

Content - April 2006

[Late Spring - Late Developments](#)
[Motivating the Project Team - Late Employees](#)
 Why are people late for meetings?
 Last minute interview preparations
 Ageism - too old and too late?

For any feedback or comments please get in touch at: tipoffs@projectmanagementnewsletter.co.uk

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The End is Nigh

By Chris Grey

What does that mean? Basically it means that the end is upon us, but not quite yet. This has particular importance when the end of a project is reached because in my experience many project manager's interpretation of that all important phrase "when the project's objectives have been met" falls short of the real world need.

I have seen many project plans where the final milestone is linked to some element of the project plan such as QA sign-off or, slightly better, Customer Acceptance sign-off. This falls short because this is often indicative of a complete lack of knowledge transfer.

Oh yes, many plans include training but this is not the same as knowledge transfer. Only a very few products, especially IT related products and definitely a tiny percentage of internal IT products, can be released into the wild with a simple training event. Most require the end users to be supported by the real knowledge holders for some time after delivery and this is inevitably the project team.

So there needs to be a definite resource allocation and planning for this knowledge transfer activity. Allocate a reasonable amount of time and a mix of resource (team members, including yourself) to knowledge transfer after sign-off. Don't forget to ensure that the appropriate processes and procedures are created to ensure that the full time support team benefit from this team's knowledge. Do not close out the project until this element has been completed, there may be lessons learned elements that only come to light through the knowledge transfer activities. But do ensure that those not involved in the knowledge transfer activities complete their close out tasks (they may have forgotten all about the project by the time you get to finish the knowledge transfer).

"Chris Grey is a versatile Project Management professional with in excess of eight years experience combined with a proven track record in the successful completion of projects relating to IT, business process re-design, software design/development and turnkey deployment of software solutions. He is dedicated to promoting Project Management through the provision of solutions based on formal methodologies combined with mentoring of existing staff".

If you would like to contact Chris about the article please get in touch: tipoffs@projectmanagementnewsletter.co.uk

Back to the Future

By John Gough, Director of Diabolo

It looks like all of us will now be working into our seventies, as we all realise that our retirement income is just totally inadequate. Forget the halcyon days of the 1970's when everyone assumed they would retire at 55 and spend more halcyon days sailing around the Med' or wedded to the golf course.

To some who have never saved a bean that may not come as a surprise, the state pension has never offered a profligate lifestyle, but to others who have religiously stuffed money into pensions it's a bit disappointing to say the least, so who do we blame for this rum state of affairs. A recent government enquiry headed by Sir Derek Morris the former head of the Competition Commission puts the blame squarely in the hands of the actuarial profession.

Sir Derek found that actuaries 'substantially' underestimated the scale of contributions needed for adequate pensions and that although the industry could not be blamed for failing to forecast the future, they were slow to adapt to a changing economic climate and 'they remained too locked into the environment of the 1970's and 1980's.....they were not sufficiently innovative... and were too persuaded by their own abilities'

Actuaries are trained for years and paid a fortune, but even they cannot get anywhere near predicting the future. So is a wrong forecast better than no forecast? I was at a presentation last week where the Finance Director

10 Steps of Project Management

Mistake #No.3

When a client is looking at selecting a vendor, even an optimist should stop and think before using a vendor who does not have indemnity insurance. For reference please read for "vendor": large, medium or single contractor company, partnership or sole trader.

At a minimum as a client you are likely to need your vendor to hold indemnity in case the vendor goes bust during a project. If the vendor did go bust the vendor's indemnity pays for the clients cost of switching to a new vendor and in addition business lost due to disruption.

Indemnity insurance is a critical buffer when viewed on your risk analysis for mitigation against disruption and business loss. There's always a small risk that the installation of a new system will cripple the vendor's organisation if it goes wrong. Think about some recent retail trading statements that have suggested their new stock control and logistics systems have caused problems in placing goods on the shelf, therefore purchases lost means revenue and profit shortfall.

If the above should be the case the vendor's insurer can provide a buffer that keeps the client afloat. All professional suppliers should be insured, however you as a vendor regardless of you are a single contractor or major corporation you might want to consider passing the indemnity cost directly on to the client as an expense, after all it is the client who needs the cover as he is the one that will receive the imbursement, a negotiation point perhaps. As to what value of indemnity at what cost, well that is another subject!

Adapted from the little book of project mistakes [Best Practice Group PLC](#)

congratulated the business for achieving costs that were below budget, and sales that were above forecast. Well who set the budget and the forecast, because it was plainly wrong and yet this was OK, because the actuals fell the right way.

Most businesses have given up those big 5 year plans, they may have strategic direction, but planning in detail based on spurious projections is a thing of the past. Ironically, this in turn has led to more short term thinking, we cannot predict the future so why bother.

New year is traditionally a time for looking forward, but as none of us can predict the future, it's surely a waste of energy pouring too much time into budgets and forecasts, they are after all just a device to determine the winning post. Instead there is real value in spending more time understanding what is changing around your organisation, because it is these changes that will shape the future.

Organisations must remain acutely aware of what is going on around them, their collective antennae should bristle, otherwise they risk following the actuarial profession and getting locked into an environment of now. Too many organisations live for the day to day, but to survive, organisations must proactively manage their reaction to the change.

An effective way to do this is to simply ask 'what if' questions, followed by 'if so why and if not, why not':

What if healthy eating cuts into the burger and fries business?
What if music downloads affect CD sales?
What if there is a consumer backlash against off-shoring?
What if the trend to work life balance leads to fewer office hours?
What if Chinese 'IBM' PC's lower the cost of world PC production?
What if blogging replaces traditional journalism?

Maybe we cannot see the future, but we can at least listen out for change.

About Diabolo

Diabolo promotes an innovative dynamic approach enabling change in organisations by connecting hard-headed business skills with the human spirit and values. Combining our collective knowledge and experience, we have created some powerful frameworks for business thinking. We call these Diabolo Journeys. We use a highly visual technique to guide clients through complex processes with clarity of thought. By combining tried and tested coaching and consulting practice with graphics, we have developed a suite of Diabolo Journeys covering many business issues."

John Gough is a Director of Diabolo

Careers: Objectives and the CV

By Lindsay Scott, Arras People

Arras People receives hundreds of CV's every month from people all across the project management spectrum - from people applying directly for advertised posts or through our registration process. Hundreds of CV's using different styles - layouts sourced from books, friends, the company standard or specialist CV service providers.

What do you think is the most underused and undervalued space on your CV? In a poll of 100 CV's we currently hold on record only 5% use the CV to show a prospective employer what it is they're looking for. The objective also often gets confused with the personal profile **so what exactly is it?**

The objective is "a statement of what you want to do for an employer", for example:

"Objective: To obtain a challenging project co-ordination position within a public sector organisation which will allow me to continue developing my project management skills, with a long-term aim to progress to the role of Programme or Project Office Manager."

Anything written in the objective must also be clearly backed up in the rest of your CV and this can take the form of a personal profile and then the normal chronological layout of your works experience.

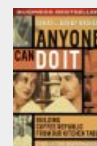
So why do we encourage people to spend time writing their objectives? For a number of reasons; it makes your application stand out from the 100's of others the client may be reviewing, it shows the employer you've taken the time to think about your application and above all else it makes you the most ideal employee on paper!

So what do you need to think about when putting together an objective? Here's a list of some of the do's and don'ts:

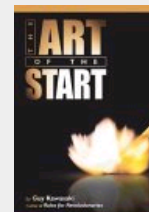
- Don't be too general - there wouldn't be much point in including an objective in the first place
- The objective should take into consideration your skills, abilities, aspirations, education and interests
- Write a new objective for each position you apply for - difficult when there's a limited advertised job specification but make the effort
- Remember to tell the employer in your objective exactly what it is that you can do for them
- Be realistic and sensible in your aspirational goals

Six of the Best - Recommended Business Books

As voted for by the business user group - Business Bricks, six of the most entertaining and readable business related books



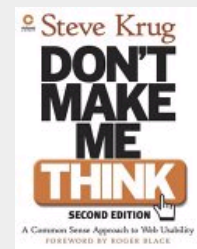
Anyone Can Do It: Building Coffee Republic From Our Kitchen Table: 57 Real-Life Laws on Entrepreneurship



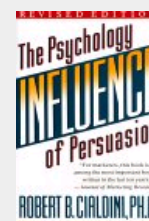
The Art of the Start: The Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything



E-myth Revisited



Don't Make Me Think!: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability



Influence: Psychology of Persuasion

- Take time to do the objective properly and get friends or family to review it

This article was written with reference and thanks to M Owens at Job Locator

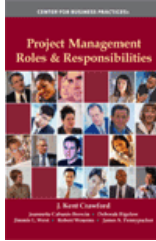
[| top |](#)

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[Survey - exploring the role of project co-ordinator and project support - take part today!](#)

Roles and Responsibilities: At last a comprehensive guide

Reviewed by: Lindsay Scott



In our last edition of tipoffs we featured a new book recently published called "Project Management Roles and Responsibilities".

The book released by the Center for Business Practices (CBP), focuses on the core responsibilities and competencies of project personnel across a variety of roles. So lets get down to basics, why should you buy it?

Straight away it's become a well thumbed copy at Arras People because its a great source of help when defining roles or key skills for some of our project management roles (especially some of the more obscure roles we are asked for help in providing). But what information would this book provide you?

Preparing the Project Initiation Document

Use the role descriptions to help you in putting together the roles and responsibilities as required in the PID or any other project communication documentation

Use it for a career development checkpoint

Each job title is broken down into Role Overview, Suggested Duties and Responsibilities, Suggested Knowledge, Skills and Abilities, Suggested Background, Experience and/or Education. Some of suggestions are more aimed at a US audience but it is minimal. You can use it as a mental checklist to see how you compare and highlight your strengths and weaknesses.

Prepare your own job specification

If you're preparing for an annual appraisal use the lists to generate your own ideas on where you should be improving your skills or even gaining new skills. Be ready to talk to your boss, armed with good research.

Get better resources in your project team

Use some of the suggestions to assist you in complying new role specifications for existing or new team members. The roles covered in this book help generate ideas about what you do or don't have covered in your project team

Keep up to date

Project Management, Project Offices, PMO's, Centres of Excellence etc etc, things keep moving on all the time in this field and the book, in addition to the roles and responsibilities, also covers "Strategic Project Office", "Building Project Manager Competency" and "Project Control Functions"

Positions described in this book include:

- Project Portfolio Manager
- Strategic Project Office Director
- Manager of Project Support
- Manager of Project Managers
- Project Management Mentor
- Program Manager
- Project Manager
- Project Team Leader
- Project Support Team Member
- Project Controller
- Project Planner
- Project Scheduler
- Project Estimator
- Risk Management Coordinator

PM Solutions - Rationale Behind the Book

More and more organisations realise that today's project managers will, in the future, rise through the ranks and bring the same set of skills to bear when effectively managing enterprise-wide project systems that they now use to manage individual projects. To position themselves to take advantage of this situation, companies must look hard at their division of responsibilities, their ability to leverage projects for competitive success, and their commitment to project-centered role design.

According to co-author J. Kent Crawford, CEO of PM Solutions, "Most of the reasons projects fail are management related. Most enterprises have no processes in place to ensure that project managers are appropriately trained and evaluated." With Project Management Roles and Responsibilities, companies can identify their project management needs, streamline management, reduce bureaucracy, facilitate the development of intellectual capital, and remain focused on their strategic goals.

Project Management Roles and Responsibilities describes not only the duties associated with each position, but also the rationale for their existence, and the knowledge and skill sets necessary in any candidate. These project management descriptions have been developed over several years from a review of actual job descriptions used by companies in a variety of industries around the world.



Authentic: How to Make a Living by Being Yourself

March 2005
Conference for the
Programme and
Project Support SIG



The March Conference takes place on the 2nd March 2005 in Birmingham

In this conference a variety of workshops and presentations will cover the hot topic of **Politics & The PPSO**.

Politics & The PPSO

PSOs are frequently at the receiving end of a political environment. Over the years, I've asked a number of associates, "Do you live in a politically 'free' zone?" You all know what the answer is. "NO!"

Organisational politics exist! We will never live in an environment that is not influenced by politics!

Working in or being responsible for a PPSO - how do we recognise the political impact that we not only create, but experience?

Politics, and the PSO! How do we make it work? What needs to be considered?

Stakeholder Analysis and Expectations Management

Stakeholders - you can't live without them - can you live with them?

Finding out and knowing who your Stakeholders are, followed by having an idea of how to manage them, can be the making of whatever it is you are trying to do. Not doing so can spell disaster. A workshop to brainstorm all the various types of stakeholders and what might be their individual foibles

Quantitative and Qualitative Benefits the PPSO Provides

It is a question of survival. How can you justify the existence of your PPSO? Can you present the value of your PPSO to the key stakeholders? Can you start to think in terms of your PPSO starting to provide higher value than it does today?

This workshop will critically

This 102-page paperback book is available for purchase at www.cbponline.com. The list price is \$19.95 USD per copy, but is currently being offered for a special introductory price of \$17.95 USD.

Read a good project management book lately? Tell us about it tipoffs@projectmanagementnewsletter.co.uk

Thanks to Mary Yanocha at PM Solutions

New Roles from Arras People

For all our current live vacancies see the website at www.arraspeople.co.uk/jobs.php

Project Management Careers Clinic Timings for February 2005

Career clinic timings over the coming month:

Project Managers - 09/02/05

Project Support / Project Office - 23/02/05

Programme Managers/Executives - 09/02/05 & 22/02/05

> [Book now](#)

Recent feedback - From a candidate wanting to discuss "testing my expectations of my market value" - Recommendation to others to use the service "**Absolutely - the session matched my expectations completely, and the format was practical.**"

[| top |](#)

About Arras People:

Latest update from Arras People - the project management and project office recruitment specialists.

Heather Slough and Peter Blundell both joined Arras People in January 2005. Heather is our new recruitment office administrator whilst Peter joins us to manage a new area of the business - Arras Headhunting. If you're a senior manager or know someone else who would like to consider using these services please contact [Peter Blundell](mailto:Peter.Blundell) directly for more information.

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Tel: 0208-772-7770 (London) london@arraspeople.co.uk

"It's amazing that the amount of news that happens in the world every day always just exactly fits the newspaper." Jerry Seinfeld

evaluate the benefits your PPSO provides and of course trigger thought starters on what next?

The Relationships - PPSO and the Project Manager/s

"One of the key relationships for the PSO is with the Project Manager. We'll have a look at types of PSO and Project Manager and identify some possibilities for harmony and friction."

See the events page on the [PPSO SIG website](#) for March to gain more information about the event and ways to join up and attend.



Think Octopus!

John Thorpe of Arras People shares his thoughts on the difference between programmes and projects;

I'm often asked the question "**what is the difference between a Programme and a Project?**" and I can't help but to think Octopus!

Why? Well I see it this way; The body represents the organisation be that a manufacturing unit, government department or anything else for that matter. It has a direction and purpose which at any time can be influenced by external currents (policies, legislation, corporate goals).

The tentacles represent the programmes that support the direction and purpose of the body. All of which should be connected to the body and be contributing to that purpose or goal.

Also because they are all visible should a change in direction be required they can be changed or if really necessary shed.

Finally the suckers (no pun intended) are the individual project elements that contribute to the achievement of each programme.

So we have a holistic view of the business, its programmes and associated projects gliding through its environment capable of reacting to the unknown.

Arras Corner

From project management recruitment to a whole new culture!

A rare and nationally significant Iron Age chariot burial has recently been

found in West Yorkshire.
"Chariot burials, have helped archaeologists to identify a unique cultural grouping centred on the Yorkshire Wolds known to modern archaeologists as the Arras culture"

Take 5 minutes out to learn something new in History!

Taken from [The West Yorkshire Chariot Burial piece in Oxford Archaeology](#)

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