

bulletin

news from CITI – partner in change

making the right choice

YOU'LL remember the old days ... when you needed a project run, you'd find someone who was available and give it to them. Easy! Of course, there were performance problems: things done poorly, things not done – but you were used to that!

It turns out that availability isn't a project management competency – but what is? In the analysis of a survey of 500 companies we ran recently, there was a distinct trend for organisations to now recruit project managers (PMs) to project management roles – which is a good thing. But, what is a little worrying is that there is no consensus about exactly what skills and competencies should be used to identify a good PM.

best indicator

In the absence of a good competency model and a technique for assessing individuals against it, the recruitment process was a little 'hit and miss'. Without doubt experience is the best indicator – but some CVs turn out to be 'imaginative'.

Perhaps as worrying is the lack of a coherent approach around the management and deployment of the PMs, once recruited. Some organisations do group them into a central pool and have them treat the PMO as

by **Christopher Worsley**

CEO: CITI Group

'home', but it is by no means the 'norm'. Of the 67 per cent of project-using organisations that have some form of PMO, 22 per cent were responsible for recruiting and selecting project managers, and 31 per cent ended up being responsible for managing all or most of the PM population. That means that out of 100 organisations, 79 – the overwhelming majority of organisations – manage their PM population within their normal functional line.

dynamic environment

The problem is that research on human resource management in project organisations, strongly suggests that resource management practices in the functional line are not particularly well suited to the more dynamic environment required by project-oriented organisations.

And the consequences? The development

of PMs depends upon the assignments they undertake, and as the best project managers are generally also ambitious, without sensitively managed career and development support, the only option they may see for themselves may be for the individuals to 'career develop' by moving on to their next job, in another company!

So it's your choice; provide a stimulating and progressive career path and enjoy the consequences, or stick with the 'availability' criteria and you may not have many 'good ones' to choose from!

experience
is key in a
demanding
environment

choosing the right route

BOTH commercial and public sector organisations feel under a relentless obligation to change; to constantly improve the quantity and quality of the products and services that they supply.

Most managers are recruited expressly for their potential to deliver such improvements. No one ever looks for staff who can 'keep things going just the way they are now'. Improvement is clearly vital, but just how good are we already?

The attractive notion of 'best practice' within each business sector has created an eager market for models, methods and comparative measures.

We all feel safest when following a proven path, so the creation and sponsorship of these 'maturity models' by professional bodies seems to give us 'legitimate' external standards to judge against. The score, rating or badge becomes all important. However, this only works if an appropriate model has been chosen from the many.

we all feel safest when following a proven path

which model?

Some of the models that are particularly suited to a project-based environment have recently been reviewed by the APM:

Models to Improve the Management of Projects is written by a specially selected expert panel, including Monty Finniston Award holder Terry Cooke-Davies and IPMA Vice President Mary McKinlay.

Using the right maturity model and benchmark can be a persuasive indicator that inspires you to act and improve the right things for your situation. The wrong model will drive the wrong behaviour and results.

who is going to improve what?

It is very common for a project management professional to be expected to achieve both delivery promises and to produce this sort of lasting business change as a sideline (like sort-out a 'better' requirements, change or configuration management process).

Taking this route, will almost certainly lead to sub-optimal solutions to just a few isolated problems.

Real life cases are proving that the maximum benefit can be achieved by identifying the underlying client drivers, strategic fit and key process areas, and then sponsoring this business change as an independent (consultancy-led) project.

A skilled appraisal and implementation sets you on the road to releasing the real potential for your business or organisation. Not just a target, score, rating or a badge, but a real and lasting improvement in what you do for your customers.

So go on - pick a model!

on track for success

THE launch of Eurostar services on High Speed 1 (HS1) has begun a new era in short-haul travel between the UK and mainland Europe. The impact has been immediate: Eurostar's faster services, shorter travel times and carbon neutral journeys are winning over more travellers from the short-haul airlines.

HS1 is the UK's first high-speed rail line linking London to the European network - it is also the first new British railway in 100 years and said to be the country's largest ever single construction project. Eurostar's HS1 services programme was complex in itself but add the political complexities and a non-negotiable, very public, end date and you have a significant, business-critical programme.

high profile

Was it a success? Of course! The end date was marked by the high-profile opening of St Pancras and the highly publicised launch of the HS1 services.

Justifiably proud of what has been achieved, Eurostar's HS1 Programme Office Manager, Elaine Davies, shares with us the importance of understanding and managing the seven

critical steps to programme success:

■ Persistent and visible senior management support:

Our CEO, Richard Brown, not only supported the programme throughout but his forward thinking paved the way to our success by insisting our project management was under control before HS1.

■ Planned and continuously managed stakeholder engagement:

Absolutely critical as we were engaging with three countries, numerous suppliers and railway companies with differing languages.

■ Up front planning and structuring:

Time spent structuring, prioritising and planning paid dividends providing us with a strong focus and a means to monitor, control and deliver.

■ Sound project management techniques:

Professional project managers sharing an agreed methodology and common language across the programme proved crucial.

■ Centrally facilitated change management:

Buy-in by our staff was one of our critical success factors and was integral to the smooth transition to the new services.

■ Testing:

getting this right enabled us to appreciate our staff and customers' new journey experience in a safe environment - leading directly to a smooth service launch.

■ Communication, communication, communication:

This essential element of

going from strength

CITI is delighted to announce that it has been chosen as a preferred supplier of project and programme management consultancy services to Norwich Union (NU) Life, NU Insurance and their UK IT Services division, part of the AVIVA Group of companies.

Through a collaborative relationship, established in 1991, we have seen NU go from strength to strength to become the largest insurer in the UK. This award is another great step forward to continuing our successful relationship.

NU insures one in five households, one in seven motor vehicles and more than 800,000 businesses in the UK. It is essential for them to develop world-class project management expertise to maintain their enviable position

and CITI is pleased to be recognised as an organisation who contributes to this and continues to make a difference to their business.

Over more recent years, we have profiled the capability of over 250 Norwich Union project managers, to assess their development needs, and this has been followed with targeted learning events.

CITI's AVIVA Group Account Manager, Loretta Devonshire, said: "We are looking forward to continuing our long relationship with the AVIVA Group of companies by providing real value added services to ensure that the preferred supplier status we have achieved is a success."

Building on our skills

CITI has been collecting data on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, skills and experience (KASE) of project managers for 18 years.

The KASE information is collected through questionnaires supplemented with face-to-face assessment. A common problem with questionnaires is that they are affected by biases that are difficult to determine, and are not well suited to the assessment of skills or behaviours. Combining questionnaires with structured interviews and case study reviews overcomes many of these problems and yields very rich data, with a high degree of predictive validity as well as having excellent face validity.

At the APM conference in October, CITI presented a summary of the last three years of data collected from over 3,000 participants. The data is analysed by sector, job title and gender, and allows independent examination of each of the elements of KASE.

Here are just a few of the insights:

- There are over 400 job titles represented in this sample. This seems to reflect both the varying names we give project managers and the diverse roles that are running projects within organisations.
- The Government sector showed strength and breadth in project managers in the mid capability levels but in comparison to other sectors had fewer high performers.
- The knowledge test administered used a selection of ten knowledge topics in line with research findings on what seems to make a project manager successful. Only five per cent of the high performing project managers 'failed' this test. This is counter to other research which suggests little correlation between performance on professional body knowledge-based tests and overall capability.
- Of the behaviour profiles administered, the analysis of where project managers 'claimed' they spent their time was most predictive of overall capability.

The analysis raises many interesting questions. Who is running projects in UK plc? Is the PM career path working in Government? Can we hone in on particular knowledge and behaviours which are symptomatic of potential high performers?

The findings from this data are being fed into a two-year research project. A Research Fellow position at Middlesex University, the National Centre for Project Management (NCPM), has been funded by CITI. The NCPM are very interested in what questions you, the practising community, are interested in them following up.

To express your views please follow <http://www.citi.co.uk/news/events/0709-APM.htm>

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programme management should not be underestimated in a complex change environment – we used every mechanism available to us!

Elaine is proud to have such an achievement on her record. Elaine told CITI: "I am delighted that the hard work and determination of the programme team paid off. We successfully delivered the largest programme Eurostar has ever run with no disruption to passengers and HS1 services running to schedule from St Pancras from day one."

Richard Brown, CEO, also commented: "We worked with CITI to review and strengthen our project management capability. The impact of the programme of work has focused us on performance and delivery and there is a predictable 'professionalisation' within the project management community.

"This was invaluable in helping us open services on High Speed 1 from the new station at St Pancras International exactly on time and to a high standard."

h to strength



Norwich Union is part of Aviva, the world's fifth-largest insurance group which has £364 billion of assets under management. Aviva has 59,000 employees serving 40 million customers worldwide.

aiming higher

Project Challenge Spring 2008

NEC, Birmingham

**12-13
March
2008**

AT this event Dr Christopher Worsley, CEO of CITI, will discuss **how to balance the desirable with the do-able**.

Enterprise project portfolios are investment vehicles for businesses. Fund managers have esoteric tools to help them make decisions; project portfolio managers have business cases!

What can be done to support good decision-making in this environment when

the claims made on the investment purse range from mandatory expenditure through to strategic commitment to financial benefits?

In this case-based session, CITI shares with delegates the approach it has been using over the past 10 years with its many clients to translate strategy (the allocation of organisational resources) into action (the creation of the organisation's portfolio of projects). Christopher is a popular speaker

at this event, as he engages the audience with his lively and passionate style. The autumn Project Challenge show brought over 180 delegates to hear his session; it is recommended that you get to his presentation early as generally late arrivals find that there is standing room only!

■ **For more information or to register please visit www.projchallenge.com**

Knowing the value of your PPSO and getting your organisation on board

Aston Business School, Lakeside Conference Centre, Birmingham

**10
April
2008**

CONSIDER the evolution of many PPSO-type organisations – they often start off as the result of an enlightened individual who has identified a need to solve a worsening situation in the project delivery department – a PPSO is an ideal vehicle that promises to halt the decline in delivery that gets shown to the directors each month: budgets over-running, disputes with suppliers, deadlines being missed, and the ever-growing unrest from the user base – “it’s not what we wanted!”

The PPSO can turn from ‘hero’ into ‘sitting duck’ overnight; a victim of its own success. The Spring 2008 PPSOSIG Conference will discuss how to identify the type of PPSO you work in, and what your organisation needs, concentrating on helping you to determine your own business case, and identifying and working with your stakeholders

to ensure that the PPSO's value is properly understood and appreciated across the business.

John Zachar, CITI Principal Consultant, sets the scene for the day by discussing **the different types of PPSO in organisations today**. There will be a presentation and discussion on the different types of PPSOs to ensure all types of PPSOs are categorised.

In the afternoon, Chris Hobson, CITI Principal Consultant, will be **challenging the benefits of your PPSOs** and will later show why stakeholders are important to you, and why you are important to them. The event will help you to look for ways to enhance your stakeholder relationships and create a stakeholder management plan.

■ **See the full agenda and booking details – www.ppsosig.co.uk**

**train to gain:
helping to create
a more dynamic
and competitive
environment for
employees**

Unicom – effective programme and project management

London

THE accelerated pace of change now facing all industries in the 21st century is a golden opportunity for programme and project managers as they enhance enterprises' business performance towards the achievement of organisational goals.

This conference provides an opportunity to find out about the reviewing processes of other organisations. By listening to the views of experts, narration of successful practices, networking and discussing with peers, participants will be able to improve their knowledge management and the strategy and tactics

of management processes.

On 13 May Christopher Hodson, CITI Principal Consultant, explores the tools the project manager has to develop an effective resource plan, and the value that clear roles and responsibilities has in meeting the project's time, cost and quality criteria.

In his session **plan the resource to resource the plan**, Christopher discusses how getting the right person to do the right things at the right time is the real purpose of resource planning. Done early on in the project planning process, the project manager retains control. However if done late, the resources determine the project strategy!

■ **For further information about the conference or to book a place visit www.unicom.co.uk**

**13-14
May
2008**