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# Project Management

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# Preface

This book chronicles the exploits of Brad—a fictional character who’s been thrust into the wonderful world of project management. Just like many project management professionals I’ve met in my many years in the field, he was drawn into the battle reluctantly, but he emerged wanting more.

And as you will soon discover, project management is actually a curious combination of art and science. The artistry refers to the leadership part of the role, or the *people component*. The science—which we will explore with Brad—consists of the tools and techniques that form the underpinnings of the entire project management process. But instead of simply providing information on project management tools and their proper use, this book will explore the *principles* behind their use. This marriage of tools and the principles behind them yields a powerful, plain-language guide that not only explains *how* to do things, but *why* they need to be done.

The book presents a *realistic* view of project management—a very difficult, yet rewarding profession. The role of project manager is a particularly challenging job. Actually, many practicing project managers consider overcoming challenges to be the essence of their job. So this book explores project management from the standpoint of challenges. The very first chapter, in fact, explores the question of whether you should even take on the role at all! Don’t let me scare you though. This book—if you stick with it—will provide all of the tools and techniques you’ll need to overcome just about any problem related to the science of project management.

The first three chapters lay out everything you need to know about projects, project management, and the role of project

manager. Establishing a foundation of understanding in these areas will provide the context you need to better understand the world you (and Brad) are about to enter.

Brad's first big challenge unfolds in Chapter 4, as he tries to figure out exactly what he's supposed to do! All too often, project managers are given half-baked ideas that they must convert into viable, feasible, money-making ventures. This isn't easy. Chapter 4 will show you how to define your project so that everyone understands what it will accomplish, and agrees that it is a worthwhile undertaking.

Building and maintaining an effective team is always challenging. Chapter 5 offers a host of practical tips for getting the right people, providing the right amount of direction, and ensuring that people will be standing in line to work on your next project.

Few would argue against the understanding that planning is the heart of project management. Planning is so important, in fact, that I've devoted two chapters to this subject. Project managers are under tremendous pressure to "just get on with the work." Consequently, project planning is sometimes short-changed. Chapter 6 helps you understand the function and purpose of planning, and offers insights on the challenges you can expect to face as you strive to prepare your project plan. Once this groundwork of understanding is laid, Chapter 7 shows you the nuts and bolts of planning, step by step.

One of the biggest single challenges all project managers face is risk and uncertainty. By their very nature, projects are one-time events. This means that you don't really know what to expect or how things are going to turn out. Chapter 8 will show you how to address that challenge so as to, if not eliminate risk, manage it effectively.

Chapter 9 describes how you can stay in control while the project work is being done, even though there are many different people doing many different things. The key to tackling this challenge, as you will see, is information. And plenty of it.

Chapter 10 shows you how to manage the environment that surrounds your project. Just like Brad, you will discover that

there are a myriad of people and things trying to tug your project in different directions. In this chapter, you'll learn how to manage your project interfaces in an effective manner.

Effective communication and proper documentation are threads that bind the project together. The biggest challenge you'll face in this area, however, is likely to come from within. Many people do not communicate as effectively as they would like, and many try to avoid documentation. If either of these situations describes you, be sure to read Chapter 11. You'll find many tips and techniques that will enhance your understanding of communication and documentation from the project manager's perspective.

Eventually, your project will come to an end. Brad discovered that this part of the project is surprisingly challenging. Confusion and chaos are not unlikely in the waning days of the project. Chapter 12 shows you how you can cut through the chaos and drive your project to a successful conclusion.





Brad's adventure in managing Project Apex was an incredible learning experience for him, as I trust this book will be for you. Obviously, you can't learn everything there is to know about project management in a single book. That's OK. Most of what you will eventually learn about project management will come from your on-the-job experience. The intent of this book is to provide practical tips and techniques that will open the door for your self-development, and allow you to get the most from your experiences.

Being an excellent project manager requires years of practice. For many, however, getting started is the toughest part. This book, I am certain, will get you off to an excellent start.

## Special Features

The idea behind the books in the Briefcase Series is to give you practical information written in a friendly person-to-person style. The chapters are short, deal with tactical issues, and include lots of examples. They also feature numerous boxed sidebars

designed to give you different types of specific information. Here's a description of the boxes you'll find in this book.

	<p>These boxes do just what they say: give you tips and tactics for being smart in the way in which you plan and execute the management of your project.</p>
	<p>These boxes provide warnings for where things could go wrong during every phase of the project management process.</p>
	<p>Here you'll find the kind of how-to hints the pros use to make your project go as smoothly as possible.</p>
	<p>Every activity has its special jargon and terms. These boxes provide definitions of these concepts.</p>
	<p>Look for these boxes for examples of principles and practices described in the text.</p>
	<p>Here you'll find specific procedures and techniques you can use to manage your project more effectively.</p>
	<p>How can you be sure you won't make a mistake sometime as you manage your project? You can't. But if you see a box like this, it will give you practical advice on how to minimize the possibility.</p>

## Acknowledgments

The ideas and learnings expressed in this book were shaped from countless discussions with project management profes-

sionals and many other associates willing to share their experiences, insights, and opinions. Unfortunately, I cannot list all of the people who helped me learn how to manage projects, or all of my friends and colleagues in the Project Management Institute who have helped to broaden my knowledge. But I do appreciate them nonetheless.

And I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the contribution of the many students who have attended my seminars, and were willing to discuss the problems and issues confronting them—they have provided some of the most valuable insights of all.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Don Lindsay, a visionary leader who shaped my thinking and professional behavior more than any other organizational manager throughout my long career.

For helping me improve the product, I'd like to thank Frank Saladis, PMP, for his willingness to review my manuscript and offer his insights and suggestions. I'd also like to thank Mary Russo for her help in transcribing my marginally successful attempt at trying to make this part of the "books on tape" series!

I'd also like to thank John Woods from CWL Publishing Enterprises for recruiting me to write this book and for his perseverance and latitude. He kept telling me that I'd be pleased and proud when I was done. He was right. Bob Magnan, also of CWL, was responsible for much of the final editing, and I appreciate the polish he put on this work.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife, Sandra, and sons, Gregory and Russell, for their support, patience, and understanding through some difficult periods—and throughout the countless hours of solitude they allowed me to impose on myself, and the countless hours of silence I imposed upon them.

## About the Author

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