Inter-relations of Emerging Practices in Project Launch: Project Manager as Focal Actor in Multi-tasked Work Environment

Organization and Management

Master's thesis

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SUMMARY

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INTER-RELATIONS OF EMERGING PRACTICES IN PROJECT LAUNCH
Project Manager as Focal Actor in Multi-tasked Work Environment

In contemporary work life notable amount of work is done in the form of projects. They differ in scope, size, context etc. However, every project has a project manager. This research explores the work of a project manager during the start-up of the project.

The starting point of the research was that I was working as a project manager in an international company with the task of managing an internal development project. The research objectives can be divided into two parts. The first objective was to identify what sort of challenges a project manager faces during the project start-up and how they are solved. Secondly, I try to contribute and evaluate some project related scientific research areas by providing a personal perspective of a project manager on them. To learn how to be a better project manager and to contribute to the project management practices in my company are two additional goals.

Ethnographic approach was a corner stone of the research i.e. I observed the project I was managing almost for a year. I wrote a story about my experiences and then applied grounded theory methodology and ideas of the process-relational thinking to it. It meant that the issues identified in the story were seen as emerging practices and their relationships to the context and between each other were analyzed.

My thesis contributes to extant research and provides also practical implications. My story itself, identification and classification of the emerging practices and their relationships as well as recognition of some project management interventions and their impacts on the project can be considered as contribution to science. In addition, I present some normative suggestions that can be taken into account when developing project management practices in companies. All this is considered from the project manager's viewpoint.

Key words: Project management, project manager, emerging practice

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TIIVISTELMÄ

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INTER-RELATIONS OF EMERGING PRACTICES IN PROJECT LAUNCH
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Nykyään huomattava osa työstä tehdään projektien muodossa. Projektit vaihtelevat laajuuden, koon, sisällön ja monen muun tekijän suhteen. Mutta ainakin yksi asia on yhteinen kaikille projekteille – projektipäällikkö. Tämä on tutkimus projektipäällikön työstä projektin käynnistysvaiheen aikana.

Tämän tutkimuksen lähtökohta oli, että minä työskentelin projektipäällikkönä kansainvälisessä yrityksessä ja tehtävänäni oli kansainvälisen kehitysprojektin johtaminen. Tutkimuksen tavoitteet voidaan jakaa kahteen osaan. Ensimmäinen tavoite oli tunnistaa haasteita, joita projektipäällikkö kohtaa projektin käynnistysvaiheen aikana ja ymmärtää miten nämä haasteet ratkaistaan. Toinen tavoite oli tuoda uusi näkökulma olemassa olevaan tieteelliseen projektijohtotutkimukseen tuomalla siihen projektipäällikön henkilökohtaista näkökulmaa. Lisätavoitteiksi voidaan laskea myös henkilökohtainen tavoite tulla paremmaksi projektipäälliköksi ja vaikuttaa projektijohtokäytänteiden kehittämiseen nykyisessä työpaikassani.

Etnograafinen lähestymistapa oli tutkimuksen kulmakivi. Se tarkoittaa, että tarkkailin johtamaani projektia lähes vuoden. Sen perusteella kirjoitin tarinan kokemuksistani. Tarinaan ja sen analyysiin sovelsin Grounded theory –menetelmää ja Process relational –ajatusmaailmaa. Se tarkoitti että tarinasta identifioidut aiheet nähtiin osana kehittyviä käytänteitä ja että näiden käytänteiden suhteita ympäristöön ja toisiinsa analysoitiin.

Tutkimukseni tuo projektipäällikön subjektiivisen näkökulman olemassaolevaan tutkimukseen mutta työ esille myös joitain käytönnön huomioita. Tieteellisiksi ansioiksi voidaan nähdä itse tarina, käytänteiden tunnistaminen ja luokittelu, niiden suhteiden tunnistaminen sekä joidenkin projektijohdollisten toimenpiteiden ja niiden vaikutusten huomaaminen. Lisäksi esittämäni normatiiviset suositukset voidaan ottaa huomioon kun kehitetään projektijohtamista yrityksissä. Kaikkea tätä tarkastellaan projektipäällikön näkökulmasta.

Asiasanat: Projektin johtaminen, projektipäällikkö, kehittyvät käytänteet

Foreword

I walked through the HSE doors first time some three and half years ago. My intention was to develop myself with some studies of management and corporate law. The graduation was just one possible scenario distant in the future. But now it is reality – I will be a M.Sc. Economics. Studying parallel with a full-time job has been more than an occasional hobby, but it has paid off.

The master's thesis project itself has been long and progressed sometimes faster and sometimes slower. I owe gratitude to two persons that have helped me to conclude this project and supported me along the way. First I would like to thank Kari Lilja, who has supported and guided me more than I could have expected. If all students will get as thorough guidance and as much time of the professor than I have got, there is nothing to complain. Secondly, Sanna (my lovely wife) has supported me and pushed me forward when there has been the time of slow progress in my work. She has patiently looked me working during evenings and weekends to finalize this work. For her I promise that there will be no new "projects" for me in the near future.

For all future project managers I wish all the best and strength and perseverance (sisu in Finnish) in your future actions. Luckily all projects are not like the one Dilbert has.

Ville Konsti

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1 Introduction

In contemporary work life a notable part of the work is done in the form of projects. They exist in different size and form and especially in a large global company there is a great variety of these, involving different people and functions. But projects cannot be just executed – first they have to be planned and initialized. Especially in large companies a project start-up might take some time and people participating at the start-up face a lot of issues to be solved.

The person responsible for project preparation and start-up varies between cases, but quite often that person is the project manager (PM). Nevertheless, the one responsible for the start-up is normally responsible for acquiring resources for the project, preparing the project plan and many other issues.

I was hired to a global stock-listed company in March 2008 to develop its packaging practices globally. From the start I was designed to be responsible for the development action. When joining the project, I believed it was going to be a relatively straightforward case – but I was totally wrong. This study provides an in-depth review on the project start-up from the project manager's point of view with all the ups, downs and twists it contains. It reveals some emerging practices and issues in the project start-up but also presents how they were confronted. This is not a project management guide book, but one special story and case – my case.

In this section I present my personal background, review research objectives and scope and give an overview on the structure of the thesis as well as on the research approach and process.

1.1 Personal background

My personal background is described briefly in order to create an understanding of what is my perspective on the issues concerned. I'm a 31 year old with M.Sc. degree in engineering. I have worked for seven years after my graduation – three years in the packaging industry in business development area, three years in the management consulting for packaging industry and now for almost two years in my current position. I already have some experience in projects and project management as the consulting business I was part of was totally project-based operations. In my mind my expertise is in the packaging (industry), business development and management accounting, which was also the topic of my previous master's thesis.

1.2 Research objectives

The objectives of this study can be divided into two parts. First of all, the starting point of this study was to find out what kind of issues a project manager faces during the project start-up and how they are or should be solved (from the project manager's point of view). This objective was transferred to the analysis of

1. what kind of emerging practices there are during the project start-up
2. how they relate to each other and
3. how they impact the project's progress and project manager's work as well as how the project manager can impact them

In addition to these scientific objectives, it would be a bonus if I could learn about "me as a project manager" or find out some aspects on how to develop the project management practices of our company. These are the more practical goals of the research.

In this study I describe closely one case and its characteristics. Therefore, making normative findings to guide project manager's work is not the goal of the project. However, looking closely, even on personal level, the work and life of the project manager in the organization is the key aspect in the study.

1.3 Scope

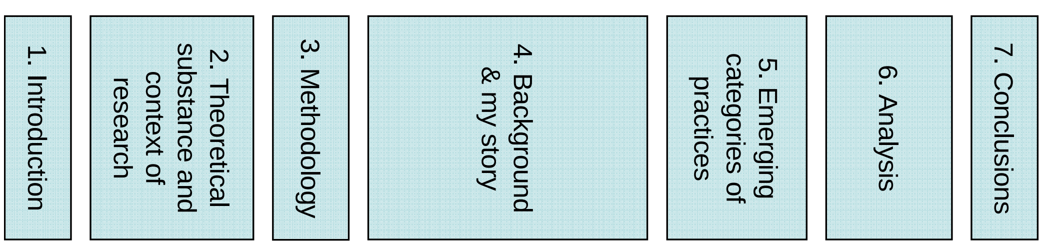
The scope of the research can be described from few different aspects. From the project point of view it covers project manager's work in the project start-up i.e. during "Analysis and Prioritization" and "Planning and Preparation" (naming is based on the project management methodology of the company). Project phases prior to that (mainly concepting) are excluded as they are not as formulated and I was not part of the company at the time. On the other hand, the nature of the project changes when a project is going forward from planning to execution Thus, I do not consider execution to be part of the project start-up. That is why it is also excluded from the study. The project management methodology of my company and respective project phases are described in more detail in section 4.1.

This study focuses only on one project that I have managed. Other development activities and projects I have participated are excluded. However, they naturally impact my thinking even if explicitly excluded. Project manager's (my) point of view is the fundamental idea behind the study. Aspects that might be important from other stakeholders' point of view are excluded unless they have some significance from my perspective. This study aims to look deep into the project manager's life during the project start-up. Therefore, in addition to external and explicit factors and events also the project manager's thoughts and feelings are explored to some extent.

The focus of this study is on the practices and situational factors of the project-oriented environment. Therefore handling of issues not solely linked to projects even if impacting them (like organizational culture), are left to minimum in this research. Emerging practices and relationships between them are covered but impacts of surrounding environment are not included in the analysis to keep it manageable.

1.4 Thesis structure

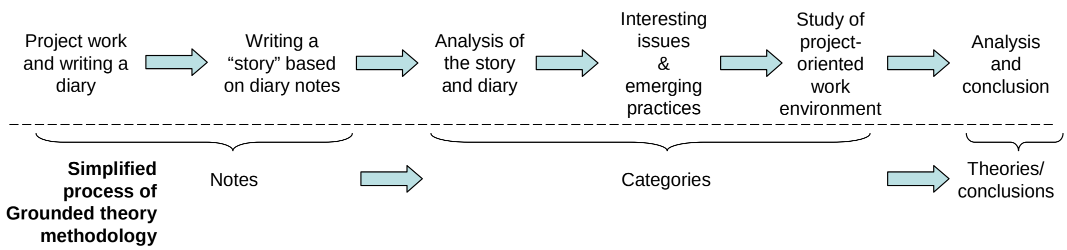
The structure of the thesis is depicted in the picture below. It describes also the relative importance of the sections. The thesis starts with introduction to the study. After this I review the issues with providing theoretical substance to the research as well as literature about the context of the research i.e. projects in companies. This will help in perceiving the topic. After that methodological issues are described briefly. The core of the study i.e. the story of the project start-up is the section number four. Emerging practices, their categorization and their relationships is done after this. Finally an analysis about practices, their inter-relations and relationship to existing literature is done in section 6. Lastly are the conclusions of the study.



Picture 1. The structure of the study

1.5 Approach and research process

The approach to the research project follows partly the structure of the thesis. After the selection of the research object, I followed the process described in the picture below (upper part of it). As ideas of Grounded theory methodology are in the background of this research, the respective steps of it are described below the line. Grounded theory methodology is applied quite loosely and applicable parts of it are included in the process. The methodological issues related to research are explored more detailed in section 3.



Picture 2. Research process and its relationship to Grounded theory methodology

The research process started with the fieldwork, which was done parallel to the management of the project start-up. I kept a diary and wrote notes for eight months. Based on those notes I wrote a story describing what I experienced during those months. After that, the story and the notes were analyzed and interesting practices/issues where identified. Next, the practices were categorized. The category formation was an iterative process as the categories of the practices kept changing and observations changed places from category to another. After that, I looked for respective literature and theories to find out what was written about these issues before and to get a better understanding about them. Based on this, I wrote the final analysis. All this is summarized in the conclusions.

2 Perspectives for studying project management in global company

As stated, in contemporary work life a notable part of operations take place in the form of projects. This section provides a tightly limited overview on practices of project-oriented organization, which helps in understanding the context of my story. However, I start this section by presenting ideas of reflective practice and sensemaking, which helps me in constructing the essence of the case. I end the section by reviewing process-relational approach that gives (me) new tools to deal with the environment and the issues I confronted.

2.1 Reflective practice and sensemaking creating awareness

2.2.1 What are they?

Requirements for professionals have expanded and become more complex than before. Experts work in unpredictable situations, working environments are unstable and the positions of the people in companies are often unclear. In addition to demanding environment, there are other issues creating uncertainty in working life. For example, leadership is not always based on hierarchical position like before and people might have no training to management even if they have to manage/lead others. (Tiuraniemi, 1994) This kind of ignorance and uncertainty can be considered as one starting point of reflective practice (White, 2006).

Reflective practice (also reflection here) is a concept introduced by Donald Schön in his book *The Reflective Practitioner* (Wikipedia). Reflective practice can be associated with the learning from experience and one characteristic of it is explorative and experimental attitude towards one's own work and the object of the work. (Tiuraniemi, 1994) Reflective practice involves the learner considering critical incidents in his life (Wikipedia). Self-reflection is also a clarification of the situation via an analysis of one's own feelings, images and thoughts (Tiuraniemi, 1994).

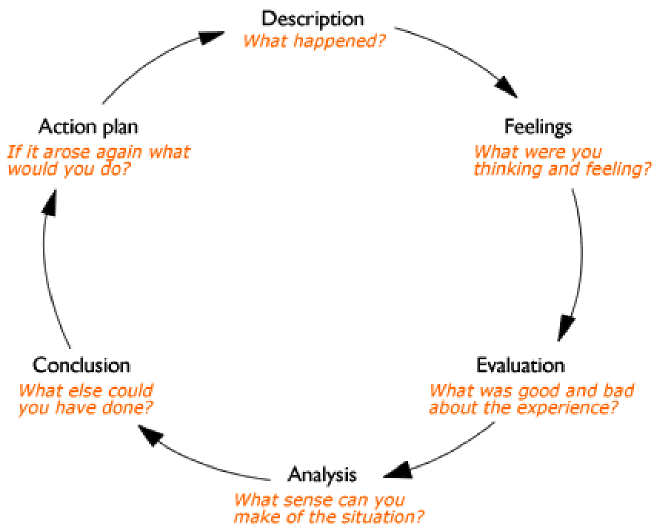
The context described above is a potential ground for sensemaking as well. Sensemaking is simply what it says to be – making of sense. To summarize Karl Weick's (1997) ideas, sensemaking is increasing of understanding that can be defined in different ways. However, the key is in the understanding. Weick characterizes sensemaking as putting things in framework, comprehending, redressing of surprise or construction of meaning. Weick et al. (2005) point out that sensemaking includes turning circumstances into a situation that can be easily understood in words. They say that situations and environments are talked into existence. Sensemaking is an explanation and interpretation of events, clues etc. which people observe in the context they try to explain or understand.

All in all, it can be said that the reflection as well as sensemaking create a basis for professional development needed in contemporary work life. Reflective practice can help an individual to develop himself and sensemaking is a way to understand the world around him.

2.1.2 How to apply them?

The process of reflection describes quite well what the reflection is all about. There are different ways to reflect one's work. Examples could be reflection via cases, artificial situations, introduction to work, consultation etc. (Tiuraniemi, 1994). One way to analyze one's own work is to write the situation to be analyzed on paper and then to review feelings and thoughts evoked in that situation afterwards. As said by White (2006), reflective practitioners need to be able to tell stories about themselves. It should be noted that the reflection can take place during the action (reflection-in-action) or after it (reflection-on-action) and I utilized both of these as I analyzed my work in the live situation during the project and naturally afterwards when writing the thesis.

One way to perform reflection is presented by Gibbs' reflective cycle originally published in "Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods" in 1998. (Oxford Brooks University, 2009) Gibbs' reflective cycle guides one to think systematically about the phases of an experience or activity. All phases presented in the picture below should be used to compile the reflection. Altogether, analysis goes from the description of the situation and making the analysis to conclusions and how to develop based on what has been learned. Even though this kind of full cycle is not used in reflection in this study (at least not explicitly), the main ideas of it can be recognized.



Picture 3. Gibbs' reflective cycle (Oxford Brooks University, 2009)

If the reflection can be done in action, according to Weick et al. (2005) sensemaking is done retrospectively. They say that sensemaking takes place when contemporary status of things differs from the expected status or when the status cannot be explained in any obvious way, which is also the case in this study.

Sensemaking can take place on individual level or it can be a social activity (Weick 1997). This means that sensemaking takes place also in organizations. There sensemaking exists e.g. in the form of constructing a group's identity and in forming a reaction to crisis. It can be said that sensemaking is an essential activity in dynamic and unstructured contexts. (Auvinen & Kosonen 2006) In this study sensemaking is done mainly by the researcher when analyzing the start-up process but there were events in the start-up that included sensemaking at an organizational level as well.

I used sensemaking and reflection in the analysis of my own work, my actions and their consequences. In addition, sensemaking was used when I tried to comprehend the practices, their relations and their impacts on the environment and vice versa. In section 2.2 I make a literature review about the context where I applied reflection and sensemaking.

2.2 Practices and contextual issues of project oriented working environment

Projects are an integral part of contemporary work life. There is a notable amount of literature written about project management. However, majority of the literature describes the context of *large projects* having either *external customer, R&D or IT focus*. Small and medium size (e.g. budget less than 1 million Euros) internal business/operations development projects are rarely in the focus of research. However, I was running this sort of project.

In this section I make a literature review dealing with projects in organizations trying to highlight aspect in small/medium sized projects. In the first sub-sections I describe the project-oriented organization as a context and in the latter part I review briefly some practices tightly connected to my case.

2.2.1 Multiple projects in organizations

Projects can be the essence of the organization or just a small part of its actions. However, individual projects are rarely isolated from other projects. According to Payne (1995) c. 90 % of the projects occur in multi-project contexts. Since the project-based operations have increased during recent years, I assume that the percentage is even higher nowadays.

Multi-project environment can be defined in many ways but the profound idea is practically same for all definitions. For example, according to Engwall and Jerbrant (2003), in multi-project environment there are several projects done simultaneously and they are utilizing at least some common *resources*. This means that they are integrated into a management control and a common resource pool. For me the multi-project environment is simply a context where many projects are done simultaneously even if there is no integration to any central system.

The multi-project environment is more complex and demanding than a single project environment from the perspective of the individual project. Engwall and Jerbrant (2003) say that the multi-project environment is highly political due to constant fight over attention, resources etc. Instability also causes conflicts in this kind of environment (Payne, 1995). Additionally, Zika-Viktorsson et al. (2006) point out that when linkages and integration between projects and their interdependencies increase they become less predictable. The practices and context of the multi-project environment is the key in section 2.2. All issues are analyzed from this perspective as it deviates quite notably from the single project environment.

Organizations have many different ways to adapt into the project-based way of working. One aspect to consider is the structure of the organization, which has notable impacts on individual projects. Jolivet and Navarre (1996) claim that traditionally two options for the structure of the organization from project point of view exist. The first is matrix organization and the second is project coordination done case by case through a functional organization. These are sustaining the permanent (non-project) part of the organization well and are emphasizing the role of the PM as a plain executer. However, today the matrix structure can be organized to support the projects efficiently, which means that the power can be either mainly in the functions or in the projects. There are also fully project-based organizations such as many consulting companies.

Different structures have specific impacts on projects. For example, according to Payne (1993), traditional, functionally structured organization does not easily permit cross-functional coordination needed in the projects. The impacts of organizational structure to projects are summarized in picture 4. It is modified from the ideas of Project Management Institute (2004, 28).

Organization structure

Project part

	Functional	**Matrix**	**Project**
PM authority	Low	Medium	High
Resource availability	Low	Medium	High
Budget control	Functions	Mixed	PM
PM role	Part-time	Part-to-full time	Full time

Figure 4. Impacts of organization structure on projects

Whereas the dedicated project organization is the best from the project point of view, there are notable amount of challenges for projects in functional and matrix organizations. These include e.g. mistrust between functions and projects as well as problems in establishing project teams. According to Payne (1993), when conflicts between functions and projects emerge, projects always suffer.

It should be noted that the impacts of the organization on projects are not only stemming from its structure. Culture is another significant organizational factor impacting projects. Marttiin (2007) summarizes quite well the importance of corporate culture to projects. According to him, *"culture is the river and project is a boat"*. It means that when the culture is favorable for the project, only 'steering' is required, whereas cultures discouraging team work and cooperation are notable hinders for the project.

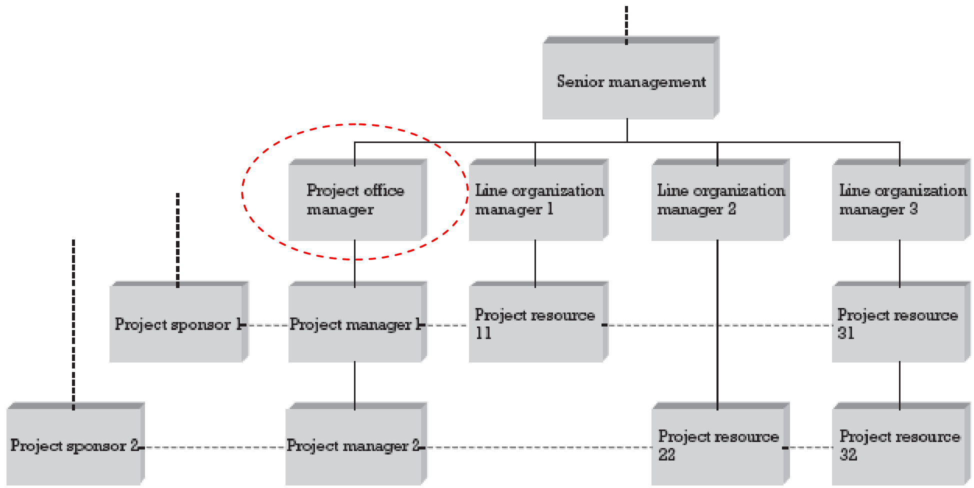
It should be noted that there are also other ways to support projects in organizations than the organizational structure. One is the project management office introduced next.

2.2.2 Project management office

Project management office (PMO) is a function that supports the project-based operations in a company. There is no unanimous definition of the PMO, but it can be examined via its tasks. Even though this organizational unit may be called with some other names as well, in this context it is referred to as the PMO. Based on the ideas of Wikipedia, Swift (2009) and Miranda (2003) I compiled a short list of the tasks that can be addressed to the PMO:

- Management of the company project portfolio (portfolio management in more details later in this section), including e.g. resource planning, inter-project coordination, project cost and benefit estimation and documentation
- Definition and management of project management methodology
- Providing services, assistance, tools and training to project management

The PMO can be set up at the enterprise level, business unit/department level, for special purpose or at any level with a need to coordinate multiple projects (Miranda, 2003; Wikipedia). In picture 5 there is one example of the place of the PMO in the organization. It represents the matrix organization where project managers are reporting to the PMO and resources are owned by functions. The basic idea is that the PMO is independent from the functions it works with.



Picture 5. Example of PMO reporting relationships. (Miranda 2003, 46)

However, even if the essence of the PMO is to support the projects and the PM in organizations, the PMO and the PM may also encounter conflicts. As the PM has project level objectives, resources etc. and the PMO has to manage these same issues at the company level, they may have contradictions (PMI, 2004). The PMO needs tools and practices to perform its tasks. In the next section two essential ones are introduced.

2.2.3 Portfolio management and project management methodology

In the multi-project environment companies try to coordinate the projects they run. Project portfolio management is a way to do this and it is a key task of the PMO. However, there are two definitions that are not clearly separated in the literature, but that are essential to understand. Lycett et al. (2004) have made a good definition for the other. *Program management* is defined as "*integration and management of a group of related projects with the intent of achieving benefits that would not be realised if they were managed independently*." *Portfolio management*, on the other hand, is the management and coordination of the whole project portfolio of a certain unit such as a company or an R&D department. In Wikipedia project portfolio management (PPM) is described *“as methods for analyzing and collectively managing a group of current or proposed projects based on numerous key characteristics.”*

Lycett et al. (2004) say that program management assures a connection between organization’s strategy and project deliverables. It can be seen that the same applies even better for the PPM. In addition to this, the objective of the PPM is to determine the optimal mix and timing of (proposed) projects while paying attention to constraints stemming from the company or from external factors (Wikipedia).

One important task of the PMO is to develop, maintain and apply project management methodology to the projects in its portfolio. This is one way for the PMO to exercise its power and to keep the projects in the portfolio comparable. There are notable amounts of different types of general/commercial methodologies developed including e.g. PMBOK and PRINCE2[1], which might serve as the basis of the development of companies’ own methodologies.

Earlier stated fact claimed that when a company has a portfolio of projects, they should be managed with a common approach (Payne & Turner, 1999). The benefits include e.g. comparable reporting, consistency, continuity of project documentation and more efficient resource allocation between projects. Zika-Viktorsson et al. (2006) point out that such practices provide also means to support project participants as well as the company to manage “similar” projects more easily.

But standardized project management methodology may have some down sides as well. For example Zika-Viktorsson et al. (2006) note, that methodologies can become a burden if they are too bureaucratic. This means that the balance between too many and too few routines is something to aim for.

Different views exist on how the balance can be reached. A liberal approach is presented by Jolivet and Navarre (1996). According to them, a selected part of the projects should be managed individually based on only some “meta-rules” and with high degree of power on the PM. In their concept project teams should be formed

[1] PMBOK is a Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge published by Project Management institute.
PRINCE2 (PRojects IN Controlled Environments) is project management methodology originally designed for governmental IT projects in the UK but that is currently in public use.

based on self-organization. According to them, all this would free the time of the top-management on other issues than project control and increase the speed of decision making as the PM has the mandate. This would also decrease the need of central services such as the PMO. This approach would be especially suitable for complex and changing environments.

Also Payne and Turner (1999) claim that projects reach better results when project management procedures are tailored based on project size, type (e.g. R&D, system development or organizational change) and resource needs. They also claim that common methodology serves most likely (typical) medium sized projects the best. According to them, small projects cannot endure the bureaucratic procedures where as larger projects are more complex and versatile and do not meet the characteristics of a typical project.

All in all, common project management methodology and procedures have clear benefits, but they cannot be too strict and detailed in order to prevent the negative impacts on versatile projects.

2.2.4 Focal project stakeholders

Project stakeholders are the people or group of people that have either interest on the project or may have (positive or negative) impact on the project. In this section I review the roles of two essential stakeholders mentioned in practically all contemporary project literature i.e. the project steering group (committee) and the project sponsor. The focus is especially on the sponsor that is normally a chairman of the steering committee. In addition, their relationship to the project manager is analyzed briefly.

It should be noted that research done on the substance of the sponsor role in projects is limited (Kloppenborg et al., 2009; Helm & Remington, 2005). In addition, the interaction between the sponsor and the PM is rarely analyzed (Helm & Remington, 2005). However, some recent studies have emphasized the importance of the project sponsor's role in the project success, and in some there is an analysis about how to deal with unsuccessful project sponsors (Kloppenborg et al., 2009). All in all, these issues are essential to understand when considering the work of the PM in projects.

Role of the steering group

The main governing body of the project is the project steering group (steering). It might also be referred to as the steering group, project board, project management group etc. The steering group usually consists of the key people representing the different interest groups of the project including e.g. the business owner and the delivering organization (PM Hut, 2009; Kettunen, 2003).

Kettunen (2003) notes, that larger projects are normally the ones supervised by the steering group; smaller ones may be governed only by the PM and possibly the sponsor. In many cases a large steering is formed in order to have an effective communication with all respective stakeholders (Kettunen, 2003). However, having a large group contains also some risks such as slower decision making. In addition to communication, some approvals, ensuring the project progress and cooperating with the PM are the tasks of the steering. Altogether, the role of the steering is not as eminent in the daily project work as is the role of the sponsor, which is reviewed next.

Role of the sponsor

Among the most crucial roles in a project is the project sponsor (sponsor), also called executive sponsor. The role of the sponsor can be viewed from different perspectives. E.g. Kettunen (2003) starts the definition from the project ownership. According to him, every project must have an owner. The owner is the person taking the responsibility of the project deliverables after the project closure. In many cases that person also proposes the project in the first place (Kloppenborg et al., 2009; Miranda, 2003). That owner is the project sponsor. However, the sponsor role is not that simple and can be reviewed more extensively via the tasks of the sponsor.

The role of the project sponsor normally consists of the multiple tasks and responsibilities and can vary between projects and organizations (Crawford & Brett, 2001). Based on the ideas of Berrie (2008), Kloppenborg et al. (2009), Crawford & Brett (2001), Miranda (2003), Melymuka (2004) and Helm & Remington (2005) I have summarized some of these. As stated above, the sponsor has the overall accountability of the project and the sponsor provides a direction to the project. In many sense the sponsor is also an enabler for the project by providing connections between the project and the organization, funds, political support, power etc. This should be realized e.g. when having a project specific challenge mentioned by Jolivet & Navarre (1996). They note that most of the decisions in the project environment are multidisciplinary and multifunctional, which pushes the decision making up in the organization. It means that decision making may take a lot of time and in that case the sponsor could speed up the process. In addition, the sponsor is the closest partner of the PM during the project by guiding, providing support, motivating and solving issues with the PM. All in all, the sponsor ensures the success of the project for the business/organization.

According to Crawford & Brett (2001), the need of the sponsor stems from the fact that not all PMs can be part of the company senior management and the sponsor maintains the link there. According to Kloppenborg et al. (2009), Englund and Bucero have said that the sponsorship is *"a commitment by management to define, defend, and support major activities from start to finish."* These emphasize the key task of the sponsor as an "enabler".

Kloppenberg et al. (2009) say that the role of the sponsor is most important in the initiating phase of the project, which can be verified by looking at the tasks of the sponsor. Many of the tasks are most relevant during the start-up of the project.

Even if the substance of the sponsor role and the work of the sponsor are hardly studied, there are some notions about issues impacting the success of the sponsor in his/her tasks. According Crawford & Brett (2001), the higher the role of the sponsor in the organization, the higher is the probability of the project success. On the other hand, Kettunen (2003) says that it is essential that the sponsor is genuinely interested in the project, which makes him/her to focus on guiding it. On top of all, the projects take place in a complex environment with multiple needs of the stakeholders. The sponsor needs to have the ability to comprehend this. (Hall et al., 2003)

The failure of the sponsor may originate from deficiencies in the abovementioned areas. For example according Helm and Remington (2005) in some cases the PM had to simplify things too much for the sponsor, which distorts the complexity of the reality. As a result, when the sponsor is not successful in his work, it might be that the PM must compensate the poor work of the sponsor. However, it should be noted that part of the lack of the sponsor's support may stem from the culture and structure of the organization. (Helm & Remington, 2005)

All in all, the roles and responsibilities between the sponsor, the steering and the PM should be clearly agreed at the beginning of the project. This includes reporting, giving/getting feedback and support etc. This way all three are contributing to the success of the project in an optimal way. In the next section I review one specific practice the PMs have to do in their projects where the steering/sponsor may need to participate.

2.2.5 Issue selling

In the project world many activities are inter-functional and the PM must be able to work with people from multiple functions and operations. One of the most challenging tasks is to sell your own ideas, goals, methods etc. to leaders of different functions in order to ensure adequate support and collaboration from them. The support is then realized e.g. in the form of "resources". This refers mainly to working time and knowledge input of experts. It is clear that managers offering resources to projects evaluate what they are gaining from the activity versus how much they should invest in it. This is where the PM needs to be convincing.

Jane Dutton et al. have written quite extensively about issue selling. Even though in these articles (1993, 1997, 2001) issue selling is defined as an activity of getting ones issues on the top management's strategic agenda and issues are further distinguished from projects, there are very interesting analogies to the project world as well. All in all, it is clear that selling issues and getting attention precedes change in organizations (Ocasio 1997, Dutton et al. 2001).

Issue selling can be characterized as a two step process. First the "issue seller" has to get the management's attention and time and then win them on his/her side. (Dutton et al. 1993) Naturally getting attention depends also on other things and not just on issue selling ability. Ocasio (1997), for example, presents one model on focusing attention in organizations.

After getting the management to listen to you, there is still a need to get them to agree with your ideas. Dutton et al. (1993) indicate that one aspect explaining partly what issues become strategic i.e. important from the management's viewpoint is based on social problem theory. It states that when many people (in the organization) claim the importance of an issue, it becomes important also for the top management. Naturally there are numerous other arguments the PM can utilize as well in selling the issue.

Also the PM himself impacts the issue selling process and its outcome. Dutton et al. (2001) present categories of knowledge the PM may have or lack, which condition issue selling. Relational knowledge answers questions like "who in the organization knows about this", "who is affected", "who might object it" etc. Normative knowledge, on the other hand, is about the data, arguments and protocols related to the issue. Strategic knowledge is about the organization's strategy, goals etc. And relational knowledge helps the seller to talk with people and present things from their viewpoint. However, Dutton et al. (1993, 2001) point out that the organizational context affects notably on how to justify your ideas.

It should be also noted that issue selling might be even somewhat unethical at times. E.g. Kunda (1992) has noticed that in some cases it was required to give unrealistic expectations to management about the project in order to get it started.

In addition to succeed in issue selling itself, Dutton et al. (1993, 1997) emphasize the implications that a successful or unsuccessful process might have on the seller's career, credibility, image etc. They also point out that it varies notably (due to many reasons) whether a seller is more concerned about one's image or the success of the company. However, the significance of that phenomenon is questioned in the article of Dutton et al. (2001).

All in all, issue selling can be summarized in three aspects. There are things (moves) the PM can do to make the issue selling process more efficient. In addition to those, there are internal and external factors in the organization impacting the outcome.

Personal characteristics of the PM also impact the success of issue selling. But in general, the PM should get support from the steering and the sponsor in selling issues. In section 2.2.6 I present one of the challenges that requires successful issue selling.

2.2.6 Resourcing

Getting resources for the project is one of the most important tasks of the PM. But it is rarely a simple and straightforward issue. As stated e.g. by Hendricks and Kroep (1999), the allocation of people in the multi-project environment is often difficult and faces a lot of problems. Resourcing is one of the most obvious practices in project start-up where the capability of selling issues is required.

Empirical research regarding the allocation of resources in the project environment exists. However, it often explores a situation where some resource pool exists such as in R&D organizations (e.g. Hendricks and Kroep, 1999) or where organization structure is somehow supporting project-based operations e.g. by matrix form (e.g. Jolivet & Navarre, 1996). How to get resources in a functional organization is more seldom studied. This section presents a review about who are involved in the resourcing of a project and what kind of issues/problems impact this activity.

Stakeholders involved in resource game

Depending on the responsibilities of the project participants, the key role in the resource game is held either by the sponsor or the PM. When acquiring resources, the PM (or the sponsor) has to negotiate with functional managers, process managers and other project managers as any of these may have resources (generic or some particular one) needed in the project. In addition to in-house resources, there is naturally a possibility to get outside resources such as consultants and other sub-contractors working for the project if the project budget allows it.

In addition to the abovementioned, the PMO is one stakeholder to be involved in the resourcing of the project. In many cases the PMO has generic resources to allocate to projects or at least it can coordinate resources located in other functions. As stated earlier, common methodology for managing all projects in the portfolio enables good resource management (e.g. Payne & Turner, 1999). All in all, in many cases the primary challenge of the PMO is the prioritization of the projects and resource allocation to those as no excess resources are available (Engwall & Jerbrant, 2003).

Issues and problems impacting resourcing

As stated, resourcing is one of the most challenging tasks of the project manager. One very eminent and often mentioned issue is the scarcity of resources. There are multiple reasons for this. As Kettunen (2003) says, it often originates from the situation where people have daily routines they have to do (in addition to project work). On the other hand, resourcing problems in the multi-project environment may stem also from poor project scheduling or commitment to too many projects at the same time (Engwall & Jerbrant, 2003; Payne, 1995). In general, in the multi-project environment projects are pursued in parallel with same resources in order to optimize resource usage leading to the lack of them in many cases. (Zika-Viktorsson et al., 2006)

Issues and challenges related to getting resources for a project are in many cases connected to the structure of the organization. For example Jolivet and Navarre (1996) claim that in traditional functional organizations the PMs have very limited power over resources as described also in picture 4. All in all, when the project-based operating model is visible in the organization structure the procedure of acquiring resources is much easier for the PM.

Projects get resources partly based on their importance. How projects are perceived, is a multi-dimensional and problematic issue. According to Payne (1995), the size of the project normally determines how the importance of the project is seen. On the other hand, the PMO has means to rank and evaluate the projects. In addition, there are issues such as attention focus impacting this. Therefore, resourcing is not an objective and well-defined procedure in all cases, which causes problems to the PM and eventually also to the company.

2.2.7 Motivation and commitment in projects

When resources i.e. people are nominated for the project, people need motivation and commitment in order to perform in optimal way. This does not concern only the project team but also the sponsor, the steering and the PM.

Projects have some inherent properties which make them unique from the motivation and commitment perspective. It starts from the position of the PM. Hendrickson (2008) says that the PM creates the commitment of the team through a combination of formal authority, reward and/or penalty power, expert power (when perceived to possess special knowledge or expertise) and attraction power via personality. The first two depend on the organization and its culture regarding projects whereas the last two depend on the PM himself. The last two are practically similar to line management, but the first two are fully project related issues. Therefore the PM might or might not have tools to motivate people in this respect.

Project context specific issues in motivation may stem also from the project team members. Kettunen (2003) writes that motivation might be quite easy for people who do not do projects as their daily work. For them project work brings variation to daily routines. But as Kettunen notes, it is extremely important that people are willing and motivated to participate in the project work from the beginning. However, that is not always the case as people might be allocated to project work they don't want to do. According to Maturo (2008), there are simply some people in projects that cannot be motivated and they should be forgotten. But how to ignore people, if they are the only ones you have?

People in the project team may have notably different backgrounds. As Kettunen (2003) and Otterholt (2009) point out, the PM must consider differences in people participating in the project. This means they have to be supported, directed and motivated in different ways. It is stated in many articles and books (e.g. Boyer Smith, 2009; Thizy, 2009; Kettunen, 2003) that the roles and responsibilities of the people should be clear in order to keep them motivated and committed. This is stated by all mentioned above, but what they emphasize after that varies. Kettunen (2003) says that allocating people to tasks they prefer in the project and changing the areas of responsibility during it might motivate people (especially people that do projects as the main content of their work). Otterholt (2009) says that people should be allocated to tasks related to their expertise. Boyer Smith (2009), on the other hand, states that the PM should be confident that people can do what is expected from them. According to Thizy (2009), people should also be aware of what is their contribution to the project, why are they on that task, how they benefit from it and what is the purpose of the whole project. All in all, clarifying the issues around the tasks of the people is essential for motivation even if allocating them to optimal tasks is not always possible due to predefined resources.

Good communication and interaction among the project team also creates motivation and positive atmosphere in various ways. Nordqvist et al. (2004) indicate that promoting emotional ties impacts the effectiveness of the team. In their article they also refer to Guzzo et al. that have elaborated the term potency in article “Potency in groups: Articulating a construct” in 1993. Potency is a collective understanding that the group can be effective. When a team has the potency they are committed and willing to work hard.

In addition to the issues related to human relationships, there are other project related factors impacting the motivation of people which the PM can impact. For example clear, established and challenging project goals are something which motivate project members (Nordqvist et al., 2004; Zika-Viktorsson et al., 2006). According to them, it is essential that the team members share the vision about the project’s goals. This can be ensured partly by letting them participate in the goal setting. Participation in the planning is naturally motivating and increases the commitment of the project stakeholders. In addition to project team’s participation in the planning, Kettunen (2003) suggests that the project plan should be approved by the steering to increase their commitment to the project.

All in all, there is a notable amount of ways in which the PM can impact the motivation and commitment of people. Some project specific ones are presented above but naturally there are numerous “generic” managerial issues as well.

2.3 Process-relational thinking explaining the reality

The contexts and practices presented in section 2.2 are in a constant change and connected to each other. This leads to the situation where stable, normative rules and “truths” of the project-oriented working environment cannot solely explain the reality.

In this section I present the concept of process-relational thinking which brings a new viewpoint to the previously presented issues in the multi-project environment.

Contexts and people in process

In this study I analyze how certain things evolve during the project start-up. One possible approach is to consider them as processes. Naturally the term process itself can be defined in many different ways. Pettigrew (1997) thinks that Van de Ven's definition *"a sequence of events that describes how things change over time"* is something that fits the purpose when analyzing organizations in longitudinal studies. Even though there were two other definitions in that particular article, according to Pettigrew this is the best. His opinion is based on the fact that this definition views how an issue or entity develops and changes over time. When Pettigrew defines a process, he also adds the context i.e. how things develop over time in a structured and institutional environment. This emphasizes the fact that processes should not be studied in isolation of the specific context.

I use the concept process in describing how and why things evolve as they do. Therefore, a distinction must be made to the concept of process that entails only the idea of "input-transformation process-output". In the early days of the process research the focus was on this sort of mechanistic input-process-output model, so called variance theory. Today the process itself i.e. how/why things change is a research object itself. (Van de Ven & Huber, 1990) Even though both concepts contain the idea that the process has some inputs and generates some outputs, the development of things is the research object here and outputs as such are not analyzed.

I emphasize the profound idea of the processes used in this study by linking Pettigrew's (1997) descriptions such as becoming, emerging, developing, transforming and decaying into the process. According to him, underlying mechanisms which drive the processes are things that a process researcher should look for. He points out that these can be directly observable or hidden in the context somehow. Understanding the sequence and the flow of events over time is a crucial requirement for the process scholar. All in all, Pettigrew notes that the driving assumption behind process thinking is that the social reality is not a steady state.

Analyzing processes from this perspective contains some issues to be solved. Even though Pettigrew (1990) looks at the process research from a somewhat different perspective than I do in this study, he points out relevant questions also for this report. "*When does the process begin and end? When is the appropriate moment to make assessments about outcome evaluation?"* According to him, there is no clear answer for these, but it should be remembered that the scoping of the research from this perspective defines what changes are observed and how they are explained. For me this means that I must interpret issues before I will know how everything ended. To help partly to solve this dilemma I also use observations which took place after the actual temporal scope of the study. These observations are presented as footnotes in my story.

Processes in context

As pointed out, the processes cannot be studied in isolation. As Pettigrew (1997) notes, the social processes are deeply embedded in their contexts and the processes impact the context like the context impacts the processes. As an example, Pettigrew introduces matters such as traditions or technological commitments which might constrain the processes but, on the other hand, processes might alter technological strategies or corporate cultures. Therefore, when e.g. the development of the corporate culture can be seen as a process, it can be said that the processes are impacting each other.

It is impossible to list all different aspects of the context that should be taken into account when analyzing processes. However, one thing close to this research which Watson (2006) points out, is that people are not only observing and interpreting organizations but they are living as part of it and making it what it is. This is especially important to understand in this study as I am part of the research object myself.

Process-relational thinking explaining the reality

As explained, things evolve as processes and such processes should be studied in their contexts. Process-relational (in this section PR) thinking is one approach to put process analysis in the context. Based on the writings of Pettigrew and others, PR thinking is defined by Watson (2006) as a way of understanding that human beings and their social arrangements are always developing i.e. emergent. It means that they are not fixed entities and are relational, meaning they exist in relation to others. In PR research as such, the focus is on "*how things happen in practice, when people come together*". Even though Watson's definition is about humans and social arrangements, analogical thinking can be applied to organizations and working practices.

PR thinking is challenging the systems-control (in this section SC) thinking to some extent. According to Watson (2006), the PR way of framing reality is more useful than SC thinking even though he points out that "the one is not right and the other wrong". SC way of thinking can be characterized as the traditional way of looking at organizations. From this perspective the organization is seen as a system taking inputs and making planned outputs. It works as it is designed to work; it is controllable and is producing outputs it is designed to produce. (Watson 2006) This has a clear analogy to the variance theory process analysis. It should be noted that there are inputs and outputs also in PR thinking, but the processes that transforms inputs to outputs are in constant change and PR thinking focuses on how things change.

In the table below, there are some selected ideas from Watson's (2006) presentation about the differences of SC and PR ways of framing organizations and people.

Table 1. Comparison of systems-control and process-relational ways

Organization		**People**	
Systems-control	Process-relational	Systems-control	Process-relational
Own entity	Relational phenomena	Individual entity	Relational beings
Based on design	Emergent patterns	Fixed personality	Emergent identities
Rules and procedures	Reason and emotion	Rational thinking	Rational thinking and emotional encounters

Clear differences between the SC and the PR thinking can be noticed. First of all SC looks at organizations and people as isolated entities whereas PR looks how they exist in the context. Secondly, SC looks at organizations as fixed, stable and designed entities, whereas PR sees them developing constantly i.e. they are in emergence. Thirdly, from SC point of view people and organizations are totally logical and work as instructed, whereas in PR point of view emotions are brought to organizational encounters too.

As pointed out, the profound idea of PR thinking is that processes are in constant change. According to Watson (2006), one reason for this is the multiplicity of goals organizations entail. In SC thinking, an organization has one or several predefined and aligned goals. However, according to Watson, organizations have multiplicity of goals leading to constant change. In fact they are the goals of different coalitions of people. It should be noted that according to Watson (2006), organizations cannot have goals, only humans can. From his viewpoint, organizations exist only s arenas for performing a task, such as making elevators or educating children. This would apply to projects as well. It means that people have goals and the project has tasks to meet those goals.

Thus, according to PR thinking, organizations may have a multiplicity of goals, which are actually the goals of the people (or group of people) involved in the organization. As there are many people, organizations ultimately contain controversies as people have their individual goals. These controversies lead to emerging processes. Therefore one aspect of PR thinking is to look at constantly changing relationships in the organization which help and hinder in performing the task the organization exists for. (Watson 2006)

In addition to the "goals" of the organization there are goals for organizing as well. According to the PR view, the goal of organizing is to create a productive cooperation in order to do the task defined (Watson 2006). In the SC approach cooperation is thought to exist in organizations automatically. In the PR approach, on the other hand, this is something that needs to be worked for. The means to achieve this include e.g. issue selling, negotiations, bargaining and persuasion. In my mind the definition of organizing should be used broadly (not only changes in the company's organization) so that it covers many different aspects used in trying to affect the processes creating the required outputs.

Linked to everything stated above, PR thinking also includes the idea of limited control in organizations. It is partly stemming from the idea that control exists between humans and no human lets the other to have 100 % control over himself or herself. It also entails the idea that the control is achieved via negotiation, persuasion, manipulation etc. as well as via official rules and procedures. (Watson 2006) Even though in some cases it may feel that the organization makes one do something and the organization is bureaucratic, there are always people behind the rules. These people are exercising their power and control over others. (Watson 2006) This aspect can be clearly seen e.g. when discussing about the resourcing and the performance of people, but also when discussing about the applying of rules to different cases.

In chapter 2 I first presented such conceptual tools as reflection and sensemaking that help me in comprehending the research object. After that I reviewed existing literature about the research context and some practices of it. The last part of the section provided a new aspect to the context in the form of process-relational thinking. In the next chapter I present the methodology I used in the field work and in the analysis phase of the project.

3 Aspects of methodology

Doing the research requires knowledge about research methodologies and issues alike. The relevant ones for this study are reviewed in this section. However, they are not in-depth analyses about the topics but represent the “how I did it” aspect.

3.1 Ethnographic research

This research is an ethnographic one. When we are talking about intensive case studies, we are already quite close to ethnographic research (Eriksson and Koistinen, 2005). Ethnographic research itself is an essential part of anthropology where it is stemming from. Ethnography is a methodological strategy used to provide descriptions of human societies. As a methodology it does not prescribe any particular method (e.g. observation, interview, questionnaire), but instead prescribes the nature of the study (i.e. to describe people through writing). (Wikipedia) Field study is often used as a synonym to ethnography in some contexts.

Vered (2000) defines ethnographic research as *“experienced as performed rather than just communicated in dialogue”*. It means that ethnographic research is “lived” as part of the community. When collecting data ethnographers participate in peoples daily lives for an extended period of time. They watch what happens, listen, ask questions etc. The basic idea is that people are observed in their daily context rather than in a created atmosphere. Data collection is quite informal. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007)

What I did was very close to the descriptions above. However, one distinction can be made. Whereas stated above that ethnographers live and participate in the community they study, I can actually say that I was part of the community. That helped me in one essential characteristic of this sort of study, which is that the researcher’s personal relationship to the research object is a key issue in making findings and observations.

3.2 Case study

This research is an ethnographic one, but it is also a case study. As Eriksson and Koistinen (2005) state in the title of their book, case studies vary a lot. In some case studies the objective is to create a theory or to understand issues more extensively (instrumental or collective research). Yet, there are studies which focus on the case itself and consider it valuable as such. (Eriksson and Koistinen, 2005) Sometimes case studies are criticized as their results cannot be generalized, but it should be noted that this is only one objective of research. As Eriksson and Koistinen (2005) point out, the strengths of case studies can be seen when studying complex and changing entities. Many corporate world development projects are like that, just like my case. It means that a case study might be practically the only option when a deep analysis of the target is needed.

It is commonly said that the goal of a classical case study has been the making of a thick description or a good story. As Eriksson and Koistinen (2005) summarize it, it is considered that creating a good narrative (story) is theory making itself. This is justified with the viewpoint that for understanding human activity it is important to find connections between issues, to define entities from pieces and to understand the world around us by doing this. This means that the core of a case study is not just an isolated description of a case. This is one aspect on how I see my study contributing to science as well.

Thus, case studies may have different objectives. Descriptive study and causal explanation are two of which are close to each other. To make a distinction between these, the causality is more about why things happen whereas the descriptive study is about what and how. (Eriksson & Koistinen, 2005) This study has both aspects even if the descriptive side might have more emphasis.

3.3 Observing

When doing a case study one has to observe the objective (in most of the cases). At least in my case observing is the key data collection method. The role of an observer and his relationship to participation is discussed in the booklet of Laitinen (1984) based on Junker's well known typology. Four different roles are described starting from a complete observer to a complete participant. Between these two are the roles of an observer-participant and participant as observer.

My role in this study is somewhere between the “participant as observer” and the “complete participant”. In practice this means that my role is not hidden but some people did not know about it. It also means that I am part of the daily activities in the research object and have an access to information via formal and informal channels like discussions. Pure “complete participant” role was not the case as my identity as a researcher was disclosed when asked or otherwise became apparent. In my mind the benefits that I had when doing the research was, that I was already part of the organization and I did not need to learn any role to be a part of the “culture”. I also had a role which enabled my observation from all relevant viewpoints to the research object.

Therefore, in this research I clearly have two roles – I am the project manager i.e. the object of the research, but at the same time I am the observer/researcher analyzing the project. In addition to these, I see some aspects of a reflective practitioner in myself, meaning that I try to analyze my own work as well and learn from it. This third role positions itself somewhere between the first two roles.

3.4 Writing

How to write an interesting story based on an ethnographic research is one of the key issues in making an interesting study in this category. Kirsi Korpiaho (2009) has written an article about it. Her article contains some very useful points. She says that when writing about your own community, you should try to see things from a new perspective and to make it interesting. Korpiaho lists three tactics which help in looking at things near and, on the other hand, three tactics which help in looking at things from a distance. One approach to get distance to the issue is to use (scientific) concepts in writing, which I utilized in the analysis phase. The other approach, which is slightly broader, is to build a sort of framework around the issue in question. On the other hand, if one wants to come closer to the issue, suitable tactics include e.g. reflecting your own work and analysis, looking at things from different perspectives (e.g. as a new recruit or as a packaging expert) and write about your own feelings and experiences. I utilized all these three tactics, which can be seen in the story as well as in the analysis.

3.5 Research ethics

Research ethics is something that needs to be considered in every research. A researcher must keep in mind that the research does not pose any threat to the person's self esteem, career prospects etc. Issues related to privacy must also be considered. (Auvinen & Kosonen 2006) Koskinen et al. (2005) point out another ethical dilemma linked to the observation approach presented above. That is the researcher's identity i.e. whether it is explicitly announced or not. According to them, the identity should not be hidden even though it sometimes decreases the reliability of the research. In this study, I have not explicitly announced that I am doing research. On the other hand, I have not denied it either, so some stakeholders of the project might have the understanding what I have been doing. However, I don't see that as a big issue as the project work has taken the attention of the stakeholders and my research has not been constantly on their mind. All in all, as I have neither asked permission to do this study explicitly nor have discussed with the people involved, I will disclose neither the people nor the company as a part of this study. In my mind such distance taking is not hindering the interpretation made by me of the processes under study.

3.6 Subjectivity

This sort of study is naturally somewhat subjective, and the subjectivity is actually a key issue for some parts of it. This approach has obvious issues with objectivity. However, Saija Katila and Susan Meriläinen (2002) present some positive aspects about the research methodology where you are the subject and the object at the same time i.e. you study your own work. They name issues like access to discussions which are difficult to participate otherwise, you understand and know people and you can put things in context. They also point out that this sort of research can be objective but at the same time it can present a reliable picture about reality. This is what I aimed for as well, but it should be noted that some parts of the research are clearly my view on things.

3.7 Grounded theory methodology

Grounded theory methodology (GT) is a process that I loosely follow in my research, as mentioned in the introduction. Grounded theory refers to a process where a theory or a hypothesis is derived from the empirical data instead of using deductive reasoning and existing theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Based on Wikipedia, GT does not seek the truth but aims to conceptualize what is going on; and as Martin and Turner (1986) put it "…goal is to represent conceptually what data reflect empirically". Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka (2006) emphasize the findings of practical level logic in the material. All in all, the general goal of GT is not to test existing theories, but to create new ones. However, in this research creating a theory is not the key goal. I just utilize the process and steps to analyze the data and to understand the observations I made.

GT can be used in various contexts. Martin (2002) says that GT is usually used when making subjective/emic (i.e. participating) research. Even though Martin is writing about studying organizational culture, it is very analogical to this case. On the other hand, Martin & Turner (1986) point out that complexities, which e.g. organization research contain, can be analyzed well with GT. According to them it is especially useful in case studies.

GT is widely discussed, developed and analyzed methodology but the researchers are unanimous (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006). Therefore the steps to utilize it and the emphasized issues vary between researchers. I have formulated the following steps of the GT process based on the following sources: Martin & Turner (1986), Molander, Koskennurmi-Sivonen (2004), Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka (2006) and Wikipedia. The names of the steps can vary between the sources and not all steps are emphasized alike:

1. Making of observations: Saturation principle is usually followed, thus data is collected until it saturates.
2. Open coding (first stage of coding): Observations are coded, rephrased etc. hence they can be followed up and understood later.
3. Axial coding or selective coding: Observations are classified to concepts/categories. These are still somewhat abstract.
4. Selective coding: Finding relationships between categories. Possibly also finding the core category – the most important/central thing other issues relate to.
5. Making theories.
6. Comparing theories to existing ones and the research field

As stated previously, my goal was not to create new theories and therefore my focus in the described process was in the steps 1-4. The process itself is iterative as e.g. the concepts can be merged, renamed and modified, data collection can be continued after entering the next steps etc. When continued the analysis moves towards a higher level of abstractivity and a theory emerges from relationships between categories. All in all, applying the GT methodology is not a straight-forward process that goes similarly every time.

When applying the GT, some fundamental and useful issues should be noted. These issues are modified based on the same sources as used for the process steps. First point is that all observations are data. This covers not only interviews and traditional observations but anything that helps the researcher to generate concepts.

Secondly, an open mind is essential when forming new concepts and theories. Some researches even say that no literature reviews should be done prior to analysis, but the opinions differ regarding this. All in all, the literature should be read during the research process in order to understand what has already been coded and generated, but this should be done only in later stages of the process partly due to the fact that in the beginning it is impossible to say what sort of findings emerge, thus what literature to read. This leads partly to the fact that the research question is more of an end result than a starting point. Even though the research questions were somewhat familiar to me in the beginning of the project, I nevertheless read the literature after collecting empirical data.

In this chapter, I have presented relevant methodological issues and approaches related to this research. The aim was to highlight how I applied these general rules of research. After this it is time to move on to the issue itself – the next chapter contains my story.

4 My story and the context

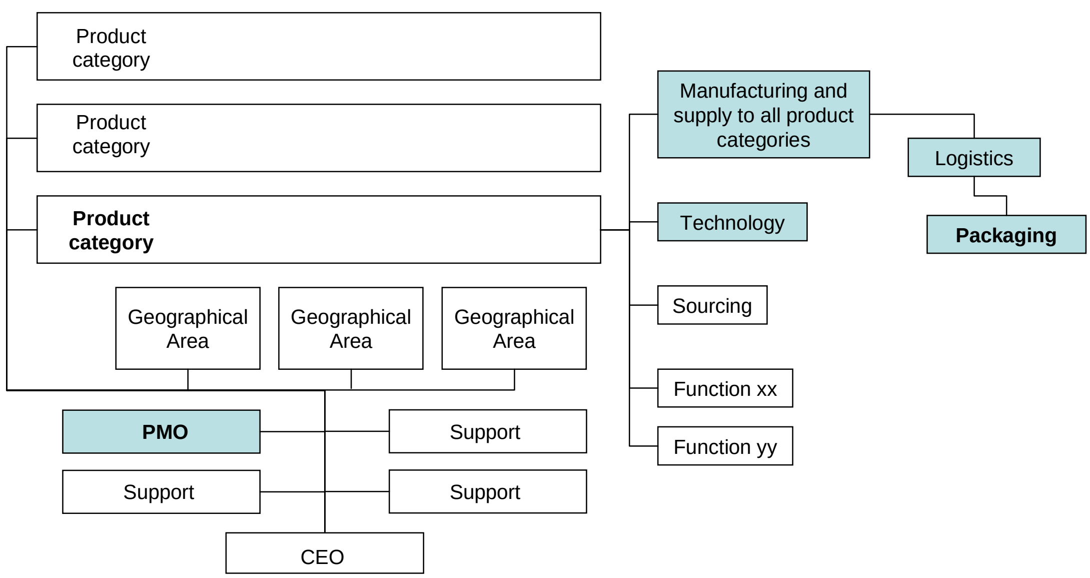
So now we are going to see my world. In this chapter I first describe some relevant issues about the background of the project. After that I tell my story in order to create a picture about what I experienced and did during my first ten months at this workplace.

4.1 Background of the project

In this section I briefly describe some issues which help in understanding my story. Organization of the company, project management methodology and the project itself are introduced briefly.

Organization of the company

The organization of the company is somewhat ambiguous. However, it is essential to understand some relationships of different functions in the organization in order to get a full understanding of this study. Simplified organization of the company is depicted in the picture below.



Picture 6. Organization of the company and the place of some key functions in it.

Organizational key issues to notice include:

- Global development (GD) is a support function under CEO. The GD manages company's project portfolio (excl. R&D projects) i.e. the GD is company's PMO

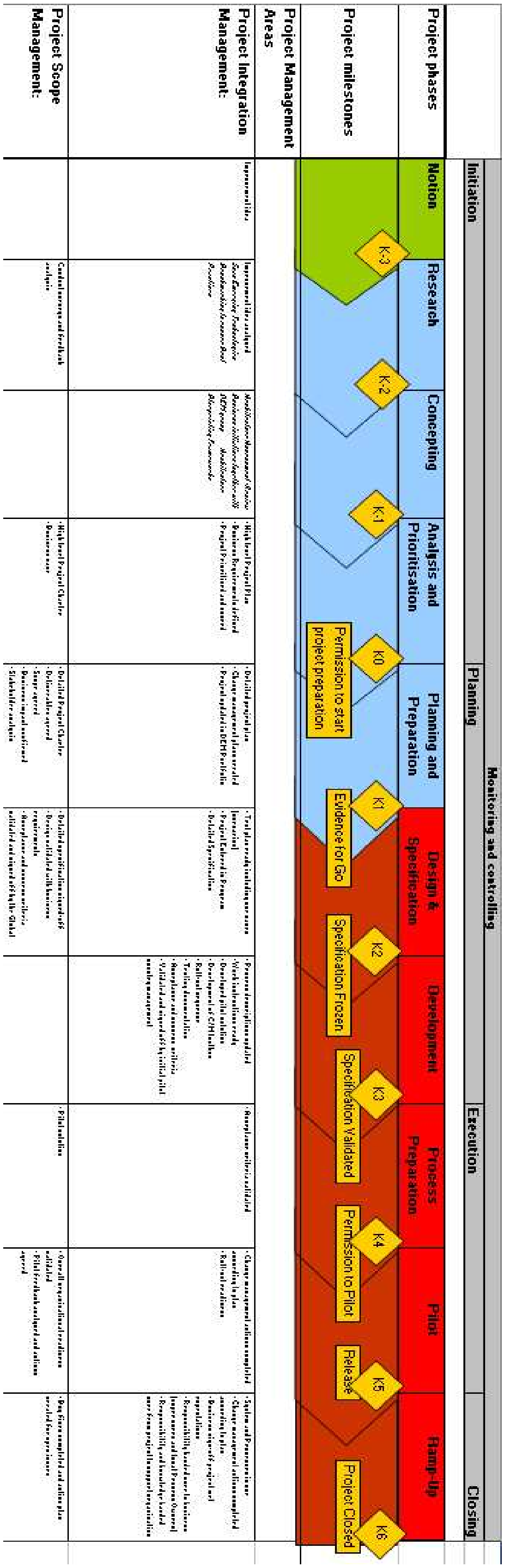
- Company-level process owners (process development responsibles) of the manufacturing and supply area are located in the GD function, which creates one additional matrix organization aspect
- Technology is a function on the same level in the organization as the supply and manufacturing operations
- Packaging is located under one product category, but it manages packages for all product areas

Company's project management methodology

All IT-development resources of the company are located in the corporate function called Global Development (GD). Thus, the GD manages also the company's IT development project portfolio. This means that whenever IT resources are needed in a development project, the project must be managed as a part of the GD project portfolio.

Whenever a project is managed as a GD project, it follows the company level project management methodology and the GD monitors it closely. This is always the case regardless of the share of IT development in the total budget of the project. For example, in my project three sub-projects out of four are fully business driven i.e. no GD resources are needed for those, but still my project was part of the GD's portfolio.

It is worth mentioning that the background of the GD function is in the IT and system development, which means that also the GD project management methodology is guiding projects much from the system development viewpoint.



Picture 7. Part of the GD project management methodology template.

The picture 7 is a fragment of the project management methodology template. In this methodology project phases before K0 are considered to be project initiation and the phase before K1 is called “Planning and preparation”. The management methodology itself gives guidelines and requirements for projects in the areas like integration management, scope management, HR management etc. The project phases preceding particular milestones are named in the picture. The project management methodology follows relatively closely the principles of the commercial PMBOK project management mentioned earlier.

The Project

The project which is the research object of this study consists of four separate sub-projects. The sub-projects are all related to packaging and have some interrelations, but are nevertheless clearly separately manageable entities. Therefore all of the sub-projects have their own project teams and reference groups. The sub-projects have the following contents:

- Packaging development road map: plan about future projects and activities in the area of packaging development in the company
- Packaging design process: definition of how packages should be designed as part of the company’s R&D and product life cycle management
- Packaging documentation: renewal of company’s packaging requirements (for suppliers and own manufacturing), documentation of current packaging
- Package item list: implementation of the document describing the content of a package in paper and electronic format for own units and suppliers (later also discussion about illustrated list)

Regardless of the individuality of the subprojects, the project is followed as one from the GD viewpoint.

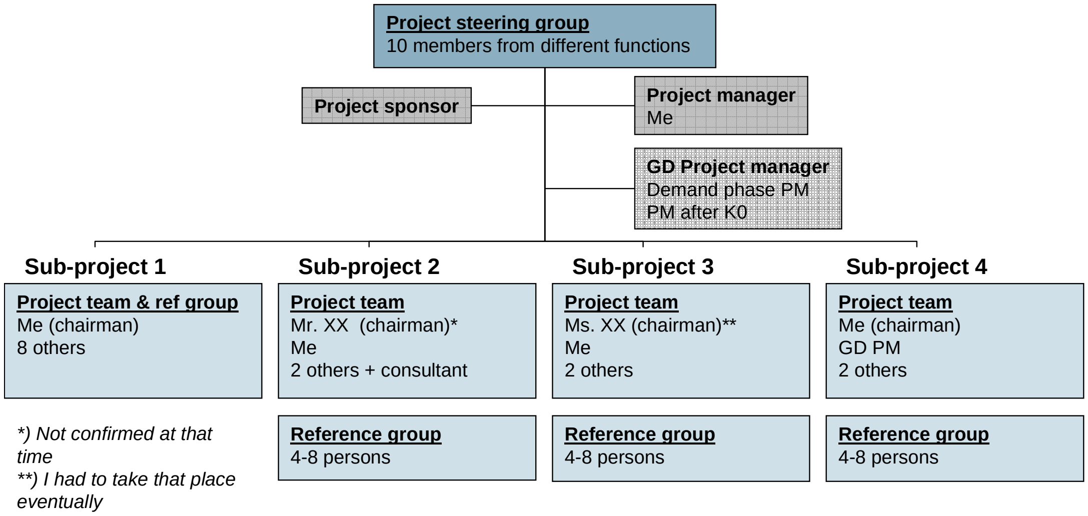
The initial idea and the scope of the project was actually just one of the sub-projects. However, when I started to analyze the situation and plan the project, I noticed the need for some other developments in this area as well. Originally the project was planned to fulfill some packaging related needs of the geographical areas, which take care of product sales and installation. In addition to the geographical areas, the extended project with all four sub-projects is developing solutions also for organizational product categories.

Picture 8 presents the project organization as it was in September 2008. At the time my plan was to manage two sub-projects myself and have the others managed by someone else. Most relevant project stakeholders are presented in the picture. Their roles as defined in the project management methodology of the company can be summarized as follows:

- **Steering group (steering committee):** gives guidelines to a project and to the project manager (PM), grants milestones (except K0, K1 and K5) and proposes milestone approval for the corporate project governance council (K0, K1, K5), approves project deliverables, PM reports to the steering group
- **Sponsor:** chairs the steering group, owns the project and "wants the project to succeed", supports and guides the PM, provides information to the PM, solves conflicts, requests the project to start, controls resources
- **GD PM:** reports to the steering group, manages system design and solutions
- **Business PM (me):** manages business process design, manages communication and documentation, reports to the steering group
- **Reference group:** has interest in the project, gives feedback and guides in finding/accepting solutions

Resources (people) for the project teams and the steering group were planned to be chosen mainly from my product category area, i.e. from manufacturing, supply/logistics, sourcing, quality and technology.

It should be noted that the actual roles are not precisely according to these guidelines mentioned above as e.g. I am chairing the steering group.



Picture 8. Simplified project organization as it was in September 2008

4.2 My story

So welcome to have a look into my project from my perspective. The story is written based on what I saw, felt and observed during the time of the project. In addition, I provide future perspectives on the issues in footnotes. These are observations I made later regarding that particular issue/event so they help in understanding the big picture or explain the future, but are something I did not know/realize at the time. The bolded issues are essential parts of the story (or at least I think so). The story is basically written in chronological order so themes jump from one issue to another as in daily work. Brackets mark “quotations” of my thoughts at that time. Some parts of the project were still going on when writing the story, which might be visible from the tenses.

Start-up

All this can be considered to have started in autumn 2007. I was once again updating the cost competitiveness Excel-model on my desk in the consulting company I worked for. Even though the work was important for the clients, it was so damn boring. Then I decided that it was time to get my hands on real work again and leave this Excel and PowerPoint world behind – at least for now. So after a few job applications and interviews I saw an ad in the newspaper. It stated that there would be a vacancy for a packing expert in a large stock listed company. The position was a new one and its holder would be responsible for the packaging development of the whole company. I thought it would be just the right position for me as in that position I could utilize my project work skills; it's about packaging (my substance expertise) and I had heard mostly positive things about the company. So I applied and finally got the job. My first day in that position was on March the 17^{th} 2008.

From the first interview, it was clear that the management of a notable development project would be one of my tasks. It was actually also mentioned in the ad. It seemed that they (my supervisor and some others) had all figured out and my duty was just to execute it. However, I noticed later that the planning was actually on the level "something needs to be done to this as there are problems", which meant notable work for me also in the area of project planning.

Starting to work with the project

The first months in the work were mostly introduction and getting to know people etc. Naturally there were bits and pieces about the project work as well, but I can say it got really started in June 2008.

As stated, I had an impression in my mind that I could just plan and execute the project. However, approval and support for the project from the management of different functions was also something I needed to earn. The support would have been mainly resources (i.e. in this study always working time unless indicated otherwise). So the selling of the project to the management started as soon as I had some ideas about the project content and goals in my mind. That was what I needed to sell. The selling procedure was mainly discussions with different managers and directors in the organization e.g. from supply and manufacturing, sourcing, support functions, area representatives. **The purpose of the meetings was to create awareness of the project and at the same time gain the management's commitment to it.** These meetings were, in most cases, very positive in nature and the management seemed very interested about the project and ensured that there will be a need for it. One challenge regarding the start-up was that the decision to have this project was done before I joined the company, but the internal marketing and the acceptance had not been gained yet.

During these discussions the operational problems regarding packaging took most of the attention from my marketing agenda. It seemed that **people had a lot on their minds regarding packaging as there had been no "packaging expert" position in the company before.** All this made me feel that I was going to do an important job and was extremely excited to get things moving forward.[2]

The "road show" continued till the end of June. And the management's commitment was strong – at least in their talks. (I always have some skepticism in my mind…) In addition to creating awareness, for me this was also about acquiring resources i.e. participants for the project teams and the reference groups. I had a good feeling that **getting resources from the business would be relatively easy – even easier than I had expected.**[3] I felt that the problems my project was trying to solve were so immanent in everyone's daily life, that by promising to solve them, people would be willing to make some resource allocations for the project.

First set-backs with resources and internal marketing

The discussions mentioned earlier took place mostly inside my product category organization. The GD was (and still is) a totally different story as resources from that unit are allocated based on their internal decisions and I had very little to do with that. I noticed this on June the 18th when I received information that **planned GD resources were postponed to be available only in 2009**. There was no one available in the GD. Postponing endangered some parts of the project's timetable, but I believed we could **start the project by doing things which required more business than GD (IT) resources**.[4]

At the time the project selling still continued and I noticed some criticism towards the project from some managers. Some parts of it were accepted quite easily, but one was criticized to be too theoretical as it was only a plan for future actions (Road map). I personally believed that plain fixing of the problem wouldn't give us permanent results and we needed to have long term solutions. This meant e.g. that we should have planned packaging development process instead of just redesigning poor packages. I

[2] However, this overflow of issues will eventually lead to problems in defining the project scope.
[3] This opinion is about to change later.
[4] I noticed later in the autumn that all the hassle around this postponing of the GD resources has caused more problems to the project than I expected.

thought, “convincing all parties about the fact that all these actions should be done, even if fast benefits are not in sight, will be a hard task. **It is good that the project sponsor is backing me up** and sharing my opinions about the importance of these actions.” My supervisor was also acting as the project sponsor and the sponsor has (should have) a key role in the project.

People I had met so far were mainly from Finland (HQ and other locations including my work place). But during July I took a tour and met a lot of people in Mexico, China, Italy and Finland. These are the locations of our factories. For me this tour had two main purposes – informing people about the project and collecting information and contact network from the local operations. As everyone still had their own opinions about the project contents, **I needed to communicate the planned project scope very firmly.** All in all, I felt that I met a lot of relevant people from the project point of view.

Planning continues with some challenges (related to people)

Our company is relatively big. However, there were times when I felt quite lonely. For example, when I was planning the project, it would have helped, if the experts of some areas would have been available for the planning of the project together with me. But as people always have full calendars and are so busy, it is **not easy to get help every time when it’s needed**. So this kind of occasional loneliness and uncertainty were something I needed to learn to live with. Therefore, I just worked and tried to figure out things by myself.

The steering group and the sponsor should be the first contacts where to look for assistance for missing contacts and reducing uncertainty. After the first individual meetings with the steering group members I had positive feelings. However, **getting constructive feedback about the project plan, documentation etc. from them via email seemed to be relatively difficult**. That was also the case regarding the feedback from the installation reference group. **People seemed to be very busy**. And as going through a notable amount of PowerPoint- and Word-format material requires time and commitment, emails asking for feedback are easily neglected. Anyway I felt that “**the**

biggest issue here is, how to involve these people to participate and answer me and take more responsibility for the project?"[5]

At the beginning of August challenges started to emerge also in the area of resourcing. My project consists of four sub-projects. I had an idea that one of the sub-projects should be lead by a person whose background is in the technology function because the project outcome is for their use. However, identifying that person was difficult. Some suitable candidates were pointed out, but the **R&D organization seemed to be loaded with work and resources allocated to this project were very scarce.** I realized that this might lead to the situation where I would be running this sub-project myself (suggestion from R&D). In theory I could have done it, but I did not have time for everything. Nevertheless, at that time, we continued with the idea of someone else running the sub-project and tried to identify the right person.

Summer was ending and I had a vacation (honeymoon) at the end of August. That meant only limited progress for the project because I had a significant role in all sub-projects. Keeping the timetable got some new challenges, but I was hoping that we would be able make up for some of the lost time during the autumn.[6]

Breaking the rules to get forward

After getting back to the office I started to notice that even though this project is highly business driven and the system development represents only a minor part of it, **GD bureaucracy was hindering the project**. For example, numerous reports and documents defined in the methodology took time. I understood that the GD project management methodology was supporting project management by being very consistent and extensive, but I did not like all parts of it because it was designed from the IT project perspective. I was told that I should utilize the PM methodology in a way that best fits my project, but I can say it was not always so easy.

The bureaucracy was also clearly shown when the K0 milestone was not granted for the project only because the resources of the GD were not **available for 2008**. **As**

[5] Later I noticed that the responsibility for the decisions made with the limited background knowledge and preparation are easily "forgotten". It is frustrating that people making decisions don't familiarize themselves with things when they should, but then show some interest six months later.

[6] Later I will learn that this was only a small delay even if it worried me to some extent at that time.

there were no GD resources, **we did not get the GD's approval to proceed with the project.** Everything else defined in the methodology (documents, state of planning etc.) would have been ready and the project could have continued with business side work force. What a disappointment!

But we figured out a way to go on – "plain managerial decision". I was so relieved when we decided to continue as if we have got the "green light". **A high ranking participant from the GD supported me and the project "to break the rules".** I hoped this would not slow down the project more than it already had. Even though the official funding was not granted, I had been told that this was a key project and it would get the GD resources for 2009. This gave me some faith for the future of the project.

Resourcing still an issue

The issue with the resourcing and finding the sub-project leader continued. On the 10th of September I had a discussion with a director in a relatively high position in the R&D organization. **The aim of the discussion was to get the R&D committed** in finding a solution to the sub-project management issue. As the director got more familiar with the project and its goals as well as my expectations regarding the sub-project team leader, **we received a common understanding that the R&D should provide that resource to the project**. He promised to discuss this issue with his subordinates and in a couple of days he told me the name of the candidate. **Getting this name required a lot of work and communication from the management at the adequate level of the organization.** I think discussing with the right person and getting to meet him was the key issue for this success.[7]

In addition to this kind of "getting resources" issue, I faced a "changing resources" issue. There are constant changes in the organization of big companies and all projects with long duration will eventually have changes in the project organization. I thought, "OK, it is not so dramatic, but it takes time and effort to get new people on-board."

[7] But this issue was not solved at all even though I believed so.

Budgeting with the GD

Around mid-September it was time for budgeting. I had to make a budget for the whole project but also participate in the budgeting for the GD. I was thinking “we must pay close attention to the harmonization of the GD and project budgets so that project’s business case equals to the cost estimation presented to the GD.” At some point I realized that the GD budget had some major deviations compared to my initial budget. I believed it was a better estimate as **I’m not familiar with IT-resource needs in this kind of project.** So we changed my initial budget to be the same as the GD project manager’s budget regarding the GD resources. In general, the monitoring of the GD resources is much more detailed than the monitoring of the business resources.

Communication back to focus

Since mid-August 2008 I had had a feeling that **the marketing of the project should be aimed also at other levels of the organization than just management.** “I believe that is the only way we can involve and get commitment from the relevant people i.e. potential people in the project and reference teams.” The targets were identified based on the know-how required in the project. As the best way to do the information sharing, is to involve people in the project work from the planning phase on and by this way letting them know about the progress of the project and the development work ahead. This was done.[8]

All in all, I felt that more consistency to communication was needed to avoid ad hoc messaging and information sending, and the GD methodology would provide a solution to this. Thus, I created a simple communication plan consisting of some basic guidelines about the communication to the steering group, working teams, reference groups and other stakeholders.

My project started to get more and more typical characteristics of the project’s execution phase. On September 22nd I held the first steering group meeting. I was a bit nervous but it went quite well. I was a bit unsure on how to present issues but I felt (and still feel) that presenting also unsolved issues clearly and openly to the

[8] Later in 2009 I will notice that when participation of these people got less intensive, the uncertainty and speculation about the project progress and status among the stakeholders on the field increased.

management is the only way to promote constructive project management. That way I could expect guidance and support from the steering group to my challenges.

However, there was one problematic issue regarding the steering group. "**How to activate them in the project work i.e. guiding the project and participating?** How can I increase their commitment to the project?" I thought that one way would be to use individual and focused requests and contacts to one particular person and avoid contacting the steering group as a collective. That way the steering group members would know they are responsible for answering and they could not rely on the responses of others. Still I wondered whether it is enough. Or could I expect more sort of a general interest towards the project from them? I did not find a silver bullet but this issue was definitely on my agenda.[9]

Within a week a new issue got my attention. Management on the upper level of the organization wanted the project to achieve and present quick wins i.e. improvements that can be achieved relatively fast. I did not know why they were intervening. But they said (and I agreed), that in addition to quick wins' usefulness as such, they would also motivate the project participants and stakeholders. "It is possible that they also want to show some results to the top management." From my perspective the challenge was that planning and executing long term solutions were not as fast as wanted and at least in some cases, there were **contradictions between the long term and the short term solutions. "All in all, communicating and showing some constant progress in both of these fronts is essential to get enough peace for the project team to work."** Because of this we started to plan short term actions as well.[10]

Managing myself and others

In the beginning of October daily project work issues were already very familiar to us all. This made me starting to wonder that my management style might need some development. This came into my mind when reflecting my management style. In a nutshell, my dilemma was that **I should trust others** and let them do their job even if their working style was not similar to mine. And that was (and probably still is) not

[9] Now it is September 2009 and I'm still working with this same issue. How sad!
[10] That is how we bought and still "buy time" for next actions. It feels that a chance to go forward has to be earned all the time with the progress of things.

easy for me. I tried to solve this issue by discussing with the project team members to get to know them better. I discussed with some of them also about what kind of management style they prefer. That might have helped a bit, but did not bring any final resolution to the issue. **Nevertheless I had some problems to get the team working as I would have liked.** Particularly I wanted to see more active approaches to the issues and more independent working.

I also noticed a need to manage my own work. There were a lot of other **emerging tasks outside the project work**[11] and spending time on those issues slowed down the project work. "These tasks are a natural part of my work, but if they keep emerging, they might have a notable impact on the project." My dilemma was **how to manage both?** I thought that being aware of the issue is being one step closer to the solution.

Issues regarding the GD PM arise

Discussions with the GD had been going on all this time, but finally I got some good news. The GD had allocated 20 % of the GD project manager's time to this project already in 2008. They also promised that the PM would be available full time from the beginning of the 2009. The pressure from the top management to get things forward with my project seemed to pay off.

However, the implementation of this decision was not so straight forward. **The GD PM** had her hands full of work and she **was not able to participate in the project** as much as needed or promised. I also feared that she might not be fully available even in 2009 as her projects were not ending precisely on the 31st of December. **I indicated my worries to the sponsor in the middle of October.**

A few days later I got an email from the GD announcing that **the PM allocated to my project could start working for me not until in March 2009**. I god damn knew it! This would again postpone my project. Luckily **the project sponsor and one high-ranking GD member in my project's steering group were saying that this is not acceptable.** I felt some relief because they supported me. I was confident that we could find a solution to this.

[11] This included many different packaging related tasks that were not part of the project scope. I was also involved in some other development actions not directly dealing with packaging.

Despite the support, the negative news and issues around the project lead to the situation where the project timetable started to look like mission impossible. But as said earlier, my approach from to start has been to be honest to the steering group and present also the negative issues clearly. Many of these issues were not in my control but they surely affected me. “I hope steering members understand.”[12]

Back to the resourcing

On the 11th of October I heard alarming news from the supervisor of my team member. There was a chance that **I would have to let go one of my key resources** (I consider the number of key people to be under 5) due to other tasks he had. **I immediately contacted my team member’s supervisor’s supervisor** (as he was also part of the steering group). He indicated that he favors continuing the participation and the current arrangement, but cannot decide on behalf of the supervisor. I then had a discussion with the supervisor and the team member again and the resolution was that **he continued his work for the project**. I felt that “now there was some use of a steering group member.”

The resources were needed because so far I had done myself a notable part of the project planning and preparation. I felt that **other members of the project working groups should be involved as soon as possible** to ensure their commitment to plans and also to get fresh ideas during the planning phase. However, getting teams going on had been quite hard due to some **missing allocation of resources** to the project.

If not all, at least one resourcing issue was in good hands. I thought that the received **support from the top management most likely helped in getting the key resource** (the sub-project team leader). A person originally planned to do this task was again the top candidate. Also the sponsor’s contacts to the top management had helped a lot. It seemed that we finally got the team leader from the R&D. I was excited to be getting forward.

But the feeling of luck was premature. Few weeks later I got confusing news from the Technology Director. He had discussed this issue in his organization, but there was

[12] And in general they have been understanding...

actually no clear response, who will take the lead of the sub-project notwithstanding the commitment I thought I had from him. He gave us two names which would support us in the work, but the actual responsible was not named. I felt "this issue needs to be discussed more thoroughly as soon as possible as it is a bottleneck for the sub-project progress." **The project sponsor promised to be a driving force in the discussion**. This was good as I had had the feeling that his relationships inside the company had and would contribute in this discussion. I left this issue for him to handle.

Things not moving forward

During those days I also faced an issue regarding the sub-projects' progress. The sub-project needed a decision about the final specification. There was not an easy way to make that decision as translating proposed solutions in monetary terms was not an easy task. Nevertheless we needed to have the resolution on this to go forward. As the decision was to be made relatively high in the organization, it seemed to take some time, which again was hindering the project's progress. My dilemma was **how would I be able to speed up the decision making process?** I hoped well prepared material for the management was helping the issue, but still the decision was pending… too long. But even though I asked every now and then for the resolution, I had little real tools to speed up the process.

I had also noticed that **pressure (from top to down) to get things forward actually does get things forward.** Another sub-project was not so critical from the management's viewpoint and therefore was not under so much pressure. When resources are limited, **it tends to happen that the things which don't confront so much pressure are easier to neglect, which happened also to this sub-project**. Anyway I must say this is not the optimal way to prioritize tasks to be done.

In general I felt that the project faced **more pressure from the organization than it got support**. However, as the resource scarcity from the GD occurred, also the pressure decreased. **The management understood that getting progress with non-existing resources is not possible.** I thought "they are not totally unreasonable."

But obstacles were stemming from my team, too. During the end of October I had had discussions with an experienced colleague in my department. I liked to discuss with him as he had valid points and comments regarding my project. But he had also a very pedant approach to things and suggested a more in-depth validation of stakeholder requirements regarding one proposed solution. He had a point, but on the other hand, my supervisor urged me to **go on even if there would be some unknown issues ahead. There was a dilemma, whether I should look deeper into this issue or should I go on.** I decided to follow my supervisor's proposal to proceed. His organizational position and time pressure drove to this solution even though both ways of proceeding had their pros and cons.[13]

Managing the project back on focus

The "real project work" started to take bigger share of my time. When reflecting my management practices I had started to wonder, **should I be more "bossy"**. As my background is in the consulting business where tasks are allocated and then performed without questions, my expectations here were somewhat similar. However, it seemed that at least some participants of the project required closer management and guidance. Naturally there are differences between personalities and a manager should adjust his style accordingly, but it is not always that easy, especially when I don't have years of supervisor experience. But I try to learn every day.

It was mid-November when I felt that "now people (e.g. from R&D) seem to have the willingness to participate to the project by commenting our plans, results etc." But I still wasn't totally happy. **It seemed to be quite hard to get actual doers for the project.** I had indicated this issue to the project sponsor and the steering group, but we continued like we had done before. **The issue was not that serious if the timetable could be prolonged respectively.** "It would mean that I would do more myself but during a longer period of time. I think that this is the direction we are heading."

First milestone granted!!!

Few weeks went by and on November 10th **we finally got the fixed budget and resources from the GD for 2009 – now it is official. Yes!** This also meant that we got

[13] The decision turned out to be good as we have been able to clarify the issues we have confronted.

the K0 milestone and could officially start planning the project. K0 means that a project moves from “Analysis and Prioritization” to “Planning and Preparation” This was very good news even though we were c. four months behind the original schedule – so much work done even before the official planning phase. But naturally there has been a lot of planning already. All in all, it was time for a small celebration.

Communication in positive and negative

But soon it was time to go back to business. Two months ago we had had first discussions about the quick wins and their impacts on the project. At this stage **those were ready to be implemented, which was going to give us some time to make long term solutions.** The stakeholders were requiring fast progress and we could show them that. This kind of communication of achievements also created a positive atmosphere around the project as was intended. On the other hand, I kept wondering that if we had concentrated only on the long term solutions, we would have gotten them implemented sooner. All in all, quick wins seemed to be a good thing.[14]

“It’s now the middle of November and the project work turns piece by piece from planning into doing.” During the project I work closely with colleagues from China, Italy and the USA. I have to admit that working with them has not been as smooth as with the Finnish people. **The biggest problems I had was with the people from the USA**. It felt like I couldn’t get a hold on what they were doing. Even though the project sponsor contacted them, we faced delays due to problems with them.[15]

But the communication challenges continued also with the steering group. I felt frustrated as **getting input from the top management and the steering group in solving project bottlenecks (e.g. with the resources and timetable) was difficult.** I didn’t have any clear ideas on how to improve the situation. I had explicitly informed them about these issues and they knew they should help, but nothing happened…

But at least something positive happened in the steering group meeting on November 24th. The steering group **decided** to change the approach of a sub-project and this was

[14] Later I will learn that the long term solutions are not implemented on time. Therefore it is good to have some evidence that the project proceeds and gives results in some parts.
[15] Whenever our main contact from there has visited Finland (now maybe 2 times during the project) I have met him face to face in order to increase his focus on my project. Probably it has worked now.

not even my suggestion. When I presented the approach proposal, they felt it was too complicated. “It feels good, that they discuss about ideas and make concrete decisions about the direction of the project. **Now it finally feels that they participate.”** All in all, I felt that getting only yes/no answer from them was possible, which indicated that **they needed very concrete proposals when making decisions.** Sprawling discussion and figuring out something not on ppt-presentation was not something they did.

Resource issues and some solutions

By the end of the month there was some other good news too. A solution for the GD PM dilemma was found – they nominated a new PM for my project. “It is good that we got one, but now I have to give him an introduction to all this work.” I could not wait to start the work with him.

During this time a conclusion about the sub-project team leader was also reached. I was happy that we made this decision, but I did not like the result. **We (I and some management representatives) had come to the conclusion that I will be the team leader of the sub-project** and the future process owner of the DFP-process (Design for packaging). It seemed to be the only possibility to get forward as we had discussed with so many managers already without a result. The only good thing was that this way there would be no more hassle around this issue and we could concentrate on working. **“It took more than three months to clarify this issue – unbelievable!”**

I have found some uncertainty in me, which is not so common. For example, some solution and capability issues were still bothering me. In this project I was (and still am) dealing with the issues that were new to me. I thought “**I am learning all the time but I am not an expert on those yet.** However, I hope that I can get help from experts. With some parts of the project I feel like I am heading towards the unknown, but I hope I can survive with my team.” Regardless of the uncertainty I was confident that by working hard we would get things done.

Positive feedback gives energy

But there were also issues boosting my self-confidence. I received positive feedback from one of the reference groups (i.e. operative people). Many of them indicated that we were doing a very good job. **Even though we were in the planning phase, people**

seemed to be happy that something was being done and things were going forward. This created a positive atmosphere and gave the project team time to do what was planned in a somewhat lower pressure. All in all, **involving relevant people quite broadly and pre-marketing the results had proven to be effective.** This kind of issues gives you good energy to continue through the bad days.

Learning about me and management

It was already the beginning of December when we went through the business case and the budget of the project with the new GD PM. He said that the **budget was very big compared to the work required**. I had that kind of gut feeling when we made the budget with the previous GD PM, but I did not have the competence to question her. The fact that **we were both quite inexperienced in the IT project management** has caused this "over-budgeting". We adjusted the budget slightly down, but did not make any significant changes to it. This caused some extra work but nothing dramatic.[16]

During the project I learned some issues regarding the culture and practices of the company. And one really started to bother me. I had noticed that if you really need something to get done, you should not use email. After practices and the culture of the consulting company, it seemed quite unbelievable that people do not answer or react to emails. I did not find out any other solution to this issue than calling to these people before or after sending the mail. How much extra work with no additional value!

Things went forward "on their own" and before Christmas I had some time to look into the old documentation prepared for the project bureaucracy. I realized that I had not used the communication plan actively, but I also noticed that a notable part of the plan was realized as planned. **I believe thinking those issues when making the plan had helped in the realization of the communication.** There had been only a very few comments about the poor communication or information sharing in the project.

Altogether, the project was (and still is) a big learning experience to me. At one point I remember thinking **"I have tried to develop my leadership style regarding trusting**

[16] Later I will learn that these "over-budgeted" resources (man days & opex) are most likely needed due to new issues added to the scope and high costs of external development work. The funny thing is that the project budget is fixed already during the budgeting season even if the scope would be fixed later. Then one just figures out, what can I do with this budget.

others, but it is still quite hard." There was some improvement in that area (at least I think so) as I deliberately focused on trusting others. But anyway I had a feeling that "I'm not sure whether the problem is in my mind or in the performance of others, but I would like to see more proactive approach from some people in the project work."[17]

On December 31st I had a discussion with the project sponsor. **It didn't bring any solution to the "actual doers" issue.** I had a feeling that it is harder to get new resources than to do more by myself. Managing others was turning into managing me. It was not how I planned, but I had to do something to get things forward.

As it was difficult to get resources in-house, I realized that one possibility to ease my workload would be to use consultants. In addition to the work contribution, I thought they would bring essential technical knowledge to the project team. However, in my mind the probability of using consultants was quite low due to budget limitations. I had to continue the discussion regarding the funding with the business representatives as well as with the GD people (about whose budget to use).[18]

Good and poor communication

Few weeks back I had been proud of the communication concerning the project. But in the beginning of January I was copied in an email sent by a steering group member to a manufacturing manager. He forwarded a specification to be used as a basis of the development of the future solution. He asked in the email, "are these already implemented in the factory". Sending forward this kind of mail without knowing properly the status of the issue only creates confusion. I could not believe how little the steering group member knew about the project status. This highlights how extremely important it is **to be proactive in communication towards all stakeholders to prevent rumors and other kind of false information from spreading.**

To improve the commitment and to make the work of the steering group more efficient, we decided that from now on **comments for approval and feedback were acquired from one of the members at a time** (instead of all). This focuses the

[17] By autumn 2009 my leadership style has turned into "being one in the team and making decision when needed". This bossy thing has preserved in the sense that people seem to be little self-orienting. But I'm not sure if being bossy helps as they are not my direct reports…
[18] To my surprise, at the end of the day we used some external consultants in the project.

responsibility to reply and, on the other hand, decreases the work load of busy people. I started to collect the feedback in face to face discussions to emphasize the steering member's responsibility and to increase the commitment to the issues. This was a totally new way to do steering group work and I felt a bit proud of organizing it that way.

To keep myself learning constantly, I also looked into myself regarding the communication issues. I believed that **not getting feedback had stemmed from multiple reasons** – not just from the earlier mentioned "they are not answering my emails". By improving the focus on feedback requests and making the questions concise I hoped to increase the amount and definitely the quality of the feedback. The dilemma here is that, if you only ask from few people, you get better answers, but others may feel that they are left out of the decision making.

Later I asked comments from the GD to this new method of managing the steering group work. **The GD liked it and wanted me to give feedback on how it works in projects.** The PM methodology was still quite new and the GD was learning all the time and we (the projects) were sort of "guinea pigs of the GD". I was satisfied that I had an opportunity to participate in the development of this methodology.[19]

Scope expansion

On January 20th I presented the cost analysis about the implementation of illustrated package item list to the steering group. The decision was that the illustrated list must be implemented. It meant scope expansion and delays. In addition to this, also the cancellation of a project we had depended on had **increased our scope** as we needed to do what they did not deliver. Luckily we had some over-budgeting of the GD resources. But I was not sure, what the comments would be if we still had to propose a budget increase. **Anyway we had to expand the scope, increase the budget and delay the timetable.** I hoped that we were not creating a "project monster".

As the steering group made the decision to increase the project scope, I indicated my worries a few days later as I felt that the decision was made without thorough

[19] In the summer 2009 this way of managing the project steering group was included in the official methodology with a slightly finer version, but anyway…

investigation. “It is good that before the next milestone I must do a more thorough analysis regarding the proposed solution and then this decision of the steering group will be re-evaluated – and hopefully reverted.” But reaching that re-evaluation would take time and we didn’t have too much of it.[20]

Pressure from the top

But that was not my only problem. In the end of January the pressure from the top got bigger again. I got an email. It was regarding the package item lists, again. **Top management wanted to see results.** We communicated them what we were planning to do and how these quick fixes were proceeding, again. “Communicating progress and making presentations to them always takes some time, but I hope it is worth it.” The discussion was going on in a very high level of the organization (corporate management team members and their subordinates). This naturally increased the pressure, but on the other hand most likely ensured the commitment of others to this activity. But the best way to show this commitment would have been by providing resources, which were still lacking... I thought this whole thing was stemming again from the area director(s) who were complaining that “everything regarding the package item lists sucks” and their complaints were based on feelings more than facts.

Closing words

The storm went away as we were able to convince the management about our progress. However, every now and then, still even today (September 2009) we get questions and comments that something needs to be done regarding this, but luckily not from the top management anymore. I believe that our constant communication about facts (compared to complaints from areas) have convinced them.

The work continued for preparation of the K1 readiness. I even spent two weeks on a vacation in February. The preparation of the documents was a huge task, but finally in March both the steering group and the corporate level governance council granted the K1 milestone. Yahoo! Second milestone received and the planning phase was over. We shifted officially to the design phase of the project, but mentally we had been there already for some time as many tasks of that phase had already been done.

[20] And I was right about this. In September 2009, we are still wondering on whether to implement this illustrated package item list or not.

When writing this story, the project has received the milestone K2, much behind the schedule. Problems at the moment are mainly in other activities my project relies on – they are behind their timetables and we can't utilize their outputs. It has also been decided that my project will be combined to another project from the beginning of 2010.

5 Emerging Categories of Practices

A number of interesting series of events can be extracted from the story and the diary preceding it. I started to put these under certain titles and after a few iteration rounds interesting practices started to shape up. Eventually I formed four categories from those practices and an "additional category" focusing on me and my feelings during the observation period. It should be noted that one event may belong to many practices and therefore also many categories even if from slightly different perspective. Practices, respective observations and their categorization are presented in picture 9 on the next page.

The identified categories containing the practices are (1) Resource game, (2) Methods and directions of internal communication, (3) Creation and sustaining of motivation, commitment and positive energy and (4) Work with the organization that is divided in the two sub-categories of the project management office (i.e. the GD) and the steering group and the sponsor. In addition to that aforementioned (5) Me experiencing the project is the category looking for the project from my perspective from the emotional point of view.

In this chapter these categories and respective practices are described. The focus is on the most interesting issues and on the analysis of how these issues emerge and evolve during the observation period.

Chapter 6 (Analysis) deals with how these emerging issues relate to each other, and to some extent also to their relationship to extant literature. Chapter 5 may even leave more open questions than offering answers but I try to form a more comprehensive picture in the analysis in chapter 6.

	June-July	August-September	October	November	December	January
Resource game	12.6 Marketing road show among management to get resources 17.6 Feeling that getting resources from business is easy	8.8 No identified leader to sub-project from technology organisation yet 08/09 GD resources missing for 2008 and 2009 (= no KD milestone) 10.9 R&D director promises me a sub-project leader	11.10 Key persons' participation in danger - immediate communication saves the situation 13.10 Doubts that GD PM has time for project even if 20% of her time allocated in 2008 14.10 GD PM participation postponed to March 2009 16.10 My need to get project members nominated and working 16.10 Based on Technology Director's proposal we finally get sub-project team leader from R&D 25.10 Lower pressure on results due to limited resources 28.10 R&D sub-project team leader withdrawn	15.11 People are willing to participate by commenting issues but hard to get actual doers 29.11 New GD PM nominated	2.12 I'm going to be the team leader after more than 3 months discussion 31.12 Discussion with sponsor brings no resolution to the "actual doers" issue	10.1 Using outside consultants under investigation, but budgets are limited; consultant would bring also technical knowledge
Methods and directions of internal communi-cation	During first months getting to know people 12&17.6 Road show brings positive feedback; people share their improvement ideas 27.6 People needs to be convinced about necessity of planned work 06/07 Getting contacts and intorducing project outside Finland 29.7 Pressure to include different things in scope - consistent communication helps in avoiding scope increase	13.8. Partisipation of internal stakeholders in project work to do communication and marketing (seemed to work) 10.9 Communication in high level of R&D to get resources 22.9. Simple communication plan done 22.9 I prefer open communication to steering about problems End of 09: High level manager wants quick wins 30.9 Contradictions between short and long term goals; communicating project progress in both is essential and wanted by top management	11.10 Fast communication to keep resources 13.10 Pressure from top helped in getting GD PM?? 16.10 Sponsor contacting R&D helped in resourcing 17.10 Low pressure on Road map has slowed it down	15.11 Communication of quick wins buy us time to make longer term solutions 16.11 Cooperation with different geaographical units vary, most difficulties with USA	5.12 Marketing proven to be effective 16.12 E-mail not effective 20.12 Communication plan has helped even though not in active use; no negative feedback about communication so far	2.1 More detailed communication plan done - is it used? 9.1 Steering committee member makes misleading communication; proactive communication needed from me?!? 26.1 Top management wants to see progress; reply with what is and will be done 29.1 Discussion about the progress on high level partly based on feelings
Creation and sustaining of motivation, commitment and positive energy	12.6 Positive feedback for project during marketing 17.7 Steering committee and field reference groups are not answering mails; how to motivate and involve them?	10.9 High ranking manager's decision to proceed without official approval creates good feeling 10.9 We were said to be among GD key projects 22.9. Steering committee lacks enthusiasm End of 09: Motivation expected to emerge from quick wins	8.10 Trusting others more would most likely help in management; discussion with team members to get to know them better 16.10 Others should be included in the work to get their commitment 17.10 Low pressure on Road map has slowed it down 30.10 Uncertainty about should I be mo bossy...	15.11 My outdated bonus plan makes me think how should I motivate my team? 15.11 Quick wins create positive atmosphere 17.11 Not getting help from steering lowers feelings	5.12 Positive feedback from operative people brings energy 31.12 Feeling that it is harder to get new resources than do more myself	7.1 Trusting others is still hard for me 20.1 Feedback requests to only part of steering at the time to increase responsiveness 22.1 I got bonus not based solely on bonus plan 25.1 I asked project members about their motivation to learn more about them
Work with Project Management Office	18.6 GD resources (PM) available only in 2009	5.9 GD bureaucracy hinders the project 10.9 Proceeding without official milestone as per GD manager's decision 17.9 I lack the experience in making IT budget	10.10 No help in making the IT budget from anyone 13.10 I'm worried if GD PM has time for this project 14.10 GD PM participation postponed to 2009	10.11 KD milestone and GD resources for 2009 officially granted 29.11 New GD PM nominated	8.12 IT budget of the project turns out to be very large (previous GD PM was inexperienced)	10.1. Discussion if GD budget can be used for consulting 21.1. GD likes the new approach for project management (regarding steering)
Work with steering committee and sponsor	During first days in the company I had the impression that the project was already planned 27.6 Sponsor is backing me up in selling the project 17.7 Steering committee members are not answering mails	12.9 Changes in organisation changes members in steering 22.9. Steering committee lacks enthusiasm (already in first meeting) 22.9 I drive open communication to steering	11.10 Steering member supports in keeping project member, but with not too forcefully 14.10 Steering members do not accept GD PM move 15.10 Communication about challenges to steering 16.10 Sponsor contacting R&D helped in resourcing 16.10 One decision takes time in upper management (above steering) 28.10 Sponsor promised to help in finding the solution to R&D sub-project leader issue	16.11 Sponsor asks better support from USA with limited impacts 17.11 General support from steering is limited 24.11 Steering makes "finally" concrete decision 24.11 Decision to investigate the including of illustrated package item list into scope	31.12 Discussion with sponsor brings no resolution to the "actual doers" issue	9.1 Steering committee member makes misleading communication as he knew so little about project status 20.1 Illustrated package item list included in scope without "proper justification" 20.1 Feedback requests to only part of steering at the time to increase responsiveness; face-to-face discussions my preference
Me experiencing the project	12.6 Positive feedback felt good, but I was somewhat sceptic still 17.6 Feeling that I'm doing important job 7.7 Planning unfamiliar issues alone is challenging, lonely and evokes uncertainty 06/07 I had positive feelings about steering after first individual meetings	08/09 Honeymoon and positive feelings; but I felt some pressure about timetable 09 Dissapointment when KD was not granted; relief when we continued 5.9 I don't like GD bureaucracy at all 22.9 I was nervous about first steering meeting, but their lack of interest took away the positive feeling	8.10 I feel my management style needs improvement 10.10 Tasks outside project take time; I need to manage myself 13.10 I'm worried about GD PM issue 14.10 I'm confident that GD PM issue will be solved 25.10 I feel the project gets more pressure than support; but less than before as GD resources are taken away 28.10 I was confused after withdrawal of sub-project leader 30.10 Limited supervisor experience makes me uncertain: should I be mo bossy?	10.11 Excellent news; we got KD milestone and I'm a bit proud 15.11 Some frustration due to people's unwillingness to participate 15.11 My bonus plan is outdated - not a big issue but definately not motivating 17.11 I feel helpless with poor commitment of steering 24.11 Steering making a decision is good; frustration about including illustration	2.12 I learn a lot by doing myself, but it will post-pone the project 3.12 I'm dealing with issues new to me but I learn all the time; heading towards unknown, but I'm confident that by working hard we get there 5.12 Positive feedback from operative people brings energy and confidence on what we are doing 16.12 Inefficiency of e-mail bothers me	20.1 Notable uncertainty regarding decision about illustration 21.1. I hope we learn from new management approach and I'm a bit proud of it 22.1 I got bonus not based solely on bonus plan as it was impossible to reach with current project set-up - it felt good

Figure 9. Emerging practices in the project start-up and their categorization.

5.1 Resource game

Getting resources is a self-evident task belonging to the beginning of all projects. However, how that works is not so straightforward and in organizations with many functions, limited resources and many own agendas getting resources is not easy.

I started the collection of resources (labor input, not money) by introducing this project to the middle management. The intention of the road show was to let them know what could be expected, how I can help them in their daily lives and finally to let them know what I required from them. At the beginning everyone was interested and I had a feeling that getting resources would not be an issue. I think this was due to the fact that I had to introduce the project first, which showed the managers only what they were about to benefit. Only in the later meetings more concrete discussions about the resources took place.

Finding the sub-project leader was the most difficult issue in this stream of events. After many discussions and proposals, three months after the road show started, the R&D director promised to get me that person. I had the feeling that this was clarified, but after a month the team leader was withdrawn. Even until today I don’t know the exact reason for this but I assume the director faced strong opposition from his subordinates and had to change his mind. After this I was chosen to be the team leader, but it took half a year to reach the decision.

The other significant battle in this area was about the GD project manager. This issue was not directly in my hands, but it affected the project progress notably. The GD organization was responsible for managing it and its actions are discussed in more detail later. All in all, the same phenomenon can be seen here with the sub-project team leader. Resources are promised but then withdrawn and so on.

An issue reflecting the same sort of problem was the fact that people were willing to comment the project but actual doers where not so easy to find even with the “help” of the sponsor.

What is causing this resource game? Is it the fact that so many projects are run at the same time and the organization cannot handle all this? Functions have their daily routines and at the same time they should participate in development projects. Or is it in the matrix and the project forms of the organization where responsibilities are not as clear and the practices of getting resources are not clearly defined? One interesting question related to these is, why it took six months to reach the conclusion about the team leader? Is it in the slow communication (changing emails, decisions standing on email boxes etc.), while all relevant parties should have been around same the table making the decision in one meeting.

5.2 Methods and directions of internal communication

Communication is something that has a link to practically everything in the project. Even if it is a routine action, the way communication is done, to whom it is directed and how it impacts people and issues is an interesting topic.

At the beginning of the observation period, during the marketing road show, the communication was information sharing to the relevant stakeholders. However, as a part of that I listened to people's comments about the project scope. They partly questioned my proposal and, on the other hand, wanted to include something from their agenda into it. The need for the justification of the project scope was something that I did not expect to face that much, but I believe it emerged partly due to the new position I had in the company. Everyone believed I would release them from the packaging problems immediately.

I found out that the communication should be targeted on the several levels of the organization. Selling issues and the resource game are something that should be started from the top. I wasted much of my time in looking for the team leader before I went to present the issue high enough in the R&D organization. Even though I ended up being the team leader, the discussion was the one that brought the conclusion to the issue. On the other hand, getting actual doers to participate in the work as early as possible is a good way to promote the project as well. When people work as a part of the project they will tell by their functions how things proceed in the project.

After a few months the quick wins started to emerge in the discussion. Especially the top management wanted to see some progress fast. The background of this was stemming from the time before the project as problems with the package item list had occurred for some time already. This reveals one point in the internal communication. The problems that get the management's focus face some pressure and are dealt with fast. For example, in this case the discussion was done even in the corporate management board level and when problems escalate there, then finding solutions is most likely speeded up. It should also be noted that the discussion at that level is not always based on facts; people have heard some complaints in their organization and suddenly everything concerning this issue is "100% bad quality in their minds". These sort of unofficial discussions are clearly impacting the decision making.

The discussion about the quick wins continued for c. four months. By explaining calmly over and over again the progress and how things were proceeding we could finally work in peace. Even if these quick wins required work, I am not saying they were a bad idea. As we got something done, it lifted the atmosphere and it gave us time to develop long terms solutions as we could show people that we are delivering results already in a shorter time frame.

During the observation period, I noticed that email is not the most effective tool to handle the communication. This was totally different compared to my previous work place in the consulting company where emails were answered very promptly. I am not sure what is causing the neglect of emails, but there are many people doing it. Could this be partly in the corporate culture that "emails not coming from your supervisor can be neglected, just based on your feelings"?

To summarize these events and practices categorized under communication I would say that most of the communication in the project start-up phase took place between me and the upper management. They wanted results, pushed their own agenda and put pressure on the project, whereas I communicated them the achievements and the future of the project. The communication on the steering group level and on the lower parts of the organization was more random and it was dealing with issues ad hoc. Naturally daily work with them was also communication that cannot be seen in the notes.

5.3 Creation and sustaining of motivation, commitment and positive energy

Positive feelings among the project team are an important enabling feature during the whole project. They should first stem from myself and then spread to other project members. In this section I focus mainly on the issues dealing with the project members. Issues related to my own feelings are handled in more detail in the section Me experiencing the project.

In my mind one of the most important motivational things is the feeling that we are doing something meaningful and important and we actually get things done (cf. the quick wins). During the road show, I started to have the feeling that this work is important. The reason for this was that I had discussed with people about the packaging related issues in our organization and was able to formulate the project scope accordingly. This led to the situation where I was impacting people's everyday life, which created a positive feeling for them, which then reflected back to us.

The creation of motivation and commitment with the steering group was a completely different issue. Even though they were the most important stakeholders whose work we were going to impact, the general level of enthusiasm among them was low. One reason for this might have been the fact that they were so high up in the organization that these daily packaging related issues were too distant to them. On the other hand, they probably were too busy with other tasks, but then they should have refused the proposal of being a part of the steering group. Nevertheless during the first months I was "helpless" with the low commitment of the members of the steering group.

These issues emerged for the first time in July, and still in November I was wondering how to improve the situation. In January, I started to discuss and collect feedback about the issues with one steering group member at a time. This person was then responsible for presenting his view on that particular issue to the steering group and that made them really think about the issues and evaluate my proposals as they were responsible for the issues in front of the whole steering group. There was a dilemma between individual and collective responsibility. The large number of steering group members (ten) was probably also enabling this situation but I wanted to have a steering group representative from all relevant stakeholder groups and at the same time keep the different geographical functions represented in the steering group.

During the start-up I reflected my own management style regarding how to motivate and manage the project team members. At the beginning we had some issues with the project progress and therefore I had become a bit skeptic about the performance of others. This led to the situation where I did not fully trust others and that consumed energy from me but also from others. To improve the situation, I had discussions with the individual team members to get to know them better and to understand what kind of leadership style was needed. The discussions were useful but did not solve the issue. I had the most difficulties with a man almost double my age. How to manage him as he was much older than me and not even my direct report? I started to wonder if I should be more “bossy”. All in all, I tried to involve them in the planning and not just in the execution. I also continued the activities to get to know them better in order to motivate and manage them more effectively.

There were also some individual events affecting the motivation and positive feelings among the project members. For example, the decision to proceed with the project without official milestone approval was one of those. The decision made us feel that we had done things right and getting forward is important, not the bureaucracy.

5.4 Work with Project Management Office

The GD (i.e. corporate project management office) is the other important organizational body with which the project works closely. The other one (the steering group) is covered in the next section. The GD should have an enabling and controlling role in the project management context in the company, but during the project start-up the cooperation had many different aspects.

Already during the first months I felt that the GD bureaucracy was hindering the project progress. There were so many reports and templates to fulfill that I had a feeling that I could not focus on the actual doing at all. This kind of situation is obviously emphasized during the start-up phase where all the plans etc. are made. But all in all, somewhat lighter documentation would have been sufficient for me.

The resource game with the GD was another issue confronting us. In the summer 2008 there was no GD project manager available and when we were ready for the K0 milestone, we decided to proceed without one. When the first PM was nominated, the GD promised only 20 % of her time to the project. I had doubts that she could provide even that. In October the GD postponed her participation until 2009 but finally in November the resources for 2009 were officially granted. That meant also the K0 milestone for the project. But as the PM was still tied with the other issues, the new GD PM was nominated to the project in the end of November. To sum this up, I would say that the GD had no clear vision on how to manage the resourcing of this project. There were promises, cancelled promises, pure ignorance, etc. This created the situation where I was not confident at all regarding how the project would succeed in cooperation with the GD. Naturally, I understand that allocating people from a "resource pool" to projects is not always easy as the puzzle has so many pieces which, on top of all, tend to be late in many cases.

The other thing decreasing my confidence on the GD was the lack of support when we were making the IT budget for the project. I personally was not responsible for doing it as it was the task of the GD PM. However, she was also quite new in managing IT projects. Thus, the budgeting and using budgeting tools was a bit unfamiliar to her as well. We asked for support, but did not receive any concrete help, training etc. This seemed a bit strange to me.

The cooperation with the GD was not all negative. Their PM methodology gave me many good ideas and a systematic way to manage things, and I was able to give something back to them. The GD liked the new approach in managing the steering group. In the summer 2009 (after the observation period) that idea was incorporated into the GD project management methodology.

5.5 Work with steering group and sponsor

The steering group and the sponsor as the head of the steering group are other important organizational institutions for the project. My work with the sponsor had many aspects during project start-up as he was also my organizational supervisor. All in all, I would say that a more active approach from both the steering group and the sponsor could have been beneficial to the project. That was seen already when we set up the steering group. Normally the project sponsor is the head of the steering group, but we decided that I was going to chair it. I did not mind that as I got more responsibility but probably that indicated already somewhat low commitment on things from others.

There were many times during the project when I felt that the sponsor was backing me up and supporting me. It really felt that he listened to my problems and wanted to help in resolving them. However, looking back, the actual impact he had on these issues were mostly quite low (e.g. the sub-project team leader dilemma, issues with the passive participation of the subsidiary in the USA).

The poor participation of the steering group during the start-up was something I noticed already in the first meeting. This was quite surprising as the personal “recruiting” meetings with the steering group members were quite promising. The discussions were lively and I felt that they really wanted to participate. However, I shortly noticed that the steering group members were not answering to my emails and lacked enthusiasm. However, the work with the steering group improved notably when we took into use the practice that one steering group member is a stakeholder for one issue. All in all, the responsibility of the collectivity seemed to be no one’s responsibility. Even though their participation improved to some extent with this new practice it was still not the best possible.

There were also some single cases where an individual steering member participated in the resource game. In one case the steering group member was indicating that he prefers the participation of a subordinate of his own subordinate to the project. I do not know how much the member’s comments impacted the issue, but the project member stayed in the project team. In another case, the steering member from the GD helped in getting the new GD PM for the project. In this case their contribution was clear.

5.6 Me experiencing the project

What I felt during the project start-up was directly related to the issues I was dealing with and those are the topics presented in other categories. Even if my daily feelings varied, deep in my mind I was constantly confident that we could do this thing even if it might take some time and be frustrating time to time.

The daily feelings varied a lot. At the beginning, I was encouraged and happy because I was told I am doing an important work. All in all, at the beginning when everything was new to me I had more positive feelings and wanted to get things moving forward. I was also a bit anxious in some new occasions, but I think that is only a positive thing. When you have butterflies in your stomach it makes you try harder and be better.

From time to time I felt quite lonely. This happened e.g. when I was doing things unfamiliar to me and there was no clear support available. Every now and then I was also disappointed and frustrated when things did not proceed as I wanted. On the other hand, I was happy and proud when we achieved the project milestones or finalized some other notable tasks.

During the observation period, I reflected my working practices a few times. I know that there is always room for improvement and I try to identify those when things are not proceeding as planned.

My personal experiences are fully related to other practices presented in this section. In the next section these relationships are described separately and a deeper analysis about them in constructed.

6 Analysis

In the previous chapter I identified and analyzed the emerging practices in the project start-up, which was one research objective. I have also reviewed some existing areas of the project research that are closely connected to the practices. In this chapter I first analyze the interrelations of the emerging practices. Secondly, I try to connect my observations to the extant literature by highlighting the project management interventions and their impacts. Specifically, I try to approach these from the personal point of view of the project manager. I try to bring forth issues that can be clearly seen from my observations but also to dig out some issues that might not have been so obvious.

6.1 Relationships of emerging practices

In this section realized relationships between the practices are described. As seen from the figure 10, where the red arrows are representing the impacts/relationships, there were a notable amount of interrelations of practices during the observation period. Every practice either impacted on or was impacted by (or both) some other practice(s) described.

The resource game had a significant amount of connections to other practices. It can be even characterized as the platform practice. At the beginning of the observation period, during the road show, the focus of the communication was in getting resources. This was done by “selling” an image of a very important and meaningful project. As the feedback I received was positive, I got the impression that this was going to be an easy task. This created a positive atmosphere for the project. In addition, the sponsor promised to back me up in selling the project idea and he seemed to take the role he was supposed to in getting the resources. At this stage the communication and the role of the sponsor were well aligned with the resource game.

But the resource game started to have also a negative impact on the motivation. The problem was that I had no resources (team members) identified and could not involve them in the designing and planning of the project. When people are not participating in the planning it tends to have an impact on the commitment in the execution phase of the project.

	June-July	August-September	October	November	December	January
Resource game	12.6 Marketing road show among management to get resources 17.6 Feeling that getting resources from business is easy	8.8 No identified leader to sub-project from technology organisation yet 08/09 GD resources missing for 2008 and 2009 (= no KD milestone) 10.9 R&D director promises me a sub-project leader	11.10 Key persons' participation in danger - immediate communication saves the situation 13.10 Doubts that GD PM has time for project even if 20% of her time allocated in 2008 14.10 GD PM participation postponed to March 2009 16.10 My need to get project members nominated and working 16.10 Based on Technology Director's proposal we finally get sub-project team leader from R&D 25.10 Lower pressure on results due to limited resources 28.10 R&D sub-project team leader withdrawn	15.11 People are willing to participate by commenting issues but hard to get actual doers 29.11 New GD PM nominated	2.12 I'm going to be the team leader after more than 3 months discussion 31.12 Discussion with sponsor brings no resolution to the "actual doers" issue	10.1 Using outside consultants under investigation, but budgets are limited; consultant would bring also technical knowledge
Methods and directions of internal communi-cation	During first months getting to know people 12&17.6 Road show brings positive feedback; people share their improvement ideas 27.6 People needs to be convinced about necessity of planned work 06/07 Getting contacts and intorducing project outside Finland 29.7 Pressure to include different things in scope - consistent communication helps in avoiding scope increase	13.8. Partisipation of internal stakeholders in project work to do communication and marketing (seemed to work) 10.9 Communication in high level of R&D to get resources 22.9. Simple communication plan done 22.9 I prefer open communication to steering about problems End of 09: High level manager wants quick wins 30.9 Contradictions between short and long term goals; communicating project progress in both is essential and wanted by top management	11.10 Fast communication to keep resources 13.10 Pressure from top helped in getting GD PM?? 16.10 Sponsor contacting R&D helped in resourcing 17.10 Low pressure on Road map has slowed it down	15.11 Communication of quick wins buy us time to make longer term solutions 16.11 Cooperation with different geographical units vary, most difficulties with USA	5.12 Marketing proven to be effective 16.12 E-mail not effective 20.12 Communication plan has helped even though not in active use; no negative feedback about communication so far	2.1 More detailed communication plan done - is it used? 9.1 Steering committee member makes misleading communication; proactive communication needed from me?!? 26.1 Top management wants to see progress; reply with what is and will be done 29.1 Discussion about the progress on high level partly based on feelings
Creation and sustaining of motivation, commitment and positive energy	12.6 Positive feedback for project during marketing 17.7 Steering committee and field reference groups are not answering mails; how to motivate and involve them?	10.9 High ranking manager's decision to proceed without official approval creates good feeling 10.9 We were said to be among GD key projects 22.9. Steering committee lacks enthusiasm End of 09: Motivation expected to emerge from quick wins	8.10 Trusting others more would most likely help in management; discussion with team members to get to know them better 16.10 Others should be included in the work to get their commitment 17.10 Low pressure on Road map has slowed it down 30.10 Uncertainty about should I be mo bossy...	15.11 My outdated bonus plan makes me think how should I motivate my team? 15.11 Quick wins create positive atmosphere 17.11 Not getting help from steering lowers feelings	5.12 Positive feedback from operative people brings energy 31.12 Feeling that it is harder to get new resources than do more myself	7.1 Trusting others is still hard for me 20.1 Feedback requests to only part of steering at the time to increase responsiveness 22.1 I got bonus not based solely on bonus plan 25.1 I asked project members about their motivation to learn more about them
Work with Project Management Office	18.6 GD resources (PM) available only in 2009	5.9 GD bureaucracy hinders the project 10.9 Proceeding without official milestone as per GD manager's decision 17.9 I lack the experience in making IT budget	10.10 No help in making the IT budget from anyone 13.10 I'm worried if GD PM has time for this project 14.10 GD PM participation postponed to 2009	10.11 KD milestone and GD resources for 2009 officially granted 29.11 New GD PM nominated	8.12 IT budget of the project turns out to be very large (previous GD PM was inexperienced)	10.1. Discussion if GD budget can be used for consulting 21.1. GD likes the new approach for project management (regarding steering)
Work with steering committee and sponsor	During first days in the company I had the impression that the project was already planned 27.6 Sponsor is backing me up in selling the project 17.7 Steering committee members are not answering mails	12.9 Changes in organisation changes members in steering 22.9. Steering committee lacks enthusiasm (already in first meeting) 22.9 I drive open communication to steering	11.10 Steering member supports in keeping project member, but with not too forcefully 14.10 Steering members do not accept GD PM move 15.10 Communication about challenges to steering 16.10 Sponsor contacting R&D helped in resourcing 16.10 One decision takes time in upper management (above steering) 28.10 Sponsor promised to help in finding the solution to R&D sub-project leader issue	16.11 Sponsor asks better support from USA with limited impacts 17.11 General support from steering is limited 24.11 Steering makes "finally" concrete decision 24.11 Decision to investigate the including of illustrated package item list into scope	31.12 Discussion with sponsor brings no resolution to the "actual doers" issue	9.1 Steering committee member makes misleading communication as he knew so little about project status 20.1 Illustrated package item list included in scope without "proper justification" 20.1 Feedback requests to only part of steering at the time to increase responsiveness; face-to-face discussions my preference
Me experiencing the project	12.6 Positive feedback felt good, but I was somewhat sceptic still 17.6 Feeling that I'm doing important job 7.7 Planning unfamiliar issues alone is challenging, lonely and evokes uncertainty 06/07 I had positive feelings about steering after first individual meetings	08/09 Honeymoon and positive feelings; but I felt some pressure about timetable 09 Dissapointment when KD was not granted; relief when we continued 5.9 I don't like GD bureaucracy at all 22.9 I was nervous about first steering meeting, but their lack of interest took away the positive feeling	8.10 I feel my management style needs improvement 10.10 Tasks outside project take time; I need to manage myself 13.10 I'm worried about GD PM issue 14.10 I'm confident that GD PM issue will be solved 25.10 I feel the project gets more pressure than support; but less than before as GD resources are taken away 28.10 I was confused after withdrawal of sub-project leader 30.10 Limited supervisor experience makes me uncertain: should I be mo bossy?	10.11 Excellent news; we got KD milestone and I'm a bit proud 15.11 Some frustration due to people's unwillingness to participate 15.11 My bonus plan is outdated - not a big issue but definately not motivating 17.11 I feel helpless with poor commitment of steering 24.11 Steering making a decision is good; frustration about including illustration	2.12 I learn a lot by doing myself, but it will post-pone the project 3.12 I'm dealing with issues new to me but I learn all the time, heading towards unknown, but I'm confident that by working hard we get there 5.12 Positive feedback from operative people brings energy and confidence on what we are doing 16.12 Inefficiency of e-mail bothers me	20.1 Notable uncertainty regarding decision about illustration 21.1. I hope we learn from new management approach and I'm a bit proud of it 22.1 I got bonus not based solely on bonus plan as it was impossible to reach with current project set-up - it felt good

Figure 10. Relationships between the emerging practices

As mentioned earlier, there was also a tight connection between the resource game and the GD. Due to lack of resources the project was not able to proceed as defined in the GD rules. Regardless of this we proceeded along with the decision of the high-ranking GD member, which partly created a positive atmosphere. The GD was impacting the resource game also in the form of consulting as their budget was eventually used for the external help. To summarize this, there were problems to get the GD PM for the project. The sponsor and the steering group helped in finding the solution and all this had impacts on the atmosphere of the project.

One sequence of events connected to the resource game was the battle of getting the team leader for the sub-project. In September when I realized that I might have a problem regarding it, the R&D director promised to help me with that. In addition to my personal communication, the sponsor had contacted the R&D management and all that seemed to create a positive result. However, the promised resource was withdrawn. After that the sponsor still promised to help me in finding a person for this role. Notwithstanding all that, in the end I was the one managing that sub-project.

During the whole start-up phase the communication and motivation practices had direct link to the work of the steering committee. Their lack of enthusiasm decreased my motivation and positive feelings to some extent. Nonetheless, I developed a new way to manage project steering group in cooperation with the GD. The responsiveness and the commitment of the steering group increased when they took the individual responsibility on the issues. Later the GD took this approach as part of their methodology and I was able to provide something also to them.

As can be seen from the figure 10 there is a notable amount of inter-relations between the emerging practices I experienced during the project start-up. In this case, the resource game can be characterized as the platform practice. It was a decisive factor for the directions and issues regarding the communication. It impacted strongly my motivation and was a major issue in the discussions with the GD, the sponsor and the steering group.

I think this sort of platform practice phenomenon could be found in other projects as well. If e.g. the quality of delivery was the issue, it would dominate the communication, be a clear focus in the steering group and probably impact also the atmosphere, first negatively and when solved positively. The work with the PMO would probably be the only practice (I noticed) not directly linked to that. On the other hand, new practices concerning that platform practice would most likely emerge. All in all, it should be noted that the practices are highly inter-related and do not occur in isolation.

Only a part of the emerged connections were highlighted in this section. There might have been many others that were not even recognized. Also some of the connections are presented in the next section as a part of the PM interventions.

6.2 Project management interventions

Section 6.1 described the self-evident connections between the practices. In this section I try to set forth a more detailed description about the practices as well as some causality i.e. how and why the practices were impacted in positive and negative ways. I also try to elaborate the connections between the practices more from this perspective. All this should describe some of the project management interventions i.e. how the project management (not just the project manager) can impact the practices in the project start-up.

Quick wins

One issue among the observed events which turned out to be very important were the quick wins. Communicating achievements as soon as something was done and planning the actions so that some things can be realized fast was important for the project; communicating these might have been even more important than the development itself.

The quick wins were also an interesting sequence of events in the sense that they emerged from the strong pressure of the top management. They kept the project alive to some extent during the time when the progress of the project was not as fast as planned as in the contemporary work life things must be done with a high speed and one achievement must follow another.

I also believe that motivation and positive energy are partly created via single events and achievement. That was proved when the quick wins created positive atmosphere among the project team, which also then radiated outside the project.

All in all, the quick wins were a very positive thing even if I was a bit skeptic about them at first due to somewhat contradictory approaches of the long and short term goals. It was also an interesting connecting factor for some of the practices as described.

Behavior of steering group and sponsor

The role of the steering group is essential in the project’s success. The project sponsor often as a head of the steering and as a primary sparring partner of the PM, is the embodiment of the steering. In my case, steering members’ ability to act respectively was very much compromised. Their lack of commitment and enthusiasm resulted in the fact that they put little effort on the project and eventually knew very little about it in general. And I, as the PM, was leading the whole thing. This was a bit exaggerated statement and there were differences between the steering group members, but nevertheless this was more or less the situation.

The interesting question is what led to the situation where the contribution of the steering group was so minimal. One thing I noticed is that the responsibility of the collectivity is no one’s responsibility. The size of the steering group was also too big, which again led to the dilemma concerning the collective responsibility. Other thing that might have impacted the motivation was that the steering group members did not participate in the preparation of the project. I know that all the people in the steering group had some interest in the project and they were, at least partly, motivated when named to the steering group. However, as they are in relatively high positions in the organization, they may lack time to participate thoroughly. Their subordinates might have more time and commitment to participate in the steering group, but they would then lack the authority that people in the higher positions of the organization have. How to nominate the steering group is a challenging question, and I as the PM was responsible for proposing the steering group members in this case.

The sponsor is the single most influential person in the project. It seemed to me that in my project the sponsor did not have the ambitions that he should have for the job. I see two reasons leading to this, but naturally there might be others as well. First of all, the sponsor was working in a part of the organization which utilizes only a very small part of the deliverables of the project. However, the concept of the project was so complex that I cannot say whether it was possible to find a more suitable sponsor from that perspective. The only way to handle this would have been to have different sponsors for the different parts of the project. Secondly, the sponsor's participation in the definition phase was limited and he did not know the project in detail. This might have also decreased his value-adding capability and interest towards the project.

The behavior of the steering group and the sponsor had also impacts on the other practices. The impacts in the resource game were quite limited even if they should have supported me strongly in that. This was an interrelation between the practices that was observed only few times even if it should have existed all the time. In the end, I noticed that the sponsor couldn't help me in the resource game, which created a feeling that I can manage the project work most efficiently myself. The lack of interest regarding the status of the project lead also to the situation where the steering group members could not participate to the external project communication efficiently and even messed up things in some occasions.

The situation was partly improved when the responsibilities in the steering committee were reviewed but that did not solve the whole thing. All in all, I am not able to say how the lack of enthusiasm and commitment of the sponsor and the steering impacted the success of the project. However, I'm sure that their commitment and performance were not optimal and in the sense the management interventions were occasionally missing when needed. From the perspective of the PM they should have been the most important stakeholders of the project.

Fight over resources

The resource game was the area of events that had multiple connections to other practices as described earlier. One essential thing is to get an understanding about what is causing this resource game at first place. The organization was impacting the resource game from the cultural and structural perspective. As stated in the literature, a traditional functional organization that has no project culture and common practices built in, can be very challenging for a PM. This definitely was the case. I had very limited power over the resources and other matters which the project had in common with the functions. The culture of the company was partially impacting the issue that people were more willing to set demands for the project than to participate in the work.

From the perspective of the PM, issue selling was one of the most important issues related to the resource game. I was able to get the attention from the directors, even if it did not lead to action as much as I would have wanted. I have no clear answer for why that was the case. The incentives or pressure that could have made them act just were not strong enough. I believe the directors understood my situation regarding the scarcity of resources, but they did not feel strong pressure to act accordingly.

However, the presented aspects of the issue selling seem rational. Presenting facts, showing incremental steps (the quick wins in my case), being prepared and tying things to valued issues like profitability were helping in my communication activities but they were not enough. One thing missing in my repertoire though was the utilization of formal processes as these were not defined in most parts of the organization. This may have partially hindered the turning of enthusiasm into acts of directors. I was also relatively new in the organization and did not know all the relevant people and ways to get things done. These knowledge categories presented also in the issue selling theory would have probably helped me to get things done more efficiently.

I am not fully satisfied with my own work either. One example where I could have done better was the case where it took six months to reach the conclusion about the team leader. I should have been more determined and call one meeting where all the relevant people would have been around the same table and the issue could have been solved. This summarizes the fact that the PM is to a large extent responsible for getting resources to projects. Nevertheless, he is the one suffering mostly from the lack of them.

6.3 Connections to extant literature

The observations, the emerging practices and the management interventions have some connections also to extant literature. In this section I describe those very briefly as this has not been the primary goal of the project. It is possible to find interesting future research topics from this section. The relationships to literature are presented by the categories of practice. Relationships presented in the previous sections are not repeated anymore.

In table 2 it is presented how the practices and the existing research areas are linked. Theories are grouped and named based on the division in the chapter 2. Me experiencing the project practice is not as relevant in this connection as the others. As noted all handled areas of theory have links to at least three categories of practices.

Table 2. Link between practices and existing PM related theory areas

Emerging categories of practices / **Sections of theoretical framework**	Resource game	Internal communication	Motivation, commitment and positive energy	Work with the project management office	Work with the steering group and the sponsor	*Me experiencing the project*
Multi-projects in organizations	X			X	X	X
PMO	X	X		X	X	
Portfolio management and PM methodology				X	X	
Focal stakeholders	X	X		X	X	
Issue selling and resourcing	X	X	X	X	X	
Motivation and commitment			X		X	X

Resource game

The multi-project environment and the organizational context (culture and structure) are important factors in the resource game. The scarcity of resources is a commonly identified issue in literature, and the multi-project environment is partially causing this. This was clearly seen in my battle for the GD resources that were at first allocated to other projects. This lack of resources is not only a problem in project-based organizations. The same issue can be observed also in “normal business” that has no resources to allocate for development projects when required. The daily work people have might already be too much for them. In these cases, clear rules and commitments to resourcing should be agreed as otherwise the project manager ends up in drifting in the quest for resources.

Methods and directions of internal communication

The analysis of internal communication in projects can be done via the project stakeholders. They are the target group for the communication. In my project the communication had also close ties to selling issues and getting resources.

As stated earlier, the communication in the project start-up phase was directed mainly to the management and upper levels in the organization. They wanted results, pushed their own agenda and put pressure on the project, whereas I communicated them the achievements and future plans I had made in order to sell them my ideas and to get the resources. One thing to be noticed in the communication to stakeholders is that it should be targeted high enough in the organization. The target of the communication is as important as the amount of it.

Attention focus and pressure stemming from multiple sources (cf. issue selling theory) were also impacting the directions of communication. In my case, the top management received complaints about the packaging impacting their subordinates' work and the issue became very important. It should be noted that this phenomenon has also a reverse nature. When an issue does not face much pressure or focus, it is delayed. The selling of issues in general is a notable part of communication in projects and mainly the responsibility of the PM. For project managers who have technical background or otherwise no orientation to selling, this might be a challenging task. This is one part where the roles of the sponsor and the PM must be explicit and optimized and they need to have a fluent cooperation.

The importance of communication can be easily forgotten, especially in internal development projects. However, it is essential for ensuring the project progress and success, and eventually even the project's existence. A project might fade away, if right people are not aware of it, pushing it forward and providing resources for it.

Creation and sustaining of motivation, commitment and positive energy

Creation of positive energy and motivation should have been targeted primarily into two stakeholder groups – the project team and the steering group. Both had challenges in this project, even if different ones.

One of the most important features impacting the motivation of people joining the project team is their background. According to text books people are assigned to projects based on their expertise etc. However, in reality it might be that the project team is formed based on the resource availability or completely other reasons. It might mean that people's background, expertise, available time and willingness to participate are not optimal at all. This creates a challenging starting point for creating motivation. I am not saying my project had this kind of situation, but there were some signs of it.

In my mind, common commitment to objectives creates motivation. One reason for the lack of motivation, in this case, might have been the unclear expectations from me to the project team. This can be seen on the team level as well. When we had a task that we believed that it was totally useless, we proceeded extremely slowly with it. On the other hand, based on the observations about the achievements such as quick wins, I definitely share the idea of potency. It predicts that with the increase of our team's confidence also the motivation and efficiency increased.

Work with Project Management Office

The impact of the multi-project environment on the resources was discussed earlier, but it has also other influences on projects. One of the most self-evident is the existence of the PMO that coordinates all projects. The PMO aims to bring project perspective on the organization that otherwise may be totally driven by functions (see figure 4). In this the GD succeeded quite well.

However, for me the work with the GD was two-folded. As said, I felt that the GD bureaucracy was hindering the project progress and reporting was too extensive. On the other hand, the project management methodology was guiding me well to take into consideration all the relevant issues in the project start-up, and I got some advices from the GD as well. All in all, the work with the GD people went well, but we just had very different perspectives on many things, which is a risk pointed out also in the literature.

They looked after the corporate portfolio whereas I was responsible for one project, its progress and success. These are in some cases contrary objectives. Finding the balance between the focus on ones own project and complying with the PMO is a challenge to any PM.

Me experiencing the project

Even the definition of the project says that every project is unique and this surely is the case. A project manager faces something new in every project. Depending on the case, it might be exiting and positive, or a source of stress. This leads to an observation about the project manager's personal perspective on project management. A PM must endure different kinds of feelings. The position of a PM between multiple stakeholders is quite lonely. Sometimes I was frustrated, even desperate, but generally I was confident that I will get things done. Altogether, a PM must tolerate stress stemming from multiple sources as indicated in the literature review.

Occasionally, I felt that the project and the project work did not get the prestige it deserved. Behind this might be the functional organization that does not recognize the importance of projects in development work.

One single observation presented in the literature that I cannot agree with, is the opinion that project managers estimate the impacts of the project success to their career during the selling process. I believe that when a PM truly believes in his issue, it diminishes this kind of thinking, as was the case with me.

All in all, project managers have strong personal link to the project. However, this aspect is seldom studied.

In this chapter I analyzed the connections between the emerging categories of practice, presented some management interventions observed in my project and shortly reviewed some connections between the extant literature and my observations.

7 Conclusions

To conclude this research I shortly describe the research itself and present the strengths and weaknesses of it. I list its objectives and summarize the practical implications of the research. In the end I give some suggestions for future research ideas.

Description of the research

The starting point of the research was me as a project manager during the project start-up in a global corporation. I observed the project and my work in it for eight months. I wrote a story about that time and wrote down notes about the observations I made during that period. By following the logic of the Grounded theory methodology I categorized the emerging practices in the project start-up. After that I reviewed the theoretical background regarding the context of the research. Based on all this I analyzed the issues in question.

Strengths and weaknesses of the research

The strengths of this research are definitely in the intensive empirical research. When I was observing myself in the role of a project manager, I was able to form a deep understanding about the situation I worked in, as well as about my performance. Relatively seldom in a master's thesis work a researcher can have such a long observation period in a real organizational environment. I also see that the objectives are relatively well met and the approach is rarely used and therefore this case study is something new among master's theses.

Subjectivity, which is an essential part of this research, can be seen as both a strength and a weakness of the study. Personal stand point and involving my personality can be seen as somewhat novel and different kind of approach to research, and as a strength as such. On the other hand, subjectivity can be seen as an opposite to the old ideal of objectivity in scientific research.

This study also has some weaknesses. Firstly, all the observations and analysis are based on one single case. However, that is inherent to this kind of research. I also see the broad scope partly as a weakness. Even if the study is only about the project start-up, there is a notable amount of issues and respective theoretical literature to handle, which limits the possibility to look those very deeply. All in all, a lot of issues concerning this study can be evaluated only after some time has passed and as the project has progressed. Then it would be possible to evaluate the identified practices and all aspects in them more efficiently.

Project objectives

The main objective of the research was to observe me as a project manager in a project start-up, identify what kind of issues I face and how I handle them. The second objective was to contribute to scientific research by providing a project manager's personal perspective on the research in this area. I also wanted to learn to become a better project manager and to contribute the project management practices in the company I am employed.

I believe this research was successful regarding the first objective. The issues were identified and the emerging practices were depicted well. The identification of the practices and their relationships enabled the contribution to scientific research. I was also able to bring the PM's viewpoint into this research area. However, in my mind this objective was not met as thoroughly as I would have wanted. I also learned quite much and was able to have an impact on the project management methodology development at my workplace as well.

Practical implications of the research

I believe this study contributes in a few different ways to practical work in project management by looking at things from the project manager's perspective. From the practical and normative perspective the impacts can be seen and realized primarily on the development of the project management methodology and practices in my work place. Some issues, like allocating the responsibility only to one steering group member per issue, are already incorporated in the practices. Further recommendations could include e.g. that the PM should ensure the commitment of people and resources already at the early stage of the project, the cooperation between the GD and the PM should be developed and the sponsor's nomination, role clarification, preparation and cooperation with the PM should be emphasized. In addition to these, clear rules and procedures for project management should be agreed upon when the organization is not project-based.

The study also provides contribution to research in the area of project management. My story itself can be considered as an important issue from a scientific perspective. The identification and classification of the emerging practices can be considered to be another. Finding out some project management interventions is also a relevant issue, as well as the depicting of the relationships of the emerging practices and project management interventions.

One observation which is relevant to research in the area of project management as well as to real world is that some issues look very different from the perspective of the project manager compared to others, or to existing doctrines of project management. Even if not totally different, the issues may look different, which would be good to understand by the sponsor, the PMO and other relevant parties.

Suggestions for future research

As this research was limited in scope and depth, it definitely evokes some ideas about future research. I list here some ideas which I consider most interesting. The first could be the quick wins i.e. how they are formed, how to utilize them in communication and do they really have a positive impact on the project. The second could be how project managers can impact on the motivation of the project team members that have their home base in the functional organization. The third potential research topic could be the platform practice in project work. What forms it has and do these really exist?

The context impacts the research and its results notably. By varying the contextual factors, one might get interesting research approaches to this subject. Different organizational structures and cultures, as well as a different kinds of project (external, R&D etc.) could be examples of factors worth varying in a study. I have also tried to set forth the perspective of the PM in this research. However, it should be extended with future research as well.

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