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### Welcome

#### From the Editor:

Here we are, in a month that will be remembered for swine flu, Eurovision and dodgy minister expense reports, and what lies at the top of Tipoff minds? That's right - the most important element of project management: the people!

OK: We don't want to presume what is on your mind when the fifth month rolls around. Hopefully the weather has been agreeable enough for you, and the bright sunshine of summer are to follow. But we are big on the people element.

This month, we're just a little bit more hung up on that which makes us human. As one of our articles below surely reminds us, the manner in which we value each other and their contribution is something any leader worth their weight in mayflies can bring to the table.

That's why our valued candidates deserve better when it comes to tracking down the best project management jobs out there. It's always a good time to ramp up your project management knowledge, so keep reading Project Management Tipoffs!

*Dan Strayer, Editor*

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### The Human Factor: Your Most Valued Resource Available

By Karine Simard

**Project Management is about managing the resources you have to meet the requirements that were agreed upon at the beginning of the project. While project management started out in the construction business, where material resources were an integral part of the project, today's projects are different.**



Most projects conducted today are based on knowledge rather than materials. Building software, implementing complex systems and developing a new product are all dependent on one type of resource: the human one.

Humans can't be managed like pieces of wood or inventory supplies in the warehouse. People have emotions, needs and are unpredictable. However, your project depends on the productivity of your team.

Here's the kicker: happy people are more productive. Hence, the best strategy for managing human resources is to keep your project team happy.

#### So, how do you keep your team happy?

Keeping your project team happy is actually simple:

1. **Remember they are human.** Programmers are people too. Keep in mind that they have emotions, likes and dislikes. You should respect them for who they are. If your star developer really hates to fix bugs, keeping him working on new code may boost the overall team's productivity.
2. **Observe.** It's usually easy to spot unhappy people. Just watch and listen to what they have to say. When you spot someone on your project team who is negative and does not contribute to the project, chances are they are unhappy.
3. **React quickly.** As soon as you spot an unhappy person on your team, sit down with them and try to understand why they are unhappy. If it's work-related, see with them how you can improve their morale at work.
4. **Believe in your team.** As humans, we need validation from others. Make it clear to your project team that you believe in them. Don't be shy to give them praise and tell others in your organization about them.

#### Harness your team's disgruntledness

Often disgruntled teams are seen as a negative thing: people are unhappy, their productivity is low and they won't be willing to go the extra mile for their project.

A nice bag a lemons, don't you think? How about turning those lemons into lemonade, then?

Disgruntled workers are great agents of change. They are unhappy about the way things are now in the project. This means they will be more open to new ways of working.

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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:



Maybe they are unhappy because they feel isolated and kept in the dark from the rest of the project. Maybe the team feels overworked and thinks management is insensitive to their needs. When you take the time to listen to your team, you can implement changes that will not only make them happy, but ultimately affect the project's bottom line.

When people are unhappy about something, their negative energy (lemons) can be turned into a drive for change (lemonade).

#### Power to the team

If you take time to listen to your team and figure out how to improve their work environment or lighten their workload, you will also have the effect of giving power to your team. People who feel they have some control over their environment are generally happier in their jobs.

And happy people work more, better and smarter.

*Karine Simard is the pen behind Go Ahead, Manage, a blog about the life of a small company in the great world of project management software: from marketing to product management, software development...and project management, of course. Karine works at Websystems, the creator of AceProject, an online project management system. Visit her site: [www.aceproject.com](http://www.aceproject.com), read her blog at [blog.aceproject.com](http://blog.aceproject.com) or e-mail her: [karine.simard@aceproject.com](mailto:karine.simard@aceproject.com).*

#### An Inside Look at 'The Economic Situation', and the Future of Project Management Communications Tools

By Helen Moore

As Editor of [pmlifeline.com](http://pmlifeline.com), I get to speak to lots of people connected with Project Management – training organisations, software companies, recruiters, academics not to mention project managers themselves. And of course the topic which is at the top of everyone's list is 'the economic situation'.



Well, I'm glad to report that there is a mood of tentative optimism and definite signs of those much talked-about 'green shoots'. Since the New Year, more companies are talking about project work than in the last quarter of 2008 – recruiters are reporting that there is a definite interest in clients checking out the availability of people for future projects.

There are also several large scale government projects out for tender which will be a significant feature on the Project Management landscape for the coming years.

Generally speaking, companies are still recruiting Project Managers and the sector has stayed remarkably buoyant with New Media and Telecoms being the vertical markets that have seemed to be most resilient.

Talking of media, 2009 seems to be the year that the Project Management industry has really embraced social media – project managers are being very active on Twitter (follow us at PMLifeline) and LinkedIn.

From the messages that are flying around, there does seem to be a lot of underlying confidence in the market.

Internationally, it seems to be a similar story – things have slowed down, but it's certainly not dead. And the Middle East that saw growth drop off as well, has returned to form, with many clients seeking experienced staff.

So 2009 looks full of opportunities, and whilst the market is still slower, things are definitely moving in the right direction.

*Helen Moore is the editor of [pmlifeline.com](http://pmlifeline.com) and has been a regular contributor to the Arras People family of newsletters.*

#### Dear PM Bartender...

*Dispensing the Finest in Ales and PM Advice Since 2009!*

**QUESTION:** Does the project management job market change once you find yourself on the wrong side of age 60? - *Anonymous*

PM BARTENDER: Thanks for your email. Tough question to deal with, inasmuch as it deals with one's viability based on nothing more than the cruelty of time. In essence: Was age (blatantly or inadvertently) emerging as a factor in mid-level project management decisions? I've pulled many a pint for project management bar folk in my day that have pondered this conundrum.

For that reason, I polled several different project management professionals at LinkedIn and other discussion sites for project management. By no means is the answer definitive and absolute – primarily because I came away from reading the responses as thinking that with responses coming down on both sides of the fence, there simply is no absolute answer. Except, perhaps, this: **What is important is not how old you are, but rather, how fresh and relevant you are.**

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

#### How to Manage a Camel

The hot PM topic: this month at the



top among top blogs for the discerning project management professional:

[PMXPO 2009 - Did You Catch It?](#)

[Free Best Practice Showcase 23rd June 2009](#)

[PRINCE2: 2009 PROJECT™, Are We Ready?](#)

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

#### ProjectOffices.com




This month, Arras People launched a new webpage dedicated to all things related to Project Offices - [ProjectOffices.com](http://ProjectOffices.com). The hot Project Office topics this month at the new spot for Project Office information:

[The P3O is Launched](#)

[The PPSO SIG Conference](#)

[P3O Training Courses Launched](#)

ProjectOffices.com brings together PMO whitepapers, presentations, articles, news, blogs, templates and just about anything else which will help PMO professionals keep up to date with the latest in Project Offices.

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One American respondent told me of his 63-year-old friend who had found permanent work across a variety of high-level consulting firms. When, working independently, a client needed to cut costs and requested that he come work for them in house, he felt compelled in a weak economy to "jump" at the opportunity. The respondent said that he is now managing the company's help desk, a far cry from his earlier days.

Age may not be a singular issue when it gets down to it. As you may have noticed, the economy is seeing more red than a goalkeeper mauling the striker as the last defender. As such, most firms simply aren't taking people on at the moment. The same respondent is fighting the effects of the economy as much as his 64 years.

"Several firms...love my skill set and want to bring me on board as soon as an appropriate project is signed," he told me. "I have discussed joining one of the large firms as an independent contractor when a project hits, but not one has hit yet. (All the consulting firms are doing their best to keep from laying off existing consultants. They have no need for additional consultants in this market.)"

"I may have to follow my friend's lead and settle for something significantly lower than what I have been used to and what I know I could still do very well."

Here's another sign that it's not ageist, but rather, downturn-ist: A 52-year old PMP Practitioner who has worked on a senior level as a programme and project manager. He wrote: "My last assignment was to have turned into a permanent hire (or re-hire in my case, as I had been a permanent employee previously and gone through a layoff), but a hiring freeze hit and so I got frozen out. And I'm not yet at the point where I'll work for 40-50% of my last consulting rate, which is all that many contract houses are offering now, simply because there are enough folks desperate enough to take it."

Some highly experienced project professionals aren't so sure that age isn't a factor, though. A Production Project Manager in his 60s told me he was having a hard enough time getting an interview. "A lot of that is due to the employment situation we're currently in. However, I can't help believe that some of it is due to my age."

He is exactly right, but in a roundabout way. Oddly enough, the earlier notion I raised about how relevant and fresh you are was confirmed from someone on the other side of the interview desk.

"I've interviewed and hired several project managers that are (age) 50+," one hiring manager wrote. "To me, as a hiring manager, the real question became whether or not the candidate looked like he or she could fit in the environment, with the environment usually being project teams made of younger resources...if a candidate passed all of the screening criteria (PMP, domain experience, etc.) and we brought him or her in for an interview, often their physical 'presentation' was the key to the job offer. While that may be true for most interviewees, I think it's especially important for 50+ candidates. If the candidate acted (and looked) 'old', he or she got less consideration than someone who was energetic, and looked like they fit with the rest of the team."

In essence: Advanced age can serve as a strike against you. But if the Hiring Manager walks away from your interview think, "Boy, he/she seems energetic", you're in business. Ah, the good old 'energy' factor – this is the freshness we're talking about. You've probably heard the question at first from someone willing to lie about their age (I'm a bartender – I should know), but it takes on such importance in this case: How old do you feel? This is the question that separates the "My CV speaks for itself" crowd from the crowd who gets the job.

HR professionals and career advisors recognise that the lack of work available at the moment **does not** mean your hope should be lacking as well. "Network Network Network," said one HR Strategic Support advisor. "Statistically businesses find their best new employees from employee referrals – so...WHO DO YOU KNOW?"

Moreover, age is something that never has to come up until hiring personnel actually set up the interview. Arras People recommends that any details that might suggest a person's age need not be included. Why volunteer information that only an energetic performance at an interview would negate?

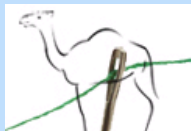
If you're on the wrong side of the age discrimination chart, never forget this one important thing: There are too many good things an experienced project manager can do to show they are getting better. And for all the amalgamation of project management talent out there, nothing shines through better than enthusiasm combined with experience, a good CV and an open mentality for the times we live in.

This one's on the house. Cheers!

E-mail [careersadvice@arraspeople.co.uk](mailto:careersadvice@arraspeople.co.uk) with your questions for the PM Bartender.

### Eye of the Needle

We introduced a new feature for Tipoffs / PM News last month:



### 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 human nature and its relationship to

The Eye of the Needle, a brief glimpse at a selected blog post from our blog, **How to Manage a Camel**. This month's post marks our first guest post, as author Josh Nankivel checks in with his inaugural Camel posting, 'New to Project Management?'.  


But before we get to Josh's words, we'd like to alert both our PM News and PM Tipoffs readers of another first-come, first-served opportunity, just like last month. Arras People will give away free copies of the **Portfolio, Programme and Project Offices (P3O) Pocketbook**, authored by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), to the first four (4) respondents who answer our monthly trivia question correctly.

Yes, there will be four fortunate winners of the Pocketbook in all, so act fast and **email us** with the correct answer. Why seven each? It falls in conjunction with Arras People's **month-long celebration of seven years** as the leader in project management recruitment. When we have the birthday, you get the rewards!

With regards to last month's question, the correct answer was 'Basketball'. For the bonus question, our first correct respondent was **Stephen Cameron** with the 'Cleveland Cavaliers'.

Without further ado, the trivia question:

**What will be the generally agreed-upon name to accompany the revamp of PRINCE2, due out this June?**

I received an email from someone the other day who is very interested in becoming a project manager. She doesn't have any experience in the field yet, and wanted some advice on how to proceed. She assumed that the PMP exam is what she should be looking into getting.

She mentioned that she is saving up for a training camp that claims they can train her to pass the PMP exam without project experience. I want to thank her for writing to me and taking action towards her career goals!

Unfortunately, that training camp is engaging in unethical practices. If they are condoning that people take the PMP exam without any work experience as a project manager, that really burns me!

### Becoming a Project Manager

For those who would like to get started in project management the RIGHT way, here are a few suggestions: When it comes to project management, general management, and many other careers you just need to go get some experience.

Get on a project team somehow and find someone who is doing what you want to get into. Ask them to mentor you. Do odd jobs for them, things they find tedious but that you will learn from. Go above and beyond and tap into the veterans.

Read more from this post [here](#).

project management success, so we felt it appropriate to point you to three books and three web sites that can address the issues surrounding the topic.

### TIPOFFS' BOOKS OF THE MONTH



#### **Outliers: The Story of Success** Malcolm Gladwell

**Review:** "You will never again think as you did before about [success] ...

This book deserves the gold star that adorns its front cover." - A. C. Grayling, The Times

"A global phenomenon, one of the most brilliant and influential writers of his generation ... there is, it sometimes seems, no subject over which Gladwell cannot scatter some magic dust ... he has a genius for making everything he writes seem like an impossible adventure" - The Observer

Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



#### **Perfect Phrases for Dealing with Difficult People: Hundreds of Ready-to-Use Phrases for Handling Conflict, Confrontations and Challenging Personalities**

Susan Benjamin

**Product Description :** "No matter where you work or what you do, you're bound to run into 'colorful characters' who can make your job challenging. No question-learning to deal with them will prove critical to your success in the workplace. That's why you need this all-purpose reference of ready-to-use phrases to help you handle all kinds of people at all job levels."

Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



#### **The Ten Management PEPs: Plain English Principles for Being a Great People Manager** Nigel Jeremy

**Customer Review:** "This book is simple to read and yet the content makes so much sense! I asked myself the questions posed in the book and found that although I THINK that I'm consistent with the simple practices that make a GREAT people manager, I don't do them as much as I'd like to think that I do. The ten management 'plain English principles' are easily explained and does what the book talks about - it makes things blindingly obvious." - Ten Books a night man,

Amazon.co.uk (5 stars)  
Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

### PEOPLE ON THE WEB

**ProjectOffices.com** - Some might argue we're tooting our own horn, but in the case of ProjectOffices.com, it's a horn several different project office personnel people will be glad we've tooted. Complete with the latest news, books, training, links and tools, ProjectOffices.com offer a wealth of opportunity for growth in office-based project professionalism.

**Business Link on Best Practice in People Management** - A rundown from the government website on how to successfully manage people in the workplace in a Best Practice format.

**Project Smart - Jakob Jelling on PM**

**Training** - Jelling tackles the rise in project management training course interest with some ideas for people about the best kind of training aspiring PM professionals can find - understudy roles.