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Project Management Handbook

 Springer

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Preface

The German edition of this book has found great approval in the project manager community in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. We are very pleased that now an English-language edition is published for the international market in order to bring maximum practical benefit to many project managers in their daily work.

In this first edition in English, following three German editions, we provide updated and extended coverage of many topics, especially in the area of project leadership. We also share the experience and challenges from our own project management work, both as practitioners and as teachers. During more than 2,000 seminars and workshops in the past 10 years, we have constantly refined and optimised the discussed theories, models, and checklists.

We are particularly pleased that the result of our work does not come across as simply a collection of articles by different people. We worked on this book – this project – as a team, working together to structure the book and to ensure a consistent approach. That is why this book flows smoothly, as a cohesive entity, proof in itself of good project management.

Why We Wrote This Book

The complexity of projects has increased significantly in recent years: Time and resources are becoming more limited, product cycles are getting shorter, and project contents are becoming more varied, more interdisciplinary, and more interconnected. A wide range of stakeholders are expressing their wishes more assertively, and regional and cultural differences have become the norm.

In our experience as practitioners and trainers, we see again and again that countless projects only partially fulfil their objectives, or even fail completely. This has three key reasons:

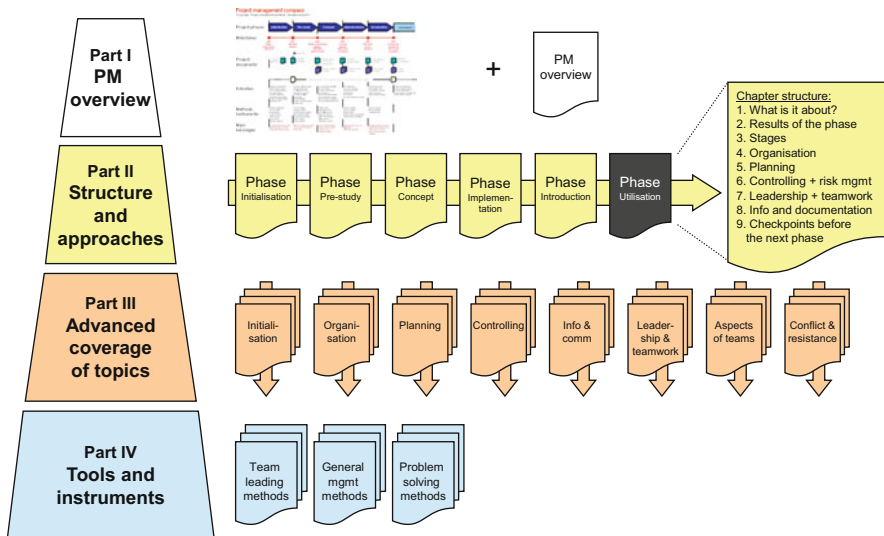
1. In many organisations, there is not enough understanding of project management and not enough support for it. Many project managers simply don't have the right project management skills.
2. Even though this is how tasks of strategic importance for the organisation are handled, the complexity of projects is not fully recognised.

3. Projects involve change around the organisation's existing hierarchical structures. The need to clarify relevant functions and roles is often overlooked.

This book addresses these key issues. Building on the success of our previous publications, we extensively revised the material and included information about the latest trends. The central theme revolves around the main challenges that project managers face, as process architects and moderators who have to define the work processes involved in a successful project, in implementing the project, in checking, and in effectively managing a project.

Our understanding of project management is based on Systems Engineering concepts, on management psychology, on interpersonal skills in a team context, and on process dynamics. This systemic approach and “networked thinking” matches the complex reality of projects and goes beyond the mechanistic and causal approach. In that respect, this book can be considered to be at the leading edge of project management developments.

The Structure of This Book



We have favoured a very broad approach which should be suitable for most projects, and it is not tailored for any particular specialist area. One feature that differentiates this book from other literature is how we have structured the material. We have introduced the concept of a project management compass to help guide you, and we have split the book into four distinct sections. This enables the reader to use the book in a way that is targeted to their own role and function and to build on their existing knowledge.

How to Get the Best from This Book

For **project managers** and **managers of sub-projects** who are about to start a project, or who are in the middle of a project: Part II contains checklists that show what needs to be done in the current phase, broken down by different aspects:

- Purpose of this phase
- Results of this phase
- Steps in this phase
- Things to watch
- Checklist of important points

For **members of project teams, students** or **beginners** who want to learn more about the subject: Part I gives you a basic introduction and explains why this approach is useful and necessary. Part II shows you a project and gives you an overview of the relevant steps. In Parts III and IV, you can choose individual topics and methods that will be useful in your specific situation.

For **experienced project managers** who want to learn more about specific topics or refresh their knowledge of particular procedures:

Choose the relevant topics that are of interest to you from Parts III and IV. When you prepare each phase, use Part II as a reminder and as a checklist. You can also use it as a starting point for creating and developing project-specific checklists.

For **decision-makers** with management functions such as HR managers, department heads, quality managers and product managers, Parts I and II will give you an overview of the important factors and approaches for project managers and provide you with insights that enable you to give optimum support to your project and to the project team.

We have deliberately kept the material very general so that it is suitable for application in industry, the service sector, public administration, non-profit organisations, and scientific bodies. The book is also suitable for use as a standard textbook in colleges and universities.

March 2015

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