

The Right Projects Done Right!

**From Business Strategy to
Successful Project Implementation**



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Paul C. Dinsmore
Terence J. Cooke-Davies

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Published by Jossey-Bass

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989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741 www.josseybass.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dinsmore, Paul C.

The right projects done right! : from business strategy to successful project implementation / by Paul C. Dinsmore, Terence J. Cooke-Davies.

p. cm.—(The Jossey-Bass business & management series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7879-7113-7 (alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-7879-7113-8 (alk. paper)

1. Project management. 2. Business planning. 3. Success in business. 4. Project management—Case studies. I. Cooke-Davies, Terry, 1941- II. Title. III. Series.

HD69.P75D572 2006

658.4'012—dc22

2005017202

Printed in the United States of America

FIRST EDITION

HB Printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The Jossey-Bass
Business & Management Series

Contents

Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xix
The Authors and Contributors	xxi
1. Introduction: The Right Combination of the Right Projects Done Right	1
The purpose of the book is to present a pragmatic and holistic view of project management, beginning with business strategy and carrying through to final project results, and to promote constructive dialogue among three groups of people, each of whom is necessary to the successful application of enterprisewide project management: top management, project sponsors, and the project management community	
Part One: How to Manage Multiple Projects Successfully Throughout the Enterprise	21
The chapters in Part One explain how to link projects to strategy and to recognize top management's crucial role in creating an environment within which projects can succeed.	
2. Organizational Project Success	27
Organizational project success is achieved when strategy is implemented effectively, when the productivity of scarce resources is improved, and when projects are delivered successfully.	

3. Factors Critical to Achieving Organizational Project Success 43

Factors critical to organizational project success include a means of aligning the whole organization behind the right projects and programs, a comprehensive suite of metrics that gives the right people the information they need, and relentless continual improvement of all practices and processes that are crucial to the management of projects.

4. Some Ways to Achieve Organizational Project Success 63

If successful projects are required for companies to survive and prosper in increasingly challenging times, what does it take to make that happen? Is it a question of restructuring the company, implementing new systems, or bringing about a new mind-set with the people involved? Or is it a combination of these factors melded with other influences from the marketplace and new technological developments? Where should you start making improvements? What actions will have the most punch?

5. The Management of Multiple Projects: Three Success Stories 97

Case studies of three multinational organizations that have made great strides toward linking projects to business strategy are examined: Eli Lilly in the field of pharmaceutical development through the implementation of an organization-wide information system, Ericsson in the field of telecommunications through the development of a portfolio and project maturity assessment mechanism, and Hewlett-Packard in the field of computers and peripherals through the implementation of a project management office.

Part Two: How to Make Sure Each Project Is the Right Project 119

Sponsors have a wide variety of roles to carry out, and their competence is crucial to the success of the program or project that they are sponsoring.

6. The Project Sponsor	123
Sponsors have a wide variety of roles to carry out, and their competence is crucial to the success of the program or project that they are sponsoring.	
7. Selecting and Defining the Right Project	133
Selecting and defining the right project involves much more than choosing projects from a list of proposals. It involves clarity about the business reasons for undertaking the project, determination to include all necessary pieces of work in an appropriate scope, and clear-eyed assessment of the risks and rewards associated with the project.	
8. Aligning Projects with Strategy	153
In a world that is constantly changing, maintaining the alignment of any program or project with enterprise strategy requires constant attention.	
9. Managing Benefits	165
Ensuring that a project delivers the benefits that are expected from it requires both benefits management practices that are integral to managing the project and benefits realization practices that involve “business as usual” managers in harvesting the benefits from the project.	
10. Project Governance and the Critical Role of the Sponsor	177
Executive decision making in the governance of projects involves different behavior from that involved in decisions about business as usual, and understanding what metrics are appropriate is crucial to decision-making success.	
11. Organizational Change Projects and the Leadership Role of the Sponsor	193
The leadership role of the project sponsor requires dedication of time to the cause along with a passionate belief in the business case and the ability to inspire the program or project manager and team to plan systematically yet think	

“outside the box.” Directing and leading organizational change requires the project sponsor to manage diverse relationships and to keep the project closely aligned with the principles of successful change management.

12. Successful Sponsorship: Two Case Studies 205

This chapter features two stories from the experience of large organizations undergoing radical transformation through integrated project management with strong sponsorship: from the United Kingdom, the story of the transformation of a large retail bank, Abbey National’s Retail Change Program, and from the United States, the story of transformation in a city government.

**Part Three: How to Make Sure
Each Project Is Done Right 217**

If a project is done right, following the prescribed practices of project management, common logic has it that the project is bound for success. Yet when the term *success* is applied to projects, interpretations of the relative degree depend strongly on the perspective of the person making the judgment.

13. What Does It Take to Do the Project Right? 221

Of the many recommended project management practices, four are particularly critical for making the difference between success and failure: clarity about the project’s goals and technical performance requirements, adequate resources, effective planning and control, and realistic risk management.

14. Stakeholders and the Complexity of the Human Dimension 245

Methodologies and processes don’t deliver projects; people do. Everything done on projects is done by people, so every technical aspect of project management comes complete with its human dimension. Successful project managers

recognize the need to assemble a team of capable people and to lead them effectively, which requires the mastery of complex interpersonal relationships.

15. Doing It Differently: Variations in Project Management Practice in Different Industries	259
The application of organizational project management is most mature in traditional industries such as engineering, aerospace, and defense, but strikingly different approaches to managing projects are emerging in industries that are more recent converts to enterprisewide project management.	
16. Doing It Right: Development of a State-of-the-Art Methodology	275
This chapters reveals how Ericsson, a global telecommunications company headquartered in Sweden, developed a state-of-the-art methodology for managing projects of any kind in any country.	
Notes	281
Glossary	287
Index	291
For Further Information	303

Preface

It is said that nothing happens by chance: somehow the universe conspires to make certain things come to pass. That seems to be the case in the collaborative project that resulted in this book. The authors' partnership evolved as a consequence of independent works that merged as they began to exchange ideas at international meetings in London, San Antonio, Johannesburg, and Sydney.

Paul C. Dinsmore's articles during the 1990s in the PM Network Magazine on the topic of managing organizations by projects(MOBP) ultimately evolved into the book Winning in Business with Enterprise Project Management (Amacom, 1998) and became a reference for seeing project management from an enterprise, multiproject standpoint as opposed to single-project views as outlined in the Project Management Institute's Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge and most of the literature until that time.

Terry Cooke-Davies's work in developing and managing international project management knowledge and benchmarking networks through his company, Human Systems, created a treasure of experience and information on the art and science of managing projects effectively across organizations. Experiences were drawn primarily from North America, Europe, and the Australian-based Pacific Rim networks. Terry's numerous articles in Project Manager Today magazine as well as papers published in international symposia and project management journals documented many of the findings that became part of this book.

We found great synergy in our face-to-face chats in sundry global encounters and in lengthy transatlantic e-mail correspondence.

Our communications invariably converged on the common theme of conducting a multitude of projects simultaneously across an organization. Both of our respective areas of interest in research found common ground. We both participated actively in developing a broad-based model proposed by the Project Management Institute for measuring organizational maturity in project management—the Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3). Since that time, we have written on the pros and cons of using more complex or simpler approaches to assessing project management maturity in organizations, and that discussion is also presented in this book.

The primary area of convergence in our exchanges, however, always reverted to enterprisewide project management, the application of project principals to companies made up of multiple projects. Much has evolved since the concern for managing multiple projects in organizations emerged in the 1990s. Solutions have ranged from across-the-board training programs to broad-brush integrated systems to project offices and centers of excellence in project management. Standardized methodologies and specialized certification programs have also been applied in an attempt to ensure that multiple projects are dealt with appropriately. We include in this book a discussion of all these approaches, which by themselves constitute partial solutions but when melded together in the right proportions can yield astounding results.

As our discussions evolved, it became apparent that there are three primary thrusts related to projects that are essential to ensure success in business or other organizational endeavors. The book has therefore evolved in the form of conversations, findings, and solutions related to each of the following questions: whether the right portfolio of projects has been chosen to ensure that company strategy is implemented successfully, whether the right projects with the right scope are chosen as candidates for the portfolio, and whether the projects are managed well. We therefore decided to organize the book along these lines to complete the picture of enterprisewide

project management—from business strategy to portfolio management to project implementation and finally to benefits management.

It is with great pleasure that we share our findings and views on a challenging and stimulating topic that can make the difference between failure and success in organizations. Indeed, the strategic application of project management is the key success factor in organizations: the ability to consistently do the right projects and do them right across the enterprise.

Book Organization and Outline

This book is organized around the three primary themes. Beginning with the business strategy, the book shows how to plan, structure, and organize the right combination of the right projects so that the whole enterprise is aligned to the strategy and desired results are substantially boosted. It demonstrates how to implement a “projectized” mentality in an organization so that projects become a natural way of working and doing business. It pays particular attention to the dynamic interactions between multiple projects and multiple levels of hierarchy so as to maximize success.

Potential readers of this book include the CEO, top-level executives, project managers and professionals, academics, and consultants. The book also contains valuable input for organizational change agents and human resource professionals, as it breaks new ground in highlighting the dynamic interactions between multiple projects and multiple levels of hierarchy and in proposing solutions based on observed best practices.

Introduction: The Right Combination of the Right Projects Done Right

Setting the scene for the rest of the book, the introduction describes the unique contribution that this book makes to the literature on managing projects and programs. It describes the three crucial

conversations that need to take place throughout an organization if it is to prosper in the long run and the three “rights” that should ensue from these conversations. The different worlds of the key participants in these conversations are explored, along with the gaps that consequently need bridging.

Three parts follow, each one aimed at a specific audience.

Part One: How to Manage Multiple Projects Successfully Throughout the Enterprise

Part One targets upper management, whose responsibility is to make sure that projects are carried out effectively and consistent with business strategies. Criteria for doing the right projects consistently and doing them right are discussed, including overall level of project management success, overall success of all projects undertaken, productivity of key corporate resources, and effectiveness in implementing business strategy. Critical success factors for doing the right projects and doing them right are also defined, including continuous improvement of business, project, and support processes; efficient and effective portfolio, program, and resource management processes; and a comprehensive and focused suite of metrics covering all levels. Some of the pathways to success outlined in this section are implementation of a strategic project management office; project management maturity models; portfolio management, applying Six Sigma techniques; and building project management capability through training, communities of practice, mentoring, and developing qualifications. Case studies and industry variations are also discussed.

Part Two: How to Make Sure Each Project Is the Right Project

Part Two focuses on the role of executive sponsors and the competences they need to develop in order to fulfill their responsibilities. This includes ensuring that each project undertaken fulfills a clear

business objective and contains all the work necessary to deliver that objective successfully as well as aligning each project with the overall business strategy. State-of-the art practices in managing benefits is reviewed, along with advice on how to measure whether a project is indeed successful. Finally, the sponsor's roles in project governance and as a leader of organizational change are described.

Part Three: How to Make Sure Each Project Is Done Right

The success criteria for doing the project right, including the classic “triple constraint” of time, cost, and quality, are presented along with other criteria such as technical performance, scope, and safety. Variations, depending on project type, are also discussed, as well as factors such as complexity and uncertainty. Critical success factors for doing a project right are presented along with a summary of success factor research and recognition of the limitations due to the composite definition of success criteria. Factors influencing cost predictability and the impact of project type and project size are explained, as are other basic practices such as clarity and achievability of the project goals; putting together a well-selected, capable, and effective project team; adequate resourcing; clarity about technical performance requirements; effective planning and control; and good risk management. Project type and industry variances are also presented, along with surveys and frequently encountered roadblocks.

How to Read This Book

For the avid reader who wants a full overview of project management from business strategy to final project implementation, the classic cover-to-cover approach is the way to go. This guarantees the reader of a broad-based knowledge encompassing project selection, proper management of each project, and issues of managing multiple projects across the enterprise.

Depending on the reader's position, best benefit can be reaped by zeroing in on a particular area of interest. Here are some of the ways the book can best be read, depending on the interest and bias of the reader.

If the CEO wants to develop a more projectized organization to boost the company to new highs, Part One is recommended priority reading. If that part rings a bell with the CEO, then the book should be channeled into the hands of other key stakeholders in the company.

For top-level executives who are often sponsors and the principal interface between corporate strategies and the implementation of multiple projects, Parts Two and Three of the book are suggested reading.

Content aimed at project managers and other project professionals is summarized in Part Three, which talks about how to make sure each project is done right.

Academics can use the book in research and as recommended reading in both business and technical schools, as it covers the range from organizational to specific project management.

Consultants will likewise find the entire book useful for showing the value and strategic importance of project management to upper management.

August 2005

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Acknowledgments

The authors acknowledge the valuable contributions made by past and present member organizations of the Human Systems networks who have provided data for both benchmarking and research and who have shared their good practices with each other in workshops and conferences for more than ten years. It is through such sharing that a comprehensive picture can be obtained of what good practice is in enterprisewide project management. Those organizations include Abbey, Abbott Laboratories, Amgen, Anglian Water, AstraZeneca, Astrium, Australian Department of Defense—Defense Acquisition Organization, Australian Water Technologies, Automobile Association, Axa Australia, BAE Systems, Balfour Beatty, BHP Information Technology, Boehringer Ingelheim, BP Oil Europe, Bristol-Myers Squibb, BT Projects Group, Cable & Wireless, Cable & Wireless Optus, Centocor, Centrica, Coles Myer, Colonial Australian Financial Services, Com Tech Communications, Defence Procurement Agency (UK Ministry of Defence), Department for Work and Pensions (UK), Ericsson AB, Ericsson Australia, ETSA Utilities, Fujitsu Systems, Genzyme Corporation, GlaxoSmithKline R&D, HBOS, Hewlett-Packard Consulting, IBM Global Services Australia, ICL, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research and Development, Kvaerner Construction, Lloyds TSB, London Underground Infracos, Lucent Technologies Australia, Lundbeck, Main Roads—Queensland, Merck, Microsoft, Motorola Electronics (Australia), NASA, Nationwide Building Society, NatWest Group, NCR, New South Wales Department of Public Works, Nortel Networks, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Nycomed

Amersham, Paccar, Perkin-Elmer, Pfizer, Pharmacia Corporation (now part of Pfizer), Post Office Consulting, Project Services (Queensland)—Department of Public Works, Qantas Airways, QBE Insurance, Queensland Rail, Racal Radar, Rail Services Australia, Railtrack, Resitech, Sinclair Knight Merz, Sun Microsystems, TAP Pharmaceuticals, Telstra, Thames Water Utilities, and Westinghouse Brake.

Much help in making sense of the variety of project management practices was provided by professionals at Human Systems, and particular acknowledgment is extended to Stephen Allport, Paul Armstrong, Pamela Ashby, Lynn Crawford, Frank Davies, Marlies Egberding, John Gandee, Tony Teague, and Brian Trefty. Debbie Del-Signore brought to the production of the final typescript of the book the same professionalism and diligence that is a hallmark of her work.

The authors also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Pedro C. Ribeiro, senior consulting associate of Dinsmore Associates, for his insightful suggestions and review of the final manuscript.

Finally, in the production of any book such as this, a tremendous amount of work is carried out by the publisher's team. The authors acknowledge the help and support of the team at Jossey-Bass, including Kathe Sweeney, Jessie Mandle, Mary Garrett, and Bruce Emmer.

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The case studies featured in this book were contributed by practitioners who have each made a substantial contribution to the advancement of enterprisewide project management in their organizations.

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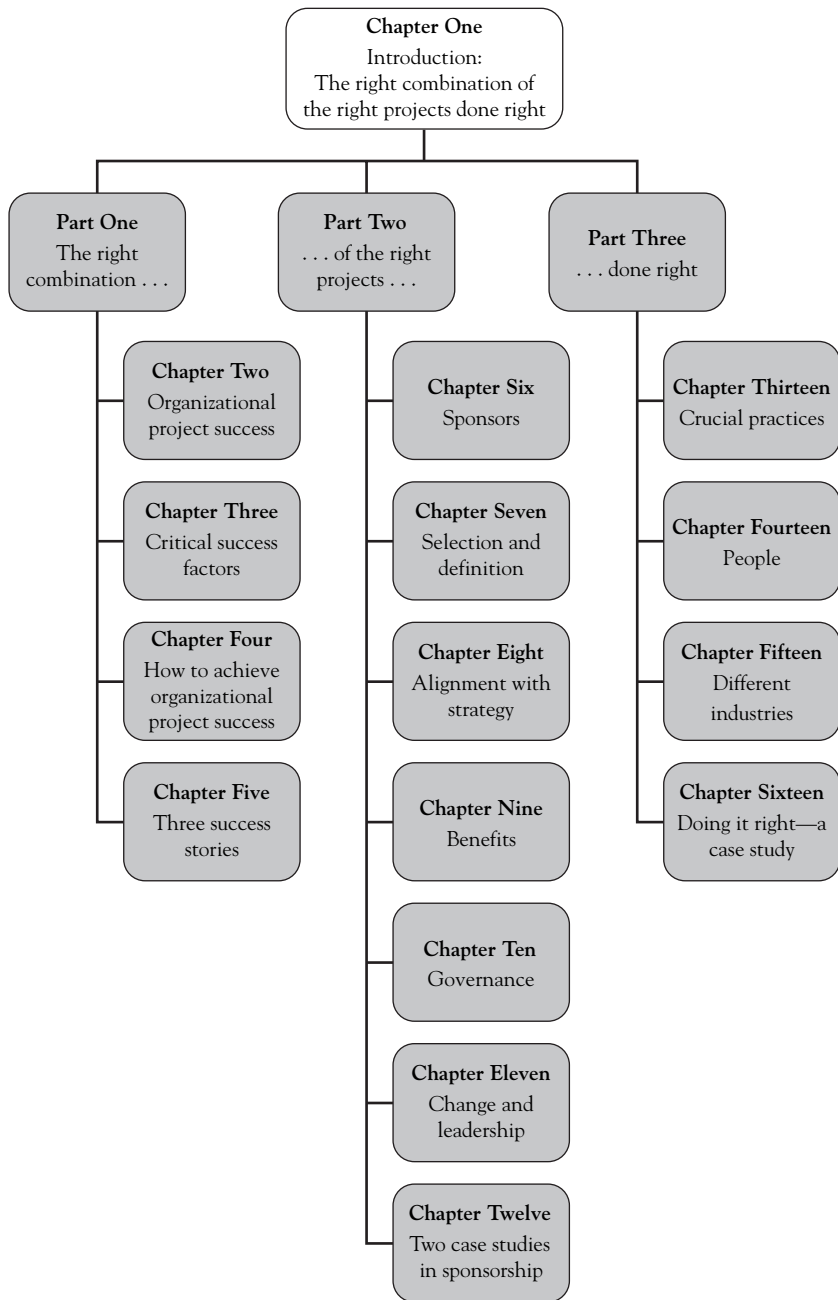
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The Right Projects Done Right!



1

INTRODUCTION

The Right Combination of the Right Projects Done Right

Interest in project management continues to grow astoundingly in the twenty-first century. Since the early 1990s, membership in professional project management associations such as the Project Management Institute (PMI) and the International Project Management Association (IPMA) has grown from a few thousand people to hundreds of thousands. Projects have become recognized as a valid way of working not just in the traditional industries, such as engineering, defense, and construction, but in every corner of the private, public, and even voluntary sectors. Libraries of books have been written on the topic.

The rate of project success, however, has failed to keep up with the growth of the profession. Megaprojects continue to show cost overruns. Sizable sums are spent on information technology projects, some of which are never implemented. A majority of organizational projects fail to deliver even half the benefits they were designed to provide.

This book pinpoints the reasons for these shortcomings and puts forth a series of solutions. Those solutions are founded not on advocating standard practices but rather on a fresh way of looking at the problem. Einstein is reputed to have said, “You can’t solve a problem using the thinking that created it.” And this book presents fresh thinking about what is involved in managing projects—to manage projects consistently and successfully, across the enterprise. It focuses on the growing trend toward broadening the scope of traditional project management. That broadened scope takes place in two different directions.

The first expansion is stretching out the span of the traditional life cycle. A classic view would say that project management starts when the project is authorized and funds are provided and that it ends once the tasks outlined are completed and it's turned over to whoever is responsible for the next ongoing stage, such as operations. The broadened view extends the project life cycle both "upstream" into "mission and vision" and "downstream" into "total asset life cycle management." This is a growing worldview—the Japanese Project Management Forum, for instance, has developed a model known as P2M that adds a "mission model" to the front end of projects and a "service model" to the back end. In this view, projects start during the thinking stage, when feasibility is still under consideration, and are completed only when the business results or benefits, as initially proposed, are in fact achieved.

The second expansion is to encompass multiple project settings and related organizational issues, which fall under the umbrella known as enterprisewide project management. This trend started gaining momentum in the 1990s and continues to grow as companies come to grips with the challenges of responding to market demands by systematically managing multiple projects through improved portfolio management and project support groups such as project management offices. Broadening the view of project management diffuses its implications throughout the enterprise and brings to light major issues not traditionally dealt with under the project management banner.

Three "Rights"

Prosperity in organizations hinges on the successful application of a simple formula: *the right combination of the right projects done right*. So prosperity depends not only on good strategy but also on implementing that strategy effectively. Success thus depends on the effective management across the enterprise, involving an array of unique, timely, and finite initiatives called projects.