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Presidents Message

Building Optimal Performance Takes Coaching

In January, we had the pleasure of having Reno Bighorn's Coach Paul Mokeski as the guest speaker at our dinner meeting. What a fun and interesting presentation, as he shared with us the phenomenal journey from professional basketball player to coach for the NBA. And Coach Mo took us



into his world – the daily challenges he encounters fulfilling his obligations to build and motivate a winning team. Coach Mo – I believe you're a Project Manager! We PMs know all too well that a team with the right blend of skills and expertise, all working together toward a common goal, is going to be far more effective than a group of individuals. The coordinated effort of a team wins basketball games and produces successful projects!

The challenge is motivating each individual on the project team to develop their strengths. After listening to Coach Mo, I believe no one knows more about building skills and motivating a team than a coach! We PMs, as the leaders of our project teams, must also be coaches. This is a powerful leadership skill. Effective coaches use challenges that crop up on the job (and on the court), as chances to work with people in a productive way – to build their skills and broaden their team contributions – and that builds motivation.

When a team is motivated, the enthusiasm results in improved performance and a greater sense of accomplishment. This positive environment builds upon itself. When we take a coaching approach to managing our human resources, we

continually build up their perspectives, skills and motivation base. And providing this positive example inspires others to become capable leaders themselves. That can free up our time to devote to other leadership activities.

Effective coaches don't just solve today's work problems; we use these opportunities to develop greater strengths in our team "players" for the future. A sense of accomplishment has always been a strong motivation for me personally. And by integrating the needs of our teams and projects, with the development needs of our team members, we tap into everyone's self-driven motivation to succeed!

My key actions to be an effective coach can be utilized in a quick discussion or a longer working session. Most important is a positive, straight forward, and open line of communication. The goal is to continually engage our team members to strive toward optimal performance.

1. Describe the performance/development area, and why it's important.

Coach Mo described the many distractions his players have and his techniques to overcome this challenge to keep them focused and not overwhelmed. Highlight one specific area rather than too many things to work on at once. Focus their attention on "manageable chunks". And describe the importance – how their efforts will benefit themselves, the project, team and even the organization. "Because I said so..." won't build commitment or motivation.

2. Seek their opinion

Asking for their point of view or how they see a situation, encourages people to take the initiative to analyze their own performance or evaluate their development. Communication is most effective when it's a 2-way conversation, providing you firsthand knowledge of their perspective; and it helps build a connection and understanding during a discussion.

3. Ask for them to identify ways to enhance performance

Why? It builds "expect & respect"! Give them the responsibility for finding their own solutions before you jump in with yours. The message you send says you expect them to find better ways and solutions; and the best ideas often come from those working

closest to the problem! You also communicate that you respect their ability to find solutions and generate ideas – it builds buy-in and commitment. "My way or the highway" doesn't build unity – not a good "team spirit" technique.

4. Give feedback and add your own

Well, not every idea is a good one. But whether on target or not, an honest reaction from you is important. Encourage and reinforce workable ideas, and provide constructive feedback to get on track when the ideas don't hit the mark. And providing your own input is very important – they provide other options and a different perspective based on your expertise.

5. Summarize the action items

It may seem redundant, but a quick summary and even scheduling a follow-up can really help a person get started. It clarifies "what and when"; and more importantly, as a leader you've set an expectation for action and accountability to deliver results. After a coaching session on improving the skills required for writing winning proposals, a summary could be something as simple as "Okay, Bob, this is a good plan. Go ahead with review of the Statement of Work, and put together the technical proposal outline. Let's get together Wed at 9:00 and see what you've got. I'll get Diane started on the cost prop."

6. Express your support and confidence

It motivates your team members to succeed when you close a discussion on a positive note of support. Your confidence in others builds their confidence in themselves!

No Coach or PM will ever say coaching people is an easy job! However, opportunities to enhance skills and improve performance crop up all the time. So it's an ongoing effort to help others reach their full potential – whether working with a poor performer to make necessary improvements, or helping our very best contributors excel even further, or supporting a valued teammate learn additional skills that will open up new opportunities. Taking a coaching approach to build optimal performance is a key leadership responsibility utilized by successful managers as an integral part of team building.

Carmen Jones
PMI-NNV President

Monthly Dinner Meeting

The Commissions' Roles in RTC and Flood Control Projects



The Project Manager has primary responsibility for project success, but is far from alone in the "accountability chain." President Harry Truman kept a sign on his desk that said, "The buck stops here." It referred to the fact that Presidents, CEOs, elected officials and leaders have to make critical decisions and accept the ultimate responsibility. Sparks Councilman Ron

Smith chairs two commissions that oversee some of the most challenging projects in the region.

He is well aware that most of the largest public projects in the nation finish substantially over budget, behind schedule, or both. While there are dozens of reasons for this, he is currently collecting data to compare original construction bid prices with final cost. This information will quantify any gaps between budgeted cost and actual outcome. It may indicate a tendency to "low ball" prices to win a competitive bid and then make up lost profit through change orders. Or, it could reveal methods or policies that local leaders can implement to help control costs. Whatever the result, the research effort shows that serious attention is being given to effective project management. Councilman Smith will describe a commission's role and responsibility in the projects that are planned and in progress at the Regional Transportation Commission and the Flood Control Project.

Ron Smith was elected to the Sparks City Council in November 2006 and re-elected in 2008 to a four-year term, after running unopposed. Councilman Smith is Chairman of the Sparks Redevelopment Agency, Chairman of the Regional Transportation Commission, Chairman of the Flood Control Project, Vice Chair of the City's Tourism and Marketing Committee, and a member of the Western Regional Water Commission. Mr. Smith has been in the grocery business for 39 years and is currently employed by Scolari's Food and Drug as the Store Director. He has served on the Vistas Home Owners Association, the D'Andrea Home Owners Association and the High Sierra Industries Board of Directors. He is currently on the Board of Directors of Tune into Kids and is also the Sparks

Mayor Pro Tempore.

Meeting Time and Location

The presentation is scheduled for the February 28 meeting of the Project Management Institute's Northern Nevada Chapter. It will be held at Firkin & Wolf restaurant (13971 S. Virginia St in the Sierra Summit Mall, Reno). Networking begins at 5:30pm, dinner and announcements begin at 6:15pm, and the presentation begins at 7:00pm. The charge for dinner and presentation is \$25 (\$20 members); \$10 (\$5 members) for the presentation only. Register on-line at <http://www.pmi-nnv.org/>. One PDU can be earned for attending. Additional information can be obtained from Wynnlee Crisp, NNV PMI Program Director, (425) 681-7887 .

How Can You Get Discounted Training?

PMI-NNV Educational Sponsor Program – Excellence in PM Education at Significant Discounts!

In our world of increasing costs and competition, it's important to stay ahead of the pack. One of the best ways to sharpen your skills is by getting insights, tips and techniques from the best practitioners. As project managers, we tend to work alone with our project teams so it's hard for us to learn or improve our project management skills at work. Getting a chance to take a week off to fly to an urban location, pay \$2,000 for a class, along with travel costs and expenses has become a dream that most of us can no longer attain....like paying off our mortgages! Knowing this is an issue for our membership, PMI-NNV has developed a way to offer the best project management training at a discounted rate to our community. We are partnering with project management consulting companies that offer professional project management training today to governments and corporations around the world. They have offered to provide these same courses at a discounted rate to Northern Nevada. Our first class offering is a 3 day class, *Leadership and the Application of Project Management (LAPM)*. It's an interactive course for both experienced and novice project managers and teams. The course emphasizes best practices that are essential to successful project planning and execution. The

course is designed to achieve three crucial goals:

- Expand the participants' capabilities as strong project leaders.
- Increase participants' knowledge of key project management concepts.
- Build skill in the practical application of best practice techniques for planning and executing projects.

Participants in LAPM receive the following materials in support of the training and on-the-job application:

- Attendee handbook of presentation slides.
- The 50+ page Project Management Process Guide, a step-by-step guide to on-the-job application of project management concepts and techniques.
- 10 templates in MS Word™ and MS Excel™ format to document project plans and data.
- 24 Educational Professional Development Units (PDU).

To learn more about becoming a PMI-NNV Educational Sponsor, contact Julia Childs, Vice President of Marketing at vp-marketing@pmi-nnv.org or Sharon Grundy, Vice President of Professional Development at vp-prof-dev@pmi-nnv.org to schedule a meeting at your convenience.

Partner with PMI-NNV for Excellence in Project Management Education!

PMI Member Benefits

This information came out in January and we wanted to make sure everyone was aware of the new benefits being provided by PMI.

New Member Benefits

We have exciting news about new member benefits! Now there are even more ways for our members to enjoy their PMI membership through PMI-sponsored insurance and credit card programs.

These new member benefits initially will be available to PMI

members in the United States. Members will be able to learn more about these programs by visiting the Benefits of Membership page on PMI.org beginning Monday, 9 January 2012.

As we strive to support and build long-term value for members worldwide, PMI is also exploring opportunities to offer comparable member benefits to meet the needs of members in all regions of the world.

In the next couple of months, you will receive an e-mail asking you to complete a survey that will help PMI gain a better understanding of the affinity and loyalty programs that exist at the chapter level. We understand the effort it takes to develop and cultivate these relationships and, if appropriate and feasible, we would like to help you build upon your successes.

Insurance Benefits

We are offering PMI members in the United States the opportunity to apply for any of the following insurance options:

- Auto
- Prescription Discounts
- Home
- Medical
- Dental
- Life Insurance
- Pet Insurance
- Annuities

PMI Credit Card

PMI members located in the United States can also apply for a PMI credit card. The Project Management Institute Visa® Platinum Rewards card offers the following benefits:

- No annual fee
- Low introductory APR on purchases and no balance transfer fees for six months
- 1% cash back that can be used on merchandise, travel (no blackout dates), event tickets, activities, gift cards, and account credits

If you have questions or comments, please send an e-mail to MemberPrograms@pmi.org.

2012 Elections

Do you want to develop your leadership skills?

- Are you looking to build your leadership skills and personal contacts?
- Are you looking to develop new job skills along with adding experience to your resume?
- Or maybe you're just looking to increase your personal satisfaction knowing that you contributed to helping our chapter offer continued opportunities for our members...

You can get all this and more by being an officer of PMI-NNV. PMI-NNV officers are an essential part of our organization to provide continuing education, networking, and personal growth opportunities for our members. Our officers are integral to the continued growth. Join the PMI-NNV Board of Directors! Some of the benefits that you could see from being an officer are:

- Build your professional and personal contacts
- Opportunities to develop leadership skills
- Develop your communication and people skills
- Allow you to share your current skills with others
- Develop job skills and add experience to your resume
- Increase your personal satisfaction
- To be challenged and appreciated
- Earn PDU's

This year we have three positions open for election: President Elect, Vice President of Finance, and Vice President of Professional Services. Join our team of officers and become a valuable contributor to the continued growth of PMI-NNV!

If you are interested in this opportunity to become part of the Board for the PMI-NNV chapter, please login to www.pmi-nnv.org and select the "2012 Elections" menu item to fill out a nomination submission. Email the submission to elections@pmi-nnv.org by 4/15/12. We will announce the candidates at our April Monthly Evening Meeting on 4/24/12.

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