

VELOCITY

INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

EDITORIAL

Olfa Hamdi on
the launch of the
Concord Academy



THE TRAINING EDITION

GET CERTIFIED

**Why Advanced Work Packaging Training and
Certification Matters in a Rapidly Changing World**

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EDITORIAL

Introducing Concord Academy

Our proven method has been tried, tested and refined on multi-billion dollar capital construction projects. We know it works.

BY OLFA HAMDI

Why did Concord invest in developing an Advanced Work Packaging (AWP) certification program? Why should companies and practitioners place their faith in Concord as a certifying body? The questions came fast and furious after we launched the Concord Academy in May, and I'm going to answer them all right here.

First, the basics. The Concord Academy offers standardized, structured, progressive training to capital project professionals who practice Advanced Work Packaging. It is foundational training appropriate for everyone from sponsors and engineering teams to project managers and field leaders. Concord training is provided entirely online, using cutting-edge technology that allows students to learn at their own pace, anywhere in the world. The course of study includes regular, mandatory tests and quizzes, and those who successfully complete all of the modules become certified in Advanced



Work Packaging or Workface Planning. The program has been adopted by leading organizations including Shell and Samsung.

We established the Concord Academy and developed a certification program because there was a dire need for standardized capital project management training, and Concord was well-positioned to meet this need.

I researched and co-authored the industry's seminal report on Advanced Work Packaging, and then founded the Advanced Work Packaging Institute to serve as a clearinghouse for implementation research. I founded Concord Project Technologies specifically to support capital project companies in their efforts to adopt AWP, Workface Planning and Predictability Thinking.

At Concord, my team and I have had the unique privilege of designing, implementing and supporting AWP pilot projects for some of the biggest capital construction companies in the world. We've worked in Europe, North America and the Middle East; we've worked on projects ranging from petrochemical sites and energy projects to data centers and commercial buildings; we've worked at the executive, enterprise, portfolio management and execution levels. We have worked on business, engineering, procurement and construction aspects of capital projects. In all, we have an AWP implementation portfolio of roughly \$6 billion.

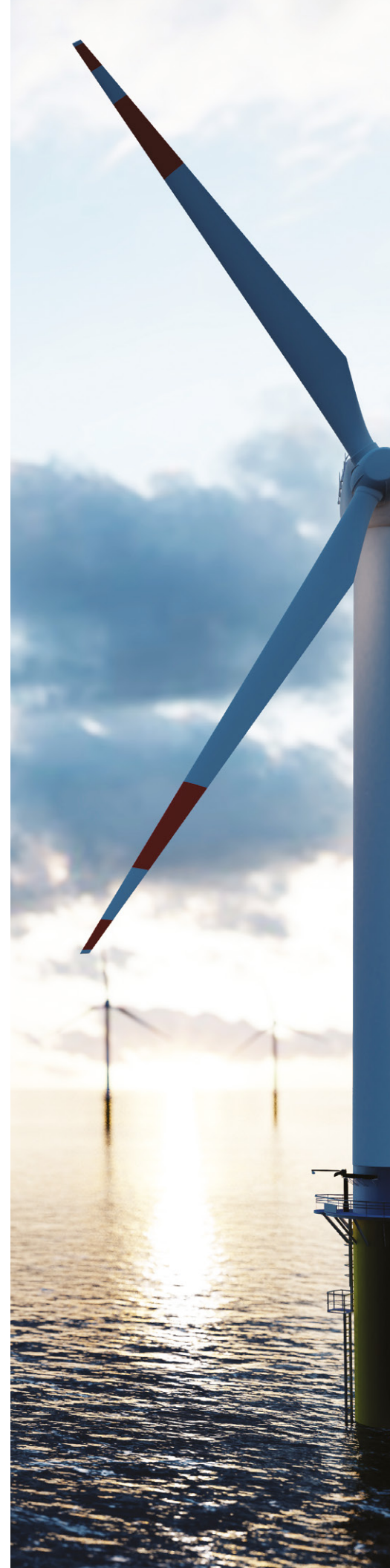
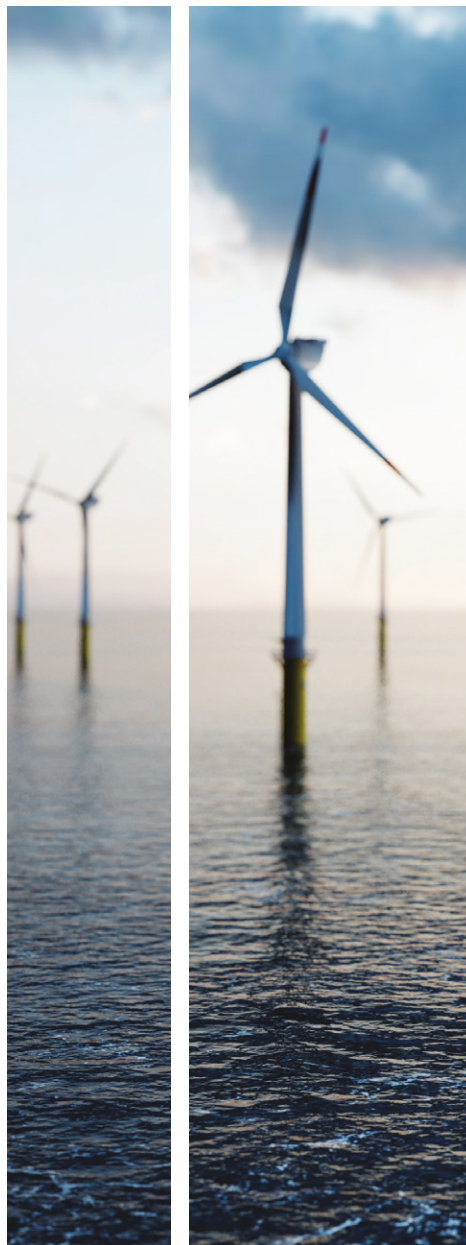
In the process, we developed a proven method for adopting AWP that can be deployed by any organization willing to invest in training and implementation. We've shared our approach through more than 100 free articles and webinars, and we were already training teams when the pandemic hit. The forced move to online-only training made the next step obvious: It was time to scale and start certifying our graduates. Concord Academy was born.

Our training is not just based on ideas, theories or research; it is based on hard-won, real-world experience. We cover terminology, principles and paradigms, but go beyond concepts to provide practical tools, systems and strategies for implementation.

The curriculum we teach to our students has been tried, tested and refined on multi-billion dollar capital construction projects. We know it works.

In this 9th edition of Velocity — The Training Edition — we take you along on the journey of creating the world's first self-paced, online training program for capital project professionals. In keeping with our mission to educate and empower, we explore why certification matters, why online training works, and some of the pillars of our training program, including an introduction to Implementation Layers. We hope you enjoy the magazine and stop by to visit us at tconglobal.com/learn.

Olfa Hamdi
CEO, Concord Project Technologies





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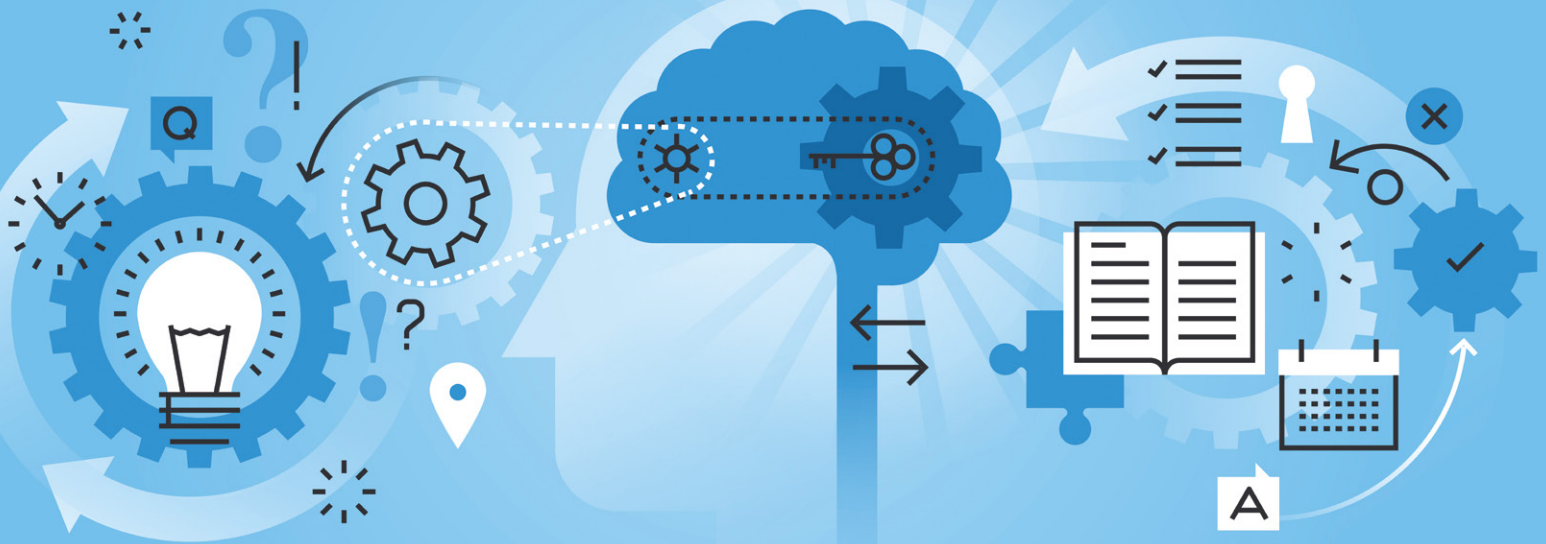
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Concord Academy students master workplace planning fundamentals and gain access to our world-class methodology, tools and materials. Become an industry leader in safe, predictable capital project construction, and tackle your next assignment with confidence.

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WHY CERTIFICATION MATTERS

BY OLFA HAMDI

“Capital project professionals do unique, skilled, valuable work. Certification is long overdue.” – OLFA HAMDI

Capital project management has come of age. The remarkable people who plan, design and build modern capital projects are highly skilled professionals who use sophisticated systems and technology to construct buildings that transform landscapes and impact millions of people. The global move toward certification is an empowering, optimistic development that acknowledges existing skills, standardizes training, and lays the groundwork for continued evolution in this critically important field.

In a time of unprecedented economic upheaval and global uncertainty, certification matters more than ever. Here's why.

Purpose-Built Training

For too long, capital project professionals borrowed training and certification from other industries. In the absence of clear standards, they cobbled together education from associations, mentors and related fields. We know these tools and

systems don't fully meet the needs of capital project organizations, because nine out of ten megaprojects are late or over-budget.

With purpose-built training programs and certification, we can support capital project professionals in mastering ideas and tools that meet their unique needs. We can teach Predictability Thinking™, Advanced Work Packaging, Workface Planning and other emerging best practices that will help them deliver on-time and on-budget.

A Trusted Career Pathway

Capital project professionals do unique, skilled, valuable work. For established professionals, certification offers an acknowledgement of their proven expertise. For those just entering the profession, it offers a trusted career pathway: comprehensive, structured training and certification in areas of key competence. Doctors, lawyers and engineers have been doing this for more than a century. It's time for capital project professionals to join them.

Which capital project professionals am I talking about? It's not just the project manager who needs specific training. On large projects, people leading project controls, engineering, procurement and construction management need to be fully versed in core project competencies, as do the field supervisors. If we're going to achieve more predictable outcomes, everybody needs to speak the same language.

A Framework for Continuous Improvement

At Concord we believe Advanced Work Packaging (AWP) currently offers the best foundation for a capital project education. AWP provides an elegant, effective and comprehensive system for linking the work of all those who contribute to capital projects, regardless of size or scope.

From Predictability Thinking™ and front-end definition to Workface Planning and field execution, AWP provides definitions, standards and a flexible structure for capital projects. Capital project professionals who understand AWP know what it takes to deliver on-time and on-budget.


Of course, this will change. In the decades to come, smart people will develop new paradigms and technologies that change the way we build capital projects. An established training and certification program offers a framework for both evaluating and introducing new concepts and tools to students and working professionals. Capital project organizations can rely on Concord Academy, as the certifying organization, to stay on top of developments and integrate proven tools into the curriculum.

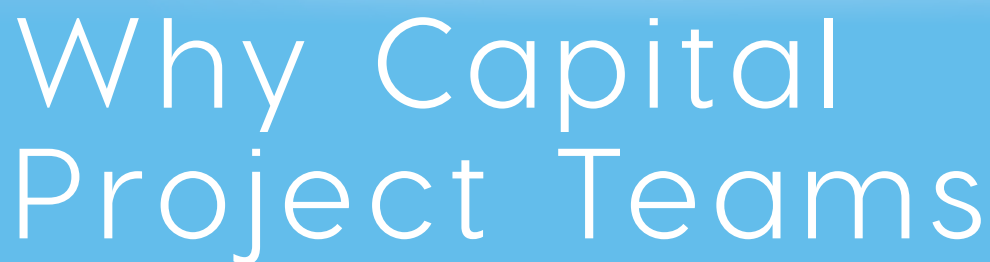
Independent, test-based assurance

Independent, test-based certification is essential because it provides assurance that individuals have mastered the core concepts and can be trusted to apply them effectively in the workplace. Independent certification means that the training and testing has been completed by a third-party organization. It offers standardized, consistent training in fundamentals, and confers a level of unmatched integrity on the process. Companies can outsource foundational training and focus their own resources on training around proprietary services.

Independent certification vs. in-house training

It's worth noting here that in-house training comes with hidden pitfalls that snare many well-intentioned organizations. While independent organizations like Concord must remain focused on developing knowledge at the industry level in order to remain competitive, in-house training teams risk becoming inward-looking and mired in internal politics. In addition, when it comes to building this type of high-level training, your in-house training team can't do it on their own, and you'll have to pull your best people off their projects to consult. I'd argue that's not the best use of your top resources.

Concord was built by capital project professionals who became experts in research, development and training. We're specialists in disseminating practical, effective, foundational training for capital project professionals. If your goal is to certify the acquisition of Advanced Work Packaging fundamentals for your people, and to ensure that they have the knowledge required to implement through the entire lifecycle of a capital project, contact us today. 



BY THE CONCORD ACADEMY TEAM

“When it comes to training, online wins.” – OLFA HAMDI

Why couldn't we see this before?
Why has it taken so long for
Concord — and the capital
projects industry — to fully
embrace online learning as
a cornerstone of employee
training and development?

To be fair, we were already conducting some of our training online. Typically, about 60% of our training was done in-person, in conference and board rooms from Cairo to Texas to San Francisco to France, and on site-visits around the world. The remaining 40% was done online, remotely from our offices in Palo Alto, California.

But until COVID-19 arrived, we never managed to make the transition to 100% remote learning. We already knew that training outcomes were better when education is delivered online, and we knew that costs were substantially lower because neither the trainer nor the trainees have to travel. Habit and resistance to change kept us locked in old patterns.

Plus, many of our client resisted online training because they have encountered challenges in the past with remote Engineering Value Centers. It's worth noting that working remotely with engineers is an entirely different experience from training online. Training is brief, finite, and doesn't impact project outcomes the same way that working with an EVC does. (Actually, Concord training will help you engage productively with EVCs and improve those outcomes, but that's another subject.)

Three months after COVID-19 forced us to take our training program entirely online, we decided to make the change permanent. We recently launched the Concord Academy online, and we're now working to build out an accessible, affordable, scalable training platform for capital project professionals around the world.


Here's why we're fully committed to online learning:

- **Engagement:** Professionals who take part in our online learning courses are more engaged. The format supports full attention, encourages active learning, and allows for immediate workplace application. Participants experience an educational journey rather than a one-time training event.
- **Retention:** The challenge with in-person training is that it is delivered in long stretches, at least two days long, and up to two weeks. Participants are pulled away from their work, inundated with new information, and even the most committed struggle to retain it all. Online delivery allows us to break learning up into smaller blocks and makes information easy to access and review on-demand. Missed a key point? Lost the thread? Just hit rewind.
- **Investment:** Online training requires capital project team members to take ownership of their professional development. Herding a team into a conference room for training day does not guarantee that everyone will engage with the material. Online training requires that participants take active steps to listen to and engage with the content, so they can pass the pop quizzes and tests built into the courses. Finally, they'll gain a sense of accomplishment from completing the course. Team members who are hungry to learn will soar.
- **Connection:** Online training offers unprecedented new opportunities to connect with leaders and like-minded capital project practitioners around

the world. It's not the same as face-to-face connection, it's even better. Trainers and facilitators drive discussion through live webinars and training sessions, and Concord's advanced system supports group chat and one-on-one Q&A sessions around each lesson. Video chat and forums allow participants to connect meaningfully overtime, developing solid relationships with leaders and peers.

- **Certification:** We've written before about the need to develop a clear career path for capital project professionals, and Concord's new certification program meets this need. We've established a rigorous, test-based process for certification based on learning objectives and acquired competencies. Our first two flagship programs include the Workforce Planning Certification Program and the AWP Certification Program.

When it comes to building the capacity of capital project teams, we've concluded that a standardized, virtual learning approach is the best way to teach key concepts and critical competencies. With face-to-face follow up via live Q&A webinar, this becomes the most robust, accessible, and effective training system on offer, delivering practical outcomes that far exceed those of in-person training.

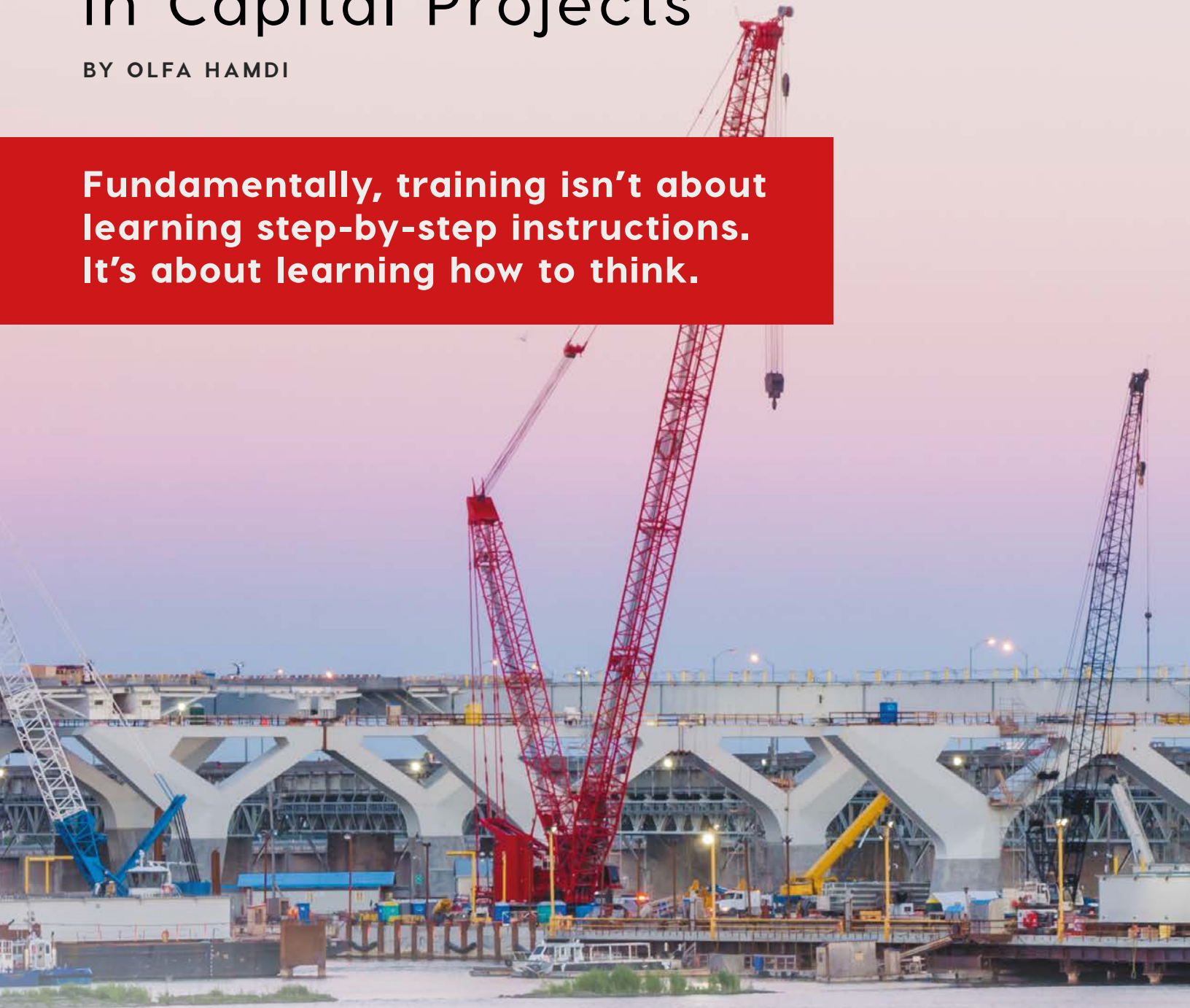
The COVID-19 pandemic has given us all an opportunity to pause and rethink the way we do things. Here at Concord, we've taken what we've learned and used it to transform and improve our way of working. Capital project organizations can do the same by using this time to train teams in Predictability Thinking™ and Advanced Work Packaging. 

TRAINING, CULTURE AND TRANSFORMATION

in Capital Projects

BY OLFA HAMDİ

Fundamentally, training isn't about learning step-by-step instructions. It's about learning how to think.



It is impossible to deliver a predictable capital project without well-trained people. In the complex universe of capital project delivery, competency is the undisputed king. This is why top companies compete for the very best talent, and why they invest millions in training and development.

But if competency is king, then culture is queen: An unheralded but equally powerful influence on your ability to deliver on-time and on-budget. Even the best and brightest can be brought down by a toxic culture, and conversely, a healthy culture will improve the performance of your entire team.

If you want to deliver a predictable capital project, the king and queen must rule together. When an organization embarks on a journey to predictability, training is almost always the first step. It is equally essential, however, to ensure that your newly trained team members will return to an environment that is receptive to and supportive of their new skills. If your internal culture is resistant to change, then the money you invest in training will be for naught.

Here's what it boils down to: You must give your people new skills, *and* you must teach them how to apply those skills in the real world. Anybody can learn Advanced Work Packaging

(AWP) on paper, but putting it into practice is an entirely different kettle of fish, as anyone who has tried will tell you. At Concord, we teach your team members to do new things, but we also teach them how to think about how to do those things in the context of their own workplace, with its unique culture and colleagues.

Learning To Do vs. Learning To Think

Fundamentally, we believe that training isn't just about step-by-step instructions, it's about learning how to *think*. This is why we deliver free webinars and publications — we want to transform the industry by helping you and your team think about how new processes fit into what you're currently doing. We call this Principled Project Management training.

Here's an example. Imagine you're a project manager, and you're implementing AWP in your organization for the first time. You must, of course, understand how AWP works, and you need to understand the role of a project manager on an AWP team. But that's not enough. It's absolutely critical that you think about what you will need to change about how you do your job on a day-to-day basis. What work and communication habits will you need to develop in order to facilitate predictability-driven collaboration on your team?

Equally important: What are you doing now that might undermine your efforts?

Leverage Training to Drive Cultural Change

It should go without saying that any training must support your strategic objectives, and for most capital project organizations that means every dollar invested in training is an investment in your capacity to deliver safe and predictable projects.

It's also possible to leverage training to drive cultural change. Your most ambitious people want more training, and the increasing availability of engaging, interactive, remote training opportunities makes it easier than ever to give it to them. New online training modules are short, focused and typically consumed on the job, providing an extraordinary opportunity to apply new skills immediately.

In our own online training sessions here at Concord, we have found that the emerging acceptance of remote learning helps your best people feel as though they are truly a part of the capital project organization's journey to achieving safety and predictability. And they are. 🌐

“If your internal culture is resistant to change, then the money you invest in training will be for naught.” – OLFA HAMDI



PILOTING ADVANCED WORK PACKAGING:

7 Lessons Learned

BY THE AWP IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

**ARE YOU PILOTING ADVANCED WORK
PACKAGING (AWP) FOR THE FIRST
TIME? HERE ARE SOME LESSONS
WE'VE LEARNED THAT CAN HELP.**

You're sold on the advantages of Advanced Work Packaging (AWP), and you're getting ready to launch your first pilot project. You're committed to taking a new construction-driven approach to planning and execution, and you understand the benefits of achieving a constraint-free work environment in the field. If you succeed, you'll vastly improve operational predictability and are more likely to deliver both on-time and on-budget. It's a thrilling time.

Still, your first pilot project can be overwhelming. AWP implementation is almost always complex because you have to integrate new ways of thinking and doing with existing structures and protocols. Leaders and teams alike are in unfamiliar territory, where there are no perfect answers.

In this article, we'll look at seven lessons we've learned that can help guide you when the going gets rough, as it almost certainly will. Hint: It's all about principles.

1 | Begin with the End in Mind

If you only take one phrase away from this piece, let it be this: Begin with the end in mind. Remember that the process of adopting AWP is ultimately tied to real outcomes in the field; it can be easy to forget when you're immersed in change management or wrestling with a new workflow for weeks. On your first construction-driven project, you'll spend far more time on front-end definition than ever before, and everything from your contracting strategy and schedule to your Path of Construction will feel like it's in flux. Keep your eye on the prize.

2 | Embrace Construction-Driven Engineering

Nearly two-thirds of all field rework can be traced back to engineering.

Construction-driven engineering doesn't eliminate this problem, but it can mitigate it substantially. Aligning your engineering and construction sequences is central to the AWP methodology and requires a detailed, reliable Path of Construction (PoC) in place. You might be tempted to skip it, especially if your engineering department is resistant. Don't.

3 | Align Procurement with the Path of Construction (PoC)

On your first AWP pilot, one of your most significant challenges will be to make sure that the procurement process aligns with your PoC. Getting tools and materials to the field at the right time is essential to the AWP methodology. If you have to hire expeditors to resolve stalled processes, do it. Few things have the power to undermine construction progress more than a procurement team that isn't keeping pace with the PoC.

4 | Adopt a Construction-Driven Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

Make sure your Work Breakdown Structure is construction-driven — it's a simple lesson, but it is often overlooked. Organizations that try to import their old numbering structure for drawings, deliverables, and schedules into a new AWP environment often find that it's not consistent with a construction-driven mindset and doesn't align with the PoC. Of all the challenges you'll encounter in implementing AWP, this one is the easiest to solve.

5 | Engage Construction Leaders in the Earliest Stages of the Project.

Construction leaders need to be involved in a construction-driven project from the get-go. You cannot


do Advanced Work Packaging without construction leaders in the room from the outset. This can be challenging because everyone on an established team will be unfamiliar with the new protocols, and some will be uncomfortable with the changing power dynamics — perhaps the construction leaders themselves most of all. Push through the discomfort.

6 | Manage your Constraints

You need a formal process for identifying and managing constraints, and a person or team dedicated to doing this critical work. Empowered Workforce Planners can expand the scope on constraints management to include all constraints, not just those involving tools and materials.

7 | Create an Accountability-Driven Culture in your Organization

Disciplined collaboration and stable accountability structures are critical to the success of your first Advanced Work Packaging pilot. Many capital project teams operate with little or no accountability structures in place, with deliverables assigned to multiple people or, worse yet, assigned to nobody in particular. This mistake is easy to identify, and you can begin to address it as soon as you decide to move toward advanced work packaging.

With these seven lessons learned in mind, you'll have a better shot at succeeding with your first AWP pilot. If you need help along the way, the Concord team is here to help with training and a full suite of support services for capital project organizations. 



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Concord Academy students master Advanced Work Packaging fundamentals and master the skills, methods and tools required to make AWP work in any organization. From definition to engineering and construction, Concord's program provides you with a comprehensive understanding of Advanced Work Packaging project lifecycle.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO

**ADVANCED
WORK
PACKAGING****Implementation Layers**

BY OLFA HAMDI

**THIS POWERFUL PROCESS CAN HELP YOUR
ORGANIZATION SUCCEED WITH ADVANCE
WORK PACKAGING, WRITES OLFA HAMDI**

Some capital project organizations approach the implementation Advanced Work Packaging (AWP) as if they're simply adding another tool to their corporate toolbox: an open and shut case. I prefer to think of the AWP implementation like an organ transplant: lengthy and complex, with a serious risk of rejection. In this article, I'll talk about how Concord's AWP implementation layers can help leaders predict, plan for and overcome the challenges that come with major organizational surgery such as implementing AWP. Let's dive in.

Whether you're building a capital project team from the ground up or

implementing AWP in an existing project environment, you're never truly starting from scratch. You're always introducing AWP to people, and people come with training, expertise, experience — and strong beliefs about the right way to do things. The implementation of Advanced Work Packaging will require that your people change parts of how they do their work. Change is hard, and often resisted. Implementation layers can help.

It's worth noting that a maturity assessment is a prerequisite for everything that follows. Leaders always need a comprehensive

understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their project delivery systems *before* they embark on an AWP implementation. This includes an assessment of project management and controls, engineering, procurement, contracts, and collaboration protocols, among other things. AWP will impact every aspect of your project delivery system, and you need to know where you're standing before you start.

Now, on to implementation layers. For many years, the concept of implementation layers was a proprietary methodology that we used only for Concord clients.

I'd write about the importance of approaching capital projects with a predictability mindset, but I never elaborated on how we achieved this for clients, practically speaking. As our organization has expanded to include the Concord Academy, I've been thinking a lot more about our mission, which is to empower and educate capital project professionals. Implementation layers really are the very best way to integrate *Predictability Thinking™* into the AWP implementation process, we have decided it's time to share this with the industry as a whole.

What is an Implementation Layer?

Implementation layers are to your AWP implementation what the front-end definition phase is to your capital project. An implementation layer is a scope of application that defines when, where and why you plan to apply AWP in your organization. We've identified six layers of AWP implementation, which can be applied individually, all at once, or in a specific combination.

LAYER 1 – Adopt Construction-Driven Definition and Planning

In Layer One, the organization is focused on creating construction-driven processes for the planning phases of the project. This includes construction-driven phasing, plans and schedules. This layer is generally first adopted by the Owner organization, and/or the FEED contractor.

LAYER 2 – Embrace Construction-Driven Engineering

In Layer Two, the engineering team modifies its workflow so that engineering work packages are defined and executed to support the construction sequence. This can happen as a standalone transformation, or in connection with Layer One. Note that the change here must be led and embraced by the engineering groups.

LAYER 3 – Improve Field Planning to Maximize On-Tool Time

In rare cases, Layer Three — also known as Workface Planning — can be a stand-alone process for subcontractors and construction management teams. It's important to understand, however, that the "garbage in, garbage out" rule always applies to Workface Planning. If Layers One and Two aren't in place, and

the information supplied to the field teams is not construction-driven, then you won't see the results in your Workface Planning.

LAYER 4 – Establish Disciplined Collaboration

Advanced Work Packaging impacts everybody in your organization: their roles, their daily work, their interactions with each other, and their outcomes. It is imperative that leaders establish a structure and systems that support disciplined collaboration. This is a separate effort because it takes as much effort as any of the first three technical layers, and it is often overlooked entirely.

LAYER 5 – Integrated Information Management

The way that information flows through your organization is dictated largely (though not entirely) by the process decisions you make in the first four layers.

“Whether you're building a capital project team from the ground up or implementing AWP in an existing project environment, you're never truly starting from scratch.” – OLFA HAMDI

This is why we only tackle knowledge management and technology systems *after* the first four layers have been addressed. Companies that implement AWP technology as a standalone layer with no consideration to the first four layers almost always compound the difficulties they face in AWP implementation.

“AWP will impact every aspect of your project delivery system, and you need to know where you’re standing before you start.” – OLFA HAMDI

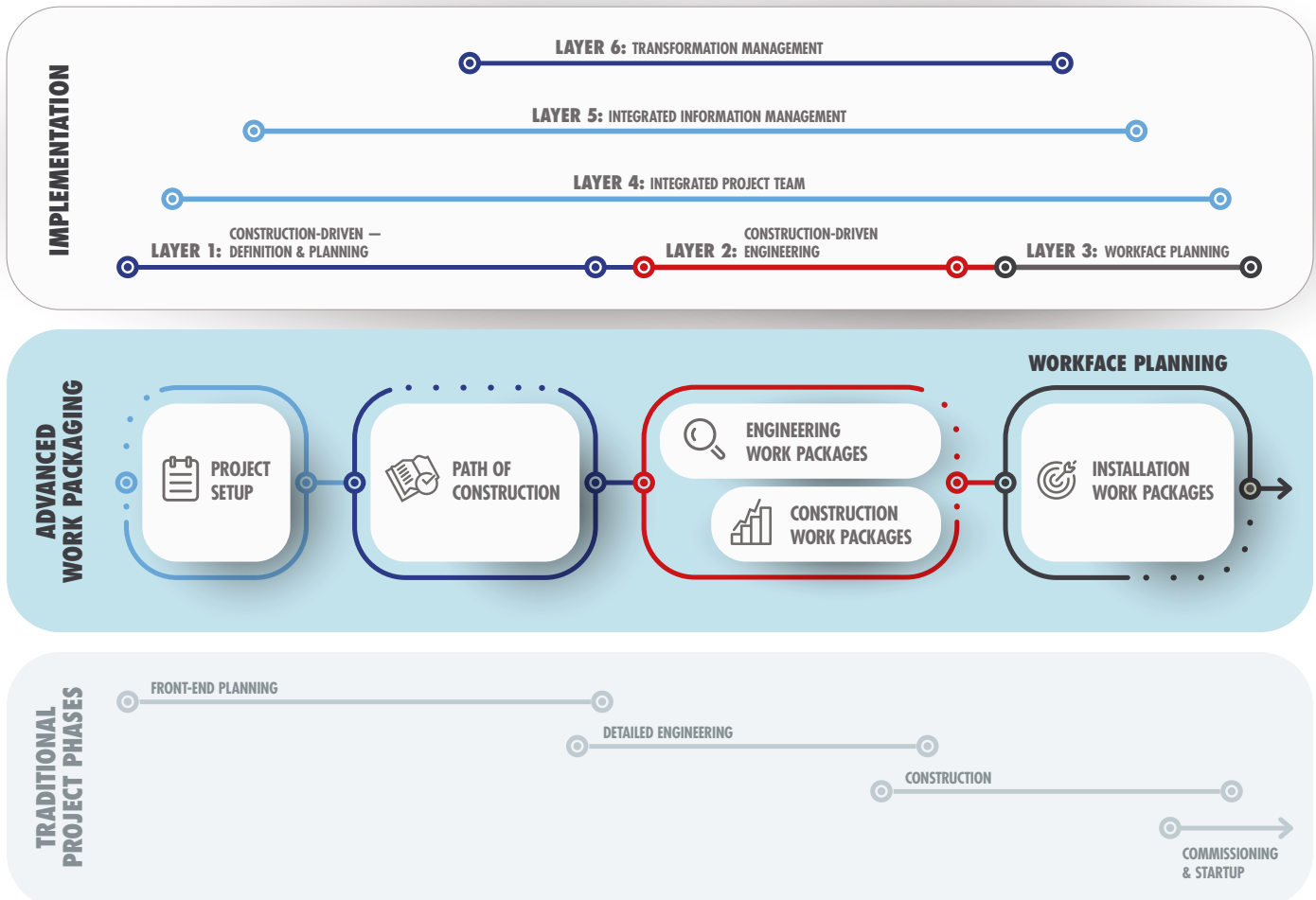
LAYER 6 – Transformation Management

Layer Six is the step that is most often ignored by capital project organizations, and the layer that almost always delivers true market differentiation. Organizations that fail to manage change often fail to reap the benefits of AWP, even if they do everything else right.

Successful organizations budget for, plan and execute a comprehensive change management program.

There you have it — Concord’s six implementation layers, short and simple. Are any of these applicable to your organization? Where are your strengths? Your weaknesses?

What can you do to improve today? If you’re interested in learning more about our implementation layers, be sure to subscribe to Velocity and get the complete series delivered directly to your mailbox over the coming months, along with other great insights and ideas for more predictable capital projects. 📧



WHAT IS AN AWP CHAMPION?

BY THE CONCORD RESEARCH TEAM



**IF YOU'RE IMPLEMENTING
ADVANCED WORK PACKAGING (AWP),
YOU NEED AN AWP CHAMPION.**

HERE'S A GUIDE

The process of adopting Advanced Work Packaging (AWP) requires a comprehensive, systemic change that will affect every person on your capital project team. The presence of an empowered, respected change agent is critical to your success. Here at Concord, we call this person the AWP Champion.

The AWP Champion is a leader dedicated entirely to supporting the transition to Advanced Work Packaging. His primary focus is people, because people are your most valuable asset, and all but a few will need help in adapting to new roles and new requirements.

More broadly speaking, the champion functions as a resource for information, a source of practical assistance, and a skilled motivator. The AWP Champion is responsible for fostering a spirit of collaboration and getting the entire team on board with AWP.

It's important to note that AWP Champion has real, positional authority in the organization, across the entire project team, and through the project lifecycle. He's not a consultant or advisor who makes recommendations. That said, he also derives his authority from his expertise and the respect and admiration of his colleagues. He is a servant leader.

What does the AWP Champion Do?

The AWP Champion is the go-to person for Advanced Work Packaging questions. He has a deep, technical understanding of AWP systems and processes, and is intimately familiar with AWP roles and responsibilities.

On a day-to-day basis, he works directly with teams, organizes group training, and provides one-on-one coaching. On pilot projects, he customizes templates and revises workflows. Throughout the project, he proactively identifies internal roadblocks and works to address them by creating custom-fit AWP solutions for the project or the organization. He answers questions and ensures that team feedback is incorporated as the project moves forward.

Who is the AWP Champion?

The role of the AWP champion is not connected with a specific function, but it's safe to say that it's not your planner, your scheduler, or your project manager. These people have plenty of work to do, and giving them the additional role of AWP Champion sets them up for failure.

If your project is small, with a total price tag of under \$20 million, the AWP Champion role can be a part-time job, but be certain that the person filling it can dedicate at least half of her time to the position. If you select someone who is already overwhelmed with other work and you're setting her up for failure, too.

Complex projects, and any project that is considered large in terms of Total Installed Cost, will require a full-time AWP champion. Consider this an investment in your successful transition to a construction-driven project.

When we work with clients, we partner with someone in-house to take on the AWP Champion role together. We typically manage the technical heavy lifting — the creation of templates, workflows — freeing the in-house AWP champion's time to focus on people. We provide this champion with one-on-one training and coaching on areas including change management and Path of Construction facilitation so that, when our mandate is complete, the AWP champion is empowered to continue in the role without outside support.

Common Pitfalls in Hiring the AWP Champion

Having worked with dozens of companies at various stages in the AWP implementation process, we have identified four common mistakes that undermine the transition to AWP.

Don't assume that the AWP Champion role automatically falls to your Project Manager.

This is by far the most common mistake we see in organizations that are making the transition to Advanced Work Packaging. Your Project Manager should certainly "champion" the change to AWP in a general sense, but the role of AWP Champion is a dedicated role and is often a full-time job. Your PM can be accountable for the transition to AWP, but should not be in charge of it.

Don't underestimate the amount of work the AWP Champion will do.


Preparing systems and people for a transition to Advanced Work Packaging is no easy task. Depending on the size of your organization, the scope of your project, and the readiness of your team, the work can fill a full-time job for a year or more. Ensure that both leaders and team members are clear on the full scope of the AWP Champion's work.

Don't ignore the impact on the AWP Champion's career path.

Have a meaningful conversation about what taking on this role means for the AWP Champion's career path. Here at Concord, we encourage organizations to think of the AWP Champion role as a step along the career path to Project Manager, leadership, and even enterprise roles.

Regardless of what your organization decides, it's important to remember that your AWP Champion may invest two to three years in this role, and the best candidates will want to know in advance how this will impact their career prospects down the line.

Don't leave your AWP Champion all alone.

Typically, we encourage organizations to consider their AWP Champions as members of the Integrated Project Management Office (IPMO). This is because, if there is a PMO, it will no doubt be taking a leadership role in change management, and this is a crucial area of influence for the AWP Champion. If you do not have a PMO, then the next best home for the AWP Champion is as a vital member of the project leadership team. 

Four common mistakes that undermine the transition to AWP:

1. Assuming your project manager will automatically fulfill the AWP Champion role.
2. Underestimating the amount of work the AWP Champion will do.
3. Ignoring the impact on the AWP Champion's career path.
4. Leaving your AWP Champion all alone.



A STABLE PLATFORM: ADVANCED WORK PACKAGING FOR MEGAPROJECTS

HOW JAMES PORTER'S CONCEPT OF THE REASONABLY STABLE PLATFORM CAN HELP US DELIVER MEGAPROJECTS ON-TIME AND ON-BUDGET.

BY OLFA HAMDI

In this short article, I'd like to discuss and elaborate on the concept of the reasonably stable platform that Dupont engineer James Porter invokes in this fantastic quote from Edward Merrow's book, *Industrial Megaprojects*. What does a reasonably stable management platform look like on a modern megaproject? How does it function? How can we build and maintain a management platform that supports us in delivering on-time and on-budget? Where do Advanced Work Packaging and Predictability Thinking™ fit in?

These are not philosophical questions. A recent survey from IPA canvassed more than 300 global megaprojects and found that 65% of industrial projects with budgets over \$1 billion failed to meet their business objectives. Practically speaking, this means these projects did not do what they were intended to do. In some sectors, this rate ran as high as 75%. If James Porter says that a reasonably stable management platform is *the most important* requirement for a successful megaproject, I think that's worth exploring.

“I would like to call to your attention what I believe is the most important and most unique requirement for a successful megaproject. ... That is the need to assess and then shape the opportunity into a reasonably stable platform from which to manage the project.”

— JAMES PORTER, FORMER
CHIEF ENGINEER, DUPONT

“If the devil is in the details, as they say, then Advanced Work Packaging can show you all the places he hides.” – OLFA HAMDI

When we look at the way megaprojects have traditionally been approached and studied, we see a heavy focus on opportunity-shaping and risk management. By contrast, we see little or no discussion of management platforms. In the three points that follow, I'll argue that we need to broaden our thinking to include management platforms.

Why? Because statistics like those noted above illustrate that there is no distinction between “business” and “execution.” The execution is the business, the business is the execution. When our management systems reflect this fact, they will become increasingly stable and more effective in supporting our teams to deliver on-time and on-budget.

So, what does a reasonably stable platform look like, in the context of a megaproject?

1 | It is Designed and Driven by Predictability Thinking™

A reasonably stable management platform is built to encourage, incentivize and support predictable behavior from everyone on the project. It enables people to report issues right away. It identifies and addresses blind spots in the collaboration. It spots silos, connects them, and breaks them down when necessary. It's a management platform in which the contracting strategy, stakeholders and collaboration are coherently designed to support on-time, on-budget delivery. It supports proactive problem solving and conflict resolution.

A platform like this does not emerge by chance: it must be planned, funded and built. A megaproject organization is temporary by nature, but it's long enough and large enough in scope that it needs to be set up like an established business. To succeed, all decisions concerning the structure of the management platform must be anchored in predictability thinking.

2 | It's Built to Support Disciplined, Construction-Driven Collaboration

Opportunity shaping and risk management are just the tip of the iceberg. To build a successful megaproject, you have to go deep and look at everything that sits below the surface, from organizational charts and schedules to collaboration tools and information exchange protocols. A superficial approach that focuses only on definition and risk leaves far too much of the project execution to chance.


A reasonably stable platform supports disciplined, construction-driven collaboration by setting clear expectations and providing systems that support their achievement. Advanced Work Packaging is the most powerful tool we have for achieving these outcomes. It is a ready-made, yet flexible structure that makes the entire iceberg visible. If the devil is in the details, as they say, then AWP can show you all the places he hides.

3 | It Stays Out of the Business vs. Execution Trap

The notion that business and execution are separate or distinct is a dangerous trap. The reality is that business and execution are two sides of the same coin. This is a challenging paradigm shift for many in our industry, but it's essential if we want to start building reasonably stable management platforms.

In practical terms, what I'm saying is that in the lifecycle of a successful megaproject, the people who execute the project need to be involved in the business planning, and the people who do the business planning need to be engaged in the execution to a certain extent.

The entire process must be construction-driven, which means the people who construct need to be in the room from the very beginning, and the people who ink deals need to stick around until the end to see how their systems work (or don't). Is this challenging? Yes. Is it possible? Absolutely.

The glue that holds it all together is a construction-driven project team that understands the business objectives and is also committed to Advanced Work Packaging. If you'd like to learn more about AWP and Predictability Thinking™, check out our Predictability Package options or sign up for a self-paced, on-demand course at the Concord Academy. 



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