

March 2016 Archive

Across the Board **By Malika Malika**



Malika Malika

2016 has been a fantastic year for our Board members with many important milestones. In April 2015 when our incumbent board members took the office seats, our chapter operations were under a brand new team. Obviously, there were some initial teething challenges such as minimum training, lack of continuity, and various vacant high executive positions (CEO, COO, CFO).

One of the first chapter milestones involved building healthy culture with continuity and trust. This was implemented by improving the existing policy and governance. The Board strongly believes in a sustainable policy and governance structure, which makes work more enjoyable and approachable. Through critical analysis, the Board identified and erased weak policy and governance procedures that were critical road blocks.

Secondly, the Board also streamlined the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which used to convene for half a day on a Saturday. Instead the Board decided to:

- 1) decrease the meeting duration by a couple of hours
- 2) holding meetings on evenings and
- 3) incorporated games to help achieve increased member engagement. This resulted in higher member turn outs, which is necessary to achieve AGM goals.

Additionally, the Board evolved its leadership style to be more positive and forward thinking. By taking on a more caring role (e.g. bringing coffee to board meetings), the Board is trying to build a team based on collective values of respect, trust, and patience. The Board promotes 'shared goals' so that we are reaching one decision as a unit where everyone has a right to be heard. We anticipate this will lead to gratefulness between our chapter members having a multiplier effect.

Meanwhile, the Board team started broadening its circle with the help of the exceptional CEO, Nathan Mellin, to build one volunteer team between the board and operational staff. Now PMI SFBAC Volunteer Team has created and published its core values, mission, and vision. These are:

Vision Statement

PMI SFBAC Volunteers will be able to:

- Achieve professional goals

- Practice and obtain mastery of project management
- Showcase individual's strength
- Contribute to the community
- Build leaders

Mission Statement

Our mission is to create/maintain a fun community built on supportive relationships to foster mentoring and growth.

Values

- Have Fun
- Build Relationships
- Promote Growth
- Embrace Ownership
- Give Back

The volunteer team is invigorating with positive energy and working to bring its members new, easily accessible, reasonable cost and short programs.

The coming year will be very active and fun time for our members!

If you are interested to join us either as volunteers or as engaged members then please do contact us. We would be very happy to be "ONE TEAM".

Watch a small clip from our one team building activity.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/7p9cf9fd1qqj07v/IMG_2001.MOV?dl=0

From The Sponsor's Desk – Nine Steps To Project Success

By **Drew Davison**



Drew Davison

Often, it's once bitten, twice shy. We try something. It doesn't work out. We go on to something else. Yet, many discoveries and innovations are launched from an initial failure that yields valuable lessons and ultimately paves the path to success.

In this case, a failed project provided valuable insights that helped this company launch a second, highly successful effort to address an important business challenge. The lessons learned from that first project formed the foundation for later success.

Thanks to F.W. for the details on this case.

THE SITUATION

This facilities contractor had a nation-wide presence designing, constructing and servicing commercial and residential

building systems including heating and cooling, plumbing and electrical. The services business was a consistent, reliable revenue generator with minimal risk. However, the project side of the business was another story. The company had a checkered history of performance and suffered a number of losses when projects ran into trouble. As well, clients often demanded fixed price contracts to limit their exposure but that put the contractor under greater risk.

The company had attempted to improve their project management capability and performance in a previous project, but that had been abandoned when the delivered solution failed to gain traction. The post audit from that attempt revealed a number of causes:

1. Very few project participants realized the importance of the project to the company's ongoing well-being.
2. There was little user input in the design phase so users had little motivation to use the application or seek remedies to make it work for them.
3. Duplicate entry of data was required by a number of different users, a significant disincentive to use.
4. There was little value to many of the targeted users as the data was accessible only to the managers.
5. The application was very time-consuming for the foremen so the foremen tended to use it only as a last resort.

Learning from those earlier lessons, the company launched a new project to address their project management challenges. This time, the project needed to achieve its goals. The company's bottom line depended on it.

THE GOAL

To institutionalize project management best practices across the organization to significantly improve project performance. The delivered system would support planning, scheduling and budgeting activities as well as change orders and performance tracking and reporting. The corporate target was for 80% of projects to meet or exceed gross margin forecasts. Because of other corporate priorities and financial constraints, the budget for the project was void of any new capital acquisitions. The project would have to make do with assigned resources and available technologies.

THE PROJECT

The CEO formed an initial steering committee that included the head of the organization's Project Management Office (PMO), the head of the Business Process Management (BPM) organization and the process manager for facilities projects. He also included primary contacts from two key sub-contractors. The head of the PMO added a knowledgeable project manager to the team. The PMO members were to be the subject matter experts. The BPM members would actually guide the project.

The CEO also announced the formation of the steering committee and launch of the project to all staff and to many of the company's sub-contractors. The communication stressed the importance of the effort to the company's bottom line, asked everyone to contribute to and support the undertaking and promised frequent updates as the project progressed.

The process manager pulled together a project charter that reflected the lessons learned from the prior project and itemized the remedies and actions that would be incorporated into the new project, including:

- Improved stakeholder identification and extensive engagement
- Better communication to all stakeholders
- Appropriate recognition and rewards
- Providing better data for more informed decision-making

- Reduced data entry
- Phased implementation

The charter included a high-level plan with a three month requirements exercise engaging key stakeholders across the country, staged design and development including prototyping to facilitate collaboration and accelerate consensus, piloting of development iterations with selected targets and a staged rollout over the year. The communication strategy included in the charter covered monthly updates to key stakeholders, quarterly CEO updates, and periodic local show and tell sessions to give stakeholders a sense of the new project management environment and to solicit feedback. The process manager also proposed a recognition and reward scheme that included recognition for key project contributors and bonuses for facilities projects using the new project management process and tools that achieved the corporate goals.

In addition, given the constraints on the project's capital budget, the process manager recommended using Excel as the primary interface for the delivered functionality. All facilities project managers had Microsoft Office on their laptops, they were familiar with the tools so little additional training would be required and it would allow the project to focus on the new project management process versus a new technology suite.

The document received full approval from the steering committee and the project was underway.

THE RESULTS

The results were quite amazing. Where the previous project met with indifference and, ultimately, abandonment, the new project management environment was met with enthusiasm, internalized and fully integrated into the organization's operating practices. Participants knew it was a CEO top priority, they had numerous opportunities to shape the solution and they were rewarded for their contribution and their facilities projects' successes using the new environment.

The project was completed mostly on plan and budget. What variances existed happened because of decisions to change approach, timing and content based on experiences and target feedback. In the year following the first successful implementation, 93% of facilities projects met or exceeded their gross margin forecasts. As well, there was a significant increase in best practice submissions from facilities project teams across the country, many of which were embedded in the new project environment, helping shape a continuous improvement culture across the country.

HOW GREAT LEADERSHIP ACHIEVED SUCCESS

This project is a great example of how the learnings from an initial failure can be harvested and leveraged to feed the follow-on project's success. Nine actions taken by the key stakeholders made all the difference:

Great Sponsorship – The CEO took on the sponsorship responsibility and guided the change through the realization of planned benefits. Everyone knew the project was his and responded accordingly. His personal emails and visits to key contributors and successful facilities teams elevated the project to top of mind for everyone.

Engaged Stakeholders – With active sponsorship and frequent virtual and face-to-face visits from the project team, staff and sub-contractors affected by the change were vital and enthusiastic contributors.

Appropriate Incentives – Emails and visits from the CEO, mentions regarding personal and team contributions in cross company project updates and bonuses for those using the new environment to deliver successful facilities

projects created an unprecedented demand to be involved.

Process Over Technology – Sometimes a limited budget can be a benefit. In this case, the default selection of Excel allowed the project team to focus on the new project environment, which accelerated delivery, lowered the learning curve and minimized resistance.

Phased Development – The team was able to focus on the key functionality and gain acceptance quickly, incrementally adding capability according to need. That reduced risk and built an expectation and reality of continuous improvement.

Piloting Makes Perfect – Nothing aids understanding more than being able to try something. The piloting activity was instrumental in getting stakeholder buy-in and providing feedback and insights to improve the environment.

Staged Rollout – The staged rollout helped build a wonderful camaraderie between the team and the targeted stakeholders. The team was able to focus exclusively on the rollout subset and work with the targets until they were fully knowledgeable and performed competently. The after implementation dialogue that frequently occurred generated numerous ideas for future improvements, which were often incorporated as part of the rollout.

Stellar Communications – From the CEO's quarterly updates to the process manager's targeted reports, from individual and team acknowledgements to facilities project successes using the new environment, no one in the organization or among key sub-contractors was uninformed or left untouched.

Lessons Learned – This project was the offspring of lessons learned from the forerunner. As well, the conduct of the project, from stakeholder engagement to phasing, piloting and staging was fully geared to harness lessons learned as the project progressed and after implementation, in a continuous improvement culture.

These nine actions aren't new. We (the project/change management practitioners and others) know they work to reduce risk, add value and accelerate delivery. They're not rocket science. There's lots of information available about the practices. They're reasonably easy to apply. So why aren't they used on every project? It's a mystery! If we analyzed the fifty plus posts in this blog we'd find, I expect, that most of the successful projects used the majority of these practices and most of the failed projects didn't.

So, please, put these points on your checklist of things to do in future endeavors so you too can be a Great Leader. And remember, use Project Pre-Check's three building blocks covering stakeholder, the engagement and collaboration process and decision area best practices right up front so you don't overlook these key success factors.

Finally, if you have a project experience, either good or bad, past or present, that you'd like to have examined through the Project Pre-Check lens and published in this blog, don't be shy! Send me the details and we'll chat. I'll write it up and when you're happy with the results, Project Times will post it so others can learn from your insights. Thanks

© Drew Anderson 2015. Drew Davison is the owner and principal consultant at Davison Consulting and a former system development executive. He is the developer of Project Pre-Check, an innovative framework for launching projects and he guiding successful project delivery, the author of Project Pre-Check – The Stakeholder Practice for Successful Business and Technology Change and Project Pre-Check FastPath – The Project Manager's Guide to Stakeholder Management. He works with organizations that are undergoing major business and technology change to implement the empowered stakeholder groups critical to project success. Drew can be reached at

By Joakim Ahlström



Joakim Ahlström

For managers, time is a scarce commodity. Actually, it's equally scarce for everyone, but I start off this way to show that I know how tough it is to be a manager. When I meet managers of various kinds – CEO's, division managers, middle managers, indeed all sorts of managers – I take their lack of time into account and let them know that there's only one thing they need to do to develop a culture of continuous improvement. This is what I tell them: "Ask each of your employees to always bring one improvement idea to your recurring (weekly or monthly) meetings."

I have stolen (with pride) this advice from management guru Peter Drucker, but I usually don't reveal that. Instead, I often get to listen to their objections. The first one usually sounds like this:

"That's not a good idea! Judging by the suggestions we normally get, it would only result in a heap of suggestions we would be forced to reject. And that would kill creativity."

"What creativity?" I get the urge to ask, but I don't. Instead, I ask them what they think is the reason for getting only "bad ideas." Most managers realize that it does not have to do with the intelligence of their employees. There's something else missing: clear expectations of how everyone can contribute to the development of the business. My definition of an improvement is a solved problem, and my definition of a problem is the gap between where you are and where you want to be. A "bad improvement idea" is a sign of poor knowledge about how someone in his or her role can help the company achieve its objectives. And who is responsible for breaking down and creating commitment to the objectives of a company?

I also let them know that they don't have to be afraid to reject a portion of the suggestions. In the organizations I have supported, we have had an implementation rate of 50 percent as our lower limit, and as long as at least half of all ideas are implemented and their results are highlighted, I have never seen a negative effect on creativity. Though most managers follow this reasoning, many deliver their next objection straight away:

"Even if I rejected half I wouldn't have the time. If all my colleagues gave me one improvement idea at every meeting, all my time would be consumed by trying to understand their suggestions and deciding on which ones to implement."

This objection confirms that I have come to an organization where managers are the bottlenecks in the improvement process. “It’s your colleagues who should make the decisions, not you,” I explain. I also clarify that a high-performing improvement process is driven by all employees of the organization. Instead of making decisions in matters where the employees themselves are better suited, the manager should act as a coach and make sure everyone knows where they are headed, support those who have a hard time advancing and visualize progress to increase motivation.

“But what if they take a lot of stupid decisions or change things they do not have the authority to change?”

While I appreciate the objections turning into questions, I feel the penny should have dropped by now. “Well, wouldn’t that be great!” I usually respond. The manager doesn’t agree. Then I explain that the only difference from before would be that stupid decisions and people exceeding their authority are now coming to the manager’s attention.

Now you will be able to see where there’s a need for leadership, where there’s a need to clarify the priorities of the business, and in which situations the expertise of certain persons should be sought. In other words, you know that your leadership has been successful when your colleagues tell you about valuable and already implemented improvement ideas at your meetings. “But you said that you know I don’t have much time. How can you expect me to have the time to break down and communicate objectives, support those who don’t move forward, visualize progress and clarify roles and responsibilities?”

“What else should you do? Isn’t that precisely the job of the manager?” To start working with continuous improvement is like gradually revealing the need for leadership in an organization. The fact that the improvement potential of your leadership becomes visible can be interpreted in two ways – as a painful truth that you continue to deny or as an opportunity to grow as an individual and organization.

It is not until the improvement process is running that you will clearly see what your colleagues consider to be your expectations of them. Only when you see how things really are will you get the chance to improve. The question is, are you ready to take on the leadership challenge?

© Joakim Ahlström 2015. Joakim Ahlström is a leading continuous improvement authority. Head of Consulting at C2 Management, he has helped many companies across the globe to achieve high performance through a continuous improvement culture. His book, How to Succeed with Continuous Improvement is available at Amazon. For more information, visit <http://www.SucceedwithCI.com>

<http://www.projecttimes.com/articles/are-your-managers-bottlenecks-in-your-improvement-process.html>

Knowledge Management: making the Most of Intellectual Assets **By Rachel Thompson**



Rachel Thompson

Most of us need knowledge in some form to do our jobs well.

Perhaps you need to understand how your customer database is designed, so that you can extract a particular report. Maybe you need to know the best way to get senior managers to approve a business case. Or perhaps, you need to know how your boss prefers to receive bad news, so that you can deliver this as painlessly as possible.

All of these things require specific knowledge. No matter what your job is, you need this knowledge if you are going to do a good job.

This seems obvious, right? But how does your organization handle all of this knowledge? When you have a question, is it easy for you to find an answer, or do you have to search for hours or days to find what you need to know? This is why knowledge management is so important.

Knowledge management is the practice of organizing, storing, and sharing vital information, so that everyone can benefit from its use. In this article, we will look at exactly what knowledge management is, and how you can start organizing knowledge within your own organization, thereby saving money and increasing productivity.

What is Knowledge?

Words like “data,” “information,” and “knowledge” are often used interchangeably. But there are some important differences:

- **Data** is a specific fact or figure, without any context. For example, the number 1,000 is a piece of data, as is the name Tom Smith. Without anything else to define them, these two items of data are meaningless.
- **Information** is data that is organized. So, pieces of information are “Tom Smith is a CEO” and “1,000 widgets.” We have more details, so now the data makes more sense to us.
- **Knowledge**, then, builds on the information to give us context. Knowledge is “Tom Smith is the CEO of our company’s biggest competitor, and his company ships 1,000 widgets every hour.”

The key difference between knowledge and information is that knowledge gives us the power to take action. We can use it.

There are also two different types of knowledge, explicit and tacit:

- **Explicit knowledge** includes things that you can easily pass on to someone else by teaching it or putting it into a database or a book. Explaining your company’s safety protocols to a new team member is demonstrating explicit knowledge.
- **Tacit knowledge** is less quantifiable. It’s when you know that your company’s best client won’t make a deal unless you go golfing with her. Or when you know that your department’s smallest supplier is also the most reliable one, but only if you place your order by the 15th of every month. This is knowledge that’s most often learned by experience.

It’s the stuff you know, but don’t necessarily know that you know.

Benefits of Knowledge Management

The major benefit of knowledge management is that information is easily shared between staff members, and that knowledge isn’t lost if someone goes on vacation, gets sick, or leaves the company.

This can result in substantial savings to an organization’s bottom line. People are easily brought up to speed, and valuable knowledge assets are never lost (which means that you don’t lose time and money when people have to learn new information quickly).

Because ideas can be shared easily, knowledge management may also increase innovation and help create better customer relationships. And if the company has a global team, knowledge management can create a more powerful workforce when all of those different cultures are brought together to share assets.

Knowledge management gives staff members the knowledge they need to do their jobs better. This makes them more productive.

Implementing Knowledge Management

There are two different ways of managing knowledge: using technology-based systems, or using softer systems.

- **Technology-based systems** – These can include a collaborative wiki, where everyone can add and edit information. Or, it can include programs or databases on the company’s intranet, with information organized so that everyone can access them.

Any technology-based system will have challenges. For instance, who will manage the project? Who will keep the information up to date? How will people access the information?

There’s no “one size fits all” approach here. Every company and culture is different.

- **Softer systems** – These are things like specific actions or meetings that take place to share knowledge and help people connect with one another.

Consider the following methods as part of your soft knowledge management systems:

- Shadowing.
- Mentoring.
- Instant messaging and intranet forums.
- Specific actions, like After Action Reviews after significant events, and Post-Implementation Reviews after a project has been completed.
- Voluntary groups, also called communities of practice, which help team members doing the same thing in different areas to meet informally and share information.

Keep in mind that technology-based knowledge management systems are great at capturing explicit knowledge, but not so great at capturing tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is more often captured by softer systems, like the ones listed above.

This is why knowledge management approaches should try to use both approaches.

Tips for Implementing Knowledge Management Systems

- **Identify tacit knowledge first** – Many organizations find that identifying their team’s tacit knowledge is the biggest hurdle. If you implement a knowledge management system in your department or company, start with a brainstorming session with your team to get their ideas flowing on how to capture this.
- **Start with a small team** – It is very easy to get overwhelmed with the amount of knowledge that could be shared. Start with a small group, in one department, and grow from there. This will help you figure out what information you would like to keep, and how you would like to organize it.

- **Help staff feel comfortable about sharing knowledge** – It might be hard to “sell” knowledge management to your team. After all, you’re asking them to share their hard-won knowledge and experience, the very things that make them valuable to the company. (This can be a powerful incentive for people not to share their knowledge!)

Make knowledge sharing part of the company culture, and something that everyone does. This will help make team members feel more comfortable about getting involved. And, consider bringing knowledge sharing into your formal approach to performance management, so that people are rewarded for sharing information freely.

- **Make it as easy as possible for your team to share information** – Everyone is busy. If being part of a knowledge management program is difficult or time-consuming, people may not want to be involved. The easier it is for people to participate, the more likely you are to succeed.
- **Plan for retiring team members** – Retirement is a major reason why so many organizations are trying to quickly implement knowledge management systems right now. If you are facing a baby-boomer generation that is about to walk out of the door, it makes sense to start collecting their experience first.

Tip:

Find out more on knowledge management with our Book Insight *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Knowledge Management*.

Key Points

Knowledge management is becoming increasingly important to organizations. Having an effective knowledge management system not only protects revenues, it may also improve retention, increase productivity, and promote innovation. Knowledge management systems should try to implement a two-part approach: using a database or wiki to collect explicit knowledge, and connecting colleagues to one-another to share tacit knowledge.

© Rachel Thompson. Ms Thompson completed her MBA at London Business School and currently works as EVP at Mindtools.com. Her skills include: Entrepreneur, Change Manager, Expert in Organizational Learning.

Project Management Benchmark Report 2015

By Arras People

Back for the tenth year, the Project Management Benchmark Report (PMBR) from Arras People is an independent report into the lives and careers of PPM practitioners.

Would you like to know about your peers?

For the tenth edition we take a look at different roles within project management, show comparisons in the industry across the globe and bring unrivalled insights into areas that impact the project professional.

The 2015 PMBR

Some of the highlights from this year’s PMBR include:

- 24% of UK based practitioners say they are using Agile concepts in their day to day activities, yet only 8% have a recognised Agile Project Management accreditation.
- 3.6% of UK based practitioners say all programmes and projects undertaken in their organisation use Agile, yet only 50% believe their organisations have made the required philosophical shift to support its use.
- UK based programme and project management practitioners continue to over deliver, with the average practitioner

delivering +20% on top of their contracted hours.

- Despite only 37% of UK based contractors seeing their day rates rise above inflation during 2014, 82% of them enter 2015 with a smile according to the Arras People positivity index.
- Amongst UK based employees, 16% of Public sector workers saw their salary increase by more than inflation compared to 43% of their peers in the Private sector.

If you would like to secure access to the PMBR 2015 without completing the form, you can purchase a copy for £10.00 on the link below.

© www.arraspeople.co.uk Did You Know...?

Did you know...that around 10% of the sum spent in total over all projects is wasted money due to lack of alignment, lack of agility or lack of execution? This means that about 100 million USD are wasted for every billion invested in projects. (Source: PMI Pulse of Profession Report □The High Cost of low performance)

Did you know... that 47% of unsuccessful projects fail to meet goals due to poor requirements management? This is due to the fact that about 50% of companies have insufficient resources to do requirements management properly. (Source: PMI Pulse of Profession Report □Requirements Management)

Did you know... that 52% of Project Managers consider the rate of successful agile projects higher than 80% while only 26% of project managers consider the same success rate for classic projects? (Source: Study □Status Quo Agile □ University of Koblenz)

Membership Certification

By Mark Franks

Professional development is all about the long game. But you can get noticed in the short-term with these simple career hacks. Building the skills and experience organizations look for in a project leader takes years of focused effort. But there are also small steps you can take in the short term to position yourself for success.

Here are five project management career hacks that can help you showcase your skills — and stand out from the pack come promotion time.

Acknowledging Chapter Members' Achievement of PMI Certification

by Mark Franks, PMP

As PMI members almost all of us are familiar with the PMP certification — in fact, we try to publish monthly the list of members who have recently achieved their PMP certification. What has gone under appreciated until very recently is that many of our members are attaining the other PMI certifications. Due to the membership database structure we cannot easily distill monthly data for these achievements; however, acknowledging the effort and accomplishment of these successes is important. We will strive to recognize our fellow Chapter members' achievements semiannually by listing all those that attain certification at the newsletter link

Scopemasters — Develop your Communications Skills

By Chuck Siu

Toastmasters is not just a forum for better speaking skills, it's also a great venue for discussing, practicing, and perfecting communication techniques for all types of situations, from meeting facilitation to professional networking. The Scopemasters chapter adds a project management focus to the mix, and the result is a valuable, PDU earning, meeting that can pay big dividends for the time invested. If you are interested in finding out more about Scopemasters please send an email to scopemasters@pmi-sfbac.org and include your contact information. We'll get back to you with more details about how to be a part of this exciting organization.

Newsletter Team **Editor-in-Chief:** Sunil Prasad

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Web Layout Editor: Vacant

Editor-at-Large: Vacant Have something to share?

Have something to share? You are encouraged to submit notes, articles, or interesting tidbits on relevant Chapter happenings or PM topics. Submit content to Newsletter@pmi-sfbac.org. We reserve the right to: edit content to fit space constraints, reformat to Newsletter style and decide appropriateness of submission. [Return to Top](#)

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