Breaking the Code of Project Management

By A. Laufer

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This new classic is an examination of how to refigure project management to be more efficient and effective, particularly in terms of leadership. Using a case study approach, the author, Alex Laufer presents a specific set of guidelines on how to improve the team approach to any project, be it a new airline jet or an IT project.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Many of us have been preaching for some years that thetraditional analytical tools of project management best exemplified byCPM scheduling, have tiny impact on project success and failure. It s actually all about the behavior and interactions of people. Dr. Laufer has brought into onebook an account of all the people factors, considered perhapsfor the first time as a whole system. The perceptions and scholarship are inspiring and the breadth ofsupporting data and opinion impressive. Getting alarge body of differently skilled and differently motivated people to work together to achieve a single goal whilst everybody is constantly assaulted by theunexpected is the real projectmanagement challenge. Thisbook will be a tremendous help to the profession in meetingthe challenge."

Dr. Martin Barnes, President, Association for Project Management; former Chairman, Council of the International Project Management Association

"This is an extraordinary book and an exceptional resource for project managers. The experience I had in reading Breaking the Code was repeated flashes of "That s it!" A series of "nuggets of wisdom" that I would want to pass on to protégé project managers. Fairly simple concepts that are not necessarily difficult to implement, but are not intuitive and typically learned only through trail by fire. It reads like the combined wisdom and experience of hundreds of years, distilled down into the important 1% and presented as a workable model of project management mastery. It should be revisited on a regular basis to inform every project manager s changing reality, so be prepared to see dog-eared copies of this book on desks everywhere."

Scott Tibbitts, Managing Director, SpaceDev Inc.; Founder, Starsys Research Inc.

"This is a significant book. Anyone who has read the typical offerings on project management should read this one as an antidote. Anyone who hasn t studied the standard works should start here and skip the others. "Breaking the code" means overcoming the standard procedures for managing projects. It also means figuring out how to really be successful. The book does both. Laufer helps us let go of the convenient fictions about well-ordered situations. Managers should be so lucky. Laufer shows that a "permanent white water" mentality is more apt. The tools that fit well-ordered situations aren't of much use in turbulent and complex environments. Fortunately, Laufer provides a set of strategies that are much more suited to the challenges facing project managers. And he gets this all across with a continuous stream of real-life stories."

Dr. Gary Klein, author of "Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions"

"All white-collar work today is project work. Experienced and less experienced project managers alike have all been waiting too long for this breakthrough in project management. In giving us the "real story" of project management, Breaking the Code of Project Management combines the rigor of Good to Great with the conviction of Organizing Genius and the spirit of In Search of Excellence. No project manager can afford not to read and re-read this superb book."

Dr. Edward J. Hoffman, Director, NASA Academy of Program and Project Engineering and Leadership

"This book is the breakthrough in projct management we ve all been waiting for - real principles illustrated by real stories told by real people. Unlike other books on the subject, Breaking the Code of Project

Management tackles central issues and dilemmas in the complex reality of today's project environments. By using stories drawn from the experiences of master project managers, Dr. Laufer provides us with cutting-edge guidelines for dealing with multiple and conflicting demands and adeptly demonstrates how they all work together to get the best results. Breaking the Code is the ultimate handbook in project management and a must-read for practitioners as well as for students."

Gregory A. Howell, Co-Founder & COO, Lean Construction Institute

"Agile programmers and non-software project managers alike, take note. In this book, Dr. Laufer synthesizes from within the field of classical project management the results of modern agile and lean software development, and more. He shows project management to be the human-centered, creative, and determined activity that it should be. For me, this book gives hope to the project management profession as a whole as well as to the future of software project management."

Dr. Alistair Cockburn, President, Humans and Technology, co-author of the Manifesto for Agile Software Development

"Breaking the Code is an important and timely book. It presents fresh concepts that are uniquely packaged and thought-provoking for both master project managers and beginners. Some books are valuable to practitioners within a specific industry, while others provide "truths" which are so basic that they transcend all boundaries. Breaking the Code definitely falls in the latter category. It will help project managers everywhere to understand their own practices and to think through their problems with sharper insight."

Ian Mitroff, Professor Emeritus of Business Policy, University of Southern California; author or co-author of 26 books, including "The Essential Guide to Managing Corporate Crisis" and "The Unbounded Mind"

"Dr. Laufer sResults-FocusedLeadershipmodel is a simple, yet powerfuland elegant, toolforsuccessfulproject managers in their struggle to remain agile and responsiveto our dynamic andglobally competitive environment. His five eloquently presentedprinciples are grounded in reality and provide practicaland insightfuladvice and guidance forinspiredleadership,effective communication,and the unlearning of outdatedconcepts. A must read for all project managers."

Sylvia V. Baca, Vice President for Social Investment Programs and Strategic Partnerships, BP America

"Dr. Laufer not only understands that project management must evolve to meet current needs, but recognizes that the key to identifying cutting-edge concepts is to extract and document the tacit knowledge of competent practitioners. As in his earlier works, Dr. Laufer departs from conventional wisdom to provide real solutions for forward-looking organizations in the 21st century."

Hugh Woodward, former Chair, Project Management Institute

"Breaking the Code of Project Management focuses on the future of project management - a future in which the ability to take action early, reflect on those actions, and adapt quickly will lead to success. Rather than the traditional "corrective action," the future is one of "adaptive action." Laufer s work, which is deeply aligned with agile principles, provides us with a fresh approach to the real dilemmas of project management."

Jim Highsmith, author of "Agile Project Management: Creating Innovative Products"

"Dr. Laufer has painted a masterpiece on the art of Project Management. By combining his research, personal experiences and real life stories, he has created a pallet of skills which both new and experienced

project managers can use to evaluate and improve their own pallets so that they too can consistently deliver highly successful projects."

W. Scott Cameron, Global Project Management Process Owner, The Procter & Gamble Company

About the Author
ALEXANDER LAUFER is the Barney Seidle Chair in Construction Engineering at Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, where he served as Dean of the Faculty between 2001 and 2005. He is also currently director of the Center for Project Leadership of Columbia University. He is the author of the co-author of *Shared Voyage: Learning and Unlearning from Remarkable Projects*, NASA History Office, 2005; the co-author of *Project Management Success Stories: Lessons of Project Leaders*, Wiley, 2000; the author of *Simultaneous Management: Managing Projects in a Dynamic Environment*, AMACOM, The American Management Association, 1997; and the co-author of *In Quest of Project Excellence through Stories*, Procter& Gamble, 1994. He is currently a member of the Editorial Review Board of the Project Management Journal.

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