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# PMI Finland Chapter

Newsletter

November 2008

# International Project Management Day on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>

We use International Project Management Day again to send out our – so far annual – Newsletter.

For next year we planned to send out more information than we did in the past. Our minimum aim is a quarterly newsletter and if time allows we wish to send you one every other month.

We are also working on improving our offering on the web-pages ([www.pmifinland.org](http://www.pmifinland.org)). Most of the changes will be in the background and therefore not immediately visible, but as our interface for content update will change you may see more content in the future. One feature which will be visible to you will be a Discussion Board and we hope that you will visit there very frequently to exchange thoughts.

We hope you enjoy this version of our Newsletter and wish you good projects!

PMI Finland Chapter Board

# Upcoming events

## Breakfast Round Tables

The Finland Chapter offers currently a round table twice a month (20 times a year), one in Helsinki and one in Vaasa. Each session is dedicated to a specific topic and you may claim 1 PDU for each session you attend.

Please, check the web-pages for upcoming events and details on the topics:

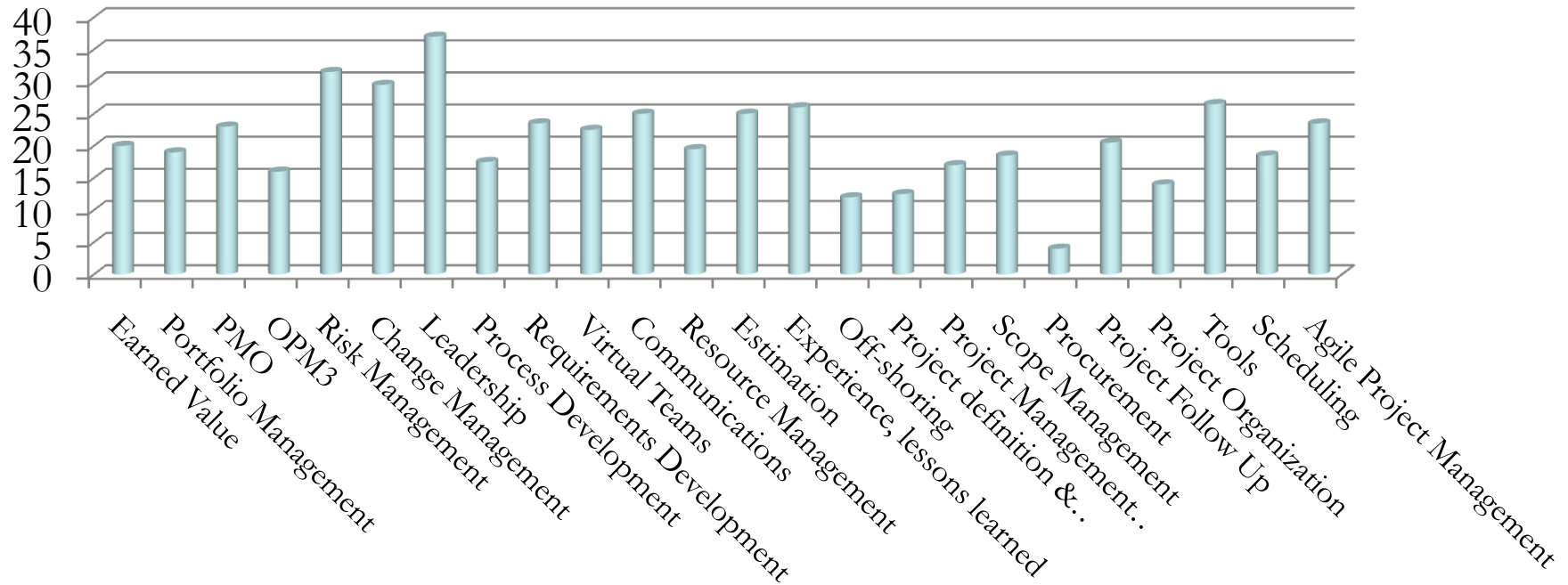
<http://www.pmifinland.org/Doc.aspx?id=1175>

## Upcoming other Events

- November
  - Project Complexity Classification (5.11.2008) 2 PDUs (<http://www.pmifinland.org/Doc.aspx?id=1565>)
  - Nordic Portfolio Management Forum 2008 (17.18.11.2008) (<http://www.pmifinland.org/Doc.aspx?id=1562>)

# Here is how you voted on the first question about which topics you are interested in

weighted values



We will use this result to customize the Chapter's offering to you in the future.

Even though we did not get an many responses as we would have liked we thank you very much for your participation and feedback.

# The Perfect Project Manager

By Mary Brandel

AUGUST 06, 2001 (as it was published in COMPUTERWORLD)

*Good IT project managers are hard to find - and opinions vary as to the best ways (and best places) to find them. Computerworld contributing writer Mary Brandel asked two industry veterans to discuss the traits they desire most in project managers and the best way to find people with those characteristics.*

**John Oliver** is deputy CIO and vice president of critical business systems at Chicago-based True North Communications Inc., one of the world's top 10 global advertising and communications holding companies.

**George Nassef** is CIO at Hotjobs.com, a leading Internet-based recruiting company in New York.

**Project management is a field that requires people with competencies in three subject areas: technology, business and behavior. Ideally, you'd want to hire a project manager with all three traits, but if you had to choose only two, which would they be?**

**Oliver:** I would rather have the candidate without the IT background, as he or she would be far more likely to deliver a solution that will meet the business needs than a technical person with little understanding of the business. At the same time, he or she will need a strong technical person on the project team to help communicate with the technical staff.

**Nassef:** I'd choose technology and behavior. In order to motivate IT workers, you need an understanding of the challenges they face, in addition to an understanding of human behavior and how to motivate teams. Unless the project is of an enormous scale, the business understanding would be handled above the project manager; that is, the business goals would already be translated into project goals.

**There's an IT project that absolutely must be completed on time, and you learn that the project manager has been taking short-cuts on testing to meet the deadline. You can see that it has put the project on schedule, and the code seems to work well. Do you intervene?**

**Oliver:** Yes. Ultimately, this requires a risk assessment: Is the risk of missing the project deadline greater than that of bringing up a system that will have problems that goodtesting would reveal? I would pull together the management team that sponsored and/or is impacted by the project and let them decide whether to delay the project. Ultimately, this is a business decision, not a technical one.

**Nassef:** I would intervene because one of the tenets of project management is communicating in all directions, so there shouldn't be any surprises. The right answer might have been to shortcut testing, and there are ways to mitigate the risk of that. But intervention and due diligence is the role of the officer in charge of the project.

**What is the most fruitful place in the organization to look for an untried IT project manager?**

**Oliver:** Good project managers are difficult to find because those skills are not actively developed in most organizations. You can, however, look for a strong manager with a good understanding of the business. Our system conversion [after True North purchased New York-based Bozell Group, a \$2.2 billion agency network] was headed by the former [chief financial officer] from one of our offices.

We spent almost two years moving onto the new system, and it was nice to have a person on the project who could effectively communicate with the CFOs and general managers.

**Nassef:** Customer support is a good place to find people with a good blend of skills for project management. They understand escalation, communication and customer needs, they're exposed to IT, and they know the company well. They deal with all areas within support and tend to be at the end of the food chain when an IT project is being rolled out, so they understand the repercussions of poorly run projects.

**If you had to choose between the following characteristics in a project manager, which would you choose and why: can-do optimism or assume-the-worst realism?**

**Oliver:** Can-do optimism. Ideally, I want a candidate who is able to anticipate all the things that can go wrong and head them off, but I would be concerned if the person was always assuming the worst, because he wouldn't do a good job of cheerleading and motivating people.

**Nassef:** It's really a balance. If I just chose one, you'd end up with two wrong answers.

**Warm and fuzzy or down-to-business?**

**Oliver:** Down-to-business. I want someone with people skills, but the person has to make sure critical tasks are getting done.

**Nassef:** It depends on the project. The tighter the deadline and the more aggressive the risk, the less time there is to gain consensus vs. enforcing execution. What's more important is to earn the respect of the people you're interacting with.

**Detail-oriented or visionary?**

**Oliver:** Detail-oriented. It's a tough balance, but you need someone who's digging down and making sure critical business issues aren't missed.

**Nassef:** It depends on the project. If you're building the complex features that Hotjobs has online, you've got to be detail-oriented. But four years ago, when it was just the founder and several programmers, you very much needed vision.

**How damaging to a project manager's track record are project failures and cancellations?**

**Oliver:** If there were three or more failures, that would seriously impact whether I would want to use that person on a project. But if they had a couple of failures and had good reasons for those failures, it wouldn't bother me.

**Nassef:** It depends on the company and its appetite for risk vs. reward.

Hotjobs has always been a company that moves fast, builds quickly and learns from failure. Larger companies that don't have an appetite for taking risks and getting high rewards might not be so forgiving.

**When attempting to expedite a project that's behind schedule, you find out that a project manager has cut out requirements analysis and design and has jumped right into coding. Do you intervene now or wait to see what happens?**

**Oliver:** I'd talk to the project manager and ask to see a requirements spec and design. If they don't have it, I'd tell them why they need one before they go on.

**Nassef:** The rule book says there is a standard methodology for rolling out projects. But the rule book doesn't apply in all cases. Before I made a judgment, I'd determine whether the project was really suffering.

**A project is late and over budget. The project manager asks for more developers. What do you do?**

**Oliver:** I'd say no. Their learning curve is so high in trying to catch up with the rest of the team, the productivity gains are minimal. You're better off asking people to work longer hours or on weekends.

**Nassef:** I've had that happen and have seen it succeed and also not succeed. It's certainly an early warning to jump in and determine all the facts at hand. If the bottleneck is in development, the solution might be a change of skills, not additional programmers.

**What advice would you offer an aspiring project manager?**

**Oliver:** Communicate, communicate, communicate. By sitting down with people and talking through a project, you learn a great deal about why you're doing what you're doing.

**Nassef:** Understand that different companies have different risk vs. reward appetites. If you want to make the judgment calls I'm talking about, small companies offer those. Or, if you want more of a rule book approach, look to a larger company.

# Congratulation to our new PMPs

- Virva Maria Väisänen, PMP
- Mika Tiittanen, PMP
- Tuula Halinene, PMP
- Tuija Liisa Tuomainen, PMP
- Jukka Karna, PMP
- Donna J Roberts, PMP
- Kim A Strömbäck, PMP
- Juri Lakka, PMP
- Tuomas Linna, PMP
- Kimmo J Rantanen, PMP
- Nina Asikainen, PMP
- Henry Andersson, PMP
- Kurt Corthout, PMP
- Anna Hrycej, PMP
- Mira Rautiainen, PMP

The list includes new PMPs up to September this year.

Congratulations to all of you.

Please remember that you can claim PDUs for attending Chapter events. You can find more information about PDUs on our web-pages <http://www.pmifinland.org/Doc.aspx?id=1493>.

Those of you who will attend ProjektiPäivät 2008 in Espoo Dipoli (19.-19.11.) may collect PDUs for participation. If you need proof of the attended hours please let me know via email ([bernhard.korjonen@pmifinland.org](mailto:bernhard.korjonen@pmifinland.org)).

# Search for Volunteers

As you may have seen from our recent survey we are looking for volunteers to help providing a better service.

We already got some names trough the survey and we would like to ask you again for your support.

If you wish to help us out and collect PDUs while you do so please contact

[bernhard.korjonen@pmifinland.org](mailto:bernhard.korjonen@pmifinland.org).

Thank you very much in your interest to providing a better service.