

PROJECT SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Upper managers in many organizations express frustration through statements such as “We did project management in our company, we spent a lot of money and effort training and educating our project managers, and we developed a project management career path. So why do we still have problems on our projects?”

These managers wonder when they will see improved productivity and profitability from their projects. Vendors provide software tools that appear to offer them the help they need. Conferences and seminars highlight best practices learned by other organizations, how to do portfolio management, and how to capture project requirements. Project managers earn professional certification. They learn that executive support is essential for project management to earn its benefits and enhance the practice. Why, then, do difficulties persist? We believe that an answer may lie in reviewing the organization’s sponsorship skills.

This chapter defines sponsorship and identifies roles and responsibilities. We paint a broad picture of sponsorship applicable to all endeavors and then focus on specific duties that apply to the world of project management.

Challenges

Project managers are more effective when they are *passionate* in their approach to projects and people. They need to reinforce best practices, often more than once, and explain why those methods make the most sense. To ensure that project activities get done the

right way, project managers need to be *persistent*. And in taking the necessary time to talk with people and solve problems requires that they be *patient*. All three of these *P*-words may be regarded with disdain by certain managers.

Managers need to spend time with every project team member, ironing out misunderstandings, miscommunication, and varying perceptions. Managers in a sponsor role need to listen to many team members, even when the messages conveyed are not easy to receive. If you focus on people as human beings, language, culture, and unique behaviors become less of an issue. When people feel valued, they are more proactive, and performance improves. Communication is the underlying problem in many international efforts. Language differences cause difficulty, but a big issue is how different people filter directives they receive. Only 10 percent of the total message people perceive is communicated through words (Harris and Moran, 1996).

Different cultures have different values, so international team members may misunderstand the approach to executing activities and tasks that are prescribed in another country. Good managers clarify reasons for their priorities. Some multinational companies conduct initial project meetings about mission, objective, and personal roles and responsibilities, using teleconferences and videoconferences. They communicate and share information in the same way and rarely hold regular face-to-face meetings. Other companies insist that all team members get together in one place to start up a project. The project manager travels to each country where team members are located to determine the status of activities and to observe feelings, collect inputs, and gather ideas. They give and solicit regular feedback.

Human beings adapt to the environment in which they work. A lack of cultural sensitivity distracts them from the tasks at hand. We advise all managers to understand that in a world of globalization, they must inspire project managers to advance in their understanding of other cultures and behaviors. Managers acting as project sponsors need to demonstrate their own passion to team members. All these human issues surface as sponsorship issues.

Projects Without Sponsorship

It is perhaps easier to describe what sponsorship is not. All too often, no sponsor is assigned to a project, or the one who is assigned disappears shortly after the start and is not around when problems or conflicts appear. Some sponsors are passive; others micromanage, getting involved in every detail or decision. Some sponsors are too busy attending to other responsibilities.

Here is an example without sponsorship:

I (Bucero) managed a migration project for an insurance company while working as a project manager for a multinational services company. The project mission was to change the hardware and software platform from proprietary to open systems. My project sponsor was the general manager of that multinational company. After the proposal was signed, my sponsor took the customer general manager to dinner. At the restaurant, they talked about the importance of the project and about our know-how as providers. The customer said, “You know, we also have some software applications in our old system that would be convenient to be migrated.” My sponsor said, “We have a migration center in my company, and we can migrate your applications for you.” The migration took a year and a half and raised a lot of scope changes, issues, and problems.

When the project started, my sponsor told me, “Bucero, if you need me, please let me know.” However, whenever I asked for more skilled resources, which I did repeatedly, I never got them. My sponsor was too busy—always traveling or otherwise occupied. It was impossible to meet him. I talked to him from time to time, but he reacted only when the customer general manager phoned him. It was very frustrating for me as a project manager and for the team members as well.

Some months later, the customer learned to live without a provider sponsor. The problem was that I had to manage all the issues and problems on my own. Many times this was very complicated. My own organization developed animosity toward me because I escalated too many issues. People would point at me and say, “Your project” . . . this and “Your project” that. I took them aside and told

them, “This is not ‘my’ project; it is a project I am trying to manage *with your support, guys*. If you are not supporting me, the project will fail. I will not be able to do it alone.” The general manager was the project sponsor, but he did not act like one, and that left a huge gap.

In this example, the sponsor supported the team during presales activities but caused trouble because he lacked technical knowledge and appreciation about the project and the difficulties generated by his inaction. He visited the customer on very few occasions. From time to time, he asked me about the project. He never read my e-mails and reports. Consequently, the project was delayed six months. When the project finally got done, the customer was happy with the efforts of the project team but absolutely unhappy with the provider project sponsor and organization.

Case Study

CG, a banking company with offices throughout southern Spain, needed to implement new banking technology. For the new equipment to be successful, stakeholders, including CG’s staff and customers, had to agree to use the technology. One company was chosen to lead organizational acceptance through application of its project management skills and processes. I (Bucero) was the project manager for that project.

After a decade of stability and prosperity, CG was under tremendous competitive pressure. Even though the company’s customers were satisfied with old banking systems and methods, Y2K forced all financial entities to be prepared for disaster, meaning that they had to update or create processes, train people and upgrade, or change technology altogether. If the firm did not adapt, other banking companies would.

CG chose to implement new technology. An internal information systems (IS) strategic project consisting of functional and technological innovations appeared to answer the company’s market and environmental needs.

Clear communication and intimacy with bank managers were critical success factors. The project was clearly linked to the bank's overall customer strategy, and that connection proved very helpful throughout the project. By implementing an evolved information system (from mainframe to open systems), the bank could answer its business and market needs, generate competitive advantages, increase the quality of customer service, and keep an efficient cost and profitability framework. Upper management knew it was a high priority.

Five overall factors were important for CG's project success:

- Upper management sponsorship
- A link between the project and the corporate strategy
- A quality management plan
- Communication planning and deployment
- Encouragement of the end user

The customer project sponsor had authority to make a continuous commitment to the change. He reported directly to the Bank Executive Council. I as the provider project manager spent a lot of time sharing information, thoughts, and ideas with the customer project sponsor.

The provider project sponsor, however, had little involvement in the project. He met the customer project sponsor only twice during the project. The project manager was the only real interface to the customer project sponsor. It was a difficult situation. Many times I felt closer to the client organization than my parent organization, and that created conflicts for me and my manager.

To facilitate the change, the provider shared the plan and its rationale with CG's upper managers to convince them of the plan's effectiveness. Next, we sought approval for the implementation plan from the project sponsor, and the team leader got consensus from the project steering committee as well as other stakeholders in the organization.

The provider team experienced resistance to change throughout the project life cycle. This resistance diminished, however, with personal communication among various stakeholders and by regular discussions with the customer project sponsor.

Change was imposed by the bank, but the provider had to explain the reasons and justifications for that change to each internal group. The project manager had personal meetings with each of the branch directors to clarify project goals and objectives and convince them of the major project benefits for them and for their businesses. The customer project sponsor supported all those meetings, attended some of them, and spoke with the branch directors by phone before each meeting.

The customer situation was stable in terms of processes, people, and technology, but upper managers at the bank knew that they could not ask for extra effort without any added recognition. Customer management compensated team members through bonuses.

Throughout CG, functional team leaders owned the whole project life cycle and were responsible for talking and meeting with end users, leading software development teams, and managing all tests. Leaders were trained by provider consultants to be prepared for managing and motivating their teams. The customer project sponsor spent some time every week talking to functional team leaders. These communications were crucial to the project's success.

Steering committee members also participated, not only in sponsorship tasks but also in all communications and dissemination tasks. The members talked to and supported people, boosting morale and recognizing their efforts publicly. I organized a monthly meeting with the steering committee to clarify roles, responsibilities, and misunderstandings.

Complete buy-in on the project took six months. Success at CG can be measured in terms of people, process, and technology. Defining, modifying, and using processes were some of the most difficult parts of the project, but process ownership was key. Without upper management commitment from the beginning to the end of the project, no project can be successful. The involvement and sup-

port we received from the IS manager of CG (the project sponsor) were very high. The time we spent together established a trusting relationship. Personally, it was hard for me, but I learned that to ensure a project's success, the project manager and the project sponsor must work very closely together.

This case study demonstrates that sponsorship means *commitment to people* in organizations. When we talk about project sponsors, we are referring to managers who are committed to active involvement throughout the project. These are professionals who meet regularly to track progress. One basic characteristic of a good project sponsor is to be clear about the objective and at the same time be consistent, acting as a parachute for the project team. Project sponsorship does not mean doing project planning or work directly.

Sponsorship means dealing with people. The sponsor is both a supplier and protector of resources and the focal point of escalation for the project manager. During the project life cycle, the sponsor acts as a high-level decision maker because he or she is usually more knowledgeable about the business context in which the project operates.

Sponsorship means owning the project objective, determining priorities, and keeping the project going. Many problems can be avoided on a particular project if it has a sponsor who defends the priority of the project, the project manager, and team members. For example, it is very common in organizations that provide services to customers to have conflicts in terms of resource assignments among projects. The sponsor plays a key role in that, keeping the project priority as established at the very beginning of the project. It is key for project success to have a sponsor who gives his or her team the benefit of the doubt and supports the project manager and the team.

Coaching and mentoring are desired characteristics of a good sponsor. In the project field, we do not find many sponsors who have managed projects, making it difficult for them to be effective mentors. Furthermore, they allow themselves to remain woefully ignorant about daily project obstacles, issues, and problems. Sponsorship

means commitment and assuring alignment to objectives from the beginning to the end of the project.

Sponsor Definition

There are definitions of the role of sponsor that extend beyond projects:

1. One who assumes responsibility for another person or a group during a period of instruction, apprenticeship, or probation
2. One who vouches for the suitability of a candidate for admission
3. A legislator who proposes and urges adoption of a bill
4. One who presents a candidate for baptism or confirmation; a godparent
5. One who finances a project or an event carried out by another person or group, especially a business enterprise that pays for radio or television programming in return for advertising time

Not many professionals in organizations have a clear idea of what sponsorship entails. We find different understandings and different behaviors from project sponsors across the vast variety of organizations. Some think that sponsorship is just work authorization, signing up contracts, funding the project, and deciding to go on or not go on to the next phase. Funding projects is a key role of sponsorship, but there is more.

Our definition of sponsorship is a commitment by management to define, defend, and support major activities from the start to the end.

We consider sponsorship is an active role during the project life cycle. Obviously, the types of activities to be done by the project sponsor may be different. But there are some things all sponsors have in common, including obligation, devotion, and achievement—in other words, commitment.

Usually, the project sponsor is a professional with a higher level of authority than the project manager and project team in the organization. It is preferable for the project sponsor to be an experienced executive. The person's experience is crucial to ensure that projects execute organizational strategy because the sponsor is aware of the strategy and can affect resources to support it.

Project Roles and Responsibilities

The project sponsor, the senior manager, the project manager, and the project team all have specific roles and responsibilities.

Project Sponsor

The project sponsor has a relationship with all project stakeholders but even more frequently with the project manager. The project sponsor performs different roles during the project life cycle: seller, coach and mentor, filter, business judge, motivator, negotiator, protector, and upper management link.

Seller: The project sponsor is able to sell the project to project stakeholders. The sponsor believes in the project, speaks positively about it, and can passionately sell the benefits.

Coach and mentor: A good project sponsor increases the level of confidence felt by the project manager. The project sponsor needs to have the ability to instill a sense of confidence in the project manager and protect the project manager from losing that confidence. The project sponsor may help the project manager understand the project business context. In this role, the project sponsor also improves the problem-solving skills and judgment exercised by the project manager. The project sponsor promotes knowledge creation and reuse of project intellectual capital.

Filter: The project sponsor is able to stimulate project leaders by allowing them to focus on the work at hand. The project

sponsor challenges the project manager to consider more possible options and reactions but not get distracted, obliging them both to think before taking action. To be objective in assessing project relevance is an obligation for the sponsor.

Business judge: The project sponsor uses sound business judgment to coach the project manager when making decisions. The project sponsor is recognized as a focal point for decisions beyond the project manager's scope of authority.

Motivator: The project sponsor helps the project manager stay positive and solve problems with the project team. The project sponsor asks for and listens to bad news. The sponsor needs to share status and feelings with the project team about changes happening in the organization. The sponsor is present for celebrations and milestone meetings. The sponsor constantly reminds the project leader about the importance of the project mission.

Negotiator: The project sponsor is swift and decisive in resolving conflicts. The sponsor helps overcome obstacles that are not within the project manager's control. Obstacles may include managers who are not supportive, resource assignment problems, people problems, deadlines, lack of tools, and logistics.

Protector: The project sponsor works proactively with the project manager to manage risk. The sponsor is actively involved throughout the duration of the project. The sponsor keeps executives, managers, and other professionals from interfering with the team and protects the team from unnecessary bureaucracy. The sponsor demonstrates, through personal involvement with the team, that the agreed-on activities are important.

Upper management link: The project sponsor actively develops and manages relationships with peers in client organizations and rapidly builds trust with project managers and clients. Before establishing the project team, the project sponsor explains to the management team the project mission and

objectives, the desired team, and the project descriptions. During the course of the project, the sponsor communicates to senior management and to other stakeholders. The project sponsor asks management for help and support when needed.

Senior Manager

Senior managers have a number of obligations relevant to project success throughout the project life cycle. They delegate upper management support to middle managers in the role of project sponsor. Senior managers need to communicate periodically with project sponsors, and vice versa. Senior managers need to support and listen to project sponsors.

For this to happen, senior managers are more effective when they are clear about the objectives for each project, understand and support the project management process, and know the role of sponsors. Those things take time and commitment. Since senior managers are involved in changes that affect the whole organization, they need to assess how changes affect projects, be proactive in communicating with project teams, stay informed on project progress, and continuously review the project portfolio, both for meeting strategic goals and for necessary revisions. These activities may require additional training.

Project Manager

The project manager is the person responsible for *getting things done*. He or she requires a proactive relationship with the project sponsor and acts at all times as the one person responsible for the project. Good project managers need to develop key skills in a number of important areas:

Leadership: The project manager leads the team in the use of project management methodology.

Business judgment: The project manager demonstrates sound business judgment in managing all aspects of a project. The

manager makes quantitative and qualitative risk analyses and sound contingency plans. The project manager leads the team to achieve maximum business returns.

Motivation: The project manager provides a stimulating work environment and opportunities for people development.

Effectivity: The project manager manages overall project timelines and is effective and timely when issues need to be escalated.

Proactivity: The project manager needs to be proactive in anticipating the needs of team members, the sponsor, and customers.

Communication: The project manager needs good communication skills and needs support to develop whatever additional communication skills may be required.

Risk control: The project manager deals with uncertainty and finds ways to manage and control project risk.

Relationships: The project manager builds relationships with all other project stakeholders.

Project Team

Team members need to understand the high-level methodology process within the context of the project. They can identify phases, major activities, and deliverables within PM methodology. They understand and can articulate standards of business conduct.

They can describe what is legally binding and understand the project terms and conditions for the part that affects their work. They remain cognizant of customer and end user requirements as they strive to meet those requirements.

Project Sponsor Activities

In some organizations, the project manager is selected by the project sponsor; in other companies, that selection is the result of an organizational process related to organization portfolio manage-

ment. Taking into account the project characteristics and the available project managers from the organization, one professional is selected.

The project manager assignment is a formal process that gives the project manager enough authority to manage the project and also formalizes the existence of the project in the organization. The project manager needs to be respected by everyone in the organization and needs not only project management experience but also business context knowledge. It is very important that team members regard the project manager as their leader. That leader will be the link between the team and the sponsor.

An area of focus for sponsors is the start-up phase, when the most crucial decisions are made, setting the tone and pace for the rest of the project. Sponsors make a huge impact by actively participating at the start of each project. The following are some essential activities for project start-up:

- To develop a draft document with the project mission, objectives and constraints
- To identify the right project team members
- To sell the projects to executives and team members (gain commitment)
- To communicate the importance of the project's mission
- To help refine the team mission and objectives as required
- To identify deficiencies in the project plan
- To sell the project to management

Escalating Issues

Although issue management is a project management responsibility, some issues may not be solved by the project manager and need to be escalated to somebody in the organization who has enough power or authority to do so. A wise sponsor coaches the project manager to separate technical from organizational issues and escalate organizational issues that require a broader perspective or authority to

resolve. Establish a flowchart, including trigger criteria, for an escalation process.

Sponsorship Behaviors

To implement project sponsorship in organizations means to change typical behaviors for many managers. Some sponsors suffer from less than adequate leadership and people skills; others do not know what customers need and do not see the big picture.

The “mind map” in Figure 1.1 shows desired behaviors to be implemented in organizations that want to support excellence in project sponsorship. A good project sponsor needs to deal with resource availability, minimize functional barriers, get help from upper management, and be sure the right tools are used. For example, a good project sponsor attends management meetings and project portfolio meetings and deals with maintaining project priorities. Project sponsors ensure that projects link to organizational strategy. The project sponsor role is sometimes a difficult and unpleasant job, but it is also a challenge. As each project moves forward, many issues—depicted in Figure 1.2—come up with the team, project manager, other stakeholders, and sometimes the project sponsor.

Environment Problems

A key obligation of the project sponsor is to create the right environment for project success. When a team is in trouble, it is helpful to find out if there is any problem in the organization (crises, bad figures or results, changes)—anything that can divert the attention of team members. The project sponsor spends time explaining the importance of the project and how every team member will be part of project and organizational success.

Promoting dialogue and discussion among team members and with the sponsor helps a lot. For this reason, the project sponsor may want to attend some team meetings and gain a sense of the team.

Figure 1.1 A Map of Sponsorship Behaviors

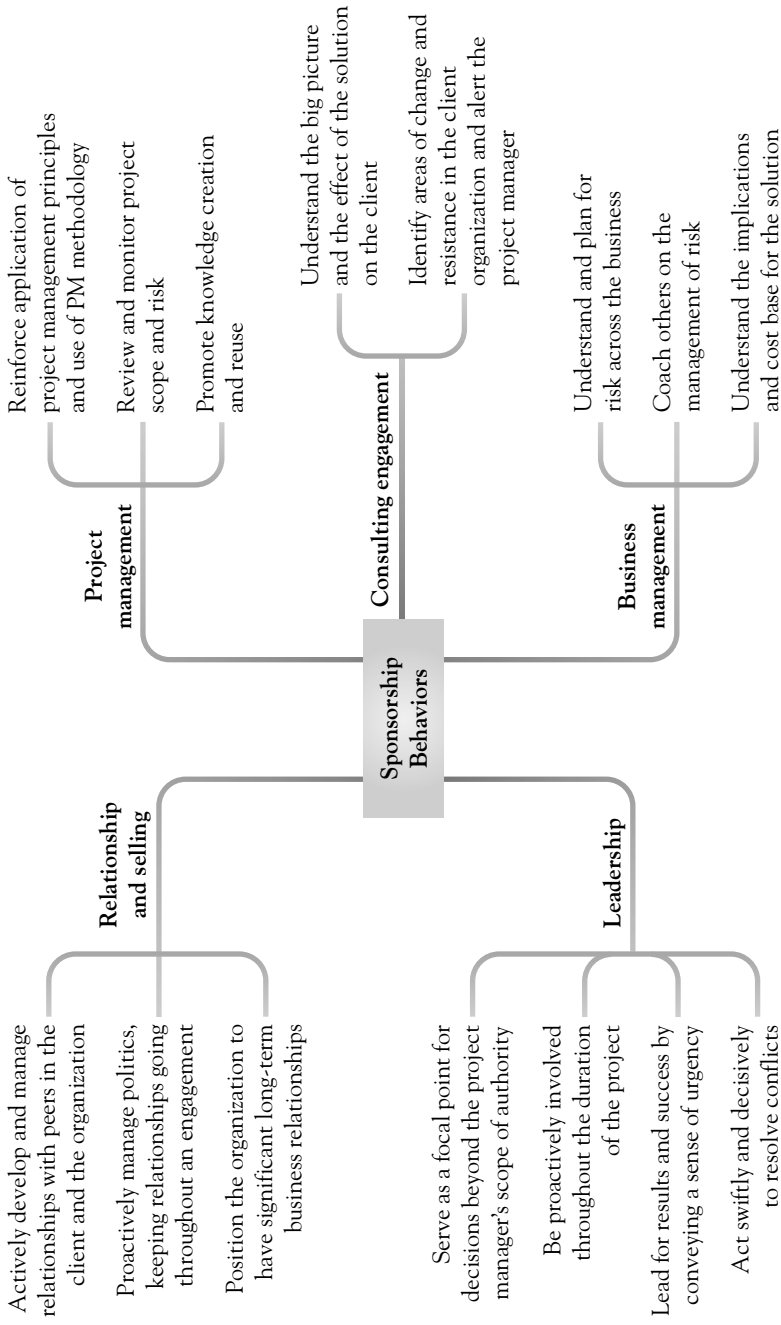
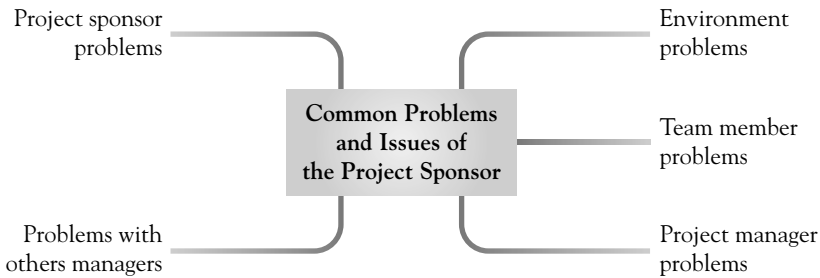


Figure 1.2 Typical Sponsorship Problems

Problems with Team Members

Project sponsors can be helpful in a number of ways.

- *Project sponsors can ensure that project team members attend project meetings.* Missing team meetings may cause team productivity problems and lead to more problems for the rest of the team, lack of motivation, and low morale. The project sponsor is best advised to deal with the problem immediately, talking to each person who misses a meeting, finding out the causes, and ensuring resolution. Teamwork is crucial for project success.

- *Project sponsors can protect team members from serious conflicts.* Sometimes the stress of project work or other circumstances generates conflicts between two or more people. The project sponsor can ask individually about the causes of the conflict and try to resolve it.

- *Project sponsors can keep the team from becoming too dependent on the sponsor.* Some teams need too much direction from the project sponsor. This usually happens when the organization has an autocratic management style. The project sponsor needs to delegate sufficient authority to the project manager.

- *Project sponsors can prevent team conflict during presentations.* Sometimes team members have different opinions or arguments regarding project activities and execution. If during management presentations, some of them seem to not fully support recommendations, fall apart, or argue about their differences, the project sponsor may need to facilitate more effort on teamwork and motivation.

- *Project sponsors can make sure that team members do not skip steps.* In some projects, the team skips actions or tasks in the project plan or does an inadequate job. Sometimes this is because the project manager lacks authority. In that case, the project sponsor needs to reinforce the power and authority of the project manager within the team, as well as support following the PM methodology.

- *Project sponsors can keep team members from becoming dysfunctional.* A team member can disrupt teamwork and team progress during the project life cycle. Project managers usually deal with that situation first, but if the manager is unable to solve it or carries too long, the issue needs to be addressed by the project sponsor.

- *Project sponsors can keep the team moving.* When the project manager acts to speed up a slow-moving team but fails, the project sponsor may want to organize a meeting and investigate the circumstances.

- *Project sponsors can prevent stalemates.* The project sponsor supports the project manager to choose the best people available. However, getting the right people is not always possible, and some projects do not make progress, even after meeting and brainstorming. In that case, the project sponsor and project manager need to talk, find out what the obstacles are, and develop a different approach before meeting with the project team again. The reason may require unseating false expectations and creating clear stakeholder expectations. It may mean rescoping the project to match the resources and time available.

- *Project sponsors can prevent meeting interruptions.* A best practice for the project leader, with support from the sponsor, is to ask each member to accept accountability for meeting success and discipline in following effective meeting processes. Mobile phones should be turned off. People should commit to the whole meeting and be actively engaged. The first person who should set the example is the project sponsor.

- *Project sponsors can make sure that the project's mission and objectives are validated throughout the project life cycle.* This means that the project sponsor clarifies the desired specific achievement and answers questions that may arise. The sponsor has a key responsibility

to keep the team on track and to handle changes when they are mandated by circumstances or strategic shift or when progress (or lack thereof) suggests that the objective may need modification.

Project Manager Problems

Project sponsors may have to deal with some of the following scenarios:

- *Project manager avoids project sponsor:* Sometimes the project manager does not understand the role of project sponsor or does not want to be available for meetings with the project sponsor. In some cases, the project manager feels intimidated by the project sponsor; at other times, the project manager is uncomfortable in that role or is afraid of reporting negative behaviors from a team member. Sometimes there is a communication problem or a chemistry problem. Although it is a requirement of project management to work well with people, not all project managers and project sponsors can understand each other. Believe it or not, even some sponsors are very difficult to work with.

- *Project manager in the middle:* The project manager feels bad because the team is heading one way and the project sponsor wants something else to happen. Sometimes that situation is also a communication problem. The project manager and project sponsor need to agree on and clarify all project objectives. The project manager has a role to create teamwork and motivation from the beginning of the project. In order to help, the project sponsor needs to create and support an open, trusting atmosphere among project manager and team members.

- *Project manager not working out:* It may be that the wrong manager was assigned to the project. In many companies, there are no established criteria for project manager selection. Accidental project managers—those assigned at random or because they happened to be at the place at a certain time or made a suggestion—are not prepared for the job. Sometimes technical experts are assigned as project managers, and they do not like to deal with people.

- *Project manager burnout*: The project manager's spirit is going down because he or she is overloaded or has a poor relationship with the project sponsor or team (or both) or does not receive sufficient support from the sponsor.

Problems with Other Managers

Sometimes, mainly in non-project-oriented organizations, we find three types of difficult managers: *unsupportive managers* who refuse to allow employees to attend project meetings, *sabotaging managers* who undermine the team's mission, performance, or recommendations, and *threatened managers* who are upset that employees are meeting with upper managers and the project sponsor.

Project Sponsor Problems

Project sponsors can cause problems too. Project sponsors tend to use certain styles of management that are ineffective or inappropriate:

- *Tendency to overcontrol*: The project sponsor acts like a super project manager. Sometimes this is a management style. At other times, the project is very critical and the project sponsor is nervous or uncomfortable.
- *Proximity*: The project sponsor stays too close to the team or too far from the team. For example, the project sponsor attends all meetings and asks too many questions of all team members. Or the project sponsor attends the project start-up and management meetings but does not display interest in the project's day-to-day issues. Or the sponsor is virtual, residing at a distant location.
- *Lack of time*: The project sponsor is not able to spend time supporting the team by meeting with the project leader, is unable to attend team meetings, or is too busy with other activities.
- *Manipulating the team*: The project sponsor believes that he or she knows the right team approach or plan and influences the team to do only what he or she wants.

- *Not sharing*: The project sponsor does not believe in the team and refuses to share thoughts or ideas, assuming that the team must explore everything from scratch.

Tools

Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 reflect three different approaches to the sponsorship role. Table 1.1 is based on the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) (Project Management Institute, 2004), Table 1.2 is client-based, and Table 1.3 is for new product development. Each provides a proactive basis for creating an effective project environment and avoiding problems.

Summary

Project success can be ensured through better project sponsorship. Sometimes executives are unable to pull the plug on “ill projects.” Yet all the resources, energy, and passion not poured into those “ill projects” could substantially improve the company bottom line. Project sponsors fulfill a crucial role by guiding right decision making throughout the project life cycle.

Executives are advised to support project management in organizations in order to reap the benefits. This means they need to spend time understanding their roles and responsibilities during project life cycles. Sponsorship means dealing with people. Unfortunately, many professionals operate without a clear definition of sponsorship. Sponsorship requires taking an active role during the whole project. Serving as the project sponsor requires making a commitment to define, fund, defend, and support major activities from the start to the end.

As explained in this chapter, the project sponsor has a relationship with all project stakeholders, especially the project manager. The project sponsor performs various roles (such as seller, coacher, and mentor) during the phases of each project. Many of these roles require that new skills be developed. That takes time.

Table 1.1 Roles Under PMBOK-Based Sponsorship

<i>Sponsor Activities</i>	<i>Project Management Deliverables</i>	<i>Initiation Process Group</i>	<i>Planning Process Group</i>	<i>Execution Process Group</i>	<i>Control Process Group</i>	<i>Close Process Group</i>
Project initiation	Project charter	E				
Scope review	Preliminary project scope status	R/I	R/I	R/I	R/I	
Getting informed	PM plan	R				
Getting informed	Deliverables			I	I	I/A
Review request	Requirement changes			I/R	I/R	
Is informed	Work performance information			I	I	
Is informed	Approved change request				I	
Is informed	Rejected change request				I/R	
Review with PM	PM plan updates				I/R	
Review with PM	Project scope status updates				I/R	
Is informed	Performance reports				I/R	
Is informed, reviews, and shares	Forecasts				I/R/S	
To be informed	Administrative closure				I/A	
To be informed	Contract closure					I
Approves and is informed	Project acceptance					I/A

Note: E = execute, R = review, I = inform, A = approve, S = share.

**Table 1.2 Questions to Be Answered
When Contemplating Client-Based Sponsorship**

Understanding the Client

- What is the business condition?
- What are the account's major products and services?
- What is the company's position in the marketplace?
- What are the business objectives of this account?
- What is the account's industry climate?
- What is the account's position in the industry?
- Who are the major or key clients of this client?
- What is the account's IT environment and installed base?

Understanding the Deal

- What are the client's business needs for this project?
- What are the requirements and client expectations for this project?
- Is the project in line with or part of the client's strategic plan?

Influencing the Solution

- Are we driving the solution planning and design as a trusted adviser?
- What is the differentiation of the proposed solution based on?
- What are the needed presales resources and related costs?
- What is the total presales time?

Understanding the Provider Profit and Risk

- What is the calculated monetary risk in this deal?

Pursuing the Deal

- Can the provider establish a sales presence with reasonable investment?
- What is the financial condition of the account?
- Are funds designated in the client's budget for this project?
- What is the provider's business potential in this project?
- What is the level of client competence in this project?
- Does the client have a clear driving mechanism for the buy?
- What is the strategic marketing value of this project?

Fitness to Compete

- What is the provider's position in the client relationship?
- Why does the client want to do business with us?

Positioning to Win

- Does the deal team have access to the client's upper management?
- What is the sales objective?
- What is the selected sales strategy?
- What is the plan to compete against a suspected indirect counterstrategy?
- What is the tactical plan to close the deal?

Resources

- Is a steering committee required?
- Are required project team members available?

Table 1.3 New Product Development Process

<i>Phase 0</i> <i>Requirements and Planning</i>	<i>Phase 1</i> <i>Study and Definition</i>	<i>Phase 2</i> <i>Specify and Design</i>	<i>Phase 3</i> <i>Development and Testing</i>	<i>Phase 4</i> <i>Pilot Testing and Prep</i>	<i>Phase 5</i> <i>Enhancement and Support</i>	<i>Phase 6</i> <i>Maturity</i>
Describe specific requirements consistent with business and technology plans	Define the product; integrate the product into functional strategies	Identify and commit resources; design the product	Develop the product	Test the product; prepare for shipment	Support the product; complete product enhancements	Maintain the product; discontinue the product
Phase Exit Objectives						
Complete Activities or Deliverables at Phase Exit						
Product and market requirements complete	Product specifications complete; product schedule and inter-dependencies determined	Design specifications complete; functional plans complete; design released	Functionality complete; prototype signoff	Product, certification, and user testing complete; product released	Production and sales objectives met; enhancements implemented	Discontinuance plans implemented; CPE complete
Sponsor Commitments at Phase Exit						
Fund and staff product study; identify vision and constraints	Fund and staff product design; validate product objectives	Fund and staff product development, testing, and support; validate product plan	Decide on price, performance, availability, and product manufacture	Authorize unrestricted customer shipments	Support current product engineering	Provide specialized support

Sponsor activities and behaviors vary with the organization. The lack of good project sponsorship is a major cause of difficulties and problems on projects. Well-executed sponsorship by senior executives brings better project results.

The key lessons are these:

- The absence of thoughtfully assigned sponsors with well-defined and clearly understood responsibilities is a major cause of project difficulties and frustrations.
- Complex programs that cross internal and external organizations require a structured approach to sponsorship.
- Senior executives are more effective when they understand their role as sponsors and do not delegate this responsibility to lower levels.
- Well-executed sponsorship brings financial results, increases motivation and participation, and improves the impact of project-based work on the organization.

A good project sponsor needs to deal with resource availability, minimize functional barriers, get help from senior management, and be sure the right tools are used. A key obligation of the project sponsor is to create the right environment for project success. Problems and issues that arise from people working on projects are greatly eased when effective sponsors are fully present and skilled in fulfilling their roles. The rest of this book addresses how to make this happen.

