



Simply the Best

by Peter Taylor, *The Lazy Project Manager*; PMO Director at Siemens PLM Software

There was a very famous (at least in the UK) advertisement for a type of beer that is brewed using bottom-fermenting yeast at lower temperatures and for longer durations than those typically used to brew ales – I of course mean lager. Now, for those of you who may never have seen this advertisement, then the ‘joke’ was that whilst it was not allowed to declare that the goods a company sold and promoted were the best this Danish brewer (and their ad agency) came up with the tagline that their lager was ‘probably the best lager in the world’. Very clever – ‘probably’ the best.

Now *The Lazy Project Manager* received an accolade recently that, on the face of it may appear to be the exact opposite of such high praise and declaration, but which is, in my humble opinion, exactly that – high, high praise indeed. Better than even ‘probably’ the best.

With the benefit of the international success of *The Lazy Project Manager* book I have been extremely fortunate to secure speaking engagements in Brazil, USA, UK, Hungary, Italy and many more.

Now as part of this process you can get such speaking bookings typically in two ways. Someone finds you or has seen you speak, and contacts you to request your time; or you submit, through some form of paper submission, an offer to speak at a future event. For example this is how the PMI® Congress system works – you submit an outline presentation and, if they like the sound of it (and you) PMI request a full paper and presentation, etc. Many events use such a mechanism.

So I considered a project management event in a certain part of the world and thought a) this would be good to promote *The Lazy Project Manager* in a new location and b) the place in question was a very attractive place to go to. This event required would-be speakers to submit a paper and once this was done that paper would be reviewed by 3 ‘peers’ in a blind review process. That is they don’t know who you are and you don’t know who they are.

All good so far and something I had done a number of times before (with a good success rate).

And so I duly submitted a ‘paper’ based on *The Lazy Project Manager* to this certain event.

Now I absolutely freely admit that it was not a ‘paper’ in the official sense of the word. It was, in fact, an exact replica of a submission that gave me the opportunity to speak at PMI events in Amsterdam and Sao Paulo in 2009, at Project Zone in Budapest 2010 and at a number of other sessions around Europe. Being ‘lazy’ (as you know) I didn’t feel the need to customize this paper since an awful lot of people had already enjoyed the presentation without a problem.

This time it was not to be – my submission was rejected.

I was not overly surprised that my paper was rejected; the submission process and structure demands were a little more rigid than I had encountered beforehand, and – as I have already mentioned and come clean about – I didn’t make any additional efforts to enhance my existing paper or presentation in this particular case.

As a result I won’t be going to the ‘XXXXX’ Conference in ‘XXXXX’ after all. Not a big problem.

I was, however, a little surprised at the final review comment. As I mentioned you got three blind reviews in this process and the purpose is to a) assess for inclusion in to the event and b) offer guidance to improve the paper for a potential future submission. In my case two reviewers offered some guidance but for number three it was all too much.

What reviewer number three said was (and this is a direct quote here) ‘In short, it is among the worst paper I ever reviewed in my record’. Not even a ‘probably’ the worst – it was the worst.

The Lazy Project Manager

Productive Laziness



I am not sure they were supposed to make such an emotive declaration but they obviously felt that they had better things to do in life.

And the result? I was a happy man.

Why aren't I upset I hear you ask?

I had clearly plumbed new and so far unknown depths for good old reviewer number three and they just wanted to let me know - loud and clear. Well mission accomplished but I am really fine about it.

Here's why. Can the minority be right when the majority disagree?

Several thousand copies of *The Lazy Project Manager* sold around the world. 2,000 plus people have so far listened to me present and argue the value of 'Productive Laziness'. I have had many, many great and positive points of feedback. And the world, it appears, wants to be lazy.

Is this what I aimed for?

Now, the book was conceived and written to be the antidote to the deep, dark and often depressing tomes on project management theory. It was about project management practice. It was a guide to real life project managers to help them manage themselves in a way that would ease their working life. It is about reality. And it was written to be read - easily read - and if easily read then the lessons, I hope, just as easily learnt.

'Probably' exactly what it is supposed to be.

It was never meant to be the subject of 'papers' and deeply researched matters; it was meant for the masses and the 'coalface' project managers.

So I thank you Reviewer number three - I salute your wisdom - and I appreciate the affirmation that I am pitching the message at the right (and useful) level.

'The worst paper I ever reviewed' means that I am speaking to the people I wanted to speak to - I am using the language that I wanted to use to reach these people, the project managers of the world.

The Lazy Project Manager is 'Simply the best', and by that I mean is it written 'simply' in a style that is accessible to all and it is the 'best' that I could do to share my experience and whatever wisdom I have gleaned on the way through project life.

I have no idea who reviewer number three is but I thank them and, should they ever wish to get in direct contact, then a copy of *The Lazy Project Manager* is theirs as a further 'thank you'. They reaffirmed a key message in good communication.

'If you wish to persuade me, you must think my thoughts, feel my feelings, and speak my words' Cicero, Roman orator and statesman.

The Art of Productive Laziness: Simply the best.

Long may it continue - it is 'probably' the most 'lazy' thing in the world.

The Lazy Project Manager

Productive Laziness



About the Author

Despite his title of 'The Lazy Project Manager', Peter Taylor is in fact a dynamic and commercially astute professional who has achieved notable success in project management, program management and the professional development of project managers: Currently as Director of a PMO at Siemens PLM Software, a global supplier of product lifecycle management solutions.



He is an accomplished communicator and leader; always adopting a proactive and business-focused approach, and he is a professional speaker with City Speakers International.

He is also the author of '*The Lazy Project Manager*' book (Infinite Ideas 2009) – for more information - www.thelazyprojectmanager.com. You can subscribe to a series of free podcasts on iTunes (The Lazy Project Manager).

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