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Advances in Project Management¹

Project Oriented Leadership

By Dr Ralf Müller and Prof Rodney Turner

Leadership in projects provides guidance in direction, gives purpose and meaning to the work in the project. Management in projects makes sure that plans are developed, implementation is controlled and goals are accomplished. Both leadership and management are needed for long-term success. Leadership lights-up the flame of motivation, whereas management provides the oxygen for the flame to stay alive.

A lot has been written about project management, but relatively little can be found on leadership in projects. However, all organizations, including projects, need leaders who give vision, identity, keep the stakeholders and the project team on board and make difficult decisions. Leadership by the project manager is the often overseen success factor on projects

When viewed as a competence, then leadership can be learned, practiced and continuously improved. Competence is hereby understood as the knowledge, skills, personal characteristics, traits, and behaviours that deliver superior results. What is required for leadership competence in project management are intellectual (IQ), emotional, (EQ) and managerial (MQ) competences. These are made up of fifteen underlying measurement dimensions, as shown in Table 1 (after Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003).

¹ This series on *Advances in Project Management* was launched with a Guest Editorial by Professor Darren Dalcher and first article in the December 2009 edition of *PM World Today*. Please read that introductory editorial at <http://www.pmworldtoday.net/editorials/2009/dec/GuestEditorial-DarrenDalcher.html> where Professor Dalcher explains and sets the stage for articles in this exciting series by leading authors in the field of project management. Please read previous articles in the series by visiting <http://www.pmworldtoday.net/archives/archives.htm>, beginning with the December 2009 edition. Each month's article is introduced by [Professor Darren Dalcher](#), special editor of the Series on *Advances in Project Management*. Darren is also the editor of the *Advances in Project Management* series of books for Gower Publishing in the UK – our series includes articles by authors in the Gower book series. To read Professor Dalcher's introduction to this month's article, click www.pmworldtoday.net.

<i>Competence</i>	<i>Measurement</i>
Intellectual (IQ)	1. critical analysis & judgment 2. vision and imagination 3. strategic perspective
Managerial (MQ)	4. engaging communication 5. managing resources 6. empowering 7. developing 8. achieving
Emotional (EQ)	9. self-awareness 10. emotional resilience 11. motivation 12. interpersonal sensitivity 13. influence 14. intuitiveness 15. conscientiousness

Table 1: Competences and their measurement

The intellectual competences (IQ) address the cognitive and rational leadership aspects and the emotional competences (EQ) the interpersonal and social aspects of leadership. The managerial competences (MQ) supplement the other two competences to balance leadership and management at a level that is required for a project.

Through a PMI funded worldwide study we identified the different combinations of leadership competences of project managers which relate to success in different types of projects. These are shown in Table 2.

	<i>Project type</i>		
	<i>Engineering & Construction Projects</i>	<i>Information & Telecommunication Projects</i>	<i>Organizational Change & Business Projects</i>
<i>Main competencies</i>	Conscientiousness Sensitivity (vision)	Communication Self-awareness Developing others (vision)	Communication Motivation (vision)
<i>Situational competencies</i>	Managing resources, empowering, critical analysis & judgement, strategic perspective, emotional resilience, influence, conscientiousness		
<i>Supporting competencies</i>	Achieving, intuitiveness		

Table 2: Hierarchy of importance of leadership competencies by project type

Each project type has main competencies which directly relate to project success, no matter what the particularities of the project are, such as contract type, complexity, life cycle phase or culture the project is in. For example, success in engineering and construction projects is largely influenced by the conscientiousness and sensitivity of the project manager. Project managers' visionary competences are not asked for in these projects. Here the vision may be better given by the project sponsor. Communication competencies are needed for information & telecommunication projects as well as for organizational and business projects. Success in the former type of projects is also strongly influenced by the self-awareness of the project manager and his or her ability to develop project team members. The latter type of projects requires motivational, in addition to communication, competencies.

Situational competencies come to bear through the particularities of projects in a given project type. Examples include: influence competencies are needed in highly complex organizational change projects, or critical analysis & judgment is needed in engineering & construction projects for renewal of existing products.

Supporting competencies work in collaboration with other competencies, but do not emerge as directly linked with project success.

Once project managers are aware of the specific leadership competences needed for their projects, they can start learning to become a competent leader. Over time they are able to adjust their leadership styles not only to project types, but also to, for example, different cultures.

A process of unlearning old behaviour and learning of new behaviour is required for this. In other words, a development from becoming aware of different leadership competences, via developing them for different types of projects and finally securing project success through the right combination and application of them.

In summary, project managers and their leadership style are a critical success factor in projects, which complements the well known project management tools and techniques, or processes and methodologies.

Editor's note: Information about the book - Project-Oriented Leadership, by Ralf Müller and J Rodney Turner, published by Gower, August 2010, 110 pages, softcover, ISBN: 978-0-566-08923-7, priced at £26.50 (Website price: £23.85) - is available at http://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=641&calctitle=1&pageSubject=2064&sort=title&fortcoming=1&pagecount=3&title_id=9392&edition_id=12076&lang=cy-GB

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