The Value of Project Professionalism

Andrew Bragg, 15 August 2014
Structure

- IPMA and APM
- Current UK context
- Turning point for the profession
- Big vision
- 5 Dimensions of Professionalism
- Summary & Questions.
IPMA

» World’s first international project management association (1965)
» First with role-based, competence-assessed certifications in PM
» IPMA standards leading the way for individuals, projects & organisations
» Particular focus on competence-based education, training & development
» Awards for Project Excellence
» International events & networking.
IPMA – a vibrant network
Association for Project Management

- Lead professional body for project management in UK
- Largest independent professional body of our kind in Europe
  - Leading member within International Project Management Association (IPMA)
- Individual members range across 4,000+ organisations
- Corporate members drawn from public, private and not-for-profit sectors:
  - across all industry sectors
- Charity, founded in 1972
- Campaigning for increased professionalism:
  - helping make it happen in practice.
APM charitable objective

“To advance the science, theory and practice of project and programme management for the public benefit”
APM membership by sector - indicative historical split

- Engineering & Construction: 80%
- Everything else: 20%
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Current context

- Informed by legacy
- Inspired by urgency.
Legacy

- Not recognised historically as a discrete profession:
  - Not historically a career of first choice
  - “Anybody could call themselves a project manager”
- Confusion of knowledge with competence.
The Major Projects Authority Annual Report

GMPP aggregated RAG distribution (with exemptions)
Download this data as a CSV file [1kb]

- Green: 16.8%
- Amber/Green: 11%
- Amber: 30.4%
- Amber/Red: 25.7%
- Red: 12%
- Exempt: 4.2%

42.5%
86% of projects fail to deliver against their budget, schedule, scope, quality and benefits baseline

December 2012
Legacy (cont’d)

- High-profile project failures
  - Standish Group CHAOS Reports

- Edward W. Merrow, IPMA World Congress 2011:
  - “As a profession, our track record of failure on major industrial projects is not acceptable
  - “This is true even though project management professionals are rarely the actual source of the failures”.

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Urgency

- Too many projects still fail
- Successful practice is too frequently ignored
- Professional project management skills are in short supply
- Failure often lies beyond the boundaries of traditional project management
- Relentless quest for enhanced shareholder value
- Increased media and public scrutiny.
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Sources: http://learninglegacy.independent.gov.uk (1 & 4) and www.olympic.org (2 & 3)
“What we have already learnt is that Britain is actually rather better at organising big projects than we often gave ourselves credit for...
“What we have already learnt is that Britain is actually rather better at organising big projects than we often gave ourselves credit for – on budget, on time and without the unwelcome discipline of dictatorship...”

Source: Business Secretary Vince Cable MP, The Times CEO Summit, June 2012
3. Analysis: building blocks for Games success

i. Vision

ii. Politics

iii. Institutional design and governance

iv. People and skills

v. The budget

vi. Programme and project management

vii. Risk and scrutiny
Government’s past performance on major projects has been poor, with around a third being delivered on time and on budget.

“Much of this failure has been because policy gets announced before implementation has been fully thought through, and because civil servants have not been given the skills and tools needed for good project management.”
Meeting the Challenge of Change
A capabilities plan for the Civil Service

House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts
Civil Service Reform
Thirteenth Report of Session 2013–14

Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence

Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 24 June 2013
Project management is viewed as a prestigious career path in the private sector
UK PM mandates Major Projects Authority

- Compile a Government portfolio of Major Projects
- Require, review and approve assurance plans for each major project
- Carry out assurance reviews where there is cause for concern
- Intervene directly on the delivery of failing major projects...
- Work with departments to build capability in programme and project management
- Publish an Annual Report on major projects.
Major Projects Authority

- Major Projects Leadership Academy:
  - “Sponsor’s passport to practice within government”
    - “… mindset, not methodology…”
“Mr Pitchford is widely lauded in Whitehall for getting a grip with Whitehall’s major projects and increasing the number that will be delivered on time and on budget.

“When he started in 2009 the proportion was 28 per cent. The figures …. should be at 90 per cent or 95 per cent by the general election.”

Source: *Daily Telegraph*, 15 August 2013
Increasingly a “profession of first choice”
Increasingly a “profession of first choice”

- Increase in undergraduate numbers
- More women in project management

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Practitioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>30%</td>
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*Source: Arras People Benchmark Report 2014*
Increasingly a “profession of first choice”

- UK public and private sector support for chartered status for project management:
  - Recognition and awareness
  - All stakeholders gain from “a rising tide which lifts all ships”.

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Kenna Kintrea, Head of Venues & Infrastructure, Olympic Delivery Authority

“project management rigour”
Getting the basics right

**Director of Rocket Science**

LiquidPlanner

Privately Held; 1-10 employees; Internet industry
March 2007 – March 2009 (2 years 1 month)

At LiquidPlanner I wrote technical specifications for the project management product. This included speaking with end users to discover use cases and requirements and to garner actionable feedback. I acted as the point person for patent filings, wrote white papers, and filled the role of company spokesperson/evangelist. I attended trade shows and conferences, speaking on panels and giving solo presentations on project management topics. This included speaking to investor groups (e.g. Bellingham Angels Group) and at pitch forums (e.g. DEMO conference, Under the Radar).
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“Unreasonable” challenge

No single fatality
“Goal Zero captures the belief that Shell can operate without fatalities or significant incidents despite the often difficult conditions in which Shell operates.”
“Unreasonable” challenge (cont’d)

1,000 m.p.h.

“This is an innovative and unreasonable aerospace innovation programme, funded by sponsorship and public donations.”

Richard Noble OBE
Big vision for project management ...

- Radical
- Aspirational
- Knowingly unreasonable

BUT

- Reflects what society expects
- Underpins APM’s campaign for professionalism
- Is all about collaboration
- Requires effective leadership at every level.
APM’s mission:
To provide leadership to the movement of committed organisations and individuals who share our passion for improving project outcomes.
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Based on concept of “profession”

“An occupation in which an individual uses an **intellectual skill** based on an established **body of knowledge and practice** to provide a specialised service in a defined area, exercising independent judgement in accordance with a **code of ethics** and in the public interest”

As defined by UK Interprofessional Group in Professional Regulation Position Statement 2002
A framework or methodology which defines the processes and practices for the organisation

A competence framework to map levels of knowledge and experience at appropriate levels of development and qualifications to provide developmental opportunities and recognition of competence at appropriate levels

A continuing professional development scheme that broadens horizons and builds understanding through sharing of good practice

Recognition that true professionals should be accountable for their actions and adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct

APM’s 5 Dimensions of Professionalism

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All 5 Dimensions, or nothing
Accountability

- The ethical dimension:
  - UK hallmark of professionalism.

“Stand up and be counted”
The relevance of the “Gershon Challenge”

Both the Major Projects Authority and a supplier-led review in mid-2012 identified problems with staff culture, including a “fortress mentality” within the programme.

The latter also reported that there was a culture of “good news” reporting that limited open discussion of risks and stifled challenge.
5 Dimensions Accredited Organisations

Corporate development programmes
P&PM In-house Academies
P&PM career frameworks
Communities of practice
Role profiles
APM – working collaboratively within IPMA
APM – working collaboratively with Finland

“Strategic intent that “Project profession to become a new cornerstone for national economy of Finland”

Timo Saros, CEO, Project Management Association, Finland
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