

Authentic leadership for 21st century project delivery

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Abstract

Project leadership has to adapt to meet changing needs of this 21st century if it is to remain relevant. The 21st century world has changed from that of the previous century with the global financial crisis (GFC) marking a point of inflection in this change. At the same time generational change and particularly in Australia, a move to project alliance contracting, combine to require a re-examination of project leadership. Results of a pilot study and preliminary results of research into characteristics required for successful alliance project leadership are presented.

Characteristics identified by this research relate closely to those of authentic leadership. A capability maturity model (CMM) to track the development of authentic leadership attributes in project leaders is proposed. Research by others in a range of project based environments would further test the usefulness of this CMM for project managers and leaders.

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Keywords: Authentic leadership; Project management (PM); Capability maturity model; Alliance project management

1. Introduction

Managing projects in the 21st century will require a different approach and therefore different attributes, knowledge and skills of project managers; a new leadership style will be required (Toor and Ofori, 2008). Accordingly, the focus of this paper is on the characteristics of authentic leadership and how this new leadership style may fit the needs of successful project leaders in the 21st century. Team virtues to be developed by project leaders have for some time included ethics, trust and respect for others, honesty and using power responsibly (Kloppenborg and Petrick, 1999). Authenticity in leadership is described by George (2003) as being true to yourself; of being the person that you are rather than developing an image or persona of a leader. Authentic leadership incorporates transformational leadership and ethical leadership (Avolio et al., 2004), or could be seen to add ethical leadership qualities to the established transformational leadership style. An authentic leader is self-aware, and guided by a set of values, or high moral standards; is viewed as honest and as possessing integrity

demonstrated through transparency in their actions, resulting in fair and balanced decisions, or ‘doing “what is right and fair” for’ both ‘the leader and their followers’ (Avolio et al., 2004: 807). Given the changing values and factors underpinned by trust and commitment of project participants, especially in alliance project management, the distinguishing features of authentic leadership, components that set it apart from transformational and other leadership styles: leader self awareness and self-regulation; emotional contagion, and commitment to enabling follower success through supporting their development (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), address the need identified by Toor and Ofori (2008: 628) for ‘authentic leaders’ who ‘successfully operate in the increasingly complex working environment’.

Alliancing has increased in importance as a procurement method in Australia for infrastructure and construction projects. Expenditure on infrastructure alliance projects in Australia grew from A\$12 billion per annum in the 2003/04 financial year to \$32 billion per annum in the 2008/09 financial year (Wood and Duffield, 2009). Project alliances have distinct features as compared to the business alliances referred to by Doz and Hamel (1998). Parties to a project alliance agreement work as a collaborative team, acting with integrity and making unanimous decisions relating to key

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project delivery issues. Risk is shared through group gain-share or pain-share arrangements and “best-for-project decisions” require the alliance partners to work together to provide innovative solutions to problems (Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria, 2010). This new approach to project management highlights the need for collaborative skills and demonstrates that trust building and higher levels of communication and dialogue to facilitate innovation are required. The move to project alliance contracting in Australia requires an increased emphasis on soft skills for project leadership success. Based on research currently in progress, we discuss the needs of project managers in alliance contracting environments. Hence, this paper will also draw upon results of a recent study conducted by the authors of alliancing in Australasia to report on the knowledge, skills and attributes required for successful alliance project management. The paper culminates with a capability maturity model (CMM) which is suggested as a means of tracking authentic leadership development of alliance project leaders.

Thus the aim of this paper is to address the identified need for a new project leadership style to suit project environments of today and the future. This new environment, especially in Australia where this research was based, includes a move to project alliancing. Hence we will discuss the attributes of authentic leadership to identify whether this leadership style would provide the leadership required for successful future projects. We then draw on results of recent research to demonstrate how authentic leadership attributes might be measured and developed to support improved project leadership.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section discusses past, present and future project leadership then explores the broad concept ‘leadership style’ concentrating on two approaches: Transactional and Transformational, popularly espoused in the 20th century and a third style Authentic, that had its origins during the 1990s but has gained growing attention during the first decade of the 21st century. This is followed by a brief discussion of PM and programme management in terms of the expectations of followers, gaining commitment from project participants, and the different emphasis placed on leadership by project and programme leaders. The next section focuses on leadership as a value alignment and brings in elements of ethics, intergenerational values, and matching values with the chosen leadership approach. This then leads to a discussion section. This section provides some findings from research on successful projects, including those completed under alliance contracting. These findings illustrate the importance placed upon fitting values with leadership style when nurturing future leaders, and the increased need for communication and relationship skills to aid the development of trust within alliance project teams. Insights presented in this section support the argument for authentic leadership in a construction PM context, but we argue from our analysis of the literature that this position can be supported for other PM sectors. We then provide a model of authentic leadership that can be used to assess and evaluate the maturity of leadership authenticity that we propose could be the subject of useful further research. Our paper concludes with an

indication of what future research could flow from this largely conceptual paper and we summarise our paper.

2. Project leadership past, present, future

Much of 20th century PM leadership was focussed upon return on investment (ROI) and iron triangle results (within time, cost budget and to acceptable quality). In many ways the widespread 20th century PM thinking was captured by a major PM study reported upon by Thomas and Mullaly (2008) which had its roots in a previous study (Thomas et al., 2002a, b). However, the 2008 study does reveal a shift in viewpoints from a primary focus upon ROI (see Chapter 2 in: Thomas and Mullaly, 2008) to a more general benefits stance, with value being measured using balanced scorecard (BSC) tools and organisational competency tools, such as capability maturity models for adding value to the project participant organisations.

Another way in which PM leadership is changing in unison with all other disciplines is that a generational change in leadership is occurring, with the Baby Boomers handing over the responsibility for PM leadership to generation X (Gen X) and generation Y (Gen Y) people. These three groups have shaped their world view, values and aspirations in very different contexts. Conditions that shaped the world view and management style of Baby Boomers and which enabled them to be effective in leading projects in their era are not necessarily effective in an emerging era that will be dominated by Gen X and Gen Y project managers. Sirias et al. (2007) undertook a study of 434 people in a general management context using factor analysis to examine the generational effects on teamwork within a changing workforce. They argue that the analogy of the ‘melting pot’ organisational values (where teams subsume much of their values to that of the organisation), needs to change to one of a ‘salad bowl’ analogy (based upon each person maintaining their individuality yet making a valued contribution to teams). This need was based upon demographic changes and values held by Baby-Boomers and Gen X knowledge workers. Some Gen Y workers are already managing project teams — the oldest members of the generation are now turning thirty. Suffice to say that value change is afoot, be that generational or based on an evolutionary context. This dynamic, as for other generations throughout the evolutionary process, must shape leadership approaches in gaining commitment from project team members, other project participants and stakeholders. As Twenge and Campbell (2008: 873) conclude, “The profits of the twenty first century will go to businesses that can harness the unique traits of Generation Me to their benefit and that of their company.”

2.1. Leadership

Theories of leadership are extensive in content and in the period of time that leadership has been written about in terms of approaches or styles. It is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into an extensive history of the evolution of leadership theory, hence discussions will concentrate on those theories that were

dominant at the closing decades of the 20th century and that are now emerging during the 21st century.

2.2. Three categories of leadership

A recent paper on authentic leadership in a construction PM sector context attracted our attention (Toor and Ofori, 2008) as a good starting point to explore how authentic leadership may not only apply to the construction PM sector but to other PM areas. Toor and Ofori (2008: 622–624) provide a sound general review of literature relevant to their paper; that review is relevant to this paper. Readers may wish to refer to that paper for the broader discussion of leadership styles particularly relevant to construction PM.

Toor and Ofori (2008) argued the need for a new project leadership style in the construction industry. Today an increasing amount of work is completed across a range of industries in teams organised to deliver distinct, though often inter-related, projects (see next section for more discussion on this aspect). It is for this reason that we advocate that it is not only project leaders in the construction industry but all project leaders that need to adopt a new leadership style. This new style would deliver projects that are not only successful when measured against the traditional iron triangle success factors of on time and on budget to specified quality, but which result in sharing and retention of knowledge, ethical behaviour that supports future and not only immediate success, and accordingly contributes to organisational sustainability. This concept of project success is about leading organisations to a sustainable future (Maltz et al., 2003). Walker and Nogeste (2008: 183) adapted Shenhar et al.’s (2001: 717), model of success. This adapted model is presented in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 indicates that PM success in terms of project efficiency is insufficient for long term business sustainability. Stakeholders are now demanding more than the traditional measures of organisational success; impact on customers as well as other team participants is important. The purpose of undertaking projects is to deliver benefits (Thiry, 2005; Bradley, 2006) this means that

not only should customers appreciate a benefit but that the base business or commissioning organisation should also gain benefits from projects be that directly or a by-product through learning or building competencies (Cooper et al., 2002; Sense, 2003; Maqsood et al., 2004). Another purpose of projects, particularly vanguard projects where new learning can be harvested, is to prepare the organisation for the future (Brady and Davies, 2004). Clearly, Fig. 1 suggests that sustainable project leadership extends beyond efficiency and even customer impact thus the kind of leadership discussed by Toor and Ofori (2008) centred on the construction sector that extends to many types of projects. PM leadership in other areas including information technology (IT) needs to persuade, influence and inspire a diverse group of beneficiaries of projects to be able to count on their cooperation, commitment and support (Hartman and Ashrafi, 2002).

Avolio (1996) outlines a progression of leadership approaches, commencing with laissez faire in which by abdicating responsibility a leader takes an ‘anything goes’ stance; managing by exception through either only passively being concerned with fixing mistakes after they happen or more actively looking at what went wrong and ignoring what went right. The constructive transactional leadership style develops well defined roles and expectations to achieve desired outcomes; and the transformational leadership style contains evidence of what Avolio calls the 4 I’s (Avolio et al., 1991). These are: Individual consideration (stimulating motivation mainly through performance and rewards that meet the individual’s value proposition); Intellectual stimulation (questioning the status quo and seeking innovation and continuous improvement); Inspirational motivation (articulating a desired future and how to achieve it); and Idealised influence (gaining trust, respect and confidence with high standards of conduct to be a role model).

Leadership approaches can be generally seen as being categorised as non-leadership (dereliction of duty through a laissez faire approach), transactional leadership (where there is a ‘give and take’ between leader and follower) and transformational leadership (where intrinsic motivation is coaxed or encouraged in some way from followers by leaders). This was

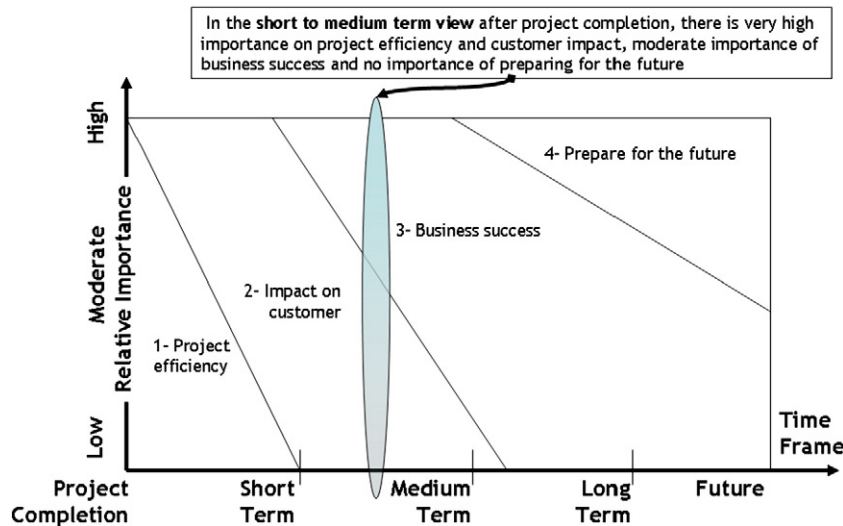


Fig. 1. Project long term success.

essentially the model of development of leadership though through the 21st century. Transactional leadership was the norm in the earlier part of the century and may still be seen as appropriate for highly process-oriented projects where following standard methodologies and getting the job done by the rule book is valued by the organisation and its project participants. However, Price (2003: 68) points to weaknesses in a transactional leadership approach: “transactional leadership adopts a markedly uncritical view of the selves engaged in these exchanges. This form of leadership appeals to us simply as we are, whatever our desires and preferences might be and regardless of their perhaps questionable normative force.” However, in the 1990s evidence of a trend towards acceptance that transformational approaches better resonated with the change from manual work to skilled knowledge work occurred. Skilled knowledge workers cannot be effective when treated as machines and programmed precisely what to do. They need to be engaged in dialogue to make sense of situations they confront so they may choose wisely from a wide repertoire of possible responses. Transformational leadership appeals to high levels of motivational reasoning (see Section 2.3 for further discussion on this aspect).

At the beginning of the new century, Avolio and others extended the final ‘I’ in their transformational model into the concept of authentic leadership (Avolio, et al., 2004; Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Avolio and Luthans, 2006; George et al., 2007). George et al. (2007: 130) state that “Authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practise their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads. They establish long-term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are.” At the core of this view of leadership behaviour is consistency between espoused practise and practise in action. Key elements of Avolio et al.’s (2004) model of authentic leadership behaviours and espoused values also include hope, trust and positive emotions.

Avolio et al. (2004) maintain that followers can identify with the leader at a personal and social level. This requires that followers identify with leaders through their demonstrated hope, trust and positive emotions. This influences followers’ optimism which leads to commitment, job satisfaction, meaningfulness and engagement. The expected outcome of this is desirable follower behaviours. Authentic leadership, according to Avolio et al.’s (2004) model, requires leaders to have confidence, optimism, hope, self-efficacy and resilience (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). These leaders are aware of how they think and act and are true to themselves, and they are conscious of how they are perceived by others. Self-awareness and awareness of others are the recurring theme within authentic leadership. Authentic leaders are clear about their own values and moral perspectives, knowledge and strengths and are equally aware of these attributes within others. They are confident, hold a positive view of the future, are resilient and are perceived by others to be of high moral character and place a high importance on the development of employees as leaders. As a result, they lead from their own personal point of view (Shamir and Eilam, 2005). This is also consistent with the

concept of emotional intelligence (EI) and the need for project managers to have not only good general intelligence (IQ) but also managerial competencies and intelligence (MQ) as well as having emotional intelligence so that they can select an appropriate leadership style based on context and their perception of the most effective leadership style to gain the desired response from their team (Müller and Turner, 2007).

The change to an authentic leadership style that Toor and Ofori (2008) recommended for construction PM is a change which is generally supported. Authentic leadership attributes impact organisations in a variety of ways. The positive psychological capacities of authentic leaders mean that they are open to development and change (Avolio and Gardner, 2005); such leaders develop individuals, teams and the organisation or the community in which they operate to ensure their success and prosperity. Authentic leaders help followers recognise their leadership potential and provide a role model for the development of authentic leadership skills. Authentic followership is viewed by Gardner et al. (2005: 346) to be ‘an integral component and consequence of authentic leadership development’. Unlike transformational leadership, charisma is not necessarily a component or an attribute of authentic leadership (George, 2003). It is the authentic leader’s ability to establish and maintain relationships and to lead with purpose based on values that leads to them being perceived as desirable leaders and contributes to their success. Successful project leaders develop and grow their team. They build strong relationships with and between team members, leading to positive social exchanges. These project leaders demonstrate authentic leadership capabilities and thus will be viewed as possessing personal integrity and to be living values that lead to followers behaving in a manner consistent with the leader’s values (Avolio and Gardner, 2005).

In Alliances, the alliance leadership team (ALT), and team members, all have high level expertise in their respective areas, but all will also need to possess attributes commonly attributed to transformational leadership with the additional attributes of authentic leadership supporting yet higher levels of success and team member satisfaction: they are being collaborative, demonstrating attributes that build trust, and encouraging communication and dialogue that facilitate team building and commitment. Group, or team, leadership skills are required in this environment. Some have suggested that globalisation has led to convergence of leadership and management ideologies; however Holmberg and Åkerblom (2006) questioned the validity of this view. They found that a Swedish leadership style could still be used to better understand leadership in cross-cultural interaction. Leadership in alliancing in Australasia may be another example of culture influencing ‘shared leadership ideals’. Holmberg and Åkerblom (2006: 3) acknowledge, though, that ‘a shared vocabulary and set of norms’ may still exist. Authentic leadership, and alliance team leadership, use vocabulary and norms established in the general leadership literature. Thus the possible ‘shared leadership ideals’ make applying authentic leadership attributes and team leadership within alliances to other cultures possible. In particular, Holmberg and Åkerblom (2006) refer to the Global Leadership

and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Programme which found that the Swedish leadership style includes consultation of all relevant team participants. This is the case in alliances, and is an attribute of authentic leaders.

2.3. Foundations of authentic leadership, trust and commitment

The theoretical link between authentic leadership and trust and commitment requires consideration because it is this link that adds so much validity to the argument that authentic leadership is essential in the turbulent environments and situations that project managers find themselves in today. Mayer et al. (1995) developed a useful model of the antecedents of trust that are highly relevant to our argument. Mayer et al. (1995) present three factors that build trust—ability, benevolence, and integrity. A person considering trusting another person or organisation needs to have confidence on the delivery of the ‘promise’ made. This ability is active at the personal or group level (that they can do the job) as well as the organisational or systemic level (that the context, resources etc. allow the job to be done). Benevolence refers to goodwill; it can be seen as aligned to shared values. Integrity means that the person, group or organisation does what it says. Trust involves incremental tests by parties to ensure that the demonstrated action of the three elements is consistent with the level of ‘trust’ that was promised. It is possible for both trust and distrust to co-exist (Lewicki et al., 1998). When this happens each party allows open communication and, for example, probity measures to be part of a system that allows the level of trust to be questioned and ascertained. Having such measures does not mean that trust is absent. In alliance contracting projects, for example, the inclusion of probity measures is part of the alliance agreement to ensure that transparency in words and actions establishes and maintains trust (Walker and Hampson, 2003).

The other linking concept is commitment. Authentic leadership enhances the chance that dialogue and discussion can lead to mutual goals and aspirations being realised. This is the basis of a ‘good project leader’; being able to positively influence project participants in an upward direction (project manager to sponsor), downwards (to the project team members reporting to the project manager) and sideways to the project supply chains as well as inwards to the self as reflection (Briner et al., 1996; Walker et al., 2008a). This conversation between the project and its major influencing stakeholders who can have significant impact, to the advantage or detriment of the project goals, has been described as ‘stakeholder engagement’ and has recently been advanced to a more prominent position in a project manager’s repertoire of skills (Bourne, 2009).

Effectively engaging and influencing others require different skills and competencies than those envisaged even during the 1980s and early 1990s (Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 1999; Goleman, 2000; Goleman et al., 2002). The competencies, often called emotional intelligence (EI), were recognised as leadership competence and are now believed to be a key project management competence (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000; Müller and Turner, 2007) through a number of recent studies in PM across industry sectors (Turner et al., 2009) and in specific

sectors such as defence (Turner and Lloyd-Walker, 2008) and construction (Dainty et al., 2004, 2005). EI often encompasses self-reflective capabilities as well as the ability to empathise and tone down power asymmetries that can hamper genuine dialogue.

2.4. Links between authentic leadership and ethical behaviour

There are, of course, dangers in authentic leadership being seen as a model where being true to oneself is sufficient. The leader’s view of what is just, moral, ulterior or ethical is entirely self referential. What if the leader is totally mistaken in his/her beliefs? Price (2003) cautions against viewing the ethical validity of authentic leadership as a model to be slavishly adhered to. Using a two dimensional matrix of altruism and egoism on a vertical ‘values’ axis against a horizontal axis of congruent and incongruent behaviour Price (2003) developed four sectors: Quadrant 1 with congruent behaviour and altruistic values represents authentic transformational leadership; Quadrant 2 with altruistic values but incongruent behaviour is referred to as ‘incontinent pseudo-transformational leadership’; Quadrant 3 is characterised by egoist values and congruent behaviour and is termed ‘base pseudo-transformational leadership’; and Quadrant 4 has egoist values with incongruent behaviour and is described as ‘opportunistic pseudo-transformational leadership’. This framework is useful in understanding the difference between transformational and pseudo-transformational leadership values and behaviour combinations.

Leaders may mislead followers; they may mislead themselves as moral chameleons (Walker et al., 2008b) by either cunningly adopting a ‘politically correct’ stance or deceiving themselves that they are adopting an ethical stance when they are in fact not. That behaviour falls into either quadrant 4, opportunistic pseudo-transformational leadership or quadrant 2, incontinent pseudo-transformational leadership in Fig. 3. This can happen when the ‘ends justifies the means’ or ‘greater good’ utilitarian ethical argument (Velasquez, 1998) is used. Alternatively if a rights approach to ethics is taken where the focus is on due process being undertaken then similar problems may arise where agreed processes result in unintended consequences that turn out bad for the intended aims and benefits. Authentic leadership also is about actual behaviour being congruent with stated intentions. This may be seen to include egoism in a culture where leaders and followers agree that ‘greed is good’ or at least effective for generating the greatest good (according to their beliefs). This is illustrated as quadrant 3 in Fig. 3. Clearly this view of authentic leadership, as was shown with the GFC of 2007–2009 and scandals such as Enron (Gitlow, 1991; Knights and O’Leary, 2005), is a mirage.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) was a rising issue before the GFC (Carroll, 1999; Williams and Zinkin, 2008), but the push to demand a more ethical and long-term view of organisational effectiveness has increased in the last two years as people consider the causes, and lasting impact, of the GFC. Corporate social responsibility relates to the way that leaders in organisations take an interest in the wider group of stakeholders, the general community, so that their business is sustainable

through considering the social impact of decisions they make. Social responsibility and corporate sustainability (Ingleby et al., 2008) are now being demanded of organisations by a range of stakeholders: shareholders and the community at large as the effects of the GFC were felt by all. This also links to triple bottom line (3BL) concepts (Elkington, 1997) where not only the financial bottom line is considered but also social and environmental impacts. Authentic leaders who wish to be able to demonstrate their 3BL credentials will be expected to measure up to an increasingly sophisticated set of stakeholders who voice their values in 3BL terms. Increasingly, CSR is being set at the core of business strategy to achieve organisational sustainability.

The link between corporate strategy and project management and success has been established (Morris and Jamieson, 2004; Morris, 2009). There is also a need to link project outcomes, or suites of projects through programme and portfolio management, to corporate strategy (Cooke-Davies, 2002) if projects are to be perceived to be successful, going beyond traditional iron triangle measures to foster business success and preparation for the future (see Fig. 1). Linking project strategy to corporate strategy will support buy-in by all major stakeholders (Hartman and Ashrafi, 2002). For all organisations that use projects to achieve their goals, but especially for those which are project-based or project-oriented, the post-GFC environment will require that their project leaders, vital players in achievement of strategy and in ensuring CSR and sustainability, possess the leadership capabilities to satisfy the increasing demands of a range of stakeholders. With the increasing use of teams across industries, organisation type and size, responsibility for achieving organisational objectives falls on the shoulders of this broad range of project leaders from a diverse range of backgrounds.

In proving their credentials as illustrated as necessary in Section 2.2, project managers as authentic leaders will need to take a broader perspective than the simple ‘iron triangle’ cost time and acceptable quality performance measure. They need to inspire, positively influence, and lead by example.

2.5. People management and leadership skills

Cooke-Davies (2002) quoting findings that human factors were not amongst the 12 critical project success factors identified, went on to explain that there was a ‘human dimension’ within all the 12 critical factors. Whilst this is recognised, the focus of PM research has remained on the tasks performed rather than on the people who performed those tasks and the qualities they require for successful PM and leadership. Cooke-Davies (2002:189) quoted Lechler (1998) who said ‘when it comes to projects, it’s the people that count’. Indeed, project managers’ human skills have been found to have the greatest influence on project management practises and technical skills have the least impact (El-Sabaa 2001).

Control has always been considered a part of all managers roles, including that of the project manager, but much of the project manager’s role involves acting more as an influencer than a controller, thus requiring of them interpersonal relationship and political skills (Leban and Zulauf, 2004) in

addition to their traditional business and technical skills. Although this is increasingly acknowledged to be the case, training of project managers still concentrates on hard skills when the need for soft or human skills for successful project management has been demonstrated (Pant and Baroudi, 2008). Thus, the importance of people to project success requires project managers to develop the skills to manage people.

3. Project management and programme management values

This section focuses on PM and programme management in terms of the expectation of followers, gaining commitment from project participants, and the different emphasis placed on leadership by project and programme leaders.

3.1. A difference emphasis on leading

Project management has for a long time been seen as a purely technical competence area. Project managers are good at ‘cracking the whip’ to ensure that iron triangle performance is achieved. Turner et al. (2009) studied Intellectual (IQ) competencies, managerial (MQ) competencies and emotional and social (EQ) programme management competencies that explain the leadership performance of project managers. They concluded that results showed the need for clear distinction between leadership performance and follower commitment, and their different expressions in different managerial roles and industries. They state that their results “support Goleman’s (1995) theory that EQ+IQ=success, and extends it into MQ competences” (Turner, et al. 2009:213). They found that whilst EQ is very important to PM and that project managers require a strong MQ and IQ as well. They explain this as being associated with a strategic and design/plan/act approach to PM as opposed to more emergent strategies that are being shown as relevant in programme management where the balance of projects within a strategic programme may be in a constant state of flux. This thinking relates to data gathered from those with predominant PM experience of the later stages of the 20th century and so we may expect some change in this view of project managers as technicians. Indeed, at least one paper, (Crawford et al., 2006) extols project managers to become reflective practitioners in order to position themselves to better influence upwards to sponsors as well as to be better performers in the eyes of the general community. For project managers to aspire to move to roles in which they are responsible for delivery of programmes of projects they need to move beyond the iron triangle to embrace a more holistic view of what PM entails. Project sponsors or project champions are generally situated at board level to oversee and ensure adequate project definition, project benefit explication and that project support is evident (Hall et al., 2003; Crawford and Cooke-Davies, 2006; Crawford et al., 2008; Morris, 2009). These requirements are aligned with the need for authentic leadership because the stakeholder group faced by project sponsors and champions is wide requiring project managers to adopt authentic leadership characteristics.

The values espoused by project managers increasingly, particularly if those project managers aspire to become

programme managers, needing to be extended beyond PM success of individual projects to a concern for the benefits generated toward the portfolio of projects of which their particular project is just one part. This also fits in with a need for PM to clearly open a channel for aspiring programme managers to see how they might progress their career and how they should perform at a portfolio benefit contribution level. We argue that an authentic leadership style prepares project managers for that career move. Moreover we will later argue that inter-generational value systems also provide a pressing need to consider how authentic leadership can be facilitated.

3.2. *Projects from a leadership perspective*

Hobday noted ten years ago (Hobday, 2000) that projects are being undertaken by firms across all types of industries. These may be project-based organisations, such as film or theatre productions (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2007), or events management activities (Thiry and Deguire, 2007), where the major activities of the organisation are carried out by groups organised into temporary project teams. Here, the traditional functional organisational structure is either non-existent or less distinct. As a result, employees in project-based organisations spend the majority of their time working in a variety of different temporary project teams (Bredin, 2008). Others have referred to this type of organisation as a project-led organisation because they use projects as a mechanism to lead and direct their organisations (Clark and Coiling, 2005); they tend to see the *raison d'être* of the organisation as delivering projects. Hence, for this type of organisation the use of vanguard (totally new ventures) projects provides value potential bottom-up lessons for learning (Brady and Davies, 2004) as opposed to use of PM tools and techniques being diffused through an organisation by a central expert PM group (often referred as the PMO or project management office) via its projects (Light and Berg, 2000; Hobbs and Aubry, 2007; Aubry et al., 2008). Project-oriented organisations are still structured around the traditional functional areas of an organisation, but they use temporary work processes, in the form of project teams, to deliver products or services to their clients (Huemann et al., 2007). Alternatively, these organisations purposely establish projects and project teams to solve complex benefit delivery problems (Gareis, 1989) such as instigating organisational change or developing a new product or service or complex product and service (Davies and Hobday, 2005). Many people who would call themselves 'a manager' in non-project oriented contexts are indeed managing projects as part of their functional management role (Huemann et al., 2007). Project leadership is involving an increasingly diverse range of people, and they are managing budgets, resources, and people whose cooperation is vital to the success of the organisation.

3.3. *Broadening expectations*

This brief section reiterates the change in performance expectations of projects within portfolios and its leadership expectations.

Section 2.3 linked project realisation expectations and ethical leadership behaviour. That section discussed 3BL and CSR. The key concept here is benefits realisation. The wider community (in terms of projects that are aimed to deliver social benefits) and the business community (in terms of projects that deliver business success or business preparation for the future) expect that PM shifts its focus from a profit maximisation (ROI) stance to encompass wider value generation as outlined earlier by Thomas and Mullaly (see Chapter 2 in Thomas and Mullaly, 2008). This stance also aligns with that of Winter et al. (2006) whose 'rethinking PM direction 3' is stated as moving from a product creation focus to a value generation focus. Their direction 4 is about moving towards projects having contestable parameters and being open to negotiation between the project manager or sponsor and beneficiaries and their direction 5 is for reflective PM practitioners. These all require a broader scope of effort to manage wider project interfaces, cope with diversity in expectations and commitment by project participants and to cope with changing inter-generational expectations of the nature of work, commitment and reward. Clearly, transactional leadership is now incapable of delivering on these new expectations and that transformational leadership needs to be demonstrably authentic to meet the more critical expectations of the 21st century.

4. Leadership as value-orientation

Previous sections have comprehensively established the need for an ethical values-based leadership to deliver benefits to project stakeholders. Section 2.3 and 3.3, above, have stressed the expanding project beneficiaries' expectations. This section will now discuss the impact that intergenerational values have on PM and nurturing the next crop of professionals that will deliver projects and programmes of projects. It will be argued that different generations of project management participants have different expectations and values to the current dominant group leading projects. This status quo cannot be assumed to prevail into the 21st century.

4.1. *Integrating values between generational groups*

The first question that needs to be answered is "Does a gap exist between generations of project managers that requires different leadership approaches because of potential different value systems of these groups?"

Kyles (2005) stated that Baby Boomers remained the largest group in the workforce and they held the greatest number of positions of influence. Over the next 10 years, the scales will tip and Gen X will dominate the workforce, becoming the most powerful group in organisations through both their numbers and their decision making roles. Fig. 2 illustrates the intergenerational cross over. This new group of leaders has different expectations, values and ways of working to those of the Baby Boomers (Sirias et al., 2007). They are a group that sees their work as a series of projects.

Gen X is the group that will need to develop authentic leadership capabilities to lead projects in the future so that the

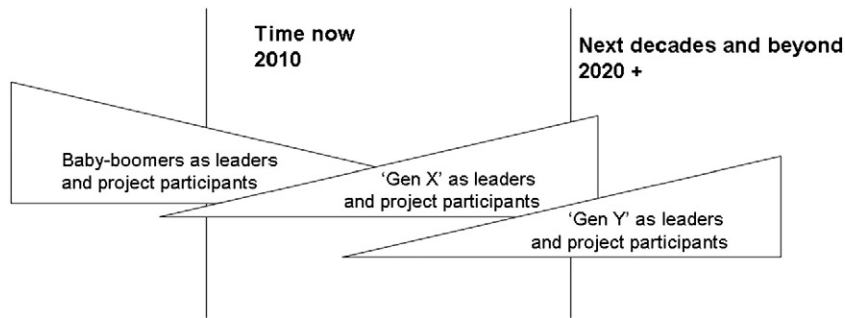


Fig. 2. Generational handover of leadership.

concerns of all stakeholders are addressed to support the development of socially responsible organisations and to achieve corporate sustainability. Capabilities of an authentic leader include developing those they supervise so that they may achieve their leadership potential. If Baby Boomers can commence the process and hand on this capability to Gen X employees, they, in turn, will ensure that Gen Y employees, who are now moving into middle management roles, are prepared to take on PM leadership roles in the future.

4.2. The changing PM environment

There is a marked change occurring in project management in Australia. Alliance contracting is a sophisticated development in the way that major infrastructure projects are delivered. Although far more common in the public sector than in the private sector, since 1996 the value of projects undertaken in Australia using alliance contracting has increased dramatically from nil in 1996 to A\$12,000 million in 2009 (Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria, 2010). Governments in Australia are now contracting for the procurement and delivery of services and infrastructure through the alliancing model. This means that as providers of services to the public sector private companies are conducting, at times, the major part of their business activities within this new alliance project environment. This has resulted in changed business environments which demands different relationships between the players in the project process.

Alliancing has been described as ‘a method of procuring major capital assets, where’ the owner, commonly a state agency, ‘works collaboratively with private sector parties’ (Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria, 2010: 9). A distinguishing feature of alliancing is that all alliance parties jointly share the risks and rewards, ‘to an agreed formula’ (Walker and Hampson 2003: 53). A consequence of this shared burden of risk and of opportunities, or rewards, is that all stakeholders seek to cooperate to ensure the mutually agreed outcome is achieved. For this to occur, along with this risk sharing the other common features of alliances include a commitment to no disputes; unanimous decision making processes aligned to ‘best for project’ objectives; a culture of no fault/no blame; good faith; open book documentation and reporting which ensures transparency, and a joint or shared

management structure involving all stakeholders (Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria, 2010).

A report commissioned by the Department of Finance and Treasury (Wood and Duffield, 2009: viii) confirms that ‘... alliancing can provide real benefits in the delivery of public infrastructure and has a place in the suite of other established procurement methods that are available to governments’. That report indicated that in 2009 alliancing provided value for money (VfM) within Australia. Walker and Hampson (2003) describe several case studies of alliances from the engineering and hydrocarbon industry sectors drawing upon reputable sources (KPMG, 1998; ACA, 1999) as well as providing details about the National Museum of Australia (NMA) which was the first project alliance undertaken on a building, rather than engineering, project in Australia (Walker and Hampson 2003).

Compared with traditional PM approaches to procurement and delivery such as the lump sum, fixed cost and time or design and construct approaches, with alliance PM the level of risk carried by the contractor is greatly decreased, whilst the construction risk carried by the owner increases (Walker and Hampson 2003; Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria, 2010). This can be seen to ensure that the risk is thus managed by those best placed to do so, avoiding the need to build in a large or unrealistic margin for contingencies. Importantly, what this change in PM means for participants in the project is that they will now be working closely together in a cooperative and collaborative manner with people from a range of organisations; those who have come together to design and deliver a project. In the construction environment, this means that site managers whose contact in the past with the original designers of the construction would have been limited, are now working closely with the designers, architects, planners, engineers and others. Those who have worked in isolation, or within their closed common group of professionals on the discreet area of the project for which they were held responsible, are now working throughout the project with those who plan and design the construction and those who will perform a range of activities beyond where their traditional involvement ended. Suddenly, engineers, planners, architects, trades people and site managers are required to consider the input and considerations of others; they need to find a way of communicating with a range of project participants and this is to be done in a culture of openness where unanimous decisions are arrived to support the shared desire of delivering the stated outcome. These

participants will come from a range of employing organisations, but form a separate entity – a named alliance – for the duration of the project, thus they will, at times, be working alongside people who in other circumstances would be employees of a competitor organisation.

Alliancing changes the relationship between stakeholders. Those working on alliance projects now need to relate to all people involved in ensuring the desired outcome is achieved. Whereas in the past a construction manager and their direct reports, for instances, could work almost in isolation, they must now work with those managing the social, environmental and other issues within the project. A construction manager that moves ahead without considering other issues will cause problems in another area of the project, perhaps even requiring the work that was completed to be re-worked. Soft skills as identified by Humphreys (2001) and Stevenson and Starkweather (2010) are required. Alliance team members must communicate with other team members at a variety of levels and move forward in unison, thus an environment of changed relationships exists on an alliance when compared to a traditional project. Added to this is the tendency for alliance projects to incorporate a new range of key result or performance expectations, including social and environmental benefits and sustainability. A broad range of technical and professional participants is confronted with the need to develop and use a sophisticated range of communication and relationship skills, a range of skills not commonly included in their professional training or required of them in the competitive, hard money project environment in which they learned their project skills.

Project leadership and management have been researched and written about, but this has predominately centred on the role of the project leader and manager, and project team members, in a traditional cost-driven project environment. We contend that this change in the way in which projects are being delivered requires a re-examination of the knowledge, skills and attributes which the PM professional will require for success in the future. Soft skills, communication and relationship skills and those skills linked to emotional intelligence that are also present in authentic leadership.

5. Discussion

A short pilot study and preliminary results of a larger study within the project alliance contracting environment are introduced in this section. Findings from both studies demonstrate a link between authentic leadership characteristics and those required for PM success. The pilot study unearths a number of salient themes relevant to this paper. The pilot study was part of a broader research project relating to the identification, recruitment, retention of key talent within construction contracting organisations and the way that these individuals create value for their project based companies. The larger study within project alliance contracting organisations thus followed the pilot study. The themes identified within the preliminary and larger study are followed by the presentation of a proposed capability maturity model that measures authentic leadership maturity level.

5.1. Pilot study insights

During 2008 we undertook a pilot study that entailed interviewing the chief executive officer (CEO) of an Australian-based global construction contracting company that is privately owned by its directors and has been in existence in this form for over 25 years. The CEO has been a project manager, programme manager (general manager of a division) and CEO for well over a decade. This research explored how key talent is identified and developed. It was found that it was largely the leadership style of those supervising recent graduates, or new starts which led to successful selection and preparation of future leaders in the research organisation. Further analysis revealed that these leaders possessed many, if not all, of the attributes of authentic leadership.

That this leadership style has benefited the organisation can be supported by the fact that this company has successfully weathered the GFC storm with committed employees and supply chain partners. A recent short discussion with a director of the company in early 2010 revealed that continuing high levels of trust and commitment had helped to ‘rally employees around’ to put in that bit more to steer the organisation through the economic downturn. No employees were made redundant during the recent GFC, despite the organisation’s activities extending into areas more severely affected than was Australia, and they have in fact recently recruited new talent.

5.2. Preliminary alliance PM research study results

Interviews were conducted with 10 experienced alliance project leaders and three unit managers who have alliance project leaders reporting to them. All participants commented on the need for increased communication and relationship skills. For instance: ... *communication is one of the most important aspects. Making the relationship better ... providing the opportunity for further work down the track. (alliance leader participant 2 [ALP2]); ... relationship management has become very important for this alliance (ALP1); ... there is a need to build good rapport and communicate well with people; it's essential for this role (ALP5); in alliancing you're communicating with a more diverse team, then communication skills are a higher requirement of an alliance project (ALP7).* Alliance members collaborate and co-operate in an honest and transparent way (Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria, 2010), hence there is a need to develop trust between alliance partners, people who may in other situations be competitors. The link between relationship building and trust was highlighted by one participant: ... *it is the most important aspect of it because if you don't develop a relationship, you can't develop trust (ALP2).*

Long term benefits for the owner and other stakeholders form part of the key performance indicators (KPIs) developed within the project alliance agreement. These incorporate an ethical approach to the way the project alliance team will work together and the agreed outcomes include a commitment to ‘best for project’ decision making. However, as one participant explained: ... *best for project doesn't necessarily mean the cheapest price.*

There are also measurable benefits to the client ... getting a safer workplace (ALP5.) Another commented that ethics and corporate social responsibility, sustainability and environmental issues were very important to their alliance relationship stating ... *sustainability is one of the five key result areas* in their agreement with a number of KPIs under that ... (ALP8), And another commented that: *in the alliance every decision we make, every major decision we make, has a triple bottom line assessment* ... (ALP7). The process of agreeing on the ethical framework within which a project will be conducted was explained by one participant: *We had a workshop for the day and what we did is we looked at the alliance principles and we said, okay, to live that principle what are five acceptable behaviours and what five unacceptable behaviours? And then I got those printed up and actually got them posted in front of everyone* (ALP9). This was seen as an extremely important component for establishing the desired work environment, one in which all members of the alliance team would communicate openly and honestly with their fellow team members within an ethical framework that all team members had contributed to shaping.

Preliminary analysis of the data exploring the attributes identified as required by alliance project managers and leaders demonstrates that characteristics of an authentic leader are required by alliance team leaders. Toor and Ofori (2008: 621) stated that there was a need 'to develop leaders who possess positive values and practise high levels of moral and ethical standards.' The project leaders establishing the ethical principles that will guide the way that all alliance team members conduct their interactions with one another will require these values and standards. Ethical alliance project leaders will need to operate in a confident and transparent manner to meet the requirements of the alliance agreement and by 'being true to self and others' (Bass and Steidelmeirer, 1999:191), they will consistently demonstrate the values they hold and ethical standards they work to. This consistency is important. Followers – other team members – may not agree with all of the values and ethical standards held by their leader, but if they are lived by the leader and perceived to be not only based on self interest, but on values and ethical standards which will benefit the larger community, the leader will be viewed as an authentic transformational leader.

5.3. The authentic leadership conceptual model

We are proposing a model in this paper and a capability maturity models (CMM) that can be fine tuned and developed in future research. Our aim is to propose how this model and CMM may look and 'feel' and we intend to test it though further research.

The development of CMMs has been seen as a useful research outcome with CMMs being developed for IT maturity (Paulk et al., 1993), building social capital (Manu and Walker, 2006), knowledge management (Walker et al., 2005) and PM maturity, (Ibbs and Kwak, 2000; PMI, 2003). The basis of such models is a conceptual model that can describe some form of (usually best) practise that is converted into a tool or template that describes the levels of maturity. Users of the tool can then

assess where they currently stand and then make an assessment of where they would like to be in a future time. This provides a visualisation of the gap and a change management strategy can be developed from that information that can provide a road map to achieve the desired maturity level.

As a first step the model is developed as illustrated in Fig. 3.

Fig. 3 illustrates authentic leadership as being developed from the argument presented thus far. Trust, shared values and affective commitment provide the engine at the heart of the model which develops support for authentic leadership behaviours. The model provides dimensions that can in turn be used to develop a CMM.

Adapting the approach taken by Paulk et al., (1993) and Walker et al., (2005), we propose a similar format. Based on research already conducted, and further refined as required based on more in-depth planned future research, levels of maturity will be developed for each dimension of authentic project leadership identified. This will result in a CMM which clearly describes each of the attributes of authentic project leadership (e.g., trust, integrity) and the levels of maturity from Foundational, to Recent, Developing and Mature, the highest level. How this is expected to develop is summarised in Table 1.

Current research findings suggest four levels of maturity. A brief explanation will be provided to describe the generic state of each of these and a set of measured dimensions that best describe the capability maturity required. Each cell from level 1 to 4 is then filled in with a short description that helps a user of the CMM to identify the CMM level for that dimension. In this way authentic leadership can be de-constructed into elements that can form dimensions that can be measured in a course grained way. Neeley (1997; 2002) suggests that only 'the significant few' KPIs should form the basis of a useful performance measurement tool. This means that much of the work in developing a CMM such as that proposed in Table 1 involves deciding on what critical dimensions and measures should be chosen. The aim or use of this model is to provide a visualisation of authentic leadership performance so that concerned individuals or groups can appreciate what are the most important factors and behaviours that develop authentic leadership. This can then be used in a similar way to any other management performance tool and could be used in concert with, for example, 360 degree feedback and other standard human resource management tools.

There would be dimensions relating to supportive behaviours, coaching or mentoring, for example. These may be either separately identified or subsumed in a more general EI competency characteristic. The results of our work thus far have centred on exploring the elements and characteristics of authentic leadership in a PM context. We acknowledge that there is much yet to be done but we argue that the work presented in this paper and other work presently underway by our research team is heading us in this direction and that a useful outcome will be achieved.

6. Conclusions

This paper had as its stated focus in our Introduction the investigation of "characteristics of authentic leadership and how

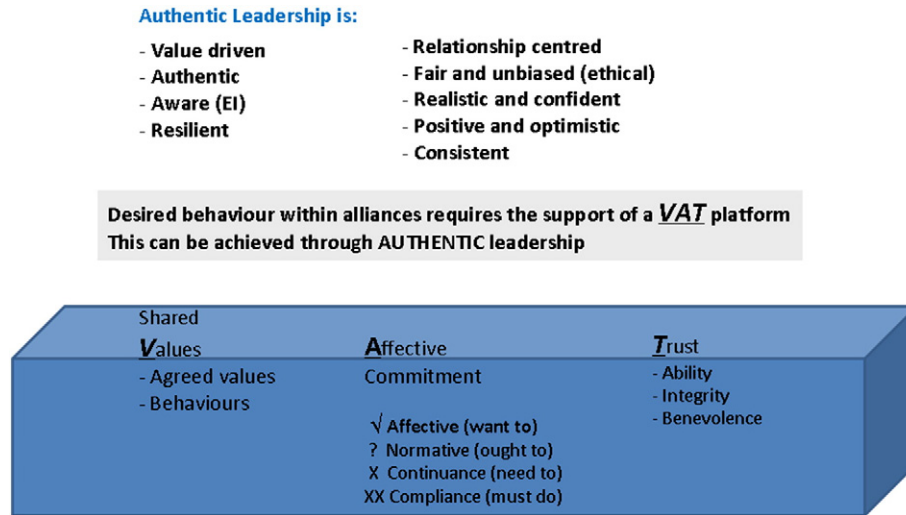


Fig. 3. Authentic leadership conceptual model.

this may fit the needs of better managing projects in the 21st century given the changing values and factors underpinned by trust and commitment of project participants that shape an affective leadership style.” These characteristics were explored, described and used to present a model (Fig. 3) that enabled us to suggest and propose a CMM template that could be used to measure maturity of authentic leadership.

Our exploration of authentic leadership led us into reviewing literatures on intergenerational attitudes and behaviours and how these may allow us to better understand authentic leadership. We conclude that the labels ‘Baby Boomers’, ‘Gen X’ and ‘Gen Y’ are useful as a guide but the important issue that underpins this form of stereotyping is that it is the lived context of individuals that shapes their values, attitudes, and actions and thus the culture that they create. We also investigated literature relating to CSR and ethics in general as it applies to authentic leadership. All this literature is useful in deciding upon which dimensions a CMM, such as that presented in Table 1, could be adopted in a template.

We also described how a CMM model could be used to encourage enhancement of authentic leadership skills and we suggest that this could be useful in the PM world, especially within project alliance contracting.

It is clear from Section 5 that there is much more research needed to advance the work presented and we do not pretend to be at a stage where we can present a CMM tool that can be

applied. We have taken an incremental approach and linked this into other work we are involved in relating to the recruitment, retention and development of key PM talent and we see this as a valuable part of that work.

Specifically, we identify the following strands of further research required:

- Further exploration of the additional elements that authentic leadership adds to transformational leadership within the context of project management in general. Is it the new leadership style which Toor and Ofori (2008) suggested is required?
- Development of a robust set of dimensions, this may require quantitative research to be undertaken that allows factor analysis to better group factors into dimensions. We are open to other suggestions.
- Developing and testing the model (CMM) in several different PM contexts. Can it be applied to non-alliance and alliance project environments equally?

The authentic leadership traits discussed may be found to be present to some extent in other leadership styles. As discussed, authentic leadership may be viewed as an extension of transformation leadership. The Swedish leadership style (Holmberg and Åkerblom, 2006), that involves consulting all relevant team participants requires the transparency present in

Table 1
Possible CMM format.

Profile level	Description skills, attributes, experience required
Mature Experienced alliance PM	For each identified dimension, or component, of authentic project leadership, the skill, attributes and experience and standards expected at each level will be described. Performance will be measured and career paths mapped using the CMM. This will enable authentic leadership development programmes and work experience opportunities to be planned.
Developing Intermediate alliance PM	
Nascent Recent alliance PM	
Foundational Aspiring alliance PM	

the practise of authentic leadership. The levels of communication and dialogue required in alliances are found in authentic leaders, and in the Swedish leadership style. Future research exploring the suitability of the Swedish leadership for alliances and its similarity with authentic leadership may prove valuable.

This paper has an opportunity to expand on research of others in relation to project leadership. It has introduced the increasingly preferred procurement method of alliance project agreements and the different skills, knowledge and attributes it requires now, and will require of project leaders and team members in the future. It has provided results of a pilot study and preliminary results of further research which demonstrate that the new project leadership style required for the 21st century links closely to Avolio et al.'s (2004) authentic leadership.

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