

Reading and Reflecting – with ‘Meet the Managers’

by Tom Taylor

A project manager from UK

In a busy world is there sufficient time to develop and apply our reflection capabilities? This ‘Meet the Managers’ series of short stories may appear to be frivolous and irreverent. But their true purpose is to stimulate our reflective skills – in ourselves as readers and with our colleagues as teams or communities or families – for each story.

These reflections can be shallow or deep, quick or longer, reactionary or considered. Having read and reflected on these pieces it may be possible to read and reflect on other articles in PMWJ.

Very best wishes with your reading and reflecting.

No.1 – A trip to the seaside – planning pays off¹

Hello everyone.

Are you sitting comfortably?

Then we will begin.

Today we will meet the Managers.

There is Mummy Manager, Daddy Manager and two junior Managers.

They are planning to take a trip to the seaside.

As we all know planning pays off. Planning makes perfect. So the Managers did some planning.

When the big day arrived – for their trip to the seaside – it was a warm and sunny day.

But the Managers still packed their coats because it formed part of their risk mitigation strategy.

The Managers had a wonderful day out and it was a great success.

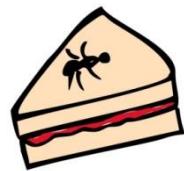
Naturally there were incidents along the way.



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The ants tried to eat the picnic. (All together now) Oh No!

There was oil on the beach, and on the towels. Oh No!



There was melting ice cream in the warm weather. Oh No!



And finally, the bus had a puncture in a tyre on the way home which had to be repaired. Oh No!

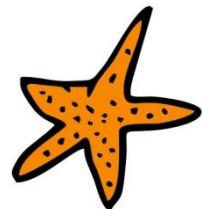


But these incidents just added colour and character to their day and did not significantly diminish the benefits – or the Managers did not allow them to.

When they arrived home the Managers did the routine things of teatime, bath time, story time and bedtime.

Routine is good and brings discipline and confidence to individuals and to the group.

The Managers talked about their trip to the seaside and started thinking about their next trip and whether they should take their coats again.



The Managers had a wonderful day out. The planning had paid off.

Bye Bye everyone.

Some questions for Aspiring Managers to reflect upon:

1. Does planning pay off – for a day ahead?
2. Does writing lists help with planning?
3. When is the best time to get organised – at the beginning, or halfway through, or towards the end??
4. What will you be doing – next month, next year, next decade?
Are you planning ahead?

Tip for the storyteller:

Life is a journey. Projects are journeys. A trip to the seaside is a journey. Even a journey is a journey.

Add your own commentaries or interpretations for these stories to suit your listeners, or yourself. For example, this may need to be modified to the lakeside, riverside or oasis.

Tom Taylor is the author of the “Meet the Managers” collection and is known as:

- *A popular, confident and energetic speaker and broadcaster,*
- *A prolific author and publisher on innovative business and original management issues,*
- *An experienced and enthusiastic lecturer and course leader,*
- *And an award-winning, highly experienced manager of projects, advisor and consultant.*

The illustrations are by Rob Dee, a talented designer and illustrator from UK.

A little more About the Author



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Tom Taylor is Principal with Dashdot and joint founding director of Buro Four in the United Kingdom. For many years, he has been a central figure in the Association for Project Management (APM) in the UK as former APM president, vice-president, Chair and London Branch. Via APM he has achieved Chartered Project Professional (ChPP), Registered Project Professional (RPP), an Honorary Fellowship, the inaugural President's Medal from Professor Martin Barnes and APM's prestigious Sir Monty Finniston Award for lifetime achievement. Visit www.apm.org.uk

Tom's professional career so far has been in property and construction in UK in front line roles – from theatres to manufacturing, from residential to harbour works – significant to less so – with contractors, designers and as a consultant – as employer, employee and entrepreneur - within major organisations and “all-on-my-own” – prize winning and mundane. It's been rewarding and enjoyable – so far.

He is an advisor on projects, programmes, enterprises and business, as principal at Dashdot – a consultancy and publishing vehicle – please go to www.dashdot.co.uk

He is a joint founder from 1985 and occasional advisor with Buro Four – an eminent project management outfit based in UK - please go to www.burofour.com

Tom has been a guest lecturer at several universities, a previous Visiting Professor at Salford University and an external examiner at UCL.

Tom is a supporter of Membership Associations (MAs) of International Project Management Association (IPMA), Young Crews - and their events. Visit www.ipma.org

Tom attends, speaks and hosts PM events in UK and round the world. He holds honorary positions with project management associations in Finland, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Portugal, Spain and UK plus with IPMA.

“Continuing to be involved in front line projects and the journey of the project management community, over the last fifty years or so, has certainly been fascinating, rewarding and enjoyable – as a bystander, passenger, navigator and driver. Changing technologies and surprising opportunities have had significant impact for me, and on me. However, it is people, the colleagues, who are most important – with our collective commitment, common purpose and good humour. I have been very fortunate indeed in that aspect. Approaching my likely career midpoint, I am looking forward to more good projects, with good people, with good humour.”

A current personal profile of Tom is available at www.tomtaylor.info and he may be contacted at tomtaylor@dashdot.co.uk