NAVIGATING THE MODERN CORPORATE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Additional personal competencies required of Project Managers
THE MODERN CORPORATE WORLD:
THE SHIFT TO THE “AGE OF DISCONTINUITY” – YOUR TYPICAL DAY AS A PM?

DISORIENTED

CONFUSED

UNCLEAR

PERPLEXED

UNSURE

LOST

BEWILDERED
THE MODERN CORPORATE WORLD:
IN THE “AGE OF DISCONTINUITY”

• “The Age of Discontinuity” – author Peter Drucker (late)

• Peter Drucker - author, professor, management consultant and thought leader on management and organisations; known as the father of modern management

• Definition of Discontinuity - Unpredictable, unforeseen, natural or man-made sudden change, consequence, event, or force that disrupts earlier expectations or estimates. (businessdictionary.com)
FROM DRUCKER’S BOOK “AGE OF DISCONTINUITY”:
4 MAJOR AREAS OF DISCONTINUITY FORTHCOMING IN SOCIETY

- **Explosion of new technologies resulting in major new industries.** Eg the Internet – leading to - cloud computing; social media

- **Changes to a world economy - globalisation impact.** Increase in competition, more options for cheaper products, services (China, India human rights laws and labour laws less stringent)

- **Pluralistic (tolerance for debate\ideas, dynamism, autonomy) vs monolithic (static, hierarchical, bureaucratic) organisations.** Eg Google – 20% innovation time culture

- **Knowledge/expertise emphasis vs fixed assets and labour – outsourcing (IT, logistics, warehousing etc), core business competitive advantage focus vs labour focus**

**Drucker’s book was written in 1969!**
HOW DOES THIS “AGE OF DISCONTINUITY” AFFECT PROJECTS AND PM’S?
HOW DOES THIS “AGE OF DISCONTINUITY” AFFECT PROJECTS?

- Constant and dynamic changes in structure, strategy, staffing impacting scope and budgets, etc
- Less resources due to outsourcing, downsizing; but more expectations
- Conflicting attitudes, politics, jostling for positions
- Any other effects??

“Competitive pressures in markets have forced the rate of change and innovation to skyrocket, with the results often being turbulence in organisations. Economic conditions, labour markets, demographics, consumer preferences and technological changes are affecting how business is being conducted”. (Coetzee, Visagie and Ukpere, 2012)

Eg Nokia, Blackberry, Samsung – adapt or Disappear.
HOW DOES IT AFFECT US FROM A PM PRACTICE VIEWPOINT?

• “The recent re-examination of projects has consequently rendered the static and non-reactionary project environments of the Bodies of Knowledge less useful and immediately replaced it with a world that is both complex and dynamic” (Gul, 2011).

• “There is a need that business schools strive to improve the course offerings that incorporate the issues of complex, dynamic environments”. (Arain and Tipu, 2009)

Trends – eg Lean vs Waterfall? What are the other, additional skills required of us?
## EVOLUTION OF THE PM LITERATURE REVIEW: SKILLS PERSPECTIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Management Era (approximate)</th>
<th>Project Management Effectiveness Factor - main focus area</th>
<th>Examples of Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995 - 1997</td>
<td>Industry competence eg Civil Engineers or Architects becoming project managers for construction projects.</td>
<td>Pinto and Kharbanda (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2013</td>
<td>Personal attributes of the Project Manager (PM) eg psychological profile matching of PM to a project, emotional competence of the PM, ability of the PM to deal with failure and stress, personal traits and personality focus.</td>
<td>Muller (2009), Meredith and Mantel (2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**EVOLUTION OF THE PM; SKILLS SUMMARY**

**SHIFT OF FOCUS AREAS THROUGH THE ERAS**

- **Industry knowledge/Methodology Focus – Focus on the work of the project itself**
  - **Era - 1990's to 2000's**

- **People Interaction Focus Era – Focus on the people resources – how to manage and lead others involved in the project**
  - **Era - 2000's to 2013**

- **Project Managers for Focus Era – focus on intrinsic properties of the PM**
  - **Era – 2014, and beyond**

**The researcher suggests that all competency focus areas are still required, but should never be considered all encompassing, as environmental conditions of industry keeps changing, hence project practice and competencies must continue to evolve (eg post-recession attitudes).**
FOCUSSING ON THE PM INTRINSICALLY: INTRODUCING SELF-EFFICACY AS A PM SKILL

Definition: a person’s own judgment of their capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to attain predetermined goals (Bandura, 1985)

Speaks more to project management than general “self-confidence” or “self-belief”; it is more goal focused and particular to certain tasks/projects.

- Hypothesis – based on this definition, SE appears to be highly relevant to project practice!
UNDERSTANDING SELF-EFFICACY LITERATURE REVIEW

- It is concerned not with the skills one has but with judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses (Bandura, 1985)
- Self-judgements (self-talk?) of how well someone can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations (Kihlstrom and Harackiewicz, 1990).
- Specific to a particular situation and/or action (Gist, 1987, 1989, 1992)
- Self-efficacy is a significant mechanism for self-influence (Locke, 2009)
- Hypothesis – this is relevant to project practice!
GENERAL EFFECTS OF SELF-EFFICACY FOUND IN LITERATURE

- Influences physiological states including anxiety, stress and fatigue (Bandura, 1997)
- Enhances employees’ willingness to invest additional effort and master a challenge, hence plays a significant role in increasing work effectiveness, job satisfaction, and productivity (Mulki, Lassk and Jaramillo, 2008)
- It is partly on the basis of efficacy beliefs that people choose what goal challenges to undertake, how much effort to invest in the endeavour, and how long to persevere in the face of difficulties. (Locke, 2009)
- Students with higher self-efficacy than their peers appear to generate and test alternative courses of action when they do not initially achieve success. (Breso, Schaufeli and Salanova, 2010)
- Many more SE effects found in academia.

Many more SE effects found in academia.
SELF-EFFICACY IMPROVEMENT
LITERATURE REVIEW

• Mastery experiences

• Modelling

• Social persuasion

• Proper judgment of own psychological states
This paper primarily intends to raise awareness of SE effects to the PM community. More in-depth studies could/should take place if applicable.

• Meta-ethnography - a more in-depth form of literature review, as it synthesises into one another, and then translates, separate qualitative studies from different contexts to form new findings

• Qualitative study by means of E-interviews – to verify the meta-ethnography findings in the “real world”
RESEARCH PROCESS

All current research collected on the 3 concepts of self-efficacy (SE) effects, contemporary competencies & Project Manager (PM) personal competencies (Meta-ethnography Phase 1)

Filtering of all research found for quality using CASP Tool & academic standards (Meta-ethnography Phase 2)

Synthesis of the results into only competencies common to all 3 concepts (Meta-ethnography Phase 3)

Final list of competencies (5) from the synthesis shows PM effectiveness competencies affected by SE for contemporary companies (Meta-ethnography Phase 4)

Qualitative study to verify the meta-ethnography findings (PM E-interviews)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attributes/Competencies found</th>
<th>Self-efficacy Effects Researcher 1</th>
<th>Self-efficacy Effects Researcher 2</th>
<th>Self-efficacy Effects Researcher 3</th>
<th>Self-efficacy Effects Researcher 4</th>
<th>Contemporary Competencies Researcher 1</th>
<th>Contemporary Competencies Researcher 2</th>
<th>PM Personal Competencies Researcher</th>
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</table>
E-INTERVIEW RESULTS
VERIFICATION OF THE META-ETHNOGRAPHY FINDINGS

• 80% of the respondents agreed with Adaptability\Flexibility affecting their self-efficacy

• 100% agreed with Ability to handle ambiguity

• 80% agreed with Persistence\Perseverance

• 60% with Resilience

• 60% with Emotional Intelligence
RESEARCH CONCLUSION

- PMs in the new era, need competencies over and above the legacy skillset like industry knowledge, methodology and people skills.

- Where previous eras have focused on managing the work of the project (industry and methodology competency) and people in the project (people\leadership skills), the next generation will need to focus more inwardly, on skills like self-efficacy.

- Self-efficacy makes project managers more effective in the modern business world by improving personal competencies and attributes like Adaptability\Flexibility, Ability to handle ambiguity, Persistence\perseverence, Resilience and Emotional Intelligence
HOW CAN WE APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT? SUGGESTIONS..

- Shows SE to be taken seriously, development as a skill or competency on its own; will make PMs more effective in the modern “cut-throat” company
- Shows 5 personal competencies affected by SE; needed for PMs in modern companies – Adaptability/flexibility, Ability to handle ambiguity, Persistence/perseverance, Emotional Intelligence and Resilience – though SE improves these factors; these could be developed even further outside of SE development
- PMO managers to lead in such a manner, as to build SE - mastery experiences, modelling, social persuasion, and judgments of own physiological states
- Allocation of projects based on specific PM background and not mere availability of capacity; generalisation
- PMs will not have the same level of SE for all types of projects
- Makes a case for the contracting of specific PMs for particular projects, in the “open” market
QUESTIONS \ COMMENTS \ THOUGHTS

• Should we redefine projects\project management?

• Has our role changed?

• Are we in fact the new rock-stars of strategic business enablement?

• RIP – extensive, rigid and detailed waterfall methodologies?

• ❓❓❓
THOUGHTS FROM OTHER RESEARCHERS

“Up to 30% of the world’s economy is based on projects, and projects are the building blocks to the sustainable growth of businesses”. (Muller, 2009)

“Just 20% of the success of a project depends on the approach to the actual management of the work involved in the project, while the remaining 80% depends on the role of the project manager and how successfully he or she performs”. (Binde and Saulite, 2013)

“A man cannot directly choose his circumstances, but he can choose his thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape his circumstances.” James Allen, As a Man Thinketh.

I would love to hear from you!
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