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The History of the PMI Frankfurt Chapter: 1988 - 2005
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The history of the PMI Frankfurt Chapter 1988-2005

By Thomas Walenta

Based on files and memories of Thomas Walenta, PMI Fellow
Incorporating input from Ralf Müller and Eckhard Genßmann
Spring 2015

25 years after its chartering and almost 10 years after I left the Chapter as a President, I want to help document the history of the Frankfurt Chapter. As it happens, this is also partly the history of PMI in Europe and Germany. As any organization grows beyond the active lifetimes of their members, the management in charge might want to learn about the past (if not even **from** the past).

I tried to remember as many individuals with significant contributions as I could. They could be asked about details if needed. I certainly forgot somebody. If so, please take my apologies for leaving you out.

Also, I report about my personal experiences, which are many. Nevertheless you may view the period or specific events and results from different angles. So if you like, you can add to my memories or even dispute some of them.

Saying so, this article is free for discussion and amendment.

The foundation years 1988-1998

In 1988, a group of US Army Engineers under sponsorship from *Robert Steven Lide* requested from PMI to found a Chapter in Frankfurt, Germany. Unluckily for this group, PMI and the predecessor of IPMA (which then ran under the name of 'INTERNET'), had an agreement that PMI will not establish a Chapter in the primary area in which they serve the PM profession, which included Germany and Europe.

Since the group consisted of US military personnel located on an US base, PMI HQ argued that the Frankfurt Chapter could be seen as a 'US Chapter based in Europe'. PMI Executive Director *Bonnie McGarr* informed the members of the Chapter in October 1989, that PMI and INTERNET adapted their agreement. The Frankfurt Chapter was then chartered as of 1988.

The core group consisted besides *Robert Steven Lide* of *Jim Thomasson* (Interim President), *Mike Fallon* (Interim Secretary), *Cynthia Nielsen* (Membership Drive), *Robert Wade* (Interim Officers Project), *Harry Kohler* (By-Laws and Constitution) and *Tahir Rizvi* (Interim Treasurer).

The Chapter became dormant after a few years and activities to restart it commenced in 1992 by a group of NCR managers. The story behind that is that the by then Director of NCR's European Technology Center, *John A. Kennel*, was pushing forward to establish project management as a key competence within NCR in Europe. For that he established an education program with George Washington University, with the goal of getting NCR's project managers PMP certified. Three managers of NCR took this idea forward in the German organization, *Erich Hantzsch,*

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Jens Grappendorf and *Ralf Müller*. The Chapter was officially (re-)opened in March 1994. While essentially a group effort, one of them volunteered to be the first one to sit for the PMP exam and became the first President of the new PMI Frankfurt Chapter. The first few meetings attracted only a small number of professionals from the Frankfurt area. Efforts to attract new members were mainly along personal contacts of these managers. In early 1994 the Chapter had only a few members. Two articles in the German IT publication Computerwoche[12] more than doubled the number of members.

When I became a PMI member in 1992 and eventually a Chapter member, I attended two or three meetings which were organized by the then German Chapter Leadership, several of them Germans working at NCR. In late 1997 I sat for the paper/pencil PMP exam, which was organized by the Chapter. *Jens Grappendorf (*then President) and *Ralf Müller* were overseeing the exam in the Frankfurt NCR location. *Ralf Müller* today is a professor and well known researcher and writer on project management in Norway.

One member from this time sticks to my memory: *Professor Wolfgang Roesch*. He was an well established author on project management and at this time diligently suggesting improvements to PMBoK Guide like the scheduling method Line-of-Balance. He sought the support of the Chapter to be acknowledged by PMI. While I had a decent mail exchange with him, I met him once personally when he spoke to the Cologne Chapter and was deeply impressed by his presence and knowledge, even being over 80 years of age at this time.

As a snapshot: end of 1995, the Frankfurt Chapter had 72 members, Paris 36 and UK 60, so PMI in Europe was just starting up. Membership in all Chapters globally was at 13780, the largest Chapter was New Jersey with 700 members.

The revival 1998-2000

In spring 1998, the President of the Chapter, *Jens Grappendorf*, invited to a Chapter meeting where he asked the group of members to take over Chapter leadership and 3 of us volunteered. A first Board meeting of that group took place in Frankfurt. In lack of Chapter documentation according to German law, the new Board decided to hold a inauguration assembly to create a legal entity under German law, a **'eingetragenerVerein**', requiring at least 7 people to take part in the meeting. The assembly was intended to be held on 26. June 1998 during the 2nd PMI European Project Management Congress in Munich, as it was expected that we could reach more members. The Congress was organized by *Thomas Wuttke* and the company he was with, Westernacher, and was a risky endevour with a lucky and very positive outcome.

The inauguration meeting was attended by international guests: *Karen Tate*, later PMI Board member and PMI Fellow and *Stephen Harrison,* then Board member of PMI and VP Region I (which comprised of all Chapters outside US).

Indeed, out of 111 inscribed Chapter members, 7 were attending the assembly: <u>*Thomas Walenta (IBM), Petra Nemecz (NCR), Rolf von Roessing (E&Y), Peter Schnell (IDG), Olaf*</u>

1. Müller, R. 1994. "Gesamterfolg hängt von der Förderung der Mitarbeiter ab", Computerwoche, vol. 1994, no. 13. ISSN 0170-5121
2. Müller, R. J. 1994. "Internationales Zeugnis steigert Chancen von Projektmanagern", Computerwoche, vol. 1994, no. 22. ISSN 0170-5121

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Pannenbaecker (Uni Bremen), Frank Scheckenbach and Joachim Wolberson (WHS, represented by Mr. Schlepkothen). In addition, 3 attendies signed up to PMI and the Chapter while they were attending: *Florian Doerrenberg (Uni Bremen), Marcel Bhend (NCR) and Eckhard Genßmann (EDS).*

Olaf and Florian also were very active in GPM and IPMA and were key players in these organizations. *Eckhard Genßmann* stayed on the Chapter Board in different positions even longer than me, we became friends and share common values not only about volunteering in PMI. A new Board with 5 members was elected from these attendees (names underscored).

The PMI Frankfurt Chapter was the first in Europe (followed by France and UK Chapters in 1995) and second outside North America (South Africa chapter was chartered in 1981). Though membership was not large, it was diverse. The roster was comprised of members from Uganda, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands and USA, with the majority from all over Germany. It was at this time set as the default Chapter for new members seeking membership in Germany.

Later in 1998, the **PMI Munich Chapter** was founded and chartered by *Jessy Magerl,* with *Ralf Müller* as co-founder. Jessy later became the first German PMI Board Member and today is living downunder in Australia. The Munich Chapter led by successor President *Andreas Lowinger* later claimed to cover the southern part of Germany, including the states of Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg. PMI HQ at this time followed the principle of creating Chapters around cities and defining their area by covered ZIP codes. Similarily, the **Cologne Chapter** (including Nordrhein-Westfalen) founded by *Herbert Borchardt* and **Berlin Chapter** (including state of Brandenburg) founded by *Steffi Triest*, claimed a set of ZIP codes as their areas. *Andreas Lowinger* became my direct successor as President of the PMI Frankfurt Chapter in 2006 before he handed over to *Wilhelm Kross.*

Frankfurt never filed ZIP codes with PMI during my tenure, as it was regarded by PMI HQ as the default for Germany. This was an example of a perceived 'supremacy' of the Frankfurt Chapter in these years. This perception resulted in a ongoing competition between Munich and Frankfurt and the strive for local independence by Cologne and Berlin. There were even official complaints to PMI HQ about this Frankfurt supremacy and I had interesting meetings in the US with PMI staff about these complaints. The complaints all failed since there is no fault in just being older, larger and more mature.

Today, the **Munich Chapter** seems to have overtaken the leading role and size leadership in Germany. The current (2015) President and longtime active volunteer, *Oliver Lehmann,* has been instrumental over the past 10 or so years to take Munich where it is today. Oliver also is a promoter of PMI and PMP in Germany for more than a decade.

As a snapshot: at the end of 2000, there were 21 chartered Chapters in Europe (today called Region 8, including Turkey and Russia). UK Chapter led by *Terry Warren* and later by *Guy Lee* was the largest Chapter in Europe. The France Chapter led by *Stephane Derouin* had won the Chapter of the Year Award in 1999 (the Frankfurt Chapter did apply for this award later but was not chosen). Three European conferences had been run, in Paris, Munich and Jerusalem, organized by Chapters. Now 46.408 members were in Chapters globally, the Frankfurt Chapter had 162 members (up from 111 in 1998) and Munich 97. The largest Chapter globally was

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Georgia with 2.214 members. The second edition of the PMBoK Guide came out.

Establishing a set of member services in Germany 1998-2003

The newly elected Chapter Board in 1998 decided to establish a set of basic but key services for the members like **bimonthly meetings,** a **monthly newsletter**, a **website** and Chapter hosted **paper/pencil PMP exams**. In addition, the decision was made to communicate primarily in English, given the membership demographics but also the need to serve a wider area than Germany at this time. Communication with members was switched completely from letters to email.

The Board focused on introducing **stable processes** and set the framework for increasing the value for the Chapter's members. Increasing PMI's footprint in Germany was another priority and therefore communication became key to reach out to interested people.

As there were almost no documented Chapter procedures from the years before, everything on the Chapter administration and management side needed review and design.

From an **administration** point of view, incorporation according to German law was started as a process. The bylaws stipulated by PMI HQ needed review to synchronize the PMI internal chartering with the German law, especially as the Board at this time perceived the approved status of "common public interest" (**Gemeinnützigkeit**) as benefitial for the Chapter. Additionally, setup for finance authorities and a regular communication with PMI HQ was established. Contracts were signed with tax and legal advisors.

The **Chapter logo** is an important icon to recognize the Chapter locally as well internationally and to create a sense of belonging for members. Frankfurt as city does not have globally recognized landmarks, it is mainly known for its Airport. Frankfurters may not share this view fully. So, as a Board we looked for different suggestions and jointly decided for the current image of the top of the Frankfurt Messeturm. Graphic designer *Susanne Walenta* offered a competitive price and the Board decided to chose her to develop the logo and promotional materials. We then obtained approval by PMI HQ to use the graphics as the Chapter logo and it all went from there.

Later, in 2005, after intensive elaborations with legal and tax advisors it became clear to the 2005 Board that the potential benefits of **Gemeinnützigkeit** were out-weighted by the risks introduced by that legal status. Even the tax advisor ran out of arguments, given the specific income situation of the Chapter. Tax advisor's DNA seems to include saving taxes by all means, regardless of the cost. The Board decided to propose to the general assembly in 2005 to take the formal decisions to skip this common public interest, which they did. Unluckily, these decisions were not implemented by 2006 Boards but even revised. As a long term consequence, finally in 2014 tax authorities denied the tax exempt status after many hours of volunteer and paid advisor work on this over the years and making the Chapter pay taxes for these years.

Starting with a member's roster with 111 members spread over all German regions, many European and even African countries, with un-reliable contact information, communications was an issue. Only a handful email addresses were known and the members needed to be contacted via other channels, mainly postal letters. *Eckhard Genßmann* (EDS) took that migration task

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with the position as VP Members from 1998 and was succeeded by *Christian Beick* (EDS).

To reach out to the Chapter members in the region, **Chapter meetings** were organized bi-monthly. While the first meetings toke place in meeting room facilities hosted by one of the member's employer, participation grew over time and the meetings had to be organized in a different way. Inviting interesting speakers to these meetings contributed to turning the PMIFC Chapter Meetings into valuable events not only for members but for guests as well. From 1998 to 2000, the meetings had approx 20 attendees, with the exception of the first joint PMIFC/GPM meeting in March 2000, which drew 80 participants. The average attendee number grew to 40 until 2003. From 2000, we introduced dinner meetings in the last (November/December) meeting of each year. As meeting organization became an intensive task, we created the VP meetings position, which was held by *Sandra Titus* (IBM) in 2001 and 2002, followed by again *Eckhard Genßmann* and *Manfred Rieck* (IBM) from 2005.

Overall, the Board established an **annual strategy meeting** to develop and review the Chapter strategy. In 2001, the first 3 year plan was created with the goal to achieve 11 objectives until 2004: (1) European collaboration among Chapters, (2) Supportive rules&regulations for the Chapter, (3) develop stakeholder relationships, (4) participation in global leadership meetings, (5) create targeted benefits, (6) develop PMI in Germany, (7) establish Chapter Marketing, (8) PMP Preparation and other Programs, (9) Events, (10) develop membership and (11) mature Chapter meetings. These objectives served as a framework for the Board and were widely responsible for the Chapter's success.

In 1999, *Udo Leisten* (IBM) took over VP Finance from *Petra Nemecz* until 2003 and *Stefan Derwort* (Bull) joined the PMIFC Board to fill the then vacant position as VP Programs. From 2000, *Ralf Friedrich* took over from *Rolf von Roessing* as VP Communications. Stefan was also active in GPM, he led the local group Freiburg and later became Board member of GPM. Ralf was later the program manager finalizing PMI's first OPM3 standard.

As an interesting observation when looking back to these years: The PMIFC's Board at this time was mainly composed by employees of major companies (like IBM, EDS, NCR, Telekom etc.). Those individuals focused on stable processes, value generation for the members and growing the Chapter's maturity. There was rarely a **conflict of interest** situation, as they did not pursue own commercial interests in the PM profession. With more commercially interested parties volunteering for Chapter positions, this changed gradually over the years and in my view was a root cause for many conflicts. It is not a German phenomenon only.

From 2001, the Chapter Board extended the services for members and practioners by offering **PMP Exam Preparation Programs (P3)**. The material for these classes was created by a handful coaches, including myself, *Hans Leweling and Albert Schultheis* from EDS and *Ralf Friedrich. Hans Leweling* (EDS) consequently took over the position of VP Programs in 2005 and 2006 from Stefan Derwort who continued to volunteer at GPM. Material from the PMI Minnesota Chapter was licensed and served as a starting set but soon needed to be extended and amended. The program was – in contrast to similar Chapter programs – set to be high quality and high price and followed a unique concept of holding classes at non-working hours. In doing such, the Board wanted to make sure the Chapter was not competing with education providers on price and concept. No other provider at this time stretched a PMP Preparation Program over weeks and over 8 full days, scheduled for Saturdays only. The program was quite successful for

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the participants and the Chapter, it even was licensed to other Chapters and a large German Corporation, which created a nice income for the Chapter over years.

Nevertheless there was an ongoing discussion with education providers if the Chapter should offer such a program at all. When the Chapter introduced its sponsoring program some of the education providers became sponsors and raised the Chapter's PMP Prep Program as a conflict. However, since we only had 10-20 participants each year, the Board did not perceive the program as a threat to anybody. In contrast we understood, by promoting these programs, the Chapter served the education industry by making this kind of programs and the PMP more known to practiioners.

The Board reviewed and discussed the continuation of the program regularly, especially whenever the P3-material needed update according to new PMI PMBoK® versions or any issues were raised, special task teams were funded and implemented the new materials. *Albert Schultheis* was a driving force behind these updating efforts.

Despite the limited number of participants and hence income, the programs served as an important funding source of the Chapter. They also supported the independence of the Chapter, since the other relevant funding source was sponsoring. Member fees income was neglectable compared to these two other sources. There was even a discussion to set member fees to zero, but the existing collaboration with the other German Chapters requested aligned member fees.

The Program was continued successfully well beyond 2006, promoted by then VP Programs *Henning Zeumer*, it was later skipped by the Chapter Board. The funds accumulated from these programs still serve the Chapter well today.

Sponsoring was established to grant companies the publicity of the Chapter from 2003. Since the sponsoring funds are rewarded with marketing services by the Chapter, the sponsoring was not setup as a pro bono sponsoring granting tax-exempt but as a contract. Three sponsoring types were established: Bronze, Silver and Gold with different annual fees and sets of services. Since all Chapters in Germany were looking for sponsors, some sponsors did complain about having to pay four Chapters if they wanted to cover all of Germany. Hence, the four Chapters came together, discussed and agreed on a joint sponsoring concept in 2005.

PMI HQ's chartering agreement for Chapters inhibited the creation of sub-Chapters until ca. 2007. Today, the '**Chapter with Branches**' model is a well-accepted and successful concept, especially for country Chapters. It was piloted by Poland led by *Zbig Traczyk* (IBM), already implemented by UK (with consent by PMI HQ) and established in 2014 in France led by *Jean-Claude Dravet (*IBM and later freelancer).

In order to serve membership in German locations that did not have the critical mass for creating a Chapter, the PMI Frankfurt Chapter defined the concept of **local groups.** Technically the local groups were chartered as Chapter committees (which were allowed by PMI Chartering, but not Sub-Chapters) but basically they were similar to today's branches.

We created local groups of the Frankfurt Chapter in **Hamburg** in 2002, led by *Thomas Kopsch*, and **Dresden** in 2003, led by *Astrid Mueller-Wenzke* and later *Burkhard Pötter* (both T-Systems). We also tried to convince the Chapter sponsors of Berlin and Cologne to do the same for their

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cities, but German PMI politics were already too agitated. Later also other Chapters copied the concept of local groups and Frankfurt established Hannover as local group. The local group of **Stuttgart/Karlsruhe** (SKA) was initiated by *Jörg Mäsing* (T-Systems) on behalf of the PMI Frankfurt Chapter, a first meeting had 37 participants. As the Munich Chapter meanwhile had claimed at PMI HQ all ZIP codes of southern Germany, they complained and the Frankfurt Chapter did not take up a fight. The Munich Chapter local group in Stuttgart now seems to be flourishing for the benefits of members.

Chapter Committees were a concept also for technical working groups and Board support groups but on the other side to involve more volunteers and eventually grow the base for Chapter Board succession. The first committee was the **NomCom** (Nomination Committee for running the election process) diligently led by *Olaf Scherer* (Telekom) from 2001 to 2005 and succeeded by *Rudolf Baumgärtner* and *Michael Witzorky* (IBM*)*.

In 2002, committees were founded to create PM templates (**TEMPLA,** led by *Jean Pierre Lhomme*), Chapter Marketing (**MARKET**, initiated by *Wilma Driessler*, then IIL), Website Consolidation **WEBCON**, led by *Mark Fietkau* (later IBM)*, Petra Richter, Christine Saitz* (Microsoft) *a*nd eventually leading to the VP WebMaster position. Even program management was of interest and *Armin Tüting* and later *Tom Alby* worked on the **PROMAN** committees.

Committee Troubled Projects (**TroPro**) was initiated by *Wilhelm Kross* (self employed) in 2003, and taken over by *Herbert Borchardt* (self employed)*, Michael Köhler* (Consensa) founded a Committee to cover intercultural PM in 2003 (**CULTUR**).

As part of her role, *Wilma Driessler* organized Chapter meetings for the **Frankfurt IHK** (business chamber), but we had to learn that we and PMI did not speak the language of stakeholders mainly coming from SMBs (small and medium businesses, German 'Mittelstand'). She also organized for PMIFC booths at the **Frankfurt business fair** and we could solicit a number of new members and interested parties through this venue.

Gabriela Danzenbrink (self employed) initiated the Committee to cover the needs of freelancers and other members with commercial interests (**COMMEM**). Gabriele later became a Board member of GPM. *Ulrich Becker* (IBM) the committee **PM4YOU** covering students as a stakeholder group of PMI. Since 2011, this stakeholder group is well served by PMI's Educational Foundation (PMIEF), which strives to establish also Chapter liaisons. From 2005, *Bernhard Termer* supported the Chapter award process with the **AWARDS** committee. *Frank French,* a US born professor living in Germany, was interested to support partnerships of the Chapter and led the **PARTNR** Committee, *Frank French* became Chapter President after the PMI HQ driven Chapter changes around 2010 and was key to building the Chapter structures currently in place.

In hindsight, the majority of these Committees did not reach their intended targets or even were significantly active. Critical mass of volunteers participating (at least 8) and regular monthly meetings, as well as coaching by a Board member should be looked at when chartering a committee. However the ideas behind the Committees were great and we shared them among European and global Chapters. We created a roster of volunteers and started to establish succession planning, in order to manage the resources better and establish sustained leadership as a sign of maturity. If a Chapter is able to sustain its achievements regardless of the individuals

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in charge, it reaches a next level of maturity.

As a snapshot: End of 2003, Frankfurt had 439 members, almost tripled from 2000, the global Chapter membership was 93.881 (with total membership at 120.981), almost doubled. UK (1.995) and Sweden (545) were larger than Frankfurt. The PMI Global Corporate Council had just 12 members. IBM had 5.080 employees who had PMI membership, followed by EDS with 2.688.

Global and European connections

Attendance at **PMI Chapter Leader Meetings** started with *Thomas Wuttke* representing the Chapter at the CCP in Long Beach 1998. *Thomas Wuttke* was a member of the Frankfurt Chapter and a officer of the Munich Chapter, he also was key in organizing the 2nd European PMI conference in 1998.

From 1999 to 2005, the Chapter Board was represented at almost every **PMI Volunteer Leader Meeting,** which took place twice a year in US or Canada. 1998, the Council of Chapter Presidents (CCP) and after 1999 the Assembly of Chapter Presidents (ACP) was the group of Chapter Leaders which tried to be heard by PMI Board and staff and influence PMI strategy regarding local membership globally. *Frank Saladis,* President of NYC Chapter, a PMI Fellow since 2013 and again Chapter President of NYC in 2014, was a driving force behind these activities. CCP and from 1999 ACP developed democratically funded resolutions and recommendations to PMI HQ and the Board who were both not really receptive to this kind of help. In the then newly created and current governance model of PMI, Chapters do not play a significant role, they are merely reporting into the CEO and staff. Regional mentors serve as link between PMI HQ and the Chapter leadership, but can only be operational. Representation of membership is solely by electing the global Board, not through Chapters. This limits PMI's capabilities to utilize and include local resources and makes the organization slow and perceived as far from the diverse needs of members Interesting that GPM in 2014 decided to change their governance model from a similar direct democracy model to a representative democracy model by establishing a level of elected regional representatives, who also are deeper involved in decision made by the organization. Maybe PMI's governance is due for a review after 15 years?

The PMI Frankfurt leadership actively took part in the **European and global developments**. It was beneficial for Board members to attend these meetings and gain a wider view on PMI, the Chapter landscape and grow their own global networks and capabilities. It was the age of globalization. Several Chapter Board Members were sent to the PMI Meetings, partly on Chapter funding, partly on own cost. As a result for the Chapter, Frankfurt Chapter was regarded as a mature European Chapter and quite visible globally. The Chapter and its officers supported other Chapters creation in Europe, for example, I personally became a founding member of the **PMI Romania Chapter**, then led by *Gusti Purnus*.

One particular activity tried to create a Chapter group **DSR (Deutsch Sprachiger Raum, German Speaking Chapters)**, it was initiated by *Mark Engelhard*, then President of the Austria Chapter, *Andreas Lowinger* as Munich Chapter President and myself. Kickoff was 3. June 2000 and a 3-Chapter agreement was signed in August 2000 and agreed by the respective Chapter assemblies. The contract covered general collaboration, newsletter, webpage and sponsorship. It was anticipated to extend the collaboration to maintain a joint pool of speakers, joint admin

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support, a German project of the year award as well as a German PMI event. We found that PMI HQ was interested to charter DSR and negotiations with *Stephen Townsend* from PMI HQ took place, a DSR charter was drafted which added some additional admin tasks but also PMI support. Initially, a joint newsletter between Munich and Frankfurt was created and sponsors were presented aligned contracts and fees. The efforts to maintain DSR out-weighted the benefits for the individual Chapters, with changing leaderships and Chapter structures over time the collaboration faded out. Nevertheless, from 2003, these discussions were extended to the new Chapters, but the collaboration could not be revived.

Under DSR collaboration we had a **booth at the 16th IPMA congress** in Berlin 2002, which was well received and showed the cooperative behavior of both organizations, depending on the acting persons.

European PMI Conferences were organized and owned by Chapters: Paris 1997, Munich 1998 (*Thomas Wuttke*), Belgium 1999 was postponed, Israel 2000 (*Shay Shargal*), London 2001 (*Terry Warren* as President, *David Hillson* as PM), Cannes 2002 (*Jean-Claude Dravet* as President and *Cornelius Vonk* as PM*)* were extremely successful conferences. They attracted an impressive number of participants in the hundreds and created significant funds. *David Hillson* is now 'Risk Doctor' and PMI Fellow. *Terry Warren* later was elected as the second Board member from Europe after *Jessy Magerl* being the first, then *Louis Mercken* and from 2006 myself the fourth.

These European PMI Conferences were instrumental to increase PMI's awareness in Europe and helped PMI to become less US-focused but being more recognized as global organization. created significant funds. In November 2001, a group of European Chapter Presidents decided to establish a framework to enable and finance a regular European Conference, owned by a Chapter who would get some seed money to start the conference. PMI HQ intervened and imposed and implemented the concept of PMI owned and managed conferences in the regions. Today, the AP and LA regions are back to a Chapter organized concepts, the EU conference still is owned by PMI.

In 2004, the Chapter was visited by a **Chinese** group of 23 managers, mainly women, from major Chinese companies and government agencies (e.g. Sinopec, Shanghai Engineering, Changling Petrochemical) in Frankfurt to explain PMI's PMBok concepts and the Chapter activities. The visit was well received and the Chapter got an invitation to return the visit in China. The Chapter Board decided to fund this project and *Axel Lukassen* (IBM) led the corresponding Committee, which eventually brought a small group of 11 Chapter members for ten day trip to China in September 2005. After 2006, another such visit was done to India.

Growth in members and assets 2001-2005

From 1998 to 2005, Chapter membership grew from 111 to 750 and the Frankfurt Chapter was the largest and most active Chapter in Germany and under the first 5 in Europe (e.g. UK and Sweden as national Chapters were larger). The Chapter annual income reached 100K Euro, and also free cash was in that range.

The distribution list for the **Chapter Newsletter** had more than 4000 entries, worldwide. The newsletter was read and used as a best practice in other Chapters. It was designed based on an

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analysis of best practices of newletters from Chapters around the globe. Since most of them were available as printed versions only, we had to collect the publications at PMI Volunteer Leadership Meetings. Newsletter policies limited the advertising and sponsor-supporting percentage to make the publication content driven and interesting to practioner stakeholders, which was a real challenge for the VP Newsletter., in particular *Thomas Lieb* (then with next level consulting) did a great job in this position from 2002 to 2005. All newsletters are still available for download on the Chapter website www.pmifc.de. In every month since December 1998, a newsletter was sent out. Talk about reliance (or stubbornness)

The **Chapter website** also created a lot of work and the need for immediate changes. *Andreas Lowinger* became VP Webmaster from July 2003 and was succeeded in july 2005 by *Volker Gottwald* (self). Volker really professionalized the web presence by outsourcing hosting to a provider and installing a content management system of his own company. Later he also served as a member of the global PMI technology advisor group.

Also new services were introduced over time, like a **Student Paper Award** and university relationships (some Chapter Meetings were held at the premises of Hochschule Darmstadt, there was/is a formal cooperation agreement and a Project Management class at the university was sponsored by the Chapter). In 2005, the Student Papers were reviewed by a jury including external assessors from executive management and academics: *Mr. Böhmer* (T-Systems), *Mr. Heintel* (EDS), *Prof. Yvonne Schoper* (FH Mannheim) and Prof. *Hans-Jürgen Zubrod* (FH Darmstadt). The winner in 2005 was the paper 'International Project Management in a Transnational Corporation – Cultural Challenges during Project Execution' by *Melanie Noll.* She was invited to present her paper at the Chapter Meeting and received a sum of 2000 Euro as price.

Florian Dörrenberg was instrumental as VP Education from 1998 to 2004. Florian then took over leading volunteer roles with GPM, which might have raised some conflict of interest concerns with GPM leadership. He handed over the VP position to *Hans Klemm* (9pm) for 3 months and finally to *Marianne Utendorf* (mut consult).

Our outreach to universities resulted in an official **agreement with Hochschule Darmstadt**, signed in 2005. Professor *Hans-Jürgen Zubrod* and *Professor Ralf K. Schellhase* were much supportive of a partnership with the Chapter. We did some meetings in university venues and established a Project Management class for the students of business administration from 2002. My kudos for setting up the relationship with this university go to *Jean-Pierre Lhomme*, who was making initial contact and drove this partnership. Other contacts with universities were not so fruitful.

Over time and with more services planned for, the Chapter Board grew from 5 to 9 positions and several Committee Leaders were complementing the volunteer leader base of the Chapter. The list of volunteer leaders from 1998 to 2005 is 69 names long.

As a snapshot: in August 2005, there were 147.058 members in Chapters worldwide. Frankfurt had 737 members, in Europe overtaken by the largest European Chapter in UK with 2.910 and Sweden with 801 members, both of them national Chapters. Sweden was led by *Patrick Bergstroem*, a passionate biker and friend I have first met in 1999 in Chicago at an PMI exam item writing session. With Cologne (225), Berlin (128) and Munich (412), Germany would have

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accounted to a Chapter with 1502 members minus some duplicate memberships.

The fact that UK seems to be stronger than Germany in project management numbers grants another analysis and cannot solely be attributed to the scattered PMI landscape in Germany. Not only for PMI, but also for IPMA this seems to be true: GPM is by far smaller than APM. The English language is the global standard, from a methodology view, the German V-Modell is not as popular as PRINCE2 and more factors are to be considered.

The German situation

The Project Management Situation in Germany is and was characterized by several German specifics; I offer my personal view on this below:

1. There is a strong presence of **GPM**, one of the oldest, largest and most influential national IPMA affiliated organizations. GPM has a wide range of local representations, some of which were able to team with Chapters and local groups. As there is no central PMI Germany representation, there is also no single partner for GPM to discuss collaboration or at least co-existence. Some talks between PMI HQ and GPM were positive, in particular to create relationships, but there was no priority from PMI side given to these efforts.

   There were some discussions between GPM leadership, *Guenter Rackelmann* and *Gernot Waschek*, and the Frankfurt and Munich Chapters, even a collaboration agreement between GPM and these two Chapters was developed and signed in 1999 but not prolonged beyond the first year.

   The PMI Frankfurt Chapter organized for four Chapter meetings from 2000 to 2003 as joined meeting with the local GPM group in Frankfurt, then lead by *Gernot Waschek*. These were very interesting meetings and most participants from both organizations appreciated this exchange. The 2003 meeting drew more than 100 interested individuals and was rated highly. However, GPM decided to discontinue this collaboration, probably because PMI and Chapters were seen as growing competition.

   Some GPM leaders seemed to remember the 1988 argumentation of PMI HQ to create a Chapter in Frankfurt despite an agreement of not doing so and continued complaining about PMI supremacy. On the other side, some PMI executives exhibited the notion of PMI being a '500 pound gorilla', able to outpace other associations over time. There were more activities between GPM and PMI, it may be a reason for another historical essay in future. Just to mention one meeting I helped to setup immediately in 2006 when I was elected to the PMI Board of Directors: *Greg Balestrero* (the PMI CEO) and myself met 3 Board members of GPM, Professor *Nino Grau*, Professor *Siegfried Seibert* and *Roland Ottmann* in Frankfurt and discussed how to initiate a quick improvement in collaboration. Unluckily, shortly afterwards there was a major revision in GPM's Board, so these personal relationships could not be used for the purpose.

2. Germany's business stronghold is the famous 'Mittelstand' (see also http://tompeters.com/2014/11/video-tom-mittelstand/), comprised of small to medium sized companies often focussed on highly specialized niches, but servicing globally.

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Project Management for these kinds of companies is quite different to the mainstream e.g. exhibited in PMI Project of the Year awards. Agile and lean techniques might be better suited to help these companies succeed with project management; on the other hand business it is not too bad even without formalized project management. There is not much research on project management for small and medium businesses. It has yet to be proven that project management is a viable practice for these companies.

3. Germany's federal structures and reluctance to national thinking favours local and regional rather than national organizations. Local pride and culture are valued much and inhibit the likelihood of being emotionally attached to a larger national body, which is in contrast to London, Paris and Moscow being undisputed national hubs of their countries. For example, Berlin as capital of Germany would like to be also the business hub, but by far is not. And the Bavarians like to quote their 'Mia san mia' (we are we), not only in football.

4. With the growth of the project management education business, mostly by small companies, Chapter leadership was more and more represented by small business owners and freelancers. In contrast to the earlier practitioners from large corporations setting Chapter strategies, the tendency to control a local unity and maybe benefit from being a Chapter officer seemed to become targets for entrepreneurs (this tendency also could be seen in other geographies, in my experience the expectations were rarely met and as a consequence the resources to run a Chapter were often de-prioritized).

5. German culture, in particular stubbornness and willingness to suffer should not be underestimated. Voluntarismus can be taken dead seriously.

There is an ongoing discussion, promoted mainly by PMI HQ and EMEA, to establish the Chapter with Branches model also in Germany, to create a **German Chapter.** Small signs of collaboration between the Chapters create hope for progress with the participants. As France and Poland showed though, a strong and widely accepted focal point from Chapter leadership is helpful to obtain results in acceptable timeframes. Chapter leadership has been quite stable outside of the Frankfurt Chapter and the individuals in charge today did not succeed in creating a German Chapter before. What has changed?

In 2003, when PMI established a presence in Brussels mainly to start lobbying in the EU and providing call-in numbers for the EU timezones, I met *Milagros Mostaza.* Being not a PMI employee but a contractor, she nevertheless established an excellent insight into PMI politics and the European chapter landscape. PMI EMEA, the regional mentors and PMI HQ with the help of legal consultants together changed the Frankfurt Chapter incorporation, bylaws and leadership significantly around 2010. For the Frankfurt Chapter from 2003 to 2005 though, the PMI EMEA organization did not play a relevant role. Looking forward, as we hear, PMI HQ is planning to establish a location in Brussels staffed by PMI employees, no longer contractors.

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In closing

I was not much informed about or involved in Chapter matters from 2006. Writing down these lines, I already mentioned some ideas looking forward, not knowing how much of the ideas already are in the making or under consideration, by the Chapters or by PMI HQ.

- a German PMI Chapter would be helpful to implement any of the following
- PMI Chapters to re-engage with GPM in Germany, either in cooperation mode (preferred) and/or in a defined competition, understand joint and mutual history
- engage with German stakeholders and markets, to better understand what is the importance of project management in Germany, if any, in government, industry, society
- support research for project management in small and medium sized businesses
- why seems PM to be stronger in UK than it is Germany?

- what is the future of PMI in the EU?
- how could PMI and IPMA jointly drive the profession in EU and globally?
- how can Project Management, can PMI, enhance the impact of the EU globally, e.g. in developing regions (this means to look into the matter from the inside of EU)?
- how to improve linkage of the PMI governance and EU Chapter matters?
- lower the center of gravity – empower Chapters and regions to fuel innovation and growth on a global base

- strengthen PMIEF as the charitable organization linked to PMI, establishing skills for life in society, starting with kids early on, also in Germany

Many of the key players mentioned in this article are still active in the profession, several chose another venue or retired, and a few passed away, in each case too early. Let me close with expressing my gratitude to all of you as you enriched my professional life during the past 20 years. I still intend to stay active in the profession within and outside PMI, even as my longtime employment with IBM ended in 2014 on my own initiative.

Panta Rhei - Jump into the water!

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Thomas Walenta, PgMP, PMP, PMI Fellow, was working as Project and Program Manager for IBM from 1983-2014. Most recently he was responsible for a program encompassing all business of IBM with a global client in the EMEA region, with teams in India, Japan and across Europe. He led the PMI Frankfurt Chapter from 1998 to 2005, increasing membership from 111 to 750 and annual budget to 100K Euro.

Thomas had a variety of volunteer positions for PMI, among them being final juror of the PMI Project of the Year award, member of the PMI Board nomination committee, auditor for PMI's Registered Education Provider Program, writer/reviewer of PMP Exam questions and significant contributor to PMI's first standards about Program Management and Portfolio Management.

In 2005, he was elected by PMI membership to serve a 3 year term on the PMI Board from 2006 to 2008. Being a speaker on global project management events in Tokyo, Moscow, São Paulo and across Europe, Thomas extended his professional network significantly and is regarded as an experienced and skillful advisor and mentor.

Thomas is serving as a member of PMI's Ethics Review Committee since 2011. He can be contacted via email at thwalenta@online.de.