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Leadership and the Project Manager

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Chapter Objectives

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand how project management is a “leader-intensive” profession.
2. Distinguish between the role of a manager and the characteristics of a leader.
3. Understand the concept of emotional intelligence as it relates to how project managers lead.
4. Recognize traits that are strongly linked to effective project leadership.
5. Identify the key roles project champions play in project success.
6. Recognize the principles that typify the new project leadership.
7. Understand the development of project management professionalism in the discipline.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT BODY OF KNOWLEDGE CORE CONCEPTS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER

1. Responsibilities and Competencies of the Project Manager (PMBoK sec. 1.7.1)
2. Interpersonal Skills of the Project Manager (PMBoK sec. 1.7.2)
3. Manage Project Team (PMBoK sec. 9.4)
4. Project Communications Management (PMBoK sec. 10)
5. Manage Stakeholder Engagement (PMBoK sec. 13.3)

PROJECT PROFILE

Leading by Example for the London Olympics—Sir John Armitt

England's John Armitt had run major contractor, including pioneering UK's first high-speed-rail system, and steering the national railroad infrastructure company out of bankruptcy, when he was named chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), charged with building all infrastructure and facilities for London's 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games.

"I was immediately interested," he says.

When London won the bid to develop the 2012 Olympics, the challenges it faced were significant. London is a city that is heavily congested, with little open ground or natural sites left for development. The challenge of putting up multiple stadiums, sporting venues, Olympic Village structures, and transportation infrastructure defines the complexity of the massive project, all under the requirement that the completed work meet a fixed deadline. More than \$10 billion worth of construction later, London's widely acclaimed Olympics were enhanced by complete and fully functioning facilities. A 600-acre urban site had been converted into a multi-venue park and athletes' village on schedule and \$1.6 billion under budget. In addition, not one life was lost during 70 million worker hours, and the project's accident rate was well below the UK average. For his performance in steering the complex development project, Armitt was granted a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his services.

Following some high-profile, troubled UK projects and the steady history of Olympic Games cost overruns (see the Sochi Olympics case in Chapter 8), the preparations for these games came under intense scrutiny. Armitt dealt with numerous external interests aiming to create "an atmosphere of calm," allowing his team to focus on the task.

Described as a "stabilizing influence, giving confidence that the project could be delivered," Armitt brought high credibility and a history of competence to his role in leading the development effort. Both politicians and executives involved in the multiple construction projects lauded his leadership. Ray O'Rourke, chairman and chief executive of Laing O'Rourke construction, was particularly complementary, noting that the success of London 2012 was a result of the careful leadership, continual presence, and understanding of the requirements needed to complete this enormous



FIGURE 4.1 Sir John Armitt

Source: Philip Wolmuth/Alamy

undertaking. According to O'Rourke, perhaps Armitt's biggest impact lay in his ability to manage the politics and interests of numerous project stakeholders throughout the development of the Olympic sites.

When asked about the keys to making the Olympic project so successful, Armitt pointed to his approach to managing projects, honed through years of experience and overcoming multiple challenges. "What was different about the Olympics was the level of collaboration across all the projects. This came because of the recognition that to deliver these projects successfully, the client had a responsibility to provide the leadership," he noted. Much of the project's success comes from the clarity of the ODA's vision, the leadership the ODA provided, and the way two years were set aside at the start for planning and preparation. Sir John says the credit belongs to the whole team. When he joined in 2007, construction was at an early stage, but the program "was in good shape," he says.

Although Armitt is modest about his contribution, others associated with the London Games success are much more generous in pointing to his critical role in making the process come together. They note that, thanks to Armitt's leadership in coordinating the work of hundreds of professionals, the project has consistently met targets throughout the building phase and set new benchmarks for sustainable construction and technical expertise. He was pivotal in all aspects of the Olympic and Paralympic Games infrastructure project, including finance, engineering, environment, management, and external relations, as well as acting as an ambassador for the project in explaining its complexities to the public. He is perhaps most proud of the long-term outcomes from the development: "The big opportunity was to take 600 acres of wasteland, a very heavily contaminated, rundown part of the east side of the city, and transform it into what is now going to be a new, magical place in London for the next 100 years."

On the heels of his Olympic triumph, Sir John is not slowing down. He was appointed chair of a national commission to review how Britain could improve its poor record of project planning and delivery and assess the current state of the UK's infrastructure, including transport, energy, telecommunications, and water infrastructure. For example, he recently warned about the dangers of energy brownouts throughout England if the needed construction of power plants continues to be delayed due to political pressures. Finding major problems with a national infrastructure that was ranking 24th internationally in overall quality, Sir John has been an advocate of taking politicians out of the equation. For too long, he observed, politicians ducked the hard choices, delaying crucial decisions and repairs to the nation's infrastructure because they were politically unpopular or lacked broad-based support. The Armitt review's key recommendation is for a properly independent body, along the lines of the Office of Budget Responsibility or the Committee on Climate Change, that would take the electoral cycle and political cowardice out of big infrastructure decisions.

"We need to find ministers who are prepared to say to their departments, 'You are free to make mistakes. You are free to mentally allocate some of what you are doing to the 70/30 projects where, in fact, there is a good 30% chance that it will not work—but the 70% is worth going for, so let's go for that. If it goes wrong, you won't be hanged, but you will actually be praised for having a go. Because we are willing to take a risk, there will be certain things that will be successful.'" As he noted, innovation carries risk, but it can also deliver big wins.

"If you want to innovate, you have to accept that there are risks, and so you need flexibility in your budget," states Armitt. "And you need to be open and honest about that."¹

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is often recognized by its accomplishments. After cofounding Apple in 1976, Steven Jobs served as both a visible spokesperson for the corporation for many years, as well as the guiding hand behind many of its most significant product developments. Starting with his work in developing many of the technical and crowd-pleasing features of the Macintosh computer in 1984, Jobs always made his presence felt, often to the discomfort of other members of the organization who found his leadership style abrasive and demanding. In fact, less than two years after the success of the Macintosh, Jobs was fired from the company he started. His return as an older and wiser executive a decade later sparked a resurgence in a company that was nearly bankrupt, devoid of new ideas, and without a strong sense of strategic direction. At the time of his return, Apple's market capitalization was \$3 billion. However, over the following 15 years (until his death in 2011), Jobs spearheaded some of the most innovative new electronic consumer products ever conceived, revaluing the firm at over \$350 billion. His impact on iconic products such as the iPhone, iPad, and iPod left him with a reputation as a visionary technology leader and helped make Apple one of the most profitable and valuable corporations in the world.

The situation Jeff Immelt faced as CEO of General Electric was very different. Taking over for the charismatic and highly successful Jack Welch, Immelt inherited a company that was quite literally the face of American business, phenomenally successful, and perhaps the most valued brand in the world. Immelt set about recasting the corporation along his own vision. By most accounts, his record has been mixed. Stock prices have been sluggish and a number of acquisitions did not

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pan out and had to be resold (notably, GE's purchase of NBC Universal). On the other hand, he has been quick to lead the firm's recovery from the Great Recession of 2009 and has been instrumental in rebuilding the company's reputation as one of the most admired firms in the world. Coupled with his leadership of President Obama's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, Immelt remains a widely recognized head of a highly respected organization. By his own account, his tenure at GE has been challenging and demanding, but he also expects to leave the firm on solid footing when he retires.

Leadership is a difficult concept to examine because we all have our own definition of leadership, our own examples of leaders in actions, and our own beliefs about what makes leaders work. The topic of leadership has generated more than 30,000 articles and thousands of books. Although there are many definitions of leadership, one useful definition that we will employ in this chapter is that **leadership** is the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organizational goals.² For the project manager, leadership is the process by which she influences the project team to get the job done!

True leadership from the project manager has been shown time and again to be one of the most important characteristics in successful project management. The impact of good leadership is felt within the team and has an effect on other functional managers and important project stakeholders.³ In fact, project management has been viewed as one of the most "leader-intensive" undertakings within an organization.⁴

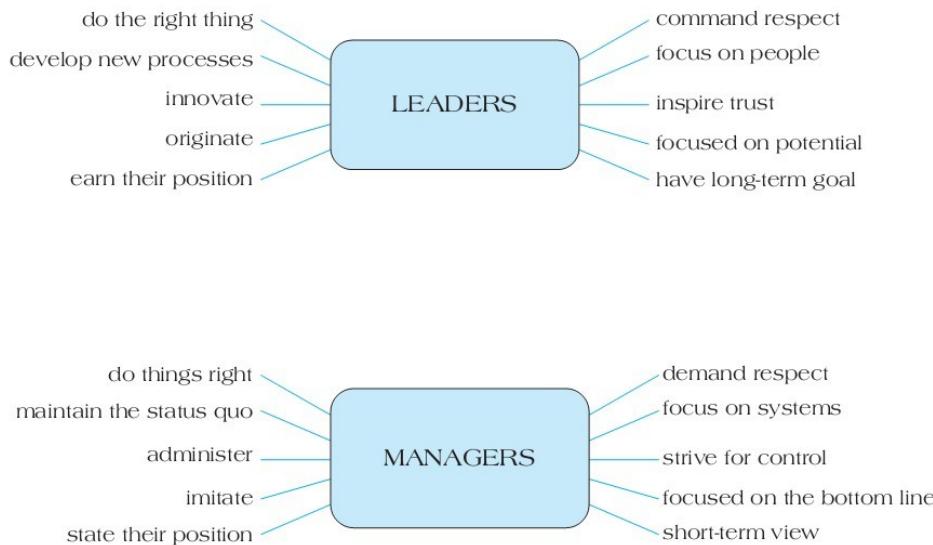
4.1 LEADERS VERSUS MANAGERS

Most leaders are quick to reject the idea that they were, by themselves, responsible for the successes attained or the important changes undertaken within their organizations. For them, leadership involves an awareness of a partnership, an active collaboration between the leader and the team. In project management, successful team leaders are often those who were best able to create the partnership attitude between themselves and their teams. As Peter Block⁵ notes, the idea of leadership as partnership is critical to project management because it highlights the important manner in which all leaders are ultimately dependent on their teams to achieve project goals. Four things are necessary to promote the partnership idea between the project manager and the team:

1. ***Exchange of purpose:*** Partnerships require that every worker be responsible for defining the project's vision and goals. A steady dialogue between the project manager and team members can create a consistent and widely shared vision.
2. ***A right to say no:*** It is critical that all members of the project team feel they have the ability to disagree and to offer contrary positions. Supporting people's right to voice their disagreements is a cornerstone of a partnership. Losing arguments is acceptable; losing the right to disagree is not.
3. ***Joint accountability:*** In a partnership, each member of the project team is responsible for the project's outcomes and the current situation, whether it is positive or shows evidence of problems. The project is shared among multiple participants and the results of the project are also shared.
4. ***Absolute honesty:*** Partnerships demand authenticity. An authentic atmosphere promotes straightforwardness and honesty among all participants. Because we respect each team member's role on the project, we make an implicit pact that all information, both good and bad, becomes community information. Just as honesty is a cornerstone of successful marriages, it is critical in project team relationships.

Leadership is distinguishable from other management roles in a number of ways. A manager is an individual who has received a title within the organization that permits her to plan, organize, direct, and control the behavior of others within her department or area of oversight. Although leadership may be part of the manager's job, the other management roles are more administrative in nature. Leadership, on the other hand, is less about administration and more about interpersonal relationships. Leadership involves inspiring, motivating, influencing, and changing behaviors of others in pursuit of a common goal. Leaders embrace change; managers support the status quo. Leaders aim for effectiveness; managers aim for efficiency. Figure 4.2 illustrates some of the distinctions between typical management behavior and the kinds of processes with which leaders are engaged. Although leaders need to recognize the importance of managerial duties, it is often difficult for managers to recognize the nonstandard interpersonal nature of leadership. However

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**FIGURE 4.2** Differences Between Managers and Leaders

this is *not* to say that leadership is merely an innate characteristic that some of us have and others do not. Most research and common experience seem to indicate that leadership behaviors can be taught. That is the good news: Leadership can be learned. And a number of properties and models of leadership are quite relevant for project managers.

Although we will use the term *project manager* throughout the chapter, we do so only because it has become the common designation for the head or leader of a project team. A much better description would be "project leader." Successful project managers are successful project leaders.

This chapter will examine both the general concept of organizational leadership and the special conditions under which project managers are expected to operate. What is it about projects that make them a unique challenge to manage? Why is leadership such an integral role in successful project management? The more we are able to understand the dynamics of this concept, the better able we will be to effectively manage our implementation projects and train a future generation of managers in the tasks and skills required for them to perform their jobs.

4.2 HOW THE PROJECT MANAGER LEADS

The wide range of duties that a project manager is expected to take on covers everything from direct supervision to indirect influence, from managing "hard" technical details to controlling "soft" people issues, from developing detailed project plans and budgets to adjudicating team member quarrels and smoothing stakeholder concerns. In short, the project manager's job encapsulates, in many ways, the role of a mini-CEO, someone who is expected to manage holistically, focusing on the complete project management process from start to finish. In this section, we will examine a variety of the duties and roles that project managers must take on as they work to successfully manage their projects.

Acquiring Project Resources

Project resources refer to all personnel and material resources necessary to successfully accomplish project objectives. Many projects are underfunded in the concept stage. This lack of resource support can occur for several reasons, including:

1. *The project's goals are deliberately vague.* Sometimes a project is kicked off with its overall goals still somewhat "fluid." Perhaps the project is a pure research effort in a laboratory or an information technology project designed to explore new possibilities for chip design or computer speed. Under circumstances such as these, companies sponsor projects with a deliberately "fuzzy" mandate in order to allow the project team maximum flexibility.

2. *The project lacks a top management sponsor.* As we will learn, having a project champion in the top management of the organization can be very helpful to project development, particularly in gaining support for the project with sufficient resources. On the other hand, when no powerful sponsor emerges for the project, it may face underfunding compared to other projects competing for scarce company resources.
3. *The project requirements were deliberately understated.* It is not uncommon for project resource needs to be purposely understated at the outset in order to get them accepted by the organization. Contractors bidding on work for governmental agencies are known to sometimes underbid to win these jobs and then renegotiate contracts after the fact or find other ways to increase profit margins later.
4. *So many projects may be under development that there is simply not enough money to go around.* A common reason for lack of resource support for a project is that the company is constantly developing so many projects that it cannot fund all of them adequately. Instead, the company adopts a "take it or leave it" attitude, presenting project managers with the option of either accepting insufficient funding or receiving none at all.
5. *An attitude of distrust between top management and project managers.* Sometimes projects receive low funding because top management is convinced that project managers are deliberately padding their estimates to gain excessive funding.

Regardless of the reasons for the lack of project resources, there is no doubt that many projects face extremely tight budgets and inadequate human resources.

Project managers, however, do have some options open to them as they seek to supplement their project's resource support. If the resource problem is a personnel issue, they may seek alternative avenues to solve the difficulty. For example, suppose that you were the project manager for an upgrade to an existing software package your company uses to control materials flow and warehousing in manufacturing. If trained programmers were simply unavailable to work on your upgrade project, you might seek to hire temporary contract employees. People with specialized skills such as programming can often be acquired on a short-term basis to fill gaps in the availability of in-house personnel to do the same assignments. The key point to remember is that recognizing and responding to resource needs is a critical function of project leadership.

Another common tactic project managers use in the face of resource shortfalls is to rely on negotiation or political tactics to influence top management to provide additional support. Because resources must often be negotiated with top management, clearly the ability to successfully negotiate and apply influence where the project manager has no direct authority is a critical skill. Again, leadership is best demonstrated by the skills a project manager uses to maintain the viability of the project, whether dealing with top management, clients, the project team, or other significant stakeholders.

Motivating and Building Teams

The process of molding a diverse group of functional experts into a cohesive and collaborative team is not a challenge to be undertaken lightly. Team building and motivation present enormously complex hurdles, and dealing comfortably with human processes is not part of every manager's background. For example, it is very common within engineering or other technical jobs for successful employees to be promoted to project manager. They typically become quickly adept at dealing with the technical challenges of project management but have a difficult time understanding and mastering the human challenges. Their background, training, education, and experiences have prepared them well for technical problems but have neglected the equally critical behavioral elements in successful project management.

In considering how to motivate individuals on our project teams, it is important to recognize that **motivation** ultimately comes from within each of us; it cannot be stimulated solely by an external presence. Each of us decides, based on the characteristics of our job, our work environment, opportunities for advancement, coworkers, and so forth, whether we will become motivated to do the work we have been assigned. Does that imply that motivation is therefore outside of the influence of project managers? Yes and no. Yes, because motivation is an individual decision: We cannot make someone become motivated. On the other hand, as one career army officer puts it, "In the army, we can't force people to do anything, but we can sure make them wish they had done it!"

Underlying motivation is typically something that team members desire whether it comes from a

challenging work assignment, opportunity for recognition and advancement, or simply the desire to stay out of trouble. Successful project managers must recognize that one vital element in their job description is the ability to recognize talent, recruit it to the project team, mold a team of interactive and collaborative workers, and apply motivational techniques as necessary.

Having a Vision and Fighting Fires

Successful project managers must operate on boundaries. The boundary dividing technical and behavioral problems is one example, and project managers need to be comfortable with both tasks. Another boundary is the distinction between being a strategic visionary and a day-to-day firefighter. Project managers work with conceptual plans, develop the project scope in line with organizational directives, and understand how their project is expected to fit into the company's project portfolio. In addition, they are expected to keep their eyes firmly fixed on the ultimate prize: the completed project. In short, project managers must be able to think strategically and to consider the "big picture" for their projects. At the same time, however, crises and other project challenges that occur on a daily basis usually require project managers to make immediate, tactical decisions, to solve current problems, and to be detail-oriented. Leaders are able to make the often daily transition from keeping an eye on the big picture to dealing with immediate, smaller problems that occur on a fairly regular basis.

One executive in a project organization highlighted this distinction very well. He stated, "We seek people who can see the forest for the trees but at the same time, are intimately familiar with the species of each variety of tree we grow. If one of those trees is sick, they have to know the best formula to fix it quickly." His point was that a visionary who adopts an exclusively strategic view of the project will discover that he cannot deal with the day-to-day "fires" that keep cropping up. At the same time, someone who is too exclusively focused on dealing with the daily challenges may lose the ultimate perspective and forget the overall picture or the goals that define the project. The balance between strategic vision and firefighting represents a key boundary that successful project managers must become comfortable occupying.

Communicating

Former president Ronald Reagan was labeled "The Great Communicator." He displayed a seemingly natural and fluent ability to project his views clearly, to identify with his audience and shape his messages accordingly, and to not waver or contradict his basic themes. Project managers require the same facility of communication. In Chapter 2 we examined the role of stakeholder management in successful projects. These stakeholders can have a tremendous impact on the likelihood that a project will succeed or fail; consequently, it is absolutely critical to maintain strong contacts with all stakeholders throughout the project's development. There is a common saying in project management regarding the importance of communication with your company's top management: "If they know nothing of what you are doing, they assume you are doing nothing." The message is clear: We must take serious steps to identify relevant stakeholders and establish and maintain communications with them, not sporadically but continually, throughout the project's development.

Negotiating is another crucial form of communicating. We will discuss the process of negotiation in detail in Chapter 6; however, it is important to recognize that project leaders must become adept at negotiating with a wide variety of stakeholders. Leaders negotiate with clients over critical project specifications (for example, a builder may negotiate with house buyers over the number of windows or the type of flooring that will be laid in the kitchen); they negotiate with key organizational members, such as department heads, for resources or budget money; they negotiate with suppliers for prices and delivery dates for materials. In fact, the total number of ways in which project leaders routinely engage in negotiation is difficult to count. They understand that within many organizations, their authority and power to impose their will automatically is limited. As a result, negotiation is typically a constant and necessary form of communication for effective project leaders.

Communicating also serves other valuable purposes. Project managers have been described as "mini billboards," the most visible evidence of the status of their project. The ways in which project managers communicate, the messages they send (intentional or unintentional), and the manner in which they discuss their projects send powerful signals to other important stakeholders about the project. Whether through development good meeting and presentation skills a facility

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for writing and speaking, or through informal networking, project managers must recognize the importance of communication and become adept at it.

One of the most critical means by which project managers can communicate is through their ability to run productive meetings. Meeting skills are important because project managers spend a large amount of time in meetings—meetings with team members, top management, clients, and other critical project stakeholders. Meetings serve a number of purposes for the project team, including:⁶

1. They define the project and the major team players.
2. They provide an opportunity to revise, update, and add to all participants' knowledge base, including facts, perceptions, experience, judgments, and other information pertinent to the project.
3. They assist team members in understanding how their individual efforts fit into the overall whole of the project as well as how they can each contribute to project success.
4. They help all stakeholders increase their commitment to the project through participation in the management process.
5. They provide a collective opportunity to discuss the project and decide on individual work assignments.
6. They provide visibility for the project manager's role in managing the project.

As a result of the wide variety of uses meetings serve, the ability of project managers to become adept at running them in an efficient and productive manner is critical. Meetings are a key method for communicating project status, collectivizing the contributions of individual team members, developing a sense of unity and *esprit de corps*, and keeping all important project stakeholders up-to-date concerning the project status.⁷

Two forms of leadership behaviors are critical for effectively running project meetings. The first type of behavior is *task-oriented*; that is, it is intended to emphasize behaviors that contribute to completing project assignments, planning and scheduling activities and resources, and providing the necessary support and technical assistance. Task-oriented behavior seeks to get the job done. At the same time, effective project leaders are also concerned about *group maintenance* behavior. Group maintenance suggests that a project manager cannot act at the expense of concern for the team. Group maintenance behavior consists of supportive activities, including showing confidence and trust, acting friendly and supportive, working with subordinates to understand their problems, and recognizing their accomplishments. Group maintenance behavior increases cohesiveness, trust, and commitment, and it satisfies all team members' needs for recognition and acceptance.

Table 4.1 identifies some of the critical task and group maintenance behaviors that occur in productive project meetings. Among the important task-oriented behaviors are structuring

TABLE 4.1 Task and Group Maintenance Behaviors for Project Meetings⁸

Task-Oriented Behavior	Specific Outcome
1. Structuring process	Guide and sequence discussion
2. Stimulating communication	Increase information exchange
3. Clarifying communication	Increase comprehension
4. Summarizing	Check on understanding and assess progress
5. Testing consensus	Check on agreement
Group Maintenance Behavior	Specific Outcome
1. Gatekeeping	Increase and equalize participation
2. Harmonizing	Reduce tension and hostility
3. Supporting	Prevent withdrawal, encourage exchange
4. Setting standards	Regulate behavior
5. Analyzing process	Discover and resolve process problems

Source: Gary A. Yukl. *Leadership in Organizations*, 5th ed., p. 329. Copyright © 2002. Adapted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

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the flow of discussion to ensure that a proper meeting agenda is followed, stimulating conversation among all meeting participants, clarifying and summarizing decisions and perceptions, and testing consensus to identify points of agreement and discord. The project manager is the key to achieving effective task behaviors, particularly through a clear sense of timing and pacing.⁹ For example, pushing for consensus too quickly or stifling conversation and the free flow of ideas will be detrimental to the development of the project team and the outcomes of meetings. Likewise, continually stimulating conversation even after agreement has been achieved only serves to prolong a meeting past the point where it is productive.

Among the group maintenance behaviors that effective project leaders need to consider in running meetings are gatekeeping to ensure equal participation, harmonizing to reduce tension and promote team development, supporting by encouraging an exchange of views, regulating behavior through setting standards, and identifying and resolving any “process” problems that cause meeting participants to feel uncomfortable, hurried, or defensive. Group maintenance behaviors are just as critical as those related to task and must be addressed as part of a successful meeting strategy. Taken together, task and group maintenance goals allow the project manager to gain the maximum benefit from meetings, which are so critical for project communication and form a constant demand on the project manager’s time.

Although running productive meetings is a critical skill for project leaders, they also need to recognize that face-to-face opportunities to communicate are not always possible. In situations where team members are geographically dispersed or heavily committed to other activities, finding regular times for progress meetings can be difficult. As we will discuss in Chapter 6 on virtual teams, modern international business often requires that meetings be conducted virtually, through platforms such as Skype or Adobe Connect. These electronic media and new technologies have shifted the manner in which many business communications are handled. That is, project leaders must possess the ability to handle modern electronic forms of communication, including e-mail, Twitter, and Facebook social networking sites, and emerging methods for online communication. For example, it is becoming more common for project leaders to set up social networking or group collaboration sites for their projects, including project team Facebook accounts, Twitter feeds, and Yammer collaboration spaces. These sites can create an atmosphere of teamwork and help promote networking, while also maximizing the ways in which project leaders can communicate with members of their team. In short, although project team meetings remain one of the most useful methods for leaders to effectively communicate with their subordinates and other stakeholders, *it is not a requirement that their meetings have to be face-to-face to be effective.*

Table 4.2 paints a portrait of the roles project leaders play in project success by ranking the nine most important characteristics of effective project managers in order of importance. The data are based on a study of successful American project managers as perceived by project team members.¹⁰ Note that the most important is the willingness of the project manager to lead by example, to highlight the project’s goals, and to first commit to the challenge before calling upon other team members to make a similar commitment.

Equally interesting are findings related to the reasons why a project manager might be viewed as ineffective. These reasons include both personal quality flaws and organizational factors. Table 4.3

TABLE 4.2 Characteristics of Project Managers Who Lead

Rank	Characteristics of an Effective Project Manager
1	Leads by example
2	Visionary
3	Technically competent
4	Decisive
5	A good communicator
6	A good motivator
7	Stands up to top management when necessary
8	Supports team members
9	Encourages new ideas

TABLE 4.3 Characteristics of Project Managers Who Are Not Leaders

Personal Flaws	Percentage	Organizational Factors	Percentage
Sets bad example	26.3%	Lack of top management support	31.5%
Not self-assured	23.7	Resistance to change	18.4
Lacks technical expertise	19.7	Inconsistent reward system	13.2
Poor communicator	11.8	A reactive organization rather than a proactive, planning one	9.2
Poor motivator	6.6	Lack of resources	7.9

BOX 4.1**Project Management Research in Brief*****Leadership and Emotional Intelligence***

An interesting perspective on leadership has emerged in recent years as greater levels of research have examined the traits and abilities associated with effective project leadership. While characteristics such as technical skill, analytical ability, and intelligence are all considered important traits in project managers, an additional concept, the idea of emotional intelligence, has been suggested as a more meaningful measure of leadership effectiveness. *Emotional intelligence* refers to leaders' ability to understand that effective leadership is part of the emotional and relational transaction between subordinates and themselves. There are five elements that characterize emotional intelligence: (1) self-awareness, (2) self-regulation, (3) motivation, (4) empathy, and (5) social skill. With these traits, a project manager can develop the kind of direct, supportive relationships with the project team members that are critical to creating and guiding an effective team.

SELF-AWARENESS. Self-awareness implies having a deep understanding of one's own strengths and weaknesses, ego needs, drives, and motives. To be self-aware means to have a clear perspective of one's self; it does not mean to be excessively self-centered or self-involved. When I am self-aware, I am capable of interacting better with others because I understand how my feelings and attitudes are affecting my behavior.

SELF-REGULATION. A key ability in successful leaders is their willingness to keep themselves under control. One way each of us practices self-control is our ability to think before we act—in effect, to suspend judgment. Effective leaders are those individuals who have developed **self-regulation**; that is, the ability to reflect on events, respond to them after careful consideration, and avoid the mistake of indulging in impulsive behavior.

MOTIVATION. Effective project leaders are consistently highly motivated individuals. They are driven to achieve their maximum potential and they recognize that in order to be successful, they must also work with members of the project team to generate the maximum performance from each of them. There are two important traits of effective managers with regard to motivation: First, they are always looking for ways to keep score; that is, they like concrete or clear markers that demonstrate progress. Second, effective project managers consistently strive for greater and greater challenges.

EMPATHY. One important trait of successful project managers is their ability to recognize the differences in each of their subordinates, make allowances for those differences, and treat each team member in a manner that is designed to gain the maximum commitment from that person. **Empathy** means the willingness to consider other team members' feelings in the process of making an informed decision.

SOCIAL SKILL. The final trait of emotional intelligence, social skill, refers to a person's ability to manage relationships with others. Social skill is more than simple friendliness; it is *friendliness with a purpose*. Social skill is our ability to move people in a direction we think desirable. Among the offshoots of strong social skills are the manner in which we demonstrate persuasiveness, rapport, and building networks.

Emotional intelligence is a concept that reflects an important point: Many of the most critical project management skills that define effective leadership are not related to technical prowess, native analytical ability, or IQ. Of much greater importance are self-management skills, as reflected in self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation and relationship management skills, shown through our empathy and social abilities. Remember: *Project management is first and foremost a people management challenge*. Once we understand the role that leadership behaviors play in effective project management, we can better identify the ways in which we can use leadership to promote our projects.¹¹

lists the most important personal flaws and the organizational factors that render a project manager ineffective. These factors are rank-ordered according to the percentage of respondents who identified them.

4.3 TRAITS OF EFFECTIVE PROJECT LEADERS

A great deal of research on organizational leadership has been aimed at uncovering the traits that are specific to leaders. Because leaders are not the same thing as managers, they are found in all walks of life and occupying all levels of organizational hierarchies. A study that sought to uncover the traits that most managers believe leaders should possess is particularly illuminating. A large sample survey was used to ask a total of 2,615 managers within U.S. corporations what they considered to be the most important characteristics of effective leaders.¹²

The results of this survey are intriguing. A significant majority of managers felt that the most important characteristic of superior leaders was basic honesty. They sought leaders who say what they mean and live up to their promises. In addition, they sought competence and intelligence, vision, inspiration, fairness, imagination, and dependability, to list a few of the most important characteristics. These traits offer an important starting point for better understanding how leaders operate and, more importantly, how the other members of the project team or organization expect them to operate. Clearly, the most important factors we seek in leaders are the dimensions of trust, strength of character, and the intelligence and competence to succeed. The expectation of success is also important; the majority of followers do not tag along after failing project managers for very long.

Research also has been done that is specifically related to project managers and the leadership traits necessary to be successful in this more specialized arena. Three studies in particular shed valuable light on the nature of the special demands that project managers face and the concomitant nature of the leadership characteristics they must develop. One study analyzed data from a number of sources and synthesized a set of factors that most effective project leaders shared in common.¹³ It identified five important characteristics for proficient project management: oral communication skills; influencing skills; intellectual capabilities; the ability to handle stress; and diverse management skills, including planning, delegation, and decision making. These findings correlate with the fact that most project managers do not have the capacity to exercise power that derives from formal positional authority; consequently, they are forced to develop effective influencing skills.

The second study also identified five characteristics closely associated with effective project team leaders.¹⁴

- **Credibility:** Is the project manager trustworthy and taken seriously by both the project team and the parent organization?
- **Creative problem-solver:** Is the project manager skilled at problem analysis and identification?
- **Tolerance for ambiguity:** Is the project manager adversely affected by complex or ambiguous (uncertain) situations?
- **Flexible management style:** Is the project manager able to handle rapidly changing situations?
- **Effective communication skills:** Is the project manager able to operate as the focal point for communication from a variety of stakeholders?

The final study of necessary abilities for effective project managers collected data from 58 firms on their project management practices and the skills most important for project managers.¹⁵ The researchers found seven essential project manager abilities, including:

1. **Organizing under conflict:** Project managers need the abilities to delegate, manage their time, and handle conflict and criticism.
2. **Experience:** Having knowledge of project management and other organizational procedures, experience with technical challenges, and a background as a leader are helpful.
3. **Decision making:** Project managers require sound judgment, systematic analytical ability, and decision-making skills.
4. **Productive creativity:** This ability refers to the need for project managers to show creativity; develop and implement innovative ideas; and challenge the old, established order.
5. **Organizing with cooperation:** Project managers must be willing to create a positive team atmosphere demonstrate a willingness to learn and positive interpersonal contact.

6. ***Cooperative leadership:*** This skill refers to the project manager's ability to motivate others, to cooperate, and to express ideas clearly.
7. ***Integrative thinking:*** Project managers need to be able to think analytically and to involve others in the decision-making process.

Conclusions about Project Leaders

Given the wide-ranging views, it is important to note the commonalities across these studies and to draw some general conclusions about the nature of project leadership. The specific conclusions that have practical relevance to selecting and training effective project leaders suggest several themes, including:

- Effective project managers must be good communicators.
- Project leaders must possess the flexibility to respond to uncertain or ambiguous situations with a minimum of stress.
- Strong project leaders work well with and through their project team.
- Good project leaders are skilled at various influence tactics.

Although examining the traits of successful leaders, and specifically project leaders, is valuable, it presents only part of the picture. One key to understanding leadership behavior is to focus on *what leaders do* rather than who they are.

PROJECT PROFILE

Dr. Elattuvalapil Sreedharan, India's Project Management Guru

The capital of India, Delhi, is a city of amazing contrasts. Home to 17 million people, many living in abject poverty, the city boasts some of the country's leading high-tech centers for industry and higher learning. Traffic snarls are notorious, and pollution levels are high as the city's 7,500 buses slowly navigate crowded streets. Like other urban centers in India, Delhi desperately needs enhanced infrastructure and a commuter rail system. Unfortunately, India's track record for large-capital projects is poor; there are many examples of projects that have run well over budget and behind schedule. A recent example highlights the continuing problems with managing infrastructure projects in India. Delhi launched



FIGURE 4.3 Dr. E. Sreedharan in One of the Delhi Metro Tunnels

Source: Prakash Singh/AFP/Getty Images

a multiyear project to host the Commonwealth Games in the fall of 2010, a sporting event bringing together athletes from 71 territories and countries associated with the former British Empire. Unfortunately, problems with sanitation, inadequate construction, numerous delays, and poor planning left the country with a very visible black eye and reinforced the popular view that large-scale infrastructure projects in India are, at best, a chancy venture.

Set against this backdrop, when the city announced its intention to develop a metro system, the rest of the country was hesitant of its chances of success. After all, Calcutta's metro had taken 22 years to create a mere 17-kilometer stretch, had overrun its budget by a multiple of 14, and had resulted in building collapses and multiple deaths from the construction. What chance did Delhi have of doing better? In fact, Delhi's Metro system has been a huge success, and it has recently completed the second phase of the \$2.3 billion project, with current daily ridership of 2.2 million passengers, earning the Metro organization nearly \$900,000 a day in revenues. Not only that, the rail line planned for this phase, covering nearly 160 kilometers, with 132 operational stations, is running well ahead of schedule. So unexpected was this circumstance that it led *BusinessWeek* magazine to label the project's leader, Elattuvalapil Sreedharan, "a miracle worker."

Sreedharan came to the project with an already enviable record of managing projects throughout India. In 1963, he had been given six months to repair the Pamban Bridge. Sreedharan, barely 30 at the time, took 46 days to finish the job. In the 1990s, he was in charge of Konkan Railway, a 760-kilometer stretch cutting across the Western Ghats mountain range. Nearly 150 bridges and 92 tunnels had to be built. He took seven years from the initial survey until the launch. Clearly, Mr. Sreedharan has determined the secrets to making projects work. So what has been the secret of Sreedharan's success, especially in a land where so many before him have failed in similar ventures?

First, he says, is the importance of accountability. "One of the biggest impediments to the timely completion of infrastructure projects in India today is a lack of focus and accountability." Poor performers are not held responsible for failure to hit their targets, so where is the incentive to be on time? According to Sreedharan, his organization took a different approach: "The organization's mission and culture include clearly defined objectives and a vision, which was to complete the project on time and within the budget without causing inconvenience to the public." Sreedharan also has almost an obsession with deadlines. Every officer in the Metro project keeps a digital board that shows the number of days left for the completion of the next target. Another critical element in his success has been meticulous advance planning. Sreedharan said, "All tenders (bids) from contractors are decided very fast, sometimes in 18 or 19 days. [I]t is essential to lay down the criteria for settling tenders clearly in advance."

Finally, Sreedharan is adamant about transparency and constant communication with all project stakeholders. Under his watch, the project maintains open communication with all contractors, updating them about plans and holding frequent meetings and workshops. A unique feature of the Delhi Metro project is that it has held nearly a hundred "community interaction programs" (CIPs), which are open forums during which local residents are given the chance to discuss aspects of the construction that could affect them. The CIP meetings are designed to allow advocacy groups, neighborhood organizations, and other stakeholders to share ideas, air grievances, and ask questions as the project moves forward. Regarding the questions from CIP meetings, Sreedharan comments, "Most of them are resolved on the spot, while necessary action and remedial measures are taken on the rest." Sreedharan's team has used this transparency and open communication approach to allay the concerns of affected groups and spur their cooperation with the project rather than their antagonism.

The total project is designed to be rolled out in four phases, with a total coverage of 152 miles when finished. The final phase is due to be completed in 2020. The Metro project is currently in the midst of its phase three goals. In fact, work on the Metro is proceeding so smoothly that Sreedharan, now 80 years old, does not believe his presence is needed at the work site on a regular basis, knowing that the principles he established will continue to guide the work to its completion. Sreedharan retired in December 2011. He wanted to return to his ancestral village and live a placid life in Ponnani, on the southwestern Malabar Coast. As with so many successful people, retired life has not worked out the way he had planned. Kerala's Chief Minister has already enlisted Sreedharan's help in implementing the Kochi Metro project.

Sreedharan's leadership principles echo beyond the challenge of infrastructure: "I believe that there are three basic qualities for a successful life," he notes, "punctuality, integrity and good morals, and professional competence. The future of India will be in good hands if these qualities are assiduously nurtured by the youth of our nation."¹⁶

4.4 PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Dr. Thomas Simpson (not his real name) came back from a recent medical conference enthusiastic about an innovative technique that he felt sure was just right for his hospital. He had witnessed the use of information system technology that allowed doctors to link wirelessly with patient records, retrieve documentation, and place prescription orders online. With this system, a doctor could directly input symptoms and treatment protocols on a laptop in the patient's room. The benefit of the new system was that it significantly upgraded the hospital's approach to patient record keeping while providing the doctor with more immediate flexibility in treatment options.

As chief of the medical staff, Dr. Simpson had some influence in Grace Hospital, but he could not simply order the hospital to adopt the technology. Instead, over a period of six months, he worked tirelessly to promote the system, setting up information seminars with the software designers and question-and-answer sessions with the hospital's administration and other important stakeholders. Eventually, his persistence paid off. The hospital adopted the technology and has been using it for the past two years. In spite of some start-up problems resulting from the need to transfer old paper records to the system, Grace Hospital now brags that it is "paper-record" free, and all because of Dr. Simpson's efforts.

In this example, Dr. Simpson displayed all the qualities of a project champion. Champions, sometimes referred to as project sponsors, are well known both in the organizational theory literature and within organizations themselves. A **champion** is an individual who "identifies with a new development (whether or not he made it), using all the weapons at his command, against the funded resistance of the organization. He functions as an entrepreneur within the organization, and since he does not have official authority to take unnecessary risks...he puts his job in the organization (and often his standing) on the line.... He (has) great energy and capacity to invite and withstand disapproval."¹⁷

Champions possess some remarkable characteristics. First, it is assumed (in fact, almost expected) that champions will operate without the officially sanctioned approval of their organizations. Often they set themselves directly at odds with the established order or popular way of thinking. Standard operating procedures are anathema to champions, and they are usually unafraid of official disapproval. Second, champions have a true entrepreneurial talent for recognizing value in innovative ideas or products; they see things the typical organizational member does not. Third, champions are risk takers in every sense of the word. Their single-minded pursuit of truth in whatever innovative form it may take often puts them at odds with entrenched bureaucrats and those who do not share their enthusiasm for a new product or idea.

Capturing the enthusiasm and fervor that champions have for their ideas is difficult. Tom Peters, best-selling author, describes champions as "fanatics" in their single-minded pursuit of their pet ideas. He states, "The people who are tenacious, committed champions are often a royal pain in the neck.... They must be fostered and nurtured—even when it hurts."¹⁸ This statement captures the essence of the personality and impact of the champion: one who is at the same time an organizational gadfly and vitally important for project and organizational success.

Champions—Who Are They?

Champions do not consistently occupy the same positions within organizations. Although senior managers often serve as champions, many members of the organization can play the role of implementation champion, with different systems or at different times with the same system implementation project. Among the most common specific types of champions are creative originator, entrepreneur, godfather or sponsor, and project manager.¹⁹

CREATIVE ORIGINATOR The **creative originator** is usually an engineer, scientist, or similar person who is the source of and driving force behind the idea. The fact that the individual who was behind the original development of the idea or technology can function as the project champion is hardly surprising. No one in the organization has more expertise or sense of vision where the new information system is concerned. Few others possess the technical or creative ability to develop the implementation effort through to fruition. Consequently, many organizations allow, and even actively encourage, the continued involvement of the scientist or engineer who originally developed the idea upon which the project is based.

ENTREPRENEUR An **entrepreneur** is the person who adopts the idea or technology and actively works to sell the system throughout the organization, eventually pushing it to success. In many organizations, it is not possible, for a variety of reasons, for the creative originator or original project advocate to assume the role of champion. Often, scientists, technicians, and engineers are limited by their need to perform the specifically demarcated duties of their positions, and thereby precluded from becoming part of the project implementation team. In such situations, the individual who steps forward as the implementation champion is referred to as an *organizational entrepreneur*. The entrepreneur is an organizational member who recognizes the value of the original idea or technology and makes it a personal goal to gain its acceptance throughout the relevant

organizational units that would be employing it. Entrepreneurial champions are usually middle-to upper-level managers who may or may not have technical backgrounds. In addition to performing their own duties within the organization, they are constantly on the lookout for innovative and useful ideas to develop.

"GODFATHER" OR SPONSOR The project champion as **godfather** is a senior-level manager who does everything possible to promote the project, including obtaining the needed resources, coaching the project team when problems arise, calming the political waters, and protecting the project when necessary. A **sponsor** has elected to actively support acquisition and implementation of the new technology and to do everything in his power to facilitate this process. One of the most important functions of godfathers is to make it known throughout the organization that this project is under their personal guidance or protection. In addition to supplying this "protection," the godfather engages in a variety of activities of a more substantial nature in helping the implementation effort succeed. Godfathers also use their influence to coach the team when problems arise in order to decrease the likelihood of political problems derailing the project.

PROJECT MANAGER Another member of the organization who may play the role of champion is the project manager. At one time or another, almost every project manager has undertaken the role of champion. When one considers the definition of a project champion and the wide range of duties performed in that role, it becomes clear why the manager of the project is often in the position to engage in championing behaviors. Certainly, project managers are strongly identified with their projects, and to a degree their careers are directly tied to the successful completion of their projects. Project managers, however, may have limited effectiveness as champions if they do not possess a higher, organizationwide status that makes it possible for them to serve as project advocates at upper management levels. For example, a project manager may not have the authority to secure additional project resources or gain support throughout the larger organization.

What Do Champions Do?

What exactly do champions do to aid the implementation process? Table 4.4 lists two sets of championing activities that were identified by one study through its survey of a sample of project managers.

TABLE 4.4 Traditional and Nontraditional Roles of Project Champions

Traditional Duties	
Technical understanding	Knowledge of the technical aspects involved in developing the project
Leadership	Ability to provide leadership for the project team
Coordination and control	Managing and controlling the activities of the team
Obtaining resources	Gaining access to the necessary resources to ensure a smooth development process
Administrative	Handling the important administrative side of the project
Nontraditional Duties	
Cheerleader	Providing the needed enthusiasm (spiritual driving force) for the team
Visionary	Maintaining a clear sense of purpose and a firm idea of what is involved in creating the project
Politician	Employing the necessary political tactics and networking to ensure broad acceptance and cooperation with the project
Risk taker	Being willing to take calculated personal or career risks to support the project
Ambassador	Maintaining good relations with all project stakeholders

Source: J. K. Pinto and D. P. Slevin. (1988). "The project champion: Key to implementation success," *Project Management Journal*, 20(4): 15-20. Copyright © 1988 by Project Management Institute Publications. Copyright and all rights reserved.
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The first set of activities is commonly thought of as the “traditional” duties of managers. The champion can actively aid in the project development process by interpreting technical details, providing strong leadership, helping with project coordination and control, as well as supplying administrative help for the project team. It is important that the champion be familiar with the technical aspects of the project. Another important traditional activity of the project champion is the procurement of necessary resources to enable team members to perform their tasks. Champions are often in an excellent position to make available a continual supply of logistical support for the project.

The second set of activities in which champions engage is referred to as the “nontraditional” side of management, which implies that these activities are not part of the usual roles identified in traditional management literature. That does not mean, however, that these activities are in any way unnecessary or eccentric. In fact, several champions have reported that these duties are just as important for project success as the more frequently identified, well-known requirements for successful management. Performing functions such as cheerleader, visionary, politician, risk taker, and ambassador is important for most project managers, and yet these roles tend to be deemphasized in literature, job specifications, and training programs. As one champion put it, “We can teach people those (traditional) skills easily enough, but experience is the best teacher for the other (nontraditional) duties. *No one prepares you for the irrational side of this job. You have to pick it up as you go.*”

In many organizations, the majority of a champion’s time is not engaged in performing the traditional side of project management duties, but rather is involved in the “nontraditional” activities. The champion is often the person with the vision, the cheerleader, or the driving force behind the project. Additionally, the champion is expected to take on the key political roles in attempting to play the right kinds of games, make the right contacts, and network with the necessary people to ensure a steady supply of resources necessary for the project to succeed. Finally, because champions, by definition, strongly identify with the project, much of their time is spent in networking with other organizational units, top management, and prospective clients (users) of the project. In this task, they take on an important ambassador/advocate role throughout the organization. In many cases, champions put their careers on the line to support and gain acceptance of a new system and, as a result, become committed to aiding the project in every way possible, through both traditional and nontraditional activities.

One question often asked is whether this type of behavior really plays an important role in successful project management. The answer is an emphatic “yes.” Aside from anecdotal and case study information, some compelling research studies have helped us better understand not only what champions do, but how important champions are for acquiring and gaining organizational acceptance of new projects.²⁰ One study, for example, examined a series of new product developments and start-ups at a variety of organizations.²¹ The relationship between the presence or absence of an identifiable organizational champion and the success of the project was studied for 45 new product development efforts. Of the 17 successful new product developments, all but one, or 94%, had a readily identifiable champion. These ventures were spearheaded by an individual that the majority of those involved in the project could point to and identify as that project’s sponsor or champion. On the other hand, of the 28 projects that failed, only one was coupled with an identifiable project champion. Clearly, the results of this study point to the enormously important role that a champion can play in new product development.

How to Make a Champion

All organizations differ in terms of the availability of individuals to take on the role of a project champion. Although some organizations have a supply of enthusiastic personnel at all levels willing to serve as champions, the reality for most organizations is not nearly so upbeat. The fault, in this case, is not that these organizations have inadequate or unskilled people. Very often, the problem is that the organizations have failed to recognize the benefits to be derived from champions. Champions and a climate within which they can exist must be developed and nurtured by the organization.

Some important principles and options for organizations to recognize in the development and use of project champions include identify and encourage the emergence of champions, encourage and reward risk takers, remember that champions are connected emotionally to their projects, and avoid tying champions too closely to traditional project management duties.

IDENTIFY AND ENCOURAGE THE EMERGENCE OF CHAMPIONS In many companies, there are individuals who demonstrate the enthusiasm and drive to champion new project ideas. It is important for these organizations to develop a culture that not only tolerates but actively promotes champions. In many organizations, a creative originator who continually badgered upper management with a new project idea would likely offend some of the key top management team. However, for a firm to realize the full potential of its internal champions, it must create a culture of support in which champions feel they can work without excessive criticism or oversight.

ENCOURAGE AND REWARD RISK TAKERS Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, made it a personal crusade to actively encourage senior, middle, and even junior managers to take risks. His argument was that innovation does not come without risk; if one cannot bear to take risks, one cannot innovate. The corollary to encouraging risk taking is to avoid the knee-jerk response of immediately seeking culprits and punishing them for project failures. Innovations are, by definition, risky ventures. They can result in tremendous payoffs, but they also have a very real possibility of failure. Organizations have to become more aware of the positive effects of encouraging individuals to take risks and assume championing roles in innovative projects. One project success will often pay for 10 project failures.

REMEMBER THAT CHAMPIONS ARE CONNECTED EMOTIONALLY TO THEIR PROJECTS Champions bring a great deal of energy and emotional commitment to their project ideas; however, a potential downside of the use of powerful project champions is the fact that often they refuse to give up, even in the face of a genuine project failure. As a result, many companies keep pursuing "dogs" long after any hope for successful completion or commercial success is past. For example, Microsoft introduced their "Kin" cellphone in 2010 and marketed it particularly to teens and fans of social networking. The Kin was not a "smartphone," it did not support apps or games, and it was expensive to operate. In spite of Microsoft's best efforts, it quickly failed in the marketplace and was abandoned only two months after its introduction. Microsoft executive, Robbie Bach, mastermind behind the Kin device, left the company soon afterward.

DON'T TIE CHAMPIONS TOO TIGHTLY TO TRADITIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT DUTIES Project champions and project managers may be the same people, but often they are not. Many times classic champions, as Table 4.4 demonstrated, are more comfortable supporting a project through nontraditional activities. Because they tend to be visionaries, cheerleaders, and risk takers, they approach their goal with a single-minded strength of purpose and a sense of the overall design and strategy for the new technology. Rather than supporting the more routine aspects of project management, such as planning and scheduling, allocating resources, and handling the administrative details, the champions' expertise and true value to the implementation process may be in their political connections and contributions, that is, in employing their nontraditional management skills.

4.5 THE NEW PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Project management requires us to harness our abilities to lead others. These skills may or (more likely) may not be innate; that is, for the majority of us, leadership is not something that we were born with. However, we know enough about the leadership challenge to recognize that leaders are as leaders do.²³ The more we begin to recognize and practice appropriate leadership roles, the more naturally these activities will come to us. An article by one of the top writers on organizational leadership, Dr. Warren Bennis, summarizes four competencies that determine our success as project leaders.²⁴

1. *The new leader understands and practices the power of appreciation. These project leaders are connoisseurs of talent, more curators than creators.* Appreciation derives from our ability to recognize and reward the talent of others. Leaders may not be the best, most valuable, or most intelligent members of project teams. Their role is not to outshine others but to allow others to develop to their best potential.
2. *The new leader keeps reminding people what's important.* This simple statement carries a powerful message for project managers. We need to remember that in pursuing a project, a host of problems, difficulties, annoyances, and technical and human challenges are likely to arise. Often numerous problems are uncovered during projects that were not apparent until after serious work began. Project managers must remember that one of their most important contributions is reminding people to keep their eyes fixed on the ultimate prize—in effect, conditionally reminding them what is important.

3. ***The new leader generates and sustains trust.*** The research by Kouzes and Posner cited earlier in this chapter contains a powerful message: The most important characteristic looked for in leaders is honesty.²⁵ Leaders who generate trust and behave with authenticity, fairness, honesty, and caring will be successful in creating an environment in which the project team members strive to do their best. Trust plays a critical role in developing productive leader-member relationships.²⁶ It is only by recognizing and applying trustworthiness that we demonstrate the loyalty and commitment to our team members as individuals, that will bring out the best in them.
4. ***The new leader and the led are intimate allies.*** Earlier in this chapter we examined the concept of a partnership existing between the leader and followers. This point is important and should be emphasized in effective leadership behaviors. Project management leadership does not arise in order to control and dominate the project team, but as a natural method for supporting the team's efforts. As we work to develop leadership abilities, it is important to first recognize the reasons why leadership is necessary for project success and then take the concrete steps needed to realize the vision of the project, something we can best do when we as leaders work in close harmony with our teams.

BOX 4.2

Project Managers in Practice

Bill Mowery, CSC

"Project management, as a discipline, provides limitless opportunities across almost infinite combinations of industries, skills and alternatives and provides a career path that remains challenging and rewarding." This statement comes from Bill Mowery, until recently, a Delivery Assurance Senior Manager in the Financial Services Group (FSG) of Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC).

Mowery's job was a combination of project governance, working with the corporation's Project Management Office (PMO), and special projects in support of strategic objectives. Project governance duties consist of monitoring and reporting on the status of the project portfolio of one of FSG's divisions while providing guidance on best practices and methods in project management. An important part of Mowery's was as the "business architect" in support of FSG's proprietary project tracking and reporting system. This system was developed to provide advanced capabilities in the automated collection and dissemination of project performance metrics. Mowery states, "Perhaps the most challenging part of my job pertained to ad hoc special projects that support the goals of both FSG and the corporate objectives of CSC as a whole. The opportunity to collaborate globally with my colleagues on a wide range of technology and business endeavors provided both challenge and variety in my career."

Mowery's career path into project management work seems to have been somewhat unintentional. After being trained in electronics and computer technology and earning an associate's degree while serving in the U.S. Army, he began his civilian career in software engineering while pursuing undergraduate degrees in computer science and mathematics. As a contract programmer, he got his first taste of project management work, simply because he was the software contractor with the most seniority. This serendipitous introduction to this type of work led to a career that has kept him fascinated and engaged for the last 25 years. During this time, Mowery has worked in a variety of industries, including electronic product development, nuclear fuel processing, financial services, and material handling systems. One thing he has learned during his diverse career is that sound project management principles are critical regardless of the setting. As he points out, "While the industry and technology can change, the tenets of project management that lead to success remain a constant theme."

Because of Mowery's wealth of experience with running projects across so many settings over such an extended period, he served as a mentor for junior project managers in his organization, a role that he relished. "The aspect of my job I found most rewarding was the opportunity to collaborate and mentor within a large project management staff. When a project manager was faced with a unique challenge in project management and I could offer insight and advice that helped solve the problem, it provided a satisfying feeling that someone else didn't have to learn something 'the hard way.'"

When asked what advice he could offer to those interested in pursuing a career in project management, Mowery reflected, "The best advice that I can offer to anyone considering a career in project management is to have the patience of a rock, an empathetic personality, and a love of learning. Project management can be a complex field, and I often tell people that the more I learn, the less I know. This often confuses people, but simply put, the more I learn, the more I understand just how much more there is to know and discover in a fascinating and complex profession."



FIGURE 4.4 Bill Mowery, CSC

Source: Jeffrey Pinto/Pearson Education, Inc

PROJECT PROFILE

The Challenge of Managing Internationally

As project management becomes an internationalized phenomenon, it is critical for successful leaders to recognize their management style and make necessary accommodations when dealing with project team members from other countries. The current generation of project managers is discovering that international work is not a mysterious or infrequent event; in fact, it is the everyday reality for project managers in many project-based organizations. What are some of the important lessons that all project managers need to take to heart when working overseas? One list is offered by a successful project manager, Giancarlo Duranti. A native of Italy, Duranti has experience leading teams in Brazil, Cuba, and Gambia. Among his suggestions for making the right leadership choices in foreign settings are:

1. **Develop a detailed understanding of the environment.** Educate yourself on the setting in which you will be working by viewing documentaries and reading travel guides, tourist books, and even local newspapers. History is equally important: The better you understand the past of a particular culture, the sooner you can begin to understand team attitudes and perceptions.
2. **Do not stereotype.** It is easy to approach a foreign setting with preconceived notions about its people, culture, weather, and food. Without allowing ourselves to experience a setting for the "first time," it is difficult to avoid forming easy and, ultimately, useless opinions.
3. **Be genuinely interested in cultural differences.** People are eager to share local and national traditions and, in turn, have a curiosity about yours. Demonstrating a real interest in their culture and sharing your own helps both sides to appreciate these differences rather than be separated by them.
4. **Do not assume there is one way (yours) to communicate.** Communication differences among cultures are profound. Remember, for example, that use of humor and ways of giving feedback, including correction, differ greatly among cultures. Learn to appreciate alternative means of exchanging information and to recognize what is "really" being said in various exchanges.
5. **Listen actively and empathetically.** Suspend judgment when listening and try to view each situation with some distance and perspective.²⁷

4.6 PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALISM

At the beginning of 2003, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) kicked off an internal initiative to create a project management career path within its organization. The launch followed similar moves by a variety of organizations, from firms as diverse as Ernst & Young (consulting) to NASA. Bruce Carnes at the Department of Energy explained the reasoning for this move:

Much of our work is accomplished through projects. In fact, our project managers are currently responsible for over 100 projects with a total value in excess of \$20 billion, plus another \$150 billion in environmental restoration work over the next several decades. It's important for us to make sure that our project managers have the best skills possible, and that each person is treated as a critical DoE asset. Therefore, we need a cohesive career management plan to develop them, match their skills with assignments, track their performance, and reward them as appropriate.²⁸

Embedded in this explanation are several important points that illustrate the growing **professionalism** of the project management discipline. Let's consider them in turn.²⁹

First, for more and more organizations, project work is becoming the standard. Projects are no longer simply additional and nonroutine components of organizational life; in many organizations they are becoming the principal means by which the organizations accomplish their goals. Along with the increased recognition of the importance of using project management techniques comes the concomitant need to acquire, train, and maintain a cadre of project management professionals who are dedicated to these work assignments.

Second, there is a critical need to upgrade the skills of those doing project work. It would be a mistake to continually apply organizational resources, particularly human resources, to projects without ensuring that they are learning and developing their project skills, and approaching these tasks with a solid foundation of knowledge. In short, one of the aspects of professionalism is to recognize that project management professionals are not an ad hoc feature of the organization, but a critical resource to be developed and maintained. Therefore, it is important to support these individuals as a resource that requires continual training and skill development.

Third, project management professionalism recognizes the need to create a clear career path for those who serve as project managers and support personnel. Historically, organizations "found" their project managers from among their line management staff and assigned them the responsibility to complete the project, always with the assumption that once the project was finished, the managers would return to their normal functional duties. In short, project management was a temporary assignment, and once it was completed, the manager was returned to "real" duties. In the new professionalism model, project management personnel view project work as a permanent career assignment, with managers moving from project to project, but always dedicated to this career path. Increasingly companies are officially distinguishing between their functional staff and their project management professionals, resisting the urge to move people back and forth between project assignments and functional duties.

This new professionalism mentality is typified by the experiences of NASA, particularly in the wake of the 1986 *Challenger* shuttle disaster. Following the lessons learned from that terrible event, NASA determined that there was a permanent need for a dedicated and embedded professional project management group within the organization. Ed Hoffman, who serves as the director of NASA's Academy of Program and Project Leadership, makes this point: "The NASA mind-set sees the project approach as the only way to do business. We are constantly charged with meeting cost and timeline challenges that require the cooperation of a variety of disciplines. Frankly, our folks would be confused by a functional approach."³⁰

What practical steps can organizations take to begin developing a core of project management professionals? Some of the suggested strategies include the following:

- **Begin to match personalities to project work.** Research suggests that certain personality types may be more accepting of project work than others.³¹ For example, outgoing, people-oriented individuals are felt to have a better likelihood of performing well on projects than quieter, more introverted people. Likewise, people with a greater capacity for working in an unstructured and dynamic setting are more attuned to project work than those who require structure and formal work rules. As a starting point, it may be useful to conduct some basic personality assessments of potential project resources to assess their psychological receptiveness to the work.

- **Formalize the organization's commitment to project work with training programs.** There is little doubt that organizational members can recognize a firm's commitment to projects by the firm's willingness to support the training and development of personnel in the skills needed for them. For training to be effective, however, several elements are necessary. First, a corporatewide audit should be conducted to determine what critical skills are necessary for running projects. Second, the audit should determine the degree to which organizational members possess those skills. Third, where there are clear differences between the skill set needed and the skills available, project management training should first be targeted to reduce those gaps—in effect, bringing project management training into alignment with project management needs.
- **Develop a reward system for project management that differentiates it from normal functional reward schedules.** The types of rewards, whether promotions, bonuses, or other forms of recognition, available to project management personnel need to reflect the differences in the types of jobs they do compared to the work done by regular members of the organization. For example, in many project companies, performance bonuses are available for project team members but not for functional personnel. Likewise, raises or promotions in project firms are often based directly on the results of projects the team members have worked on. Thus, within the same organization, functional members may be promoted due to the amount of time they have been at one managerial level, while their project professional counterparts are promoted solely due to their accumulated performance on multiple projects.
- **Identify a distinct career path for project professionals.** One rather cynical project manager once noted to this author, "In our organization there are two career ladders. Unfortunately, only one of them has rungs!" His point was that excellent performance on projects did not earn individuals any rewards, particularly in terms of promotions. In his firm, projects were "a place where mediocre managers go to die." Contrast this example with that of Bechtel Corporation, in which project management is viewed as a critical resource, project management personnel are carefully evaluated, and superior performance is rewarded. Most particularly, Bechtel has a dual-track career path that allows successful project managers the same opportunities as other functional managers to move upward in the company.

Project professionalism recognizes that the enhanced interest in project management as a discipline has led to the need to create a resource pool of trained individuals for the organization to use. In short, we are seeing an example of supply and demand at work. As more and more organizations begin to apply project techniques in their operations, they will increase the need for sufficient, trained individuals to perform these tasks. One of the best sources of expertise in project management comes from inside these organizations, provided they take the necessary steps to nurture and foster an attitude of professionalism among their project management staff.

This chapter began with the proposition that project management is a "leader-intensive" undertaking; that is, few activities within organizations today depend more on the performance and commitment of a strong leader than do projects. Through exploration of the types of duties project managers must undertake, the characteristics of effective project leaders, the role of emotional intelligence in managing projects well, the concepts of project championing behavior, and the essence of the new project leadership, this chapter has painted a picture of the diverse and challenging duties that project managers are expected to undertake as they pursue project success. When we endeavor to develop our leadership skills to their highest potential, the challenge is significant but the payoffs are enormous.

Summary

1. **Understand how project management is a "leader-intensive" profession.** Project management is leader-intensive because the project manager, as the leader, plays a central role in the development of the project. The project manager is the conduit for information and communication flows, the principal planner and goal setter, the team developer, motivator and conflict resolver and so forth. Without the

commitment of an energetic project leader, it is very unlikely the project will be successfully completed.

2. **Distinguish between the role of a manager and the characteristics of a leader.** The manager's role in an organization is characterized as one of positional authority. Managers receive titles that give them the right to exercise control over the behavior of others they focus more on the administration and

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- organization of the project, and they seek efficiency and maintaining the status quo. Leaders focus on interpersonal relationships, developing and inspiring others with their vision of the project and the future. They embrace change, motivate others, communicate by word and deed, and focus on the effectiveness of outcomes and long-term risk taking.
- 3. Understand the concept of emotional intelligence as it relates to how project managers lead.** Five dimensions of emotional intelligence relate to project leadership: (1) self-awareness—one's understanding of strengths and weaknesses that provides perspective, (2) self-regulation—the ability to keep oneself under control by thinking before acting and suspending immediate judgment, (3) motivation—all successful leaders demonstrate first their own degree of motivation before they can inspire it in others, (4) empathy—the ability to recognize the differences in each subordinate and treat each team member in a way that is designed to gain the maximum commitment, and (5) social skill—friendliness with the purpose of moving people in a direction thought desirable.
 - 4. Recognize traits that are strongly linked to effective project leadership.** A number of leadership traits are strongly linked to effective project leadership, including (1) credibility or honesty, (2) problem-solving abilities, (3) tolerance for complexity and ambiguity, (4) flexibility in managing subordinates, (5) communication skills, (6) creativity, (7) decision-making abilities, (8) experience, (9) the ability to work well through the project team, and (10) strong influence skills.
 - 5. Identify the key roles project champions play in project success.** Champions are those individuals within an organization who identify with a new project, using all the resources at their command to support it, even in the face of organizational resistance. Champions are risk takers because they are willing to work persistently in the face of resistance or hostility to their idea from other members of the company. Research strongly supports the contention that projects with an identifiable champion are more likely to be successful than those without. Among the traditional roles that champions play are those of technical understanding, leadership, coordination and control, obtaining resources, and administration. The nontraditional nature of the champion's behavior includes engaging in activities such as being a cheerleader, project visionary, politician, risk taker, and ambassador, all in support of the project.
 - 6. Recognize the principles that typify the new project leadership.** Warren Bennis's idea of the new project leadership is strongly based on relationship management through creating and maintaining a mutual commitment with each member of the project team. The four principles of the new project management include (1) understanding and practicing the power of appreciation regarding each member of the project team, (2) continually reminding people of what is important through keeping focused on the "big picture," (3) generating and sustaining trust with each member of the project team, and (4) recognizing that the leader and the led are natural allies, not opponents.
 - 7. Understand the development of project management professionalism in the discipline.** As project management has become increasingly popular, its success has led to the development of a core of professional project managers within many organizations. Recognizing the law of supply and demand, we see that as the demand for project management expertise continues to grow, the supply must keep pace. Professionalism recognizes the "institutionalization" of projects and project management within organizations, both public and private. The proliferation of professional societies supporting project management is another indicator of the interest in the discipline.

Key Terms

Champion (p. 128)	Entrepreneur (p. 128)	Leadership (p. 118)	Professionalism (p. 134)
Creative originator (p. 128)	Godfather or sponsor (p. 129)	Motivation (p. 120)	Self-regulation (p. 124)
Empathy (p. 124)			

Discussion Questions

- 4.1 The chapter stressed the idea that project management is a "leader-intensive" undertaking. Discuss in what sense this statement is true.
- 4.2 How do the duties of project managers reinforce the role of leadership?

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- 4.3 What are some key differences between leaders and managers?
- 4.4 Discuss the concept of emotional intelligence as it relates to the duties of project managers. Why are the five elements of emotional intelligence so critical to successful project management?
- 4.5 Consider the studies on trait theories in leadership. Of the characteristics that emerge as critical to effective leadership, which seem most critical for project managers? Why?
- 4.6 Consider the profile examples on project leaders Sir John Armitt and Dr. Sreedharan from the chapter. If you were to

summarize the leadership keys to their success in running projects, what actions or characteristics would you identify as being critical? Why? What are the implications for you when you are given responsibility to run your own projects?

- 4.7 Why are project champions said to be better equipped to handle the “nontraditional” aspects of leadership?
- 4.8 Consider the discussion of the “new project leadership.” If you were asked to formulate a principle that could be applied to project leadership, what would it be? Justify your answer.

CASE STUDY 4.1

In Search of Effective Project Managers

Pureswing Golf, Inc., manufactures and sells a full line of golf equipment, including clubs, golf balls, leisure-wear, and ancillary equipment (bags, rain gear, towels, etc.). The company competes in a highly competitive and fast-paced industry against better-known competitors, such as Nike, Taylor Made, Titleist, PING, Calloway, and Cleveland. Among the keys to success in this industry are the continuous introduction of new club models, innovative engineering and design, and speed to market. As a smaller company trying to stay abreast of stronger competitors, Pureswing places great emphasis on the project management process in order to remain profitable. At any time, the company will have more than 35 project teams developing new ideas across the entire product range.

Pureswing prefers to find promising engineers from within the organization and promote them to project manager. It feels that these individuals, having learned the company’s philosophy of competitive success, are best equipped to run new product introduction projects. For years, Pureswing relied on volunteers to move into project management, but lately it has realized that this ad hoc method for finding and

encouraging project managers is not sufficient. The failure rate for these project manager volunteers is over 40%, too high for a company of Pureswing’s size. With such steady turnover among the volunteers, successful managers have to pick up the slack—they often manage five or six projects simultaneously. Top management, worried about burnout among these high-performing project managers, has decided that the firm must develop a coordinated program for finding new project managers, including creating a career path in project management within the organization.

Questions

1. Imagine you are a human resources professional at Pureswing who has been assigned to develop a program for recruiting new project managers. Design a job description for the position.
2. What qualities and personal characteristics support a higher likelihood of success as a project manager?
3. What qualities and personal characteristics would make it difficult to be a successful project manager?

CASE STUDY 4.2

Finding the Emotional Intelligence to Be a Real Leader

Recently, Kathy Smith, a project manager for a large industrial construction organization, was assigned to oversee a multimillion-dollar chemical plant construction project in Southeast Asia. Kathy had earned this assignment after completing a number of smaller construction assignments in North America over the past three years. This was her first overseas assignment and she was eager to make a good impression, particularly given the size and scope of the project. Successfully

completing this project would increase her visibility within the organization dramatically and earmark her as a candidate for upper management. Kathy had good project management skills; in particular, she was organized and highly self-motivated. Team members at her last two project assignments used to joke that just trying to keep up with her was a full-time job.

Kathy wasted no time settling in to oversee the development of the chemical plant. Operating under

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her normal work approach, Kathy routinely required her staff and the senior members of the project team to work long hours, ignoring weekend breaks if important milestones were coming up, and generally adopting a round-the-clock work approach for the project. Unfortunately, in expecting her team, made up of local residents, to change their work habits to accommodate her expectations, Kathy completely misread the individuals on her team. They bitterly resented her overbearing style, unwillingness to consult them on key questions, and aloof nature. Rather than directly confront her, however, team members began a campaign of passive resistance to her leadership. They would purposely drag their feet on important assignments or cite insurmountable problems when none, in fact, existed. Kathy's standard response was to push herself and her project team harder, barraging subordinates with increasingly urgent communications demanding

faster performance. To her bewilderment, nothing seemed to work.

The project quickly became bogged down due to poor team performance and ended up costing the project organization large penalties for late delivery. Although Kathy had many traits that worked in her favor, she was seriously lacking in the ability to recognize the feelings and expectations of others and take them into consideration.

Questions

1. Discuss how Kathy lacked sufficient emotional intelligence to be effective in her new project manager assignment.
2. Of the various dimensions of emotional intelligence, which dimension(s) did she appear to lack most? What evidence can you cite to support this contention?

CASE STUDY 4.3

Problems with John

John James has worked at one of the world's largest aerospace firms for more than 15 years. He was hired into the division during the "Clinton years" when many people were being brought onto the payroll. John had not completed his engineering degree, so he was hired as a drafter. Most of the other people in his department who were hired at the time had completed their degrees and therefore began careers as associate engineers. Over the years, John has progressed through the ranks to the classification of engineer. Many of the employees hired at the same time as John have advanced more rapidly because the corporation recognized their engineering degrees as prerequisites for advancement. Years of service can be substituted, but a substantial number of years is required to offset the lack of a degree.

John began exhibiting signs of dissatisfaction with the corporation in general several years ago. He would openly vent his feelings against nearly everything the corporation was doing or trying to do. However, he did not complain about his specific situation. The complaining became progressively worse. John started to exhibit mood swings. He would be extremely productive at times (though still complaining) and then swing into periods of near zero productivity. During these times, John would openly surf the Internet for supplies for a new home repair project or for the most recent Dilbert comics. His fellow employees were hesitant to point out

to management when these episodes occurred. Most of the team members had been working together for the entire 15 years and had become close friends. This is why these nonproductive episodes of John's were such a problem; no one on the team felt comfortable pointing the problem out to higher management. As time progressed and John's friends evolved into his managers, while John remained at lower salary grades, John's mood swings grew more dramatic and lasted longer.

During the most recent performance appraisal review process, John's manager (a friend of his) included a paragraph concerning his "lack of concentration at times." This was included because of numerous comments made by John's peers. The issue could no longer be swept under the rug. John became irate at the review feedback and refused to acknowledge receipt of his performance appraisal. His attitude toward his teammates became extremely negative. He demanded to know who had spoken negatively about him, and his work output diminished to virtually nothing.

Analysis of the Problem

Clearly John has not been happy. To understand why, the history of his employment at this company needs to be looked at in greater detail. The group of coworkers that started together 15 years earlier all had similar backgrounds and capabilities. A group of eight people

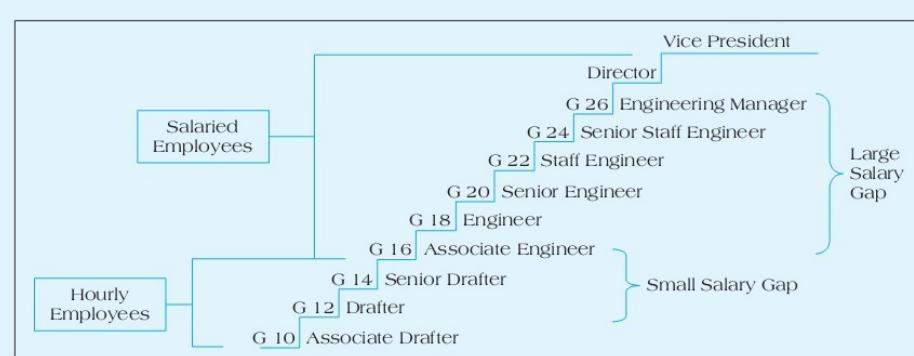


FIGURE 4.5 Salary Grade Classifications at This Corporation

were all about 22 years old and had just left college; John was the only exception to this pattern, as he still needed two years of schooling to finish his engineering degree. All were single and making good money at their jobs. The difference in salary levels between an associate engineer and a draftsman was quite small. Figure 4.5 shows the salary grade classifications at this corporation.

This group played softball together every Wednesday, fished together on the weekends, and hunted elk for a week every winter. Lifelong bonds and friendships were formed. One by one, the group started to get married and begin families. They even took turns standing up for each other at the weddings. The wives and the children all became great friends, and the fishing trips were replaced with family backyard barbecues.

Meanwhile, things at work were going great. All of these friends and coworkers had very strong work ethics and above-average abilities. They all liked their work and did not mind working extra hours. This combination of effort and ability meant rewards and advancement for those involved. However, since John had not yet completed his degree as he had planned, his promotions were more difficult to achieve and did not occur as rapidly as those of his friends. The differences in salary and responsibility started to expand at a rapid rate. John started to become less satisfied.

This large corporation was structured as a functional organization. All mechanical engineers reported to a functional department manager. This manager was aware of the situation and convinced John to go back for his degree during the evenings. Although John had good intentions, he never stayed with it long enough to complete his degree. As John's friends advanced more quickly through the corporation, their cars and houses also became bigger and better. John's wife pressured him to keep up with the others, and they also bought a bigger house. This move meant that John was living above his means and his financial security was threatened.

Until this point, John had justified in his mind that the corporation's policies and his functional manager were the source of all of his problems. John would openly vent his anger about this manager. Then a drastic change took place in the corporation. The corporation switched over to a project team environment and eliminated the functional management. This meant that John was now reporting directly to his friends.

Even though John now worked for his friends, company policy was still restrictive and the promotions did not come as fast as he hoped. The team leader gave John frequent cash spot awards and recognition in an attempt to motivate him. John's ego would be soothed for a short time, but this did not address the real problem. John wanted money, power, and respect, and he was not satisfied because those around him had more. Although he was good at what he did, he was not great at it. He did not appear to have the innate capability to develop into a leader through expert knowledge or personality traits. Additionally, due to the lack of an engineering degree, he could not achieve power through time in grade. By now, John's attitude had deteriorated to the point where it was disruptive to the team and something had to be done. The team leader had to help John, but he also had to look after the health of the team.

This detailed history is relevant because it helps to explain how John's attitude slowly deteriorated over a period of time. At the start of his career, John was able to feel on a par with his peers. When everyone was young and basically equal, he knew that he had the respect of his friends and coworkers. This allowed John to enjoy a sense of self-esteem. As time passed and he gave up in his attempt at the college degree, he lost some of his self-esteem. As the gap grew between his friends' positions in the company and his position in the company, he perceived that he lost the esteem of others. Finally, when he became overextended with the larger home, even his basic security was threatened. It is difficult to maintain a

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level of satisfaction in this situation. The problem was now distracting the team and starting to diminish their efforts and results. Because of the friendships, undue pressure was being placed on the team as they tried to protect John from the consequences of his actions.

The team leader had to try to resolve this problem. The challenge was significant: The leader had to attempt to satisfy the individual's needs, the group's needs, and the task needs. When John's individual needs could not be met, the group atmosphere and task completion suffered. It was time for the team leader to act decisively and approach upper management with a solution to the problem.

Possible Courses of Action

The team leader put a lot of thought into his options. Because of the friendships and personal connections, he knew that he could not make this decision lightly. He decided to talk individually to the team members who were John's close friends and then determine the best solution to present to upper management.

After talking with the team members, the team leader decided on the following list of potential options:

1. Do nothing.
2. Bypass company policy and promote John.
3. Talk John into going back to college.
4. Relocate John to a different project team.
5. Terminate John's employment.

The option to do nothing would be the easiest way out for the team leader, but this would not solve any problems. This decision would be the equivalent of burying one's head in the sand and hoping the problem would go away by itself. Surprisingly, this was a common suggestion from the team members. There appeared to be a hope that the problem could be overlooked, as it had been in the past, and John would just accept the situation. With this option, the only person who would have to compromise was John.

The second option of bypassing company policy and promoting John to a higher level would be a very difficult sell to management. John was recently promoted to a salary grade 18 (his friends were now 24s and 26s). This promotion was achieved through the concerted efforts of his friends and the team leader. The chances of convincing management to approve another promotion so quickly were extremely low. Furthermore, if the team leader was successful at convincing management to promote John, what would the long-term benefits be? John would still not be at the same level as his friends and might not be satisfied for long. Chances were good that this would be only a temporary fix to the problem.

After the shine wore off the promotion, John would again believe that his efforts exceeded his rewards. It would be nice to believe that this solution would eliminate the problem, but history seemed to indicate otherwise.

The third option of trying to talk John into going back to college and finishing his engineering degree would be the best solution to the problem, but probably the least likely to occur. If John could complete his degree, there would be no company policies that could obstruct his path. He would then be competing on an even playing field. This would allow him to justifiably receive his advancement and recapture his self-esteem. If he did not receive the rewards that he felt he deserved, he would then have to look at his performance and improve on his weaknesses, not just fall back on the same old excuse. This solution would appear to put John back on the path to job satisfaction, but the problem with it was that it had been tried unsuccessfully several times before. Why would it be different this time? Should the corporation keep trying this approach knowing that failure would again lead to dissatisfaction and produce a severe negative effect on the team? Although this third solution could produce the happy ending that everyone wants to see in a movie, it did not have a very high probability of success.

The fourth option of relocating John to a different team would be an attempt to break the ties of competition that John felt with his friends and teammates. If this option were followed, John could start with a clean slate with a completely different team, and he would be allowed to save face with his friends. He could tell them of his many accomplishments and the great job that he is doing, while complaining that his "new" boss is holding him back. Although this could be considered "smoke and mirrors," it might allow John the opportunity to look at himself in a new light. If he performed at his capabilities, he should be able to achieve the esteem of others and eventually his self-esteem. The team would consider this a victory because it would allow everyone to maintain the social relationship while washing their hands of the professional problems. This option offered the opportunity to make the situation impersonal. It should be clear, however, that this solution would do nothing to resolve the true problem. Although it would allow John to focus his dissatisfaction on someone other than his friends and give him a fresh start to impress his new coworkers, who is to say that the problem would not simply resurface?

The fifth option, termination of employment, would be distasteful to all involved. Nothing to this point had indicated that John would deserve an action this severe. Also, since this option also would sever the social relationships for all involved and cause guilt for all of the remaining team members, resulting in team output deteriorating even further, it would be exercised

only if other options failed and the situation deteriorated to an unsafe condition for those involved.

Questions

1. As the team leader, you have weighed the pros and cons of the five options and prepared a presentation to management on how to address this problem. What do you suggest?

2. Consider each of the options, and develop an argument to defend your position for each option.
3. What specific leadership behaviors mentioned in this chapter are most relevant to addressing and resolving the problems with John?

Internet Exercises

- 4.1 Identify an individual you would call a business leader. Search the Web for information on this individual. What pieces of information cause you to consider this individual a leader?
- 4.2 Go to the Web site www.debian.org-devel/leader and evaluate the role of the project leader in the Debian Project. What is it about the duties and background of the project leader that lets us view him as this project's leader?
- 4.3 Knut Yrvin functions as the team leader for an initiative to replace proprietary operating systems with Linux-based technology in schools in Norway (the project is named "Skolelinux"). Read his interview at <http://lwn.net/Articles/47510/>. What clues do you find in this interview regarding his view of the job of project leader and how he leads projects?
- 4.4 Project champions can dramatically improve the chances of project success, but they can also have some negative effects. For example, projects championed by a well-known organizational member are very difficult to kill, even when they are failing badly. Read the article on blind faith posted at www.computerworld.com/s/article/78274/Blind_Faith?taxonomyId=073. What does the article suggest are some of the pitfalls in excessive championing by highly placed members of an organization?

PMP CERTIFICATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. The project manager spends a great deal of her time communicating with project stakeholders. Which of the following represent an example of a stakeholder group for her project?
 - a. Top management
 - b. Customers
 - c. Project team members
 - d. Functional group heads
 - e. All are project stakeholders
2. Effective leadership involves all of the following, except:
 - a. Managing oneself through personal time management, stress management, and other activities
 - b. Managing team members through motivation, delegation, supervision, and team building
 - c. Maintaining tight control of all project resources and providing information to team members only as needed
 - d. Employing and utilizing project champions where they can benefit the project

3. A project manager is meeting with his team for the first time and wants to create the right environment in which relationships develop positively. Which of the following guidelines should he consider employing to create an effective partnership with his team?
 - a. The right to say no
 - b. Joint accountability
 - c. Exchange of purpose
 - d. Absolute honesty
 - e. All are necessary to create a partnership
4. Joan is very motivated to create a positive project experience for all her team members and is reflecting on some of the approaches she can take to employ leadership, as opposed to simply managing the process. Which of the following is an example of a leadership practice she can use?
 - a. Focus on plans and budgets
 - b. Seek to maintain the status quo and promote order
 - c. Energize people to overcome obstacles and show personal initiative
 - d. Maintain a short-term time frame and avoid unnecessary risks
5. Frank has been learning about the effect of emotional intelligence on his ability to lead his project effectively. Which of the following is *not* an example of the kind of emotional intelligence that can help him perform better?
 - a. Self-awareness and self-regulation
 - b. Motivation
 - c. Social skills
 - d. Results orientation (work to get the job done)

Answers: 1. e—Remember that stakeholders are defined as any group, either internal or external, that can affect the performance of the project; 2. c—Leadership requires allowing workers to have flexibility, providing them with all relevant information, and communicating project status and other pertinent information; 3. e—All of the above are necessary characteristics in promoting partnership between the project manager and the team; 4. c—Energizing people to overcome obstacles is a critical component of leadership, as opposed to a philosophy of management; 5. d—Although a results orientation can be a useful element in a project leader's skill set, it is not an example of emotional intelligence, which is often manifested through relationship building with others.