

PROJECT

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The voice of the project management community



Association for
Project Management

TUNNEL VISION

Behind the scenes of the Thames Tideway megaproject



BIG INTERVIEW

Meet APM's new President,
Dr Yvonne Thompson

MOONSHOT

Reaching for the stars
with Nammo Space

PLUS: Make the most of your
entrepreneurial edge



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Experiments in entrepreneurialism

If there's one connecting thread through this issue, then it's allowing yourself to release your inner entrepreneur. You might not think of this quality as one that directly applies to you, but as writer Dave Waller discovered, project professionals are bedfellows with risk, have a close relationship with uncertainty, and are used to dealing deftly with competing priorities and perspectives. These are all sought-after qualities in life and work these days.

Whether or not you want to launch your own start-up or join a fast-growth business, it's the ability to allow for experimentation, problem-solving and collaboration – and be able to calmly go with the flow no matter what gets thrown at you – that can lead to successful projects. It's time to reframe yourself as the kind of agile leader who can get the job done and who can bring their people with them.

As our Big Interview with Dr Yvonne Thompson, new President of APM, shows us, it pays to be courageous, focused and motivated if you want to succeed in your career. Dr Thompson has an ambitious agenda for her time in office, not least steering the profession through tech innovation and navigating remote working, but most importantly for her, championing diversity and inclusion. The first woman of colour to take up the role, she says her vision “includes fostering an environment

where diverse voices are amplified across all strands, enhancing our collective creativity and innovation, and reflecting the rich tapestry of the project management profession”. It's the perfect ambition to champion at her first APM Women in Project Management Conference in September.

Another grand vision was on display at Nammo Space, which I visited to find out more about the propulsion engines and systems they work on that will end up on missions to the moon, Mars and other planets. What I found was an appetite for innovation – not only in the cutting-edge technology they are designing but in the way that they approach their projects by introducing ‘New Space’-style agility to a traditional project management framework.

This willingness to innovate and experiment can only be a good thing for the delivery of projects, and it's getting Gen Z excited about working in places where the delivery of projects is shifting from more traditional models to something faster and fearless. Karolina Zatorska, a young project manager there, told me that she believes that change “is always good” because “if the outcome doesn't work out, it teaches you something along the way”. That's something all of us can pay heed to.

Emma De Vita is Editor of Project

This willingness to innovate and experiment can only be a good thing for the delivery of projects



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In the picture

Like all good project management, it allowed the true stars (the athletes) to steal the show





Take our breath away

The Paris Olympics certainly entertained over its 19 days, from the wacky, rain-soaked opening ceremony on the River Seine to the closing ceremony featuring Tom Cruise flying through the air to whisk the Olympic flag off to Los Angeles.

The Games were distinctly French in flavour. This might sound obvious, but it's a new approach for the Olympics, whereby "the event is tailored to the city and existing infrastructure, rather than the traditional model of mega developments and new sporting venues to cater to the Games", write AECOM's Bill Hanway and Rodrigo Soares on page 15.

The project management approach Paris took was one of greater delegation and collaboration with venues and federations, as well as a reduced delivery timetable. It seems to have worked, and like all good project management, it allowed the true stars (the athletes) to steal the show.

XINHUA/ALAMY

Perspectives

WiPM Conference • Strategic misrepresentation • The Paris Olympics • Tackling misinformation

Ros Atkins

Ros Atkins is a BBC presenter, journalist and creator of viral explainer videos. In the 100th episode of APM Podcast, he shares his secrets on what makes for a good explanation – and why excellent communication matters



Q Why bother improving the way we explain?

A I've worked on big projects over the years in different forms, and I always try and think, even if I'm dealing with different people with different interests in the project: what do each of those individuals want to know from me? What would it be helpful for them to know? And if I can then answer those questions, there's a good chance that they're going to feel what I'm offering is relevant. And if they feel it's relevant, they're much more likely to engage with it.

Q What's the right type of language to use for effective communication?

A We should understand the cost of using words, phrases and concepts that some people who we're communicating with don't understand. They'll simply conclude this isn't for them and start tuning out. It's not something we want to be doing. But there's a second element to this, which is that, when we use complex language phrases,

complex words, sometimes this can feel performative... I don't think this is ever needed.

One of the most powerful things that I keep in mind when I'm communicating is: is what I'm saying in the simplest form that it can be? That doesn't mean I'm dumbing down or discarding important information. It just means, once I've decided what it is that I think is important to say, can I get that into its simplest form? And that means replacing complex words and phrases with things that are simply easier to understand. The simpler you make your language, the easier it is to understand and the easier it is for people to act on.

Q What's your advice for project professionals facing difficult questions from stakeholders?

A If you're going into any environment where you're going to be facing a range of questions, whether supportive or challenging, it's always worth simply stopping and thinking: what are those questions most likely

to be? How would I like to answer them? Practise how you answer them. Review how your practice is going, and keep practising until, by the time you're in those situations, both the questions and how you're answering them will feel much more familiar. There's a greater chance you'll speak with clarity in that moment.

I used to present a phone-in on the BBC World Service for a number of years. From time to time, you would get someone who was getting irate with you. I'm not an expert in how to manage some of the situations project managers would be in, but in the case of doing phone-ins, one of the things I would often do would be to say, "I want to understand your perspective on this, and if you're shouting at me, it's becoming hard to understand that." That was a sincere point – and sometimes effective, because I was genuinely interested in the perspective of every caller.

I think being interested in people who don't agree with you is really important. So, if I'm in a meeting,

Sometimes I think that how we communicate is something that we largely do on instinct, and perhaps don't consciously think about as much as we do other skills in our working life

whether it's the BBC or otherwise, and people are not agreeing with a plan or a suggestion of mine, I'm genuinely interested to understand why. I'm not fed up with them or cross with them – I'm genuinely keen to understand why. And I think if you can come from that perspective, that can help.

Q What is your top tip on how to communicate well?

A It would be to see communication and explanation as being really important, because often they're seen as being secondary skills. For me, my ability to communicate is core to my journalism and core to my work as a broadcaster, and sometimes I think that how we communicate is something that we largely do on instinct, and perhaps don't consciously think about as much as we do other skills in our working life.

So, the big one for me before you get into what you do, and how you do it, is simply to see it as being really important. And if I was to make a list of the things that I've managed to do at the BBC which I'm most proud of and which have been most high profile, every single one of them would not just have been about having a good idea, but communicating that idea. So, just taking it seriously would be my number-one tip.

Episode 100 of APM Podcast with Ros Atkins will publish on 19 September. Atkins' book *The Art of Explanation: How to communicate with clarity and confidence* is out now.

SHUTTERSTOCK



1 Change must be purposeful.

Projects are a means to deliver beneficial change. My hardest projects were not those where the change was difficult to deliver, but those where the purpose of the change was not clearly or consistently understood by those involved. Work hard to ensure you have clarity about the purpose of the change and then even harder to ensure others do too.



Ask yourself: how will your project be remembered in say one, three, five or, for some, perhaps 100 years?

2 Avoid a siege mentality.

I probably shouldn't share this, but I once worked on a project that failed. We had a great team who would do anything for each other. The project team even had a unique brand. The strong identity and mutual support within the team created a 'them and us' culture when faced with challenges. Unfortunately, the users became the 'them' and we had lost our purpose. Watch out for

it, especially as high-performing teams could be most at risk.

3 If people seem odd, it's probably you!

We are hard-wired to be rational. If you ever hear yourself saying (or thinking) that someone behaved irrationally, it is because you don't understand the basis of their reasoning. The misunderstanding sits with you, not them, so go and find out.

4 A project without data is not project management, it's just winging it.

The temporary and cross-cutting nature of projects means they suffer from data poverty compared to business-as-usual activities. It is crucial early on in the project to ask: what decisions are needed on the project? What data will help those decisions? Where will it come from? How will it be analysed and shared? And what will happen to it after the project finishes? Armed with the answers, set your data strategy for the project.

5 Think legacy.

The great thing about projects is the sense of accomplishment you gain when they deliver the outcomes that were sought. So, ask yourself: how will your project be remembered in say one, three, five or, for some, perhaps 100 years after project close? What will its legacy be? Or, more to the point, what will your legacy be from your time on the project? Answer that and you'll make the very best decisions in your work.

Comment

Be inspired, connect and grow at WiPM Conference

The APM Women in Project Management Conference is a vital platform for career advancement and professional growth, Irene Maposa explains. It provides women in project management with opportunities to network, share experiences and learn from each other.



The APM Women in Project

Management (WiPM) Network works to address the challenges faced by women in the field, providing a supportive community and offering actionable insights for personal and professional development. The APM Women in Project Management Conference 2024, 'Leadership Unpacked', will offer a platform for authentic, meaningful and practical stories from women who have made significant strides in the profession. It will celebrate the achievements and contributions of women who have paved the way for future generations in a field where female representation is still emerging.

The opening keynote speaker will be Natalie Campbell MBE, a social entrepreneur and broadcaster whose journey from Co-CEO of Belu Water to Chancellor of the University of Westminster exemplifies the kind of inspirational stories attendees can expect to hear.

The closing keynote will come from Maggie Alphonsi MBE, a former rugby union player whose transition from celebrated athlete to motivational speaker and advocate for female participation in sports mirrors the transformative leadership journeys that the conference aims to highlight.

Throughout the day, there will be three streams of workshops, interactive sessions and networking opportunities.

Stream 1: Women in leadership

This stream will provide attendees with a roadmap to becoming a project leader. Drawing from the APM Research Fund series, it will highlight the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, discussing pathways

for aspiring women. A case study will highlight the unique challenges faced by women in leadership, emphasising the need for flexible leadership to support women in the workplace. The discussion will extend to practical aspects, such as negotiating pay, pensions and work plans, referencing Caroline Criado's *Invisible Women*.

Stream 2: Celebrating differences

This stream will address the importance of male allyship, which

plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality. It involves men actively supporting female colleagues, not just in words but through actions. Through an interactive and engaging panel session, attendees will share experiences and look at challenges faced and ways in which we can support the achievement of inclusive workplaces. In addition, the power of neurodiversity within project teams and navigating the complexities of global and hybrid working models will be discussed.

Stream 3: Career development tools and techniques

Practical tools and techniques are vital for setting up projects for success and provide insights into using performance, image and exposure (PIE) to enhance career connections. A workshop will examine strategies for managing difficult conversations, a skill that is invaluable for career progression. Being able to navigate challenging discussions with poise and empathy can lead to better outcomes and stronger professional relationships.

The WiPM Conference is more than an event; it's a community focused towards a more inclusive and equitable project management landscape. It's a commitment to actively seek and implement solutions that will pave the way for future generations of female project leaders. The conference's dedication to these goals reflects a broader mission to reshape the profession, ensuring that women have a strong, supported and celebrated presence.

Irene Maposa is APM WiPM Chair 2023/2024

APM WiPM'S FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS

The conference aligns with APM WiPM's five strategic goals, which are designed to support women in project management by:

- 1 Providing practical tools and measurable outcomes to promote well-being and manage stress
- 2 Supporting the established coaching and mentoring scheme within APM
- 3 Working through internal DE&I initiatives with APM Corporate Partners to encourage professional qualifications and development opportunities
- 4 Implementing positive change by raising awareness, celebrating diversity, creating opportunities and supporting networks within the profession
- 5 Examining recruitment and retention challenges, as well as employment and salary disparities, to address underrepresentation in the field

Comment

Professional expertise shouldn't be left behind in the office

Tammy Watchorn on smashing through the 'glass front door', which can stop you using your skills and experience because you like to keep work and home separate



I was recently doing a review of a training programme on managing change, with an emphasis on neuroscience. One of the participants was particularly honest and told me that they hadn't had time to use the training because they'd been on holiday with friends. "How was it?" I asked. "Terrible," she replied. "Nobody could agree on activities or places to eat and we kept falling out."

I responded with a quick question: "Could the training you did before the holiday have helped you manage the holiday issues? What do you think?" I watched her expression change and mood rise as she slowly realised it could have helped a lot and perhaps she had missed a trick by thinking 'work training' would only be useful for work things.

We respond to things differently at home and at work

Think back to the last time your boss challenged something you had done? How did you react? I'm guessing you felt a nervous churn of panic or anger before telling yourself to stay calm and respond with a logical and rational answer. You knock a cup over at home, and someone asks: 'What did you do that for?' You feel stupid and respond with emotion, perhaps even a small angry outburst that makes no one feel better.

Next, think about a task you hate doing and have persuaded your spouse/kids/pals to do instead. I'm guessing you understand what makes them tick and used this in your approach when trying to persuade them? Perhaps you are an expert in getting the bins emptied without lifting a finger. But then you head into work where stakeholders keep dismissing your project and all you

do is keep explaining the benefits. You know it wasn't an explanation of benefits that got the kids loading the dishwasher; instead, it was a very personal approach based on what you knew might make them do what you needed.



The home skills become redundant at work and the training is left in the office. It is time to smash that glass front door

Capitalise on your project prowess...

How many training courses have you been on at work? Leadership, project management, change management, risk management. You have the certificates, books and the T-shirts. You can write a business case and present it to ensure your preferred solution is selected. You eliminate risks before and during your project and you try not to scare your stakeholders with surprises.

But at home? Let's imagine you are planning a move to the country. You forget how to do the self-same business case. The move is, you tell your family over dinner, the best solution for them. You are surprised when they don't agree, surprised with all their questions that you can't

answer, surprised at the level of fear they have when clearly (to you) the benefits far outweigh the 'do nothing' choice. Dinner is ruined with a fraught and emotional discussion, and your country-living dreams feel quashed.

... especially when you need it the most

And what about when life throws you big emotional curveballs? These are the unexpected or unwanted changes that trigger a real (justifiably) emotional response – where you are more likely to panic than plan, to feel fear rather than excitement. It could be the reorganisation, bullying boss, cheating partner or empty nest syndrome. In these situations, whenever you start thinking about what comes next, you discover your brain is full of endless doubts that can stop you making any progress at all. When was the last time you consciously chose to brush off or ignore the doubts, just like you might those pesky 'doubting' stakeholders at work who are just getting in the way of progress?

I call this the glass front door. Forget the glass ceiling. That is nothing in comparison. You have built your very own personal barrier: the glass front door that can, every single day, without you noticing, stop you using the skills, knowledge and experience you already have because you like to keep work and home separate. The home skills become redundant at work and the training is left in the office. It is time to smash that glass front door.

Dr Tammy Watchorn is author of *The Change Ninja Handbook* and *The Change Ninja Returns* and this time it's personal (change-ninja.com)

Comment

The challenge of strategic misrepresentation

Martin Samphire of the APM Governance Interest Network considers the reasons behind this blocker to good group decision-making



A study by Oxford University looked at more than 20,000 projects and how they performed against their business case. Incredibly, only 0.5% delivered the expected benefits on budget and on time. Strategic misrepresentation is a leading cause of this failure (whether it's conscious or subconscious) but this challenge can be overcome by focusing on truth, transparency and governance.

Strategic misrepresentation refers to the act of deliberately providing false or misleading information in order to influence a group decision and has been researched by project management academics, most notably Professor Bent Flyvbjerg. Making key decisions in the right way underpins governance on projects, so we need to avoid strategic misrepresentation and make better decisions to improve project outcomes.

The APM Governance Interest Network has run a series of workshops on the topic and found that examples of strategic misrepresentation from APM members' projects include:

- inflating the business case
- failing to understand the full scope
- expecting the project context to remain unchanged during delivery
- stating single-figure end dates and costs despite high uncertainty
- promising on-time/cost completion even when significantly late/over budget
- glossing over poor performance at gate reviews and being overly optimistic
- reducing contract pricing to win work without adjusting scope or method
- ignoring or not researching historical data or prior experience
- deferring to senior (less aware) opinions

- 'people pleasing' and not being truthful about risks, experience or evidence
- not using evidential data to forecast outcomes
- lacking an environment for honest challenge or whistleblowing.

So, what is going on here?

Strategic misrepresentation is not just about project management tools or processes – it is about behaviour, driven by personal cognitive biases and political or organisational biases that influence group behaviour. Bias affects all of us in different ways and therefore it will impact our projects just as much. In our workshops, the audience identified behavioural traits and motivations that could be behind strategic misrepresentation:

- personal agendas, self-interest, self-gain
- group dynamics and the fear of losing face
- fear of failure/loss of job/self-preservation
- commercial posturing
- avoiding potential conflict
- lack of self-confidence.

Is strategic misrepresentation lying, deception or fraud?

Lying involves making a statement that the source knows is false with an intent to deceive. This can start with 'small' white lies. More serious lies encourage false beliefs with false information and result in false representation of a material fact. Done knowingly, this is deception. If this causes subsequent harm or loss, then this could become fraud.

This behaviour can be down to an individual wanting to influence a decision, knowing that the data is false or incorrect. I call this being

consciously incompetent; others call it lying or deception. Alternatively, the individual may be unaware of or inexperienced in contradictory data. Let's call this unconscious incompetence; others may call this negligence or incompetence.

How can we address strategic misrepresentation?

We all have a role in addressing this. We may need to be more courageous and challenge where we suspect strategic misrepresentation is affecting our outcomes. For me, the core principle is the need for truth and transparency at all times. If you feel that strategic misrepresentation is in the air:

- Understand if the source is deceiving or lacks experience.
- Ask for the evidence and reasoning behind their views.
- Avoid undermining the source's credibility; it may be a difference of opinion.
- Ensure members can speak out without fear of reprisal.
- Involve experienced individuals from similar projects.
- Promote data literacy and transparency at all levels.

Strategic misrepresentation in project governance needs to be addressed. It may occur in different forms and is down to individual behaviour, but is influenced by organisational culture or politics. We all have a role to play in helping to create an environment where transparency and the truth prevail. We also need to call out situations where strategic misrepresentation may be present and challenge others to substantiate their assertions through evidence and experience.

Improving experiences for diverse professionals

Christina Scott-Young, Jessica Borg and Naomi Borg of RMIT University share critical lessons from their research



The project management workforce in the UK has recently shown an encouraging upswing in diversity, with 20% of new entrants belonging to an ethnic minority. Of those, 11% identify as Asian or Asian British, while 5% are from Black, African, Caribbean or Black British backgrounds. However, APM's *Salary and Market Trends Survey 2023* also found that 24% of the UK's minoritised project employees perceive their ethnicity as a barrier to their career development.

So, despite the increasing number of diverse project practitioners, more work is needed to improve their inclusion, sense of belonging and equitable treatment in the project management profession.

To date, there has been limited research on ethnic minorities working in project management. Therefore, insights into the lived experiences of minoritised professionals are rare. Our APM-funded research project conducted in-depth interviews with 40 early-career racially diverse project professionals working in two prominent sectors – business and construction – in the UK and Australia. The cross-country comparative findings provided detailed insights into the lived experiences of diverse early-career project management professionals:

- Experiences were both positive and negative in the project-based workplace. Some participants considered they were valued and treated well due to their diverse status.
- Existing company diversity management practices were often ineffective or not adequately enforced.
- Identity-based discrimination of some form was reported by almost

three-quarters of the women and half the men.

- Racial discrimination at work was experienced by almost half the participants.
- Early-career project professionals in the UK experienced more racial discrimination than those in Australia.
- Racial discrimination was more prevalent in the business sector.
- Black project professionals experienced more racial discrimination in both countries



than South Asians and Southeast Asians.

- Gender discrimination against women was over twice as high in the UK as in Australia.
- When job-searching, minoritised women reported less discrimination than men in the construction sector across both countries. This may be due to the sector's concerted focus over recent years on recruiting more women.
- Racially diverse early-career women in both countries experienced additional types of identity-based discrimination (known as intersectionality) at work on top of their ethnicity and gender in both countries. Many

were treated differently due to their youth, social class or disability, as well as their race.

- More early-career women reported they were considering leaving their industry sector in both countries, most likely due to the higher levels of discrimination they experienced. An exception was UK construction, where the number of women and men planning to exit was equally high (50%).

What needs to be done

To improve the inclusion of early-career project professionals, project-based organisations are encouraged to:

- include diversity-friendly wording in job advertisements to attract minoritised groups.
- listen to the voices of diverse employees about their specific needs.
- audit the effectiveness of existing company policies on diversity and inclusion.
- implement necessary diversity and inclusion measures and training.
- offer better onboarding, greater managerial and peer support, and mentoring for diverse early-career employees.
- establish communities of practice to support diverse project practitioners.
- provide more training and career development opportunities for diverse employees.
- promote more diverse employees into leadership roles.

For more information on the APM-funded research, *Improving the early-career experiences of racially diverse project professionals*, see apm.org.uk

Comment

Observations on the 2024 Paris Olympics

Bill Hanway and Rodrigo Soares consider whether the latest Games delivered on its ambitious vision



In September 2017, Paris presented an ambitious vision to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in a formal session in Lima, Peru. At the time, this was in competition with Los Angeles for the rights to become the host city in 2024, but the IOC made the first-time decision to award both cities sequential Games.

Paris delivered on this vision. Despite heavy rain at the opening ceremonies along the Seine, this approach – 100,000 fans watching the athletes travelling down the river on boats – reflected Paris’s commitment to the ambition, and also the project management challenges to the delivery.

To balance the complexity of delivering the vision, Paris 2024 showcased the future of the Games, where the event is tailored to the city and existing infrastructure, rather than the traditional model of mega developments and new sporting venues to cater to the Games.

Event delivery model

The project management benefit of the traditional model for the Games typically spaces the capital expenditure across multiple years, as was seen with London 2012. The multi-year delivery process allowed for greater control of cash flow and procurement. Paris adopted an event delivery model, which reduced the timetable and delegated more control to individual projects, which had many benefits, including a stronger partnership between the organisers, venue operators and international sports federations. This allowed for some of the venues to continue their normal operations well into June, before pivoting to the needs of the Games.

The impact, though, was significant pressure on the delivery timetable. The challenges included cost impacts, commodity availability, procurement capacity, as well as access to construction teams. These issues are not unique to Paris, but it is a lesson for future cities to consider.

There must be a careful balance between reducing the build of new venues, balancing exclusive use periods for existing venues and the impact of the scale of temporary construction and overlay. The solution



A specific consideration of the Games is the timing and impact of the global economy

rests in early adoption of a project management team to monitor each of these key considerations and a methodology with comprehensive responsibility to track risks, opportunities and cost impacts, and implement solutions.

A specific consideration of the Games is the timing and impact of the global economy. The Games must be delivered on a four-year cycle, and this does not always coincide favourably with market conditions. Consider London 2012 and Rio 2016.

London’s contracts were bid during the economic crash of 2008 and the resulting projects were the largest in Europe and therefore were competitively priced. In the lead up to 2012 and the decade following, the global economy grew and delivered a successful legacy for London.

For Rio 2016, the economic impact was the opposite. In 2010 Brazil was in ascendance and was pushing towards seventh in the world GDP ranking. The following years saw the country mired in political scandal and economic implosion after the contracts had been awarded. It is only now that the legacy promises are being delivered with Mayor Eduardo Paes back in government.

Passing the baton

Paris 2024 had to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent delay of Tokyo 2020 and the impact of the war in Ukraine. This highlights the importance of establishing a project management team as early as possible to manage risk.

Every Games provides insights into delivery and lessons learned, but it is equally clear that every host nation must adapt to its specific requirements and the economic context. Paris 2024 provided an amazing Games and an evolved delivery methodology. As with every paradigm shift, there are elements to be perfected, and it’s up to the future Games to learn from Paris and deliver the next iteration of this new project management model.

Bill Hanway is Executive Vice President/Global Sports and Social Infrastructure Leader, and Rodrigo Soares is Director, Global Sports, at AECOM

Professor Adam Boddison OBE

Professional bodies' role is more important than ever

APM's Chief Executive considers how professional bodies can counter the threats of misinformation and disinformation



In an era where misinformation and disinformation are identified as the most severe short-term threats by the World Economic Forum's *Global Risks Report 2024*, the role of professional bodies has never been more critical. But, somewhat counter-intuitively, professional bodies could face existential threats as access to significant volumes of data and information becomes more readily available.

For example, if I want to network with others in my profession, do I need to pay a fee to join my professional body or should I use a freely available service such as LinkedIn? Similarly, for professional development, is a platform like YouTube Shorts a cheaper alternative?

These alternatives can certainly help and are often cheaper, but there are some key questions that should be considered. For example, who checks that freely available content is high-quality and correct?

The reality is that professional bodies such as APM are guardians of truth and quality. They have a duty to ensure that the information circulated within their professions remains accurate, reliable and high-quality.

The escalating threat of misinformation

The *Global Risks Report 2024* highlights that misinformation and disinformation pose the most immediate risk to global stability. This phenomenon undermines public trust, disrupts social cohesion and can even lead to political instability and violence. The pervasive spread of false information, particularly via social media and other digital

platforms, has made it increasingly difficult for the public to discern truth from falsehoods.

Guardians of truth and quality

Professional bodies are uniquely positioned to counteract this threat. They establish and uphold standards of practice, ensuring that their members adhere to

The fight against misinformation and disinformation is a collective effort



ethical guidelines and rigorous quality expectations. By doing so, they help to maintain the integrity and credibility of their respective professions.

APM plays a pivotal role in the project profession. It ensures that project professionals are well trained, that they adhere to best practices and that they are equipped with the latest, most accurate information. Recognised standards such as Chartered Project Professional not only enhance the quality of project outcomes, but also build public trust in the profession.

APM in a global context

Projects today are not confined to local or national boundaries; they often span multiple countries and involve diverse teams. APM provides

a cohesive competence framework that ensures consistency and reliability across all projects, regardless of location.

APM's increasing international reach facilitates the dissemination of high-quality information and best practices worldwide. This helps to mitigate the risk of misinformation by ensuring that all stakeholders have access to reliable and validated knowledge. APM's emphasis on continuing professional development, qualifications and standards further ensures that project professionals remain competent and well-informed throughout their careers.

What next?

It is crucial for individuals and organisations to support their professional bodies. By doing so, they enable these organisations to continue their essential work in maintaining the standards of truth and quality. Supporting professional bodies means more than just paying membership dues; it involves active engagement in professional development opportunities, volunteering, adherence to established standards and participation in the broader professional community (such as mentoring).

The fight against misinformation and disinformation is a collective effort. By standing with professional bodies like APM, we ensure that our professions remain credible, that our practices stay ethical and that our information is reliable. This not only safeguards the integrity of our professions but also contributes to the stability and wellbeing of society as a whole.

A storming success

Main construction on the Thames Tideway Tunnel was completed in March, and the super sewer should be fully operational in 2025. Richard Young caught up with key players on a programme that will make sure storms don't equal sewage for London's river users

The tunnel is 7.2m in diameter, the equivalent of three double-decker London buses

The timing was near perfect. On 27 March, the Thames Tideway Tunnel was completed. It will change the way the capital handles effluence, delivering a cleaner River Thames and handling storms that regularly overwhelm London's Victorian sewage system. As outcry over polluted rivers peaked, it arrived not a moment too soon.

Thames Tideway is also a poster child for big infrastructure projects and innovative financing – just in time for a new Labour government that has promised to get Britain growing. It's a £5bn project whose client – Thames Water – has been slammed for failure to invest; yet it's been completed to the satisfaction of investors and regulators alike. So how did the team get it right?

Structural integrity

The project's structure is a good place to start. Thames Tideway is run by Bazalgette Tunnel Ltd, owned by investors such as pension funds keen on long-term returns. The programme manager, Jacobs,

supplies a lot of the key personnel, particularly at the executive level. That's where Andy Alder FAPM worked as Thames Tideway's Programme Director until summer 2023.

Although Tideway is a "one-badge" project, construction was handled by four project groups, breaking construction into manageable sections. "All the project teams had their own structure – with the programme team coordinating the overall controls, logistics and stakeholder engagement," Alder explains.

Alder is a civil engineer, but grew frustrated by a lack of project management expertise on many major projects, and so did a master's in the discipline. He is now an APM Fellow.



Andy Alder

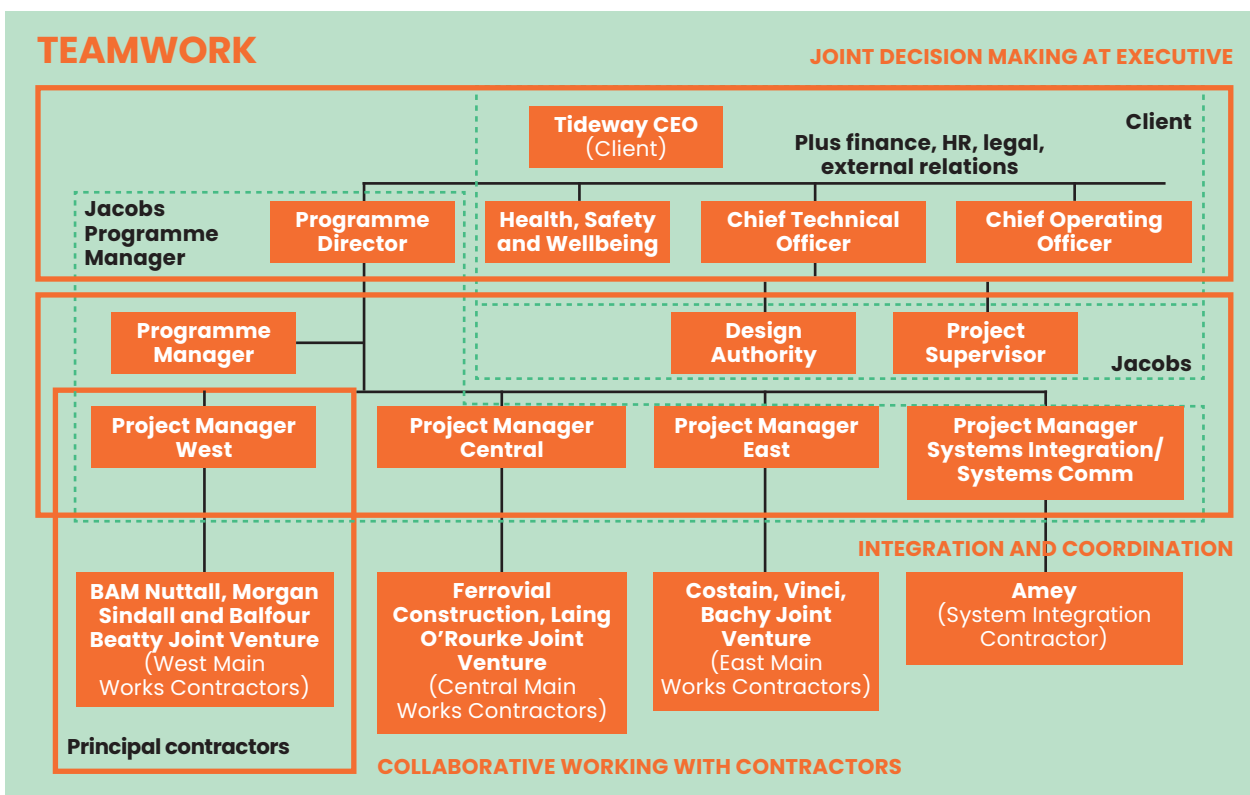
Being project manager for key stretches of the Crossrail tunnel provided critical experience that he brought to Tideway. "But tunnelling really

"We had to work out the links with the existing sewer network while it was still operational"

wasn't the big challenge," he says. "The big ones were the consenting and stakeholder agreements."

Multi-borough planning, the need to build out marine works to support shaft-digging, and handling the community aspects of the project were all core roles for the central team. "And the interface with Thames Water was key," Alder adds. "We had to work out the links with the existing sewer network while it was still operational."

James Smith, who succeeded Alder as Programme Director, was at Thames Water during the planning phase (he left in 2007 and returned to Tideway as a Senior Project Manager in 2013). "Centrally, the work was to get the contracts together, then run assurance,"



he says. “But continuity was key – we had a lot of embedded knowledge to pass on to the contractors. It was always a ‘hot start’ to get them up and running.”

Culture

The other huge contribution from the centre? Culture.

“The CEO, Andy Mitchell, and the board were very clear about the aspirations for the project from the outset,” Alder explains. “Tideway has a critical environmental purpose that always included creating new public places on the river, reconnecting people with the Thames. It’s a once-in-a-lifetime project to create new land in London.”

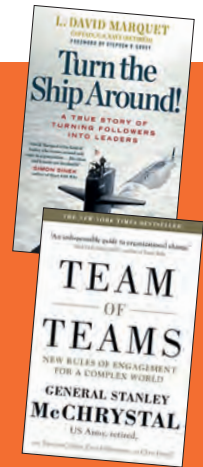
The other big culture piece was worker engagement, especially around health and safety. Crossrail (where Mitchell had also worked, as Programme Director from 2009 to 2014) had a good



James Smith

TOILET READING

Ever considered a project reading list? Tideway Programme Director Andy Alder explains that embedding the right culture at Tideway was helped by sharing project philosophies. The executive team would recommend project managers and contractors read *Turn the Ship Around* by US Navy captain David Marquet; and *Team of Teams* by General Stanley McChrystal. Alder kept a box of the latter under his desk and reckons he personally handed out around 200 copies, so deep was the desire to embed the idea of delegated decision-making, among other things.



record, Alder points out. But on Tideway, they wanted to do even better. That meant a full day’s training in a state-of-the-art visualisation facility for every worker on the project.

“We ran onboarding at our Employer Project Induction Centre,” Alder says. “As well as presentations on safety protocols and PPE, we had a room with three video walls where everyone got to see a fatal accident play out.” Every worker watched

mock interviews with colleagues and even the family of “the deceased” (“That training still sits with me eight years later,” Alder adds) before working through the scenario again, picking out key moments that would have prevented the accident.

Delegation

Another benefit of this approach was making a vivid connection between the decisions of senior management, project managers, contractors and their workers. It created a one-team work ethic and ensured project pressure wasn’t cascaded into poor decisions.

After the initial phase, when control had been centralised (the focus was liaising with local authorities, Transport for London, the government and so on), the delegation process for construction was a challenge. “Project managers were nervous about taking decisions and kept referring them up,” Alder explains. “We did a session with the exec covering 12 or 15 scenarios. Who should make the decision? Chief exec? Programme director? Project manager? It turned out that on most of them the exec was happy for the project manager to make the decision.

“Then we did the same session with the project management teams, and they assumed a lot of those decisions should go up to the exec. That was a really vivid way of explaining that, actually, the chief exec wants you to make the decision.”

Commitment

The COVID-19 pandemic was a test of whether those values would stick. The Tideway board’s firm commitment



Abbey Mills pumping station, the easternmost Thames Tideway site

“We did a session... Who should make the decision? Chief exec? Programme director? Project manager?”

to health and safety made it relatively straightforward, says Alder. Work stopped – no simple task when you have boring machines 50m below ground – while the virus gripped the capital. But payments to contractors continued and all workers were paid. “When we got going again, it meant the level of commitment from everyone was fantastic,” he explains.

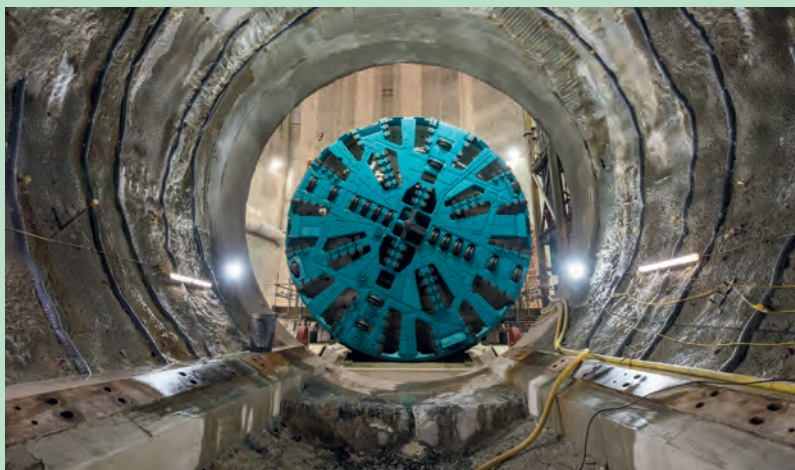
That ‘do the right thing’ culture also helped when unexpected challenges arose. Alder recalls a situation at the Blackfriars cofferdam (a way of facilitating work under the river). Ground movement during the works put a Victorian gas main at risk, but rerouting it promised to be a cost and scheduling nightmare – with all the contractual finger-pointing between subcontractors and stakeholders that every project manager dreads.

“Andy Mitchell’s focus on doing the right thing was huge,” says Alder. “He said: ‘Forget everything; just get in a room, come up with a solution and afterwards we’ll look at the commercials.’” The outcome? A creative engineering fix that avoided rerouting the main. The lesson? Incentivise positive actions rather than looking to minimise the downsides.

The legacy

It’s no surprise that a project designed to last over 120 years and reshape its environment should focus on legacy. But Samantha Freelove, Legacy and Sustainability Manager at Tideway, has a remit much wider than just the “greening of the grey”. In 2017, the project produced a detailed legacy objective report, listing 54 commitments in five categories; environment was just one. Wellbeing and safety, economy, people and the community all featured.

“I took a lot from my experience as sustainability assurance manager on London 2012,” says Freelove. “The legacy programme was already well established here when I arrived, and it was clear they’d drawn heavily on both



THAMES TIDEWAY TIMELINE

Completed by Joseph Bazalgette in 1865, London’s sewerage system was designed to divert the emissions of three million Londoners that turned the Thames into an “open sewer”, causing cholera epidemics and an intolerable stench. But it handles human waste and rainwater in one flow. Expansion of the city – now more than nine million strong – has resulted in regular combined sewer overflows (CSOs), especially when it rains heavily. Instead of heading to treatment, overwhelmed drains dump everything in the river.

Thames Tideway is huge upgrade – a 25km, 7.2m-wide

tunnel; a 4.5km connection tunnel in south-east London; and a 1.1km tunnel in south-west London. The main tunnel starts at a depth of 31m at Acton in the west, dropping to around 66m at Abbey Mills pumping station in the east. With a capacity of 1.6 million cubic metres, it can soak up heavy flows to avoid overwhelming treatment plants without polluting the river.

The system has 21 shafts to handle sewer overflows; the largest have a diameter of around 25m. The construction phase was considered complete when the 1,200-tonne concrete lid was placed over the deep shaft at Stratford.

2001 Thames Tideway Strategic Study launched to explore the problem of CSOs.

2005 Study lands on a “screening, storage or treatment” strategy.

2010–12 CSOs into the Thames average one per week; Thames Water consults on optimum route for a new tideway.

2013 Designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

2014 Planning approved.

2015 Tunnelling contracts for west, central and east tunnels awarded.

2016 Construction begins.

2018 Six tunnel boring machines named after female pioneers begin work.

2022 Tunnelling complete.

2024 Main infrastructure finished.

2025 Commissioning and surface works complete.



Samantha Freelove

the Olympics and Crossrail.” That’s now being paid forward: even as the commissioning works begin, she’s talking to other major projects about lessons

from Tideway.

“It makes such a difference when it’s intrinsically an environmental project,” she says. “But from the start we’ve been looking at ‘additionality’ – how we leave a positive benefit during construction and beyond.”

That’s included innovative ways of dealing with the spoil from the tunnelling operations, minimising road use by committing to river-based logistics and securing firm commitments from contractors on their own environmental impacts. The innovations weren’t always welcomed at first. But over time, the social and then financial benefits won them over.

On a project this close to communities, communication was also key. “I’m a technical sustainability person, but we’ve tried really hard to make it accessible,” Freelove says. “Making people, not just numbers, central to what we do has made a big difference. The narrative needs to come



Thames Tideway will reduce combined sewer overflows in a typical year by 95%

“A key legacy is the skills and experiences passed on... we’ve had a big apprenticeship programme”

back to people and the solutions we’re delivering for them.”

Feel the flow

The tunnels are built, then, but there’s plenty of commissioning work still to do. “It’s when the trees are getting planted – two for every one we removed – and also the arts and public realm work, the biodiversity enhancement, all

the rest,” says Freelove. “A key legacy is the skills and experiences we’ve passed on that will help future projects become more sustainable. We’ve had a big apprenticeship programme, for example, and lots of outreach to schools to promote work in infrastructure. Everyone is heading off to other projects now, and we hope the experiences and culture from here will sustain them.”

Alder says the project has changed his perspective. “When I joined, my professional mission in life was to build as many excellent infrastructure projects as I could that have a real purpose and serve society. But by the end of Tideway, it had become creating and growing leaders, the engineers and project managers who are going to build things way into the future. When I’ve hung my boots up, they’ll still be doing stuff in the right way.”

For Smith, the big lesson is communication and flexibility. “All our project managers and construction engineers go through APM qualifications,” he says. “With an emphasis on the assurance side of project management, the strategic mindset and the ability to engage with a wide range of stakeholders have been so important.”

A storming success, then? Smith is cautiously optimistic: the commissioning will be crucial, not least to the legacy. “And we won’t really know how it’s working until we get our first really big storm,” he says. So if you see thunderclouds in the sky this autumn, spare a thought for the project teams at Tideway – they should be flush with success.

THE FLOW OF FINANCE

Thames Tideway is a standalone company – reflecting the needs of its investors (keeping it separate from Thames Water’s balance sheet), creating a “one badge” philosophy for all the project managers and contractors, and enabling the planning and delivery of ongoing maintenance for 120 years. Funding is handled by Bazalgette Finance Ltd, which has raised funding via creative means. The main one has been a regulated asset base (RAB) model, where a company receives a licence to charge a regulated price to consumers – a £25 a year levy

on Thames Water customers – lowering the cost of capital. It’s now considered a model for future nuclear projects.

There’s also a programme of ‘green bond’ issuance, begun in November 2017. The bonds pay a lower interest rate if environmental KPIs are met, enabling holders to sell themselves as ‘green’ to pension funds and investors keen on sustainability. The final piece of the jigsaw is a government guarantee – if cost had overrun too much, the state would have backstopped the investment with additional equity.



Dr Yvonne Thompson

Emma De Vita meets the new President of APM, a trailblazing and bold business leader (it comes as no surprise that she likes to skydive) and ambassador, who will help steer the profession to a more successful future

Dr Yvonne Thompson CBE DL has a gift for creating connections with people. We speak the morning after she dined with an African queen. The night before, she was at Homerton College, Cambridge, dining with its Principal, Lord Woolley, a crossbench member of the House of Lords. Raised in South London, the new President of APM tells me proudly of the time she met Nelson Mandela in Brixton (where she lives with her husband) and Michelle Obama at the O2.

Evidently, Dr Thompson is well connected, and her love of networking – and ability to support others, stay focused and communicate – has served her well. In her career as a marketer, she has been a vocal advocate for groups that have been underrepresented and underappreciated – much like the project profession itself has felt at times. She is a bold woman who helped set up not only the first black-owned PR company in the UK but also the first legal black-run radio station, Choice FM. It doesn't surprise me that she recently took up skydiving, likes to rollerblade and has a couple of London Marathons under her belt.

This woman has guts, determination and focus – but more on that later.

Dr Thompson is still only President-Elect of APM when we meet, but she has already enjoyed a deep dive into project management at the annual APM Conference in Coventry, just a few weeks before. She was blown away by the breadth of projects and the interesting speakers. “It was amazing,” she says. Innately curious and keen to learn, she says her new position on the APM Board will be “a fascinating opportunity... I'm all about learning. I love to take in as much as I can when things sound interesting. And this really did sound interesting.”

She has already identified eight areas of focus that she would like to achieve progress on “in a very short space of time”. Top of the list is helping the profession get to grips with artificial intelligence (AI) and new technology: “How do you harness that for the betterment of everyone, not just for a programme, not just for one particular project?” Up next is helping to get remote working right. “One of the biggest issues obviously is that you don't get to meet with your colleagues; you don't learn

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEWIS PATRICK

The Big Interview

from them as much as if you're in the same room. Although I love the idea of working remotely, I'm equally passionate about people coming back into the office, looking at each other eye-to-eye," she says.

Of equal importance is her area of speciality: diversity – the golden thread that runs through her career.

"It's one of the things I've been championing for the last 40 years, and I'm really surprised that I'm still having to push that snowball up the hill," she says. "When people say they've got diversity on their board, it usually means they've got white women, and it doesn't mean they've got race on their boards. I always feel like I had to keep fighting to make sure people remember race is one of the top signifiers of diversity. You can't hide from being black; there's nowhere you can go. You've just got to walk through the fire."

A true change maker, Dr Thompson has broken down barriers and paved the way for others. She has worked with the government and Ofcom to promote equality and diversity and, when we speak, is just about to step down as the Chair of OKRE.org, a charity researching the effects of the entertainment industry. She has led numerous Black-led organisations throughout her career, leveraging her extensive experience to foster cross-cultural exchange.

Dr Thompson's professional background includes roles as Music Editor of *Root* magazine, Managing Director of marketing and PR company ASAP Communications, and President of the European Federation of Black Women Business Owners. She has four fellowships, including from King's College London, along with honorary doctorates from London Metropolitan University and the University of Plymouth. She is also a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London and a successful author, speaker and influencer. Milla Mazilu, Chair of APM's Board of Trustees, has called her "a hugely respected leader, role model and campaigner. These qualities make her the ideal choice to represent APM."

Of her new position, Dr Thompson says: "It's so much more about influencing, rather than advising."

What are the secrets to Dr Thompson's career success?

CV: DR YVONNE THOMPSON CBE DL

Current roles

2024– President, APM

2021– Chair, OKRE (an entertainment industry charity)

1997– Founder, Wintrade Global Women in Business

Past roles

2021–23 Chair, Black Cultural Archives

2018–2021 Chair, The Radio Academy, supporting Ofcom Advisory Equality & Diversity Board

2016–2018 National Steering Committee, Women's Equality Party

2015–2022 Participated in the Parker Review, encouraging greater diversity of UK boards

2015–2017 Chair, The African

Caribbean War Memorial Committee

2014–2016 Advisory Board, Greenwich School of Management

2012–2019 Economy Honours Committee (Cabinet Office)

2000–2008 Chair, London Central, Learning and Skills Council; Board, London Development Agency

2003 Received CBE for work with women, minorities and small business

1998–2001 Small Business Representative, Economic & Social Committee, Brussels

1987–2003 Board, Choice FM

1983–2009 Founder, Positive Publicity (now ASAP Communications)

"I'm in a privileged position to say I've always enjoyed every moment of the business life I've led"

"It's about finding your focus. I know what I do best is communicate." It's what makes her an effective marketer. Yet she cautions that listening is as important as speaking. "You've got two ears and one mouth, and you should use those in that order."

While others might perceive her as a role model, Dr Thompson likes to think of herself as a "real model".

"I love helping other women," she says. "If I can teach them something or they can learn something from what they know of my journey, then that's amazing."

Her journey as a black woman in business has at times been difficult. She worked at CBS Records in the press office for more than seven years, but was consistently bypassed for promotion. "This was nearly 50 years ago. I was a bit of an enigma in the music industry. I was the only person of colour for the majority of the time that I was there," she explains.

She took matters into her own hands, leaving CBS to start the first black-owned PR company, and then became part of the launch team of Choice FM. She was the only woman on the board. "God, that was really hard having your voice heard; sitting in those board meetings," she remembers. "That was really the first board position that I had, and I was learning as I went along, and it was tough. We had that company for 15 years, and my personal growth over that time was phenomenal."

It was during that time that she started chairing government quangos like Business Link for London and the Learning and Skills Council. The only board she walked out on was the Health and Safety Board. "Rather than embracing the diversity, they obviously thought I had nothing to teach them... it was awful. I wasn't prepared to take what was going on there, so I just moved on."

Dr Thompson's evident passion for inclusivity will be, by definition, incredibly



YVONNE'S TOP TIPS FOR NETWORKING

During our interview, legendary networker Carole Stone calls by accident on speed-dial – Dr Thompson explains that she is a close friend. The power of networking to elevate your career is a theme close to Dr Thompson's heart (she gave some brilliant tips at the APM Fellow's dinner in Coventry).

"I think networking is very underrated. I think it should be part of people's [employment] contract. If you do it in the right way, you never know who you're going to meet that's going to make a huge difference to you, your project or whatever you're doing."

Isn't it a bit much to mandate networking of everyone, especially when many find it such an excruciating experience?

"Everyone should actually go on a networking course or be encouraged to network at least once a month," she replies. For those who struggle with it, her advice is clear – approach it with passion, purpose and positioning (the three Ps, as she calls it). The passion part needs no explaining, but the purpose aspect requires you to consider ahead of time who you want to meet, why you are going – and who might want to meet you.

Positioning is about what level you want to network at – is it your peers you want to chat to? People younger than you, to find out what they can teach you? Or perhaps it's making yourself known to those higher up the corporate ladder.

"I always think about trying to network up," she says. It's evidently a strategy that has worked brilliantly for her...

Dr Thompson recently appeared on APM Podcast alongside outgoing President Sue Kershaw. Listen at bit.ly/3YGeiUE

important to every member of APM, across every sector. While some might lead on this issue (particularly when it comes to gender equality), there are some project-centric organisations – in the construction and technology sectors, for example – that are not as diverse as they could be in terms of gender. It's clearly Dr Thompson's hope that this will change, while also supporting men in those industries to be better in their roles and progress their careers (and give their support as valuable allies).

It comes as no surprise, then, that Dr Thompson describes her work style as one of "servant leadership... I'm very much about helping people." She has always had a desire to look after others. As a child she wanted to become a doctor but her work experience stints alongside her midwife sister quickly put her off. "It was shattering!" she says, but she doesn't regret ditching her medical

dreams – and feels no regret for any of the career decisions she has made. "I'm in a privileged position to say I've always enjoyed every moment of the business life I've led. I think I've been recognised for doing that, so that's a bonus – and I've helped people along the way, which is another bonus."

Dr Thompson likes to spend any free time she has doing sport, although a brush with COVID-19 has left her less inclined to run marathons or indulge her love of swimming. A fan of skydiving, she gets groups of people together to participate and raise money for charity. She regularly gets up at 5am to get on with everything, including the women's business network she runs with her daughter, who has lived in Germany for the past 20 years. Dr Thompson has a voracious appetite for learning, lately about all things AI, but clearly enjoys the networking and connecting part of her life too.



Going full blast

Emma De Vita reports on Nammo Space, a pioneering UK company that's pushing technological frontiers and using a more dynamic approach to projects to help keep it ahead in the space race

The sleepy Buckinghamshire countryside is not the kind of place that springs to mind when you think of a high-tech space facility. Westcott Venture Park has been the home of rocket science since 1946, when the UK Ministry of Supply allowed German V2 rocket scientists to continue their work at its Rocket Projectile Establishment on what was a World War II airfield. When I visit on a drizzly July day, the grounds are eerily quiet and sparsely dotted with old government buildings, new offices, stacked shipping containers used for storage and enough blown-up

concrete monolith blocks to give the place a post-apocalyptic flavour.

Sitting on the edge of the site is the UK home of Nammo Space. Nammo UK, a jointly owned Norwegian and Finnish ammunition manufacturer, took over the running of a space rocket propulsion business in 2017 after the UK government sold it off to the private sector in the 1990s. It describes itself as a provider of spacecraft propulsion solutions for Earth orbit and moon and interplanetary missions. Its solid, liquid and gaseous rocket engines are used not only to help guide space rockets in

orbit (rather than launch them), but also for advanced telecoms, GPS and defence-based satellite missions. It has 90 flown missions under its belt for its LEROS Apogee Engine family, and 100 for its thrusters.

Entering the orbit of new space

In a new office building, Rob Selby, Nammo's Vice President for Space and an experienced aeronautical engineer, talks enthusiastically about the projects and people he leads. In the corner of the room sit models of some of the engines,



TRIFF/SHUTTERSTOCK

Rob Selby

“Every time I look at the moon, I realise that there is a piece of hardware that this factory has built... that I’ve touched, that is sat on the surface of the moon”

which look like stylish lampshades to the uninitiated (me). The view from the window is of scrubland and faded yellow shipping containers. Glamorous it is not, but Selby explains that it’s a step up from the shed that they recently upgraded from. The company is growing fast, catapulting itself into the world of ‘new space’, which refers to the reinvigoration of the industry by private companies (think SpaceX and Blue Origin) with the boldness and money to move fast.

“There’s been heavy investment in the space industry by venture capitalism,

which has helped to push the boundaries of developing technologies,” says Selby. “There’s a lot of investment going into space because it’s seen as a high-value manufacturing sector, which provides jobs growth and new opportunities, and is becoming increasingly commercial. It’s not just for little green men anymore. It’s about how we live our lives.”

This centres on the use of space data gathered by satellites to help our phones connect to the internet and GPS systems. “For the connectivity of the human race to be increased, the build out of space infrastructure is necessary. That’s putting

a lot of pressure on the space industry to become able to develop faster, go to higher volumes,” he says.

The space business is about solving some of the most challenging engineering problems. Project management is central to this and a growing function at Nammo UK (it recently became an APM Corporate Partner), which itself is rapidly expanding (it now employs around 100 people). Projects can take a decade or more to gestate, and it can be easy to get lost in day-to-day problems, explains Selby, rather than looking up at the moon and appreciating that your work has helped push human endeavour to the limit. “Every time I look at the moon, I realise that there is a piece of hardware that this factory has built, that I’ve been involved with, that I’ve touched, that is sat on the surface of the moon,” Selby says with a smile. “Who gets to do that?”

Make it, break it

It’s an exciting time for Nammo UK’s project managers. Selby explains that the business is experimenting with agile project management practices, buoyed by the success of SpaceX, where Elon Musk’s experimental approach of reiteration and learning is in stark contrast to what ‘old space’ previously favoured. “Conventionally, this business has been a waterfall project management company – and that worked quite well – but we’re migrating a lot to using more agile systems in our project management and that’s down to wanting to do much more rapid development and testing.

“Companies such as SpaceX show how you can develop faster – make it, break it,” Selby continues. “The quicker you can learn from your mistakes and move forward, the quicker your development cycle.”

Nammo is also helping to lead its customers towards a more hybrid project management future. “A hybrid approach is working quite well, where we’re using a top-level waterfall planning approach then building in sprints and short development activities that allow you to move to the next milestone,” says Selby.

One of the most important enabling factors of this shift in approach is Nammo’s heavy investment in building its own testing facilities on-site.

Previously, engines had to be sent to the US to be tested, but now products can be tested a few minutes away. “The least glamorous explanation I ever heard of our rocket engines when we tested them was when someone in the village referred to it as gravel going down a chute,” says Selby, smiling.

Risky projects at the frontier of space exploration

The business centres solely on propulsion for spacecraft, which means the ability to launch something into space (a satellite from a launch vehicle to its final orbit, for example). Nammo’s thrusters and engines are used to steer or move the craft too. For the past 30 years, it has been developing new variants of liquid chemical propulsion engines, and more recently, developing propulsion systems (“basically all the bits that you need to connect to a rocket engine to make it go to space”, explains Selby).

The portfolio of projects numbers around 65, comprising regular repeat products and projects that are developing new technologies. They end up being used on projects at the frontier of space exploration. “We have a robotic spacecraft powered by nano engines which is currently orbiting Jupiter and picking up data and sending images back, so we get to understand the composition of its surface. It’s just an amazing experience,” says Selby. Nammo’s engine will also be used on Firefly’s Blue Ghost lander. Firefly is hoping to become the first private commercial organisation to land on the moon successfully when it launches later this year or early in 2025. “Some of these missions are 30 years in the making, so you don’t want anything to fail because it can be people’s life’s work,” says Selby.

So much development makes for a dynamic working environment, with unpredictable outcomes that require a keen risk management approach. “It’s critical that you understand where your opportunities for risks occur, and how you mitigate that and keep the business functioning,” says Selby. “Space in its entirety is all about managing risk because it’s very difficult to repair something when it’s in orbit. You can’t go out there with your toolbox and fix



A LEROS Apogee Engine under hotfire test at Westcott

it... A lot stands on how you test, how you validate it on the ground.”

The projects are highly complex by nature. To make a difficult project into one that people want to keep working on, it is key to keep customers close and build a relationship that doesn’t become combative or tied up in red tape, says Selby. Sometimes a “tiger team” of customers and the project staff huddle on-site for an intense problem-solving mission, which tests the limits of transparency, openness and collaboration, but achieves big wins.

A race to commercialisation

Elliott Worsley is a Programme Manager at Nammo and is responsible for its propulsion systems. During his four years working there, the project management team has grown from two people to 12, who work across three product lines. He explains that these are complex systems ranging in size from a notebook up to a shipping container. A key product is Nammo’s RELIANCE engine, which is currently in testing. Uniquely, it uses engine pump technology (a first for

“A hybrid approach is working quite well, where we’re using a top-level waterfall planning approach then building in sprints and short development activities”





Europe) to efficiently take low pressure liquid fuel and oxidiser (needed to propel a space rocket engine through space) and pump them up to the right conditions for the engine. “It means everything upstream can be lighter, simpler, easier,” says Worsley.

A simpler spacecraft allows for a bigger payload – and that’s critical for an industry that is in a race to commercialise. “It’s the cost per kilo landed. That can range from \$1m to \$2m per kilo landed,” he continues. If RELIANCE is a success, that cost will fall considerably. It will be presented to the European Space Agency (ESA) in October in a two-man race for use on its Argonaut mission, to be launched in 2031.

Worsley says that working on a development project like this brings out some of the toughest challenges when it comes to actively managing risk. “Often it’s the unknowns, the things that crop up halfway through that can suddenly hit you out of the blue that you need to accommodate.” For example, the engine they are developing uses 3D metal

printing. “These are alloys that people haven’t used before that haven’t flown in this type of environment before. You don’t quite know what you’re going to come up against. It all seems great on paper, you print it, you use it and that little chamfer on the design feature is too small and has led to some cracking, so you need to go back to the drawing board, rectify it and go around the loop again,” Worsley says.

“It’s always an evolving climate. Trying to manage these tasks and other stakeholders is critical to that process of always being transparent, because they need to understand the challenges, where we think they can be solved and where we think they can’t – and how we can move things around in the future because the 2031 launch date is fixed. We need to find a way of working around that.”

It’s all about the people

What’s Worsley’s favourite part of the job? “Nothing quite beats testing an engine... Just seeing everyone else’s hard work and vision and passion pay off.” There’s so much passion that a lot of work goes into managing the welfare of the team so that they don’t push themselves too hard – burnout is prevalent within the industry, he reflects. “It’s a vocation until it’s not – burnout can come in lots of different ways. I’ve come to realise that project management is less about the project and more about the people. If you can empower them and show them how to use those tools,

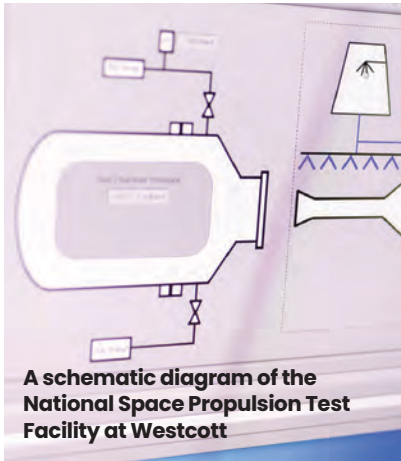
“[The space sector] is not just for little green men anymore. It’s about how we live our lives”

then quite often they can go off and do great things.”

Until recently, Lucy Stock worked as a Senior Project Manager at Nammo. She has now left to set herself up as a project management consultant while continuing to work for Nammo. For five years, she has worked across a wide variety of different projects, from engines and facilities to space systems. She previously worked in the world of particle accelerators, but says there are big similarities between the two: the vacuum, the high radiation and the fact that you can’t go and fix it. A physics graduate, Stock wanted to be an astronaut when she was a child, so when an opportunity to work in the space industry came up, she jumped on board. She has found the experience exciting, especially working in such a high-profile, high-stress environment.

One thing she’s learnt is that keeping a sense of humour is a good way to keep people buoyant. “You know there’s a launch window that you’ve got to make, and if you miss it, people will lose millions of pounds. But it’s important to keep that little bit of perspective and give people a space to





debrief afterwards, particular if it's a tricky customer meeting. If you've got to give bad news and you're the face of the project, that can be really hard. Having that opportunity afterwards to chat to peers and keeping a fact-based narrative just helps to keep perspective." These "hot debriefs" with peers are an important way to get frustrations out and level off.

One of the most important project management lessons Stock has learnt is "understanding where to dive into the deep end and when to not manage things so closely. It's understanding – depending on the stage of the project life cycle, the type of project and the different streams of work within it – which bits to really get into the weeds of and which bits you don't need to."

How do you do this practice? "By having a really strong risk management process. At the beginning of the programme, it's really delving into the high-risk areas – what are going to be the biggest issues that we're likely to see? Obviously, there are always those black swan events that are difficult to predict, but having a strong risk analysis at the beginning [allows you to understand] what the impacts might be," she explains. This is particularly critical on new development projects. "Really look at the project as a whole and break it up into chunks and understand which bits you're going to have to spend your time focusing on."

It's also key to keep the team reminded of what the key milestones and



deliverables are, "because if people lose perspective of those things, everything falls apart," she says.

Accelerating the design loop

The project Stock is most proud of working on is the National Space Propulsion Test Facility – a vacuum test facility for rocket engines at Westcott, which enables Nammo's expensive engines to be tested on its doorstep, rather than being packed off to the US with an engineer to a testing facility there. "It has really accelerated our design loop," she says.

The project ran for about a decade, but Stock joined at its critical design review, managing it for three years to completion. The project faced two big challenges. The first was Brexit, which happened mid-project when the team was about to take delivery of an expensive vacuum pump set from Germany. "So, we had a new milestone imposed on us – we had to have it delivered before Brexit, because it would have become much more complicated after that," explains Stock.

The second major challenge was when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. "We had to rapidly implement lots of new working practices in order to be able to keep going. So that made it particularly tricky too, but I'm really proud of it because there was a lot of big subcontractor management... In the end, we were all on-site when it was being built," she says.

What was even better was that the facility worked first time around. "That never happens!" says Stock. "We were all so proud." What made it such a success? "Communication was absolutely key." She had four key contractors on-site, working on the building and cooling and power systems, and then the project team working on the engine mounting. "We had daily stand-ups with all the key people to make sure everybody knew what everybody else was doing, and where there might be issues, concerns or crossovers," she explains.

Agile in motion

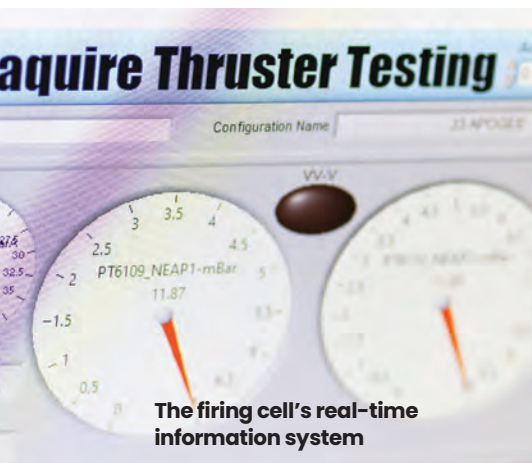
Stock talks of the implementation of "pockets of agile" at Nammo Space to accelerate product development. "We'll



An early model of one of Nammo's propulsion systems



“Recently we’ve had a few more disruptive companies and concepts [from the US], whereas the space industry in Europe is based on heritage”



The firing cell's real-time information system

never get fully agile because we’re building big mechanical systems, but we can do hybrid,” she says. With the testing facility, for example, this meant looking at individual areas where an agile approach could be taken, such as the engine thrust stand in the testing facility.

“You could look at that as a complete sub-assembly and say, ‘OK, we can’t finish the whole system until the end, but we can take each sub-assembly as far as we can, and test it and de-risk it.’” All this within a standard waterfall approach that brings everything together at the final point.

Does she think that the future of space will mean following the SpaceX model? “I think it’s somewhere in between new space and old space,” she says. “There will hopefully be a happy medium where we can be a bit more rapid but not miss things.”

We live in exciting times

Karolina Zatorska is a recently qualified Project Manager at Nammo Space, working in its chemical propulsion stream. “I manage projects from the contractual stage through to project kick-off, procurement, manufacturing, testing and all the way through to delivery to the customers,” she explains. She switched from being a Propulsion Test Engineer on a graduate scheme at Airbus Defence and Space to join Nammo as an Associate Project Manager two years ago. She was drawn to the variety of project management and the clear career progression that comes with it.

She works on Nammo’s LEROS range of engines, traditionally used for raising the apogee of an orbit – “basically making sure that you’re in the right orbit around Earth... it’s the positioning of the spacecraft around whichever planet it’s orbiting around”. Some of the engines will be used on a future joint mission for NASA and ESA, scheduled for launch in 2026, with the aim of retrieving a sample from Mars and bringing it back to Earth.

It’s an exciting time to be in space, says Zatorska. “Recently we’ve had a few more disruptive companies and concepts [from the US], whereas the space industry in Europe is based on heritage – on things you know are going to work. The time aspect of that means that projects do take



Karolina Zatorska

longer, but recently we’ve had new space companies pop up where they don’t want the heritage because of the time and cost that comes with that.

“They want new and quick and different solutions to get them into space, flying cheaper and faster. That will be disruptive in a good way, because suppliers will have to learn how to deliver to tighter schedules and smaller budgets, but also customers that are competing against each other will be competing in two different worlds. If you’re in a world of heritage versus new space, you’re going to have to somehow bridge that gap... I think it will change the way we look at delivering new projects. They’ll be exciting.” Zatorska believes that change “is always good” because “if the outcome doesn’t work out, it teaches you something along the way”.

Zatorska’s project work has taught her the value of having lessons learned sessions to reflect and prevent things going wrong, rather than defaulting to a natural “warrior mode” to fix anything on a project (even beyond her remit) to keep it moving. “It’s not your job to fix it, but you will do anything in your power to make sure it gets fixed quickly and reliably. If anything like that comes up, you’re just going to deal with it – but it’s not sustainable, especially when you manage quite a few projects at the same time.” She’s learnt that it doesn’t pay to always be a project hero.

Listen to APM Podcast go on-site at Nammo UK at bit.ly/3X5uF2R



MAKING IT MODULAR

ANDREW SAUNDERS EXPLAINS THE COMPELLING ARGUMENT FOR MORE MODULARITY (BREAKING A PROJECT DOWN INTO SMALLER REPEATABLE BITS) IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT – AND SPEAKS TO THOSE WHO ARE TRYING IT OUT

The challenges of climate change, shifting geopolitics and economic uncertainty have made the 2020s into one of the most volatile decades in recent memory. But they have also created fertile ground for a whole range of exciting, new, high-profile projects that are urgently needed to help tackle everything from

the energy transition and sustainable transportation to the housing crisis and national security.

But delivering those projects in such uncertain times creates its own problems. Exciting new projects, as every good project professional knows, can all too easily turn into delayed, over-budget millstones once the

early enthusiasm has evaporated and initial assumptions made in the heat of the moment turn out to be heavily rose tinted.

Throw in the added scale, complexity and extended timelines of megaprojects, and the chances of success diminish so quickly that lateness and overspend become almost axiomatic.

Modular design; speedy iteration

Modular project management has been increasingly discussed as a way of helping to manage this chronic problem, as Bent Flyvbjerg, Emeritus Professor at Saïd Business School, has noted. “I’ve researched and consulted on megaprojects for 30 years,” he wrote in a *Harvard Business Review* article, ‘Make Megaprojects More Modular’, in 2021.

“And I have found that two factors play a critical role in determining whether an organisation will meet with success or failure: modularity in design and speed in iteration.

“If a project can be delivered fast and in a modular manner... it is likely to succeed. If it is undertaken on a massive scale with one-off highly integrated components, it is likely to be troubled or fail.”

“The whole concept is that nuclear power plants should be easier, quicker and cheaper to build”

On one level, modularity as a key success factor seems simply to be common sense. Most of the products and technologies on which we rely – cars, ships and aircraft, mobile phones and the internet, for example – are designed and built in a modular, repeatable way using common, mass-produced components. And yet, for a whole range of infrastructure, energy and defence projects in particular, treating each one as a bespoke undertaking, rather than breaking it down into smaller repeatable bits, remains the norm – a methodology that is, if not entirely doomed to failure, then at least far from being the most likely way to succeed.

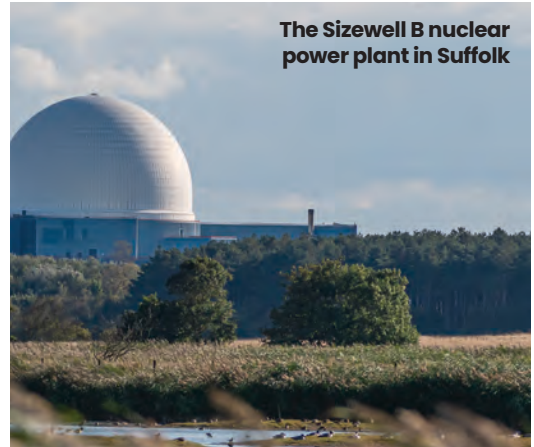
Smaller and faster wins the race

It’s high time for a change and for more projects to embrace the benefits of a modular methodology says Joseph Harrison, Teaching Fellow and Doctoral Researcher at the University of Bath’s

School of Management. “Complexity and uncertainty often become endemic in non-modular (mega) projects. A modular template reduces the risk of cost overruns and late delivery, and helps to ensure that projects deliver on iron triangle constraints.”

As a result, a number of firms are challenging the traditional ‘big’ (if not always beautiful) versions of their respective industries by opting for a smaller, faster and more modular approach. Elon Musk’s SpaceX is one example, challenging the government-funded NASA megaproject approach with a more industrialised model based on replicability and economies of scale (although the firm has faced its fair share of problems making the theoretical advantages a reality).

Nuclear power is another. Nuclear power plants are still typically built as large one-off projects (think Sizewell C) that can take decades to construct and accrue costs large enough to furrow the brows of heads of government, never mind corporate leaders. And yet if the delivery of the undoubted benefits of nuclear power could be accelerated and achieved safely at lower cost, it could potentially play a much more significant part in tackling climate change.



Putting modularity into practice

“The whole concept is that [nuclear power plants] should be easier, quicker and cheaper to build,” says Carol Tansley, Vice President of Projects and UK Market Leader at X-energy, the company behind a range of innovative small modular reactors (SMRs) aimed at industrial customers as well as local and national power authorities. “We need nuclear for net zero and we need it for energy security. So we have to find a way of delivering nuclear power that is commercially attractive.”

X-energy’s advanced pebble bed reactors are small – each module produces 80MW, whereas the two reactors at Sizewell will generate 1.6GW apiece – but are safe by design, so they need much less in the way of containment than conventional reactors. They should be both cheaper and quicker to build. Tansley says that a typical four-module, 320MW installation should cost \$2.5bn-3bn.



The company is developing its first commercial grid-scale installation with US chemical giant Dow at its Seadrift plant in Texas. A four-module array of XE 100 SMRs will provide low-carbon electricity and steam for the 4,700-acre facility, with excess power being sold back to the grid.

The on-site construction time – from first concrete pour to completion – should be in the region of three to four years for the first module, and then 12 months for every additional unit, says Tansley. “One analogy we use is that we are going from building airports to building aeroplanes: instead of large, one-off reactors that are difficult to build, we have a standard reactor design and we replicate it,” she says.

The modular approach also means that benefits – and revenues – arrive

“Time is like a window. The bigger it is, the more bad stuff can fly through, including unpredictable catastrophic events, so-called black swans”

more quickly and can help to de-risk the project as a whole. “As soon as the first module is switched on, you are seeing returns, which helps your business case. And if you are building a fleet of 12, say, you can also use those early returns to help fund later modules,” Tansley explains.

The origins of modularity

Where did the idea for modular project management come from? The received wisdom is that the inspiration came from the world of tech, where agile software development methodologies began to emerge in the early noughties, with the express aim of delivering functionality in small, rapid instalments, rather than a single splurge right at the end of the project.

But the truth is that the concept has been around for a lot longer than that, says Harrison, citing research

which found that British engineers way back in the 1750s were already approaching road building across challenging terrain as a series of smaller projects that were then linked up, rather than as a single entity started at one end and completed at the other.

“Where does modularity come from? It’s something of a controversial question in academic circles,” he says. “My personal and somewhat pragmatic view is that modularity as a project management concept has had multiple intellectual influences. Although some of the agile crowd like to claim credit too.”

One reason why modularity hasn’t spread as far and as fast as it might has more to do with appearances than practicality. Huge halo projects, from dams to high-speed railways, are often as much about status, national identity and the desire to bask in the glow of pioneering achievements as they are about delivering benefits on time and on budget. In this politicised context, being late and expensive can actually add to the ‘heroic’ image of having built the longest tunnel, the tallest tower or the fastest trains – so long as delays and overspend don’t go too far.

Whether its roots lie in tech or elsewhere, modular project management, say its proponents, is more agile and therefore less at risk from the inherently unpredictable future. As Flyvbjerg notes: “Time is like a window. The bigger it is, the more bad stuff can fly through, including unpredictable catastrophic events, so-called black swans.” So the faster you can get something delivered, even if it is only a part of the whole, the less risky the entire project becomes.

“Modular calls for the recognition that planning is not only a valid project activity, it is a critical one”



The Madrid Metro is cited as a modular project management success story

How feasible is it?

Of course, some projects are more readily modularised than others. Electric vehicle maker Tesla’s gigafactory battery production facilities, like the car’s power packs, comprise many smaller identical units grouped into a larger package. But even projects that seem to resist a modular approach can still benefit: half a bridge, for example, may not provide much utility to users wanting to cross from one side to the other, but the design and construction of its towers, stays and deck can be tackled in a modular way.

A metro rail system may also appear to be intrinsically non-modular, but the Madrid metro extension begun in the mid 1990s – 75km of track, 39 stations – was conceived and executed as a series of repeatable, modular units and completed at under half the cost and twice the speed of industry averages.

Modularity also allows the greater use of off-site ‘production line’ techniques borrowed from manufacturing. “In other industries, such as oil and gas and shipbuilding, engineering, fabrication and assembly of modules is carried out in a controlled factory environment before being transported to site for assembly,” says Stephanie Illingworth, Group Head of PMO for the Rolls-Royce SMR and an APM Fellow.

“The approach results in significant advantages over ‘traditional’ on-site construction, including improved quality control, shorter construction times and increased safety,” she adds.

In concept, Rolls-Royce’s SMR is a land-based version of the pressurised water reactors it already builds for nuclear submarines. At 470MW, it is the largest SMR currently available and uses

the most proven technology – qualities that the company believes makes it the best choice for grid-scale applications.

But manufacturing-style economies also call for manufacturing-style scale. “What’s different about the Rolls-Royce SMR programme is definitely the reduced project risk – due to build certainty, repeatability and off-site manufacture. This, along with the lessons we’ve learned from major infrastructure projects over recent years, will drastically reduce cost increase and schedule slippage. Learner curves will also be applied to make sure repeatability is something each ‘unit’ will benefit from. Overall, there should be lower risk once the first units in a global fleet of Rolls-Royce SMRs are delivered,” says Illingworth.

Lessons in modularity

What can project managers expect from a modular approach? “Front-loading,” says X-energy’s Tansley. “More planning time, and less execution and delivery time.” So it’s time to consign the tired old ‘Fire, aim, ready’ project manager gag to history. “Modular calls for the recognition that planning is not only a valid project activity, it is a critical one.

“As project professionals, it is our job to demonstrate the value. That means making sure you’ve got the planning right before you start the physical work,” she says.

And although it’s early days, Tansley firmly believes that modular project management has a bright future, both within the nuclear sector and beyond it. “This way of thinking is still in its infancy – there is going to be a learning curve and it will not be without its challenges. But I think there is a recognition that this is the path forward and that project professionals will increasingly seek to adopt it across multiple sectors.”

3 WAYS A MODULAR APPROACH CAN HELP MANAGE SCALE

- 1** It can address the dysfunction of scale in terms of complexity and uncertainty. Breaking down a large complex whole into less complex, modular parts shortens timescales and reduces uncertainty.
- 2** It can accelerate scale-up. Multiple small, lower-cost and replicable units can scale up delivery more quickly and at lower risk than a single, larger whole.
- 3** It is more resilient. If problems do arise, modular projects can be more readily adjusted by eliminating some modules entirely, resulting in reduced scope but better cost and time control.

SOURCE: ‘SCALE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: A REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA’, HARRISON ET AL, *PROJECT MANAGEMENT JOURNAL* 1-15 2024

THINK LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR

DAVE WALLER UNCOVERS A SURPRISINGLY ENTREPRENEURIAL SIDE TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT, WHETHER IT'S BEING BOLD AND LAUNCHING YOUR OWN START-UP OR INJECTING SOME DYNAMISM AND AGILITY INTO YOUR CORPORATE WORLD

How does a project manager end up jumping from a multinational corporation to launching their own start-up? For Dev Amratia, it was “entrepreneurship through a lack of choice”. Amratia worked in project management at a multinational for just shy of a decade, but struggled with how challenging it was to make a difference. After an unexpected stint advising Theresa May’s government, he felt the only way he could use his skills to make a genuine difference was to create something himself.

“Project managers are among the most entrepreneurial people you’ll find,” Amratia says. “Every new project means pressing the reset button, bringing new teams together, motivating them and showing how you’ll do it. I had to do all those things when managing projects, and I have to do them right now running my own company.”

Natural entrepreneurs

Amratia is unlikely to be alone. While launching a start-up may not be on everybody’s to-do list, those entrepreneurial skills are becoming increasingly necessary for project managers – thanks to the upheaval brought by rapid change and overlapping crises. These are making the operating environment more challenging and project delivery harder.



Dev Amratia

So you may find yourself having to prove your entrepreneurial chops – whether you’re rethinking project delivery in your existing role, managing projects in a more agile team, joining a start-up in an entirely new position or taking the leap to launch your own business. The good news? You may be more entrepreneurial than you think.

“Leadership, establishing the mission, a singular focus on the path – project

managers have all that in spades,” says Amratia.

Vijay Luthra says he originally gravitated towards project management because he’s goal-focused, and that he finds that trait deeply useful as an entrepreneur.

“For me, the goal – the project – was to build a consulting business that helps solve the world’s most complex problems,” he says.

FIVE WAYS IN WHICH YOU’RE MORE ENTREPRENEURIAL THAN YOU THINK

1 LEADING THE MISSION. Project managers are willing to crack on, set the direction and corral a group of people efficiently and effectively.

The same skills are needed when launching a new product or venture.

2 THE TECHNICAL STUFF. Managing budgets, schedules, risk – the bread and butter of project management – is still needed in smaller organisations; they just may lack the usual processes to fall back on.

3 VISION. Throw a random bunch of Lego bricks on the floor, and a project professional will know how to build something that stands. They won’t do it alone,

but they can see how it will come together, and pull in the right people to get the job done.

4 ADAPTABILITY. If you can’t lead and manage a team through different situations as they emerge, you’ll struggle as a project manager. It’s the same in more agile ventures, where you’ll be expected to wear more than one hat.

5 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. Project managers have to be able to communicate and work with people to plan, and to secure buy-in on how you’ll achieve something. These ‘soft’ skills are the basis of start-ups, too, where networks and partnerships help nimbler organisations to punch above their weight.





CASE STUDY: CHANGING TRAINS – AGILITY IN RAILWAY PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Network Rail's Eastern Region includes around 20,000 different assets, from bridges and culverts to signals, that require annual inspection. This work is high volume and low complexity and was previously planned manually. In 2023, Network Rail asked D2 Global, a programme management solutions company employing around 100 people, to come up with an alternative, more innovative solution.

Troy Lancaster, D2's Head of Programme Management, explains the team's approach: "At D2, we have an entrepreneurial mindset and seek to challenge the norm. We'll use technology and data to do something fundamentally different, and we're willing to take informed risks. Instead of seeing Network Rail's work as infrastructure inspection, we took it as a big logistics challenge. So we turned to the likes of Amazon and other industries to see how they use data analytics to plan their delivery routes and inspections.

"After spending time with the client and seeing how they planned and delivered their inspections, we got our experts in data analytics and rail industry project management together for a big brainstorm. We quickly saw how the issue related to the

'travelling salesman problem', a mathematical problem of how to create the most efficient route through various points in a given area. We combined mathematical modelling with our digital technology capability to solve the problem, and then figured out how to tailor our solution to the constraints imposed by the client.

"The outputs of our modelling showed a 37% improvement in examiner productivity, and an 18.4% efficiency improvement on overall inspection costs, equating to around £250,000 in savings a year.

"In a larger organisation, it is always difficult to break the mindset of 'this is how it is always done' due to the countless processes in place. But the world is getting faster and more data-driven. The project profession needs to adapt, learn from other industries and become more agile. We need to look again at the processes in place and see how we can make them better using new technologies and techniques. These conversations are now being had at the highest levels. With the new government in place, this is a great time to challenge the prevailing big organisational mindset of process and bureaucracy."

Luthra chose to focus on healthcare, which presents a perfect snapshot of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity facing projects across the board today.

"From the metabolic health crisis to the outdated technology of the NHS, the healthcare environment has never been more challenging," says Luthra, who launched Ceva Global, which offers strategic advice in the health sector, in 2023. "To deal with the challenges, healthcare organisations need to transform and become resilient, agile and adaptive. But a lot of organisations struggle to turn their ambition into action. Project management gave me a strategy-to-execution mindset. The skills I built and honed in that discipline have been critical in helping me to get a business off the ground; to be able to plan it, manage risk and manage stakeholders."

Luthra gained the emotional resilience he needs to run his start-up



Vijay Luthra

from managing projects too, including the complex challenge of delivering nationwide health reform in Saudi Arabia – an experience that also bestowed "the confidence to be comfortable with ambiguity... As an entrepreneur, you never know what's around the next corner," he says.

Early days

Alejandro Vargas is Director of the Business Project Management MSc course at London South Bank University. He describes this intersection of entrepreneurship and project management as "very close to my heart".

Vargas has been busy asking what would happen if more start-ups consciously approached their ventures as if they were projects. This would leave them able to apply a host of tools, techniques, processes and frameworks from the project profession to their many challenges.

"Entrepreneurship is all about acting to create value under uncertainty," he says. "Often, when I talk to entrepreneurs about their new ventures, they're



Alejandro Vargas

effectively talking about putting together a very specific kind of exploratory project. Just like a project, it's temporary in nature – the company will either cease to exist or scale up to become a new, established firm. Not many entrepreneurs are thinking like that yet – it's early days in the conversation – but those who do are starting to connect to the value in borrowing from all the toolkits and insights that we have, and the elements of risk-taking, agility and flexibility.”

Risky business

Risk-taking is one of the most important facets of entrepreneurship. Amratia points out that project managers are doing this all the time – simply by logging on to work in the morning. They embark on large and complex capital projects, and sign up to fixed deadlines and budgets when they have no certainty or control over most of the parameters. “It’s mad to think you can succeed,” he says.

Amratia’s start-up, nPlan, helps clients forecast the outcome of their projects, using artificial intelligence (AI) and a vast dataset covering the outcomes of 760,000 projects around

the world. His staff include several project professionals, hired into roles in software engineering and product management. Amratia says he values their project management skills, and that these new recruits are well suited to a start-up environment.

But anyone making a transition to a nimbler environment can expect to encounter some significant differences. “In a start-up, I may tell my team there’s a launch event that’s T-minus six months away,” says Amratia. “They may have a week to give me a proposal. The core skill of getting that to happen is the same as on any project; you just have to operate at a higher clock speed.”

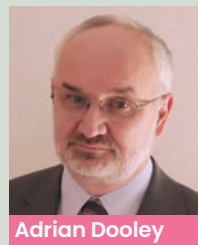
Let go of process

A project manager moving into a start-up may also have to wear more hats, mucking in with a lot of the business support work, beyond the nuts and bolts of running the project itself. They need to be more adaptable and may also find themselves less well supported. There’s no map for where they’re heading, and they won’t have any pre-defined processes.

“Very entrepreneurial leaders want things done, not necessarily done right,” says Luthra. “Instead of long programme

“If they’re burning cash at a fast rate, they won’t care about things like plans. They want results”

boards, you may only get five minutes with your senior leader, so you’ll have to exercise your judgment and critical thinking to identify the key things you need from them. If they’re burning cash at a fast rate, they won’t care about things like plans. They want results.”



Adrian Dooley

People skills and business nous

Adrian Dooley, project management commentator and founder of Praxis, an

open-source project management framework, agrees there’s “a big overlap in the Venn diagram” of characteristics and qualities of project managers and entrepreneurs. Yet he’s cautious of the idea that all project managers should be seeking to be more entrepreneurial. As a project manager, any risk appetite has to be appropriate to the task, and to the tone set by the organisation.

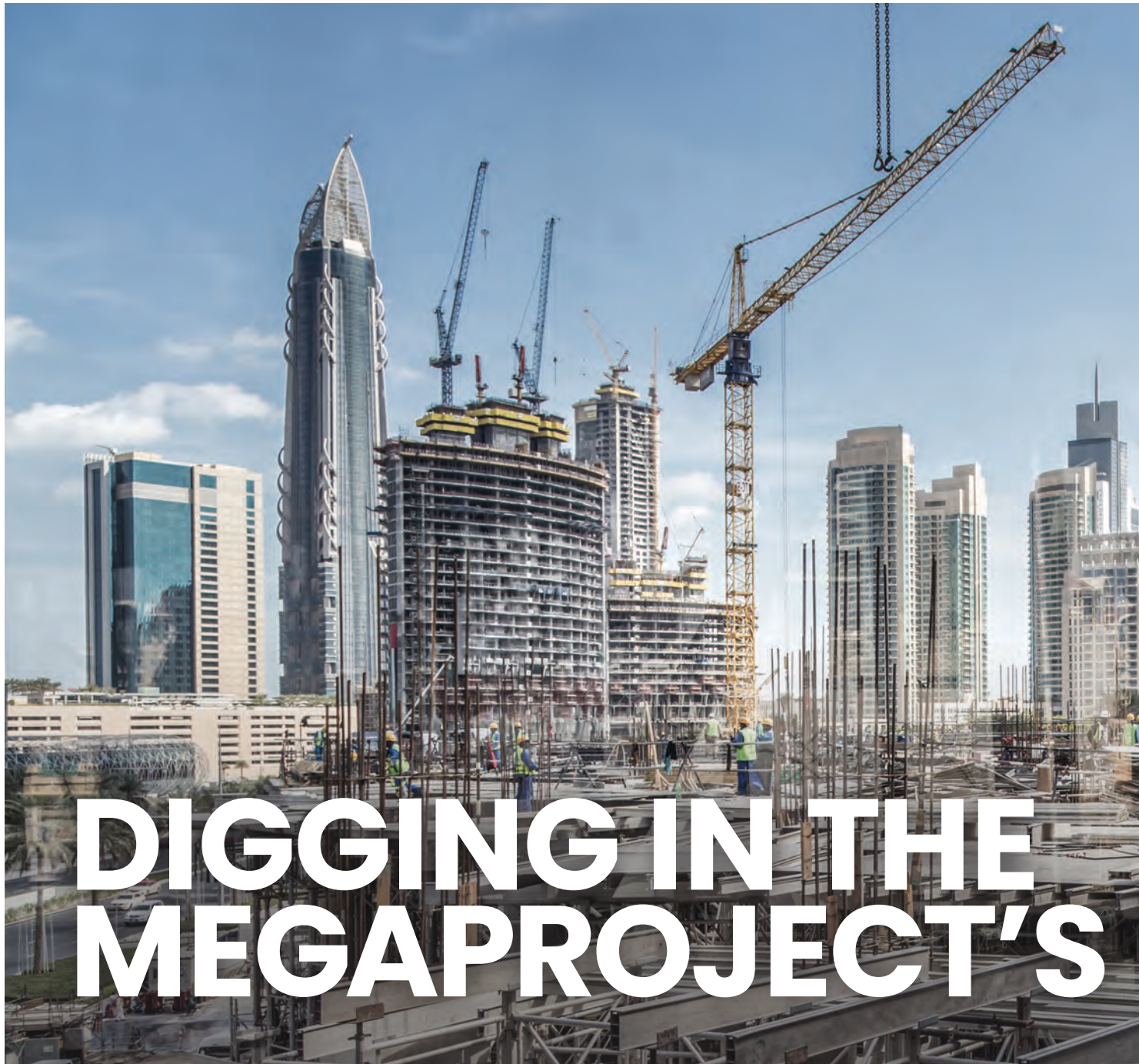
“In a typical corporate environment, you’re taking risks on behalf of somebody else,” says Dooley. “It’s not your neck on the line. You have constraints on the amount of risk that you can reasonably take.”

Given the rapidly changing external conditions, however, the nature of those constraints may be changing. Organisations will have to become more flexible and responsive, and that may mean taking on more risk. As AI and data tools become better understood, project managers will increasingly be handing over the more technical tasks to dashboards and datasets. The onus for them will be on strategic nous and people skills. On being able to see what’s ahead, to plan accordingly and to adapt when necessary, and to create the conditions for success in the face of complexity and uncertainty.

In other words, entrepreneurship through a lack of choice.



TANIA YAKUNOVA / IKON IMAGES



DIGGING IN THE MEGAPROJECT'S

THE WINNER OF APM'S RESEARCH PAPER OF THE YEAR AWARD ASKS: WHY DO MEGAPROJECTS DIE AND HOW CAN WE CHECK THEIR HEALTH? HERE, WE GIVE A TASTER OF WHAT THE RESEARCHERS DISCOVERED...

The pressure to complete infrastructure megaprojects is enormous; once started, they are commonly considered too costly to be stopped. Still, despite this widespread belief, several such megaprojects have been terminated during delivery/construction. We wanted to investigate why this happened. By analysing 30 unfinished infrastructure

megaprojects that were terminated during the delivery stage, we identified the six common determinants behind this: socio-political, environmental, financial distress, regulatory, *force majeure* and technological.

Project termination during the delivery stage has been studied for research and development projects, but scarcely in construction projects.

Relevant examples of project termination in new product development include the Amazon Fire phone, which had to be cancelled outright – Amazon wrote off \$170m in losses – or the collapse of the TAURUS project, a £500m IT venture considered one of the major fiascos of business history.

The decision to terminate an infrastructure megaproject should



GRAVEYARD

consider whether: the project no longer meets strategic fit criteria; costs exceed business benefits; deadlines are continuously missed; or the technology evolves beyond the scope of the infrastructure megaproject.

An example of unfinished infrastructure includes the New Jersey Hudson River Tunnel Project, which was cancelled after one year of construction due to increased cost escalation and over \$500m invested. The decision to terminate such megaprojects is not easy, as the decision-making process involves behavioural uncertainty where decision-makers' risk tolerance,

collaboration and preferences come into play. The later the project is terminated, the more complex the decision is due to "sunk costs" and commitments made.

Termination almost always occurs due to a combination of the six determinants, and it can be explained as a process that occurs gradually in different stages and with different patterns. Out of the 30 cases studied, we found that the most common reasons for termination are (i) socio-political, (ii) financial distress and (iii) environmental. For instance, in our sample, 17 out of 30 infrastructure megaprojects presented the socio-political determinant

as the most prevalent reason for termination, and 11 out of 30 included the financial determinant as the second most prevalent.

The project health model

As a further stage of our analysis to provide an overview of the termination process, we developed a project health model (see page 44).

We use the concept of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' as an analogy to explain that infrastructure megaprojects can be healthy and become unhealthy, regardless of how 'good' or 'bad' they are. We argue that megaprojects become

unhealthy just as both good and bad people get sick. Being healthy or unhealthy does not imply any moral judgement as being good or bad. Good projects can start in good shape, and as problems or issues arise during construction, they become unhealthy until there is no further remedy, leading to the termination of the project.

When infrastructure megaprojects have continuous problems during their execution, they fall into a crisis or 'critical condition' from which they are hardly able to get back on track, and the decision of termination is the final thrust. The termination of infrastructure megaprojects is a dynamic process that exacerbates due to issues or determinants that appear over time. The model includes two scenarios of termination, namely internal and external.

The internal model (death due to disease)

Infrastructure megaprojects are generally healthy when the delivery stage begins (Phase 1: Project initiation) once the investment decision is made. In the following stage, initial problems or mild symptoms appear (Phase 2: Receipt of poor results). We consider these to be issues that are not a significant threat, whose impact can be minimised by decision-makers acting in a timely manner. In stage 3, we argue that the problems evolve and are manifested through strong symptoms (Phase 3: Receipt of worsening results) during the execution of the project. We consider these

to be issues that require immediate attention. The model's final stage refers to the project's end (Phase 4: Project termination). We argue that this stage is when the symptoms are so evident that they can no longer be ignored and the project dies.

The external model (accidental death)

This considers three stages. The delivery of the infrastructure megaproject initiates at a healthy stage (Phase 1: Project initiation) once the investment decision is made. In the following stage, an accident or uncontrollable event external to the project occurs (Phase 2: Receipt of fatal results), leading to the project's rapid deterioration. The model's final stage refers to the project's end (Phase 3: Project termination). We argue that this stage is when it is impossible to recover from uncontrollable events and the project dies.

Examples of this include changes in government due to electoral cycles that rapidly change attitudes towards the project; and nuclear disasters such as the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, which led to the 1987 Italian referendum against nuclear energy.

Infrastructure megaproject health assessment

Furthermore, as a final stage of our analysis, we developed an infrastructure megaproject health assessment, which can support decision-makers in assessing how unhealthy a megaproject is. We created a checklist of problems

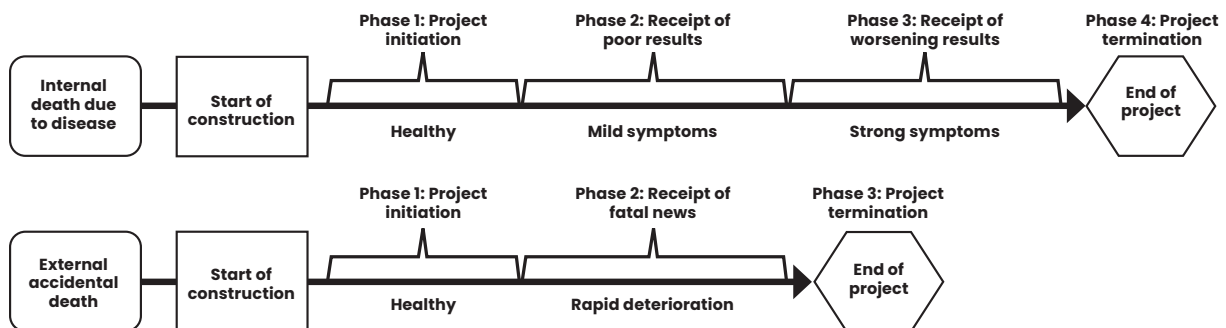
to assess a project's health (see page 45). The health assessment does not aim to be definitive or exhaustive for all the problems that infrastructure megaprojects have, but serves the purpose of recognising critical issues. The checklist identifies potential areas of action that, if not acted upon, can have detrimental effects on the overall project performance. We consider the checklist to be most useful before the project's construction begins. Here are our explanations for the state of health of infrastructure megaprojects:

- Healthy: all the problems are covered.
- Mild symptoms: up to 15–20 problems are identified.
- Strong symptoms: more than 20 of the identified problems are present.

The earlier these problems are identified, the more likely it is that decision-makers can avoid investing resources in projects that are not solid and instead focus on implementing those that are well prepared or with a better understanding of the problems that are present.

'Digging in the Megaproject's Graveyard: Why do megaprojects die, and how to check their health?', Jose Rodrigo Juarez Cornelio, Tristano Sainati & Giorgio Locatelli, *International Journal of Project Management*, Vol 41, Issue 6, August 2023: [sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0263786323000650](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0263786323000650)

Project health model





An infrastructure megaproject health assessment

Socio-political

Social opposition

- Do local communities accept the project?
- Are there any communication plans for engagement with local communities?
- Have the needs of local communities been considered?
- Are there any policies for communication with local communities?
- Is there periodic stakeholder analysis (individual, by groups and interdependencies)?
- Is there a social impact assessment?

Political opposition

- Is the project accepted within the political environment?
- Are there periodic meetings to deal with political issues?
- Does the project require intergovernmental agreements/integration of multiple jurisdictions?
- Is the project timeline being constantly adjusted to political times?
- Are there periodic meetings with government agencies?
- Is the project organisation prepared to deal with government changes?

Environmental

Endangerment of protected resources

- Is the trace/footprint of the project clearly defined?
- Does the project involve crossing or trespassing on protected areas?
- Are local flora, fauna or water bodies identified as endangered?
- Is there any plan to deal with the findings of cultural heritage/archaeological remains?

Transition to cleaner sources of energy

- Is the project a strategic fit for the current organisation/government?
- Does the project consider the use of fossil fuels/production of unsustainable energy sources?

- Is the project aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals?
- Does the project involve multiple jurisdictions/governments with different approaches to sustainability?

Misrepresentation of environmental impact assessment

- Is there an environmental impact assessment (EIA)?
- Is there a dedicated team to follow up with the EIA? Is this communicated?
- Is there a clear understanding of the existing utilities that will be impacted or required?

Financial distress

Cost and time escalation

- Is the cost of the project too optimistic?
- Is the schedule of the project too optimistic?
- Is the cost of the project like projects with comparative characteristics?
- Are there significant events that could delay the completion of the project?
- Are deadlines constantly missed?
- Do project forecasts vary frequently?
- Is there any functional change management process in place?
- Is value engineering or peer review used for cost optimisations?

Lack of funding

- Does the project count with stable sources of funding?
- Does the project count with funding from multilateral development banks?
- Does the project count with funding from commercial banks?
- Does the project rely exclusively on government funding?
- Does the project budget consider contingency funds?

Macroeconomic contraction

- Are there any macroeconomic instabilities that could deteriorate the project organisations' credit quality (default/bankruptcy)?

- Is growth in the project's area of influence highly dependent on one source?

Regulatory

Sanctions

- Is the project dependent on companies from countries facing sanctions?
- Is the materials/supply chain dependent on sanctioned countries/companies?

Regulations (non-compliance or changes in existing)

- Is the project compliant with the existing regulations?
 - Are there any recent changes in regulations?
 - Are the new regulations implementable or feasible?
- #### Lack of permits
- Does the construction of the project count with the required permits?
 - Is the land required for the project in order?
 - Do the land-of-use permits allow for the project to be developed?

Force majeure

Force majeure

- Are there any disruptions in major economic activities (e.g. a pandemic)?
- Are there any wars or other hostilities that prevent the execution of the project (civil unrest, riots, revolutions, insurgent attacks)?
- Are there any exceptional weather conditions?
- Are there any natural disasters?

Technological

Identification or release of new/more efficient technologies

- Are the latest technologies being considered?
- Are the technologies being used the most efficient?
- Are the technologies being used flexible/adaptable for technological changes?

PEER TO PEER

HOW TO MAKE LESSONS LEARNED EASY

**ELIZABETH HARRIN
EXPLAINS WHY IT'S THE
'DOING' OF LESSONS
LEARNED THAT MATTERS
– AND HOW TO MAKE
SURE YOU PUT VALUABLE
PAST EXPERIENCE INTO
PRACTICE NOW**

We all know we should be reflecting on professional practice and the process of bringing strategy into being through project delivery, but it's often hard to find the time for lessons learned activities.

Even if we have the time, lessons learned activities often aren't meaningful. One of my takeaways from reading *Sponsoring a Major Project: The Crossrail Experience* was that the team involved did not follow the recommendations that had already been identified in an earlier review. That review had identified actions that should have been taken, but they weren't. Most project teams know how to tick the box to say they've done lessons learned; we just don't actually learn anything.

With 8.5% of the UK's population currently working in the project profession, you'd expect that collective wisdom would abound, and yet organisations still make the same mistakes, project after project. So how can we make the process of lessons learned easier and more meaningful?

Here are three steps that you can implement to put the focus on learning from experience.

SHUTTERSTOCK





1 Making it easier to find lessons

When I first started working in projects, the expectation at the time was that capturing lessons was an activity that took place once the project work was done. It was a retrospective exercise looking back at what we had achieved. We held a meeting at the point of project closure to document what we had done well, what hadn't gone so well and what we would do differently next time.

It quickly became clear that this approach left a lot to be desired. Waiting until the end of a project means you lose the opportunity to improve as you go. Future projects might benefit from your learning (assuming

the individuals on the team carry the learning forward to their next initiative), but the one you've just finished didn't get any benefit from the exercise at all.

Agile and hybrid methods have shown us that we can both deliver and improve delivery at the same time. Record and reflect on lessons as you go through the project, so you avoid getting to the end and thinking: "What could we have done better, now it's too late to change anything?" Making small, incremental changes along the way helps you in this project and ensures you put your learning into practice instead of simply documenting it and filing it away.

Look for lessons throughout the project and prompt your colleagues to regularly reflect.

Here are some situations where lessons lurk:

- during issue resolution
- from process improvement suggestions
- during regular conversations with stakeholders about how the project is going
- when dealing with quality problems
- while carrying out risk management activities and planning
- when you feel you've resolved a conflict or removed a blocker

Schedule time at least quarterly to reflect on what the project team has learned, and what you have learned personally as a project leader. It just needs to be half an hour.

2 Making it easier to capture lessons

What lessons did you learn on the project you were working on 18 months ago? I can't remember either.

We need to capture lessons in a way that makes it easy for us to look back and see what happened so we can use that knowledge again. Think about how to categorise lessons and what tool you are going to use to store them in. It needs to be searchable, with the ability to add categories and tags to aid people looking up information in the future. A database, wiki, SharePoint site or even a centrally located spreadsheet will do the job.

However you plan to capture the information, make sure everyone who will use the tool knows how to do so. It's also worth sharing some examples of well-written lessons so you don't end up with one-sentence inputs that are so vague you can't take anything from them. Writing lessons is like giving a present to 'future you', so add in the context and detail to make those nuggets of information something you can come back to in 18 months and still get some value from.

Think about how you record the information. Focus on the why, not the what of the lesson. "There was a delay that caused issues with expectations and next time we'll ensure timeframes are adequately estimated and suppliers are on board" – that's not good enough. What was the root cause of the delay? If your lesson ends up being some variant of "we didn't follow good project management practice", such as skipping steps in a process or not doing a good job of managing scheduling, planning, estimating or resources, ask yourself why good practice wasn't applied. These are harder conversations to have but they lead to more insightful action steps afterwards.

uncovered, captured and shared in standard formats. Project stage gates and closure processes can also have a bullet point on the checklist that prompts project managers to document lessons learned to date.

The goal is to get lessons learned turned into something practical and actionable, so for each point uncovered, think about how you would turn that into an actionable improvement or way of working that means you benefit from what's been learned.

Each lesson should result in a specific tip or action that can be taken forward and used. Perhaps you need to update a document template so that the distribution list includes more stakeholders. Perhaps a process needs tweaking or a conversation needs to be had with senior leaders. Allocate owners to actions so that the improvement work happens.

Learning from project experience should mean the next project you do is better: both for you personally and the organisation generally. The process contributes to building organisational knowledge. Focus on creating change from that knowledge to embed and benefit from what you learn, and do it often, in small ways, to make the process feel less like an overhead and more like a useful step towards improving your professional practice.

Elizabeth Harrin is the author of *Engaging Stakeholders on Projects and Managing Multiple Projects*. She is a senior project manager in healthcare.

3 Making it easier to learn lessons

Let's face it: you might have stakeholders who are jaded about the lessons learned process, especially if you run them regularly. Another retro? Joy. If they don't see any change happening, they'll start to wonder whether it's worth turning up to the meetings or sharing their experiences.

The absolute key to lessons learned is not the learning, although that's good too. It's the doing. Doing something differently next time is the ultimate goal

and if people see that lessons are driving different actions, then they'll start to appreciate the value in the experience. Their contributions matter because they change practice.

The easiest way to do this is to build a 'look at lessons from past projects' step into the start of your business case process or delivery methodology. Add a tick box or a field to your templates and governance documentation. Prompt people to seek out learnings from others.

Make it clear that there is the expectation that lessons will be

ON THE BUSES: AN URBAN TRANSPORT REVOLUTION



ANNE MARIE PURCELL, CHIEF TRANSFORMATION OFFICER AT TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER, EXPLAINS THE WORK BEHIND THE PIONEERING BEE NETWORK PROGRAMME

Over the past decade, Greater Manchester's population has grown faster than any other metropolitan area outside London. To support this, we need world-class transport services and infrastructure – including buses. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and its partners are building the Bee Network, a high-quality, affordable, fully integrated transport system.

Central to this was bringing the city region's buses under local, public control in September 2023, using the Bus Services Act 2017. We were the first place in the UK to do so, after 40 years of deregulation. The previous model of privatisation had led to service fragmentation and declining passenger numbers, and the TfGM bus franchising programme was set up in response to this.

Consolidating a deregulated market

Franchising will cover all 10 districts of Greater Manchester, including around 720 bus services and an annual ridership of 186.7 million passengers. The deregulated market was formed of 35 different commercial operators, which would



all now be run publicly as part of the Bee Network.

The first buses were franchised in Bolton, Wigan and areas of Bury, Salford and Manchester in September 2023 (tranche 1) and further services were brought under local control in Oldham, Rochdale and more areas of Bury, Salford and Manchester in March 2024 (tranche 2). The final services will be brought under control in the rest of Greater Manchester in January 2025.

The programme so far has overseen 170 routes brought under local control and Greater Manchester has acquired 10 large depots and around 1,000 buses to be used across the tranche 1

and tranche 2 areas. TfGM is now responsible for more than 100,000 journeys every week, with more than 17 million made since buses were franchised in September last year.

Tickets, please!

To ensure these journeys are made smoothly, the programme has also had to oversee:

- the introduction of new tickets – including the AnyBus + Tram ticket, which provides 20% cheaper joint bus and tram travel – and the phasing out of old ones
- the introduction of 96 new electric buses and the electrification of two depots
- changes to timetables, including earlier, later, more frequent and better integrated services
- a new Bee Network customer contact centre, website and app

Complexity requires delegated authority

From the outset, the programme had a complex governance structure due to its political, social and economic impact on Greater Manchester. This complexity made existing governance unsustainable if the required legal timelines for the devolution act were to be met. This included internal TfGM constitutional governance, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) governance, local council governance and mayoral governance. In total, it took approximately six months to receive full approval on key decisions.

To address this, the programme agreed on a delegated authority route, which empowered key decision-makers to progress the programme. The Bus Reform Board, with direct links to the mayor via the Bee Network Board, provided robust oversight. This structure ensured effective decision-making and accountability.

Under close scrutiny

External factors such as public scrutiny and legislative requirements influenced the



project management and delivery approach, requiring adaptability and resilience. Public and political interest in the programme and its benefits was significant from an early stage. The programme was a key deliverable in the mayor's election campaign, and other areas of the country were actively following the programme before making decisions on their own transport strategies.

There was opposition and scrutiny from political opponents and privately operated bus organisations, and considerable media attention nationally and locally.

Continuous development was a priority

The programme team comprised individuals with diverse backgrounds in change

Transport for Greater Manchester is now responsible for more than 100,000 journeys every week

management, infrastructure, technology, project management and operations. Key personnel included the Bus Franchising Programme Director, appointed in May 2022 and now the Chief Transformation Officer. Continuous development was a priority, with staff undergoing project management apprenticeships and APM qualifications, with internal progressions, two project coordinators gaining promotion within the programme to assistant project managers following the

completion of the APM qualifications and apprenticeship.

The appointment of a Delivery Director gave much-needed direction to the team. Project leaders employed hands-on leadership, motivating the team through direct access, town halls, roadshows, regular social media posts, daily stand-ups and mayoral messages. Social events facilitated multi-supplier collaboration, fostering a professional and cohesive working environment. The mayor regularly held sessions with the business and team to champion the programme, allowing for positive employee and public momentum.

The challenge of being first-of-a-kind

The outcome of the programme would be the biggest change to

transport since deregulation four decades ago, but the programme was also the first of its kind to take forward the powers from the Bus Services Act and mayoral devolution. Therefore, stakeholder expectations and public scrutiny were intense.

The programme also faced compressed timelines, judicial reviews, changing business structures and a need to change ways of working across multiple organisations urgently to enable delivery. Managing trade unions, complex supplier relationships, political uncertainty and additional scope, such as acquiring and electrifying a number of bus depots, further complicated delivery.

Although these challenges varied and differed in context, the programme team approached them consistently, utilising its programme management framework as a toolkit. This included meticulous planning, targeted and detailed stakeholder engagement, adaptive management strategies, risk and opportunity workshops, and, above all, teamwork.

Another significant challenge was to transform TfGM into a commercially operated entity that is financially, socially and operationally responsible for the bus services in Greater Manchester. This required a detailed change process, including establishing a new operational structure for the Bus Team, producing a detailed service catalogue and transitioning to business-as-usual operations.

Through meticulous workshops, each area of the business was reviewed to understand the impact of bus franchising in terms of people, process, technology, data and capacity. Heat maps were produced to prioritise areas with the greatest change. Detailed stakeholder management plans were developed, and

communication channels were created. Requirement gathering exercises were completed, and service designs and end-to-end processes were developed. This enabled the programme to manage all the key areas effectively.

The right approach

The projects utilised various methodologies, including public procurement, agile app development, NEC4 and RIBA for infrastructure, and waterfall processes – all within an overarching programme delivery method based on Managing Successful Programmes (MSP). Tailored programme governance ensured compliance with constitutional and delegated authorities, positively impacting delivery.

The programme followed APM best practices around stakeholder management, risk management and cost and planning techniques. In addition to management methodology, standard business transformation methodologies were applied around service designs following the people, process, technology and capacity model. The programme also worked closely with assurance and audit teams to ensure a concurrent approach to the delivery, allowing the required level of scrutiny.

Risks were managed through independent assurance, comprehensive contingency planning and mobilisation dependencies. Opportunities for collaboration with other authorities were leveraged to share resources and enhance outcomes. The risk registers were actively managed, with a risk manager facilitating regular workshops to capture and mitigate risks and opportunities. Quantified risk registers were produced to actively manage the delivery of the programme.



Green transport

The project prioritised sustainability by incorporating zero-emission buses and sustainability clauses in procurement. The programme will introduce 400 zero-emission buses to the network in Greater Manchester; 30% to be zero-emission by January 2025, moving to 100% by 2032. In addition to transitioning to zero-emission buses, the numerous depot assets acquired are undergoing sustainability and carbon reviews to incorporate solar, heat pumps and modern carbon reduction technologies. The programme is also working towards a financial sustainability model for the bus network, addressing the impact of COVID-19 on passenger trips.

The project maximised inclusivity by ensuring all franchises included the Good Employment Charter and Real Living Wage in contracts, conducting quality impact assessments and considering accessibility in design. Partnerships

The bus franchising programme has delivered immediate improvements in service reliability



CREATING A BUZZ

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

1 Enhanced service reliability: The introduction of franchising has led to more punctual and frequent bus services.

2 Increased customer satisfaction: With a unified standard, ticketing system, app and consistent fare structures, passengers enjoy a seamless and cost-effective travel experience. This also included increased passenger safety through the programme introducing a cohort of TravelSafe support and enforcement officers.

3 Expanded network coverage: New routes and services ensure that more areas are connected, benefiting communities across Greater Manchester.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

1 Environmental sustainability: The deployment of zero-emission buses significantly reduces carbon emissions, contributing to cleaner air and a healthier environment.

2 Economic growth: Improved public transport connectivity supports local businesses and stimulates regional economic development.

3 Social inclusion: Enhanced access to reliable public transport services promotes equity by connecting under-served communities to essential services and opportunities.

and engagement ensured diverse perspectives were integrated. The new approved fleet design includes two wheelchair bays on all new double-deck buses and the installation of audio-visual announcements on all fleets to enhance accessibility. Multiple engagement events were held with various minority and disability groups to ensure an inclusive programme outcome.

On time, on budget

The project has delivered on time and within budget, meeting key public milestones and securing multiple funding sources, including £134m for transition, £100m for asset depot acquisition, £115m for zero-emission buses fleet purchase and electrification, and Bus Service Improvement Plan funding for £2 fares. The programme was approved by the mayor and started in April 2021.

Stakeholder management included extensive internal

briefings, roadshows, council team briefings, media events and public scrutiny committee interactions. This ensured broad engagement and support for the project.

The programme had multiple interfaces, both internally and externally, including politicians, local leaders, affected staff, unions, franchised operators and incumbent operators. Internally, the programme interfaced with stakeholders through weekly town hall events ensuring consistent messaging from senior management to the team.

Additionally, roadshows were held with operational staff leading up to the go-live date, ensuring all questions were addressed and feedback was implemented where possible. The most intensive periods were around cutover night when commercial services ceased and franchised services commenced. Both tranche 1 and tranche 2 cutovers were planned out with cross-party working between

TfGM and outgoing and incoming operators to ensure a safe and successful night.

En route to success

The bus franchising programme has delivered immediate improvements in service reliability, customer satisfaction, patronage and network coverage, while setting the stage for long-term benefits in sustainability, economic growth and social inclusion. These outcomes will collectively transform Greater Manchester's public transport system, creating a more efficient, accessible and environmentally friendly service for all residents.

Team members gained valuable experience in managing a fast-paced, high-scrutiny project, developing skills in problem-solving, planning and implementation. Many team members pursued further professional development through project management apprenticeships and qualifications from APM.



Arit Anderson (second from left), designer of the RHS Peat-Free Garden, is joined by exhibiting growers

BEHIND THE SCENES AT RHS HAMPTON COURT

ISOBEL COULTER, SHOWS PROJECT MANAGER AT THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, SPILLS THE BEANS ON PROJECT MANAGING ITS ANNUAL GARDEN FESTIVAL

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival has been running for over 30 years. It's a huge event, attracting on average around 120,000 visitors across six days to a site that spans around 31 acres. You can't quite top the backdrop of a royal palace and the surroundings of a deer park.

The event is one of a suite of shows that the RHS runs, including the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. RHS Hampton Court is one of our biggest events and offers a more summery and more relaxed festival feel, with live music and more. RHS Hampton Court involves over 400 exhibitors and partners, and 150 contractors and suppliers. It has a build time of over three weeks.

The RHS is a charity devoted to the science, art and practice of horticulture. Our mission, which hasn't changed in over 200 years, is to inspire plant growing for people and planet. Recently, we launched a new strategy to take the charity up to 2030, with a focus on opening up gardening for everyone, particularly urban dwellers, beginners and young people – the next generation of gardeners and future custodians of the environment.

As Project Manager for the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, I head up the team that creates, builds and runs the festival both from an operational/infrastructure perspective and also on the visitor/horticultural content side.

Our main aim is to ensure that we deliver a well-executed, engaging and commercially successful event every year. Aside from leading the RHS Hampton Court team, I work



Thenjiwe Nofemele, star of *The Lion King* on the West End, performs 'The Circle of Life' in costume

with other project managers in the shows department on cross-show projects, such as sustainability, accessibility, streamlining processes and new event development.

Bouncing back

Stepping into my current role in autumn 2019 was a really exciting opportunity, but we came up against a hurdle early on – the COVID-19 pandemic. The period 2020/2021 was a mad time of planning a familiar event to many, but a new one to all of my team members bar one. We were having to constantly adapt our plans as we consulted with local authorities and waited for government updates on what we would and wouldn't be able to do.

It was a challenge, because you have to commit to spending money and convince and reassure exhibitors/contractors/partners to do the same. It was a nerve-racking time, but there

was real desire from stakeholders and visitors for events to make a comeback – for the sense of normality they signify and, of course, enjoyment. And that's what drove us and ultimately made it all the more rewarding.

It made for a strong learning experience. In particular, it emphasised how important regular communication is to stakeholders, both internal and external – and also the importance of being able to pivot and have flexible plans. It made my team stronger than ever and taught me the art of perseverance and not giving up. We were very proud to run what we believe was one of the largest events post-pandemic in July 2021, welcoming 100,000 visitors back to the festival.

Getting to grips

RHS Hampton Court is fully ingrained in visitors' and exhibitors' hearts – it has evolved so much

It made my team stronger than ever and taught me the art of perseverance and not giving up

over the decades that we certainly felt (and do feel) the pressure to keep doing it justice.

With the event having been established for so long, I wanted first to understand how the event ticked, and to start documenting key timelines, while planning the upcoming festival at the same time. I needed to find out the deadlines that people had been working with for decades, try to document those, and also work out what needed adjusting, unblocking, tightening or loosening to bring the festival in line and allow for progression and improvements at the right pace and right time.

Every year we approach the project of RHS Hampton Court as a fresh year to continue to improve, involve and inspire. There are key cogs that make up our event:

- **Visitor experience.** How do we create an event our visitors love and enjoy when they're there, both practically and creatively?
- **Sharing the joy of gardening.** How do we use our events to inspire, spread the joy of gardening and engage with new audiences? We do so much as a charity that we use the shows to share messaging, whether its horticultural science, the latest gardening trends or how best to get your kids involved in gardening.
- **Operational elements.** How do we turn a deer park into a national gardening event?
- **Partnerships and exhibitors.** How do we work with partners and exhibitors to help deliver this event?
- **Commercial success.** We are part of the commercial arm of the charity and our shows help bring in vital funds to help fund the charitable work of the RHS.

Although we largely work on a year-round cycle, there's always a lot of pre-work and planning going alongside the current show to make sure we can hit the ground running post-event for the following year. The team are always particularly enthused during and post-show, with plenty of ideas for the next. I always try and capitalise on those moments and document the ideas while they come organically so that we can come back to them.

The challenges include understanding and delivering what our visitors want to ensure they keep coming back each year

If we want to make big changes, we need to factor those in at least 18 months in advance

On the whole, the content team try and tap into the wider RHS for content inspiration and ideas on what we can champion each year. This year, we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of Britain in Bloom, a nationwide competition that sees thousands of volunteers use gardening to help build communities and tackle local issues. At the heart of it are people and friendship, so we highlighted those through a beautiful garden aiming to inspire friendship and connection.

If we want to make big changes, we need to factor those in at least 18 months in advance so that we can hit budget submission time, which is only one month after that year's festival. It's very easy to get caught behind schedule on that and then feel like you have to say: 'Well, let's think about it for next year's event.'

Stiff competition

The challenges include understanding and delivering what our visitors want to ensure they keep coming back each year. There's a lot of competition out there, and the risk with a long-running show is that some people think they've seen it, and don't need to go every year. For our content and marketing teams, there's a real push to work out how we will convey what's new each year.

The theme of this year's festival was 'Gardening for Good', celebrating the benefits that plants and green spaces can bring not just for the environment and for wildlife, but for people too, through wellbeing and building communities. We themed the content to highlight those messages clearly.



In terms of the scope of elements that the RHS Hampton Court project can encompass, it can range from working with the operations team and refreshing some of the infrastructure to working with the palace (our landlord) on reinstatement of the grounds to working with new partners on engaging visitor content.

We work with a contractor to ensure the grounds are returned to the same condition as when we arrived. This involves a year-round plan of ground works, reseeding and verti-draining (a way of aerating turf) – all fairly specialist stuff that ensures that, when we return, the showground is looking fresh again.



The RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival show team

TOP TIPS FOR ALL PROJECTS

1 BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND CHANGE

As project manager, work out the best way to accommodate these in a fair and well-balanced way. Contingency, and getting a few steps ahead with general plans, means that when changes come along there is capacity to explore these.

2 DOCUMENT AND RECORD

Even if it's something that happens every year, it's important to document what you do and how it went. This helps with future planning, but also gives any new team members a strong plan and framework to fall back on.

3 LISTEN AND LEARN

Listening to others and taking in their plans and movements can help you notice and flag up elements of your planning that may not have been considered fully yet. There are always learning opportunities throughout the project cycle, so take time to note these and look at change and implementation for future projects to enable continued growth.

Improving sustainability all the time

There are lots of nuts and bolts involved in putting on an event. We're essentially building a mini town for the month, so waste and toilets play a pivotal role. Our waste partner provides over 230 bins across the site and deals with all of the recycling on-site too. We are constantly reviewing how we do this to make sure we are reducing the amount of waste we produce and reuse and recycle what we currently can't reduce.

Through comms to our exhibitors and visitors, plus a trial of 'binfluencers', we are starting to see our waste stats drop. All of our show gardens are either rehomed

in full or reused on other projects, plus we work with a reuse partner (Wayward Plants) to rehome any spare plants and materials to community groups and schools. Food waste goes to a local charity to reuse where possible.

This year, we also took on a new area of trade stands (which had previously been provided by a partner). We needed to plan a few years ahead to work out whether we had the capacity, desire and budget to run this area ourselves. It involved different parts of the team and all the timings had to work out to make sure we could deliver.

These mini projects can come in all shapes and sizes – and not

always when you're expecting it. My role is to get a good and broad-level understanding of the timings and impact for us and related stakeholders. When do we need to start thinking about it and when does it need to be ready? Or how do we flex to fit this in?

A push to nurture and grow

With our events, we are always pushing ourselves to grow, improve and innovate. RHS shows are a real platform for us to shout about the amazing world of horticulture and inspire others.

Some of my personal highlights over the years of RHS shows have included bringing a carnival theme to life at RHS Flower Show Tatton

The whole department will be taking on new shows in new locations, which will be an exciting challenge

Park and commissioning a local carnival group, Cabasa Carnival Arts, to put on a 50+ performer parade through the show – it brought so much joy and surprise to visitors. At RHS Hampton Court, I've loved working with the team on improving show layouts and therefore visitor engagement with our traders. We used to have 'dead spots' at the festival and now, through a clever redesign, we are able to make sure visitors don't miss key areas, such as the show gardens. That's hugely satisfying.

With a new shows schedule having been announced from 2025, the whole department will be taking on new shows in new locations, which will be an exciting challenge. My team will potentially be working across two events a year, rather than one. Planning of time and resource will be required, and I'm excited to support the team during this time and help bring a festival flavour to new parts of the country.



HOW TO STAY CALM IN CHOPPY WATERS

(AND WE DON'T MEAN MOTHER NATURE)

SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2023 APM YOUNG PROJECT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD, SEBASTIAN GOLDSMITH IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BUILDING FLOOD DEFENCES ON THE SOUTH COAST, A JOB REQUIRING A SENSITIVE TOUCH. CHARLES ORTON-JONES MEETS THE ARCADIS HIGH FLYER.

Getting stuff built in Britain can

be a difficult thing. It's not just the shortage of construction workers and electricians (we need 15,000 more sparkies according to one estimate), it's the paperwork.

A new billion-pound data centre in Abbots Langley? Denied for being visible from motorway bridges. A solar farm in Gayton? Vetoed for harming the visible landscape. An undersea electricity inter-connector from France to Portsmouth has been in planning limbo for four years due to local objections – construction would interfere with a field of allotments. And new rules on nutrient pollution blocked 145,000 houses last year, driving completions to a record low. The national housing target hasn't been hit since Tony Blair was prime minister.

Smoothing a path through complications

This is the world Sebastian Goldsmith inhabits. As a Project Manager at Arcadis, a global design consultancy, he is helping the Environment Agency build essential flood defences on the south coast. The banks of the River

Rother need to be raised to ensure seasonal waters don't spill into the surrounding farmland and villages as they flow towards the town of Rye and into sea.

The real challenge isn't Mother Nature. It's finding a smooth course through the myriad rules of special interest voices.

Natural England, for example. "We can only work from April to October," says Goldsmith. "That's mainly due to wintering birds. Natural England sets out what we can and can't do." There are lapwings, redshank, snipe marsh harrier, mallards, ruffs, avocets and even the occasional colony of great crested newts to watch out for. Badger setts were found in close proximity to work areas. New setts were established, and barriers erected to prevent the nocturnal foragers from returning to their homes. A project in nearby Romney Marsh hit the buffers when a breeding spot for marsh mallow moths was discovered (the moths were sensitively relocated).

"The Environment Agency has its own processes," says Goldsmith. "I work with the Fisheries Biodiversity and Geomorphology





“We can only work from April to October. That’s mainly due to wintering birds. Natural England sets out what we can and can’t do”

CV: Sebastian Goldsmith

Education: BSc geology/ earth science, University of Portsmouth (2012–2015)

Qualifications:

- NEC3/4 contract training
- Construction Skills Certification Scheme Gold Supervisor card
- Construction Industry Training Board Temporary Works Coordinator
- Site Environmental Awareness Training Scheme

Employment:

- **Currently:** Project Manager, Arcadis
- **Previous experience:** Geoscientist ERCL; Project Manager, SOCOTEC

Hobbies: “I’m a big football fan, and working for Arsenal would be a dream job, should they ever need a project manager. In my spare time I listen to podcasts, which are a great way for me to fill the two-and-a-half-hour drive to the site every week.”

departments of the Environment Agency. Then there's the local planning authority to deal with. They all tie in together. It is stressful as everyone has their own agenda. There are also the farmers who we are working with for three or four years. They've got a big say on issues that impact them."

In for the long haul

As a result, the project will take 10 years from inception to completion. Goldsmith is admirably calm in the face of such obstacles. Listen to him and the process almost sounds reasonable: "That time period includes the original strategy, planning, design and getting funding. So it's not just 10 years to build the embankment."


Goldsmith was shortlisted for the 2023 APM Young Project Professional of the Year award, in part for his methodical way of managing the complexities of his role. "It's about creating a stakeholder engagement plan," he says. "From the get go, you need to work out how often to speak to each relevant party. How do you speak to them? What information do they really need? Some people you can drip the information to. Others you just need to keep an eye on. With the farmers I try to deliver weekly updates," he explains.

The Goldsmith charm also comes in handy. There's a limit to what a chart can do. Sometimes it's about personal communication.

"With farmers it really helps to go face to face," says Goldsmith. "Go out on foot and meet people. Talk to them. Then you can really explain what's happening." The route is 7km long. He puts on his safety boots and does the rounds. "Not always possible to send an email," he notes. "There are some farmers who really don't use a lot of technology."

Thoughtfully involving all stakeholders

The dialogue is two-way. Goldsmith has learned why the farmers are so



"With farmers it really helps to go face to face. Go out on foot and meet people. Talk to them. Then you can really explain what's happening"

passionate about construction on their doorstep. "They have sheep in their fields. Construction can mean access is blocked, which is going to cause significant problems. One of the reasons we keep in touch so often is to ensure there is clear communication about when access will be closed, so we can all work around it."

A customer visitor centre means curious locals can peruse plans. And there are even links with the local birdwatchers to ensure wildlife is monitored and fed into the national database. Some of the rarer varieties seen include the great black-backed gull and widgeons.

The upshot of Goldsmith's work is that the Rother Tidal Walls East project, as it is known, is on track for completion in 2026, and currently under budget. It's proof that it is possible to build infrastructure while respecting the environmental requirements. And few zones in the UK are quite as tricky as the Rother waterways – an idyll dotted with Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

With the right project manager, the system can be made to work.

In recent years, the Rother Valley has been overwhelmed by flood waters, notoriously in 2014, when a local blogger wrote, after weeks of rain: "I'm expecting the Ark to swing into view any time now with Mrs Noah peeking out the window," Goldsmith quips. The villagers of Rye and beyond will rest easy knowing the waters are being contained.

Motivated by a positive purpose

Goldsmith is energised to be working on something with such a clear and positive impact. "Protecting the environment and people's houses feels worthwhile. It makes me feel good," he says. And it's a U-turn from his early career path, where he wanted to work with fossil fuels. "I studied geology at university with the intention to go into oil. The market crashed in 2015, so I ended up in engineering and ground investigation, and worked



my way up from there. Geology, with its broad applicability, is integral to any construction or development project.”

An underrated pleasure of being a project manager is working on spectacular sites, and Goldsmith clearly relishes his life strolling through the farms and waterways of the Rother landscape. An eerie footnote on an official plan by the Environment Agency highlights the importance of his work. As climate change pushes sea levels ever higher, more rivers will need remodelling. The Environment Agency warns the site will be revisited in 50 years’ time to elevate the banks further.

For now, the nesting sites of teal and redshank will remain safe.

“Protecting the environment and people’s houses feels worthwhile. It makes me feel good”

SEB’S TOP TIPS

1 Leave your ego at the door

I read a terrific book called *Letting Go: The pathway of surrender* by David R Hawkins. It is about releasing yourself from attachments and negative emotions. In the workplace, this means putting your ego to one side. If you make a mistake, own up to it. If I’ve done something such as overlook a bit of critical feedback from a stakeholder during a planning project, it is so much better to admit it and move on. I had a case where I told a farmer he’d been given a plan of an access route; he said he hadn’t. Potential conflict. I simply held up my hands, said I’d got it wrong, and we fixed it. Take your ego out of the equation and the drama goes too.

2 Master the soft skills

Project managers rely on technical skills. That’s natural, but a huge part of the job is the ability to communicate and connect with people. How do you improve soft skills? By getting out of your comfort zone. This is especially true for shy people. Go and see people, and talk face to face. Maybe do a co-location day with your team. Ask people about their problems and how they are feeling. There was a time I was quite shy in my career and kept myself to myself. I’ve worked on that side of my performance. Mastering soft skills is the fastest way to go from zero to hero.

3 Don’t be afraid to break the mould

Project professionals are taught to work in certain ways, with specific tools. But you’ve got to innovate and find your own ways of working. That’s what I mean by breaking the mould. For example, a lot of bosses rely on spreadsheets for work such as project tracking. There are a lot of alternative

tools, such as Microsoft OneNote, which gives access to the entire team via Sharepoint, which I use a lot. No one will mind you doing something different when the benefits become clear. You just need a bit of courage to follow your own path.

4 Celebrate successes

It is vital to keep morale high, and that means recognising moments, big and small. A team dinner or trip to the pub when you hit a milestone is a great idea. You get to know each other and build momentum for the work ahead. Even little things are worth recognising. I entered the APM Young Project Professional of the Year award because of this mindset. Even then, I took a fair bit of convincing. A manager approached me and said we’d like to put you forward. I was uncertain, but realised I may win or may not, but I should take part and experience the process. In the end it was terrific. I’m even a fan of putting something on LinkedIn once you’ve taken that initial uncertain step, or if you have a promotion or something to celebrate.

5 Know your colleagues’ strengths and weaknesses

A project manager will be required to work with a variety of people. It is essential to learn about them. What are they strong at? Where do they need to improve? It’s a good idea to write things down, even if it’s just to jog your memory. Knowing strengths and weaknesses helps when distributing tasks. You can make sure the people have jobs that suit them. An effective project manager thinks about the team around them and how they can improve, not just their own narrow personal performance.

PUBLIC REGISTER OF ChPPs

The following individuals make up the latest cohort to achieve Chartered Project Professional status with APM. Congratulations to you all, wherever you are based! Full details of the criteria for achieving chartered status and the routes to get there can be found at apm.org.uk/chartered-standard, where you can also view the full Register of Chartered Project Professionals.



Name	Country	Name	Country	Name	Country	Name	Country
Fahmin Ahangari	UK	Marcina Dunwell	UK	Peter Jopp	UK	Luis Rico Bensusan	UK
Waqas Ahmad	UK	Ola Dykes	UK	Adam Kitchener	UK	Ian Robinson	UK
Iyola Ajala	UK	Judith Eastwood	USA	Nikolaos Kokotinis	UK	Jeffrey Rose	UK
Hamood Al Azri	OMN	Darren Edkins	UK	Maryanne Kuria	KEN	John Rovers	NLD
Mohammed Al Dhuhli	OMN	Isobelle Edmunds	UK	Benojir Laskar	UK	Shukur Sadikhov	UK
Yasir Al Gharabi	OMN	Matthew Edwards	UK	Lynsey Lauer	UK	Ozan Sakarya	NLD
Saif Al-Chalabi	UK	Richard Edwards	UK	Louisa Le Roux	UK	Zoe Scotton-Pinhey	UK
Abu Ansary	UK	Waly Ahmed Abdellatif		Mal Leadbetter	UK	Elaine Seaton	UK
Meghann Archer-Downing	UK	Eltaher	EGY	Mark Leadbitter	UK	Youness Sebbar	UK
Daniel Armitage	UK	Fiona Erol	UK	Rob Leslie-Carter	UK	Joy Senior	UK
Fiona Ashwood	UK	Darren Evans	UK	Ben Lewis	UK	Zak Shayler	UK
Matthew Au	UK	Emile Fakhoury	UAE	Charles Lloyd	AUS	Alkis Sigkeris	UK
Anthony Baafi	UK	Aaron Farmer	UK	Richard Macintosh	FRA	Mike Sims	UK
Matt Bagnall	UK	Catherine Fenton	UK	Naveen Kumar		Paige Skinner	UK
Matthew Batchelor	UK	Andre Ferdinand	UK	Madanagopal	SGP	Richard Smart	UK
Andrew Beardon	UK	Kevin Fettes	UK	Claire Mahoney	UK	Geoffrey Spour	UK
Jasal Beavis	UK	Peter Finlayson	UK	Duncan Manning	UK	Gordon Steele	UK
Stellan Bengtson	UK	Emma Floyd	UK	Aiden Martin	UK	David Stevenson	UK
James Bennett	UK	Steve Foxley	UK	Craig McAdie	UK	Selina Suri	UK
Joanne Bhalla	UK	Leon Francis	UK	Ryan McBain	UK	Nicol Taylor	UK
Angus Bidwell	UK	Louise French	UK	Chris McClean	UK	Duncan Tessier	UK
Ian Blanks-Walden	UK	Paul Gallacher	UK	Gary McGonigle	UK	Alan Thomson	UK
Antonio Boccuzzi	UK	Sarah Gallagher	UK	Gordon McKay	UK	Omar Tizini	UK
Chris Bowbrick	UK	Hannah Gibson	UK	Sue McLaren	UK	Richard Tomlin	UK
Gerard Bowers	UK	Karl Gilmore	UK	Emmie Michie	UK	Matthew Townley	UK
Chris Boyle	UK	Harish Goel	NLD	Sonal Mitra	UK	Laura Townsend	UK
Mike Boyle	UK	Robert Gothard	UK	Thomas Moore	UK	Tina Turvey	UK
Charlotte Boys	UK	Toni Gray	UK	Ben Musty	UK	Sternly Utete	UK
James Brackenbury	UK	James Green	UK	Roya Najafi	UK	Sven van den Bedem	UK
Rebecca Amy Brayshaw	UK	Jeroen Groenhagen	NLD	Christopher Nash	UK	Ashwin Vig	IND
Jill Bronnert	UK	David Hackett	UK	Steve Newby	UK	Jacqui Waby	UK
Aisha Cajee	UK	Linda Hadri	UK	Paul Nicol	UK	Tina Waggott	UK
Felipe Cardona O'Dwyer	UK	Jigneshkumar Halani	SGP	Liam Norman	UK	Christopher Walters	UK
John Carridge	UK	Ruth Harding	UK	Jon O'Callaghan	UK	Mabel Wanogho	UK
Stephen Carswell	UK	Amanda Harris	UK	Alex O'Connor	UK	Michael Warren	UK
Michael Charteris	UK	Matthew Harris	UK	Ifeoma Obieniu	UK	Ryan Wattage	UK
Chi Ming Cheung	HKG	Jessica Hern	OMN	Katie Oliver	UK	Peter Wattel	NLD
Kate Cohen	UK	Peter Hoadley	UK	Lawrence Onuma	UK	Darren Watts	UK
George Collinson	UK	Anna Holbrook	UK	Sarah Ormerod	UK	Amy Webb	UK
Mike Cooper	UK	Debra Holmes	UK	Mary Osuagwu	UK	Shington Widjaja	BRN
Harriet Copsey	UK	Jaqueline Howard	UK	Liam Overfield	UK	Caroline Wilke	AUS
Hamish Corbett	NZL	Keiran Hughes	UK	Don Pashley	UK	Cameron Williams	UK
Laura Coulton	UK	Imtiyaz Hussain	IND	Rhona Philp	UK	Mark Williams	UK
Tracey Courtenay-Williams	UK	Clare Ibbeson	UK	Daniel Phipps	UK	Sarah Williams	UK
Davina Dacre	UK	Khairul Syazni Ibrahim	BRN	Ian Pickford	UK	Tom Willson	UK
Yvonne Daly	UK	Olawale Ilori	UK	Brigitte Pine	AUS	Allan Wilson	UK
Lee Davies	UK	Mohamed Wasim Ismail	UK	John Pinkstone	UK	Michael Wong	UK
Sarah Davies	UK	Adrian Jack	UK	Stephen Prescott	UK	Jol Woodard	UK
Ellen Dean	UK	Matthew Jackson	UK	Lesley Pringle	UK	Ronan Workman	UK
Andy Dellar	UK	Mohammed Yousuf Javed	UK	Tom Puncher	UK	Gillian Worley	UK
Paul Devoy	UK	Bhavesh Jha	NLD	Mark Quin	UK	Huma Wright	UK
Joanne Dickinson	UK	Stuart Johnstone	UK	Shelly Quinton-Hulme	UK	King Chung Yip	HKG
Charlie Dingwall	UK	Donald Johnstone	UK	Bhaumik Raval	UK		
Daryl Docherty	UK	Becca Jones	UK	Desmond Reape	UK		
Verity Doust	UK	Gemma Jones	UK	Andrea Reynolds	USA		

DEAR SUSANNE

I'm leading a global team and find that we often have different and even conflicting opinions about how to move forward. As much as I value diverse perspectives, I find it hard to manage in practice. How can I get better at this?

Thank you for your question, which serves as a great reminder that diverse teams have the potential to be much more creative and innovative than homogeneous teams. People with different backgrounds, cultures and genders see the world from different angles and solve problems in different ways. When they come together with the right mindset, new and creative solutions can be born. For this reason, diverse perspectives should be welcomed, even if they challenge your leadership style and can seem more time-consuming in the short term.

Of course, I understand your impatience and doubts about the effectiveness of the team when faced with too many conflicting views about a solution or the way forward. But as management thinker Patrick Lencioni writes, one of the five dysfunctions of a team is a fear of conflict. Conflict can be good if you stay open and work with it constructively. Lencioni also reminds us that trust is the basic building block that enables teams to turn conflict into win-win solutions.

The power of the team charter

I recommend that you invest time in some deeper work with the team to strengthen trust and understanding between you. Perhaps you could set half a day aside to work on a team charter. This will enable a deep dive not into what the project will deliver, but into how the team will

collaborate to make it happen. Even if it's best done in person, the team charter workshop can be done online too.

If you don't know what a team charter looks like, you can download one at bit.ly/3ShZ0IB. It captures the team's strengths, your common values and how you will work together. It's a great opportunity to get to know each other better, build trust and discuss how you can best work with diverse perspectives in the team. Remember that you don't need to have all the answers yourself. Trust and collaboration arise when the team is engaged and bought into the process. So, involve the team and ask them what they think.

Managing conflict is the responsibility of the entire team

Managing diverse perspectives isn't just the responsibility of you as the team leader. To navigate conflict, the entire team needs to develop their social awareness and sensitivity towards each other. Your role is to bring that vision forward and to set a good example. Show openness, curiosity and trust during team discussions. Show the team that diverse opinions are welcome and that you believe they can be combined into a richer and better overall solution.

To effectively drive towards a win-win solution, make sure the entire team understands what you're trying to achieve with a particular decision. If the objective and success criteria aren't clear,



Susanne Madsen is an internationally recognised project leadership coach, trainer, consultant and author. Her latest book, *How to do the Inner Work* (TCK Publishing), is out now. For more information, visit www.susannemadsen.com

people will certainly disagree on what the best solution is. Work with the team to provide that clarity. What are we trying to achieve? Can we agree the criteria for what a good solution will look like? This provides a framework to evaluate the different opinions against.

During the discussion, ask team members why they believe what they believe and what data they have to back it up. Do they have experience from a previous project showing that the proposed solution did or did not work, or do they base their opinions on a feeling? And remember to challenge the team with curiosity rather than scepticism. It's when you cut people off, exclude them or rush a solution that mistrust and dysfunction can take hold.

Do you have a question for Susanne? Email mail@susannemadsen.com

READER OFFER

Enjoy a 25% discount on Susanne's book *The Power of Project Leadership* when you order the book from Kogan Page at www.koganpage.com
Quote code: PROJ25

PROJECT ME

WE ASK PROJECT PROFESSIONALS FOR THEIR TOP TIPS ON HOW TO DELIVER ON THEIR PROMISES



Be honest and provide updates

Adam Bradley, Director for Project Management, WSP

Delivering on promises is what gives you integrity, but it is not always easy. Many factors can influence the way that you deliver; sometimes they are out of your control. But it is extremely important to be honest and provide updates via regular communication. One thing I have learned is to be realistic and challenge as appropriate. In business, and in our personal lives, promises often relate to delivery against deadlines, which if not realistic will not be achieved. This must be explored and discussed at the outset and realistic targets must be set. Break these down into deliverables that are manageable and achievable, and have conversations to set expectations from the outset. The best way to avoid not delivering is setting deliverables that you can influence or have the connections to influence. Build personal and professional networks that can help you.



Use strategic project management

Jagruti Dhande, Technical Programme Manager, Rivian

Delivering on promises to stakeholders is predominant in project management. Strategic project management weighs proven techniques and tools to fulfil on-time delivery. Employing a robust project planning process with detailed work breakdown structures and realistic resource estimates should be the first crucial aspect. Your Gantt chart should always have achievable timelines factoring in dependencies, constraints and, most importantly, risk buffers. Implement an agile approach with frequent status reporting, metrics tracking and scope control processes. Using the Kanban approach to track programme metrics gives you a futuristic view of timeline completion and risks. Leverage collaboration platforms like Jira to maintain transparency and quickly adapt to changes. Conduct regular stakeholder engagement to align expectations and gain buy-in, thereby establishing clear governance for decision-making. With strategic planning, the right tools and diligent execution, project managers can consistently deliver high-quality initiatives on time and within budget.

Build trust and credibility

Yaeger Irwin, founder, Bloom Project Management



Delivering on promises effectively hinges on clear communication and consistent follow-through. Before committing to any promise, I gather everyone's buy-in to ensure alignment and shared understanding of the goals. This collaborative approach ensures that all stakeholders are invested and aware of their roles. During the execution phase, regularly check in on progress to monitor tasks and address any issues promptly. Consistent updates on progress are crucial. Keep everyone informed about milestones and any changes that may impact the timeline. It is important to remember that deadlines can be flexible, but how you communicate these changes matters.

Set realistic goals

Scott Crittall ChPP FAPM

In the initial stages of a project, stakeholders will push for more in less time, driven by the fast-paced digital landscape and the need to remain competitive. It's crucial for project managers to negotiate wisely, understanding what's non-negotiable and where flexibility is possible. Preparation is key, backed by experience and examples, to reach a fair agreement of what can be achieved, by when and how. Negotiation is a delicate balance, but setting realistic goals from the start increases the likelihood of fulfilling promises. Success in project delivery starts with a clear understanding at the outset that is agreed between the stakeholders and the project manager. Incidentally, make sure you document your agreement, so everyone knows what has been signed up to and continue to refer to these project goals in your ongoing project communications and governance activities.





PROJECT: TO HELP THE HOMELESS



SPENCER HOBBS, ASSOCIATE PROGRAMME MANAGER AT AECOM, ASSEMBLED A GROUP OF COLLEAGUES TO START AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT TO BENEFIT THOSE ON THE STREETS (AND CLEVERLY REPURPOSE OLD LAPTOPS, TOO)

In 2021, there were 274,000 homeless people in England. Over 80% had been employed prior to becoming homeless. These figures emphasise the importance of employment in reducing homelessness. However, the world's increased reliance on digital and information technology has made it much harder for homeless individuals to access employment spaces.

Society's IT dependency has also led to environmental problems of electronic waste (e-waste), with only 2.5 to 10% of electronics reused in the UK, while computer disposal is a growing global problem, with an estimated 50 million tonnes of e-waste ending up in landfills worldwide every year. This improper disposal of electronic products leads to the possibility of damaging the environment and its ecosystems.

Establishing the why

Shocked at these statistics, I and a group of former Turner & Townsend colleagues saw an opportunity that would benefit both the UK's homeless and local organisations in the south-west of England that were looking for a sustainable way to dispose of e-waste. In 2022, after being

inspired by this vision, we were motivated to give up considerable amounts of our free time to voluntarily initiate 'Project Giving IT for Those in Need to Grow', or GIFTING as it became known.

Establishing the what

An early challenge was determining how we would achieve GIFTING's vision and what success would look like. This meant working collaboratively with homeless charity St Mungo's to develop and deliver an ongoing initiative. This entailed effective requirements management to capture and define the charity's needs for GIFTING, which we did by producing a project requirements specification document that we agreed with the charity.

Consequently, the project initiated an ongoing scheme where redundant laptops donated by participating organisations (including the Digital Poverty Alliance, the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England) are repurposed, reissued and reused by the homeless to help tackle digital poverty and hopefully reintegrate them into society. To date, the project has led to 50 laptops being donated to St Mungo's and

The world's increased reliance on digital and information technology has made it much harder for homeless individuals to access employment spaces

onwards to their homeless clients for reuse.

Establishing the how

Delivering GIFTING entailed the use of many skills aligned to the APM Competence Framework. These include effective leadership and team management to inspire and bring together a group of individuals (giving up their free time) to work effectively together and deliver the project's vision. This entailed mentoring less experienced team members and ensuring individuals were assigned clear roles and responsibilities.

Engaging all parties

Effective stakeholder engagement and communication management of a wide range of individuals and groups affected by the initiative were also vital, which included liaising with St Mungo's, as well as





Left: (L-R) St Mungo's representative Alexandra Henden with Project GIFTING's Molly Stewart and Beth Doddridge. Below: The former Director of Network Rail's Rail Investment Centre of Excellence (left) attending a Project GIFTING review to share valuable advice.

complete, when training materials were required and the deadline for training of end-users).

Assurance

We assured our progress was effectively tracked by holding regular meetings with the team and participating organisations. Additional assurance was introduced when I held a series of stage gate reviews at different stages of the initiative. On one occasion, the former Director of Network Rail's Rail Investment Centre of Excellence attended, providing invaluable independent advice and guidance to the team.

The laptops have helped address the problem of 'digital poverty' among the homeless

There are also economic benefits to society, because a homeless person currently costs the UK government £30,000 per person annually. In the long term, GIFTING will (by providing recipients with new IT equipment and skills) help a proportion of them return to employment and escape homelessness.

Donating stakeholder organisations participating in the scheme will also benefit via improved corporate social responsibility and contributing to global sustainability goals by reducing waste and not having to dispose of redundant laptops via environmentally unfriendly means such as landfill. Donating organisations will also gain from related cost savings (i.e. not having to pay expensive specialist contractors to dispose of the laptops in a secure and sustainable way). Society also benefits environmentally due to the reduced need to manufacture and procure new laptops for the GIFTING scheme (therefore reducing demand for natural resources/ carbon emissions required to manufacture new laptops).

The project team I led benefited from the experience by developing many of the project skills and competencies mentioned in this article. They also experienced the highs of reaching the final four of APM's South Wales and West of England Branch project team challenge – narrowly missing out on winning the competition. Ultimately, St Mungo's significantly benefited, as the initiative gave it invaluable exposure and promotion, while helping it to achieve many of its strategic enablers.



Bringing the benefits

To enable effective benefits Management, our assurance methods focused on and tracked the realisation of GIFTING's short-term benefits (i.e. achieving the minimum desired number of repurposed, reconfigured, donated laptops) and also the initiative's anticipated longer-term benefits by supporting St Mungo's to ensure the

convincing donating organisations to participate. We improved our stakeholder engagement by producing a business case that clearly demonstrated the benefits of GIFTING to each participating organisation, which consequently strengthened their buy-in and support for the initiative.

Planning for progress

To ensure the initiative progressed, we planned the activities and timescales required, thus using schedule management to develop a plan. We used Microsoft Project to track and achieve key milestones (e.g. when the laptops had to be donated by, when the repurposing work should be

laptops were (and continue to be) effectively reissued and properly utilised by the intended end-user recipients – the homeless. This included supporting the charity's digital college to produce training materials for end-users and capturing their feedback.

This excellent initiative has already delivered many benefits to the different stakeholders involved. The laptops have helped address the problem of 'digital poverty' among the homeless, facilitating increased IT literacy; a reduction in social isolation, disconnection and unhappiness; improved access to benefits; and better job/training opportunities and life prospects.

OFFLINE

WHERE PROJECT
MANAGEMENT MEETS
POPULAR CULTURE

HALLOWE'EN SPECIAL!

HALLOWE'EN WILL SOON BE UPON US, SO WE THOUGHT THE HORROR MOVIE MIGHT BE A GOOD VEHICLE FOR A FEW PROJECT MANAGEMENT LESSONS. RICHARD YOUNG DELVES DEEP INTO THE GHOULISH SLIME TO UNCOVER SOME HARD-WON TRUTHS

We're not scared. Honest. The fact that 'Offline' has only covered one horror movie (*Gremlins*) in 26 outings has nothing to do with our intolerance for jump-scares or weak stomachs when faced with gore. To prove we're made of stronger stuff, we've gone all out with three horror classics.

It's a good decision. While horror films generally have a strong focus on a project – by definition, the challenges faced by the protagonists are never 'business as usual' – quite often they're focused on a narrow set of project goals. Well, one, really – survival. But looking at how either the heroes – or, sometimes, the key villains – handle their project can offer some interesting lessons. Welcome to your nightmare.

CABIN IN THE WOODS

A case study in what happens when regular projects suddenly go off-track thanks to unforeseen external inputs.

Who's the project manager?

There is no horror film – perhaps no film of any genre – that more accurately

portrays a project. Meet Gary Sitterson (Richard Jenkins) and Steve Hadley (Bradley Whitford), project managers for some kind of global spiritual cult that has evolved over countless generations into a well-oiled corporation. This corporation undertakes an annual project to prevent the return of a world-ending ancient demon from a shadow realm. Meet also their project sponsor, 'The Director' – played by Sigourney Weaver!



Project goals?

The mysterious organisation has subsidiaries around the world, all running projects to undertake the very specific ritual murder of innocents, preventing the arrival of the aforementioned demon. The facility in the US is the last remaining hope – the projects in all other countries have failed, and now Sitterson and Hadley must manipulate the classic horror trope of teenagers being murdered gruesomely at a cabin in the woods to fulfil the terms of the ritual. So the goal is crystal clear, the team is well versed in the project's dependencies and timelines, and the mission is crucial.

Stakeholder management?

Where do we start? There are some great scenes inside the complex where the corporation runs the project. There's team camaraderie, solid organisation, the project is extremely well resourced and the team members know exactly what their roles are – and how they fit into the project's deliverables. Textbook. The outside stakeholders – the teenagers on their excursion who don't know



they're key to the project – are also well marshalled by the project managers at every stage. They can be unpredictable, but the project methodology has built-in contingencies to manipulate the stakeholders around the project goals until the end. Almost...

Does it work?

Ah. Sadly, one of the stakeholders manages to avoid the manipulation by dint of being stoned the whole time. (It's complicated: let's just say, using hypnotic gases to convince your users to conform to the project outcomes might make an ERP roll-out a bit easier, but it's not exactly ideal.) He must die (and one other teenager survive) to meet the contractual terms set down by the demonic forces, and when he demurs in that deliverable... well, all

By definition, the challenges faced by horror movie protagonists are never 'business as usual'

hell breaks loose. This is a post-project contract dispute you don't want to witness.

KEY PROJECT LESSON

If your PMO regularly undertakes a particular type of project, don't let them get complacent. All it takes is one stoner to derail a well-oiled project machine and we're all doomed.

1/10

SHAUN OF THE DEAD

When 'accidental project managers' are drawn into a situation, they can bring a useful dose of common sense and knowledge of the terrain.

Who's the project manager?

Crouch End slacker Shaun (Simon Pegg) is so numbed by his dead-end existence and depression at being dumped by his girlfriend that he and his mate Ed (Nick Frost) completely miss the onset of a zombie apocalypse. But then his innate project management skills kick in. As soon as the pair finish off the undead lurking in his garden using a variety of household implements and his record collection, he sets about saving his people with a masterplan.

Project goals?

We're blessed that the title character literally produces a list of stage gates for the key project: "Take car. Go to Mum's. Kill Phil – 'sorry' – grab Liz, go to the Winchester, have a nice cold pint, and wait for all of this to blow over. How's that for a slice of fried gold?"

Note how the project is framed as a series of dependent goals, satisfying a wide range of stakeholders, with clear deliverables, crafted to take full account of environmental factors outside the project manager's control, with a final, unarguable end state. All communicated in 28 words. "Fried gold" indeed.

Stakeholder management?

Shaun has uneasy relationships with everyone in the movie – even best friend Ed, whose ham-fisted approach to life jeopardises the project several times (including playing a loud slot machine in the Winchester pub when the humans are trying to avoid detection by the zombies). But his ability to reconcile with the different personalities despite

his misanthropic approach to life is textbook project leadership. Keep them focused on the deliverables, use their talents to further the project goals and leave the emotion to one side. Well played.

Does it work?

Yes... There are casualties along the way, including several of the main characters. Even Shaun's mum Barbara (Penelope Wilton) buys it, and Ed gets bitten and turned into a zombie. But Shaun and girlfriend Liz (Kate Ashfield) make it through safely, and the film ends with the world returned to normal: Shaun playing video games with Zombie Ed in his garden shed. So sure: some of the team didn't make it. But the project overall works (and Shaun gets his girlfriend back).

8/10

KEY PROJECT LESSON

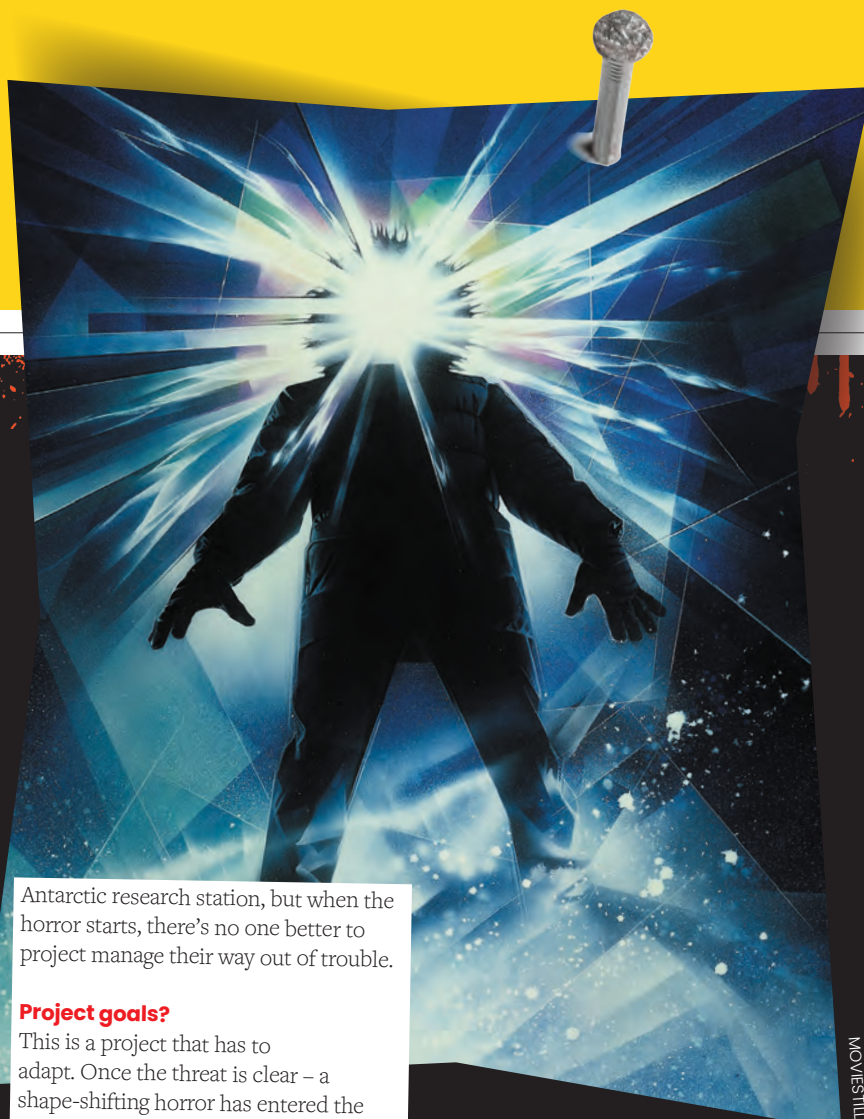
Clarity of purpose, adaptability of project techniques, and easy-to-understand deliverables make all the difference, especially in a changeable and hostile environment.

THE THING

What happens when the project team no longer feel they can trust each other – and their project methodologies diverge.

Who's the project manager?

“RJ MacReady, helicopter pilot, US outpost number 31.” MacReady (Kurt Russell) is a laconic project manager, without a doubt. We meet him playing computer chess – which he loses, prompting him to pour his Scotch into the machine. This tells us he's a smart guy with a no-nonsense approach and a refusal to lose. We've no idea how he ended up a fly-boy for a remote



Antarctic research station, but when the horror starts, there's no one better to project manage their way out of trouble.

Project goals?

This is a project that has to adapt. Once the threat is clear – a shape-shifting horror has entered the camp and is assimilating team members, risking infection of all life on Earth – MacReady and the team realise they have to contain the... ‘thing’. His approach starts with the systematic closing down of situations that would allow the being to absorb team members. Then when it's clear that stage gate has failed – they know at least one of them is a ‘thing’ – he devises new methodologies to detect and destroy the intruder.

Stakeholder management?

Not so great, in all honesty. MacReady's natural project leadership skills do emerge, but because he's not the ranking crew-member, there's all sorts of fuss before he can get the project working. What with insubordinate team members who decide on a different project approach – never workable, let's be honest – and constant interruptions from the alien horror, getting everyone inside around a specific goal is essentially impossible.

Does it work?

Er... no? The final recalibration of the project's goals is met: MacReady and chief mechanic Childs (Keith David, in fine form) have been at loggerheads over project methodologies for the whole movie, but are left at the end surrounded by a burning camp that – they hope – will mean the final remains of the alien lifeform are destroyed. But can they – or we, the viewers – be sure one of them isn't a ‘thing’ happy to go to sleep in the cold and wait for the rescue team to bring them back to infect civilisation?

5/10*

KEY PROJECT LESSON

In-fighting is terminal to successful project management. And if one of your team comes in with grouches and gripes about how you're doing things, they can infect the mood of the whole project. Beware.

MOVIESTILLS

* because it's a \$50:\$50 bet



NEW BOOKS, RECOMMENDED FAVOURITES AND PODCASTS TO KEEP YOU ENTERTAINED

WE LEARN LESSONS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH OUTRAGED STAKEHOLDERS IN A FOUR-STEP FRAMEWORK, AND REVISIT A CLASSIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT BOOK UPDATED FOR 2024



The Age of Outrage: How to lead in a polarized world
Karthik Ramanna
(HBR Press)

Karthik Ramanna provides a timely and

insightful guide for leaders navigating modern societal dynamics. Drawing from various disciplines, including psychology, economics and philosophy, he offers a practical and nuanced four-step framework for managing outraged stakeholders. The book's strength lies in its clear and accessible presentation of complex ideas, making it an invaluable resource for leaders.

Ramanna begins by identifying the three key forces driving the current climate of outrage: a pessimistic outlook on the future, perceptions of systemic injustice and the rise of divisive ideologies. This foundational analysis sets the stage for his comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges. The framework is both practical and

detailed, emphasising the importance of acknowledging emotions and creating safe spaces for dialogue as a first step in "cooling down the temperature". This initial step is followed by a deeper analysis of outrage, crafting appropriate responses, mobilising allies and developing long-term resilience strategies.

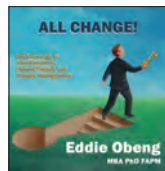
One of the book's most valuable contributions is its emphasis on authenticity and open communication. Ramanna stresses the importance of validating stakeholders' concerns while staying true to organisational values and mission. This balanced approach offers a roadmap for leaders seeking to build trust and credibility in challenging times.

Throughout the book, Ramanna enriches his framework with real-world case studies that bring his principles to life. These examples range from corporate settings to public institutions, demonstrating the versatility and applicability of his approach. Leaders can see how to apply these strategies in various contexts, making the theoretical concepts more relatable and actionable.

While the book excels in its practical advice and theoretical grounding, some readers might find the final chapter less cohesive compared to the preceding sections. The concluding chapter, which should have succinctly summarised key points and included a compelling case study, instead meanders through various anecdotes without clear direction. However, this minor weakness does not significantly detract from the overall value of the work.

This book is particularly relevant for leaders in sectors where managing projects amid societal tension is a daily reality. Ramanna's insights on fostering positive environments, establishing clear rules of engagement and striving for incremental progress are especially noteworthy. By combining analytical rigour with practical wisdom, it provides leaders with the tools they need to navigate complex stakeholder relationships and build more resilient organisations. This book is an essential read for anyone seeking to lead effectively in today's polarised world.

Review by Emma Carroll-Walsh
ChPP FAPM, Director, Customer Programmes, Aqua Consultants



All Change!
The secret art of transformation, perfect project and change management

Eddie Obeng (Pentacle Works)

Some project management textbooks can be worthy but dull, and the messages don't stick in the memory for long. *All Change!* is the antithesis of that type of book. Eddie Obeng has a unique style and an ability to explain difficult concepts in everyday language which he applies to good effect in this substantial update to the original 1990s edition. I particularly like the way he uses storytelling as a substantial part of his narrative to help the reader learn almost without trying

and to create a receptive environment for his ideas.

Most of us spend most of our time working on complicated projects trying to deliver change, which isn't always welcomed. *All Change!* offers invaluable insights to help us navigate these tumultuous waters. In its four parts, the book is almost encyclopaedic.

Part 1 is the story of how Obeng and a friend make sense of the rapidly changing world and the intricacies of project success. He introduces a raft of ideas such as the four laws of change, the different types of change projects – painting by numbers, quests, movies and fog. Part 2 is a comprehensive guide to how to deliver each type of change. It is packed full of useful hints, more than 300 performance enhancement tools and quizzes to encourage the reader to apply the ideas to their own projects. Part 3 is about delivering perfect projects and is told as a story of a visit to the virtual reality QUBE campus, which Obeng established in 2010. It is here that the ideas from parts 1 and 2 come together in a way which, the author argues, makes zero-defect projects routine. The final part is the art of transformation.

For this more 'mature' practitioner, the book stimulated much thought. The reimagining of the iron triangle for the modern world – fast, good, cheap – will stay with me for a long time. There were also occasions when I found myself disagreeing with the author – particularly around applicability to complex megaprojects. But I take that as a good sign of a well written and helpful book and one which follows in Obeng's long tradition of original thought.

I particularly recommend *All Change!* to less experienced colleagues for whom the practical advice, clarity of thinking and accessibility to a raft of concepts should prove invaluable.

Review by Tim Banfield, Director, Banfield Advisory. See page 74 for details of an APM discount on *All Change!*

My Bedside Books

Jason Waddy, Partner, Gardiner & Theobald

The Empire State Building: The making of a landmark John Tauranac

More than a history book or construction text, this reads like a novel and is a compelling tale of how technology, logistics, politics, economics and architecture created a real icon. A recommended read for anyone embarking on a project and a lesson on the art of the possible.

Humanise: A maker's guide to building our world Thomas Heatherwick

This book divides opinion: literary clickbait to some and a victory for common sense to others. Certainly, it is over-simplistic, but it is undeniably accessible to a broad audience. It definitely provokes a

response and attempts to offer solutions. Is it more wrong more than it is right? I would suggest that you read it and decide for yourself.

An African History of Africa: From the dawn of humanity to independence

Zeinab Badawi

This is the most impressive book I have read for a long time. I have travelled in Africa and it has been a magical experience. Taking the reader from the emergence of our species, through ancient civilisations, dark periods of modern history to a complex but optimistic present day, this book is an essential and fascinating read. As the dust jacket says: "Everyone is originally from Africa, and this book is therefore for everyone."

We're all ears – podcasts to listen to

APM Podcast, episode 100

It doesn't seem that long ago that we first experimented with podcasts in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. In September, we will mark our 100th episode with an interview with Ros Atkins, BBC News' Analysis Editor, who has been dubbed 'Explainer-in-Chief', in part due to his hugely successful 'Ros Atkins on...' video series. His book *The Art of Explanation* is out now, but if you want to listen to some of his top tips on how to communicate better for every aspect of your work (and life), then skip straight to our podcast.

This is Not a Drill

Exploring threats to global stability, from Ukraine to China

to the Middle East, this podcast is hosted by Gavin Esler – former BBC News presenter, Washington correspondent and host of *Newsnight* – plus Ukraine-based war reporter Oz Katerji and independent conflict analyst Emma Beals. It dives deep into the dangers, corruption, conflicts, disinformation, rivalries and ruthless realpolitik that are making our world ever more dangerous.

The Daily

The biggest political event this autumn will be the US election in November, so it pays to keep abreast with developments with this series of 20-minute episodes from *The New York Times*. Hosts Michael Barbaro and Sabrina Tavernise describe it as "exactly how the news should sound". Find the time to listen to it a couple of times a week with your coffee or on your commute, and you'll impress everyone with your informed take on global affairs.

A thirst for change... for the better?

EDDIE OBENG PROVIDES ADVICE ON NAVIGATING A WORLD OF SEEMINGLY CONSTANT CHANGE (AND CHAOS). QUICK TIP: IT'S ALL ABOUT CONQUERING YOUR FEAR.



Professor Eddie Obeng HonFAPM is an educator, TED speaker and author. You can join his masterclasses, courses and workshops on the QUBE #SuperReal campus at QUBE.cc

You, like me, will have noticed that, these days, it's all change. So what should you do? Stay in your comfort zone or venture out into the uncertain? Deliver the project you've been set or provide benefits for stakeholders? Put up with the challenging chaos of the world or surf the waves of change? Are you paralysed by these dilemmas? Do you secretly wish for someone to sort things out and save us all?

The Three Laws of Change

We're surrounded by change, drowning in it – but thirsty for 'change for the better'. Why? We've connected up the world with light-speed communications and common standards and even shifted all institutions to a 'culture of change'. The First Law of Change kicks in as 'One Change Leads to Another'. People and politicians respond to the change with knee-jerk reactions that fuel the Second Law of Change: 'Adding Change to Change Creates Chaos'. Now we get unpredictable, surprising and vicious cycles of change.

You might ask: what is wrong with that? After all, isn't change inevitable and isn't progress good? Some of us know that not all change is progress. Progress is improvement. Improvement is a very small subset of change that makes things better. 'Better' can only be defined by the stakeholders of that specific change and the stakeholders must be thinking critically and be unpersuaded by third parties.

But once the level of chaos rises, the stakeholders are in big trouble. When our ancestors, 100,000 years ago, found themselves in uncertainty, it really was a matter of life or death. Today practically

You often find what you need most where you least wish to look

nothing is an existential threat, and yet the chaos of change causes us high levels of anxiety, even fear, because of the old subroutines running in our brains.

The Third Law of Change gives the reason: 'People Constrain Change'. It's because our fear response overwhelms our logical capability. Once scared, we wait for the top gorilla to tell us what to do. And as every persuasion professional in sales, marketing or media knows, fear is the most powerful, though unethical, vehicle to deliver your own agenda over your stakeholders'. The more you exaggerate how bad the situation is, the more you can influence stakeholders.

How to take action on change

Don't look for 'change for the better' in the wrong place, however much it's highlighted. Here's how you find improvement:

- 1. Unplug from fear.** If you feel anxious, recognise that it's probably your software misfiring. Work out who is driving the fear – a colleague, the media, etc – and disengage from them completely.
- 2. Future dream.** Spend a few minutes each morning daydreaming about the potential trip hazards that might come at you during the day. If they do, you will be proud you predicted them, not cowed.
- 3. Orient.** Does the change impact what is important to you, your family or your profession? Can you act or is it just upsetting and disempowering?
- 4. Reframe.** Read and use reframes. I like: 'You can't change the past but you can change how you feel about it!'
- 5. Go where the fear is.** It's your compass. It points at what you need to learn or master. If the media scares you with a political ghoul – go read speeches in detail. You often find what you need most where you least wish to look.

On your project:

- 1. Map.** I use the four-stage Here2There people engagement tool to map out the territory. Draw images (no words) of the current state of things (HERE); the future state (THERE); and what's GOING WELL and NOT GOING WELL. Set to work immediately on what's not going well at the moment to make things better now.
- 2. Orient.** Return to the stakeholders and check how the project brings improvement.
- 3. Chunk it.** Find a small change effort you can complete now that will bring in benefits now.

To calm the world down, we'd apply the Second Law in reverse – place gaps between causal events and add friction wherever possible. The world won't be getting calmer and no one is coming to save us, but don't worry about those dilemmas – just do as I suggest above. You must never fear the future, because that's where you are going to spend the rest of your life. Just stand tall and stride purposefully towards whatever scares you the most.

READER OFFER

A special APM edition of Eddie's book *All Change!* is available to APM members for the discounted price of £30. Get your copy at eddieobeng.com/apm-allchange