

## Welcome

### From the Editor:

If you can sum up the year-end edition of Tipoffs in a single word, you would fail the word association test if you failed to drop this eye-inducing active verb - looking.

Whatever the case for December 2008 and Tipoffs, it all comes back to what we are looking at. And with the whirlwind year we've seen and experienced ourselves, the word is most apt: Not unlike most publications, you will find Tipoffs joining in with a year-in-review meme, the traditional manner of publications is one of *looking backward*, mostly for trends that emerged, issues that were raised, problems that were or were not solved, and, ultimately, lessons learned from everything that took place.

We are also *looking forward*. If 2008 has taught us anything, we have learned that poor economic status and project management dependency are just as intertwined as they were in other historically black financial eras. As a result, you seek advice and information, and perhaps some examples of what be ready for. You'll even turn to us for a way out of the struggles that have emerged this year. Another variation of our original verb is to look, or see, and we endeavour to provide you all with some advice and consultancy know-how straight from several renowned external advisors. They are professionals I like to call The Seers Of 2009.

You may be wondering: Why all the external advice and writings? Simple: Our talented writing staff/project management consultants from Arras People have the month off, a break I'm sure they have been *looking forward* to! (Cheap joke.) But they'll be refreshed and rejuvenated, as January rolls around just as quickly as the post-Christmas highs look ahead to a rollicking New Year's celebration.

They have also been using their time to help produce the Granddaddy of them all - the [2009 Arras People Project Management Survey](#). The fourth annual edition of this renowned study is now available online and hoping to provide revealing answers about the project management industry as it stands today. More on this key resource below.



While I remain on board this month, I'm happy as ever to write and talk with you, as it were. For lately, I've found myself to be *looking on the bright side*. As ever, when I see the Holiday lights dot the dwellings and businesses throughout the landscape, I realise that in spite of all that may frustrate us, this time of year continues its tradition, one that is inspiring, renewing and - in a phrase I'd like Oxford Dictionary to recognise by next December - *happifying*. I've gone out and found other resources that would make good stocking stuffers, such as helpful advice books in our Suggested Readings and Links section, that may be of importance as tools and guides to 2009 and the principles we discuss this month.

Our guests know no bounds when it comes to great expertise. Maven Training CEO Melanie Franklin is here to talk about how rough things will get in the PM sector in 2009. Vodafone's Chris Walters, on the other hand, has a hip and uplifting take for PPSO's reasoning for professionalism (though he used his own word to describe it!) and confidence in 2009. John Zachar of CITI Limited drops by for a quick breakdown of the differences between PSO and PMO. And ESI International provides us with PM veteran Peter O'Neill, who reflects on the struggles of 2008 that nonetheless provided ammo for optimism in 2009.

As always, I encourage you to drop me a line at

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[dan.strayer@arraspeople.co.uk](mailto:dan.strayer@arraspeople.co.uk). And remember: Take it all in, and absorb it while it's there. Because during the Holiday season, it will be there next year. And won't that anticipation be well worth the wait, too?

You might even look forward to it!

*Dan Strayer, Editor*

## Professionalism, Confidence Highlight An Interesting 2009 For PPSO organisations



*By Chris Walters, PPSO SIG Chairman*

2009 looks to be a very interesting year for PPSO organisations for a couple of reasons:

1. The credit crunch means that there will be less projects, or that projects will have less money, or most likely both. This means that scope management, planning, control and risk management will be key to ensure that budgets absolutely don't overrun - that can be dealt with in the main by the traditional PSO with some help from a CoE-type organisation. A real opportunity is for portfolio management to be "wheeled in". With the impetus of the eagerly-awaited OGC guidance refresh, and the focus on only doing a few strategically-aligned projects, there's a real need now for portfolio management techniques to be introduced, reinforced and mandated within the organisations that still have the spare cash to do discretionary investment projects.
2. The P3O guidance is going to start changing a number of things about PPSOs:
  - a. Professionalisation (just made up that word!) - there will be recognition that to get the best out of a new [P3O World](#), professional status needs to be conferred to PPSO practitioners, and the PPSO will no longer **be seen just as** a career stepping-stone to being a project manager, but increasingly as a worthwhile career move for the experienced project or programme manager
  - b. Confidence - the stuff that we've been talking about in the PPSO SIG (and reflecting what happens daily in our organisations) over the last few years has now got a formal framework which has been published in a proper manual! It has immediate credibility, and we can use it to get organisational traction on the things we've been trying to get done for a while.
  - c. Moving from "support" to "leadership" - we are ready to take that step, and there is now the clarity that if we do make that leap of faith, then there are rewards in terms of better and cheaper project delivery.
  - d. Can you hear the buzz in the industry? I certainly can! I'm sure that buzz was always there, but muffled by the blanket of Prince2 and MSP. Now we're out in the open, and ready to kick a-er, collective backside!

So amid all the doom and gloom of the current economic situation, remember that we in PPSOs have a huge role to play, and an even bigger opportunity to take our profession to new heights - if we prove the value of our profession during hard times, we will reap the rewards as the economy recovers!

*Chris Walters is currently the Chairman of the PPSO SIG, and has a wealth of project management and PMO management*



Back by popular demand and now in its fourth year, the [Project Management 2009 Report](#) remains the most comprehensive report available for the project management market in the UK.

Renowned and cited worldwide for its detailed research and statistical analysis, the Report - courtesy of the 2009 Arras People Project Management Survey - has become a resource no project management company or professional can do without. This is mainly due to the fact that it relies solely on the responses of so many project management professionals in the industry today.

As an individual PM pro, your input will allow us to once again create a snapshot and provide a current picture of what is happening in the project management field. Whether job seeking or settled in your current position, this data will provide an insight into the market and how you rate against your peers.

Upon completion of this six-minute survey, individual respondents can fill in their details to receive a copy of the report in January 2009. You will also be registered for our prize draw with a first prize of £150 in M&S vouchers

Take the survey online today [at this address](#).

### 'Professional' links

The popular [pm4girls](#) project management blog has some insight on the P3O Guidance issues awaiting PPSO in 2009. Click [here](#) for the post.

For the official P3O homepage, click [here](#).

Lindsay Scott has had a lot to say about the P3O process. Click [here](#) to choose among her 16 blog entries on the category thus far.

## Despite Some Reasons For Optimism, 2009 Is Going To Be A Difficult Year



By Melanie Franklin, CEO, Maven Training Ltd.

**2009 is going to be a difficult year - and anyone who says differently isn't thinking hard enough! Throughout the year, the media are going to be running stories every day of corporate hardship - small businesses forced to close through cash flow problems, larger firms announcing job losses of hundreds of staff, human interest stories on how the recession is affecting individuals.**

All of this will have an impact on confidence, which may ultimately affect contract daily rates and permanent salaries. I am already hearing from colleagues in many firms that if someone doesn't like the rate offered, then they should go elsewhere. That is a sharp contrast to this time last year, when lots of conversations were about the 'war for talent' and the fight to get people to pick your job rather than one from another organisation.

Despite this gloom, however, I do think that there is optimism for the project management sector of the economy. This is because so many of the initiatives that larger firms and the public sector are planning to take in 2009 require a structured and systematic approach to the work, to virtually guarantee that the projects will be delivered on time and on budget. No organisation can afford to be late in delivering new products or services to the market place and risk losing potential new revenue. The public sector will need to clearly demonstrate that it is tackling costs and improving services in order to justify council tax bills.

I also see a continued strong demand for programme management. Again, I think this is a pragmatic approach to organising the work required to ensure that only valid projects get the go ahead and that the work is coordinated effectively. Organising work as a programme is a clever way of knitting together disparate projects to ensure that taken together they will deliver something of value. At the same time, it forces senior management to ensure that only those projects that are absolutely necessary will get the go ahead. It is interesting to see those senior project managers who do not yet know much about programme management losing the opportunity to get involved in shaping the work at a strategic level.

Being outside of this loop is a dangerous place to be when jobs are being allocated, and it is imperative that project managers keep up skilling. A great track record is not enough any more. Organisations expect project managers to bring a more strategic viewpoint, understanding the impact of not only their project to the bottom line, but also the impact of not doing other projects in favour of theirs.

I think that the cycle of approval for projects will probably get longer but that once they are approved the pressure for delivery to unrealistic deadlines will be immense. Project managers and their teams will need to ensure that they have the will and the ability to negotiate appropriate levels of scope to match the available deadlines, rather than agreeing to anything to get the project off the ground, believing that they can tackle the fundamental problems of timing and scope later in the project lifecycle. Interpersonal skills in influencing, persuading and motivating staff are all key to success and are essential tools in this era of uncertainty.

*Melanie Franklin is CEO for Maven Training, Ltd. For more information about Maven, click [here](#).*

### "Difficult" links

For a solid article about the importance of confidence in PM, check on this [projectsmart.co.uk piece](http://projectsmart.co.uk/piece).

For more information about courses and project management training available from Maven Training Ltd., click [here](#).

### "PSO & PMO" links

Hey, we know a thing or two about PMOs and PSOs! To find out more from Arras People about them and other Office Support jobs, click [here](#).

To find out more about CITI Limited, click [here](#).

To learn more about PPSO SIG, click [here](#).

### "Assumptions" links

Olympics minister Tessa Jowell's recent comments about the economic woes in conjunction in line with the 2012 Summer Olympics in London have caused a bit of stir. [Here](#) is there latest on the story from the BBC.

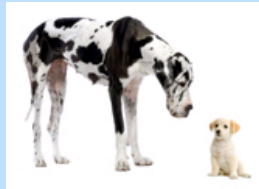
PMI has several different updates to their popular resources on project management, including the PMBok Guide and Organisational Project Management Maturity Model. Click [here](#) for a look at 2008 Standards Updates.

For more information please visit [www.esi-intl.co.uk](http://www.esi-intl.co.uk).

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## These Renowned Office Methodologies?



*By John Zachar, CITI Limited*

**For many, there is no difference; however, for many others, the differences are substantial, yet often subtle. Assuming the "p" in PSO is for projects, then the PSO is all about supporting projects, usually in a multiple-project environment. This environment is frequently called a portfolio.**

Whether this is the case or not, a PSO offers support to projects in a number of useful ways. Helping to identify, acquire and record appropriate project data for reporting purposes is only the start. In many cases PSOs help to identify and supply staff to projects, including project managers. Usually specific support for the project management methods in use is provided as well. This may be in the form of workshop facilitation, or the provision of templates or other useful information.

If the "p" in PSO is for a portfolio, then a different perspective is taken. Questions like what is the portfolio position on risk? For example, if the same risk appears in each project's risk log, it really is an organisational issue, and appropriate action should be taken by the PSO.

The obvious difference between PSO and PMO is the "s" for support, moves to "m" for management; and of course the "p" now stands for programme. This is appropriate as active management is involved from a programme perspective. As each project is commissioned by the programme manager / director, he or she becomes the sponsor for each project within the programme. As such, and as a part of providing support to the programme manager, managing benefits at a programme level becomes one of the many aspects requiring management, rather than just support.

In this case, the move from PSO to PMO is entirely appropriate.

***John Zachar is a Principal Consultant for CITI Limited. For more information about CITI Limited, click [here](#).***

## Economy That Shattered Our Assumptions Creates Uncertain Management Future



*By Peter O'Neill, ESI International*

**2008 - The Year of Shattered Assumptions**

**It is impossible to reflect on our profession of project management in the last year without reference to the wider economic disasters which have impacted so many sectors and organisations. Any organisation must base its strategy - and the plans designed to achieve that strategy - on a range of assumptions about the general economy, values of revenue, prices of goods and services and cost of credit. In 2008, many of those assumptions proved to be massively inaccurate - in some cases, by orders of magnitude, and in others, over a period measured in weeks or days, rather than in months or quarters.**

This has resulted in large numbers of projects needing at best a speedy - yet very difficult - reassessment of viability, and in many cases, in projects being put on hold, renegotiated or cancelled. The process of 'change management' has taken on a radically new significance for many of us in recent months.

As an example, consider the plight of the numerous organisations' project managers involved in staging the 2012 Olympics. Almost all of the assumptions used in the initiation and preliminary planning of this project (particularly the availability of both public and private funding) need major revisions just as construction gets under way and after large commitments have been made. These paradigm changes are of such a scale that even the underlying principle that most of us have taken as read - that it was good news for Britain to have won the bid - has been [recently challenged by a Cabinet member](#)!

On a different (but still depressing) note, the EDS / BSKyB legal action has dragged on through 2008, with costs predicted to approach £100 million. Hopefully, we should soon know if moving forward on a project where the client has not clearly specified their requirements (sounds familiar, doesn't it?) may leave a supplier open to claims of misrepresentation and liable for damages significantly outside contractual limits.

### 2009 - The Year of Uncertainty Management

If you want to find a brighter side to the impact of the globally mismanaged economy for project management, look ahead to the coming renaissance of uncertainty management (or risk management to those of us long in the tooth).

Those of us who don't look for alternative career options will at least be rewarded by a change of heart in the majority of senior management with regard to the unpopular message that most projects in their early stages do not support accurate single point estimates. Hopefully at least, gone are the days when an estimate of '£10 million, plus or minus 50%' is reinterpreted at higher levels as 'not more than £10 million', if it refers to cost and 'at least £10 million' for revenue estimates.

2009 will be the year when project managers can confidently discuss estimate ranges, scenario planning, risk-sharing contracting strategy options and careful use of stage gate methodologies - and be sure of a more receptive audience among internal sponsors and customers alike!

On a smaller scale, we can also look forward to using the new (and harmonised) editions of four of the Project Management Institute's standards. The standards for Program and Portfolio Management will include significant - and welcome - additions in the areas of governance and risk. The [2nd Edition of the Organisational Project Management Maturity Model®](#) has been simplified and brought more into alignment with the PMBoK® Guide - which is also shortly to be [released in its 4th Edition](#) which now includes examples of good practice in project documentation.

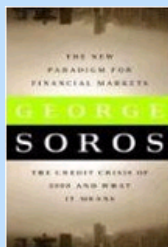
*Peter O'Neill is a senior instructor with ESI International with more than 25 years of experience in the project management and project leadership arena. He earned an MBA from Warwick Business School and a degree in technology and systems. For more information please visit [www.esi-intl.co.uk](http://www.esi-intl.co.uk).*

## 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 a combination of a year in review and a look ahead serving 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 New Paradigm For Financial Markets: The Credit Crisis of 2008 and What It Means](#)  
George Soros

Reviews: "This was a book that [George Soros](#) badly wanted to write. It is probably not what many of its readers expect to read. But it shows that in his deeper thinking about the way markets operate, Soros was several decades ahead of his time... His insights are

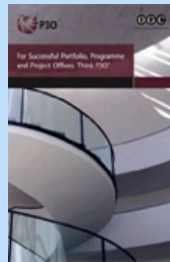
clear and concisely expressed. They are worth reading for anyone interested in the topic." Financial Times - Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



### Project Scope Management Study Guide

Frank V. Payne, Brandon McCormick

**Product Description:** "A study guide for the Project Scope Management area of knowledge as listed in the PMBOK. This study guide provides a road map for what you can expect to find on the PMP certification exam. Complete with a practice test for this subject, our series is the best way to prepare for your exam." - Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



### Portfolio, Programme and Project Office: P30

Office of Government Commerce (OGC)

**Customer Review:** "This new core guidance from OGC describes why, when and how to use portfolio, programme and project Offices (P30) models. It describes what a P30 is, defining the two key types of P30, and goes on to answer the question posed by Senior Management: 'Why have P30s and what value-add do they bring to the organisation?' It also includes business cases, funding models for set-up and ongoing costs and performance measures." - Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

## TIPOFFS' LINKS OF THE MONTH

[NASA PM Challenge 2009](#) - Commencing 24-25 February in Daytona Beach, Florida, NASA, partnered with the Project Management Institute, will be hosting this training, networking and lesson-sharing session. Organised by the NASA Academy of Program, Project & Engineering Leadership, this event is geared toward professional engineers with a PM background.

[APMGroup's page on the P30 Guidance](#) - The final word on accreditation for programme, portfolio and project accreditation, APMGroup's page for Portfolio, Programme and Project Office accreditation is another must-read for those affected/interested in the new guidance.

[ProjectSmart.co.uk](#) - It was also mentioned in a link above, but it is simply too good to not bring to your attention twice. In a time where confidence is king, ProjectSmart have some tips on being just.

## Arras People Update

*Edited by Dan Strayer*

In the words of the late Jim Morrison, "this is the end, beautiful friend."

Arras People's resident graduate, Zoe, completed her volunteer project assistant post with Groundwork Oldham & Rochdale last week, ending a memorable 13 week scheme that sought to develop her skills as a burgeoning member of the project management landscape. More information about Arras in the Community's Groundwork Volunteer Project is available [here](#).



Yet in keeping with the popular lyrics theme, we borrow the words of A-Ha: "Take Me On." Why the cheesy lyrics? Because Zoe's efforts with Groundwork Oldham & Rochdale as a volunteer led to her attainment of a full-time paid position with the North West-based voluntary organisation as NEET Project Officer Assistant for the

In her [week 13 diary entry](#) for Arras People's Arras in the Community, Zoe described her new role in detail.

"This job (involves) working on a project with young people that are not in employment, education or training, and helping them pursue any plans they may have for their future," she wrote.



The thirteen weeks Zoe served as a volunteer seemed to fly by, as her weekly contributions to the webpage with diary entries about her experience have given insight to both us as consultants and her interested online readers. In turn, Arras People's Lindsay Scott interpreted Zoe's experience each week by breaking down most of Zoe's work into recognised project management terminology.

Overall, the page sought to emphasise the importance for budding project management standouts to take notice of the voluntary sector. Also known as the third sector, groups such as Groundwork Oldham & Rochdale have a consistent demand to fill voluntary roles, and being that it serves as a great way for novices to learn about project management, the sector is often more than welcoming to those interested in such a career.

Arras People plans to sponsor another voluntary assistant in the future, so be sure to stay tuned to all forms of Arras Services Media (including blog, website, and newsletter) for any upcoming events. As someone who can attest, Zoe has nothing but high praise for the volunteer experience.

"The experience was very beneficial and interesting, and it provided me with many opportunities and experiences," she wrote. "I would recommend this scheme to any individual that would like experience in a similar field."

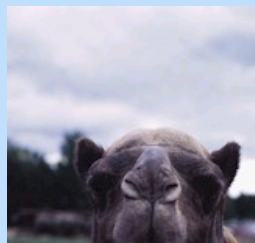
#### In other news...

- If you wanted to find project management agencies in the UK on Google, and typed in '[project management vacancies](#)', you can't do any better than Arras People. You'd also find us to be quite solid on the search terms '[programme management recruitment](#)', '[pmo recruitment](#)', '[project office support](#)', and '[IT project management vacancies](#)', among many others.
- Just take a look at Arras People's continually-updated [job board](#). You'd never believe there was economic downturn given all the possibilities! After taking a look at it, take five minutes out to [register](#) with us to be informed of new opportunities and to take advantage of our highly popular [Project Management Careers Clinics](#). You might just be our 800th clinic, and win our lucky grand-prize!
- Vacancies on the Arras People job board come from all over Great Britain, especially for those looking to work in the Home Counties. Have a look at this [Project Manager - Systems Intergration position in Redhill](#). Or this permanent [M & E Project Manager vacancy in London & the South East](#). And don't forget about the [Automotive/CRM Project Manager role in Hertfordshire](#).
- The Project Management Careers Clinics are going strong as ever. Sign up for one now, and you might become our 800th clinic, with a special prize to boot! [Book a slot](#) at one of our clinics today.

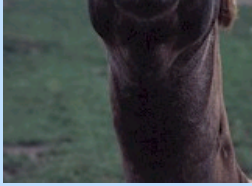
## Project Management Blog

### How to Manage a Camel

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 theme about change management. Or just change in general (as we've said earlier, there seems to be a lot of it going on at the moment!)

We'd love to hear your opinions about our predictions for 2009 and reflections on 2008 with regards to the project management marketplace.

As always, you are always welcome at the Camel!

> [Visit the blog](#)