

Preface

This is not intended to be just another book about project management. There are many of those already in publication. *The Relationship Manager: The Next Generation of Project Management* is more about aligning traditional project management with the changing needs of business.

The first part of the book covers the evolution of project management and establishes the need for a new approach to coordinating business requirements. The reader is able to identify business considerations which set the scene for combining the dual responsibilities of today's account managers and project managers to produce a new title – the relationship manager. This title should not be confused with anything that has recently been described within the context of CRM – client relationship management. It is far more geared towards the true function that project management sets out to achieve – delivering solutions to time, cost and quality, whilst meeting client expectation, as well as achieving the planned elements of profitability for the project supplier.

We will see the way in which we try to manage this today, within the limitations of the account manager working, to some extent, with the business unit. We can then project this further, to see how this practice could be improved, in terms of defining the skills required for a relationship manager and then, very specifically, the new set of parameters that are needed to determine whether or not a potential project is viable and whether the project team, working with the relationship manager, will be successful. In taking this theme to its logical conclusion, we can then focus upon the specifics of identifying future potential relationship managers.

Inevitably, however, a relationship manager will need to be familiar with some of the technical aspects of project management. No attempt has been made to analyse these in depth but Part 2 of the book consists of an 'Appreciation Workshop' of the suggested knowledge base that the relationship manager will need to develop. Depending on circumstances relating to specific assignments, there are many excellent project management books available for the relationship manager to study further.

One very important point which needs to be carefully understood is what will be expected of the project manager who works as one of the key information streams, in conjunction with the business unit, all of which are orchestrated by the relationship manager. It is therefore appropriate to look at the general and strategic skills required of a project manager, in order to provide the necessary input to the early stages of the success of the project. Having achieved some elements of success, in terms of business case approvals, we will then examine the control and technical topics that the project team will need. All these will be encapsulated within the necessary commercial, organizational and human resources skills that project personnel will require.

Interspersed throughout the book are practical examples and exercises to help the reader gauge his or her understanding of the changes that will need to be undertaken. There are self-assessment questionnaires which have been designed to help verify the subject matter

covered. Answers to the questionnaires are contained within the Appendix, together with guidelines for interpreting the scores gained. Whether the reader be a project manager who wants to enhance his or her business skills, or a business manager who requires further project management knowledge, is not necessarily an issue. It will be seen clearly how both functions can be merged into what may well become the most exciting new professional assignment in business in the years to come – the relationship manager.

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