

# **The New Rules for Project Success**

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**Based on “*Project Management Success Stories: Lessons of Project Leaders*,” Wiley, 2000, by Laufer and Hoffman**

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Dr. Laufer has lectured in many US corporations such as: AT&T, Bechtel, DuPont, Exxon, General Motors, IBM, Mobile, Stone and Webster, and Texaco. He has given seminars to executives and project managers at various organizations such as: Lockheed Martin, Motorola, NASA, Proctor & Gamble, and the US Department of Commerce.

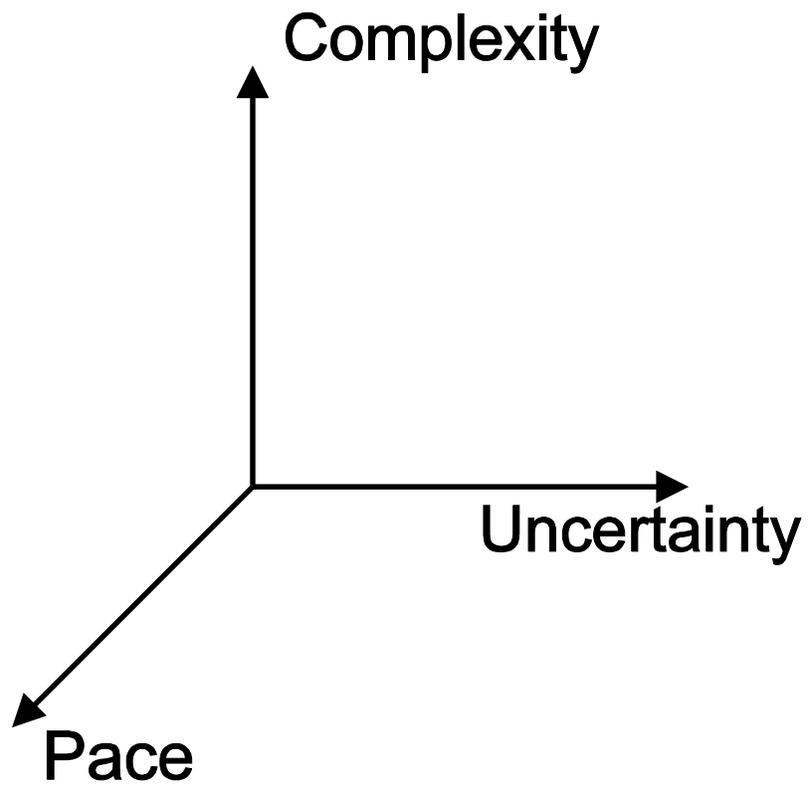
Dr. Laufer is a member of the Editorial Review Board of the *Project Management Journal* and of *Construction Management and Economics*. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of the NASA Academy of Program and Project Leadership.

Dr. Laufer's authored or co-authored four books. His most recent book is "*Project Management Success Stories: Lessons of Project Leaders*," Wiley, 2000. Previously he published "*Simultaneous Management: Managing Projects in a Dynamic Environment*," AMACOM, The American Management Association, 1996.

# Evolution of Models of Project Management

(Each model encompasses the previous ones)

<b>Central Concept</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Project Characteristics</b>
<b>Scheduling</b>	<b>1960s</b>	<b>Simple, Certain</b>
<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>1970s</b>	<b>Complex, Certain</b>
<b>Risk Management</b>	<b>1980s</b>	<b>Complex, Uncertain</b>
<b>Simultaneity</b>	<b>1990s</b>	<b>Complex, Uncertain, Quick (CUQ)</b>



## **The UCP Model**

**Competent Practitioners  
Usually Know More  
Than They Can Tell**

# **Explicit and Tacit** **Knowledge**

## **Explicit Knowledge**

- Words
- Numbers
- Data
- Scientific formulas
- Specifications
- Manuals

# Tacit Knowledge

- Subjective insights
- Rules of thumb
- Intuition and hunches
  
- A body of perspectives
- Beliefs
- Values

# The “Excellence Through Stories” Project

- A great deal of project management knowledge is **tacit**.
- **Stories** are very powerful in capturing and sharing tacit knowledge
- Stories stimulate **curiosity**.
- Stories are **memorable**.

- **Excellence** is a better teacher than mediocrity.
- By collecting **success** stories from the best project managers you enable people to find role models to emulate.

## A Good Story

1. Starts with a **problem/conflict/challenge/**, etc.
2. Describes a **unique** experience.
3. Describes concrete **actions by people.**
4. **Makes a point!** It arrives at some basic truth.

## “Success Stories”

	<b>Government</b>	<b>The ETS project</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Public relations & teaching	Learning & <i>unlearning</i>
<b>Problems</b>	None	Central
<b>Focus</b>	Institutions, systems	People
<b>Focus</b>	Results	Actions & results
<b>Scope</b>	Entire project	An isolated episode
<b>Source of data</b>	“Objective”	Subjective



## **Source of Data**

20 project managers from  
NASA

8 project managers from  
DOD

8 project managers from six  
agencies (DOC, DOE, DOI,  
DOT, FBI, and GSA)

# **Findings: The New Rules for Project Success**

- 1. Adopt a Will to Win**
- 2. Create a Results- Oriented Focus**
- 3. Foster Sensitivity to Context**
- 4. Collaborate through Trust**

## **1. Adopt a Will to Win**

- Have a sense of a mission; own the project.
- Challenge the status qua.
- Be willing to take (calculated) risks.
- Dare to fail, embrace failures as a source of learning.
- Set high, but realistic expectations.
- Persevere; set and adhere to (relatively) fixed targets by employing flexible tactics.
- Radiate a personal passion that is contagious.

<b>OLD</b> <b>(Espoused theory,</b> <b>explicit)</b>	<b>NEW (Theory-</b> <b>in-use, tacit)</b>
<b>Systems</b>	<b>People &amp; Systems</b>
<b>Skills*</b>	<b>Courage &amp; Skills</b>
<b>Management</b>	<b>Leadership &amp;</b> <b>Management</b>
<b>Mental</b> <b>intelligence</b>	<b>Emotional &amp;</b> <b>Mental intelligence</b>

\*One of the highest priorities of the **public** project manager is to minimize the risk of embarrassing incidents.

## **2. Create a Results-Oriented Focus**

- Create and maintain a focus.
- Focus on results.
- Focus on both, long-term and short-term results.
- Employ fast prototyping.
- Generate short-term wins.
- Create a sense of urgency.
- Adopt pragmatic and simple solutions.

<b>OLD</b> (Espoused theory, explicit)	<b>NEW (Theory-in- use, tacit)</b>
<b>Processes</b>	<b>Results &amp; Processes</b>
<b>Control</b>	<b>Learning &amp; Control</b>
Internal orientation	External & Internal orientation
“Managing” risk (as an independent activity)	Managing uncertainty & Risk

### **3. Foster Sensitivity to Context**

- Fit procedures and systems to the situation.
- Employ formal *and* informal systems.
- Legitimize judgment-based decisions.

Rule # 3 says: there are **numerous** “unique” rules. It covers the entire project management body of knowledge.

<b>OLD</b> <b>(Espoused theory,</b> <b>explicit)</b>	<b>NEW (Theory-</b> <b>in-use, tacit)</b>
<b>One best way</b>	<b>Tailoring &amp;</b> One best way
<b>Objective</b> <b>analysis</b>	<b>Subjective</b> <b>judgment &amp;</b> Objective analysis

## **4. Collaborate through Trust**

- Take recruiting very seriously; spend as much energy as possible on getting the right people.
- Develop teamwork.
- Build trust, allow for honest mistakes.
- Involve the customers and representatives of downstream phases as early as possible.
- Delegate authority and foster a strong sense of a mission by all team members.

**Bottom line: lead all team members  
to embrace rule #1:  
“adopt a will to win”**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OLD</b> (Espoused theory, explicit)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEW (Theory- in-use, tacit)</b></p>
<p><b>Contracts</b></p>	<p><b>Trust &amp; Contracts</b></p>
<p><b>Training people for teamwork</b></p>	<p><b>Attracting the right people &amp; Training them for teamwork</b></p>

# **The New Rules for Project Success**

- 1. Adopt a Will to Win**
- 2. Create a Results- Oriented Focus**
- 3. Foster Sensitivity to Context**
- 4. Collaborate through Trust**

**The four rules are highly interdependent**



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Championship	2000s	CUQ, Dynamic Status Quo

# Recent Shifts

- From work done via routine **operations**, to work accomplished via unique **projects**.
- From learning via **formulas** (explicit knowledge), to learning from **stories** (tacit knowledge).

You don't write your success story with a pen, following project completion.

You "write" it with your actions as you progress through the project.

**Leading a project  
to successful completion  
*is*  
writing a unique story.**

# **Implications: Creating a New Culture**

People

Results

Trust

Risks, mistakes

Adaptation, experimentation

Judgment

Learning

Management of contradictions

# **Management of Contradictions**

Leadership *and* management

People *and* systems

EQ *and* IQ

**Flexibility *and* stability**

Unlearning *and* learning