

SUCCESS & FAILURE



What is Project Failure and Project Success

Project failure can be defined as a “project that fails to perform a duty or an expected action, non-occurrence or non-performance”

Whereas **Project success** can be defined as the achievement of something desired, planned or attempted . It is also said that success is an event that accomplishes its intended purpose . Anything short of that is failure.

STARTLING FACTS

- Only **2.5%** of companies in South Africa successfully completed **100%** of their projects in the last 2 years.
- The average cost overrun of a Project is **27%**
- **57%** of projects fail due to “breakdown in communications.” (No 2 cause of Project Failure at the moment)
- **39%** of projects fail due to lack of planning, resources, and activities
....simply saying that If you don't plan, you don't succeed
- **60%** of failed projects have a duration of less than one year.

STARTLING FACTS

- 31% of Development Programmes are cancelled
- 53% of Projects have a cost overrun over 180 % over their Original Budget.
- By 2020 , 40% of existing infrastructure programmes will be stopped due to poor execution
- By 2025 , 45% of firms appointed as Consultant Project Managers will have failed their Clients.

How can you predict the future of your project? Here are 2 ways that can help.

- **Practice Relentless Risk Analysis (RRA)** - Every time you have a meeting, use the top ten risks as your agenda. If you practice management by walking around (even if you do it virtually) you should always be asking your team and stakeholders questions about the future. For example: What risks do you see in the near term? What would we do if the top engineer left for another position? What's the Plan B if we don't receive the materials on time?

After all, risk is a future phenomenon. The more we ask our team about risks, the more we encourage them to think about the future. Project management is a team sport; use everyone and anyone you can to help.

2. Identify your project's "Leading" indicators and track them - Many of the progress and performance metrics used on projects are lagging indicators. They tell us what happened in the past, and, as we know, we can't change the past, we can only react to it. What metrics could you employ to help tell you about the future? One client used the number of tasks added to the schedule every two weeks as a possible indication that the scope was increasing, thus impacting cost and schedule negatively. If the world's top economists believe in lagging indicators, then you should too!

In order to reliably assess what the future holds for your project, you need to gather relevant data on a regular basis at frequent intervals. This not only instills a discipline in reporting but it enables you, the project manager, and others, to detect trends. If you are keeping track of trends, then you'll be in a better position to see where those trends lead.

However, the key to such reporting is to ensure that the information we receive is credible. That means it is being provided by people who are trustworthy and telling the truth. It does you no good whatsoever to have your team members providing overly optimistic reports. You want the unvarnished truth. As a project manager, you simply cannot be the last to know critical information that's affecting your project.

Predicting the future isn't easy. But with the right techniques and the right folks on the team, we can provide credible information to our stakeholders. After all, that's what we're paid to do, isn't it?

SOME CAUSES OF PROJECT FAILURES

- **Lack of Senior management support-** happens when “Junior” or “Candidate PMs” are thrown into the Project and left unattended.
- **Poor communication-** causes delay or even failure since team members do not have the information they needed, issues or changes do not get escalated, project reporting is sluggish
- **Inadequate resources-** Task take longer than expected to complete, deadlines and milestones get missed, and project completion date comes into jeopardy, one end of working more than necessary (double shift) to get the work done
- **No one is in control** not even the project manager, who is assigned to the project but not given the free hand to manage the project
- **Poor definition of Scope-** Project changes from its original objective and goals. This can occur due to additional requirement from the client.

- **Project lacks structure** - caused by things such as critical tasks being under rated
- **Inaccurate estimates** - A top- down plan causes constraints on the prediction of the cost of the project
- **Poor risk management** - The project planning stages (Stage 1 – 3) is not properly planned
- **Unrealistic Milestones** - it is not possible for a project to succeed if unrealistic timeframes and milestones are made available for that project
- **Incompetent project management skill** - procedures and policies are not adhered to from inception

10 Characteristic of Good Project Manager

1 Command authority naturally.

In other words, they don't need borrowed power to enlist the help of others – they just know how to do it. They are optimistic leaders who are viewed in a favorable light and are valued by the organization.

2 Possess quick sifting abilities, knowing what to note and what to ignore.

The latter is more important since there's almost always too much data, and rarely too little. Ignoring the right things is better than trying to master extraneous data.

3 Set, observe, and re-evaluate project priorities frequently.

They focus and prioritize by handling fewer emails, attending fewer meetings, and generally limiting their data input.

4 Do not use information as a weapon or a means of control.

They communicate clearly, completely, and concisely. All the while giving others real information without fear of what they'll do with it.

5. Set, observe, and re-evaluate project priorities frequently.

They focus and prioritize by handling fewer emails, attending fewer meetings, and generally limiting their data input.

6. Adhere to predictable communication schedules

Recognizing that it's the only deliverable early in a project cycle. All this takes place after very thorough pre-execution planning to eliminate as many variables as possible.

7. Possess domain expertise in project management as applied to a particular field.

It's not just that they have generic project management skills; they have a deep familiarity with one or multiple fields that gives them a natural authority and solid strategic insight.

8 Exercise independent and fair consensus-building skills when conflict arises.

But they embrace only as much conflict as is absolutely necessary, neither avoiding nor seeking grounds for control of a particular project segment

9 Cultivate and rely on extensive informal networks inside and outside the firm to solve problems that arise.

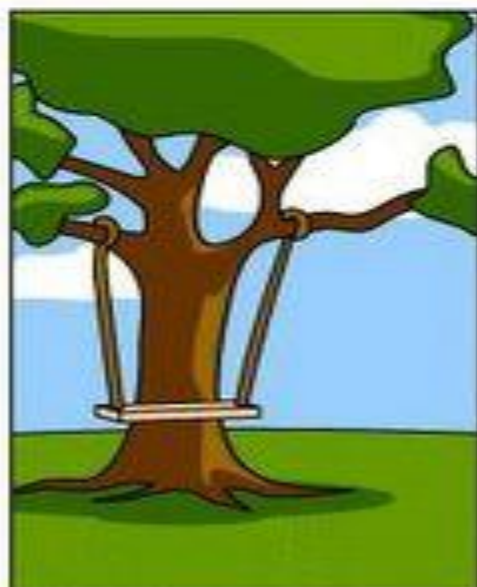
They identify any critical issues that threaten projects and handle them resolutely (vs. ignoring them).

10 Look forward to going to work!

They believe that project management is an exciting challenge that's critical to success. The truly great ones view project management as a career and not a job, and they treat it like so by seeking additional training and education.



How the customer explained it



How the Project Leader understood it



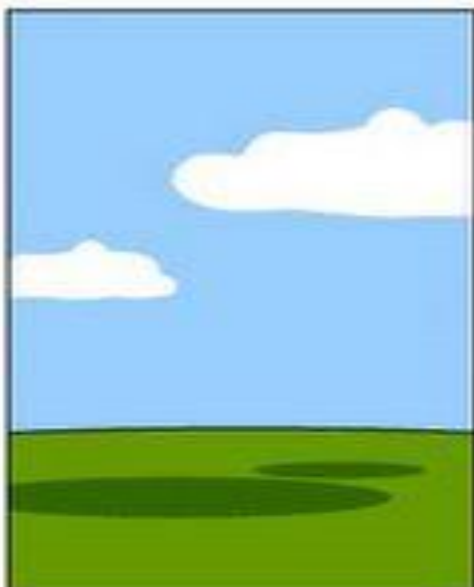
How the Analyst designed it



How the Programmer wrote it



How the Business Consultant described it



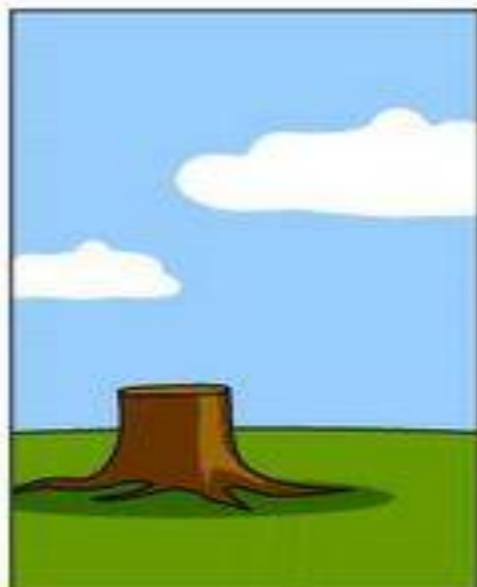
How the project was documented



What operations installed



How the customer was billed



How it was supported



What the customer really needed

MANAGEMENT PLANS REQUIRED AT WORKSTAGES 1 - 4

Stage 1: Initiation

- Identify who will receive updates on the project and when (**Communication Plan**)
- Develop the **Project Procurement Policy**
- Develop the **Project Initiation Plan**

Stage 2: Concept & Viability

- Identify budget and estimates (**Cost Management Plan**)

Stage 3: Design Development

- Identify potential risks and begin managing those risks (**Risk Management Plan**)
- Create processes for managing quality (**Quality Management Plan**)
- Develop the **Project Management Plan**

Stage 4: Document & Procurement Phase

- Develop the **Procurement Management Plan**

How to define success criteria ?

Project success criteria are **the standards by which the project will be judged at the end to decide whether or not it has been successful in the eyes of the stakeholders.**

Why are project success criteria important?

- **Organizations don't define failure.** We don't document how we will know if a project has failed – what failure looks like – because thinking about failing is not a good way to motivate the project team when the work has only just started. The absence of a formal definition of failure makes it uncomfortably easy for internal and external stakeholders to brand projects a failure.
- **Successful organisations take the guesswork out of this process:** they define what success looks like, so they know when they have achieved it. If you want project success, you have to define what success looks like for your project. Perhaps budget is the most important thing to your stakeholders, and quality is taking a back seat on the project. Perhaps customer satisfaction is essential, and you don't care how many overtime hours the team has to work to get that end result

Which Project is a failure or success?

Project A

- Completed Ontime
- Within Budget
- Acceptable Quality
- Mediocre Building

Project B

- Delivered 2 years late
- Cost 3 times more the Estimate
- Excellent Quality
- Iconic Building

When do I track success criteria?

- You'll take an initial performance benchmark as soon as you can in the project.
- Then you have to work out how often you want to measure your project success criteria
- Some you can track once a month, others you'll only measure once more. Some you won't track very often and then as soon as you hit delivery you might be measuring them daily (like daily quality targets)
- The measurement of these over time should be handed to the operations team as part of the project handover when the project closes. You should not keep the responsibility for tracking success criteria (i.e. project benefits) over time
- While the project is running, report on your progress so you celebrate the successes as you go. And if there aren't successes to celebrate, so you can adjust your project approach so that you do hit your success criteria.

Some Success criteria for a successful project

- Clearly defined goals.
- Competent project manager.
- Senior Management Support.
- Competent project team members.
- Sufficient resource allocation.
- Adequate communication channels.
- Control Mechanisms.
- Client consultation.
- Technical tasks.

Top 5 factors that increase success

1. Top Management Support: This is now the No. 1 factor in project failure. Lack of executive support can and does jeopardize projects. Positive Executive support positively influences project outcome.

2. Client Involvement.

3. Experienced Project Manager: 80% percent of successful projects have an experienced project manager at the helm.

4. Setting Clear Objectives.

5. Defined Scope

To summarize Success Criteria

- You must define what success looks like for your project or you won't know if you have achieved it
- Document success criteria and get everyone to agree to them.
- Use continuous measurements where possible.
- Baseline today's performance so you know where you are starting from
- Track as appropriate and report on your progress

WARNING SIGNS THAT COULD HELP YOU AVOID PROJECT FAILURE

Despite your best efforts, managing a project can quickly spiral out of control. If this has happened to you before, it may have even made you a little wary of taking on any new project management responsibilities. You don't have to be worried. Project management isn't impossible. If you can spot the warning signs early, you can make corrections and get back on track

So what are these warning signs?

1 Disinterest: I'll get right on it *yawn*

If none of your employees believe in the plan or aren't interested in the results, then it'll be hard to motivate them to get their tasks done well and on time. The basis for good work is being invested in the project and caring about the results. Make sure that everybody involved understands just what you are trying to accomplish and the benefits that will result from it. Often, you may have to give people reasons for accomplishing a simple task even if they don't understand the overall goal of the project.

2 Lack of Communication: I never got that email !!!

This is pretty obvious in any work setting, let alone project management. If people don't understand what they should be doing, you can't expect them to do it. But this goes beyond giving an accurate agenda; your employees must also be able to communicate problems and results back to you and you need to give encouragement.

Even though it's often important to have a record of communication, you should also encourage your employees to communicate in person as much as possible and then send reminders and reports through email. By interacting personally, all of you will improve morale, a team atmosphere and communication skills

3 Momentum: How much longer will this take?

Even adults can have short attention spans, and this is especially true in work settings. If a task is extremely repetitive or menial, your employees will quickly lose interest. If people can't see the light at the end of the tunnel, they start to give up.

This means that a project should be made up of a bunch of shorter tasks that can be easily tracked and accomplished. Never have the only reward be the completion of the entire project. You should also give frequent encouragement and rewards for finishing on time. This will help maintain the pace of the project and help everyone involved stick with it until completion.

4 The Keep-It-Quiet Culture: If it's not good news I don't want to hear it

In an effort to keep morale high and avoid complainers, many workplaces mandate that bad news be kept to a minimum. While this sounds nice, it can actually hurt your project management. If people are taught to keep problems to themselves, they can't be addressed and fixed. This doesn't mean that you should have everyone complain loudly about the smallest hurdles, but you should cultivate an environment where people know they can come to you or other leaders with problems and get assistance.

5 Overusing the Overtime: Yep, I'm staying late again tonight

If you have scheduled a project correctly, there should be little or no need for employees to work overtime. However, the first thing employers do when trying to compensate for a failing project is assign overtime in an effort to catch up. This is an indicator of bigger problems, whether it is unreasonable schedules or unmotivated employees, but it should be taken seriously. If your project requires a lot of overtime, you should step back and analyze where the source of the problem is, in the schedule or with the employees. Don't keep assigning more overtime. Everyone will get burned out and it will create a frenzied atmosphere in the workplace

6 Bringing in Help: Hey, could I borrow a couple of your guys for a few days?

Much like the overtime dilemma, if you need more resources or people than you originally planned, it means your project is spiralling out of control. There are several problems with this approach. Other projects will suffer if you are moving people around, employees get tired of being shuffled about and extra resources could put you over budget. If you need significantly more resources than you planned for, it may be time to completely rethink and replan the entire project.

7 Going Over Budget: I'm not telling the boss, you tell him

Going over budget can be attributed to both your funds and your schedule. You should have planned out the project well, but if you are still not following your projected money and labour usage plan, you might be veering off course. Pay close attention to how things are following the plan and the budget; little deviations are expected, but if you are coming significantly above or below your budget and schedule you may have bigger problems than a bounced cheque.

8 Missing the Mark: When was the deadline again?

You can't expect people to maintain momentum without multiple, small milestones in the overall completion of the project. But if you are consistently missing the deadlines for these smaller tasks, it may be a sign of bigger problems. If there are too many missed deadlines, complications may arise for later tasks. Staying on schedule is important, so pay close attention to those project milestones. Create measurable goals to determine where you are in the project and stick with them.

9. Changing Your Focus: You know, I think we should take this in a whole new direction

If you want to complete a project on time, you can't change the goals in the middle of the project. This can include downsizing the scope of the project or even enlarging it. If you have to start adding or subtracting components of your project halfway through, you know something larger is going wrong. You may have noticed that many of these warning signs overlap or happen in pairs. That's why they are important to know. If you recognize one, you'll also know what else to look for when troubleshooting the project.

And don't immediately give up when you see one of these problems. By identifying the signs of project failure early, you can actually prevent the failure. Forewarned is forearmed. Just by being aware of them, you're already a step ahead.

10 SIGNS YOUR TEAM IS EFFECTIVE

1. Purpose

Team members share a sense of why the team exists and are proud to be working on accomplishing its [mission](#) and goals.

2. Priorities

Team members know what needs to be done next, by whom, and by when to achieve team goals.

3. Roles

Team members know who does what to get things done and when it is a good idea to allow a more skillful member to do a certain task.

4 Talent

Team members feel their [unique personalities are appreciated](#) and well-utilized.

5 Decisions

Team members clearly understand leadership authority and decision processes.

6 Conflict

Team members deal with conflict openly and productively; project-related [conflict is seen as important](#) to decision-making and personal growth.

7 Norms

Team members work together according to group [norms](#) and these guidelines are seen as standards for everyone in the group.

8 Effectiveness

Team members find [team meetings](#) efficient and productive and look forward to spending such time together.

9 Success

Team members know clearly when the team has experienced success and share the joy in such excellence proudly.

10 Feedback

Team members take advantage of opportunities for feedback and view that [feedback as valuable](#) for updating their skills to achieve new levels of high performance.

How to Manage your Projects Successfully ?

P L C M Process

PLAN

- Identify all stakeholders up front!
- Develop the project plan before starting the project
- Establish communications protocols
- Define your requirements in detail
- Establish a speedy conflict resolution process
- Make contingency plans
- Plan a reasonable roll-out schedule

LEAD

- Ensure strong, committed management support
- Connect the business goals to the project
- Assign an experienced project manager
- Establish clearly defined directions
- Be proactive
- Set clear performance expectations
- Ask for technical assistance

COMMUNICATE

- Ensure strong, committed management support
- Communicate objectives frequently
- Recognize different perspectives
- Check assumptions frequently
- Manage expectations
- Share success and broadcast achievements
- Invite feedback

MANAGE

- Hold the reins and don't let GO !!! Don't be a shadow PM
- Train all staff in a timely fashion
- Don't "marry" the contractor
- Trust but question
- Their bottom line is the bottom line. Your bottom line is a working system
- Nothing is ever free
- The end product is only as good as your requirements

Project Management Tips

- Project Manager does no work other than manage the project!
- Project Manager spends 90% of time communicating
- Understand the project flow from beginning to end
- Identify risks and develop contingencies
- Clearly outline the critical path of the project
- Be flexible
- Be firm
- Check egos at the door!

What does the future hold for Project Management

- The overall project success rate has increased from 16% in 1994 to 28% in 2000 to 45% in 2012
- The future of project management and project managers will rely heavily on technology.
- Each one of us has a duty to ensure our Profession reaches maturity.

Contact Details

- Email : edward.ramdaloo@kznworks.gov.za
- Cell : 074 2445904

