

PM WORLD TODAY – FEATURED INTERVIEW – APRIL 2008

Interview with Mr. Osvaldo Ucha
President of the PMI Buenos Aires Chapter

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In December 2007 the Buenos Aires Chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMIBA) renewed its authorities and is now facing the year 2008 with great challenges: the transformation of the chapter into a chapter with branches, and also the evaluation of its results by PMI's headquarters. Osvaldo Ucha, President of PMIBA, shares with PM World Today how he faces these challenges and which are his expectations for his labor.

PM World Today: Which projects do you expect to develop during this period in front of PMIBA?



Osvaldo Ucha: For this year 2008, the most challenging Project we face is the transformation of the chapter into a chapter with branches, according to PMI's new politics, and proposing to have the Mendoza Branch as its first component. In parallel, new communities are emerging in Cordoba and Rosario, which we expect to add soon to the branches structure.

Other projects, very important for the life of the Chapter, are the development of our Argentinean Meeting of Project Management which we have held yearly since the year 2000 and the participation in the Cono sur Tour Congress of PMI, we expect to bring back more awareness to these events. We also expect maintaining a growing rate of participation both in quality and quantity in the chapter's activities, last year 2007 we achieved an important level of assistance. And last but not least, we expect to renew our web page and to prepare a regular Newsletter for the chapter.

PMWT: Please share with us about the experience of transforming the Buenos Aires Chapter into a Chapter with Branches. How does this project born? Which are the expectations? The challenges? What type of support is PMIBA receiving from PMI for this process?

OU: The transformation Project comes from an old dream which is born in my mind in 2002, a dream of enlarging the scope of the chapter to a national instance, offering space to the community of Project Managers that live and work in environments greatly different from Buenos Aires, the capital, where the chapter was first created in 1996 as a logical result of the concentration of

companies and PMs. Many of these PMs met at international congresses, since there is no common place within their country.

The idea of promoting PMI as a national organization slowly matured, and it became evident the need of creating regional organizations offering contention to local needs without losing the objective of grouping, not dividing.



Our first pilot experience, which was completely satisfactory, was the development of the Annual Meeting of PMIBA at the city of Mendoza in 2004, within the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (UNCU). This meeting was organized with the people of the Master in Quality and Business Management, School of Engineering, who completely compromised themselves with the activity. We achieved a great success.

This first experience was strength by PMI when decided to transform the Chapter communities into Chapters with branches; this is the instrument we needed for achieving the dream of a national community.

The main expectations are to create a unique space, with national range, for containing and enriching the action of individuals with interests that might be different, according to the social and economical realities of each region. We expect to be united by the ideas we share, and to manage with autonomy our differences.

The challenges we face are the logical ones for a organization and its members at a pilot stage; we know what we want (or at least that is what we believe most of the time) and we are learning how to act for achieving these results. Diversity, some differing interests, different expectations, makes us manage the process with extreme care in order to unite and not divide.

PMI is offering to PMIBA all its support, sharing with us experiences developed in other places and working with us in this process that is totally new for all of us.

PMWT: How has been the experience of working with the communities in formation in Mendoza, Rosario and Cordoba?

OU: The working experience has been so far very dynamic and motivational, changing, with the complexity of aligning diverse interests behind a unique directing vector which is the expression of the vision of the organization, also considering the needs for autonomy of each component regarding actions, needs and expectations.

An additional ingredient is added when trying to define a common objective, joining different positions, criterias and manners to work of people that meet spontaneously due to geographical distance. We are all learning and obtaining

experience. Of course there has been discrepancies and conflicts, the challenge is to overcome the differences for the benefit of a common objective.

PMWT: It is known that PMIBA will be evaluated this year by PMI, following a Balanced Scorecard. This would be a pilot experience for PMI. Which are your expectations for this initiative?

OU: Our expectations regarding the evaluation, are focused on two main issues:

- a) Efficiently plan and execute the work
- b) Define the right indicators in order to efficiently measure the performed work.

We (and I include myself and the whole Board of the chapter in this expression) are satisfied and excited of implementing a practice of our profession that we accept as needed in the area of our specialty, although we are conscious that measuring efficiency in Volunteer Organizations does not follow the parameters and standards that we usually apply in places with return of investment is the objective.

PMWT: What does PMIBA offers to the Project Managers of Argentina?
Que ofrece PMIBA a los Project Managers de Argentina?

OU: PMIBA offers a place to meet, to share experiences and therefore a place to enrich one's practice by receiving and offering knowledge and information, meeting people, methods, and professional practices of all business areas.

PMWT: Lastly, how has been your experience of volunteer work at PMIBA? Your main satisfactions? Your Main wishes?

OU: The experience has had its high and low points, since there has been moments for frustration and failure, but it has been totally enriching mainly by learning how to work on a non-profit organization with volunteers, where rules and conducts are broadly different from those in a profit organization.

With no doubt, the main satisfaction has been the people I have met, specially sharing experiences at Congresses and Meetings. My main dream is to see PMI Argentina become a reality, as a symbol of a mature market that has accepted our discipline of Project Management as a working standard.

About Osvaldo Ucha:

Mr. **Osvaldo Ucha** is a Civil Engineer and Cofounder in 1992 and Technical Director of MetaControl Argentina S.A., a company offering Project Management Solutions. He is a representative (PAR) of Primavera Systems, Inc. (USA) in Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay y Paraguay since 1992. Mr. Ucha has cooperated as Project Management Consultant and Executive with the implementation and operation of integrated management systems (primavera Software) for important projects at companies such as NASA – Planta Nuclear Atucha II), ERICSSON , CARGILL SA, BHSA, CPC S.A., HOCHTIEF S.A., IECSA S.A., INECO

S.A., J. MINETTI S.A., LOMA NEGRA S.A., MACKENZIE HILL , SADE S.A. , TECHINT S.A. , TGN S.A. Mr. Ucha has also lectured and participated in numerous training activities in Project Management through all Latin America. He is a member of PMI BA since 2000, actual president of the Chapter, where he previously cooperated as vice-president and pro-secretary in the last years. He has also lectured at PMI's congresses in Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, and Uruguay. For more information regarding his activities, please visit www.metacontrol.com.ar



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Ana Maria Rodriguez is an International Correspondent for PMForum and PM World Today in Argentina. Ms. Rodriguez is also a Project Management Consultant to the Engineering and Construction Industry in Rosario, Argentina, and an adjunct professor of project management at the Universidad Nacional de Rosario. Colombian by birth, Ms. Rodriguez graduated with a Civil Engineering Degree from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota and from the University of Texas at Austin, USA with a Masters Degree in Construction Engineering and Project Management (MSE). Ms Rodriguez has implemented project management best practices and managed projects both in the government sector and in the engineering and construction private sector. Ms. Rodriguez is an active member of PMI in Argentina. Additional information about Ms. Rodriguez can be found at www.pmforum.org/pm_forum_team. Ms. Rodriguez welcomes contact at arodriguezdev@gmail.com.