



# Making Sense of Project Realities

Theory, Practice and the Pursuit of Performance  
Charles Smith



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There is more than a touch of 'The Emperor's New Clothes' in the way many organizations approach project management and the consequences are all too clear: project methodology inappropriately applied; little or no consideration of complexity or ambiguity; alienation of the stakeholders and a statistically poor record of performance for major business or infrastructure projects.

Charles Smith's groundbreaking book *Making Sense of Project Realities* offers convincing explanations as to why project management theory and practice have become disconnected and describes the kind of complex, human skills that are required to deliver successful projects.

The text draws heavily on the experiences of practising project and programme managers from across private and public sector organizations, many of whose stories were shared and analysed during the two-year research network 'Rethinking Project Management', which brought together thought leaders on project management from consultancy, industry and academia.

The result is a highly readable, very credible and imaginative exploration of the nature of projects and programmes that will strike a chord with every project practitioner; a book that offers a realistic set of ideas for developing creative and effective project players, who understand the purpose of what they are doing, the context within which they are working, and the people with whom they need to engage.

Update: Several MBA Courses use this book and the tutor feedback is encouragingly positive, including: "can be used from day one to change the mindset of the students concerning projects and their management."

## Contents

; Projects - the opportunities and shortfalls; Making sense of projects; Projects and complexity; Tribalism and rituals; The tyranny of projects; Managing multiple projects; Fraudulent projects; The language of projects; Creating project sense; Personal engagement; Delivering value; Business transformation; Dealing with uncertainty; Quests for value and accountability; ProjectCraft; The business of project management; Index.

## About the Author

Charles Smith runs Charles Smith Consulting and has over 30 years' industry experience, holding management and consulting positions in engineering, structural dynamics, safety and risk management, project management, business improvement and organisation change. Charles was recently coordinator for the EPSRC funded network Rethinking Project Management. Originally qualifying in engineering, Charles also has a degree in psychology and is a Founder Member of the Association of Business Psychologists.

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