

Project Management

Introducing the CDC Project Management Community of Practice

In July of 2006, in collaboration with the CDC Unified Process Team and sponsorship by Dr. Tom Savel, Science and Research Lead for NCPHI and Jason Bonander, Director of the Division of Knowledge Management Services for NCPHI, the CDC established a Project Management Community of Practice (PMCoP) with the following objectives:

1. *Developing and sharing collective knowledge about project management*
2. *Facilitating professional networking among CDC project managers*
3. *Developing synergies across CDC projects and the CDC project management community to create innovative strategies for addressing project management challenges, solving problems, and dealing with emerging project management issues*
4. *Staying on the cutting edge of project management best practices utilizing the CDC Unified Process (UP)*
5. *Providing input to future CDC UP development*
6. *Providing continued educational opportunities to the CDC project management community*

PMCoP founding members include:

- *Sherry Brown-Scoggins (CoCHIS/NCHS)*
- *Sharon Burks (CCID/NCHHSTP)*
- *Nicole Fehrenbach (CoCHIS/NCPHI)*
- *Lisa Grant (CoCHIS/NCPHI)*
- *Peggy Joyner (CoCHIS/NCPHI)*
- *Robin Tracy (CCID/NCHHSTP)*

PMCoP meetings allow members to interact with guest speakers while being educated on specific project management topics designated for that PMCoP meeting. After presentations conclude relevant networking activities often follow that allow members to interact, share information from across the CDC, solicit help from other managers, etc. In addition, the PMCoP Team assembles project management educational resources, reference materials, refreshments, and door prizes that are available to those attending the meetings.

Since the PMCoP began holding regular monthly meetings a different project management topic has been presented at each meeting. In addition, new topics are constantly being explored for presentation at future meetings. PMCoP members have also begun taking an active role in featured events and have presented on topics such as:

- *Weathering Project's Ups & Downs*
- *Earned Value Management*
- *Managing in a Virtual Environment*
- *Hidden Treasures in Microsoft Project*
- *New WBS Standard from PMI*
- *Change Management using Team Track*
- *Risk Management Metrics*
- *Six Degrees of Separation*
- *CDC Unified Process*
- *CDC PMCoP Collaborative tool using CDC Team*

PMCoP meetings are held monthly with average meeting participation regularly exceeding 50 attendees, and growing. Relevant topic presentations and a great sense of community collaboration between its members have contributed to a steady increase in new first-time participants at each new PMCoP meeting.



The CDC PMCoP began holding regular monthly meetings in July of 2006. A planning team was established to draw upon their professional networks to ensure a successful PMCoP launch and subsequent monthly meetings. The team was made up of a cross section of representatives from the CDC community including, full-time employees and major contracting companies such as BearingPoint, Northrop Grumman, SAIC, and EDS/Lockheed Martin.

As a result the PMCoP has branched out to further support the CDC project management community by establishing PMCoP sub-groups that support such things as a Project Management Institute's (PMI), Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification self-study group and a team to build out a collaborative workspace used by the CDC PMCoP. The collaborative workspace is now used to archive PMCoP presentations and also acts as a centralized forum for further discussion of those presentations and other relevant project management topics. The CDC Unified Process Team has also made PMCoP presentations available for download on the CDC UP website.



The PMCoP is open to anyone wishing to participate. Meetings generally occur the last Friday of each month at 2500 Century Center room 1200 from 9:00-10:30AM. The PMCoP welcomes and encourages attendance from anyone wishing to attend from anywhere across the CDC. Meetings for the remainder of the year are scheduled for May 18, June 22, July 27, August 24, September 28, October 26, and December 7. ■

Project Charter - Starting Projects Correctly

Have you ever had a situation where your boss or someone in a higher authority comes to you and asked that you head up a very critical initiative for the organization? If so, did you just jump in and begin the planning effort realizing that time was critical and you needed to get started? If so, you may have bypassed one of the most fundamental practices of good project management – creating a project charter.

A project charter formally authorized a project, addresses the business need for the project, and describes the product and/or service to be created and/or provided by the project. The project charter summarizes the key aspects of the project and project's scope and identifies the project manager's responsibility and authority to apply organizational resources to project activities.

The project charter is developed in the early phases of the project life cycle, often as part of the concept/initiating phase. The purpose of chartering a project is to document the business need, project justification, customer requirements, the result that is intended, and at a high level, what is considered in scope and out of scope for the project.

The project charter describes the project at a specific point in time, the beginning. Every aspect of the project charter describes characteristics that may, and probably will, change during the life of the project. As the project environment changes updates in the form of updates to supporting documentation such as the project management plan, should reflect these changes. Some areas of

the initial project charter, such as risk, are expanded upon as the project progresses into the planning phase.

Not chartering a project increases the possibility of confusion between project stakeholders; rework resulting from poor understanding of requirements, change requests, scope creep, etc. For this reason, a project sponsor at a level that is appropriate to fund the project usually issues and/or approves the project charter.

More information on the CDC UP Project Charter, how to apply it to a project, and other relevant project management tools can be found at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/> ■

Contact the CDC Unified Process Team

The *CDC Unified Process Project Management Newsletter* is authored by Daniel Vitek MBA, PMP and published by the National Center for Public Health Informatics.

For questions about the CDC UP, comments regarding this newsletter, suggestions for future newsletter topics, or to subscribe to the CDC UP Project Management Newsletter please contact the CDC UP Team at cdcup@cdc.gov

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/>