

# **Michael S. Dobson**

## **Information Packet**



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# Featured Presentations

## Thinking SideWise: The Power of “What If?” The Seventh Dimension of Project Management To Uncertainty...and Beyond!



### THINKING SIDEWISE™: THE POWER OF “WHAT IF?”

Sewell Avery, chairman of Montgomery Ward, believed the consensus of economists after World War II that we would immediately relapse into the Great Depression. He hoarded cash while others expanded. Meantime, the United States entered into the Long Boom of the 1950s. Avery was wrong. But was he stupid?

“Lessons learned” are arguably the most valuable part of the project management lifecycle. They are definitely the most neglected. While age often correlates with experience, it does not necessarily correlate with wisdom. Wisdom involves learning from those experiences. There are two ways to learn from experience: have an experience and learn from it, or find someone else who’s had that experience, and learn from that. The latter is cheaper.

Thinking about the past, however, has one important difference: we know the outcome. But what if we didn’t? Michael, former head of game development for simulation giant TSR, Inc., has spent years probing at the intricacies of history to ask one vital question: what if?

A plan is a model of a possible future. Murphy’s Law reminds us that it’s not the only possible future – your mileage may vary. The outcome of the decision does not automatically confirm its validity. If you do something stupid, and you get lucky, that doesn’t make it any less stupid. Equally, if you act responsibly and intelligently, you don’t necessarily guarantee success. Sometimes the dice go against you.

Whether Schrödinger’s cat turns out to be alive or dead, project managers still have to manage the aftermath. That’s why you need to think SideWise — peering into the space where planning, risk, creativity, and decision-making intersect. SideWise thinking involves not one possible future, but many, probing the unknown unknowns for threat and opportunity.

In this entertaining and insightful journey through histories that might have been, you’ll learn SideWise principles that help you predict and analyze the range of futures in your planning environment. You’ll learn how the laws of physics shape organizations and people. Come explore the world of “what if” — and learn to think SideWise.



## THE 7<sup>TH</sup> DIMENSION OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project managers all know the triple constraints: the triangle of time, cost, and performance that bounds the universe of your project. Experienced project managers know that the interplay of the triple constraints is a subtle source of risk... and opportunity.

You can optimize a project for fastest time, lowest cost, or optimal performance – but usually something has to give. Figuring out the difference between the driver and the weak constraint is essential for making the right strategic and tactical choices on your project.



Within the balance of the triple constraints, however, risk is always a factor. Not only is the severity of a risk affected by whether it impacts the driver, middle, or weak constraint, but the very nature of the risk itself is changed by the project of which it is a part. Optimizing a project plan for risk must be done in balance with the other constraints.

Michael has probed the mysteries of the triple constraints in two books — *The Six Dimensions of Project Management* and *Project Management Essentials Library: The Triple Constraints* — making him one of the true experts on the subject.

In this witty and insightful presentation, Michael will take you through the first six dimensions – the six possible hierarchies of time, cost, and performance – then penetrate the mysterious seventh dimension, the world of risk, illustrated with stories ranging from Apollo 13 to Butch Cassidy.

You'll learn new strategies for managing risk in addition to the classic PMBOK® four (avoid, transfer, mitigate, or accept), you'll discover the single most overlooked question in project management...and you'll learn why making a bad decision requires more talent than making a good one.

Surprising insights and vivid stories make this a presentation you'll never forget.





## TO UNCERTAINTY...AND BEYOND

What makes work difficult? There are three main types of difficulty: hard, complex, and uncertain.

Hard work is challenging. It taxes your mind and sometimes your body. Your experience, your stamina, your smarts, your creativity, and your skills determine your personal level of challenge. To a novice, it may be back-breakingly hard; to an expert, it may be easy.

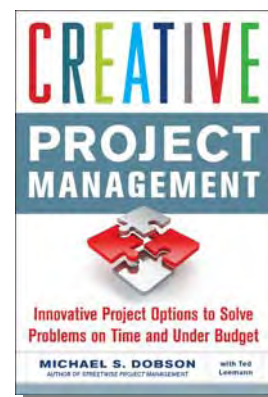
Complicated work needs taming. Scheduling, logistics, systems engineering, project management, and time management are just some of the tools you can use to turn chaos into relative order.

But uncertainty—either by itself, or combined with the other two—is the real challenge. Of the four kinds of risk (known knowns, known unknowns, unknown knowns, and unknown unknowns), three have uncertainty at the core.

Michael is an authority on project uncertainty. The author of numerous books on project management, leadership, and alternate history, and an award-winning designer and developer of simulation games, will share with you the operational secrets and skills of a lifetime spent on the edge of project uncertainty.

You'll gain essential insights into the three forms of uncertainty risk, including how to do a proper perimeter check, the strategies for preparing for "unknown unknowns," and how to overcome your own assumptions and biases that create your blind spots, the "unknown knowns."

You'll never see things the same way again.



## Biographical Information



MICHAEL SINGER DOBSON, PMP, is an internationally known project management consultant, author, and lecturer. He's the author of 21 books on various aspects of project management, office politics, organizational dynamics, and personal growth. A popular seminar leader and keynote speaker, Dobson

brings a practical real-world background, good humor, and a dynamic personal style to make his topics come alive.

His latest book is *Creative Project Management*, which will be released by McGraw-Hill in Summer 2010. *Enlightened Office Politics* (with Deborah Dobson) was named one of *Library Journal's* Top 100 Business Books for 2001. His novels *Fox on the Rhine* and *MacArthur's War* (both with Douglas Niles) were selections of the Military Book Club. His simulation game *Battlesystem* won the H. G. Wells Award.

Michael's client list has included the U.S. Navy's nuclear program, Calvin Klein Cosmetics, Union Carbide, NASA, GSA Public Building Service, and Australian State Rail. He recently authored the "Decision-Making" chapter for a NASA-sponsored textbook on systems engineering. He's given well over a thousand seminars on three continents. Michael is certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP) by the Project Management Institute.

He lives in the Washington, DC, suburbs with his wife and frequent co-author Deborah Singer Dobson, an organizational development executive, their son James, two Shelties and a tarantula—and the only Apollo spacesuit in private hands.

# Publications

## Project Management



***Creative Project Management*** with Ted Leemann (McGraw-Hill, Summer 2010) adds SideWise Thinking to conventional project management. It's a powerful combination that will help you find opportunities, solve problems, and gain insights into the real challenges facing even the toughest projects. Learn how to adjust your thinking to avoid cognitive decision traps, run high-powered brainstorming sessions that turn blue-sky ideas into practical results, and manage when the project is tightly constrained, highly complex, and very uncertain. Features new techniques for managing assumptions and risks, including the powerful Seven Level Outcome Evaluation Technique.



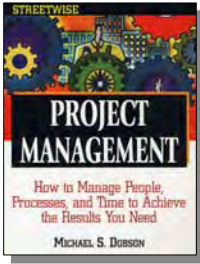
***The Six Dimensions of Project Management*** (Management Concepts, 2007) Who would imagine that a project management book could also be funny? Sharp and insightful case studies illustrate core project management principles in memorable form. From Bugsy Siegel's management of the Flamingo Hotel to G. Gordon Liddy's management of the Watergate break-in, you'll see real life project management up close like you've never seen it before.



***Practical Project Management*** (SkillPath, 1996) The most popular resource for new project managers. Clear, quick, easy to read and filled with practical detail, this book has been chosen by numerous companies as the one project management book to be given to each and every employee.



***The Juggler's Guide to Managing Multiple Projects*** (Project Management Institute, 1999) The first formal project management book to address one of the toughest challenges any project manager can face: multiple projects. What kind of project portfolio do you have? *Task-based* portfolios involve very small projects, but lots of them—when you have a full-time job on top of them. *Independent* portfolios involve projects that share resources but have unconnected outcomes. *Interdependent* portfolios involve larger projects that may share resources, but definitely have connected outcomes.



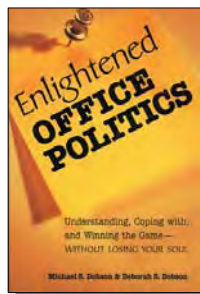
***Streetwise Project Management*** (Adams Media, 2003) This comprehensive yet highly readable 386-page resource is PMBOK® compliant, covering everything from PERT and CPM to project charters and team building. It's the one-stop resource every professional project manager needs—and it's accessible enough to be useful to the new project manager, too!



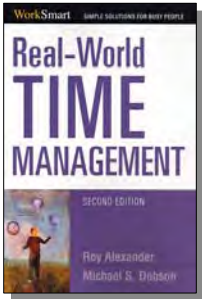
***Project Management for the Technical Professional*** (Project Management Institute, 2001) There's really no such thing as a promotion. Instead, each level up the ladder amounts to a career change. From technical work to people management, from facts to politics, the transition can be tough. Let this book show you how to manage the transition and equip yourself for your new role.



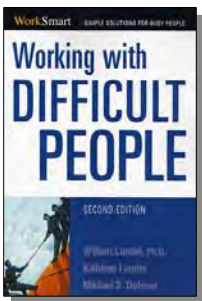
***The Triple Constraints in Project Management*** (Project Management Essential Library) (Management Concepts, 2004). The project manager's universe is bounded in three dimensions: how long have I got, how much can I spend, and what do you want it to do? The triple constraints of time, cost, and performance are at the very heart of project management. If you don't understand the Triple Constraints nature of your project, you'll overlook resources and fall into traps for the unwary. Don't let this happen to you. Detailed cases lay out exactly how to find the hidden resources in your own project. (Part of the Project Management Essential Library.)



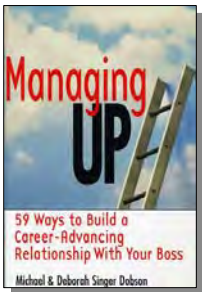
***Enlightened Office Politics*** (AMACOM, 2006) Take a positive look at the political side of the workplace, see why office politics are inevitable and important, and learn how to play them—and win—in an ethical, principled manner.



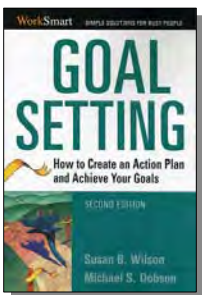
***Real-World Time Management*** (AMACOM, 2008) Most of us dream about having a few extra hours in our day for taking care of business, relaxing, or engaging in the activities we most enjoy. But how can we make the most of our time when it seems as though there aren't enough hours in the day? This instructive guide to time management is full of tips, techniques, and commonsense advice that will make anyone more productive.



***Working with Difficult People*** (Worksmart Series, Second Edition) (AMACOM, 2008) This is a handy tool to help novices through seasoned managers deal with difficult employees; it's a quick read and easy to follow.



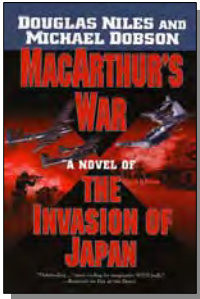
***Managing Up: 59 Ways to Build a Career-Advancing Relationship with Your Boss*** (AMACOM, 2000) The ideas, strategies, and tactics found here will help you to \* Enhance your relationship with your supervisor in a constructive and effective manner \* Accurately you're your boss's likes and dislikes \* Provide the kind of support that helps your boss succeed \* Make sure you're in tune with their boss's goals \* Build mentoring and networking relationships throughout the organization \* Handle criticism, deal with problem bosses, and more.



***Goal Setting: How to Create an Action Plan and Achieve Your Goals*** (Worksmart) (AMACOM, 2008) Why is it that some people consistently seem to get more done than others? The answer is that they know how to set specific, achievable goals for themselves...and then follow through on them. This revised and updated edition of *Goal Setting* features worksheets, quizzes, and other practical tools, giving you powerful techniques to set a goal, make a plan, and acquire the resources and power necessary to achieve your objective.

## Alternate Histories

Three highly acclaimed novels by the team of Michael Dobson and Douglas Niles

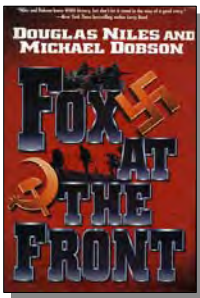


*MacArthur's War: A Novel of the Invasion of Japan* (Forge, 2008)

What if the Battle of Midway was yet another setback for the Allies? If the Manhattan Project was subject to lethal problems, delaying the creation of the atomic bomb? What if the United States couldn't intimidate the Japanese into surrender?



*Fox on the Rhine* (Forge, 2000) July 20, 1944: A group of disillusioned officers of Hitler's high command plant a bomb that succeeds in killing the Führer, bringing forth an option for surrender, peace, and survival for all of Germany . . . but Himmler has other plans.



*Fox at the Front* (Forge, 2003) The sequel to *Fox on the Rhine*, the action here takes you to the bloody end of WWII, with the Soviet Union re-entering to ignite non-stop tension.

# Client List

Administrative Offices of the US Courts  
Alcom Power  
Alix Partners  
American Management Association  
American Society for Quality  
American University  
Arthur Anderson  
Australian State Rail  
Bechtel Plant Machinery, Inc.  
Bechtel-Bettis Marine Propulsion  
Biblical Archeology Society of Northern Virginia  
Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church  
BWX Technologies (subsidiary of Babcock & Wilcox)  
Calvin Klein Cosmetics  
Center for Systems Management  
Charlotte Nature Museum  
Dun & Bradstreet Business Education  
FEMA  
Fred Pryor Seminars  
GENCON Game Fair  
GP Putnam Sales Conference  
Harcourt  
Health Care Financing Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services  
International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP)  
International Planetarium Association  
Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory  
Management Concepts  
NASA  
National Security Agency  
North Carolina Writers Conference  
Project Management Institute (various chapters and regional conferences, multiple times)  
Random House Merchandise Sales Conference  
Scientific Research Corporation  
Sears (Corporate HQ)  
SkillPath Seminars  
Smithsonian Institution Associates Program  
The Weather Channel  
Trane  
Union Carbide  
University of Alaska/Kodiak  
University of Newfoundland  
University of North Carolina/Charlotte  
University of Western Australia Center for Aborigine Studies  
US Air Force Blue Flag, Hurlburt AFB  
US Coast Guard  
US National Archives  
US Navy Reactors Program  
US Postal Service Headquarters  
World Science Fiction Convention

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