

Message from the President – January 2003

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Welcome to 2003. Is everyone still feeling a little bruised from 2002? What a year... and what a profession to be in.

The project management practice continues to be touted as the solution to business planning and execution, but we still encounter many senior executives that do not see the value in ensuring strategies are shaped and executed as projects.

I am starting to believe that it is the 'doers' that understand the value a project manager brings to the table – and really, when a project manager does a great job, it should appear effortless to the executives... that is, after all, our job. So my question to you today: How do we make the leap in 2003 to ensuring that your leaders position project managers to successfully execute their strategies? After all, it should be an easy sell, tell me what executive does not want to meet their objectives for the year.

A lot of work needs to be done, and it starts with ensuring that project managers continue to focus on being proactive and manage the people, as opposed to the processes as they did in the past. Project management is not about being able to put a list to tasks into a gantt chart and competing those tasks, but instead, it involves possessing leadership abilities in addition to skills and experience in technology and business to support a broad constituency of business operations, and the ability to direct activities to mitigate issues across political boundaries.

This year, commit to improving your leadership skills (a life-long endeavor). Share your insights on leadership with your peers. Learn from others. Most leaders have grown from challenges, and as project managers, the challenges you face daily give you the opportunity to transcend adversity, with all of its stresses, and emerge stronger. Continue to adapt through these formative experiences.

Work on your integrity, listen and engage others in setting common goals, and carry a distinctive and convincing voice. Believe in yourself, and others will believe in you. Enjoy the ride, and take the time to share your success stories as we all continue to learn through life.

All the best in this new year.

Michelle O'Donovan
PMI-CTT Chapter President

Michelle O'Donovan is the Chief Project Officer for the Metafore Project Management office of Metafore Corporation.

WEBMASTER UPDATE:



As the year draws to a close, let's pat on our accomplishments and thanks to your suggestions, we have a very informative chapter website. More functionality is on the way as we embark on secure transaction processing sometime in the new-year. My hats off to Gwen Williams for editing and composing this newsletter on a regular basis with tight publishing deadlines. Enjoy and have a very merry Christmas and a happy new-year.

Ashok Goyal, MBA, ISP, PMP
Webmaster & Director of Communications, PMI-CTT

President, e-StrategicConsulting.com, and Associate Faculty,
Conestoga College

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** represents members of the Executive*

Laugh? Not me, I'm a Project Manager!

For most of us who are Project Managers, we have chosen that profession. Given that fact it's amazing how many of us seem to have the weight of the world on our shoulders day in day out. Seeing as we chose it, aren't we supposed to be enjoying what we do. 'Lighten up people!!!' –

That was not meant as an insult, but as a thought to helping us in those days where all seems to be going from bad to worse, the number of projects we have just doubled, and our teams think we're the control freaks from hell.

The successful 'Dilbert' cartoon strip from Scott Adams shows us that we can identify and laugh at the seemingly silly situations we find ourselves in daily. Each of us may not have the cartooning experience of Scott Adams but we can certainly identify with the lighter side of things. This can allow us to do a number of things. Often to see the funny side of things we need to look on a situation very much as an observer would. This serves two purposes. We not only get to see what may indeed have a funny twist, but more importantly see the 'big picture' of what is happening around us. Many times Project Managers can get stuck in the quick sand and may not be able to get themselves out, in fact many times see it get worse. By stopping, evaluating, and moving forward we can dig ourselves out, and as a bonus find a cartoon in the making.

Another place where humour can find a home is in the world of 'dry' topics. How many of us have sat through project presentations that have been as dry as the Arabian Desert. A well-placed cartoon or amusing comment can be the oasis your audience is looking for. It can also serve to illustrate a point. As we know most people remember pictures better than words. If you have a point to make and you want to re-enforce it, a graphic will often to the job.

Other meeting ideas have been used have been used, such as having a 'silly topic' brainstorming session before a real one occurs to get the audience warmed up. Arm everyone with Nerf guns and use meeting latecomers as target practice? Not only do we get everyone livened up for the meeting but we get a team spirit going.

Michael Kerr Writer of the book "*You can't be Serious*" - *Putting humor in the work place* shows humour has a direct impact on creativity, morale, and overall motivation.

Laughter is the best medicine – Laughter has been shown to reduce blood pressure

Humour keeps you balanced - A healthy sense of humour is one of the most effective ways of keeping grounded.

Laughter is a powerful stress buster - Many psychologists tell us humour is the direct opposite to stress.

Humour and managing change – Humour can allow us to better manage large changes.

Humour is a powerful morale booster – If the overall mood is light morale usually is good.

Whether or not you're a PM on a large project or a small one, having a sense of humour about it may make the difference in enjoying your work or not, and completing it much easier. I'm not advocating that we all turn up tomorrow in clown outfits, unless you're a PM at a circus, or really need to make a point. But to use humour as you would any one of the project tools.

Richard Rees, PMP

Richard is a Senior Project Manager with CheckFree i-Solutions and a freelance Cartoonist/Web Illustrator.

Cheetah Prep Course

Our Chapter recently assisted in putting together a prep course to assist local project management professionals. Congratulations to those who just obtained their PMP!



Cheetah PMP Prep course offered November'02

A New Kind of Accountability

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Accountability can be a help or a hindrance to a project. In the past, accountability was synonymous with blame. It created fear, forced people to cover their backsides, sabotaged learning and did very little to enhance performance. Now, we have a new way to approach accountability – as a proactive approach to preventing problems. In order to make this approach work, you need to follow these three rules:

Tip 1. Use preventive accountability.

Accountability has been used as a club - to beat up on people when something went wrong. The statement, "Who's accountable for this?" sent fear racing through the veins of team members. A more effective approach to accountability is to use it for prevention, not punishment. The question you should be asking team members is, "Who is accountable to make sure this outcome happens as planned?" The accountable person's job is to do whatever is possible in order to assure the defined outcome is achieved. If something goes wrong, the question to ask is, "What can we learn from this so we can do a better job next time?"

Explain to your team at the kick-off meeting how you intend to deploy accountability and then make sure that you provide each accountable person with the resource needed to get the job done. Accountability isn't about creating something out of thin air. It's about using resources to get the job done. Providing the resources is the job of the project manager.

Tip 2. Define accountability for results. When you are accountable, you must assure that an outcome is achieved. This means you have to define the project in terms of outcomes or deliverables. Activities are not outcomes. Writing is an activity. I could write

all day long and not produce any useful output. What you want is the output, the column. Focus on the deliverables, not the activities. You can and should define quality criteria for that deliverable. (Can I produce just any article or does it need to meet certain acceptance criteria?) You can and should define a delivery date for each deliverable. You can assign a budget to the deliverable. So, instead of breaking your project down into tasks, break it down into deliverables. Someone on the team will then be accountable for each deliverable (see next tip). The accountable person doesn't necessarily have to do the work. She just has to assure that the deliverable is produced and is acceptable to the customer. The questions to ask are, "Who will be accountable to make sure this deliverable gets produced? What acceptance criteria will the customer use to determine if he's satisfied with the deliverable?" Then if something goes wrong, focus on how to move forward. Look back only to learn from what happened (see tip 1).

3. Use team participation during planning and execution.

You can assign accountability all day long but when the people on the team don't report to you, it has very little practical effect. In today's environment, accountability has to be voluntarily accepted, and the best way to accomplish that is through team participation. Team participation means having the team create the plan, as a group, with you, the project manager, as the facilitator. When the team creates the plan several things happen: the plan is improved because there are more shared ideas, it is more realistic because it reflects each person's reality, the team understands it because they all participated in creating it and finally, and most importantly, they have ownership of it and are committed to making it happen. This sense of ownership drives people to want to fulfill their accountabilities. Since they helped define the accountability in the first place, they understand what is required and have confidence that they can be successful. Then the project manager is

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in a position to hold people to their accountabilities.

A word of caution - don't make the mistake of taking back the ownership of the project during the execution phase. It's as important to continue the team's involvement in monitoring progress and solving problems during execution as it was for them to develop the plan in the first place. Let the team decide how to get the project back on track when things go wrong. If you do, they'll take accountability for the solutions.

Accountability is a powerful tool if used properly. The old approach to accountability – blame oriented, activity-based and assigned by a project manager – worked well enough in the old authority and control based organizations, but it does not work well in today's matrixed environment. For that, you'll need to the new approach to accountability. Try it. You might find it useful.

Paula Martin is the CEO of Martin Training Associates, a management training and consulting firm. She's the author of seven books including the *Project Management Memory Jogger™* and *Executive Guide: The 7 Keys to Success*. For more information, visit the Martin Training website: www.martintraining.net. Phone: 866-922-3122 or 513-563-3512.

Thursday, January 30th, 2002

Topic: Measuring Project Management Success:
From Making Cents to Making Sense
Speaker: Catherine Daw

Session is being held at the Holiday Inn (Kitchener).

Directions to Holiday Inn:
From 401 – take Hwy 8 West to Fairway Rd exit
Turn right onto Fairway Road
Holiday Inn is on the right

Please visit the website for further details
www.pmi-ctt.org

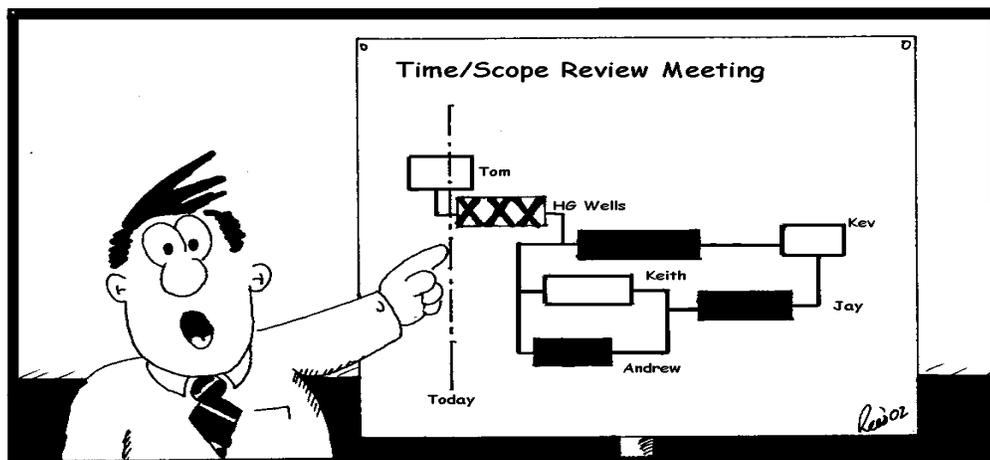
The project manager walks into his boss' office and says, "Here is the bottom line budget needed for the success of the project."

The boss says, "What can you do for half the money?"

The project manager says, "Fail."

The boss says, "When can you get started?"

The project manager says, "I think I just did."



"The only way I could meet YOUR new end date,
Was to add a task to build a Time Machine"

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