

Chapter 55

Inside the Project Management Institute

Setting up Change Makers for Success Based on Social Connection

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ABSTRACT

PMI is the world's leading not-for-profit professional membership association for the project, program, and portfolio management profession. Now in its 46th year, the association provides global advocacy, collaboration, education, and research to more than 2.9 million professionals working in nearly every country in the world. To better support project practitioners in their role as "change agents," PMI utilizes popular social media platforms, as well as a robust virtual community. Through social media, PMI creates an environment in which project practitioners create, curate, and share strong value-added content, take part in well-informed discussions, and collaborate to seek effective solutions.

INTRODUCTION

Project management may very well be the world's loneliest job. Project managers are often the only person in their organization responsible for the type of project they run, facing unique issues that no one around them understands. They may have more in common with a project manager on the other side of the world than with a colleague on the other side of the cubicle wall.

And the project manager is nearly always a "change agent," driving unprecedented and unfamiliar initiatives. This can work to isolate project managers from their coworkers, leaving them yearning for relevant discussion or a sympathetic ear. Recognizing these unique challenges, the Project Management Institute (PMI) reaches out to project practitioners through popular social media platforms, as well as through a robust virtual community known as ProjectManagement.com.

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PMI has learned that connecting project practitioners who work on similar projects can mean bridging more than geographical boundaries. Cultures, experiences, and involvement levels must also be considered. PMI's global outreach is as diverse as it is far-flung, including PMI members and certification holders, volunteers, and professionals loosely affiliated with PMI who seek assistance.

Since 1969, PMI has been meeting the challenge of keeping this multi-faceted audience connected and engaged by hosting face-to-face meetings, including annual global congresses in the North America and EMEA regions and localized PMI chapter events, as well as by offering networking-rich opportunities for volunteers. But social media has offered an even greater opportunity for PMI to easily connect its members and reach an extended audience of project practitioners.

HOW PMI USES POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

PMI currently employs LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, and its own virtual community at ProjectManagement.com to connect with aspiring and practicing project practitioners and to facilitate knowledge sharing among them. Approximately 1.4 million people engage with PMI through social media and the community on ProjectManagement.com.

PMI specifically uses social media to:

Connect Project Practitioners

PMI's LinkedIn discussion group, now approaching 200,000 members, is managed day to day by a small group of volunteer moderators who are also experienced project managers. Many members participate in group discussions, showcasing their expertise and building their personal brand on the world's most popular professional network. Discussions often tackle difficult issues, such as working with disengaged executive sponsors, transitioning a company from a waterfall to an agile approach or managing remote project teams spanning various locations, languages, and cultures.

In addition, aspiring project managers frequently visit PMI's LinkedIn forum to seek advice on studying for their certification exams or getting their first project management job. Writers for *PM Network*®, PMI's flagship magazine, also initiate discussions and feature responses in each issue of the magazine, giving group members the opportunity to appear in a prominent, project management–focused publication.

Stay in Touch and Get Feedback

From discussions of complex topics to lighter interactions, project practitioners respond to thought-provoking content on all PMI social channels by sharing their rich personal experiences. Members and chapters often reach out to PMI, typically on Twitter, to share pictures and updates from their regional events, exhibiting the diverse industries and locations where project practitioners work, as well as volunteer work such as community improvement projects.

Provide Encouragement

Within its social media channels, PMI frequently hears from project practitioners seeking to achieve their Project Management Professional (PMP)®, PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)® or other

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