

Project Management Update from Milan



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Interview with Ivan Calimani Chairman of IPMA Young Crew Italy

“Project management: a development opportunity for young professionals”

We hear more and more about Project Management every day and not only in our professional life; this can be a solution to the crisis and above all a way to give perspective to young people who are struggling to enter the job market. Here is an interview with Ivan Calimani, Chairman of IPMA Young Crew Italy, providing his point of view.



Ivan Calimani graduated from EDA in 2007; he worked for several years in London, dealing with the development and management of projects with social impact such as the construction of the main Islamic Cultural Center of the city. In 2010 he entered in Expo 2015 in Milan, where he currently manages programming work and international co-ordination with the many participating nations. He's within IPMA YC Italy Board since 2011 being responsible for the partnerships. In 2012 he was appointed as Chairman of IPMA YC Italy.

Luca Cavone (Luca): Ivan, let's start with IPMA Young Crew, tell us about it:

Ivan Calimani (Ivan): The Young Crew was founded as the youth section of the International Project Management Association, a non-profit organization operating in 55 countries around the world with the aim of seeking and promoting the development and standardization of a modern Project Management. As a youth section our mission is to create opportunities for exchange, share know-how and experience through participation in cultural initiatives and explore new areas in which to apply the Project Management methodologies to address the changes that the market is experiencing.



Luca: What are these changes?

Ivan: The market environment has changed compared to the past; there is a strong market and a heartfelt affirmation given increased competition in international markets of emerging countries.

The economic activities are changing to meet these demands; nowadays require cross-functional teams, management of multiculturalism, increased outsourcing, major stakeholders, compression of time and cost.

Luca: In your opinion, is Project management a response to these changes?

Ivan: The effective application of Project Management methodologies is essential for success on the market, especially in an ever-changing environment, with deadlines, budget constraints and increasingly stringent quality standards as we are facing now.

To meet these challenges, organizations need up to date knowledge on the best techniques of Project Management, methodologies and approaches that have proven their effectiveness in all the industries.

Luca: Can the Project Manager be considered as a key reference point?

Ivan: Of course to coordinate the efforts of many actors involved in the implementation of a project (contractors, consultants, partners, customers), it requires a single figure of coordination and decision, the Project Manager in fact. He has the task of managing the project team, coordinating all the resources of the project and is the person directly responsible for its implementation within the limits of time, cost and quality targets.

It is not normally figure in a hierarchical relationship to the members of the team, but a "professional" that performs a specific function for the benefit of the entire project team.

Luca: Can Project Management be the solution to all problems?

Ivan: Have a good preparation in project management does not mean not to have more problems; or even that the risks will disappear or that there will be no surprises. The value of a good Project Management is to have standard processes, instead of chasing the contingent facts.

Therefore, the Project Management is an art that requires flexibility and creativity, especially in the management of people.

A good Project Management methodology provides the frame of reference, processes, guidelines and techniques to manage people and the work load. A good methodology increases the chances of success and, therefore, offers benefits to the organization, to the project team and the Project Manager himself.

Luca: How do we understand if projects are managed effectively?

Ivan: The most obvious answer is to do a check on the achievement of objectives in terms of time, cost and quality, but simplifying I would suggest to ask yourself a few simple questions:

- When the project encountered major problems, were they proactively resolved as soon as possible, or is expected to occur?
- Are Stakeholders proactively managed, or uncertainty and conflicts caused by the lack of information about the project addressed with a reactive approach?
- Is the project scope managed, or cost and schedule overruns due to more work than expected or budgeted?
- Do you invest in the quality of your processes or solve problems when they occur, that is, when their solution costs more?

The right answers are trivial but, on reflection, if we realize that in reality in our own business we rarely act in the correct direction, a strong cultural change is required.

Luca: What does IPMA Young Crew to spread the culture of Project Management?

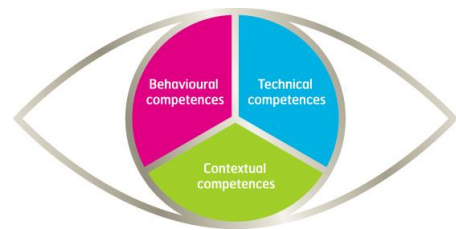
Ivan: Through a series of activities we try to offer our members education and training based on the transfer of experience, the 'interactivity and direct participation with the aim of meeting the specific needs of the participants.

To attract young professionals, we also use very informal events. The idea is to overcome the concept of the conference, where the communication is one-way, and open the theme in a dialogue between the presenter and the participants. To achieve this we organize the Cocktail Event, where the debate is combined with an aperitif; it becomes an opportunity for networking. Over the years it has become the type of event that has proved most successful.

In addition, Young Crew is a reality that operates in several countries of the world and the interaction that occurs during international events provides a great vehicle in the dissemination of best practices developed in each country.

Luca: One final question, what are the advantages of being a member IPMA in your work?

Ivan: My activity as a Project Manager takes place within a very complex system, Expo 2015. Within Expo 2015 S.p.A. organization, I work the program works exhibition site and it is easy to understand that here you will find all the elements of complexity listed above, to which is added, in view of the relations with various countries, special attention to the management of multiculturalism. On a similar type of project technical skills are not enough, but you have to put into practice behavioral skills (soft skills) and contextual. These are exactly the three areas of expertise that IPMA identifies as fundamental to a good Project Manager and which aims to develop during different training events that are organized.



About the Author



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Luca Cavone is a Consultant at JMAC Europe, the Consulting firm of the Japan Management Association. He is mainly focused to support companies in Innovation Management and Product Development Projects typical of R&D and Marketing areas, with an interdisciplinary background of the business processes. In JMAC Luca follows also the study and development of project management methodologies based on the application of Lean Thinking approach. Before joining JMAC he worked several years in the Aerospace industry. Since 2009 Luca has been actively involved with the International Project Management Association (IPMA); at that time he was between the founders of the Young Crew Italy and was appointed as first chairman. In 2011 he left the position to join the Young Crew Management Board, where he's currently Head of Membership and Responsible for the Young Project Manager of the Year award. Since 2010 Luca is also a member of the Executive Board of IPMA Italy. Luca is an international correspondent for PM World in Italy; he can be contacted at luca.cavone@tiscali.it.