



Industry Notes: Is Project Management a key element of economic revival?

With the focus of the last twelve months seeming to have been on the negative aspects of the credit crunch, recession (impending and real) and the general downturn in the economy, early respondents to the Annual Arras People Project Management survey suggest that it's not all bad news out there. In this years survey we asked project management professionals a number of questions around the "**Current business climate and Me**" Section and some of the interim results are detailed below.

The survey asked PM professionals' "**How would you describe your current sectors confidence moving into 2009?**" in order to gauge the temperature across the Public, Private and NFP/Charity sectors. Amongst those who had responded, confidence among public sector employees remains definitively higher than amongst those working in either the private or NFP/Charity sectors. Nearly three quarters of public respondents have neutral to higher growth perspectives against negative feelings such as "Contraction" and "Hard Times". In total, only 26.4% of our public sector workers anticipate a tough year ahead, compared with 44.1% of private sector employees and 41.4% of NFP/Charity workers.

The negative responses mean across all three sectors is 38.5%, an indication of how wide the gap is between the collective private and charity totals with those of the public sector numbers. How important is that gap? Consider if there were no public responses: the mean answer across the remaining two sectors would rise to 42.75%, an increase of over four points. In essence, public project managers are not just altering overall positive feelings – they're setting the confidence bar even higher.

The confidence factor remained unshakeable as we continued to investigate the data. When asked "**How confident are you that your employer will escape having to make project management staff redundant in the next 12 months?**", the sector divides were once again apparent, with the Private sector leading the way in terms of major cuts, 17.3% against a more stable 10.8% for the Public sector. The numbers anticipating some cuts were consistent across all sectors at around 43% with a similar differential of 7% between Public and Private sector workers anticipating no cuts at all. These numbers were also consistent against the responses returned regarding personal concern over redundancy. Clearly, when macroeconomic struggles emerge, it's good to be working in the public sector.

Confidence again bubbled over when the survey asked respondents "**How would you describe your personal confidence moving into 2009?**" Nearly three out of four respondents gave an answer that displayed a strong level of confidence moving forward. In total, 63% of our respondents stated they felt 'steady' in their current situation, while another 11.6% indicated their situation at the even higher status of 'buoyant'. Among the two featured lower confidence options, 18.6% of respondents listed themselves as having 'low' confidence looking forward into 2009, and those listing their confidence as 'gloomy' totalled a mere 6.8% in spite of recent global economic turmoil.

On a more personal front we asked our respondents "**Compared with this time last year would you say you / your family are..?**" in order to ascertain the changes that had occurred over the last twelve months. Two-thirds of respondents found their standards to be anywhere from 'about the same' to 'much better'. The highest choice came among those putting them in neutral at a rate of 34.3%, with 25.5% feeling they are 'slightly better', and 7.7% feeling 'much better' about their living standards.

It stood to reason that we were beginning to wonder if the profession featured professionals who lived life through a set of rose-coloured spectacles. But if the early returns indicate anything, we now know that there is a never-ending well of confidence in project management professionals, even in hard times. Here's yet another example: Respondents were asked "**Do you believe Project Management Professionals have a significant role to play in helping the UK economy out of its current difficulties?**" The resounding





Industry Notes: Is Project Management a key element of economic revival?

ARRAS PEOPLE
Project Management Recruitment

answer was a positive yes at 83%, a result that had limited fluctuation across all sectors. Comments in the affirmative included;

- An unprecedented crisis will require an unprecedented amount of well managed change to overcome it.
- More and more is project based - as we need to continue to change at a rapid pace to stay ahead of the game - this involves specialist skills - many matched with those of successful project & change managers.

On the negative side, one comment was that "Project management is seen as an overhead at times like economic downturn", a statement which is worthy of further investigation.

So in summary, we feel that this snapshot supports the statement that whilst there are tough times ahead in 2009, the Project Management Profession is clearly confident that they can make a significant contribution to the future wellbeing of the UK economy. A significant point of interest is that Change Managers are "Buoyant" in their outlook with 15.1% feeling this way against a norm of just 7% suggesting that the wind of change blows and they are ready to face the challenge and look for those bright skies ahead.

Arras People The Project Management Recruitment Specialists

Arras People is a Project Management company delivering Recruitment and Resourcing solutions in the area of Programme and Project Management.

100% focused on providing Project Management professionals they supply contract, interim, temporary and permanent recruitment services across the UK and across all industry sectors including, public sector (central and local government), IT, engineering, banking & finance, marketing and media organizations, not-for-profit and charities.

Arras House
47 York Street
Heywood
Lancashire OL10 4NN

Phone: 01706-366444
Fax: 01706-366544
Web: www.arraspeople.co.uk
Email: industry@arraspeople.co.uk

