

Don't just tell them.. SHOW them!

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[Effective PM Practices](http://www.cheetahpm.com) - www.cheetahpm.com***

I sat in a window seat on the plane with my nose stuck in my newly purchased book. It was one of those books that sucks your right in, leaving you completely unaware of your surrounding, which is exactly what I needed to save me from what otherwise would have been a monotonous travel day, full of weather delays and missed connections. At my next stop, as I waited in an endless line to find out which flight was available for me now that I missed my connection, I was an island of contentment surrounded by a sea of angry and frustrated individuals, and all because I had a good story to occupy me.

I got to thinking about why certain stories were so riveting, why others were just so-so. What I decided was that a good author did not simply tell you the story, they *showed* you the story as if you were there, revealing the plot with actions of the characters, and not just with explanations. The act of showing, rather than telling, is very powerful, and can turn a story from “boring” to “best seller.”

In your profession as a Project Manager, make sure that you are using good story techniques to advance in your occupation by showing others your story, not just telling. Become a captivating author of your career by following these tips.

Walk the Talk Or better yet, don't talk at all, just walk! A good Project Manager earns the respect of their project team from leading by example. If you want your project team to go the extra mile to accomplish a goal, then be the first to show them how it's done.

I recently worked on a project where team morale was way down due to gossip running amuck among team members. It was worse than a high school prom, and it was affecting project progress.

To snip this attitude in the bud, I changed the script and created a “no whine” bubble around me, where I was not allowed to complain unproductively, and I would not listen to others do it. I showed my project team the appropriate way of communicating by doing so myself, and dealing with unresolved issues by addressing the person involved directly, privately, and in a professional manner. Soon, others followed suite, and team morale began to grow as we built trust and respect within our project team. The simple act of leading by example changed our project results from what may have been a tragic end, into a success story.

Experiential Learning Think about the last time you learned a new skill. Did you learn by reading about it, listening to someone else that is proficient in the skill, or by doing it? For most of us, we need our teachers to SHOW us how to perform a task, and then be able to do this task ourselves in a safe environment.

Some of the most innovative private schools in our country are adopting school schedules that provide longer classes. The extra time allows teachers to capitalize on experiential learning that takes place when you give students the time and space to learn the tasks themselves. Do the same for your project team by showing what they need to learn rather than telling them.

Show Your Stuff Imagine you are sitting in an interview, and you are asked about your best strengths as a PM. You could list off your many attributes, such as your fantastic negotiation and communication skills, OR you could *show* your skills. Tell your interviewer a story about the time you procured the resources you needed for a project against all odds. While other projects in your organization were running into budget problems, you utilized your negotiation skills and ability to assess others, as well as the situation, arrived at the most optimal situation, saving the project and earning company wide recognition.

The ability to demonstrate your capabilities to others comes handy in an interview, but it is also an essential skill needed throughout your career as a PM. The more specific you are in describing situations and outcomes to show your skills, the clearer your capabilities are, and the more memorable you are.

Show your stuff PM! Because the more you show, the more they know, and the more your career can grow.

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About the Author:



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is an entrepreneurial powerhouse with a penchant for making success easy, fun and fast. She is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](#), the [author](#) of the [Cheetah Success Series](#), and a prolific [blogger](#) whose mission is to bring Project Management to the masses.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company with 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. To date, more than 30,000 people have become “Cheetahs” using Cheetah Learning’s innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Recently honored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), Cheetah Learning was named Professional Development Provider of the Year at the 2008 PMI® Global Congress. A dynamic keynote speaker and industry thought leader, Michelle was previously recognized by PMI as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the world.

Michelle’s articles have appeared in over 100 publications and web sites around the world. Her monthly column, the [Know How Network](#) is carried by over 400 publications, and her monthly newsletter goes out to more than 50,000 people.

She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School’s Owner President Manager’s (OPM) program and also holds engineering degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Dayton.

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