



# Sponsorship is not a Spectator Sport!

*“The Art of Project/Programme Sponsorship”*

**Iain M. Begg**

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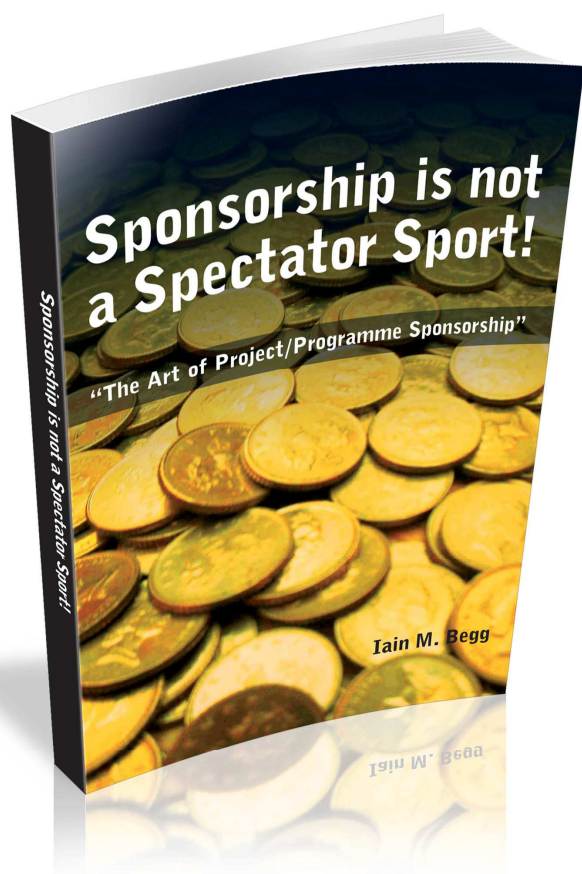
*Sponsorship is not a Spectator Sport!*

# Iain M. Begg

presents

## Sponsorship is not a Spectator Sport! "The Art of Project/Programme Sponsorship"

With delivering successful projects an ongoing struggle for most companies, Iain Begg teaches readers how to achieve and maintain success. Looking at projects from the standpoint of a Sponsor is imperative to delivering them successfully. A failure to provide leadership and strong sponsorship is often cited as a key driver of project failure. This book reveals how readers can watch out for those risks, monitor progress and setting up a project with success in mind.



Iain Begg is an experience practitioner with over 25 years experience of delivering major projects as well as training others to do so. He has worked for Investment banks, Retails banks and Financial Houses in a variety of senior level Project Management, Programme Management and Line Management roles and has a proven track record of delivering highly successful projects.

Iain Begg, owner of IMB Consultancy and joint owner of EndState Management Services, regularly uses his experience and knowledge in training courses emphasising on how to achieve and then maintain success.

The learning and observations within "Sponsorship is not a Spectator Sport!" will help you to avoid the common sponsorship pitfalls and open your mind to a world in which success is the only option.

For more information about Iain see  
[www.endstate.uk.com](http://www.endstate.uk.com)

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# **The Art of Project/Programme Sponsorship**

*and how to manage technology projects  
without needing to understand the technology*

**Iain M. Begg**



## About the Author

Iain Begg is an experienced Project Practitioner. For the last 25 years he has been delivering major projects and change initiatives as well as training others to do likewise. Delivering successful projects is an ongoing struggle for the majority of companies and during Iain's training courses the emphasis is always on how to achieve and then maintain success – this book follows this same theme. Looking at projects from the standpoint of a Sponsor is imperative to delivering them successfully. A failure to provide leadership and strong sponsorship is often cited as a key driver of project failure. The learning and observations within "Sponsorship is not a Spectator Sport!" will help you to avoid the common sponsorship pitfalls and open your mind to a world in which success is the only option.

Iain Begg has worked for Investment banks, Retail Banks and Financial Software Houses in a variety of senior level Project Management, Programme Management and Line Management roles and now owns his own Consultancy company, IMB Consulting, and jointly owns EndState Management Services. He has a proven track record of delivery, primarily of high volume global transaction processing systems across various business areas including; Payments, Settlements, Accounting, SWIFT, Reconciliation, Cash Management, Reference Data, Equity Research and Data Warehousing. As a consultant, Iain now specialises in Project HealthChecks, Project Turnaround and Governance.

As regards personal qualities, Iain has strong motivational skills and consistently builds teams with a high level of drive and commitment to achieving group goals. He has a proven ability to deliver results within the parameters of the defined terms of reference (scope, budget, schedule, resources) and has a reputation for building stable, reliable solutions.

Ongoing research into the reasons why projects fail enables Iain to offer entertaining and enjoyable talks, which include some serious messages and practical suggestions to reduce the risks of failure.



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This book has been produced as a manual to accompany a training course entitled “The Art of Project/Programme Sponsorship” and for this reason some blank space has been created on each left hand page to enable the reader to make their own notes as they progress through the book and the training course.

A series of quotes and sayings are included which are thought-provoking and relevant. Wherever possible, the source of quotations is shown. Due acknowledgement will be made in future reprints when the source of anonymous quotes is discovered.

# 1. Introduction

Is your success and that of your organisation dependent upon the delivery of projects? These are what I call Projectised Organisations. And is one of your responsibilities to act as Sponsor for one or more projects or programmes? Then this training manual is for you.

This book is designed as a training manual to accompany *The Art of Project/Programme Sponsorship* training course and space has been left to enable you to make additional notes during the training. However the manual can equally be used either standalone or as a reference guide. I hope you get maximum benefit from reading it.

## 1.1 I'm a Sponsor, so what?

If you are a Project Sponsor already, have you sometimes thought "I know what I want, but those project people always let me down and I still get held accountable!"?

Numerous surveys across a diverse range of IT projects have identified that the lack of support from senior management (i.e. Project Sponsorship) is one of the biggest causes of project failure. So, as the Sponsor, you can help the Project Manager to succeed or you can help them to fail – what's it going to be?

**"The great leaders are like the best conductors  
- they reach beyond the notes to reach the  
magic in the players." –Blaine Lee**

One of the things you're really going to love about this book is I'll show you how you can manage and Sponsor technology projects without understanding anything about technology. In other words the focus is on managing, and not on technology.

**Q: Why do you need a Project or Programme Sponsor?**

**A: Because the Sponsor is the business direction-setter and decision-maker, making decisions such as:-**

- ◆ Decide on the appointment of the Project Manager
- ◆ Approve the Business Case
- ◆ Decide checkpoint reviews, status reporting requirements & tracking metrics
- ◆ Approve objectives
- ◆ Approve scope
- ◆ Approve schedule
- ◆ Approve budget
- ◆ Decide on risk mitigation strategies
- ◆ Approve Roles & responsibilities (and lobby for resources)
- ◆ Provide strategic direction
- ◆ Review progress
- ◆ Help resolve issues & manage risks (esp. those that cross organisational boundaries)

***“Flowers Flourish when they are watered and  
wither when they’re not. People are no  
different. The best leaders are the ones who  
look for the best in people.” – Richard Branson***

- ◆ **Approve scope changes**

In the remainder of this book I will take you through:

- ◆ **An Overview covering:**
  - ⇒ **The Sponsor's Role,**
  - ⇒ **Life Cycles**
  - ⇒ **Stakeholders**
- ◆ **The Sponsor's Role during Startup**
  - ⇒ **Setting It Up For Success**
  - ⇒ **Commercial Aspects**
  - ⇒ **Risk & Issue Management**
- ◆ **The Sponsor's Role during Execution**
  - ⇒ **Monitoring Progress**
  - ⇒ **Cross-Project Effects**
  - ⇒ **Scope & Change Control**
- ◆ **The Sponsor's Role during Closedown (and After)**
  - ⇒ **Project Closedown**
  - ⇒ **Benefits Realisation**
- ◆ **Case Study - "The Sponsor from Hell"**
- ◆ **Portfolio Management**
- ◆ **Conclusions**

***“A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner”*** –  
**English Proverb**

## 2. What is Sponsorship?



*Sponsorship; what is it? Well let's take a step back for a moment and ask ourselves, why does this (or any) initiative need a Sponsor? Then let's take another step back and ask why do we need this initiative?*

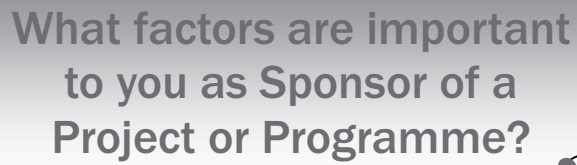
Well you can't have a project without a Sponsor, because the Sponsor is the person, from the business, who wants the project – or more precisely wants the outcomes of the project. Therefore the Sponsor is the client or customer.

So it's a Chicken and Egg scenario; you can't have a project without a Sponsor and you can't have a

***The difficult I can do today, the impossible will  
take a little longer” – Billie Holliday***

Sponsor without a Project – but which came first?

## 2.1 What's Important to you as Sponsor?



What factors are important to you as Sponsor of a Project or Programme?

Before turning over to the next page, have a think about this question and try answering it, either in your head, or even better, write them down in the space below so that you can refer to them as you progress through this book.

Also consider what factors are *not important*.


What are your criteria as Sponsor of a Project or Programme?

***“One characteristic of winners is they always  
look upon themselves as a do it yourself  
project.” – Denis Waitley***

Hopefully you will have come up with a list that looks something like this:

1. Delivery On Time
2. Completion within Budget
3. Delivery of Business Benefits
4. Trust that it is on-track (measure performance)
5. Quality
6. Doing the right thing as well as doing things right

In summary, it's all about results because Sponsors care about results. Not solutions, not technology, just results. In other words "I care *not how* you deliver, but *what* you deliver".

 <p>association for project management</p>	<p>APM defines Sponsorship as...</p> <p><i>“Project Sponsorship is an active senior management role, responsible for identifying the business need, problem or opportunity. The Sponsor ensures the project remains a viable proposition and that benefits are realised, resolving any issues outside the control of the project manager.”</i></p>
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This is the definition of Sponsorship from the APM – Association for Project Management. I like this definition because it makes five important points, and I think this is a very good definition of Sponsorship:

***“A project is complete when it starts working  
for you, rather than you working for it.”***

**– Scott Allen**

- ◆ “*active senior management role*” – senior management (i.e. somebody with authority) and the APM describe it as an **active** rather than a **passive** role. It is possible to delegate the Sponsor’s responsibilities if you are unable to dedicate enough time yourself, however you must ensure that you also delegate authority because the principal advantage the Sponsor has over the Project Manager is greater power and authority that is essential in overcoming obstacles.
  
- ◆ “*responsible for identifying the business need*” – is there a real business need, can you justify the project, will you champion the project if it is important enough to the business?
  
- ◆ “*ensure it remains viable*” – this recognises that things change over the life of a project that might affect its commercial viability so the Sponsor is the one that should keep their eye on this ball and continuously reassess the business case.
  
- ◆ “*ensure benefits are realised*” – When are benefits realised? Is it at the beginning, in the middle, at the end, or possibly after the end of a project? Later I’ll show you what I refer to as the Extended Life Cycle to put this into context, but I hope you will agree that benefits come **after**, sometimes a long time after, the project has finished so it is up to the Project Sponsor to ensure that benefits are realised.

***"Every problem was once a solution to a  
previous problem."***

- ◆ *“resolving any issues outside the control of the Project Manager”* – I often talk about spheres of influence. If an issue occurs that is outside the sphere of influence of the Project Manager then what can they do? They need help, so where can they go for help? The most common issues include resource dependency (key person dependency) and cross-project dependencies. These are issues that the Sponsor can certainly help to address. Therefore when it comes to resolving issues the Sponsor needs to be ready, willing and able to assist.

I'm going to come back to this definition throughout the book as we reinforce some of these key messages.