

Propelling New Leadership in the Project Management World

Interview with Badr Burshaid¹

PMO Global Alliance Fellow (2023)
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Interviewed by Yasmina Khelifi

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Introduction to the interviewee

Badr Mohammed Burshaid is a visionary leader in strategy and project management, currently serving as the Chapter President of PMI Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Badr Borshaid serves as the chairman of the Global Project Management Forum, a distinguished global community dedicated to promoting excellence in project

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management and fostering connections among leaders worldwide. His leadership aims to advance the field by encouraging collaboration, innovation, and the sharing of best practices across international boundaries.”

With under progress Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) from Bordeaux University, focusing on strategy and project management, and an Executive Leadership certificate from CII in 2017, Badr's educational foundation is robust. He also holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, obtained in 2001.

Badr's career is marked by his remarkable ability to lead and innovate. In his role as Vice President of Strategy and Programs, he has been pivotal in driving transformative initiatives that align with Saudi Vision 2030. His leadership at the Project Management Institute (PMI) - Saudi Arabia Chapter has been transformative, significantly growing membership

As President of the PMO Global Alliance - kingdom of Saudi Arabia Hub , Badr leads an international network of professionals and organizations, enhancing project management practices worldwide. His achievements are numerous, including leading Saudi Arabia to top rankings globally in various project management certifications. His exceptional leadership and dedication to the field have earned him several prestigious awards, such as the PMOGA Fellow Award in 2023, the Best Leader in Strategy Implementation from the Strategy Implementation Institute in 2023, and the World PMO Leader of the Year in 2020. Additionally, he was honored with the Alphonse J. Dell'Isola Outstanding Accomplishment in Construction Award in 2019.

Badr Mohammed Burshaid's career is a testament to the transformative power of strategic leadership and his passion for advancing the project management profession. His contributions continue to shape the future of project management, both in Saudi Arabia and globally, making him a beacon of excellence in his field.

Interview

Q1: First, thank you for accepting an interview request from PMWJ. You are the president of the Chapter in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Can you remind us of some numbers? (number of members and evolutions, history) are there some regional branches?

Badr Burshaid (Burshaid): I am deeply honoured to be interviewed by *PM World Journal*, a renowned publication dedicated to advancing knowledge and best practices in project management. I look forward to sharing my experiences and insights with such an esteemed audience. My illustrious career in project management is marked by exceptional achievements and leadership within the Project Management Institute (PMI). My journey with PMI began in 2002, and over the past two decades, I have significantly contributed to advancing project management practices globally. My

innovative strategies and visionary leadership have elevated Saudi Arabia to new heights in PMI certifications.

Under my leadership, Saudi Arabia has achieved the following global rankings in PMI certifications:

- First in Risk Management Professional (RMP) Certifications: Demonstrating unparalleled expertise in identifying and mitigating project risks.
- Second in Portfolio Management Professional (PfMP) and Scheduling Professional (SP) Certifications: Reflecting strategic capabilities in managing project portfolios and excelling in project scheduling.
- Third in Business Analysis (PBA) and Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) Certifications: Indicating a strong foundation in business analysis and project management principles.
- Fourth in Program Management Professional (PgMP) Certifications: Showcasing proficiency in managing multiple related projects to achieve strategic objectives.
- Fifth in Agile Certified Practitioner (ACP) Certifications: Highlighting adaptability and competence in applying agile practices.
- Sixth in Project Management Professional (PMP) Certifications: Underscoring comprehensive understanding and application of project management practices.

These accomplishments reflect my enduring influence and leadership in the project management community. My commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement has been instrumental in these achievements, firmly establishing Saudi Arabia as a leader in the global project management arena.

Moreover, my strategic leadership has propelled Saudi Arabia to a prominent position in the Portfolio Management (PfMP) certification landscape, claiming 331 of the global 1,803 certifications, an 18% share, positioning it as the second highest globally. In the first few months of 2024 alone, Saudi Arabia secured 40 out of 103 global certifications, showcasing its leadership in the field.

Q2: You are also the founder and the president of the Global Project Management Forum. How did you come up with this idea?

Burshaid: The first idea for the Global Project Management Forum (GPMF) came to me in 2017. I noticed that there was no single platform or community that truly embraced and connected the entire world of project management professionals, regardless of their gender, nationality, or background. My intent was to create a global community where everyone—from students to intermediate managers and executives, to experts in the field—could share their knowledge, contribute to the community, and connect with one another. This community aims to bridge government bodies, private sectors, universities, and professionals around the world, fostering inclusivity and collaboration at all levels. This vision has driven the development of GPMF into the vibrant and diverse community it is today.



Q3: In 2024, 11 000 participants attended the GPMF. How do you explain this success?

Burshaid: In 2024, the Global Project Management Forum (GPMF) saw unprecedented success with over 11,000 participants. This achievement can be attributed to several key factors that reflect the event's growing influence and effectiveness in the project management community.

Firstly, the GPMF's focus on high-quality content and expert speakers significantly contributed to its success. The event featured a diverse range of masterclasses and technical sessions, covering crucial topics such as digital transformation, organizational excellence, and the integration of AI in project management. These sessions were designed to address the latest trends and challenges in the industry, providing attendees with valuable insights and practical knowledge.

Secondly, the event's strategic partnerships and sponsorships played a crucial role. Collaborations with leading organizations and industry stakeholders helped enhance the forum's profile and attract a wider audience. The presence of esteemed speakers and high-level officials, such as government representatives and industry leaders, added significant value to the event, making it a must-attend for professionals across the globe.

Moreover, the GPMF's emphasis on networking and community building was a major draw. The forum provided numerous opportunities for participants to connect, share experiences, and build professional relationships. This focus on fostering a collaborative environment resonated well with attendees, contributing to the event's high attendance and positive feedback.

In summary, the GPMF's success in 2024 can be explained by its comprehensive and relevant content, strategic partnerships, focus on networking, and strong support from the community. These elements combined to create an impactful and enriching experience for all participants.

Q4: Is there cooperation with other project management organizations (PMI or not) in Qatar, Oman, UAE, Egypt, or other countries?

Burshaid: Yes, there is cooperation with other project management organizations, whether they are affiliated with PMI (Project Management Institute) or not, in various countries including Qatar, Oman, UAE, Egypt, and other nations. This collaboration enhances the sharing of best practices, resources, and expertise across the region.

Q5: How does PMI KSA contribute to Saudi Vision 2030?

Burshaid: PMI KSA (Project Management Institute Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) significantly contributes to Saudi Vision 2030 through various initiatives aimed at enhancing project management practices across the Kingdom. The contributions include:

1. Providing Project Management Tools and Resources: PMI KSA aligns its vision with Saudi Vision 2030 by offering necessary project management tools and resources to support the development of a vibrant society and a thriving economy. This alignment helps mirror the ambition of the nation and ensures that project management practices are up-to-date and effective in achieving national goals.

2. Knowledge Sharing and Skill Development: PMI KSA organizes conferences, forums, and webinars to provide its members with the latest knowledge and networking opportunities. This includes events like the National Transformation Conference, where strategies for digital transformation are discussed to help organizations align with Vision 2030's objectives. These events foster creativity, innovation, and the continuous improvement of project management methodologies

3. Research and Development: The PMI KSA emphasizes the importance of project management research to advance the concepts and practices within the Kingdom. This includes improving project management practices in both public and private sectors and encouraging youth involvement through professional webinars and training programs. The research domain helps adjust practices based on current and future market needs in KSA, supporting the broader goals of Vision 2030

These efforts collectively contribute to the successful realization of Saudi Vision 2030 by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of projects across various sectors, thus driving economic growth and societal development.

Q6: What role does the KSA government play in developing the project management profession?

Burshaid: The Saudi Arabian government recognizes the importance of project management skills as a key component of its Vision 2030 initiative, which aims to

diversify the economy and reduce dependency on oil revenues. Here are several ways the government underscores the significance of project management skills:

1. National Development Fund (NDF) Initiatives: The NDF strategy emphasizes developing robust project management skills to ensure the successful execution of development projects across various sectors. This includes orchestrating development support, enabling private-sector funding and participation, and enhancing ecosystem impact and efficiency. By building top-tier institutional capabilities, the NDF aims to deliver on its ambitious goals for economic and social transformation

2. Infrastructure Projects: The establishment of the National Infrastructure Fund, with a value of 200 billion Saudi riyals, highlights the government's commitment to modernizing and expanding the country's infrastructure. This fund supports the development of critical infrastructure such as transportation, telecommunications, and energy sectors, all of which require advanced project management practices to be executed effectively

3. Human Capital Development: The government, through various development funds and programs, focuses on enhancing the skills of its workforce, including project management. For instance, the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) aims to build a productive and sustainable workforce by providing training and development programs. These initiatives help raise the project management capabilities of Saudi citizens, enabling them to contribute more effectively to national projects

4. Support for Private Sector and SMEs: The government encourages the private sector and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to adopt advanced project management practices. Programs like the "Kafala" initiative help SMEs access necessary financing and support, fostering an environment where robust project management is crucial for success. This approach not only enhances the performance of individual businesses but also contributes to the overall economic growth of the country

Through these initiatives, the Saudi Arabian government demonstrates a clear understanding of the critical role project management skills play in achieving the objectives of Vision 2030, ensuring that projects are delivered on time, within scope, and on budget, thus driving the nation's economic and social development forward.

Q7: How will project management contribute to shaping Saudi Arabia?

Burshaid: Project management will significantly shape Saudi Arabia's future by ensuring the effective implementation of Vision 2030 initiatives across various sectors. This involves managing projects to be completed on time, within budget, and to high-quality standards. It plays a crucial role in economic diversification by overseeing projects in renewable energy, technology, and manufacturing, thus reducing the country's dependency on oil and creating new job opportunities. Additionally, project

management is vital for the development of large-scale infrastructure projects that enhance connectivity and support economic activities.

Facilitating public-private partnerships is another key contribution of project management, as it helps accelerate development through collaborations that leverage private sector expertise and innovation. The development of human capital is also supported by project management, which provides training to build a skilled workforce capable of leading complex projects and boosting economic productivity. Furthermore, project management promotes the adoption of new technologies and innovative solutions, essential for modernizing various sectors and maintaining global competitiveness.

Lastly, project management ensures that development projects are sustainable and environmentally friendly, contributing to the long-term well-being of society and the environment. Overall, project management is indispensable for achieving Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, driving economic growth, improving infrastructure, fostering innovation, and ensuring sustainable development.

Q8: On a personal note, how were you introduced to project management? How did project management contribute to your individual career? How did you achieve your leadership roles in PM/PMI?

Burshaid: I was first introduced to project management during my early career while working on a complex project that required meticulous planning and coordination. This experience highlighted the importance of project management skills in ensuring project success. Recognizing its value, I pursued formal training and certification in project management, which significantly contributed to my professional growth.

Project management played a crucial role in advancing my career by providing me with the tools and techniques needed to manage projects efficiently, meet deadlines, and deliver high-quality outcomes. These skills not only improved my performance but also opened up new opportunities for career advancement.

Achieving leadership roles in project management was a result of continuous learning, gaining practical experience, and actively participating in the project management community. I volunteered for various roles, contributed to initiatives, and built a strong network of professionals. My dedication and contributions were recognized, leading to leadership positions where I could further influence and shape the field of project management.

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

Burshaid: My final message to PWJ readers is to embrace the principles of project management in all aspects of your work. The skills and methodologies of effective project management are invaluable tools that can lead to successful outcomes, whether

in large-scale projects or everyday tasks. Continuous learning, adaptability, and dedication to excellence are key. By applying these principles, you can drive significant positive change, achieve your goals more efficiently, and contribute to the growth and success of your organization and community. Keep pushing boundaries, stay curious, and never stop striving for improvement.

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 SA](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with significant 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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