



## Principles of Project Leadership

by: Paula K. Martin, CEO, Martin Training Associates

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Principles serve as guideposts or beacons that help you stay on course with your project. Let's review seven principles of project leadership.

Principle number 1: People own what they participate in creating. When team members work together to create a project plan and then monitor and control the project, they take ownership not only for their own work, but also for the project as a whole.

Some projects leaders fear losing control of the project if the team participates. Actually the opposite is true – the project is under more control because teams make better decisions and are more committed to carrying them out.

Principle number 2: People are inspired by what is meaningful to them. To make a project meaningful to the team, you need to connect the project to the strategic goals of the organization. When people on a team understand the project – why it's being done, what they are supposed to do, how what they do affects others and fits into the whole picture, they are more effective as individuals and more effective as a team.

Principle number 3: Team members that understand how the parts of a project fit together are more committed to making the project successful. It's important for everyone to understand the interdependencies in the project and to see how their pieces are essential to getting the whole project completed successfully. Create the schedule on banner paper with sticky notes with the team. That way they'll understand how their pieces fit into the big picture.

Principle number 4: Team buy-in is in-

creased if team members work from shared information. Use visual, team-based tools to guide the project management process so that everyone sees the same information presented. Record ideas and decisions on flipchart paper. Use sticky notes for recording ideas. Team-based tools provide a structured way for everyone on the team to contribute and to reach consensus on a decision or solution.

Principle number 5: Show your appreciation for the contributions of each individual on the team and for the team as a whole. People are more motivated to perform when they feel valued. When teams are valued, they also perform better. Not everyone on a team will feel valued in the same way. However, there are some standard ways in which to value people and teams.

Take time at each team meeting to recognize accomplishments and thank people for their contributions. Periodically solicit their feedback on how you can improve. In addition, when significant accomplishments are achieved, take time for a small celebration.

As important as recognition and celebration are, it's equally important for the team to feel you're on their side and if they take a risk, that you'll support them. If you want a motivated team, remove obstacles and provide a shield that minimizes outside interference.

Principle number 6: To build a team you must build and maintain an environment of mutual trust and respect.

Trust takes time to build. Tips for building trust include:

- ✓ Honor diversity of thinking, learning and other individual differences
- ✓ Don't make promises you can't keep
- ✓ Keep your commitments
- ✓ Maintain confidences
- ✓ Value each person's inputs and ideas
- ✓ Be honest
- ✓ Use good people skills
- ✓ Use good facilitation skills
- ✓ Eliminate blame

Although trust is built slowly, it can be destroyed in an instant, and when it has been destroyed, rebuilding trust takes a very long time.

Principle number 7: Empower the team.

Try these tips for empowering the team:

- ✓ Have the team create the project plan
- ✓ Maintain team ownership during execution
- ✓ Create clear accountability and then don't micromanage
- ✓ Set up an oversight process so you have early warning signs if the project is off track
- ✓ Make sure people have the resources/cooperation they need to get the job done
- ✓ Make sure people have the skills to do the work assigned

Try applying these seven basic principles and see if they don't make you a more effective leader.

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Paula Martin is the CEO of Martin Training Associates, a management training and consulting firm. She is the author of seven books including the *Project Management Memory Jogger™* and *Executive Guide: The 7 Keys to Success*. For more information, visit their website: [www.martintraining.net](http://www.martintraining.net). Phone: 866-922-3122 or 513-563-3512.

## President's Message

by Ed Miller, PMP

It has been another successful year for our chapter. In October, at PMI's Leadership Meeting and Annual Symposium in San Antonio, the New Jersey Chapter was presented with our eighth consecutive Sustained Superior Performance Award and with a plaque celebrating its Twentieth Anniversary. In addition, our New Jersey Project of the Year, the Merck-Medco Omega Automated Pharmacy Project, was one of the three international finalists in the 2002 PMI Project of the Year Award Program.

Other positive signs for our chapter include:

- Membership – We have grown to over 2500 members (with over 900 PMP's) and are one of the five largest of the 198 chapters worldwide.
- Dinner Meetings – The average attendance has increased and we have had several meetings with over 200 attendees. We also just initiated on-line registration.
- NJ Annual Symposium – Despite the economic turndown, last May's symposium was a great success –in terms of both attendance and attendee feedback.
- PMP Exam Prep Course – We provide this course three times each year with the support of volunteer instructors from our membership. Because it offers a lot of value for a modest cost, it is regularly sold-out more than a month in advance.
- Newsletter – Over the last two years, our newsletter has been revived and improved.

- NJ Chapter Website ([www.pminj.org](http://www.pminj.org)) – Our website is regularly visited by many members seeking current chapter activities or past program presentations.

Thanks to our many volunteers, our chapter has much to be proud of. Yet, we also have challenges which deserve our attention. Some of the concerns discussed at recent board meetings are:

- Large Service Area –Although most of our members are concentrated in central and northern New Jersey, we serve the entire state. We presently hold our meetings at a variety of locations and would like to find other ways of addressing our geographical distribution. Some thoughts:
  - Last year, we initiated an annual joint meeting with the Delaware Valley Chapter. We would like to strengthen that relationship in order to better serve southern New Jersey.
  - We are currently forming a group of northern New Jersey members for the purpose of organizing some programs in that area.
- Bigness – Our large dinner meetings have many advantages including the ability to attract good speakers and opportunities for attendee networking. However, the opportunities for follow-up questions and discussions are limited. We would like to foster opportunities for smaller, more focused groups to get together.
- Community Service – We would like to find appropriate ways of contributing volunteer members' PM expertise to charitable projects in New Jersey.

If you have any suggestions, please contact me or any other board member.

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The Chapter congratulates the following 154 PMI NJ Chapter members who achieved PMP certification or recertification between August 2002 and October 2002.

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## Unconstrained Thinking: (Bench)Marketing

By Frank Patrick

Back in the early days of Unconstrained Thinking essays, I wrote a piece on **(Bench)Marketing Time**. In it, I questioned the value of benchmarking for improving operations. One organization's solution is rarely appropriate for a second organization. And if it's a competitor being benchmarked, the result will be at best one of catching up and not one of true innovation.

I have, however, come up with an appropriate subject for benchmarking, especially in these restrained economic times – your market and its problems. The target of this benchmarking effort is that aspect of your market's processes that is related to your product; how they acquire and use your products, and what problems they face with and around its use.

Once the targets are understood, truly profitable innovation comes from solving more and "more valuable" problems felt by your market in a way that refers primarily to your own internal understanding and rules of how the business works. By focusing on these internal policies and paradigms, it makes it harder for competition to copy your offering. The core of the approach, based on the TOC Thinking Processes, is as follows:

1. Identify problems suffered by the supply chain of your market that are related to your offering (both the actual product itself and the ways in which you present and deliver it).

*(Continued on page 9)*

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# The Art of Execution

By Randy M. Parker, PMP

*Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done* by Larry Bossidy, Ram Charan and Charles Burck, 278 pp., New York, Crown Business.

*Who Says Elephants Can't Dance? Inside IBM's Historic Turnaround* by Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., 372 pp., New York, Harper-Business.

In recent years, books by outgoing CEOs of U.S. corporations have become a staple of business reading lists. More recently, however, titles representing what amount to extended valedictory addresses have lost some of their appeal with book-buyers. While some of this loss can be attributed to the economic slowdown and "9/11," it's reasonable that much stems from the recent accusations of corporate fraud and other malfeasances. In the wake of Enron, Worldcom, Tyco et al., CEOs seem to have little to say to current audiences. So many such tomes now molder in "remainder" bins, and the rest of us move on to tales of firefighters and adolescent wizards.

However, two recently released volumes authored by the retiring CEOs of Honeywell International and IBM Corporation merit renewed attention to this literary genre. The strong operating results achieved by Honeywell and IBM under their tenure have (largely) escaped the calumny rained on the firms previously mentioned -- per the old commercial, Lawrence F. Bossidy (of Honeywell) and Louis V. Gerstner, Jr. (at IBM Corporation) each led business turnarounds to "make money the old-fashioned way." More importantly, these books focus on a relatively neglected aspect of enterprise management in the literature: namely, execution -- the sweaty details necessary to mesh lofty corporate objectives with the organizational ability to deliver them.

To fill this void, Bossidy has collaborated with executive advisor Ram Charan and former *Fortune* editor Charles Burck to produce a treatise on this topic. And while Lou Gerstner devotes only a chapter of *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* to his

views on execution, his examples of execution and other success factors at IBM (not to mention the coincidence of these two book releases) warrants comparison of his perspective with that of Bossidy and Charan.

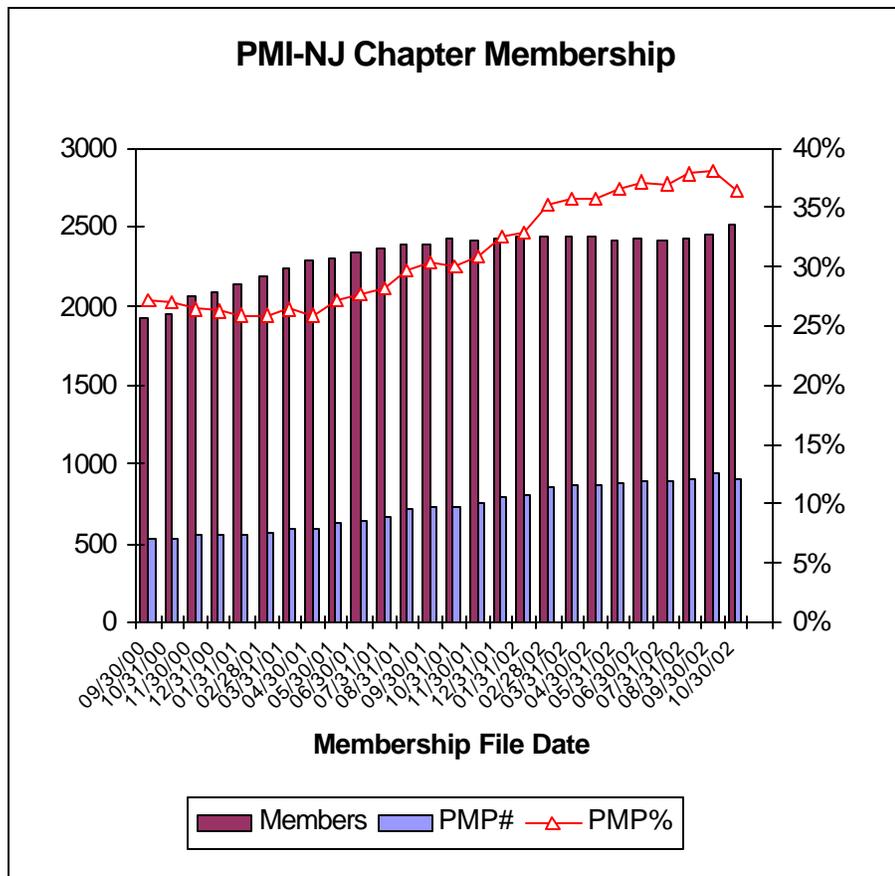
Larry Bossidy had a successful 34-year career with General Electric, rising to the post of vice chairman under chairman/CEO Jack Welch (whose blurb graces the dust jacket of *Execution* -- on the other hand, what would it mean if Welch *didn't* lend his name to this long-time GE executive's work?). In 1991 Bossidy was named CEO of AlliedSignal and retained the title following its merger with Honeywell, retiring in 1999. Following the failed merger attempt between Honeywell and GE, Bossidy came out of retirement to, in his words, "get the company back on track." In large part, this meant reinstating what the authors call a "discipline of execution."

(Continued on page 6)

## PMI NJ Membership Changes: 9/00 - 10/02

As of 10/30/02:

Members: 2513  
 PMPs: 914  
 % PMPs: 36



## The Art of Execution (con't)

(Continued from page 5)

To the authors of *Execution*, execution goes beyond tactics to be delegated by senior leadership. Execution is the mesh between goals and reality, the link between an enterprise's people, strategy and operations, "the right people ... focus[ing] on the right details at the right time." It comprises a discipline requiring a comprehensive understanding of a business, its people, and its competitive and market environments. It entails a system of questioning, analysis and follow-through. Bossidy et al. provide brief illustrations of both poor execution at Xerox and AT&T, whose strategies were disconnected with reality, and Lucent Technologies, whose senior leadership was, in their words, "out of touch" with the fast-changing marketplace realities. The authors include an account of EDS Corporation's turnaround where they make the case for its cause due to the instilment of an execution culture.

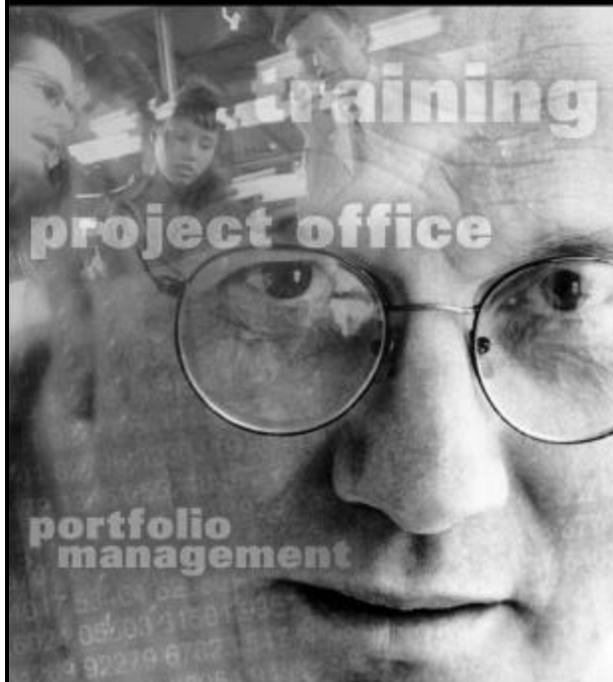
At the heart of the Bossidy/Charan system of execution are "core processes" devoted to people (the "who"), strategy (the "where"), and operations (the "how"). The people processes, considered by the authors to be the most important, must have explicit and reinforced links to strategy and operational results, entailing leadership development, succession planning and, unfortunately, easing out "nonperformers." A key aspect for making both strategy and operations work is the practice of explicit follow-up whereby following a pan review meeting, the senior executive writes a letter restating what was agreed to as well as adding detailed comments for improving the plan. The book reprints several such memos personally written by Bossidy.

Both books are crisply written and largely free of charts, graphs and tables which often interfere with the flow of business books. *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* (the title referencing the popular Elizabeth Moss Kanter tract of 1989 *Teaching Elephants to Dance*) is the somewhat more appealing read, despite the lack of a co-author or ghostwriter. Gerstner's ability to communicate -- stripped of bureaucratse and, if required, delivered extemporaneously -- is refreshingly manifest in his accounts of speeches at critical junctures of his IBM career, as well as selected all-employee e-mails in an appendix to this book. He relates an anecdote of a meeting early in his IBM tenure when, during a foil presentation "as politely as I could in front of his team," Gerstner switched off the projector saying: "Let's just talk about your business." (Joan Rivers indeed!)

Gerstner also has the juicier plot. Gerstner devotes a scant six pages to his career prior to his courtship with IBM. The alumnus of Dartmouth College and the Harvard Business School joined McKinsey Consultants in 1965, advancing to senior partner. In 1977 he was lured to American Express to head its Travel Related Services Group. In 1989 he was appointed CEO of RJR Nabisco following the "Barbarians at the Gate" imbroglio. By the early 1990s, IBM was suffering from a precipitous erosion in revenues from its historical mainframe market, a fragmentary approach toward competition in its other markets, a growing perception of arrogance to customers, and a bloated cost structure which together was hemorrhaging in billions of dollars in cash. The company was to be broken up and serious speculation of bankruptcy

(Continued on page 8)

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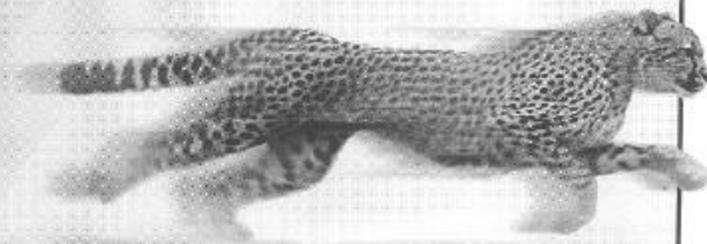
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## The Art of Execution (con't)

(Continued from page 6)

abounded. Yet for all this, observed Gerstner, "its problems weren't technical... [T]he company was frozen in place. What was needed was someone to grab hold of it and shake it back into action."

"What's striking," Gerstner notes, was "the absence of any mention of culture, teamwork, customers or leadership – the elements that turned out to be the toughest challenges." Gerstner relates his aplomb at the "extraordinary preoccupation with internal processes" such as the 60-page manual for a vice president's administrative assistant including details on setting the time for each of three clocks and re-supplying his desk with Carefree Sugarless Gum.

The story of IBM's turnaround have been extensively reported and for reasons of space, will not be related here. Of course, IBM was *not* federalized. Of immediate interest to this readership, however, is the prominence Gerstner places on execution as a business imperative. Typical of Gerstner's knack of real-time encapsulation of powerful concepts, he reduced his intention for a guide to IBMers' daily priorities to the mantra "Win, Execute and Team." Regarding the second part ("Execute"), he writes:

*This was all about speed and discipline. There would be no more of the obsessive perfectionism that had caused us to miss market opportunities and let others capitalize on our discoveries. No more studying things to death. In the new IBM, successful people would commit to getting things done – fast and effectively.*

Behaviors aside, the new business context for the new IBM culture -- the "galvanizing mission" as Gerstner writes -- was "e-business." Gerstner was able to effect the infusion of e-business as the thread uniting IBM's advertising, product planning, research agendas, customer meetings, and throughout its communications and operations – similar to the way System/360 galvanized IBM's operations in the 1960s.

Gerstner's brief chapter on execution -- "the most unappreciated skill of an effective business leader" -- appears within a section on "Lessons Learned." Proprietary position advantages are fleeting – success lies in "People do what you *inspect*, not what you *expect*" is quoted repeatedly in this book. Mastering the art of execution involves detail, complexity and holding people accountable for results. To Gerstner, successful execution is built on three attributes of world-class processes (e.g., Wal-Mart inventory), strategic clarity (no mixed signals to employees and customers) and "high-performance culture". A quibble: here Gerstner hedges somewhat on a definition "high performance" other than to state that "once you enter a successful culture, you feel it immediately." (Gee, so *that's* it!)

Beyond "Mahogany Row", what lessons can these books impart to project managers, who are presumed to be involved with execution issues day by day?

- Vision and strategy are meaningless unless they are explicitly connected to viable execution plans.
- Strategies are a dime a dozen -- the key competitive advantage lies in execution, in mastering the techniques necessary for

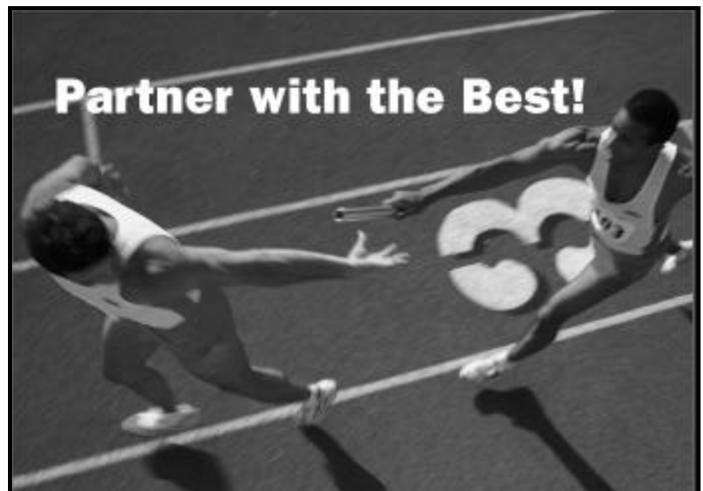
competitive advantage.

- Leadership cannot delegate active management of plans and initiatives. They must "sweat the details" by probing and challenging, then following up with agreed-to deliverables through closure.
- Be vigilant of "analysis paralysis" – move quickly, react quickly if plans force you to.
- The only details that matter are those that serve the interests of the customer and the growth of the business.
- Process is important, but don't use it as a "crutch" to impede essential activities and communication. If the process adds no value, stop doing it.
- Execution must be linked to people processes for talent acquisition, training, and retention.
- "Culture change" cannot be imposed by executive fiat. Leadership must create the conditions for transforming the culture and invites the workforce to do so. The culture changes only through people living the new behavioral norms each day.

The hard part, of course is applying these lessons in the context of one's current management and leadership. But as demonstrated by the authors of these works, it can be – and has been -- done.

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Randy Parker can be reached at Parker47@veizon.net or 1-908-277-1732.



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## Unconstrained Thinking (con't)

*(Continued from page 4)*

2. Dig down into a common root cause for those problems, and then
3. Determine where to focus your improvements in order to help your customers deal with that cause and its symptoms.

Ideally, the solution won't be related to any benchmark process you find out there, because if it is, you'll only be playing catch-up, not leap-frog. That's the way to really improve/innovate; do what it takes to help your customers improve. After all, you probably only sell a product or service; what

your customers are buying are solutions. The more problems you can solve, the more attractive and valuable your offering is.

Think about it . . .

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Unconstrained Thinking columns are archived at [www.focusedperformance.com/articles/utlist.html](http://www.focusedperformance.com/articles/utlist.html).



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