



SPRING/SUMMER 2009

## Global CEO Survey – Key Findings

**Every two years IBM talks to more than 1,000 CEOs and public leaders worldwide.**

**Pace of change is accelerating and many companies are struggling to keep up.** CEOs rate their ability to manage change 22% lower than their expected need for it.

**CEOs view more demanding customers not as a threat, but as an opportunity to differentiate.** CEOs are investing to attract and retain increasingly prosperous, informed and socially aware customers.

**Most CEOs are adapting their business models** – more than 40% are changing their enterprise models to be more collaborative.

*A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the IBM website.*

To arrange a free no-obligation discussion about how we can help your business, please contact us.

Welcome to the spring edition of our newsletter. Since the last edition in Autumn 2008 the economic downturn has begun to have an impact on organisations in terms of profit warnings and redundancies. At Oxford Projects, we have experienced two previous recessions and our recipe for survival is to encourage our clients to ensure that the project portfolio only contains 'business critical' issues and to maintain the people development initiatives. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills has been promoting this message recently with full page adverts in the national newspapers. In this edition we are pleased to introduce our **new competency assessment tool** for project managers, and provide some practical guidance on how to take over an existing project. We hope that you will find the newsletter both interesting and informative.

*Ron Ford Steve Kendall*

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## RECENT ASSIGNMENTS

### How good are your project managers?

This is a question that has been taxing the minds of directors for many years, and now there is an answer! We have designed a **competency assessment** tool based on the International Association for Project Management (IPMA) competency framework, which assesses

- technical
- contextual
- behavioural competencies

The questionnaire can be tailored to fit in-house job descriptions and if it is combined with de-briefing interviews can provide project managers with a comprehensive development plan. For more information please contact [ron.ford@oxfordprojects.co.uk](mailto:ron.ford@oxfordprojects.co.uk)

### The fight against cancer

**Elekta** is a human care company pioneering significant innovations and clinical solutions for treating cancer and brain disorders and have been a client of ours since 1996.

A successful **lean initiative** has been implemented at Elekta and project management training was a key element of the new approach. Oxford Projects designed and delivered a tailor-made training course that reflected Elekta's new processes and practices.

As a result they were able to help people adjust to the new ways of working, express and overcome their reservations and take a positive attitude to working in the new environment. Course participants practised and enhanced their skills, particularly in managing project tasks and project teams under pressure.



**We will be running our highly successful public courses again in 2009 in conjunction with the CIPD**

**APM Introductory Certificate** 11-12 Jun, 7-8 Sept, 14-15 Sept, 22-23 Oct, 10-11 Dec

**Leading a Project Team** 13-14 Oct

**For full details call 01865 201815 or visit [www.oxfordprojects.co.uk](http://www.oxfordprojects.co.uk)**



# STEVE'S CHECKLIST FOR TAKING OVER AN EXISTING PROJECT

*This is a big opportunity for your reputation for your career for your organisation*



*This is a big risk for your reputation for your career for your organisation*

**Common Anxieties** – *I don't want to be seen as less effective than my predecessor. How can I get the team's respect quickly? How can I not only do a good job, but be seen to be an effective project manager? How can I maintain the momentum of the project's progress while I get up to speed?*

**Let me encourage you to do the right thing: BE BOLD, CONFIDENT and PROFESSIONAL** – you only get one chance. It is a chance to demonstrate leadership. To be a project leader not just a co-ordinator. Take the reins firmly and confidently. But how? Here are some suggestions:

**Firstly – revalidate the Business Case.** What are the reasons for doing this project? Return on investment? Quality Improvement? New strategy? What are the key deliverables? Update the Business Case if necessary.

**Secondly, make sure you know who all the stakeholders are, and what their needs are.** Ask them exactly how they will judge whether the project is successful. And make sure you establish a good relationship with the project sponsor.

**Thirdly, ensure you have a realistic plan in place.** The need to 'keep everything running to schedule' sometimes can override more important things – like re-assessing whether that schedule is realistic. The longer you leave it, the more difficult (and potentially embarrassing) it will be to revise the schedule, because the project has momentum. You can only be the 'honest broker' for a short while. Very soon it will be seen as 'your project'. So, involve the team – ask them. Do they believe the plan is achievable?

Many organisations have honesty and integrity as part of their values. If you have an honest, realistic project plan it will help you to make the right decisions (e.g. to ask for more resources; to negotiate scope changes; to manage expectations about timescales; and so on) and to bring the project to a successful conclusion.

## Steve's summary:

***Is the Business Case up-to-date and valid? • Who are the stakeholders? • What are their needs? Does the team believe the schedule is achievable? • What are the main risks? • What actions need to be taken to reduce those risks?***

[steve.kendall@oxfordprojects.co.uk](mailto:steve.kendall@oxfordprojects.co.uk) May 2009



## FEATURED CONSULTANTS

### Andrew Dellar

Andrew has 20 years of corporate and consulting experience that spans a range of sectors and two continents. There are two themes to his current work that draw on his wealth of experience in the commercial world. Andrew works closely with organisations to understand the commercial and operating drivers, in order to identify and develop tools that enable those who lead and manage others to become more effective.



Secondly he is skilled at devising relevant HR infrastructure for organisations that do not have 'in-house' HR expertise; this includes developing policy frameworks and suitable approaches to appraisal and recruitment activity.

## Development Programme at e2v

**We have recently started working with e2v whose specialist areas include:**

- medical and science
- aerospace and defence
- commercial and industrial markets

Claire Rooks, People Development Manager, said: "We're working with Oxford Projects – a supplier specialising in working with companies to improve project management capabilities. It's a programme which all UK project managers will go through initially. In the longer term we will be looking to cover the rest of the world." The three-day development programme supports learning through simulations, exercises and team events. It focuses on both the behavioural and technical sides of project management.

Claire added: "Project management is not just about charts and plans; it's about developing relationships with customers and other people in our organisation to make sure projects run well. If a project runs smoothly, on time, and all the components fit, we're going to satisfy customers' needs and their expectations."

**“An excellent, comprehensive course, covering a wide range of project management tools and techniques.”**

Ian Davies,  
Project Manager  
e2v

For information on how we can help you call **01865 201815** or visit [www.oxfordprojects.co.uk](http://www.oxfordprojects.co.uk)

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