

# Foreword to the second edition

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Since the publication of the first edition in 1993, project management has continued its rapid development towards full professional standing and recognition, and this second edition reflects the changes in emphasis and practice which have occurred in the last five years. Project management is now not only fully recognized, but more significantly regarded by client and top management alike as the first essential for their projects. There are now clients appointing a project manager before any other appointment, a rare occurrence five years ago, and much to be welcomed.

Furthermore high standards of training and achievement are demanded in project management, and rather less emphasis is placed on the technology in which it is practised. The new edition takes account of these significant shifts in approach, for example the sections on the management of risk, quality, and audits are either added or enhanced.

As the use and availability of information technology expands, so the importance of achieving success in information systems projects increases. These projects remain among the most difficult, and I think it is right that they are now specifically included in a section on the application of project-based management. Small projects can be very challenging, either alone or in multi-projects, and a new section on multi-project management, including programme management, fills a long-standing gap.

The new edition of the *Handbook* is a practical reference text to take us into the next century of project-based management.

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Turner, J. Rodney  
The Handbook of Project-Based Management  
Improving the Process for Achieving Strategic Objectives  
McGraw-Hill Companies, London, 1999  
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Books about project management give a static impression, a feeling that the book proposes to encapsulate a fund of knowledge and experience, a body of knowledge, which can be absorbed to give the capability of managing a project effectively.

After reading these books, I am usually disappointed – not because useful information and insights are not given – but because expectations are not realizable in practice. Dr Turner's handbook gives at once a touch of realism. It is about new approaches to general management based on projects. It is about managing change – a very challenging and dynamic endeavour. It is about managing that change through projects, the emerging idea that widens the scope of project management.

Project management has developed quite markedly over the last 20 years, from a systems-oriented methodology, through 'goal orientation', to project-based management. From a topic in which computers were pre-eminent, to one in which people, interpersonal and intergroup relationships predominate.

There has been a broadening of the definition of projects, and a broadening of the scope of project management. Management by projects, the theme of the IPMA World Congress in Vienna in 1990, was a signpost to the new directions in which project management was moving.

Dr Turner's book, *The Handbook of Project-Based Management*, catches the tide of development trends. It is current, relevant and timely.

I was pleased to see that the single point contact – the emphasis on the project manager – is maintained. Having gone through the mistaken phase myself of believing that systems would, in the end, make the role of the project manager redundant, I support the unified theory, which Turner quotes from Exodus 20.3 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me', indicating that the reality of the matrix organization has been anticipated, but the prime authority always remained with the Great Project Manager in the Sky.

Quality is given a welcome and effective treatment. This is an area requiring great care and attention, and is a high risk area for a project

manager, as quality issues almost always involve cost and time effects.

I find the concept of 'zero defects' difficult, partly because one person's defect may be acceptable to others, and partly because 'customer requirements' are not fixed, nor easily defined. Sufficient to remember that 'The best is the enemy of the good'. Nevertheless, the section on quality includes the salient issues and will be found very useful.

The sections on management procedures come towards the end of the book, in Part 4, and this is the right emphasis for the new century. This implies the view, which I support strongly, that if one gets the issues in Parts 1, 2 and 3 wrong, the best systems in the world will not work. If these issues are right, the Part 4 matters will not constitute a problem in themselves.

I was particularly pleased to read the section on international projects in Part 5, and the inclusion of cultural factors researched by G. Hofstede. This is required reading by everyone involved in international projects and change projects across cultural boundaries – very relevant in today's changing world.

The book includes a fund of information across the whole spectrum of contemporary project management as applied to the management of change. The material is presented without pedantry or oversimplification, yet in a form that makes it easily assimilated. It is readable page after page, holding the interest – a rare quality for a book with this depth and breadth of information, which could so easily have become superficial or academic. Key issues, checklists and practical comments are readily found on any topic for reference.

The book has much for anyone engaged in the management of change and management of projects. It will help experienced project managers to understand more fully what they often do by instinct, and hence improve their performance.

Aspiring project managers, on the other hand, will be helped to understand the basics of the subject – and most importantly – to get the priorities right.

It will be valuable, too, for all involved in the provision of project management services; in the vital areas of planning and scheduling, cost control, cost engineering, materials management, contracts management and so many others, helping them to understand the role of the project manager, and advising on how to improve the quality of the information and of the service which they supply.

The book will be on my bookshelf and is required reading for all involved and interested in the management of change and the emerging concepts for effective management in the new century.

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