

Project Management across Cultures and Industries



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I THOUGHT I KNEW A LITTLE ABOUT LOTS OF THINGS WHEN I STARTED WORKING!

My first project was to develop a presentation on the trends in European life insurance – it took 4 weeks of 12 -14 hour days, 6 days a week to get it right!



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*We do not discover new lands without consenting to
lose sight of the shores we have known for a long time.*

Andre Gide (1869 – 1951)

Don't forget the human element



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- ▶ Many project management methodologies
- ▶ Many project management certifications



- ▶ But:
 - ▶ 80% is really about people
 - ▶ Most companies have their own methodology you are expected to follow
 - ▶ Evolve from data-oriented to people-oriented
 - ▶ Delegate and have faith in your people
 - ▶ Be a leader and inspire your team members
 - ▶ Be ready for your own evolution

Cultural differences



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Why is understanding cultural differences important?

- ▶ Considerations of past, present and future
- ▶ Time as an unlimited resource
- ▶ Authority and decision making
- ▶ Individual responsibility and departmental responsibility
- ▶ Masculinity
- ▶ Religion

Are industries really that different?



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Project stages	Financial services industry	Mining and resources industry	Soft ware industry
	A new product development	A mine extension	A system development project
1	Idea development	Concept	Concept
2	Business case preparation	Pre-feasibility	Business analysis and business requirements
3	Prototyping and refinement of business case	Feasibility	Design
4	Development	Detailed Design	Development
5	Product launch	Construction	Testing and production
6	Project close and monitoring of product uptake	Commissioning, project close and monitoring of performance	Project close and monitoring of production stability or error rates

When in Rome do as the Romans do...



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Wall Street and City of London

- Appearances are important; pinstripe suit, expensive shirts and cufflinks
- Which business school did you go to?
- Small talk is not very important

Middle East

- Long skirts, dresses and gold jewellery
- They never really say "No"
- "Give me an update on everything!"

Paris

- Fancy and long restaurant lunches
- Vague commitments and colourful language
- To be well read appeals to the French intellect

Balkan countries

- Nothing works between 11.30 and 2.30pm - siestas in Slovenia, Greece
- Wine and constant evening engagements

Queensland

- Brisbane is not Melbourne
- Steel caps and high visibility in the Bowen Basin

Case Study 1



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Financial Product Development on Wall Street

Project objective:

- ▶ Develop an alternative product to Bloomberg terminal for the international fixed income market (front, middle and back office)
- ▶ Estimate market potential for such a product

Project content:

- ▶ Development of a product prototype
- ▶ Interviews of potential users in 6 countries to test reactions
- ▶ Development of a market potential assessment model
- ▶ Documentation of findings and recommend action to proceed to client

Project outcome:

- ▶ No go

Challenges:

- ▶ Setting up interviews from London with Wall Street bond traders in New York
- ▶ Logistics with London office and team members in 4 countries
- ▶ Egos of bond traders, balanced by helpful middle office and back office personnel
- ▶ Impeccable appearance every day for 12 hours

Case Study 2



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Cost/ income ratio improvement for a bank in Eastern Europe

Project objective:

- Improve the cost to income ratio of a bank in Slovenia

Project content:

- Analyse current situation in bank
- Determine future state and strategy
- Develop and implement improvement ideas

Project outcome:

- Project went ahead
- Bank is now one of most successful financial institutions in the country

Challenges:

- Mixed consultants and client team members team
- Background of war and communism
- Social fabric and non-free market thinking
- Healthy drinking culture in prime wine region and... “I did not ski”

Case Study 3



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Strategy Development for a Muslim Bank in the Middle East

Project objective:

- Develop viable strategy and business plan for a Pakistani bank in the UAE and Oman

Project content:

- Document current unhealthy situation in bank (declining profits)
- Develop future strategy
- Run workshops with all branch managers to get their “buy-in”
- Document all findings

Project outcome:

- Project went ahead
- Bank did not lose license and is still operating in the Middle East

Challenges:

- Masculinity and Bureaucracy
- Time zones and interactions with London, Africa and the Middle East
- Socio-economic make-up of Dubai’s society

Case Study 4



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Feasibility Study Management for a Coal Processing Plant Upgrade

Project objective:

- ▶ Project manage the pre-feasibility and feasibility study for a coal process and plant upgrade in the Bowen Basin

Project content:

- ▶ Potential project execution and construction costs around AUS\$100m
- ▶ Manage the pre-feasibility and feasibility study according to the company's guidelines and standards
- ▶ Obtain project approval and funding for the project execution

Project outcome:

- ▶ Project was approved to go into Feasibility

Challenges:

- ▶ Limited experience in the coal industry was secondary to strong project management and coordination skills of large scale and complex projects
- ▶ Working on a mine site and in a new industry: mining and resources

What is difficult and how can you prepare?



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Managing a project in a new industry:

- ▶ Prepare for the industry
- ▶ Learn about your client
- ▶ Document the supply / value chain for the industry
- ▶ Understand the drivers of behaviour of all participants in the industry, every industry has slightly different profitability levers
- ▶ Read industry specific magazines and newspaper
- ▶ Sign up for websites and newsletters
- ▶ Talk to people who work in the industry

Or in a new country:

- ▶ Read about the country
- ▶ If practicable visit beforehand
- ▶ Join interest groups and find ex-pats who have returned to Australia
- ▶ Understand the country's economy and the key issues facing the country (National News papers, Central Bank reports, Office of National Statistics)

Learnings



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- ▶ Travel and read in your spare time
- ▶ Prepare for the country, the industry or the town you are going to with external sources
- ▶ Speak your client's language
- ▶ Dress like your client dresses
- ▶ Keep it real, factual and fun
- ▶ Front-end load: "The 1:10:100 rule"
- ▶ Control the scope as late change is costly
- ▶ Bend the rules, do not break them
- ▶ Solve problems as a team and give credit to junior team members



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Use suspense as a material for perseverance

Use danger to seek courage

Use praise to find humility

Use pleasure as a material for temperance

Use pain as a source for endurance

Bailie (1960)

Questions?



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