

## **Skill swap – GCHQ to Eurostar**

Thomas Docker and Steve Jones

8<sup>th</sup> November, 2006



# major projects – cost overruns

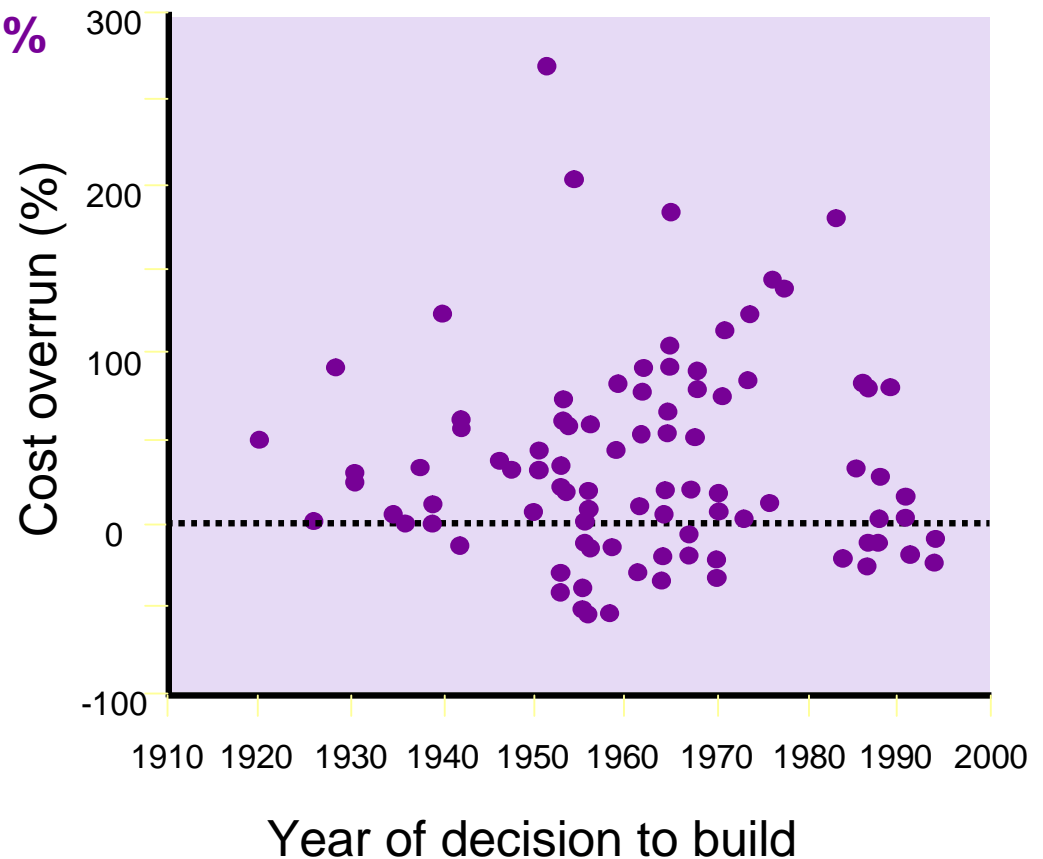


and we are not getting better!

Humber bridge  
Denmark tunnel  
Channel tunnel  
Tyne and Wear  
metro

cost  
overrun %

175  
130  
80  
55



## the big ones

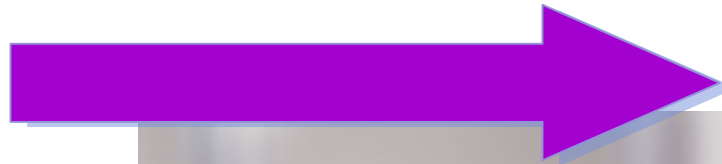
Suez Canal 1,900  
Sydney Opera House 1,400  
Concorde 1,100

# citi centres of excellence club



for like-minded people to come together and discuss issues, **network** and exchange ideas

**April 2005**



**The CofEe Club**



# benefits

- ✓ Driving improvement in PM3
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Ideas exchange
- ✓ Skills exchange



## Welcome to CITI's hosted Centres of Excellence Club

A 'by invitation only' enterprise, **CofEe Club** offers networking opportunities for key players in the project and programme community.

Standard CITI Xchange resources are accessible via the left-hand pane. **CofEe Club** resources are available via the links below.

**Xchange**  
portal community union partnership convergence alliance group commune society



Online forum



Forthcoming meetings



Downloads

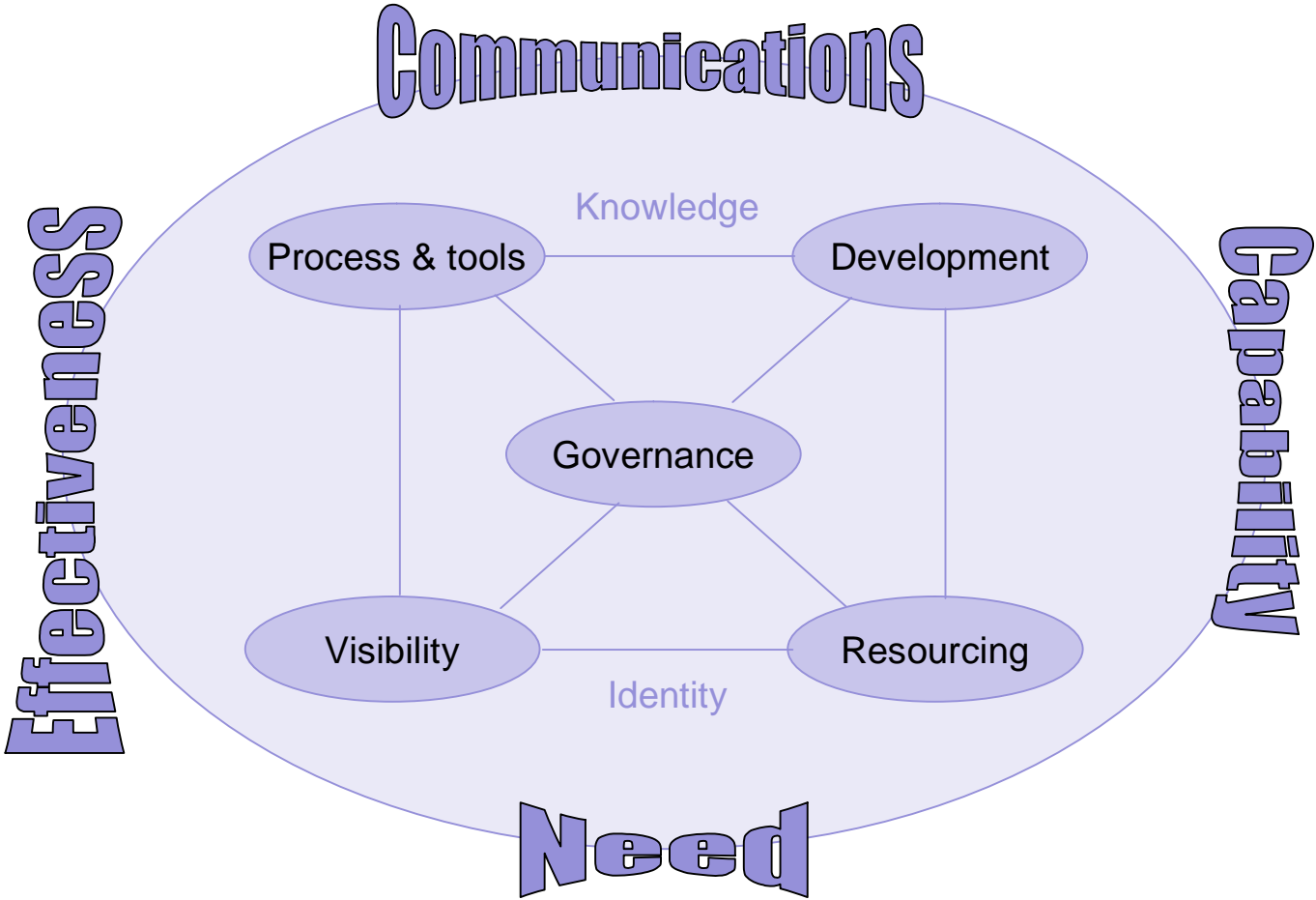


Useful links



Contact

# centre of excellence in PM3

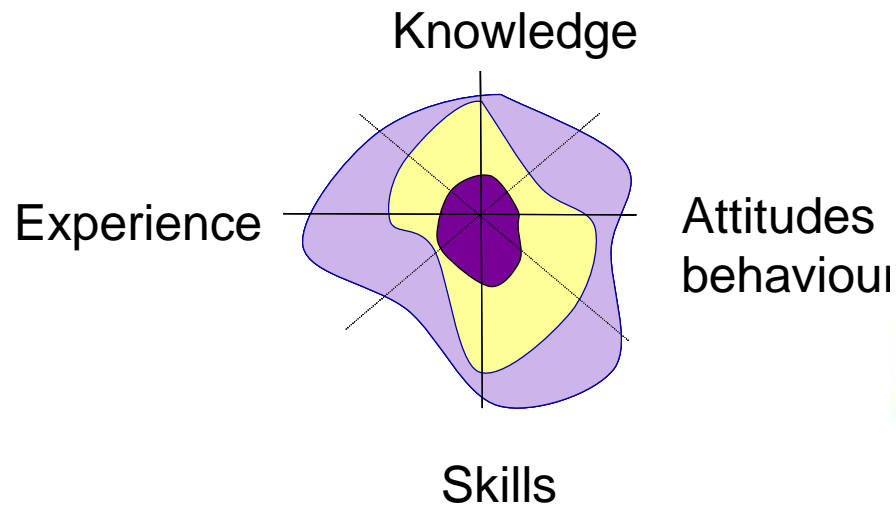


# development framework



## Needs to ...

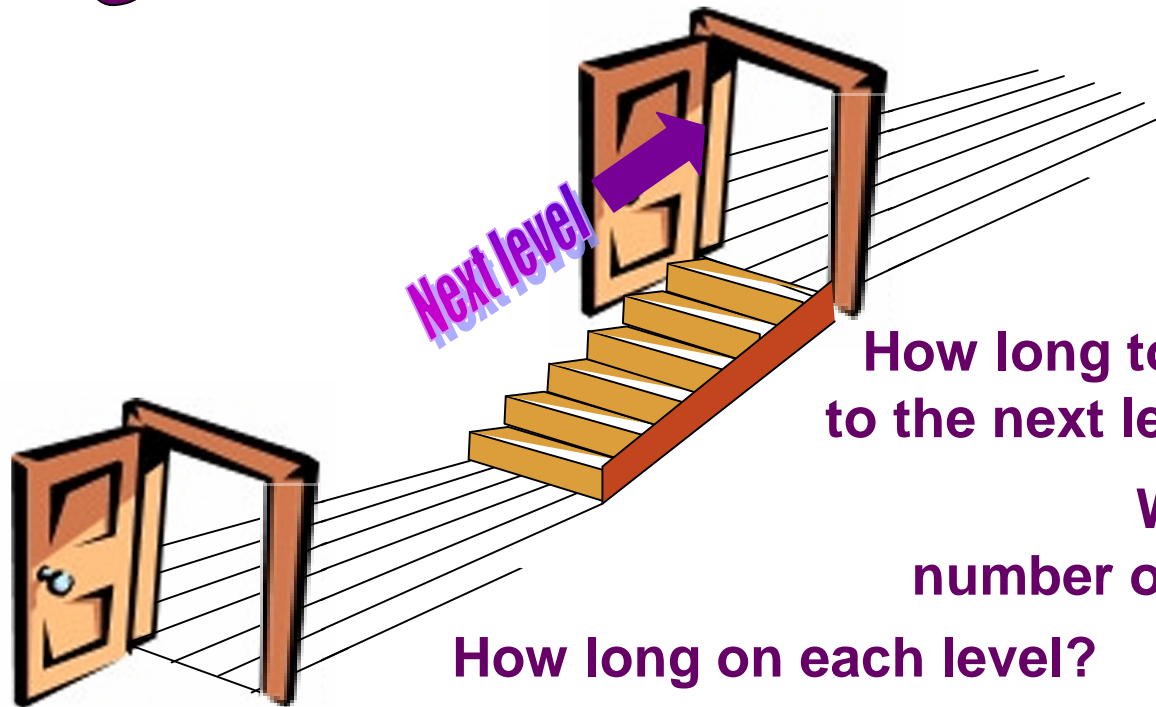
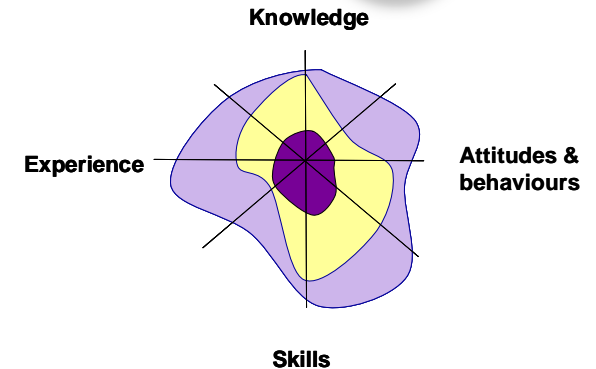
- ✓ be unambiguous
- ✓ use a simple language
- ✓ have a simple, logical structure



# key issues



# Competences



How long to get to the next level?

What types and number of interactions?

How long on each level?

How to gain entry?

# skill swap



## SKILL SWAP: GCHQ TO RAIL



A UNIQUE chance to develop skills through experiencing life in another sector has given a project manager at Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) a wider window on their professional world.

GCHQ has a two-year programme for staff who want to develop as technologists or project managers. It is not a graduate fast track type of scheme but features an active partnership between the customer (the technical community) and the provider (learning and development services).

About a dozen people are funded each year on the scheme to follow a tailored programme. Places are allocated among 'strands' such as software engineering and project management. These strands vary from year to year, according to the sort of skills the business needs at the time.

Each strand is overseen by a development manager (an acknowledged expert in their field), who helps each candidate to draw up a personalised development plan, which includes work-based learning, placement, training courses and other development activities.

It's a unique opportunity to work in a variety of specialist areas in a relatively short period of time, gathering valuable professional skills and experience and personal performance evidence.

The aim of the project management strand is to develop individuals to become career project managers (technical and non-technical), with the appropriate professional training and a broad experience of project management in the organisation.

As part of the second year of the current scheme, an opportunity arose for Judith, one of the developing project managers, to gain experience in a

different sector through a five-month placement with the high speed train operator Eurostar, at its main offices at Waterloo International Station in London.

The placement was designed in such a way that experience could be gained of project management in a different environment to that at GCHQ, where different business driven define the projects undertaken, as well as gaining exposure to the wider commercial aspects that affect Eurostar. It would also provide the opportunity to compare the use of project methodology, tools and techniques employed by each organisation.

These aims were achieved through a placement with the marketing team - not an activity usually associated with GCHQ - particularly to gain insight into how to control project start-up and initiation in an environment that is naturally rich with innovative ideas!

One of the clear observations of the placement was that although the business drivers of each organisation differed significantly, many similarities existed.

Although on a smaller scale, Eurostar, like GCHQ, embeds its project management within specific business units ensuring more effective team working and project discipline, yet has still managed to create a defined 'sense of community' for the project managers.

Eurostar has also embarked on a large new accommodation project - the move from Waterloo to St Pancras. GCHQ has recent experience of such a project, having successfully moved from two locations in Cheltenham to purpose-built new accommodation under a private finance initiative (PFI) arrangement. This involved significant technical, people and cultural change aspects and from which GCHQ gained enormous project management experience.

The placement at Eurostar has been very beneficial for Judith. As well as adding a further dimension to the project management skills and knowledge base, already developed during the scheme at GCHQ, it also helped to develop a wider set of behaviours through working in an unfamiliar environment.

Eurostar has gained an appreciation of the drive for greater professionalism of the project management at GCHQ, the project organisation used and the approach adopted to deliver its own portfolio of projects as well as being able to share in some of the experiences and difficulties of a large new accommodation project.

To that end, the placement has been mutually beneficial to both organisations and to the individuals directly involved, and GCHQ is grateful to Eurostar for providing the opportunity to help develop its project management talent.

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*Editor's note: Because of the sensitive nature of the work at GCHQ, full names have been withheld.*

THE BUDDING between GCHQ and Eurostar which has led to the role swapping opportunities came out of the Centres of Excellence Networking Club (Coffee Club) organised by CITI.

The club was created in 2005 to allow people from different industries but performing similar roles to get together and share their ideas and experiences within project and programme management.

"Companies were coming to CITI to ask for help," said Tamasine Thompson, the club coordinator. "They thought they were unique, that theirs was the only team with a particular problem. They were not!

"CITI decided that the most effective antidote to their fears would be to get them together, to provide a forum to discuss issues and potential solutions with people who had been there before or who were in similar positions. We discovered, as the events progressed, that people found the meetings even more to their advantage than we had predicted."

The club enables like-minded project and programme managers and directors to meet, discuss ideas and network with each other to forge alliances throughout the public and private sectors. It is run on an invitation only basis. Attendees are key influencers in programme and project management in their organisations.

The last event was held during March, when representatives of the aerospace, financial services, banking and higher education sectors debated governance and its impact on projects. Speakers included representatives of Coutts & Co, Sheffield Hallam University and CITI.

Membership applications are welcome from anyone sitting at a senior management or director level within an organisation running projects. Managing benefits was the topic set for the June event, with project and programme support offices (PPSO) another future topic already on the list.

For more information, contact Tamasine Thompson  
Email: [tthompson@citi.co.uk](mailto:tthompson@citi.co.uk)

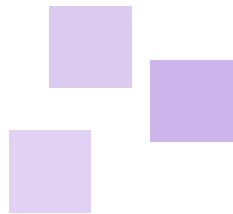
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When a project manager from government intelligence and security buddies up with the marketing team of a high speed rail operator, what signals do they pick up to help their personal development?

# LISTENING IN







## Thank you – Q&As

Thomas Docker and Steve Jones  
8<sup>th</sup> November, 2006