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Project Management Institute

Exploring the Interplay of Human Creativity and Digital Tools in Project Management

CONFERENCE SPECIAL: #PMSAC23

IN THIS ISSUE

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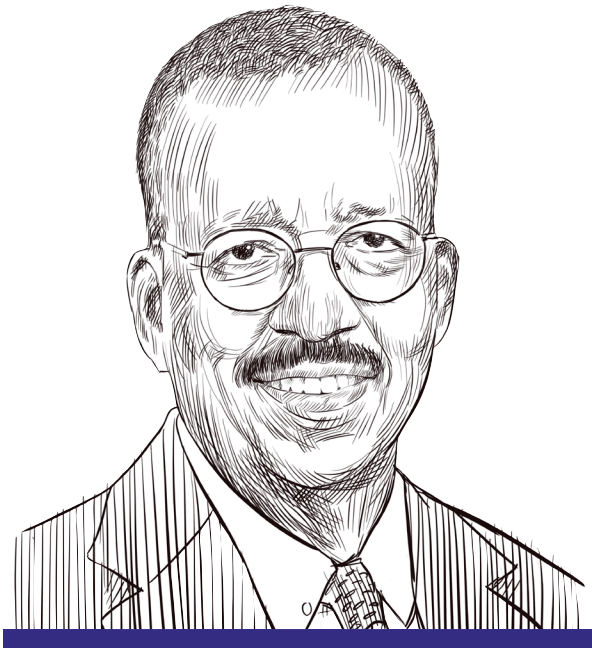

LETTER FROM MANAGING DIRECTOR, PMI SOUTH ASIA

Dear Practitioner,

Technology is as much an enabler of innovation as it is an outcome of innovative thinking. However, without human intelligence, machines are ineffective. Machines cannot surpass human ingenuity and creativity and emotional intelligence. Hence, for sustainable innovation, we need machines and humans to work together.

At its core, project management is all about pushing boundaries — accomplishing what has never been achieved before. Innovation, hence, takes center stage in the lives of project leaders.

The Project Management South Asia Conference 2023 (PMSAC23), which took place in Chennai on 2 and 3 September, explored how people and technology are fuelling innovation in projects. Imminent speakers from diverse industries shared their viewpoints and motivated our attendees to work toward "Innovation in Action: Connecting Humans and Technology," the conference theme.

As always, the conference provided an opportunity for our delegates to not just learn from the best in their respective fields, but also network with like-minded individuals, establishing meaningful connections and fostering business relationships.

I extend my sincere thanks to the industry leaders and project practitioners who generously shared their invaluable insights with our delegates.

I appreciate the dedication of our volunteers who invested considerable effort in successfully orchestrating this conference. Besides the leadership of the PMI Chennai Chapter, chapter leaders from across South Asia provided guidance throughout the planning phase. Without your support, it would have not been possible to make the conference a success.

My sincere thanks, also, to all of our sponsors for their support.

For the first time since I have become a part of the PMI family, I missed PMSAC due to unavoidable reasons. I regret not being able to meet the attendees. Yet, I am pleased to hear that the conference was a great success with more than 780 attendees.

I hope to see you at PMSAC24 in New Delhi.

Kind regards,

Dr. Srini Srinivasan
Managing Director, PMI South Asia

LETTER FROM CONFERENCE CHAIR

Dear Reader,

As I reflect on the 15th Project Management South Asia Conference (PMSAC23), I'm filled with great satisfaction on what we achieved in the 2-day summit.

Our conference theme, "Innovation in Action: Connecting Humans and Technology," resonated with our speakers and delegates. Speakers delved into the dynamic interplay between human ingenuity and technological advancements in the field of project management. Over the course of the conference, we explored how emerging technologies, data analytics, artificial intelligence and human-centric design are reshaping project management methodologies and unlocking new horizons.

What made PMSAC23 truly exceptional was the sense of community and collaboration it fostered. Our networking sessions and collaborative activities facilitated enriching dialogues, sparked innovative ideas and nurtured lasting partnerships. These connections will extend beyond the conference, leaving a legacy of shared knowledge and collaboration that will continue to drive progress.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each participant for their unwavering enthusiasm and insightful contributions. Your presence enriched the conference, and your engagement was integral to the vibrant discussions that took place. Our collective efforts have not only advanced project management practices but have also set the stage for a more prosperous future.

Thank you for being a part of this remarkable journey. I encourage the continued impact of the innovative ideas and connections forged during the conference.

Warm Regards,

Parvez Alam M
Conference Chairman, PMI Chennai Chapter

Exploring the Interplay of Human Creativity and Digital Tools in Project Management

To drive innovation, project leaders must facilitate collaboration between technology tools and human skills.

POTSHANGBAM JULY

Is technological innovation sufficient to effectively address the evolving project landscape and prepare for future challenges? Technology excels at automating tasks and speeding decision-making, but it lacks the creative problem-solving skills and analytical thinking of humans. Therefore, balancing technological advancements with human-centric approaches in project management is critical for superior project outcomes.

These thought-provoking insights, shared by eminent speakers from diverse industries, stood out as core takeaways at the 15th edition of the Project Management South Asia Conference (PMSAC) 2023. Exploring the theme, "Innovation in Action: Connecting Humans and Technology," the conference was hosted by the PMI Chennai Chapter on 2 and 3 September in Chennai.

The conference was attended by more than 780 project professionals from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It served as the ideal platform for professionals to network and exchange fresh insights that contribute to reshaping the project management community.

The event kicked off with an opening speech by Prasanna Sampathkumar, PMI's Region 11 mentor. Conference chair and president of the PMI Chennai Chapter, Parvez Alam, welcomed the delegates and set the context for the conference.

In his keynote address, Ike Nwankwo, governance committee chair of PMI, emphasized the importance of collaboration in achieving innovation. Chief guest, Dr. Palanivel Thiagarajan, minister of information technology and digital services, Government of Tamil Nadu, said, "People in project management are likely to have a brilliant future because the demand for project professionals is only going to increase."

Kishore Jayaraman, president of Rolls Royce — India and South Asia, stressed that project managers must look at outcomes rather than actions for sustainable business.

Srimathi Shivashankar, corporate vice president and business head of EdTech Services, HCLTech, highlighted the need for project managers to place more emphasis on revenue generation rather than cost reduction.

Sandeep Kumar, founder and CEO of Product Dossier, spoke about investing in people and technology for sustained revenue growth.

R. K. Shenoy, member of the

executive leadership team and senior vice president of Mobility Engineering at Bosch Global Software Technologies, talked about Bosch's experience in moving from a hierarchical to a flat, collaborative ecosystem to enable the creation of integrated products.

Sandeep Kochhar, certified leadership coach, emphasized the importance of storytelling and the role of emotions, rather than logic, in narrating compelling stories.

The final keynote on Day 1 was delivered by Sowmya Iyer, founder and CEO of DViO, who discussed the technologies that are poised to transform the future.

Delegate participation remained high on Day 2. The day began with a welcome address by Vijay Narayanan, conference director and secretary of the PMI Chennai Chapter.

Dr. Srimathy Kesan, founder and CEO of Space Kidz India, narrated the journey of inventing a tiny satellite weighing 64 grams using 3D printing technology.

Talking about innovation, Saveen Hegde, founder and director of Unbox Experience, emphasized that organizations must implement a strategy for fostering innovation to solve practical business problems.

Namita Mishra, senior solution consultant, strategic portfolio management (SPM), ServiceNow, discussed how organizations can boost their efficiency in achieving business outcomes through SPM.

Kewyn George, global director, information services, Expeditors, highlighted the role of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in helping project professionals smoothly navigate changes in today's business landscape.

Rajendran Dandapani, director of technology, Zoho Corporation, explained why project managers must prioritize simplicity, micromanagement and procrastination as strategies to enhance productivity.

Dr. Aravindan Selvaraj, co-founder and executive director of Kauvery Hospital, spoke about the critical role of technology in planning future strategies for better preparedness in the healthcare sector.

Lt. Gen. Arun Ananthanarayan gave an inspiring talk on the "power of straight lines," which is the strict adherence to rules, as the secret to success.

The parallel track speakers included Santosh Bhadule, director of software engineering, Burns and McDonnell; Dr. Yadvendradev V. Jhala, field biologist and conservationist; Ashutosh Bhatawadekar, engagement director at Tata Consultancy Services; Tal Karkashon, lead solutions engineer (APAC), Monday.com; Ramam Atmakuri, chair, board of directors, PMIEF; and Dr. M. Manivannan, professor of biomedical engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Madras.

Awards were presented to the winners of the annual PMI South Asia Awards that recognize excellence in project execution. Teesta Solar Limited, Engineers India Limited, Bosch Automotive Electronics India Pvt. Ltd. and Northeast Frontier Railway won in the large, medium, small and micro categories, respectively. L.V. Prasad Eye Institute and Daahuk were recognized for their contributions in the Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) and Contribution to the Community categories, respectively.

The conference host, the PMI Chennai Chapter, passed on the responsibility for hosting PMSAC 2024 to the PMI North India Chapter. Next year's conference will take place in New Delhi.

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Powering the Project Economy: Innovation in Action

IKE NWANKWO, PMP
Governance Committee Chair, PMI

Ike Nwankwo is the managing director at Distinct Management Ltd., an independent project management consultancy focusing on information technology, construction and business transformation. He has supported multiple PMI initiatives and served on the Board of Directors of the PMI Nigeria Chapter as vice president of finance (2013-2014) and president (2014-2016) and was the PMI region mentor for Africa (2016-2020).

In his opening address, Ike Nwankwo spoke about the relevance of the conference theme, "Innovation in Action: Connecting Humans and Technology," in today's context when innovation can be the bridge that brings humans and technology together.

Exploring the definition of innovation, he said that effort must go into making innovation actionable. "Everyone is responsible for innovation and we are all innovators. However, people tend to overlook the importance of collaboration in attaining innovation," he said.

Today, innovation is at the core of business practices, though often the attention goes only to technology or product innovation. There are seven types of innovation: process, product, technological, business model, service, social and architectural. But he cautioned against boxing oneself into specific areas of innovation since that would be a hurdle in translating innovative ideas into action.

Discussing the project economy, he said, "It is an ecosystem that facilitates turning ideas into reality and one in which individuals must have the right skills and mindset to run successful projects." Overall, it aims at strengthening society and organizations and empowering people to bring ideas to life.

Nwankwo suggested approaches by which project managers can enhance innovation. Project managers must employ an agile approach to test ideas, use hybrid methods for different project components and act as facilitators of innovative ideas.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Accelerate digital transformation to achieve organizational agility and innovation.
- Drive innovation to foster problem-solving capabilities.
- Prioritize data to understand customer needs and define solutions.
- Innovate project approaches and processes to create new values.
- Explore the concept of ambidexterity to take advantage of new opportunities.

Managing Cost Overruns in Indian Infrastructure Projects

Dr. Palanivel Thiagarajan is the minister of information technology and digital services of the state of Tamil Nadu. Prior to this role, he was the finance and human resources management minister of Tamil Nadu between May 2021 and May 2023.

DR. PALANIVEL THIAGARAJAN
Minister of Information Technology & Digital Services, Government of Tamil Nadu

A confluence of factors contributes to cost and time overruns in infrastructure projects in India. Dr. Palanivel Thiagarajan discussed the primary reasons behind cost escalation in government projects. Over-ambitious targets without a realistic assessment of feasibility are a top reason. He also attributed cost overruns to inefficient organizational design and transient government structures with frequent changes of the roles of elected officials and bureaucrats. A lack of expertise, institutional memory and continuity also hinder the ability to achieve meaningful outcomes.

Digging deeper into the status of projects in Tamil Nadu, Dr. Thiagarajan said projects in the state are being started without a prior assessment of land availability or cost effectiveness. Such lack of thorough planning leads to setbacks and cost escalations at latter stages of projects.

He recommended ways to address these challenges including the use of technology tools and platforms. Building, and continually enhancing, a data platform for tracking project progress and mapping vendors to requirements will enable organizations to proactively identify bottlenecks and determine the capacity of vendors. Teams also need a mechanism to assess the availability of hardware, human resources and project management skills.

As parting thoughts, he said, "People in project management are likely to have a brilliant future because the demand for project professionals is only going to increase. I hope that even as you do well and prosper, you will continue to keep social responsibility in your mindset and contribute to the greater good."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Develop in-house expertise and institutional memory to engender success in ambitious projects.
- Use project management and infrastructure development to help manage complex financial systems.
- Avoid budget overruns by making processes consistent and increasing investments in technology.
- Develop project management skills to execute projects efficiently and deliver results that align with projections.
- Create mechanisms to continuously evaluate in-house capabilities.

Building Sustainable and Resilient Businesses for the Future

KISHORE JAYARAMAN
President – India and South Asia, Rolls Royce

Kishore Jayaraman heads Rolls Royce's Civil Aerospace, Defense and Power System businesses in India and South Asia. Before joining Rolls Royce, he was the president and CEO of GE Energy, South Asia.

When faced with an existential crisis, only those with fortitude and resilience can survive. An example is Rolls Royce in India.

While the Rolls Royce brand is associated primarily with premium cars, it also has a civil aerospace, defense and power systems business. When the United Kingdom company went bankrupt and was sold to BMW in the 1970s, the focus moved to other product lines.

Rolls Royce's India business, which was built on cost arbitrage, needed reorientation. To win and sustain, it now needed to show value arbitrage. Rolls Royce India did it in two ways — setting up expert teams and convincing customers it could deliver.

The leadership set up a digital team of 140 people in Bengaluru to deliver value by building future-ready solutions with artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). Winning a deal to fit Air India aircraft with long-range Rolls Royce engines gave the company the impetus to set up a 500-person supply chain design and engineering team in Bengaluru.

But the team knew it did not have all of the expertise to execute the project. It partnered with leading organizations in the digital space industry such as Tata Consultancy Services and Larsen and Toubro. Rolls Royce also entered into a joint venture with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to set up a unit to manufacture 300 parts in India that would be fitted into aircraft worldwide.

The next step was to find a state government that was progressive and hungry for growth. Tamil Nadu stepped up to help Rolls Royce and HAL with a unit in Hosur that would deliver the first part within 14 months.

The Indian entity is also growing rapidly by securing defense and power systems business. Jayaraman left project managers with a parting thought: "Become relevant globally by generating intellectual property in India, developing a product and exporting it. It is critical to control one's destiny by showing value."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Deliver value from a cost center to obtain investments from leadership.
- Have a good plan, set realistic schedules and complete work on time.
- The project manager is responsible for the success of the business.
- To be successful, look at outcomes rather than actions.

The Journey Matters

SRIMATHI SHIVASHANKAR
Corporate Vice President and Business Head of EdTech Services, HCLTech

Srimathi Shivashankar has more than 25 years of experience in managing and transforming businesses. At HCLTech, she has been instrumental in strategizing and leading programs such as establishing new delivery centers, diversity and sustainability practices, the HCL Foundation and the HCL Grant.

Some skills enable an individual to obtain a job or perform a role well and some other skills stay relevant — lifelong and across various roles within an organization. Srimathi Shivashankar urged project professionals to consider project management not as a mere job role but as a competency that is relevant to other positions within their organization, including CEO and CFO.

She drew an analogy between project management and a pack of playing cards. "The life of a project manager is a symphony of hearts, spades, clubs and diamonds, each with its own unique characteristics," she commented. She compared hearts to spring, the season when emotions blossom and forge meaningful connections. Diamonds relate to summer, the season of abundance and awareness of financial standing, property and overall material well-being. Spades symbolize autumn and are associated with change, action and wisdom. Playing a spade card is a strategic move, suggesting one should be thoughtful and wise when faced with challenges in life. Clubs align with winter, a time for introspection and hints at new beginnings and growth.

Shivashankar said that the primary responsibility of project managers lies in empowering and managing individuals, not just projects. Project managers are seen as people managers, whether in HR or other roles. Their focus should be on ensuring individuals perform well, which ultimately determines the success of projects.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Focus on revenue, not on cost.
- Introspect about your role for your own development.
- Ensure a balance of emotions (heart) and analytics (mind) in project management.
- Be ready to take the first risk to catalyze project management transformation.
- Look beyond cold analysis and charts and put your heart into your work.
- Encourage project managers to be compassionate leaders who prioritize empathy.

Building a Culture of Efficiency and Profitable Growth — The Professional Services Automation (PSA) Way

Sandeep Kumar has 28 years of professional experience in the software industry. His expertise lies in professional services automation, project and portfolio management and operation excellence in IT/IT-enabled service companies. He founded ProductDossier in December 2005. It focuses on building enterprise solutions for operational excellence and digital culture in global corporations.

Sandeep Kumar used the tale of two hypothetical organizations to highlight how investment in people and technology could make all the difference. Surprisingly, Organization A grew 9 times more in revenues over 20 years than Organization B.

He attributed the difference to culture. Organization A embarked on a journey of finding inefficiencies early on and invested in technology to handle them, unlike Organization B, which did not.

Kumar talked about how redefining collaboration between sales and delivery teams by Organization A changed the very fabric of its business. The impact of this change was felt in winning proposals, improving productivity, empowering project managers, utilizing resources, reducing change requests, plugging revenue leakages, reducing daily sales outstanding (DSO) and winning new business through lessons learned.

Focusing on opportunities in these areas gave Organization A an additional 10% revenue. To make this collaboration people independent, Kumar advocated a single strategy to be put in place through connected intelligence that would span opportunity to cash. In other words, a technology solution between sales, delivery, HR and finance would drive excellence.

Such a journey made all the difference for Organization A, where the leadership adopted a positive culture and supported the plan. Technology created a culture of efficiency and helped ordinary people become extraordinary to elevate Organization A within the marketplace.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Empower the project manager to be like the CEO of his/her project.
- Foster a positive culture in the organization to succeed.
- Make problem identification and acceptance the start of the journey to excellence.
- Drive people change management for technology implementation to succeed.
- Automate repeatable tasks to achieve consistency and shift the focus to value.

SANDEEP KUMAR
Founder and CEO, Product Dossier

Managing Innovation — The Bosch Way

R. K. SHENOY
Executive Leadership Team, Mobility Solutions, Bosch Global Software Technologies

R. K. Shenoy has been associated with the Bosch Group since 1986. He is responsible for mobility solutions at Bosch Global Software Technologies in India, overseeing the Vietnam and China centers. Shenoy is a member of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) — Engineering Research and Development Council.

Bosch Global Software Technologies (BGST) began operations in India 25 years ago to capitalize on the country's engineering capability and cost arbitrage. Originally a service organization, BGST has now moved to developing products for the world market. Shenoy talked about that transformation.

The first step was a change to the organizational structure. BGST went from a hierarchical to a project-driven organization. A three-pillar approach made project management the core of delivery, followed by experts trained in domain and technology. Last, the talent management of developers completed the strategy. These three pillars instilled Bosch with the confidence to innovate and scale with ease.

Bosch had traditionally developed products in domain siloes. The world of mobility was exploding. People were expecting to work across domains. The second step developed a vision to innovate by moving away from siloed to cross-domain work by leveraging people and new-age technology, globally.

Third, the innovation ecosystem was supported by a collaborative network, centers of excellence (CoE) and communities of practice (CoP). Going to market with start-ups made Bosch nimble. CoEs were started to nurture talent but were later changed to create cross-domain assets. The project management CoP was the most vibrant, it drove all projects in Bosch.

Fourth and last were the cultural enablers for innovation. Bosch instituted an innovation fund supported by innovation networks with experts to mentor people, a virtual innovation platform to collect ideas, hackathons to generate new ideas and rewards to incentivize people.

These steps resulted in the Bosch innovation framework (BIF) that brought experts from various domains together to develop products for the Indian market. Some subsequently won awards and were exported worldwide.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Move from a hierarchical to a flat, collaborative ecosystem to create truly integrated products.
- The pandemic has proved that global teams can deliver effectively from home.
- Create a culture of innovation by considering new ideas, funding the good ones and giving them mentors to take the ideas forward.
- Combine people and technology across the organization to innovate.
- Work on giving users a great experience as innovation to succeed.

Art of Storytelling: Consumption to Creation

Sandeep Kochhar is a social media influencer and an alumnus of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. An electronics and telecommunications engineer with more than 22 years of corporate consulting experience, he is an inspirational speaker and storyteller.

SANDEEP KOCHHAR
Story Teller, Personal Brand Expert, Certified Leadership Coach

What can a project manager learn from a fairy tale? The art of storytelling.

Sandeep Kochhar started his session by dissecting the storytelling techniques in the fairy tale, Hansel and Gretel, by the Brothers Grimm. "Storytelling is all about emotions; it's not about logic. Emotions are the heart and soul of a compelling story. The goals of storytellers are to evoke empathy and create an emotional connection with their audience," said Kochhar.

In the world of business and technology, professionals tend to apply logic alone and forego the role of emotions in communications and decision-making. He said the lack of a narrative and inventiveness make messages dry and uninteresting. To make communication compelling, it is important to incorporate the emotional and narrative elements of storytelling.

Kochhar explained the enticement, engagement and education (EEE) model of storytelling that comprises enticement, engagement and education. Enticement is about igniting the interest of the audience and awakening their emotions. It is the first impression you make that compels the audience to open up their mind. Engagement focuses on building strong relationships with the audience to keep them hooked. This is where you set the stage, introduce the characters, build the plot and reach the climax of your story. The goal of education is to guide the audience so they act upon the narrative's key points.

He recommended understanding and categorizing the audience into readers, writers and listeners. Each category has different objectives, attention spans and expectations. For example, readers enjoy the process of reading and are interested in how the content or words make a difference in their reading experience. Writers prioritize well-structured narratives with explanations, while listeners are primarily concerned with what impact the storyteller can have on them.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Incorporate empathy in your communications.
- Forge an emotional connection with the audience through storytelling.
- Analyze the types of audiences you want to engage.
- Start stories with a hook to keep the audience captivated.
- Give creative thinking a higher priority than innovation when crafting stories.

Leadership in Times of Artificial Intelligence

SOWMYA IYER
Founder and CEO, DVIO

DVio is a global creative technology and digital-first marketing organization. Beside being the founder of DVio, Sowmya Iyer is a start-up investor, TEDx speaker and chief mentor at the MAD-Tech incubator.

Sowmya Iyer addressed four major questions through her talk: What technologies are set to transform the future? Are they just a fad? Or will they take over our jobs? And how do we handle new technologies?

The future technologies are artificial intelligence (AI), metaverse, blockchain and digital/crypto currency. Iyer urged practitioners to not consider these as fads, but as technologies that will have a lasting impact on our lives. "These futuristic technologies put power in the hands of the people. They are equalizers. While existing systems will resist them or there may not be sufficient infrastructure yet to leverage them, it is only a matter of time before we see them in action. We should be fully aware of their potential and look forward to them," she commented.

Given the possibility that AI can easily complete mundane and routine work tasks for us, embracing AI can actually unleash human potential. Companies and individuals are already using AI or Gen AI tools like ChatGPT to do just this. Thousands of AI tools are being released in the market. Iyer suggests that leaders must look for people or "prompt engineers" who use these tools to obtain the best results for their business.

The future of business will move from a supply chain model to a platform business model. In the latter model, the platform will learn from every customer interaction directly through a network effect and acquire new information. An example is Alexa, Amazon's cloud-based voice service. Businesses that win today are those that have the advantage of information arbitrage. Iyer discussed working with architects to design a system that learns from every interaction with the customer.

She spoke about a "futures wheel," a method to find the impact or consequences of a change or development. Choose the technology and run it for your industry to see the upcoming changes. This will help your business prepare for the change or beat the competition.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Run training programs to demystify AI within your organization.
- Recruit prompt engineers who can extract the best from AI tools for your business.
- Work with architects to design a platform business model that is self-learning.
- Run a futures wheel on your industry and AI to understand the upcoming changes.
- Analyze the impact of AI on your business and design strategies in order to embrace it.

Gulab Jamuns to Stars

Space Kidz India is a leading Indian aerospace start-up that is pioneering design, fabrication and launch of small satellites, spacecraft and ground systems. Dr. Kesan's goal is to provide economical and sustainable access to space to cater to the needs of education, research and the industry. She is the only Indian to be decorated as ambassador to the top three space centers — National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), European Space Agency (ESA) and Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center (GCTC), Moscow.

DR. SRIMATHY KESAN
Founder and CEO,
Space Kidz India

Reaching for the stars is not for everybody, at least that is the common belief. Space exploration requires not just talent but also enormous resources and grit and determination. But Dr. Srimathy Kesan has proved that a lot can be achieved with out-of-the-box thinking.

Kesan explained how her team used 3D printing technology to invent a tiny satellite that weighs just 64 grams. It all began with a team of gifted young individuals, aged 14 to 17, from small towns in India. The palm-sized satellite reminded the team of the Indian dessert "gulab jamuns," the small size the team chose to keep costs minimal.

Since sending a satellite into space is an expensive affair, it posed a significant challenge for the start-up. The question that always popped up was: "How do we do this?" However, the young talent with an unwavering spirit came up with a new concept. They decided to build lightweight, small satellites, all the same color, size and mass. This innovative strategy promised to significantly cut costs.

The next question was, "Who would give us a platform to launch the satellites into space?" Coincidentally, NASA had just announced a competition that was open to participants from across the globe. It sought to send 64-gram science experiment cubes into space. That was just the opportunity the team was looking for to demonstrate their capabilities.

In December 2016, the team submitted a proposal outlining its ambitious project of launching a satellite into space. It was not an easy journey, but their commitment paid off when they were declared a winner in March 2017 and launched the satellite 3 months later.

Kesan reminisced that during the development stage of the project, the team struggled with challenges. The students encountered poor internet access and connectivity in their home towns, forcing them to work from 7 pm to 4 am when the signals were more reliable. Driven by passion, they persisted despite the difficulties and fulfilled their dream.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Dream big, and ultimately, the universe will conspire in your favor.
- Work hard and with passion; success will follow.
- Nurture scientific zeal and innovation in the youth.
- Embrace out-of-the-box thinking to overcome any resource or financial challenges.
- Emotion, and not just electronics, led the team to success.

FAST Innovation

SAVEEN HEGDE
Design Thinking Specialist, Founder and Director, Unbox Experience

Saveen Hegde is the founder of a boutique consulting firm that has successfully delivered innovation and strategic transformation engagements for more than 100 global firms spread over 22 countries. He was among the top 10 speakers in the World Championship of Public Speaking in 2017.

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) conducted a survey this year asking leaders about their top three priorities. Most leaders cited innovation in that list. Yet the following two simple questions were never asked of employees in their annual performance appraisal: Did you innovate? How much did you innovate?

This indicated that most organizations did not consider innovation necessary for career advancement. Hegde's interactive session covered reasons for innovation not being a part of organizational culture and conveyed a strategy to inculcate innovation through the acronym FAST.

Fun: Create opportunities for innovation and make them fun. Anyone can do it. "The most important thing is to make something you believe is fun rather than something that would sell," he said, quoting Shigeru Miyamoto, Game Director at Nintendo. For example, give points for every innovation.

Actionable: Event-based and reactive innovation events are not sustainable. Accept ideas by default and implement them as projects that solve real-world problems. Encourage people to collaborate and innovate.

Systematic: Innovation is not a one-time affair. Create a systematic process where everyone follows innovation diligently from the CEO to the trainee. Despite starting at a lower marketshare than Intel Corporation, Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) has accomplished this consistently in the last few years.

Tangible: The innovation process becomes effective when ideas are actioned systematically. Yet, they are not complete unless they are also measurable and tangible. For example, Hegde and his team ran innovation workshops for four batches of participants. At the end of the program, nearly 9,000 ideas were generated and returns were quantified at 360 times the amount that was invested. (If 10 rupees were invested, the return would be 3600 rupees.)

In summary, Hegde explained that an organization will prosper when it fosters a culture where failure is acceptable, novel ideas are actioned and innovation becomes systematic while staying fun.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Run a hackathon for innovation to solve practical business problems.
- Set up a team to gamify innovation in the organization.
- Mandate a culture of justification for each idea that is turned down by a leader.
- Create an innovation framework that tracks tangible results for each employee.
- Include innovation in the performance appraisal process.

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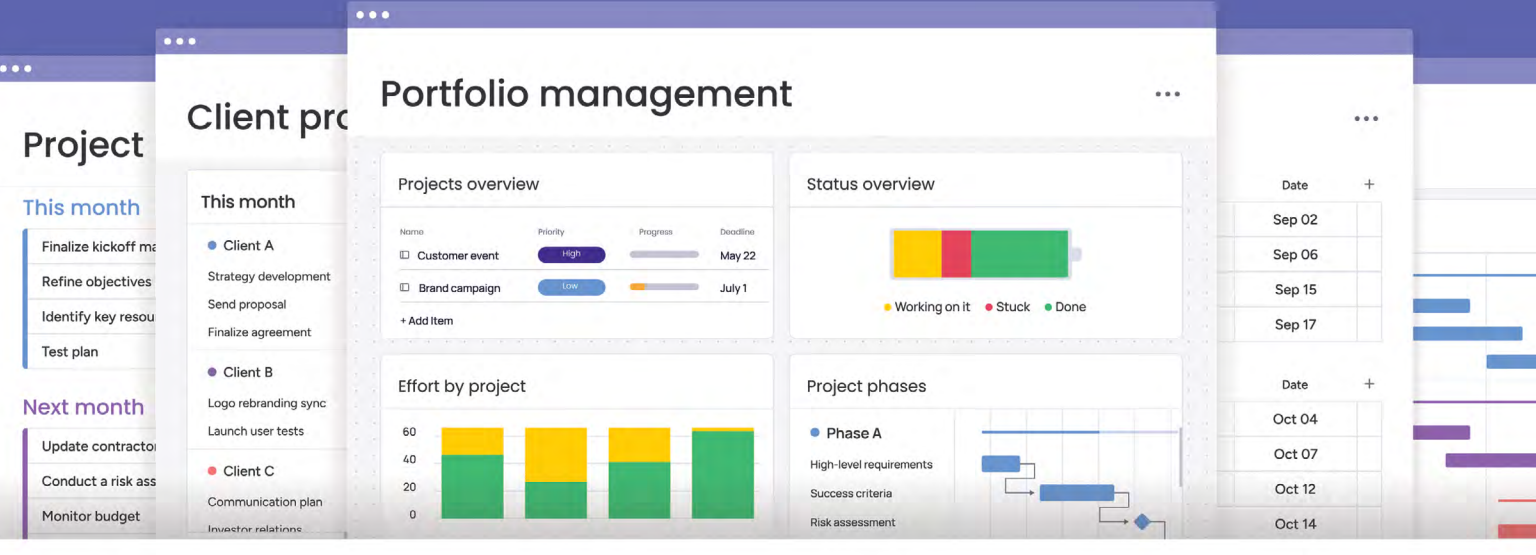

Learn more

Connecting People and Technology Across the Value Stream

With two decades of experience, Namita Mishra is a passionate technology and product leader with experience in selling complex enterprise software across Asia. She is a subject matter expert in strategy management, project and portfolio management. Previously serving as a director of product management in the software industry for over a decade, she now takes an advisory role.

Mishra emphasized the importance of having time to think out of the box and innovate. An effective application or a solution can free professionals from the daily grind of spreadsheets and slide decks, enabling them to focus more on strategic and innovative endeavors.

Today, digital transformation has touched everyone's life. Mishra discussed how it is impacting both personal and professional aspects of our lives. She also delved into the challenges faced by organizations in accomplishing successful digital transformation.

She said that disparate systems were not allowing various departments in an organization to communicate effectively with one another, thus hindering the overall progress and value realization. To effectively address these issues, organizations must adopt strategic portfolio management (SPM).

SPM empowers organizations to enhance their efficiency in achieving business outcomes. It acts as a control tower for transformation, connecting strategies, working across all departments and ensuring 360-degree transparency. It enables greater planning agility, optimal resource utilization, improved team collaboration and the flexibility to work in any methodology.

Mishra stressed the power of artificial intelligence (AI) in realizing business value. AI can assist in setting strategies, targets and key results. She said, "Customers tell us that by using SPM, they can consolidate 90% of their strategic work and deliver it on time with added value. They can now align their requirements to their strategic business priorities."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Build a single platform for setting, tracking and evaluating business goals.
- Foster end-to-end visibility, align strategic projects and deliver business outcomes.
- Help business leaders prioritize their work to contribute to the company's goals.
- Bridge the gap between strategic planning and execution.
- Connect people through technology across the entire value stream to achieve goals.

NAMITA MISHRA
Senior Solution Consultant, Strategic Portfolio Management, ServiceNow

The Future of Project Management With Generative AI — Will it Ring the Bell?

KEWYN GEORGE
Global Director–Information Services, Expeditors

Kewyn George is a technology thought leader with more than 20 years of experience. He is the author of "Digital First," a columnist for Forbes India and has been published in several industry magazines. He is the India Technology Center Head for one of the largest freight forwarding and logistics organizations in the world.

Kewyn George discussed the evolution of Generative AI (Gen AI), calling it a 6-month-old baby that has rapidly grown into an adult in just half a year. Since unveiling the first version of Generative Pre-trained Transformer (ChatGPT) a couple of years ago, the creators, OpenAI, launched its most advanced, fourth version this year. It is an ongoing evolution, much like a child's process of crawling and learning to walk.

With Gen AI, project professionals can smoothly navigate changes in the project landscape. They can introduce novel business models and strategies and launch collaborative projects. Gen AI will enable the creation of new revenue streams and cost savings. "The future is not just about AI, but about humans and AI working together. Leaders must be prepared for heightened global competition and collaboration in the wake of this technology," George cautioned.

George highlighted two types of mindsets of project leaders concerning Gen AI: The first is a process mindset that is rooted in established processes. It may be a reliable way of working but may lead to rigidity. The second is a growth mindset that is open to change and ready to adapt, which is vital for organizations in today's relentlessly evolving landscape. The absence of a growth mindset can hinder responsiveness to market changes. He advised leaders to strike a balance between the two mindsets.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Embrace a growth mindset to adapt to the changing landscape.
- Adopt the top rising skills for 2023, including creative thinking, analytical thinking, AI and big data.
- Expect machines to handle 43% of tasks while humans will manage 57% by 2027.
- Focus on reskilling and upskilling to adapt to the technological revolution.
- Be ethical in how you adopt Gen AI by striking a balance between innovation and morality.

Meaningful Productivity at the Edge of Chaos

Rajendran Dandapani, a founding member of Zoho Corporation, is a business solutions evangelist. He has vast expertise in conceiving and nurturing creative concepts into full-fledged software applications. He is the president of Zoho Schools of Learning, Zoho's ongoing experiment in alternative education.

Dandapani started the session with a tweet from a project manager, "Software estimates are one of the oldest lies we tell ourselves," which garnered 1.9 million views. He acknowledged that software estimates often lack accuracy but people tend to pretend that they hold significance.

When it comes to software estimation, Dandapani said, "Remove words like 'quick,' 'simple,' 'straightforward' and 'easy' from your dictionary." He cautioned against volunteering an estimate, especially estimating future work in hours.

Talking about Zoho's offering of software products for managing projects, portfolios, risk, cost estimation, bug tracking and agile system, he said despite these tools, projects continue to fail and face delays. It is not a new challenge but one that has existed for over 2 decades.

He urged organizations to focus on simplicity to overcome these issues. Quoting the Apple Company's philosophy, "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication," he said that sophistication did not equate complexity.

Discussing micromanagement, Dandapani noted that it is commonly perceived as a negative trait since it signifies a lack of trust and a fear of losing control. However, micromanagement has it benefits, such as fostering a learning environment when someone new joins a team or someone requires guidance. Micromanagement can be valuable in mission-critical environments or circumstances as well.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Beware that software estimates lack precision.
- Prioritize process-driven over people-driven in project management.
- Consider procrastination as a strategic approach and avoid rushing into action.
- Embrace the Golden Circle Theory of "why," "how" and "what" to achieve meaningful outcomes.
- Have clarity on "why," be disciplined about "how" and be consistent with "what."

RAJENDRAN DANDAPANI
Director of Technology, Zoho Corporation

Technology and Healthcare

DR. ARAVINDAN SELVARAJ
Co-Founder & Executive Director, Kauvery Hospital

Dr. Aravindan Selvaraj practiced orthopedic surgery for 15 years in some of the world's leading hospitals in Ireland and the United Kingdom before returning to India.

Healthcare obviously centers around human beings, which means outcomes cannot always be predicted. An 85-year-old with many health issues may survive a cardiac bypass surgery, whereas a 48-year-old with no issues may develop complications and not survive. Selvaraj gave this example to explain that, in spite of technological advances, not all outcomes can be predicted and the role of doctors in managing healthcare cannot be diminished.

He also raised some pertinent questions facing healthcare providers and patients today. Patients want the best technology, but are they willing to pay? Will patients agree when a doctor wants to experiment on them with new technology? Do nurses, who work long hours and are poorly paid, care about technology? "Healthcare will be the last frontier to be significantly disrupted by technology because of the human factor," said Selvaraj.

Cost effectiveness must be a critical determining factor when designing technology solutions. Beside that, Selvaraj said the technology must help improve outcomes, make the life of the stakeholders easy and provide a better experience.

Selvaraj explained how he set up an innovation cell in Kauvery Hospital before the pandemic. Innovation was discussed daily with the nurses and paramedics. It came in handy when the pandemic struck. The hospital was agile and created an oxygen plant producing surplus oxygen in 3 weeks. A 75-bed intensive care unit (ICU) was ready in 2 days. Involving stakeholders like nurses, paramedics, doctors and nonclinical staff in technology innovation initiatives prepared them for emergencies.

The team also applied innovation to nonclinical needs such as reducing discharge delays, telemonitoring ICU patients remotely and providing digitized care post-discharge. He recommended picking the right use cases to relieve human challenges.

Disease patterns change with time. By 2050, a large section of the Indian population will have aged, which means their care needs will be different. Selvaraj advised studying trends and planning future strategies with the help of technology, so the healthcare sector will be better prepared for change.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Validate the list of critical stakeholders in your business.
- Design a solution with the stakeholders and explain the technology impact on them.
- Create an innovation cell in your organization to ensure agility in times of need.
- Study the future of your domain for the next 20-30 years..
- Prepare a strategy to handle the short- or long-term changes in your domain.

The Power of Straight Lines

Lt. Gen. (retd.) Arun Ananthanarayan joined the National Defence Academy in 1982, opting not to join the Indian Institute of Technology. He has about 41 years of varied experience, largely leading counterterrorism teams.

LT. GEN. (RETD.) ARUN ANANTHANARAYAN
Yudh Seva Medal, Sena Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal

Ananthanarayan likened making daal (lentils) to managing a project. While cooking daal is a scientific process that involves a recipe, the taste varies depending on the person making it. That is the art of project management.

He believes that 70% of a project requires the use of the brain and only 30% involves physical work. Quoting the strategist and philosopher Chanakya, he said, "Greater care in preparation results in success."

"Executing projects is hard work, but the secret to success lies in the power of straight lines," Ananthanarayan added. Simply put, follow the rules to achieve success. Everyone wants to take a shortcut. There are multiple wrong ways to do something but only one right way, with integrity. It may mean more hard work, but the results will follow.

Ananthanarayan advocated creating a positive project environment where people can debate decisions and openly discuss their problems with leaders. He advised project managers to inspire people by conveying their vision in simple and consistent terms.

He used the story of Mo Farah, the British Olympic gold medalist in distance running, to highlight the indomitable spirit of human beings. Leaders never give up or change their aim just because the going gets tough. They take ownership and stay with the team. "The greater the faith in leadership, the lower the cost." he remarked. Ananthanarayan also advised practitioners to keep the happiness quotient of the team high and help people find happiness.

After narrating a moving story of a soldier in his unit who put selflessness over everything else, showed integrity all his life and died serving others, Ananthanarayan left the audience with this final message. "Projects will come, and projects will go. It is one component of life as you transit through it. What will people say of you after you are gone? That is the legacy you leave."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Plan a project starting with the end in mind.
- Prepare 5-10 years ahead as an architect Of the future.
- Communicate your vision to the team at the beginning of the project.
- Identify weak links in a project and either help strengthen or remove them.
- Find the balance between detail orientation and letting go.

ProductDossier
Professional Services Automation

Building a culture of efficiencies and profitable growth - The ProductDossier PSA Way

In today's fast-paced business landscape, organizations face a constant challenge: how to achieve not only growth but sustainable and profitable growth. It's a multifaceted goal that demands a strategic approach and the right tools. This is where Professional Services Automation (PSA) comes into play, transformative solution that can help organizations navigate their journey towards business winnability, enhanced visibility, empowerment, optimal resource utilization, reduced revenue leakages, and improved billing cycles.

Unlocking Success

Have you wondered why you cannot stay ahead of the curve despite building a talented team, implementing flawless processes, and going above and beyond to offer top-notch customer service? Why are your competitors steadily racing ahead? What are they doing differently? Is it a matter of luck or a superior strategy?

How are you dealing with resource shortages?

- How do you allocate resources to different projects?
- Do you know their competency levels?
- What efforts are in place to ensure stable bench management?
- How do you stop revenue leakages?

If you cannot answer these questions, you probably use incompetent software that does not foster a

Efficiency Unleashed: The PSA Path to Profitable Growth

Recognize the Need for Change

The first step is to acknowledge the need for a change. Despite your best efforts, there might be significant gaps in your project management processes. Evaluate whether your existing tech enables you to spot these gaps and turn things around. If not, it is time to invest in advanced project management tools.

The Right Resource Utilization

Efficient resource management is paramount for profitability. ProductDossier PSA optimizes resource allocation, matching skills and availability with project requirements. This eliminates underutilization and overbooking of resources, allowing organizations to maximize billable hours and reduce costs. The right resource utilization directly impacts profitability and client satisfaction.

Reducing DSO (Daily Sales Outstandings): Reduce Delays, Boost Profits

It is time to ditch time-consuming and mundane financial processes. Improving your DSO minimizes financial stress, maintains steady cash flow, and ensures timely client payments. Real-time insights into client payments and project finances are the need of the hour to ensure your business is running smoothly.

Evolve While Sticking to Company Values

Your company values define your brand and set the tone for your organizational culture, impacting how your employees deal with internal stakeholders and clients. If your current system falls short, consider implementing a state-of-the-art project service automation solution that aligns with your organizational culture and builds on it to improve client satisfaction and internal efficiency.

Strive for Operational Excellence

ProductDossier PSA is not just a software solution; it's a strategic enabler of efficiencies and profitable growth. By harnessing the power of PSA, organizations can transform inefficiencies into sustainable and profitable growth, setting them on a path to long-term success in today's competitive business landscape.

Technology and the Human Connection To Stay Competitive

SANTOSH BHADULE
Director – Software Engineering, Burns & McDonnell

Santosh Bhadule is a US-based engineering leader with experience in delivering commercial enterprise solutions for the construction sector and a technology evangelist. He is Six-Sigma trained and a champion for people change management.

Bhadule spoke about ways in which technology has changed the world around us and touched upon some of the key considerations for using technology.

Use artificial intelligence (AI) for repeatable jobs — there is a fear that AI will take over human jobs. Look for opportunities to use AI for mundane jobs and elevate humans to a more analytical or strategic role.

Do the right thing — "It is our moral responsibility to use AI ethically," said Bhadule. For example: AI could convert a medicine in pharma to a molecule that could be used in biological warfare.

Prepare things for prime time — ensure that an innovation will do what it is supposed to when given to a customer. For example, a customer took a computer tablet to the field for measurements. The tablet failed, and the customer spent effort and time to complete the job manually.

Plan for people change management — people become frustrated and resist if their life is changed without notice. Put things in perspective for them through ADKAR (Awareness of need to change, Desire to participate in change, Knowledge of change, Ability to implement and Reinforcement to sustain change).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Design opportunities to use technology to automate mundane tasks.
- Test a solution thoroughly before a customer uses it in the field.
- Develop a people change management strategy for every technology change.
- Review ethical considerations wherever AI is being used.

Technology and AI in Wildlife Science and Conservation

Dr. Yadvendradev Jhala obtained his PhD in Wildlife Science from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia, USA in 1991, and a postdoctorate from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. He joined the Wildlife Institute of India in 1991 and retired in 2023.

Jhala talked about preventing the extinction of a species, specifically the tiger in India. The tiger is an umbrella species that requires the conservation of an entire ecosystem. Artificial intelligence (AI) and technology can go hand-in-hand in meeting conservation goals. This is the intent of Project Tiger, the nationwide tiger conservation effort in India.

A census in 2006 showed that India had only 1,400 tigers left in the wild. Another study showed that if India created a forest ecosystem for the tiger, the forest land would generate over US$26 million, while agricultural land would only account for US$10,000. This gave Project Tiger an impetus.

Forest reserves with core areas were created by incentivizing people to move and devising wildlife corridors for animals to move between reserves when more space was needed. The 'Mstripes' mobile app allowed the digital tracking of tigers and the remote monitoring of forest guards patrolling the area, Jhala explained. Sixteen years later, India now has 75% of the world's tiger population, with their ecosystems regenerated.

"Be mindful of our inventions and footprint on the planet. The fate of conservation or conserving biodiversity is not just in the hands of scientists, conservationists or wildlife managers, but also in how society views and values conservation, what it is willing to pay and how it influences the political will," Jhala said.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Identify all of the important stakeholders in a large (nationwide) program.
- Design technology and AI solutions to ease the challenges of manual work.
- Plan individual contributions toward the conservation of our planet.
- Document quantitative benefits for decision-makers to support your program.

DR. YADVENDRADEV V. JHALA
Field Biologist and Conservationist

What is the New EBITDA for Leadership?

ASHUTOSH BHATAWADEKAR
Engagement Director, Tata Consultancy Services

Ashutosh Bhatawadekar is a senior industry professional with more than 25 years of experience in enterprisewide agile transformation, coaching, consulting and mentoring.

"We live in a fast-changing world where the problems are the same as before but the answers are different," said Bhatawadekar.

If VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) defined the pre-COVID world, today is about BANI (brittle, anxious, nonlinear, incomprehensible).

Bhatawadekar used the example of India going from a complete societal and economic lockdown during the pandemic to becoming the fifth largest world economy in 2022 to explain "brittle." The world will continue to face unforeseen shocks but how we handle it by growing our capacity and resilience will make all the difference.

Human beings have "illusions of control," with leaders becoming anxious when they lose control. Bhatawadekar advised empathy and mindfulness to expand one's awareness if anxiety takes over.

Employees proved during the pandemic that they could be successful while working from home, yet organizations are calling them back to the office today. This is called a nonlinear occurrence, where a "successful work from home" situation was accepted during the pandemic and has been rejected now. It drives different decisions depending on the situation and requires context and adaptability.

The complexity of information and occurrences makes the world incomprehensible. Transparency and intuition are important to gain knowledge and understanding.

Bhatawadekar redefined the traditional, financial term EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes and amortization) to bring out the traits required of today's leaders. The leadership EBITDA is about empathy, behavior, intent, talent, development and appreciation (of employees).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Research world events that can impact business.
- Develop a purpose-driven organization.
- Train leaders to be empathetic.
- Focus on employee-centricity over expense.

From Strategy to Execution: A Day in the Life of a Project Manager with Generative AI

TAL KARKASHON
Lead Solutions Engineer (APAC), Monday.com

Tal Karkashon is a dynamic professional with experience in solution building and business consulting. She has 10 years of experience guiding companies toward operational excellence by reimagining their workflows, meticulously analyzing processes and implementing transformative improvements.

While demonstrating how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the daily routine of a project manager, Karkashon pointed out several challenges that project managers continue to encounter. They struggle handling multiple tasks simultaneously, such as preparing for executive meetings, identifying and mitigating project risks and maintaining efficient operations. Moreover, complexity escalates when project managers use a variety of tools.

Explaining the Monday AI system, Karkashon said it can be used to address a variety of challenges and improve the way a project manager manages work. Collaboration is a vital aspect of project management, especially with project teams spread across the globe. Communicating through emails holds the risk of missing important information. The Monday AI system documents all of the communication and keeps everyone well informed.

Karkashon said the system helps centralize information and create a single source of truth. She also emphasized the importance of defining ownership for action items and ensuring everyone is clear about their responsibilities since there are many tasks associated with a project.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Use collaboration tools like Monday AI to manage work smoothly among colleagues across the globe.
- Centralize feedback from stakeholders for actionable insights.
- Foster automated task generation and balance team workloads.
- Drive decision-making with real-time data.

PMIEF: Leveraging Technology, Youth Innovation and Project Management to Create Social Impact

RAMAM ATMAKURI
Chair, Board of Directors, PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF)

With 40 years of experience in manufacturing, IT and nonprofit organizations, Ramam Atmakuri has served as the head of global delivery centers for multinational companies such as Cognizant, Invensys and Baan. He led multidisciplinary teams across continents, successfully managed mergers and acquisitions and delivered multimillion-dollar transformation programs that resulted in business growth.

Atmakuri is a firm believer of giving back to society if one has benefited from society in any way. Contributions can be through the "three Ts of time, talent and treasure," or in other words, volunteer your time, use your skills or donate money for social good.

The PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF) aims to create social impact that aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Talking about the PMI Youth Strategy, Atmakuri said that PMIEF partners with nonprofits that serve organizations focused on the youth. They impart project management skills to the youth like problem-solving and decision-making.

More than 450 PMI volunteers from around the world participate in PMIEF programs. Last year, the programs reached 189 million youth in 130 countries, across 30 languages.

Partner organizations such as the Special Olympics and F1 in Schools have integrated project management trainings and equipped individuals with key skills to effectively manage tasks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Empower youth to help them take on the role of changemakers.
- Volunteer to share project management expertise and resources for the greater good.
- Collaborate with like-minded organizations to maximize social impact.
- Move beyond STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education and integrate project management skills in training curricula.

Vision 2047: Extended Reality Corridor and Project Management

In 2005, Dr. M. Manivannan set up the first Touch Lab in India at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras that conducts research and devleopment in haptics technologies. He recently set up an Experiential Technology Innovation Center (XTIC), the first multidisciplinary center for Virtual Reality (VR)/ Augmented Reality (AR)/ Mixed Reality (MR) and haptics in India.

Manivannan shed light on the technologies that IIT Madras is working on, which could be useful for project managers.

Discussing XTIC, he said that the center is a scaled-up version of the Touch Lab. It enables students to study the intricacies of the touch sensation and haptics engineering. It can be adapted and used in different areas, such as biomedics or project management.

Manivannan believes experiential learning is essential for skill development. For example, trainee surgeons can use VR/AR to immerse themselves in a virtual surgical room and not only see but also touch, cut and perform procedures on virtual tissues.

The underlying tools for medical simulation are similar to those used in project management. There is a high demand for skill development in these advanced technologies among project managers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Embrace experiential learning to enhance skill development.
- Personalize training through simulations for better outcomes.
- Explore the potential of haptics to transform varied industries like medicine and project management.
- Leverage innovative technologies that outperform traditional methods and yield positive outcomes.

DR. M. MANIVANNAN
Professor, Bio Medical Engineering, IIT Madras

AWARDS PRESENTATION

PMI South Asia Awards 2023

PMI South Asia recognizes projects from the region that demonstrate excellence and adopt innovative project management approaches. Projects from diverse categories competed for the top honors at the annual gala that was organized during the conference.

PROJECT OF THE YEAR—LARGE

PROJECT: Teesta Solar Limited

ORGANIZATION: Teesta Solar Ltd.

PROJECT OF THE YEAR—MEDIUM

PROJECT: Consultancy Services for INDJET Project at Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL)

ORGANIZATION: Engineers India Ltd.

PROJECT OF THE YEAR—SMALL

PROJECT: Prototyping for Automotive Electrification Products

ORGANIZATION: Bosch Automotive Electronics India Pvt. Ltd.

PROJECT OF THE YEAR—MICRO CATEGORY

PROJECT: Intrusion Detection System for Saving Elephant Lives

ORGANIZATION: Northeast Frontier Railway

PROJECT OF THE YEAR—NGO

PROJECT: Retinopathy of Prematurity Care in the Rural Districts of Odisha

ORGANIZATION: L.V. Prasad Eye Institute

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

PROJECT: Facilitating Climate Resilient Alternative Livelihood schemes for vulnerable communities

ORGANIZATION: Daahuk

Manage South Asia interacted with conference attendees to gather their thoughts and views on the conference.

MUHAMMAD ZAHEER NAIVASAL
Program manager, Srushty Global Solutions

This is the first time that I have attended PMSAC. There were a couple of very engaging and informative sessions. The discussions on managing innovation, the challenges associated with it and how to solve the pain points were particularly insightful.

KOUSHIK PANDA
Complex program manager, IBM India Pvt. Ltd.

We have an opportunity here to interact with leaders who are successful in their own fields. The data presented at some of the sessions indicate that the demand for project management professionals will continue to grow. This will encourage people to take up project management jobs seriously.

AMEYA VINOD PARATKAR
Product manager, 6sense

I have been a PMI member for the past 4 years. This is my second annual conference. I have found the sessions at the PMSAC23 very relevant to the current context such as connecting Generative AI to project management.

JYOTHI D.
Associate consultant, Jasmin Infotech Pvt. Ltd.

I have been impressed by the quality of the sessions. One of the main reasons for attending the conference has been to find motivation. Sometimes, we find ourselves stuck doing the same things repeatedly. This conference has provided me with a refreshing experience.

SANTHOSH KUMAR BATHRABAGU
Program coordinator, Caterpillar India Engineering Solutions

I enjoyed the session on Generative AI and gained insights on its potential impact on innovation. I also found the session on design thinking valuable. The speakers have provided us with a lot of information from various perspectives.

JAYANTH VETHAKUMAR
General manager, Caresoft Global Pvt. Ltd.

It is really exciting to be present at PMSAC. A lot of knowledge transfer has taken place from the leaders who have shared their perspectives and experiences. The knowledge will be useful for us as we apply it to our own projects.

PRIYANKA SHAH
Lead consultant specialist, HSBC

The conference is packed with enlightening sessions covering a wide range of project management related topics. Every session has left us with valuable takeaways to enhance our professional journey. Networking opportunities have been abundant. Connecting with fellow professionals and exchanging experiences have been the highlights for me.

LATHA SREENIVASA MURTHY
Program manager, Red Hat

The theme of the conference revolves around innovation, and each speaker has brought out a unique perspective. A session that has stood out the most for me is Sandeep Kochhar's "Art of Storytelling." I have also found Srimathi Shivashankar session inspiring. Kudos to the volunteers who have put in tremendous effort in pulling the conference together so well.

MAHESHKUMAR METRE
Program manager, Bosch Global Software Technologies

The conference has provided us with valuable insights. We would not learn such knowledge by staying in our own office cubicle. I would say PMSAC23 has been one of the best conferences. I'd like to see it take place at least every 6 months so that we can get more out of it.

SOUNDHARYA NALLA
Senior associate consultant, Infosys Limited

I have learned a lot about bringing innovation to project management from various industry leaders, which has given me new perspectives. It has been a wonderful platform for networking. I am looking forward to next year's conference.

Thank You, Volunteers and Sponsors

We salute our volunteers for their extraordinary spirit, hard work and commitment to give our conference delegates a great experience.

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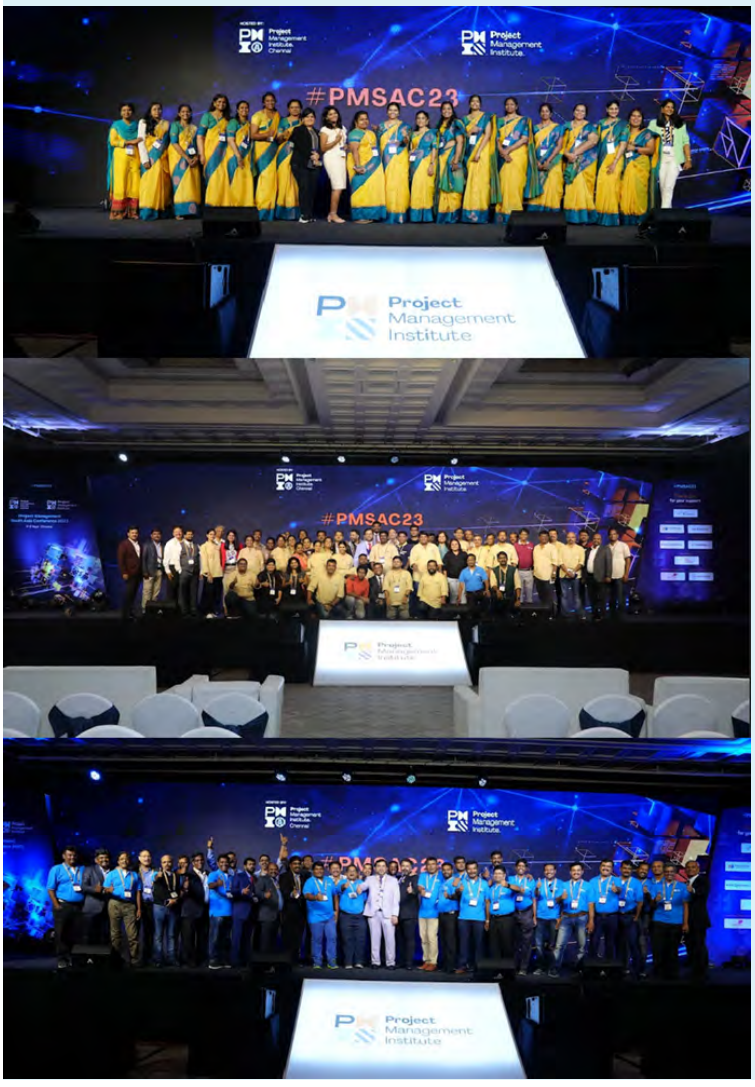

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2023 South Asia Region Meet

The South Asia Region Meet, a chapter-focused annual event, took place on 1 September, a day before the Project Management South Asia Conference 2023 in Chennai. It brought together chapter leaders from the region, including India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, to foster collaboration and synergy.

The day-long event comprised insightful presentations, interactive sessions and workshops, with the objective of keeping the South Asia Chapter leaders abreast of various initiatives taken up in the region. Chapter leaders engaged in brainstorming activities that

helped them craft strategies for the upcoming initiatives.

The meeting was helmed by Prasanna Sampathkumar, region mentor of PMI South Asia, who took the audience through the successes of the South Asia region. He also discussed various learnings and goals for the rest of the year.

A highlight of the event was a fireside chat moderated by Sampathkumar that featured Ike Nwankwo, a member of the PMI Global Board of Directors. The session focussed on Ike's volunteering journey at PMI, his perspectives on how chapters can help with the implementation of the new PMI strategy and a deep dive into the restructuring of the strategic pillars. It provided chapter leaders with an opportunity to learn about PMI's global strategy and offered a platform for them to ask important questions.

A workshop was also conducted for chapter leaders on a new key initiative in the region. The intent was to understand ways in which chapters can adapt to the changes and reconfigure their approaches.

Some of the other topics covered were the brittle, anxious, non-linear, and ncomprehensible (BANI) world and how artificial intelligence (AI) is impacting project management. In addition to this, there were significant presentations by chapter presidents and the leads of regional programs. These sessions not only provided valuable information to our chapter leaders but also opened channels for cross-chapter collaboration.

Another highlight of the day was a leadership training special for the chapter leaders. It was an energetic session with content specially curated for the audience.

The day ended with a felicitation session to recognize key milestones and award winners from South Asia.

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Chapter Administrator, PMI South Asia

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