

Why Up to 30% of Your Time and Energy is Falling Through the Cracks



John Reeve is a developer, designer, and co-founder of [Intervals](#) — web-based time, task and project management software. He's been building web sites and apps since he got his first dial-up account 20 years ago. In his spare time, he loves to ride his bike and fiddle with Linux.

Fifteen years ago, I co-founded a web design and development agency dubbed Pelago. We bought a few computers, rented some office space, and starting signing on clients. It wasn't too long before we experienced our first fiasco — a mismanaged project went way over budget and chewed up any hope of a profit. When the numbers were tallied, we'd actually lost money on the project.

Our failure was not unique. Studies show that [less than a third](#) of all projects were successfully completed on time and on budget in 2013 alone.

Our problem was managing projects and tracking time using Excel spreadsheets—a simple process that left us perpetually a week behind on every project. Problems went undetected until it was too late. To escape our dilemma, we needed to identify overages and out-of-scope work during the project, not after the project completed.

Taking action to prevent this from happening again, we installed open source project management software and bolted a time tracking feature onto it. We diligently tracked every detail and every minute of every project. Then we started looking closer at the data.

What happened next was truly unbelievable.

We were tracking and billing more time without having to put in more hours during the day. Time and tasks that had previously fallen through the cracks were now being accounted for. Our previous method of task management and time tracking had been so inefficient that adopting new software netted a 30% increase in productivity and billable work.

In the years since, I have spoken with several agencies that have experienced the same story. After struggling to get the upper hand on their projects, they threw out the Excel sheets, the post-its, and the notebooks. They ditched their antiquated analog methods and went digital on their workflow. And, they saw similar increases.

The secret to their success wasn't finding the perfect project management software. It was finding software that worked for them. Today, 44% of project managers use no software, even though [PriceWaterhouseCoopers](#) found that the use of commercially available [project management software](#) increases performance and satisfaction.

You need software to manage projects efficiently and accurately. Why? Because there are cracks in your workflow. Big, bottomless crevasses that swallow up time and tasks. Project management software bridges these gaps by doing three things you can't do well manually.

1. Track more time

Study after study has proven [our memory is unreliable](#). If you wait until the end of the day to fill out your timesheet, you will forget some of the details. Tracking time using antiquated methods, such as Excel, results in stale and inaccurate data, none of it useful beyond billing clients.

[In a recent survey](#), businesses identified “capturing time/costs against projects” as their biggest project management challenge. Project management software can assist in capturing time using online timers and timesheets, resulting in real-time data for analysis. The project management process becomes fluid, with fresh estimates and actuals that empower you to make decisions in the moment, not the next week.

2. Manage more tasks

Post-it notes and to-do lists just don't cut it when you are managing a team. Keeping everyone up-to-date is a cumbersome process involving long, tedious meetings—a waste of time if you ask me. Let the software handle the details (and free everyone up to focus on getting things done).

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Letter from the President



Now is promotion time for our 6th Annual Professional Development Day which is going to be held on March 28, 2015. It is a full day event focusing on Entrepreneurial Project Manager. Our Keynote Speaker Frank Wander, CEO of PeopleProductive.com and former Guardian Life CIO, will explore the special skills of the Entrepreneurial Project Manager. He will share his thoughts on what this means for today's project

managers. We will learn about how we can develop that leadership mindset for the projects we manage and how we can socialize entrepreneurship into our organizations to build lasting project success. Spread the word around and bring your colleagues to this event and get up to 8 PDUs.

Our board members are also working on two important and strategic projects. First one is the revision of our bylaws. Based on last few years of experience and recommendations from our election committee, the Bylaw Committee will review and revising our bylaws. The new bylaws will be reviewed by the Board and then approved by both chapter members and PMI. Mike Byrnes, VP of Membership will be leading this effort with help of additional volunteers.

Second on is the preparation of election – We will be electing our VP (Finance), VP (Membership), VP (Outreach) and Secretary at the end of this year session. All these positions will be elected for a two year term. The nominating Committee will be led by Carol DeGrella and supported by volunteers. The nominating committee will be working with our members to select potential candidate for different positions. Any Member interested in any position or has any questions about any position should approach any member of nominating committee.

See you at the February Chapter Meeting!

Pawan Kumar, PMP
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PMI Westchester

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Anand Kanakagiri

Essential Skills of Project Managers in 2015



Vara Prasad Rongala is the Founder and Managing Director of [Invensis Technologies](#).

With changes in the economic, business and regulatory landscape, organizations need capable and qualified project managers now more than ever to take charge of projects and deliver successful

outcomes. According to PwC's 2012 report titled Insights and Trends: Current Portfolio, Programme, and Project Management Practices which surveyed more than 1,500 respondents across 38 countries, 87% of participants who reported successful project budget management within their organization also said that their project managers possessed the relevant and required experience in managing projects along similar lines in their careers. Around 97% of respondents stated that project management is critical to business performance and the success of the organization; 94% agreed that project management facilitates business growth.

This clearly demonstrates that the project manager plays a key role in meeting important performance indicators in a project. However, the project manager's role is ever evolving and only candidates with up-to-date skills will be in demand across industries. According to PMI's talent report, approximately 9 million new project management roles are predicted to be required by 2020 in India. However, only candidates with the right combination of knowledge and experience will be able to make the most of lucrative project management opportunities in the job market.

In this article, we list down hard skills that will be required in 2015 and soft skills that are always in demand across industries, and can help professionals boost their career prospects.

Hard Skills

1. **Knowledge of latest technologies:** 'Cloud', 'big data', 'analytics', 'mobile', 'social', 'business intelligence' - no longer just buzzwords, these technology paradigms, platforms and trends are transforming the way organisations function all around the world. Developing or implementing them is coming into the project purview. For IT project managers, building knowledge about these technology applications will be paramount for successful delivery of the application or service for customers. For project managers in other industries, having knowledge about how to incorporate these new technologies in the project to attain cost and operating efficiencies will be critical.

2. **Knowledge of agile methodology:** Agile project management brings aspects like continuous improvement, team contribution, scope flexibility, delivery of quality products and maximization of customer value into focus. Agile methodologies typically include Scrum and Lean. According to the PwC survey mentioned above, 59% of most organizations which employed an agile project management methodology credited it for project success. As more and more IT service providers adopt agile for project management, and in fact some companies scale up to more mature agile practices, project managers will have to hone their skills in this methodology to meet expectations.
3. **Knowledge of program and portfolio management:** As projects widen in scope and become more complex, program and portfolio management are gaining in importance. Both these practice areas facilitate selection of projects that are aligned with strategy, deliver optimal return on investment and enable organizational growth. According to Gartner, by the end of 2016, 50% of digital transformation initiatives will be unmanageable because of lack of portfolio management skills, and this will lead to a loss in market share. Hence, project managers with the relevant knowledge and experience in program and portfolio management will be in demand.
4. **Knowledge of new PPM tools:** Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tools facilitate financial and operational overseeing of projects, standardization, measurement, governance and process automation. Some standard Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tools that are based on the Waterfall method have been found to not be in sync with Agile methodology. Hence, project managers should be updated on the latest PPM tools that are delivering the best results for the project management methodology in place in their organizations.

Soft Skills

1. **Leadership skills:** According to Project Management Institute's (PMI) 2013 'Pulse of the Profession In-Depth Report: Navigating Complexity', 81% of respondents said that leadership skills are the most important skill to successfully manage highly complex projects. Good project managers are typically result-oriented, able to motivate project team members, assign both responsibility and accountability, and resolve conflicts. They are also collaborative in their approach and set an example by being proactive.

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“The Power of Lunch,” and Other Strategies for Building Social Capital at Work



Michelle LaBrosse is the founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning. An international expert on accelerated learning and Project Management, she has grown Cheetah Learning into the market leader for Project

Management training and professional development. In 2006, The Project Management Institute, www.pmi.org, selected Michelle as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the World, and only one of two women selected from the training and education industry

In their study of different Project Management practices across the globe, Frank Anbari and his collaborators noted that PMs in the US, UK, and Australia ranked as the most “individualistic” in their attitudes towards work, as opposed to those with more “collectivist” attitudes (“Managing Cross Cultural Differences in Projects,” 2009). Project Managers in these countries tend to define “success” in terms of their own success in their professions and are more likely to disregard the success (or failure) of other members on their project team. Unlike those with a more “collectivist” attitude, the “individualists” may not feel great loyalty to their team or other co-workers.

Our “individualist” tendencies here in the US have their advantages - for example, this approach is likely more time-efficient than a strongly “collectivist” one, which might strive for group consensus on every decision. Taken to the extreme, though, an individualist approach to Project Management has drawbacks. Interpersonal relationships - between co-workers, supervisors, and stakeholders - play a role in every project; the only difference is that some Project Management practices take them into account productively, while others try to ignore their existence. In this article, we’ll review some of the ways to incorporate a consideration of “social capital” into your everyday PM practices in order to build a more successful project team.

You may have heard of the idea of “social capital” before. This is your network of connections that helps shape the kind and number of different opportunities you have in your life. The idea of “social capital” is fairly new - it has only come into popular use since the publication of Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam’s book, *Bowling Alone* (2000). In this book, Putnam tracks Americans’ involvement in different social groups and finds a consistent decline in in-person interactions - “social capital” - since the 1950s.

We can see this trend in our own workplace environments. Many of us spend the whole day in front of our computers, and will interact with co-workers only over WebEx or email - even if we’re working on a project team. To really build social capital, though, you need to get out of your cubicle and talk to people face-to-face. Here are some steps you can take to build your “social capital” at work that will not just increase your own network and field of opportunities, but will improve the performance of your project team:

1. **The Power of Lunch:** Instead of eating lunch alone at your workstation, where you run the risk of spilling soup all over your keyboard as you attempt to “multitask,” go out to lunch with your co-workers, supervisors, or stakeholders. Take this opportunity to develop rapport with these people and get a better sense of their communication styles. The kinds of conversations you’ll have at lunch will likely show you a new side of the people you work with, which you might not get to see if you only communicate with them over email or conference call.
2. **Foster a Culture of Reciprocity:** A great way to get more “buy-in” from the other people on your project team, or co-workers whose help you might need, is to show them what’s in it for them. Rather than just saying, “I need you to do X,” begin your interaction by briefly explaining your project and why this person could benefit from helping you. You’ll also need to find a balance of offering help to others and asking for it in order to develop lasting and positive working relationships with others.
3. **Be Proactive:** Don’t just interact with the co-workers and supervisors that your job requires you to interact with - get out there and meet other people in your industry! If you’re a Project Manager, joining your local PMI chapter is a great way to expand your network of connections and develop your professional skills.



These are just a few ideas to help you grow your “social capital” at work, even if you’re not currently in need of “networking” opportunities to look for a new job. The benefits of social capital go beyond just helping you land a position; social capital is also a key part of developing a successful project teams built on mutually beneficial working relationships among co-workers. A few simple actions like taking your team out to lunch can have a huge impact on your team’s ability to work together effectively.

Essential Skills for Project Managers in 2015

2. **Solution-seeker:** If the project runs into any roadblock, the project manager should have the skill to find a workaround or solution. The ability to think calmly in a stressful situation and find a way out, is one that employers look for in a competent project manager.
3. **Astute decision-making:** A project manager should have the ability to assimilate all the information that comes in from various sources and take an informed business decision. This should be aligned with the project's objectives or business case.
4. **Communication skills:** A project manager needs to be a good communicator with team members, stakeholders and external parties to ensure a smooth workflow for the project. He or she should also be able to discern the relevant information to be communicated to an individual to enable the project to move ahead to a successful outcome.
5. **Good learner:** A project manager needs to have in-depth knowledge of his or her domain or industry. He or she should also be able to pick up information on the other aspects of the project that influence its outcome, such as information technology, resource management, finance and budgeting, quality management and so on.

Don't Miss the Job Club This Month!!

Join PMIW Job Club and Linda Van Valkenburgh, certified executive career coach, to improve your LinkedIn skills to position yourself for career search or elevate your credentials and industry reputation. Specifically you will learn:

- How to maximize and control your LinkedIn profile to heighten your rankings
- The latest methods in site navigation and trending features and why they are vital
- How to be viewed as a "go-to" subject matter expert through discussion groups, target companies and influencers

The program will be held on Friday, February 20th at 8 a.m. at Fordham University's Westchester Campus: 400 Westchester Ave., West Harrison, NY 10604. It will run for two hours and will be in Room 142. An interactive Q&A session is scheduled to follow the presentation.

Please feel free to contact Rich Antash, Program Manager for the Job Club, with questions at [914-343-4498](tel:914-343-4498) or rantash@gmail.com.

Why Up to 30% of Your Time and Energy is Falling Through the Cracks

Cloud-based project management software leverages the always-connected Internet to empower your team. Everything happens in real-time, and no one is left waiting for the next meeting to receive a status update.

3. Communicate more clearly

The distributed team is now the norm. Working in a team comprised of people from different time zones requires more than Skype can offer. Project management software puts everyone in the same virtual location where they can collaborate and communicate effectively.



Centralizing your projects makes them accessible at any time to any person on the team. One person's evening is another's morning, but they are both able to get the information they need, when they need it, to move the project along.

Making the leap

When it comes to adopting project management software into your workflow, there are a seemingly infinite number of choices. The important qualities to look for are reliability, ease of use, ease of integration, and responsive support. [Find software that meets these criteria and try it out.](#) Don't expect the software to fit you like a glove. It won't. You may have to adapt your workflow, but your projects will run more efficiently in the long run.

What have you done to increase project productivity? How has your project management software been able to increase project productivity for your team?

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Mindfulness in Managing Risk



A Risk Doctor Briefing Note © 2015 Dr David Hillson PMP FAPM david@risk-doctor.com

Mindfulness has its roots in Eastern religion, although it is also used therapeutically to treat a variety of psychological conditions (including anxiety, depression and stress), as well as in coaching to encourage excellence in healthy people. Used properly, mindfulness can also make our risk management more effective.

Being mindful means bringing your complete **attention** to your current experience on a moment-to-moment basis, being **aware** of everything in your surroundings, **acknowledging** what is there and accepting it as valid. So how can this help us to manage risk better?

Mindfulness can be particularly useful in improving our identification of risks, by making us more aware of the full range of potential risk sources. These include:

- *Ourselves* – we are often blind to the risks that we bring with us to our businesses and projects. Being self-aware will help us to identify those actions and attitudes that create uncertainty, as well as exposing risky biases and behaviours. Similarly mindfulness can help us find internally-generated risks that arise from within our own teams and organisations, as a result of policies and practices as well as ethos and culture.
- *Others* – it is important to be aware of the people we are working with, understanding their motivations and moods, ambitions and attitudes. Every business or project has a large number of different stakeholders who can either generate risk or help us to address it. We need to know who is in our stakeholder network and understand how they might affect what we are trying to achieve.
- *Environment* – many risks arise from the situation in which we are operating. This includes our physical surroundings as well as less tangible elements of the context. What do you see and hear around you? And what do you sense or feel? Which of these things create uncertainty?

Carefully considering these risk sources will also help us to spot hidden risks that may lie beneath the surface. Some risks are implicit or tacit while others are more obvious. It is too easy to focus on the risks that are easy to see, and forget to look more closely to expose the ones that are less evident. A mindful approach will see things that otherwise would be missed, and help us to pick out the important risks from the insignificant ones.

If mindfulness is so useful, how can we develop it in order to strengthen our approach to risk management? The most obvious way is to practice it intentionally, seeking to be more aware of ourselves, our stakeholders and our surroundings, and consciously looking for hidden aspects as well as those that are more obvious. But it is easy to forget to pay attention, especially when we are under pressure to perform, or if time is short.

A helpful tip is to use “mindfulness triggers” to remind us to step out of our routine behavior, and to stop and think. One simple way is to stick a post-it note to your bathroom mirror or computer screen with a short message to yourself to be more aware as you go through the day. Another approach is to link ordinary actions with remembering to be

deliberately mindful, such as opening a particular door, or entering a meeting room, or getting into an elevator. Every time we do the trigger action it prompts us to pause and think about our internal and external environments, paying closer attention to what is going on.

Too much of what we do in our personal and professional lives is automatic and unthinking. Unfortunately this means that we often miss important risks, failing to see them as we get on with our daily routine. Practising mindfulness can help us to break out of our usual habits. As we do we will be able to see risk more clearly and manage it more effectively.

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).



Chapter Meeting – February 10, 2015 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Topic: Consulting Skills for Project Managers

In this session we will discuss how project and program managers can enhance their professional development by perfecting their consulting skills. We will draw on Peter Block's framework to discuss the roles, processes and competencies that constitute 'Flawless Consulting' and how they can be leveraged in the project management context.

Featured Speaker – Jerry Julian

Dr. Julian is President of Julian Advisory Group, a management consulting practice founded in 2001. His clients and business partners have included well known bluechip firms, growth-stage private equity portfolio companies and global IT service providers. He was previously with Accenture, Aon Management Consulting, and Cafe Mom.

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

6:00 | Registration, Networking & Dinner
6:45 | Announcements, Introduction of Program
7:00 | Guest Speaker or Internal Program (1 PDU)
8:00 | Participants network
8:15 | SIG programs; PMO, Quality (1 PDU)

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Contact: Vanessa Botelho – Recruiting Manager, IT

Phone: 203-750-1111 x175

E-mail: VRB@themcintyregroup.com

Fees

Chapter members – \$20

Non-members – \$30

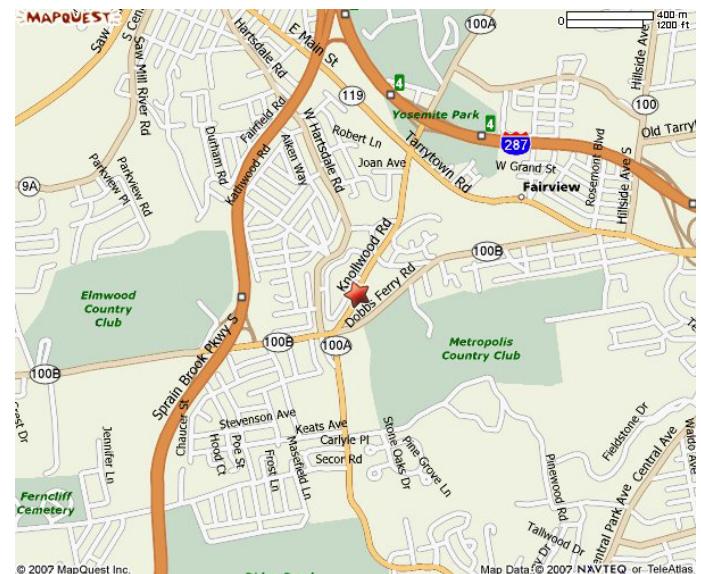
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Directions:

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 the movie theater on your left until you come to the Royal Palace.

Map to Royal Palace Restaurant



Upcoming PMI Westchester and Other Educational Events

February 2015 Job Club Meeting

Topic: Leverage LinkedIn to Fast Track Jobs, Sales Leads + Business Opportunities

Date: February 20, 2015

Time: 8:00AM

Speaker: Linda Van Valkenburgh - Ms. Van Valkenburgh is the owner and certified executive career coach of My Executive Career Coach, LLC – Stamford, CT. She has great business experience in a broad range of corporate environments including marketing, advertising, engineering, entrepreneurial partnerships, industrial manufacturing and full time career development work experience.

Location: Fordham Westchester, 400 Westchester Ave, Room 142, West Harrison, NY 10604

February 2015 Breakfast Roundtable Meeting

Topic: Setting Up a Home Office -- (This is a **REMOTE ONLY Breakfast Roundtable!** You must register one day in advance - e-mail tcsmithsr@verizon.net)

Facilitator: Tom Smith

Date: Tuesday, February 24th – 7:30 to 8:45 AM

March 2015 Chapter Meeting

Topic: Leadership Redefined

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Speaker: Jeff Harmon, President of Brilliance Within Coaching & Consulting

Location: The Royal Palace, 77 Knollwood Road, Greenburgh Shopping Plaza, Greenburgh, NY

March 2015 Breakfast Roundtable Meeting

Topic: Post Mortems - Lessons Learned on Projects -- (This is a **REMOTE ONLY Breakfast Roundtable!** You must register one day in advance- e-mail tcsmithsr@verizon.net)

Facilitator: Tom Smith

Date: Tuesday, March 24th – 7:30 to 8:45 AM

Happy
Valentine's
Day



COMING IN SPRING 2015 - PMP Exam Preparation Class

The PMI Westchester Chapter is pleased to announce another PMP Exam Preparation course with instructor John Sherlock, who will assist the PMP Certification candidate in preparing for the PMP Exam. This course will be offered on the Westchester campus of Iona College in New Rochelle, NY.

Date: Saturdays, April 11th, April 18th, May 2nd, May 9th, and May 16th (No Class on April 25th)

Location: Iona College Hagan School of Business, Room 101, 715 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY

Fees: \$700 Westchester PMI Members and Other Chapter PMI Members; \$800 non-members by Friday, 27 Mar 2015.

Late Registration after 27 Mar 2015: \$800 Westchester PMI members and Other Chapter PMI members; \$900 non-members. Payments must be made by Paypal in advance or by check (payable to PMI Westchester).

COMING IN SPRING 2015 - PMP Exam Study Group

PMI Westchester is pleased to offer a PMP exam preparation study group with instructor Anita Wilton to further assist you in taking your PMP exam. This program requires a 6-week commitment. If you are almost ready to sit for your exam, or just need a bit more study incentive, this is the group for you! It is fast-paced and informal. Some materials are provided, light dinners are included, and weekly homework assignments are mandatory.

Instructor: Anita Wilton, PMP

Fees: \$300 for members of the Westchester Chapter of PMI and \$375 for non-members. Payments must be made via Pay Pal or by check the first night of class.

Dates: Mondays, March 23rd through April 27, 2015

Time: 6:30PM to 8:30PM

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 editor listed below:

Brenda Horton – Chief Newsletter Editor
newsletter@pmiwestchester.org

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