

## Subject: ViewPoint newsletter from Projectability

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# PROJECTABILITY

## ViewPoints

Projectability's monthly newsletter

April 2009 - Vol 1, Issue 4

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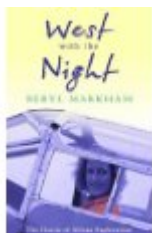
### Project Reading



This book provides the reader with an easy to follow practical guide to help you improve your effectiveness as a Project Manager using tried and tested techniques.

This paperback book comes with a useful CD with plenty of tools and materials to support the approach suggested by the book.

### Reading for Pleasure - West with the Night



[West with the Night](#)

I am including this book to tie

Dear Dominic,

Hello yet again,

Spring is upon us and nature is doing its very best to put a smile on our faces. As with the last edition it is a reminder to carry on regardless. Time seems to be flying by and it seems like only last week that I put together issue 1 of this newsletter.



I hope you are continuing to enjoy the eclectic mix of articles in this newsletter, I have had several people tell me that they have now discovered [Richard P Feynman](#), hopefully they will be similarly inspired by [Beryl](#), an unlikely name for a hero but an inspiration all the same.

Happy Planning - Dominic

### Why do Projects Fail?

Despite the best efforts of professional bodies such as the [APM](#) and [PMI](#) and the existence of rigorous methodologies such as PRINCE2 it is a sad fact of life that a significant proportion of projects fail.

The landmark Chaos Report (1995) by the Standish Group found that an incredible 31.1% of projects will be cancelled before planned completion and that 52.7% of completed projects cost over 189% of their original estimates.

In a study conducted by our PMO partners [Wellington](#) they surveyed their clients and identified the most common causes of failure as being:

1. Inadequately trained and/or inexperienced PMs
2. Failure to set and manage expectations
3. Poor leadership at any and all levels
4. Failure to adequately identify, document and track requirements
5. Poor plans and planning processes
6. Poor effort estimation
7. Inadequate or misused methods
8. Ineffective communications
9. Inadequate progress tracking and reporting

**The no. 1 reason for project failure is inadequately trained Project Managers**

in with the [inspirations](#) article in this newsletter.

It achieved modest success when first published and was then discontinued only to be revived following demand from a Hemingway devotee who found references to it amongst his papers.

I tracked this book down soon after reading her obituary and found it a captivating read.

If Ernest Hemingway raves about a book it is well worth reading.

### Project Server 2007 Open Public Courses

We will be running our [Administering Project Server 2007](#) and [Managing Enterprise Projects](#) courses as open public courses in London on 11th & 12th May and 13th - 15th May respectively.

To register your interest either call us on 08707 303 400 or send us an [email](#) requesting more information.

### Are you Linked In?



Are you a member of **Linked In**? If you are I would welcome the chance to **Link Up**.

### Downloads



There are a host of documents available for you to download **free of charge** on our Website - take a look!

This suggests that project failure is often controllable and avoidable and that the Project Manager has a great deal of responsibility and accountability. They need the authority to do their job properly and will have the most significant impact on the outcome of a project.

The Project Manager needs to be able to do many things but in order to be successful, the Project Manager must be armed with the appropriate formal tools and techniques of project management AND be able to apply these techniques correctly.

As with any professional discipline, targeted training to enhance existing skills and develop new skills brings significant benefit. Investing in Project Managers usually brings a significant Return on Investment - any performance improvement can lead to dramatic benefits due to the Project Managers influence on project outcome.

### Don't just take our word for it though

The Office of Government Commerce, the owners of the PRINCE2 methodology conducted their own research specifically looking at large scale public sector projects and the reasons for their failure.

***" Lack of skills and proven approach to project management and risk management"***

featured as part of their top 4 reasons for project failure.

### Recognise the importance of good project management skills

A common mistake is to assume that a good line manager must have the skills to run projects well. Line management requires a different skill set to project management.

Over 60% of projects are run by individuals with no previous project management experience who then never run a project again. A good portion of these projects probably fail and these new Project Managers never build on their mistakes and early experience.

### Clear return on investment

Review a list of failed projects for the last year. Could some of that overspend, under-delivery, delay been reduced by arming your project managers with more skills and tools.

- Could risks have been better managed?
- Could recovery plans been developed and implemented earlier?
- Could resources have been better controlled and scheduled?
- Could client expectations have been tamed?

Use the [Success Checklist](#) available to download from our website to make an initial assessment of current project management strengths and weaknesses.

For upcoming projects you may want to use the [Project Healthcheck](#) tool to critically assess areas of the Project that may need attention in order to avoid failure later on.

Customised training based on your projects & ways of working, designed to focus on areas for improvement,

rather than generic public programmes provides the highest return on investment and satisfaction ratings from attendees with lower costs than many public course offerings, to this end we have developed a new course entitled "[Grow your own Project Managers](#)".

### CTRL+ - Handy Microsoft Project Keyboard Shortcuts



Keyboard shortcuts are a useful way to improve your efficiency in using Microsoft Project. Each month we highlight one of the shortcuts available and the benefits of using it.

If you have created a series of tasks that will be sequential, linking one after the other using the **FS** (Finish to Start dependency) select them in the order in which they are to occur using the **CTRL** button, when you have selected all the tasks you want to link keeping the **CTRL** button pressed press the **F2** button at the same time, this will link your tasks in the order in which you selected them one after the other.

It does not matter if the tasks follow each other in your task list, simply select the first task in your desired sequence press the **CTRL** button, keeping it pressed select subsequent tasks in the sequence until you have selected all the tasks you wish to link together then with the **CTRL** button still pressed press the **F2** button.

If your schedule now looks a bit chaotic don't worry you can re-sort your list - the following "[Ask the Expert](#)" article explains more about this subject.

A document with all the [Keyboard shortcuts in Microsoft Project](#) is available to download **free of charge** from our website.

### Ask the Expert - Presentable Order for both Tasks and their ID numbers.



If you have a question you would like answering and are happy for others to benefit from the answer provided send an email to [ask the expert](#).

This months question is a fairly common request. "I have created a schedule and the tasks were entered in reasonable order after an initial work breakdown workshop, having put my schedule together and sorted by start date the schedule looks good and has a progression running from top to bottom and left to right in terms of the task list and bars displaying in the

Gantt chart view. My only problem is that the ID numbers after sorting are out of order, knowing the audience for my plans they will pick up on this anomaly as a flaw when it is simply a function of the schedule."

The answer to this common problem lies in the Project>Sort>Sort By.. dialogue box. With it displayed you can elect to sort by up to three criteria, it will display the last sort you applied in the first drop down selection list - typically this will be Start sorted in ascending order. At the bottom of this dialogue box is the option to permanently renumber tasks, put a tick in this tick box and then click the Sort button, your schedule will now show tasks listed in time order and listed in numeric order as well.

Note the WBS code automatically assigned to your tasks will be incorrect when you have sorted using this method. However once you have saved and closed the project plan on next opening the order will be as previously sorted but the WBS codes will have been re-calculated to reflect where the tasks sit in the hierarchy of your schedule.

This answer and answers to other frequently asked questions will be archived on our website soon, feel free to take a look.

### Inspirations - Beryl Markham



I first heard of this remarkable lady when reading her obituary in The Times back in 1986. Twenty three years later and I find myself living close to her birthplace.

[Beryl Markham](#) was a pioneering Aviator, the first woman to fly East to West solo across the Atlantic. However it was her non-conformist and

eccentric character that intrigued me and which are to be celebrated. I won't go in to too much detail here suffice to say that she was involved in a scandal involving the British Royal Family which resulted in her being paid "hush money" to avoid further revelations.

Her book "[West with the Night](#)" attracted the attention of Ernest Hemingway who wrote " this girl, who is to my knowledge very unpleasant ... , can write rings around all of us who consider ourselves as writers ... it really is a bloody wonderful book."

A truly inspiring and unconventional character if ever there was one.

### Next Months Issue

If you have enjoyed this newsletter please feel free to pass it on to a friend or colleague using the Forward email option at the foot of this email. We will be keeping an eye on just how far this newsletter gets and hope to publicise just how far ViewPoints has gotten around the globe in future editions.

In the next newsletter we will be focusing upon key steps in getting your project ready, an often overlooked discipline that can result in failure. Until then I wish you and your projects the very best.

### [Dominic Moss](#)

Principal Consultant- Projectability

Projectability have been helping people and organisations achieve more through effective Project Management and the use of the Microsoft Project scheduling tool since 1996. Our full range of offerings can be viewed on our [Website](#).

If you wish to contact us to see how we can help you please contact us using the details below.

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