Social **climbing**

Communication has always been the watchword for successful project delivery. Taking this to a new level, **Lindsay Scott** has blazed a trail in social media, working with project managers online to share knowledge and promote professionalism.

WHEN you ask Lindsay Scott about the best route to enter project management, the co-director of Arras People might feel inclined to say, "admin skills and osmosis". Hired by Hewlett Packard 12 years ago right out of university for the former skills, Lindsay was thrown into the project management group in its professional services division and spent the first year absorbing all of the project management knowledge she could gather from sitting in team meetings and attending knowledge forums.

"I totally fell into it. Right place, right time," she says of those early days as a business support administrator to the portfolio director. "Project management is so diverse, I couldn't help but get intrigued. Supporting the team of programme and project managers, I had to track project progress, preparing status reports and provide administrative support. That was my introduction to the world of project lifecycles, methodologies, processes and tools."

Today, Lindsay points to one leading senior project manager at HP as one of the biggest influences in her development.

"This senior project manager was amongst other things a whiz when it came to project finance – money, budgets, cost to complete, P&L, he knew how to do it all. You just couldn't structure things better than he did! Thankfully for me, he was willing to take me under his wing and spent many hours formally mentoring me in this key operational area," she recalls. "This kind of development is really priceless; I still believe that all organisations should actively encourage this approach to back-up their investments in formal training."

Lindsay proved to be a fast learner, constantly quenching her thirst for knowledge in all things project and programme related. Her last role at HP saw her establishing the original PMO department, an experience she labels as one of the first great achievements of her career – and latterly, the inspiration behind her involvement in the knowledge-sharing voluntary organisation, Programme and Project Support Office Specialist Interest Group (PPSO SIG).

In 2002, Lindsay moved on from HP to take up a new challenge with recruitment specialist Arras People. Using her PMO knowledge and experience she has placed many practitioners within blue chip organisations and across the public sector. At the same time she has been responsible for the marketing activities at Arras People using traditional channels, web and social media to expand Arras People's reach as an expert project management leader as opposed to simple high-street 'win-chaser'.

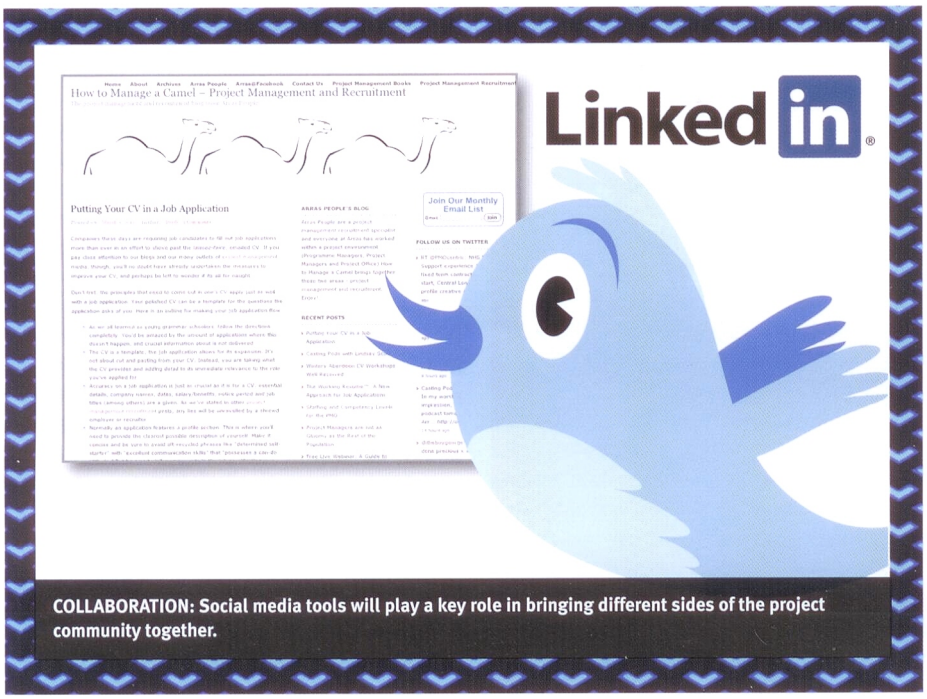
"Outlets like LinkedIn, Twitter, blogging and online resources are very important for us as a business. We're project managers first and it's to our advantage to enhance the professionalism of the industry in any way we can. Social media is another great tool to push the message. We work with like-minded project managers to spread the message and share knowledge of how to go about it the right way.

"When we learn, hear or observe things through other project managers in our networks, and that includes social media, that we deem to have integrity, we want to share that with the wider project management community. We use our own social media platform to enable project professions to share their experiences through things like blogging and newsletters."

In addition to the possibilities for marketing and knowledge-sharing, Lindsay senses great opportunities for better collaboration in project teams through improvements in online and social media communication tools.

"Project managers and their project teams should really look closer at the tools and software which allow for better collaboration. There's a bounty of tools (which just keep getting better and better) for project professionals to pick-up and use to drive better communication in a project setting. It's what many projects have been waiting for really, something that helps improve that key element of successful project delivery – communication."

The future? "I believe that social media is still in its infancy and will certainly increase its influence in the field of programmes and projects, not to mention recruitment over the coming years," says Lindsay. "Communication and collaboration are the cornerstones of effective programme and project management, so how could it not?"



COLLABORATION: Social media tools will play a key role in bringing different sides of the project community together.