Making the Transition to Agile

By Ron Montgomery

During most of my 30-plus year I.T. career, I have employed traditional, "waterfall" project management approaches. A few years ago, while meeting with the CIO of a new client, I began to describe the need for a WBS. Looking skeptical, he replied, "What the heck is a WBS?" After I explained the term, he asked, "Have you ever heard of Agile?" He patiently explained the benefits of Agile, not the least of which was my ability to continue to work for this client. Beyond that rather selfish motivation, I soon learned that Agile can help improve developer productivity, reduce project risk, and improve alignment with customers. Thus properly motivated, I began my sometimes-painful transition to Agile. The purpose of this article is to share the five lessons I learned with other project managers who are making this transition.

Lesson 1 - Do not discard what you already know – build on it

Please take a look at the sidebar with the Agile Manifesto and Agile Principles. If you are already an experienced project manager, most of these concepts will be familiar. Now, take a look at the following table, which compares the PMBOK® sections with Agile.

As you can see, Agile does not require that you discard project management principles. It does require that you develop a different mindset toward those principles. How much planning is required in order to develop a "just enough" estimate of the product backlog? How much written project documentation is needed? How can I know how long a project will take if the scope is variable? It takes some experience and judgment to acquire an Agile frame of mind, and this will be uncomfortable for those of us who were trained to "plan the work and work the plan."

I recommend that you begin your transition to an Agile frame of mind with an Agile project management class. But the class is only a starting point and it may make the transition seem too easy. An experienced project manager can sit through an Agile class and think to herself, "This is just like prototyping (or rolling wave

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PMBOK Section	Agile Viewpoint
Scope Management	Changes to scope are encouraged, and are managed via customer prioritization.
Schedule Management	Emphasis on short-term planning horizons and continual re-planning. Task sequencing and dependencies are worked out within iterations. The attitude is "plan, work, and plan again," instead of "plan the work and work the plan."
Cost Management	Proposes doing "just enough" planning to create an estimate at the project level. The rough estimate is then refined when the functionality is planned for a specific iteration.
Communication Management	Greater reliance on informal, face-to-face communications instead of written documentation.
Risk Management	Not an area of emphasis for Agile because common risks are mitigated as a result of the short-term planning horizon.
Human Resource Management	There are new role names (product owner, scrum master) and a strong preference for co-located, self-directed teams.
Integration Management	"Lessons learned" discussions occur at the end of each iteration instead of the end of the project. Agile utilizes a more collaborative approach to directing and managing project execution.
Quality Management	Emphasizes building quality into the development process.
Procurement Management	Not an area of focus for Agile.

or spiral or fill-in-the blank)." And she would be right; up to a point. The Agile methodology appears to be a variation on earlier attempts to cope with the complexity of software development. But Agile is more than that. While the concepts are simple, the transition of your thinking is not. After attending an Agile class, you should begin a course of independent study. There are numerous resources available but the following web sites are a good places to begin:

Agile Project Leadership Network:
    http://www.apln.org/
Scrum Alliance:
    http://www.scrumalliance.org/
Agile Journal:
    http://www.agilejournal.com/

Lesson 2 - Change management begins in the mirror

Perhaps the decision to "go Agile" is not your idea. After years of study and of leading successful projects, you know how to do your job and the day-to-day activities come naturally. You do not even need to think of them, until you try to transition to Agile. Over the years, you may have developed the habit of positioning yourself as the key point of contact for communication and task assignment. With Agile, the teams are more self-directed and you will become a facilitator who removes impediments rather than a director who assigns tasks. You will replace your earned value reports for a "backlog burn down" graph. The transition will not be easy and you will often become frustrated. It will be tempting to blame the methodology. Your team is watching you, so you will need to resist that temptation. Otherwise, your negative attitude will become contagious and you will contribute to the failure of your project. It will be necessary to control your own attitude and emotions and retain your focus on your project deliverables. Fortunately, Agile's emphasis on quick, short-term deliverables will provide enough positive feedback to help maintain your focus and your attitude.

Lesson 3 - Spend some quality time with the business sponsor

The Agile methodology arose from the software development discipline, but it is designed to be business-driven rather than technology-driven. In Agile, software functionality is defined in business terms by means of "stories." Those stories are defined and owned by the business. This level of business involvement helps ensure that the final product provides business value and avoids unnecessary functionality.

The project sponsor may welcome the opportunity for the business to drive the software development, but he must also be aware of the consequences. Normally, business involvement in a software project is heavy at the beginning and the end of the project but light during the most of the duration. The Agile method requires continual involvement of the business owner and subject matter experts during the entire project. As key business resources are pulled away from their daily duties to work on the project, their managers will protest and seek to reduce the time requirements. It is critically important that your sponsor understands the benefit of user involvement and resists the pressure to pull business team members from the project.

The contribution of the business resources and subject matter experts can be maximized if they are co-located with the developers during the duration of the project. This simple idea meets a surprising amount of resistance and you will need your sponsor's help to make it happen.

The Agile Manifesto, from the founders of the Agile movement
www.agilemanifesto.org

"...we have come to value:"	
Individuals and interactions over processes and tools	Working software over comprehensive documentation
Customer collaboration over contract negotiation	Responding to change over following a plan

"We value these principles..."	
Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software	Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage
Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale	Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project
Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done	The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation
Working software is the primary measure of progress	Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.
Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.	Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential.
The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.	At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

Finally, you will need to help your sponsor understand the short planning horizon of Agile projects. He may be accustomed to being told "Functionality XYZ will be complete in 9 months." It will take some time and some persuasion to allow your sponsor to be comfortable with plans that extend to only 2-6 weeks. He will need to understand that this short planning horizon supports changing priorities and ensures that development resources are not spent on unneeded system functionality.

Lesson 4 - Share your sandbox

In traditional projects, you may have been the "go-to" person. You were the focal point for the communications flowing among team members the customer, and the sponsor. With Agile, you will share those responsibilities with someone called a project owner. The role of the project owner is to explain the desired system functionality, which will be documented as user stories. The project owner prioritizes those stories during iteration planning and will have the responsibility of signing off on the stories when the development is complete.

Agile also requires changes in processes for communication, quality assurance, and release management. You will need the support of the IT line managers in order to make these changes, and it will be necessary to sell them on the Agile vision and share your successes with them.

It is common for project managers to be defensive of their turf. If you have difficulty sharing your sandbox, your transition to Agile will be quite painful.

Lesson 5 - Adapt to less formal methods of project communication

As noted earlier, Agile promotes extensive face-to-face communication. A cornerstone of Agile project communication is the daily stand up meeting (usually 15 minutes long). The daily stand up is not a status meeting. It requires each team member to quickly describe work accomplished the prior day, work to be accomplished today, and impediments. The project manager needs to listen carefully to these impediments because they identify potential issues or risks. It may be necessary to follow up on these impediments after the meeting.

The daily stand up meeting requires candor, but that may not be possible if there is an external customer in the room or on the phone during the meeting. Arrange separate meetings to communicate with the external customers.

Although face-to-face communication is a priority for the Agile method, bear in mind that not all stakeholders will participate directly in the project team. It will be necessary to communicate with all stakeholders periodically. Some of my Agile colleagues will disagree, but I recommend a written status report at the end of the iteration. The status report should go to project sponsors, owners, and all interested parties. Without the written status, you run the risk of information about your project being spread through the organization via the rumor mill.

The transition to Agile will require perseverance and an occasional dose of humility as you adapt to the change in mindset and approach. My transition is still underway, most of the pain has subsided, and I am working on another project with the client who introduced me to Agile. After you have worked with Agile for a couple of years, you may look back on the six-level WBS charts, the 10-page Gantt charts, and the detailed system specifications documents and marvel at how difficult project management was back in the old days.

Ron is a management consultant and owner of OnPoint, LLC (www.go-onpoint.com). Ron has over 30 years of hands-on experience with projects that encompass business planning, software development, process improvement, and deployment of software solutions.

Ron has achieved the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and has held the office of president of his local PMI chapter. He holds a B.A. degree in Industrial Relations from Rockhurst College in Kansas City.

☰ *Editor's Corner*

By Richard K. Fox, MS, PMP, CBAP

We believe that this issue offers our loyal readers a set of outstanding articles from knowledgeable authors with a host of practical ideas to immediately put to use on the job.

"Making the Transition to Agile" from author **Ron Montgomery** provides a fascinating look at the lessons learned by an experienced project manager from the "old school" on his way to experiencing the wonders and joys (and a few tribulations) of the Agile approach to software projects. Ron has provided a great explanation that will help you understand the Agile approach and especially how to get there as a project manager.

"**Managing Projects by Telling Stories**" from author **R. Camper Bull** provides a very unusual, yet very helpful, suggestion on how to motivate and engage all team members.

Ilango Kumaran MBA, PMP, ITIL in his article "**Thinking Operationally!**" offers a look at a touchy subject that is very often underestimated by many software project managers, much to the detriment of the project implementation. The author describes in detail the subject of insuring that the project manager has thought about and planned operational requirements and standards.

Author **Richard Bowden** in his article "**Components of a Successful Website Design Project**" provides our readers a fascinating and very practical look at a website creation or redesign project. Loaded with practical advice on insuring the success of your project, this article is a must read for any project managers about to embark on such a project.

Author **Kelly Gigliotti** ("**What Type of Project Manager are You?**") offers a very informative article that every project manager should read. It will definitely cause any reader to do some serious thinking about their management style and approach.

Managing Successful Software Projects: Estimating and Tracking the Right Way! by **Pedro Serrado** offers some very sage advice about the primary project manger responsibilities of estimating project costs and schedules as well as how to effectively track project performance.

Please contact me at editor@pmi-ISSIG.org with any ideas for articles that you would like to see in a future *Review*.

If you do consider writing an article for publication in the *Review* (15 PDUs for you PMPs) to share your experiences in project management, I would love to hear from you. Remember, you do NOT have to be a polished author to write for the *Review* and to see your name in print. That is what editors are for!

A most sincere thank you to all of our authors in this issue. By sharing your project experiences, good or bad, you provide the best learning experience for our readers and help to improve the project management profession.

Components of a Successful Website Design Project

By Richard Bowden

In this article I discuss what I think are three key aspects of website design projects that can help ensure the success of such projects. These three key aspects are;

1. The use of a user centered approach to designing the website
2. The use of the agile development methodology to develop the coding behind the website
3. Some important tasks that the project manager needs to manage to ensure that the project team perform well

While there is a section in the article dedicated to an overview of each aspect to demonstrate the benefits each can bring to a website design project, I emphasize that the greatest overall benefit is derived from the three being used together.

User Centered Design

With user centered design, the user becomes the focus of the design process. With this approach; designers are seeking to design an appropriate website that supports the user in their daily routine by asking such questions as;

- What is the user attempting to accomplish in terms of specific tasks and goals in their work?
- What information does the user require to progress their work and what's the most appropriate format that they would prefer?
- What set of features does the user require from this website?
- What are the user's expectations about how the website will work?
- Given the user's profile in terms of skills and experience, how can a website better assist the user in problem solving, learning and memory related tasks during their work routine?

As you can see from the above questions, this approach encompasses quantifiable items such as tasks and goals in addition to qualitative aspects such as a user's personality and their problem solving style.

In gathering relevant information from these and other related questions, the designer is focusing on improving the usability and the usefulness of the proposed website. Usability and usefulness may appear to be similar terms, but they are related to different aspects, in that;

- Usability is concerned with improving the ease of use of the website
- Usefulness is concerned with improving the relevance of the website to the user as they are completing a task

By improving the usefulness of a website, the user will find the information and functionality provided by the website to be relevant to the task at hand. This helps to increase the user's expectations and satisfaction with using the website. The quality of the website content is a critical factor in determining the usefulness of a website. In simple terms, if the site's content is written in simple, easy to understand terminology with short sentences and the appropriate management process is used to keep the information content current; the website will register high marks for usefulness.

Usability is focused on designing the website to be easy to use. So, irrespective of whether the website is relevant, the key question here is does the user find using the website to be a chore or a joy? Well known pointers for improving the usability of a website include;

- Does the user know where they are on a website as they are browsing the site and do they know how to get to the page where they want to go?
- Is the user able to find information quickly and easily, given that people scan rather than read content on a website?
- Is the content that the user is scanning self-evident or does the user have to spend time thinking about the meaning of the content. This point is elaborated on in Steve Krug's book – "Don't make me think …" as a key usability principle.
- When a user clicks any item on a website, there should be immediate feedback from the website showing the result of the action. If the user has made an error, then the website should provide both adequate detail on the error and a means of recovery, so that the user can quickly return to what they were trying to achieve before the error.

With the user centered approach, the user's requirements can be clearly articulated and with the related user involvement, the project is focused on the appropriate set of features to be delivered. An agile development approach can then be used to ensure that this set of features can be developed and delivered with high quality.

Agile Development

I believe that the main principles of Agile Development fit very well with the user centered design approach and assist in the rapid delivery of high quality software. In particular I would like to focus on the principle of iterations. In the context of this article, an iteration can be considered a specific set of website improvements or features that have been designed, developed and tested over a specific short timeframe. Such an iteration developed using Agile principles differs from a prototype in that the website improvements are a working piece of the final desired set of improvements or features.

Adopting the iteration principle with the resultant focus on a distinct and defined set of features when developing a website can bring a number of benefits to the project including;

- Better software quality
- Improved team communications between designers, developers and users

If the website project needs to change direction to respond to a changing business environment, short iterations provide the project team with the option to respond quickly to current circumstances as opposed to being 'anchored' to a sequential design and development process and a pre-determined project plan that may be going out of sync with the current business needs.

Another benefit of incorporating the iteration principle, as a team executes a website design project, is the leveraging of the release and sign-off phase of each iteration to provide a checkpoint for users, designers, developers and sponsors to compare and validate the overall project direction and design to ensure that the project is pursuing the appropriate business objectives.

Since Agile development and user centered design provide methodologies to articulate and deliver new features to a website, now all that is needed is for the project manager to facilitate the project team to perform.

Project Management

One way for the project manager to facilitate the project team to perform well is to focus on the potential risks that could negatively impact on a project. These may include the following;

1. **Ensuring a clear understanding of the business drivers for the website project.**
   The project manager should compile and circulate a statement of work. The statement of work contains details on:
   - The business requirements that are driving the project. These drivers can include legal/regulatory requirements, market/customer requirements and internal business process improvement initiatives.
   - An overview of the specific requirements that are to be provided by the project. This overview can be expanded in greater detail later in the project, as each iteration is planned and completed.
   - An explanation of how this project supports the strategic goals of the organization. This explanation is very important in demonstrating the project's importance to the organization.

   The statement of work shows the overall scope from which the detail of each iteration is drawn.

2. **Ensuring that the website project team has the appropriate sponsorship and support of senior management, in particular from the different areas of the organization that may be impacted by the project.**
   This doesn't mean that the website will be designed for senior management! It means that the project will be delivering practical business benefits to the business and that senior management support is available as and when required.

3. **Ensuring that an appropriate budget is set aside for website maintenance after the initial software application is rolled out.**
   As we all know, if a well designed website is not maintained appropriately and consistently after its launch, it can lose its usefulness. Appropriate maintenance includes the recognition that:
   - Style guides and templates need to evolve with changing business needs and to ensure that the look & feel doesn't become outdated.
   - The importance of content management to provide a means to have content prepared for the web first, rather than assuming that content from other media can be copied or reformatted from other sources to be displayed on the website.

4. **Ensuring that a proper user centered design methodology and approach is used for the detailed design and development work.**
   The project manager needs to ensure that not only is the methodology being used, but that it is being used effectively. Rather than just deciding on a specific set of design iterations in advance, it may be preferable to incorporate a set of metrics such as the time required to complete a set of sample tasks using the new design to help decide if an iteration has achieved its desired results and/or whether further iterations are required. Additional metrics such as the number and categories of errors discovered before the iteration is completed assist in reviewing if changes are required to the development process and workflow.

In summary, the probability of a successful website design project is enhanced when such projects:
1. Focus on the user(s) and ensure that their requirements are articulated correctly and that the user(s) have the right involvement in the iterative development of the set of features for a website.
2. Adopt an agile approach to the development of the website's set of features with a focus on iterations, frequent reviews and, if necessary, adaption to changing business circumstances.
3. Ensure that the project manager is focused on facilitating the project team to perform well with the benefits of a combined user centered design and agile development approach.

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Managing Projects by Telling Stories

By R. Camper Bull, PMP

It was the end of another very long week. I slumped down at my desk not wanting to look at how many e-mails had accumulated since I'd been away at my meetings. I was in the midst of an international project, developing a key piece of software that would take my company to the next level.

I had everything going for me including stakeholders' support, the best resources in the company, a budget that actually made the project possible, and it still wasn't working. I couldn't understand why it was not happening. I had done all the proper prerequisites. I had a kickoff meeting. We'd even done some of those teambuilding exercises. I had followed the project management guidelines laid out by the organization and even came up with several improvements; but the team still wasn't coming together. People did not follow procedures or didn't bother to show up for meetings that were critical to keep the process going.

It seemed like I was Sisyphus, pushing a rock up the hill only to have it roll back down on me. In desperation, I opened my e-mail and focused on my personal correspondence, trying to avoid work for a few minutes. I received an e-mail from an old friend whom I hadn't talked to a long while. He had once given me some of the best advice. As I was walking up to make a speech in front of 400 people, he shook my hand and whispered in my ear, "Remember, the best teachers teach by telling stories."

Those few simple words changed the way I looked at the world. Upon reflection, I realized that most of the great leaders of our world use stories to motivate, teach, excite, and highlight the important things in life. Once I started looking, I began finding this everywhere – from the teachings of Confucius who would explain difficult problems by setting them in a local context, to national stories about historical figures. I recognized that the great historical figures did not stick in my head because of dates or prominence or any sort of edifice; but because I knew stories about them. In all major religious texts, the important lessons are told in story form to make them easier to understand and remember.

After making this realization, my whole world came into greater clarity. For example, my father was an archaeologist and would inspire 200-300 individuals a year to fly to the Middle East to work in a hot, sweaty desert for five weeks on a city that had been dead for almost 2000 years. He would also convince them that they should pay their own way. Most of these volunteers were not the idle rich but college students and professors with a great deal of interest and very little money. It always amazed me how my father could get people to pay their own way to excavate in relatively uncomfortable situations. Then I realized that I had known the answer all along. My father was a master storyteller and could get people excited about the idea of the unknown and the discovery of bits of information or as he would say, footnotes to history. The great discoveries of his career included a road system and an ancient religious hall for a long dead religion. This was nothing like the Indiana Jones movies; it was hot, sweaty work with very little reward. But he would talk about how this city was built brand-new with the best of Roman engineering. He would speak about the names of individuals from the past who set foot on the walk that he would excavate. He would talk about discovering the road system by using new technology and the ingenious

ways that volunteers would figure out how to become more efficient and use the meager resources to discover this city of dreams.

Volunteers would come back year after year to rekindle the excitement and to do more hot and sweaty excavation. These volunteers would bring their stories of past excavations and tell them in the beginning to the new volunteers to let them know the fun, the hardships, and the excitement involving this once-in-a-lifetime experience. So my father needed to tell fewer stories and the volunteers took over that process. My father has long since retired from excavating in the Middle East and at 88 years old is still convincing people to help him write books about all of the excavations. His legacy continues almost 20 years later with new individuals and new stories.

We, as Project Managers, are very much like my father. We have a group of individuals who do not report to us and must be treated for all intents and purposes like volunteers. They need to be motivated, excited and focused. The Project Manager is responsible for all of this as well as helping them understand that there is a process that they need to follow and the importance of that process. I had fallen down on my responsibility as a Project Manager. I was so concerned with the mechanics of Project Management, I had forgotten to treat these people like volunteers and inspire them the best way I could.

Throughout the ages, from the fires that we sat around to today's great cinema productions, our society and the world are shaped by the stories we tell. Once we recognize the power of stories, we can harness that primeval understanding to really motivate and excite the individuals around us. Stories should talk about great achievements, the way the individuals came up with new ideas, and should teach lessons indirectly.

A classic example of this is that when the Federal Express company first started, their motto was, "When it absolutely, positively has to get there overnight." One of the stories that circulated to teach a new Federal Express driver was how important the slogan was. The story was about a Federal Express driver who forgot to take the key that opens the Federal Express drop-off boxes. These Federal Express boxes actually have cement in them to make sure that they stay where they are placed. Instead of the Federal Express driver driving back to get his key, which would make the packages late, he backed the truck up next to the box and struggled to get it onto the truck. When he got back to the warehouse he opened up the truck to reveal that he had taken the entire Federal Express drop off box instead of leaving it for the next day. The point of the story is that the driver was not punished and the packages got to their destinations on time. Whether this story is actually true or not is almost immaterial. It is much better if it is, but it certainly teaches us and all the other drivers how seriously Federal Express took their commitment to delivering on time.

Not all of us will have such heroic stories of great feats. But there are certainly stories you can start telling that teach your project team about what you're expecting as well as setting the expectations of what they should be doing.

Storytelling not only helps teach but emphasizes the importance of certain things and makes them memorable. It is better if you can find stories that are not about yourself but about other people. In this

way, you get the added benefit of not only teaching but using that story to recognize individuals that have done good work within the project team. Once you start looking for stories you will find them all over the place. As you start telling stories people will reciprocate and tell you stories as well. It is important not only to remember the stories but who told them in order to recognize as many people as you can within that storytelling group.

This is a tool that can be used on a regular basis to emphasize important points to teach an organization. The other interesting thing about stories is that they are relatively easy to remember and repeat. This allows you to create a culture whereby individuals can continue to represent and display the admirable qualities that you have emphasized in your stories.

After this realization I started keeping a small notebook full of ideas and actions that people had done that I wanted to compliment. I would start most meetings with a quick story of something positive I saw and recognizing the individual by name. Sometimes it was simple as getting information to me on time. Recognizing an individual who had always been late who actually got me the information on time for the first time broke the ice as well as encouraged this individual to continue the positive practice. As I started looking, I was able to find more and more stories not only from the team but also from the senior management that I could bring in to emphasize this important point. This would show not only senior management buy-in but also how important they see various aspects of our project.

When meeting with the stakeholders, if I knew that an individual was within their organization, I would make sure to share some story about what they're doing and how well they're doing it. Interestingly enough, the stakeholders would then tell me stories about that individual which I could bring back into the organization. The true test was one day when

I was in the hall sorting through a problem on a Gantt chart, I heard a senior member of the team retelling a story to a new member to help her understand what the expectations of this project were and how important it was to get certain items done on time. Just using stories I was able to turn around not only the attitude of the people, but also make my life easier, because I had a mechanism by which not only I could emphasize the importance and teach, but compliment each individual in a very personal way.

As powerful as the stories are, they can be used positively or negatively. It is vitally important that you only tell positive stories and that you reinforce the things that you wish to happen. You have to set the expectation and if you use stories that talk negatively or reflect poorly on the group, this will have a multiplying effect just as much as the positive conversations.

At the end of this project, we were able to not only surpass the requirements but secure the customer in a long term agreement and develop several individuals into much more advanced team players. I would never take all the credit. All I learned was that once I started the stories and a positive attitude, the entire project team took that up and made it much better than I could have by myself. Almost 10 years later, we still stay in contact. The funny and memorable stories still circulate over e-mail and quiet corners of the local pub. Some of the processes we developed and the software we implemented are still working as a testament to how powerful stories can be.

Camper is the host of the free Project Leadership Podcast, bringing state-of-the-art Project Management information to your iPod. Camper is a partner in Armiger International, a small boutique training firm and can be reached at camper.bull@armigerinternational.com

The Mission of the ISSIG

The mission of the PMI Information Systems SIG is to become *the* professional IS and IT project management organization of choice by providing the greatest value to current and prospective worldwide members through the delivery of quality and unique services and products in a cost-effective manner. The Mission will be accomplished through:

- Disseminating state-of-the-art project management practices.
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What Type of Project Manager are You?

By Kelly Gigliotti, MBA, PMP

Your future in Project Management depends on the answer to the question "what type of PM are you?" A Dr. Kerzner recently gave a speech at the 2009 NEOPMI Annual Awards Dinner. The title of the speech was The Future of Project Management: Value-Driven Project Management. Dr. Kerzner emphasized that Project Management is no longer just managing the triple constraint (time, budget and performance), but that a new type of Project Manager now focuses on defining and delivering business value. Through my 15 years in Project Management, I have observed and performed as both. Even when a company expects only administrative PMs, I believe it is necessary to do more. Stepping up and leading your project team to focus on delivering business value will provide significant benefit to project stakeholders and the organization as a whole.

In the mid-90s, as a Jr. Project Manager (PM), the projects that I worked on were under $200,000 with only 3-4 resources. With such small teams, a dedicated business analyst wasn't often needed. There was a methodology to use, but no PMO or any enforcement of the methodology. Beyond the standard PM tasks, I often would gather the business requirements, interpret them for the developers, occasionally create designs, guide the developers, create test scripts, perform testing, create and deploy end user training. Being close to the clients increased my knowledge of the business and their expectations and the value that the project was to deliver. Due to the informality, there was flexibility to adjust the project scope. The clients felt they had direct control over the outcome of the projects.

Evaluations were done based on the satisfaction of the clients and the PM's evaluation of their skill and effort. Without knowing the terminology at the time, I was functioning as a **Leader** who focused on the business value of the project.

Showing the leadership and focusing on the client and the value of the project was recognized by Management. I was quickly assigned to bigger projects with more resources and a significantly larger business impact and budget. The company formalized the role of the Project Manager and created their first PMO. PMs were heavily rated on being on-time and on-budget, and producing all the required artifacts described in the methodology. Often times, the methodology required artifacts that were not relevant for a particular project. After a few times of being "dinged" during a PM audit for not producing a deliverable, PMs began to blindly create the documents. The methodology produced "robot" PMs that used a "cookie cutter" approach to managing projects. High ratings for year-end performance appraisals were gained by PMs who learned to create all required documents and use the change process to ensure the project came in on-time and in-budget. However, clients weren't happy and the reputation of IT was tarnished.

In 2005, the next era of Project Management came into play with my employer's adoption of an Agile methodology. PMs now were direct managers of a dedicated team of programmer/analysts. The role of the PM expanded to include actual manager and in many instances, technical lead. Project document assets were up to the discretion of the project team, who scrutinized the value of each deliverable created.

The Organization rated the performance of individuals and teams based on the value that they delivered to their clients and the company as a whole. The PMs quickly learned to socialize the value aspect of their project and constantly justify the value that their team produced.

Corporate performance evaluation practices have a great influence over the type of PM that resides in an organization. Companies that solely judge PM performance based on "on-time and on-budget" will likely have Administrative PMs. Companies who evaluate PMs based on the value they produce and the satisfaction of clients will likely develop PM Leaders. Even though a company has a major influence on the type of PM that they create, a PM can exceed expectations and focus on being a Leader who delivers value to the client and organization.

In 2008, I joined another Fortune 500 company. The project methodology was heavily waterfall-oriented with a daunting array of required deliverables. I was fortunate to be assigned a regulatory project with a hard end date. The IT team was engaged very late and resulted in a difficult, large, high risk initiative. When assigned, I knew that the organization's expectations were that the PM should fill the "Administrative" role. But, I also knew that we would never meet the regulatory date without strong leadership and a close client relationship. Given the enormity of the job, after convincing management, I hired an assistant to fulfill the PM administrative role.

This allowed me to focus on leading the project to ensure the intended value was delivered. The Business Analyst took another position mid-way into the project and I happily assumed that role in addition to the leader PM role. This closer relationship with the clients provided me the opportunity to better understand their goals and expectations. After the entire project team worked 60 to 80 hour weeks, the project successfully delivered the product on the required date. The project team's feedback was that it made such a huge difference to have a Project Leader who supported the team, worked through problems in a collaborative fashion and knocked down barriers instead of just being a paper pusher who screamed about tasks being late.

Ask yourself, "What type of Project Manager am I?" More importantly, once you know the answer, decide on what type of PM you want to be on your next assignment. Even if your company hasn't changed their expectations and evaluation methods, you can still meet the administrative requirements and begin taking more of the leader role. Project Managers must continue to manage to the triple constraint and additionally lead their teams to ensure real business value is delivered. Doing so will benefit you and your company. You will have appreciative clients, satisfaction knowing you've made a real difference, and improved career opportunities. You will be noticed as a stand-out performer. Your company will have happier more productive teams and higher value results.

To determine the type of project manager you are and the type of project environment that exists in your organization, please complete the brief questionnaire on the following page. Then check the scores for yourself and your organization.

The Project Manager Type Questionnaire

Below is a questionnaire to help determine which type of Project Manager your company values and which type of Project Manager you are. Rate the questions below on a scale of 1 to 10. 10 is the most representative of the question, and 1 is the least representative.

You can also ask team members to complete the individual characteristics questions to get their perception on your project manager skills.

Kelly Gigliotti, MBA, PMP, has worked in Information Technology for over 20 years; 14 years as a Project Manager. She has worked for Progressive Insurance, KeyBank and is currently employed by National City, now a part of PNC. She earned her MBA with a concentration in MIS from the Weatherhead School of Management in 1994, and became a PMP certified in 2001. Kelly is also certified as a SCRUM Master and Basic FAIR Risk Analyst. During her career, she has led the creation of a project management methodology, formalized a quality and testing methodology, developed numerous training programs for project managers and quality assurance specialists, served as an organization change manager for a quality assurance group, and a program risk manager for an enterprise-wide project. She has also led numerous other projects, small and large, in the banking industry. Kelly is a member of PMI NE Ohio Chapter as well as the ISSIG. She can be reached at Kelly.Gigliotti@att.net.

Scale of 1 to 10
10 being most like,
1 being least like

Company Characteristics:
1) My Company has a centralized PMO that determines required deliverables. _____
2) My Company rates the PM performance primarily on the triple constraints. _____
3) The Information Technology Organization is engaged by the business after defining the project. _____
4) The PM Methodology is primarily waterfall-oriented. _____
5) The Information Technology Organization is seen by the Line of Business as a necessary evil. _____

Individual Characteristics:
1) Every member of the project team knows the business value of the project. _____
2) Team members feel free to offer suggestion and bring up issues. _____
3) The PM makes decisions quickly. _____
4) The PM can describe the business features of the product. _____
5) The PM can discuss the function of each piece of technology being delivered. _____
6) The PM uses "we" as opposed to "I" and "You"? _____
7) Would clients use you again? _____
8) Would clients recommend you to their friends or colleagues? _____

Evaluating the Results:
Company PM Characteristics
Score of 35 to 50 – Company views the Project Management job as primarily Administrative.
Score of 20 to 34 – Company is likely in the process of changing its view of PMs from an administrative role to a leadership role focused on delivering value.
Score of 5 to 19 – Company views the Project Managers as Leaders focused on delivering business value.

Individual PM Characteristics
Score of 64 to 80 – You are already performing the PM Leadership role, focused on delivering value to your clients.
Score of 48 to 63 – In process of transition into the "Leader" role focused on delivering value to your customers.
Score 8 to 47 – You are functioning primarily as an Administrative PM.

Thinking Operationally!

By Ilango Kumaran, MBA, PMP, ITIL

It was a big day at London Heathrow airport! After nearly two decades in the making, the £4.3 billion Terminal 5 was becoming operational. The gleaming, fashionable Terminal 5 with elegant departure lounges, and high-end shops was the answer from British Airways to attract and retain business and first class passengers. These premium passengers have recently preferred ultra-modern European hubs like Amsterdam and Frankfurt. With state of the art equipment, Terminal 5 was expected to increase operational efficiency and eliminate at least 700 airport jobs.

Within a few hours of the opening, incoming and outgoing baggage started piling up, with passengers queuing up at security and check in desks, and flights getting delayed or leaving without baggage. It was chaos everywhere!

Over the next several hours, several flights were cancelled, thousands of passengers were left stranded or traveled without their baggage, 15,000 bags did not travel with their owners, and the whole operation had to be moved back to the old terminals. An investigation into this operational fiasco found that it started when the first group of airport staff could not arrive on time due to lack of parking spaces in the designated car parking area. This resulted in the staff searching for a parking space and being delayed.

Yes, it was a small, overlooked operational detail that resulted in a disaster of this magnitude!

In every industry, you can quote such stories. Software is not exempted. There are many instances when a new software implementation has brought the business operation down to its knees. The standard recipe for any operational disaster: **Roll back and investigate!**

Traditionally, projects are more focused on managing functional and other non-functional requirements. In many instances, operational requirements are never understood, never gathered, completely ignored or overlooked. Any of these can guarantee an operational disaster on the very first day a project moves into production.

In the software industry, project managers are responsible for building the software within the given cost, time and resource constraints. They use a traditional or agile software development life cycle (SDLC) as their product development methodology. Both recommend the requirements, analysis, design and testing on the path to build a successful software product. Any activity necessary to support a software product in production, also known as 'Post-production or Operations,' is usually considered to fall outside the software development life cycle. In a mature organization the post-production support is handled by a Production Support Manager or an Operations Manager.

A project manager represents an IT development organization or a Project Management Organization (PMO) while a production support manager represents an Operations organization. This distinct boundary between the development organization and the opera-

tions organization creates numerous challenges in practice. (See Figure 1) In many cases, project managers are not exposed to the processes, procedures or tools used by the operations team. This results in a project manager failing to collect the operational requirements in the initial phase and often discovering them at the end phase. At this point, a project manager has only 2 choices - allow a project to overrun or face an operational failure. This double headed monster could have been avoided if the project manager had thought operationally from the beginning of the project.

This paper provides an insight into the operations world's processes, procedures and tools which can be used by software project managers to **think operationally** right from the beginning of a project. The information is presented along the software life cycle phases so that the expected operation-related activities can be seamlessly integrated into the development process.

Requirements Phase:

Discover Operations Standards: A project manager should explore and discover all the operations standards for the environment. Typical operations standards include - file transfer standards, job/batch standards, scheduling standards, file naming convention standards, directory naming standards, archival standards, database naming standards, database table and field naming standards, messaging standards, security standards, reusable library naming standards and others. Not following these standards usually result in significant rework or new work at the time of moving into production.

Discover Operations Processes: In addition, the project manager and the project team must become familiar with all the relevant processes that are followed by the operations team. Some operational processes that can impact a development team are source code control/configuration management, builds, change management, system downtime approval and notification, deployment, release management, incident management, and the event notification process.
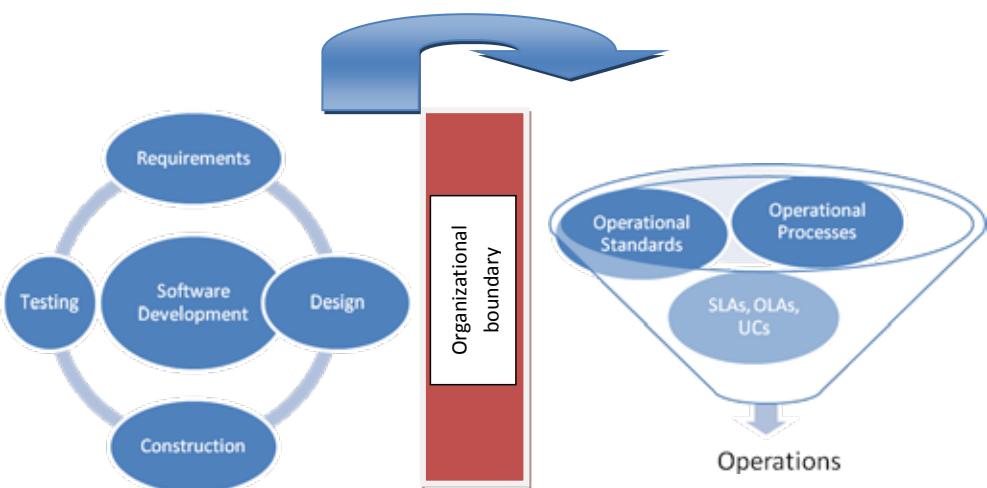

Fig - 1: The distinct organizational boundaries between a development organization and Operation organization

Discover Service Management Agreements: The project manager must capture the Service Level Requirements (SLR), Service Level Agreement (SLA), Operational Level Agreement (OLA) and the Underpinning Contract (UC) for the newly built system. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is an agreement between an Operations department and a customer. The agreement could be for making system availability or system monitoring or both. For example, an agreement that any system failure will be resolved within 'x' minutes is a typical Service Level Agreement (SLA). A Service Level Requirement (SLR) is a customer requirement for an aspect of an IT Service. A requirement that a system must respond within 'x' seconds is a typical Service Level Requirement (SLR). Many times project managers capture the SLRs but miss the SLAs. Such missed requirements can seriously impact the operations team's service providing capabilities and can result in a penalty or loss of business. An Operational Level Agreement (OLA) is an agreement between an IT department and another department within the enterprise. An OLA is internally focused. An Underpinning Contract (UC) is an agreement between an IT provider and a third party vendor.

Get the Operations Manager on board: A project manager should get the operations manager on board to evaluate the impact of the new system on the existing SLAs or to draft a new SLA based on the new system changes.

Create Operational Test Plan: It is quite common for the project team to start identifying test cases, test scenarios and test plans during the requirements gathering phase. A project manager must also ensure that test cases, test scenarios and test plans are created for the identified operations requirements as well. SLRs, SLAs, OLAs, and UCs must be tested.

Design Phase:

In this phase the project manager must ensure that the system is designed in compliance with operations standards. An example would be to design a database table with the appropriate naming standards or a messaging queue with the messaging queue standards. Additionally, he/she must ensure that all aspects related to SLR, SLA, OLA, and UCs are addressed in the design. The design must be peer reviewed and the designer must explain the design aspect that addresses the SLR and SLA requirements. The designer is accountable for highlighting any risk in meeting the SLA expectations. If the project permits, a system prototype demonstrating the key SLRs and SLAs would help to avoid any operational surprises.

Construction Phase:

The development team must be compliant with the expected operations standards such as file and folder naming standards, database table and field naming standards, security standards, reusable library naming standards and others. During the construction phase, the project team usually pays very little attention to security standards as they are more focused in building the functional and non-functional requirements. However, this can lead to rework when the system is ready to move into a controlled test environment System Integration Testing (SIT), User Acceptance Testing (UAT) or Production environment. A classic example is writing and executing stored procedures as a database administrator (DBA) in the development environment which then will stop working when moved into a controlled test environment (SIT, UAT). This situation can lead to unproductive time for the testing team as they have to wait until the security issue is resolved.

Fig - 2: Thinking Operationally: Quick poster

Testing Phase:

In addition to validating and verifying the functional readiness of the system, the team must verify and validate the operational readiness of the new system. The test cases, test scenarios and test plans created during the Test plan creation phase must help in accomplishing this objective. The project manager must help the team simulate the operational environment as close as possible to verify operational readiness. This is also the phase where the project manager and operations manager must validate any updated service level expectations with the customer and secure their approval.

Transition to Operation: For the Big Day

Depending on the size of the project, a project manager must coordinate a 'mock operation day' before the 'real operation day.' This helps in ironing out any issues and to observe any new processes in action. A clear backout plan must be developed and tested so that the new system can be rolled back within the shortest time frame. Additionally, a team of engineers must be available on call to act on any new issues or to initiate the roll back.

Conclusion:

To summarize, all project managers must wear an operations hat all through the project life cycle to ensure that their final product is operationally ready. If the Heathrow Terminal 5 team had ever tested the operational readiness of the new terminal, then the opening day fiasco could have been avoided. Adopting an "operationally thinking" approach will avoid a great deal of surprise when the project is transitioning into production. Figure 2 provides a poster to remind you through the software life cycle.

Though on-time and under-budget are good measures to identify a project's success, a project's true success must be determined based on its operational success.

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Managing Successful Software Projects: Estimating and Tracking the Right Way!

By Pedro Serrado, MBA, PMP, P.Eng

Proper estimating and tracking are keys to successful software development projects. Without them, you may be stuck managing a late project. With them, you will find the ultimate key to happiness and acclaim (well maybe not … but you will enjoy your work quite a bit more!).

Software development project management is notorious for late and unsuccessful projects. I have managed software development projects for more than 15 years and have discovered some keys to delivering successful software projects.

Software projects today are managed differently from the way they were managed in the past. Formal processes are more widely used and the level of experience of the managers involved is better than ever before; yet many projects are still delivered late, over budget or both. In 2008, 51 percent of big corporate software development projects surveyed were defined as "challenged" by the Standish Group of research advisers in Dennis, Mass.

One reason is that software development poses some unique project problems. Estimating and tracking are two areas where software projects often get into trouble.

Estimating Faults

Many software development projects fail due to the lack of accurate estimates. If your estimates are too low, as is the case in many software projects; then there probably will be no way to meet your original timelines and budgets. Software projects are very difficult to estimate for a wide variety of reasons.

Why is estimating software projects so darned hard? Here's why:

- **Detail:** Writing software is about handling a large number of details: everything from the way the main program does its calculations, to writing code to change the look of the buttons on the screen, to writing code that displays the many hundreds of possible errors in a readable manner to the user. When estimating the time to create a piece of code, it is very easy to overlook some of this detail.
- **Uniqueness:** Though attempts have been made to make software code reusable, this effort has had only limited success. Most software projects and most modules within those projects are new to the developers writing them and often new to the world. Most software developers spend their careers writing code to do very new things every project. On a construction project, if you had only put in windows before could you give a good estimate on building a staircase?
- **Software developers are optimists:** Estimates by developers are usually too optimistic. You can trust the estimates of some experienced developers and software architects, but I have never run into a software person who pads his estimates too much. Often the opposite is the case.
- **Unexpected problems will occur:** In software, bugs caused by a mistake in a single line of code can take days to track down. Other problems can occur when a piece of third party software

doesn't perform as expected and you can spend weeks trying to find out if it is a bug in your code or in the vendor's code. These types of problems can and do occur, are hard to plan for and can affect your project schedule.

- **The attitude that planning and process are a waste of time:** This attitude was prevalent in software development a few years ago. Some of the comments heard include:
  - o Software is creative and we can't interfere with the process
  - o Paperwork takes away from development time
  - o The schedule is too tight for us to spend time properly designing the solution
  - o The documentation is the code (it isn't!)

Of course, avoiding proper planning results in late projects; or worse, a project that doesn't meet the needs of the end user and ends up being scrapped.

Tracking Mishaps

Even with good estimates and planning, a project can run into problems during execution. Here are some problems to watch for:

- **Difficult Bugs:** Developers will always run into bugs. I have seen a developer spend the better part of two days trying to track down a problem caused by a single letter spelling mistake.
- **Gold Plating and Tangents:** Some staff will start working on a task and quickly use up half the time on the task building the world's greatest configuration utility, a top of the line help system or a module in that sexy new computer language. None of this work may be necessary, planned for, or good for the project. Ensure that developers know their deliverables on a weekly basis and don't spend their time doing unnecessary work.
- **Drifting Away:** Not monitoring closely enough can result in your dates slowly drifting to the point where your project will be late. Near the

> **Software Project Problem Area Summary**
>
> Estimating
> - Detail: It is difficult to get detailed enough
> - Uniqueness: almost every project is new
> - Software developers are optimists: check their estimates
> - Unexpected problems will occur
> - Many in the software world will believe planning and process are a waste of time
>
> Tracking
> - Difficult bugs will occur so you better know about them and fix them
> - Gold plating and tangents: are developers focusing where they should?
> - Drift: if the project is trending toward lateness, you should know about it early

end of the project, it will be too late to take action and get it back on schedule.

Solutions?

Is there anything a project manager can do to avoid these problems? Yes! Here are some tips:

Estimate right the first time!

- Ownership has its advantages - have the developers own the estimates in the project plan. The best way to ensure you have an accurate schedule that the team believes in is to base it on their estimates. Require them to breakdown and list all their tasks and then estimate the effort. The team lead will also be involved in this process. When the planning is done, get them to agree to the dates. This process will give you better estimates to work with and will motivate the team to meet their deadlines.
- Detailed design - ensure that each developer has considered design. This doesn't have to be a long process but it needs to be detailed enough to show that the developer has thought through everything that needs to be done. Even a small amount of pre-planning and design will improve estimates and improve the quality of the product.
- Design review meetings - get the team together in a room to discuss the proposed design. What else needs to be done and the possible pitfalls should also be discussed. You will be surprised at the ideas put forth and the problems avoided.
- Bottom up is good! - the greater the level of detail, the less chance work will be missed in your planning. Work should be broken down to approximately 1-5 day long tasks. If your project is too large to make that practical, break down the project plan into smaller sub-project plans and delegate the estimating. If no one goes to that level of detail, there is a good chance work will be missed. Put all your detailed tasks together to build the big plan.
- Top down is bad! – trying to get a plan to fit into dates defined from above without doing detailed estimating will get you into big trouble.
- Previous experience – it is always better to learn from someone else's mistakes than from your own! If you have a similar project that was competed within your organization in the past or if you have access to records from a similar project elsewhere, you may use this information as a basis for comparison and for creating your estimates. Best of all is if some of your team has done a similar project in the past. Do what you can to get these people on your team and consider hiring outside consultants with the right experience. Often, this type of information or experience may not be available internally.
- Formal analysis – Formal methods such as function point analysis exist for estimating software projects and are ways of estimating based on an analysis of the requirements for a project. Doing function point analysis requires training but can provide estimates before a detailed design is available and even before the team is assembled. It is not always a substitute for detailed design and planning. However, it may be worthwhile for high risk projects.

Track Religiously!

- Track Weekly – meet at least once a week to discuss progress and to update your project plan. It will quickly become clear if a developer is having problems or is behind schedule. Group meetings are great for this; developers will not like to report they are late in front of the team and so are motivated to keep on schedule. If your project plan isn't being updated with actuals every week, why not?
- Have some contingency, darn it. Always ensure you have adequate buffers built in. I sometimes add contingency to individual estimates from junior developers. Developers often don't factor in interruptions, meetings and phone calls when estimating. In addition, I add an overall contingency to the project. Even with this added contingency, which may even sound like overkill, you are very likely to find your project pushing the deadlines.
- Don't rush it - the biggest mistake starting software project managers make is to agree to compress the timeline. This doesn't work in most project management fields and is especially problematic in software development. Rushing through the writing of code is a risky exercise. Small mistakes made in a rush or by a tired developer can be costly. You may find the code written when a developer has stayed an extra six hours late one night ends up taking him or her two days to rewrite during the testing phase. An occasional late night or weekend can help get a project back on track but save it for emergencies; you shouldn't include it in your up front planning or overdo it.
- See a problem, take action! – if dates start to slip, get help for that developer. If you're tracking weekly, you will know early enough to take action. Ensure you know if someone is stuck on a problem and try to help (asking questions can do wonders for expanding developer's thought processes even if you don't have the technical knowledge to give the solution). Get senior team members to help resolve tricky bugs. Get the team lead or a senior developer to help out.
- Stop the drift: If you start to see that your estimates are consistently off, you need to take action immediately. Otherwise, the chances of delivering on time are very, very low. Renegotiating delivery dates or removing some functionality is much easier to do early in the project than towards the end of the project. Late in the game, capital may have already been spent on the project launch and changing it will be very difficult.

Following these suggestions will improve the consistency of software development projects. Though other things can go wrong and other areas need to be managed, following these tips will maximize your chance of delivering a highly successful software development project.

It has worked for me: I have been consistently delivering successful software development projects for many years now. Just follow these steps and you can too!

Pedro Serrador, MBA, PMP, P.Eng. is a project and program management consultant and speaker to large international corporations based in Toronto. He specializes in technically complex and high risk projects. He holds an Hons. BSc in Physics and Computer Science from the University of Waterloo, Canada and an MBA from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland. He is a professional engineer in computer engineering and has been a PMP since 2000. He can be reached at pedro@serrador.net.

Avoiding the Pitfalls Summary:

Estimating
- Give the team ownership of the dates
- Do detailed design
- Use design review meetings
- Estimate bottom up
- Take advantage of previous experience
- Consider formal analysis

Tracking
- Track weekly
- Have enough contingency
- Don't rush it!
- See a problem, take action!
- Take early action on drift

☰ Chair's Corner

By Teresa Colon, PMP

Welcome to another issue of the PMI Information Systems Specific Interest Group *Review*. As we all hope that this economy will bounce back and fast, we have to begin to take stock of ourselves. We would have to find ways to re-invent ourselves to see about finding that perfect opportunity. How about seeking a PMI certification?

For those of you seeking the PMP certification, there is a new exam based on the 4th Edition of the PMBOK®. Many organizations have updated their material and are offering courses throughout this year. The PMI Information Systems SIG has developed a PMP Desk reference that can be used to help you study for the exam. It will soon be available online for our members. For those who are certified, it also helps to keep up with the new changes.

With all the different PMI certifications, what would be best for you? I encourage all of you to seek other certifications to augment your personal knowledgebase and help you succeed in these tough times. Recently a member reached out to me searching for answers on the PgMP exam. He was interested in taking the exam but wanted to know what it took to get certified. I introduced him to a PgMP® I know and the rest is history.

Did you know that there is a Risk and a Schedule certification? If you are seeking employment, why not consider looking into these other certifications to give you the edge over other project managers? There are many different steps for all the separate PMI certifications. Check out PMI's website for details on what is available.   http://www.pmi.org/CareerDevelopment/Pages/AboutPMIsCredentials.aspx

Are you planning to attend the PMI Global Congress this October at the Gaylord Palms in Orlando, Florida? Specific Interest Groups will conduct their Annual Business Meeting at the Global Congress so why not join us at our Annual Business Meeting set for Saturday, October 10, 2009 from 1pm till 3pm. This is the opportunity for you to meet with the Information Systems SIG board of directors face to face. We are finalizing our plans for this event and are excited to meet you all. There will be a presentation, networking, raffles and PDUs will be awarded that day. Look for more announcements in the coming weeks.

For the PMI Information Systems SIG, one of our Stakeholders is you, our members.

One of our initiatives, the Virtual Community Project headed by Vice-Chair Sanjay Swarup, is looking for a few good volunteers. Volunteers are needed to assist with documentation, transition development, etc. The Virtual Communities Project (VCP) history is explained from a letter from Philip Diab, Chair 2008 PMI Board of Directors to component leadership titled "Dear PMI SIG and College Leaders" from early March 2008.

"In 2004 the PMI Board of Directors assigned an objective to Greg Balestrero, as CEO, to implement a new community strategy. The initiative was named the Community Transformation Project (CTP). The first phase within CTP was implementing a new model for geographic-based components. Its implementation is currently underway with 28 actively forming chapters under development, all required to conform to a new value-based performance framework.

"The second phase of CTP, which began in 2007, is the Virtual Communities Project (VCP). VCP is still driven by the same principles of CTP. The focus is to 'normalize the value delivered to PMI's individual members through communities.' The main intent of normalizing value is the element of stakeholder management, as it is critical that our members receive consistent service across geographies, industries, interests, and knowledge areas."

We are always looking for ways to re-connect with our members and are using LinkedIn to do so. I will be sending out personal invitations soon, but if you have not received my LinkedIn invitation, then go join on our group address http://www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=1972283&trk=anet_ug_grppro

There are lots of interesting discussions that will give you an insight to how Information Systems projects are managed in other parts of the world. We are the largest Specific Interest Group in PMI and have lots to share with each other.

I'd also like to introduce two new members to the Information Systems SIG management team. Please welcome Yong Li, Acting Director Member Services and Paddy Puthige, Acting Director of Marketing. These new members come to us by way of Toronto and Iowa respectively. Both have volunteered at their local Chapters and have now joined our management team. They have lots to contribute and are eager to support our vision.

There are quite a few open board positions available. As always, we cannot do this alone; it is with volunteers who want to make a difference. The Information Systems SIG is seeking skilled, experienced and knowledgeable leaders to serve on our committee teams. By volunteering with the Information Systems SIG board, you will have the opportunity to network, gain new or refine existing knowledge in several areas (finances, marketing, etc.), exercise/improve your leadership skills, and gain PDUs for maintaining your certification. All of this happens in a safe environment, working with a team of colleagues and friends. If you would love to make a difference and be a part of increasing your membership value, please let me know. Note that volunteering on a PMI Board provides you with PDUs for your certification.

We have a lot to do in 2009 but most importantly we have a responsibility to you, our members! Help us to change our programs as you see fit.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Fratenally,

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By Richard Fox
Editor, *ISSIG Review*

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