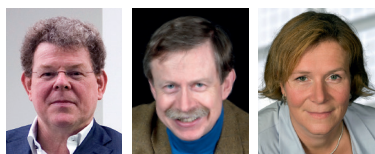


- A concise handbook providing feasible and realistic techniques for the implementation of the leading approach to project management, *Project-Driven Creation* (PDC).
- A unique integration of the four ingredients of successful project management; the traditional (control) tools *plus* working in project teams *plus* managing the project environment *plus* personal leadership.
- Easily absorbed, practical concepts.
- Tricks and tips of the trade.
- Clearly illustrated.

In an independent review of project management methods by PMI Netherlands/Berenschot, PDC was rated as the most versatile of them all. They gave it the highest overall score and praised the large number of available practical tools.



The authors, Jo Bos, Ernst Harting and Marlet Hesselink have many years of experience with project and programme management. As consultants, trainers, and coaches working in the field, they share a passion for improving project management through the application of PDC.

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JO BOS, ERNST HARTING &
MARLET HESSELINK

PROJECT-DRIVEN CREATION



PROJECT DRIVEN CREATION

JO BOS, ERNST HARTING & MARLET HESSELINK



Succeed With Your Team!

References to other chapters are noted with a ❶

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Since the initial publication of *Projectmatig Creëren 2.0* or *PMC* (our Dutch handbook on project management) personal leadership, commitment, energy, and inspiration have become an integral part of the 'normal' project vocabulary. Thousands of project leaders, their teams and sponsors, have mastered and now apply the concepts of PMC. As a result, PMC is not only an accepted practice, but has become one of the leading systems of project management in The Netherlands.

In the ensuing years, we received many requests to bring out a compact edition that highlighted the key concepts and tools. The Dutch version, *PMC Compact*, was published as a handy guide aimed at project leaders, sponsors and project teams. It explained our methods in clear steps and included many practical tips garnered from our daily experience.

Our work with international clients challenged us to address the needs of multicultural project teams. In the course of tailoring our concepts for this audience and re-vamping some of our materials, we realised the potential utility of an English language version of *PMC Compact*. As a reflection of its revisions, it sports a new name, *Project-Driven Creation (PDC)*. You have in front of you a 'pocket book' that puts the essence of our approach literally within everybody's reach; practical with a wealth of experience based advice.

Our experience compels us to relate how inspiration and creation can and should drive projects. In the daily

operations of organisations, however, we see a growing aversion to risk and an increased preference for tight control. The demand for accountability grows and leaves little room for creativity. Fear of failure results in curtailing the responsibilities and power of project leaders; however, it is exactly now that empowered leadership, commitment and creativity are so desperately needed. With the adoption of PDC, inspiration returns to a central position in projects and organisations. This is especially relevant when we need to forge staff from different backgrounds, departments or even countries into an effective, multidisciplinary team capable of bringing a complex task to a successful end.

As consultants, trainers, and coaches we work on a daily basis with project leaders, project teams, their sponsors, and line management, in the implementation of PDC, training programs, Project Start-Ups, project evaluations, team workshops, and coaching sessions. We are particularly grateful to our clients for the opportunity to work with them and learn in the process.

Sue Loewenstein contributed to reworking the Dutch manuscript into an edition for an international audience. Bram Vandenberghe, the design wizard, found a way to turn our 'dry texts' into the book you are now holding. We hope that this is the book you have so often requested. We eagerly await your reactions.

Jo Bos, Ernst Harting and Marlet Hesselink

21 International project teams

If you thought working with a 'normal' project team is challenging, try one that consists of team members from different national, cultural or ethnic backgrounds! These backgrounds provide a unique 'programming of the mind' that results in vast differences in behaviours, values, norms, preferences, and perceptions of 'reality'. These differences cover areas as diverse as 'power distance', the relationship between the individual and society, concepts of masculinity and femininity, dealing with conflicts and uncertainty, the importance of rules or personal relationships, how we regard time, our relationship with nature, the expression of emotions, personal space (bubble), etc. Cultural curiosity, a genuine desire to understand the other's way of thinking and feeling, and respecting differences is an absolutely critical success factor for working with multinational project teams. The leaders of these teams must be agile and flexible in constantly switching between different worldviews, needs and sensitivities.

⚠ CAUTION

Preferring one's own (national/regional/ethnic) culture to that of someone else is fine. Considering it to be superior is not. This erodes mutual trust and respect and thus frustrates productive working relationships between team members.

⚠ CAUTION

Don't confuse fluency in a language with communication. A perfect sentence in reply to what you just said is by no means synonymous with understanding what you actually meant to convey.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

— Margaret Mead

Culture

Think of a water lily. Floating on the surface are the 'artifacts'; behaviours and structures that we can see, perhaps admire, or despise, but not easily fully understand. Below the surface, at the 'stem level', we find the values, norms and goals, what we consider to be good or bad and what is therefore acceptable. Hidden in

the dark mud of the unconscious are the implicit assumptions and taken-for-granted beliefs about the world and ourselves as humans in it. These assumptions largely rule our visible behaviours. (Schein) So if you want to understand your foreign colleague, you'll have to dig a little deeper.

💡 TIP

Match team members' strengths with their tasks. To illustrate, heaven is where the cooks are French, the police British, the mechanics German, the lovers Italian, and everything is organised by the

Swiss. Hell is where the cooks are British, the police German, the mechanics French, the lovers Swiss, and everything is organised by the Italians!



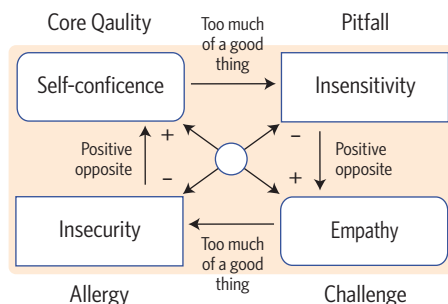


Core Quadrant

Cultural differences often lead to some level of mutual incomprehension, tension or conflict. A simple but effective tool to describe and explore the nature and sources of these tensions is the Core Quadrant (Ofman). Let's begin with a fundamental *quality* recognised in US (business) culture, self-confidence. Under stress, this quality may turn into a *pitfall* where self-confidence deteriorates into insensitive behaviour. The *challenge* is to turn it into its positive opposite, empathy; trying to see the world through the eyes of the other person. Overdoing this in turn leads to insecurity, a behaviour to which our confident American business person tends to be *allergic*. We tend to be allergic to the negative opposites of our core qualities! For each national (sub)culture in the team, a number of these core quadrants should be constructed.

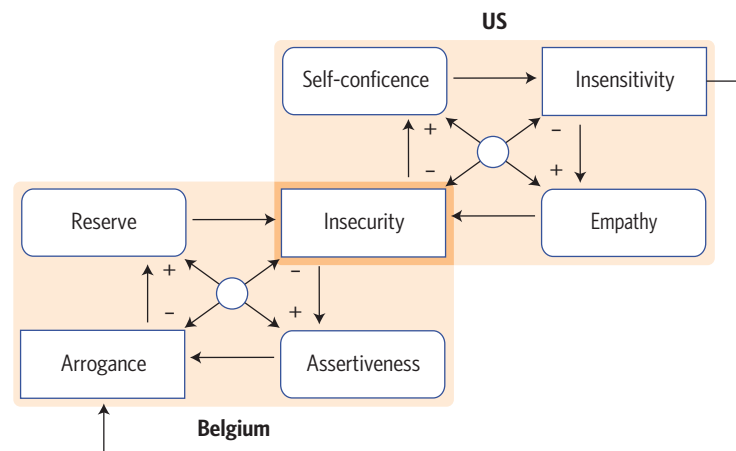
CAUTION

Never assume your sense of humour is universally shared. It doesn't easily transcend national borders.



It gets even more complicated 'when worlds collide.' Imagine the merger between a US manufacturing company and an R&D firm in Belgium, a country known for its reserve. Reinforced by the additional cultural dif-

ferences found in manufacturing and R&D, an unfortunate dynamic could develop between an American project manager and her Belgian team members. This is illustrated by a *Double Quadrant*:



The Belgian project team has had a bad week and projects hesitancy and insecurity. This triggers an allergic reaction on the part of their new US project leader who, in response, shows herself largely insensitive to their issues. This is now interpreted by her Belgian team as arrogance, to which they in turn are allergic. It drives them even further into their insecurity,

provoking...etc. Before you know it, all are locked into an unhappy pattern of mutual misunderstanding. The vicious cycle will only be broken if all are aware of what has happened and are willing and able to focus on their respective challenges. Self-confidence, tempered by empathy, tends to respond very well to reserve in combination with a modicum of assertiveness.

Virtual teams

A special challenge is posed by teams whose members are based in different countries. Here are ten tips that apply to any team but are particularly useful under these conditions.



- **All you need is love** As with any team, trust, respect, humour and a certain ease are prerequisites for top performance. This is much more difficult to achieve at a distance. Create the basis by arranging for at least one face-to-face team meeting at the start of the project.
- **Be tech savvy** Pull out all the stops: video conferencing, Skype, conference calls (if necessary at midnight), blogs, chats, Yammer, tweets, newsletters, a dedicated project web site; whatever it takes for the team to keep in touch, and not just on project matters but also at a personal level.

TIP

Never ignore, let alone try to eliminate, cultural diversity within the team. Instead, organise a dialogue around cultural differences. Guard against stereotypes and focus on the differences in

beliefs, values and norms with regard to work. Listening is key; try to understand the project from the position of the other person based on his or her cultural background.

- **Culture rules** Propagate a team atmosphere characterised by shared leadership, cultural sensitivity, mutual collaboration, sharing information freely, and honouring commitments.
- **No room for newbies** In general, only project leaders with a track record with 'normal' teams can be trusted with a virtual team. Very experienced project leaders also must be comfortable with 'new' technology.
- **Yes we can!** If anything, this team must be driven by a shared mission and dedication to creating a result they all believe in. Yet another reason to get them together for an inspiring, 'live' Project Start-Up ¹⁶.
- **¿Que?** Nothing goes without saying. You'll have to clarify many issues ranging from the role and responsibilities of the project leader to the interpretation of agreements on the schedule.
- **Open eyes and ears** Be alert to subtle indicators of strife or changes in morale expressed in mail messages, phone conversations, etc. Respond personally and quickly.

International stumbling blocks

- Leadership behaviour
- Gender roles
- The importance of personal relationships
- Attitudes towards time and punctuality
- The meaning of the word 'yes'
- The role and rules of using humour (Lewis)

- **The A-Team** When selecting team members, focus on competencies like autonomy, networking skills, emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity.
- **Cast your net wide** It pays to nurture your relationships with the local managers of your team members abroad. You may need their support.
- **Ah, but next time...** Project evaluations (and not just at the end) are a prime tool that enables the team to learn and improve their performance next time 'round.