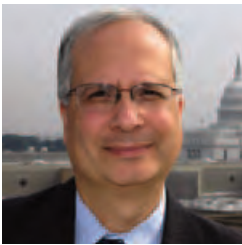


## From the Academy Director

# 2011 Trends in Project Management

BY ED HOFFMAN



Throughout the past year, I have seen organizations, leaders, and managers wrestle with challenges brought on by economic, political, technological, and organizational change. The complexity of the global economy continued to present surprises. Political powers shifted. E-books outsold paperbacks for the first time in history. Organizations like British Petroleum and Johnson & Johnson faced greater public scrutiny and accountability than ever before. All this leads me to believe that organizations with open and global mind-sets will gain the inside track in the project world. Three trends in particular are shaping the future of project management, requiring a more global mind-set from practitioners.

### *Transparency*

Projects exist in a more transparent, networked environment than in the past. President Obama's open government directive initiated a shift toward government transparency. Thirty-nine government agencies, including NASA, have developed open government initiatives. World Wide Web pioneer Tim Berners-Lee highlighted the work of Data.gov, introducing the possibilities (and controversy) that open data and ideas can offer, from new uses of satellite data to provide relief to earthquake victims in Haiti to WikiLeaks. Managers and leaders are expected to be open about their work. Information and decisions are no longer easily hidden. The jig is up—the public knows where to find the wizard behind the curtain.

### *Frugal Innovation*

The growing demand for breakthrough technologies in engineering and management has led to the emergence of innovation grounded by cost. Associated

with products like the Nokia 1100 and the Tata Nano, this innovation paradigm is spreading to aerospace projects like the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite, CubeSats, and Johnson Space Center's Project M to put a humanoid robot on the moon. The next big thing will come from incremental changes punctuated by revolutionary leaps. It is a continuous process. *Homo sapiens* didn't walk out of the primordial soup.

### *Smart Networks*

Today's projects are about collaboration, alliances, and teaming—you're only as good as your network. In 1965, the world's first communications satellite introduced the "frightening prospect" of man being able to communicate anything anywhere in the world. Now wikis, Facebook, Twitter, and blog-like platforms are rapidly spreading and transforming the way we connect. Organizations need to harness the power of these platforms' multiple ways to transfer knowledge and information. Cultivating "smart networks" that provide broad streams of information, a global perspective, and a sophisticated ability to manage information overload is integral to success.

Tomorrow's project world will be driven by an integrated and nearly invisible game-like framework that will enhance virtual work, connect distributed teams, and encourage collaborative discovery. This framework will be a unifying medium for the next generation of young professionals, almost all of whom will work intensively with international partners.

We live in a society that expects to know about and believe in the work that we are doing—and we owe them nothing less. ●