

This product of the construction industry is in hot demand just about everywhere. Why?

PROJECT MANAGEMENT



Simply put, project management is the discipline of planning, organizing and managing resources to bring about the successful completion of a specific project.

Project management itself, however, is anything but simple.

It's an incredible balance of asking the right questions before a project even goes ahead, engaging all stakeholders in a carefully laid out plan, diligent adherence to budgets and timelines, and thorough follow-up and project evaluation upon completion.

And, in today's economic downturn, project management is a critical piece of almost any private or public sector undertaking.

"We can't afford to deliver late or over budget anymore," says David Barrett, program director of the Project Management Centre of Excellence at York University's Schulich Executive Education Centre, founder and group conference director for Project World Canada, and founder and editor of Project Times magazine. "It doesn't matter if it is a

\$10,000 new website or a \$20-million building project, organizations need good business project management practices, tools and people," says Mr. Barrett. "It is important to look at more of our initiatives as individual projects – with a beginning, an end, a budget and a team of people. Running parts of a company as a series of projects allows for better control of budgets and outcomes."

Another efficiency of project management is productivity.

Dale Christenson, an associate faculty member in the Project Management Graduate Certificate program at Royal Roads University who works at the Project Management Centre of Excellence with the Government of British Columbia, says, "If you look at the literature, you'll find that people working on projects are 40 to 60 per cent more productive at that time than they are at other times. People identify with their project and become more focused and engaged."

In tough economic times, Dr. Christenson says, project managers become more criti-

cal. "There is less room for error right now. We have to be very careful to ensure that we have the right project and that we do it the right way. That's what project management brings."

For organizations, finding the right project manager is critically important.

In many cases, that may mean going outside to a project management consulting company if there isn't already anyone on the bench ready to go, says Mr. Barrett.

Although, he adds, the right project manager might be found sitting at the desk just around the corner. "Many companies get their best project managers from within. They are organized leaders with strong people skills. They are empathetic, rational and calm in wild times."

He says often the hardest part of managing a project is the people. "It is a real mix of personalities: artists; diggers; dreamers; and doers – who all need to be managed throughout."

Gina Davidovic, director of Bay3000 Corporate Education – a company specializing

in the training and development of project delivery skills that often consults on project recovery – says, "Very often, particularly if the stakeholders have a high level of influence, if we don't manage them proactively and engage their support, they might hinder the project."

She says if a project goes awry, the project recovery process follows specific steps that require a strong emphasis on stakeholder management. "We diagnose the problem – looking at different aspects such as people, processes and outcomes – and identify where the gaps are. After that, if it is still seen as a benefit to continue the project...we create a new plan."

Mr. Barrett says portfolio

management – the management of all projects within an organization – allows a company to see where money is being spent across the whole organization.

He says this is a very strategic initiative that capitalizes on the advantages of project management. "It is an effective way for organizations to link their project choices to their strategic directions."

Project management skills are applicable to any sector.

Dr. Christenson says project managers' education allows them to hone their skills in stakeholder relations, change management and leadership in order to be effective, go into any situation and apply the science successfully, regardless of the circum-

stances they are in.

Project World Canada's project management conferences are heavily attended by the IT world, but also by financial institutions, small businesses, government and more, says Mr. Barrett.

He says, in the last recession, organizations cut out the use of project managers because they didn't understand how critical the role was.

Today, things are different.

"Even though times are tight, the good news is that the role of the project manager isn't being cut at all. Instead, corporations are continuing to invest in project management, even in this downturn, because they get it; they understand the benefits." ■

ISO 21500 emerging as new standard for project managers

With roots dating back fewer than 100 years, the project management discipline has evolved during one of the most spirited periods of innovation and technology advancement the world has seen. These days, work is underway worldwide bringing this applied science into its sharpest focus yet through the development of a new project management stan-

dard called ISO 21500.

Just as there are ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards for organizational quality (ISO 9000) and environmental management (ISO 14000), when completed the new ISO 21500 standard will provide guidance and principles defining good practice in project management.

"To ensure openness and

that the standard is globally accepted, ISO has solicited information from different countries, companies and individuals," says Michael Kamel, chairman of the Canadian ISO 21500 Advisory Committee.

The mammoth undertaking began some three years ago, when the British Standards Institute (BSI) approached the ISO about

creating an international standard for project management. Currently, experts from 31 countries are involved, including Canada through the Standards Council of Canada. Five

other countries are observing, while the Project Management Institute and International Project Management Association are among other major players.

"We have multiple ways of working together," says Dr. Kamel, a professional engineer who is also president of

See ISO 21500 Page PMI 3

Award-winning performance

Hatch wins 2009 PMI project of the year award

After 50 years of working with client Quebec Iron and Titanium (QIT), it was no surprise that Hatch was invited to undertake QIT's most important and complicated project yet.

What turned heads, however, is that Hatch turned challenge into triumph, with the job earning the Project Management Institute's 2008 International Project of the Year Award.

The task? To raise QIT's upgraded slag (UGS) processing plant capacity to 375,000 tonnes a year – a 15 per cent increase – while the plant remained up and running.

But safely adding production lines with zero down time needed very careful planning. Hatch assembled a core team of 10 employees who had an average of 15 to 20 years with Hatch, most of whom were already familiar with the QIT facility.

"Through knowing your client very well, knowing their expectations, and working with them over many years, comes an efficient process," says Kurt Strobele, chairman and CEO of Hatch.

The Canadian-based company Mr. Strobele leads provides process consulting and design as well as project management and construction management services, and systems and process controls and advanced technologies. The firm's client base spans North America, Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and South America in three key sectors: mining and metals; energy; and private and public infrastructure.

With no fewer than 2,000 projects under way at any given time – and currently managing \$40 billion worth of



Kurt Strobele, chairman and CEO of consulting engineering firm Hatch, says the firm prides itself on "doing difficult work, and doing it well."

PHOTO: MARK ZELINSKI

projects around the globe – Hatch prides itself on its depth of experience and expertise.

"You have to plan the work then work the plan," says Mr. Strobele. "You plan every detail, and then execute the project according to the plan."

Even with exhaustive planning, projects will have surprises, says Mr. Strobele, and that is where Hatch's experience sets it apart. "We are quite unique at Hatch in that, rather than compromising quality by bringing in temporary staff, we have a high percentage of staff who have been with us for most of their careers.

"These experienced folks have the ability to react and adjust accordingly," he says.

Focusing on four key areas – safety, staying on schedule, beating cost targets and remaining uncompromising on quality – the Hatch and QIT team executed the award-winning plant expansion.

Hatch – without a single unplanned shutdown – was able to close the UGS project three months ahead of sched-

ule and \$15 million under budget.

"We are extremely proud of the [International Project of the Year] award. We highly value the relationship that we have with QIT, and are equally proud of our team that has delivered this," says Mr. Strobele.

"QIT entrusted Hatch with the full responsibility for equipment and process design, engineering, procurement, project and construction management, as well as commissioning, all using our own methodologies and tools...and QIT, for its part, assigned its very best project and operations people to the undertaking to ensure its ultimate success."

Beyond the award, a more telling accomplishment was that the plant performed as designed and actually produced more than 400,000 tonnes of UGS – 25,000 tonnes more than originally planned.

According to Mr. Strobele, that is the beauty of a well-executed project. "If the production targets are set, the equipment is properly designed and it all works perfectly, you will actually exceed the original targets."

Mr. Strobele says Hatch is currently working on some very exciting, leading-edge projects, including: lithium materials for cars that will run on batteries; oil sand extraction resulting in fewer carbon dioxide emissions; and wind power. In 2007, for example, Hatch Energy designed more than 54 per cent of the installed wind power capacity in Canada.

"We pride ourselves on doing difficult work, and doing it well," says Mr. Strobele. ■

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The Masters Certificate in Project Management was developed at The Schulich Executive Education Centre at York University, Toronto. PMI, PMBOK, PMP, and PMI Registered Education Provider logo are registered marks of the Project Management Institute, Inc. The Schulich Executive Education Centre is a PMI Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.), as designated by the Project Management Institute (PMI).

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Best fit, not best practices

Insights from a 4-year research study

By Mark E. Mullaly, PMP
President, Interthink
Consulting Incorporated

More than four years ago, the Project Management Institute set out to identify the value that organizations receive in managing projects. The resulting \$2.5 million project was the largest research effort to date in project management, involving 65 organizations and 48 researchers from around the world. Co-led by Dr. Janice Thomas of Athabasca University and myself, our goal was to identify the value that project management provides to organizations.

Organizations use projects to develop new infrastructure, systems, products and services. Projects are essential to realizing organizational strategy. The way in which projects are managed, though, varies considerably.

The reasons that organiza-



tions choose to invest in how they manage projects are numerous. For many, they are simply moving past the basics of training staff and buying new software. Early strategies can be extremely straightforward, whether introducing status reporting or a process for initiating projects. These simple approaches can also result in significant value for a time, but can quickly be taken for granted.

A more robust project management capability is typically only sought where the

organization consciously recognizes that project management is a key means of executing its strategy. Even here, however, what is implemented can differ significantly.

Organizations frequently start with capabilities based on standards and 'best practices.' Unfortunately, straight adoption of the practices of others often falls short or is not seen as appropriate or completely relevant. One of the key findings of the study is that the idea of best practices is not a universal one. There is no one right way to manage projects, any more than there is one value that organizations seek from their project management.

The organizations that truly see value are those whose implemented practices best 'fit' what they do, who they are and how they operate. Effective approaches are those that are tailored and adapted to the specific needs, circumstances and culture of the indi-

vidual organization.

Another insight from the study is that while a level of adaptation is key, it is also possible to err on the side of too

much customization. Adapting a project management approach to the culture and types of projects in an organization, while not veering too

far from accepted practice, seems to create the right balance between appropriate process and the ability to quickly bring new staff up to speed.

The organizations realizing the most value from how they manage projects are those that recognize and value it is a strategic enabler. Their practices are particular and unique to them, and are often seen as a source of proprietary competitive advantage. The top organizations in the study are leaders in their markets and industries that other organizations emulate. They continue to invest in improvement today, because it is critical to their continued success.

The leading project management organizations did not get there overnight. They do not all value the same results, nor do they get to those results the same way. For each, however, project management is an essential means of creating and sustaining strategic value. ■

Value of PM Findings

The results of the Value of Project Management project are based upon 65 detailed case studies conducted in organizations from five different continents.

While the value that each organization saw was unique, a number of trends emerged from the study.

A quantifiable return on investment was one of the hoped-for outcomes of the study, but less than half of participating organizations saw tangible benefits such as increased revenue, cost savings or improvements to customer and market share. With one exception, the focus of each organization seeing tangible value is selling project management services.

The value that most organizations saw was intangible, and focused on the ability to deliver strategic value and outcomes. These outcomes included more efficient use of human resources, improved corporate culture and more effective overall management approaches.

The most important factor for all organizations, however, was the degree to which their approach truly fit their strategic goals.

Project leadership demands knowledge of sustainability, argues leading manager

Can sustainability be free? In a word, yes, says Franklin Holtforster, president of MHPM Project Managers Inc. In fact, Mr. Holtforster argues that it is the absence of sustainability that is costly.

"Sustainability is free. Building owners can no longer afford to ignore it. They are being compelled to incorporate sustainability into their projects because it is cost-competitive, mandated or simply to ensure the best working conditions," he says.

MHPM is one of Canada's leading project management

companies, with 14 offices from coast to coast. It successfully completed the soon to be LEED Silver certified Richmond Olympic Oval on budget and on schedule.

Despite such success, critics maintain that achieving sustainability through green building practices offers no true return on investment. MHPM is proving them wrong, project by project.

"There is a great opportunity to improve building energy performance, divert construction waste from landfills, and reduce water consumption in buildings," says Mr.

Holtforster. "The opportunity to capture life-cycle cost-savings has never been better."

And, with buildings being responsible for an estimated 40 per cent of all energy consumption, the opportunity to reduce greenhouse gases – as well as operating costs – is enormous, says Mr. Holtforster.

"Some owners of older buildings persist in denying and resisting this emerging reality. To do otherwise would admit their growing disadvantage in the marketplace," says Mr. Holtforster, who says the pursuit of sustainability and

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards are now mainstream.

In fact, Turner Construction's 2008 Green Building Market Barometer demonstrates the marketplace importance of sustainability.

Of 750 commercial real estate executives, 72 per cent associated green buildings with higher building values, and 68 per cent believed green building would lower operating costs. More than three-quarters also anticipated improved health and well-being for green building occupants.

"It is what our clients expect. And as sustainability becomes increasingly important, we must provide them with informed advice," says Mr. Holtforster. "As project management knowledge lead-

ers, MHPM requires its 210 project manager to maintain Project Management Professional (PMP) certification from the Project Management Institute. As of several years ago, we also required them to achieve LEED Accredited Professional (LEED AP) designation from the Canadian Green Building Council."

MHPM currently has more than 50 LEED-registered projects underway.

"Historically, project management has been compared to a three-legged stool, supported by cost, schedule and quality," says Mr. Holtforster. "Today, every successful project needs a fourth leg: sustainability. Project leadership demands knowledge of this new domain."

One important area of consideration is understanding the

relative merits of different sustainability strategies. "Not all sustainability initiatives are created equal," says Mr. Holtforster. "The strongest advocate for ensuring project owners derive maximum value from sustainability investment is an independent project manager working solely on their behalf."

Mr. Holtforster says sustainability needs to be incorporated in the project from the start of the planning process, before design begins. "A knowledgeable project manager will evaluate the merit of available alternatives step by step...to achieve the required point-rated improvements and ultimately LEED certification."

"If sustainability is an affliction, then it is soon going to be an epidemic, infecting our entire industry," says Mr. Holtforster. ■

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New Brunswick initiative highlights value of PM in large-scale public projects

Rarely is the management of large-scale projects as interlaced with the overlapping pressures of timelines, budgets and accountability as it is in the public service. Yet, as the Government of New Brunswick is demonstrating, with effective project management even enormously complex and sensitive jobs can be executed efficiently.

Part of the province's e-health strategy involves several large IT initiatives within the Department of Health.

"We have 12 project managers managing various projects within the department," says Carole Sharpe, director of e-health Projects, Innovation, e-health and Office of

Sustainability.

Ms. Sharpe is working on the province's e-health agenda. "Our major initiative is the implementation of One Patient, One Record – bringing the records from hospital systems, Medicare, physicians' offices and pharmacies all into one database," she says.

The project started in 2006 and is geared up for full implementation by December 2010.

With timelines that have to be met to retain funding, mandatory internal due diligence and auditing practices, and public accountability at the forefront, Ms. Sharpe says project management is central to e-health's success.

"Project managers are criti-

cal in that they are the holders of all the information – its availability and accuracy – for public reporting," says Ms. Sharpe.

As well, she adds that project managers have to be additionally diligent during times of economic constraints. "They provide information for critical decisions on which pieces to pull back on if a budget is reduced."

With so many large projects under way, New Brunswick's Department of Health has opened its project management processes to other departments. "It's about sustainability; sharing processes and expertise," says Ms. Sharpe. "That is a good thing, especially in government." ■

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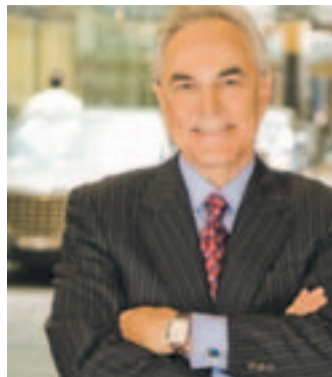
Canadians demonstrate PM skills

By Gregory Balestrero
President & CEO, Project Management Institute

When you think of major projects in Canada do you picture the Canadian Pacific Railroad winding through a canyon in the Rockies; or the Confederation Bridge linking PEI to the mainland; or Hydro Québec's immense James Bay hydroelectric complex?

Those are certainly major projects to be proud of. But Canada's project managers today are just as likely to be developing software at Research in Motion or Cognos; implementing new business processes for Royal Bank of Canada or EnCana; exploring virtual publishing for Thomson; or tracking resource projects through environmental review at Ottawa's Major Projects Management Office.

Project management has



come a long way from its roots in "hard hat" fields and manufacturing. Today, it is indispensable for results, successful innovation and strategic execution across a range of knowledge-based and service activities. Businesses, government and not-for-profit organizations can all benefit from project management's common global language, standards and toolkit of proven methods.

Many of those can be traced to Canada. In 1976, the fledgling Université du

Québec had no engineering school. It inaugurated one of the world's first graduate programs in project management within its business school in Montréal. "That turned out to be the right place after all, as project management thinking spread far beyond construction and engineering," said Professor Brian Hobbs, who holds the chair in project management today at the world-class UQAM program.

In that same year, the Project Management Institute – itself a fledgling professional association – held a congress in Montréal. Discussions there led to development of PMI's first practice standards and professional certification. Today, there are almost half a million PMI members and credential holders in more than 170 countries, supported by 11 global standards (including the PMBOK Guide), five credentials (including the Project Management Professional or PMP), and a Global

Accreditation Center that certifies degree programs, such as the one at UQAM.

Canada's 28,000 PMI members, organized in 18 chapters from Vancouver to St.

John's, contribute by advancing the rigour and clarity of the profession. In addition to UQAM, there are also fine programs under Blaize Reich at Simon Fraser University in

B.C., and Janice Thomas at Athabasca University in Alberta. With Mark Mullaly of Edmonton, Professor Thomas co-directed a groundbreaking study of more than 60 organizations around the world, published last year as *Researching the Value of Project Management*, the highlights of which Mr. Mullaly has reported on the opposing page of this special feature.

And our members contribute in practice. Walk through Montréal's Quartier International, renovated in 2000-04 so successfully that it garnered 17 international awards, including PMI's Project of the Year award for 2005. Yes, superior "hard hat" project management was needed to cover a sunken expressway, overhaul infrastructure and build a striking new square. But just as important were the "soft" skills of project alignment and stakeholder communication. They helped earn the project a 100 per cent satisfaction rating from the city, while incurring no litigation or claims. That's almost unheard-of for such an undertaking in a busy urban centre.

Those are the kind of results that keep the world looking to Canada for the best in project management. ■

President and CEO of Project Management Institute (PMI), Gregory Balestrero travels the world inspiring business executives and government leaders. With nearly 500,000 members and credential holders behind him, Mr. Balestrero promotes project, program and portfolio management as disciplines that can drive innovation, improve organization performance and strengthen competitive advantage.

About the Project Management Institute

Internationally, PMI advocates project, program and portfolio management to enhance and accelerate organizational change – driving innovation, improving bottom line performance and strengthening competitive advantage. In Canada, locally run PMI chapters across the nation welcome inquiries and participation.

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ISO 21500 from page PMI 1

the Project Management Institute's Montreal chapter and manager of corporate strategy consulting at Deloitte.

The process involves teams from each country producing components of the standard independently; country representatives meet periodically to discuss global and specific issues.

"One of the main challenges is the conversion of everyone to a common way of doing things," says Dr. Kamel.

Unlike pure sciences such as physics, Dr. Kamel says project management is an

applied science – one based heavily on practices and anecdotes of what works best. "It's a grassroots discipline formalized initially by practitioners, rather than academics. But because it is newer than other management disciplines such as operations, there are not as many existing anecdotes."

He says the work on ISO 21500 is building a solid base – a global framework – on which further anecdotal evidence on best practices may be built. "It will help us solidify our understanding of the best ways to do things under

various project circumstances."

Developing the standard is itself complex, but Dr. Kamel is confident the effort will be worthwhile. "With this standard, we will start to understand the world of complexities called management – and specifically project management," he says.

The next milestone: constituents will meet in Japan this June to confer and continue the advancement of a standard that will eventually impact project management around the world. ■

This report was produced by RandallAnthony Communications Inc. (www.randallanthony.com) in conjunction with the advertising department of The Globe and Mail. Richard Deacon, National Business Development Manager, rdeacon@globeandmail.com.

International Project of the Year*



Guy LeClair
Hatch

José Domingos
Rio Tinto

Gilles Grégoire
Rio Tinto

Massimo DeDavide
Hatch

Winner:
Rio Tinto UGS Titanium Slag Expansion Project, Québec, Canada

Project Highlights

- 525,000 working hours with no lost-time safety incidents
- Under budget and three months ahead of schedule
- 20 percent production boost without interrupting daily production
- Excellent example of long-term client and project-delivery team cooperation

* Project Management Institute Award – PMI has 265,000 members worldwide in 150 countries and is considered an authority on Project Management



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In demand skills

Canadian schools preparing project managers

Once the sole domain of engineers and the construction industry, project management's application has expanded over the last 15 years, prompting Canada's leading institutes of higher learning to offer courses that prepare people for success with project management skills and knowledge.

Just ask Shelley Zapp. The Victoria, B.C.-based president of enterprise resource planning firm Agresso North America says the company's project management orientation has enabled it to take on heavyweight competitors such as Oracle and SAP.

"Anything operational can be managed as a project," says Ms. Zapp, a Project Management Institute-certified project management professional who studied the discipline at Royal Roads University. "We may be hiring a new HR person or managing the company pension plan, but we're really managing projects."

Canadian educational institutions are helping executives such as Ms. Zapp by offering programs aimed at

working professionals. "I studied project management at night and on my own time," she says.

The skill set is now considered an essential element of both career- and organization-building, says David Barrett, national program director for the Project Management Centre of Excellence at the Schulich Executive Education Centre, which offers Canada's largest Master's Certificate and Project Management program in partnership with 11 universities.

"Project management has now infiltrated organizations in all industries, at all levels. We've realized that whatever the size of the project – whatever the where, how and who – if you don't apply good project management practices, your chance of failure is greatly increased. In this day and age, if you don't deliver on time and on budget, your competitors will. We are training people to be great project managers," he says.

Professor Emeritus Sam Mikhail, a professional engineer and project management professional whose experience



David Barrett, national program director for the Project Management Center of Excellence at the Schulich Executive Education Centre, says the need for project management skills is pervasive across industries. "In this day and age, if you don't deliver on time and on budget, your competitors will." Working in partnership with 11 universities across Canada Schulich offers the nation's largest Masters Certificate and Project Management program. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

includes consulting with the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), now directs the University of Toronto's Pathways to Employment in Canadian Project Management.

"Many organizations now see the adoption of a project and program portfolio man-

agement approach as an effective way of conducting business," he says. "It provides more accountability for the allocation of resources and allows for more effective control and strategic management of the activities of the organization in both public and private sectors."

Prof. Mikhail notes disas-

ters in the financial industry have further elevated public awareness of the importance of risk assessment and management. "Risk management is an integral part of the project management approach to conducting business... whether it's development of financial portfolios or development of new products."

As a result, educators have responded to the broadening applicability of project management skills and demand for them. "Our approach is one that's based on making the opportunity to acquire project management knowledge and skill accessible to people from all sectors of the economy," says Prof. Mikhail.

Project management: understanding the power within

By Brad Loiseau, PMP
Vice President Marketing and Training, Project Management Center



In the parlance of project management, a 'Work Breakdown Structure' is the foundation on which a successful project is built. The WBS contains such things as a project's deliverables, how we

intend to do it, by whom as well as its cost, expected completion date and measures of success. The WBS is an important element within a project's development and monitoring methodologies, but is it only useful within a project environment? Has project management grown beyond its traditional applications?

In the face of the economic downswing and increased glob-

al competition, companies are rethinking how they do business; they are looking for best practice methodologies to help their businesses not only stay afloat, but remain competitive in these challenging times.

Developing opportunities, honing sales initiatives, rebranding marketing materials, reducing expenses and outsourcing various functions are several operational responsibil-

ities that might or might not include 'projects.' Is it possible, however, that techniques and best practices associated with the science of project management could be applied to improve operational execution? I say yes.

In fact, applying project management methodologies to non-project initiatives is quite simple to do. For example, "scope management" can be

adapted to fit not only an operational environment, but also an individual's workload, enabling the better workload understanding and management. I call this new process "Workload Scope Management."

By leveraging scoping techniques such as WBS, a team member could gain a better understanding of the entire workload: the inputs/outputs, the influences and constraints. Thus, he or she could better set goals, timelines, required level of effort; assign other team members into their workload; organize priorities; understand risk and develop a clearer execution and monitoring plan. Not all aspects of project management will work in an operational environment, but regardless, the project management discipline can help.

To make project management work for you in your job, it is vital to understand the discipline. There are many questions around the teachings of project management, and whether or not the knowledge application should be exclusively around projects, or if education should be expanded to include the discipline from an individual's workload right through to a complex project.

In my experience, however, the discipline of project management is not only scalable within a project, but outside as well. Anyone interested in bettering his or her work results should consider studying project management.

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