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**PROJECT  
LEADERSHIP**

**SECOND EDITION**

WENDY BRINER  
COLIN HASTINGS and MICHAEL GEDDES

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COLIN HASTINGS and  
MICHAEL GEDDES

The bestselling first edition of this book broke new ground by focusing on the leadership aspects of project management rather than the technical. This radically revised edition is substantially reorganized to introduce much new material and experience and bring the applications up to date.

Project leaders now exist in many different types of organizations, and they and their projects extend far wider than the construction work where traditional project management began. This new edition begins by explaining why the project way of working has been so widely and enthusiastically adopted, and provides new material on the role and key competences of project leaders in a wide range of different organizations. The authors provide invaluable guidance to senior managers struggling to create the context within which project work can thrive as well as be controlled. A new section, 'Preparing the Ground', reflects their increased emphasis on getting projects off to the right start, with new insights into the scoping process designed to ensure all parties agree on objectives. It also demonstrates the importance of understanding the organizational and political factors involved if the project is to succeed in business terms.

Part III shows how to handle the issues that arise at each stage of the project's life including a whole new section on the critical process of project team start up. The final section contains a thought-provoking "action summary" and a guide to further sources of information and development.

Project leadership and the project way of working has moved on. This book will provide both a conceptual framework and a set of practical tools for all those who find themselves permanently or occasionally in the project leader role, as well as an invaluable guide to setting up and maintaining project activity.





# PROJECT LEADERSHIP



# Project Leadership

Second Edition



Wendy Briner, Colin Hastings and Michael Geddes

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# Preface

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This book is not about project management as most people understand the term. It is about the rapidly growing new specialism of project leadership in organizations.

The world of traditional project management is evolving rapidly in two fundamental ways. Firstly it is moving away from a preoccupation with project planning and control tools as the keys to success, and towards the management of people and their performance. Secondly it is moving away from a preoccupation with complex construction projects towards a wider appreciation of the diversity of 'projects' that are mushrooming within organizations.

The new ways in which organizations are using projects as mechanisms for managing innovation and change, or making things happen fast, have resulted in the rapid rise in importance of a new role – that of the project leader. Few people will bear that title; they are more likely to be called New Product Development Manager, Computer Installation Co-ordinator or Exhibitions Manager, and so on. Many will not have titles at all, such as the person evaluating and preparing for a new acquisition, or the person appointed to co-ordinate a move to new offices.

Over the last ten years we have been concerned to identify the essential attributes of the effective project leader. How do the successful ones make things happen in practice, often in situations of great uncertainty, complexity and organizational change? Our learning grew originally out of the activities of the specialist teamworking research and consultancy unit we founded at Ashridge Management College. That early work was summarized in a now standard text on high-performing teams: *Superteams: Building Organisational Success Through High Performing Teams*, published by HarperCollins in 1986. Since then, with two other ex-Ashridge colleagues, we have formed our own consulting business, New Organisation Consulting. Later work which shows the growing importance of the project way of working in emerging new forms of organization is pulled together in another book: *The New Organization: Growing the Culture of Organizational Networking*, published by McGraw-Hill in 1993. During this time we have been working a great deal with the new breed of project leaders, both in consultancy assignments and in the special course we developed to meet the

training needs entitled 'Leading Projects Effectively'. We have also looked at the many ways in which projects of different types are being used within organizations as diverse as manufacturing, financial services, retail organizations, an opera company, television, the lifeboat service and a political party.

This revised edition says little about the traditional project management techniques because many of the new project leaders find them inappropriate or limited in application. It concentrates instead on the skills, awareness and understanding deployed by project leaders operating successfully in a wide range of organizational and project settings. We have tried to distil their experience, make sense of it, and present it in a form that will provide both conceptual clarity and practical payoff for the growing number of people who find themselves permanently or occasionally in project leadership roles.

The book begins by explaining why the concept of project teams is being adopted so enthusiastically in modern organizations.

In Part I 'The project leader' we chart the territory of the project leader's role and its associated skills and competence requirement in some detail. We also introduce the important concept of the project spectrum, a way of describing the range of fundamentally different project types that we now encounter in organizations, each of which requires a tailored leadership approach.

Part II 'Preparing the ground' demonstrates the importance of understanding and managing the fundamental organizational realities within which the project will be judged to have succeeded or failed. Chapters on the big picture, managing the sponsor and the process of scoping cover these aspects.

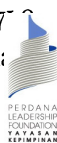
Part III 'Managing the project' covers the practicalities of making it happen, from project start-up, through marketing its benefits, to keeping it and the team on track, and finally to handing over and winding up.

Part IV 'Action summary' provides chapter summaries of key points and key questions for the reader, together with key references.

We know that the rapidly growing project leadership role is and will be of fundamental importance to all organizations. It is a pivotal integrating role that is both exceedingly demanding and also very rewarding personally and in performance terms when skilfully executed. Dumping people unprepared into such roles is an almost certain recipe for failure. This book demonstrates our cumulative experience of how we have helped organizations to make the project way of working work for them.

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WB, CH, MG

# **Introduction**

## **The brave new world of project management**

# Introduction: The brave new world of project management

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John Kingsley had a disaster on his hands. He'd worked in a construction company all his life as a project manager. There was nothing he didn't know about getting buildings up on time, within budget and to the technical spec. Three years ago he'd wanted a change and taken a new job as Co-ordinator of New Stores Development with a large high street retailing group and life had been nothing but hassle ever since. 'They make it so complicated here,' he said, '*Everyone* wants their say; the Merchandising people, the Finance Director, the Distribution people ... even Personnel think they have a right to dictate to me.' To make things more difficult, John didn't control his own construction team any longer – there were subcontractors whom he thought were appalling, but they'd always done the Group's new stores. And the Architect and Interior Designers – what a crowd! They could never make up their minds what they wanted. The last straw was a telephone call from the recently appointed Store Manager saying did he not realize the impact on the bottom line, and their reputation, if the previously announced store opening had to be delayed by three weeks; then there was a message asking John to make sure he attended a meeting with the Managing Director that afternoon!

Consider another case where Liz Jones, working for a computer systems company, was asked to take over a prestige project to introduce a computerized typesetting and layout facility for a national newspaper. The project was already in mid-cycle. The client organization, however, had demanded the replacement of the existing project team because its key managers were not being fully kept in touch with progress. In this case, the challenge facing Liz was how to manage:

- the expectations of senior management in her own organization – who regarded the project as vital to the organization's reputation and commercial future
- the needs of senior management in the client organization – who were dissatisfied with progress and felt excluded from the planning process
- the demands of technical staff in the client organization – who had specific requirements from the system being introduced which were not being met