

Understanding Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies to Build Your Career in Project Management



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Ricardo Viana Vargas

Ricardo Viana Vargas is a project, portfolio and risk management specialist. During the past 15 years, he has been responsible for over 80 major projects in various countries.

He was the first Latin American volunteer to be elected Chairman of the Board for the Project Management Institute. He is currently the director of the Project Management Practice Group at UNOPS and lives in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Coordinating more than 300 project managers, his work is focused on improving the management of humanitarian, peace-building and infrastructure development projects in dozens of countries, such as Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan.



WHERE DO I FIT IN?

BEGINNING MY CAREER

- Newly graduated
- Little work experience

CAREER TRANSITION

- Entering the project mgmt. field
- Previous professional experience
- Seeking new opportunities

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Has worked as a Project Manager
- Seeks to work in other types of projects or on larger projects

10 DIMENSIONS OF CAREER

p
r
o
j
e
t
c
s

10 DIMENSIONS OF CAREER

planning
relationship
focus
adjustability
self knowledge
study
ethics
persistence
experience
dynamism

A close-up photograph of two hands, one from a darker-skinned person and one from a lighter-skinned person, gently holding a small, light-colored object between their fingers. The background is a textured surface with a wood-grain pattern. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the word 'EXPERIENCE' in white capital letters.

EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE

- Competence comes from experience
- PMP is not experience, is a certification!
- Practice improves results
- Seek challenges
- Learn from mistakes. Fast!
- Show in your life what you preach

EXPERIENCE

BEGINNING

- Forget about money and go for the opportunity
- Become a volunteer!

CAREER TRANSITION

- Solidify the experience you already have
- Adapt your story and experience to every market opportunity

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Make strategic changes. Losing in the short term doesn't always mean to lose
- Seek NEW experiences

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a document. The person is wearing a blue button-down shirt. Their right hand holds a silver pen, and their left hand rests on the document. The word "STUDY" is overlaid in white capital letters on a semi-transparent blue rectangular background in the center of the image.

STUDY

STUDY

- Be obsessive about study
- Ignorance is not a virtue
- Think "outside the box"
- Do not study what you already know ...

STUDY

BEGINNING

- Learn the basics. Understand what a project is and what it is not
- PMP, PRINCE2, courses abroad
- Learn another language, mainly English


CAREER TRANSITION

- Recycle your knowledge
- New subjects, credentials, schools
- MOOC¹: www.coursera.org

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- New subjects (Coursera and others)
- Go beyond the 'traditional' areas
- Seek new certifications (CIPS, CCP, etc.)

¹Wikipedia: Massive open online course

A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a chessboard. The focus is on the white pawns in the center, while the dark pieces in the foreground and background are blurred. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image.

Focus

Focus

- Have a goal and know what it is
- Increasingly solidify your principles
- No one can be brilliant at everything
- We live in a world infinitely dispersed

Focus

BEGINNING

- Seek to study and learn
- Build your résumé
- Success is built brick by brick

CAREER TRANSITION

- Demonstrate what you know
- Focus on new positionings
- Don't hit on everything that walks

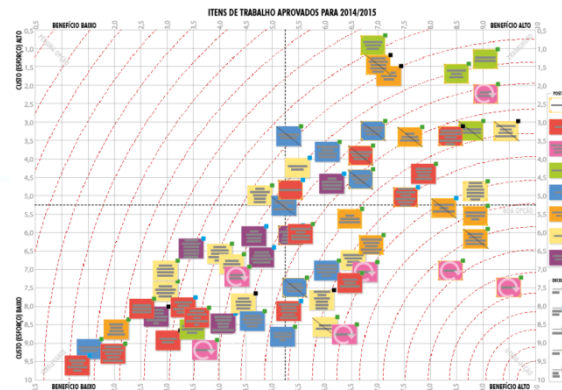
EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Seek to fulfill your desires
- Focus on having contingency plans
- Focus on some related strategies

PLANNING

PLANNING

- Do not wish to work in projects if you can't plan your own steps
- Use project management for your own career planning
- Do you plan your actions for the next year
 - I do ...



PLANNING

BEGINNING

- Plan your next steps
- Develop an objective and professional justification

CAREER TRANSITION

- Plan all your immediate actions
- Find and build relationships and dependencies
- Assess the risks

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Plan for the next 5 years
- Evaluate all possible paths
- Use project management as an example to apply the concepts



PERSISTENCE

PERSISTENCE

- Tirelessly carve out the results, be results-oriented
- Be determined
- Create challenging targets and do your best to deliver them
 - Schedule your PMP exam and start studying ...

PERSISTENCE

BEGINNING

- Do not think it will work in the first time
- Remember the concept of "entropy" that you learned at school

CAREER TRANSITION

- Do not let fear take over
- The market will try to devalue you, do not let it succeed ...

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Do not let the current frustration influence the future
- Create or search for new options. They will not *magically* appear at your doorstep

A full-page background image featuring a cyclist in a blue and white jersey and a silver helmet, riding a road bike. The image is heavily blurred to convey a sense of high speed. A dark blue grid pattern is overlaid on the entire image. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band runs across the middle, containing the word 'DYNAMISM'.

DYNAMISM

DYNAMISM

- “A nimble sixpence is better than a slow shilling” - *Proverb*
- Agility shows energy, interest, ability and motivation
- Do not expect things to happen
- Make things happen

DYNAMISM

BEGINNING

- Become a volunteer (to anything)
- Show interest

CAREER TRANSITION

- Choose visible positions
- Promise and deliver
- Be a leadman not a supporting role

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Choose which may add up
- Assume responsibilities that others refuse
- Seek not to perpetuate the same thing



ADJUSTABILITY

ADJUSTABILITY

- Develop your ability to adapt to different and unexpected conditions
- Do not expect "Standard Conditions of Temperature and Pressure" (STP)
- Think globally. Your country is not the world

ADJUSTABILITY

BEGINNING

- Move out of your parents house 😊
- Do not expect to find a job as you saw at school. It doesn't exist ...

CAREER TRANSITION

- Be flexible to new forms of hiring
- Be careful not to become a consultant without an edge

EXPANDING HORIZONS

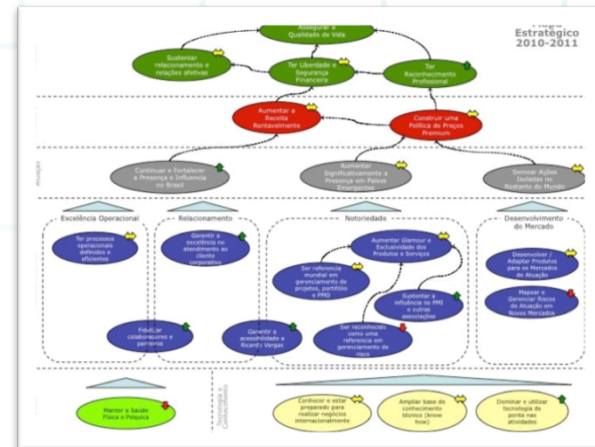
- New markets
- Think about different projects, related areas (not necessarily opposing)

A person is seen from behind, sitting on a dark, rocky ledge. They are looking out over a vast, hilly landscape covered in dense green vegetation. The hills recede into the distance under a clear, bright sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of solitude and contemplation.

SELF KNOWLEDGE

SELF KNOWLEDGE

- Do you know your weaknesses?
- Competence is knowing where you are going to and why you're going there
- Have you developed your personal vision?
 - I have ...



SELF KNOWLEDGE

BEGINNING

- Know your weaknesses
- Listen to friends and colleagues to know yourself better

CAREER TRANSITION

- Work your weaknesses
- Seek external support
- Do not try to hide weaknesses

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Ethics

ETHICS

Values

Fairness

ETHICS

- Ethics does not always produce results in the short term
- Reputation – Give your life to defend it
(read the book '48 Laws of Power')
- Institute for Global Ethics

ETHICS

BEGINNING

- You are not in a game where anything goes
- Small concessions can have a great impact on your future public image

CAREER TRANSITION

- Never let go of your principles
- Promote ethics in actions and not just in speech

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Use ethics as a differential, as you do with your certification

A close-up photograph of a blue and yellow rope tied in a knot, set against a light-colored tiled wall. The rope has a braided texture with yellow accents on the blue sections and blue accents on the yellow sections. A semi-transparent blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the word "RELATIONSHIP" in white capital letters.

RELATIONSHIP

RELATIONSHIP

- Isolation is dangerous
- It is critical to understand and accept different cultures and points of view
- Compromising means to relate, not to become submissive
- Networking is key
- Social networking is growing exponentially.
Do not stay out

RELACIONAMENTO

BEGINNING

- Make your profile on LinkedIn. A DECENT one
- Join relevant social networks
- Watch your exposure on networks

CAREER TRANSITION

- Join relevant social networks
- Networking is everything
- Have your business card handy

EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Select new networks and new ways of social relationships
- Be curious about new subjects



FINAL MESSAGE



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