



## **PMO SIG February 2016 Meeting Summary**

### **Discussion Topic: Project Management and Stress**

#### **Unrealistic Expectations**

- “Iron Triangle”
  - ♦ Constraints - Scope, Schedule and Budget, are firm and fixed
  - ♦ No flexibility from management, sponsors to change any of the three major constraints
- PM should still explore where flexibility might be possible
  - ♦ Need to evaluate consequences, risks

#### **Sources of stress**

- People are often primary source of stress
  - ♦ Some may apply stress as a motivator
- Executives pushing projects as means to get results
  - ♦ Some push is needed to challenge team, but too much burns team out
  - ♦ PM needs to protect team from executive “bullying”
- Stress is not in the work itself, but in how we deal with situations and circumstances
  - ♦ Typically rooted in something PM cannot change or influence
  - ♦ Need to decide personally how to deal with it emotionally
- Untruths
  - ♦ Statements made regarding the project that are untrue or unprovable
  - ♦ Waste of time, can divert or derail projects
- New turf, unfamiliar territory
  - ♦ Uncertainty can feed stress
  - ♦ PM should seek knowledge and expertise, mentor
  - ♦ Taking small steps, trial period, proof of concept can alleviate uncertainty
- Distraction, frustrations and annoyance of ‘simple things’
  - ♦ Scheduling a meeting across busy calendars
  - ♦ Contacting an elusive person
  - ♦ Serving as administrator
    - Administrative assistants are few, everyone is ‘on their own’ for handling administrative tasks
    - Time consuming, distracts PM from managing, more administrative work
  - ♦ Everyday tasks can add stress on top of workload
- Multitasking
  - ♦ e.g. Doing emails while attending a meeting
  - ♦ Taxing, distracting, often ineffective
  - ♦ Affects team overall, impedes communication and collaboration

#### **Career expectations**

- PM is a difficult job, stress should be no surprise
- Expected to ‘work miracles’, organize chaos, please everyone
- Prospective PMs need to understand and prepare for high expectations and difficult work



### **“Do more with less”**

- Tired, worn out concept
  - ♦ Formerly used to define constraints
  - ♦ Overused, becomes ineffective and unheard
  - ♦ Does not motivate
- Does not provide a solution or clear direction
  - ♦ Adds uncertainty, restriction, complexity
  - ♦ Summarizes ingredients for stress in few words
- Euphemism for difficult circumstances, lack of strategy
- Simplicity of such statement may not introduce stress until details are explored, revealing challenges and stress factors

### **“Wearing many hats”**

- PM typically has multiple roles
  - ♦ Project manager
  - ♦ Team resource manager
  - ♦ Business analyst
  - ♦ Product owner
- If/when any role becomes too challenging, distracts from other roles, adds stress
- Some roles pushed to PM may be completely different jobs
  - ♦ e.g. Acting in sales role
  - ♦ May work in other areas where resources and time allow absorption of role
  - ♦ Will add stress when extra role is delegated without addressing or acknowledging constraints or difficulties
  - ♦ PM needs to explore alternatives, clarify roles, manage expectations

### **Flexible workplace**

- “Work from anywhere” more and more prevalent
  - ♦ Advantages
    - No commuting
    - Able to be at home if needed (personal reasons)
  - ♦ Disadvantages
    - Less separation of work/home life
    - Clock never stops, never leave the office to go home
- Geographically disperses team, adds communication and teamwork challenges
  - ♦ Communication and collaboration is virtual
    - Teleconferences, emails, instant/text messages

### **Meetings**

- Too many meetings fills workday
  - ♦ Less time for productive work
  - ♦ More overtime to catch up on productive work
- Block your calendar to reserve work time
  - ♦ Advise overworked team members to do the same
- Don't invite everyone to every meeting
  - ♦ Enable others to get work done
  - ♦ Sub teams can divide and reduce overall meeting time

## Next Meeting

Next meeting is in March. Suggested topic "Value of PMBOK".

## PMO SIG Discussion Topics to Consider

### Proposed Topics (items in bold are recent suggestions)

1. PMO Practice
  - a. **Types of Charters**
  - b. **Using BAs in PMO Models**
  - c. PMO Resources - Templates, Websites, etc.
  - d. PMO Governance and Portfolios
  
2. PMO Promotion
  - a. Looking at the PMO from the Outside
  - c. Promoting the value of the PMO
  - d. Explaining the benefits of the PMO
  
3. Organizing and Starting the PMO
  - a. Defining the Role of the PMO
  - c. The PMO and Cross Organizational Matrix Management
  - d. Lifecycle of a PMO, how to start one and pitfalls at different stages of the lifecycle
  - e. Where should the PMO be migrated into with a company that re-organizes, downsizes?
  - f. Criteria to establish a PMO in your organization - When does it NOT make sense to have a PMO?
  - g. Should the PMO be in-sourced or out-sourced? Why?
  
4. Other
  - a. Sphere of control vs outside your control - knowing the difference
  - b. **Internal Audit Projects**
  - c. **Enforcing Results Offshore**
  - d. Thanksgiving Project Management (November meeting?)
  - e. Model PMO Job Descriptions (Maude Fribourg has sample, find others)
  - f. **Several 15-minute talks on PMO topics of interest**

Attending: Charles J. Cante, Charles R. Cante, Christine Williams, David Morgen, Howard Paul, Jason Fox, John Grazier, Marlo Moss

February 9, 2016  
8:15 – 9:15 PM

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