

Welcome

From the Editor:

It seems we have a case of the R's lately here at Tipoffs. Last month, it was a more dreaded 'R' that infected us: the feared 'Recession' and its growing eminence in public consciousness. A month has passed, and we're still not sure if this 'R' is still one to fear or merely keep a watchful eye on.

This month, we stay serious but remove the far-most dreaded 'R' from our lexicon, and instead instil a running theme congruent to the end of summer, the holiday season, the return of the kids to school and - quite similarly - the return of the working professional to a 'new term': one of production, progress and, perhaps, power! The 'R's in question, you ask? Our trusty '3+1=Success' Formula: (Reflect + Re-energise + Re-invent) + Ramp it Up = Ready to Roll.

Our dependable leadoff man, Mick Hides, starts things this month when he tackles the concept of **Reflection**, and uses careers clinics and other third party mediums as a way of using independent resources for advice on how you can truly advance your career. Fresh off holiday, Nicola Thorp is the perfect candidate to handle the concept of **Re-energising** for the road ahead at work.

We introduce a new writer to the Tipoffs team this month, as Arras People's latest consultant Gary Holmes tackles the **Re-invent** concept. To give us the lonesome "1" in our 3+1 formula, our own John Thorpe takes it all in and **Ramps** up the goals and planning into a solid year of production and output.

We had a huge response to last month's Tipoffs, and we always look forward to your submissions and articles. As they taught us in the communications curriculum at university, keep writing. And while you're at it, keep reading! We receive requests to write for our newsletters all the time.

Do you want to contribute to a future issue of Project Management Tipoffs? We are always looking for contributions from the next great writer out there looking to share their knowledge, experience and expertise in the project management industry. For more information, drop me a line at editor@arraspeople.co.uk.

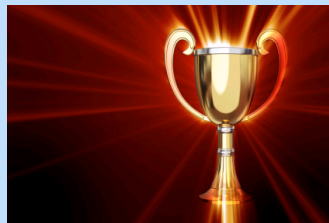
It's PM New Year - make a go of it!

Dan Strayer, Editor

Reflection - Powerful, Progressive Ways to Take Your Career Forward

By Mick Hides

Reflection is a powerful way to look at what you have been doing and consider whether you might adopt a revised approach.



Using a third party (from a neutral perspective) to challenge your thinking is a valuable experience according to many of our candidates. The majority of candidates using Arras' **Project Management Careers (PMC) Clinic** are looking for advice as part of leaving their current employer (often focusing on how they might improve their CVs). More recently I have spoken to candidates who are not looking to change employers but rather to develop their careers.

One such case involved a Project Manager who was being offered an internal promotion but was concerned about the implications for his career. Working within an IT consultancy the new role was

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the programme & project support office
specialist interest group

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED OFFER!

The Programme and Project Support Office Specialist Interest Group (PPSOSIG) will be holding a two-day conference, 'Sweating Your PPSO's Assets: How Do You Get Best Value Out of What You Already Have?' 17-18 September at Warwick Conferences in Coventry. Tipoffs is offering you the chance to take part in this conference at a significantly-reduced rate!

The first person to sign up by e-mail through Tipoffs gets 40% off of the regular two-day price

concentrating on managing programmes for one key client in the retail sector. The candidate was concerned that he might be tagged a "one trick pony" and that the label might limit his opportunities in the future. The candidate had asked for an internal meeting to discuss the role and turned to the clinic as part of his preparation.

Through the clinic we were able to offer different perspectives and compare the positives and negatives of taking the new role. In addition the discussion included training/development as well as potential reward packages.

A short time after the meeting the candidate, he came back to me with an update in which he was pleased to announce that he had agreed to expand his role to include Programme Management responsibilities on key accounts. His employer had agreed to support training activities and a sizeable increase in salary. In particular, the following comments reinforced the value of the clinic.

'I think some of the points you raised when we had our conversation were very useful. Specifically, to be able to show a significant move on my CV and to look at this situation as a challenge and a way of learning as opposed to something that I might get burnt by. [My Company] also did not throw lots of money at me, which was reassuring (in a way) but I really get the feeling this role is mine to make of it what I can as opposed to any senior figure guiding me or marking out the space...wish me luck!'

This is not to say that the clinic is the only means of reflecting on your own development. Self audit can easily be undertaken and there are plenty of websites to aid the process. Fundamentally it is about determining what it is you want to achieve or "Begin with the end in mind" as Stephen Covey ("[Seven Habits of Highly Effective People](#)") puts it. From here it is relatively easy to compare where you are now to where you want to be and devise a development action plan.

Keeping the ultimate goal ("end in mind") is very useful, but be sure to include plenty of milestones that reinforce that you are on the right track. Going back to the clinic, a further discussion began as to the competencies that the candidate might wish to consider. The publication of the APM's competency Framework was an obvious place to start and I am sure we will continue this discussion.

Before you begin the autumn slog, why not take a view minutes to reflect on your career and see what you might change? You may love where you are working and cannot possibly see yourself leaving, but are you ready to accept the challenges and opportunities that life holds?

Mick Hides is a Consultant for [Arras People](#).

Re-energise - Give Yourself and Your Project a Proper Workout!

By Nicola Thorp

Having just returned from a well-earned summer break in sunny Spain I was provided the opportunity to write an article for Tipoffs about re-energising. This article ties in well with a previous article I wrote for our Holiday themed Tipoffs back in June (Issue 29). Click [here](#) to go to the article.



Back then, I discussed delegation prior to taking annual leave - now having had chance to take a relaxing break it's time to reflect on how well your work was covered during your absence, this could be the answer to help re-energise your life in the realms of work. This is an ideal opportunity to not only assess your delegating skills and the skills of the project teams abilities it's time to realise the benefits. Once you have conducted an audit you are in the best position to change your routine and assess your daily tasks - have you previously been taking on responsibilities which are easily managed by competent members of your team? Would it be more beneficial to allow the project team members to take on such tasks leaving you available for more pressing and demanding matters?

The saying "a change is as good as a rest" rings true in this instance - pulling yourself away from the minutia and allowing more time to

for an extremely low £200. But hurry, because this offer is first-come, first served!

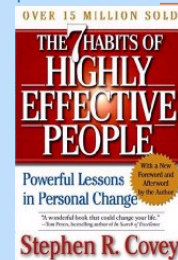
HOW TO WIN: Simply email conference@ppsosig.co.uk with the words '40% off offer' in the subject line, first, and you could be the one to get over 40% off on the advertised rate!

For more information on this event, click [here](#). You can also go [here](#) for more information about PPSOSIG.

"Reflection" links

For more information on the Project Management Careers (PMC) Clinic, click [here](#).

Some background on Stephen R. Covey's 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' is available [here](#).



To buy the book, go [here](#)

"Re-energise" links

To get a look at Nicola's June article for Tipoffs, click [here](#).

Can you fathom reinventing yourself in five easy steps? [Patricia Soldati can](#).

"Re-Invent" links

Tom Mochal's 2006 Tech Republic article lists Five Reasons why [Organisations Fail at Project Management](#)

really progress your projects will start towards gaining a positive attitude in the direction of your projects and will again boost moral in the team. Once you start to make the changes you can look at training and development both for yourself and the team - if you have team members who are champions in a particular area, why not mentor them into a training position - set up a workshop morning every 2 weeks, cutting out expensive training courses by utilising the skills that are readily available in-house.

Focusing on one aspect of your life is good, but as a project professional you will appreciate analysis of the bigger picture is essential to gain full potential. It is difficult to fit in extra curricular activities when you are balancing a family, work and a social life. Try to combine some areas such as time with the family can be a more physical activity - I am not suggesting running marathons but more days out in the park playing with a ball and eating a healthy picnic.

This leads me onto another area - diet. It is easy to skip meals and take convenience foods on the go but it's not going to help you achieve a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Personally I have set about making "snack pots" the evening before a busy day, comprising of small boxes of fruit and salads to pick at throughout the day.

This is a starting point towards re-energising your life - please don't sit at home dreading the first day back to work after a holiday, take on a positive approach to refreshing all aspects of your life and reap the knock on effects.

Nicola Thorp is a Project Management Consultant for [Arras People](#).

Ever think making a music album could thrive on harmony, lyrics and quality musicians alone? Get an inside look at Metallica's latest album and how a [proactive approach](#), albeit coupled with some volatile relationships, has helped them through the years.

Re-Invent - Starting on a Road to Bettering Yourself after Some Needed Objectivity

By Gary Holmes

It's the end of the summer holidays unfortunately, but this can be a good time to take a look at your role in the project management office in a clearer light and make the changes you might not have even

considered before getting away for a couple of weeks to gain a bit of clarity and objectivity.



There are lots of ways you can go about re-inventing yourself as a project support professional, and any company worth its salt will encourage this sort of positive action, but sometimes it has to be initiated by you. So here are a few things I thought of that might be of a great help.

- **Identify and focus on your weaknesses** - As you well know, no one is perfect at their job, and I'm sure you can think of areas of your performance that you can make a concerted effort to improve on. A good way of doing this is to go back to your last appraisal or KPIs. Even your original job description from when you landed the role can help with this. Moreover, it may even highlight some areas of your work that have slowly disappeared from your role over time as department priorities have changed. In turn, you can now phase them back in following the summer break.
- **Ask for advice** - Talk to your fellow Coordinators or Support Officers if you work in a large department. As they say, two heads are better than one. Not only might they be able to help you iron out any problem areas you have and vice-versa, but together you stand a greater chance of identifying areas for improvement within the department. It is this sort of proactive and co-operative action that is so useful if you decide to go down the road of Project Management. If you are the only Project Support Professional in a team of Project Managers (like I once was), talk to them and get their opinions, and if all they tell you is to stop chasing them up for their weekly status updates, well, just ignore them.

"Ramp It Up" links

For more details on Arras People, click [here](#).

You can check out the blog managed by Arras People [here](#)

ESI International



A close partner of Arras People is ESI International, world leaders in Project Management and Business Analysis training has worked with more than 1000 clients worldwide to develop customised Project Management and Business Analysis courses.

- **Pester your boss for some extra training** - As I'm sure you know, there are a lot of useful courses out there that can help you develop your career and its always worth taking a lead and asking for the funding yourself (if you don't ask for it, you don't get it). If your company can't afford to send you on a Prince2 or APM course, its worth asking for some in-house training with your Programme or Project Manager to boost your experience.
- **Go the extra mile** - It's easy to get stuck in a rut of complacency, especially if your role is not too demanding in the first place. This is where its down to you prove you're worth more than your salary and do things that are not expected. Say, for example, that you currently update Risk and Issue Logs with data provided to you by your PM. Go out there yourself and get the data direct from the source - I'm sure your PM will appreciate it. Its things like this that will get you noticed, and they don't have to be massive changes. Not to mention it makes the PM's job that much easier, and you can bet that they'll notice that!
- **If all else fails...** - Change your appearance. It works for Madonna! Maybe that tongue piercing or tattoo on your forehead that says 'I love MS Project' is a bit drastic, but a new haircut or tie could be the change you need.

Gary Holmes is a Consultant for [Arras People](#), and blogs about Project Management issues [here](#).

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Ramp it Up - Turning Ideas of Renewal Into Real Time Energy and Production

By John Thorpe

From a personal point of view the end of August and the onset of autumn always feels like a time of energy and renewal; in many ways it feels like the time to catch all the energy and ramp it up much more than January and the start of a new calendar year!



Maybe I still carry in my psyche that memory of new pencil cases, new uniform and the excitement of change and challenge that the new school year had to offer; the re-acquaintance with classmates after the summer break, the introduction of new classmates or even a completely new school.

Maybe it's the weather? The hot, sunny (rainy!) days give way to hopefully a warm and dry period as the leaves change colour to give a fine fiery display and the garden gives up its wide variety of fresh vegetables' for the harvest. The working day still surrounded by daylight rather than the bleak darkness of winter; a better time of year I can not imagine!

In terms of my time as a project professional these feelings all add up to a time of high energy and a real sense of purpose, sixteen weeks to the Christmas period in which to put into action all those thoughts and plans which were conceived during the time out of my summer break. Plans that normally include both personal objectives as well as business (project) related targets.

Like the school days, the team generally gets back together after the fractious period of holidays, all refreshed and ready to drive on; or a new project is set to be launched and a team needs to be built to address this new challenge. As a leader it is important to capture this energy and focus it on a clear plan of action for the coming period of uninterrupted activity, drive it on and ramp it up, and achieve those targets, whatever they may be!

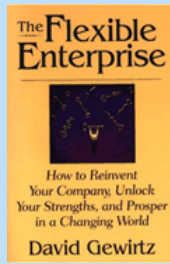
John Thorpe is the Managing Director for [Arras People](#), and blogs at [How to Manage a Camel](#).

Suggested Readings and Links

Edited by Dan Strayer

With each issue of Tipoffs, we endeavour to find some web sites and relevant books for your perusal and study with the month's theme. With economic concerns as this month's theme, we point you to three books and several web sites that can address the issues surrounding the topic.

TIPOFFS' BOOKS OF THE MONTH



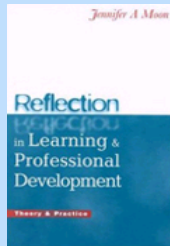
[The Flexible Enterprise](#)

David Gewirtz

Synopsis:

"Based on the author's experiences of restructuring his own small technology company, this guide explains how to develop the diversification and flexibility necessary to adapt to changes in the marketplace. Gewirtz covers such issues as product development,

marketing, sales, cash management, operations/manufacturing, and staff motivation. He offers a practical approach that takes real monetary constraints into account." - Available now at amazon.co.uk



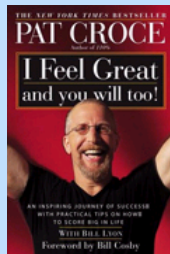
[Reflection in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice](#)

Jennifer A. Moon

Synopsis:

"Reflection is a technique for aiding and reinforcing learning, used in education and professional development. An essential element of good learning, it has wide

potential application in most learning situations and environments. This volume offers practitioners and students guidance that cuts across theoretical approaches, enabling them to understand and use reflection to enhance learning in practice. It clarifies the many theoretical origins of reflection and presents a route map designed to improve learning in classrooms, lecture theatres or training sessions." - Available at amazon.co.uk

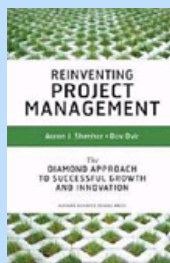


[I Feel Great and you will too!](#)

Pat Croce and Bill Lyon: Foreword by Bill Cosby

Exterior review: "You'll find that Pat's enthusiasm and positive outlook will inspire your everyday life... Watch out... these pages are packed with energy!" - Lance Armstrong, seven-time Tour de France winner and author, 'It's Not About the Bike' - Available at

amazon.co.uk



[Reinventing Project Management: The Diamond Approach to Successful Growth & Innovation](#)

Aaron J Shenhar and Dov Dvir

Exterior review: "Reinventing Project Management provides [an understanding of how to execute] in a clear, concise and thoughtful manner." - Automotive Design and Production, November 2007 - Available at

amazon.co.uk

TIPOFFS' LINKS OF THE MONTH

Whitepapers.silicon.com (Registration required) - This link takes you to a downloadable report entitled 'Turning CRM Project Lemons Into Lemonade: Realigning, Refocusing, and Reenergizing CRM Projects'. Though customer relation-centric, project management readers will have an opportunity to reenergise their project management skills as well.

[Reflection from an Oxfam PM Group Member](#) - Someone took

Mick's advice of reflection quite literally - so literally that the unnamed writer (through her parent company, Oxfam) went ahead and wrote about it at [teachingexpertise.com](#). Give it a read: there is a thorough account for many different elements of a group project that lends for views on group think, resource investment and even how to solve problems effectively.

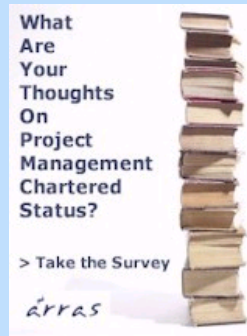
[Agile Management Blog](#) - Public speaker and agile management author David Anderson gives a brief review of Aaron J Shenhar and Dov Dvir's book, [Reinventing Project Management](#). Anderson's post is revealing and informative: he reflects on whether management's 'iron triangle' had been morphed into the authors' 'Diamond Approach', but soon realises his initial word-of-the-moment scepticism was ill-founded.

Arras People Update

Edited by Dan Strayer

As mentioned in this space last month (click [here](#) to see last month's e-mail), [Arras People](#) has recently taken a strong interest in the future of Chartered status for Project Management Professionals. We can state today that your interest in a Charter remains that filled with intrigue and wonder.

The [webpage dedicated to news](#) and updates about the Association for Project Management's application for Chartered Status remains open, and respondents have been plentiful and opinionated. Our [Survey on Chartered Status](#), which is also available through links on to the Chartered Status news page, has received the bulk of your views and thoughts on the application and its importance to project managers nationwide. Please feel free to log on to either page and check for news, information or to add your own thoughts about Chartered Status. The survey will be available throughout September.



After all, it is you that stands to benefit from this crucial application: Why not show us what you really think of it?

In other news...

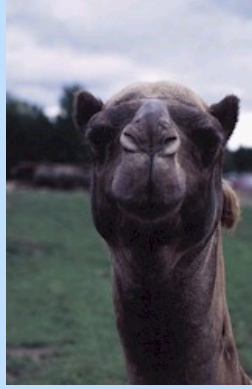
- Our survey work doesn't just end with the Chartered Status application enquiries. Arras People acted recently on a letter sent to us by a graduate student hoping to discern more information about project sponsorship. Click [here](#) to give your input.
- The 14th PPSOSIG conference will be held on Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th September at [Warwick Conferences](#) in Coventry. The full agenda for the conference revolves around using one's assets, including the Physical, Personal, Skills & Knowledge, Information and Future Assets. For more information on this event, including booking forms, guest speakers and full agenda details, click on the [PPSOSIG web site](#).
- If you wanted to find project management agencies in the UK on Google, and typed in 'project management agencies', you can't do any better [than us](#).
- Check out the [job board](#) and register to be informed of new opportunities.
- Vacancies on the Arras People job board come from all over the UK, one particular strong area of late has been the Home Counties area. For those living in or near this region, have a look at [this vacancy in Essex](#). Or [this one in Hertfordshire](#). Here's another that requires a background in Educational Assessment, with a [home base in Cambridge](#).
- It's never too late to brush up on your training and skills. If you need advice on your project management career with the added bonus of contributing to one of four newly selected charities, then [book a slot](#) at one of our clinics today.

Project Management Blog

How to Manage a Camel



The comments are piling in, and traffic is growing steadily. The blog we at Arras People created is an online gathering spot for professionals in project management. It is a place for project managers, programme managers and other project-related professionals to address issues in this growing sector. We are raising questions and concerns about the field, and it is our hope to continue that trend. But we need something else - you!



Drop by How to Manage a Camel today, and add your comments to existing posts, or simply let us know about your thoughts on the issues surrounding this month's 3+1 theme. We'd love to hear your stories on reinvention and re-energisation. And as always, you are always welcome at the Camel!

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