

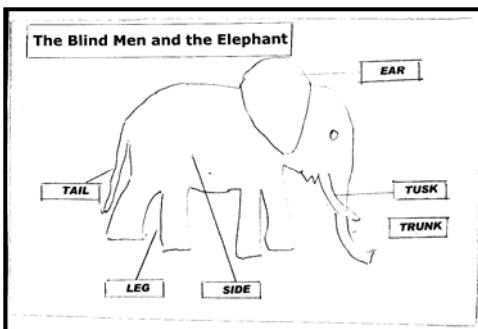
What Forest?



Larry Cooke Larry Cooke is an independent Senior Project Manager and Certified Business Process Professional working with Financial and Manufacturing organizations. He is a member of PMI Westchester and lives in New Rochelle, NY. He can be reached at LHC209@aol.com

The moral of this article is the cost of not seeing the forest for the trees. Before that, though, let's look at the story of the blind men and the elephant. An emperor, who had never seen an elephant, sent six blind men to investigate and report back. Each took a station near the beast, and reported what they had felt. One felt the trunk, another, the

leg, tusk, side, ear and the last, the tail.



The men each told their stories, and argued. The trunk person described a writhing snake. The leg person described a

sturdy tree trunk. And lastly, the tail person described a rope, which, when yanked upon, all the filth from the heavens spewed forth. And the emperor was no wiser.

There is a less dramatic tale of the "forest" story, but is more pervasive and more relevant to Project Management.

On some engagements, I have encountered a situation where the organization uses PMs for many simultaneous "projects." In fact, each PM is expected to follow up to 50 projects a week.

Now, through higher math, using a 40-hour week, this distribution allows the PM to devote a maximum of 48 minutes a week to each project. Some may take more or less, but on average, that's how the math works out.

Very little analysis can be done to reconfigure the environment, since all the time is consumed developing status reports, risk logs, corrections to last week's mistakes, and so forth. This environment is not terribly productive, and high turnover usually is a hallmark of the organization, since it is finally demoralizing to the PM. The activity is similar to rolling the rock up the hill, only to have it roll down again. Few PMs last long.

I highlight two environments where I was presented with this situation. Not to name the companies, they were, respectively, a telephone company and a chemical manufacturer. In each case, the PM was hired to pick up the tools immediately and solve the immediate problems on each separate "project".

Now, since the companies each have discrete product lines, there is considerable overlap and similarity of the problems to be solved. In fact, there are not 50 projects, but only one or just a few project scenarios. What the companies really have is "activities". These engagements are delivery services, closer related to Florists or Pizza shops than to companies implementing systems of business excellence.

In the first case, the telephone company area manager is a "straw boss," too low down in the company hierarchy to have a vision beyond his immediate mission. His job is to keep the people moving.

The second case is more involved. A contract with a servicer was negotiated several years beforehand. In those days, 20 years were contracted for. The technology, in the meanwhile, has changed several times, so the original deliverables are no longer relevant to today's business needs. The contract has been modified.

The original contract was drawn up by high-level technologists and salespeople. The day to day work is being executed, although now somewhat modified, by journeymen employees of the servicer. The new change management requirements, not within the contract's scope, are filled by ad hoc sub-contract personnel.

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Letter from the President



Request For Proposals – Help the Chapter Help Members Get Jobs

Welcome Back. After our traditional summer break we will kick off our programming year with an Indian Buffet dinner at the Royal Palace – a favorite for many members. We follow that with ten months of chapter meetings, breakfast round table meetings, courses, seminars and our professional development day. Our calendar is full, and, as I reported at our annual meeting in June, our membership is growing and our treasury is strong. The chapter, in short, is very strong.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for many of our members. We are entering the fourth year of a painful slowdown of what used to be referred to as the “worst recession since the Great Depression”. I say used to, because there is the distinct possibility that this downturn may turn out to be more protracted than the famous downturn of the 1930s. It has been marked by a massive aversion to capital investment in the United States as private companies see no reason to invest their cash and the public sector appears to be turning from investment of any kind in the name of reducing government. Regardless of what the accounting rules may say, projects are capital investments and when capital investment goes south, its bad news for project managers. Some of our members have been out of work for a year or more – and many more of us are under-employed or working under difficult or very temporary arrangements. For young workers, the situation is also bleak – recent grads appear to be in complete limbo – unable to find entry level positions that will build on their college experience – leaving them to drift through a succession of temp and low level service jobs while they live at home and struggle to pay their loans.

Our chapter has responded to the downturn. Early on, we established the Job Club – a free support group for project managers who are in transition. The club helps members learn and apply the effective approaches to pro-active job searching advanced by the “Five O’clock” club and many other career experts. Members learn to identify their marketable skills, and communicate them to their network so they can get in the door before the “job” is even created. It’s a great technique, but even the best fisherman won’t catch much when the pond is drying up. So it begs the question – is there more that we as a chapter can do to help our unemployed members?

If you have ideas on how to do this, I’d like to hear from you. I am especially open to ideas that leverage the chapter’s resources and are “sustainable” in the long term in a way that won’t overwhelm our volunteer resources. The chapter has resources to provide initial funding but if the program needs long term funding, there should be some way for the program to generate that. All proposals need to be practical, legal and allowed by our bylaws as not-for-profit organization. The most important consideration, however, is whether you, the proposal writer, is willing to put in the time needed to lead the initiative and make it happen. I’m hoping that we can identify two or three new programs that can make the chapter stronger in the years to come. Please send your ideas to me, at President@pmiwestchester.org.

See you at the September Chapter Meeting!

Duff Bailey, PMP
President, PMI Westchester

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Introducing the PMI Agile Certified Practitioner



Stacey Berlow is a software product consultant and founder of Project Balance. With over 18 years of product and project management and she has successfully directed multi-million, large-scale, multinational, and offshore IT development projects. Stacey is a member of the Westchester PMI Chapter and lives in White Plains, NY.

Plains, NY.

Those who know me know that I'm into "Agile" and that I try to apply agile tools and techniques to the projects that I manage. An agile approach works well in the software development environment I work in because it focuses on building and working on activities that bring the highest business value to stakeholders at each step of the project. I like it from the project management perspective because I'm able to verify and re-prioritize work regularly and the customer gets to see progress regularly. My approach can be much less "command and control" and much more collaborative – which makes me a happier and calmer person and hopefully that translate into being a better project manager.

Earlier this year PMI announced that it was piloting an Agile Certified Practitioners certification. Of course I had immediate interest and when I saw the outline of topics for the certification, I got kind of excited about it. PMI has been given a pretty bad rap on how the PMBOK philosophy is incompatible with an agile philosophy and in the latest edition they've made some attempts to include agile ideas. Companies are looking for ways to be more flexible in how they deliver products and services and are demanding that project managers be versed in other tools and techniques in addition to traditional techniques. In my opinion, as a project manager both approaches should be available in your PM tool kit

I'm in the pilot group for the ACP certification and I'll be taking the exam on September 15th. (Unfortunately, I won't know if I passed until December.) I'm busily reading the books they recommended and learning new things. I'm really impressed with how much thought PMI has put into the exam structure and the books they are recommending. There is a real emphasis on the key areas required to effectively manage projects that use an agile approach. This is not a repeat of Scrum. In fact, if you are a Certified Scrum Master, don't expect to be able to answer the questions without studying. It's like the PMP exam – even if you were a seasoned project manager you had to study to pass the exam.

Here are the eligibility requirements for the certification:

Educational Level

- Secondary degree (high school or equivalent) or higher

General Project Management Experience

- 2,000 hours (minimum of 12 months) working on project teams. These hours must be earned within the last 5 years. If a PMP or PgMP then these requirements are already met.



Agile Project Management Experience

- 1,500 hours (minimum of 8 months) working on agile project teams or in agile methodologies. These hours are in addition to the 2,000 hours required in general project management experience. These hours must be earned within the last 2 years.

Agile Project Management Education

- 21 contact hours; hours must be earned in agile project management topics

Examination

- Tests knowledge of agile fundamentals and ability to apply to basic projects

Maintenance

- 30 PDUs/3 CEUs every 3 years in agile principles and practices. Note: these hours would count toward fulfilling PMP requirements, if the individual holds both certifications

More information can be found on the PMI website at: <http://www.pmi.org/agile>

Similar to how the PMP certification is set up, to be eligible to be an Agile Certified Practitioner, you need to have some experience managing projects using an agile approach for a minimum of 8 months. You also need 21 contact hours of agile training. PMI Westchester is surveying the chapter members to find out any of you might be interested in taking a certification class. If there are enough interested individuals, we may be able to give the course in the last quarter of 2011. If you are interested please talk with Pawan Kumar, VP of Program or send email to VP.Programs@pmiwestchester.org. If you have any questions about exam material, please do not hesitate to email me at sberlow@projectbalance.com.

What Forest (continued from page 1)

These workers receive no benefits, no connection with the end client, no hope of becoming employees, and are paid a relatively low industry hourly rate. Much of the money paid by the client goes to the recruiting third party, which performs a one-time recruiting activity and ongoing payroll services. Not surprisingly, this leads to resentment by the actual knowledge workers, who generally work in isolation, pay their own home office expenses, and perform monotonous work. Consequently, they are not highly motivated to quality.

The traditional values for employment are missing. In addition the company loses the value of learning on the part of the worker, who, when leaves, takes whatever accumulated skill and knowledge elsewhere.

A Better Way?

Each company has thrown away opportunities for continuous improvement and performance redesign. In the first case it is by the limited scope of the engagement. Within a single functional environment, it misses the improvement possibilities of cross-functional scope. In the second case, there may be many functional areas involved, but the PM will be involved only in the local scope, so learning opportunities are minimal.

A better way is to incorporate the Business Process Management principles and viewpoints. Rather than deal with each "project" as a thing in itself, the business can look more broadly to incorporate the Customer's real needs, instead of focusing on the mechanics of the service provider. A general, corporate-wide set of priorities can be evaluated by professionals and senior management, in order to handle highest priorities and high value activities first. While each company is earning some income from the agreements in place, as time goes by, the activities will become increasingly out of step with market needs, since the people performing the work have no knowledge or visibility to the changing business climate.

In the process of outsourcing the activities to subcontractors, the companies are "losing their frontal lobes," (to borrow the expression coined by industry commentator Ed Yourdon). Eventually each company will lose relevance with economic realities, and either will have to scrap the activities or go out of business.

Looking at the trees alone, within a single department or function, will miss the chance to grab improvement or redesign opportunities that will keep the companies at the forefront of their industries. It is the forest that has the payoff potential, not a tree here or there. Look up from the daily grind, and see the wider world. It will be more fun and will pay better.

Volunteer Positions Available !!

The Westchester Chapter has several open volunteer positions, which are listed below. To volunteer contact Mary Jo Vesseccchia, Director, at volunteer@pmiwestchester.org or call 914-522-9199.

Opportunities –

- Co-Program Managers – e-Mail Communications (2)
- Program Manager – Finance & Budgets
- Program Manager – Sponsor & Vendor Relations
- Co-Program Managers – Mentoring (2)



The chapter is always interested in ideas for new programs and people to run them. To suggest a new chapter program that you would like to pilot contact Duff Bailey, Chapter President, president@pmiwestchester.org or call 914-263-5034.

Board directors and program managers can often use help in the form of committee volunteers. If you would like to get involved with an existing chapter program visit the [Officers & Contacts](#) page, contact the owner of the program, and offer to help.

Advertise in "The Critical Path"

Are you an independent consultant that provides project management related services? Do you offer training in project management skills and techniques? Are you looking to get your company's name in front of PMPs and other business professionals? Then join our growing list of advertisers! Advertising rates are as follows:

The Critical Path Ad Size (10 issues/year)	Monthly Cost	Monthly Cost One year pre-paid (15% Discount!)
Full Page	\$200 / issue	\$170 / issue
Half Page	\$100 / issue	\$85 / issue
Quarter Page	\$50 / issue	\$42.50 / issue
Business Card	\$25 / issue	\$21.25 / issue

To advertise in The Critical Path, e-mail our Vice President of Communications at newsletter@pmiwestchester.org

The IKEA Approach To Risk



A Risk Doctor Briefing Note © 2011 Dr David Hillson PMP FAPM david@risk-doctor.com

IKEA is the world's largest furniture retailer, with over 250 stores in 25 countries supplying about 12,000 products. The IKEA catalogue is published every year with 55 editions in 27 languages for 35 countries.

Many people will be familiar with the iconic blue and yellow buildings, with a standard internal layout presenting home furnishings in naturalistic settings. IKEA products can be found in millions of homes around the world, characterised by functional design and clean lines. Most IKEA furniture is designed to be assembled by the consumer, so that people can build the furniture from the components when they get it home. This requires particular attention to the user instructions, to avoid unnecessary frustration and mistakes when the customer tries to assemble their new furniture at home!

IKEA user instructions use as few words as possible, with lots of pictures to illustrate the required actions. This is supported by an intuitive design which tries to make it obvious how the piece of furniture should be put together. The goal is to make the task of self-assembly foolproof, so that anyone can construct the furniture correctly just by following the simple instructions and using a few basic tools.

How different this is from most business process descriptions, including those that tell you how to do risk management! The majority of processes use words only, with few or no pictures. The underlying process design is not intuitive, so the user must refer to the process documentation to find out what to do next. The tools are not easy to use and often require specialist knowledge or expertise. And the process is certainly not foolproof, so people make simple mistakes that could easily be avoided.

Managing risk would be much easier if we adopted the IKEA approach to documenting the risk process. This means that we should:

- Provide a checklist of what is needed at the start, and clearly describe the intended outcome
- Use the minimum number of words, with diagrams illustrating the most important parts of the process
- Ensure that all instructions can be understood by a normal person, with no specialist jargon or technical language

- Design the process logically so that it is obvious what to do next
- Provide all the required tools and make sure they do exactly what is needed
- Use high-quality components that have been well tested and proved to work
- Check that nothing essential has been left out before we release the process



A common problem with self-assembly is lack of preparation. Everyone wants to start making their furniture as soon as they get it home, and they think they can do it without reading the instructions. Then they hit a problem and they have to go back to the documentation to find out where they went wrong. It would be much better if we followed the process first time.

This happens too with managing risk, when people believe they can do it themselves without having to follow a process. But a well-designed process can make it so much easier to succeed. If our risk process has simple steps in a logical order, described using few words and clear illustrations, supported by tools that work and are easy to use, then we will soon get the job done with minimum hassle and maximum satisfaction.

To provide feedback on this Briefing Note, or for more details on how to develop effective risk management, [contact the Risk Doctor \(info@risk-doctor.com\)](mailto:info@risk-doctor.com), or [visit the Risk Doctor website \(www.risk-doctor.com\)](http://www.risk-doctor.com).

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Google+ and Your Job Search



Miriam Salpeter is owner and founder of Keppie Careers, a coaching and consulting firm helping job seekers and entrepreneurs leverage social media and other tools to achieve their goals.

I believe there are three big reasons to use social media:

1. To expand the number of people you know and who know you.
2. To learn new information pertinent to your field from mentors and thought leaders, and
3. To illustrate your expertise with a community of people who may connect you to opportunities based on learning about you and what you know.

Google+ allows users to accomplish all of these goals in similar ways to other networks, such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Google+ makes it very easy to open up pathways to connect with people you've never met and to engage in an in-depth conversation. This engagement compares, in many ways, to Twitter, where it is possible to connect, meet, and learn from people you don't already know, without barriers requiring introductions.

Google+'s value add is the fact that Google controls much of search traffic. Any tie to being "found" online and any boost Google+ may provide gives this new network extra value.

Google+ Job Search Tips - Some important aspects about Google+ and tips for job seekers:

Your Google Profile - You may already have a Google profile, but you probably never paid much attention to it! Be sure to set it up by visiting Google profiles, even before you start with Google+. Use the same avatar as in your other social networking profiles, and be sure to spend some time selecting a good description for your "Occupation," as Google uses it under your name as your "headline."

It's important to optimize your profile so it's easier to find you in search. Be sure to fill in all of the sections accurately, and write your Google profile so it is consistent with your other online profiles.

Circles - The major, lauded aspect of Google+ is the "circles" concept, which allows you to create groups of people, to share content with them, and to view content they share. If you don't know how to find people to add to your circles, follow this tip from Kelly Dingee on Fistful of Talent. Go to Google and enter: {site:plus.google.com google}. Then include a keyword to help locate others in your field. Kelly suggests, for example: {site:plus.google.com google engineer}. Don't include the { }s in your search. (This is tip # 8 in Job-Hunt's Googleize Your Job Search.)

Once you find some people to add to your circles, it is okay to look to see who they have in their circles and add people who suit your interests. It's also fine to "circle" people who don't circle you. This makes Google+ similar to Twitter, where it is acceptable to find and follow friends of your contacts, even if you don't already have a relationship. Google+ will also suggest contacts for you.

You'll probably keep personal and professional circles and want to label them accordingly. You may want circles for your closer contacts and circles for people whose information you value, but you don't know well. If you're looking for a job, maybe you'll have a "Job Search Info" category.

This is similar, in some ways, to "groups" on Twitter. However, it allows you to both share content to the group AND see content from that group only. As of now, people cannot see what circles you put them in; they just know they are in one of your circles.

Sparks - This allows you to find content written about a topic you'd like to know more about. Google+ suggests several topics, for example, "Recipes," "Fashion," and "Android." You can search for keywords and uncover people sharing content that may be of interest.

The search is very limited and nothing like Google itself. It's unclear how Google+ decides what to include in this section. You can "pin" your favorite finds from Sparks to save them for later. While you may find new content creators using this tool, otherwise, it is the least obviously useful aspect of Google+ for job seekers, as it doesn't allow direct interaction or sharing, but it's a good idea to keep an eye on it in case there are changes making it more "social."

Hangouts - Just click on the "Start a hangout" button on the right side of your screen. Clicking it opens up a chat window where you can check your mic and choose who will be able to join the hangout (either by inviting individuals or sharing it with your circles). Once the hangout is live, your friends will see the hangout prompt in their stream. They can then join the hangout until a maximum of ten people have joined.

Mashable reports on a new website, GPHangouts.com, which aggregates public hangouts on Google+. You can add your hangout there, and join in conversations with people in your field. These video chats are limited to 10 people, but this can certainly be an opportunity to either meet and get to know people in your field and/or start a "Hangout" and be a leader in your field.

Bottom Line - Google+ promises to be an important addition to social networking strategies, and job seekers should try to keep on top of opportunities to engage and grow their communities and to learn new information using these tools. For more general information about Google+, see Google's introduction to Google+ which includes videos as well as brief articles.



Chapter Meeting – September 13, 2011, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Topic: Beyond The Certification

Revealing the secrets for real-world project manager success: learn pragmatic techniques to help be a better project manager.

Featured Speaker – Wayne Botha, PMP

Wayne is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP®) and a seasoned IT project manager overseeing enterprise software delivery for a multinational insurance company. Since 1986 Wayne has helped audiences by speaking in South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Holland and the USA. Wayne has an MBA in e-Business and has lectured at Axia college. He develops project managers through his website (www.bothaconsulting.com), monthly newsletter, and personal coaching. Wayne is currently a Director of Marketing for SNEC-PMI..

Location

The Royal Palace Restaurant

77 Knollwood Road, White Plains / Greenburgh, NY 10607
(at the south end of the Greenburgh Shopping Plaza)
Phone: 914.289.1988

Agenda

- 5:30 to 6:15 Networking, buffet dinner, Meet the Vendor and Recruiter
- 6:15 to 6:30 Chapter business / announcements
- 6:30 to 7:30 Featured program
- 7:30 to 7:45 Continued networking, meet the Speaker, Vendor, Recruiter
- 7:45 to 8:45 PMO SIG Meetings (PMO & Quality)

Fees

Chapter members – \$20; Non-members – \$25
We accept cash or checks. Sorry, no credit cards.

Career Corner – Watch our website for details

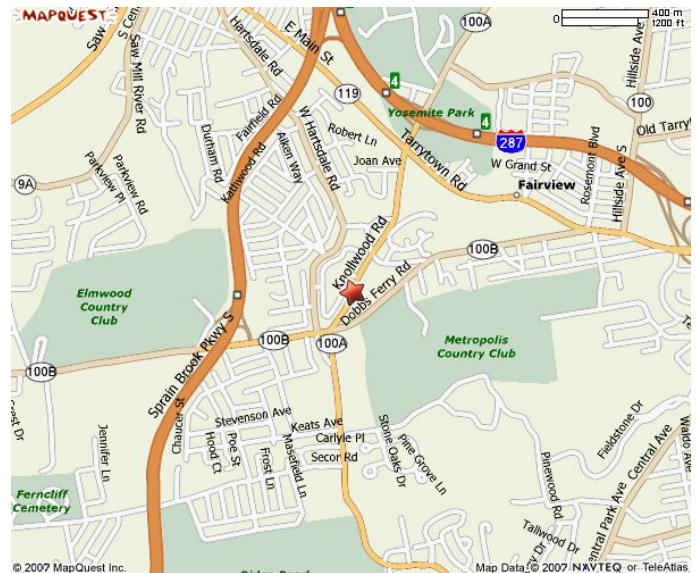
Vendor Corner - Watch our website for details

Directions:

From I-287

- Take I-287 to exit 4.
- At the end of the exit ramp turn SOUTH and go 6/10 of a mile to the traffic light at Stadium Road (sign may not be visible).
- Turn LEFT onto Stadium, go 50 yards, then RIGHT into the unused end of the plaza parking lot.
- Go to the far right hand corner of the lot where it connects to the part with the stores. Pass the stores and movie theater on your left until you come to the Royal Palace.

Map to Royal Palace Restaurant



Upcoming PMI Westchester Events

September Breakfast Roundtable Meeting

Topic: Work Breakdown Structure

Facilitator: Doreen DePass

Date: Thursday, September 27, 2011 – 7:30 to 8:45 AM

Location: 108 Corporate Park Drive, White Plains, NY (off Westchester Ave) Cafeteria – Lobby Level – 2 Buildings down from Malcolm Pirnie

Breakfast available for purchase at the cafeteria

October Chapter Meeting

Topic: Winning Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies in Program and Project Management: Lessons Learned and Critical Success Factors

Speaker: **Dr. Gad J. Selig, PMP, COP**

Date: October 11, 2011

Location: Antuns of Westchester, 35 Valley Avenue, Elmsford, NY 10523 914-592-5260

October Breakfast Roundtable Meeting

Topic: Preparation, challenges and benefits of obtaining a PMP certification

Date: Thursday, October 25, 2011 – 7:30 to 8:45 AM

Location: 108 Corporate Park Drive, White Plains, NY (off Westchester Ave) Cafeteria – Lobby Level – 2 Buildings down from Malcolm Pirnie

Breakfast available for purchase at the cafeteria



PMP Exam Preparation Class

Dates: Saturdays, September 24, 2011 through November 19, 2011 (9 sessions)

Time: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Location: Rockland County Campus of Iona College, Pearl River, NY

Instructor: John Sherlock, MS, MBA, PMP -- an accomplished and credentialed Project Management professional with over 30 years experience in the financial, telecommunications and automotive industries. In addition to his current position as a Project Manager for Volvo Cars of North America, John Sherlock is a PMP, a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt, a Certified Six Sigma Instructor and an Adjunct Professor in the Iona College graduate program.

Fees: \$900 Westchester Chapter Member; \$1000 Non-Chapter Members –

For this fee the student will be provided with the Andy Crowe textbook "The PMP Exam: How to Pass on Your First Try" (a \$79 value), the associated workbook, and a 6-page Quick Reference Guide, as well as a 3-month subscription to the Velociteach InSite eLearning study aid and practice test facility (a \$199 value). The student will also be required to purchase separately the PMI PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge), Version 4, on which the PMP Exam is based.

Register Online: [PMP Exam Preparation Class](#)

PMP Exam Preparation Study Series

Dates: Mondays -- October 3, 2011 through November 14, 2011 (No class on October 10th)

Time: 6:30PM to 8:30PM

Instructor: Anita Wilton, PMP

Location: BOCES Center, 44 Executive Drive, Elmsford, NY 10523 -- Light dinner is provided

Cost: \$300 Westchester Chapter Member, \$375 Non-Chapter Members -- Payment must be made via Pay Pal or by check the first night of class.

Prerequisites: Students must provide their own copy of the PMI Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), 4th edition, ISBN# 1933890517. It is also recommended that you purchase the PMP Exam Prep book by Rita Mulcahy, 6th edition, ISBN# 978-1-932735-18-5. Amazon.com offers both books at a discounted price.

Register Online: [PMP Exam Preparation Study Series](#)

SCRUM Certification Class

Dates: November 10th and 11th, 2011

Time: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Instructor: Mark Layton, MS, MBA, PMP – Platinum Edge

Location: Antuns of Westchester, 35 Valley Avenue, Elmsford, NY 10523

Cost: **(Early Bird Before 10/31)** \$850 for Westchester Chapter Members, \$950 for Non-Westchester Chapter **(After 10/31)** \$1000 for Westchester Chapter Members, \$1100 Non-Westchester Chapter Members

Prerequisites: Students must provide their own copy of the PMI Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), 4th edition, ISBN# 1933890517. It is also recommended that you purchase the PMP Exam Prep book by Rita Mulcahy, 6th edition, ISBN# 978-1-932735-18-5. Amazon.com offers both books at a discounted price.

Register Online: [SCRUM Certification \(Platinum Edge\)](#)

The Critical Path

The Critical Path is PMI Westchester's free monthly newsletter, published as a service for members and non-members alike. We're always looking for your contributions. To submit an article for publication, please contact the newsletter editors listed below:

Brenda Horton – Chief Newsletter Editor
newsletter@pmiwestchester.org

Kathy Steuber – Co-Newsletter Editor
ksteuberpmp@aol.com