**If you don’t know what to say … pause and say “Thank you…”**

This is one of the best pieces of advice I have been given by my parents. And, don’t take me wrong, it hasn’t always been easy…. Being quite an outspoken person, who often speaks before taking a deep breath and thinking through the response, particularly the “pause” part has been quite challenging. However, I can’t underestimate the value of this advice especially in difficult, often confronting, situations when the only thing that wants to get out of my mouth (and quickly) is … you know what!

Saying “thank you” is such a powerful thing. It brings calm when the air is boiling. It brings smiles to even most tense looking faces. It builds trust. It brings joy. It takes less than 1 sec (in English at least), doesn’t cost a cent and actually can be expressed without saying. There is never a bad time to say ‘thank you’.

As project managers, we often forget that it’s really not us but our team that make the projects happen. It’s our team that make us successful and our team that help us get through challenging times. So, make sure you build saying “thank you” into your daily routine – make it part of WBS if you have to! And, if you are a New Year’s resolutions person, make this one yours for 2014: To say ‘thank you’ at least once in every conversation.

As I reminiscent on the past 2 years in my role as Communications Director at PMI Sydney Chapter, I feel I have been so privileged to work with a group of unbelievably committed, skilled, reliable and fun volunteers who have done an amazing job keeping the chapter communications flowing, informative, vibrant and ever improving. From re-vamping our website, the new Critical Path and refreshed e-blasts , all of which now offer advertising opportunities as a service to the members and way to raise revenue for the chapter, we have achieved so much. Ashish Tilara has done an incredible job as our website guru as well as re-designing the newsletter (and now acting as Chief Editor). Megha Kanth has been keeping you all informed about global PMI events. Joan Baar, together with Siri Padmanadham who joined later in the year, have worked tiredlessly as editors of the newsletter. Ida Rohne has made a great contribution through her articles, research and editorial skills. And, Karthiga Prasana has been keeping you all engaged through our social media platforms.

We have had several other volunteers working with us through the year and to all of you “THANK YOU!” (yes, shouting loud in capital letters ☺ ). None of what we have achieved would have happened without your tremendous input.

I am very excited about the new opportunities and challenges and things to learn in 2014. In my new role as Vice President, I am looking forward to working with the new board to create an even better chapter that we have had so far. My personal ambition is to make the PMI Sydney Chapter the one local professional organisation every project, program and portfolio manager wants to be a member of!

Have a wonderful Christmas and remember, saying ‘thank you’ is a great gift!

All the best

Maja Kowalski