

PM WORLD TODAY – VIEWPOINT – DECEMBER 2009

THAT MOST AWKWARD OF QUESTIONS.

By Tom Taylor

It is coming to that time of year when project managers - and programme managers for that matter, are asked that most awkward of questions. And despite its complete predictability it is often a question you treat with surprise.

Despite your complete grasp of all manner of things at work and on your projects you appear shocked when this topic arises and might mutter something like "I will have to get back to you".

The question from colleagues, friends and family is the eternal "***What would you like for Christmas?***". For non-Christians there are other gift and celebration opportunities to be equally flummoxed. This is a reasonable question to the project manager who appears to have everything, knows everything and wants for nothing. And although enquiry, consideration and reply does remove the element of complete surprise it does increase the chances of getting something you might like or need.

Of course the Number One Tip is to keep notes across the year of possible suitable gifts of interest as you see them. The notes can be kept in your daybook, diary or laptop - if you do not have one of these then they are immediate potential gift targets. You can also add to the list the items you hoped to get last year but did not; the items other people received and you wished you had; and the items you gave but wished you had received.

The Second Tip is not to look as if you have a prepared list but need to think about it for a while. This will enable you to assess their budget capabilities against your list and any suggestions they may make - for mutual benefit and to avoid undue distress - especially for small children.

Fashions, styles and budgets change each year prompted by relationships, the economy and the retail sector.

It may be of interest for some readers to know in advance what some of the top twenty gifts for project managers might be for this year. Here are some likely candidates:

a memory stick - because there is so much to remember,

tickets, travel and time off to attend one or more of the excellent Project Management Conferences round the world - as featured on PM Forum - see current and future issues,

a project management book - serious or light - including those featured or reviewed on PM Forum - including Dashdot publications - as a suitably economic item to give as well as to receive - can be obtained quite quickly,

a project management magazine subscription - although there is no subscription for PM Forum,

a new pillow,

a set of Sesame Street videos - to calm you down and for old times sake,

a diary, day book or laptop

a 2010 calendar featuring pictures of Power Station projects,

a sustainable, environmentally friendly, green torch,

something related to the approaching decade..... perhaps a diary, day book or laptop.

Good luck with your giving and receiving this year.

This item has been contributed on behalf of the "Bettergiftsforprojectmanagers" foundation which also supports **Bistamundi**.

About the Author:



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Tom Taylor is a founding partner of Buro Four - an eminent project management outfit based in UK - see www.burofour.co.uk. He is a Certificated Project Manager, a former chairman and current vice President of Association for Project Management (APM). He was awarded the inaugural President's Medal by APM in 2007 and was recently named an Honorary APM Fellow. - see www.apm.org.uk for information about APM. Tom has over thirty years experience in front line project and programme management including the Centenary Project for Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), the Cable and Wireless College, National Tennis Centre for Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and with many other types of projects, contract forms and teams. He is an active manager, advisor, consultant, lecturer, speaker, author and occasional broadcaster - with an enthusiastic, knowledgeable approach. His recent publications for project management practitioners, through dashdot, include "Characteristics of Effective Project Managers", "GMPM and other modern afflictions affecting project managers", "Management in Practice" and "How to Select the Right Project Manager" - which have touches of good sense and good humour. He is continuing to research and promote further pragmatic topics including PM's contributions to Sustainability, the Environment and Green Issues. Tom is a principle of dashdot - see www.dashdot.co.uk and can be contacted at ttaylor@dashdot.co.uk.