CONNECT

BUILDING CAPABILITY IN COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

CEO MESSAGE

Welcome to this edition of the Connect. In this edition we will hear from a number of our members and connections as they share their articles, views and opinions with us. I am very pleased that the number of contributions from our member community has increased significantly this year. We learn best from the experiences of each other, I commend to you the notion of sharing experiences in the hope that we can all learn from each other for that is the value of belonging to a network.

We have now completed the data collection phase of our International Roundtable Series with two exceptionally valuable events in Washington and London. We were privileged to have Professor Peter Morris address the roundtable in London. His key message was very clear, "Projects are delivered by people for the benefit of people" which begs the questions why is that we are generally pretty poor at managing the people issues in projects, and in a lot of cases it's the people issues that cause us to fail. Why is that? Mainly due to the people issues being all pervasive, and our PMs not being given the capability and resources to firstly recognise that they are there and secondly to manage them accordingly.

I commend to you the article written by Steve Ashfield as a fellow graduate of the Executive Masters in Complex Project Management, I thank him for articulating quite clearly the value of educating oneself in managing complex projects and complexity and I salute Nova Systems for having the courage and faith in their investment to allow Steve to flourish and make a significant return on their investment. Imagine a world where the other 200+ graduates of the program were able to make such an impact… I dare to dream!

CONTENTS

ICCPM Board Appoints New Fellows

The ICCPM Board recently appointed five new Fellows to increase the total number of ICCPM Fellows to 26. ICCPM Fellows are acknowledged by their peers as highly credible and successful practitioners with a proven track record in the field of managing in complex environments. They have extensive networks of influential thinkers, and are leaders in their field.

We welcome the following new Fellows who have been recognised for their individual excellence in Complex Project Management.

Mr Bruce Armstrong (Australia)

Dr Phil Crosby (Australia)

Ms Deborah Feakins (UK)

Mr Dan Ross (Canada)

Ms Nandini Srikantiah (Canada)

ICCPM MD/CEO Deborah Hein said, "It is such an honour to have this calibre of individual as 2016 entrants to our Fellows program, building on last year's cohort. The collective wisdom that these five new fellows encapsulate is extraordinary as is their diversity of background and experience."

In accepting her nomination, Deborah Feakins said,

"It is difficult to imagine what our world would look and feel like if we did not have the combined skills to effect major complex projects and programmes. The work that the ICCPM engages in to seek innovative ways to collaborate, share best practice and improve in this field make my involvement as a Fellow both highly rewarding and challenging."

In accepting his nomination, Dr Phil Crosby said,

"I consider ICCPM Fellowship as a highly valued marker of professional achievement. As a Fellow, I very much look forward to sharing ideas and solutions for those challenging, seemingly unpredictable, and often maddening, high-technology mega-science projects."

2016 International Roundtable Series

Contracting for Success in Complex Projects

Seven roundtables have now been conducted, concluding with events in Washington on 15 September and London on 23 September. We were very pleased to have all our UK Fellows in attendance at the London event.

The outputs from each event are being collated and will be sent in raw form to event participants. These outputs will be analysed and a White Paper produced for practitioners and also an Academic peer-reviewed paper.

Our thanks go to all those involved in the roundtables – our sponsors, hosts, facilitators, recorders and participants.

L-R: Deborah Feakins, Tony Graham, Simon Henley, Deborah Hein, Mary McKinlay, Tim Banfield, Peter Fielder

Series Sponsor:

The Australian Department of Defence - Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group

Event Sponsors/Hosts:

Brooke (Canberra and Melbourne), CSIRO (Perth), IP3 (Washington DC), NSW Roads & Maritime (Sydney), Telfer CEL (Ottawa), UCL (London)

Supporting Sponsors:

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What's Happening in Complexity Education

Complexity Training Delivered Nationally

The past six months have been a busy period as we delivered 17 workshops and customised programs for individuals and corporate clients across Australia and internationally.

We are committed to supporting the growth of experienced business managers, team leaders and project team members operating in complex organisational environments and contexts. Our facilitators stimulate world-class thought-leadership and bring attention to the tools and approaches that will help practioners deliver greater future success in the complex projects they manage.

Our Certificate IV in Responding to Organisational Complexity Course is currently being delivered in Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne and Brisbane. The latter three locations are public programs that were open to any individuals or groups and the current cohorts represent diverse groups.

Learners of this accredited course tell us they value the opportunities to not only practice applying the tools and approaches in the interactive workshops but also being supported by ICCPM as they apply the knowledge and skills to their own organisational situation back in the workplace. 98% of learners state that they developed the knowledge and skills expected from their learning.

2017 Delivery

If you wish to formalise your skills in responding effectively to organisational complexity join the seventy-six people who are currently enrolled in ICCPM's Certificate IV in Responding to Organsational Complexity Course.

Look out for the 2017 Training Calendar in our December issue of Connect, on our website or email admin@iccpm.com and ask us to contact you directly.

What People Say They Like Best About Our Certificate IV Course

"The use of the case study - by making a common baseline it allowed me to compare my responses to others & assess if I was understanding or needed assistance."

"Use of participant experience to demonstrate relevance of tools, getting an easy-to-understand toolkit."

"Using the tools to work through our common problem, learning a language and framework to deal with complexity."

"Clear definition of what complexity is or looks like. Setting of the suitable terminology to deal with complex issue. Good toolset & polarity management, rich pictures and root definition."

"It had many fun activities and chances to put models into practice."

Bougainville Senior Leaders Training Program

During last month we delivered a strategic governing module to the Bougainville Senior Leaders Training (BSLT) Program. The BSLT Program is a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sponsored initiative to increase the capacity in the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG). It is designed for and attended by all ABG Ministers, President and Heads of Government Departments. This comprises 32 participants in the age range of early 30s to mid 60s, 28 males and 4 females. We are delivering the Program in collaboration with our partner, the QUT International Projects Unit.

The Program comprises 6 modules delivered over an 18 month period. It is designed to support nation building in Bougainville in the lead up to the referendum on independence in mid-2019. Additionally it is the first opportunity that the ministers and department heads have had to be in the same room. A positive consequence of the program is that we have enhanced the working relationships of the senior leaders of Bougainville at this critical time in their history.

The module delivered in Buka, Bougainville by ICCPM Director of Education and Research was Module 1 Governing Strategically. It was a 4-day face to face delivery on 22-25 July 2016. Participants were required to work on a Real Issue Project relevant to their work and apply the strategic planning presented in the workshop.

In the week of 19 September each Real Issue Project team received coaching to ensure the progression and completion of their project.

As the name suggests, the Real Issue Projects were on the current priorities of the government and include:

- Unification of the Bougainville People (President Momis' project);

- Alignment of Economic Strategies towards sustainable development for Bougainville (Economic Development sector project);

- Awareness on Community Government Act (Dept of Communities);

- Completion of Phase I of Recruitment for the Public Service (Dept of Public Service);

- Induction Plan for Governing Board of 100 School Boards (Dept of Education);

- Resourcing the ABG Tax Office (Dept of Finance);

- Implementation of a Bougainville Ombudsman (Dept of Law and Justice).

These represent major undertakings of work on the complex problems facing Bougainville in the post war situation.

The issues have been exacerbated by the withdrawal of Rio Tinto from the Panguna mining operations at this time and the government is currently in negotiations. This was discussed during the sessions as it hampers the environmental, social and economic recovery of Bougainville. Background to this complex issue is reported in the Sydney Morning Herald article: (http://www.smh.com.au/world/billiondollar-mess-a-major-disaster-the-people-do-not-deserve-to-have-20160817-gquzli.html).

The mine was the flashpoint for the civil war in Papua New Guinea in the 1990s. Bougainville is one of the only nation's that has successfully negotiated a Peace Agreement that has remained in place and sustained peace. Most of the fundamental infrastructure of Bougainville including hospitals and schools were destroyed in the civil war. Despite their rich natural resources little of this has been delivered to ensure that the country has adequate infrastructure for these basic services.

The BSLT Program supports the Bougainville government and the people that they serve to build their nation and ensure a peaceful conduct of the upcoming referendum that will determine their next phase. The program delivery and coaching sessions received strong praise and participants were highly engaged.

It was an honour to work one-on-one with the leaders and to support Bougainville in their projects to achieve their mission for self-determination to achieve the aspirations of the people of Bougainville.

By Dr Erin Evans

Director of Education and Research

September 2016

John Momis, President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville of Papua New Guinea being awarded a certificate from the Bougainville Senior Leaders Training Program delivery Team.

Photo courtesy of the Queensland University of Technology

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A Futures-Oriented Approach to the Management of Projects

By Marisa Silva - The Lucky PM

Marisa Silva is a passionate, high performing, results-oriented and people-driven PMO professional and trainer trying to succeed in her biggest project: life itself. Marissa's goal is to improve organisational performance through passion by partnering with organisations to help them achieve their full business potential and deliver projects on-time, on-budget and on-scope and aligned with their core strategy resulting in a positive business impact.

Introduction

Project management has been conventionally conceived using a functional view, where a project is carried out with the purpose of creating or improving a specific product, service, or process, for which constraints are given to the Project Manager to manage (Morris, 1997). While this perspective is still the dominant approach, it has been strongly criticized as outdated and reductionist, since it focuses solely on the technical side of Project Management, neglecting the social and contextual dimensions in which projects exist (Cicmil et al., 2006; Morris, 1997). As a response, Morris (1997) established the 'management of projects' paradigm, which entails a broader image of projects, where the author goes beyond the necessary yet simplistic goal-seeking view, whose focus is on the delivery of outputs on-time, on-budget, and according to specification, to emphasize the importance of (also) managing the project front-end rather than just the delivery phases, and providing value to the sponsor and lasting outcomes, rather than just a functioning output.

These two contrasting views remind us that there is no single way of seeing projects and reinforce the importance of being aware of different theories available for practice, since practitioners will have an underlying image of projects, even if not aware of it (Winter and Szczepanek, 2009).

In this respect, Konstantinou and Muller (2016) argue that philosophies – foundational to theories - not just allow practitioners to define their professional identity and standing, but also determine their way of perceiving and doing things, where their priorities are allocated, and which proposals and solutions are considered; in essence, the philosophy one adopts defines who one is or wants to be and influences one's day to day actions. Extending this construct to the realm of projects, to follow a philosophy is to hold a particular image of projects (Winter and Szczepanek, 2009), which will influence how the project is perceived, designed, and executed by the project manager.

Recognizing that the theoretical grounds of Project Management are narrowed, Konstantinou and Muller (2016) claim however that there is a lack of options available to offer to practitioners, which, in light of the interdisciplinary, time-critical and complex issues faced by society nowadays, makes this matter of serious relevance to the future of the project management profession. Hence, the authors call for new approaches that can redefine what project management practice can be, while at the same time able to deliver an impactful and practical change that could shape the future of the profession and allow us to respond to what Morris (2013) called 'the age of relevance'. What follows is a proposal of just that.

The Case for the Future

In project management literature, we are often alerted to the importance of documenting lessons learned for the sake of replicating what went well and not making the same mistakes in future projects, a practice which aligns to the 'reflective practice' theory proposed by Schön (1983). While the author recognizes the criticality of reflecting on the past, this leave us to a management paradox: all our decisions are about the future, but all the knowledge in which we rely to make those decisions are about the past (Wilson, 2000). This has led some authors (Conway, 2004; Mintzberg, 1994) to support that there is a fundamental flaw in current planning approaches, where the dominant outlook shows an overreliance in the past and remains focused on short-term thinking to the detriment of the "art of the long view" (Schwartz, 1991).

Examples of the consequences of this short-termism include the often cited examples of Kodak or Blockbuster, which let their core capabilities become their core rigidities (Leonard-Barton, 1992) and, failing to envision how their business models could be dramatically disrupted by newer technologies, went bankrupt. In fact, the prevailing practice in most organizations is still to define short-term targets and incentives and reward executives by the performance achieved

in the previous quarter, thus promoting a vicious cycle where management is inwardly focused and neglects the signals of change outside the organization, ultimately resulting in risky conducts, opportunities missed, and poor or misinformed decision-making.

It is now a commonplace to hear that change is the new normal and that we are living in a vulnerable, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment. While this panorama certainly makes it more difficult for organizations to anticipate and cope with changes in their horizon, it also strengthens the need to develop capabilities of imagination, be comfortable with the unknown, and to consider how different versions of the future may impact the industry in which these organizations operate. To that end, Hamel and Prahalad (1994: 120) maintain that "companies fail to create the future not because they fail to predict it, but because they fail to imagine it".

In effect, the future is happening now. The Internet of Things promises to revolutionize how we interact with objects, driverless cars are currently being tested, the first 3-D ear was successfully printed earlier in 2016, and artificial intelligence and machine learning are said to become a reality not too far in time. What can this mean to project-based organizations, and project professionals?

"The world we have created is a product of our thinking; it cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

Albert Einstein
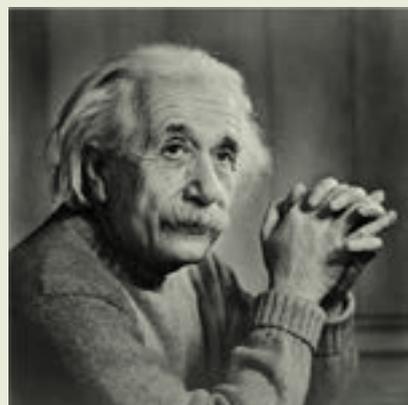
"The relation between the future and projects is a two-way street: while on one hand projects shape the future, on the other hand, how the future may unfold is critical to projects, as it may compromise or facilitate the attainment of the objectives of a project, aspects often captured by the risk management processes in place."

A Furures-Oriented approach

In order to answer these challenges and to escape the management myopia provoked by the short-termism involved in traditional project management approaches, the author argues that, just like we are asked to think 'outside the box' to develop innovative solutions to complex problems, project managers need to think outside the conventional iron triangle of project management and employ a long-term impact approach if they are to use the future to their benefit.

In fact, projects are by definition a projection of a desired future and represent a vehicle for the intended new state an organization aims to be at, thus, since the notion of the future is implicit in the nature of projects, it is a surprise to note that this subject is scarce in project management main academic outlets (Silva, 2015) as an explicit phenomenon to be analyzed and discussed in project settings.

Three current avenues of research that demonstrate the interplay between these concepts should be mentioned though: research on future preparedness (Shenhar and Dvir, 2001), the future-perfect-strategy (Pitsis et al., 2003), and research conducted on project early warning indicators (Nikander et al., 2001; Haji-Kazemi et al., 2013). While these streams, individually, provide a basis to advance a discussion on the role of the future in projects, the author claims that an integrative, solid approach is necessary to address how the future impacts and is impacted by projects – a futures-oriented approach.

The relation between the future and projects is a two-way street: while on one hand projects shape the future, on the other hand, how the future may unfold is critical to projects, as it may compromise or facilitate the attainment of the objectives of a project, aspects often captured by the risk management processes in place. However, the author supports a wider view of projects, where the project does not end when delivered, but is rather perceived as a legacy to be managed, thus, also required an extended approach to risk and uncertainty (Brady et al., 2012), which goes beyond the short-term and assesses the impact of long-term futures on the project and its outcomes.

To do so, Foresight appears as a fundamental tool to equip project managers to deal with uncertainty (Silva, 2016). Conceived as a multidisciplinary and participatory field which aims to make sense of the future in a systematic way (Bell, 1996; Mendonça and Sapio, 2009), by analyzing and interpreting the signals perceived in the environment and, through prospection, discussing the implications of possible futures, Foresight allows decision-makers to act in the present to take advantage or move away from these futures.

It is important to stress that this approach does not aim to predict the future, but to consider the future and how it may unfold while managing a project. Focusing on the future and employing a long-term impact approach to the management of projects involves a radical shift in thinking, not to mention several implications in practice.

Adopting a futures thinking approach, expand the timeframes at stake and, as a result, strongly influences several practical aspects, starting from the selection of which projects to carry out, to the risk tolerance and risk appetite defined, or the approach followed in the management of innovation.

Likewise, managing for the future can impact how requirements are captured, defined, and tested, as not just current business requirements and constraints are considered but also future ones, thus, where possible, flexibility is incorporated during project planning and design stages (Cairns, in Blyth and Worthington, 2010). From here, also the triple constraint can be expanded and readjusted to position quality as more important than time or cost.

Additionally, thinking long-term involves starting with the end in mind, leading to planning the project legacy in the front-end of the project (e.g. London Olympics 2012), and establishing the right mechanisms to ensure that benefits are realized and sustained, and that the project legacy is effectively managed.

> *"...thinking long-term involves starting with the end in mind, leading to planning the project legacy in the front-end of the project (e.g. London Olympics 2012), and establishing the right mechanisms to ensure that benefits are realized and sustained, and that the project legacy is effectively managed."*

> *"...a futures-oriented approach takes a holistic and societal view of project success by considering an expanded timeframe and the impact on multiple stakeholders..."*

Moreover, from a people's viewpoint, to consider a long-range perspective means expanding individual planning horizons, daring them to think beyond the status quo and to imagine different paths, as well as uniting them around a strong project vision. By foreseeing and rehearsing alternatives of the future, project-based organizations can also become more agile, resilient, and future-prepared (Silva, 2016), enabling their ability to detect emerging changes and their readiness capabilities to respond to different scenarios.

While traditional approaches to project management consider a project to be successful when delivered on-time, on-budget, and against specifications, a futures-oriented approach takes a holistic and societal view of project success by considering an expanded timeframe and the impact on multiple stakeholders, where value for many is more important and the realization of the project benefits is more important than the mere delivery of the project's outputs.

It is not unusual to find projects which are successfully delivered within the constraints defined by the project sponsor but then fail to realize the benefits that justified its initiation in the first place or, using a medical analogy, projects where, from a professional standpoint, the operation was a success but, unfortunately, the patient died in the end. A futures-oriented approach has the role of time at its core and, consequently, emphasizes the importance of a patient who lives to tell the story.

From the previous point, once the future is considered, sustainability comes into play, requiring projects to apply sustainable practices during their design, operation, and disposal of products, and meaning that the way project managers select and work with suppliers and surrounding communities, or how the interests of different stakeholders are considered and balanced also needs to change. This view is aligned with the recent flourish of movements towards sustainable development in project management, which reasons that project professionals have a mission to fulfil, that is, to manage projects using sustainable principles in order to allow current needs to be met without that meaning compromising the future generation's needs (Silvius et al., 2012). Alerting of the perils of an inward-focused approach, Morris (2013) advocates that the project management community have for long reflected on the means rather than the ends, suggesting that current and prospective critical societal issues such as climate change or the recent refugee crisis, demand a sense of relevance from project management academics and practitioners, who have the responsibility of using their work and projects to drive a desired future and leave a positive, impactful legacy.

Bearing this in mind, a future-oriented approach to project management claims for project managers an active role in shaping the future, by doing better projects for a better world.

Limitations

While this approach entails conceptual strengths and relevance to practice – not to mention to society – it also includes limitations which need to be acknowledged. Perhaps the most obvious limitation resides in what is also its major strength, the broader time horizon involved. Although there is not a defined standard for the duration of a project, it is reasonable to state that most projects exist in the short-term planning horizon, thus, benefits to be gained from a futures-oriented approach, even though noticeable, can be not as visible as when compared to programs and portfolio, which typically consider a medium to long-term perspective. Despite of this fact, the legacy of the project, the emphasis on benefits realization, or the focus on sustainability can be derived from the lens of the future and is realistic to suggest that also megaprojects can make extensive use of this approach due to their long time span and life expectancies.

Likewise, the relevance of this approach can vary depending on the industry in analysis as different industries operate within distinctive timeframes (e.g. Pharma vs IT).

From an implementation standpoint, it is also important to note that the adoption of a futures-oriented mindset can be challenging as it requires a profound shift in the way of thinking, currently constrained by the fast pace of the market, and also by our own schemas and mental models where, as humans, we are uncomfortable with the unknown and tend to believe that our future will be a mere extension of the present as we know it.

Finally, in a time where management decisions and career progression are mostly built around a short-term perception, senior management may show resistance as they perceive their annual bonuses to be threatened or that their time is being wasted on risks and opportunities that may or may not happen. However, the imperative question is: can we afford to neglect the future?

OUR PROECTS ARE OUR LEGACY AND OUR FUTURE. LET US MAKE IT A GOOD ONE.

Conclusion

While the future is unknown, the author argues that a future-oriented approach to the management of projects draws a new, relevant direction for practice and can provide project practitioners with robust tools to deal with uncertainty while at the same time designing and delivering a sustainable future. This approach does not imply a full reset with earlier proposals, but places a different emphasis on the role of the future instead, under the premise that different results require a different way of thinking. We must therefore lead from and for the future, not the past. Our projects and the way we perceive and manage them can determine what future we will get, hence, the future is not an island ready to be discovered, but a place that practitioners can shape with their decisions. Our projects are our legacy and our future. Let us make it a good one.

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Book Review:
A Practical Guide to Dealing with Difficult Stakeholders

By Jake Holloway, David Bryde and Roger Joby
Published By Gower Publishing
Advances in Project Management Series
Review by Andrew Pyke

Andrew Pyke is a Owner, Director and Principal Consultant of Key-holder Pty Ltd, a member of the International Centre For Complex Project Management. Andrew regularly advises and assists on large scale complex projects in Australia, in Aviation and Defence industries.
Follow Andrew on @Keyholder3.

Holloway, Bryde and Joby have taken on a truth that every Project Manager knows: A reality of project management is that stakeholders can be difficult.

The book describes some of the common stakeholder types and associated unhelpful or difficult behaviour profiles that a project manager may come across.

It is refreshing that Holloway, Bryde and Joby have avoided a reiteration of theoretical processes and instead attempted to offer real-world experience to the reader. Holloway, Bryde and Joby adopt the Human Relations School, pioneered by Chester Barnard in the 1930s, that sees the organisation as comprised of natural groups, as opposed to the groups and teams formed by management. They also do not look at stakeholders as always being rational and compliant. Readers will say "Hooray!" as they recognise their real world.

The book is not a comfortable read for project managers grappling with stakeholder problems. Problems, and the reader will feel her already burdened "to do" list being added to.
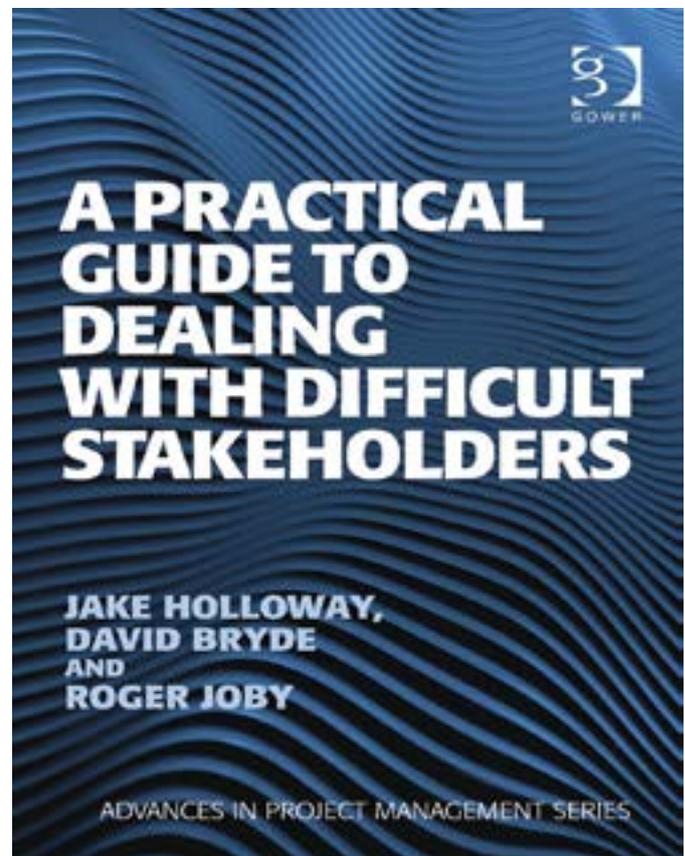
However, the reader is rewarded with some useful gems, such as:

- tips on how to use information to change attitudes;

- identifying the visible and hidden sponsors and anti-sponsors, and tips on how to approach them;

- possible solutions to a demotivated project team;

- lots of relatable examples in how to deal with a stakeholder, and/or of failure in dealing with the stakeholder;

Holloway, Bryde and Joby dedicated a chapter to a situation where the project management is outsourced to a contractors, creating a principal/agent relationship.

They are to be congratulated for not writing the book just from a customer or supplier perspective, and for including these real-world scenarios.

Holloway, Bryde and Joby acknowledge that many project managers do not enjoy stakeholder management. They do however advise that, if the reader takes one lesson from the book, it is that: "By understanding the different groups of Stakeholders, what they want as people, what makes them difficult and what pressures they face, you have a chance of getting from the what you and the project need."

An experienced project manager will find the book concise and read it in a few hours, so the book is rewarding for the busy reader. Readers are bound to pick up one or two pithy ideas to help them, and Holloway, Bryde and Joby are to be congratulated on an excellent contribution to the literature, on a subject that besets all project managers.

Do you have something to say about complexity, projects, programs, people, or research?

If you would like to be included in future editions of *CONNECT*,
contact us with your suggestions and abstracts.

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Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each publishing month.

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EMCPM FOR NOVA SYSTEMS

By Steve Ashfield

Steve works in the definition, development, integration, and optimisation of complex and critical infrastructure systems. Steve is an internationally experienced Technical Leader, Systems Engineer and Technology Manager and has applied his expertise in Aerospace, Electronic Systems, ICT, Power, Oil & Gas, Water and Rail.

Background

It was 2010 when I joined Nova Systems. As an accomplished aerospace systems engineer, I sought a highly challenging role and they sure gave me one; to be a part of taking Nova Systems services and products into new domains. This role formed part of Nova's recently started growth and diversification strategy. The organisational challenge was growth and diversity, so I figured that could be my personal challenge too – I would grow with Nova.

Skills Shortage

It wasn't long before I had an unexpected feeling that my skill set was being stretched. I needed some extra skills, and more importantly, my current skills were becoming less effective, exacerbated by being in a new role. The reason of course, was the higher levels of complexity faced by my clients and their industries.

So I went searching. I travelled to the USA to hear from Universities and their advanced degrees in Systems Engineering and Project Management, but they all seemed to be repeating much of what I already knew. A good friend was in the first part-time cohort of the Executive Master of Complex Project Management (EMCPM) at QUT, and he vouched for the course. I also knew some of the course staff at QUT and spoke with them. I signed up for the course with the support of Nova, and it happened to be right on my doorstep in Brisbane, Australia. I could do worse. I began the course in February 2013.

Reality Check

In my first Intensive Learning Forum, I was lucky enough to be taught Systems Thinking by Michael Jackson, the author of the course text. Mike explained to me that my current skills were classified as Hard Systems Thinking, and that those skills were less than half of what I need to solve complex problems! This took me a while to compute, but it set the tone for the entire course. I was right, I needed new skills and plenty of them.

Testing One, Two

After completing 2/3 of the course, I was given a lead role in a very challenging consulting job for Nova, based in Melbourne. I was given a small team, a confused client, and a blank sheet of paper. I thought to myself "ok, let's see if this stuff works", and I committed myself to applying my newfound leadership skills at 100% on this new gig.

And it worked; my team and client were highly engaged, all working to a common vision and objectives, and delivering on some seemingly impossible requests. Nova sure recognised a difference, and the job was fun to be a part of. A lesson I learned on that job was that not all people can cope with high levels of uncertainty. Note to self.

Seeing Different

Having completed the course, I see the world quite differently. I see my clients struggling with complexity. I see that every day. The smart clients actually know quite a bit of what I learned, and have mastered its application. However, they are few and far between.

A Bigger Repertoire

During my final year of EMCPM I found myself (successfully) undertaking roles that I would never have previously entertained. For the Nova five-yearly organisational re-structure, I secured the role of Change Manager as part of the internal restructure core team. Knowing what to actually do was the easy part, and putting it to work was of benefit for Nova. I hired myself a consultant and enjoyed learning from him, and implementing the plans we came up with, drawing heavily on Communications Management and Leadership skills. This work proved valuable to the core team and to the whole organisation as the organisational changes were planned, rolled out, and verified. Later feedback reflects high satisfaction from many staff who were on the receiving end.

For my pass project I performed a review of Nova's award winning innovation program. Again this was something I would never have seen myself doing before the EMCPM course. Sponsored by the COO and reporting to both QUT and the Nova Innovation Manager, I applied my tools from Communications, Problem Solving, Managing Innovation and more. My recommendations were at times confronting, but well received and they flowed into the program.

Teams That Work

Daily I work as part of a small team with a diverse array of clients. Applying knowledge taken from the High Performing Teams module is welcomed by all, and we revisit this as the team grows.

Soon after I graduated, the COO issued my team with a challenge; he wanted a new consulting business model that would serve to generate revenue without 100% direct consulting effort. It took us 12 weeks and we had a business model approved by Nova for offering to key clients. I contributed several of my new skills in finance, risk, managing programs and more. We developed a more holistic approach to meeting business goals. My main contribution was a tactical innovation loop that is based upon an OODA loop, it forms the central process to the operation. The new model is being offered to several key clients with keen interest.

There's More

Being a fairly typical Engineer, I have found the soft skills from the course quite valuable. I remember exercising them at home one weekend with visitors to my family. After that my wife asked "who are you, and where's my husband?" EMCPM works at home as well as in my work.

Nova has recently recruited one of my colleagues from my EMCPM cohort. Whilst we don't work directly together we probably share our systems thinking at least once a week to discuss new opportunities for ourselves and for Nova. We see opportunity everywhere to help others fight the fight against complexity.

In Summary

I have been fortunate to have a number of roles at Nova where I can exercise a great deal of my new learnings. Nova has been most receptive and continues to value, support and invest in my ideas even if they seem new or "really big".

Now, time for something really wicked!

Drop Your Tools
By Patrick Albina

Patrick is passionate about helping today's current and emerging leaders unlock their full potential. He helps them to become more effective by being less reliant on certainty and leveraging the opportunities afforded by the constantly changing world around them. Patrick is a Principal Consultant, an Executive Coach, and is one of a small number of practitioners specialising in the field of complexity and systems thinking. With more than 25 years of experience, Patrick enables leaders, managers and team members to unlock their potential through a mindset shift, which makes it possible to operate effectively in the grey space of decision-making.

Since 1990, at least 23 country firefighters have died in four separate incidents, each time with their equipment beside them. They died within reach of safety zones that could have been reached had they been lighter and able to move faster. In several instances, the firefighters were still wearing their backpack with chain saw in hand. The inability of these firefighters to quite literally drop their tools when the firefighting efforts were clearly futile cost them their lives. If they had dropped their tools, would they have made a different decision?

Karl Weick, the renown thought leader on 'sense-making' explored the failure of a variety of seasoned professionals to 'drop their tools' resulting in incorrect decisions. He identified circumstances where fighter pilots, whose planes became disabled, lost their lives when they held onto what they call "the cocoon of the cockpit" rather than face the harsh conditions following ejection. Naval personnel told to remove their steel-capped shoes before abandoning a sinking ship often refused to do so, only to punch holes in their life rafts when they boarded them.

Weick concluded that people held on to their tools because they did not know how to drop them, and furthermore, they could not rationalise their tools as separate from their identity. The fusion of a professional's tools with their identity means that under conditions of threat, it makes no more sense to drop one's tools than it does to drop one's sense of pride and identity.

Implicit in this idea is that tools and people are inseparable and the mere thought of dropping one's tools would raise questions associated with their source of power "…without my tools, who am I?" In this light, the notion of 'tools' can represent many things beyond its literal meaning.

In his book, "The Fifth Discipline", Peter Senge highlights seven learning disabilities that are typically found in organisations. One of these learning disabilities is the tendency for people to entirely identify themselves with their position, i.e., "I am my position." Along with one's position come all the representations of power such as title/rank, reputation, authority etc.

By constraining one's thoughts to the limited frames of their position, this learning disability collectively manifests itself as silos, where there is often a long history of defensive posturing between individuals, teams, and/or functions due to the need to seek an accord and preserve their internal beliefs system.

When people do attempt to go about solving problems, they often make matters worse through their inability to see beyond their frames of reference as bounded by their tools. Specifically, a "solution" in one area without an appreciation of the systemic nature of the problem may bring short-term relief, but the pain will reappear sooner or later in another form…and the blame game continues.

> *"Human potential can be realised as much by what we drop, as what we acquire."*

Weick suggested that learning the ability to drop one's tools is to gain lightness, agility and perspective. If we can start to think in different ways, we are able to act in different ways. In order to act in ways that best suit the situation, we must make decisions that consider perspectives other than our own.

So if not axes and chainsaws, what are our tools? They are our titles, ranks and authorities. They are our well-known and rehearsed methodologies and techniques as based on our vocational preferences, training, experiences and education.

Those of us who worry about our credibility if we were to drop our tools are unable to pay attention to the unfolding drama that could suddenly turn on us. Did the 23 firefighters who lost their lives within reach of safety zones undertake the correct course of action?

As firefighters who were being true to their identity, it is likely that they did. However under the futile circumstances, were they really undertaking the role of firefighters or simply people trying to flee the threat and seek safety? The answer is a matter of knowing when to enact our identity and knowing when to hold on to it gently.

Understanding these choices is not simply just a matter of decision making, it must be coupled with sense making to be truly effective as the context necessitates. Only then can we really know if we are doing the right things and doing those things for the right reasons.

Image supplied byPatrick Albina

Book Review:
Project Management, Denial, and the Death Zone: Lessons from Everest and Antarctica

By Grant Avery
Published By J. Ross Publishing, 2016
Review by Dr Philip Crosby FICCPM

Dr Philip Crosby is Assistant Director: Western Australia for one of CSIRO's National Facilities. He is a business strategist and a major projects specialist, with a PhD in high-technology mega-projects. He lectures and publishes widely on this topic, and his popular eBook "Success in Large High Technology Projects - What Really Works" is published by the ICCPM and available through Amazon.

Any book that manages to combine the words "Project Management" with "Death Zone" is bound to attract attention from our community, and rightly so with this intriguing and informative new text from New Zealand author Grant Avery MBA, PMP. Within its 250 pages, helpfully illustrated with many graphics and photographs, Avery sets out his views, lessons learned, and personal approach to lifting success in complex business projects.

Two factors differentiate this book from typical project management references. First, the book is exceptionally well organised and structured, presenting a logical development of the author's compelling ideas concerning risk appetite, advanced basics, and leadership. Second, Avery delves deeply into arduous expedition scenarios (many from personal experience) and draws useful analogies with thorny complex project situations.

It is clear from reading the book, and my subsequent conversation with him, that Avery is well qualified to speak on the topic, noting his substantial experience in the field of project assessment combined with both academic and professional credentials.

His exposure to problem solving and decision-making in the wildest of places allows mostly valid contrasts with complex high-tech project environments. Many gripping case studies and anecdotes drive home the key points making this book far more pleasant reading than a standard test book.

Early in the text, Avery establishes his underpinning idea that each of us has a point where our risk exposure is comfortable. When that risk level is reduced (through gained experience or changed circumstances), we tend to then engage in actions that restore the higher risk exposure, rather than continue in a lower risk environment. This is known as risk homeostasis and manifests as "outcome-maximising". The book explains this concept of risk appetite setting and risk management in the form of the CORA triangle (capability, outcomes, and risk appetite).

> *"... Avery delves deeply into arduous expedition scenarios (many from personal experience) and draws useful analogies with thorny complex project situations"*

BUILDING CAPABILITY IN COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

This segues into chapters on denial, the dangers of abnormal narcissism, and how overstretching can spell the death of projects. Avery then addresses the importance of organisational maturity, and describes the criticality of Level 3 status in achieving a sustainable project foundation.

The book then takes readers into the world of the "heroic manager", where comparisons with the famous Antarctic explorers and Alpine climbers are readily made with standout project leaders. A chapter titled Advanced Basics follows as something of a 'catch-all' where the author covers much ground in the practice of ICT-enabled business project management.

Avery continues his thesis in final chapters on project management ethos, and promotion of the 'humble servant' style of leadership, before a well-crafted epilogue summarising the major concepts.

Useful key learnings are also provided at the end of each chapter, and several checklist tools mentioned in the book are downloadable in Word format from the publisher's website – an indication of the author's genuine altruistic approach.

The tightness and defined scope of this book results in several strongly related topics not being explored (e.g. mission assurance, contingency management, and Black Swan events), and perhaps a future edition will include alternate project review terminology such as CDR, MCR, ORR, PDR etc. as these will be more familiar to the high-tech/aerospace/defence project office community. But these are small criticisms of a well-presented and valuable contribution of several new ideas to the genre.

Project success rates haven't changed in 20 years. Learn why, and what you can do to improve them in your organization.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, DENIAL, AND THE DEATH ZONE

Lessons from Everest and Antarctica

Grant Avery, MBA, PMP
Foreword by Sir Ranulph Fiennes
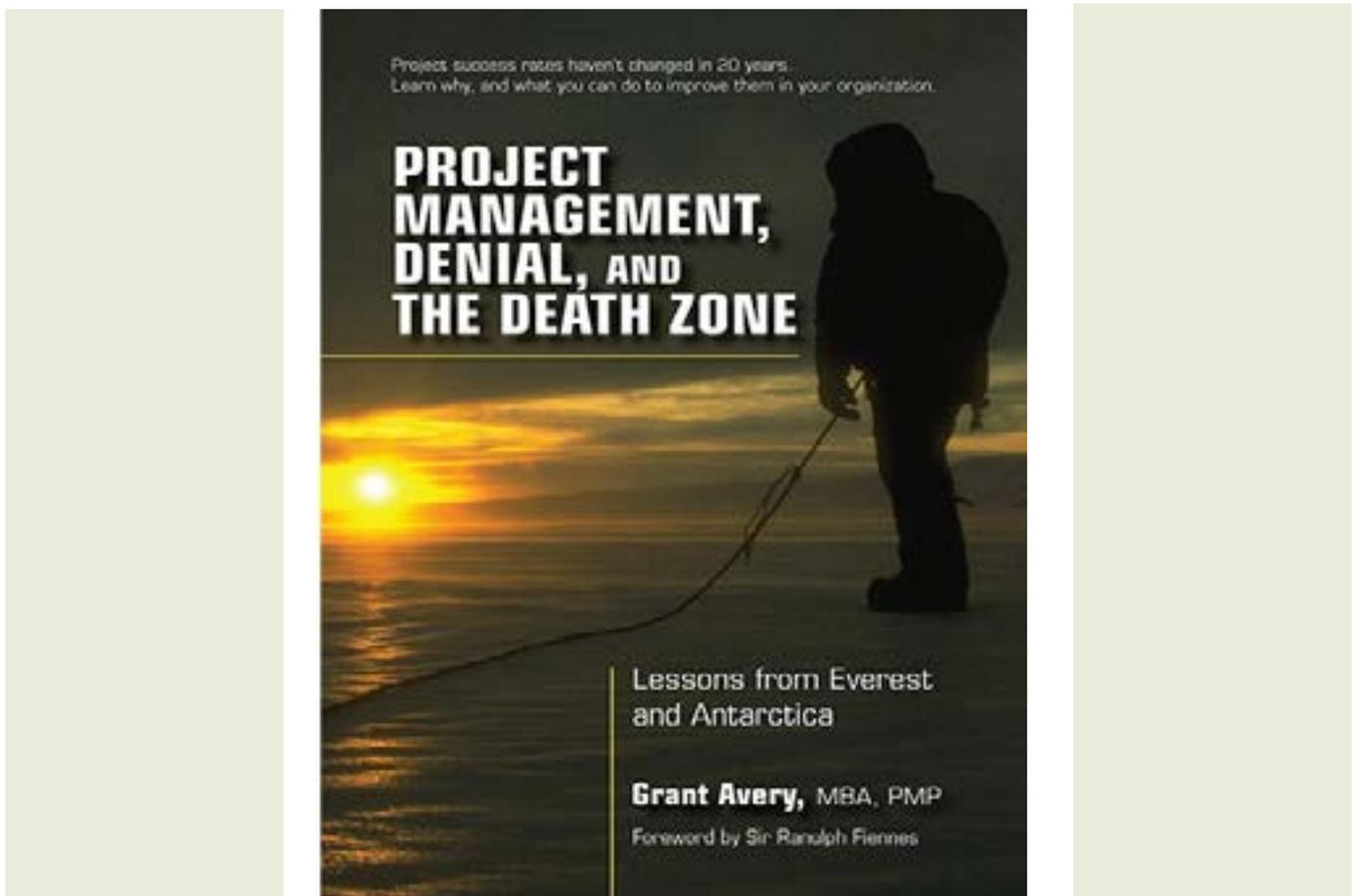
Catching the Complex Project Bug

By Phil Tammen

Phil is a Member of the Order of Australia for services in acquisition and sustainment, holds masters degrees in engineering science, project management and strategic studies, is a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia and a Graduate of the Company Directors program; skills he also uses working on not for profit boards associated with Defence.

I have worked in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as an engineer for nearly 30 years, spending 20 of these working in acquisition, technical management and sustainment. I graduated as an electronic engineer from the Australian defence Force Academy and worked in fighter aircraft maintenance management until joining the F/A-18 Hornet Upgrade project in 1995. In this role I managed contract development and execution for software and hardware developmental projects in Radar, EW, communications and embedded computing systems.

Having caught the complex project bug, I shifted into managing the technical team for the development of the Hawk 127 Lead-in Fighter, from contract signature in 1997 to the cusp of initial delivery. This project combined aggressive schedules, concurrent design and manufacture along with significant technical risk in safety critical systems and software.

I learned much about pragmatic approaches to incremental capability delivery and the importance of a close and constructive professional relationship between suppliers and customers, working with BAE SYSTEMS UK to tranche the delivery of capabilities to protect the continuity of RAAF fast jet pilot training.

I then joined the Wedgetail E-7 AEW&C resident team in 2000 as an avionics engineer, quickly assuming responsibilities for certification, safety along with elements of platform and mission system development oversight. In this role, the importance of excellence in project planning and the enduring importance of open dialogue among customers and suppliers on measuring and providently reducing technical risk was emphasised.

I rejoined AEW&C a few years later in 2006 as the mission systems lead and then moved to be the program engineering manager. The project was at this time experiencing the effects of significant delays and complex technical challenges were emerging.

I learned of the need for personally courageous leadership, deep technical competence in customers and suppliers, excellent strategic communications about program issues and a constructive approach to resolving tough project challenges. The importance of close but professional inter-personal relationships between stakeholders at all levels in a complex program was amply illustrated, forever influencing my philosophy of relationship centric complex project delivery. I then led the development of the AEW&C sustainment system, building on work underway to deliver the mature support arrangements. A new performance based cost-plus incentive based rolling wave sustainment contract developed at that time remains a benchmark approach for Defence.

For several years from 2010, I sponsored all RAAF engineering and technical policy except airworthiness regulations, implementing a number of complex projects to improve technical integrity management, boost workforce productivity, improve organisational performance and save cost for the 6000 technical personnel constituting largest single workforce in the RAAF.

I moved to my current role in Jan 2014, leading the Airlift and Tanker Systems Branch in Aerospace Systems Division of CASG. I contributed to settlement of difficulties being experienced with Airbus on KC-30A, led the redevelopment of the support system for that platform and managed the procurement of additional aircraft of various types including extra KC-30A. The need for organisational agility, a sense of what constitutes genuine technical risk and an entrepreneurial approach to seeking project funding were the key experiences.

Along the way, I have developed an approach to complex project management based upon my education and experience of the risks and rewards associated with seeking and managing non-trivial levels of technical risk to deliver excellence in platform based systems for Defence. The primacy of candid communications based upon sound relations with stakeholders and the need for collaboration in difficult circumstances all contributed to shaping my ongoing practice.

I believe that project management complexity is best dealt with by diverse teams with a blend of genuine technical discipline and domain experience, personal leadership as well as structured analysis and management approaches from the project management body of knowledge.

Image source: https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/

AROUND THE NETWORK

With 35 years of engineering, engineering management and project management experience in EPC and EPCM delivery of major international resource projects, Francis Norman is a Director and consultant in Perth, Western Australia where he advises organisations on project management, specialising in leadership and communications in large virtual team structures.

Francis began his career as a control systems engineer in the UK before moving Australia in 1993. Along the way he has lived and worked in Brazil, South Korea, India, Germany and Norway on a wide array of resources sector projects, including iron making, water treatment, power generation, various forms of mineral processing upstream and downstream oil and gas.

For the last 10 years Francis has managed and overseen the delivery of a number of projects into the Western Australian resources sector, mainly through the use of global engineering teams. Seeing the challenges encountered in coordinating the efforts of these distributed teams led him to start a PhD investigating interpersonal communications in project virtual teams and, in 2013 to set up his own consulting business, Ulfire Pty Ltd, where he works to assist clients get the most from their teams in these challenging and complex environments.

Francis is a Chartered Fellow and Engineering Executive with Engineers Australia where he was also the 2015 Western Australian Division President as well as being a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He holds an MSc in Project Management and is completing his PhD through Curtin University part time while also teaching and consulting.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

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- Discounts on ICCPM courses and events

- Access to research, communications and information reserved for ICCPM members

- Opportunity to contribute to the ICCPM eBook series

- Access to free books (in exchange for a book review)

AROUND THE NETWORK

Gopi Nath has 20 years of professional experience predominantly in program and project management. Gopi is currently engaged as a program manager in the NBN Program at Telstra, Melbourne, Australia.

His initial career in Australia was at Red Sheriff as Special Projects Manager. In 1999, he was deputed to India as General Manager to establish Red Sheriff's India operations, which was a senior role reporting to the CEO in Australia. This leadership role also resulted in joint ventures between Red Sheriff and two multinational organisations leading to revenue growth.

Subsequent engagements were at Sensis and Energy Australia managing complex projects and programs.

Previously he managed a complex program as General Manager for Programs at Telstra. In this position he managed a team of 30 senior project managers and the PMO, with accountabilities in delivery, stakeholder management and managing external vendors. Gopi has managed complex programs of $50M each year over the last 10 years.

Gopi is passionate about people and strongly believes that great teams are valuable assets to any organisation. He believes that leadership and team players are equally important in achieving critical business objectives.

Gopi lectures at education institutions and at an Australia University on excellence in project management on an ongoing basis.

Gopi holds a Masters in Engineering (IT), a MBA and Bachelors in Engineering. He is a professionally certified project manager with PMP and PRINCE2 certifications. He is a member of PMI, ICCPM and Institution of Engineers.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our new members:

Bizhan Jamshidnezhad
APIC, Australia

Gregg Bohan
Thales Australia, Australia

Collin Smith
Strategic Reform, Australia

Kannan Balaram
Fennovoima Oy, Finland

Lesleigh Ross
Business Aspect, Australia

Liesl Perez del Pulgar
Australia

Christian Graf
ZHAW School of Management and Law, Switzerland

Mark McKenna
Telstra, Australia

Johann Baard
Airservices Australia, Australia

Chris Smith
Boeing Defence Australia

CALENDAR

16 - 19 October 2016
AIPM National Conference
Sydney, Australia

24 - 26 October 2016
IACCM Americas Conference
San Diego, Canada

1 - 2 November 2016
Lead through Organisational Complexity
Canberra Public Course

3 November 2016
International Project Managment Day

8 - 9 November 2016
Lead through Organisational Complexity
Brisbane Public Course

14 - 15 November 2016
Risk & Decision Making in Complex Environments
Melbourne Public Course

16 - 19 November 2016
ProMAC Conference
Gold Coast, Australia

7 February 2017
Australian Defence Magazine Congress
Canberra, Australia

7 - 9 February 2017
Konnect Learning - Driving Regulatory Reform
Forum
Canberra, Australia

2 - 4 May 2017
Project Governance & Controls Symposium
Canberra, Australia

CSIRO   **ICCPM** INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR COMPLEX PROJECT MANAGEMENT   **ICCPM Digital Gateway**

he Digital Gateway is a one-stop-shop for the most up-to-date resources for anyone involved in complex projects a
programs

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Key categories: Complexity in Project Management, Delivery Leadership, Collaboration, Benefit Realisation, Cultur
Communication and Relationships, Sustainability and Education

The Future of "Leadership"
Do we need a new word for it?
Linda Fisher Thornton

7 Steps to Building Resilience
Human Systems International
Dr Alicia Aitken

**Working with Powerful People
- manage your relationships for
maximum satisfaction**
Mind tools

**Building Expert Power -
Lead From the Front,
at Work**
Mind tools

**What Can We Learn From
Shortcuts**
TED Talk
Tom Hulme

Moving from Good to Great Leadership
Human Systems International

**Language and Cross-cultural
Well-being**
Marta Velazquez Gil
Positive Psychology News

**Why You Think You're Right -- even if you're wrong
Ted Talk**
Julia Galef

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We will be profiling members of the ICCPM network in each issue of the CONNECT magazine; if you would like to appear or suggest someone for a profile in a future edition please get in touch.

In the December edition...

- International Roundtable Series Wrap-up
- News
- Academic-in-Residence
- Articles
- Book Reviews
- Fellows Profile
- Member Profiles

and much more!

BUILDING CAPABILITY IN COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

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