



ViewPoints

Projectability's monthly newsletter

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Project Reading



This book provides the reader with an easy to follow practical guide to help you improve your effectiveness as a Project Manager using tried and tested techniques.

This paperback book comes with a useful CD with plenty of tools and materials to support the approach suggested by the book.

I have made good use of this book over the last few years and find its approach a useful refresher when looking to improve on the content of our courses.

Dear Reader,

Hello once more,

Issue 5 already - apologies for the late arrival this month. Great news is that the word is being spread and ViewPoints has attracted a steady stream of new subscribers, primarily through people finding out about it rather than being told about it!



Subscribers are now to be found around the globe and in a diverse range of business sectors. Our policy of providing valuable content in the form of [downloadable documents](#) has led to a steady stream of new contacts being established.

Feedback on the newsletter has been very positive too, I am enjoying writing it and in particular introducing people to my [Inspirations](#) - Richard P Feynman has proven very popular, check this [page](#) out for some Video Clips of him to enjoy his commentary on the joy of finding things out.

I hope you find the story of [HW Tilman](#) equally enjoyable.

Happy Planning - Dominic

Project Preparation - Get Ready first, then Start!

Henry Ford the industrialist coined a phrase which I think is most appropriate to project success.

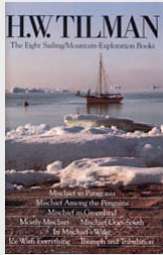
"Before everything else getting ready is the secret of success."

With the benefits of hindsight it is all too easy to identify examples where projects were not ready at the start and suffered as a consequence. The Channel Tunnel project is a classic case in point, as with all projects of any significance it had a slogan at the outset:

"On time and on Budget"

Sadly this slogan proved to be misplaced primarily because the project started too soon. There was enormous political pressure from both Mrs Thatcher and President Mitterand for the project to commence so as to leave a grand monument to their time in power. Those responsible for making it happen bowed to this pressure and in so doing deprived themselves of

Reading for Pleasure - The 8 Sailing /Mountain Exploration Books



[The Eight Sailing/Mountain Exploration Books](#)

Probably the last of the great explorers, HW Tilman was also a brilliant writer.

Not only does he take the reader to the places he has explored he uses his wit and an extensive knowledge of literature and the classics to delight his audience. He also has a great line in self-deprecation and most definitely did not suffer fools gladly.

His books remind us that there is so much in this world to marvel at and to enjoy.

Are you Linked In?



Are you a member of **Linked In**? If you are I would welcome the chance to **Link Up**.

Downloads



There are a host of documents available for you to download **free of charge** on our Website - take a look!

Project Conference



If you are interested the

sufficient preparation time.

As a result the project suffered a series of misfortunes which could have been avoided and which resulted in significant delays and massive cost over-runs. The average person regards this project as a fiasco when with a little bit more time spent preparing it could have been a stunning achievement. Does this sound familiar to you?

So what do you need to do to get ready?

Who has asked you to deliver the project? Having a sponsor who takes ultimate responsibility for the project and its outcomes should ensure that the project is supported by senior management - if you don't have the backing of senior management your project can become a liability that is disowned by those in power. There is an Arab proverb.

"Success has a hundred fathers, failure is an orphan."

Make sure your project has active and continuous support from those who matter.

Having a clear and agreed idea as to what exactly the project is looking to achieve would be a good start. Are you confident that **everyone** involved has a shared and common understanding as to what the project entails? Do you know who all the **Stakeholders** in your project are? It may be worth spelling out the objectives of the project in clear and unambiguous terms so as to achieve clarity and avoid expensive misunderstandings.

Ideally your project should be clearly defined, easily understood and measurable - if you are unsure if any of these simple rules apply odds are your project will have problems, try to nail this at the outset.

Identifying key deliverables and what exactly will be delivered at each stage of the project should also foster common understanding and avoid people having conflicting expectations of the project.

Projects are the delivery mechanism for strategy. Which strategic driver is your project aligned to? From this you may be able to gauge the relative importance and priority of your project. Is your sponsor actively engaged in the strategic initiative your project is aligned to? If they are not who is and what are they expecting of your project?

Do you have the necessary authority to make things happen? All too often the position of the Project Manager is undermined by their being new to the role or the organisation and in some cases lower in rank than those they are seeking to engage in their projects. The organisation should ensure that the project managers position and authority is clearly communicated across the organisation at the outset so that there can be no objections when they seek to exercise the power they have been (temporarily) invested with.

Having the resources to make things happen is a common

annual Microsoft Project Conference is taking place in Phoenix Arizona on 14th - 17th September.

Check the [website](#) for more details.

problem for projects. As the project manager you will need to identify the skilled resources required to make your project happen, in a lot of cases these people will be managed by other managers and you will have to negotiate with them for resources. You may well get tacit agreement to provide resources at the outset but all too often people make commitments in the present which they then seek to avoid when called upon when the time arises. Have a mechanism to secure agreement to provide resources and to then keep the relevant managers informed as to when exactly this will be.

Having laid the ground for your project the next step is to produce the plan, mapping out how you will get to your objective. We cover that in more detail in the next edition of this newsletter.

CTRL+ - Handy Microsoft Project Keyboard Shortcuts



Keyboard shortcuts are a useful way to improve your efficiency in using Microsoft Project. Each month we highlight one of the shortcuts available and the benefits of using it.

Connecting to relevant information from tasks is a breeze if you use Hyperlinks. With the relevant task selected **CTRL+K** brings up the insert Hyperlink dialogue box where you can link to a website, a relevant document, elsewhere in the project plan itself or even to an email address. By using Hyperlinks your project plan can become a focal point from which relevant information can be accessed at the click of your mouse on the Hyperlink icon that will be displayed in the indicator column.

This feature can support more effective communication, connecting people to relevant information at the click of a button.

A document with all the [Keyboard shortcuts in Microsoft Project](#) is available to download **free of charge** from our website.

Ask the Expert - Fitting the Project Timescale to the screen.



If you have a question you would like answering and are happy for others to benefit from the answer provided send an email to [ask the expert](#).

This months question is another regular request. "I have created my schedule and it exceeds the timespan visible on the screen, how can I zoom out to the point where I can see the overall timespan?"

This is a common issue with users, getting the project to fit the screen - happily there is quick and easy way to achieve this. In any timephased view go to the View menu and select the Zoom option - in the Zoom dialogue box there is an option "entire project", select this and click the OK button and your project will then fit the screen.

A document explaining the [VZEP Macro](#) is available to download on our Website, it provides a step by step guide on how to create a macro to automate the steps described above and to then allocate the macro to a toolbar button.

Inspirations – HW Tilman



I don't quite know how I discovered [Bill Tilman](#) but I am mighty glad I did. Like Beryl Markham he was a slightly unconventional character but the more I read about him the more fascinated I became. I love this photograph of him as it captures the spirit of the man, jovial, rugged and a man of simple pleasures.

Definitely "Old School" and from a different era Bill has left a legacy of some of the finest travel books ever written.

His life story is itself like a fable from days of old, destiny, duty and forbearance feature strongly along with a suitably poignant conclusion. A gloriously inspiring and strong character. I would urge you to discover his story as you will undoubtedly enjoy it.

Next Months Issue

If you have enjoyed this newsletter please feel free to pass it on to a friend or colleague using the Forward email option at the foot of this email. We will be keeping an eye on just how far this newsletter gets and hope to publicise just how far ViewPoints has gotten around the globe in future editions.

In the next newsletter we will be focusing upon approaches to producing a workable schedule. Until then I wish you and your projects the very best.

[Dominic Moss](#)

Principal Consultant- Projectability

Projectability have been helping people and organisations achieve more through effective Project Management and the use of the Microsoft Project scheduling tool since 1996. Our full range of offerings can be viewed on our [Website](#).

If you wish to contact us to see how we can help you please contact us using the details below.

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