

“Moylan’s Mulligans” article for PMI GLC *Baseline* newsletter - February 2020

OCM – The Solution to “*I’d hate to be that PM!*”

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The 2020 Iowa Democratic caucus fiasco which unfolded this past week made many project managers think to themselves “Thank goodness that’s not my project!” and “I’d hate to be that PM!” Fingers are pointing, heads are rolling, and the news pundits have learned more than they ever wanted about software bugs. This mobile app was created for the nearly 1,800 Democratic precinct chairs to tabulate and report the results of the caucus. Many intended users couldn’t download or sign in and even those who could access the app lacked the training and support to use it correctly. Incorporating an organizational change management plan into the project plan would not have de-bugged the software but certainly would’ve helped to identify the issues and provide support to the precinct chairs before the caucus began.

Organizational Change Management [OCM] focuses on the people side of change. Incorporating OCM into projects improves the success of change efforts. As a PMP and Certified Change Management Professional™ I’d like to share what I’ve learned through experience, expertise and my observation of implementation outcomes. We define Organizational Change Management as the process of moving an organization and its stakeholders from a current state to a future state. OCM is the combination of benefit identification, communications, leadership engagement, process redesign, stakeholder/user connection, training and support.

The goal of OCM is to help stakeholders adopt and use the change to benefit the organization. The benefits of change vary with the project and are usually identified by leadership as the reason to pursue change. Benefits may be described as positive financial outcomes, productivity improvements, integration of multiple systems, or enhanced user experience. If we know what is expected as an outcome and we can help others change the way they work to meet that outcome, our change is successful. The success of any change is measured through business results and outcomes. A question to ask is “What percentage of the success of this project will be determined by the acceptance and use of the change by the business?”

More than two decades after my first change management role I’m still a passionate advocate for incorporating OCM into project plans. Through experience and experimentation, I’ve defined and refined how to provide an understandable and easy-to-follow approach to help people prepare for and adopt change. This desire to make implementations—particularly technology projects—easier and more productive has led me to develop a model and approach to help the business get back to business more quickly, and I’m looking forward to sharing with you OCM tools from my forthcoming book *READY-Set-Change!*

If the Iowa Democratic caucus project team had incorporated even a few OCM tools such as an impact assessment, change communications plan or training for those who needed to use the app, chances are the project team, candidates and Iowans would have high-fived each other to the next primary. It would have been a much better outcome for all of us.



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April is a nationally known organizational change management expert and has implemented change for clients including the State of Michigan, Whirlpool, AAA, and the University of Michigan. She's the Author of "Springboard to Success", "Leading Successful Change" and the forthcoming "READY, Set, Change". April believes that no one should have to suffer through an unorganized, poorly managed change and the resulting negativity and she's frequently quoted by the Associated Press, The New York Times and other international media outlets. April is the leader of Springboard Consulting and one of the "First 100" Certified Change Management Professionals (CCMP™) and a Change Ignitor for Association of Change Management Professionals. She's also a Project Management Professional, winner of the Top Trainer Throwdown and Past President of the Michigan National Speakers Association.