



## CTB Launches Project Management Service

*From the president of CTB Consulting...*



Throughout last year the CTB Marketing team and I devoted a major effort to analyzing the requirements of today's marketplace against our current skills. We were working to discover an approach for aligning our expertise with client's needs. We started

the process by organizing our skills around core competencies in five strategic areas:

### **IT infrastructure, Enterprise Messaging, Workflow Collaboration, Financial Systems, and System Integration**

Our analysis initiated a decision to promote CTB's skills in situations involving corporate **mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures**. CTB has a history of success in these areas. Our existing clients are increasingly finding themselves with these projects, and we have found many new companies looking for skilled professionals when they were acquiring or divesting. While our analysis formed the basis for the decision to promote CTB in the mergers and acquisitions marketplace, it also uncovered that project management is also a significant issue. The following paragraphs provide some more background on this statement as well as an explanation of how we have chosen to address this.

Mergers and divestitures are stressful times involving dramatic change within the organization. Their successful execution requires the coordination of many sub-projects under a single master effort. This coordination mandates that all projects be tightly managed for completion on-time and under-budget. Many organizations recognize that this requires skills and capabilities in managing projects that they often can't find.

As a firm who has offered fixed cost proposals for over ten years, CTB Consulting has always applied rigorous

and disciplined project management to its engagements. By necessity, we have had to develop the operational infrastructure and find skilled project managers to succeed. During our market research to focus CTB's core competencies, we found that our project management skills have great value in their own right.

While Project Management has always been a core internal proficiency for CTB Consulting, we have never promoted it as a separate service. I am pleased to announce that CTB is now actively promoting Project Management as a separate service offering. It has become clear to us that our project management skills, along with several new web-based tools, provide important value for our clients. We have organized our project management skills and tools under the concept of a "Project Management Office" (PMO). We are working on engagements where we are asked to develop a PMO methodology that organizes, defines, approves and monitors projects, and we are working on other engagements where we simply implement new management tools for our client's to setup projects, assign tasks and report on status in real time.

This newsletter is organized on CTB's project management services and several of the tools that are now available. It also includes a success story with one of our clients, and information on a seminar to be held in New York City on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

If you have not visited our web site recently - [www.ctbconsulting.com](http://www.ctbconsulting.com) - please take a moment to look at it for a more complete description of our new direction and supporting service offerings.

I hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Your comments and feedback on it and other topics of interest are appreciated.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Coley T. Brown'.

Coley T. Brown  
President

## CTB Centers New PMO Offering on “Project Central”

Microsoft Project Central is at the core of CTB’s new Project Management offering. This powerful, web-based tool allows project managers to include team members in both the planning and reporting phases of a project’s life cycle.

Project managers use MS Project 2000 to create the master project plan. They then assign summary tasks to specific team members. Using Project Central the team member creates the sub-tasks beneath the summary task. Team members also use Project Central to report their actual time spent on each sub-task.

Microsoft Project Central uses web-based forms so that project team members can be included in the planning process without the requirement for them to learn or use MS Project. Project Central also allows project managers and executives to easily view the status of all projects.

As a web-based companion to MS Project 2000, Microsoft Project Central delivers a powerful set of collaborative planning and scheduling tools. Project Central takes advantage of corporate intranets to deliver collaborative features that allows project team members to participate in project planning, and provides executives with unprecedented visibility to review individual tasks and project milestones.

The project process can be controlled by a Project Management Office (PMO), a person or group of people responsible for implementing project standards across all corporate projects that have been approved, reviews milestone attainment, and prepares management reports.

CTB Consulting Newsletter  
is a publication of  
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## Project Methodology

Despite all the new tools and communication improvements available today, project management remains an art, not a science. While developing the skills for managing projects can require years spent refining and developing approaches, all good project management starts with a clear and well-understood methodology. The first rule of any project methodology is to be sure that “everyone is on the same page” when the project begins. This means that all team members have a consistent understanding of the project goals and it’s deliverables. One of the arts of project management is to keep this understanding valid throughout the project.

While there is no single methodology that fits all projects, there are a number of key elements that every methodology should include. First, the project must be well defined for all participants at

the start and for any project adjustments. Second, the project should be chronologically staged into phases with well-defined milestones. This facilitates problems and adjustments being uncovered early while there is time to address them. Third, the project should be functionally segmented into critical subject areas. This facilitates parallel tasks and organizes work effort tracking around teams of expertise.

While both staging and segmenting projects have important returns, they also make the management of the project more complex. Another “project management art” is to know how much staging and segmenting to use without adding too much complexity.

Here are a few rules for developing a methodology and approach for projects.

- Don’t start unless the deliverables that the project should accomplish are clear and you understand how they can be accomplished.
- Every project has a customer. Identify who the customer is and confirm how they define being finished.

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## CTB Manages Divestiture for Thomson Corporation

***“When you are in a divestiture situation, you have only one opportunity to get it right. You won’t get another chance so it only makes sense to get the best professional help in the industry,”***

So says Beth Sholar, who recently championed a major technology transition. The challenge was to divest all of Thomson Newspapers’ 60 community newspapers.

In February 2000, The Thomson Corporation announced that it was going to sell its newspaper division. Thomson made a strategic decision to focus strictly on the business of producing solutions to “knowledge workers and information professionals in the business and academic workplace.” Says Sholar, who was vice president of information technology at the time, “All of Thomson’s other divisions are in these businesses. Newspapers just didn’t fit that strategy.”

The Thomson Corporation was then composed of five different market groups. The Newspaper market group included 60 newspapers organized in a cluster of 15 Strategic Marketing Groups (SMG), an Internet software business and a syndicator of newspaper content. The process of divesting such a large and complex organization was not a simple transaction. The newspapers weren’t sold as one entity with one check from one buyer.

The biggest complication to this project was that portions of the technology for the SMGs were centralized in Stamford, CT, including general financial, circulation and advertising systems, along with the management of the wide area network. Messaging systems were also running from Stamford ever since CTB Consulting implemented Microsoft Exchange as the corporate-wide e-mail system the previous year. The individual SMGs had an Exchange Server to handle messaging all under the Thomson domain name.

One of Thomson’s priorities was to retain as many key people as possible during the divestiture process. At the same time, Thomson had to be realistic. There would be key people that would choose to leave the

organization prior to the completion of the divestiture. The Company felt it was critical to hire an outside firm -- with people not in fear of losing their jobs -- to manage the project. This would provide stability and focus.

“We were only doing this once,” Sholar emphasizes, “so we needed a consulting firm in which we had the utmost confidence.”

CTB Consulting came to mind immediately since Thomson Newspapers’ had used CTB for earlier projects. Thomson knew that CTB would deliver a thorough project plan, manage it to meet all milestones, and help implement the solutions.

Sholar recalls, “CTB is the only group that said ‘here are some suggestions.’ They were very proactive right from the start. Other groups said ‘tell us what you want to do, and we’ll make a proposal.’”

“The thing that I like about CTB,” says Sholar, “is that they are project management experts. When they make a proposal, it’s very thorough and they hit it. They hit it from a pricing standpoint -- I don’t worry one iota about cost overruns, period. And they hit it from a milestone standpoint. And they give excellent reports all along the way.”

“Once you’ve agreed to the parameters of the project you can turn it over to CTB and you can take it to the bank that it’s going to be done properly. I don’t have to find out if they’re on track day to day. They hit the mark. Their people are very competent.”

From February to December, there were six to ten CTB people engaged at any given time. The original consultants Sholar met with were those that stayed on the job. “With other consulting firms, you might have a rapport with the consultants who come in to sell you the work. But when the time comes to do the work, you may be dealing with an entirely different set of people. And those may be people you don’t get along with very well.”

Additionally, CTB always had one primary project manager who was physically there every day. “That’s very important, because he is dealing with both the financial and the technical departments. He is reflecting the business concerns to the technologists. He is keeping everyone on the same track.”

When all was said and done, 11 buyers purchased the 15 Strategic Marketing Groups. Each SMG had six to



seven daily papers, a handful of weekly papers, and so on, for the total of the 60 newspapers in the division. "CTB was very helpful in dealing with the buyers," says Sholar. Thomson tried to make it easier for the buyers by giving them direct access to CTB. In turn, CTB gave the buyers the input they needed to work with the systems.

For example, one buyer bought five SMG's, and CTB helped with the coordination efforts. In addition, the new owners were thinking about instituting a corporate-wide messaging system, so CTB set up a subset of what they had done at Thomson for a demonstration.

"When we sold an SMG to a buyer," explains Sholar, "CTB made a recommendation on how to technically decouple it, how to do the work, and what our options were for transitioning it to the buyer."

CTB guarantees their work to be on time and on budget. "They really keep their word," emphasizes Sholar. "My experience in the past has been that other consulting firms may give a lower quote, but they are clearly doing that to get the job. Then the overruns begin, and as a manager, I have to keep on top of that every day."

"CTB demonstrated the ability to propose real numbers more accurately and they always hit those numbers. With CTB, there were no surprises."

"Finally," Sholar concludes, "we chose CTB because of their prior experience with similar projects. They knew the best practices in the industry. They had the intellectual capital. That experience gave us an immediate comfort level that we were unable to find anywhere else."

#### **Project Methodology** (continued from page 2)

- Resist major changes during the project. The more you are forced to change the original plan, the riskier the project becomes.
- Projects rarely fail all at once. Most projects are dragged down by the accumulation of small slips and errors. Be honest about status and completeness throughout the project.
- The pyramids were built from the bottom up and successful projects are delivered the same way. If the resources assigned to a project think it can't be done, either the wrong resources are assigned or this is the beginning of a risky project.
- Executive reporting, like critical path analysis, requires focusing on only what is most important. Where executive assistance is needed, provide the information and background only to the areas where executive help is warranted. More is not usually better ... an accurate summary will usually be more effective.

### **CTB to Lead Free Seminar**

## **Project Management in the New Millennium**

**April 19 (Thursday) Microsoft New York Metro Office**  
825 Eighth Ave., 21<sup>st</sup> Floor, New York, NY

***You'll see how Executives can effectively address the many issues in evaluating, approving & tracking projects.***

Bringing projects in on time and on budget is harder than ever. The reasons are many, and include –

- Projects are more complex and interrelated than ever.
- It's difficult to measure the business return for the many projects that compete for approval and funding.
- You need to reconcile the point at which approved projects will exceed your implementation capacity.
- You need to establish management review milestones for approved time and budget estimates.

***You'll see how Project Managers can establish detailed plans and assignments that stay within budget and schedule.***

- You'll see how to define and organize sub-tasks within the approved project time line and dollar estimates.
- You'll see how to allocate and distribute these tasks across all assigned project resources.
- You'll see how to set up a regular tracking system for assigned resources to report status and progress.
- You'll see how to establish a process for disseminating project changes throughout the life of the project.

***Register for the seminar at***  
***[www.ctbconsulting.com/seminar.htm](http://www.ctbconsulting.com/seminar.htm)***  
***or call 201-573-0682***