PMI-NIC's 25th Anniversary - The pleasure of listening
Dalia Vodice, Michela Ruffa, Walter Ginevri

Abstract

Three passionate volunteers listened to the voices of PMI-NIC's interlocutors segmented by 21 "personas". Thanks to 77 interviews and the use of value proposition canvas, the PMI-NIC will make 2021 a memorable year through a set of initiatives characterized by three core values: Culture, Contexts, Connections.

Content

This is the story of three seasoned members of the PMI Northern Italy Chapter - Dalia, Michela and Walter – who had the opportunity to live an inspiring experience of volunteering. In the hope of inspiring other chapter volunteers like you guys, let's start our story from the early beginning.

"Once upon a time" a team of visionary project management practitioners decided to found the first Italian PMI Chapter. It was October 1996 and, even if this endeavor was characterized by uncertainty and risks, their goals were very clear:

- to spread the project management culture
- to offer contexts for professional networking
- to promote relationships with other organizations

Many years later, it was March 2020, the Chapter Board decided to entrust to three volunteers the collection of ideas and proposals for the incoming celebration of the 25th anniversary. As an essential input to this team, the Board identified a set of clear critical success factors:

- not be limited to a celebration of past achievements, but take the opportunity to explore the next 25 years of the PMI community
- to look over chapter members domain in order to involve a wide population of stakeholders in the "co-design" of the PMI-NIC of the future
- to assure the alignment with the PMI strategy and its focus on the «project economy» and the target population of «5-75» people

Thanks to the "why" provided by the Chapter Board, we could concentrate on the "how", "what", "when". As a result of that, a four-step path was established in order to plan and synchronize our collective efforts:

1. classification of NIC's target "personas" and selection of some representatives for each of them
2. collection of ideas and suggestions through interviews supported by customized questionnaires
3. elaboration of the collected information and conversion into a set of coherent value propositions
4. proposals for chapter initiatives based on common and specific needs of NIC's target "personas"

And since we believe that figures are often worth a thousand words, we'd like to share some deliverables related to the first tree steps of our project path.

Step 1 - Segmentation of PMI-NIC target "personas" (summary and detail view)

DEVELOPMENT SEGMENT   RETENTION SEGMENT
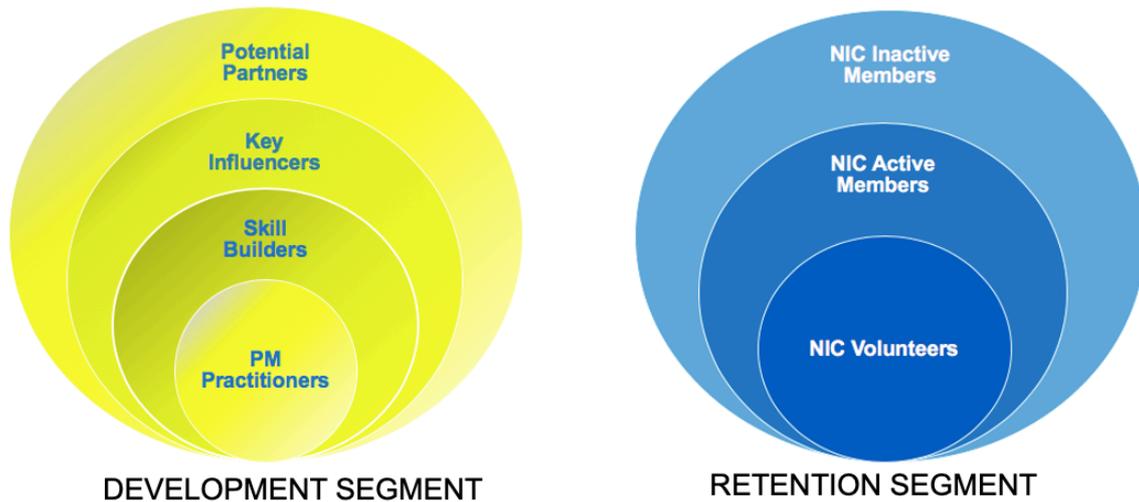
- **Potential Partners**
  - Potential Sponsors
  - Professional Associations Repr.*
  - Cultural Associations Repr.

- **Key Influencers**
  - Exec. & Functional Managers
  - PMI Staff & Leaders
  - PMO Representatives
 - Media Representatives
  - Government Representatives
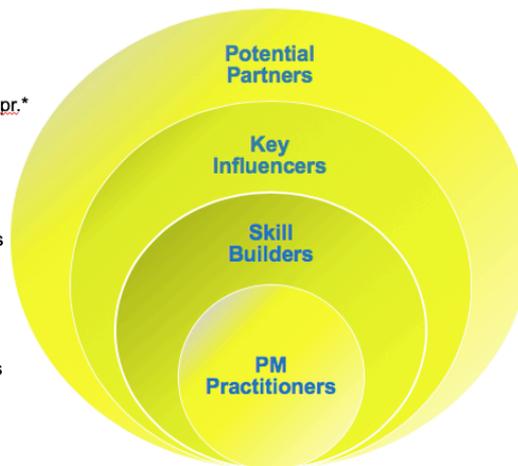
- **Skill Builders**
  - Educators**
  - HR Managers
  - PM Trainers***

- **PM Practitioners**
  - PM Professionals****
  - Next-Gen PMs*****
  - "Unaware" PMs

*   Including PMI Chapters
**   Including School Teachers
***   Including REPs and ATPs
****   Including Italian PMI Members
***** Including Students (aged 16-25)

Step 2 - Example of customized questionnaire used to interview PMO representatives

Personas	Domain	Questions
Development Segment ↓ Key Influencers ↓ **PMO Representat.**	WHO?	*How long has been a PMO introduced in your organization?*
		What functions and projects are assigned to the PMO in your organization?
	WHAT?	*What is the experience of the people of your organization in relation to projects and programs?*
		What are the needs and expectations that people and organization are addressing to the PMO?
	HOW?	*How could the NIC possibly help you to operate within the PMO and grow professionally? And how could the NIC possibly help PM professionals and managers of your organization?*
		How could you possibly help the NIC to accomplish its mission of PMI professional community?

Step 3 - Example of Value Proposition Canvas derived from interviews of PMO representatives
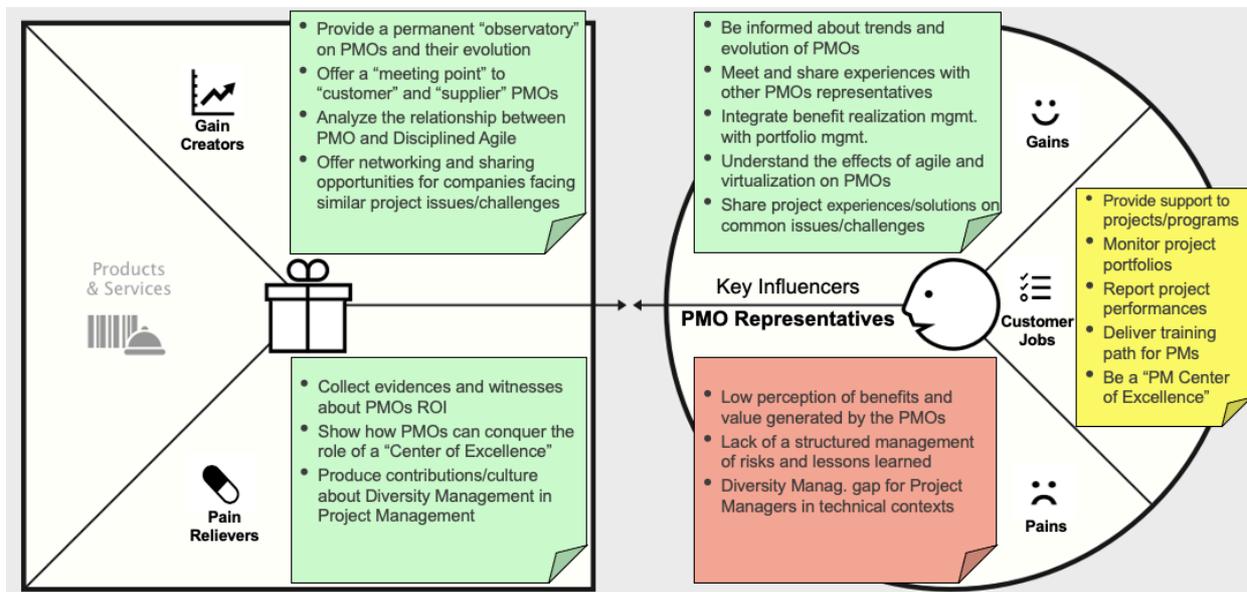
As far as Step 4 is concerned, we started from the search of the most recurring concepts within the collection of personas' interviews. In other words, our first objective was to identify common needs of all our interlocutors to be used as a sort of "red thread" for future chapter initiatives.

Our search was awarded with a great result, that is even more surprising if you go back to the goals of the NIC's founders. As a matter of fact, this is the list of expectations of our target population:

1. to empower the project Culture as the success factor for professional and personal growth
2. to dispose of enabling Contexts where people can share and learn from others' experience
3. to exploit win-win Connections thanks to partnerships with other people and organizations

After our discover of both continuity with respect to the past, and clear perspective with respect to the future, we continued with the analysis of the VPCs and the selection of the most interesting and valuable hints in order to convert them into a set of proposals for the Chapter Board.

Having done this, we assigned a priority level to each specific need (low, medium, high) on the basis of the number of occurrences within all interviews, VPCs, and also clusters of personas. In other words, the more recurring was a specific need within the target population, the higher was the priority level.

In addition to the priority level, we decided to adopt a very intuitive way to classify "customer" needs, that is an extended version of the Start/Stop/Continue Retrospective. Here following, you can find a summary of our final deliverable including one or two examples from the collection of proposals (40) submitted to the Board.

- Start offering → Professional development paths by industry and age
  → Permanent observatories on strategic topics (i.e. PMO)
- Offer more → "Disciplined" networking aimed at assuring exchange of ideas
  → Workshops to share experiences in similar/different contexts
- Keep offering → Social and no-profit initiatives to spread the "project culture"
  → Opportunities to share experiences related to the Disciplined Agile approach
- Offer less → Events characterized by a too "self-referential" approach (it's the only one)
- Stop offering → No requests (happy to know!)

As it's evident, this collection of proposals of chapter initiatives goes beyond the time horizon of 2021, the year of our 25th anniversary celebration. For this reason, we completed our work with the design of a framework aimed at supporting PMI-NIC's Board decision making thanks to the integration of the following elements:

- 25! Goals: Shape the Future - Strengthen Identity - Share knowledge - Facilitate Networking
- 25! Audience: PM Pros, Next-gen Pros, Unaware PM, Students, Executives, Sponsors, etc.
- 25! Keywords: Culture, Contexts, Connections

Since we believe that numbers are often worth a thousand words, this is the list of "data analytics":

- 21 → "personas" identified as target population
- 77 → total number of performed interviews
- 19 → total number of customized questionnaires
- 30'/45' → planned/actual average duration of interviews
- 52% → interviewed PM Practitioners (40) / interviewed people (77)
- 40% → interviewed Chapter Members (31) / interviewed people (77)
- 39% → interviewed "Inactive" Members (12) / interviewed Chapter Members (31)
- 20 → total number of delivered value proposition canvas (VPC)
- 3+40 → common + specific needs derived from the analysis of VPCs
- 6 → project duration expressed in months (for April to September 2020)
- 25/35 → planned/actual volunteering effort expressed in day/person

And since an inspiring story cannot be closed without a moral, we'd like to share our lessons learned.

Dalia	Michela	Walter
1. Confirmation, once more tested in practice, that diversification always brings value.	1. Importance of curiosity and real desire of learning with an open-minded disposition.	1. Contributions were so rich that I really wouldn't know which interviews could be discarded.
2. Asking questions and listening to answers is the simplest, yet most effective way to find out about others' needs.	2. Our work was developed step by step in emergent way with intensive discussions, sharing of opinions and experiences.	2. As inspiring music is built around an underlying theme, the NIC' soundtrack will be based upon culture, contexts, connections.
3. Together is better. It may seem evident, but it's worth always reminding ourselves about it.	3. Never underestimate the effort required, particularly, when the passion guides you.	3. My membership isn't simply an annual fee. It's a lifelong way to grow humanly and professionally.

Last but not least, if you think that images are worth a thousand words or numbers, we invite you to watch this subtitled video of our experience → https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL7OkFZioWM.