

## **Project Management Skills – a Life Changer<sup>1</sup>**

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I commenced studying Project Management only in 2015 and I have to honestly confess that since then the way I look at and do things has totally changed for the better. I am now able to properly organise my home, work as well as school projects and activities. I have now taught myself that each and every small task or activity is a project on its own, wherein all the 10 PMBOK Knowledge areas are applied. This has helped me achieve all my targets smoothly, with only a few inevitable challenges. Some of my colleagues at work were amazed at the way I organise my work and were curious to know where that ability stemmed from and I had to happily refer them for trainings in project management. Those who took my advice are equally doing good work and a historical comparison can tell that project management training caused some of the improvements.

A module called Personal Development Planning (PDP) incorporated in Project Management Zimbabwe (PMZ)'s learning programmes was my first eye-opener. This module helped me view my own life journey as a project on its own. The only difference between life and other projects is that the project finish date is unknown: we are only aware of our dates of birth and unaware of our dates of death although we can make probabilistic predictions based on life expectancy and related statistics. I am therefore now successfully applying all the PMBOK's ten knowledge areas from Project Integration Management to Project Stakeholder Management and it is interesting. It is only after the PDP module when I did my first SWAIN Analysis, which analysis is now instrumental in directing my personal development plan. When necessary, I update my SWAIN Analysis to keep it real and live.

At work, I make sure I diarise a list of all my daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly tasks. These tasks are spiced with relevant details such as timelines and priority lists. I also make sure that I identify, assess and attempt to control all possible risks so that I exploit positive risks and attempt to mitigate negative risks that may hamper the successful completion of my tasks. This culture has earned me a reputational trademark at work and all lower level projects that need an organised coordination are given to me by my superiors for coordination. This is helping me to gradually grow as an aspiring project manager because I regularly apply the project management methodology. I am optimistic that, all things being equal, I will be able to work from the Modernisation and Projects Office (MPO) at my organisation. The MPO is our analogy of the Project Management Office (PMO).

When you are really a passionate project manager, you begin to be so addicted to the project management methodology that you want even to apply project management skills to natural processes such as sleeping. Project management skills have helped me get my home place organised. I have managed to apply project management skills to my personal income generation projects, family development as well as all other home

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activities and tasks. I am beginning to informally instil a culture of project management at home and this helping everyone to get organised.

Project management is equally applicable in career development and that is where PDP directly comes in. As someone with strong interests in research and academic work, I always find efficient and effective ways to develop my career path and project management skills are helping me in managing this personal development project. At school, it is non-contentious that project management skills help both the teacher and the learner. As a student, knowledge of project management helps me stand out among the rest. I also experience the teacher side at my workplace during times when I do workshop presentations and trainings to clients and fellow workmates.

The importance of quality to individuals or organisations cannot be overemphasized. Proper application of the project management methodology is a quality assurance mechanism on its own. Personally, I had been able to produce quality output at home, work and school and all this is attributable to the project management skills that I acquired. Skills such as avoiding scope creep and gold plating as well as well-planned risk management always help me conform to quality requirements.

With project management, we can change the world. It was going to be a wonderful world if everyone is a project manager at their own occupation. Many people think that project management is only for specific industries such as the construction industry. No; project management is everywhere and is for everyone. When I am given an opportunity to address a group of people, I intentionally and always encourage the audience to apply the project management methodology where necessary. However, the proper project management methodology requires suitable training with the suitable institution.

In the dynamic world that we are living in, those who are trained in project management also ought to continue keeping abreast with current developments.

## About the Author



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**Tasiyana Siavhundu** is a member of Project Management Zimbabwe (PMZ) with qualifications and experience in Project Management, Economics, Taxation as well as Investments and Portfolio Management. He is a holder of a B.Sc. Honours Degree in Economics, Master of Commerce Degree in Economics, Post-Graduate Diploma in Project Management, Executive Certificate in Investments and Portfolio Management, Advanced Certificate in Taxation and many other qualifications.

Tasiyana has worked both in the private and public sectors in Zimbabwe. He is now employed as a Revenue Officer with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) where he has been instrumental in economic research, revenue enhancement projects, taxpayer education, audits and so forth. He is very passionate about research work and has interests in the fields of Economics (particularly Public Economics), Project Management and Taxation.

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