

The importance of Project Management Journals On the First Issue of PM World Journal

By Ana María Rodríguez, MSE, PMP
Senior Contributing Editor

Project Management is not a science. There are no perfect methodologies. And no training is ever enough to be ready to face all type of situations on Projects. For many skeptics, Project Management training is worthless, and methodologies are just a good business for consultants. And for sure, if we are not aware of the origins of Project Management knowledge, we could have unreal expectations on its application.

Project Management knowledge is based on best practices, practices that have shown to improve the performance of projects. The most popular publications on Project Management such as the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide, Project Management Institute), and IPMA Project Management Standard are based on best practices that are systematically compiled. Well known authors such as Harold Kerzner, Harvey Levine and others, share their best practices in their books. There is no genius in a lab inventing project management knowledge; it comes from real-life projects where good ideas turn into powerful tools.

Of course, we can have our own compendium of best practices, based on our experience. But, learning from others' experiences could make our work easier.

And here comes the importance of Project Management Journals, as a vehicle for knowledge. PM Journals let researchers share their ideas, students learn from experienced authors, and all project managers learn from others. Journals are a need for the growth of the profession.

More than 10 years ago I had the great opportunity to obtain a research assistantship from the Construction Industry Institute, while pursuing my master's degree at the University of Texas at Austin. Until that moment, I had never thought on the origins of Project Management knowledge. Following my advisor's suggestion, I dedicated more than a year of my life to write on "Planning and Scheduling a Multi-skilled workforce". Yes, many of you might be thinking this is an odd topic, and all I wrote were crazy ideas that I got from books in the library (at that time Internet was not so powerful as to bring me all the knowledge I needed without visiting a library!).

Well, it was a great experience. After defining the objectives of my research, I travelled to almost ten companies that count with a multi-skilled workforce (that is, resources are knowledgeable in more than one skill, they could be experienced carpenters and have basic knowledge on plumbing). I visited Ciambro company in Maine, and many important companies in Houston. I also visited a military facility in Ohio. I interviewed

project managers, planners and workers. Just to learn how do they organize their multi-skilled teams to get the best of their resources. After many months of work, the Thesis was ready and approved. And then, an article was ready for a Journal. And guess what, it was hard to find a journal interested in publishing it! My research was based on qualitative data, not statistically proven (I am glad to say that the profession has evolved and is now more interested on these types of research). Finally we got published. And some guys in England read my article and found it so useful for their work that they invited my advisor to lecture about it in a Congress. So, my work was really worthwhile, people were learning from my research.

And I am sure you are thinking (as I thought many times during my research period) “why bother so much?” Well, Project Management knowledge needs to grow, and the only way it could grow is to learn from what others do. Since we cannot meet all project managers to learn first-hand, we need Journals. And the best of all, online journals that allow us to learn from colleagues in so many different places in the world, that face similar issues as we do in our day-to-day work

Congratulations to David Pells and all the editorial team on the Launch of Project Management World Journal!

About the Author



ANA MARIA RODRIGUEZ

*Senior Contributing Editor
Rosario, Argentina*



Ana Maria Rodriguez is founder and manager of ERA Project Management, offering consulting services to the Engineering and Construction Industry in Rosario, Argentina, and is an adjunct professor of project management at the Universidad Nacional de Rosario. Colombian by birth, Ms. Rodriguez graduated with a Civil Engineering Degree from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, Colombia and from the University of Texas at Austin, USA with a Masters Degree in Construction Engineering and Project Management (MSE). She also holds the Project Management Professional (PMP) credential. Ms Rodriguez has implemented Project Management best practices and managed projects both in the government sector and in the engineering and construction private sector. Ms. Rodriguez is Vicepresident of PMI Buenos Aires Argentina Chapter (PMIBA) and founding member of PMI Nuevo Cuyo Chapter. Ms. Rodriguez welcomes contact at ana.rodriguez@erapm.com.ar, also at www.erapm.com.ar