

# Global reach, local perspective

By Ken Lane

Previous to Carl Pritchard meeting Mark Langley, the new President and ceo, at the PMI Congress in Washington, Editor, Ken Lane, had interviewed Mark, late last year, when he was in London and then chief operating officer for PMI.

One of his themes was the way in which PMI has been achieving its global ambitions following a review in 2002 that led to more regional strategies. In 2003 the Brussels office opened to cover Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Offices in Singapore, Beijing and Mumbai followed and late last year Sydney joined the throng.

Responding to criticism that PMI in the past had not always taken note of local needs and the affordability of PMI products, Langley explained that membership had to be the same everywhere to meet legislation around PMI as a not for profit organization. But in the case of the PMBok they had different arrangements in China for licensing reproduction at more local prices and the same was true of India. 'We want to serve local needs as well as maintaining standards globally', he said. He explained that PMI undertake market research every year to see if new standards or certification are required.

While in London he had discussions with Government Departments and he explained that they had developed a focus on PMI's relationship with organizations in both the public and private sectors.

The aim is to influence top officials and executives and expand the PMI 'affiliation' model. The Board had authorized a \$1 million research fund specifically to look at ways in which PMI can help large organizations as they manage projects, programmes and portfolios around the world. 'They are looking for ways in which they can support their PPM business whether it's in technology, construction, defence, or national and local government. They are looking for the tools and techniques that can promote excellence in their businesses.' He added that PMI could act as a facilitator to enable them to share experience.

I put it to Mark that some people might feel disenfranchised now that PMI has such a vast spread in terms of members and geography. 'The challenge with any organization is keeping a very disparate group of stakeholders engaged,' said Mark. He said that when you have over half a million people in 180 countries, they need support which is provided by PMI's investment in a chapters network that allows local members to feed back concerns and ideas.

A good example of this in action, he says, is the work of the staff in the Brussels office

a large part of whose work is chapter support throughout the EMEA region.

At the time I met Langley, the world was still coming to terms with the effect of the global recession as, indeed, it does today. The UK's spending review, with its important repercussions on public sector projects was due out just as this was being written. But Langley, speaking at the end of last year, drew a distinction between the affect on PMI and on individual members. He said that membership fallout hadn't shown signs of increasing –

attrition had been fairly constant for some years – but the experience of individual members facing the recession would differ greatly.

He says that the networking offered by PMI was a great help to members during troubled times. He recalled a member telling him that within seven days of being told he was out of a job with a major technology company, he had a new job as a result of his personal PMI network. Mark agreed that this wouldn't be everyone's experience, but nevertheless was a clear demonstration of what was possible.



Unique recognition has been given to the work of David Hillson, *Project Manager Today's* risk columnist. He is the only person in 2010 to become a PMI Fellow.

He received PMI's highest and most prestigious individual honour at the Global Congress in Washington. It means that he joins the ranks of an elite group of about sixty project management pioneers and experts.

Dr Hillson is known globally as 'The Risk Doctor' and is particularly well-known for championing the inclusion of opportunity in the risk process, and he has also developed a practical application of emotional literacy to support appropriate risk-taking.

He received the PMI Distinguished Contribution Award in 2002 for his work in developing risk management. He has also worked to build bridges between PMI and other professional associations, notably the UK Association for Project Management (APM) where he is an Honorary Fellow, and

the Institute of Risk Management (IRM) of which he is also a Fellow.

The 2010 PMI Research Achievement Award went to Professor Janice Lynne Thomas, for her exploration of organizational change, team building, and leadership in project management.

Dr. Thomas has led a number of PMI-sponsored research projects as well as UK government-funded work.

Prior to becoming an academic, she spent 10 years as a project manager in the fields of IT and Organizational Change. She is currently a Professor of Project Management and Director of the Project Management Research Institute in the Faculty of Business at Athabasca University, Canada.

The 2010 *Project Management Journal* Paper of the Year Award went to UK-based, Terry Cooke-Davies, with Lynn H. Crawford, and Thomas G. Lechler, for their article on 'Project management systems: Moving project management from an operational to a strategic discipline'.