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When Passion Meets Recession

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Think of the recession for just a moment as a person, let's say Mr. Recession, and that person is someone who has been visiting your house for too long, and you want Mr. Recession to leave and go back to where he came from. In a typical household, how might we get Mr. Recession to leave? We might ask the kids to turn up the volume on the things they love to do that drive us crazy. Crank the Metallica up extra loud for ultimate vibration. Practice Guitar Band while Mr. Recession is listening to more doom and gloom on the news. If you don't have kids, but you live with your sweet heart – ignore the fact that Mr. Recession is even in the house and get busy being passionate with whatever you love to do. You get the picture. Basically, unleash your passion and do what you love – who cares about what the lingering lout Mr. Recession is up to?

Whether you can get Mr. Recession to leave tomorrow, or if he decides to stick around for a while longer, just get on with your life. Use whatever it is you're passionate about to propel you forward, and if your passion is Project Management, this is a tool that can actually help you capitalize on volatile times. Yes, you can actually capitalize on the recession with Project Management.

Top Five Ways to Profit from your PM Passion

- 1. Create goals with gusto.** Your goals need to inspire you and your team, and they need to be clear and focused. Once you've written down your goals – either personal or for a project – ask yourself what are the biggest barriers to success? How you will jump over those barriers needs to be in your project plan. Don't shy away from what's standing in the way of your success. Instead, call out the barriers clearly and focus every day on how you will overcome them. Be clear and make it measurable because a wise woman once said, "What gets measured, gets done!"
- 2. Track time and dollars spent with exacting enthusiasm.** Dollars always matter, but when times are tough, they matter even more. It's hard to make decisions about where to cut costs if you can't clearly identify where they are. When you can show your boss and your team exactly where you are, both in terms of time allocated and actual dollars spent, you're speaking their language. Nothing makes upper management more confident than knowing exactly where they are on a mission-critical project.

- 3. Get that deadline buzz.** You know how good it feels when you're meeting deadlines. It's the buzz of accomplishment, no caffeine necessary. Set deadlines that are real and have impact, so when they are met, they have meaning. Avoid false deadlines. They are the business version of "Crying Wolf." Always use deadlines to measure progress and as an open forum for discussion about what is and isn't working on a team or within a project plan. When you understand what impedes meeting deadlines, you can get answers that not only put your project back on track, but save your organization time and money.

- 4. Become a project archaeologist.** When you unearth the hidden gems in your project agreement and documentation, you are digging out valuable information for your team going forward. Too many people mistake documentation as busy work instead of using it to get at its real value. When you close out a project, don't literally put it to bed. Instead, ask these questions: Did you have enough resources allocated to this project? At what points did this project falter and why? What was behind the cost variance between our original budget and actual budget? If you don't capture the intelligence in your documentation, understand it and share it, you've missed a huge opportunity to make you and your team more productive, effective and efficient.

- 5. Create a consistent and standardized approach to Project Management.** I know this seems like a no-brainer, but I see companies every day that expect their people to learn Project Management by osmosis. I know you've seen this too: "Let the new people shadow Susan for a few days because she's a great project manager." This is a good start, but you can't have enterprise-wide impact from Project Management unless you have a consistent way of approaching Project Management. This is why the PMP certification has become important to many businesses and government. These organizations have started to see the value of having whole teams and whole departments and even entire companies working from the same body of knowledge.

Hug the Bottom-line like Your New Best Friend

So, plug into your PM passion and see what happens when Passion Meets Recession. Think of your bottom-line like the ally it is, and use your PM skills to boost it. The bottom-line is not just for accountants and executives. It's a sure-fire way for project managers to show their value and make themselves a valuable player in any financial discussion.

Editor's note: This article was distributed through Cheetah's The Know How Network, a monthly column written by Michelle LaBrosse, the founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning. Distributed to hundreds of newsletters and media outlets around the world, the

Know How Network brings the promise, purpose and passion of Project Management to people everywhere. Visit www.cheetahlearning.com to learn more about Cheetah PM, the fastest way to learn about Project Management and get your PMP.

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