



STORIES AS PART OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

SCHEHERAZADE AS THE PERFECT PROJECT MANAGER

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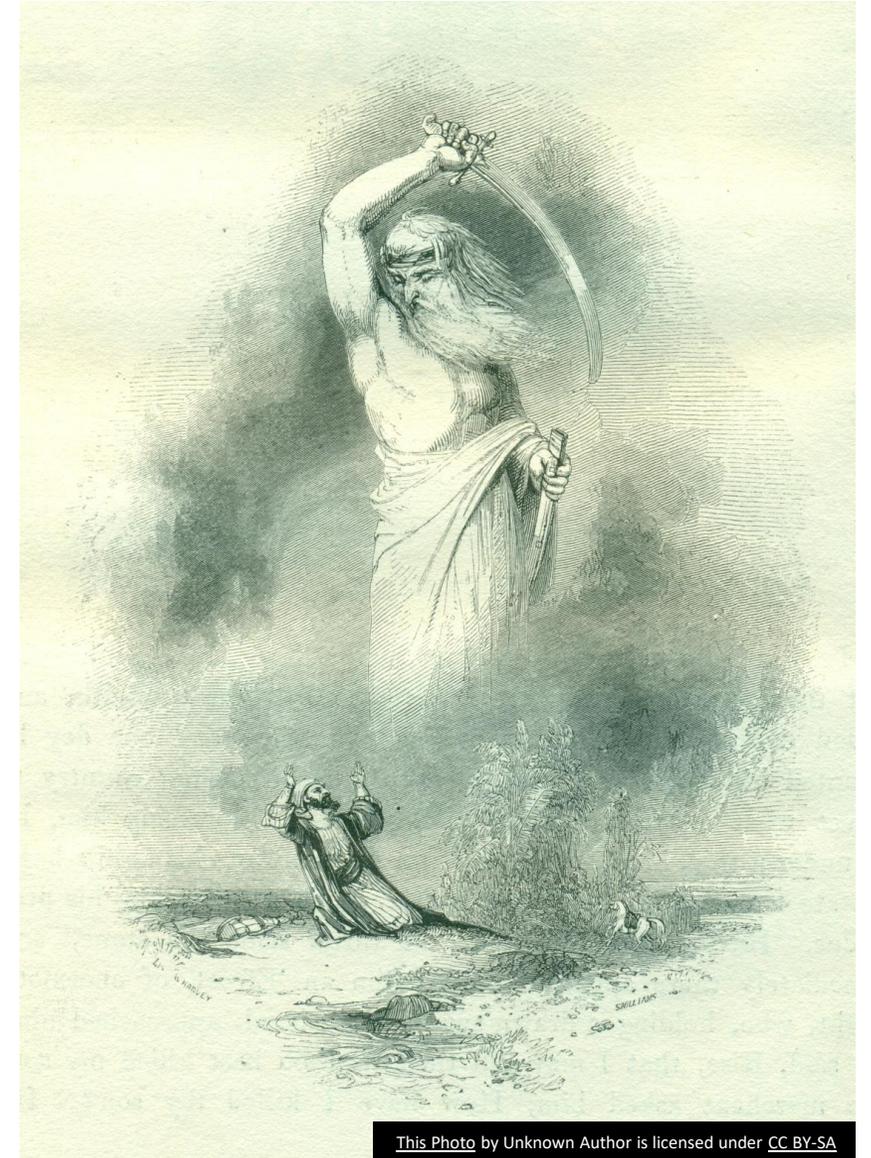


INTRODUCTION

- Background:
 - 40 years as project manager
 - Retired US Air Force Officer, and US Federal Government employee
 - Performed project management duties as government contractor, budget specialist, IT, and military
 - Taught undergraduate statistics periodically for approximately 20 years
- Webinar subject focuses on using stories to spur creative project management
- 60 minute webinar including questions and answers

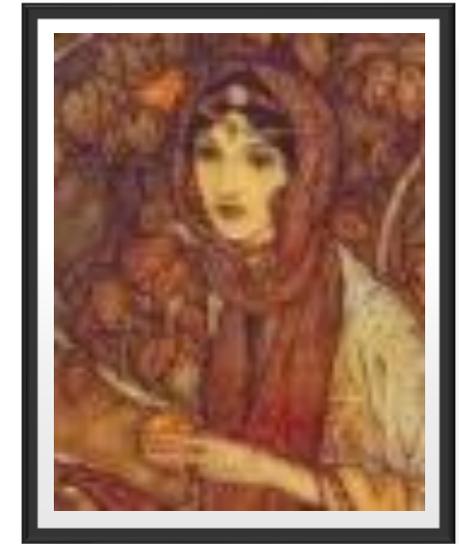
1001 Arabian Nights

- Main character in this whole tale was Scheherazade, King Shahrhara's Vizier's daughter
- She volunteered to spend a night with the King
- This was dangerous since the King had the habit of eliminating a wife after one night
- The history of this is a story in itself!
- She told a story, ending it mid-way, persuading the King to continue his relationship with her to finish the story

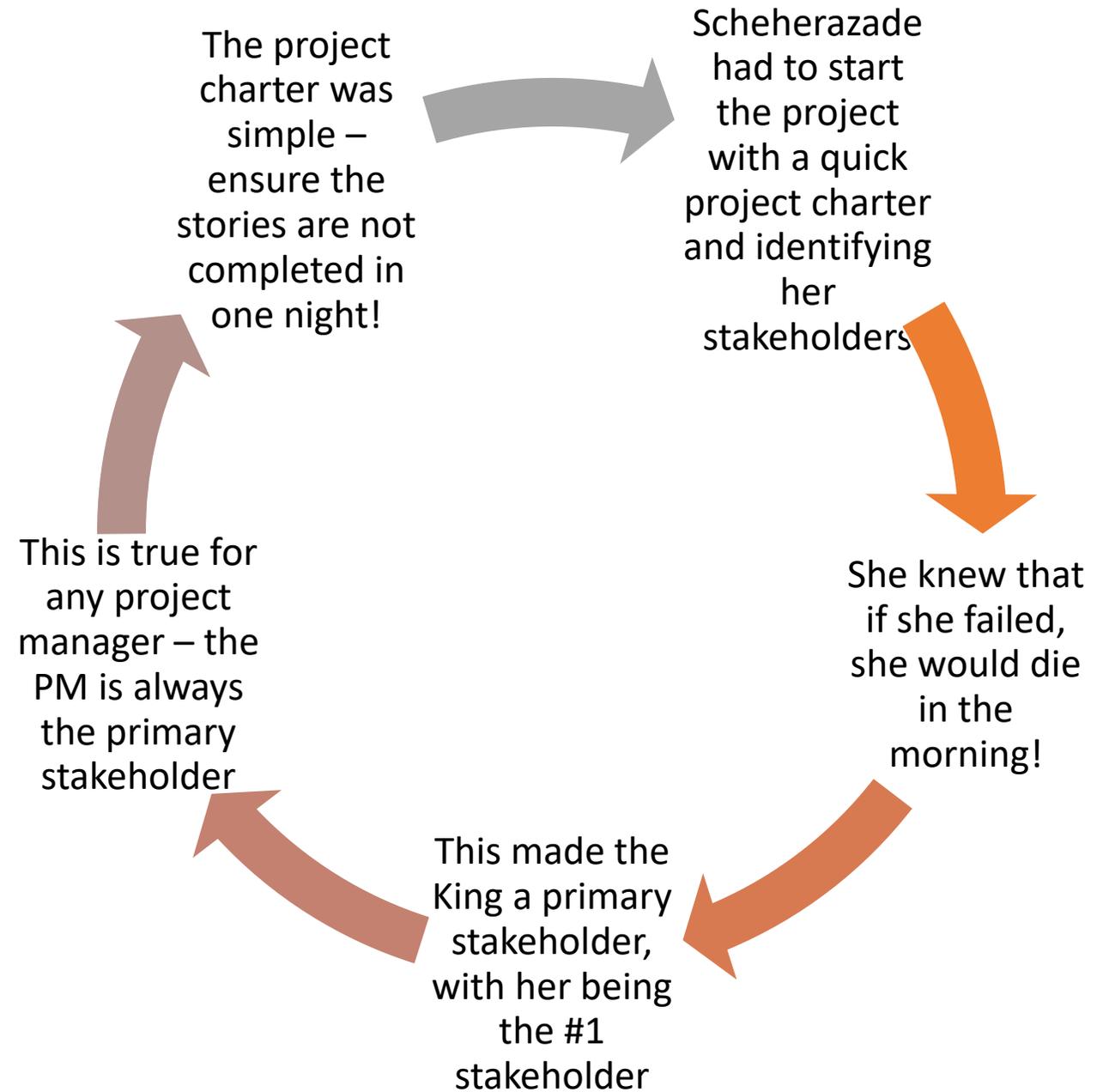


More To The Story...

- She then completed that story, but told another, ending that one half way
- Continued this trend for 1001 nights, after which the King fell in love with her and made her his wife
- This webinar shows that Scheherazade was the perfect project planner, using the project processes in PMBOK, 6th Edition
- You can follow the webinar by turning to page 25 in the 6th Edition and use the matrix found there



Initiation





Planning

- Now comes the hard part, since we all know planning takes the most time
- The requirements were certainly ad hoc since there was no way that she could know the King would like the stories
- Therefore, she would have to be able to be flexible to let the stories adapt to the audience
- How many times have we as project managers had to be flexible with the stakeholder in order to ascertain requirements?



PLANNING (MOST TIME, REMEMBER?)

- She planned the first one to keep his attention and make him want to hear the rest
- Is that not what we do as project managers?
- We ensure that the project starts strong since we want the team to be there for the entire project
- She kept the stories interesting, and even established one as part of the other
- In the story Fisherman and the Genie, the next story was introduced as part of the ending of the first



Planning Summary

- By introducing the story at the end of the first one, she ensured a seamless process
- As a project manager, we try to ensure that each phase of a project is seamless by incorporating the one phase into the other
- Doesn't always work, but we try
- Example: The US Space Program, where each phase was a buildup to the final result (Mercury, Gemini, Apollo build up to the Moon Landing)



Execution

- The execution of the task had environmental requirements
- The environment must be conducive to story telling
- Quiet area that had the right light, all conducive to receiving the story
- As project managers, we have team meetings
- Must be held in good environments to ensure the reception of information
- Meetings held in poorly equipped areas will result in distractions and disruptions
- Receiving of information will suffer as a result



Execution (Continued)

- Scheherazade had to ensure the King would ask her to tell the first story
- She pre-staged that by asking the King if she could say goodbye to her sister
- The sister would then convey to the King about her sister's wonderful stories
- As project managers, we depend on our team to raise issues and risks that we may not realize
- Qualifications are important for selecting the right team members

Monitor

- Scheherazade had to ensure that quality was monitored throughout the story process
- Was the King interested? Was the story good enough? Are some of the questions that would be appropriate
- As project manager, we are responsible for ensuring that all project team members are engaged
- We are also responsible for the quality of the team efforts and that they meet or exceed requirements



Control

- Controlling the quality is important
- Controlling the schedule was vital
- The story had to take the appropriate amount of time
- The story had to be interesting and...
- The next story had to be seamlessly introduced
- The schedule determines the outcome, and how true that is with project management



Closure

- When was the project completed?
- In the project manager's case, it is the scheduled end
- However, in Scheherazade's case it was when the stakeholder was satisfied
- How true that is when it comes to the project manager
- There are times when a project could go longer than scheduled
- Because the stakeholder is not satisfied with the results



Closure (Continued)

- If the quality is not according to standards...
- Or there are amendments to the project...
- We often find ourselves going longer than expected.
- Scheherazade was prepared to go as long as possible
- She made it to 1001 nights (approximately 3 years!)
- As project managers, we are prepared to stay the course until the project is completed
- This is something that we should never ignore



What About Agile?

- Is Agile addressed in this analogy?
- Let's begin with User Stories (Stories?)
- Scheherazade had to ensure that one project phase (one sprint or iteration) had to seamlessly flow to another
- She had to ensure that the requirements were satisfied
- Whether she used a “burn-up” or “burn-down” chart, she would have to track to ensure she did not duplicate stories (or user stories)
- In all, she employed a hybrid of agile and waterfall to get the job completed



Summary

- We, as project managers, often have a stakeholder that wants good communication
- We must ensure we communicate each phase of the project with the stakeholder until they are satisfied
- There is no telling how long Scheherazade was prepared to go in order to satisfy the stakeholder
- However, it is evident that we could take lessons from her as to her story stamina
- Project Management is like story telling – You get to the end of the project when the stakeholder says it is the end

References

- Many of the references for this presentation was from Wikipedia, like this one: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheherazade>
- In addition, there are great references to 1001 Arabian Nights including this book: ***The Arabian Nights***, Translated by Husaid Haddawy, 1990, WW Norton and Company, available through Amazon
- The music is from Scheherazade, composed by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsavov in 1888, available through Amazon
- The PMBOK reference is from the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK), 6th Edition

CONTACTS

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