

MANAGEMENT BY PROJECT: TURNING STRATEGY INTO REALITY

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1. Managing By Project – The Background;

The solution to the majority of corporate projects involves better planning and controlling of company resources. Corporate projects have always needed professional project management, yet many just limp along at a fraction of their potential simply because organisations do not know how to make them run more effectively.

On July the 20th, 1969 the spacecraft eagle lands in the sea of tranquillity and mankind takes its first step on the moon. One can only imagine how it must have felt to participate in such a historic and frontier breaking project. It must have been an absolute privilege to be involved in the project team that had the responsibility, authority and accountability to deliver the project on time, within budget and according to life threatening performance.

Traditional project management has until recent times been the discipline of managers in the construction, government, space and defense industries. However today project management has become one of the most sought after practices of modern management times and its value can be found being applied in such diverse industries as research and development, information technology, pharmaceuticals, retail, sports administration, manufacturing, education, financial services, telecommunications and even traditional medicine.

It is fair to say that the project management practices of a few years ago were characterised by the need for strict plan and control methods. Project managers were very tools focused. They had very little or no authority. Task orientation was the order of the day and project team members had very little opportunity to influence scope, time and cost. Project managers were also focussed on one project at a time.

It is true to say that today project management practices are much more oriented to the softer and more humanistic practices, these include more authority and accountability given to the project team and the project manager. Project teams members are facilitated to ensure an equal opportunity to influence, to leverage off relationships, to collaborate and participate in more complex and integrated projects, to be committed through comprehension and to be empowered within the project boundaries because they support their participative creation.

The lessons that one can deduct from traditional project management practices are that there was not always a “Big Picture View”, it was too task and tool orientated, there was limited project vision sharing, the management style was bureaucratic, project team member commitment was low, there was limited skills transfer and certain functional management orientation.

Today and certainly into the future the project manager / leader must ensure that his or her project team is specialised but interdependent. He must promote the concept and practice of plan together, succeed together and fail together. He must facilitate the team's development from being a group to being a high performing team. These are the characteristics of an organisation that is Managing By Project.

Project managers and leaders of today and the future must acquire, become competent, practice, promote and coach in “Meta Project Management” competencies. These Meta competencies are far greater in significance than the single discipline of project management. Meta skills are:

Managing By Project
 Managing Through Transition
 Making Processes Work
 Guiding and Leading Teams
 Working Across Boundaries
 Unleashing Creativity

Managing By Project is as much a culture as it is a discipline. In a Managing By Project organisation project teams partake in the conceptualisation and the detailed scoping of projects. Project prioritisation and project portfolio management is the order of the day. Team recognition is encouraged and practiced, project management competencies are built and supported and top management act more as sponsors than as politicians.

2. Managing By Project – The Driving Forces;

In a Managing By Project organisation focus is on project management competencies. These competencies are more than just academic or knowledge, it is also skill, which is taking knowledge and applying it over and over again in different project situations. Competence is the whole, it is knowledge, skill, attitude, aptitude and context. These are the new dimensions of future project leaders, managers and facilitators

Organisations who Manage By Project see Managing By Project as a strategic competitive weapon and Project Management as a tactical delivery discipline. These two components make for a lethal combination in a business world where only the best survive.

Project Management without Managing By Project is clearly doomed. Likewise Managing By Project without Project Management is as negatively affected. One of the most important disciplines that any organisation must apply is the discipline of aligning the project portfolio with the stated organisations vision and mission statements. This requires an objective approach to prioritising projects for strategic delivery.

The following diagram (fig.1) clearly illustrates how Managing By Project and Project Management are interwoven.

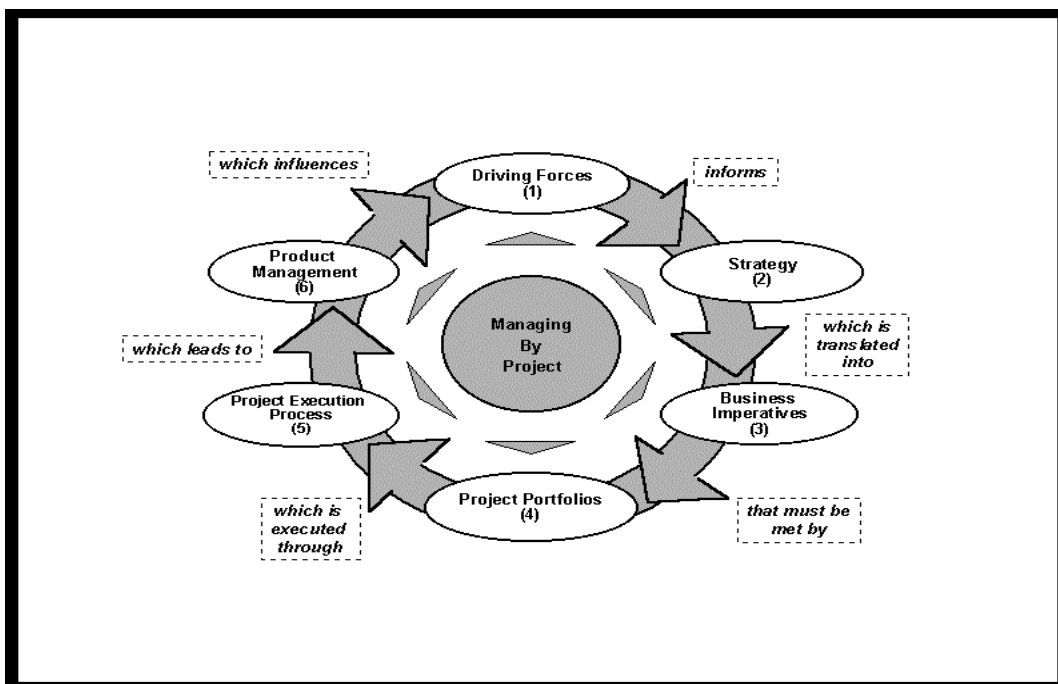


Fig. 1. Managing By Project For Business and Project Success

In the above diagram (fig. 1) Project Management is the tactical step 5 and Managing By Project are the strategic steps 1 through to 4 and 6. Here we can clearly see that the Managing By Project discipline is reiterative while projects are finite.

There are two major challenges in implementing Managing By Project as a culture within an organisation. The first is the objective discipline of project prioritisation and the second is the building of the project management competencies that will ensure that the prioritised portfolio of projects are in fact delivered on time, within budget and to required specification and that the deliverables of the project satisfy stakeholder objectives.

In the following diagram (fig.2) one can see how fig. 1 above has been translated into the hierarchical Managing By Project structure, where the fourth layer is the prioritised projects, the third level being the organisational business imperatives, the second level the mission which is annually based and the first level the vision, which is three to five year based. (I think that you should move Fig 2 to just below this paragraph)

Some of the most important driving forces that are influencing the move towards Managing By Project are;

1. Executives are requesting a global view of all projects underway across the organisation and how they are adding value to shareholders and stakeholders alike.
2. Companies are increasingly asking project managers to make use of limited cross-functional, multi-disciplinary and cross-corporate resources such as time, skill, material, money, technology, etc.
3. Project team members are requesting a central point for accessing project prioritisation information and reporting on progress
4. Project Managers share limited resources and therefore require such resources to be scheduled and leveled over multiple projects
5. Consistency in all project respects from concept to development, planning, execution and through to termination is demanded
6. Value-added for the project team, the organisation and the customer is demanded.

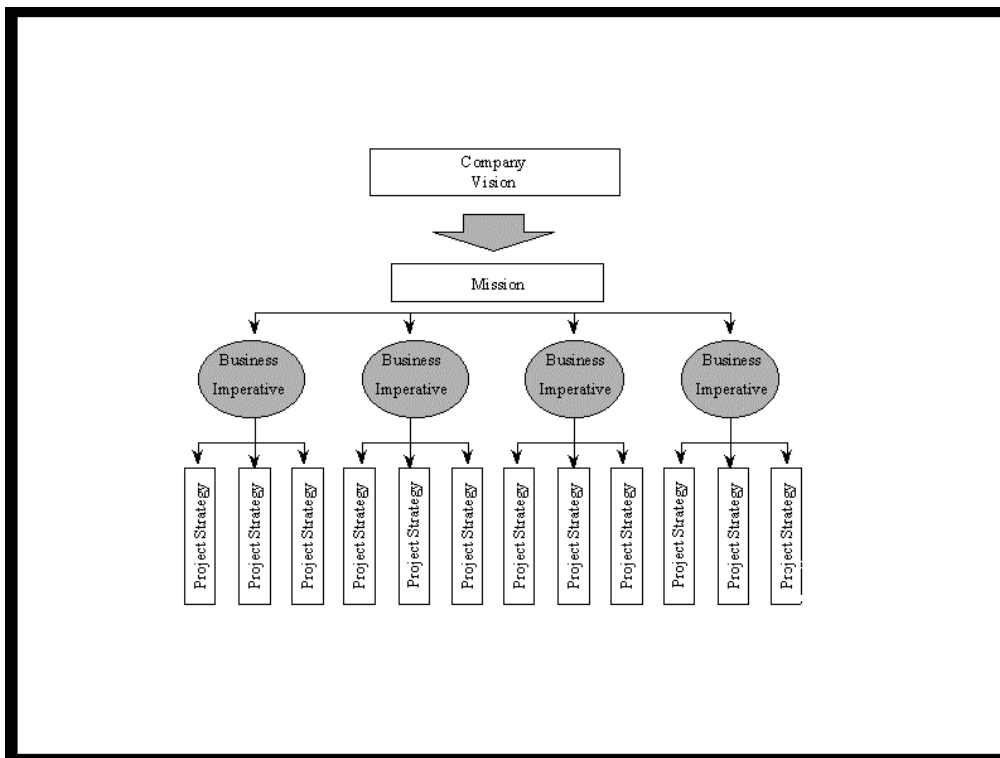


Fig. 2. Linking the Project Portfolio to the Organisations Strategic Vision and Mission

Managing By Project is done for the strategic competitive advantages it holds. It is truly the answer to ensure an integrative way of mobilising limited resources to achieve common corporate and project goals. It is a powerful business discipline that harnesses the collective power of the organisation and the project team. It is in fact doing more, better, but with less. It is realising shareholder value through a culture of focus, innovation & delivery.

As can be clearly seen from fig. 3 below, Managing By Project is very clearly about less being more and more being more. It has been proven that prioritising projects by critically evaluating them in accordance with the organisations strategic lenses brings great benefit to project, organisational and customer success.

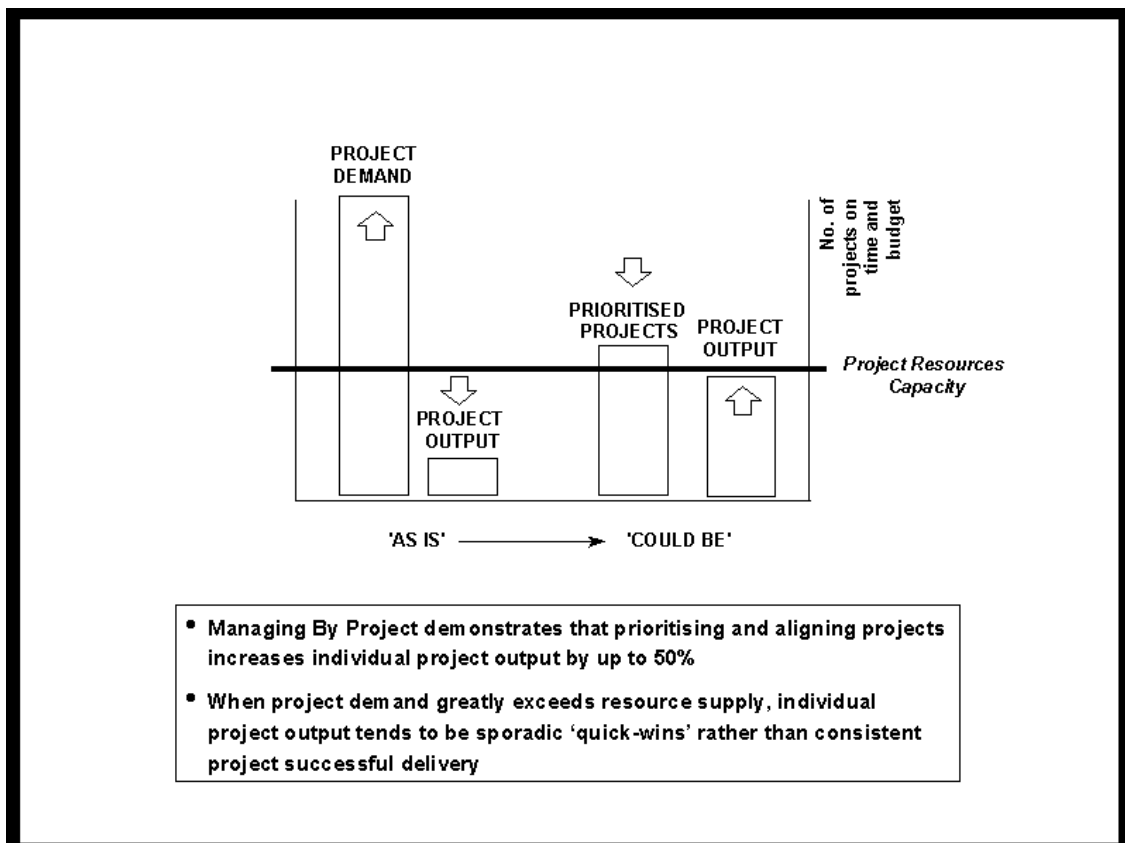


Fig. 3. More is not More, Less is More

Managing By Project is more humanistic and participative than traditional project management has been. It ensures more authority, accountability and responsibility is given to the project team, because projects are linked to organisational strategy.

Managing By Project ensures that complex and integrated projects are delivered successfully through cross-functional and multi-disciplinary teams, that commitment to the project and organisational goals is through comprehension. Managing By Project becomes the way we do and achieve things around here.

3. Conclusion:

Managing By Project as a strategic business weapon can only succeed with Project Management as a tactical management competency. To often Managing By Project is misunderstood as another form of Project Management and this to often ends in failure as Project Managers are expected to perform the functions of Managing By Project which in fact is top management's responsibility.

This paper was written with intention was putting Managing By Project into perspective as being a culture rather than a new or revised Project Management tool or discipline. Organisations that have successfully implemented Managing By Project into their respective organisations have for the first time realised enormous benefits from Project Management as a tactical integrating discipline.

These organisations range from Fast Moving Consumables Goods (FMCG) companies to Retail, Pharmaceuticals, Brewing, Telecommunications, Financial Services, Government Departments, Education and Information Technology industries. There is enough evidence now that Managing By Project synchronized with Project Management is a powerful and strategic weapon in a future of growing competition.

4. Biography:

Clinton in't Veld

(Dip. Proj. Mgmt: Damelin Management School; Hdip Proj.Mgmt: School of Project Management)

Clinton in't Veld, founder, majority shareholder and Chief Executive Officer of the X-Pert Project Management Services Group of companies and author of the dynamic "Managing By Project" (MBP™) methodology, has worked in the professional field of project management since the 80's.

Clinton has successfully grown the X-Pert Group into a prestigious and successful Managing By Project organisation with offices in all the major centers in South Africa, Oxford in London and Sydney Australia. Clinton has been a nominated entrant into the prestigious National Productivity Institute and the Young Entrepreneurs awards program.

Clinton started his project management career as Project Manager in charge of national bar code scanning implementation for a major retail chain. Clinton in't Veld has since facilitated and consulted to an impressive list of National and International companies and has worked on major business projects in such diverse fields as Retail, Financial Services, Banking, Pharmaceuticals, Mining, Communications, Correctional Services, Military, Petro-Chemicals, Transportation, Entertainment, Telecommunications, Government and Sports Administration.

Clinton in't Veld is past Vice President - Special Projects of the South African Chapter of the International Project Management Institute (PMI), founder of the Association of Project and Change Management (APCM) and Vice President of the Association of Project Management (APM) South Africa branch. He also holds active memberships with the US based Special Interest Group for New Product Development, Project Management Institute (USA) as well as the South African Productivity Institute.

Clinton has written an impressive number of articles and papers on the new art and science of Managing By Project (MBP™). He has attended numerous Project Management congresses and training academies in Africa, Europe America and Australia and has presented and guided more than 6 500 delegates in modern day Managing By Project and Project Management, related topics and simulations.

Clinton has been invited as a guest speaker on radio 702, the television programme "Your Own Business" as well as guest lectured on MBA and under graduate courses in the United States and Southern Africa.

Clinton in't Veld recently completed his book entitled "Turning Point", an exciting in depth look into numerous exciting case studies taken from a cross section of dynamic and frontier breaking projects. Three projects mentioned in his book have received special merit awards from the South African Chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI).