



TeraTech News

Tools for Programmers

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Conference Report

By Liz Arroyave

Michael Smith spoke at MX on the Rocks in Denver, Colorado May 15th and 16th on Project Management.

Over 150 people attended the conference, which was a great success. Michael's talk described how to manage a project successfully and gave pointers on methods to avoid. There was also a group discussion on what personal characteristics make a good project manager - being able to speak both

"techie" and "end-user" languages was a key point! For more on the conference see <http://www.mxontherocks.com/>



On May 29th and 30th Michael spoke at CF_Europe in London, U.K. on FLiP (Fusebox Lifecycle Process). Attendees came from all over Europe and Macromedia gave details of the new ColdFusion release coded named RedSky. FLiP is a method of organizing a project that dramatically increases client-programmer communication. It include techniques such as wireframing, full prototyping and formal sign-off. For more information on the event see <http://www.cf-europe.org/>

Project Management success factors

by Michael Smith

It is well known in the software industry that over 70% of projects fail. They either don't do what users want, are cancelled, or go wildly over budget. The Standish Group studied the factors that contribute to a successful project in their "CHAOS Report". Interestingly the most important things to get right on a project involve the people and project management. By getting user and senior management buy-in and doing task planning and milestone management you can cover over 75% of the success factors. Technical skill is much lower on the list. Here is a full list of the factors.



1. User Involvement 20%
2. Executive Management Support 15%
3. Clear Statement of Requirements 15%
4. Proper Planning 10%
5. Realistic Expectations 10%
6. Smaller Project Milestones 10%
7. Competent Staff 5%
8. Ownership 5%
9. Clear Vision & Objectives 5%
10. Hard-Working, Focused Staff 5%

Cultural Negatives

(Part 2)

By Miki Saxon

In the past it always seemed easier for people to articulate the attitudes and behaviors they did *not* want to encounter in the workplace. Even today, with a far more savvy and sophisticated workforce, people still tend to focus first on what they *don't* want:

- ◆ Too much politics: personal, group, or senior management
- ◆ Unfairness; favoritism; star mentality
- ◆ Unnecessary bureaucracy; inflexible process or bureaucracy masquerading as process
- ◆ Poor management practices such as: erratic management; micro-management; workaholism;



intimidation; belittling or contemptuous treatment; no loyalty; poor scheduling; the attitude that “we don’t have the time to do it right but we have the time to do it over”

- ◆ Any form of harassment whether overt or covert
- ◆ A generally negative attitude, i.e., the glass is half empty
- ◆ Arrogance or an elitist attitude
- ◆ An unwillingness (at whatever level) to seek and implement the compromises necessary to meet organizational needs within the required timeframe

Obviously there are many more philosophies, attitudes, and actions that could be listed, but most of them will fit the spirit, if not the specifics, of those above.

Unfortunately people learn from experience and many people have never experienced cultural elements *other* than those described above, so that their actions eventually start to mimic their experience—whether consciously or not.

But what do they say when it comes to the positives? Be sure to read Part 3: *Cultural Positives*, in July and Part 4: *Creating/Changing Your Culture* in August.

RampUp Solutions is the manager's mentor for culture creation/infrastructure, retention, and hiring—all on a shoestring budget.

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Building Community on the Web

By Beth Barnett

1. Discussion Lists

Do you want to attract customers to your organization by building a sense of belonging? Do you want to create customer loyalty? For example, a landscape and gardening business provides information about community events and answers to gardening questions as a way to become known to gardeners and respected for the staff's expertise. This gets them both new customers and helps retain existing ones. Many associations position themselves as the professional and social hub -- the place to meet people of like interests, to get the latest information, and to share solutions to challenges in the profession. This gains new members and retains existing ones.

This series of articles examines strategies for building community among website visitors. These strategies can be used by

- *professional or trade associations building stronger connections with the membership*
- *local governments holding town meetings*
- *businesses fostering a strong, loyal customer base.*



Tools for building community on the website

Web forums, discussion lists, whiteboarding, and shared documents are the web activities of community building. A good starting point for community building is to sponsor **discussion lists**. Some of the options for discussion lists are:

- Host many groups, each on a specific topic
- Moderating options: an active moderator who fosters discussion; a moderator who monitors for ground rule infringements only; or no moderator at all
- Automate the subscribe / unsubscribe process
- Participation open to all who are interested
- Or participation closed, e.g., reserved for persons who are already registered on the site.

The software to manage the discussion list can be the mail server software (such as Microsoft Exchange) or can be special list management software, generally fairly inexpensive, such as Lyris, MajorDomo, ListServ.

Next month we will look at Web forums and whiteboarding as ways to build your community.

Article by Beth Barnett

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If you missed previous articles, you can locate them at <http://www.teratech.com/news.cfm>

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