ISSIG Bits

April 2010

For the latest information in Information Systems and Technology Project Management, visit http://www.pmi-issig.org/. The Information Systems SIG (ISSIG) dedicates itself to promoting the value of project management in Information Systems and Technology. It serves as a forum for communicating project management knowledge, principles, and practices by bringing practical solutions to our members and the industry worldwide.

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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 30 Jun, 2010 and receive up to 20 PDUs. Register online by visiting http://www.pds.pmi-issig.org/

II. Greetings from the Chair

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

Dear PMI-ISSIG Members:

In my previous messages, I have shared with you our new partnership details with Roeder Consulting, Capella University, up-coming Professional Development Symposium of PMI-ISSIG from 27th to 30th June in Seattle, virtual communities' initiative and the changes in the rapidly changing world. In this message, I will be reinforcing the importance of attending the ISSIG sponsored Professional Development Symposium and my thoughts on the leadership in project management.

Our Professional Developmental Symposium 2010 is being held from 27th June to 30th June, 2010 on the west coast of USA, in the beautiful city of Seattle in Washington State. This event is sponsored by the PMI-ISSIG. The registration numbers are climbing fast. If you have not registered, it is time to act soon. The action packed professional sessions are designed to benefit all of you and provide you up to 20 PDUs. The first day's keynote speaker is Eugene Bound, Chair PMI Board of Directors. Other 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 IS BITS and PDS 2010 website http://www.pds.pmi-issig.org/

Leadership in project management is vital to the success of any project, program or portfolio. The difference lies in the results. As a leader you have the ability to shape the outcome. Even in the normal circumstances, resultant end product and project parameters are greatly influenced by the leadership. The costs stays within the budget, the milestones are met, the scope changes are controlled and quality meets the stakeholder expectations.

Project leadership makes a huge difference in case of a crisis, while dealing with unknown challenges. It is in these circumstances that the project leadership can still drive the project to a success and avoid failures. The documented risk mitigation strategies help in some cases while in other situations, out of the box thinking rally round. A strong determined leadership can still stay on course or be flexible to orchestrate controlled changes. The leadership is put to a real world test during some project implementations.

Assertiveness plays an important role while dealing with the emergencies. At times there is a need to be flexible to amend the project plans according to the situation but when conditions demand, staying erect helps. A balanced combination of both is needed. Assertiveness backed by structured facts and possible solutions will help tide over the crisis.

During previous months strength of ISSIG membership is doing very well and shows your continued support to our products and services. We are represented in one hundred countries. We are the largest component of PMI and a unique global group of IS/IT project professionals.

Your feedback is extremely important to PMI-ISSIG. Let us keep in touch. You can email me at chair@pmi-issig.org.

With best regards,

Sanjay Swarup, PMP, P.Eng.
Chair, PMI-ISSIG
chair@pmi-issig.org
http://www.pmi-issig.org

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 April 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

Scrum Terminology

By Pavan Kumar Gorakavi, M.S, M.B.A, G.M.C.P, C.A.P.M
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Scrum is an innovative software agile methodology which has gained significant importance in information technology. The term Scrum is originally derived from a strategy in Rugby, "getting an out of play ball back into the game". Takeuchi and Nonaka were the first to discuss about Scrum methodology and its variants in product development with smaller teams.

Scrum methodology can be implemented in three phases: Planning, development and closure phase. Life cycle of Scrum methodology is illustrated in figure 1. The first phase relies on planning. In this phase, Scrum players decide on the list of deliverables targeted for the Sprint. Scrum players includes Scrum master, Business Owners, marketing, team leads. Scrum methodology provides flexibility in changing the requirements at a later part of the game. This particular characteristic helps in building a product using a trial and error prototype.

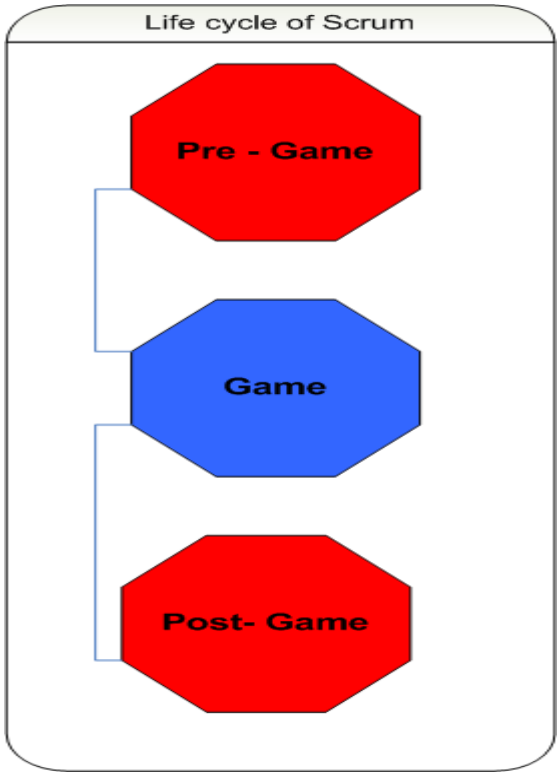

Figure 1: Life cycle of Scrum

Product Backlog sheet is used as reference while planning for the Sprint. Product Backlog is a list of features or service request or change request needs to be accomplished in order to achieve business needs. In Sprint planning meeting, all Scrum players identify the requirements, prioritize and estimate the level of effort.

The product backlog list is updated periodically with new requirements, service requests and change requests. Effort estimation is performed at a higher level in Scrum planning meetings. Effort estimation is iterative in nature. Sprint size, resource availability, dependency with other Scrum teams, risk factors are considered in planning phase, which is also called as ***pre-game phase***. Various environmental variables like resource availability, technological challenges, system stability, expertise, and any other dependent factors must be considered during Sprint commitment.

After initial planning phase is completed, Scrum players have a detailed outline about Scrum cycle term, tasks to be accomplished, resources performing on various tasks and other deadlines. Scrum cycle is also called as Sprint, which usually varies between 3-8 weeks. Development phase is iterative in nature.

In development phase, Scrum team gets the prioritized tasks after sprint planning meeting, players break down the higher level tasks into detail tasks and formulate them in a detailed task list called Burn down charts. Burn down charts have all the necessary details about tasks, estimated hours, daily updates, load factor, and project velocity. Daily status meeting also called as stand-up meeting is organized every day to track day-to-day status. Task updates are tracked in burn down charts. The development phase is generally considered as black box because of the unpredictability of the results. Factors like application dependencies, project dependencies, under estimation of tasks, requirement modifications, technological challenges and resource challenges can influence the results of the software development life cycle. Each sprint follows conventional software development life cycle: analysis, design, implement, and testing.

Unlike conventional software development lifecycle methodology, architecture and design are part of this development phase. A product can be developed in multi sprints or by multi teams based on the complexity of the project. Development phase being iterative in nature, any show stoppers faced during the sprint cycle has to be discussed among different scrum players: Scrum master, Team leads, business owners, marketing folks, and customer support folks.

Once the product has achieved necessary maturity, there will be a scenario where there are no new user stories from the business or product owners, then we can conclude that the cycle is in closure or post-game phase.

Conclusion

According to Schwaber and Beedle, Scrum methodology independent of any engineering practice, can be adopted in any organization. Scrum can be adopted both in a new project as well as an existing project. Scrum salient features like: Iterative development, high level accountability, small teams, Regular builds, Configuration management, and frequent monitoring, help in developing a robust system.

Pave the way for Innovation

By Dr. James Brown PhD., PMP President SEBA Solutions Inc
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Note: This article appeared in the October 2009 issue of PMI Community Post

Everyone can agree that organizational innovation is a valuable asset that's necessary to compete in today's hyper-competitive business environment. There are a lot of management theories about how you can create an innovative workforce or project team, but it's as simple as setting the right expectations, removing obstacles and having a little patience.

Set the Expectation for Innovation

Leaders that challenge the organization and make it known that they expect new ideas will get new ideas. Setting this expectation, however, means that you need to give those new ideas full consideration when you receive them.

A lot of companies prematurely discount ideas or are too busy to properly evaluate them. This communicates that ideas are not valued, and eventually the organization as whole not only stops submitting new ideas, but stops thinking of them altogether.

If your organization wants new ideas, you should set this expectation in writing. For example, you can require everyone to submit one new idea annually as part of their employee performance plans. Or, as a project leader, you can set this expectation with your team.

These ideas can be for new opportunities for your organization, or to improve an existing facet. For example, people see problems in their organizations all the time, both inside and outside of their job description. This requirement causes them to not just see the problems, though, but to investigate at least one and propose a viable solution. Whether it is in your formal job description or not, though, you should take this requirement as your own personal challenge.

Remove the Obstacles that Prevent Innovation

The number one obstacle to innovation is overworking people. When people are overworked, not only do their productivity decline and their mistakes increase, but they become reactive thinkers versus reflective thinkers—simply trying to stay afloat, rather than thinking clearly and creatively to solve problems.

Innovation cannot be forced into a compressed amount of time. You must allocate time for incubation, or the development and planning of ideas. This works best when problems and challenges are defined with clarity, and this clarity often does not exist when your team is in a constant "fire-fighting" environment.

The second obstacle that prevents innovation is bureaucracy. The more management levels required for approval of a new idea, the greater the likelihood that it won't happen.

Even though some management structures appear to be flat, when you start to factor in steering committees and boards, the number of approval layers can be surprisingly high. The biggest negative consequence of this is when people stop submitting ideas out of frustration.

You can whine about bureaucracy, or you can take action. One proven method is to collect data that documents its impact, such as lost time or lost opportunities due to delayed decisions. Over time this data becomes a stronger and stronger impetus for change that reduces or eliminates bureaucracy.

Once the expectation for innovation has been set and obstacles have been removed, the last ingredient is patience. Just like the farmer has set the conditions that foster a successful crop, leaders set the conditions to facilitate innovation with these two steps. When you do, innovation will happen naturally and automatically—and when it does, you will not be able to stop it.

Realizing Benefits – It's What Projects Are For

By Jeff Hodgkinson and Gareth Byatt
http://www.projecttimes.com/

Note: This article appeared in the **projecttimes**

We believe a simple methodology can be applied to attain Benefits Realization. You can achieve true project success by ensuring that:

- Project benefits are clear, concise and relevant in 'value creation' terms from the Business Case onwards, and that they directly relate to your organizational strategy
- People are held accountable for achieving these benefits
- Benefits stated in a Business Case are actively measured throughout the entire initiative, i.e.
  - During the project lifecycle (particularly if it is released in phases)
  - After the project is closed
  - When the product/output starts to be used
- Appropriate action is taken if required to alter direction (i.e. the organization changes course and the intended project benefits are no longer relevant)

Simple Process Flow for Project Benefits Realization

It Starts with a Good Business Case!

In the project management community, it is generally accepted that a project starts in earnest once a business case has been agreed to and various other initiation tasks are complete. The question now is, "Does your business case remain a core reference document throughout the project's lifecycle?" or does it go into the project files, to be reviewed only if, say, key stakeholders request a change order or when project auditors visit?

Business cases vary in size and complexity. A business case, and the process to agree to it, should include the following elements relating to benefits realization:

- Clearly show how the initiative contributes to the organizational strategy including the core reason for the initiative. There must be measurable benefits that specifically relate to the organization's goals and objectives
- People must be named as accountable for ensuring the benefits are achieved (and they must know and accept this accountability)
- People must agree to these benefits being monitored over time, with appropriate adjustments made when necessary

Three Main Points

1. Contributing to the Organizational Strategy

Circulate your proposed business case benefits with all key stakeholders to ensure they "stack up", and a 'governance' control group should oversee and approve key project decisions regarding agreed benefits, including business case approval. Remember, it can be all too easy to inadvertently omit certain stakeholders from the loop. From the beginning, ensure benefits monitoring is built into your project - it will keep you on track to deliver what your customer needs. It is most useful to include the strategy for tracking benefits in the business case. This can be high-level or it can be a detailed explanation, depending on the circumstances. One word of warning: benefits tracking can mean many things, and can be subject to lack of clarity without the right level of rigor being applied. The sample extract from a business case below shows benefits, accountabilities, metrics (if applicable) and the proposed timeframe for realization:

Aim & Objectives of the INSERT NAME initiative

The aims of the initiative are to:

- Insert here.

Justification/Rationale for project investment:

Benefit	Accountable person	Metric	Timeframe
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		
	INSERT NAME HERE		

When assessing benefits, and following through in the post-delivery phase, one should talk to people across the organization vs. taking one person's opinion as the complete story. Ensure that the focus is on creating value, and that it is realistic. For example, drawing up "use cases" of real-life scenarios of how people will perform activities with the new deliverables in place can help to define the realistic benefits. This is what may be termed "active planning" for change, rather than "passive planning" as it means you will understand the true value creation process. It can help ratify the scope and intentions of your project, which should mean the people nominated as accountable for achieving the benefits are confident of their delivery (and hence they should be comfortable in signing up to them).

A business case may not always state specific financial benefits. Projects can be charted to contribute to a strategic objective of an organization where:

- Clear-cut financial returns are not directly evident.
- Are Implemented as control measures in response to statutory requirements or legislation.

It is wise to include financial metrics in a Business Case only if they can be substantiated; financial justifications should not be included if you cannot justify and measure them (but track financial improvement in future if possible).

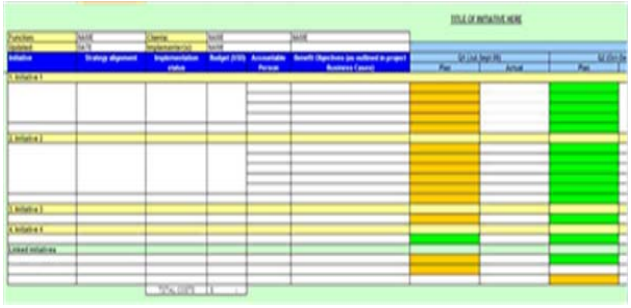
2. Assign Accountable People for the Benefits in your Business Case

The governance group you establish for your project plays an important part in ensuring benefits are measured once the project is closed and the operations or sustaining teams start to use the deliverable.

Assigning key people as accountable for realizing stated benefits should give a business case the importance it needs to ensure those benefits are traceable. The key to success is to make sure the benefits are realistic and measurable.

To link business case benefits with ongoing benefits realization, we have found it useful to clearly state in the business case that a benefits realization plan will be implemented to track the proposed benefits over the initiative's total lifecycle. We have found it can be helpful to include the proposed benefits realization plan tracking mechanism as an addendum to the business case.

One example format (many exist) is shown below:



Click here for larger view

3. Monitor Project Benefits Over Time

Successful project delivery is an important first step to achieving business benefits - completing a project on time, budget and to expected quality levels sets the platform for ongoing success. However, what we are most concerned about in benefits realization is to ensure the deliverable that the project provides generates benefits as intended (or perhaps new, unforeseen ones) over its lifecycle.

Sometimes project deliverables need to be adjusted before the project is complete or at a point in time after project closure. For example, as circumstances change, unexpected external impacts arise, or new opportunities result in a change of organizational strategy. This is often true for long duration projects. Such changes need to be fed into the benefits realization plan, so that it is kept up to date and is ready to be used as soon as the project closes.

We have found that benefits realization plans can be structured in "layers" - that is, specific project benefits can be measured regularly and aggregated at a program and/or portfolio level for overall benefits assessment and tracking.

Conclusions

The realization of project benefits can be considered to be dependent on the following five principle factors:

1. Business case benefits should to be clear and concise, and relate to the organizational strategy
2. Give your business case importance by assigning the people who will be accountable for achieving stated benefits in your business case (after obtaining authority to do so). Make sure the business case signatories agree and understand that benefits will be tracked and corrective actions will be taken in the event of a change or direction, or failure to realize the stated benefits
3. The benefits stated in a business case should be actively measured through continuous participative engagement after project closure in a benefits realization plan
4. Action should be taken if a benefit is not being realized (for example, if the organization changes course or the project deliverables are no longer relevant)
5. Lastly, giving people a continued focus on benefits throughout a project helps keep it on track.

Register Soon!!!!

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.

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.com**. *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

The ISSIG Bits is available to members from our Web site: www.pmi-issig.org.