

51. UMD Symposium 2018

Knowledge into Practice Part 1: Leadership

0:00:00 Speaker 1: The session I enjoyed the most this morning was Joe Launi talking about servant leadership.

0:00:06 Speaker 2: Fix it or forget it, dealing with troubled projects.

0:00:09 Speaker 3: Yup, eight steps to lasting change that works every time.

0:00:13 Speaker 4: The thing that really impressed me was how many people are trying to help other people get into the project management profession and have meaningful careers.

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0:00:23 Kendall Lott: Project managers, experts, professors, students, and practitioners from an impressive array of industries and enterprises came out in force for the University of Maryland's fifth annual Project Management Symposium, Turning Knowledge into Practice. The event, which took place over the course of two days in May, featured six keynote speakers and 49 breakout and technical sessions, focusing on five specialized tracks. PM Point of View was there, and we will dedicate three full PM Point of View episodes during the rest of the year to three of the tracks that were featured at the symposium. For this episode, we put together a medley of highlights from some of the presentations in the track *People in Projects: Leadership, and Conflict*. We hear about ways managers can empower their teams to allow for intelligent disobedience. Who serves who? Flipping the org chart upside down. Key concepts in emotional intelligence, and how that can help you deal with conflict. Launching a corps of Change Ambassadors to drive change. And reflections on the Kotter change model itself. And well, more, but you need to listen to the rest of the episode!

0:01:25 Announcer: From the studios of Final Milestone Productions, overlooking the White House in downtown Washington DC, this is PM Point of View, the podcast that looks at project management from all the angles. Here's your host, Kendall Lott.

0:01:37 KL: A few weeks after the conference, I sat down for a brief chat with John Cable, the Director of University of Maryland's Project Management Center for Excellence and the host of the symposium. Tell us the numbers, what happened with 2018? It was the fifth symposium.

0:01:52 John Cable: This was a great year, it was our best yet. We had 410 registered participants, and that's an over 20% growth from last year. Unlike many conferences, which are what I call stove-piped, in other words, they're for people that are all doing the same things, our goal was to have an interdisciplinary event that would be interesting to people from many different walks of life, the only common denominator is project management. And in fact attendee types, we have federal, state and local government officials, military people, people from nonprofit organizations,

an awful lot of PMI members, and of course they cut across all industry types. We have people from academia, and construction management, and industry associations. So we're getting a real hybrid of people coming from different work environments, and that's the goal, because we all have so much that we can learn from one another, and I think that's one of the reasons the energy level's really high at the end of the second day.

0:03:08 KL: I was impressed that even at the beginning of the second day, you had such a high attendance on the second day at the morning breakfast and right at that first keynote speaker. I mean, you had hundreds and hundreds of people in the room.

0:03:19 JC: We actually had people attending this year from Australia, Canada, England, Egypt, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe.

0:03:31 KL: Wow! You're seeing a growth of it from a geographical perspective. How about from the industry side? Have you seen that evolve at all, the kind of participant you have?

0:03:39 JC: Each year, it becomes more robust and I think that's because we really listen to the project management community and try to understand what are the current topics they're interested in, and then we try to respond to that. And so, we have a track on People in Projects, and that deals with change management, leadership, and then we have Agile and IT, and Construction Management, and Big Data Analysis. It's not a lot of topics, but it's topics that are very top of mind to people in project management right now.

0:04:22 KL: What trends are you seeing? And what are you anticipating?

0:04:24 JC: Well, that's an interesting question, Kendall, because topically the content has not changed dramatically from the first year. We do an analysis of, What are the most popular sessions? And the top three most popular sessions in this year's event were all People in Projects. That does not surprise me because a lot of people that work in the field of project management are probably pretty competent in what they do technically, but it's the people issues, the motivation, the leadership, conflict resolution. Those are the topics which people really want more information on, they want to get better in those fields. And it's the people that are really effective working with people that are the ones that are the most successful.

0:05:22 KL: What made you start this symposium?

0:05:25 JC: The mission of our program at Maryland includes education, research, and community outreach. That was one thread, if you will, of the idea of holding a symposium, to provide outreach to the project management community. The other thread was the notion that it would really be good to bring academics and practitioners together to share information, to share ideas. A meaningful component of our audience are academics, and so the notion of blending practice and academia together, it feeds our slogan, "Turning knowledge into practice."

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0:06:15 KL: Join me now as we listen in on our first breakout session out with Bob McGannon.

0:06:20 Intro: This morning, Bob's going to talk about Breaking the Rules: A Rulebook for

Improving Your Performance.

[applause]

0:06:32 Bob McGannon: Yes, we're going to have a rulebook for breaking the rules, which seems a little contradictory but bear with me. Picture this if you will, you are at a formal event. What do you see? Beautiful clothes, I heard that, right, okay. I was at a formal event and at the end of this formal event, I'm going back up to my hotel room and I'm in the elevator lobby and a visually impaired gentleman with his seeing eye dog comes up next to me. He is dressed to the nines, beautiful suit, tie, matching kerchief in his pocket. Seeing eye dog, a white lab with a bow tie. So I said hello and told him how fabulous he looked. And then a really interesting thing happened, the elevator came in and failed, it actually stopped about 15 inches below the floor. So we hear the ding and the woosh of the doors open up, and a very dangerous situation is in front of us.

0:07:36 BM: Now, I'm just about figuring out what it is that happens when this dog suddenly jumped 90 degrees, almost ripping that handle out of its master's hand, went perpendicular to the direction and blocked its master from walking forward onto that elevator. I was amazed and I said to the gentleman, "Well, let me explain to you what just happened." He said, "The lift failed somehow, I can tell that. This elevator failed somehow." And I said, "Yeah." And I explained the situation, I said, "Your dog just did an amazing thing." He said, "Chap is amazing." He said, "This is my third seeing eye dog, and he is the most obedient of any of the seeing eye dogs that I've ever had." He said, "But I learned one thing real quick with Chap. When he disobeys me, I obey him." And I'm thinking to myself, what if leaders got this? When their people disobey, there's something wrong.

0:08:38 BM: Chap was acting because Chap's job is to get Chap and his master to its goal without falling down the elevator shaft. Typically, when we disobey our managers, if we dare to do so, is because we're trying to achieve the goal, the objectives, or the outcomes that we are seeking to produce. There are times for us to engage intelligent disobedience, to break the rule, do something against what our managers or our leaders have asked us to do.

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0:09:18 BM: Okay, so if we're going to engage in disobedience and that disobedience is intelligent, here are rules for breaking the rules. First, this is for the benefit of the business not yourself. There's a specific outcome that is at risk and you're trying to achieve it, or you see an outcome that's bad and you're trying to prevent that outcome.

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0:09:50 BM: Rule number two, you don't do this in secret. While you may or may not be able to communicate in advance, I'm in a negotiation session with one of my clients, you might not have had the opportunity to talk to your manager in advance so you decided to bend the rule or do something along those lines because based on your judgment, that is going to be the best outcome for your project, the business, and the client. So you bend the rule or break the rule. My suggestion, go to your manager then and say that's what you did. Because that may be viewed, as your manager, as bad news if it comes from somebody else; and I guarantee you bad news ages like milk, not wine.

[music]

0:10:43 S8: Rule number three, this is not because you have some sort of a bone to pick with your manager, or leader, or someone of authority. This is probably the one that I am most concerned about people doing consciously or unconsciously. Do not do this as protest.

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0:11:09 S8: Four, perform homework before you do this. It's hard to engage in intelligent disobedience if you don't know what the rules or cultural norms of your organization are. Intelligent disobedience is not when you break the rule inadvertently because you didn't know that it was there. So understand the nature of the objectives, the outcomes of your project, the norms of your project management process, understand what the expectations are if there's a contract with your client or a document of understanding, make sure you understand that. It is not intelligent to go into this haphazardly.

[music]

0:11:53 S8: What other bits of homework do you think you might do? Understand the politics of the organization. Absolutely. My lovely bride, Denise, says, "You always check to see if there are bees before you kick that nest." What? Don't break the law. Understand something though, and for those of you folks that work in government, this is something that many people in government are inadvertently guilty of. This is your outcome and it's regulated. It's a regulatory requirement that you provide this attacking water bottle. Eight years ago, that became a regulation and someone said, "Okay, if we're going to do this then it has to be accurate, it has to look exactly like this, we should have a series of prescribed steps in a process to produce this outcome." Sounds familiar? Here's what happens over time. People perceive that those eight or 10 process steps are also regulated. So often, we don't make process improvements, we don't engage in intelligent disobedience and change those steps because we think we're breaking the law, when we're not. So another piece of homework relative to the law is, "Really? Is that the law?"

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0:13:18 Student: I don't think that this can be in place of disagreeing in order to get a better outcome.

0:13:26 BM: That's true.

0:13:27 Student: You have to talk first, let people know where you are before you don't follow the rule.

0:13:33 BM: Absolutely. Here's an example, a real example. There's a logistics manager that I know that embraces this idea of intelligent disobedience and here's what he does, and I think this is real important. Everybody hear this, this is a really great buzzword a few years ago, "We need to *empower* our people." Are you tired of hearing, "*Empower* our people"? It's sad that we're tired because in my perception here's the problem, we didn't define what that empowerment is. To me, the whole idea of intelligent disobedience is something that I can do with my manager, but as a leader I can also do with my people so I get better outcome.

0:14:13 BM: So this is the logistics manager that's working with his logistics team. He wants his team to engage in a bit of intelligent disobedience. But not just go wild-eyed and crazy, hair on fire, and do something! So he gives them a set of constraints, the rules for intelligent disobedience. This is not about you, it's about the business so it's not an act of self-promotion. Second, you can shift supplies from one place to another, but don't do it at the expense of one of our divisions. So don't make this division happy, but create strife in this other division. If you can shift without that happening, go for it. You can go over budget, if you believe that's going to be in the best interest of the business, but don't do it by more than 10% without talking to me first. And if you can increase the effectiveness of our organization and satisfy client requirements and you could do so within the guidelines in 1-4, go for it. Tell me about it later. He's empowered his people.

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0:15:22 Student 2: What's the training that managers will need to have in order to be able to just looking at those different levels?

0:15:28 BM: First and foremost, you need to be a manager and a leader. And I'm distinguishing between the two. Manager being the person that administers the rules, the leader being the person that generates change and takes an organization somewhere. I think you need to be both. I think you need to understand the concept of the organization and what you're dealing with very well. So, as a manager that's working with people that I want to enable, I also have to have done my homework and I have to often facilitate them to do homework. And then, it's not a one-time act, it's a refinement exercise. Engage in an act of intelligent disobedience, I want to review it. How'd it go? Did we learn from this? Should we be changing our standard process to allow for this? Because it was really a darn good idea. So, it's a full circle learning exercise. And if you do that, what do you call that? Continuous improvement!

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0:16:34 KL: Next up is Joseph Launi to talk about managing teams with servant leadership.

0:16:40 Joseph Launi: Before we talk about servant leadership, I need to have a little bit of conversation with you about people. Until we understand people, until we understand what excites them, we can't apply a leadership technique that will work. Over the last 50 years, there have been studies that have been done about what motivates team members, what excites team members, what creates a really successful team. I'm going to summarize in one slide what motivates a typical team member. Well, I call them the happy carpenter. And the happy carpenter is somebody that they want to influence and make a difference, especially with the customer. They see a common purpose. They want a survey of the greater good. They're driven to achieve. They want to be promoted. So these are the key things.

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0:17:39 JL: This is Deepak Chopra. He says, "What motivates people's qualities of character?" He said professional skills can be outsourced. I found that interesting – we can find technical people. But what we really want: people that are more broad than that, that have sense of purpose. Richard Branson and Elon Musk, they're looking for characteristics like... They care about the work.

They're passionate about the work. They are interested in looking for people that like working with other people.

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0:18:15 JL: Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices basically that enhances our customer relationships, it enhances our employee relationships, it switches the burden to managing and leading people, as opposed to making profits. So what does a servant leader do? A servant leader takes the org chart and flips it upside down. Our job as servant leaders is to "serve or facilitate the team above us." What's at the top? Customers. We want to meet the needs of our customers. We want to meet the needs of our employees. I'm concerned about my employees. I'm concerned about my team members. Are they just doing the job? Or are they enjoying the job? Are they benefiting from it? Is it helping their career? Are they passionate? Are they motivated? Are they making a difference in the common good?

0:19:10 JL: This model says that the executives at the top of any organization seem to know the least about really what's happening. But as you go down deeper, into the bowels of the organization, it's folks like you and me that really understand the issues. The executives don't always get it. And in my career, I can vouch for this. I mean, the executives are getting just what they need to know and maybe aren't asking all the questions, or folks are afraid to confront them with problems. A servant leader embraces this. A non-servant leader says, "I have to have control, I need control." A servant leadership says, "You know what? I don't have to have control because I trust you guys."

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0:20:04 JL: This is tough. We all work in cultures where we have to make money. Somebody needs to be profitable. I have budgets to keep. And I'm not implying that we ignore those. But what I am saying is, if our broader focus is on these three areas: Community, customers, and employees. And everything else will work out, I believe. Now this is not easy because very often the cultures that we work in may or may not support that. The strategy of the organization has to support that.

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0:20:35 JL: What is a servant leader? A servant leader's a person of character. Somebody who's not afraid to say, "You know what? That's not right, that's just not fair. It's not good for our customers or it's not good for the employees." A servant leader puts people first. I'm focused on my team, I'm focused on my customers. I'm really concerned, is the work that you're doing for me enhancing your career? Are you enjoying it? Because if you enjoy it, you'll tend to do a better job at it. We're skilled communicators. We're listening. We're seeking to understand. Stephen Covey in his book, 7 Habits of Successful People, I forget the name exactly. But he said, "To be understood you must seek to understand." So before you can expect to be understood, we have to understand what's being communicated. We have to ask leading questions, we have to ask for feedback, and give feedback, and manage those relationships at a higher level. We have to be compassionate collaborators. We have to understand multiple perspectives. We have foresight. We're able to see if I do this, what will happen a year from now? We have to respect processes and seeing the bigger picture and the systems thinking. And the last thing is, we have to lead with moral authority. I find that that's getting harder and harder to do nowadays, to be able to say, "No, this is not right." You might be rolling the dice on your job.

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0:22:19 JL: So, now we have to have a tough conversation. I'm going to use my little example here. What is truth? What is truth? Anybody? Besides it's not a lie. Go ahead.

0:22:31 Student3: Reality.

0:22:31 JL: Truth is reality, okay.

0:22:34 Student 4: But reality is a perception.

0:22:35 JL: Reality can be a perception. Right, let's dive in. I gave a simple example here. Everybody needs healthcare at some point. We go to the doctor, most of it it's above our skill set, so we have to bring in an expert. That's truth. But what is perception? Somebody mentioned perception. Well, there's lots of perception when it comes to healthcare. Well, one side says that everybody's entitled to it, it should all be free, and it shouldn't be an issue. You shouldn't have to make a choice, like, "Maybe we can't afford a doctor, maybe I'll keep my fingers crossed and this cold will go away." The other side says nobody should be forced to pay for healthcare. If you're young... I mean, my son comes to me and he's 23, he's your stereotypical millennial, he says, "Dad, I pay health insurance, but I don't use it." He can't justify why he needs health insurance." So these are two perspectives, a good servant leader respects them both. We have to be able to distinguish between truth and perception.

0:23:40 JL: Truth is something in my viewpoint that we see, it's not always clear. This is pretty clear, everyone needs healthcare. But truth is something we have to go and find. It's not always black and white. A good servant leader works to recognize perception and truth and work towards truth by looking at other points of view, by evaluating other opinions, by starting with respect, respect that even though I might not agree with your perspective, I respect you because you have it and because you've enlightened me about another way of thinking.

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0:24:28 JL: Deception. What is deception? We know what truth is, we know what perception is. The anti of all of that is deception. Deception is, let's start from the top, power for power. When you find yourself seeking power just to have power, you might be playing in deception. When you find yourself isolated, you're the only one that can make this decision, you're the only one that can speak for the organization or the project, you might be in deception. Other keywords: Lie, manipulation is deceptive, impunity is deceptive, being immune, "It's not my fault, it's somebody else's." Personal gain, when it becomes all about personal gain as opposed to the common good, and if you work for the government, you're in it for the common good, I hope. When it's all about you and nothing else, when you're using words like me, when you're using words like anger and hate, and you're feeling that. If you play in these areas, in these red areas consistently, you're in trouble. We all have played in this red area at some point. We've all sought power, maybe for the wrong reasons. We've all maybe not told the truth at times when we should have. We have all said, "It's not my fault, it's this person's fault." And I want to stress, if you find yourself in these areas, just come on back, alright? Our goal is to take accountability, honest, fair accountability and stand up and say, "Hey, I messed this up."

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0:26:15 JL: So what is success? Success is the degree which an organization or leader has a positive, healthy impact on their stakeholder community. There's nothing about money in that. Money is a side effect, it will come, I truly believe that, I've seen it in my life. When it comes to how do you practice this on your team? Look for folks and reward folks and compliment folks that are doing other things, such as teamwork, passion, commitment. Acquire team members that had demonstrated some of these good traits, seek to understand the whole person. Part of our job is to manage people, understand them outside of the work environment. This is a tough one, organizations must resist offering financial incentives thinking it will result in improved performance. So does that mean you shouldn't get raises? No. Does that mean you shouldn't be paid fairly? No, that's not what I'm saying, but if we think there's a cause and effect between throwing money at people and getting better performance, it's just not there.

0:27:19 JL: Alright, servant leadership is a journey, it's not an end point. Now here's your assignment, next Monday pull out a team member on your team, pull them aside and say, "Let's go to lunch." Don't talk business, maybe talk a little bit of business, how's his job going, do you like the position, talk about some private thing, personal life, tell me about the kids, and you're on your way.

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0:27:50 Pamela Davis-Ghavami: "Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means." That was Ronald Reagan.

0:28:00 KL: And that's Pamela Davis-Ghavami. Her presentation is about Conflict Resolution Practices for the 21st Century.

0:28:08 PD: So what really causes conflicts? Disrespect? No one wants to be disrespected or excluded. That can really make you feel bad when you have information, you need to be involved in a meeting and you're not even included and you find out later there's information you could have been able to provide. Sabotage at work, not giving you all the information you need to do your job. Authority issues. Well, as project managers, we always know we don't always have authority so we have to influence to get authority. So we're accustomed to that being a project manager, and we're also accustomed to lack of cooperation because usually when you automate manual processes, people aren't usually jumping on board to do that. And you have to address low performance, whether we have authority within our team or we have to tell on them, which creates conflict.

0:28:56 PD: Misunderstandings, when things aren't communicated clearly. Personality clashes, we have to manage that. Competition for resources, we've been talking about that all day through the conference. Favoritism, lack of equal opportunity, poor communication, bullying, harassment, some people are micromanagers, overly critical. Personal problems, we all have things happen, before we even get to work, that we have to address. And we still have our job and we still have to try and pull out of that, and that ties into the emotional intelligence and why you need to know your conflict style and the other person's conflict style or your team and your stakeholders' because then you know how to communicate in a way where you can address what the issue is, understanding how they're going to respond.

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0:29:44 PD: I know for myself, and this is why I decided to do the research. I worked for four different agencies, they're very technical. I was a systems administrator, I was a Citrix administrator, virtual private network. Even from the mainframe days, JCL and COBOL and FORTRAN. So I feel very competent, but I realized I was competent from dealing with conflict from a task perspective. But then when you start moving up the ladder, it becomes more of a relationship perspective. And when it becomes relationship, that's when it gets into not just about the work, you have to maintain relationships because when you see them on a regular basis and you've had this confrontation, if it didn't go well, it's going to linger on. That's when it becomes unresolved conflict.

0:30:29 PD: Okay, so here is the conflict styles. We've got competing/win-lose; problem solving is collaboration; compromising; accommodating; and avoiding. As I said, I was avoiding based on the relationships and I wasn't being assertive to confront what my needs were. So, when you know your style you're better equipped at handling organizational change as well, which that's what we push through. But I was good at change for tasks and with technology, but when it came to the people I was like, "I'm getting away." And that's where your leadership skills come in because when you think of all our great leaders, they had to deal with conflict and they had to hit it head on and they established deeper and more authentic relationships.

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0:31:18 PD: When you don't have the language when you're in conflict because for me, it wasn't that I'm afraid of conflict but I always thought I might say the wrong thing and let my facial expression sometimes shows how I'm feeling and that it'd be taken in a negative way. But we still have to be conscious of how we communicate because it's really how we say things or how they take it. You can change different modes based on the situation you're in with regards to these styles. When you know them all, you're able to assess the people you're around and what their style is and be able to adjust so that there's not an escalation of conflict, or be able to communicate in a way where you can address what the issue is, understanding how they're going to respond.

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0:32:08 PD: When you avoid conflict you can make yourself a target because they think, "Well, they aren't going to do anything, keep doing it, keep doing it, keep giving them a hard time." So this Workplace Bullying Institute site, created in 1997 by Ruth and Gary Namie, actually has statistics and it provides resources for legal counsel, for support, if you are being bullied. You understand? So this is the statistics I got from this website: 19% of Americans are bullied; another 19% witness it. 61% of Americans are aware of abusive conduct in the workplace, 64.4 million Americans are affected by it. 7% are perpetrators, and are men; 60% of targets are women. 61% of bullies are bosses, the majority 63% operate alone. 29% of targets remain silent about their experience because... That was another thing I found out. People who go through the arbitration process speak up because of how they feel, they become a target because it's like, "You're telling on us and we're going to really get you now." 60% of co-workers' reactions are harmful to targets. And that's the other sad part, it's almost associated with groupthink. And then LinkedIn has some training for difficult bosses, how to deal with conflict. And some of their advice is... And even the site, it says,

"How to stay safe, how to be healthy until you can get out." 77% of Americans support enacting a new law, which this is what's happening, they're trying to get a new law to address this.

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0:33:48 PD: Conflict can be positive. It can be positive. So how can we have constructive conflict resolution? So we have to practice active listening to understand what the conflict is. And once you know what it is, you can make a decision. Can you stay? Can you work with this situation? Do I need to leave? You've got to make that decision because you spend so much time at work, it really can be stressful, you can take sick days... I've been in situations where I get an email, I take a day off the next day because I don't even want to deal with email.

[laughter]

0:34:16 PD: So you have to manage your emotions and know your triggers to handle the conflict effectively. So when you have the ability to manage your emotions and begin to articulate to someone when you are having issues, then you can stand your ground and stay and still do what you have to do. You can use different styles based on different situations but the most effective is usually the collaborator. Only the collaborator takes a lot more time because you've always got to get consensus for everybody to agree. But everyone's heard, you're listening to everybody's perspective, and even if you have to override somebody else's direction, at least they felt like they were a part of the process. And even with some of the difficult conversations, when you have to decide that you're doing something else and they don't like that, there's a way to communicate that so that they're understanding your perspective, you're understanding theirs, and you hear them, and you reflect that back in your conversation.

0:35:07 PD: So constructive conflict resolution styles teach people how you want to be treated. You don't teach people that, they're going to treat you any way they want to treat you. Solve the problem versus blame the person. In project management, we always are trying to solve problems and stuff goes wrong, you just know that. But if it's communicated early and you let your managers know, and your team members that you know when things can't go forward, whether it's their timeline change or whatever reason that they expressed, then it has to be communicated to all players. Explain your thoughts and your feelings, nobody can read your mind. And because we're at work probably eight hours a day, or sometimes 10, you have to try and have positive relationships at work. You really have to work at it just like a marriage. You don't always like your spouse but you work at it.

[laughter]

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0:36:04 PD: Understand that nobody cares how much you know until you show how much you care, and I mean that – even your kids. Okay, so constructive conflict resolution strategies would establish a cooperative atmosphere in the workplace and would cultivate information and communication patterns, which project management does that, we have a communication plan, when we do our projects and we have a kick-off meeting and we always tell everybody what we're doing, create a climate that includes trust and safety, promoting collaboration. And if there's a problem, you actually try to get to the root of it, and the only way to do that is communicate

honestly. So PMBOK supports managing teams and techniques, and they've had the five conflict styles in the PMBOK. So PMBOK supports that as well as interpersonal skills, communication skills, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, negotiation, team building, and group facilitation. So, 10% of conflict is due to a difference of opinion and 90% is due to the delivery and the tone of voice.

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0:37:19 KL: For an extensive discussion on bullying and its impact, check out PM Point of View #40, on Teamwork. In that episode, Paul Pelletier devotes an entire segment to bullying.

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0:37:38 Aimee Baxter: Thoughtful change management can improve your project's adoption. And that's in the end what we all want. We don't just want a successful project, we want the project to be adopted.

0:37:48 KL: And now, Aimee Baxter talks about Practical Methods for Successful Change Adoption.

0:37:55 AB: Just this last summer, the school my daughter attends had a gas explosion, it was in national news that day, and the building was destroyed, and a couple of people unfortunately passed away. And so they've been on a very fast track to get the new building built. And I have not personally been involved, I'm a parent so I was watching from behind the scenes as a project manager thinking, "I wonder when they're going to get the families involved in making these decisions." Little decisions. I know that they couldn't get us involved in every meeting, but I thought, they're going to be asking for money at some point so they should probably get them involved. Well, the whole process went along with very little. The last thing I heard in the last, let's say month, was that they met with the neighborhood and the neighbors objected strongly because they had not been consulted at all up to that point. They had full plans, they were ready to go to the city for the license to build, and they had to backtrack the whole thing. And all I was thinking is, "You should have used change adoption principles."

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0:39:06 AB: So why is change difficult? Why do people have such a hard time getting on board with change? So people feel a loss of control. We've all felt that. Something's coming in and you don't have any say on it and it's getting into your territory. Excess uncertainty, if something feels like it's pushing you off a cliff blindfolded, you've never heard about it, that's going to give you issues with change. A surprise that comes out of nowhere, there's going to be a new ERP system next Monday, are you ready? That could cause a lot of resistance. Oftentimes, change requires more work from people with the hope that someday it'll be all very streamlined and you won't have as much work. And ripple effects, you have maybe many departments that are working together but the change is only coming to one area and then multiple areas are going to be impacted and that can give people a lot of anxiety.

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0:40:12 AB: Listening to your users is so important. I think that a lot of times people are happy to listen to people who agree with them, but I'm going to encourage you to find the people who are detractors for the project, find out really what they are bothered by, why they don't want to do it. And if you figure it out early, then you can make strategies for how you can work around them. You want to prepare a list of questions. Don't jump to the answer, lead with more questions. What I find, and I resist this every time, is doing a bunch of research on systems that are similar or that would possibly be a solution. And then as I'm asking questions, I'm leading people into a particular solution and I do my best not to do that. I want to learn a little bit about what some of the landscape solutions could be, but then as much as possible, really try to have open-ended questions so that I'm not leading into a particular solution. So, I think as a project manager you have to be as agnostic as possible, early on. I think that if you genuinely listen to people and say, "I want to hear how this is going to impact your job, what's important," that they'll appreciate it even if you're not able to add all of those features into your system.

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0:41:36 AB: Multiple methods for requirements gathering, you have to brainstorm. Have brainstorming sessions, sit down and come up with, are you going to do in-person interviews with a group with key stakeholders that you can identify and then in addition, do an enterprise-wide survey so that you can get two different kinds of angles. Do you do a session where you put Post-its on the wall and come up with ideas? Are all of these valid, and three more? As many different ways as you can get requirements the better.

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0:42:13 AB: So defining the risks. During requirements gathering, this really helps you. Of course, you do this early on. It helps you figure out what happens if a particular key thing is not implemented, what's going to happen then? Will the project still be a success? Or will it be deemed a failure if we don't add that in? The stakeholders, or the people who really sponsor the project may not understand what that one key feature is if we don't have it, but through requirements gathering, that's where you uncover that information. If a business process isn't addressed, that's also a question about will you fail? Understanding, sitting down with people, understanding all the pieces and parts. Show me how you do your job.

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0:42:58 AB: An existing communication path is limiting. We always think, "Oh, we're going to streamline everything. It's going to be great, and we're not going to have to talk to purchasing anymore." But what if, when they talk to purchasing, something else important happens during that process? So be really, again, going back to the early thing, keep listening so that you can hear those subtle things that would be important to the success of the project. And then, of course, the whole bugaboo of gaps in scope. So you want to make sure you get as good a scope written down as possible, and maybe that means that you're not going to be doing everything the first round because of time constraints, and then it's a second project or whatever. But as much as you can, identify what the project looks like.

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0:43:44 AB: I'm just a huge proponent of communication plans. Every time I sit down to start a project I say, "Let's start thinking about how we're going to communicate this, and all the different ways we're going to communicate, and all the people we're going to communicate to so that nobody's surprised and that the adoption of the change is well accepted." So, when you're creating a communication plan, you want to consider these five things, we're going to go into these in a little more depth. So audience, who's your audience? For example, we worked on a time clock system at McAllister, and you would think, "Well, that's like the payroll system, and maybe the people who clock." No, it was a big long list, it was students, it was the facilities people, and these people who are going to use the web clock, it was all these different things. So you have to, again, great time to brainstorm and write a big, long list of audience, people who are going to be communicated to.

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0:44:43 AB: Timing. So, what's coming? Here it is, and how did it go? And think carefully about the timing. We had a situation where we started talking about the project too soon and then people got into camps and were able to say, "Well, I don't like that project, and I'm going to sabotage that project by doing this, this, and this." So you want to be early, but you don't want to be too early.

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0:45:15 AB: Channels. These are the different ways that you can communicate. So think about how you might like to receive communication yourself. Do you always want it to be an email? Would you like it to be... because I think we, for one project, put things at people's desks and said the project is coming for the ones that are really impacted. There's many creative ways that you can communicate. You can use your stakeholders to review the communications that you have, they're going to have different point of view. So I'm going to just discuss a couple tactics that worked really well for me that I thought would be great to share with you. We employed this idea of ambassadors, and we had so much fun with it. We had a little meeting with the ambassadors. We picked particular people across campus that we thought would be either impacted by it. Some were friendly, some were not friendly. And we served them breakfast, we told them what their jobs were going to be. And actually, to this day, one of them I see on campus, I call her Ambassador Falls.

0:46:15 AB: So they were invested in the change, for the most part. And if they weren't, if they were detractors, we got them on board and said, "You know what, I get your points, but if you want to really make a difference in this project, please get involved." They helped in defining the requirements, they helped with testing, they helped with training. But the most important thing they did was they helped spread the word, in their own words, to their peers, what was coming. They really helped deliver any hard messages or good messages about the product, or the change that's coming. And I also like that they can help spread information if the project isn't going well through you, as opposed to just hearing it on the street, a rumor, or whatever. You can influence what the rumors are. So it's been a very good secret weapon of ours.

0:47:06 AB: The other one that we used, specifically during the time clock, and I will admit up front that I hated this idea up front. I was helping with the training and it was on such a short timeline, they did not have time to do test data, and then take those and bring them in to the live system. So what we had to do was... For any of you that have ever clocked into a time card system, we had to have the students and the staff that clocked in actually start clocking in, and then we did the training. And it felt like a real high wire act, but the beauty of this was that they were so much

more engaged to the training because they had their employees that they were reviewing during training. The benefit to us was that it was real life issues that would come up. We could never have come up with all of those scenarios on our own if it was just in a test environment. So that was fantastic. I would do that again in a heartbeat. It's not every project's circumstance if you can do that, and I don't know how large of a project I would do that with, but it really did have a lot of fantastic benefits.

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0:48:28 Myles Miller: For change to truly happen, you must do these steps in this order for it to work.

0:48:37 KL: To top off our roster of highlights, here's Myles Miller talking about Kotter's 8 Steps to Lasting Change That Works Every Time.

0:48:44 MM: So, here's the first step. You must create urgency. Most people won't change unless there's a need to. If you want to create urgency around anything in any organization, whether that's internally, with a client or a customer, bring up profitability, performance, process, procedure. The four P's. Bring up one or more of those elements, you will create for them a sense of urgency. If you go in to a business, and you state to them, "We could increase your profitability in the next 2-3 years by 30%." You think they'll take your call? You better believe it. If you go in to your boss, CEO, and you say, "I believe that there's a way for us to increase our performance by 20%-25% in the next year." You think you have their attention? Yeah, you do. 75% of the company's management must be on board. I know if I have that level of desire and commitment, it's going to happen. So we must build that urgency through conversations, interactions, relationship building, and taking time to share thoughts and ideas, and really rallying support.

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0:50:18 MM: Step 2. Once the urgency's been created, we put together a coalition, but not just any coalition. We need to pick people who are influencers in the organization. And that can be at, and should be at, all levels. These are people across the organization, up and down, horizontal and vertical who can get on board with this idea, who seem to be, almost out of the gate, encouraged by this move and direction that that urgency in the first step has created and they want to jump on board. Make sure they're part of this coalition. It's not just the C-levels, it's not just the directors, not just the managers, they're everywhere.

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0:51:08 MM: Now, in step number 3, the vision can be created for change. Because if we're about to ask potentially an entire organization or company, or just a department to change, they have to understand what that vision is, not only from our perspective as part of maybe that coalition we talked about in the second step, but what that means to them. And that's going to take some honest conversation.

0:51:36 MM: So, here's some things we can do to create that vision. A vision statement should be short enough that people can remember. And when you're instituting a change, it should be at the forefronts, top of the line, as I like to say, of the people who are going to be part of that change. So

every meeting, whether it's about the change or not, should have some mention of the changes coming. It should have a vision statement at the top that talks about the change that's coming. We all have heard these things called elevator speeches, right? If you can't express in 30 seconds what the vision is, work on it.

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0:52:23 MM: Step number 4. Now comes the all-important communication of that vision. It cannot be in one form. You must use all available communication methods to communicate the vision. The vision should be front and center, and communicated in many, many different ways. But yeah, you know what some people do when it comes to a vision and a change? They send out... Wait for it... An email to everyone, everywhere. But there's no opportunity for them to really engage with it. Some people may respond to it, the majority of people aren't going to do anything. What if a really cool marketing campaign was built around change? What if you created a really neat logo, making let's say, a phrase? Slogans work. Logos work. But when you are doing change, when you're communicating the vision, keep in mind that the majority of people who are here, you want to get more of them over there to the champion's supporter side, and you're always, always always going to have naysayers. Make sure you give those naysayers a voice. Let them be heard.

0:53:47 MM: Alright, let's move on. Walk the talk, very important. Yep. If you and your coalition are on board with this change, you've got to always speak about it in a positive light. You can't be, "I don't like this change, but I've got to do it." As a project manager, you have to lead. Remember, you are change agents. So when you walk in that door every day to institute that change, you've got to get yourself up and ready and motivated to do it because if you're not excited about it, neither is anyone else is excited.

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0:54:26 MM: Step number 5: Remove obstacles. We know that there's going to be resistance, we know there's going to be trepidation, we need to be prepared for that, and we need to do what we can to remove the obstacles that that change is going to create. The best project managers out there, they anticipate before it happens. They're proactive, not reactive when it comes to the change. They have thoughts along with their coalition team of what the resistance is going to be, and they're prepared to respond to it. But you have to do something that I've learned over the years, this is my move. You can feel free to use it yourself. I call it the contemplative grand pause. Now, I already know what they were going to say before they said it, I already know what my response to them is going to be, so I stand there or I sit there, I put my hand on my chin, that's a very important move by the way, it means you're being contemplative, at least for me. I look down, that's very important, it's not that I'm ignoring them, it's to show that I'm being reflective and then give the response that you've already prepared because you were proactive about the obstacles that you knew you were going to face.

0:55:46 MM: And one of the exercises I do with all my coalitions of change is I have them list all the things that people are going to say about this change negative. We can deal with positive, we already know that's a good thing and I'm doing that for two reasons: One is we're going to be proactive about the change. Two, I'm giving them the confidence they need to deal with the change when people are going to be talking to them about the changes and things they don't like about it too. I'm a big fan of recognize and reward. When people say, "I like this idea," recognize that. When

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you're communicating vision and change, let others know, "You know, I heard from Jim the other day Jim says he likes this change, and here's why." And get Jim's permission to do that, by the way. Use people that they know and maybe that they look up to and respect to communicate your vision in addition to your team.

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0:56:47 MM: Six, change is not an overnight thing; it is a slow, methodical, well-thought-out process. So we need a plan and part of our plan for the change should include this: Short-term wins. You need to show those first 30, 60, 90 days that you're moving towards that change because that's going to get them motivated, and you need to celebrate those wins, you need to acknowledge those wins, you need to say, "Jim, we couldn't have done this without you. Thank you so much for all you did to get us to this point." Real change has to run deep, it has to be impactful at a foundational level to some degree for it to last. So once you get those short-term wins, make sure what's happening is running deep. Last step, it goes with that run deep idea. Anchor the change to the culture, a company culture. So change has to be rooted in the culture and that's what's going to make it last.

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0:58:06 KL: From intelligent disobedience to servant leadership, conflict resolution, and managing effective change this has been a sampling of some of the key takeaways from the leadership track from the University of Maryland's 2018 Project Management Symposium. I hope you learned something from these excellent presentations. To learn more about the presenters and to see the slides that accompany their presentations, go to www.pmsymposium.umd.edu/pm2018.

Now, it's up to you to turn that knowledge into practice. Stay tuned for upcoming episodes from the symposium on Agile & IT and Construction. To learn more about the University of Maryland's Project Management Center for Excellence, go to www.pm.umd.edu.

0:58:54 KL: Special thanks to this group of presenters: Bob McGannon, Joseph Launi, Pamela Davis-Ghavami, Aimee Baxter, and Myles Miller. And of course, to John Cable for making it all happen again.

0:59:08 Announcer: Our theme music was composed by Molly Flannery, used with permission. Additional original music by Gary Fieldman, Rich Greenblatt, Lionel Lyles, and Hiroaki Honshuku. Post-production performed at M Powered Strategies.

0:59:23 KL: PMPs who've listened to this complete podcast may submit a PDU claim, 1 PDU, in the Talent Triangle Leadership, with the Project Management Institute's CCR system. Use provider code 4634, and the title PMPOV0051 Knowledge into Practice Part 1: Leadership. Visit our Facebook page, PM Point of View to comment and find links to more episodes. There, you will also find links to transcripts of all of our one-hour productions. You can also leave a comment on the projectmanagement.com portal, evaluate us on iTunes. And of course, you may contact me directly on LinkedIn. I'm your host, Kendall Lott, and until next time, keep it in scope and get it done.

1:00:06 Announcer: This has been a Final Milestone Production sponsored by M Powered Strategies.