

2006 – A Big Year!

By Robert Posener

There are many projects currently in flight and lots more planned for the new year. Some of the bigger projects include the commonwealth government's smartcard replacement for the Medicare card, a number of large Defence Materiel Organisation procurements for ships and aircraft and the swathe of new projects spawned because of the improvements required to immigration systems because of new border security arrangements. Arguably Australia's largest business transformation project, Commonwealth Bank's CommSee project, has now been completed successfully and has received a number of awards because of its well-managed project management.



There are many banking and insurance projects currently in flight. Many of these are for infrastructure improvements.

The big event for the year both from a PMI as well as an AIPM perspective was the PROMAC2006 conference. This was a great success and brought many distinguished delegates from all over the world.

There is lots of evidence that project management is becoming more accepted and more professional. There is greater demand for certified project managers in the marketplace (although most advertisements hedge their bets requesting either a PMI or an AIPM certification).

The operation of the PMI Sydney Chapter is also becoming more professional. More value is being passed back to the membership in the form of both breakfast sessions and chapter meetings (with much greater attendances at breakfast meetings). Proactive reminders are now being issued on a regular basis for each event.

Governance of projects is becoming more professional. We are now seeing that it is much harder to initiate projects because their business cases are scrutinised much more and sponsors know that they will be held accountable for realising the claimed benefits when the project is completed. There is also a greater recognition that the technical aspects of project management play a lesser role in a project's success than the people and soft skill aspects. This has most ably been demonstrated at numerous PMI breakfast sessions where attendances for soft skill topics far exceeds that for hard skills (I may have this wrong and perhaps project managers are now getting more in touch with their feminine side). It is also becoming more normal that senior management recognise that they can not abrogate their project responsibilities and still expect projects to be a success like they have often done in the past.



It is not clear how the business community is going to take to the new Microsoft Windows Vista and Office offerings that are soon to be released. There are a number of barriers to take up that some CIOs may find just too unpalatable at the present time, finding it had to cost-justify memory upgrades and re-training costs. Time will tell.

My wishes for the New Year:

- PMI and AIPM would merge for the greater good of the project management profession in Australia
- The PMBOK would include explicit references to revenue and profitability management, soft skills management and benefits management

To finish off in keeping with the festive season, a project management joke...

Fred dies at the age of 67 and goes to heaven. He is met at the pearly gates by Saint Peter who says to him, "Welcome to heaven Fred and congratulations on your hard and loyal 53 years of service to the project management profession".

Fred furrows his brow, takes a deep breath and says "There must be some mistake... I haven't been in the project management profession for 53 years".

Saint Peter (looking worried) looks down at the big ledger on a pedestal in front of him, runs his index finger up and down it a couple of times and then says "No, there's no mistake. That's what your timesheets add up to".



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