

How to Manage Serendipities

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Innovative projects and programmes are difficult to manage, especially in complicated and quickly changing context with different stakeholders. The term "serendipities" is basic to our analysis of hidden and surprising effects. It is synonymous with "lucky accidents" or "satisfying coincidences". It involves tracing processes backwards – which requires a thinking based on a combination of intuition and wisdom. It means drawing conclusions from a number of facts and clues. It involves getting to grips with the cause of an event even though the causal chain is not linear but discontinuous and jerky.

The knowledge formation and evaluation approaches chosen in development work are crucial for determining the consequences of implementation. Projects have to respond rapidly, flexibly and innovatively to new opportunities that occur in the context. *Agile project management* becomes a natural consequence of our perspective on knowledge formation and evaluation. The project organisation has to handle rapid and unpredictable changes in the surrounding world in a flexible, effective and dynamic way. This demands support systems, parallel development processes and spare capacity. Learning through ongoing evaluation is an important part of the intelligence system that shows the risks, as well as the opportunities in the uncertain situations that development programmes and projects often encounter.

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