




# Challenges for the I.T. or 'Analytic' Project Manager



April 6, 2010

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# Introduction

- **70% of PMIWDC project managers are I.T. PMs (approximately)**
- **Many of these project managers worked previously in a technical capacity, or perhaps managed technical teams**
- **So, if PMI's tremendous growth in PMPs and project managers parallels the Washington, DC chapter, a large segment of this growth is in people moving from a fairly technical careers into project management.**
- **What special challenges face the technical I.T. person making this transition?**

# Achievement Theory & TRACOM Model

The strengths of technical people can be understood well within the context of modern 'Theories of Motivation'

- **David McClelland's Achievement Theory**
  - Need for Achievement
  - Need for Power
  - Need for Affiliation
  
- **The TRACOM "Social Styles" Model:**
  - "Drivers"
  - "Expressives"
  - "Amiables"
  - "Analytics"

# “Achievers” and “Analytics”

- **High Achievers like:**
  - Very challenging, stimulating work
  - Seeking recognition for achievements
  - Work well in self-directed environment
- **Analytics like:**
  - Facts/data -
  - Logic
  - Problem-solving
  - Analysis

**“It’s a lot easier to get computers to do what you want than people!”**

## Assumptions about Project Mgmt

- **PM Fundamentals often stresses aspects which might seem similar to technical design work:**
  - **WBS decomposition:**
    - (Similar to top-down & modular design)
  - **Network diagramming/CPM**
    - Using tools such as MSPProject , Artemis
  - **Risk management processes:**
    - Monte Carlo simulation, EMV, Decision trees,
  - **Earned Value Methodology**
  - **Quality Management Processes**
    - Quality control tools

## Assumptions about Project Mgmt

### ■ Management may be fooled too!

- May not appreciate what is really involved with project management!
- (Are we CMMI level 0 or 1?)
- The “Halo Effect” – (Peter Principle)
  - Poor Assumption that because someone is an excellent technical leader, and the “go-to” person for key I.T. design or problem-solving issues that, of course, they will be successful project managers

## Core Skills for Project Management

**Success as a project manager really involves proficiency in:**

- **Soft Skills! & People Skills!**
  - Stakeholder analysis – Politics!
  - Communications
  - Meetings
  - Leading teams
  - Delegation
  - Conflict resolution
  - Negotiation
  - Attention to Contract & Administrative Details

## Top Areas of Concern for 'Analytic' PMs

### 1) Identifying Stakeholders

- Did we miss any key stakeholders? Who will be negatively impacted by this project? Most projects are bringing about new change. We are creating something new and unique.
- It's easy to miss key stakeholders and groups and underestimate their impact. Often times, there are going to be people and stakeholder groups resistant to this change.*

## Top Areas of Concern for 'Analytic' PMs

### 2) Collecting Requirements & Defining Scope

- Did we truly understand the stakeholders' requirements?
- If not, when it comes time to get our deliverables accepted, it's not going to happen! This will lead to scope creep, schedule delays and cost overruns*
- Therefore, use prototyping, VOC type methods to carefully probe and pull out the requirements
- Watch out for lapsing into jargon where these terms are understood differently*
- Requirements need to “SMART”
- Need acceptance criteria defined
- Also, it's not just about product requirements; make sure project requirements are also included

## Top Areas of Concern for 'Analytic' PMs

### 3) Communications

- Following Kerzner: Are we communicating appropriately in all 3-4 directions? – Especially, upwards to the customer, sponsor and senior managers?
- 'Analytics' may not want to get involved in politics, or understand all the organizational relationship structures*
- Are communications effective & efficient?
- 'Analytics' may assume their communications are clear and precise; may lapse into technical jargon*
- Are we good listeners? Do we practice active listening?
- 'Analytics' can struggle here too. Too often, we are the critics, and play the role of the Devil's Advocate*
- Are we paying attention to the non-verbal side of communications?
- Do we run meetings effectively?

## Top Areas of Concern for 'Analytic' PMs

### 4) Delegation

- Do we understand the importance of delegating much of the project work?
- Analytics often take on too much for themselves. They get right into the middle of creating the technical solution. They have to realize that this is not their role now as PM.*
- Their role now will principally involve “Integration” and “Communications”*

## Top Areas of Concern for 'Analytic' PMs

### 5) Team Development, Team Building, Rewards & Recognition

- Do we understand the importance of team building?
- We may overlook the importance of this: the need to be creative with this, and the need to address it on a frequent, consistent basis*
- Good managers are supportive of their team members, and look for ways they can make their lives easier & better*
- Great managers are true advocates for their team members*

## Top Areas of Concern for 'Analytic' PMs

### 6) Contracts & Administrative Work


- Do we understand the contracts and the terms and conditions, and how these might impact the project?
- When we need a subcontractor to provide a service or a product, a lot of bad assumptions can be made about how fast this will happen, or what is really required on the contractual side.*
- For contract administration, it's also common to underestimate what will be required from the PM.*
- All the other bureaucratic, administrative details: They are 'necessary evils,' and a lot of work goes into seeing these are completed as required.*

## Conclusion – What are our next steps?

**So, if you are an I.T. project manager coming from a technical background, recognize as a project manager there are a number of important areas that may not come easily. Make a commitment to improve in all the knowledge areas:**

- **Get certified! Earn the PMP!**
- **Join Toastmasters**
- **Work on communications, teamwork and other soft skills**
- **Enjoy making teams work well!**

**For companies and PMOs – Make sure you have programs in place to address and emphasize training in these skills for new PMs**



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