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Welcome

From the Editor:

Some parts of the world have been known to view March as a time of **Madness**. But if any time has been mad since our New Year's revamp, it was February - readership jumped to the highest numbers in Tipoff history, in fact. The times are changing, indeed. Perhaps Arras People, the brains behind the Tipoff outfit, are mad as well - after all, we're giving away Project Management Clinics for free - provided you'll be at the NEC in Birmingham 25-26th March for Project Challenge Spring Show 2009. If not, you may have missed out - based on our [profile pictures](#), a face-to-face chat might have been a worth more than its weight in gold!

But I digress. And remember: It's always a good time to ramp up your project management knowledge, so keep reading Project Management Tipoffs!

Dan Strayer, Editor

To Pay or Not To Pay For CV Writing Services? That is the Question!

By Lindsay Scott

In a tough recruitment market your CV takes on a whole new meaning and the message it conveys will be for many the difference between securing an interview or not. As competition increases for each available role your CV needs to be more than just an outline of your education and experience - it has to stand out and separate you from the crowd. In short, there is a lot riding on this personal document that describes you and outlines your career to date, so much so that for some the answer lies in using a paid for service such as CV writing consultancy or outplacement service.

And therein lies the moral dilemma: Can a CV really be outsourced to an external party and the output really and truly reflect that individuals career, achievements and experience in the best possible way?

As a recruiter, we talk to many people applying for project management posts. And for some, they never get past the application stage. Invariably there is a degree of frustration and sometimes anger at this rejection, especially when the application is made using a newly-purchased CV from one of the host of professional CV writing services out there. Prices can range from as little as £70 through to top of the range £900 for self-styled "executive" careers consultancy services, but when the expected outcome is not achieved, who is to blame?



So why do people use CV writing services? Many people find it difficult to write about themselves or find the etiquette of CV writing confusing or frustrating. It is also difficult to know how to write about your career in a way which is clear, concise, compelling and in some cases, accurate [one in three applicants lie in their CV (Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors [CIEA] Feb, 2009)]. There appears to be two main issues people struggle with: Firstly, it is about a subject matter they are too close to. It is difficult to write about themselves and at the same time write about themselves in a successful, high-achieving way. Secondly, it is a writing style that requires effort and a little practice: For example, the use of encapsulating words like "structured methodologies", rather than a long list of every process, method and guidance ever used in your career. CV writing is a true skill, and one which many people don't think is worth investing the time and effort when money can be easily thrown at the issue to fix it.

CVs are personal documents, and unfortunately, professional CVs come across strongly as impersonal and too generic. A professional CV writer misses the subtleties of an individual's career, especially when the writer has little understanding of the subject's trade. Project management is a complex role with many core competencies, capabilities and skills, and these coupled with the industry sector knowledge means there is much to capture and highlight in a professional project manager's CV. All this information is the real "stuff" that makes a project manager tick, and ultimately what makes them a potentially attractive employee or contractor to a hiring organisation. With a generic and impersonal outsourced CV which implies rather than being explicit, it is easy to see why some people are overlooked whilst others are being asked in for interviews.

There are a number of steps you can take before throwing in the towel and following the herds to a CV writer.

- Use a sounding board, preferably a good friend or agent*. Use a friend or colleague to read through your CV and ask for honest, constructive criticism. If your friend does not work within project

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New Vacancies at Arras People

All listed vacancies from  this issue have lapsed, but for updated, current vacancies, [click here](#)

2009 PM Survey Now Online

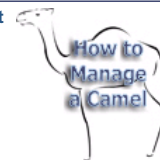
The survey that gets everyone talking is back, and the results are in. Do you want to be left behind in project management trends? If not, then it's time to show how serious you are about project management. Get the 2009 Benchmark Report:



[Sign up for your copy of the 2009 Project Management Report today!](#)

How to Manage a Camel

The hot PM topics this month at the top among top blogs for the discerning project management professional:



[The End of the IT Project Manager is Nigh!!!](#)

[Getting Into Project Management - How a Careers Clinic Can Help](#)

[Project Management Careers Clinic Roadshow](#)

And there's always more to look at whenever you go to the camel. [More available](#) at The Camel homepage.

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management, would the content of the CV make sense to them? Can they understand what you do, how you do it and how good you are? If a friend doesn't understand, you can be assured that some readers of your CV will also struggle. Remember: not all HR professionals or department heads know what a project manager does, so you are potentially writing your CV to a wide audience. Better still, use a trusted agent. Good agents will be able to mentor or coach you on what hiring organisations are looking for in a good project manager CV. They can also advise on the do's and don'ts and be particularly useful at letting you know what a successful candidate is doing right with their CV.

- Get into the mindset of thinking of the CV as sales material. Ultimately the CV is there to sell you as a first choice project manager (or programme manager, project office etc) to the hiring manager. Think of the job specification as a tender for work - what is the job outline asking for? Your CV should clearly convey and sell your skills, capabilities, competencies and experience in relation to that tender for work.

- Research for a good template and advice on the basics of CV writing. There are numerous websites and books out there but here are some selections we like:

- [Arras People Careers Advice](#) – Professional and PM focussed, we do everything the bullet point above asks for, and then go a little bit further!
- [Monster.co.uk](#) (Free to register, registration required) – Few websites are trolled more by jobseekers, but part of that gets down to the resources they make available. For CV templates, advice on CV writing and an FAQ page geared toward CV guidelines, Monster is hard to beat on the web.
- [Executives Online](#) – Relevant, professionally-focused site that provides CV tips and a sample to peruse online.
- [Alec.co.uk](#) – Slight American focus (resume?), but look past that: This informative site is for PM professionals, complete with links and sample CVs.
- [The Camel on CVs](#) – Tooting our own horn again, this post at How to Manage a Camel is called "Looking For a New Project Job", and the content is heavy on the importance of CVs and advice.
- [Contract Project Manager](#) – Heavy on sales for CV resources, but content gives a strong run-down of what your CV should have.
- [GuyKowasaki.com \(How to Change the World\)](#) – Yes, the guest poster calls it a *résumé*: Big deal. Fight past that, and you get it straight from a CEO (Glenn Kelman of Redfin) as to what he wants to read about on a CV, and what he doesn't want to read about.
- [Killer CVs and Hidden Approaches: Give Yourself an Unfair Advantage in the Executive Job Market](#) (Graham Perkins) – Written from the perspective of someone on the interviewer's side of the desk, CV advice and interview tips that can get your foot in the door faster.
- [Brilliant CV: What Employers Want to See and How to Say it](#) (Jim Bright and Joanne Earl) – Continuously updated since its acclaimed 2001 release, Bright and Earl's book has ranked among the top 5 for CVs and Interviewing & Recruitment categories on Amazon due to its flexibility on CV explanation, answering the difficult CV questions and providing strong CV samples.

Finally, if you are now feeling ready to tackle your CV again, here is a little exercise which we use to take project management professionals through their CV in the [careers clinics](#). You might find the questions obvious but for many people it is a moment of clarity. View your CV and answer these questions honestly:

1. Does your work experience cover your key skills and experience across the entire project lifecycle? Have you covered experience and skills in planning, for example? Do you cover initiation and your role, in say, business case development?
2. Does your CV cover the behavioural competencies of your role? For example, do you cover communication in an explicit way or is just implied? Do you cover team management, resource management, conflict management in any obvious way?
3. Do you actually cover the core competencies of project management? Are there details that cover areas like stakeholder management, estimating, scope management, quality, scheduling, risk management, change control, etc?
4. Is your CV guilty of giving too much detail about the projects you have worked on rather than the way you as a successful project manager have delivered them? Remember your next role may be completely unconnected to the previous projects you've worked on therefore will a new hiring manager really be that interested in the technical aspects and jargon-littered details?

**Arras People have a sounding board service available through their Project Management Careers Clinics. See [here](#) for more details.*

Lindsay Scott is Co-Managing Director of Arras People. To read more of her work on project management at How to Manage a Camel, click [here](#).

Calming the Madness of Team Management - Involve PEOPLE in Change Management Schemes

By Jonathan Gilbert

Every organisation is affected by change. Still, organisational change initiatives fail at an alarming rate. This is because most initiatives fail to consider how changes affect the people in an organisation.

At the highest level, business leaders are driven by financial goals and government leaders are driven by legislative mandates. Their urgent need to meet these objectives may lead them to impose change unilaterally, rather than engaging the people to find the best way to meet a more generally understandable desired future state.



Executives who neglect the human transition required in change management will be less successful at implementing change. Successful change management comes down to improving the relationships between people in the organisation in the attainment of a mutually desirable end state. An organisation that is too focused on objectives runs the risk of losing sight of personal relationships.

For a change initiative to be successful, an organisation must understand and address the three phases of the Change Management Life Cycle — Identify, Engage and Implement. Organisational leaders must ask themselves these questions:

- Has the organisation thoroughly identified and communicated the impending change?
- Are disturbances acknowledged and aligned?
- Has the organisation engaged all of its stakeholders — at every level of the organisation — in the change that will need to be adopted?
- Is the intent and direction of this change aligned throughout the organisation?
- Has the organisation developed a flexible plan for implementation that allows for prototyping to move continually toward the desired future state?
- Are the organisational responses aligned and institutionalised?

The human transition that is required to move from a historically acceptable way of working to one that is completely new or radically different is not to be underestimated. Good leaders will make the reasons for change personal for everyone, not just for executives or shareholders. End-user benefits, down to the day-to-day experience of the individual worker, will create a more receptive environment for fostering new ideas — and a receptive environment is essential to creating any lasting, positive change.

If an organisation can answer “yes” to each of the questions above, chances are good that its change initiative will be a success.

Jonathan Gilbert, Executive Director, Client Solutions at ESI International, has more than 20 years of experience as entrepreneur, educator, chief executive officer, construction manager, management consultant, project manager, and engineer. He began his career as a project engineer and construction manager, designing, building, and operating environmental treatment facilities. He is certified as a Project Management Professional by the Project Management Institute. For more information, please visit www.esi-intl.co.uk.

Training the Team - What Training Reveals About Soft Skills

By John Kelly

Although it is recognised that training in programme and project management such as PRINCE2® (Projects IN Controlled Environments) and MSP™ (Managing Successful Programmes) is focused on the hard skills such as process management, tools and techniques, training in these structured methods also provides valuable insights into the softer skills required by managers in maintaining the team ethic and engendering a collective responsibility.

Programme and Project management training can provide these insights by enabling clarity around the discrete roles and responsibilities needed to achieve programme and project objectives, including the decision making processes and the relationship between responsibility and authority.



Many organisations demonstrate an imbalance between the responsibility to achieve something and the authority to deliver the same. This is manifest where there is a lack of appreciation that in order to deliver the objectives there must be an consequent delegation of authority and where others fail to exercise their authority appropriately, leading to a lack of decision making.

Our experience in training over the years has led us to believe that bringing together the team responsible for the delivery of programme and projects and training them as a group ensures there is a common and shared understanding of how they need to work together to achieve common outcomes and who needs to do what and when.

This method of delivery through in-house training is particularly successful when it includes representation from all the levels of management within the programme or project as this enhances the collective experience and breaks down barriers to communication. Using a case study and working

together as a team to develop solutions within the training and relating this to the organisation promotes a sense of ownership. Another advantage of this type of training is that a common vocabulary is developed and this is an additional aid to communication and further enhances the team ethic and feeling of shared understanding.

Whilst the hard skills training described does not deal comprehensively with the soft skills needed to develop and maintain the team it can provide an appreciation of the gaps that need to be filled and some pointers to the importance attached to them.

** PRINCE2® is a Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce. MSP™ is a Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce*

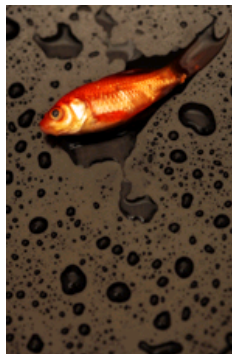
John Kelly is the Chairman of Insights an OGC (Office of Government Commerce) accredited training organisation for Best Practice products. He can be contacted through the company website www.insights-pm.com.

Project Sponsors – Part of the Project Management Team?

By Lindsay Scott

Much has been written about the role of the project sponsor and the crucial role they play in creating an environment in which programmes and projects can be successfully delivered. The project sponsor, for many, is a senior manager within the organisation with a vested interest in the deliverable, who will champion the programme or project. The sponsor may be someone with prior project management experience, but this is not necessarily a given.

As for the primary objective of the role, OGC states that a project sponsor is responsible for "Ensuring an appropriate project or programme management framework is in place, incorporating the Gateway review process if required" amongst other things*, which may lead us to believe that the project sponsor is indeed someone with expertise in the intricacies of programme and project management. In fact, the OGC definition goes so far to leave an impression of blurred lines, or even overlap of responsibility between the sponsor and the project manager. For example, "Preparing the project brief, Project Initiation Document (or equivalent) and business case" and "Determining and managing risks to the project" are both stated as responsibilities of the project sponsor.



So does the project sponsor form part of the programme / project delivery team? Or should they be seen as a stakeholder, a senior manager with a vested interest in ensuring a successful outcome?

In reality, it would appear the project sponsor's role - both in the public and private sector - is mixed, and like so many other roles there are those that play the role well and others that leave something to be desired.

There are the "good" project sponsors who have experience with leading projects or programmes before moving up the management chain, and others who have broader business skills. Good sponsors know that the success of the project is ultimately down to them and it is in their interests to work smart with the project manager to make this happen. Good sponsors are also the project's champion, acting as the conduit to senior management and, where necessary, a protector of the project manager and team. Ultimately they need to know enough about the process to be challenging when appropriate, but at the same time have trust in the delivery manager to undertake their role effectively.

On the flip side, we may have a project sponsor who is not particularly skilled for the role either from a project / programme level or indeed from a business level. It would appear that these sponsors have become the latest target for a push from some training organisations that perceive an immediate need in this group of an "upskilling exercise". Worryingly, the target is to build an understanding of the elements of project management; Specific courses**, include modules like "Identification of the different types of projects" and "A high level understanding of PPM lifecycles".

If project sponsors need to be trained, surely the areas that would really provide benefit to an already qualified project professional include;

- hands-off leadership of project managers and project teams,
- promotion of programmes and projects across the organisation,
- building rapport with your project manager,
- spotting the dud business case and,
- knowing when to stay out of the details of project delivery.

Project sponsors do not need to have a thorough understanding of PRINCE2, MSP, MoR etc. to perform the role of a "good sponsor". In fact, leaving the accredited training to the delivery people it was intended for is probably the best outcome for all. If the basics of project management are the primary concern, the project sponsor is probably out of their depth and the delivery team in danger of being short changed.

** [See the full definition of project sponsor at the OGC website](#)

** [Interested in the specific course for project sponsors?](#)

Dear PM Bartender...

Dispensing the Finest in Ales and PM Advice Since 2009!

QUESTION: I am a Prince 2 Practitioner and an Agile Scrum Master. I see lots of positions for Prince 2, but where are the Agile positions hiding?

PM BARTENDER: Thanks for your email, here are my thoughts and opinions on the question you've put to us.

To answer this question we need to take a step back and first examine the need for Prince 2 by employers. Being a Prince 2 Practitioner I know what it has to offer and equally how well used (or not). Whenever a client requests Prince 2 we invariably challenge this and what we find is that what is really being asked for is formal project management training and accreditation.

More often than not we will talk this through and widen the scope to include such things as APM or PMI accreditation. I am assuming that many agencies, not having the in depth knowledge of project management and Prince 2, just accept this as a requirement.

The second thing to consider is that where organizations have existing approaches this may include Agile and Scrum, but the client is concerned that candidates have experience of software development and not necessarily particular methods. The discussions I have are that if required and the candidate excels in all other areas then the client will be willing to invest in the additional training. If you are leading the project and a formal approach has not been adopted, you are in a perfect position to bring in a more effective way of working.

This leads me to a more generic point. Without fail, our clients will always go for experience over qualifications/training. The latter can be quickly gained; the former takes time. This is not to diminish training and qualifications, but perhaps a revisit of your CV to ensure you are marketing your experience sufficiently, and underpinning that with your training/qualifications, would help you to get an interview. Once with the client, you can make your pitch for any particular methods you favour.

E-mail careersadvice@arraspeople.co.uk with your questions for the PM Bartender.

Tipoffs Survey ?

Arras People are more than just PM recruiters. Each month, the people behind Tipoffs want to know what you, the PM professional, think about some of the issues concerning project management.

With this in mind, we look back at last month's P3O poll before delving into the March 2009 edition of the Arras People / Tipoffs / PM News Survey.

Last month, we wanted to delve into our readers' development as project management professionals by learning about what sectors they learned their trade from and what career path led to their becoming a project manager.

Amongst the varied responses, when asked "What particular job sector proved to be instrumental in developing your skills as a project management professional," nearly 67 percent of respondents answered Information Technology, while the most significant percent of minority answers stated 'Volunteer/Charity/Not-for-Profit'.

In our follow-up question "What do you think serves as the best way to get your foot in the door as an aspiring project management professional," we expected a range of responses. We didn't expect the tally to be so even, though - close to a third said they 'Know Somebody'; roughly the same amount said 'Fortuitous Career Path'; and, true to form, another third stated 'Other'.

One respondent amused us in the 'Other' category with their comment backing up their answer: "I think it's

Suggested Reading

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. We've taken a quick look at the speed of change and some essential project management skills, so we felt it appropriate to point you to three books and three web sites that can address the issues surrounding the topic.

Last month at PM News / PM Tipoffs, we had three copies of the P3O Pocketbook to give away to our first three correct respondents to a trivia question. Specifically, they had to answer correctly the following question:

"What's the name of the robot on 'Star Wars' that is a close relative of P3O?"

Answer: C3PO

Our lucky winners from the quiz are Jacques van der Merwe, Peter Harrison and Mark Hanks, and each will receive the P3O Pocketbook/Handbook from OGC, courtesy of Arras People.

TIPOFFS' BOOKS OF THE MONTH



Project Management: A Strategic Planning Approach
Paul Gardiner

Review: "This is an excellent (!)"

career path without the fortuitous bit of it. A lot of roles have a project element to it and when you take an opportunity to run a project however small or large then the option to develop and become more specialised opens up."

This month, we hope to get your take on a totally different element: The factors behind the makeup and success of the project management team. We at Arras People are always curious about what makes a team better, because it has correlation with the sum of the parts that go into effective management of projects. We'd love to get your input, so click below to participate in our two-question survey today!

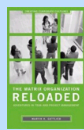
[Take Our Survey Today!](#)

introduction; well prepared and outstanding graphic support! I always forget about the importance of planning...but this book reminds me that 'planning can be fun'." - Dr. Richard Mischak, University of Applied Sciences, Austria - [Available at amazon.co.uk](#)



[Executing Change in the Organization: Participant Workbook: The Consultant's Toolkit - A Guide to Executing Change for the Project Management Team](#)
Wayne R. Davis

Description: "A Guide to Executing Change for the Project Management Team offers you and your other project management team members the information and tools needed to successfully execute change within your team and ultimately your organization." - [Available at amazon.co.uk](#)



[The Matrix Organization Reloaded: Adventures in Team and Project Management \(Creating Corporate](#)

[Cultures\)](#)

Marvin R. Gottlieb

Product Description: "Matrix management...has now re-emerged as a viable alternative. Gottlieb, an organizational trainer and consultant, reviews the evolution of matrix management and looks at its current practices and future applications." Reference & Research Book News - [Available at amazon.co.uk](#)

P3O ON THE WEB

Visitask - A website inundated with definitions in relation to project management, Visitask uses this particular URL to talk about the importance of assembling an effective team and the use of motivation techniques.

Motivation quotes - About.com - Written by Simran Khurana, this American-centric collection of team motivation quotations is concentrated on the words of sporting stars, but also features motivators like Virgil, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge and Sir Walter Scott.

Teambuildinginc.com - Though old fashioned in web design and American-centric, Teambuildinginc has several relevant articles and focuses on exercises and ways to elevate team camaraderie and development in a business setting.