

GUEST EDITORIAL FOREWORD TO THE THEMATIC BLOCK ON “CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT”

Project management has always been an important topic in modern management, since companies – no matter whether they are for-profit or nonprofit – adapt to internal and/or external changes with the help of projects. Moreover, there are such complex activities in companies where the application of the project management toolkit might increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Although nowadays the importance is inevitable, organizations provide the necessary support for management (both regarding resources and authority), and there are numerous, advanced methodologies applicable both for a specific industry or in general, the project success rate is still lower than expected. However, the ratio of successful projects has increased recently – more than doubled in the last decade – but still, there is room for improvement. If we consider that experts expect an increase both in terms of the number of initiated projects and the professionals to be employed, it could be easily seen, that project management could be a crucial element not just for the client organizations, but for all players in the modern business ecosystem.

To foster scientific research on project management Budapest Management Review announced a call for papers in 2023 with a focus on contemporary issues in this discipline. This thematic block provides a publication opportunity for scholars to present their current research to increase the potential for achieving project success, and address topics that could be valuable for academics and non-academic organizations as well.

The topics in this thematic block are widespread, however, all of the authors argue that competencies are important regardless of the industry and project type in project management. The authors, like their fellow researchers and professionals, stress, that there could be two crucial and fundamental elements in project management serving as the cornerstone of future success. Firstly, it is important to realize what can and should be considered as a project, or when to apply project management elements in case of an activity, and one should find a process (or life cycle) for it that should be adapted. Although there are numerous choices, it is also important to find the most appropriate and tailor it to the given project, context, and/or the complex (set of) activity/(activities). Secondly, organizations should find those talented and hardworking people (especially the project managers) who can contribute to implementing the given project result. This latter, i.e. talent, is encapsulated in competencies, and – as with every profession – project management has its own set of competencies, which has evolved con-

siderably in recent decades. This evolution is still in progress thanks in particular to the turbulent environment fueled by technological progress. Moreover, the set of competencies that should and could be applied might vary project by project, industry by industry, or organization by organization. Based on these, both the editors and authors believe, these papers could contribute to the current knowledge of project management and might be found interesting by every person who is interested in project management.

The first paper is a valuable systematic literature review on project management competencies. The authors focused on the leading journals of the field: International Journal of Project Management, and Project Management Journal. Their choice ensured that the corpus of papers was relevant and of scientific quality at the same time. As a result of their analysis, they not only provide a general overview of the definition of competencies, highlight the common characteristics among these, and introduce a novel approach to categorization, but also point out what potential research gaps can be identified which need further analysis. This paper might be beneficial for those, who would like to understand the modern project competencies literature and find potential future direction in the field.

The second paper also addresses an important and interesting topic, namely defining the expectations towards product managers. This definition is approached from two angles. The first angle is a broad and abundant literature review that clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of the product managers, while the second angle is an empirical analysis that deducts the results based on a survey of job advertisements. This dual approach ensures that both academic and practical approaches are realized in the paper at the same time. The findings can be valuable both for those, who would like to continue analyzing this project management role or for those aiming to hire professionals for such a position.

The third paper focuses on the common intersection of sport and project management. Sport management is a very special area in management studies for numerous reasons, one of them could be the difference regarding the attitude on team and management levels. Professional sport organizations tend to adopt advanced methodologies from various disciplines to improve their operational performance. Project management is also one of those applicable disciplines, but in most of the cases, the applications focus on managing infrastructural or event projects. This paper analyzes whether sport seasons can be considered as

a projects, and in this way, whether coaches or other team managers can apply (part of) the project management toolkit to improve the final results. The author uses a narrative literature review where the papers on project and sport season literature are compared. In the end, the author could identify several similarities, which suggest further promising areas of applications for project management tools and techniques in sport management. The paper is not only a pioneer in this area, but also might pave the path for practitioners to

increase their team's efficiency and effectiveness by means of applying elements from this management discipline.

The guest editors firmly believe that this thematic block is a valuable contribution to the body of project management knowledge and hope that the discussions started here will be continued in the future.

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