**Project Management in Practice Conference, 2015**

**Project Management (PM) Competence**

**Roger’s Intro Remarks**

**What Does it Mean to be a Competent PM?**

**Introduction**

**Good Morning. Welcome to the 9th Project Management in Practice Conference**

**First some housekeeping:**

**Please turn on cell phones, but turn off the ringer.**

**We are using the Whova App for questions, so in this conference, use your phone. We are also taking questions via live streaming and the PMiP website.**

**However, like faculty teaching a class, we will confiscate a phone from anyone surfing the web or doing emails!**

**No PDUs for you.**

**Welcome to the 9th PMiP Conference**

**This year’s Theme is Project Management Competency.**

**I tell my students the Critical Path is the most important concept in Project Management.**

**Once you know the CP, you know which tasks have to be worked on; which team members need support; and the most important thing:**

**Who does the PM need to buy coffee and donuts for today?**

**On the other hand, Vijay tells his students that 90% of PM is “Communications.” Vijay’s position is that if they can’t communicate, they can’t be a PM.**

**Which one of us is right?**

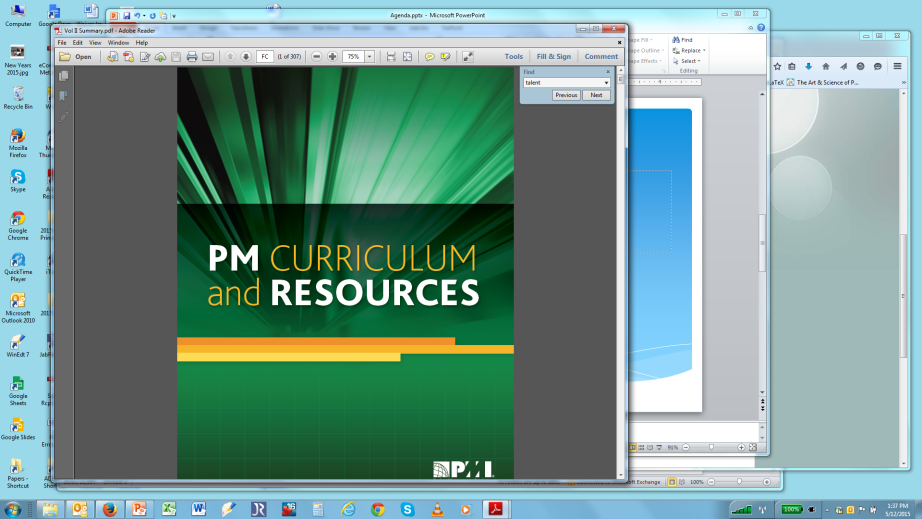
**Which is more important? Technical skills? Or, the so-called, soft skills?**

**Today, we are going to explore that dilemma.**

**Of course, it’s a trick question.**

**It is unlikely that we will answer that question today. Vijay and I have been debating this for nearly a decade and neither of us is willing to concede an inch to the other.**

**But why are we exploring the issue today?**

**Well, like good researchers, we have some new data and, as often happens when you have new data, you have a new and interesting ways to look at the issue.**

**Which brings us to the Project Management Institute (PMI).**

**PMI has just published a new volume: PM Curriculum & Resources.**

**This Book**

**What is it? Where did this come from?**

**In 2013 the Project Management Institute (PMI) issued a report:**

**The Project Management Talent Gap Report.**

**The Talent Gap Report estimated that nearly 16 million new project management jobs will be added**

**globally**

**across seven project‐intensive industries**

**between 2010 and 2020.**

**This is good news for everyone attending the conference, either online on in this room. There will be jobs for PMs for the foreseeable future.**

**In 1994 there were only 2 Bachelors and 9 Master Degree programs in Project Management.**

**Nearly 20 years later, more than 630 schools worldwide offer nearly 900 degree programs.**

**However, even these schools are not sufficient to meet the demand for more and better-educated project managers.**

**Therefore, in response to the talent gap, PMI funded an initiative to develop an undergraduate curriculum to assist schools in developing courses, programs and degrees in project management.**

**Let me explain it this way:**

**A random College Dean goes to a conference and learns that PM programs are growing. The Dean goes home and calls up some unlucky faculty member and says “We’re introducing a course in PM. You are going to teach it.”**

**What does that faculty member need to teach a class in PM?**

**A syllabus**

**Course topics**

**Homework Assignments**

**Learning outcomes**

**This report also contains guidelines for designing a degree program and/or a minor in PM, and up to 10 courses in project management.**

**This report also contains a first course in PM, along with all of the supporting materials needed to teach it.**

**Permit me a direct quotation:**

**“A well‐designed framework, developed with the help of academics, can address this demand and guide the nascent academic discipline of project management to new heights.”**

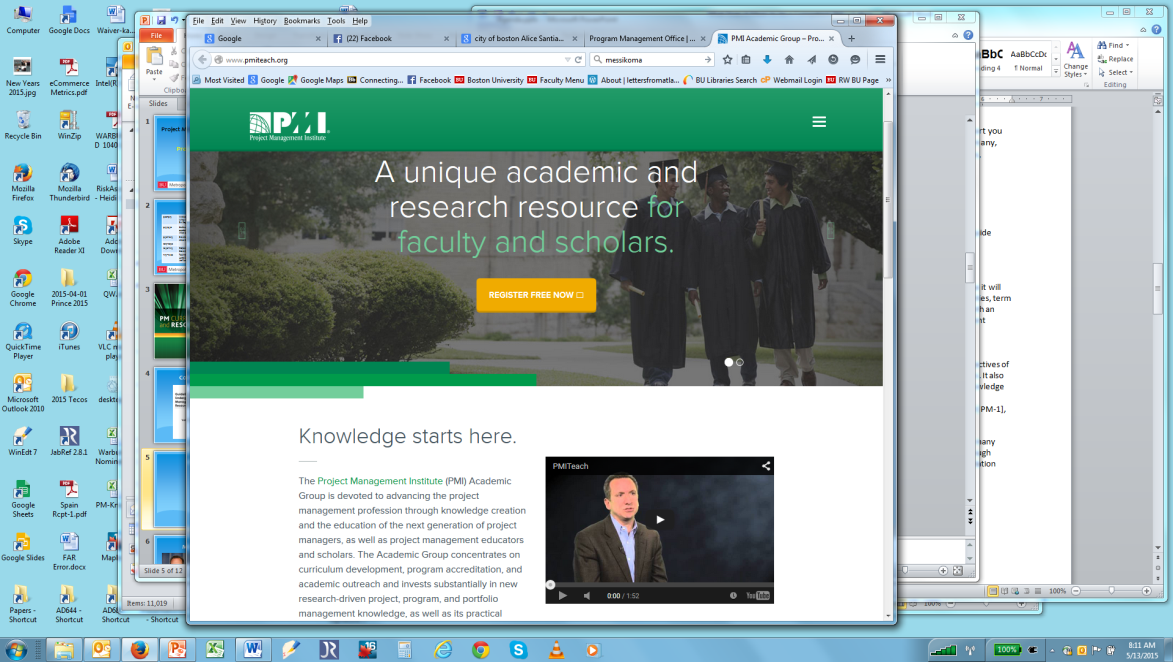
**Only Vijay could have written that.**

**Actually the first edition said: “Guide the nascent academic discipline of project management to *glorious* new heights.” Somewhere the word “glorious” got edited out. I wonder who could have done that?!**

**The PMI effort represented over two years of effort to determine the academic preparation required of students who will grow up to become project managers.**

**AT PMI, the project was managed Dr. Carla Messikomer, whom we are privileged to have with us today. More than 100 faculty members, from all over the globe, participated in the curriculum development.**

**And who took on this vast, complex task? Our own Vijay Kanabar!**

**PMI also created the website http://www.pmiteach.org **

**This will serve as a key resource. It will provide**

* **Material for teachers**
* **Course outlines**
* **Case studies**
* **Activities**
* **Term project assignments**
* **Exchange of ideas to grow the project management knowledge base**

**The technical vs. soft skills issue immediately came up. When the first course was sent for review to industry, the #1 comment that came back was “Our incoming employees know nothing about the soft skills. Why does this course focus on technical skills?”**

**Good question!**

1. **Soft Skills were so important that they deserve their own course. Therefore, it is the second course in the sequence.**
2. **You have to understand the vocabulary before you can talk to stakeholders. If you don’t know the definition of a stakeholder or their power or their influence, how are you going to talk to them?**

**So, here’s the question of the day:**

**What do students of project management need to become successful working professionals?**

**We are hoping that you will help us answer that. This morning’s conference is designed to be interactive. I have warned all the speakers that my job is to make sure the audience gets to ask questions and discuss the topics.**

**The speakers have been warned … My job is to stop the speakers from talking.**

**Discussion Forum Questions**

**Technical Skills (Roger, Vijay, Alice)**

**Roger to Vijay:**

**Can you give us a quick overview of what motivated PMI to spend a lot of hard cash in developing an undergraduate curriculum in PM?**

**Follow Up:**

**PMI already had the GAC—the Global Accreditation Center—which accredits graduate programs. Why the need for undergraduate?**

**Roger to Alice:**

**Can you give us a sense of what you look for in potential PM employees at the City of Boston? What key attributes do you look for?**

**Roger to Vijay:**

**How does the new undergrad curriculum address Alice’s points?**

**Roger to Alice:**

**In your opinion, are there any characteristics of new employees that are obviously missing, or maybe, not well prepared?**

**Roger to Vijay:**

**I know you tested the curriculum by sending out to industry representatives. What was their response?**

**Roger to Alice:**

**Does that sound familiar?**

**Roger to Alice:**

**Your job is to elevate the skills of the City of Boston in PM. What are the major challenges in that assignment?**

**Roger to Vijay:**

**The PMI curriculum was “for faculty by faculty,” how did that affect the curriculum?**

**And**

**Carla insisted that that the PMI curriculum be solidly based in research. How did that affect the curriculum?**

**Roger to Vijay:**

**There is a constant debate about whether technical skills or soft skills are more important. It seems to me that you need to teach vocabulary before you can teach skills. One of the major motivations for PM-1, therefore, is to teach vocabulary. For example, if you tell a student to calculate the CP and explain it to stakeholders, they need to know what a CP is and also what a stakeholder is?**

**Soft Skills (Steve, Vijay, Alice)**

**Steve to Vijay:**

**Same question as Roger asked, but from the soft skills perspective:**

**There is a constant debate about whether technical skills or soft skills are more important. That is a debate that we will not settle here. But it seems to me that you need to teach vocabulary before you can teach skills. One of the major motivations for PM-1, therefore, is to teach vocabulary. For example, if you tell a student to calculate the CP and explain it to stakeholders, don’t they need to know what a CP is and also what a stakeholder is?**

**Steve to Alice:**

**What are the requirements of City of Boston employees in the soft skills arena?**

**Steve to Vijay:**

**You frequently say that 90% of PM is communications. What exactly do you mean by that?**

**Steve to Alice:**

**Does the City of Boston provide specific training in the soft skills arena?**

**Or**

**Is there something we (or other teachers) could do better in the soft skills area?**