

**PROJECT MISMANAGEMENT: EIGHT TO LATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Projects turn corporate strategy into reality, and in a sense, everything an IT manager does, takes the form of a project. Yet, the concept of managing projects is poorly understood and executed. There is no doubt that many companies do a lousy job of prioritizing and allocating project resources. Worse, they fail to effectively implement the hard-won strategies. Researches continually show that companies have difficulty with information technology (IT) projects to complete on time or on budget. In fact many are cancelled before completion or not implemented.

The most common causes for IT failures are related to project management. It's true that every project is unique. However, it's also true that all project failures can be assessed using the same generalities. Understanding them can help

you be proactive. The results of mismanagement can be devastating, with projects missing key deadlines, exceeding budgets, and failing to meet business goals.' The paper explores the reasons for project failures encountered by organizations and how to avoid these failures.

**Keywords:** Project, Scope Creep, Mismanagement, Cripple.

**INTRODUCTION**

Project management encompasses all activities, right from receiving the proposal from the customer to delivering the product and warranty maintenance. These activities are categorized into different stages in the software life cycle development. Naturally the name itself implies that it happens during the development stages of the project. It is normally mistaken that if the plan is good, everything

should go smoothly from then on. Actually it is not so, execution of any project is as important and challenging as the planning. Project Mismanagement happens if there is inadequate monitoring and control at every stage of development, even though utmost care has been taken to bring out a good project plan at the initial stage.

### **WHAT IS PROJECT MANAGEMENT?**

Project management is a carefully planned and organized effort to accomplish a specific (and usually) one-time objective, for example, construct a building or implement a major new computer system. Project management includes developing a project plan, which includes defining and confirming the project goals and objectives, identifying tasks and how goals will be achieved, quantifying the resources needed, and determining budgets and timelines for completion. It also includes managing the implementation of the project plan, along with operating regular 'controls' to ensure that there is accurate and objective information on 'performance' relative to the plan, and the mechanisms to implement recovery actions where necessary. Projects usually follow major phases or stages, including feasibility, definition, project planning, implementation, evaluation and support/maintenance etc.



### **WHY PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT?**

Project management has emerged as a crucial factor that determines the success of an organization. Whether it is a question of facing an economic crisis or generating large turnover, project management plays a pivotal role in the growth of a firm. Companies recruit project managers that lead the team in order to timely achieve the targets set by the clients and customers. In management terminology, the duration in which an entire project is carried out, from its inception till the end, is called the project life cycle. The project life cycle can consist of one or multiple project management approaches. The management approaches are the various project management methodologies that the team can decide to follow so that the target is achieved in allotted time. What are the various management approaches? The most basic analysis of the project is called as the initiation stage of a project. After this stage, designing or planning is done to streamline the task and make a flexible strategy to complete the task. Then the execution phase takes the center stage, and in

this phase, the project is practically tackled with all its pros and cons. The monitoring and controlling of the project is done with the execution stage to check the possible threats and keep an eye on the performance of the team. Once the project is about to finish, it goes into the closing phase, where all the activities are finalized.

Some of the prime advantages of having a good project management team for a company are as follows.

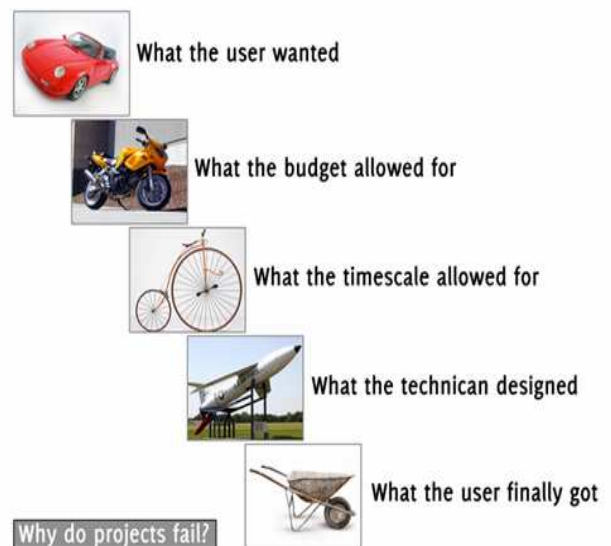
- Excellent product quality
- Adequate communication
- Reducing risks
- Strategic objectives and goals.

### FACTORS FOR PROJECT MISMANAGEMENT

The most common causes for IT failures are related to project management. The following list the primary causes for the failure of complex IT projects:

- Poor planning
- Unclear goals and objectives
- Objectives changing during the project
- Unrealistic time or resource estimates

- Lack of executive support and user involvement
- Failure to communicate and act as a team
- Inappropriate skills
- Poor Testing



### Poor planning:-

Sometimes IT managers are not given the opportunity to plan because time pressure from senior management take over and most of the time the project is on it's way before it has been clearly. In such cases, people see planning as a waste of time because they believe that time is better spent doing something rather than planning Most projects have major milestones, and the problem is that the work continues throughout each milestone implementing sometimes starts before plan completion and continues through most of the testing.

IT projects are full of start to finish relationship. Many activities can only start once another activity is completed and approved. The critical path is important, because any deviation from the schedule in this path could cause entire project failure. Detailed plans are not effective for managing IT work. The reason is that the managers do not know enough about the work to make detailed plans. Team members might make their own plan but most of them do not want to. They would rather implement the solution. Few of them have the skills and experience to make complete plans, and there is a big risk in trusting them in producing their own plans that will meet management objectives.

#### **Unclear goals and objectives:-**

Sometimes the goal of a project may be only partially clear due to a poor requirement gathering in the definition stage of a project.

Defining clear requirements for a project can take time and lots of communication, but sometimes goals and objectives might be unclear because project sponsors lack the experience to describe what they really.

#### **Objective Changes during project:-**

Many project managers had the feeling that their IT project would never stop growing. IT projects suffer from two classical problems in project management:

- Scope creep

- Feature creep.

Scope creep refers to uncontrolled and unexpected changes in user expectations and requirements as a project progress, while feature creep refers to uncontrolled addition of features to a system with a wrong assumption that one small feature will add nothing to cost or schedule

#### **Unrealistic time or resource estimate:-**

Estimation mistakes of time or resource cause project related problems. One common problem during the creation of the Work Breakdown Structure is assuming that the time on task equals duration.

The time on task is the time the task will take to complete without interruptions, whereas duration is the time the task actually take to complete including interruptions. Using the time on task to estimate schedule is one of the common mistakes made by project.

Linear thinking supports the conclusion that increasing the people by 100 percent would decrease the schedule and increase the cost to approximately the same degree. In reality, doubling the staff produce a non-linear result

#### **Lack of executive support and user involvement:-**

The research companies and academic institution has focused on the lack of executive support and user involvement as two main difficulties in managing IT projects. The project

manager is the interface between the business and technology sides of the company. Without executive support project managers in the organization find difficulty in aligning business with their projects. The executive management also needs to be straightforward if they have reservations about the project. Otherwise, once problems are encountered in the project their support will weaken.

Most IT projects will change the work life of many users and require that they participate in design and implementation. Without user involvement nobody in the organization feels committed to the project. User involvement requires time and effort, but the staff might be already stretched and unable to find time for a new project on their schedule. That is why executive management support is important to make priority clear to the staff.

#### **Failure to communicate and act as a team:-**

Projects sometimes fail due to improper communication. Communication problems are common on large IT projects. Because complex IT projects often involve large amount of analysis and work, the project teams are busy and the executive management sees no progress. IT project managers do not communicate progress regularly because they believe that progress will not be seen by the executive management. In many IT projects, there is no one person who has an overview of the whole project.

#### **Inappropriate skills:-**

The challenge of global competition, the rapid growth of knowledge, and the constant changes of technology make it hard to predict what kind of skilled people will be needed.

Most IT projects require a diverse range of skills. Many teams lack the breadth, and depth they require. It is also not easy for technology based organization to find the experienced people they need because sometimes few people in the labour market have the necessary skills.

The larger the project, the more need there is also for people with excellent planning, oversight, organization, and communications skills; experienced technology skilled people do not necessarily have these abilities.

#### **Poor Testing:-**

The developers will do a great deal of testing during development, but eventually the users must run acceptance tests to see if the system meets the business requirements.

However acceptance testing often fails to catch many faults before a system goes live because:

- Poor requirements which cannot be tested.
- Poorly or non planned tests meaning that the system is not methodically checked.
- Inadequately trained users who do not know what the purpose of testing?
- Inadequate time to perform tests as the project is late.

Users, in order to build their confidence with a system, and to utilize their experience of the business, should do the acceptance testing.

To do so they need good testable requirements, well designed and planned tests, be adequately trained, and have sufficient time to achieve the testing objectives.

### **AVOIDANCE OF THESE FAILURES**

- Perform a detail plan before the start of the project. Review and adjust plan on a daily basis. The plans created during this phase will help you to manage time, cost, quality, change, risk and issues. They will also help you manage staff and external suppliers, to ensure that you deliver the project on time and within budget.
- Goals and objectives are statements that describe what the project will accomplish, or the business value the project will achieve. Goals are high level statements that provide overall context for what the project is trying to achieve, and should align to business goals. Objectives are lower level statements that describe the specific, tangible products and deliverables that the project will deliver.

Make sure that there is an understanding on both sides of the broader goals and aspirations of each organization, so that

the project can be placed in the proper context.

- The Project objectives change can be avoided by only modify products if business critical ,Testing the change in scope against the business case, Evaluating impact on cost, schedule, and risks, implementing scope changes in the next release & setting up a Change Management committee.
- Not having the right amount of resource or indeed having the right amount with the wrong skill mix can be a cause of project failure. Insist that management provide suitable resources either from internal staff or if necessary by hiring contract staff.
- Successful projects need input from the people who will be affected most by the project. The users should be consulted on the value they will receive from a product. They better understand the business processes and how to improve efficiencies than anyone else on a project team. These users can best help with process improvements, features, and functions. Another key factor on user involvement is who will be included on the team. Successful projects have the best and brightest users on the team. These individuals make the best decisions in a timelier manner.
- Communicate Openly With the Team:

Successful project manager must possess strong listening skills, must be able to show empathy, and must be able to bestow recognition and praise on project team members. Issues crop up continuously throughout a project life cycle and can change the product scope, the schedule, and the cost, and can seriously impact the success or failure of the project. The project manager must be an active listener to anyone who verbalizes concerns. This will not only ensure the respect of the team, but will also provide early warning of problems that may lie ahead. While listening and communicating with others, the project manager should show empathy for what that individual or group is going through. It is important that the project manager understands the total environment and be able to restate that concern back to individual team members so they know that their concerns are being taken into consideration.

- Limiting your testing of a solution will increase the chance of system failure or unknown bugs that can cripple your business. Do not skimp on testing to save time or money. Eliminate features first. To limit project failure, the testing phase should consist of system test, customer acceptance

testing, volume testing, and stress testing to test scalability.

## **CONCLUSION**

The past failure need not discourage project managers from future efforts. Past examples of IT project failures gives us the opportunity to point to the relevant lessons that can be derived from recognizing areas where IT projects is more likely to fail.

Project managers can position themselves to reduce the possibility for project failure by considering the following recommendations:

- Make sure to plan before starting the development or implementation.
- Pay attention to tasks in the critical path.
- Set up the necessary processes to calculate and inform the risk.
- Ensure that the IT project has clear objectives.
- Understand project trade-offs when making decisions regarding objectives change.
- Use the duration instead of the time on task to estimate schedule.
- Avoid using linear approximation when estimating time or resources.
- Get the support from the executive management and ask them to be open if they have any reservations about the project.
- Ensure and communicate regular about the progress, even if it seems invisible.

- Require that users participate in design and implementation of your project
- Make sure you have the appropriate planning, communication, and technology skills.

These recommendations, along with solid project management, can reduce the risk that an IT project fails.

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