



## Practical Project Management

John Edmonds ( Director of Marketing and Strategy and Head of Training) and Adrian Boorman (Customer Relationship Manager)

Adrian Boorman: Hello and welcome to this short video from pearcemayfield. I am sure many of you watching will be very familiar with the range of methodologies available to today's project manager. Many of you, I guess, will already hold an accredited project management qualification. However, I am wondering if there isn't a neglected cadre out there and it's to address them that I am delighted to welcome to the studio today John Edmonds, pearcemayfield's Director of Training. John is an experienced programme and project manager and has won himself any fans both in the UK and internationally, delivering pearcemayfield courses such as PRINCE2, MSP and Change Management. John, I know, has helped many organisations to improve their project and programme management practices and he was a member of the team that authorised the latest version, sorry, that authored the latest version of PRINCE2. John, that was the big build up, so many thanks for joining us.

JE: You are welcome Adrian.

AB: So John, that neglected group that I mentioned, I have in mind those new to the discipline, new to project management, they are perhaps project assistants, just now looking to develop their careers or maybe they work in other roles and just interact with the project managers. Maybe they need something less, well, maybe something less theoretical; an introduction to and an understanding of project management terminology and just a working knowledge of the principles and practices. Why isn't there something to address their needs?

JE: Well, the good news Adrian, is that there is!

AB: Excellent.

JE: So, let me tell you about pearcemayfield can offer to people.

AB: Tell me more.

JE: We have a course, I hesitate to call it a course, because, actually, it is a series of courses but build around a basic idea: we call it Practical Project Management and we offer it as I say, in a range of different solutions, to suit the needs of different organisations. The standard course is a 3-day workshop, but we have delivered it in a number of different ways. For example, recently I just been involved in tailoring a version for a particular new client of ours, who wanted 2-days but at a certain point in time. I'll tell you a bit more about that later on.

AB: How were the options arrived at John, how did you come up with this programme, what was the genesis of it?

JE: OK. As you said we recognised that qualifications, certifications wasn't for everyone, and we started to look at what we were doing in terms of best practice approach to project management. So we were thinking, let's take that and let's build on that, let's build in disciplines of change management, programme management, stakeholder engagement and look at what we can offer really as a menu of things to give people.

AB: Right, OK. You mentioned to me when we were talking earlier on, that you have a tailored version, you mentioned a university client.

JE: Yes, that's right. This university client; they have a particular need for a project which they run on an annual basis and they wanted to time this so at the end of the one project before they started the next year's project they reflected on what they were doing. So, we talked to them about their requirements; I put together an outline; they felt that 2 days was about the right sort of time to allow the team to look at this. So we tailored it to a 2-day workshop picking on some of the key-points that we knew were training needs and development needs for that client.

AB: Right, OK. I'd like to talk about the client, certainly but can we just stay with the event itself for a moment. Can you just very briefly talk us through some of the key features within the Project Project Management offering?

JE: Right. The sort of things that people will experience if they came on the 3-day workshop?

AB: Absolutely.

JE: What we look at, we stated with some general principles of good project management and we look at some of those and get them to reflect on their understanding or projects; how projects work in their organisation. Always thinking about their own experience so that we do something that is relevant to them and cater for them. Then based on those principles, we look at some basics such as how to plan a project, how to understand the business need and the business context of the project. We look at the life cycle of project management from beginning to end and some of the steps and processes involved on the way. And then we start to pick out some of the key themes to project management like managing risks, managing issues, engaging stakeholders, how to deal with problems, how to fix problems, how to control, how to report; there is a whole range of different things in.

AB: Yes, I can see. And many of those, sorry to keep stopping you, but many of those elements that you covered are included within PRINCE2, so it mirrors PRINCE2, does it?

JE: It does. PRINCE2 of course is itself based on best practice and without the constraints of PRINCE2 we will use some of the ideas, which are common across project management any way; some of the ideas in PRINCE2, we see reflected in this, but we are bringing in other things as well to complement and supplement what PRINCE2 could give.

AB: Particular benefit for the delegate then on a Project Project Management course?

JE: They are taking away some very practical tips, hints, techniques and ideas and so on, but they are also not being constrained by the fact that they are having to sit an exam by the end of the course. This is a non-examined course. It is not certified and for many that is quite a relief; that they are not having to be distracted by learning things ready for an exam. So we focus on practical learning at the point when is needed...So that makes a real difference that they can take this away, and we encourage them to reflect on how they are going to implement it the day after the course finished.

AB: Right, OK. So, correct me if I am wrong, but if there were a group of project assistants, so those who are working with project managers, perhaps not yet project managers in their own right, something like this would be very appropriate for them?

JE: Yes it would. We are not ruling out project managers, this is very relevant for project managers who maybe don't have any formal training, but for project assistants, people who are new into project management; there is a whole range of different audiences for this, and of course the workshop can be tailored if there is a specific group in mind.

AB: Right, OK. So, if I got you right then, this is perhaps less theoretical but very practical, some sort of group exercise?

JE: Yes, plenty of group exercises, sometime using their own case-studies, so for example this one recently I was talking about, we used their project as the case study for various exercises throughout the whole of the workshop. At other times will bring in a case study, but we will give them things that they practically have been involved in and then they can take away and use.

AB: Right, so that's your point about tailoring, do it can be quite closely scoped to a particular client's needs, depending on what the requirements are. Sounds like a hell of a lot to pack in 3 days, more like 3 weeks!

JE: It is. Sometimes we deliver in two days and we have even done a one day version as well, butt that is more of a light touch, that's more of an introduction to the language of project management, some of the concepts and so on. So yes, there is a lot there, so we do really

enjoy talking to the client beforehand, to get a sense of what is important so we can focus on that and deliver the right things.

AB: So that is the sort of scoping meeting beforehand; could be done telephone, Skype I guess, or one to one. You mentioned earlier on a university client and I appreciate the need for confidentiality, but what other types of organisations have benefited from this, maybe just sectors?

JE: Sectors, I can think of Government departments, a company in the utilities business, banking, insurance, we have done it there as well, we have worked internationally, we have worked with publishers, there are no limits to this. Those are just a few of the experiences that we have had with a few sectors. It is relevant as is project management to any type of business today.

AB: It is a diverse range of clients, a very diverse range. Why do you think it has such broad appeal?

JE: Because of the generic nature of project management and the take-up of project management in business over the last few years it has been quite dramatic. People are using projects in every type of organisation. This is very, very necessary for many organisations to pick this up.

AB: Right. Just to clarify, there are no examinations associated with this course, there isn't a formal syllabus as such.

JE: There isn't a formal syllabus and that gives us the freedom to explore different aspects of the course. For example: if a topic comes up and the group wants to take it further then, our course facilitators can do that, they are really equipped to be able to take a conversation wherever it needs to go, to meet the needs of the delegates. We don't have to stick to a rigid time table.

AB: Must be quite empowering for you as a trainer to have almost a blank sheet of paper and therefore to scope it around client needs as the 3 days go on.

JE: It's a great course to develop ahead of the workshop and then is a marvellous one to deliver because of that freedom that we have to really meet the needs of the delegates.

AB: Right, so presumably Practical Project Management is not available as off-the shelf course?

JE: It could be. We have a standard course there and if anybody like to we could deliver that. It comes to life when we tailor it; even if we tailor it just a little bit. Maybe using some of the approaches that the organisations have already adopted; maybe some templates that they want to use. But we don't have to do a great deal of tailoring; we can do a little bit, we can do an immense amount. It is there ready to go in whatever shape or form people want to.

AB: Right, understand. You mentioned, confirmed, earlier on that the Practical Project Management course mirrors PRINCE2 and picks up on the terminology and the methodology; so maybe just one last question before I let you go. If someone attends a Practical Project Management workshop and then decides to go on and study for a formal qualification based programme, how much help will workshop have been to them, are they starting from scratch or is the workshop a really good intro, sort of leg up to project management?

JE: Whilst is not actually covering necessarily the precise syllabus of something like PRINCE2, it will give them a great starting point and they will recognise in PRINCE2 a lot of the core concepts that we teach on Practical Project Management; so it is going to be enormously helpful to people I think. It will give them just a confidence that they have a sense of what they are talking about with the topic.

AB: Right, so it can be a very good introduction; it is time well spent even if someone then gets excited by Project Management and wants to go on.

JE: Yes, we have even seen it worked the other way, where I had somebody recently who has done a PRINCE2 course and then come on Practical Project Management and still learned a tremendous amount beyond PRINCE2.

AB: So it is almost as a refresher.

JE: It can be, as well.

# pearcemayfield

AB: That is very interesting, turning it around. I think you have an indicative, sort of sample, content and time table?

JE: We have, yes. So, let me just confirm where that is. Actually if people would like to contact us through our help desk and talk, requests to [info@pearcemayfield.com](mailto:info@pearcemayfield.com), or if anybody wants to contact me directly, email [john.edmonds@pearcemayfield.com](mailto:john.edmonds@pearcemayfield.com) or our website [www.pearcemayfield.com](http://www.pearcemayfield.com).

AB: Or they can ring us up of course 01235 227 252. John, all thanks again.

JE: Thank you Adrian.