

Transformation: the Role of the Project Manager

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The importance of the Project Manager's role has been elevated to unprecedented levels in the contemporary business environment. Major and complex transformations involving all areas of the organisation, multiple stakeholders and high levels of unpredictability have become commonplace, and the individuals responsible for managing such projects play a crucial role in the ability of the organization to meet its strategic goals.

Conventional project management training has not evolved in line with the changes in real-life projects; it is still heavily focused on codified professional standards and the technical aspects of project management.

There are three critical success factors in transformation project management:

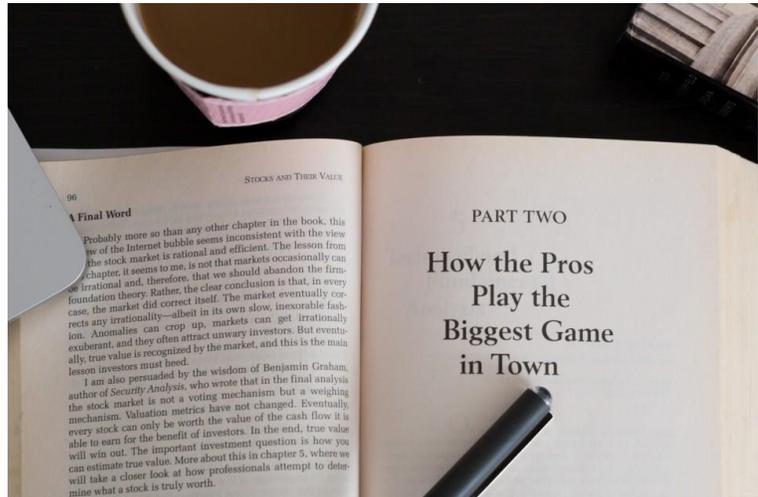
- An art and science based approach to transformation
- An effective partnership between the project manager and the executive sponsor
- A high performance transformation project team

Schroeder & Schroeder's Art and Science of Transformation® framework is concerned with achieving the right balance between technical project management skills and the business-related and interpersonal skills that have become important in the new business environment. The "science" of transformation consists of formal project management techniques, methods and tools while the "art" of transformation consists of the more intangible skills and attributes that are important in managing the people-related aspects of change.

While the "science" of project management is highly important for effective planning, implementation and monitoring of complex, high-risk transformation projects, there is also an increased emphasis on the need for softer "art" related skills and attributes, such as strategic awareness, people acumen, relationship-building skills, emotional intelligence and flexibility.

The executive sponsor of the project supports the project manager by acting as the link between the project and the wider organization, ensuring that the necessary resources as well as the inputs and contributions of various stakeholders are secured. The project manager and the executive sponsor also play different but complementary roles in relation to the inter-related operational and strategic transformation objectives of the project.

The establishment of a project team or teams that collectively provide the necessary functional and specialist knowledge, skills and expertise is the third critical success factor in transformation and will often be drawn from different functional or specialist areas of an organization, or from multiple stakeholder



organizations. Management of this team is central to the role of the transformation project manager, and typically much more challenging than more conventional project team management due to the complexity, high-stakes nature and other characteristics of organizational transformation projects.

It is important that an organization's leadership should take the necessary actions to ensure that the appropriate type of project management expertise is in place, and that the whole organizational environment is prepared in ways which maximize the potential for a successful transformation initiative.

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