

## **CEO Tip of the Month: Project Management is Out? Nonsense. Work to Boost Your Company's Project-Related Competencies**

by Guido Quelle

How many times have you heard someone claim that "project management" was out, old-fashioned, a thing of the past? I'm sure I've heard it literally dozens of times – and interestingly enough, over the course of a few decades.

The statement is untrue, pure and simple. Calling project management "out" is not only ridiculous; it also indicates a failure to recognize business realities and what corporate leadership calls for. Those who intentionally choose to do without consistent and modern project management squander valuable opportunities, first of all in terms of speed or "time" and secondly in terms of building up expertise within their companies.

How can international projects succeed if you have no common language? Here I don't just mean a literal spoken language, but also a shared language of methods. Because in methodological terms, project management boils down to a language, to a platform that makes it easy for different people to communicate beyond the borders of teams, departments, divisions, companies and countries, and to more quickly make progress on complex topics than they could without that method.

When correctly understood, project management is by no means dogma; project management for its own sake is nonsense. Accordingly, I don't put any stock in the various certification approaches for project management. The goal is not to find the "perfect" method, but instead to find one that suits you. We recently met the Senior Management of one of our client companies to discuss "their" style of project management, which we are now helping them to implement. It's not a question of right or wrong; it's about what fits and what doesn't.

An example: Especially when it comes to strategic projects, i.e., to growth projects, change projects, or corporate development projects, we see that resource planning, Gantt charts and detailed workflow descriptions fail on a regular basis. And how can we expect them to work when we can neither predict in detail which activities will be needed, nor precisely estimate how much time they'll take to conclude? For these types of project it makes much better sense to start by considering the goal we want to reach for the respective work package and to then "count backwards" from that future goal to the present.

Correctly understood, project management is a key driver for results, also in terms of establishing a body of knowledge throughout your company on how to approach specific problems and tasks – a topic we've written about elsewhere, in the Mandat Growthletter®.

Be unwavering. Make sure you have project management that can adapt to fit your company; make sure the focus is more on actually managing projects than on any particular technique. Train and familiarize your staff to work with it, and feel free to send anyone who tries to tell you project management is "out" back to where they came from.

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