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As a project professional, how good are you at managing 'difficult conversations' with senior managers?

This is a scenario that our clients come up against time and again: *The goal is clear, and the change plan is agreed. The technical problems are understood, and the resources scheduled. Yet the path to success is never smooth, and when things start to go awry, recriminations begin and senior managers start to pull in different directions.* Sometimes it can end badly – it

descends into scapegoating and even outright bullying of whoever happens to be in the 'firing line'. There are too many instances of this still happening, even in today's supposedly more enlightened and less belligerent business environments. Below you can read about one of our client's experiences of just this type of problem. This month we are talking about the kinds of problems that arise when dealing with senior business stakeholders: what goes wrong, why, and what you can do about it. It's a big topic, and there are many

aspects that we do not have time to cover here. We would love to hear from you...



Bernard Murray-Gates
Bernard supports clients through their business change journeys: from

challenging, structuring and scoping the proposals, through achieving buy-in and resolving conflicts, to ensuring that the change is adopted and sustained, and the benefits realised. To view his full profile consulting.citi.co.uk/bmg



By Nick Dobson, CITI
Have you ever had that horrible surge of panic in your project? Everything is going as expected, if not exactly to plan, and then, without warning, disaster strikes. A contractor comes up and says "the plug in adaptor doesn't fit, we're stuck!" or "the pumps gone down and the spare is missing" or "it didn't happen in testing but half the data has come through corrupted" consulting.citi.co.uk/wco



By Nick Dobson, CITI
In the companion article I discussed how to restore your calm and equilibrium when deciding "What do you tell your manager when the wheels come off?". Here I'll discuss how to prepare for that difficult conversation using a simple four-step plan including situation analysis, options development, options selection and communication... consulting.citi.co.uk/pfdc



By Patrick Boulter, CITI
Here at CITI quite often we are asked both complex and interesting questions from project, programme and change managers who may not have peers within their organisation to discuss issues – or may have an organisation where these questions cannot be asked! This month we were asked what happens if key senior managers have 'lost interest'... consulting.citi.co.uk/smli