

Project Management Update from Dublin



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Institute's Director General meets Edward de Bono.

Ed Naughton, Director General (DG) of the Institute of Project Management of Ireland, had the pleasure of meeting with Edward de Bono in Dublin in November this year at the headquarters of the institute.

Edward de Bono has been named one of the 250 people who have contributed most to mankind. He has chaired a special summit of Nobel Prize laureates, and is regarded as the leading international authority in the field of creative thinking, innovation, and the direct teaching of thinking as a skill.



Edward de Bono with Ed Naughton

During the short meeting the following three topics were addressed:

1. The World of Project Management Professional Organizations

The DG commenced the discussion by outlining to De Bono how the Institute was linked into the global network of national professional project management organizations.

This involved explaining some of the macro issues about the world of Project Management such as the structures of the two major professional bodies – PMI (USA) and IPMA (Zurich) – who dominate the discipline. He described how the PMI, a superb marketing organization was very much a centrist structure driven from Newton Sq., Pennsylvania with almost 500,000 certified professionals spread in chapters around the globe.

IPMA, on the other hand, was a federal structure representing the international interests of 57 countries across 6 continents allowing greater reflection of national needs and culture. He was interested in the fact that when the Council of Delegates from the 57 countries meet twice yearly the environment resembles that of a mini United Nations.

The ability to influence outcomes through politicking, negotiating and cajoling - without necessarily being a member of the executive board – also resonated with him. Having formerly being represented at the board level within IPMA, Ireland's current engagement is now more in this mode.

2. The Project Management Value Proposition

The discussion then moved on to the “value” proposition offered by the project management discipline.

The DG proposed that organizations cannot survive without successful projects and in order for them to deliver their strategy they need a strong project management competence. After all, the strategy is in essence comprised of a series or number of projects and unless they are successfully executed then the strategy cannot be implemented.

Project management is the strategic competency that enables organizations to deliver benefits and values. It is how an organization accomplishes its mission that provides a competitive advantage – this is the value proposition of project management.

Edward de Bono replied *"that value is multifaceted and has many dimensions - it is not enough to know that values are important. We need better ways of perceiving values, talking about them and assessing them. That is the best basis for action of any sort. The De Bono Six Value Medals framework gives you the tools to do this."*

The skills taught in Six Value Medals help people quickly but thoroughly scan for values, prioritize which values are the most important to pursue, and then ensure

that top values are addressed and maximized every step of the way. The key to making decisions that will deliver maximum value lies in creating a framework that is specific enough to add meaning but is also pliable enough to expand and contract with each unique challenge.

3. Creative Thinking and Project Management

De Bono is regarded as the leading international authority in the field of creative thinking, innovation, and the direct teaching of thinking as a skill. His techniques are used in companies like IBM and Du Pont. He believes that

“One’s ability as a Project Manager to effectively execute each project management phase and be proficient in the necessary project management knowledge is essential. Understanding the project phases and key project management knowledge then is the baseline.

“But there is also parallel and underlying need - if you will, a need that is right to the point of being an effective project manager. Your ability to think as well as lead your team in the process of solving problems, generating alternatives, and finding better means and cost efficiencies is at the heart of effective project management.”

About De Bono

Born in Malta, Edward de Bono was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and has held faculty appointments at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London and Harvard. He is an M.D. with a Ph.D. in psychology and physiology. Edward de Bono's medical background in biological information systems inspired and enabled him not only to teach thinking but also to design thinking methods.

"An inspiring man with brilliant ideas. de Bono never ceases to amaze with his clarity of thought." - Richard Branson

Although the Edward de Bono methods are based on a fundamental understanding of how the brain handles information, they are designed to be very simple and practical, and are utilized by people of all ages and professions, including Nobel Prize laureates and corporate executives at some of the world's largest organizations.

He has also written more than 80 books that have been translated into over 40 languages. Titles include classics such as *Six Thinking Hats*, *Lateral Thinking*, *Serious Creativity*, *Six Value Medals*, and *Simplicity*.

About the Author



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Ed Naughton, BE, C. Eng., F.I.E.I, IPMA-a, PMP, is the founder and current Director General of the Institute of Project Management of Ireland, the leading authority on the PM profession in Ireland. On the international front, Ed was responsible for initiating cooperation agreements with both the PMI (Project Management Institute) USA and the IPMA (International Project Management Association). He is Ireland's representative on the IPMA council of delegates, and a former Vice President-Marketing for the IPMA. He was also the first PMP registered in Ireland. Ed has researched, published and presented many articles and papers on project management and is the author of the Irish Project Management Competence Baseline. During his thirty year career, Ed has worked as a project manager and/or project management consultant on a large variety of high profile domestic and international assignments. Ed Naughton is a graduate of University College Dublin (BE, civil), a Fellow of the Institute of Engineers of Ireland, a Chartered Engineer (Ireland), a Professional Engineer in Canada, and holds an IPMA Level A certification. He is former founder and editor of the quarterly international publication "Project Management Practice". One of Ireland's most respected experts on the topic of modern project management, Ed is an executive advisor to PM World in Ireland. Ed Naughton lives in Dublin and can be contacted at ed@projectmanagement.ie.