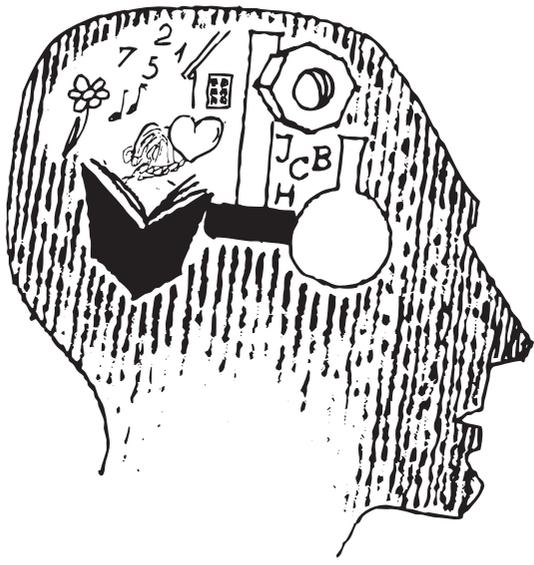


PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A Multi-Perspective Leadership
Framework



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Framework

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About the Book

Professional projects are increasingly confronted by complexity and ambiguity. For successful project management, it is essential to understand the project environment, business, and organizational perspectives, and to identify and interact with stakeholders. Much of the training and teaching of project management is dominated by a belief in prescribed solutions and courses of action that fit all situations, but in order to cope with the challenges of modern projects, a more holistic approach is needed.

Project Management – A Multi-Perspective Leadership Framework suggests that managers view change as an integral part of project development, allowing leaders to better adapt to difficulties and incorporate multiple perspectives. Often, public and private projects do not lead to expected success because of insufficient management of organizational change. This book presents a circular planning process, taking the reader from the loose ideas of a project's inception through to its gradual coherence with the demands of the environment. It breaks a project down into five key elements, allowing managers to easily develop appropriate strategies. This is reflected in the broad spectrum of tools presented in the second part of the book, focusing on practical methods for both planning and leadership.

The book is targeted at practitioners who need an overview of project management techniques through a comprehensive framework and to graduate students who work with complex projects or who wish to relate their studies to broader corporate strategy.

Preface

Although project management is a rather new subject in management and organization theory, it has undergone significant developments in the last two or three decades, partly due to its widespread applications in almost all areas of society. The role of the project manager has changed from that of a planner to the role of a business developer.

For many years we have been interested in understanding the nature of the project environment, e.g., how to identify the kind and extent of uncertainties and ambiguity, how to come to grips with various kinds of complexity, and how to understand the political environment by asking who would like to see the project carried out, and who would be against it.

In recent years, this approach has been supported by new developments. For example, Agile Project Management has acknowledged that often no clear objectives of a project can be established in the early stages; rather a learning process should be staged in a dialog with customers and by means of a series of prototypes.

Lean Thinking has successfully been applied to production, service and product development with its focus on creation of value. This has also implications for project management to focus on creating effect in the receiving organization, and to ensure that stakeholders see the project as a success.

Rethinking project management has gained momentum in recent years. The starting point was an observation that a major part of the project management theory and practice was

preoccupied with looking inwards to planning, organizing, and controlling of a project, rather than viewing a project in a larger context. For example, the Rethinking literature views a project as part of a strategic effort, and acknowledges the necessary organizational changes to take place in order to assure implementation of the project.

Our approach embraces these approaches and seeks to contribute to their further development by means of frameworks, models, and solutions.

We shall present five generic elements of a project, respectively, project management, project task, stakeholders (interested parties), resources, and project environment. This five-by-five model is used to identify the nature of a specific project and to develop appropriate approaches and means. It also allows a circular planning process that gradually leads to coherence among the five elements.

To better cope with the complexity of the project environment, this book adopts a multi-perspective framework by introducing four perspectives: a technical, a business, an organizational, and a stakeholder perspective. In this way, project management may be tied to corporate strategy and organizational development. Also, five dimensions of complexity will be identified and a number of means of managing complex situations will be presented.

In view of the diversity of projects, we have identified five generic types of projects, each with specific characteristics and practice. This has also led us to square up with a standard project phase model. In practice, we see numerous courses of action that reflect the specific situation of projects and that have been acted upon with great empathy and ingenuity. Instead of proposing a standard model for a project's course of action, we will present a spectrum of different models to support a situational approach.

The increased prevalence of projects has created a need to view several projects together. Therefore, we have written a separate chapter on management of several projects, with coordination of projects in a portfolio and a program as a central theme. Also, projects' role in corporate strategy is discussed. The chapter rests,

among other things, on a survey and a development project that we have carried out in Danish companies.

The book is organized in two, almost equal parts: (1) a theoretical part covering key models and issues related to project management. The first part of each chapter introduces a few basic models to the subject of the chapter. The latter part elaborates on the subject by means of additional models and discussions. (2) Appendices with a number of tool sheets aimed at providing practical methods, techniques, and checklists associated with themes of the chapters.

This book is aimed at two groups of readers:

- Graduate students who work with complex projects in their studies and who want to adopt a broader view of project management. They may be inspired by examples from practice and exercises.
- Practicing and reflecting project managers who want to go beyond a specific project manual, to obtain an overview by means of a comprehensive and unified framework, and to be inspired to develop own solutions. Learning from own experience may be stimulated by reflecting on own practice in relation to general models and relevant tools. It may be supported by keeping a logbook with weekly descriptions of activities, important decisions and incidents. Mutual learning may be facilitated by forming an experience group of project managers.

It will require empathy, intuition, creativity, and interplay with people to work with projects on the basis of an effort to understand the project environment, including the uncertainty and complexity of the project task. This will make project management more challenging and also more interesting and rewarding. It may be relevant to ask if companies and institutions are willing to support a more situational, task-oriented and value-driven mode of working with projects, rather than focusing on complying with procedures and directions. We believe that a more systematic and

explicit delineation of the project conditions and a broad discussion of the project task will make it possible to clearly define the responsibilities of a project.

Often in the book, we use the term ‘company’ as the place where projects take place. It should be interpreted in a broad sense to include private and public companies, public institutions and administrations, as well as networks of organizations.

We are indebted to Ms. Anna Falcon Svendsen for her great effort to format our manuscript and figures into a readable form, and to Ms. Louise Olesen Kragh for editing our English manuscript and Ms. Kirstine Rosenkrands Mikkelsen for translation assistance. We thank Annette Wier for her vignettes. We would also like to thank Jaya Chowdhury (MPS Limited, Chennai, India), the Project Manager of our book.

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Jens O. Riis
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