

Managing Your Project Manager:

*A Survival Guide for Data
Professionals*

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- Karen is the moderator of the Data Modelling List. She has 18 years of data modelling experience on large, multi-project programs
- She has a B.Sc. in Computer Technology / Information Systems from Purdue University
- She is a former President of the Information Resource Management Association of Canada (IRMAC)

Agenda

- **Warning Signs**
- **Getting it Right**
- **Survival Tips**

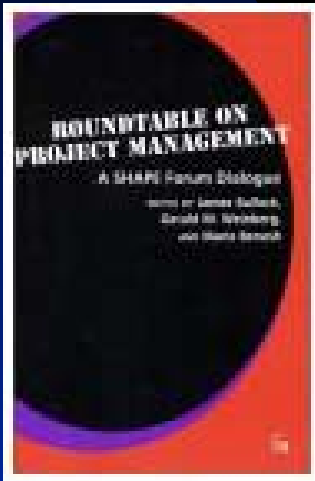
About this Presentation

- We will be using an interactive format – your opinion counts
- Opinions are good

Why this Topic?

- **Because Project Management is HARD**
- **Many IT professionals do not understand modeling**
- **Your project manager will, in part or in whole, define the success of the project**

Karen's Contribution



Contributor to *Roundtable on Project Management*, James Bullock (Editor), Gerald M. Weinberg (Editor), Marie Benesh (Editor), 2001, Dorset House, 093263348X

Your Contribution

- **How many are project managers now?**
- **How many have their project manager here?**
- **Have you ever had to ask for MORE from your project manager?**

Warning Signs

Warning Signs

Your Project Manager is:

- **Above pitching in**
- **Unwilling to remove obstacles**
- **Compensated solely on Project Plan dates**



Warning Signs



The project plan looks great, but...

- Dates are hard and fast
- Level of effort isn't
- The process is cutting edge, but the project plan isn't

Warning Signs



Issue / Defect Lists

- Rudy's Rutabaga Rule
- Perception of 'No changes'
- Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics
- Analysis issues (every issue) portrayed as 'Data Model Issues'

Warning Signs



You have a Methodology, but...

- **The deliverables are more important than the work they deliver**
- **You are expected to spend more time preparing the documents than doing the work**
- **More money is spent on publishing the deliverables than the tool used to prepare them**

Warning Signs



Who will have update access to the models?

- **Just the Modelers?**
- **The Modelers and the DBAs**
- **The Modelers, the DBAs & the Developers**
- **The Modelers, the DBAs the Developers, the Project Managers, the Business Users, the Project Sponsors, and ...**

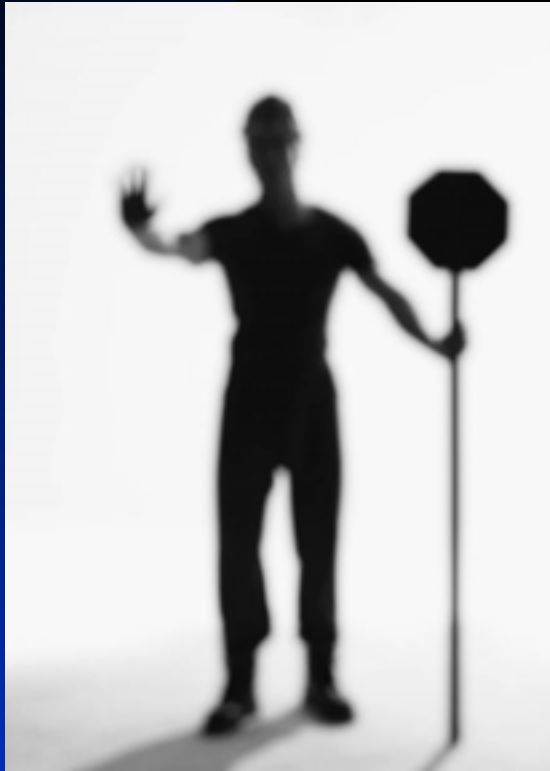
Warning Signs



Done For Now (DFN)

- Milestones are met, for now
- Make up work never completed
- Great for an iterative effort, not for a waterfall effort
- No scheduled task times for iteration
- **White Bread Warning**
- **The cost of fixing DFN grows rapidly the further you go....**

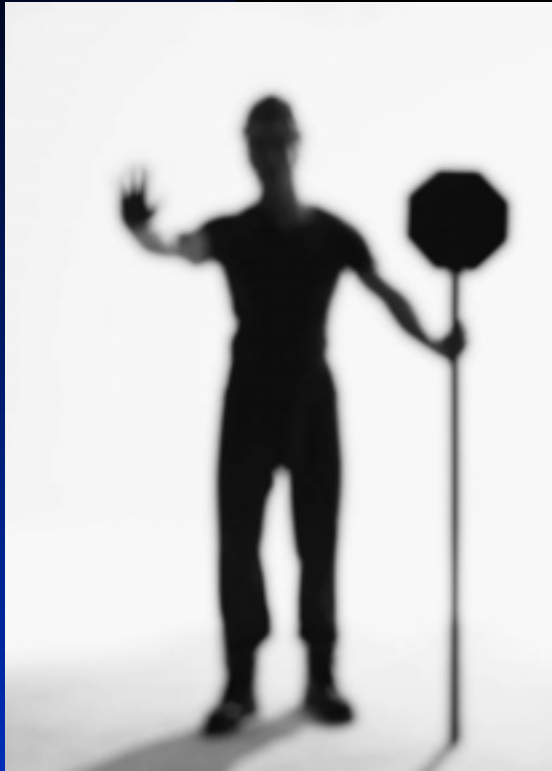
Warning Signs



Finish-to-Start mindsets

- **Nothing, absolutely nothing can start until the data models are done**
- **No tasks can start or be done in parallel**
- **Outstanding Issues are always called Data Model Issues**
- **No one understands that it is the modeling that is important, not the models.**

Warning Signs



YOU think your job is only data modeling...

- You think everyone will see the value of the data modeling
- You think everyone knows what a data model is
- You think everyone agrees what a good data model is
- You think everyone knows your jargon
- You don't understand it's the modeling, not the models.

Your Contribution

- **What warning signs have you experienced?**
- **What warning signs have you been responsible for?**
- **What are “Encouraging Signs” you have observed?**

Can you answer...

Who is your Project Manager?

Just Who is your PM?



- **One?**
- **One from each project partner?**
- **One and your Manager?**
- **One from each partner, the official one, your manager, her manager and your spouse?**

Getting it Right

Some things to think about...

Getting it Right: How long will it take?

- 1 hour per attribute....
- 5 days per subject area...
- More than you think....
- From now until the end of the project....
- What if Quality is **Job Null?**

Getting it Right: How long will it take?

Questions to ask:

- What kind of project is this?
 - ◆ Strategic, Enterprise, long term value
 - ◆ Tactical, Enterprise, medium term value
 - ◆ Chaotic, agile, extreme, desperate, someone will probably go to jail if we don't get this done on time....

Getting it Right: How long will it take?

Questions to ask:

- **Where will the work be done**
 - ◆ **Just on the other side of the cube**
 - ◆ **In a few corporate locations**
 - ◆ **Here, there, and everywhere**
 - ◆ **Days away**

Getting it Right: How long will it take?

Questions to ask:

- What tools will we be using?
 - ◆ Our favorite data modeling tool
 - ◆ A data modeling tool
 - ◆ A modeling tool
 - ◆ Tool? **You need a special tool?** How much are they?

Getting it Right: How long will it take?

Questions to ask:

- **What process will we be using?**
 - ◆ **CMM-5 / Best Practice / ?**
 - ◆ **Our usually methodology**
 - ◆ **Process? What do you mean by “process”.**
 - ◆ **Here’s the project plan – that’s our process.**

Your Contribution

- **How do you estimate modeling efforts?**
- **Where/how have your estimates been the most inaccurate?**
- **Shouldn't we just double all our estimates?**

Getting it Right: How much will it cost?

- .5 FTE per average project ...
- 2 FTEs if you wait too late in the project
- More than you think
- It depends...how much money do you have?
- **The Orange Juice Test**

Your Contribution

- **How do you estimate these non-labor costs?**
- **When/how did you once mis-estimate cost?**

Getting it Right: Who should be involved?

- **Data Modeler**
 - ◆ **Logical**
 - ◆ **Physical**
- **Enterprise Architect**
- **DBA**
- **Process Modeler**
- **Requirements Analysts**
- **Business Analysts**
- **Subject Matter Experts**
- **???**

Your Contribution

- **Who should be involved?**
- **When should they be involved?**
- **Who shouldn't be involved?**

Getting it Right: When?

- **Right from the start**
 - ◆ **Defining Scope**
 - ◆ **Recruiting existing modeling resources**
 - ◆ **Preparing modeling environment**
 - ◆ **Tailoring standards**
 - ◆ **Recruiting People**
 - ◆ **Training**

Timing is Everything

- When's a good time to start modeling?
 - ◆ Just before the code is delivered “**Can you fix this**”?
 - ◆ When they need a database “**Please Hurry!**”
 - ◆ When the other modeling is happening “**Our tool can't generate a working database...can yours?**”
 - ◆ From the beginning “**How can I help you?**”

Your Contribution

- **How do you balance the timing of modeling?**
- **How early do you get to be involved?**
- **What is the best way to get yourself in the early stages of the project?**

Survival Tips

Some things to think harder about...

Survival Tips

- **Be collaborative (even if they don't deserve it 😊)**
 - ◆ **Intranet**
 - ◆ **PDFs**
 - ◆ **Spare copies of Diagrams**
 - ◆ **I think I can...**
 - ◆ **Feel their pain**

Survival Tips

- Say **Baseline** (or whatever word you chose), not **Done**
 - ◆ **Baselines: Versions with expected changes**
 - ◆ **Done: No expected changes**
 - ◆ **Baseline everything, not just the data models**

Survival Tips

- **Don't be the Data Gang / Clique / Opposing Team**
 - ◆ **Do Lunch**
 - ◆ **Share Knowledge**
 - ◆ **Sit with the team**
 - ◆ **Talk the team up, not down**

Survival Tips

- **Know the Project Plan**
 - ◆ **A plan is not just a Gantt Chart**
 - ◆ **Current and future tasks**
 - ◆ **Provide insight to the PM on Risks and Contingencies**
 - ◆ **Identify problems when you have proposed solutions**

Survival Tips

- **Know the Issues List**
 - ◆ **Be more ready with stats than anyone else**
 - ◆ **Know the complexity of Issues**
 - ◆ **Make sure that Issues are really Issues**

Survival Tips

- **Win the Confidence of the PM**
 - ◆ **Admit to mistakes**
 - ◆ **Accurately reiterate others' viewpoints, even if you don't agree**
 - ◆ **Feel the pain**
 - ◆ **Know the political goals as well as the project goals**
 - ◆ **Get to the point where the PM asks you first**

Survival Tips

- **Acknowledge philosophical differences**
 - ◆ **The earlier in the debate, the better**
 - ◆ **Once the decision is made, don't waste everyone else's time revisiting it**
 - ◆ **Know how to express the pros and cons of all sides**

Survival Tips

- **Be a Professional**
 - ◆ **Track your errors**
 - ◆ **Track the causes**
 - ◆ **Build tools to overcome these errors**
 - ◆ **Document your procedures**
 - ◆ **Leverage your tools**

Survival Tips

- **Be a Professional**
 - ◆ **Know more about the tool than anyone else on the team**
 - ◆ **Be literate in other modeling techniques and tool**
 - ◆ **Know the lingo of other approaches**

Survival Tips

- **Be a Professional**
 - ◆ Know the limits of your tool
 - ◆ Leverage its features
 - ◆ Manage the Sizzle
 - ◆ Produce readable diagrams
 - ◆ Produce really readable diagrams 😊
 - ◆ Never present a diagram without the model...

Your Contribution

- **What are your best survival tips?**
- **How did you learn them?**
- **Do you record formal post-project reviews?**

Finally...

- You will **fail** if you think your only job is to produce a high quality data model
- Carry your ammo, but don't be trigger happy
- Be able to address every problem / challenge / issue with **Cost, Benefit, and Risk**

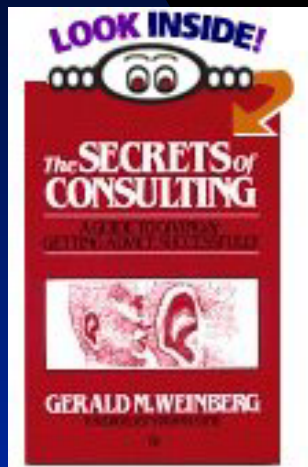
Online Data Modelling Resources

- **InfoAdvisors**
<http://www.infoadvisors.com>
 - ◆ **The Data Model List**
 - ◆ **Product User Discussion Groups (ERwin, Advantage Repository, Visible Analyst/Advantage, ER/Studio, DBArtisan, CaseWise)**

Recommended Books

- ***Data Modeling Essentials***, Simsion and Witt
- ***Building Quality Databases with IDEF1X***, Thomas Bruce,
- ***The Data Modeling Handbook***, Michael Reingruber & William Gregory, 1994, Wiley QED, ISBN0-471-05290-6
- ***A Practical Guide to Logical Data Modeling***, George Tillmann, 1993,
McGraw-Hill, \$45, ISBN 0-07-064615-5

Recommended Books



Secrets of Consulting,
Gerald Weinberg, 1986,
Dorset House, 0932633013

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