

## Miriona's Message – no. 15

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### Introduction

#### **Miriona goes Limited**

After two and a half years as a sole trader, Miriona has changed status and is now a Limited Company. This doesn't mean too much to clients as we will be working in the same way and for the same rates. But it hopefully sends the message – Miriona is here to stay!

During June the summer seems to have arrived properly, even if the odd day seems to be colder than it should! Let's hope for that long promised 'Barbeque Summer' will finally happen this year.

### Hot Topic

#### **Virtual Meetings**

With technology and broadband continually improving and a general need to reduce costs and environmental impact, many organisations are conducting more meetings 'virtually' rather than physically. However, a virtual meeting can be harder to manage – for example, is that attendee just quiet or have they gone off to make a coffee?

There are some simple guidelines which can help make a virtual meeting more successful:

- Follow the well-known meeting planning activities such as agendas, clear roles, clear objectives, good minutes etc
- Work out how to manage a discussion. Will you ask each person for their thoughts? This could be lengthy if there are a lot of attendees. Simply opening a debate with a question can lead to chaos if everyone tries to talk at once. The best way will depend on a number of variables (how many, who, what will be discussed etc) but needs to be agreed beforehand.
- People need to think about how they speak. Talking too fast or in partial sentences can be difficult to understand without physical cues, especially if attendees do not have English as their first language. Saying your name before speaking is very helpful.
- Plan the timing carefully and ask attendees to make sure they are prepared when they join the meeting.

Virtual meetings are still fairly new to many of us. With proper planning and management they can be an efficient and productive activity; it's worth taking the extra time in planning to ensure that they are.

For more information, you can call Miriona on 07766 948470 or email [newsletter@miriona.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@miriona.co.uk).

## Working Smarter

### Project Initiation Document

Probably the most important document in the PRINCE2 method, the Project Initiation Document (PID) is developed early in the project (as the name suggests) but can be used as a 'living' document, updated throughout the project to remain a central repository of information.

It contains the background and drivers behind the project, details of the objectives, overall aim and scope, information on the stakeholders and the ways in which the project will communicate with them, details of project team and specific responsibilities, details of dependencies, constraints and assumptions, an outline plan and details of the project approach, and details of how this specific project will be managed, for such elements as time, budget, change, risks and so on.

The PID should be tailored for each project. For larger projects some topics will likely require their own document – a common one being the Business Case. Smaller projects should have a simpler PID – covering the basics but not needing the details or depth of a larger project. Always ask 'what is needed to tell people relevant details about this project?'

However you tailor your PID it can still seem like a lot of details and information. And this can be off-putting, especially to a new project manager or team. However, all this information will need to be discussed and agreed for the project (or should be...) and the PID simply provides one place to hold it all – and acts as a checklist to make sure you have covered everything. Once drafted, it can be used as a starting point for a project initiation meeting, or simply sent to all interested parties to see if they agree. Having to write down the details can itself show gaps, and people will quickly say if they don't agree with the content.

Want to discuss this further? Contact Miriona on 07766 948470 or email [newsletter@miriona.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@miriona.co.uk).

## Hints & Tips

### Outlook 2003/7 – Automatically Add Holidays

To automatically add holidays to your Calendar, open the Tools menu and select Options, click the Calendar Options button, and then click Add Holidays.

### Outlook 2003/7 – Display several days

You can quickly display several days side by side in Calendar. In the date picker (the section that shows all the dates in the month being displayed), drag over the dates that you want to view.

## The Lighter Side of IT!

### Project Management Proverbs

Any project can be estimated accurately (once it's completed).

Nothing is impossible for the person who doesn't have to do it.

You can con a sucker into committing to an impossible deadline, but you cannot con him into meeting it.

A problem shared is a buck passed.

A change freeze is like the abominable snowman: it is a myth and would anyway melt when heat is applied.

A user will tell you anything you ask about, but nothing more.

Of several possible interpretations of a communication, the least convenient is the correct one.

What you don't know hurts you.

**Thank you for reading!**

**Any comments or ideas for future newsletters are welcomed – please send to [newsletter@miriona.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@miriona.co.uk).**

**More information on Miriona and our services can be found on our website [www.miriona.co.uk](http://www.miriona.co.uk).**

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