

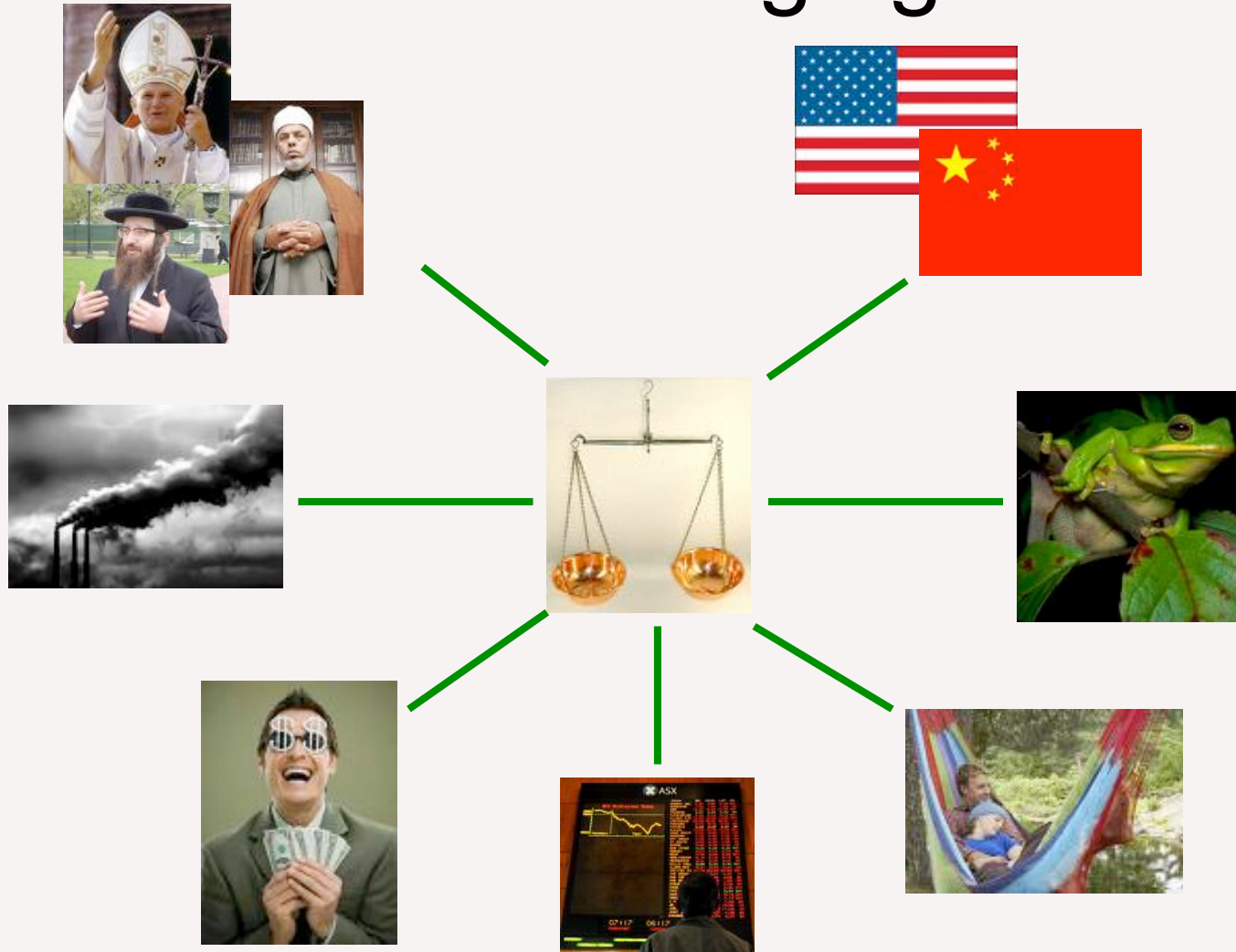
Case study

Bridging the skills gap

Presented by Martin Vaughan

core

Its a changing world



Change is rapid



The PM profession is changing too

- Recent changes:
 - Certification & standards
 - Browser based collaboration
 - Dashboard style reporting
 - Governance focus
 - Benefits realisation
 - Change Management
 - PMOs and Standards
- Skills focus changes:
 - Communication skills
 - Leadership skills
 - Relationship management
- Not all good:
 - Dumbing down of core skills due to “self serve” philosophy
 - Heavy outsourcing and hence loss of knowledge
 - Lack of investment/opportunity in young people



People are changing

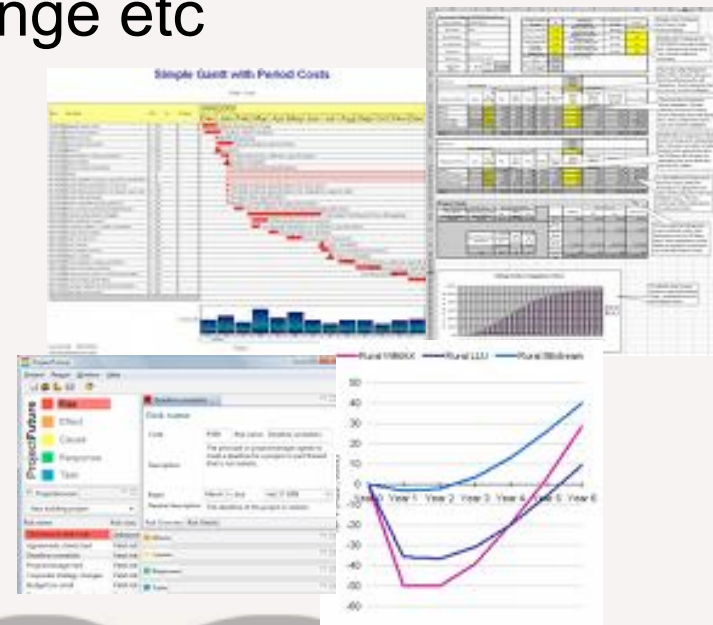
- The Project Management profession is aging
- The next generation of PMs are out there – the Generation Y or “whatever” generation:
 - Delayed maturity/responsibility
 - Affluent (desire for good life)
 - Impatient
 - Never fail mentality
 - Close enough mentality
 - Extremely Technically savvy
 - Different social skills



There is currently a skills shortage

- Project administration
- Scheduling skills
- Planning skills (as distinct from scheduling)
- Cost estimating skills
- Basic project controls – Risk, Change etc
- Financial modelling

Ironically in the contract market some good planners are being paid more than experienced PMs



Our opinion



Observation 1: The skills in short supply are also the stepping stones to a Project Management career

Observation 2: A lot of young people are wanting a career in Project Management but don't know where to start

Observation 3: Young people are a much lower cost base and hence provide a competitive advantage

Prediction 1: Future innovation will increasingly come from Gen Y, not "our" generation

Prediction 2: On line communication technology will vastly change the nature of people's interaction and hence project delivery



Who are we ??

- Core Consulting Group (www.coreconsulting.com.au)
- Professional services provider
- Niche is Project Management Improvement
 - PMOs, PM Training, Tools, Reporting, Governance
 - Provision on Planner/Schedulers, PMO staff and PMs
 - Mainly IT/Change projects
- Melbourne based, 14 staff (most permanent)



4 older
(wish we were younger)



5 happily in
the middle



5 younger
(wish we were older)

AAA program overview

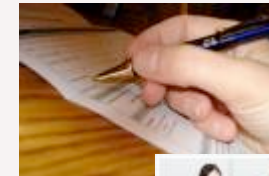
- Graduate Project Management program
- AAA = Aptitude, Astuteness and Ambition
- 3 year program
- Entry level is completion of tertiary degree (in a remotely related field)
- Competency based approach
- Structured training
- Ongoing mentoring/coaching
- Quarterly review, remuneration review every second quarter



Candidate selection

- Key to the success of the program
- Mainstream advertising, incl screening questionnaire
- Written assessment and phone screening
- Interview 1 short/sharp
 - Communications & interpersonal skills
- 1hr assessment test
 - Looking for instinctive planning skills
- 2nd Interview
 - Looking for passion, awareness, ambition

2 candidates selected, 1 didn't work out after 4 months, we ended up with 1st reserve (interstate).



Competency framework

- A blend of Traditional PM skills:
 - Scope, Time, Cost, Risk (together with PM tools)
 - Resource engagement & management
 - Quality, Procurement, Communications
 - Project Life cycle/process, Business Case & Governance processes
- Plus soft skills:
 - Stakeholder Mgmt, particularly customer
 - Verbal & written communications
 - Leadership & teamwork
 - Meeting management
 - Presentation skills
 - Analysis & decision making
- Plus generic consulting skills



Objective setting

- Defined targets at end of period:
 - Not yet
 - Aware
 - Capable
- Skills gaps provide training requirements
- Supplemented by:
 - Reading/research (self paced)
 - Formal training
 - Coaching & mentoring
 - Learn by doing (incl making mistakes)
- Basis for remuneration review



Quarterly review

- Based on competency map
- Independent assessment (manager/staff)
- Track change since previous assessment
- Track/capture actions (both sides)
- Wood for the trees overview
- Remuneration review only if expectations met
- Remuneration review typically six months
 - Sooner than expected
 - 3 year salary range \$40-70K

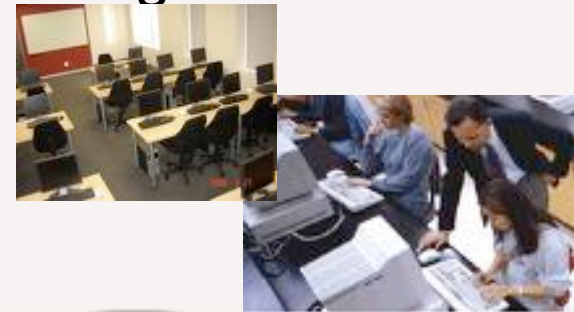
Its up to the graduate to make things happen, that will involve effort and some pain.

Its up to the business to provide opportunity and support, not spoon feed the graduate.



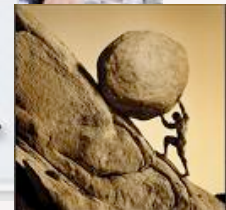
Structured learning

- There is a definite need for “Pure knowledge” through structured training sessions
- Occasional “assignment” or work at home
- This comes via short/sharp fortnightly 1½hr sessions
- Great opportunity to include more experienced PMs to gain their war stories plus offer a subtle refresher for them
- Occasionally encourage graduates to research and present – good practice
- Include role plays to keep fun and interesting
- Align to competency gaps



Self paced components

- Reading/research ideal for:
 - Basic terminology
 - PMBOK, PRICE2 and other standards
 - Different System Development Life Cycles/Approaches
 - Typical deliverable content
 - Innovations and trends
- Further studies & accreditation, eg PRINCE2
- Occasional assignment
- PM accreditation choice (PMP or RegPM)
- Actual accreditation process
- Taking ownership of career development
 - Involves pain and effort



Realistic attitude

- Graduate perspective:
 - Will involve effort and time
 - Remuneration earned not expected
 - Need passion and drive
- Company perspective:
 - Will involve effort and time
 - Expect mistakes
 - Be there to support and encourage
 - Huge responsibility
- Graduates will not stay in the long term



Reflection/learnings



- Selection process is critical
- 2 years in, we feel the program is a success
- It has spawned a second graduate planner program
- AAAA graduates well on track for accreditation by the end of year three
- They pick up PM technology quickly

- However age difference has caused issues when dealing with older people on projects

If you were to consider this

- You need the teachers:
 - Planning & controls
 - Broader project management
 - Soft skills
- You need the mentors/coaches:
 - Preferably not “the boss”
 - Who have the time and are willing
 - Who the graduates respect
- You need the funding (for the full 3 years)
- You need flexibility in HR and Finance

Follow up

- Core Consulting Group is a Melbourne based professional service provider which specialises in Project Management improvement. We advise, teach, implement, review and improve PMO systems & processes
- For help or further enquiries please contact Martin Vaughan on (03) 9428 2448, 0417 332615 or martin.vaughan@coreconsulting.com.au
- For an interesting perspective on the future have a look at a video called “Shift Happens” via <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8Kf0IV1u8A>

