ISSIG Bits

March 2010

I.   Information Systems SIG Milestones

Our Mission

The mission of the PMI Information Systems SIG is to become *the* professional IS and IT project management organization of choice by providing the greatest value to current and prospective worldwide members through the delivery of quality and unique services and products in a cost-effective manner. The Mission will be accomplished through:

- Disseminating state-of-the-art project management practices.

- Member education.

- Members sharing and exchanging information.

- Championing professionalism of IS and IT project management.

- Serving as a networking and collaborative hub for all industries and all project management practitioner levels by supporting corporations, government agencies, academic institutions, subject matter experts, trainers, consultants, vendors, other components of PMI and other organizations that contribute to the profession of project management.

Looking for PDUs?

Many of our members earn Professional Development Units (PDUs) through the ISSIG to maintain their PMP certifications. From our Web site, click on Learn, Webinars or Podcasts to access a wealth of information and start earning those PDUs!

It's Time to Look Up – PDS2010:

IT'S TIME TO LOOK UP symbolizes a return to seeking what the future holds for Project Managers. As more companies are looking to the cloud for their future livelihood, shouldn't Project Managers also be looking toward their future? In the ever changing cycle of recession and growth, it is easy to lose sight of what is important.   It's time to invest some time in you.

PDS 2010 holds numerous opportunities to collaborate and learn with like-minded professionals. Choose from many speakers and workshops meant to maximize your growth as both a person and a professional. Also, earn PDU's in the process.

Join us at PDS 2010 in Seattle from 27th to 30th June, 2010 and receive up to 20 PDUs. Register online by visiting http://www.pds.pmi-issig.org/

ISSIG Bits

By Sanjay Swarup, PMP
PMI-ISSIG Chair
chair@pmi-issig.org

Dear PMI-ISSIG
Members:

In my previous message, I shared with you our new partnership with Roeder Consulting, Virtual Communities Program of PMI and benefits from volunteerism. All the three topics are linked directly to our 2010 slogan of 'Members First'. In this message, I will be sharing with you yet another new exciting partnership with Capella University, up-coming Professional Development Symposium of PMI-ISSIG from 27th to 30th June in Seattle and the rapidly changing world.

Capella University and PMI-ISSIG's new alliance is targeted to benefit our entire global membership. This new alliance with Capella University offers you several extraordinary benefits including:

- Tuition reduction for you and your immediate family members
- $500 new enrollment grant
- Scholarship opportunities
- Professional development webinars

To learn more about these benefits and Capella's full range of program offerings, you can visit their website www.capella.edu/pmiissig or contact an enrollment counselor at 1-888-227-9896, mentioning that you are a member of PMI-ISSIG. Capella, an accredited, fully online university, specializes in advance degrees for working adults. I hope you will take advantage of this new education partnership with the Capella University to enhance your education and career. More details are in this issue of ISSIG BITS.

Our Professional Developmental Symposium 2010 is being held from 27th June to 30th June, 2010, in the beautiful city of Seattle of the Washington State. The fully action packed professional sessions are designed to benefit all of you and provide you up to 20 PDUs. The first day keynote speaker is Eugene Bound, Chair PMI Board of Directors. Other three keynote speakers include Dr. James Brown, Randall Black and Bob Rosner. You are encouraged to register ASAP. The details are in the current edition of ISSIG BITS and PDS 2010 website http://www.pds.pmi-issig.org/

Change has been part of life since ages. It is nothing new but recently the rate of change is accelerating amazingly. We all are witnessing this swift change at our work place, in our family lives, in our neighbourhoods and in all spheres of daily lives. Resisting changes are part of human behaviour but mostly we have no other choice, but to accept the changes. Things around us are changing so fast that some earlier generations haven't seen them in centuries. Things that we cannot change, let us accept them gracefully, willingly and proactively.

As part of changing times, the virtual teams are becoming order of the day in the IS/IT project management. The resources are spread all over the globe, in various time zones. It is now given that we do not meet even once, face-to-face many team members, during the project life cycle.

Major changes are being witnessed in the top global economies too. Though almost all economies have been impacted by the economic downturn, however, not all have taken the blow equally. Some economies in the east are growing exceedingly well, speculating a major shift in the economic centre of the universe. This will surely impact our day time jobs and careers.

Changes to the environment are inevitable. Staying green in these changing times is extremely important for all of us. Let us leave this planet, as we have inherited. Small or big, all good tips to keep the environment friendly are worth the consideration. Let us all do our bit. At PMI-ISSIG, all our publications are now electronic, including ISSIG Review and ISSIG BITS.

I would like to keep two way communications with you. Your feedback is extremely important to PMI-ISSIG. Let us keep in touch using LinkedIn, Face book or other social networking mediums. You can email me too at chair@pmi-issig.org.

With best regards,

Sanjay Swarup, PMP, P.Eng.
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2010 PMI-ISSIG Theme: "Members First"

III.   From the Editor

**By Tolitha Lewis, PMP
PMI-ISSIG Director of
Communications**
communications@pmi-
issig.org

Welcome to your March 2010 issue of the
Bits!

We are able to provide this information thanks to the
many volunteers within our group. Thanks to everyone
who helps contribute to all of the efforts of the
PMIISSIG community.

We love to include information written by our
members! It's a great way to share your experience
and provide critical value to the entire PMI-ISSIG

community. PDUs are awarded to authors as follows:

- ISSIG Review articles selected for
  publication earn 15 PDUs!
- Bits articles allow you the opportunity to
  be read by our thousands of members;
  however, they do not qualify for PDUs.

We urge you to document your expertise and
send us an article to share in the Bits and/or
Reviews. All articles should be in an MS Word
format and can be submitted to
communications@pmi-issig.org

Remember that you can read past issues of the
Bits and ISSIG Review on our Web site under
Documents. Visit our Web site at www.pmi-issig.org
You will be glad you did.

IV.   Articles and Contributions

**Selling Soft Skills to the
Boss**

**By Tres Roeder, MBA, PMP
www.roederconsulting.com**

Projects often are not worth the journey. Numerous
research studies show that anywhere from about
35% to 70% of projects fail. Why? Project
managers with underdeveloped people skills are a
leading cause.

We're talking about communicating, earning buy in,
team building and leading (yes, you are a leader!).
According to "Researching the Value of Project
Management", a multi-year study on the drivers of
project success, firms that support people skills
training are more likely to deliver project value. This
point is so important it's worth repeating …
statistically valid research shows that firms that
invest heavily in people skills training are more likely
to have projects that succeed. It's directly
correlated.

Yet, soft skills training is often the first line item to go
when budgets are tight. Ironically, the human side
of project management is often *more difficult* when
times are tough. Nerves are frayed as employees
become more concerned about their jobs, families

and responsibilities. The stakes of project success
are elevated as profit margins decline and
competition heats up. The result is often a wide
range of difficult human behavior. Such behaviors
can only be managed with effective people skills.

So, how can you convince the boss that people skills
are worth the investment? Well, you could sit down
and explain the research linking people skills to
project success. You could point out the increase in
emotions during difficult times. This might work.
However, research shows that decision makers are
much more likely to adopt an idea if it's their own. In
other words, *telling* the boss the answer is a lower
probability route to buy in than *guiding* the boss
along a path towards the answer. Fascinating new
research shows people receive a chemical rush
similar to adrenalin when they figure out the answer.

Here's what the savvy project manager can do to
sell the boss on people skills. Tell a story about
someone who saved the day with their people skills.
Everyone can relate to a good story. Maybe the
boss will say, "*hmm, people skills are important so I
need to get people trained*." Or, highlight a recent
situation where someone's emotions got out of
hand. Point out that traditional project management
technical skills do not address how to deal with
these emotions. Ask the boss for some ideas on
how to better equip project managers to deal with

these types of situations. How about some people skills training?

Be creative in how you plant the seeds of understanding. Also, be patient. It may take time for the seeds to take root. Along the journey, be encouraged by the fact that this very exercise of selling the boss is making you better at managing the human side of change. Now, there's a journey worth taking.

The Washtub of Unemployment – Let's take a bath together

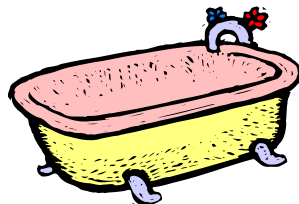**By Albert J. Cacace, MBA, PMP**
education@southfloridapmi.org

Imagine the job market as a bathtub…

Bathtub = Job Market

Spout = Layoffs

Drain = Opportunity

Water = Workers

Therefore, water level = number of people unemployed

And let's begin with the following assumptions…

1. Water near the top (around a vortex) swirls into the drain faster than water at lower levels.

2. Water coming from the spout and into the tub is a complex mix of unemployed workers. Some are skilled, unskilled, young, old, male, female, etc.

3. And let's say that e*vaporation, or* water vapors, leaving the tub are people who leave the workforce and do not seek further employment…some perhaps by choice, some not.

You may have noticed that some folks go straight from the spout into the drain. Perhaps they have resigned from a job to immediately take another, or they became self-employed, or maybe the water entering the tub is slower than the rate of drainage (inferring great economy and opportunities abound!).

And so, for the most part, workers who travel down into the drain the fastest are those who are swept into the vortex that forms around the drain. Workers that make up the topmost layer of water, and are nearest the vortex, are hired the fastest.

The amount of water in the tub is a function of the health of the economy, and so rising water in the tub means rising unemployment. Right? If the economy is under your control, well, I bet you don't need a job. The rest of us have no control over the economy, or the amount of water in the tub, and rising water means more competition for limited space near the drain.

Vice versa, when water is draining from the tub faster than it is coming in from the spout, competition for the drain (jobs) is decreasing. Yeah!

Here are three suggested methods for getting sucked into the drain:

Method 1

Get yourself **near the vortex.** This requires skillful swimming, which calls for tenacity, stamina, constant networking, savvy communications skills, and impressive interviewing skills. Essentially, this is about getting to know the right folks in the process of looking for a job. Required here is a combination of effective and persuasive communications skills; *how you are perceived* is key. Some activities that offer training and networking opportunities include Toastmasters International, volunteering for charities, and attending socials. Go where the people who are likely to refer you to a job are likely to hang out—but don't assume that you know what this is; challenge yourself by exploring new territory. Get out there and learn how to communicate and network effectively with *every kind of people*!

Method 2

Get to the **top water-layer** in the tub. This means buoyancy and low viscosity. This requires relevant and current job experience, relevant and current education, and maybe a new certification or two. Also, get involved in something that you can put on your resume to demonstrate you are a life-long giver and learner. Maybe you can volunteer your time to teach others how to do something that will make their lives better. I look for these things on résumés.

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Method 3

Rely on dumb luck. Let the currents take you where they may. Sometimes where you land in the tub and how well you float, when you exit the spout, determines *when* you get hired and *where* you will work next.

You can't control dumb luck but you can control methods 1 and 2, which is essentially about contributing to the manufacture of your own luck. Either way be sure to apply both methods…get buoyant (method 1) and swim to the vortex (method 2).

Many State and local governments have unemployment offices with programs that provide financial assistance toward training, offer counseling, and job search tools. Also seek advice from associations that provide products and services to the industry you are targeting.

Having said all this, I personally know a few highly skilled and motivated unemployed folks right now that I would hire in a heartbeat (if I had an opportunity for them). They are applying these methods, and yet they have been unemployed for a long while. This may be a function of method 3 and just a matter of time in the tub. If this sounds like you, don't give up! While you are looking for work, continue to enhance your buoyancy and swimming skills by taking courses and getting involved. What else is there to do? It certainly can't hurt.

And finally, if you are fortunate enough to be employed in this challenging economy, start applying Method 2 right now. I don't wish this on you, but this may give you the head start you need in the event you find yourself swimming in the washtub!

Project Success Plans – Planning for Success

By Jeff Hodgkinson and Gary Hamilton
http://www.projecttimes.com/

<u>Note</u>: This article appeared in the March 2010 edition of **projecttimes**

. *"A Project Success Plan can be a platform for ensuring all project stakeholders start off, and continue on, the right footing."*

Setting up projects to succeed in the view of the customer/stakeholder is a critical part of the Project Manager's role. We suggest that, as part of project planning activities in the early stages of your project, you should hold a Project Success Plan (PSP) meeting with all key team members to agree on the project's goals, and to discuss the emotional success factors that will ensure the team gels successfully to deliver the required outcomes.

A Project Success Plan (PSP) is different from a Project Management Plan (PMP), sometimes referred to as a Project Execution Plan (or PEP). A PMP is a typically produced by the Project Manager to describe how the project will be managed and controlled in its delivery/execution phase, whereas the PSP is a documented meeting convened by the Project Manager to discuss and agree "what success means" to all key stakeholders. The PSP (like a PMP/PEP) should draw from project artifacts such as the Project Charter and the Customer Brief.

Project Success Plans can Help the Team to "Gel"

Have you ever managed or been involved in a project where, at one point or another, you felt that you were not on the "same page" as other team members? Ensuring everyone on a project team is continually pulling in the same direction can be a challenge. A Project Success Plan can help you to set a solid foundation for stakeholder interactions throughout the project, and to ensure you can detect and rectify any occurrences where stakeholder views and actions start to deviate off plan. In order to ensure everyone starts off on the right foot, it is important to kick off your project communications strategy properly. By this we mean, ensuring that everyone's interpretation of success and their assumptions about the project are aired and discussed in an open group forum, which can be documented and evaluated in a Pareto-type chart format to indicate importance. This is the essence of the Project Success Plan.

The Project Success Plan is a communications planning tool in the project manager's toolkit to get all key project stakeholders on the same page, and understanding each other's prerogatives and drivers for success. This is not always an easy task, since there are likely to be a range of drivers and

interpretations of project success amongst your stakeholders. For example, team members who are recipients of the end solution/product may have very different views and expectations of what project success means to those who are focused on delivering the product. It is also likely that some (or maybe all) team members in your project will be working together to achieve a specific objective for the first time. Indeed, the number of stakeholders who have worked together on projects before is an interesting statistic for the project manager to take note of at a project's start. A Project Success Plan meeting should aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Serve as an ice breaker for team members to get to know a little about each other

- Discuss and agree the basis for setting the criteria for achieving success

- Team members agree and commit to their roles and responsibilities for the project

- Everyone should understand each other's personality and modus operandi

- Everyone's assumptions about the project and their drivers should be aired, discussed and documented

- A win/win philosophy and a collaborative approach throughout the project needs to be fostered

- The team should discuss their collective lessons learned from previous projects/experiences.

The points above are all about communication and common understanding. By understanding how to handle your key/extended teams' communications with each other, stakeholders can avoid accidental and sometimes costly mistakes in communicating information and decisions during the project's life. For example, ensuring that people discuss how meetings, reports and controls should be conducted will help set reporting expectations (e.g. if one person thinks project status reports are "a waste of time", find out why and talk it through).

Because of the emotional focus of a Project Success Plan meeting, it should be held face-to-face whenever possible, however this may not be possible for smaller projects - particularly those that involve geographically disperse stakeholders. In such situations, a virtual conference meeting may be the most practical option. This requires special emphasis from the Project Manager in facilitating the meeting to validate everyone's opinions frequently, ensure good feedback, and level set expectations for the project, since the important signs of body language will be missing.

The Timing of a Project Success Plan.

A Project Success Plan should be completed early in the project's life, as soon as all key members of the project team are in place. Key members are those with a material interest and/or delivery focus in the project. The timing for holding a Project Success Plan meeting can typically be after initial set-up works are complete and the project reaches the start of its detailed planning phase. If stakeholders change during the course of the project, the project manager should include reviewing and updating the PSP with the new stakeholders as part of the Resource Planning.

A Project Success Plan can also be a tool the project manager uses to keep the team focused and engaged. When stakeholders are suffering from project fatigue, the project manager can refer back to the Project Success Plan and use it to motivate the team by reviewing the reasons for the project and what success means to each person.

How should a Project Success Plan be structured; Do All Projects Need One?

All projects will benefit from a Project Success Plan meeting, because it is a mechanism to ensure the following aspects are agreed to:

1. Do we all agree on the core reasons for the project's existence?

2. Are we all on the same page? Can we agree how to work together (including our roles and responsibilities, team meetings and communication protocols, team member working styles, governance processes and expectations)?

3. Are our assumptions about the technical aspects of the project (such as the design, scope, build methodology, work breakdown structure, schedule, budget and method of managing change) clear?

Large, complex projects have many different stakeholders, often spread across many geographic

locations. A Project Success Plan for a large project may benefit from being led by a skilled facilitator, and it may need to last several days. Small projects with less complexity will typically not require the same level of detail.

The structure of a Project Success Plan meeting should ensure the emotional success factors are fully aired. It needs to bear relevance to the core Deliverables of the project regarding scope, budget, schedule and quality. An example of a Project Success Plan meeting agenda is shown below (the nature of your project's Project Success Plan agenda will be tailored to the project):

Agenda Item
1. Project Introductions and Executive Summary
2. What is the definition of "project success"?
3. Our Project Methodology
4. Project Fundamentals, Principles & Key Drivers
5. Project Assumptions by us all, and how we all work
6. Project Scope, WBS, Schedule, Quality and Budget
7. Project meeting, governance and review strategy
8. Project Organization and Role Definitions
9. Communications Management strategy
10. Tracking Benefits after Go Live

Conclusions

A Project Success Plan is a mechanism to achieve the following positive outcomes for your project:

1. Ensure all assumptions about the project, and the meaning of success, are aired and discussed, and any misunderstandings and/or disagreements are resolved early in the project's lifecycle.

2. Ensure project team members get to know how to work with each other so that communications throughout the project are efficient and productive

3. Assist the project manager in keeping the team focused and engaged, especially on projects of long durations.

Done well, a Project Success Plan meeting can help project managers and the entire team understand how to work together successfully, communicate well with each other, and be a tool to keep the team focused and engaged for the duration of the project.

Planning for success increases your likelihood of a successful project outcome. It is always important to ensure the "facts" of project scope, schedule, design, quality and budget are given due

consideration. It is equally important to ensure the emotional aspects of project teamwork - team member expectations, their way of working, their personal aspirations for the project and their assumptions on how the project will unfold - are managed. A Project Success Plan is a method to bring out these emotional aspects. It can be a good platform to ensure the whole team continually pulls in the same direction to make your project a success.

Conclusion

According to Schwaber and Beedle, Scrum methodology independent of any engineering practice, can be adopted in any organization. Scrum master, developers, testers, business owners, customers plays a vital role in successful implementation of SCRUM. Scrum can be adopted both in a new project and an existing project. Scrum salient feature like: Iterative development, high level accountability, small teams, Regular builds, Configuration management, and frequent monitoring, helps in developing a robust system.

IT'S TIME TO LOOK UP is the theme for this year's event. It symbolizes a return to promise the future holds for Project Managers by encouraging attendees to invest in their future. The unique array of keynotes, workshops, and presentations provide an opportunity to earn up to 20 PDU's.

"I am very excited to offer PDS 2010 to our members," states Theresa Bivens, PDS 2010 Program Manager. "We have confirmed a wide-variety of topics that will interest everyone; from the rapid-fire change of IT in the new economy, to leading projects through to successful completion."

Eugene Bounds, PMP, Dr. James Brown PhD, PE, PMP, Randall T. Black, P. Eng., PMP and Bob Rosner will speak as the keynotes for the four-day event. Keynote topics include; the value of project management, managing project teams and "Kill What's Ugly While It's Young™ and Other Unspeakable Project Management Truths."

"The depth and breadth of this year's content is outstanding. We are fortunate to have so many talented and well-known speakers come and speak at PDS 2010," comments Dianne Johnson, PDS 2010 Sessions Lead. "The theme, IT'S TIME TO LOOK UP, really captures the essence of what this conference offers. The attendees are in for four days of exciting topics relevant to their needs."

PDS 2010 will be held June 27-30 in Seattle, WA and offers up to 20 PDU's. It combines efforts of the Information Systems Special Interest Group (PMI-ISSIG), Puget Sound Chapter and other Region 1 chapters. For more information, please visit pds.pmi-issig.org or email pds.registration@pmi-issig.org. To learn how your members can earn 10% off regularly priced admission by advertising our event, please email pds.sponsor@pmi-issig.org.

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V. ISSIG Editorial Calendar & Contribution Guidelines

The ISSIG Editorial Calendar is a work-in-progress as we further streamline the publication process, better serving our members. Please remember your ISSIG staffers and contributing authors are all volunteers with busy careers of their own. A new calendar is under development and will be published when it becomes available.

ISSIG Review and Bits Contribution Guidelines: ISSIG cannot accept document manuscripts formatted as image files, so please send all manuscripts formatted in MS Word or equivalent, to **communications@pmi-issig.org***. To facilitate editing, graphics should be included as separate files as well as embedded within the document. ISSIG Review articles are typically 1,500 to 2,500 words in length and provide useful advice or guidance to ISSIG members.*

ISSIG Bits articles are typically 500 to 750 words in length and provide similar value or entertainment to ISSIG members. (Word counts are rough guidelines only.) See "Copyright and Distribution Information" below, for more specifics on ISSIG Bits articles.ISSIG Review articles selected for publication earn 15 PDUs! Bits articles do not earn PDUs at this time.

VI. Contact Information

PMI-ISSIG's Membership Service Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:45 pm EST, excluding holidays to answer your questions about membership and PMI-ISSIG resources. You can reach us at:

Mailing Address:	Other:
PMI-ISSIG	**Toll-Free, US and Canada:** 1-877-667-8707
109 VIP Drive, Suite 220	**FAX:** 724-935-1560
Wexford, PA 15090	**e-Mail:** info@pmi-issig.org
USA	**Web site:** www.pmi-issig.org

Attention: Are you an ISSIG member and not receiving your monthly electronic Bits newsletter? Sign in on the ISSIG Homepage, at http://www.pmi-issig.org*, and click on "Newsletter Signup." Not receiving the ISSIG Review? Visit the PMI Homepage and update your personal profile. The Review distribution list is based on your contact information on file with PMI.*

Remember: ISSIG receives its member contact information from PMI. Therefore, all changes to your member contact information must be made through PMI. E-mail your details to PMI. Alternatively, you can login to PMI's Web site and change it in the member section.

VII. Copyright and Distribution Information

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