

Educause Project Management Constituency Group

Wednesday, October 20, 2004

The group began by listing a variety of topics to discuss, and selected a subset that could be discussed during the 90-minute timeframe. The following highlights represent a portion of the discussions, however due to the size of the group and pace of the discussions it was not possible to capture everything. Please feel free to augment these notes as necessary. DBW

1. Forming the Project Management Office

- Who has a Project Management office?
 - a) **Princeton**: The PM office was a joint initiative between business units and IT (1997). It is staffed with 1.5 FTE and actively works with 10 to 12 projects at a time. The PM office offers facilitation and post project review. Princeton has a good selection of PM templates for project plans, status reports, and post project reviews on their website.
 - b) **Oklahoma State** reports having a PM office. Did not catch further details.
 - c) **Edinburgh University** – Has had a PM office for 3-4 years. Projects must be greater than 5 days (FTE) assigned to be projects. Project committee prioritizes the projects.
 - d) **Columbia Institute of Technology** uses facilitated discussions

2. Creating a Project Management culture

- a) Takes a long time to create a project management culture. A project management mindset must be incorporated into the customer community. It expands beyond just central IT.
- b) **MIT** discussed the project management culture needed. Included a master spreadsheet of projects.
- c) How do you convince people to use project management practices? Show benefits and results of projects using pm techniques. Need executive support. How do you promote that culture to other IT departments outside central IT? Clearly define sponsors, roles, responsibilities.
- d) Need to use metrics to prove benefits, and must show benefits to CIO.
- e) Time tracking – **U of Washington** recently implemented time tracking for developers. Tracking time is critical to the success of project management, tying time to real needs and solutions. How can you manage with tracking? Staff must be comfortable with time predictions/estimates (there may be issues with regard to billable hours though).
- f) Working with IT committee to prioritize projects. What do you do with the data you collect? Are we tracking task completion, or hours per day? **St. Michael's College** reports using a “balanced scorecard” approach.

3. IT Portfolio Management - balancing the portfolio projects to determine what you are and are not going to do.

- a) Need a large vision for alignment.

- b) Need sponsorship.
- c) **Carnegie Mellon** Discovery (borrowed from MIT) – fill out template with idea of project, it gets prioritized and evaluated before a decision is made.
- d) Use cost-benefit analysis to determine if projects are worth doing (more or less cost than benefit)
- e) Use change orders and change requests to manage change.
- f) Controlling demands and getting more resources are major obstacles.
- g) Funding project management; **Stanford** uses a concept phase, emphasizes the importance of operational cost/resource estimates.

4. **Making matrix management successful – cross functional teams reporting across the organization to complete projects.**

- a) Have regular full-time supervisors responsible for staff, and project managers responsible for projects. Formal evaluations and administrative tasks are performed by supervisors, but project managers provide input.
- b) Benefits – keeps everyone fully employed on projects, keeps best talent on projects, targets skills accordingly, and relieves project managers of operational day to day administrative tasks. Project managers stay focused on the project work.
- c) The project manager is often from a user business area
- d) Resource manager – term used to define a supervisor of staff. Resource manager needs to be kept in the loop on project progress by the project manager.
- e) Move project teams together (physically located) for project duration to improve effectiveness.
- f) The project needs to be defined separately from operational tasks, including emergencies. Consider risk and contingency planning in the process.

5. **Who makes a good Project Manager?**

- a) Disciplined in documentation and tracking
- b) Needs to have a good “bedside manner”; be an active listener, and have good judgment on what is and isn’t working
- c) Must be a good facilitator and not a tool jockey. Must be focused on the people
- d) Should be influential and a good negotiator
- e) Must have good communication skills and be a good facilitator
- f) Leadership and willingness to lead are key traits
- g) Needs to have “asbestos skin”, but burnout becomes an issue over time.
- h) The project manager should empower each member of the technical team to feel some ownership
- i) Should be able to make decisions without complete information, need good estimation skills, need to ask a lot of questions, and see the “big picture”
- j) Proactively identify and remove roadblocks
- k) Needs to be a good nag (with bedside manners)
- l) Needs broad knowledge of all areas of the university
- m) Must be good at conflict resolution and mediation!
- n) The Project Manager must be able to create the right project team.

6. **Contacts**

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Princeton – hetty@princeton.edu

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Several of you talked with Hetty Baiz, Princeton, and Mary L. Pretz-Lawson, Carnegie Mellon, at our poster session table on Project Management Templates. Here are our respective web sites with the handouts that we ran out of.

www.princeton.edu/ppo

www.cmu.edu/computing/discovery

Special thanks to our notetaker, Deb Whitten from Purdue - dwhitten@purdue.edu

And our fearless Project Management Constituent Group leader, Deb Lauriano - dalauriano@ucdavis.edu