EXTRA LAZY!



Peter Taylor

The lazy project manager

Celebrating 5 amazingly successful years of one of the best-loved books on project management

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Dedication

To all the wonderful people out there in project management land who have helped me on my 5 year journey, I can't possible repay your support and encouragement but I can at least keep trying.

To my friends, family and fans – thank you, you have been amazing.

To my various publishers – any chance of a royalty increase?

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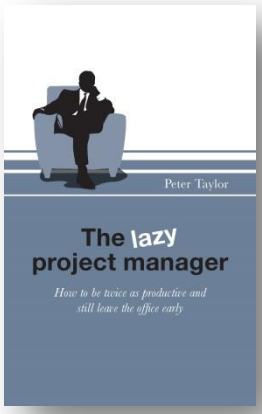
Disclaimer

Readers should note that this is a free book put together to celebrate 5 years of productive laziness and as such it has not been professionally edited or formatted and therefore probably has more than one typo and doesn't look as pretty as it might but I am hoping that it will be taken in the spirit in which it was both written and shared.

The First 5 Lazy Years

In which the author goes on a lot about how the book came about and what has happened in the last 5 years to him and the book, and general ramblings about the end of Monty Python and how he has had to buy a new comfy chair as the last one somehow got all worn out…

Welcome; you are warmly invited to join me for a celebration of a major milestone in my life – 5 years ago I submitted the manuscript for 'The Lazy Project Manager' to my publishers and the whole 'Lazy' journey began for real.



I did wonder how exactly I should commemorate this momentous (to me anyway) event and decided in the end to take a quick look at what you, the general public, were saying about 'The Lazy Project Manager' now in 2014 exactly 5 years on from the original manuscript being written and to share some of my more recent thoughts on the world of project management.

To be honest it doesn't feel like 5 years since I locked myself in my home office and, with pieces of paper and post-it notes of ideas and thoughts stuck all over the walls, I wrote and wrote and wrote. 8 days later the first

rough draft was done and I sat back, drained my final can of Red Bull[1] and considered my 'masterpiece' (well all authors think that way…). It would be many months later that the real test would come, that of what the general public thought, but here we are with thousands of copies sold (and still selling – as I write this it is currently at #25 in the US Amazon charts Amazon US for example and has been translated in to German and Portuguese so far) and so I think it fair to say it can be described as a 'success'.

And it is not just a book now – it has evolved and grown in to a series of offerings that promote the theme of 'Productive Laziness':

- It is a free Podcast on iTunes – you can listen/subscribe here iTunes Podcast
- It is a free Newsletter – you can subscribe on my website Subscribe
- It is a free Blog Lazy PM Blog
- And I have now delivered over 200 presentations around the world in over 20 countries Lazy PM Presentations
- It is a eLearning training course through RMC Project Training Lazy PM eLearning
- And you can even get Lazy PM goodies at Lazy Clothing

As well as all this thousands of you follow me on Twitter @thelazypm, or are connected to me on LinkedIn Profile - if you aren't yet then it is time to follow and link!

Plus it has led to many other books, both 'Lazy' ones and other topics, sponsorship, branding, PMOs etc.

Much has happened in the last 5 years, my own 'comfy' chair is close to being replaced due to excessive wear and another one is on order as I write, my comic heroes 'Monty Python' have just completed their last ever shows and will retire, and I am no longer in a real job but out there in the fun but scary world of independent speaker, trainer and consultant.

So thank you once again for an amazing 5 years – here's to the next 5 years and to a 10 year celebration of all that is 'Productively Lazy' in 2019

Peter

[1] Other energy drinks are available of course it is just that I don't like them

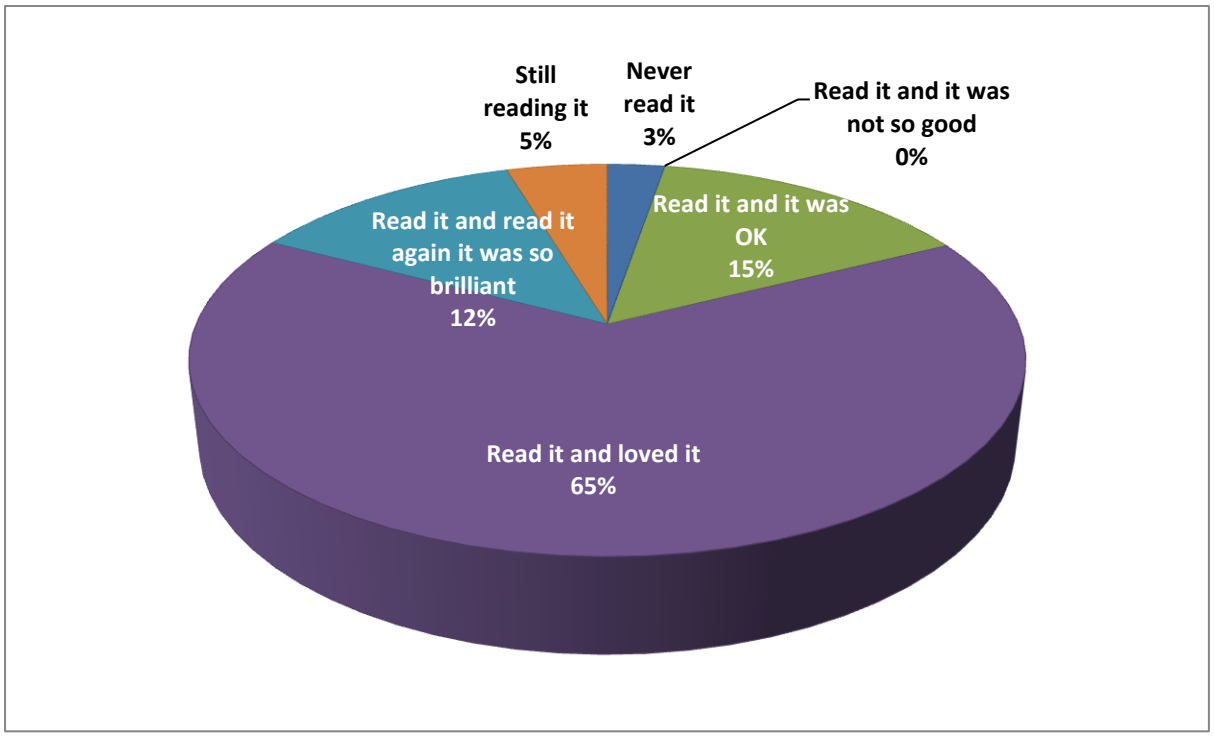


Graphic produced at the Thomson Reuters PM Unconference in 2012, London

The Lazy Book

In which the author shamelessly revisits some of the reviews the book has received and the comments that many people around the world have kindly made and continue to make, especially recently in the survey that he ran just to check that his audience was still out there and listening...

I asked, through a survey of nearly 200 people, for thoughts about the book and gathered some very pleasing feedback:



77% read and loved it or thought it was nearer the 'brilliant' end of the enjoyment scale which was fantastic- thank you! Commenting on why people liked it I received the following:

'Clear and concise, easy to read and understand, very different from any other PM book offering'

'It was a fun reminder of what I should be doing – thank you'

And

'Took an approach to practical project management and wasn't afraid to talk about failures and learned lessons'

'It made me laugh out loud'

Of course I know not everybody loved it, or even liked it. The very first review I ever received still hurts a bit:

'Unfortunately the author of this book is truly lazy. He talks about his unsuccessful projects and the lessons he learned from them as he continually brags about retreating to be lazy in his comfy chair… I strongly disagree with Taylor's negative viewpoints and management styles … I do not recommend this book'

Fortunately for my ego and career the good reviews far outweigh the bad ones, most recent ones on Amazon include:

'Great book' – 5 stars

'Easy to read' – 5 stars

'Well written, easy read, practical advice' – 4 stars

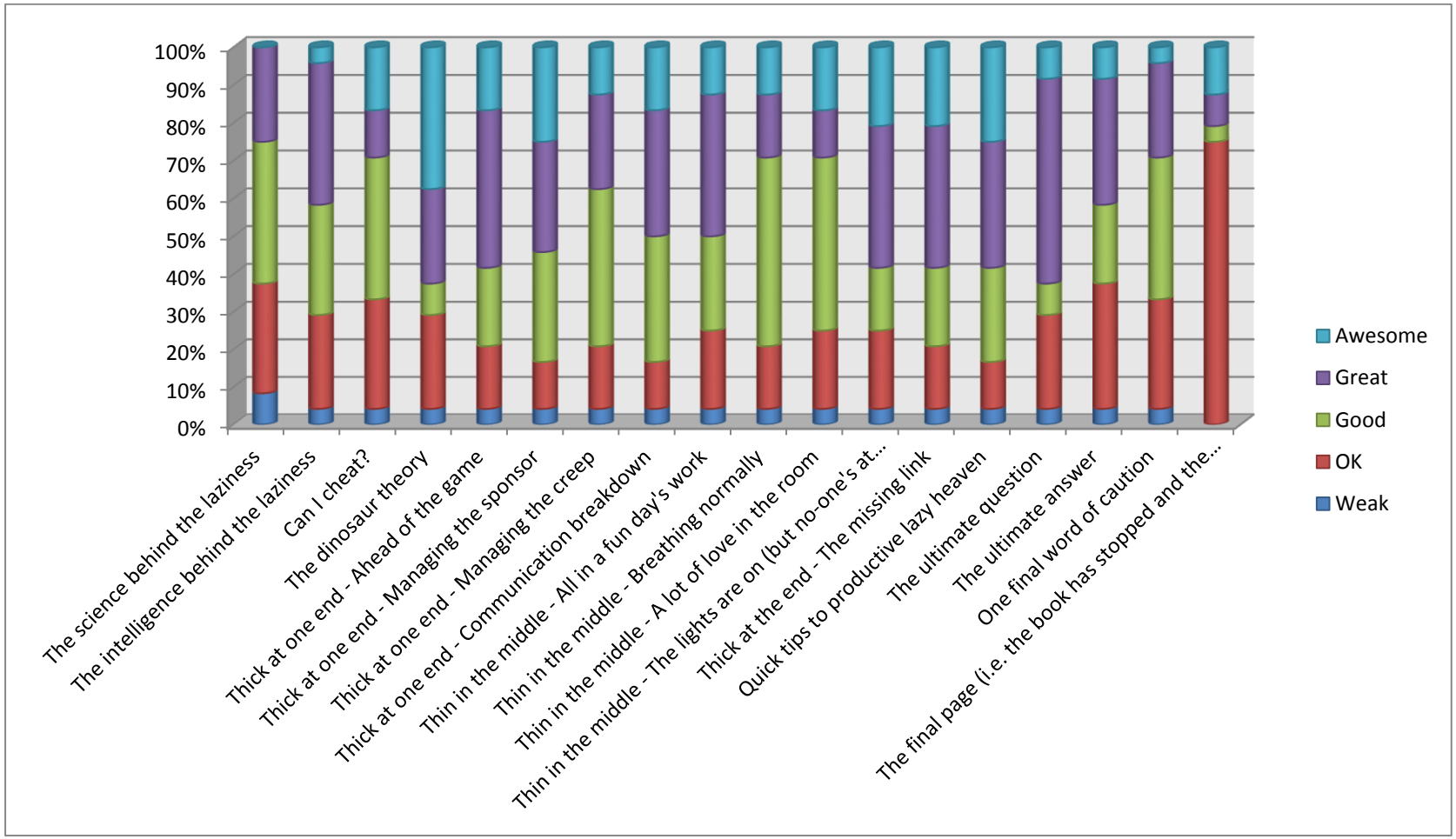
'Funny but Sage Project Management Advice' - 5 stars

'Loved it! Must read for anyone who has ever managed, sponsored, been on, or heard about projects' – 5 stars

G K Chesterton said '*A good novel tells us the truth about its hero; but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author*'.

I hope that 'The Lazy Project Manager' tells the truth about me as an author – I was only trying to help, honest!

Keep those reviews coming…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The science behind the laziness
The intelligence behind the laziness
Can I cheat?
The dinosaur theory
Thick at one end - Ahead of the game
Thick at one end - Managing the sponsor
Thick at one end - Managing the creep
Thick at one end - Communication breakdown
Thin in the middle - All in a fun day's work
Thin in the middle - Breathing normally
Thin in the middle - A lot of love in the room
Thick at the end - The missing link
Thin in the middle - The lights are on (but no-one's at...
Quick tips to productive lazy heaven
The ultimate question
The ultimate answer
One final word of caution
The final page (i.e. the book has stopped and the...
Awesome
Great
Good
OK
Weak

It was also insightful me to see what parts of the book people valued most. I started with the dinosaur theory when I wrote the book and this chapter received the highest 'Awesome' rating which was of course 'awesome'.

But perhaps most interesting of all were the responses to the question' what should I have included in the book to make it even better?'

This is covered in the next chapter.



The Lazy Project Manager in action around the world

The Missing Laziness

In which the author explores some of the 'missing' elements from the book that he either forgot to include, never considered including in the first place, or knew nothing about and thought it better to skip; all with the purpose of making everyone an extra lazy project manager…

And so back to what you, the general public, are saying about 'The Lazy Project Manager' here and now in 2014.

1.1 Ego surfing

Self-googling is something I have done, of course, 1) because it did help identify what was working and what wasn't with regards to social marketing and the interest in the 'Lazy' message and 2) I was interested in what people said or thought about me. This self-googling has also been called 'ego surfing' and I did a lot of this in the early days, less so in recent years, but now I am back and checking out what is being said.



Searching for 'The Lazy Project Manager' here are just a few of the more interesting ones I found:

- 100 Top sites for Effective Project Managers Effective PM
- What does your book shelf look like as a project management professional? Bookshelf
- PM for the Masses Podcast PM for the Masses
- Team Weighs in on Author's Project Management Strategy Applying the ideas
- Delivering Projects with a 'Project in a Box' Methodology Coopers
- Lazy Literature Interview
- Cando software and Project Zone Building Successful PMOs

- Top 20 Twitter Influencers PM Influencers
- PM Flash Blog #PMFlashBlog

Note: If you come across some unusual sites referring to 'The Lazy Project Manager' or 'Productive Laziness' do let me know.

This reminds me of the delightful moment that I was alerted to a job advertisement for a project manager that actually had the phrase 'productively lazy' in the list of desired skills or characteristics.

Wonderful!

1.2 More about more

So it is looking pretty good but there were views on how 'The Lazy Project Manager' could have been made even better:

- Checklists
- Wall chart reminder – Route map to laziness
- More about sustainability in project management
- How to deal with outside pressures, sometimes you have more than one project to run
- What about risk management?
- More about stakeholder analysis and engagement
- Pre-emptive manoeuvres with your stakeholders for even more laziness
- Linkages to program and portfolio management approaches and to strategic planning.
- Some working examples to support the story telling

And my own personal favourite:

- It needed more carrot stories. What else have you dressed up with to impress people?

In answer to this one – have you checked out the carrot picture in 'The Project Manager who Smiled'?

As to what else I have dressed up in I think it is best to leave that well alone… trust me…

Picking up on some of these suggestions:

- Checklists – yes checklists are useful but the approach I generally take is to provide simple tools and imagery to explain issues and ways of doing something, or analysing something – hence my recurring use of the Boston Matrix[2]
- Wall chart reminder – Route map to laziness – great idea, maybe I can work on something like this, or perhaps someone out there with better design skills than me can come up with something?
- More about stakeholder analysis and engagement and pre-emptive manoeuvres with your stakeholders for even more laziness – buy them a copy of 'The Lazy Winner' perhaps? Actually on a far more serious point the new book out in 2015, 'Project Branding', will cover this a lot
- Linkages to program and portfolio management approaches and to strategic planning – I do talk about this to some degree in the 'Lazy Agent Provocateur' chapter
- Some working examples to support the story telling – well maybe but you know story telling is so powerful and a good story stays with you plus adding in this level of detail would have made the book a very different 'beast' (and longer) (and less funny) (and more work for me)

Let's explore a few other ideas in more detail.

1.3 More about sustainability in project management

I recommend you checking out 'Green Project Management' by my good friends Richard Maltzman and David Shirley (CRC Press):

> *Winner of PMI's 2011 David I. Cleland Project Management Literature Award*
>
> *Detailing cutting-edge green techniques and methods, this book teaches project managers how to maximize resources and get the most out of limited budgets. It supplies proven techniques and best practices in green project management, including risk and opportunity assessments.*

For my own thoughts on this subject I have been doing a lot of driving recently, which I enjoy as it gives me a lot of time to myself to think.

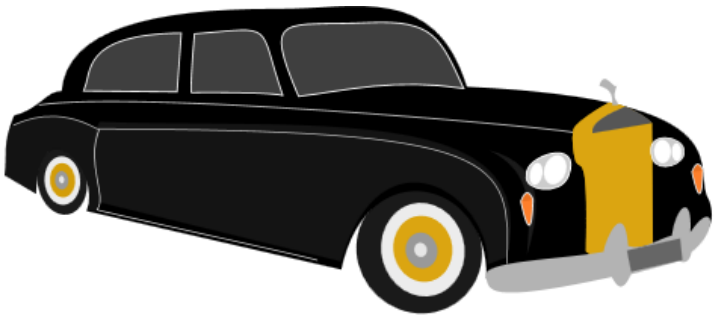
[2] The original 'Boston Matrix' was an informal marketing tool used for product portfolio analysis and management, developed by the Boston Consulting Group in the early 1970s. It considers the degree of market share and market growth and helps identify where best to use resources to maximize profit from a product management perspective.

One of the topics that I have been thinking a lot about is 'Green' project management and sustainability in general.

I was fortunate enough to attend the IPMA International Expert Seminar (Zurich) which focused on sustainability of projects in the future. This was a great topic and one that the expert audience (and me) discussed passionately and, at times, strongly about but one which became challenging when specifically speaking about project management itself.

Creating and initiating 'greener' projects in the future is one thing but managing a pre-defined project in a 'green' way is definitely something else. As a project manager our job is to deliver, on time, to budget etc and we operate within tight parameters and, often, limited authority.

So back to the car:



- Think of the project manager as a chauffeur
- The project owner is the vehicle owner

So if the owner decides to buy a limousine, what can the chauffeur do about this, green wise?

Well he can do the following:

- He can drive in a manner maximising fuel consumption
- He can ensure the vehicle is not running when waiting for the owner to arrive
- He can plan the journeys as best he can – using local knowledge combined with satellite navigation linked to traffic hotspot information
- He may try and understand the owners needs more and have input in to the daily schedule

- He can keep the car well maintained
- He can be aware of adverse weather conditions that would affect performance of the car
- He could use another car for his own private travel
- He could (potentially) discuss alternative vehicles with the owner

And will any of this make the most impact 'green' wise? No, but it will make some. The chauffeur (project manager) will have done their duty, their best to act in a 'green' manner and to educate the owner in 'green' concerns.

The owner buying a 'greener' car will make the most impact; so the worst damage has been done before the chauffeur took the job on – or in the case of most project managers, when they were given the job.

And it has to be appreciated that if the chauffeur refused to drive this vehicle then a new chauffeur (project manager) would soon be found – that is the commercial reality.

So the car owner needs to be 'green' and/or his company needs to have a 'green' policy regarding transport that would guide the car owner's choice.

That is what would make the greatest impact.

So here I am in my car driving with satellite navigation and traffic alerts, it also has 'stop/start' technology that is on. It is well maintained and I keep an eye on the weather for sure.

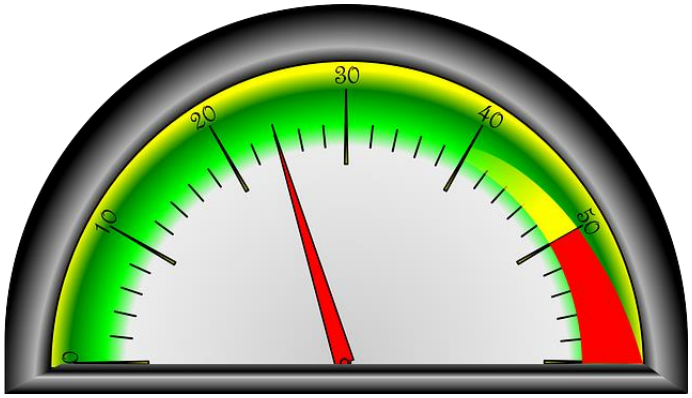
Admittedly I drive a little too fast to be completely economical but we all have to have our fun don't we?

1.4 More about how to deal with more than one project to run

Projects are generally getting more complex (or complicated – there is a difference) and that adds a challenge to today's project managers but I hear from many project managers that their particular challenge is that of multiple project responsibility.

I resonate with this issue as, when I ran projects, I would be typically looking after 3 or more at any given time all at different stages in the project lifecycle.

It all helps add a dimension of extra 'fun' to the role of project manager as well as an overlay of pressure.



But at the end of the day success in this world still comes from the application of the dinosaur theory as presented in The Lazy Project Manager.

'The Lazy Project Manager's Theory of Projects, from a Productive Laziness aspect: All projects are thick at one end, much, much thinner in the middle and then thick again at the far end. That is the theory that I have and which is mine, and what it is too.'

If you have the right foundations in your projects then multiple project management is not so difficult. It becomes difficult when you can't balance your time and efforts between the projects, and when you don't (or can't) delegate to your various project teams, where you spend the majority of your time in a reactive state rather than the correct proactive state.

Some people advise that to do this multiple focused work you should work in discrete periods of time each day on each one in turn, others that you should allocate 'x' amount of time per project and cycle through them throughout the week. Personally what worked for me was that good foundation, and a good project team delegated and empowered. I would then, at the start of each day assess what and who I needed to call or get an update on and start from there. There was no fixed cycle of project focus but only applying the good old 80/20 rule across all of the projects.

What also worked was being open and ready, and having the time to react rapidly to any project issue that arose without impacting my other projects.

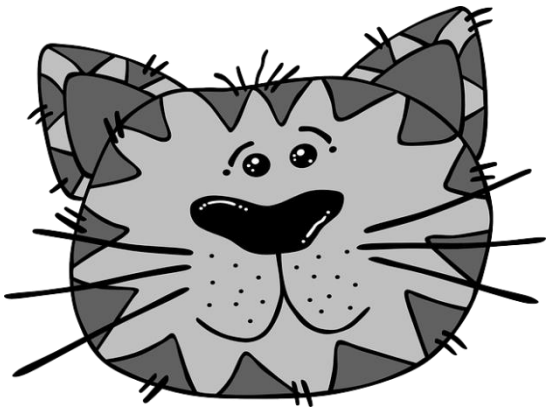
One last tip I would add. In each of your projects have a 'safety valve' representative, someone whose role it is (not a full time role of course) to challenge you, the project manager, is they are concerned about their project and are seeing an issue or significant pitfall that you are missing due to your multi-project management responsibility.

1.5 More about risk management

The buttered cat paradox is a common joke based on the tongue-in-cheek combination of two pieces of wisdom:

The first is that cats always land on their feet.

And the second is that buttered toast always lands buttered side down.



Now consider what would happen if the piece of buttered toast was attached, butter side up of course, to the back of a cat and then the cat was dropped from a large height.

Some people suggest that the following will occur. As the cat falls towards the ground, it will slow down and start to rotate, eventually reaching a steady state of hovering a short distance from the ground while rotating at high speed as both the buttered side of the toast and the cat's feet attempt to land on the ground.

This idea appeared on the British panel game QI, where as well as talking about the idea, they also brought up other questions regarding the paradox. These included 'Would it still work if you used margarine?', 'Would it still work if you used I Can't Believe It's Not Butter[3]?', and 'What if the toast was covered

[3] I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! is a butter substitute produced by Unilever.

in something that was not butter, but the cat thought it was butter?', the idea being that it would act like a placebo.

The supposed phenomenon of the buttered toast reaction was first observed in the New York Monthly Magazine, which published the following poem in 1835:

I never had a slice of bread,
Particularly large and wide,
That did not fall upon the floor,
And always on the buttered side!

A study by the BBC's television series Q.E.D. found that when toast is thrown in the air, it lands butter-side down just one-half of the time (as would be predicted by chance)] However, several scientific studies have proven that when toast is dropped from a table it does fall butter-side down at least 62% of the time.

Why is this? Well when toast falls out of a hand, it does so at an angle. The toast then rotates. Given that tables are usually between two to six feet there is enough time for the toast to rotate about one-half of a turn, and so it lands upside down relative to its original position. Since the original position is butter-side up then the toast lands butter-side down.

Now ignoring the paradox and concentrating on the simple piece of buttered toast dropping from your hand you could address this 'risk' in two ways. The first being that you rip out all of your kitchen fixings and tables and then re-install new ones that are at least 10 feet off the ground. This will result in any future toast drops have a 50/50 chance of turning sufficiently to end up buttered side up – a saving of 12% of cases using the Q.E.D. experiment results. But this would be pretty costly and impractical.

Alternatively you could just be more careful when you eat buttered toast. Sit down. Don't rush. Have the butter and toast on the table together. This would potentially deliver greater end results providing a significant reduction in dropped buttered toast in the first instance and therefore the percentage of cases where the toast falls buttered side down would be irrelevant.

Risk management needs to be relevant, appropriate and reasonable.

Besides, cats hate having toast stuck to their backs!

The Lazy Travels

In which the author denies it was his own mother that declared him 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today' and wallows in self-satisfaction at all of the wonderful places, and events he has had the privilege to visit, not to mention all of the lazy fans he has met on the way…

Thank you to the very kind person who honestly did say I was 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today' on a feedback form for a conference I spoke at' and 'no, it wasn't my mother or any other relative' – denial over. Moving on.

But I have had real pleasure in seeing a lot of the world.[4]



It was in 2011 that I found myself in Auckland, New Zealand enjoying a glass of wine at lunchtime on my final day before flying home from the PMI

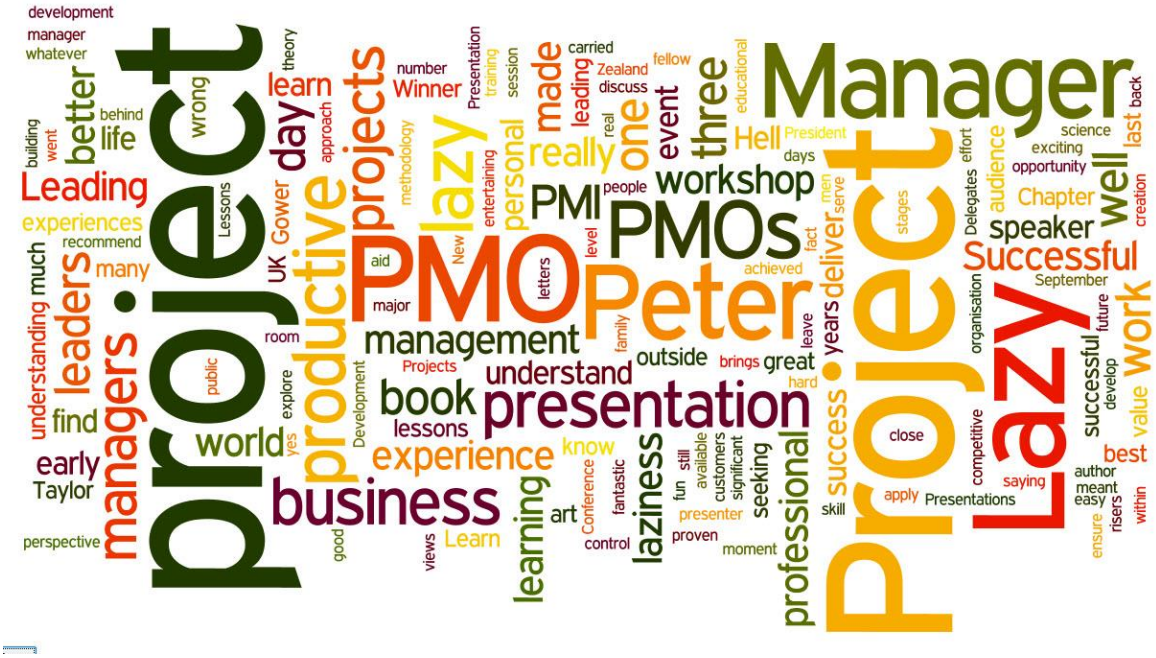
[4] A complete list can be found at www.thelazyprojectmanager.com should you really be that interested

conference where I was keynote. I realised then that this small book had taken me to the other side of the world! Amazing.

At a rough guess 200 presentations or workshops or webinars, well over 30,000 people in the audiences and so many happy memories of events, celebrations as well as meeting and engaging with some really interesting and 'passionate about project management' people.

I couldn't possible mention everyone in this book so please take this as a warm 'thank you' to each and every one of you who have connected with me, invited me to speak, train or consult, introduced me to other people, recommended me, read my books and articles (over 100 of them), listened to or have been part of my podcasts, read my newsletters or asked me to review books or well or anything at all.

You have been fantastic.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meant
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risers
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organisation
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Projects
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New
aid
major
room
public
explore
yes
methodology
entertaining
approach
Lessons
Gower
UK
recommend
experiences
understanding
much
perspective
building
went
Taylor

The Lazy Project Agent Provocateur

In which the author rants and raves about various aspects of project management that have come to his recent attention and acts like some sort of rabble raising trouble-maker just because this is his book and because he can, oh and because he cares about his profession…

1.6 The issue of executive support: Executives stop failing your projects!

Yes you read that right – not 'Executives; stop your failing projects' but 'Executives; stop failing your projects'

In 'Why good strategies fail: Lessons for the C-suite' published by The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited in 2013 the report stated, in the conclusion, that there was a need for increased C-suite attention to implementation (therefore projects) *'Leadership support is the most important factor in successful strategy execution, yet a substantial number of survey respondents indicate that the C-suite is insufficiently involved'*.



On the subject of finding the right level of C-suite engagement the report declares '*… one of the most worrying findings of our survey is that leading executives at a large number of companies do too little about strategy implementation. Only 50% of respondents say that strategy implementation secures the appropriate C-suite attention at their organisation. Similarly, 28% admit that individual projects or initiatives to put strategy into place do not typically receive the necessary senior-level sponsorship'*.

This is why I make the loud and bold challenge that 'Executives are failing their projects' and I strongly believe that this situation needs to stop – now!

So how can you get this message up to the highest level in your organisation?

Well fear is one way so why not try this simple 'script' when you get the opportunity.

Start with your company project portfolio value (this should be a reasonable reflection of the strategic investment). For the sake of this example I am going to use pounds sterling but, of course, feel free to adopt your own currency of choice. I am also going to use a small portfolio value of say £20m, again please insert your own figure here.

Now this next step will depend on the type of industry you are in but choosing a typical regulated commercial model for a business then it can be said that out of that total portfolio some projects are compliance driven and some business driven. In this example we will use 40% as compliance and 60% as business growth projects. Therefore we have £8m invested in compliance projects and £12m in business development projects.

But we don't stop there. For each project to be sanctioned there must be a 'value added' benefit. For compliance projects this is less 'value add' and more 'cost impact' and so perhaps this is a 2:1 ratio as a result of potential penalties for non-compliance plus the actually project investment costs. In our example this would be £8m multiplied by 2 plus the original £8m, which equals £24m.

Now for the rest of the portfolio, the business growth or development projects, then you don't invest £1 to gain £1 – what's the point? – Of course not, there has to be a return on investment ratio that typically might be at around 4:1 (apply your own business factor here presumably you have something in your business case approval process that has such a figure defined?). Therefore investing £1 would gain a return in investment of £4. Therefore using the same maths as the compliance projects we now have in our example a total of £12m multiplied by 4 plus the original £12m, which equals £60m.

We now have a 'true' project portfolio value of £24m plus £60m which gets us to a nice big number of £84m.

In the 'Project Management Institute, Inc. Pulse of the Profession™, March 2013' it was assessed that the value impact on poor project sponsorship from the executive level had real significance. The report suggested that with regards to 'Meeting Project Goals' there was a +29% variance with good sponsorship in place but when there wasn't good project sponsorship in place there was a -13% variance of 'Project Failure' that is there was a 13% more likely chance of the project not delivering what was expected.

Investment in project sponsorship is evidence that the executives are taking strategy investment seriously, and not doing so an example of where the C-suite are failing their own business and investors (and projects).

Taking our £84m portfolio and doing nothing to develop good project sponsorship means that 13%, or £10.92m, is practically written off from day one.

If your CFO is in the room right now and paying attention tell them to go get the shredding machine and stuff £10.92m in to it right now – you might as well as this is what is more than likely going to happen to all that money, all that investment, it will just disappear and you will have nothing to show for it except a lot of resources wondering what they had been working on all this time (I would say burn it, visually more powerful but also more of a safety risk).

And hey we haven't even considered disruption of business costs during the projects – what shall we say here, maybe another 20% of the total portfolio investment, about £16.8m or so?

And you know what? Everything is never equal. I suspect that the 40% we allocated as compliance project investment has a greater success ratio than the other projects, not that these projects are any more 'healthy' but that through the fear of non-compliance the company throws resources at these projects over and above the other 60% of business development projects and achieves' success' the hard (and costly) way.

Now if these ones are 'successful' (he says smiling knowingly) then the other 60% must carry even higher levels of potential failure.

Workout these figures now.

And looking back at your portfolio we said 40% was compliance activity and 60% was business growth but think about it, of the balance how much is real

'clear blue strategic change'? I bet that most is just to keep pace with your market and perhaps only 10% is real change. So again if failure is the 'norm' and the focus on success tends towards the compliance end of the project scale, how successful are the true change projects you have underway in the organisation?

Now I realise that all of these figures are open to interpretation and maybe my maths is less than perfect but you must get the general idea. Big investment in strategy through projects needs to be backed up by real commitment to successful delivery and, whilst the development of good project managers backed up with appropriate processes and methods is critical, it is the clear responsibility of the executive leaders to connect such strategy to project activity and to sponsor these projects in a competent way.

Hopefully all of this will have woken up the executives and you have their full undivided attention but just in case here is one last statistic that may well help.

A four-year study by LeadershipIQ.com interviewing over 1,000 board members from 286 public and private organizations that fired, or otherwise forced out, their chief executive found that the number one reason CEO's got fired was …. Wait for it …. Mis-managing change! And what is change if not projects.

And so I go back to my opening statement and shout it out once more 'Executives; stop failing your projects!'

Peter Greenwood, group executive director— strategy, CLP Group agrees, in 'Why good strategies fail: Lessons for the C-suite' notes that '*Companies fail or fall short of their potential not because of bad strategies, but because of a failure to implement good ones'*.

1.7 The issue of effective project sponsorship: Project Managers are from Mars and Project Sponsors are from Venus

'We are unique individuals with unique experiences' John Gray, Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus

Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus is a book written by an American author and relationship counsellor John Gray. It has sold more than 50 million

copies (yes that is one or two more than my own best-selling book The Lazy Project Manager) and spent 121 weeks on the US bestseller list.

The book and its central metaphor have become a part of popular culture and so I found myself, as I thought about the ongoing Campaign for Real Project Sponsors that I began back in 2011, that maybe we could think of project managers and project sponsors in similar terms.

The book states that most of common relationship problems between men and women are a result of fundamental psychological differences between the genders, which the author exemplifies by means of its eponymous metaphor: that men and women are from distinct planets – men from Mars and women from Venus –- and that each gender is acclimated to its own planet's society and customs, but not to those of the other.

Now it is possible that this comes in to play if say the project manager is a man and the project sponsor is a woman – as in the book *Strategies for Project Sponsorship* (Management Concepts Press) by Vicki James, Ron Rosenhead and myself - to aid the understanding in the book of the two inter-playing roles we (a suggestion from the lady from Venus, Vicki, actually) agreed to separate the roles by gender. But let's not go down that path for now – let us assume that gender plays no part in this and that the two roles, the two people, are both from project 'Planet' (sorry maybe that was just a tad too corny but you get my meaning).

For project success many sources of authority[5] boldly declare that good project sponsorship is critical but sadly the reality of the situation is less than perfect. Often—very often—project sponsors will have received no training or support for their critical role. In Strategies for Project Sponsorship we confirmed that with 85% of organisations declaring that they 'had sponsorship' in place but 83% confirmed the worrying truth that they did nothing to support or train or guide these project sponsors.

Many speak of the 'accidental project manager' but the reality is that the current generation of project sponsors can also be considered the

[5] Check out Project Management Institute, Inc. Pulse of the Profession™, March 2013 and CHAOS Manifesto: The Year of the Executive Sponsor (Standish) 2012 and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC: Insights and Trends: Current Portfolio, Programme, and Project Management Practices 2012 - The third global survey on the current state of project management as just a few.

'accidental project sponsors'. Although they may not have any background in project management or project-based activity, having reached a senior level within their organisation based on other achievements, they have assumed or have been given that role. Remember that there is not currently any official body of knowledge for project sponsors to help them understand best project sponsorship practices.

And yet project sponsors don't just need to support projects; good project sponsors also support the project manager and project team. It is said that a project is one small step for a project sponsor and a giant leap for the project manager. Wouldn't we all feel so much better if we knew that the project sponsor's one small step would ensure that the complementary giant leap would lead to a safe and secure final landing?

The project sponsor/project manager partnership is one that really needs to be a good partnership built on a relationship of trust and mutual objectives.

'If I seek to fulfil my own needs at the expense of my partner, we are sure to experience unhappiness, resentment, and conflict. The secret of forming a successful relationship is for both partners to win' John Gray

Project sponsorship is not about an 'either/or' situation but a 'win/win' for both the project sponsor and the project manager, it is, after all, about the project and therefore about the business benefit.

If we look at the flipside of project success we can see this inter-connection and the consequences of getting it wrong:

Project Failure

Percentage	Reason	Sponsor	Project Manager
40%	Unrealistic Goals	✗	
38%	Poor alignment of Project and Organisation Objectives	✗	
34%	Inadequate Human Resources	✗	
32%	Lack of Strong Leadership	✗	✗
21%	Unwillingness of team Members to identify Issues		✗
19%	Ineffective Risk Management		✗

This is a list of top project failure issues and clearly the lack of good project sponsorship can contribute to the unrealistic goals, the poor alignment, lack of resources and lack of leadership – in this case the project manager from Mars has one heck of a gaping hole to try and fill. Equally with a lack of good project management this contributes another vacuum of leadership, team engagement issues and poor risk management – in this case the project sponsor from Venus has no hope of dealing with the consequential impact.

In the book we found that the best of project sponsors operated in a very balanced way, being involved in the project, being objective about the project, being supportive of the project and project manager, and being reactive to project needs. The project manager clearly needs to be as equally balanced.

We also found that the best project managers understood what a good project sponsor should do and how they, as project managers, needed to behave within the reality of the partnership that they had, and with the project sponsor that they were 'given'. Like the saying goes 'you can pick your friends but you can't pick your relatives' it has to be appreciated that the same is true of project sponsors.

Each project sponsor (and each project manager) will be different, will be imperfect, will have strengths and weaknesses but if the combined relationship of the two roles, the two people, both understand each other's

responsibilities and capabilities then the best balance possible can be achieved for an effective and positive relationship (and subsequent project success).

'Relationships thrive when communication reflects a ready acceptance and respect of people's innate differences' John Gray

If you work in an organisation that needs to develop your project sponsors from Venus (and maybe also your project managers from Mars) then maybe check out the book, or contact me to find out how I can help. And spread the word, we do really need everyone to join the Campaign for Real Project Sponsors; there is a lot (a lot) of work to be done.

As an example, the latest PMI Project Management Body of Knowledge[6] (Edition 5) is a valuable and extensive document of reference with 185,230 words of wisdom crammed inside. Sadly of those words only 159 refer to project sponsorship at all, I'll raise it to 179 words by generously including the 20 words in the glossary that refer to 'organisational sponsorship' - I am being generous as it mentions project sponsorship as one word 'sponsor's' (and Project Sponsor is not in the glossary as a term). Anyway that means this most widely referenced body of knowledge has a mere 0.01% content related to the 'most important person in the project…'[7]

OK I hear what you are saying, Peter that is the 'Project Management' body of knowledge so don't be so harsh. Well maybe I might take the point (actually I wouldn't, at the very least we should see a whole lot more about how the project manager needs to interact with the project sponsor but for the sake of this particular argument …) so let's move across to the perspective of the organisation.

The OPM3 / Organizational Project Management Maturity Model[8] looks at the overall maturity of project based activity inside and organisation so there is no escaping the project sponsor on this one is there?

[6]. The PMBOK® Guide—Fifth Edition is the preeminent global standard for project management from PMI. It provides project managers with the fundamental practices needed to achieve organizational results and excellence in the practice of project management.
[7] One of PMI's foundational standards, the Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3®) – Third Edition is a guide to achieving organizational project maturity.

Well it seems that the answer to that question is surprisingly a big fat 'Yes'.

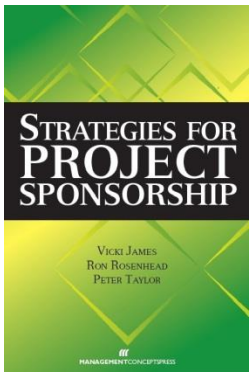
Out of the 151 Self-Assessment Measures only 1 is related in any way to project sponsorship; '*Are the sponsor and other stakeholders involved in setting a direction for the project that is in the best interest of all stakeholders?*'

At least it is question number 1 on the list.

And of the 600 Best Practice measurements only 3 reference project sponsorship, numbers 1440, 1450 and 5460.

See what I mean? Still don't think we have a problem?

This needs to be taken seriously and changes need to happen, fast. There is some fantastic work going on with and for project managers, we have landed on Mars and we are setting up home and making it look dammed good; but the balance is all on that side. Venus, on the other hand is pretty much undeveloped and in need of a real make-over.



You can find out more about the book at www.strategies4sponsors.com and get your own copy at Amazon UK or Amazon US and you can contact me at www.peterbtaylor.co.uk

You can also join the LinkedIn group – Projects Sponsors, to continue the discussion.

'*Strategies for Project Sponsorship is a unique blend of practical, step-by-step tools; hard-won wisdom from the PM trenches; and solid, research-based*

recommendations. As a PM author reading this book, I found myself in awe of how nimbly the authors weaved together seemingly disparate elements: here citing research findings, there providing war stories or case study examples, and finally pivoting to morph these into powerful, ready-to-use tools. As someone who's both managed projects and trained project managers for more than three decades, I know this for certain: This book should be in every project manager's tool kit and in every project sponsor's briefcase' Michael Greer

1.8 The issue of too much process: Rage against the machine

'Welcome my son, welcome to the machine. Where have you been? It's alright we know where you've been' Pink Floyd, Welcome to the Machine – Wish you were Here

Some months ago I was considering a full time role once again, my concern was 'how long could I act as an independent consultant and trainer without actually practising project management?', which is still an interesting dilemma for me today – any thoughts or great opportunities feel free to let me know.

Anyway I was pretty selective in what I considered but one opportunity did seem to be interesting, it was for a Global Head of PMO (this is the sort of role that I would consider in case you wondered). Eventually, after meetings with the agency and a phone interview I went for a face to face interview with the organisation in question.

It didn't go well.

In fact it went quite badly from my point of view.

After the interview I phoned the agency and said I wasn't interested and the main reasons were that this organisation appeared to have absolutely no passion for the projects that they were undertaking (perhaps something I could have helped with) but more importantly they were entirely process focused, and not in a good way, this rang alarm bells for me immediately. Being part of that set-up would have killed my creativity and I couldn't see a happy ending.

Was I right about them? Well I think the answer came some many weeks later after the organisation had finally selected a new Head of PMO (and good

luck to them of course, maybe they can check out my website www.leadingsuccessfulpmos.com for some PMO success style inspiration).

Their HR representative phoned me to give me the reasons that they didn't select me for the job!

I said that I withdrew weeks ago and they said yes that was noted and thank you for the valuable feedback but that they had to follow the process of giving feedback to all candidates….

Was I right about them or what!

'So welcome to the machine. Welcome my son, welcome to the machine. What did you dream? It's alright we told you what to dream'

And this story is true – honestly it is.



I was recently shopping in a large chain sports store with my family. Now the main purpose of the trip was to buy some new trainers for one of my sons, and after some considerable time he finally selected an acceptable (design and brand) from his point of view pair and an acceptable (cost and cost) pair from my point of view.

He spent so long deciding that I took the chance to look for a pair of trainers for myself and chose my pair on the criteria of design and brand (and of course cost).

When I went up to pay for the goods I experienced a service engagement that was pretty unique and most certainly unforgettable. Of course the sales girl had been trained in the basics of the job and presumably had been

encouraged to make the transaction an enjoyable and personal one – there was, no doubt, a pre-designed workflow in place, a process that needed to be undertaken.

So handing over the two boxes of trainers she dutifully checked the shoes – perhaps that they were a correct pair but certainly that I had the correct size.

'Size 7' she declared and I nodded (these were my sons trainers).

Moving on to the next box she went through the same process and declared 'Size 9' to which I nodded a 'yes', these were my trainers.

Then came the stunning moment when she looked up at me and said 'Well you really are treating yourself aren't you …'

Of course yes, I bought a size 7 for the daytime and a size 9 for when my feet got larger towards the end of the day!

Well I understood what she was trying to do and I appreciated the attempt at some form of real human interaction during this pre-determined process but there has to be logic in what is said and in this case there wasn't any and so the whole thing fell apart.

'So welcome to the machine'

A process is a systematic series of actions directed to some end, and there is nothing wrong with that at all, don't think that I am anti-process, I'm certainly not.

But (yes there is a 'but') any process has to be relevant, appropriate and reasonable.

I was asked to consult for one organisation about a year ago and their issue was that 'nobody is following our project delivery methodology' according to the head of the PMO that I was to work with.

This organisation had invested a fair amount of time and effort in creating a single unifying and consistent methodology based on practical experience and lessons learned, they gathered suggestions for content and structure from all of their project managers across the world, and constructed what they felt was the 'best of the best'.

It certainly looked good, was easy to navigate and had many tools and templates available to project managers.

They had developed a training program to ensure that everyone knew all about the new methodology and could access it for all future projects.

They used their marketing department to develop a complimentary series of promotional materials (hats, mouse mats, posters etc) for internal use as well as a set of flyers and other marketing collateral for customer use.

They commenced a help/support desk to gather feedback and recommendations for improvements.

They got their senior management to promote the new business tool through videos and presentations.

They even had a competition where one person could win an iPad by suggesting a great name for the methodology.

They seemed to have thought of everything…

And yet here I was a year after the launch of this all singing all dancing process trying to help them work out why 'nobody is following our project delivery methodology'.

In fact the answer was relatively easy to uncover and exposed perhaps the single flaw in their approach to this initiative.

Customers didn't like it as it seemed just too complicated. Now this didn't mean that it didn't need to be so but the delivery challenge that this method seemed to portray was in stark contrast to the apparent simplicity of the products that the customers were being offered by this organisation.

Experienced project managers didn't like it because it mandated each and every step that they had to take and a) they didn't believe projects were like that and b) it undermined them and devalued their professional experience.

Inexperienced project managers didn't like it because it was over-whelming to them and as they progressed its use step by step, phase by phase, it seemed as if the project itself was on a completely different path and timescale and events overtook the theory.

In my book 'Leading Successful PMOs' (Gower) and the follow up companion book 'Delivering Successful PMOs' (Gower Jan 2015) I explored this issue and concluded that, from a PMO perspective:

- The best PMOs are the managers of a flexible framework method to assist project managers in the delivery of projects
- The best PMOs ensured that this framework, and the associated tools and templates, were suitable for each project as not all projects are the same

And there is the key. Not all projects are the same and not all project managers are the same.

What is really needed is a scalable and flexible and appropriate means to deliver projects that can be aligned to the experience of the project manager and is relevant to the project complexity.

For the company I was advising they initiated two things with regards to their methodology:

- Creating a small scale, low complexity 'project light' version of the method with simplified templates and reduced scope
- Promoting the full scale method (in fact it now referred to as a 'framework') as a reference tool for project managers to use as they see fit, with only 3 key 'point in time' and mandated quality milestones

They also developed a new process, which is a good thing I feel.

This profiles the projects at the initiation stage in order to understand the perceived complexity (and therefore risk to the organisation) and therefore the most appropriate project manager to use, from an experience point of view.

Time will tell on the success of this revised approach but the initial feedback is very positive.

So you can see that process can be bad, and process can be good. Just remember that any process has to be relevant, appropriate and reasonable.

And so the next time you are working on a process 'improvement' why not tune in to Pink Floyd[9] and consider the 'machine' and its impact of people.

'Welcome'

1.9 The issue of making our profession attractive: Sexy Project Management

(50 Shades of Project Management that is anything but grey!)



At a recent major conference for project managers, after the opening keynote speech, the audience was invited to ask questions of the renowned ambassador for the project management profession. One question that somewhat took the speaker aback was 'when will project management be sexy?'

A great question I felt and one that the speaker responded to reasonably well (eventually, after the initial shock…) but a question that has made me think about the concept of 'sexy project management' for some time since that particular event.

What do we mean, in this context, by 'sexy'? Well the dictionary offers us three possibilities:

1. Concerned predominantly or excessively with sex; risqué: a sexy novel

2. Sexually interesting or exciting; radiating sexuality: the sexiest presenter at the conference

3. Excitingly appealing; glamorous: a sexy new car

[9] And 'yes' I was listening to them whilst writing this piece. Shine on you Crazy Diamonds!

I think we can leave options 1 and 2 alone, of course there must be some real sexy project managers out there and I am sure one or two of them partake of the whole 'physical' stuff (perhaps even occasionally with another project manager and perhaps even without the safety aid of a WBS) but for the purpose of this conversation I am going with option 3 'Excitingly appealing; glamorous'.

Many (way too many) people think of project management as dull and worthy, and boring and necessary, and as 'well someone has to do it I guess but I'm glad it is not me'.

An example of this can be seen with a simple experiment – find a project manager and ask them two questions, the rule being they must answer fast with their first thought, the first thing that comes to mind. Do that and it will most likely go something like this:

'What are you?

'A project manager'

'What do you do?'

'I... er … manager projects'

And there you have it – explaining project management in an attractive way is not so simple, for any of us – experienced project managers or would be project managers.

Probably not overly scientific but there was a survey[10] of 1.000 Australians asking to name the top 'sexy' professions and this is what they came up with:

5 sexiest professions for men are.

- Soldier
- Emergency Service Personnel
- Tradesmen/Construction Worker
- Sportsmen
- Doctor

5 sexiest professions for women are:

[10] VictoriaMilan.com.au April 2013

- Sport/Recreation
- Medical Worker
- Hospitality/Tourist
- Student
- Lawyer

Seriously! We are less attractive than lawyers!

There are plenty of other similar surveys (mainly from dating sites I note with interest – in this case maybe you should not put 'project manager' down if you are lonely and single.

But I digress; back to the important question of 'How do we make project management sexy?'

Perhaps we can consider those who are entering our 'profession' these days what is it that attracts them to this job? I mean there must be some reason that these people decide not to be soldiers, lawyers, doctors etc and instead choose to be project managers (or at least study to be project managers).

I took the liberty to check out a number of UK Universities who were offering a project management degree. What did they say to attract people to their courses, and to project management?

Sadly what I found was that they said very little that gave any indication that project management was an exciting, energising, fun and important job. Here are a few examples:

'The MSc Project Management is designed for those who wish to develop their project management skills and abilities'

'Project management is now a mainstream management discipline in many organisations. This course provides a solid grounding in the principles and practice of project management with the overall aim of increasing your ability to contribute to business effectiveness'

'It is designed to meet the increasing demand for professional project managers, both nationally and internationally, who are able to provide the increasingly sophisticated management required to meet the challenges of providing and managing projects across a broad spectrum of organisations'

'The course focuses on developing skills for careers in project management including both theory and applied aspects, and is mapped against key professional body competencies. The knowledge, understanding and skills can be applied to a range of environments that bring together resources, skills, technology and ideas to realise benefits or achieve objectives, operating within the multiple project constraints of cost, scope, time and quality requirements'

Nothing particularly thrilling in these ones, worthy statements all of them, but how do they use this to attract those future project managers?

What about the thoughts on project management itself?

'Project management is about how you deliver a defined set of changes at the right time, the right cost and the right quality'

'Project Management is the application of appropriate management strategies in order to effectively coordinate the realisation of complex and dynamic projects. The applied skills and competencies of a project manager are necessary for the successful completion of large and complex projects, particularly within the ever-changing marketplace'

'Project management is about managing the technical, cultural, political and financial aspects inherent in all projects'

'In every business, and in every industry, there is a need for effective project management'

'A successful project manager balances the conflicting goals of resource usage, quality of product, time to market and customer satisfaction. The programme is intended to provide the student with the technical and process skills to undertake the role of a project manager in the modern business environment'

OK, I am a project manager and know how great this job can be but for goodness sake even I am yawning at this point. There must be something more engaging to say about project management surely?

'In the twenty-first century, the dynamic and challenging world of business has encouraged the increasing use of project management across the sectors'

True.

'Organisations, businesses and governments are more aware than ever of the strategic importance of effective project management'

Also true.

'Offer a foundation of essential management skills required to align and cascade corporate strategy throughout the organisation'

And this can't be argued with either.

'The line between success and failure in any project is a lot of pressure on any manager's shoulders. Empowering yourself with project management skills and business acumen will ensure you can be a successful, dynamic leader'

But for goodness sake you wise and clever educational leaders find something more interesting to say, something (dare I say it) 'sexy' to say to attract the very best of the best to the courses you offer.

Now I freely admit this was a fast and dirty check on Universities websites so please if you head up such a course and you have something really attractive, exciting, energising and 'sexy' that you do say about project management please do let me know I would be delighted to read it.

Moving away from the universities what about the project organisations we all know and love?

PMI, when speaking of the PMP[11] states *'The PMP recognizes demonstrated competence in leading and directing project teams. If you're an experienced project manager looking to solidify your skills, stand out to employers and maximize your earning potential, the PMP credential is the right choice for you'*

Axelos when referring to the PRINCE2[12] qualification (foundation) states *'The purpose of the foundation qualification is to confirm you have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the PRINCE2 method to be able to work effectively with, or as a member of, a project management team working within an environment supporting PRINCE2'*

[11] www.pmi.org Project Management Professional
[12] www.prince-officialsite.com Projects IN Controlled Environments

And APM, when describing the RPP[13], state *'APM Registered Project Professional (RPP) is a pan-sector standard for those able to demonstrate the capabilities of a responsible leader, who have the ability to manage a complex project and use appropriate tools, processes and techniques'*

Again, all oh so worthy and technically accurate, but so what?

Let me give an example of what I am talking about. My son is taking driving lessons to learn to be able to drive on his own eventually. Now the DVLA describes the mandatory practical test (there is a theory component as well) as *'The practical driving test is designed to see if you - can drive safely in different road and traffic conditions and know the Highway Code and can show this through your driving ability'*

Now why does my son what to take this test? Why does he want to be a qualified driver? Certainly not so that he 'knows the Highway Code' or so that he is able to 'drive safely in different road and traffic conditions'. Nor is it because he is desperate to be able to parallel park, reverse around a corner or complete a 'three point turn' (as I still call it).

All of this is, of course, important but this is only a means to an end.

He wants 'Freedom'. He wants to escape us, his parents. He wants to be able to visit his girlfriend without catching two buses, especially when it is cold and raining. He wants to be able to take his mates out and about town. He wants to be able to stay out later. He wants a whole lot more than the technical capability of being able to safely control a mechanised object. If there was no end-result of 'Freedom' then he wouldn't have bothered. 'Freedom' and 'Independence' are the 'sexy' factors that make him want to get out there and take the driving lessons, to read the Highway Code, to take practice theory tests, and to revise and practice ready for that all important test date.

And so it should be with project management.

That one question that took that unsuspecting speaker aback has an answer already.

'When will project management be sexy?'

[13] www.apm.or.uk Registered Project Professional

Now! It is already.

We just need to find the words to describe it in the right way and, you know what, those students currently studying for their degree in project management know that it is 'sexy' already.

Feels good doesn't it?

1.10 The issue of correct user engagement: End User involvement

There is an old software company joke about how to have simpler and more successful projects.



We all know that to get real buy-in for a new system of any sort you absolutely need to engage your end-users, the last in line that will actual use the technology. End-User involvement was the cry that went up all the time in pre-project engagements and scoping exercises. What did middle management really know about what was needed and what was a good or bad system? And don't get me started on the executive level and their remoteness from reality of the business. Get me end-users and lots of them!

But as soon as you involved end-users life got complicated; they were a critical and demanding bunch, and time and effort grew exponentially according to the breadth and depth of end-user involvement.

And so the dark humour was that to ensure a faster sell and a quicker delivery get rid of the 'hyphen' – end-user involvement needed to become 'end user involvement' i.e. don't involve them at all!

OK so that may have made you smile wistfully but the truth is that not involving end users is a recipe for eventual disaster.

Resistance to new systems (change) is as a result of three elements I believe.

- User – Fear/Exposure
- User – Experience/Simplicity
- User – Profit/Gain/Extras

Having been involved in many system implementations over the years you do need to tick all three boxes to get the smoothest of transitions to the new way of doing things and the fastest acceptance of this change.

Starting with the middle point the new system has to be 'better' than the existing one – easier to use – friendlier – acceptable. Get that right and it is a good platform for change acceptance but there is more.

The fear factor rates high on everyone's agenda, we generally like the status quo and dislike change – even if we spend hours complaining about the inefficiencies and frustrations of the status quo!

A new system worries us because it might expose some weakness in our working methods, some old workarounds that aren't good practice but 'Hey, they get the job done right?'

This new-fangled all singing all dancing application is going to shine a light on things we would rather keep in the dark and well hidden from our peers and our managers.

This fear has to be considered and managed.

And finally why should we do all of this change, even if the fear is dealt with and the new system operates like a dream, if there is actually no personal gain. The call for change 'for the greater benefit of the organisation as a whole' means absolutely nothing if the result is that I have to work twice as hard to make that benefit a reality. What's in it for me?

Change

It is important to understand the balance of change if you indeed want to succeed in such changes.

Without reaching some sort of 'escape velocity' you (or your end-users) will never do anything different. What we are talking here about reaching the point of conscious decision to help others or yourself make a personal change.

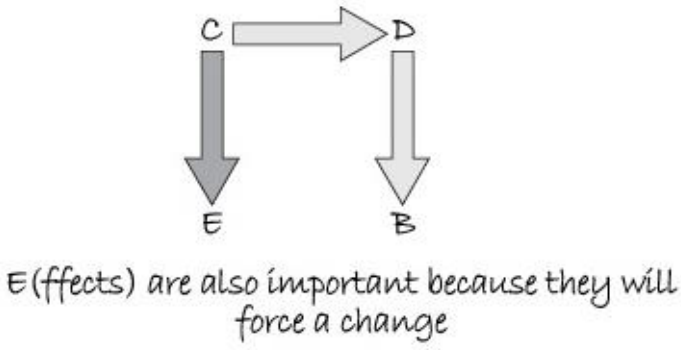
Look at it this way.

Change can be described as C(urrent), that is where you are now, and D(esire), where you want to be and B(enefit), which is the resultant reward for whatever change is undertaken.

For example:

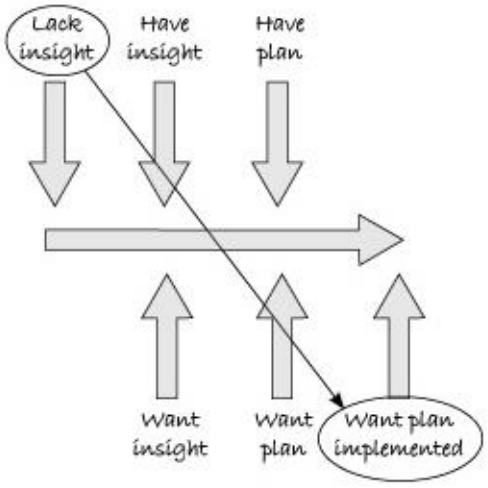
Effect: My house feels crowded and noisy, and on top of that I have nowhere to put things… And this is making life less pleasant!

This can be described as: My current house is too small (C), I would like a bigger house (D), the benefit of having a bigger house would be more room for me and my family (B). E(ffects) are also important because they will force a change.



Now you may be in a number of states as far as change is concerned:

- You may lack any insight to your problems or need to change
- You may have insight but need a solution or plan
- You may have a plan but need some assistance in making it happen



For example:

- Lack of insight – Why does my house seem so crowded and noisy, with nowhere to put things?
- Insight but no plan – My house is too small what shall I do?
- Insight and plan – My house is too small, I need to move, how will I do this?

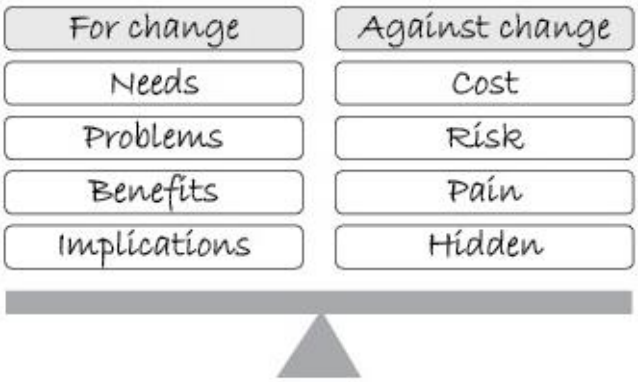
Against change

To move anyone towards change there is a balancing act that needs to be performed. There are a number of resistances that stop change taking place, or at least allow people to put up personal arguments against changing (these might be those small voices in your head that you hear from time to time):

- Cost - Everything has a perceived cost whether this is actual money that would need to be invested or just your time and effort (and distraction from other matters)
- Risk - A concern over what such change would bring about should it in some way fail and require recovery, the work to be redone or loss of face. Concern about the risk of failure and what that would mean to you and others
- Pain - Recognition that change usually means some form of pain that needs to be endured, the negative aspects of the process of change itself

- Hidden - It is often possible to uncover the first three points but there will often remain 'hidden' reasons that someone is resistant to such change.

This makes it hard to assess the 'balance' of resistance since while it may be possible to quantify and address the 'cost', 'risk' and 'pain' elements the 'hidden' ones remain hidden and therefore unquantifiable.



For change

The Formula For Change was created by Richard Beckhard and David Gleicher, refined by Kathie Dannemiller[14] and is sometimes called Gleicher's Formula 3.

This formula (D x V x F x CL > R) provides a model for assessing the relative strengths affecting the likely success or otherwise of organisational change programmes.

Three factors must be present for meaningful organisational change to take place. These factors are:

- D = Dissatisfaction with how things are now
- V = Vision of what is possible
- F = First, concrete steps that can be taken towards the vision
- CL = Creative Leadership to navigate towards the vision

[14] The original formula, as created by Gleicher and authored by Beckhard and Harris, is: C = (ABD) > X where C is change, A is the status quo dissatisfaction, B is a desired clear state, D is practical steps to the desired state, and X is the cost of the change. It was Kathleen Dannemiller who dusted off the formula and simplified it, making it more accessible for consultants and managers.

If the product of these four factors is greater than

- R = Resistance

then change is possible. Because D, V, and F are multiplied, if any one of them is absent or low, then the product will be low and therefore not capable of overcoming the resistance.

And for your end-users the resistance is:

- User – Fear/Exposure
- User – Experience/Simplicity
- User – Profit/Gain/Extras

To ensure a successful change it is necessary to use influence and strategic thinking in order to create vision and identify those crucial, early steps towards it. In addition, the organisation must recognise and accept the dissatisfaction that exists by communicating industry trends, leadership ideas, best practice and competitive analysis to identify the necessity for change.

And you have to make sure that you don't end user involvement but you value end-user involvement because they will make it a success.

1.11 The issue of not enough fun: Project Management Fun

How many project managers does it take to change a light bulb?

A better question to ask is perhaps 'how many project managers does it take to have a good project?'

I think just the one, if they have a real sense of humour and an appreciation for the value of 'fun' in a project team.



Richard Branson, Virgin Group said '*Have fun, success will follow. If you aren't having fun, you are doing it wrong. If you feel like getting up in the morning to work on your business is a chore, then it's time to try something else. If you are*

having a good time, there is a far greater chance a positive, innovative atmosphere will be nurtured… A smile and a joke can go a long way, so be quick to see the lighter side of life'.

Andrew Filev, Wrike[15] told me *'In our recent survey on working habits, one of the questions that we asked 2,000 team members, managers, executives and business owners was, "What stimulates your efficiency at work?" Good mood was cited as the second strongest motivator of productivity, ranking higher than such serious factors as a possible reward or fear of superiors. Over 57% of respondents said that good mood is a very powerful motivator. Only a sense of responsibility received more votes.*

This data seems to show that if we want to work on our projects in an efficient and stress-free way, a sense of fun, laughter and humor might be a tool no less powerful than detailed planning and helpful software, among many other things. Winston Churchill said, 'A joke is a very serious thing' so let's plug in a bit of science before you dive into the world of project management humour '

And there is more, Alexander Kjerulf, Woohoo Inc[16] advises *'Think about it: You will spend a third of your life at work. You'll spend more of your waking hours at work than on anything else, including friends and family. Make those hours count. Make them enjoyable and fun. And make sure that the results that come out of those hours are worthy of your time.*

And this is not soft, idealistic, naive, hippie thinking. This is about enjoying work, certainly, but it's also about success. Because people who are happy at work do better work. When you're happy, you are more productive, more creative, more open, more likeable and a better leader. You're also less stressed and get sick less often.

This also means that there's a business pay-off to happiness. In short, happy people make for successful projects and successful projects, along with all of those happy people, make happy companies which guess what? Make more money'

[15] Andrew Filev is the founder and CEO of Wrike. You can learn more about Andrew's views in his Project Management 2.0 blog (www.wrike.com/projectmanagement).
[16] Alexander Kjerulf is the founder of Woohoo Inc and one of the world's leading experts on happiness at work.

In my first book '*The Lazy Project Manager*' I dedicated a chapter to 'Having Fun' (perhaps one of the first project management books to do so?) and stated '*You have to laugh; well I think you have to laugh. Without a little bit of fun in every project then the project world can be a dark and depressing place. Setting a professional but fun structure for your project can really be beneficial for when the problems start to rise up to challenge your plan of perfectness. And problems will inevitably arise'*.

And I know as I have travelled the world and presented at many conferences and congresses that the humour that I put into my keynote presentations makes them popular, enjoyable and, as a result, it gets the message to the audience. There is nothing worse than 60 minutes of fact based detail being presented in a monotone voice without the slightest glimmer of a smile.

There is the commonly shared piece of wisdom that declares that 'it takes more muscles to frown than to smile'? Well it is rubbish. You will hear a whole range of numbers of muscles used but the truth is that medically there is no such balance for or against the 'smile' but what is a universal truth was proven in a Swedish study back in 2002 that confirmed what we already knew[17] and that is people respond in kind to the facial expressions that they encounter. If it was a frown then a frown was returned, if it was a smile then it was a smile that was returned automatically. Interestingly when the subjects of the test were asked to respond to a smile with a frown, or a frown with a smile they really struggled.

So, it isn't any easier to be a happy face rather than a grumpy face but a happy face generally engendered a whole lot of other happy faces.

And what do happy faces make? Well a lot of things it seems.

Happy, positive people tend to live longer apparently:

> A number of studies have shown that happy people tend to live longer. One study looked at a group of nuns who wrote a short biographical sketch before taking their vows. At the age of 85, 90% of the nuns with 'cheerful' biographies were still alive compared to 54% of the least 'cheerful'.

[17]Actually an awful lot of these studies seem to 'prove' what we already know.

So be positive and you might make it to the end of that never-ending project.

Happy, positive people have the 'bounce back' factor:

> It seems that happiness and an attitude of optimism tend to go hand in hand. Optimistic people see bad things as only temporary and good things as mostly permanent. Their positive expectation helps them see and act on opportunities faster and to overcome set-backs easier.
>
> So be positive and you can deal with all of that [insert expletive of your choice here] that heads your way on the projects from hell[18].
>
> Happy, positive people are better teamies:
>
> There is also a strong link between feeling good and doing good. Studies have shown that happy people are more willing to help others, so happy people make the world a better place.
>
> So be positive and your project team members will be all the better for it.

Happy, positive people feel pretty good about it all:

> Let's face it, we all get a good feeling when we feel positive and upbeat, it is infectious isn't it? The better that we feel the more we achieve and get on with others and, as a direct result, we feel even more positive as a result.
>
> Linked to that if we choose work that we like to do and that is meaningful to us, and that is challenging as well, it can generate those peak moments of enjoyment.
>
> So be positive and enjoy your chosen profession of project management.

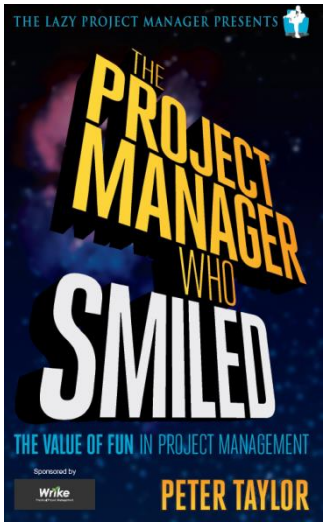
And, as I say in '*The Lazy Project Manager*', the right sort of 'fun' project environment can be good for you as well, '*Done right you will have set the acceptable parameters for fun in your project, both in content and in extent, and you will have engendered that spirit amongst your project team to the*

[18]And talking of Project from Hell – have you checked out www.theprojectfromhell.com yet?

point where, one day, when you are the one on a low, they will make come up and make you smile.'

Be Happy – Have Fun!

And to celebrate the value of fun in project management I released a book called '***The Project Manager Who Smiled'*** –



I strongly feel that this book has to go out to all of the project teams and customers I have worked with, to all of the project managers who sent me their experiences and jokes, as well as to the project management 'celebrities' for their 'PM Celebrity Gossip' contributions.

Walt Disney said 'It's kind of fun to do the impossible' but, unfortunately, many project managers seem to think, or have been trained to think, that 'It's kind of impossible to do the fun' when in reality I say 'It's kind of not possible to not do the fun when you're trying to do the impossible, or something close to the impossible'.

In my previous 'Lazy' books – *'The Lazy Project Manager'*, *'The Lazy Winner'* and *'The Lazy Project Manager and The Project from Hell'* I have included as much 'fun' as I can think of (and get away with), even in *'Leading Successful PMOs'* I gave it my best shot, but with this book the shackles are off and it is 100% humour all of the way.

I hope that you enjoy it and share it all with your project teams.

Have fun and be successful!

1.12 The issue of lack of foresight: The F-Word

No I am not getting all 'Anglo-Saxon' and aggressive but rather reflective on a presentation I delivered earlier on this year – titled 'The F-Word'.

Well you can't accuse me of not going for the attention grabbing headlines in my blog articles[19]

Actually the 'F-Word' I want to talk about is not the one you may be thinking of…

The conference theme I presented under was in fact 'Fight, Flight or Freeze' and this is what inspired me to consider these responses and validate that they were aligned to the spirit of 'The Lazy Project Manager'.

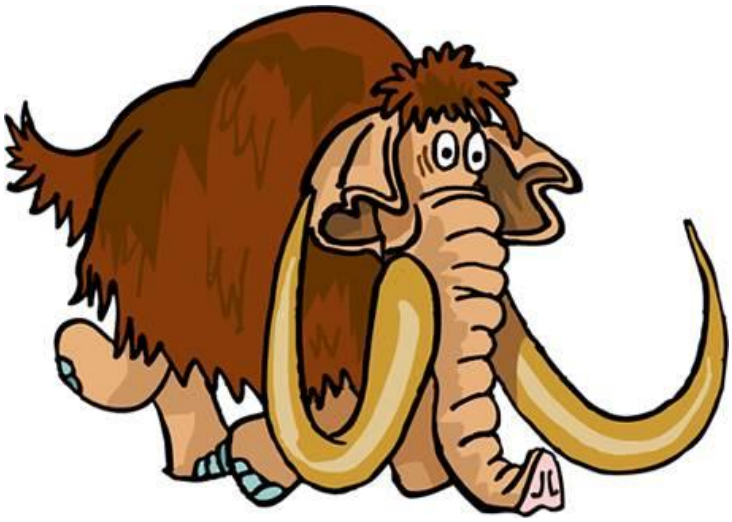
There are actually 4 responses to a stress situation, or imminent danger event:

- Freeze
- Flight
- Fight
- Fawn

The fourth was named by Pete Walker, a therapist who said *'I have named it the fawn response...the fourth 'f' in the fight/flight/ freeze/fawn repertoire of instinctive responses to trauma. Fawn, according to Webster's, means: to act servilely; cringe and flatter'*.

To explain this further to my audience I used a mammoth v caveman situation back in pre-history, the dawn of the would-be Lazy Project Manager/Caveman/Hunter.

[19] Sexy Project Management for example is my most popular article with over 3,000 views so far, and I have done '50 Shades of Lazy, that was pretty popular as well.



Ug, let us call our caveman Ug for the sake of a name, was pretty fed up. He went out each day to hunt for food for his family and tribe members and each day, after many hours, he would return home with a small mammal of some sort and each day his family and tribe members would consume the food and demand more for tomorrow. And so the next day Ug would have to do it all over again. No rest. No time to himself. And yet, budding deep inside Ug was the makings of a 'Lazy' (in a good way) man.

One day, as he gazed down across the plains from the cliff side where he and his family and tribe lived in the caves he stared at the herd of mammoth wandering around and eating.

It suddenly came to him – if he could kill a mammoth his family, tribe and pretty much anyone else that might wander past the caves at meal times would eat for days and days and he, Ug, could take a well-earned rest.

And so Ug hatched a plan to kill a mammoth.

To be honest it wasn't a good plan but it was his plan and the next day saw Ug action his less than well thought through plan by striding down the hillside with a large stone club in one hand a large spear in the other.

He headed directly for the first mammoth and with a loud war cry that attracted the attention of all of Ug's family and friends, not to mention the attention of all of the mammoths nearby, Ug hurled his club at the head of the mammoth. The club flew through the air and bounced on the mammoth's large hairy skull.

This resulted in two things. One that Ug now only had one weapon left, the spear, and two Ug had the full and undivided attention of the rather large mammoth with the three metre length tusks, 8 tonnes of body weight, and a minor headache.

Ug moved on to stage two of his unfortunately unimpressive plan and threw the spear at the same mammoth, again with a mighty war cry. Up on the hillside his family members cheered (hopefully) at Ug's bravery.

This resulted in only one thing that really mattered.

Ug was facing a charging mammoth of significant size coming at him at impressive speed and he now had only four options:



- Freeze – not so good in this case as the mammoth is in front of Ug and heading his way (at speed and with a real purpose)
- Fawn – you rarely want to pet a mammoth in any situation and this was definitely a 'situation' that petting was inappropriate

- Fight – well Ug better have quite a few friends with a lot more weapons willing to join in the fight really fast and in reality these were all still up on the hillside loudly discussing the situation Ug had managed to get himself in to
- Flight – sounds the most sensible in this situation, live to 'FFFF' another day!

History will allow us to fast-forward some months and see Ug, the now truly 'Lazy Project Manager', with a significantly improved plan born out of vivid personal experience overseeing an organised activity with all of the male tribe members driving a mammoth isolated from the herd towards a pre-selected cliff edge to fall to certain death ready for the hunters to recover the body. Fast-forward a few hours from that and we can see Ug and all of his family members feasting on roasted mammoth and Ug looking forward to a few weeks rest and relaxation before his next hunting trip – hunting smarter and not harder!

Flight in this case was the right choice but there is another F-Word that Ug should have considered before that almost fateful first attempt at mammoth hunting.

Let's meet Nigel, Nigel has a body – lots of it, inside and out and Nigel is in 'a situation' – what happens to Nigel's body?

(Warning – this is the science bit)

A reaction begins in the amygdala, which triggers a neural response in the hypothalamus. The initial reaction is followed by activation of the pituitary gland and secretion of the hormone ACTH. The adrenal gland is activated almost simultaneously and releases the neurotransmitter epinephrine. The release of chemical messengers results in the production of the hormone cortisol, which increases blood pressure, blood sugar, and suppresses the immune system. The initial response and subsequent reactions are triggered in an effort to create a boost of energy. This boost of energy is activated by epinephrine binding to liver cells and the subsequent production of glucose.

Additionally, the circulation of cortisol functions to turn fatty acids into available energy, which:

- Acceleration of heart and lung action

- Paling or flushing, or alternating between both
- Inhibition of stomach and upper-intestinal action to the point where digestion slows down or stops
- General effect on the sphincters of the body
- Constriction of blood vessels in many parts of the body
- Liberation of metabolic energy sources for muscular action
- Dilation of blood vessels for muscles
- Inhibition of the lacrimal gland (responsible for tear production and salivation)
- Dilation of pupil
- Relaxation of bladder
- Inhibition of erection
- Auditory exclusion (loss of hearing)
- Tunnel vision (loss of peripheral vision)
- Disinhibition of spinal reflexes
- Shaking

Do you recognise any of this? I certainly do.

I ran a significant project in the early days of my project management career and, to put it simply, I made myself pretty ill as a result. I was so focused and so involved in well 'everything' that I suffered from stress both during and after the project ended. I did neither myself nor the project any good acting this way.

There are many negative effects of stress:

- Physiological effects
    - Headaches
    - Muscle tension and pain
    - Chest pain
    - Fatigue
    - Changes in sex drive
    - Upset stomach
    - Problems with sleeping
    - Urinary problems
- Psychological effects
    - Anxiety
    - Restlessness

    - Lack of motivation or focus
    - Irritability or anger
    - Depression
- Behavioral effects
    - Over-eating or under-eating
    - Drug or alcohol abuse
    - Social withdrawal

Stress is, in the short-term, a good thing in that those instinctive responses to trauma kick in and we move in to survival mode rapidly and go for our selected 'F' response but stress in anything but the short-term is a bad thing, as I found out to my own personal cost.

But I learnt from the experience and this led me to the revised behaviour that forms the basis of The Lazy Project Manager[20] - just like Ug I learnt from the bad experience and changed the way I acted.

And there is more - It has to do with the 'fight or flight"' gland in our brain, the amygdala mentioned earlier. As it turns out, this little gland has significant implications for project communications.

When the amygdala 'takes over' in a 'fight or flight' situation we almost instantly lose the ability to do three things:

- Empathize
- Reason
- Listen

Given how crucial those three things are to productive and constructive communications (both personal and professional!) then we need to be pragmatic and realistic about our communications whenever we are angry or very stressed. Specifically, we might need to give ourselves a 'time out' by not sending that email, or making that phone call, or continuing a heated 'discussion' with our significant other or our work colleague.

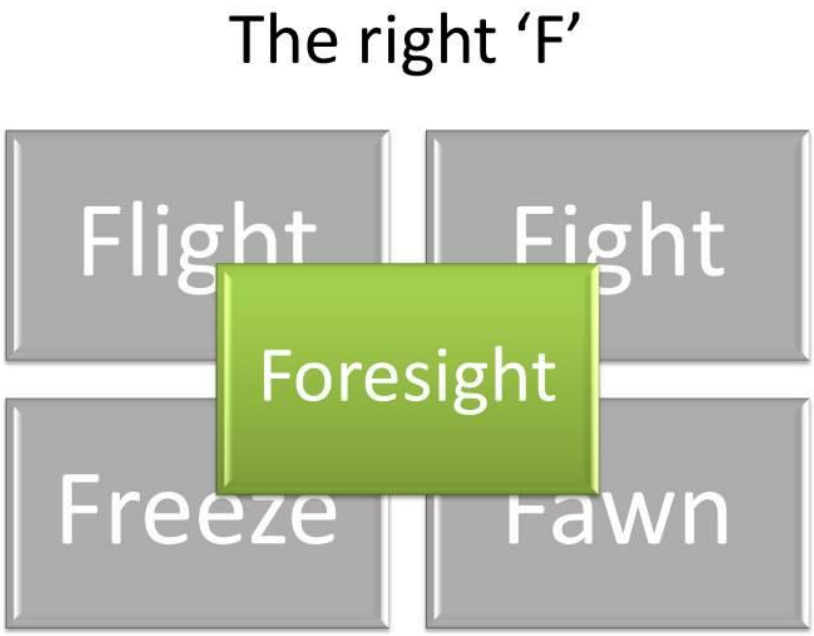
One last piece of advice – there is a real risk with regards to the 'Fight' syndrome option. Used successfully in one situation there is a real possibility of a future addiction to this option in the next situation and the one after that and so on. You face a tough situation and select fight mode, as a result you

[20] The Lazy Project Manager, Infinite Ideas, published 2009 – author Peter Taylor

win the day or get want you want – you feel great! And so you respond the same next time around and there is no longer a possibility for any other response and this doesn't make for a good project manager (or person).

And so on the real 'F-Word', the one I want to talk about, the one that our caveman friend Ug should have used, the fifth 'F'.

This F-Word is 'Foresight' – the greatest strength a project manager has is to be prepared.



I was given some great advice when I started out from my manager and that was 'No surprises' – he said that he would support me in all situations as long as he was pre-warned by me. He didn't expect me to be perfect and he knew there would be problems at times but as long as I was the one telling him about the issue or challenge first he was confident that I was in control but if someone else told him first then I perhaps wasn't.

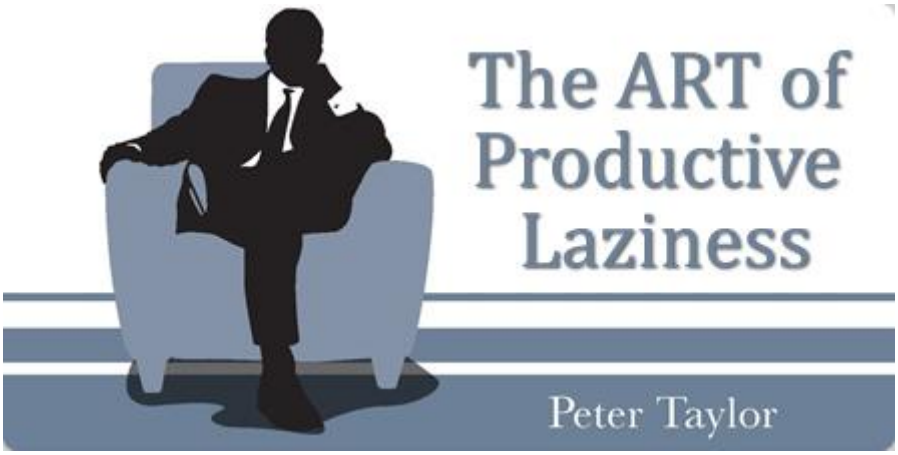
So 'No surprises' is a good motto for all project managers.

And that is where 'Productive Laziness' comes in – working smarter and not harder – being well prepared and therefore being capable of dealing with anything.

Go forward use the F-Word wisely and have foresight!



The Lazy Project Manager newsletter; why not sign up and get regular 'Lazy' PM news MANAGED BY MAILCHIMP



The Lazy Project Manager free podcast on iTunes; listen in to hear the latest 'Lazy' thoughts HOSTED BY JELLYCAST

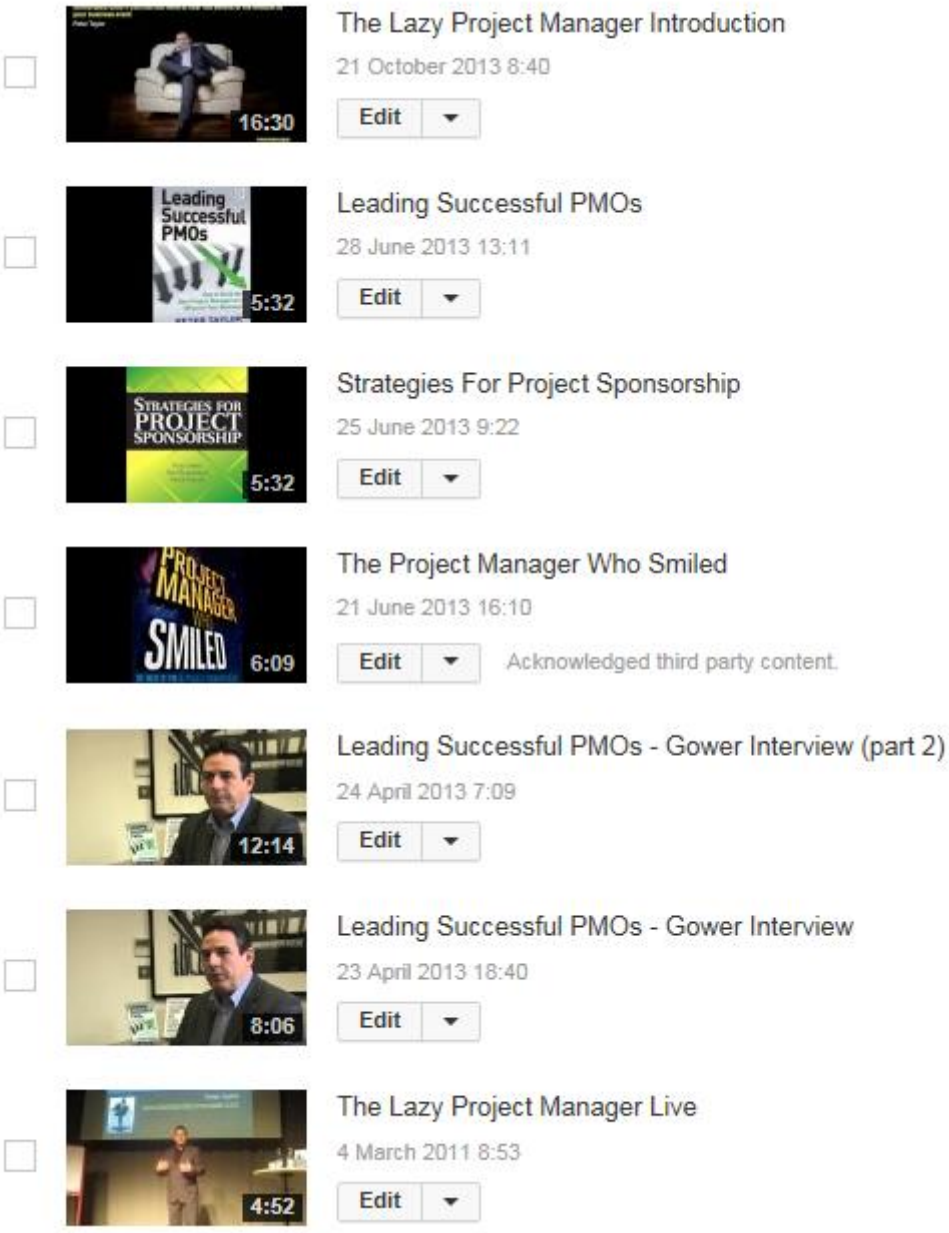
The Lazy Wall of Fame

In which the author is overwhelmed by some the kind words of congratulations that he has received from some of his world-wide supporters, and urges you to check out these great people…

As I have mentioned the support and encouragement I have enjoyed over the past five years has been amazing and below you can hear from just a few of my supporters – they all offer fantastic services to project management profession so check them out please.

Congratulations Peter. In my view the Lazy PM was absolute gold. A small book that provided a huge amount of value!	Stephen Dowling at ETM Management Training
Frankly Peter, I must ask what have you achieved? I mean you may have altered the thinking of a lot of project managers – so what? Yes, you may have made some people more effective by being lazy however come on man., what have you really achieved…? Well done on your achievement and let's all be lazy!	Ron Rosenhead at Project Agency
Happy Anniversary! Congratulations for your new book to keep our laziness!	Pablo Lledó at PL Project Management
5 years? Not bad for a lazy project manager! It's been delightful to watch your success since 2009 Keep up the fantastic work!	Cesar Abeid at PM for the Masses

surfprint BUSINESS CARDS ONLINE	*Congratulations Peter. The team at surfprint.com wish you continued success in your pursuit of laziness.*	Stuart at Surfprint
PM Podcast™	*Congratulazy! The Project Management Podcast*	*Cornelius Fichtner at the PM Podcast*
arkatay CONSULTING	*To make being lazy look easy is hard work! You're making super stars of project managers, keep it up!*	Lars Berglund at Arkatay Consulting
Ignite Creative	*Extra laziness is now being underwritten into our core constitution as of today. Thank you!*	Mezza and Steve at Ignite Creative
pmmentor	*Congratulations and thank you for the amazing inspiration that "The Lazy Project Manager" continues to provide to so many people in the project management profession. Judging by the impact of the book, it is very hard to believe that it is only 5 years young!*	Dino Butorac at PM Mentor
best badges .co.uk BEST PRODUCTS BEST SERVICE	*On behalf of all us here who have been inspired by 'Productive Laziness', we say a great big Hurrah to you after 5 years of 'The Lazy Project Manager'! Stay lazy and stay focussed on the things that matter. Many congratulations Peter!*	Richard at Best Badges Ltd



The Lazy Project Manager YouTube Channel CHECK IT OUT

The Next 5 Lazy Years

In which the author boldly asks you to help in the future with his aspirations and plans because there is much left to be done and a long list of places he has never visited yet …

So what next for this Lazy Guy?

Well there are still plenty of places that I would love to visit – whether speaking at conferences or private engagements, delivering workshops or consultancy.

Iceland remains at the top of my list – blame Blue Peter[21] back in my childhood for that one – it just looks an incredible place to tour around – so don't hold back, invite me!

I would really like to go back to Australia and New Zealand, definitely Canada, and China has to be on the list as well.

Actually you know I just love to travel so if you have a need just let me know and I will gladly help out; if it is somewhere exotic then that is just a bonus.

What else? Well I would, if I am honest, love to win some sort of award or formal recognition for what I do. By far the most important thing for me is that 'the masses', the people, those running the majority of projects out there gain value and enjoyment from what I do and write but as an added bonus to this some such recognition would always be appreciated and would affirm that I must be doing something right.

And having taken the platform at the biggest IPMA conference in the world in 2013 as master of ceremonies I would love to take the stage at the biggest PMI conference as well in the near future as a keynote.

[21] Blue Peter is a British CBBC children's television programme. It first aired in 1958 and is the longest-running children's TV show in the world.

On the engagement front it would be fantastic to secure a role leading/guiding a global project management community in a major organisation.

And on the sponsorship front I would love one of the 'big boys' in enterprise or social project management systems to pick up the 'Lazy PM' brand and drive their marketing through the benefits of 'productive laziness'.[22]

Plus I have a long list of writing projects underway (you can see these in a later chapter) and like all authors there is an idea for a novel deep inside me just waiting the escape.

I will also continue to work with the partners I have round the world, seek new partners as well[23], and develop new products and services.

In addition there will be some surprises on the way that is for sure.

A 5 year plan is all well and good but the reality is that there is no way I could have planned out the previous 5 years when I first wrote The Lazy Project Manager. It has all been a sequence of happy opportunities, mixed in with some stuff that didn't work out of course, a shot or two of hard work together with an added dash of luck and a slice of open mindness – the perfect cocktail of the lazy life.

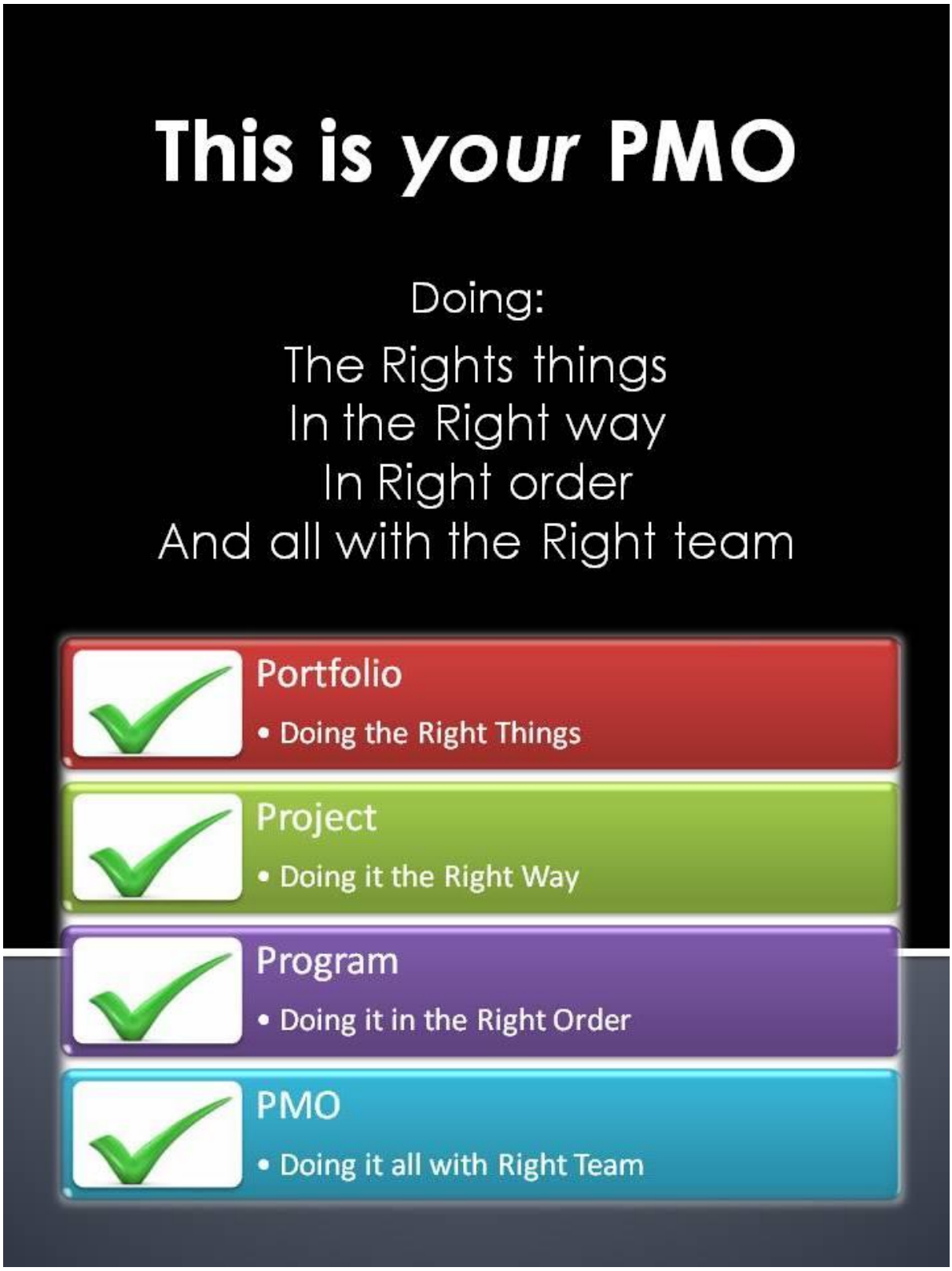


I can't predict the next 5 years beyond my desire to stay relevant, keep entertaining and continue to share knowledge.

[22] If not this then the podcasts and newsletters and website are open to sponsorship
[23] Want to find out more about this? Get in touch today!

Maybe I will be looking back in 5 years having enjoyed a second cocktail much like the last 5 years, or maybe there will be a new one to try out – who knows?

That is what makes it all so exciting!



The 'Right' poster from 'Leading Successful PMOs' (Gower)

The Other Non-Lazy Books

In which you get the pleasure (or pain) of hearing about all the other books that the author has managed to persuade a number of publishers around the world to let him write based on the success of The Lazy Project Manager…

1.13 Books today and books tomorrow

Beyond the original book I have been delighted to produce a number of other books:

1. **The Lazy Project Manager**[24] (Infinite Ideas)
2. **Strategies for Project Sponsorship** (Management Concepts Press) - this book should be given to every newly assigned project sponsor, read and referred to by every project manager, and on the desk of every organizational executive as a reference.
3. **The Lazy Winner**[25] (infinite Ideas) - is for all those who simply want to do more with less effort and succeed in their working and personal lives without rushing around like headless chickens or putting in 100 hour weeks.
4. **Leading Successful PMOs** (Gower) - outlines the basics of setting up a PMO and clearly explains how to ensure it will do exactly what you need it to do - the right things, in the right way, in the right order, with the right team.
5. **The Lazy Project Manager and the Project from Hell (**Infinite Ideas) – run your own project from hell workshop.
6. **The Project Manager Who Smiled** (TLPM Publishing) - a superb resource of inspiration and entertainment and project fun.
7. **The 36 Stratagems**[26] (Infinite Ideas) – a modern interpretation of a Chinese strategy classic.
8. **The Dance of the Meerkats** (Infinite Ideas) – A fable of parent/child relationships and change.

[24] Translated in to German and Portuguese
[25] Translated in to German and Portuguese and with a Malaysian version
[26] Translated in to Italian

9. **The Art of Laziness** (Infinite Ideas) – a free eBook to promote the other 'Lazy books'.
10. **The History of Lazy** (TLPM Publishing) – how The Lazy Project Manager got started
11. **The Lazy Blogger** (TLPM Publishing) – a series of blogs under the banner of travel: Air, Land and Sea
12. **The Extra Lazy Project Manager** (TLPM Publishing) – celebrating 5 years of laziness

Out very soon are:

13. **Real Project Management** (Kogan Page Dec 2014) – takes an in-depth look at the challenges we face in running projects in today's complex and global environment.
14. **Delivering Successful PMOs** (Gower Jan 2015) – companion to Leading Successful PMOs focusing on the 'how to'
15. **Project Branding** (RMC Publishing Jan 2015) – project marketing and project branding, the value and the process

Plus I was a happy contributor to a few more:

16. **Project Pain Reliever** (J Ross)
17. **A day in the life of a Project Manager** (Saladis)
18. **Project Leadership - Secrets of 40 PPM Experts on Changing Project Management to Project Leadership**(AtTask)
19. **52 tips for breaking in to Project Management**(PapercutPM)
20. **PM Flash Blog** (Shim Marom editor)

And currently in various states of development are:

21. **Social Project Management** (Gower 2015)
22. **Project Health** (Publisher to be decided 2015)
23. **Presenting like an Executive**(Publisher to be decided)
24. **The Squid of Despair** (Publisher to be decided)
25. **Best of British** (Gower 2015)

How 'Lazy' is all of that in 5 years!

1.14 Your book ideas

There were some interesting suggestions when I asked the question 'what should I write about next?'

1. Project Management for brilliant Technical People; making the transition
2. Complex stakeholder management
3. Embracing Innovation
4. Sustainable Lazy Project Management[27]
5. The Lazy PMO? The Lazy Sponsor (oh perhaps not we have enough of those already!)[28]
6. How to break out of being typecast for projects
7. Influencing : the lost art of PM war[29]
8. The Marketing PM[30]
9. Agile
10. PM fundamentals, including methods and recommendations on how to address questions & issues when you're green
11. Stubborn Suppliers
12. How to get executives to back off and let the PMs do their work[31]
13. Working on more than one project at once

Thank you – some really interesting ideas.

[27] See my piece on Green project management
[28] Obviously a person with a sense of humour
[29] You might enjoy the 36 Stratagems
[30] See my plans for Project Branding
[31] See my piece on Executives stop failing your projects



Where is the latest file version? Who is responsible for the task? Is your project on track? **Wrike helps you quickly answer all your project-related questions.**

- Enables real-time collaboration
- Creates graphs and charts to display project progress
- Facilitates mobile productivity with iPhone and Android apps
- Integrates with Google Drive, Dropbox, and Box
- Offers essential project management tools: Gantt chart, time tracker, customized report tools, and much more
- Integrates with MS Project

Exclusive deal for Lazy Project Managers:
3-for-1 pricing

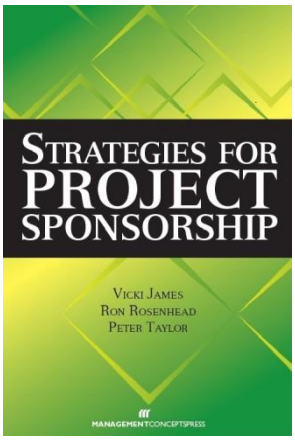
After your Wrike trial ends, pay for one month and get your next two months free!

Offer value: save $238 for a team of 15.

Get your free Wrike trial now

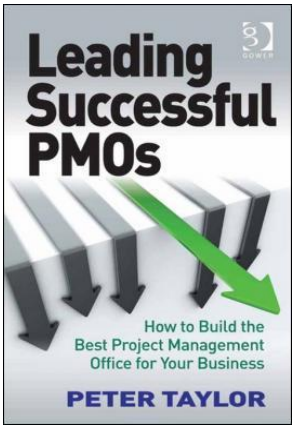
The Lazy and Non-Lazy Special Offers

In which you get invited to benefit from a whole bunch of special offers that publishers and training organisations associated with the author are offering to help celebrate this 5 year anniversary…



Get 10% off the list price of 'Strategies for Project Sponsorship'

Send an email Vanessa Gillette at vgillette@managementconcepts.com and mention that you would like to get the 'LAZY' discount



The eBook will be £20.00/$39.95 for the period up to 17th October 2014 - to purchase the ebooks at this special price go to:

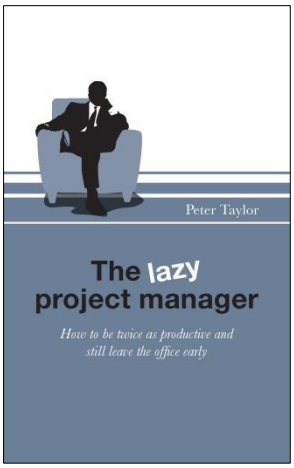
eBook pdf
eBook ePub



The Lazy Project Manager Course Online: Save $50 Now!

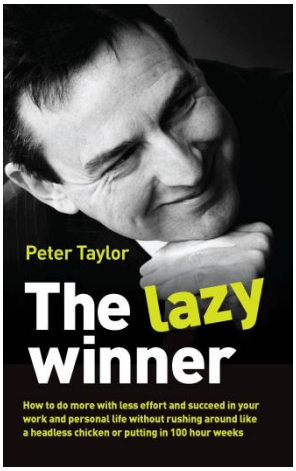
Learn the art of productive laziness from the comfort of your own home, in a convenient eLearning format. For a limited time, save $50 using promo code PTMPUG50 – expires 17th October 2014

Learn More and Take a Free Sample Lesson!



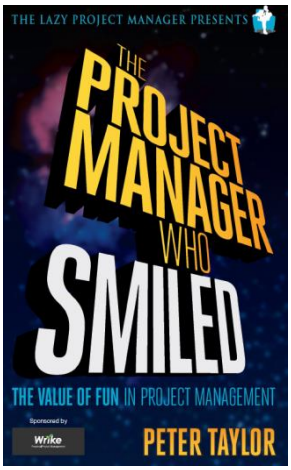
To celebrate the fifth anniversary of the publication of Peter Taylor's bestselling book 'The Lazy Project Manager' Infinite Ideas is offering a discount of 20% off of the book and free delivery within the UK

Infinite Ideas Special Offer



To celebrate the fifth anniversary of the publication of Peter Taylor's bestselling book 'The Lazy Project Manager' Infinite Ideas is also offering a discount of 20% off of Peter's second 'Lazy' book 'The Lazy Winner' and free delivery within the UK

Infinite Ideas Special Offer



eBook copy (pdf) of The Project Manage Who Smiled for only £5

Buy Here


projectplace
now a part of planview
" Communication has improved dramatically and we have reduced travel costs by 20%. We are now a real global team. Projectplace is the best tool on the market."
Bernd Sengpiehl,
CIO AEG Power Solutions B.V.
AEG
POWER SOLUTIONS
Get your free trial today
excellence in collaboration
projectplace.com

The Lazy Guy

This is the part where the author shamelessly promotes himself; you may wish to quit reading the book at this point because in all honesty it is just Peter banging on about how great he is (well plus a few other people that seem to like him as well) and how he can definitely help you and your organisation…

1.15 Peter Taylor



'Progress isn't made by early risers, it is made by lazy men trying to find easier ways to do something'

Peter Taylor is the author of two best-selling books on 'Productive Laziness' – 'The Lazy Winner' and 'The Lazy Project Manager'.

In the last 4 years he has focused on writing and lecturing with over 200 presentations around the world in over 20 countries and has been described as 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project

management world today'. He also acts as an independent consultant working with some of the major organizations in the world coaching Executive Sponsors, PMO leaders and Project Managers.

His mission is to teach as many people as possible that it is achievable to 'work smarter and not harder' and to still gain success in the battle of the work/life balance.

More information can be found at www.thelazyprojectmanager.com and www.peterbtaylor.co.uk – and through his free podcasts in iTunes.

To find out more about Peter Taylor or to discuss a speaking/consulting opportunity then please:

Email to: peter.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Phone: +44 (0)2476 540324

1.16 Speaking and Presentations

Peter offers a wide range of speaking subjects:

The Lazy Project Manager

'Progress isn't made by early risers. It's made by lazy men trying to find easier ways to do something'

> Learn about the art of productive laziness with The Lazy Project Manager; understanding what is meant by the 'productive lazy' approach to Projects (and life) and learn how to apply these lessons 'to be twice as productive and still leave the office early'.
>
> The session will cover the definition of productive laziness, the science behind the theory (yes there really is some), and will share some personal learning experiences that led to the creation of 'The Lazy Project Manager'. In addition the audience will consider the three key project stages, one of which the 'lazy' project manager works very hard in and the second they should be in the comfortable position of enjoying the 'comfy chair' safe in the knowledge that the project is well under control and the final where often some critical work is missed.

Leading Successful PMOs

'How to build the best PMO for your business and keep it relevant to your business'

The presentation is about successfully leading a PMO (whatever you understand by those three letters) to deliver better projects, better business to the customers of those projects and to the organisation that you work for, and to best serve the contributing project managers from both a professional and a personal perspective.

The session will explore some of the research carried out by Peter Taylor for his book 'Leading Successful PMOs'. The book brings together the experience and views of PMO leaders from around the world and the project managers that work within the PMOs, as well as those who are now seeking leaders for their PMOs.

The Lazy Winner

'Ambition is a poor excuse for not having sense enough to be lazy'

Learn about the art of personal productive laziness with The Lazy Winner; Through the strength of saying 'No' and the skill of saying 'Yes' and understand how being 'lazy' can make you more successful?

Meet Nigel our hero and enjoy some of his educational sense of humour as well learning how he progresses on the path of enlightenment in all things 'lazy'.

Escape your own limiting comfort zone with the influence of 5 and the relationship of 6 and gain insight in to how get past any roadblocks that life throws at you.

PM Superstars

How many people know what you do?

Beyond your fellow project managers and outside of your close family, who really understands what 'being a project manager' is all about? Possibly even your close family wave you goodbye each day without really understanding what you actually do. But you are a 'Project Superstar' and I can prove it!

Taking project management out in the open will spread the word outside our own community about what a great bunch of people we are and how project management is a valuable skill to pretty much everybody. We should appreciate how we are seen from 'outside' our project world and understand which of our many skills others would value.

The Presentation on Presentations

We aren't born to be professional level presenters but through this entertaining presentation the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of good presentations are explored along with a 'how to prepare' for that all important event.

With a few simple lessons taught through the very medium of 'presentation' the audience will take away some great ideas for improving their own technique and 'death by PowerPoint' is definitely not the outcome.

The F-Word

No I am not getting all 'Anglo-Saxon' and aggressive but actually the 'F-Word' I want to talk about is not the one you may be thinking of…

'Fight, Flight or Freeze' are the typical responses to a stress situation or imminent danger event and this is what inspired me to consider these responses and validate that they were aligned to the spirit of 'The Lazy Project Manager'.

Discover the 5 F's of project management and which one is the critical one to your future project success.

The Project Manager who Smiled

Project management is a serious business; but it is a serious business that can be a lot of fun too.

Now whilst there is, quite rightly, lots of talk about the serious side of the profession there is a lot less that addresses the more enjoyable aspects, and so I give you 'The Project Manager Who Smiled' .

- A good laugh not only reduces tension and relieves stress, but also helps to increase team bonding and boost morale
- When you're happy, you are more productive, more creative, more open, more likeable and a better leader

Strategies for Project Sponsorship

It has been said that 'A project is one small step for the project sponsor, one giant leap for the project manager' - but wouldn't we all be that much happier if that 'giant leap' was supported by a really professional project sponsor?

Based on the research from the new book 'Strategies for Project Sponsorship' (Management Concepts Press) one of the books authors, Peter Taylor, explores the current challenges of project sponsorship maturity and will deliver some techniques for creating an effective partnership with today's project sponsors, as well as looking to the future on what could be.

The Journey of Expectation Management

Based on the learning experiences from running a major PMO, developing a project methodology and being active in major sales initiatives this presentation explores the early project phases when the partnership of supplier and customer was often tested as both climbed the learning curve of understanding – as well as overcoming the wall of miss-appreciation that the 'sales' or pre-project process cheerfully built as high as possible.

Peter Taylor has dubbed this the 'Journey of Expectation Management'.

Real Project Management

Organizations demand that the projects that they commission these days are successful in order to meet their increasingly aggressive strategic goals, and for this to be possible the project managers that lead these strategic projects need to be the very best that they can be. But what skills are demanded on the new generation of 21st Century Project Managers?

Join Peter Taylor in saying 'goodbye' to the 'Accidental Project Manager' and 'hallo' to the Real Project Managers of today.

Sexy Project Management

'50 Shades of Project Management that is anything but grey!'

At a recent major conference for project managers, after the opening keynote speech, the audience was invited to ask questions of the renowned ambassador for the project management profession. One question that somewhat took the speaker aback was 'when will project management be sexy?'

A great question I felt and one that the speaker responded to reasonably well (eventually, after the initial shock…) but a question that has made me think about the concept of 'sexy project management' for some time since that particular event.

What do we mean, in this context, by 'sexy' project management?

Customised Presentation

Peter is happy to develop a presentation specifically for your event, just contact him to discuss your requirements. Presentations can be anything from 20 minutes through to 2 hours, or indeed full day training courses/workshops are also available.

1.17 Training and Workshops

Peter also offers a range of workshops, 1 to 5 days in duration:



BENEFITS

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- *Apply the approach of 'Productive Laziness'
- *Understand how to better manage themselves while managing others on projects
- *Identify ways to apply the concept of working smarter, not harder
- *Apply personal efforts where it matters most on a project
- *Work with team members in a more productive way
- *Plan projects to start the way they want them to start
- *Communicate more effectively with the entire project team

THE ART OF PRODUCTIVE LAZINESS

'Progress isn't made by early risers. It's made by lazy men trying to find easier ways to do something.'

Learn about the art of productive laziness with The Lazy Project Manager, understanding what is meant by the 'productive lazy' approach to projects (and life) and learn how to apply these lessons 'to be twice as productive and still leave the office early'.

The course will cover the definition of productive laziness, the science behind the theory (yes there really is some), and will share some personal learning experiences and look at the key project stages, one of which the 'lazy' project manager works very hard in and the second they should be in the position of enjoying the 'comfy chair' safe in the knowledge that the project is well under control.

A specific focus will be made on the third area, project closure, which can be done so much better with very little effort but with a significant value add for all 'would be' lazy project managers.

Who should attend?

- Project Managers
- Senior
- PM practitioners
- Project Administrators
- PMO staff
- Team members

All are welcome to learn about effective project management and team efficiency.

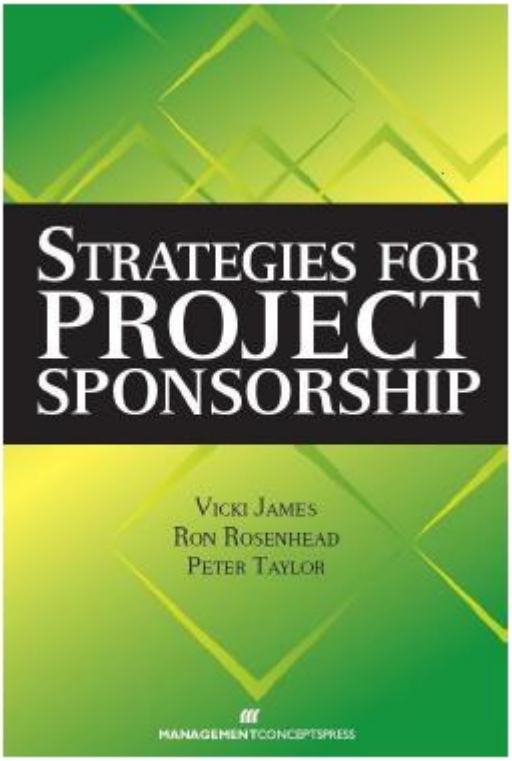
Contact Peter today at peter.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Peter has been described as 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today'

Strategies for Project Sponsorship

A one day Workshop with Peter Taylor The *Lazy* Project Manager

WWW.THELAZYPROJECTMANAGER.COM



BENEFITS

You will learn more about understanding the project sponsors you work with, or indeed what type of sponsor you are, and how to develop an effective working partnership between project manager and project sponsor.

*Better understand what role a sponsor should play and what good sponsorship looks like

*Learn how to understand the project sponsor that you have and how to work effectively with them

*Be aware of the role that you should play in developing executive sponsorship inside your organisation

*Recognise at a personal level what is needed to make the transition to project sponsor

STRATEGIES FOR PROJECT SPONSORSHIP

It has been said that '*A project is one small step for the project sponsor, one giant leap for the project manager*' - but wouldn't we all be that much happier if that 'giant leap' was supported by a really professional project sponsor?

Based on the research from the new book 'Strategies for Project Sponsorship' (Management Concepts Press) one of the books authors, Peter Taylor, will lead this workshop to explore the current challenges of project sponsorship maturity and will deliver some techniques for creating an effective partnership with today's project sponsors, as well as looking to the future on what could be.

effective sponsorship within your organisation.

The workshop can be focused on project managers wanting to learn to be more effective with the sponsors they work with, or for project sponsors wanting to improve their skills.

Who should attend?

- Project Managers
- Project Sponsors
- PMO staff

Regardless of your experience with project sponsorship in the past this workshop will allow you to understand more from all perspectives.

Contact Peter today at peter.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Peter has been described as 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today'



RECOMMENDATIONS

'Peter is a powerful, passionate and persuasive speaker'

'If you are looking for a terrific presenter for your event, I highly recommend Peter'

'Peter's humorous and engaging style grabbed everyone from the moment he started ... if that's being 'Lazy' then fantastic'

'Peter's inspiring style and humour made him one of the top contributors to the event'

'Peter is an outstanding performer, which he has so elegantly showed as the Master of Ceremonies'

'Peter is a great person to work with and has an amazing sense of humour'

PETER TAYLOR

Peter Taylor is the author of two best-selling books on 'Productive Laziness' – 'The Lazy Winner' and 'The Lazy Project Manager'.

In the last 4 years he has focused on writing and lecturing with over 200 presentations around the world in over 20 countries.

He has been described as *'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today'*.

Based on his experience in travelling the world and speaking to over 25,000 people Peter has developed his own 'Presentation Skills' training.

Keynote – the Presentation on Presentations, the best practice of good presentation taught through the very medium of a presentation.

Workshop – customised for each unique audience the one day workshop takes you on a journey of understanding as to what makes a good presentation and how you can improve your style and skills.

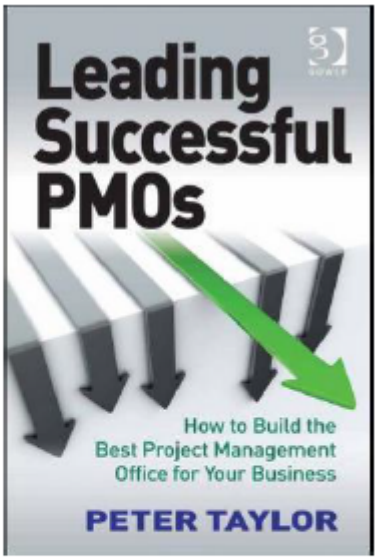
Coaching – typically following the workshop each student is supported at their next presentation through a coaching process.

The 'Presentation Skills' training is an effective and practical program that delivers results using simple tools and real experience to bring out the best in all who attend.

WWW.PETERBTAYLOR.CO.UK

'Progress isn't made by early risers. It's made by lazy men trying to find easier ways to do something'

Leading Successful PMOs



A one day Workshop with Peter Taylor The *Lazy* Project Manager

WWW.THELAZYPROJECTMANAGER.COM

BENEFITS

You will learn more about the sorts of PMO that can be adopted and the styles of operation and management.

At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

*Understand the meaning and purpose of a successful PMO

*Appreciate the 5 basic types of PMO and recognise the 4 operational modes of PMOs

*Take the 'PMO pulse' of their PMO and identify areas for improvement

*Design a PMO that their organisation really needs

The workshop includes a real life case study for student reference and discussion.

LEADING SUCCESSFUL PMOS

How to build the best PMO for your business and keep it relevant

This workshop aims to aid all would-be and current PMO leaders. As a PMO leader myself, three greenfield PMOs developed in the last 8 years, I know that this can be a really rewarding experience, but not an easy one to find the right line to balance the projects and the business demands.

The workshop is about successfully leading a PMO to deliver better projects, better business to the customers of those projects and to the organisation that you work for, and to best serve the contributing project managers from both a professional and a personal perspective.

The workshop will explore some of the research carried out for the book 'Leading Successful PMOs' (Gower). The book brings together the experience and views of PMO leaders from around the world and the project managers that work within the PMOs, as well as those who are now seeking leaders for their PMOs.

Together in the workshop we will identify what it is that successful PMO leaders have and do that allows them to succeed and how the rest of us can learn from those proven experiences.

The workshop is directed at anyone sponsoring, leading or indeed working in a PMO – whether a 'greenfield' PMO start up or a mature PMO.

Contact Peter today at peter.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Peter has been described as 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today'



The Project from Hell

A one day 'hellish' workshop experience with Peter Taylor The *Lazy* Project Manager

WWW.THELAZYPROJECTMANAGER.COM

Based on the best-selling book 'The Lazy Project Manager and The Project from Hell'

To Hell and back in one workshop!

Suitable for: Team building – Kick Off events – PM evaluations – and non-Project Managers

BENEFITS

Attendees will derive real value from the Project from Hell workshops as they very much reflect everyday real life scenarios; what can go wrong, mistakes that can be made, loss of control that can be experienced etc. They have to identify these and work out ways in which such events can be more successfully managed in the future.

The amount of time available is tightly controlled to generate the stresses and strains of real world projects and team working. Quickly this is no longer a case study but a living breathing project that must be saved, by a deadline that is rapidly approaching and cannot be missed.

Welcome to your real project world!

THE PROJECT FROM HELL

Off to the time machine to save the worst project in history...

Why learn about Project Success and Failure Factors in a dry, traditional manner when instead, you could participate in rescuing the Project from Hell in this exciting interactive and fun workshop?

Compete with your colleagues in bringing this project back from the brink of complete failure and in to the realms of success – from Hell to Heaven.

Attendees are divided into a number of teams whose role it is to analyse a failed project case study and then present back, what went wrong, why it went wrong, and their recommendations for improvements to ensure future success.

With all events encountered being based on actual events across many projects, the Project from Hell has relevance across any business sector and is very appropriate for mixed project skills within teams. To quote one delegate: 'I'm sure this project from hell is based on Project X that we canned last year'.

The aim is a challenging but enjoyable environment with lessons learnt staying in the mind because of the practical and experiential nature of the learning environment.

Therefore the audience is 'everyone' connected in any way to project based activity.

Contact Peter today at peter.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Peter has been described as 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today'



Laugh with The *Lazy* Project Manager

A unique project management themed stand-up comedy entertainment experience with

Peter Taylor

WWW.THELAZYPROJECTMANAGER.COM

COMEDY

Peter Taylor is a recovering second generation Virgo with a penchant for occasionally dressing up as a root vegetable and generally getting bored when there hasn't been a laugh or a smile in the last 60 minutes.

But he is also the author of the insanely successful books 'The Lazy Project Manager' and 'The PM Who Smiled' as well as a whole bunch of other books.

And now he is delighted to present the unique 'Project Management Stand-Up Comedy Event'

Stories, jokes, experiences all blend in to a superb one man, one microphone (and an unlimited number of laughs) special occasion for your next PM gathering.

LIVE AND LAUGHING

How many project managers does it take to change a light-bulb?

A better question to ask is perhaps 'how many project managers does it take to have a good project?'

I think just the one, if they have a real sense of humour and

an appreciation for the value of 'fun' in a project team.

Richard Branson, Virgin Group, said *'Have fun, success will*

follow. If you aren't having fun, you are doing it wrong'

A smile and a joke can go a long way, so be quick to see the lighter side of life.

Project management is a serious business; but it is a serious business that can be a lot of fun too.

I have presented to and trained hundreds of project managers across the world and I always advocate putting the right level of fun into the project work. I have personally seen how it can improve project morale and help keep projects moving forwards in a positive manner.

Now whilst there are, quite rightly, lots of times when a project team need to be serious there is also huge value in having a damn good laugh every now and then.

When you're happy, you are more productive, more creative, more open, more likeable and a better leader.

So smile and be productive.

Contact Peter today at peter.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Peter has been described as 'perhaps the most entertaining and inspiring speaker in the project management world today'

1.18 Recommendations

The most recent recommendations on LinkedIn – see full list at LinkedIn Profile

> *In my role as PMI Cologne board member I arranged the "Leading Successful PMOs" workshop run by Peter and a Chapter meeting with his presentation on Lazy Project Management. In both events Peter was demonstrating his deep PM knowledge in an easy to understand and fun to listen-to way. Based on scientific research, a lot of interesting experience and excellent humor Peter kept the audience attentive to each word until late evening. Thanks for these great events Peter*
>
> March 21, 2014, Robert Link PMI Cologne was Peter's client
>
> *In March 2014, Peter Taylor delivered a very appreciated seminar at Scandinavia's largest congress on project management, Passion for Projects. In the seminar titled "Strategies for project sponsorship", Peter shared valuable insights for how project managers and organizations can leverage the important role of project sponsors. Peter is a very skilled speaker, and the session received fantastic feedback from the audience. Anyone looking for an inspiring speaker about project management should certainly turn to Peter Taylor*
>
> March 21, 2014, Jonas Denvall PMI Sweden was Peter's client
>
> *Peter is an excellent speaker who perfectly understands to bring across his PM expertise in a sophisticated and fascinating manner.*
>
> January 16, 2014, Wolfgang Kerstner Erste Group Bank AG was Peter's client
>
> *In my experience, Peter has proved to be a high achiever and a very ambitious person. Peter has an exceptional motivation, energy and confidence which enable him to persistently search for improvements in his everyday tasks. Furthermore, Peter appreciates a challenge; he sets high goals and does not quit until he has achieved them. His acute social and diplomatic skills, coupled with an easy-going approach, put him immediately in the position of referent authority. His solidarity and honest approach often diffuse tension over silent authority disputes and imbue other colleagues with encouraging productivity. .*

He is an outstanding performer, which he has so elegantly showed as the master of ceremony of the 27th IPMA World Congress. Finally, there is no doubt whatsoever that he will make a significant contribution to any professional setting and therefore has my full recommendation.

October 5, 2013, Mladen Vukomanović project manager for 27th IPMA World Congress and Assistant Professor at University of Zagreb was Peter's client

I met Peter one year ago during workshop in Zagreb which was organized by PM Mentor. In that moment I knew I want Peter to be one of our trainers during the Global Young Crew Workshop! Now when the GYCW was finished few days ago there is nothing more to say but thanks to Peter for being so great! Participants are very satisfied and that is the best proof!

October 5, 2013, Gordana Blažević worked directly with Peter at The Lazy Project Manager Ltd

We invited Peter to hold the first Project from Hell workshop in Frankfurt. The results were excellent. His workshop was very engaging for the audience and with his outgoing personality; he kept everyone motivated and focused. We are looking forward to the next workshop already.

September 26, 2013, Sebastian Schieke of Scitus Gmbh worked directly with Peter at The Lazy Project Manager Ltd

Peter has been on my wish list for 3 years and on June 2013 he presented at our annual Best Practice User Group (BPUG.nl) in the Netherlands and provided a workshop "Creating a successful corporate PMO".

Peter is a great person to work with and has an amazing sense of humor. But most of all he is an expert in the PM and PMO field. Hope we can do more in the near future!

June 11, 2013, Ruud Peltzer BPUG Netherlands was Peter's client

Peter is an excellent speaker who engages and captivates the audience with innovative, challenging and controversial ideas. Peter is also an excellent facilitator who has the ability to facilitate change of

behavior in search of excellence. I would not hesitate to recommend Peter Taylor for workshop facilitation and speaker's opportunities.

May 8, 2013, Julia Checchia PMI Australia was Peter's client

Thank you once again – and 'be lazy'



Peter

September 2014