Chapter 1
Project Management 2.0:
Towards the Renewal of the Discipline

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ABSTRACT

With growing maturity of social media over the last few years, many companies started using these tools to interact with customers and employees. Business functions such as Sales, Marketing and Human Resources have innovatively embedded these technologies to support their processes and became, as such, an instrument for renewal. The use of social media in Project Management, however, seems to be very limited. The profession lags behind having difficulty keeping pace with the rapidly evolving web 2.0 driven technological innovations which are delivering on their promise to foster collaboration. The paper discusses the potential of social media in the project management practice. As the move towards harnessing the power of social media within the Project Management framework requires adequate organizational change, the study also addresses the implications of such an initiative on structure, culture, and control.

INTRODUCTION

With growing maturity of social media over the last few years, many companies considered using these tools to interact with customers and employees. Business functions such as sales, marketing, human resources and public relations have innovatively embedded these technologies to support their processes and became, as such, an instrument for renewal. The use of social media in project management, however, seems to be very limited. The profession lags behind having difficulty keeping pace with the rapidly evolving web 2.0 driven technological advances which, notably, are delivering on their promise to foster collaboration and communication.

In the meantime, todays' projects are becoming ever more complex and dynamic (Kerzner, 2015). Their success rate may provide some cold comfort. Indeed, in a recent study, the Standish Group (2013) showed that the projects that are considered successful (i.e. delivered on time, on budget, with the required quality) are barely above the third of all projects: 39%; 43% were challenged (i.e. late, over budget, and/

or with low quality); and 18% literally failed (i.e. cancelled or not used). The report highlights, markedly, that these numbers represent an uptick in the success rates in comparison to the year 2009 in which, 32% are delivered; 44% had quality, deadline or cost problem and 24% failed. Despite the favorable slight increase in success, the project management landscape may still seem bleak. The discipline has not renewed itself in regards to the state-of-the-art advances in technology and information flow, which hinders the proper development of the discipline.

Furthermore, information-based business models are now providing organizations with capabilities to respond rapidly to customers' demands and to the changing ecosystem's conditions (Bharadwaj, El Sawy, Pavlou, & Venkatraman, 2013). Furthermore, Web 2.0 and social based technologies have reached the maturity stage and have become real Weapons of Mass "Collaboration" (McAfee, 2009). Mobile technologies, too, have become an integral part in organizational life (Nicol, 2013). Smartphones and tablets for example have open up new venues as to how information is created, accessed and shared in real-time. They also created an unprecedented level of connectivity to resources and communities. In addition, social media platforms have enhanced the quality and quantity of data generated and accelerated the pace of the information workflow (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). Also, cloud computing is shifting the paradigm of data an information management by moving IT services to the internet, adding a new level of efficiency and economy. Along with these advances, a new generation of young workers who have a great comfort using modern technologies are joining project teams. They are joining the workforce with expectations that are different from those of their managers. Unless these expectations are tackled accordingly, tapping into potentially talent people and turning them into assets may be significantly hindered.

In view of these recent and rapid developments, it is almost obvious that the traditional project management practices and techniques are rendered ineffective for most of today's projects (Levitt, 2011). Notwithstanding the contribution of ground-breaking works that led to tools that are widely used today such as Gantt, PERT and critical path. These tools, however, are many decades old and are merely suitable for the changing requirements of the 21st century business practices (Harrin, 2010). For example, Gantt diagramming is undoubtedly one of the most popular methods of project scheduling – and probably there are still good days ahead for it –, yet it rarely gets through one's head that the diagram was developed by Henry Gantt back in 1910, that is more than a century old, and it was mostly used in the construction projects (Lavender, 2014). However, competing on today's digital age requires organizations to reinvent their tools and processes as the projects they manage are increasingly complex and dynamic, many of which are implemented concurrently. The integration of new knowledge, the velocity of change, the need for innovation and speeding time-to market all add to the complexity and require new means for communicating and coordinating projects. Real-time information and services have become the norm, not the exception in an increasingly global and networked society.

While there are cutting-edge technological advances that drive change in different organizational domains, it is disappointing to realize that there are barely few daring innovations that punctuated the modern project management landscape. Hence, we concur with authors such as Kerzner (2015), Nicoletti (2012) and Harrin (2010) who argue it is time for a renewal of project management. The discipline has much to catch up with the ever burgeoning progresses in technologies that have stormed other fields. For today's project manager, it is an opportunity and a challenge to go beyond using conventional tools such as email, shared folders and repositories, and to learn harnessing the power of social media within the project management practice.

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