



The Buffalo Chapter of PMI presented its 2010 Project Of The Year award to Independent Health

at the annual Fall Professional Development Day in recognition of their successful implementation of Computer Telephony Integration / Interactive Voice Response (CTI/IVR) technologies. In accordance with our 2010 theme of taking it to the next level, Eric Blackman and the project team did just that in providing a cost effective solution for their organization that met sponsor expectations from all perspectives of a well run project.

Significant to the challenges faced was the fact that prior to this endeavor the organization had not totally committed to the PMI methodology and convincing both the project team and key stakeholders to buy into this approach was in itself a critical enabler. The accomplishments thus described certainly warrant serious consideration for project of the year but what separated this effort from the many worthy competitors who also followed PMI principles and who also provided their respective organizations with valuable enablers as a result? As one might guess it comes down to the details, those lines on a project plan that drive the effort but have the potential of becoming major headaches if not professionally managed. Proactive from the start, Eric Blackman kept the budget on track by instituting a Budget Tracker control system modeled after the PMBoK Cost Control Tools & Techniques. With this tool in place and the team trained on how to maintain it, any cost issues were quickly identified and addressed thus avoiding unexpected and unexplained cost variances. In addition to budget controls, a formal Change Management process was deployed and together, the two processes ensured the accuracy of key stakeholder reports which in turn reinforced the organizations confidence that the PMI approach was in fact working. Bottom-line: The project came in well under budget.



Time was the next constraint to deal with having promised the deliverables within approximately 18 months of startup using the newly integrated PMI Methodology in place of a less structured methodology used in prior projects. Thus, change management took on an expanded and significantly more complex role of ensuring the organization was aligned, especially important when the project plan describes over 150 individuals that had to be kept in the communications chain. How did the PMI approach help the outcome? When the project completion date was estimated to require several weeks beyond baseline, the request was approved as a direct result of the excellent documentation that clearly identified all variances to the plan and the corrective actions taken. Bottom-line: The Project Manager (PMP) put his reputation behind the PMI methodology and delivered on behalf of both Independent Health and PMI.

Lastly, what of the deliverables? Did they meet the expected outcomes? Did the sponsors get what they paid for? Both the executive sponsor and business owner of this project were quite pleased with the results. As further evidence to the success of this project, Independent Health uses a value achievement plan to quantify project outcomes and in the words of PM Eric Blackman: "CTI/IVR is tracking far ahead of forecasted goals in reducing call transfers and initial service level timings. Additional benefits are being seen in work force forecasting, lower turnover rates and increased operational efficiencies and analysis."



In conclusion, the Project Of The Year 2010 award was well deserved and a direct result of a disciplined PMP providing organizational leadership while successfully applying PMI principles – easier said than done. To that point the following quote from Eric Blackman completes the storyline: "By adhering closely to the PMBoK principles, particularly around communications, the organization was able to meet all of these challenges to a state where the project could move forward through each phase."

Congratulations to Eric Blackman, his project team and the entire Independent Health organization which trusted this PMP to guide this effort to a successful conclusion.