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Featured Article



Recruitment figures for the pass six months show 50% less new vacancies than this time last year

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Greetings!

During June and July 2009, Arras People held a number of joint breakfast briefings with Maven Training, entitled "**Effective Project Delivery in Tough Times**". Our July newsletter is dedicated to key topics covered in the seminar including how the current economic downturn is affecting recruitment activity in project management, and current benchmarking information and trends. We also cover the softer skills side of project management, specifically the often overlooked crucial skill of communication with an article from Elizabeth Harrin. We also have a book review for "Project Governance" and a chance for one reader to win the book. Our Q&A this month from a reader concentrates on project management qualifications.

Current Recruitment Activity in Project Management



Mixed news and fortunes surround recruitment activity in project management at the moment, there are winners and losers across all sectors. Specifically within project management, the volume of requirements is down year on year by 50%, and we have also seen some pressure on day rates and salary levels over the last six months.

Story of the Week

- Public sector job cuts could hit 578,000 by 2012
Email article to a friend
- E-recruitment favoured over employment agencies during recession
Email article to a friend

Top News

- UK unemployment rises to 12-year high
Email article to a friend
- Voicemail for staff at risk of redundancy: "It's not good news, but give us a call"
Email article to a friend
- British Airways asks staff to work for free for a month
Email article to a friend

Story of the Week

- Wages fall for eighth consecutive month but upturn could be on the way
Email article to a friend

Barclays deal triggers million-pound profits for staff and £16m for Diamond
Fund unit sale creates world's biggest asset manager and unleashes at least £365m in windfalls to BCI employees

War for talent isn't over
The war for talent has not gone away. It's just become a bit more muted amid all the noise of the recession. New research has suggested.
Management Issues

Help still wanted as global talent crunch persists
Global employers still have trouble finding the right people for open positions, even as candidate resumes pile up amid recession.
Recruiting

Sainsbury raises £445m to lift growth
Retailer to increase store space by 15%
From *Construction & 21st*

The good news is that when requirements are released from organisations, we're seeing much better qualified roles which have budgets signed off and approved. Time to hire is also becoming much shorter as well qualified requirements are released; contractor hiring is typically turning around at 5-7 days, whilst permanent recruitment requirements are coming down from the traditional three month period.

Demand for project management professionals within the public sector is still holding up and we are now starting to see enquiries (green shoots?) about future requirements from organisations as they work on their resourcing plans for visible and potential orders.

In the general job market there has been increased complaints from candidates about "phantom" jobs. You may have experienced something like this yourself, you apply for an advertised position to find your details have disappeared into a black hole and no feedback or contact received back about your application. Phantom jobs or sometimes known as speculative advertising is a frustrating element of recruitment for many candidates; It is a legal form of advertising, BUT only if the adverts follow these guidelines from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation;

"Speculative adverts can be used when a recruiter needs to build up their candidate database for future positions. However, there are several things to be mindful of when doing so. The advert must:

- Not state a salary - as the advert would then be classed as a specific advert for (a position)
- Not mislead potential work-seekers - it should be clear to

- [ProjectOfficespposig](#)
- [WTECH](#)

Podcasts

- [The PM Podcast](#)
- [Project Shrink](#)

Twitter

- [PRINCE2:2009 Twitter Hour](#)



Latest News from Arras People

Sponsoring and Supporting the PPSOSIG



Arras People sponsors the ppsosig conferences

The next ppsosig event on the 16th & 17th September is focused on PMO Maturity. The two day conference covers;

PMO Maturity - Using Organisational Maturity Models to understand how weaknesses and improvements in PMOs are identified

PMO Structures - Explore the challenges that organisations will have to face in establishing or re-energising PMOs

PMO Assessments - Understanding the scope and value of performing PMO self assessments

PMO Roles - Greater awareness of P30 guidance and typical roles & services

Developing Your Team - Through identifying and reinforcing the key issues in establishing a professional PMO team

Developing Yourself - Identifying key skills and competencies that are required to improve your

- readers that the advert does not relate to a specific vacancy;
- Be justified - a speculative advert should only be used for roles that (employment agencies) are regularly asked to fill.

So bear this in mind and read the adverts carefully before sending along your details!

We have also seen increased frustration from experienced PPM professionals that PRINCE2 is mandated on most project management positions advertised today, even though the hiring organisation does not use Prince or is PINO (Prince In Name Only). Our feelings are, let's get over it! PRINCE2 has won the marketing war, it's a large industry in its own right and they've managed to convince many people and organisations that PRINCE2 = Project Management. This is also supported by key word matching recruiters who can exclude candidates very easily against a very simple criterion. In many ways as an emerging profession is it valid to say that I've got loads of experience but no formal accreditation? Moving forward hopefully something else will replace the marketing muscle around PRINCE2 and it will then take its rightful place amongst other PPM accredited methods.

We also believe that it is not a hirers market in project management. Typically when there are more job seekers available than roles it is said to be a hirers market, the hirer has the pick of good talent on their terms (salary, benefits on offer etc). What we're actually seeing in the project management market is that there are fewer quality candidates in the market for a move. During this downturn, project professionals currently working are staying put and weathering the storm. It makes sense to stay in a role rather than leave and potentially be the "last in first out" employee of an organisation they move to. Times are different and the feelings of uncertainty have led many to play a waiting game. So some organisations looking for fresh talent need to be aware that they may have to up their game if they want to attract the best.

Although we mentioned that there has been pressure on day rates and salaries, we have not seen any significant drops since the beginning of the year, in fact niche players can still demand a premium. In project management that specifically means roles where specific domain knowledge is required alongside the project management skills, for example business transformation within the public sector or facilities management within the retail sector. If you have a niche in a particular business sector or function that is in demand now you are probably one of the professionals who gave a high personal confidence in our Green Shoots survey. Read on to find out how others in the project management industry are doing.

How are Project Managers Feeling Today?



Arras People, the Project Management Recruitment specialists recently polled PPM (Programme and Project Management) visitors to our web site to gauge the economic temperature. We were keen to check out with PPM

professionals at the halfway stage of 2009; how they saw the economy in terms of their employers' position and also their own personal position. We were looking for "green shoots", the much talked about indicator that things are on the up!

The first question we asked visitors was **Compared to Jan09, my employer's business is;**

Based on our own experience the response to this question was not surprising, with 56% of UK based respondents reporting that they were either still in a downturn or significantly worse than six months ago. 34% of respondents reported no significant change, whilst 2.4% reported that times were booming to confirm that there are always winners in any economic cycle. Green shoots, yes 7.5% of UK respondents reported that they can see some, the next key question will be do they have roots?

Interestingly when the data includes non-UK based respondents the overall picture is a little more positive. Is this reality, it's hard to tell, although it may also be a reflection of the psyche of the UK workforce?



professionalism

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[For further details on how to book](#)

Early Bird Rates apply until 31/07/09

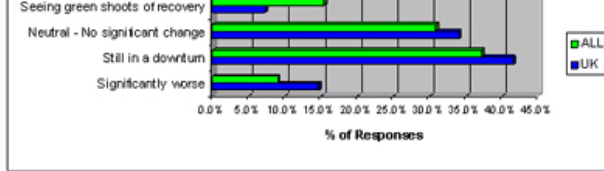
Providing Real Practical Help to Unemployed Project Managers



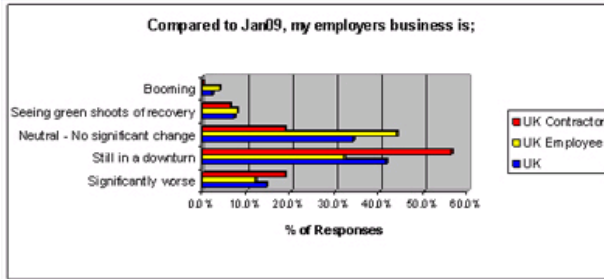
Arras People have been working with Job Centre Plus across the country to provide practical help and advice to project managers who are currently out of work

There's further indepth details on how to access the service via [the blog](#) or via [the website](#)

Please pass along the details to any friends you know who may be able to benefit from the service



When we then cut the UK data across employees and contractors we again found a significant difference in the response which aligns with the data collected for the Arras People 2009 Project Management Benchmark Report.

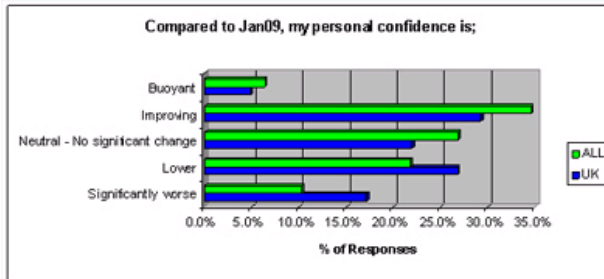


It would appear that the contractor population sees the position as a lot more gloomy with 75% reporting that they were either still in a downturn or significantly worse than six months ago. The contractor group reported a comparable percentage (6%) seeing green shoots with none reporting that times are booming. In contrast 44% of employees who responded were seeing no significant change, with 44% reporting that they were either still in a downturn or significantly worse than six months ago.

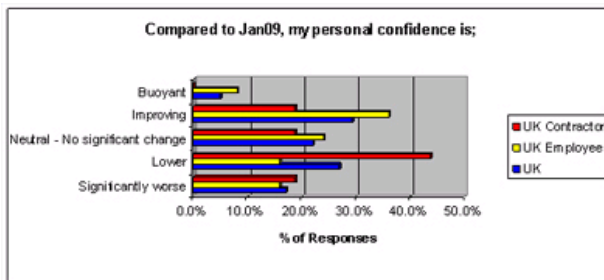
We then asked visitors **Compared to Jan09, my personal confidence is;**

As can be seen in the graph below the UK respondents were once again slightly more negative than the overall group. However, in line with the data collected for the Arras People 2009 Project Management Benchmark Report, personal confidence does not directly correlate with how people perceive their employers business state to be.

44% of our UK respondents report that their personal confidence compared to January is lower or significantly worse, which is a major change from the results analysed in the previous survey. Less than 25% of the respondents reported that they were in a neutral state whilst 5% reported that confidence is booming. Interestingly 29% of UK respondents reported that their personal confidence is improving which is 22% higher than those seeing green shoots!



As we saw in the Arras People 2009 Project Management Benchmark Report, personal confidence when compared by employee and contractor shows a significant deviation this is again true with the latest set of data that we have collected.



As anticipated in the Arras People 2009 Project Management Benchmark Report, personal confidence amongst contractors is significantly lower than that of their peers who are employees. 19% of contractors reported that their personal confidence is significantly worse with another 44% saying it was lower than in January, compared to 16% in both categories for employees. 24% of employees reported no significant change against 19% of

contractors. In the positive sphere no contractors reported themselves as feeling buoyant against 8% of employees, with 36% of employees feeling that their confidence is improving against 19% of contractors.

Summary

Based upon the responses received and our current levels of business we believe that there are some new opportunities in the UK economy, though we are not sure if we would classify this as being the all important "green shoots".

The levels of response in the negative spheres, especially those from the contractors suggest that we are still in a difficult position and this may continue for some time to come.

Our own experiences suggest that point hiring to fill specific targeted roles or replace/ cover existing roles is currently in the ascendency over clients who are looking to create new roles in anticipation of future growth.

Communicate, communicate, communicate



from Elizabeth Harrin

Does your project have a communications plan?

It's often something that less experienced project managers forget to do.

The purpose of a communications plan is to define all the people or groups who have an interest in the project and to document how and when they communicate with, or receive communication from, the project.

If that all sounds quite complicated, it really isn't. The first step is to work out who your project interacts with. You probably have a list of stakeholders already, so use those. Don't forget any groups of people or external parties. The marketing department, for example, could be one entire group - you don't have to list everyone in that team. Equally, you may have to deal with a government body; an external stakeholder maybe represented by one named individual who is your main point of contact. Make sure all these people and groups are on your list.

Establish for each entry on your stakeholder list:

- What information do they require?
- Who will provide that information?
- How often do they need it (or how often is it produced)?
- How will it be communicated?

So, let's take your project steering group as an example. It is probably made up of 3 to 5 senior managers and let's say you all meet monthly to review progress. We can answer the questions above for them like this:

- They require a status update on how the project is going **against the agreed scope, timescale and budget**. They also require copies of the minutes from steering group meetings.
- The project manager will provide the information.
- They need to see the status update in advance of the **steering group meeting, on a monthly basis**. The minutes of steering group meetings will be circulated within 3 days of the meeting taking place.
- The status update will be produced in Excel format and will be **emailed to each member of the steering group**. The minutes will be produced in Word format and will also be sent out by email to each member of the steering group.

The more experience you have at managing projects the less likely it is that you will need to document every last thing that needs to be communicated. However, even experienced project managers work to a communications plan. You can put communications milestones in your project plan: send out steering group minutes, send out Marketing briefing, circulate user guide and so on.

Don't forget that not all communication has to be written. You can also include on your communications plan people with whom you communicate verbally. Face-to-face meetings count as communication. Telephone calls count as communication. They may not be so formal as a briefing note that you write and send out on email but they are more appropriate for some audiences.

Finally, establish who needs to communicate with you. Your project sponsor should be passing down information that is relevant, and other people or groups will need to keep you informed. They may not be as organised as you are, so make a note on the communications plan to chase them for updates when you need them!

This article first published on PMTips.net



Elizabeth Harrin, BA (Hons), MA, MBSC is an author and project manager living and working in London. She has a decade of experience in projects. Elizabeth has led a variety of IT and process improvement projects including e-commerce and communications developments. She is also experienced in managing business change, having spent eight years working in financial services (including two based in Paris, France). She writes the award-winning blog, [A Girl's Guide to Project Management](#) and is author of [Project Management in the Real World](#).

Follow her on Twitter: [@pm4girls](#)

Book Review - Project Governance



by Ralf Muller, available through Gower

See details on how to win this book below

A night to read and some real practical solutions to implementing governance in your organisation - either at portfolio, programme or project level. "Project Governance" from Ralf Muller is a little misleading as it doesn't just cover project level governance. Starting at the corporate level, with academic theory, the book soon moves onto programme and project governance taking into account different organisational models. Is your organisation a "Flexible Economist Paradigm"? Or in others words has your organisation established project management as a core competence, with professional project managers? Governance within this environment will follow a different path to that of a "Conformist Paradigm" organisation where project management is performed by technical experts as an on-the-side task.

So what is governance and why would you want to know more about this area of project management? Governance is defined in the book as:

"Governance provides a framework for ethical decision making and managerial action within an organisation that is based on transparency, accountability and defined roles"

This book covers everything from portfolio management, sponsors & steering groups, strategic and tactical project management offices, programme management, in fact it brings together a lot of areas and topics already within the public domain. There are two sections that are particularly worthy of note; a governance framework for project management and how much governance is enough? The framework provides a three step process which enables an organisation to increase its PPM governance. Within each step there are three areas; what can be done, what should be done and what is done. Step 1, includes basic training and methodology use (it talks about the adoption of methodologies such as PRINCE2), introducing steering committees (ensuring what is learnt is adopted and put into use) and the use of audits and reviews to ensure the "what is done" or learnt has translated to successful project delivery. A simple framework which covers the different levels of organisational maturity has been conveyed well in this book and would be a welcome addition to any programme office manager,

portfolio manager or organisational change specialist's bookshelf.

That said, this is also a book aimed at the project manager, especially their role within project governance but also programme level, portfolio level and ultimately how their delivery impacts the corporation as a whole.

Knowing when there is enough governance - appropriate to your organisation and the programmes and projects it delivers - is also covered. A simple approach which focuses on the relationship between project manager and steering group and the roles & responsibilities of each may be useful insight for any project manager. Like much in project management, communication is the key for effective governance at each level of the organisation and Muller's book goes a long way to showing how to utilise effective communication to achieve an integrated governance model.

[Interested in purchasing the book?](#) Received 20% off the online price when you use the code: G8BRL20

Want a chance to win this book?

Let us know in 100 words or less your top tip for aspiring project managers, [email us](#) and you could be in with a chance of winning

Q&A

I have been working as a project manager for the last four years, I would like to step up to the next tier (senior level), however I do not have any formal qualifications in project management

Can you suggest a good all rounder, I have been previously advised to study PRINCE2 but some feel it is lengthy and can drag out a project. Obviously the qualification needs to be recognised nationally or internationally. Wayne B-R

Wow, that's a pretty big Pandora's Box you've opened up there! This is probably one of the hottest topics floating around in the PM community at the moment, and it's fair to say that everyone has a different opinion about whether one course is better than another.

PRINCE2 is obviously the most recognised PM qualification, and as a methodology does give you an excellent awareness of Project Management tools and techniques, as well as management of the lifecycle. I do find it a tad annoying however that PRINCE2 has become synonymous with the profession. It almost seems as though some companies use it as a failsafe measure to judge a person's PM credentials. There are a large number of PINO (PRINCE2 in Name Only) organisations out there and I think a lot of people would benefit from remembering that there was Project Management before PRINCE2.

If you have used PRINCE2 in a practical context but don't have the formal qualification, I would suggest that you go ahead and obtain it. If you are looking to move into a more senior role in the near future you should also look at the Managing Successful Programmes (MSP), another methodology from the OGC suite of products like PRINCE2.

There are other qualifications out there that will give you a genuine advantage based on your sector experience. You should look into the Association of Project Management qualifications which are recognised nationally and of course, the Project Management Institute, its PMP accreditations are internationally recognised. These two options are project management skills based qualifications, not just method training like PRINCE2 and require existing experience in project management before you can commence. Both APM (the Practitioner level) and PMI also require that you stay qualified through Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Wayne, I noticed that you are a Project Engineer. Have you considered Primavera? As a planning tool this is very much THE tool in the engineering and manufacturing sectors. You should consider training in areas that you specialise in within project management too as this ensures your formal training is rounded

It's taken as a given today that professional project managers should be demonstrating both professional experience and skills learnt on the job, backed up with recognised qualifications. It's also seen as advantageous to yourself and a future employer that you

take an active interest in your profession and community and demonstrate your willingness to carry on learning. You should consider being active in your community through attendance at seminars, conferences and networking events as well as keeping up to date with industry journals, blogs and podcasts. All these activities certainly help you to assess which learning method and courses are going to suit your personal situation the best

[Got a question for us, contact us today](#)

Sincerely,

ARRAS PEOPLE®

Arras People - Project Management Recruitment