

## Solutions for a New Reality

Now that our world has changed, we need new ways of working together and moving forward. Budgets are slim and working collaboratively is different now.

We can help. We have delivered projects virtually and are well equipped to work this way.

If budgets are tight, we may be able to help you find creative ways to get that work completed. We have been helping clients for thirty years and have experience that you may be able to leverage.

We offer a portable Project Management Office (PMO) where we can coach your team for as little or as much as you need. Our training courses are available virtually as well as in a safe classroom setting those who prefer to learn that way. Call me if we can help.

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## Watch Out for This...

Early in my consulting career I asked my mentor if he had any advice for a newly minted management consultant (me). Without hesitation, he said to be aware of conflict of interest. He said it can happen quickly when you're not paying attention.

A few years later, I was leading a team that was assisting a client in evaluating whether they should replace one of their legacy systems. We gathered requirements, prepared evaluation criteria and were about to lead the client through the evaluation process. I was surprised to get a phone call from one of my vice presidents out east who asked how our assignment was going. I replied that it was going fine and explained where we were at with the assignment. Then I got a strange question...

"You are using objective criteria aren't you?"

I replied that yes we were using objective criteria but wondered what prompted the question. We spoke a few minutes longer and then I was asked the same question again. Once again I replied that we were indeed using objective criteria.

The whole conversation was troublesome. I wasn't sure why one of the vice presidents was taking an interest in the assignment and why objective criteria were a concern.

I mentioned the conversation to one of my team members and was shocked to learn that this vice president had a family member working for the legacy software vendor. Was the purpose of the call a way of interfering with the outcomes of the assignment?

I was stunned. This put our whole assignment in jeopardy. I decided I needed to tell the client.

That conversation did not go well. They were furious but I was thanked for bringing this to their attention. We were given permission to finish the assignment but follow up work was given to another vendor.

I am still on guard for possible conflicts of interest. This was an issue again on a recent assignment and it caused significant turmoil. The best thing to do when it occurs is to bring it forward. Hiding it will be disastrous.



# Critical Success Factor: Team Identity

Several years ago, I was working with a team that was working on a large software development project. The team was pretty large with about 20 people dedicated to the project. The project was almost two years long and it was a team with a very strong identity. Here's what we did to build that identity:

- 1) We were colocated. Our team had its own space and we had minimal distractions.
  - 2) The whole team went out for lunch at least once a month. The excuse was to celebrate birthdays that month. But the outcome was that we got to be with each other in a non-stress environment.
  - 3) We recognized unique contributions by team members. Rob was one of our lead business analysts. He was in high demand as a SME from the project team and I got him one of those key chain finders that beeps when you whistle (as a gag gift). For an hour that morning the team had fun whistling and hearing the key chain finder beep like crazy and having Rob . Later that morning that key chain finder found itself taped to the bottom of my chair. That garnered more chuckles from team members.
- These simple gifts were not expensive but had incredible value. Long after this project was completed, I would see those gag gifts on people's desks.
- 4) The team was fully dedicated to the project. This made a huge difference because there were no competing priorities for team members.

The project team is THE key factor that determines whether a project is successful. It is vital that everyone is respected and valued. Please give this the focus it needs.

## EYE ON IT Current Industry Trends

One of the things we know for sure is that our world is continuing to change. When you read the predictions about what is coming there are a number of common themes from the people making those predictions. Here's what we are seeing:

- 1. We need to be good at managing virtual teams.
- 2. We need strong people skills more than ever.
- 3. AI will become a key technology to assist us in delivery projects.
- 4. New methodologies will emerge to manage in a more complex environment.

## SOFTWARE Monthly Picks

One of my favourite pieces of software these days is a product called SkedPal. It is a time blocking to do list manager that assists in scheduling all your to do items. It integrates with your calendar and schedules your to do items around your appointments. It's a bit expensive but there is a free 14 day trial.



## Survey Results

**Earlier this year we asked for your help in completing a survey on which factors are constraining your ability to deliver successful projects.**

We didn't get enough responses to the survey for it to be statistically significant and it is important to point out that these results were obtained pre-Covid. There were some interesting observations to share though:

The highest ranked factor constraining project teams ability to deliver a project successfully is an ineffective project sponsor.

- In second place: Capabilities of project teams.
- Tied for third place: Ineffective stakeholders and poor communication on the project.
- The factors least likely to constrain project delivery success include:
- Ineffective PMO
  - Lack of understanding of business requirements
  - Lack of standardized processes.

I will provide some suggestions for navigating these issues in upcoming newsletters.



## Discounted Pricing

The next four training sessions are significantly discounted. This is a great time to enroll in one of our courses. You can register here:

<https://projectpeople.ca/registration.htm>

## Upcoming Training Sessions

- **PM 101 Introduction to Project Management (virtual)**

If you are new to managing projects, this is the course for you. We deliver this instructor led course online. Sept 28 & 29.

- **PMP Exam Prep (Classroom)**

If you want a great course to help you get ready to write your PMP exam you should consider this. Our students do exceptionally well writing this exam. Class sizes are small and we make sure the room is sanitized multiple times daily. (Oct 19 – 23)

- **PM 101 Introduction to Project Management (Classroom)**

Limited to 4 students. This class is instructor led in our classroom. (Oct 26 & 27)

- **PMP Exam Prep (Virtual)**

Exam content changes in January. This will be your last chance to prepare to write the exam before the changed exam content. (Nov 16 – 20)

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