

The integration of project management and organizational change management is now a necessity



Henry A. Hornstein, *International Journal of Project Management*, 33 (2015)p. 291–298

KEYWORDS

- Organisational change management
- Organisational change

Article highlight:

This paper advocates that organisational change management should be integrated into project management processes. The author advises that formal project management certification should include education on organisation change management.

What does the paper cover?

This is a literature review. The analysis of the literature supports the suggestion that project managers should be fully conversant with organisational change management.

Research findings:

Analysis of the literature covers three areas:

1. Project work and project management:

The term project management was first used in 1953 in the US defence-aerospace sector. A few years later, the term 'project manager' was coined and the role was generally defined as a middle management function. In the late 1960s and 1970s, academics started to research organisational integration and differentiation, but this integration role didn't (and often still doesn't) focus on the need to consider social/psychological issues. The role was defined as a planner, organiser, leader and controller; this traditional view is still largely the case today. Various project management associations formed in the US and Europe from the late 1960s, but their focus was mainly on the challenges of achieving project goals and rarely on the human involvement in the successful completion of the project.

2. Project Management Bodies of Knowledge (PM BoKs):

The PM BoKs give a certification of competence of the profession of project management. The US Project Management Institute (PMI) BoK, first developed in 1983, now has 5 process groups with 9 knowledge areas. The UK's Association for Project Management (APM) BoK, first developed in 1991, is broader and most notably includes Agile Project Management and a more direct acknowledgment of social system concerns. In 1998, the International Project Management Association (IPMA) published its Competence Baseline and this is based closely on the APM BoK.

3. Project management process:

■ **Success and failure:** A lot of project management research attempts to identify factors that determine project success, but these studies tend to be biased towards technical issues rather than human factors. Research increasingly shows that project management processes need to consider how to engage employees from the beginning, to encourage them to be involved in decision-making, and make positive changes in the workplace. These issues are usually handled by organizational change managers, yet many project teams do not include such resource. Organisations often assume that project managers, program managers or business analysts will handle this role, but it is unlikely that these people have the time or sufficient experience to carry out effective organisational change management.

■ **Project management and change management:** The management of organisational change has relatively little representation in project management literature. Also, project and program management standards do not specifically address the skills needed to manage organisational and behavioural change (even though communication and stakeholder management are covered). Organisational Development is adopted globally as the main approach to organisational change, and change management is sometimes defined as a subset of this: 'the process of continually renewing an organisation's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers.'

Many of the cited studies identify that change management is integral to project management, and high project-user involvement correlates with high project success. That is, the leadership of organisational change is important in project success and project managers need to become more familiar with and use the tools associated with change management processes.

Conclusions:

The reviewed literature leads to the following conclusions:

- change is an inevitable outcome of project implementation, and how this change is managed impacts on project success. Even though project management and change management use different terminologies and methodologies, they are complementary and mutually supportive disciplines, which need to be integrated to achieve the best project outcomes
- the literature on project success factors are relatively quiet about the role of organisational change
- competition between change manager and project/program managers is an obstacle to success; collaboration will increase the likelihood of timely and effective project implementation
- the project management bodies are light on the emphasis of organisational change, and it would be useful for them to correct this omission by integrating organisational change into their BoK process groups and/or knowledge areas
- project management bodies should advocate for the inclusion of organisational change management resources on project teams
- junior and entry-level project practitioners should undertake training, education and development that introduces and guides them in the use of change implementation practices
- project-management-certifying agencies should include content relevant to organisational change management in their qualification requirements.

Significance of the research:

For project managers: Current and aspiring project managers should be explicitly trained in applying organisational change methods which integrate social/psychological perspectives in their teams, and/or include the competence in their project teams.

For researchers: Future research should be conducted to study the impact of success in projects where project managers are trained in applying effective organisational change methods.

Complete article

The original version of this article was published in the *International Journal of Project Management*, Vol number 33, Henry A. Hornstein (2013), p. 291–298. It can be accessed via: [sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0263786314001331](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0263786314001331)

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Glossary:

Organisational change management:

The process of continually reviewing an organization's direction, structure and capabilities to serve the ever-changing need of external and internal customers.



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