

Summary of Presentation

PRINCE2

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A project is a linked set of activities used as a management tool to produce some kind of recognisable outcome. Increasingly, organisations are using projects as the means of achieving business change. The key words here are 'management' and 'tool'. Projects have to be managed to have any chance of success, and a tool is only as good as the person using it. The human factor in projects is widely accepted as one of the critical aspects affecting project outcomes. Indeed, the successful projects do have a high degree of personality, motivational and team-building characteristics.

Furthermore, projects are about delivering something new. If they weren't, we would use traditional production-line processes to deliver the result. Projects are also about managing the risks associated with doing something new. Although we can usually describe the required outcome or deliverable from a project, for example the office headquarters move to a new building or the take-on of new business, working out the intermediate steps, managing their interdependencies, and monitoring progress in order to control the project is where we get into problems.

PRINCE is one of the leading project management methods around today. In fact it is the only method which is available in the public domain. It is owned and developed by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA), which is responsible for providing best-practice advice to government. PRINCE was originally intended for the management of public sector information technology (IT) projects. However, since its introduction in the 1980's, PRINCE has come a long way. It is now effectively a de facto standard for project management with widespread use in both the public and private sectors, furthermore it has been used on many non-IT projects.

In 1996, CCTA launched PRINCE2 following a two year development programme on the method. PRINCE2 covers the concepts and processes of how to organise the people and activities on a project, how and when to plan, monitor and control the project, and what to do if things don't go according to plan. Over 150 public and private sector organisations were involved in the development of PRINCE2, each bringing their own experiences and ideas into the method. One of the major differences in the new version is that the method is not specific to IT, the approach now looks at the management processes for all types of projects.

CCTA is also committed to improving the standard and quality of services around project management. CCTA has established a scheme to provide accredited training courses and registered consultants. The scheme is managed by the APM Group who now have a comprehensive list of

accredited training providers and consultants. The APM Group also administer the PRINCE2 Examination which is open to anyone and provides a professional qualification in the understanding and application of the method.

PRINCE2 is not the only new thing to hit the project management world recently. The British Standards Institute has introduced BS6079 - Guide to Project Management, and the Management Charter Initiative has been developing its NVQ on Managing Projects. Both of these address the approach and framework for managing projects. One of the major roles PRINCE2 has is to provide a means by which the British Standard can be implemented and to support the requirements of the NVQ. PRINCE2 describes the detailed level of activities, products and processes necessary for well-controlled projects and, as such, provides a useful mechanism for organisations who are implementing project management standards.

One of the common causes of unsuccessful implementations of project management is the lack of commitment from senior management. We need to raise awareness across all levels of management about the need for good practice in project management. Many organisations are setting up major programmes involving staff across the company to achieve business improvement or to manage a corporate change. Within these programmes are a variety of projects, each with its own purpose and objectives but needing to interface with and work alongside the other projects. PRINCE2 has incorporated the defined interfaces to other projects and to the programme thus making it easier to apply the method within the complexities of large-scale corporate programmes.

Since the launch of PRINCE2, over 4,500 manuals have been purchased. Organisations from a range of industries including government, retail, banking, utilities, police, insurance and telecommunications are all demonstrating their desire to improve project management practices using PRINCE2. Feedback from these organisations has shown the interest is in reviewing existing project management arrangements and introducing the stronger structure that PRINCE2 offers.

PRINCE2 is not a panacea. By itself, the method will not magically make things better. PRINCE2 will help to focus on doing the *right* project and, with its process-based framework, doing the *project right*. Used with intelligence and applied to the culture and requirements of the organisation and its projects, PRINCE2 offers a quality driven approach to project management.

Further information :

- PRINCE2 publications : The Stationery Office on 0171 873 0011
- CCTA : Help desk on 01603 704874 or email to pnewman@ccta.gov.uk