



# Managing the Gray Areas

## *Essential Insights for Leading People, Projects, & Organizations*

### **Stop managing in black and white.**

Leaders face dilemmas every day. Decisions we make are translated into real-world outcomes, with each decision cascading into other actions. Sometimes, we mentally frame difficult choices and decisions in terms that simplify them—at least on the surface. We turn them into black or white just to get some clarity around them. Yet in reality, they are not black or white; not either/or—they are gray.

These gray areas pull us into different directions and decision paths regarding resources, time, space, functions, people, culture, and a hundred other things. How we address these areas is vital to our success as leaders. Learning to live in the “gray” and having dialogue about the “gray” with others opens opportunities for us as leaders to expand our thinking and to see the bigger issues from broader perspectives. In doing so, we are able to move from tactics to strategies, from either/or to multiple perspectives, and from quick fixes to long-term solutions.

*True leadership is about understanding and managing complexities instead of taking black and white or universal approaches to problems.* Supporting this premise, *Managing the Gray Areas* explores typical challenges many leaders struggle with and offers a set of guidelines, principles, and tools that can help them navigate these murky waters—challenges such as:

- How can I be sympathetic to my people’s needs in the face of organizational pressures?
- When should I share the big picture with my team, and when is it prudent not to?
- Is it best to assemble a team of targeted specialists, or should I look for people who can do a little of everything?
- How can I implement and enforce internal processes without hurting morale or stifling creativity?
- How can I ensure adequate accountability without resorting to micromanagement?
- Given limited time and/or money, should I first focus on creating a good image for my organization, team, or product, or should I spend more time ensuring that it functions well?
- Should I centralize my organization to gain economies of scale, or should I decentralize to take advantage of local or regional expertise?

## Executive Summary Continued...

To address these questions and others, the book explores new insights from history, science, and business, as well as expert opinion from today's foremost thought leaders. It examines concepts and tools that have been proven to aid in dealing with complexity and resolving ethical dilemmas. And it offers concrete examples for asking the right questions and setting the right priorities. In the end, *Managing the Gray Areas* enables readers to examine bigger issues from broader perspectives, and to be better positioned for long-term sustainable leadership.



### About the Author



Jerry Manas is author of *Managing the Gray Areas* (RMC Publications, January 2008) and the international bestseller *Napoleon on Project Management* (Nelson Business, April 2006). His work has been cited by management guru Tom Peters and highlighted in a variety of publications, including *Leadership Excellence*, *National Post*, *Globe and Mail*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and *Houston Chronicle*. He has appeared on radio programs nationwide with the release of his first book, which *Kirkus Reviews* called "The ultimate case study in effective project management."

Jerry is president of the Marengo Group, an organizational development consulting firm with a specialty in project management, and is co-founder of "PMThink!" ([www.pmthink.com](http://www.pmthink.com)), a popular leadership Weblog. Visit his Web site at [www.manasbooks.com](http://www.manasbooks.com).

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