

## ***Positive Leadership in Project Management*<sup>1</sup>**

### **Talent Management, The Leadership Edge**<sup>2</sup>

By Frank Saladis, PMP, PMI Fellow

You probably have noticed that there is a steady stream of books that show up on the radar screens of project managers, executives and managers in general. I recently saw post that said over 400 leadership books are published every year. It becomes a real challenge to keep up with this endless supply of information.

There is so much useful information that we sometimes find ourselves in a true overload. We deal with books, articles, email, phone calls, meetings, webinars, news briefs, memos, elevator discussions, pre-meeting meetings and post meeting meetings on much more. The question is “how does anyone find the time to read the books and white papers that could really help make a difference in our performance?”

I think that people who are strong leaders or who are aspiring to be leaders know when to take a look at a new book. Sometimes the title of the book is enough to peak one’s curiosity. Occasionally there is a need to find a new topic to discuss or a new idea to bring to a meeting. While I was searching for information for a presentation, I noticed a book entitled “The Talent Powered Organization” by Peter Cheese, Robert J. Thomas, and Elizabeth Craig, published by Kogan Page. This book’s title clearly identified a major challenge that many, if not most, organizations are facing today. The need to obtain and retain the talent needed to keep an organization healthy and growing.

The changing economic climate, the rise of third world nations, and the effect of globalization is continually changing the way business is managed. The work force is changing with baby boomers exiting and setting their sights on retirement and fresh college graduates (Millennials as they are referred to) with a different work ethic and set of priorities making their way into mainstream business. During these changes, many companies are looking for the talent they need to manage in a diverse, client driven, severely competitive environment. The greatest challenge for today’s business leaders is to find the talent they need, engage that talent quickly to generate enthusiasm about the business, and create an environment that encourages loyalty and commitment. Basically what this amounts to is, according to authors Cheese Thomas, and Craig, ***the strategic value of talent***.

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<sup>1</sup>This is the first in a series of articles on Positive Leadership in Project Management by Frank Saladis, PMP, PMI Fellow, popular speaker and author of books on leadership in project management published by Wiley and IIL in the United States. Frank is widely known as the originator of the International Project Management Day, the annual celebrations and educational events conducted each November by PMI members, chapters and organizations around the world. Learn more in his profile at the end of this article.

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Organizations must assess the talent that currently exists, define their future needs during strategic planning and create a culture where the capabilities and energy of the work force can be released and allowed to grow.

There is an urgent need for every organization to analyze just what they have in terms of talent and then determine the best course of action to address weaknesses within the talent pool and where threats may exist that could impact competitive advantage.

A SWOT analysis of the organization's talent may be something to consider (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The SWOT analysis is generally considered to be a strategic planning tool but it can also be used to assess individual talent in an organization. Conducting a personal SWOT analysis will reveal quite a bit of useful information.

Many organizations immediately focus on external sources when they need talent. They do not take the time to assess the hidden talent that resides within. In a large organization there are probably legions of people who have the drive, capability, and innovative skills necessary to meet the needs of the organization. Looking internally first may create a more positive attitude among employees at all levels. The thought of advancement, new opportunity, and increased responsibility are serious motivators for many.

Organizational leaders can choose to focus on "Talent Leadership" as a method to meet business needs. The intent is to engage people at every level in contributing to the business goals whenever possible. Focus on creating an environment where people know what is going on within the business and how well the business is doing. Make them feel "in the know" about as much of the business as possible. Emphasize people skills, especially listening and providing feedback. Look for the advantages associated with a diverse work force and create an attitude that leads to high performance at the individual and team levels. Creating the right type of environment will also cause "talent multiplication." Talent multiplication is experienced when everyone works together to nurture the talent within an organization. An encouraging, enthusiastic, team type of environment that is clearly supported by executive management will cause the talent within the organization to increase and will attract other talented people to the organization.

The talent powered organization is energized by positive leadership and the realization that the talent needed to stay ahead of the competition might very well be found in the existing employee base (Don't forget the virtual / remote employees). Organizations that focus on "internal talent power" will build up a momentum that is difficult to stop. Managers should take the time to define the talent needs of their organization, seek the talent from within as well as externally, create a culture of continuous learning, recognize people for their contributions and the fuel you need to power your organization will generate itself.

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## About the Author



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**Frank P. Saladis**, PMP, PMI Fellow is the Owner/Founder of Blue Marble Enterprises Inc. and Project Imaginers. Frank is an accomplished leader and contributor in the discipline of project management. He is the author of 12 published books, the past editor of the All PM Newsletter and the author of over 160 project management articles. Frank provides training and consulting internationally and has educated and entertained countless audiences with a special blend of project management knowledge and tasteful humor. He is also an experienced and well-known project management instructor and consultant and a member of the PMI® Seminars World team of trainers. Mr. Saladis' 35 year career includes 28.5 years with AT&T, 3 years with Cisco Systems, and more than 25 years as a professional trainer, facilitator, mentor and keynote speaker.

Frank is the Originator/Founder of International Project Management Day which launched in 2004 and has been growing in recognition yearly. The goal of International Project Management Day is the worldwide recognition of the many project managers and project teams in every industry including nonprofit organizations and health care who contribute their time, energy, creativity, innovation, and countless hours to deliver products, services, facilities, and provide emergency and disaster recovery services in every city and community around the world.

Frank was PMI's 2006 Person of the Year. Frank is a Project Management Professional, a graduate from the PMI Leadership Institute Master's class, and has contributed significantly to the organization's growth and knowledge base for more than 20 years. His leadership activity within PMI included the position of President of the New York City PMI chapter from 1991-2001, President of the Assembly of Chapter Presidents, and Chair of the Education and Training Specific Interest Group. He received the high honor of the "PMI Fellow Award" in October 2013 and received the very prestigious "PMI Distinguished Contribution Award" in October 2015.