People obstacles in an organization

- **Unprofessional** people
  - Came up through the ranks
  - Learned on the job
  - Never studied or thought much about principles, methods, techniques

- **Antiprofessional** people
  - Suspicious of (even hostile to) specialists
  - Eager to discredit the professional staff, consultants
  - Negative reaction to anything professionals propose

Systems analysts and I.T. management have to work effectively with both.

Attitudes found in organizations

- Professional
  - See [www.idinews.com/professionalism.pdf](http://www.idinews.com/professionalism.pdf)

- Unprofessional

- Antiprofessional

FEAR

- Unprofessional people at all levels may fear that the new system will make their job trivial or even unnecessary.
  - They may feel pride in having mastered some dull, repetitive process. They're **indispensable**!
  - Telling them that the wonderful advanced new system will do all that automatically only reinforces their fear.
  - The **project manager** must understand those feelings and make the team member feel that he or she is now and will continue to be an important part of the new system.

How?
Instilling Professionalism in an organization requires

- Professional people
- Professional environment, infrastructure, support

Both are needed!

Building the staff screening applicants

- Professional
  - Seek top quality (85th percentile or better)
  - Question applicants in depth to elicit free responses
  - Examine samples of applicants' work
  - "Theory Y" (McGregor, MIT)

- Non-professional
  - Seek specific skills (prog. language, etc.) experience
  - Question applicants about detailed tools & techniques
  - A programmer is a programmer!
  - "Theory X"

Organization's environment

- Professional
  - Staff encouraged to contribute ideas & state opinions
  - Flexible working hours
  - Staff encouraged to participate in professional societies, write articles, attend meetings, etc.
  - Most projects well-planned, done in an orderly manner, complying with standard methodology.

- Non-professional
  - Those who offer unsolicited views seen as malcontents, troublemakers
  - Rigid hours + overtime
  - Outside activities mustn't interfere with work assignments, and mustn't use company resources
  - Important projects done in "crash: mode; pressure to set aside standards in order to "get the job done".

Most organizations are not 100% one or the other (but they may strive to be).

Organization's methodology

- Professional
  - Results oriented
  - Emphasis on quality
  - Flexible conventions & guidelines
  - Friendly & respectful style
  - Broad participation in both proposing & reviewing
  - Emphasis on what one must know to do a superior job
  - Management trusts the staff to meet commitments and use sound judgment consistent with their level of experience. ("Theory Y")

- Non-professional
  - Activity oriented
  - Emphasis on uniformity
  - Mandatory standards cover almost all activities.
  - Military tone (the rules)
  - Standards committee or "methodology czar"
  - Emphasis on satisfying enforcement & audit
  - Management expects the professional staff to be lazy and to cheat whenever they get the chance. ("Theory X")
Organizational politics

- Some staff members care more about what's best for their individual status and advancement than about what's best for the organization.

- Such people may oppose any change proposed by their "rivals" and hope for failure! ("I told you so!")

- Some of them are conservative old-timers "We've always done it that way."

- Others are overambitious younger people on the "fast-track"

Reasons for terminating an employee

- Chronic incompetence
  - Faulty work
  - Overrunning estimates

- Laziness, indifference
  - "I only work here"

- Dishonesty
  - Misleading status reports
  - Concealing mistakes
  - Shifting blame

Minimizing exposure to a dishonest team member

- **Binary** status reports
  - an assigned task is either done
    - with expected deliverables available
  - or it isn't
    - with definite estimates for remaining cost & time

- Tasks have **short** duration estimates

- They can fool us for a week or two, but not for half a year.

Giving a reference for a terminated employee

- Companies sometimes worry about litigious (disgruntled) former employees
  - Lawsuit alleging illegal discrimination
  - Complaints to EEO

- Therefore they may set a policy:
  "We’ll confirm that he/she worked here in a given position at certain dates, but we don’t comment on performance, quality of work, or the cause of leaving."
  (But we may nevertheless somehow manage to convey our assessment.)
Is *non-professional* approach to computing ever appropriate?

- Rigid policies imposed from parent company or other outside source, e.g. below average salary ranges.
- Ingrained management style, emphasizing snap judgments over rational decisions.
- Expected continuing decline in business; lack of new applications
- Ultraconservative top management resistant to change.
- Tenured staff lacking upgrade potential.

*But would you want to work there?*