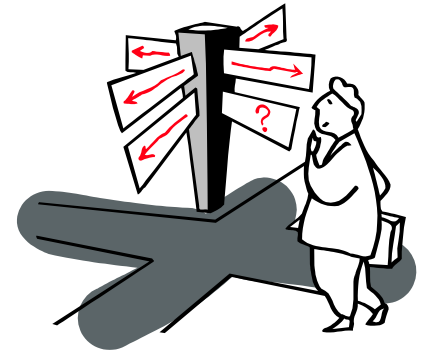


Project Management – A Roadmap for Success

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Background

Motivation

- Lack of material on IT Project Management
- About 3 years ago decided to write book about this - I would have liked this when I was learning!
- Targeted at new and learning PMs - practical focus rather than a scientific study

Research – reflective, observation, consultation

- Documented every project completed over last 10 years
- Self analysis of behaviour and learning
- Have observed other PMs and made comparisons – many similarities
- Talked to PMs over the years and found the same issues seemed to occur at same time in their career
- Built up framework for evolution of Project Managers
- Coached many new PMs
- Currently mentoring BA/PMs and developing ideas further

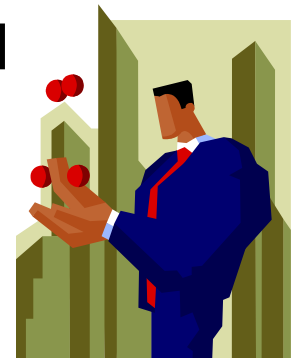
Key Findings

- Project Management can be very exciting – yes, really!
- We tend to follow a logical learning process, which follows a certain pattern
- Some people are better suited to Project Management than others
- IT projects are harder than they need to be
- Very limited awareness of PM and its benefits in many organisations
- Many organisations don't have tightly managed IT processes and lack awareness of IT rigour
- Very fertile ground for improvement

Personality Types – Is this you?

Experienced PMs tend to have most if not all of these traits

- Strong, confident and dominant personality – only one PM, Likes and needs control
- Strength of character - Overcome obstacles, a fighter
- Persistence - Never give up until problem solved fully
- Masochistic streak
- Enjoys problems – the more the better - sees opportunities
- Is not a detail person and focuses on big picture
- Needs sense of achievement, doesn't need congratulations
- Workaholic tendency
- Gregarious and a good communicator
- Team Building skills – Loyalty, motivates team and stakeholders
- Self Analysis - Constantly raising the bar
- A good juggler!



Why are IT Projects Hard?

- IT reputation for not delivering time, cost, not meeting expected outcomes
- IT projects often deliver technology solutions, but may not have solved business problem
- IT projects vary widely, so project plans must take everything into account
- Differences between IT and non-IT projects include:
 - IT projects affect how people work and often do not have a fixed pattern
 - IT projects rarely define roles of specific positions
 - IT application development projects described as “fluffy” – creative element = originality = reliance on individuals.
 - Lack of IT industry professional designation, thus project team often have no formal training in IT processes.
 - Increasingly easier to program, so less effort is spent on the fundamentals
- Golden rule for PM – don’t assume anything. Unless organisation has rules defined, the entire project must be set up from first principles every time

Building Blocks

Project Success Factors

- SC1 – deliver scope and meet business objectives
- SC2 – demonstrate you are in control at all times
- SC3 – keep everyone happy at all times

Principles

- Complete project plan before committing to anything
- Effective people are most important
- Tight project management, especially Tracking
- Design, Testing
- IT project = business project with business outcomes
- If a project is not communicating, it is out of control

Some Tricks Inexperienced PMs Play

Planning

- Don't get right resources or sponsor
- Produce a project plan, but don't agree plan with stakeholders
- Think this is a small project, Accept projects which are doomed to failure

Estimating

- Provide inaccurate ballpark estimates which then get set in stone.
- Don't get team to calculate and commit to estimates
- Over optimistic when working out budget and delivery, don't allow for "Murphy"

Risk Management

- Don't manage risks fully
- Think that problems will not happen "this time"



Some Tricks Inexperienced PMs Play

Tracking

- Don't record overtime or extra hours to hide overruns
- Don't ask the right questions OR accept vague answers
- Don't keep the project formal
- Think the project is finished once implemented

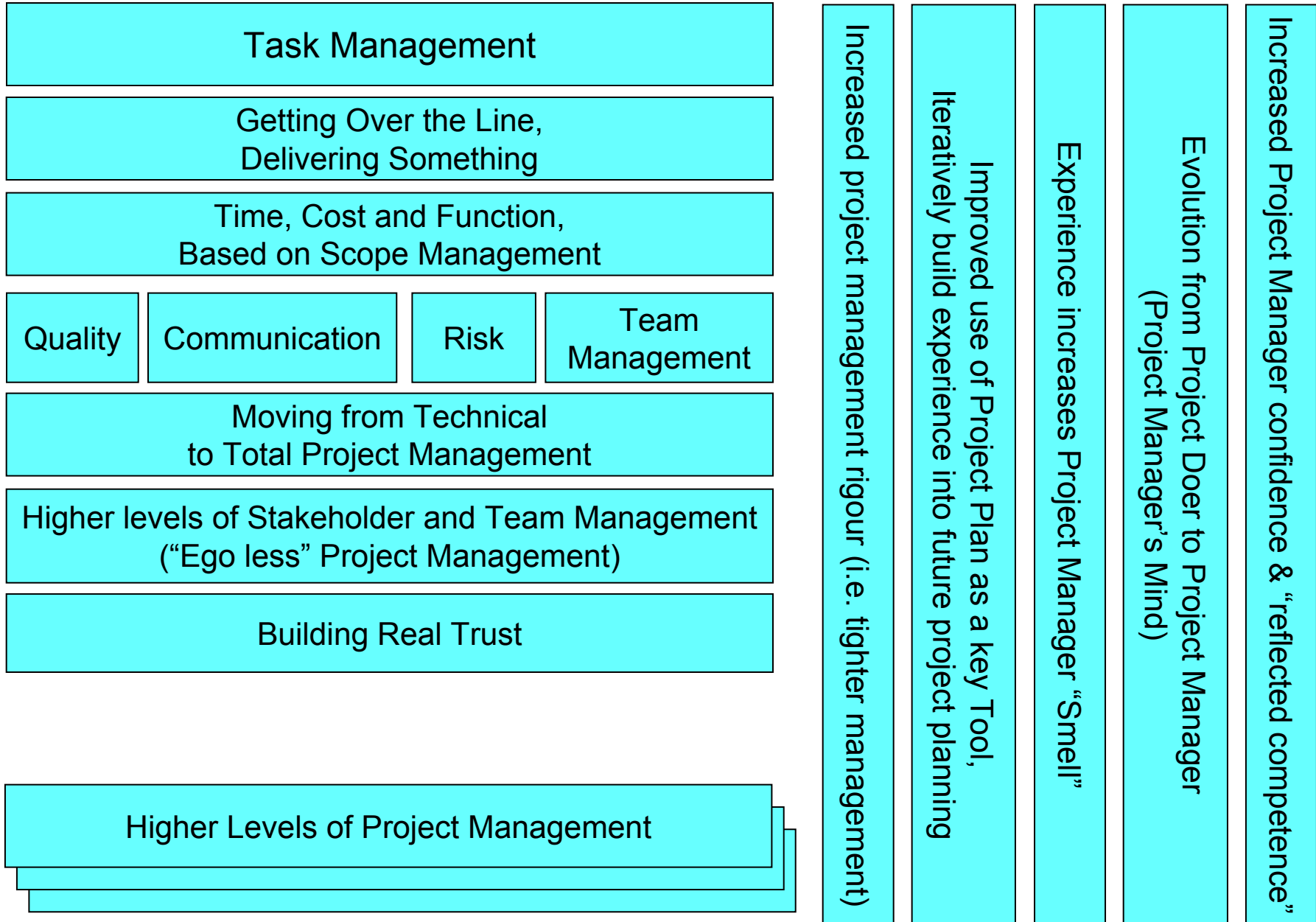
Scope Management

- Increase scope without adjusting cost, timing & risks
- Reduce scope without customer agreement

Communicating

- Don't take time to understand, develop rapport and the trust of the business
- Don't raise cost overruns immediately
- Don't manage team conflicts early or strongly enough
- Hide things – cost and time problems
- Don't identify and manage all key stakeholders

Project Management Learning Stages (Diagram)



The Project Manager “Smell”

- “Smell” comes with experience
- If something feels wrong, then it probably is
- Your success as a PM is totally dependent on your ability to identify you have a problem and what it is
- 2 examples in my career
 - A project already costed by others - then experienced resources left organisation
 - Client unable to explain what they wanted, but they knew they wanted “e”
- You will become a project manager with everything you do, even your private life?



The Project Manager Mind

Focus must change to be a manager not a doer!

- Plan, plan and replan - remain in control with up to date plans
- Spending time planning is not a waste, it is your job!
- If you are getting your hands dirty, then your project is at risk
- Anticipate every problem - it is your responsibility
- Accountability, Delivery and Passion – Delivery of project outcomes is goal. PMs are passionate about their projects
- Become an “ego less” project manager – You are the “glue” that binds the project team together. Create the environment for your team to work effectively
- Projects are fundamentally about people, not things
- You are doing this project to help people – Your decisions should give maximum results to your customers. A happy team is vital
- You will get into serious trouble if you think you know it all
- Always keep an open mind, or you will stop learning

Lessons over Time

Stage	Lesson
1	<p>Don't overcommit yourself, A project has only 1 leader</p> <p>Don't accept vague deadlines</p> <p>Implementation always takes longer than expected, do post implementation testing</p>
2	<p>Get estimates checked by a peer with team to agree</p> <p>Manage Scope tightly using Variation document</p> <p>Interfaces are hard!</p>
3	<p>Put client in control, constantly check their comfort</p> <p>Develop mechanisms for team to solve problems</p> <p>Use advanced risk management workshops</p> <p>Get team to come up with best and worst case estimates</p>
4	<p>Focus on Organisational Change Management</p> <p>Managing problems – putting client in control and empowering them, eg strong communication,</p> <p>Be honest about project status, share problems, PM facilitates more</p>
5	<p>Moving more into a program manager role to ensure external dependencies are better covered (e.g. anticipating resource availability across entire organisation)</p> <p>Ensure senior management commitment, before commencing project</p>

Other Thoughts

PM challenges in unstructured environments

- Need to focus on process as well as project
- Less experienced technical staff
- Difficult to get staff to work with more rigour (e.g. producing documentation)
- Problems with getting commitment/accountability from others
- Difficult to sell the benefits of putting structures and resources in place that will help future projects – lack of awareness by management and effort to do this is significant
- Less experienced PMs not confident to insist on rigour, may be lone voice

Other Thoughts (Cont.)

What works for me

- Build rigour into your project and don't worry about everyone else
- Project facilitation - focus on 3 Success Criteria
 - focus on people (my team, all stakeholders)
 - put management in control and keep them there
 - full communication on status, project planning, risk management
- Most important – passion!



Ways to make it better

- Set up the environment to maximise PM learning and minimise unnecessary pain
 - Eg, PM mentoring/coaching, forums for PMs to share experiences (preferably within their organisation), strong project governance, building knowledge based on experienced PMs
- Make PM exciting and help PMs get over the first “hump” of learning before they get burnt out
- Extra knowledge enables PMs to focus on higher level sooner and extend knowledge for all
- Make it enjoyable for the project team and project stakeholders
- Find ways to retain the passion in ourselves
- Share the passion and excitement about learning

Conclusions

- Benefits of this research
 - I learnt a lot about myself. Enables me to keep learning
 - Telling you the next problem you'll get before it hits you is the major benefit
 - Developed a framework others may find useful
 - Helped to maintain my passion in this topic
 - Enables me to give something back to the profession
- Problems – I'm having trouble keeping up with research, as I keep learning
- If you want the detailed roadmap, you'll have to buy my book!

