

Project Management Pain Points and a Path Forward ¹



By **Dr. Al Zeitoun**, PgMP, PMI Fellow,
Global Future of Work Executive,

and

Dr. Harold Kerzner,
Senior Executive Director for Project Management,

The International Institute for Learning (IIL)

This paper highlights an integrated review of the pain points that have shaped project management to-date and how these pain points created the foundation for the path forward for this profession and the suite of related strategy execution skills. This path forward towards the next decade and beyond will see a continual disruption of the project management principles. Those disruptions are bound to be highly impactful in creating the proper strategic value for project management.

Background

All too often, business leaders embrace the world of project management and are usually impressed with what they see and hear, especially in the benefits that project management can bring to a company along with possibly a sustainable competitive advantage. But what most people do not see or hear are the pain points that companies had to endure and overcome to achieve their current level of project management maturity and excellence.

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Project management pain points began to surface in the latter half of 1940s, when the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) invested heavily in the number of projects given out to aerospace and defense contractors following World War II. DoD was the pioneer in developing many of the processes, tools, and techniques that became the foundation elements for today's project management approaches. Project management was also used in the construction industry, although DoD was seen as the primary creator of project management practices.

For many of DoD's contractors, projects brought new types of pain points. Even with the founding of the Project Management Institute (PMI) in 1969, and their publication of *PMBOK® Guide* over the years, many pain points persisted. And as new approaches to the processes, tools and techniques to project management appeared, new types of pain points emerged, and these needed to be resolved and mitigated as well.

In this paper, we will discuss key project management pain points most commonly faced by project community today, and approaches to tackling them. We will also focus on what we believe are emerging pain points of the 21st century and the new multidisciplinary approach for a successful path forward.

Understanding Pain Points

Historically, pain points have been used most frequently by business analysts or marketers to identify recurring problems, annoyances or other obstructions that may be inconveniencing their customers. Identifying pain points thereby provides you with the opportunity to sell products or services to customers to relieve the pressure or distress caused by the pain points and position your company as a pain point eliminator.

Today, pain points are also being identified in the way that contractors perform the processes needed to satisfy both their company's business model and deliverables expected by their clients. Pain points can be identified in all forms of management and leadership activities, including project and program management, and can create the outcomes shown in **Figure 1**. Pain points can create brick walls that impede successful project management practices and can lead to project failure if not mitigated.

Pain Points

Possible Outcomes

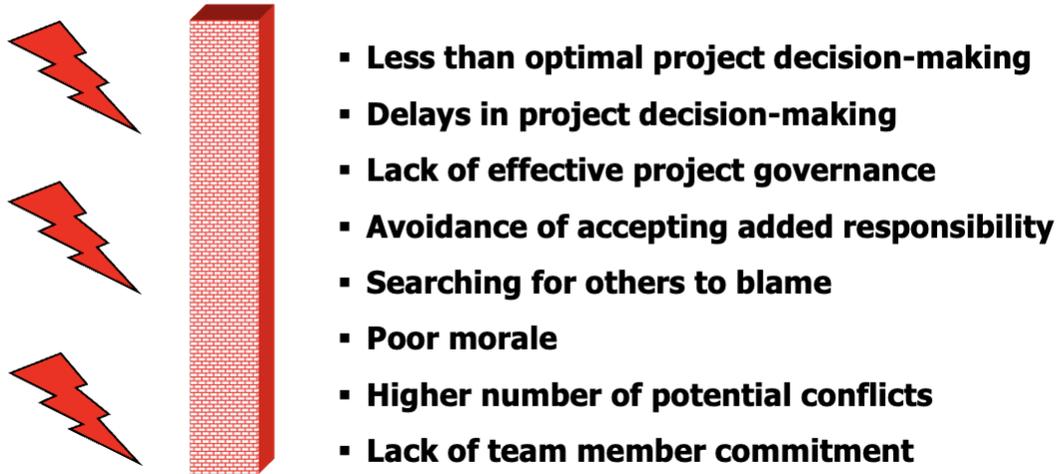


Figure 1: Pain points emanating from all forms of management and leadership activities can impact project management with negative outcomes.

The challenge is in the identification and agreement that some repetitive occurrence is a pain point. What one person perceives as a pain point, another individual may not see it in the same light or see it as an issue that needs to be addressed.

Pain points may appear as simple problems, but a deeper analysis requires establishing pain point categories. In a project management environment with emphasis on the processes, tools and techniques, typical **Pain Point Categories** might include:

Project Management Pain Point Categories	
Display pain points	Determining the best mixture of metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) necessary to provide a true meaning of the project's status
Budgetary pain points	Determining the best way to predict the expected cost of the project and potential scope changes that may occur
Scheduling pain points	The inability to eliminate waste and unproductive time from the schedules
Governance pain points	The lack of a structured help line or decision-making process for the timely identification and resolution of critical issues

Methodology pain points	The belief that all projects can fit into a one-size-fits-all methodology
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Traditional Pain Points

Many pain points have persisted over the years. Let's take a look at the most common ones and how companies are tackling them. They cover themes related to communications, organizational politics, the critical role of proper project sponsorship, challenges around career path and standardization, and the potential of project management.

Customer Communications as Seen by the Contractor or a Third Party

During most of the 1900s, corporate strategic planning was built around the product-market element, namely products offered, and markets served. This implied that the marketing and sales organizations were the dominant players in the formulation of a strategic plan. Most companies appeared to be sales- or marketing-driven because marketing and sales functions were seen as being the primary revenue generators.

Salespeople believed that they "owned" the customers and should be the primary communications link with customers, even though many companies assigned project managers to the activities to support salespeople. Project managers communicated with the sales team, and then the sales team relayed the information to the customers.

Senior management who also participated in the communications processes allowed the communications process to happen. The relationship between the sales personnel and the customers was seen as a strategic necessity and almost everyone dismissed the fact that it could also become a serious pain point.

Customer Communications as Seen by DoD

As the number of contracts began to increase, DoD recognized that talking primarily with the sales force about project issues was time-consuming and not necessarily productive. Whenever DoD had technical questions that needed answer, sales would eventually get back to DoD with answers. This process often took weeks for an effective response to the customers.

DoD wanted to talk directly with the project managers and the technical people who could provide immediate answers to their technical questions. The sales force did everything possible to prevent this from happening because they were afraid that they would then have to share year-end bonuses with project managers.

Management persisted in supporting the sales force as the primary communications link to their valued customers. DoD then made the decision to invoke the Golden Rule by holding up the government checkbook to the eyes of senior management and stating, “He who has the gold, rules!” Senior management now felt the pain of possibly having to restructure the company to satisfy the needs of their customers or lose business.

Project Management Becomes a Career Path Position

In the early years of project management, most companies did not treat project management as a career path position. Project management was seen as a part-time position to be filled on a temporary basis while performing one’s normal functional responsibilities. Project managers (PMs) had their performance reviews conducted by their functional managers and their performance evaluations were often heavily based upon their overall service to their functional unit, rather than based upon the success or failure of the project they were managing on a part-time basis.

Government agencies began insisting that project management become a career path position. This created a serious pain point for senior management. Traditionally, contractors were awarded lucrative contracts through competitive bidding. Technical personnel, and sometimes the PMs, would provide input to the sales force who had the responsibility for preparing and submitting the final competitive bid to the client.

The relationship between the sales force and PMs was becoming tenuous. In 1970, an aerospace and defense contractor made the decision to fire everyone in marketing and sales except for one marketer. Project managers were then asked to write the proposals and sell to clients. When asked what the primary skills were for selecting someone to fill a PM position, an executive commented “communications and effective writing skills.”

The government’s pressure of invoking the Golden Rule had forced senior management into making project management a career path position. But the pain point was still there. Because many of the contractors were in the aerospace and defense industry, most of the PMs were engineers with advanced degrees in some technical field, with less-than-competitive customer communication and writing skills. Aerospace and defense

contractors created technical writing departments to assist the PMs with proposal preparation.

Making project management a career path position also brought with it the pain of having PMs that had never taken any courses in interpersonal skills training or effective leadership. On short-term projects, management endured the pain and instructed the PMs to remove people from the project as quickly as possible after the team members completed their job to keep the project costs as low as possible. It was not uncommon for the PMs to have very little contact with the team members and to rely heavily upon functional managers to provide the necessary day-to-day leadership and direction to their functional employees assigned to project teams.

On long-term projects or those that may have behavioral issues, several aerospace companies assigned organizational development (OD) specialists to assist the PMs. Several years ago, one of these OD specialists was a student in one of the author's graduate courses in project management. When asked what his role was on projects, he stated that his job was to help the PM resolve conflicts and other behavioral issues. He also stated that he knew very little about the technology on any of the projects, and that his role was mainly mitigation of behavioral issues.

Allowing engineers with advanced degrees to manage long-term high technology projects brought with it additional pain points. Some highly technical PMs viewed their projects as a chance for fame and notoriety. As such, their goal was to exceed the specifications rather than simply meet them, regardless of the cost overrun. Military personnel that provided the funding for the cost overruns knew this was happening and believed that, after their 2–3-year tour of duty was completed on this assignment, they would be transferred to another assignment shortly and their replacement would then have to deal with the cost overruns which were often greater than 300 – 400 percent.

Project Sponsorship

Making project management a career path position was certainly recognized as a pain point that management knew would happen. However, there was an accompanying pain point that needed to be addressed quickly, namely the chance that the PMs would make some decisions that were reserved for the senior levels of management. How could senior management control or influence the decisions made by the PMs, including those decisions that have a serious impact on the business or may lead to unwanted cost overruns?

The answer was in project governance, by providing a project sponsor to oversee and participate in project decision-making. The pain point was mitigated by assigning project sponsorship positions to all the critical projects and staffing the positions with senior and middle level managers.

As the number of projects increased, senior managers tried to decrease the number of projects they personally sponsored because it became a time-consuming effort that distracted them from their other duties. Unfortunately, this brought to the surface another pain point on customer (specifically DoD) interfacing. Many of the military officers that controlled the funding for the projects did not consider the PMs and even some of sponsors from middle level management and lower as being equal to them in rank and status. The motto was “Rank Has Its Privileges”, and government personnel persisted in wanting to communicate only to the senior level of management believing that these people were equal to them in rank. As such, senior management was forced to remain as sponsors on many critical projects.

Another related pain point to sponsorship was the impact that a failed project could have on the sponsor’s career. If an executive believed that having their name attached to a project that could potentially fail would damage their career path opportunities, they would assign people beneath them in rank as sponsors. If they were still forced to remain as sponsors, they would create a plan whereby others could be blamed if a failure occurred.

As an example, two executives in a telecom company acted as sponsors on two “pet” projects to create new products that they believed would increase sales and generate larger executive bonuses. Both projects required innovation and were costly endeavors. At each of the project review meetings, the PMs recommended cancelling the projects because of the significant costs of developing two products that might not generate the expected revenue streams. Both executives (the project sponsors) believed that cancelling the projects could impact their career because of the funds expended. Therefore, at each project review meeting, they allowed the projects to continue to the next gate review meeting. Eventually, both projects were completed at significant cost overruns.

To avoid the embarrassment of having to explain what happened when the marketplace was not interested in purchasing these products, the sponsors promoted the PMs for having developed the products, but then blamed marketing and sales personnel for not finding customers for the new products. This reduced and even eliminated the sponsorship pain points.

Standardization of Processes

As the number of funded projects increased, DoD realized that effective control over the continuously increasing number of projects was troublesome. Each contractor had their own way of performing the work and their own reporting systems. DoD then had the painful experience of having to interpret the data in each status report.

DoD's solution was to establish an **Earned Value Measurement System (EVMS)** and standardize **status reporting**. DoD developed a series of publications encouraging contractors to use the EVMS and government-related life cycle phases and major milestones. Contractors initially saw this new process a pain point, but soon realized its potential benefits.

Companies often create a one-size-fits-all methodology to be used on all projects. This provided the necessary standardization that executives wanted and made sponsorship and control easier. Performance reviews of PMs and team members were heavily based upon how well they followed and used the forms, guidelines, checklists, and templates associated with the one-size-fits-all approach rather than the success or failure of the project.

Finding Other Applications for Project Management

From the 1970s to the turn of the century, many books and articles cited the benefits of correctly implementing project management and the successes achieved. But what most people failed to realize was the type of projects that were analyzed to make this determination.

Historically, project management was used on traditional or operational projects that were initiated with a well-defined statement of work (SOW) and work breakdown structure (WBS). Projects for government agencies and most customers were initiated with well-defined requirements. PMs were taught that they should refrain from planning, scheduling, and pricing out a project unless the requirements were very well defined, and techniques were published for finding ways to improve the requirements definition processes. The use of the EVMS worked well on the traditional or operational projects that possessed clear requirements.

But what about the strategic projects, such as those involving innovation activities that are initiated based on an idea rather than rigid requirements, and therefore subject to

possible continuous changes? As stated previously, executives were afraid that project managers might make decisions that should be reserved for senior management. With well-defined requirements and the use of project sponsors, these risks were minimized. Therefore, PMs would be allowed to manage the traditional or operational projects, while functional managers, whom executives tend to trust more than project managers, would manage the strategic projects.

Giving functional managers control of most of the strategic projects seemed like a good idea, but it eventually brought to the surface a serious pain point that was hidden from view. Functional managers in many companies received year-end bonuses based upon the success of the company or their functional unit over the past twelve months. As such, functional managers were retaining their best resources for the short-term projects that affected their bonuses and the long-term strategic projects were suffering.

There are several reasons why this pain point had been hidden for years. First, functional managers were given the freedom to use whatever processes and techniques they wished to use on their projects. Executives tend to trust their functional managers, allowing them to possibly alter the true status of some of their projects in their reporting to senior management. Second, even if the functional managers used the EVMS, which they mostly avoided, the reporting was on time, within cost and scope, and no information was provided on the quality or capabilities of the assigned resources. Forecast reports, using KPI information, was often an exaggeration rather than reality.

21st Century Pain Points Appear

The pain points discussed previously appeared for the most part, in the past. Simply because we have been using project management practices for decades, and there have been many successful continuous improvement efforts in project management, does not mean that, in the future, the same or new pain point will not occur.

By the turn of the century, there was a significant growth in the number and types of projects that companies needed to implement for a sustainable and successful future, as seen in **Figure 2**. The greatest change was in the growth of strategic projects as companies realized that continuing to conduct business the same old way was an invitation for disaster.

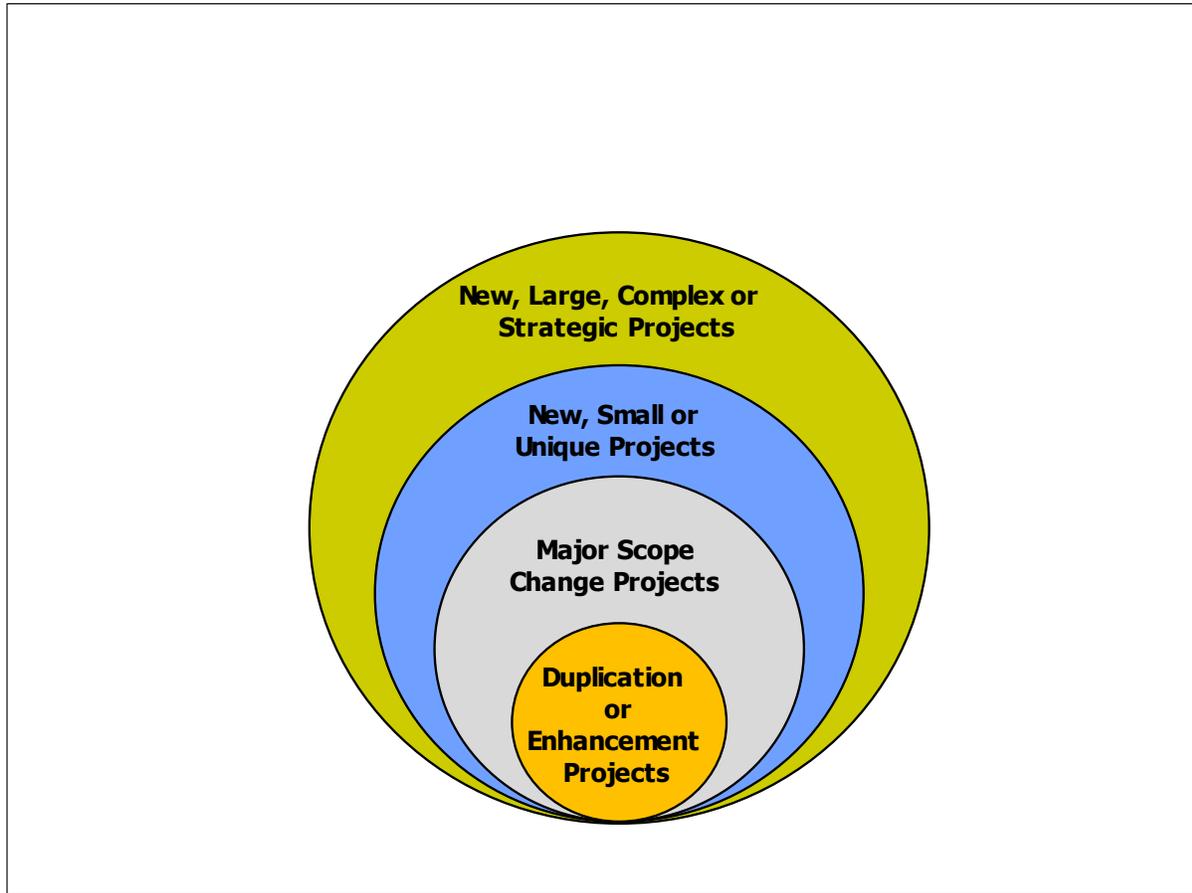


Figure 2: New types of projects are emerging, requiring us to think of new approaches of doing and measuring.

As the importance of strategic projects became apparent, executives began to ask two questions:

- Do we manage strategic projects the same way we manage traditional projects?
- Do we use the same people, processes, tools, and techniques?

Because strategic projects were significantly more complex than traditional projects, other approaches such as using flexible agile and Scrum methodologies became obvious. Strategic projects worked better using flexible methodologies and required different skill set training for project managers.

What are some pain points associated with strategic projects?

The EVMS Becomes a Dinosaur

For more than 50 years, the Earned Value Management System (EVMS) has been used with reasonable success supporting the one-size-fits-all methodology, but primarily on traditional or operational projects. The EVMS focuses mainly on time and cost metrics that can be looked at in various ways to create several approaches for determining project status.

But as project management practices are being applied to other types of projects, additional information will be required so that management can make decisions based upon facts rather than guesses and intuition. The EVMS system may not become entirely extinct as did dinosaurs, but it is inevitable that it will undergo radical changes.

Strategic projects, where success is measured by business benefits and value created, required significantly more metrics than just time and cost. Companies are now creating their own company-specific project management information systems that may contain as many as 50 or more metrics.

Categories of some of the new metrics are shown in Figure 3.

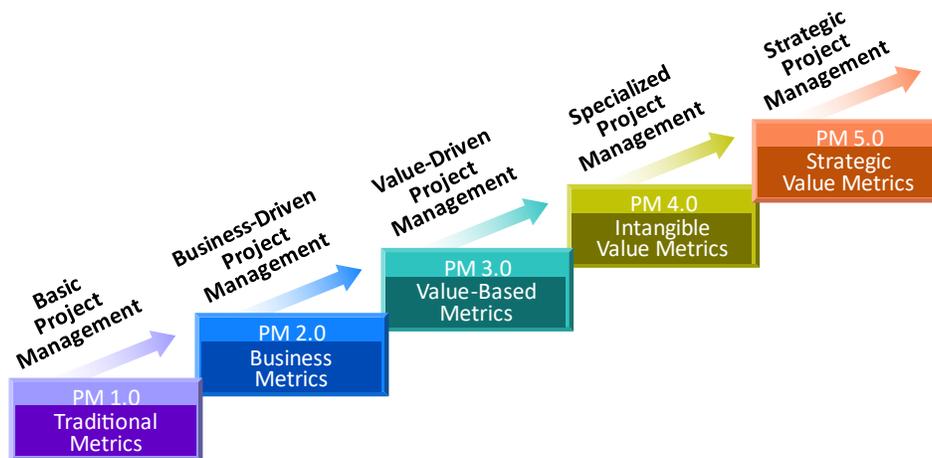


Figure 3: The types of metrics used to evaluate project success has evolved from Traditional to encompass business and various value-based metrics.

In Figure 3, PM 1.0 is traditional or operational project management focusing on just the time, cost, and scope metrics. The business metrics for PM 2.0 were needed because project managers are now seen as managing part of the business rather than just merely a project. These business metrics measure how well project management practices are integrated with the firm's business processes and can measure financial indicators related to the project and market share.

PM 3.0 through PM 5.0 are expansions of business metrics for more detailed purposes. The growth in these three levels is attributed to the fact that today we have become quite good at measurement practices to the point where we believe that we can measure anything.

The following are examples of some of these new metrics being used on projects and can be expected to be components of future EVMS systems and other project management information systems:

- Value-Based Metrics
 - Competitive position
 - Project's impact on the firm's image and reputation
 - Creation of new business opportunities
 - Possibility for new products and services
 - Impact on speed to market

- Intangible Metrics
 - Project leadership effectiveness
 - Project governance effectiveness
 - Functional management's ability to live up to commitments
 - Project morale
 - Customer satisfaction

- Strategic Metrics
 - Project's impact on business profitability
 - Health of the project portfolio
 - Business value of the project portfolio
 - Organizational capacity utilization
 - Project's alignment to strategic business objectives

Executive Support for the New Metrics Management Programs

Sharing information on new metrics, especially business and strategic metrics, requires executive support and discarding the old belief that “information is power.” Some executives will not take ownership for a new metrics management system for fear of looking bad in the eyes of their colleagues if the metrics reporting system is not accepted by the workers or fails to provide meaningful results.

Executives tend to not support a metrics management system that looks like pay for performance for executives that can affect their bonuses and chances for promotion. If they were to support such a system, the executives may then select only those metrics that make them look good.

The Growth of New Flexible Methodologies

The growth and acceptance of agile and Scrum methodologies has made some people believe that these two flexible methodologies are the “light at the end of the tunnel.” It is more likely that these two flexible approaches are the beginning of things to come, and a potential pain point executives must face.

By 2030, we can expect to have 20 to 30 different types of flexible methodologies. The days of having a one-size-fits-all methodology have disappeared. At the beginning of each project, the PM will look at the type of project he/she has been asked to manage, and then determine the best flexible approach to be taken. A possible list of factors influencing the PM’s selection decision appears in Figure 4.

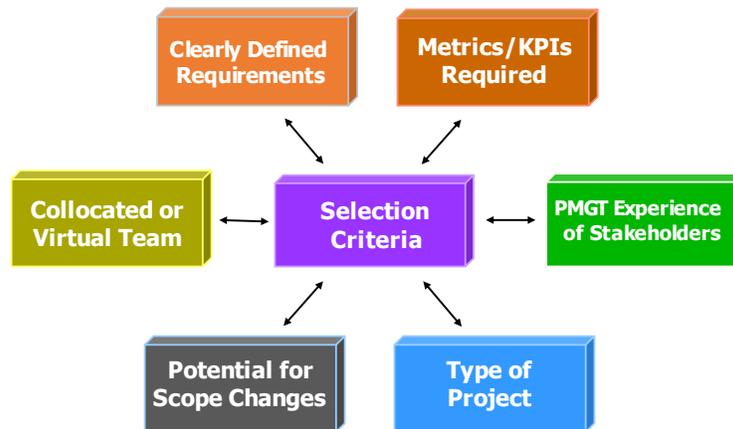


Figure 4: Numerous factors influencing the selection of a project methodology.

The Path Forward

The multitude of pain points that have been persisting in the field of project management and how organizations have reacted to them have continued into the present state. The highlighted changes reflected in Figures 2, 3, and 4 are positive signs that today's organizations are realizing the potential for the opportunities ahead.

The path towards 2030 and beyond will see the rules of project management re-written so many times and the pace of those changes is bound to be a higher multiple of anything we had encountered to date.

Figure 5 is a brief attempt at predicting some of the future critical dimensions of what we could refer to as the other side of the pain points coin. The idea to capture what represents the continual tilt we expect to see in how projects are viewed, run, and connect the ways of working for the future organizations.

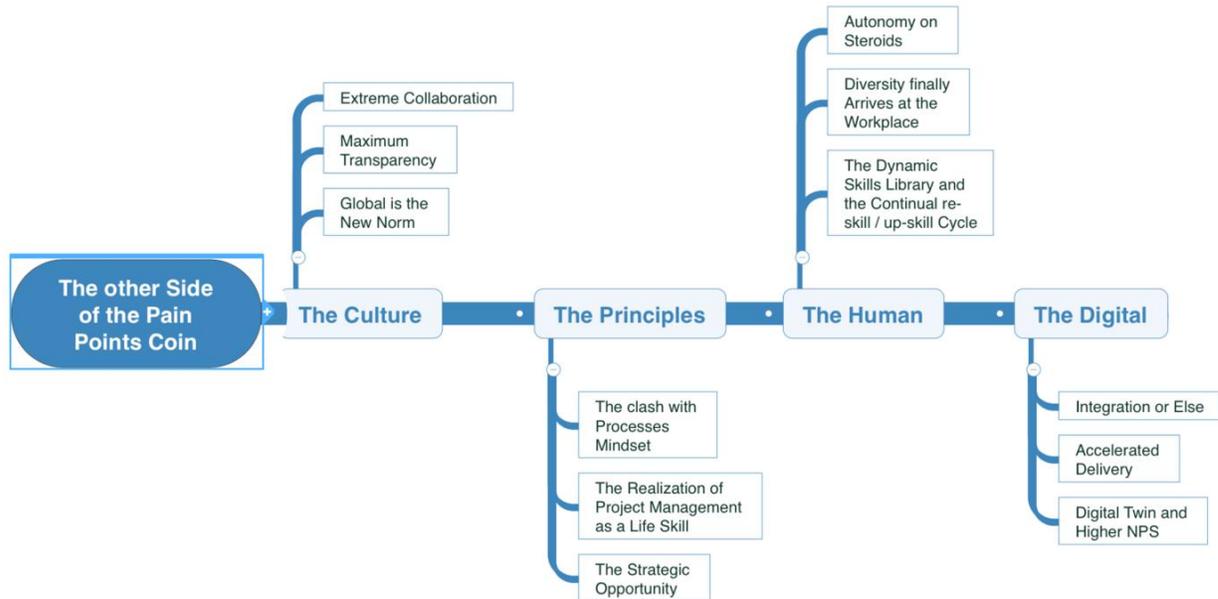


Figure 5. The other side of the pain points coin is a continuum of forces involving organizational culture, project principles, human potential, and digital transformation.

The other side of the pain points coin is still going to be painful. Strategic shifts of all kinds always are! Let's examine each of these dimensions.

Culture: Anchoring of New Ways of Running Projects

The cultural changes continue to head in the right direction to support an improved way of conducting project work. These changes tackle several of the pain points highlighted above especially around connectedness and communications.

Extreme Collaboration is the first of three elements of culture. There has been a steady increase in the understanding of the value of collaboration over the last few years, some of which was fueled by many of the organizations forced to conduct their project work virtually and using creative collaboration platforms. This trend has accelerated with the pandemic.

Maximum Transparency adds a unique ingredient to project work. With the continual shift to open ways of collaboration, transparency became an expectation. Safety in projects of the future demand that all project team members openly bring tough topics

and project concerns to the forefront and early. This openness will finally open the door for real applications of enterprise risk management where risk becomes the dialogue starter for all project team and executives' meetings and discussions.

Global is the New Norm as evidenced by the dismantling silos across business silos, disappearing geographic boundaries, and the tightly connected world organizations units. The future organizations will make the study of the research work done around culture maps compulsory. A global outlook will give us the option of realizing the multiple benefits of focused feedback, more aligned decision making, and better handling of conflicts.

Principles: The New Fork in the Road

The Clash with Processes Mindset is one of the most promising aspects in how organizations of the future conduct their initiatives. Suddenly the doors have opened to much more fluidity to the application of project management. Processes will remain a go-to source for organizations that need to maintain some of that rigor, yet the principles will allow them to scale at a higher rate.

The principles could be categorized in buckets such as team, attributes, methods, and success enablers. This dimension of principles has made the PMBOK Guide 7th edition a surprising revolutionary change in the practice of the profession.

The shift to principles paved the road to the full **realization of Project Management as a Life Skill**. No longer is project management reserved for the engineers or technical experts of the world. It becomes evident that the project management principles can be practiced by everyone and no longer a rigid career path.

The **Strategic Opportunity** is another value achieved when projects principles are practiced widely, easily understood, and clearly communicated. This brings a different take to the role of the sponsor, and allows a higher degree of comfort in the type of guidance that is given to project managers and their teams. More effective ways to cascading strategy can be achieved when adaptability and system thinking become dominant. The enhanced understanding of tailoring supports the acceptance by executives of what these project management guiding principles could do to mitigate many of the persisting pains.

The Human: The Most Stretched Side of the Coin

Autonomy on Steroids is an understatement. With the realization that the new generations not only expect but demand autonomy, workplaces of the future will have to develop all the time. A new Humans 4.0 equation is needed to lead the digital revolution, meet the sense of urgency, and navigate the fluidity of the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) concept that has become the norm. A balancing act with alignment will have to be established as a sanity check for how teams of teams are to tackle future complex programs.

Diversity has firmly arrived at the workplace. Creating inclusive work cultures will increase and be rewarded. We are an inflection point, where silos can disappear forever. Diversity is the true enabler for the sounds of expertise, the richness of ideas, and the seed of innovation. Inclusivity will be practiced by every leader and refute causes and symptoms of the pain points of the past.

The Dynamic Skills Library and the Continual Re-skill / Up-skill Cycle is going to be a feature of the future skills development. Empathy will matter more than ever. Design thinking will rule the day as a center for a multitude of similar ways of working to ensure obsession around customers and designing mindsets focus on the customer experience. This is where continual learning and growing a library of new skills are critical for survival.

Digital: The Creator of Time to Think Again for a Change

Integration or else is the realization that to stay relevant we will not be talking transformation anymore. Transformation will be business as usual and something that goes on all the time thanks to the digital revolution.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) coupled with intelligent Internet of Things (IOT) will give us the foundation to add all the intelligence we need for smarter decision-making. Whether its trending insights, enhanced estimating, comprehensive new metrics, digital integration hits a multitude of the pain points like a chain reaction. The time that is created for humans to be most valuable via the dedication to thinking, reflecting, and driving more strategically, is invaluable.

Accelerated Delivery builds nicely on the new flexible methodologies and the rational in Figure 4 above. With digitally powered experimentation, the benefits of iterative and

incremental delivery methods in agile will minimize the cases when we deliver solutions that don't fit or miss achieving of stakeholders' satisfaction. Stakeholders truly become the center of the business.

Digital Twin and Higher Net Promoter Scores (NPS) are a direct result of the new delivery models. When we have advanced simulations and use the richness of data analytics to answer all aspects about a product or a solution, we will be able to go the distance on the lifecycle path of delivering strategic initiatives. This Digital Twin model, which is a virtual model designed to accurately reflect a physical object, allows us to increase the accuracy of the results and the achievement of value. This is also how the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which measures the loyalty of customers to a company, reaches the highest numbers and the scaling impact on the organization accelerates.

This other side of the Project Pain Points coin illustrates deeply that we should not allow perfection to get in the way of greatness. When we combine the enhancements in culture, principles use, develop adaptive and thinking humans, and integrate the enablement value of digitization, we will tackle the pain points, and create more focused, healthier and more connected organizations.

Conclusion

Reversing the course of the project management pain points has begun. The undivided attention of company executives to the value promise of project management is now a must-have ingredient for extracting the future gains of project management. As we turn the tide on the multitude of pains highlighted in this paper, it is going to take a flavorful sauce to encompass key ingredients such as diversity of transparent inputs, autonomy of working, a human form of digital solutions, and an appreciation of the principles that make the implementation of project management tightly aligned to value.

Comprehending the many points raised above and the history that got us here can become a stretching capability. Learning how we got here allows us to critically focus on where some of our organizational viruses still exist, and use that clarity to drive what and how to transform.

The future will have new forms of leadership and project managers will learn continuously in order to sustain the relevance of projects in making meaningful changes more frequently and consistently. Our hope is to envision a world where boundaries in thought, strategic execution, and results that matter are no more.

How is project management evolving for you, your team or organization?

We want to hear from you. How do these reflections resonate with you? Share how you are writing the future story of project management in your daily lives and organizations.

Contact us here:

Dr. Al Zeitoun, zeitounstrategy@gmail.com

Dr. Harold Kerzner, hkerzner@hotmail.com

About the Authors



Dr. Al Zeitoun, PgMP, PMI Fellow

Global Future of Work Executive
International Institute of Learning
New York & Maryland USA



Dr. Al Zeitoun is a Future of Work, business optimization, and operational performance excellence thought leader with global experiences in strategy execution. His experiences encompass leading organizations; delivering their Enterprise Digital and Business Transformation; guiding fitting frameworks implementations; and using his empathy, engineering insights, and collaboration strengths to successfully envision new business models and execute complex missions across diverse cultures globally.

In his position, as the Executive Director for Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation, Abu Dhabi, UAE, he was responsible for creating the strategy execution framework, achieving transformation benefits, governance excellence, and creating the data analytics discipline necessary for delivering on the \$40B complex country energy mission roadmap.

At the McLean, USA HQ of Booz Allen Hamilton, Dr. Zeitoun strategically envisioned and customized digitally enabled EPMO advisory, mapped playbooks, and capability development for clients' Billions of Dollars strategic initiatives. Furthermore, he led the firm's Middle East North Africa Portfolio Management and Agile Governance Solutions.

With the International Institute of Learning, Dr. Zeitoun plays a senior leader and global trainer and coach. He was instrumental in driving its global expansions, thought leadership, and operational excellence methodology to sense and shape dynamic ways of working across organizations worldwide. He speaks English, Arabic, and German and enjoys good food, travel, and volunteering. Dr. Al Zeitoun can be contacted at zeitounstrategy@gmail.com



Harold Kerzner, Ph.D., MS, M.B.A

Senior Executive Director for Project Management
International Institute of Learning
New York & Florida, USA



Dr. Harold Kerzner is Senior Executive Director for Project Management for the International Institute for Learning (IIL). He has an MS and Ph.D. in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering from the University of Illinois and an MBA from Utah State University. He is a prior Air Force Officer and spent several years at Morton-Thiokol in project management. He taught engineering at the University of Illinois and business administration at Utah State University, and for 38 years taught project management at Baldwin-Wallace University. He has published or presented numerous engineering and business papers and has had published more than 60 college textbooks/workbooks on project management, including later editions. Some of his books are (1) Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling and Controlling; (2) Project Management Metrics, KPIs and Dashboards, (3) Project Management Case Studies, (4) Project Management Best Practices: Achieving Global Excellence, (5) PM 2.0: The Future of Project Management, (6) Using the Project Management Maturity Model, and (7) Innovation Project Management.

He is a charter member of the Northeast Ohio PMI Chapter.

Dr. Kerzner has traveled around the world conducting project management lectures for PMI Chapters and companies in Japan, China, Russia, Brazil, Singapore, Korea, South Africa, Canada, Ireland, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Croatia, Mexico, Trinidad, Barbados, The Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Venezuela, Columbia, United Arab Emirates, France, Italy, England, and Switzerland. He delivered a keynote speech at a PMI Global Congress on the future of project management.

His recognitions include:

- The University of Illinois granted Dr. Kerzner a Distinguished Recent Alumni Award in 1981 for his contributions to the field of project management.
- Utah State University provided Dr. Kerzner with the 1998 Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to the field of project management.
- The Northeast Ohio Chapter of the Project Management Institute gives out the Kerzner Award once a year to one project manager in Northeast Ohio that has demonstrated excellence in project management. They also give out a second Kerzner Award for project of the year in Northeast Ohio.
- The Project Management Institute (National Organization) in cooperation with IIL has initiated the Kerzner International Project Manager of the Year Award given to one project manager yearly anywhere in the world that demonstrated excellence in project management.
- The Project Management Institute also gives out four scholarships each year in Dr. Kerzner's name for graduate studies in project management.
- Baldwin-Wallace University has instituted the Kerzner Distinguished Lecturer Series in project management.
- The Italian Institute of Project Management presented Dr. Kerzner with the 2019 International ISIPM Award for his contributions to the field of project management.

Dr. Harold Kerzner can be contacted at hkerzner@hotmail.com