

Project Intelligence – Spring 2011

Stakeholder Management - essential to project delivery success?

Barry Sacks, Pelicam Managing Practitioner

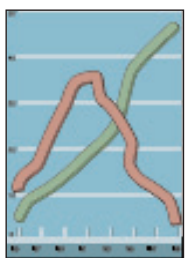
A recent gathering of influential senior business leaders, involved in project delivery, provided the opportunity for a straw poll as to “what is the most important factor essential to project delivery success?” The group was asked to select one factor from the following list:

- **Project duration**
- **IT engineering/technology**
- **Stakeholder management**
- **Shape of the delivery organisation**
- **Steering committee contribution**
- **Project management competency**
- **Delivery approach/methodology**

Is it surprising that the majority felt that stakeholder management was the most influential factor that could determine the success of a project? Why don't organisations, when analysing failed projects, conclude that stakeholder management was a contributory factor?

It may be of course that those organisations that actually undertake internal project reviews are not willing to accept that the senior stakeholders were responsible for the project failure. It can be too easy to look outwardly at suppliers or other external mitigating factors for the cause of failure.

Unfortunately project reviews or “lessons learnt” from failed projects are rarely documented, are rarely publicised and the feedback is rarely put in to corrective actions or processes to prevent recurrence of the issues. Therefore, in most cases the cause of project failure is not even analysed.



A review of Pelicam Health Checks carried out over the last decade would support this assumption. Pelicam's causal analysis of these projects reveals the true root cause affecting project delivery, many directly associated with poor stakeholder management. The external mitigating factors were simply an effect masking the cause of the issues that led to project failure.

Appointing an external organisation able to carry out a detailed project review objectively and free of internal politics and sentiment can overcome this inability or reluctance to identify the root cause of failure. An external review can often identify

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the core issues across the organisation. A wider perspective will often enable preventative actions to be taken that influence a cultural change across the organisation. This will steer towards best practice so that issues do not repeatedly occur.

So what can project practitioners do at the outset of projects and what skills and tools do they need to ensure stakeholders can be managed effectively? The ability to communicate and negotiate effectively is a core skill that every project practitioner must possess. Knowing what to communicate, how, when and to whom will shape the relationships they will have with the various project stakeholders. A number of project management approaches also provide tool guidance to project practitioners aimed specifically at managing stakeholders. These tools are often based around the four core factors known to influence stakeholder's attitudes towards a project:

- **Importance:** measures the priority given to the project by stakeholders and addresses their perception regarding the likelihood of project success.
- **Influence:** measures the degree to which stakeholders have the influence to affect the project outcome.
- **Commitment:** measures stakeholder availability to participate in the project and to take direct responsibility as well as identifies conflicts limiting or preventing participation.
- **Engagement:** measures stakeholder's willingness to stay “on board” with the project and clarifies who are the active project participants.

By asking stakeholders relevant questions based around these four factors it is possible to map out a stakeholder matrix. This matrix in turn identifies the potential project strengths and weaknesses and ways that these can be used to influence a more positive project outcome. The matrix then provides an ongoing project management tool for developing and executing a relationship strategy for each stakeholder.

The stakeholder matrix can be used very effectively by project practitioners but it only has limited impact as a “bottom up” lever. If the senior stakeholders are not aligned organisationally

or are not personally accountable for the project's success then at some time or other critical project issues can emerge. As the disengaged stakeholders look to distance themselves from the perceived problems, not recognising their actions may be the root cause, the project spirals out of control.

A strong "top down" lever that can be used to complement and support stakeholder management is to align stakeholder KPIs to those of the project. If a senior stakeholder's own recognition and reward is dependent on the project outcome there is a much greater chance that the stakeholder will do everything within their power to overcome barriers to success and to ensure a successful delivery.

In summary:
Stakeholder management should be considered essential to

guarantee project delivery success. However, it is often overlooked or underestimated. Strong communication skills, a clear relationship strategy plan and stakeholder KPI alignment to the goals and objectives of the project. These should all be considered essential to any project practitioner looking to ensure a successful project delivery outcome.

Comment on Barry's article:

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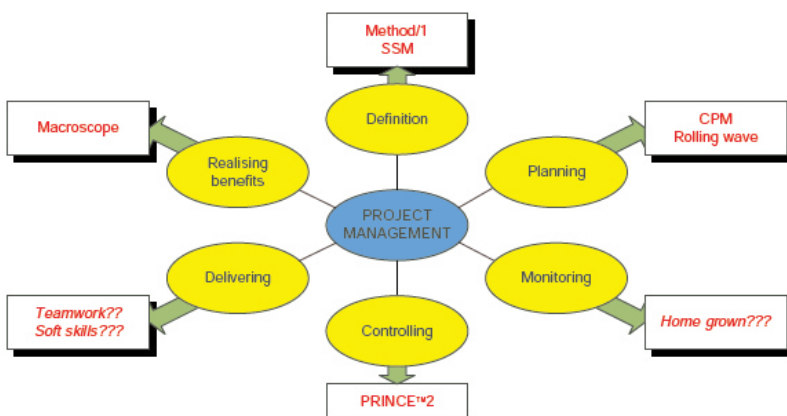


Project Management Methodology - There is no 'one size fits all'

Neil Richardson, Pelicam Managing Practitioner

There is no "one-size-fits-all" project management methodology. Success relies upon the expertise of the project manager to engage the right tools, techniques and people. So how can you bring together all the strategic ideas, knowledge, skills, tools and techniques that enable a project manager to understand what it may take to deliver a successful project?

"Project management is the process by which projects are defined, planned, monitored, controlled and delivered such that the agreed benefits are realised." APM BOK



The (admittedly) simplistic (but nonetheless correct) diagram clearly demonstrates the limitations of what we currently think of as project management methods.

According to the various venerable organisations Project Management ensures that we must:

- Understand the need the project will address
- Determine success criteria and benefits
- Define what has to be accomplished
- Plan how to deliver required accomplishments
- Monitor and control to ensure progress is in line with objectives
- Manage resources effectively

Yet think through (for a moment) which single methodology does all this? None!

- The APM address this by having 52 knowledge areas organised into 7 sections.
- The PMI® Guide to the Project Management Body of

Knowledge has volumes that cover a framework of processes, their inputs and outputs

- PRINCE2™ seeks to provide (only) a means of controlling a project environment
- ISO 10006 provides guidelines to quality aspects of project management
- BS 6079:2000 offers a guide (only) to Project Management.

Project management as a discipline recognises that there is a set of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques that enable organisations to successfully deliver projects that include:

- Organisation, scope, cost, schedule, quality, communications, risk and opportunity, procurement, integration

Yet over two thirds of projects with a significant IT element fail to deliver to time, cost and quality, let alone realise organisational benefits. The introduction of professional qualifications such as PRINCE, MSP, APM and PMP has standardised "what" project managers should do, but not "how, when or why". Similarly training courses are rarely trained by people who have ever done, or still do, the job!

Organisations need to be able to address these and many other issues head-on and provide a coherent means by which:

- The true 'need' of a project can be addressed
- Appropriate criteria for success are identified so that benefits can be tracked and delivered
- A single definition of what has to be achieved is agreed
- A coherent and realistic plan is in place
- Control is established to proactively manage the project (not react to mistakes)
- Resources necessary to deliver are managed effectively.

Comment on Neil's article:

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The Culture Beast - Ignore it at your peril

Alan Ogrizovic, Pelicam Practitioner



One of the biggest barriers to achieving sustainable business change is culture, or as I refer to it, the culture beast. Senior managers within organisations can do a great job at researching

opportunities, identifying a case for change and preparing a flawless business case, but if this change involves changes to individual roles, behaviour change, relationship changes (i.e. the people aspects of change), as most major changes do, then ignore the culture beast at your peril. The change may also challenge the core values of the organisation's brand. The problem with the beast is that it is not immediately visible, and therefore difficult to grab hold of. Yes there are signals above the surface that indicate what the cultural challenge may be, for example staff attitude surveys, but the problem still lies beneath. The culture beast is highly resilient as it has formed in the majority of cases over many years.

So what happens when a major change occurs that requires some cultural shift, even if relatively minor? Well the culture beast is intelligent, it will appear as if it has gone to sleep whilst everyone at the Project Executive Committee pat each other on the back prior to announcing yet another major change. As the change is socialised amongst its targets, the culture beast will remain in the background, not choosing to surface whilst everyone is in "happy talk" mode about the new change.

Recently, I learned of an interesting example of the culture beast de-railing what seemed like a very successful business change. This was a major business change that involved acquisition, outsourcing and a major change to its operating model. All seemed to be working well, the change was completed within schedule and business executives, still in happy talk were patting each other on the backs. Part of the change involved the outsourcing of laboratory testing from a remote site in Scotland to Scandinavia, a far larger and more technologically advanced organisation. The change involved changing the roles of the current experts, from carrying out the experiments and trials, to that of governing the entire process.

All seemed to be going well, the two teams had engaged and worked out what needed to be done, no major entries in the 'issues and risk' registers therefore. There didn't appear to be any major surface resistance, and it provided an opportunity for a couple of people to leave on favourable terms. The new site in Scandinavia was visited, and all looked in great shape.

Around nine months after the change was complete and declared a resounding success, the HR Business Partner decided that it was time to pay a visit to the remote site in Scotland to see how they were getting along with their new governance role. She arrived and was taken aback when she saw the laboratory working at full steam, literally. When she challenged the head of the function about the changes in roles & responsibilities, she was met with stern defence. A governance process had been set up as planned, but the problem was, the current team, with years of knowledge just didn't trust their new partner. There had been a few errors in the early days of the change, so replacing people's eyes and brains with technology was a big risk in the eyes of the dedicated team, and they all had the interests of the organisation at heart. Their resistance to change manifested itself in them setting up a duplicate testing process, just to make sure.

The problem was that this was duplicating costs, and eroding the benefits associated with the change, and relationships with the outsourced organisation was strained as there was a clear lack of trust. So, had this change been accomplished, or had the culture beast pounced at a time when the organisation were off guard! Was the real reason for the duplication that they enjoyed the hands on nature of the job they had been doing for years, and an unwillingness to let go?



So, how can we take, or work with this culture beast, because we all know that changes that challenge existing culture will be necessary for progression and growth. Here are 5 important tips for working with the beast:

- 1 Great sponsorship** - this involves really engaging, regular and sensitive communication at all levels in the organisation. The sponsor should be prepared for, and seen to be making personal sacrifices in order to make the change, and will ideally be there at the end
- 2 High involvement of people through the change process.** This will help resistance come to the surface rather than seeping underground where it is usually more disruptive
- 3 Ensure fair consequence management is in place,** recognising & rewarding positive behaviours and individuals who move with the change, and finding a sensitive way to deal with those who choose not to conform. This may be in the form of further involvement, additional support or in some cases, individuals leaving the organisation/function
- 4 Don't celebrate success too early** and take the eye off the ball. The beast will be waiting to pounce, usually when there are a few teething problems associated with the change. Keep going, keep re-enforcing, keep communicating so that the change becomes firmly embedded
- 5 Management control** - look for real evidence and not just words or assurances from people

Of course, many organisations have managed to work with the beast and affect sustainable change, but more continue to fail. And once the beast has changed ...**really changed**, then it will take another change effort for it to move back or change further!

Comment on Alan's article:

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Realising Project Intelligence courses have sustained benefits

Kate Woodmansee, Pelicam Marketing Manager

Project Intelligence is the basis for all Pelicam rescue and assurance assignments. We teach our clients' project teams what it is we do when we rescue projects and assure project integrity; we call this Realising Project Intelligence (RPI). We recently contacted our clients several years on from attending the course and confirmed there are some really long term benefits from attending the course. As a consequence of this we are running further courses with our clients throughout the coming months. Several have booked the courses for their teams, but we are now also running an 'Open RPI' course where up to two people from each organisation can attend.

Facilitated by Project Experts

The two day course is best suited to the more experienced project manager, who finds that despite knowing the correct processes and procedures, projects still continue to be challenging. Facilitated by a project assurance expert, there is real integrity in the course for attendees. When we trained over 80 project people at Centrica and Nationwide the feedback from the teams was incredible.

"Brings together years of "undocumented" experience - warts and all"

"The most insightful, thought provoking and valuable course I have been on"

"The facilitator inspired us to go back and redefine our projects; he acted as the voice of reason. He invigorated the delegates and motivated us to think long and hard about how to run a project well."

Immediate improvement

Following the course, the attendees are tasked to identify areas within their current role and projects what needs to be improved and to apply the learning from the course. The Pelicam one-to-one follow up which is carried out directly after this showed there was a marked improvement in personal effectiveness and as a consequence the performance of the projects.

"I have seen a marked improvement in sponsorship and business engagement"

"I have transformed the role of the PMO from ...I now proactively monitor and control the project"

"Our business critical customer billing and SAP upgrade project is now on-track for the first time"

Sustained benefits

We know that individuals often feel motivated and ready to put change into action following a training course, but how long will it last? We were very excited to hear that the RPI course has had a long lasting effect on the individual's behaviour and performance.

"I now approach risk proactively (not reactively) and build it into the project and I challenge work streams constructively ensuring we are better able to focus attention, manage costs and deliver tangible benefits."

"I identified benefits realisation as another area of focus - accurate identification of measurable, meaningful benefits gains my project sponsor's commitment. I now push the project owners to identify strong benefits that have a real impact in reducing costs for the business."

If you would like to hear more about the Pelicam RPI courses please visit our website and contact Greg Rushton at greg.rushton@pelicam.com or +44 7734 385802.

Pelicam Fundraising event 2011 - Ideas welcome please

Helen Morgan, Pelicam Office Manager

Last year, thanks to your generous support, Pelicam raised an incredible £5,000 for Lifelites, our charity partner by cycling the National Ridgeway Trail (90 miles). Our donation is helping to provide children at Helen House Hospice in Oxford with a package of fun and educational technology which makes a valuable contribution to their shortened lives.

We are now considering our main fundraising event for this year and we are keen to recruit support for the event. We would also like to hear of your ideas and suggestions for our 2011 challenge. Perhaps you have previously taken part in a successful charity event or even have a personal challenge that you would love to have the opportunity to do and would be keen to join us and help us raise money for Lifelites.

Please contact Helen Morgan if you have any fundraising suggestions or would like to be involved in our next event.

Contact Helen on +44 7811 404 127 or at helen.morgan@pelicam.com.



Contact us

To explore how things can be improved in your organisation, please get in touch at info@pelicam.com

Submit an article

If you have any interesting articles about improving the chances of project success or more explicitly delivering project intelligence that you would like to share please send them to kate.woodmansee@pelicam.com

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