

Are programme managers just glorified project managers with a higher salary, or is there much more to the discipline than meets the cynical eye? Programme management company ESI vice president **J LeRoy Ward** PMP, PgMP argues the case for opening the door to project management's younger brother.

MAKE WAY FOR PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

YOU PROBABLY don't need a lesson on the importance of project management, especially considering you're presently reading a magazine called *Project*. However, I'd like to take a moment to speak on behalf of the younger member of the Management family, Programme Management.

Because project management has become engrained in business, programme management's emergence from under project management's shadow makes perfect sense. At any time, your company probably has dozens of projects running concurrently, all with separate budgets, scopes and timelines. However, don't all of these projects exist under the same corporate umbrella? Furthermore, don't individual objectives across these projects align to broader organisational initiatives? If the answer is yes, then these projects actually comprise a programme - and they should be managed as programmes.

By definition, programme management focuses on achieving results by paying attention to the many complex interdependencies existing between component projects. This intense focus on benefits management ensures that component projects produce results that actually exceed project managers' objectives, which are usually to complete work on schedule and budget. As important as time and money are, a programme's success is measured against the benefits achieved given the time and cost involved. In a business world laced with buzzwords like 'synergy' and

"big-picture thinking," programme management is ideal for delivering complex, multifaceted initiatives, especially those initiatives with the power to produce significant business outcomes and organisational change.

In 2007, the Project Management Institute began offering its first credential recognising the discipline of programme management, the Programme Management Professional (PgMP). In support of its newest credential, PMI laid out the skills it deemed necessary for programme managers. Although some of these skills align with those of good project management, programme management is clearly far more than just an offshoot of project management. Effective programme management requires a sophisticated understanding of internal organisational dynamics and how to influence key programme stakeholders.

In other words, programme managers need the business acumen to see beyond each individual project to determine its overall place in a programme, and the leadership and communication skills to influence team members and superiors to recognise the big picture.

So, as project management is sure to remain a staple of our daily lives, I'd suggest inviting programme management to your next meeting as well. He may not be as popular as his older brother, but he's gaining notoriety fast and is certain to help your organisation succeed.

