

Projects & Project Management in Germany



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October is a very busy month for the GPM German Project Management Association, because two major events being held in Nuremberg, the “secret” Capital of PM in Germany. The first event is a PMO Day, which happened this year on October 27 with close to 400 participants. This event was held now for the fourth time and it was mainly dedicated to learning more about the practice of PMOs in the Germanic countries.

During the PMO Day, the results of an intensive PMO Survey were presented. GPM asked the University of Applied Sciences of Nürtingen and a related Research Institute to conduct this survey to elaborate on the practice of PMOs in the Germanic countries. More than 250 respondents from various industries and organisations answered a questionnaire. Obviously, the PMO is spread in organisations of different sizes - about 70% of small and medium-sized organisations use the PMO concept, whereas more than 80% of larger organisations use it. The larger organisations could have several PMOs set up, e.g. organisations with more than 10.000 employees reported to have on average 7.3 PMOs, supporting about 100 projects per PMO. Especially the Automotive Industry is using the PMO concept, significantly higher than other industries.

The PMO concept is highly accepted in most of the organisations, surprisingly the line managers are more in support of a PMO than the project managers, whom the PMO should help to manage their projects. There is a need for marketing the benefits to them and / or changing the image of a PMO to a positive one. The main contributions of a PMO is to avoid duplication of work, to better achieve the strategic goals as well as a sustainable development of an organisation. Unfortunately, a PMO and its leadership is not involved in the strategic decision making process. Here is room for improvement. Another area for improvement is how the contribution of a PMO to the success of an organisation is measured. Those PMOs, measuring quantitatively the contribution to success are highly accepted in an organisation, the others (not measuring at all or

measuring qualitatively) are struggling for acceptance. Last, not least, there are multiple tasks for a PMO to perform, depending on the maturity of the organisation and the size.

There are plans to perform an international survey on PMOs from next year on, using the network of IPMA Member Associations around the world.



Opening of the PMO Day in Nuremberg (Photo: R. Wagner)

The 31st PM Forum, the largest PM event in Central Europe, was held in Nuremberg, right after the PMO Day. Approximately 900 participants came to see a firework of keynotes, presentations and workshops regarding various aspects of project, multiple project and agile project management, exhibitions and a gala dinner with a prestigious Award ceremony made it again a great experience for them.

The first keynote was the project manager of the BMW I-series cars, the two new models I-3 and I-8 as electrical cars (<http://www.bmw.de/de/neufahrzeuge/bmw-i/8/2013/start.html>). He explained how difficult it could be to start an innovative project, even in an innovative company like BMW. Thus, change management and internal communication were key for success. Another topic the manager of BMW mentioned was the high impact of this new concept in regards to technology, materials, services, market approach and brand, to name only a few. On the other hand, he emphasized the high importance of such an innovative car for a car manufacturer to reduce emissions and to be a better corporate citizen.

During the Award Ceremony, the prestigious German Project Excellence Award was given to a Siemens project, the Modernisation of low-pressure turbines in Yonggwang (South Korea). The project manager and his team proved to be excellent in all regards of the Project Excellence Model, used for the International Project Excellence Awards as well as the German Project Excellence Awards. The team was excited and very proud to be on stage for Siemens.



Klaus Ahrweiler presenting the new BMW I-3 and I-8 (Photo: R. Wagner)

The keynote of Bruce Dickinson ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce Dickinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Dickinson)) was certainly another highlight. The musician (Iron Maiden) and entrepreneur spoke about the topic “Rock your business – what project managers could learn from a Heavy Metal Star.” He inspired the audience by talking about his own life, successes and challenges, and how he turned them into successes again. It’s always great gaining insights from other areas than from project management and use these for improving the profession.



Bruce Dickinson talking during the 31 PM Forum of GPM (Photo: R. Wagner)

About the Author



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Reinhard Wagner is an International Correspondent for **PM World Journal** in Germany. He is also CEO of Projektivisten GmbH, a service provider specialized in the field of project, program and portfolio management. He studied Electrical Engineering and Business Administration in Germany and the USA and looks back to more than 27 years of project related work and leadership experience. His career started in the German Air Force, where he served as Air Surveillance Officer in NATO Air Defense performing projects like the establishment of a Systems Operations Center. 1995 he entered the Automotive Industry and managed several major design projects and programmes, developed specific methodology for Automotive Engineering activities and published the first book on Project Management in Automotive Industry. In 2002 he founded a Special Interest Group for Automotive Project Management within GPM German Project Management Association and leads these activities since then. In 2006 he entered the Executive Board of GPM being responsible for all R&E activities as well as the International affairs. Today he is Chairman of the Executive Board. As Chairman of the respective DIN committee for the development of PM standards he is responsible for several standardization projects in Germany. From 2007 until 2012 he acted as working group Convenor in ISO for the development of ISO 21500 Guidance on Project Management. Within GPM and IPMA, he developed tools for the assessment and certification of organisations (e.g. GPM3 and IPMA Delta) and acts as Lead Assessor for PM-ZERT and IPMA in this field. Reinhard Wagner teaches project management at different Universities in Germany. He has published more than 150 books and articles, speaks to national and international audiences and is President elect of IPMA International Project Management Association. Reinhard is living close to Munich, Bavaria and can be contacted via rw@projektivisten.com.