Companies have undergone a process of transformation, organizing themselves to be able to make effective and agile responses to environmental problems and, especially, those having to do with competition and positioning in the market. These responses constitute a set of actions or activities that reflect the company’s competence in taking advantage of opportunities, and their capacity for rapid action, respecting time and cost limits and specifications (Rabechni & Carvalho, 2003). To do so, constructing project-oriented organizations and investing in management design tools and techniques is fundamental, and this has become a growing concern of companies.

Handy (1995) points out that organizations in the postindustrial era will be configured like “condominiums”, with groups of projects housed together, since what adds the most value to products and services are intelligent, rather than routine, activities (Fleury & Fleury, 2000).

According to Frame (1999), project management practices have consolidated since the 1990s, and several researchers cite this as an obligatory subject
matter for companies that seek to develop and maintain competitive advantages. A good indicator of this growth is the presence of the PMI (Project Management Institute) in over 100 countries; it has certified around 25,000 project managers since the beginning of 2002 (Rabechini and Carvalho, 2003). However, studies based in Brazilian companies show that few have formalized development of a management model for the process of innovation and projects (Rabechini et al., 2002).

The main concepts related to project management and the ways that a company can structure itself to reach maturity in its projects will be discussed in this chapter. The alignment between strategy and project management structure is also addressed.

### The Project Concept

For Rabechini, Jr. and Carvalho (1999), the concept of projects has been refined in recent years in order to establish a common understanding in organizations that work with this kind of undertaking.

There are several definitions of “project” available in the literature. ISO 10006 (1997) define project as a single process consisting of a group of coordinated and controlled activities with a beginning and end date, undertaken to achieve an objective, according to specific requirements, including time, cost, and resource limitations. For Tuman (1983), a project is an organization of dedicated people aiming to reach a specific purpose and goal that usually involves costs, single actions, or high risk undertakings which have to be complete by a certain date for an amount of money, within some expectation for performance. Finally, PMI (2000) defines project as “a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or a result.”

Two intrinsic concepts are perceptible in these definitions (Rabechine & Carvalho, 2003): the first one refers to temporality, i.e., all projects have a well-determined beginning and end; the second one refers to their uniqueness or singularity, i.e., that the product or service, in some way be different than all those similar, accomplished earlier.

Even though not so explicit in all the definitions in Chart 1, the uncertainty and complexity inherent to projects are also fundamental issues to comprehending
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