

Influencing Project Managers' Behavior: Incentives and Drive

We believe aspects of project managers' activities and behaviour can positively (and negatively) influence Information Systems Development and Implementation outcomes. To understand this better, the purpose of our research is to investigate how the use of incentives can positively influence the behaviour and attitudes of project managers in a way that can result in improved IS project success.

Although systems development support software has changed dramatically, and the number of software packages used by organizations has increased significantly, problems and failures of development and implementation of information systems continue to exist. Despite a significant amount of research and effort expended by researchers and practitioners the problem is pervasive in the IS industry, and project development overruns continue as they have over the past three decades, and many of the factors cited as influencing failure were time, cost and adherence to specifications. These three aspects of failure are measures used by management to control and manage projects and project managers.

Specifically this research seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) what aspects of project managers' behaviour are influenced by the use of incentives? and (2) what influence does that behaviour have on the criteria for successful project outcomes? We plan to investigate this by surveying project managers who have, and have not, had experience with incentive-based projects. The questions in the survey are derived from previous research in this area, both in IS and related disciplines, and modified to reflect the specific nature of this research project. The survey is about investigating attributes of management leadership that contribute positively (and negatively) to project success in an incentive-based project environment. We believe that the use of incentives can make a significant difference in how a management representative will approach an assignment to an IS project. The major benefit for organizations will be reflected in the reduction of costs, improvements in scheduling associated with ISD/I, and the avoidance of IS failures. This results directly from improving the rate of IS delivered on time, within budget, and to specification by better management of organizational factors and behaviours.