



Leading without Power  
How to Influence without authority

Andrew D Millington (RPP, CHPP, FCASA, FAPM, FIOLM, PGCert)

ADM Project Consultants Ltd

[Andrew@ADMProjectConsultants.co.uk](mailto:Andrew@ADMProjectConsultants.co.uk)

[www.ADMprojectconsultants.co.uk](http://www.ADMprojectconsultants.co.uk)

# Andrew D Millington : Project Management Consultant



30+ years project and programme capability enhancement and delivery experience across many sectors and industries

Defence; IT; Technology, Government; Consulting; Engineering; Construction; Education; Aerospace; Transformation

- PGCERT Leading Complex Projects, Programmes and Portfolios
- Advanced Leadership Development Programme
- Management Development Programme
- Chartered Project Professional (CHPP)
- Registered Project Professional (RPP)
- Fellow of APM (FAPM)
- Fellow of Institute of Leadership & Management (FIOLM)
- Fellow of Controls and Skills Authority (FCASA )
- ECITB Accredited Trainer

Author, contributor of:

- 50 Projects for a better Future
- Pre-Mortem – a new approach to risk
- How to fix projects without tools
- Leadership vs Management
- Snowball effect

Judge for various Awards:

Trainer professional qualifications from project fundamentals to CHPP

Be the Business Mentor

**AIMM**  
**Project Consultants**



# Shall we have a smile before we get down to business?

An organisation is a group of people who work together in a structured way to achieve common goals or objectives.

or

*An organisation is a place where people get promoted until they reach a level where they can't do any more damage.*

Project management - application of processes, methods, skills, knowledge and experience to achieve specific project objectives according to the project acceptance criteria within agreed parameters.

or

*Trying to follow conflicting processes and methods from multiple places, written at different times by different people who didn't know each other with a different aim in mind.*

A project professional is an individual who applies recognised project management principles, knowledge, skills, & behaviours to lead or support successful delivery of change initiatives. They demonstrate professional competence, ethical practice, and commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring that projects deliver value & align with organisational strategy.

or

*Someone who can juggle priorities, talk through endless PowerPoint slides, speak slowly and calmly, look positive, appear in control whilst panicking inside. They are often part strategist, part therapist, part miracle worker and mostly worried.*

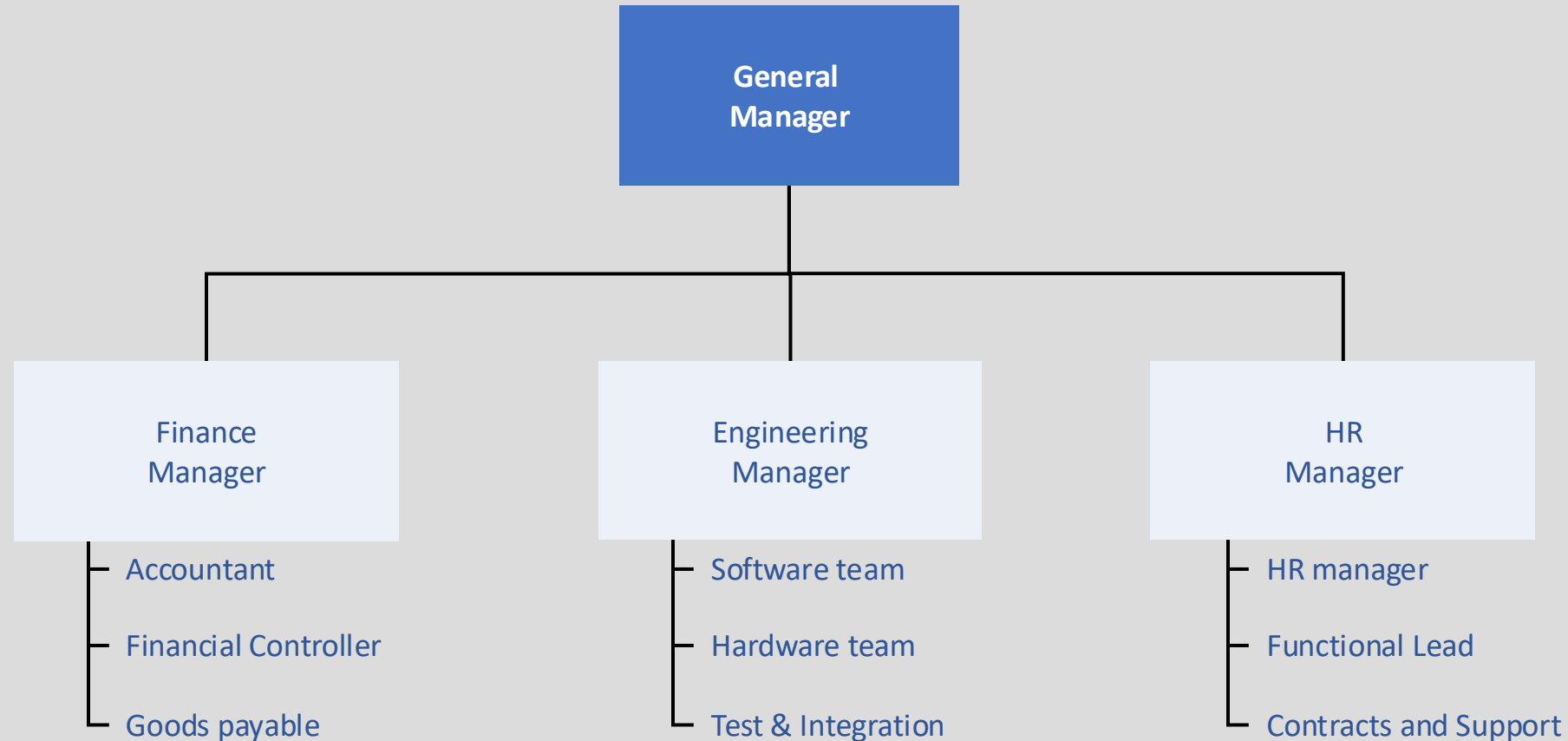
*Project management will soon be replaced by Artificial intelligence.*

or

*Please hurry up, however a fool with a tool is still a fool.*

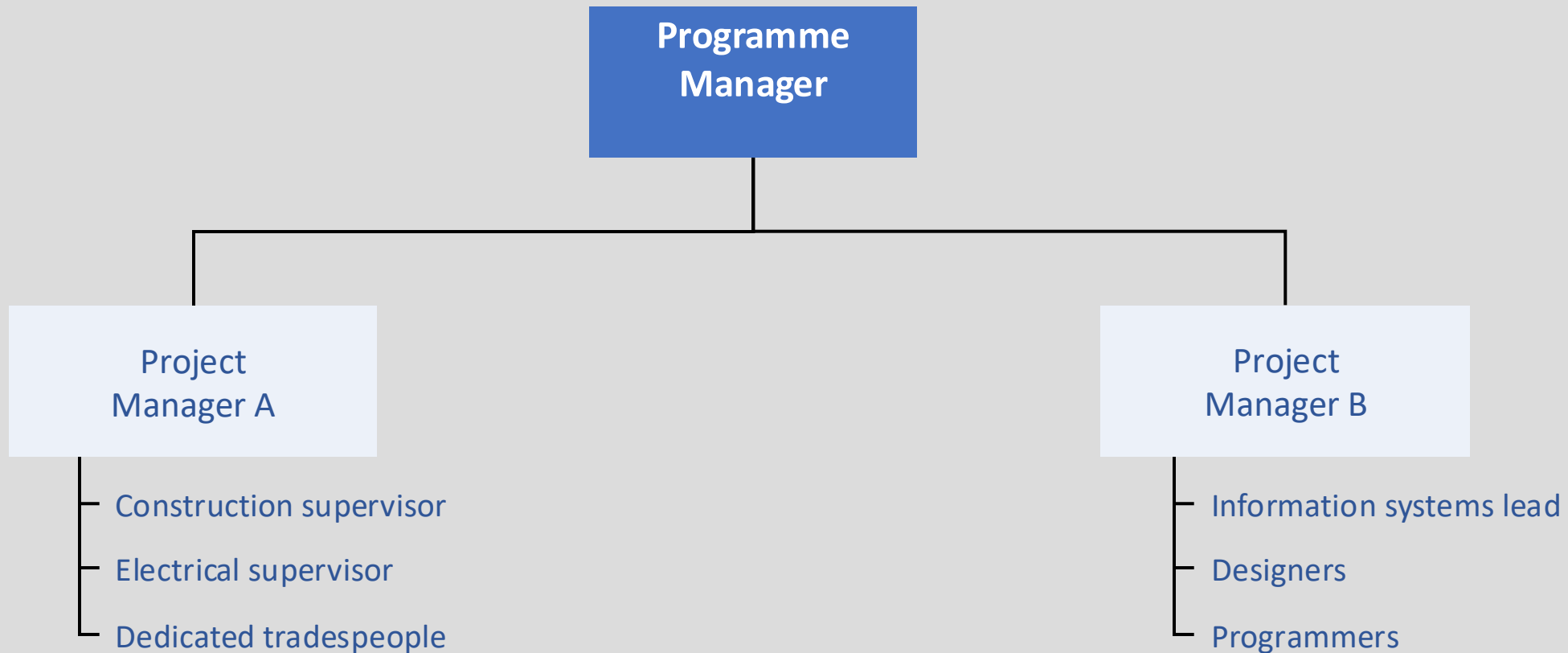
# Traditional Organisational Structures

## Functional Structure



# Traditional Organisational Structures

## Project Organisation

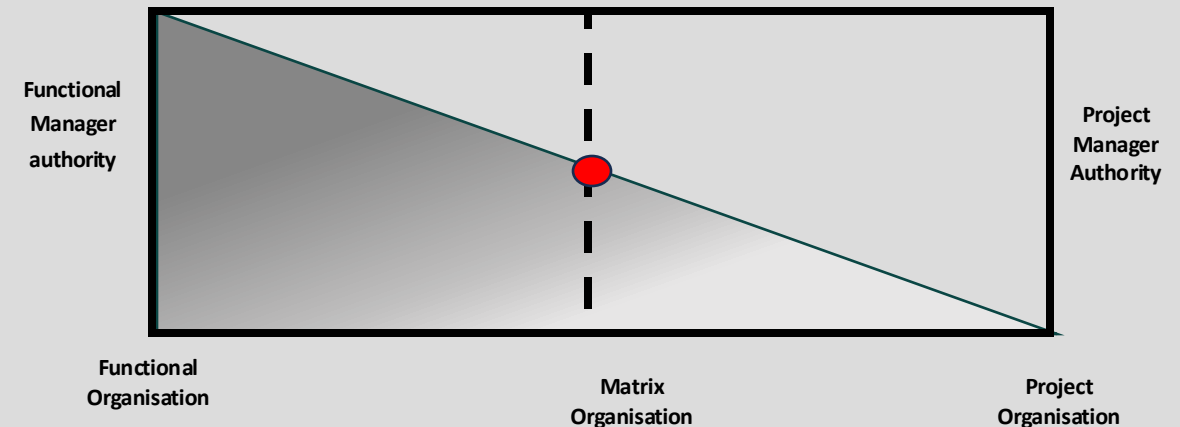
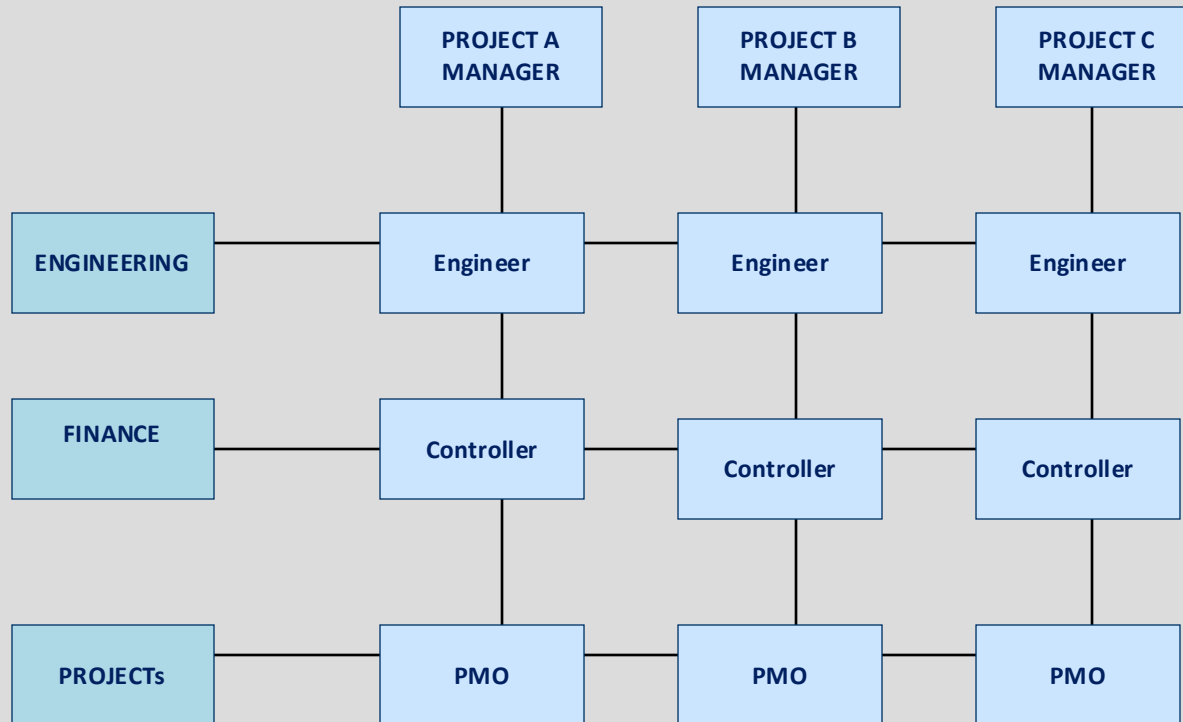


# Organisational Structure – The Matrix

Our world is changing at the greatest rate in our history and to compete and stay current organisations have evolved:

Matrix structures:

- Manage increasing complexity in their programs, projects, markets and environments
- Achieve greater efficiency in resource utilisation
- Coordinate different functions and capabilities to deliver multidisciplinary projects, goods and services
- Flexible and adaptable: forming and adjourning temporary teams, mobilisation of projects, delivering change
- Retention of skills and expertise: functional specialists remain in home departments and support initiatives



# Advantages and disadvantages of a matrix

| Advantages                                   | Disadvantages               |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Flexible & dynamic                           | Difficult to manage         |
| Increased motivation – greater opportunities | Expensive structure         |
| Efficient employment of resources            | Complex chain of authority  |
| Team spirit                                  | Can fail                    |
| Spreads burden                               | Conflict & misunderstanding |
| Better supervision                           | Empires & feuds             |
| Manages capability and capacity              | Requires strong governance  |

# Let's meet our characters from ADM PM world



Penny - New PM

- First time PM role
- Graduate - deputy PM
- Passed PFQ and PMQ
- Wants to go for chartership
- Helped deliver the bid
- Works hard
- Wants to succeed and get on
- Excited at new role
- Anxious – impostor syndrome



Storm

- Named after 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Tuckman
- Fought for recognition all career
- High energy
- Strong willed, feared
- Ready to engage
- Tough exterior, soft heart
- Wants things done right
- Dangerous in reviews
- Shock and Awe



The Gatekeeper

- Been in the department all career
- Runs a large portfolio
- Bottleneck
- Previous leaders tried to dismantle
- Secret and silent, very controlling
- Wears down opposition
- Trusts no one
- Assimilates and absorbs
- Hotel California Syndrome



Mr. Know-it-all

- Moved around roles for years
- Now in a senior advisory role
- Turns up uninvited to meetings
- Very opinionated
- Latches onto latest leader
- Keen to comment, less keen to help
- Looking for a problem to solve
- Will create work with no value
- Typical Delphi character

# Let's meet the rest of today's characters



Slider

Manages allocations process  
Chairs monthly resource review  
Slow, steady and reliable  
Frequently blamed  
War weary & battle fatigued  
Has had some successes  
Needs support and top cover  
Wants to help projects & functions  
If only he had more support....



Brilliant Brian

Narcissistic  
Slick & smooth operator  
Loves to be popular  
Just passing through  
Career highflyer  
Needs to keep business rolling  
Always front & center  
No time for niff naff & trivia  
No, I in team just BB



The Script

HR & recruitment professional  
Follows process - no short cuts  
Crisis - what crisis  
Dots every I and crosses each T  
Ensures everything is done right  
Wealth of experience  
Wishes projects would plan more  
Never deviates  
Can be a whisperer



The supporting cast

Those within the RACI  
Stakeholders who are involved  
Procurement, commercial, supply chain etc.  
Just another project  
Need their support  
Keep onside  
Backers not blockers

# The Project so far...

- Penny has been announced as the PM and has just returned from a rest after a difficult bid
- On her return Brilliant Brian congratulates her in front of the whole office and suggest they have a one to one later
- Keen to get the contract completed and ready for the premobilization review Penny reaches out to the bid team
- Surprisingly, many of them have been reallocated during Pennys brief rest (by Storm)
- Penny tries to setup a 1-2-1 with Brilliant Brian as he is the sponsor, who appears to be unavailable
- Has been asked to come for a friendly chat by the Gatekeeper
- Slider and Script have asked for separate meetings to understand the project 'needs'
- The chairperson of the pre-mobilization gateway review wants an update and a plan for contract close out
- Finance team want start date for their forecasts, Comms team need an announcement
- Salient project and part of the new CEO's group strategy
- There are several key milestones this year
- Penny recognises the importance of the project and needs the aid and support of her stakeholders to deliver it....

# Look familiar?

A scene many of us remember, when the reality hits home that no matter what was said during the bid, no matter what was promised, no matter all the hours spent on assumptions and risks.

Creating a team can be a lot more difficult that you think.....

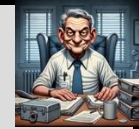


# Where does everyone sit on our Matrix?

Functional manager  
authority



Functional Organisation



Project Manager  
Authority

Project Organisation

# Leadership Context in Complex Organisations

- Leading projects in a matrix can be difficult, as well as reporting to project manager, team have functional managers
- Further exacerbated using partners or suppliers as delivery agents
- PM responsible for delivering project, but has no power to hire, fire or define how they work
- PM may not have luxury of hierarchy or position
- Often known as the 'Zero Authority' Context'

**But let's not panic, this is an opportunity and one we have all taken:**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

- Project management is still fundamentally about people getting things done together
- Leadership is no longer linked to hierarchy or roles
- Leaders operate at all levels – don't require a title to inspire, empower, coach or mentor
- Leadership is about what you believe in and stand for, its not being in charge
- Ask yourself, do you want to be remembered as a manager/task manager or a leader
- Leadership without authority is about inspiring & gaining commitment, not enforcing rules/compliance by hierarchy or position
- Delivering projects isn't about position or following processes, it's understanding people, politics, & priorities
- People deliver projects working as a team, not processes, not tools nor hierarchical roles

# First step in overcoming Zero Authority Complex

**Sensemaking** – Understanding the context of the project

- Make sense of the project, organization, locations, stakeholders, outcomes, strategy, environment and governance
- Where do and your project you fit in

**Relating** – Meet & understand your stakeholders

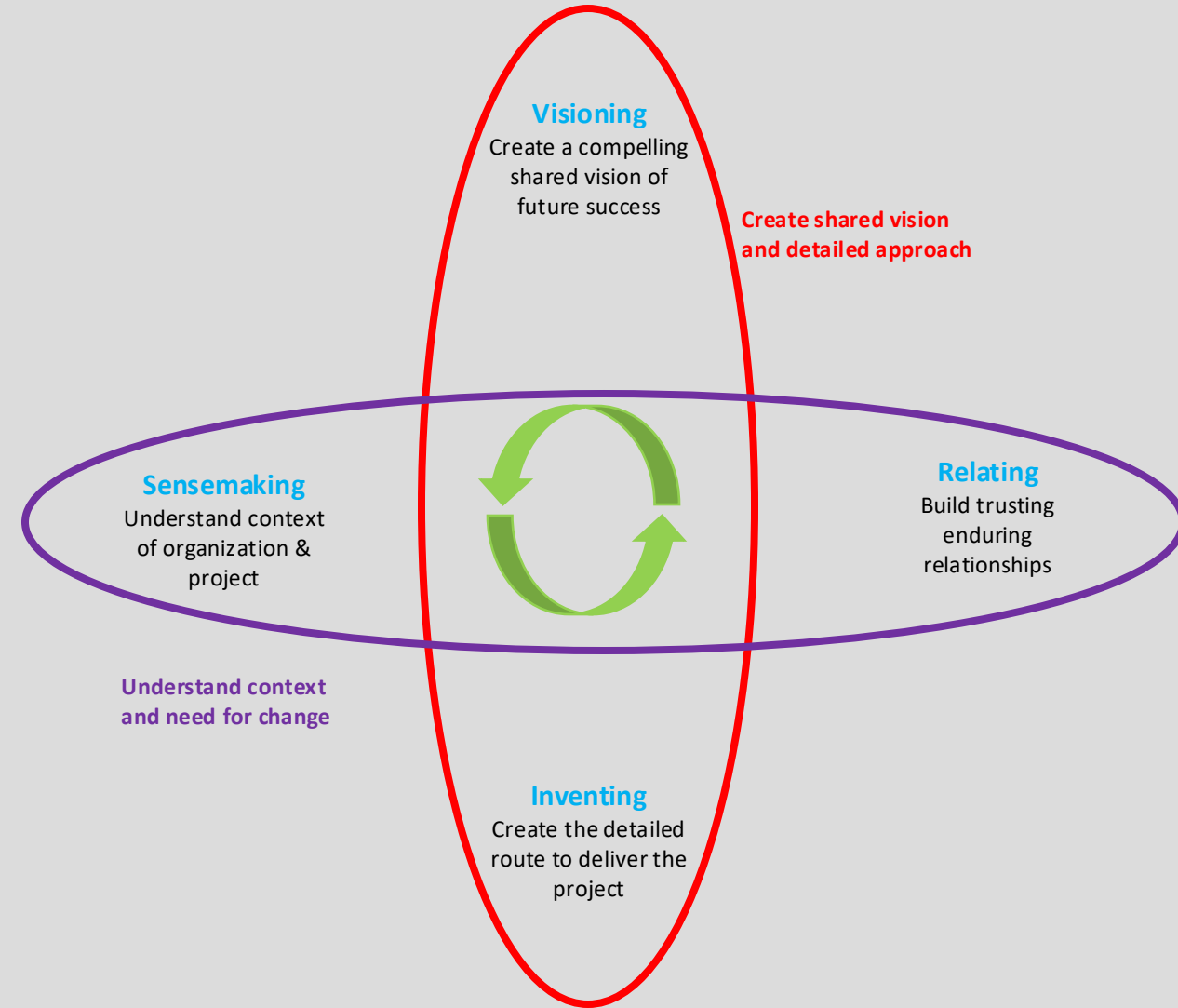
- Listen to the individuals, their values, stories, hopes & fears
- Explain ‘what you are about’ & be open to their ideas
- Create a trusted network of stakeholders

**Visioning** – create a shared or joint vision of success

- Create clear vision of the future
- Explain and agree ‘Why we are doing this’
- Excite your stakeholders and make it shared

**Inventing** – Develop shared way to deliver the project & vision

- Define how the outputs will be delivered
- Innovation together to better deliver outcomes
- Agree and share with stakeholders & iterate



# Steps to overcome Zero Authority Complex and leadership

1. Use sense making, relating, visioning and inventing
2. Understand your project in detail and always be ready to use that knowledge or expertise
3. Map your stakeholders, those involved, impacted or have a role to play in the project
4. Create a communication strategy and plan
5. Communicate, learn to listen without speaking, tailor your message, use appropriate medium & time
6. Engage and influence your stakeholders through relationships - build networks at all levels
7. Build trust and credibility - speak truth to power (not a failure to admit you don't know)
8. Create shared vision (project charter) ownership, involve, empower, make accountable, say we not 'I' or 'you'
9. Model & practice behaviour you want, stay calm (panic - infectious), demonstrate integrity & curiosity
10. Show appreciation, often smallest acts have the greatest impact

# How to deliver projects in complex Organisations

## Know the rules

- Project plan tells you what is required, how to do it, the order and who should do it
- Culture, politics, personalities tell you the real rules
- Remember there are no more heroes

## Build alliances and networks – Not adversaries or enemies

- Find allies, treat stakeholders as partners, engage and influence, don't manipulate, don't be too forceful, don't tell them... ask them
- Remember a feud can last a career

## Engage and Communicate Proactively

- Lead - don't let others tell their version of the story or add their spin -
- Celebrate success together and highlight to stakeholders where possible
- Ensure all communications are adult to adult, no matter how you are spoken to

## Be politically smart, not political

- Don't get dragged into a drama or crisis, use Kilmann's techniques (Avoid if it suits)
- Stay neutral, play the long game, keep your opinions and emotions to yourself
- Poker face

## Balance Processes with People & common sense

- Process gives structure and steps; people will get you results
- Tailor, flex and accommodate whenever or wherever possible

## Keep your Integrity

- Keep calm, never lose your calm or ethics
- You can't control the system or change the senior players but can control how you operate within it

## Protect your team

- Shield team from unnecessary politics, distractions, and external noise that waste time and reduce morale
- Shielding enables the team to concentrate on core activities and deliver

# Summary

Scenario - typical of a large organisation, balancing complex delivery, change, operations, and competing trying in a changing virtual world

Teams are drawn from multiple functions, suppliers, and business units, each with their own priorities, leaders, and pressures.

- Different perspectives, needs and wants, not a team, set of individuals

You need two key skills to navigate this strange world, leadership and culturally/politically aware

## **Leadership:**

- Project professionals today need to influence, inspire and gain commitment across their stakeholders rather than relying on hierarchical authority
- Leadership isn't about where you sit in an organisation – it's about your behaviour, belief, collaborative style and what you stand for
- Leadership today is about communications, confidence, engagement and working collaboratively,

Leadership without authority is about inspiring & gaining commitment, not enforcing rules or compliance by hierarchy or position

## **Culture and Politically awareness**

- Understand the rules, culture and personalities involved (however odd)
- Engage, build alliances, communicate and don't get drawn in, stay away from crisis
- Be politically smart - not political
- Stay focused on the end game, keep eyes on the prize

Successful delivery isn't about following processes, soft skills - understanding people, personalities, politics, priorities

It's about playing the game .... Successful Project Delivery is 20% process, 80% people and 100% politics

# So Back to the of ADM PM World

- Penny, our new PM could not have imagined this sort of start to her first project
- She expected that everyone would work together for the common good
- The gatekeeper has already started making his moves
- Slider and the Script have their own long and arduous methods and ways of acquiring resources
- Brilliant Brian is off travelling and doesn't want to be contacted
- Mr. Know it all is whispering about how he wouldn't do things this way and Storm had moved the resources



So how does Penny's story end.... See our website for conclusion of Pennys predicament

<https://admprojectconsultants.co.uk> under presentations

# Any Questions?



Andrew D Millington (RPP, CHPP, FAPM, FIOLM, FCASA, PGCert)

ADM Project Consultants Ltd

[Andrew@ADMProjectConsultants.co.uk](mailto:Andrew@ADMProjectConsultants.co.uk)

[www.ADMprojectconsultants.co.uk](http://www.ADMprojectconsultants.co.uk)