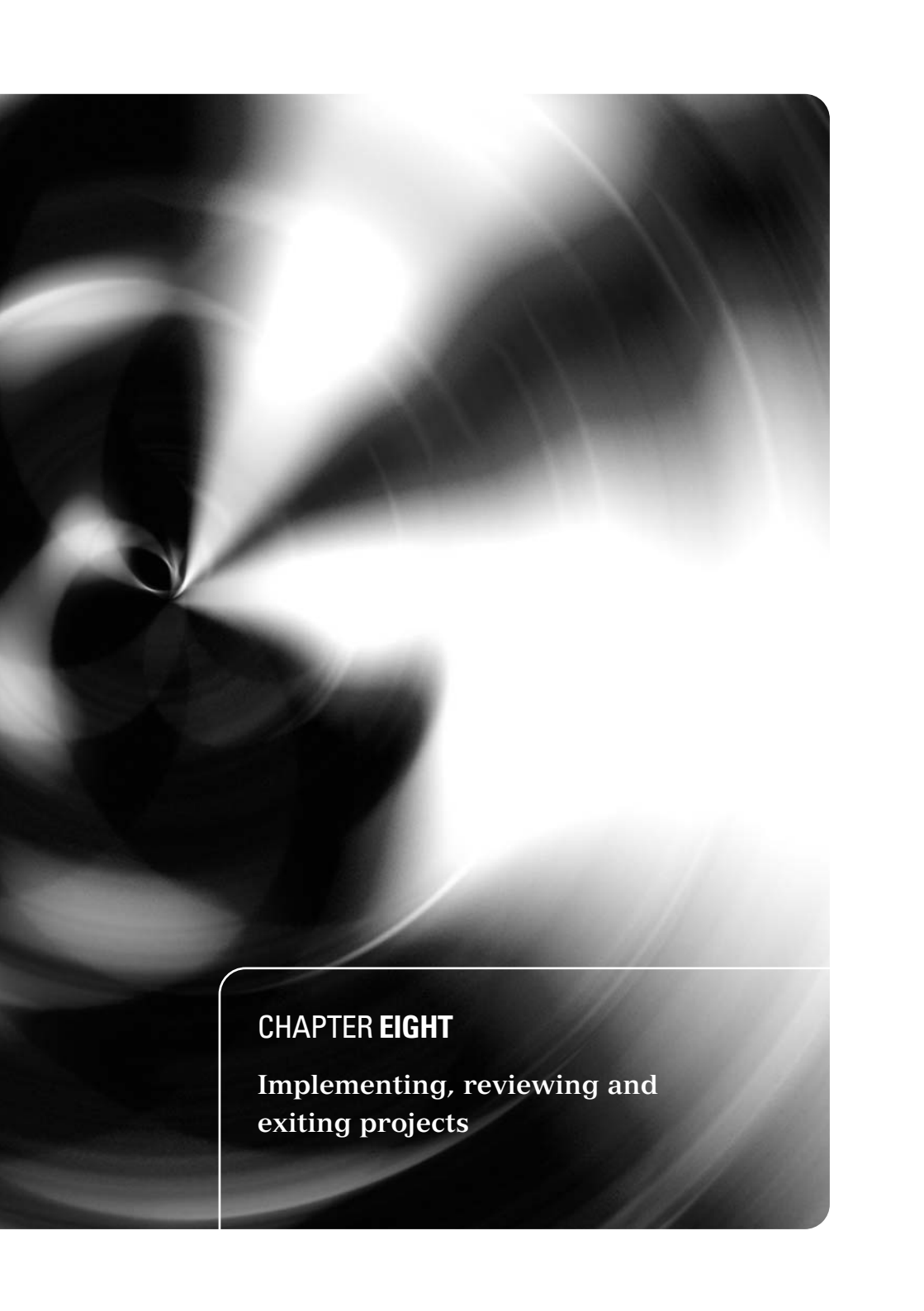




CHAPTER EIGHT

**Implementing, reviewing and
exiting projects**

Eight

Implementing, reviewing and exiting projects

Project implementation

In implementing any project you will need to be able to plan and manage effectively. The key elements of project planning and implementation involve developing a list of key activities and resources and a time-line for completion. Any project also involves risk, so you will need to review key aspects of your implementation plan and assess any significant risks associated with it.

So, think in terms of project implementation as managing resources, time and quality with a keen eye on any possible risks that might occur. As well as planning the project you will also need to ensure that you both control and lead the project.

Project control is all about measuring, evaluating and correcting progress throughout the life-cycle of the project. Central to this is your project master plan and the need to constantly monitor progress against it.

Figures 29, 30 and 31 detail a draft plan and process for conducting a risk assessment.

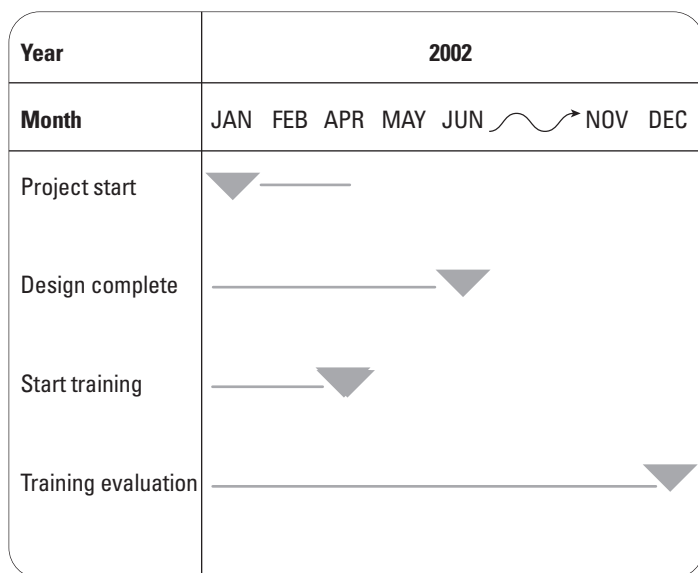


FIGURE 29: PROJECT MASTER PLAN

In conducting a risk assessment you need to consider your overall plan and review each key task against two key questions:

- 1 The probability of failure associated with that task – what if it did not happen as you have planned?
- 2 The possible impact it would have on your project – would it severely impact on the implementation plan?

By simply using a high, medium and low rating you can quickly identify parts of your plan that may need some kind of alternative or contingency planning.

As a general rule, if you identify an activity that has a medium probability of failure and a medium impact on the project then you need to develop some alternatives or contingency plans for that activity.

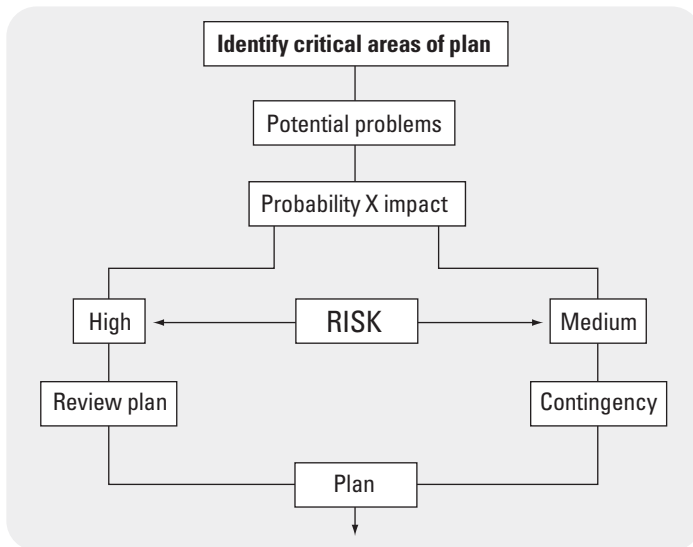


FIGURE 30: RISK ASSESSMENT IN PROJECTS

Task	Probability of failure	Impact on project	Contingency
Delivery of plant	Medium	High	Investigate alternative suppliers

- 1 Avoid hiding contingency in other tasks.
- 2 Don't add contingency at the end of phases or project end.
3. Contingency comes from carrying out a risk analysis.

FIGURE 31: RISK ANALYSIS

Obviously there are a lot of other project management techniques that can be used, and those readers who wish to get a more detailed account should read 'Project Skills' (Butterworth Heinemann, 1998) written by Dr Sam Elbeik and myself. In this book we go into the details of project management and the associated skills.

Project implementation – being client focused

This stage of the consulting cycle involves you managing the detailed project implementation.

Questions you should ask:

- Have you secured your client's agreement to the plan?
- Are you confident about your project management skills and capability?
- Have you prepared a briefing pack for the implementation team?
- Have you spoken to each individual team member?
- Will there be any conflicts arising with other parts of the organization as your work develops?
- Have you spent sufficient time thinking about the balance and composition of your team?
- Have you communicated with relevant suppliers and other interested parties?
- Do you have the necessary control and reporting procedures in place?
- Have you agreed regular access to your client during the implementation period?

Client's perspective of you:

- Are you competent?
- Does everything seem to be under control?
- Am I getting regular updates of progress?
- Have I been involved in the important meetings?
- Does it all seem realistic and feasible?
- Are they capable of taking people along with the changes?

Other statements/questions you might use:

- We would welcome your attendance at the launch meetings.
- Perhaps you would be prepared to welcome people and outline your expectations.
- We are experiencing some problems with Department X and would like to discuss it with you before it becomes a big issue.
- Here are the key developments arising out of the last week's work.
- We are still on track.
- How do you think things are progressing?
- What feedback have you received from other people concerning progress?
- We may have to reallocate some people resources for that stage of the plan but we do not foresee any slip-page overall.
- We may need to re-negotiate some extra time or resources as a result of last week's problems.

Reviewing consultancy projects

– being client focused

This final stage of the client project involves establishing whether your project's objectives were achieved and formally 'signing off' your involvement in a project.

Questions you might ask:

- Have you signalled the end of the project/assignment earlier with your client, thus avoiding any surprises?
- Have you agreed a project end date with your client?
- Is there to be a formal hand-over of the project to your client?
- Is your client comfortable with the close of the project?
- Are there any major issues still outstanding that are worrying your client?
- Have you secured the views of all the relevant parties?
- Have you been sufficiently rigorous in your review process?
- Have you been open and honest about any problem areas?

Client's perspective of you:

- Have you given me ample notice of the project's conclusion?
- Have you fulfilled the terms of reference?
- Have I enjoyed working with you?
- Would I want to work with you again?
- Have you left a positive impression on my team?
- Were you always open, honest and direct in your dealings?

Other statements/questions you might use:

- We would like to have a final meeting to conclude and review our work.
- Are you happy with everything?
- Are there any outstanding issues?
- We believe that signifies the conclusion of the work-plan and the project itself.
- Is there anything that we did not do that would have helped the project?
- We could do that but it would require us to devote additional resources because the project timetable has been completed.
- We do not have sufficient time resource to take on that additional work load.
- We would be pleased to propose to assist you on that additional work.
- We have enjoyed working on this project with you.

Evaluating consultancy projects

An imprecise science

The achievement of the stated objectives is the principal way in which most assignments will be judged. If a project has been managed correctly and the principles we have outlined in this book have been applied, the chances are that a successful outcome will be achieved. However, the complexity of many projects means that no internal consultant should ever claim all the credit or take all the blame for failures. Projects involve people, multi-disciplines and changing business landscapes and priorities. This does not mean that you

should avoid attempting to measure the impact or success of what your work. You need to know, as does your client, and any future clients, how your work has contributed to successful results. Without this information, neither you nor your clients will know how to manage similar situations in the future.

So often you will depend heavily, but not totally, on subjective opinion in evaluating your efforts.

Project evaluation – questions for your client

Key questions that your client might reflect on in attempting to evaluate your work are:

- 1 Has the original problem/opportunity which caused you to involve the internal consultant, been addressed?
- 2 To what extent do you feel that this is due to the efforts of the internal consultant as opposed to other factors?
- 3 What specific actions taken by the internal consultant helped you to address the problem/issue?
- 4 What specific actions by the internal consultant hindered you in addressing the problem/issue?
- 5 What might the internal consultant have done (but did not do) which might have helped the situation?
- 6 Would you use the internal consultant to help you address a similar situation in the future?
- 7 What has the consultant left of their skills in your organization for you or your staff to use in the future?
- 8 Would you choose to work with the same consultant again in the future?
- 9 Would you recommend the internal consultant to colleagues with similar problems or issues
- 10 Would you say your internal consultant has helped you significantly?

Project evaluation – questions for the internal consultant

- 1 Do I believe the client's problem has been solved or addressed?
- 2 What could I have done differently to improve the final result?
- 3 What do my fellow internal consultants feel about the results of my intervention?
- 4 How do the clients staff regard my involvement?
- 5 How good is my current relationship with the client?
- 6 Has my client recommended me to their colleagues?
- 7 Has my client asked me to do other work for them in the future?
- 8 Did the assignment or project come in on time and budget?

Summary

The answers to these questions will help to address the evaluation question. In the final analysis the client's perception, be it right or wrong, will be the most important feature in the evaluation process. Only if the client believes that your intervention has helped them, will the evaluation be helpful in gaining you further work. But beware of chasing the Holy Grail. If there are new problems at the top of the client's agenda, they may be uninterested in any kind of post-mortem!

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