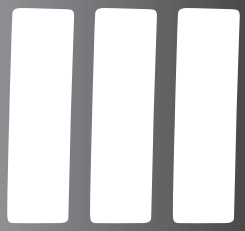
PART



Putting Selectionism and Learning into Practice

Part II of this book established that the presence of unk unks can be detected, and described how this can be done. We also demonstrated how selectionism and learning are executed in real projects. Part III now develops managerial methods and systems that can help an organization to apply selectionism and learning.

First, we acknowledge that managing the unknown is not something that can be done rationally and in a programmed way, purely by applying methods. It requires a mind-set that allows a project team to cope with the threatening nature of unexpected events that are difficult to interpret. We discuss this mind-set in Chapter 8.

Of course, in addition to the mind-set, the methods *are* important. Chapter 9 presents the essence of the "methods" that we think are relevant. We describe an infrastructure of managerial systems that can be put in place at the beginning of a project to enable the project team to execute selectionism and learning. The systems include the way the organization plans, monitors, and measures progress; coordinates the team members; evaluates performance; and exchanges information.

Chapter 10 focuses on external relationship management of project partners, or external parties involved in the project. External management is of vital importance, and increasingly so as the project becomes larger. It is fundamentally different from team management in that external parties cannot be directly controlled. As we already mentioned in Chapter 3, contractual relationships alone are not sufficient when a project is subject to unknown unknowns. When major unk unks loom on the horizon, a combination of favorable elements is crucial to the success of a project. Contractual bounds must be delineated for a clear understanding across all parties, co-ownership must be established to align incentives, a fair and transparent process must be devised to foster trust, and good relationships must be forged and mutual investments pledged to create commitment.

Finally, Chapter 11 discusses the management of the relationship with stakeholders, or external parties that are not actively involved but who have a vested interest in the project and the power to influence it. This is the "softest" of the management tools, as the project team does not even have contractual means to influence stakeholders, but it is nevertheless important, as stakeholders can sometimes cause a project to fail. Remember Shell's Brent Spar oil storage platform in the early 1990s? Activism by Greenpeace forced a solution that was clearly no better (and by many counts, inferior), purely through influencing. As in Chapter 10, a combination of influencing methods promises most success: explanation (convincing parties that the project supports, or does not impede, their interests), using indirect network ties (drawing on the influence that stakeholders have on one another, to achieve a critical mass of support), and approaching the stakeholders in a way that makes them emotionally positive about the team and the project.