

Project Management Practices in the Czech Republic. Is the Knowledge of Techniques and Methodologies Sufficient and Required?

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Abstract: The principles of project management are applied to the development activities facing most organizations today. Quality project management is a tool to successfully implement major changes in the life of a company, organization or public administration entity. Focused on the achievement of established goals and priorities, this method of management concentrates knowledge and skills for planning, organizing the preparation and subsequent implementation, and securing and effective use of resources of all kinds. In this context, the role of the project manager and his/her level of hard and soft skills is crucial. Where do Czech project managers stand in this field? Are Czech project managers sufficiently educated, using appropriate methodologies and using a wide range of software techniques and online tools? The paper aims to answer these questions through personal experience, i.e., field research and knowledge gained through several years of conducting seminars for the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic focusing on the education of applicants and beneficiaries of EU Funds. Results from seminars are expanded with project management surveys “Project Management Trends”.

Keywords: applicant; beneficiary; EU Funds; Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic; project manager; project management trends

JEL Classification: H43; M11; O22

1. Introduction

Some of the most commonly used terms today are the words project and the fourth industrial revolution – the technological revolution. A New Way Forward – call it disruption – or just the new normal. At a time of extraordinary change driven by new technologies, executive leaders from across the business, government and nonprofit organizations know that success depends on big, bold ideas. And they need people with the skills and mindset to deliver on those ideas with big, bold projects – or risk being left behind. The survey results for the 2020 year’s Pulse of the Profession revealed an average of 11.4% of investment is wasted due to poor project performance. And organizations that undervalue project management as a strategic competency for driving change report an average of 67% more of their projects failing outright. With so much at stake – and so much in flux – organizations must rethink some fundamental questions: Why do we exist? What do we offer? Who will be tasked to do the work? The 2020 Pulse reveals a new way of doing

business. The beginning of a new decade is ushering in a world full of complex issues that require organizational leaders to reimagine not just the nature of work, but how it gets done. For the first time for Pulse, executive leaders identified which factors they see as the most important to achieve success in the future. The top three were: organizational agility (35%), choosing the right technologies to invest in (32%) and securing relevant skills (31%). Future-fit organizations are not only willing to reimagine their vision and purpose, but also eager to adopt new ways of thinking that will allow them to thrive in The Project Economy – a new terminus technicus. Change is as relentless as it is pervasive – from the impact of technologies like artificial intelligence to the clamour for greater social accountability to customers' ever-evolving expectations. Organizations that stick with the status quo risk not just treading water, but sinking. Now an essential business asset, change happens through projects. Organizations are undergoing a fundamental paradigm shift in which projects are no longer adjacent to operations but instead primary to how work gets done and problems get solved. In today's C-suite – and tomorrow's – it is the portfolio that disrupts, innovates, expands and thrives. In many ways, the organization is its projects – led by a variety of titles, executed through a variety of approaches, and focused unwaveringly on delivering financial and societal value. This is what PMI calls The Project Economy (PMI, 2020).

Yes, it is true and evident, projects move the world. Why does the reality of project practice not match the theoretical and methodological requirements? Only less than half of the companies consider the introduction of project management to be important:

- 67% – On average, that's how many more projects fail for companies that undervalue project management.
- 11% – That's how many resources companies waste on unnecessary processes associated with poorly implemented project management.
- 37% – So many project failures are caused by poorly defined objectives.

What can be done to prevent the project from falling into these statistics? Every project is unique in terms of the problems that arise, the priorities and resources assigned to it, the environment in which it operates, and the project manager's attitude and style to guide and control project activities. The success of a project thus depends to some extent on the skills of the project manager. What does it mean to be a great project manager? It is not about qualifications or degrees. It is not about merely delivering on a project manager's classic duties and responsibilities. But being a great project manager isn't just about tasks and timings. Some of the crucial project manager skills – the ones that will team the project manager feel valued, motivated, and trust – are divided into hard and soft skills.

The paper aims to describe the reality of project management, and the level of use of project manager competencies (hard, soft and technical skills). The results of the paper are a combination of the results of a survey entitled "Trendy projektového řízení, i.e., Project Management Trends)" among Czech/domestic and international managers, and own experience in leading and lecturing seminars for the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic (MRD CR), whose focus is the education of applicants and beneficiaries of EU funds. The paper is thus based on personal experience.

2. Methodology

After we have set the research question, we should also think about methods and techniques of data collection we will use in the field research. The use of qualitatively oriented methodological approaches is particularly significant for this research, as they can capture the phenomenon under study in more depth. First of all, this involves participant observation, various types of interviews, and content analysis of documents, but it can also be quantitative research in the form of a questionnaire. Of course, it is good to choose the methods according to the nature of the research problem in advance, but even here the methods may change in the course of the solution, i.e., during the fieldwork.

The methodology applied is the so-called field research. Field research – also field investigation, field study – these are terms used either as synonyms of empirical research, or to denote the field phase of empirical research, also in the sense of research in natural conditions in opposition to experimental investigation, or in the sense of fieldwork. Sometimes field research, and more likely its synonyms, is associated with a case study and direct observation. In this sense, it is particularly typical of social and cultural anthropology (Soukup, 2017). The paper is thus based on own personal experience, i.e., field research and knowledge gained through several years of conducting seminars for the MRD CR, whose focus is the education of applicants and beneficiaries of EU Funds.

Qualitative data are collected from personal observation and experience through a series of professional seminars sponsored and realized by MRD CR. Data in Table 1 characterize the series of seminars for the MRD CR personally lectured by one of the authors of the paper. Specifically, the seminars are EU Grants and Project Management, EU Grants and Financial Management, and EU Grants and Cost-Benefit Analysis. The data corresponds to the training period of 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 seminar cycles. The seminars are aimed at educating applicants and beneficiaries of EU funds. The questions in Table 2 are based on an evaluation questionnaire designed by MRD CR. Seminar participants' responses in questionnaire questions are captured on a five-level scale, representing school-like grades (1-best, 5-worst). The resulting statistics from the seminars are expanded with results of project management practice and conclusions from official surveys and investigations of the use of project management methods and techniques in the preparation and implementation of projects. Surveys "Trendy projektového řízení, i.e., Project Management Trends" are made by Czech company Easy Software and published online via EasyProject. Surveys "Trendy projektového řízení" are evaluated for the same years as the seminars, i.e., 2019, 2020 and 2021, except for 2022, for which results are not yet available or compiled.

3. Theory Versus Practice of Project Management

Project management is the planning of the steps that lead from the idea to the evaluation of the finished project. The goal of project management is the successful implementation of the project. However, it is not just about the well-known project triple-imperative, it is a set of several important activities in all phases (from initiation, planning through implementation to project evaluation).

Suppose you have a great idea for a project and you want to make it happen. What next? To make everything work, you first need to: define the goal of the project (what you want to achieve and why); define the purpose of the project (a measurable effect after the project is completed); identify the project management methods and techniques appropriate for your project; assemble a team led by a project manager (see how to do this and why the role of a project manager is important); plan a project timeline (by when you want to achieve your goal – deadlines for tasks, major milestones and project completion); allocate tasks (so everyone knows what to do and what they are responsible for); create a budget (in the initiation phase by estimating, in the planning phase by calculating); plan communication within the team (meetings, what form, how often, etc.), and determine the possible risks of the project (e.g., through a SWOT analysis); etc.

But what is the best way to transfer theoretical knowledge and methodological recommendations to the real practice of project managers? In this context, it is necessary to distinguish two project management lines, i.e., hard and soft project management. In project management, theory and practice exist concocted de-bate about hard versus soft project management merits. Besides hard and soft project management skills, we must talk about the technical skills of project managers. Nowadays project management is all about using the right tools and techniques. Having these two things in order can help each project manager manage the projects quickly and effectively. Many surveys have found that using the right project management tools and techniques can increase overall performance, productivity, and happiness levels at work.

The questions should be repeated. The easiest way is to implement project management software. Sure, it can be done in excel spreadsheets, emails and flipcharts, but it is not practical. Project management software can help organize work much more efficiently. In such a tool, users can assign tasks, communicate with all participants in the project, including freelancers, monitor budgets and deadlines, or even measure time spent on tasks and the entire project. What's great is that users can keep track at all times and go back to whatever was discussed. Users know exactly who's working on what, how long it took them, and what impact it had on the budget. So, no more pointless meetings and searching for information in a pile of handwritten notes. For example, what software and applications exist to make project management and all its steps easier and more efficient, address Melecký and Staníčková (2021).

4. Results and Discussion

Information about the knowledge of project managers in the field of project management, and information about their project competencies, i.e., whether hard, soft or technical skills, are obtained from two sources that complement each other, extend each other's results and thus support each other's conclusions. The first data source presents seminars for the MRD CR. The second data source is the survey "Trendy projektového řízení, i.e., Project Management Trends" by Easy Software/EasyProject.

4.1. Facts from Seminars for the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic

The first analytical part of the paper is based on personal experience, i.e., as mentioned above, field research and knowledge gained via ensuring education for the National Coordination Authority (MRD CR) is the central methodological and coordinating body for the implementation of programmes co-financed by EU funds in the programming period 2007–2013, 2014–2020 and 2021–2027. The primary source of information is data obtained from seminars for MRD CR via personal involvement, i.e., lecturing Czech applicants and beneficiaries of EU funds. These are Czech project managers in different project positions, working in different phases of the project life cycle, applicants and recipients themselves or their representatives, whether from the public or private sphere, as well as with different project experience – beginners or persons working in projects for several years or decades. The seminars were also attended by people who work in this field and the position of a project manager or consultant is their job (self-employed or employed by a consultancy company).

The seminars are EU Grants and Project Management, EU Grants and Financial Management, and EU Grants and Cost-Benefit Analysis.

- The aim of the seminars “EU Grants and Project Management” is to introduce the field of project management in the context of projects co-financed from EU funds in the Czech Republic, and to offer comprehensive information to strengthen project knowledge and skills for the preparation of projects co-financed by EU funds in the relevant programming period and their verification through practical examples. The target group of seminars “EU Grants and Project Management” are representatives of applicants and beneficiaries of EU funds who want to gain an overview of the theoretical and practical aspects of project management in the conditions of EU funds in the Czech Republic.
- The aim of the seminars “EU Grants and Financial Management” is to introduce the financial aspects of the preparation, planning and implementation of projects co-financed from EU funds in the Czech Republic in the relevant programming period, and to provide comprehensive information to strengthen theoretical knowledge and their verification on practical examples and exercises. The target group of these seminars “EU Grants and Financial Management” are representatives of applicants and beneficiaries of EU funds who want to gain an overview of the theoretical and practical aspects of financial management in the conditions of EU funds in the Czech Republic.
- The aim of the seminars “EU Grants and Cost-Benefit Analysis” is to introduce the theoretical and practical aspects of the preparation and procedure of Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) within projects co-financed from EU funds in the Czech Republic, and to provide comprehensive information to strengthen theoretical knowledge and their verification on practical examples and exercises. The target group of these seminars “EU Grants and Cost-Benefit Analysis” are representatives of applicants and beneficiaries of EU funds who want to gain an overview of the theoretical and practical aspects of cost-benefit analysis in the conditions of EU Funds in the Czech Republic.

The data corresponds to the training period of the seminars, i.e., data for the 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 seminar cycles. Concerning this time period, the seminars were held in two modes – live, i.e., offline (fully in 2019 and 2022), and more or less online (in 2020 and 2021, although some of the initial dates were held live and subsequently switched to a distance format due to the worsening COVID-19 epidemiological situation and announced government measures).

The seminars took place in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 according to a single scenario. The location for the seminars were 13 regional cities, i.e., Brno, České Budějovice, Hradec Králové, Jihlava, Karlovy Vary, Liberec, Olomouc, Ostrava, Pardubice, Plzeň, Praha, Ústí nad Labem, and Zlín. All three seminars were always held in each regional city. The organizer of the seminars is the National Coordination Authority, i.e., the MRD CR. The seminars are organized by the Eurocentres of the MRD CR, which are located in the respective regional cities and provide information on EU funds, i.e. function of regional coordinator.

Summary statistical and contextual results related to the seminars are presented in following Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 provides a summary evaluation of the seminars, while Table 2 provides a detailed evaluation of each of the seminars in each year. In terms of the results, it is clear that although the seminars were conducted in 4 rounds, i.e., in 4 repetitions in 4 years, the interest in them developed more or less unchanged with time. The seminars were always held once a year and one thematic seminar was held in each regional city. Given the amount of repetition, one would expect interest in the seminars to decline over the years, but this was not the case. The results show that over the 4 years of repetition, a more or less similar number of participants have been trained in the seminars “EU Grants and Project Management” and “EU Grants and Financial Management” – around 990 on average. This is because many of them have attended these two seminars simultaneously, which are related in content and thus the applicant or beneficiary receives adequate information to identify, prepare and implement projects in terms of content and financial aspects. The interest in seminars is certainly due not only to the scope of this sector and the popularity of EU funding in the Czech Republic but also to the growing number of people involved, both applicants and beneficiaries, as well as project managers, advisors and consultants. Representatives of the public sector account for the largest number of participants, followed in equal measure by representatives of SMEs and NGOs.

The only seminar “EU Grants and Cost-Benefit Analysis” was held in 2020 and 2021, and the next series will follow in 2023. Taking into account the implementation of only 2 runs of this seminar, it is clear that the number of participants was the lowest. This is also because not all projects co-financed by EU funds require CBA. Another aspect is also the demanding nature of this topic on expertise both in terms of economic knowledge, financial literacy and overall awareness of measuring and evaluating the added value of projects.

The seminars EU Grants and Project Management, EU Grants and Financial Management, and EU Grants and Cost-Benefit Analysis are financed by the MRD CR from the Technical Assistance Programme and are therefore free of charge for the participants, which can also be an attraction and a competitive advantage compared to paid seminars of private companies, which are not cheap and also do not guarantee quality. The biggest

advantage of the seminars is undoubtedly the personality of the lecturer), who is rated as the greatest added value and professional in all evaluations, for the courses and the individual cities each year. This rating is not easy to maintain given the number of repeats of the seminars, and a stable "grade" speaks about the quality of the lecturer.

Table 1. Overall evaluation of seminars – statistical and content information

Seminar	EU Grants and Project Management	EU Grants and Financial Management	EU Grants and CBA
Basic data	Number		
Number of applicants	1,227	1,228	349
Number of arrivals	993	991	273
Number of questionnaires submitted	720	621	136
Information about participants – sector	%		
Non-governmental non-profit organizations	12%	11%	10%
Public administration	47%	43%	32%
Businesses – small and medium-sized	12%	12%	16%
Businesses – large	4%	4%	6%
Consulting and advisory companies	8%	8%	8%
Schools	8%	9%	9%
Other	8%	13%	20%
Questionnaire questions – course	Average (1–5 scale (1 best, 5 worst))		
Did the time, duration and venue of this seminar suit you?	1.38	1.41	1.59
Were you connected with the seminar?	1.27	1.23	1.32
How useful was the information for you?	1.56	1.54	1.58
How do you rate the performance of the lecturer?	1.16	1.12	1.22
Was the information clear to you?	1.20	1.30	1.55
Did the seminar meet your expectations?	1.52	1.49	1.63
How do you evaluate the level and processing of the teaching materials?	1.18	1.18	1.18
Open questions – course and more	The most frequent comments		
How was this event beneficial for you personally?	Absolute satisfaction. /Balanced ratio between theory and practice, concrete examples, tools and project examples from A to Z./Seminar on CBA. /Seminar focused on ISKP. /Seminar on public procurement. /Seminar on concrete examples of real projects according to operational programmes. /More days. /Unbeatable lecturer.	Overall satisfaction without reservations = especially the person of the lecturer. /Balance between theory and practice. /Problems related to a specific project from start to finish and examples of techniques. /Seminar on CBA. /Seminar on public procurement. /Seminar on public support. /Multiple days. /Distribution according to the level of expertise.	Another follow-up seminar. /Ideal and appropriate ratio of practice and theory. /Same great lecturer. /Nothing special, satisfaction. /More days (video recording).
Which part or topic was most useful to you?			
Which part or topic was least useful to you?			
What did you miss at the event?			
What would you recommend for the next event?			
<p><i>Note:</i> Considering the scope of the paper – only the most frequently mentioned comments have been selected.</p>			

As far as the overall summary is concerned, it is evident that the courses are more than positively evaluated; moreover, the participants would appreciate an extension of these courses both in terms of duration and content in the context of other follow-up courses and topics. Last but not least, it should be mentioned that these results and evaluations are again clearly linked to the personality of the lecturer, who is also the project manager.

Table 2. Summary evaluation of seminars – statistical information

Seminar	EU Grants and Project Management				EU Grants and Financial Management				EU Grants and CBA	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021
Basic data	Number				Number				Number	
Number of applicants	317	319	286	305	327	348	280	273	169	180
Number of arrivals	255	256	212	270	258	291	212	230	118	155
Number of questionnaires submitted	199	177	148	196	180	157	122	162	47	89
Information about participants – sector	%				%				%	
Non-governmental non-profit organizations	22%	4%	8%	15%	16%	9%	7%	13%	9%	11%
Public administration	54%	45%	43%	46%	50%	40%	42%	41%	38%	27%
Businesses – small and medium-sized	6%	17%	15%	12%	9%	16%	17%	5%	18%	14%
Businesses – large	2%	9%	0%	5%	2%	7%	0%	7%	5%	6%
Consulting companies	10%	4%	8%	11%	9%	7%	9%	7%	7%	9%
Schools	5%	10%	7%	12%	8%	9%	9%	12%	13%	5%
Other	2%	11%	19%	0%	6%	13%	16%	15%	11%	29%
Questionnaire questions – course and more	Average				Average				Average	
Did the time, duration and venue of this seminar suit you?	1.40	1.34	1.57	1.22	1.30	1.54	1.56	1.26	1.55	1.64
Were you connected with the seminar?	1.22	1.26	1.39	1.21	1.16	1.27	1.33	1.15	1.34	1.31
How useful was the information for you?	1.57	1.59	1.53	1.55	1.56	1.68	1.54	1.37	1.53	1.64
How do you rate the performance of the lecturer?	1.08	1.16	1.29	1.12	1.06	1.14	1.22	1.06	1.13	1.31
Was the information clear to you?	1.13	1.19	1.28	1.18	1.20	1.37	1.38	1.25	1.51	1.59
Did the seminar meet your expectations?	1.47	1.58	1.56	1.47	1.44	1.68	1.48	1.35	1.62	1.65
How do you evaluate the level and processing of the teaching materials?	1.15	1.20	1.23	1.13	1.13	1.30	1.20	1.11	1.09	1.27

4.2. Facts from Surveys Project Management Trends by Easy Software/Easy Project

The resulting statistics from the seminars above are supplemented by project management practice, i.e., with the results of official surveys and investigations of the use of project management methods and techniques in the preparation and implementation of projects. Surveys "Trendy projektového řízení, i.e., Project Management Trends" are made by Czech company Easy Software and published online via EasyProject (2019; 2020; 2021). Surveys "Trendy projektového řízení" are evaluated for the same years as the seminars, i.e., 2019, 2020 and 2021, except for 2022, for which results are not yet available (since it is early 2023). Recent years have been full of changes for all companies and their employees. The introduction of telecommuting brought with it the need for greater trust in teams and new work processes. Constant changes to budgets and layoffs as well as new hires. The turbulent year 2020 has put a thick line behind what was normal until then. A survey of project managers provides insight into the changes and practices of project management in the years before, during and after the covid pandemic, i.e. 2019, 2020 and 2021.

- Project Management Trends for 2019
 - Not only large and medium-sized companies but also small companies or freelancers feel the need to manage their projects in a different and better way than through sticky notes or excel spreadsheets.
 - Companies want to integrate project management tools into their software systems to link them with communication channels – online project management tools.
 - In the context of the Czech Republic, there is often talk about the need for robotization and automation of production. Here too, project management is useful: it brings automation of resource management, production planning, and service and even helps automate sales and marketing (EasyProject, 2019).
- Project Management Trends for 2020
 - Home office, team discipline, budget and profitability changes, layoffs and hiring, switching to more efficient work management software, but also "self-motivation issues". The most common challenges, and obstacles but also positives that the pandemic year 2020 brought in project management.
 - Even though around half of Czech respondents did not rate 2020 well, this is still a relatively optimistic result given what many traditional industries have experienced. Up to about 90% of managers from industry and logistics perceived 2020 as worse than expected and about 10% of managers perceived it much better. The comparison with global managers is interesting: almost 65% of them rated 2020 as a year when everything turned out as expected or even better or much better.
 - Many project managers were afraid of the transition to the home office. Those who were "first timers" in 2020. More than a third saw a 10-49% drop in productivity. Managers from companies working from home were already established and were the most positive about the impact of the home office on team productivity. Almost half of the managers did not perceive any change in productivity, which can be

- considered a success. Foreign managers are a bit more positive: one-third perceived an increase in home office productivity (in the Czech Republic it was only 13%).
- How were the projects managed from home? Badly. Only a third of Czech project managers rated remote team management positively. There are, of course, more reasons, but the most common was problems with team discipline. It is clear from the results and the current reality that remote management has become part of many organizations. As is the case abroad – up to two-thirds of managers have no problem with "remote management" or even evaluate it positively.
 - How has the pandemic crisis affected the profitability of projects? As many as a third of Czech and global managers said nothing. The drop in profitability was also almost the same in our country as among foreign respondents. However, it is different with its increase. It was 40% more frequent in foreign projects, where about one-fifth of managers reported it. Deadlines and project delivery are an "old familiar issue" even without the corona crisis. However, according to the survey results, up to three-quarters of project managers in the Czech Republic delivered their projects late, which is quite a terrible result. All the more so when we compare it with foreign countries, where just under half of the managers had a similar problem and experienced accelerated project delivery three times more often.
 - The question of whether the crisis has brought something of business interest to the organization – perhaps unexpected business opportunities – may sound like a provocation. More than half of the executives were able to land unexpected new projects as a result of the events of 2020. This is certainly due in part to the fact that a significant number of respondents were from IT backgrounds, where 2020 was at least as much an opportunity as a threat. 2020 ruined the plans of the other half of the companies in which they lost projects unexpectedly. Compared to foreign executives, we were worse off in the Czech Republic in terms of findings and losses.
 - The busiest department of 2020 was HR. Although pay cuts were 4 times more common than pay increases in 2020. Mid-sized companies cut to pay the most, while also laying off the least. Large firms cut pay the least often but are laid off the most. What effect has this had on bonuses and salaries? Respondents were 4.5 times more likely to see a decrease in bonuses than an increase. About half of the managers say that nothing has changed at all when it comes to bonuses and salaries.
 - The main message of COVID-19-year 2020 and the pandemic crisis: In an emergency, you know a friend – in a crisis a good tool for project management! Companies and organizations around the world use a lot of different project management software, and about 40% of teams in the Czech Republic and abroad eventually started working with new software. Czech managers tended to increase the total number of software, those abroad tended to replace old tools with new ones (EasyProject, 2020).
 - Project Management Trends for 2021
 - Year of acceleration – the year 2021 was stronger compared to 2020. 7 in 10 executives rate 2021 better than 2020, regardless of their industry or company size. The country where the company operates does not change this fact – both domestic

and international managers agreed. For 62% of Czech companies, 2021 is even ahead of 2019 in terms of turnover. Only a third of foreign companies can say the same. The other third of foreign firms reported worse results than in 2019.

- Quality people are the key to success – projects were unfinished mostly due to a lack of human resources. Even though one-third of domestic companies managed to recruit a new workforce, quality people are still a scarce commodity. Companies see the solution to this problem primarily in better planning and more effective teaming based on individual project needs. It is important not to underestimate the selection of individual team members and to monitor how well they work together.
- Based on the above facts about the reality of project management in the Czech Republic, it is clear that Czech project management practice confirms that managing projects remotely is not problematic, but quite the opposite. Most Czech companies were better at delivering projects in 2021 than in 2020. In the first year of the pandemic, two-thirds of managers could not identify with managing projects remotely. However, 2021 saw a leap year, when 76% of project managers were comfortable with remote management. Abroad, as many as 81% of respondents took remote working as a natural part of the job. During 2021, Czech companies started working on improving project culture and want to continue doing so. This is mainly due to the creation of specialized teams and more frequent involvement of company management in projects (EasyProject, 2021).

5. Conclusions

Back to the top of the paper. What is the future of project management: how to prepare for technological and societal changes? Technology, the economy and society are evolving faster and faster and this will also affect a field such as a project management. According to Forbes, the way projects are organized will change soon mainly as follows (Brownlee, 2019):

- Agile methods will become more common: Companies that can adapt to rapid developments evolving in budget, schedule etc. have a big advantage.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) will dominate processes: 85% of Chief executive officers worldwide believe that artificial AI will significantly impact business in the years to come. But at the same time, it is hard to find qualified staff to introduce at least some kind of AI into the business. This sounds like a challenge for project managers – a basic understanding of robotics, data science and other areas of AI.
- More emphasis on empathy and relationship skills for project managers: empathy is the most important trait for team leaders and will be increasingly emphasized. Take an interest in team members – what they are feeling and whether their sudden drop in productivity is related to personal issues.

Everyone manages projects, even if not everyone realizes them. A project is a fundamental tool for managing the changes that happen to all of us. But everyone - individual and company alike – has different needs. A small team or individual handling units of projects at the same time needs a simpler tool to keep track of tasks, time worked and project income and costs; on the other hand, a company with 50 or 100 employees handles dozens or

hundreds of smaller or larger projects simultaneously – some at a strategic level, others at an operational level. Here, prioritization of projects is already necessary, linked to resource utilization and capacity management – ideally all transparent throughout the whole company, otherwise, it is common that operational issues eat up resources for strategic projects, which then do not move forward, and the company loses competitiveness. And that's not all, these activities are commissioned, coordinated, and communicated by someone – person – project manager. You need to know and, more importantly, be able to apply both the hard and soft competencies of a project manager, and ideally all of them and combine them well, i.e., a mix – for more information see e.g., Melecký and Staničková (2021).

In conclusion, although this is obvious and familiar, it is not too much to repeat: How do we know if we have set up project management correctly? By completing a project that: met its objectives; met a predetermined measurable purpose; is not over budget; met the schedule; eliminated potential risks; made effective use of all resources; and has a positive impact on society. Generally, for all projects and times. The recipe for successful project management. Trust in the team and accountability of individual members is an essential ingredients for a long-lasting team. In addition, need to think about regular feedback to help the team move forward. And what does reality say? What is the actual practice? Projects were done by the heroics of individuals with no standard methodology.

The biggest weakness and at the same time the biggest challenge of Czech project practice is the lack or insufficient certification of project managers. By obtaining the certificate, the project manager demonstrates that he/she has the appropriate expertise in project management and can work as a member of a project team or as a project coordinator. This is the area in which the most improvement is needed. Another problematic area is the ethics of the project manager, which no certification can ensure.

Conflict of interest: none.

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