

contents

the project office survey
the bold pps0
project planning
common mistakes
latest vacancies
arras people

July 2005 Issue 13

Welcome to the 13th issue of Tipoffs - well we started thinking about our next issue in May and time has certainly passed quickly. There has been an abundance of organisations over the last few months looking for Project Manager resources and a very big increase in demand for Project Office staff. In this issue we look at the Project Support role and ask the subscribers; "what do you do in your role today?"

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

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

The Programme and Project Support Office Survey 2005

Reporting is officially the most performed activity by project support professionals today

Arras People has recently carried out a comprehensive survey that gives an interesting insight into the roles of project and programme support today in the marketplace. Surprise results show that more and more support people are moving away from the most basic of project administration tasks and starting to add real value.

90% of people perform reporting activities and spends about a fifth of working time doing this, planning is closely behind with 80% of respondents spending another fifth of their time on planning tasks.

The breakdown also shows that most support staff in today's marketplace have a varied and challenging role that spans from the usual job role through to areas such as recruitment (of team members), negotiations (with suppliers), stakeholder communication and budgetary tracking.

Times are certainly a-changing in the programme and project support world, with more and more opportunity to get involved with the meatier aspects of the projects and programmes, specific training for PPSO professionals and a general increased awareness that PMO and project offices exist (see the PPSOSIG).

With 21% of people rejecting the administration side of the role completely for the more interesting **knowledge management, resource management and quality assurance tasks** the project support professionals also have their eye on other areas

Costs benefit analysis, assisting in the set up of a PMO or Project Office, and more involvement in project management training are all areas where PSO-ers are looking to branch out into. But what keeps the project support professionals from progressing further?

One response, "**people in the project do not understand the role of the Project Office or in some cases want to understand**", a reason quoted by many others. Time is also an issue, with many PSO-ers having to perform many tasks already for the project and with no additional resource available to assist with the more administrative tasks. One response also touched on the problem of "**the control freak**", with the Project Manager being in total control without the need for additional help or assistance.

For Project Support Professionals looking for that something extra - consider joining the latest conference from the PPSO SIG (see details below)

[top |](#)



The Programme and Project Support Office Specialist Interest Group

To Boldly Go Where No PPSO Has Gone Before

The next conference takes place on the 28th and 29th September in Warwickshire - see the [PPSOSIG website](#) to book a place

The Agenda

Session One - PPSO Audit - David Marsh

Auditing your PPSO and identifying where you may need to go in the future



10 Steps of Project Management

Mistake #No.5

Did you negotiate the contract yourself?

Who negotiated your contract? How expert are you on IT legal issues. I am quite sure many of us know projects that go awry and are eventually settled before ending up in court but not without the expense in terms of lawyers, managers and senior execs time and fees regardless of the cost of the agreed remedies. I'll bet for every project where the contract has come out the draw for whatever reason only 1 ends up in court, however for that every 1 at least 50 IT related projects are settled outside of court at someone's cost.

If you are a project manager who is involved in negotiating contracts is there potential that you become an expert in getting a good deal but do not have the legal or case background. As "The Little Book of IT Project Mistakes" suggests an increasing number of IT executives are expert negotiators, good at getting value from suppliers. Note the word value, the IT Executive or the Project Manager will do a great job setting commercial terms defending their side as supplier and client laying out costs delivery time etc to meet each side's business needs. However in the same way that few lawyers really understand the technicalities of IT, few clever IT negotiators or project managers are totally conversant with IT legal issues.

For example did you know that suppliers have 'implied responsibilities' to make new systems work? More importantly, do you know how to write a contract so those responsibilities can't be shirked?

For a project to be sure of success, the contract must work technically as well as legally. Otherwise you may be paying extra for services that should be part of every basic supplier agreement. The best commercial negotiators will always refer to a specialist lawyer to check over any contract.

Session Two - Speed Dating - Chris Walters / Terri Hinton



You've told us that you value the networking opportunities that the PPSO SIG can offer - well, here is an opportunity to share your ideas and pick the brains of your fellow PPSO SIG members on a one-to-one basis.

Session Three - Making the Business Case Real - John Zachar

The PPSO supporting the benefits definition and measurement process - making the Business Case - Real.

Session Four - Corporate Support PPSO - c/o Sue Foster

The corporate support function: are we doing (and how do we know) the right programme and project - and how are programme and project risks that impact the organisation dealt with - where does the PPSO contribute to or lead the in emerging topic of Portfolio Management, and how can it support "business as usual"? [suggested - open to change!]

Day Two

Session Five - Workshop - Taking the PPSO Forwards - Chris Walters

Three strands looking at how we might take a PPSO into uncharted territory through process definition, supporting toolsets (infrastructure) and skills and training.

Session Six - Workshop Reports

Session Seven - Real-world Experiences to Aid or Provoke PPSO Evolution - David Marsh

What are organisations thinking, and how are they moving towards the wider-acting PPSO, and what lessons have learnt by the pioneers?

Project Management Article

The key to ... project planning

Taken from the Times Online

PROJECT teams are more common sights in offices than managerial affairs these days.

Projects equal pounds. Ever wondered what all those programme managers and project leaders do? Earn cash, it seems. According to project management training providers APM Group (www.apmgroup.co.uk) a quarter of the UK's GDP comes from projects.

A full-time job. Many companies reorganised over the past decade to chase the project pound, which has had a profound impact on staff. "Projects are no longer 'something extra'," says the website www.chiefprojectofficer.com, "they are the way work gets done at an increasing number of companies, from small start-ups to the likes of Hewlett Packard."

Get trained. As income from projects has grown, so too has the market in accredited project management qualifications. More companies are sending staff on courses such as Prince2 (www.prince2.org.uk), a project management methodology owned by the Office of Government Commerce.

Define your objectives. Every project begins with a plan. When will we start? What do we need? Can we do it alone, or do we need help? How long will it take? What will it cost? "These are typical questions asked at the start of any project and the answers are the building blocks of project management," says the Prince2 website.

Expect to change. Projects that don't evolve are the likeliest to wither so no matter how good your initial plan is, expect it to change. If you're running a project that has been outsourced to your company, consider inviting a customer on to the project team to keep them informed, involved in decisions and better motivated.

The advantages. "Project management" may sound as sexy as the words "Charles Kennedy lap-dancing", but don't be fooled. "One of the advantages of working in projects is that you never know what you will be doing in six months," says Andrew Delo at the project management advisers Provek (www.provek.co.uk). "If you like uncertainty, it is an exciting environment."

JOHN PLUMMER
www.timesonline.co.uk

Just a bit of fun

A woman in a hot air balloon realized she was lost. She reduced altitude and spotted a man below. She descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The man below replied, "You are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

As a parting thought - in terms of more generic contract wording write and tell us what you think is implied by use of the words "best endeavours" and we will publish a definition and explanation next month.

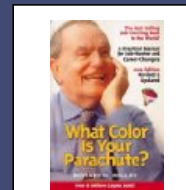
Adapted from the little book of project mistakes [Best Practice Group PLC](#)

The PMI Body of Knowledge

The whole book (1996 version) is available to view in PDF format here

> [Link](#)

Book of the month



[What Color is Your Parachute? 2005](#)

Richard N. Bolles

[Best Price £0.01](#)

or Buy New



[Privacy Information](#)

In response to Curt's request this morning, I'd have to say the best career management book ever is:

"What Color Is Your Parachute?: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and

Career-Changers" (Ten Speed Press) by Richard Bolles. It's updated annually and is available for about \$12 from Amazon.com.

It has exercises which will help you decide what kind of job you'd like, and it has timeless, worthwhile suggestions about how to get a job.

New to Project Management?

"You must be an engineer," said the balloonist.

"I am," replied the man, "how did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is, technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far."

The man below responded, "You must be in Management."

"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the man, "You don't know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault."

New Roles from Arras People

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

Tipoff

"Writing a good cover letter is tough, and you're not alone in fretting over it. "Almost without exception, what people feel most uncomfortable and awkward about [in the job hunt] is the cover letter," says McKinney. "It's worth doing right because you are developing your reputation."

Url: Yahoo.Finance

Project Management Careers Clinic

We take a break for the summer period and will be back in September 2005, thanks to everyone who has used the service over the last few months. If you need advice - register and contact us to arrange a convenient time to talk

[| top |](#)

About Arras People:

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

A busy period for Arras People (apologises once again for the absence of our newsletter!!).

Arras welcomes three new starters to the organisation, Sarah Birch (our friendly receptionist and marketing assistant), Dee Allen (our new junior recruitment consultant) and finally Ian Williams (working on both permanent and contract positions as our new recruitment consultant)

www.arraspeople.co.uk

Tel: 01706-366444 (Head Office) north@arraspeople.co.uk

Tel: 01234-823532 (Bedfordshire) south@arraspeople.co.uk

Tel: 0208-785-6746 (London) london@arraspeople.co.uk

My top three:

This issue - John Thorpe's favourite three websites:

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com>

<http://www.zoominfo.com>

<http://artpad.art.com/artpad/painter/>

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

The Project Management Kit

The Method 123 Project Management Kit comprises the entire suite of project management templates, forms and documents used to initiate, plan, execute and close projects successfully.

See the quote from Chris Grey a recent contributor to tipoffs

[> Link](#)

Arras Corner



Arras People had a great email a few weeks ago from a great lady called Arras. Not only is that a great name but she's also a Project Coordinator in Toronto Canada. Our line of work!

Arras (the one in Toronto) recommends the wine (Arras - above picture) but its from Australia not Arras in France. If anyone's tasted it could you let us know!?

[archives](#) | [comments/feedback](#) | [submit article](#)

