

The Top Ten Project Management Trends for 2016

Throughout the years the profession of project management has evolved from a niche, technical-based discipline to a fully embedded approach to the way work gets done. Although post-industrial ways of thinking still pervade parts of the workplace, project-based work has emerged through globalisation, the Information Age and the extreme speed that dictates our business environment today.

It is estimated that 1.57 million project management jobs will be created annually through 2020.¹ Along with the discipline of project management itself, the skills required to fill those positions are changing. Smart organisations are embracing these trends to stay ahead of the competition and continue to innovate.

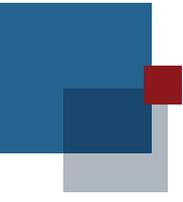
TwentyEighty Strategy Execution put together a panel of experts to identify the top ten project management trends for 2016. This year's trends centre around the evolving role of the project manager, the skills required to fill that role and how project-based work gets done most effectively.

The Permanency of Agile Project Management

Agile approaches impact the way we do project-based work and have even started infiltrating more rigid methodologies such as Waterfall. Although people are still struggling with embracing the principles of Agile, smart organisations are helping their employees grasp agile ways of thinking to move their mindset away from how things used to be done to how they need to be done now. Forward-thinking organisations will strike the balance between disciplined and Agile methodologies. They recognize the need for Agile and will assist their employees with building their skills, knowledge and capabilities. Smart organisations are the ones that have already prepared a significant portion of their workforce to balance disciplined approaches with more agile ones to get work done.

2016 Top Ten Trends

- The Permanency of Agile Project Management
- Broadening Strategic Role of the Project Manager
- Turn, Turn, Turn — The Fundamentals of Change Management
- Mastering Modern-Day Complexity
- Upskilling Talent
- The Need for Design Thinkers
- The Significance of Portfolio and Programme Management
- Diversity Matters
- Co-location, Global Teams and Distributed Work
- The Spread of Project Management into Non-PM Arenas



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Broadening Strategic Role of the Project Manager

Project managers (PMs) are being asked to think more strategically, in large part because, as organisations flatten, there is a rising need for more people to do the strategic thinking on behalf of the entire enterprise. Project management is no longer just about managing the triple constraints, but rather about reaching solutions faster and demonstrating strong, direct business impact. As a result, PMs are now more engaged in solution recommendations from the beginning. They are evolving from project managers to profit managers, accountable for the project's financial performance, benefits realization and its impact on the organisation's bottom line. As the PM's role within a project, programme or portfolio morphs into a role requiring a more strategic perspective, PMs are moving away from their historical position within the organisation as a technical cost centre and toward a more pivotal role charged with ensuring that project-based work aligns to, and helps achieve, the organisation's strategic intent. Smart organisations are hiring, retaining and training their PMs for the skills necessary to manage this evolving role.

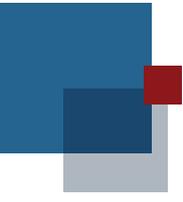
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Turn, Turn, Turn — The Fundamentals of Change Management

Change is embedded in everything we do. Because every project is a cause for change, change management is a required skill in any PM's toolbox. Change management places the emphasis on relational and strategic skills because organisations have learned technical skills alone will not suffice to effectively execute change. Without effective change, projects fail to achieve their full organisational impact. Forward-thinking organisations do not assume people have learned these skills somewhere else; instead they are providing PM leaders with the resources to learn how best to manage change quickly and with impact.

Mastering Modern-Day Complexity

The world has become increasingly complex with many interdependencies and technical interfaces required to master the multivariates of information and relationships. Although many have mastered keeping track of all the



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data, it is not enough. Understanding and interpreting the information about projects, people and relationships are essential skills for breaking down complexity into pieces easily understood by others. PMs who can explain complexity simply will be the first to experience career advancement. While project management used to be focused on the technical execution of the Project Management Institute's A Guide to the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide), today's world requires strategic viewpoints and the understanding of project-based work's impact, a fact that is slowly being embraced as organisations begin to see the value of PM leaders who possess a solid balance of technical and relational skills.

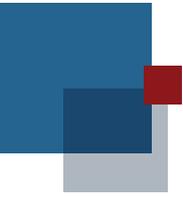
Upskilling Talent

Thinking like an entrepreneur is imperative for PMs today. It goes beyond a business mindset to an overall C-suite level way of approaching project-based work and the decisions required for top job performance. PMs can no longer function without the ability to execute strategy. It requires upskilling to meet the demands of today's marketplace. Solid PMs must have a multidisciplinary skill set that includes effective communications skills, analytical thinking, strategic initiative, a business mindset and technical finesse. The Project Management Institute's new Talent Triangle reinforces the need for this balance of skills in leadership, strategic management as well as the traditional technical expertise. Forward-looking organisations are aggressively upskilling their PMs to ensure they can master these skills; a much more cost-effective approach than trying to hire senior PM talent from the ever-shrinking talent pool.

The Need for Design Thinkers

Design thinking has emerged as a major trend for how innovative organisations are approaching problem solving. The potential impact for the project management profession is significant. Design thinking encourages innovative solutions by drawing on approaches from engineering and design and combining them with ideas from the arts, social sciences, and the business world. For PMs it is particularly significant for exploring and then

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narrowing the scope of requirements for a project in a way that generates non-typical solutions to a challenge. Leading organisations are helping their PMs build a strong knowledge and skill base around design thinking approaches and balancing that with agility and discipline, encouraging PMs to step up to a more strategic perspective that accelerates innovation.

The Significance of Portfolio and Programme Management

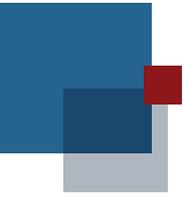
Portfolio and programme management (PPM) has grown to be a part of the overall business management and leadership landscape. In fact, PPM is a key element in successful strategic execution, because every effort of the organisation to move forward requires project-based work. Therefore, seeing how projects, programmes and portfolios align to the organisational strategy is essential for PMs and non-PMs alike. Understanding how various projects affect others while maintaining a strategic perspective requires PMs to be able to focus on the details as well as step back to a more strategic, multi-project viewpoint. Savvy organisations recognize the importance of a strong PPM perspective and work to empower their PMs to step back and question when misalignment between strategy and project execution occurs.

Diversity Matters

A diverse workforce enhances client engagement and brings new perspectives to the workplace. In fact, according to a recent Economist Intelligence Unit study, 83 percent of respondents claimed a more diverse workforce actually improves an organisation's ability to engage a diverse client base, which then leads to expanded access to a number of markets.

ⁱⁱ While more than 50 percent of all professional jobs are held by womenⁱⁱⁱ, according to a recent Wall Street Journal report on major tech companies worldwide, only around 1 in 4 technology and leadership roles are undertaken by women.^{iv} Smart organisations will tip the balance in favour of diversity to leverage the power of this growing workforce demographic.

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Co-location, Global Teams and Distributed Work

The majority of work is now getting done in a distributed manner. Few project teams are solely co-located anymore, even though co-location is a desired state for Agile project management. This tension between agile work methods and distributed teams will continue to grow. A distributed workforce creates challenges around managing at a distance, communication, cultural differences, as well as balancing and coordinating internal versus external resources. And as work is increasingly handed off from time zone to time zone in a 24/7 operating model, managing interfaces and interdependencies becomes a critical competency. Those who know how to coordinate distributed teams will increase the likelihood for achieving success as well as career advancement as they demonstrate this most essential skill.

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The Spread of Project Management into Non-PM Arenas

Given that project-based work is responsible for all organisational transformation, whether incremental or comprehensive, project management is no longer just for project management professionals. Rather project management is for anyone — which is everyone — who does project-based work. Project management best practices and concepts are being adopted by many non-PM roles such as marketing, sales and logistics. The benefits of this can be seen in increased efficiencies, stronger strategic alignment and improved customer satisfaction — to name a few — all of which lead to improved organisational performance. Organisations that embrace PM's key principles will ensure that their talent pool — regardless of title, position or location — is equipped with the skills and tools to not just get a job done, but deliver the full potential impact of a project.

The evolution of the project management discipline has created high demands for new skills to master the challenges of our ever-changing work environment. Smart organisations are equipping their project managers with

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the necessary skillsets to think more strategically and innovatively, manage change and complexity with an agile, yet disciplined approach, all while carefully monitoring the big picture.

Project management is no longer boxed away in a corner of the room. It stands front and centre and is being adopted by every area of smart organisations. Forward-thinking organisations understand its significance and are investing heavily to ensure their people, teams and organisation have what it takes to deliver maximum impact.

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ⁱ Project Management Between 2010 + 2020. (March 2013) (Project Management Talent Gap Report), PMI.

ⁱⁱ Values-based diversity: The challenges and strengths of many. (2014) Economist Intelligence Unit..Retrieved November 5, 2015. http://www.sap.com/bin/sapcom/en_us/downloadasset.2014-07-jul-03-22.values-based-diversity-the-challenge-and-strengths-of-many-pdf.html

ⁱⁱⁱ American experiences versus American expectations. (2015) EEOC. Retrieved November 5, 2015.. http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/reports/american_experiences/

^{iv} Molla, R., & Lightner, R. (2014, December 30). Diversity in Tech companies. Retrieved November 5, 2015. <http://graphics.wsj.com/diversity-in-tech-companies/>

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GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS

901 North Glebe Road
Suite 200
Arlington, VA 22203 USA
+1 888.374.8884

EMEA

7 Bishopsgate
London, EC2N 3AR, UK
+44 (0)20.3743.2910

APAC

111 Somerset Road #10-06
TripleOne Somerset
Singapore 238164
+65 3158.9500

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