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PMO SIG Local Interest Group Meeting - Minutes

Main Topic: **Tough Economy! What's a PMO to do? – Gus Sanchez**

Secretary: **Gus Sanchez**

1. Welcome & Introductions
1. Attendees included: Bruce Martin, Carol DeGrella, Carol Gingold, Gus Sanchez, Rob Wolf, Susan Leong
2. Member Announcements
    o Job opportunities (within our companies, industries, etc.)
        § No, specific, job opportunities were discussed. However, sources of job postings were (see below)
        § Gus mentioned he had joined TheLadders.com and really liked the additional articles/tips available on the site.
        § Bruce recommended Ed Pospecil (www.theteng.org) for resume makeovers. Bruce claims he received a significantly improved resume which was now generating more hits/interest.
        § Susan shared this list of resources and tips which she received when meeting with an agent of the NY Dept of Labor:

    Insurance Options

    Healthy NY (www.healthyny.com)
    Family Health Plus 1-914-761-3456 Ext.136 (www.affinityplan.org)
    HRSA Hill-Burton Free & Reduced Cost Health Care 1-800-638-0742 (www.hrsa.gov)
    www.freelancersunion.org NASE AARP
    Google = NY Chamber of Commerce Health Plan
    www.chamber.com/directory_cat.asp?catid=173

    MEGAsearch Engines

    www.indeed.com (highly recommended!)
    www.juju.com
    www.simplyhired.com

    Networking Websites

    www.linkedin.com
    www.jibberjobber.com
    www.web.com
    www.scour.com
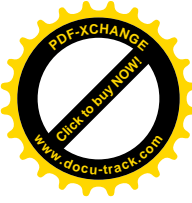   www.workministry.com
    www.notchup.com
    www.jobster.com
    www.ziggs.com
    www.jobsearch.about.com/od/networkingsites/a/networkingsites.htm (recommended)

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Hugh Internet Assistance Sites

> www.dmoz.com
> www.altavista.com
> www.lll.org (Librarian's Index to the Internet)

> **Civil Service**
> www.cs.state.ny.us
> www.westchestergov.com
> www.usajobs.opm.gov
> www.westchestercountyjobs.com
> www.westchester.com
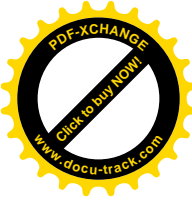> www.westchesterjobsearch.com
> www.allcountyjobs.com

- o Tools – Project, time management, specialty, …
  - § GanttProject – Free project management utility. Get from download.com. – Very "simple" – not robust (at least, not as far as I saw – you may think differently).
  - § OpenWorkbench – Robust, free project management utility. Get from www.openworkbench.org - Training CD available for $150. Found some training on YouTube, but it was in Spanish!
  - § Microsoft Office Project Professional 2007 – 60-day, free trial available from Microsoft (www.microsoft.com / Dowloads & Trials / Trials / Select from list, under the Office heading)
  - § OpenOffice – Free, open-source competitor to MS Office (works with MS office docs) – download at www.openoffice.org

- o Articles of Interest
  - § Alltop.com – Aggregator of articles/web sites (using RSS feeds) for "many" subjects, including Project Management.
  - § Thepmpodcast.com – Besides being available on ITunes, you can go to this web site. I recommend Episode 111, a review of the 2008 PMO Summit, by Cornelius Fichtner.
  - § Top 9 Hottest Skills – per Computerworld, Jan 1, 2009 edition (see attached summary)
  - § www.icpm.com – International Community of Project Management – Good blogs here, including one titled "PMO Metrics – a start" (see attached).

- o Other meetings/seminars of interest
  - § Planview: 2008 PMO 2.0 Survey Report results – Webcast / Thu, Jan 15th, 2008, 11am ET - ***NOTE*** - **This was an excellent webcast**. It was recorded and should be available starting next week (the 19th). Go to www.planview.com, select Resources/Resource Center and choose PMO from the drop down list. A copy of the survey report should be available by then.
  - § Bruce Martin sharing his PMO presentation with Southern New England PMI Chapter, Thu, Feb 26th, in Stamford, CT – www.snec-pmi.org

3. Success (or Blunder) of the Month
   - § Not reviewed

4. Problem/Challenge of the Month
   - § Not reviewed

5. Main Topic - **Tough economy! What's a PMO to do? – A discussion led by Gus**

   Information for today's discussion was pulled from the following articles:
   - § "Everything You Know Is Wrong" – Computerworld, January 1, 2009
   - § "The Incredible Shrinking Team" – PM Network, January, 2009
   - § "In Flux" – PM Network, December 2008

January 13, 2009   **Chair: Gus Sanchez**
7:45 - 8:45 PM   **Phone: (203) 877-9596**

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Budgeting

Old Notion: There will always be change, but with some measure of predictability
New Order: Be prepared to change "on-the-fly"

As PMO leaders, here are some things we should be aware of:

1. **The Credit Crunch** – This will, likely, mean less capital expenditure. Due to the WACC (weighted avg cost of capital), projects will need to show better ROI, or cost less, if they are to be approved. This could be a challenge for existing/in-flight capex projects. We will need to find a way to break them into (deliverable) "chunks" that have justification. – *BTW, breaking things into chunks is a common theme, throughout…*

2. **Compressed Payback Periods** – Back to the ROI story. No longer, is it enough to consider the "overall" ROI. Your management will want to know what the ROI is for Q1, or Q2!!! You'll need to focus on when those returns can begin. Again, to achieve this level of visibility, you'll need to break these projects into "chunks" that can be delivered in a shorter time span.

3. **Concrete Metrics** – As you might imagine, those projects with *concrete* cost reductions (headcount, maintenance charges – *real stuff*) will take precedence over "enhancements" or "productivity improvements" (meaning those with fuzzy, non-bottom-line-impacting returns).

4. **Budget Fluctuations** - "Scenario planning" is not anything new, but it's back in style/fashion. A sliding-bar approach will be used by management. As funding shifts, so will project priorities.

5. **Look Closer at "Silver Bullets"** – The "silver bullets" are those technologies/solutions that, miraculously, promise significant efficiencies or cost reductions. In this category, you have things like "cloud computing". Cloud computing is to the 2008-2009 budget recession season, what "outsourcing" was to the 2002 recession. Not to say that these things don't work, just be sure to cover all the bases. Remember, the credit crisis (as related to capital expenditure, for example) doesn't, only, affect you. It affects your vendors as well!

6. **Ruthlessly Clear Dead Wood** – As someone who recently lost their job, I take major offense to the title of this bullet point ;-) But, alas, I should not. The article points to 3 areas:
   I. IT Procurement – Take time to renegotiate/re-bid those big contracts. Make sure you procurement team slows down the process enough to obtain better deals.
   II. IT Cost Savings – Find some way to reduce your per-unit costs (e.g. cost per server, per terabyte of storage, per help desk tickets).
   III. Joint Business & IT Savings – Review your application portfolio and seek to reduce redundant functionality.

Types of projects that are expected to continue through this "storm" include: security, server virtualization and SaaS.

Teams of project managers will look to the PMO to support them with tools and techniques, such as Monte Carlo analysis. Furthermore, the business will be looking for increased communication and transparency.