TOASTMASTERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Seven members of the Binghamton River City Toastmasters organization demonstrated their craft at the January PMI Binghamton Chapter meeting held at the Brothers 2 restaurant.

Introduced by Toastmaster President Leo O’Connor, the Toastmaster of the Day, Michael Meier related how in only five months of attending Toastmaster meetings he had developed the confidence and skills to make a successful presentation to a large industry gathering. Greg Lesko then shared his Ice Breaker speech titled, “Two Sides of a Coin” and described the influence his grandfather and a social studies teacher had in his life. The Ice Breaker is the first project that a new member to Toastmasters takes on when joining the group. The speech is designed to be 8 to 10 minutes in length and is meant as a way for a new member to develop speaking skills while introducing themselves to the group.

Kevin Webb served as Timer and tracked the length of each speech. Another Toastmaster role, the Ah-Counter/Grammarian, is just what it sounds like and Maryrose Griffin tallied the Ah’s, Um’s and grammar gaffes for each presenter. Table Topics are 1 to 2 minute impromptu speaking assignments, sort of like a lightning round. Carla Sives from the PIM Chapter took on the challenge and wowed the group with her speaking skills. The Toastmasters include speech evaluations as a core element of their program to help members improve their communication skills. Benda Syle served as the Speech Evaluator for this meeting and provided constructive feedback on the presentations.

The PMI Binghamton Chapter thanks the River City Toastmasters for their engaging presentations and for providing an excellent example of a typical Toastmaster’s meeting. The River City Toastmasters meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at noon and welcome newcomers to join them. If interested, contact: Brenda Syle, VP Membership at vpm-1831@toastmastersclubs.org.
PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRENDS

With the new year upon us, I spent some time searching web articles on project management trends predicted for 2016. While each list was unique, some common themes struck me. One was an increased need for project managers to master and lead change management within their organizations. Several sites noted that companies will continue to emphasize process improvements and will need change leaders with the ability to manage large process change initiatives. While project management is different from change management, there are overlapping skill sets.

A second theme that showed up several times was agile project management. This includes scrum techniques which was the subject of the March 2015 PMI Binghamton Chapter Meeting. It typically relies on an incremental approach to providing project deliverables.

Another oft cited prediction was an increase in the utilization of remote teams. This includes the trend already in progress toward the use of contractors, freelancers and part time employees, as well as full time employees who telecommute. This is sometimes referred to as virtual management. While technologies such as instant messaging, video conferencing and file sharing websites, as well as the ability to use these technologies nearly anywhere via smart phones has made managing remote teams far easier, the traditional challenges are still there to some extent. Examples are working around time zone differences, difficulty in maintaining clear project communications and the loss of the informal break room discussions that help people to share project information.

An interesting point I came across on one site was the supposition that while PMP certification is a plus, a perhaps more important qualification of a project manager is to have a technical background in the subject area related to their project. The author in this case felt that people with technical backgrounds were often more adept at analyzing large amounts of data and had an advantage in being able to better understand complex technical issues associated with their projects.

I’d like to hear what you think about these and other subjects that might be interesting to include in a future Newsletter or Chapter Meeting. Drop me an email at communications@pmi-binghamton.org.
I hope the New Year finds you happy and healthy, and that you are enjoying making a difference through your project management endeavors. I wanted to touch base and let you know about a few things the chapter is working on.

First of all, I am excited to be your 2016 President and pleased with the caliber of the current Board Officers. I fully expect we'll continue to advance our mission to make a difference for our community of project managers, building on what the 2015 Board accomplished. Many thanks to the 2015 board for their service!

Our January Chapter meeting was another home run with the River City Toastmasters demonstrating what they do and how they can help with public speaking. I am seriously thinking about joining, and am definitely recommending my two children look into Toastmasters Clubs where they live, because I am convinced doing so will help improve their comfort level when addressing groups.

February's meeting is gearing up to be our biggest chapter meeting ever! We'll be holding it at Binghamton University where students and other attendees will hear about a project management career and PMP certification. This is a meeting for PMP’s as well - sharing your experience and talking with the students will ultimately help grow our profession in the area. We also expect quite a few BU faculty there, including the CIO of BU, so it will also be a great networking opportunity! We'll have an email out soon to register.

Plans for the rest of the year are gaining momentum, not just for chapter meetings and our Third Annual Professional Development Day, but to continue to ramp up the chapter's presence. So stay tuned!

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, please contact me at president@pmi-binghamton.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

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**Why PMP? Networking, Career Opportunities and How to Prepare!**

**Presented By:**

**Anthony Olenik, PMP**  
Engineering Lead, BAE Systems

**Debra Saucke, PMP**  
Quality Engineer, BAE Systems

**John Clark, PMP**  
Program Manager, Retired

**Thursday, February 18, 2016 6-8 P.M.**  
Binghamton University, ITC Center of Excellence, Symposium Hall

**REGISTRATION:** http://www.pmi-binghamton.org/index.php/events/registration
FIVE LESSONS LEARNED FOR 2015

I learned a lot in 2015. Did you? Here are my top 5 lessons learned in project management that we can put into practice during 2016. Scroll to the bottom for a free lessons learned meeting agenda template to help you manage your lessons learned this year.

1. **Succession planning matters**

You can only move into a new job when your boss is confident that they can spare you from your current role. Make that an easy decision by finding the right person to fill your shoes while you are out on holiday and longer term, when you decide to take a new job.

The UK’s Major Projects Authority’s annual report highlights the importance of making sure that there is a pipeline of talent and a clear career path for project management professionals. The report promises that the MPA:

“will develop the profession by creating a clear career path for project delivery professionals, supported by an understanding of the skills and training required at each stage. This will help individual departments develop their cadre of skilled delivery professionals, while allowing the best project leaders to move between departments so that the right people are on the right projects at the right time.”

In 2016 the first Project Delivery fast stream and apprentices should join the government teams, demonstrating that commitment to career progression runs from bottom to top. You can read more about how the MPA is changing the UK’s major projects for the better in this article.

Action: Identify your successor and train them. They could be a junior project manager or a functional manager whom you are working with today on a project. They might not even exist in your organisation yet, so your first job is to find someone to take over when you move on (upwards).

2. **Find your support network**

As project management takes a hold in even the smallest organisations, it can be hard to build a professional network and grow your career.
This year I met women from huge organisations with large project management capabilities and those working alone. I met women from teams in construction where there’s typically one person in a particular role on a project that can last for years which, they said, can be lonely. There’s an immense power in meeting and talking to someone doing broadly the same thing as you, with the same challenges. So find them.

Action: Find out how to boost your career with these networking tips (which work even if you are the only project manager in your business). Make 2016 the year that you add more people to your professional network, as long as they are the right people. Don’t be afraid to reach out and make contact with someone. Whenever I have done that I’ve been delighted that people are prepared to share and answer my questions! Very, very rarely does someone say no. Try it.

3. Agile waterfalls work

My own experience this year working on expensive and time-consuming software projects has shown that there is a definite flaw with waterfall. Agilists won’t be surprised. The concept of specifying a solution, going away for six months to build it what’s in the requirements document and then giving it back to the customer is flawed for most developmental technology projects (and other types of project) today.

We need Agile waterfalls, and these work. Iterative project plans, with short build times and little, phased waterfalls, help mitigate risk and deliver benefits faster. They work best with a customer embedded in the project team. If that sounds Agile-y it is, but you can adopt that approach even in a traditional waterfall environment, and you’ll see benefits.

Action: Challenge the waterfall approach where it is embedded in your organisation. Look for quick wins. Think about how you can adjust your project schedules to deliver value early, because that’s what really matters – stakeholder value.

4. Learn lessons, don’t just capture them

At the beginning of the year I facilitated a lessons learned meeting for a colleague. It served to highlight how poorly project management as a whole deals with lessons learned. In fact, a friend on Twitter went as far as to say that lessons learned in the world of the PMO are called ‘lessons captured’ because you can’t guarantee that any learning has happened.

Action: Check that you have a way of turning lessons captured into lessons learned. Read this article on how to implement lessons learned on projects for 5 tips on doing that.

5. Multi-tasking kills productivity

I knew this already, but I needed to relearn it this year. It’s my first full year back at work in three years and the second half of it was hectic. In fact, these last few months have been the most hectic for a very long time. I used to bake bread when the babies were small. Now there’s a packet of yeast in the cupboard that has expired. I have no idea where I found the time, but apparently I had more time then than now for things like that.

My trouble is that often technology is slower than my brain. While my PC fires up I need to do something so I file papers or check email on my phone. Then when my browser decides not to function I switch to doing something else for a few minutes, like making a call, and when the screen finally loads I switch back.

I don’t do well with moments of downtime and I have to change that, especially as this research from Stanford University says that people who normally work in an environment with several electronic channels open at the same time have poor attention spans and poorer memories. The trouble is, I feel the only available option is to do less and I don’t know how to do that either.

Now excuse me while I make a cup of tea and clean the kitchen surfaces while the kettle boils.

Action: Slow down. I don’t want to live with my brain so full that it feels unmanageable a lot of the time. I don’t have any advice for you if you feel like that too, but if you’ve got helpful tips then please share them.
OBJECTIVES

- Advance the mission and objectives of the Project Management Institute within the Binghamton area.
- Develop a growing and committed membership of local Project Management Professionals.
- Promote Project Management principles and techniques with local businesses, universities and professional associations.
- Support and enhance Professionalism within Project Management by developing and providing quality programs based on local Project Management needs.
- Create and deliver an educational program that strengthens local Project Manager skills and supports the PMI Certification Program.

PMI BINGHAMTON NY CHAPTER, INC.

Project Management Institute (PMI) is the world’s leading not-for-profit professional association for the project, program and portfolio management profession, with over 2.9 million members. The PMI Binghamton, NY Chapter was chartered in October of 1998 to provide a forum for Project Management professionals, to promote the Project Management Institute through networking with other project managers, to share project experiences, to provide and receive training and to support Project Management professionals in their certification efforts.

Chapter meetings are held monthly except during summer months. Meetings include dinner followed by presentations by experienced project managers and lecturers on topics of interest to other project managers or those interested in project management. Topics have included the PM Certification process, the PMI Exam, and a number of specific projects from area businesses that demonstrate the use of project management principles and techniques. Recent presentations have included: Management in Entrepreneurial Ventures, Environmental Remediation, Delegation as a Process, A Start-up: Chroma Nano Tech, Electric Power System Operations and Emergency Response, Microbrewery Operations Management, Winning Project Presentations and Risk Management Essentials.

Our mission: Improve our community and enhance the professionalism of project managers by teaching project management principles / techniques and promoting them with local businesses, educational institutions, professional associations, and other organizations.

We believe Project Management can help ensure success!

PMI BINGHAMTON CHAPTER
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http://www.pmi-binghamton.org/

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