

# SAMOHT LAHCOM

## stories



The Greatest Project Manager  
in the World

# WARNING

**This book contains humorous and outrageous  
advice from our favorite fictional project manager**

**Samoht Lachom Stories – The Greatest Project  
Manager in the World**



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Tom Mochal. Contributions from Sean Mochal.

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## **Overview of TenStep, Inc.**

We hope that you enjoy this book from TenStep, Inc. We specialize in business methodology development, training and consulting. Our focus is to provide value to our clients in the areas of project management, program management, Project Management Office, portfolio management, the development life-cycle and application support.

Our products and services fill an important gap that exists in most organizations. For instance, let's assume that your organization needs to become much better at managing projects successfully. Once you decide you need to be better, you are probably not going to run out and buy software tools. The first thing you will probably do is realize that you need to have a good, common set of processes, best practices, templates and other components of a common methodology.

This is where our products and services come in. When you realize that you need a good set of common processes, you can either spend months and months creating them from scratch, or you can use our products as your base, and make the minor customizations that are needed for your specific organization.

Building a methodology from scratch could take months (or years) and require a large expenditure of money and time. Using our products and services allows you to have the basic methodology in place immediately. We can train your people in using the methodology and we can help you with training and implementation services, such as:

- Basic and advanced project/program management and project lifecycle classes
- Project Management Office and Portfolio Management workshops
- Methodology deployment services
- Methodology customization
- Coaching and mentoring
- Project assessments and quality assurance
- Much, much more

Our products and services cover project/program management, Project Management Offices, portfolio management, the development life-cycle and application support.

Our value proposition is simple - we take the time and effort to develop these important business processes so that you don't have to. We also update and enhance these important business processes so that you don't have to.

How can we best help you meet your important business objectives? Contact us for more information.

### **TenStep, Inc.**

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## **Overview of this Book**

*Sam Labcom is a fictional character working for a fictional company in a fictional country. These stories are meant to be humorous. In fact, the advice given is not nearly accurate in terms of project management practices and techniques. The stories are meant to be humorous in that they are ridiculous.*

*PLEASE do not take the advice seriously.*

## **Who is Samoht Lahcom? (Remember, he is really a pretend character)**

My name is Sam Lahcom and I am the greatest project manager in the world. Please excuse my poor English. I am from the country of Putympkin. Project management is shiny and new to my country but I have been practicing this fine art for many many years before it has become so popular. Many peoples that work for me and rely on me for promotions have told me that I am in fact the greatest project manager in the world.

We are pleased to welcome a new guest columnist Samoht (Sam) Lahcom, to provide project management advice. Sam has an MPP from the IMP Institute in West Bromo, Fuuumistan.

## **1. Learn How to Create a Dysfunctional Team and Make Everyone Mad at You**

**Dear Sam,**

*I recently took over a project from a prior manager who was promoted. The project team seems to be working productively and everyone gets along well with each other. We are hitting our deadline dates – sometimes even a little early. Our customers are very supportive and happy. They have offered to withhold any scope change requests until this initial set of requirements is implemented in production.*

*Everything seems to be going well – perhaps too well.*

*Every team I have been on in the past had problems. I feel a little uneasy without some conflicts. It is healthy. The prior manager fashioned a high-performing team, but they appear to all be on autopilot. Do you have any other ideas for how I can shake things up?*

*Hapi D.*

**Answer:**

The following reply is from the official desk of Samoht Lahcom.

Hapi,

You certainly have a situation that I have not run into very often. You may have a good thing going, but as they say – too much of a good thing can actually be bad for you. Teams are made up of people, and it seems that people always have misunderstandings, miscommunication and tension. I have some ideas for you as the project manager, that may help, as you say, “shake things up”.

### **Communicate poorly**

Have you been on a project where the project manager is a poor communicator? This trait usually results in a miserable project experience for everyone. First, give unclear instructions when you hand out work so that people are not quite sure if they are doing things right or not. Of course, don't provide status updates so that people can see the progress being made. Keep the overall status of the project to yourself.

### **Don't praise or complement anyone**

When people on your team do a good job, just act like they are finally meeting your expectations. People don't expect money or gifts when they do a good job – just a pat on the back and a ‘well done’ by their manager. Don't give it to them. Then they will start to wonder why they bother to work hard, and their performance will start to degrade.

### **Don't set clear expectations**

People like to understand what is expected of them so that they know the challenges they need to meet. Since you are the project manager, you can thwart this desire. When you hand out work assignments, give a deadline date, but then shorten the deadline just as the activities are coming due. When a team member is creating a paper deliverable, like a testing

plan, don't give them any guidance on how it should be prepared, but then complain that it is not what you wanted when they send it to you.

Overcommit on behalf of your team

Your customers are being too nice by holding back on change requests. They have a business to run. They should expect the team to meet 100% of their needs. Let them make changes to the requirements, but don't use any kind of scope change process. Just tell them that your team can get the new work done within the existing budget and deadlines. You will accomplish two things. Your team members will be upset at you, and you will get high customer satisfaction ratings.

### **Have everyone work overtime to make up for the problems you caused**

This is the one where you should see the payback in terms of team friction. As you know, people usually don't mind working overtime when the business needs demand it. However, based on the items we have already discussed, no one will enjoy working overtime because of poor communication, unclear or wrong expectation setting, and scope not being managed effectively. The team will start to grumble and complain, and productivity will suffer as a result.

### **The bottom of the line**

Hapi, the project manager has a lot of control over the dynamics and morale of the team by the way they manage processes and people. I have just given you some of the characteristics of a poor project manager. There are many others as well. If you start to emulate these traits, you will join the legion of other project managers who communicate poorly, provide vague assignments, don't praise anyone and over commit the team. In other words, you are in good company. I wish you the best of luck in your quest to "shake things up".