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What my road trip to Malawi tells us about good planning

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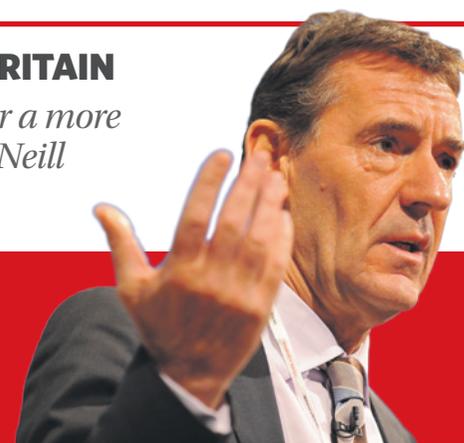
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What my road trip through Malawi tells us about project management

OPENING SHOTS
RENÉ CARAYOL



ON A trip to Malawi in November of last year, we landed at Blantyre airport and were driven in the comfort of a large, brand-spanking-new four-wheel-drive wagon. It appeared perfectly equipped for whatever conditions the beautiful but rugged African countryside could throw at us.

It would be a long and taxing drive, and we were prepared for the worse, but the wagon was our insurance on getting there safely and in time.

As we left Blantyre and headed to the stunning and huge Lake Malawi, the main road was excellent and we sailed past the bustling towns and small villages at either side of the dead-straight and flat main highway.

After an hour or so, however, the road just

abruptly disappeared. In its place was a red dirt track that had many potholes from the recent rainy season, and our state-of-the-art wagon was now being put through its paces.

We were crawling through the terrain at a snail's pace as the experienced driver picked his way carefully and cautiously through the treacherous winding and undulating track.

The two hours allocated for the drive came and went, and now darkness fell upon us. If it was already fraught before the streetlights completely disappeared, it was now clearly dangerous to carry on, and we had been bumped and jogged out of our sleepy stupor.

This particular African road trip felt synonymous with the unhelpful environment some of the exciting new thinking and techniques in the fast-changing world of project management are having to contend with. No matter which of these systems you are considering implementing, preparation of the environment is essential.

“There are few project management accolades to be won without changing the environment to become far more conducive to the chosen methodology”

The incumbent culture, organisational structures and infrastructure can be as damaging and as impenetrable as our dirt track was for our “cutting-edge” wagon in Malawi.

The wagon is unlikely to last long trying to traverse such impassable terrains in future. However, once the highway is fully completed, most vehicles will sail along to Lake Malawi.

The same is true of whichever project management approach is selected. Without the appropriate preparatory work and investment, the approach usually fails for all the wrong reasons – no matter how gifted the chosen project managers or the quality of the methodology.

The mountaineer Eric Shipton once said, “No, it is not remarkable that Everest did not yield to the first few attempts; it would have been surprising and not a little sad if it had, for that is not the way of great mountains.” Good that he remained a climber and not a project manager.

Whether it be Lean, Agile, Waterfall, Scrum, Per, Prince2... – I could go on – they will struggle to deliver when the odds are stacked against them.

There are few project management accolades to be won without changing the environment to become far more conducive to the chosen methodology. It requires much more than perseverance and determination. Change the game by doing all you can to make the environment far more accommodating to the new method of project management *before* you commence.

On my next trip Malawi, we will fly into Lilongwe airport in the north of the country, and drive to Lake Malawi from there. It will be much longer as the crow flies, but in actual fact it will take far less time as the highway is so much better from there. Then we will really enjoy the benefits of a new-age vehicle that can really show off all of its “extras”.

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Starting as you mean to go on

A strong opening lies at the heart of good project management, says Alistair Godbold of the APM. By Joanne Frearson

PROJECT MANAGERS need to make sure they take time in the beginning to plan a project's development and believe in its progress in order for it to be successful.

Alistair Godbold, consultant with the Nichols Group and honorary fellow of the Association of Project Managers, says: "Taking time in the initiation phase is very important as projects that do not start well rarely recover. Before you do anything – whether it is pouring concrete or digging a hole – take your time and make sure you understand the project. You go through and say what are the outcomes I am trying to achieve, you need to be clear about these. Who are the people that are going to be impacted by this? Who are the primary users?"

"You need to ask yourself, what are the features of this? If it is a road, what are the traffic levels? If it is a computer, what are the features it has to have? You must get those agreed with all stakeholders, not just one or two. Then get the commercial structure in place that allows you to do that – the form of contract best for that particular project."

"Getting a good client is also for me one of the most important things. A client who is clear and can give you an environment in which your project needs to succeed."

The challenges for project managers is getting all the behaviours right, Godbold explains – not just within the project team itself, but also among the stakeholders, the supply change and the user base.

"The hard part is getting people to behave in the right way, to believe



"The hard part is getting people to behave in the right way and believe in the benefit of what you are trying to achieve"
– Alistair Godbold, APM

in the project, in what they are doing and in the benefit of what you are trying to achieve," he says. This includes making sure the people involved in the commercial relationships are incentivised to deliver what is required for the project.

"Quite often the contracts have punitive clauses in them, where they have liquidity damages if you go over budget," Godbold says. "But very rarely do they reward success – most contracts punish failure, so you spend your time avoiding failure instead of looking for success and generating extra value."

According to Godbold, when changes happen it is important to be clear about what they are, what are the costs, and how they impact time, scale and risk.

It is also essential to make sure the project managers are "people" people. He says: "Lots of project managers come through an

engineering route and some of them are not 'people' people. They like to stick to the technicalities and do not manage the people around them.

"Project management is about people. There are technical things you can learn, but anyone can learn those – project management is about getting people to move in a certain direction and do things. As a generalisation, engineers like numbers and figures and dealing with things not people, and the ones that tend to rise to the top are those that can do both."

"Finally, believe in success. With lots of projects I see the project team run into difficulties which they do not believe they can overcome so they settle for second best. But if one of them says, that is going to be successful, and really believes in it, then that feeling permeates the rest of the team and they can overcome anything."

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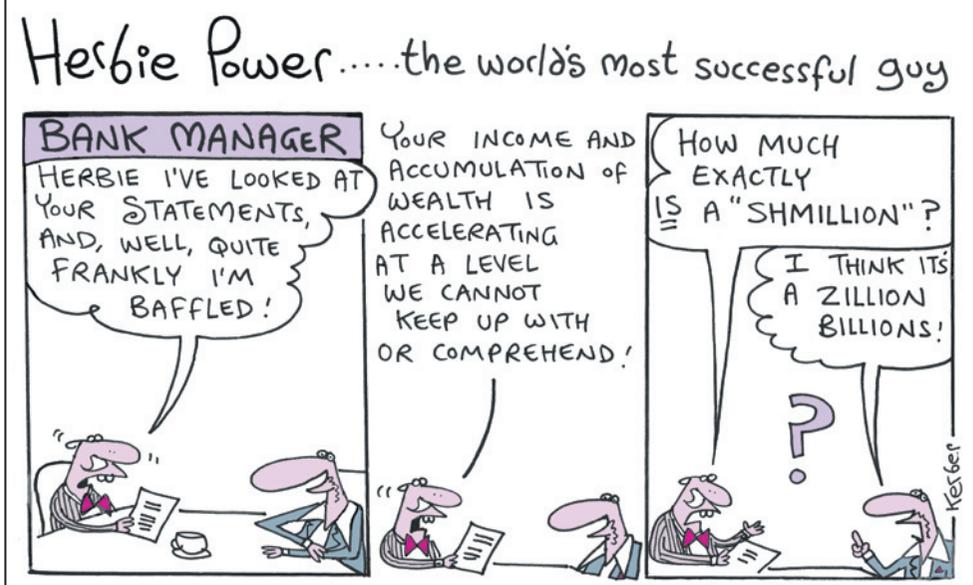
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The way ahead: creating quality candidates to satisfy growing demand

Introducing a new qualification aimed at streaming suitably qualified project professionals into the market and helping organisations improve project outcomes

BILLIONS OF pounds are invested in projects, programmes and portfolios every year. The cost of failure can have a massive effect on the economy, environment and society.

To deliver on time, effective governance is essential. For this, projects need competent and capable project professionals. Although a profession growing in popularity, research suggests there is a lack of qualified practitioners as demand grows – up to 30 per cent of project managers have no formal qualification.

Independent research from APM's Conditions for Project Success report in 2015 revealed that more than 90 per cent of respondents considered their project to be successful to some degree. However, just 22 per cent of projects wholly met their original objectives. Around one in eight projects failed to meet their budget and about one in six failed to deliver on time.

On the whole, project management mirrors the overall economic growth in the UK, with 70 per cent of APM Salary And Market Trends Survey 2015 participants noting that their organisation is experiencing growth, and a further 47 per cent expecting to recruit additional staff members. The results highlight the ongoing growth and success of the project management profession.

Talent competition

However, this situation, where there are too few qualified and competent project professionals for the current rising demand, has led to what is becoming a competitive battle over talented individuals, pushing organisations to step up their recruitment, training and engagement of candidates to win and retain the best project talent. Qualified applicants no longer need to worry as much about what they can offer organisations, and are in a strong position to ask what companies can offer them.

Unfortunately, this isn't helping employers. Many organisations are failing to make the most of the project professionals they already have, and fail to identify the individuals who create competitive advantage for their company. Great project professionals are hard to find, yet organisations further risk letting prize candidates slip through their fingers as a result of not recognising and rewarding exceptional performance.

Developing excellence

Research by PA Consulting shows that businesses that think seriously about how they develop future talent and embed talent management practices in their organisations perform better financially than those that don't.

Moving talented people from one part of the business to another will enable them to gain the growth experiences they need to develop into future leaders. Projects and programmes may also be an untapped source of talent. Organisations' most complex programmes often contain people with the right qualities and experience to make successful business leaders.

Companies that are unable to effectively offer the right career development for their workforce leave employees with no choice but to train themselves. No employee wants to stay in the same position forever. That's why they network, take on new projects and study further in order to take charge of their career development. So shouldn't



The percentage of projects that completely reach their objectives, according to APM's Conditions for Project Success report

organisations invest in their staff by ensuring they update their skills and keep ahead with best practice in their profession?

Boosting potential

Addressing the gap in quality that the project management profession is suffering, the APM Project Professional Qualification (PPQ) is a unique qualification designed to thoroughly develop, examine and recognise project professionals, equipping them with the capability of delivering successful projects, programmes and portfolios. Extending beyond the profession's most commonly held qualifications; APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification and PRINCE2®, it is a key stepping stone through to APM's Registered Project Professional (RPP) standard. Like other credible qualifications before it, it has the ability to increase earning potential and enhances peer, management and client confidence in the candidates' abilities.

The APM Salary And Market Trends Survey 2015 revealed qualifications have a bearing on final salary – with 44 per cent holding a qualification such as APMP: The APM Project Management Qualification earning up to £60,000, compared with 34 per cent without.

It was also shown that for project managers looking to boost their earning potential it pays to be a member of a professional body. On average 70 per cent of APM members earned more than £40,000, the report reveals.

"Membership is a kite mark of competence. As a member of your professional body, you go through a CPD process of continually refreshing your skills and competences.

Employers recognise this strength," said Rob Denny, head of research at the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN).

Qualification features

Launching in April, the new PPQ qualification offers a progressive step for practising project professionals and those holding a wide range of project management qualifications to further their careers. Achieving a qualification such as PPQ will build on professional status that will enable individuals to secure the project jobs they want.

PPQ is made up of six modules, with candidates required to pass four: three core modules covering governance, leadership and project controls; and one of three elective modules which examine the competencies required to manage projects, programmes or portfolios.

Based on the APM Competence Framework 2nd edition, successful candidates will be eligible for APM membership, allowing them to put the industry-recognised MAPM post-nominal after their name, which provides the foundation for individuals to progress through to the APM Registered Project Professional standard.

RPP is a pan-sector standard for those able to demonstrate competence in responsible leadership, including the ability to manage a project and use appropriate tools, processes and techniques. Successful candidates will be entered onto the APM Register of Project Professionals. The wider public can be confident that successful RPPs have been externally assessed as competent and dedicated to their own continuing development.

Broad benefits

There is a growing recognition of the value that competent and capable project professionals can offer to society – both in the public and private sector.

The APM Project Professional Qualification raises the standard of project delivery, providing the quality of project professionals that employers need. Indeed, the qualification offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate a much deeper understanding of the profession than before, and extends beyond project management into the areas of programmes and portfolios, reflecting the profession's broad application.

For employers it provides assurances that candidates have been provided with a robust assessment of capability and that they will end up with a high-quality professional workforce. This visible investment in staff offers the benefit of raising the profile of project management as a driver for competitive advantage and improved project delivery. It is a clear demonstration to customers and clients that a company is committed to delivering successful projects, programmes and portfolios, which in turn raises the profile of project management within the organisation.

And for the profession itself, it is the next step in providing a talent pipeline required to address the vast portfolio of work currently being undertaken in the UK and beyond.

INDUSTRY VIEW

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Projects such as Crossrail have benefited from the National Infrastructure Plan

Boost for UK infrastructure as government sets up national plan

£483billion earmarked to bolster economic and social infrastructure nationwide. By Joanne Frearson

THE GOVERNMENT has outlined plans to invest £483billion to support economic and social infrastructure under the National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016 and support large-scale housing and regeneration as well as investment in new local schools, hospitals and prisons.

The plans underpin the government's commitment to invest more than £100billion in infrastructure by 2020-21, together with significant investment by the private sector, to deliver important projects that are vital to grow the economy and improve people's lives. Speaking at the Institution of Civil Engineers, commercial secretary to the Treasury Lord O'Neill (inset, below) said: "From more modern transport links, to faster broadband, better infrastructure is at the heart of our plans to build a more productive economy and improve people's everyday lives."

"That is why we are stepping up with the private sector to invest in some of this country's most ambitious projects to create a more secure future for the next generation. This government is determined, even at a time of global uncertainty, to invest in the long-term projects that will make our economy and our country fit for the future."

The investment targets the local economy and community, seemingly tying into the governments plans to build a "Northern Powerhouse", by connecting up the great towns and cities of the North.

The plan incorporates the latest version of the National Infrastructure

3,000

Number of projects completed under the National Infrastructure Plan since its introduction in 2010

Pipeline which highlights more than £425billion worth of planned investment in more than 600 major projects and programmes across the UK to 2020-21 and beyond. In addition, it sets out £58billion of public investment for housing and regeneration, education, health and justice.

Since 2010 there have been around 3,000 individual infrastructure projects which have been completed across the UK under the governments' first-ever National Infrastructure Plan (NIP) introduced in October 2010.

These include major new road improvements and local transport schemes, improvements to hundreds of rail stations and more than 20GW of new electricity generating capacity.

There has also been more than 3.5 million premises that have gained access to superfast broadband for the first time and more than 175,000 homes are better protected from floods, while transformational projects such as Crossrail and the Mersey Gateway Bridge are now well into construction.

Nick Baveystock, director general of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), says: "The National Infrastructure Plan has evolved steadily since 2010, and this new iteration of the plan and pipeline builds on the progress, improving visibility for the supply chain and investor community."

"The shift in focus to delivery over five years sets a fresh tone – one of 'spades in the ground' – and we welcome the recognition that this must be complemented by a vision for the longer term."

To help establish the right framework, two newly created bodies have also been established – the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA), and an independent National Infrastructure Commission.

Formed in January 2016, the IPA brings together Infrastructure UK and the Major

"The shift in focus to delivery sets a fresh tone – one of 'spades in the ground'. We welcome the recognition that this must be complemented by a vision for the longer term." Nick Baveystock, Institution of Civil Engineers

Projects Authority into a single organisation that will report to and carry the combined weight of HM Treasury and Cabinet Office ministers. It will have a renewed mandate to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery of the government's infrastructure priorities alongside other major government projects and programmes. It will also publish regular updates to the National Infrastructure Pipeline, alongside the Government Construction Pipeline.

The IPA has also put together the Government Construction Strategy to increase productivity in government construction to deliver £1.7billion efficiencies and support 20,000 apprenticeships over the course of this parliament.

Tony Meggs, chief executive of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, says: "This plan sets out details of infrastructure investment by government and the private sector across all sectors and regions. It describes not only what we are going to build, but also how we will prioritise investment and work with industry to improve delivery."

"Through the new IPA we will continue to support delivery of the government's priority projects and ensure we remain on track to deliver."

Meanwhile, the National Infrastructure Commission has been set up by the government, to produce a clear picture of the future infrastructure the country needs and provide expert, independent, analysis and advice on pressing infrastructure issues.

The commission is currently operating in interim form under its chair Lord Adonis, and it has already started to provide advice on the UK's most complex infrastructure challenges.

There have been three detailed studies completed by the commission where recommendations have been made on complex infrastructure challenges, such as the future of energy infrastructure, London transport and northern connectivity.

The commission is also set to carry out two new studies on specific infrastructure priorities. This includes an assessment of how the UK can become a world leader in 5G infrastructure deployment, as well as proposals for unlocking growth, housing and jobs in the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford areas.



Keeping your business in good health

Project management is more important than you think



André Pereira da Silva is Project & Visio UK lead for Microsoft UK

IN MY career, I have engaged with many companies across several countries. I have experienced the challenges presented by different economies, and seen first-hand the most common pains faced by businesses as well as public institutions when managing their day-to-day work, enterprise projects and investments.

Many of the companies feeling these pains share a common trait. They aren't using project management to manage their work effectively. Strangely, I am yet to find a company that does not have to run and manage projects, so why is there a general lack of emphasis on project management? Perhaps the confusion comes from the vastness of the term, which can include different initiatives, investments, and work in general, as much as actual projects in the traditional sense.

I have frequently encountered project managers that dedicate huge amounts of their precious time and effort to creating their static project plans. They then print them just so that they can be proudly displayed on the wall behind their desks. The unavoidable truth is that such plans become outdated within ten minutes. These project managers then make it their daily mission to chase all the stakeholders involved for progress updates, and ultimately, after investing even more time and effort, they are (barely) able to show these updates and subsequent changes in the plan. But, as we know, projects rarely run as planned.

Don't live with the pain, seek help

I recall working with a particular customer who was struggling with managing change and growth within the business. The company had decided to invest in new processes, as well as tools to support the next fiscal planning cycle.

In the past, this customer had implemented a variety of ad-hoc, poorly managed, and disconnected approaches to managing resource demand and planning. This was leading to poor decisions, which forced them to rethink their approach to business planning. They also wanted to ensure that investments and initiatives were fully aligned to effectively support the company's strategic aims and business drivers.

It is essential to have the right tools as well as the right processes in place to support collaboration, productivity, and in particular project management. Yet somehow many businesses still take a reactive approach to this important part of management. So when this customer could no longer live with the pain, they did the right thing and looked for a solution. They found it with



one of Microsoft's PPM (Project & Portfolio Management) partners.

The solution is in the cloud

Project Online enables initiatives and investments to be captured centrally, and rated through a prioritisation algorithm to see how they support each business need. With a top-down view, this customer could see and understand more than ever before.

This process provides a first-pass prioritised list of potential projects that can be executed, considering the availability of resources and budget. All of this means that this company can now make data-driven decisions to select the initiatives that contribute the most for their success and deliver them on time, on budget and with the desired quality.

This structured approach has already become an enabler of repeatable success in the years ahead for this customer, and is revolutionising the way the entire workforce collaborates in every business initiative too.

Project management is not just for project managers

As we all go through these exciting times, when technology is gradually becoming an intrinsic part of every aspect of our lives, we must acknowledge that it is inevitable that the way we work and collaborate will be affected by all these innovations. We are

becoming inseparable from our devices and permanent connectivity, and as such these tools and resources are bound to make us more capable of accomplishing the goals we set ourselves as professionals.

This reality is well understood by Microsoft and, as such over the last few years, we have seen a profound change in the way software in particular can be used by companies to achieve more. Microsoft Project was the company's third Microsoft Windows-based application, with its origin tracing back to the early 1980s. It quickly became the dominant PC-based project management software – which, over the years, has gathered a user base that exceeds 20 million globally.

With the advent of the cloud and the growing importance of SaaS (Software as a Service), new variants of this tool were developed. These include Project Online as well as Project Lite, which are designed to serve the needs of other stakeholders that are clearly as involved in projects as the actual project managers.

This means that today, there are several flavours of Microsoft Project available, with different levels of complexity (or rather, simplicity), as well as different pricing. Collectively, they enable different types of users to access what has now become a true business solution that promotes structured collaboration across entire teams,

departments and, in many cases, even entire companies.

I have described the challenges faced by project managers who execute their duties without making appropriate use of the tools and resources at their disposal. I will now return to this to describe a much different scenario: one where the right processes are put in place, and are supported by technology to fundamentally change the role of project managers.

The creation of project plans should promote the normalisation of best practices and knowledge accumulated within the business. Team members should be able to see through a simple interface the tasks that are assigned to them, as well as be able to report on their progress. These inputs should flow naturally to the project manager, who can then see and approve the impact that these will have in the plan. Moreover, they should liaise with resource managers and portfolio managers to ensure the success of their projects, while giving executives greater visibility over the status of these projects through interactive dashboards.

This is not a utopia, this is what Microsoft Project means for companies and public institutions today.

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310%
ROI

Payback period of
6.7 months

Source: 2016 Forrester
Report on the Total
Economic Impact of
Microsoft's PPM tool



London's King's Cross station redevelopment is one example of what infrastructure investment can achieve

Trim up North: could reduced travelling time add £1.6bn to the Northern Powerhouse?

Just 60 seconds could make all the difference, claims new research

REDUCING TRAVEL times to key services such as doctor's surgeries, hospitals or supermarkets by just 60 seconds could give the Northern Powerhouse an annual £1.6billion economic boost, according to research published by Mace.

The report, National Infrastructure, Local Benefits, said that there is enormous potential for transport infrastructure investment to drive not only growth and productivity, but wellbeing and living standards.

Using official "value of time" research from the Department for Transport, the paper revealed how reducing journey times by just one minute could lead to £4.7billion of economic benefit across all regions outside London, and £1.6billion to regions covered by the Northern Powerhouse. The paper said that although the UK has historically lagged behind other developed countries in terms of the quality of overall infrastructure, the government's new approach to devolution and infrastructure should start to close the economic gap between London and the North.

The report showed the amount added to the economy by the Northern Powerhouse today is approaching £300billion, compared with £338billion for London. But in the North of England, less than 60 per cent of the population is within 30 minutes of an area where more than 5,000 jobs are available by public transport. In London the figure is 80 per cent.

According to the report the most practical way to see these benefits is the creation of transport hubs, encompassing the services and retail that the local and travelling public want. This would benefit the local community and improve passenger experience and perception.

"Transport infrastructure is vital for boosting growth and increasing wellbeing." – Jason Millett, Mace

Jason Millett (inset, below), COO for major programmes and infrastructure at Mace, said: "Transport infrastructure is vital for boosting growth and increasing wellbeing. Yet the UK has a history of slow progress in delivering what is required to attract business investment, creating jobs and regenerating towns and cities across the entire country.

"Reducing journey times by just 60 seconds could lead to significant benefits, especially to regions outside London. At the same time, joining up our major cities and improving the quality and amenity of our transport hubs under local leaders could really accelerate the government's devolution revolution."

Another highlight of the paper was that businesses strongly identify transport infrastructure as vital in driving investment decisions. According to the CBI, the vast majority of UK firms see rail (81 per cent) and roads (89 per cent) as crucial or important to their business, and many believe investment in developing them should be increased.

Millett adds one of the most practical and cost-effective ways to see these economic benefits is the inclusion of key services, such as GPs, dentists and retail. Bringing these services and amenities closer to people and transport hubs would improve passenger experience, peoples' perception of public transport and help the local community.

The redevelopment at London Kings Cross and Birmingham New Street stations are prime examples of the success that quality transport infrastructure investment can achieve. David Brown, CEO of Transport for the North, says: "This research backs up our position. To transform the economy of the North we need to focus on transport infrastructure."



Why being married to project management works for me...

EXPERT INSIGHT SIMON ASHBY



I AM FORTUNATE to be married to a project manager. In fact, my wife teaches project management to undergraduate students. Unlike my wife's students, however, who are much more career-focused and hardworking than I was at their age, I live a relatively happy-go-lucky life. This means I struggle with many of the formal processes associated with project management, though I very much respect and appreciate my wife's organisational abilities. She once project managed a major refurbishment of a ramshackle house we owned in Nottingham, ensuring it was completed days before we had to cook a Christmas lunch for 14 people. I just stayed at work in London, blissfully ignorant of the challenges she faced.

Processes are of course a major part of project management. If you take the PRINCE2 methodology, for example, you will find it is founded on seven core processes (linked to the life-cycle of any project from start-up to closure), with many sub-processes (such as project planning and risk assessment) beneath these. The aim is to ensure projects are organised so they meet their objectives and are completed on time and on budget. A laudable aim, but are we in danger of missing the point?

I do not doubt some projects fail because of a lack of effective processes to control their delivery and implementation. But in my experience, many more fail even though the associated project management processes are strong. The problem is that just like the businesses looking to implement them, many projects are unique. As a result the rigid application of standardised process based methodologies for project management can mean that the individual complexities of projects and organisations are overlooked, resulting in a perfectly managed failure.

Even more dangerously, I have witnessed projects failing because so much effort is

devoted to following the various processes of project management that managers forget to adapt to the changing world around them. All may appear serene with a clear project plan and a regularly updated risk register. But what about the problems of cultural or ethical misalignment, for example? Do people within the organisation understand and accept the project and its objectives, and is their sufficient buy in? Plus, by focusing on the process, managers can miss the early warning signs of a failed project. And then there is simple human error – following a process does not guarantee that someone will make a stupid and potentially expensive mistake.

Irrespective of who is in power, failed major government projects provide fertile ground for businesses looking to learn from the mistakes of others. The Taxpayers' Alliance research into UK government departmental losses is illuminating (www.taxpayersalliance.com/departmental_losses_2013_14), since many of these come from failed government department projects. The causes of these failures are varied, but factors such as human error, changing political priorities and not understanding the changing needs of end-users are common factors. Even more significantly, the high-profile failure in 2013 of the ambitious NHS National Programme for IT cost billions, and had more to do with a failure to understand the diverse cultures that make up the NHS, rather than poor process management.

When embarking on a new project, businesses would do well to remember that while strong processes and project controls have their uses, they are no replacement for common sense, adaptability and thinking creatively. Perhaps there is a role for my brand of "seat of the pants" project management after all? But don't tell my wife – I don't want to end up managing our next home refurbishment project!

To boldly go: managing the final frontier

Business Reporter speaks to Alan Thirkettle, formerly of the European Space Agency, about how exploring space – and keeping Tim Peake safely orbiting Earth – requires project management skills of the highest quality

SPECIAL REPORT
JOANNE FREARSON



THE EUROPEAN Space Agency (ESA) has many programmes in place to explore the universe. In December last year, British European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut Tim Peake began his six-month stay on the International Space Station (ISS), while in March this year ExoMars was launched to search for signs of past and extant life on Mars.

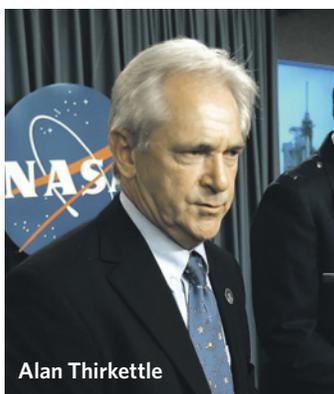
All these missions need extensive project management from the beginning in order to succeed – and that means you need a project manager. “The management of the various projects at ESA, such as Tim Peake’s human space flight or the ExoMars mission, is all very different,” Alan Thirkettle, the former European Space Agency (ESA) programme manager of the International Space Station (ISS), tells *Business Reporter*.

“There are some commonalities – you need to control the cost of the activity, for example. You need to be sensitive to the schedule of the activity – in Tim’s case, he had to be ready for the day he was being launched.

“If you think of Tim as a project, what he is doing on the station is a mixture of scientific and educational activities inside an existing infrastructure called the International Space Station.

“But as well as undertaking science research, he is also an integral part of the crew of the space station. He is responsible, along with five other members, for the on-orbit maintenance of the entire station. This means not just the Western part, but the Russian part as well.”

Thirkettle, who also runs a project management training course for the ESA, explains that there is a lot that goes on to prepare for these operations and that everything has to be managed, from the costs to the schedule to the performance requirements of the missions. The operators have to be



trained and simulations undertaken. Peake’s six-month mission on the ISS is the culmination of six years of training.

“Tim would have done very specific simulations,” Thirkettle says. “For instance, he has to learn how to behave in zero gravity. For that, he spent a lot of time on parabolic flights – where you get a minute or so of zero gravity – to get used to the idea of how he moves in it and how he can operate things – turn a screwdriver, or switch things on and off.”

In January this year, Peake completed the first ever spacewalk by a British astronaut, in order to replace a failed power regulator.

Thirkettle says: “The other aspect of gravity simulation is in water – you make yourself neutrally buoyant [in space] just the way that deep-sea divers do. As part of his training Tim would have spent time – mostly in Houston, certainly also in Cologne – on mock-ups of the space station underwater.

“Think of Tim [Peake] as a project – what he is doing on the station is a mixture of scientific and educational activities on an existing infrastructure called the International Space Station” – Alan Thirkettle

“He would have been put in an underwater suit, that is weighted in such a way it feels neutrally buoyant, and he would have learned how to operate various things under those conditions. He would have spent a lot of time doing that.

“He also would have spent a lot of time simulating loneliness. There are six people up on the station, but it is quite a large thing – they can be alone in a module for a long time, for many hours. So he would have spent time in caves.”

There would have been training not only for the objectives of the mission, Thirkettle explains, but also to prepare for things that might not go according to plan on the infrastructure side.

“What happens if something fails?” he says. “What happens if the launcher did not put us into the right orbit? What happens if this motor stops producing the correct amount of thrust? There is a lot of preparation in that sense as well.”

According to Thirkettle, risk management should be set down as early as possible in the project, as that is when you spend at the lowest rate. The further you go into the project, the greater the expenditure is.

But at ESA, the design and development of the infrastructure of a spacecraft is contracted out to a different company. However, Thirkettle explains that ESA will still closely follow the development of the infrastructure to make sure it is being managed to plan.

There will be extensive tests undertaken to make sure it is compliant with the mission’s requirements.

He says: “They do analysis and will test articles to prove that is the case. All that work is done on the ground with gravity, and the spacecraft has got to operate without gravity, but we can try to simulate aspects of that.

“Certainly we can simulate the vacuum of space and the thermal extremes of space, the day and night cycle, that kind of thing. We put test

Tim Peake embarks on the first spacewalk undertaken by a British astronaut



How far away is Tim Peake?

Peake’s likely height above Earth’s surface



190

The total number of ISS spacewalks to date



Tim Peake's spacewalk

Purpose: replacement of voltage regulator outside International Space Station (ISS)



Estimated time: **6.5 hours**



Longest spacewalk to date: **8 hours 56 minutes** on March 11 2001

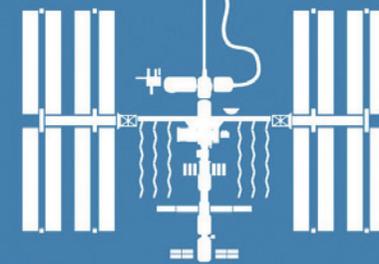
Total ISS spacewalks to date: **190**



US 142



Russia 48

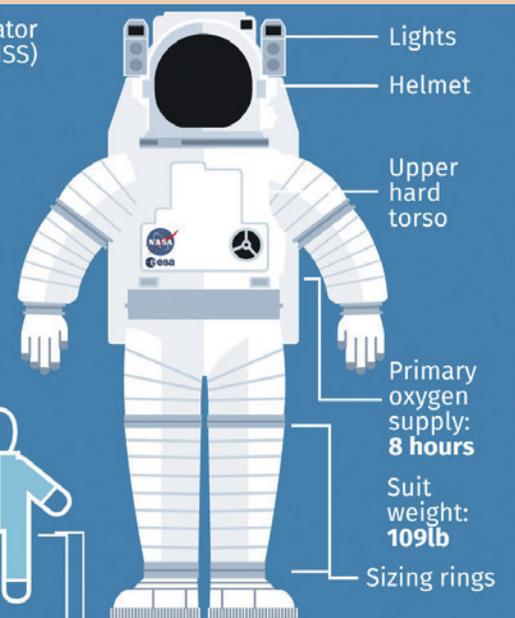


Peake's likely height above Earth's surface

ISS
270 miles



Yuri Gagarin
first
spaceflight
204 miles



Liquid cooling garment is worn under the suit and has tubes carrying cool water to remove heat from the astronaut's skin

PA Source: Nasa

articles into simulators that simulate the space environment.

"You design everything so nothing fails and everything is perfect. But it is designed by human beings, therefore we also design it on the assumption that things will fail – we have a thing called redundancy, which is a very simple concept where you just add two of something.

"For example, you need power from a battery. The battery may fail, but you have two batteries side-by-side. If one fails you can just switch to the other one. Then you build in the capability of the spacecraft to detect if it has got a failure, so the spacecraft can switch to the redundant system."

In preparation for the ExoMars mission, Thirkettle explains that simulations would involve the normal mission, as well as the failures. During simulations, an anomaly would occur during a critical time – for example, an antenna failing to send data down so the astronauts do not know what is happening in the spacecraft.

He says: "The operators would not know what failures they are having thrown at them. They have to practice to cover for it, so you try and guess at a large number of things that can go wrong to train the operators to be flexible and adaptable, and help them understand the characteristics of the spacecraft.

"One of the biggest things that we try to do is risk management. You

"You design everything so nothing fails and everything is perfect. But it is designed by human beings, therefore we also design it on the assumption that things will fail" – Alan Thirkettle

Recruitment boom for the UK space industry

The UK's space industry has seen a 250 per cent jump in registered jobs in the first quarter of this year, and specialist recruiters Huxley Engineering estimates the space sector in the UK will be looking to fill an additional 100,000 skilled jobs by 2030.

According to Huxley Engineering's Tom Kelly: "Looking at the projections of the industry, the high quality of roles being offered and the number of projects coming online, the future of the space sector will have a positive outcome not only for applicants but for companies, complementary products and services and the global mission of space exploration."

identify things that possibly could go wrong, you dream them up and you access the severity of what such a problem would be, so you can prioritise the ones that would make a real mess of the project. You identify a plan should that problem occur – but you also identify a plan to make sure that problem does not occur."

The derring-do of our astronauts is certainly exciting stuff. But without the background of extensive project management, ESA would not be able to explore the universe and Peake would have not been able to undertake his six-month mission to the ISS.

The age of agile

How agile you can be on a project is like a spectrum; it is always a matter of degree

“WE WANT to be more agile” is a statement likely to be familiar in many boardrooms across the UK across all industry sectors. More business leaders are starting to appreciate that there is real value in adopting an agile approach when undertaking projects. The benefits of agile are compelling and celebrated by those organisations that are already ahead of the curve, and no one wants to get left behind.

The concept of agile has grown in popularity over the past decade. Long gone are the days when agile was exclusively a delivery concept adopted by software companies. Delivering products customers actually want and seeing a quicker return on investment is incentive enough for any organisation, regardless of industry or sector, to consider an agile approach.

When agile is implemented appropriately it can certainly reap many tangible benefits. However, get it wrong and organisations are quickly able to see the error of their ways. There are lots of agile concepts out there, with Scrum and Kanban being the most well known and the most practised frameworks. But a lack of understanding of how agile can be implemented properly with a standardised approach, and knowing when to apply agile, can result in anarchy; where teams are not following an agreed plan and there is no personal accountability when issues arise.

Agile over anarchy

PRINCE2 Agile is heralded as the world's most comprehensive agile project management solution, combining the flexibility and responsiveness of agile with the clearly defined framework of PRINCE2.

It has been developed to enable organisations to become more competitive by focusing on delivery as well as project direction and management. It offers explicit guidance on how and when to use agile, while also allowing the senior leadership team the control and governance to ensure that the principles of agile are not hijacked, resulting in an undisciplined and unplanned approach to working.

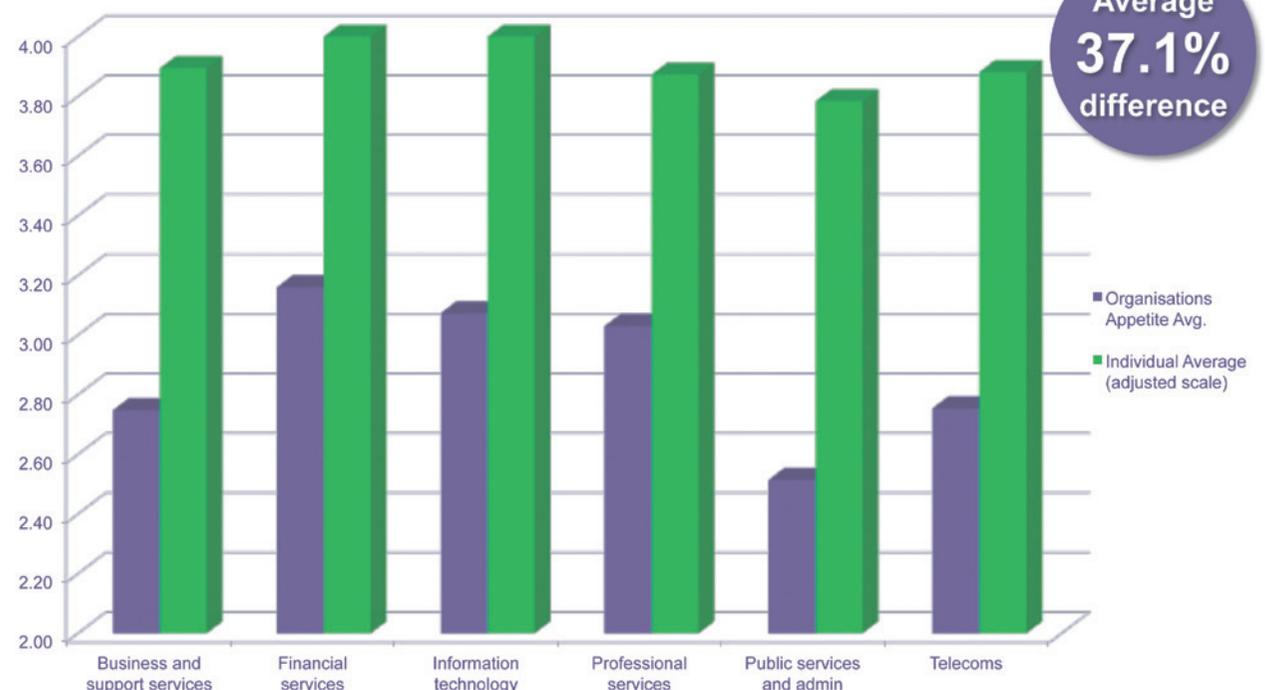
“The growth in people and organisations using agile approaches and techniques has raised its profile,” explained Nikos Paxos, AXELOS head of programme and project management. “Regardless of whether you're in a small start-up, building revolutionary apps or working for one of the big banks, the digital revolution has meant that businesses nowadays have to be able to adapt at an incredible rate. For these reasons agile is no longer viewed as niche.

“However, as our research illustrates, there remains a disconnect between the belief that professionals have in the values of agile compared with the use of its methodologies in their organisation. We believe

81%

Professionals surveyed by AXELOS who see value in working in an agile way

Agile: individuals' value vs organisations' appetite by industry



that the rationale behind this disconnect is that senior leaders are reluctant to relinquish full control and are concerned with the negative impacts of implementing 'fragile agile', despite agreeing they could see the value in working in an agile way when surveyed.

“PRINCE2 Agile allows senior leaders appropriate control through the principle of 'manage by exception', where the project manager is empowered to make decisions within certain tolerance levels the project board are comfortable with, ensuring that budgets, quality standards and deadlines do not spiral out of control.”

Agile isn't just Scrum

The publication of the Agile Manifesto in 2001 marked the beginning of the methodology. Since then, agile has branched out into a number of different schools – Scrum, Extreme Programming and others – each stressing slightly different approaches. However, the core remains the same – repeated iterative steps to produce results on a short time scale.

“The benefits of the agile approach are clear,” explained Nikos. “It provides a quick, flexible way of working which builds in feedback from the team at every stage. Agile is very effective for small teams working in a single location, and produces innovative solutions to projects that may not have been obvious at the outset.

“As we have seen in our survey, despite many organisations now looking towards adopting agile practices, they can be unsure which methodology is the most appropriate for their business. Even when they do make

AXELOS survey points to greater interest in agile

A NEW global survey of more than 2,400 professionals by AXELOS has found that more than three-quarters of those surveyed (81 per cent) now see value in working in an agile way.

The research reveals a greater appetite for the use of agile among individual professionals – across all roles and sectors surveyed – compared with the rate of agile adoption by their employer.

The research shows this disconnect comes from a lack of appetite from organisations in adopting agile. Across all industries surveyed, inclusive of IT, financial service, telecommunications and engineering, the respondents all rated the appetite for agile in their organisations as significantly lower than the responses they gave for their own perceived value of agile.

the decision to adopt an agile approach, many businesses recognise the need to apply greater control than the agile methodology allows.”

When should I use agile?

So how do organisations decide the extent to which they use agile techniques in their project management? How can agile methods be combined with a more structured approach such as PRINCE2, which provides greater control and good governance?

“In order to receive the most benefit from using a method or approach it is essential

to adjust and adapt it to suit the current conditions,” explained Nikos. “Take the analogy of driving a car. The driver needs to make decisions and control the car appropriately depending on the conditions. Assessing the conditions before the journey commences helps improve the chances of remaining safe and driving effectively.”

PRINCE2 Agile has an assessment tool called the agilometer to help practitioners answer the question: “How agile can we be on this project?” The agilometer looks at six key areas; flexibility on what is delivered, level of collaboration, ease of communication, ability to work iteratively and deliver incrementally, advantageous environmental conditions and the acceptance of agile. The project manager is responsible for canvassing the key stakeholders involved in the project as to what values to give each category.

The most important point to understand when tailoring the approach to a project is that the result will always be a case of “how much agile can we use?” as opposed to a yes/no decision. In PRINCE2 there is no such thing as an “agile project” or a “non-agile project”. How agile you can be on a project is like a spectrum; it is always a matter of degree.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Nikos Paxos (inset) is head of programme and project management at AXELOS. For further information about PRINCE2 Agile, or to learn about the rest of the Global Best Practice Portfolio and how it can help your organisation, please visit the website at www.axelos.com/PRINCE2 Agile



Why professional qualifications give organisations an extra edge

ADEPT BELIEVES people with a natural bent towards being organised usually make good project managers. However, it is their ability to manage people effectively that makes the most out of a project team. Significant skills that improve the probability of success could be, for example:

- Stakeholder analysis, risk analysis and leadership
- Team development and performance
- Project control, including earned value analysis and float trend analysis
- Planning, scheduling and cost estimating

Stakeholder management is where the project manager and team list the main stakeholders and then develop a set of actions to determine their commitment and support. The knowledge and subsequent actions are generated during dialogue with these stakeholders. Strategies have to be developed to address the situation if this commitment or support is not forthcoming.

In our recent experience, this approach had true commitment from one particular company and its project leadership. So when new technologies, systems and procedures were being implemented by this deep water drilling client, the recipients of the change (the stakeholders) changed their behaviour and commitment when information and its availability improved.

The assignments included risk management – introduced as a basic but vital technique. The key to the acceptance of the techniques was to reach an awareness of the steps involved, such as to identify risks, assess, plan and implement responses.

In dealing effectively with risks, within these complex environments, the project teams had to go beyond the simple analytical approach, to embrace planning and scheduling and confirm that cost issues would not restrain safety or risk. Each individual element of risk became manageable, but it was important to the team and the stakeholders that the cumulative effects were not perilous.



The interconnected processes, such as technical, organisational, and human factors, were discussed and assessed. Taking a broader approach by identifying and dealing with risks early in the life cycle recognised that many risk factors originate outside the project organisation and reside in the enterprise environment. Cross-functional collaboration among all stakeholders was vital. The resultant benefits were safe-schedule reductions, coherent safety training, and co-ordinated commissioning and sea trials.

Adept has workshops and courses to cover applied and strategic project management that focus on the top knowledge areas in project management. In programmes during 2014 and 2015 we combined a blended learning approach where classroom courses were supplemented by distance learning. The focus in some cases was PM competence or professional qualifications. Adept has three project management routes to follow. They are:

- PMI® – Project Management Institute
- APM – Association for Project Management
- Bespoke service – Providing training needs analysis, tailored training courses, and so on

Even though some sectors are experiencing a downturn, when – and not if – the market picks up, organisations will have gained a significant advantage by having trained personnel with recognised professional qualifications.

Companies who are in-scope to the ECITB pay a levy for their APM Training in 2016. As an ECITB-licensed training provider and an APM-accredited training provider, Adept can help with all your project management training requirements.

INDUSTRY VIEW

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My view: three important principles for successful construction projects

WHEN WORKING for Bovis in the mid-1980s after my career as an architect, I was fortunate enough to play a major part in the Broadgate development in and around Liverpool Street Station.

Broadgate re-engineered me – opening my eyes to the potential of unique collaborative relationships in construction, and understanding the benefits that could be realised by the guidance of a knowledgeable client. Although I am enormously proud of some of the other projects in which I was subsequently involved, my philosophy and approach to design and construction has been fixed since the Broadgate experience.

As a result, I believe there are many important principles for successful construction projects, three of which I have listed below:

- Fixed-price contracts as we know them will be proven not to deliver the security that funders require within the next few years. As a result, there will be a surge in popularity of alternative contract forms which, more than anything else, give the client body control.
- Transparency, in part related to the above. The clients have the right to understand every aspect of cost within their projects and have the



opportunity to pay more and add value where it can be created.

- Design and preconstruction. “Fail to prepare, prepare to fail” is very much our motto at RISE. The metrics of any project are won or lost during the preconstruction period. We at RISE specialise in controlling this element of the works, because once it is mastered the rest of the project falls into place.

INDUSTRY VIEW

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Project management + Agile: problem, meet solution

PRINCE2® WAS conceived as a formal, structured approach to help sort out complex project management issues. Agile methods started life as a family of developer-oriented software engineering approaches. They are very different animals, so how can they possibly work together?

People are an organisation's most important asset and there is a war for the best project management talent in today's market. A Computerworld survey found that, in 2015, 33 per cent of organisations planned to hire project managers. Demand will be particularly high for project managers who can oversee large projects that span the enterprise, have knowledge of Agile, and whose competencies span business and technology.

Best of both

Agile and PRINCE2 have gone a long way to professionalising project management and already share many elements. For example, both focus on the need for stakeholder buy-in and the need for effective sponsorship. There was already overlap between the two approaches when it came to defining roles and responsibilities and outlining project lifecycle processes. Now PRINCE2 Agile® enables organisations and project managers to scale work to precise requirements while being agile and responsive and limiting escalation of issues and delay.

Tailored approach

Senior management embrace tools and techniques for the delivery of change as these can provide a clear process to follow to realise change, yet a key element of the new PRINCE2 Agile Best Practice guide and qualification is the ability to tailor the approach taken to each project to achieve the best result. PRINCE2 describes how to tailor the method taken, while PRINCE2 Agile sets out the need to determine the appropriate use of agile techniques.



Percentage of organisations which planned to hire project managers in 2015

Source: computerworld.com/article/2844020/10-hottest-it-skills-for-2015.html

PRINCE2 Agile is part of the AXELOS Global Best Practice Portfolio alongside the project and programme management (PPM) suite of products and the ITIL® service management standard. It is assessed by exam, leading to a recognised qualification. Accredited training suppliers support its use and people who already hold the PRINCE2 Practitioner qualification can take PRINCE2 Agile as an extension.

Competition becomes collaboration

In the past it was not unheard of for PRINCE2 and Agile practitioners to be in competition, if not outright conflict, as to the best approach. Critics of PRINCE2 accused it of focusing on a tick-box approach. Agile, critics would argue, focuses on keeping decision-making embedded within a team, at the risk of lack of senior oversight. That debate is now consigned to history.

PRINCE2 Agile will benefit any project where PRINCE2 would normally be used to plan and control it, but where the team wants to introduce Agile methods, or where an Agile approach needs greater control. Organisations will be more reassured that ahead of even starting a project they have a clear view of the financial controls on it and also of the benefits to the bottom line from the iterative approach of Agile and its focus on fast delivery. PRINCE2 can underpin the business case for an Agile project – surely a marriage made in heaven.

INDUSTRY VIEW

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Doing the right projects right

PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES and portfolios keep businesses in motion. That sounds simple enough, but figuring out what projects to pursue and how to execute – that's the hard part.

The key to agility – aligning strategy and execution, or doing the right projects right – depends on complete visibility of initiatives, and that depends on technology. Spreadsheets, manual processes, and subpar work-management tools are not the answer.

Digital transformation is top-of-mind for most businesses. However, according to a recent Accenture report, 85 per cent of companies surveyed “agree that digital business is an enabler of strategic growth”, yet less than 25 per cent are “positioned to optimise and deliver the growth objectives they recognise are critical”.¹

Forward-thinking businesses know that digital solutions are needed to keep digital transformation efforts in motion. The first step is an integrated approach to enterprise portfolio management (EPM) and project portfolio management (PPM) that provides a wide-angle view of portfolios and projects.

With EPM, decision makers gain a real-time inventory of enterprise

portfolios – making it easier to identify opportunities, discover gaps in resources (or redundancies), and define what should be pursued or divested. EPM makes it easier to do the right projects.

To do projects right, an integrated, collaborative PPM solution provides complete visibility into project and resource data, and makes it easier for users to get the job done.

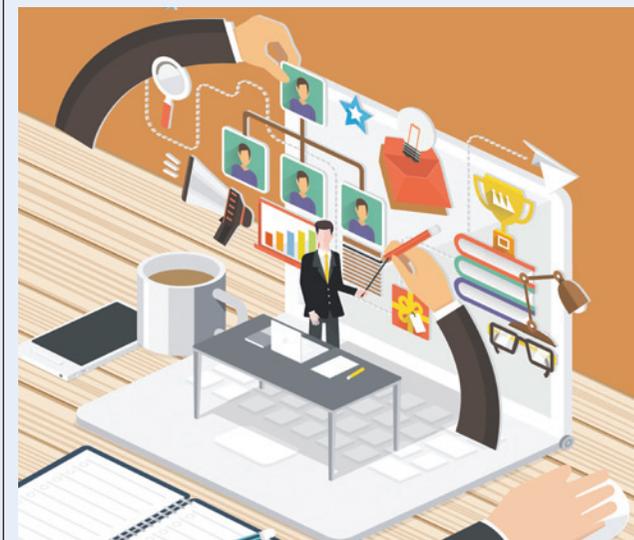
PPM solutions that support multiple methods of execution – namely, waterfall and agile – improve efficiency so teams can apply the right method for the right outcome.

The world of project management is at a crossroads. Technology is an enabler, but it's disruptive, and forcing organisations to reconsider how projects are assessed and delivered. Staying ahead of the game comes down to keeping your business in motion. And that starts with doing the right projects right.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Jim Byrnes (inset, above) is CEO of ChangePoint
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Citation: 1. Schulmann, D., & Timmermans, K. (2016). Increase agility to fuel growth and competitiveness. Retrieved from AccentureStrategy: <http://bit.ly/1Mp730h>



WHEN PLANNING projects, many organisations spend considerable time and energy identifying scope, resources, and timelines – the “who, what, how and when” – without sufficiently addressing the “why”. Effective benefits management begins long before the project itself. The initial activity – benefits identification – looks at the intended business value of a project. Essentially, this is the “why” of investing in a project.

“The wisest organisations tell PMI they don’t do projects because they are enamoured with them; they do projects because they want to achieve a goal or take advantage of a business opportunity,” said Mark A Langley, president and CEO of Project Management Institute. “When expected business benefits are explicitly identified in the business case that justifies the work, 54 per cent more projects meet their goals.”

How can your organisation improve benefits identification and increase project success? Here are three actions that can help ensure success...

Link benefits to projects and programmes

Organisations must be clear about why each project and programme is a significant investment, and how it is essential to organisational success. By aligning projects and programmes to clear benefits at the onset of activity, you will set more realistic expectations about project outcomes.

Benefits realisation, as a discipline, will illustrate that projects and programmes deliver benefits to the business and that they enable the necessary change. This is a fact not always recognised by organisational leaders, who are more focused on issues of cost and ROI than on the execution of projects. Benefits realisation is a way to change that thinking, underscoring how projects and programmes deliver tangible value to the business.

Position benefits identification as a shared responsibility

Executives typically focus on organisational strategy, whereas project managers focus more on project activities. But they both have a vested interest in ensuring projects deliver expected benefits. When projects are tied to achieving strategic objectives driving the change that will advance the business, there should be a shared understanding of the value each project delivers. Benefits identification is ideally a shared responsibility, which should also extend to business owners and executive sponsors.

Yet the Pulse of the Profession® research indicates that, although 38 per cent of project managers are accountable for identifying project benefits, just 27 per cent have responsibility for the strategic alignment of those benefits. Meanwhile, only four in 10 organisations indicate that a functional area vice president or director is accountable for



Three ways to effectively identify and achieve project benefits

“The wisest organisations tell PMI they don’t do projects because they are enamoured with them; they do projects because they want to achieve a goal or take advantage of a business opportunity.”
Mark A Langley

ensuring the project benefits are aligned with their strategic goals. This is a missed opportunity to align the organisation and can be easily remedied by sharing responsibility for a thorough, formal, documented benefits identification process.

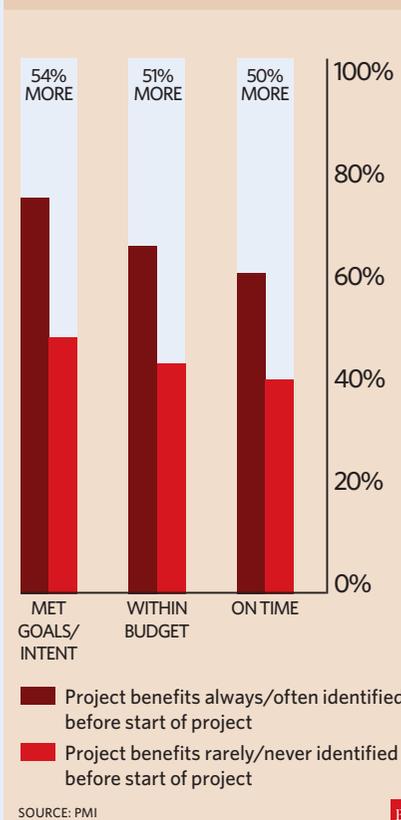
Elevate the benefits conversation to the strategy level

Formalising benefits management requires purposeful attention to which projects and programmes are approved – and why. It facilitates more effective strategic decision-making about investments. In fact, organisations that do it well waste 67 per cent less money than those without a formal benefits management approach because they have better project performance.

Many organisations are not effective at identifying the benefits that projects deliver, especially the softer or intangible benefits that can’t be quantified in financial terms. Only half of the respondents in PMI’s survey report that the identified benefits of projects are specified in a manner that is adequately explicit in terms of achieving strategic goals.

We already know that when organisations embrace project, programme, and portfolio management practices, they have better results. Yet even those that are high performers rarely pay enough attention to benefits management.

Improving project outcomes by identifying benefits



They might be good at completing projects and programmes successfully, but rarely connect those projects back to the business purpose. Often, this is because they have failed to identify the expected benefits before the start of the project – and that leaves value

unrealised. Organisations that value project management as the strategic capability that drives change already perform better than their counterparts. When benefits realisation management is part of a disciplined approach to project management, that performance gets even better.

“Benefits identification helps create a shared vision, identifies key relationships between outputs, benefits and strategy,” said Laura Brock, benefits and savings lead at Infrastructure and Projects Authority. Brock continued: “It also ensures that all benefits and possible outcomes have been considered. The value in doing this work is significantly increased the earlier it is carried out. Activities such as benefits identification workshops and benefits mapping can help predict unintended consequences that might otherwise divert progress.”

Managing project benefits underpins all aspects of strategic success. When benefits are delivered, organisations achieve their desired outcomes: customers are satisfied, business owners realise the return on their investment, and project teams see the value their work brings to organisations.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Mark A Langley is president and CEO, PMI
www.pmi.org.uk



Laura Brock and Mark A Langley

What is the key to success in project management?



André Pereira da Silva
Senior Product Marketing
Manager, Microsoft

THE KEY to success lies in the adoption of the necessary set of processes as well as having the right technology in place. Microsoft certified partners in project and portfolio management help ensure just that. They make it their daily mission to help organisations review their existing processes, and work with them from an initial set of requirements and clearly defined goals to achieve a better overall approach to project management.

According to the latest Forrester report on the total economic impact of PPM, businesses see on average a return of 301 per cent from this investment, with a payback period of 6.7 months. These benefits must be clear to those who work in the organisation. The adoption of a better approach to PM will bring success to the business, but will also allow for a greater ability to evaluate and reward those who contribute the most for that success.

INDUSTRY VIEW

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Colin Balchin
Director, Adept Knowledge
Management Ltd

QUESTIONS ABOUT the key to success in project management are legion. Is there a magic bullet in project management? Is experience more important than training or intellect? What contributes most to success – methodologies or an experienced team? How can you guarantee project success?

Different PM skills are needed. First, communication is a core skill to transfer information in clear formats. Second, teams do the project work; the PM needs to build a motivated team able to work in their absence.

Third, the PM should know when to listen to, or silence, the team, or when to involve them in dialogue. Fourth, the PM needs to avoid endless debates on domain knowledge and be the preferred domain expert. Fifth, processes and people must never be overwhelmed. Changes must be handled in an organised, disciplined and controlled manner.

INDUSTRY VIEW

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Sara Drake
Chief executive, Association
for Project Management

IN OUR report, *Conditions for Project Success*, APM research (apm.org.uk/research) has identified key factors for project success, drawing on 40 years' experience as the professional body of project professionals.

Projects need clear leadership, responsibilities and communication. Sponsors play an active role and are ultimately accountable. The project is well-planned and properly funded. Progress is carefully monitored, schedules realistic and budgets tightly controlled.

Teams apply PM techniques to ensure flexibility and robustness. They monitor standards to ensure best practice in delivery. Stakeholders are informed and involved. End users help design and deliver the project. Suppliers are co-ordinated and are aware of project needs, schedules and standards.

The project operates in a friendly, supportive environment. Everyone is committed to success, inspiring commitment in others.

INDUSTRY VIEW

www.apm.org.uk



Mark A Langley
President and CEO
PMI

PROJECTS CAN only be as successful as the people and Project Management Offices (PMOs) running them. Start with these actions:

Look beyond technical skills. Effective project and programme management relies on blending technical skills with leadership and business qualities. Successful organisations empower well-rounded professionals to oversee long-range strategic objectives, and can see 40 per cent more projects meet goals and original business intent.

Recognise the strategic role of an enterprise-wide project management office (EPMO). PMOs are essential to overseeing strategic initiatives. Organisations that align their EPMO to strategy report 27 per cent more projects completed successfully and 42 per cent fewer projects with scope creep.

Drive success with executive sponsors. Executive sponsors are uniquely positioned to overcome barriers, secure funding, champion strategies and foster collaboration. When more than 80 per cent of projects have an engaged executive sponsor, 65 per cent more succeed.

Agile organisations can put you ahead of the field

67%

Companies describing themselves as either "leaning towards Agile" or "pure Agile"
Source: Techbeacon

MORE THAN 20 years ago a eureka moment led to the creation of the DSDM Consortium and a vendor-independent method for overseeing IT projects in a more Agile, responsive and business-driven way. In that time hundreds of organisations have introduced DSDM and completed thousands of projects successfully – most importantly delivering what the business users needed in a timely manner.

As a flexible, open model, the DSDM Agile Project Framework can be tailored to each organisation's requirements and can be integrated with traditional project management methods or to complement other Agile approaches.

But the business climate has been changing (fast!) and organisations that have seen the benefit of Agile software development have started to apply the principles of Agile to their wider business, such as in HR, operations, sales and marketing; enterprise-wide, and

moving towards an Agile organisation.

The context for this is a world where economic, regulatory and social change is happening ever faster, so executives in organisations of all types and sizes need to respond differently. As examples:

- The drive to do more for less – with scarce financial and human resources
- Need for flexibility and speed in decision making
- A competitive imperative to innovate constantly
- Responding to the rise of consumer power enabled by technology platforms

This means that organisations are in a world of "Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity" (VOCA) and need to respond with agility.

So what might be the characteristics of an Agile organisation? Unlike bureaucratic "command and control" management, where organisational silos inhibit



collaboration, the Agile organisation would adopt well-tried Agile techniques and practices such as:

- Small, focused self-organising, multi-skilled teams where collaboration is the norm
- Rapid, devolved decision making, with no barriers to doing the right thing

- Fewer layers of management – more workers per boss, with increased labour productivity
- Teams are dynamically formed and can extend beyond the organisation to partners and supply chain

The key players with the power to make the Agile organisation happen are

the C-level executives: CEO, COO, CFO, CMO and other senior directors and heads of functional domains. These have both the opportunity (and arguably the requirement) to show leadership in changing the culture and the way an organisation does business.

And what are the benefits? All the research (for example, that by the Agile Future Forum into 20 top UK companies in 2014) shows that workforce costs are reduced, productivity is increased and, critically, the customer perspective is central to all the decision making. Adopting Agile approaches has to have been shown to increase revenues and margin beyond that of their peers. So who wouldn't want to run an Agile organisation?

INDUSTRY VIEW

Ed Holt (left) is founder and former chairman of DSDM Consortium
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The key steps: business success delivered by better project management

IMTECH IS a mechanical and electrical technical services provider operating throughout the UK and Ireland and employing more than 2,500 people. We specialise in engineering, facilities management and systems integration. We are currently involved in a wide range of projects across multiple sectors from residential to public buildings and from industrial sites to sports arenas. With 80 per cent repeat business, we think we know what is required to make a successful project: excellent people and excellent processes.

£5-10m

The average size of projects undertaken by Imtech



Excellent people

We start by employing the best people in the industry and we enhance their skills using an in-house project management development programme delivered by our own technical specialists. Experience has demonstrated to us that the foundation of every successful project is strong relationships within the team including clients and suppliers. Building and maintaining these strong relationships are key elements of a project manager's role and are something that we concentrate on developing in our people.



Excellent processes

In 2006 we developed the Imtech Project Delivery System (PDS), which has been implemented consistently across our business. This describes all of the key processes in a project, from health and safety to risk management, and financial control through to commissioning and handover to the client.

By working within this framework, we ensure a consistent approach on all of our projects. Our people understand what is expected of them, and have the tools they need to deliver successful projects, on time and to budget.

The future

Innovation is driving change in the construction industry. We have the flexibility and adaptability to take advantage of these technological changes. For example, in the recent Mark Lane project in London, we were able to view a virtual 3D model of the proposed installation on a tablet while on-site and prior to install, and reconfigure the drawings to take into account anomalies that were not apparent during the design phase. Building Information Modelling (BIM) and off-site prefabrication are further examples of the way the industry is innovating to improve efficiency and

delivery for the customer. We made extensive use of off-site prefabrication during the project to build venues for the 2012 London Olympics.

We believe that by finding and developing the best people and by embracing the changes impacting the construction industry, we will succeed in delivering a better experience for our clients.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Mike Harris (inset, left) is group managing director, engineering services at Imtech 01784 229900 www.imtech.co.uk

Succeed by delivering a better experience

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