

Lab Hybrid: From Waterfall to Agile to Agile-at-Scale and the Tailoring of Project Management ¹

Interview with Stéphane Derouin

Head of Practice, d2X-Expertise
Former Managing Director South Europe, ESI International
Founder & Former President, PMI France
Paris, France



Interviewed by Yasmina Khelifi

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Introduction to the interviewee

Career Path: Stéphane Derouin is “Head of Practice” for d2X-Expertise since December 2020. As such, it provides training and advisory services to large organizations in all sectors of activity. It focuses primarily on digital and organizational transformation. He is a recognized expert in hybrid approach and portfolio management.

He created and managed from 2001 to 2020, a training and consulting company dedicated to project management at the international level. From 1999 to 2001, he was Managing Director South Europe of ESI International, a company specialized in project management.

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PMI®: In 1995, he was one of the seven founders of the Project Management Institute (PMI®), French Chapter, and was its second President for three years. He received from PMI® the “Outstanding President of the Year – Region 1” Award in 1999. He wrote the preface and supervised the first French translation of the PMBOK® Guide published by AFNOR (French Standardization Association). He is a member of the Supervisory Board of PMI France. Recently, he is responsible for a new project, the «Lab Hybrid», with a panel of companies to develop a hybrid best practices guide.

Other: Stéphane is a frequent speaker at PMI® events and corporate internal events. He is co-founder and Chairman of HMI, a think tank on the hybridization of project management methodologies. Since 2019, he also teaches Agile and is a thesis tutor in a Business School, at the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris -ESCP within the International Project Management Master of Science®. He is AgilePM® certified.

Interview

Q1: First of all, thank you for accepting an interview request from PMWJ. From the philosophy to project management, could you tell us how you came to project management?

Stéphane Derouin (Derouin): At the beginning I studied philosophy and political science with the aim of becoming a University Professor. The fortunes of life have changed my orientation, and all my career path has become intimately linked to PMI®.

In September 1994, I was conducting research on project management to create a training institute on this matter. During a reading, in a footnote of a French PM book there was a reference to a mysterious Project Management Institute, it was the beginning of my journey.

Q2: How did you begin the adventure at PMI France?

Derouin: I started my investigation to find out what the famous PMI® was, and during this research I met a small team of Project Managers from AT&T France who had undertaken an approach like mine. We joined our forces to create the PMI® French Chapter. To do this, we had to bring together 25 members; Michel Brix has been the 1st President, and I was the 1st Secretary. The French Chapter was officially born in October 1995 in New Orleans.

Q3: How long have you been a member of PMI France?

Derouin: Since 1995. I am the oldest active member of PMI France. I succeeded Michel Brix as President of PMI France and now member of the Supervisory Board.

Q4: You have created a lab Hybrid with PMI France. Could you explain the goals of this new initiative

Derouin: With the PMBOK Guide V7, and the concept of «Tailoring», a tailor-made approach based on a multiplicity of criteria, we have a privileged trigger to implement hybridization: “There is no one-size-fits-all approach that can be applied to all projects at all times.” Tailoring is the understanding of the context, objectives, and operating environment of the projects. With hybridization, we would like to offer a new vision with analytical criteria, understanding and decision-making grids.

In 2021, observing the maturity of hybridization theme in our project ecosystem, and given the expectation of many stakeholders, reinforced by the publication of the PMBOK Guide V7, we have decided to create within the PMI France a working group called “The Lab Hybrid”.

With the strong involvement and support of the PMI France President, Ricardo NACIFF, we have brought together from September 2021 a team of thirty people from all sectors of activity, some more Waterfall, others more Agilists, with the objective of creating a “Hybrid Best Practices Guide”. By capitalising on our experience and the existing, it is a matter of affirming our values and principles, building a framework, defining the rules of the game, presenting use cases, new methods and techniques of project management.

Q5: What changes have you seen in project management over the years?

Derouin: The main issue we face in the project world over the years is that the initial conditions (needs, functionalities, objectives) evolve rapidly and constantly throughout the project, which means updating scope, time, and cost continuously. Beyond in our VUCA world we must add a fourth axis to our PM golden triangle: value.

On the other hand, changing mindset and practices mean working differently, mobilizing collective intelligence, and closely associating all the stakeholders in a partnership relationship from the moment the needs are expressed until the end of the project.

Q6: What trends in project management do you foresee in the coming years?

Derouin: The ability to mobilize the different approaches - Waterfall, Agile, Agile at scale and hybrid - will become a requirement. Understanding the strengths and limits of each approach, mastering all the concepts, techniques, and tools they put at our disposal, we must know how to use each one wisely, or to combine them, depending on the nature of the work to be performed and its environment.

Q7: What are the 3 skills needed by project managers in the future?

Derouin: Change Management, Hybridization and Digital Knowledge.

Q8: You are also a musician. Do you see common points between music and project management? A conductor and a project manager?

Derouin: Art has a prophetic dimension and shows us how our world will evolve. I am passionate about music, of all music. The models from the history of music: classical, jazz, rock 'n' roll, teach us through their various aspects - style, rhythm, structure and organization of the orchestra, instruments, audience, success - the impact and meaning of musical transformations, both on human evolution, and on the work itself. By analogy, we can make a link between the different types of music and project modes: classical symphonic is the waterfall, agile it's modern jazz band, hybrid it's rock 'n' roll.

Q9: Do you have a last message to PWJ readers, please?

A huge thank you to the PMI and its members all over the world who have contributed so much to my professional life.

Tailoring and hybridization are now our new frontier.

About the Interviewer



Yasmina Khelifi

Paris, France



Yasmina Khelifi, PMP, PMI- ACP, PMI-PBA is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange S.A.](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with major manufacturers and SIM makers. Yasmina strives for building collaborative bridges between people to make international projects successful. She relies on three pillars: project management skills, the languages she speaks, and a passion for sharing knowledge.

She is a PMP certification holder since 2013, a PMI- ACP and PMI-PBA certification holder since 2020. She is an active volunteer member at PMI France and PMI UAE, and a member of PMI Germany Chapter. French-native, she can speak German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and she is learning Arabic. Yasmina loves sharing her knowledge and experiences at work, in her volunteers' activities at PMI, and in [projectmanagement.com](#) as a regular blogger. She is also the host and co-founder of the podcast [Global Leaders Talk with Yasmina Khelifi](#) to help people in becoming better international leaders.

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