to known carpenters and metalworkers within the community, thereby establishing our own supply chain of specialists.

During execution, one of the major blockers was the committee of the centre in West London. Naturally their concern was that this is a dangerous sport. How would we manage safety and injuries to individuals? It took a lot of patience and reassurance to get this through the organisation's health and safety requirements.

It was not until the demonstration and the workshops were delivered that the committee was satisfied that we could be trusted to run regular Gatka classes. To this day, they are our key allies and supporters.



Gatka is a traditional martial art that involves full contact and weapons seen in films such as *Gladiator*

The big day was set for the launch of the BFS Gatka Akhara (Hounslow), with roles and responsibilities allocated, two formal briefing days held, and many hours spent on the phone. The key deliverables were:

- successful launch of BFS Gatka Akhara in West London
- demonstration and workshop delivery
- promotion of mental and physical well-being through Gatka
- registration of new students to Gatka (modest target of 10–15)
- awareness of Gatka and its links to Sikhism
- engagement of children/adults and community with Gatka
- committee sign-off for holding regular classes

### The big day

The day arrived and everything was in place. As I was responsible for the plans, execution and leading the demonstration, it was probably the most nervous I've ever been. This was value-based leadership in action, promoting Sikh values in a modern setting and driving values and beliefs that would benefit the wider community. The day was a huge success, and we were congratulated for the event.

The registrations were good on paper, but for the first class only five people attended. However, this was a long-term investment, and this risk was considered. We persevered with the classes and increased the marketing to other platforms such as social media, and after six months, our classes had reached (and remain) 30-strong.

This project required my project skills and expertise, not in a business context, but within a community setting where my understanding of cultural values and beliefs was key to its success.

### The benefits of giving back

I have been leading classes for BFS Gatka Akhara (Hounslow) since 2005 now, so what of its legacy? We've had over 500 students go through our classes now. Most joined at a young age, between seven and eight years old, and left us when they went on to university or were of working age. Seeing them grow into responsible young people and learn the disciplines of life is both satisfying and inspiring personally. I've also been able to promote Gatka to a global audience beyond the Sikh community. We've taken part in demonstrations as part of the Queen's Golden and Platinum



jubilees, various charity and cultural events throughout the UK, as well as being invited to Europe, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and more.

Why do I keep doing it? To see the young children develop into caring adults who contribute to society is priceless. They get to understand the importance of self-discipline, teamwork, emotional control, pushing limits both mentally and physically, and moving away from being self-centred to being part of a community. Personally, it has helped me grow as person and professionally and appreciate the importance of value-based leadership in projects. 'Sikh' means learner and Sikhism has three main principles: spiritual meditation on God, service to others (communities) and sacrifice of time and ourselves to protect others. These simple principles are promoted as part of Gatka, which allows us to become the best of ourselves.

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# OFF LINE

WHERE PROJECT MANAGEMENT MEETS POPULAR CULTURE



**IS A PROJECT MANAGER RESPONSIBLE FOR IDIOTIC BUSINESS-AS-USUAL PRACTICES AFTER THEY'VE MOVED ON? GREMLINS SUGGESTS YOU NEED TO PROVIDE MORE THAN JUST OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW YOU, WRITES RICHARD YOUNG**

**Most project managers** are familiar with that nervous feeling when you hand over your carefully nurtured project to the business-as-usual (BAU) operators – and you pray they're not knuckle-headed enough to ignore your carefully crafted guidance. Have they read the manuals? Did they listen properly to the risk briefing? And will they respect the prescribed operating parameters?

The answer to all three questions in 1984 Christmas classic *Gremlins* is, sadly, “not really”. *Gremlins* is really the story of three different types of project manager: the grizzled veteran who is always cautious of the knuckle-heads; the headstrong creative type who just wants to wow their board; and the novice project manager trying to do their job in the best way they can.

Above all, of course, *Gremlins* is a Christmas film. The premise is simple. Struggling inventor Randall Peltzer (the headstrong project manager, played by Hoyt Axton) is a serial failure. His projects are all disastrously hare-brained, like the Bathroom Buddy (a kind of toiletry Swiss Army knife). But he's desperate to get his son, Billy (Zach Galligan), a great Christmas gift – perhaps to make up for his own poor project development skills.

# GREMLINS



Randall stops by a Chinatown antiques shop, and sees a small, furry creature called a mogwai. (International project managers take note: in Cantonese ‘mogwai’ 魔怪 means ‘devil’. Never neglect your translation services.) Here we meet the savvy project manager, shop owner Mr Wing (Keye Luke). He knows better than to trust his pet project (pun intended) to knuckle-heads, even in the face of severe budgetary pressure. No sale.

But his grandson says the business needs the money and abandons his grandad’s risk management approach to sell Randall the furry critter. And his version of the risk register is dangerously scant. He passes on just three rules for BAU: keep the mogwai out of sunlight (will kill it); don’t get it wet; and never feed it after midnight.

Most seriously of all, apart from rule one, he doesn’t explain why those other operating procedures are in place. This might seem logical for some project managers – you don’t need to understand alternating current to know not to stick your fingers in a power socket; you don’t need to know every nuance of a project to know how it’s supposed to work – but sometimes passing on that extra bit of detail can make all the difference.

Sure enough, Billy – who gets the risk register third hand from his dad, meaning there isn’t even someone in the immediate reporting line with the full information – soon learns why the rules are in place. His friend Pete (Corey Feldman) spills water on Gizmo (as Billy has named the mogwai) and, after much convulsion, five new mogwai have spawned. They are less cuddly than Gizmo and are led by a particularly naughty one called Stripe. They’re hell-bent on causing trouble.

### When risks multiply

‘Trouble’ includes unplugging Billy’s clock radio so that he accidentally feeds them after midnight... revealing the consequences of breaching rule three. As with the ones he gave to his science teacher, Mr Hanson (Glynn Turman),

who also didn’t understand the risk register and is well outside the core operating group, as a result of this late supper they form cocoons, pupate and eventually hatch as little demons. Hanson pays for his ignorance with his life – these gremlins are homicidal.

There follows a town-wide cascading failure – something pretty much every project manager would know to guard against. Because the gremlins multiply with water, it’s far too easy for them to have a little spritz, overwhelm resistance in one part of Kingston Falls (the bank, say) and then move on to the next location for another bath. Billy rescues his girlfriend, Kate Beringer (Phoebe Cates) – who relates a harrowing story about why she hates Christmas (see box). But by now it’s clear that the town has been decimated by the murderous pranksters.

## WHEN A PROJECT CHANGES THE RULES

While *Gremlins* was a critical and box-office hit (worldwide ticket sales were \$213m – about £600m in 2022 money – on a budget of \$11m), perhaps its biggest impact as a film project was a change to the way movies are classified. The film earned a PG certificate from the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) – but there was a public backlash about the film’s more gruesome scenes.

The UK’s British Board of Film Classification was more cautious,

awarding it a 15 rating, claiming it was “too disturbing for children”. Its review cited Kate’s recounting of the tragic tale of a father who went missing for a week at Christmas. It transpires he was trying to come down the chimney as Santa Claus to surprise his family, slipped and broke his neck (in a grisly bit of narrative that’s certainly not PG material).

Steven Spielberg – whose production company, Amblin, financed the film – had also directed the controversially PG-rated *Indiana*

*Jones and the Temple of Doom* (complete with someone’s heart being torn from his body). Spielberg took the criticism of *Gremlins*’s rating seriously and lobbied hard to introduce a new age category. Thus was born the PG-13 rating – similar to the later 12A rating in the UK.

The spate of comedy-horror movies and action films with younger heroes in the 1980s had shifted the landscape. It’s an interesting case study in iterative project management. A single project



**Billy with Gizmo and, below, Mr Wing, his grandson and Randall in the antiques shop where the Christmas project starts to unravel**

### Hazardous network effects

That's another warning about project vulnerabilities. It's bad enough when point failures cascade to overwhelm other functions. When the failures are also individually small, identifying and rectifying them – it's hundreds of small gremlins, not one big Godzilla – becomes a game of whack-a-mole. So how does our novice project manager fix the problem?

Well, the cat's out of the bag. Trying to fix things piecemeal just isn't going to work. Fortunately, the evil gremlins go to watch *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* at the cinema, and Billy and Kate take their chance – they divert the town's gas supply and blow up the cinema.

Stripe is the only gremlin to escape, and just when he's about to throw himself into the fountain at the department store – to spawn a new army of evil mogwai – Billy remembers the second rule: sunlight kills them. He sends Kate with Gizmo into the shop with that tip, Gizmo manages to throw open a skylight at dawn, and Stripe burns up before he can spawn. A terrible Christmas for Kingston Falls, then, and a damning indictment of the project management skills of hot-head Randy and novice Billy. So what have we learned?



### When the failures are individually small, identifying and rectifying them becomes a game of whack-a-mole

First, never undermine the leader of your project management office. Mr Wing won't sell the mogwai because he knows people aren't ready to handle the 'project'. Sometimes your superiors can seem blockheaded or not entrepreneurial enough, but there's usually a reason for their decisions. Second, take the time to compile a detailed risk register – and ensure people understand why the items are on it. It can seem laborious, but if there are high-stakes

consequences to the project – and if risks can aggregate exponentially – it's a must.

Third, always assume your BAU users will be knuckle-heads. That's not to insult them – merely to acknowledge human behaviour and organisational culture. (After all, the film doesn't happen if Mr Wing's grandson doesn't prioritise incoming revenue over proper project safeguards.) The closing exchange of the film sums this up:

*Mr Wing:* I warned you. With mogwai comes much responsibility. But you didn't listen. And you see what happens.  
*Billy:* I didn't mean it.  
*Mr Wing:* You do with mogwai what your society has done with all of nature's gifts. You do not understand. You are not ready.

### The search for perfection

Finally, *Gremlins* reminds us that the incessant hunt for the perfect Christmas gift is fruitless and self-defeating. Kate's dad dies trying to make Christmas special (see box); Billy's dad causes the town to be decimated for the same reason. And if your project is built around trying too hard to please people in the organisation – rather than sound operational principles and well-defined outcomes – you risk making the same mistakes.



### The kind of mess you get when WFH

operating in a grey area in terms of acceptable practice around, say, risk or social impact might fall foul of regulations or norms. But when several projects all run into the same unclear waters, it's often a catalyst for a change in the way we set standard operating procedures or risk tolerances.

The lesson is that sometimes the PMO (in this case, the MPAA) needs to recalibrate – especially when its most high-profile project manager calls for a change.

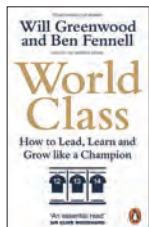


# NEW BOOKS, RECOMMENDED FAVOURITES AND PODCASTS TO KEEP YOU ENTERTAINED

**GRAHAM MACKAY APPRECIATES THE PARALLELS BETWEEN SPORTS AND PROJECTS, AND TIM BANFIELD REVELS IN A FUN READ ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

## World Class: How to lead, learn and grow like a champion

**Will Greenwood and Ben Fennell (Ebury Edge)**



Do effective leadership behaviours in the field of sport have anything in common with those required in successful project delivery?

Initially I had doubts, which grew as the value

of team member selection in the book was promoted. I felt for and appreciate the challenges facing the many project managers who would leap with alacrity at the luxury of such control over team selection. In reality, you have to work with those you are given.

Yet despite my initial misgivings I discovered real value emerging from the authors' combined rich insights born of hard-earned success over decades in both business and sport. In three successive sections, the book focuses

on 'Difference', 'Togetherness' and 'Growth'. Despite any limitations in choosing team members, the potential benefits to be gained by celebrating and promoting inherent 'Difference' soon become very apparent. Herein the book also scores highly by highlighting the project leader's central function: tackling their responsibility in getting to truly know their team, so uncovering and realising their potential both as individuals and in collaboration.

Another initial reservation arose around the centrality of 'competition' in sports. Its immediate relevance in project delivery was not apparent. Yet here the parallels prove even more compelling. For while competing teams are constrained by the rules of the game, no such constraint is typical in the emergent complexity of the often turbulent environments in which projects are delivered. Examples and exemplars abound as time and again the successful leader has the courage to entertain diverse perspectives and insights from

the team, so creating an environment where all are engaged and heard, and where innovation is encouraged and collaboration is secured. It offers any project manager food for thought.

The many powerful insights presented show the leader as a catalyst, inspiring everyone to personal excellence, then motivated and aligned through the leader's engagement of the team in a shared vision. The authors promote a 'Growth Mindset' in both leadership and the team. This focus on enabling and empowering the team fosters heightened situational awareness and resulting agility as individuals and teams become intelligent agents. This evolution from a traditional focus on 'process' to 'people' fosters agility and resilience in project delivery, to the benefit of all.

**Review by Gordon MacKay FAPM, Sellafield Project Management Capability Lead, and author of APM's book *Evolving Project Leadership***



## The Change Ninja Handbook: An interactive adventure for leading change

**Tammy Watchorn (Practical Inspiration Publishing)**



If you type 'change management' into Amazon, more than 10,000 entries come up. In my experience few contain anything radically different.

However, in this book, Tammy Watchorn tackles the subject in a fundamentally new way and brings the latest thinking in change delivery vividly to life. She writes in a highly emotionally intelligent style, with people at the heart of everything. The whole book is process- and theory-lite, which is refreshing, and I loved the



way ‘management’ was virtually never mentioned. In short, *The Change Ninja Handbook* is fun.

Why ‘Change Ninja’? Well, we all know that whatever they say, most organisations don’t really like change and are nervous of it at both corporate and individual levels. Ninjas work with stealth and perseverance and the tips Watchorn offers are about exactly how to do that in a volatile world so that we can do what is necessary to make change stick.

The handbook guides readers through the challenges and pitfalls of delivering change using an easy-to-read, game-based approach interspersed with real-life case studies. You can pick from different options at every stage of the change journey and then explore how they might play out in practice. And because the wisdom is set in such a fun and engaging context, it sticks in the memory wonderfully.

Watchorn creates characters so vividly and tells the ‘story’ so well that I was quickly drawn into such a different approach. ‘Sami’s Fables’ are a clever way to explore issues and suggest ways to understand and address challenges. I particularly enjoyed the fable characterising the different types of change and how to adapt to the challenges each poses. Quoting Professor Eddie Obeng – the only ‘real’ character in the adventure – is a great way of bringing another authoritative voice into the narrative.

This book is a brilliant source of reference for both experienced change professionals and those new to the field. It is amusing, authoritative and different and made me, as a non-linear thinker, approach the subject quite differently. Highly recommended.

**Review by Tim Banfield, Director, Banfield Advisory**



## My Bedside Books

Jaspal Kaur-Griffin, Head of Programmes, Bar Standards Board

### Portfolio Management: A strategic approach

**Ginger Levin and John Wyzalek (Auerbach)**

I find the chapter on ‘Delivering Organizational Value’ insightful. It reminds us that a good way to manage uncertainty is to pay particular attention to the four potential generations (Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers and Gen Yers) in the workplace today and the fact that they have different motivating factors. Being mindful of the complexities and benefits this could bring will aid portfolio management significantly.

### Bringing Up the Boss: Practical lessons for new managers

**Rachel Pacheco (Matt Holt Books)**

I recommend this to the new managers and project managers

I train, especially the advice on owning your own development, as it discusses how it is crucial to think about what you need to do to get to the next level in your career, and not just wait for your manager to suggest CPD options. The author also mentions being brave enough to share your CPD/development plans with others in a similar situation as this might lead to cross-learning and reminds us how we grow together.

### Wuthering Heights

**Emily Brontë (Penguin Classics)**

A classic that’s impossible to read just once. The way Brontë describes the Yorkshire moors and the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine makes this a true work of dark art for me. And with the release of the film *Emily*, what better time to reread it?

## We’re all ears – podcasts to listen to

### The APM Podcast

If you didn’t make it to APM’s Women in Project Management Conference in September, listen to the two follow-up podcasts, the first with career tips from young high-flyers, the second with advice from senior leaders. Also, don’t miss APM Chief Executive Professor Adam Boddison’s chat with former MP Justine Greening about her experiences as co-founder of the Social Mobility Pledge campaign, and where project management fits into the social mobility agenda.

### The High Performance Podcast

Sports broadcaster Jake Humphrey and organisational

psychologist Damian Hughes interview performers who have excelled in their field. Learn from Olympic gymnast Max Whitlock on why even the most successful winners can struggle, British mountaineer Kenton Cool on finding your inner depths, and CEO of Aviva, Amanda Blanc, on finding your voice and speaking up.

### The Rest is Politics

With three prime ministers this year, UK politics has rarely been more of a rollercoaster ride. If you want to keep in the know with what’s going on in Westminster, and enjoy some behind-the-scenes enlightenment and good humoured ribbing, then join former Downing Street Director of Communications Alastair Campbell and former cabinet minister Rory Stewart, who come from both sides of the political divide.

# Is 'failing at failing' success?

EDDIE OBENG ON WHY WE LOVE TO WIN BUT WHY IT'S SO HARD TO DO

“**S**uccess is overrated”, we tell ourselves when we worry we might fail. So why this fear of failure? Well, for most of the last century in most spheres of life it was possible to learn faster than the world changed. That meant someone somewhere knew the correct answer so you could be judged on your actions and outcomes. In addition, for millennia when life was more precarious, getting it wrong could mean death, and you wouldn't have further learning opportunities.

Recently there's been a fashion to insist that projects never fail. Citing examples from the Sydney Opera House to No 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, that bankrupted constructors, I hear the argument: “Well in the longer term it was useful, so it couldn't have been a failure!” They yawn at the iron triangle as outmoded tosh, irrelevant to modern project professional activity. HS2's budget doubling just confirms even more 'future usefulness'. There is a desire to 'win' regardless, but is 'failing at failing' success?

## Everyone loves a winner

And winning is great. As a child did you play 'championship golf'? All you needed was a stick and a decent-sized stone. You'd whack the 'ball', shout 'fore!' and wherever the stone landed was automatically a hole-in-one. “Winner!” you would shout as you raised your hands and dopamine surged through your veins.

And it's so hard to win as a project manager. Your first problem is that the only ones who can define and judge success are your stakeholders. They often choose to work with you based on tangibles, the hard criteria, but you will know that having a workman in your home who fixes the dishwasher,

but feels spooky or tramples on the flowerbeds, means you'll never use them again. Those soft success criteria can be show-stoppers. And then there are four groups, each with their own list of hard and soft criteria:

- **Pre-project stakeholders.** Just starting the project affects them – for example, you might be taking away their people or causing disruption.
- **Output stakeholders.** They want the deliverables. From them you learn the 'correct answer for the project'. Does it need to go quickly, or be cheap or be super good? Anniversary party? Means good, at the right speed and spend a bit more if needed. Low margin, competitive product launch means go fast, don't spend too much and 'just about compliant'. Each project is unique.
- **Project journey stakeholders.** They want to enjoy, learn, build relationships and do worthwhile work.
- **Outcome stakeholders.** Did it resolve the original problem or provide the envisaged opportunities? What's it like to live with? Chances are, your project isn't painting-by-numbers, and even if it is, the world keeps changing and can mean you need to keep checking or changing the purpose of the project. So you will need to agree again with the stakeholders, who define success, how you adjust the mark you must now hit. Stakeholders are people so they are fickle. Also, as the project progresses, they learn and may discover what they asked for isn't what they need. Stakeholder management is a huge job, always knowing they will remember any infringements you make on their soft criteria forever.



**Professor Eddie Obeng HonFAPM is an educator, TED speaker and author. You can join his masterclasses, courses and workshops on the QUBE #SuperReal campus: <https://QUBE.cc>**

## Do you have a fear of success?

And then there's you. Fear of failure may make you pretend the winnings aren't worth it, and make you try less hard. The research suggests that although you will feel better, your chances of succeeding may reduce. Also, secretly do you have a fear of success? Real success changes your life. It lifts you out of your comfort zone like a tornado and drops you into uncertainty. Apparently, some people even sabotage themselves to avoid it. So how do you succeed? I say use 'smart' failure (see TED Talks on 'smart failure' at [www.worldaftermidnight.com](http://www.worldaftermidnight.com)). Also recognise that past failure means reflection and skill building.

Work on the small steps of the journey, taking a win from each little one and absorbing the joy of the dopamine hit that will fuel you to the next challenge. That means taking time to reflect and write up '10 commandments' giving advice to anyone who might attempt to do what you have in the future.

Our APM Awards ceremony is stakeholders defining and judging 'success'. You and your colleagues are the pre-project and project journey stakeholders. You also get to judge the outcomes. So whether the APM judges choose to put a glass ornament on your shelf or not, I hope you took the dopamine hits as you put your submission together and will take time afterwards as outcome stakeholders to bask in the dopamine-fuelled glow of success.

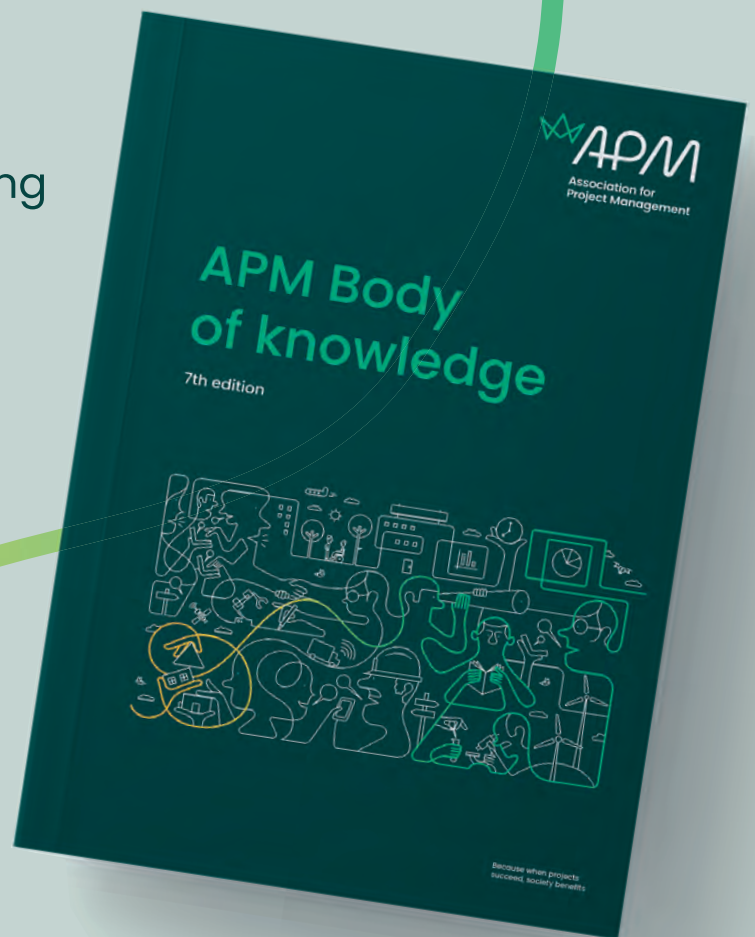
**It's so hard to win as a project manager. Your first problem is that the only ones who can define and judge success are your stakeholders.**



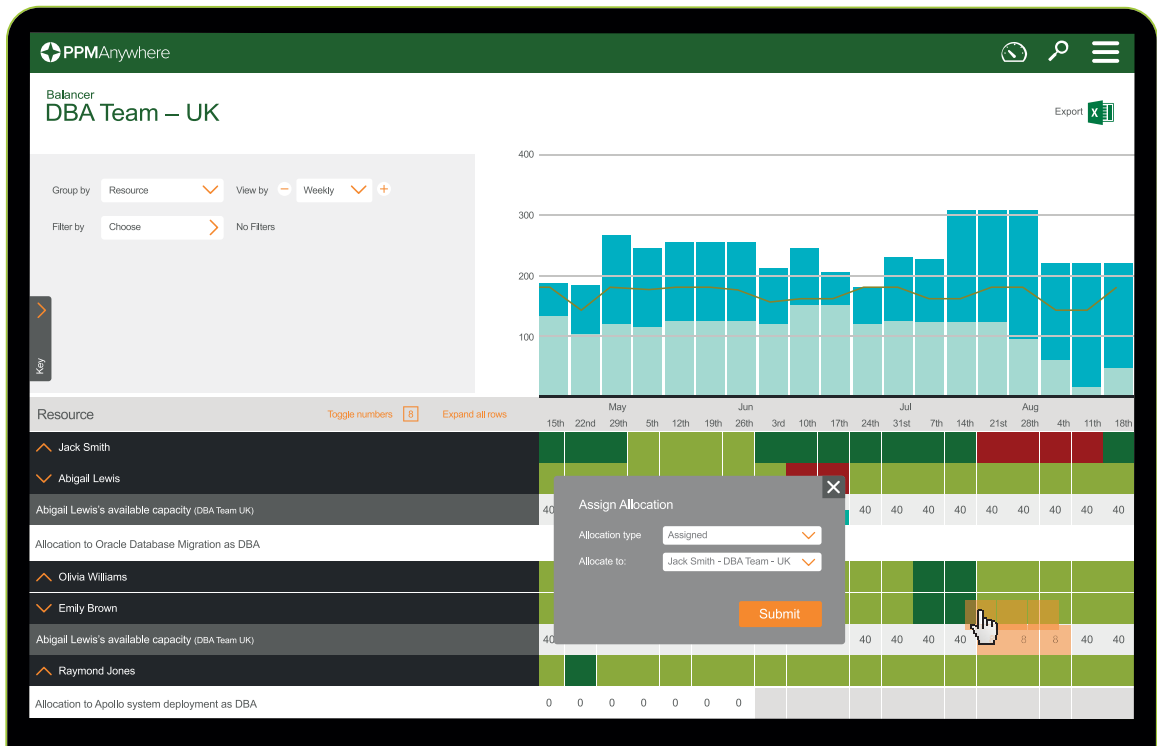
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