UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following published document and is licensed under Publisher's Licence Non-Commercial Use license:

Walther, Ronald A (2015) The Art of Project Management: Orchestrating Multicultural Project Teams. In: HR Practices, Strategic and Entrepreneurial Challenges: Academic and Practitioners Views. EuroMed Press, Paris, France, pp. 342-344. ISBN 9789963711321

EPrint URI: https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/2276

Disclaimer

The University of Gloucestershire has obtained warranties from all depositors as to their title in the material deposited and as to their right to deposit such material.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation or warranties of commercial utility, title, or fitness for a particular purpose or any other warranty, express or implied in respect of any material deposited.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation that the use of the materials will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark or other property or proprietary rights.

The University of Gloucestershire accepts no liability for any infringement of intellectual property rights in any material deposited but will remove such material from public view pending investigation in the event of an allegation of any such infringement.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE
at Cheltenham and Gloucester

This is a peer-reviewed, final published version of the following document:

Walther, Ronald A (2015) *The Art of Project Management: Orchestrating Multicultural Project Teams.* In: HR Practices, Strategic and Entrepreneurial Challenges: Academic and Practitioners Views. EuroMed Press, Paris, France, pp. 342-344. ISBN 9789963711321

The full conference proceedings are available online at
http://euromed2015.com/conference.html

Disclaimer

The University of Gloucestershire has obtained warranties from all depositors as to their title in the material deposited and as to their right to deposit such material.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation or warranties of commercial utility, title, or fitness for a particular purpose or any other warranty, express or implied in respect of any material deposited.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation that the use of the materials will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark or other property or proprietary rights.

The University of Gloucestershire accepts no liability for any infringement of intellectual property rights in any material deposited but will remove such material from public view pending investigation in the event of an allegation of any such infringement.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

Published Version

THE ART OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT: ORCHESTRATING MULTICULTURAL PROJECT TEAMS

Walther, Ronald, Andreas[1]

[1]Human Resource Management Research Centre (HRMRC), University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, UK

Abstract

The research aims to identify common attributes of world-class conductors of symphonic orchestras and managers of multicultural projects involving highly skilled personnel. Additionally, the research will focus on aspects from this comparison, which could potentially enrich existing project management models, methods or tools. A further aim is to identify opportunities to organise or orchestrate highly skilled multicultural project teams to manage cultural interference effectively.

The different cultural backgrounds of project team members can lead to problems in social interaction. Social interaction has been found to have a direct impact on outcomes delivered by project teams (see e.g. Bouncken (2009), Hong and Boyd (2010), IT Cortex (2012a), IT Cortex (2012b), Kerzner (2013)). A rich body of academic literature addresses these problems, predominantly however from a post project perspective (see e.g. Williams and Kendrick (2011)). Further research is required to consider how, from a pre-project perspective, these problems could be avoided, rather than dealing with them retrospectively. This research seeks to demonstrate how the work of world-class conductors can be compared to the work of managers of highly skilled multicultural projects. How, for example, could the comparison be used to enrich project management models, methods or tools? Additionally, what opportunities exist to improve the effective management of cultural interference by organising or orchestrating highly skilled multicultural project teams?

There is an assumption that orchestrating highly skilled multicultural project teams is more complex than managing homogeneous low-skilled project teams, because intellectual and cultural difference add an additional dimension to management (see e.g. McCann and Margerison (1989)). However, it has become apparent that there is no a specific and universal way of orchestrating highly skilled multicultural project teams (see e.g. Edmondson (2012)). The perceptions and interpretations of project members are affected by cultural factors (theirs and that of the context), which leads to different decisions and behaviours (see e.g. Hofstede (2001)).

Such cultural differences affect approaches to managing highly skilled multicultural project teams or interactions within these teams (see e.g. Hofstede (1980)). Furthermore, this has a direct impact on the outcome of the projects (see e.g. Bouncken et al. (2008)).

During the research journey, the use of the metaphorical device of the orchestral conductor has changed from a means of illustration to an academic research approach. This is because a metaphorical comparison allows the combining of knowledge from different disciplines. The discipline of conducting originates from the science of 'art' and music performance and production in particular, whilst the discipline of project management has developed from economics. Like project managers, conductors use tools to interact with team members (musicians). By studying the conductors' tools and behaviours, this study will develop a new understanding of how project managers can improve their project management.

A brief literature search on statements such as "What are the qualities of a good conductor?" reveals differing perspectives. These perspectives make clear that beyond the competence to read notes, understand music, a knowledge of instruments, etc., a good conductor requires additional soft skills such as emotional intelligence (see e.g. Abbas (2013)).

The use of metaphor-based analysis can be seen as an innovation in qualitative analysis methods (Sharp et al., 2005). Gentner (1983) pointed out that a metaphor can be seen as a structural mapping of knowledge from a base domain to a target domain. Thus, this approach serves as a mechanism to develop a depiction of a set of relations. To achieve this, data analysis will be based on an open-ended inductive process, where the aim is to build up a theory. A preliminary task is to critically validate existing project management methods, tools and personal soft skills as cited for a project manager with the findings derived from conductors and musicians in orchestras. The use of semi-structured interviews serves to identify parallels and comparable attributes (Given, 2008). These parallels and attributes will be used to develop clusters applicable to both contexts. The use of metaphor in interpreting the qualitative data requires a three-step process for the analysis of the interview data (Sharp et al., 2005). Firstly, to identify the initial mappings to verify that the particular metaphor is likely to be useful; secondly, to seek confirmatory mappings to endorse that the metaphor supports existing observations about project management and thirdly to use properties of the metaphor to explore further findings. This process was developed by Sharp et al. (2005) and was successfully used in qualitative research based on metaphor. The emphasis in this approach is vested in an explorative stage, which seeks to explore the properties of the metaphor within the qualitative data.

Keywords: Project Management, Project Manager, Project Team, Culture, Diversity, Conductor, Symphonic Orchestra, Metaphor.

References

Abbas, A. (2013). *Project Manager Skills* [Online]. Available: http://www.pmbody.com/most-important-skills-for-a-project-manager/ [Accessed 03-10 2014].

Bouncken, R. B. (2009). Cultural Diversity in Innovation Teams: Surface and Deep Level Effects. *International Journal of Business Research,* 9**,** 17-26.

Bouncken, R. B., Ratzmann, M. and Winkler, V. A. (2008). Cross-Cultural Innovation Teams: Effects of four Types of Attitudes towards Diversity. *Journal of International Business Strategy,* 8**,** 26-36.

It Cortex 2012a. *Project Failure Statistics* [Online]. Available: http://www.it-cortex.com/Stat_Failure_Cause.htm [Accessed 04.10 2014].

It Cortex 2012b. *Statistics over IT Failure Rate* [Online]. Available: http://www.it-cortex.com/Stat_Failure_Rate.htm#The%20OASIG%20Study%20(1995) [Accessed 04.10 2014].

Edmondson, A. C. (2012). Teamwork on the Fly. *Harvard Business Review,* 90**,** 72-80.

Gentner, D. (1983). Structure-Mapping: A Theoretical Framework for Analogy. *Cognitive Science,* 7**,** 155-170.

Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods,* SAGE Publications, Inc.

Hofstede, G. H. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values,* Beverly Hills, Calif., Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. H. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations,* Thousand Oaks, Calif., Sage Publications.

Hong, X. And Boyd, D. (2010). Learning from Cross-Cultural Problems in International Projects: A Chinese Case. *Engineering Construction & Architectural Management,* 17**,** 549-562.

Kerzner, H. (2013). *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling,* Wiley.

Mccann, D. And Margerison, C. (1989). Managing High-Performance Teams. *Training & Development Journal,* 43**,** 52.

Sharp, H., Woodman, M. And Hovenden, F. (2005). Using Metaphor to Analyse Qualitative Data: Vulcans and Humans in Software Development. *Empirical Software Engineering,* 10**,** 343-365.

Williams, T. C. And Kendrick, T. (2011). *Rescue the Problem Project: A Complete Guide to Identifying, Preventing, and Recovering from Project Failure,* AMACOM.