

Reading and Reflecting – with ‘Meet the Managers’

No.3 – A hospital visit – dealing with distractions¹

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.

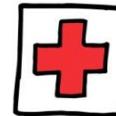
These reflections can be shallow or deep, quick or longer, reactionary or considered. Having read and reflected on these pieces it may be possible to read and reflect on other articles in PMWJ.

Very best wishes with your reading and reflecting.

The Managers family received a message.

A relative was in hospital. (All together now) Oh No!

It was agreed someone must go and visit them.



Mummy Manager, Daddy Manager and the two junior Managers talked about it.

They decided they would ALL go. Oh yes.

Other things which they had planned would have to wait. They could do them later.

Then the Managers had to decide what to take.

This was a classic “make or buy” dilemma.

Artistically with a basket of fruit of their own design and making?

OR should they simply buy a ready-packed gift from the fruit shop?



A lot of time and effort can be used up discussing and arguing about the merits and practicalities of such alternatives.

The Managers decided to make the visit and establish the fruit circumstances on their arrival.

Often the third or fourth option is the best option.

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When they arrived and had had some initial dialogue they decided not to overburden the relative. So Mummy Manager and a junior Manager chatted to the relative. Daddy Manager and the other junior Manager went outside.

They bought and read a newspaper and a magazine.

They then changed places at the bedside of the relative.

Mummy Manager made some telephone calls to other relatives and friends to report on the health of the relative. The junior Manager read the magazine.

This kind of prioritisation of activities and delegation can be quite subtle and go unnoticed sometimes.

At the end they all came in to say “Good Bye and get well soon”.

They handed over the newspaper and the magazine which the relative had requested on their arrival.



There was plenty of fruit there already. And the relative did not like fruit anyway. Result! Oh Yes!

It was late when the Managers arrived at their home. They still did the usual things of tea time, bath time, story time and bed time – with a quick bath this time.

They would catch up on their previously planned activities over the following days. That is unless more relatives find themselves in hospital or other unexpected situations arise. Then it would be “Oh No!” again and more reprioritisation.

Bye Bye everyone. See you soon.

Some questions for Aspiring Managers to consider:

1. Is it useful to appear to be flexible – to deal with the unexpected?
2. Is it important to have options – such as with fruit?
3. Does team working benefit from prioritisation?
4. Do busy people get things done?
5. If they had spent waiting time on internet devices, rather than newspaper and magazine, what would they have been able to hand over to the invalid? And would it have supported the charity shop at the hospital? Something to reflect on?

Tip for the story teller:

Identify that one's own performances and achievements can be greatly influenced by the circumstances and health of others.

Alternatively: *identify and talk about healthy fruit, at least five times each day.*

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 Finneston 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