

communities and those of professionals do not always coincide” (2010, p. 30). While not a systematic study of a large number of cases that would constitute evidence based conservation in its strict sense, it is an honest examination of what actually happened despite good intentions and important projects. The authors “feel strongly that there is a need for active research programmes by heritage managers to generate information for management as well as for empowering local communities” (2010, p. 41). This is a far more radical proposal than simply asking experts to listen; it asks experts to create and hand over knowledge, i.e. power, to the community, who will then make decisions and sustain the project. This goes further than Renn’s observation, after examining successful risk assessment consultations in the field of public safety, that “participants from the lay public were not only willing to accept, but furthermore demanded that the best technical estimate of the risks under discussion should be employed for the decision-making process” (2008, p. 330).

Evidence of failure in sharing decisions by managers in general

Nutt (2002) examined over 400 major management decisions spanning 20 years, made in businesses, non-profits, and public organizations. He examined the methods used and the eventual outcomes. He concluded that “half the decisions made in organizations fail”. He also examined well-known “debacles” to see what went wrong. Nutt discovered three fundamental “blunders”, each of which contain failures to share.

The first blunder Nutt called “the rush to judgement”. Managers identified a concern and latched on to the first remedy that they came across, especially when those higher up pressured them. The rush to judgement caused failures four times more often than when managers took the time to investigate thoroughly. Investigating thoroughly generally means sharing the decision and its context with others.

The second blunder was “misuse of resources”. Managers spent their time and money during decision-making on the wrong things, for example spending heavily on evaluations in attempts to defend the first type of blunder, rather than gathering useful information in the first place.

The third blunder was the use of “failure-prone tactics” – used in two-thirds of all decisions. For example, although managers knew that sharing with staff was important, they used it only 20 percent of the time! The data showed that staff participation resulted in an 80 percent success rate. Another failure-prone tactic was the use of coercion by managers, applied in 60 percent of the decisions, but successful only 30 percent of the time. Coercion of staff is the opposite of sharing with staff!

Managers who made one of Nutt’s three blunders found themselves caught in one or more of seven traps: (1) failing to uncover concerns and competing claims (not sharing); (2) overlooking people’s interests and commitments (not sharing); (3) leaving expectations vague