

Offprint

Specialize - but in what?

Strategic career planning with the EKS model

Project managers looking for an orientation framework for professional project management will find it in the generally known and recognized standards of PMI (PMBOK), IPMA (ICB) and AXELOS (PRINCE2). An abundance of specialized books supplements and varies the contents addressed there. Thus, it also quickly becomes clear which training courses one should complete in order to acquire the required knowledge.

However, project managers are largely left on their own when it comes to making specific career decisions on this basis in a way that offers the greatest chance of success.

This article presents an action model that can support such decision-making processes: the "bottleneck-focused strategy" (EKS), founded by Wolfgang Mewes.

Using the example of personal career planning, we want to show the potential of EKS for professional decision-making situations. In doing so, we address project managers who want to professionalize themselves in this role and not those who take on project management tasks on an ad hoc basis and only want to master this one challenge as successfully as possible. Professional project managers can always be found where project management plays a significant role in the creation of the product or service that a company sells.

Before we turn to the potential of EHL as an action model for project managers, we will first briefly explain the essential elements of EHL theory.

Theory of the Bottleneck-Concentrated Strategy (EKS)

Wolfgang Mewes began his professional career as an accountant and auditor and wrote a distance learning course for this target group. In examining the further career paths of the course participants, he became increasingly interested in why some graduates were extremely successful and others, with equal or even better

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qualifications, did not get their feet on the ground. His approach to the subject was therefore an empirical one; he gradually worked out the theoretical basis for explaining his observations as an autodidact, finding what he was looking for above all in biology and cybernetics.

Mewes summarized his findings in a number of publications and, on the basis of these, developed a comprehensive distance learning course which, with the help of numerous case studies and exercises, was intended to promote implementation for the specific situation of the course participant. This course, with its wealth of information, was certainly not easily digestible fare, but with its precision and passion it provided an impetus that had a lasting impact on many, including one of the authors of this article.

In 1990, the publishing house of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung brought out a modernized version, and at about the same time the first edition of a book version by Kerstin Friedrich was published (the similarity of names with one of the authors of this article is a coincidence). Further editions with the co-authors Edgar Geffroy, Lothar Seiwert and Fredmund Malik followed. Currently, the book is on the market in its 20th edition with the authors K. Friedrich, F. Malik and L. Seiwert. In 2009, Fredmund Malik acquired all rights to use the EKS and integrated it into the training and consulting offering of his MZSG. There it now operates as part of the MAS ("Malik Alleinstellungstrategie").

Prominent application cases, such as the companies Kärcher, Fielmann and Kieser Training, prove the success potential of EKS. But also the little-known, but consistently leading medium-sized companies on the world market, which Hermann Simon analyzed and presented in his book (Simon, 1996), have been successful with the principles of EKS - whereby it does not matter whether the companies have used them consciously or acted on their own insight. Last but not least, Lothar Seiwert's positioning as a "time management expert" and the subsequent further development (together with Tiki Küstenmacher) into the multi-layered concept of "Simplify your life" is also a prime example of the successful - and in this case conscious - application of the EKS principles.

The core statements of the EKS

In his foreword to the 16th edition of "Success Strategy," Mewes defines the essence of the term "strategy" as "concentrating forces on the essentials at the decisive point. And further explains: "The EKS is the doctrine of the effective use of every kind of energy. Its laws apply across systems [...]. Whether you want to improve your company or department success, your (self-)management or your career: You have to bundle your forces and concentrate them on the most cybernetically effective point".

Mewes summarized the recipes for success in four principles and developed a seven-step procedure model for implementing these principles (we use the word recipe here deliberately because Mewes made the claim to provide concrete instructions for action). These principles, the process model and a multitude of methodical instructions and tools form a multi-layered system with the goal of ensuring the economic success of individuals, companies and organizations.

The four EKS principles

Different authors and co-authors have formulated the four principles mentioned by Mewes as the core of his strategy theory in different ways, in many cases even exchanging contents. We follow the naming of the principles

of the current edition of "Erfolgsstrategie", for which Mewes has written a foreword; it can therefore be assumed that the contents of the book are in line with the intentions of the author of the EKS. In the explanations, we sometimes fall back on formulations from earlier publications, in which Mewes impresses and convinces again and again with his pictorial language.

Principle 1: Concentration instead of dispersion

The prerequisite for any success is the concentration of forces on existing strengths. Concentration brings more penetrating power than breadth with the same use of force. So no matter how great one's own talents and resources are, one can always achieve more impact with specialization. When it first appeared, this central message completely contradicted the ideal of the generalist as the foundation of personal career strategy and collided with the diversification recommendations for companies that dominated at the time.

Principle 2: Minimum principle

You can achieve a big impact even with small forces if you aim at the right point (this corresponds to the metaphor of David's fight against Goliath). If you address "the most burning problem of your target group", you gain the highest attention and support. If you miss the mark, you will earn - with the same effort - disinterest.

Principle 3: Intangibles before tangibles

Attraction counts more than capital, ideas more than possessions, because these intangible goods can be used to obtain the material resources. It rarely works the other way around. Fantastic purchase prices for companies that have never made a profit confirm the validity of this principle - albeit often in a far exaggerated and thus unsustainable manner.

Red Bull is practicing this on a large scale, addressing people who are looking for a certain kick and offering them a drink (which it does not produce itself), sponsoring athletes or sports and events that fit its image, selling television, cell phones (here, too, production is left to others), magazines, etc. to this target group and to all those who would like to belong to it. The company's capital consists mainly of non-material values - in line with this EKS principle.

Principle 4: Benefit maximization

A benefit offer for a defined target group is the best basis for long-term material success. Mewes does not derive benefit orientation from an ethical premise, but from empirical observations of successful individuals and companies as well as from cybernetic principles. In a market economy, customers are only willing to buy if the offer provides them with a subjectively perceived benefit. If this benefit solves a "burning" problem, the motivation to buy increases exponentially. This problem need by no means be material, but can have a lot to do with image and emotion (see also EKS Principle 3) - as demonstrated impressively by Apple, for example, in recent years. This applies to products and services of all kinds, but Mewes also sees the situation of a job seeker or an employee as analogous.

The concept of placing the benefit for a target group at the center of every approach also makes use of the realization that support from the environment is mobilized in this way - be it through the willingness to pay good prices for it, or through support in the further improvement of the offer. Mewes repeatedly emphasizes that customers are interested in maintaining the existence of people or companies that solve their most burning problem for thoroughly egoistic reasons and are therefore also prepared to actively support them.

The EKS approach model for career planning

At the heart of the EKS is a phase model of strategy development that translates the four principles presented into a process. It comprises seven elements which have to be passed through one after the other. Mewes has always depicted this sequence as a spiral, so it is not a one-time process. Strategy development is conceived by Mewes as a learning system that reacts to positive and negative feedback from the environment and thus continues to optimize itself. There are also various formulations for the phase model; we will stick to the 16th edition of "Success Strategy".

In our opinion, the potential of the EKS for the career planning of project managers can best be shown by describing the procedure in this model. Our explanations are limited to core statements; for the numerous methodological tips - in our opinion one of the outstanding strengths of the EKS - please refer to the original publications (see section "Literature").

Phase 1: Analysis of the current situation and specific strengths

The EKS always starts with the actual situation. Only strengths that already exist can be the basis of sustainable success. Mewes demands a level of detail here that goes far beyond commonplaces. The goal is a selection of really highly specific and very concretely described characteristics and experiences, for which Mewes uses the somewhat unwieldy but apt word "difference aptitude". These do not always have to be strengths in the narrower sense; a crisis that the company has gone through, regional peripheral locations, or belonging to a minority group can also combine with other factors to make the difference that is developed into a decisive competitive advantage - a "unique selling proposition" (USP) - in the further phases.

To begin such an analysis, project managers can first brainstorm personal strengths. Sooner or later, however, they should refine the results through a more comprehensive analysis in which they refer to reference models. One suitable one is, for example, the IPMA standard, which directly targets the competencies of project managers and distinguishes between three areas:

- Technical competences
- Behavioral Skills
- Contextual Competencies.

The detailed qualifications behind them may well capture the imagination.

Less well known is the PMI competence standard (Project Manager Competency Development Framework - PMCD), which is based on PMI's own phase and process systematics. Since ISO 21500, as an internationally valid standard for project management, is structured in the same way, this standard is also a good choice, in our opinion even the better choice.

What is difficult about such an inventory, however, is the abundance of points that are identified in the process. It is therefore important to make a sensible selection beforehand. In addition, there is a risk of losing courage in view of the encyclopedic approach of the standards or of investing in further training measures whose contribution to success is small.

What the two standards mentioned do not take into account is the actual content of projects. This is because project management standards naturally attach little importance to this. The context competencies of IPMA touch on the topic with a very high degree of abstraction. In PMI, production processes play a recognizable role in the process "produce product deliverables (product scope)". In comparison, the content-related aspects of projects are addressed most strongly in PRINCE2 with the process "manage product delivery".

In each specific project, however, the interaction of the product-specific processes and the processes that are generally valid for projects determines success. Therefore, the analysis of the actual situation must also take into account strengths resulting from experience in specific industries or companies. These product-specific aspects are fundamental for the orientation of the career; because in project management there are significant differences, depending on whether it is about plant engineering, software development, organizational development, etc.. After all, only in exceptional cases will a newcomer who is clueless in terms of content but familiar with all project management standards be given preference over an applicant who is familiar with the industry or the company and the actual project content but not so well-versed in the standards of project management.

Phase 2: Search for the most promising specialty area

In this phase, the focus is on the outside: suitable "business fields" with economic potential are sought for the identified strengths. The guiding principle allegedly originating from Caesar applies here: "Better the first in the village than the second in the city", i.e. better the market leader in a small market segment than a follower in a large one.

The EHL distinguishes between three basic specialization options: primary specialization, problem specialization and target group specialization, with the latter being the most sustainable.

Primary specialization: This is the classic form of specialization in which the supplier focuses on specific products, materials, services, etc. It is often successful but also risky because the supplier has to reckon with innovations that replace his offering. It is often successful, but also risky, because the provider has to reckon with innovations that replace his offering. The EKS rates this variant as significantly better than no specialization at all, but points the way to further development in the subsequent phases.

For project managers, a specialization in project management as such, possibly with the expression of a certain standard, would be a primary specialization. The reference to certifications (e.g. PMP, Scrum Master) or the



familiarity with certain tools (MS Project Server, IBM Rational, SAP, etc.) would not be sufficient.

can also represent such a specialization. But all this is only a beginning and, in the long term, not enough.

Problem specialization: The trend toward this form of specialization is widespread today. Automobile manufacturers and the railroads position themselves as specialists for mobility, telecommunications companies as specialists for communications, and so on. This specialization is much more sustainable, but requires corresponding potential to actually deliver the promised services. If you reduce your vertical range of manufacture and cooperate, you can implement problem specialization even with limited resources.

As a project manager, this can mean, for example, specializing in IT application development, introduction of SAP modules, company mergers, company start-ups, relocation, etc.

Target group specialization: The strategic goal of an EKS-compliant strategy is to become a "target group owner". This form of specialization is considered the highest and most sustainable variant. It is characterized by a deep understanding of a group of people who are connected by common, identity-creating characteristics. The understanding is combined with precisely selected problem specializations and the trust of this target group in its own person or company.

Project managers can specialize in this way, for example by focusing on a specific group of decision-makers. At the same time, they actively network with this target group, e.g., by attending congresses or, even better, by giving presentations at relevant industry meetings.

Phase 3: Search for the most promising target group

In EKS, target groups are always people. On the surface, industries are a strong differentiator, but EHL requires a much deeper analysis and differentiation. Not only economic, demographic and other hard facts count here, but also soft factors such as values, attitudes, interests, needs. Here, it is important to refer back to phase 1, because a target group with which one has had no previous direct or indirect dealings will not be the most promising target group.

Even if "only" one primary specialization (see phase 2) can be implemented, the identification of a clearly defined target group is mandatory. In many cases, however, several specialization variants and several possible target groups will still be considered in this phase. Mewes has described in detail in his publications how active research measures (ultimately the typical arsenal of modern market research) are used to arrive at a decision regarding the most promising combination of specialization and target group. In order to avoid too high a risk, he recommends not immediately putting all one's eggs in one basket, even though numerous EKS users have been very successful in doing so.

For project managers, this means not only achieving a deep understanding of the problem, but also integrating socially with a target group for whom the problem is highly significant. This will only work if one also deals with the content of the projects. It is hardly possible for method or tool specialists without such a focus on content to build a sustainable competitive advantage.

Phase 4: Bottleneck analysis

In view of the results of the previous phases, it is now a matter of recognizing the subjective problem view of the identified target group and learning to formulate it in their words. This is where experts in particular can make big mistakes. How else could it be explained that a change in the user interface of cell phones, classified as a gimmick, turned Nokia, the leading cell phone manufacturer for many years, from market leader to restructuring case within a very short time? The insiders of the cell phone industry had not foreseen that not the further improvement of the typical phone functions, but their combination with completely different features (the apps) as well as a consistent graphical user interface would overturn the previous market laws. They had overlooked the fact that telephony was not the most pressing issue for large customer groups, but rather the availability of information and the possibility of communication at any location and at any time.

In bottleneck analysis, Mewes distinguishes between external and internal bottlenecks - i.e., those that prevent the target group from solving its perceived burning problem (external) and those that prevent a company or person from successfully offering a problem solution to the target group (internal).

An external bottleneck from the point of view of project managers can be that there are no resources available in the target group that have specific experience with project-oriented problem solving. This "external" bottleneck is at the beginning of all considerations, because it is a matter of communicating an offer that promises to eliminate precisely this bottleneck. In the search for such an offer, one often encounters an "internal" bottleneck, e.g., that one does not know enough about the specific framework conditions of project management for the intended target group.

If the internal bottleneck cannot be overcome, the target group must be selected differently and the most pressing problem identified. This takes the analysis to the next level. However, one should not give up too quickly, because with innovations (see phase 5) seemingly insurmountable obstacles can turn out to be an opportunity to achieve a unique position as a solution provider.

Phase 5: Innovation strategy

Once the target group's bottleneck has been analyzed precisely and in detail, one must develop an innovative solution based on one's own strengths. In most cases, this consists of answering the question "In which market are we active?" differently so that a complete solution can be offered that displaces established providers. It should be recalled here that this requires permanent dialog with the target group and that this would not be possible without specialization in a target group. Mewes and his students have described a large number of case studies for this phase, and the "Success Strategy" also contains seven detailed case studies and numerous brief references to successful implementations.

An orientation with the highest probability of success is to combine the professional handling of project management tools and the knowledge and experience in a specific area of problems. Project managers, for example, do not "only" offer methodological competence, but an integrated package of industry and product knowledge with a project management procedure model tailored to this.

Templates for work breakdown structures, work package definitions, etc., which are already filled with the typical project contents of the selected target group, supplement this offer.

Phase 6: Cooperation strategy

Specialization according to EKS must necessarily exclude many options, both target groups and products. Hotels decide for families with children or for business customers, but do not mix both. Management consultants specialize in a specific problem of an industry, etc. Such a departure from the belly store makes one open for cooperations, virtually requires them. The simplest case is to recommend customers with problems outside one's own focus to a suitable specialist, instead of serving them oneself with high effort and poor quality. After all, it should also be understood that specialization enables lower complexity costs, unit cost depression and, due to the higher number of repetitions, better quality. The further this specialization progresses, the more difficult it is to copy and catch up. Mewes speaks here of the principle of the inclined plane, which becomes steeper and steeper as the lead increases and is thus increasingly difficult to climb.

If all market participants behaved in accordance with the EKS, the market would function better for all participants and also for customers. The EKS thus proves to be a win-win strategy at its core and differs from all warlike strategy doctrines which see one's own success as the result of victory over one or more opponents.

Many project managers are pushed into cooperations by decisions of the client and know this from their own experience as a difficult challenge. Be it because a separation of tasks between project management, project controlling and risk management or even quality assurance does not bring synergy but overlap and thus creates friction losses. Or, on the other hand, because too many different tasks lie with one person or organizational unit, so that efficient work is no longer possible.

Where project managers themselves can (co-)shape cooperations, a close look is important in order to use them for their own benefit. There should be no shyness about handing over assignments or tasks if this supports one's own focus. Controlling the snap reflex for tasks helps to retain the capacity for the promising topics.

Phase 7: The constant basic need

A strategy is only secured in the long term if a company or person addresses a permanent need and satisfies it better than others. Target group specialization and dialog, innovation, cooperation, focusing on one's own strengths and repeatedly going through the optimization process are a suitable basis for this. For example, construction companies cover the financing, take over the official procedures, also offer a solution for maintenance, etc., and thus address the customer's need for a property that can be financed, is quickly available and retains its value. This is only possible through the cooperation of specialists. Attempting to cover all this yourself inevitably leads back to fragmentation and thus to higher costs, lower quality and ultimately a loss of trust on the part of the target group.

Summary

It is obvious to apply the EKS to the personal career planning of project managers. The principles and the phases translate well, as shown in this article. The essential point is that the EKS argues resolutely against a generalist profile. Instead, it recommends a specialization that is as narrowly defined as possible and that is oriented to the individual's own strengths as well as to the interests of a target group that is likely to be successful.

Knowledge of the product-oriented processes in projects - which are naturally not detailed in the PMI or PRINCE2 standard - is worthwhile, as this knowledge is an outstanding differentiator from the client's point of view. These industry-, customer- and project-specific contents contain the special features of the respective area of application. And for these topics, one finds interest and support from potential clients as well as from the stakeholders of one's own ongoing projects - both emotionally and in substance. It is therefore more worthwhile to continuously expand target group and problem specialization (e.g. by avoiding industry and topic changes between successive projects or jobs) than to acquire another project management certification or to acquire knowledge of additional tools.

Working through the EKS phase model in detail, in writing and repeatedly over a longer period of time can be recommended without reservation as a method for personal career planning in project management. The "Success Strategy" is designed as a workbook and is therefore suitable for this application. However, the process is open-ended and can also lead to turning away from a career as a project manager if this proves to be a better solution.

Case studies, commented from the EKS point of view

Finding your own specialty

Roman somehow "slipped into" the project management track. As an employee of a medium-sized consulting firm, he had already been involved in several projects for customers. Initially, he was more of a technical consultant, but he was increasingly entrusted with management tasks in project execution. In a short phase between two project assignments, it was obvious to have the practically acquired project management experience oriented to the company's own method formally recognized with a certification. This was to become a convincing argument in the sales process for choosing Roman as project manager. The choice of certification was quickly made. Since there were already a few certified project managers in the company, this certification provider was given preference.

After being certified, Roman realized during the course of the next project assignment that the application of formal methodological knowledge requires a certain amount of translation work. Due to his previous focus on projects in which the customer needed management reinforcement for the implementation of large IT projects, he tried to target his theoretical knowledge combined with his practical experience to this problem. In the course of the following project, Roman was able to further expand his expertise for this specific customer situation. But then it became apparent during the discussion of a new project assignment,

that Roman's client lacked the knowledge of industry-specific core processes that he expected for the project manager role.

When Roman looked back on his career as a project manager, it became clear that he had always been successful in a specific industry. He therefore consciously built on this basis and from now on focused on his expertise with this target group. He focused on supplementing his experience with this target group through active networking outside of the immediate project work. This led Roman to position himself as a recognized specialist who is also actively sought after by customers.

Comment from EKS point of view:

Roman started with a primary specialization in project management standards and developed rather independently and initially unnoticed by him in the direction of a target group specialization. The focus on large IT projects was the logical intermediate stage of an increasing problem specialization.

If he actively maintains contacts with "his" target group, pays close attention to what the representatives of this target group give him in terms of feedback (both positive and critical), he will be guided by his target group in his further career path.

Of course, he should also pay attention to what he particularly enjoys and probe by asking questions, e.g. in small talk, whether he finds resonance for it.

Daring to innovate

Roland had worked for a renowned international management consultancy for several years since graduating. He had quickly developed into a valuable employee who could be flexibly deployed in projects. He had also already completed a certification in project management in accordance with company guidelines. Roland had well-developed knowledge in the subject area of his training and had already gained a lot of experience in different customer situations. But his personal profile was little different from that of comparable colleagues. A high level of commitment and good communication skills repeatedly led him to exciting project assignments, but this did not allow him to establish a sustainable profile. Roland was reasonably successful, but his success had a pattern that many colleagues followed.

With this realization, he sought a new perspective for himself in which he could better bring his personal experience and individual competencies to bear. He found this perspective in a bottleneck in customer projects that he had experienced repeatedly. The bottleneck is in the estimation of effort for software development projects. Since effort estimation is the basis for any cost discussion and at the same time substantial for scheduling, it is a key element of this type of project .

Now there are mature methods for this and a wide range of empirical values. However, Roland concentrated on making the accumulated knowledge of effort estimation more easily available with a new business model. To this end, he started his own business with a new service. The innovative offer addressed a

burning problem of customers and was not comparable with established services. Thus, Roland generated a new need, which in turn changed existing needs as a result.

Comment from EKS point of view:

Roland is moving here from a rather diffuse primary specialization to a problem specialization, i.e. in the right direction.

If he continues to specialize in certain types of projects or industries, he will be able to deliver ever more reliable estimates with less and less effort, the quality of which could never be achieved with even the most sophisticated methods (that would be a further expansion of primary specialization).

However, he should keep in mind that the real problem of the target group is not only the estimation of the effort, but also the compliance with this estimation in the realization. He could react to this by also offering the realization of such projects, but this would be a step in the wrong direction (diversification). However, if he also participates in the selection of suitable realization partners (whether standard software with adaptations or individual development depends on the industry conditions), he develops further in the direction of problem specialization. The more focused he remains, the sooner he will be able to quickly find the right implementation partners for each project and to assess their solution competence and likelihood of success.

From do-it-yourself to instructing

Sabine had been working in the project management office of a large company in the manufacturing industry for a few years. She had already been involved in numerous projects, but after initially very interesting phases with many new insights into the product creation processes, the point was soon reached where Sabine was lacking challenges and opportunities for development. Routine and administrative activities in project management took over too much.

She wondered what measure could advance her career. Would additional training be purposeful, even though Sabine already had a high level of qualification in project management? Where would there even be opportunities for additional competencies? She had thought of one or the other topic where, from her experience in project management, problems occurred again and again due to a lack of qualified resources. So Sabine took a closer look at these areas and came to the conclusion that they were interface problems. On the one hand, the interfaces to external suppliers did not always function optimally in project management. On the other hand, the question of what should be done internally in project management and what should be purchased externally was not always solved optimally.

Sabine now focused on improving supplier management in her projects. She did not need any additional new training for this. She was able to demonstrate with initial success that her new focus on the overall performance relationships in the project architecture was having an impact. Sabine thus became more visible in the company and developed repeatedly applicable expertise. The optimized control of suppliers via project management brought new attention also from other business units of the

company (e.g. the purchasing department) and increasingly established itself as a field where people kept approaching Sabine with questions, also from other projects in the company.

Comment from EKS point of view:

Sabine has resisted the temptation to further expand her primary specialization and thus ultimately reduce her degree of specialization.

Her focus on the project management process "Procurement Management" was a step in the right direction, especially since it was based on strengths that she had actually built up in her previous projects. She also promptly achieved higher attention in the company with this differentiation than would have been possible with any further training and certification of a general nature. This would also have increasingly diluted her profile.

She should now work towards positioning herself as a procurement management specialist in more and more of the company's projects. In the role as consultant, trainer and coach, she gains more and more knowledge about the special problems and solution approaches and can extend her lead more and more.

Outlook

With his strategy theory, Mewes claims to provide generalizable instructions for action that can be implemented in every concrete situation and are highly likely to lead to success. What this success consists of in terms of content is ultimately open, although it is typologically restricted by the principle of benefit orientation for a defined target group. EHL can claim to be applied by everyone and thus to enable the highest possible success for everyone, which characterizes it as a true win-win strategy. This clearly distinguishes it from warlike strategy doctrines which propagate the achievement of success at the expense of others or see it as the only possibility.

Mewes advocates a policy of small steps and calculated risk. For example, he recommends pushing options that are seen as promising, but not actively excluding all others (he uses the term "skewed battle formation" for this, a formation with which Alexander the Great was able to defeat numerically superior opponents). If the forced option is successful, the others automatically lose importance, if not, one can start the next attempt with another option.

In EHL, specialization is always associated with the challenge of reducing complexity. In the social sciences, approaches to reduce complexity, e.g. by Niklas Luhmann, are prominent. But these approaches are themselves of a not inconsiderable complexity. The problems are not solved, but one can talk about them at a high level (to quote Woody Allen's summary after 10 years of psychoanalysis). Reductionist approaches in the sense of some well-meaning guidebooks that pretend to have found the true secret of success stand in contrast to this on the other side of the scale. The belief that there is this one secret, however, must be given.

It is therefore important to apply the right reduction method. However, one professional life is not enough for "trial and error", so one should build on the accumulated experience of others when gaining experience oneself. We keep it with Kurt Lewin, who said: "There is nothing more practical than a good theory".

If it has been shown here how project managers can use EKS for decisions in the context of their personal career planning, then the potential seems far from exhausted. In practice, the challenge of "project management" consists of a multitude of decision-making situations.

Let's just think of the project execution itself (Where is the real bottleneck for the stakeholders?), the management of project crises (What is the most burning problem of the project client in connection with the crisis development?) or the project portfolio management (What burning problem does a project address apart from a quantitative benefit consideration in the business case?). From our point of view it would be worthwhile to show the possible use of the EKS process model in detail. However, this must be reserved for a future publication.

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