

## **A time of change: Reflections on my term as APM president <sup>1, 2</sup>**

David Waboso

Project management and change go hand in hand. The most successful projects – and project managers – are those that embrace change and seek out the new.

During my three years as Association for Project Management (APM) president, the pace of change we have seen in the profession and within APM itself has been truly staggering.

When I took on the role of president in 2016, my ambition was to enhance APM's status as a body that supports the needs of our profession, to further raise the profile of the profession at home and abroad.

Gaining our Royal Charter in 2017 was a significant step towards realising this ambition. Achieving chartered status is helping us to galvanise the profession and build recognition in the eyes of other professionals, organisations and the wider public. We have seen the creation of nearly 800 Chartered Project Professionals (ChPPs), including 495 within the first five months of the standard being announced in October 2018, according to the latest APM Member Review.

There are also other areas where I feel APM has made a real difference in building the strength of the profession:

- **Improving the delivery of the programmes and change that we manage, especially against the backdrop of increasing organisational and operational complexity.**

This has been supported by an increasing range of APM research and thought leadership, development of relevant qualifications and e-learning. In addition, the themes of our recent conferences and events will help ensure APM is increasingly seen as the leading source of knowledge and insights for the project profession.

- **The need to manage the unprecedented rate of technology change sweeping across our personal and working lives across all sectors.**

As a profession, we recognise this challenge and the continuing need to adapt. We can therefore provide the professional standards and framework to build a community of credible, capable and trusted professionals, delivering effective change in all sectors to all stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> This article appeared as a blog post on the APM website in July 2019. It is republished here with APM and the author's approval so the rest of the world can read his comments.

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- **The need for huge amounts of collaboration across the board, whether huge infrastructure programmes or in small and medium-sized enterprises.**

For APM, this has meant broadening and deepening links with like-minded bodies to promote collaboration and engagement. Also, achieving chartered status has allowed us to collaborate with an increasing range of bodies, such as recent events and research reports with the Institute for Government and PwC, our involvement with the CBI, and building our links internationally.

- **Building the talent and capability of the profession and developing a profession drawn from the widest possible range of talent.**

Becoming chartered was a key part of this. It is great to see the wide range of sectors that our recent Chartered Project Professionals (ChPPs) are drawn from. In addition to infrastructure, we now have a much broader range of sectors represented – over 50 in total.

We have made great progress in developing our links with schools, colleges and universities, to ensure that project management is a career that young people are aware of and can aspire to. We now have record numbers of student members – almost 7,000 – so we are creating a strong pipeline of talent into the profession.

We are also diversifying our reach. For example, last year's Women in Project Management Conference became APM's biggest ever conference, with over 500 attendees!

And of course, we are leveraging diversity of thought and organisational innovation by introducing our first female president, Sue Kershaw.

I believe that APM has made good progress on all these fronts in the past three years, but we must continuously strive to do more, as our profession will continue to face challenges. We must continue to listen, act, advocate and adapt in order to remain responsive, relevant and sustainable in a constantly changing world.

I am confident that my successor [Sue Kershaw](#) will serve as an example of how change can be leveraged to drive success. With her strong background and considerable expertise in project management, Sue is well placed to engage and inspire project professionals – and the wider public – to further enhance APM's status as a body that supports the needs of our profession.

**To learn more about the Association for Project Management, visit [www.apm.org.uk](http://www.apm.org.uk)**

## About the Author



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**David Waboso** served as president of APM from 2016 to 2019. He was awarded an APM Honorary Fellowship in 2011. He is an internationally renowned engineer and project manager who has worked on some of the world's most prestigious infrastructure programmes including Docklands Light Railway and the Jubilee Line Extension in the UK, projects for the European Rail Agency and World Bank funded infrastructure developments in Africa.

David has a passion for training and education. He has served on committees focusing on the teaching of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects in schools, speaks regularly to the media and radio/TV, and promotes opportunities for people of all backgrounds to realise their full potential in engineering and other professions.

David was awarded a CBE in 2013 for services to transport in London. He is a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers, a Fellow of the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers, and an Honorary Fellow of Association for Project Management. He also holds a Fellowship to the City and Guilds Institute.