

# Cover to Cover

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## Strategic Project Management Transformation: Delivering Maximum ROI & Sustainable Business Value

by Marc Resch

**P**roject management needs a paradigm shift. The old model is flawed. Targeting scope-time-cost constraints is not enough. The traditional project management life cycle methodologies, such as initiate/plan/execute/close, focus on the triple constraint but not on the ultimate project goal of achieving business value. We need a new standard, where value attainment is paramount. A value-centric project life cycle methodology has the power to deliver consistent optimal business returns on project investments. This is the central theme of Marc Resch's new book *Strategic Project Management Transformation: Delivering Maximum ROI & Sustainable Business Value*. His message may not be novel, but his style, candor, and insight are refreshing. He talks to the reader directly in a conversational manner and asks incisive questions. He is clearly adept at breaking down complex business concepts into easily understood snippets. His explanations are lucid and arguments vehement.

A prevalent theme throughout the book is that today's project professionals must possess the requisite business skills. The role of project managers is shifting from simple project execution to providing leadership. The new role requires strategic and business focus that delivers value to the organization's shareholders and stakeholders. It warrants inclusion of value or benefit attainment as a phase in the traditional project life cycle after execution and before closeout. Project teams are responsible for identifying, quantifying, monitoring, and delivering intended benefits. The book fosters eliminating the use of ambiguous terms such as hard vs. soft and tangible vs. intangible benefits in building business cases. Alternatively, it offers: return on investment (ROI) contributors, which directly contribute to a project's ROI and can be quantified and expressed monetarily, and value enablers, which do not directly contribute to a project's ROI but bring about business value in other ways.

The book contains 13 chapters. The first three discuss why projects should be considered strategic investments, how strategic

### STRATEGIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRANSFORMATION

Delivering Maximum ROI & Sustainable Business Value



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planning forms the foundation for project success, and why we need to redefine the project management life cycle to include value attainment. Chapters 4 and 5 are, respectively, about the importance of the business case in value attainment and how effective stakeholder management can drive value. The next few chapters delve into value metrics, starting with their definition. A five-step framework is presented to identify, evaluate, and prioritize the metrics. An illuminating discussion on ROI contributors and value enablers follows a quick review of various cost types. The later chapters are dedicated to basic project finance, including cash flow models and ROI, net present value, internal rate of return, and payback measurements. The last two chapters are on the value attainment phase and continuous value improvement through lessons learned. Each chapter

concludes with the "Professional Development Game Plan for Success." The plan asks thought-provoking questions about your current projects and helps you identify appropriate action plans aimed at value-driven project management.

Strategic alignment, discussed in the earlier chapters as key to project value attainment, receives scant attention in the later ones on project benefits. In fact, it is oddly left out in the weighted attribute scoring matrix (p. 160) that rates various attributes of a project to evaluate its attractiveness. Many organizations weigh strategic fit heavily in the project evaluation process, especially when the benefits are not so easily quantifiable. The critical role of project portfolio management in delivering maximum ROI or creating a balanced approach to project investments to achieve financial and nonfinancial benefits is not even mentioned in the book.

Nevertheless, the book offers a solid foundation for novice as well as experienced project managers who are seeking to learn value-centric project management. It provides project teams with ideas and insights to create value-driven business, increasing the likelihood to gain support and commitment from the senior leaders—a key ingredient of project success.