



# Management & Information Technology Department

## Center of Excellence in Project Management

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### Of Special Interest:

- Practical Education
- Film industry research
- The Powerless Project Manager
- Project Governance
- Fascinating Facts
- Super Hero to the Rescue

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### PM Training—are we addressing practical issues, or memorizing theory?

The New York Times (Nov. 20, 2011) ran a very compelling front page article about the education of lawyers in the US. The title “What They Don’t Teach Law Students: Lawyering” could be altered for many careers including Project Management.

How did you learn how to manage projects? What is the entry level position to start off in if you want to become a project manager? Are you a project manager by virtue of the responsibilities you have, but your official business title is something different, perhaps, Relationship manager, account manager or coordinator?

Many of you would have trouble defining the entry level position for a new college graduate who knows they don’t have enough experience to be a project lead, but want s to learn the ropes. In some companies, the business analyst role is a good

start, but in others that position doesn’t exist. And, if you are like most of the project managers I know, you came to the position by accident. You were probably the individual who never turned in anything late, who always worked well with your colleagues and who could summarize the status of your work for your boss without taking up two hours of their time or giving them a stack of papers to read. So when they needed someone to get a new project underway, you were the first one they thought of, right?

You most likely did not have any official training and if you are now a PMP® you most likely were running projects before going back and sitting for the exam.

As the law article points out, there is a tension between the need to learn a skill prior to entering the job; however, the current education system for some careers needs to be

refreshed to better provide students with the practical skills they need in the corporate environment.

This disconnect is best addressed by developing an ongoing dialogue between academics and the business community. The Center of Excellence is trying to breach this gap with continuing education, forums and workshops. If you are interested in developing a one-day or weekend workshop devoted to a practical skill set, please contact me at the Center. Let’s start the New Year off with a united goal to improve the educational opportunities for our project managers.

[Barbara Edington, DPS, PMP](#)

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### Project management for Entrepreneurs

Do you have a business plan that you would like to turn into a reality? Time after time, people have told me about a business they would like to create, or an existing business that they would like to expand beyond its current target market. When I ask them about their progress, they tell me they just don’t know where to start.

If this sounds familiar, why not start the New Year with a resolution to take the first step by bringing your dream to a project management course designed specifically for entrepreneurs., small business owners and those who have a dream they would like to see become a reality. This is a regular semester course and classes

start in mid-January on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

If you would be interested in taking this course, but in a weekend format, please let us know and if there is enough interest we will schedule that format in the new year.



**Teresa Ashley, PMP**  
Senior Business Analyst  
Contractor at SouthStar  
Energy Services in  
Atlanta, GA

**Fascinating Facts.....**

*Because you can never have enough trivia ready for holiday party conversations!*

A Project Manager is the person who leads the project, communicates the project to stakeholders, takes the heat when the project goes wrong and rejoices when the project is on schedule and within budget. If the Project Manager is accountable for the entire project, imagine what happens when the Project Manager feels powerless and has no control to get the team to work. Here are a few things that happen:

- ◆ Project team members do not have confidence in the Project Manager, therefore they do not feel obligated to provide status, estimates or resources
- ◆ Project has no direction and the team does not feel accountable to each other
- ◆ Project has no leadership and decisions are never made
- ◆ Management Team is not engaged in the project. They do not understand the project but want to hear “On Target”, “We are done within budget”
- ◆ BLAME, BLAME, BLAME!!! Everyone is blaming each other when the target date is missed or any obstacles surface Although the Project Manager feels

powerless, he or she is responsible for the overall success of the project. While I was studying for my PMP I do recall the teacher who was training my class say, “An unrealistic project date is the Project Manager’s fault”. The more experience I have gained in Project Management, the more I realize this statement basically means, “You are accountable no matter what obstacles you face. You are accountable to drive and run the project to successful completion”. A Powerless Project Manager can take steps to gain power. Next issue, I will discuss those steps .



*Wilson Bentley, a Vermont native, photographed his first snowflake on January 15, 1885 and in his lifetime captured over 5,000 images of crystals. He died from pneumonia after walking six miles in a blizzard to capture more images.*

Image Source:  
<http://ethnomathematics.wordpress.com/2011/03/05/snowflake-forming-patterns/>

### Current Research – Film and TV Industry–Need participants

The Center of Excellence is involved in a research project about the arts and entertainment community. We need your help.

We are looking for participants who work or have worked in the film industry . We are particularly in need of individuals who have worked as directors, assistant directors or line producers in any type of film or television production.

We would need about 2 hours of your time via phone or in person for a detailed interview. All information is confidential. No individual or corporate names will be used. This is for academic research purposes.

If you would like to participate with our research team, please contact the Director of the Center, Barbara Edington, at this address:

bedington@stfranciscollege.edu





**The Holiday Project – a humorous look at managing holiday stress**

The holiday season should be a joyful one and yet it is typically a time of stress and overindulgence followed by promises to do better next season. Would you like to change this pattern in your approach to the holidays? Sounds like a job for the PM Super Hero. Let's see what advice he has:

To all those who are suffering from holiday stress, the first thing we need to do is a quick root cause analysis. What's causing the stress and the general loss of control? Try to identify one of the following major root causes: am I a victim of scope creep, was there an unexpected budget cut, have I lost critical members of the team or has project execution been occurring without proper

monitoring and control? Let me ask a few more questions to help you figure out which is your most critical problem and therefore one that you should prioritize.

If you originally started out planning a small family celebration and now find yourself in charge of the school pageant and the community charity ball, you have clearly allowed scope creep to inject its deadly poison into your project! Quickly re-evaluate the priority projects and immediately consider off-loading to other unsuspecting individuals! If you are one of the millions of people who have decided to cut back on the financial aspect of the holidays, make sure you have actually decreased the number of activities or the number of

participants so that you aren't facing post-holiday bill paying blues. Keep tracking the budget throughout the project, don't wait till the bills come in. If you have lost a few members of your team because they have lost interest, decided to take a quick trip to a warmer climate, or whatever, you must quickly recruit new members or scale back just like you would in any project. It's easy to slack off on the monitor and control part of a holiday project. Be sure you are checking your inventory early...you don't want to run out of deviled eggs just as the grocery store closes. Monitor your team's (and your) motivation level and make changes sooner rather than later. —

**Happy Holidays from your PM Super Hero**



This column is written by the **PM Super Hero** who protects PMs all over the world and flies to their rescue when they need help getting a project back under control!

**Project Governance- Why does it really matter?**

A straight forward common sense view infers that every successful project needs to be planned and managed efficiently to ensure its success. That said, how do you ensure that this in fact occurs? Let's say that you have the most sophisticated project plan, you manage to the triple constraints in super human fashion, you aggressively monitor the critical path items, you have the most incredibly supportive stakeholders and sponsor/s a project can ever have... is that enough?

Oops! maybe not. This where project governance comes into play. A project governance framework includes the rules and principles under which your project thrives, the mechanisms

you put in place to ensure compliance and project controls occur within defined standards. Effective project governance is more vital to project success than is usually thought. If you evaluate as to why projects fail consistently, it is perhaps more due to poor project governance, than poor project management. Therefore applying a project governance discipline upfront in projects, versus addressing the same 'on the fly' or 'an afterthought' is often the right thing to do.

Employing a project governance culture will realize customer value and create competitive advantage. This coupled with adopting value-added process driven culture and leveraging sensible tools, are all part of a

powerful package towards resounding project and overall organization triumph. Deploying it in any organization will certainly shake things up, so think through your governance objectives carefully. Address your governance milestones in manageable increments, and more importantly evaluate your tradeoffs cautiously. Project governance discipline and rigor may not be the 'business-as-usual' culture, and it may take time for it to make its way across the organization. Then again, aren't we all over achievers any way!

More details on project governance can be found at: [www.pmi.org](http://www.pmi.org)

**“Address your governance milestones in manageable increments”**



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Strategic Operations,  
American Express



# Management & Information Technology Department

## ***Center of Excellence in Project Management***

### **Center of Excellence in Project Management**

Email:  
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St. Francis College  
Management and Information Technology  
180 Remsen Street

We offer weekend executive style classes so you can earn your Graduate Level Project Management Certificate while you work.

*Holiday Wishes for a Peaceful  
and Joyous Season*

*From the Center of Excellence  
in Project Management at  
St. Francis College*

*Have a Safe and  
Happy New Year*

<http://stfranciscollege.edu/academics/Graduate>

### **How Can You Participate?**

The Center of Excellence in Project Management is always looking for new ideas and input from all members of the community.

Here are a few of the ways you can participate. Please forward your comments, suggestions, proposals to:

bedington@stfranciscollege.edu

- ◆ **Volunteer to write an article for the next newsletter.** We are open to a broad range of topics associated with the general principles of project management. If you have an example, an idea, an experience you would like to share, send us an outline.
- ◆ **Participate in the Film Research Project**—check page two for details. It would only take two hours of your time and can be completed via phone or in-person.
- ◆ **Conduct a workshop or seminar** on a topic in your area of expertise. We will work with you to develop a short (one or two day) interactive learning opportunity. Send us a proposal with the topic, your expertise in this area, and your ability to help generate an interest in this seminar.