

*Making a Modern Project Manager*¹

Resist Complacency²

Yasmina Khelifi

What is complacency?

a calm sense of well-being and security: the quality or state of being satisfied especially: satisfaction or self-satisfaction accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies

- *Merriam-Webster dictionary*

Why can complacency become a problem?

Complacency is a comfortable state that every leader may wish to achieve. But it presents some risks. It can prevent you from learning new things or meeting new people. It can prevent you from experimenting with new ways of working.

How to resist it

Complacency is not something you passively avoid. You must actively build resistance to it.

Engage in diverse communities

When I talk about diverse communities, I include those outside your field of expertise. I make sure to engage with people working in areas that are completely different from my own. For example, I was part of a coaching community. I'm now part of an international marketing community. I read the threads, listen to advice, and observe how people interact.

¹ Editor's note: This series of articles is for Gen X, Y and Z project professionals by a real project manager. The author Yasmina Khelifi is an actual project manager with a large multinational telecom in France while also an active PM professional, authoring articles, interviews and a popular LinkedIn blog as well as a podcast with a global audience. Also active in PMI France for many years, she has been an international correspondent for the PMWJ since 2021. This series of articles is based on her personal experiences over the last decade.

² How to cite this article: Khelifi, Y. (2026). Resist Complacency; Making a Modern Project Manager, series article, *PM World Journal*, Vol. XV, Issue VII, July.

Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to resist complacency. I found that it really gave me the space to try out new things and indeed forced me to do so. My experiences of volunteering are described more fully in my coauthored book with Mayte Mata Sivera, *The Volunteering Journey to Project Leadership*.

Seize opportunities to connect with new people

During meal breaks at work, I made an effort to eat with people from other parts of the organization, not just my own (lovely) colleagues. Outside of work, when I participated in language courses, I tried to establish a more personal relationship with some of my classmates. I met a French translator of Manga, a pastry expert, a startup CEO, and a journalist.

In a networking break in a conference, someone asked me, "I love what you are doing. Do you have a communication business?" I was puzzled. But the fact is, you don't need a communication business in order to communicate! Communication is a way to share knowledge and meet new people. Next time, I will answer: "No. I just want to resist complacency."

Where do I need to go to be exposed to somebody bigger, better, faster than me? Where am I going that will stretch me? Who am I seeing that will stretch me? What am I doing that's going to stretch me?

- *Maxwell Leadership Podcast, Strategies to Stop Complacency, August 2025*

What best practices can you share to resist complacency?

About the Author



Yasmina Khelifi

Paris, France



Yasmina Khelifi, PMP, PMI-ACP, PMI-PBA, is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange S.A.](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with major manufacturers and SIM makers. Yasmina strives for building collaborative bridges between people to make international projects successful. She relies on three pillars: project management skills, the languages she speaks, and a passion for sharing knowledge.

She is a PMP certification holder since 2013, a PMI-ACP and PMI-PBA certification holder since 2020. She is an active volunteer member at PMI France and PMI UAE, and a member of PMI Germany Chapter. French-native, she can speak German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and she is learning Arabic. Yasmina loves sharing her knowledge and experiences at work, in her volunteers' activities at PMI, and in [projectmanagement.com](#) as a regular blogger. She is also the host and co-founder of the podcast [Global Leaders Talk with Yasmina Khelifi](#) to help people in becoming better international leaders.

Yasmina can be contacted at <https://yasminakhelifi.com/> or LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/yasminakhelifi-pmp-telecom/>

Visit her correspondent profile at <https://pmworldlibrary.net/yasmina-khelifi/>

To view other works by Yasmina Kehelifi, visit her author showcase in the PM World Library at <https://pmworldlibrary.net/authors/yasmina-khelifi/>