

## PM WORLD TODAY – FEATURED INTERVIEW – APRIL 2009

### Interview with Luis Fasano

*President, PMI Panama Chapter*



*The following interview was conducted by Tom Sheives, International Correspondent for PMForum and PM World Today, North Texas, with Luis Fasano, President PMI Chapter, Panama. Mr. Fasano was responsible for the organization of the symposium held on March 18-21 and was helped significantly in the organization of the agenda and the recruitment of speakers by Mr. Sheives (sponsored by CH2M HILL, University of Texas at Dallas, and his own company, Better Project Results).*

**PMWT:** Luis, tell us about your 1st Annual PMI Panama Project Management Symposium.

**Luis Fasano:** The event was a four day event, starting on March 18 with two separate full day workshops. The workshops on this first day were delivered by Randy Englund and yourself. On Thursday, March 19, we had a three track symposium with 11 speakers in a General Track, Construction Track, and Information Technology Track. The following two days of the symposium on March 20-21, we had the College of Performance Management – Project Management Institute (CPM-PMI) deliver its 300 Series courses on Earned Value to full classes of 40 students.

**PMWT:** How would you describe the success of your 1st Project Management PMI Panama Chapter Symposium?

**Fasano:** It was really an amazing event and it exceeded all of our expectations. We had close to 200 people attending from 8 different countries - Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Australia, U.S., and Panama. We also raised 18 different sponsors that contributed significantly to the attendance and financial success of the symposium.

**PMWT:** What were the one or two things that you were most happy about in the symposium?

**Fasano:** Our event hosted the first series of workshops that the CPM-PMI delivered in a country outside of the United States. It was exciting to be a part of a truly first event for CPM-PMI and the workshop was extremely well received by our attendees.

In addition, it was remarkable that we had 4 published authors speaking at our event. This is not the usual for an event like this in Central America and I believe it contributed significantly to the success of the event.

**PMWT:** What else was remarkable about your event?

**Fasano:** We had some really great keynote speakers. We started the symposium with Mr. Jorge Quijano, Executive Vice President of Engineering and Program Management of the Panama Canal Authority (ACP). Mr. Quijano is responsible for the \$5.25 Billion canal expansion program. He attended several of the events and supported the symposium from the very beginning. The event was actually hosted by ACP and the service and facilities they provided were outstanding.



In addition, we closed the Symposium with Mike Kennedy, President of CH2M HILL's Transportation Business Group. Mr. Kennedy is also the new program manager in Panama for CH2M HILL for the canal expansion program.

**PMWT:** Tell me how your PMI chapter supported the event.

**Fasano:** The PMI chapter had 20 volunteers that worked the day of the event. In addition, many of them supported the symposium planning prior to the event by helping to raise sponsors, coordinate the fabrication of banners, and printing of literature. We had people taking care of sponsors, speakers, supporting registration, and helping to make it happen.

**PMWT:** What was your biggest challenge?

**Fasano:** The PMI Panama Chapter is a young chapter. This event could not be conducted without significant outside support of sponsors. This was the biggest challenge to get the sponsors. The early support from our biggest sponsors, the Panama Canal Authority and CH2M HILL, was critical to our success. ACP provided great facilities while CH2M HILL contributed both significant help in funding the planning and organization of the symposium with speakers but also as one of the largest sponsors.

**PMWT:** What is your recommendation to a new chapter that is considering conducting their first symposium?

**Fasano:** I would leverage considerably the Regional Mentor program that exists to help chapters take on new challenges such as a symposium. There are some really great lessons and experiences that are already out there and organizers should really leverage those previous experiences and ask for help. Our region mentor for Region 13 North was Geraldo Sierra and he provided some great support.

**PMWT:** Are you planning a symposium for next year?

**Fasano:** Yes, we are already talking about this and looking to set a date soon. We want to make this an annual event in Central America and continue to draw participants from around the world.



Shown Left to Right Above are:

Tom Sheives, Part-time Faculty UT Dallas, and President, Better Project Results

Mike Kennedy, President, CH2M HILL, Business Transportation Group

Jorge Quijano, Executive VP, Panama Canal Authority

Gregg Hughes, Director, CH2M HILL

Luis Fasano, President, PMI Panama Chapter and Haxis Consultoria

**About the Author:*****Tom Sheives, PhD****Author*

**Tom Sheives**, PhD, PMP, is president, project consultant and coach with his company Better Project Results, Inc. His mission is to “Get Project Teams and Management Teams unstuck!” Tom is author of the new book **OPPORTUNITY *unstuck!***

Tom has helped organizations worldwide achieve better project results, working with companies such as Microsoft, the Panama Canal Authority, Texas Instruments, Lockheed Martin and others. He has written and delivered training programs for High Performing Teams, Leadership, Project Management Professional (PMP) certification, Fundamentals and Advanced Topics in Project Management, and has delivered a widely acclaimed project management simulation program. A notable recent assignment was with the faculty of The University of Texas at Dallas, where he delivered 56 days of project management training to 175 executives of the Panama Canal Authority, helping prepare them for the current \$5.25 billion expansion program. As a graduate of Coach University, he is also trained to deliver High Performing Project Team Workshops, Project Team Assessments, Leadership Practices Inventory – 360°, the Winslow Dynamics Profile (Behavioral) Assessment, and the Personal Coaching Styles Inventory. Tom is a graduate of the University of New Mexico, Texas A&M University, Baylor University and Coach U, all in the USA. He is on the board of the Fort Worth Chapter of PMI and is a member of the IEEE. His company is a Registered Education Provider for the Project Management Institute (PMI). Tom is also an International Correspondent for PMForum and ***PM World Today***. He resides in Texas and can be contacted at [tom@BetterProjectResults.com](mailto:tom@BetterProjectResults.com).