

THE AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

In a volatile economy, project managers are turning to other countries and new work styles to survive.

BY LINDSAY SCOTT

Q: I'd like to apply for project management jobs outside of my country. Any suggestions?

A: There are always some customs and practices unique to a local job scene. To make sure you're maximizing your opportunity and following etiquette, do your homework.

First, look into the mechanics of working in your target country. You need to ensure that you meet the criteria for entry and, more importantly, are eligible to work there. In some instances, you may need to obtain a visa or even sponsorship from an employer. Along with government websites, there are specialist organizations that offer assistance in these areas.

Once you understand the logistics, research the job market and the types of roles you're looking for. Job boards can help you get a feel for the local market, expectations regarding qualifications and which skills are in demand.

Building up your own network with project management contacts from different parts of the globe can be a proactive and positive move. People can be quite generous

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with their time when helping out fellow professionals. Then, you can tap into your local scouts to help you work out the best course of action.

Ideally, you should also seek out a recruiter who specializes in project management positions in your target country. Armed with insider knowledge, they're more inclined—and able—to provide guidance.

Job-hunt etiquette can vary dramatically from country to country. For example, résumés in the Middle East run a little longer and are expected to include a photo, your age and your gender. In European countries, though, the CV should be shorter—two pages, maximum—but you're expected to back up each claim with copious documentation, including certificates and testimonials.

Finally, think very hard about the logistics involved in moving to another country. Not only is this important during the application process, but also in terms of availability when starting a new role. Could you travel to the country for an interview? What notice would you require? What would you do about accommodations?

These are all questions you're likely to be asked during the process, and your



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answers will dictate how the people doing the hiring will view your candidacy.

As with any project, you need to research and plan for the best opportunity to succeed.

Q: I'm hearing reports that my job may become redundant, and I'm thinking that now might be the right time to consider contracting. What advice can you offer?

A: The threat of redundancy is often a tipping point for project management practitioners who have been considering a swap into the contracting world.

This is a big shift, so consider the following:

- Life on the "outside" does not suit all project management practitioners. You're no longer part of the team or involved in the office politics—you're engaged to deliver the agreed task.
- Will freelancing coexist with your domestic circumstances? Long hours may come with the change. The next contract may be far from your home location, and you may have extended periods away.
- The day rates may look attractive, but how many days a year will you have to work to cover your financial needs? Don't forget to factor in taxes and the periods where you may be without work. And remember, there's no holiday or sick pay.
- Do you have a unique selling point? Are you a master or specialist in your project area? Is there a demand for your skills

now—and in the future? And can you sell yourself to get that next role?

Before you launch your contract career, it's vital that you carry out the research, understanding exactly who you are, what you have to offer and the price you offer it at. *PM*

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