



### COMMON APPROACH, UNCOMMON RESULTS



It is a sad fact for businesses that all too often essential improvement programmes, from software rollouts to business process outsourcing, fail to deliver the intended results. There have been many attempts to find reasons for this; *Common Approach, Uncommon Results* places the blame squarely on a corporate failure to consider how grand

schemes will be adopted at the coalface. According to the author, Ian Gotts, the CEO of consultancy Nimbus, focusing on adoption is the key to ensuring IT project success.

Much of the book is dedicated to illustrating how what Gotts calls 'a common operational platform' (COP) can provide a mechanism and vocabulary for business leaders to define action plans in clear, unambiguous terms. COP is the key to driving adoption, and thereby ensuring success. The book details how a COP can capture all the business requirements needed to plan, for example, an SAP implementation. The author provides tools for delivering on this plan in the context of specific, measurable activities.

As a management tool, the COP strategy to driving adoption is intended to sit alongside corporate



improvement techniques such as Six Sigma, and provide context and document standards to such regimes. In theory it is a technique that can be used to increase the adoption rate of any project. But as every good management bible will tell you, theories and practice are poles apart. And it is here that the book fails to deliver.

A number of case studies are included, but they tend to be vague, and very few identify IT users that have benefited from using COP. In its chapter on software implementations, the author is able to be more specific, but the examples he chooses are so well known as to appear hackneyed. Another illustration is of a JD Edwards-based case study – but reading it almost eighteen months after the business applications vendor was bought out by rival PeopleSoft, makes it feel distinctly out of date.

Stylistically, the book tries to be a practical guide. Information is presented so that it can be easily absorbed, and the author tells a compelling story. Helpfully, it highlights the key ideas, marking useful passages with a little light bulb icon. But sadly, the advice imparted is too-frequently clichéd. “The devil really is in the detail” or “Actions speak louder than words” may be apt advice, but such trite aphorisms undermine some of the more serious points the author is attempting to make.

*Common Approaches, Uncommon Results* has taken the laudable aim of examining how to improve the success rate of change programmes by focusing on adoption. It is worth picking up though to examine what can be done to increase the adoption of business improvement plans. But the book would have benefited from a more in-depth and considered approach in places.

**Common Approach, Uncommon Results by Ian Gotts.  
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