

An Interview with Adam Boddison, CEO at APM

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Pioneering Project Management and Leadership

In the fast-paced project management sector, there is a visionary whose leadership is not only transforming the landscape of the profession - but is also inspiring thousands of individuals on a global scale.

The team at Project Management Global had the great pleasure of catching up with Professor Adam Boddison OBE, Chief Executive (CEO) of the [Association for Project Management \(APM\)](#) last week. What we discovered was a fantastic career alongside achievements and foresight that serve as a beacon of inspiration for other aspiring leaders, seasoned professionals and anyone considering a career in project management.

An Advocate for Engagement and Education

Adam embarked on his journey as CEO of APM in September 2021, armed with a steadfast commitment to take the association to unprecedented heights of success. His ascent to this highly influential role is a testament to his illustrious career so far, characterised by dedication, passion, excellence, and a relentless pursuit of 'doing the right things.'

With a background deeply rooted in engagement and education, Adam's journey began as a mathematics teacher, where he honed his skills in fostering growth and nurturing young minds. It was his innate drive for innovation and impact that guided him towards leadership roles within various membership organisations, where he spearheaded initiatives aimed at empowering individuals and driving positive change with his various teams.

His tenure as Chief Executive of nasen (National Association for Specialist Educational Needs) and his role

as Academic Principal for IGGY (a global educational sector network for gifted teenagers) underscored his unwavering dedication to fostering growth and excellence in education. His involvement as a visiting professor at the University of Leicester School of Business reflects his commitment to enriching the academic landscape and shaping future generations of leaders.

A Visionary at the Helm

As Chief Executive of APM, Adam is not merely a leader but a futurist on a mission to build the one of the most influential project-focused associations. He believes that professional associations like APM are indispensable entities and, in APM's case, serve as a catalyst for progress and prosperity within the sector and more widely in society. Adam aims to build and strengthen a network that not only elevates and enriches the professional lives of project professionals but also develops their personal growth and fulfilment.

He believes that the shifting sands of legislation and the imperative for demonstrable competency underscore the critical need for a unified voice that advocates for clear and consistent industry standards and best practices. With unwavering determination, he aims to foster consensus and drive-up standards in collaboration with industry leaders, technical experts and tomorrow's trailblazers across all levels of the project management world.

APM Advantage

Founded more than 50 years ago, APM stands as the only chartered membership organisation for the project profession worldwide, with over 45,000 members and 450 corporate partners. The association's multifaceted activities encompass qualifications, networking, events, research, resources and advocacy, all aimed at raising the profile of the project profession and setting the highest possible standards.

Central to APM's mission is its unwavering commitment to empowering members and nurturing their professional growth. Through a diverse array of services and activities, APM supports project professionals at every stage of their careers, from student membership right through to Fellowship and chartered status. Adam believes that APM's role extends far beyond delivering qualifications; it is about providing members with the tools, knowledge, and networks they need to excel in their roles and drive industry-wide innovation.

A Force for Good

Adam said: "Our role is to empower members, helping them to thrive in their roles, drive innovation and make a lasting impact. APM's range of services and activities are designed to assist project professionals in strategic development and day-to-day operations, while also promoting the excellent contribution that project managers make on the plethora of initiatives that are in delivery every day of every year. All too often there is a negative focus on the things that go wrong, which are small in number when compared to the many millions of projects that are delivered on time, to budget with high degrees of innovation and skill by our members and other project professionals worldwide."

During our conversation, Adam mentioned one such project within the UK's National Health Service where there has been an historic move from general practitioner prescriptions that may be inconsistent when using older methods, to a new online system that sees requests for medication being transferred from a doctor's desktop, at the click of a mouse, straight to a chemist who can dispense medication, in most

cases, within the hour. “This was a hugely complex IT and logistics project,” Adam said. “It was delivered brilliantly and is now adding daily value to millions of lives and yet has gone largely unnoticed. Compare that with a road closure that has overrun by a day or so, which makes the front page of every local newspaper with everyone up in arms!! Impact relatively small, public profile off the scale...something, somewhere isn’t quite right.

“Projects can be impacted by a multitude of challenges, many of which are outside the project team’s control – the discovery of the unknown and other factors such as ‘Acts of God for example.’ Yet despite overruns and overages accounting for a very small number of the projects delivered, the media and political focus tends to fall on the perceived negatives as opposed to the great many projects that go so well. We know that companies and their project teams are faced with these issues daily and that it can take years to build a good and solid reputation, but when things don’t quite go to plan, a matter of minutes to ruin it. If you think about it like that, it makes perfect sense for us to share success stories, building a bank of goodwill so that the silent majority has a stronger voice and setting things into a better context. It really is important for us all to think about things a little bit differently.

“That is where I think Project Management Global (PMG) will be a massive benefit for project managers and their communications teams. It is a great concept that will give our sector a bigger and stronger voice to promote the how, what, where and why and is a fantastic opportunity for industry professionals and organisations to showcase their work. We will certainly be throwing our weight behind the concept as a force for good for project professionals.”

A Seat in the Boardroom

Adam is a champion for a stronger voice in the boardroom for project professionals. “More organisations are waking up to the fact that project professionals need to be **directly** represented at the executive roundtable, in board meetings and in the C-suite,” said Adam. “This is a positive move but much more still needs to be done. It’s time for singular ownership and accountability for organisational strategic planning and execution and for a dedicated focus on organisational resource planning, allocation, and utilisation. In achieving this, there will be a greater and more focused attention on return on investment, earned value on execution, appropriate risk management and post-execution benefit capture.”

He is also a big believer that project professionals should be able to move between sectors in the same way as those in other professions, such as accountancy, human resources, or marketing. He explained: “In my opinion, not only should project professionals be able to move between sectors, but we should actively encourage them to do so. The cross-pollination of sectors helps lessons to be learned and applied at scale, improving the profession for everyone. Some argue that domain knowledge is essential (e.g. for nuclear projects, IT projects or construction projects) and I can see that point of view. However, the combination of highly effective, domain-neutral project professionals working with colleagues who have specialist sector expertise should not be underestimated. It’s arguably advantageous to have this expertise spread across multiple colleagues rather than compressed into one individual person.”

A Moment of Reflection

Reflecting on his journey and vision for APM, Adam said: “I believe that it is important to try and always be able to predict what’s next and then have the flexibility to adapt and evolve. Aside from the completely unexpected, great communication is essential, indeed mission critical. People and clients don’t like

unpleasant surprises, so ongoing engagement and education is crucial. Despite all the challenges project managers face, however, what impresses me is how they respond to them and their focus on getting work done safely and to the highest possible standard. My job as an influencer in the project management and trade association world is to make sure everybody has a voice with great and value-adding opportunities; that they feel they're having a meaningful impact and are contributing to the good of society. That is where APM comes in."

Adam believes that APM needs to constantly reinvent itself, leveraging its wealth of knowledge and creating a steady source of new ideas and best practice – giving members the tools and information they need to do their work well. This included sharing thoughts and learning from peers – benefiting from the experience of others – doing the right things and doing things better. APM's range of services and activities are designed to assist project, programme and portfolio professionals in the strategic development and day-to-day running of their work, as well as promoting the excellent contribution that these professionals make across the world in industry and to the wider public.

His visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to excellence have positioned APM as a global force for good in project management. As he continues to steer APM towards new horizons of success, his words resonate as guiding beacons for all who aspire to make a difference...

"Success is not just about achieving greatness; it's about empowering and enabling others to achieve greatness alongside you."

Here at Project Management Global, we have no doubt that with Professor Adam Boddison at the helm, the journey towards excellence in project management has never been more promising.

About APM



APM member benefits are tailored around individuals and where they are on their career pathway. Members are encouraged to become chartered. The Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) standard is a professional benchmark that demonstrates attainment of a defined level of technical knowledge, professional practice and ethical behaviour.

It forms the basis of the assessment that applicants must pass to gain ChPP status and inclusion on the

Register of Chartered Project Professionals. Members can also undertake training and benefit from the learning of other more experienced project training professionals. APM qualifications enhance peoples' career potential and there are a range of project management qualifications all designed to support individuals throughout every stage of their project management career. APM recognises the importance of keeping qualifications up to date and relevant, so they reflect the knowledge that people have, the work that they do and the skills that they have developed. APM provides a progressive structure for career development to advance project managers' knowledge and grow their skills through a mix of project management tools, techniques and processes. APM's qualifications offer a clear route to achieving the [Chartered Project Professional \(ChPP\)](#) status, recognising the competence and success of project professionals worldwide.

Become a member

People can also just become members and there are several grades to choose from:

Student membership is open to full and part-time students as well as apprentices aged 16 and over. Whether a person is just starting out in the project profession or are keen to learn more as part of their studies, APM Student membership provides the support and resources students need. And it's free. APM recognises that at this important stage, students want to learn as much as they can. They want to gain the knowledge to move forward and take the next step. They are ambitious to achieve more and build their skills. The student membership will help them do that. Becoming a student member enables upcoming project managers to instantly take advantage of a range of online resources to aid their studies.

Associate membership provides the tools and resources project managers need to progress and invest in their career. Whether someone has just joined the profession or is already an established project professional, APM understands how important career aspirations are. APM is here to support individual journeys. As part of APM, the only chartered membership organisation for the project profession, its Associate membership provides the tools and resources emerging project professionals need.

Full membership gives experienced project managers influence and recognition so they can make a difference.. There are three routes to follow to become a Full member. Whichever route project managers choose, APM is on hand to support project managers throughout their career.

APM Fellowship recognises those who have made a significant contribution to the profession as a practitioner. APM believes that it's important to celebrate those who have not only achieved a certain level in the project profession, but who also give back, encouraging others to succeed. Becoming a Fellow of APM does just that. APM gives experienced professionals, who have made a significant contribution to project management, the status they deserve from the only chartered membership organisation for the project profession.



Association for
Project Management

APM Conference 2024:

Navigating Tomorrow: Future Skills for Project Professionals

5-6 June 2024 | Coventry, UK

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