

Resources

Home > Resources > 5 transformative trends affecting the PM sector, its clients and its partners



5 transformative trends affecting the PM sector, its clients and its partners.

Is your AI dancing with data? Are you dabbling in circular design? Or maybe your team is navigating the nuances of new ESG requirements?

The first half of 2024 brought a mix of emerging and intensifying trends in project management (PM). Each with its own set of challenges and opportunities, giving our team at Acuity room for pause.

Let's take a look at what those trends are – and how you can leverage them to enhance your project outcomes in the new financial year.

1. The integration of AI, data and automation is exploding

AI, data and automation are not new to the PM sector. But their adoption is growing rapidly.

And quite frankly, we can't wait to start realising the full benefits these tools will deliver in our work. Benefits like enhanced decision-making, efficiency and productivity gains, and real-time monitoring and control.

At Acuity, we're already experiencing early wins. For example, ChatGPT, a form of generative AI, is helping us slash our reporting and admin time.

And the availability of superior datasets – both private and public – is turbocharging our ability to make estimates (like average allowances for bad weather) with unprecedented confidence levels.

If we look at PM-adjacent fields, we see companies using AI to automate schedules, optimise resources and enhance decision-making.

So, although there will never be an AI or automation technology that completely replaces project managers, embracing technology to make our work more efficient is a no-brainer.

It'll free us up to do what we do best: build stronger client relationships and deliver exceptional project outcomes.

My advice? Keep your eyes peeled for new AI tools specific to PM and construction. It's only a matter of time before they become commonplace.

2. The focus on ESG is here to stay

Since 2019, we've seen a fivefold growth in internet searches for ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance). This tells us just how prominent these factors have become in the minds of consumers, investors and businesses.

Not convinced? According to PwC, more than 60% of consumers choose products based on how sustainable and ethical they are. And this number is increasing by 10% annually.

Our team sees this trend up close and personal every day with more and more of our clients increasing their attention on ESG principles – and, importantly, applying them in their projects. That usually starts right at the beginning, with a mandatory requirement to address ESG KPIs in our project proposals.

I strongly feel that we, as project managers, need to lead the way here. For three reasons.

Firstly, for ourselves and our people – because it's important to us and our values. Secondly, it improves our social licence to operate, as it means we're genuinely *doing good* rather than just focusing on profits (and enriching owners).

Finally, it makes us more attractive to clients, which grows our bottom line. When we're financially successful, we can invest in initiatives that make our community a better place to live, work and play for all.

3. Circular design is the new net zero

With ESG growing in prominence, it's no surprise that sustainability initiatives continue to be popular.

And the newest, most popular initiative on the block? Circular design.

For those not in the know, circular design challenges the development sector's notorious 'create, use and throw away' approach. Instead, it encourages us to choose – or design – products and processes that minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency.

But what does that look like practically?

It might look like saving and reusing existing assets during a redevelopment – from the humble desk chair to ceiling tiles. Or it might mean choosing products with high levels of recycled content, carpet (which can be recycled many times).

To embrace this trend, you must implement processes that put numbers to actions, especially in the context of saving carbon emissions. This is critical when you are aiming for a Green Star rating on your next build.

At Acuity, we're establishing partnerships with external experts while upskilling staff to facilitate the growing demand for circular design. This will continue to be a strong focus for us.

So if circular design is new to you – or it's been bubbling away in the back of your mind to look into 'one day' – now is the time to dive in.

4. Climate change will continue to wreak havoc

Extreme heat. Heavy rain. Strong winds. We're well accustomed to extreme weather in Australia. But its frequency is becoming a real challenge on project sites.

The answer, I believe, is to ensure contracts contain suitable allowances that protect all parties. That means that a renewed focus on weather and climate change must be a core component of project planning.

This involves integrating advanced weather forecasting tools, contingency planning and adaptive resource allocation. It creates extra work, sure. But by proactively managing these factors, we can minimise delays and financial impacts – ensuring that projects remain resilient in the face of unpredictable environmental conditions.

My other advice is to engage a cost adviser or quantity surveyor in the early stages of a project. Some clients resist doing so until it's too late, and the realities of site conditions have already derailed the project vision.

Remember, it's not just about responding to challenges, but anticipating and preparing for them to maintain project timelines and profitability.

5. The burden of risk will become a shared responsibility

Contractor solvency is a real concern right now following a disastrous year of company collapses that hit the media in a big way. (Hello, Porter Davis.)

The result is a growing push for project partners to share the burden of risk – rather than lumping it squarely on the shoulders of subcontractors.

At Acuity, we think this is a good move. And long overdue.

The tough post-COVID market conditions have left subcontractors suffering the result of inflexible lump sum contracts, leaving them more vulnerable to poor cash flow than ever. And when cash flow stalls, insolvency quickly follows.

As project managers, we want to avoid this outcome for our clients. So we're educating them about the hazards of pushing risk entirely onto subcontractors – and encouraging them to share the load instead.

It'll protect the project. And build a better, more sustainable industry overall, which we think is an outcome worth taking a bit of a risk for.

A final thought

I'm sure you're not reading about these trends for the first time. But if, like many businesses, you're too busy or overwhelmed with the day-to-day to give them the focus they deserve, you will be left behind in no time.

Instead, gather your team today to determine what steps you will take to capitalise on the opportunities before you – and you could find yourself at the forefront of innovation and project excellence.

If you're looking for a PM partner who can give you clarity on these trends and how they will affect your next project, [get in touch with Acuity today.](#)

About

Ethos
Story
Team

Services

Project management
Design management
Development management
Superintendent services

Procurement management
Independent certification
Contract administration
Technical due diligence

Portfolio

Workplace
Commercial
Industrial
Residential
Education
Retail

Blog

Contact

Ordinary
ends *here*

© 2024 Acuity Project Management Pty Ltd.
Disclaimer,
Site by Firesauce

acuity
in @

Acuity respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country we operate our business upon. We pay our sincere respects to Elders and community. We share our gratitude for their continued custodianship of the lands and waters upon which we live, work and play.

