

Project Holiday

Use PM to Make the Most of Your Holiday Resources

By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP®, Founder & Chief Cheetah, [Cheetah Learning](#)

When I think back to some of my favorite holidays with my family, it's never about the gifts that were given or received. It's about the experience of being together and capturing some Kodak moments. So, instead of getting caught up in the stress of a holiday budget, how about if you think of your holiday as a celebration that requires two things: your imagination and your Project Management skills.

Here's how to get started:

- Create a Project Holiday board that can go in your kitchen or in your family room.
- Gather your family and create your plan for the holiday together.
- Brainstorm ideas of all the things you can do as a family to make this holiday unique and to create an experience.
- Agree upon the key ideas to make this holiday come to life.
- Set a budget.
- Assign roles and responsibilities.
- Set deadlines.
- Agree upon a couple of milestone meetings to see how everyone is doing.
- Enjoy!

And just in case you need a few ideas to get you going, here are a few of mine.

Ten ways to make your holiday one to remember.

1. **Get your family on board.** Involve your family in the holiday planning, and share with them your goal to create a different kind of holiday. If you involve them in the planning, not only will you have elves at your disposal, you'll have a team that is working toward a goal that they were part of developing.
2. **The power of potluck and food prep.** If your family gathers for a large dinner, consider making it a potluck and ask everyone to bring their favorite dish. If dinner usually falls on one person's shoulders, turn the meal into an event itself, where everyone is cooking together and has a role in prepping, preparing and cleaning up after the dinner.
3. **Give the gift of your time.** During the time that you would normally be opening gifts, give the gift of your time. Go as a family or group of friends and work together at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter for a few hours.
4. **Pick a charity.** You can choose a charity and make a donation as a family to that charity or ask everyone in the family to choose a charity and make a donation in whatever amount each person can afford. Then, everyone can tell a story about that charity and why he or she chose it.
5. **Have an open mike.** If you have a family of storytellers, ask each person to write a holiday story, and have a family reading over hot cocoa or hot apple cider.

6. **Create a gift-giving game.** In the Northeast, we like to do a Yankee Swap. Each person brings one gift that can be for either gender, and there is an agreed upon amount that you're permitted to spend. The gifts are in the center of the room and there is a drawing to determine who goes first. The first person gets to choose a gift. The next person can choose a gift or "steal" the gift that the first person chose. After a gift has been "stolen" three times, then it is safe. This game usually gets a lot of laughs and focuses the fun on the game itself instead of the gifts. You can also make up your own rules, and do your own variation on this, which makes it even more fun.
7. **Create family gift certificates.** The best gift certificates are the ones that are created by the people who know us best. A gift certificate for one month of cleaning the kitty litter box or a coupon for no hassles about homework. These can be really funny and last for a few months after the holiday is over.
8. **Design a family holiday card.** Choose one of your favorite photos of the year and make that your holiday eCard. No mailing or stamps needed. Just a photo that captures a great moment of the year.
9. **Get some exercise in.** Depending on where you are in the world and what the climate is, plan an outdoor activity that everyone can enjoy. Could be as simple as a walk together or even a family 5K run if you have athletes in your clan.
10. **Get a jump on your New Year's resolutions.** Have everyone in the family state a goal that they want to accomplish in '09. There's nothing like saying it out loud and having a lot of people to be accountable to. It's a powerful motivator.

Here's to the very best of the holiday season to you and your family from Cheetah Learning. May you see and realize the opportunities that are often present in every challenge.

Get 5% off as You Use PM to Plan Parties – Cheetah Style

Check out our [PM of Holiday Parties](#) class. Use promo code **Holiday08** by December 31st and receive 5% off the cost of the course.

Chief Cheetah Podcast Is Yours for the Downloading

Want to hear what Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, and Chief Cheetah has to say about the power of Project Management? Download our podcast at <http://podcast.cheetahlearning.com/podcastgen/> and hear the words straight from the Cheetah's mouth.

About Cheetah Learning and the Know How Network

The Know How Network is a monthly column written by Michelle LaBrosse, the founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning. Distributed to hundreds of newsletters and media outlets around the world, the Know How Network brings

the promise, purpose and passion of Project Management to people everywhere. Visit www.cheetahlearning.com to learn more about Cheetah PM, the fastest way to learn about Project Management and get your PMP. You can also get your career in gear with [CheetahWare](#), free Project Management tools from Cheetah Learning.

About the Author



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is an entrepreneurial powerhouse with a penchant for making success easy, fun and fast. She is the founder of Cheetah Learning, the author of the [Cheetah Success Series](#), and a prolific [blogger](#) whose mission is to bring Project Management to the masses.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company with 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. To date, more than 30,000 people have become “Cheetahs” using Cheetah Learning’s innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Recently honored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), Cheetah Learning was named Professional Development Provider of the Year at the 2008 PMI® Global Congress. A dynamic keynote speaker and industry thought leader, Michelle was previously recognized by PMI as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the world.

Michelle’s articles have appeared in over 100 publications and web sites around the world. Her monthly column, the [Know How Network](#) is carried by over 400 publications, and her monthly newsletter goes out to more than 50,000 people. Her radio program, [Your World Your Way](#), is a weekly broadcast that is an inspiring and practical look at how Project Management fuels success.

She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School’s Owner President Manager’s (OPM) program and also holds engineering degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Dayton.

She lives in Nevada with her family and likes to rejuvenate in Alaska where you’ll often find her kayaking, hiking, and riding her motorcycle.