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Project managers and their teams

17.1 Introduction

I shall conclude this part about project administration by considering project managers and their teams. These are the mandatory elements of both the project organization and the management procedures and systems; without them, nothing will happen. I have to admit that, with the exception of Chapter 3, all other chapters of this book are fairly clinical in their approach. Even in Chapter 6, where I describe the organization and talk about human resources you might be forgiven for thinking I was talking about androids rather than people. There are three reasons for this. First, to make progress it is necessary to describe an ideal approach. You may quickly recognize in any situation the ideal is not fully achievable, and so must be adapted to suit the circumstances. However, the ideal of best practice always remains a guiding light. Secondly, the way in which the ideal must be adapted is different in every situation; no two projects are identical, remember. I can therefore only describe the ideal, although I hope that by the series of anecdotes I have included I have shown how it was successful in some situations, but less successful in others. Thirdly, I am not an organizational psychologist or sociologist, only a project manager. I cannot give advice beyond my specialism. It is better for you to read specialist books on situational management.^{1,2,3}

However, this book would be incomplete without considering project managers and their team. For managers to be able to deliver the project successfully, they must be able to manage the project team, and the individuals within that team. (This is the basis of an approach to management called *Action-Centred Leadership*,⁴ Figure 17.1.) Indeed, effective teams are the essence of successful project management.^{4,5,6}

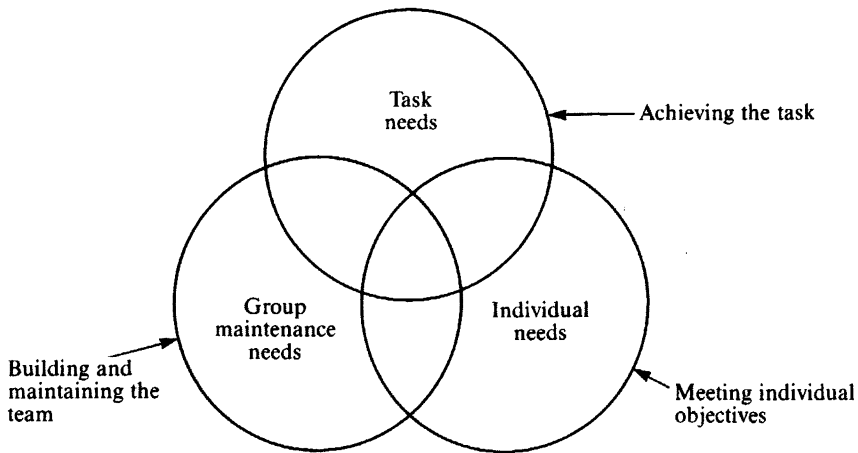


Figure 17.1 Action-centred leadership

I shall define a project team, identify different levels, and explain the processes of team formation and maintenance. I then identify how the manager can judge whether the team is performing effectively, and describe how to motivate the professionals working on a project team. My attention then switches to project managers. I describe their leadership role, and consider what makes an effective project manager, explaining the leadership styles they can adopt and the competencies they require to fulfil their role.

17.2 Project teams, formation and maintenance^a

In forming the project team, the project manager brings together a group of people and develops among them a perceived common identity, so that they can work together using a set of common values or norms to deliver the project's objectives. Handy⁷ says this concept of perceived identity is critical to team formation; without it the group of people remain a collection of random individuals. What sets project teams apart is that a group of people, who may never have worked together before, have to come together quickly and effectively in order to achieve a task which nobody has done before. The novelty, uniqueness, risk and transience are all inherent features of projects, as I showed in Chapter 1. Because the team is novel, it has no perceived identity, *ab initio*, and no set of values or norms to work to. It takes time to develop the identity and norms, which delays achievement of the team's objective. Furthermore, because the objective is novel, and carries considerable risk, it takes time to define, and, if the

project is to be successful, this must be done before the team begins work. In this section, I describe the levels of people who make up the project team and the process of team formation and maintenance.

Levels of the project team

In any context, there are three levels of groups⁵ (Figure 17.2):

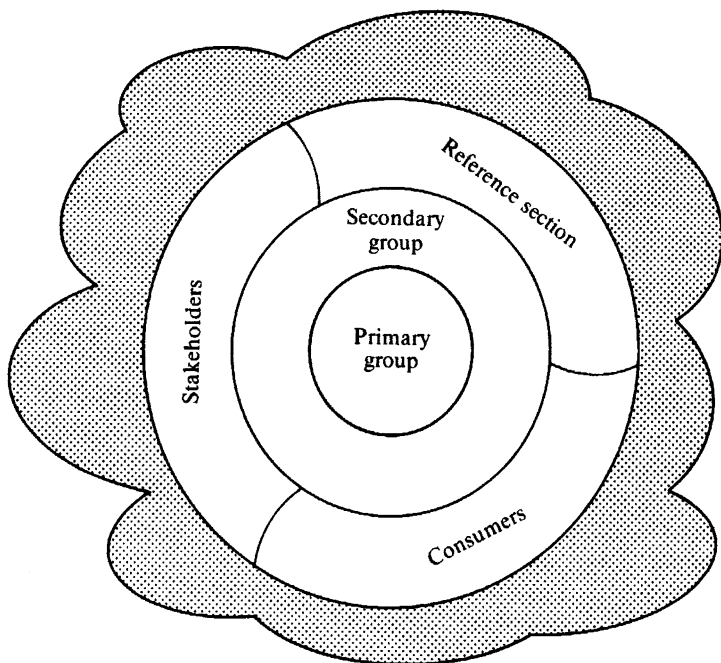


Figure 17.2 Three levels of groups

1. *The primary group*: the set of people who work face to face, and know everyone else in the group. They are the immediate team, or task force. They may work full time on the project for its duration, or be seconded part time. If seconded, then they may be physically seconded to the project office, or they may remain at their normal workplace, but be told that for the duration of their attachment to the project, they will take instructions from the project manager.
2. *The secondary group*: consisting of people who interact with people in the primary group, and contribute directly to their work, but are not part of the task force. In a project environment, these are the functions or disciplines which contribute through the matrix organization. However, they must be treated as part of the larger project team, if it is to be effective.

3. *The tertiary group*: people who have influence over the members of the primary and secondary teams, or who are affected by the work of the project, but have no direct contribution to the work. In Figure 17.2, I have shown the tertiary group split into three parts, those affected by the work of the project, the facility delivered, and the product of the facility, respectively. The first are reference groups, people who have an affect on the members of the primary and secondary groups. They may be family and friends, peer groups or professional bodies. The second group comprises people who live or work in the neighbourhood in which the facility is to be built (NIMBYs), or who will use or operate the facility after it is commissioned, or they may be people whose lives will be irreversibly changed (even made redundant) by the operation of the facility. The final group consists of the consumers, the people who will buy the product produced by the facility. (Sometimes they are the users, but often not.) The expectations of all of these groups of people must be managed if the project is to be successful, as they have a powerful ability to disrupt.

As an example, consider a team conducting an operation. The surgical team is the primary group. The secondary team is the department of the hospital within which it exists, and other departments such as pathology and X-ray. The reference group consists of the College of Surgeons, other surgeons within the hospital, the medical ethics committee and the hospital administration. The users and consumers are the patients and their families.

Team formation and maintenance

The members of a team must identify themselves with the team, and develop a common set of values, or norms, before they can work together effectively as a group. The process of forming a team identity and a set of values takes time. Project teams typically go through five stages of formation called forming, storming, norming, performing, mourning (Figure 11.1).

During these five stages, the teams motivation and effectiveness goes through a cycle in which it first decreases, before increasing to reach a plateau, and then either increasing or decreasing towards the end. The manager's role is to structure the team formation processes in such a way that this plateau is reached as quickly as possible, the effectiveness at the plateau is as high as possible, and the effectiveness is maintained right to the very end of the task.

1. *Forming*: the team comes together with a sense of anticipation and commitment. Their motivation is high at being selected for the project, their effectiveness moderate because they are unsure of each other.

2. *Storming*: as the team begins to work together, they find that they have differences about the best way of achieving the project's objectives, perhaps even differences about its overall aims. They also find that they have different approaches to working on projects. These differences may cause argument, or even conflict, in the team, which causes both the motivation and the effectiveness of the team to fall.
3. *Norming*: hopefully some accommodation is achieved. The team members will begin to reach agreement over these various issues. This will be by a process of negotiation, compromise and finding areas of commonality. As a result of this accommodation, the team begins to develop a sense of identity, and a set of norms or values. These form a basis on which the team members can work together, and effectiveness and motivation begin to increase again towards the plateau. Although norming is important for the ultimate performance of the team, it can have a negative side-effect. If the team norm too well, they can become very introspective, and isolate themselves from the rest of the organization. They work very well together, but produce something the rest of the organization do not want.
4. *Performing*: once performance reaches the plateau, the team can work together effectively for the duration of the project. The manager has a role of maintaining this plateau of performance. For instance, after the team has been together for too long, the members can begin to become complacent, and their effectiveness fall. If this happens the manager may need to change the structure or composition of the team.
5. *Mourning*: as the team reaches the end of its task, one of two things can happen. Either the effectiveness can rise, as the members make one concerted effort to complete the task, or it can fall, as the team members regret the end of the task and the breaking up of the relationships they have formed. The latter will be the case if the future is uncertain. Again, it is the manager's role to ensure that the former rather than the latter happens.

These five stages of team formation mirror the four stages of the project life cycle, although all five can take place within a single project stage. There are several group working techniques which the manager can use to shorten the forming, storming and norming stages, such as the application of the start-up processes described in Chapter 11, and in particular the use of start-up workshops.

Having formed the group, the manager's role is to ensure it continues to operate at the plateau of effectiveness. Over the next two sections I describe the leadership role of the manager, and how to motivate a team of knowledge workers. First the manager must be able to determine just how

effective the team really is. On a simple level, this can be assessed by the way in which the team achieves its agreed targets, and by the way in which the individuals' and group's aspirations and motivational needs have been satisfied.⁵ The team leader and the line management of the organization must ensure that both corporate and personal objectives are met. If only the corporate goal is met, with time there will be an erosion of morale and effectiveness followed by staff attrition. Often, however, it is only possible to measure achievement of these objectives at the end of the project, when it is too late to take corrective action. Hence, we must also have measures by which to judge the cohesion and strength of a group during the project. Indicators of team effectiveness include:

- *attendance*: low absenteeism, sickness, accident rates, work interruptions, and labour turnover
- *goal clarity*: individual targets are set, understood and achieved; the aims of the group are understood; each member of the team has a clear knowledge of the role of the group
- *high outputs*: commitment to goal achievement, a search for real solutions, analytical, critical problem solving using knowledge and skill, the search for widely tested and supported solutions
- *strong group cohesion*: openness and trust among members, sharing of ideas and knowledge, lively and constructive meetings, shared goal.

17.3 Motivating the project team

How does the manager motivate the members of a team of professional, knowledge workers, to build and maintain their effectiveness and commitment to the project? In the project environment, without the functional hierarchies, distinctions of title, rank, symbols of power and status do not exist, so many factors which are traditionally viewed as providing value to motivate professional staff are no longer available. In the project environment, managers must find new motivational factors which will be valued by their staff.

In this section, I shall recall the features of the project environment which have a significant impact on the motivation of professional staff, and then describe the factors likely to be valued by knowledge workers in the project environment, and which will therefore act as motivators. I also show how the effect of these varies throughout the project life cycle. The conclusion is that people are motivated by the development of their career. However, because they are no longer able to judge that development by their position in a hierarchy, they must measure it by their own growth and learning both within and through the organization. However, money

remains a common yardstick by which individuals can measure that growth.

Impact of the project environment on motivation

There are three features of the project environment which have a significant impact on the motivation of personnel (Section 3.4):

MATRIX ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES

Within a matrix organization, people do not have the clear indicators of title, status and rank, as described. They also have reporting lines to two people, a short-term (project) boss, and long-term (functional) boss. Although the project manager tries to motivate the individuals towards the project goals, they often give their primary loyalty to their functional manager. It is that manager who writes their annual appraisal, and has greatest influence over long-term career development. This is exacerbated if annual performance objectives are aligned with the functional hierarchy because projects are of shorter duration than the time scale over which they are set.

FLATTER ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES

With flatter hierarchies being adopted by project organizations, individuals have less opportunity for career advancement, as there are fewer levels to occupy. They spend longer on each level before progressing, which means they have fewer opportunities to measure progress against career milestones (disturbing for a project manager) and are less able to judge how their contribution is viewed by the organization. Words of encouragement are not enough, because individuals can only judge their perceived value by progression, which means promotion.⁸ With decision-making processes by-passing the centre (Figure 3.4), individuals may also feel less able to influence their careers, as they no longer have direct contact with senior managers making career decisions. They rely very much on their project managers or their functional managers to act on their behalf on career matters. This feeling of detachment can be heightened if the individual does not entirely understand the direction or strategy of the company, or how their project contributes to it. Having no direct contact with the centre through their work, they will not have the opportunity regularly to question the reasons for strategic decisions, or to suggest alternatives. This can exacerbate all the previous problems if they perceive their manager as the cause of their isolation.

THE TRANSIENT NATURE OF PROJECTS

I showed above how the transient nature of projects means that an individual's annual performance objectives tend to be aligned with their

functional responsibilities rather than their project ones. Similarly, because projects only last a short time, they cannot satisfy an individual's long-term development needs in their own right. They can only be a stepping stone. It is the functional hierarchy which provides the focus for the individual's development, and if the individual is to be committed to projects, they must be assigned to projects which they view as fulfilling their development requirements. Furthermore, many people come to work for social reasons.⁹ This can be lost in the project environment, and the impact of the second reduced, because people do not stay on a project long enough to develop long-term relationships. However, there are also people who relish the much larger number of contacts the project environment gives them. Such people are able to form new relationships very quickly.

The new motivational factors

A traditional view of motivation is Maslow's *hierarchy of needs*.⁹ Maslow proposed that people have five essential needs (higher levels first):

- achievement
- esteem
- belonging
- protection
- sustenance.

People are motivated initially by lower needs. However, as they satisfy one, that reduces in importance, and they become motivated by the next. As their needs move up the list the lower ones lose all effect. Many of the traditional views on motivation are not valid in the project environment. However, Maslow's hierarchy continues to provide a basis for motivational factors. Many people have now passed the point at which belonging is the primary need to be satisfied at work; they satisfy that through their leisure activities. They therefore look to satisfy their needs for esteem and achievement. This is especially true of knowledge workers, and leads to five new factors for effective motivation.¹⁰

PURPOSE

People must believe in the importance of their work, and that it contributes to the development of the organization. It was shown in Section 3.4 that it is this sense of purpose, and the linking of the work of a project to the mission of the parent organization, which can help overcome the uncertainty of the dual reporting structures in a matrix organization.

PROACTIVITY

As career paths become less clear and predictable, and as senior managers become remote, people want to manage their own career development. Emphasizing the achievement of results, rather than fulfilling roles, and delegating professional integrity through results gives subordinates the opportunity to take responsibility for their own development. Furthermore, allowing people to choose their next project as a reward for good performance on the present one satisfies this need.

PROFIT SHARING

Allowing people to share in the entrepreneurial culture will encourage them to value it. Many organizations now encourage employees to solve their own problems, and to take the initiative to satisfy the customer's requirements, and are allowing employees to share in the rewards. The growing band of freelance workers also shows that many people are taking this initiative into their own hands.

PROGRESSION

As people near the top of Maslow's hierarchy, they become conscious of the need for self-fulfillment. They therefore value the opportunity to increase their learning experiences. Each new project is an opportunity to learn new skills, and thereby increase esteem and self-achievement. However, I said above that in the flatter organization structures, people may have fewer career milestones to measure their progression. The one yardstick they still have is money (or other status symbols such as company cars). These things remain important, not as motivators in their own right, but as measures of achievement.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

Another measure of achievement is professional recognition. Knowledge workers do not want the anonymity of the bureaucrat, but want to accumulate 'brownie points', to contribute to their esteem and achievement. I said above that in the flatter hierarchies of project-based organizations, managers at the centre may not be in direct contact with professional employees. Line managers must therefore ensure that their subordinates do receive due recognition.

Variation of the motivational factors with life cycle

The efficacy of these five motivators varies throughout the project life cycle (Table 17.1).

Table 17.1 Variation of the motivational factors throughout a three-stage project management life cycle

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Execution</i>	<i>Close-out</i>
Purpose	High	Low	High
Proactivity	High	Medium	High
Profit sharing	High	Low	High
Progression	High	Low	High
Professional recognition	Medium	Medium	High

DEFINITION

During this stage, the project team try to determine what the project is about, so their focus on its purpose is high. They will try to determine how it can contribute to their development, and so the entrepreneurial spirit will be high. During definition, there will be some opportunity to demonstrate professional skill through problem solving.

EXECUTION

During this stage, the focus switches from the purpose of the project to the work done. The learning opportunities, and chance of profit were set in the definition stage, and there is little chance to influence them during execution. However, through the use of responsibility charts,¹¹ people can be given responsibility for achieving milestones, and so have some opportunity for demonstrating their professional skill.

CLOSE-OUT

During close-out all five factors come back into focus: the purpose becomes important again during commissioning; people deliver their results and receive their due reward, if the project has been profitable people complete their learning experience, and look forward to the next; they receive their professional recognition. During close-out, individuals can be given career counselling to help manage their careers. Individuals should be helped to define their development needs, plan how they are to be achieved, and to develop networks, internal and external to the organization, to be used in their career progression.

SUMMARY

The five factors have the least combined effect during the execution stage of the project. The manager must therefore look to make the maximum use of the two factors which do have some effect. (*Note:* those factors which have a high ability to motivate, also have a high ability to demotivate if the appropriate action is not taken, or if the project goes

badly wrong. If the project has been unsuccessful, then during the close-out stage there can be a rush to get off the project, with the result that work will be left undone.) Through all of this, if both the project manager and line manager understand the expectations and aspirations of the individuals in the team, and take proper account of them, then half the battle is won.

17.4 Leading projects

Much has been written about leadership, some of it by me,⁵ but it remains one of the most elusive of topics. Often authors start off by saying they are going to discuss leadership, and end up describing management. I firmly believe leadership is different from management. Somebody can be a good, effective manager, without being an inspirational leader; and yet other people can be inspirational leaders, while being fairly chaotic managers. I read recently an article by Stephen Covey on leadership, and this for the first time said to me what is different between management and leadership. (Unfortunately I have lost the reference.)

In the article, Covey said that there are three elements of leadership, which he called *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Unfortunately the majority of Western managers use only the last of these. They try to persuade their subordinates by the logic of the situation. However, this is not totally effective, without the other two. The effective manager is good on the logos, but to be an inspirational leader, he or she must first convince with *ethos* and *pathos*.

1. *Ethos* is the leader's basic value set. The leader must demonstrate to the team that he or she has values and beliefs worth working for. The leader must communicate his or her values to the team, to motivate them to work towards the project's goals.
2. *Pathos* is the leader's relationship with the team. Once the leader has demonstrated to the team inclusive ethical, moral and cultural values, he or she then needs to win their backing and support. Machiavelli¹² says the leader must be respected. He says the leader does not need to be liked, and even said it is best if the leader is respected and not liked. However, he also says it is essential that the leader is not hated, because then mutiny is more likely. Once the leader has convinced the team with his or her value set, and once he or she has developed a relationship with the team, then the team are ready to be persuaded by logic. Without the *ethos* and the *pathos*, the *logos* will flow off the team like water off a duck's back. *Logos* remains a necessary condition for inspirational leadership, but on its own it is an insufficient condition.

What this might mean for project managers is as follows. *Ethos* can work on several levels. First, the project manager must convince the wider team (primary, secondary and tertiary) of the value of the project to the organization. Secondly, he or she must gain commitment of the team to the overall management approach, and gain support for it as a way to deliver a successful outcome for the organization. Thirdly, the project manager must demonstrate their overall ethical and cultural values, showing an inclusive style that recognizes the contributions of others, and convinces the team that they will be properly rewarded. Then the manager needs to build the *pathos*, that is relationships, between themselves and the project team members, and between the individual members of the team. Both the *ethos* and the *pathos* can be achieved through a well-designed start-up process as described in Chapter 11. Once the manager has won support for his or her personal values and values for the project, and once people are working well together as a team, then the team members will be open to persuasion on individual issues that need resolving on the project.

17.5 The effective project manager

Now let us consider what makes an effective project manager. Handy⁷ suggests that there are three possible criteria for effective leaders:

- *leadership traits*: effective managers have certain common traits
- *leadership styles*: effective managers adopt certain styles
- *a contingent approach*: effective managers adapt their styles to suit the circumstances.

Traits of effective project managers

There are six traits of effective project managers:⁵

- problem-solving ability and results orientation
- energy and initiative
- self-assured leader
- perspective
- communication
- negotiating ability.

For several years, I have conducted an exercise on courses whereby I ask delegates, individually and in teams, to select 6 traits from a list of 19. There is consistency in the answers, and the results agree with this list. Almost every team has four traits from the list, and many five or six. Handy,⁷ in reporting research conducted in the United States into the traits of effective managers in general, says they have the first four of these traits. I once

conducted the exercise with a group of managers from the Former Soviet Union. The two teams returned with five traits from this list. The sixth in both cases was technical competence, which is never included by a team of British managers. On discussion, we decided that if the exercise were conducted with German or French managers, then it is likely that technical competence would appear on their list, but it is not something valued by British managers. Conducting the exercise with course delegates has therefore reinforced my view of the six traits of effective project managers.

PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITY AND RESULTS ORIENTATION

Effective managers are usually of above-average intelligence, and able to solve complex problems, by analysing the current situation and recognizing patterns. Problem solving pervades project management. The achievement of the project's purpose is a problem, as is the completion of each stage of the life cycle. Chapter 1 presented a problem-solving cycle (Figure 1.6) as both a view of the project management life cycle and the management processes within each stage. Furthermore, the control processes is also one of problem solving, planning recovery to overcome variances from the plan. Without a problem-solving ability a project manager would be lost. This ability at problem solving should be coupled with results orientation. The purpose is not to complete work for work's sake, but to achieve the desired ends. The solution to the problems should deliver the planned objectives and defined purpose, not necessarily complete the originally agreed work. *The end justifies the means*¹² or *All's well that ends well*.

ENERGY AND INITIATIVE

The project manager must also have the ability to continue working and managing under considerable pressure and against considerable odds. This requires the manager to be energetic and fit. This energy will be coupled with initiative to see the need for action, and have the resolve to take it. The Russian managers I mentioned above said that this initiative should extend to the management of one's own career as well as the task at hand.

SELF-ASSURED LEADER

Managers must have the self-assurance to know that what they are doing is right. This does not mean they must be extrovert or brash; a manager can be self-effacing while still self-assured. They must take action resolutely, confident in their opinions and judgement. Sometimes it is better to take action, based on incomplete information, being ready to modify the action as new information comes to light, than to dither endlessly looking for the perfect solution. Self-assured managers also delegate readily to their project team, confident in the ability of the team's members, and their own ability

to motivate the team. Sometimes, especially in the IT industry, you see good technologists promoted into managerial positions, who are very reluctant to delegate, because they believe, quite rightly, that they can do the work better than anyone else. They work themselves into an early grave, while their team members are idle and consequently demotivated.

PERSPECTIVE

Managers need to be able to look beyond the team, and to see how they fit into the organization as a whole. This need for perspective extends to the project work. The manager must be able to move freely through all three levels of the project hierarchy, and above as well, to understand the detail work of the project and how it will deliver the project's objectives, and to understand how the project's objectives will meet the needs of the parent organization. This ability is known as a *helicopter mind*.

COMMUNICATION

Similarly, the manager must be able to communicate at all levels of the organization, from managing director down to the janitor. They must be the project's ambassador, selling it to senior managers to win their support; they must be able to talk to their peers, functional managers and resource providers to win their cooperation. They must brief and motivate the team; and they must talk to the janitor, because often the latter knows better than anyone how the project is progressing (Example 17.1).

When I was a post-doctoral research fellow, I had an office in one half of a pair of semi-detached houses. We had offices in one house while the other was being renovated. The plan was that when the other was complete we would move into that house, while the one we were currently occupying was renovated. I was due to go to the United States for a month for a combined lecture trip and holiday. About a week before I was due to leave, the janitor, a retired Welsh miner called Frank, asked me when I was going to be away. From the 20th August to the 20th September I said. Frank said that we were due to move into the other house on the 14th September, so it might be worth while for me to put my books in a tea-chest before I left. I said that was a good idea, but decided to check it out first with the administrator of the engineering department. I spoke to his secretary, but she denied any knowledge of the move. So I next asked the builders, but they said they would not be finished until late October or early November. I locked my office door, and went off to the States. When I came back, I found that the door had been forced, and that the move had taken place on 14th September, the very day Frank had predicted. Of course, he had spoken to the University Estates people as they came to survey the work.

Example 17.1 Talking to the janitor

NEGOTIATING ABILITY

In Parts Two and Three the project plan was said to be a contract (Figure 2.6). It is a contract between the project manager (showing what the manager and the team will deliver to the organization), and the project's sponsor (showing the support that person or group will give to enable the project manager to deliver the contracted results). Like all contracts this must be negotiated through bipartite discussions. Project managers rely on their ability to negotiate, because they do not have the direct line authority over their resources as functional managers do. They must win and maintain the commitment and cooperation of other people through their ability to negotiate and persuade.

Styles of effective project managers

Project managers can adopt four styles (Table 17.2).

Table 17.2 Appropriate management styles and team structures at different project stages

Stage	Style	Team
Feasibility	<i>Laissez-faire</i>	Egoless
Design	Democratic	Matrix
Implementation	Autocratic	Task hierarchy
Close-out	Bureaucratic	Task force

LAISSEZ-FAIRE

Laissez-faire managers allow the team to manage themselves. They behave like all the other members of the team, and are there to advise if required. This style is appropriate during the early developmental or feasibility stages of a project, or on research projects.

DEMOCRATIC

Democratic managers consult their team, and then decide the best course of action. Note that this style is different from the *laissez-faire* style above, which is almost anarchic, not democratic. This style may be appropriate during the feasibility and planning stages of a project, when you want to encourage people to contribute their ideas.

AUTOCRATIC

Autocratic managers dictate to the team what should be done and how. This style may be appropriate during the execution and close-out stages of a project, when the specification and design of the facility has been decided, real money is being spent, and so early completion is required to achieve the returns.

BUREAUCRATIC

Bureaucratic managers manage through rules and procedures. This style is appropriate on projects with low risk, for which there will be little change, because the bureaucratic manager is unable to respond to change. This means it will also be appropriate during the close-out stages of a project.

TYPES TO BE AVOIDED

In addition, there are styles which should be avoided in project managers. I have already mentioned the technocrat, the person to whom the science is more important than the results, the means more important than the ends. This person searches for the ideal solution, rather than achieving an adequate solution which satisfies the customer's requirements. (There is a saying that the perfect is the enemy of the good.) They are usually unable to delegate, because they have no faith in their project team's ability to achieve the perfect result. Secondly, taken to extreme, the bureaucrat can be ineffective. They pedantically follow procedures, assured in the knowledge that they have done the job correctly, even if not effectively. And, thirdly, the salesperson, who is very good at selling the project, but not at delivering results. All three of these characteristics, technical ability, application of best practice, and the ambassadorial role, are strengths if applied in moderation, but they become weaknesses when applied to excess, and they become more important than delivering the results of the project.

Situational management

Many project managers have a preferred style of management, but research shows they should adapt their style to the stage of the project.^{5,13} Different styles are appropriate to different stages of the project, and at those stages different team structures are appropriate (Table 17.2).

During the *feasibility stage*, the research team works under the guidance of the project champion, to gather information about the background to the project, to design a schematic solution, and to gather design information to enable the systems design stage to take place. They will be working very much as equals, contributing their ideas to the effort, and the champion and/or manager will act to facilitate the process. Hence the *laissez-faire* style is appropriate with an egoless team.

In the *design stage*, engineers from different disciplines work together in multi-functional (matrix teams) to produce the overall solution. The manager will want to empower the knowledge workers to contribute their experience to the design process, but must provide firm guidelines as to the overall strategy to be adopted, and the time scales to be met. Hence, a democratic style, which sets firm guidelines and parameters, but empowers the team to work within that is appropriate.

In *implementation*, money is being spent, and the team must work quickly and effectively towards the completion of the project. Hence the project manager must provide quite rigid constraints within which the work should be done. The time for problem solving is over, and the chosen solution must be implemented. No changes ought to be allowed, other than to correct *show-stoppers*, and so the team must be instructed to do the required work. It will often be possible to parcel the work into single-discipline packages, and so the teams can work in a task-based hierarchy.

During *close-out*, the team will be reduced in size, and the tidying-up processes will require cross-discipline working again. Hence the smaller groups will work in task forces. Because there will often be hands-on leadership from the project manager during this stage, the team structure is often described as *surgical*.¹³ The project manager's own room for manoeuvre will be quite limited now. There will be various essential procedures to be followed during close-out, quality checks, test procedures, etc. Hence the project manager will need to follow various essential checklists in a fairly bureaucratic way.

Not only does the stage of the project impose different management styles, the team itself may look for different management approaches from their managers (Example 17.2).

Silburn interviewed nine project managers, each of whom had two teams.⁵ He determined each project manager's natural style, and the style being sought by each of the teams. Usually the manager's natural style matched quite closely the style sought by both of their teams. However, one manager whose natural style was *laissez-faire*, had one team who wanted totally *laissez-faire* management, and another which wanted totally autocratic management. Perhaps the second team was reacting against the manager's natural style. However, the manager had to change his style as he moved between one team and the other.

Example 17.2 Managers' styles, and the styles sought by their teams.

17.6 Summary

1. A project team is a group of people with a perceived identity, who collaborate according to a set of values or norms to achieve the project's objectives.
2. There are three levels of project team, primary, secondary and tertiary groups, and the tertiary group consists of three types: reference groups, users and stakeholders, and consumers.
3. There are five stages of team formation:
 - forming

- storming
 - norming
 - performing
 - mourning.
4. The five factors provide value to knowledge workers, and so can be used to motivate the team throughout the project life cycle. They are:
 - purpose
 - proactivity
 - profit sharing
 - progression
 - professional recognition.
 5. The leader inspires through ethos, pathos and logos, not by logos alone.
 6. The effective project manager has six traits:
 - intelligence
 - energy
 - self-assuredness
 - perspective
 - communication
 - persuasiveness.
 7. The manager can also use one of four styles:
 - democratic
 - autocratic
 - bureaucratic
 - *laissez-faire*.
 8. Managers need to adopt a management style appropriate to the stage of the project.

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Whose promise none relies on
He never said a foolish thing
Nor ever did a wise one
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Note

- a. Section 17.2 incorporates material from the first edition based on a contribution originally made by Dr Mahen Tampoe.