

## **Interview with Nejat Murat Erkan**

PMI Turkey – VP Marketing, PR, Sponsorship and Outreach  
and PMIef Turkey Liaison



***Interviewed by İpek Sahra Özgüler***  
*Istanbul, Turkey*

Nejat Murat Erkan started out his career as a business consultant in the USA. In the following years, he continued his career in pharmaceutical industry. Initially, he worked as a Project Leader in Health Marketing at GlaxoSmithKline and later on, he worked as a Project Manager in the field of allergy and immunology at Greer Laboratories in North Carolina. After spending 7 years in USA, he moved back to Turkey in 2000. After his return, he continued his career in the telecommunication industry at Vodafone (Telsim) Turkey. In 2005, he started to work at the leading GSM operator Turkcell, as Program Manager and he managed multinational/multi-million dollar Telco/IT projects. In April 2011, he started to work as ICT Key Account Manager for Turkcell Group Companies Best in Belarus and Astelit in Ukraine. Since August 2014, he is working as Turkcell Technology Sales & Marketing Manager.

Mr. Erkan holds a Bachelor of Science degree (BScE) from Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Campbell University, USA. He is a member of Project Management Institute and currently he is serving as the VP of Marketing & PR & Sponsorship and Outreach for the PMI Turkey Chapter. He is the College of Performance Management-Global Advisory Committee representative and first PMI EVM certified person in Turkey.

He gained his PMP certification in September 2005. He is keeping his certification valid by volunteering at PMI activities and lecturing at universities. He is the past president of IPYD (Istanbul Project Management Association) and in the last years he managed the PMI TR PM Summit 2014 Project (which was the largest project management conference ever done in Turkey). He also lectures project

management courses at Istanbul Technical University. In August 2014, he gained his CPCC «Certified Professional Co-Active Coach» certificate and coaches professionals.

Mr. Erkan was born in 1970 in Istanbul. He speaks fluent Turkish, English and French and speaks basic Spanish and Russian. He believes in "life time learning".

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**İpek Sahra Özgüler (Özgüler):** In Turkey what is the mosaic of project managers consist of?

**Nejat Murat Erkan (Erkan):** In Turkey there are about 3600-3800 certified project managers from different industries. Approximately 2400 of them are PMI certified. Among this profile roughly 42% are coming from telco, IT and banking industries, 13% from consulting and training industries and 11% from defense and 5% from construction industries. And 43% of Turkish the population (82 mio people) are in the age range between 25-54 years old and 41% of the population are in the range between 0-24 years old. That is why project management is a very good skill set to invest for a nation with the young generation.

**Özgüler:** Which are the key players in the project management industries in Turkey?

**Erkan:** There are several not for profit organizations in the 3 major cities in Turkey. In the order of project managers size these cities are Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Istanbul headquarters 4, Ankara headquarters 3 not for profit project management association. Among all of these associations, PMI Turkey has the largest active member base with 40+ currently task assigned volunteers.

**Özgüler:** How do you see the future of project management profession and its techniques in Turkey?

**Erkan:** Well, as I mentioned above, Turkey has a great potential to raise a new generation with a solid project management knowledge. Turkish people are very adaptive, quick learner and practical. They like to try new things. When I became PMP in 2005, there were around 20 project managers and 7-8 PMPs in my company. Now, there are 50+ project managers, and more 50% of them are PMPs or pursuing a PMI certification. And some of them are getting secondary expertise in scheduling, risk, agile, Kanban and earned value management.

**Özgüler:** What are some of the biggest risks and challenges facing project managers in Turkey?

**Erkan:** Even though project management is a fairly old profession in the world, it is a quite new profession in Turkey. So, this shelters pros and cons. Many businesses have many projects. But most of them do not have enough experienced project managers and specifically the certified ones. And moreover, many entrepreneurs/business owners do not really know what project management is and its methodologies. This is good part for not for profit project management associations as our job is to create awareness to them and to prove the benefit of project management profession for their business. Because I truly believe in the mindset of project management and its universality.

**Özgüler:** In Turkey to create the awareness in the project management profession that you mention above, as a leader of PMI TR, what are the three major things you did this year?

**Erkan:** It has been more than 10 years that I am volunteering for the growth of project management profession. I managed several large scale conferences, I taught volunteering to young generations and I gave several project management seminars in universities. What satisfies me, what I did this year is:

- 1) I became the bridge for joining the five PMI Chapters (Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine) in a single conference to motivate collaboration in the region
- 2) I created the awareness of the full aspects of the PMIef and reached out to disabled communities in Turkey
- 3) I challenged the capacities of the all Turkish project management associations to attend with the maximum member to the International Project Management Day which will be held on 3 November 2016. The day is not lived yet, as a project manager, I challenge myself that the IPMD'16 to be the most attended and to be most satisfied one ever done in Turkey.

## About the Interviewer



### **İpek Sahra Özgüler**

Istanbul, Turkey



**İpek Sahra Özgüler** graduated from the Istanbul University with the Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014. She works as international correspondent for the PMWJ in Turkey. Before joining PMWJ, she worked for global multinational companies and leading local companies such as Coca Cola, Deloitte, Turkcell Superonline, Havelsan and TAV IT. Over the years, she has gained extensive experience in managing various medium and large scale projects, programs and portfolios.

Her article named “When I Decided to Develop Multi Processing Project Manager’s System” was published in the book “*A Day in the Life of a Project Manager*”. She has published several articles in the *PM World Journal* and one in PMI’s *PM Network* magazine. İpek is actively involved in sailing, writing and discovering new cultures.

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