



Emerald Coast Florida Chapter

Volume 3, Issue 7

President's Corner

by
Cheryl Archer, PMP

Fellow Program Managers,

Where did 2011 go? It seems like just a few weeks ago we were starting our "Journey through the PMBOK" program. It really has been a great year for growth for our Chapter. We added our third Branch in Pensacola thanks to a lot of hard work from those folks. Our chapter has grown significantly and we are seeing a new surge in fresh volunteers! I am so excited to have Bonnie McClure serving as our president for 2012. She has such an enthusiasm for our Chapter and our profession. She is a great leader and mentor to all of us.

Thank you all for your support and service this year. I will be around as "Past President", but I am so excited about the 2012 board and what we will all accomplish this upcoming year. Have a wonderful and safe Holiday Season.

Thank you, and see you soon!

Sincerely,

Cheryl
Cheryl L. Archer, PMP
President, PMI Emerald Coast FL

**PMI Emerald Coast
Florida Chapter
P. O. Box 1265
Shalimar, FL 32579**

December 2011

Membership Stats as of
December 2011

Total Members: 244

*141 PMP, 1PgMP, 1
CAPM*

106 Chapter Members

*29 Mobile Branch
Members*

*49 Panama City Branch
Members*

60 Pensacola Branch

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2012 PMI Emerald Coast FL Chapter Board Members

President	Bonnie McClure, PMP president@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP (President Elect)	Caroline Pepa, PMP presidentelec@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP Finance	Donald Perry, PMP vpfinance@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP Communications	Tracey McWhorter, PMP vpcommunications@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP Public Relations	To Be Announced vppublicrelations@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP Programs	John Bernhart, II vpprograms@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP Professional Development	Tom Lehmann, PMP vpprofdevelopment@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP Membership	Jennifer Nypert vpmembership@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
VP Operations	Armand Izzo, PMP vpoperations@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
Past President	Cheryl Archer, PMP pastpresident@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
Director at Large	Mike Cary, PMP directorsatlarge@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
Director at Large	Noel Cumbia, PMP directorsatlarge@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org

2012 Pensacola Branch Directors

Director of Branch	Charlotte Peacock, PMP directorpensacolaranch@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
Director of Finances	Mike Beck, PMP
Director of Operations	Pat McMichael, PMP
Director of Communications and Public Relations	Holly Smith, PMP
Director of Professional Development	Brynn Ammon
Director of Community Outreach	Kevin Brennan, PMP

2012 Mobile Branch Directors

Director of Branch	Carrie French, PMP directormobilebranch@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
Director of Finances	Rick Gaviria, PMP
Director of Communications And Public Relations	To Be Announced
Director of Programs and Professional Development	Carl Brasington III, P.E., PMP
Director of Membership	Reggie Carney
Director of Operations	To Be Announced
Director at Large	Tony Trawick, PMP



2012 Panama City Branch Directors

Director of Branch	John Dawson, PMP directorpanamacitybranch@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org
Director of Finances	Dave Reyes, PMP
Director of Communications	Paul Despres, PMP
Director of Programs / Public Relations	Bobby Lago, PMP
Professional Development	Gerson Cedeno, PMP
Director of Membership	Lori Beaver, PMP
Director of Operations	Bob Hess, PMP
Director at Large	Shawn Hochstetler, PMP



Following are a few photographs of both Board Members and General Members who attended the November 10th Annual Membership Meeting.

Thank you to our 2011 PMI Emerald Coast Florida Board Members!



Welcome your 2012 PMI Emerald Coast



Welcome your 2012 PMI Emerald Coast Florida Panama
City Branch Directors!



Welcome your 2012 PMI Emerald Coast Florida



Welcome your 2012 PMI Emerald Coast Florida
Mobile Branch Director!



Thank you to the evening's event sponsors:
Jacobs / Tybrin and DRS Defense Solutions



2011 Annual Membership Speaker: John Watson, PMP



2011 Newest Branch Plaque Presentation: Pensacola



General Mingling





Thank you to Tyler Scafidi—our Student Volunteer!

Congratulations to our area's newest Project Management Professional!



Mimi Laongpich, PMP

Proud member of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce.



Boost your PMP Studies - Join PMP Exam Prep Internet Forums

By Cornelius Fichtner, PMP - Making the [PMBOK®](#) Guide fun.

One of the best sources of information you currently have at your disposal is the use of an internet forum. The opinions and information available on these forums can be extremely valuable and they often provide specific examples and personal experiences to help guide you in your quest for knowledge and instruction. [PMP Exam](#) prep internet forums are no exception.

You may be wondering why it would be beneficial for you to spend your precious study time reading materials on internet forums. This is because these forums can actually help you prepare for your exam. If you are having trouble understanding a specific project management concept, there is probably someone on these forums who can explain it in such a way that you can better understand it. Chances are that they ran into the same problem during the course of their own studies. This will save you time and frustration and you will understand the concept, instead of just memorizing it.

There are many ways that you can use these internet forums. The method you use will depend on the specific type of information you are looking for. This information may include asking specific questions, using a 'search and scan' technique for more detailed information, or soliciting advice on specific PMP Exam Prep topics. Many project managers (who are Project Management Professionals in their own right) are active participants in these types of forums. They are usually open to answering your specific questions, willing to provide you with information search tips, and also enjoy sharing their experiences from their own journeys to [PMP certification](#).

If you have a specific question that you want to ask concerning preparation for the exam, most online forums have a detailed and easy-to-follow process for you to submit your question. The beauty of this is that you will most likely receive answers to your question from many different project managers, who will offer a variety of perspectives and experiences. This will help you choose the best answer as it pertains to your specific question and/or situation.

On the other hand, if you are a self-starter and you prefer to do your own research, internet forums can also make this very easy. Almost all of these forums include a very strong search engine so that you can quickly 'search and scan' the forum content to find the information that you are looking for. And since you will be reviewing internet forums specific to PMP Exam Prep, your search will be that much more targeted.

Most importantly, you will find participants on these forums who have already completed the entire study process for the exam, and who have successfully passed the exam. One of the main reasons these PMPs spend their time on these forums is to help aspiring PMPs become successful so that they too can use these skills to give back to their local communities. You will also find expert advice on how to properly complete the PMP application process. This can be very tedious and time-consuming and is probably the most difficult part of the entire certification. Forum members will give advice on the best way to complete the application, sometimes even providing templates and tools to make this process as easy and as painless as possible.

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You will also find advice on how to study for the PMP exam. There is a wealth of information on these forums about specific study tools such as PMP Exam Prep courses, books and guides, audio/visual aids, tips and tricks, and the all-important exam simulation practice questions. You will learn exactly what happens from the moment you walk into the exam room until you leave it from the point of view of someone who has actually been there. PMPs will also suggest the best time to take the exam, as well as letting you know the specific “Do’s” and “Don’ts” of effective exam preparation.

As you can see, there are many benefits to participating in PMP Exam Prep internet forums that will help you prepare for the exam, take the exam and successfully pass the exam. But how can these forums help you after you successfully pass the exam and obtain your PMP certificate from the Project Management Institute (PMI)? Well, by participating in these forums during the exam preparation stage, you will have established and grown your project management network base, which will lead to many opportunities for both your personal and professional growth in the discipline of Project Management.

There are many internet forums available that provide all the information you need to get you on your way to becoming a PMP. Following are some recommended choices:

- <http://www.allpm.com>
 - <http://pmp.groupsie.com>
 - <http://groups.google.com> (search for “PMP Exam”)
 - <http://www.pmpbest.com>
- <http://projectmanagement.ittoolbox.com>

I am certain it is obvious that by joining a PMP Exam Prep internet forum you will save both time and money, avoid frustration and counter-productive study habits, and be thoroughly prepared for successfully passing the PMP Exam. Then it will be your turn as a PMP and an internet forum participant to pass on your knowledge and experience to future generations of aspiring project managers.

About the author: Cornelius Fichtner, PMP is a noted PMP expert. He has helped over 16,000 students prepare for the [PMP Exam](#) with The Project Management PrepCast and offers one of the [Best PMP Exam Simulators](#) on the market.

Summary:

PMP Exam Prep internet forums offer a central place for you to get all the information you need to apply for, study for, and successfully pass the PMP Exam.

Keywords:

PMP, PMP Exam, PMP Exam Prep, PMP certificate, PMP Certification, Project Management Professional, PMI, Project Management Institute.

Root Cause Analysis and Corrective Action for Project Managers

Gareth Byatt, Gary Hamilton, Jeff Hodgkinson, and Duke Oakes

Project managers have the immense task of juggling requirements and resources that are often not under their direct control in order to produce the required project deliverables within the limited constraints to which they must adhere (scope, time, quality, etc.). Even if the perfect project plan could be designed and executed, it would not remove all of the risks that could ultimately impact a project. Plans must inevitably change for one reason or another.

During the phases of a project, it could be said that there are three major activities focused on reducing project risk. The first risk reduction activity occurs during project planning, when a proactive risk assessment is conducted and the identified risks are either mitigated or avoided (e.g., by modifying the project plan), transferred (such as through insurance) or accepted (by doing nothing and accepting that “if it happens, it happens”). The second activity is the continual assessment of risk throughout the project. The final risk reduction activity is to hold a retrospective “lessons learned” at the end of the project, which will have the least impact on the current project but will serve to benefit others in the future.

However, for the unforeseen problems that occur throughout a project, risk management is too late, since it has already been completed, and lessons learned are too early, since that is conducted at the conclusion of the project. Corrective action is then a critical process for dealing with ad-hoc problems encountered during projects.

Unfortunately, actions taken to resolve an issue often only address the problem itself, not its underlying causes. Symptoms of the problem are addressed and project resources are adjusted to compensate for the problem, but true corrective action may not be taken. In other words, the causes of the problem remain unknown, meaning the problem may reoccur later in the project and/or in future projects.

Consider this example:

Problem: A design project to develop a new vehicle has come to a complete stop because one of the key work packages for it is on the critical path but is behind schedule.

Action taken: The work package behind schedule is deemed to be a low risk, so it is decided that it will proceed in parallel with other modules, changing the critical path. This means that if no major problems found are with the module, there will be no additional delay.

Note that while the action taken in this example may allow the project to proceed along a modified critical path, nothing was done to identify why the work package was behind schedule in the first place. That is, while the problem was resolved (corrected), no action was taken to ensure that the same problem would not occur in the future (corrective action). In our example, was the module behind due to inadequate capacity of the assigned resources, or for some other reason?

Corrective action consists of two major phases:

- **Diagnosis:** Performing an investigation to find the root causes of the problem
- **Solution:** Taking action to prevent the causes from recurring

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To provide a more detailed breakdown of these steps, we put forward an example “10-step problem solving model” that we hope will be of use in guiding you through a corrective action process. Steps 1 through 5 are for problem diagnosis, and 6 through 10 for solution implementation.

1. Define the Problem: What occurred, where and when was it identified, when did it begin, and how significant is it?
2. Understand the Process: What were the process steps that should have been carried out before the problem was found?
3. Identify Possible Causes: If they did not occur as planned, which of the process steps could have caused the problem?
4. Collect Data: What information could indicate which of the possible causes actually occurred in a way that would create the problem?
5. Analyze Data: What does the data indicate about which of the possible causes did or did not contribute?
6. Identify Possible Solutions: What changes to the processes of project planning and execution might keep those processes from failing in the future?
7. Select Solutions: Which of the possible solutions identified are the most viable?
8. Implement Solutions: Plan and carry out the selected solutions.
9. Evaluate the Effects: Were the solutions implemented and have they worked?
10. Institutionalize the Change: Update project management guidelines and tools to ensure that future projects are carried out in alignment with the improved processes.

Note that steps 1 through 5 are typically done iteratively, until the causes found are at a depth sufficient to prevent recurrence. For example, if on a software project testing, delays are due to inadequate capacity of the testing software, the reason for the capacity problem would need to be determined in order to prevent such a failure in the future.

Of course, it is not necessary to carry out this level of investigation and action for every problem that occurs during a project, so an important component of the corrective action process is risk assessment and agreement on a sensible course of action. That is, for each problem that occurs, the relative magnitude and likelihood as part of a risk assessment should be considered before assuming root cause analysis is required.

There are many barriers that prevent corrective action from being carried out effectively. We have already alluded to ... a lack of guidance ... a process ... for carrying it out. That’s the purpose of steps 1 through 10. Other barriers and resulting imperatives for project managers include:

- There is often a tendency for a single individual to try to perform the investigation and solve the problem without help. However, project failures are often the result of incremental variations within multiple processes, and a single individual is unlikely to be sufficiently familiar with all processes to be able to evaluate them effectively and without bias. Therefore, project managers must ensure that they involve multiple players in the diagnosis of complex problems. They need to encourage their team to “put their hand up for help”.

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- In the rush to solve problems, people make assumptions and jump to causes or solutions without having data to back them up. This leads to tampering with processes, which can result in further problems. Project managers need to be certain that adequate information is available before deciding which actions to take.
- Corrective action often has a negative connotation in organizations, which means people don't look forward to being involved. However, many studies have shown that humans and organizations learn more from their failures than from their successes, so corrective action needs to be viewed as simply the process of learning more about how processes actually operate. Project managers need to employ positivity when assessing the need for corrective action and putting the case forward to do it.
- Corrective action is seen as something that is in addition to the "regular work", rather than as part of effective business management, as indicated by the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. Project managers who emphasize the PDCA cycle as part of day-to-day thinking, as well as during major milestone reviews, will help others see the more complete picture of their roles. It is certainly an embedded part of Quality Management.
- Many organizations want to automatically assign the cause of all problems to human error. The problem with this is that it is insufficient to provide identification of solutions, since the cause for that human error would need to be known. Many of the causes of human error turn out to be deficiencies in information, equipment, and management processes. Project managers who focus on process deficiencies rather than blaming people will find that others are more willing to dig down to the real causes of problems.

There are also challenges specific to project management which serve to make the activity of corrective action more difficult. These include:

- Many projects involve multiple organizations, each a separate legal entity having unique knowledge/skills for which they are being contracted. This means players may try to protect their own turf (think of the BP disaster in the Gulf, and how the various contractors blamed each other), making the truth hard to find.
- Project personnel may only consider the current project, rather than future projects, as potential beneficiaries of corrective action. The reality is that all players should be able to learn from investigations and often carry that knowledge into future projects.
- Similarly, due to the fact that each project has an end-point, it may be difficult to do a full-on evaluation of effectiveness. The value of solutions may only be appreciated in the course of future projects.

Another significant advantage of developing better root cause analysis skills within the project team is that such thinking is fundamental for risk management, quality management and the creation of a "learning culture."

Why participate as a Sponsor?

The PMI Emerald Coast FL Chapter serves the Northwest panhandle of Florida and Southern Alabama area. Sponsorship at this Chapter offers a tremendous opportunity to support the Project Management profession while exposing your company's products and services to our members.

We are the newest chapter in our Region. Our depth and breadth of membership has various needs for community outreach programs, educational opportunities and professional networking. Our primary location is Fort Walton Beach, FL with Chapter branches in Mobile AL, Pensacola FL and Panama City, FL

Sponsorship Options

The PMI Emerald Coast FL Chapter is pleased to offer a variety of sponsorship options. Descriptions for each of these sponsorship options are presented below.

- *Annual Sponsorships (\$2,500, \$1,000, \$500)*
- *Event Sponsorships (\$500, \$250)*
- *Bi-Monthly Newsletter Promotions (\$500, \$250, \$100)*

If you would like to sponsor the Chapter Annually, an individual event, or newsletters, have suggestions for other sponsorship ideas, please contact us at info@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org.

Additional facts about PMI Emerald Coast FL:

Our members are Project Managers working in a broad range of industries.

Our monthly Chapter meetings are broadly attended by local project management practitioners and are open to members and non-members. Many of our member attendees are certified Project Management Professionals (PMP®).

Our newsletter is circulated electronically to active members & subscribers.

Our Chapter website receives frequent visits from guests, members and other Project Management professionals.

Cheetah Learning is offering a FREE holiday gift of a 2 PDU PM Skills Assessment and Development Online course if you register by December 31, 2011 and use promotion code *SharpSkillsPM* to receive this course for free. Anyone is eligible to take this course and if you are PMP® certified the course counts for 2 PDUs.

Cheetah Learning also offers PMP® Exam Prep courses, receive 10% off when you use promotion code *SharpPMP* by the end of December 2011.

<http://www.cheetahlearning.com>

Where do I take the PMP Exam?

If you are not taking a PMP training class that includes taking the exam, you may be wondering how/where you will take your test. The PMI website provides the name of the testing company but not much more in the way of specifics. You might start your search using the following URL: <http://www.prometric.com/default.htm> As you drill down to find a testing site, be aware that the one most convenient for YOU may not be in Florida; for instance, the site in Mobile Alabama is more convenient if you live near Pensacola. Another possibility is Tallahassee—depending on your location.

Interested in forming a PMP Study Group?

Tom Lehmann, VP Professional Development would like to hear from you if you are interested in participating in a study group to prepare for the PMP Exam. Our Mobile Branch has had success with forming study groups in the past and will continue to do so as the need and / or request arises in 2012. Also, this would provide another way for current PMPs to earn PDUs—by leading a session. So—if you are interested in forming a PMP Study Group or leading a session, please contact Lehmann, PMP at: vpprofdevelopment@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org

PMI Emerald Coast FL Chapter Needs YOU!

If you are interested in volunteering, the Chapter has many opportunities for Volunteers and you can earn PDUs at the same time. The Chapter has a continuous needs for volunteers to help board members with planning and executing Chapter activities.

Volunteering is an excellent way to expand your contact network, and to increase your skills and qualifications as a leader.

Board Members earn 10 PDUs for their service. Chapter volunteers also earn PDUs to help you meet your continuing certification requirements for your PMP. However, having a PMP is **NOT** a prerequisite!

NOT a member of PMI® or the Chapter?

When you become a PMI member, you'll gain access to knowledge, networks and resources that can help you to improve your work and advance your career in project management. Membership means you'll be recognized as someone who is:

- Serious about professional and personal development
- Enthusiastic about good practices in project management
- Dedicated to practicing your profession in an ethical manner

All of these factors give you an edge in the job market and distinguish you to employers, colleagues and stakeholders. Go to <http://www.pmi.org/en/Membership/Membership-Benefits-of-Membership.aspx> for more details on how to become a member of PMI and the Emerald Coast FL Chapter

Chapter Website

www.pmiemeraldcoastfl.org

Check the website often for information regarding Chapter Events (and registration for Events), Newsletters, as well as PDU-earning opportunities such as Webinars, Classes and Bootcamp sessions that might be of interest to our members. You will also find the Monthly Training Session presentations on the website; these are posted within a day or so after the monthly membership meeting. We encourage suggestions and other input regarding Newsletter and/or Website content. If you have an item or an idea for Newsletter or Website content —please send it to: info@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org

Academic Resources

To advance the teaching of project management in higher education, PMI offers a range of programs and services for students, professors, researchers and educational institutions.

Student Resources: For students, PMI continues to develop educational resources to help them achieve their academic goals. PMI also offers discounted student memberships, tuition scholarships, professional credentials and the ability to get involved in communities to learn and network with other students and project management practitioners.

Faculty Resources: Classroom resources such as teaching case studies, journal articles, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* and other global standards have proven invaluable to instructors. PMI also offers a scholarly journal and research grant opportunities.

Institutional Resources: Because higher education plays an important role in advancing project management, PMI offers programs that give recognition to universities and colleges that meet quality standards for project management education and training.

From: PMI website - see “Academic Resources” under “Academic Degree Accreditation” on the “Career Development” page on the PMI.org website: www.pmi.org.

Chapter Communications

If you are receiving e-mail communications from the PMI Emerald Coast Florida Chapter - your e-mail address is on our distribution list. You have been added to this list because - (1) you have requested notification of chapter events (2) we have received notification from the PMI that you have joined/renewed your membership in our chapter (includes contact info) and/or (3) you are a PMI member in our area and we hope to interest you in an upcoming chapter event (including Chapter Branch formation). Also—when you renew your membership - please ensure your contact information is current!

It is not our intent to contact anyone who wishes to be excluded from our distribution list. If you receive unwanted e-mail from the PMI Emerald Coast Florida Chapter- please contact the VP Communications at vpcommunications@pmiemeraldcoastfl.org and request to be removed from this distribution list.

For new members who may not yet be receiving chapter e-mail notices - depending on the day of the month you join it may take a couple of weeks for us to receive your information from the PMI. Please feel free to contact the VP Communications to have your e-mail address added to our distribution list rather than waiting for PMI to send us their notification.