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December 2011: Tidings of Comfort & Joy

Where's RMA in December?



Dec 2 McDonald's 10 Steps to Successful Project Management

Dec 2 Free Webinar: The Earliest New Year's Virtual Party
[Register](#)

Dec 14 Emotional Intelligence at Fishers Chamber of Commerce
Morning Motivator

Growing Collaboration by Sharing Decision Making

Sounds like a great way to grow engagement, but make sure it's the right decision to do as a team. Here are questions to consider and an activity from Thiagi www.thiagi.com:



- Do you have enough time to make the decision?

Tidings of Comfort and Joy

It's the busiest and most thought provoking time of the year. First, we're racing to get everything done before the holidays (at home) and end of year (at work). Another part of our brain can't help but think "Wow, what happened this year? What should we do differently next year?", in addition to a spiritual pause of many faiths this month. The busy-ness has continued this year, and with it the absence of Comfort and Joy. Here are some brief thoughts to help you pause and think about bringing it back:



David McClelland's "Theory of Needs" states that we are influenced by three social needs:

- Affiliation: The need to belong / people
- Power: The ability to act / dominance
- Achievement: The desire to accomplish

As you reflect on how to bring comfort and joy back to yourself, those you influence and your company think about these three:

- The need to belong brings comfort and joy - how can you grow more of this in your life, and for others that depend on you? When people are crazy busy, this falls away. Loneliness is an epidemic in the workplace and in our families. As many of you learned in our project management learning experiences, it's powerful to choose what we pay attention to rather than roll with the chaos.
- The need to lead self and others - how can you move yourself and those you influence to leverage more strengths? To play in the zone? How can you build a 'whole brain' with your team by collaborating? How can your family enjoy time

- Who are the different stakeholders with different needs and perspectives?
- Who has the information needed to contribute to making the decision?
- Will the decision be improved by involving others?
- What is the risk of conflict during the decision making and how will you mitigate it?
- Will collaborating on this issue build commitment?

Activity:

Draw this grid for the meeting:

	Strategy	Opposing Strategy
+		
-		

Take turns answering the following for each strategy:

- What are the key elements of this strategy? What are any existing questions about what the strategy involves? (common Definition)
- What are the positive and negative outcomes expected?
- What are the conditions that would provoke the positive?
- What are the conditions that would provoke negative

Concurrent Development: Too Good to Be True?

David N. Ford and John D. Sterman, authors of one of my favorite project management white papers, "The Liars Club" have taken on another sacred cow. Their whitepaper, *Overcoming the 90% Syndrome: Iteration Management in Concurrent Development Projects* can be used to challenge the business preference for working on multiple projects in parallel instead of the 'old way' of working on one project from start to end without interruption. In businesses, doing multiple projects at once seems to mean that more new things arrive more quickly. It turns out, this is rarely the case. Troubles come for two reasons: both the processes and communication required to be successful juggling concurrent projects are much more complex, and much more prone to failure. In other words, there's more project management time required to keep track of where you left one to move to another and there are more conversations with more people. The authors also found that more projects were starting with incomplete analysis when concurrent work was expected. They also found that concurrent processes tended to create more error and

together more often? Many of you have leveraged our consulting services and assessments including DISC, Workplace Motivators and Trimetrix to improve team productivity, hiring and job benchmarking.

- The need to achieve and make an impact brings comfort and joy - what ways can you remind yourself of the impact you make, be more accountable to creating that impact and then help others with the same? We have worked with your teams this year to help everyone be explicit about expectations and measurements. One task, one owner.
- Achievement can also be measured in formal ways. Congratulations to those of you who have used the PMI PDUs from our workshops and sessions to certify or re-certify your PMP or CapM project management certifications. Likewise, kudos to those who have been studying with our own Thought Leader Trish Uhl, and mastered the CPLP certification.

This year, we've shared the latest on emotions and their impact on our decision making and performance. Many of you have used our EQ assessments to help your teams be more productive. The opposite of comfort and joy is constant noise. Constant noise creates stress. Stress discourages hearing. Joshua Ehrlich's article, "For Great Leadership, Clear Your Head," helps us think about how to recover:

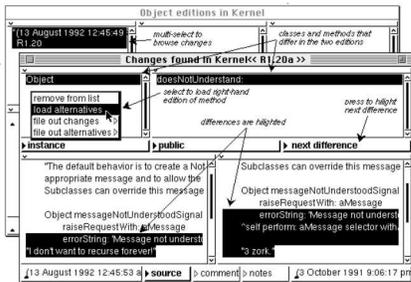
- Getting stuff done is overrated. Knowing where you are going is everything. Spend less time doing and more time thinking.
- Remove the obstacles. Say no to unnecessary things. Trust and delegate.
- Quiet the noise. Mindfulness helps leaders solve problems more creatively, learn more quickly and be more flexible. Notice your emotions.
- Journal cool ideas.
- Clarify your personal and business vision, mission and values. Yup, I know, that's so 80s, but still important.
- Adjust, adjust, adjust. "To everything turn, turn, turn."

I was surprised to find a used book this weekend titled "Take Back Your Time" edited by John de Graff. The subtitle is brutal - "Fighting Overwork and Time Poverty in America". John states in the first chapter:

"... What is an economy for? Why are we caught up in patterns of life that force us to pay an enormous price in terms of our health, our families, our communities and the earth itself to be less happy than we were decades ago when we had half as much stuff?"

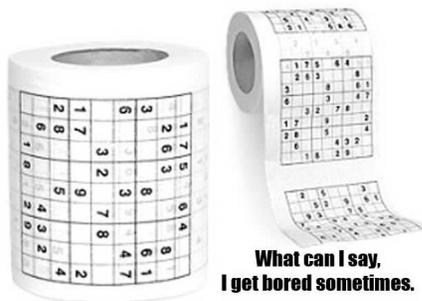
This was a national movement in 2003, 10/24 to be exact. I guess I was too busy to notice. It was tough financial times. Two years after 9/11/01, John and others were asking 'did we learn anything?'. It will shortly be 2012 and the same question is on the table. As a leader of self and others, how will you apply what you've learned this year? I wish for you

rework, triggering the 'always 90% done' title. Finally, one of the more important conclusions- do a better job on the Project Charter.



If you'd like to learn how to create a Project Charter in 45 Minutes or Less for any size project, check out the recording of our webinar by that name at <http://bit.ly/LearningProjectCharter-LouRussell-Recording>. If you'd like to grow your organizations' ability to get the 'bad news early', contact Brittney at bhelt@russellmartin.com

Multitasking: How Effective Is It Really



In this simulation, divide your team into pairs. One person will be solving simple Sudoku puzzles and another will be asking the person questions about how they organize their work. Here are some examples:

- Where do you keep your to-do list?
- What do you do when you complete a task on your to-do list?
- How do you feel at the beginning of the day and why?
- How do you feel when you get something done?
- How do you feel when you can't get something done?

If you have an odd number, make a few people observers. Give the pairs five minutes and see how many puzzles can be solved. Discuss the following:

- How is the puzzle solving impacted by distraction? How is this like real work? Who is impacted? (Personal productivity)

the holiday gift of Comfort and Joy.

Peace on Your Earth



Here are tips from Ashley Davis Bush, author of **Shortcuts to Inner Peace**:

1. In the shower: Imagine your worries, one by one, and then imagine washing them down the drain. This is an easy way to start your day with a positive perspective.

2. Write a To-Do List: As you practice good task management each day by creating your to-do list, take a moment to dash off a quick email to someone thanking them or telling them you were thinking of them.

3. Getting Home: Do a 'rest and digest' exercise (which is the opposite of 'fight or flight') as you enter your home. Shake each of your legs, arms, roll your head and shoulders and exhale deeply, shaking away the stress of the day by activating the parasympathetic nervous system.

4. Lying in Bed: Before falling asleep, resist the urge to list all the things you didn't get done or worry about and instead, list three things that happened that you are grateful for. Recreate them and re-experience the emotions.

Most Successful PM: Santa

Here are some of the things that Santa gets right so he never messes up his project success record.



Sponsorship:

Santa knows that his project is owned by his customers. Without the children, Santa cannot have a successful project.

Project Plan:

"He's making a list". Santa knows to implement a global project like his, he'll need help. He also knows that the only way to ensure consistent communication across his entire project will require good documentation.

Vision:

Santa is passionate about the success of his project. Everyone he meets will attest to that. This passion is contagious and spreads to his stakeholders, their parents, as well as the project team. Everyone seems aligned to the project charter; every role seems clearly defined.

- How is the conversation impacted by distraction? How is this like real work? Who is impacted? (customer service)

One PM Technique, One Hour:

Need PM help but there's no time to go to class? Starting in 2012, we will launch eight new e-learning modules on project management. Each topic can be taken when you need the technique, or they can be taken in order to learn the whole process of 'DARE to Properly Manage Resources'. PMI Educational PDUs will be available for these modules. Reserve your spot by emailing bhelt@russellmartin.com.

Project Management Virtual Peer Mentors:

Need more than training? How about a support group of peers? After a successful trial in 2011, PM Virtual Peer Mentors will begin again in 2012, polished, tightened up and with a dazzling new virtual location. This virtual community provides you with training, coaching and peer mentoring to work on your real projects without leaving your desk. You will grow your overall ability to juggle multiple projects while minimizing rework. Individuals meet with their peer mentor once a month by phone, and challenge each other through a shared discussion area as each person shares project deliverables. Webinars with engaging guest speakers and online training modules complete the service. There are only 20 seats available. If you'd like to apply or get more info, download the application and flyer [here](#). Send completed applications or questions to info@russellmartin.com.

**Happy Holidays from
Russell Martin & Associates
(& IRMA our Mascot)**



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Agility:

It doesn't matter what the constraints are (blizzard, wind, sand storm, meteor shower), Santa never lets project issues prevent him from meeting his project goals. If the iPhone6 is unavailable, Santa will find a good alternative for his stakeholder. I've never heard a story about a time when Santa sulked in his big chair by the fire, complaining about unexpected project glitches. My sense is that Santa, after years of experience, has a rigorous risk mitigation strategy.

The Right Resources:

Santa knows that his project success depends on the skills, passion and agility of his project team. He has an operations manager, Mrs. Claus, to make sure that the team is productive and each individual elf feels needed. Good project and team behavior is rewarded with cookies and milk.

Magic:

Every successful project enjoys an element of magic. Project managers and teams with sponsorship, planning, vision, agility and resources can do magical things. Nothing is more magical than a large man being able to get down and up a chimney undetected, especially when many of his target homes don't even have chimneys any more.

Review:

At the end of each project, Santa takes a moment to review the project purpose:

"And I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight, Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!"

See the full article at <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/contributors.asp?id=840>

Scope Creep

In the interest of having some fun at work, I think we should change the meaning of "scope creep". It should now be a job title for a person charged solely for making sure a project stays in scope. Like "Uh oh, here comes the Scope Creep, and he has his baseball bat. Somebody must have asked for the widget to solve the drought in Africa..." - Michael Smith, McDonalds USA

Holiday Contest

At a Holiday Program, five students (John, Kate, Larry, Mary and Nick) performed five musical pieces. Two about Christmas, two about Hanukkah and one about Kwanzaa. There were three violinists and two pianists. Each student performed only one piece, and played only one instrument. Find the order of the students, their respective instruments and the category of holiday song, with the following conditions:



-The categories were not played consecutively. Kwanzaa was played last and Hanukkah was played first.

-There was one piano piece that was played between two violin pieces, and two violin pieces between the first and last piano piece.

-There were no piano pieces about Hanukkah.

-Kate played third.

-Nick played the piano, and immediately followed John, who played a piece for Hanukkah.

-Mary did not play a piece about Kwanzaa.

Each submission earns 12 points. All correct answers will be awarded 225 to this quarter's scoreboard. Send your answers to Brittney to make her day
bhelt@russellmartin.com

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