

MANAGE South Asia

JANUARY 2022

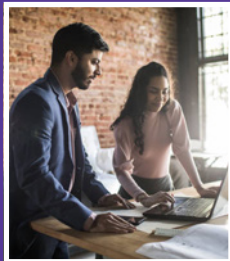
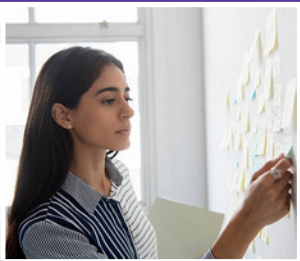


**Project Management
South Asia
Conference 2021**

10-11 Dec | 3pm to 8pm IST

#PMSAC21

New Strategies to Thrive in Uncertain Times



In this Issue



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**03 LETTER FROM MANAGING
DIRECTOR, PMI SOUTH ASIA**

**04 LETTER FROM THE CONFERENCE
HOST**

05 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

06 KEYNOTES

11 INVITED SPEAKERS

16 PANEL DISCUSSION

18 AWARDS PRESENTATION

24 CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS

26 CONFERENCE TESTIMONIALS

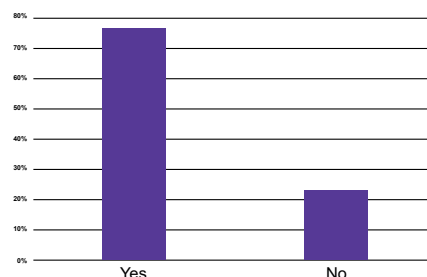
28 PMI UPDATE

PMI POLL BOOTH

RESULT OF LAST POLL

Q. The new normal is more of a boon than
a bane for the project management
profession.
Yes 77% No 23%

Voice your opinion • Last poll results





Dear Practitioner,

The ongoing crisis has made it evident that there is nothing normal about the 'new normal.' Uncertainty continues well into 2022. However, we at PMI believe we can turn this uncertainty into an opportunity. Project leaders must seize the moment to learn and build a new work ecosystem to stay agile and resilient.

The much-awaited Project Management South Asia Virtual Conference 2021, held on 10-11 December, offered us a great platform to understand how organizations are navigating uncertainty. Expounding the theme, 'Embracing the New Normal,' speakers brought to light ways in which they have addressed business challenges and equipped themselves and their teams with effective response strategies. The talks have left us inspired to embrace change and thrive.

I want to extend my gratitude to all the industry leaders and experts, who have invested their valuable time to share their knowledge and insights with our delegates. I also want to express my sincere appreciation for all the

contributions and hard work made by the regional chapters to make this summit a huge success.

Special thanks and congratulations must go to the PMI Bangalore Chapter who produced a great event amidst big challenges. Our sponsors need a special mention here. Without their support, the conference would not have been possible.

In case you have missed the news, PMI South Asia has unveiled Career Connect, a job portal that seeks to bring practitioners in the region in touch with prospective employers. It is a free portal and I would strongly urge you to take advantage of it, whether you are a job seeker or a provider.

As many of you may already know, our Region Mentor Girish Kadam has stepped down from his role at the end of 2021. Girish has been a leading light of our project community, and we at PMI South Asia are in his debt for the inspiration and guidance that he has provided the chapters in the past four years. Please join me in welcoming Prasanna Sampathkumar as the new region mentor; all of us can look forward to working with him.

The past two years have been very challenging for us all, trying to navigate the chaos and complexity posed by the pandemic, at both a professional and personal level. But 2021 has taught us new coping skills and strategies, and brought out the good in many people. Our humanity, fighting spirit, and innovative mindset were on display during this year.

I hope and pray that 2022 brings brighter and happier days, and enables us to bounce back better.

I wish you and your family a Happy New Year.

Kind regards,

Managing Director
PMI South Asia





I am really happy and proud as we recently concluded the PMI South Asia Conference 2021 that had over 600 paid registrations and attendees from across the world. The theme was “Embracing the New Normal.”

The last two years have been very turbulent and challenging, to say the least. These are unprecedented times and the rate of change of all factors including people, environment, social, and psychological has been very fast, scary and unpredictable.

We have all experienced a lot of hardships and difficult times and we were never prepared for it.

The conference was organized by the PMI Bangalore India Chapter, and ably supported by all other chapters from India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

We at PMI thought the PMI South Asia Conference is an apt medium to bring people on to a single platform where we will understand more about what we did to address the “new normal.”

We had eminent speakers and panelists who attended from all parts of the globe. We used a collaborative platform called Airmeet that allowed participants to attend the sessions, view sponsor booths, and network.

Yes, it is not like an in-person event, but the feedback we received from speakers and participants was very good and encouraging.

Warm regards.

Muktesh Murthy
Past President, PMI Bangalore India Chapter

New Strategies to Thrive in Uncertain Times

The unprecedented times set off by the COVID-19 pandemic have compelled organizations to put new systems and processes in place and project professionals to find new ways of working.

Potshangbam July



A question that is on everybody's mind and has no definite answer is: what's next? To thrive in the new normal where nothing is certain, organizations and project leaders need to get comfortable operating in an ever-changing business environment. It calls for a relook at existing operating models and work practices to drive organizational agility and flexibility, which are perquisites in the current scenario.

Today's changed project environment formed the backdrop for discussions at the two-day virtual summit, 'Project Management South Asia Virtual Conference 2021.' Hosted by the PMI Bangalore Chapter, the conference, held on 10-11 December, brought together leaders, practitioners, and startup founders from India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. As many as 600 practitioners from various countries attended the conference and took away insights, new perspectives, and practical advice on how to navigate the challenges.

Focused on the theme, 'Project Management: Embracing the New Normal,' the conference featured six keynotes, four parallel tracks, a panel discussion, networking sessions, and the annual project awards presentation. Globally renowned business leaders and experts from various industry sectors shared their diverse viewpoints on defining the new normal, and the best practices to make it work in the 'never-normal' era.

Dr. Srinivasa, regional managing director, PMI South Asia, set the context of the conference and announced the launch of Career Connect, a job portal supported by PMI South Asia. "The annual conference celebrates professionals in project management. This year, some of the top minds from across the industry and functional sectors are speaking at the conference. The focus is on enabling change-makers like you to position yourself for a leadership role in your career," he said. Talking about the free job platform, he said it was a humble way for PMI to give back to the profession during these difficult times.

Ramkumar Narayanan, vice president technology, and managing director, VMware India, kicked off the conference with a keynote in which he stirred up

thoughts with the quote, 'never waste a crisis.' He spoke about opportunities for change created by the pandemic, and the need to create a resilient organization that can thrive in adverse times.

Col. Anand Swaroop (Retd.) of the Indian Army outlined how the new normal calls for a new paradigm of leadership to deal with unexpected circumstances.

Alok Nanda, CEO, GE India Technology Centre and CTO, GE South Asia, highlighted that India can become self-reliant if it strengthens its manufacturing and R&D capabilities, and reduces dependence on other countries for high-tech weapons.

Padma Parthasarathy, senior vice president - Consulting and Digital Services at Tech Mahindra, explained the characteristics of conscious enterprise and its effectiveness in navigating uncertainty in an organization.

The second day of the conference saw the launch of the PMI Bangalore Chapter website as part of their ongoing efforts to create a better experience for users.

Prithvi Shergill, co-founder, Smarten Spaces, spoke about how the 'enterprise of tomorrow' can sustain exceptional performance in the 'never-normal' era.

This was followed by an engaging panel discussion on the theme, 'Bharat Startups: Exploring the Unexplored.' Hosted by Palash Gupta, vice president, Professional Development, PMI Bangalore Chapter, it featured young entrepreneurs from four deep tech startups. It brought into focus the use of innovative technologies and a problem-solving mindset that are responsible for some great business ideas that are creating social impact in the country.

At the closing keynote, David Hillson, who calls himself a 'risk doctor', spoke about the concept of black swan and the importance of building flexibility and resilience as a coping mechanism in an unexpected situation.

The winners of the PMI South Asia Project of the Year awards were honored during the conference. On the first day, winners in three categories were announced: Avtar Human Capital Trust in NGO category, Tata Projects Ltd in Contribution to the Community, and State Bank of India in the Micro Project category. On the second day, awards were given to RITES Limited, Larsen & Toubro Limited, and Infosys in the Small Project, Medium Project and Large Project category, respectively.

The virtual conference allowed delegates to e-network with business leaders, explore the sponsor stalls, interact live with speakers through Q&As, and seek expert advice. The mega event was sponsored by Intuit, i2e Consulting, and Zoho Projects.



Resilience by Collaboration: Building and Thriving Through Ecosystem and Organizational Synergies

RAMKUMAR NARAYANAN

Vice President, Technology, and Managing Director, VMware India

Ramkumar (Ram) Narayanan leads strategy and growth for VMware's largest global center outside of its headquarters in Palo Alto, USA. This includes working closely with the company leadership on portfolio management, talent strategy, and positioning of VMware as a leading organization in India. Before joining VMware, Narayanan served in global leadership positions at eBay, Yahoo!, and Microsoft.

There is more to a crisis than disappointment and pain. VMware India lived up to the dictum 'never waste a good crisis' by using some of the opportunities arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic to create a new organizational framework for resilience.

Ramkumar Narayanan spoke about an enterprise-wide exercise the organization undertook at the start of the pandemic that involved over 300 employees to create a structure for strong alignment between strategy, execution, and outcomes. The key objective was to identify and harness opportunities in the existing ecosystem to build a resilient organizational structure. It would nurture an environment that drives ideation, a collaborative network, execution excellence, and business impact.

"Organizations cannot be fragile that break easily and cannot tolerate shocks. Being robust is not enough; you can survive shocks but being robust means staying the same and not having to adapt. We need to have resilient systems that thrive in adverse conditions, and help us learn and grow," he said.

The company built a '5P framework' of key pillars (focus areas), programs, projects, performance metrics, and people.

One of the key learnings was to internalize project management as a strategic capability to deliver value. The company also realized the need to move from an activity-based mindset to an outcome-based mindset, create cross-functional synergies, and take advantage of the opportunities in the ecosystem of partners and associations.

The initiative has helped in breaking down silos to bring people together, create strategy alignment with organizational goals, develop an outcome-based approach with key results identified for over 60 projects, create new partnerships such as those for diversity and inclusion, and define rewards and recognition to inspire teams.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Make mistakes and learn by taking up projects with a high degree of uncertainty.
- Be open to change.
- Stay curious by taking up courses, listening, and reading.
- Innovate by building buffers to absorb shocks from failures.
- Develop hobbies and experiment with new ideas and tools.



Every Day is a 'New Normal'

ANAND SWAROOP

Retired Colonel, Indian Army

Col. Anand Swaroop (Retd.) is a techno-management professional, who served in the Indian Army for over three decades. He has been honored with the Sena Medal twice and the Arjuna Award.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled organizations to embrace a 'new normal' in project management practices. Anand Swaroop outlined three important aspects that contribute to the success of a project in any

scenario – a clear project goal, a well-defined plan or strategy, and an open-minded leader or team to execute the plan.

The new normal is witnessing unprecedented uncertainty and complexity. The course of this new reality remains unclear. What makes the current times extremely difficult is that conditions are constantly changing, with new scenarios emerging every now and then.

Therefore, organizations must stop relying on outdated response mechanisms even if they had worked in the past. Those mechanisms may not be relevant and impactful for new challenges and situations.

What must you do to tide over a crisis in which you have no experience or knowledge? Mr. Swaroop shared his experiences of managing military projects in unforgiving terrains devoid of any navigational landmarks. His team faced many obstacles – equipment malfunction, medical

emergencies, navigational errors, limited resources, and the slim chance of an evacuation in case of an emergency.

However, tough conditions gave them new perspectives and helped them reprioritize their objectives. Fast-changing situations call for a new paradigm of leadership that prioritizes team engagement in the face of adversity. Leaders must motivate teams to embrace change to accomplish their project objectives. They need to understand employees' emotional intelligence for better collaboration, and solve problems effectively.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Every project needs a clear goal, strategy, and an open-minded leader.
- Reset the established structures and processes to deal with the uncertainties of the new normal.
- Do away with outdated response mechanisms to a crisis.
- Build relationship-based and not task-oriented leadership to deal with the 'new normal.'
- Constantly work toward keeping team enthusiasm and confidence high.



Role of Defense and Aerospace Industry in India's Quest for Self-Reliance

ALOK NANDA

CEO, GE India Technology Centre, and CTO, GE South Asia

Alok Nanda heads the India technology center of GE that employs over 5,000 engineers and scientists in various industry verticals, including aviation, healthcare, power, and renewables. He is responsible for regional business outcomes through innovative technology solutions. Prior to GE, he spent eight years at the Indian Defence Research and Development Organization.

At a time when India's self-reliance is under focus, Alok Nanda shed light on the country's standing in the field of aerospace and defense. With several successes such as the Light Combat Aircraft, long-range missiles, and space launches by the Indian Space Research Organisation, India has no doubt established its prowess in this area. But a lot more needs to be done to strengthen the country's R&D capabilities.

To date, GE has partnered with several academic institutions in India for joint technology development. Mr. Nanda said the 3D printed combustor is one such collaborative outcome that has no equivalent in the world.

One of the major stumbling blocks on the road to self-reliance is the country's dependence on other nations for aerospace hardware and

technology. The ownership of original designs of transferred technologies lies with the manufacturer, thus placing scientists and researchers in India at a disadvantage.

"For India to become the owner of its destiny, it is not enough to become a manufacturing hub; rather we need to also develop critical technologies here," said Mr. Nanda.

He, however, cautioned against the over-involvement of academia in developing new technologies. Although there have been small successes as a result of collaboration with academia, no path-breaking outcomes have come along.

He recommends that the government allocates more funds for R&D projects based on competitive bidding so the best ideas get an opportunity to come out of the lab. Explaining the American model, he said funds are directly allocated to the industry based on certain conditions, and the industry body or company decides which academic institution to partner with to jointly develop the new technology.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- India has the talent but needs to nurture collaborations in R&D.
- India needs to aim to be self-reliant in technology development and not just manufacturing.
- The lack of experience in project management in academia is a stumbling block in developing new technologies.
- There is a belief that industry-led research is going to drive the nation toward self-reliance.
- Government is on the same page with the industry but the translation from intent to action is a journey in itself.



Is the 'New Normal' Really New?

PADMA PARTHASARATHY

Senior Vice President, Consulting and Digital Services, Tech Mahindra

Padma Parthasarathy heads the global consulting team at Tech Mahindra, which is engaged in business consulting, as well as technology and business process advisory, and re-engineering services. Ms. Parthasarathy is responsible for the growth of the digital business of Tech Mahindra.

Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA) that define our world today do not appear to be ending soon. Padma Parthasarathy cautioned that in today's highly interconnected world, what happens in one part of the globe may greatly impact businesses in another part of the world.

She took the examples of two organizations that have dealt with this kind of complexity and uncertainty. For centuries, the Oxford University and the Japanese firm, Bumi, that specializes in building Buddhist

temples, have stood the test of time and thrived against all odds. How have they weathered the storms? What valuable lessons can we derive from these organizations?

Ms. Parthasarathy highlighted that these two organizations have strictly invested in people. They hire the best people and nurture talent. They encourage employees to develop a deep sense of inquiry, challenge the status quo, and find creative solutions.

Elaborating on the concept of a "conscious enterprise," she stressed that organizations must learn quickly about their clients' needs, and adapt to those needs. Organizations must be purpose-driven, have a sense of direction, and move fast to integrate new capabilities. Additionally, they need to develop a highly flexible approach that encourages a culture of adaptive collaboration.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Build a conscious enterprise that is purpose-driven in its business strategy.
- Leverage human and machine learning capabilities to sustain good performance in a crisis.
- Adopt a flexible and adaptable outlook to facilitate new learning quickly.
- Create programs like employee engagement for effective change management.
- Drive positivity and holistic wellness activities to enable a new normal workforce.
- Incorporate new technologies to allow better collaboration and zero-touch processes.



A Practitioner's View on Mastering Risk & Performance in the 'Never Normal'

PRITHVI SHERGILL

Founder, Advisor, Investor, Researcher, Ideapreneur

Prithvi Shergill is the co-founder of Smarten Spaces, and chief business officer at Entomo (formerly KPISoft). In his last enterprise assignment, he was the chief human resource officer and senior corporate vice president, organization effectiveness, at HCL Technologies.

In the 'never normal' world, professionals are struggling for control over changed situations, and creating new ways of working. Prithvi

Shergill said employees are curious about the current environment and the journey they are likely to take from now on. They are looking for meaning in their work, and want to have control over their performance, proficiency, passion, and productivity.

A key question for leaders to ask is: How can the enterprise of tomorrow drive performance in disruptive times? Mr. Shergill pointed

out that there is a need for the leadership to engage, enable, and empower teams. First, leaders must engage the employees with purpose. Leaders need to equip them with insight and empower them. These will ensure employees' personal growth, and eventually the organizational growth.

Leaders must rethink their operating models for the future and encourage new ideas. Changes in enterprise practices must be geared to improve competitiveness and resilience.

He advised project and program leaders to have clear beliefs, intentions, and priorities. When these are aligned well, action will fall into place and projects will meet the desired outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Organizations must reimagine the new normal to solve the immediate obstacles.
- The role of leaders is to facilitate change in the organization to have control over performance and productivity.
- An enterprise must engage with purpose and support personal growth to sustain performance in a crisis.
- Leaders must ensure that their intentions and beliefs are well aligned.
- Develop leadership behaviors in terms of character, competence, and courage to enhance performance in the new normal.
- Rely on evidence-based decisions to drive performance in the current context.



Black Swan: Myth or Reality

DAVID HILLSON

David Hillson, The Risk Doctor

David Hillson is a thought leader and practitioner in the field of risk management. He has advised organizations on risk management and has written 13 books on the subject. He is a PMI Fellow and an Honorary Fellow at the UK Association for Project Management.

"Is this something we have made up?" This is often the first thing people ask David Hillson when he speaks about 'black swan' events.

At the closing keynote, Mr. Hillson presented the concept of a black swan from the point of view of risk management and explained the challenges behind predicting such an event.

Quoting Nassim Nicholas Taleb in 'The Black Swan: The impact of the Highly Improbable,' he defined a black swan event as one that is completely inconceivable, causes extreme impact, and appears obvious in hindsight. Some recent examples of black swan events

include the invention of the internet, the 2008 financial crisis, the 2015 European migrant crisis, and Brexit. All these events caught us unprepared but they had a significant impact on the world.

The next obvious question is whether the COVID-19 pandemic is a black swan event. He said that though the pandemic cannot be classified as one, the events that resulted from it, such as lockdowns, are black swan events.

He advised risk managers to be cognizant of these developments and design the right mitigation strategies. He said they must understand the key vulnerabilities associated with such an event, scan the environment for emergent risks, and closely monitor the early warning indicators and triggers. The strategy to manage risk is to build flexibility and resilience. Both of these can be done at a personal, project, business, and society level.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Note what defines the future: DANGER or Dynamic, Ambiguous, Non-linear, Glocal, Emergent and Relational.
- Be flexible in risk management; know how to bend without breaking.
- If you cannot control the volatile tides of change, learn to build better boats.
- Practice emotional literacy; learn how to self-moderate and make intentional choices.

Meet Program Managers at Intuit

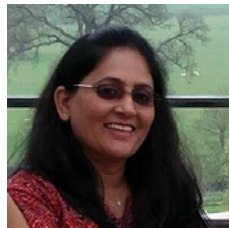
Intuit Program Managers go above and beyond, demonstrating their commitment to living by our values and delivering for our customers every day.



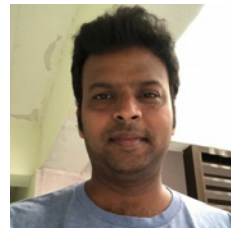
Radhika Kannan
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Prashanth K S
Manager, Program
Management
Business Strategy & Operations



Jayashree Nagaraj
Manager, Technical Program
Management
CX3



Sudhakar Mani
Technical Program Manager
DevX

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Advertorial

Impact of COVID-19 on PPM Practice



MOID AHMED
Project Delivery Head,
i2e Consulting

Moid Ahmed is a certified scrum master with over 12 years of project management experience. He has managed large teams at multiple locations to deliver complex and cross-functional applications.

Waleed Letaeif comes with more than six years of project management experience. He has worked in various capacities in large, complex programs for capability planning and operations.

Moid Ahmed and Waleed Letaeif highlighted some of the key challenges and opportunities arising out of the pandemic for project practitioners.

Mr. Ahmed spoke about the changes in everyday work life due to COVID-19, and the ways of working in the new normal. He pointed out that completing projects in the changed circumstances would have been even more difficult had it not been for new tools and technologies.

The biggest challenges in remote working in today's times are communication and collaboration, with practitioners being heavily



WALEED LETAEIF
Product Specialist,
Planisware

dependent on modern tech tools to communicate and collaborate with teams and streamline processes. A key advantage that has emerged in recent times is location independence. Companies now have the capability to pick teams without being location dependent. Another area of improvement has been reporting. Quoting a KPMG report, Mr. Ahmed said that the project success rate has improved from 19 percent before the pandemic to 25 percent now due to the diligent usage of data reporting capabilities.

Waleed Letaeif gave a demonstration on a new software tool for project management that brings together all project stakeholders on to a single platform. It is a web-based platform that does not require installation and can be accessed with laptops or mobile devices.

The product enables digital transformation within organizations and provides a collaborative space for all project stakeholders. In addition, it can also help with resource allocation, wherein project managers can easily allocate work to available resources without any chances for "over or under" allocation of work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Teamwork and ascertaining real-time status updates of projects are two big challenges associated with remote work.
- After the pandemic, organizations have increasingly embraced tech tools for various tasks, including data reporting.
- Resource allocation has become more efficient with location independent teams.

Intuit's Transformation to Platform Ways of Working



SAYANTANA ROY
Group Manager, Technical
Program Management, Intuit

Sayantana Roy has been in program management leadership roles in platform and core services, as well as in product teams at Intuit. She heads the technical program management for QuickBooks Online Advanced and key transformation initiatives for the small business and self-employed group at Intuit India.

Sayantana Roy outlined Intuit's mission to power business growth and prosperity through technological innovation. The company underwent a major change to move away from a product mindset to platform thinking, and create an ecosystem around its AI-driven platform solution. It furthers the concept that the free flow of data and capabilities of the platform must benefit everyone in the ecosystem.

During the planning process, the company faced a number of challenges in terms of timelines, resource management and dependencies, drag on innovation, and conflict in priorities. To sort out these challenges, the company devised unified planning.

Unified planning entails clear roadmaps, aligned timelines and functions, clear prioritization, consistent process, continuous planning, and common architecture. This helps to align all the important work and people involved on the same page. This, in turn, drives customer benefit, achieves business outcomes, and galvanizes the ecosystem.

Ms. Roy stressed that a unified consistent planning is extremely beneficial when driving economies of scale. It is important to build durable capabilities that can be leveraged across the ecosystem, and reused with ownership and accountability.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Adopt unified planning to accelerate business outcomes and drive customer benefits.
- Create roadmaps for better transparency and alignment between teams in the planning process.
- A unified approach helps to keep all stakeholders aligned, from the inception of an idea to the delivery of the code.

New Norms Emerging in Project Development



RAJESH SANAL
Transformation and Innovation
Head, Deutsche Bank

Rajesh Sanal has 29 years of experience in building products, platforms, services, and high performing teams across banking, transportation, and healthcare. He has close to 22 years of experience in banking, where he has built software and services for multiple business areas.

Rajesh Sanal covered a wide range of areas that have got a new impetus to change after the pandemic. He touched upon customer experience, the emerging conflicts in project management, hiring trends, and the startup ecosystem.

He termed the recent global events like the Suez Canal blockage, the global semiconductor shortage, and maturity in the adoption of cloud technologies as precursors to the new normal. The pandemic added yet another dimension to the changes that the world was already witnessing. Mr. Sanal called it a "perfect storm," and added that it all depends on how we navigate it.

He stated that the pandemic has accelerated digital transformation by 3-7 years. For instance, customer experience has become central to customer retention, and managing customer expectations have become the new paradigm. Secondly, designing for scale and reusability have become important while creating products and platforms.

Mr. Sanal spoke about emerging trends in the project management domain, such as conflicts between old-timers and millennials in a project team, and the presence of an unequal measure of risk between brownfield and greenfield projects, with the former having the relative advantage. He cautioned project managers against lethargy and asked them to fail fast, fail early, and ask for help while keeping all stakeholders in the loop without surprising them.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Agile and DevOps are going to be the norm in the new business environment.
- Companies going for digitalization must undertake a 'tech refresh' and assess their 'tech debt' to measure up to their existing potential.
- Today's leaders need deep domain expertise along with good communication skills.

People's Well-Being, Renewed Focus Post Covid



DR. ARUNDHATI CHAKRABARTY

Honorary Clinical Associate Professor

Arundhati Chakrabarty is a consultant neuropathologist at the Leed Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. She has been an active contributor to research projects in brain tumor and rheumatology for the past 20+ years. She is a named collaborator for numerous grant applications with more than 50 peer-reviewed publications to her credit.

Arundhati Chakrabarty spoke about the alarming rise of mental illness since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. As per studies, nearly 35 percent of the general population struggled with mental health issues in the first COVID-19 induced lockdown.

Dr. Chakrabarty said that the experiences of stress, anxiety, and depression are directly linked to sudden changes in lifestyle. She suggested adopting a positive mental attitude, such as engaging in creative activities and hobbies, and maintaining a routine, as an effective way to improve mental well-being. She cautioned against harmful coping mechanisms like alcohol and binge eating. She emphasized upon the importance of having a support system of family, friends, and community connections.

Dr. Chakrabarty urged employers and businesses to play their part in containing this burgeoning issue. Besides integrating advanced technologies, they must cultivate a culture of trust, transparency, and openness in today's remote workforce, she said.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Adopt positive coping strategies, such as developing hobbies and maintaining a daily routine.
- Stay away from negative coping strategies, such as drinking alcohol and binge eating.
- Manage work from home better by creating a dedicated workspace and fostering long-term thinking.

Response of HVAC Industries Post Covid - Blue Star Perspective



V. S. ASHOK

Chief Human Resources Officer,
Bluestar

V. S. Ashok heads the human resources function of Blue Star. He joined Blue Star as a trainee engineer in 1992. In his previous role, he headed the company's customer service business.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many important lessons and reset our priorities. V. S. Ashok spoke about some of the initiatives his organization has undertaken since the pandemic broke out.

He recommended prioritizing three areas in an organization – people, process, and technology. For an effective people strategy, companies must organize programs such as direct interactions with the leadership and health and wellness initiatives, and improve employee engagement.

As far as processes are concerned, his organization introduced an HR bot through which employees can get updated on the latest information. The company also created an in-house safety app to improve workplace safety.

This was also a time for Bluestar to accelerate its digital transformation journey. It is utilizing the Internet of Things (IoT) and automation for real-time monitoring and utility diagnosis. The company has upgraded to Industry 4.0. to deal with the challenges brought by the pandemic.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stop micromanagement to deal with challenges during a crisis.
- Reset priorities around people, processes, and technology.
- Make the workplace safe for employees with products such as UVC emitters, touchless water coolers, and vaccine transporters.

Future of Urban Mobility



SATYA CHAKRAVARTHY

Professor, Aerospace Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras, and Co-founder, ePlane

Satya Chakravarthy works in the area of propulsion and conducts research on combustion in gas turbine and rocket engines. Besides teaching at IIT Madras, he has co-founded ePlane. The company aimed at making a new breed of aircraft called hybrid aerial vehicles that will be capable of vertical take-off and can be deployed as air taxis in the future.

There is an immediate need for us to rethink the way we do traffic management. It is no longer about building roads and flyovers; rather the future of mobility is going to be aerial. According to a recent study by McKinsey, India presents the best market for aerial mobility in the world.

Prof. Chakravarthy stated that the existing aerial technology used in helicopters does not do justice to the need of fast mobility to cover short distances. Aerial vehicles must be silent, pollution-free, and cost-effective, he said, and pointed to electric propulsion as the solution for the future. Such aerial transport will work in cities where roof-tops can be used as a launch pad.

He showcased various aerial vehicle prototypes that are currently being flown in various countries. However, all of them have some inadequacies which have made them a less desired option currently. Prof. Chakravarthy is optimistic about the future and believes that his aerial vehicles will be ready to fly by 1 march 2022.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- India is a great testbed for innovative, aerial urban mobility solutions.
- Urban mobility needs electric aerial solutions that offer quick and short rides, and are cost-effective.
- Think of vertical take-offs and landings from roof-tops as a solution to today's urban traffic problems.

Medtech – Key Enabler in Personalized Cure and Wellness



DR. PRADEEP DESAI

CEO, Thaleset Innovations Pvt. Limited

Dr. Pradeep Desai leads Thaleset Innovations that offers affordable and innovative medtech and healthtech products. He was earlier associated with GE where he built the Software Center for Excellence and the Advanced Analytics Organization.

Pradeep Desai stressed upon the need for affordable healthcare in a developing country like India, and the role of technology in meeting some of the toughest challenges in healthcare delivery.

Dr. Desai spoke about an indigenously developed technology to diagnose sleep apnea. When brought into the mainstream, this technology will be an affordable alternative to expensive polysomnography that is used in the diagnosis of sleep apnea.

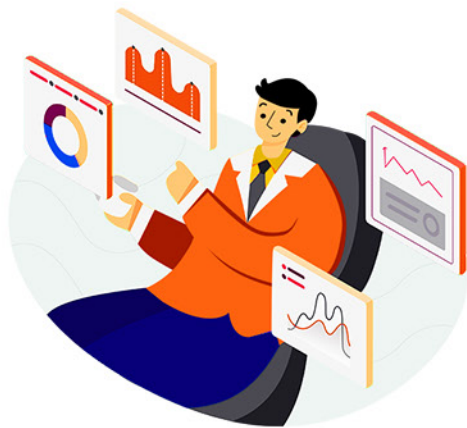
Medtech innovation has also made personalized patient care possible. Physicians can today conduct remote monitoring of patients with smartphones. New age technologies such as diagnostic engines, 5G telecom network, wearables, digital assistants, smart implants, labs on a chip, and nanotechnology are driving medtech innovation. Dr. Desai believes that medical decisions of the future will be data driven, with analytics technologies providing doctors with actionable insights for better decisions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Future of medtech is in disease management and wellness solutions.
- Data-driven insights to guide physicians in making better medical decisions in the future.
- 5G technologies are opening up real-time medical monitoring due to zero latency in data transmission.

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Bharat Startups - Exploring the Unexplored

The Project Management South Asia Conference 2021 gave a platform to fast growing startups to showcase their disruptive innovation and tell their inspiring stories.

Hosted by Palash Gupta, Vice President - Professional Development, PMI Bangalore Chapter, the discussion shone the spotlight on the impact of deep tech startups in bridging the digital divide and enabling inclusive growth.



MODERATOR

PALASH GUPTA,
Vice President -
Professional Development,
PMI Bangalore Chapter

PANELISTS



HIMANSHU SHARMA,
Co-Founder & CEO, Devnagri

Devnagri is an AI-powered human translation platform with a vision to help businesses reach over 1 billion Indian internet users in their regional languages.



SRINIVAS K. PAI,
Co-Founder & CEO, PaceRobotics

PaceRobotics is a startup incubated by the Society for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, and builds robots that complement human skills to enhance productivity in construction projects.



PREM KUMAR VISLAWATH,
Co-Founder & Chief Innovator,
Marut Drones

Marut Drones builds end-to-end drone solutions for telemedicine, farming, and mosquito eradication purposes by integrating artificial intelligence (AI), data science, and Internet of Things (IoT).



AVIJEET KUMAR SINGH,
Co-Founder & CEO, Prakshep

Prakshep is a satellite-based agri-monitoring platform that aims to enhance agricultural productivity with satellite imagery and machine learning for farm data.

What is the unexplored question behind your business venture?

Sharma: Only 5 percent of the Japanese understand English but that has not stopped the country from becoming an economic superpower. In India, our regional languages have been neglected. I want everyone in India to harness the power of the internet in their own language.

Pai: The construction industry contributes 10 percent to India's GDP but it has a big productivity gap. In India, 80 percent of construction workers are unskilled and not utilized in a decent manner. I want robots to improve productivity and give workers a life of dignity.

Singh: The company grew out from my interest in studying satellite images and how I can use satellite images to help farmers. Today, we can proudly say that we are monitoring one-fourth of India and will grow into covering half of India soon.

Vislawath: Delivering critical medicines on time is a problem in India, especially in rural or remote areas. On the climate change front, tree planting is important. We envisaged use of drones for medicine delivery and rapid reforestation as an effective solution for a sustainable future.

It is often said that project managers are mini-CEOs. How do CEOs become good project managers?

Sharma: CEOs are nothing but CWOs or Chief Whatever Officers. We are expected to deal with whatever comes our way. Project management is about asking the right kind of questions. Only with the right knowledge can you clear the clutter in your head and get clarity of vision.

Vislawath: Even if you are a CEO, every small problem comes to you. At times, it becomes difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff. Ask questions to bring clarity and spend some time alone everyday to introspect and figure things out.

What makes you focus on a product-intensive business?

Pai: As startups, we see ourselves as problem solvers. Being in the construction industry for the past 14 years has helped me understand the problems to some extent. We believe that if our product is good

enough to address the market needs, the market will grab it with both hands.

Singh: I come from a tier-2 town and a middle-class background. So my focus was always on building something that impacted the masses. At Prakshep, we see value in empowering farmers that perfectly fits our vision of helping India grow and prosper.

How did you find the first customer and ensure product-market fit?

Sharma: Everything started with research to understand the feasibility of the product. We interviewed a lot of people, ran a proof of concept to validate the thesis, and verified whether someone is likely to pay for our solution.

Pai: Building a product and testing it out is costly in the hardware space. Even a basic prototype would cost us a few lakhs of rupees. So we created a video of our prototype to capture actionable insights and feedback from potential customers.

What have been your top learnings?

Sharma: My top learnings are to remain calm under pressure, and to realize that what may appear as a huge problem may not really be so big; it's often big only in our mind.

Pai: Actively hunt for problems because solving problems will make your product better. Ask for help wherever possible, and build partnerships and networks.

Avijeet: Most of the problems get solved by talking, so discuss and resolve issues.

What is that inner calling that you are seeking to fulfill?

Sharma: I want Indians to get comfortable with their native language. This can go a long way in empowering the upcoming generation of rural children who will play a crucial role in the future of India.

Pai: We want to see the application of robots in the construction industry as a standard norm, and not as a premium feature in big projects.

PMI South Asia Awards 2021

Each year, PMI South Asia confers awards to organizations for executing projects with excellence. This year was no different, and awards were given to deserving organizations that completed daunting projects with high quality outcomes — an endeavor that serves to inspire other project management practitioners. Here is a snapshot of the awards given in multiple categories in this year's PMI conference.

Project of the Year (Large): Winner

Project: Goods & Services Tax (GST): One Nation, One Tax

Organization: Infosys



Highlights

- To provide taxpayers a uniform online experience across the country, while providing a homogeneous and robust IT backbone for the smooth functioning of the GST regime.
- The project scope also included integrating systems of multiple government agencies to create an efficient and user-friendly system.
- Currently, the system is capable of handling 300,000 users concurrently with a response time of two seconds and a processing rate of 50,000 transactions per second.
- Revenue increase of US\$ 46.1 billion (till 4 April 2021) was recorded, which was higher than previous regimes.
- GST project held as a reference architecture for future implementation of open-source stack leveraging microservice & application program interface.

Project of the Year (Medium): Winner

Project: Cricket Stadium, Motera, Gujarat

Organization: Larsen & Toubro Limited (L&T)

Highlights

- Aimed at building a new stadium with a seating capacity of 1.10 lakh spectators without any change in the built-up area of 63 acres of the old demolished stadium.
- Upon completion, the seating capacity was increased to 1.32 lakh spectators against the original plan.
- The stadium became the world's largest stadium, surpassing the Melbourne Cricket Stadium in Australia.
- Project was completed in 21 million safe human hours without any time lost due to injury.



Project of the Year (Medium): Runner Up

Project: Execution of Model Sub Division Works in E8

Sub Division of Shivaji Nagar Division, BESCOM

Organization: L&T, Power, Transmission and Distribution



Highlights

- A pilot project awarded by the Government of Karnataka for providing safe, reliable, quality, and affordable power supply to consumers.
- Project completed within the stipulated time, while adhering to the safety and quality systems with minimum inconvenience to the public.

Project of the Year (Small): Winner

Project: Construction of Store Depot, Scrap Yard & Associated Electrical Work at Sabarmati, Ahmedabad

Organization: RITES Limited

Highlights

- For India's first bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, old existing railway infrastructure and utilities needed to be shifted to create space for new terminals and workshops.
- The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited engaged the services of RITES for shifting the infrastructure and other utilities.
- The shifting work was completed during the COVID-19 lockdown and a modern store depot was put in place with latest security and safety features.



AWARDS PRESENTATION

Project of the Year (Small): Runner Up

Project: Walmart Labs India

Organization: HMPL Consulting Pvt. Ltd.



Highlights

- Development of a state-of-the-art corporate facility involving multiple stakeholders, including architects, interior design team, IT specialists, and the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) team.
- Purpose was to create a 'smart workplace' that is scalable and future-proofed.
- Delivered in time despite COVID-19 related constraints, with the deployment of teams in shifts while complying with the guidelines and project management mechanisms.

Project of the Year (Micro): Winner

Project: Shikhar

Organization: State Bank of India

Highlights

- Aimed at generating leads for pre-approved credit cards by taking into account the financial propensity of customers most of whom were high-net worth individuals.
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning models were created to generate a customer score, based on which a decision was taken whether to pursue a lead or not.
- Successful in the achievement of the objectives within cost and time constraints validating the in-house capabilities of the organization's IT wing.
- The final outcome of the project was a conversion rate of 10 percent, which was equivalent to USD 4.2 million in fee-based income.



Project of the Year (Micro): Runner Up

Project: Hardware Development for EAC Inverter in Fuel Cell Application

Organization: Robert Bosch Engineering & Business Solutions Pvt. Ltd.



Highlights

- Development of inverters for electric air compressor (EAC) for fuel cell based electric vehicles.
- Came up with a prototype for a functional model in less than eight months, while abiding by the Design for Manufacturing and Assembly (DFMA) requirements.
- The final product is capable enough to withstand the thermal and EMC targets.

Project of the Year (NGO Category): Winner

Project: Puthri

Organization: Avtar Human Capital Trust



Highlights

- Sought to create "career intentionality" among 10,000 underprivileged girls aged between 13 and 18 years studying in government schools in 2020.
- During COVID-19, the project faced challenges due to the closure of schools, but was revived through online sessions.
- More than 200 sessions were conducted in virtual mode which included interventions from mentoring and role modelling to career coaching.
- Participants were enlightened about career prospects in manufacturing, civil services, engineering, accounting, audit services, and humanities.
- In the last academic year, the project had impacted 5,000 and 300+ volunteers who contributed over 10,500 volunteering hours.

AWARDS PRESENTATION

Project of the Year (NGO Category): Runner Up

Project: Heart Tribal Development Project, Barwani District, Madhya Pradesh

Organization: Heart Tribal Development Project, Barwani District, Madhya Pradesh

Highlights

- The project aimed at intensive capacity building among the farmers, youth, and women in Barwani district and reducing the usage of tobacco and alcohol.
- About 400 people were directly impacted by the program, with 80 widows and old persons receiving pensions through the project.
- About 90 percent of the households were provided toilets under the Swachh Bharat mission, 700 were provided LPG connections, and 21,000 samplings were planted.



Contribution to Community Category: Winner

Project: Construction of 551-Bed COVID-19 Hospital

Organization: Tata Projects Limited



Highlights

- The project was mobilized as part of a CSR activity by Tata Sons; construction was done using precast and prefab materials.
- Construction of 551-bed COVID-19 hospital, including quarantine, isolation, and staff rooms.
- The entire hospital was finished in record time of 92 days, which

was 16 days ahead of the targeted project completion date, despite COVID-related closures and lockdowns.

- More than 1,500 patients have utilized the facility so far. The project was instrumental in creating employment opportunities for the local workforce.
- The project received appreciation from the Government of Kerala.

Contribution to Community Category: Runner Up

Project: Video Integration & State Wide Advance Security (VISWAS)

Organization: Gujarat Police

Highlights

- Initiated by the Gujarat home department, the project sought to improve the safety of citizens and integrate traffic management through the usage of CCTVs.
- Over 7,000 cameras have been installed in 41 cities, including 34 district headquarters and six religious places, along with the Statue of Unity.
- The project has helped in reducing the crime rate by 22.8 percent, and crime detection has improved from 76 to 83 percent during 2018-2020.
- Going by the statistics reported for traffic management, the project reduced the occurrence of accidents by 28.79 percent during 2018-2020.



Thank You, Jury Members and Volunteers

The PMI South Asia Awards were judged by an esteemed panel consisting of eminent project management practitioners. This diverse jury from various industry sectors brought in the much-needed depth in knowledge to select the award recipients. With their vast experience and wisdom in project management, they ensured only well-deserving organizations and projects received the prestigious PMI South Asia Awards.

Level 1 and Level 2 Jury Members

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Akshay Sharma | ● Vidya Chavan |
| ● Alakananda Rao | ● Sanjay Buch |
| ● Anil Rahate | ● Suresh V S Punyamanthula |
| ● Ashish Saxena | ● Tushar Shah |
| ● Chandrasekar Ramakrishnan | ● Abhijit Maity |
| ● Choudhury Das | ● Arun Seetharaman |
| ● Karthik Ramamurthy | ● Arun Shanmugam |
| ● Naveen Kumar Gupta | ● Biren Parekh |
| ● Palani Vel Rajan Arul Chelvan | ● Chintan Oza |
| ● Parcha Phaneendra Kumar | ● Debasis Sengupta |
| ● Roopali Srivastava | ● Diwakar Killamsetty |
| ● Saju Devassy | ● Krishna Komarabathini |
| ● Sanjeet Teri | ● Krishna Mohan Bandi |
| ● Satish Narasappa | ● Mahesh Singh |
| ● Srikanth PV | ● Manish Mohandas |
| ● Sripriya Narayanasamy | ● Parameswara Vara Prasad Ramoju |
| ● Sudhakar Ottalingam | ● Rakesh Swami |
| ● Sumit Sinha | ● Tushar Shah |
| ● Sundar Mahalingam | ● Venkata Durga Raja Sekhar Ganti |
| ● Venkat Raghavan Raghupathy | ● Vinay Udekar |

Level 3 Jury Members

- **Amol Pradhan**, global capability and enterprise agility leader, Agile CoC Leader, IBM Services
- **Dileep KV**, joint president and head – Business Transformation, Hindalco
- **Prof. Vijaya Dixit**, professor, IIM Ranchi
- **Lt. Col. L Shri Harsha**, past president, PMI Bangalore India Chapter, and chief operating officer, Sankalp Constructions Private Limited
- **Pawan Jaipuriar**, executive director and business head – PM, AECOM

Members - Leadership Team for Awards

- Shyamprakash Agrawal
- Vikram Kumar BT
- Visukumar Gopal
- LakshmiPratha Hari

Thank You, Volunteers and Partners

We would like to extend our special thanks to the volunteer team for their incredible dedication and hard work to make the Project Management South Asia Conference 2021 a grand success.

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1. Arun Malavalli
2. G. V. Ranganatham
3. Shobha Umesh
4. Sivaraman

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2. Prasanna S

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2. Monika Muddamshetty (PMI pearl city Hyderabad Chapter)
3. Koushik Srinivasan (PMI Chennai Chapter)

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What Our Esteemed Speakers and Delegates Have to Say

We have received highly encouraging responses from the conference speakers and delegates. The positive feedback speaks volumes of the hard work and commitment of the conference hosts towards ensuring quality content and replicating the in-person experience in a virtual environment to provide great value to our delegates.



LEE LAMBERT, FOUNDER, LAMBERT CONSULTING

This has been one of the best conferences I have attended in years. Congrats to the organizers and all the speakers. It is worth waking up at 4 am in Ohio. Thanks for including me.



RAMKUMAR NARAYANAN, VP TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, VMWARE INDIA

It was my pleasure to address the group, and thank you for the invitation. I was thrilled to see plants as gifts, and appreciate the gesture immensely. Keep up the good work.



V. S. ASHOK, CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER, BLUESTAR

Thank you for the help in making the session a flawless one, and for the plant as a gift, which was a thoughtful gesture. It was a pleasure to speak at the PMI South Asia Conference and also listen to many eminent speakers.



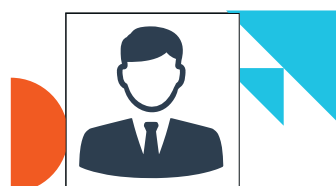
SRINIVAS K PAI, CO-FOUNDER & CEO, PACEROBOTICS

It was an honor and privilege to be a part of the event, and participate in the discussion. I would like to thank the entire team at PMI for this opportunity. I look forward to having a continued close association with PMI on our path towards growth and achieving our goal of making construction more efficient and sustainable.



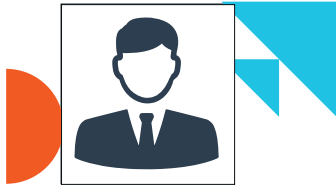
PROF. SATYA CHAKRAVARTHY, PROFESSOR, AEROSPACE ENGINEERING, IIT MADRAS, & CO-FOUNDER, EPLANE

I could see a lot of appreciation for my presentation while I was delivering it. It was quite encouraging to have such an enthusiastic audience. The conference was well-organized, and the coordinating team was very professional. Congratulations on holding a successful event.



DAMODAR EKBOTE

The session by the 'Risk Doctor' was one of the best sessions in this year's event. Thanks for the effort you have put in to make this event a great success.



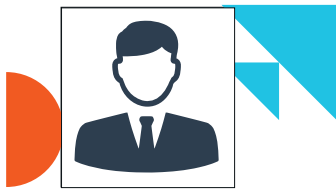
JITENDRA KUMAR DIXIT

Thank you for organizing such a wonderful two-day webinar. It was really informative and interesting.



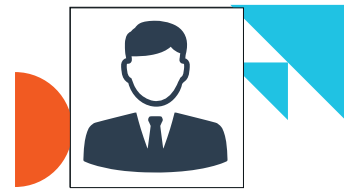
KISHORE B SETLUR, FREELANCE PRINCIPAL CONSULTING ADVISOR

A job well done by the PMI Bangalore Chapter and the PMI India family. Keep up the great work!



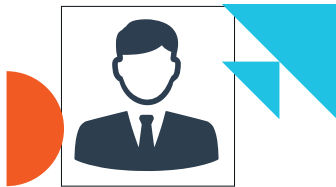
MAHES KUMAR P C

A salute to the PMI Bengaluru team for organizing a great event, and specifically to the event anchors, Koushik Srinivasan and Monika Muddamshetty. The sessions were diversified and informative. I would love to attend such sessions again in future. Thanks and congratulations to the PMI Bengaluru team.



RANJITH JANARDHANAN

It was a very well-organized conference. The conference platform was seamless and user-friendly. Needless to say, the sessions were informative and relevant.



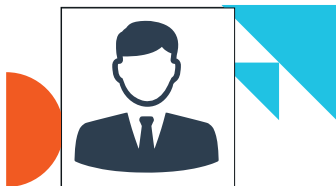
HARISH RAGHUPATRUNI, SENIOR PORTFOLIO MANAGER

Kudos to the organizers, speakers, sponsors, and the audience for a great two-day event.



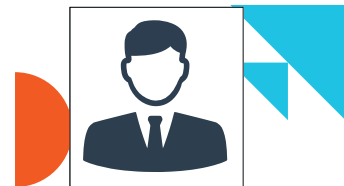
GEORGE SAMSON, SENIOR MANAGER - PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, DIVYASREE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED

The event was well-presented, and the quiz was interesting. The moderators were good at staying on schedule and communicating clearly.



SIVANARESH POCHAMREDDY, CONSULTANT

Each member of the volunteering team did a great job, and displayed amazing organizational skills to conduct an event at this scale.



UMASHANKAR GOTRAPPA, PROJECT MANAGER, YOKOGAWA

Thanks to the PMI Bangalore India Chapter for the two-day event, which led to many key takeaways.

Bringing Job Seekers and Recruiters Closer



Launching Career Connect

An exclusive job portal for project professionals



PMI South Asia has launched Career Connect, a job portal for project practitioners in the region. The portal will help employers connect with available talent in the project, program, and portfolio management from the PMI community.

This new initiative aims to bridge the existing gap between prospective employers and job seekers. PMI's Talent Gap Report stated that there is a persistent gap between the demand for project management-oriented skills and the availability of talent globally. This talent gap is likely to impact every region, resulting in a potential loss of up to US\$345.5 billion in global GDP by 2030. In South Asia, there is a potential risk of losing US\$ 28.1 billion.

The pandemic has presented new challenges to different industries and upended normal business operations. It has driven organizations to look at new ways of working for effective change management. Project practitioners with new capabilities are in urgent need to help organizations navigate change and meet their business priorities amid the crisis. This has led to high demand for niche skills in project professionals.

As per the report, the demand for project management professionals will reach 25 million by 2030. To keep up with the demand, 2.3 million professionals will be required in new project management positions every year.

Considering the current scenario, Career Connect is a significant contribution that can effectively address the growing disparity between the demand and availability of talent.

While announcing the launch during the Project Management South Asia Virtual Conference 2021, Dr. Srinivasan, regional managing director, PMI South Asia, said, "This free platform connects potential employers with project, program, and portfolio professionals in South Asia. This is just a humble way for us to give back to the profession during these difficult times."

The platform is a free connecting link for both employers and job seekers. It will cater exclusively to project management talent requirements in South Asia, including Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka. The portal will help to quickly narrow down the search process and results, and accurately assess jobseekers' competencies.

Besides, it will benefit many organizations in saving their time, effort, and money by sourcing competent project professionals from within the PMI community.

[Register here](#) to hire project managers or look for new job opportunities.



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