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April 2005 Issue 12

Welcome to the 12th issue of Tipoffs - well Spring is upon us (apart from the snow this morning!) and this year promises to be an interesting one if the skills shortage crisis continues - see the Project Management Trends article. We also take a new at the new media darlings who are currently "wowing" the project management world with their skills. Talking of skills - need a training course but really don't know which one you should be picking? We introduce Focus Project Management - a brilliant site.

Calling all project support professionals, enter the [survey today](#) and win a mystery prize

For any feedback or comments please get in touch at: [tipoffs@projectmanagementnewsletter.co.uk](mailto:tipoffs@projectmanagementnewsletter.co.uk)

Get the previous editions at: Project Management Tip-Offs [Click Here](#)

### "It lasts all night... can you?"

By John Thorpe

#### You're Fired

As someone who does not watch TV, I must admit that I am intrigued by the latest television program advertising Sir Alan Amstrads Empire "The Apprentice"!!

I have not yet understood what kind of person, manger or skill set he is looking for nor how he is looking to use this person in his empire! What I have recognized is that he is not looking for a PROJECT MANAGER.

I would love to be able to have a word count from the series to-date on the number of times I have heard the word "project manager" and what he thinks this animal is and what it brings to his organization.

If anything the one thing I take so far is this; I am unsure of what he is really looking for out of this interesting group of individuals. Is he is looking for a general manager, a marketer, a generalist? I am sure they all have something to offer, but from what I have seen so far it certain they won't be employed as Project Managers!

What I do hope is that Sir Alan is reinforcing to them all, is that whoever he chooses and whatever he tasks then with, they should all take onboard that "a professional Project Manager" is crucial if they want to succeed! He has shown that none of them are capable of effectively project managing the tasks he has set. Hopefully this will not be seen as a slight on our profession but a great advertisement to show that not everybody has our skill-set. We are not an add-on, we are a vital part of the team!

By the way - my tag line for the multi CD changer would have been "it lasts all night - can you?"

### Skills Shortage Fever!

By Lindsay Scott, Arras People

Looking at various news articles and comments on the web in the last month it would appear that;

- UK employers are about to be hit by a massive skills shortage!
- The job market is bound for massive expansion as companies and organisations take the dust covers off their delayed investments in new IT systems and regulatory adherence demands change!
- The general consensus would appear to be that this skills shortage will convert into pay increases and a general scramble as organisations look to secure the services of the best permanent and freelance consultants!

So, the assumption is that we can all look forward to higher salaries and day rates as this year progresses?

Our experience so far this year would suggest;

- The number of available skilled programme and project management professionals is reducing.
- Employers are not yet cognoscente to the fact that there may be a shortage on the horizon.
- Rates are still pretty level and not inflationary

## 10 Steps of Project Management

### Mistake #No.4

#### Do you have a clean contract?

Through involvement in initiating an idea that turns in to a project a contract between all parties will be drawn up that will reference many documents and discussion. The contract evolves through the input and at length discussion of many experts all coming at the opportunity with a different view, in particular protecting their part of the Supplier or Client Company.

For example in large organisations either on the client or supplier side different divisions deliver or are delivered too at different stages of a project life cycle. It is likely each division may have a different set of measurement criteria.

The supplier may have different internally set measures in different delivery divisions. For example the build division may be looking for profit, while the after delivery service group may be measured under market growth and share. So you end up with many internal agendas that can get in the way of what the client needs as a solution.

While the measures on the client are likely to be around the realising the benefits the project delivers, Therefore by the time the client and supplier are ready to conclude a contract the negotiation and agreements by the client and supplier will have generated an enormous amount of paperwork and references. At this point it's tempting to try to cut through that confusion by signing what's called a 'clean' contract - a document that excludes the various pre contractual documents and discussions supplier and client have negotiated.

That is a bad idea. The documents and discussions

So if it's to become a high demand time, what does it mean to you as project management professionals?

- Ability to pick and choose the projects you want to work on?
- More attractive day rates / salaries?
- Better length of contract and commitment from clients / employers?
- Confidence to leave that job you have been secure in during the tough times of the last three years?

We are intrigued to understand if this is fact or hype and will be keeping a very close eye on where the market is moving so that we can not only get the best opportunities for our candidates but also keep our clients updated. If this move turns out to be fact then businesses will need to be on the ball as they move through 2005 if they are going to have the right staff to meet their plans.

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## Project Management Training Courses - a new source of help to guide you through the labyrinth

At last, an organisation that has brought together all the Project Management training courses available on the market today making it easier to decide and select the best course for you.

To give you some background, Focus Project Management was set up to provide a single source where customers can find a course which will meet their cost, quality, timing and location requirements. They've recently launched their new Focus website ([www.focusprojects.co.uk](http://www.focusprojects.co.uk)) and it now offers over 200 project management training courses from around 30 accredited providers in over 50 locations across the UK including PRINCE2, APM, MSP & ISEB qualifications.

Visit the website, sign up for the newsletter and request the free PRINCE2 factsheet (a great feebie!)

## Freshen-Up your Project Management Skills by Steve Twine at Focus Projects

April often marks a chance to freshen-up your skills and maybe the opportunity for a new pot of money from the training budget!

While you are probably aware of the most popular project management qualifications through APM (Association of Project Management), PMI (Project Management Institute) and Prince2, the leading project management methodology, but it's also worth looking at the following areas to top-up your skills

### *Programme Management*

If you are handling a portfolio of projects or organizing a major business change, programme management provides the framework to deliver change and benefits to the business  
Training courses can lead to the OGC's "Managing Successful Programmes Qualification"

### *Managing Risk*

All projects involve risk, but how well do you handle them? - Learn best practices with the OGC's "Management of Risk" certificate

### *Project Planning & Control*

Learn the basic techniques for estimating, planning & controlling your project

### *Microsoft Project*

Improve the clarity of your timing plans using the most popular software tool

### *Managing your Team*

Projects involve people and effective project management depends on effective leadership, so you may feel the need to improve your leadership, delegation and motivational skills

### *Negotiation Skills*

Major business changes require negotiation with management, suppliers and customers - Training can help you to understand your strengths and weaknesses and to develop your skills

### *Problem Solving & Decision Making*

Discover the techniques & skills of problem-solving and decision-making to make sound logical decisions

that gave the client and supplier the confidence to proceed in the first place must form part of the final contract. Those discussions and documents detail the objectives the client and supplier negotiated to achieve, and how they plan to get there.

In the event of disagreement, neither the client or supplier can afford to let the other contractually 'forget' the decisions they have agreed.

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

## How to make sure projects don't go down in flames

Another article (seems to be the favourite topic for many!) on project failures or rather what to do to avoid it

*"The blame for project failures is often placed at the foot of inefficient project management. But this can be addressed with standardised processes overseen by programme management. Anthony Plewes investigates best practice."*

Thanks to Anthony Plewes at [silicon.com](http://silicon.com)

[> Link](#)

## Book of the month

Business Consulting  
A guide to how it works and how to make it work



## Understanding Finance

If ROI, PBIT, P&L and Balance Sheets leave you cold, maybe learning the basics of financial jargon will help when it comes to dealing with the bean-counters in your Finance Department

## Ask the Headhunter!

In January 2005, Arras People launched a new area of the business - [Arras Headhunting](#)

Headhunting differs to the normal activities of a recruitment business in that it's a more pro-active, discreet and exclusive service that identifies high-calibre individuals to fill posts for senior directors, managers, key executives or difficult roles within an organisation.

One key differentiator is that Headhunters never advertise due to the sensitive nature of the client's requirements so these roles are filled by the headhunter knowing their client, knowing their sector and knowing about good quality people who just don't know they're about to change their job!

New to tip-offs from May 2005 onwards gives you the opportunity to put any questions to our key Headhunter here at Arras. Just drop Peter Blundell a line at: [peter\\_blundell@arrasheadhunting.co.uk](mailto:peter_blundell@arrasheadhunting.co.uk) with any questions or problems you have in relation to job searching

## New Roles from Arras People

For all our current live vacancies see the website at [www.arraspeople.co.uk/jobs.php](http://www.arraspeople.co.uk/jobs.php)

## Project Management Careers Clinic Timings for April and May 2005

Career clinic timings over the coming month:

Project Managers - 20/04/05 & 06/05/05

Project Support / Project Office - 14/04/05 & 28/04/05

Programme Managers/Executives - 21/04/05 & 19/05/05

> [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.**"

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### About Arras People:

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

Arras People has been working hard these past few months and we've had many different and diverse organisations contacting us for project management professionals - including charities, food & beverage companies, more management consultancies than we know what to do with :). It never ceases to amaze us just where you find the Project Manager role and of course the project support ones. More and more clients are realising the important of good PSO staff - something we've been preaching for years.

[www.arraspeople.co.uk](http://www.arraspeople.co.uk)

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"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'" Robin Williams



The ultimate guide for those using or planning to use business consultants - and for consultants themselves

In the last three decades of the 20th century the management consultancy industry grew at a cracking pace but increased scepticism about the value that consultants genuinely add, combined with the economic slowdown, has made life much tougher for the consulting industry. As firms have cut back on consulting services and begun to review the way they use consultants, consulting firms themselves are looking at how they need to change. People are now talking about business consulting rather than management consulting.

Using real examples from a range of private sector firms, public sector organisations and from the consultants themselves, this book explores the new business consulting world and looks at every element of it with the aim of both helping firms make better use of consultants and showing consultants how they need to adapt and provide their clients a better service.

The book is due to be released in May and has great reviews already

## New to Project Management?

The About.com portal is a great place to start for simple straightforward definitions and discussions, recent additions include Managing Costs, Money, and Profits

> [Link](#)

Thanks to F. John Reh at Management 101

Crash course for your business sponsor in what he needs to know about your IT project

Interesting web article from Michael Hugos, CIO

Includes Strategic Guidelines for Sponsoring Projects and Tactical Principles for Sponsoring Projects

> [Link](#)

## Arras Corner

April 9th

The Battle of Vimy Ridge took place on April 9, 1917, and was the first time all four divisions of the Canadian Corps went into battle together. It was there,

about eight kilometres northeast of Arras, France, that the Canadians accomplished what other allied forces could not, they took Vimy Ridge

2005 is the Year of the Veteran: Celebrate. Honour. Remember. Teach. Thank.

> [Link](#)

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