

Status Reports are No Fun

Question:

My organization requires me to create a status update on a monthly basis and I have to tell you it is a real pain. I try to tell my boss that I would be happy to give him a verbal update if she is interested. However, it has to be in writing. The time that I spend writing a status report could be better spent actually doing real work on the project. How can I make the case to stop these reports?

Marco

Answer:

Marco,

I have to agree with you that status reports can be a real thorn for many project managers. I would personally rather “climb a beanpole” than do these updates. (Not sure if that saying translates to English well.) I have the following logical arguments for you the next time you talk to your manager.

- Communication blackout. One argument you can make is that you don’t believe that communication is not important on your project. In fact communication is actually a hindrance. You should tell your manager that you just want to keep the project status to yourself. If anyone wants to know what is going on they should just ask you. And by the way, you are very busy and so the first you can see them is after the project ends.
- Time commitment. If the prior argument does not work, then base your case on the time commitment required to complete the report. How long does it take to create a good status update – maybe 20 minutes? Add it up – that is four hours in a year that you have to spend communicating project status. Just imagine that instead you could get four of your major deliverables completed one hour earlier. Think of the time-to-market implications!
- Aptitude. It sounds like you would rather be working on the project itself rather than managing the project. So, go ahead and tell that to your manager. Let her know that you just don’t have the smarts to be a project manager – that it is too hard for you. Ask if you can just be a team member instead where you can work in a hole and never speak to anyone. It sounds like this will make you happier and will be worth the demotion and lower pay you will receive.

These are just a few arguments that you could use. I hope that these and other logical explanations can help you in your search.

Summary

First of all, I sympathize with you. However, because of my larger brain, I have found that it is logical to complete the status reports. In the past I wrote very short reports to save time, but then I was constantly asked questions by our moron clients. So, I decided

to write a better status report so that I did not have to answer all the follow-up questions. So, you see that the better status report actually saved me time and hassle during the project. But of course, my team members call me the Greatest Project Manager in the World, so I don't expect that you would understand.

I encourage you to follow my advice above, and then tell me in a few months the name of your new company.