

Interview with Jennifer Young Baker

President, PMI Metrolina Chapter
Project Management Institute



Interviewed by İpek Sahra Özgüler
Istanbul, Turkey

Jennifer Young Banker is curriculum developer and adjunct faculty member at the University of Southern California and has been managing projects, programs, portfolios and PMOs for nearly 30 years in many different industry sectors. Within the Project Management Institute (PMI), she is currently serving as President of the PMI Metrolina Chapter and the Regional Mentor for the Mid-Atlantic States (Region 5) in the United States. In 2015, PMI Metrolina won the Chapter of the Year award. Jennifer was in the first Masters of Project Management Class at Northeastern University and also holds PMP, PgMP, ITIL, BRMP and SSMBB certifications. She had the honor of graduating from the PMI Leadership Institute Master Class in 2015. She is also very actively involved in two other non-profit organizations. In addition to my very full professional life, she owns a small bakery and catering company. Jennifer lives in North Carolina with her husband and two Yorkies (George Jr. and Frankie) with a large extended family nearby.

Note: this interview was conducted at the conclusion of the 2017 PMI Turkey Chapter's PM Summit conference in Ankara.

Ipek Sahra Özgüler (Özgüler): *Good morning Jennifer. Overall, how was the PM Summit for you this year?*

Jennifer Young Baker (Baker): I really enjoyed the summit. I have been to many of these events and can safely say that it was one of the best.

Ozguler: *What were the highlights in the PM summit?*

Baker: I really enjoyed the sessions from Antonio Nieto-Rodriguez and Kevin Ciccotti. Both were very informative and filled with important details about how we live and work.

Ozguler: *What is your main topic in your speech? Please give detail information.*

Baker: I spoke at 2 sessions. The first session was called “A PM’s Guide to Chaos” which discussed factors that lead to chaos within projects. Many of these elements centered on project communication and what PMs could do to be clear, transparent and concise to ease the feelings of chaos with the project team members and stakeholders. The second session was called “Managing Leadership” which focused on managing the relationships with sponsors and company leaders to improve successful project outcomes. This session discussed things that PMs could do to improve the relationship such as providing status and information in value terms for those leaders.

Ozguler: *As you know, the main topic of PM Summit is “Human Factors in Project Management”. What is the relationship between human factors and project management?*

Baker: Project management is all about delivering value and building relationships. This means that PMs need to understand what others perceive as valuable and what they need to do to foster relationships throughout the process. It is impossible to do our job as a PM without understanding the human factors.

Ozguler: *What do you see for the future in terms of that? Why human factors so important in project management?*

Baker: Understanding and utilizing human factors are the core of a PM’s role. The projects that are done and the way they are done but the human factor will not change.

Ozguler: *In the future, robots are expected to replace humans in almost every field of work. How will the project management be affected from this transformation?*

Baker: One of the articles that I have read on the topic estimate that 50% of the current jobs will be replaced with some form of artificial intelligence in the next 10 years. Another estimate was 60% of jobs over the next 20 years would be replaced. Most sources agree that there are some jobs that require a high level of human interaction in order to be successful. Those are the jobs that will be less impacted – but all jobs will be impacted. Look at our current lives, technology proliferation is everywhere. Many of my peers spent at least part of their childhood without a television and all phones had a cord – now we have a portable phone that we watch television on. Devices within our home are now connected to the internet. We can work without going into an office. Life will change – a PM’s job is to implement that change.

About the Interviewer



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İpek Sahra Özgüler graduated from the Istanbul University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. As a project manager, she has more than 10 years' experience in various areas such as portfolio management, program management, project management, software management, business analysis. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014.

She has managed a variety of projects across manufacturing, defence, FMCG (Cola Cola), insurance (Euler Hermes), audit (Deloitte), telecommunication, ICT and aviation sectors and gained broader insights. In addition, she has worked as international correspondent for the *PM World Journal* since 2014.

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