

FUTURE-FIT PROJECT LEADERSHIP



Project
Management
Institute
Finland

Rubin Jen & Inna Halminen



Project Leadership: Past, Present and Future

Project Leadership: Past, Present and Future

Inna Halminen and Rubin Jen
International Institute for Learning



What is IIL?

- 35 years in training and consulting global customers and organisations around the world
- Headquartered in New York, USA with fully owned local offices around the world
- *20 Languages via pool of 300 contract trainers*

E LaVerne Johnson
Founder, President and
Chief Executive Office
(CEO)





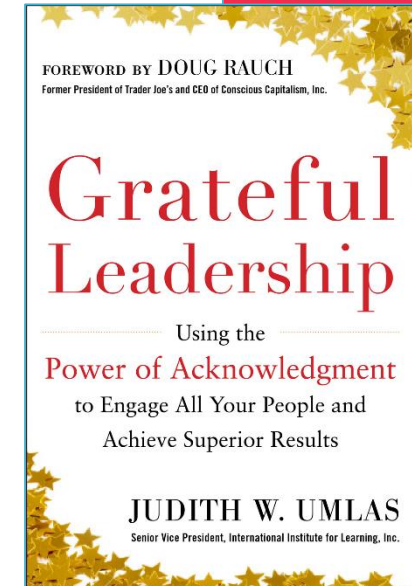
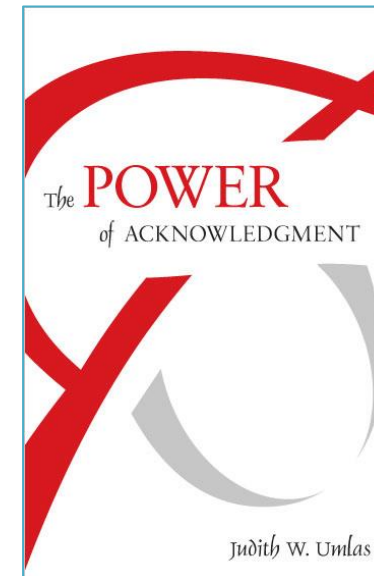
Harold Kerzner

Ph.D. in Project Management



Judy Umlas

Writer, producer and book author



FUTURE-FIT PROJECT LEADERSHIP

How to lead, decide, communicate and deliver
in changing environments.

*A journey
to become
future-fit.*



LEAD

People & culture
in a changing world.



NAVIGATE

Complexity,
uncertainty and
disruption.



DECIDE

Technology, AI and
smarter decision-
making.



ADAPT

Change, capability
and ways of
working.



DELIVER

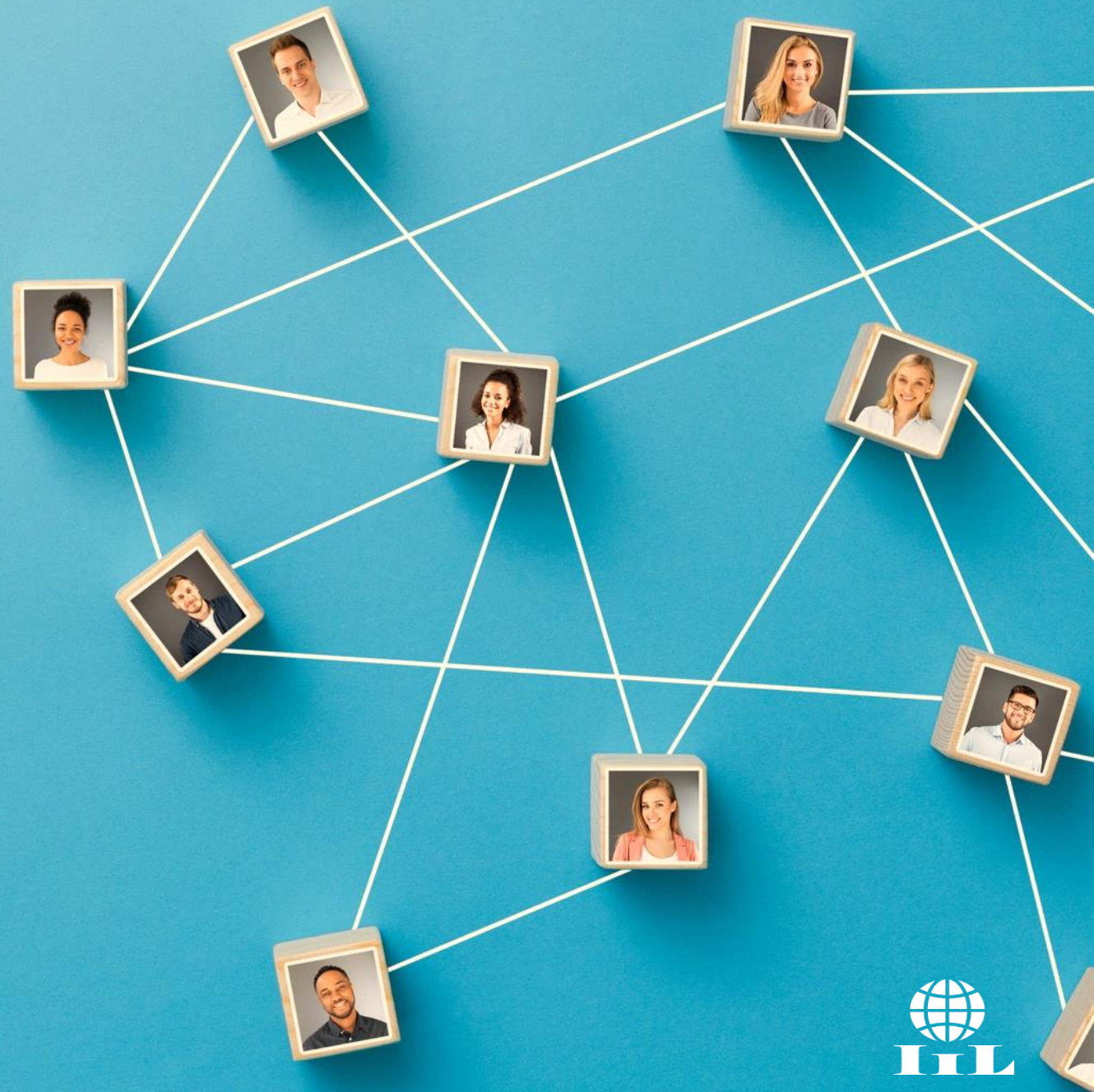
Value, outcomes
and sustainable
impact.



SHAPE

The future of
project
leadership.

Project Leadership: Past, Present and Future



Agenda



- The Past
- The Present
- The Future

Rubin Jen



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- Canadian expat in Finland
- Mechanical Engineer from University of Toronto
- 25+ years project management
 - Aerospace, engineering, telecom, finance, IT
 - Government, NFP, consulting, support
 - Agile coach
- Project Management Instructor for over 15 years
 - Fundamentals, certification training
 - Program, Portfolio, Change Management
 - Leadership and soft skills
 - Agile and Scrum

What's Happening?



- Project management was static for a long time
- Fads came and went (remember maturity models? OPM3)
- Agile ways of working was a catalyst
- What's coming next?
- Let's take a look at the journey of project leadership

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Poll 1: When Did You Enter Project Management?



Choices:

- 1-5 years ago
- 5-10 years ago
- 15-20 years ago
- >20 years ago

The Past

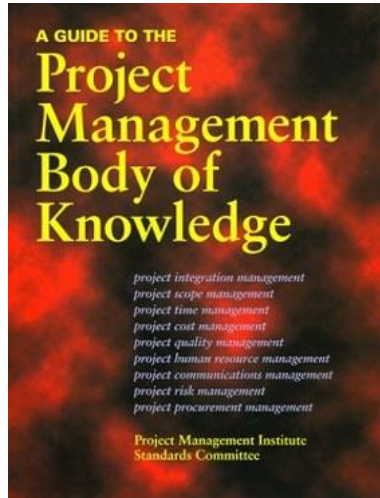
Act 1: Scope, Schedule and Cost



- **Project leadership** was about focusing on scheduling tasks, tracking progress, managing documentation
- Projects and project management were “new”
- Many “accidental project managers”
- One “throat to choke” 🗣️
- PMI evolution into the ‘premier’ project management authority

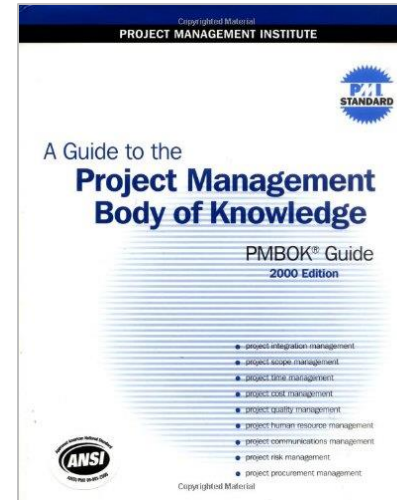
PMBOK 1 & 2

PMBOK 1st Edition (1996)



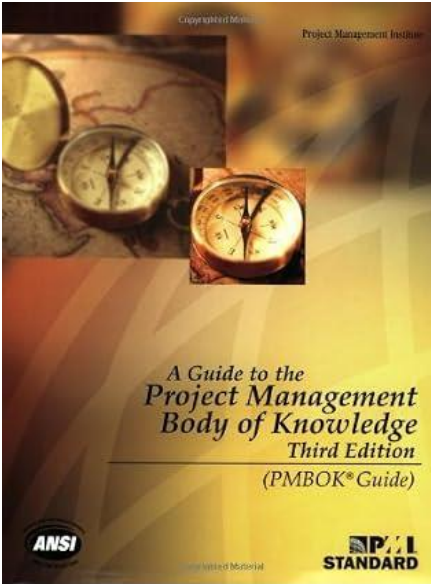
- Established common terminology and foundational project management concepts
- Brought consistency to a fragmented profession, defining core processes
- Engineering, construction, and defense projects

PMBOK 2nd Edition (2000)



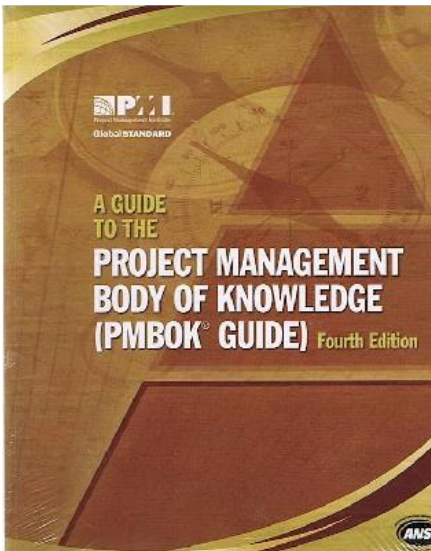
- Formalized process groups and expanded/clarified processes
- Focused on repeatability and predictability for growing organizations
- Manufacturing and industrial process optimization

PMBOK 3 & 4



PMBOK 3rd Edition (2004)

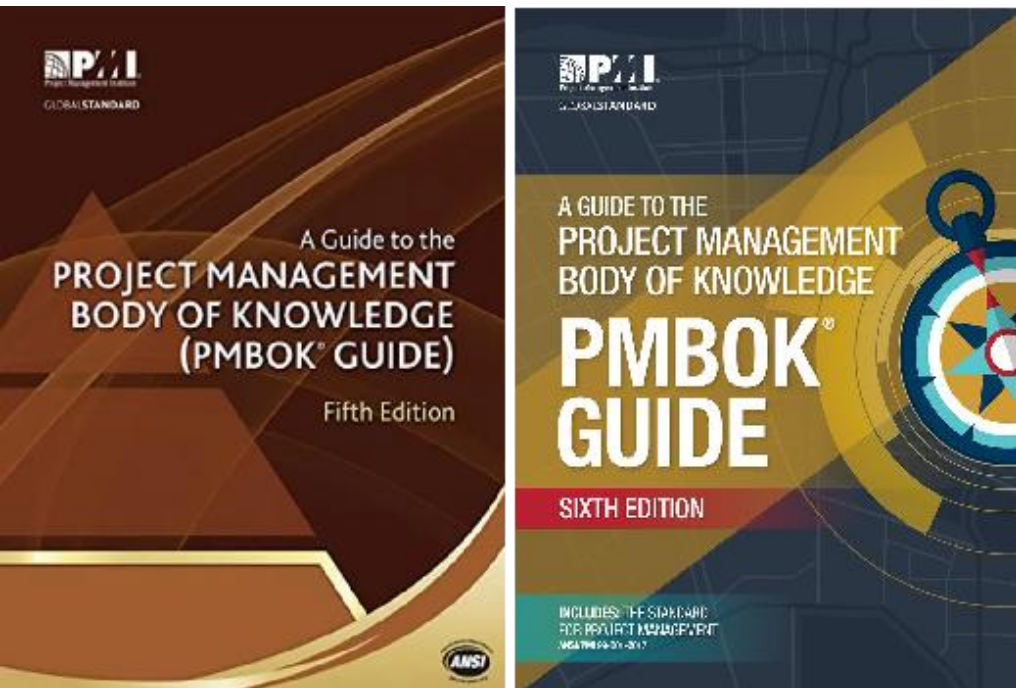
- Strengthened integration management across scope, time, cost, and quality
- Improved clarity and consistency, adding practical examples
- Large multi-vendor, multi-disciplinary projects



PMBOK 4th Edition (2008)

- Emphasized global standardization and harmonization with international norms
- Simplified terminology and enhanced stakeholder communication
- Globalization, offshoring, outsourcing

PMBOK 5 & 6



PMBOK 5th Edition (2013)

- Introduced Stakeholder Management as a new knowledge area
- Information technology industry terms

PMBOK 6th Edition (2017)

- Formally introduced agile and hybrid practices into the standard
- Strengthened governance, control, and enterprise alignment across knowledge areas

The Present

Act 2: The Collaborator and Coach

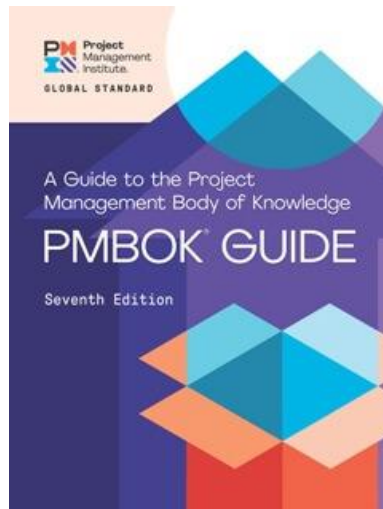


- Current **project leadership** is about prioritizing value, empowering the team, and engaging stakeholders
- Projects and project management now considered a regular operating mode
- The Agile “tsunami”
 - Self-managed teams
 - Benefits and value
 - Change
- Project managers as a distinct profession and career path

PMBOK 7 & 8

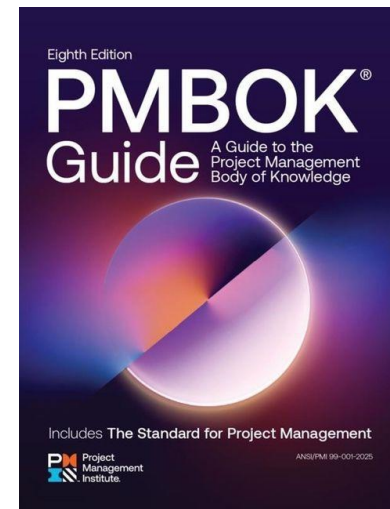
PMBOK 7th Edition (2021)

- Replaced processes with 12 principles and 8 performance domains, emphasizing value
- Focus on outcomes, adaptability, and tailoring



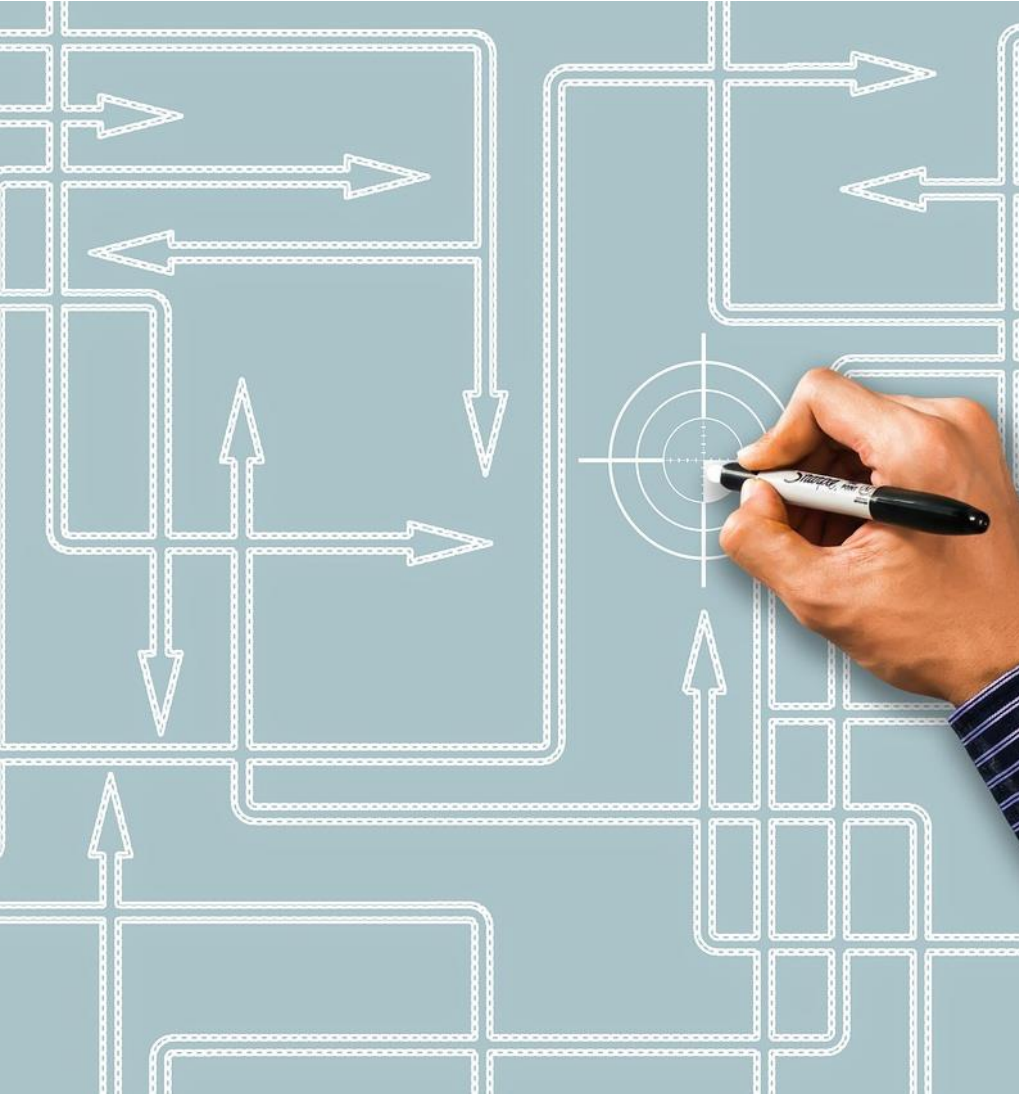
PMBOK 8th Edition (2025)

- 6 principles, 7 performance domains
- Reintroduced 40 tailorable processes organized under 5 Focus Areas
- Emphasis on AI and sustainability



The Future ?

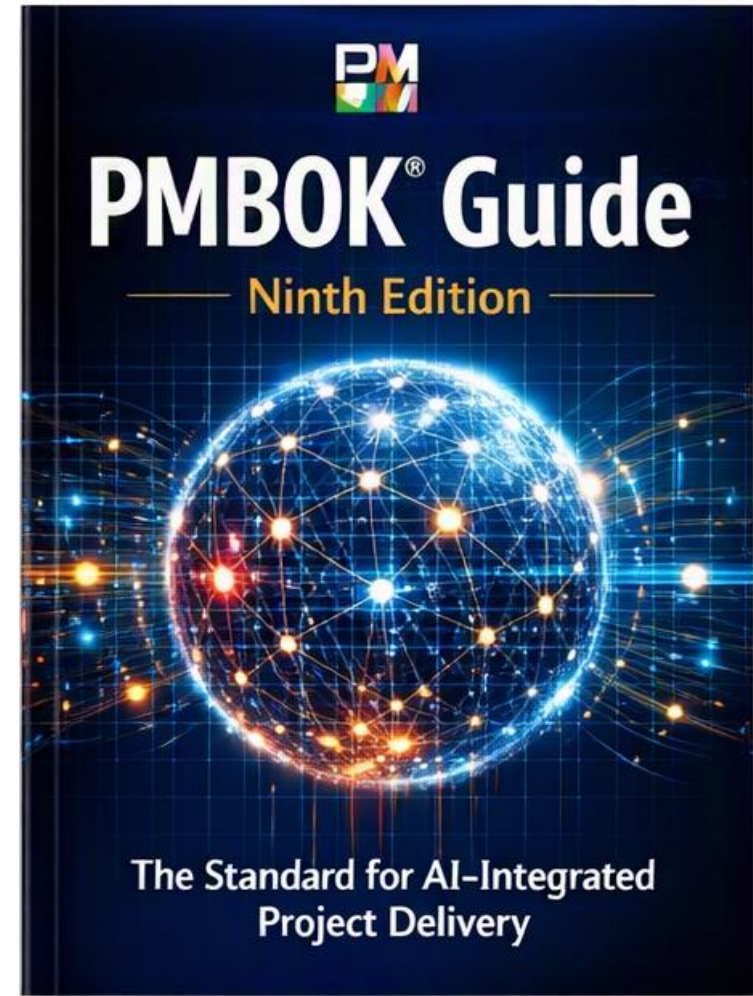
Act 3: Strategy and Innovation



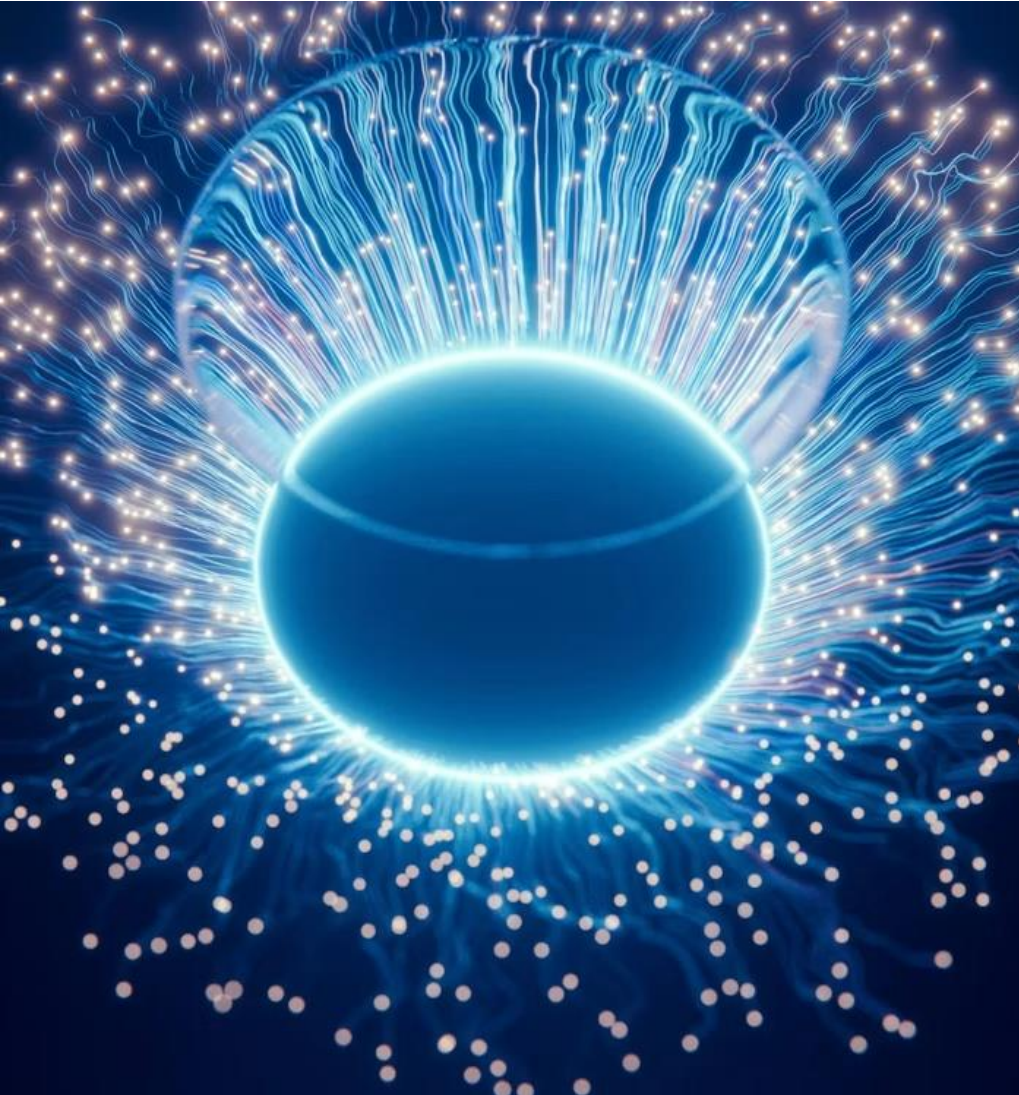
- Future **project leadership** is shifting project management to strategic alignment and realization, and innovation leadership
- AI reduces/eliminates administrative, repetitive work
- Continued focus on business outcomes
- Disclaimer: I do not own a crystal ball
😂

PMBOK 9 Predictions?

- Reinforce PMBOK 8 themes, no further re-invention
 1. AI-Integrated Project Management
 2. Value Delivery → Business Impact → Strategic Alignment
 3. Sustainability further focus
 4. Focus Areas strengthening, including hybrid guidance
 5. Project Leadership beyond team management



The Obvious Answer: AI is Here to Stay



AI can handle:

- Status report generation
- Meeting notes and summaries, action item tracking
- Schedule updates and adjustments
- Basic resource allocation and levelling
- Routine communications
- Data entry and updates, template population
- Risk and issue identification/ tracking
- Agile components (Product Backlog, iteration management and reporting)

The Many AI Productivity Studies

1. Increase in knowledge-worker productivity and quality
 - Tasks completed 25% faster, 40% higher-quality outputs on average
2. Changed daily work patterns
 - Less time on administration (email, meetings) more time longer stretches of deep work
3. The “Cyber teammate”
 - Professionals using AI more likely to generate ideas ranked in the top 10% of all submissions, matching or exceeding human collaborators
4. Reduced execution time and costs
 - AI agents reduce human work time by 87%, cut costs by 94%
 - Human roles shifting from “executor” to “supervisor”

AI Already Does (1 of 2):



Knowledge Management and Support:

- Documentation and knowledge management
- Administrative and operational support

Monitoring and Adaptation:

- Review and continuous improvement
- Practice tracking and visualization

Execution and Delivery:

- Quality and testing activities
- Development and technical practices

AI Already Does (2 of 2):

Collaboration and Communication:

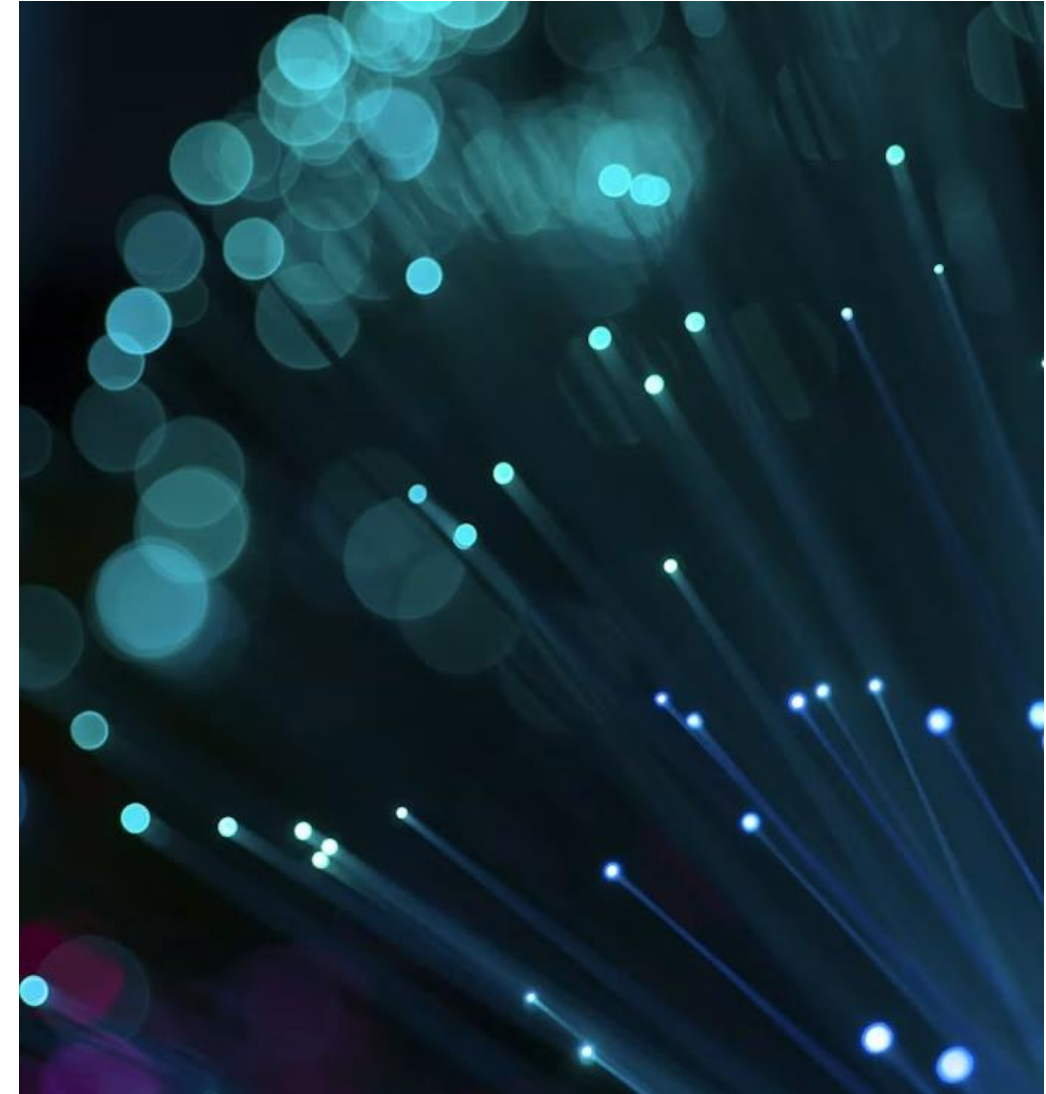
- Team and collaboration management
- Stakeholder management and communication

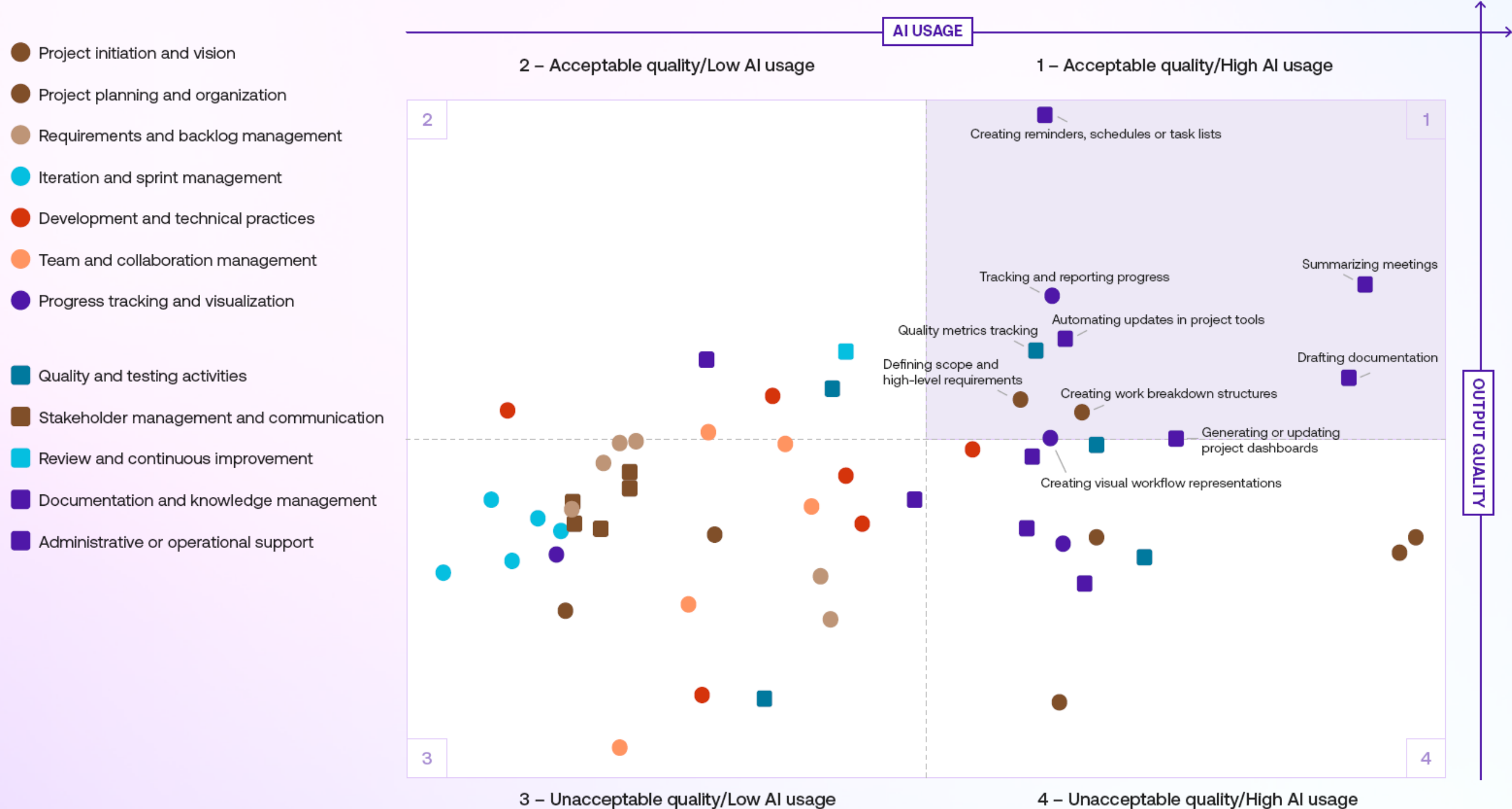
Initiation and Planning:

- Project initiation and vision
- Project planning and organization

Requirements and Workflow Management

- Requirements and backlog management
- Iteration management





Poll 2: Your AI Uses

 Mentimeter



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- AI-generated project plans
- Predictive scheduling
- Risk identification
- Automated status reports
- Meeting summarization
- Stakeholder communications
- Variance detection
- Documentation search
- Drafting PM documents
- Agile user stories
- Compliance checks

Poll 3: Future AI Possibilities

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- What tasks/ areas/ documents do you want AI to handle?

Are We Cooked?

What humans still do better:

- Strategic judgement: evaluating context, organizational policies stakeholder priorities
- Relationship building: building trust, understanding motivations, managing dynamics
- Creative problem solving: finding innovative solutions to unique challenges
- Ethical decision making: Balancing tradeoffs with value and principles
- Vision and inspiration: Creating meaning and purpose that motivates people

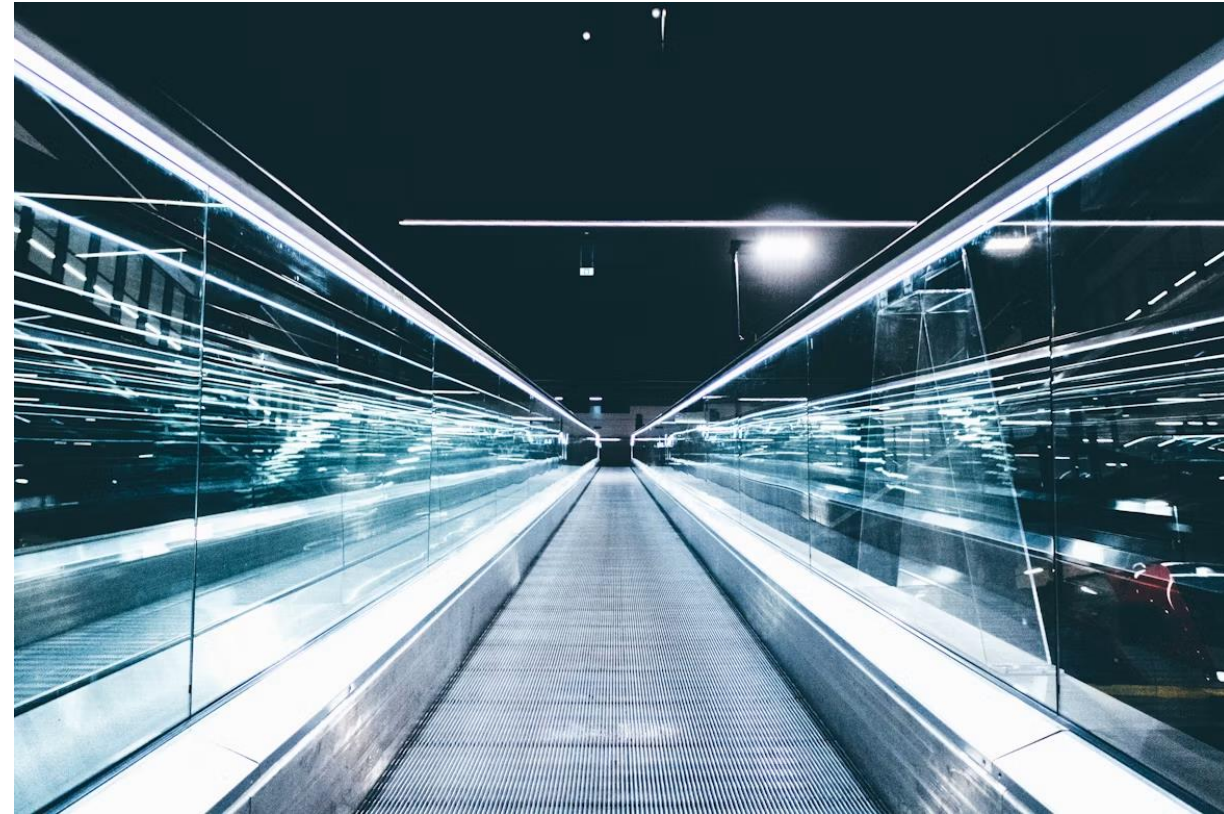
Where PMs add value:

- Stakeholder relationship management
- Conflict resolution and mediation
- Strategic decision making
- Change management and adoption
- Team coaching and development
- Creative problem solving
- Organizational navigation
- Vision setting and alignment
- Leadership and inspiration

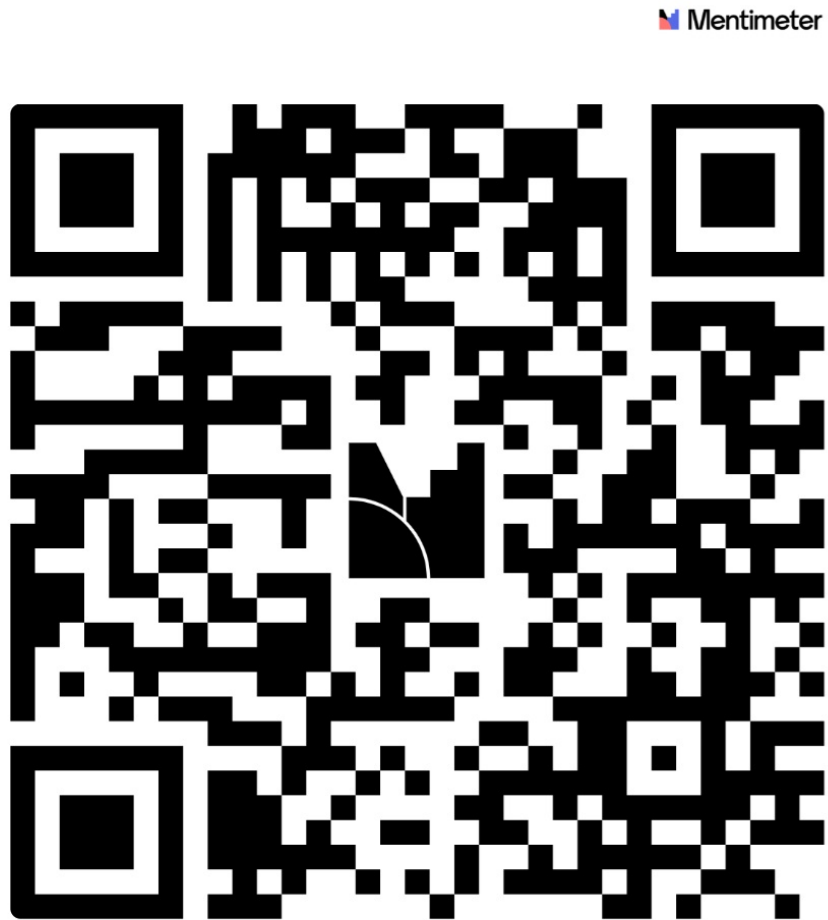
What's Next?

Preparing for the Future

1. AI is here to stay – become AI literate
2. Start shifting to a strategic PM – Develop business acumen and strategic thinking
3. Improve your soft skills – Increase your Emotional Quotient
4. Change management – Become a change leader
5. Experiment – Find areas to use AI in your day to day



Poll 4: Which Ones Have You Already Begun?



Mentimeter

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1. AI literacy
2. Business acumen and strategic thinking
3. Increase your EQ
4. Become a change leader
5. Find areas to use AI

**People Need People
Especially In AI Era**

Human Skills That Become More Important with AI

- Critical thinking and decision making
- Communication and storytelling
- Change leadership
- Facilitation
- Navigating ambiguity and uncertainty
- Influencing and stakeholder management
- Emotional intelligence and empathy
- Collaboration across cultures

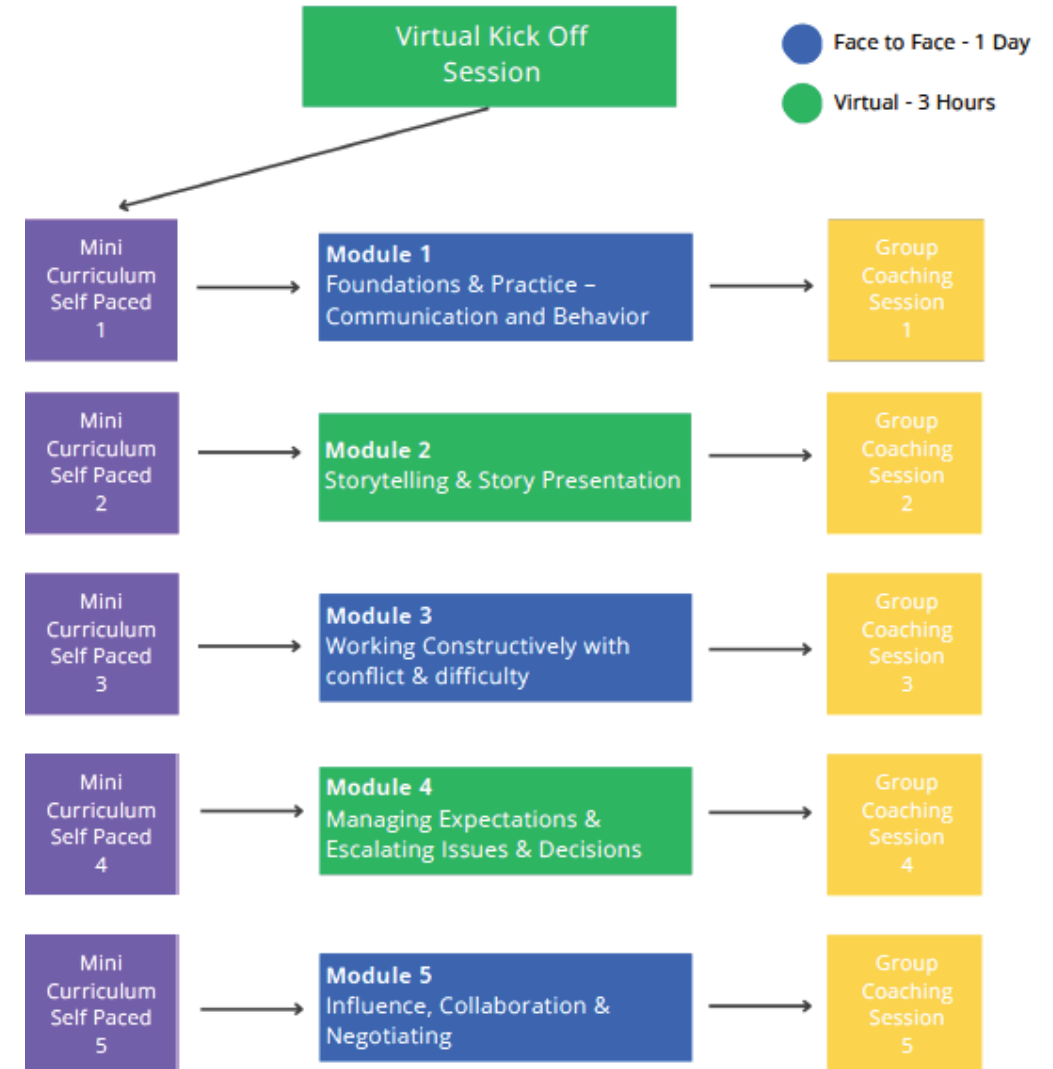


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Power Skills Development program

Soft and Business Skills

- For project engineers, managers, PMs who are acting between the customer and own organization
- 10 Assessments and 17 different Leadership competencies
- Flexible 3-5 month duration



Questions?

