



MEET THE SPEAKERS

2026 Speaker & Session Guide

THE POWER OF PEOPLE IN THE AGE OF AI

OCTOBER 15, 2026

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM EST

Virtual Conference

A one-day virtual experience for project leaders, researchers, and innovators exploring what it means to lead, deliver, and create impact when AI is transforming the way we work.

PEOPLE	PRACTICE	PERSPECTIVE
Advance, align & inspire people and teams.	Build the tools, skills & competencies needed for what comes next.	Create the conditions required for success.

Registration: \$49 • Sessions recorded for on-demand viewing

Register: <https://pmforward.ipma-usa.org>

2026 PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Three tracks. One day. A shared focus on the human capabilities that matter most as AI changes project work.

TIME	PEOPLE	PRACTICE	PERSPECTIVE
11:00 - 11:15	Welcome Skip Pettit / Tim Jaques		
11:15-11:45	KEYNOTE Dr. Reinhard Wagner Mind the Gap: Future Competence Requirements for Delivering Projects in Times of AI		
11:50-12:20	Lars Johannessen AI Doesn't Lead Projects. People Do.	Dr. Hannes Griebel The Human Side of Digital Engineering	Dr. Tikajit Rai Systems Thinking in Project and Program Management
12:25-12:55	Alan Zucker Modern Project Management	Kyle Loff The Human Advantage: Leading Projects When Everyone Has Access to AI	Joe D'Mello AI as a Catalyst for Workforce Empowerment and Motivation
1:00-1:30	VIRTUAL NETWORKING/LUNCH	VIRTUAL NETWORKING / LUNCH	VIRTUAL NETWORKING / LUNCH
1:30-2:00	KEYNOTE Dr. Vladimir Obradovic AI: The Great Equalizer or the Great Divider?		
2:05-2:35	Andrea Schwarz & IPMA-USA Young Crew Beyond the Deliverables: The Signals That Shape PM Perception	Panel Members: Robin Golden, Sheila Garcia Holloway, Jewel Engerman- Glover ProjectHER: The Impact of Women in Project Management	Dr. Ravikiran Kalluri Whose Work Is This? Authorship, Pride, and Meaning When AI Does the Doing
2:40 - 3:10	Diego Arimany Beyond Efficiency: Reclaiming Time and Trust with AI Agents in Complex Institutional Programs		Dr. Khan Farhan Rafat Governing at the Edge of Tomorrow
3:10 - 3:20	BREAK		
3:25 - 4:15	KEYNOTE John Johnson You Go First: AI Is Your Turbo, Not Your Engine		
4:15 - 4:30	Closing Ceremony		
4:30 - 5:00	IPMA-USA AMA & Networking		

Note: Session times and selected-paper titles are based on the current PM Forward 2026 program and may be subject to change.

Dr. Reinhard Wagner

Associate Professor & Deputy Head, Doctoral Study Program in Project Management

Mind the Gap: Future Competence Requirements for Delivering Projects in Times of AI

Professor Dr. Reinhard Wagner brings nearly 40 years of project management experience across automotive, engineering, and consulting. A former IPMA President and GPM Board Chair, he has contributed to international standards and global project management development.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

How AI is reshaping the competencies project professionals need—and how leaders can close the gap.

PEOPLE

Lars Johannessen

Head of Product, Platform & Operational Readiness, Siemens Energy

AI Doesn't Lead Projects. People Do.

Lars Johannessen is a seasoned renewable-energy leader with more than 18 years at Siemens Energy and extensive experience developing project management frameworks and PM communities.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

Why human leadership, competence, and development remain central as AI changes project work.

Dr. Hannes S. Griebel

Executive Director, Griebel Aerospace Consulting

The Human Side of Digital Engineering: Why MBSE, Digital Twins and AI Fail Without Program Discipline

With more than 25 years across aerospace and spaceflight, Hannes Griebel has worked with organizations including ESA, Thales Alenia Space, and Inmarsat on complex, safety-critical systems. He connects engineering, program management, and executive decision-making.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

How disciplined program management enables digital engineering and AI initiatives to succeed.

Dr. Tikajit Rai

Chief Consultant, Systemic Excellence Group

Systems Thinking in Project and Program Management

Dr. Tikajit Rai is a 3PM professional with more than 23 years of experience in software, wireless, and EdTech. A systems thinker and award-winning leader, he focuses on digital transformation, organizational development, and sustainability.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

How systems thinking can help project leaders understand complexity and create better outcomes.

PEOPLE

Alan Zucker

Project Management & Agile Leadership Expert

Modern Project Management

Alan Zucker brings deep experience in modern project management, agile leadership, and organizational transformation, helping teams adapt their practices to changing environments.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

Practical perspectives on how project management continues to evolve in a modern, AI-enabled workplace.

PRACTICE

Kyle Loff

Project & Program Head, Cape Town, South Africa

The Human Advantage: Leading Projects When Everyone Has Access to AI

Kyle Loff is an engineer and project management professional with more than a decade of experience across mining, oil & gas, defence, and public-sector projects. His focus includes governance, leadership in complex environments, and translating strategy into measurable public value.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

How project leaders can turn uniquely human capabilities into an advantage when AI is widely available.

PERSPECTIVE

Joe D'Mello, Ph.D., MBA

Collegiate Professor, University of Maryland Global Campus

AI as a Catalyst for Workforce Empowerment and Motivation

Joe D'Mello is an educator, consultant, and former technology leader with experience in execution, organizational agility, process improvement, analytics, and change management across Fortune 500 companies, government, and higher education.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

How AI can be used to empower people, reduce friction, and strengthen motivation rather than simply automate work.

KEYNOTE • PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Vladimir Obradović

Vice President, International Project Management Association (IPMA)

AI: The Great Equalizer or the Great Divider?

Vladimir Obradović is an internationally recognized project management leader, executive, advisor, professor, and frequent keynote speaker with more than 25 years of experience across complex projects, organizations, and professional associations.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

A broader perspective on how AI may reshape opportunity, capability, and the project profession.

John C. E. Johnson

Professional Programs Manager, University of Maryland Project Management Center for Excellence

You Go First: AI Is Your Turbo, Not Your Engine

John Johnson leads programs spanning academic excellence, outreach, professional development, research, and large-scale online learning. He also teaches Agile and Predictive project management and brings experience as a CTO, startup co-founder, and senior Agile PM.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

Why project professionals should use AI to accelerate their impact—not outsource their judgment and leadership.

Andrea Schwarz

Founder, IMUA OLA • Executive Coach

Beyond the Deliverables: The Signals That Shape PM Perception

Andrea Schwarz is a trailblazing executive-turned-coach with more than 20 years of leadership experience across music, food, life sciences, and sports. She held senior leadership roles at adidas, Reebok, and Novartis and was Germany's first female general manager in the meat industry.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

How communication, leadership presence, trust, and other signals shape how project professionals and their work are perceived.

PEOPLE

Dr. Ravi Kalluri

Assistant Professor of Project Management, Northeastern University

Whose Work Is It? Authorship, Pride, and Meaning When AI Does the Making

Dr. Ravi Kalluri is an executive, author, researcher, and educator with nearly 30 years of experience leading complex technology programs at organizations including Amazon, Cisco, and Ericsson. His work explores AI, systems thinking, and the future of work.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

Three practical moves project managers can make to stay relevant as AI adoption scales.

PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Khan Farhan Rafat

Public Administration Professional & Project Management Researcher

The Adaptive Governance Nexus: Governing Project Ecosystems in the Age of AI

Dr. Khan Farhan Rafat is a public administration professional and project management researcher focused on digital transformation, governance, leadership capacity, and AI. He is the founder of the Adaptive Governance Nexus (AGN).

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

A practical framework built around governance structure adaptability, digital maturity, and leadership capacity for AI-era projects.

PANEL • PEOPLE

Robin D. Golden

Project Management & Government Leadership Professional

ProjectHER: The Impact of Women in Project Management

Robin D. Golden brings a project management perspective grounded in government and organizational leadership, with a focus on efficiency, accountability, stakeholder coordination, risk, and public value.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

A candid conversation about the impact and influence of women in the project management profession.

PANEL • PEOPLE

Sheila Garcia Holloway

Project Management Leader & Advocate

ProjectHER: The Impact of Women in Project Management

Sheila Garcia Holloway joins the ProjectHER panel to share leadership experience and perspective on the opportunities, challenges, and impact of women in project management.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

Insights and lived experience from women helping shape the next generation of project leadership.

PANEL • PEOPLE

Jewel Engerman-Glover

Project Management Leader

ProjectHER: The Impact of Women in Project Management

Jewel Engerman-Glover brings her perspective as a project management leader to a conversation about women, leadership, opportunity, and the future of the profession.

WHAT YOU'LL TAKE AWAY

How women can strengthen their influence and create meaningful pathways for the next generation of project professionals.



OCTOBER 15, 2026
[HTTPS://PMFORWARD.IPMA-USA.ORG](https://pmforward.ipma-usa.org)

ONE-DAY VIRTUAL EVENT FOR
PROJECT LEADERS AROUND THE GLOBE



AI is transforming workflows, services, and entire industries. PM Forward 2026 brings project leaders together to explore how we can lead more effectively, strengthen human capability, and create the conditions for success in a technology-driven world.

REGISTER FOR PM FORWARD 2026

<https://pmforward.ipma-usa.org>