

### OVERVIEW

This edition of the PMCentersUSA newsletter highlights the following:

#### Certification Dashboard

PMI PMP®	IIBA CBAP™
Over 265,000	Over 400

#### 2009 Webinar News (page 2)

New Webinar Schedule posted on PMCentersUSA website.

#### IIBA NEWS (page 4)

"Requirements Sign-off: A Weapon or Project Milestone", is written by Nilesh A. Raje, Lead Business Analyst with SYSTIME Computer Systems Ltd. This article explains the details of Requirements Sign-off and its associated impact on projects.

#### PMI NEWS (page 6)

In the article, "The Search," Sarah Fister Gale points out that there is more of a global need for project managers than ever before. Despite the economy, project managers remain a hot commodity.

#### NEW SECTION - Monthly Book Review (page 9)

This book review of "The Goal," is written by Fred Bentzel, PMCentersUSA Business Process Improvement Practice Director. "The Goal" discusses important business principals that are used to save a failing manufacturing plant. Learn from the main character how to take your organization to a higher level of performance.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT: PMCENTERSUSA WEBINAR CONFERENCE Earn 0.5 PDUs for Every Webinar You Attend

PMCentersUSA is offering new educational webinars for 2009. The webinars are a half hour format during the noon time frame (EST) and provide 0.5 PMI PDUs. Our webinars will be grouped together for PDU reporting purposes and listed on PMI's website as the "PMCentersUSA 2009 Webinar Conference." To report these PDUs, keep a record of your attendance and claim the hours once you have accumulated at least 1 PDU. We will discontinue issuing certificates for attending the individual webinars but will continue to keep a record of attendance for each presentation. Should you ever need to provide PMI with specific data on the webinars you attended, please contact us.

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2009 WEBINAR NEWS

PMCentersUSA has added a new Webinar Schedule to our website!

[Click Here](#) to view the new Live Webinar Schedule for 2009.

**FEBRUARY WEBINAR SCHEDULE**  
\*Webinars are held from 12:00 - 12:30pm (Eastern Standard Time)

Webinar	Day	Date	Register
Bad Estimates	Thursday	February 5, 2009	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
Using Use Cases	Thursday	February 12, 2009	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
Data Modeling Part 1	Thursday	February 19, 2009	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
Data Modeling Part 2	Thursday	February 26, 2009	<a href="#">Click Here</a>

**FEBRUARY LIVE WEBINARS**

**NOW OFFERING 0.5 PDU's for Each Webinar!**

**“Bad Estimates Just Don’t Happen!”**

Joe Lukas, PMCentersUSA Vice President, has over 30 years of estimating experience, and based on his experience, bad estimates just don't 'happen'. Bad estimates are almost always the result of incomplete information and/or lack of communication. This webinar will discuss the common barriers to the preparation of accurate estimates, and provide timely tips that can be used for preparing more accurate estimates.

**“How Do We Use These Use Cases, Anyway?”**

Many companies are utilizing Use Cases on their projects as part of their requirements elicitation. But what do you do with them afterwards? Are these all the requirements, and can the solution team use them? Attend this webinar and see what must be done to make your Use Cases really useful.

**“Advanced Data Modeling Tips and Tricks: Part 1”**

On today's projects, with the recent standardization of the Business Analyst's (BA) role, Data Modeling has landed directly on the BA's plate. As an analysis methodology, Data Modeling is unparalleled in its ability to force clear thinking on the information content of a project. In this first part on advanced data modeling, we will do a quick review of the basics before jumping into the resolution of the many-to-many relationship. Data normalization, up to sixth level, will also be examined.

**“Advanced Data Modeling Tips and Tricks: Part 2”**

Data Modeling is an important analysis skill for a Business Analyst. In the Part 1 webinar, we discussed the many-to-many relationship and data normalization. This Part 2 webinar will discuss hierarchical structures, generic data modeling, and data modeling traps that are waiting out there.

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WEBINARS	WHITE PAPERS
<p><b>2 NEW On Demand Webinars:</b></p> <p>“Creating Competitive Advantage Through Goal Alignment”</p> <p>“Project Negotiations: Deal Yourself a Winning Hand”</p> <p>“Common Scheduling Mistakes and How to Avoid Them”</p> <p>“Overview of the BA Master’s Certificate Track”</p> <p>“Overview of the PM Master’s Certificate Track”</p>	<p>“Effective Use of Milestones to Manage Projects and Communicate with Management”</p> <p>“Introducing Earned Value Analysis on Existing Projects”</p> <p>“Is Your Schedule Correct?”</p> <p>“It Works! Risk Management on an IS Project”</p> <p>“Take Control of Your Project with Earned Value Analysis”</p> <p>“Bad Estimates Just Don’t Happen”</p> <p>“Can YOU Handle the Truth? Truth as a Factor in Risk Management”</p> <p>“Earned Value and Why It Doesn’t Work”</p>

**NEW: Industry Aligned Private Training information!**  
**Call 1-888-762-3683 for additional details.**

### “Requirements Sign-off: A Weapon or Project Milestone”

By Nilesh A. Raje, Senior Consultant with SYSTIME Computer Systems

In today’s world of emerging and competitive markets, it is an accepted fact that many software organizations still struggle to complete projects on time, on budget and with a benchmark of quality. The reasons for projects not being delivered on schedule may involve a lot of parameters such as lack of user involvement, incomplete requirements, changing requirements or mandatory sign-off on the Requirements Document, which serves as a benchmark for customer approval.

#### What is a sign-off?

It is imperative that every project participant understands what Requirements Sign-off means, and its associated impact on the project. Customers should not dismiss sign-off as meaningless but rather consider it as a project milestone. Requirements sign-off means a formal agreement with the project stakeholders, stating that the contents of the requirements document, as drafted, are complete to the final projections and that there are no open issues left to be addressed. The sign-off serves as a formal agreement, indicating that the requirements drafted in the document are approved by the customer so as to enable the development team to go ahead with the next planned project activity.

#### Obtaining a Sign-off

Obtaining a requirements sign-off is typically the final task within the framework of Requirements Communication, which is an expression of the output of requirements gathering to all those concerned with the project.

A sign-off typically involves a one-on-one final review of the requirements document with the project stakeholders.

At the end of the review, the stakeholders are responsible for formally approving the reviewed requirements document. Where requirements apply only to a subset of stakeholders, it is appropriate for each stakeholder to sign-off only on those requirements falling directly under them.

A business analyst is responsible for updating the requirements document or recording any observations that might have been raised during the review process. In an unlikely event that any of the project stakeholders declines to sign-off, then the business analyst needs to alert the project manager to the absence of the requirements approval, and provide the reasons why the approval has not been secured.

#### Sign-off: Project Milestone

For a Business Analyst, getting a formal approval of the requirements document means a closure to the requirement gathering activity. The problem is many of the project stakeholders are apprehensive when they are asked for requirements sign-off. And the reason is, they may consider sign-off to be a weapon used by the business analyst to call a halt to the requirement gathering activity.

For a business analyst, sign-off is not a weapon but a project milestone. The task is complete when all the project stakeholders have signed off, and once this milestone is achieved it should be formally communicated to the project team.

Often the size of the requirements document is so massive that it runs over hundreds of pages, and the customer does not have the time to read the whole document or give justice to it. The result: The customer agrees to give the sign-off without understanding its potential impact.

The project manager views sign-off as the yardstick to freeze project requirements. So whenever a new scope creeps in, the project manager is quick to react, now that there is a sign-off obtained.

### Conclusion

It is impossible to know all the requirements early in the project as they keep on changing with the passage of time. While the business analyst works to bring all the stakeholders to a common understanding of the requirements, the customer feels that until there is a sign-off, the development team can not start the coding, thereby causing a delay in the project deliverables.

Customers also fear that they won't be able to make any further changes once they approve the requirements document. Customers need to understand that a sign-off gives them the assurance that their proposed system will work and that the project scope is kept under control, without scope creep. The business analyst is confident that future changes to the project will be kept to a minimum.

A sign-off is not a weapon but a project milestone, that leverages agreement to build a strong customer development partnership, leading to project success and resulting corporate benefits.

### About the Author

*Nilesh A. Raje works as a "Lead Business Analyst" with SYSTIME Computer Systems Ltd. based in Mumbai.*

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## “The Search”

By Sarah Fister Gale

Despite a world wide job market that can only be described as awful, project managers remain a hot commodity. With massive infrastructure projects cropping up in almost every nation and a dramatic spike in organizations embracing project management methodologies, the battle for project managers is only intensifying.

And it knows no borders.

A Japanese company might be poaching a project manager from a Latin American company, while an Indian organization is stealing back one of its employees that went off to the Middle East.

“There is more of a global reach for project managers than ever before,” says Sheree Rulard, senior recruiting consultant for Beeline Recruitment Process Outsourcing, which represents Bechtel Central Recruiting in Durham, North Carolina, USA. “If we need to fill a position in Washington, D.C., USA, we’ll look everywhere from Texas, USA, to Australia to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.”

Of course, identifying talent is just the beginning. Skilled project managers are well aware of the high demand for their talents. And they come to negotiation tables armed with a breadth of expectations—not all of which come down to money.

“It’s not all compensation-driven,” Ms. Rulard says, noting that she frequently sees project managers making lateral moves to find positions better suited to their personal or career needs. “It’s about how the company treats its employees. They want to know whether there is potential for training and going to seminars and the opportunities for long-term growth.”

And companies that don’t offer what the candidates are looking for may suffer the consequences—especially if those companies are looking to launch complex mega-projects.

“Unfortunately, there are a small number of people who are good at managing large-scale projects,” says Harold Sirkin, a Chicago, Illinois, USA-based senior partner leading global operations at The Boston Consulting Group and co-author of *Globality: Competing with Everyone From Everywhere for Everything* [Business Plus, 2008]. “It’s an incredible talent to have, and those who have it are in huge demand. Companies need to take a much harder look at how they recruit project managers and what they do to keep them happy once they are on board.”

Arup is one of those companies on the prowl for new project talent. And the firm of designers, engineers, planners and business consultants is finding slim pickings these days—which is starting to hurt the bottom line.

“Our growth is significantly constrained by our ability to find good project managers,” says Rob Robson, PMP, a Melbourne, Australia-based project management leader at Arup.

Once he does manage to find the right person, he helps to customize a career path through an appraisal process that includes a training plan. He also offers a mentor and helps in choosing projects aimed at inspiring and challenging that specific project manager.

“They all go at different paces and in different directions, and they all have different needs,” Mr. Robson says. “You need to tailor your development support for all kinds of project managers if you want to keep them.”

Arup also puts its senior managers through a series of training programs to help them learn how to better reward and motivate their people.

“Different things tweak different people,” Mr. Robson explains. “Some prefer a pat on the back while others like to be publicly acknowledged for their hard work. We train our leaders how to recognize what pushes their people’s buttons.”

### The Chosen One

Given the talent dearth, it can certainly be tempting to hire anyone who seems like they can get the job done. Yet Mr. Robson says he would rather wait than hire a project manager who isn’t quite right—even if it means foregoing business in the meantime.

“We believe that a bad project manager is going to deliver mediocre work, which is not good for clients or ourselves,” he says.

The company—which employs more than 500 project managers around the world—regularly turns away projects rather than compromising its quality goals with unproven new hires.

“We don’t employ project managers who thump the table and shout at people. We look for project managers with highly developed communication and [people] skills,” says Mr. Robson, who personally supervises about 100 project managers. “We don’t do projects just to get them done. We live Arup’s vision about ‘shaping a better world’ and we have found this is a key factor in why people come to us to have a project manager,” he says noting that many of the company’s projects involve social infrastructure, educational facilities, housing and hospitals.

“We take a relationship-based approach to delivering these projects, and that requires people who are enthusiastic about their work and think about the client’s and the project’s interests first,” he says.

Mr. Robson will even go so far as to hire project managers without the right technical skills or background required if he sees potential in them. “If they have the presence and gravitas to be strong leaders and good communicators, we can train them up on the project management technical skills,” Mr. Robson says. “It’s that extra sparkle we are after when we do interviews.”

And sometimes it’s the candidates who come knocking. “A lot of people approach us for job opportunities because they know our employees are well looked after,” he says.

Mr. Robson isn’t the only leader who believes it is better to wait than to hire a project manager who doesn’t meet the standards of the company.

“Hire well or not at all,” says Rogério de Mello Pires, PMP, program and portfolio manager at Unibanco, São Paulo, Brazil. “Talent is the foundation of any successful venture.”

### Predicting the Future

At a time when project managers seem to have no qualms about jumping ship for a better offer, DirecTV’s office in Buenos Aires, Argentina is an unusual island of certitude. It has had the same staff of project managers for more than seven years.

“For an IT department, that’s a long time,” says Patricio Romero, head of the project management office (PMO) at the U.S. broadcast satellite service provider’s Argentina group. “We have clear career paths and good communication between the team, the managers and the project sponsors. Everyone works well together and they know what their future looks like.”

Mr. Romero helps other managers in DirecTV offices in the region navigate the talent desert and he reports good project managers are scarce in South America.

So he tries to make sure his staff is happy and motivated by recognizing relationships matter just as much as salary.

"If you just work for the money, as soon as more money comes along you'll make the switch. For us, it's all about the career path," he says. "Project managers at DirecTV know if they perform well they will get a better position and they can see exactly what that position is."

For each project manager at DirecTV Argentina, Mr. Romero defines a career path based on a convergence of personal goals and the company's needs. "There is no template," he says. "Some are more interested in technical projects, while others want managerial opportunities. Every project manager is unique."

Career paths are tweaked based on formal annual evaluations as well as less formal biweekly meetings at which Mr. Romero meets with individuals to talk more personally about how they're doing, what they'd like to improve and what challenges they are facing. To help them grow in their roles, team members frequently receive training in new project management methods and people skills.

Mr. Romero's relationship-building strategy also includes team outings aimed at encouraging bonding and open communication.

"The key for me is to stay connected to them and to become one of the team," he says.

That connection comes in handy when rival companies try to poach team members—which happens a lot.

"They know they can come to me when they've been recruited to talk about the offers and why they may have considered them," Mr. Romero says.

"It's better for me to know that it's happening so we can talk about it, and it gives me the opportunity to try and make their situation here better."

He urges other project leaders in PMOs to foster that same sense of trust with their teams. "You don't want project managers to be afraid of the PMO because then they won't come to you when they need help," Mr. Romero says. "But to win their trust you have to prove that you are trustworthy and that you are committed to helping them succeed."

Part of that commitment is arming team members with the knowledge they need.

"The key to success is moving knowledge from people who have it to the people who need it," says Mr. Pires. "Everyone benefits from sharpening their current skills or developing new ones."

Mr. Pires has found that training is actually considered a perquisite, and is increasingly among the demands of talented job applicants.

"Attractive transparent career development processes, proactive professional development programs and attractive remuneration are all key to helping us build long-term relationships with our people," he says.

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A BOOK REVIEW OF:  
"THE GOAL"

by *Fred Bentzel*,  
*PMCentersUSA Business Process  
Improvement Practice Director*

"The Goal," by Eliyahu M. Goldratt, is a business textbook that is written as a novel. It describes the enormous trials and challenges of Alex Rogo, the manager of a failing manufacturing plant. To save the plant he must rethink the basic assumptions that have guided his entire business career. His mentor, a sage named Jonah, helps Alex understand the real goal of his company and the steps he must take to turn around the business.

The story begins with the familiar situation of a company that is struggling to deliver its customers' orders on time. The sales department is angry and panicked over this situation and is demanding that things improve immediately. No one, including Alex, seems to know how to fix the problem without expediting the "hottest" orders through the plant, invariably at the expense of other orders in the schedule. This practice leads to an endless cycle of late orders and dissatisfied customers. Alex knows he needs help and quickly realizes he will not find the answers within the plant.

In an attempt to make things better, Alex seeks out the advice of his mentor, Jonah, an experienced businessman turned consultant. Jonah is the kind of mentor who only provides clues, which forces Alex to think deeply about what Jonah tells him, to develop his own solutions. The first thing Jonah teaches Alex is the goal of business is to "make money." Once this is established, Alex begins to understand the only way to make money in both the short and the long term is to deliver customer orders on time while still maintaining the specified quality.

He also learns that reliability is important, and this helps him begin to build a positive relationship with the sales department.

Alex and his staff start to tackle their problem by focusing on the causes of delayed customer orders. They find that many orders are delayed because they reach a point in the manufacturing process when they sit for days, and even weeks, while other orders are processed. This point in the process is defined as a "bottleneck." After discussions with Jonah, they learn that the most important responsibility of management is to increase the capacity of their bottlenecks to meet market demand.

This knowledge serves Alex and his team well over the next few months. They systematically remove several bottlenecks in the manufacturing process and start to ship customer orders on time. The sales department begins to trust the plant, and the quality of life improves for everyone. This success is short-lived, however, because it is discovered that despite the plant's shipping performance, the plant is still not making a profit and is in danger of being shut down.

Alex's staff doubles their efforts to increase the capacity of their bottlenecks, with stunning results. The inventory sitting ahead of the bottlenecks is processed, and they determine they can accept more customer orders than they have historically produced. At first the sales department is reluctant to solicit more orders for Alex's plant, but in the end they agree to help. At the higher levels of throughput, the plant becomes profitable. The plant becomes known across the industry for its product quality and on-time delivery performance.

The story ends on a positive note. Alex is promoted to implement across all of the plants in his company the things he and his staff learned. Moreover, Alex's original staff members are promoted to continue the good work they started at the plant.

"The Goal" is a treasure of learning for businesspeople who want to take their organizations to a higher level of performance. These are some other important business principles discussed in this book:

- ROI and cash flow are the two most important financial measures for evaluating progress toward the goal.
- Throughput is the most important nonfinancial measure of success.
- Managers are responsible for continuously driving improvement by:
  1. Increasing the capacity of bottlenecks to meet market demand
  2. Converting excess inventory into throughput
  3. Reducing operating expenses
- An hour of throughput lost (wasted) at the bottleneck is an hour of throughput lost for the entire enterprise.
- The bottleneck will move from one area to another as throughput increases.
- Managers must clearly define all employees' priorities in order to maximize throughput.
- Sustained improvement will not occur until managers overcome employees' resistance to change.

Alex Rogo's team followed a five-step process to increase the throughput of their plant. They systematically approached every bottleneck this way:

1. Identify the bottleneck.
2. Remove the barriers to throughput with solutions that require minimal effort and cost little or nothing to implement.
3. Sacrifice the efficiency of non-bottlenecks to keep the bottlenecks operating as efficient as possible.
4. Increase the capacity of the bottleneck to meet market demand by making a capital investment.
5. Restart the process at the next bottleneck.

Although it is not addressed in "The Goal," benchmarking best practices is the best way to de-bottleneck a process, because benchmarking is the fastest way to learn how others solved the same problem as yours. Use the knowledge gained from benchmarking and "The Goal" to accelerate improvement in your organization.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Fred Bentzel is the PMCentersUSA Business Process Improvement Practice Director. He has over 30 years of business experience assisting companies with large-scale change management initiatives. Fred has pioneered the concept of Business Resource Alignment™, along with many proprietary tools for analyzing and improving the performance of critical business processes. He has facilitated several cross-functional teams to significant improvements in revenue growth, cycle-time reduction, cost containment, employee development, and customer loyalty.*

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING SCHEDULE

PMCentersUSA and universities from around the country have teamed up to deliver a comprehensive series of project management courses leading to a Master's Certificate in Project Management. The university-level Master's Certificate program is aligned with the Project Management Institute's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)* and provides a broad and practical curriculum that builds the skills necessary to tackle the challenges of directing projects in a broad range of work environments. This focused program is taught by skilled project management practitioners, many of whom are leaders in their field.

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2009 Schedule					Pittsburgh	Philadelphia	Houston	South Bend
Project Management Essentials	●	●	●		5/6-7 9/9-10	6/1-2 8/3-4	3/2-3 8/31-9/1	
Project Leadership	●	●	●		5/20-21 9/23-34	3/2-3 8/24-25	3/16-17 9/14-15	
Project Scope and Quality Management	●	●	●		2/4-5, 6/3-4 10/7-8	3/23-24 9/28-29	3/30-31 9/28-29	
Project Schedule and Cost Management	●	●	●		2/18-19, 6/17-18 10/21-22	4/6-7 10/26-27	4/13-14 10/12-13	
Project Risk and Contract Management	●	●	●		3/4-5, 7/1-2 11/4-5	4/27-28 11/16-17	4/27-28 10/26-27	
Project HR and Communications Management	●	●	●		3/25-26, 8/5-6 11/18-19	5/18-19 11/30-12/1	5/11-12 11/9-10	
PMP Exam Preparation		●	●		4/15-16, 8/19-20 12/2-3	6/15-16 12/14-15	6/8-9 11/23-24	
IT Project Management			●		9/2-3			
Managing Multiple Projects			●		9/28-29			
Turning Around Problem Projects			●		10/26-27			
5-Day Project Management Training				●				3/9-13 10/5-9
5-Day Advanced Project Management Skills Track				●				5/4-8 11/9-13

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## BUSINESS ANALYSIS TRAINING SCHEDULE

Our Business Analysis training is designed to meet the standards established by the IIBA, as well as to transfer knowledge and develop skills in the BA discipline. This courseware was created to be compliant with the IIBA's *A Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge™ (BABOK®)*, as well as to prepare individuals with the knowledge and course credits required for the IIBA professional certification examination.

- The **Master's Certificate Track** consists of 7 focused courses in Business Analysis leading to a Master's Certificate in Business Analysis (BA). Each course in the track is two days in duration and provides learning activities and knowledge transfer techniques which enable the Business Analyst to work more effectively according to the IIBA's best practices and also to prepare for the IIBA's CBAP™ certification examination.
- PMCentersUSA has added an elective 8th course to our program, **Technical Skills for the Business Analyst**. This course addresses the essential skills necessary to interact effectively with technical project team members.

Master's Certificate Track



2009 Schedule		Pittsburgh	Philadelphia	Houston
Introduction to Business Analysis	●	5/6-7, 9/9-10	7/27-28	3/5-6, 9/3-4
Enterprise Analysis	●	5/20-21 9/23-24	8/17-18	3/19-20 9/17-18
Requirements Planning and Management	●	6/3-4 10/7-8	8/31-9/1	4/2-3 10/1-2
Requirements Elicitation	●	6/17-18 10/21-22	10/5-6	4/16-17 10/15-16
Requirements Analysis	●	7/1-2 11/4-5	11/2-3	4/30-5/1 10/29-30
Requirements Documentation and Communication	●	8/5-6 11/18-19	11/23-24	5/14-15 11/12-13
Solution Assessment and Validation	●	8/19-20 12/2-3	12/7-8	5/28-29 12/3-4
Technical Skills for Business Analysts	●	9/2-3 12/16-17	12/21-22	6/11-12 12/17-18

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# What Information Are You Interested in Receiving?

## EVENTS WHERE YOU CAN FIND US:

**EVENT:** PMI Pittsburgh Chapter Event  
**Earn 1.0 PDUs through PMI Pittsburgh Chapter**

**LOCATION:** Pittsburgh, PA  
**DATE:** February 12, 2009  
**SPEAKER:** V.P. Joe Lukas  
**TOPIC:** "Project Negotiations: Deal Yourself a Winning Hand."

**EVENT:** PMI NJ Chapter Event  
**Earn 1.5 PDUs through PMI NJ Chapter**

**LOCATION:** Edison, NJ  
**DATE:** February 17, 2009  
**SPEAKER:** V.P. Joe Lukas  
**TOPIC:** "Business Case Documentation."  
This talk will explain common business case analysis terms and discuss the elements of a solid project business case.

**EVENT:** PMI Long Island Chapter Event  
**Earn 1.0 PDUs through PMI LI Chapter**

**LOCATION:** Farmingdale, NY  
**DATE:** March 11, 2009  
**SPEAKER:** V.P. Joe Lukas  
**TOPIC:** "Project Negotiations: Deal Yourself a Winning Hand."

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