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September 2005 Issue 14

Welcome to the 14th issue of Tipoffs. What a fantastic summer, it's gone so fast and here at arras we have been working very hard to find new specific project related opportunities for you consider. We have made great strides to increase our client base therefore offering you more opportunities to consider either as a contractor, interim or permanent employee at all levels. I am sure you will have noticed the roles on our job board at www.arraspeople.co.uk.

See Arras Corner for more information about how we spent our summer!

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](#)

back basics

PRINCE for Beginners David Marsh

PRINCE2 (Projects Run IN Controlled Environments) is one of the cornerstones of the [OGC Best Practice suite](#). It has a long pedigree - it started life in the 1970's. PRINCE2 (P2) is a project management method - not a project development method i.e., it provides the eight processes, eight components and three techniques used by the organisation to manage the project - not the development of the project deliverables.

The processes are:

1. Starting Up
2. Project initiation
3. Directing the project
4. Controlling a Stage
5. Managing delivery
6. Managing Stage Boundaries
7. Closing the project
8. Planning a project

The components include:

1. The Business Case
2. The Organisation structure
3. Plans
4. Controls
5. Risk
6. Quality
7. Configuration Management
8. Change control

The three techniques are:

1. Product Based Planning
2. Change Management
3. Quality Reviews

The most notable features of the method are:

1. The setting up of an Organisation Structure and Project Board to direct the project - P2 not only provides a recommended structure it also provides template roles and responsibilities
2. The recommend project control documents - P2 provide a comprehensive set of such documents and also defines their content and format
3. The used of deliverable or product based planning - this is where the definition of the product and its quality standards are agreed before it is developed

So how does P2 work?

PRINCE is designed to ensure "you do the project right". This means that what the project is to deliver is defined and control processes and techniques used to ensure that what was agreed in respect of the required outputs, and the resources to be consumed (all the M's - money, manpower, minutes, machinery etc) are adhered to.

10 Steps of Project Management

Mistake #No.6

Remember back in Mistake Number 1 we discussed the need to bring in a 3rd party supplier to determine your requirements? We stated that when you write the requirements yourself, you may make yourself contractually responsible for anything your vendor misunderstands!

This is Tip Number 6 and a similar outcome applies if you insist on micro-managing an ongoing project.

In general terms how do you describe micro-management? Basically you are disenfranchising responsibility from the person who has been asked to complete a task. You are probably in their hair every day worrying that they are not doing it the way you think it should be done. This leads lack of confidence in the person carrying the task which in turn means they are not motivated to own that task. They believe you have no faith in them and therefore abdicate responsibility.

Do you yourself like to be micro-managed?

If you adopt this route and micro-manage everything yourself what happens in the

PRINCE does this because it contains Processes - these define the recommended sequence of what needs to be done and by whom to meet the above- a recommended management organisation structure to ensure the right decisions are made by the right people at the right time with the right information - a recommended techniques to be deployed for planning, dealing with changes and issues etc. And finally a recommended list of and contents of Project Control Documents - the vital baseline agreement and review reports used to ensure the project does deliver what is required etc. Thus this method can be used with any type of project (subject to the appropriate tuning or adjustment) to reflect the specific project or organisation.

This use of a Project Management Method can help - and I stress can help the project management of the project if the organisation uses it and does not indulge in what is known as PINO or LIPSO - PRINCE In Name Only or LIP Service Only. This is where they appear to follow PRINCE but are not really committed or take the decision making and controls that PRINCE demands seriously. There are a number of large-scale failures of projects that used PRINCE but were really PINO or LIPSO applications of the method!

Users of the method can undergo accredited training and sit exams at two levels - foundation and practitioner and they also can choose from a range of software tools to help them perform the process and produce the documents etc.

P2 has a large user base in the UK but is also found in many places in Europe and also New Zealand and Australia

David Marsh is an experienced Consultant and Lecturer who has particular expertise in the introduction and implementation of structured methods for Project and Programme Management, systems development, and the introduction, use and application of PRINCE® and SSADM. He is a founder member of the Association for Project Management (APM) Special Interest Group for Programme Management. In June 2001, he became Founder and Chairman of the Specialist Interest Group for Programme and Project Support Offices. See <http://www.m-m-p.co.uk> for more information

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Careers

Standing out from the Crowd

An interesting article published by [Grey Hair Management](#), gives some good tips and interesting facts that any job-seeker should ignore at their peril. We all know that for each good job advertised - by agencies or organisations directly - there are going to be hundreds of applicants, so what can you do to make sure you stand out from the crowd? Here are some suggestions (and this is not just for the grey haired amongst us!)

1. Know your value.

Know your professional strengths and weaknesses as an employee and be able to work out quantitatively the value you had to your previous employer.

2. Be concise and specific in your interview.

Be able to describe what you can do and have done in a precise, understandable way. An interviewer won't understand long-winded statements about wonderful things you felt good about.

3. Be prepared to do it in 15 words or less

A lot can be learnt from direct marketing theory - if you can't articulate what you do in 15 words or less with the listener really Understanding, you're getting it wrong

4. Does the interviewer get it?

Don't assume the interviewer is getting your message. Most people assume that the talking they're doing is understood by the person listening but they won't have a clue what you're talking about, nor do they know what you want. Most people can't figure that out unless you've figured it out first.

5. Don't wait until you're out of work to begin preparation for a job search.

Always plan ahead.

An interesting take on the average time you're going to be out of work has been formulated by the Grey Management team; one month for every £10,000 you currently earn. So £40,000 will be 4 months of job searching. Let us know your thoughts on this - is this your situation? Let us know at situation@arraspeople.co.uk

contracted vendor environment what might the impact be, could the vendor just assume he has no responsibility as you are assuming all responsibilities? This is probably the most difficult balancing act that Best Practice Group recommends.

If you want to avoid paying for your vendor's mistakes, you've got to know how to manage a project without inadvertently instructing your vendor to make expensive errors.

Provide all the help you can but always make it clear that you rely on the guidance of your vendor. They have to take ownership of resolving problems - because otherwise you could end up paying for their mistakes.

Remember you hire them to do a job, get the balance right and give them the space to deliver, whether vendor, employee or neighbour, trust is the key in my opinion and it has to work between all parties, other wise you will forever be doing things yourself and carrying the can for everything.

For further information and an has an entire library of project-management tips please contact the [Best Practice Group](#).

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

SAP Implementations

Best Practice Guidelines For SAP Implementation For Companies Implementing SAP Projects For The First Time

A 14 point press release from Keane, an IT Outsourcing organisation

Thanks to the Grey Hair Management - <http://www.grayhairmanagement.com/> and "[Winning the Job Race](#)" By Jack Heyden and Scott Kane

Is it worth taking a PRINCE2 course?

by **Maven Training**

PRINCE2 is a specific project management methodology that concentrates on the structure of a project, and the activities that the Project Manager and Senior Management must perform to ensure that a project successfully delivers its objectives. As a method of managing projects, PRINCE2 provides a detailed step-by-step guide through the life of the project, with recommendations on what management information to document before the project begins, what to agree before each significant piece of work is undertaken and what to agree and document before closing the project. There is a lot of common sense in the PRINCE2 method, which enables it to be easily understood and followed by everyone, whatever the size or type of project they are managing.

However, the role of Project Manager is a sophisticated management role, requiring a mixture of technical or "hard" skills e.g. negotiation, marketing and communication, presentation, planning and scheduling, risk management or "soft" skills, like communications, motivation, team building, leadership and the ability to perform under stress. The PRINCE2 course will not specifically address these issues, although by following the method, there is guidance on where in the lifecycle of the project certain of these key areas will need to be applied.

It is important to recognise the difference when selecting your development path. A course can present you with technical information that you can then practice in the real world and become proficient in the skill. 'Soft' skills cannot be learnt on a course. The trainer can develop ideas that you might choose to apply, but because these areas are heavily dependent on your personality and management style, you will need to practice them in real world situations and develop your own approach.

So what training should you undertake? The most important point is to ensure that your CV demonstrates your commitment to project management, so make sure that you undertake some training, at least every couple of years. There are many useful management courses available that will address each of the technical and soft skills as a specific subject and some general project management skills courses that will cover many of them within the same course structure.

However, anyone currently job hunting cannot fail to have noticed the requirement for PRINCE2 qualifications in many project management related roles. Therefore, it is sensible to ensure that you have equipped yourself with this qualification, before addressing the accompanying skills, as these are harder to demonstrate during CV evaluation by prospective employers.

Maven Training has been established to address the training needs of project managers, project team members and support staff. We specialise in PRINCE2 and MSP Accredited courses but also offer a range of project management related training and bespoke courses. See <http://www.maventraining.co.uk/> for more information

So what is the Working Time Directive?

by **John Stamford**

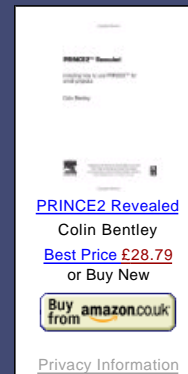
Working for an employer is dangerous to an employee's health or so the European Parliament would have us believe.

Whilst the UK Government has always been fiercely against any restriction on employees' working hours, under the Health and Safety Provisions of the European Parliament the Working Time Directive was passed in 1998. Basically this limits employees hours of working to 48 hours per week, gives a 20 minute break after 6 hours work and states that night workers can only work 10 hours in any 24 hour period and a minimum of 20 days leave (including the statutory days) per year.

The UK Government was successful at the time of the Directive in obtaining a provision whereby employees could opt out of the 48 hour limit, which has aided the UK employment market such that it is the envy of Europe (in France until recently they have been lumbered with a 35 hour working week and in Germany also there is a strict maximum of 48 hours per week). Those who have travelled to Germany will find that the large stores close early on a Saturday afternoon and do not open until Monday morning.

> [Link](#)

Book of the month



[PRINCE2 Revealed](#)

Colin Bentley

[Best Price £28.79](#)
or Buy New

Buy from [amazon.co.uk](#)

[Privacy Information](#)

There's just something about Colin Bentley's books that I like - clear, concise and to the point

Seven steps to successful organisational change....

And project management came sixth!

6) Project management – reorganisations need organising too, and good project management can make the difference between success and failure.

But project management is not a cure-all, and without care can become overly rigid and cumbersome for the changing circumstances being managed.

[See the other steps](#)

Taken from the [Management Issues](#) website - research by CIPD and the Said Business School

Given this state of affairs, Europe has been very much against the UK opt out. In May 2005 the Employment Committee of the European Parliament voted in favour of scrapping the UK opt out and this was approved by the European Parliament on 11 May 2005. There is still a final hurdle for the Europeans to achieve which is that the decision has got to be ratified by the Council of Ministers (so our Government has one last attempt to block this proposed legislation on UK working hours). So, it is a case of watch this space...

In the event that the UK does not succeed in vetoing the EU decision it would mean that by 2009/2010 there would be a 48 hour limit on the working hours of all UK employees, which would have a detrimental impact on the flexibility and productivity of the UK market.

As it stands, the 48 hour working week can be averaged over 17 weeks so it could be that employers would be able to have employees working more than 48 hours to meet peak demands - but the thought of keeping detailed records of hours worked would be a bureaucratic nightmare. Stephen Byers tried to make record keeping mandatory when the Directive was first introduced but dropped the requirement when employers buckled under the extra workload.

As it is, the 48 hour working limit does not apply to managers, sole traders, and those in the decision making process (who are exempt) and this would be unlikely to change. Provided that those in a family business are seen as decision makers (rather than purely and simply employees) it is unlikely that these people will be affected.

The EU Parliament decision is being strenuously challenged by the CBI and the Chambers of Commerce, who describe the decision as a "leap back to the 1970s". It is to be hoped that somewhere along the line the UK government can retain the opt out, otherwise we are sure that industries in China and India will be looking forward to the importation of more European workers' jobs.

Advice on any area of employment and consultancy see [John Stamford & Associates](#). Thanks to John Stamford for this article

New Roles from Arras People

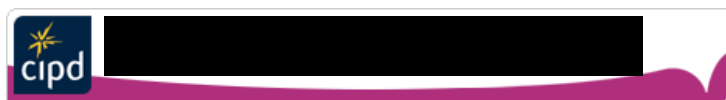
For all our current live vacancies see the website at www.arraspeople.co.uk/jobs.php

Project Management Careers Clinic

The Project Management Careers Clinic is open for business once again, with two dates each month for each area of specialism. The next dates are the 26th, 27th and 28th September. [Book now](#) or refer a friend in need. This clinic remains free to all registered project management professionals who are registered with Arras People

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Arras People are back at the CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition this year, come along and say hello. For subscribers to the newsletter ONLY - bring along your CV and have a chat over coffee with one of our consultants - alternatively book a time at cipd@arraspeople.co.uk



About Arras People:

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

Arras People has been growing dramatically since we started the business 3 years ago.

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 -Lindsay Scott's favourite three websites:

<http://www.ourproperty.co.uk/index.html> - good for searching local house prices free - unlike the Land Registry site

<http://www.tripadvisor.com> - I wouldn't book a hotel without it!

<http://maps.google.com/> - My new streetmap!

Arras Corner

Time Off!

Of course we can't let the summer go by without a mention of the cricket. Just in case you missed it England won back The Ashes from Australia in one of the most fantastic series of test matches you or I are ever likely to see.

I expect that most of you will remember where you were on that Monday afternoon as one of our clients put it "...I was watching the pre lunch session on the last day in the staff coffee area - saw both Trescothick get out to one of the best balls I've ever seen (turned more than the Gatt!) and then Flintoff and at the time I was somewhat pessimistic about a draw let alone a win! But, given the way the rest of the series had gone, I never lost hope as it (the series) has see-sawed so much match to match and session to session.

The over by Lee to Pietersen just before lunch was the turning point as it was one of the most vicious I have ever seen (memories of Donald's classic confrontation with Atherton) and Pietersen somehow survived it to play what must rank as one of the finest Test match innings I've seen. Given the circumstances of the match, the series, 18 years of hurt etc not to mention his inexperience at this level it was a truly great innings. We're lucky to have him in our team..."

I was actually lucky enough to have a day off and attend the first day at the Oval, what an incredible atmosphere.

So what has this got to do with **project management**? Much has been written and many more forests will be recycled before the debate is over on this series. The recurring hindsight message

appears to be that we had a coach and manager in Duncan Fletcher, Michael Vaughn had another pair of ears and eyes to help him make decisions, Ricky Ponting did not have that level of support, Australia where playing 12 men not 11 (regardless of arguments about subs), so coaching is not just about physical and mental technique its about getting a team to work hard and play together, the Ashes could be seen as a programme where the strategy was set to win the ashes over 5 tests and each test was managed like a project with tactics executed like actions where everyones effort counts.

Roll on Australia 2006-07, I bet Ponting has a coach the calibre of Fletcher to work with by then Warne will still be around!

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