

Mastering Project Management

Second Edition

**APPLYING ADVANCED
CONCEPTS TO**

Systems Thinking

.....

Control & Evaluation

.....

Resource Allocation



James P. Lewis

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James P. Lewis

McGraw-Hill

New York Chicago San Francisco Lisbon London
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This book is dedicated to

Linda FitzRandolph Clark

*With admiration for her mastery
of project management.*

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P R E F A C E

Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the first edition of this book. I don't know that the state-of-the art in managing projects has changed all that much, but the profession has grown from infancy to at least a moderate maturity, though I believe it will be some time for full maturity to be reached.

Nevertheless, the Project Management Institute (PMI®) has grown at an exponential rate during this time, reflecting the importance of project management as a profession (www.pmi.org). And more organizations are requiring their project managers to become certified as project management professionals (PMP®) through PMI. For that reason, developing your skills is important if you want to advance in your career as a project manager and beyond to higher levels of general management.

There will always be only a small percentage of any group that actually master the skills of that discipline. In sports, there are only a few masters in golf, basketball, soccer, or tennis. The same is true in management. How many of them do you know who are really masters at what they do?

For those who do master a discipline, the rewards are usually far greater than those available to the masses of individuals who are only adequate at the required skills. Of course, it requires dedication to self-development and a lot of hard work to master anything, and project management is no exception.

I personally do not believe anyone can master project management unless he or she is willing to engage in a program of personal or self-development of interpersonal skills, the ability to be self-aware and aware of others, and to be able to live fully in the moment. The best way I know to do this is to engage the help of a life coach who approaches coaching from a holistic perspective; that is, an approach which addresses the improvement of one's mental, physical, intuitive, and spiritual development. One such approach is practiced by James Flaherty (2005), which he calls Integral Coaching™. My own organization, The Lewis Institute, Inc., is offering such coaching following Flaherty's approach, which we call Collaborative Coaching™.

What this book offers is a broad range of topics that are needed to fully master project management. What is important to note, however, is that mastery is defined as the mastery of skills—that is, the application of knowledge, which might be called the art of project management. Skills are not mastered by reading a book. What you will have to do is read, practice, assess yourself, practice some more, and continue this until you reach your goal. It is a process of lifelong learning, and there will always be more to learn, so it is an exciting journey.

I wish you the best in your travels on this path. I would like to hear from you about your experience. You can contact me at the email address shown below.

James P. Lewis
Vinton, Virginia
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June 2007

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Much of what I know about project management I have actually learned through discussions with clients and students in my seminars. I am very grateful to them for sharing their experience with me, and for challenging me to think about project management in new ways.

I have also been impressed with the natural project management skills of my friend Linda FitzRandolph Clark, to whom this book is dedicated. She organizes a guitar recital each year for some forty-odd students and friends, and this year I witnessed the best practices in project management, which included risk management with contingency planning, resource allocation, scheduling, estimating, and so on. She usually holds her event outdoors, but a big threat to success is rain, and this actually happened this year. Her indoor backup location worked beautifully, and the event went off without a hitch.

My thanks to Lora Hansen, my assistant, who has prepared illustrations for this second edition. Lora has worked on several of my books and always does a very nice job to enhance the appearance of the publication.

In addition, Judy Brown has now typeset all of my McGraw-Hill books, and working with her is always a pleasure. She is very patient with me when I fail to practice good project management—getting behind on my copy edits and page proofs. Her work is excellent and the final product always pleases me.

My partner, Tom Boldrey, has been a source of much discussion and thinking around leadership and management, and we are attempting to integrate the two disciplines in our training. Tom has contributed a chapter to this work, and my thanks to him for challenging me to think harder about these subjects.

As is always true, I owe much of what is good in this book to others. The flaws are entirely my own.

ONE

SECTION

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

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C H A P T E R

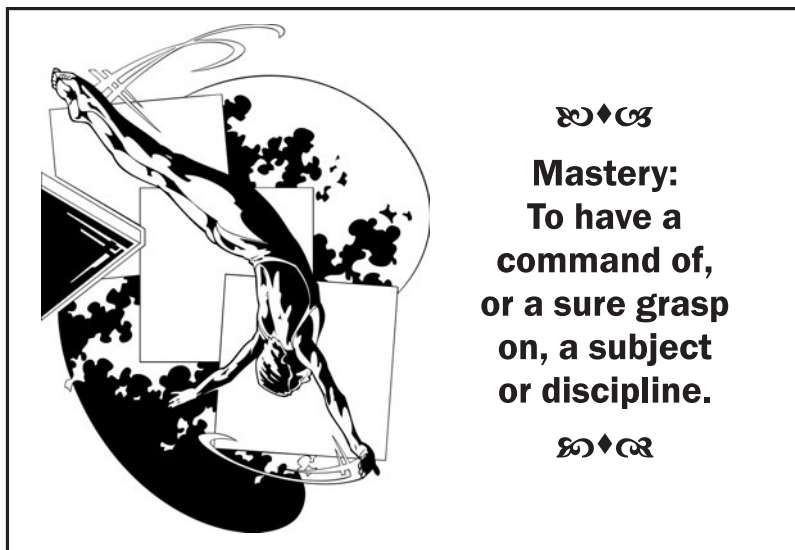
So You Want to Master Project Management

It seems safe to assume that you bought this book because you want to be more than a casual project manager. Indeed, you want to master the discipline. Congratulations. You have chosen a worthy goal. Why? Because I believe project management is the key to your future career success.

Project managers are fortunate in that they often work with almost every function in an organization. That is great training for future chief executive officers. So, if you aspire to higher management levels, you will have made the right move by mastering project management.

WHAT IS MASTERY?

The dictionary definition of mastery is to have a command of, or a sure grasp on, a subject or discipline. This implies that you are so good at performing an activity that few other individuals could perform at a higher level.



ACHIEVING MASTERY

How do you achieve mastery? Practice, practice, practice! And study the subject thoroughly until you know everything that is to be known about it. Unfortunately, for some disciplines this is nearly impossible. Consider cardiology, for example. Not long ago, over 30,000 articles were written on the subject in one year. No cardiologist could hope to read even one-tenth of them. Fortunately, project management is not such a fast-moving subject. Also, it is more of a *performing art* than a cognitive discipline.

One of the best models for achieving project management mastery is to study actors and athletes. That they rehearse and practice is obvious. But two other components might be overlooked. One is observing and emulating people who are already masters. We call these people role models. By imitating the very best, one learns the key behaviors that contribute to their skill.

The second component is coaching. It is a major factor. Every great actor and athlete owes much of his or her success



❧❧❧
**Study how the
athletes do it
(observe
people who
are already
masters).**

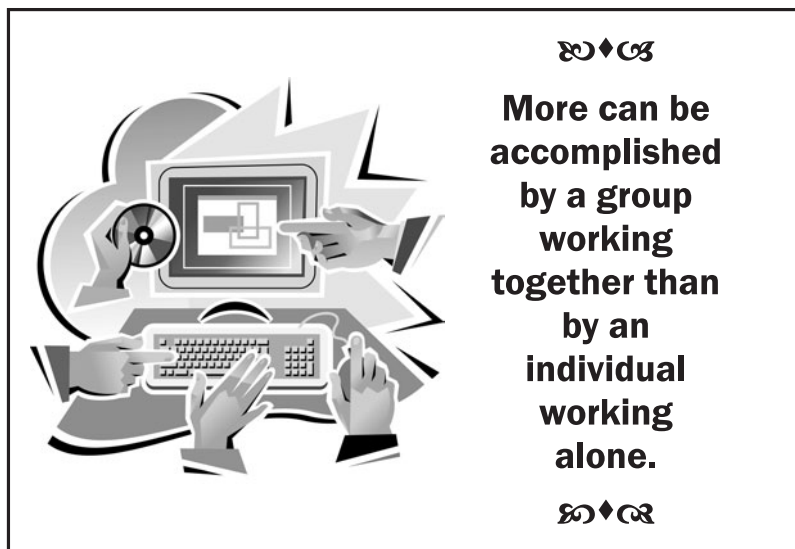


to being coached. The fascinating thing about coaching is that the coach often can't perform as well as the person being coached, but he or she can see what needs to be corrected or augmented and provide advice on how to improve.

A coach also challenges the person being coached to excel. Andrea Bocelli, the singer, is so adept at his art that he can walk into the studio and record a single "take" that will be good enough. But his coach always challenges him to do better, thus inspiring a level of performance that even Bocelli may not dream possible.

Mastermind Groups

Another approach, not used by athletes or actors particularly but used by many successful individuals to develop themselves, is to assemble a *mastermind group* of advisors that can help you deal with issues that you are uncertain how to handle. This was an idea presented by Napoleon Hill in 1937 in his book, *Think and Grow Rich*. Andrew Carnegie and Henry



Ford both formed mastermind groups. Among members of Ford's group were Thomas Edison and Harvey Firestone.

The fundamental principle of a mastermind group is that more can be accomplished by a group working together than by an individual working alone. Such a group comes together on a regular basis—weekly, monthly, or whatever. They share ideas, thoughts, information, and knowledge. They may be people from your own discipline, or from more diverse backgrounds. My personal belief is that more is to be gained by diversity. You acquire much better perspective with a diverse group. Another advantage of a mastermind group is that members can introduce you to people in their networks—people you will find good to know.

Whatever you want to accomplish with your group, choose people who are already where you would like to be in life, or at a level above you. One benefit to the members of your mastermind group is that they get to interact with other people on their level and, in the process, they develop themselves even further.

Remember, *you* are orchestrating the group meetings, so stay in charge of the process. This may occasionally be difficult to do because of the very nature of the group members—most will be strong, influential individuals. But if you conduct the meetings with a clear agenda, are efficient and clearly goal-driven, you should find that they will follow your lead.

The ideal size for a mastermind group is five or six. If it is smaller, you won't have enough resources. If it is larger, there won't be enough time in a meeting for everyone to participate evenly. The group will normally meet weekly or bi-weekly, and the meeting can be in person, over the phone, or via the Internet. With the rapid growth in technology, it is becoming very feasible to meet online with members anywhere in the world. I have personally used a program provided by the Intellor Group (www.intellor.com) to conduct training sessions and meetings with people in Canada, India, China, and Singapore. The voice-over IP quality is excellent, and you have the ability to view a whiteboard on which people can write, draw, type, project slide presentations, and run applications such as Microsoft Project®. For those of you who use Mac computers, they have an excellent video-conferencing program. A good friend of mine owns a marketing communications company based in Sweden and recently opened an office in Princeton, New Jersey. His people meet frequently online and are able to talk to and see each other throughout the meeting.

SHOULD YOU GET YOUR PMP® CERTIFICATION?

The Project Management Institute (PMI) certifies project managers as professionals, or PMPs. The certification process requires that you document 4,500 hours of work experience and pass an online exam. If you want to truly master project management, I recommend that you get your PMP certification. In addition, there are numerous certificate programs in