
Everything that occurs in the world is due to a Project ¹

Interview with Ricardo Triana,

Managing Director, Latin America
Project Management Institute



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Ricardo Triana, current Latin America Managing Director for PMI, has delivered an interview to share his standpoint about PMI and the Region. Ricardo is well known in the project management environment due to his dedicated and outstanding career, being a member of the PMI Board of Directors from 2010-2015 and its chair in 2014. In 2019 he received the honor of being distinguished as a PMI Fellow. Currently he is in charge of developing and managing the Latin America Region for PMI, a region he knows very well since he is a Colombian and Mexican citizen living in the United States and traveling around the Region and the world for so long.

Q1: Why is it essential to have a Director in Latin America Region, and which are your responsibilities?

Ricardo Triana (Triana): As a historical context, there has been identified the need to have regions around the world and focus on specific products and services. PMI was not configured in that manner and was challenged to deliver. So, seven regions were created to serve the particular communities best: Asia-Pacific, China e India,

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Middle East, North Africa, Sub Saharan Africa, Europe, North America, and Latin America.

In this context, it was needed to have a head of the Region to oversee the product and services thinking in the specific market and improve the decision-making process. The idea is that each Director works as a CEO for the Region. In our case, I am responsible for overseeing 47 chapters, volunteers, products and services, partners, universities, and other organizations. Everything that happens under Latin America in the PMI context is my responsibility.

Q2: What is the meaning of the Project economy in the context of Latin America?

Triana: Everything that happens in the world is related to a project, whether we realize it. Many economics behind each country and organization are moved or backed up by a project itself, even when it is not called that way. We carry the economy thought projects! We need to provide focus and tools to people running projects to improve the society and economy and achieve the goals and obtain successful results.

Q3: In this new PMI approach, when we talk about project economy and agile, to whom we are talking to?

Triana: As we shared before, our understanding is that we should be talking to people from 5 years, preparing them as early as possible in project understanding and frames that will help them their entire lives and careers. We called this the 5-75 strategy to cover a range of age groups where people will be productive and produce results together.

Now, in terms of agile, it is only a way to do project management. There are different approaches or methods to manage projects; once you have all possible details and clarity to plan, you might work on a traditional approach. However, the current reality is that requirements and methodologies are available to use them as needed. According to requirements is when you can talk about hybrid methods, agile, hybrids, etcetera. Here is where disciplined agile as a concept comes to help organize you better and find a way to work.

Q4: How do you find Latin America as a region in comparison with other regions?

Triana: In general, PMI has focused on two markets, people and organizations. In this way, it can be identified how to provide better products and services in each case. We have created and developed several tools for leadership thinking, university accreditations, advocacy with governments and universities, research projects, and in particular, one that is the pulse of the profession that tells us how project management is working around the world.

For example, these studies reviewed the rate of failure for each project around the world. Last year this rate was around 11%, while in Latin America, it is approximately

13%. This means that for each 100 USD spent, 13 are at risk. In general, this is a good sign for Latin America, meaning that projects are managed similarly with the rest of the world. However, it also represents a challenge and an opportunity to improve our methods to do it better. The current COVID-19 crisis expresses an excellent chance to enhance the economy with the correct project management set.

Q5: PMI traditionally approaches very well to Engineers, IT professionals, managers, etcetera. But project management can have a broader spectrum. In your opinion, PMI is at the point to start directing to other professions?

Triana: Well, I am a bachelor in Philology and Languages; anybody could think that I cannot manage projects; however, this has never been the case. Project Management concepts are the same, no matter the profession or area in which you apply them. A social or humanistic project is the same as any other type of technical project or engineering. Of course, it will be needed to have a technical expert to help in the detailed or specific aspects but managing a project is doable.

It is essential to realize that around 2 million people are working on projects in Latin America, and they do not know. Inside this group, there are all kinds of professions, and therefore there is a great potential to get close to this public with knowledge and tools. Hence, they understand what a Project Manager is or how to benefit as a society by managing projects properly.

Q6: Which are the challenges in your new role, and how will the chapters be impacted?

Triana: One of the immediate benefits of working as a region is working together in a unified fashion. Before, every chapter used to work more like individual organizations. From now on we can think like a region, identify the needs for Latin America and which contents are needed, we can create content in Spanish and Portuguese, make sure people get to know about us, what the profession means and how we can help professionals in the frame of the 5-75 strategy.

Chapters will benefit from this change to have more resources and work aligned as one team. On the other hand, being the head of the Region and coming from different experiences as a volunteer in the chapter, president of the chapter, volunteer at a global level, reviewing PMBOK, being part of the BOD and Chair, I know PMI very well from different views as a volunteer and as a practitioner, I know how to handle projects right and wrong. So, I believe I can bring something into the Region to improve it.

Q7: People worldwide will be reading this interview; what else do you want that people know about what is happening in Latin America Region?

Triana: I would like to share what we have been working on during these months. In general, Latin America is facing economic issues due to the exchange rate; a problem has arisen for some years now that became critical with the pandemic. So, we decided to extend membership to some members during May, Jun, and July, have a discount promotion of 35% for PMP, deliver some free training that you can find on

the PMI web page under COVID Resources. At the same time, we are evaluating middle-term solutions such as local payment or monthly payments.

On the other hand, we are generating Spanish and Portuguese content. We currently have the first course as a Basics in Agile Discipline online, first in English, and soon in Spanish. We will have the organizational transformation Brightline training first in English then in Spanish. And we will be holding several virtual online regional meetings to gather together, connect, and grow the Region.

About the Interviewer



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Angelica Larios, MBA, PMP, is a project manager with more than 20 years of experience in implementing software projects related to business intelligence, planning and budgeting, and financial consolidation solutions based on software applications to support the business decision process. She is the owner of ALACONTEC, an I.T. consulting company founded in Latin America. She has held several professional positions in private and public organizations, such as the Health Ministry in Mexico as I.T. director, and as a business manager for several firms in Mexico.

She holds a master's degree in business administration and a bachelor's degree in computer science from National University of Mexico (UNAM) in addition to her studies in project management and her Project Management Professional (PMP)[®] certification, which have helped her to consolidate her career and have a better understanding of what businesses and projects need nowadays. She is a doctoral student in strategic leadership at Regent University, VA, USA; she is a PMI volunteer since 2007, starting in the local Mexico chapter, being Past President. At a global level, she has been part of the Chapter Membership Advisory Group (CMAG), the Board Volunteer Advisory Committee (BVAC), and the Ethical Membership Advisory Group (EMAG).

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