

This is an example of a 'Training Proposal' that **Rubicon Writing Services** were commissioned to write on behalf of **NewEra Consultants** in order to win a training contract. For confidentiality reasons the target company has been amended to 'Company XXX'

Proposal for in-house 'Practical IT Project Management' course for Company XXX

NEWERA Consultants Ltd Professional Training

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Introduction

Anyone who regularly reads the Newspapers or IT magazines will be familiar with the shocking track record of projects that have either failed to deliver or delivered late and over budget. The statistics are truly frightening.

Studies by numerous research bodies have proven beyond doubt that despite numerous advances in the reliability of IT components generally, and a much greater focus on training Project Managers, every year billions of pounds are wasted on IT systems and projects that fail to deliver and thus the true costs to business of months wasted on non-productive effort are staggering.

So where is it all going wrong? And why?

To answer these questions means we have to look beyond the surface explanations offered to the media by embarrassed corporations or governments to the true root causes of the problem.

What we find, time and time again, is that it is not the project itself that is at fault - after all a project is only a series of sequential tasks - nor the project goals or objectives - which may be very clear and explicitly understood - it is usually something much more elusive.

Like all business tasks a project has to be well managed, regardless of shape, size, complexity or timeframe. A good Project Manager therefore is the lynchpin of any project and quite simply is fundamental to the success or failure of the project. A good Project Manager needs to be an inspirational leader, a diplomat, a good organiser, a good communicator, a mediator and a motivator, thick skinned, focused and goal orientated.

Good Project Managers who meet these demanding criteria are a rare breed indeed - and perhaps it is for this reason that many would-be Project Managers simply don't make the grade. This does not mean however that seemingly 'average' Project Managers do not have the potential. Usually it means that they have not been given the guidance and tools to help them excel.

Through the eighties and nineties IT went through some enormous changes and whether we like it or not IT is now a fundamental part of our life from ipod's to PDA's, from wireless internet to chip and pin. The need for innovative, creative leaders and thinkers has never been so critical in these competitive times. Companies need to deliver solutions before their competitors and it is often the selection of the right Project Manager than can be the 'make or break' factor.

Delivering complex systems requires structure and for this reason IT Project Managers looking for some kind of structure are usually handed a very thick set of manuals created by consultants. They are called "Methodologies" and rapidly became the 'Bible' for would-be IT Managers. The methodologies come in all shapes and sizes but basically offer the same thing - a detailed framework to help PM's navigate their way through the complex world of IT Project Management. Some of these methodologies are 'home grown' and others are now increasingly recognised as 'industry standard'. So in theory if you give a PM a good methodology, and perhaps some training in how to use it, then your worries should be over shouldn't they?

If only life were so simple!

Let's take a moment to look at things from a slightly different angle. If 80% of IT projects are going pear shaped then what about the other 20%? - i.e. the one's that are delivered on time, on budget and to their correct specification. What is it that the PM's of successful projects are doing that the other 80% aren't doing? And what can we learn from this? Perhaps the answer is that it is something more than a methodology in isolation can provide? Perhaps it is that elusive something called 'real world experience'.

The NewEra solution

Suppose for a moment you are a senior manager in a big corporation with overall responsibility for delivering a massive and complex IT project to meet the strategy set by your board of directors.

Your job is to appoint the Project Manager to oversee the delivery of the solution and you have narrowed your choice down to two candidates for the job.

The first candidate is a young top grade IT graduate who has recently left University and additionally been fully trained in the latest all-embracing software development methodology. The second is a seasoned, mature PM with few qualifications, a slightly cynical view of methodologies, but has a track record of successfully delivering large projects on time and on budget.

Okay – I've simplified the scenario but the point is clear. There is something about real world experience that transcends the theoretical. Something that is not always easy to capture and put in a bottle but something well worth seeking. Let's be clear that this is not decrying the importance or value of a structured framework or methodology, which is often essential, it is rather recognition that the best Project Managers need a whole host of important skills in order to deliver results.

At NewEra we believe that high quality and relevant PM training is critical to success. Not the sterile, mechanistic type of training that shuns the day-to-day reality of living and working in competitive, commercial businesses but rather training that is practical, relevant and focused on the things that really make the difference between success and failure.

In our experience there are a number of key elements that all Project Managers need to understand in order to be fully effective. Many of these elements are missing from traditional PM courses because they are viewed as 'peripheral' or 'soft skills' based. In reality we believe that they are the fundamental building blocks on which effective Project Management is based. These elements include factors like managing and motivating people, learning to be an effective communicator, understanding the real meaning of leadership, understanding what the client is really looking for, understanding planning and estimating, knowing how to deal with issues and problems, knowing how to focus on the things that are important and how to harness the power within teams. That is why our courses focus on developing individuals rather than training a classroom full of 'delegates'.

The next section of this proposal outlines this approach in a little more depth.

Typical Course Content

Because NewEra recognises that every organisation is different our usual policy is to work with clients to customise a course that is perfectly suited to the subject matter and the proposed attendees. Therefore, the course detail below represents a typical example of an IT based Project Management 2 day course, but which can be adapted if necessary to meet any specific client requirements.

"IT Project Management" 2 day training course

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