

Handbook of People in Project Management
A book edited by Dennis Lock and Lindsay Scott, © 2013
(Review by R. Max Wideman, FPPI)

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Introduction

"This handbook was born in the spring of 2011. That's when Gower's publisher Jonathan Norman and both of us met at chez Lock to discuss Jonathan's proposal that we might work together to complete a work devoted entirely to the important subject of managing people in projects."¹

So say authors Dennis Lock and Lindsay Scott in the opening paragraph of a short Preface to this momentous book. And considerable it is with a footprint of 7"x10"x2.5" (thick) and weighing in at about 4.5lbs (2kg)!

The authors go on to say: "Now we have to say a word about our contributors – of which there are over 50.² They have been drawn from several parts of the world and different sectors, and were invited to take part because of their particular reputation and skills." And end with: "In general, we have not attempted to cramp the style of any contributor, and readers will notice that one or two of the views expressed are a little controversial, or should we say refreshing?"

At first glance, noticing the "controversial" could be a serious challenge. That's because the authors give no indication where such controversial views might be found in this book of 63 chapters in over 800 pages – and few readers, we suspect, will have the fortitude to do so. But wait! Every now and then one encounters a grey block titled "Editorial Comment (DL)" that contains a clarification or even a contrary view. We suspect that these are the necessary clues.

As readers will observe from the long list of chapters shown in the next section, the book provides broad coverage of the subject of "People in Project Management". This coverage ranges from topics like the people associated with a project at all levels, to recruiting and terminating, to teams and spirituality. Clearly the target audience is just about anyone and everyone. However, we had some difficulty in establishing in our minds what the authors had as their objective in assembling the book. That is, other than gathering together a whole lot of relevant, or semi-relevant, stuff into a book on project management. Is this publication intended primarily as a book of reference, or as an organized technical storybook?

But here we should hasten to declare our prejudices. We are not enamored of books by multiple authors. Too many that we have read in the past have been little more than efforts to assemble disparate contributions into a publication simply designed to enhance the reputation of the name of the person on the title page. And this is at the expense of the contributors who typically lose their rights to the copyright of their own work to the publishers of the book. What benefit is it to them especially when their chapter is lost amongst so many others? As for the reader, the lack of a consistent philosophy and flow throughout a book tends to lose a reader's interest.

And so we plow forward searching for the highlights of this one.

About the authors

Dennis Lock is well known to our readers. Two of his previous books have been reviewed on this web site.³ He is a freelance writer specializing in project management. Following early years as an electronic engineer, management posts were held in industries ranging from defense electronics to heavy machine tools and mining engineering. After occasional consultancy assignments in Europe, eight more recent years were spent as an external lecturer in project management on Master's degree programs at two British universities. Dennis is a Fellow of APM, Fellow of the Institute of Management Services and a Member of the Chartered Management Institute. He has written or edited over 60 management books, mostly for Gower. His best seller *Project Management* has sold over 100,000 copies worldwide and is now in its 10th Edition.⁴ Dennis has written about 20% of this latest book.

Lindsay Scott is a director of Arras People, a project management recruitment organization. She is also currently lead committee member of the PMOSIG, a specialist group of PMO professionals. Previously, Lindsay was the Project Office Manager for Hewlett-Packard.⁵ Lindsay contributed about 5% of the contents of this latest book.

Book Structure

The contents of this book are set out in six parts containing 63 chapters. The long list of chapters and their authors in this section of our review may be a trifle boring for some people, but is necessary to gain a thorough understanding of the extent of the book's subject matter.

| Chapt | Title | Author(s) |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| PART 1 – MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION | | |
| 1 | People and Project Management | Donnie MacNicol |
| 2 | Successes and Failures of People in Projects | Todd Williams |
| 3 | Project Life Cycles | Dennis Lock |
| 4 | Project Sponsors | Karsten Isenbeck & Joel Friedman |
| 5 | Corporate Managers' Support for the Project Manager | Dennis Lock |
| 6 | Project Management in the Private Sector | Susan de Sousa |
| 7 | People in Public Sector Projects | John Hyde & David Sawyer |
| 8 | Project Management in the Third Sector | John Cropper |
| 9 | Introduction to Project Organization Structures | Dennis Lock |
| 10 | Managing in Matrix and More Complex Organizations | Dennis Lock |
| 11 | International Projects | Jean Binder |
| 12 | Managing People in Virtual Project Organizations | Penny Pullan |
| 13 | The Creative Organization | Geof Cox |
| PART 2 – PEOPLE IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT ENVIRONMENT | | |
| 14 | Project Stakeholders | Guy Giffin |
| 15 | People in Senior Project Roles | George Jucan |
| 16 | People in Supporting Roles | George Jucan |
| 17 | The Project Office Environment | Dennis Lock |
| 18 | The Construction Working Environment | Steve Lewis |
| 19 | The Workplace of the Future | Colin Stuart |
| PART 3 – IMPROVING PROJECT TEAMS AND THEIR PEOPLE | | |
| 20 | Identifying and Building Key Relationships | Neil Walker |
| 21 | Creating and Changing a Project Team | Andy Jordan |
| 22 | Building Relationships through Influencing | Mark Rodgers |
| 23 | Managing Conflict in Projects | Peter Simon & Fred Murray Webster |

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| 24 | Cross-cultural Relationships | Jean Binder |
| 25 | Project Communications | Jo Ann Sweeney |
| 26 | Behavior Traits | A Research Paper by Dr Paul Giammalvo |
| 27 | Ethics in Project Management | William Moylan |
| 28 | Leadership | Alfonso Bucero |
| 29 | Conducting One's Self in Project Management | Dennis Lock |
| 30 | Managing Daily Routines: A Day in the Life of a Project | Sam Barnes |
| 31 | Management Theorists of the Twentieth Century | Dennis Lock |
| 32 | Team Development | Elisabeth Goodman |
| 33 | Motivating People in Projects | Bernado Tirado |
| 34 | Conduct of Meetings | Dennis Lock |
| PART 4 – DEVELOPING THE INDIVIDUAL | | |
| 35 | Learning and Training: Part 1 | Dave Davis |
| 36 | Learning and Training: Part 2 | Dave Davis |
| 37 | Self-development | Edward Wallington |
| 38 | Developing Competency | Dennis Lock & John Cornish |
| 39 | Developing Project Management Capability | Tim Ellis |
| 40 | Coaching and Mentoring | Kevin Dolling & Paul Girling |
| PART 5 – PROJECT STAFFING AND HRM ISSUES | | |
| 41 | Scheduling People for a Single Project | Dennis Lock |
| 42 | Resource Planning for People in a Project Company | Dennis Lock |
| 43 | Recruitment | Lindsay Scott |
| 44 | Legal Issues | Peter Harrington |
| 45 | Pay and Rewards for Project Management Work | Lindsay Scott |
| 46 | Performance Appraisals | Dennis Lock & Lindsay Scott |
| 47 | Employment Termination: Letting People go | Lindsay Scott |
| 48 | Advice for Project Managers on the Employment of Supplementary (Temporary) Workers | Dennis Lock & Lindsay Scott |
| PART 6 – MORE SPECIALISED TOPICS | | |
| 49 | Managing the People side of Change | Brian Richardson |
| 50 | Neuro Linguistic Programming | Ranjit Didhu |
| 51 | Positive Psychology | Jocelyn C. Davis |
| 52 | Industrial Psychology | Bernardo Tirado |
| 53 | Emotional Intelligence in Project Management | Deanne Earle |
| 54 | Managing Social Communications | Elizabeth Harrin |
| 55 | Empathy in Project Management | Geoff Crane |
| 56 | Creativity | Alicia Arnold |
| 57 | The Hero Project Managers | Andy Jordan |
| 58 | Human Traits and Behaviors in Project Management | Kevin Dolling, Paul Girling and Joanna Reynolds |
| 59 | Career Paths in Project Management | Jason Price |
| 60 | Project Management Certification: Taking Charge Locally | Michael Greer |
| 61 | Stress and Project Management: Maintaining High Performance | Stephen Flannes |
| 62 | Teams and Spirituality in Project Management | Judi Neal and Alan Harpham |
| 63 | Education and Qualification in Project Management | Lindsay Scott & Peter Simon |

The book has a total of a little over 900 pages and includes a thorough Bibliography and Index. It does not include a Glossary of Terms. Each chapter is a separate essay ranging from eight to sixteen pages, averages around 5,000 words, and generally ends with a summary and/or Conclusion. Chapter 1 acts as a sort of introduction to the whole book.

What we liked

The diversity of authors and their opinions brings a broader spectrum of technical conjectures and beliefs to the fore, much greater than could be expected from only one or two authors. In fact, for the edification of the reader, this very diversity of content may well point to the shape and extent of the project management body of knowledge of the future.

So the benefit to the average reader is in finding in this book suggestions, recommendations, clarifications and posits that go well beyond the content of the typical examination study texts. In addition, for those undertaking academic research, the works of most of the authors are thoroughly referenced in the "References and Further Reading" provided at the end of each chapter. As an additional benefit these references are collected together as a complete and extensive bibliography at the end of the book.

In general the book is well written throughout and the editors have done a good job of ensuring reasonable uniformity of style so that it does not get in the way of moving from chapter to chapter. The contents are also well illustrated with diagrams, tables, and bullets where appropriate. Because of the number of chapters, the number of authors and the sheer volume of the book, it does not make sense to try to extract examples of the content in the limited space of this page. Moreover, it would be churlish to choose one author over another.

Nevertheless, we can report that editors Dennis Lock and Lindsay Scott have written nearly a quarter of the book themselves. That is, fourteen of the sixty-three chapters. We also found it interesting that several authors referred to the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as a frame of reference. In particular, the MBTI was used to illustrate concepts and ideas ranging from how to deal with recalcitrant children to stubborn stakeholders.⁶ Otherwise, the MBTI was used for positioning individual personality types in the environment of project life span phases, and areas of authority, responsibility, accountability and reliability.

Regrettably, none of these authors had cottoned on to the *Dominant Personality Traits Suited to Running Projects Successfully* as described in my 1990's research that you can find here: <http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/personality/intro.htm>.⁷

For what it is worth, we did attempt a comparison of the book's six parts by subjective evaluation on first reading of each of the contained chapters. We used a five-point scale as follows:

- Relevance to the book's subject matter as implied by the book's title;
- The extent to which the chapter is written structurally;
- The value of a particular project management "people" challenge;
- The degree of support in the associated tables and illustrations; and
- How realistic the author's solution or response appears to be.

We have reflected on the book's title on the next page. By "structurally" we mean ease of reading and/or following the line of reasoning of the particular author.

On this basis, Part 3: *Improving Project Teams and Their People* proved to be the most useful with a score of 88%, followed closely by Part 2: *People In and Around the Project Environment*, brief though it is, with a score of 87%. We felt that Part 4: *Developing the Individual* was the weakest, with a score of 67%

Downside

As we mentioned in our introduction, for the reasons stated we are not a great fan of technical books composed by multiple authors. Indeed, from its very title, this book purports to be a "handbook". However, a handbook is generally thought to be "a concise reference book" capable of being "conveniently carried as a concise reference covering a particular subject". That is: "They are designed to be easily consulted and provide quick answers in a certain area". In this case the certain area is the pursuit of better project management performance by people. To make matters worse, the back cover states: "The *Gower Handbook of People in Project Management* is a **complete guide** to the human dimensions involved in projects." (The emphasis is ours.)⁸

So, clearly this is not a handbook as such, nor do we think it is complete. Instead it is an eclectic collection of short lectures on the art of managing people engaged on projects, as presented by a particular selection of thought leaders. There is an extensive index as might be expected on a book of this size.

However, we did find difficulty in double-checking on topics of interest that we found in various chapters but which were not traceable through the index. Thus, researchers might miss some of the pearls of wisdom that can be found in these offerings.

The book has a general theme, but because the book has been written by separate authors, there is no evident consistent thread. Further, there is also quite a bit of content overlap that might otherwise have been avoided in a regularly authored book.

Summary

What we have in this massive tome is a large collection of valuable thoughts worthy of study. It is also laced with a little humor here and there. For example:

"The idea you can specify everything up front, execute the project in pre-defined phases, base your testing on your specification etc. etc. is all very persuasive. If however, you start to feel it's a little unreal – not the way the world works, don't worry. It's not you that's got the wrong end of the stick."⁹

Did we learn anything you may ask? Indeed we did. We learned that the classic reference to "left brain – right brain thinking" denoting differences as "logical" on the left side versus "creative" on the right side of the brain has now been debunked by scientific MRI scans of brain activity.¹⁰

R. Max Wideman
Fellow, PMI

¹ Lock, Dennis and Lindsay Scott, *Handbook of People in Project Management*, Gower Publishing Limited, Surrey, UK, © 2013, p xxxix

² Actually, we counted 49 but we will not quibble. And, in case you are wondering, this writer is not one of the contributors to the contents of this book!

³ The reviews referred to are in our Book Reviews – Set #5: [Book 1](#): Project Management, Tenth Edition, by Dennis Lock, 2013 and [Book 2](#): Naked Project Management, The Bare Facts, by Dennis Lock, 2012

⁴ Handbook of People in Project Management, Dennis Lock, pp xxxiii-xxxiv

⁵ Ibid, p xxxvi

⁶ One should not assume from this that all stakeholders are seen as problem people.

⁷ Wideman, R. Max, *Dominant Personality Traits Suited to Running Projects Successfully*, a paper presented to the Project Management Institute's Annual Seminar/Symposium in Long Beach, California, USA, 1998, updated in 2002 for web presentation as the fourth in a series linking project type through management style to project success. The six papers in the series can be found published from December 2001 to May 2002 on this page <http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/index.htm>

⁸ We suggest that as a better alternative, the three-volume set of books: *The Human Aspects of Project Management*⁸ by Vijay K. Verma is much more complete. These conveniently-sized books – Volume One: *Organizing Projects for Success* (1995); Volume Two (1996); *Human Resource Skills for Project Managers*; and Volume Three: *Managing the Project Team* (1997) are available from the Project Management Institute, PA, USA.

⁹ Lock, Dennis and Lindsay Scott, *Handbook of People in Project Management*: Kevin Dolling, Paul Girling and Joanna Reynolds on the subject of *Human Traits and Behaviors in Project Management*, p757

¹⁰ Ibid: Alicia Arnold on the subject of *Creativity*, p730