

Responding to Rapid Change in Project Management

Director General of the Institute of Project Management (IPMI) Ed Naughton examines how Project Management is evolving globally, with the introduction of recognised standards and certification.

Project Management as a management methodology is undergoing dramatic change. It has evolved from a very physical discipline focused on building tangible assets, to one that is also heavily concerned with managing change.

It is estimated that the total number of people around the world who view, or might view, Project Management as a profession of choice currently exceeds 16.5 million.

IPMI's Response

As the national organisation representing Project Management in Ireland, the Institute's value, particularly to its members is tied to its ability to move quickly and meaningfully to support the evolving profession, particularly in its knowledge maintenance activities. This is especially important in the Project Management standards and certification areas. As Project Management becomes globalised, there is a worldwide demand for procedures, concepts and vocabulary to become more uniform, so that a project team employing good practices in Berlin is functioning in much the same way as a project team operating in Dublin.

Standards

So far the IPMI has responded effectively to dealing with changes in the profession that require knowledge maintenance. The evolution of the NCBI, (National Competence Baseline for Ireland), as a body of knowledge, is one of the major examples of how IPMI's standard activities are keeping pace with changing perspectives on project management knowledge.

It describes the knowledge and experience requirements of a person responsible for project management and a qualification and certification process matched to it. This definitive body of knowledge outlines the standards that are the essentials of best practices. The NCBI will be the authoritative point of reference for project managers in Ireland.

Certification

Similarly, IPMI has moved quickly to respond to the evolving needs for a National Project Management Certification Programme. This internationally recognised qualification is aligned with the IPMA (International Project Management Association) validated four level certification programme.

Certification is based on a combination of self-assessment, written examination tests, proven experience and independent interview assessment. Since its formal launch in September 2001, in excess of 200 candidates have indicated their intention to seek certification. This certification programme recognises that there is a demand for different kinds and levels of certification and it is being currently rolled out in some fifteen European countries.

Research

Despite the rapid growth of the global economy, there are still many large global businesses and governmental agencies in which Project Management is undervalued. IPMI is working to help business and government better understand and deploy Project Management, and to help business and government increasingly organise and align their support for Project Management.

To achieve this goal IPMI and UCC (Department of Management and Marketing), are continuing to deepen their already considerable joint efforts in the area of Project Management, by together representing Ireland in a major Project Management research undertaking -- the Project Oriented Society (POS). The research initiative benchmarks Ireland's status as a POS against other countries including Germany, Austria, India, UK, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Hungary. We envisage that the outputs from this benchmarking exercise will be a very valuable tool in helping to influence government and big business about the benefits of Project Management.