



Capital Project Manager

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NEWSLETTER

CONTENTS:

Dinner Meeting
Speaker Profile

From the President

Upcoming Training
Events

Our Sponsors

Board Members

Leaders Don't Blame Others!

Popular speaker and best-selling PM author Neal Whitten made a statement at the dinner meeting, which followed the day long seminar on *No-Nonsense Advice for Successful Projects*, that got me to thinking. "Leaders don't blame others!" Project managers are leaders. Do we blame others when things don't go according to plan. It is an easy path to follow. Neal Whitten provided insights into behaviors to master when dealing with your leaders. First and foremost is to inform them of problems in a succinct, direct approach. But also to bring a solution and perhaps other possible solutions as back-up options. He added that you should tell the boss what you expect of them. How do you actually handle problems in your organization? Do you blame other groups or people for the failures?

Neal said we should speak directly to the person to resolve issues instead of complaining to other co-workers or the boss. The intent is to add value to solving the issue. Often we may want to complain but do not actually speak with the person with which we are having difficulties. The key is to be a closer of issues. Issues, like rumors, can rob the project of valuable resources and further exacerbate the situation.

Meeting commitments is essential. Those who make commitments should keep them. Your value to the company and as a resource will be enhanced if you are viewed as one who can be counted on; that is reliable. Leaders don't blame others when there are problems, they take actions to resolve the problems and are viewed as the person who gets the job done.

Neal Whitten pointed out that sometimes the boss is removed because of our actions. Our failures or bad behavior can result in actions taken against the boss. Our job should be making the boss look good. Neal recounted a story of how he moved up in an organization and it was because he made the boss look good. The boss valued Neal's approach. No matter what we do we should make sure our boss looks good. As a project manager or leader, would you not want those individuals working on the project to have a desire to make you look good? It is more satisfying to do something for a person rather than just completing a schedule task. Making the boss look good also means keeping the boss informed. Not about every thing, but about everything the boss needs to know.

Integrity is a standard requirement for project managers. It is easy when everything is going well, but what do you do when faced with unethical or illegal behavior? There are some options you could try. You could try to stop it before it happens. If it is in progress you could ignore it. You could move to another office or job. You could blow the whistle. You could do it anonymously to avoid being found out. You could seek a second opinion. All of these could end up bad. Neal recommended that you be mad about the situation and don't let them suck you in to their behavior.

When you make a mistake Neal recommended four things: first, admit the mistake; then tell them how you will fix the mistake. Let them know how you plan to prevent the mistake from occurring again. And finally, let it go. Don't carry guilt, make restitution and move on.

Neal ended the presentation with a simple statement: "Things are no important; people are. Put your energy into people." Perhaps if we valued people more than schedules and budgets and requirements, we might actually become leaders that don't blame others. And the people will be willing to make us as project manager look good.

If you have not read Neal's book, find a copy and spend time studying his no non-sense advice on being a successful project manager.

Advancing Project Management in the Capital City

From the President. . .

Recently I was asked a question by someone outside of the project management world that made me realize I really do not talk enough about project management except inside my PM circle. I am always prepared for the high level elevator spiel about what I do for a profession but when a question came back to me "what are the advantages of project management?" a light bulb went off in my head. Why have I not been promoting project management by giving more specifics on what it is and what it does? I have been making an assumption that the people I talk to knew the value of project management. I went on to tell this individual that since I became a project manager and followed proven, defined processes that it has improved our customer relations, our productivity, and lowered our costs. All of a sudden they were intrigued and wanted more information. Everyone wants to have better control of their business and this just hit on three key things in which every business pays attention.

What this told me is there still is a ways to go before the practice of Project Management is mainstream, much less understood. It is our job as project managers to make sure that the term project manager is not just thrown around and its value left misunderstood. You know how important it is and what advantages it brings forth. But do the people you talk to know? For something to be properly valued it must be truly understood and I think our job as project managers includes giving clarification and understanding.

Project Management is widely appreciated in many organizations and a large number of companies have implemented Project Management in their offices. However, it is often larger organizations that have adopted this practice, and in an economy where just under half of the work-force is employed by small businesses there are a significant number of organizations that have never used Project Managers nor understand their value. It is this small business area that needs to be exposed to project management's true advantages. In many cases they have heard the terminology but have no clue how it can benefit them.

I encourage each of you to make opportunities to shed the light on the true value of project management. It may actually open additional opportunities for you as well as encourage others to take a good long look at becoming a certified project management professional.

Emily

Challenge
Find the Bar
Challenge

The challenge is simple. Just find somewhere in the newsletter the following milestone symbol ◆ and send an email to: vpcommun@pmimontgomery.org with a specific description of its location. The first email received each issue will win the prize. You will also be named in the next issue of the newsletter. There are only so many pages so it should not be too hard to find but be warned it may be any direction, size, or color. So look carefully. The one included above does not count.

Upcoming Training & Events

PMP® Exam Preparation Course, October 26-28, 3 days, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Location: Auburn University Montgomery TechnaCenter Building, \$749 for PMI members, \$799 for others.

This course is designed to equip students to pass PMI's Project Management Professional (PMP®) certification exam. Participants receive a course manual that includes over 400 sample questions. The course provides 21 contact hours of training that apply toward the hours required to take the PMP or CAPM exam. Students should bring a copy of the *PMBOK Guide, 4th Edition* to the course. For brochure go to the Events page of www.pmimontgomery.org. For more information or to register call 334-244-3080.

Successful Project Management-Introductory Level, December 9-11, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Auburn Montgomery TechnaCenter Building. \$749 for PMI members, \$799 for non-members.

This highly interactive three-day seminar provides an overview of project management concepts and principles using lecture, small group case studies and discussion. Course participants develop many of the project plan elements required to take a project from initiation through planning, executing, and closing. This course provides 21 hours of training that apply toward the hours required to take the PMP or CAPM exams. For more detail visit the Events page of www.pmimontgomery.org. For information or to register call 334-244-3080.

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