

Management Brief – So we know we need project managers....



PM CONSULTING

We have all been enthralled by Channel 4's Grand Designs and the constant cry from the host, Kevin McCloud, "if only they had appointed a professional project manager". As a result we are now subliminally aware that for projects to deliver what we wanted, when we want them, and for us to have a chance of them meeting the budget, we need to use a project manager.

It is common today, for a key team member to be appointed as manager for a business critical project. This individual normally has excellent "technical" knowledge of the project. The \$60m question is, do they have the systems, competence and available time, to project manage professionally?

The statistics suggest probably not. Most project management surveys in the last decade indicate that 80% or more of projects fail to successfully meet to their objectives – just think of the scale of disappointed customers, advantaged competitors, and lost profits that result.

Those companies who have recognised the potential for savings have employed dedicated Project Managers, either interim or on the payroll, with mixed success. *Recruitment* is the first challenge – what do you look for? Many business leaders have heard of qualifications such as APM, PRINCE, PMI, and the like, but are not sure what they mean. Nor do they understand the relevance and appropriateness for their business. *Integration* into the business is the next problem – are there suitable project management processes and tools/templates in existence in the business to be used, or is the Project Manager (PM) left to their own devices. The final big challenge is *performance*. Is the PM delivering as well as they could and should? There is a clear need for a framework of measurement and improvement. This need is often overlooked.

So, back to Grand Designs. 2nd time around, most people would "without question" bring in a professional project manager.

If any of the above is a little too familiar for comfort, then help is available. John Williams is Project Director at ProjExc, an independent project consultancy based on the Birmingham - Worcestershire border. He has over a decade of experience helping small and large companies achieve Project Excellence. ProjExc offers qualifying organisations free, no obligation, Project Management Audits. Contact John by telephone (0121 445 6372) or by email (john@projexc.com) for further details.

