



Management

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Find New Perspectives at the Management SIG Progressions

by Annette Reilly

Current experience, lively discussion, and a chance to learn from a variety of perspectives await participants in the Management SIG Progression sessions. The sessions are scheduled for the 46th Annual Conference, May 16 to 19 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Managing Departments, session MG6T, will be presented on Tuesday, May 18, 11 a.m. The moderator is Sally Yeo.

The Managing Departments progression includes topics that range from promoting your department

aging in a chaotic development environment, project management with divided roles, documentation plans, information transfer, and the popular puzzle of scheduling, "Nine Women and a Baby."

More than 20 Management SIG members are presenting our progression sessions. As one volunteer noted, "At STC...1998 in Anaheim, I particularly enjoyed the progression tables. Maybe my attention span was short or I needed many ideas at once." Plan to join the discussion and take home new ideas.

"These sessions are highly popular with busy attendees looking for experience-based models and practical approaches."

A progression session includes 8 to 12 speakers, each seated at a table for 10. Speakers open with a 5-10 minute presentation and then lead a 15-20 minute discussion. The presentation is repeated in three rounds to different groups of participants during the 90-minute total session. These sessions are highly popular with busy attendees looking for experience-based models and practical approaches.

Each progression session focuses on a particular aspect of management:

to surviving an acquisition to metrics, P&L statements, knowledge sharing, and growing with your team.

Managing Projects, session MG2T, is scheduled for Monday, May 17, 10:30 a.m. The moderator is Annette Reilly.

The Managing Projects progression features the challenges of long-distance management, managing multiple projects with a small staff, justifying projects, keeping teams together, managing third-party documentation, man-

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A Sneak Peak at Management Conference Topics

by Brenda Huettner

In addition to the SIG-sponsored progressions, the Management stem incorporates a wide variety of information about managing projects, managing your people, even managing your career. Currently, there are over 50 sessions scheduled over the three days of the conference. Just a few of the highlights include:

Projects

“Rescuing the Nightmare Project”, presented by Meryl Natchez, presents a case study of a project where everything possible went wrong, and offers exercises using the lessons learned.

“Project Management 101: Plan Your Work and Work Your Plan”, presented by Sarah Lee Hauslinger and C. Grant Hogarth, covers the basic steps of project management.

“Managing a Localization Project”, presented by Lelanie S. Hellmer and Phebe W. Packer, will give managers guidelines for planning and executing a localization project.

People and Departments

“Excuses, Excuses, Excuses: A Manager’s Guide”, presented by Dawn M. Stevens, will show us how to respond to common excuses and how to avoid them in the first place.

“Communication Skills for Managers”, presented by Barbara A. Giammona, will review some of

the common people-management problems that we deal with as documentation managers.

“The Care and Feeding of Teams”, presented by Lauren Y., Hansen and Susan M.J. Leseter, will share strategies for improving team performance.

Strategic Planning Workshop

The SIG is also sponsoring a workshop on Strategic Planning, presented by JoAnn Hackos and our own Charlie Breuninger. Attend these two sessions to learn more about what strategic planning is, and how to do it. This will be the third year for this popular, two-part workshop.

The first session focuses on how to define your current state, identify and analyze trends. The second session describes how to define your future, determine competitive advantages, and implement with strategic intent.

SIG Business Meeting

In addition to sponsoring progressions and other presentations, the Management SIG offers a variety of programs throughout the year. We have an active listserv, a mentor program, a website, and a newsletter. If you would like to participate in any of these activities, including preparations for the next annual conference in the year 2000, attend the annual SIG business meeting at the 1999 Annual conference in Cincinnati.

At the business meeting, we will discuss the focus of our SIG, make decisions about projects we want to sponsor, and choose our SIG team members for the upcoming year. Even if you can’t volunteer, come to the business meeting and express your opinion.

I hope to see you all in Cincinnati!

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Charlie's Column: Organizational Effectiveness

by Charlie Breuninger

Metrics is a perennially popular topic among managers. STC annual conferences always include several presentations devoted to the subject of metrics, and a recent thread on the Management SIG listserv focused on measuring the effectiveness and productivity of staff members.

Most of the discussions I hear about metrics tend to focus on measuring individual performance, how well (or poorly) that last project turned out, how much it costs or how long it takes to develop information products, and how all these metrics compare to so-called "industry standards." Indeed, I've logged many hours over the years tracking and comparing all sorts of metrics, mostly with the goal of having a good story to tell my clients, my colleagues, and my boss.

comes of complex, lengthy processes, trying to discern after the fact what went right or wrong and how to do better next time.

Wouldn't it make more sense to identify and monitor the critical activities and components that go into producing the final result, so I could make adjustments or change course in time to actually affect the outcome? Wouldn't it be great if I could measure the indicators that predict success rather than find out how we did after the fact?

The good news is that people have already figured out how to develop and maintain predictive metrics, and there are some great examples in the worlds of manufacturing and finance on which we can draw.

The Conference Board's Index of

isfaction, and profitability back to a single, measurable factor in their manufacturing processes: the number of defects per thousand for manufactured items.

They've learned that there's a direct correlation between that number and all the financial and marketing metrics that companies usually emphasize. They can predict the effect that reducing the number of defects per thousand will have on metrics such as sales and customer satisfaction.

I'd like to suggest that we managers could do ourselves and those we lead a huge favor by identifying and learning how to maintain predictive metrics for our organizations as we operate in the information industry.

I'll be leading a workshop on this interesting topic at the 46th Annual Conference in Cincinnati, and I would welcome your participation. My goal for the workshop is to begin to develop a generic set of predictive metrics that managers could use as a starting point for their organizations. If you're interested, please join in! I'd also be interested in hearing your ideas via e-mail. Please drop me a note at breunic@ibm.net.

Happy trails, and happy managing!

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"The good news is that people have already figured out how to develop and maintain predictive metrics"

I've been thinking and reading a lot about metrics lately, and I've become convinced that I've been paying too much attention to the wrong things. Perhaps more accurately, I've been blissfully unaware of what I should have been focusing on.

I've realized that I've been measuring effects (things like project cost and customer satisfaction), when it would have been much more useful to measure causes. I've been scrutinizing the out-

Leading Economic Indicators is one such example. They've identified a set of measures of economic activity (e.g., housing starts, inflation, money supply) that collectively predict how the U.S. economy will be performing 6-9 months in the future.

Another great example is the single metric concept developed and refined in manufacturing companies such as Motorola and General Electric. They've been able to trace outcomes such as sales, market share, customer sat-

Manager and Leader - a look at differences

By Kathleen Aughey

An interesting thing happened to me. I attended a seminar entitled Leadership Challenges for the Future. Twenty minutes into the presentation I began to feel I had been there before. So at break I carefully reviewed the syllabus and discovered this indeed was a seminar I had attended two years ago entitled Creative Management. About 30% of the content had changed but 70% was the same. I even asked the instructor to confirm it. He did and rambled on about changing styles. I think he might have been embarrassed. I stuck out the day to see what the ending would be like, and I was not disappointed. An open discussion on managing versus leading was well worth the wait. Below I have listed some of my lessons learned.

Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things. Both roles are necessary, but they differ in style and result. A manager handles the "business routines," while the leader asks if routines should be done at all.

Managers define goals and processes, but leaders pull people together to meet the goals. This

leading/team concept makes work challenging, stimulating and maybe even fun.

Managers and Leaders must establish and live workplace values such as trust, open

The attribute list could go on and on, but I would like to present some suggestions I have gathered from learning to be a leader. Use your personal work experience and model yourself after others you think are successful leaders.

Managers and leaders are creative and powerful. It is the thoughtful and effective use of power that separates leaders from managers.

communication, truth and credibility. Managers tend to get so involved in planning the path forward and how to get there, they often forget lessons learned from the past and what is going on in the present. Leaders are educators and great listeners.

"Commitment, and not control, will keep leaders focused. People skills are the greatest asset of a leader. Fail to honor people They fail to honor you; But of a good leader, who talks little, When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, They will all say, "We did this ourselves." --Lao Tzu, Book of Tao

Managers and leaders are creative and powerful. It is the thoughtful and effective use of power that separates leaders from managers.

Get training in leadership - it can be learned. Trial and error is only effective if you can afford the mistakes. Job experiences and strong business relationships provide opportunities for broader responsibility. Find a leader/mentor you admire. Be prepared to stretch yourself. Set your bar higher with each success. Volunteer yourself for the tougher assignments. Get involved in professional associations and community groups. This experience will help you develop skills in getting volunteers to get things done. Assess your strengths and weaknesses and develop an action plan for positive change. Build your track record of success as a team player. Always keep your work and personal life in balance.

It comes to mind that the trick to success would be to manage the business and lead the people who will bring about the success!

Check Out Our Web Site!

Access the Management SIG through the main STC web page at:
<http://www.stc-va.org/>

OR go directly to our page at:
<http://www.stc.org/pics/mgmt/>

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HELP WANTED

The STC Management SIG needs your help! We have lots of opportunities for you to gain experience, learn new skills, and help the other members of the Management SIG. After all, the SIG exists to serve its members - all 800+ of us!

Membership Coordinator

We need someone who is willing to help maintain our membership list. We receive information from the STC office, and need to incorporate additions, changes, and remove requests from our own list. Just as importantly, we send out a "welcome package" to our new members. If you can help with this task, contact Charlie Bruening at breunic@ibm.net or Brenda Huettner at bphuettner@aol.com.

Web Site

We need people to suggest and contribute content; ideas for links; graphic design and production; and HTML coding, PERL scripting, and other

techno-geek kinds of assistance. Contact Denise Roth, at rothd@avl.com, to volunteer.

For example, at the SIG business meeting in Anaheim last spring, we discussed ideas for content and services delivered through our web site. One idea was to conduct and make available the results of regular membership surveys. This would be a great web application, but we need people who can make it happen to step forward.

Management Newsletter

To volunteer to help with this newsletter, contact the Managing Editor, Brenda Huettner, at bphuettner@aol.com. Specific newsletter needs include:

Layout and Printing

We need someone to help with our newsletter production. You don't have to write (unless you want to) - just be detail-oriented and willing to help layout and produce the newsletter three or four times a year.

Writing and Editing

As a manager, you know what the hot topics are in your field. Share your knowledge with fellow SIG members by submitting articles for inclusion in the next issue of "Management". You'll get your own byline and a great sample for your portfolio. Even if you can't commit to writing an article, you can help out by editing other articles, or suggesting topics.

Conference 2000

You've heard lots of talk already about the year 2000, so it isn't too early to start planning for next year's SIG activities. If you can't make it to the Business Meeting in Cincinnati, contact any of the SIG Team Members (full email listing on page 2).

To subscribe to the Management SIG listserv, send a note to majordomo@stc.org. In the body of the note, enter:

subscribe stcmgmtpic-l youremailaddress

To remove your name from the Management SIG listserv, send a note to majordomo@stc.org. In the body of the note, enter:

unsubscribe stcmgmtpic-l youremailaddress

Note that the character after the hyphen is a lower-case L.

Listserv News

We've seen a lot of interesting, relevant discussions on our e-mail list, and many questions asked and answered. Much of the success of the list is due to the hard work and diligence of our moderator, Doreen Mannion. Although Doreen is stepping down as moderator, her efforts will surely make the job easier for our next moderator. Thank you, Doreen, for a job well done!

Welcome to Joseph van Oss, who has graciously volunteered to take over moderating our email list.

Joseph has been in technical communication for 20 years. He has worked at Bell Labs and several high-tech start-ups, and has been the director of tech pubs at Firstlogic for nine years.

Joseph has been very active in STC. He has presented several times at STC chapter meetings, regional and international conferences (he'll be presenting on management in Cincinnati this year).

For the past five years, Joseph has managed the tech pubs competition in the Twin Cities chapter. Joseph has won over two dozen STC awards, including a bunch of chapter competition awards, an international competition award, and a chapter service award.

Let's all pitch in and continue our tradition as the best, most active SIG listserv in the STC. We've done a great job so far with issues like keeping on topic and helping each other out. We also need to

ensure that the part of the listserv we don't see runs smoothly as well.

To do this, make sure that you keep your email address up-to-date. Every time you close an email account (because you change your name, company, job, or service provider, for example), you should unsubscribe the old name, and then subscribe again using the new name. You should also update your email address with the STC office, as their records are separate from the listserv records. If you have trouble with the listserv, send a note to Joseph at joseph@firstlogic.com

As outgoing moderator Doreen Mannion says, "Welcome to the wacky world of moderating, Joseph!"



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The staff of Management welcomes any news and information that would be of interest to members of the SIG. Please contact the Managing Editor for information about submitting articles.

Visit the Management SIG web site at <http://www.stc.org/pics/mgmt/>