

## **GOODBYES**

I had to say goodbye this week. Goodbye to someone I've worked with for some time but who is moving on now. Goodbye to someone else I had heard good things of and knew from the first meeting I would love working with. Goodbye to a project that we have been fiddling around with for a few weeks.

It is funny how things turn out. Our project, I think, was a great idea and I was really looking forward to seeing it all come to fruition. Until earlier this week, everything seemed to be going well. The money was in place, all the right people were saying all the right things and, even though there were only four of us, our ambitious plans were looking good.

And then it all started to unravel. First one of our sponsors started to look uncertain. Then someone else let us down. The task began to look bigger and the time too short. We could have struggled on. We might just have pulled it off. But in the end we decided to call it a day.

It felt sad, but there was also a sense of relief. All of us are busy people, and putting any more energy into this project might have affected the other things we were all planning to do.

It's not the first time I've had to do something like this. I've worked on enough projects over the years to see some fall by the wayside. Sometimes you have to put a bit of effort into investigating the viability of something before you realise that it just isn't meant to be. Too many people persevere with something because they haven't got the courage to admit defeat.

The infamous NHS registration system is a case in point. More and more time and money continues to be poured into it. The idea was great – one big medical database so that, no matter where you were taken ill, medical staff could access your records immediately and help diagnose what might be wrong with you. For reasons which may never yet become clear, the project faltered, requirements were changed, the costs shot up and it looks as though it may never come to fruition now.

Patients didn't trust the system, there have been too many big projects gone wrong or maybe we just don't trust the government agencies any more. I just wish someone had the guts to say 'enough' instead of struggling on wasting more money.

So our little project, costing a zillionth of this big one, will not be going ahead. Maybe another time, if circumstances allow, we can shake it off and give it another go. Maybe someone else will succeed where we have not.

I have read about successful people who succeeded against all the odds. They struggled on when things looked bleak and overcame the obstacles to win through in the end. I suppose if they hadn't got there, they would be working on some production line and I wouldn't be reading their story.

The temptation is to believe that the right thing is to try, try and try again. But this can lead to disaster. How many businesses should have folded months before they did but kept going long after they should have, through some fear of failure? I think it takes guts to recognise that an idea is not working (or is no longer working) and bravery to make that decision to call it a day.

We never lost any money, just our time; and nobody's reputation was affected. It was no-one's fault that it never worked, but I know I have learned some lessons for the next time. I met someone I am sure I will work with in the future and we all parted on good terms. I hope our little group might come together again soon and maybe we will be able to produce something next time. In the meantime I wish them all the best.

Now what were the million other things on my to do list?