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The primary ingredient for progress is optimism. The unwavering belief that something can be better drives the human race forward.

Simon Sinek



Dear Readers,

We are happy to present to you the first international edition of the quarterly "PMI Zone", entirely in English, the magazine issued on the Polish market since 2013 by Project Management Institute Poland Chapter – the Polish division of the world's largest organization of pro-

ject management practitioners. Encouraged by the success of our magazine in the domestic market, we decided to share our work more widely and offer our inspiring content to the international audience.

The theme of this issue constitutes the title of the interview with Antonio Nieto-Rodríguez: *Projects – the greatest disruption of the 21st century*. Do we really have the right to rank projects as drivers of change and development higher than technology, AI or Big Data? Doesn't it sound like light megalomania in the mouths of project management enthusiasts? Reach for this interview (p. 32) to see how the promoter of the Project Economy idea proves that it is the way companies, organizations, or even countries – which are increasingly based on projects – will be the most important factor that will change the reality around us.

We also devote a lot of space to other development drivers in this edition of "PMI Zone". We especially recommend the interview with Maria Parysz (p. 40), with whom we take a closer look at the subject of Data Science and AI projects. Do you know how they differ from projects in other areas? What are the key competences of AI Project Manager? Until finally, is Artificial Intelligence as terrible as it is sometimes portrayed? And what does it mean for our industry? And if we are talking about the future, we also recommend an article by Nikita Shtemenko (p. 42), which takes us on a journey to the future of projects in the construction industry.

The 21st century is a time when the word *sustainability* is inflected in all cases. Wondering how it connects to project management? Do we, project people, have a real impact on the fate of our planet? Take a look at the article of Artur Kasza (p. 16) that discusses the relationship between project management and sustainability and introduces us to the PRISM methodology that integrates both areas and the P5 standard.

And when, inevitably, you are already thinking back to the reality around us, reach for Malgorzata Kusyk's article (p. 10). In it, you will read about resilience, antifragile and organizational agility and learn how to build them in your organization. Everything indicates that these days they will be useful to us like nothing else. Just like agility at the team and personal level – and here we also have a lot of inspiration to offer you – you will take it from an interview with Mark Lines about Disciplined Agile (p. 36), Monika Potiopa's article about Definition of Ready (p. 26) and Jarosław Ściślak's paper about a culture conducive to experimentation (p. 14). Another valuable insight on projects, its areas and your role you will find in Anna Gambal's article (p. 28). The optics change like a kaleidoscope and you just have to – and until – learn to see the differences and adapt yourself and your optics to change.

We hope that you enjoy our work and it will bring you a lot of inspiration and will benefit your development. If yes, please don't hesitate to share your thoughts on our social media, we would be happy to have your feedback.

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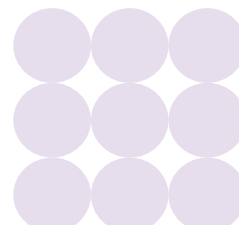
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Added Value from a Project Manager

Maciej Bodych

I guess that there is no need to convince the readers of “Strefa PMI” about the role and value of project managers. The ability to plan, lead, control and draw conclusions is currently perceived as part of a project manager’s body of knowledge. Unfortunately, very often the work results are not directly visible, because when the project is on track, the manager “simply capitalizes on good planning”. Moreover, in such circumstances, you are likely to hear statements such as: “our project managers do not add value”, they are just “forward managers” who barely transmit requests from the top management to the team and report data from the team to the top management.

Should then the project manager behave like a voluntary fire brigade, which may be inclined to set fire to some “old barn” just to prove its usefulness? Some individuals recommend that the manager should indeed initiate a crisis in the project in order to save

it. I must admit that I really like the idea of finding the “old barn” in the project. Both to save the project, and—even more importantly—to direct the attention of all those outside the project team to some insignificant stuff that has no real impact on the project. But let’s get back to the point and focus on things that, in my opinion, a project manager can do to deliver much more than “just project management”!

In search for optimization and savings

Surely this is something that instantly came to your mind, so I will start with this topic. Finding a cheaper supplier; “expelling” a non-performing team member or someone who damages the efforts of the rest; establishing a better organization; re-using existing items (such as modules, technologies or lessons learned from other projects) are all examples of things intended to decrease project implementation costs. Sometimes

we lack this type of thinking. Project manager check if they are within budget and if that is the case they simply forget about the topic. All they need to remember is to conduct such analysis at the right moment from the perspective of their organization’s budgeting cycle. Unfortunately, in many companies reporting “unspent” money in the last months of the year will be perceived as “unnecessary confusion” and “you’d better spend everything, because you know how many things need to be undone now”.

Stop this madness

The multitude of committees, boards, and other stakeholders leads to project managers being endlessly augmented with recommendations or (to make things even worse) decisions that reorganize and improve their projects. Sadly, these changes are made without involving the project manager or through an official consultation in which project managers have no real opportunity

to present their view. And while many occurrences external to projects are outside of project manager's sphere of influence, the way these "improvements" are implemented can actually be impacted by the project manager and the team. As an example I would refer to a new reporting format introduced by the top management in some organization for all investment projects. Initially, the development of its detailed form required 10 man-days of effort from the project team every week! The project manager was assertive enough to engage in the negotiations with the board. And the board was so keen to receive these reports that they eventually agreed to use a simplified approach to calculating the status. The format has not changed, but data preparation and analysis were a lot less time-consuming. One can only wonder why this approach was not used right from the beginning.

By the way, I hope that we all keep in mind that such a situation is an example of a **project change**. And consequently, project sponsor should provide additional resources for these activities if they wish to continue the project in accordance with the guidelines received from the board. What should be done to stop this madness? In my opinion, project managers should become partners for stakeholders. Their interest should not be limited to an operational dimension of their project. Instead, they should also look into the impact of organizational changes resulting from their project. We would be interested in the future development of the system we are currently implementing. Together with our team, we would provide suggestion on how to increase benefits of the project product, or propose additional product features that would provide greater value. And we would always provide our recommendations. **We would no longer be focused on the operational success of our project, but on creating the value for the organization where the project is implemented.** Increasingly more individuals and organizations seem to be fed up with how much efforts project managers put to ensure good PR of their projects and to blame others for all the bad things that happen in their projects.

Develop project team

From the project manager's perspective, the team's competences should be matched with the project needs. We cannot see any

incentive in spending team members' precious time for acquiring knowledge that will be needed after the project is completed. This hesitation is even deeper when we are in the position of an external PM hired on contractual basis or a supplier who will "disappear" as soon as the project comes to an end. But what if half of the project team keep and develop the solution later? Invest in people during the project and you will benefit both in your project and beyond. Such investment will positively affect the team members, but also your project. And think about the feedback concerning your project, when the stabilization phase goes smoothly and without problems because the organization will have the capabilities needed to sustain and reinforce the outcomes of the project.

Use your expertise from other domains

Prior to your project manager's career, most probably you were performing other roles in your organizations. Your experience related to testing, business processes, products, or support functions may prove to be an added value for the project. Perhaps, you also have the capability to educate others and this could also be an advantage for the company? Do not hesitate to apply your strengths, because it actually makes a difference if you are paid for performing a single role or when you wear several "hats". Educate new project managers by sharing project management knowledge.

Look beyond your project

What should you decide or recommend, when you could expand project scope with items that facilitate future development of the system, but such expansion results in additional effort or delay? Taking a traditional project manager's perspective an obvious answer to this dilemma would be "no". However, it may not be so obvious when you look from the business perspective. And if you think about the organization's perspective the answer would become an evident "yes"! Being guided by the value for the company, and not only the value for your project, is a key aspect of the project manager's work. The fact that work is organized in project or functional structures does not justify dissecting the company into distinct and unrelated islands and ap-

proaching everything solely from your own perspective.

So what should the project manager focus on to add value to the project? Above all, they should continuously look for opportunities to improve both the project and the post-project outcomes. Strive to become a partner and advisor to project stakeholders. Provide them with your recommendations of specific actions offering value from the perspective of customers and not just convenient for your project. Think what is your competitive advantage over other project managers? And I'm not talking about the corporate rat race, but a question of fundamental importance: why should the company pay me more? Now whether it will, that's a different story. But take the first step in this direction and deliver added value to the project or from the project! 📈



Maciej Bodych

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▲ Eight Reasons Why Your Organisation Should Hire a Learning Partner

Katarzyna Mikołajczyk

A person who examines the development needs of a company and its employees, builds a training strategy, takes care of the quality of training, and finally – checks if all of the above translates into the business. Who are we talking about? A Learning Partner. You may have not yet heard of such a role but here's why you should consider having one in your organisation.

Your company probably has an HR Business Partner who supervises the communication and relations within the team. You are also familiar with the concept of Talent Success Lead, who supports employees in developing their careers. You might have had the opportunity to work with a training specialist as well, and you are wondering is there room there for yet another person? What value would they actually bring?

Let's think about the situation that many of us have encountered in our companies. We have a project team consisting of ten people: developers, a tester, a business analyst, and, of course, a Project Manager. Each of them has different development needs. So are we going to organise ten different training courses? Theoretically, yes. A resourceful manager with a little help (and budget) will certainly manage to do that. Now let's go one step further. Suppose we have ten such teams and each of them has ten different training needs. This sums up to a total of 100 training courses to be conducted. On top of that, we should consider different initial levels of knowledge and experience. Does this mean that we need 100 or more separate courses? Or maybe some of the needs are similar, and they can be addressed together? If so, how does that work if we take into account, for example, different ex-

periences? What format should be applied, a training course or totally different solution? And finally, who will take charge and responsibility of the task? Will the entire burden of organising training courses fall on a Project Manager?

Such situation is very common in organisations. A company obviously understands that employees want to develop professionally. But how to make it happen? The solution is simple – a whole training package, a typical benefit/cafeteria plan. "Dear Employee, here is your budget for your development, and here is the menu – pick what you like!" We know straight away that this cannot work. To succeed, there must be someone who verifies the effectiveness of given solutions, ensures the quality of training, limits the menu to the options addressing the real needs of employees, and supporting the objectives of the company. Otherwise,

there is no real system of training and talent development.

And here comes a Learning Partner.

A Learning Partner is a T&D (Talent & Development) expert. They have the knowledge and practical experience in developing people's skillset. They combine the competencies of a leader and a strategist who can carry out a deep, comprehensive analysis of development needs – not only at the individual and team level but also for the entire organisation. They can then create and implement specific development projects.

1. A business partner expert (they consult, advise, analyse);

A Learning Partner supports the business by working closely with it. Such specialist is close to employees, leaders, and so-called support roles. They analyse the company's business strategy, have an insight into the competencies that the organisation plans to develop in the near future, verifies the development or training needs and, based on that, advise on the best training solutions for the situation. An effective Learning Partner can identify a development need from a problem/challenge and knows how to address it most effectively.

2. They engage internal experts and enhance the exchange of know-how;

A Learning Partner builds relationships and creates opportunities to exchange know-how within the company. Such specialists engage internal experts in creating communities and organise internal corporate meet-ups and webinars. They recruit, train and prepare trainers, speakers, and in-house mentors. As a result, the process of exchanging knowledge is smooth and the quality of its transfer increases across the company.

3. They check real (present and future) development needs (expert meta-analysis)

A Learning Partner is a good analyst, who knows and uses tools to collect information about development needs, not only qualitatively but also quantitatively. They look at

data from many different perspectives and compares it with the company's strategic goals, career paths, and global trends. They can identify current development needs and anticipate future ones and thus meet them in advance.

4. They match methods and solutions to needs and conditions (tailor-made)

What works for one company will not necessarily work for another one. A Learning Partner takes care of the personalisation and effectiveness of the T&D activities. There's no training that would be suitable for everyone (and therefore not suitable for anyone). A Learning Partner plans various solutions and development methods through analysis and knowledge of their clients (aka employees). They also ensure the proper allocation of resources, effort and time and thus help to increase the ROI of an organisation.

5. They remove blockers

A Learning Partner makes sure that the existing solutions and the T&D strategy work efficiently and effectively. They care about user experience and act as helpers and innovators. They continually verify whether the existing processes work properly. If they notice a need, they implement improvements and innovations, ensuring flexibility of the development strategy in response to changing conditions, needs or business vision.

6. They define strategy and direction for T&D

A Learning Partner analyses development needs in an organisation at many levels and then compares them with their knowledge of human development, as well as with the latest training methods and trends. On this basis, they develop a short and long-term T&D strategy. As a result, development activities are targeted, planned and effective.

7. They take the burden from Project Managers saving their time

Finally, a Learning Partner provides support to leaders who can focus on their tasks, knowing that the development (training)

needs of their team members will be met and that a Learning Partner will come up with a solution that suits them.

8. A Learning Partner saves money and brings the right investment

In the case of training, ROI is a subject that keeps many organisations awake at night. Although indeed it is challenging to define the ROI indicators for development, there is still a lot of room for improvement in this area. Knowing what competencies are needed and what solutions/methods will be most effective for a company/team, it is possible to effectively plan the budget for development activities. Simply, this translates into higher ROI and savings, because you only invest in what has real value and supports the goal.

Very often employee development is managed by several different persons/roles at the same time or even is fully outsourced (as a benefit in the form of training budgets). Training courses are organised without a more profound strategy and preferably in response to an existing requirement. They are also seen as more of the fulfillment of employees or team individual needs, than of the entire organisation. A Learning Partner helps to look at the subject from a completely different perspective and understand that a comprehensive approach to employee development is also (and perhaps above all) conducive to business development. This is a function that ensures the quality of training and makes sure that the knowledge gained through it is up-to-date and useful. So, knowing all of these, are you going to add a Learning Partner to your organisation? ▲



Katarzyna
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Resilience – Antifragile – Agility. How to Thrive in Times of Crisis?

Małgorzata Kusyk

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn”

Alvin Toffler

With this quote Ralf Knegtmans begins the foreword for the Polish edition of his book *Agile Talent: Nine Essential Steps for Selecting Tomorrow's Top Talent*.

Recent events have confirmed how unpredictable and volatile today's world is, often described by the acronym VUCA, which comes from the words: volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. It was invented by the American army and created from the first letters of words describing the peculiarities of the situation during the war. VUCA been adopted quite quickly in the business world, as it describes well the environment in which today's organizations operate – rapid changes have become the norm. Some also talk about the Black Swans, although personally prefer VUCA.

What is resiliency?

The word **resiliency** – the ability or process of adapting a person to changing conditions – has been repeating over and over and over again. Preparing an article for the previous edition of Strefa PMI on the new normality and trends in project management, I asked a question about which of the topics

is worth exploring. I received the following response: “I’m happy to read about examples of team and organizational resilience”.

Hence the idea of writing a few words on this subject, not forgetting also personal resiliency, which has been recognized as one of the three most important leadership competences in these days (Talent Development Institute and Adventure for Thought study of 100 companies). Chris Burry, on the other hand, mentioned resilience as top *Mindset of the Successful Entrepreneur* at Infoshare 2020 conference.

Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth (American Psychology Association, 2018).

Antifragile

“Complex systems are weakened, even killed, when deprived of stressors”

Nassim Taleb

Nassim Nicholas Taleb coined the term of **antifragile**. Antifragility is beyond resilience

or robustness. What Taleb has identified and calls *antifragile* is that category of things that not only gain from chaos but need it in order to survive and flourish.

From the organization's perspective, *antifragile* is “the result of the characteristics of its ruling units adjusted for flexibility and the ability of holistic leaders to perceive challenges. **Complexity requires a holistic approach**, the ability to prioritize and draw on the team's diverse experiences and skills” (Taleb, *Antifragile*, 2014)

Regardless of how the company is managed, it is a **complex adaptive system** (CAS) that requires a systemic view and management from the whole system perspective. It is a set of individual factors that work in a way that is not always entirely predictable in the way that the behaviour of one factor affects the behaviour of others. Complex systems are full of interdependencies – hard to detect – and nonlinear responses – **there is no simple cause-and-effect** (Taleb, *Antifragile*, 2014). However, not all organizations understand this and see the organization as a steam-driven machine and mechanical system, often optimizing individual parts of it.

Personally, I hoped that today's crisis would force organisations to change the paradigm of thinking to more holistic view. And instead of repairing the individual components of the machine – optimizing and cutting costs – they will invest in preparing the right ground, thanks to which people

will flourish. As the psychologist Jonathan Haidt (*Happiness*, 2006) rightly pointed out, humans are not machines, but plants. *“It’s impossible to fix a plant – you can create the right conditions for it: provide it with water, sun and fertile soil – and wait. The rest belongs to her.”*

Organisational Agility

However, I am saddened to see how far we are from agility, which Christopher Worley defines as *“the ability to make timely, effective and sustained organisation change when and where it provides performance advantage for the organisation”*. An agile organization is one that changes better than anyone else.

The changes should address areas such as goal setting, feedback, evaluation, rewarding and budgeting. Agile organizations are built around interdisciplinary teams or at least work together across departments to achieve better results. They actively fight “US and THEM” thinking by investing in a common understanding.

The agile organization is characterized by the following routines (Worley, 2015):

- setting innovative objectives, a shared strategy and creating a climate for its implementation,
- continuous monitoring of the business environment and communication of changes to decision-makers for interpretation and action,
- creating a climate for continuous implementation of change – a culture supporting cooperation, open communication and transparency,
- learning by experimentation – making mistakes is part of the learning process,
- craftsmanship – continuous improvement and development of all members of the organization.

Worth mentioning here is the Amy Edmondson’s concept of **teaming**. Teaming is a dynamic way of working that provides the coordination and collaboration without the rigidity of stable team structures. Teaming and its associated behaviours support organisational learning and require the right leadership mindset to optimise outcomes. Starting from teaming and its four behaviours: **speaking up**, **experimenting**, **collaboration** and **reflection**, through **Organising to Learn** mindset which involve four actions: reaching across boundaries, learning from

failure, creating psychological safety and re-framing for learning the organisation reaches **Execution as Learning** – a way of operating that builds learning into ongoing operations. Execution as Learning is defined in contrast to **Execution to Efficiency**, which values control over flexibility and adherence over experimentation, and often relies on fear to promote control and adherence. Execution as Learning comprises of four steps: diagnose, design, act, reflect.

How to develop resilience at work?

“When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us”

Alexander Graham Bell

Even self-conscious and emotionally strong leaders can sometimes be surprised by unexpected events and challenges, so it is worth learning healthy ways to deal with adversity that will help us strengthen psychological resilience.

Below are some tips shared by psychologist Barbara Mróz in the Leader’s Compass, and more at the Agile Leadership Navigator workshop:

- Develop self-awareness
- Use self-reflection
- Take care of physical immunity: sleep, nutrition, physical fitness
- Search your area of influence
- Build a social support network
- Learn to see situations as challenges, not threats
- Search for meaning and meaning in what you do
- Develop a lifelong learning habit
- Consciously decide your answer to what happens
- Develop positive thinking
- Show compassion.

Activity: When one door closes, another opens

Think of a time in your life when someone rejected you, you missed something important, or dropped a big plan. These would be the moments of your life where the door closed. Now think about what happened next: what door opened later? What would never have happened if the first door hadn’t

closed? Write down as many experiences as possible that will come to your mind.



Agility Pyramid

Source: Own compilation from C. Worley

Epilogue

Unfortunately, my observations confirm that, despite the increasing complexity and uncertainty and the available knowledge and practices on how to deal with them, organizations are constantly looking for ways to stretch a single into a triple – cut costs and optimize the “machine”. Just as the opposite of fragile is not robust but *anitifragile* – Taleb had to come up with a new word, **the opposite of uncertainty is not certainty but the new possibilities, and these require a paradigm shift.** ▲



Małgorzata Kusyk

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Liberating Structures – Techniques for Valuable Meetings

Ewa Koprowska

What are Liberating Structures? What value they bring and how to apply them in your organization or team? Where to find the resources from which you can learn more and explore further structures? How to combine structures into more complex “facilitation strings”?

Liberating Structures (LS) are 33 schemes for conducting meetings or conversations in a specific group and for a certain purpose. The authors: Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless propose a different approach to the group interaction than the traditional one. The structures they propose create a framework that is aimed to boost creativity, imagination and intelligence in participants. A large group of LS practitioners promotes this approach precisely because these structures are to trigger what is best in the participants instead of embarrassing them as it is often the case during traditional meetings.

When to use Liberating Structures

If you notice that you waste a lot of time on typical meetings such as presentations,

discussions and statuses in your organization or in your team, Liberating Structures come as the last resort. You don't need to be a certified moderator. You don't even need to have extensive facilitation experience to start working with a group using the simplest selected structures. Later in this article, I will propose a few sample structures to start with. Liberating Structures have been designed intentionally in a simple manner so that anyone can conduct a meeting using them without much preparation in any organization or group. Sounds as unbelievable as advertising, however, it is just as easy as it sounds. You don't have to take my word for it, just check how people are getting involved at your next meeting when you ask them to share insights according to the 1-2-4-All structure. You will find more about this structure in two paragraphs below. First, I want to present you the basic resources that you will use when preparing your first Liberating Structures meeting.

Where to look for information about LS

Your first steps should be directed to the Liberating Structures [website: www.liberat-](http://www.liberatingstructures.com)

ingstructures.com or its Polish translation: www.liberatingstructures.org.pl. The website is simple, it could be more transparent, nevertheless, it contains all the necessary information. There you will find a list of structures, their description and examples of use. On the website, in addition to the above-mentioned set, you can see the structures that are currently being tested by the Liberating Structures community.

A very useful, perfectly designed and easy to use tool is Liberating Structures [application](#) available for both iOS and Android. In the application, you will find descriptions of structures and all the necessary information that you will have at hand during the facilitation. The application is available in several languages, including Polish.

The [book](#) by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless entitled *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures* is dedicated for the advanced user of LS. It lets you understand the idea and the history of LS. I recommend this book because, in addition to describing the structures themselves, it contains intelligent considerations about interactions that we are constantly involved in, in the everyday complex world.

If you are a [Slack](#) user and you feel comfortable with asynchronous communication, I recommend subscribing to Liberating Structures channel. You will find there information about events that take place non-stop around the world, many of them are carried out *pro publico bono*. You will read what new structures are tested, what problems are practitioners struggling with and you will find answers to your questions. At the time of writing this article, the link to sign up for Slack LS is: bit.ly/lshrzhzome. The link is changed periodically, so if it doesn't work – check the Liberating Structures website for information about the current link in the "Ask Questions" section or ask someone from the LS community to add your address. In particular, you can write to me via LinkedIn, I will be happy to do so.

From which structures should you start

For sure each of the Liberating Structures users has the own preferred set, but everyone starts with 1-2-4-All. Below you will find this structure, which is worth starting your adventure with Liberating Structures, and two of my favorites, which I strongly encourage you to try.

1-2-4-All (12 mins)

Structure involving all meeting participants in five simple steps to share insights and aggregate them into the group's most important solutions. You can use this structure during a meeting, a conversation in a larger group, workshop or project meeting. Using this structure works well in groups that are quiet and reluctant to enter into discussions. On the other hand, you will nicely mitigate the dominant people at the meetings by taking equal care of the opinions of all participants. A simple sequence of moderation steps is as follows: individual reflection on a given topic (1 min), discussion in pairs (2 mins), then in the groups of four (4 mins) and then as the whole group we share our insights and select the most important conclusions.

Troika Consulting (30 mins)

It is a "self-help" structure, which means that it allows to use the knowledge and experience of group members in an even manner, so as to obtain suggestions for solutions to problems brought to the meeting. An additional advantage of this structure is

learning to listen actively. Both, the person who formulates the issue of the "client" and the "consultants", i.e. people who propose a solution, listen to each other. The sequence of steps is as follows: the participants divide into groups of three and determine in groups who is the "client". The "client" tells about the problem and the "consultants" ask in-depth questions. The "client" then turns around (or turns off the webcam in the virtual world) and listens silently to the "consultants" conversation. In the last step, the client returns to the triangle and informs the consultants which of the proposed solutions will be used in practice.

TRIZ (35 mins)

A playful, energetic structure that turns our worst, low instincts into constructive discussion. Use it when you want to identify obstacles, find a plan to solve difficult complex problems, or break your team out of stagnation. The downside to this structure is that you can only successfully complete it once for a given group, because surprise is essential here. Therefore, I do now give a sequence of steps in this case.

How to prepare LS facilitation string?

Once you have successfully applied the first simple structures several times, the next natural step is to make a chain of them. Using the structures cited above, you can prepare a simple chain when collecting community good practices in your organization. First, using "Troika Consulting" collect a proposal of solutions to the issue raised, and then using 1-2-4-All look for patterns that you will be able to note in an agreed manner and convey to interested people in your organization. Gradually, as you experiment and gain experience in running various structures, your moderation chains will become more varied and your meetings will be full of energy and commitment of the participants.

How to choose a suitable structure?

After the first successful experiments, you will find yourself in a situation where you want to reach for another structure and do not know which one to choose. You have another meeting ahead of you and another goal to achieve. Think about what will be useful to achieve your goal and then reach for the

Matchmaker tool available on the LS website. Matchmaker will help you align structures with the steps necessary to achieve yours during the planned meeting and discussion. A simple and extremely useful tool for any facilitator.

Why do I recommend Liberating Structures?

I find the Liberating Structures an interesting way to deal with the complexities of the modern world. Small simple schemes can bring participants together and bring out their intelligence, imagination and creativity, and then combine these values with the intelligence, imagination and creativity of others, which gives unexpected results compared to traditional meetings and discussions. In my work, I often see organizations where business meetings are seen as pain or a nightmare that haunts innocent people every day. The use of Liberating Structures as a simple form of facilitation meant that many more meetings were conducted in an energetic and engaging way. These meetings achieved the assumed goals and, as a consequence, delivered the expected product or service. Realizing that using a few of the simplest LS helped me significantly improve the quality of the meetings I held, I decided to get to know as many of them as possible. I experimented with other structures, I got involved in promoting them and I use them successfully in my daily work. And this is what I wish for you, too. ▲



Ewa
Koprowska

Ewa has been working in the IT industry for over 20 years. During her career she has worked as an actuarial developer, analyst, project manager, Scrum Master, Product Owner and Agile Coach, so she can look at organizations and teams from a wider perspective. Ewa was also one of the Everest project managers at PZU, thanks to which she became one of the most recognizable experts on the subject of agile transformation and scaling in Poland. Currently in Code Sprinters she acts as a consultant in the area of modern management methods and mentor for organizations that want to achieve agility.



Deadbeat or a Rebel? Welcome to the Team!

Jarosław Ściślak

Bill Gates once said: “If I have a difficult problem to solve, I hire a lazy person because he will find an easy way to do it”. If so, why so many projects are sentenced to weeks and months of email discussions, meetings, and internal struggles? Wouldn’t be just easier to give the task to someone not giving a damn about protocol?

Naturally, this is oversimplifying and any sane Project Manager would think twice before doing so. There are, however, benefits of making things quicker, simpler, and more efficient. One of them is time and money-saving. The other – finding new ways to achieve goals.

Don’t think, act

We are socially conditioned to do the opposite. “Think before you act”, they say. “Choices have consequences”, they say. That might be very much true but it’s also limiting in a way and forbids us from actively seeking new solutions. **Sometimes the best way to tackle a challenge is to face it head-on, rather than analyzing it three times over.**

Especially in Agile, which promotes responding to change over following a plan. Paper can accept everything, reality doesn’t. People who work “**smart not hard**” are a valuable part of a team.

Over the years, I have encountered or was a part of, numerous situations where internal processes slowed down projects and made them unnecessarily complicated. **Lack of decisive actions combined with a lack of determination to solve problems, made projects longer and expensive.** Even fairly simple decisions like choosing the right CMS to run the company’s website took weeks.

People are actually made for making snap decisions. The 2018 PNAS study by Nadav Klein and Ed O’Brien proved that we notoriously overvalue long-term trials and neglect the speed at which conclusions are formed. In other words – as a species, we don’t trust our gut.

The revenue and company stability are basic motivators and factors for any business decision-making process. So much in fact, that many companies are paralyzed to think outside the box. Especially large and estab-

lished organizations, where spending above \$100 needs to be often approved by a manager. **Parachutes and extreme caution superseded pioneers and internal thought leaders.** Life gave way to lethargy.

I’m not saying that teams should go out there and approve every idea that comes to mind. Nor to throw money at expensive prototypes without proper business justification and technical documentation. **I’m saying that Big Data and overengineering took away what is best in us – Big Intuition. I’m saying both should be respected and play the same role in digital transformation and continuous, everyday business development.**

Establish and cherish a culture of experimentation

In the 29th issue of “Strefa PMI” I have published an article (Polish only) about the role of a company’s culture in project management. It’s time to expand on that. Many CEOs, CTOs, PMs, and similar C-level executives are too

risk-averse. They believe that if something previously worked fine, there's no reason to change. **But good enough is sometimes not enough.**

In December 2017, before the holiday travel season, the director of design at Booking.com proposed a bold move. He said: let's throw away all these different options for customers and simplify the process. Yes, we have optimized it for years and it works just fine but let's take a step further. Let's eliminate options for hotel rentals, travel deals, and all this noise. Instead, we could have a window that asked our user three simple questions: where are you going, when are you going, how many people are with you. On top of that, let's give them accommodations, flights, and rental car options. Why? Why not? What else would they need? Right now, we expect people to dive deep into the page and browse through options they don't necessarily need. **Making life simple for them will make life profitable for us.**

The result? Booking.com's CEO **Gillian Tans** wasn't very happy. She feared that changes will cause confusion among customers and drive navigational problems. That, of course, could lead to frustration and a changing travel agency. She wasn't alone – **Lukas Vermeer**, leading an in-house experimentation team, argued that everything would go down: time spent on the page, customer conversion, number of bookings. The experiment should go down in flames, right? It didn't, because at the very core of Booking.com's culture was the right to test anything without management's permission.

Personally, I believe this approach to be too radical but in this case, it worked. The team made the test and today Booking.com is light and simple. It's because some companies treat teams as forever-curious beings. They allow them to try, make mistakes, and fail. Even if they do, they come up on top with new knowledge. **Contained experiments don't necessarily burn money – they save truckloads of burned money in the future.**

Experiments come from curiosity. Curiosity comes from a feeling of security. And security comes from cultivating "save place policy" when our inner child has the opportunity to play. Children are often amazed at how complicated the "real world" is, where people dress up every day and make "serious" decisions. Children's naive and oversimplified take on the "real world", however lovely and innocent, is actually, in some regard, true. **If you can simplify processes, production, and**

products, do it. If people want to play with them and think they can make things easier, why don't let them? Especially if they challenge the status quo.

Trust the devil's advocate

Again, with the social conditioning – **we gravitate towards something we know and feel safe with.** When we are new in the crowd, some of us hang out with trusted faces. Meeting new people and talking about current affairs with the opposite standpoint in mind, scare us. We like to fit. Be part of something, even for the evening. **This approach feels right but it actually and slowly kills us. If we all think alike, no one is thinking at all.**

It's not just Benjamin Franklin's quote but also **Charlan Nemeth's**. This professor and academic researcher in 2018 published her life's work. A book called *In defense of troublemakers* told us that **people follow others in 70% of cases.** No matter if we think the other person is right. No matter if the domain authority and experience are there. We will follow whoever, just to belong and feel safe with the choice. If someone else tells us the white is actually black, so be it.

This behavior is also known in teams. Members will often not seek approval of the original idea but rather follow. That's why is important to always have a **"devil's advocate role"**. **To make conversation fresh, to question the status quo,** create "controlled chaos" and make the team on the lookout for **better solutions.** The problems with this:

- **You can't just appoint someone and expect this person to walk the rebel path.** "Devil's advocate" works fine only if one has a natural set of character traits, helpful for the organization. Forcing someone to be an innovator is counter-intuitive.
- **Even if someone is a natural-born but constructive rebel, the team can't automatically assume that every meeting will be questioned.** If something goes perfectly right, it can be the case of great work. If there's no ferment from time to time, it's ok. As long as everything is natural and feels comfortable for everyone.
- **The company's culture should be ready for both the deadbeat and the rebel.** Implementing advanced solutions like giving people immense trust with expectations to perform is not an easy thing to do. It requires maturity from the entire organization, CEO, and PM alone.

Human nature – your biggest operational advantage

Social conditioning and our character attributes don't always turn right for us. We are often afraid of rebels and take indolence for granted. If something can be done in a different way or with limited resources (simpler yet effective), let's do it just like that. **People are creative, passionate, and love to play with others if we let them. What limits both individual and group efforts are unreasonable and often artificial barriers.**

Many managers are more cautious than some CEOs. Company owners, these successful ones, see problems in business, economic, and more importantly, **cultural context.** They know that multiple viewpoints bring a larger variety of solutions, driving better decision-making processes. The bigger organization, the bigger problem. Corporate **incentives and control mechanisms often limit human's curiosity and passion for growth,** introducing controlling mechanisms instead. There is a quarterly target to be made. There is a chunk of paperwork to be filled. There is a budget we should all respect. Some of these mechanisms have a rational basis, some of them don't.

The real question is not which of them are which but rather can you really afford to block natural human spirit in the name of the artificial path of growth? **People leave their bosses, not companies. At the same time, they work for other people, not quarterly targets.** If the team can create and maintain trust, everyone can have a productive role to play. Even if they are just a bit lazy or well-spoken. ▲



Jarosław Ściślak

The author is a branding, marketing, company scaling, process optimizing, and content expert. He creates and develops brands, builds an image, and marketing communication. He believes in a holistic approach to sales, marketing, public relations, human resources, and employer branding. By relying on Customer-centric Selling, Design Thinking, and Created Shared Value (CSV), he helps companies increase revenue and build an attractive image for both customers, business partners, and employees. He published a few books, first at 22 years old. Learn more by visiting www.scislak.com



Sustainability: Project Manager's Contribution to Protecting the Planet

Artur Kasza

You might have heard of the Earth Overshoot Day (EOD). This is the day each year by which the humanity starts using the resources of the following year. It is calculated by dividing the world's biocapacity by the global ecological footprint and multiplying this by 365. The biocapacity is understood as the amount of natural resources generated by the planet in a given year and the ecological footprint is understood as the humanity's consumption of those natural resources in that year.

According to this measure, in 2019, we started using the resources of 2020 on the 29 of July. In 2020 that day has been pushed by three weeks, to the 22 of August. An ironic impact of the coronavirus global epidemic. It looks like if the humanity stops moving for a while, the Earth catches it breath. More specific information about the EOD approach and methodology is available from New Economic Foundation and Global Footprint Network.

Obviously, we are all looking forward to the end of the pandemic. We are looking forward to all our usual activities, including travel and tourism. But that places the theme of sustainability at the centre of the stage. Reduction of activities is not sustainable. Neither is an excessive use of the planet's resources. Can we let the Earth keep its breath and renew its resources while we come back to our usual activities? **Project Management, being a way of introducing change in organisations and communities, offers an avenue of doing that.** Such approach has been provided by **Green Project Management Association**, which has contributed two major components of sustainable projects: the **P5 Standard** and **PRISM methodology**.

P5 Standard

Traditionally, projects aimed at the delivery of a defined product, at the desired quality level, within the key constraints of time and cost.

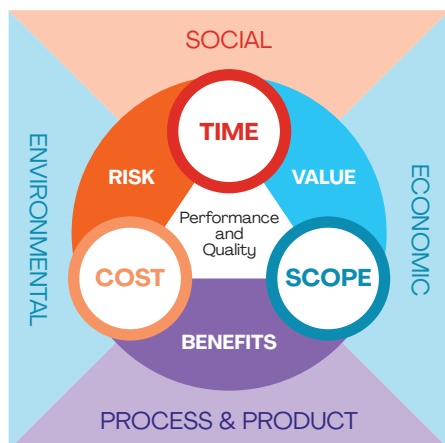
The overall objectives were to achieve an outcome that would generate some measurable benefits. The project context was recognised but to a more or less limited extent.

In 1994 another baseline appeared, with the publication of the book under an all-telling title *Cannibals with Forks*, by John Elkington. In that book, Mr Elkington put forward a **Triple Bottom Line**, composed of three elements:

- **Profit** – the traditional measure of business effectiveness,
- **People** – the measure of the business impact on communities concerned and of its social responsibility,
- **Planet** – the measure of the business impact on the natural environment and its environmental responsibility.

GPM brings these two sets of constraints together, leading to a new triangle of constraints. The traditional project triangle is placed in a context where the risks, value and benefits are integrated into project considerations from the start, and these are not only

perceived from the organisational perspective but also from the social and the environmental perspective. The full model is presented in Picture 1.



Picture 1. Project constraints and impacts
Source: *The P5 Standard for Sustainability in Project Management*, V 2.0, GPM Global, 2019

With such a view of project constraints and contexts, GPM has developed a methodology that places sustainability at heart of project management. The foundation of that methodology is to be found in the P5 standard, where the five letters 'P' stand for: **Product, Process, People, Planet, Prosperity**.

Such a configuration of areas translates into a tool of project context analysis that brings the attention to many possible impacts of projects on their environments. In the P5 Standards each domain is broken further down into detailed subdomains and areas of focus, offering directions for specific insight. And so, in the Product Impacts we will find the Life Span of the Product and Servicing. In process impacts we find effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of project management.

Going further down, the P5 map features detailed sets of social impacts (People), environmental impacts (Planet), and economic impacts (Prosperity). The P5 tool requires a degree of selectiveness as well as broad

thinking. Perhaps, protection of indigenous and tribal Peoples (in Social Impacts – Society and Customers domain) will not apply to every project. But if that is understood as the consideration of local cultures and languages, it will be important in regions such as Kaszub or Occitania.

Project Management Integrating Sustainable Methods (PRISM)

PRISM is not a new and distinct approach to project management. Rather, it integrates elements of sustainability into the existing methods. First, PRISM brings in a specific understanding of project benefits and dis-benefits. It is inspired by the benefits mapping and modelling of PRINCE2, but it adds the broader societal and environmental benefits and dis-benefits to the picture. The task for a project team committed to sustainability is to go beyond the pure business benefits and identify those that may concern the broader community and the natural environment. The PRISM approach to benefits is illustrated in Picture 2.

This model also brakes away with the cradle-to-grave thinking and prefers the cradle-to-cradle approach. Many products at the end of their life generate both the divestiture costs and benefits from recycling and reuse of components. If the reuse is taken into account from the early design, projects acquire a regenerative power. This trend is already visible in the automotive sector.

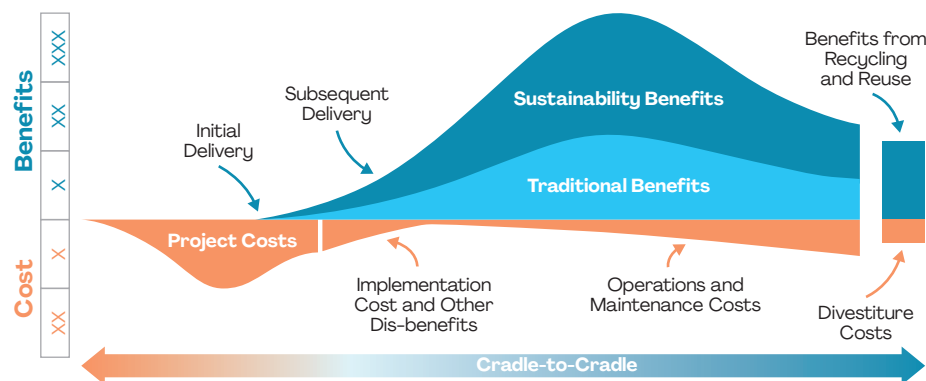
From process perspective, in project initiating (PMI vocabulary) or starting up (PRINCE2 vocabulary), PRISM makes a strong reference to the organisation's corporate sustainability strategy and the environmental management system, assuming that the organisation has developed those. The project charter or business case should be levelled with such strategy and system.

Following this, PRISM introduces key steps and tools that allow the sustainability to be integrated into the project from the first steps. The project team should carry out an impact analysis, using the P5 impacts map. Having full clarity of specific impacts, the sustainability objectives of the project can be defined and written down in a Sustainability Management Plan. In this way PRISM introduces a specific management product oriented towards the definition and control of the sustainability aspects of the project.

Conclusions

From the methodological point of view, Green Project Management, with its P5 impact mapping and sustainability elements integrated into the established methodologies, may not amount to a revolution. And it is not its purpose. **But it is a major philosophical shift. It is ethically substantiated, with a strong value set.** It encourages the project managers and teams to think in broad terms about the projects contexts and environments and consider all possible impacts, both positive and negative, on these environments, with the aim increasing the positive and reducing the negative ones. This is not to argue that such broad thinking is all absent from many projects undertaken globally. But there is certainly room for improvement.

As projects are means to introduce organisational and societal change, sustainable project management may be a platform upon which to introduce sustainability into all spheres of business. Project management systems and organisational structures, such as project management offices, may become the source of organisational sustainability. If there is a critical mass generated in that direction, this may be a stepping-stone to avoiding the devastation of the planet that we inhabit. ▲



Picture 2. Project costs and benefits in the entire product life-cycle
Source: GPM Global



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Technical Project Manager

Somewhere in Between Project Manager and Software Developer

Tomasz Springer

The *PMI Talent Triangle* defines the ideal domain skill set including project management methods, processes and tools as a *Technical Project Management* skills group. It might seem that a technicality of a Project Manager (PM) is focused on proficiency in such methods and tools for scope, budget or risk management. However, the reality of a current IT labour market shows quite a different picture, where **Technical Project Manager is often someone in between a manager and a software developer.**

There are noticeable changes within organizations consisting in creating more specialized technical positions (e.g. DevOps Engineer, AI/ML Engineer) as well as hybrid ones, where soft, management or leadership skills are complemented by skills related to engineering technologies and processes, which as yet were reserved only for tech experts.

Employer expectations

An analysis of a current IT labour market within a Project Manager context shows

a clear and visible trend of combining soft skills with technical ones within an ideal candidate. Among positions directly related to the project management one can find e.g. Technical Project Manager (TPM), IT Project Manager or Software Project Manager. All the above mentioned have one thing in common – connection to technology. The importance of this connection varies in different organisations and so there is no reference skills set for a Technical Project Manager. Among expected attributes technical documentation reading, hands on experience in business analysis, IT systems design, source code reading, knowledge of communication protocols and even prior experience in software development can be identified. **Thus, a current TPM image is inconsistent and highly dependent on organisational context.**

Technology for dummies

Organisations adapting agile approach for IT products development as well as leveraging it for an overall management tend to bring closer tech experts (e.g. software

developers) to business and end users, while at the same time tiding managers' relations with these experts and technological issues. In case of technology experts, this might consist of attempts to include them in a process of active project scope definition. Engagement of these people can be stimulated by encouraging them to participate in face to face meetings with a business client representatives or end users. As a result, technology experts learn how to talk using business values and end-user language. Such activities, develop a better understanding and they empathise with e.g. a functionality that is being developed, supporting specific business process. How then bringing closer Project Managers to technological experts and issues can be realised in practice? When does a Project Manager become a Technical Project Manager?

Foreign language – Technical

The answers are straightforward and need to be searched in one of the key success factors of almost all IT projects – effective com-

munication. **Transparent communication in a project which goes beyond defined skills boundaries which are a result of typically established company positions division results in knowledge and competences increase for all engaged people.** If we would try to divide a project team working on IT product in two groups in terms of required technology understanding level, the first one would include mainly client, users, PM and business analysts whereas the second one IT architects, developers, testers and all the other technical professions. Within each group, members use their own specific language, processes and tools. A common understanding of needs and problems between members of different groups is quite a challenge. In most of the cases, understanding a business group language is not a problem for people who are properly involved in business analysis process or everyday communication with a client representatives. However, understanding of a technical language by a PM requires some preparation, education and experience – just like learning a new foreign language. **In cases where a PM does not have prior experience with a specific technology to be used in a project, initially an organic learning process based on even passive participation in technical discussions is a way to consider.**

Refactoring? Why should I care?

Let's analyse the following situation: A software developers team wants to consult with a Project Manager a need of an IT system source code refactoring. Technology aware (Technical) Project Manager knows that refactoring is an activity which in the end increases an internal product quality and reduces future system maintenance and upgrade efforts. The same Project Manager knows also, that such an activity brings additional risks due to a lack of business value from an end user or client perspective. This is due to the fact that refactoring by definition does not provide any functional or non-functional (e.g. performance or reliability increase) increment. Therefore, a decision about a scope of refactoring activity should be an informed decision worked out by a whole team together basing on real needs. In such a situation only specific elements of an IT system to be potentially further developed could be selected at first. A TPM makes a decision by understanding objectives and

consequences of code refactoring including business needs, product roadmap, costs and effort needed for such activity and risks related to a potential project delay. Conclusion: **Technical Project Manager should be able to discuss with tech professionals effortlessly and make right project decisions basing on these discussions.**

Non-practising believer

Is it possible to become a Technical Project Manager without having experience related to a specific technology or software development process? The answer is strongly dependent on organisation context. Considering company environment where strategic decisions related to tech matters of a project is supported by skilled IT architects or tech leads, participation of TPM in making such decisions, requiring in-depth understanding of a technology can be limited. Although **for inexperienced teams or projects where even the smallest decisions related to selection or specific use of a given technology have significant impact, TPM competences in a tech area are critical.**

In any case, a **TPM should be aware of a specific technology capabilities and consequences of its usage in a project.** Let's face it, hands-on experience in technologies, processes and tools related to software products development definitely helps to:

- **communicate with tech experts** (e.g. knowledge of formal and informal graphical notations for depicting technological issues)
- **understand structure** (*What are the components of a system? What is data model behind?*) and **dynamics of a system** (*How it works from a data processing perspective?*)
- **manage a project scope consciously** (e.g. co-creating architectural drivers, requirements management, understanding a difference between perceived and actual complexity of technological issues)
- **manage quality consciously** (e.g. managing a technical debt, understanding quality assurance and control processes and tools)
- **determine requirements and capabilities in terms of scalability, security and reliability** of a system (e.g. benefits of using virtualization, containerization or cloud infrastructure)

- **optimise development processes** in order to reduce waste (e.g. introducing practices and tools for automation, continuous integration and delivery)

It does not mean that it is required that a TPM must have prior experience in software coding or IT systems design. **An ability to ask right tech nature questions is often enough and brings a lot of value for a project team.** Questions, for which a team will most likely find answers themselves.

Conclusions

In IT projects a traditional roles distinction between so called business and technology is no longer valid while combining soft or organisational skills with engineering ones does not surprise anybody. **Commonly used agile practices (Scrum, XP, Kanban) increase a need for self-organising teams, where filling the competences gaps should be organic and stimulated by team members themselves.** This also concerns Project Managers in terms of exploring technological knowledge required in projects they manage. And, above all this knowledge enables more informed, quicker and less riddled with risk decisions. **Bridging the communication gap between PM and technological professionals is a key factor to be implemented first.** Business aware engineers together with technology aware Project Managers seem to be a recipe for a perfect project team. But be careful... to not switch places. ▲



Tomasz Springer

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▲ Remote Project Management in the Age of COVID – What Kind of PPM Solution Choose?

Grzegorz Laskowski

We faced with difficult decisions at the present time. Remote work without appropriate tools causes big difficulties with the control of currently implemented projects and efficient collection of reports. How to deal with it? Should you invest in tools or try to prepare a remote tool yourself, e.g. in a spreadsheet? I will try to help you make this decision.

Where should we start?

Let's start by analyzing the needs we have. Let's consider who and how the tool should help. Who is the main stakeholder? Do we care about collecting project statuses or maybe preparing reports? Or maybe we need totally manage whole aspects of project? What's more, before we decide to start choosing a tool, let's think about how many projects we have in our organization and how large and long these projects are. If we

run more than 30/40 or a dozen large strategic projects per year, this is the moment to think about a project and portfolio management tool. Depending on the answers received, we will find out what solution we need.

Emerging doubts

The questions that will arise in the organization are of course the business case for such implementation. Especially now in the era of savings and allocating funds only for the most necessary expenses. So how do you justify the management board's to buy this type of software? Apart from incurring costs related to the implementation and license, it is possible that we will have to change or adjust the methodology in our organization and the question is "is it worth it?" Again, we should consider what we will gain. The main benefits of choosing a full tool for

project portfolio and project management are the time savings that project managers have to spend on preparing and collecting data, and this time saved can be spent on a more detailed risk analysis in projects or contact with the project team. Thanks to that the projects will be implemented in more effective and efficient way. We will also save a lot of time on the preparation of reports by the project office and project managers. Which is also a big plus for the organization, when the management board needs not only "some" data, but data that is real and verified. Decisions now have to be made quickly and we cannot afford to make mistakes as they can be costly.

Which solution to choose?

Once we analyze the needs and draw conclusions, you need to recognize the market and what solutions are available. If we want

to collect project statuses, maybe a spreadsheet prepared in an appropriate structure, posted on the web, where everyone has access to it, is enough. It is the fastest and cheapest solution to the problem of collecting information about the project status. A short description of the project manager what has been achieved since the last reporting and what are his plans for the next reporting period. Another solution is a BI class tool. For such a tool, we have to prepare appropriate inquiries so that reports are generated from available sources that we have in the company (spreadsheet, data from accounting systems, etc.). The competences to prepare such inquiries are probably in our company. However, if we want to monitor and support the project manager in conducting the full scope of the project (schedule, budget, competences, risks, periodic reports), then let's look for a complete solution. And also consider whether we want to design all the processes ourselves and "write" a tool exactly to our needs, which may take several / several dozen months, or maybe choose a ready "box" solution and implement it in a maximum of several months. Some companies offer the implementation of their software even in 5 days. What about the costs ...? Portfolio and project management tools are very expensive? Not necessarily. Most vendors offer their software in the form of a subscription in the SaaS offer and the monthly cost is not all that deadly. However, let's consider whether the security of our company allows data to be stored outside the company's servers. If not, pay attention to whether the provider offers a subscription model, but in the On-Premises solution. Thanks to this, the costs of monthly or annual subscription will not be such a heavy burden on the company's budget. There are many financ-



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ing options in the current situation and it is worth getting acquainted with the solutions offered on the market.

What to look for?

When creating a short list of suppliers, check how many implementations a given supplier has completed. Does he have references, maybe our friends already had contact with one of these suppliers? Let's ask the supplier if he can arrange a reference visit to one of his clients who already uses the tool and we will learn about good practices of another organization. Currently, companies are willing to share their knowledge and experience. Let's ask the supplier to test the best pre-configured solution for our needs. This will allow us to verify whether the tool meets our expectations. We will be able to check how our organization has to prepare for full implementation. What else needs to be considered before making a decision? Let's check if the consultant who will

implement the tool has project experience, because thanks to this, apart from the "dry" implementation, we will also get a lot of valuable advice and suggestions from his project experience. By paying for the implementation, we get design consulting included in the price.

Summarizing

The tool can really improve work in the current situation, when we cannot discuss project topics over coffee with the team and collect project statuses. With online access, the management board has ad-hoc access to real data about projects and their statuses. The design office can oversee those projects that actually require attention. With one integrated solution for managing your portfolio of projects and projects, most activities are performed automatically as managers run the full range of projects in one place. ▲



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Grzegorz Laskowski

Grzegorz works at the Hadrone company, where he conducts implementation projects and trainings in PPM tools. Grzegorz has many years of experience as a project manager and portfolio manager. He conducted audits of PMO's, prepared recommendations and a final report for clients. He advised companies on the selection of appropriate tools for project management and project portfolio.



Lessons Learned — the Case Study

Maciej Bodych

Much has been written about collecting lessons learned in projects. On the one hand, project management standards provide guidelines and examples of such activities. On the other hand, even the Agile world has focused on collecting and implementing improvements (for example in the form of retrospectives in Scrum) from the very beginning of its “existence”. And while the Scrum teams often use the retrospective, on large projects it is a bit like a “square peg in a round hole” and is primarily done at the very end of the project (only because it is required by the project closure documentation).

Therefore, today I would like to propose a more interactive method of cooperation with readers. Namely, I am going to present you a case study from one of the projects and provide you with an opportunity to analyze and propose an approach to collecting lessons learned in this situation. I encourage you to prepare a short recommenda-

tion on how to apply the lessons learned in the project, and the most interesting solutions along with my “solution” will be published in the next issue of Strefa PMI. Please, send your recommendations to: mbodych@whitecom.com.pl.

Case study

The business process optimization project has been going on for 1.5 years. Its goal is to increase revenues by acquiring new clients and increasing the margin on the company's existing clients. The goals are to be achieved as a result of the improvement of business processes related to customer service and the implementation of a new IT system. The project is intended to impact over 1,000 users handling the company's clients, and over 50 people are directly involved in its execution.

So far, there have been many changes in the project (submitted both to the Project Sponsor and to the company's management

board). They result from both technical issues and changes in business requirements. The project was divided into 7 areas:

1. New customer service model (process optimization)
2. Establishing a single point of contact with the company for customers
3. Implementation of the customer request handling module (M1)
4. Implementation of a new financial module for settlements with customers (M2)
5. Implementation of the customer data management module (M3)
6. Implementation of the customer request reporting module (M4)
7. Integration with other systems

Each area is taken care of by a separate business line in the company, and in addition, the team for the new customer service model participates in the works of areas 2, 3, 5, and 6. Each area has its dedicated Area Coordinator, Director, and a business team.

Some Directors also participate in the project steering committee, which also includes heads of individual Divisions.

Project works in areas 3–7 are conducted by three IT suppliers. Modules M1 and M4 are handled by an internal IT team that carries out work within one Scrum team. All requirements are recorded in a single repository of tasks (backlog) and every week a decision is made to implement new functionalities. Priorities are defined by the project manager on the IT side based on conversations with two separate business lines. Module M2 is delivered by the supplier that carries out work based on the fixed price arrangements and has a complete schedule for the entire implementation. Many project aspects are managed by this supplier based on its internal PMI-based methodology. However, so far no lessons learned were collected by this supplier. Finally, the supplier of the M3 module conducts the work on the basis of 2-week sprints and keeps a close eye on the work backlog. It happens that as part of improvements, product demo workshops and lessons learned workshops (retrospectives) are combined into a single meeting. In practice, insufficient time limits longer discussion about potential improvements (and if there are such discussions, they are not documented anywhere).

The customer service system will interface with seven other systems. The two most critical of them are the financial system and the production planning system. The first one is currently also in the implementation and there are many cross-related issues between these two projects. They

are being resolved on an ongoing basis. The second system is used in its production environment. Its requirements have been clearly defined and so far there have been no issues in cooperation with the production planning system maintenance team.

The works on defining the customer service model were completed 6 months ago. Currently, the efforts are put to close the development work in areas 2–7. The next steps in the project are:

- Conducting acceptance tests of individual modules—by January 29, 2021
- Conducting acceptance tests of the entire solution—by February 26, 2021
- Preparation of materials and conducting training courses—by March 19, 2021
- Migration and implementation of the solution in production environment—by April 9, 2021

Knowing that so far there has been no implemented approach to managing lessons learned from project, decide:

- How to organize the lessons learned process on the project?
- When should such a process take place and who should be involved?

Final note

For those who cannot wait until the next issue to learn from the case study wrap-up, I have prepared some of my lessons learned to be applied in projects. I hope this wisdom in a nutshell helps you rethink your approach to this topic. Things that you may pay attention to include:

Lessons learned are only a step towards actual improvements. We do not collect lessons learned only to fill the register, but to implement them in a project or organization.

The lessons learned must be “bought-in” by the project team. The process is not about the manager or the board making their comments just based on their observations and without any discussion for application and expecting they will be implemented in projects. Rather than that, it should be an outcome of the team understanding their mistakes and identifying things that can be improved or corrected.

We should also consider good practices (and not only about the mistakes we made).

As part of the workshop, we are not aiming at investigating who made the mistake. Instead, we want to identify the non-performing components of project organization, missing capabilities of the project team, and defective tools or processes.

The lessons learned should be used throughout the project life cycle.

I am waiting for your solutions until December 31, 2020 and I encourage you to accept this challenge. See if you can find all the elements of the solution that I have designed. 🚀



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Maciej Bodych

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Expert in project, program, project portfolio management and PMO. He specializes in organizations and individuals development. He delivered projects and trainings for companies from Gas&Oil, Productions, IT, Financial and public sector companies in Poland, Germany, UK, Ukraine, Switzerland and others countries. Since 2003, involved in Project Management Institute (PMI®) activities. He was the President of the Warsaw Branch and of the Polish Chapter and the Chairman of the Audit Committee. Since 2010 worked in the headquarters of PMI® (USA). Currently, he works for the PMI Global Board in the Certification Governance Council (CGC). Since 2010, the President of WHITECOM Project Experience, the company that specializes in training, setting the PMO and project management and project portfolio organizations. Co-author of book: *PMO. Practical project and portfolio management in the organizations*.



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How to Deal with Work When You Have a Boring Project to Deliver?

Aleksandra Gepert

We are still fascinated with all the possibilities that working in IT has to offer. We hope that we can change the world for the better by creating the most useful and helpful application, or just create a service using the most advanced ML or AI technologies, and all those dreams are so close... But then we got hit by the reality of being stuck in a boring project working on another website or internal service that will not change anything.

I really can't say how many times I've heard developers saying that the only thing they need at work is an interesting project – a sexy one as some recruiters say. So fruits, soy milk, young, dynamic team, or international customers are not required to make them more satisfied with their job. Not even a mystic 15k PLN net. Just an interesting project and maybe, if possible, no deploys on Friday after 4 pm.

We are getting more and more satisfied

Before we move forward, let's take a quick look at numbers: according to the research carried out by Randstad in March 2019, **79% of the Polish respondents are satisfied with their jobs** and that was the highest result in the history of this research. At the same time, 66% of the audience admitted that they are not afraid of losing their job. The main reason for changing employers as indicated by the responders was the willingness to grow professionally.

To summarize, we are satisfied with our jobs but we are also open to new opportunities: not because of money, but because of the inner need to develop ourselves. So again, an interesting project comes to mind.

Then we have a pandemic gap that is still there. It has obviously influenced the employees' morale all over the world, the

stability of companies, and job security has become more important than other factors. At some point, we will get back on track and we will face the same problem again: if you don't have an interesting project, I won't work for you. To be honest, I already faced it again, and I lost a great developer.

Satisfied = Happy

Keep it all in mind and let's move in a slightly different direction with the assumption that being satisfied with your work, means that you are happy with it. I really like this definition: *"(...) happiness is related to an individual's sensing of their own affect."* (after ResearchGate). So we are happy when we care about our work, our actions, and when we can see that we are able to do something meaningful and we have the power to change the current state of things. For the better, of course.

But that's not all. There are more and more researches that reveal the truth that has always been out there: people need to feel happy to be productive and it is not enough to just *feel* happy. This happiness should stem from the tasks that we do at work. Oh, how greedy we all are, aren't we?

Developer's Voice

There is another truth relevant to all of this: **Developers bring Value. Developer's work brings Revenue, all beyond the Development Team is Waste.**

Following another definition, *"We consider a software developer to be a person concerned with any aspect of the software construction process (including but not limited to research, analysis, design, programming, testing and management activities), for any purpose such as work, hobby, or passion"* (ibid). We can admit that the majority of developers care about what they do and they are not fans of half-measures or other shortcuts. All developers that I have already worked with hate: spaghetti code, not having the time for tests, technical debt and promises that they will have some time during the Sprint to pay it back.

According to the research that I have already shared here (*What happens when software developers are (un)happy*), the main reason for developers to be unhappy at work is frustration caused by not interesting tasks (sic!), lack of understanding of the work principles by the teammates, handling a broken project, bad code written by others, feeling that code must be restructured, and more.

Let's give them the voice here and find out how they actually feel when put in such a situation:

"[the unhappiness] has left me feeling very stupid and (...) feel like I'm being forced to code to live as a kind of punishment";

"I really start to doubt myself and question whether I'm fit to be a software developer in the first place";

"[...] can lead to working long hours and trying to find shortcuts. I'm sure this does not lead to the best solution, just a quick one";

"[...] I'm working at a really slow pace [...] because I'm just not as engaged with the work".

And, on the other hand, how it feels to work as a happy person:

"great pride in the work I've just completed";

"I get more proud of myself";

"The sense of accomplishment when finishing something that actually works, is very rewarding";

"This give you energy [which] feed your creativity and you come up [with] more crazy and wonderful ideas".

Money and digital transformation

Remember those and let's proceed to the **idea behind every business that has been ever created.** Money. Yup, this is it. We started to call it Revenue so it wouldn't be so harsh. We keep falling in love with various ideas but if they don't bring money and if profitability is too low they are simply useless from a business point of view. It does not matter if you work for a start-up company that develops its own product, or at a software house that only has exciting projects for cool customers understanding Agile, or for a professional corporation where all the procedures keep being updated all the time. In all those places you will, sooner or later, end up with a task that you don't want to do and your team will break the national record when it comes to complaining during a daily meeting. And in the case of all these projects, it all started with money and plans for how to get more of it.

The digital transformation is an enormous venture and many companies have just started to consider it. They finally got the budget for this and they've been working so hard to make it happen because in most of these organizations the people with money to invest do not know a dime about IT and how software development works. Some of them still think that Scrum is something related to rugby. Some people responsible for gathering requirements on Customer's site have never done it before and it's hard for them to understand that someone tells them that what they want is impossible, or at least – a lot more expensive than they expected. Last but not least, a customer will ask why on Earth something takes so much time, and you will have to explain that a person that used to work on this solution before you, didn't have a clue what was going on and right now somebody else has to pay for it.

Does it mean that we should tell them: sorry, you are not an interesting prospect for our Development Teams, see you like never?

No, **it only means that we will have to work hard.** Not particularly harder than the other teams, but in a different way.

Because we are also doing business and we need money. And not every company gives you the possibility to spend some of your time on personal development and you might not be the one to come up with another Gmail service. Does it mean that you should quit? I don't think so.

It's all about perspective

The IT industry is the only one that focuses on employees so much and companies try to outdo one another in terms of offered benefits, mentioned at the beginning of this article in a little sarcastic way, but still, nowhere else you will find so many perks as in IT. I used to work as a Project Manager in different industries before I joined IT and believe me, nobody asked me if I enjoyed my work on a weekly basis. Nobody was really concerned about losing anyone, myself included and I had to bring my own coffee to the office. Remote work? Forget about it.

But even the most friendly IT company was created to bring money and value to their customers no matter what, so we need to keep going and make our people feel happy even if the technology is not the modest one, or if a customer always asks to squeeze more features within the Sprint, or we got an old project previously developed by a bunch of students and our job is to bring it to life – I strongly believe that it is possible.

Because we can never think that doing what you love means not doing things you don't love. 🚀



Aleksandra
Gepert

Project Manager at SoftServe. She's been working in IT for the past 4 years and from the very beginning of her professional career in project management. She strongly believes that people are more important than processes, so at work she always puts relations first. At SoftServe she is mostly responsible for implementing platform projects (e-commerce). A Russian linguist, technology enthusiasts just like her father, real chatterer, she spends her free time at the gym.



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Ready, Steady, Go!

Definition of Ready as Support in the Race for Success

Monika Zofia Potiopa

It is likely the majority of Agile supporters already use the concept of the Definition of Done (DoD), which informs when the task can, *de facto*, be considered completed. There are many benefits of implementing DoD. I believe that its most important aspect is that it provides a sense of security in delivering the product in line with our expectations, and the set standards.

However, this sense of security should not be built solely upon receipt of the product. It can also be provided before work begins, by agreeing upon a contract which informs when a given task is allowed to be undertaken.

Work Commencement Readiness

The Definition of Ready (DoR) is a much less frequently used concept than the Definition of Done. Personally, this surprises me considering that a properly prepared and implemented DoR is a powerful tool. On the one hand, it protects the Development Team from performing work while exposed to the risk of changes (e.g. due to the fact that the vision has not yet been presented to/confirmed with Stakeholders); on the other hand, it supports the creation of high-quality tasks by commissioners, leading to a win-win situation.

A well-prepared Definition of Ready Contract should include all the conditions that the task will fulfill before it is implemented – or even earlier, planned. There is no clear rule on what such a Contract should look like – each team will have its own DoR, as everything depends on its composition, the context of the product/project and the environment in which it operates. It is certain, however, that the Definition of Ready will go through a cycle, in which it may (in fact – should!) change incrementally during its lifetime. On the first attempt, one will likely find that they have forgotten about many elements, or that the level of detail is too low. In the next iteration of the

work, one can add DoR elements or subtract excess elements. It is a living artifact, so changes should be expected from the moment the product or project comes to exist. This is mainly due to two reasons: along with the life cycle of a product/project, the requirements for it may also change, and as the team matures and experiences new situations, the need may arise to change or adjust the decisions that have been made earlier. It is only natural.

Process completed with Contract

The Definition of Ready Artifact should be a contract between its stakeholders. Currently, working as a Product Owner, I am a firm opponent of imposing my beliefs upon the team. I would prefer to work out solutions together, rather than imposing them in a dictatorial manner. Therefore, I am a strong supporter of joint DoR determination, thanks to which a high level of commitment will be maintained by every party involved.

The meeting initiating the creation of the Definition of Ready should be attended by all interested parties: people who will use the DoR artifact and who will also agree on a Contract amongst themselves. These will be both development roles – including the development team (for example, Programmers, Analysts, Testers) – and “management” roles, such as Project Managers, Product Owners or Servant Leaders. To sum up, all the people who create tasks or influence their creation, as well as everyone else who will work on these tasks.

During the meeting, each party should feel comfortable to speak up, and all of the participants should come out from it confident that the right decisions have been

made. The facilitator of the event is obliged to conduct it in a way that all elements of the discussion are maintained. The brainstorming technique will work particularly well in this context.

It is best to start the discussion with a reflection in the area of false starts on tasks. It is also worth asking oneself the following questions: What does a poor-quality task mean for us as an organisation; or on the contrary – what constitutes a high-quality task? What does one usually miss, and what information do we most often forget or omit? Consider under which circumstances the team works most effectively on a task, and when it wastes time, e.g. guessing or making assumptions which result in a high risk of returning to the task in the future.

The list of ideas should be grouped and redundant. All written down in one document, and *voilà* – we have created a living artifact Definition of Ready! Each participant should feel comfortable with it and accept the Contract.

Below is an example of what a potential DoR for an IT product task could look like.

The DoR life cycle should include an element of verification of its correctness. A retrospective is a good ceremonial for that. During a retrospective, one can discuss the optimization of the Definition of Ready, which will then become the opener for the discussion on introducing improvements.

One last – but not the least – Important element: the Definition of Ready should be transparent and available to anyone interested! It can be displayed on a board inside the room where the team works, attached as a checklist for tasks in Jira or added to the Wiki in Confluence. The place does not matter much, as long as its accessibility is ensured.

Danger of DoR

There are many DoR superlatives – I am a strong supporter of this concept myself. It allows me to prepare high-quality tasks for the team. I can noticeably see a reduction in the number of repeated approaches to implemented functionalities.

There is, however, a risk associated with having a DoR: that the Team does not interpret its elements clearly. A zero-one approach to classification will begin to define whether the task can or cannot be started. When the Definition of Ready includes the rule that something **MUST** be done before the next thing begins, it leads us to a waterfall way of working. For example, if the team insists on having UX completed before starting work, the entire design phase will need to be completed before actual programming. In this case, agility is “lost”. Refusal to undertake a task that does not meet the DoR may result not only in frustration, but could also be detrimental to the project itself, e.g. exposing it to the risk of not being completed on time. Therefore, common sense, flexibility and agility education are very important.

Summary

The Definition of Ready is certainly a concept that can help you achieving success. For the roles who provide the tasks, it is a kind of guide on how a given task should be prepared. For developers, it is a checklist to ensure success in delivering the task at hand. The contract concluded between its stakeholders gives each party a sense of security in the context of implementation of the workload. In the right “hands”, and with the right mindset, it becomes a very powerful tool! 🚀

Definition of Ready:

1. The task has a current state
2. The task has a business purpose
3. The task has a target state
4. The task has acceptance criteria in line with the INVEST technique
5. The task is estimated
6. The assignment was verified by the legal department
7. The assumptions were presented and confirmed with the client

Example of Definition of Ready for an IT product task



Monika
Potiopa

Product Owner & Product Team Leader with technical background and project management experience. Ex-perfectionist, and after “rehab” identifying herself with the motto “be the best imperfect self you can”. A fan of the specific humor of the IT world, horse riding and good Portuguese wine!



Project Manager's Kaleidoscope

Anna Gambal

Being a Project Manager you need to act in different roles at once depending on many factors in a certain time. Nowadays in the DNA of the PM there is an ability to play and juggle different roles and responsibilities for the success of the project. You as PM need to be a functional or hierarchical manager, sales person, finance manager, change manager, risk manager etc. at once. Sometimes you ought to be a psychologist as well or even play a role of devil's advocate to make sure your team will achieve their deliverables in the boundaries of the project. Sounds like you shall see your projects as if they are pictures in a kaleidoscope to lead your Team to success and bring customer satisfaction - from different angles, in different shades and colors.

Project manager and their interdisciplinary role

Let's get back to the basics of the project management. *"The project manager is the person assigned by the performing organization to lead the team that is responsible for achieving the project objectives."*¹

In many cases PMs are very focused on the primary goal of the project only and this leadership is concentrated on delivery of the project itself. They are focusing on project goals, progress, operational issues, daily reporting, daily ceremonies or they are just trying to make sure the project is going forward by firefighting as much as possible. Multiple roles of PM and interdisciplinary character of this role make us, PMs, forget or neglect certain aspects of it. Usually this depends

mostly on the project situation like – tight deadlines, very demanding clients, lack of resources, very big scope, too much bureaucracy in the organization etc. All of those make our lives harder and make us focus on fighting windmills not consciously managing all aspects of our projects.

Don't forget about different perspectives in the kaleidoscope

*"A kaleidoscope is an optical instrument with two or more reflecting surfaces tilted to each other in an angle, so that one or more (parts of) objects on one end of the mirrors are seen as a regular symmetrical pattern when viewed from the other end, due to repeated reflection."*²

Being a Project Manager you cannot stick just to the basis. You need to remember

about the “other end” of the kaleidoscope and remember about different areas of the project that shall be addressed. In my view there is an art in it, as you attempt to adjust those areas to multiple layers such as the project itself, organizational and environmental factors around as well as the Client expectations and needs.

From my perspective, what I can often observe or I've taken as lessons learned, both junior and senior Project Managers may overlook different aspects in their project fervor of the fight.

First of all, quite an obvious and surprising field – **continuous improvement**.

Delivery focus may put us in the shoes of firefighters, when issues are arising and the Team works hard to solve them we forget about root causes elimination and making sure this is not happening again. Here the learning curve of our Team is helpful but it won't address all needs on the way. Project, to be successful, needs to continuously evolve in the meaning of people and processes as well as product (up to Customer's expectations). Project Manager ought to ensure there is a continuous improvement process embedded in the project mechanics. Great tool for this is retrospective. You identify what works well and what is not working to make sure you and your Team are not repeating wrong patterns. Let the Team vote and include actions till the next retrospective. Do not cancel this ceremony and prioritize other work instead – without that you will be in the same place all the project long. Make sure as well you analyze root causes of the errors made and eliminate them for the future. Possibly your Team would like to forget about the issue that has just been solved, nevertheless don't address only symptoms as the project will not be on the success path.

Another point is to listen to feedback and adjust to that feedback – this will also let you better adjust to Client needs and improve – don't forget the feedback shall be incorporated in your Sprint Review meetings. If you will treat it as status or demo meeting only, you will lose the perspective of the Client and you may land far away from their expectations.

Risk management is a second important point which is overlooked by PMs or performed as a process which is never used in practice of the project. Statis-

tics show that *“Risk management practices are widely used across (...) organizations – 27% say they ‘always’ use them, while 35% use them ‘sometimes’. 3% of surveyed organizations say they ‘never’ use risk management practices. (PMI)”*³. Both ‘always’ and ‘sometimes’ answer barely summarizes to more than half of organizations surveyed, while ‘sometimes’ does not mean risks are managed effectively. PMs are very often fighting with the project fire, looking very short term on the goals and deliverables, which is why they are attempting to make the situation better here and now but they forgot those fires can be prevented or mitigated if they try to identify them earlier on and prepare for them.

Dr H. Kerzner in his article is showing very nicely what might cause ignoring of potential problem: *“Knowing about a problem and not addressing it can be seen as a ‘kiss of death’ by the sponsor to the point where the project may be subject to termination.”*⁴ Lack of risk management is like knowing that something may happen and that it can have a really big impact on the project and not trying to manage it. You as PM shall remember about this important knowledge area and process. Identify risks, plan risk management, embed it into your project management processes, plan risk responses and breathe life into that process so that the Team is part of it. Do not let your risk management be just a risk register which is never updated during the project lifecycle.

Stakeholder and expectation management are two processes which are obvious and known possibly for all Project Managers. Have you reflected how you address them in your projects?

*“Poor stakeholder-project manager alignment is a big cause of project failure. Only 55% of people involved in projects – team leaders and project managers – feel that the project’s business objectives are clear to them. More than 80% also feel that the requirements process doesn’t articulate the needs of the business. And when the project is wrapped up, only 23% of respondents say that project managers and stakeholders are in agreement when a project is done. (Geneca)”*³

PMs in many cases limit themselves to identify and manage stakeholders who are the closest to the project. For instance, working with the Product Owner on the Client side they focus only on this person and forget about other stakeholders

whom the project is interacting with and who may have a significant impact on the overall satisfaction from the project result. You can think about different persons – so called “Business”, where the product of the project will be serving certain business people in the organization or you can think about the managers of your Product Owner or Client's IT Department etc. Those examples should already ring you a bell and show you how much you can be wrong not caring about those guys expectations or influences wider.

People management – this area is associated with line manager responsibilities. In projectized structures this is a more visible field of responsibility – PMs shall generally care about their people as a rule of thumb and have to play a role of manager who supports their development, goals setting, gives feedback or makes sure people are feeling appreciated as well as feel good in the organization and the project. Is this so obvious? In many cases no, as PM being totally focused on project delivery, current performance, metrics, results may put that area somewhere on the back side, which may be really dangerous for the project and the organization leading to dissatisfied or burned out Teams. There is also the perspective of PMs who are in matrix organizations, where their Team members are just “borrowed” for the projects – here the motivation of individuals plays a key role so people management aspect sounds even more important for project results.

Maybe you think this is black and white view but I hope it will lead you to reflect on whether you are saying ‘thank you’ for a good job and asking your Teammates in which areas they would like to develop themselves and have more frequent one-on-ones to understand ‘how is it going?’ in general.

Being a psychologist in the project – managing projects is working with people and their psychological side as well as handling emotions. Talking with people you work with, knowing something more about them, letting them integrate together even by small talks, short coffee meetings or some off work integrational activities will help the project to be effective and make people feel that they are working in a nice environment with great people around. PMs may just underestimate the power of integration of the Team, sometimes they need to balance be-



tween profitability and team buildings but always they can try to find creative ways to do that – especially in our current virtual times.

Longer term planning horizon – delivery focus may keep us in a very short term planning horizon, especially if you think agile and you focus with your Team on the next two Sprints, nevertheless you cannot forget about the bigger picture and strategic / long term horizon. In case you'll be looking only on your current contract with the Client and focusing only on it you may find yourself in the situation where the prolongation of the contract will be missed. Another possible result is that you will need to release the Team because preparation of the contract or budgeting process on the Client side takes very long – does it sound serious enough to ensure you take a look broader than two Sprints ahead? Obviously details of planning should be adjusted to the planning horizon but still actions shall be taken. In many cases PMs are too much into current operational delivery that are forgetting about this super important aspect of planning.

Playing a bit of a sales representative role – You possibly heard about upselling and cross selling and you also think this is the task for a sales person – actually not only. The practice shows that you, as the PM, are the closest to the Client and you know very well where additional needs may appear. Your main source of this information may be your Team. Listen carefully and grab opportunities. Once you are working with external Clients think about your account development plan. Plan actions that will let your Teams grow. Sometimes there are

opportunities that will be really lucrative for both – your Client that will get a very decent level of delivery and your organization in terms of profit.

Next aspect that may be put by PMs somewhere aside is thinking as a **finance person** and balancing that with aspects such as people satisfaction, project quality, organizational requirements, profitability required, project goals, customer satisfaction and many more... This one sounds very complex and it is because you deal with projects, people, processes and there is one more P – PROFITABILITY – that is required by your organization. Being focused blindly on it may lead you to loss of people, lack of proper quality and finally loss of your Client. This is where art of management appears again, where you need to balance and maneuver between all those priorities. There is yet another aspect of being a finance person and managing finance properly – do you like administrative processes? I bet the answer is no, but guess what? – you have to be super careful and super cautious with the numbers. Lack of proper focus on tracking finance of your project may lead you as well to big troubles. Think about points like: is your Team reporting hours diligently? Are the figures from reporting systems aligned with the invoices? Have you forecasted costs well for next period? Those questions shall appear in your head at minimum to effectively manage costs and budgets.

Those and many more

There are many more areas which PM may neglect or overlook being really focused on daily delivery only. You can also consider:

- being a change agent – treating a change as positive but in organized manner,
- communication aspects – making sure everybody is aligned about current state of the project,
- planning activities that may be done only really briefly or focusing on too many details on the other hand or
- neglecting organizational factors that are influencing the project etc.

I bet as many PMs as many additional points that can be added to the list.

You may then ask – how to use that kaleidoscope of PM? So many views, so many angles and so many topics to address. In my view receipt is simple and very complicated at once – keep the balance and adjust to what surrounds you. This golden rule is the hardest to be achieved for humans in every aspect of life but you can always try to be as close to the balance as possible. If I am to advice, that would be: think creatively, learn to operate within colors and angles of the project and people, think out of the box and use the best practices as well as be flexible and adjust to changes. 🌀

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Anna
Gambal

Certified Project Manager leading complex cross functional projects within business environments. Managing projects within IT, Innovation and Transformation, HR domains with focus on improvements, system implementations, transitions, integrations/ splits (M&A) as well as Go-To-Market. After work traveler looking for undiscovered and surprising places in Europe as well as all over the world. Amateur of macro photography, who likes listening to good music and interesting audiobooks. Usually, looking for perfection in the world around.



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Photo: Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez private archives



Projects – the Greatest Disruption of the 21st Century!

Interview with Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez, co-founder of the Strategy Implementation Institute and former Chairman of the PMI, conducted by Agnieszka Krogulec

Antonio, thank you very much for accepting my invitation to the interview. You are the world's leading champion in project management and strategy implementation. You do a lot in promoting the project management skills around the world, especially within senior management to show it's crucial to manage projects in the right way. Could you highlight the key moments, key steps in your career which led you to your present position?

It's a pleasure to be here with PMI Poland which I have very good memories of when I was there a few years ago. I love what you are doing, your team, the volunteers, so thank you for the opportunity to share a bit about my views. To answer your question, the highlights of my career – they were failures and maybe that's what made me just fight harder to get what I wanted or the message that I wanted to share. I think that one big point or step in my career was when I was working for a very large consulting company and they did not appreciate pro-

ject management. They thought everybody would do project management. It's not strategic or something very important for a consulting firm to advise, so they fired me after 10 years. It made me wonder if project management was an area I could develop or focus on or just maybe go to a more traditional career in marketing, sales, finance. I think many of the listeners probably have that wondering – I should stay as a Project Manager or I should move into a more stable and defined career path. That happened in 2005 and I decided that I need to find a way to show senior executives that what they did to me was wrong. Why do they think that project management is tactical, engineering, is about IT but not strategic? I spent a lot of time researching, I went to the banking and it collapsed, so another big failure, but it was a great opportunity to learn about the risks in big projects. I think that was another step in my career and my goal has always been in line with my thinking of improving project management. It is in line with mak-

ing people aware of the importance of projects and is about influencing senior leaders, academic and business. So, that's a bit of my career, I worked in finance, banking, consulting, pharma and always around PMOs, portfolio management, project management. It is something that I really enjoy.

You talk a lot about project economy and it seems to have been a real buzzword of recent years. You have even spoken on this phenomenon as the new management paradigm and The Project Revolution. Could you please describe what it means for you and for us?

I have written about the project economy concept for the first time in 2017 and I thought that there was something big happening here that people weren't talking about and I realized that we were shifting the way the work is being carried out in the companies.

I did the research for one of my books *The Project Revolution* and it was clearly showing

that at least half of the workforce in organisations is working project-based and there may have a fixed role in the day-to-day but they are also doing part-time projects and this trend is just accelerating. So what I mean with the project economy is that the type of work that we are going to do in the future is mostly project-based because it's more agile, more flexible, it's about diversity. Now, with working at home, it's even better because we work in projects.

The other part is that the day-to-day activities are going to be done by Artificial Intelligence and robotics. Of course, it happens now for example in banking, they are mostly IT companies, there is a lot of automation, fintech and blockchain, so there are not many people doing the day-to-day activities. Most of the people work in projects or agile teams, so I think that's what I mean with the project economy. The other big important point is whenever there is a big crisis, you see a lot of projects coming into the recovery of businesses, organizations or societies. So we can expect a massive amount of projects which will need a massive amount of project leaders to get us through the crisis, so there are a macro and a micro view.

Ok, so projects are everywhere. Can we say that the Project Revolution will only bring benefits? Do you see any negative aspects or any threats for you and for us?

Despite these positive trends towards the projects world, if we don't change, if we – the PM's of today – don't adapt, evolve and learn how to use technology, we are going to be considered as old-fashioned and soon be taken over by modern processes of Artificial Intelligence. We need to evolve fast into other areas, not the traditional project management. I am always a bit stressed because I don't see that sense of urgency in the PMI or the PM world that we really need to adapt, we cannot fail. When you look at any statistics around project success, they're very poor. It's about 20-30% of the project cases succeed, this is unacceptable. It is not just the Project Managers fault, but I think that we can influence much more and do a better job in different stages of the project to make project success higher. We need to adapt fast if we want to be the key players in the new world. As an example of my vision, every company that I worked for or advised or researched, they had a Chief Operating Officer. He was like the number two or three in the company and that was a fundamental

role because operations were the main part of the business 10, 20, 30, 40 years ago – we had to be very efficient. But now, in the project economy, that role does not exist anymore. We don't need Chief Operating Officers, we need Chief Project Officers.

You mentioned Artificial Intelligence and about the connections with projects, what about the future of Project Managers? What will be the function, the role of Project Managers in the future and what skills he or she needs? And the most important is how can today's leaders or the project leaders prepare for it?

I guess most of the people reading the interview know that in project management we talk about the project life cycle. You start with the initiation, then you do the planning, execution and monitoring and then you have the handover, closure. That is what we have been focusing on in project management for the last 50 years. That project life cycle will be completely impacted. 80% of what we do today is going to disappear or be done by Artificial Intelligence, which is massive, but it makes sense when you think about what Artificial Intelligence does. It does repetitive, manual things and reporting on which we spend a lot of time – chasing for data to have accurate reports. That's going to disappear. So where is the future of project management? What skills do we need to develop? What happened before a project? Innovation? Iteration? Why have we never thought about it? Why don't we care about innovation? It is not covered and that's for me something very upsetting. We have to focus on innovation, it is going to be a big field for us. We have to play a role in Design Thinking. One of the reasons why many projects fail is because they start too early. We take an idea and tomorrow we start the project. You can never make a project when the idea is too early, but we do that.

Yes, especially in the big corporations – we do not have time to think too much.

We don't have time! One project that fascinates me is the first iPhone. The idea was shared by Steve Jobs in 2001. They said, let us not launch the project now, the idea is great, but let us do it in 2004. It took them three years of innovation, of prototyping, of Design Thinking, of narrowing down the number of prototypes and ideas, building the knowledge to give on to have a proper project. So I think the innovation is key. Second-

ly, what happens with the project we do not care about? Let us hand it over, whatever it is, but we do not care. We just deliver this machine, a bridge, an app, who cares, if it sells or not. That is wrong. We need to play a big role in what happens with the project. Again, it's very frustrating for me – why in our methodologies we don't care about what is going to happen after we do the project? There is nobody more knowledgeable about your project than you. And why do you need to drop it, when you start running it? We need to move in some cases to the next level.

And the last thing, benefits. Benefits are a line that comes when you handover in your project life cycle. We do not care about the benefits, we care about deliverables, time and cost, we manage the scope and that's it. When we do a bit of benefits management – it's the most important thing. If your project delivers benefit, time and cost maybe are not so important. Some of the best projects ever were late, over budget, but over time they delivered much more than what they cost. Today our plans show the deliverables, the milestones. I think the plans of the future should just tell you about benefits. When you are going to achieve that, don't tell me about the deliverables – I am the customer or the stakeholder and I want the benefits, I do not care about the deliverables.

Just to summarize, you have just focused on three main areas: innovation, focus on the results of the projects, not only on the project itself and benefits.

You are the author and you have outlined the guiding principles of the project economy in the document which is called *Project Manifesto*. What is the aim of this document? What is the correlation with the famous *Agile Manifesto*?

Well, it's part of that goal to make everybody aware of the importance of projects. Going back to the previous question, one of the biggest mistakes that we have done in the project management is that we said – this methodology is applicable to all the projects and you need to have all these phases and templates for all the types of projects. That was very wrong. Then came Agile and that is waterfall or Agile. We did it wrong. It's not one or the other. I think the Project Manager of the future will use Agile, will use the traditional project management, will use Six Sigma, sometimes will use programme management. There is a big mistake in our



way of educating and talking about projects. There's no one methodology for every project.

Backing to your question on the *Project Manifesto*, there have been projects forever, there are millions of projects but why don't we have a *Project Manifesto*? PMI has 600,000 members, we have also northern associations, so in total, we have maybe 2-3 million people working in projects but we don't have a Manifesto to share, not with us, but to share with the people, the leaders, the communities. Projects are important, this is how we built our prosperity and how we make a change. I copied the concept of this Manifesto, but what I proposed, it's a bit higher level.

I think that was one of the reasons why Agile was so popular – because they built the Manifesto and we don't have the Manifesto. I don't intend to be the sole writer, it is going to be co-created with bigger communities of people. I would like to seek endorsement from relevant people and the PMI community somewhere next year.

You have spread the idea that the most significant disruption of the 21st century is how the organizations and countries will be managed – through projects. You rank this phenomenon as even higher than technology, artificial intelligence or big data. This is a huge revolution in thinking! But are those changes truly revolutionary or maybe they have more evolutionary character?

I'm trying to be very provocative because people need to be shocked, they need to

think outside the box. Over the past 80 years, the world has been driven by efficiency, meaning that most of the management concepts were how can we do our work, how can we run our organization faster, cheaper, with fewer resources, with automation, Six Sigma and ERP.

So that is what I called the world driven by efficiency. That's how the organizations organize themselves, by hierarchical structures. That's why in universities you train people to become an expert in one thing – marketing, finance, that's why strategies were lasting six to nine years because we were quite a stable world. It was all about efficiency, but it has been changed. The Covid-19 has just accelerated it, but I already started talking about the project economy two or three years ago. We are going toward the world which is driven by change. Nothing that you were using in the past works now. In the new world driven by change, we have self-managed agile teams, very flat project-based organizations. The PMO will be very different too, forget about the one we know today. The skills that we need are very different. I talked a lot about the generalists, which is great for us – PM's – we can work with different teams, we need to evolve. Your strategy is no longer valid seven or nine years, no industry has such a strategy. From the human perspective, we are human beings, we need stability around tasks to deliver, to perform. We want to feel safe, it means not changing too much and not having too much distraction. This is how the brain works. But no one puts the humans in situations where there's no stability. We

don't know what's going to happen in one week. I think there is an evolution in humans and that we look at humans differently. Now humans have to work in change, it's not what we were used to. To sum up, we are moving from the world driven by efficiency, stability, structure to a world driven by change, projects, adaptation and flexibility. And everything we believe in the past has to change.

In terms of the stability and what we have around this Covid-19 situation, will Covid change the way we plan and deliver projects? Did Covid affect your work apart from not being able to travel?

Covid has caused a massive move – people who were not used to working in projects so much have moved to project-based work, so that's good. The second thing, there is more focus on communication. When we were doing projects in the past, we had weekly team meetings and even updates because there was a lot of informal communication throughout the days. We hadn't much more dialogue about the project deliverables or the scope, or the benefits assuming that everybody knew. That's not the case anymore and I think we're doing that better today. We have much more communication so I think we're moving slowly into more empathy, more soft skills, we're focusing more on the softer side of projects, on intangibles of projects we cannot see and touch. It's a good movement for project management, we just need to learn to adapt.

So I think there is an opportunity for us to move towards what we were talking about before. Thanks to the intangibles and then bigger benefits, we have better communication, more buy-in, less resistance for change. So I'm very positive around although this is not a nice situation around, we're going through but it's going to define new ways of working and a much project-based one.

I'm also thinking about the changes for PMI because we are both volunteers and we love this organization. And you are the former Chairman of the PMI, thus you know the organization inside out. Could you please tell us what the biggest challenges for PMI for the next decade are?

I think PMI has something special that you don't see in many companies, which is the volunteers and the communities that we have, they are so solid, so strong. I think that's something that has a magic formula



for keeping the organization through difficult times. So for me, that's kind of the backbone of the PMI, the volunteers that are working in passion, dedicating their time. But then, you become an organization like the others, you try to have structure and hierarchies. PMI has to evolve faster and need to become something a bit more modern in the way we see other companies adopting. You would be amazed by how difficult it is to change PMI. It's about spreading the importance of change but actually, there's quite a resistance with the PMI, not just with bosses, but also from the chapters and members. We need to learn to become more agile, as we talk. We need to explore and experiment and adapt our products and services and go for market towards the new reality. I think we have completely missed agile. We cannot afford that anymore, we need to be shaping the future of competencies in organizations

and influencing senior leaders. There are so many bright people, actually, I don't see any community with so many bright people, who are smart, who think, have work and experience. But somehow that's not projected around or it's not projected with the power it could be. PMI will survive for sure but we do want to make it like a leading place to be.

Do you have an idea for your next book or for the next concept for project management?

Well, I am not like a book writer, it's just a very painful process. But the good news is that everyone can write a book. You don't need to be a guru or professor, it's enough if you have an idea or something to share. Nowadays, you don't even need the publisher. It's a painful process but it gives you the clarity about what you want to share and bring some concepts and examples because you need to do a bit of research.

Last year I published two books just because people came to me, so I had to work on the *Project Revolution*, which is about the project economy and simplification of project management. I think that's one of my biggest areas. I need to make project management simple and I want to make project management not for the PM's but for the 95% of people who are occasional Project Managers, for the sponsors.

Then Penguin, a well-known publisher whose things you can meet at the airport, came to me. They were launching a new business series and one of the main books

was about project management. I couldn't refuse, but after writing two books last year, I said "no more books in 5 years." But then, Harvard Business Review (HBR) offered me cooperation. They wanted to renew their HBR project management handbook. It was published ten years ago, it's very old-fashioned and again, I couldn't say no. So I am writing the HBR project management handbook, it will be published next year and it's again back on the simplification.

I am also working on the second edition of the project canvas – to simplify project management. So, more focus on simplification, more focus on the project economy, more focus on senior leaders. But I think Project Managers can learn, we have been trained to be very technical and use technical walls and focus on time, cost, deliverables, but we need to learn to talk about the benefits. We need to learn why we do a project, not because there's a nice return on investment but because we're changing the world and that's nobody tells us to tell. That's my big project, it's not easy, but it needs to be done.

Thank you very much Antonio for your time today and a very interesting interview. Good luck with your plans, keep safe and healthy! 🍀

Ready for more? Check out the full version recorded interview on our social media: <https://youtu.be/hQYtsd4qBK8>



Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez

Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez is a leading expert in project management and strategy implementation, recognized by Thinkers50 with the prestigious award "Ideas into Practice".

He is the creator of concepts like *The Project Economy* and the *Project Manifesto*.

Former Chairman of the PMI, co-founder of the Strategy Implementation Institute and the global movement Brightline. Antonio has held executive PMO positions at PwC, BNP Paribas and GSK. He is the author of *Lead Successful Projects*, *The Project Revolution* and *The Focused Organization*. He has been teaching project management for more than a decade to senior executives at Duke CE, Skolkovo, Solvay Business School, and Vlerick. He is an Economist, has an MBA from London Business School and Insead's IDP. He is a member of Marshall Goldsmith 100 coaches.



Mark Lines spoke at the Dubai International Project Management Forum in December 2019.



Scrum Is Wonderful, It Is Just not Enough

Interview with Mark Lines, Vice-President of PMI and co-creator of Disciplined Agile, conducted by Dominika Kantorowicz

Mark, let's start from the basics. What is Disciplined Agile? If this is not a framework, nor methodology, how can we name it? Where did it come from?

Disciplined Agile began in around 2009 when the co-creator – Scott Ambler – was the Chief methodologist of Agile and Lean for IBM worldwide. He recognized that we needed something more robust than just Scrum to deliver complex, enterprise initiatives using agile. Scrum is described by a 19-page guide. While Scrum is wonderful, it is just not enough. So Scott asked me for help and together we decided to pull together supplemental practices from all the different methods and frameworks and bring them together into one cohesive library of practices and strategies, as well as fit-for-context advice for which ones make sense in different situations. We need to recognize that there is not just one agile process that suits all situations. If you're building a simple website, you don't need to do much in the way of requirements.

You can even simply diagram everything on the whiteboard if you are co-located. But if you're building software for medical devices that people's lives depend on, you will have to take a much more formal approach to how you deliver your products using Agile. In the beginning we described DA as a "process decision framework" but people didn't understand what we meant. What resonates better is describing DA as a "toolkit" of practices and strategies, you can select the techniques that make sense for you. To summarize, using the DA toolkit you can customize an agile way of working for any situation.

Could you briefly introduce us DA principles? Do any of them seem particularly important to you?

Disciplined Agile principles are near to our hearts. You might have heard about the Agile Manifesto that was written in 2001. We need to recognize that this is almost 20 years old now and maybe there's a better way to frame

the Disciplined Agile Manifesto. We describe the DA mindset in terms of principles, promises, and guidelines.

One of my favourite principles is "be awesome". It means that if you do Agile properly, everybody should be happier because you're focusing on high-value work and not doing things that don't add value. This makes us more productive, things get done quicker, and this increases our joy. When properly done, everybody in the organization should be happier using Agile techniques. This joy translates into projects that are delivered on time and within the budget, the risk is lower, customers are delighted and collectively that's what "being awesome" means.

My other favourite principle is that "context counts". The way you do Agile will differ in different situations, it varies in small and large teams, and for example, in regulatory environments versus startups. The DA toolkit is what helps you to customize a way of working that makes sense for you.

Another principle is that “choice is good”. We don’t have just one way of doing things, we have many of them. It’s good to have choices. Many methods and frameworks out there are very prescriptive, they say this is the way you have to do things. A wonderful thing about DA is that we believe that choice is good. A related principle of DA is to “be pragmatic”. Pragmatism means that we do the best we can in the situation that we face. In some situations that may mean that we don’t do agile “by the book”. And that’s ok. Be as agile as we can be, but we recognize that in an enterprise we have to do things that aren’t agile in the interest of the larger good. This is part of the “discipline” in DA. So we do what makes sense for us, not blindly following prescriptive guidance of any particular method.

What are the primary roles on Disciplined Agile delivery teams?

A key role, very similar to Scrum, is the Team Lead, what Scrum calls Scrum Master. It doesn’t matter what you call it – Scrum Master, Team Lead or Agile Project Manager. It’s just a role, not the job title. We also have a Product Owner, which also comes from Scrum. The Product Owner represents the business and conveys the requirements from the business to the team. He also helps set priorities. In DA we also have a unique role – an Architecture Owner who you can think of as the technical lead of the team.

One of the principles that I didn’t mention is “enterprise awareness”. It means that teams don’t work in isolation, we have to work with other Agile teams and other business units. Therefore it’s good to make sure

that everybody works together effectively. An example of applying enterprise awareness is having an Architecture Owner who understands the enterprise technical direction and makes sure that if there are any guidelines, standards that need to be followed, the team follows those standards. We also have the Team Member role. We don’t have business analysts, testers and developers as specific roles because, in the most effective Agile teams, everyone does what needs to get done irrespective of their formal role or job title. However, DA recognizes that you may also need some specialists, like user experience specialist or database specialist particularly in more complex initiatives to assist part or full time. We refer to these as supplemental, optional roles.

What type and size of an organization is the best to implement DA? Does the organization with no prior experience in Agile methods or frameworks can implement DA?

One of the great advantages of DA is its adaptability. It can be used in any size organization, any industry, any size and type of team. Even if you are a start-up with a four-person Scrum team, that team can still benefit from learning about the tools and techniques inside the DA toolkit to help you be more effective with Scrum. At the other end of the spectrum are the very large companies, for example a large UK-based company has over 1200 teams that use techniques from the DA toolkit. They use DA to increase the effectiveness of their teams around the world using methods like SAFe, LeSS, Lean, and Scrum. So, the size of the organization does not matter.

In turn, do you need to have Agile experience? No, you don’t have to. When you take a DA workshop or certification, you can take the one that matches your understanding and knowledge of Agile. Our Disciplined Agile Scrum Master (DASM) certification assumes that you don’t know Agile at all so we cover the basics of Agile, Lean and also basics of the DA toolkit. This certification goes far beyond “basic Scrum” and is a great place to start your agile learning journey.

What should be the best way to implement DA? Do we have any prescriptive steps that we need to follow?

What we would recommend first and foremost is investing in the right education. Unfortunately, a typical Agile certification is a two-day program that only teaches you about one specific method and it doesn’t teach you how to use it effectively. It just teaches you structurally what it is and that just simply isn’t enough to get the job done. What distinguishes the PMI certifications is that you can learn about all different kinds of Agile techniques and they’re backed by significant bodies of knowledge as well as challenging tests to help you apply the material learned during the trainings. This will help make you more flexible in applying Agile in a way that works best for you. So start with the right kind of education. What we see in many cases is that after somebody takes a course on DA, they may choose to get the assistance of a Discipline Agile partner – a consultant partner – who provides coaching services to help them adopt these ideas. So that’s the pattern we recommend – the education combined with coaching or help from somebody who’s done



Mark Lines spoke about Disciplined Agile strategies for optimizing your way of working at the PMI Global Conference 2019 in Philadelphia, Penn.



Mark Lines spoke about Disciplined Agile strategies for optimizing your way of working at the PMI Global Conference 2019 in Philadelphia, Penn.

some kind of Agile but ideally is experienced using Disciplined Agile.

A fundamental philosophy of Agile is that teams should own their own process, or as we say in DA – teams should choose their way of working (WoW). We also say that there are no “best practices”, rather every practice has tradeoffs and works well in some situations and poorly in others. Given all of this, how can a team choose its WoW?

We do say that organizations that are truly successful with Agile aren't successful due to copying other particular methods or frameworks. What makes them successful is that even though they may start this way, then they learn how to optimize, how to use it based on their unique situation. One of the beautiful things about Agile is that it has process improvement built into it and often teams use a technique called a retrospective where they periodically review where they didn't meet the customer's expectations and what they can do to get better to improve it. Another aspect is the idea of failing fast. Feel free to experiment and try things to get better. If you fail, that is ok. The quicker you fail, learn and get better, the quicker you will be a higher-performing team and deliver better results. While the idea of failing fast is a good one, the unfortunate reality though is that teams often don't understand how to get better. When they fail, they don't know what solution will make them get better and it's often because of a lack of education they don't know what alternatives are available. The answers are in the DA toolkit!

This is the real value proposition of Disciplined Agile. If you have a team that under-

stands the hundreds of different strategies that can improve their way of working, they know what the guidance says in this kind of situation. So they succeed earlier because they can reference the toolkit, accelerating their continuous improvement. In DA we call this Guided Continuous Improvement (GCI). That's what it means to choose your way of working! We call this “choose your WoW”.

I'll give you one example. Some people copy the techniques from Spotify – the Swedish music company using Agile. Spotify does a wonderful thing in terms of using Agile, they chose what works for them, they chose their way of working. So the beauty of Spotify is not how they do Agile, the beauty is that they understood the importance of figuring out an agile way of working that makes sense for them. This is what you can do with the DA toolkit. So don't copy Spotify, be like Spotify and choose your way of working!

Does the DA have any tangent points with classic project management?

As I said earlier, one of the principles of DA is “Enterprise Awareness”. Typically an organization has many Agile teams, so we need to be enterprise aware, looking outside of our team, to understand better ways of working with other teams and interacting in a natural manner that supports functional groups of our organization. What I mean by that, is that in any enterprise, we may have a PMO that is responsible for ensuring that the investments, initiatives and risks are well managed. It's important that the PMO also works in an agile fashion. DA provides guidance for those functional areas like PMO, enterprise architecture, release management, and data groups to help them be agile as well. This is how we achieve true business agility when all parts of the organization are agile. Answering the question about the correlation with project management, we need to understand that we need to have some governance in place. Effective PMOs help us to prioritize our projects, ensure effective return on our investments, and manage the risks of our projects. Disciplined Agile has built governance into DA but it is light-weight, lean governance. This is not bureaucratic governance, rather it shows how you can provide oversight to your project teams in an agile way.

What's more, DA includes guidance for agile Risk Management – which is a part of traditional project management. Unfortunately, most Agile methodologies don't even talk about risk management. These are examples of blending DA and classic project management ideas.



Mark Lines spoke about Disciplined Agile strategies for optimizing your way of working at the PMI Global Conference 2019 in Philadelphia, Penn.

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Journey to Business Agility

PMI Agile Certifications graphic

Can you tell us how to develop your DA knowledge? What is the certification path?

We are strong believers that everybody on the team should understand the DA toolkit. We can't depend on just the team lead or the Scrum Master to understand all aspects of Agile. The most effective teams are the ones where everyone invested a little bit in education to understand agile practices.

We are very excited that we have just announced a new Agile certification journey, as part of the integration of DA into the PMI family. PMI has always been known to have world-class project management training, offering certifications for junior and senior project managers, so that you spend your entire career learning and growing within the traditional project management certifications. Now we have provided the equivalent career journey for Agile. We have introductory Agile certifications, as well as intermediate and advanced certification so that you can continue to learn and grow throughout your career.

We have 5 Agile certifications in the journey. The existing PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP) Certification is not going away, so if you are working on your ACP please continue and complete it, but the good news is now you can go beyond ACP and take more advanced certifications within the Disciplined Agile certification journey.

Disciplined Agile Scrum Master (DASM) Certification is available now and there are many training workshops that have been scheduled. DASM is perfect for beginners in


DA. It is a nine-lesson, instructor-led course that teaches the fundamentals of agile and lean approaches like Scrum, Kanban, SAFe® and more, along with how to implement the Disciplined Agile toolkit to choose your way of working (WoW) based on your individual situation.

We are very excited about our new Disciplined Agile Senior Scrum Master (DASSM) Certification for advanced or experienced Agilists. If you have Agile experience or you're certified Scrum Master, you can go directly to that certification. One of the great things about this certification path is that you can get credit for your current background and go directly to the certification that makes sense for you.

What makes these certifications particularly valuable is that students learn how to draw on hundreds of practices from all types of methods including lean in order to optimize their way of working.

There are a lot of organizations who are looking for more senior Scrum Masters, people who have done it for many years and so we created the senior Scrum Master certification to fill the market needs. Some people ask us why we call it Scrum Master when DA is agnostic and works with many other kinds of Agile besides Scrum. The reason is that our research with hiring managers shows that employers are looking and hiring for the role of Scrum Masters even though they use other techniques such as Lean. So our courses go far beyond Scrum, covering Lean, the DA toolkit and how to use it for Guidance Con-

tinuous Improvement. DASSM courses will be available in early December 2020.

The last two certifications are Disciplined Agile Coach (DAC) Certification, which will be redesigned and released in early 2021 and Disciplined Agile Value Stream Consultant (DAVSC) Certification, which learn you how to optimize large-scale agile situations and improve your delivery capability using a framework such as SAFe. So that will be available in early 2021 as well. 

If you want to learn more about Disciplined Agile, please visit the website: <https://www.pmi.org/disciplined-agile>.



Mark Lines

Mark Lines is Vice President, Disciplined Agile at Project Management Institute (PMI). He is co-creator of the Disciplined Agile toolkit with Scott W. Ambler and has co-authored several books on Disciplined Agile (DA). Mark has over 25 years of experience helping organizations around the world to be successful with project delivery using Agile, Lean, Traditional, and Hybrid approaches. He has a record of successfully transforming entire organizations to business agility so that they can rapidly and continuously deliver value to their customers and other stakeholders. Mark is a frequent keynote speaker at industry conferences worldwide. At PMI Mark leads overall DA strategy and end-to-end delivery partnering with sales, product development, communications and marketing.



Photo: LogicAI



Data Science Up Close

Interview with Maria Parysz, CEO of LogicAI, conducted by Dominika Kantorowicz

Maria, what do you call yourself? Data Science Project Manager? AI PM? Digital Manager? Or maybe something else?

Most often, clients call me AI Expert or Tech Community Manager. And for our community, I am simply Maria. I come from the world of innovation and technological visionaries. Together with our partner, we founded LogicAI, under which we implement Machine Learning projects, including for world giants such as Rolls Royce, Louis Vuitton or Sephora. We operate very widely in the artificial intelligence industry, because we provide both AI software tailored to the client's needs, manage the world's largest community of Data Science experts and implement projects to build tech communities, hackathons and technological events.

Are AI projects different? How are they different?

AI projects pose a lot of new challenges for Project Managers and it must be admit-

ted that they are different. The main difference lies in the approach to time management – AI projects are most often based on experiments and it is difficult to determine what the exact result will bring a series of tests carried out within a set time. Customers most often expect the algorithm to achieve 99% efficiency, which is not very realistic at the first implementation. Therefore, it is required to work in short sprints and to implement the solution for production as quickly as possible, under the Lean Startup approach. The implementation of projects in this area also requires knowledge that Machine Learning algorithms learn over time, so there is no point in tweaking the code for a long time, as the increments of business benefits over time are smaller and smaller. Besides, PMs need to understand data work, so they have to be a bit of a data analyst – and this is another difference worth mentioning. That is why PMI in the material *The Project Manager of the Future*, in the first

place among the six most desirable competencies of the digitization era, lists Data Science skills.

What competencies are required of AI Project Managers?

When Project Managers ask me what they should master to become AI Project Managers, I always mention the same set of six competencies: understanding data and the basics of managing them, Agile mastered to perfection (there is no other way to act here), the ability to assess uncertainty (calculating project profitability) is often difficult for projects with an undefined scope) and... the ability to play with Lego blocks – this is a joke, but it is about philosophy. Assembling AI solutions requires knowledge of the available “blocks” and the knowledge of how to fit them together. To this, I would add the curiosity and readiness for continuous learning and the ability to manage change – at the level of the change introduced to the or-

ganization through a given project, especially in the context of potential changes in the composition of teams, where we introduce automation.

Reportedly, you manage a community of 5 million AI experts. How is it related to the core business?

It is a great honour for us that in cooperation with Kaggle, as the only company in the world, we have created the largest AI community in the world, including Data Scientists and AI experts. We are growing very fast – more than threefold in two years! We work hand in hand with Kaggle and Google in an area that is just beginning to be popular – tech community building. Cooperation with millions of talented Data Scientists allows us to create project teams composed of the world's best experts and use their expertise for the benefit of our clients.

What challenges should we expect as Project Managers of the future?

I am aware that the work of each of us will change, partly due to work automation and partly due to the type of projects we manage. That is why I believe that the greatest challenge will be to adapt to the fast-coming changes, both in terms of the type of implemented projects and management methods. That is why proper education and courage in implementing changes are so necessary, and I constantly encourage them to do so. Most of the projects that will be implemented in companies in the coming years will be related to AI. The tasks of the Project Manager of the future will also change, as the algorithms will also automate our daily work, consisting of creating schedules, estimating, task delegation or status communication.

How would you rate the current state of AI in the world? Do we have reasons to be happy or should we be afraid?

I am a promoter of technological education and I believe that education is the key to the proper use of the power that the dissemination of AI gives us. Ignorance is often the basis for fear of the upcoming changes. I believe that an investment in technological education is the best investment for the future. Artificial intelligence was created to help people and should also be considered as such, not as a threat. On the other hand, the current level of knowledge leaves much to be desired, which results in the fact that

AI mechanisms have become the domain of programmers and scare people with a business profile.

This is where I see the greatest risk is precisely in the lack of understanding of at least the simplest mechanisms behind the artificial intelligence solutions that already surround us. Ignorance leads to a situation where we react with fear to humanoid robots, and we do not react to content adapted to us by social media, which, as shown in recent years' practice, can be extremely dangerous when used in an unethical way.

What would you recommend to the younger generations of Project Managers? What about the older ones?

Both, I propose to broaden the knowledge in the field of AI and Data Science. By conducting much training in these areas for business, I know how important the foundations on which to build specialization are. You should start with good training and finding an AI mentor to help you navigate the sea of available information. Of course, I recommend training conducted by people who implemented AI projects and not only completed an online AI course.

I know from experience that regardless of your age, you can become an AI PM because one of the domains of Data Science is business experience, which alone knowledge of the latest technologies cannot replace.

And how will AI affect the role of PMO?

PMO has a great chance to become a key unit in the process of digitization of enterprises. Even today PMO is an information center about projects in the organization and most often collects data from many years of implementation of initiatives. As I mentioned earlier, we need data to create an effective algorithm, which is why I say that future PMOs will largely use Data Science, for example by creating algorithms that predict project risks or its duration. I am observing a trend that PMOs (mainly in the USA) are slowly starting to hire Data Scientists for their teams, realizing the power of the data they have.

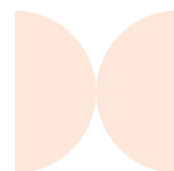
Will the importance of the Project Manager role increase or decrease in the organization?

Project Managers have a gigantic chance to grow on the wave of new digitization and AI projects, but they need to acquire and deepen new knowledge in the area of

new technologies. Answering the question, it depends a bit on which Project Manager we are talking about. For many years, I have been pointing to the trend consisting of the stratification of our profession – a group of Project Managers carrying out assigned tasks from A to Z and PMs solving business problems. These might look similar, but the difference is huge. Thus, the importance of the first group will decrease, as relatively repetitive tasks will be replaced by algorithms, and the importance of the second group will increase significantly, as their expertise will be necessary to introduce any technological change in the enterprise.

How do you rate the maturity of AI projects in Poland versus projects in other countries? Do we look pale in comparison with the USA, China, India, Arab countries or Europe?

I see a significant disproportion in investments in AI-based solutions. Poland is very shy and usually starts with small projects, such as a trial. The second thing that worries me more is that we are followers. Companies and government units from Arab countries, China or the USA are always asking for something unique and extremely innovative. And Poles are asking for something that has already worked elsewhere. Meanwhile, having such talented programmers and a group of experienced Project Managers, I believe that we can introduce AI solutions that will be admired and imitated by the world. 🇵🇱



Maria
Parysz

AI entrepreneur, Data Scientist, AI community leader. Co-founder and president of LogicAI, a company that builds and implements solutions based on artificial intelligence and Data Science for international corporations and state entities. Chairwoman of Kaggle Days – the world's largest community of over five million experts in artificial intelligence and Data Science. He is a lecturer, incl. at the Warsaw University of Technology, Warsaw School of Economics and Collegium Civitas. Winner of awards for entrepreneurs, incl. Jutronauts.



The Future of Construction Projects

Nikita Shtemenko

5D models, Artificial Intelligence, and drones in construction projects, what will happen with the role of project managers? Are we in the age of project managers extinction or the rise of new opportunities for PMs? Will project managers have to work with robots instead of people? How construction projects will be shaped with new technologies? Read this article and learn about some of the newest trends and technologies that will change the construction projects as we know them now.

Construction projects are changing rapidly. New technologies, such as Building Information Modelling, 3D printing, and drones on construction sites are becoming widely used. The new trend for sustainable resources of energy, environmentally friendly products shows us that people will move towards solar panels, minimal or zero-waste materials. Construction projects will become even more complex. We use more fashionable

construction materials such as recycled materials, modern equipment, and solar panels. It requires more specialists, stakeholders, and project members of different expertise. What this means for construction project managers is that they will need additional qualifications, team members, and experts from the energetic field to build such houses. The management of such a project will be more complex, as now the designers, architects, and various engineers will have to find an ideal compromise to satisfy the client. This also means that stakeholder management and expectation management will be even a bigger priority for PMs. Building a house according to the agreed design and architectural solutions is not an easy task but building a house that will have to sustain itself and produce electricity becomes even harder to deliver due to various constraints that will require the project owner to compromise on his or her demands. The budget and scope of such a project will increase, and the quality criteria of sustainable

houses will grow as well increasing the responsibility of the project manager.

Active houses or NZEB (near zero-energy buildings) are being constructed in developed countries since the beginning of the 21st century. For instance, in Dubai, UAE Diamond Developers has started building a sustainable city for \$354 million. The other support for active houses comes from the European Union that set a deadline for 2050 for all existing buildings to fit in a “nearly zero energy” standard.

Automatization — less work for people?

The technological aspect is influencing construction projects with innovations. New technologies require more expertise and qualification on the construction site as well as a new method of project management. For instance, Building Information Modelling (BIM) technologies are gaining popularity among developers. The idea behind BIM is

that the engineering team can develop 3D and even 5D models of the facility. In the case of the 5D model – elements of a 3D model are linked to the execution schedule and costs. Both of these 5D model elements are used to determine the budget and detailed schedule of the project. 5D model enables the project manager to simulate the project before the start of the construction. This approach allows us to negotiate and approve the project with the project owner, who will have a chance to see the 3D model of the building, the schedule of the project, and the budget allocation. Therefore, it can be assumed that the construction projects in the future will be divided into two parts in which the first part will be the development of the 5D model and approving it with the project owner and the second part of the project is the construction process itself.

Not only will the technological changes impact the planning stage, but also the execution stage. Drones are already used on the construction site to lift the materials and montage them in places where is a high risk for people. However, the use of drones is not only limited to building functions. Currently, the number of drones on construction sites is skyrocketing. Drones are more actively used by project managers to control construction projects. Drones check and control the real progress against the budget, scope, and timeline providing the project manager with information about the project. The quality control also increases, as the drone can easily detect any defect and report it. The cost of such a project will drop since the drone can see what was accomplished by the contractor.

Print instead of build!

The use of 3D printers is growing every year due to the quality of the materials, less waste, and the cost of production. The technological progress went that far those 3D printers are used for printing entire buildings. This change in the production of construction materials might reduce the total time of the project and the number of specialists required. The production of the materials will be on the construction site – logistics time will decrease and the specialists from the construction materials side will not be needed. The material produced by the 3D printer will be universal and can be adjusted to any climate, and conditions. 3D printing will enable construction in environments where humans struggle to do it – for instance space. Since space exploration and colonization are the goals for some influencers like Elon Musk, it can be assumed that 3D printing technologies will be used in space to build facilities.

Another way of managing

It can be seen that technological progress and new trends will inevitably change the construction projects as we know them now. It can be assumed that in 10 to 15 years project managers will be required to have more qualifications for collaboration with drones, robots, and Artificial Intelligence. It can be said that in the nearest future project managers will be collaborating with the AI during project management. This collaboration will be based on the AI collecting all the data about the project, analyzing it, and providing

to the project manager for the decision-making process. The Gantt chart, budget, quality control, and other functions that are based on collecting data and analyzing it will be done by Artificial Intelligence with the help of drones and BIM like software. This will lead to a decrease in the number of project members, as some functions will be substituted by robotic systems. However, it does not mean that people will lose their jobs, as these changes will bring a new job position in maintenance and IT teams for the project.

At the same time, the cost of land will skyrocket in the nearest future, as the human population is constantly growing. This increase in real-estate prices and new ecological trends will push people towards construction in new environments like the down deep in the sea, in the mountains, under the ground, and building huge high-scrappers. All of these will be done to reduce the costs of the land. And to construct in such a dangerous environment 3D printer will be used to print blocks, houses, and materials. 3D printers will decrease the price of the construction, have a minimum or zero waste, and can be used almost anywhere.

Construction projects will transform radically from the way they were known before, these changes will require more qualification and expertise from project managers and the use of the latest technologies. The projects itself will become more complex and require a huge number of drones and other smart machinery for execution. The role of the project manager will become even more significant and no Artificial Intelligence will substitute the project manager's role. 🚀



Nikita Shtemenko

An ambitious, enthusiastic student of the University of Economics in Krakow, who possesses a genuine interest in project management, business processes, and continuous improvement. Vice-Director of Finance in Krakow Branch of PMI, master's student in project management and Cash Management analyst in Shell. Passionate language learner with knowledge of Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, English, pre-intermediate German, and basic Italian. Co-founder of a football team in Polish amateur league PlayArena and young investor on the Warsaw Stock Exchange. An active traveller, who has lived in many cities, such as Dallas, Warsaw, Krakow, Prague, Kyiv, and Nurnberg.



In Three Words – It Is OK. In Four? It Is not OK

Kinga Matysiak

It won't be a super nice piece of reading. I am kind of tired of all those faked smiles, courtesy and repeating, that everything is ok. It is not. We live under constant pressure. So many people have lost their jobs and have been looking for the new one for long. So many people had to requalify to support themselves and their families. How many of us live in fear of losing a job? Let's not pretend that the current situation makes no difference to us, that it doesn't affect our lives. We are locked up on and on, deprived of our favorite activities and places. We get nervous and spiky, trying to handle the depression by an online therapy.

The most common problem I hear about from my clients is to keep the commitment of people who are forced to work remotely. Many introverts (well, it may be stereotypical thinking) are probably satisfied with the home-office, but a great number of people need the contact with other people and simply miss them. And it is natural because, as Aronson said¹, we are social animals.

I recall the conversation in mid-April with a representative from one of the global companies. That was a standard conversation

about the training they were going to order. We discussed everything, but no one wanted to hang up. For the next half an hour we talked about how hard it is for us in this new COVID reality. We both needed it, and after this conversation we felt very close to each other. Just for a moment. A while. But this closeness was really important. It helped us keep on going in this strange, unknown world in which we live until today. Thanks to the fact that we were talking about something difficult for us and revealing ourselves to each other, we felt very comfortable with ourselves. Our next conversations, still business ones, were enriched with how we feel now and whether we have a good day. How often do we answer such questions honestly? We are told to always smile, not to talk about how bad it is, to avoid complaining. But there comes a time when even the best "actors" give up and say what it really is. Because sometimes you just have to let go.

In the past, when you talked to the clients regarding their training needs, there were almost never any problems. They didn't want to talk about the difficulties they had to struggle with. But a trainer doesn't come

when everything is perfect, or when everything goes smoothly and there is no need to improve the skills of the people. Why would you invite a plumber when nothing is leaking? But, but... For almost a year now, I've been hearing about the problems raised straightforward. I hear undisguised difficulties. Why? Because it's just natural in every organization – to have problems and to deal with them every day. So why pretend everything is sparkling when it's reflected light?

Recently, I found a book² about the importance of being genuine for the salesmen. Well! Since in sales departments, the kingdom of pretending, there is now a trend of being authentic, it must mean, that the world is ending. What is this authenticity about? It is just to show this "human face" of a tired man who may also fail sometimes. "Fuck up Nights" used to be parties to laugh, and to see that others have it worse. But it was frowned upon to open up except of these evenings. Better to talk about yourself as someone who has not failed ever. Ok, maybe got some little lessons, that you've learned immediately and always carry off everything. We shine on Instagram, we get promoted on LinkedIn and we are great friends on Facebook. So where are we ourselves? I strongly believe that this difficult time, which we are still facing, will teach us to be more honest and will rip off these masks of fake happiness. And for the record, I shine on Instagram, I get promoted on LinkedIn and I am the friend of the year on Facebook. But sometimes I do show my weakness. And I believe that this is my strength. 🚀

1. Eliot Aronson, *The Social Animal*

2. Patrick Lencioni, *Getting Naked: A Business Fable About Shedding The Three Fears That Sabotage Client Loyalty*

Kinga Matysiak

Trainer in project management and social competences in business. Since 2002, she has been conducting trainings based on proprietary games and work tools. She gained experience in business working as a project manager and board member. She is an accredited trainer by APMG International and Peoplecert. She conducts classes with students at universities all over Poland. As a Change Agent, he helps organizations to methodically introduce changes to their organizations. She is the President of the MINDSTREAM training company, specializing in certified project management training.



Post Agile? Or Maybe Rather Pre-Agile?

Jerzy Stawicki

In the description of one of the paths of the XV International PMI Poland Chapter Congress, titled *Post Agile*, we can find the following sentence and question: *"Today we can say that Agile is already a standard, but does Agile solve all our problems?"*

I have been living in the world of project management for nearly 30 years, for nearly 10 years also in the Agile world. Therefore below you will find my reflections regarding the above mentioned sentence and question.

I start my story with the following question: maybe Agile – as it is commonly practiced – solved not the right problems? And maybe created many other new problems?

In my opinion what we have observed in the last years in many companies and in many teams can be rather called pre-Agile, similar to the pre-historical times.

Let's start with my understanding of Agile. I will stick to Tom Gilb's definition, stating that Agile is „any set of tactics that enable a prioritized stream of useful results, in spite of a changing environment“. Describing in the different words Tom stated, that *"Agile is a meta tool for delivery of the value to the stakeholders within resource limits and other constraints"*.

And now, let's have a look at the reality of the last few years and ask a few simple questions:

- Is copying the organizational solutions for product development and delivery - from the company based in Stockholm, rooted in the Scandinavian work culture, applying the specific technical infrastructure and dealing with the very specific product – for the development of completely different products, in the different company culture can be called Agile? Maybe it is a cargo cult?

- Is very wide application of one of many Agile methods (used according to the State of Agile Report by 57% companies in 2019), having of course some advantages, but also showing many quite serious weaknesses, not being the topic of a discussion in the community of practitioners and very slowly evolving – Agile?
- Is really Agile - "the art of doing twice the work in half the time" – as says the subtitle of one well know book? Where are the "useful results" from Tom Gilb's definition, being the core of Agile?
- Can the lack of reference to finance topics (both traditional accounting, as well as Throughput Accounting) and the reference to the bottom line in the so called agile methods and approaches oriented verbally towards value delivery, be considered as really value oriented?
- May the ignoring in the agile methods and approaches the system constraints (as defined by dr. Eliyahu Goldratt) lead to an effective product development process of the right products and thereby to the stream of valuable results?
- Should I continue the list of questions?

For me the above mentioned examples and many, many more observed in the real life, show, that in many, many cases what is commonly named/treated as "agile", in practice deviates strongly from the Agile, as defined by Tom Gilb, presented in one of the previous paragraphs. I would say it is rather pre-Agile, something like the very beginning, like the embryo, from which some more mature form can emerge. Such more mature form can be relatively easy defined by adding to the pre-Agile the key elements, which are currently missing.

In my opinion, there is a quite big amount of work to do for us – executives, managers and

specialists and experts operating in the agile project management, agile product management and striving to achieve in their companies business agility, to reshape so called pre-Agile – in an evolutionary way – into something, which could be effectively called Agile. The good news is, that there is quite a lot of such initiatives aimed at that, which has been started in the last years. I am also – through my new initiative which you can easily find it in the internet – acting in that direction. I think, that the entity, which emerge out of those initiatives, may become a very big surprise for all of us and may not be aligned with our imaginations at the starting point of all of those activities.

Seems like we have an optimistic ending of the feuilleton.

Well, do you remember what dr Eliyahu Goldratt, the creator of Theory of Constraints was asking in such apparently obvious situations? I will tread in his footsteps and also ask the question: "oh really?" Oh really after the pre-Agile era, the Agile era will succeed? In the same way that after Dark Ages the Renaissance has come?

I am not such optimist. My opinion is based on what I see looking through the window at the surrounding world, based on what I see happening in the companies. And on what I hear from my colleagues working in various companies, both in big "corpo", as well as in smaller, like start-ups. The picture emerging from that panorama is very pessimistic. Effective company management methods? Forget about it. Big transformation conducted without head? Normal thing. A lemming-like rush for the novelties promoted by the technological giants, playing customers for a fool? On the agenda sheet. The decline of ability to read with understanding a little longer text and the extinction of the grey matter? Visible on the very step.

Like Casandra I am forecasting the regress, not the advance. The Renaissance and later the Age of the Enlightenment? Post Agile? It is a good joke, it would make the cat laugh. My opinion is, that after the era of pre-Agile, we will regrade deep down the road. Well, we are already regrading.

Welcome to the world of pre-Agile. 🚩

Dr. Jerzy Stawicki

Project & portfolio management, Kanban, OKR and Management 3.0 consultant and trainer with over 25 years of the field experience. Promotor of innovative management methods like flow thinking and also of innovative learning methods, like business simulations. Leader of improvement projects, workshop trainer, conference speaker and university lecturer, columnist and articles author. Also co-creator of Per Se Academy offering on-line agile courses.

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