

Preface

Project management is a hot topic. It is a hot topic because projects are the nerve center of a company. It is where new products come from and it's where profits are made or lost. In simplest terms, companies live or die based on the success of their projects. The single most important element in a project's success is the leadership of the project manager. But what is a project manager? Look at the Job Opportunities pages, and what do you see?

- Project Manager
- E-Marketing Project Manager
- Peoplesoft Project Manager—financials
- Facilities Project Manager
- Program Manager Simulation and Modeling
- Project Mgr—IT Finance/BA
- Logistics Engineer/Project Manager
- MMS Project Manager
- Project Manager/Business Analyst
- IT Analysis Project Managers
- Telecom Network Project Managers
- Construction Project Manager
- Program Manager

It may prompt you to ask: “What in the world is an IT Analysis Project Manager?” “Who is a Telecom Network Project Manager?” And: “How are they different from a Project Manager?” All good questions! This book will answer these questions and a whole lot more. I will talk about Project Managers and Telecom Project Managers as well as others and project management and program management and show how they all

relate to each other. Project management is not a binary issue; it is an issue with many variables and many requirements.

We will start with a “big picture” view of project management. How it started, how it developed, and where it is now. We’ll explore who the movers and shakers are and what all this means to you.

There’s a lot of detail in this book. But, even with all the detail, you may need to do some interpolation to find exactly where you stand in all this. The book is also broad. But even with its breadth, you may need to do some extrapolation to create a direction for yourself that will meet your long-term goals. But, after all, interpolation and extrapolation are a big part of project management. It is not simple and straightforward and must be treated as a complex subject

Contrary to what you may have been led to believe, project management is not a simple “Read a book, take a test, and you can do it” exercise. The field of project management is a broad and deep sea where you will create your own course based on your own long-term objectives. Fortunately, there are some lighthouses and buoys along the way, and I will point them out to you to help you stay in the channel.

Part I sets the scene. I explain what project management is all about, where it came from, and where it is today, and introduce you to the various organizations that are the guideposts of the project management discipline. Then I help you determine which organization is right for you. Part I also defines the terms used in project management and separates the different project types. It defines the skill sets and leadership roles required to lead the different project types. Finally, it compares the project types, the skill sets, and the leadership roles.

Part II introduces the five skill set levels and concentrates on achieving these skill levels. The subject areas that constitute each skill level are then presented. Here is where the detail sets in. Each skill level is explained, and I show you a path to achieve each one.

Part III concentrates on improving your project management abilities by allowing you to assess your capabilities. Then I recommend ways to expand your knowledge, gain experience, develop your persona, and improve your performance. If you are looking forward to what you can do with what you have or with what you will develop, this is the chapter that will help you.

Part IV compares the skill levels to various projects and programs and shows you why the different skill levels are important.

Part V is about making career moves at different times in your career and for different reasons. Now that you have it all together,

what are you going to do with it? This part talks about the advantages of staying where you are versus moving to another department or company, and if you move, what you can expect when you get there.

Part VI advocates that you keep the momentum going. Project management is a dynamic discipline, and you really need to stay on top of it. New ideas, new software, and new approaches are being developed every day. I have included recommendations for staying on top of all of these.

You may have noticed that I refer to project management as a discipline and not a profession. What do I mean by this? My view is this: Engineering is a profession, electrical engineering is a discipline. Accounting is a profession, cost accounting is a discipline. Management is a profession, project management is a discipline. So, project management is really a part of the overall profession of management. In fact, project management is the bridge between all the staff elements of the company and the technical heart of the company. To really understand project management, consider it an appliqué—an overlay, if you will—of the entire project task. Project management is, in fact, one of the disciplines that contributes to the overall task by providing planning and leadership. This is fundamental to the concept of the project team.

On the basis of my experience and research I have identified five levels of project and program management. My objective in creating these levels is to set out a plan that coincides with the way business looks at project and program managers. In other words, how business hires, assigns, and promotes project managers—their most important resource. My categorizations differ from those set out by the leading project management organizations, but that's just because there are different reasons for the categories we have each created.

As I said before, you don't read a book or take a course or take a test and wake up some morning as a project manager, nor are you a project manager because your boss appoints you as one. Project management is a discipline you grow into a little at a time. Why? Because project performance holds the purse strings of the company, and project performance is based on the performance of the project manager. No responsible company management will trust an individual with leading a large project or program until they are certain the person has the right stuff.

Individuals grow into project management from their technical

fields. Technical fields include computer science, engineering, finance, banking, health, construction, and dozens of others. Whatever they are, those are the technical fields to which I refer. Individuals can grow into the project management field, but not before they show they are capable of being a manager at some level. Individuals become project managers by first gaining knowledge, then by applying that knowledge to gain experience. Through it all they develop a persona. All this is applied to a task (a project) that results in a performance. If the performance is positive, there will be success. If performance is not positive, the project manager will be looking for another job.

I have devised a table to show you why I have chosen to categorize projects into seven levels and project managers into five levels. Notice that at each complexity level the project manager's technical task becomes smaller and the management task becomes larger. The percentages are devised to show relativity; they are not absolutes. In the far right column is a reference to a PM Skill Level. These levels are explained in detail as the book unfolds. Suffice it to say at this point that the qualifications for each level grow from top to bottom in the table. Certainly it is understandable that responsible management assigns project or program leadership based on the individual's competence.

Project management is not a simple discipline. In fact, it is one of the most complex and difficult jobs in the company. The only way you can maintain your position as a project manager is through positive performance. But positive performance doesn't just happen, it is a complex process that begins with knowledge, is compounded by experience, and is vectored by persona.

Over the years, I have developed a formula that expresses success in project management. This formula is:

$$\text{Knowledge} + \text{Experience} + \text{Persona} \times \text{Performance} = \text{Success}$$

Notice the arithmetic factors in the formula. The factors say that Knowledge and Experience and Persona are additive factors but that Performance is a multiplier. Therefore it is much more important than the other factors. The interesting thing though is that you really can't have positive performance without the other factors. In the formula all factors are interdependent. The formula treats knowledge as the leverage that allows you to gain information quickly. It treats experience as the opportunity that allows you to apply that knowledge, and it treats your persona as the vector you will use to apply your knowledge and

gain experience. With all these factors working in concert, you end up with positive performance. With positive performance, you have success.

Throughout this book there are references to other books and articles. In addition, there are references to many Web sites. When perusing these references, you should keep these things in mind: Printed material is a matter of history. It takes time to formulate and print a book, and, to a lesser extent, an article. Consequently, the timelines of printed material are somewhat dated. But, once printed, the book or article is, at least theoretically, always available. Web sites, on the other hand, usually contain current and dynamic data and can change overnight. Information that is available today may or may not be available tomorrow or it may be available in a different place. This means that as you use the references of this book, you are pretty well assured that a book or article reference will be available but the data may be somewhat dated. The references to Web sites will probably be current but the sites may or may not exist because they may have been updated or removed.