Considering the Project Management Organizations

In Chapter 2, the principal organizations were introduced. There we found that the organizations are essentially geographically oriented. Now, in order to accommodate where you are in your career, we need to enter another variable. That variable is the basis for certification. You will see that there are two bases for certification. You can use these variables in selecting the ''right'' organization for you both geographically and from the basis of certification.

The Current State of the Art

While the art of project management is still emerging, it is reasonably stable in its core content—that is, the content concerning what to do once a project is initiated.

There are two trains of thought as to what a project manager is or should be. To see these two ideas, we'll look at the certification processes. The certification processes fall into two groups: ''Knowledge-Based'' and ''Competency-Based.'' The PMI is the primary user of the ''Knowledge-Based'' approach; AIPM, APM, asapm, and IPMA use the ''Competency-Based'' approach. The PMI certifies at two levels; the others certify at three to five levels.

In terms of size, however, the PMI is head and shoulders above all the rest. The PMI touts over 100,000 members worldwide; the IPMA has 30,000 members; the APM has 13,000 members; and the AIPM has about 3,700 members. The asapm is just emerging, and no membership figures are yet available.

Where Is Project Management Going from Here?

As technology has opened new vistas we couldn't even dream of even ten years ago, I believe that project management is going broader and

higher and more virtual. This means that project management and its standards and organizations are still evolving.

By broader, I mean more encompassing. For instance, if you compare the PMBOK to the APMBOK to the P2M to PRINCE2 to the ICB, you will find significant differences. The fundamental differences in the certification process is that the PMI is knowledge-based and the others are competency-based. It appears that each organization has generated its certifications based on its own ideas of what project management is or should be and what market they want to serve. In order to grow, it also appears to me that any organization would want to be as broad and all-encompassing as it can be. That's why I think it's going to be broader.

By higher, I mean more international. Right now, the most serious competitors for international ''conquest'' are the PMI and the IPMA. Each organization serves many, many countries, and in many cases there are overlaps. That means that if you live in Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, or dozens of other countries, you actually can select the organization you belong to.

The PMI is a centralized organization with radials extending to the various countries. The elements in the various countries are simply components of the PMI. The IPMA, on the other hand, is a confederation of organizations that subscribe to its standards. It is decentralized. Will the two merge? I doubt it. The concepts of each are quite different, and it would take a lot of doing to get them together. However, both PMI and IPMA have submitted their bodies of knowledge and their certification processes to higher (that is, international) organizations such as ISO. Clearly, both organizations want to be thought of as ''higher.''

By more virtual, I mean that many more projects will take advantage of the ''virtual'' phenomenon and move in that direction. The World Wide Web as a communication and data vehicle opened the floodgates. Every day more and more projects and programs are being conducted remotely than ever before. We refer to this phenomenon as ''Virtual Projects.''[1] Typically, a virtual project has team members in various, different locations. Sometimes they are in different locations on campus, and sometimes in different states or countries. The combinations are limitless. Conducting a virtual project is similar to conducting a traditional project, but it requires extensive communication and control that traditional projects do not. The gains in productivity and decreased cost are achieved at the risk of monumental failure unless the

project manager keeps the virtual project on the straight and narrow. Nevertheless, virtual projects are the wave of the future. Virtual projects will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 9.

There are some potentially exciting changes in the hopper right now. As of this writing, the ideas are just beginning to gel, but soon they will be developed and could change the mainstream ideas of the project management bodies of knowledge and the project management processes. These ideas are loosely grouped into the general category of ''Knowledge Management'' (KM). The idea is that KM is dynamic and vertically integrated, while the standard bodies of knowledge and practices are static and horizontally integrated. The bodies of knowledge (BOKs) determine or follow the flow of work, while KM follows knowledge generated in the process.

And now my personal opinion: I would like to see a melding of the breadth of the NCSPM with the ''hard-core-what-to-do'' approach of the PMBOK into an all-encompassing standard that includes the enterprise with the project and elevates them both to serve international needs. The IPMA approach of having a core set of areas and then allowing ''electives'' to be taught to compensate for differences in culture, approach, and so on, is a brilliant idea. Perhaps the asapm working with the IPMA can become the catalyst for this action. Add to this the concept of virtual projects and make allowances for KM, and there is no end where the knowledge base of project management can go.

Selecting the "Right" Organization for You

This issue begs two questions: Where are you in your career? and Where, geographically, do you or will you practice?

Where are you in your career? If you are just beginning your project management career, and by that I mean in school or in the first three years of practice, then the ''right'' answer is the PMI. The PMI PMBOK establishes the knowledge base for practically all the other organizations. The exception is the APM. Even at that, the PMI PMBOK is still just as useful in these organizations because the BOK is essentially universal. After the first three years, you may want to consider adding one of the other organizations based on where you practice. Why do I say ''after three years?'' Because the certification processes of the other organizations require and test experience in project management. Even though the PMI requires experience, their certification process does not test it. Whether you are early or later in your career, the American

Management Association (AMA) is always a good bet to provide continuing educational books, courses, and seminars in project management and general management as well.

Where, geographically, do you practice? The answer to this question may have an impact on which organization you choose. For instance, if you practice in Australia, you will likely want to belong to the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM). If you practice in Great Britain, you will likely want to belong to the Association of Project Management (APM). If you practice in Japan, you will likely want to belong to the (JPMF). All these organizations are geographically oriented. Next comes a compound situation. Once you have become established in your career, if you practice in the United States, you will likely want to belong to the Association for the Advancement of Project Management (asapm). If you practice internationally, you will likely want to belong to the International Project Management Association (IPMA) through a local chapter.

If you belong to one of the geographically oriented organizations, should you cancel your membership in the PMI or AMA? My answer is an emphatic: No! Both these organizations have offerings that are of great value to you no matter where you practice. The same statement holds true no matter where you are in your career.

Now, let's look at the language of project management.

Note

1. *Virtual* in this document refers to the *programmatic virtual*—that is, parts of the project are remotely located. These elements of the project organization are usually connected electronically (through the World Wide Web and other communication links). This is distinct from a *technical virtual* project, where the object of a game is simulated and represented virtually. A military training scenario, where soldiers shoot at video screens with laser gun attachments, is an example of a *technical virtual* project.