

The Global Project Management Talent Gap ¹

Interview with Dave Garrett ²

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Interviewed by Ipek Sahra Ozguler

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Introduction to the interviewee

Dave Garrett, Chief Strategy & Growth Officer, drives PMI's growth strategy by working across the organization to define, test, and deliver solutions that enable individuals and organizations to create impact and propel change. Dave was the co-founder, President and CEO of ProjectManagement.com (formerly Ganttthead.com), an online community for project professionals, established in 2000 and acquired by PMI in 2014. Since joining PMI, he has

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² This is the second interview with Mr. Garrett published in the PM World Journal this year. Because of his position at PMI, the world's largest and most influential project management professional body, his perspective and knowledge on various topics should be of high interest to PM practitioners around the world. To view Ipek's previous interview with Dave Garrett on the topic of PM Trends for 2022, go to <https://peworldlibrary.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/pmwj115-Mar2022-Ozguler-Interview-with-Dave-Garrett-pmi.pdf>

held several leadership roles, including dual role as Director of Digital Presence and CEO of ProjectManagement.com.

Dave's passion for project management led him to serve in multiple volunteer positions for PMI prior to becoming employed by the organization. Earlier in Dave's career, he also created Project Pain Reliever, a just-in-time handbook for managing projects; he has published and bylined dozens of articles related to project management, technology trends, and more.

Interview

Ipek Sahra Ozguler (Ozguler): First of all, thank you for accepting another interview request from PMWJ. Careers in project management are hotter than ever, driven by a new “never normal” working environment. In order to understand the growth of project management as a profession and skill, Project Management Institute (PMI) analyzed industries that rely heavily on project management skills and published a report on the ten-year outlook for project management-oriented employment (PMOE) last year. Could you please provide more details on the Talent Gap report and how we are seeing this trend noted in the report take shape?

Dave Garrett (Garrett): Thank you for having me. PMI releases our Talent Gap Report every four years, which provides a 10-year outlook of project management-oriented employment (PMOE). Our 2021 Talent Gap report covers projectized industries that will see an increased demand for project management skills, the need for global talent growth, and how organizations and professionals can help fill that need. The report found that the global economy will need 25 million new project professionals by 2030 to fill crucial roles across construction, manufacturing, finance, insurance, and others.

The report paints a picture that there are many new job opportunities in PMOE for project professionals and all changemakers — those who, regardless of their role, are inspired and equipped to drive change and turn ideas into reality. The report gives further insight into specific job sectors, regional trends, financial opportunities, and tips for how employers can help fill the talent gap. This trend is taking shape by the increased demand for project professionals around the world, in addition to the rapid growth of projectized industries due to digital transformation and evolving business needs.

Ozguler: In the report, some industries are referred to as “projectized industries.” What does the term mean?

Garrett: Projectized industries are industries in which many or most activities are being managed through projects. This is where work is more modular, with discrete outcomes expected from group efforts. Many industries, such as publishing and professional services, are becoming increasingly project oriented. The growth rate of PMOE within projectized industries is expected to be higher than overall employment in these industries, indicating a higher demand for vital roles and qualified people to fill them. For example, we expect the global PMOE demand in the information and publishing sector to increase by 15.2% over the next 10 years, with finance and insurance seeing a 14.9% change. Simply put, projectized industries are those that are fueled by project work, and thus, project managers. This is why the surge in project management for both organizations and professionals are so prevalent right now.

Ozguler: It is stated that “a career in project management means you’re less likely to get stuck.” Could you please elaborate on this? How are roles evolving in project management and what does this mean for professionals and organizations?

Garrett: Project management skills are in high demand across virtually every industry. This is largely due to the extensive, diverse skillset of project managers — both technical and interpersonal skills. PMI calls these interpersonal skills “power skills,” such as empathy, active listening, and collaborative leadership, because they give people the power to connect with others, allowing for more meaningful, authentic interactions that drive better outcomes. So many of the skills that make you a great project manager, effectively getting work done through others as a team, also make you an excellent leader.

Regardless of which industry interests you, there are most likely opportunities for project managers as they make effective leaders of teams. Since many of the skills required of project managers are transferable across industries, project management professionals often have the flexibility to reinvent their roles at any stage of their career, and employers are becoming increasingly amenable to hiring people from different industries, but with transferable skills. And since project management is all about driving and ensuring outcomes, those with project management skills have excellent proof points of how they have created value and driven results in previous roles. Project Managers make things happen.

Across virtually every industry, the world is becoming more projectized. Organizations are undertaking ambitious projects, such as digital transformation, that will make them more resilient and competitive over the long-term and that require skilled project managers to bring them to fruition. Similarly, governmental organizations are making significant

investments in their future; for example, the passing of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA) in the United States will open a host of new jobs for professionals who possess the in-demand project management skills needed to fill these critical infrastructure projects. And this is just one example of where project professionals are in-demand.

Ozguler: Could you please share global/regional trends and costs pertaining to the skills gap? Why do these skills gaps persist and how can we narrow the talent gap?

Garrett: The gap between the demand for project management skills and the availability of talent is likely to impact all regions, which could result in a potential loss of up to USD\$345.5 billion in global GDP by 2030. While the pandemic caused a temporary drag on PMOE, better-than average long-term growth across many job categories is expected within the next few years. That drag was at least somewhat alleviated by the fact that many Project Manager jobs can be remote. At the time of this writing, Indeed had over [101K Project Manager jobs available](#) and [over 11,000](#) of those were remote.

The successful management of projects into the future is essential to industry and economic growth. In fact, the total GDP of projectized industries is estimated to increase from \$24.7 trillion in 2019 to \$34.5 trillion in 2030. In addition, according to an analysis of US Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the largest and fastest-growing PMOE occupation will be software development — a projected increase of 14% between 2019 and 2030. Much of this growth will come from the development of mobile apps, IT security, and healthcare technology.

As more industries become project-oriented, organizations will need to ensure their employees can acquire the skills they need to work smarter. Continual learning and technology-augmented work will play a huge role here. Some of that comes from training, other new skills are best learned from peers. PMI is in a unique position to provide both individuals and organizations with the tools, resources, and peer support they need to fill the talent gap and demand for PMOE. Our community not only builds products through massively collaborative efforts, but also supports those products locally through global chapters, virtual study groups and more. We are a for purpose organization where peers help each other get better by sharing what works.

Ozguler: Organizations are clearly battling for talent, as evidenced by the surge in project management needs across industries. How are organizations affected by the talent shortage?

Garrett: Organizations are grappling with and driving massive change today. They are using the talent shortage as an opportunity to upskill their current workforce and empower a new generation of talent and changemakers with the necessary project management skills to complete these projects. We're seeing an increased desire from project professionals to hone their skills and learn new ones, so leaders should address their appetite for growth by offering training opportunities to their employees. This will help further develop skills and may even result in talent discovering renewed passion for the work that will help make big things happen.

At PMI, we offer several certifications and courses that organizations can point employees to for growth opportunities, such as [Disciplined Agile®](#), the industry-leading process decision tool kit that helps you learn about your options and guides you to your best next step, and [Wicked Problem Solving](#), an online course and toolkit that helps changemakers and leaders sharpen their creative problem-solving and collaboration skills.

Ozguler: **What are employees seeking in the new “never normal” working environment?**

Garrett: Simply put, workers are looking for purposeful work, flexibility, opportunities for career advancement, and competitive compensation. The pandemic completely upended not only the ways in which we work, but also the ways we derive value from our jobs and how we measure the importance of our work against our personal lives. It's no longer enough for people to clock their eight hours each day after going through the motions and expect that to result in purposeful work for individuals and organizations; it's evident now, more than ever, that people expect to feel fulfilled in their work, as they rightfully should.

That's where project management shines. When people work together on a project, they are working toward a common goal, with checkpoints along the way that allow them to reflect, assess, and move forward in ways that make sense for the project and team. This sense of camaraderie among the group allows people to feel like they're contributing to a greater goal. This, paired with the fluidity and flexibility of project work and the excellent compensation offered in the project management field, is what people are looking for as the new “never normal” drives workers' expectations.

Ozguler: **Why are companies looking for employees with project management skills?**

Garrett: Organizations look to project managers to deliver tangible results, unlock new capabilities, and improve processes. Simply put, project managers make big things happen. They are the changemakers who bring ideas to life and allow organizations to deliver value.

But beyond technical project management, staff who properly apply project management techniques are honing power skills that help their teams succeed and allow work to get done.

They make teams sustainable, helping people see meaning in their work in a way that motivates them to stay. At the end of the day, we're all human, and part of our humanity is creating a win-win environment that we can all thrive within.

Ozguler: **How can leaders cultivate those skills within their existing workforce?**

Garrett: Upskilling and continuous learning are critical components of successful organizations today. We've entered an unprecedented era of work where staff are in the driver's seat: they want to do work that matters, they want opportunities for growth, and they want to feel seen and valued within organizations. Leadership can meet these needs and expectations by providing upskilling opportunities throughout the organization.

While providing these opportunities is a step in the right direction, an important step before that is asking people what they want to learn and where they want to grow. Then map out the connections between the work you need done and their personal aspirations. It's not enough to throw some time on their calendars for a mandatory training; instead, reach out to people individually and ask them about their passion points and what they want to learn. Not only does this prove to your staff that you see each of them as a person, but it also shows them that you are listening and acting on their feedback to help them grow within the organization.

PMI has many offerings that can help workers on their professional journey, from varied certifications like the [Project Management Professional](#) (PMP)® and the [PMI Professional in Business Analysis](#) (PMI-PBA)® to skills- and industry-specific courses and offerings like [PMI Citizen Developer](#)™ and the [Construction Professional in Built Environment Projects](#) (PMI-CP)™. Whether an employee is looking to hone their craft or learn an entirely new skill that can drive value for the organization, leaders and professionals can look to PMI for their professional development and growth needs.

Ozguler: What are the main benefits of a career in project management?

Garrett: As project professionals, we know there are many benefits of a career in project management, but to me, these three stand out the most:

1. **Project managers do purposeful work.** Everyone wants to find meaning in their work. We put so much time and energy into our jobs, so it's important that we not only enjoy our work, but that it is purposeful — however we define that purpose. Simply put, project managers bring big ideas to life. They are the backbone of organizations and the reason behind team success. Everyone is looking for that kind of purpose and value in the work they do, which truly is a day in the life of a project manager.
2. **Project management offers an array of opportunity.** Project managers are in high demand across industries and sectors. Now, more than ever before, organizational leadership is looking to project managers to drive business and people outcomes. Because of this, there is a plethora of opportunity for project managers to dig their heels into the ground and root themselves in work they care about, in addition to trying out new opportunities if inspiration to dabble in something different strikes.
3. **Project managers are well paid.** PMI recently conducted a survey of project managers across 40 countries, and the survey reveals compelling insights for the industry in terms of compensation. Our [2021 Salary Survey](#) finds that survey respondents with a PMP certification report higher median salaries than those without a PMP certification — 16% higher on average across the 40 countries surveyed.

Ozguler: What advice do you have for those who want to pursue a career in project management or take their PM career to the next level?

Garrett: My best advice is to just go for it. Immerse yourself in the world of project management by seeking out advice and mentorship opportunities from those in the field. Poke around job boards to see the different types of skills organizations are looking for in project managers to help you understand where you excel and where you can learn and grow. You can also check out [PMI's New Work Ecosystem Resource Hub](#), where you'll find free resources, an online community of professionals, and more to help you navigate the world of project management.

You can also get started by taking PMI's free 45-minute [Kickoff](#) course, which dives into the fundamentals of project management. Additionally, the [Certified Associate in Project](#)

[Management \(CAPM\)](#)® is a fantastic certification for novice project managers who want to learn the ropes of the project management world and show employers they are dedicated to learning more about the field and driving positive business outcomes across organizations. Or if you are already certified, pop into a local PMI chapter meeting, where you are likely to meet a recruiter or network with peers who can connect you to opportunities.

But what it really all comes down to is drive. The future of project management is bright, and thus, opportunities for project managers are vast and varied. Anyone looking to pursue a career in project management would do well to really zero in on their passion points, goals for the future, and skillsets they wish to obtain and perfect — from there, they're sure to find success in their project management career.

Ozguler: Thank you for giving such useful detailed information.

About the Interviewer



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Ipek Sahra Ozguler graduated from the Istanbul University, Turkey with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University, Turkey with an MSc degree in Software Management. As a project manager, she has more than 13 years of experience in various areas such as portfolio management, program management, project management, software management, business analysis. She became a certified PMP in 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014.

She has gained broader insights in a variety of projects across manufacturing, defence, FMCG (Cola Cola), insurance (Euler Hermes), audit (Deloitte), telecommunication, aviation and finance sectors. In addition, she has been working as an international correspondent for the PM World Journal since 2014.

Ipek is the creator and editor of the highly acclaimed book, [The Perspective of Women Project Management Professionals](#), interviews with leading female PM experts and professionals around the world. The book was published in March 2020 and is available [here](#).

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