

# Ron Rosenhead

Helping you deliver on time, on budget and with the right results!



## Learning from projects - Jerry points the way ahead

While browsing the net I came across Jerry Madden who retired from NASA in 1995 as Associate Director of Flight Projects at Goddard Space Flight Centre. He had a 37-year career and was considered by many of his peers to be one of NASA's "premiere" Project Managers. Jerry collected over 100 lessons from project management. The actual list grew to 128 but the name "[100 Lessons Learned for Project Managers](#) still survives"

I thought I would highlight a few here:

- Never ask management to make a decision that you can make. Assume you have the authority to make decisions unless you know there is a document that states unequivocally that you cannot.
- Never make excuses; instead, present plans of actions to be taken.
- Management principles are still the same. It is just the tools that have changed. You still should find the right people to do the work and get out of the way so they can do it.
- A working meeting has about six people attending. Meetings larger than this are for information transfer.
- Running does not take the place of thinking. For yourself, you must take time to smell the roses. For your work, you must take time to understand the consequences of your actions.
- Never assume someone knows something or has done something unless you have asked them. Even the obvious is overlooked or ignored on occasion — especially in a high-stress activity.
- Don't assume you know why senior management has done something. If you feel you need to know, ask. You get some amazing answers that will dumbfound you.
- Projects require teamwork to succeed. Remember most teams have a coach and not a boss, but the coach still has to call some of the plays.
- The project manager who is the smartest man on his project has done a lousy job of recruitment.

I do I like the tone and common sense of these lessons.

I have written before about lessons learnt from projects. Share these around and maybe, just maybe a few projects will be delivered more effectively.

All 128 lessons can be found here.

[http://appel.nasa.gov/ask/issues/14/practices/ask14\\_lessons\\_madden.html](http://appel.nasa.gov/ask/issues/14/practices/ask14_lessons_madden.html)