

PMI Mid-Mo Chapter News

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PROjections

By Alexis Nixon PMP
Vice President Membership

Welcome New Members!

PMI Mid-Missouri Chapter welcomes new members who joined in February and March:

Camille Dickson-Deane	Mark Allen Dolan
Deborah Lou Durham	Billie Ertel
Luci M Fichter	Julie Gochenour
Christine Lynn Mayer	Karen L Messerli
Jenni Murray	Michael Ray Nichols
Christine Babel	Duane Cook
Myra Drummond-Lewis	Darshan Gandhi
Kimberly Jackson	Richard Minor
Glenda Moun	

Welcome Back to John M Leeper and Lucy B. Watts who recently rejoined!

Thanks to all the members that have recently renewed. As of the end of March, the Chapter has 133 members and 72 PMP's.

We hope to see you all at the May meeting.

Do You Have the Greatest Project Management Ability?

By Dr. James T. Brown PMP, President of SEBA® Solutions, Inc.

The ability to anticipate is by far the greatest project management ability. Anticipation is an ability that is a culmination of knowledge, experience and skill. The ability to anticipate is not only what separates great project managers from good project managers; it is what separates great from good in most professions. The best hitters in baseball have the ability to anticipate what kind of pitch will be thrown to them and where the ball will be when it is time to swing the bat. The best soccer goalies have the ability to anticipate where the ball will be kicked so they can block it. This really comes into play during penalty kicks and this ability to anticipate will determine the goalies success or failure.

What the baseball batter and the soccer goalie have in common is that they cannot be successful trying to cover every possible outcome. The batter cannot possibly hit the ball with power and control trying to protect the entire strike zone. He has to limit the strike zone to maximize the chances of getting a hit. The goalie cannot possibly guard the entire net. He has to determine what part of the net he will defend and what part will be left unprotected. The batter and goalie that can most effectively anticipate and plan their response to the future circumstances get the best results. This is also true of project managers.

The challenge of project management is so daunting that the project manager's ability to anticipate and plan has a direct correlation on their ability to execute. A lot of project management books will state that everything needs to be planned in detail

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and every risk needs to be covered with a risk plan. This is good in theory and for a very small percentage of projects it is good in practice. However, most project managers live in a world characterized by uncertainty. Uncertain requirements, resources, risks, etc. The role of the project manager is to minimize or eliminate this uncertainty, but it is rare when uncertainty doesn't exist at significant levels. Therefore the best project managers anticipate. They are able to visualize and plan through the fog. They make aggressive decisions based on what they anticipate. The average and poor performing project manager waits on the fog to clear. They complain or whine constantly about the uncertainty and it becomes an excuse for inaction.

The great project managers anticipate then act. The great baseball hitters sometimes swing and miss wildly. The great soccer goalie sometimes leaps to the wrong end of the net. They make mistakes just like the great performing project manager will make mistakes. To anticipate and act means that you will occasionally make mistakes. Over the course of a project, program or career these mistakes will be small compared to the number of good decisions that were made due to excellent anticipation. The successful project manager is a continual learner, not afraid to make decisions based on what they know to be true and what they anticipate to be true.

The ability to anticipate can really be summed up with one simple phrase. "TOP" (**T**rain**O**bservation, **P**ractice.) The combination of these three activities aggressively deployed provides the ability to anticipate and the confidence to act.

Training – There are always rare exceptions, like someone born with a gift that can play the piano masterfully without training. As a rule though, expertise and even basic proficiency cannot be achieved without training. If it wasn't so prevalent and sad, the number of companies that expect their project managers to be successful without training would be amusing.

Do you know any project management quacks (PMQ's)?

Would you go to a medical doctor who had no formal training but said "I have been doctoring on people for 15 years". Most would quickly identify this doctor as a quack. There are a lot of project management quacks out there. The doctor without training may indeed be able to practice medicine with minor or perhaps moderate success but certainly not at the level of someone that is a trained physician. What would you think of the football coach who told his team we'll learn as the game goes along because we don't have the time or budget for training?

Part of what makes Tiger Woods the golf champion that he is, was training from an early age. In the absence of that training he would not have been a child prodigy or dominating golf as he does today. In fact, he still values training and still submits himself (even at his level of expertise and accomplishment) to coaching. I am always amazed when I come across project managers who don't feel the need for training. Projects involve lots of variables including technology, resources and the most complex variable of all – people. Project management is so complex it is worthy of life long study if you choose to excel at it. There is a marked difference between proficiency and excellence.

A PMP doesn't make you or anyone else a good project manager!

Yes, the basics are easily acquired. PMP certification is in fact readily acquired with effort. A PMP certification by itself does not make you a great project manager or even capable of managing a challenging project. Greatness in any endeavor is the application of the basics and the summation of a large number of little things done well. This is what characterizes the masters in any field of endeavor. When I go to training (and I do) I am looking for the little things that take the basics to another level.

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The importance of continuous training to maintain the ability to anticipate is only one piece of the puzzle. The next component is Observation.

Observation – Going beyond the basics to the collection and mastery of little things also involves observation. Once you accept the fact that there are little pieces of knowledge that when applied strategically together you are always on the hunt for them. People often make the mistake of limiting their hunt for knowledge to whatever field or discipline their in. If you take one thing away from this newsletter take the following point.

Excellence at anything is worthy of your careful observation and study.

Opportunities abound to study excellence. Books are a very good tool for studying excellence. Autobiographies of people who have achieved greatness are worthy of your time. Personal interviews are worthy of your time. You are panning for gold.

Occasionally I will stay at the Ritz-Carlton. Their service is usually extraordinary and when there I will inquire about their excellent service with anyone from the bellman to the manager. What they view as a conversation is in fact an interview, for I am always on the hunt for tips that contribute to excellence and achievement at high levels.

This year while in South Florida I came across the famous jazz guitarist George Benson sitting alone at the hotel bar prior to an evening show. I introduced myself and once he was done laughing at my name (he said he had been good friends with the late singer James Brown), I asked him what he did to play guitar at such a high level? How did he practice? What and who influenced him? We had a nice twenty minute conversation as he played air guitar and talked to me. George Benson probably doesn't know much about project management, but he knows a lot about excellence.

Excellence has common threads

Obviously you should talk to every project

manager you view as excellent, but achievement at high levels goes beyond a particular discipline. If the grocery store you shop at is well run, talk to the employees and the manager. Not only are there common threads in excellence but often you will identify parallel applications or inspiration from what you learn from an expert in any unrelated field.

Now that we have discussed Training and Observation and their role in obtaining the skill of anticipation, we will discuss Practice, the third and final element of TOP.

What good is knowledge and theory without application?

Practice –A leader whose style and methods I hold in high regard is Ron Dittmore. Ron is a former Space Shuttle Program Manager who is now a Vice President for Morton Thiokol. Before he left NASA I interviewed him and here is one of many valuable things I took away from our conversation. He stated “You know, I have been a counselor of people, of youth and youth groups, of adult organizations and most of my experience in how to deal with people comes from those situations and not from work. I apply all the lessons that I have learned through 27 years of that experience to deal with a lot of the challenges that I face in the work place.”

I marvel at young professionals who say they want big project leadership opportunities at work yet take no opportunity to lead outside of work. They say they just can't get good experience when we have a world crying out for people willing to lead.

Take Every Opportunity to Lead

If you can lead people and projects to success in a volunteer setting, where people are not getting paid, you can certainly do it in a work setting (where some act like they are not getting paid). Identify an issue you are passionate about and take the opportunity to work and lead for the benefit of your passion. It will be a direct carry over to your effectiveness in the work environment.

Excellence – A lot of little things done right

As you work projects (practice) you must try to apply the little things you have garnered through

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training and observation. Some will work very well others may not.

Keep track of what succeeds and don't abandon what fails or what seems to have failed to soon. Analyze, analyze, analyze. Trying different things is a form of stretching yourself.

Do not be afraid of change. Any golfer can tell you how Tiger Woods has changed what was a very successful swing to a new one while getting a lot of "He shouldn't have messed up a good thing" from pundits before they were proven wrong. Tiger also practices a lot. Tiger is not afraid of change, practices and analyzes his performance. He also sets the expectation that he will be better next year than he is today. I come across many people who are content with their leadership ability to the point they have zero initiative when it comes to self development and improvement. Change, initiative and self evaluation are also necessary to your continual growth to ever exceeding greatness as a project manager or leader.

Once you start to develop great anticipation skills I guarantee others will marvel at how effectively you succeed in the uncertain environment of projects. They will marvel because they won't be able to nail it down to just one thing and the results will be the summation of a lot of little things you have honed to a sharp edge through training, observation and practice over time. The wise observers of your success will engage you in a conversation that is really an interview because they know excellence is worthy of careful observation and study.

About the Author

[Dr. James T. Brown PMP](#) is president of [SEBA® Solutions Inc.](#) a Registered Education Provider with the Project Management Institute and is the author of [The Handbook of Program Management](#) published by McGraw-Hill. He provides project management training and keynote speeches worldwide and may be reached at jtbrown@sebasolutions.com

A Great Teller of Tales

By Tom Grzesiak, Global Knowledge Instructor

Your ability to make outstanding presentations is one of the most critical skills you possess. It enables you to affect the people around you and inspire action from your audience. You use this skill to make sales calls, train staff, and ask for a raise. But making a presentation is, for most of us, an unusual form of communication. If only there was a magic wand that could be waved, or some formula we could use, that would always ensure a successful presentation.

Unfortunately the magic wand and formula don't exist because when you think about it, every presentation is different. Even if you are presenting the same content multiple times, each new audience has different requirements, and you as the presenter bring something different to each performance. But there are principles that you can apply to preparing and delivering a great presentation that gets your message across every time.

The first principle you can apply is STRUCTURE. Think of your favorite movie. There is a classical structure to it, used since before Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus. It is The Setting, The Elaboration, and The Solution. Don't forget that as a presenter, you are telling a story, and this structure helps to make your story compelling to your audience.

The Setting

In your favorite movie, think about what happens at the beginning. My favorite movie is *The Godfather*, which opens with the wedding scene. Here we meet the members of the "family" and they grab our attention, making us curious about what will happen to them next. This is The Setting. In your presentations, this is where you will introduce the characters (the key stakeholders) and the business problem to be solved.

It is also where you want to get your audience's attention, either with a bang or a gentle setting of the scene. Be creative and try to do something out

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of the ordinary early in your presentation. You could make a controversial statement, purposely challenge your audience's expectations, or unveil a dynamic presentation aid. The goal here is for each member of the audience to think this presentation is important to me, I want to be here, and I cannot wait to see and hear more.

You first need to understand your audience before you can grab their attention. Put yourself in their shoes. What are their expectations? Even if you know the audience personally it is good practice to review their expectations: are they waiting to be persuaded, informed, or being asked to make a decision? Also determine their level of interest. Are the members of the audience truly interested in the subject of the presentation, or have they been forced to attend? For the latter, you will need to create the interest.

The Elaboration

The second part of your presentation is The Elaboration. Here you reveal the tension and detail about the business problem. Make sure you keep your audience involved. Describe the severity of the problem or explain what would happen to different members of the audience if the problem is not solved. For a complacent audience, you will want to create visual aids that drive home your message.

The role you play in the problem-solving situation will dictate your style in this part of the presentation. If you have a non-directive role, you could act as an objective observer and raise questions for reflection. Or you could be a process counselor and observe the problem-solving process and provide feedback. If you have a more directive role, you could be a joint problem solver, offering alternatives and participating in the decision making. The extreme directive role would be that of an advocate. Here you would use your power and influence to move your audience in the direction you desire.

The Solution

The final part of your story is The Solution. Here you conclude the presentation by proposing how the problem will be resolved, the next steps for the characters, and what the future will look like.

Think about how you feel when your favorite movie is over. Do you feel joy, relief, or inspiration? Here is where your presentation should offer a call for action, creating the emotions you want your audience to leave with. Just as you created an opening that pulled in the audience, you have to be inventive and create a theatrical climax. You can use the techniques described earlier in The Setting, or create your own. Do not let your ending be inconclusive; a definitive ending will compel the audience to feel passionate about the solution and the future.

The Brainstorming Diagram is a tool you can use to take all the ideas you have for a presentation and organize them into this structure. Begin with a single idea in a circle or box, and then add branches with other sub-ideas. You can add lines to create linkages between the different ideas you want to make in your presentation. Here is a simple example of a brainstorming diagram for a presentation about making effective presentations.



The master presenter Winston Churchill once said: "Of all the talents bestowed upon men, none is so precious as the gift of oratory. He who enjoys it wields a power more durable than that of a great king."

A Great Teller of Tales continued...

About the Author

Tom Grzesiak, PMP, is the president of Supple Wisdom LLC. Tom has over 20 years of project management and consulting experience with IBM, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and dozens of clients. He has trained thousand of project managers and consultants. Tom can be reached at tom.grzesiak@supplewisdom.com.

This article was originally published in Global Knowledge's Business Brief e-newsletter. Global Knowledge (www.globalknowledge.com) delivers comprehensive hands-on project management, business analysis, ITIL, and professional skills training. Visit our online Knowledge Center for free white papers, webinars, and more.

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PMI NEWS

Record-Breaking Congress Generates Excitement in Sydney

Close to 800 practitioners from 43 countries gathered in Sydney, Australia, in early March for three days of learning, networking and enjoyment. The turnout for [PMI Global Congress 2008—Asia Pacific](#) was the largest yet for a PMI congress held outside of North America, as attendees sought out events tailored to advance their careers and professional development.

In a speech at the opening general session, PMI CEO Gregory Balestrero told attendees, “[You] can manage any project anywhere, anytime. The power to get you where you want to be is sitting in front of you, behind you and next to you.” [Read the full story in today's PMI Community Post.](#)

Executives and Leaders Celebrate Launch of PMI Office in India

PMI celebrated the opening of its India office with a reception at Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, on 24 March that was attended by more than 65 senior level executives from government organizations and companies.



Gregory Balestrero, PMI chief executive officer, presented a sculpture of the Delhi Metro to Dr. E. Sreedharan, managing director of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, for his outstanding contribution to the country and profession.
From left: Mr. Balestrero, Mr. Diab, Dr. Sreedharan, Mr. Kalady.

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Located in Mumbai, the office will focus on development and advancement of project management in the country. The goal will be to convince more organizations in India to adopt or adapt global standards and certifications for project, program and portfolio management.

PMI has appointed a managing director for the India office, Raj Kalady, who will be responsible for advancing project management principles across multiple industries.

Ultimately, the office will help organizations in India to better understand and apply global skills and techniques in their efforts to complete projects on time and within cost.

In attendance from Amman, Jordan, was Philip R. Diab, MBA, PMP, chair of the PMI Board of Directors, who said that the purpose of a fully operational office in India is to “keep India growing as a world economic power and to do so in a way that benefits all who live and work here.”

During the reception, PMI Chief Executive Officer Gregory Balestrero honored Dr. E. Sreedharan, managing director of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, for his timely completion of challenging projects such as the Calcutta Metro. Dr. Sreedharan is a highly respected project manager in the India community.



In his speech, Mr. Balestrero spoke of India's need for project management professionals “who know how to compress

schedules to meet the urgent needs of a developing economy.” He said, “A key to this is utilizing standardized professional project management practices to build capacity and capabilities to achieve break through results.”

Mr. Balestrero noted that India has the third largest PMI membership – after the United States and Canada - with seven chapters and over 11,000 PMI members, most of them in the IT sector.

Upcoming Chapter Events

05/22/2008: WorkShop

Topic: [Leadership: Executing for Success](#)

PDU: 8.0

Sponsor: [Rose International](#)

05/22/2008: Seminar/Chapter Meeting

Topic: [Can You Hear Me Now? Strategic Listening](#)

PDU: 1.0

Sponsor: [Tier, Inc.](#)

09/18/2008: WorkShop

Topic: Integration Change Management

09/18/2008: Seminar/Chapter Meeting

Topic: Integration Change Management

11/20/2008: WorkShop

Topic: Project Life Cycle

11/20/2008: Seminar/Chapter Meeting

Topic: Project Life Cycle

For information and registration information on Chapter meetings and events, visit the Chapter's web site: <http://www.pmimidmo.org/>

Upcoming Events (Away)

[Missouri - KC Mid America](#)

5/12/2008 Chapter Meeting: Get Out of B.E.D.
(Blame, Excuses and Denial); Change
Your Outlook – Alter Your Outcomes

[Metro St. Louis PMI](#)

Saturday, May 17 2008 8:00 am to Noon
Spring '08 Career Fair
Microsoft Building

Wednesday, May 21, 2008 5:30pm - 8:15pm
Chapter Dinner Meeting
How to Say and to Listen to "No"
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Clayton MO

Wednesday, June 18, 2008 5:30pm - 8:15pm
Chapter Dinner Meeting
Project Metrics
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Clayton MO

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