

# **PM World Journal**

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## **On the Subject of Lynda Bourne's article on Governance in the October PM World Journal**

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Managing Editor,

I was most interested to read Dr. Lynda Bourne's article in your November issue of the PM World journal on the subject of Governance. Lynda has provided a valuable background as to what "governance" is all about in her "Governance overview". It describes well the generally accepted concept and purpose at the top of the corporate hierarchy.

But these days associations and corporations are beginning to talk about governance as it relates to project management as in the form of projects, programs and portfolios. So the last two paragraphs of Lynda's article are particularly insightful and, I think, worth quoting here. She says:

"The Governance of PPP is focused on ensuring management develop and implement systems that are capable of ensuring the right projects and programs are selected by the organisation to support its objectives, and that the selected 'few' are accomplished as efficiently as possible. Management's role is to understand the Board's strategy and objectives and develop systems that are capable of offering effective 'answers' to both sets of questions as well as providing advice and recommendations for improvements.

### **Conclusion**

The governance system and the management system are symbiotic, but whilst being mutually interdependent, the two systems fulfil very different functions. A well governed organisation is designed to allow these two systems to work together to the benefit of the organisation's overall stakeholder community."

If I may put that more simply, because "The governance system and the management system are symbiotic" it means, as Lynda pointed out, corporate governance establishes the basis on which the Project Portfolio group shall be managed.

However, by the same token, the Project Portfolio group is charged with how the Program Management group shall be managed, and the Program Management group

establishes the basis on which their contained projects shall be managed. So, at each level we see that "governance" edicts provide management's terms of reference at the next level down. Or, in short, one man's governance is another man's management standard.

There is nothing new about all of this, of course; we've just got a better way of driving the point home.

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