



Willamette Valley Chapter Leadership Team

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Message from our President: Welcome to 2004.

Contingency is a reality that most project managers face on a regular basis. The reality of having good contingency plans in place was brought home to me this past week with the onslaught of snow and freezing rain in the Salem area. Many of the things planned had to be cancelled due to the inclement weather. Even a Portland Trailblazer game was postponed because of the icy conditions.

It has been interesting to watch how people react when their plans go awry. Some people panic because their plans can't happen just the way they were supposed to happen. Others are more philosophical in their approach, realizing that maybe today's problems will provide other opportunities in the future.

In planning any project it is critical to the success of the project that risks and their contingencies be considered. Risk is, defined as "Anything that can go wrong in a project that will affect project targets" (*James P. Lewis, The Project Managers Desk Reference, 2nd edition, 2000 pg. 298*). Sounds like Murphy's Law. And some say Murphy was an optimist! So it is important to identify risks as early as possible in the project. But just identifying the risks is not enough. Analysis of the risk, including the probability of the risk being realized and the impact to the project if the risk is realized need to occur also.

After the analysis has been completed then the management of the risk needs to

happen. This is where many project managers have problems. They do a good job identifying and analyzing the risks to their project but fail to plan contingencies for when or if the risk is realized. Even if some contingencies are identified very few project managers revisit the risks and contingencies during the life of the project. Without good risk management, when the identified risks are realized, many times the reaction causes additional problems because the contingencies haven't been thought through ahead of time. In another part of the chapter on Risk Management, Lewis states, "Trying to deal with a problem that has hit you without warning is always more difficult than laying out contingencies before the problem has occurred." (*James P. Lewis, The Project Managers Desk Reference, 2nd edition, 2000 pg. 299*).

As we look forward to 2004 and the many challenges and opportunities we will have, let's do some additional planning and analysis so we are ready to respond when life provides those things that "spice" up our daily lives.

Looking forward to serving the chapter in 2004,

John A. Doan
Willamette Valley Chapter President

Requests:

1. Please send your email address to admin@pmiww.org in order to receive timely messages regarding upcoming opportunities, and
2. If you no longer wish to have a paper version of our newsletter mailed to you, please let us know at admin@pmiww.org so we can use our financial resources and time wisely.

January Lunch Program

Dashboard Development—When things aren't perfect!

Dashboard Development -- When things aren't perfect!

Discussion will be a "how-to" talk. The goal of the discussion will be to relate how summary reporting is used for top management in the emerging, project management environment at the Department of Education. The literature often refers to the importance of providing summary information to sponsors and top management using "dashboards" – documents that provide high-level, visual information that briefly summarizes the status of multiple projects. Deliverable will be identification of what made it work so well.

Speaker Bio

Sylvia Gillpatrick, CPA, has been working as a project manager and business process-reengineering consultant for a number of years. She began her career working for SFC, (formerly Children's Services Division) for the State of Oregon after receiving a BA in Psychology from the UCLA. At CSD, she held a variety of positions in both caseworker and supervisor capacity. She returned to graduate school and obtained an MBA with an emphasis in accounting from the University of Oregon and worked as a CPA for Deloitte and Touche, (formerly Touche Ross). As an auditor, she completed a number of systems audits. This was her first exposure to the complexity of mixing people and technology.

After her stint in public accounting, she joined Management Compensation Group (MCG) as a VP of marketing and client administration. As manager of a company administering employee benefit plans, she completed a number of projects requiring a good fit between people and technology – records management, electronic data trans-

fer, a custom accounting and reporting system and a sales and marketing database.

Since leaving MCG, Ms. Gillpatrick has worked both as an independent consultant and a member of CACI, Inc., an international systems integration firm. She has completed several large-scale projects, with the focus on process reengineering and blending current technology with the organization's business strategy and objectives. One recent major accomplishment was designing and implementing a custom-developed program that transformed the City of Beaverton Municipal Court from a paper-based system to a "paperless" court, perhaps the first in the nation.

"I love working on public sector projects. They are often large-scale, complex and unique. There is nothing more satisfying than to be part of an innovative team that is creating systems that are of benefit to our society."

Currently, Ms. Gillpatrick is working in the K-12 public education industry with a focus on assessment, administered via paper/pencil and computer. She has recently completed the implementation of the first fully computer-adaptive assessment for the entire State of Idaho.

Another focus is to advise on the use of project management methodology in the development of assessments at the Oregon Department of Education.

Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better.

King Whitney Jr.

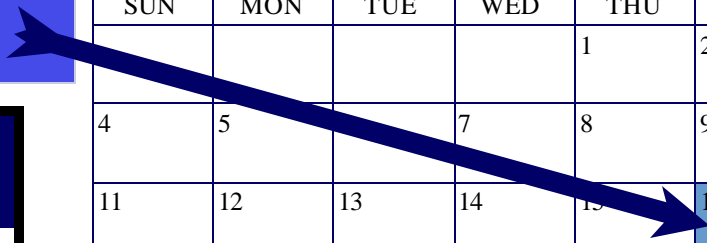
Membership Corner

PMI WV Lunch Program

Third Friday of every Month
 Location: McNary Restaurant
 Time: 12 - 1 PM.

January 2004

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5		7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



Directions to Luncheon Meeting Location:

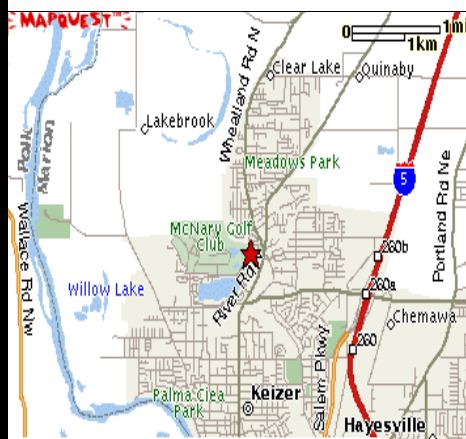
From Downtown Salem:

Proceed north on High Street. This street will change its name to Broadway. Continue north. As you enter Keizer the road changes to River Road. Continue north to McNary Estates Dr. Turn left at the signal and proceed to the restaurant.



From I-5:

Leave the freeway at exit 260-A coming from the north or exit 260 coming from the south. Turn west toward Keizer. Follow Lockhaven to River Road and turn right (north). Proceed to McNary Estates Drive. Turn left at signal and proceed to the restaurant.



Calendar of Events

January 2004

- 13 Board Meeting, 11:30, Location: Revenue Building Cafeteria
- 16 PMIWV Lunch Program, 12:00, McNary Restaurant
 Topic: Dashboard Development—When things aren't perfect!
- 26 *DAS Oregon Project Management Certification Program,
 Cost \$3155

February 2004

- 17 Board Meeting, 11:30, Location: Revenue Building Cafeteria
- 20 PMIWV Lunch Program, 12:00, McNary Restaurant
 Topic: TBD
- 23-25 *DAS Fast Start in Project Management, Cost \$723

*STEPS classes—please contact, Cyndi S. Smith, STEPS Operations Manager
 Statewide Technical Education Provider Source (STEPS)

Phone: (503) 378-3099, Email: cyndi.s.smith@state.or.us

Breakfast Roundtable for Portland, PMI Chapter is held on the first Friday of every month
 Location: Mentor Graphics in Wilsonville. Contact Person: George Walker
 (Director of Breakfast Roundtables)

Contact Email: georgewalker0614@aol.com



Too Much Information Amber Nelson

One of the most important aspects of a project manager's job is keeping all the players "in the loop." For better or worse, we live in an age that provides us with the technological tools to share nearly everything with our clients, team members, vendors, consultants and stakeholders. It can be incredibly tempting to forward a team member's update e-mail to the whole team or fax a vendor's bid to the client. But frequently that behavior, which feels so efficient, litters in-boxes and eats up attention that should be focused on truly important information.

The most vital element in figuring out how much information is too much information is the initial decision about who needs what. Notice I used the word "need." Not, "who might be interested in the information, or who shared similar information with you on their project," or "who you want to know you solved a problem they couldn't." Who *needs* the information?

Yes, it may sound a little autocratic. And it may be a little uncomfortable at first to determine what someone else's needs are. But relax, it's not nearly as hard-headed as it sounds, and it gets easier as you go along.

Let's start with your clients. Aside from regularly scheduled updates, your clients need to know when you've reached critical milestones. They need to know that you are staying on budget. And they should be alerted if any unforeseen circumstances require their input. That's it.

Every time you send them a "for your information" e-mail, you are diminishing the attention they have for your truly important communications about budget or staffing. You are the project manager, and you should be able to handle the day-to-day decision making. If you aren't sending them information that they *need*, you shouldn't be send-

ing it.

If your clients *really* want to know how you arrived at the revised budget, they will ask and you can provide that data. If it's important to a particular client that they are included in staffing decisions, certainly include them. But don't assume they need all the information that crosses your desk.

As for your team members, they need any information that will help them do their jobs well. That may require a little more work on your part. Instead of drowning them with information, try dissecting lengthy documents and providing only the relevant parts to the appropriate team members. This will keep them abreast of any information they need without requiring that they dig through unnecessary pages.

Of course these "need to know" guidelines will require you to keep track of the big picture in case someone has the time and interest to ask for additional background. Once you're organized and have a long range vision of your project, these "need to know" methods will become easier.

With a little forethought, some self control and a healthy dash of patience, you can provide all the players in your project with the information they need, when they need it. At the same time, you will avoid bombarding them with details they don't really need and can't really use. As with any new management tool, it might take a little getting used to, but in the end, "need to know" is the way to go.