

Book Your PMO in for a Service – Before You Run It Into The Ground



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leading the Program and Project Management Services offered by Stoneseed via Project Management as a Service (PMaaS).

Why you should treat your Project Management Office like an vehicle, maintain it and service it regularly to avoid costly breakdowns or new parts.

Did you ever run a car into the ground? You didn't have the time or the money perhaps to get it serviced? It crept over the 12,000-mile service marker and every time you got behind the wheel you said, "I must book it in!"

12,000 miles became 13, 14 ... 15 ... 16 and then before you knew ... 20,000 miles had passed and one day you were flying down the fast lane when something blew. You had to take the car to the garage then, right?

At this point, it costs much more to get it fixed than the service ever would have! Factor in the cost of the downtime, the inconvenience and the withering looks and raised eyebrows from the mechanics and you instantly see the wisdom of meeting those regular service intervals.

Chances are though that this has never happened to you. You're probably smart enough to ensure that your car's manual has a fully stamped, up to date service history. Furthermore, that's probably the way you run the maintenance of your home ... your personal finances ... you probably get regular health checks with your dentist and doctor ... and that's no doubt the way you maintain the effectiveness of your PMO ... ah!

Many organizations have a Project Management Office (PMO) to help deliver their IT projects successfully. More often than not they are working efficiently and like that car on its 11999th mile, will carry on working just fine right up until that moment when suddenly, out of the blue – it doesn't. Like the car, it can be really useful just to drop it by an expert to run an experienced eye over it so that comes back performing better than ever.

For every PMO that is running well I can show you two that are not – they are underperforming or not delivering the desired business outcomes or they have unclear scope and objectives so it's impossible to measure success

Have you ever thought about taking time out to reboot your PMO? Now your answer is probably the same as a Project Manager friend of mine recently, "David," he said, "I've just done 16 months of 70-80 hour weeks including weekends and without a holiday. Show me where I've got time to take time out!" t's worth doing. Either as an internal exercise or if you're like my friend with an external partner (more on this in a moment).

You should start by asking, "What is our business strategy and what part does Project Management and our Project Management Office need to play to achieve it?" Take enough time to really think about this, your best results WILL be achieved from a foundation of clarity of purpose. Objectives can be wide-ranging: "Help deliver projects on time and to budget," "Improve project success rates and implement standard practice," "Provide reporting," "Improve transparency and communication to stakeholders" – but with clear stated objectives you have a clear direction of travel. That's powerful!

Next, carry out capability gap analysis on your PMO. Identify the key practices that need to be embedded within the PMO for it to improve process capabilities and achieve the next maturity level and really seek to understand (and improve) your organisation's capability to manage projects more effectively. This can be hard and often an external perspective can look round a few corners and present more creative solutions.

"The Critical Path" Inside this Month's Issue

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Letter from the President



PMI Global Congress and Leadership meeting was held in Orlando, Florida last month and our chapter was represented by our board members and volunteers. They have come back with some great ideas and list of speakers and sponsors leads. Now our volunteer team will work on them and our chapter membership will get the benefits in next year.

This month's topic is 'Create team of Distinctions'. I personally believe this is the root cause of success or failure of any unit where we have more than one person involved in it. We have seen in many sports events like cricket or scorer where team which played as a cohesive unit won the final trophy rather than team depending on individual performers. Even in sports like tennis where the performance of the individual player matters, the success is contributed to the team of coach, physio trainers and other members of management team. This is true in all aspects of our work, our volunteer work or even at home. I really look forward to this meeting and like to hear from our speaker about how to create teams of Distinctions- a must for all of us.

On PMI front, our PMP certified members must have received one email from PMI about the change to the CCR Program which is only one month away. The new CCR system has been redesigned to have more intuitive interface, simplified PDU reporting and improved dashboards and tracking capabilities. Our team will work with you to help you to go over this transition. Please come to me or any board member for any questions you have. We can surely try to direct you to right resolution. In the meantime go over the webinar - (<http://www.brainshark.com/pmiorg/CCRSPreview>). This will help you to prepare, so there are no surprises when PMI goes live.

Wishing a very Happy Thanksgiving in advance to all our members.

See you at this month's chapter meeting

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I Can't Make Another Decision



Karen Goold has worked in leadership and coaching roles for over 20 years, within the Financial Services industry and with blue chip/FMCG companies, and now uses that extensive customer-focused knowledge, combined with being a practitioner in Applied Neuroscience, NLP and the MBTI, to provide client-specific

coaching through Assiem Ltd. Go to assiem.co.uk for more information on executive coaching available.

We probably all know what it's like to get to the stage where we feel we can't make any more decisions in a day. If you've had a very busy day at work, you often have to make lots of decisions on strategy, resources, management issues, budgets etc. When you get home you may be faced with even more decisions to make regarding the family, what to eat, where you might go on holiday, activities with the children, red or white wine!

At some point you're likely to get to the stage where enough is enough and some decisions will just have to wait for another day. If someone asks you to do something else and make even a small decision, you can get to the stage where you just stop. I know when I was at my most busy at work my friends and family got used to me joking "I don't make decisions at home - I make decisions all day, so am not doing any more!! Someone else can decide and I'll just go along with it!" I admit, I may not have been joking!

We could think of our decision-making capacity like a battery, which is successively drained a little with each decision we make. Eventually, over the course of a day or week, the battery flattens and the ability to make difficult decisions will be depleted.

Unfortunately, this could have considerable impact on the motivation to make decisions, especially in the workplace. And, more importantly, this is significant when it comes to risk-taking: we are more likely to not take a risk when we should, or we could take bad risks (as we may also have lower willpower).

When making decisions we need to be aware of any cognitive biases that could be at play. We all have them, as they are the result of our neural networks needed for quick decision-making abilities, and use our beliefs, experience and knowledge. However, we should be aware that these can cause the tendency to make decisions or take action in an unknowingly irrational way, rejecting information or causing us to miss opportunities. One example is confirmation bias, where we look for information/statistics that supports our existing understanding, and we may reject data that goes against what we believe.

When we think our decision-making battery is low, we could be more at risk of missing vital details. And the consequences can be significant.

However, different people can have different sizes of decision-making battery. And although you have felt this way, there is actually no limit. Therefore you could upgrade the "perceived" size of your battery and top it up with different techniques:

- Limitations - if you believe your battery is limited, it will be - but it is as big as you decide it will be.
- Reframe - if decisions seem difficult, what are the alternatives to thinking about the situation, what other options for a positive focus could you choose?
- Positivity - celebrating successes tops up the battery. Thinking about what you can achieve/learn from making the decisions helps decrease anxiety and allows for more creative and innovative thoughts to flow.
- Exercise - this increases brain capacity and provides energy and the space to think effectively.
- Enjoy the moment - for example, going outdoors, going for a walk, yoga etc helps increase your battery. Short naps also work.
- Feedback - get feedback on how you are doing (constructive and positive), as this helps you understand your decision-making processes and gives you vital information to improve your ability to make decisions in the future.



Rather than suffer "decision fatigue", try these techniques on yourself and with your team. It can help increase motivation and reduce stress and anxiety, as well reducing the risk of bad or delayed decision-making (with all the consequences that could bring). Help others to increase their batteries too by giving positive feedback, celebrating successes and reframing difficulties.

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New Perspectives on Millennials in the Workplace



Richard Lepsinger is President of OnPoint Consulting and has a twenty-five year track record of success as a human resource consultant and executive. The focus of Rick's work has been on helping organizations close the gap between strategy and execution, work effectively in a matrix

organization and lead and collaborate in a virtual environment.

When it comes to what matters most in the workplace, are Millennials really that different from the rest of us?

Among leaders, human resource managers and researchers, there seems to be no clear consensus. Some researchers have concluded those born before 1980 learn differently and have distinct leadership development needs. Others contend there's no real evidence of that, aside from perception. Much has been written about how to engage Millennials at work; just as much, if not more, has been written about why Millennials are failing in the workplace and why employers shouldn't give them special treatment.

Whatever employers think of them, at least one thing is certain: they can't be ignored. In the next five years, Millennials will make up nearly half of the global workforce, and many of them will be in leadership roles, whether they are prepared to lead or not.

Here's a look at what some of the more recent research has found and what business leaders should take away from it.

The Findings: Leaders Have More In Common With Millennials Than They Think

Jean Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State University, compared people of the same age at different points in time to determine whether Millennials are actually fundamentally different from those who were the same age in the 1960s and 70s. In her book, *Generation Me*, she notes some small shifts in how Millennials view work compared to previous generations, but the differences were less significant than common perceptions.

The Takeaway: The differences between generations have more to do with life stage than inherent characteristics. Older generations were just as likely to challenge authority figures as those in their 20s and early 30s today, perhaps even more so. Many were full of confidence and lacking in humility, two traits commonly attributed to Millennials today.

However, many have forgotten what it was like to be that age. They should take into consideration their own past behaviors and tendencies at that point in their lives when dealing with Millennials at work.

Professor Peter Capelli of the Wharton School has done significant research on this topic to support greater empathy in the workforce, challenging middle aged managers to recall their early 20s.

"You probably wanted to get out of the office in a hurry - you were interested in what was going on after work," Capelli said in a New York Times article. "You had these bursts of energy and great enthusiasm about something, but you also didn't have a lot of resilience."



Discipline where necessary and remember they were once that age too.

When possible, use a misstep as a learning experience for a younger employee.

The Findings: Leaders Need to Bridge the Generation Gap

Generational gaps exist between all generations-each one has a perception of another that leads to differences in the workplace. Research has found that Baby Boomers believe Gen Xers lack discipline and focus and Millennials are easily distracted and lack commitment. Gen Xers believe Baby Boomers are resistant to change, sexist and insensitive and Millennials are arrogant. Millennials believe Baby Boomers are defensive and lack creativity and Gen Xers are poor problem-solvers. These perceptions aren't especially helpful to anyone.

The Takeaway: Be Aware of Generational Differences While Embracing Individual Traits

Despite these judgments, each generation brings positive qualities to the workplace. Each generation should recognize one another's positive traits and learn from them. In general, Baby Boomers tend to be more competitive, Gen Xers tend to be more independent-minded and Millennials are more likely to work well in teams.

While it's good to be aware of these tendencies as they can shape behaviors, avoid using them to stereotype team members. The best leaders are attuned to the strengths and weaknesses of their own team members. They strive to bring out the best qualities in everyone, rather than criticizing them for what they lack.

The Findings: Leaders Should Embrace the Changes Incoming Generations Bring

The truth is, times are changing. Technology has played a large role in workforce changes and is also an influencing factor in Millennial traits. But this is not specific to any one generation.

(article continued on page 5)

10 Ways To Stay Focused On The Critical Path



Lisa Anderson, President of LMA Consulting Group, Inc., www.lma-consultinggroup.com, is a senior supply chain and operations executive and management consultant

Remaining focused on any one strategy, project or task can prove challenging in today's new normal. Volatility is the new norm, and so it becomes easy to get caught up in the highs and lows of organizational life. For example, if your company is having a rough month due to volatility, management can begin to panic which causes deviations from the critical path to the latest crisis.

Soon, you are deterred from the project altogether as resources are lean and can only focus in so many places at once. Most major change initiatives, new product launches, cost savings programs, customer collaboration programs and the like are accomplished through projects. Thus, it behooves us to remain committed to the critical path – and ultimate project success.

What can you do to increase your chances of success? Stick to the critical path. The critical path includes the essential tasks that have the ability to delay the entire project and make it veer off the path. Thus, my most successful clients find ways to ensure the focus remains on the critical path. Some of the successful approaches include the following:

1. It starts at the top: As with success overall, it is most easily deterred from the top. Make sure your executives know the critical path. Often, by taking the step to make the critical path clear to executives, the project has a significantly greater chance of success. For example, if a manager has a conflict with a critical path item, the executives will support the critical path if they understand the importance.
2. Communicate the critical path to the project team: Certainly the project team has to fully understand the critical path. When it comes to fighting the daily battles and focusing attention, the project team is in the thick of it. If they understand the priority of the critical path, the project has a much greater chance of success.
3. Make it visual: As is popular in Lean circles, make the critical path visual. The more it is apparent to everyone what tasks are a part of the critical path and the progress on those tasks, the more likely they'll be to gain attention and receive priority. Put them on the walls. Be creative in how you make the critical path visual.
4. Follow up with task owners prior to starting dates: The project manager should follow up with critical path task owners prior to their task starting. They should ask about resources, potential bottlenecks, etc. I find that critical path task owners know many of the likely issues ahead of time.

However, if no one asks, they might not be communicating them. Ask questions in advance.

5. Remind task owners just prior to start dates: Even if you engage with the task owner to talk through what is upcoming, doesn't mean they will remember at the "right" time. Typically task owners have multiple jobs and responsibilities. If they aren't thinking about the critical path at the time, they are likely to delay until the issue or project their boss is asking about is complete. A personal reminder can go a long way!
6. Critical path transition: When moving from one critical path task to another, think about what would make it a smooth transition. Similar to running a relay race, it is important to have a code worked out in advance and to know each other well enough so that you can make up time or modify based upon the critical path task before or after you. Have you thought about the importance of collaboration?
7. Critical path post completion follow-up: One way to ensure communications throughout the critical path is to complete a post-task follow-up. What was successful and helped to speed up progress or improve the result? What happened that could be improved? If you gain this type of feedback rapidly, you can incorporate it into later critical path tasks. Why wait until the next project?
8. Monitor metrics: As with all projects and business, remember to focus on metrics. What core metrics should you measure to get a feel for whether the critical path is on track and whether the project team is achieving the objectives thus far? Put your heads together to identify these metrics and find a way to measure progress. It could be as simple as talking with critical path owners or talking with the recipients of the critical path tasks. Or it could be slightly more complex with numerical metrics. Find something that is meaningful and measure progress.
9. Critical path milestones: Although it is easy to get caught up in a maze of tasks and to-do lists, don't take your eyes off of your critical path milestones. Which tasks are more important and signify an output? Keep them in mind and focus on those actions that will contribute specifically towards achieving these critical path milestones.
10. Final result: Last but not least, remember that you must be getting closer to the end result of the project. Whether you complete 2 or 200 tasks, it won't matter unless the end result occurs.

Since executives consider projects a critical contributor to growing the business and delivering bottom line results, remaining focused on the most important tasks to achieving these end results is vital. Thus, leverage these strategies to keep focused on the critical path and continually search for additional options. Success will follow.

Book Your PMO in for a Service (con't)

You should treat your PMO reboot with the same discipline you would treat a key transformational IT Project. Know what outcomes you would like to achieve and how they will help achieve your operational goals. For instance, a six-part set of stated outcomes could be;

1. Align the project portfolio to business strategy
2. Prioritize Projects
3. Deliver Programs on-time, within budget + according to scope
4. Understand dependencies between Projects within the Programs
5. Improve communication within the Program team and all stakeholders
6. Optimize + rationalize delivery resources

Returning to my overworked PM friend, as we spoke we agreed that his workload was not sustainable, that it was actually impacting negatively on his productivity and on that of his team and that his weekly schedule was a consequence and a symptom of a lack of available capability within the PMO. Project after project was completing either late or over budget despite him working harder and harder, longer and longer and his creativity and enthusiasm were waning. We were creative in our thinking and were able to arrange the buying in of PM capabilities when they were needed.

What I was able to give him was an external pair of fresh eyes. Like the mechanic at the garage servicing your car who spots your bald tires and saves you from an accident or a penalty, having someone from outside your organization take a look at your project management operation can be hugely beneficial – providing you have the humility to take a few truths on the chin in the interest of improving performance.

Soliciting an independent view on the performance of your Project Management Office can efficiently help refocus, refine or totally redesign your business Project Management capabilities. It will determine your future requirements and set out productive steps to be undertaken to achieve your operational goals - like buying in Project Management resources to complement your in-house talent when you need them.

Recognizing the importance of an effective PMO in delivering high-quality services and resources management, ensuring project success and meeting business objectives and cost/time constraints is an important first step.

Booking your PMO in for a service before you run it into the ground should be your critical next step.

New Perspectives (continued)

Influences brought on by the times have impacted each generation - the Baby Boomer generation brought many changes to the workforce by witnessing important social movements like the Civil Rights and Women's movements, calling for a need for social and economic equality. Gen X likewise grew up with both parents in the workplace, and this generation began the pattern of women having children later to pursue careers. Their influences changed the way the workforce is, and the Millennial generation has now begun unleashing its impact on the way people work. Likewise, Gen Z will inevitably bring new changes as the first generation to not remember life before technology.

The Takeaway: Leaders must take into account the historical events that have shaped each generation. Bridging the gap is just the beginning - embracing these differences between generations must occur to maintain a cohesive workforce that currently comprises multiple generations. Developing leaders to find the best among these diverse mentalities will promote strong company morale. Millennials have much to learn, and Baby Boomers and Gen X have much advice and wisdom to pass on.

The Bottom Line

Millennials don't need special treatment, but employers do need to prepare them for leadership roles. Part of their preparation includes embracing the unique qualities they bring to the workforce, just like previous generations before them and the generations to come. Understanding Millennials and their thought processes can help turn a negative experience into a learning experience for both the Millennial and the employer.

This is crucial when preparing Millennials for a leadership role because once they become leaders, they will be using their life experience to guide their teams. Incorporating these experiences now will help ensure that your successors are taking the company in a direction you want to go.

Chapter Meeting – November 10, 2015 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Topic: Creating Project Teams of Distinction

The quality of an organization's project and program teams—specifically, how they are motivated and unified to achieve a mission—has a major impact on the success (or failure) of that project, program, and organization. The hard truth is, all too many companies are virtually teamless: the people who are supposed to act in unison, are actually divided, battling each other and pursuing conflicting agendas. When this goes unchecked over time, management winds up flirting with a project or program team that is near extinction, as the enterprise or its goals are jeopardized. But with the proper intervention in the form of a team-building methodology, the negative flow can be reversed, making a U-turn toward a "Project Xceptional Team!"

Featured Speaker: Tom Mattus

Tom is the President and founder of Successful Strategies International, Inc. As an SSI corporate officer, American Express and other companies, Tom has worked with such Fortune 1000 companies as Johnson & Johnson, L-3 Communications, AEP, Ingram-Micro, Baker Hughes, Olympus, Triumph Corporation, Motorola, and many others to help resolve their project management and leadership needs. As a facilitator, Tom conducted courses on such topics as Project Management, Supervisory and Sales Management. Tom has published several articles in PMI publications, websites and has released his recent book, Boss Talk in the 21st Century, A Leadership Guide.

Location

The Royal Palace Restaurant

77 Knollwood Road, White Plains / Greenburgh, NY 10607
(at the south end of the Greenburgh Shopping Plaza)
Phone: 914.289.1988

Agenda

- 6:00 | Registration, Networking & Dinner
- 6:45 | Announcements, Introduction of Program
- 7:00 | Guest Speaker or Internal Program (1 PDU)
- 8:00 | Participants network
- 8:15 | SIG programs; PMO, Quality (1 PDU)

Meeting Sponsors



Fees

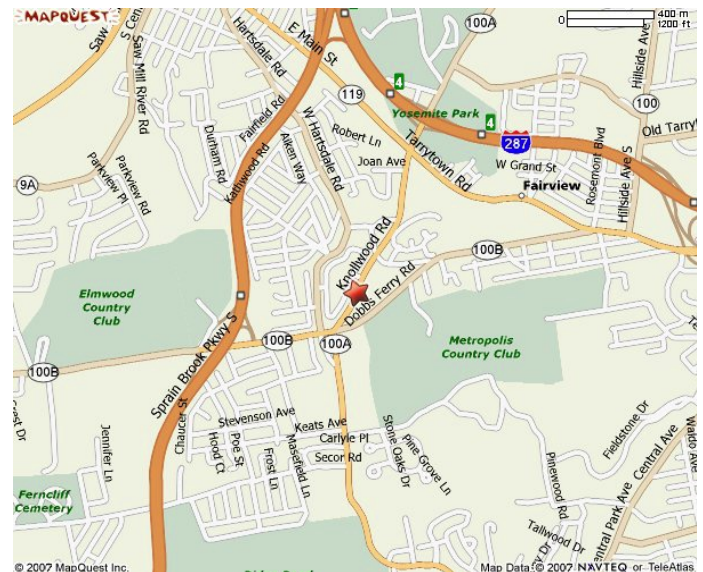
- Chapter members – \$20
- Non-members – \$30
- We accept cash or checks. Sorry, no credit card

Directions:

From I-287

- Take I-287 to exit 4.
- At the end of the exit ramp turn SOUTH and go 6/10 of a mile to the traffic light at Stadium Road (sign may not be visible).
- Turn LEFT onto Stadium, go 50 yards, then RIGHT into the unused end of the plaza parking lot.
- Go to the far right hand corner of the lot where it connects to the part with the stores. Pass the stores and the movie theater on your left until you come to the Royal Palace.

Map to Royal Palace Restaurant



Upcoming PMI Westchester and Other Educational Events

December 2015 Breakfast Roundtable Meeting

Topic: MS One Note Workshop-- (This is a REMOTE ONLY Breakfast Roundtable! You must register one day in advance - e-mail tcsmithsr@verizon.net)

Facilitator: Paula Cancro, Assistant Chairperson, Business, The College of Westchester

Date: Tuesday, December 1st – 7:30AM

December 2015 Chapter Meeting

Topic: TBD

Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Speaker: TBD

Location: The Royal Palace, 77 Knollwood Road, Greenburgh Shopping Plaza, Greenburgh, NY



January 2016 Chapter Meeting

Topic: TBD

Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2015

Speaker: TBD

Location: The Royal Palace, 77

Knollwood Road, Greenburgh Shopping Plaza, Greenburgh, NY

January 2016 Breakfast Roundtable Meeting

Topic: Grab Bag of Topics-- (This is a REMOTE ONLY Breakfast Roundtable! You must register one day in advance - e-mail tcsmithsr@verizon.net)

Facilitator: Doreen DePass

Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 – 7:30AM

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You have nothing to lose, only PDUs to gain. Happy Learning!!

PMI Westchester Wishes You and Your Family A Very Happy Thanksgiving!!!

