GRABBING AUTHORITY

June 10 Dinner Meeting Presentation by Thomas Cutting, PMP

Authority is weird. It can be granted to you, and then it can be stripped away. You can wield it like a club or wear it like a mantle. You can build on it or let it slip through your fingers. Typically, the fact that a project manager is assigned to a project gives him or her some level of authority. Unfortunately, the authority granted by the charter (assuming you got it approved) doesn't stretch very far when all the other project managers have charters that say the same thing.

"Grabbing Authority" is a unique look at getting and using authority. It explores the four different types of authority, discusses how to build authority from scratch, and follows up with what to do if you lose it. **Thomas Cutting** will look at both a functional and a projectized organization.

From "Grabbing Authority" you will learn:
- Authority comes in four types: positional, referent, reward/penalty, and expert.
- Each type of authority has its own uses, abuses and challenges.
- Authority can be grown, lost, and renewed.
- How to use each authority type appropriately and avoid misuses
- What challenges to your authority might arise
- How authority differs between a functional organization and a projectized one
- Ways to build your authority from scratch
- Steps to regain lost authority

Thomas Cutting, PMP is a project management mentor with Cutting's Edge. His experience spans the entertainment, retail, insurance, banking, health care, and automotive industries.

Managing and mentoring in this diverse background enables Thomas to bring that learning to you through his training, writing and conference appearances.

Thomas is currently PMI-OC Membership Director.

June Vendor Showcase:
Compuware
www.compuware.com

In This Issue

THE CHAIR'S COLUMN

New www.PMI-OC.org Launched!

On May 21, our new PMI-OC website became available! We are very excited to launch our new site bringing you a new look-and-feel, new features, and additional benefits. Here are some highlights.

The key scope we wanted to deliver to you is new **Event Calendar** and Registration functionality. We appreciate your patience over this last year with the online registration issues. The online event registration on our new site has been working smoothly. Visit our new Event Calendar located via the News & Events menu to find and register for an upcoming event. The Event Calendar and Registration functionality enables you to add events to your shopping basket and register for multiple events at once. There is a new map link feature as well. Note that we have a new Event Registration Cutoff and Cancellation Policy, as described on the event registration pages.

Our **Career Center**, a great source of local job opportunities, has a new home located via the Member Login menu at the upper right corner. Currently, this continues to be a public feature and potentially will change soon to be available only to PMI-OC members. In the near future, we plan to include a Members Only section enabling us to provide features available only to our PMI-OC members. It is a chapter priority to add PMI-OC member-specific benefits increasing your membership value. Note the Member Login link located at the upper right corner is a placeholder currently for this upcoming functionality.

Please be patient with us as we continue to stabilize our new site and deliver more content. Your feedback is highly encouraged. For website problems and suggestions, send an e-mail to webadmin@pmi-oc.org. Of course, feel free to contact any of us **Board Members** with your feedback.

Out of all the PMI-OC volunteers who helped implement our new site, I specifically recognize **Tariq Shaikh, PMP** for his leadership, the core implementation team (**Elizabeth Bond, Gerald Julius, Stephen June, PMP,** and **Cindy Pham, PMP**), **Sylvan Finestone, PMP** for his facilitation of the process, **Lori Shapiro, PMP** for taking on additional responsibilities in these last few weeks, and **Steve Goto**, PMP for the many hours he contributed.

Finance Director Position Is Open

We regret to inform you that the Finance Director position is now open. The resignation of **Lora Lockwood, PMP** became effective at the end of May. We thank Lora for her dedicated service as Finance Director for the last one and a half years and wish her well in her other priorities. Lora and her Finance team expended significant extra effort over this last year to resolve financial issues resulting from our old website's registration issues. Also, they helped keep the chapter financially solvent and made improvements in the processes, as evidenced in the smooth and timely completion of our 2007 income taxes. As a result of Lora and her team's effort, we should have a smooth transition due to all of these improvements in our financial environment. Until we appoint a new Finance Director, Sylvan Finestone, Nora Goto, and I will split the Finance Director role and responsibilities.

If you are interested in applying for this position or know someone else who is qualified, please contact our Nominations Committee at Nominations@pmi-oc.org. For those of you with finance and accounting experience, this is a great opportunity to take on a leadership position, share your expertise, and continue to evolve a critical area of this chapter. Review the Finance Director role and responsibilities in the Board of Directors Position Descriptions, located on the Chapter Documents page under the About Us menu on our site. The Board will appoint a replacement based on the recommendations from the Nominations Committee. The Board is targeting to fill the position by July.

As a reminder, our *Milestones* newsletter will be moving to digital-only format after the July, 2008 issue. You can access currrent **Milestones newsletters** via the News & Events menu.

Victoria Flanagan, Chair/President

Volunteer Opportunities

Membership Director:
membership@pmi-oc.org

Volunteer Coordinator

This could be a shared position. Work with the membership director to support volunteer programs and efforts.

Volunteer Coordination Team Members

The organization chart at the right depicts the key areas and activities under the volunteer coordinator.
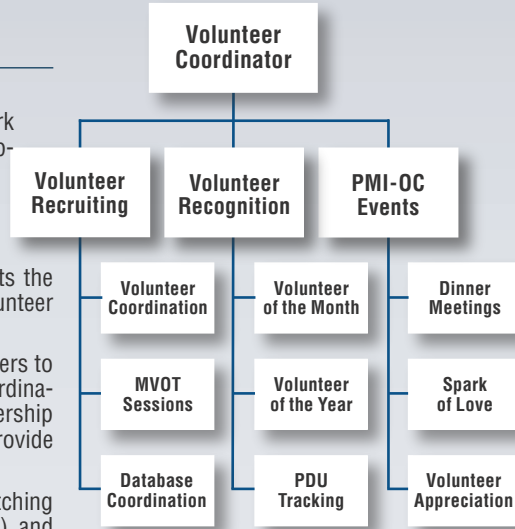
There are opportunities for several members to become involved. Overall, volunteer coordination requires working with the membership director to solicit volunteers and provide volunteer candidates.

Volunteer Recruiting: Includes matching people with needs (connecting the dots) and supporting our revitalized MVOT sessions.

Volunteer Recognition: Support the board of directors by identifying volunteers and recognizing those who make things happen and get things done. Contributing to *Milestones* is part of this responsibility.

PMI-OC Events: Requires participation in dinner meetings and support of other events, such as the annual Spark of Love toy drive.

Are you interested? Do you want more details? If so, we want to talk to you.

Volunteer Coordinator
- **Volunteer Recruiting**
  - Volunteer Coordination
  - MVOT Sessions
  - Database Coordination
- **Volunteer Recognition**
  - Volunteer of the Month
  - Volunteer of the Year
  - PDU Tracking
- **PMI-OC Events**
  - Dinner Meetings
  - Spark of Love
  - Volunteer Appreciation

Marketing Director:
marketing@pmi-oc.org

Milestones Contributors

Write 300, 500, or 1,000 word reviews of attended chapter events for *Milestones*. Clear, concise writing styles are required.

Milestones Photographers

Need talented and creative individuals with an eye for style to take photos of chapter events for *Milestones*. Must have a digital camera and a flash unit for both indoor and outdoor venues. Photos are sent electronically to *Milestones* editors and graphic designer.

Website Editors

The marketing team needs several volunteers to help edit our new website. Website editors will report spelling and grammatical errors to the chief editors, who will make changes to assure accuracy and compliance with web page standards. Time commitment is one to two hours per week. Both chief editors and web editors are needed.

Operations Director:
operations@pmi-oc.org

Operations Deputy

Supports the operations director in preparing for board meetings (agenda, minutes, auditing, updating, and e-storage of documents) and should be available to attend board meetings. Four to ten hours per month. Word processing and excellent writing and communication skills are necessary.

Programs Director:
programs@pmi-oc.org

Advanced Topic Seminar Reviewer

One individual from each ATS is needed to write a *Milestones* article about the ATS they attended. Editorial specs for ATS reviews are: full page article at 1,000 words; photos and/or graphics may extend total submission length.

The advanced topic seminars are on the first Saturday of each month. ATS reviewers earn free admission to the seminar and four PDUs for each event.

Venue Coordinator

This is an ongoing position with responsibility for reserving venues and arranging food service for PMI-OC programs. Potential venues are already identified. The venue coordinator will make contacts, confirm space and date requirements, obtain contracts, arrange catering and parking, and report to stakeholders. One to two hours per month

Researcher, UCI Student Projects

Six volunteers needed ASAP. Three volunteers for a corporate outreach project and three for a golf tournament project. For the corporate outreach project, the volunteers will contact C-levels and non-PMP® certified project managers to do research. This will be via e-mail and phone calls, as well as the volunteers' own connections.

For the golf tournament, the volunteers will assist by contacting venues and researching potential sponsors and participants. One to two hours per week through mid-June. Phone skills and ability to meet very strict deadlines are required.

Dinner Meeting Badges

Need a volunteer to create name badges from attendee list via automated process. Time commitment is approximately one to one and half hours per month

Volunteer of the Month

Marca Atencio, PMP

The PMI-OC Board of Directors selected **Marca Atencio, PMP** as Volunteer of the Month for June, 2008. Marca is an accomplished project manager who has served the chapter in a wide range of roles since joining in 2001.

Marca can be characterized as a versatile volunteer. She continues to help edit *Milestones* and assist our paparazzi crew. Marca played a key role in preparing the *Marketing Team Annual Plan* for the strategic planning sessions. As an active member of our marketing team, Marca is the lady who presses the "send" button to generate our informative *E-Mail Blasts*.

Marca complements her support of PMI-OC with active volunteer responsibilities in other project management related organizations. For example, she is currently the newsletter chair for Southern California Quality Assurance Association and has taken on a key role in the upcoming Southland Technology Conference (SoTeC), formerly known as SCCTC.

Marca represents all that is positive about our chapter and about project management. She has demonstrated that volunteering can enhance personal and career development. She is always willing to learn more about a colleague and is quick to offer her time, support, encouragement, and knowledge when asked.

Marca enjoys the people she meets through PMI-OC and the benefits of networking with other professionals. A special tip of the hat to Marca!

Ralph Dutra

From the Programs Director
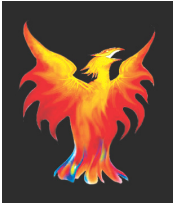
THE STORY OF THE PHOENIX IS AS OLD AS TIME. The tale of a bird burning itself every 500 years to renew its immortality has been passed through all major civilizations since the ancient Greeks.

Sensing its old age and lackluster energy, the mythical bird collects kindling and fans its own fire while nesting upon the flames. From the ashes of the old phoenix, a young and beautiful phoenix is reborn, thus overcoming death and old age. The phoenix represents triumph over adversity and rebirth into glory, thereby symbolizing hope and constancy. However, unlike the phoenix, human organizations do not need to burn themselves up before renewal. And, indeed, without risking our own burnout, we can evolve and build a team to ensure a successful succession next year.

Whew, we're already five months into the year! The programs team is working together as a community of leaders and learners while having fun in a supportive, encouraging, and safe environment. We're striving to reach the milestones set out in the programs area at the beginning of the year.

- My first task was to create a succession plan. My first career mentor, **Glen Sustrik**, ingrained this concept in me so that we could all grow our skills and move to new and exciting challenges. A subtask of this initiative was to create a knowledge café of all processes for programs offerings so that this chapter could reach a CMM level 3.

- Attaining financial responsibility was the second milestone. Appointment of a financial analyst for the programs area was critical for fiscal responsibility. A parallel need was to assess the expenses associated with our programs offerings, which resulted in changing a number of venues to reduce expenses and a wonderful discovery of Deli 456, a non-profit agency for people with developmental disabilities. This organization offers five star culinary delights for our programs at a break-even cost and provides a learning opportunity for those who need a hand up to find their way and add value to the greater community as a whole

- An operations manager will be appointed in the next month, allowing the programs director to implement the strategy for the following year, thus ensuring that the seeds planted this year continue to flourish with the incoming programs director.

- Creation of a measurement of quality was crucial to feedback. A score card has been developed to measure financial success and quality of our programs. A team of volunteers is working on a mechanism to measure quality of all of our offerings in the future. These results will be published and used as input to our future strategic planning efforts to create an environment that attracts senior level executives to assess the talents and abilities of our volunteers.

Continuation of the outstanding cadre of programs offered by previous programs teams was also critical. New initiatives for this year include:

- A golf and leadership seminar this year, with a long range view for a golf tournament in the upcoming years. This event is currently an assignment of the UCI project management students. After all, as one PMI® Fellow maintains, there are three places decisions are made: the boardroom, the bathroom, and the golf course.

- A five day negotiations seminar with **Bob Kubacki** is planned. Details to be released soon.

- **Neal Whitten** will be back in the fall for a discussion of his latest book, *Lets Talk*.

- July will bring interesting insight from **John M. McKee**. Widely regarded as one of America's leading career, business, and executive coaches, John McKee is an articulate and engaging speaker known for his "workplace wisdom" on a litany of personal, career, and work/lfe balance issues. McKee's down-to-earth and energetic demeanor never fails to resonate with audiences. As part of the negotiations with John to deliver the keynote address at the career fair, we have gained access to a wonderful marketing engine.

- September will bring a continued offering of the PMP® prep classes under the capable leadership of **Jim Monical**, **PMP**, supported by **Ted Sauca, PMP**. Many thanks to **Mike Graupner**, **PMP** and **Adri Estrada** for their efforts in prior classes.

- We continue to offer our outstanding Advanced Topic Seminar series with waiting lists for attendees.

- Other committees are emerging; mentoring and career planning committees are forming. An alumni association for the global leadership institutes is in the planning stages through "Spa for the Mind," including a local Southern California chapter in the near future.

- As promised in the fall, we are offering a panel discussion of "C" level executives, and we have some other top shelf presenters lined up to speak in 2009.

In the spirit of mentorship and career planning, a couple of wonderfully supportive former board members continue to encourage me to persist on this path of constant improvement, and I am capitalizing on their former efforts.

It's time to listen to the fresh new ideas of our membership, as we are all living in an environment conducive to constant change. Don't blink; it'll all be over before you think, and I know that I will miss this. I sigh, take a deep re-energizing breath, remind myself of the story of the phoenix, and recruit more volunteers to add to the community of learners and aspiring leaders.

On that note, if you are looking for an opportunity to showcase your talents, please look up the volunteer opportunities on www.pmi-oc.org or see page 3 of this issue of *Milestones*.

Members of our team would like to move on to new challenges, and they have the responsibility of finding and training their replacements.

Renata Weir
Programs Director

PMI-OC PROJECT OF THE YEAR

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON®

An *EDISON INTERNATIONAL®* Company

We are pleased to announce that the **Southern California Edison SmartConnect** project has been selected as the **PMI-OC Project of the Year**. Sponsored by the Orange County Chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI-OC), the Project of the Year (POY) Award recognizes the accomplishments of a project and the involved project team for superior performance and execution of exemplary project management.

Paula Campbell (above), SmartConnect Program Office Manager, accepted the award on behalf of the team at OC-PMI's dinner meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2008.

The Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system for SCE, known as Edison SmartConnect, will replace approximately 5.3 million meters and associated infrastructure with two-way communication capability and ultimately enable automated meter reading.

Edison SmartConnect's submission focused on Phase II (pre-deployment) of the program. Phase II was the second step of SCE's three-phase AMI deployment strategy and focused on providing the foundation for implementing emerging technologies while also meeting the requirements of various internal and external stakeholders and client groups. Phase II enabled SCE to identify cost effective AMI solutions that will empower customers to manage their energy costs and enable new services through smart metering technology. The project team completed Phase II on scope, on schedule, and under budget by approximately $9 million while simultaneously planning and preparing for Phase III, the full deployment phase.

Paula Campbell presented an overview of the project and reiterated the hard work put forth by the team in achieving schedule despite an increase in scope and a reduction in the regulatory approved final budget. SmartConnect's submission has now been submitted to PMI® headquarters for consideration in the semi-finalist competition. At this next level of competition, projects from around the globe are reviewed, and the top three entries will be selected as finalists.

We congratulate the Edison SmartConnect project team for their efforts in the deployment of advanced metering infrastructure solutions. We thank SCE for sharing their success with us. We look forward to the decision of the judges in the next level of competition.

Bernice Maldonado

Left to right:
Enrique Garcia, PMP
Elizabeth Virdin, PMP
Paula Campbell,
Bernice Maldonado
Linda M. Keller, PMP

PMP Exam Questions

Test your knowledge on these sample questions.

1. The information from the *Work Breakdown Structure* (WBS) is used to derive all of the following, except:
   a. The project's master schedule
   b. The project budget
   c. The project objectives
   d. Work component description

2. Projects are usually under many constraints. All of the following are examples of constraints that can affect the flexibility in human resource planning, except:
   a. High-grade product requirements
   b. Travel budgets
   c. Collective bargaining agreements
   d. Hiring freezes

3. Your project data shows that, at some point in the time during execution, the earned value (EV) is $10,000, and the planned value (PV) is $9,500. The schedule variance (SV) is:
   a. $500
   b. ($500)
   c. There is insufficient data to make a determination.
   d. 0.95

4. As the project manager on a new technology project, you estimated the project activity durations and determined the project will cost $1 million and take seven months to complete. However, you created the estimate in the first month before the full project resources had been identified. This past week, two senior contractors were added to the team on tasks that you had anticipated would be filled by college graduates with some training. As the project manager, you should . . .
   a. do nothing; the project cost baseline has been approved, so you will need to save cost on another activity to stay on plan.
   b. initiate an additional planing session to adjust the project cost baseline to account for the new resource changes.
   c. submit a change request for the additional resources.
   d. swap out two lesser costing resources on other schedule activities to make up the difference.

Answers are on page 17

AGILE METHODOLOGY PANEL DISCUSSION

IF meeting-goers were expecting impassioned disagreement and debate from this panel, they were disappointed. Three seasoned software development experts; **Jack Bicer**, **Ajay Godhwani**, **and Lois Zells**; shared their best practices, and perhaps not surprisingly they had all learned similar lessons. Agile methodology is here to stay, but as Lois was quick to point out, it is not new, nor were any of the three panelists either "agile or stage-gate" purists. All felt that depending on the project, the client, the environment, and the team, various degrees of iterative or "agile" techniques could be applied to a software development project with success.

Jack Bicer opened by reminding us that information technology (IT) projects used to have an 84 percent failure rate, and we are now down to 71 percent, so we must be learning from our mistakes. Jack spent his opening remarks sharing "tips from the trenches." His first was a common sense reminder of best planning practices: attack your riskiest modules first. This will let you know early in the project whether or not you will even be able to continue. You always want to find out what you don't know EARLY. If there is a "kill" decision to be made, you want to make it before a lot of time and money have been spent. Also, working on the toughest problems first, while the team is fresh, can give you some breathing room later in the project, when you can work on the easier portions.

More common sense advice was to get developer buy-in for features, timelines, and milestones by treating the project plan as a contract negotiation. The legal and professional character of a negotiated contract has the effect of keeping team members accountable to their commitments and milestones. People know they need a very good reason to break a contract, so they treat those agreements seriously.

Jack's final tip was to under-promise and over-deliver. By keeping two separate project plans, you can push your team to keep to one project schedule, but show a different, longer timeline to the customer. That way, if the team misses its own schedule, you are less likely to jeopardize your schedule commitment to the customer. He reminded us that although software development practices have come a long way, it is still an art and not a science. Keeping two project plans is just another way of giving yourself a buffer that you may need as the inevitable slippage, scope creep, and surprises add time to your project. If you don't need the time buffer, you can deliver early or deliver additional features.

You can ownload Jack's top ten tips at www.septium.com/10tips.pdf.

Ajay Godhwani took the opportunity in his introduction to review some basic SCRUM principles that he has been using successfully for the last four years. Like Jack, he suggested that we attack the most important pieces first, and that the first iteration is the most important. Prioritization is central to agile planning. Each feature is prioritized and given work-effort estimates, and this information becomes the input for the planning in every work-cycle iteration. Daily meetings with the developers are also critical to making a tightly task-driven, time-boxed approach work. Questions and obstacles are raised and resolved quickly, and tasks can be re-assigned, adjusted, or re-prioritized within a day if necessary.

In her introduction, Lois Zells shared some observations and research about how best to determine the level of iterative methodology that is appropriate for a given project.

Lois believes that large, complex, life-critical systems are better off using methodologies that employ a mix of iterative and phase-gate development (not to be confused with waterfall). Better candidates for pure agile projects are proof-of-concept projects, and internet applications without a lot of deep internal processing.

Lois also stressed the importance of architects when there are many highly complex architectural interfaces. Many projects, in her experience, fare better as some kind of hybrid, and she gave us criteria and processes to use in making these decisions.

May Meeting Review

The entire panel agreed that agile methodology was not right for every project in every organization every time. For example, agile development is not suitable for fixed price projects.

One of the questions from the audience was whether there was any hope for agile in an immature IT shop with existing waterfall practices. Amid laughter, each panelist responded with a reason why the answer was no.

Ajay said it was too challenging a methodology for some organizations and too much of a cultural change. Jack pointed out that management often prefers a waterfall approach because it gives visibility to milestones, resources, and costs. Lois cautioned against taking a "sheep-dip" approach to implementing agile practices by mass-training staff and then expecting everyone to be "agilized."

Try using the methodology on a small sample project. Work on continuous improvement of your software management processes. Spread those employees who have successfully used it into other teams, and take an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary, approach.

Sharon Welden, Ph.D, PMP

The panelists can be contacted at:

Ajay.godhwani@tallan.com
jack@septium.com
lzells@aol.com

At the May Meeting

Above:
Checking in at the Wyndham.

Above right:
Caroline Jurado, PMP and **Lesley Adams, PMP** chat before the meeting.

Right: New PMPs
Back row:
Katarina Evans, Randy Steukrath, Robert Keller, David Brown, Jagdip Mehta
Front row:
Doug Reed, Gregory Applewhite, Joy Farrell, Sanjay Kumar

Above:
Rodney Hendrixson, PMP and other attendees enjoy dinner at the Wyndham..

Right::
Representatives from **Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University,** showcase vendor for May.
Left to right:
Mike Terrill, Janet Cosmun-Ross, Patrick Ross, Rosemarie Adrogna-Elliot, Shelley Estebo

Photos on pages 3, 7, 9, and 10 by **Shirley Goodwin, PMP**

Microsoft Project
Back by Popular Demand

Part 1 Have you ever been frustrated trying to locate a feature in **Microsoft Project** that you know exists, but you cannot remember where? Have calculated dates or durations been different than you expected? Have you struggled to level resources or find meaningful reports? If you have had these problems, you are not alone! Whether you have just started using MS Project, or have used it for many years, you can benefit from the tips shared below.

We had a full class at the beginning of our second series of **MS Project** workshop/support groups on May 3. We moved past our pain, and got some great tips! The class was taught by **Mike Graupner** and **Gene Senecal**, both local PMPs.

The first part of the session covered some basic concepts, such as constraint types, and included an exercise to help us understand what is appropriate to go into a project schedule. We identified which items in a schedule should be tasks, which should be milestones, and which should not be included in the schedule. A good rule to follow is to set up tasks with verbs, and set up milestones as nouns. Leave out items that don't add value to the schedule, such as "hold status meetings." Also, make your schedule "deliverables based."

Three variables in a task (effort, duration, and work) are used to determine hours and dates. MS Project will calculate differently depending on whether you define a task as effort, work, or duration driven. Of these three variables, one you "set," one you "tweak," and one is "calculated" by MS Project. An example would be fixing the duration at one week, tweaking resources and allocation percentages, and letting MS Project calculate work (total hours). With the above example, with one resource allocated at 50 percent, MS Project would calculate work to be 20 hours.

Here are some quick tips:

A. Don't try to over-engineer your use of MS Project, or try to make it be something more than it is. Management doesn't care whether you have used every feature, only that you manage and report your schedule dates.

B. Don't wing it each time; develop a "project methodology." Here is a sample methodology:

1. Configure default settings (Tools-> Options). Recommended defaults are "fixed duration" (yes, that's right!), with "new tasks are effort driven" **unchecked**. This will allow us to set what we know best (duration), tweak resource availability as we get better information, and then let MS Project calculate the work. If you trust this recommendation, in most cases it will save you a lot of grief, both in setup and in tracking progress!

Top: **Mike Graupner, PMP** reviews the results of the first exercise to identify project tasks, milestones, and out-of-scope items.

Above: **Gene Senecal, PMP** gets in the driver's seat to help **Dr. George Meier, PMP** with an exercise.

2. Brainstorm tasks and milestones.
3. Import or enter tasks and milestones into MS Project.
   a. Define task types (fixed duration, units, and work).
   b. Define sub-tasks and dependencies.
4. Enter resources and resource attributes.
5. Assign tasks to resources.
6. Baseline project.
7. Define reports.

C. If you are getting strange results, consider adding some key columns (Insert->column): "Type" (e.g. fixed duration), "Constraint Type" (e.g. "start no earlier than" and "effort driven" (yes or no). These settings may explain why some calculations are not what you were expecting.

D. Avoid these top ten mistakes:

1. **Trying to use MS Project as a brainstorming tool**. MS Excel comes with some standard MS Project templates that are more intuitive for brainstorming than MS Project. You can import these into MS Project.

May 3 ATS Review

2. **Entering fixed dates instead of linking tasks.** These require constant updating. There are exceptions where fixed dates are needed, e.g., a class that has been scheduled for a certain date.

3. **Overestimating resource capacity.** We are not all available 40 hours a week, 52 weeks are year.

4. **Confusing "work"' with "duration."** Duration is how long a task will take, and work is how many hours the task takes. A week long task will have 20 hours of work with one resource at 50 percent, and will have 80 hours with two resources at 100 percent.

5. **Thinking effort driven scheduling actually makes sense**. If you set this on, MS Project will either calculate strange durations (e.g. 4.67 days) or strange resource allocations (e.g. 13 percent) that you will constantly be trying to correct, so turn it off.

6. **Expecting that resource leveling will alter reality**. Don't push that button! The results are unpredictable. Some of you have tried the automatic resource leveling once, but very few of you have ever done it twice!

7. **Tracking work by percent complete.** Most of us have experienced this when reporting partial completion. A task is reported as 50 percent complete, then 75 percent complete, then 90 percent, then 92 percent, 94 percent, 95 percent, 96 percent, etc. Instead of reporting partial completion, consider breaking down long tasks into smaller deliverables that can be completed. Then record only as complete (100 percent) or not (0 percent).

8. **Putting too much detail into the schedule.** Task duration should be one reporting period or less, and tasks less than one day should usually not be used.

9. **Believing that good scheduling software makes a good project manager.** A good PM can use a poor scheduling tool successfully, and a poor PM cannot make the best tool effective.

Photos on pages 11 and 12 by **Patty Tutor**, **PMP**

Above:

Mike Graupner, PMP and **Gene Senecal, PMP** work well as a duo teaching this highly interactive session, taking turns piloting and navigating

Students were able to practice what was preached with exercises prepared by instructors **Mike Graupner, PMP** and **Gene Senecal, PMP.**

10. **Believing the schedule is the project.** Managing the schedule is not managing the project.

Mike and Gene came up with some great exercises that the class went through. You can also go through these exercises. They are located at www.pm-mind.com.

In summary, we learned:

- MS Project is not a magic tool.
- There is a lot of planning before MS Project is started.
- Create deliverables based project schedules.
- Determine and apply the appropriate level of detail.
- Implement a regular status update and reporting process.
- Review and adjust the schedule regularly.
- Create and follow project scheduling standards.

Thanks, Mike and Gene, for a very interesting class with great practice exercises to hammer home the message. Mike and Gene are scheduled for "MS Project" Part 2" in August. See www.pmi-oc.org and watch *Milestones* for more details.

Patty Tutor, PMP

Is Going Digital

Since the PMI-OC Chair/President announced that *Milestones* will be going to a digital only format, I have been reflecting on how the change will affect me as a chapter member. In case you are not aware, *Milestones* is the printed vehicle PMI-OC has used to communicate with its members. It's a published monthly magazine that is currently mailed to each member's home or office. While cleaning out some of my files today, I came across an old copy of *Milestones* that I had saved. It was interesting to see the board of directors listed for 2005 when Kristine Hayes Munson was chair/president. As I flipped through the pages, I was able to take myself back to that period in my life. On the next to last page, I saw my name listed as a new member of PMI-OC.

Reminiscing, my thoughts turned to the great accomplishments that the chapter has achieved while I have been editor of *Milestones*. I remembered the three professional awards PMI-OC received from PMI® Global in 2006. I remembered the start of the PMI-OC Leadership Institute classes in 2007. The great events that I remembered have all been published in *Milestones*.

The July issue will be the last printed issue of *Milestones* that will be mailed to our members. Fortunately, this will not be the end of *Milestones*. A new opportunity for the chapter to reach out to its membership is coming. While *Milestones* will no longer be coming to a mailbox near you, *Milestones* will still be available to you at www.pmi-oc.org. *Milestones* will remain one of the principal vehicles to bring you information on members and news about events happening in the chapter.

The digital format will permit the editors greater flexibility and functionality while producing *Milestones*. Our chair/president mentioned that there will be direct links to vendors, advertisers, and events. There will no longer be space limitations, and we will now be able to display all of the photos in living color.

Although I will probably miss seeing *Milestones* in my mailbox the first week of the month, I am glad that I will not miss the opportunity to read about all of the exciting and newsworthy chapter events that are happening. I think it might be time to toss out that old copy of *Milestones*.

Roger Lew, PMP
2008 *Milestones* Co-Editor

NEW!

Buy PMI-OC Logowear Online

Now you can have all the PMI-OC logowear you want! Just go to **http://ces.landsend.com/pmioc**

Our very own PMI-OC e-Store lets you "click quick" for Lands' End® logo'd gear.

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• This will take you to the product online catalog.
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• Once you have reviewed your order, click "**Checkout.**"
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We hope you enjoy this option made available to you by the PMI-OC Marketing Team. If you have any questions, please email us at marketing@pmi-oc.org.

Wear the PMI-OC logoware anywhere you want!

Linda M. Keller, PMP
Marketing Director

WANT TO BE PMP® CERTIFIED?

Studying for the PMP Exam?
Need qualifying education contact hours?

PMI Orange County Chapter Announces Its 2008 Fall Course

PMI® PMP EXAM PREPARATION WORKSHOP

Six Saturdays Beginning September 13, 2008

This workshop is intended for anyone who wishes to achieve their PMP certification, who meets the requirements as identified by PMI® (see http://www.pmi.org/certification), AND who has studied recommended PMI project management literature, specifically, the third edition of the PMBOK® Guide.

This workshop will help you prepare for exam success, and will provide you with the eligibility requirement of 35 contact hours in project management education. Participants will be provided with a classroom discussion guide and a supplemental text that includes study questions on CD-ROM. Also, participants will have access to additional study material.

NEW THIS FALL: PMI-OC is partnering with The Project Management PrepCast™ to make their downloadable podcast available to our PMP prep students. Developed by former PMI-OC Chair/President **Cornelius Fichtner**, The Project Management PrepCast™ consists of 89 episodes, each of which focuses on one concept or process. Download them directly to your computer or iPod and listen when, where, and as often as you want to each episode to enhance your understanding of the concepts, tools, and techniques you learn in the class. More details to come in the next edition of *Milestones*. In the meantime, see Cornelius' article on page 00.

When: Six Saturdays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

| Sept. 13 | Sept. 27 | October 18 |
| Sept. 20 | October 4 | October 25 |

Where:

Laguna Hills
Holiday Inn
Laguna Hills
25205 La Paz Road
Laguna Hills, CA 92653

Costa Mesa
University of Phoenix
South Coast Learning Center
150 Bristol Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Cost: The workshop fee is per participant, payable at the time of registration. Classes fill very fast, so get your registration and money in early to guarantee a seat. **Register by September 3 to receive a special discount!**

• **PMI Member: $750 before September 3, $800 after September 3**
• **Non Member: $850 before September 3, $950 after September 3**

Register at www.pmi-oc.org

Information at www.pmi-oc.org or **e-mail programs@pmi-oc.org**

Note: This course is NOT intended to teach the participant project management or to impart project management industry experience. Its primary purpose is to prepare the participant for the PMP exam based on the PMI identified domains and PMI recommended preparation material.

Break Your PMP Studies into Small Pieces

By Cornelius Fichtner, PMP

TAKING THE PMP® EXAMINATION is one of the biggest steps you'll take in your career as a project manager and one of the most daunting. There seems to be an endless parade of information to stuff into your brain, but don't be discouraged! By careful planning and structure, you can pass the exam with a minimum of stress and absorb more of the information you need to achieve success in your chosen career.

The very first thing you need is a study plan. Assess your daily obligations; many people devote months to their studies and ignore the other things they need to do every day. Distraction sets in; catch-up becomes tedious and interferes with studies. List your normal schedule and then assign a daily time for study, usually 90 to 120 minutes. By establishing a routine, you have study time allotted, and everything else that can distract you has already been taken care of.

Why assign a time limit for study? There are only so many hoops you can make your brain jump through before it tires and begins to stumble. Just like pushing yourself physically, after a while pushing yourself mentally becomes redundant, and you start to lose the progress you've made.

By limiting your study time, you actually increase your retention and the amount of knowledge you can absorb! If your goal is to be the best project manager you can be, this may be one of the most important things you can do for your future. You'll need only 61 percent to pass the exam, but if you want to enjoy being the very best at what you've chosen to do, aim a lot higher.

Setting weekly goals and keeping track of your progress will not only encourage you as you study, but you'll be able to make the most of your time and study more effectively. Instead of skipping around and perhaps missing an important area of study, you'll cover everything thoroughly.

Before you begin, it would be a good idea to make a chart of your objectives, week by week. This will help you focus on daily goals, but be sure not to cram too much into each session. You will retain much more by concentrating on one subject at a time. Since you need to learn so many things about so many subjects, it may be best to divide the subjects into categories that make sense to you. If there is something of particular interest to you that you really enjoy, you might place it in such a way that it "rewards" you after an especially difficult section of study.

Repetition is another good technique for solidifying your new knowledge. Believe it or not, repeating a fact to yourself creates a neural pathway that your memory can travel again. Rather than "burning" it into your memory, you're clearing a trail through the undergrowth with the important knowledge at the end of the path. By repeating something to yourself or writing it on paper, you're walking it home, where it will stay as long as you visit it occasionally.

It's best to practice repetition every day for at least a month and ideally for two months. If possible, you should do your repetitive mental calisthenics when you first get up, as the brain is at its most receptive immediately upon awakening. Plus, relaxing in bed for ten minutes while you mentally repeat what you want to remember can be very pleasant and reinforce a positive outlook toward your PMP test!

A very important last suggestion: everyone needs a break. Even if you're enjoying your studies, you should take at least one full day a week to get completely away from them and do other things. It doesn't have to be a big production or cost a lot of money; a morning walk, reading, a movie, a play, or anything that truly relaxes and refreshes you is just as important as the work you do the rest of the week.

About the author: Cornelius Fichtner, PMP is an international project manager and noted PMP expert. He is the host of *The PM Podcast* at www.thepmpodcast.com, where you can hear his free interviews with project management experts from around the world.

His *PM PrepCast* at www.pm-prepcast.com has also helped over 2,000 project managers to prepare for the PMP exam. Please send your comments to pm@pm-prepcast.com.

Cornelius served as PMI-OC Chair/President in 2007.