

Leaders highlight people-centred project delivery as key to achieving strategic goals

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Businesses are more likely to meet their strategic objectives when they empower people to lead projects and take the time to understand what motivates their teams, according to senior leaders speaking at an [Association for Project Management \(APM\)](#) roundtable held at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford.

The discussion brought together C-suite leaders from financial services, consultancy, technology and other sectors undergoing significant transformation. Contributors explored the pressures facing organisations in a volatile environment, how businesses are adapting, and how investment in transformational capability is helping organisations stay resilient. The event was supported by Insider Media, and APM will publish a white paper capturing the conversation in full.

Empower people to deliver and lead projects

Bob Bradley, Business Leader, Speaker and Coach, said: “A key element of project management and leadership is delegation. How do you delegate and how do you get things done? One of the things I’ve come across again and again is that some people have a tendency to delegate a task or activity in a manner of ‘this is how to do it’. That means that when that activity is going wrong or when it needs to be done differently, you get dragged back in.

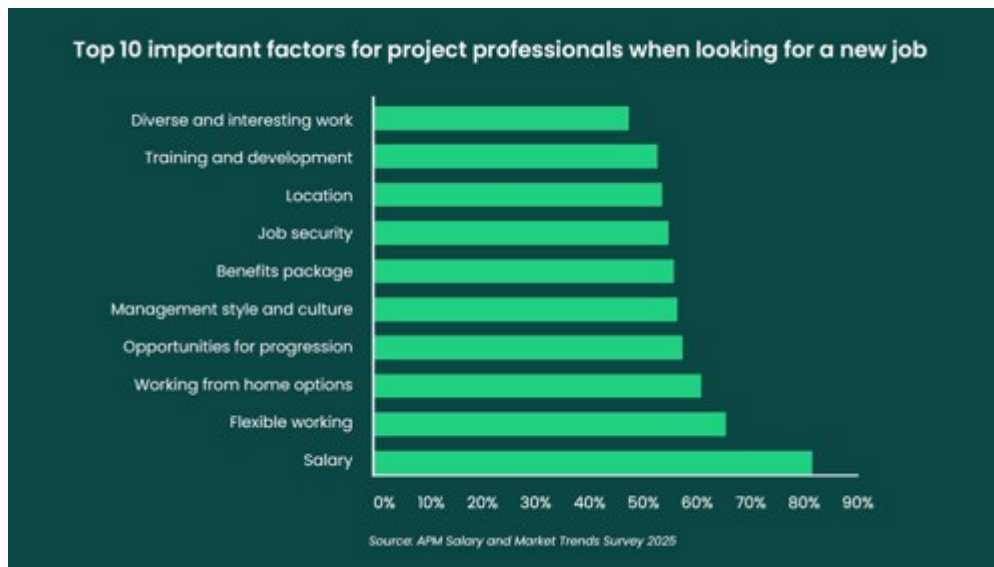
“One thing I’ve learned in my career is not to focus on the activity or task to be done but on the outcome.

“That certainly ties in with project management. Projects I’ve seen that go wrong often go wrong because they’re confused about the goal; the outcome. Be clear about the outcome and delegate an outcome to

someone in such a way that they can just get on with it. It's up to them to use their creativity to find the best way of doing it. This way is more motivational too."

Understand people's motivators

APM's Salary and Market Trends Survey shows that while two-thirds of project professionals plan to stay in their role, a third expect to move jobs within a year. Salary remains a strong motivator, but so too are flexible working, career progression and finding work meaningful. Leaders agreed that understanding these motivators is essential for recruitment, retention and performance.



Laura Riley, Associate Director at Michael Page, said: "If you've got the right people, you can achieve anything. But it's not just getting the right people. It's knowing what their motivators are. Is it about career? Is it about their next promotion? Is it about psychological safety? Do they feel safe enough to fail and to take a risk and put themselves out there to lead a project?

"It's also about capacity. If your people are swamped and overworked they won't have capacity to drive a new project."

Support productivity using technology

APM research shows that 43% of business leaders say AI is having a positive impact on productivity across their organisation, while only 13% report a negative effect. Gains are most evident in IT, finance, research and development, and customer service.

Matt Johnson, Head of Communications at APM, said: "Value extraction from the technology depends where that technology is being used. With professional services, people often want the value of a professional's time and expertise. Using AI to free up that time is therefore likely to be better than using it to replace a professional.

"Corporate partners of APM have started using tools like Microsoft Copilot – a relatively off-the-shelf tool –

which they have found tremendously useful for administrative work around tenders and procurement. Processes and workflows for that still need to be set up, so it does still need to be integrated into the workflow, but it is saving them an incredible amount of time.”

The roundtable highlighted a consistent theme: organisations that equip people with the authority, motivation and tools to lead projects are better placed to navigate disruption and achieve sustainable success.