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The Project Saboteur ...and how to kill him

By Dion Kotteman and Jeroen Gietema

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Because every project has opponents...

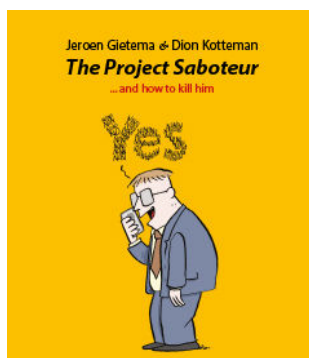
“In 2015 only 29% of software development projects were considered to be successful, meaning that these projects delivered on time, on budget, with a satisfactory result. 52% of the projects were listed with the qualification challenged and 19% failed completely.”*

With approximately \$665 billion spent worldwide on IT projects, this means that \$126 billion goes down the drain each year due to project failure.

**Standish group Chaos report 2015*

“The big takeaways from this book are the tools to be able to deal with the potential saboteur without hurting the project or your career.”

Jim Johnson, The Standish Group, thought leaders on management of software projects, known for the Chaos Reports



- **Why business projects – and particularly IT projects fail – by a leading financial expert for several large banks and the former Chief Information Officer for the Dutch government**
- **A humorous, but also seriously insightful, guide to identify people who manipulate and kill projects within large companies**
- **How projects can be manipulated to failure using popular tools such as PRINCE2**
- **How to secure your project and stop the sabotage**

Every project has opponents who will try to manipulate it so that the result better suits them. A naive idea? Hardly! People have the inclination to adjust truth to suit themselves and serve their own interests: more power, more income, more respect.

Even though it is rampant, little attention has been to the art of undermining and manipulating projects. And yet annually many millions are squandered as a result of project sabotage. If more

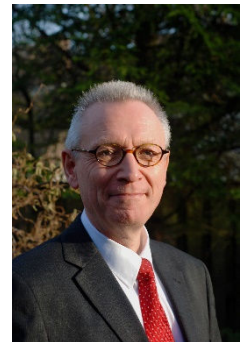
attention is given to the motivation and methods of project saboteurs, this will lead to large savings and better project results. This book explains how to sabotage a project, the motivations that guide the project saboteur, the alliances the project saboteur might make, and most importantly, how to stop him. It includes real-life case studies, examples, and helpful check lists and tables to determine if there's a project saboteur at work.

About the Authors



Dion Kotteman worked as the Chief Information Officer of the Dutch Government, then as an executive advisor to the Dutch Minister of Finance. He has also worked as a commissioner of police for Interpol and Europol. Since 1997, he has worked for several large banks including ING and ABN AMRO, where he concentrated on information security dealing with international concerns. At ING, he was programme director. Dion is now a consultant and a non-executive board member for several companies.

Jeroen Gietema has more than thirty years' project and management experience in the field of information and communication technology. He is co-owner and CEO of Cedira B.V., a company that develops and provides WEB based solutions. The most important WEB based service developed under his responsibility is ProSpondo, an assessment and impact analyses engine with advanced analysis and reporting capabilities.



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Foreword by Jim Johnson, The Standish Group

On March 4, 1921, Warren Gamaliel Harding became the 29th President of the United States. If remembered at all, Harding is remembered for the first major presidential scandal, known as Teapot Dome. The Teapot Dome was a scandal involving Harding's Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall. Fall did a secret leasing deal for federal oil reserves and got kickbacks from Sinclair Oil. Harding was slow to take action and let Congress do most of the investigation, which ultimately led to Fall's conviction. In response to the scandal, Harding is reported to have made these immortal remarks: "I have no trouble with my enemies, but my damn friends, they're the ones that keep me walking the floor nights!"

Projects in general and software projects in particular are all about change. Change will have an impact on different people in different ways. Change also causes fear and uncertainty. It is a rare project that does not have detractors. Dion Kotteman and Jeroen Gietema's *Project Saboteur* provides insight into how some people may react to changes they perceive as

unfavorable to their position and place. In most cases people will act in their own self-interest and preservation. This book will help you make decisions through understanding their behavior and motivation. Project managers can use this new understanding to help in the control and management of the project. Executive sponsors will find helpful hints for neutralizing or transforming the project saboteur to help move the project forward.

A Roman gladiator's purpose was to fight well in hopes of either beating his opponent or gaining a reprieve to fight another day. In most cases the combatants were set up so that each had a different advantage either for close combat or a distant struggle to make the fight more interesting and show off the latest martial arts. Each gladiator clearly knew his opponent. Bob Kelley, serial CIO, related an ERP systems project that had its own gladiator. There was one woman in purchasing who openly refused to help with the implementation and she put up a fight. She went so far as to poison the well for the other people. The organization gave her the thumbs down and helped her retire with a nice severance package. Unfortunately, project saboteurs are not always so aboveboard. They exhibit a more passive-aggressive approach. They are more likely to give you a bear hug before stabbing you in the back.

The first thing you need to do is recognize the project saboteur. This book helps you recognize the habits and behaviors of a potential saboteur. Once you recognize a project saboteur, managing her or him is crucial to the project. The big takeaways from this book are the tools to be able to deal with the potential saboteur without hurting the project or your career. This book is both fun to read and insightful. However, you will no longer look at the people in the project meeting in the same way, but you will have the awareness to not be blindsided by the project saboteur. You need to keep your enemies close, but your friends closer. Hopefully you will not be walking the floor nights.

Jim Johnson
Dreamer
The Standish Group