

## ***From a Different Angle: Competitive Programs, Winning, Not Losing and... Welcome to the March edition of the PM World Journal***

*David Pells, Managing Editor*

Welcome to the March 2018 edition of the **PM World Journal** (PMWJ), the 68<sup>th</sup> uninterrupted monthly edition. This edition contains **37** original articles, papers and other works by **40** different authors in **15** different countries. News articles about projects and project management around the world are also included. Since the primary mission of this journal is to support the global sharing of knowledge, please share this month's edition with others in your network, wherever in the world they may be.

For the past year I have used this space to discuss important trends or issues that I see as journal editor. This month, as another political season gets underway in the United States and other countries (and as Democracies and Democratic institutions seem to be under attack in so many places), I have been thinking about the role of project management in politics. Or more correctly, in political campaigns! Aren't political campaigns projects, with concrete end goals, schedules, budgets, stakeholders and many other characteristics of projects? I started thinking about the contribution that professional project management might make to the campaign of someone running for political office, at the local, state or national level. I discussed it with my wife, how might I help our favorite candidate for US senate this year?

Then I realized that the opposition candidate's political campaign might well be using their own expert project management resources, and how all candidates for political office either win or lose elections. That led to thoughts about project management in sports and other competitive industries and situations, including in many businesses. There is much written and discussed these days about project successes and failures; how do those discussions relate to projects in politics and sports where there are so many losers. Are those projects failures? It occurred to me that it's not so straightforward and perhaps there are different ways to think about all of this. So here goes.

### **Political Campaigns as Projects and Programs**

At first glance, a political campaign looks like a classic project, with beginning and end, scope of work, schedule, budget, resources, risks, contracting and procurement requirements and many leadership, stakeholder and team building issues. Classic project planning and management techniques would seem applicable, with agility also required in today's fast paced environment. On closer examination though, we can see some unusual and complicating factors. For example, a majority of the project (campaign) team members will be temporary participants, with many external resources and volunteers. In addition, the campaign management (project/program) team will need knowledge and experience that many project managers may not readily have – fund raising, legal and regulatory knowledge, leading/coordinating volunteers, experience with other political campaigns, political and economic knowledge, governance and policy knowledge, marketing and social networking experience, etc. That said, it still looks like a project, at least for campaigns for local elections.

On political campaigns for statewide or national offices, things get more complex in a hurry. Larger campaigns take more of everything – more people, more money, more knowledge and experience, and usually much more time. A campaign for a state-wide election will more closely resemble a program, with multiple projects related to volunteers, ICT, marketing, events (both

physical and on media), financing (events, campaigns, other), stakeholders (events, communications, analysis), research (issues, stakeholders, voting trends, opinion polls, opposition and competitive research). Voter registration issues will be more important, along with campaign-related regulations, laws, policies or issues.

Campaigns for national office are major programs, with sub-programs, portfolios of projects and multiple project teams. In the United States and most other countries, a national campaign requires ballot registration in every voting district or state, office and volunteer mobilization in every state (50-100 in the USA), massive fund-raising initiatives, multiple multi-media marketing projects, multiple research projects, information and knowledge about a wide range of issues. And national campaigns take a long time, often over several years. If a candidate is proposing significant policy change, then the program will resemble an organizational change program and may require changes in the conditions or environment surrounding the campaign itself. For example, laws and regulations may need to change independent of the campaign itself; public opinion might need to be influenced; impact on other factors may need to be considered, planned for or incorporated into the campaign.

While politicians and campaign managers could well benefit significantly from deeper project management knowledge, that is nowhere near enough to win a political campaign. The requirements are closer to general and strategic management; the leaders at the top need to have broad and long range perspective on many topics, including existing and future laws and regulations affecting key stakeholders, the government or political office in question, business and the economy, and citizens at large. There is a need for business, financial, human resources, information technology and marketing expertise (and experience).

More importantly, major change programs require strong leadership at the top. A candidate and her or his campaign manager must demonstrate such leadership skills as passion, motivation, effective communication, empathy, knowledge and capacity. Personality and appearance also matter as campaigns introduce candidates to citizens for the first time.

### **Project and Program Management in Competitive Sports**

I have not studied project management in sports too much, but I think the situation is similar. There are many projects related to sports, at the team, organization, national and international levels. But with respect to competitive sports, my guess is that most serious efforts to create winning teams involve programs. An organization or team in any sport that wants to improve its future competitive performance may need to launch multiple projects related to recruitment, coaching, training, facilities, financing, marketing, alumni relations, public relations, information processing, research and other topics. Such a program will require a variety of resources, expertise, experience and knowledge.

An example that I am familiar with is Washington State University in the United States. About ten years ago, university leadership decided to take steps to improve the competitive performance of their men's football team, a sport that can generate a great deal of income for U.S. universities. They hired a well-known and previously successful (and expensive) coach who then hired an entire new assistance coaching staff, and invested in new football stadium, new practice and training facilities, new office facilities, and new ICT systems. They launched new marketing, public outreach and media relations campaigns. The results have been very successful, as their team now competes for league championships. This program had a long timeframe, many projects and required classic program management – strategic planning, stakeholder relations, life cycle management, etc., and leadership, management and industry-specific expertise.

I think a similar process is needed in any competitive sport where performance improvement is desired. That is, many sub-projects will be related to supporting the end goals, and some not directly related to the actual performance of the team. The context and environment may often need to be improved; more financing may be required, more expertise, knowledge and experience added. And a long term perspective and plan may be essential for ultimate success.

### **Competitive Projects (Programs) in Business**

Thousands of projects are launched each year in hundreds of companies in competitive industries to create new products and services, which will compete in the marketplace against other products and services. I think those projects are very similar to projects in competitive sports, and may be better planned and organized as programs. The program leadership should have a good understanding of the industry and market conditions; the program will undoubtedly need information, technology and other resources outside of the project itself, and most likely will require external projects to be launched to provide additional information, knowledge or conditions. And certainly market entrée and performance will require attention, support and possibly other projects after a new product or services is introduced. Planning and leadership should be focused on the product or service lifecycle, in other words long term and consistent with program management.

### **Common Success Factors**

In considering project and program management in competitive industries, I have gained new appreciation for PMI's "golden triangle" of leadership, technical project management and strategic/general management knowledge and capabilities. While expertise in project management should be extremely useful for program and project teams in politics, sports and other competitive situations, it's nowhere near enough. Strategic planning is required; general management knowledge is often needed related to finance, marketing, ICT, human relations, and laws and regulations. Most importantly, competent, passionate, skillful and visible leadership is required for success. It seems to me that every winning sports team, every winning politician, every successful organization has these characteristics.

### **How Professional Program Management can help avoid Losing**

Now, about the winning and losing aspect of competitive programs and projects. Obviously, not all political candidates, sports teams and new products win the top prize. This is especially true where there is only one top winner in a competition – victorious candidate, race winner, national champion, Olympic champion, market leader. So how can so many individuals and organizations avoid feeling like losers when they end up on the short end of the election, score, season or marketplace? The answer can be found, in my opinion, in modern program benefits realization management (BRM).

Effective BRM includes carefully establishing strategic objectives defined in terms of measurable outcomes and benefits to key stakeholders. If the only strategic goal is to win, then losing will be the more likely outcome. But if strategic goals include such benefits as increased revenues or income; team, employee or public satisfaction (or well-being); personal, organizational or brand recognition and/or reputation; educational opportunities or results; or other positive outcomes, then the program will indeed be successful.

I'm sure much more can be written about all of this, so I would like to encourage some research and feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions related to project management in politics, sports or competitive industries and environments, please let me know. I would love to publish some articles and papers on this topic or add some resources to the PM World Library.

## Now - This month in the Journal

This is another full edition of the PMWJ with good works from around the world. We begin with three Interviews. İpek Sahra Özgüler, International Correspondent for the PMWJ in Istanbul, has interviewed two interesting professional leaders, IPMA President Jesus Martinez-Almela and Rich Maltzman, popular American author, educator and promoter of sustainable (green) project management. Ömer Berkay Dağlı, recent research intern for the PMWL in Southampton, UK, has interviewed the director of the MSc Programme at SBS, Dr. Ramesh Vahidi. These are interesting interviews this month.

8 Featured Papers are included this month, including three from Nigeria and one each from Australia, India, South Africa, UAE and the USA. Featured papers are serious research-based, fully referenced original works that contribute to the global PM body of knowledge, so please give them a look and a possible read.

Three series articles are included this month. Darren Dalcher in UK has facilitated another interesting 'Advances in Project Management' article, this month by Routledge author David Bentley. Read Darren's interesting introductory article titled "*The map is not the territory: musings on complexity, people and models.*" Then read David's article titled "*Choosing to Change*", based on his 2018 Routledge book titled *Choosing to Change – an alternative understanding of Change Management*. The third series article is "*Benefits Maps You Can Count On*," the first full article in his series on "*Applying Earned Benefit Management*" by Kik Piney in France (series based on his 2017 book titled *Earned Benefit Program Management*).

One advisory article and one commentary are included this month. The advisory by American author Evan Piekara is on the topic of "managing millennials", something we've heard a lot about over the last few years. Evan has contributed a well-written advisory piece on how to leverage some new age habits, from his own (millennial) perspective. The commentary is a second article this month from Kik Piney in France, titled "*Principles AND Processes*", in which he pointedly discusses some of the recent changes in PMI's PMBOK Guide. We thought Kik's article important enough to include this month; both of these articles are very good.

We have again published a range of papers by graduate students attending SKEMA Business School in France, at their Lille and Paris campuses. This month we include 11 excellent papers on a variety of topics. At first glance some of these papers don't appear to be directly related to project or programme management, but you might be surprised and actually learn something (as I have). We congratulate these students on their good works and their publication in the journal. Please read these papers, for most of them their first published works.

Informative reports are again included this month from Alfonso Bucero in Spain and Jouko Vaskimo in Finland. Most significantly, we include the first report from Massimo Pirozzi, new International Correspondent for the PMWJ in Italy. His report describes the history and status of the PM profession in Italy, and the Instituto Italiano di Project Management (ISIPM), based on Roma. It's very informative.

Six book reviews are also included this month, including a first book review from the Alamo PMI Chapter in San Antonio, Texas, the second from the PMI Silver Spring Maryland chapter and four from PMI Dallas chapter members. We now have cooperative book review programs with these three PMI chapters, so authors, books and publishers will now receive even more visibility in the PMWJ.

All of the articles, papers, reports and reviews included in the PMWJ represent significant work by the authors, and some contain important new knowledge. Please read those of interest to you, then share them with others. Sharing knowledge multiplies the impact of good ideas, and some ideas (like projects) can change the world.

The rest of this article is our monthly boilerplate. Please read if this is your first time with the PMWJ or read again if you are a regular; it's important for sustaining this publication.

## **Share Your Experience, Research and Knowledge**

We invite you to share your own experience, knowledge or research results related to program and project management. A wide variety of original works are included in the PMWJ each month. Share knowledge and gain visibility for yourself and your organization; publish a paper or article in the PMWJ. See our [Calls for Papers](#) and review the [Author Guidelines](#) for the journal. Then just email your original work to [editor@pworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@pworldjournal.net). The PMWJ is not a refereed journal; however we can publish your work quickly (for sharing with thousands of readers around the world and for immediate reference). The PMWJ is also indexed by EBSCO, which means that your work can also be read and referenced by students and researchers around the world long into the future.

## **Opportunities to get involved**

If you are interested in becoming a regular contributor, consider becoming an **International Correspondent**. Correspondents receive visibility in the PMWJ, introductions to others, many opportunities to author works for the journal and free membership in the PM World Library. For more, visit <http://pworldjournal.net/team/international-correspondents/>.

If you are teaching project management at a college or university, or an active academic leader or researcher in the P/PM field, our "Offer for Students of Project Management" provides three areas of potential interest to students – publishing opportunities, free library memberships and a virtual research internship. We will soon introduce a Research Scholar opportunity. For information about these programs, please contact [info@pworldlibrary.net](mailto:info@pworldlibrary.net).

If you are a student of project management at an accredited university, consider our virtual project **research internship** program. [Learn about our interns here](#). See opportunities for students at <http://pworldlibrary.net/students/>. The PMWL supports continuous learning in the field of program and project management but is proving especially useful for students. Help us create a global resource; visit [www.pworldlibrary.net](http://www.pworldlibrary.net) and become a member.

## **Thanks to Authors and Sponsors**

I want to thank the authors who contributed to this edition of the PMWJ. Most have included an email address at the end of her or his author profile. If you find an article or paper useful or interesting, let the author know. Better yet, ask questions, start a discussion, share information and knowledge. We also want to thank our advisors, correspondents and contributing editors around the world. These teams include leaders from academic and professional organizations in around 50 countries.

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## Share it forward

If you found something interesting in the PMWJ this month, please **SHARE IT FORWARD** - send the link to colleagues, co-workers or friends. If you have knowledge or a story to share, submit an article or paper for publication. We are especially interested in those that contribute to solving global problems. Thank you for reading this month's edition of the PMWJ, have a great month and...

Good luck with your projects!

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## About the Author



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**David L. Pells** is Managing Editor of the **PM World Journal** ([www.peworldjournal.net](http://www.peworldjournal.net)) and Managing Director of the PM World Library ([www.peworldlibrary.net](http://www.peworldlibrary.net)). David is an internationally recognized leader in the field of professional project management with more than 35 years of experience on a variety of programs and projects, including engineering, construction, energy, defense, transit, technology and nuclear security, and project sizes ranging from thousands to billions of dollars. He has been an active professional leader in the United States since the 1980s, serving on the board of directors of the Project Management Institute (PMI®) twice. He was founder and chair of the Global Project Management Forum (1995-2000), an annual meeting of leaders of PM associations from around the world.

David was awarded PMI's Person of the Year award in 1998 and Fellow Award, PMI's highest honor, in 1999. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Association for Project Management (APM) in the UK; Project Management Associates (PMA - India); and Russian Project Management Association. He was made an honorary member of the Project Management Association of Nepal in 2010. From June 2006 until March 2012, he was the managing editor of the *PM World Today* eJournal. He occasionally provides high level advisory services for major programs, global organizations and the U.S. federal government. David has a BA in Business Administration from the University of Washington and a Master's degree in business from Idaho State University in the USA. He has published widely and spoken at conferences and events worldwide.

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