

Contents

FEATURES

Agile Project Management: A Firestorm and a Rebuttal	1-3
Managing Corporate Software Development Projects: Exploring Agile Project Management Frameworks	5-6
Managing Projects Virtually	7-8
Project Management – Challenge to Professional Responsibility	9-10
Risk as a Barking Dog	11
RFP, WBS and COTS Implementation Planning	12-14
Call for Articles	14

IN EVERY ISSUE

Advertising Rates	4
Editor's Corner	4
Chair's Corner	15
Officer Listing	16

Agile Project Management: A Firestorm and a Rebuttal

By Jesse Fewell

It's hard to describe exactly how passionately many Agile experts disagree with the article "Managing Corporate Software Development Projects: Exploring Agile Project Management Frameworks," which appeared in the last issue of ISSIG Review. The analogy of a powder keg comes to mind. By seeking to find "the best" Agile method, the author misses the whole substance of Agile, and invited some explosive reactions. There is a much simpler and more accepted approach to getting started with Agile Project Management.

Overview

In the article, author James Neudorf seeks to add value to everyday project managers by sifting through the noise surrounding the Agile buzzword. As the author puts it, with all of the processes, methodologies, and gurus out there claiming to be agile, how does one "ascertain which approach they should follow"? With that stated objective, he sets out on a point-by-point comparison of the pros and cons of four specific examples of Agile: Scrum, eXtreme Programming (XP), Crystal, and Evolutionary Project Management (Evo). The final output of this analysis was the declaration that "Evolutionary Project Management integrates the best features of its Agile Project Management counterparts while avoiding their most troubling shortcomings."

His aim was noble, and his criticism was well-balanced, but the end result was a conclusion that misses the mark of helping project managers.

First, the conclusion is not practical. A quick online search reveals that Evolutionary Project Management is much too obscure to be implemented with confidence. One can find only a few white papers and a few isolated training classes. This seems insufficient to equip a PMO to implement this approach, let alone convince senior management to organize their portfolio around it.

Second, the comparison is incomplete. Although the author cites a strong bibliography of methodologies, there was no input from each method's advocates. The article introduces us to some of the common criticisms put forward by project management traditionalists (e.g. "Scrum isn't prescriptive enough with technical practices and XP is too prescriptive"). However, when Agile experts are asked to provide a similar critique of each other, there is very little disagreement. Certainly, there is much debate within the Agile community about a variety of topics from certification to how much Agile to bite off at once. The more you hear Agile experts talk, the more you hear passionate agreement on methodology and process.

Finally, the comparison of Agile methods against each other misses the proverbial forest for the trees. The key source of the article is a book by noted UML and Agile expert Craig Larman. "Mr. Neudorf makes some conclusions I would not make. My book makes no comment about better or worse agile or evolutionary or flexible methods, and the very idea of the search for the 'best' method is a rather unsophisticated framing of the issue. The real implication of [Agile] is that there is not One Best Way in terms of specific method or practice, and that in addition, practices are situational and need to evolve."

Because the Agile movement has become a mainstream recipe for successful project delivery, we will take the time to provide a detailed rebuttal of the author's assertions. To help us set the record straight, we contacted Agile experts who practice every day the methods we are discussing. The feedback contains valuable clarification on what Scrum, XP, Crystal, and Evo are really trying to achieve. Once we review this feedback, we'll conclude with some practical steps to get started with Agile.

Continued on page 2...

Scrum

The most popular of the Agile methods today is Scrum, which describes itself as a “Lean framework for software development.”¹ The most obvious difference to Agile newcomers is the quirky terminology Scrum intentionally uses to force traditionally-minded project managers into a team-oriented mentality. For example, phases are called “sprints”; project scope is called the “backlog”; daily stand-ups are called “Scrums”, and the project manager assumes a more facilitative role as the “Scrum-Master”.

Nevertheless, underneath these mnemonic devices, Scrum is still an Agile method the author finds to be lacking. In his assessment, the author states that Scrum suffers from a “relative absence of close (and frequent) contact with senior project managers.” “I don’t know where he got that idea,” says Michele Sliger, PMP, Certified Scrum Trainer, and co-author of *The Software Project Manager’s Bridge to Agility*. “Daily Scrums and Sprint Review meetings are open to all interested stakeholders -- if senior project managers are not showing up and sharing feedback then they need to start.”

Sliger is considered one of the pioneers of introducing Agile to the PMI community, and gave a focused response to the next criticism of Scrum: “Problems which spark a departure away from the original backlog arise subtly and incrementally over time and can become insurmountable.” Sliger wonders why it is bad for a team to stray far from the original project scope. “The backlog is not intended to stay in its original state. It is a tool for managing change, which is inevitable in software development projects. Rarely is the list of items to be worked the same in the third [phase] as it was in the first, because we’re working on building learning into the process.”

It is that learning, she says, that is key to the success of any software project. “The more we know about the product, the business problem it’s designed to solve, how the user interacts with it, and what the competition is doing, the more likely we are to need to make changes.” Since we assume and expect that a software project’s requirements will change over time, we need to have a process that selects the changes that bring the most business value.

eXtreme Programming (XP)

XP has always been controversial. From encouraging teams to pair off for programming assignments to espousing Just-In-Time software design, its practices have raised many eyebrows for quite some time. In particular, the

programming practices around quality control can inspire passionate debates on software engineering and epistemology. Rather than taking a detour into the finer points of Software Engineering, we examine the Project Management aspects raised by the article.

To start with, the article mistakenly presumes that XP “makes no apparent effort to have plans in place spanning the length of the release cycle.” However, according to the process map on the official website², XP requires a Release Plan that guides the selection of work for each iteration.

Next, there is the assessment that, without detailed written requirements, “inherent risks are not addressed prior to financial commitments being made.” But it seems this concern ignores the most important risk that these detailed written requirements change dramatically after the financial commitments are made. XP and its other Agile counterparts allow for this by offering the sponsor full control of the scope at the beginning of each iteration, including the choice to kill the project after a series of bad iterations.

Also, confusion about the role of a customer arises when the author says, “last of all, having the customer present [on-site] may well be of little help...since he or she will most often lack the expertise and experience needed to offer the sort of design guidance that a carefully-reviewed design specification offers.”

However, neither the PMBOK nor XP advocate that the customer be responsible for actually designing software. Rather than this should be done by architects and engineers. Instead, the XP website explicitly defines the role of the on-site customer as someone that “must make the [scope] decisions that affect their business goals...be available to get enough detail to complete a programming task... and also be needed to help with functional testing.”²

Since XP engineering practices are so hotly contested, it is not surprising that an article may bundle its project management processes into the same maverick category. As it turns out, XP requires the same focused plans and high-profile customer that Scrum requires.

Crystal

Crystal is defined as a family of human-powered and adaptive, ultralight, shrink-to-fit software development methodologies³. However, the article determined this was too prescriptive a methodology for a project manager to adapt. This leap from “adaptive” to “prescriptive” was rather confusing to Alistair

Cockburn, who in addition to being a recognized Use-Case expert is the original founder of the Crystal method. “If Crystal has one unique failing, it is that it is not prescriptive. There are no mandated techniques; there are no mandated processes; there are no mandated deliverables. It is based upon seeking to achieve properties that many successful projects have demonstrated... (examples being frequent delivery, close communication and reflective improvement). The only prescriptive elements are two: use incremental development; and reflect after each increment.”

Cockburn should know. He was one of the original seventeen thought leaders who coined the term Agile at a process summit in 2001⁴. When discussing Neudorf’s article, he was rather animated by the idea that his flexible process method would be considered as “[adhering] to a fairly rigid matrix.” He says, “I am not sure what [Neudorf] means by this. One of the methodology design principles that I describe in Crystal is that the optimal set of project conventions change as the team size changes by around factors of 2 and according to how much damage product defects can produce. This is a principle of design, not what most people consider a ‘rigid matrix.’”

This flexibility to tailor your processes is another key facet of all the Agile methods. “It is explicitly written in Crystal that equivalent substitution is permitted. Crystal practitioners regularly use elements of Scrum, XP, DSDM, or their local methodologies.”

Evolutionary Project Management (Evo)

Finally, we have to examine the conclusion that Evo is the best place to start your adoption of Agile techniques. As mentioned earlier, the key source the author used to make this conclusion was Larman’s book *Agile & Iterative Development*. When asked whether his book was intended to paint such a picture, Larman replied unequivocally “No; I made no such comment...Evo was covered in my book to include a look at the early history of iterative and evolutionary ideas, because Evo is an antecedent to the modern agile methods. I did not say or imply that Evo was a modern agile method, though there is no doubt that it expresses adaptability and empirical control ideas, and has some good concepts. But, there are ideas from other methods that are both practical and useful.”

Indeed, if a Project Manager or PMO is looking for the most practical place to start, Larman suggests Scrum. “By current trend statistics, Scrum is overwhelmingly the

most popular agile method — so much so that discussion of any other methods (Evo, XP, Crystal) is essentially a moot point; the alternatives barely register in the adoption statistics. Evo or other systems can be accommodated within a Scrum framework, which is not uncommon. So, as a practical response to this issue, one might as well focus on Scrum adoption (because of the experienced people, educational resources, support by following a useful large-scale trend, etc).”

The Bottom Line

Recall that Neudorf’s original objective was to give everyday project managers a solid starting point for understanding Agile and how to get started using it. Rather than picking a single “best” methodology, we offer the following:

First, get trained. As Agile becomes more prolific within PMI, there are a growing number of PMI-sponsored and REP-provided classes. Training on Agile topics can often be found at the Global Congress and SeminarsWorld. If you are not able to find PMI-oriented class soon enough or local enough, one should consider the resources offered by

Scrum. The 2-day ScrumMaster and Product Owner classes offer newcomers a solid introduction to Agile concepts.

Second, get connected. Every professional needs a good network of advisors, and Project Managers are no exception. To meet other practitioners, you can either attend an Agile conference or join a local Agile chapter. In addition, the PMI Agile community is working with PMI’s Virtual Communities Project to launch an official component in mid 2009. For details on conferences, chapters, and the component, submit a question to the unofficial PMI Agile collaboration site: <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/pmiagile/>

Third, get going. Cockburn summarizes the best way to get started. “Evo is a fine agile methodology, just as are XP, Scrum DSDM, FDD and Crystal. These days, more and more, people are blending them, learning to tailor and adjust them, so that it is becoming hard to tell where one leaves off and the next begins. The general message to the newcomer is to pick any one to start with, work with it for perhaps six months, and then start adjusting it according to principles and experience. That is a happy evolution for the field, and good advice.”

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- ¹ http://www.scrumalliance.org/pages/what_is_scrum
- ² <http://www.extremeprogramming.org/>
- ³ <http://alistair.cockburn.us/>
- ⁴ <http://www.agilemanifesto.com>

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By Richard K. Fox, MS, PMP, CBAP



I would like to remind everyone of the revised distribution schedule for the *ISSIG Review*. The new policy can be found on page 17. Please feel free to contact me with any questions and/or comments.

Once again, we offer a set of outstanding articles from knowledgeable authors who offer a host of practical ideas for our readers to immediately put to use on the job.

In a previous issue of the *Review*, James Neudorf provided a very detailed and technical view of some of the popular Agile software project approaches (“**Managing Corporate Software Development Projects**”). He offered our readers a detailed comparison of the advantages and disadvantages, from a developer viewpoint, of these popular Agile project management approaches.

In this issue, Jesse Fewell “**Agile Project Management: A Firestorm and a Rebuttal**” offers a challenging and interesting rebuttal to a previous *Review* article (reprinted in this issue for your reading convenience) by James Neudorf on “Managing Corporate Software Development Projects” about Agile Project management. I suggest that you read each one of these and make your own mind up.

“**Project Management - Challenge to Professional Responsibility**” from author Ralf Schwerdtner provides a very in depth look at the place of a project manager in the organization as well as the skills and knowledge that a project manager should possess to be successful. In the author’s words “This article identifies some core qualities that a project manager should possess in order to succeed.”

Author Liliana Buchtik (“**Managing Projects Virtually**”) has provided an excellent look at an increasingly common type of project environment. She provides a discussion of four “Lessons Learned” about Virtual Project teams and what the project manager can do to help insure a successful project. She has obviously spent a great deal of time and effort in virtual project management.

“**Risk as a Barking Dog**” by Andy Willums provides a very interesting and unique look at how the project manager should look at project risks. In a very short article, the author manages to provide an extremely useful approach to handling project risk.

“**RFP, WBS and COTS Implementation Planning**” from authors Christine Bruce & Yong Li, PMP offers an excellent, informative look at software package acquisition and implementation projects. They specifically discuss COTS (Commercial Off The Shelf – a government defined term to describe commercial software products) terminology, but their information would prove valuable for any software package project.

Please contact me at editor@pmi-issig.org with any topic that you would like to see in a future *Review*. I would also encourage all of our readers to email me with your thoughts about our new *Review* distribution policy.

If you consider writing an article for publication in the *Review* (15 PDUs for you PMPs!) to share your experiences in project management, I would love to hear from you. Remember, you do NOT have to be a polished author to write for the *Review* and to see your name in print. That is what editors are for!

A most sincere thank you to all of our authors in this issue. By sharing your project experiences – good or bad – each of you provide an excellent learning experience for our readers and help to improve the project management profession.

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This article is being reprinted from the 2008 Vol. XII, No. 3 issue so that readers can read this original article in addition to the rebuttal article which begins on the front page of this issue.

Managing Corporate Software Development Projects: Exploring Agile Project Management Frameworks

By James Neudorf

As our corporate world changes and the need for responsiveness to consumer demands grows more pressing, traditional approaches to software development management are being muscled aside in favor of open-ended approaches that offer the flexibility and creativity that twenty-first century software development requires. Determining the best open-ended method for software development is no easy task – but it does appear as though **Evolutionary Project Management**, the oldest of the “flexible” project management types, is one that project managers should look at when they try to ascertain which approach they should follow.

The reasons behind this claim are simple but significant: **Evolutionary Project Management** integrates the best features of its Agile Project Management counterparts while avoiding their most troubling shortcomings. To understand why this is so, one must understand what these Agile Project Management variants bring to the table.

First of all, if we accept the premise that flexible and relatively open-ended **Empirical Process Control**, with its emphasis upon meeting incremental objectives and short feed-back loops, is superior to **Defined Project Control**, a process wherein expectations and objectives are laid out at the start and the project follows that original template in accordance with a rigid timeline, then **SCRUM** appears to be one such form of EPC that is an excellent methodological tool.

The “Second System Effect” is something that occurs when designers making changes to a system believe they have mastered it sufficiently that they can “perfect” it with additional updates. As one can imagine, further “add-ons” to any system can cause a host of problems and compromise the functionality of the original design – which is why coming up with a method that allows project managers to resist this sort of temptation is vital.

Happily, the SCRUM approach not only allows small teams to work on “discrete” product features with very little outside guidance or interference; it ties this work to a product backlog which delineates what the final product requirements should be (Schwaber & Beedle, 2002). If there is one criticism of this approach, it is that SCRUM’s chief means of keeping small creative groups “on-task” is via the aforementioned product backlog. As such, the relative absence of close (and frequent) contact with senior project managers means that problems which spark a departure away from the original backlog arise subtly and incrementally over time and can become insurmountable (or at least quite complicated) before they are finally addressed.

SCRUM’s strengths and weaknesses are also borne out when one looks at its iterative characteristics more carefully. Specifically, by insist-

ing that requirements are not to change within each 30-day iteration period, the individuals involved in the software development project can focus squarely and solely upon developing one narrowly-defined, discrete, “executable production functionality” (Beedle & Schwaber, 2002, pp.7,9). Because SCRUM is all about delivering a specific feature set during those 30 days, the “forest” does not get in the way of the “trees” and designers can steadily work towards the final goal in a systematic, orderly way.

Unfortunately, SCRUM’s iterative processes are not fool-proof – and this is where SCRUM falters as compared to some other Agile Project Management approaches. Most of all, compared to another Agile Project Management process (XP), SCRUM’s iterative machinations do not cut down on the duplication of code. XP, in short, encourages re-factoring of systems – something that SCRUM does not (at least it does not encourage re-factoring explicitly) – and this feature invariably eliminates much of the de-bugging that arises later in the software development process. Still, it must not be forgotten that SCRUM’s emphasis upon such seemingly trivial things as post-it notes at daily group meetings make it an excellent tool for facilitating information and idea exchange in collaborative ventures (Holmstrom et al., 2005).

Still, if SCRUM is a step up from traditional prescriptive templates for software design, then XP (otherwise known as eXtreme Programming) is, in some respects, better yet. To begin with, XP is an iterative approach that has its iterations usually set or “timed” at only one week – though this can be adjusted to up to three weeks (Larman, 2004). XP allows for even tighter turnaround than SCRUM and may be viewed as a better tool when it comes to adaptability and quick diagnoses.

XP suffers in some areas compared to SCRUM as well. Most conspicuously, SCRUM offers a detailed product backlog – just the thing needed to avoid the sort of “Second System” debacles discussed previously. XP does away with “detailed up-front specifications” and makes no apparent effort to have plans in place spanning the length of the release cycle (Larman, 2004, p.139). As a consequence, “adaptability” and “flexibility” can easily lead into initiatives that ultimately detract from the desired final product.

In defense of eXtreme Programming, its ability to accommodate customer needs and wants is unparalleled. For one thing, while it eschews detailed written requirements, it does encourage the presence of customers “on-site” while the software is being developed. The customer becomes the product backlog. As part of the ongoing effort to reduce inefficiencies in design, eXtreme Programming has unit tests conducted on all code. Code reviews are carried out via pair programming. Code

integration takes place, literally, around the clock using what is known as “a dedicated build machine” (Larman, 2004, p.141). Naturally, all that has been described in the last sentence highlights the ways in which XP surpasses SCRUM as a design method when it comes to avoiding oversights and/or duplication in code production. Yet, while continuous customer input and things like pair programming have many laudable features, eXtreme Programming falters in ways that can be alarming.

To get to the heart of the matter, critics of XP decry the absence of detailed written requirements. Their absence means that inherent risks are not addressed prior to financial commitments being made. Likewise, the XP obsession (if that is not too strong a word) for constant re-factoring heightens the possibility of new bugs being introduced into the system. Adding to the set of potential problems, there is nothing in XP which calls for design specifications to be reviewed by senior engineers – an oversight which means that the frequent unit tests will most likely fail to find design errors. As for the argument of XP proponents that pair programming makes such reviews unnecessary, critics respond that programmers rarely know what to code without a design specification that has been reviewed by high-level engineers. Last of all, having the customer present may well be of little help; even if the on-site customer becomes the “spec” responsible for outlining how things should be since he or she will most often lack the expertise and experience needed to offer the sort of design guidance that a carefully-reviewed design specification offers (Stephens, 2007).

The third of the APM methods which warrant discussion is the Cockburn Crystal Methods “family.” Crystal Methods is a complex approach and it comes in various forms. It is not possible, unfortunately, in a paper of this size to do justice to all of them. Be that as it may, Crystal Methods are characterized by frequent delivery, close communication, and reflective improvement. To elaborate further, Alastair Cockburn’s system mandates such things as automated testing, configuration management, frequent integration; in fact, the Crystal Methods approach requires integration to take place at least twice a week. Unsurprisingly, Crystal Methods is not dissimilar (fundamentally, at any rate) to the preceding APM methods already discussed above.

In the end, while still championing close communication, Cockburn’s approach can actually lead project managers to the conclusion that their course is the right one and that any suggestions from underlings deserve to be ignored. (**Editors observation: do some managers need help with this?**)

The final Agile Project Management method – and, in the view of this writer, the best of all, is **Evolutionary Project Management**. Often referred to by its diminutive, “Evo,” it is similar to the other approaches above as it places considerably more weight upon adaptive planning than it does predictive planning. It is also iterative and defined by constant feed-back between the parties. That said, Evolutionary Project Management has certain “controlling principles” that allow it to avoid the potential pitfalls of eXtreme Programming’s dismissal of up-front specifications; at the same time, it is less prescriptive than Cockburn’s Crystals Methods and more receptive to incorporating elements from other APM methodologies.

Looking first at Evo’s controlling principles, the one that leaps out immediately is its emphasis upon financial control. Every iteration in the design process should fall between 2-5 percent of the total “initial” budget before providing or delivering a “measurable result.” Deadline control is also critical. An iteration should fall between 2 to 5 percent of the total project time. Last of all, value control is an essential part of Evolutionary Project Management: design ideas for the next iteration must (or at least should) deliver the best value to the stake-holder for the

costs involved. According to Stephen Larman (2004, p.228), the overall purpose of these control guidelines is to ensure that each following iteration is chosen in response to the most recent measurements and in response to an “evolving understanding” of the project requirements. Whereas Crystals Methods adheres to a fairly rigid matrix, Evo adheres to a set of principles that are borne in mind throughout the design process – regardless of the project in question.

In what can best be described as a departure from XP and SCRUM, Evo calls for the utilization of “impact estimation tables” that predict the impact of a new design idea as well as the utilization of “impact tables” that assess the impact of delivered solutions (Larman, 2004, pp.228-229). Suffice it to say, this is actually not that far removed from Cockburn’s Crystals matrix wherein the size and criticality of a project determines how things will be carried out. In that regard, a couple of things can be said that speak well of Evo. Firstly, Evolutionary Project Management can successfully integrate some aspects of the Crystals Methods when it comes to things like “scaling” a project; secondly, Evo – far from being the least progressive of the major APM methodologies – actually anticipated Cockburn’s approach to things by several decades. All in all, Evo warrants a great deal of praise.

Evolutionary Project Management can be held up as the epitome of smart agile and iterative development. Larman (2004, p.213) points out that the method has been used with great success in a wide range of projects since the 1970s. Beyond that, Evo is designed to deliver early results to stakeholders (which, admittedly, is true of all of the iterative methodologies – especially SCRUM – wherein discrete product functionalities or features are expected to be delivered within 30 days or one to three-week intervals) and it actively encourages customer involvement (just like XP).

Further, because it does feature a quick implementation format, designers and programmers can see the fruits of their labors right away. Lastly, it is a flexible enough tool (unlike Crystals Methods) that “bits and pieces” from other APM methodologies can be incorporated into it. The failings of Evolutionary Project Management are that its impact estimations can be time-consuming and that its short delivery iterations may prove difficult to sustain (for a closer look at the strengths and disadvantages of Evo, please see Larman, 2004, pp.242-243). When everything is considered, Evo is the one method that is most able to accommodate other methods, and the one that best combines the salient elements of Defined Process Control and Empirical Process Control.

In summary, Agile Project Management, while advocating a certain approach to doing things, is comprised of many different methods. **Evolutionary Project Management**, the oldest agile and iterative project management method, could be the best choice for your next corporate software development project.

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Managing Projects Virtually

By Liliana Buchtik, PMP

This article discusses **four major lessons learned** when managing a project virtually and working with virtual project teams. Working virtually is a trend that is growing worldwide; many leading global companies are looking for this different way of work to attract and retain key talent, to decrease costs, to protect the environment, to be more competitive and responsive to the market, and to improve employee relations, etc. This article presents things to consider before starting to manage in this scenario. It presents a particular case: when the Project Manager is thousands of miles away from the project team. The lessons presented can be applied to any virtual team.

Lesson 1- Do not assume that you know how to work virtually

If you don't have experience managing virtually, it is important from day zero you understand what it means and what you need to make it happen. It is different when the project team is in a distant location and you only interact electronically for months. You definitely need to master the virtual environment.

So my first suggestion is, don't assume you or the people around you know how to do it. Look to learn and understand how to work virtually and what tools and level of support are needed. This includes the support needed from your team, your managers, and your organization.

There is a great deal of information available about working in this context including what technology tools are needed to be effective. You need to understand what your project needs to support your project virtual team.

Once you understand the key principles of working virtually you will be able to go to the next level of performance, productivity, team trust, collaboration, communication, and results.

Lesson 2- Understand that working virtually is not better or worse than working co-located, it is just different

Managing virtually requires different skills from the project manager, senior managers, the project team, and some key stakeholders.

Sometimes there is the option of avoiding the virtual team; but sometimes it is a requirement. The needed resources (human/materials) may not be available in your location. It is important to be prepared to manage a virtual force. As Ann Bamesberger, Vice President of Open Work Services at Sun Microsystems Inc.¹ said: *"knowing how to manage a virtual force is an imperative of the new millennium."*

For many companies, working virtually has given them opportunities they needed to save their company. There is an extensive list of benefits and savings for the company, the employees, and the environment that virtual teams can provide. However, working virtually not only requires different skills, it also requires specific training, different support and technology tools that are not optional. Not having the specific skills, training, tools, and support for this environment are strong reasons why the project could fail in the virtual environment.

One way to improve the probability of success is to provide formal training on virtual work for the involved stakeholders. In general, we believe that training the project manager is vital. However, it is also required for the team, and other stakeholders that need to interact virtually. If the stakeholders don't understand how to work in this different environment, and how to support the project manager and the team, then the chance for success are reduced.

Lesson 3- Managing virtually needs the right tools

There are two essential aspects that stakeholders need to understand.

First, by definition a **virtual team is a team that interacts electronically rather than interacting face-to-face**. If the team does not have the right technology to use, or they have it but they are not required to use it; then the organization is not maximizing opportunities and doing all they can to succeed.

Management needs to ensure that the virtual teams have the technology tools needed, and that they are being used. This can be done by establishing the team norms or policies related to the use of the tools.

Most of the communication challenges in a virtual team emerge as a result of the lack of face to face interaction. It is imperative to provide the tools needed to aid with the lack of face to face interaction.

Second, the Project Manager needs to learn how to master the technology tools, and needs to communicate to the team which tools will be used in each context, and to establish in the team norms those specific to virtual teams. For example, if the team needs to use a whiteboard to interact with people co-located and people virtually, then a physical whiteboard should not be allowed, and a web conferencing whiteboard should be used instead. That way everyone gets to see the whiteboard.

There is important literature around the use of different technology tools with virtual teams and in which context each of those tools is most effective that the project managers who work virtually should review. Examples of these tools are videoconferencing, web conferencing, teleconferencing, instant messaging, e-mail, phones, collaboration tools, virtual worlds, social networking tools, etc.

I have found that it can be difficult to make some stakeholders understand that we need more than the use of e-mail and phones for a virtual team. The same way we cannot use a plane to navigate the sea, we cannot use a phone and e-mails for each need we have to communicate virtually. There is an appropriate transportation means for each way of travel, and there is an appropriate technology tool for each virtual communication requirement.

Any of these tools can be better depending on who we need to communicate with, in which context, and what the urgency of the message is. For example, when we need to have the closest match to face to face meetings, to see body language, to have formal meetings, etc., videoconferencing is probably the best option. When we need to show a presentation with slides and visuals, share the desktop, or use a

whiteboard; then web conferencing is the best choice. When we need to see if someone is available, or ask a quick question to get an immediate answer, then the chat is a great option. E-mail is an especially challenging tool to use across different cultures, and when technical team members are involved there may be challenges to understand text based messages, and sometimes different interpretations may be done according to each culture.

It is risky to assume that we can work virtually with the same tools that we work co-located. Working virtually has its own particularities, challenges, and environment. Some of these tools can be used in both environments, others are different.

Lesson 4 - Company and management support are imperative

A virtual project means a virtual project team supporting virtual rules and a virtual environment.

You will not succeed without the support of the team and especially the support of management who will provide the team with the needed tools, and will make sure the norms needed to support the virtual team are in place.

The support of the managers and executives for the virtual environment can be seen through different actions. For example, making sure needed decisions are made to facilitate the purchase, installation and/or support of the needed tools, and making sure that there are policies to ensure that the team knows what is expected from them in terms of the effective use of those tools.

When we work virtually in a company that already has in place formal programs to work virtually, then the effort to support virtual teams is simpler because the policies are already in place and the tools are in use. However, not all companies have experience working virtually, so the less experience, formality, and maturity we have around this; the more effort it will require from the project manager and the managers to be successful.

Another important aspect in regards to the management support has to do with “preaching with their example.” If a manager says: you need to support the virtual team members, but then this manager is not including them in important project discussions, decisions, meetings held on site, etc., then he/she is sending contradictory messages to the team that “it is not as important to have the virtual team members involved.” **Supporting the virtual team means involving the virtual team members as much as we would involve any co-located team members.**

There is an article² that should be required reading in which a manager of a virtual team gives recommendations to other managers saying: “managing a virtual team is challenging but not impossible; *it will require that managers examine their management style so that their remote people feel that their access to them is as easy as the access the local team has. Manage the remote people like they are local, and manage the local people like they are remote.* The most successful approach to me was to have a scheduled time for everybody to have access to me. I made it a point to schedule a little more time with the remote people than the local ones.”

Conclusion

Working or managing projects virtually has so many aspects to be discussed that an entire book could be written. This article focused on discussing four important lessons to consider when we need to manage a project team virtually.

The trend of working/managing virtually continues to grow. In the first six months of 2008, leading companies like Sun Microsystems have around 50%³ of their employees working virtually, IBM has 40% of their employees without offices in the company. Many younger employees at Boeing Corp prefer to work virtually than co-located. They value the flexibility given to them to balance their work life with their personal life, and for Boeing it is an imperative to attract and retain young talent. For managers at Intel who manage virtual teams of more than 200 people, the virtual work program is the way they can gain/retain key and creative talent that otherwise they would lose. Working virtually is giving global companies the possibility to reduce their costs like Sun Microsystems who saves USD 300 million a year in real estate costs. It also provides the opportunity to extend the working day from 8 hours a day to 24 hour coverage.

So, the question is why managing virtually and virtual projects succeed in some companies and not always in others? Why sometimes they are as productive as co-located teams, and sometimes they don't provide the same results as co-located teams?

I hope this article provides some lessons to think about some of the reasons and answers. I have had opportunities to learn from the different virtual teams I have worked with. As time goes by, I am more and more convinced of the powerful advantages offered by the use of virtual teams, so I challenge you to keep on learning about this topic and to see how to fill in the gaps you may have in your virtual teams. There are great companies with great results in their virtual work programs; these are the companies we should look at as examples and as a source of information, motivation and strength.

Working virtually is here to stay. Those companies and project managers who take advantage of this concept will be more competitive.

Working virtually can be an incredible way to decrease project costs while retaining key talent for the project. It will require learning how to work in this different environment.

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Liliana Buchtik, PMP has fifteen years in the Information Technology and/or project management field. She is President of Buchtik Global, a firm providing remote project management and project management consulting and training services in English and Spanish globally to customers like the PMI Global Operations Center in the USA. Liliana has also been an IT Project Manager. She has worked in Latin America, North America and Europe for private companies, government organizations, and not for profit organizations. She has participated in one of the PMBOK Guide translation projects.

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She is a speaker and keynote at international and regional project management events and has been a key leader and volunteer for PMI. She is especially recognized for her contributions to the project management profession and the development of the profession in Latin America. In 2008, she was recognized by the GovSIG for her outstanding contributions to the PMI ideals and principles and the support to the SIG. She has been in many volunteer positions for the past 6 years at national, regional and international level with PMI including having been in the PMI Board of Directors Other Committee EAC in 2005.

Project Management – Challenge to Professional Responsibility

By Ralf Schwerdtner

Along with knowledge of a set of proper techniques, project management can be considered primarily a challenge to personal traits and emotional intelligence. This article identifies some core qualities that a project manager should possess in order to succeed. It also attempts to analyse and discuss the human characteristics behind those qualities.

The position of a project manager in the organisation

Being a member in a hierarchy of an organisation usually gives people the feeling of safety and supports their integration into a group. In this environment, it is easier to become familiar with new tasks or to take responsibility for work to be done. If something goes wrong, the hierarchy network provides protection. In general this environment helps to develop someone's self-confidence and makes work a place to fulfil safety and belongingness needs to a certain degree.

In many cases this is totally different for a project manager. He/she often stands outside the organisational structure, supported by project sponsors who are mainly interested in results and deliverables rather than in personal relationships. Often the interests of sponsors clash with the interests of other groups in the organisation, or may even require spoiling the old structures to establish new ones. In this conflicting environment, someone may never develop self-confidence, so he/she must already possess it and consider conflicts as challenges.

Leading project teams

Project teams have some significant differences in comparison to teams in functional divisions. Project teams may be less homogeneous because projects often require skill sets in different disciplines. They may need people with different educational levels to perform all the different tasks in a project. Furthermore project teams are usually less stable than other teams, because many specialists join the team only for the time they do their tasks. Additionally, project team members may not be naturally collocated in one spot. This is often too expensive or not practical and so-called virtual teams are used where team members hardly ever or never meet personally, but must communicate via electronic media. Members of a project team are aware of the fact that their job will finish with the end of the project. This may make them feel insecure about their future and may influence their commitment to the project.

Looking at all those circumstances, in a worst case scenario, a project manager may have to lead a team which is strongly inhomogeneous, has a high fluctuation, is spread around the world, with members who hardly know each other and don't feel very comfortable. On top of this, the project manager has in most projects very little actual authority over the team members.

Dealing with different stakeholders in a project

As a member in a hierarchy of an organisation, one's world of communication links is quite manageable. The boss is the link to the more senior levels in the company while peers represent someone to go to

lunch with and discusses day to day business and personal issues. Employees are familiar people and it is known how to treat them. A project manager lives in another world. Having just finished a hard bargaining session with his sponsor from senior management about some extra money for risk mitigation, he/she may have to settle a dispute among a group of upset workers.

This potentially extreme situation illustrates that a project manager should be able to adapt his/her communication style within minutes across different hierarchy levels and topics. He/she has to cope with different language styles, word choices and personal appearances. This requires a lot of personal flexibility and an understanding of social interaction in different areas of society.

A Project Manager's Behaviour Requirements

The examples above point to the facts that a project manager must be very self-confident, willing to solve conflicts and have a strong ability to put ideas across. On the other hand, he/she must be empathetic, impressive and very flexible in language and social understanding. The key to fulfil all these demands is the project manager's professional competence, knowledge, interpersonal skills and personal integrity.

Knowledge

The project manager must know what is right and what is wrong in their own organization and project environment. When starting a new project, a project manager should be informed about technical aspects, legal requirements, ethical standards and social norms that he/she might encounter during project execution. Independently, a project manager must always plan to extend his/her general knowledge. This includes actual news from newspapers, magazine or TV and radio, as well as a good broad educational background.

A broad educational background assumes some knowledge of basic principles in humanities, natural and social sciences (e.g. biology, philosophy, economics and physics), historical backgrounds, different languages or famous literature. A project manager with this background will not only gain respect from his/her counterparts, but will be able to express ideas in different ways and clarify topics by finding examples in familiar areas of their conversational partners. Finally a broad knowledge provides a good basis for research and solution finding in a complex environment.

Interpersonal Skills

Having adequate knowledge is important, but it is even more important to show the right behaviour at the right time and to handle various situations among people successfully. This can not be acquired solely from books, but requires training in communication skills, in reading body language and in applied psychology. A project manager should watch and listen to opponents and team mates to be aware of their current mood and needs. Further, he/she should practice to create

an appropriate atmosphere using his/her referent power and his/her facilitating and promotional communications style.

Not all attendees of a group may automatically follow. In this case a project manager should have learned to switch to an authoritarian and confronting manner to get general alignment within a group. People are harder to manage if they have conflicts. A project manager should be able to fathom what kind of resolution is best and then smooth the parties involved or try finding consensus or perform problem solving with a fundamental discussion.

Such competence in handling people can not be achieved in a two week training course. The project manager needs training or coaching for a longer time period combined with intensive practical experience.

Personal Integrity

Knowledge and skills provide aids from outside for personal development which can be absorbed, adapted and then used in various situations. But it may not help to listen and watch if the input is strongly filtered by one's own narrowed perspective. In this case the receiver only hears what he/she wants to hear rather than the information the sender wants to transmit.

The removal of personal filters is not an easy task. It requires awareness about oneself including hidden wishes, weaknesses, and fears. These areas can be explored by professional support like coaching/formalized assessments where talking about truths is possible.

Overall the development of a fair-minded view of oneself is an ongoing process in a project manager's life to include successes as well

as failures and represents a continuous self-assessment of personal actions and behaviour.

By the way, a good companion along the way of this ongoing process is PMI's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Its rules for responsibility, respect, fairness and honesty provide good measuring points for your own personality.

Since completing his Master of Engineering degree at the University of Aachen in Germany, Schwerdtner has worked for over ten years as Software Developer and IT Architect for logistic and financial companies. In a large number of IT projects, he has had the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge in all phases of the software development cycle.

Five years ago he started managing IT projects in the finance world. His activities include the setup and leading of development teams, communication management with customers and stakeholders, people recruitment and support of sourcing activities to Manila and Eastern Europe.

Schwerdtner increased his project management skills with several training classes culminating with certification as Project Management Professional(PMP). My languages are German and English.

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Risk as a Barking Dog

By Andy Willums, MS, MA, PMP, SSBB

Risk Management is viewed in different ways and executed with varying degrees of rigor. Some organizations are content with identifying risks at the beginning of a project. Other organizations manage risk with mathematical analysis using estimated cost and schedule impacts. Most organizations use an approach to managing risks on their projects that lies somewhere in the middle. With the definition that a risk is a potential problem, let's use a simple analogy and view risk as a barking dog next door.

The potential problem of a barking dog next door is that it could come and bite you. In this situation, you'd likely begin to evaluate both the probability and impact of being bitten. The probability, or likelihood, of being bitten would depend on some set of criteria such as the people-biting history of this particular dog, your own history of being bitten by a dog, the distance between you and the dog, aggressive behavior the dog may be showing, or other factors you deem important. The impact of being bitten depends on such things as size or breed of the dog and the current state of your own health.

To manage this barking dog next door situation, we can act on mitigations and plan for contingencies. Mitigations are actions we can take before the dog bites to influence the likelihood of being bitten and/or the impact of being bitten. Mitigation actions affecting the likelihood of being bitten could include putting up a fence, digging a trench, or moving to avoid the risk. Mitigation actions affecting the impact of being bitten could include wearing armor or layers of clothing. Contingencies are plans for us to enact should the risk, or potential problem, come true. Contingency plans covering the dog biting scenario could include having someone at home and a first aid kit ready.

Unfortunately, not all risks are as obvious as a barking dog nor might they have as clear an indication as to when they might be triggered.

In your projects, the project manager can actively manage risks by identifying them, assigning probability and impact values (High, Medium, Low), listing and acting on mitigations, and planning for contingencies. This can be done continually in an appropriate forum such as project team meetings. The tracking could be as simple as rows in a spreadsheet log.

If all projects in your organization were actively managed for risks, you could be addressing potential problems earlier and elevating risk trends to management.

Andy Willums is the Director of Program Management for Sage's Employer Solutions. He is certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP) and a Six Sigma Black Belt with over 16 years of experience in software project management and process improvement. Andy received his MA in Management from Bellevue University and his MS in Computer and Information Science from Troy State University. Prior to joining Sage, he earned a Software CMM Level 3 assessment as Director of Software Process Improvement for Certegy Check Services, served as the CMMI Program Manager for TYBRIN Corporation and led the Project Office and Process Improvement efforts at Thomson Multimedia. Previously, he held a variety of technical and management positions in the U.S. Air Force for 12 years.

The Mission of the ISSIG

The mission of the PMI Information Systems SIG is to become *the* professional IS and IT project management organization of choice by providing the greatest value to current and prospective worldwide members through the delivery of quality and unique services and products in a cost-effective manner. The Mission will be accomplished through:

- Disseminating state-of-the-art project management practices.
- Member education.
- Members sharing and exchanging information.
- Championing professionalism of IS and IT project management.
- Serving as a networking and collaborative hub for all industries and all project management practitioner levels by supporting corporations, government agencies, academic institutions, subject matter experts, trainers, consultants, vendors, other components of PMI and other organizations that contribute to the profession of project management.

RFP, WBS and COTS Implementation Planning

By Christine Bruce & Yong Li, PMP

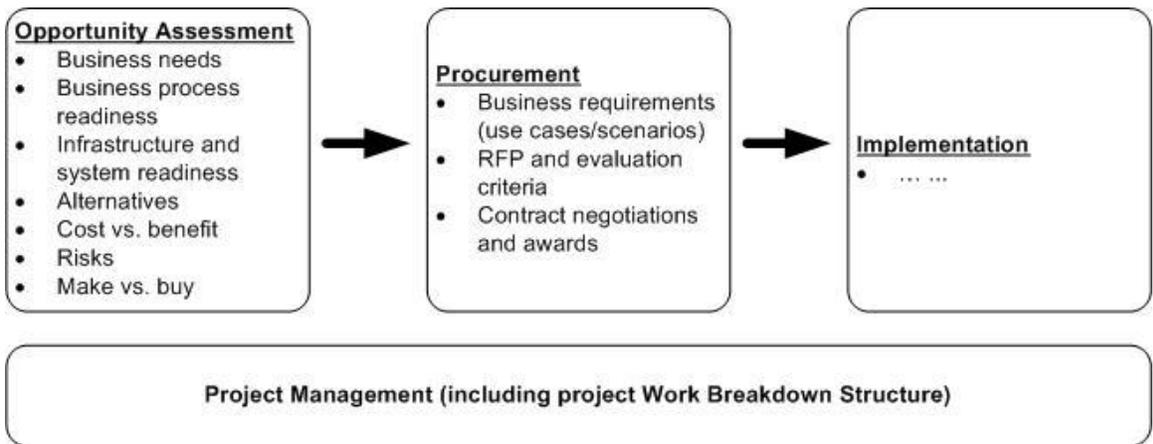
Have you heard of COTS (commercial off-the-shelf) software? Do you need to integrate COTS software components into your system development? Perhaps you even use COTS software packages to fulfill your business needs? On the surface, it seems that a COTS implementation project might be a very simple one – purchase the COTS packages and make them work in your environment. However in reality, COTS implementation projects can be very risky and challenging.

The authors have undertaken quite a number of COTS implementation projects. Each project is unique with respect to the business requirements, COTS applications, platforms and organizational cultures. That being the case, the approach discussed here is not intended to be a silver bullet, but rather a work-in-progress (of a project management framework) and a report from the trenches (of lessons learned) intended to assist project management professionals.

COTS

Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) software is used to reduce development time, lower systems costs and gain continual product improvement in functionality and capability of the system. Typically, COTS software has the following characteristics:

- Developed and supplied by an external vendor or vendors
- Sold, leased or licensed to an acquiring organization
- Tailored to meet business requirements and used by the end business users in the acquiring organization
- Integrated into the IT infrastructure and architectures of the acquiring organization unless an application service provider (ASP) model is used
- Supported and evolved by the vendor(s)
- Has a profit driven commercial product
- Its life cycle could be impacted by market pressures and economic conditions



- The acquiring organization has to track the vendor product releases, configuration management and ongoing training within the project duration and beyond.

To mitigate these risks, it is desired and essential to use a thorough procurement process such as Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a suitable vendor. In addition, systematic project management practices must be applied to ensure the successful implementation of the COTS software packages.

Lessons Learned:

- Not all COTS software packages are created equal, therefore performing a market scan of potential vendors is well worth the investment.
- In most cases we may not want state of the art COTS components; but mature ones.

RFP and WBS

As an integral part of the COTS implementation project, a Request for Proposal (RFP) process could be utilized to select suitable vendors and COTS products as well as system integrators if necessary.

A COTS software implementation project has many potential risks:

- The acquiring organization is not the developer or even the owner of the COTS software, thus has no control over the functionality, performance and evolution of the COTS product.
- Very often, either the business requirements need to be bent to fit the COTS software or significant effort is required to customize the COTS software to meet the business requirements.
- Sometimes, extra effort is required for the acquiring organization to build hardware infrastructure and/or develop software interfaces to incorporate COTS components.

A typical RFP contains the following sections:

- Project Overview and Administrative Information
- Functional and Technical Requirements
- Management Requirements
- Vendor Qualifications and References
- Vendor Section
- Pricing Section
- Contracts and Licenses

Figure 1 – Vendor/Product selection process model

An emerging trend is to evaluate vendors on the completeness and responsiveness of their project management plans (including their Work Breakdown Structures (WBS) against the statement of work or use cases) and the project team assigned to the implementation.

The rationale of the evaluation is to determine

- A vendor has adequate and relevant experience for similar projects
- A vendor understands the requirements and tasks
- A vendor can demonstrate appropriate resources
- A vendor has appropriate management/implementation skills

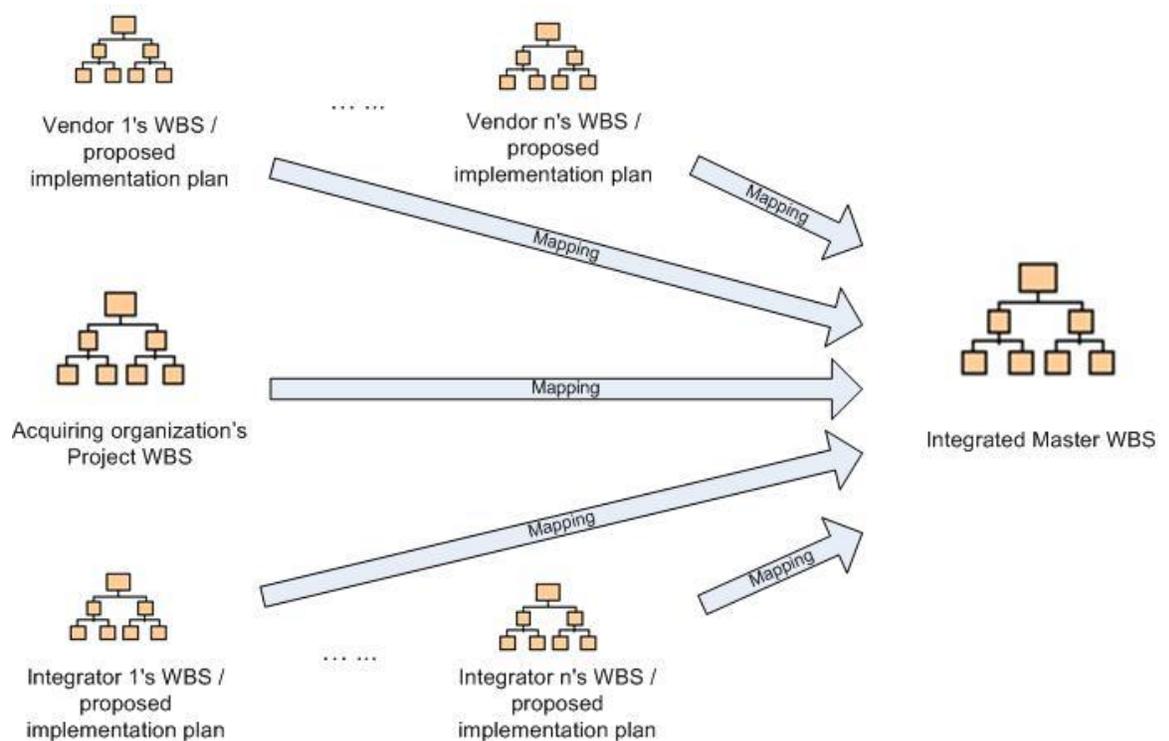


Figure 2 – Consolidation and mapping of project WBS and contract WBSs

In addition to other RFP evaluation criteria (such as vendors' pricing models, appropriate products and functionality), the acquiring organization's confidence in the vendors' ability to meet deadlines and evidence of successfully managing similar projects will be a primary consideration. Thus, special consideration should be given to vendors who propose a detailed project plan with sufficient breakdown of tasks and steps to demonstrate a complete understanding of the project.

Lessons Learned:

- There is a tendency for vendors to oversell. So in addition to the statement of work, provide vendors with end-to-end use cases/scenarios and request that they demonstrate the proposals against the use cases/scenarios.
- The project team should have a big picture – always keep life cycle issues in mind. For example, the project team not only needs to consider the one-time project cost of the COTS software implementation, but also the maintenance cost after the implementation.
- Flexibility with respect to requirements is vital for a COTS software implementation project. COTS software packages may guide or even dictate the requirements to some extent.
- The project team should manage the trade-off between requirements and COTS software customization to avoid problems and realize the benefits of COTS software implementations.

Implementation Planning In Action

After COTS product(s)/vendor(s) and integrator(s) are selected, the project manager and team members of the COTS implementation project need to put all the pieces together by consolidating all the WBS/proposed implementation plans into an “integrated master WBS/plan.”

The COTS implementation planning can then be derived by using the integrated master WBS and project management methodologies:

- Integrated master WBS → all the work required, and only the work required to complete the COTS implementation successfully → project scope baseline → project scope management plan

- Integrated master WBS → schedule activities + sequencing & dependencies → project schedule baseline + milestones & critical paths → project schedule management plan
- Integrated master WBS → activity based costing (ABC) → project cost baseline & cost allocations → project cost management plan
- Integrated master WBS → test strategies, test plans, test cases, test data, test tools, test scripts, test environment → project quality management plan
- Integrated master WBS → organizational breakdown structure (OBS) + resource breakdown structure (RBS) + resource availability → responsibility assignment matrix (RAM) → project staffing management plan
- Integrated master WBS → When, Where, Who, What, Why and How to communicate → project communication management plan
- Integrated master WBS → risk breakdown structure (RBS) → risk register → project risk management plan
- Integrated master WBS → updated project procurement management plan
- Integrated master WBS → project financial plan + change management plan + project control plan + contract management plan + vendor relationship management plan + acceptance plan + ...

Lessons Learned:

- Different vendors or integrators use different project management terminologies, methodologies and tools. The project team should unify the WBSs/plans into the “integrated master WBS/plan” complying with the acquiring organization's project management standards.
- Gaining vendor cooperation occurs before the contract is signed and the ongoing vendor relationship management is very important to the successful implementation of the COTS software.

Summary

A framework for COTS implementation planning is discussed in this article. Our emphasis is on:

- Risk mitigation by using a RFP process
- An integrated master WBS by consolidating project WBS from acquiring organization and contract WBSs from vendors and integrators

Our back-to-basic approach is based on the following simple ideas:

- Simplify complex tasks into much more manageable ones.
- Learn from yesterday's lessons, plan per today's situations and face tomorrow's challenges.

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Write a Review Article!

By Richard Fox, Editor, *ISSIG Review*

I would like to offer an opportunity to each of you – our loyal *Review* readers, to become a published author. That's right – document your PM experience – good or bad! Create an article that all *Review* readers can learn from. Any of you who hold the PMP certification will not only provide a good learning experience; but you will also gain 15 PDUs toward renewing your certification.

We have had a remarkable and welcome response with a number of first-time authors submitting their ideas and experiences. Some have already been published, with others scheduled to be published in upcoming issues. So, if you didn't send one in for this issue, but have an interesting story to tell or proven advice to offer to our readers, now is your opportunity.

We offer simple guidelines for your article. We like articles that are practical and real that offer some true value to our readers. The usual length of a *Review* article is between 1,500 and 2,500 words, but this is very variable and dependant on the article.

Remember, “you do not have to be a great writer!” Editors can and will “polish” your article (but your name is shown as the author).

How about it? – how many of you have an interesting experience about some aspect of IT project management that you would be willing to share with the rest of our readers.

Feel free to contact me if you have any interest in becoming a published author. Think of the impact when you show your colleagues and manager(s) your published article!

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By Teresa Colon, PMP

Welcome to our first issue of the PMI Information Systems Specific Interest Group Review of 2009! It all started about 14 years ago when a few project managers got together at a PMI Global Congress to discuss Information Systems project management issues. The PMI Information Systems SIG was chartered in 1995 and serves a global community of over 12,000 members.

Every year the PMI Information Systems SIG Board of Directors meets to lay out the goals for the coming year, align them with the Chair's vision and PMI's Strategic Goals. It was at this meeting, that I decided my vision would be to **Help our Members Gain Increased Value**. We will strive to provide programs that have an added value to your membership. The members of PMI Information Systems SIG come from a broad range of industries, but all share a common interest in the professional development of the of project managers for information systems and technology projects. We understand our diversity and need to adapt our programs. We also review our plans and make adjustments as necessary. We are all members first and are always looking for ways to improve and cannot do so without your feedback.

This year for our annual Professional Development Symposium we are collaborating with the PMI Montreal Chapter. Our Professional Development Symposium will be held in Montreal Canada this year and is set for June 10 through June 13, 2009. Our theme is **Innovation, Inspiration, and Individuals**. We are planning some exciting presentations that can give you the tools to apply once you return to work. The Symposium Planning team is always looking for volunteers. If you are interested, send an email message to Johnny Mo, Director, Professional Development at professional.development@pmiissig.org. I hope to get to meet and greet you there.

In March of this year, the Information Systems SIG collaborated with the IT&T SIG and the Scrum Alliance to participate in a Scrum Gathering in Orlando, Florida. Participating in a Scrum

Gathering is an important step in expanding Scrum knowledge for Scrum users of all skill levels, as well as a great introductory opportunity for those who are investigating the possibility of using the Scrum process. This effort provides more exposure for our members who manage technology projects today and requires PMs to be versed in more than just the PMBOK®. To learn more about Scrum, just read Jesse Fewell's interesting article on Agile Project Management.

There are also the new changes with the PMBOK®, Program and Portfolio standards. We will make every effort to keep you informed of these changes on our Web site and the newsletter. For those of you who are not certified, this is the right time to get certified before June 2009, when the new exam is available. These articles and more will give you some help. If you have an idea for an article, let us know.

I'd also like to introduce two new members to the Information Systems SIG management team. Please welcome Tina Hayden, Director of Administration and Vikas Sharma, Director of Component Affairs. These new members come to us by way of Atlanta and Washington DC respectively. Both have volunteered at their local Chapters and have now joined our management team. They have lots to contribute and are eager to support our vision.

There are quite a few open board positions available. As always, we cannot do this alone; it is with volunteers that want to make a difference. The Information Systems SIG is seeking skilled, experienced and knowledgeable leaders to serve on our committee teams. By volunteering with the Information Systems SIG board, you will have the opportunity to network, gain new or refine existing knowledge in several areas (finances, marketing, etc.), exercise/improve your leadership skills, and gain PDUs for maintaining your certification. All of this happens in a safe environment, working with a team of colleagues and friends. If you would love to make a difference and be a part of increasing your membership value, please let me know. Note that volunteering on a PMI Board provides you with PDUs for your certification.

During this time of change, we are all change agents who must adapt to our environment to deliver the project successfully on time and within budget. We have a lot to do in 2009 but most importantly we have a responsibility to you our members! Help us to change our programs as you see fit.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Fratently,
Teresa Colon, PMP
Chair
PMI-Information Systems SIG
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PMI *ISSIG* Review Availability Announcement

By Richard K. Fox, MS, PMP, CBAP
Editor, IS-SIG Review

In order to better serve our members and other subscribers, we are very pleased to announce that the *PMI ISSIG Review* will be published electronically 4 times a year in **April, June, September, and December 2009**. Also please note that the 2008 4th issue is currently ready for download from http://www.pmi-issig.org/Documents/ISSIGReview/tabid/219/DMXModule/734/Command/Core_Download/Default.aspx?EntryId=910.

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