



# PMM *impact*

March 2026

## Navigating Complexity— PMBOK® 8 and the Art of Mastering Modern Projects

A PMBOK® Does Not Fall from the Sky!

**Dirk Witthake**

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Male Allies in Project Management

**Dr. Martin Bertram and Werner Waldner**

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What Happens “When the Last Woman Leaves the Room?”

**Vincent-Immanuel Herr and Martin Speer**

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Between Strategy and Project Reality

**Frank Tassone and Frank Jäger**

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Register Court: Local Court of Berlin (Charlottenburg)  
Association Register No.: VR 37708 B

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### **Proofreading:**

Lektornet GmbH

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# When Projects Have an Impact

# Editorial

Monday morning, 8:30 a.m.

A project team is discussing why an important feature is once again being delivered later than planned. The numbers in the reporting actually look good. The milestones are documented. The processes have been followed.

And yet the customer experiences no real added value.

Many project managers are familiar with situations like this. Projects are formally managed successfully—and yet the impact falls short of expectations. This is exactly where one of the most important discussions currently shaping our discipline begins: **How do projects actually create value?**

With the **PMBOK® Guide—Eighth Edition**, this question moves more strongly into focus. Instead of defining project management primarily through processes, attention shifts more toward impact, benefits, and the interaction between organizations, people, and projects. Projects are no longer viewed in isolation but as part of a broader system of value creation.

In this issue of **PM*impact***, we explore this perspective from different angles. One article provides insights into the development of the new PMBOK edition and shows the ideas behind its evolution. Other articles address the role of PMOs, leadership in projects, and the question of which competencies project managers will particularly need in the future.

A special focus of this issue is also on **women in project management**. In several articles and interviews, project managers from different industries describe how they lead projects, which challenges they have experienced, and what perspectives they see for the future of our profession. The contributions make one thing clear: diversity is not a “soft topic”—it is a decisive success factor for projects and organizations.

Perhaps this is what connects all the topics in this issue: Successful project management does not arise from methods or tools alone. It arises from people, perspectives, and decisions.

**Or put differently: Projects deliver results—people create impact.**

With this in mind, we wish you inspiring insights, new perspectives, and many ideas for your own project practice.

Enjoy the read.

Paula Wenzel and Alex Bruckschen  
Editors-in-Chief *PM*impact**



Alex Bruckschen

As a Senior Project and Transformation Consultant, Alex Bruckschen manages complex cross-industry programs and develops scalable delivery and quality processes. Her expertise includes agile scaling, BizDevOps, and KPI and performance management.



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# Understanding PMBOK® 8 and Putting It into Practice

## The Ideas Behind the New Edition and What We Can Actually Do With Them

WOLFGANG FRIESIKE AND ALEX BRUCKSCHEN

Project management rarely changes as a result of a single new standard. And yet, the PMBOK® Guide—Eighth Edition marks a noticeable turning point. Not because it introduces new methods, but because it shifts the focus: **projects are not an end in themselves – they are part of a value creation system.** The new guide links project management more closely with organization, governance, strategy, and benefit realization. The PMBOK® Guide continues to consist of two parts: the “Standard for Project Management” as a framework and the “Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge,” which describes practices and concepts. Key elements are principles, performance domains, and tailoring. Project management is understood as a context-dependent organizational skill.

But what does this change in perspective mean in practice? Which skills are becoming (more) important for project managers—and how is the role of PMOs changing? **Wolfgang and Alex** explore these questions in this article and classify the most important developments in the PMBOK® Guide—Eighth Edition from a practical perspective.

**How does the PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition differ fundamentally from previous editions – and what do you see as the key paradigm shift?**

**Wolfgang:** PMBOK® 8 is the first edition to explicitly define project management as an organizational skill. The actual paradigm shift already took place with PMBOK® 7. This version radically departed from the previous logic and introduced twelve principles and eight performance domains for the first time. The aim was to break down the strongly process- and waterfall-oriented image of project management. However, the problem with version 7 was its high level of abstraction. The structure and, in particular, the connection between the principles and the performance domains were difficult for many readers to understand. This is exactly where PMBOK® 8 comes in. The principles now clearly form the normative basis, while the remaining elements provide a concrete application structure. The guide thus describes a consistent system and explicitly distinguishes between organization, governance, portfolio and program level, project, product or result, and value realization. Summarized in one sentence: PMBOK® 6 was a process architecture – project management as a technique. PMBOK® 7 was a conceptual framework – project management as a value system. PMBOK® 8 is an organization-integrated system model – project management as an organizational capability.

**The PMBOK® Guide—Eighth Edition clearly prioritizes value creation**

**over methods. Why is this shift in perspective so important today—and where does it still encounter limitations in practice?**

**Wolfgang:** A method is always just a means to an end. The actual purpose is value creation, i.e., the benefit generated by a project. This brings two questions to the fore: Why are we doing this project in the first place—and who evaluates the resulting benefits? Value can mean many things: a strategic advantage, higher customer satisfaction, additional revenue, or even efficiency gains. PMBOK® 8 focuses precisely on this perspective. Projects are increasingly understood as part of a larger system – with business integration, benefit tracking, and strategic embedding. This essentially brings us back to the core reason why the project form of work exists in the first place. In practice, however, this value orientation is not easy to implement. Many organizations manage via annual budgets, cost centers, and fixed business cases. Value orientation, on the other hand, requires adaptability and often iterative investment decisions. Added to this is a structural problem: Value is usually created end-to-end across multiple areas, while organizations are often organized in functional silos. The power of the line often stands in the way of true value responsibility.



**benefits of PMBOK® 8 in this area—and where does the approach reach its limits in reality?**

**Alex:** For me, the greatest practical benefit of PMBOK® 8 is that it clearly describes project management as part of a larger organizational system. It is precisely this perspective that is lacking in many projects. In transformation and IT programs in particular, projects are often managed cleanly—with roadmaps, backlogs, or project plans—but the actual benefits are not consistently pursued. PMBOK® 8, on the other hand, emphasizes the connection between strategy, governance, project work, and value realization. Projects are thus understood not only as implementation units, but as instruments for achieving strategic goals. Especially in transformation or DevOps environments, this view helps to make dependencies visible, clarify priorities, and maintain focus on customer value. In the construction and infrastructure environment, too, this perspective expands classic control over deadlines, costs, and scope of services to include the question of a project’s long-term benefits. At the same time, this approach has its limits in practice. Many organizations are still functionally organized and manage projects via budgets and reporting systems. The systemic approach of PMBOK® 8 therefore only unfolds its full effect when organizations also further develop their governance and decision-making structures.

[Read more ...](#)

It is precisely this ambivalence that poses one of the greatest challenges of PMBOK® 8: Project management is conceived as part of a value system – but in reality, companies are usually organized as cost and functional systems. And these two logics often collide.

**The PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition reduces the project management principles to six. Which of these principles challenges project managers the most in their everyday work – and why?**

**Wolfgang:** For me, the principle of “focus on value” is clearly at the center here. Value orientation often contradicts the classic project routine of status reports, deadline tracking, and budget control. Value orientation means regularly questioning the underlying assumptions about benefits—and, when in doubt, making unpopular decisions, such as stopping or realigning a project. This requires holistic thinking, courage, and a willingness to work against organizational inertia. This can be realistically implemented when projects are understood primarily as strategic investment vehicles rather than administrative units. For organizations, “focus on value” is therefore a key challenge. In the everyday life of project managers, however, the principle of “be an accountable leader” is likely to be the greatest personal challenge. Accountability as understood by PMBOK® 8 means: I take responsibility for direction, clarity, and deci-

sions – even in uncertain situations. This is often challenging in everyday project work.

**If project management is understood more as a value-adding skill, which competencies will become more important for project managers in the future than traditional methodological knowledge?**

**Alex:** Methodological competence remains an important foundation, but it is no longer the decisive factor for success. PMBOK® 8 understands project management more as the ability of organizations to implement change and create value. For project managers, this brings three skills to the fore: understanding context, the ability to integrate, and the ability to make decisions under uncertainty. They must understand the strategic contribution their project is supposed to make, bring together different perspectives from business, technology, and organization, and provide guidance even when the framework conditions are unclear. This is particularly evident in transformation and digitization projects: it is less about the perfect method and more about effectively bringing together strategy, organization, technology, and people. Project management is thus becoming less of a technical discipline and more of an integrative management skill.

**You work extensively on IT and infrastructure projects. Where do you see the greatest practical be-**

**What role do PMOs play in the context of the PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition – and how is their self-image changing from that of a governance body to a value enabler?**

**Alex:** PMBOK® 8 is changing not only the understanding of project management, but also the role of PMOs. When projects are increasingly understood as part of a value creation system, a PMO can no longer act primarily as a control and reporting authority. Traditionally, many PMOs focused on governance: defining standards, consolidating reports, and ensuring compliance with methods. These tasks remain important, but they are no longer sufficient to create real added value. In the context of PMBOK® 8, the focus is shifting more toward value orientation and enablement. Modern PMOs support organizations in prioritizing initiatives, creating transparency about benefits and progress, and linking projects more closely to strategic goals. They thus provide less method control and more guidance and decision-making bases. In practice, this development is particularly evident in larger transformations and complex project landscapes. Successful PMOs today ask not only, “Is the project on schedule?” but above all, “Is this project delivering the benefits we expected?” As a result, the PMO is transforming from a governance body to a value enabler that helps organizations consistently align their projects with strategic impact.

► **Conclusion**

PMBOK® 8 is not a methodological evolution. It is a status assessment. It forces us to ask an uncomfortable question: Are we managing projects – or are we shaping the future? Those who continue to define project management primarily in terms of milestones, traffic light reports, and budget compliance will find little of use in PMBOK® 8. However, those who are prepared to understand project work as a strategic organizational skill will recognize the true significance and scope of this edition. Project management determines the future viability of organizations. PMBOK® 8 thus shifts

the responsibility. It is not only project managers who are challenged. Executive boards, line organizations, and governance structures are also called upon to act. This is because value orientation does not work in silos. It requires clarity about strategy and the courage to prioritize, combined with the willingness to terminate projects when they are no longer beneficial. Especially in Germany – in a phase of industrial transformation, technological disruption, and increasing regulatory requirements – competitiveness is not determined by the perfection of individual projects, but by the ability to consistently align initiatives with impact. Project management is thus no longer an operational discipline. It is becoming a yardstick for organizational maturity. As PMI Germany Chapter, we see PMBOK® 8 not as a set of rules, but as an invitation: to rethink project management – integrated, value-oriented, and responsible. The crucial question is not whether we apply PMBOK® 8, but whether we are prepared to draw the consequences from it.

The PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition is not a manual to be worked through linearly, but a framework for orientation and reflection for modern project management. A helpful approach is to use PMBOK® 8 more as a navigation system. The principles provide the conceptual framework, the performance domains describe key areas of action, and tailoring makes it clear that there is no universal standard approach, but that each project requires a context-dependent use of methods. This is precisely where its strength lies: PMBOK® 8 provides less rigid process models, but instead a framework for professional judgment, helping not only to manage projects efficiently, but also to consciously understand them as part of a larger system for value realization and organizational development.



**Wolfgang Friesike** is president of PMI Germany Chapter. He studied industrial engineering at TU Berlin and has spent his entire professional life designing and implementing projects and project portfolios. Today, he works as a freelance mentor and organizational consultant.



**Alex Bruckschen** works as a Senior Project and Transformation Consultant and supports organizations with complex transformation programs. Her focus is on scalable delivery and quality processes as well as topics such as agile scaling, BizDevOps, and KPI-based performance management.

# Ready for Growth.

# Ready for Community.

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FRANZISKA HÖHNE

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## 2026 Will Be a Special Year for Us

With the introduction of PMI's "New Membership" model, we expect a significant increase in members—and above all many great people who will become part of our community. We are preparing deliberately, because a strongly growing chapter means more than just rising numbers. It means new perspectives, new experiences, and new expectations. That is precisely why this year we are investing specifically in ensuring a good start for new members. Monthly onboarding formats are intended to provide orientation, enable first connections, and show what our chapter stands for. Because community does not emerge on its own—it must be actively shaped.

At the same time, we are continuing to expand our offerings. Professionally, thematically, and across media. Existing formats are being refined, and new ones are being added. We are also consistently developing our media partnerships further, for example with established voices from the project management community such as the "Projektmanagement Podcast" and the "Projektmagazin." Our goal is clear: relevant content, easily accessible, professionally prepared—for members and thus for everyone who actively shapes project management in Germany. This growth also challenges us organizationally as a chapter. Therefore, processes are being analyzed and roles clarified. We do not see professionalization as an end in itself, but as a prerequisite for making volunteer engagement effective and securing it sustainably.

For me personally, 2026 is also a moment of reflection. For just over a year, I have been responsible for the Marketing area on the board. Together with currently ten, and from this year eleven, additional board members, we are shaping the development of our chapter. What continues to impress me in particular: we are a very diverse group. Different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives—united by a common goal. People I might otherwise never have met have suddenly become a permanent part of my life. That makes working in the chapter so extraordinary, and I can only warmly

encourage anyone interested to get involved.

Because this diversity is not a given. It requires coordination, discussion, and sometimes patience. That is precisely why it is also our strength. Good decisions rarely emerge from uniformity, but from the conscious bringing together of different perspectives. What connects us all is the shared commitment to take responsibility for our chapter and to position it for the future.

## One Goal. One Team. One Chapter.

With this spirit, we enter the new year. Open to growth. Clear in our direction. And convinced that community is our most important success factor.



**Franziska Höhne** has been supporting companies for almost 20 years in leading virtual and multicultural teams and develops strategies for sustainable transformation. In addition, she serves at PMI Germany Chapter e.V. as Vice President for Marketing and Communications.

# Attitude Has an Impact

## A Look at the Invisible Forces at Work in Everyday Project and Management Life

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PHILIPP PICHLER

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The term attitude initially seems abstract. The dictionary defines it as an inner disposition, as a visible behavior and as an internal stance. In project work, we encounter all three levels daily: how we classify conflicts, how we allow for different perspectives, how we communicate, and how we act when something unexpected happens.

### An Example from Practice

A new project team meets for a kick-off. The project goals are clearly structured and presented transparently, and the approach is formal and disciplined. The mood is good and correspondingly optimistic. The new colleague also seems impressed by the approach and the atmosphere within the team. Without being prompted and without giving an impulse, the new colleague speaks—more to the others than to the project lead. He appreciates the clarity, the approach, and the truly appreciative and personal enthusiasm. But then the reaction comes: awkward silence. Immediately afterward, the project lead switches topics. The conversation seems to conclude quickly. Although no one criticizes him, the colleague is affected by the silence, and is rather ashamed.

### What Happens in the Room at This Moment?

Teams develop often unspoken rules. Whoever “behaves differently” runs the risk of stepping outside the established framework. Well-intentioned new perspectives, suggestions, or creative impulses can fade into nothing.

### Perhaps Some Are Thinking:

- What is he talking about? He should first deliver something.
- That’s not how we do things here. That’s completely inappropriate for an initial meeting.
- That was brave! I wouldn’t have dared to say that.

Such differences can be explained through different inner attitudes. Martin Permantier describes attitude as a developmental space that shapes how we perceive, interpret, and act. It is not necessarily right or wrong, but simply different and coherent in itself. The colleague’s feedback was therefore not “wrong”—it was merely unfamiliar. What if such impulses were consciously embraced? A simple “Thank you for the feedback” might have been enough to open the space. Perhaps that would have triggered a conversation about collaboration. Such moments shape project culture more strongly than any method. They determine whether teams become open,



learning systems—or remain rigid in routines. Projects are not purely technical, they are social. Value creation does not arise only from output, but from the way collaboration is shaped. Leadership becomes a design task. And sustainable project work requires leadership that keeps the human element in focus.

### ► Conclusion

Attitude becomes visible when things do not run smoothly—between process and method knowledge. It makes expectations, irritations, and unspoken rules tangible. Through this, relationships and mutual understanding develop. And projects run noticeably more smoothly.



**Philipp Pichler** works as a project manager and organizational developer at the intersection of strategy, collaboration, and culture. He supports teams in clarifying complexity and shaping work environments in a more human way — with agile practices, systems thinking, and strong focus on attitude.



# Engineered Wisdom

## How the PMP Philosophy Anchored a Strategic Automotive Project in a BANI World

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JOANNA GÜRTL

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### Why Project Leadership Needs a Philosophy

After completing two master's degrees, in mechanics and business administration, I initially gained experience as a project engineer in the automotive sector. At the beginning of 2020, the time had come—I was highly motivated and started my first major R&D project: a power electronics development for battery systems. It was a strategically key project for the company, and at the time I did not yet suspect that my inner motto could have been: “They don't know that it's impossible, so they just do it.” Three months later, reality caught up with us—friendly, but certainly crazy. The coronavirus sent us into home office, and shortly afterward the semiconductor crisis followed. Suddenly, procuring a simple chip became more complicated than gaining an audience with the Pope. I didn't know it at the time, but we had officially arrived in the BANI era. In the following five years, everything changed: sponsors disappeared faster than free coffee in the cafeteria, team locations were relocated, and the global situation resembled a bad disaster movie.

How do you survive that? The answer was not a Gantt chart, but an inner attitude: the PMP philosophy. Although my certification has only been officially listed since 2025, principles such as a holistic view, responsible leadership, and building an empowered culture were already part of my toolkit back then. When the “magic triangle” (budget, time, scope) implodes, value-based leadership is the only constant. I call it “Engineered Wisdom”—the art of combining technical precision with the stoic calm of a Zen master.

### When Engineers Start Speaking “Business” (and Even Like It)

My team consisted of young, brilliant minds. They could design complex circuit boards in their sleep—but when the words “stakeholder management” were mentioned, many of them froze. According to the PMBOK® principle “Build an Empowered Culture,” we started a transformation:

#### 1. Orientation in the Fog

Leadership in BANI times means staying the course—even when the map is burning. I invested a lot of time in viewing the team as individuals: Who, based on their level of development, needed support from me? And who was already ready to grow into a lead role and take responsibility? We created clear roles—not as shackles, but as guardrails—so that no one would go overboard in the chaos.

#### 2. Out of the Lab

To sharpen the “Focus on Value,” I motivated my engineers to think about customers. We held workshops in which technicians suddenly had to think as if they were business developers. The shock was deep, but the impact was magical: suddenly the circuit board was no longer an end in itself, but a tool for market success.

#### 3. From “Plan Follower” to Co-Entrepreneur

The breakthrough came when engineers began asking themselves: “Does this feature actually have business value, or is it just technical gold-plating?” Sudden-



ly they were sitting at the “stakeholder table” and negotiating outcomes instead of executing orders. Success did not come from rigidly working through Jira tickets, but from empathy, integrity, and the courage to contradict customers—with the best technical arguments, of course.

**Lessons Learned—The Truth (Hurts Only a Little)**

Could the original plan have been maintained? No. Was it within budget? Not that either. Would the approach have been simpler two years earlier? Perhaps. But this is exactly where PMBOK® 8 shows its true strength: success is defined through value. We formed a team that is so resilient today that it could probably even manage a Mars mission successfully. We built know-how that is invaluable for the organization.

**My Three Tips for the Community (No Guarantee, but with Heart):**

- **Integration Instead of Isolation:** Do not isolate your team off—break down hierarchies. The team must understand who the stakeholders are and that we are all in the same boat. When engineers understand the stakeholder landscape, they no longer work “against” requirements, but “with” the solution. Integration always beats isolation.
- **The Stable Pulse in Chaos:** Even in acute crises, it is your most important task to convey calm and structure. When PM panic burns in circles, it infects the team. Take a deep breath—it is just a project (usually).
- **Culture of Giving and Learning:** Share your mistakes. Lessons learned do not belong in the archive folder where they gather dust. Turn them into a story. Only then does a learning organization emerge.

► **Conclusion**

Project leadership in the automotive industry today is more psychology than physics. “Engineered Wisdom” means daring to rely on our principles when the Excel sheet fails. My journey from kick-off 2020 to series production was a lesson in humility—and proof that the PMP philosophy works even in the BANI world. And hey, for some time now we have been very successfully producing thousands of pieces annually of this extremely complex and unique product that ensures that tomorrow’s electric vehicles achieve even greater range.

**Impossible? Maybe. But we simply did it.**



**Joanna Gürtl** has been leading international electrification projects at AVL as a PMP-certified Senior R&D Project Manager for over eight years. With an interdisciplinary background in mechatronics, management, and battery systems, she manages complex developments in dynamic environments.

# Change: Everyone Has Heard of It—Only Few Have Seen It

## How Leadership and Engagement Turn Visions into Results

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JENNIFER KESSLER

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Change does not show itself in words, but in actions. Companies communicate more than ever: town hall meetings, newsletters, videos, roadshows. Everyone hears the message. And yet little seems to change when you speak with teams or observe everyday decisions.

### **Everyone Has Heard of the Change. Only a Few Have Actually Seen It.**

That is the uncomfortable truth behind many failed transformations: communication is confused with change, while the behavior of leaders—the actual lever—receives too little attention. People do not experience transformation through sophisticated messages. They experience it through priorities, decisions, and compromises. They observe what leaders do when pressure rises or when targets are missed. And they quickly recognize whether the new ambitions are genuine or merely rhetorical. Effective change begins with leadership that enables action, models the desired behavior, and removes obstacles so that teams can make a meaningful contribution. But leadership alone is not enough. Sustainable transformation takes place where clarity from the top meets ownership from the bottom. Leaders set the direction; teams implement the vision by adapting it to their daily work. When empowered, they make decisions, refine processes, and become active contributors rather than passive recipients.

One of the most effective methods for anchoring

change is the “strategy of a thousand pinpricks”: small, consistent interventions, new rituals, decision patterns, KPIs, or norms of collaboration that collectively change how an organization works. Each individual measure may seem minor on its own, but together they weave change into everyday life.

The role of leadership is to create the conditions that allow these pinpricks to accumulate. That means strengthening teams with clarity and trust, modeling the expected behavior across the organization, and removing obstacles that slow momentum. When leaders embody change through their own actions, teams gain the confidence to follow and to contribute. For teams, this empowerment means ownership, initiative, and creativity. They become cocreators of the transformation. Their contributions multiply the impact of strategic initiatives and turn abstract goals into concrete results reflected in daily decisions and behaviors. Communication remains essential, but it is most effective when it supports action rather than replacing it. Clear messages provide direction; the behavior of leaders and empowered teams translate that direction into reality.

When leaders clear the way, act as role models, and remove obstacles, organizations move away from merely hearing about change toward actually experiencing it.

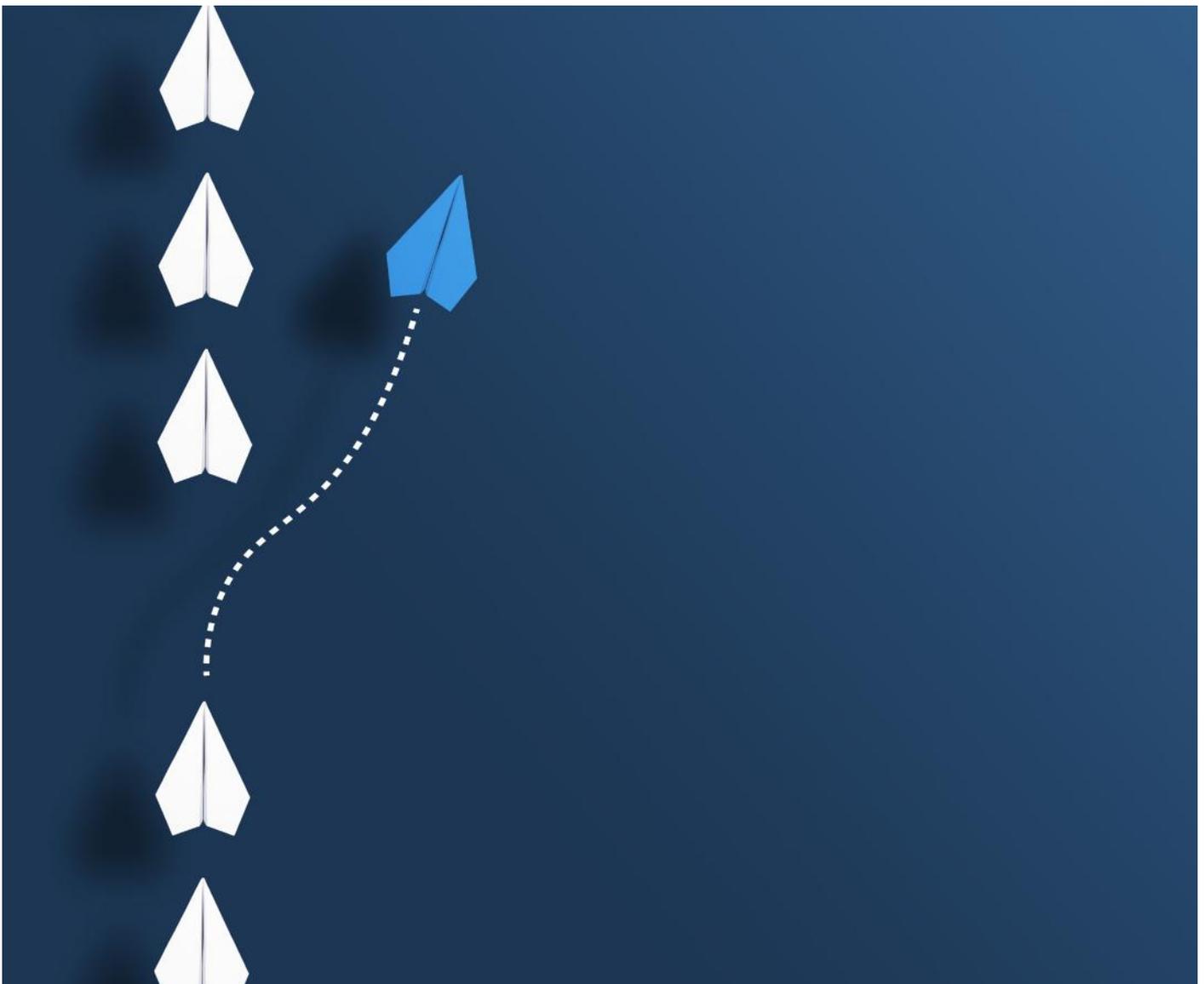
Change becomes credible, visible, and firmly anchored.

- It is embedded in processes, rituals, and decision-making.
- It is no longer just something that is announced.

**It becomes something that is lived.**



**Jennifer Kessler** is Head of Transformation and Change Management and has more than 20 years of international experience in various industries. She is an accomplished program and delivery manager known for driving strategic initiatives and leading high-performing, cross-functional teams.



# A PMBOK® Does Not Fall from the Sky!

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DIRK WITHAKE

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The eighth edition of the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK®) has been available for several weeks—both online and now also in printed form. After the quite revolutionary approach of the seventh edition, which was fully principles-based and had moved processes into the companion volume “A Process Guide,” the pendulum now swings slightly back and remains pleasingly balanced: processes and principles both have their place, without one displacing the other.

The processes are back: 40 newly designed processes in seven focus groups, significantly shorter and more concise than in the sixth edition. The 12 principles of the seventh edition have also been condensed to six principles. The central guiding motif is “Value”: it runs throughout the entire book and becomes the North Star for project management activities. Anyone who has followed PMI’s direction in recent years (Project Success Report, PMI: Next, M.O.R.E., etc.) will recognize a welcome consistency in terms of content. It is easy to lose sight of the reach of this work: a PMBOK® edition is purchased or downloaded over one million times, translated into many languages, and is therefore the most widely used project management standard worldwide. A PMBOK® has been renewed every

four to five years since the first edition. How does such a PMBOK® actually come into being? Certainly not in an ivory tower!

The work on the eighth edition began around two years before publication with a broad collection of input: market research, academic meta-studies, and—very importantly—feedback on the previous edition were consolidated. And yes: the feedback on the seventh edition was clear. Many project managers had been unsettled by the radical shift away from processes toward principles; particularly among younger project managers and trainers, there was resistance. A large portion of the feedback supported the return of processes—but please not in the previous length. Further inputs included emphasizing value delivery, tailoring, as well as hybrid/agile approaches. What is important here: only topics that prove themselves in the long term belong in a standard work—not every trend that appears in one edition and disappears in the next. Agile and hybrid approaches have provided that proof and were therefore consistently integrated.

Another hotly debated topic was artificial intelligence: in the end, it was clear that AI is currently developing so rapidly and is not yet sufficiently “established” for the main section. At the same time,

its impact could not be ignored—therefore it has its own chapter in the appendix.

Parallel to collecting input, PMI launched a call to find experienced project managers to participate. Anyone who meets the minimum requirements can apply. From several hundred applications, 24 project managers were selected by PMI.org with a view to geographic, cultural, and industrial diversity and divided into two teams—a Development Team and a Review Team. The PMBOK® content was created exclusively by these volunteers, supported by technical writers (for consistent writing style and wording).

The teams were guided by the PMI Product Manager for the PMBOK® and the Project Manager. Only these two individuals interacted with both teams and formed the content bridge. Otherwise, the teams were strictly separated and were not allowed to know each other or be in contact during the work—in order not to undermine the process specified by the American standards institute ANSI. This was sometimes tedious, but it ensured clear task separation and quality assurance.

While in earlier editions subgroups had developed individual process groups, in the eighth edition each

team member was confronted with all content—in rotating assignments. Silo thinking was not intended to arise in the first place; the integrative aspect was consciously strengthened. And because team members were distributed across the entire world—and thus across many time zones—night shifts were occasionally simply part of the process.

After about one year, a “Solid Draft” was completed, which then entered public review. During this multi-week phase, around 12,000 comments were received. Every

single one was reviewed, evaluated, and, if necessary, incorporated by the Development Team. This was followed by final editing, layout, graphics—and finally publication: first digital, then as a printed work, and ultimately as AI-supported translation into many languages, but always quality-assured by native-language teams who ensure consistency and appropriate terminology.

The two teams of the eighth edition met for the first time at the announcement and publication of the new PMBOK® edition at the PMI

Global Summit 2025 in November 2025 in Phoenix—a very exciting and emotional moment.

**Around the year 2028, the cycle will begin again—and everyone will then have the opportunity as a volunteer to help shape the ninth edition of the PMBOK®!**



**Dirk Withake** — PMI-PMP/PfMP/PgMP/PMOCP/CPMAI/CAPM/PBA/ACP/RMP/SP/DASSM/DAC/GPM-b—is PMI Austria Chapter President, member of the writer team for the sixth edition of PMBOK® and member of the review team for the eighth edition of PMBOK®.



# From Reporting to Relevance

## Why PMOs Must Become Strategic Partners Today

ALEX BRUCKSCHEN

The role of the Project Management Office is changing—and faster than many organizations realize. For a long time, the PMO was primarily understood as a stabilizing anchor: responsible for methods, standards, reporting, and governance. These responsibilities remain important. But they are no longer sufficient to meet the expectations of executives.

The current PMI study “Bridging the Gap—Positioning PMOs as Indispensable Partners in Strategy Execution” clearly shows that organizations now expect something different from their PMOs. What is needed are units that not only coordinate projects but actively contribute to executing strategy and making value visible. Having been interviewed as part of the study and having contributed my perspective from a PMO viewpoint, I recognize many of the described tensions from my daily work. One insight stands out clearly: today’s greatest challenge for PMOs is not methodology—it is positioning.

### Rethinking the Role— From Executor to Cocreator

In many organizations, the PMO is still primarily perceived as an

executing entity. It assumes responsibility once decisions have been made, structures implementation, and ensures transparency. That is valuable—but insufficient when it comes to exerting strategic influence. In my experience, relevance emerges precisely when PMOs begin to think beyond project status reports and actively engage in strategic questions. This means not only focusing on schedules and budgets, but asking: Which initiatives truly contribute to our strategic objectives? Where are risks emerging that threaten expected benefits? How are external developments shifting our priorities?

### As I phrased it in the report:

**“It means speaking the language of senior management, directly linking initiatives to business outcomes, strengthening stakeholder and customer alignment, and using data not only for reporting but for concrete recommendations for action.”**

This capability—translating between strategy and execution—is what distinguishes an administrative PMO from a strategic one. The study confirms that PMOs are uniquely positioned to build this bridge. But doing so requires an ex-

panded self-understanding: moving away from a sole focus on processes and toward a clear contribution to value creation.

### Relevance Emerges Through Dialogue with the Business

A recurring pattern I observe in transformation initiatives is the importance of proximity to the business. Successful PMOs understand what drives executives. They know which topics carry priority and where uncertainties lie. They listen—and contribute their own perspectives. The study underscores that leaders expect PMOs to place greater emphasis on strategic alignment, customer proximity, and value realization. In practice, this often means questioning established routines. Which reports are truly used? Which metrics actually support decision-making—and which exist merely out of habit? Where can we initiate discussions instead of merely documenting results?

I have seen how the perception of a PMO fundamentally shifts once it begins not only to report but to explain interdependencies. Suddenly, it is no longer viewed as a controlling instance, but as a partner that provides orientation.

## Learning as a Core Competency—Staying Relevant in a Dynamic World

Another central aspect of the study is the growing importance of data literacy, technological competence, and continuous learning. Leaders expect PMOs to support data-driven decision-making and to use new technologies—including AI—in meaningful ways. In my experience, this is changing the nature of PMO work. Automation increasingly takes over operational tasks such as reporting or tracking. At the same time, demand rises for interpretation, context, and advisory capability. Remaining relevant therefore means deliberately investing in one’s own development. PMO professionals should engage with emerging trends, broaden their perspective, and understand how business models are evolving. In practical terms, this may mean regularly exchanging insights with other organizations, experimenting with new technologies, or actively contributing to strategic discussions. It also means stepping outside one’s comfort zone and not defining oneself solely through established processes.

### ► A Look Ahead

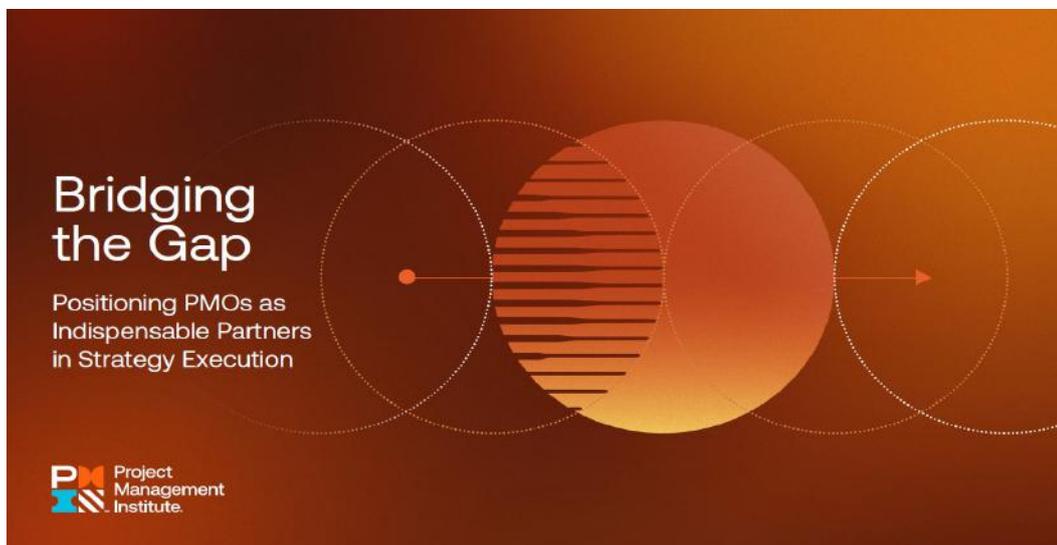
When I reflect on the developments of recent years, I am convinced: the future belongs to PMOs that clearly articulate their contribution and actively shape it. Organizations need orientation in a world defined by uncertainty and rapid change. PMOs can provide that orientation—provided they see themselves as learners, as observers of the overall system, and as catalysts for better decisions. The study makes it clear that PMOs can play a central role in organizational success if they broaden their perspective and assume strategic responsibility.

**In my experience, this shift does not begin with a new methodology, but with a simple question: What are we truly needed for?**

Those who answer this question honestly and are willing to evolve their role will realize that the PMO can be far more than a reporting hub. It can become a true partner—for executives, for teams, and for the future of the organization.



**Alex Bruckschen** works as a Senior Project and Transformation Consultant and supports organizations in complex transformation programs. Her focus is on scalable delivery and quality processes, as well as topics such as agile scaling, BizDevOps, and KPI-based performance management.



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Project Management Institute. <https://www.pmi.org>

# PMBOK® Guide—Eighth Edition: What’s New and Why It Matters

LAURA LAZZERINI NEUWIRTH

As the author of this article and a member of the core development team for the PMBOK® 8, I want to emphasize that the views expressed here are my own; I am not writing on behalf of the Project Management Institute or my company.

## How Did It All Begin?

My involvement with the PMBOK® 8 began rather by chance. I saw a LinkedIn post by PMI CEO Pierre Le Manh in which he was looking for volunteers for the Core Development Team or the Review Team for the new edition.

I decided to apply, even though I knew that thousands of professionals from around the world would likely be submitting applications.

The process involved detailed written responses and interviews. It was an interesting experience and also a reminder that PMI’s Volunteer Engagement Platform (VEP) offers real opportunities to contribute to the development of the profession.

Being selected for this role was a truly enriching experience. I had the opportunity to work with a team of twelve outstanding professionals from around the world, each of whom brought deep expertise from diverse industries, cultures, and professional backgrounds. When we first met, I wondered: How will we work together? Will we be able to agree on all the decisions ahead? The answer was yes. The key was our shared commitment to creating something that works across industries and work styles—forward-thinking, adaptable, and hybrid.

What truly made this collaboration successful was the team’s attitude. Everyone was open to different perspectives and focused on moving forward constructively. And the fact that there were no “prima donnas” in the group certainly helped as well.

Two teams worked together on the publication: the core development team, which was responsible for creating the content, and the review team, which provided continuous feedback.

Since the PMBOK® Guide also incorporates the ANSI standard, the draft was additionally subjected to public review.

Practitioners from around the world were able to submit comments, all of which we reviewed and responded to.



This collaborative process also shaped the structure of the new edition and the topics it highlights.

## A Framework Designed for Today’s Project Environments

The PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition represents a significant evolution of PMI standards. Its goal is to provide a fully integrated perspective across all practices. The publication is divided into two main sections:

- the “Standard for Project Management,”
- and the “Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge.”

The Standard describes the value creation system and outlines the key principles and project lifecycles. The Guide provides practical guidance on practice areas, adaptations, and commonly used tools and techniques.

The publication also includes additions on the topics of Project Management Offices (PMOs), artificial intelligence, and procurement—topics that are increasingly shaping the project management profession.

**Principles, Domains, and Mindset**

One of the core ideas of the new edition is the relationship between principles and practice domains. The principles describe the mindset and behavior expected of project managers, while the domains focus on their practical application. In the eighth edition, these elements complement each other without overlapping. For example: Quality appears as a principle and emphasizes the importance of embedding quality into processes and outcomes. Risk appears as a performance domain that focuses on practical risk management. The foundation of the principles is the project management mindset, which encompasses three dimensions: Proactive, Accountable, Value-Driven Together, they align with the six principles that guide project management behavior. Compared to the previous edition, the principles have been streamlined from twelve to six, improving coherence and reducing overlap.



**Greater Focus on Value**

The new edition also refines some fundamental concepts—particularly the definition of a project. A project is now defined as: A time-bound initiative in a unique context undertaken to create value. This definition highlights three key elements: the time-bound nature of projects, their unique context, and their focus on value creation. The emphasis on value is consistent across the definitions of projects, programs, and portfolios and underscores that project decisions should ultimately be driven by the benefits achieved.

underscores that project decisions should ultimately be driven by the benefits achieved.

**Changing Expectations for Project Professionals**

The PMI Talent Triangle® has also been revised. While the core competencies—work styles, power skills, and business acumen—have been retained, the new edition also emphasizes social responsibility and sustainability, as well as results orientation. This reflects the growing expectation that project professionals not only manage projects effectively but also contribute to broader organizational and societal outcomes.

**From Framework to Application**

The guide describes seven performance domains: governance, scope, schedule, finances, stakeholders,

resources, and risk. Each domain includes practical processes, examples, and associated tools and techniques. The domains apply to all working styles, including adaptive approaches, and highlight both their interactions and the outcomes they are intended to achieve. Quality is not treated as a separate domain but is viewed as a cross-domain attribute that influences all areas of project management.

**► What This Means for Practitioners**

Taken together, these changes reflect a broader shift in PMI’s perspective on modern project management. The PMBOK® Guide – Eighth Edition goes beyond the description of methods and processes and emphasizes mindset, value, and integration across practices. For practitioners, the guide is therefore less a step-by-step manual and more a framework for navigating complex project environments with the goal of creating meaningful value.



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# Impact Instead of Resistance

DR. KARSTEN ENGLER AND DANIEL VEITH

Projects rarely fail because of methods. They fail because of people and individual behavioral patterns. Because of friction between stakeholders, unspoken expectations within subprojects, or decision makers who are formally expected to deliver but have internally withdrawn long ago. Project management is therefore far more than planning, controlling, and reporting.

Especially in contexts where responsibility is distributed and leadership operates without formal authority, interaction determines success or stagnation. And yet, in critical moments, many project leaders repeatedly fall back on the same patterns: more pressure, clearer directives, withdrawal, or ignoring. These reactions are human, quickly accessible, and socially accepted in everyday business. Their impact, however, is limited—and often counterproductive. An approach drawn from leadership, mediation, and project practice distinguishes between two fundamentally different strategies for dealing with tense interaction. As illustrated in Figure 1 of the underlying model: tower strategies and field strategies.

Tower strategies are strongly self-centered. They aim to initially stabilize the situation and its dynamics—through counterpressure, ignoring, or issuing directives.

In project contexts, they can be meaningful and necessary—for example, to halt escalation in meetings, set boundaries, or clarify responsibility in the short term. Particularly in acute situations, tower strategies

create orientation and restore the ability to act. They become problematic when they turn into a permanent state. In that case, they narrow the scope for action, generate hidden resistance, and push conflicts below the surface. Impact does not arise from avoiding tower strategies, but from consciously embedding them—for example, as temporary interventions that enable a transition toward more sustainable approaches.

This is where field strategies begin. They expand the perspective from one's own standpoint to the entire interaction field. The starting point is as neutral an assessment as possible: What is actually happening here—between the stakeholders and within myself? From there, additional levers come into focus. This may involve consciously reconsidering one's own behavior, shaping context and framework conditions, and—where appropriate—jointly realigning collaboration. Project management here is understood as active work within the relational and expectation space—not merely as the control of task packages. How often this transition succeeds is currently being examined in an ongoing impulse study on interaction patterns (note: participation is still possible).

Initial findings provide insightful reflections for project leaders. Adjusting one's own behavior is used comparatively often, whereas consciously questioning one's own perception filters, assumptions, and biases occurs significantly less frequently. Constructive feedback is also applied very differently—from a central leadership instrument to a nearly unused lever. It is

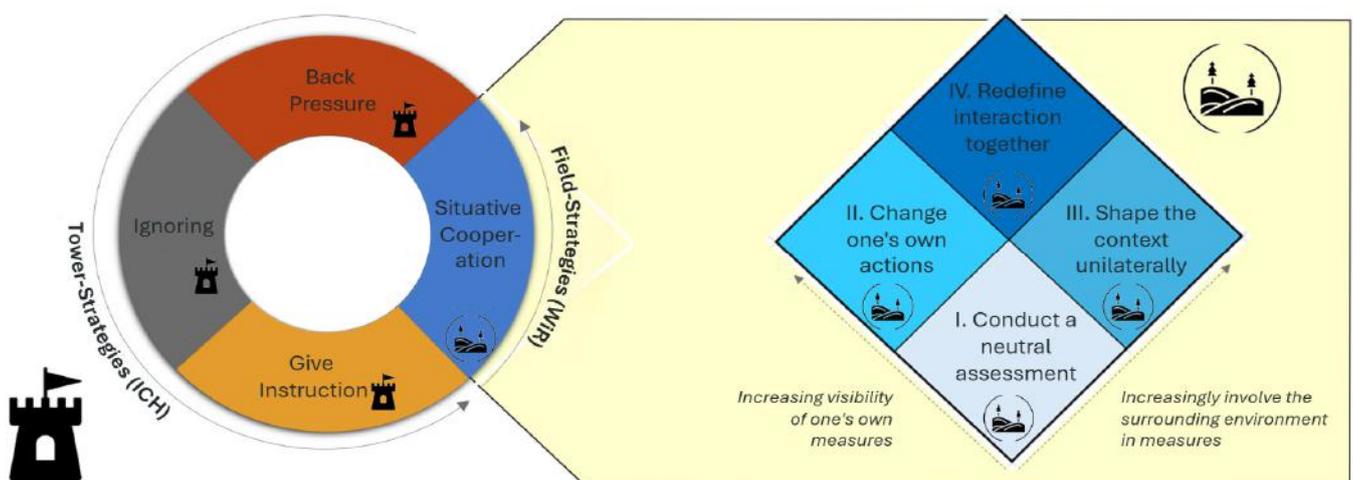


Figure 1: Interplay Tower and Field Strategies

also striking that measures without direct involvement of the counterpart tend to dominate. Conscious joint clarification—the step from tower to field—often does not take place. For projects, this means: stability is achieved, but impact is not fully realized.

These patterns raise questions that translate directly into everyday project practice:

- Where do I reflexively resort to pressure or withdrawal?
- Which options do I rarely use—even though they could generate impact?
- What unconsciously prevents me from using alternative approaches?

**Artificial Intelligence as an Amplifier—Not a Replacement**

At precisely this interface between tower and field, artificial intelligence can provide meaningful support. Not as a decision maker or conflict resolver, but as a structuring sparring partner. AI is particularly strong where it analyzes objectively, identifies patterns, and structures complexity—especially during the assessment phase following an acute intervention. It can help disentangle conversations, make hidden substantive concerns visible, or offer alternative interpretations that broaden one’s perspective. In doing so, it supports the conscious transition from a stabilizing tower strategy to more sustainable field strategies. At the same time, core elements of human leadership remain non-delegable: attitude, courage to clarify, genuine curiosity toward others. AI cannot replace these—but it can prepare, reflect, and structure them. When ap-

plied correctly, it becomes a coach in the background, helping to prevent premature reactions and enable deliberate decisions.

► **Rethinking Project Management**

The combination of situationally applied tower strategies, consistent field strategies, and targeted AI support points to a more mature understanding of project management. It is not about either-or, but about timing, awareness, and transitions.



**Dr. Karsten Engler** advises executives and top management in organizations—as a project manager, leader, management coach, and business mediator. He is a lecturer at the Executive School of EBS Business and Law and at Steinbeis University Berlin.



**Daniel Veith** has extensive experience as a leader in various professional contexts, particularly in the automotive sector. His technical-methodological focus areas include automotive software and sales. In his current role, he operates at the critical interface between service providers and automotive manufacturers, balancing stakeholder interests.

# Value Creation in Modern PMOs

## The PMO-Guide and Its Opportunities

PIERRE CORELL AND PEER REVIEW THROUGH CAROLIN BURKHART

With the release of the PMO-Guide<sup>1</sup> (Project Management Offices: A Practice Guide) in early 2025, a paradigm shift became manifest, which the Eighth Edition of the PMBOK® also pursues: The PMO is emancipating itself from being an administrative control entity to becoming the extended arm of portfolio management. This realignment marks the departure from a focus on pure deliverables (outputs) toward targeted benefits realization (outcomes).

This transformation pays off, as proven by a GPM<sup>2</sup> study, among others: If PMOs are closely integrated into portfolio decision-making processes, their acceptance is rated good to very good in around 60% of cases. However, if strategic involvement is missing, the rate lies at 20%. The less strategically a PMO acts, the more likely it is perceived as a mere cost center—a risk that the PMI report Built to Thrive<sup>3</sup> also underscores. Modern PMOs are service-delivery units within an organization and support project executives. They form the bridge between management’s strategic goals and the executing project teams as well as their expert committees. As a service provider, a PMO focuses on its customers—alongside senior management, these can be project managers, finance departments, legal, expert and excellence departments, or external stakeholders. Not all of these customers have the same importance in managing the PMO’s daily routine and value creation. It is always necessary to weigh goals, benefits, and value generation—to set priorities and be effective. Serving all interested stakeholder groups simultaneously is practically impossible.

A PMO’s key focus group comprises strategic departments and senior management. Their perspectives need to be understood and congruent metrics identified—a shared interest in the portfolio is essential. Due to limitations in time, cost, or resources, quick wins that contribute to senior management’s goals are the first choice to demonstrate value and establish a newly set up PMO. Quick-win measures are successful when they rapidly eliminate immense disruptive factors to project excellence (quality, scope, cost, time). An example could be setting up a document management system as a single source of truth, where project documents are managed centrally with version

control. Quick and not dirty helps—very much in the spirit of Pareto—documentation combined with workshops sufficiently, ensuring that the latest version of an important document is always referenced.

**In established PMOs, more complex needs come to the fore: e.g., resource management, decision excellence, or project prioritization.**

Value creation is the evaluation of achieved benefits in relation to the investments (cost, time, etc.) that PMO stakeholders gain from a product or service. Value positioning is the subjective perception, lying in the eye of the PMO customers, of the extent to which individual expectations were met. Actual value generation takes place iteratively—any improvement measure, whether for a portfolio, projects, or the organization itself, requires fixed points. The PMO Value Ring™ defines the pillars of mandate, governance, and strategy, along with diverse influences, as the basic factors of a PMO. The iterative Customer Experience Circle sets



the mode's

Figure 2: PMO-Value Ring™

Value Ring™ Phase	Central Practical Question in the PMO
Exploration	Which opportunities are promising and which frictions are massive?
Design	What helps operatively right now – instead of just theoretically?
Deployment	How do we achieve rapid usage before perfection?
Enhancement	What is actually used in practice, what is ignored?
Realization	Where does the customer feel concrete relief?

Figure 3: Key Practical Questions

five fixed points with concrete steps and methods. Phase one is dedicated to Exploration, which includes awareness building and assessments, followed by the Design phase as the development of dedicated services. The operationalization of PMO services is titled Deployment in phase three and leads to Enhancement, the obligatory monitoring and improvement. Realization, as the final phase of the iteration, actualizes the real value creation, in which recognition by PMO customers becomes possible.

Since the mandate of a PMO is subject to changing objectives, it is now important to utilize the momentum of the Flywheel Principle<sup>4</sup>, which the PMO-Guide employs. It states that an initiative gains momentum once it has started rolling—just as starting on a bicycle is more strenuous than the energy expenditure once speed is reached. This is not a linear but a circular process—with every iteration, value generation becomes somewhat easier, and the PMO becomes ready to dedicate itself to challenging topics.

A new exploration phase begins, in which metrics, analyses, and needs are updated and evaluated. Metrics and KPIs of value creation contain numerous unmeasurable factors, such as efficiency, trust, satisfaction, or the quality of collaboration. As a means of measurement, the PMO-Guide introduces the PMO Customer Expectation Assessment, which is interlinked with the PMO service catalog and forms a decision basis for relevant activities. The PMO service catalog connects strategic and project-related goals as outcomes. It provides the PMO with a practical template to identify the most sensible options from the numerous possibilities for optimization. Long-term oriented PMOs additionally use maturity assessments like the OPM3<sup>5</sup> to offer management a quantitative view of value creation.

Analysis, definition, and establishment transform methodical value creation into targeted value generation and thus solidify the value positioning of a modern PMO. Setting the right priorities at the right time remains the decisive goal, even with a benefits-oriented alignment—and at the same time, the epitome of lived excellence.

**PMO Certified Professional™—At a Glance**

- Target Group: PMO Executives and Managers.
- Prerequisites: 10 h PMO dedicated education; three years of PM professional experience in the last eight years or a valid PMP®.
- Exam: 165-minute exam (120 questions); can be taken in German.
- Validity: three years; recertification via 30 PDUs.
- Details: <https://www.pmi.org/certifications/pmo-certified-professional-pmi-pmocp>



As PMP®, PMI-PMOCP™ and Management Consultant in cybersecurity PMO, **Pierre Corell** unites theoretical knowledge with operative practice. He is actively engaged in the further development of the profession and collaborative knowledge expansion.

<sup>1</sup> Project Management Institute, Ed. 2025. Project Management Offices: A Practice Guide. <https://www.pmi.org/standards/pmo>.

<sup>2</sup> GPM Deutsche Gesellschaft für Projektmanagement e. V. 2014. The PMO in Practice. <https://www.gpm-ipma.de/wissen/studien/das-pmo-in-der-praxis>

<sup>3</sup> Project Management Institute. 2024. Built to Thrive - PMOs That Elevate Innovation and Power Transformation. <https://www.pmi.org/learning/thought-leadership/built-to-thrive>

<sup>4</sup> Collins, James C. 2001. Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... And Others Don't. First edition. New York, NY: HarperBusiness.

<sup>5</sup> Project Management Institute. 2003. Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3).

# From Deliverable to Outcomes

## How Project Managers Take Responsibility for Real Value in PMBOK® 8

ANDREA DE RUITER

**When Projects Are Successful—Yet Create No Value**  
Many projects are considered successful today: on time, on budget, scope delivered.

And yet, one essential question often remains unanswered: **What has actually improved as a result of the project?**

PMBOK® 8 directly addresses this gap. With the principle Focus on Value, attention shifts away from delivery alone and toward the actual impact projects create in everyday organizational life. This is not a minor methodological adjustment—it is a fundamental change in perspective.

### Focus on Value: More Than a New Buzzword

In practice, value is often equated with results: a system, a process, a new feature. PMBOK® 8 makes one thing very clear: These are outputs—not value. Value only emerges when:

- solutions are actually used
- decisions improve
- behavior changes in a measurable way

This shifts the responsibility of project managers. They are no longer accountable only for delivery, but also for the value assumptions underlying a project—and whether those assumptions hold true over time.

### A Practical Example: Formally Successful—Practically Ineffective

In my work, I repeatedly observe projects that are formally completed—yet fail to create real impact. This exact gap also became visible in a transformation project where all formal criteria had been met: clean governance, an on-schedule go-live, and positive clo-

sure feedback.

In the months following implementation, however, a different picture emerged:

- managers barely used the new solution
- decisions continued through informal channels
- expected benefits failed to materialize

The turning point did not come from technical optimization, but from asking a different question: What concrete value is this project supposed to create in daily work—and who is responsible for that value?

Instead of project status reports, value hypotheses became the focus of discussion. Responsibility was no longer assigned only to roles, but to tangible outcomes.

### Be an Accountable Leader: Responsibility Without Formal Authority

PMBOK® 8 frames leadership in projects not as a position, but as a mindset.

Accountability does not mean making every decision personally—it means consistently demanding responsibility for outcomes.

In complex project environments, common patterns include:

- many stakeholders, but unclear ownership
- postponed decisions and growing risks
- project managers without disciplinary authority

Accountable leadership in this context means not letting go of the essential questions—even when they are uncomfortable.

**Why Value Only Emerges in an Empowered Culture**

The principle Build an Empowered Culture is closely linked to Focus on Value. Teams can only create sustainable value when they:

- understand the purpose of their work
- are allowed to make decisions
- can observe and reflect on impact

Empowerment is therefore not a “soft skill”, but an operational prerequisite for value realization in projects.

**Key Takeaways**

- Value starts before project kickoff—and does not end at go-live.
- Project managers are responsible for value assumptions, not just deliverables.
- Accountability is created through persistent questioning, not hierarchy.
- Empowered teams are a key driver of real impact.
- PMBOK® 8 is less a methods catalog and more a compass for leadership mindset.

**Conclusion**

PMBOK® 8 does not ask project managers to document more. It invites them to focus more clearly on impact, lead more courageously, and take responsibility for real value. This is where the true strength of the new standard lies.



**Andrea De Ruiter** is a strategy consultant, project manager, and transformation expert with extensive experience in complex organizational and digital projects. Her focus lies on value-oriented project management, leadership in transformation contexts, and the integration of strategy, execution, and impact.



# Women in ... a Bikini?

## What a Search Suggestion Reveals About Gender Roles in Professional Life

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PAULA WENZEL

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### It was just two words. “Women in...”

That was all I had typed. I wanted to search for women in project management. For this issue. For a topic that has accompanied me for years. No aimless scrolling. No algorithmic game. Just ordinary research. The algorithm finished the sentence for me: bikini. No joke. No one-off. No typo. An automatic suggestion—generated from what is frequently searched. I paused for a moment. Not shocked. Just with the quiet thought: Of course.

### Algorithms Don’t Invent Anything

Search suggestions are not commentary. They have no opinion. They simply reflect what has been entered, clicked, and consumed often enough. And that is precisely why they are so revealing. They show which associations come first. Not responsibility. Not leadership. Not expertise. But swimwear. Of course, this is not proof of systematic devaluation. But it is an indicator. A small statistical window into collective thought patterns. And these patterns do not exist only online. They sit in the meeting room as well. If I listen closely in my professional environment, it quickly becomes clear that role stereotypes do not operate in only one direction. They influence many dynamics. Women are more frequently described by their appearance than by their content. “Very confident—and well dressed.” “Ambitious, maybe a bit emotional.” These side comments happen. Between the door and the whiteboard. At the same time, men who do not fit the traditional mold are also commented on. Those who take parental leave, work part-time, or openly prioritize family responsibilities are sometimes praised—and in the next moment subtly questioned. “Oh, you’re doing that?” It is rarely openly hostile. More often quiet. Normalized. And that is exactly what makes it so stable.

### Visible—But for What?

Women are visible. In media, in campaigns, on social networks. More visible than ever, one might say. But visibility is not neutral. It is often tied to youth, attractiveness, and the body. Competence, on the other hand, often has to be proven—again and again. Sometimes twice. I have experienced more than once that an idea in the room faded into silence—until it was reformulated minutes later by a male colleague. Then it received approval. Not out of bad intent. But because it apparently sounded more fitting. Perhaps this is not always systematic. Perhaps it is coincidence. But when such situations accumulate, they lose their character as coincidence. In everyday professional life, the mechanisms are subtler than a search suggestion. But they follow the same logic. First, someone is categorized—then evaluated.

### Diversity Is Not a PR Phrase

Especially in project management—a field shaped by uncertainty, conflicting objectives, and complex stakeholder dynamics—different perspectives are not a moral gesture. They are functionally necessary. Complexity cannot be solved with homogeneity. Different life paths, communication styles, and cognitive models expand decision-making space. That is empirically well documented. In practice, however, it means above all this: people should not constantly have to push back against implicit expectations. If competence is assumed for some and has to be demonstrated by others, friction emerges. Invisible friction. It influences appointments, trust, and development opportunities. Not loudly. Not dramatically. But sustainably.

**Not a Women’s Issue—A Leadership Issue**

This is not about outrage. Not about assigning blame. And not about telling search engines what people are allowed to think. It is about awareness. Algorithms amplify what already exists. They make collective habits visible. And sometimes—as in that moment with “Women in...bikini”—they shine a light on something we already know, but rarely see so clearly. Prejudice is rarely loud. Most of the time, it is automated. And what is automated appears particularly reliable.

Perhaps change does not begin with large campaigns. But with a brief pause. With the honest question of why certain associations feel more obvious than others.

**Sometimes a single search suggestion says more about our reality than we would like.**



**Paula Wenzel** is a master’s student in project management with a specialization in AI-supported methods and data-driven decision-making. Her work centers on healthcare and the development of practical approaches to improve clinical processes and care systems.



# Principled Principles

## Or How Stable Should Principles Actually Be?

THOMAS WUTTKE

Principles are supposed to be timeless. Or at least long-lasting. They are meant to provide orientation, offer stability, and remain valid beyond methods, processes, and trends. Fundamentally—or should I say in principle?

**All the more surprising, then, when principles have a life span closer to that of fad diets. Principally too short, wouldn't you say?**

A fine example from the project world is the Agile Manifesto. Formulated in 2001—now a quarter century old—and still remarkably stable. Hardly anyone seriously calls for an Agile Manifesto 2.0. Its four values and 12 principles have survived wars, framework hypes, endless waves of certifications, six US presidents, and countless LinkedIn debates. Respect. And if you want to know whether your environment is truly agile, one look at that list of 12 principles is often enough—the answer is right there on the table.

**Which brings us to the PMBOK® Guide, 7th Edition.**

In 2021, 12 (coincidence?) project management principles were introduced—solemnly, fundamentally, almost philosophically. A new PMI era had supposedly begun, grounded in principles such as Stewardship, Systems Thinking, Value, Leadership, Tailoring, Quality, Complexity, and others. Much of it made sense. Some of it felt vague. Some read more like attitudes than principles. But fine—principles are allowed to be abstract.

**The only problem: these “timeless” principles survived exactly one edition.**

With the PMBOK® Guide 8, we see a reversal—or perhaps a decisive step forward. 12 principles become six. Not refined. Not sharpened. Not fine-tuned. Simply reformulated—and cut in half. That alone raises an intriguing question: How principled were those principles, really?

If principles are rethought or folded together after just



one edition, then apparently they were either:

- poorly chosen
- insufficiently clear
- not applicable in practice, or
- not principles at all, but well-sounding headlines

The six new principles in PMBOK® 8 appear more grounded. Less academic. Less abstract. More action-oriented. Focus on value. Embed quality. Lead responsibly. Integrate sustainability. Think holistical-

ly. Build an empowering culture. At first glance, that sounds reasonable. One can criticize the reduction—or read it as an admission: 12 items do not automatically make a good list, even if there is a famous historical model. 12 were simply too many. Perhaps the ambition to distill a handful of knowledge areas and common sense into “principles” was doomed from the beginning.

What irritates me, however, is not the reduction itself, but the speed with which it happened. Principles are meant to provide orientation over years. They are not supposed to be rearranged with every new edition like IKEA furniture collections. If principles are redefined every three or four years, they lose exactly what defines them: stability. They are no longer a foundation, but decoration. Attractive, perhaps. But interchangeable. And this is where the comparison with the Agile Manifesto becomes interesting. Those principles were deliberately formulated as timeless. No tools. No roles. No processes—just attitudes.

But we can run a simple test. Just as the 12 principles of the Agile Manifesto still provide a powerful benchmark for assessing how “agile” we truly are, readers can use the six principles of PMBOK® 8 to reflect on their own project management practice. On a scale of 1 to 10—where 10 is strong performance—how well does your project embody each of the six principles? And does that score align with your subjective perception of your project’s effectiveness? If yes—there may be something there.

One thing is certain: if PMBOK® Guide 9 introduces eight or 11 new principles, we might want to stop calling them principles—and honestly refer to them as “editorial recommendations with an expiration date.”



Perhaps this is the real lesson from PMBOK® Guides 7 and 8: you cannot simply declare principles. They must prove themselves. Sometimes you only realize in hindsight that what you formulated were not principles—but well-intentioned generalities. The hope now is that the six principles of PMBOK® 8 will last longer than their 12 predecessors. Not because six is a prettier number, but because fewer principles may have a better chance of becoming real guiding guardrails for project work.



**Thomas Wuttke** is a project management expert, corporate consultant, trainer, author, and speaker. He has been active worldwide in project management and was long associated with the PMI Germany Chapter in a media partnership.

# Product Development

## Building a Sustainable Development Program for Leaders

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ANKE MENZLER

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### Initial Situation and Problem

The project is the implementation of a business idea in the form of an online learning platform for effective leadership. Leaders find themselves in very complex situations every day, sitting between people and responsibilities—toward the company and its stakeholders, their own role as a leader and their personal standards as a human being, their employees, and the changing market.

Leadership is often not understood as a profession and learned—let alone developed sustainably. As a leadership developer, I noticed this discrepancy in many trainings and workshops—from which the Leadership Box emerged. A modern self-learning format that covers the complex requirements placed on leaders: mastering leadership in different situations, developing employees and the company, and creating sustainable impact in the market. The approach: learning leadership easily and practically—with short learning sequences, transfer into everyday work, and formats for different types of learners.

### Project Approach and Structure

As a small team of experts, we set up the project within one year—selecting, structuring, and preparing the content.

In doing so, we followed agile principles: content was developed iteratively and made available to potential customers at important milestones through a structured review process. In this way, they were able to directly influence the content of the product. The results were discussed within the team and requirements were jointly prioritized based on customer value, timeline, and resources.

We assembled the project team according to competence requirements. The most important categories: leadership experience from different worlds—start-ups, SMEs, corporations, public authorities, project and matrix organizations, hierarchical levels—role

diversity—disciplinary and functional leadership, coaching, consulting, sales, project management, change management—and implementation competencies—didactics and communication, learning platforms, video and audio production. This diversity led to constructive discussions and brought the essence from different organizational worlds into the product.

### Key Decisions

New requirements were not automatically adopted but consciously prioritized based on customer value and the effort required until go-live. The most important criterion here was customer value—the higher the marketable value, the higher the priority.

The AI question arose early: our most important principle is the communication of real leadership experience from practice and the effectiveness of the content. Therefore, we decided against the use of AI in the core product—that is, in the selection, structuring, and didactic preparation. For some operational visualizations, however, AI was used as an efficient tool.

### Challenges and Turning Points

A critical factor in every project is resources—the availability and time capacity of team members. Capacity and energy are always in tension with requirements and timelines. The most critical moment was the decision between expanding the benefit at the expense of the planned go-live date after valuable customer feedback. In one review, we received so much valuable additional input that it influenced the decision to postpone. After weighing customer value and effort, we decided to expand the scope and postponed the go-live by three months.

Continuous project process improvement through dailies and retrospectives not only helped the team but also benefited the quality of the product—from long coordination meetings to regular short check-ins, with new format ideas and critical reflection on our own work.



Our main learning: customer value comes first—but a conscious sense of our own resources is just as crucial. As founders, we had to ensure that we as a whole team remained healthy and that the project remained compatible with other responsibilities. We anchored this mindset directly in the Leadership Box through learning modules such as burnout prevention, resilience, and self-leadership. Because sustainable leadership begins with the individual.

► **Lessons Learned for Project Managers**

Several transferable insights can be derived from the project:

- Sustainability does not begin with the product—it runs through the entire project.
- Iterative development with real customer involvement strengthens relevance and quality.
- New requirements require conscious evaluation and prioritization—not automatic implementation.
- Project resilience and team health are not side aspects but central success factors.
- Technological possibilities such as AI should always be measured against one’s own quality standards and the project vision.

In this way, the project itself became a practical example of what the Leadership Box teaches—effective, agile, and sustainable.



**Anke Menzler** is a consultant, trainer, and coach specializing in leadership and organizational development. She has 18 years of IT experience and focuses on sustainable development and effective communication.

# Male Allies in Project Management

## How Visibility, Leadership, and Team Culture Make Diversity Effective

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PAULA WENZEL IN EXCHANGE WITH MARTIN BERTRAM AND WERNER WALDNER

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Women in project management is not a new topic. And yet, conversations with practitioners repeatedly show how differently experiences, structures, and learning curves can develop. In the exchange with Martin Bertram and Werner Waldner, it becomes clear that the question of women in projects can hardly be viewed in isolation. It is closely linked to leadership, internationality, team culture, and not least to the role of male leaders as Male Allies.

### **Different Starting Points, a Shared Look Ahead**

Martin began his career in IT in the 1980s. Women in technical roles or in project management were rather the exception at that time. There were individual female project managers, but they remained rare occurrences. It was only after moving to a large financial institution that the topic became more present for him. However, less through IT itself than through the broader organizational environment, in which women were generally more strongly represented.

Werner describes a different path. International assignments, work in the financial services environment, and a clear corporate-wide strategy focused on internationalization and profitable growth significantly shaped his context. Particularly in the course of this strategic alignment, talent development was deliberately structured to be more open and more diverse. Diversity was therefore not an incidental by-product, but part of a long-term growth logic. Mixed teams and women in leadership positions did not emerge by chance, but as the result of a consistently implemented development strategy. Potential had to be identified early, deliberately supported, and built up over years. As Werner puts it: “It takes twenty years. Diversity does not emerge overnight, but through consistent development.”

### **When Support Meets Structure—or Fails Because of It**

Both conversation partners agree that well-intended individual measures are often not sufficient. Martin describes initiatives that were formally correct, but in implementation felt unfortunate. Support measures without accompanying development or clear communication led more to irritation than to empowerment. On all sides, uncertainty arose about whether performance, quotas, or symbolism were at the forefront. In contrast stands the experience that diversity becomes effective where it is structurally anchored. Talent promotion, mentoring, international experience, and clear expectations of leadership create framework conditions in which different talents can develop. Not short-term preference, but long-term development makes the difference.

### **Visibility as a Prerequisite for Impact—With Side Effects**

A recurring topic in the conversation is visibility. Those who are visible are perceived. With performance as well as with mistakes. This applies regardless of gender, but becomes relevant at different stages depending on the environment. Martin puts it succinctly when he says that with increasing visibility, mistakes also become more visible—and the higher one rises, the more one is under observation. Especially in strongly male-dominated contexts, this visibility often begins earlier for women. Not only in leadership roles, but already as the only woman on a team. In other industries, this can also apply the other way around for men. Visibility thus becomes a prerequisite for influence, but also a stress test. It is both opportunity and risk, and requires conscious support from leadership.

## Male Allies: Opening Spaces Instead of Explaining Roles

What does Male Allyship mean concretely in this context? For Martin and Werner, above all: listening, understanding, and enabling. It is not about explaining roles or distributing well-meant advice, but about jointly identifying where someone wants to go and what is holding him or her back.

Martin describes listening as a central tool of leadership. First understanding what someone truly wants, and then jointly looking at where support makes sense. Support does not mean removing risks or shielding people. Development often arises where expectations are set—however with backing, and not through overload. He describes it figuratively as not making “the water ice-cold, but perhaps giving a small push.”

Mentoring plays a central role in this context. Not as a control instrument, but as a space for reflection, orientation, and the development of self-confidence. Werner emphasizes that long-term mentoring programs in particular help make potential visible and enable development—regardless of gender. What matters is encouraging people to take on responsibility before they feel fully ready themselves.

### ► Project Management Becomes More Human

Looking to the future, both agree that methods, tools, and AI will simplify many technical aspects of project management. All the more important will be those capabilities that cannot be automated. Empathy, communication, stakeholder management, and team leadership will move more strongly into focus.

## Why Male Allies Play a Role

The term Male Allies describes male leaders and colleagues who actively commit to creating fair framework conditions in everyday professional life. Not by speaking for women or prescribing solutions, but by questioning structures, enabling visibility, and supporting development. Precisely because many decision-making and leadership positions are still predominantly held by men, they bear particular responsibility. Male Allies act where informal rules, established cultures, or unconscious expectations determine who is heard, who is promoted, and who becomes visible.



After many years as a project management professional in the financial services sector, **Dr. Martin Bertram** is now retired. He serves on the board of the PMI Germany Chapter, where his responsibilities include overseeing our diversity initiatives. In addition, Martin Bertram serves as chairman of the board of PM4TheWorld—an organization dedicated to promoting sustainable project management.



**Werner Waldner**, PMP, worked at Allianz for over 30 years on international projects, most recently in sustainability reporting at Allianz Direct. Today, he volunteers with the PMI German Chapter.

# Community is our Superpower

## The Rhineland Local Group Reports

ALEXANDRA BRÜCKNER

When the room fills up and, before long, lively conversations begin to form—as everyone approaches one another with openness and the joy of meeting new people and reuniting with old friends is palpable—we experience it once again: the PMI spirit, which brings people together beyond the technical aspects of the field.

Implementing projects in a way that creates real value is a demanding part of our daily work. Time and again, we face questions and obstacles or discover opportunities we'd like to discuss. Project management cuts across nearly every industry and field of work—and the professional backgrounds of the people who meet at our gatherings are just as diverse. It takes time and attentiveness to truly understand each other's situations. When we succeed, it quickly becomes clear how rewarding these encounters are—because our challenges and opportunities are similar.

### What's on Our Community's Mind

At the end of last year, the community compiled a list of topics that are currently shaping day-to-day project work. In addition to PM tools, sustainability, social responsibility, AI, and information security, people and collaboration topics are clearly coming into focus, and at this year's events and regular get-togethers, we will be focusing more on the "human factor": How can we actively shape change? How do we involve the entire team? How do we handle tensions when conditions change and pressure mounts? How do we fulfill our role as the human level of responsibility? The Rhineland Local Group brings together people with a wide range of life experiences—different age groups, backgrounds, and career stages. We examine these topics from various perspectives, and seeing things through

others' eyes helps us reevaluate our own standpoint. This enables us to discuss these issues competently.

### Create Practice Spaces With the Local Group

As project managers, we ensure the quality of project work by creating work environments characterized by respect and trust that facilitate open feedback from stakeholders. We develop an instinct for opportunities and challenges, and to address them proactively, we must be able to make decisions—even unpopular ones. How do we arrive at well-informed decisions? On the one hand, through project knowledge and a clear understanding of developments in the economy, society, and politics. On the other hand, through a solid knowledge base of procedures, methods, and standards—here, the PMI knowledge base provides guidance. And then the very concrete question arises: How do we communicate our decisions in a way that is clear and understandable? It takes practice to formulate a decision clearly, to step forward, and to defend one's own position.

“I love to participate and to volunteer for the Rhineland Local Group events for meeting not just project managers but the people behind the projects. With their hopes for their projects, with their struggles they need to address and with results. Behind projects are people desiring to create something that will bring value, which inspires me.”

Lavinia Postelnicu-Ciurez  
Accounting manager  
PMI GC Volunteer

“After relocating to the Stammtisch, how powerful is keeping projects relevant, and when guiding a group, including a group.”

“Every get-together is worth attending. Over the past two years, a wonderful group of like-minded people—PMers—has come together to discuss a constant stream of new topics over water, wine, beer, and good times.”

Arno Vogel  
Lead Project Manager &  
Partner Manager



It is important to me that the Rhineland Local Group also provides opportunities for hands-on practice. Project professionals are invited to participate in Local Group events and actively help shape them—sharing their experiences and reflecting together on typical project situations. At the same time, Local Group events offer the chance to try out new roles, take center stage, and thereby further develop one’s profile as a project manager.

ating from Dubai to Bonn, the n Rhineland has shown me ul local communities can be project management human, and connected - especially d by committed leadership, strong female Head of the

**Diletta Ciolina, FM Growth Project Manager**

“GIVE TO GAIN” is this year’s theme for International Women’s Day—and it fits us perfectly. No matter what your personal background is or what career path you’re on, one thing is certain: when you contribute your time, experience, and ideas, you not only strengthen the community but also gain confidence, visibility, and the ability to shape your own future.

We look forward to seeing you!

**How to Reach Us:**



Newsletter



**Alexandra Brückner** has been the head of the Rhineland Local Group since 2023. She draws on her many years of experience in project and organizational management across various industries and countries to establish structured knowledge management and effectively facilitate collaboration on projects. For the PMI Germany Chapter, she designs and organizes events that promote the cross-industry exchange of project management knowledge and best practices.



**Event in June:  
Conflict as Chance**

Together with **Mareile Blendl**, we are organizing an interactive event exploring the potential of conflicts. Mareile brings her experience as a trained actress and speaker, as well as her deep expertise in **relationship dynamics** and **communication**—we combine this with our own professional experience.

**There’s plenty to look forward to at another lively event in the Rhineland—will you be joining us?**

# What happens “When the Last Woman Leaves the Room?”

VINCENT-IMMANUEL HERR AND MARTIN SPEER

**Hardly any topic polarizes as strongly as gender equality. Men in particular sense exaggeration or quickly feel attacked. Where does this come from and how can men become allies for gender equality?**

We spoke with the authors and consultants Vincent-Immanuel Herr and Martin Speer. In their Spiegel bestseller *When the Last Woman Leaves the Room* (Ullstein), they provide insights into the thoughts and concerns of men in the workplace. They show where resistance—but also opportunities—lie and how men as allies (Male Allies) can contribute to progress.

*When it comes to gender equality and the equal treatment of women and men, debates quickly become heated. Where does that come from and why do many men in particular feel attacked by the topic?*

Gender equality moves many people because ultimately it concerns the core of our shared coexistence—values, fairness, and how we want to work and live together. That the topic polarizes is understandable: it challenges the status quo. And the status quo has, to this day, often placed men at the center—in business, society, in public spaces, practically everywhere. When privileges or structural inequality are discussed, we quickly feel personally addressed. “I’m not a bad guy,” or “I treat everyone equally,” we then hear. Many men initially experience the topic as unfamiliar or unsettling. Often not because they are against equality, but because they simply do not know what specific role they can take when it comes to changing things for the better.

*You have worked with over 1,000 executives in recent years. Are men sufficiently aware of the disadvantages that the current system and narrow role expectations bring with them?*

Many men feel disadvantages of the status quo, but only a few connect them to gender injustice. Some

only realize during parental leave, burnout, or a team conflict how restrictive traditional role models and expectations can be—and what potential we fail to unlock. We live in a culture that teaches men early on to suppress their own emotions and to express confidence through dominance. As a result, not only many men suffer, but above all women, companies, and teams are harmed.

*Why do many men find it so difficult to perceive gender injustice or discrimination based on gender? You recently wrote about this in your book *When the Last Woman Leaves the Room* (Ullstein).*

Quite simply, because we men almost never experience discrimination based on gender. When we ask men in our workshops when they last experienced sexism at work, we are often met with silence or intense thinking, while women can immediately name dozens of their own experiences—sometimes several per day. In addition, there is a psychological effect: we humans prefer to perceive what fits our self-image. Those who see themselves as fair and performance-oriented do not want to hear that structures are unjust. It feels like an attack—but it is actually an invitation to reflection. We extend this invitation in the book as well. It is not about guilt, but about responsibility. Those who have power and privilege can make a difference. That requires Male Allies (men as allies).

*How can a man become an effective ally for gender equality and why is this also important for project work?*

Anyone can start immediately. Male allyship begins with small, conscious actions. Listening and believing is the first step. Truly wanting to understand how structures work, whom they benefit, and whom they harm. Then one can begin to use influence—whether in meetings, in promotions, or within team culture.

► Let's simply try four things starting tomorrow:

- Listen better, interrupt less
- Do not let inappropriate comments or jokes pass
- Share care responsibilities fairly, at the office and at home
- Advocate for fair structures and processes within the organization

This is especially important for collaboration in project management. Studies show that teams work more innovatively, with fewer conflicts, more effectively, and more motivated when an inclusive work climate prevails and women can contribute on equal footing. It is economically foolish not to activate this potential—and unfair on top of that.



**Vincent-Immanuel Herr and Martin Speer** are authors, speakers, and the founders of HERR & SPEER. Together, they advocate for gender equality, new role models for men, and a modern work and leadership culture. They advise and support companies, government agencies, the military, and political institutions on male allyship, leadership, and cultural change. Their articles appear in publications such as \*Der Spiegel\* and \*Die Zeit\*, and they serve as HeForShe ambassadors for UN Women Germany.



We're giving away a signed copy of the book **\*When the Last Woman Leaves the Room\*** (only available in German)

**Curious?** Then be sure to check out the giveaway post on the [PMI Germany Chapter's LinkedIn page](#). (Entry period: March 14, 2026, to April 11, 2026)

# What Project Management Has to Do with Reclam Booklets

ANDREAS BERNING

Who does not remember them from German class during school: the Reclam booklets. These small yellow things in DIN A6 format that were always getting lost somewhere in the school bag or in the very last corner of the room, immediately reminding us of our teachers who, after the bell rang, quickly assigned homework: “For next week, prepare up to and including Chapter 4, page 194.” And suddenly they are back—does that mean the PMBOK® will soon be published as a Reclam edition?

But one thing at a time—it began with an innocent theater visit: The Rider on the White Horse was on the program at the Oldenburg State Theater, more precisely the stage adaptation by John von Düffel of Theodor Storm’s well-known novella from 1888. At its center stands the fictional character Hauke Haien, who, learning from his father, became interested at a young age in optimizing coastal protection through a new dike design. Later, as dike reeve, he implements his vision in a project (as we would say today) but unfortunately neglects the necessary repairs to the old dikes. What had to happen, happens: the old dike breaks, Hauke’s wife Elke and child Wienke drown in the incoming floodwaters, and in his despair he throws himself with his horse into the raging waters flooding the land, calling out: “Lord God, take me; spare the others!”

After this stormy yet entertaining theater visit, the gears in my head began to turn: clearly, an attempt was made to implement a vision through a project. Project end = new dike completed. That the dike and the associated coastal protection were a formidable “business outcome”—without question. And all the stakeholders... And Hauke’s role was clear—project manager (okay—possibly also product manager coastal protection). And the question “How did Hauke Haien perform as a PM?” immediately suggests itself. Why did everything end in a major catastrophe? What would have needed to change for the project to succeed? For readers not familiar with the literature, excellent (and much better than the above) summaries of the work can be found, from which the following conclusions can be drawn from a project management perspective:

## 1. Connect Vision with Responsibility

Hauke Haien has a clear vision: to build a better dike that is safer than the old one. And he implements it consistently despite resistance.

Lesson: While it is not necessary—and certainly not typical—that the project lead has a clear vision, it is certainly important for a project to have a clear objective. And for project leaders, the willingness to take responsibility is immensely significant for project



success. But: without bringing the team and stakeholders along, every project fails. Communication plays a key role here.

**2. Manage Change—Understand Tradition**

Hauke stands for progress but encounters rejection because he underestimates traditional perspectives.

Lesson: Innovation is important—but only successful if one takes the fears of those affected by the project (i.e., the stakeholders) seriously. Change management and stakeholder involvement are absolute obligations, not optional extras.

**3. Technical Excellence Is Not Enough—Leadership Counts**

Hauke is technically skilled but distant on a human level. This leads to isolation and resistance.

Lesson: Projects require leadership; leadership requires social competence. Trust arises through dialogue; dialogue requires (active) listening. Anyone who wants to lead must convince people—not merely issue instructions and/or juggle numbers.

**4. Identify Risks—but Also Communicate Them**

Hauke sees the dangers and acts correctly, but he fails to bring others along. The consequence: catastrophe.

Lesson: Early risk analysis is essential but not sufficient. Risks must also be explained to those involved, understood by them, and then organizationally secured. This is essentially Risk Management 101—but it should be reflected upon again and again.

**5. Limit Responsibility—Strengthen the Team**

In the end, Hauke sacrifices himself for the project: heroic, but lonely. This is definitely not the desired approach or the expectation placed on project leaders.

Lesson: Good project leaders know their limits. Responsibility does not mean carrying everything alone. Delegation and a strong team protect against overload. Escalation is of fundamental importance when the project and its participants cannot solve problems on their own.

► **Resolution**

The connection to the Reclam booklet topic is, of course, that *The Rider on the White Horse*, as of 2012 with 3.1 million copies sold, is listed among the top 10 titles in Reclam’s Universal Library. Among the top 10 alone, there are several interesting classics such as Goethe’s *Faust*, *William Tell*, and many others. This could indeed be the beginning of a long series of contributions, as more than 10,000 titles have been published in Reclam’s Universal Library, with around 3,500 still available as of 2017. And perhaps someday the PMBOK® will indeed be published there.

**P.S.: Until that happens, you can at least buy a notebook in the format of a Reclam booklet (simply google “reclam notebook”) in order to take your notes as a successful project leader.**



**Dr. Andreas Berning** – PMP, PMI-ACP, DASSM, GPM-b, has worked for 25 years in projects within the financial services industry—from IT to finance and compliance to initiatives combating financial crime. He was active in PMI from 2016–2024 (Frankfurt and Germany Chapter, founding member). His mantra: “Never stop learning.”

# New Podcast Episodes You Won't Want to Miss

BY AND STARRING THOMAS WUTTKE

## Episode 230 - The Magnet Project Management Approach: How to Attract Top Experts to Your Project

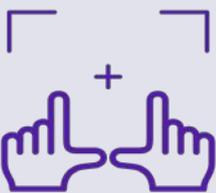


In this episode, Erik Zettel discusses the principles of intrinsic motivation and their significance for modern project management. The focus is on how lasting motivation is fostered—not through pressure, bonuses, or formal authority, but through an environment in which people are naturally motivated to perform at their best.

[Direktlink zur Folge 230](#)



## Episode 229 – Less Is More: Why Focus Speeds Up Projects



“Less is more”—a phrase many are familiar with, yet rarely put into practice consistently in day-to-day project work. In this podcast episode, Nicole Weidner and Klaus Nitsche discuss why small and medium-sized businesses in particular benefit from a clear focus in project work, and how organizations can deliver results faster by taking on fewer projects at once and consistently prioritizing them.

[Direktlink zur Folge 229](#)

## Episode 228 - PMBOK 8 – A Return to Reason?



In this podcast episode, we take a concise but critical look at the PMBOK® Guide 8. We discuss why, even though the world would have kept turning without a new edition, it's still good for project managers that it exists. And we compare, openly and with a touch of humor, what makes the PMBOK Guide 8 different from its predecessors.

[Direktlink zur Folge 228](#)

# Power Skills: Rebirth or Relaunch of a CoP?

JÖRG GLUNDE

**Artificial intelligence can provide support—but project success still depends decisively on the power skills of project managers. In order to place these competencies more firmly at the center and develop them further together, the PMI Germany Chapter is realigning the former General PM CoP into the Power Skills CoP. Members are invited to get involved and actively shape the community.**

At the PM Summit 2025, around 60 participants discussed in the workshop “Achieving Better Project Success with Power Skills and Artificial Intelligence” how project management is changing in the age of AI. The key insight was clear: artificial intelligence can prepare decisions, structure information, and accelerate routines—but the decisive factors for project success remain the power skills of project managers.

Based on this strong interest, the PMI Germany Chapter is realigning the former General PM CoP and further developing it into the Power Skills CoP. Three committed chapter members—Mirko Blüming, Jörg Glunde, and Thomas Suppes—have come together to bring this further development to life and to create tangible added value for members and the profession. Even in the age of artificial intelligence (AI), personal competencies remain indispensable. In particular, skills in communication, collaborative leadership,

problem-solving, and strategic thinking—as PMI describes under the term power skills—continue to be decisive for successfully delivering projects. At the same time, the combination of human capabilities and technological support opens up new possibilities for collaboration and decision-making.

The goal of the Power Skills CoP is therefore to explore these competencies in practice-oriented deep dives and to discuss together how project managers can further develop their skills in a working environment shaped by AI and digitalization.

The previous General PM CoP will therefore continue under the name Power Skills CoP, but will not lose its previous remit.

► **Interested?** Then send a short email to [cop-powerskills@pmi-gc.de](mailto:cop-powerskills@pmi-gc.de) or [register for our next event on April 13, 2026, at 7 p.m.](#)



Jörg Glunde



Mirko Blüming



Thomas Suppes

# Becoming Visible Is No Coincidence

## What a Mentoring Journey Teaches About Self-Confidence, Role Models, and Project Work

PAULA WENZEL IN CONVERSATION WITH MARIA SKRYAGINA AND ILDIKÓ VARGA-NEOFOTISTOS

When Maria Skryagina and Ildikó Varga-Neofotistos came together as part of the PMI Germany Chapter’s mentoring program, it was not about career plans drawn up on a drafting table or about quick solutions. It was about questions many women project managers know—and often wrestle with for too long on their own: How visible am I, actually? How do I talk about my performance? And why is good work alone so often not enough?

Today, several months later, both look back on a mentoring journey shaped less by individual milestones than by a gradual shift in thinking.

### “Good Work Speaks for Itself”—Or Maybe Not

For Maria, one of the central insights was both sobering and liberating: good work is not automatically seen. For a long time, she had trusted that results speak for themselves. That quality prevails without having to name it. In mentoring, this assumption was not directly challenged; rather, it dissolved through conversation. Visibility, it became clear, is not a matter of volume or self-promotion, but of deliberate communication. Those who do not contextualize their work, do not explain it, and do not confidently represent it leave the interpretation

to others—or to chance. This realization was not a theoretical aha moment for Maria, but something that gradually became reflected in her behavior. She began addressing results more deliberately, naming responsibility more clearly, and no longer excluding herself from her own success story.

### A Familiar Pattern—From a Mentor’s Perspective

What Maria describes is not an isolated case for Ildikó—and yet every mentoring relationship is different. As an experienced project manager and mentor, she encounters similar patterns again and again, especially among women in project management. But the backgrounds and manifestations are individual. Some mentees doubt their visibility and wonder why their performance is not automatically recognized. Others struggle less with perception than with self-confidence. Still others put enormous pressure on themselves to do everything one hundred percent correctly—out of fear that mistakes might be weighted more heavily than successes.

What appears similar at first glance often has different causes. For Ildikó, mentoring therefore does not mean working with ready-made answers or standardized solution paths. Rather, it is about listening

carefully, understanding contexts, and jointly finding out what truly moves the respective mentor or mentee forward in their current situation. Visibility can be a topic—as in Maria’s case. But it is never an end in itself and never the sole objective. At its core, it is about clarity regarding one’s own role, expectations, and room for action. Mentoring creates a space in which individual patterns can be reflected upon and new perspectives developed—tailored and without a patent remedy.

### Development Without a Patent Remedy

A defining aspect of this mentoring relationship was that there was no fixed roadmap. No training agenda, no checklist, no “This is how you have to do it.” Instead, a space for reflection emerged: about professional decisions, about self-perception, and about how to navigate often male-dominated project environments without losing oneself. For Maria, this space became particularly relevant during a phase of professional reorientation. Mentoring accompanied her not with concrete answers, but with sparring, feedback, and honest assessment—even regarding topics such as applications, conversations, or her own positioning.

### Mentoring Works in Both Directions

For Ildikó as well, this mentoring journey was not a one-way street. Being a mentor does not only mean passing on experience, but continually questioning one’s own perspective. The exchange with mentees from other industries and contexts opens up new viewpoints on familiar topics. At the same time, mentoring strengthens skills that are essential in project management: listening, structuring, contextualizing, encouraging. In this way, mentoring becomes a learning process at eye level and a form of conscious “giving back” to the next generation of project managers.

### Women in Project Management: More Than a Side Topic

The fact that visibility, self-confidence, and positioning were so present in mentoring is no coincidence. For many women in project management, these issues are not individual weaknesses, but the result of structural expectations and internalized role models. Mentoring does not create a quick fix here, but it creates awareness. And sometimes that alone is enough to set things in motion.

### A Quiet Framework: the PMI Mentoring Program

Maria and Ildikó’s mentoring journey took place within the PMI Germany Chapter’s mentoring program. The program offers project management professionals the opportunity to exchange ideas in mentoring tandems over several months, accompanied by joint formats and a structured matching process. The focus is not knowledge transfer in the classical sense, but personal and professional development. Mentoring is not training and not certification preparation, but an offer for reflection and mutual learning.

**What remains:** At the end of this mentoring journey, there is no certificate of completion and no clear final point. The exchange between Maria and Ildikó continues—in conversations, decisions, and everyday professional life.

**Perhaps that is precisely the strongest argument for mentoring: that it is not loud, not spectacular—but sustainable.**

The next mentoring application phase begins in March 2026. The official program start follows shortly after the application phase, allowing sufficient time for matching and preparation.

For questions about participation or the program process, the mentoring team can be reached at:

[mentoring@pmi-gc.de](mailto:mentoring@pmi-gc.de)



**Ildikó Varga-Neofotistos** holds a PhD in mathematics and is an experienced project manager with over 20 years of professional experience in the financial and IT sectors. After leadership roles at UniCredit and Fondsdepot Bank, she is now a Senior Project Manager at LBBW.



**Maria Skryagina** is a project manager at ZF with a focus on automated driving. After studying automation engineering and robotics, complemented by an MBA program, she gained international experience in research, automotive, and software development.

# Women@PMI Germany Chapter

YASMINA KHELIFI WITH ROSA GILSANZ, VICKY ADAMS, ILDIKÓ VARGA,  
YERKENAZ ARINOVA AND SERAIDI CHESENEY

## How It All Began

The first webinar of Women@PMI Germany Chapter under the leadership of Silviya Apostolova took place on May 27, 2021.

The idea behind it immediately inspired me, and I decided to participate. Thanks to the virtual format, the event was open to all interested participants and easily accessible from my place of residence in France. At the same time, I saw it as a wonderful opportunity to deepen my German language skills. The experience was both inspiring and reassuring. After asking the team a few questions, Silviya invited me to get involved as a remote volunteer. Volunteering is not unfamiliar to me, but the focused support of other women project managers had special meaning for me. I said yes without hesitation and remain happy about that decision to this day.

## This Prompts Me to Share Why This Community Is Important to Me

As a woman in a technical field, I am often the only woman in the room or on the team. Although there is a strong inclusive spirit at my workplace, there were moments when I wondered whether I myself might be the problem. Only through exchanging ideas with other women in this group did I realize: we often face very similar challenges. After each meeting, I go home with a lighter heart, a more positive mindset, and renewed energy. That is

exactly our goal: to create a safe space where we can openly share our challenges and successes. Our webinars are intentionally not recorded so that every participant can speak freely. We want to help women build strong networks, gain self-confidence, and confidently pursue their own path. These conversations are a source of new connections, fresh ideas, and valuable collaborations.

## Let Me Show You What Women@PMI Germany Chapter Is Working On

Women@PMIGC is part of the Diversity and Inclusion Circle within the PMI Germany Chapter. We regularly organize webinars and roundtables in English or German and have conducted more than 20 inspiring events so far. When selecting our topics, we rely on community feedback and consistently strive to provide added value and benefits to our members. Our webinars are intentionally non-commercial and create space for exchange, learning, and mutual

support. Among our annual highlights are two particularly popular formats: “Bring Your Own Problem” and “Books and More.” We also collaborate with other European chapters to organize events for International Women’s Day. Our first in-person meeting took place in July in Munich, followed by a warm reunion at the Christmas market in December. Further exciting events are already being planned—we look forward to seeing our community continue to grow.

## Get to Know the Organizing Team

The team largely happens to be based in Munich.

**Rosa Gilsanz** played a central role as a founding member in developing this initiative and will soon take over leadership of the Risk Management Community of Practice.

**Vicky Adams**, another founding member, is responsible for leading and coordinating the design of our events.



I, **Yasmina Khelifi**, from near Paris, contribute as a dedicated remote team member to communication, public relations, and remote volunteer support.

**Ildikó Varga** leads the Inspire & Connect program and promotes networking and engagement opportunities within our community.

We recently welcomed two committed volunteers to our team: Yerkenaz Arinova (Naz) and Seraidi Chesney, who each take on different responsibilities and enrich our initiative with fresh energy.

**Naz** manages our LinkedIn group, is responsible for visual communication, and created a video to strengthen our online presence and visibility. She also supports event organization.

**Seraidi** is responsible for supporting our webinars by moderating sessions and assisting participants during the events.

Thank you to our former volunteers: Silviya Apostolova, Cristina Baciú, and Sonja Rueffer.

Together we can achieve more: bring your ideas, energy, and perspectives and help shape a community that empowers and inspires women in the project management world.

- If you are a woman, we warmly invite you to become part of our community and help spread our message.

- If you would like to promote women project leaders, support us by recommending our events.
- And if you want to strengthen women in project management, support us by sharing our posts and publications.

Through my volunteer engagement with the PMI Germany Chapter, I have found a close circle of friends and companions who support me. That, for me, is the true value of engagement.

If you would like to learn more, please contact us at: [ildiko.varga@pmi-gc.de](mailto:ildiko.varga@pmi-gc.de)



► **Gratitude**

We thank the board members of the PMI Germany Chapter—Andreas Berning, Wolfgang Friesike, Jörg Glunde, Martin Bertram—as well as everyone else who has supported us along the way.



**Yasmina Khelifi**



**Rosa Gilsanz**



**Vicky Adams**



**Ildikó Varga-Neofotistos**



**Yerkenaz Arinova**



**Seraidi Chesney Sosa**

# Between Visibility and Genuine Effectiveness

CHRISTINE E. ASTOR

When Paula Wenzel contacted me on LinkedIn and asked if I would like to write an article for PM*impact* on the topic of “Women in Project Management,” I was immediately enthusiastic.

But the request made me pause. When we talk about women in project management or in the workplace in general today, what are we actually talking about? Roles? Numbers? Career paths? Or about something fundamental: how visible is female effectiveness really—especially in projects and leadership roles? How long have we been standing our ground, getting involved, working, leading projects, pursuing careers—and then this? Why is that? Have we not given enough, not shown clearly enough what we can do? Or is the system still surprisingly resistant to female competence? It’s not because of a lack of performance. We give our all – in all areas. We lead entire companies, departments, and teams. We are involved in charity projects, we are loving mothers, reliable friends, and empathetic partners. Often without it being visible. This is where the real issue begins. We still hide our own light under a bushel far too often. Not out of insecurity, but out of habit. And in doing so, we increasingly lose ourselves in adapting to systems that were never designed for us. Over time, we lose touch with ourselves in our daily role-playing. We overlook what we perceive within ourselves, skip over

what we feel, and ignore what we could actually contribute—namely, genuine female authenticity. Modern corporate, work, and project structures were historically designed predominantly by men—along classic “masculine” performance logics such as linearity, control, competition, hierarchy, and rationalization. This is not a thesis, but a historically and psychologically proven pattern. Women entered these systems later—not as their designers, but as adapters. The implicit message was: “If you want to be successful here, play by the existing rules.”

## **We Have Learned to Live in Conformity With the System**

And recently, we have been perfecting this adaptation even further. An example: It’s Monday morning, everyone is gathering for the weekly meeting. General chatter about the weekend. My colleague had a short night because her daughter didn’t sleep through the night – and yet you can’t tell by looking at her. I look ahead, my colleague presents the project figures and the plan. Everything is fine. And yet my gut feeling tells me: something isn’t right, this could cause problems later on. I hesitate internally and hold back. I put my perception into perspective and say nothing, because I can’t prove it conclusively.

Weeks later, that’s exactly what happens. And I realize: I didn’t hold back out of uncertainty, but out of habit. I didn’t want to be

seen as “emotional” or “vague.” We all know this, even from our private lives. We see something, our inner voice speaks to us—and we ignore it. A little later, it turns out that exactly what this voice had whispered to us would have been the decisive clue.

This is where an enormous strength lies: perceiving things early on, sensing tensions, anticipating dynamics, creating emotional stability in teams—often quietly, often as a matter of course, often invisibly. But visibility does not automatically result from competence.

## **It Results From Conscious Self-Positioning**

In order for us to be seen and heard more, we need to listen to ourselves again. It is fatal that with the advent of AI and data-driven control logic, measurable results count even more: output, speed, efficiency. Anything that cannot be quantified – interpersonal skills, contextual awareness, intuitive clarity—is increasingly disappearing from the radar.

The consequence: many women try to function even more clearly. Even more rationally, even faster, even more conformist. They translate themselves into a language that the system understands—and in doing so lose some of their impact.

**But the Opposite Is Needed**

The key to our visibility and effectiveness lies within us. Consciously listening to our inner voice, expressing it and putting it in the spotlight. Don't be afraid of making mistakes. Being wrong is not the problem. The problem is how much we judge ourselves for it and how loud our inner critic becomes. Treating ourselves with care changes the effect we have on the outside world. In a world where artificial intelligence optimizes processes and prepares decisions, humanity becomes a crucial leadership resource. Not as a feel-good factor, but as a strategic skill. Authenticity here does not mean living everything out unfiltered. It means inner clarity—and the ability to take your own perceptions seriously and take responsibility for them. Let's consciously bring our effectiveness to bear.

**Present—Female—Clear—Genuine.**



**Christine E. Astor** spent 19 years working in project management at an automotive company. Today, she is a speaker, trainer, and author of *\*Ungezähmt & echt\**—and she helps women on their journey of self-discovery.



# Between Strategy and Project Reality

PAULA WENZEL IN CONVERSATION WITH FRANK TASSONE AND FRANK JÄGER

**When sustainability in project management is discussed, a recurring pattern quickly becomes visible: its relevance is undisputed, yet systematic implementation remains rare.**

Frank Tassone describes the initial situation clearly. Strategically, sustainability has long been anchored in many companies. ESG goals are defined, responsibilities assigned, compliance requirements established, and reporting processes implemented. At the corporate level, the topic appears structured and prioritized. Yet in project practice, a different picture emerges. While clear sustainability criteria increasingly exist for products—after all, nearly every product is created within a project—concrete requirements for integrating sustainability into project management itself are often lacking. In his Green PM presentations over the past two years, Tassone has observed significantly growing interest. Discussions are becoming more intense, awareness is increasing. At the same time, actual integration lags behind this awareness. Many project professionals recognize the importance of the topic; only a small proportion have systematically integrated sustainability into their own project work. This very tension marks the current state.

Frank Jäger confirms this assessment from corporate practice. There are certainly projects with explicit, sometimes even primary

sustainability objectives—visible and strategically intended. However, the majority of projects continue to be managed conventionally, with a focus on time, cost, and scope. Sustainability aspects are incorporated selectively, but rarely embedded structurally.

## Sustainability as a Management Principle

The conversation makes clear that the issue is not only individual sustainable projects, but sustainable management overall. It is not enough to implement isolated “green” initiatives. What matters is how projects are selected, prioritized, planned, controlled, and evaluated. Sustainability must be an integral part of existing instruments—in the business case, in the project charter, in the project management plan, as well as in key knowledge areas such as stakeholder, communication, and risk management. Measurability is particularly important. Impact, value created, and long-term contribution to sustainable corporate operations must be transparently captured. Only then does sustainability move from a guiding principle to a manageable management dimension.

Jäger sees this as a strategic opportunity for project managers. They can demonstrate how their projects contribute to implementing corporate strategy—for example, in the context of decarbonization or resilient structures. In doing so, not only project execution but above all the outcome comes into focus. Depending on the project type—such as software or construction—the emphasis shifts between implementation and long-term use. The greatest leverage lies in institutionalization. As long as sustainability remains optional, it will be treated as secondary in everyday project work. Only when it is bindingly integrated into methods, standards, and decision-making processes does sustainable impact emerge. However, this requires project professionals to understand the relevant “currencies” of sustainability. Terms such as materiality or social impact along the value chain are not naturally part of the classical PM vocabulary—and this is precisely where the challenge begins.

## From Awareness to Institutionalization

In this context, the role of PMI Sustainability Champions becomes particularly clear. With more than 700,000 members worldwide,

<sup>1</sup>PMI – Pulse of the Profession, Sustainability Edition (2023), IPMA & KPMG – Project Sustainability Survey (2022), BCG / World Economic Forum Report (2022)

<sup>2</sup>Green Project Management® and GPM® are registered trademarks of GPM Global. Sustainable Project Management™ is a trademark of GPM Global for training and professional development in the field of project management.

## PRiSM und P5 Ansatz

Kurze Einführung in die GPM-Grundlagen: (GPM.org)

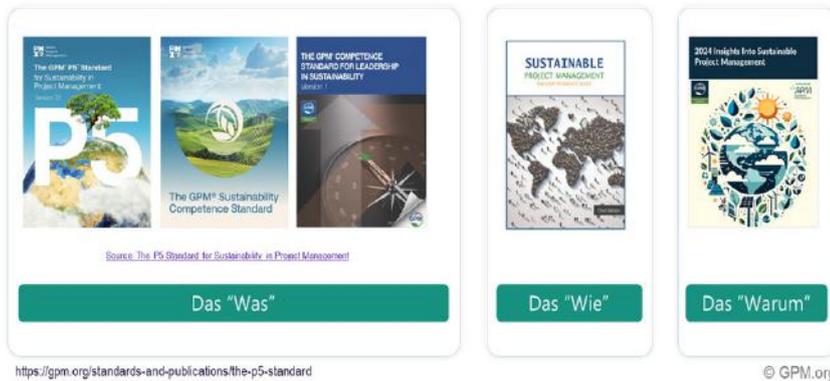


Abbildung 4: PRiSM und P5 Ansatz

PMI has enormous reach. Sustainability Champions act as multipliers by making the Green PM approach understandable and translating it into practice. Project managers themselves then carry the topic further into their teams and organizations.

For getting started, both consider qualification essential. Existing methods must be supplemented with sustainability aspects and applied in practice. Project management is already complex; through sustainability it becomes more demanding, but at the same time more strategically relevant. Technological developments—such as AI-supported analyses—open additional possibilities. A common misunderstanding is to associate sustainability exclusively with additional effort or environmental aspects. In fact, it is about long-term value creation, risk minimization, and a broad

spectrum of topics—from occupational safety and health to education, and economic metrics such as ROI or benefit-cost ratio. Sustainability is equally not the responsibility of a single department. It concerns everyone—especially in the project context.

Looking ahead, both expect increasing standardization. In regulated industries, sustainability in project management will continue to gain importance, driven by regulatory requirements, investor expectations, and market mechanisms. Examples such as the textile industry already show how new regulations are changing projects. Even if end products are not energy-intensive, global supply chains contribute significantly to emissions. Projects will increasingly need to

systematically consider these requirements—with or without a formal standard. Awareness exists. The next stage of development is to consistently translate sustainability into methods, decision-making processes, and daily project practice.



**Frank Tassone** is a GreenPM Advisor at ALVISSION EDUCATION, the Authorized PMI and GreenPM Training Partner

“If we all work to make our projects more sustainable, our future will be more sustainable as well.”



**Frank Jäger** works in the Distribution Excellence division at adidas and, as a Global PMI Sustainability Champion (volunteer), aims to inspire as many project experts as possible to contribute to more sustainable business practices through their project work.

Experience the PMI Germany Chapter **live!**

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

You can find out more at

<https://pmi-gc.de/event>

(for PMI members and non-members).

**The next issue of *PMimpact* will be published on  
13.06.2026**

**Our central theme is**

**Projects for a Sustainable Future—  
How Project Managers Turn Sustainability into  
Real Impact**

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