

September 2025

**Focus**

# Data-driven decisions in project management

Data utilisation in the PM environment:  
**Interview with Wil van der Aalst**

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Project management in construction:  
**Construction Ambassador Initiative PMI-CP**

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Project management with heart:  
**Homeless Entrepreneur**



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# Editors-in-Chief Across Two Continents

# Editorial

Alex is in Germany and starts her day with coffee. I'm in China and already at dinner. The magazine? Somewhere in between.

For me, that means: while Paula is wielding chopsticks, I'm starting my day at the desk with espresso and a fresh mind. This time shift sounds like chaos, but in truth it's our built-in extension of the workday.

Between us lie a seven-hour time difference and, figuratively, seven dimensions of to-do lists. When Alex's inbox is exploding, I'm already easing into the evening. And when I get going in the morning, Alex is long into her well-deserved break.

That requires clear handovers—otherwise gaps appear. At the same time, that's exactly what makes our collaboration exciting: we're forced to keep decisions lean and transparent. A principle that applies to global projects just as much as to our magazine routine.

What sounds like a logistical nightmare is our secret superpower: we're practically working in a 24-hour rhythm. While one of us sleeps, the other keeps going. *PMimpact* becomes a jet-set publication project—just without the jet lag (mostly).

At times it feels like a relay-baton handoff in a virtual marathon. I pass it on, Paula keeps running. No training, no competition—but a shared goal that drives us both.

Shared responsibility, for us, means double perspectives, double checks, double composure (well, mostly). The time difference is our metronome—and sometimes also the reason for spontaneous night shifts.

Of course, there are evenings when I open the laptop again even though, strictly speaking, the day is done. But it's precisely this back-and-forth between structure and flexibility that makes our work so lively—and the result all the more valuable.

In the end, we both hold a magazine in our hands that feels as if we had made it side by side at one table. Only that this table is virtual and spans two continents.

And when we see the finished issue, we know: the adventure was worth it—no matter which clock is striking quitting time.

Paula Wenzel and Alex Bruckschen

Editors-in-Chief, *PMimpact*



Alex Bruckschen



Paula Wenzel

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## MAGAZINE TEAM

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# HOW WELL DO YOU RETAIN YOUR USERS?



## User activity by cohort

Based on device data only

30 DAYS

68K

7 DAYS

16K

1 DAY

1.7K

	Week 0	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
All Users	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%
Apr 23 - Apr 29	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%
Apr 30 - May 6	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%
May 7 - May 13	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%
May 14 - May 20	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%
May 21 - May 27	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%
May 28 - Jun 3	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%
6 weeks ending Jun 3	100.0%	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%

# Data-Driven Decisions in Project Management

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ALEX BRUCKSCHEN

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How key figures, models, and leadership work together to achieve results—in IT and on the construction site.

Consistent thinking: prioritization follows a clear pattern—cost of delay × strategy fit. This means that operational signals regarding delivery capability and risk meet the strategic thrust; portfolio trade-offs become explicit.

In the planning sync of a product group, as in the cycle time meeting on the shell construction, the same question arises today: How do we determine what will be most beneficial next? Not based on traffic light colors or gut feeling, but on clearly defined data—with context and clearly identified uncertainty. “Data-driven” does not mean more charts. It means better decisions in the flow of work—continuously, iteratively, comprehensibly. That is exactly what this article is about: a craft that combines numbers with judgment and responsibility.

## From numbers to decisions

Numbers are only as good as their meaning. If you don’t precisely define terms such as “incident”, “deployment” or “supplement”, you will produce metrics that pit teams against each other instead of enabling leadership. A concise metric profile—formula, purpose, measurement limits, typical

misinterpretations—takes the heat out of heated debates and prevents goals from degenerating into mere number games. In IT/software, leadership reads the pulse and stability of the system: How much work is in the air at any given time?

How long does it take from “start” to “in operation”? How often does a change lead to a failure, and how quickly are we back up and running? These signals—work in progress, lead time, deployment frequency, change failure rate, MTTR—answer the only relevant question: How do we increase delivery capability without sacrificing availability? In construction/engineering/capex, the earned value trio of CPI, SPI, and, in particular, earned schedule provide a reliable picture of performance and deadlines; buffer consumption and critical path drift serve as an early warning system; addendum and rework rates tell the truth about quality and scope.

## The mathematics behind the key figures

Little’s Law links inventory, rate, and time in the software flow: limiting WIP shortens throughput time—but only if the arrival rate does not fluctuate chaotically. Kingman’s formula explains why variability and high utilization cause waiting times to explode disproportionately. In practical terms, this means smaller, more homogeneous units, less

parallelization and a stable cycle time. On the construction site, batch sizes, cycle planning, and delivery punctuality have the same effect. Variability eats up buffers faster than gut feeling would suggest—an insight that saves money and nerves. Read correctly, KPIs become navigation lights, not headlights that blind everything.

## Examples from practical fields

An example from IT: a program with unstable releases did not rely on more controls, but on neatly cut work packages and hard WIP limits. The effect was not announced on a gut feeling, but was proven with process behavior diagrams: only when MTTR and change failure rate shifted sustainably—not just in individual outliers—was the measure considered effective. And from construction: a large-scale project linked earned schedule and buffer tracking in such a way that discussions about deadlines were replaced by trend assessments. Addenda decreased because causes—not symptoms—were addressed.

## Transparency is not a technical problem, but a cultural decision

Numbers only become leadership when people dare to reveal uncomfortable truths: a feature that no one uses; a buffer that is shrinking faster than planned; a



wave of supplementary requests that stretches the budget. Where blame is likely to be assigned, data quality declines—in IT through watered-down incident reports, on construction sites through embellished progress reports. The paradox is both old and current: the more we sanction risk, the less we see of it in the systems. A mature data culture therefore protects not the perpetrators, but the truth—and thus the project. Leadership begins with a mindset: curiosity before certainty, diagnosis before blame, causes before symptoms. When a key figure tips, the first reaction is not justification, but a good question: “What could explain this deviation—and how do we check it?” This tone makes the difference between data as a weapon and data as a tool. In software, it manifests itself in post-incident analyses that document mechanisms instead of names. In construction, it manifests itself in safety meetings that treat near misses as learning opportunities rather than disciplinary hooks. The same attitude also carries over into planning: premortems (“Imagine the project has failed—why?”) bring risks to the table early on and reveal data requirements before the first measurement exists.

**From hypothesis to effect**

Once approved, the evidence-gathering process begins: each measure is assigned an outcome hypothesis with a measurement plan for T+30/ T+90/ T+180. “Success” is only considered proven once the benefits are visible in the field—not when a milestone has been reached; decisions are consistently fed back into this Process.

Culture also determines incentives. If bonuses are linked to traffic light colors, the lights turn green. If, on the other hand, learning is rewarded—clearly formulated assumptions, clearly documented decisions, verifiable experiments—the quality and speed of control increase. This can be put into practice in IT programs: a team that manages its error budget transparently and slows down releases when it falls below target is showing leadership, not weakness. The same applies to buffer policy on construction sites: those

who disclose buffer consumption and trigger countermeasures in good time protect deadlines and budgets better than any cosmetic curve.

After all, culture needs rituals to sustain it—not as a checklist, but as recurring, short formats in which figures and responsibility come together. A decision journal that records not only the “what” but also the “why” and “when do we check the impact?” A weekly “data debrief” in which each deviation is thoroughly dissected—with hypotheses, counter-hypotheses, and a clear test plan. And a narrative that managers exemplify: “We measure to learn—not to prove ourselves right.” Where this narrative is consistent, dashboards become quieter, decisions better, and projects more reliable—in the data center as well as on the construction site.

**Forecasts without apparent accuracy: uncertainty, Monte Carlo, and AI with railings**

Each forecast or AI model has a profile (purpose, inputs, training window), a documented walk-forward validation including a calibration report, and a challenger variant. Extensions are only granted if quality remains stable; drift monitors report when intervention is needed—AI remains a tool, not an oracle.

Decisions follow clear guidelines: for example,  $P80 \geq \text{target date for critical milestones}$ , a time deviation  $SV(t) \geq 0$  over three periods, and a  $TCPI \leq 1.10$  as a hard limit. This means that deviations are not negotiated, but regulated—with clear accountability.

Forecasts are tempting—and tricky. Anyone who takes them seriously openly shows uncertainty. Point values (“finished on March 14”) create a false sense of accuracy; ranges with calibration (“P80 between March 14 and 23—our 80% statements are correct in ~80% of cases”) create trust. Walk-forward validation has proven itself in software programs: models learn from past windows and prove themselves in later time periods. In the construction environment, Monte Carlo simulations serve



well—provided that dependencies are not romanticized. Trades share supply chains; rework correlates sections. Those who model such correlations and feed them with historical distributions instead of desired ranges obtain P-curves that enable decisions: Which measure shifts P80 most to the left, and at what price?

**Earned value explained in plain language:**

This refers to the “value” of the work actually completed—measured against what should have been completed at this point in time according to the plan. The “earned schedule” approach translates this performance level into calendar time: if our performance to date corresponds to what was planned for week 8, then we are at week 8 in terms of performance—regardless of whether the calendar already shows week 10. The time deviation is then





simply the difference between this achieved plan date and the actual calendar date. A time schedule index expresses the same thing as a ratio (anything above 1.0 means ahead of schedule; anything below means behind schedule).

We take a similar approach to cost control: an updated cost forecast up to completion shows where we are heading based on the current trend. This is supplemented by a key performance indicator based on the principle of “productivity on the remaining distance”: it answers the management question of how efficiently we need to work from today onwards in order to stay within budget and meet the target date. The result: away from traffic light colors and towards reliable trend assessments—with a clear statement of where we stand, where the trend is heading, and which levers are now effective. AI has a place in this—as an assistant, not

as an oracle. Generative models help to manage text volume: consistent protocols, concise status reports, extracted risks, neatly curated lists of measures. Classic ML models show their strength when patterns have real predictive power: incident probabilities in IT, claim risks in construction, schedule and cost trends based on progress, weather, and delivery punctuality. The framework is crucial: a model profile with purpose, inputs, training window; traceable validation and calibration; approval by the specialist side; drift monitoring during operation; a rollback plan. AI increases signal quality—the decision remains a matter for management.

**The smallest effective structure: decision log, value focus, and scaling**

What professionalizes teams most quickly is not the next visualization,

but discipline in decision-making. A lean decision log answers three questions: What decision did we make, when, and on what data basis? What options did we reject—and what were the side effects? When do we review the impact? In software, you link this to SLOs and error budgets (“Which release is permissible if the budget is Underspent?”), in construction with a clear buffer policy (“Which risk consumes how much buffer—and who approves it?”). This log turns numbers into stories with responsibility—and shifts debates from justification to learning.

It is crucial that three principles are evident in day-to-day work. Firstly, transparency about uncertainty: bandwidths with proven calibration instead of bold point values. Secondly, economy instead of output: time has a price—in IT as cost of delay, in construction as capital commitment and follow-up costs. Decisions belong in this value context. Thirdly, scalability without dogma: a semantic layer with common definitions creates comparability at the portfolio level while still allowing teams scope for local optimization. Those who lead in this way deliver more reliably—in the data center and on the construction site.

At the portfolio level, we replace rigid annual budgets with value-based, data-supported funding in quarterly cycles. P50/P80 risk, realized outcomes and visible trend breaks determine whether to increase, maintain, or stop funding. In this way, we link evidence to capital—and reduce sunk cost bias.

► **Conclusion:** data-driven projects are not a cult of numbers, but a culture of decision-making discipline. Those who clarify terms, reduce variability, disclose uncertainty, test models, and document decisions create predictability without false precision. The result seems unspectacular: less drama, more impact. That is precisely what professional excellence is all about.

# Making Better Project Decisions with Data: What Process Mining Reveals

## Interview with Wil van der Aalst

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ALEX BRUCKSCHEN IN CONVERSATION WITH WIL VAN DER AALST

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In project management, decisions are often made based on intuition, past experiences, or status reports—despite the availability of rich data sources. One methodology is changing that: Process Mining. It uses digital traces left in IT systems to visualize and analyze how processes really run, uncovering inefficiencies and enabling data-driven steering.

To explore how Process Mining is entering the world of project and portfolio management, Alex Bruckschen spoke with Prof. Wil van der Aalst, the field's founding researcher and one of the most cited computer scientists in the world. Their conversation shows how project leaders and PMOs can benefit from making the invisible visible.

### From formal models to real-world impact

**Alex:** Wil, what sparked your interest in the combination of data science and business processes?

**Wil:** My background is in computer science, especially formal methods like Petri nets and workflow

simulation. But I noticed that while we were building ever more sophisticated process models, organizations lacked an objective view of how their processes actually worked. That's when the idea of using event data to discover and improve processes emerged. This became the foundation of Process Mining. In the early 2000s, my team in Eindhoven was the only group worldwide systematically researching this topic.

**Alex:** You later collaborated with Celonis. What led you to bring Process Mining into the industrial World?

**Wil:** The Celonis founders had read my papers and started building a platform based on them. I was impressed by their drive—they wanted to bring Process Mining to scale, not just for analysts, but for entire organizations. While academia had developed prototypes, Celonis made it usable in real-world enterprise settings. I realized that true impact comes not from insight alone, but from adoption.

### What projects can learn from their data

**Alex:** Let's move to project and portfolio management. How can these areas benefit from Process Mining?

**Wil:** Projects generate event data, too—through issue trackers, approval flows, time logs, or change requests. Process Mining helps you detect deviations, delays, and inefficiencies—not just after the fact, but while they're unfolding. For portfolio management, it provides a consolidated, data-driven view across multiple projects.

**Alex:** Is this already mainstream in project work?

**Wil:** Not yet. Operational use cases like order-to-cash are more established. In project environments, we're still in early adoption. Pioneers in IT, engineering, and consulting are experimenting with it, but widespread use will follow as methods and tools mature. One challenge is the lack of repetition—many projects are too unique to spot patterns immediately.





**Position:** Alexander von Humboldt Professor, RWTH Aachen University

**Known as:** “The Godfather of Process Mining”

**Contributions:** Founder of the Process Mining discipline, 900+ publications, fellow of ACM, IEEE, and GI

**Industry ties:** Scientific advisor to Celonis

**Research focus:** Formal methods, Petri nets, workflow management, process intelligence

More at: [www.vdaalst.com](http://www.vdaalst.com)

**From insight to steering**

**Alex:** Can you share an example where Process Mining significantly improved a project?

**Wil:** A good case comes from software development. One organization applied Process Mining to GitHub data—commits, pull requests, issue tracking—and visualized how teams really worked. They uncovered a lot of rework caused by late code reviews and fragmented handovers between dev and QA. Those are issues that are hard to see without analyzing actual data.

**Alex:** What recurring patterns does Process Mining reveal in projects?

**Wil:** Rework is common, as are bottlenecks in decision-making, late involvement of key roles, and disconnected toolchains. PMOs can use Process Mining to define meaningful KPIs, set early-warning indicators, and get beyond firefighting by focusing on root causes.

**Bridging data silos**

**Alex:** What makes collecting and integrating the right data in projects so challenging?

**Wil:** The main problem is data fragmentation. Project data lives across Jira, SAP, MS Project, email—and not all of it is structured. Aligning time stamps, connecting tasks or milestones, and capturing context is tricky. Object-centric

Process Mining helps solve this but requires solid data modeling and careful integration.

**Alex:** So what does a project team need to get started?

**Wil:** A few things:

- Training, so teams move beyond intuition and work with actual data.
- Clear process questions to guide analysis.
- High-quality, connected data sources.
- And cultural readiness. Transparency can be uncomfortable. Many underestimate the resistance that arises when data exposes weaknesses. Without leadership support, it’s hard to act on the findings.

**Looking ahead: real-time and AI-driven**

**Alex:** How do organizations move from transparency to real-time, data-driven decisions?

**Wil:** It requires automation—continuous data collection, real-time conformance checking, and integration with operational systems. Many get stuck either with data governance or with acting on insights. You can have great analysis, but if no one takes responsibility, nothing changes.

**Alex:** What are common pitfalls you see in Process Mining projects?

**Wil:** The biggest misconception is expecting the tool to solve problems automatically. Process Mining uncovers the truth—but it takes people to interpret and act. Another issue is poor data quality. If the input is incomplete or inconsistent, the results will be misleading, no matter how good the software is.

**Alex:** And what does the future of Process Mining look like?

**Wil:** The future is object-centric and AI-driven. Traditional case-based approaches are too limited for complex environments like

projects. With object-centric data, we can build AI systems that predict delays, simulate project variants, or suggest mitigation steps. Over time, Process Mining will become part of broader decision-making and intelligence platforms—supporting automated, data-based interventions in real time.

► **Final thoughts**

Process Mining is no longer just an academic concept—it’s a practical, actionable way to uncover how projects really work and where they go off track. As Prof. Wil van der Aalst emphasizes, the value lies not just in the technology but in the mindset: being ready to face the facts and take action.

*Thank you for this interview and the shared insights!*

# Data Culture, Not a Data Show

What data-driven decisions in project management really need

PAULA WENZEL IN CONVERSATION WITH JÖRG ENDTER

Data-driven decisions are considered to be a key competence of modern project steering—but how do we make the shift from data collection to action-relevant analysis? We interviewed Jörg Endter, a project-steering expert and long-time companion of complex transformation projects. He knows the opportunities and stumbling blocks from practice.

## From data seeker to data knower

The increasing availability of data has fundamentally changed project management. “In the past, the problem was getting hold of the right data. Today we have almost an oversupply. It’s more about finding and using the right data,” says Jörg Endter. This leads to a change of role: project leads and steering committees no longer have to search, but evaluate, weigh up, and translate data into decisions. This change is not only technical but above all cultural: project managers become data translators—yet with the aim of turning the abundance and speed of data into real ability to act.



## Structure and preparation as success factors

The value of structured data becomes apparent especially in stressful decision situations.

“If I’m poorly prepared and only start the analysis under time pressure, it’s usually already too late. What I have prepared, I can use better in critical moments.” In this way, data becomes a prerequisite for the ability to react and for confidence in steering. Jörg speaks here of a change in perspective: away from short-term reporting and toward a forward-looking data strategy. Those who prepare systematically decide faster—and often better.

## Human and machine: working with AI

The availability of AI-based assistance systems has increased sharply in recent years. According to Jörg, this leads to new requirements: “AI as a project assistant is almost standard. That allows me to respond more individually to my situation.” Many systems today are so low-threshold that even project stakeholders without an IT background can work with them effectively—provided the competence to assess results is there. “AI is not a cure-all. It’s a tool that





**Data culture as a prerequisite**

In the end, everything comes down to a central foundation: “If I accept data as a central asset, data quality almost automatically improves as well.” Jörg advocates a data culture in companies in which all stakeholders take responsibility. “Everyone who works is also a data source—and thus responsible for how data is made available for the process, or not.”

This responsibility must be carried through all levels, especially by leadership. “If leadership doesn’t play along, the topic is not culturally anchored. Then only those participate who really need it or who ‘feel the pain’ when it doesn’t work.” Data quality, says Jörg, is not just a technical issue but an expression of organizational maturity.

**The game changer: mindset**

Asked about the greatest lever for future-proof project management, Jörg doesn’t have to think long: “It’s the topic of data culture and data quality. Everything else—tools, automation, AI—follows from that.” Those who invest today in competencies, data awareness, and a shared understanding lay the foundation for robust decisions tomorrow. The most important task is therefore not the next tool rollout but strengthening one’s own organization. “Tools change. Competencies remain decisive. Only those who understand what data means can work with it effectively.”

works well when used correctly, but can also do harm if used wrongly.”

What matters is the ability to classify AI results and check their plausibility. “Many people know they have to deal with AI, but don’t know where to be careful. That quickly leads to misapplications.” The role of people therefore does not become smaller but more differentiated: they review, verify, and translate.

**Data is useless without a goal**

Jörg sees a major risk in a lack of clarity about goals: “You often hear: ‘Do something with data,’ or ‘Just add some AI.’ But without a goal that’s pointless.” Successful data-driven projects begin for him with a clear question: What added value should the data work deliver? “If I know, for example, that I want to save five hours per week, then I can tailor the solution to that.”

He recommends concrete, measurable goals—such as time savings, better forecasts, or lower resource expenditure. Without this orientation, data use often remains vague and non-binding. “Such projects die quickly because no real benefit is produced.”



**Dr. Jörg Endter** is a biophysicist (PhD) and has been working for over 15 years as a consultant, trainer, and project lead with a focus on data analytics. After completing his doctorate at Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, he moved into management consulting and supported numerous projects in the areas of digitalization, process management, and data-driven decision support. With his company endter consulting, he helps organizations develop data strategies, implement projects successfully, and build a sustainable data culture. His work ranges from training and talks to the practical implementation of data solutions.

# From Status Report to Real-Time Analysis— Data as a Compass for Better Project Decisions

## Reducing the blind spot in project management through continuous data collection

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BERNHARD KONRAD SCHWAB

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### For readers in a hurry / summary

Classic status reports offer project managers only a snapshot of project progress. With continuous data collection as part of data-driven project management (DDPM), project data can be gathered on an ongoing basis and visualized in dashboards. Deviations become visible immediately, enabling faster reactions and greater transparency—often even without additional software purchases.

### Blind trust and blind spot

The demands on project management are constantly evolving. A main problem is the

lack of time for core PM tasks. This becomes particularly clear with classic status reports, which are often prepared half-heartedly shortly before the presentation.

Data for the relevant KPIs is only collected at that point. Between reporting dates, potential risks and changes often go unnoticed—the notorious “blind spot” emerges.

The principle of data-driven project management addresses this: instead of ad hoc reports, project data is collected and aggregated continuously and automatically. Dashboards prepare this data visually and intuitively. This allows project managers to

spend more time on steering rather than manually compiling lengthy reports. Depending on maturity level, degree of digitalization, and selected KPIs, even same-day reporting is possible.

### Strengthening steering competence—even for the less experienced

An often underestimated advantage of DDPM is that less experienced project managers also gain more transparency and confidence. Automations make the work easier: for example, in MS Project, an ongoing, automated check can be integrated that evaluates the project plan against PMO



specifications and points out possible improvements or errors.

Such functions can be implemented with built-in tools or simple automation tools like Power Automate—even without programming knowledge.

**It doesn't always have to be a new tool—often the toolbox is enough**

A new, expensive tool is often introduced too quickly, unnecessarily complicating the situation. In practice, this is almost always a change project—mistakenly often labeled a simple

“tool rollout.” Behind such an introduction lie numerous tasks that go far beyond pure technology: stakeholder management, training, data preparation, security, and much more.

**First steps with Excel and existing data sources**

Especially for getting started with data-driven PM, existing tools like Excel in combination with automation solutions provide a solid basis. Many processes can be implemented quickly with RPA tools or, traditionally, via VBA. A semi-automated dashboard can

often be realized within a day—even for less experienced users. Particularly helpful is the Power Query function integrated into Excel since 2010, found under the “Data” menu.

**Handling unclear data sources**

The source data is not always well maintained. Duplicates, inconsistent formats, outdated and differing data statuses, or unclear and non-auditable provenance are common. To make such data sources usable, it is advisable first to clearly identify the source and jointly define who is responsible for maintenance. This step is crucial, especially in companies that have grown over years. Often these are department-specific silo solutions with different quality levels in terms of documentation methods.

Such silo solutions often arise from the necessity of a missing overall corporate strategy, and are characterized by dependence on the “head knowledge” of individual persons. As staff changes occur, knowledge about these systems or interfaces is gradually—and often quietly—lost over time. A current overview of all available sources, collection intervals, quality factors, target audiences, and responsibilities creates the

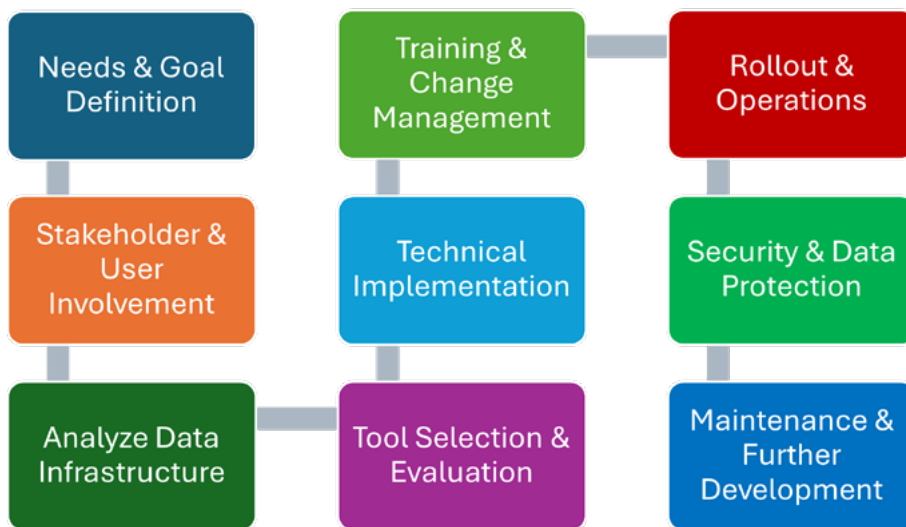


Fig. 01: Development of “data collection” (Source: Own illustration by B. K. Schwab)

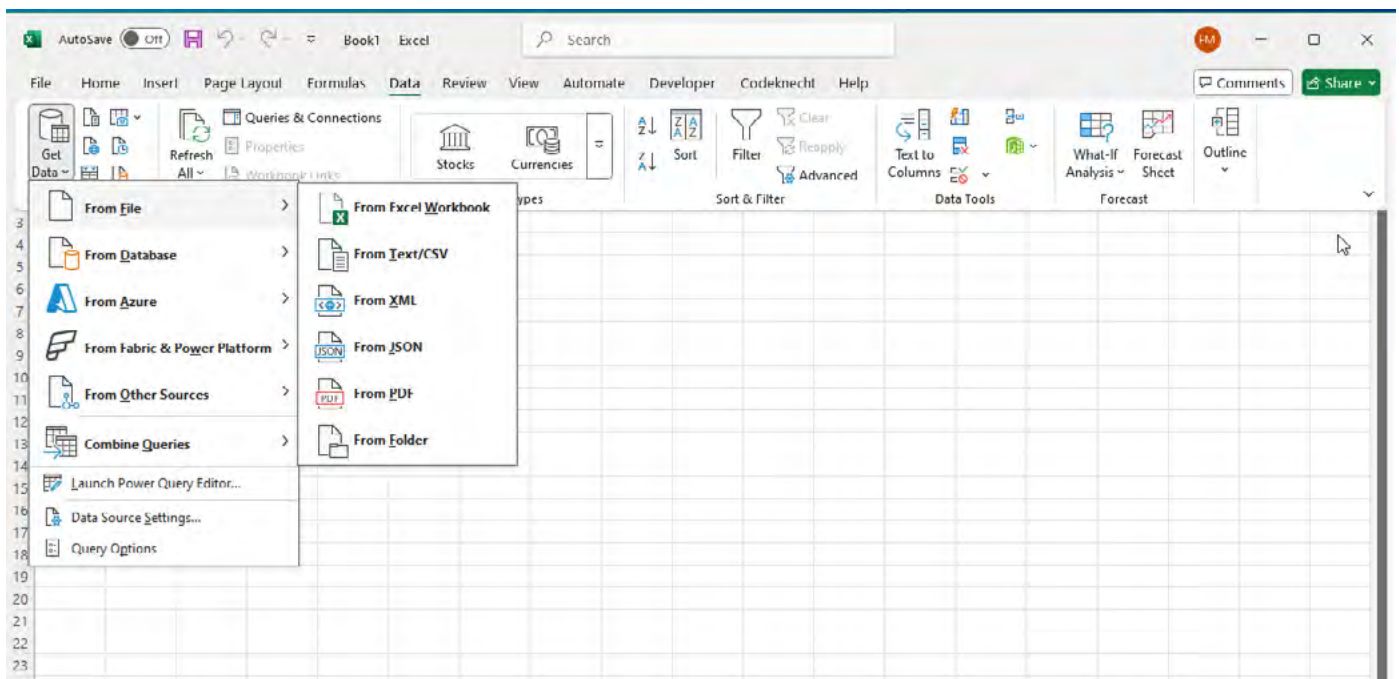


Fig. 02: Excel table overview (Source: Own illustration B. K. Schwab)

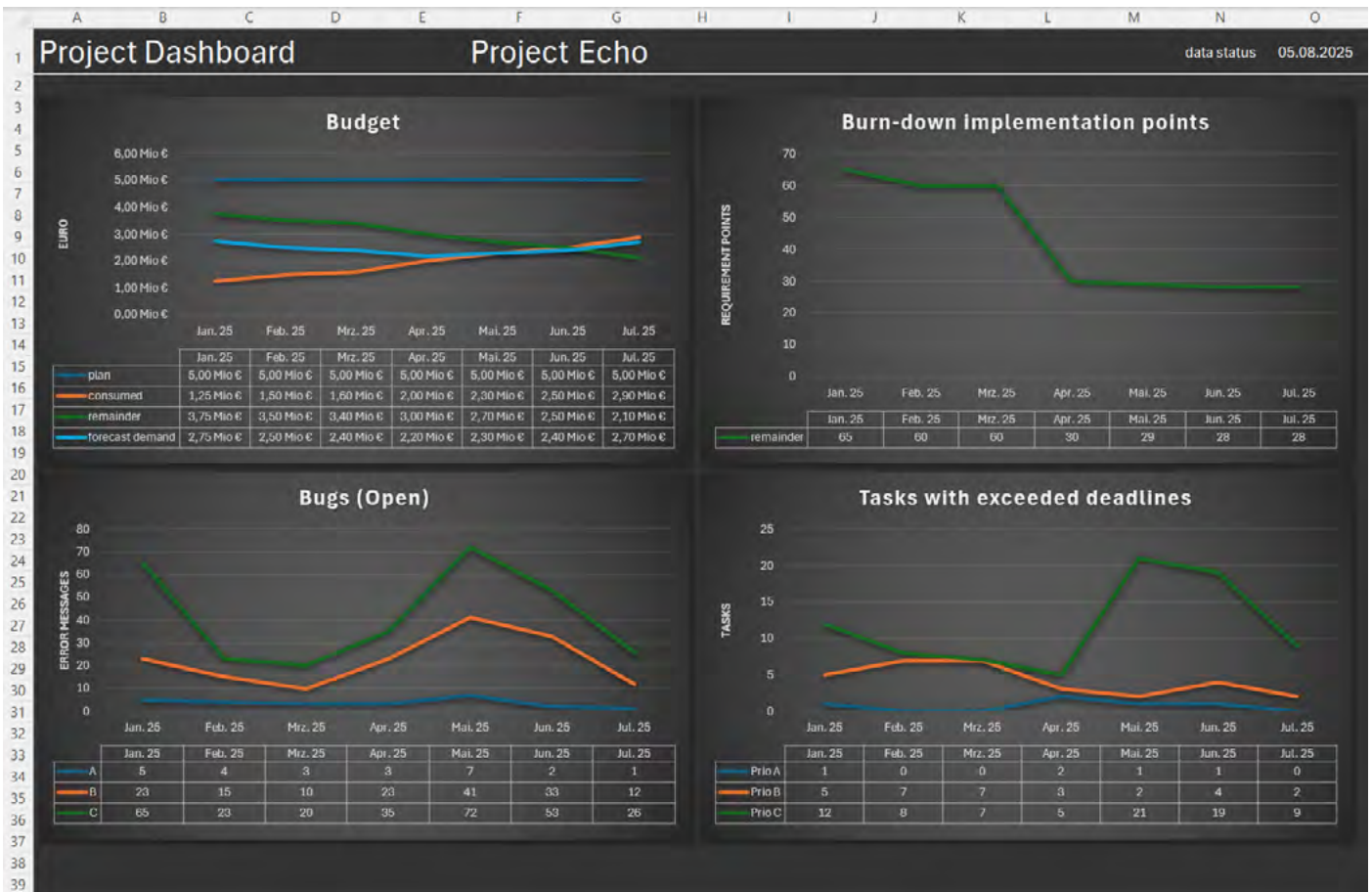


Fig. 03: Project dashboard—“Project Echo” (Source: Own illustration B. K. Schwab)

necessary transparency and forms the basis for all further work with the data.

In the next step, format and structure should be checked to establish uniform standards for data transformation—for example, for dates or currencies. A quality assessment based on defined test methods provides information on completeness and correctness. This is followed by cleansing, in which duplicates are removed in the analysis system, missing values are added where appropriate, and typos are corrected. It is also sensible to set up automated checks—for example, via plausibility checks in Power Query. Every adjustment to the data sources should be documented to facilitate later error analysis and to secure a reliable data basis in the long term.

At the end of each data retrieval there is an automated quality report that also describes in detail which changes were made to which dataset in the analysis system—and above all why—so that data quality can also be improved over time in the source systems.

**From data sources to meaningful dashboards**

With Power Query, data from different sources such as Excel files, CSVs, databases, or Web services can be imported, transformed, and combined. This creates integrated dashboards that map project status in real time and bring enormous time savings.

**Guide and example**

At the following link, you will find a sample project showing how a dashboard can be built with Power Query:

<https://experte.org/pmi-magazin/>

Curious? You can get an introduction from the author at the next webinar on October 23, 2025 (6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.).

**Conclusion**

Data-driven PM can significantly increase a project’s steering capability without necessarily introducing new tools. Those who use existing software cleverly can quickly achieve initial successes, increase transparency, and base decisions on a more solid foundation. With AI support, a flexible sparring partner is also available that—aligned with the organization’s maturity level—helps with analysis and makes room for maneuver visible at an early stage.



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# Flow Management: Achieving Predictable Project Outcomes with Data-Driven Decisions

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MATHIAS TÖLKEN

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Project portfolios are becoming more and more complex: tight schedules, parallel initiatives, shared resources, and a web of dependencies. To deliver reliably in this environment you need more than milestone tracking. Flow management shifts the focus away from rigid plans towards a data-driven understanding of how work actually flows. It makes bottlenecks visible before they jeopardize delivery dates and looks at how work moves across project and portfolio levels. Where is work piling up? How long do individual initiatives take? Which efforts block other projects due to dependencies? If you answer these questions systematically, you shorten delivery times, increase quality, and reduce stress in the system.

## From gut feel to robust metrics

In multiproject environments, progress is too often judged by gut feel or isolated status updates. However, only consistent, regularly captured metrics reveal whether projects are truly in flow and whether improvements are having

a tangible impact on business results. Key metrics include:

- **Lead time**—the time from project request to completion. Shows how long customers or stakeholders wait.
- **Cycle time**—the time spent working on an item from actual start to finish.
- **Work in progress (WIP)**—the number of tasks or projects in progress. High or rising values indicate overload.
- **Throughput**—the number of completed work items or projects per time period. Only completed work delivers value.
- **Flow efficiency**—the percentage of the total duration that is truly value-adding (touch time).
- **Outcomes**—organisation-specific measures that tie directly to business results.

These metrics are not only for measurement. They also form an

early-warning system. If lead time or cycle time rises across projects, that points to prioritization or capacity issues. If flow efficiency drops, it is time to challenge dependencies, reduce WIP, simplify processes, or examine opportunities for automation.

## Make flow visible: tools that work

In multiproject settings, visualizations are diagnostic and management instruments rather than static reports. Particularly useful charts include:

**Cumulative flow diagram (CFD)**—shows work in each process stage over time. A widening band is a clear sign of a bottleneck.

**Cycle or lead time scatter plots**—help identify trends, outliers, or sudden shifts.

**Throughput charts**—show how much is being finished and make capacity trends visible.

**Aging WIP charts**—reveal where tasks or projects linger unusually long.



A practical tip: run regular flow reviews at team, project, and portfolio level. Review metrics together, discuss anomalies, and agree targeted actions. This helps you spot dependencies early and take coordinated decisions that improve flow across the whole portfolio.

**Small levers, big impact**

Flow management does not have to start as a big transformation program. Small, targeted changes produce tangible improvements:

- Set WIP limits at portfolio level to reduce excessive parallel work and focus on finishing.
- Establish clear project priorities to avoid multitasking and allocate resources effectively.
- Relieve and optimize bottlenecks, for example through automation or by reallocating capacity.

**Data and AI as aids**

Most organizations already collect large amounts of project information, from classic KPIs to team performance and tool status updates. Value only emerges when this data is interpreted and translated into improvements. AI-assisted analyses can detect patterns, forecast lead times, and surface recurring bottlenecks, such as systematic delays in approvals.

In flow management the decisive question remains: How do we improve the flow of work? The answer emerges from a dialogue between the numbers and the team. Use data as a compass, not as an autopilot.

► **Conclusion**

Flow management makes project and portfolio control more predictable, faster and less stressful. If you make bottlenecks visible, maintain metrics consistently, and continuously test small improvements, you build stable throughput regardless of industry or project size.

The result is more punctual delivery and more room for innovation and qualitative growth. Flow management also provides the basis for evidence-based prioritisation and strategic decision-making. Improvements affect not only processes but business outcomes, too, for example shorter time to market, lower costs, or higher asset availability.

In a world where projects rarely run linearly, flow management offers a reliable foundation for predictable results and sustainable business success.



# Data-Driven vs. Experience-Driven: a Contradiction?

## How project managers benefit from both approaches

BERNHARD KONRAD SCHWAB

Project management lives on decisions that often have to be made under high time pressure or uncertainty—even though far-reaching consequences may occur. But how do you make the best decisions? Do you rely on many years of experience, your gut feeling, and your intuition? Or do you rely on data-based analyses, metrics, and objective evaluations? The debate about “data-driven” versus “experience-driven” is as old as project management itself. But are these approaches really in contradiction?

### Data-driven vs. experience-driven: foundations and differences

Data-driven project management relies on the systematic collection, evaluation, and use of data for decision-making. Metrics such as schedule adherence, budget deviations, resource consumption, or risk probabilities provide the basis for objective assessments and forecasts. Modern tools and software enable the visualization and analysis of this information in near real time.

Experience-driven project management, on the other hand, is oriented toward expertise acquired over many years of practice. Experience, intuition, and knowledge of the “unwritten rules” in the company or industry play a central role. Often, experienced project managers can recognize looming conflicts, bottlenecks, or opportunities at an early stage—even without hard facts.

### Contradiction or complement?

Experienced project managers in particular know the value of their intuition. They know typical pitfalls, understand team dynamics, and are familiar with stakeholder idiosyncrasies. But this is exactly where



risks lie: experience can create blind spots; head knowledge alone does not replace lived practice; and confidence in one’s own actions often leads to hubris. Those who rely too much on the familiar risk overlooking new trends, changing conditions, or unexpected risks.

Data-based approaches compensate for this weakness. Objective analyses can reveal subtle developments



and recurring patterns that experience may miss. At the same time, data is only as good as its collection and interpretation. It rarely captures the whole picture—especially when it comes to “soft” factors such as team dynamics, motivation, or corporate culture.

The combination of data-driven and experience-based approaches offers a decisive advantage from a strategic perspective—particularly in dealing with skills shortages and the loss of knowledge due to turnover. While experience is often tied to individuals, data-based approaches enable the systematic recording, safeguarding, and transfer of knowledge. This creates a learning organization in which individual experiential knowledge is complemented by objective data and made usable on a lasting basis. This connection not only creates resilience to personnel bottlenecks but also a reliable foundation for sustainable decision-making and continuous development.

**Practice example: rollout of a new project management software**

Take the example of a company that wants to introduce new project management software. The experienced project managers are initially skeptical: previous software introductions were bumpy, there was resistance in the team, and productivity dipped in the short term. Intuition warns: “This will end the same way as back then!”

A data-based approach would first conduct a comprehensive as-is analysis of the current workflow, error rates, and communication paths. Pilot projects would be evaluated, feedback systematically collected, and metrics such as user acceptance and time savings recorded.

Only the combination of both perspectives leads to success: experience helps anticipate resistance and identify sensitive areas in change management. Data-based evaluations provide the arguments and success criteria to counteract in a targeted way and to present successes in measurable terms.

**AI: efficiency gains with side effects**

Artificial intelligence can significantly accelerate and objectify data-based decisions. But it does not replace experience. Especially in times of skills shortages, the temptation is great to see AI as a substitute for disappearing knowledge. In doing so, there is a danger that not only specialist expertise but also context-related judgment will be lost.

Algorithms recognize patterns but not nuances. Without interpretation by experienced project managers, soft factors in particular—such as corporate culture, trust, or team dynamics—can easily be overlooked or misinterpreted. In addition, AI systems are only as objective as the data with which they were trained. Distortions in the database or unspoken assumptions in modeling can favor wrong decisions.

AI only becomes strategically sensible when it supplements existing experiential knowledge, is critically examined, and is embedded in a reflective decision-making process.


**Experience AI in project management, understand risks, leverage opportunities**

As part of the “Transformationskompass”, an interactive training environment is available in which you can try out the use of AI in project management in a practical way. The basis is a trained GPT model built on a test dataset spanning ten years of a fictitious company. It simulates several parallel projects with overlapping resources, typical goal conflicts, and realistic decision-making dilemmas. This allows project managers to experience for themselves how AI reacts to structured data, what potential arises from it, but also where limits, biases, or misinterpretations can occur. The goal is to test data- and AI-supported decision-making processes in a protected space, to question them critically, and to become more confident in dealing with new technologies.

► **Conclusion: the right balance decides**

Successful project management today requires a sound decision-making basis more than ever. Data creates transparency and enables objective analyses. Experience provides context and foresight. Artificial intelligence helps to recognize complex interrelationships more quickly and to automate routines.

But none of these components is sufficient on its own. Only the interaction of data, experience, and technological support unfolds its full value. Those who question data critically, actively incorporate experiential knowledge, and understand AI as a learning tool make better decisions—reflected, forward-looking, and adaptable.



Curious?

Via the following link (<https://experte.org/pmi-magazin/>) you can request access to the digital twin and receive a solid introduction at the next webinar on October 30, 2025 (6:30 pm to 8:30 pm).

# Rethinking Bug Tracking

## How project managers benefit from a well-designed client–contractor workflow

STEFANIE MEYER

Bug tracking is more than just error management—it is a culture of communication. This field report shows how a clear, interactive workflow creates transparency, an equal footing, and efficiency in day-to-day project work—especially for products that require explanation and when external suppliers are involved.

Most project managers have already experienced it: the use of bug tracking tools is standard today—but usage is often unclear or even conflict-prone. Especially when external service providers come into play, it becomes apparent: a good tool alone is not enough—the workflow is decisive.

This contribution presents a proven workflow from a coordination-intensive project in which clients and contractors use a Web-based error-tracking system that enables cross-site access, role-based control, and independent administration—but with a clear focus: to improve interaction between the parties and intercept escalations at an early stage.

### The pivot: the workflow

At the center is a staged process that runs from bug reporting through bug fixing to the final bug closing. Each step is assigned to a responsibility area—with clear visibility of responsibilities and handovers. Particularly helpful are so-called “stops” in case of uncertainties, which deliberately trigger an escalation

at management level instead of getting stuck in endless ping-pong loops.

### More than a workflow—why this approach is effective

A key element of the workflow is the mandatory quality check on the part of the client. Before anything is

“passed on”, the delivered results are actively reviewed—for example, software versions, product prototypes, documentation, or technical components. What sounds obvious is not a separate step in many standard processes. This is supplemented by an upstream input check at the contractors, which ensures that the



Fig. 04: Bug tracking—7 tips (Source: Own illustration by Stefanie Meyer)

client's specifications are met. What sounds obvious is not a separate step in many standard processes. This is supplemented by an upstream input check by the contractors, which ensures that not every bug report ends up directly in the developer backlog, but is first checked for meaningfulness and traceability. The entire workflow is designed in such a way that both sides—in accordance with the contractual structure—work together as partners. This reduces the risk of misunderstandings and ensures that the workflow is designed in a way that is mutually beneficial.

For project managers, this results in several advantages. They benefit from more transparency, as the status of each bug is clearly visible at all times—including history. Targeted control is also made easier: stops and escalation options help to identify blockers at an early stage. Friction losses are reduced because joint prioritization and flexibility in implementation promote cooperation. Additional statistical evaluations provide further insights for project management.

**Know the limits—use the full potential**

Of course, such a workflow does not replace a comprehensive project tracking system. Smaller tools in particular quickly reach their limits with categories, roles, or permissions. Nevertheless, those who use the approach described as a sub-process

for defect handling already create a solid basis for collaboration—including as a simple, connectable tool for cross-company projects.

Bug tracking is not an end in itself. Those who understand it as a tool for partnership-oriented communication and deliberately design the workflow not only reduce errors but also strengthen mutual trust. For project managers, this means more overview, targeted steering options, and stronger cohesion within the project team—in short: real added value in everyday project work.

**KENNST DU SCHON ...?**

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# Project Size Is Relative

## Why context matters more than the metric

PIERRE CORELL

To optimize and standardize projects, they are often categorized according to their size. But how do standards such as the PMBOK® Guide, ITIL, and PRINCE2® define project sizes—uniformly or fundamentally differently? In practice, the answer determines the difference between targeted control and additional administrative effort.

Project classifications aim to create a stable project landscape and greater efficiency. As a result, the classification defines mandatory processes, requires differentiated measures for budget and risk management, and specifies the level of detail and reporting frequency.

Depending on the context, various departments such as a PMO, a delivery excellence department,

or the strategic management of the executive board are involved in optimizing a portfolio.

Project size is one of the primary distinguishing features for portfolio gradations.

Let’s imagine an e-commerce project portfolio that manages various time-consuming online shop projects. For large, lucrative, and well-visited sites with thousands of managed products, dedicated quality measures may be necessary to ensure stability, as these are subject to more critical risks and higher costs. The more revenue a web shop generates in comparison, the more important it is for the operating company. This results in two context-specific metrics for the size of such a project type—the average sales volume

and the daily number of visits—which can be used to evaluate the importance of the project.

The distinction based on size has a direct impact on quality measures, such as the scope and type of automated testing. Functionalities that span several areas of the system represent another potential metric that could determine how much testing a new or modified feature requires before it is implemented in the live system.

Ultimately, the noble goal of optimization is always to find the optimal balance between the necessary effort and the functions that positively influence the return on investment (ROI). All parameters must be taken into account in order to identify adequate criteria for a portfolio.

Category	Small	Medium	Large	Source/s
Budget (Construction Industry)	<\$500,000	\$500,000–\$5M	>\$5M	PMBOK® Guide, USACE, RICS
Budget (IT Projects)	<\$100,000	\$100,000–\$1M	>\$1M	COBIT Framework, ITIL
Duration	1–3 months	4–12 months	>12 months	PMBOK® Guide, PRINCE2®
Team Size	1–10	11–50	>50	PMBOK® Guide, Scrum Guide, SAFe®
Scope Complexity	Single deliverable	Multiple deliverables	Broad scope, complex interdependence	PMBOK® Guide, ISO 21500:2021
Story Points (Agile)	<50	50–500	>500	Scrum Guide, SAFe®
Lines of Code (Software Development)	<10,000 LOC	10,000–100,000 LOC	>100,000 LOC	Capers Jones, IEEE Software Standards
Industry-Specific Complexity				ISO 21500:2021, FAA for aerospace
Risk Factors				ISO 31000, PMBOK® Guide
Geographic Scale				ISO 21500:2021

Fig. 05: Project sizes (Source: Own illustration by P. Corell)



**The usual suspects**

Typical distinguishing features for size differentiation are budget, project duration, and team size, which are also included in the well-known project management standards and frameworks.

However, a classification based solely on these parameters can be misleading. A project with a budget of more than €2 million is generally considered large. However, if the project runs for ten years and is managed by only two team members, a biweekly budget status report is a less efficient use of time and, on top of that, a cost driver. On the other hand, a project with the same budget is guaranteed to be a larger undertaking if it is to be completed within a year.

“It depends”—the famous words prove true once again. Neither team size, project duration, nor budget alone will suffice to adequately cluster project sizes. Each portfolio needs to be categorized individually so that standardization can achieve optimal value creation in a tailored manner.

**Orientation towards standards: How frameworks classify projects**

All of the frameworks examined that provide recommendations for classifying project sizes use a similar nomenclature of small, medium, and large projects. For example, while projects with a budget of \$5 million or more are considered large in the standards for the construction industry, the threshold

in IT is set at \$1 million TCV (total contract value). However, the PMBOK® Guide, Scrum Guide, and SAFe® agree on team size—a project is classified as complex or large if it has 50 or more team members.

The table below summarizes the usual distinctions between project sizes.

To assess complexity and the associated costs, the risk appetite of a portfolio, its volatility on the market, or its geographical range are also common and specific criteria.

Dedicated frameworks offer additional established metrics for this purpose, the relevance of which must be examined for individual strategic considerations.

► **Conclusion**

Standards provide assistance with classification, but specific criteria of a portfolio must also be included in segmentation considerations. Organizational goals and the customer landscape are also characteristic parameters for accurate differentiation in project portfolio optimization.

Just as every project is different and unique, it is crucial in portfolio management to identify the appropriate metrics and key figures that can be used to make distinctions.

# PM Summit 2025

## Inspiration. Innovation. Networking. That's the PM Summit 2025!

FRANZISKA HÖHNE AND ANDRA STEINBACH

From **November 11-12, 2025**, the project management community will gather at the Empire Riverside Hotel in Hamburg—with a panoramic view of the harbor and an even broader view into the future. Under the motto “Compass of the Future,” PM Summit 2025 brings current and aspiring project managers together with experts. Learning, exchange, and personal growth take center stage.

And you can be there live!

Experience a diverse, practice-oriented, and forward-looking program with keynotes, talks, and workshops on topics such as:

- Artificial intelligence in project management
- Digital transformation
- Emotional intelligence
- Leadership
- Future skills
- Sustainability and diversity

Our keynote speakers provide special impulses:

Prof. Dr. Carlo Masala, one of the leading experts on international politics, on how global power shifts impact business and society.

Tijen Onaran—entrepreneur, investor, bestselling author, and one of the most influential voices for diversity—on how diverse networks unlock innovation and drive sustainable success.

Michael Wenzel, former professional footballer and certified Life Kinetik® coach, on how targeted movement and brain training can enhance thinking processes and strengthen mental fitness.

The program will be held primarily in German, with selected sessions offered in English.

To round off the first day in style, you're invited to an evening cruise on the MS Louisiana Star—with views of Hamburg's sea of lights, culinary highlights, and genuine Southern flair.

*Did you know? PM Summit 2025 is organized by volunteers from the PMI Germany Chapter. Thanks to their commitment, team spirit, and passion for project management, this event becomes possible in the first place.*

**Get your ticket now and be part of it:**

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# PM-Summit 2025

PMI Germany Chapter e.V.

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# Homeless Entrepreneur

## Project management with heart: encounters in Cologne and Essen as part of The Great Walk

ALEX BRUCKSCHEN

Recently, as part of The Great Walk initiative, PMI Germany Chapter had the opportunity to shine a spotlight on people who have not only explored the streets of Europe, but also the limits of hope and possibility.

### Where paths cross: Cologne, Essen, and joint dialogue

On August 6, we welcomed Andrew Funk and Toby Plüss from the Homeless Entrepreneur organization in Cologne, just a few meters from Cologne Cathedral. At that point, they had completed a quarter of their 880-kilometer journey—organized as 20 marathon stages leading from Linz to Madrid. With “The Great Walk,” Homeless Entrepreneur is sending a strong message: one million steps symbolize the more than one million homeless people in Europe—to make their voices heard and mobilize concrete support.

In Essen, we continued this encounter at the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex—with representatives of the Local Group Ruhrgebiet and the Social Responsibility Initiative, we deepened the exchange on social responsibility, project objectives, and joint commitment. Projects such as The Great Walk give us the opportunity to think beyond disciplinary boundaries: projects that inspire courage and bring about lasting change.

### Who or what is Homeless Entrepreneur—and why is it our business?

Homeless Entrepreneur is an international non-profit organization that promotes economic self-efficacy, civic participation, and poverty reduction through work. Its projects are known for their creativity and impact:

- the helpline connects people in need with help in real time—a bridge of solidarity and practical support.



- The “Assistance vs. Empowerment” report documents strategies in 12 European cities to generate political momentum at EU level.
- Music as a message: the “twelve cities” project uses piano music to give a voice to homelessness in 12 European cities—a deeply emotional approach to conveying solidarity through culture.

Andrew Funk himself embodies what Homeless Entrepreneur stands for: he was once homeless, but his own painful experience gave rise to his mission to combat homelessness—including symbolic actions at the World Economic Forum in Davos.



**The connection to PMI: when project management touches lives**

At their core, the stories and methods of Homeless Entrepreneur are project management in its most impressive form:

- Setting goals and sharing vision: As in a project, they set milestones, such as defining the stages of the walk route or publishing reports.
- Involving stakeholders: They mobilize the public, politicians, the media, and affected



individuals—multilateral cooperation.

- Pooling resources creatively: Whether music, reports or helplines—each approach uses different resources in an integrative, agile, and hybrid way on hybrid terrain.
- Measuring and communicating impact: By making feelings audible, data visible, and paths traceable, they shape sustainable transformation

For us as the PMI Germany Chapter, it was a small but meaningful step: listening, eating together, supporting. Because sometimes that 's exactly what matters—making space for stories that need to be heard and showing: we see you.

**Depth that touches**

These encounters made me realize that project management is not just about planning and controlling. It is also about listening and opening up new perspectives. Impact-oriented action begins when we treat others with empathy. Andrew 's and Toby 's stories touch not only the head, but also the heart: homelessness—a topic that is often abstracted and ignored—became real, tangible, challenging. And at the same time, it became clear that change begins with individual people who rise up step by step—as in a project called life.



**► Acknowledgements and outlook**

A big thank you to Andrew Funk, Toby Plüss, and the entire Homeless Entrepreneur team for their courage, perspective, and tireless commitment. And thank you also to all the PMI representatives who made these encounters possible. These impulses remain—and they make us stronger as a network and as a community.



Scan me



# PMI News Global

PAULA WENZEL AND GORAN MIZDRAK

## Three impulses shaping project management

The world has undergone profound changes in recent years—and project management has felt them, too.

At the Project Management Institute (PMI), we’re making clear where things are headed and how the profession is evolving. Artificial intelligence has already reshaped the way project managers work worldwide—but in recent months, additional themes have come to the fore that could sustainably transform the PM landscape: the global talent gap in project management, PMI’s new collaboration with MIT, and the growing importance of sustainability in projects.

### [“Close the talent gap—seize the opportunity!”](#)

What poses a real problem for some opens up entirely new opportunities for others. In our current article, we show how significant the shortage of qualified project managers has become—and why now is exactly the right time to advance your career or your company’s talent strategy.

Project managers are in higher demand than ever. According to PMI’s Talent Gap report, more than 25 million additional project professionals will be needed worldwide by 2030.

### Why is that?

The reasons are diverse: many seasoned leaders are retiring, whole industries are transforming rapidly, and many project professionals are reskilling into new directions. All

this creates major challenges for the PM world—and will continue to affect organizations unless we seize the opportunity to strategically develop new talent.

This is where we come in: we help organizations cultivate talent strategically—with practical training for different knowledge levels, mentoring programs, and a clear focus on power skills—soft skills such as communication and leadership that have proven decisive for successful project management in the 21st century.

### [Research and practice hand in hand](#)

We have launched a two-year collaboration with the renowned MIT Lincoln Laboratory. Together, we are researching how modern project and program management practices can improve outcomes in highly complex, safety-critical research projects. The idea: combine MIT’s broad scientific expertise with more than 50 years of PMI experience in managing complex projects—a powerful mix with strong future potential.

### The research focuses on five themes:

- Defining projects and project success—how MIT LL operates in its specific research environment and sets success criteria.
- How different project and program management approaches are applied across research programs.
- Which capabilities project managers need to succeed in such complex contexts.

- How PMOs can evolve to support a wider range of projects and programs.
- And, finally, how organizational and team structures can be optimized to best support project execution in research settings.

### Sustainability as a core principle

Arguably the most important topic of the past decade—sustainability—has now firmly established itself in project management. It’s no longer a “nice to have.” Balancing environmental, social, and economic aspects—people, planet, and prosperity—has become a decisive factor in project success.

We have developed clear guidelines to help project managers make a positive contribution today and drive innovation.

With our M.O.R.E. framework, we provide a practical toolset. You’ll find more in our newsletter [Your Guide to Sustainability in Project Management | PMI](#).

How can you integrate sustainability into your projects right now?

- Think beyond mere project delivery and pay closer attention to impacts on people and the environment.
- Start early with conversations and concrete measures—and challenge the project management status quo.
- Above all: actively involve others and lead by example.

# PMI Fellows at GSS

## Barcelona 2025—A highlight for the PMI community in Europe

THOMAS VALENTA

In April 2025, Barcelona was twice the stage for the European PMI community: around 900 participants attended the Global Summit Series Europe (GSS), while the Leadership Institute Meeting (LIM) took place in parallel. Two formats that complemented each other—and showcased the diversity of PMI in a special way.

### PMI Fellows at the PMI Global Summit Series Europe (GSS) in Barcelona

What an incredible event in Barcelona! On April 7 and 8, 2025, GSS Europe lit up the city, bringing together around 900 passionate attendees from across the continent!

For the first time, the spotlight shone on a special session featuring European PMI Fellows—a truly historic moment! Out of the nine esteemed Fellows from Europe, four inspiring leaders took the stage:

- Alfonso Bucero (Spain)
- David Hillson (UK)
- Michel Thiry (UK)
- Thomas Walenta (Germany)

While we missed the presence of Jean-Claude Dravet (France) and Walter Ginevri (Italy) due to last-minute changes, their spirit was still strongly felt. Although Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez (Spain), Ralf Müller (Norway), and Louise Mercken (Belgium) couldn't attend this time, we hope to see them at future events!

Also in Barcelona was the amazing Al Zeitoun (USA), who was fully

immersed in leading the Global Executive Council (GEC) meetings running alongside the GSS.

It was a gathering full of insights, connections, and inspiration—a milestone for the PMI community in Europe!

A big shoutout to PMI for their generous support—they kindly offered a discount for Fellows participating in the GSS, while travel costs were managed individually. As a special touch, Lysan Drabon, PMI's dynamic European Managing Director, graciously hosted a lovely lunch for us—a wonderful moment of connection and appreciation.

Wearing our Fellow medals with pride, we were frequently approached by curious and enthusiastic attendees wanting to know: What does it mean to be a PMI Fellow? And how does one become one?

These great questions sparked deeper conversations and led to a lively panel session right in the GSS exhibition area, attended by 30 to 40 engaged professionals. Each of the four Fellows shared their insights and perspectives—and it was fantastic to see how closely aligned our thoughts were. It was a rich, inspiring exchange that truly embodied the spirit of mentorship and excellence that PMI stands for!

I'm incredibly proud to have received my PMI Fellow Award in 2012—as the first and (so far!) only Fellow from Germany! It's been an amazing journey that began in 1998, when I kicked off my volunteer service

with PMI as President of the PMI Frankfurt Chapter. That Chapter thrived for eight impactful years, and I was honored to be part of its growth from the ground up.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of serving as a global volunteer in a variety of roles—from contributing to PMP exam item writing, to being a Project of the Year Award reviewer, to serving on PMI's Board Nomination Committee, and more.

Every step of the way has been deeply rewarding—giving back to the global project management community has truly been a highlight of my professional life!

The PMI Fellow Award—the highest and most prestigious honor presented by the Project Management Institute—has been celebrating excellence since 1982. To date, only 87 extraordinary volunteers have received this recognition, and around 55 are still active today. That's a testament to the lasting impact and commitment of this incredible community!

The award criteria are now grouped under three powerful pillars:

1. Excellence in Leadership
2. Excellence through Impact on the Project Management Profession
3. Excellence in Volunteer Service Commitment to PMI



# Growing together— a look back at the 2025 Leadership Institute Meeting

FRANZISKA HÖHNE

Why do people volunteer for PMI? What motivates them to invest time and energy in their Chapter? Every year, the Leadership Institute Meeting (LIM) provides answers to these questions—this time in Barcelona. We asked some of our volunteers why they took part and what they took away from the event.

## Networking, exchange, inspiration

Whether long-standing Board members or new volunteers, everyone came with similar expectations: to network, learn from each other, reflect on their own contribution to the Chapter, and bring back new ideas. For many, the LIM was also a welcome opportunity to finally meet people in person with whom they had previously only worked together virtually.

## What we are taking away for our Chapter

- **We are doing a lot right.** A comparison with other European Chapters showed that the positioning of the PMI Germany Chapter since the merger is bearing fruit—as evidenced, for example, by rising membership numbers and attractive offerings such as our empowerment programs, mentoring, events, and communities of practice.

- **Rethinking project success.** The new PMI formula for success—value > effort + costs—challenges us to think beyond traditional KPIs when it comes to impact. This mind shift will also shape our Chapter work: Which measures generate real added value for our members? Where is it most worthwhile to invest our time?
- **Shaping change.** The M.O.R.E. vision (Manage Perceptions, Own Project Success, Relentlessly Reassess, Expand Perception) inspires us to take responsibility not only for results, but also for impact—in projects and in voluntary work.
- **Personal development.** Many participants spoke of new motivation, a deeper understanding of their roles, stronger contacts—and, more specifically, of ideas that they are now taking back to their study groups, local groups or programs.

And, of course, the personal experiences were also unforgettable: Spanish whisky, deep conversations in the side streets of Barcelona, a workshop with “Project Managers without Borders” and exchanges with like-minded people about cognitive bias and true leadership—all this is LIM. Thank you to everyone who was there—and who will now carry on the experience.

## ► Conclusion: growing together, shaping together

Barcelona 2025 impressively demonstrated how strong the PMI community is in Europe—from experienced fellows to new volunteers. The mix of global perspective, local commitment, and personal encounters is what makes our community so special.



# The Board of the PMI Germany Chapter

WOLFGANG FRIESIKE

The PMI Germany Chapter is the local entity of the globally active professional association, the Project Management Institute (PMI). Legally, the Chapter is organized as a registered association under German law.

We have a Board team consisting of 11 members. The Board's task is to develop a strategy for the Chapter in order to realize the purpose defined in our bylaws—namely, to promote and disseminate the methods and application of professional project management across all areas of society—and to implement this together with many volunteer members.

To this end, we create numerous opportunities for our members to purposefully develop and expand their project management competencies.

To implement this, the Board meets once or twice a year for strategic weekend retreats to align on fundamental questions, priorities, and future offerings. In addition, monthly meetings are held to address operational topics and coordinate the work of the portfolios.

Offerings of the PMI Germany Chapter

**Events**—As the local entity of the Project Management Institute, one of our core tasks is to host events on a wide range of project management topics. We do this in roughly 25 local groups with many regular meetups and regional events, in virtual training sessions, and in an annual two-day congress, the PM Summit, which will take

place on November 11-12, in Hamburg this year (PM Summit 2025—Germany's leading project management conference).

**Communities of Practice**—We enable our members to engage actively in topic-focused groups—our Communities of Practice. These are spaces to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and jointly advance key topics in project management.

**Social Responsibility Program**—We provide members with opportunities to apply their professional skills for charitable purposes by connecting them with social organizations that benefit from this engagement.

**Diversity Initiative**—We offer our members platforms for exchange, networking, and knowledge sharing—particularly in the areas of gender diversity and intergenerational dialogue—thus fostering inclusion and participation.

**Mentoring**—We connect members in mentoring partnerships so they can support each other and learn from one another.

**Study Group** – We offer members the chance to prepare for PMI

certifications together with peers in a structured, collegial learning environment.

**Information** – Through various channels—the website, social media, the newsletter, and the Chapter magazine—we regularly share news from PMI, the PMI Germany Chapter, and the project management profession in general.

Everything we do is volunteer-driven—made possible by our volunteers. Currently, around 170 volunteers are engaged in the Chapter. Because life priorities can change—privately and professionally, sometimes at short notice—and because we always have more ideas than active volunteers, we welcome every application to support us. If you're interested, simply send an email to [volunteering@pmi-gc.de](mailto:volunteering@pmi-gc.de).



# Board Presentation

Behind the PMI Germany Chapter are people who contribute their experience, time and ideas. Our board members provide a brief insight into their motivation and their role in the chapter's work.



**President:**  
▶ **Wolfgang Friesike**

As President, Wolfgang Friesike steers the strategic direction of the Chapter, represents it externally, and ensures that the association's goals are brought to life. He has been engaged in the PMI community in Germany since 2004 and has supported the Chapter since the merger of the local Chapters—always with the goal of connecting and strengthening people in project management.



**Vice President Finance:**  
▶ **Jens Liebold**

As Vice President Finance, Jens Liebold is responsible for ensuring a solid and transparent financial foundation for the Chapter. He oversees budget control, long-term planning, and compliance with all tax regulations. Since the Chapter's founding, he has actively shaped the financial structures and has thus contributed to the association's stable development.



**Vice President Operations:**  
▶ **Thomas Zimmermann**

Thomas Zimmermann, as Vice President Operations, ensures that everything in the Chapter runs smoothly. He coordinates processes, optimizes workflows, and provides the organizational basis for events, programs, and the work of volunteers.



**Vice President Membership:**  
▶ **Jörg Glunde**

In his role as Vice President Membership, Jörg Glunde is responsible for supporting and further developing the member community. He fosters engagement, supports local groups, and ensures that both new and long-standing members can connect effectively within the Chapter.



**Vice President Communication:**  
▶ **Franziska Höhne**

Franziska Höhne, as Vice President Marketing, is responsible for the Chapter's entire external presence. She coordinates the website, newsletter, social media, and the magazine *PMimpact*, ensuring that members, partners, and the public are always well informed.

**Vice President Organizational Relations:**  
▶ **Annett Schlotte**

As Vice President Organizational Relations, Annett Schlotte connects the Chapter with external partners and organizations. She builds cooperations, maintains strategic relationships, and strengthens the Chapter's visibility both inside and outside the PMI community.

**Vice President Region North:**  
▶ **Heiko Stoldt**

As Vice President Region North, Heiko Stoldt shapes PMI's presence in northern Germany. He organizes regional events, supports local groups, and ensures that the interests of the region are represented on the Board.

**Vice President Region East:**  
▶ **Stephan Wolter**

Stephan Wolter, as Vice President Region East, is responsible for the PMI community in eastern Germany. He promotes exchange in local groups, initiates regional events, and brings the Chapter's offerings directly to members in the region.

**Vice President Region Central:**  
▶ **Dr. Martin Bertram**

As Vice President Region Central, Dr. Martin Bertram coordinates activities and member support in the central region. In addition, he leads the PM Summit program, shaping one of the Chapter's most important flagship events.

**Vice President Region South:**  
▶ **Jutta Zilian**

Jutta Zilian strengthens the PMI community in southern Germany in her role as Vice President Region South. She initiates events and networking opportunities, particularly in the Munich area, ensuring an active and vibrant regional community.

**Vice President Region West:**  
▶ **Dr. Eckhard Hauenherm**

As Vice President Region West, Dr. Eckhard Hauenherm represents the western region on the Board. He develops regional offerings, fosters local networks, and creates opportunities for exchange and professional development on-site.





# Reorganization of the Communications Team

PAULA WENZEL

## Rethinking communication—The PMI Germany Chapter on the move

New year, new team, new energy: something has shifted at the PMI Germany Chapter. Under the leadership of Franziska Höhne, our new Vice President Marketing, a communications team has come together that not only distributes tasks, but also shares a vision—to make our stories more visible.

It is not just about new formats or fresh design. It is about how we work together, develop ideas, and present the diversity of our community to the outside world. Each team member brings their own experience, strengths, and perspectives—and from this diversity something new emerges: communication that connects, engages, and makes an impact.

### A holistic new start

Behind the new communications strategy stands a team as diverse as the topics it covers: Franziska Höhne, Alex Bruckschen, Andra Steinbach, Florian Padberg, Juliane Schmidt, Paula Wenzel, Tolga Akco, Goran Mizdrak, Blessing Brisibi, and Isabell Hermann.

The magazine *PMimpact* is in the hands of Alex Bruckschen, Paula Wenzel, and Goran Mizdrak. While Alex and Paula develop topics, conduct interviews, refine texts, and ensure that each issue maintains its red thread—both in content and design—Goran contributes with his support and takes care of the social media campaign.

Florian Padberg brings his editorial touch to the newsletter: clearly structured, concise, and designed so that members and interested readers regularly receive the most important updates.

On the website, Tolga Akco is the go-to person when it comes to guiding the major redesign. He works closely with colleagues outside the communications team who are driving the technical implementation.

Juliane Schmidt ensures that exciting contributions from the community quickly find their place on the website—making them visible to all.

Social media and the PM Summit are managed by Andra Steinbach together with Blessing Brisibi and Isabell Hermann. They translate events, highlights, and insights into formats that work online and create reach.

What unites us all is a common goal: to stop thinking in channels and start thinking in stories. Stories that begin in the magazine, are deepened in the newsletter,

continue on social media, and finally find a home on the website. This way, all the gears interlock and the Chapter's communication becomes more dynamic, more connected, and more impactful.

### More reach, more connection, more impact

The new concept means that editorial, social media, Web, graphics, and newsletter no longer work in isolation but are closely interlinked. Content is planned across platforms, coordinated, and tailored to the respective target audience. This creates recognizable communication campaigns that not only inform but also invite participation.

### ► An invitation to contribute

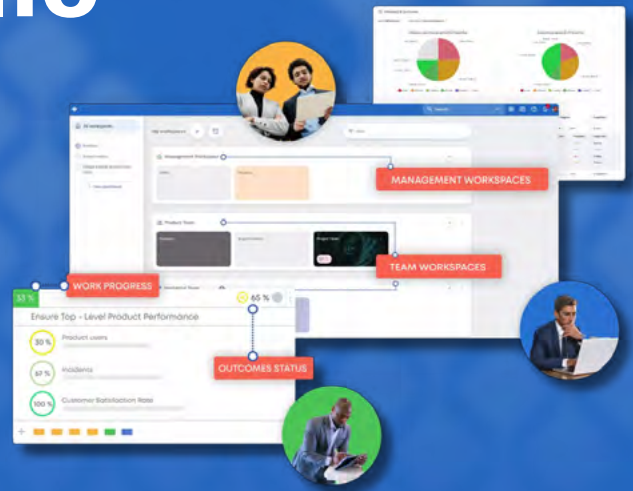
This change is also an invitation to the community: anyone with ideas, topics, or a desire to cocreate a format will find open doors in the new communications team. Whether it's an article, social media post, photo story, or podcast—we want to bring the diversity of voices in our community to life.



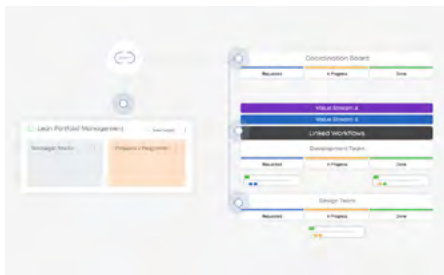
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# Construction Ambassador Initiative PMI-CP

Rethinking project management in construction: the PMI-CP and the ambassador initiative

ALEX BRUCKSCHEN

## Construction projects between complexity and cost risks

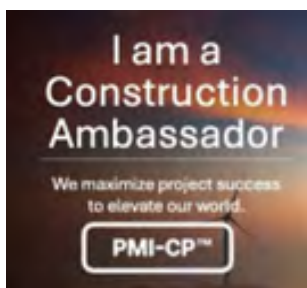
The construction industry is one of Europe’s most important sectors: in Germany alone, the annual construction volume exceeds €400 billion. However, almost every second large-scale project exceeds its budget or time frame. This is often due to unclear interfaces, complex contractual relationships, and slow digitalization. Project management excellence is therefore not a “nice-to-have“, but crucial for quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness.

## PMI-CP: international standards for construction practice

With the PMI Construction Professional (PMI-CP) certification, the Project Management Institute (PMI) has developed its first professional development program specifically tailored to the



challenges of the construction industry. Unlike general project management certifications, PMI-CP focuses on topics such as contract and risk management, claims management, stakeholder involvement, and the integration of digital control systems and sustainability requirements. It thus complements existing qualifications in the UK—such as VDI guidelines or RICS standards—with an internationally recognized, practice-oriented perspective. An initial introduction is provided



Alex Bruckschen and Konstantin Sarantopoulos

▶ PMI Germany Chapter Construction Ambassadors





**Global network for construction project management**

Working with other PMI Construction Ambassadors globally offers particular added value. Together, we develop formats, share market experiences, and promote a Europe-wide network for construction project management.

“Our ambassadors are bridge builders: they anchor PMI-CP in local markets and at the same time work closely together across Europe to build a strong network for project management in the construction industry.”  
—Sandra Deichsel, PMI, Country Strategy Lead Germany

► **Outlook**

The PMI-CP provides an opportunity to make project management in the construction industry internationally comparable, practical, and future-proof. As ambassadors, we want to actively promote this development—in Germany, in Europe, and together with everyone who is successfully shaping the construction projects of tomorrow.

**Let’s build the future of construction project management – together.**

by four practical e-learning modules covering key topics: contract and risk management, claims and disputes, stakeholder collaboration, and technology and sustainability in construction. These topics form the foundation of the certification and offer flexible access to international expertise.

**Focus on practical benefits**

Our personal experience confirms the added value: “PMI-CP certification has helped us combine international best practices with the requirements of complex construction projects in Germany—especially in areas such as interface management, digital control systems, and governance. These are precisely the skills the industry needs right now.”—Alex and Konstantin

As PMI Construction Ambassadors, we see our role as raising awareness of these new developments in project management in Germany.

We want to highlight the fact that professional project management in the construction industry not only makes projects more efficient but also contributes significantly to innovation and competitiveness.

The following formats are planned:

- Information and networking events for construction companies, engineering firms, and clients
- Webinars and brown bag sessions to present PMI-CP content
- Best practice exchange with experts from ongoing construction projects
- Cooperation with universities to involve young talent at an early stage

# Mentoring Program

## More visibility. More self-confidence. Insights into a special mentoring relationship and into the reality many women face in project management

PAULA WENZEL

When Ildikó Varga-Neofotistos sits in project meetings or at conferences, she is often the only woman in the room. “In the IT project world, women are still heavily underrepresented, and it is impossible not to notice,” she says. All the more important, then, for her to encourage young female colleagues to take on greater responsibility. This is where her commitment as a mentor comes in: “I want to empower women to take the step into project management—and beyond.”

For her mentee, Maria Skryagina, mentoring was a conscious decision. After her first years in the automotive industry, the desire to broaden her horizons grew stronger: “I wanted insights into other industries, fresh impulses for my project management knowledge, and above all more self-confidence, so that I could apply outside the automotive world as well.”

### The PMI GC mentoring program as a platform

The tandem is part of the mentoring program of the PMI Germany Chapter (PMI GC), a well-established format that connects experienced project managers with new members or young talents. The aim is to foster personal development, professional growth, and new perspectives through structured and individual exchange. The matching process is based on a detailed questionnaire covering interests, level of experience, industry focus, and goals. This creates a solid foundation for a sustainable mentoring relationship.

For Ildikó and Maria, the match proved to be excellent: “The conversations with Maria are very open and clearly structured. We work toward specific goals and stay in touch via WhatsApp and regular online meetings.”

### Goals with purpose

Together, Ildikó and Maria set clear goals. Two of them are central: gaining more visibility—both internally and externally—and building self-confidence in

professional settings. Equally important is their conscious reflection on the challenges women face in the project environment.

“Often I see that men apply for a position with only 30% of the requirements met and say: I’ll give it a try! While women with 80% alignment still hesitate,” Maria observes. Ildikó adds: “Women often start by explaining what they cannot do. Instead of saying: I bring 60% and will grow into the rest, they focus on what they (still) lack.” This is exactly where their conversations begin—with concrete exercises, honest feedback, and small tasks, such as increasing visibility within the local PMI community.

### Mentoring as coaching

In their collaboration, Ildikó and Maria agreed on a classic coaching structure: regular online sessions, clear goals, and continuous exchange. “It is a very structured, yet open relationship,” Maria explains. Between meetings, they communicate via WhatsApp, share event tips and materials, and work step by step on the agreed development topics.

For Ildikó, one reason the PMI mentoring program works so well is the quality of the framework: “The matching process was very well thought out. You could specify your priorities and wishes, there was a preselection, and the responsibility lay with the mentee right from the start.” Maria also praises the onboarding: “The support in choosing goals and topics was excellent. You can really see that the program is professionally set up.”

### Women in project management: the courage to be visible

What stood out in their conversation was how openly the two spoke about women’s career paths and the often unspoken stumbling blocks. Ildikó recalls a key moment from her doctoral studies: “My supervisor



once told me: You are better than many of the men I supervise, but you sell yourself far too short. That really made me think.” Today, she is eager to pass on this awareness.

Maria shares similar experiences. Both in her studies and career, she has always worked in male-dominated environments. “Especially in the field of software for autonomous driving, you have to learn to make your voice heard and actively communicate your achievements.”

**Visible changes already**

After only a few weeks, the impact of mentoring became visible. “I already notice that I react differently in certain situations,” says Maria.

“Before, I might have hesitated or held back. Now I speak up or represent my position more clearly.” For Ildikó, that is exactly the highlight: “I am delighted to accompany Maria on this journey and to see her grow.”

Another benefit for both is the exchange within the mentoring network. “The regular meetings with other tandems and mentors as part of the PMI GC program are very

inspiring. Despite different goals, many of the questions are similar – and you learn from one another,” Ildikó points out.

► **Outlook**

The tandem intends to continue consistently on the path they have started. In addition to regular

discussions, their agenda includes events, technical topics such as AI in project management, and work on self-presentation and goal-setting. A follow-up article will appear at the end of the program, taking a look at what has changed along the way.



**About the Mentor:**

Ildikó Varga-Neofotistos holds a PhD in Mathematics and is an experienced project manager with over 20 years of professional experience in the finance and IT industries. After holding leadership positions at UniCredit and Fondsdepot Bank, she is now a Senior Project Manager at LBBW.



**About the Mentee:**

Maria Skryagina is a project manager at ZF, focusing on automated driving. After studying Automation Technology and Robotics, complemented by an MBA program, she gained international experience in research, automotive, and software development.



# Youth Empowerment

## Empowerment of the NextGen Project Manager!

### A portrait of the Youth Empowerment Program

PAULA WENZEL

How can young project managers be specifically supported while simultaneously building a vibrant network across generations? The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) of the PMI Germany Chapter provides a clear and inspiring answer to this question. Since its introduction, it has pursued a central goal: to make it easier for young talents in project management to get started, to accompany them on their way, and to encourage them to raise their voices. This is not only about knowledge transfer, but also about mutual inspiration and the experience of being part of a supportive community.

In this article, we take a look behind the scenes of the program from the personal perspective of Elena Pancera, initiator and driving force behind YEP.

#### **A bridge between generations**

The Youth Empowerment Program arose from Elena's commitment not only to impart knowledge to young people in the project environment, but also to provide them with a place where they can exchange ideas, learn from one another, and grow



together. The program is based on the idea that young people are not just passive recipients of knowledge, but active participants in the learning process.

Her involvement in the Diversity Circle of the PMI Germany Chapter had shown her how important such spaces are, where personal development, professional exchange, and mutual support go hand in hand.

“I wanted to create a space where young people could network, learn from experienced professionals, and feel seen, heard, and supported, both professionally and personally,” Elena describes her motivation. For her, empowerment is more than just a buzzword: it means enabling people to take responsibility courageously and shape their own path.

# Interview with Elena Pancera, Initiator of the Youth Empowerment Program

► *Elena, what was your original motivation for initiating the Youth Empowerment Program?*

The idea for YEP arose from a simple observation: at that time, there were no specific initiatives explicitly designed for young project managers. The project management community is rich in knowledge and experience, but at the beginning it is often difficult for young professionals to find their place. I wanted to create a program that would accompany them on this journey, give them orientation, and encourage them to take responsibility.

► *What distinguishes the YEP from traditional mentoring programs?*

YEP is not pure mentoring, nor is it top-down training. It is a collaboratively designed space, tailored to the actual needs of the participants. They bring in their own topics, help shape the content, and even take responsibility for individual sessions themselves. This creates a strong sense of belonging and makes the program a turning point in personal and professional development.

► *How has the program developed since it started? Were there any milestones that particularly stick in your mind?*

With each cohort, we have responded to the feedback from the participants. This makes each edition unique, because it is shaped by the current interests and questions. It is particularly moving when former participants return,

whether as speakers, mentors, or to help with the organization. Such moments show that the program does not end with the last workshop, but remains a lasting point of contact.

► *What role does diversity, including professional backgrounds and cultural diversity, play in the YEP concept?*

The Youth Empowerment Program is an initiative within the PMI Germany Chapter that is entirely dedicated to the next generation of professionals—and thus an important part of the mission of the Diversity Circle. For me, diversity is more than age, gender, or origin. It also means incorporating different perspectives, career stages, and life paths. YEP gives young voices a platform and creates opportunities for learning, visibility, and growth—regardless of background.

► *What is the next step for the program? Are there any concrete plans for future cohorts or new formats?*

My wish is that participants leave the program with more clarity, self-confidence, and a clearer direction. Many start out with uncertainties, and it is incredibly enriching to see how they find and shape their own path. For the future, we would like to involve alumni even more and further promote exchange between the generations.

## More than a mentoring program—a growing network

Today, YEP is much more than a single program cycle. It is a growing network of committed people who support each other, learn from each other, and bring new ideas to project management together. Speakers and role models benefit just as much from the exchange as the participants, through new perspectives, inspiring stories, and reflection on their own role.

The program is closely linked to other initiatives of the PMI Germany Chapter, such as the Diversity Circle and the community of young professionals. In the future, even more voices will be heard and experiences shared so that this network can continue to grow and develop. Those who become part of this program not only gain knowledge, but also a network that often lasts well beyond the end of the official program period.

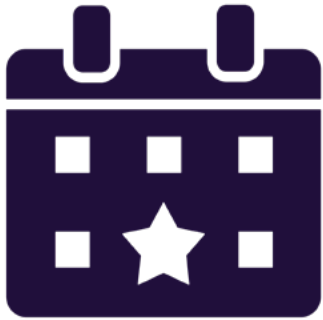
At the end of the year, the Youth Empowerment Program will once again open its doors to applications, so that at the beginning of next year, a new cohort can learn, network, and grow together.



**Elena Pancera** is the Director of the Project Management Office at Bosch Mobility and holds a doctorate in electrical and communications engineering. Alongside her many years of experience in research, development, and management, she is actively engaged in the PMI Germany Chapter as the initiator of the Youth Empowerment Program, which supports and connects young project managers.



Experience the PMI Germany Chapter **live!**



Every month, a variety of events take place across Germany, either virtually or in person.

For more information, visit <https://pmi-gc.de/event>  
(for PMI members and non-members)

Our next *PMimpact* will be published on December 12, 2025.

**Our main focus is “AI in project management.”**

Do you have any ideas as an author or can you recommend any interesting interview partners?

Get in touch with us!

(Editorial deadline: November 4, 2025)

