

citi bulletin

spring 2002

news from **citi** – the project professionals

fast starters

TWO classic observations made by project evaluators in the relative calm of the post-implementation review are that the project objectives were not stated with sufficient clarity, and that the project start-up was too slow!

CITI's experience of projects and programmes fully authenticates this finding – and there is no contradiction! At project initiation, the process of defining the purpose or the problem to be solved, succinctly stating the objective and identifying critical success factors is very poorly exercised. This, coupled with characteristically vague specification of the benefits, little analysis of the fundamental business risks, and unclear and indistinct determination of the scope of the project, leads to slow early performance and false starts. It all adds up to frantic activity, long delays and frustration; the project equivalent



of the military's 'hurry up and wait!'

CITI and others have focused much research on how to eliminate this project phenomenon. As is so often found, the answer lies in the application of common sense – but it only becomes common sense once it is pointed out!

The first trick is to split project initiation into two steps. Step one involves getting the key stakeholders together (and don't accept deputies!) and focusing them on the problem that led to this particular project being selected. Make sure the purpose is not a clandestine restatement of the benefits, or a sly attempt to dress up a solution as a need!

Once the stakeholders have agreed the problem, get them to define the project objective. Good objectives describe an achievement – a desired end-state. Objectives should not be statements of desired benefits, or yet another sly attempt to introduce a pet solution. A good test for an objective is that it clearly defines the completion criteria. The



by **Christopher Worsley**

CEO: CITI Group

stakeholders are also the group to state what the benefits are – how big they are supposed to be and who is responsible for them.

Step two follows immediately after step one, but the 'players' are different. The project sponsor, the project manager, perhaps a key stakeholder, and one or two technical specialists, determine the critical success factors, the scope of the project and the major risks. Splitting project definition in this way focuses effort and eliminates premature initiation, with its subsequent delays.

Each of these components – problem, objectives, benefits, CSFs, scope and risks – has its own tools and techniques, and the application of them by even moderately experienced people has a radical impact on early project performance. We have successfully used this approach to fast start even the most complex of projects. There may be no silver bullet to successful project initiation, but there certainly is a six-chambered gun!

change starts here
www.citi.co.uk

citi the project professionals



responsible for your success...

THE ROLE OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

OUR experience over the years tells us that doing a technically good job, even an excellent one, as project manager is not enough to guarantee business success.

It is essential to address the fundamental issues and these are invariably at a senior management level. So when we are asked to put in a delivery manager, we always put in a management team. Part of the team is the project manager or programme manager working with the client, at the client site. The other part sits within CITI.

In this 'hidden' component, the most significant member is the Project Director. Each Project Director is a highly experienced project or programme manager with many years line management experience and is responsible not only for the account, but also for the success of the assignment on behalf of the client and CITI.

Project progress

Over the lifetime of an assignment your Project Director is actively involved in the scoping process of the project, objectively reviewing the initial plans, evaluating project status and advising you of progress. They track the critical success factors, ensuring that the CITI delivery manager and you are aware of the management actions that need to be taken to achieve them.

The most critical aspect of being a Project Director is personal integrity – you can expect nothing short of the truth – even if it proves at variance from your internal reports. Their key role is to 'trouble shoot' the project. Even when you outsource, 'life' happens – the world can put your project at risk. The Project Director is there to support you, the project, and the project management team in times of calm and of crisis, arriving on site whenever it is helpful to you, but always keeping in close contact with the CITI delivery manager.

For more information on delivery management, please contact Amanda Muscat on 01908 283600.

take your project along

THE most useful service a project manager can receive during the life of a project is an objective assessment of the health and status of the project.

When carried out rapidly by experts who can compare actual performance against benchmark values, it improves overall performance in the immediate and near-term future of a project.

The assessment provides an early opportunity for the project manager and sponsor to work together to identify and introduce corrective action where and when required.

A project clinic is a 'safe' environment

where managers discuss their projects frankly and openly.

During an interview, using project benchmark questionnaires and baselines, an expert assessment of the project is created. (The analogy is that of a healthy person visiting a 'well-person' clinic. The person is compared against pre-established criteria, to assess how far their vital characteristics deviate from the norm.)

Once the assessment process is complete, the expert advises suitable actions and, if necessary, provides a 'prescription' to reduce or remedy potential sources of later problems.

Project managers attend the clinic for a

from VISION

OVER the past 12 years, programmes have repeatedly proved to be the most effective way of implementing permanent change.

What distinguishes a programme from other management approaches is how it focuses on realising the organisation vision through the creation of the changes in people and processes that make up the new way of working (the operating blueprint).

Moving from vision to blueprint follows a 'right to left' approach, i.e. by starting with the outcomes and driving back towards the things that must be done to achieve them. A coherent programme plan can then be developed.

The work is structured into three steps. The first step determines the target operating blueprint; a recent example is work successfully carried out by CITI for a major UK retailer in creating customer focused staff working in a new 24/7 environment. The blueprint was defined in terms of processes and functions by identifying the changes between the current operating model and the new one. If the target operating blueprint cannot be established, the programme as conceived is incoherent and should be abandoned.

Programmes clearly link business benefits to the impacts needed to deliver those benefits and to the deliverables (products) from projects

and line initiatives. The second step determines the 'doability' of the programme by identifying the complete set of programme products in terms of scale and diversity of impacts and the stakeholder management implications.

Tranche planning (the third step) describes the grouping together of project and line initiatives in order to make a predetermined set of impacts. The tranche plan defines the optimum grouping of products into projects so that the risks associated with delivering the programme outcomes is reduced. This step identifies the resource demand, the sequencing of projects and the timing of impacts on the business.

By following this sequence, it is possible to translate an organisation's vision into a plan that delivers an effective, implementable operating environment. The time taken for these steps varies, but eight elapsed weeks is a good guideline for most organisations. Without a clear, consistent, comprehensive and implementable programme plan, change can be an endless series of adjustments to not wanted and not thought-through impacts. With an eight-week investment change becomes a planned progress towards the 'new'.

For more information on programme blueprinting please contact Norman Ebbs on 01908 283600.

to B

long to the **citi** clinic

'health check' assessment.

They bring with them 'samples' that are recognised indicators of project health, that include their plan, schedule, current status reports, and project risk and issues logs.

When CITI carries out a project clinic, it is a structured evaluation that identifies the management actions that should be taken in order to redress any shortfall between delivery and expectation.

The turnaround time for a project clinic – from initiation to final report – is one week.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

FOR the chance to win a free health check on your project, answer the following questions by typing your answers in at www.citi.co.uk/clinic.

1. – Who is the author of the seminal project management text book (the mythical man – month)?
2. – What do the initials APM stand for?
3. – The US Navy is credited with developing which project management tool?



Bestseller:
Against the Gods – Bernstein

insight into the history of risk

"We can never know exactly what will happen in the future. But like the wanderer facing a sea of fog, we can try to blow away some of the clouds of vagueness, so that we can better understand and manage risk"

Kenneth Arrow, Nobel laureate in economics

RISK management is not simply a technical discipline, but a way of thinking about the world.

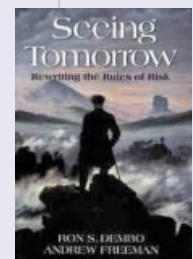
Against the Gods is an excellent history of risk. You won't come away with any new tools or techniques, but it is thought provoking and motivating. It provides insight into why risk management is fundamental to management in uncertainty, something you will almost certainly want to share with colleagues.

Like *Against the Gods*, *Seeing Tomorrow* focuses on the practical application of risk management. Planning around a single view of the future is simply gambling. As Dembo & Freeman clearly assert, proper risk management requires us to consider a lot of possible events and explore how to react to them.

This book focuses on financial cases and from a project management perspective is low on examples of application. But the introduction of behavioural economics – the concept of 'regret' and its application – are pertinent to the kinds of decisions taken.

Both books are mind-set changers and are recommended to programme managers, risk managers, project sponsors and project managers. Read *Against the Gods* first – it has become almost the seminal book on the history of risk management. If you enjoy this then you will find some interesting new insights in *Seeing Tomorrow*.

Against the Gods, Peter L Bernstein, Wiley, 1996 ISBN 0-471-12104-5
Seeing Tomorrow, Ron Dembo and Andrew Freeman, Wiley 1998 ISBN 0-471-24736-7



Recommended:
Seeing Tomorrow – Dembo & Freeman

BLUEPRINT

Courses and workshops

February – Programme support office workshop, London

Complementing the project support office workshop or as a stand-alone event, this one-day workshop concentrates on monitoring the benefits and portfolio performance as well as what the programme management team should expect from the support office.

March – Programme management workshop, Dublin

Identifying the differences between project and programme management is key to the

successful delivery of benefits into the business. This one-day workshop discusses the roles and responsibilities in programmes and how to deal with complexity.

April – Project support office workshop, Dublin

CITI's popular one-day project support office workshop is a must for companies setting up a project support office for the first or nth time! Looking at personal successes and gaining knowledge from CITI's extensive research base, the workshop covers best practices that should

be applied in every business.

April-May – Managing programmes course

Suitable for both practising programme managers and managers about to initiate a major change programme, this four-day course looks beyond the roles and responsibilities in the programme to what needs to be done to deliver the business benefits.

For more information on courses and workshops please contact Anna Singleton on 01908 283600

showcasing solutions

CITI is proud to sponsor **ProjectWorld 2002**. Taking place on **March 13 and 14 at the Novotel, Hammersmith, London, for its twelfth consecutive year.**

Recognised as Europe's most comprehensive event for project and programme management professionals, the event will continue to showcase the latest solutions and services from major suppliers and provide visitors with an unrivalled seminar programme.

ProjectWorld is now part of a series of international events giving delegates access to top speakers and seminars covering hot

THE UK'S MOST EXTENSIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT EVENT



topics from around the world.

Leading the field in project and programme management, CITI will be running two seminars at this prestigious event.

The first, 'Managing separate but interdependent projects', on March 13 is led by Peter Collin and Norman Ebbs, Principal Consultants, CITI. This session discusses one of the few universally accepted characteristics of programmes which is that they involve the management of interrelated projects. The impact of this interrelationship is profound and the success of a programme can often be traced back to the way in which the

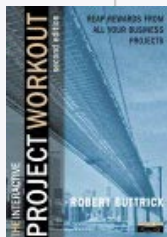
programme management team managed the interfaces between the projects.

In the session you will be taken through CITI's research and case studies in managing programme critical interfaces – how to define them, how to spot them, and what to do about them. Delegates attending this session will receive a copy of Robert Butterick's best-selling book, *Project Workout*.

The second, 'Benefits realisation: why is it so critical yet so often overlooked?', on March 14 is led by Dr Christopher Worsley, CEO of CITI. This seminar focuses on achieving business benefit and delivering a customer value proposition. In response to the need to manage programmes effectively, we have developed strategies, techniques and tools to model, map and teach benefits as an aide and directive for programme boards and the programme management team.

Delegates attending this session will be given free access to the CITI e:programme office (e:PO) for the length of one of their projects.

To register on either seminar, complete the ProjectWorld registration form at www.imark.co.uk/proman, or call the Imark Communications hotline on 07000 763 896. The cost for each seminar is £165 plus VAT – mention the following reference (CITIGUEST) and receive a 15% discount.



Free! Project Workout, Robert Butterick.

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