



North America Research Working Session Summary

October 11, 2009

Orlando, FL

The Research Open Working Session generated lively discussions around the subject of Change Management. As described by Lynn Crawford, PhD, with Bond University in Sydney, Australia, change management is not 'change avoidance'- not change control. The session focused on guiding people through the change implicit in every project. The 100+ attendees participated in exercises and discussions that explored the concepts of change management, and provided experience-based input to current research efforts being conducted by PMI.

Marge Combe, a change manager for a large corporation and consultant with Vernal Management Consulting, LLC, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, provided the conceptual base for how people change, and what they need in order to successfully transition. She shared a change management model that operates within the nine PMBOK knowledge areas, emphasizing the need for early communication with and participation by those who will be affected.

Dr. Anat Hassner-Nahmias, also of Sydney, Australia, and a consultant with Presence of IT, presented her PhD research findings comparing the roles and activities of project and program managers with those of change managers at three Australian companies. Drs. Crawford and Hassner previewed new quantitative research on the same subject being undertaken under PMI's auspices, and invited participation.

The session participants were invited to offer their experiences related to the research propositions advanced by Dr. Hassner. Ms. Combe also used three real-life case studies of large-scale change efforts to illustrate points both supporting and departing from the research findings.

The session generated additional ideas for research in change management, and participants suggested that additional training in change management would be valuable for project managers. There was agreement that, though there are overlaps between change management and project management activities, change management activities start earlier and continue after project implementation, and project managers often do not have the bandwidth to organize all important change management activities.