

PM WORLD TODAY – GUEST EDITORIAL – DECEMBER 2009

Advances in Project Management

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This editorial launches a new series of articles in *PM World Today* that will extend and enhance our knowledge and capabilities in the management of projects by introducing new ideas and distilling existing knowledge in distinct areas of project management. The growth of the discipline means that it is a growing set of specialisms and competencies that need to be mastered and the series will offer short practical introductions to many of these areas.

Why project management?

Project management is increasingly being recognised as a key competence in many organisations in both the public and private sectors. Trends such as downsizing, reduced management layers, greater flexibility, distributed teams and the challenges of rapidly evolving technology have taken project management beyond its routes in the construction, engineering and aerospace industries and are playing a part in transforming the service, financial, IT and general management sectors. Academic courses, professional training and accreditation programmes are blossoming as practitioners seek to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies. *Fortune* has even rated project management as the number career choice at the beginning of the 21st century.

Project management offers the discipline and framework required to help organisations to transform their mainstream operations and service performance. It is viewed as a way of organising for the future. Moreover, in an increasingly busy, stressful, and uncertain world it has become necessary to manage multiple projects successfully at the same time.

Yet, many organisations have struggled in applying the traditional models of project management to their new projects in the global environment. Projects still fail at an alarming rate. A major ingredient in the build-up leading to failure is often cited as the lack of adequate project management knowledge and experience.

Some organizations have responded to this situation by trying to improve the understanding and capability of their managers and employees who are introduced to projects, as well as their experienced project managers in an attempt to enhance their competence and capability in this area.

The column – A Series on Advances in Project Management

The purpose of this column, which derives its name from a new book series edited by the author for Gower is to make the ideas and principles of the knowledge required to manage projects more accessible. *Advances in Project Management* was introduced in order to improve understanding and project capability *further up* the organization; amongst strategy and senior decision makers and amongst professional project and programme managers. Our ambition has been to provide project sponsors, project management leaders, practitioners, scholars and researchers with thought provoking, cutting edge books that combine conceptual insights with interdisciplinary rigour and practical relevance thus offering new insights and understanding of key areas and approaches.

The articles offered here will feature some of the authors from the series and highlight concepts, ideas and tools that will be of benefit to practicing project managers.

To this end, we aim to:

1. Identify and focus on *key* aspects of project, programme and portfolio management;
2. Offer practical case examples of how new applications have been tackled in a variety of industries;
3. Provide access to appropriate new models in these areas, as they emerge from academic research;

In other words, the series will aim to provide those people and organizations who are involved with the developments in project management with the kind of structured information that will inform their thinking, their practice and improve their decisions. Featured contributions will not be limited to authors in the Gower series to ensure that a wide variety of angles and perspectives are covered.

Geography and scope

People come to project management from many directions bringing with them their own particular take. Over the years we have witnessed a number of distinct influences on the development of project management from various sectors, government bodies, professional associations and even from specific geographical regions. The series is meant to be inclusive and offers a platform to ideas which will be of use to practitioners regardless of where they are based and whatever the geography of the projects that they are running.

Projects take place in organisations and feature people. Our perspective therefore is to focus on what it takes to manage projects in these settings. The topics we cover will emphasise the skills, competencies, attitudes and knowledge that are needed for

successful delivery in a wide range of environments and contexts. We will also endeavour not to get stuck in any particular silo, instead offering a wider and more inclusive context. Some of our experts come from other domains and bring organisational, psychological, sociological or other influences that they can share. The value of the series is in integrating the viewpoints and perspectives and offering improved insights and understanding.

Project management is a dynamic and exciting discipline. Together we can start a journey of exploration, trying to map some of our new knowledge and understanding. We encourage potential authors who would like to share their insights and ideas with the wider community to get in touch with the editor. We look forward to continuing this discussion and extending the boundaries of project management.

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