

## On the Subject of PM Standards, People and Community

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

22 February 2020

Dear David,

I would just like to share with you some considerations after having taken some cues from the new PMI's Standard for Project Management (and future ANS), which I had the chance of examining in its Exposure Draft, from the next Guide to PMBOK 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, which will contain it and which is supposed to be available in a near future, and also from the already announced scheme of PMP examinations, which is supposed to be active on next July.

It seems evident that a thorough renewal is under way (PMI says that it is a “fresh approach to the profession”), and this is going to lead to drastic changes in PMP Certification process, and on PMI's reference texts. Indeed, PMI is introducing a brand-new concept of Standard (former one was always coincident with PMBOK Guide), which we may consider “lean” (its draft was less than 40 pages), which will probably influence next International Standard ISO 21502 (that is presently referred on a dedicated page of PMI's website), which will be applicable to traditional, agile, and hybrid projects, which introduces the concept of “project delivery” (that is supposed to include project management!), which is based on “project delivery principles” and not anymore on “process groups”, which introduces new roles and professions too, and so on. Then, after the Standard, PMBOK Guide 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, which is supposed to include it, will follow; may be it will have less pages than the previous one, but what we know for sure is that in this case PMI will not release an exposure draft, and that the new Guide will be based on “performance domains” and not anymore on “knowledge areas”.

Moreover, we already know, although it seems that no reference text and/or course is available yet, that, starting from next July, PMP Examination will radically change, too: instead of being based 100% on processes as the previous one (and as it was in the past), it will be based 50% on “Process” domain, 42% on “People” domain, and 8% on “Business Environment” domain. This new perspective that enhances greatly the importance of people – which, by the way, is fully in accordance with what other International and National PM Associations carry on since several years – is, in my opinion, perfectly represented by PMI's Chair, Tony Appleby, in the [interview](#) made by Ipek Sahra Ozguler that PMWJ published last month, when he said, very directly, “*The most important lesson I've learned in my career is that it's all about the people.*”

From my personal scientific perspective, I should be happy, because my book [“\*The Stakeholder Perspective – Relationship Management to Increase Value and Success\*”](#)

[Rates of Projects](#), in some way anticipated, and developed, several issues that are fully compliant with new Standard. In fact, “stakeholder” is the only issue, together with “team”, which both is present as a “project delivery principle” in the standard and will be present as a “performance domain” in the Guide, and, moreover, is the only issue that now is a “principle” but that previously was referring to a “former” knowledge area – a great step forward, considering that stakeholder management became a knowledge area just in 2013. Moreover, in the book, people domain has its primary role, since focus is on the stakeholders/people centrality in both projects and project management, but on the same time, processes and business have their prominent importance too, since the suggested approach is to integrate competences and processes – both rational and relational – to target delivered business value...

On the other hand, from my perspective as a member of project management community, the feelings are very different. While I am not so much concerned for those colleagues who will follow a certification path in the future, and who for sure will take care of themselves quite well, I am worried for the relationships among us from now on, since what is happening is, in any case, a strong discontinuity with respect to the past – recent and/or less recent – that could alter that unstable balance, which has been laboriously achieved in terms of a common language and a common understanding. Indeed, about one million project managers were trained, and got their PMP certification, in last 25 years or more, dealing with knowledge areas and process groups, and not with performance domains and project delivery principles, which will be basic from now on: how will they react? Other project managers who were trained, and got a certification in a process-oriented scheme, as, for instance, International Standard 21500:2012 still presently is, will probably feel in the same way... But also the hundreds of thousands colleagues who were trained, and got a certification, in competences-oriented schemes, as, for instance, IPMA ICB 4.0 and some other major National Associations schemes are, and who were used to a full complementarity with respect to the process-oriented schemes, how will they react to this new “hybrid” scheme? Will they oppose, will they ignore the changes? In addition, will the hundreds of thousands of “agile” fans recognize above “comprehensive” approach as compatible and/or useful, and what their feelings about these issues will be?

Moreover, what will happen in terms of a new common PM language to be established and agreed? For instance, until now, International Standard 21500:2012 represented a sort of “matching point” for both PMBOK Guides and IPMA ICB 4.0, which both were “coherent” with it... Will next International Standard ISO 21502, which is supposed to be released in July 2021, continue to ensure that commonality? Finally, going back to PMI’s world, and considering just the relationship issues – and not of course the relevant business impacts – we can notice that all the agreements with Registered Education Providers will be terminated and renegotiated, that all the Teachers from now on will have to be accredited, that the provision of Standard Plus Digital Content Platform will for sure impact on relations with previous providers of course materials and/or of knowledge bases and/or similar... Ultimately, what about our project management community as a

whole? Which organization(s) will take care of our questions, our concerns, our feelings, our needs, our expectations?

Which could be the possible future PM World Journal's perspectives? Since potential disinformation, or eventual insufficient and/or inadequate communication could significantly increase the threats of dichotomies, misunderstandings, strains, or even cracks in our community, maybe that, nowadays more than ever, both a continuous and precise information, and a delicate and accurate interactive communication, are needed.

Therefore, if we can agree about the point that all above issues are of significant importance for project management community and that there is a present common feeling of some uncertainty, too, could that become an opportunity for PM World Journal to enhance its role of "global focal point"? For instance, by continuing and increasing to feed PM World Library's global knowledge base, by hosting commentaries of the readers, or by answering to their questions via some of its Authors and/or Correspondents, or by making surveys, or by realizing a blog (this would be great, but may be it would be a bit harder) ... issues as above, if implemented, could also empower PM World Journal in order to evolve from its present – and excellent – 1.0 informative logic to a 2.0 interactive one ... what do you think about it?

Best regards, and

Sincerely

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## About the Author



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**Massimo Pirozzi**, MSc cum laude, Electronic Engineering, University of Rome “La Sapienza”, Principal Consultant, Project Manager, and Educator. He is a Member and the Secretary of the Executive Board, a Member of the Scientific Committee, and an Accredited Master Teacher, of the Istituto Italiano di Project Management (Italian Institute of Project Management), and he is a Senior Examiner for Certifications in Project Management, and for Professional Project Managers, too. He is Certified as a Professional Project Manager, as an Information Security Management Systems Lead Auditor, and as an International Mediator. He is a Researcher, a Lecturer, and an Author about Stakeholder Management, Relationship Management, and Complex Projects Management; in particular, he is the Author of the Book “*The Stakeholder Perspective: Relationship Management to enhance Project value and Success*”, CRC Press, Taylor & Francis Group, October 2019. He has a wide experience in managing large and complex projects in national and international contexts, and in managing relations with public and private organizations, including multinational companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, research institutes, and non-profit organizations. He worked successfully in several sectors, including Defense, Security, Health, Education, Cultural Heritage, Transport, Gaming, and Services to Citizens. He was also, for many years, a Top Manager in ICT Industry, and an Adjunct Professor in Organizational Psychology. He is registered as an Expert both of the European Commission, and of Italian Public Administrations.

Massimo Pirozzi serves as an International Correspondent in Italy for the *PM World Journal*. He received two *2019 PM World Journal Editor’s Choice Awards* for his featured paper “*Stakeholders, Who Are They?*”, and for his report from Italy titled “*PM Expo® and PM Maturity Model ISIPM-Prado®*”. He received also the *2018 PM World Journal Editor’s Choice Award* for his featured paper “*The Stakeholder Management Perspective to Increase the Success Rate of Complex Projects*”.

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