

PROJECT MAINE

A Newsletter of the **Maine Chapter, Project Management Institute**

MARCH 2003

www.pmaine.org

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Project at 7 years . . . and counting

MaineToday.com founder to tell story to PMI Maine March 12

A **multilayered project** that has been in continuous invention mode for seven years will be described at a PMI Maine program March 12 at Wright Express in South Portland.

Joe Michaud, president of MaineToday.com, has been managing the project since its inception. When the management of the Portland Press Herald decided to get involved in interactive media in 1995, the entire enterprise was a foreign concept. The organization was a successful, mature business that had honed its skills in producing one excellent product every day.

The people responsible for creating the interactive service had to invent not only a new line of business, but also new production processes and new interfaces with the "legacy" systems of a newspaper.

Those same challenges continue today. Michaud will discuss the lessons learned from the early days of MaineToday.com, and how the organization currently manages complex projects.

MaineToday.com is by far the largest and most popular news and information service online in Maine, with nearly 5 million pageviews per month. It is recognized in the newspaper industry as an innovator in interactive media, and has received numerous national awards. Michaud was a finalist in nationwide voting for the title of 2001 New Media Pioneer by the Newspaper Association of America.

In addition to enhanced sections on news, sports, business and other subject areas, MaineToday.com includes such services as 20below, a section by and for Maine teens; a powerful interactive events calendar; an outdoors section and other niche features.

The division's 20 employees include specialists in online journalism, sales, technology, marketing and design.

*They had to invent everything.
That's what they're still doing.*

Michaud has over 25 years in media, including the launch of two magazines. He has been using interactive online services since 1989, and working with the Web since 1994. In 1995, as city editor of the Press Herald, he led the launch of MaineToday.com, one of the first such newspaper efforts in the U.S. He holds University of Maine degrees in journalism and TV/film production.

The March 12 meeting site is the Wright Express campus on Darling Avenue in South Portland. Directions are at pmaine.org/meetings.htm.

Registration, networking and a buffet are at 5:30 p.m., a brief business meeting is at 6, and the 90-minute program begins at 6:30. The meeting is open to nonmembers.

Success tactics for project managers in vital influencing role

"You have just a little over a minute to typically influence someone when managing projects," says Dave Wessel of Situation management Systems.

Wessel presented a program "Influence Skills for Project

Managers" at PMI Maine's February meeting.

Since project managers spend much of their time and energy trying to persuade other people without the benefit of positional power, he said, it makes good sense for them to have a sound approach in hand before attempting to do it.

In opening his presentation, Wessel put the group into pairs to take turns trying to influence a partner to watch a favorite movie. The activity demonstrated the difficulty of trying to convince someone in just over a minute.

His three principal quick-influence approaches:

1. The Push approach is the "Darth Vader" approach. "I recommend you do this, or these could be the consequences. . . ." You are trying to force the other

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Project contest nears windup

At **PROJECT MAINE's** deadline, entries were arriving for the chapter's first Project of the Year competition. Winners will be announced and honored by PMI Maine April 17. Details to come.

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Influencing skills for project managers

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the other person to take the desired action.

2. The Pull approach is the "Yoda" approach. "If you do this, imagine how this could change your life or benefit the project." You are creating a desirable vision and attracting the other party to it.
3. The Disengagement approach, when you feel it is important to back off when trying to influence. You protect the relationship, and look for a better opportunity to influence in the future.

Wessel noted that all three are important options, to be used selectively depending upon the situation. In a lively and engaging presentation, he used a number of examples to bring each technique to life.

-- Bob Laliberte, PMP

PMI MAINE Website News

- *NEW* – Search our library materials! Includes PMI 2002 Symposium Papers; among them our very own John Peterson's.
- Sign up for **electronic delivery** of this newsletter – Help use your membership fees wisely (THANKS to those who already have!).
- Update your bookmarks & favorites to www.PMIMaine.org.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- Post reviews of library materials

PMI Maine Meetings 2003

*Check pmimaine.org
for meeting locations and directions
if site isn't specified*

March 12 – The MaineToday.com Project
-- Continuous Innovation for Seven Years
with Joe Michaud

Site: Wright Express, Darling Avenue, South Portland

April 17 (Thursday) – Project of the Year 2002
-- PMI Maine's first awards program
Jim Milliken, Project Manager

May 14 – The Downeaster
-- Lessons Learned and the Future
of Rail Passenger Service in Maine
Steve MacIsaac, Host

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