

Interview with Simon Buehring

Managing Director
Knowledge Train



Interviewed by İpek Sahra Özgüler
Istanbul, Turkey

Simon Buehring is the founder and Managing Director of Knowledge Train, an accredited PRINCE2 training provider based in the UK. Simon regularly offers training courses and PRINCE2 project management in the UK and abroad and writes a blog on these topics. For over 28 years, Simon has worked on projects and has managed projects for a wide range of organizations, both in the UK and internationally, including the BBC, HSBC and IBM.

Ipek Sahra Özgüler (Özgüler): Hi Simon. Welcome to PMWJ. Please tell us about your recent project 'The challenges with agile', published by Knowledge Train in March 2017.

Simon Buehring (Buehring): [The challenges with agile](#) is a new ebook I developed to assist teams who are getting to grips with agile. It contains insights from 6 industry experts who share their most common agile challenges and suggestions on how to overcome them.

Özgüler: What is the main objective of conducting this project?

Buehring: As the Managing Director of Knowledge Train, an AgilePM training provider, I have noticed in recent years an increasing interest in learning how to manage agile projects. Agile is becoming more popular because organizations need to adapt to a fast-changing digital world. Implementing agile methods inevitably comes with challenges, so many organizations are reluctant to embrace such a transition.

Novices can gain a better understanding of agile methods by hearing different perspectives from experienced agile practitioner. Every agile practitioner has an experience or a lesson to share. I wanted to gather a collection of these stories from experienced practitioners to develop this ebook.

Özgüler: Who made contributions to this project?

Buehring: Emanuele Passera, Project Manager at TRE ALTAMIRA s.r.l. Learn more about him at his blog Emanuelepassera.com.

Andrea Fryrear, Agile Marketing Consultant, CCO of Fox Content and Editor-in-Chief at TheAgileMarketer.net. Top-ranked speaker and prolific author.

Martin Wickman, who has been working with dev teams for the last 20 years. He focusses on developing awesome software, whilst helping teams take steps towards agile goodness and increased productivity. Author of [Effective Agile Meetings](#) and he can be found on mwickman.com.

Mario Lucero, Agile Coach, Consultant and Scrum Trainer based in Santiago (Chile). He helps organizations deliver high quality software with predictability and happiness. Agilelucero.com.

Tanner Wortham, a U.S. Marine turned Software Engineer turned Agilist. Tanner helps teams improve by reflecting behaviours and helping them find simple solutions to complicated problems. Learn more at his blog at Spikesandstories.com.

Özgüler: Could you summarize the main challenges with agile?

Buehring: I think Tanner hit the nail on the head when he said “Scrum is easy. People are hard.” As I mentioned earlier, people can be reluctant to adopt organizational change due to the inevitable challenges change brings.

Andrea states that she has seen team members struggle with a team-centric approach and instead require individual praise to feel appreciated. Mario shares a similar story when departments might not share information or goals, more commonly known as ‘silo mentality’.

Emanuele advises on building an environment based on trust and respect, to manage issues with honesty and accountability. Martin seconds this and suggests that allowing your team to fail is important to their learning, growth and stability.

Barry talks about teams misunderstanding the [Agile Manifesto](#), suggesting that they allow the right side to enable the left rather than overruling it completely.

Özgüler: How can PMWJ readers find this ebook?

Beuhring: The eBook ‘*The challenges with agile*’ and the associated infographic can be downloaded on the Knowledge Train website:

<https://www.knowledgetrain.co.uk/resources/practice/agile-challenges>

About the Interviewer



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İpek Sahra Özgüler graduated from the Istanbul University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. As a project manager, she has more than 10 years' experience in various areas such as portfolio management, program management, project management, software management, business analysis. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014.

She has managed a variety of projects across manufacturing, defence, FMCG (Cola Cola), insurance (Euler Hermes), audit (Deloitte), telecommunication, ICT and aviation sectors and gained broader insights. In addition, she has worked as international correspondent for the *PM World Journal* since 2014.

İpek is based in Isanbul and can be contacted at ipeksahra@gmail.com. Her portfolio is published at the <http://ipeksahra.strikingly.com/>.