



# Preface

*Whether you think you can or think you can't: either way you are right.*  
—Henry Ford

I started my career in project management many years ago, when a wise woman I worked for said she had heard about a new discipline called project management and thought I should go to a class and check it out. I signed up for the class, called “Government Project Management.” On the first day, I walked into a room of 19 men in military uniform. I was the only woman and the only person from the private sector. When I was finished with the class, my organization decided that I was now a project manager and gave me a very complex project to run that included changing more than 500 software modules from all parts of the organization. I delivered the project three months late and well over budget. My career continued on, with me learning from the school of hard knocks until 1995.

In 1995, I attained my Project Management Professional designation from the Project Management Institute, and also received a Master’s Certificate in Program Management from Denver University. These two accomplishments changed my career and my outlook on project management. Since I’ve received those two designations, I have never missed a triple constraint on a project for which I was the project manager. Now, I can’t say that I didn’t negotiate a new date, a new MOP, or a new budget since then. But my client or sponsor willingly agreed to the change based on what was best for the business and the project.

## What Is This Book About?

This book contains my knowledge gained over the years, as well as the knowledge of my friends who are great project managers. It covers the basics of good project management built on the good practices in *The Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)*. It also covers tried-and-true techniques for making projects work—and work well.

The book is organized by chapters that cover specific topics of project management. For example, Chapter 6 is all about project quality. But each chapter also has five sections for you to use. The first several parts of every chapter explore the mechanics of project management specific to the topic at hand. You will encounter processes, tools, and techniques that you can use to successfully deal with that topic on your projects.

The next section in each chapter deals with the human resources on your project. How do you get your project team to work with you to create the objectives of the project? How do you build an atmosphere of success in which people want to work?

Following the human resources section is a section that covers project politics. Throughout my career, I have worked very hard to deliver good projects. But I always had the feeling of being a salmon trying to swim upstream. It was never easy because of the politics in my organizations. In the politics section, you'll investigate techniques for establishing a good offense for project politics, as well as learn what to do when a good offense is not enough.

Each chapter has a case study section. This case study introduces our project manager hero, Chris Williams. You'll watch as Chris uses the tools and techniques introduced in the chapter, as well as those you learned about in previous chapters.

Finally, each chapter includes a set of review questions that cover the most important tools and techniques covered in that chapter. You'll find the answers to the review questions in the Appendix.

A unique feature of this book is the collaboration between this book and *Microsoft Project for Mere Mortals*, by Patti Jansen. These books were developed in conjunction with each other. Based on that collaboration, when you read about a topic described in this book, you can go to Patti's book and see how you would handle the same topic in MS Project. With the two books, you'll have everything you need to manage your next project using sound tools and techniques and MS Project.

## **Who Should Read This Book?**

The original intent of this book was to be a beginning project management book. Through the development, though, I've come to realize that facets of it apply to many different levels of experienced project managers. My reviewers

have confirmed that they learned about new tools and techniques, even though they have been project managers for many years. Here's a synopsis of what is available for each of you.

### **New Project Managers**

As a new project manager, you will find the basics of your craft covered in the pages of this book. As you get deeper into your newly chosen profession, you'll find that some projects need more rigor than others. I have noted throughout this book where you should apply the different processes described. You'll find techniques that you can use now and some that you will probably decide to use later in your career, as you get better at your craft.

### **Intermediate Experienced Project Managers**

You've managed a few projects, and things are getting better with each one. You are looking for a way to make a quantum leap to completely successful project management. This is the book for you. Here you have the opportunity to review what you do against the processes of this book. You can refine your own processes based on what you find here. Besides, with the time it takes to manage a successful project, you probably haven't had the time to spend on the politics that are surrounding you. Here's your opportunity to tackle some of those tough subjects in one book.

### **Experienced Professionals**

As an experienced project management professional, you have honed your craft and grown to be a really good project manager. However, you might find a few areas of your profession that need a little work. You'll find a myriad of sound techniques in this book to warrant your time. Also, the book has been organized to enable you to find exactly the topic you are looking for, with specific ideas on how to handle that situation.

### **How This Book Is Organized**

The book is structured around project management topics. I start with a chapter defining some of the concepts of project management. But from the next chapter on, the book covers the topics in the order of planning activities: executing, monitoring, controlling, and closing. It looks as if the structure is

sequential and that you must read the book start to finish. However, you can zone in on a specific topic and read about, for example, how to handle project risks from a planning perspective. Here's what each chapter covers:

- **Chapter 1: "Setting the Project Management Context"**  
This chapter establishes the structure of project management. I cover some of the fundamental definitions you should know. In the "Teaming" section, I cover the fundamental skills you should possess to effectively manage your team. And in "Politics," you explore the overarching political environment in which a project manager works.
- **Chapter 2: "You've Been Assigned a Project!"**  
This chapter is all about starting a project successfully. You'll explore project initiation and the preliminary documentation that must be produced at the start of the project. A new concept, Measures of Performance, is introduced here. MOPs are a terrific way to get clear about the results of the project. In "Teaming," you investigate how to get the best people assigned to your project. "Politics" covers planning for the politics that lie ahead.
- **Chapter 3: "How Big Is This Project?"**  
You start this chapter by defining the scope of the project. Basically, that means asking this multipart question: How do you progressively elaborate the MOP to create the scope, the work breakdown structure, and the order of magnitude estimates for the project? A major element of the scope statement is product requirements, which I also cover here. The "Teaming" section is concerned with successfully getting the key players engaged in the work of the project. It also covers how to get people to work for you effectively when they don't report to you on paper. In the "Politics" section, you'll read about building alliances, who to target for alliances, and how to successfully create confidence in your project.
- **Chapter 4: "Laying Out the Work"**  
This chapter continues the work of progressively elaborating the work breakdown structure. In it, you use the work packages to create activities or tasks. Then completion criteria are applied before the WBS is transformed into a network diagram.  
  
One of the tools and techniques used in the "Teaming" section is called team norms. I expand on this topic in the "Politics" section and talk about the rules of engagement when working with executives.

- Chapter 5: “The Art of Estimating”

This chapter provides everything you need to successfully create estimates. It explores the different types of estimates as well as the different estimating techniques.

In the “Teaming” section, I spend some time looking at a technique you can use to build the team while you get estimates created. The “Politics” section covers how to deal with a boss who creates estimates for you.

- Chapter 6: “Quality—How Good Does It Have to Be?”

Most project management references don’t spend a lot of time on project quality. This book devotes an entire chapter to the subject. The chapter covers quality from the moment you plan quality into your project, all the way through the concept of the cost of quality.

In the “Teaming” section, you’ll concentrate on the Storming phase of project team development. In the “Politics” section, you’ll learn how to use the same quality concepts to enhance your interactions with your executive team.

- Chapter 7: “Communications—What Do You Think About My Project?”

It is time in this chapter to move into one of the most important planning elements that must be completed for your project: planning your communication. I introduce a communication template that spells out the “who, what, when, where, and why” of communication.

After you have stepped through the entire template, you will see how you can effectively apply communication to your project team. I also cover some special tactics that you can use when your executive sponsor has lost interest in the project.

- Chapter 8: “Risk—What Should You Worry About?”

In this chapter, I spend some time laying out a methodology that is easy to use yet effective when dealing with risk. You can easily modify this strategy, depending on the size of your project and the rigor you want to apply.

In the “Teaming” section, I talk about the project pessimist and how this person can really help you effectively plan the risks of your project. In the “Politics” section, the discussion revolves around how to let your executives know about project risks before they happen.

- Chapter 9: “Creating the Schedule”

This chapter introduces tools and techniques that help you pull together your schedule and meet the project end date that the project sponsor requested.

The “Teaming” section explores how to get commitment on project work and move through the stages of team development by doing project scheduling work together. In the “Politics” section, I talk about setting the stage for success or running into possible problems.

- Chapter 10: “Budgeting—How Much?”

I explore the last planning activity in this chapter, budgeting. I cover building the budget, including all the components that make up the budget, through reconciling the amount you’ve been given with what you actually need.

In the “Teaming” section, I cover rewards and recognition. I explore a technique that doesn’t cost much but that works incredibly well to motivate the team. In “Politics,” I discuss the importance of executive education, as well as how to sell budgeting best practices to your executives.

- Chapter 11: “The Rhythm of Project Execution”

You will be amazed in this chapter by the activities that are required for you to complete the execution of your project. I explore each thoroughly, along with what it takes to build a rhythm.

The “Teaming” section covers the importance of training the project team; the “Politics” section investigates how to deal with some executive personality types that you might have seen in your career.

- Chapter 12: “Keeping the Project on Track”

I explore some important topics in this chapter: variance and the earned value technique. When you understand these concepts, you can explore how to determine the impact of the variances and take corrective action.

The “Teaming” section covers the behaviors that you want to find, reward, and encourage in your team members. The “Politics” section addresses rumor control and your strategy for handling rumors.

- Chapter 13: “Controlling Changes”

Chapter 13 covers the concept of change control. I explore a change-control process step by step so you will know how to construct your own effective process. You’ll find that change requests are disruptive to the project team. This chapter explores tools and techniques in the “Teaming” section to combat those disruptions. In the “Politics” section, I discuss how to work with a Change Control Board (CCB) to get the right decisions needed for your project.

- Chapter 14: “Success!—Closing the Project”

This chapter covers the activities that you perform just before the end of your project. You’ll spend time planning the end of the project, conducting a readiness review, verifying your deliverables, and, finally, turning over the project to operations. I also cover the last set of activities that you perform to close the project, archiving the project documentation and gathering lessons learned.

In the “Teaming” section, I cover a situation that I call the 95 percent phenomenon. I give you some practical ways of getting the team motivated to complete the project. In the “Politics” section, I discuss how to blow your own horn—tactfully and gracefully.

The book finishes with an appendix, “Answers to the Review Questions,” a glossary, and a bibliography. The appendix contains the answers to the review questions at the end of each chapter.

## About the Opening Quote

I started this preface with a quote from Henry Ford. In it, he says that success is all about attitude. Project management is a discipline that you can learn and execute well. But the basis of your success is really all about your attitude. If you hold to the vision “think you can,” you will. You will find solutions. You will find mentors. You will find reference books that guide you through the ins and outs of project management. My hope is that this book becomes part of your success.