



May 1, 2000

Volume 8 Issue 5

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GRR 2000 Terminal Renovation

Summary by Cindy Lewis, PMP

At our March dinner meeting, Ken Klomparens gave many of us an eye opening view of how the airport operates and how the renovation was handled. Ken has served as facilities engineer with the Kent County Department of Aeronautics since 1991. The airport is totally self-sufficient and does not receive support from our taxes and, as a government agency, it must accept the low bid. The Grand Rapids airport operates like a landlord. They receive revenue from airline fees and a portion of the ticket price. Airlines may pay by square foot or by percent of profit. In addition, every plane that lands pays a fee based on its weight.

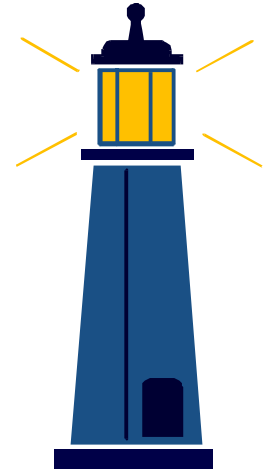
The goals of the airport remodeling project included: improving airport function, establishing a common visual theme, assuring user friendliness, and maintaining a state-of-the-art facility. The project team had architects develop concept drawings to help the board with ideas on how to proceed. At one point, the project was stopped for one year to avoid running out of funds. During the remodeling the team was faced with challenges. Once they started to upgrade an area, the entire area had to be brought up to the current code (e.g., electrical, heating, etc.). Additionally, no one knew what would be found when walls were torn down. As in many projects different groups wanted to have control. One group was known as "Nike" since their focus was to "get it done." Another group with the motto "just say no," became known as the "Nancy Reagan" group.

The project was successful due to regular board meetings, weekly communication with the staff, constant communication with the contractor, hiring a consultant to communicate with the tenants, and hiring a public relations firm. When visiting the newly remodeled airport look for the Michigan theme, the enhanced lighting, the insulated windows (put your hand on them), the common Flight Information Display (FID), and the new meeting rooms. The project team learned at least one valuable lesson: "get the people out". It would have been easier to build an addition, move the people to the new section, then remodel the older area. After Ken's presentation, I am anxious to fly again so I can see the finished airport.

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LIGHTHOUSE



“Lighthouse” is a regular section of On Target. Its goal is to allow local members to share experiences in project management, and in the process make us all just a little more aware that what we encounter in our jobs is not necessarily unique. Lighthouse provides the opportunity for you to obtain points toward PMP certification each time one of your articles is published. We look forward to receiving your article for use in this section. Please see the last page of the newsletter for forwarding information. When local member project experiences are not available, national articles will be used for education.

Attacking Unproductive Communication and the Case for Clear and Stable Priorities

Wendell P. Simpson III, Ph.D., Senior Consultant

William Lynch, President and COO, ProChain Solutions, Inc.

Abstract

Unclear and unstable priorities force everyone in the organization into unproductive communications. While the cost of unclear and unstable priorities is tough to quantify, it is far higher than most would guess. In addition to time lost in communicating, productivity is lost, and tasks are stretched out. This paper helps managers to recognize the signs of multitasking and provides strategies for addressing the problem.

Introduction

People in multiple project organizations often spend a fair amount of their time communicating. Some would argue this is good—the more we communicate the better. To a certain extent this is true—productive communication is focused on learning what is needed to better complete tasks and on coordinating our actions with others to better accomplish project objectives. Unfortunately, not all of the communication in project organizations is productive. Often, we spend a fair amount of time communicating to compensate for inadequate or ineffective systems. Such a communication “time sink” occurs whenever organizations lack an effective system for setting clear and stable priorities.

The absence of clear and stable priorities forces everyone in the organization to spend extra time communicating. Project managers spend time convincing resource managers and team leaders why it is so important to bump up the priority on their project. Resource managers spend extra time explaining to project managers their situations and why they must make certain decisions. Both groups find themselves in meeting after meeting with top management, negotiating and lobbying for today’s top priority status and deciding whose work must now be postponed to make room. Those doing the project work are caught in the middle; they find themselves moving from one job to another just in time to be told to change over to a third.

The Signs of Unclear and Unstable Priorities

Many project organizations suffer from unclear and/or unstable priorities. Note that these are related but sometimes separate problems. We use the term unclear priorities to refer to a situation in which workers, managers, and leadership either have no idea about, or differ in opinion as to the relative importance of, completing the many open tasks from the many ongoing projects. Unclear priorities usually result from a lack of information about the current status of the project and the amount of work that remains to complete the project. Unstable priorities exist when organizations frequently shift the relative importance of competing tasks. Shifting priorities is most often management’s response to new information about ongoing projects.

Some of the symptoms of an organization suffering from unclear and unstable priorities include:

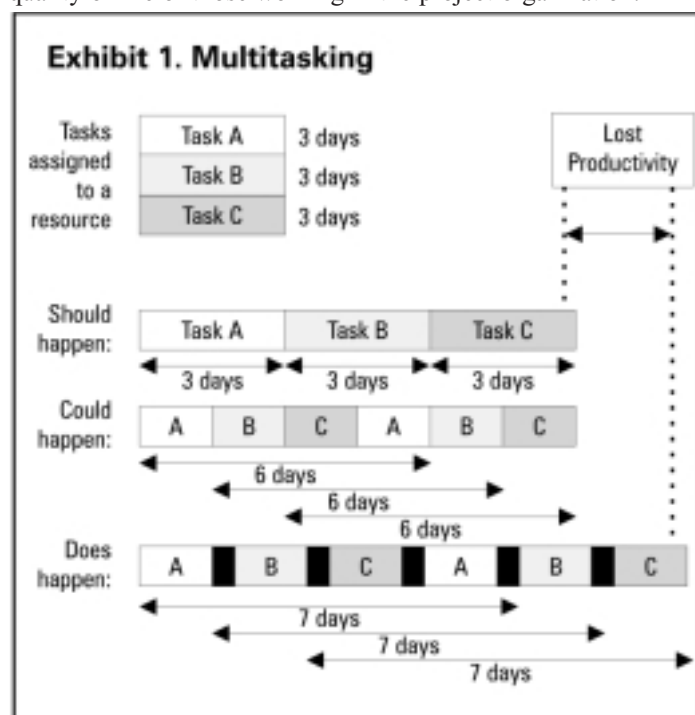
- workers frequently shifting from one task to another before completing the task they are working on. We call this multitasking and will discuss this symptom more below.
- workers and managers meeting on a frequent or regular basis in order to clarify project status and negotiate new priorities.
- frustration and a shared feeling of not being able to accomplish anything. When priorities are unclear or always shifting, we keep busy but rarely feel like we are able to accomplish anything.
- frequent conflicts between managers in different organizational areas or dimensions of the organizational matrix over resource allocation decisions. Low levels of trust result from continuous and unresolved conflicts.

Working in an organization where priorities are unclear and unstable is never a rewarding experience. Turnover often results

as resources seek a more fulfilling environment in which to work and interact with others.

The Costs of Shifting Priorities

What are the costs of unclear and unstable priorities? While tough to quantify, we believe they are far higher than most would guess. There are both tangible and intangible costs — the tangible being those that directly affect the bottom line of the company, and the intangible being those that affect the quality of life of those working in the project organization.



The Tangibles. The tangible costs all come as a result of the impact of unclear and unstable priorities on the folks in the trenches —the people doing project work. Project workers in today’s organizations all have a long list of tasks they need to complete for various projects. Multitasking happens when workers frequently switch from one task to another without first completing the task at hand. Multitasking hurts the organization in the following two ways.

- Tasks stretch out. A five-day task that is worked on one day per week suddenly becomes a five-week task. All downstream tasks are forced to wait longer before they can be accomplished, causing projects to stretch out.
- Productivity declines. Every time a worker switches tasks, time is lost in doing what it takes to package up the task being set aside and get back up to speed on the task that is now the top priority.

These effects are illustrated in Exhibit 1. We start with three tasks assigned to a resource. Each task is part of a larger project,

and each takes three days to complete. Suppose the true priority of the tasks — the priority that best satisfies the needs of the customers — does B followed by C follow A. If these priorities are communicated to the worker and the priorities are left unchanged for nine days, the three tasks will be complete in days 3, 6, and 9 respectively. The “could happen” scenario reflects what happens if, as the result of unclear or unstable priorities, the resource switches to the next task when the current task is only 50 percent complete. All three tasks are still completed in 9 days, but look at when they finish. Task A is now complete at day 7, Task B at day 8, while Task C is still complete at day 9. The impact on the system is that other project tasks that are waiting for Tasks A and B to complete will be delayed. What has been gained? Perhaps we have gained a little peace of mind for the project managers watching tasks B and C because those tasks started a little earlier than they would have otherwise. For the organization as a whole, though, the truth is that nothing is gained by multitasking; instead, time has been lost.

Another very important effect is illustrated on the “does happen” line of Exhibit 1. Switching from one task to another can rarely be done instantaneously. Almost always, some time is required to set aside the task we are working on. We must make notes of where we left off, gather and organize the materials we are using, write an E-mail or phone the persons that will be impacted by the delay we are introducing, or even schedule a meeting to ensure other balls aren’t dropped as a result. In addition, extra time is now required to start up the task we are switching to. We must gather and review where we were when we last set the task aside. On creative tasks especially, we can spend a substantial amount of time trying to recreate the train of thought we had established prior to the interruption.

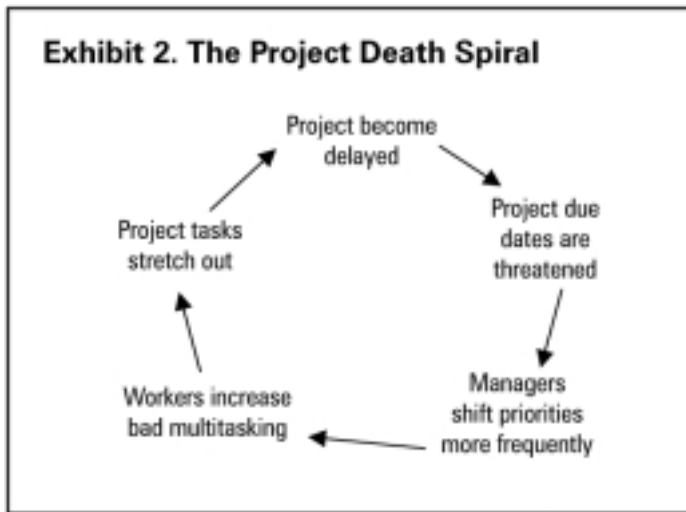
What is the impact? Now all tasks are delayed and delivered later than they would have been in the absence of the multitasking. While the lost time in switching between one task and the next often doesn’t seem like much, it can quickly add up. Our experience with organizations is that as much as 25 to 40 percent of productive time is lost switching between uncompleted tasks. That means the organization’s capacity for producing projects is 25 to 40 percent, or what it could be without multitasking.

Perhaps the worst effects are found in the dynamics that occur over time as a result of unclear and unstable priorities. Exhibit 2 diagrams how multitasking can and often does play itself out in the dynamics of the organization over time. We have seen how multitasking causes project tasks to be extended. If we are not very careful in how we manage the multitasking, it is not unusual for the result to be tasks that are delayed past their scheduled completion time. As project tasks are delayed, more and more projects become delayed, and project deadlines become threatened. As more project deadlines become threatened, managers react with more frequent changes in priorities. As priorities shift with more frequency, multitasking increases, which only makes the problems worse. We end up working harder and harder, getting less and less done and living in a chaos that sometimes becomes the death spiral of project organizations.

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The way to break out of this death spiral is to eliminate the bad multitasking. Most organizations are blind to this solution because they don't see multitasking as the core problem. The only other way to break out of this spiral is to remove projects from the system—that is, to reduce the amount of work in the system. Given the organization's inability to complete work effectively, the removal of work often comes in the form of canceled projects or projects put on hold. This resolution is hardly a satisfying one. The organization has failed. Both customer's and management's expectations are not met, and those in the workforce who had invested so much of their time and energy in the canceled project feel cheated and empty.



The Intangibles The intangibles are the byproducts of working in an environment where almost nobody seems to know what is really important, and those that do are sure to change their minds by tomorrow. Workers are constantly frustrated in their attempts to get things done. Offices are littered with partially completed project work, and often more time is spent organizing the chaos than working to complete tasks. Workers are fed a steady stream of mixed signals, leaving them confused and discouraged as they try to sort through and determine what really needs to be done. Managers unable to see what is best for the organization become parochial in their views and revert to protecting the interests of their project or their department. Conflicts are frequent and almost predictable as the organization repeatedly deals with determining what is the top priority for today. Over the long term, levels of trust can degrade to the point that cynicism sets in.

Perhaps the most significant intangible costs come from the impaired communications that result in this type of an environment. In the uncertain world of projects, effective communications are a must; they serve as the fabric from which successful projects are cut. An organization's ability to communicate new information—updated requirements, task status, new discoveries, test results, quality problems, specification changes—often makes the difference between success and failure in the eyes of the customer. Effective communications are difficult enough to establish in high-quality work environments. They require proactive efforts to identify the type of information that needs to flow, and they create the

channels by which everyone will keep informed. When conflict, frustration, discouragement, and low levels of trust mark the work environment, the already difficult task of establishing effective communications is made next to impossible. If we are to make progress in improving communications in our project organizations, creating a system by which work priorities are clear to everyone and stable over time is a must.

Improving Communication by Stabilizing the Project Workplace

If the above descriptions come close to capturing the problems you are experiencing in your project organization, there are some actions you can take that will have an immediate impact on the productivity of your resources and the quality of life in the workplace. We recommend that you do the following.

1. Begin an Internal Campaign to Reduce Multitasking.
2. Implement a System for Priority Setting.

The first initiative—the campaign against multitasking—can begin immediately and is only limited in scope only by the imagination, ingenuity, and drive of the leadership of the organization. The second initiative—improving how priorities are established—takes a little more time to institute but will bring a long-term stability to the organization that will greatly improve your competitive position.

Multitasking—Corporate Enemy Number 1 It has been our experience that multitasking is the standard mode of operations in most project organizations. Very few tasks are ever completed without interruption. It is commonly expected that a resource will work a task for a while, then set it aside to pick up a new hot task, and then come back to it later to make more progress. We feel there are several reasons why bad multitasking is so prevalent.

Those reasons include:

- Unawareness. Many of us—both as project resources and managers—have simply been unaware of the costs associated with the practice of multitasking. As a result, it often occurs simply because we allow it to occur. We multitask because we have always multitasked, just as everyone has always multitasked.
- Progress over completion. Making progress on tasks is often perceived as being more valuable or more important than completing tasks. Sometimes this is simply part of the culture that exists in an organization. Other times, emphasizing visible progress is a survival response on the part of project resources. When you have three different project managers poking their heads into your cubicle wanting to know how their task is coming along, you are more inclined to switch between tasks in order to show progress to each of them. Still, at other times, the emphasis on progress rather than completion comes from the measurement system in place. For instance, if resources are reporting percent complete, then resources are often motivated to show progress. This can encourage resources

to “cherry-pick” — that is, to switch to another task when the going gets tough on the current task. In this way, the resource can report more progress by switching than by sticking to the current task and completing it.

- **Overreactive Management.** A primary responsibility of management is to see that the right people are working on the right things at the right time. In the highly dynamic environment of most project organizations, this can represent quite a challenge. When things change, for whatever reason, managers are presented with an opportunity to change priorities. The decision boils down to a simple tradeoff — the cost of changing priorities versus the cost of staying with the current set of priorities. How a manager perceives these costs will determine their response. Too often, managers underestimate the cost of changing priorities and overestimate the costs of staying with the current set of priorities. That is, managers tend to over-react — shifting priorities frequently in response to every change they see in the environment around them. For many, this frequent shifting is seen as simply doing their jobs well.

The first step to eliminating multitasking is simply to decide to eliminate it. This is such an obvious step that it is easily overlooked. Having been made aware that multitasking is causing significant performance and morale problems in their organization, leadership often looks past this first step to solving the problem. Organizations rush headlong into new scheduling systems, new measurement systems, new office layouts, or new training programs to address the problem. Before implementing any of these, the first step is to declare that multitasking is corporate enemy number one. Leadership must establish the expectation that the standard mode of operating is going to change. Frequent switching between tasks will be replaced by infrequent switching between tasks. As with all new expectations, this will take some time to establish and will place new demands on everyone. Workers will be challenged to stay on task. This is not something they are used to doing and will sometimes require them to establish new work patterns. Perhaps the most challenged will be management. First, management must shift the emphasis from making progress to completing tasks. This is a fairly simple and straightforward change to make. Second, management must shift to more of a hands-off approach to managing their resources and their projects. This will be a more difficult change for many to make and will take some time and practice. Management must perceive themselves as the ones who create a stable work environment where tasks can be completed in the shortest time possible. To do this, workers must have clear priorities that change much less frequently than they currently do.

Many managers will balk at this shift. Minimizing the frequency with which they change priorities places a premium on getting

priorities right the first time. They will argue — and probably rightly so — that they don’t have the information they need to establish the right priorities. While the information they have is certainly far from perfect, it is our contention that most managers have enough information to begin stabilizing their workplace. Moreover, we contend that the improved productivity that will directly result will compensate for any wrong decisions they make. Managers usually have a fairly well-developed intuition regarding the organization and the relative priorities of tasks under their control. We recommend that in the absence of information, managers apply their intuition in the initial setting of priorities, understanding that some of them may be wrong. Once set, we recommend that managers first clearly communicate the priorities to the workers, then commit themselves and their people to working tasks without interruption as often as possible for a fixed period of time, such as one month. During the month, managers should work to minimize the number of times the priorities are changed. What will happen is that productivity of that department will increase dramatically. Many more tasks will be completed in a much shorter period of time.

Better Information for Setting Priorities: Once the organization has taken steps to begin eliminating multitasking, energy can and should be spent improving the information system for priority setting. While we never want to replace our manager’s intuition regarding what is important and what isn’t, we do want to supplement their intuition with accurate information. For now, let’s focus on the needs of the resource managers — those responsible for setting priorities across the projects that pass through a functional department. In setting priorities, resource managers need answers to the following questions.

- What is the current status of all projects? Which are projected to be on time, and which are projected to be late?
- Which tasks are directly impacting project completions? Some tasks have slack associated with them, and some don’t. Knowing the ones that don’t is important because any delay in these tasks will translate into a delay in the completion of the project.

How much slack is remaining for the rest of the tasks? All else equal, the more slack remaining, the lower a priority the task is.

What is the impact of delaying a task? If the task is set so low in priority that nobody can work on it for a period of time, what impact will this have on completing the project? This requires knowing the tradeoffs that exist between tasks in the department.

Implementing a *Critical Chain Project Management* (CCPM) system provides accurate answers to all of these questions. CCPM systems are specifically designed to allow managers to establish clear and stable priorities in their organization and ensure that these priorities are based on an accurate and up-to-date snapshot of the projects in the organization (Newbold 1998). The mechanisms used in CCPM to establish clear and stable priorities include:

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Officers' Corner



Messages from your chapter board....

Chapter President Update

May 2000 finds me writing the last of my communications in my role as PMI Western Michigan Chapter President. This month I will pass the responsibility of the position to another who will take up the reins of chapter leadership. Does this mean I will fade away? By no means! I will continue to serve on the chapter board for another year as Past President, assisting in the leadership of this chapter. And speaking of leadership, I recently attended the bi-annual PMI Leadership meeting held this spring in Birmingham, AL. It was an information filled 3 days, and provided learning and sharing opportunities for all PMI volunteer leaders. Key topics from this session included Intellectual Property and PMI members as owners/customers.

As reported in the April 2000 issue of *PMI Today*, protecting PMI's Intellectual Property is now a hot topic, and one that is being actively pursued by the organization. PMI is intent on protecting valuable resources and assets to ensure that they are used properly to further PMI's mission and to the benefit of its members. As PMI and the project management profession continues to grow exponentially, it is becoming increasingly important to protect the quality of the products PMI provides to its membership, as well as to maintain the credibility of the organization itself. If you have not read the April 2000 issue of *PMI Today*, please do so to gain additional information on this "hot topic."

Another important topic discussed at the PMI Leadership meeting highlighted that all PMI members are owners, as well as customers of the project management profession. This is indeed an interesting concept, as most of us became PMI members to learn more about the profession, gain knowledge and network with like-minded professionals (i.e. become a "customer" of PMI). What we may not have realized is that by becoming a member of PMI, we also have become an "owner" in this professional organization, and thereby have a responsibility to contribute to and promote the project management profession. For it is the expertise, the knowledge, the lessons learned by all of us that shape the profession into "best practices" that can thereby become the body of knowledge that we all seek.

How can you as an "owner" meet your responsibility? Become actively involved in your local chapter by volunteering your knowledge and services as a board or committee member. Offer to do a program and share your expertise or lessons learned on a

topic of interest to the chapter members. Or, right now, you also have the opportunity to contribute and provide feedback on the Draft version of the PMBOK 2000 Edition. Here is a prime opportunity to contribute to, and shape, the most valuable PMI asset, Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). All members should have received the Draft version of PMBOK 2000 Edition along with your April 2000 *PM Network* magazine. You have until June 30, 2000 to provide your input and feedback on the draft, and truly become an "owner" of the project management profession.

I look forward to serving on our chapter board another year in my role as Past President, along with the new volunteer board members you will have elected. I also look forward to many more of our chapter members stepping up to the responsibility of ownership and shaping the project management profession of the future.

Mary Lonski, PMP, President

Publicity Update

I've enjoyed serving on the board for the last two terms. If you have seen a PMI pin, a PMI magnet, a thank-you certificate, or an announcement in the local media, you've witnessed some of my efforts. This position broadened my skills in terms of public speaking, networking, and leadership. Also, serving on the board enticed me to pursue my PMP certification which I recently received. One of my future personal goals is to write a Microsoft Project book, so if anyone out there would like to join me in this effort, please let me know. Due to the extensive support from my company, and the educational benefits of the chapter, I will remain an active member and look forward to seeing you at future dinner meetings.

Cindy Lewis, PMP, VP Publicity

Newsletter Update

As a new chapter member several years ago I was offered an interesting challenge: to take the position of newsletter director for PMI Western Michigan Chapter. Because I enjoy a challenge and found this as an opportunity both to learn about project management and learn what it takes to produce a newsletter I decided to take it on.

I learned a great deal about managing a project through the proof-reading of PM articles and in-depth conversations. I also learned quite a bit about the mechanics of newsletter assembly, the details of which are too varied and out of the scope of this document to try to explain. I learned one other very important component during this time: without teamwork and collaboration, this would have been a much greater challenge.

As I pass this challenge on to our next Newsletter Director, I must publicly thank Mary Lonski, Barb Fisher, Rose Herrmann, Cindy Lewis, Kim Schwamberger for the exceptional support, the articles, ideas, proof-reading and newsletter assembly. Thanks also goes out to Conni Schaftenaar for the creative and imaginative ideas.

Mike Janisse, Newsletter Director

PMI Western Michigan Chapter	2000	Year to Date
Financial Report	Budget	Mar. 31, 2000
<u>Income</u>		
Dinner Meetings	\$11,810	\$4,635
Chapter Memb. Dues	\$5,040	\$1,268
PMP Cert. Workshops	\$14,085	\$6,464
Newsletter Advertising	\$500	\$0
Other Income	\$1368	\$723
⇒ Total Income	\$32,803	\$13,090
<u>Expenses</u>		
Dinner Meetings	\$11,100	\$3,916
PMP Cert. Workshops	\$8,010	\$2,406
Newsletter Charges	\$4,700	\$347
Chapter Admin & Development	\$3,595	\$924
Special Projects	\$0	\$0
Chapter Reserves & Miscellaneous	\$125	\$0
Advertising	\$1,350	\$0
Website	\$250	\$227
⇒ Total Expenses	\$29,630	\$7,820
⇒Excess (Deficit)	\$3,173	\$5,269
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Total Assets @ Period end		\$33,097

Spring PMP Review Session

by Barb Fisher, PMP

Our annual spring PMP Review Day held March 18 had an excellent turnout. Peggy Cannon from Herman Miller participated, sat for the PMP exam a week later and PASSED! Please congratulate her. Also in attendance, though not taking the exam yet were Tala Davidson and Brenda Kolkman from Pharmacia Upjohn; Nadene Delana, Pam Hove, Jeff Kolka and Judy Willard from Steelcase Inc.; Leisa James, from Meijer; Tom Lamb, of Earth Tech; Paul Lamphear of BDO Seidman; Kathy Lyon from Defense Logistics Info Center; Greg Opplé from Keane Inc.; Jill Privette of Sarcom; Robert Shanghai from Smiths Industries Aerospace; Michelle Smith from Johnson Controls; Katye Somers of JD Edwards; and Monica Twa from Michigan Bulb.

Thanks too to our instructors, Nancy Hopper, PMP; Mary Lonski, PMP; Dan Schulz, PMP; Cindy Lewis, PMP; Kelly Talsma, PMP and Dick Spigarelli, PMP. Cindy and Kelly are very recent PMP's who eagerly volunteered to instruct and to share their experiences and recent test taking tips. Special thanks go to Ruben Balangue, PMP, our chapter treasurer, and to Mike Janisse, our chapter Newsletter Director, who made the day run very smoothly. This was by far our best session ever and they just keep improving.

Science in Art

Summary by Cindy Lewis, PMP

During our April dinner-meeting, the President of the Grand Rapids Symphony, Bill Ryberg, spoke on the uniqueness of running the arts like a business. The goal is to balance artistic creativity with fiscal responsibility. Bill's background included opera singing and banking, which helped make him a good fit for his position. Besides the ticketed events, which generate half of the Symphony's income, they perform a variety of outreach events. For example, the symphony puts on special performances for the children in elementary through high school, while public performances are presented during special events such as the Arts Festival.

The goal of the Symphony is to organize and schedule the various series of events known as a season. Music selection begins in a brainstorming session. Our PMI chapter had an opportunity to critique one piece called "Short Ride in a Fast Machine." During the scheduling process one of the challenges is to find music that appeals to all ages yet keep to only a two hour program. They need to satisfy the sponsors and still meet the expectations of conservative Grand Rapids. Despite their best efforts, they occasionally receive negative feedback from attendees. They handle this by thanking them, offering them alternatives, and further educating them on the Symphony. This advice is useful for many businesses.

The GR Symphony has a 50 member board. Each member's responsibility includes being an ambassador to the Symphony and supporting it financially. Since half of their income is from outside sources, having vocal public supporters is extremely important. Board members are not required to donate any specific amount and they are not required to attend every meeting, but each member helps advance the future of the Symphony.

Bill explained that each musician has a four year contract and are members of the musician's union. For each open position, 175 people might audition. At the close of the presentation, each PMI attendee received a flyer on the program year to further educate us on the variety of programs available at the Grand Rapids Symphony.

February 2000 Meeting Location Evaluation

by Cindy Lewis, PMP

We tried something different and mixed feedback. Positive comments included: liked the location, liked the faster meal (and getting out sooner), liked the separate bar/cigar room, and liked the food. Negative comments included too crowded, terrible bar service, long buffet lines, and bad location. When asked about the meal style, 35% preferred buffet while 65% preferred plated. If buffet was cheaper, approximately 1/2 would still prefer plated. Overall preference: 80% preferred Duba's, while 20% preferred the Holiday Inn. Approximately 1/2 would like the chapter to consider other locations. At this point, Duba's will still be our main location. The new board will accept your input on meeting location suggestions for the upcoming program year.

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Resolved Resource Contention. When creating project plans, the capacity of the resources in the organization is taken into account. Resource limitations for key resources are reflected in the plan in that these resources are not overloaded.

Controlled Flow of Work. All early-start schedules are replaced with a pacing mechanism that ensures gating tasks (those without predecessors) are started at the right time — not too early and not too late. This enables managers to use a first come, first served sequencing rule without fear of misplacing priorities.

Buffer Management. Buffers are used to insulate the project against disruptions. Task updating replaces rescheduling, and reports indicate the amount of buffer remaining in the project. Buffer management allows resource managers to know which tasks are impacting project completion and the impact of tradeoffs in delaying different tasks. Managers can set priorities with full knowledge of the current status of the projects and the most likely ramifications of their decisions.

CCPM has been implemented with success in a wide variety of industries. Often incorrectly viewed as a scheduling solution, CCPM at its core is focused on changing how work is accomplished in project organizations. By supporting the managers in their quest to establish clear and stable priorities, CCPM provides a means by which organizations can improve both project performance and the quality of life in the

organization. Both of these will contribute significantly to improved communications, thereby improving the fabric of your project organization.

Unfortunately, space limitations prevent a more complete discussion of CCPM concepts. If you are interested in learning more, read *Project Management in the Fast Lane: Applying the Theory of Constraints* (Newbold 1998).

Conclusions

Unclear and unstable priorities undermine productive communications in a project organization. Workers spend their time frequently switching between tasks while managers try to sort through the impacts of uncompleted tasks and further rearrange priorities in response. Communications are wasted when they focus on trying to clarify who needs to do what when, rather than on transferring the information needed in order to complete project tasks more successfully. Managers can greatly reduce the amount of bad multitasking by simply focusing their efforts in that direction. In addition, new systems, like Critical Chain Project Management, should be introduced that support managers' efforts to establish clear and stable priorities.

References

Newbold, Robert C. 1998. *Project Management in the Fast Lane: Applying the Theory of Constraints*. St. Lucie Press/APICS Series on Constraints Management.

Proceedings of the 30th Annual Project Management Institute 1999 Seminars & Symposium
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA: Papers Presented October 10 to 16, 1999

Annual PMI Western Michigan Chapter Membership Survey Results

by Kim Schwamberger, VP Membership

Thank you to those who took the time to fill out our Annual Membership Survey. This is a wonderful tool for the board members to make sure they are meeting the chapter member's wants and needs. Congratulations to Marilyn Dykstra for winning the \$25.00 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble.

We received 35 responses out of the 270 surveys sent to the members. E-mail was the way to respond this year, 80% of the responses were received that way. Our chapter received very high marks in the program's speaker quality, and subject matter for a total 86% overall supporting the chapter. The top (3) three desirable program topics are:

- “Hot” topics in the PM profession
- PM soft skills
- Local company's PM work

We received some great suggestions for program topics. Several example suggestions were: Project Management Maturity, Set up of the PM offices, and Guest speaker Carl Pritchard. Please keep your ideas coming throughout the year.

Members who are in the certification process or have been through it are very satisfied with the information available and preparation training assistance. The dues look to be 47% satisfactory while 53% wouldn't mind an increase for chapter funding.

The cost of the dinners are satisfactory. Several responses indicated that the costs are too high. 90% of the responses like the day, the time, and the place. The payment by credit card option is a big yes, but not having a credit-card payment method wouldn't prevent anyone from attending.

I would like to also include a few of the comments received “The quality of the programs have increased significantly in the 2 1/2 years I have been attending;” “Need to have life experiences of professional application of PM tools and techniques;” “Appreciate the support and follow up from all the board members;” “The chapter would better meet my needs if the dinner started exactly at 6:30, the president did the updates as soon as dessert was served and the speaker started right away;” and, “It would be great if PMI offered it's members assistance in how to bring PM to their company of employment”.

Thank you, Thank you, to those who have volunteered. One of our board members will be calling you to help soon. This will be a wonder benefit to the chapter.

The chapter is working very hard to meet the needs of all its members. Please keep your ideas and comments coming.

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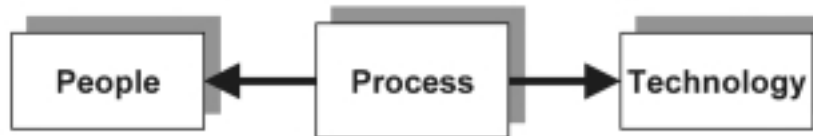
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This month, try testing your knowledge of Risk Management from the PMI's PMBOK by selecting the best appropriate answer. Sample questions are created from the information found in PMI's PMBOK.

Risk management includes processes concerned with identifying, analyzing, and responding to project risk. It includes maximizing the results of positive events and minimizing the consequences of adverse events.

1. Risk mitigation could involve:
 - A. Licensing and intellectual property rights
 - B. Accepting a lower profit if some activities overrun
 - C. Buying insurance
 - D. Eliminating risk through beta testing
 - E. Policies and procedures for a response system
2. The risk management plan is a major component of the:
 - A. Communication plan
 - B. Quality management plan
 - C. Contingency plan
 - D. Project plan
 - E. Procurement plan
3. The major processes of project risk management are:
 - A. Identify, respond, assess, and document
 - B. Identify, quantify, develop, and control
 - C. Plan, identify, document, and assess
 - D. Respond, evaluate, and document
 - E. Identify, mitigate, and plan
4. The categories of risk response development include:
 - I. Interpretation
 - II. Acceptance
 - III. Mitigation
 - IV. Avoidance
 - A. II and III and IV only
 - B. I, II, and III only
 - C. II and III
 - D. I, III, and IV only
 - E. I, II, and IV only
5. A risk management plan should include all of the following EXCEPT:
 - A. How the contingency plans will be implemented
 - B. How reserves will be allocated
 - C. Who is responsible for managing various areas of risk
 - D. A Work Breakdown Structure
 - E. Risk identification and risk quantification processes
6. One of the outputs of risk identification is:
 - A. The plan for mitigation
 - B. Potential risk events
 - C. Alternate strategies
 - D. Corrective action
 - E. Expected monetary value of the risk events
7. Risk identification should be done:
 - A. When preparing the project plan
 - B. Just before a meeting with the client
 - C. Early in the execution phase
 - D. As soon as time and cost estimates are ready
 - E. On a regular basis throughout the project
8. Risk response development will utilize which of the following tools?
 - A. Contingency plan
 - B. Contracting
 - C. Corrective action
 - D. Risk Management plan
 - E. Work-arounds
9. The tools and techniques for risk quantification are:
 - A. Checklists, historical results, and interviewing
 - B. Expected monetary value, statistical sums, schedule simulations, and decision trees
 - C. Contracting, contingency planning, alternate strategies, and insurance
 - D. Checklists, damage control reports, standard allowances, and inspection
 - E. Work-arounds and additional response development
10. Responses to risk threats include all of the following except:
 - A. avoidance
 - B. acceptance
 - C. mitigation
 - D. rejection
 - E. none of the above
11. The most crucial time for project risk assessment is:
 - A. when a problem surfaces
 - B. during the planning phase
 - C. during the close-out phase
 - D. after the project schedule has been published
 - E. when a change is requested
12. The outputs from risk quantification include:
 - A. Checklists, corrective actions, and decision trees
 - B. Threats to ignore, opportunities to accept
 - C. Direction, resources and costs
 - D. Opportunities to pursue, threats to respond to
 - E. Threats to respond to, threats to accept

Answers:

1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (d) 6. (b) 7. (e) 8. (a) 9. (b) 10. (d) 11. (b) 12. (d)



Remember...

Bring a friend and win a chance for a free dinner. To increase the membership, the board has decided to provide an incentive to the members willing to invite their coworkers to learn what we do at the Project Management meetings. The more colleagues you invite, the greater your chances to win become. For more details contact any board member.

PMI Western Michigan Chapter Spring-Fall 2000 Programs

by Barb Dawson-Bishop, VP - Programs

May 8, 2000 - Change Management - Suzanne Gust, Not So Basic Training

All businesses, both service and manufacturing are going through continual and constant change. Leaders need to know what individuals experience during change to help facilitate transitions. You will learn how to make change easier for individuals and how to get more buy-in for changes. The phases of change will be presented along with emotions people experience and the responsibilities of each individuals (including your own) in the change process.

Ms. Gust is a nationally recognized training facilitator, public speaker, consultant, and an encore PMI Presenter. She brings with her varied experience, having worked in both the public and private sectors. She is a Professional Member of the National Speakers Association. She holds an MBA from Eastern Michigan and a BBA from Western Michigan. She is certified in numerous programs including ISO Lead Assessor and Problem Solving.

BONUS PROGRAM:

Requirements Management - Mark Dettl, President, Phoenix Strategic Management Services

FALL PROGRAMS

September 13, 2000 - Critical Chain Project Management - Dr. Donn Novatny, The Avraham Y. Goldratt Institute

Joint Meeting with APICS

The discipline of project management has been around for years. Much, however, has changed in the time since PERT and Critical Path were developed and embraced as the way to manage projects. The Critical Chain Project Management Suite includes Planning, Execution and Control, Resource Management, Multi-Project Management and Diagnostics and Historical Analysis.

October 9, 2000 - 3-10-3 Calling the Winning Signals

Bill Kerr, Keane Inc.

3-10-3 is not an audible called at the line of scrimmage. But on the field of action in projects, it is a series of tested plays that score high in enforcing project control, reporting progress, monitoring change, and assuring quality! Keane, Inc designed this methodology but you can gain a home field advantage by applying these guidelines in the frantic "red zone" of your company's project culture. Bill Kerr will open the play book for attendees when he reviews this set of methods for getting projects started on the right track, as well as keeping all parties informed and actively involved in carrying the project across the goal-line. By the way, 3-10-3 stands for 3 things to perform at project initiation, 10 things to perform throughout the life of the project and 3 things to perform at project conclusion. These actions can and should be applied by ANY project manager. These simple, common sense actions reflect how Keane applies its 6 principles for Productivity Management (PM) for more effective project management.

November 13, 2000 - Listening: a Management Must!

Mary Jane Mapes, CSP

When managers possess both the ability and the willingness to listen, good things happen:

- potential "customers" get their needs met;
- employees get the respect and recognition they need to become committed and therefore more productive;
- team members get their ideas heard and the entire team process is reinforced;
- real dialogue is made possible;
- strong working relationships are formed;
- employee "buy-in" is made possible

You will learn what's needed to discover needs, sell yourself, your service, or your idea, hear valuable ideas, handle potential conflict, diffuse anger, solve problems, and maintain good people relations.

VALUES and Code of Ethics

by Barb Fisher, PMP, VP Certification and Education

It's happened to me twice this year. Twice I've had to cancel my Western Michigan Chapter Dinner Meeting reservation at the last minute due to business for my company. And twice I've taken the PMP Code of Ethics seriously by sending in my personal check for the dinner I wasn't able to attend.

Personally I live by values that consist of: treating others as I want to be treated; doing what I say I will do when I say I will do it.

Are you aware that our chapter pays for every meal that we reserve whether the person making the reservation shows or not,

unless they have cancelled in the time frame required? As a board member, I'm finding it increasingly uncomfortable to ask members of our chapter to pay for commitments they make and then aren't able to keep. So, I'm appealing to your sense of professionalism to handle these situations before being asked to.

As members of the Project Management Profession we are responsible to model the Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics can be located on PMI's website by typing in www.pmi.org/certification/code.htm. Please take a moment and review the Code of Ethics. You're right, it's not going to read "pay for dinners you don't cancel out of in time", but it will say things like "Accept responsibility for your actions", and "Advance the integrity and prestige of the profession by practicing in a dignified manner".



Mike Janisse, Director
ON TARGET
200 Shore Haven Drive SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546-2256
(616) 954-1748

ON TARGET will be published every other month for members of the PMI Western Michigan Chapter of the Project Management Institute. PMI is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the state-of-the-art in project management.

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Join us at Duba's on May 8th

Change Management
Suzanne Gust, Not So Basic Training

Bonus Program: Requirements Management
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