SUPPLEMENTAL READING

TO

THE CPPMBOK

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CHAPTER 1: PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

The IAPPM has provided readers with an insightful look into various select readings from some of the most knowledgeable business authors in their fields. The aim is that this supplemental knowledge will facilitate the CPPMBoK document and not replace it.

This document presents but only a snapshot of the knowledge areas the IAPPM covers in their CPPMBOK. It is not complete; rather it is the aim that this supplemental guide document will evolve with additional readings as time permits.

We heard from many members that the CPPMBOK cannot cover every conceivable topic known to man and we agree. We have only selected meaningful topics that would benefit readers.

As always, we appreciate your support and enthusiasm in the preparation of this guideline document. We especially want to acknowledge and thank the contributors to this supplemental guide of the CPPMBOK. It is through their commitment to the business profession that works can be published and be read by members alike. Please continue to support these contributors by visiting their websites and taking some of their classes as needed. Our writing panel included:

- Neville Turbit, Neville is also past chairman of Software Engineering Australia, a co-convener of the Australian Computer Society PM group and sits on the Standards Australia committee developing a new PM terminology standard, http://www.projectperfect.com.au
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2 POLITICAL INFLUENCES

This chapter is about understanding, identifying, and managing the political aspects of project management. Project management goes beyond techniques to complete projects on time, scope, and budget. Improving organizational performance depends upon getting more accomplished through projects. Just what gets accomplished and how comes under the purview of power and politics. Organizations by their nature are political. To be effective, project managers need to become politically sensitive. Assessing the environment, rethinking attitudes towards power and politics, and developing an effective political plan are foundation steps. These help to address the power structure in an organization, identify critical stakeholder levels of trust and agreement, develop a guiding coalition, and determine areas of focus—actions that take place on all projects and especially in a project office (see Englund, Graham, Dinsmore, 2003).

Instead of lamenting about a failed project, program, or initiative, learn about power and politics so that project success is optimized. The alternative to suffering through victim scenarios is to turn them into win-win political victories. A common theme for success or failure of any organizational initiative is building a guiding coalition—a bonding of sponsors and influential people who support the change. This support, or not, represents a powerful force either toward or away from the goal. Gaining support means the difference between pushing on toward a new order of business, modifying the approach, or exiting a path. Moderate success may be achieved without widespread political support, but continuing long-term business impact requires alignment of power factors within the organization.

Too late, people often learn the power of a non-guiding coalition. This happens when a surprise attack results in a resource getting pulled, a project manager is reassigned, or a project is cancelled. Getting explicit commitments up front, the more public the better, is important to implementing any change. It also takes follow through to maintain the commitment. But if commitment was not obtained initially, it is not possible to maintain throughout. It all starts by investigating attitudes and assessing how things get done.

2.1 Views of Power and Politics

Albert Einstein said, "Politics is more difficult than physics." Politics will be present anytime an attempt is made to turn a vision for change into reality. It is a fact of life, not a dirty word that should be stamped out. A common view is what happens with negative politics, which is a win-lose environment in an under-handed or without-your-knowledge-of-what's-happening approach. People feel manipulated, and the outcome is not desirable from their point of view. Secret discussions are more prevalent than public ones. Reciprocal agreements are made to benefit individuals rather than organizations. The challenge is to create an environment for positive politics. That is, people operate with a win-win attitude. All actions are out in the open. People demonstratively work hard toward the common good. Outcomes are desirable or at least acceptable to all parties concerned. This is the view of power and politics being espoused in this writing. One's attitude toward political behavior becomes extremely important. Options are to be *naive*, be a *shark* who uses aggressive manipulation to reach the top, or to be *politically sensible*. "Politically sensible individuals enter organizations with few illusions about how many decisions are made."

They understand, either intuitively or through their own experience and mistakes, that politics is a facet of behavior that happens in all organizations. Political sensitivities do not shun nor embrace predatory politics. "Politically sensible individuals use politics as a way of making contacts, cutting deals, and gaining power and resources for their departments or projects to further corporate, rather than entirely personal, ends" (Pinto, 1996, p.75-76).

What is a political environment? A negative reaction to the word "political" could be a barrier to success. Being political is not a bad thing when trying to get good things done for the organization. A political environment is the power structure, formal and informal. It is how things get done within the day-to-day processes as well as in a network of relationships. Understanding power and politics comes down to understanding two statements:

Power is the capacity each individual possesses to translate intention into reality and sustain it.

Organizational politics is the exercise or use of power.

The world of physics revolves around power. Since project management is all about getting results, it stands to reason that power is required. Political savvy is a vital ingredient for every project manager's toolkit.

Understand the power structure in the organization. A view from outer space would not show the lines that separate countries or organizations or functional areas or political boundaries. The lines are man-made figments that exist in our minds or on paper but not in reality. Clues to a power structure may come from an organizational chart, but how things get done goes far beyond that. Influence exists in people's hearts and minds, where power derives more from legitimacy than from authority. Its presence occurs in the implementation of decisions.

Legitimacy is what people confer on their leaders. Being authentic and acting with integrity are factors a leader decides in relations to others. In contrast, legitimacy is the response from others. Position power may command respect, but ultimately how a leader behaves is what gains whole-hearted commitment from followers. Legitimacy is the real prize, for it completes the circle. When people accept and legitimize the power of a leader, greater support gets directed toward the outcome; conversely, less resistance is present. Power is not imposed by boundaries. Power is earned, not demanded. Power can come from position in the organization, what a

person knows, a network of relationships, and possibly from the situation, meaning a person could be placed in a situation that has a great deal of importance and focus in the organization.

A simple test for where power and influence reside is to observe who people talk to or go to with questions or for advice. Whose desk do people meet at? Who has a long string of voice or e-mail messages? Whose calendar is hard to get into? Who does everybody want to manage their projects?

One of the most reliable sources of power when operating across organizations is the credibility a person builds through a network of relationships. It is necessary to have credibility before a person can attract team members, especially the best people, who are usually busy and have many other things competing for their time. Credibility comes from relationship building in a political environment. In contrast, credibility gaps occur when previous experience did not fulfill expectations or when perceived abilities to perform are unknown and, therefore, questionable. Organizational memory has a lingering effect—people long remember what happened before and do not give up these perceptions without due cause. People more easily align with someone who has the power of knowledge credibility; relationship credibility is something only each individual can build, or lose.

Power and politics also address the basic priority of project management's triple constraints—outcome, schedule, and cost. If the power in an organization resides in marketing where tradeshows rule new product introductions, meeting market window schedules becomes most important. An R&D driven organization tends to focus on features and new technology, often at the expense of schedule and cost. People have always used organizations to amplify human power. Art Kleiner (2003) states a premise that in every organization there is a core group of key people—the "people who really matter"—in which the organization continually acts to fulfill the perceived needs and priorities of this group.

There are numerous ways that Kleiner suggests to determine who these powerful people are. People who have power are at the center of the organization's informal network. They are symbolic representatives of the organization's direction. They got this way because of their position, their rank, and their ability to hire and fire others. Maybe they control a key bottleneck or belong to a particular influential subculture. They may have personal charisma or integrity. These people take a visible stand on behalf of the organization's principles and engender a level of mutual respect. They dedicate themselves as leaders to the organization's ultimate best interests and set the organization's direction. As they think or act or convey an attitude, so does the rest of the organization. Their characteristics and principles convey what an organization stands for. These are key people who, when open to change, can influence an organization to move in new directions or, when not open to change, keep it the same.

Another way to recognize key people is to look for decision makers in the mainstream business of the organization. They may be aligned with the headquarters culture, ethnic basis, or gender, speak the native language, or be part of the founding family. Some questions to ask about people in the organization are: Whose interests did we consider in making a decision? Who gets things done? Who could stop something from happening? Who are the "heroes?" Malcolm Gladwell (2002) provided another way to recognize influential people. His book on *The Tipping Point* postulates three reasons why epidemics spread:

- The Law of the Few
- The Stickiness Factor
- The Power of Context

These factors relate to people, process, and environment. To increase political influence on a project, first find the *few* connectors, mavens, and sales persons. Getting these people on your side or supportive of the project exerts influence over a wide area. Second, experiment or modify your process so that people find it *sticky*, something they want to hang onto and use. The opposite is being rigid and dogmatic about following a process exactly. Be flexible in adapting a process to the situation. The third element, *context*, is adjusting the environment so that people want to be there. Make the work environment fun, productive, and stimulating. Set expectations that this is the place to get things done. All the above ideas are nutrients for the mind. They set the attitudinal stage to apply more detailed persuasive techniques that build upon a positive framework.

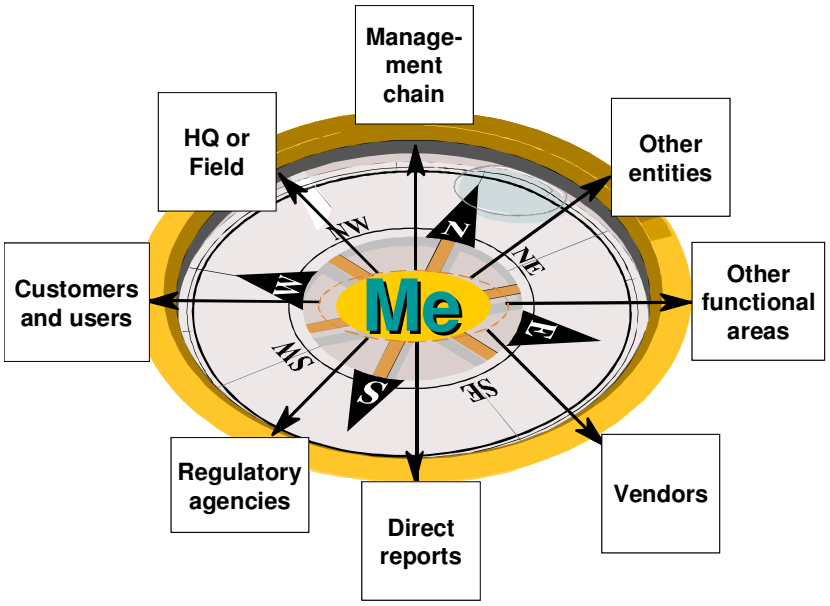
2.2 Political Plan

Optimizing results in a convoluted organizational environment requires a political management plan. This is probably a new addition to the project manager's arsenal. Elements may have been included in a communications plan. Even better is to conduct a systematic approach to power and politics. A key element is to prepare a stakeholder analysis. Then assess the political jungle, and put all findings together in a political plan.

2.3 Stakeholder Analysis

Analysis of common success factors indicates that project leaders need to pay attention to the needs of project stakeholders as well as the needs of project team members. Identifying stakeholders early on leads to better stakeholder management throughout the project. Use the diagnostic tools and traits of key powerful people described previously to analyze stakeholders. A stakeholder is anyone who has a "stake in the ground" and cares about the effort—sponsoring the change, dependent, supplying, or executing it. Ask "Who could stop this effort?"

To be thorough in identifying all stakeholders, visualize them as points on a compass (see Figure 1). To the North is the management chain; direct reports are to the South. To the West are customers and end users; other functional areas are to the East. In between are other entities, vendors, or regulatory agencies. Identify all players. Write down names and get to know people in each area. What motivates them, how are they measured, what are their concerns? The more thorough this identification process, the less risk that a key player will be forgotten. Approach a stakeholder analysis using these questions:



- **Who are the stakeholders?**
  - Project team brainstorms to identify all possible stakeholders
    - Diagnose the relationship the project team has with each stakeholder in terms of power and influence during the project life cycle
  - Identify the level of support or resistance each stakeholder exhibits towards the project
- **What are stakeholder expectations?**
  - Identify primary high level project expectations for each stakeholder
  - What constitutes project success in the mind of each stakeholder?
- **How does the project or products affect stakeholders?**
  - Analyze how products and deliverables affect each stakeholder
  - Determine what actions the stakeholder could take which would affect the success or failure of the project
  - Prioritize the stakeholders, based on who have the most positive or negative effect on project success or failure
  - Incorporate information from previous steps into a Risk Analysis plan to develop mitigation procedures for stakeholders who might negatively impact the project
- **What information do stakeholders need?**
  - Identify from the information collected, what information needs to be furnished to each of them, when should it be provided, and how
  - Develop a communications plan to address each stakeholder's needs

Use the template in Figure 2 to score each stakeholder on their level of interest in the project (x axis), their power in the organization (y axis), and how strongly they support or resist the project (z axis). Figure 3 is a bubble chart of the same data, positioning people in grids that guide

stakeholder action planning. Larger bubble size in two stakeholders shows a boss who is quite powerful in the organization, moderately interested in the project, and not very supportive. The colleague is the technical expert who loves the project as long as he or she does not have to deal much with people. Their positions on the bubble chart indicate what behaviors can be expected from them and point to ways to approach them that optimize desirable outcomes.

Approach stakeholders in each area starting from the position of strength. When, for instance, power is high but agreement about the project is low, start by reinforcing the effective working relationship that exists and how the person may contribute to and benefit from the project. Express desire that this bond will help work through any differences. Only after establishing agreement on these objectives is it then appropriate to address the problem area. People often jump right into the problem. This prompts defensive behavior from the other person. Taking time to reestablish rapport first can prove far more effective to reach a mutually satisfying solution. It is then possible to discover misinformation or negotiate a change in outcome, cost, or schedule that lessens the levels of concern and moves people higher in supporting the project.

To illustrate, the customer says to the project manager, "I'm okay with most of your status report but have a big problem with progress on resolving the resourcing issue." Most people only hear the problem and immediately jump into defensive mood. Instead, start with "I hear that you're satisfied with how we implemented your requests and can continue moving forward. Is that correct? Great! Okay, so now we only have this one issue to work through…." The tenor of this approach is positive, the topics on the table for discussion are bounded, and rapport is present, setting the mood for a creative solution.

2.4 Positioning

Another element of a political plan is positioning. An individual or organizational unit needs to consider where it is in the organization to assess if that is effective to get its job done. For instance, where a project office is located in an organization affects its power base. The concept of "centrality" says locate it in a position central and visible to other corporate members, where it is central to or important for organizational goals (Pinto, 1996, p.57). The author had experience at a project office in HP's Project Management Initiative. This Initiative started in Corporate Engineering, a good place to be because HP was an engineering company. That put the effort into the mainstream instead of in a peripheral organization where its effectiveness and exposure may be more limited. Likewise, a project office for the personal computer division reported through a section manager to the R&D functional manager. This again reflected centrality since R&D at that time drove product development efforts.

Most important decisions in organizations involve the allocation of scarce resources. Position and charter a project office with a key role in decision-making that is bound to the prioritization and distribution of organizational resources. Be there to help, not make decisions. The steering committee or group of managers who prioritize and select projects as part of project portfolio management need to directly control the resources that will be assigned. A project office only administers the process, not do the job for others. Put managers at ease that they are not losing decision-making power but gaining an ally to facilitate and implement decisions.

An individual contributor, project leader, or *project office of one* needs to consider where he or she is located in an organization when wanting to have a greater impact, make a larger contribution, get promoted, or generally gain more power and influence. Doing service projects in a field office for a manufacturing and sales oriented company is less likely to attract attention than a product marketing person doing new product introduction projects in the factory. Seek out projects that address critical factors facing the organization. In essence, address in a political plan how important the project is to the organization, where it resides in having access to key decision makers, and the support resources available to it

2.5 Leading Change

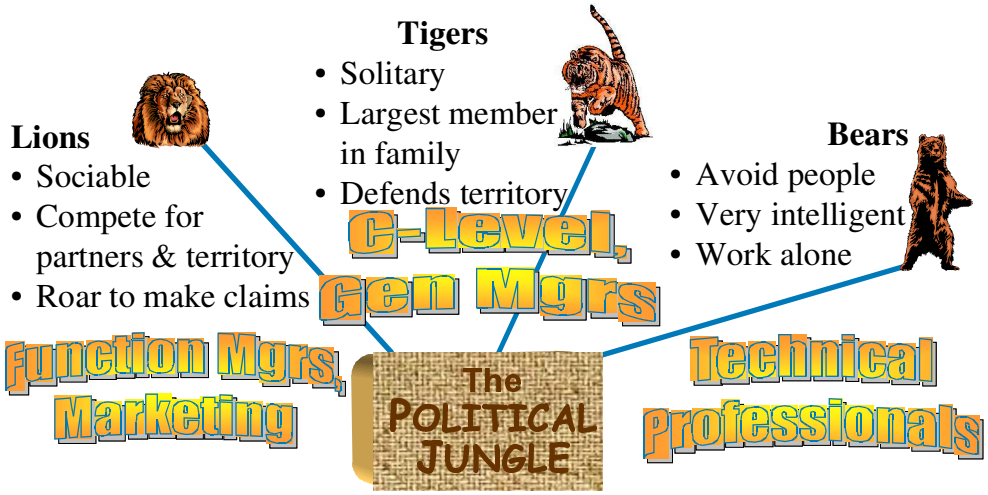
Recognize that organizations are political. A commitment to positive politics is an essential attitude that creates a healthy, functional organization. This may be a change for the organization. Create relationships that are win-win (all parties gain), actual intentions are out-in-the-open (not hidden or distorted), and trust is the basis for ethical transactions. Determining what is important to others and providing value to recipients are currencies that project leaders can exchange with other people. Increased influence capacity comes from forming clear, convincing, and compelling arguments and communicating them through all appropriate means. Effective program managers embrace the notion that they are salespersons, politicians, and negotiators. Take the time to learn the skills of these professions and apply them daily.

Start any new initiative or change by thinking big but starting small. First implement a prototype and achieve a victory. Plan a strategy of small wins to develop credibility, feasibility, and worth ability. Get increased support to expand based upon this solid foundation. This advice is predicated on implementing a well-documented change management process. Figure 4 illustrates the essence of this process. Effective influencers, and project managers by definition, are typically creating something new so that means they are also an agent of change, or *change agent*. Embrace this process by, first of all, understanding it is a change process, then getting clear about the problem being solved, identifying and lining up a coalition of powerful forces, getting clear about where you are going and how to get there, and harnessing internal support to do it. These create the conditions for making change.

The next steps are to manage the change, by starting out small and then developing broader based actions that build upon successes. Throughout it is imperative to model desired behaviors through authentic leadership, acting with integrity, being credible, and earning legitimacy. The really hard part comes in the third stage, trying to make the change stick. Organizations may be stretched like a rubber band; when the change agent leaves or moves on, the end of the rubber band he or she pulled on snaps back. The organization reverts to how it always did things before. To get past this point, apply L^2M^2: leadership, learning, means, and motivation. Leadership is the process of declaring that the existing reality must change. It starts the mental restructuring that is the change process. This is intensified and reinforced by Learning. This process helps to complete the mental restructuring and provide a common map for everyone to follow. It is important that all parties to the change are subject to the learning, or the process will not be complete. Means provides the artifacts necessary to consolidate and implement the changed behavior. Motivation issues ensure that the changed behavior prevails over time due to positive reinforcement and negative consequences. All four factors need to be present in abundance to make change stick. An effective plan is to apply these factors to the ten components identified by Graham and Englund (2004) in Creating an Environment for Successful Projects.

2.6 Mapping the Political Jungle

The political process is always at work in organizations. The political jungle is a chaotic environment. Success comes to those who identify the "animals" in the jungle and recognize that they exhibit certain traits and patterns. Each is driven by a purpose. Being effective with the "lions, tigers, and bears" involves working in their preferred operating modes, speaking their language, and aligning common purposes. Stakeholder analysis is integral to a political plan. One format is to apply traits or characteristics of animals to people within the organization. This is proven to be a fun and less risky approach to sensitive topics. People quickly come to understand the challenges of dealing with these "animals." For example, for each individual on the stakeholder grid, what sort of "animal" are they (see Figure 5)



- **Tiger**. Solitary, powerful, strong and skillful.
- **Lion**. Social, outgoing, approachable, roar to make claims.
- **Bear**. Solitary, intelligent, avoid people.
- **Venomous snake**. Cold-blooded, ruthless when provoked.
- **Female black widow spider**. Shy and solitary but venomous; eats weaker colleagues for breakfast.
- **Artic fox**. Easy to recognize but hard to catch; manipulates with a smile.
- **Sheep**. Herd animals; follow leaders willingly and produce what is required

Use the knowledge about traits and behavior patterns to address each stakeholder's needs, as well as to protect yourself when necessary.

2.7 Develop a Plan

With the above concepts in minds, the next task for the project leader is to apply political savvy within his or her environment. Difficult challenges that arise do not have simple answers, but effective action can be guided by applying the concepts of authenticity and integrity. Beware of ambivalence towards power and politics. Take a stance where motivation is to create a win-win situation that is out in the open. The alternative is to become a political victim of a win-lose situation that is conducted not in the open but in a back room or out of sight of full disclosure. History is replete with scenarios of limited growth curtailed by dictators, mob controls, or special interests. When trust is lacking, and motivations are not transparent, negative politics come to play. Free markets and open organizations accomplish far more in shorter time periods.

Create a political plan that addresses the power structure in the organization, levels of stakeholder impact and support, who forms a supporting or guiding coalition to make the vision become reality, and what are the areas of focus that constitute a strategic plan. Understand the power structure and decision-making processes in the organization. Do this by analyzing how things get done. Use the cultural context to decide if the political plan should be developed by an individual or with a team, and if it can be shared in public or kept private. A closed, highly political organization means proceed with caution. An open, enlightened organization allows for inputs, findings, and recommendations to be accessible by and useful for all stakeholders. Document the findings in a plan that includes:

- Assessment of environment
- Description of political jungle
- Stakeholder roles

- Potential issues
  - Approach to stakeholders and issues
  - Strategic response, such as positioning and steps to take
  - Action plans

2.8 Summary

Draw courage from acting on convictions, passion, and commitment to do the right thing. Getting a job done through political influence starts with clearly describing the pain of the current reality plus sharing a vision for a future state that is different. Credibility and transparent motivation make people want to listen to what you say. A key point is to speak in the language of the persons needing to receive the message, such as in upper management speak or in engineer speak. For example, too many technical details do not interest upper managers who want to know how a portfolio of projects will create revenue, increase market share, or solve particular problems. Learn the language of each "political animal" so it is possible to converse not only with bears but also the lions and tigers. An effective sender matches the style and content of the language used with the preferred means of communicating used by the receiver of the message.

An overlay to the project management process is to prepare a political plan. This plan involves observing how an organization gets work done and performing stakeholder analysis. It further incorporates creative human dynamics to encourage proactive thinking about how to respond to and influence other people in the organization. Since power is the capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it and organizational politics is the exercise or use of power, leading

through political influence means embracing the political environment as a means to achieve success.

2.9 Sample Political Plan

1 **Assessment of environment**
We are a "loose-tight" organization with a moderately weak project culture. Power is relatively diffused and no one person dominates team meetings. People with initiative can step up and succeed but few of these efforts are coordinated across the organization. Ineffective and inefficient processes are a big problem.

2 **Description of political jungle**
The tigers stay out of our way. The lions roars are not heard very far, and the bears seem to run the show, doing their own thing. Venomous attacks can come from anywhere, especially when traversing in new territories.

3 **Stakeholder roles**
Sponsors are assigned but do not actively support projects unless asked. Team members lack full commitment to the project because of other distractions. Senior management is just beginning to understand the value of project and program management to the vitality of the organization.

4 **Potential issues**
Too many projects threatens successful completion. Requirements change when managers cater to special interests. Vague understanding of roles & responsibilities creates confusion and leads to missed milestones. Few commitments exist to follow through on project plans.

5 **Approach to stakeholders and issues**
Need to get tigers involved in supporting program management and a project portfolio process. Need to harness the lions to roar in concert by focusing on a limited set of strategic goals and corresponding projects. The bears will continue to perform as long as we do not disturb them too greatly with complex processes or detailed checklists.

6 Strategic response, such as positioning and steps
A small project office reporting to the general manager can facilitate the introduction of simple portfolio and project management processes. Get the attention of the lions by pointing out the consequences in the market if we fail to systematically coordinate our efforts. Neutralize negative [venomous] behaviors by an open approach to all issues and the free flow of information.

7 **Action plans**
Interview all stakeholders. Prepare proposal. Line up upper management support. Define the project sponsor role and conduct training for new sponsors. Develop an environment where excellence in project sponsorship contributes to competitive advantage. Select strategic efforts leading first to small wins before rolling out more broadly. Get explicit commitments from all stakeholders. Remember to be authentic and act with integrity on every interaction.

2.10 References

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3 WARNING SIGNS OF PROJECT FAILURE

Project Managers are expected to serve as the 'early warning' system for their projects. Management expects them to not only lead the project to success, but recognize and act on any signs the project is headed in the wrong direction. This unit describes the 7 classic signs of a project in trouble. It also reviews the use of trends in monitoring Earned Value Management reports as another indicator. Does not mention anything about actual project execution. It assumes that the PM manages the project through a remote control - Plan, dispatch and control. It looks good on paper, but try managing a real project and let me know how it feels to be completely lost. Any management, any new endeavor, needs a lot of common sense and experience. It's easy to say - 'prepare a WBS' or 'follow the 5 processes for every phase'. But try doing it even for a small IT project with all it's dynamics, undefined dates & requirements, fuzzy phase boundaries, the company's PM and procedural methodologies, and staff and you find that without experience you just can't do it. In my view PMP's who don't have domain and execution experience in similar projects tend to be "project administrators" and not project managers. Thus someone else actually executes the project while they receive status reports and manage the funds movements. As an aside, I am an IT PM and I admit that I am preparing for the PMP cert to boost my profile!

3.1 Introduction to Project Failures

As an experienced project manager, chances are you've experienced some of the above situations at least once and can probably add several of your own bullets to the list. If so, then this unit is for you. Do any of these issues sound familiar?

- A critical project task that quickly gets to 90% complete and takes forever to get the last 10% done
- You're about to release your product and a stakeholder that wasn't involved in the design jumps up and down and causes significant product rework
- Your project team spends more time fighting and finger-pointing than working together to get the project done

In my 20 years experience in running projects as a consultant, project manager and business owner, I'm proud to say that I've experienced many project successes. But strangely enough, it's the failures that stick at the forefront of my mind and it's those projects that I think about whenever I'm starting up a new project. I'm bound and determined not to repeat mistakes that I've made on prior projects. I so clearly remember that touching a hot stove hurts just as much the second time as it did the first time. Nonetheless, I've been back to that stove numerous times over the years…and have the scars to prove it!

In this section we will highlight six of the most pervasive reasons why projects fail. For each reason, you'll get an explanation of the reason, how it happens, what the warning signs are, and what you as a project manager can do about each of them. So let's get down to business…

3.2 Reason #1: Not addressing the right problem

Virtually every project has at its core a need to solve some problem that is perceived by someone. Problems can manifest themselves as barriers to getting something done ("we can't possibly ship 10,000 units/week with our existing systems") or as opportunity to doing something better ("we need to reduce the cost of processing purchase orders by 20%"). In any event, there is a desire to do something tomorrow that can't be achieved today.

Admittedly, some of the most fun projects that I have worked on have been the "omigosh, we need to get this done or else" projects. I have seen the greatest clarity of purpose on projects where there was a very real and tangible consequence to not completing the project successfully. One outstanding example of this that affected virtually every business on earth was the Y2K computer scare. One of my jobs was in ensuring that our mission-critical vendors were adequately prepared for Y2K and that there would not be any business interruption to our company as a result of a vendor's failure to perform. Everyone knew what the problem was: computer systems that only use a two-digit year and assumed the "19" in the first two years were going to assume a year of "1900" on January 1, 2000 and, depending on the system, everything from power grids to air traffic systems to small appliances had the potential to malfunction.

You all know the story; 1/1/2000 came and went with a minimum of problems; not because the scare was overblown, but because there were billions of dollars spent worldwide ensuring that a problem didn't occur. There was tremendous clarity of purpose and a very real and tangible consequence if no action was taken. Here's how it happens:

3.2.1 There's a poorly articulated mission statement –

Many projects that I have seen had a mission statement that was either vague, unrealistic, or simply didn't exist. Saying "we need to reduce costs", is admirable and desirable, but is not something a project team can surgically execute upon simply because it is not clear what the project is and when the project will be complete. One project that I worked on focused on vendors entering invoices directly into a company's invoicing system via the Internet as opposed to invoicing via a hardcopy document. The mission statement for the project was as follows:

"We need to reduce the cost of processing invoices by 50% by March 1 while ensuring that vendors are paid within terms 100% of the time."

The project had a clear ***what*** (reduce the cost of processing invoices), a clear ***when*** (March 1) and clear ***measure*** (50% cost of processing and 100% of the time payment within terms). In the invoicing project, we were able to stay laser-focused on what we needed to do and make sure all of the project constituents stayed in sync because we had a super-focused mission statement.

3.2.2 There's an inconsistent understanding of what the problem is –

On projects where you have multiple stakeholder groups there is a very strong likelihood that each stakeholder group is going to have a specific agenda that they bring to the project. Some may view what you perceive to be the problem as not being a problem at all. Very early on in your project, it is crucial to get a very consistent view of what the project is meant to accomplish via the use of the clear mission statement, ensure that the constituents understand the mission and are bought into working to resolve it.

At times you're going to have the "resisters" that don't want to do the project because it means significant change or elimination of their job or organization. It is vital to address this early in the mission statement definition and to identify the concerns of the resister. One technique that I have used with success is to get the stakeholders in a room and to give them each an opportunity to somehow shape the mission statement. What I have found is that even if someone only adds or changes *one word* to the mission statement they feel that they have influenced the direction of the project. On some projects we've been able to turn some of the resisters around; on others the resisters never got with the game plan. In those instances the resister ultimately was taken off the project. It's never smooth to remove a resister, but it's always been necessary to keep the project moving forward.

3.2.3 It's a problem but there are bigger fish to fry –

So, maybe you see something that isn't working as well as it should or you see some product or service that could benefit your organization. It very well could be that implementing the solution could reap some benefit to your organization; the questions become those of management priorities and focus. Now, things do change and the relative priorities of projects do change. Thus it's important that the project list is reviewed periodically (we did it quarterly) to ensure that you're still working on the right things in the right priority sequence.

Warning Signs

3.2.4 You are having difficulty getting a sponsor for your project –

So you've got a project that you think is important but you're having a difficult time convincing potential sponsors that the problem is significant enough that they should care and take action. It could be that the problem is truly a problem but it's not a high enough priority that warrants immediate action. Then again it also could mean that you've got a poorly defined mission statement that isn't compelling enough to take action.

3.2.5 The project team is confused about what problem the project is trying to address –

I've seen more than one project where the project team goes through the project with different views about what problem they are trying to solve. If each of your project team members is unable to consistently recite your mission statement then you're sure to have points of confusion throughout your project.

3.2.6 It is difficult to keep the project team focused on solving the problem –

Sometimes on projects I have encountered situations where project team members stray from solving the root problem to solving a "problem du jour" which may or may not be related to the project. At times, there could be validity to the issue being raised, which helps you to further articulate your problem statement and resulting solution. At other times, though, it could just be a red herring, which dilutes your focus and creates confusion about what you're trying to accomplish.

Turning it around

3.2.7 Keep your mission statement prominently displayed -

I've seen some projects where there's a great mission statement that is developed in order to sell the project then put in a drawer for no one to see ever again. Ensure that you are re-visiting and re-communicating the mission statement through the life of the project to ensure that you're doing the right thing, that everyone understands what the right thing is, and that you're driving toward resolving the problem.

3.2.8 Adjust the mission if the problem changes –

Problems aren't immutable; they can change in complexion and importance. If something changes about the problem make sure that your mission changes accordingly. This could also mean that the importance of your project changes because the problem is either more or less important than it was prior to the change.

3.2.9 Put it on hold –

If you can't get support for the project, then either put it on hold or recognize that it's not something that sponsors care enough to do something about at the present time. Better you do this than try to forge ahead with the project without sponsorship. It's likely only a matter of time before the project dies.

3.3 Reason #2 – Defining a poor project schedule

I can remember vividly my very first project schedule. My manager gave me the mission statement and an overall timeframe he thought it should take for me to complete the project. I diligently broke the schedule down to lower levels of detail. I continued to divide the overall timeframe among the tasks and assigned people to the tasks. I worked for days on end with my face buried in a computer screen developing the schedule. What I ended up with was a horrendously detailed project plan that had no logical dependencies identified, people being asked to complete 40-hour tasks in 15 minutes, and some people being asked to work 200 hours per week to get their work done. But by golly, the schedule met my manager's timeframe request.

Sadly enough (for me), this is a very true story but one that I don't think is too terribly uncommon. It's pretty easy to ignore reality at times when you're developing a schedule and to skip some fundamental steps in completing your schedule. You may get everything to look good on paper, but the result may deviate significantly from reality.

How it happens

3.4 The project schedule was either too detailed or not detailed enough –

A project schedule is only effective when it is able to help you know that everything is on track and that you're going to be able to complete the work on time. When your activities are at too high a level, you risk losing accountability, missing out on key dependencies or expose yourself to "90% complete syndrome" when the team reports progress that is not real. When your activities are at too low a level, you can frustrate your team members by unduly micro-managing them, creating a greater administrative headache for yourself, and confusing the team with an excessive number of activities to manage. Either of these can spell schedule slippage and can severely impact successful project completion. I've learned to use two rules of thumb when defining the appropriate level of detail for a project plan:

- Can the activity be assigned to a single person to complete the activity?
- Can the activity be completed in less than 40 hours?

Let me explain my question rationale. In the first question, I have found that explicit, clear lines of ownership are vital to ensuring that activities are completed. Whenever there is an activity assigned to "the team" or some other group of people there is no single point of accountability thus no one truly owns the task. Therefore each and every task should have a named person that takes the heat if the task isn't completed on time.

In the second question, the more time an activity is given to complete the greater the likelihood that you will be surprised at the last minute that the activity was not completed on time. I've gotten burned way too many times on an activity getting to 90% very quickly then taking twice the amount of time to finish the last 10%. Now, it's not that I'm a distrustful person or that I think that people are overtly trying to deceive me. No one wants to miss a deadline and thus will continue to report that they are on target and hope that everything falls into place if things start going awry. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't. I prefer to leave as little to chance as possible. So, I've zeroed in on a 40-hour rule of thumb because it allows you to divert train wrecks on time but also doesn't micromanage the team member. Depending on your environment, you may want to use something other than 40 hours, just be definitive and consistent in what you use.

3.5 The project schedule didn't correctly address dependencies between tasks -

When designing your project schedule, you need to keep in mind how those activities relate to other activities and define them accordingly. Establishing clear dependencies between tasks and having a true understanding of the critical path (the string of tasks that are the longest point between the start and finish of the project) is in my view one of the most important components of your project schedule. As you're designing your schedule activities it's helpful to keep dependencies clean by defining clear finish-to-start relationships. There are ways to accommodate this using most common project management software packages, but I recommend keeping your dependencies simple to understand and manage.

3.6 The project duration was too long –

When designing your schedule, keep specific focus on the length of time that you go between celebrating successes. I've become a strong advocate of keeping project phases to no longer than three months in duration. This is not to say that, if you are implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning system that you should try to do the entire implementation from software selection to implemented system in that three-month timeframe. What I am saying is that you should phase the project in such a way that there is a defined beginning and end to the phase within three months. Why would I say such a thing? Simple; people (particularly management) live in a short attention span theater world and over time will become discouraged and lose interest if a project drags on too long. So ok, you've figured me out, I'm just breaking a $10 bill into two $5 bills, but I've seen teams perform better when they are able to have mini celebrations at the successful end of each phase because at any point in time the end of the phase of work is no more than three months away. This also gives the team and management logical review points to look at the project's mission and ensure that it is in sync with management's current priorities.

3.7 Some of the tasks didn't produce useful deliverables –

When you're defining your project schedule, make sure you're continually asking yourself these questions:

- What is the deliverable that will be produced out of this activity?
- What will it look like?
- What happens if we don't do it?

If you don't have satisfactory answers to each of these questions, then seriously consider whether or not the activity is necessary. Remember, every activity that you do should be getting you one step closer to successful completion. If you can't articulate what the activity is supposed to produce then chances are you don't need to do it.

3.8 The team didn't understand the plan –

Your project team needs to have complete buy-in on the tasks, the durations, the team assignments, the dependencies, and the deliverables. What I've seen work well is doing shorter, more frequent informal reviews with team members while you're developing the schedule. I've seen project managers hold themselves up in an office or conference room for days on end, emerge from their cave with the schedule to end all schedules, and then have the other team members storm the Bastille because they don't see how they're possibly going to be able to

accomplish what the project manager expects (recall my opening store about my unrealistic schedule). It's days like those that the project manager wonders why he or she didn't take over the family delicatessen instead of doing this stupid project manager job. Get the buy-in along the way; it helps you avoid rework, allows the team members to feel more included in the process, and will produce a better quality plan that the team will believe they can achieve.

Warning Signs

3.9 Tasks aren't getting done on time –

Chronically missed deadlines on tasks can be due to unrealistic task durations, poorly defined dependencies, poorly defined work assignments, or project distractions. Diagnose the reasons for the missed deadlines immediately before the snowball rolling down the hill turns into an avalanche.

3.10 Tasks assigned to "the team" or some other group of people aren't getting done –

Any time that a specific name is not attached to a task, it is easy for team members to assume that someone else will do the task because *no one is specifically held accountable for task completion*. If you want things to get done, make sure that there are specific names beside each of your task and that each team member feels personal accountability for getting their work done.

3.11 Team members aren't aware that they were supposed to be working on a task -

It's an ugly situation when you're getting status updates from team members and a task that was supposed to be completed last week wasn't even started because the team member didn't even know they were supposed to be working on the task. Make sure that work assignments are crystal clear and that team members know what tasks they are supposed to have completed by when.

3.12 Team members are confused as to what they are supposed to produce for a task –

So you assign a task to a team member and the day that the task is due the team member produces a deliverable that looks exactly *nothing* like you were expecting it to look like. The deliverable now needs to be reworked which means other tasks are going to slip as a result. Be clear about what deliverable needs to be produced and ensure that you and the team member have a common understanding of what it needs to look like.

Turning it around

3.13 Get real with the schedule, and fast –

Don't delay; get the schedule in shape quickly making sure that you've defined all the right tasks, durations, dependencies, and resources to get it done. More importantly, don't go into a cave for

days on end to do; make sure you are getting input on the schedule frequently to avoid an unrealistic schedule.

3.14 Do focused reviews with team members –

On some projects, I have developed supplemental documentation which explains key tasks that might be confusing and even gone so far as to produce a template of what the deliverable out of the task needed to look like. I prefer to do mini reviews, as the plan is being developed to ensure that the team is putting their thumbprint on the plan and that any confusion points can be addressed early.

3.15 Keep dependencies simple –

While it's great to clearly understand dependencies between tasks, I've also seen plans that are overly complicated because the project manager built in serial dependencies between tasks that could actually be performed in parallel. This could be due to an assumed dependency between the tasks or because the project manager is anticipating that one person will be doing both tasks. Before defining a dependency, put rigor into making sure that the tasks are truly reliant on being performed serially.

3.16 Highlight tasks which are due in the next 1-2 weeks –

I've learned through experience that solely relying on the project schedule as the communication vehicle for a project team is not always the most effective way of ensuring tasks get done on time. Depending on the experience of your team, they may not understand how to read the schedule and may miss some key tasks that need to get done. I've learned to use either status reports or e-mail reminders to individual team members reminding them of what they need to do and when it needs to be done. It puts a bit more work on the project manager, but it better ensures the team member knows what needs to be done by when.

3.17 Reason #3 – Not having the right sponsorship

Some years back I was appointed the lead program manager on an initiative which had as its objective to consolidate a number of disparate order management systems into a single system which supported all of the company's order management needs. There were about five program managers working with me who each dragged in their respective customers to participate in the project. The project was sponsored by the IT organization with no sponsorship from the business owner. The project lumbered along for about two months with the customers continually questioning why they were working on a project that wasn't on their manager's radar. The business owner had finally had enough and called IT management and the lead program manager (me!) into a meeting. The meeting started off with the manager saying to IT, "Who told you to go do this project?" Now, I'm no rocket scientist, but it was pretty clear at that point that this was not to be one of my shining project management moments. While the meeting was very uncomfortable, I learned an extremely important lesson: absolutely, without a doubt, secure sponsorship on a project at the beginning, or suffer the consequences. For any project, it's crucial to get an appropriate level of project sponsorship. The ideal project sponsor for your project would possess the following characteristics:

- He/she directly experiences the pain of the status quo and would directly benefit as a result of doing the project

- He/she actively helped craft the project mission statement
- He/she has the decision making authority to secure or re-allocate resources to/from other projects as necessary to ensure that your project can be completed successfully
- He/she is willing to go to bat for your project with peer managers if you need help in getting something from another organization
- He/she is willing to meet with you on a regular basis to ensure that you're getting what you need to succeed
- He/she is willing to make difficult decisions that may be unpopular but are in the best interests of the business
- He/she has some "skin in the game" to ensure the project's success

Now, I recognize that as a project manager you only have so much control over your project sponsor. Nonetheless, it's important to diligently try to manage your project sponsor to ensure that you're getting what you need from him/her. Depending on the scope of your project, it may be beneficial to have a steering committee in place in addition to the project sponsor. Your steering committee is typically comprised of key managers of your stakeholder organizations. The primary functions of a steering committee are:

- Be a decision-making body on key issues that cannot be resolved by the project team
- Eliminate any project barriers that the project team is running up against
- Be a supporter of any resultant change that the project will bring about to their respective organizations
- Provide counsel and guidance to the project team on key aspects of the design and implementation of the product
- Assist the project manager in securing required resources for the project
- Provide recommendations to the project sponsor on major issues which are beyond the authority of the steering committee
- You need to decide whether a steering committee is beneficial to the project. Some criteria that I have used on projects are as follows:
- There are multiple stakeholders that are directly affected by the outcome of the project
- There are internal or external subject matter experts that can provide functional, technical, or execution guidance to the project team
- The project sponsor has limited time to spend on the project and delegates some of the project decision making responsibility to the steering committee

I've successfully completed projects with and without a steering committee depending on the criteria above, but every successful project *always* had an engaged project sponsor.

How it happens

3.18 The project sponsor was either too high or low in the organization –

Just because you have someone that is willing to sponsor your project doesn't mean that they are the right sponsors for the project. Optimally, your project sponsor should have decision-making authority over the in-scope project areas while at the same time being close enough to the work that they understand the implications of the issues that are raised. If your sponsor is too low of a level, they're unlikely to be able to make decisions that will stick and will have to be getting authorization from their management before committing to decisions. If your sponsor is too high of a level, you're likely to get decisions made but you're probably not making best use of management since others at lower levels could be making the decisions you need made.

3.19 The project sponsor was being inundated with issues that could have been resolved by a steering committee –

In deciding whether or not you need a steering committee, consider what you're going to need from your project sponsor and whether or not decisions can be made by others at lower management levels. If you are continually bringing issues to your project sponsor that can be addressed by other managers, you run the risk of exasperating your sponsor and being labeled as crying wolf. This will put you in a very difficult situation for when you really need help because your credibility with your project sponsor may be eroded.

3.20 You made the project sponsor work too hard to try to understand your project -

In the environments that I have worked, I never gave a project sponsor anything other than presentation-type slides when it came to project reviews and requests for help. Typically, your time with the project sponsor is limited and he or she has to understand where things are at and what you need from him or her in an efficient manner. Be very conscious of what you share with the sponsor, how much detail you give him/her and what you want him/her to do for you to help the project succeed.

You walk a fine line here of being credible with your sponsor and giving them the elevator pitch. If you've already established credibility with your project sponsor to the point where you're a trusted project manager, then you can possibly afford to be more high-level in your communications as he or she is going to trust you with the details. If you're an unknown quantity or (gulp) have gone negative in the credibility column, you're going to need to be prepared for deep-dives on areas that the project sponsor will want to go. One technique I've seen and used is to have appendix slides which have supporting detail in areas where there's likely to be question. The appendix slides are only meant to be used in the event that a specific question arises to support your claims and would not even be seen if no question arises on the topic.

Being prepared to go through details is important, but there will be the occasional situation where you just don't know the answer or don't have supporting detail. Your best bet at that point is to simply say "I don't know, and I'll get back to you on <put date here> with the answer." It's much easier to fess up quickly than guess at the answer and later be found wrong. Keep in mind as well that there are only so many "I don't knows" you can use before your credibility becomes an issue. More than a couple in a meeting can turn into a problem pretty quickly.

3.21 You didn't tell the project sponsor what you need –

Working with a project sponsor is a two-way commitment; you need to deliver what the sponsor considers important and they need to help you when you've run into an issue you can't resolve on your own. The issue could be with another organization, a need to change policy, a team member not participating as agreed or a host of other reasons. It's super important that you are very explicit with what you need the project sponsor to do for you. In your reviews with the project sponsor, it's helpful to have an "asks" slide which very explicitly lays out what you need the project sponsor to do and when you need it by. As I've discussed earlier, make sure that your requests are appropriate for your project sponsor to be addressing. If your requests are inappropriate, you run the risk of exasperating your project sponsor and losing credibility.

3.22 You met either too much or not enough with your project sponsor –

Depending on the criticality of the project, you may need to meet with the project sponsor either more or less frequently. I've been on projects where we've met with the project sponsor on a monthly basis for a one-hour update and have also been on projects where we've met weekly for an hour or more. You need to decide along with your project sponsor what the right frequency needs to be. I've found that meeting at least monthly is important to keeping the sponsor engaged and ensuring project success.

Warning signs

3.23 You don't have an identified project sponsor -

If you're running a project and don't have someone at an appropriate level in the organization sponsoring the work, then you most likely don't have a viable, sanctioned project and it's just a matter of time before the project meets an abrupt end. Someone at an appropriate level in the company needs to care enough about the work that you're doing to sponsor it. If not, then you're better off stopping the work yourself before someone stops it for you.

3.24 You can't get the project sponsor's attention –

Cancelled meetings, unresponsive emails, unreturned calls, are all signs that your project sponsor isn't engaged, doesn't care, is the wrong person, or has more important things to do. Regardless of the reason, if your sponsor won't give you the time of day then you're unlikely to get the support for your project when you really need it.

3.25 Your project sponsor doesn't help you with management issues –

Your project sponsor has a responsibility to the project to provide guidance on key issues that materially impact the resulting work product. Armed with the right decision factors, a good project sponsor will provide direction on key issues on a timely basis and keep the project moving forward. I've seen some project sponsors, though, that are either unwilling or unable to provide direction on key issues which can ultimately stall out a project. Having an unwilling or indecisive project sponsor is a pretty clear signal that you've got the wrong sponsorship for the project.

Turning things around

3.26 Make sure your project sponsor is current and engaged -

Do a regular status meeting with your project sponsor and make sure that they know the status of the project, where there are problems, and what you need from them to keep the project moving forward. Make sure they know enough about the project so that when you need them to make decisions you're not spending unnecessary time getting them up to speed on project basics.

3.27 Get clear on your project sponsor's expectations –

Identify the expectations of your project sponsor at the onset of the project to ensure you're working towards a common end result and that project deliverables are in line with what your sponsor wants. Periodically validate the expectations to ensure that any changes in expectations are clearly communicated and understood between you and the project sponsor.

3.28 Right-size your time with your project sponsor –

Chances are your project sponsor has a long to-do list of things that they're doing and will not want to feel like their time is being wasted. Determine with your sponsor the frequency, time and method of communications that you need and **stick to it**.

3.29 Tell your project sponsor explicitly what you need for the project to succeed –

As discussed earlier, let your project sponsor know as explicitly as you can what you need them to do to ensure project success. But, make sure your requests are appropriate. Don't ask them to make decisions that others (or you) could be making.

3.30 Strongly consider stopping the project –

If you aren't able to secure appropriate sponsor engagement, then you should think strongly about stopping the project and refocusing resources on other projects that management cares about.

3.31 Reason #4 - The team not gelling

I played the drums as a kid starting in 4th grade up into college. My family suffered through many hours (and headaches) of me beating the skins to jazz, funk, and rock music. When I started playing with the school band, I had to learn that making music wasn't about how fast I could do flam-a-diddles or how loud I could play, but how I played in relation to the other band members. If the music called for *adagio* (slow & leisurely pace) it would be a bad idea to break into an *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* drum solo while everyone else is playing elevator music.

The important thing was to match my playing to the other instrumentalists and to make beautiful music together. While I never got to rock stardom with my own entourage and groupies, I did learn that music is about how the entire band sounds not any individual player. By now you're probably wondering why I took a mental trip to Tahiti to tell you of my musical aspirations. To me, a well structured project team where each team member understands their role in making the project successful is like the musicians playing in a band. Each project team member knows what they need to contribute to the project, knows when they have to perform, understands what other project team members are doing on the project, and knows what it takes to be successful. Just as important, each of the project team members help each other to ensure overall project success.

How it happens

3.32 There was not a clear project organization with clearly defined roles –

This goes beyond a hierarchy chart. Each person needs to know what function they play on the team, how they fit into the other functions, and what happens if they don't do their job. Depending on your industry or functional discipline, there may be standard or customary roles that you employ on your project. There are a few things that I have learned, though, about project standard roles as follows:

- Start with the standard or customary roles that are typical for your type of projects
- If the project need warrants a special role which is outside of standard, then create a special role
- If the project doesn't need a standard or customary role, then eliminate the role

These may sound like overly simplistic statements, but I've been amazed over the years with seeing cumbersome project role structures because the project manager was reluctant to deviate from standard project roles. As experienced project managers, our job first and foremost is to make sure that the right people are assigned to do the right tasks to produce the right result at the right time. At the end of the day, I've never been graded on how well I adhered to a standard project role structure; I've been graded on results.

If the project environment doesn't have standard or customary project roles or if I'm taking on a unique type of project, then I like to take a very pragmatic approach to role definition, as follows:

- Define the 3-6 things on the project that I am most concerned about or pose the greatest risk to me
- Create roles that encompass the concern or risk areas
- Cross-check the roles with the work that needs to be done in the project schedule to ensure that all of the major roles are being defined correctly

By doing this, I am addressing concern or risk areas head-on by defining a role with a singular point of accountability to manage the areas of my project that are most likely to fail. This technique has helped me on more than one project to sleep better knowing that I had my most crucial areas covered.

3.33 The team finger pointed and fought in public –

On any project you do, so long as there is more than one person involved, there are going to be lively discussions. When this happens, it is very likely that something good will come of the discussion and that in some way the project will move one step closer to the finish line as a result. On past projects I have managed, I was very deliberate about letting these discussions happen and in letting team members question each other. I did put a few rules in place, though:

- It's very cool to challenge and stretch, but once we make a decision we need to get behind it as a team
- What happens in the room stays in the room; outside of the room we are a unified team
- If we made a wrong decision we accept the decision as a team; no finger pointing allowed
- We focus on the problem and not the person; don't make the problem personal

So, were the rules followed 100% of the time? Sadly, no (myself included). After all, we are human. However, you should still strive to get some ground rules in place to avoid team strife where you can.

3.34 There was no "rallying cry" –

You can look at many major successful campaigns and pull some slogans from them which embodied the message behind the slogan; "Where's the beef," "Milk, it does a body good," and "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz" are all unifying messages that cause you to think about a product. Similarly, when driving a project it helps the team to have some kind of a rallying cry or mantra that the team embodies when driving work. On one project, we wanted to be extremely cautious of not over-designing a solution and putting too many bells and whistles in to help us keep our costs down. We started using a "good enough" rallying cry during the design phase to be a continual reminder that we wanted to not overdo the solution. It worked incredibly well because the team would critically question itself with "is this good enough?" when looking at the architecture and functionality. Aside from helping to make sure our solution was cost effective, the rallying cry helped the team to better bond.

3.35 Team members weren't held accountable for delivery –

With project teams, I firmly believe that each role needs to clearly understand what they need to do, when they need it by, and how their work fits into the big picture. I also firmly believe the project team isn't only accountable to the project manager; they are accountable to each other since if any of the other roles fail the entire team fails. Given so, it is vitally important for each role to be visible as to what each other role is doing for the following reasons:

- Each role should be continually looking at other work that is happening to ensure that they know if and how they fit into the other work
- Each role should feel that if they miss a deadline or do not perform their job adequately, they are letting down the team as a whole, not just the project manager.
- Meeting or missing deadlines and deliverables are a team issue and should be exposed to the team.

The point here is accountability. Each member needs to feel accountable for their work and needs to experience the joy of success as well as the discomfort of failure. The project manager needs to use discretion on making sure that things do stay constructive. Focus should be very much on how the team gets things back on track and moving forward versus badgering the team member.

In some instances, though, you may just have someone in a job who is not suited to perform. The project manager needs to deal with those situations swiftly because if he or she doesn't, he or she is not doing his job, nor are they being accountable to the team by dealing with a problem performer.

3.36 The project manager wasn't suited for the job –

The project's needs and criticality to the business will be key drivers in the required experience level of the project manager. For relatively simple projects you may be able to staff the project with an inexperienced project manager with a more seasoned project manager serving as an occasional mentor. As projects increase in complexity and criticality to the business, though,

there's no substitute for an experienced, seasoned project manager. I've been incredibly fortunate to have worked with some outstanding project managers over the years. In thinking about the best project managers, they've had the following things in common:

- They knew the techniques of project management cold
- They knew (through experience) where they could bend the rules on the techniques to be able to buy time or be more efficient
- They always kept things moving forward
- They knew when to shift from "let's discuss" mode to "let's decide" mode
- They held others accountable to do their jobs
- They praised success
- They were excellent communicators
- They took the heat for the team when external criticism happened
- They were calm and focused when things started going bad on a project and everyone else was wigging out

I know of no magic formula for fitting the project manager for the job; what I can say is you're better to err on having an over-experienced project manager versus an under-experienced one.

I knew of a very gung-ho young project manager (let's just call him "Author") who felt he was an outstanding project manager because he knew the techniques well (cost and schedule management, status reporting, etc.). Because Author knew the techniques, he felt he could simultaneously take on three complex projects which really should have each had a dedicated project manager. Not only did Author learn some very valuable lessons, he unfortunately also cost his company a lot of money because others had to come in and mop up his mess. Both Author and I can't stress enough to make sure your project manager is suited for the job.

3.37 The team didn't celebrate wins –

Driving through a project is tough work. It is incredibly easy for people to get discouraged whenever the team hits roadblocks or has setbacks. It is vitally important for a team to celebrate hitting key milestones simply to keep morale up and keep project momentum. I'm not talking about three-day cruise type celebrations; it could be as simple as bringing in pizza or cake or something that allows people to let their hair down and take a bit of a breather. I would caution you about doing this too much; doing too much celebration lessens the effect of the celebration and could actually annoy your team members. I was on one project where people did not like the morale events because it only meant that they had to stay later that evening to get their work done. So, celebrate, but do it in moderation.

Warning Signs

3.38 The team shows confusion about who is doing what –

Confusion can exist either due to poor communication on who is responsible for what tasks or because tasks can reside under the responsibility of more than one role. It's important not only to get people to agree on areas of responsibility, but to ensure that the responsibilities are clearly documented and communicated to the entire project team. Also, be prepared to pull this document out and remind the team of its respective responsibilities as confusion creeps back into the project team.

3.39 Discussions are destructive and unproductive –

You know what this looks like; if you're team can't have discussions without getting personal, derogatory, or outright mean this is a pretty clear sign you're not gelling as a team. The project team doesn't have to be best friends with each other, but they should at least respect what each other bring to the table.

3.40 Team members aren't helping each other –

I've actually been in some environments as a consultant where some team members enjoyed seeing other team members fail and did absolutely nothing to help them for the good of the project. Project team members that carry an "every person for themselves" kind of attitude are not going to perform anywhere near their full potential.

Turning it around

3.41 Clarify the confusion –

Get team members locked in a room and hammer this out. If you get stuck on a particularly contentious area or if you see tempers flaring, set it aside and work on other things, then come back to the contentious area. Make sure that responsibilities are documented and clearly accessible for all members.

3.42 Address the problem team member –

Never a pleasant task, but I on more than one occasion have had a project team member taken off the project because they simply were going to remain a destructive force on the project. At the same time, I've also been able to turn a destructive situation around. In either event, address the issue swiftly before it does further damage to the rest of the project team.

3.43 Co-locate the team –

I've had some of my greatest successes where the project team was physically located in the same area and had minimal physical barriers to inhibit communication. This may or may not be entirely possible depending on your project, but where you have the opportunity to co-locate team members strongly consider doing so.

3.44 Go out for a milkshake –

Sometimes it's great to just get people away from their work environment and socialize over a favorite food and beverage. As a consultant on out-of-town projects, our project teams were typically very effective because we had more time to socialize and bond during non work hours. Getting to know each other a bit and being able to laugh as a team will pay huge dividends in overall team effectiveness.

3.45 All work and no play… -

...makes for a really dull and demotivating project. Take some time out of the project to have a laugh. I have certainly been known to play an occasional practical joke on a project or to bring some occasional levity to a particularly stressful time in a project. Just be careful that the use of humor isn't too excessive or inappropriate; but by all means make sure that you share a laugh or two even if it's at your expense.

3.46 Be the unifier -

As the project manager, you are expected to take responsibility for getting the team to gel and to know the barriers that exist which are preventing the team from being a highly cohesive, collaborative, high-performance team. At times it's likely to be the most uncomfortable part of your job, but it can also be one of the most rewarding when done well.

3.47 Reason #5- Poor communication with stakeholders

Television commercials. Thirty very structured seconds, which follow the time-tested AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) marketing principle. As irritating as some commercials may be, commercials are effective in promoting awareness about a product or service and are a proven method of getting you to buy what the advertiser is selling. So what do commercials have to do with how you communicate your project? A good communication plan is very similar to a good commercial in that it has the following similarities:

- The communication is targeted to a specific audience
- The communication gets your attention
- The communication is embedded into something that the audience is already engaged in
- The communication is brief but relevant and informative
- The communication clearly states what you as the audience needs to do if you want whatever is being advertised

Putting together and executing a solid communications plan with your audience is going to be a crucial aspect of ensuring that your project is ultimately successful. Let's drill into what makes a communication plan effective. There are going to be a number of groups that will somehow be influenced by the result of your project. In prior chapters I talked about the project team, executive sponsor, steering committee and stakeholder groups. These are all audiences that should be included in your communications plan. In addition, you may have some other interested parties that may not directly be impacted by your project but may have some indirect interest. For example, if you are doing project that is deploying a new technology, there may be other groups in your organization that would have an interest in the technology and in learning from you. The important thing here is to clearly define your specific audiences you want to communicate with.

Once you've got your audiences defined, you need to think about what each specific audience is going to need from you, how frequently they're going to need it, and how they're going to get it. The very best communication plans that I have seen all start with a one-page communications matrix. This matrix clearly spells out the following for each audience:

- The audience
- Type of communication the audience is going to receive
- Purpose of the communication

- Owner of the communication
- Frequency that the audience will receive it
- The medium (email, presentation, etc.) in which the communication is going to be delivered

Let's put this to an example:

Communi-cation type	Purpose	Owner	Frequency	Medium	Audiences				
					Project Team	Cus-tomers-	Supplier Stake-holders	Steering Committee	Executive Manage-ment
Status Reports	Provide detailed status on project progress	Project Manager	Weekly	Email	X	X	X	X	
Project Briefings	Provide overview of project purpose, deliverables & timeframe	Customer Project Team Member	Once at beginning of project	Live Presen-tation at staff meetings		X	X	X	X
Status Meetings	Discuss project schedule, risks, issues and costs	Project Manager	Weekly	Live meeting	X				
Executive memo	Memo which outlines why project is being done and importance of project to organization	Project Sponsor	Once at beginning of project	Email	X	X	X	X	X

In designing your communications matrix, you can either have audiences down the side or the communication types, so long as your matrix is easy to understand. Next let's talk about content of the communication. The best project communications that I've seen share the following characteristics:

- It uses as few words as possible to get the point across
- It is tailored for the specific audience to only give them what they need
- It uses a medium that the makes the audience most likely to look at the communication
- It clearly spells out what actions the audience needs to take, if any

Your communication should also blend into the culture so that reading your communication is embedded into the audience's typical workflow. In my email-intensive culture, virtually all of my communication is done via email. Routing things hardcopy simply isn't done and would very quickly cast a negative shadow on the project. In addition, rather than sending attachments in the email, I will try to copy and paste relevant content right into the body of the email. My experience is that the audience is more likely to read and respond to an email when the information is embedded in the body versus the recipient having to open up another document. This can't always be done particularly if the document is large, but consider doing it where possible. You may also consider using real-time venues (i.e. town hall meetings, "brown bag" lunch meetings,

staff briefings, etc.) to get your word across. The important thing is to fit your communication to your culture.

Lastly, the communication very explicitly outlines what action the audience is expected to take and when it needs to be taken by. The best communications that I've seen on this always have a "What do you need to do" section, even if there is no specific action required by the audience. It provides very explicit guidance to the audience as to what you expect from them and when, and forces you to keep your communication tight and relevant.

How it happens

3.48 Audiences were not defined clearly –

At the beginning of your project, take the time to clearly think through who your audience groups are and why then need to be included in your project communications. Make sure you are getting feedback on your audience group definitions and that the project team, steering committee, and project sponsor agrees with the definitions.

3.49 You did a great communication plan but it wasn't followed -

As the project manager, it's your responsibility to make sure that communications happen when the plan says it's going to happen and the audiences get the communication that they're expecting. I've seen plans fall apart particularly if things start going bad on a project. It's at times like this that very relevant, concise and deliberate communication is most important on the project. If you as the project manager "go silent" on a project then your audience groups are left with tapping into the rumor mill on what's happening on the project. Rumor mills are rarely flattering and could mean that you will end up spending more time fielding one-off requests by concerned stakeholders than you would if you had taken the deliberate communications route.

3.50 The communication wasn't tuned to the audience -

Make sure that you are taking into account what communication is being sent to whom and that it is concise, relevant, and timely for them. Don't be lazy on this and try to take a "one size fits all" with your communication; your end result is likely to frustrate your audiences and leave your communications unread.

I once worked on a project where the project manager sent virtually every document the project created to all of his audience groups. The rationale that the project manager used was that he wanted to be "very open" with the project and wanted all audience groups to have complete access to any information about the project. While being very open about a project is a good thing, what ended up happening was that the audiences got incredibly frustrated with the sheer amount of information they were receiving and ended up ignoring anything that this project manager sent out. So, the communication plan of "send everything to everyone" ended up being a fatal error in the project's success

3.51 The communication doesn't come from the right person –

You could be communicating all of the right things but if it isn't coming from the right person on the project then your communication is less likely to be received as intended. For instance, if you are trying to garner support for the project then having the project sponsor deliver the

communication would be more effective than the project manager delivering the communication. Similarly, project status reports shouldn't come from a lower-level project team member; they should come from the project manager.

Warning Signs

3.52 Your audience asks questions about the project that you've already communicated –

Whenever I've gotten these types of questions I've learned to take my hands off the keyboard to avoid typing a terse "didn't you read my status report"-type response. It very well could be that they aren't paying attention to your standard communications, or it could be that they're unable to understand your communication.

3.53 You're getting a lot of one-off requests for project information from audiences not in your communication plan –

When audiences that are not included in your standard communications are repeatedly asking for information, this could be a sign that you don't have all of the right audiences identified for communication, or if they are already in the plan, it could be that your communication to them isn't frequent enough.

3.54 Your audience requests go unanswered -

So you send out a communication asking for something from your audience and you get very little response. It could be that your audience isn't reading your communication, or it could be that your communication isn't explicit enough about what you need, who needs to provide it, and when they need to provide it by.

Turning it around

3.55 Right-size the communication to the audiences -

For each of your audiences, make sure that your communication is very crisp, relevant, and timely to the audience. I don't expect a busy executive to read a detailed documentation on how a product function is to be designed so I don't send it to them. For every communication that you send, make it worth their time to read it. If they don't need it; don't send it.

3.56 Take some time to redefine your audiences and how to communicate with them –

You may need to redefine your communication plan because your audiences have been poorly defined or misaligned with the type of communication that they need. Do this as soon as you see some warning signs that your communication isn't reaching the right people to avoid confusion escalating to a fever pitch.

3.57 Follow the plan -

You've done a plan, now follow it. If you need to make some tweaks because an audience is being over- or under-communicated to, then don't be afraid to do so. I've seen too many communication plans fall by the wayside because more "important" things come up. Communication is important; keep up with the plan.

3.58 Make requests explicit and easy to see -

If requests go unanswered, make sure that they are explicit, easy to find, and clear as to what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and when it needs to be done by. Doing timely follow-ups on requests are also very helpful as your project team and audiences will get the message that you don't let requests linger and die.

3.59 Reason #6 - Poor attention to project risks and management issues

So your project is humming along and stuff is getting done. Then, out of the blue, a key unanticipated product design issue comes up. As the project manager, you assess the design issue as not having a schedule impact and let the one of the project team members work it out. The design issue doesn't go away because the project team member thinks that the project manager is driving issue resolution. Before you know it, the project is late because the design issue wasn't addressed when it should have been.

Project risk and issue management is one of the most lethal but easily overlooked aspects of successful project management. Risks and issues derail your plan and cause you to divert focus away from project activities. But, there's simply no avoiding them. If you've got a project you're going to have risks and issues. Now would be a good time to define risks and issues. First let's talk about risks. Have you ever done a project plan and documented assumptions that needed to occur for the project to be successful? These are the conditions in which you are relying on a specific outcome otherwise your project will not succeed. Because you are relying on the assumption having a specific outcome, the assumption presents a risk to the project if the outcome is different. For example, let's say you make an assumption that customers are going to be available for a minimum of 20 hours per week throughout the project. Because you have made this assumption, you are relying on them to be available or there will be a negative impact to schedule. So, this assumption then becomes a project risk, which needs to be managed. Project risks have several attributes as follows:

- They are generally known at the beginning of the project
- They can exist at a specific point in the project or can persist through the life of the project
- They can materially impact the outcome of the project if the risk comes true
- There is a reasonable likelihood that the risk could come true
- They are extraordinary to normal project management

Using your assumptions to identify the project risks are a very reasonable means of fleshing out the things on a project which are likely to hurt you. It is important, though, to focus on the important risks based on three factors: materiality, likelihood, and extraordinary-ness. When I define risks, I try to limit the risks to the top 6-8 things that have a likelihood of occurring, are extraordinary to normal project management and could seriously hurt my project if they came true. As an example, if we were implementing a new technology I would absolutely have that as a project risk as there is a likelihood that the technology could fail and that it would seriously impact

the project if it did indeed fail. I would not include risks like "activities must be completed on time" because, while it's material and likely, it's not extraordinary.

Once you get your top project risks defined, your next step is to put mitigation strategies in place for each risk should the risk start coming true. So, if we take our example on implementing a new technology being a project risk, a mitigation strategy for the risk might include conducting stress and acceptance testing at the beginning of the project to ensure that the technology is able to perform under expected volumes. By defining mitigation strategies for each risk, you actively outline how you're going to head off the risk and manage away the potential problem. We'll discuss how risks are statused in the Screw-up #11 – We didn't follow the project plan. Precision in defining risks is very important. I once worked with a project manager who consistently said "this project is risky." That statement, while it may be true, is completely in-actionable in that I didn't know what to do to mitigate the risk. Your risks should be defined in terms of the action that needs to be taken to mitigate the risk. If you're unable to articulate the action, then your risk is ill-defined or not a material risk.

Now, let's focus on management issues. Similar to project risks, issues are problems that occur on a project that need some management action for resolution. If an issue isn't addressed, it could materially impact successful completion of the project. Where issues differ from risks, however, is that they generally don't persist throughout the project and they may not be known at the onset of a project. Your issue list will not be persistent like your project risks; items will open and close as they are identified and resolved. What's important in managing issues is that the issue needs to be material to successful project completion to be a management issue. For example, a management issue exists if there is a policy decision that needs to be made as a precursor to a key design point being finalized and the decision needs to be made by the project sponsor. There's materiality as the policy change directly impacts the design and may have widespread impact on the organization. In addition, an item may be escalated to a management-level issue if the issue owner is unable or unwilling to drive resolution to the issue. In this situation the project manager escalates the issue for the project sponsor or steering committee to help the issue owner resolve the issue.

Once an issue makes it onto the management issue list, a desired result is documented along with an issue owner and a date in which the issue needs resolution. We'll discuss how issues are statused in the Screw-up #11 – We didn't follow the project plan.

How it happens

3.60 Project risks or management issues don't get defined or don't focus on the important stuff-

In defining project risks or management issues, it's important to ensure that the entire management team has input to and buys off on the lists. In defining risks, continue to ask yourself the following:

- Is it material if it happens?
- Is it likely to happen?
- Is it extraordinary versus just normal project management?

Similarly, when raising management issues, keep focus on materiality and project impact. It's also super important to only raise issues to management once they exceed your span of control.

If you chronically raise issues that the steering committee or project sponsor feels you should have been able to resolve on your own, your credibility as a project manager becomes suspect.

3.61 Project risks get defined but there is no mitigation strategy to manage through the risk –

Defining and filtering your risk list is easy relative to defining mitigation strategies to navigate the risks. The mitigation strategies are going to be where your creativity and resourcefulness as a project manager come into play and, in my view, are one of the more fun parts of the job. I was running a project recently where we were using a new planning product and had an abnormally compressed timeframe to meet the needed completion date. We identified this as a key risk and employed as a mitigation weekly "show me's" where the product development team conducted weekly demonstrations of product functions completed that week. It worked great in that the product development team moved along quickly in order to meet their scheduled demonstrations, the project team got to see the weekly progress, and the team was able to react quickly if there was a problem with the product. Yes, this was an unconventional approach, but, given the identified risk, was a very appropriate and effective mitigation strategy.

3.62 Management issues get documented but there's no defined action to manage through the issue –

Over the years I've worked with a number of people who were great at saying "I've got an issue" but did little beyond that to help resolve the issue. They are adept at backing up the issue dump truck into your project back yard, dumping the issues, then driving away leaving you to clean up the issue mess. As a project manager, I've learned to push back on issue dump truck drivers not only in clearly defining the issue, but in being part of the resolution. Putting a thoughtful and concise action plan down with needed actions, dates and owners are crucial to ensuring that management issues get closed before they fatally impact your project.

Warning Signs

3.63 You don't have a project risk or issue list –

If you can't go to a place where risks and issues are readily handy and accessible by the project team, then you're likely to get surprised by an issue or risk on the project.

3.64 You don't have a plan for how you would mitigate risks from coming true –

If you've only documented risks and have no specific mitigation plan for each risk, then you're just a sitting duck waiting for a risk to blow your project out of the water. Each material, likely and extraordinary risk needs a clear mitigation to help ensure that the risk doesn't come true.

3.65 There's no clear owner or need date for resolving issues -

So an issue rears its head on the project and because it doesn't have a clear date or singular owner for resolving the issue, it creates a major budget or schedule impact to the project because

it wasn't addressed on a timely basis. Each issue needs an owner and a date in which it needs to be resolved to keep things moving along.

3.66 The project sponsor or steering committee isn't utilized effectively for resolving issues -

Either issues get escalated when they shouldn't or issues don't get escalated when they should. You've likely got limited time with your sponsor or steering committee and you need to make sure that their time is spend on issues that you cannot control or require approval greater than you can provide.

Turning it around

3.67 Get your risks defined and define clear mitigation strategies for each risk –

It's never too late to take this step in your project. Take the time to think about the risks you face that are material, extraordinary, and likely. If you developed an assumptions list as part of your project plan, use that as a starting point. Review them with the project team to ensure that the list is right. Then put together very clear mitigation strategies for averting each risk. The best way to do this is to incorporate the mitigation activities in the project plan so they are a normal part of the project and not superfluous activities.

3.68 Right-size the issue list –

Get clear about defining which issues can be resolved by the project team and which issues you need help from your sponsor, steering committee or other stakeholder to resolve. Don't escalate issues that you can deal with amongst the project team

3.69 Know who's on the hook –

For risks, make sure that there is an owner on the team for managing the mitigation. For issues, make sure that a team member owns teeing up the issue and proposed resolution with the project sponsor or steering committee. While the sponsor or steering committee is responsible for making the decision, the project team is responsible for analyzing alternatives and providing a recommendation.

3.70 In Summary

So OK, projects will continue to fail and you'll at some point in the future find yourself in hot water on a project. My sincere hope is that you will be able to glean some take-aways from the above six reasons for failure and apply some of the ideas to your next project to avert disaster or navigate through the storm confidently.

3.71 References

Lonnie Pacelli has over 20 years management experience as an executive, project manager, developer, tester, analyst, trainer, consultant, and business owner. During his 11 years at Accenture he consulted with many Fortune 500 companies including Motorola, Hughes Electronics, and Northrop-Grumman. During his nine years at Microsoft he headed up development of some of Microsoft's internal systems, led their Corporate Procurement group, managed their Corporate Planning group, and led company-wide initiatives on Continuous Fiscal Improvement and Training Process Optimization. He has successfully implemented projects ranging from complex IT systems to process re-engineering to business strategies.

Lonnie is also a partner with **Ascend Business Solutions** (www.ascendbusiness.com) which specializes in back-office outsourcing and consulting for small businesses.
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Lonnie is also the author of ***The Project Management Advisor: 18 Major Project Screw-Ups and How to Cut Them Off at the Pass (Prentice Hall, 2004).*** and ***The Truth About Getting Your Point Across*** (Prentice Hall, 2006). His experience as a consultant, project manager, and business owner give him a unique perspective into managing successful projects.

4 PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

The Federal Facilities Council has performed a study to: "identify the elements that should be included in a scope of work design to help ensure that the resulting facility is one that supports the fulfillment of a federal agency's program or mission." According to the study: "Industry practitioners recognize poor definition of project scope as one of the leading reasons that projects fail to meet the owners' objectives and expectations and contractual requirements related to project cost, schedule, and operational performance." The study objectives also included identifying key practices for developing effective scopes of work for design involving new construction or major renovation projects and identifying key practices for matching the scope of work with the acquisition strategy, given a range of project delivery systems and contract methods.

-Rick Carey, VACO, 2004

4.1 Introduction

Development of a scope of work for design presents a number of challenges. Ideally, the resulting facility should support the fulfillment of an agency's mission and programs for decades and meet the short-term needs of the users, all within cost, schedule, quality, and political constraints.

4.2 Objectives

The original objective of this study as defined by the Federal Facilities Council (FFC) Organizational Performance and Management Committee were to identify the elements that should be included in a scope of work for the design to help ensure that the resulting facility is one that supports fulfillment of an agency's program or mission.

4.3 Scopes of Work for Design

Scopes of work for design are contracts. Industry-recognized standard contract forms were considered a natural basis for this study. These documents have been developed through the collaborative efforts of a number of professional associations and sources and are often used as a starting point in developing contracts between facility owners (in this case federal agencies) and designers (typically private-sector architect-engineering firms).

In addition to the standard contractual obligations-services to be provided, standards, payment, schedule-a significant amount of project specific information must be conveyed from the owner to the designer in order for the designer to

produce design and construction documents that will ultimately result in a facility that meets the owner's goals, needs, and constraints. The scope of work for design must be tailored to each specific project and it must consider the acquisition strategy for that project.

4.4 Assignment of Project Functions or Services

A significant activity of the owner early development of the scope of work for the design involves determining which functions or services. At the end of the "General Information" section of the AIA Standard Form of Agreement between Owner and Architect, in section entitled "Identifying the Services Needed for the Project," sixty-eight services are listed as a starting outline. There are functions or services that are best performed by the owner, some best performed by the designer, and based on the owner and designer capabilities, and the project specifics. Anderson et al. (1999) provide an implementation guide for owners to use in making critical decisions regarding the division of responsibilities between the owner and the contractor (G. Edward Gibson, Jr, and Michael P. Pappas).

Table-1 Potential Competencies for Alignment

Owner Functions	Owner or Contractor Services Functions	Customer Services or Functions
Business development	Alliances/partnering	Construction
Financial approval	Benchmarking/metrics	
PM oversight	Commissioning/start up/performance testing	
Setting project goals, objectives, and priorities	Conceptual cost estimates	
	Constructability	
	Construction management	
	Convert research to project/scale up	
	Definitive cost estimate	
	Detailed design	
	Environmental/permits	
	Field quality control	
	Legal/contract administration	
	Lessons learned	
	Maintainability and operations	
	Preliminary design/scope	
	Process/conceptual design	
	Procurement	
	Project control	
	Planning and scheduling	
	Risk management	
	Safety	
	Team building	
	Technical expertise	
	Total quality management	

SOURCE: Adapted from Anderson et al. (1999).

4.5 Common Issues Emphasized by Standard Documents

All of these authoritative documents agree that a detailed, comprehensive project scope of work is the critical element prerequisite to developing a scope of work for design. They also assume the owner's leadership in the facility procurement process and definition of the project scope of work. The role of federal agencies as the owner in facilities acquisition activities is reinforced in Outsourcing Management Functions for the Acquisition of Federal Facilities (National Research Council, 2000b).

Table 2 summarizes common parameters set forth in the AIA (American Institute of Architects), EJCDC (Engineers Joint Contract Documents Contract), and the DBIA (Design Build Institute of America) standard documents.

Table-2 Common Issues Emphasized by Standard Documents

Owner's role **contractor**	. **Properly divide project functions between the owner and design** . Provide accurate and complete project information to the designer . Provide project scope requirements to the designer . Identify project representatives early in the process . Review and approve the work product at various points in the process
Contractual Requirements	. Responsibilities of parties . **Services to be provided** . Description and timing of deliveries . Payment . Insurance and bonds . Liability . Termination or suspension . Notices, severability, and waivers . Dispute resolution . Ownership of work product
Development process for scope of work for design	. Owner provides assumptions, project objective or use, physical parameters, owner's program, legal parameters, financial parameters, time parameters, proposed procurement or delivery method . Designer evaluates project information provided by owner . Project requirements are sufficiently defined prior to preparation of schedule and cost estimates . Design effort is based on a mutual understanding of the project scope of work . Design development proceeds in a structured manner, each step predicatedOn the approval of the previous step and subject to project budget and scope modifications

Table-3 Development Routing and Control

1.1.1.1 Scope of Work Design

Owners	Designer*	=	Contractor
(Goals/Necessities)	(Control/Development)		(Implement)

* Some factors to consider: During the various negotiation processes, try to strive for a professional communication environment (teamwork oriented), and keep close attention to design changes/details

SOURCE: J.R. Quinones

4.6 Project Scope Management

Project Scope Management (PSM) includes the processes required to ensure that the project includes all the work required, and only the work required, to complete the project successfully. It is primarily concerned with defining and controlling what is or is not included in the project. Project Scope is define as the work that must be done to deliver a product with the specified features and functions. The PSM major project overview process includes: Project Initiation, Scope Planning, Scope Definition, Scope Verification, and Scope Change Control (For additional information refer to: PMI, PMBOK Guide, Chapter 5, pp. 50-52, 2000 edition).

4.7 References

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5 BUILDING A HIGH PERFORMANCE PROJECT TEAM

This chapter is focused upon the vital but often neglected part of project management, that of converting the people working on the project into a team. It introduces the high performing team, what it means to belong to and lead one and then using extracts from our work provides some practical tips on how this challenge can start to be met. A chapter cannot pretend to do justice to this topic but hopefully this compilation of tips and ideas will provide a positive starting point.

5.1 Why High Performance Teamwork

Unfortunately teams don't just happen. In practice many teams never achieve the synergy essential for teamwork to become multiplicative – creating something more than the sum of the parts. In fact some teams can become subtractive – the teams producing results less valuable than its members would have achieved if they worked separately.

For this reason the Project Leader and team need to value and recognize the role of the team, and be equipped with teamworking skills and insights, in order to create a team that is truly greater than the sum of its parts. Yet we constantly meet Project Leaders who do not believe in or value the need to create and work with a team. Thus they attempt to do it all themselves, or if their first attempt at delegating doesn't produce instant results, quickly revert to a do-it-yourself approach.

But is becoming a team a real choice? Project Teams are expected to rapidly form and immediately perform, combining their expertise to solve problems, earn the trust and commitment of those affected, create a future for the Business and deliver change to a predetermined timetable. Some expectation! And for some project teams lets add the complexity of matrix, virtual and cross-functional working. Yet rarely do we come across project plans and resources that account for the need to have an effective team in place and even rarer a business and sponsor that supports and encourages the Project Leader to build one.

Instead the requirement is often to" just get on with it" - to demanding deadlines. This frequently backfires, with Project Leaders and teams feeling compelled to immediately dive into the detail of the task, before they have clarified their goals, and with no attention paid to whether the team is capable and committed enough to work together. Result, the rich resources of a team are diluted into one task focused leader and disengaged under utilised Team Members watching on the sideline.

Yes, there may be occasions where you are in a position to do a specific task faster yourself and where making a solo decision is quicker and more appropriate than achieving consensus, but these will be moments in time. Investing in the team, seeing team as a primary task, is like investing in a high interest rate bond, you get back what you put in and much more.

So if you wish that the team didn't exist, and find involving them hard work or a distraction from the project, challenge yourself to understand why and assess the real costs and benefits of "taking care of the team so that they can take care of the task." Just think:

- What could you really achieve and go for if you knew that every one would go flat out for the team and its goals?
- What are you prepared to contribute and offer when you are on a team compared to a group?
- What issues and obstacles emerge on your projects as a result of the "team" not working well together?

- How much energy and time is diverted from progressing the project into poor relationships, unresolved conflicts, miscommunications, absenteeism from meetings, unmet commitments?

5.2 What Is A Team?

Team is a word carelessly used, a title attached to any collection of individuals that appear to work together, share the same boss or even occupy the same space. Unfortunately having the title team will not convert a group of individuals into one, neither will the typical one-off team build days that many businesses invest in, hoping it may do the trick. Reality - it takes conscious effort and intervention to shift a collection of individuals to a team that feel accountable and committed to their goals and are in a position to optimally perform as a team. A team can be defined as "an interdependent group of people, working to a common goal and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable". This team has:

- Reason and purpose for working together
- Needs the contribution of the different members on the team to create the desired output
- Needs each others' experience, ability and commitment to attain the goals
- Believes that working together will lead to more effective performance
- Wants to be successful
- Is held accountable by the larger organization for team results

So how does a group differ from this definition of team? There are many differences between a group - which basically remains a collection of individuals - and a team, where fusion and cohesion between individuals is required. One key difference is that belonging to a group is a looser attachment. It makes fewer demands on the individual. Whereas belonging to a team intent on high performance is **not** an easy ride. In a team no one can take the luxury of being a passive passenger, it requires active engagement, maybe even temporarily putting aside your own needs for the good of the team. The chart below describes and compares groups with high performing teams – where are your teams?

5.3 Group Versus Team

Dimension	Group	High Performing Team
Team Member's view of their role	Does what he/she is instructed. Deliver specific tasks to the group. Functional expert. Restricts contribution to area of expertise. Sees no need to contribute beyond the specific tasks assigned.	Responsible and accountable for making the team a success, whatever it takes. Expects to and does contribute to all aspects of the Team.
Leadership	One Leader who maintains the Leadership role throughout the team's life. Directive, uses positional power to progress the work. High on control, checking and instruction. Task focused.	The Leadership role is rotated, depended on talent and task, not on hierarchy. The Leader is a coach and enabler. Focused on the process, people and task.
Emotions	Let's pretend they do not exist. Avoided as something which would cause problems and spiral out of control.	Invited in and openly expressed. Seen as central to motivation and creativity and commitment.
Communication	Guarded. Real understanding is rarely achieved. Communications are primarily initiated and channelled through the Leader. Many answers provided. Little evidence of listening. Group communications are focused on exchange of facts and opinion.	People say what they think without fear of recrimination. Members freely communicate with each other to get the work done. There are as many questions as answers in this team's dialogue. Active listening is the norm. Team communications involve joint problem solving and decision making.
Challenge	Challenges and differences of opinion are viewed as divisive. Differences are suppressed.	Differences are encouraged and effort is made to understand different perspectives and opinion.
Information	People tend to hold on to their functional data. Sharing of information is ad hoc and not valued. Issues and concerns are not automatically fed back to the Leader or group.	A system and process is established upfront, to ensure transparency and easy access to information.

Dimension	Group	High Performing Team
Relationships between Colleagues	Focused on self, with limited awareness of the links and interdependencies with colleagues. Would not see relationship building as important to achieving the task, or place any effort on this beyond social niceties.	Recognise their interdependence. Building strong relationships is seen as critical to optimal performance with high value placed on trust and co-operation.
Issues	For the Leader to both discover and deal with. Blame and defensiveness may accompany attempts to understand the issue. The focus is on why the issue occurred.	Issues are raised by anyone on the team. The focus is on understanding the issue, to help determine its resolution and to learn from it.
Focus	Past and present. Conversation tends to relive the past, full of stories, explanation and justification.	Future. Conversation looks forward at possibilities, improvements and actions.

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication "High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide"

5.4 The Project Players

Six key players need to work together to secure project success. In summary these players are:

- **The Business Leaders**, the most senior leaders, who are responsible for creating the right environment within which projects and teamworking can flourish, for managing the project-portfolio by selecting and prioritizing which projects are pursued and closed down.
- **The Sponsor**, who is accountable to the Business for achievement of the project goal and benefits through the Project Leader and Team. The Sponsor provides resource, removes obstacles to progress and ensures the ongoing alignment and viability of the project.
- **The Project Leader**, who is accountable for achieving the project goal with a project team such that the project changes are sustained and the benefits realized.
- **The Project Team**, who hold themselves mutually accountable for achieving the project goal in the most effective and efficient manner possible.
- **Customers**, the key beneficiaries of the project who need to be clear about their needs and requirements, and prepared to become involved to ensure that their requirements are understood and are being met.
- **Stakeholders,** who need to make the time to understand the project and develop the commitment and ability to work with the outputs and sustain necessary changes.

5.5 What Does The Project Team Consist Of?

Anyone who is required to contribute to the project by carrying out the work. Three distinct levels of involvement are defined here as:

- Core Team Member
- Associate Team Member
- Invisible Team Member

5.6 Core Team Members

Core Members are people who remain with the project for considerable periods of its life and are responsible for delivering significant parts of the work. This could be a specific milestone, or a number of activities spread across the project. The Core Member's responsibility is such that they need to be fully integrated into the team, know exactly what is going on, and understand the impact and implication of their work on the rest. Ideally your Core Members will identify with the project and feel accountable for its success or failure. Core Members may participate on a part or full-time basis. Planned changes to Core Membership often happen as the project moves from the Development Phases to the Implementation Phases.

5.7 Associate Team Members

Associates have a more narrowly defined and distinct contribution to make to the project. Their contribution can be sought at appropriate points without having to engage them in each team meeting or ask for their input across the whole project. Take care that Associates understand the distinction between Core and Associate and why you have defined them as an Associate. If this distinction is new to your Business it may be perceived as an insult or a less valued role, rather than an opportunity to make a clearly defined and highly valued contribution to a team without the expectation of further involvement. The practical advantage of using the Associate role is that:

- Associates are often "experts" needed across many projects. Economic use of their time allows them to provide expert input to more projects.
- It helps limit the size of the Core Team.
- It provides you with someone who can look at the project with a "fresh pair of eyes."

5.8 The Invisible Team Member

Consists of all those people within the Business who do not work directly on the project but undertake tasks that are necessary for the fulfillment of the goal. For example, employees within the Purchasing and Accounts departments may be important Invisible Members for a project, which requires lots of new equipment and prompt payment of invoices. However, if asked, they would not necessarily state that they belong to the project or identify with it in any way. This could be high risk for a project that needs them to perform for the project to stay on track. So do not take their participation for granted.

If your Invisible Members understand the project goal and how their tasks contribute to its achievement, their approach and commitment could be significantly enhanced. This may take no more than a ten-minute explanation of where their task fits. Investing a few seconds to say thank you, acknowledging their support, and informing them when the goal is achieved can also have amazing results on the person's interest and attentiveness.

5.9 Core Member Team Size

Aim to have no more than eight Core Members, with 4 to 6 being an ideal size. If you have a larger team, question whether everyone has a clear contribution to make, or whether their involvement is for communication purposes only. Politely disengage anyone who fits the latter role and reposition them as Associates or Stakeholders. There are no limits to the numbers of Associate or Invisible Team Members. Belonging To A High Performing Project Team
Those Team Members who think this role entails being a passive attendee at some meetings, ducking work assignments and relying on the few with passion or visibility to carry the project off, are in for a big surprise! If you are intent on developing a high performance project team you will not the only one with a changing and more demanding role to play. Belonging to a team which is

trying to achieve high performance is likely to make a different, often tougher, set of demands upon its members than the traditional "team".

5.10 The Generic Role Of Team Member

- Lead the team when their skill and talent makes this desirable
- Contribute across the whole team
- Meet their commitments to the team
- Feel a sense of ownership and accountability to the team, not just the specific part they play
- Keep themselves up to date with overall project progress and issues
- Publicly own team decisions, whether they agree with them or not
- Care
- Sell the team and the goal
- Alert the team to issues and opportunities
- Have views and express them
- Identify, relate to and respect different views and perspectives
- Assert their needs
- Coach and support colleagues
- Admit when they need help or have made a mistake
- Be prepared to work through differences and conflict
- Openly share information and expertise with others
- Set aside their personal agendas
- Give and receive feedback with Team Members and the Team Leader
- Deal with their own and other people's resistance, emotion and stress
- Operate within the agreed norms and rules set by the team
- Participate fully in all relevant meetings

5.11 How To Be An Ideal Team Member

This list can be generated by the team, where you may also want to get them to brainstorm the opposite scenario - how to be a nightmare of a Team Member. Sadly it is often easier to generate negatives and talking through how not to be a Team Member will be as valuable, if not more so, than agreeing the desired behaviors.

- Give the team no nasty surprises. Alert the team to all actual and potential issues/threats as soon as you become aware of them
- If you see a problem which you think is beyond your ability to sort, bring it to the team's attention
- Don't present the team with, "we must have an immediate answer/decision"
- If you want an answer to a complex issue, provide full explanation and unbiased data. You may have lived with this problem for sometime; others have not
- Try to see your work in the context of the Business and team, not just your part of it
- Be prepared to make sacrifices for the good of the team
- Present alternatives and options not just the one idea you want progressed

5.12 The Challenges Of Membership

Some Team Members may feel that too much is being asked of them when they join this team, or feel uncomfortable with the demands of the new role. Particularly if your business culture has not yet embraced high performance teamwork. Some of this discomfort can arise from:

- The person's need and comfort in being led and directed
- No previous experience of taking on Leadership type tasks
- Not wanting to be integrated into a team, but preferring to work solo
- Being unsure how to work with others
- The increased level of accountability
- The expectation placed on them of contributing beyond their functional area of expertise
- Having their functional contributions challenged rather than accepted as expert input
- Being asked to surface and deal with issues that historically would only be bitched about
- Having colleagues assess and give feedback on their performance and behavior
- Being asked to give feedback to colleagues and the Leader
- Concern with how far they can perform this role
- Concern with how far they will be accepted by others on the team
- Having to deliver!

5.13 The Inherent Challenge In Making Project Teams Work

Project Teams share a number of characteristics that can make them a greater challenge than a more permanent functional work team, not least the requirement upon them to rapidly form and immediately perform. For example:

- People brought together for a project are often a team with a limited life, ultimately to be disbanded
- People seldom work on projects full time, with the result that many Team Members may have conflicting loyalties and priorities
- The Project Leader may have no formal authority over the Team Members
- The Team Member's Line Manager may not fully support their involvement in the project
- The team often has to be up and running very quickly, with no time to settle in
- Individual job descriptions and role clarity are unlikely to exist
- The team may sit outside the normal running of the Business, with few established relationships or standards in place
- Success often really does depend on the team performing as an interdependent and integrated unit, not a collection of individuals
- The short life of the team can mean that Team Members have less incentive to resolve conflict and differences, yet these same conflicts could destroy the project
- Team Members may not know each other or may have developed prejudices and assumptions about each other from office gossip and limited exposure
- The team is more likely to be cross functional in its composition, with people bringing their own distinct "jargon" and functional concepts to the conversation

6 The Right Project Leader

"Here being a good leader is knowing when to lead and knowing when to follow"

Despite the challenges of converting a collection of individuals into a high performing team you really cannot afford to operate solo. The complexity of most changes, and the need to win the hearts and minds of those affected by the changes, make it critical that you are prepared and able to develop a real team – a team that can find within itself all those conflicting characteristics that cannot be united in any single individual. A team can also be in multiple places at once! To

achieve this you need to assume a far more complex role than simply ensuring that the technical aspects of the project are dealt with.

6.1 The Myth About Project Leadership

Project Management has its roots in the "technical" aspects of change, in environments where stability and longevity of product and organization were both the target and the norm. For this reason, the Project Leader role is still often thought of merely as a recipient of an agreed goal, with the primary challenge being to organize resources and coordinate activities to meet that goal. This view assumes that the overall organization, and people involved in the change, are generally supportive of the change, or that the people managing the change have the legitimate authority to influence and dictate. So the specification is often for an implementer with an eye for detail. How far from the truth is this?

6.2 The Real Role Of Project Leader

Here Project Leadership is defined as going well beyond the management of the triple constraints of achieving the project goal on time, to the agreed quality, and within the agreed budget. Why? Because optimum performance and real and sustained success with a project is only possible if the Project Leader has built an effective team, has satisfied the Customers of the project and earned the commitment of the Stakeholders. As a result the Project Leader has a far richer and more challenging role to perform that incorporates not just three but six core areas:

- Achieving the goal to time
- Achieving the goal to the agreed quality
- Achieving the goal to the agreed budget
- Understanding and satisfying the Customers
- Creating a High Performance Project Team
- Building the capability and willingness of the Stakeholders to accept the final output from the Project Team

So that the changes the project is there to bring about are sustained and the benefits realized upon and beyond completion of the project.

6.3 Are You Ready For High Performance Teamwork?

Building and sustaining a high performing team requires a Leader who has shifted themselves, or is willing to make the shift, from

"What can I get out of this team to meet my needs?"

To

"What can I provide this team so that we can achieve our goals?"

For many Leaders this can be a big shift and making this shift can feel like giving up the very reasons why they were attracted to Leadership in the first place. This is particularly so if your self worth is derived from being seen as the powerful Leader, fixing problems, sorting out crises and having all the answers. The successful Project Leader will constantly ask, "What does this team really need from me to achieve the task?" Then they will adapt their Leadership style and support to provide what the team cannot provide for itself. Taking up this challenge requires belief:

- In the value and benefits of teamworking.
- In the Leadership role needed to achieve it.
- In yourself, confident in what you are and what you can offer a team; because it takes a very confident Leader to truly abandon the "positional power" bestowed upon the traditional hierarchical Leader.
- That leadership is about getting things done through others, and your role is to do everything in your power to help the team succeed, because you only succeed when they do.

6.4 Some Leadership Challenges To Confront

6.4.1 The Task

Each project is unique, so there may be little Business or personal experience to draw upon. Results are often demanded within a tight time scale and can be very public.

6.4.2 The Team

The team can be multi cultural/functional and spread across many countries. Add to this challenge the fact that the team may involve specialists, all with their own assumptions, jargon and concepts, who are not necessarily used to communicating and working with each other. Then add to this the fact that the team may rarely meet due to the cost of travel. If you are leading a Virtual Team you will also need to understand how to build a team that rarely meets, and how to make effective use of the technologies to connect you.

6.4.3 Influencing without authority

Being able to influence without authority and manage upwards is vital when leading projects in a matrix organization. The Project Leader is often faced with the challenge of leading people who do not normally report to him/her. Add to this the fact that many Team Members may be part-time with loyalties to other Leaders and work asks. Stakeholders, Customers and the Sponsor must also be influenced if the team has any hope of bringing about the desired changes. These people can be at all levels of seniority, spread across multiple functions, Businesses and countries.

6.4.4 Managing conflict

Conflict will happen, whether on the team, or between the team and their Customers and Stakeholders. Given the nature of some of the changes these conflicts can be significant, and the ability to manage conflict can make the difference between success and failure.

6.4.5 Decision-Making

Decisions can have very tough and immediate consequences (which site to close, which platform to proceed with), can mean the difference between success and failure, and require the involvement of the Team, Sponsor, Customer and Stakeholders. Also, unlike many decisions that are made in private and stay in private, these decisions are often open to public scrutiny and challenge, both as they are being made and in hindsight. And unlike the traditional Leader a Leader wanting to build a high performing team does not automatically assume the "right" to make all the decisions and determine direction. Neither does the Leader enjoy the ego trip that can come from people looking to them for answers and direction. A high performing team will feel comfortable to challenge Leadership decisions but they will also feel capable and confident to make decisions, and be held accountable for the outcomes.

6.4.6 Dealing with ambiguity

You may have to deal with the personal uncertainty, ambiguity and risk that is a natural part of change, as well as dealing with the emotions which change can arouse in the team and those impacted by the project.

6.4.7 Rotating leadership

To achieve high performance, the person in the driving seat needs to be task and talent-dependent, not position-dependent. To benefit progress, you will not always automatically carry out traditionally held Leadership tasks, such as chairing discussions, having the casting vote and presenting progress to the Business.

"Letting go" of traditional leadership tasks will depend on how comfortable you feel in temporarily loaning the Leadership role to others, without feeling diminished in any way by this act, or perceiving that you have given your authority away. In this sense you are trying to create a "Leaderful Team" where anyone can step up to leadership when required.

6.4.8 Upward challenges

If you're successful in creating a team intent on high performance then expect to be challenged. This team will be looking for the best solutions, expect commitments to be fulfilled, and will not tolerate poor performance. This team will hold each other mutually accountable for progress and results. Team Members are prepared to openly challenge and question each others' actions and thoughts in order to optimize performance. This includes the actions and thoughts of the Project Leader and Sponsor.

As Leader you may not always find it comfortable to be challenged or disagreed with, but then, who does?

However, a high performing team leader when challenged will not allow this challenge to progress to a primeval power struggle. This Leader will encourage open direct dialogue so that they can have easy access to the talents and ideas of the complete team.

6.4.9 One Team - one set of rules

The team "rules" and agreements apply to everyone, including the Leader. The "we are all in this together" attitude is vital to the performance aspired to and enjoyed. Hierarchy, position and title do not determine how people behave or are treated. So setting rules for the team, which the Leader feels justified in ignoring, is not part of High Performance Teamworking.

6.4.10 Their needs not mine

The traditional Leader often displays a belief that their needs are the critical ones to be addressed and somehow central to achievement of the task. By contrast the High Performance Team Leader treats their needs as subservient to the needs of the team and its Stakeholders, and is prepared to adapt their role, providing whatever the team cannot provide for themselves. Could you operate like this?

6.4.11 Emotion is invited in – not suppressed

To succeed, you cannot ignore the emotions that surround change. This Leader must be as focused on the emotions as he/she is on the facts and figures. Engaging people at a rational level alone is unlikely to result in them "going the extra mile," or coming to terms with the impact of change.

6.5 Leadership With Attitude

Your attitude will significantly affect how Team Members view the task and team. So whether your Team Members are enthused about or resent their participation, think about what you may be doing to influence this. This list reflects teams feedback to us from across the globe regarding Leadership attitude that can make a difference to how they perform – both positive and negative.

Poor leadership attitude	**Positive leadership attitude**
Task is the only thing that matters around here	We all make mistakes or say something we regret; we just have to learn from it
I don't care what it takes to achieve the task as long as it is done	I'll stand by you
Don't give me the detail	I care
I don't want problems just solutions	Do you need some help? - makes time for people when they need it
I am more important than you, so what I say counts, what you say only counts if I say it does	How are you getting on? - respects the personal needs and other work priorities of the team
You're here to support and serve me	"We can do it" attitude
I can change my mind and overturn team decisions	"Thank you" - appreciates people's effort and achievement
You must do as I say, but I can make exceptions for myself	Enthusiastic
I am centre stage, so don't try and upstage me	Values integrity
If I can find someone else to blame when things go wrong that's just smart politics	Values doing the right thing above being popular
It's not dishonest to massage the data and results, this is the real world	Focuses on future and solutions
It is a weakness to own up to mistakes and errors	Will not tolerate commitments not being met
If anyone disagrees with the general team consensus they have a negative attitude	Lets see what is good about this idea, change, issue
	Don't play games, be straight with me
	I believe in you and this team
	"Sorry my mistake" - is prepared to apologize and own errors

The chart below compares the behaviors and values of the more traditional autocratic leader compared with that of a high performing team leader.

6.6 Moving From Autocratic Leadership

THE TRADITIONAL AUTOCRATIC LEADER IS:	THE HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM LEADER IS:
Into personal success and visibility	Into personal and team success
Task focused	People, process and task focused
Good at crisis management	Also good at strategic planning
Most comfortable in one-on-one interaction	Keen to work with the complete Team as well as with Individuals
The Hero, stands apart from the rest	An active Team Member
Focused on their own needs and views	Focused on the needs and views of the Team and Stakeholders
About divide and conquer	About Teamwork
Interested in gaining compliance	Interested in building commitment
About giving answers	About asking questions
Into blaming	Into problem solving
Into past and present	Into the future
About “my” schedule	About “our” schedule
A teller and seller	A developer of people
Solely accountable	Eager to create mutual accountability
A keeper of information, operating a need to know policy	Keen to establish common access to information

6.7 Project Leader Assessment

Use this Leadership assessment below to assess your own performance and to structure feedback from your team. It is important to get feedback from others as your perception of how you behave is interesting but it tells you only how you intend to act. Unless your intent is what is actually experienced then it is not a helpful indicator of what is actually happening. Receiving feedback from others, especially if this is a rare occurrence, can be daunting and hurt. However, it is only when you know what people think that you can start to address concerns and build on what is working well.

6.7.1 Pointers on receiving feedback

- Refrain from using respondents’ comments against them, even in a supposed joke. This could destroy any chance of receiving further honest feedback and could seriously undermine credibility and trust
- On first receipt of the reports, simply thank them
- When you review the reports do it on your own, as your facial expressions can be a window to your true thoughts and feelings, and it may not be easy to appear so appreciative of their honesty!
- Remind yourself not to justify or defend. Your team’s perceptions and feelings are real whether you feel you earned these views or not
- Give yourself time to speed read all the reports to obtain a general impression, then re read them to look for common features, patterns and differences
- Decide what aspects of the feedback you are going to work on and what this means in reality
- Prepare a communication with the team, to share your impressions, future intended actions, and to thank them for their honesty

- Repeat the feedback process a few months later to see if, in their view, you have started to address concerns and build on the positives
- By asking for, using and valuing their feedback you will be demonstrating your commitment to team success and openness to raising the performance stakes on an ongoing basis

6.8 Project Leader Assessment Form

Team Title:	
Sponsor:	
Project Leader:	Review Date:
Team Members:	Reviewer:(Optional)

How often does the Project Leader:	Rarely/never	Sometimes	Consistently
Take the time to ensure you understand what is happening and why?	☐	☐	☐
Provide access to the information you need to contribute to the team?	☐	☐	☐
Invest in your development through coaching and feedback?	☐	☐	☐
Connect and refocus your efforts back to the Business, team purpose, and Stakeholder needs?	☐	☐	☐
Help you confront and resolve issues, however sensitive they may be?	☐	☐	☐
Keep you focused on the future?	☐	☐	☐
Acknowledge your contributions and effort?	☐	☐	☐
Respect your other priorities – work and home?	☐	☐	☐
Ask how you feel and what you think?	☐	☐	☐
Actively listen to you?	☐	☐	☐
Let you experiment and take calculated risks?	☐	☐	☐
Appear passionate and enthusiastic about the team and achievement of the goals?	☐	☐	☐
Encourage your involvement across the complete task?	☐	☐	☐
Create an environment which is fun and comfortable to perform in?	☐	☐	☐
Maintain the agreed standards set up by the team?	☐	☐	☐
Provide processes and tools to help the team work better together?	☐	☐	☐
Inspire you?	☐	☐	☐
Challenge you to perform better, generate more ideas, practise?	☐	☐	☐
Demand mutual accountability?	☐	☐	☐
Help you out when you need direction and support?	☐	☐	☐
Support the team when things do not go to plan?	☐	☐	☐

The Leader adds most value to this team when he/she…

The Leader adds least value to this team when he/she…

To help this team achieve high performance I feel we could do with…

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication "High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide". Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts

6.9 The Benefits Of Project Leadership

Despite the fact that it can be a challenging role to accomplish, it is also a role that offers many personal and career rewards. It can help to understand the rewards, so you can remind yourself of them when you hit a low point.

- You are helping to create the future and can have a visible impact on Business success
- One look in the recruitment papers demonstrates that project management skills are highly prized and portable across Businesses and cultures
- The well repeated, but still accurate, phrase that "the only constant is change" means that Leaders who develop the capability to manage change will be equipped to survive and thrive
- An opportunity to learn and develop new skills and insights into Teamworking, Change Management and Leadership
- Working as a Project Leader can be a bridge between a functional role and moving into a leadership/cross-functional position
- A good way to increase your visibility in the Business
- An opportunity to network and learn more about the Business you are in
- Many of the skills and tools are also applicable to your personal life and day-to-day business, increasing your effectiveness, sense of control and achievement
- It can be fun

7 Putting The Project Team Together

"Coming together is a beginning: keeping together is progress: working together is success" – Henry Ford

The opportunity to build a high performing project team starts from the moment the project is approved and selection onto the team commences. Here are some practical tips for selecting your team, welcoming people onboard and obtaining clarity about what it means to belong.

7.1 Is this really selection

The reality is often "No". Real life observation shows that many people get involved in a project because they:

- Gravitate to it through personal interest or their relationship with the Sponsor or Project Leader
- Have a reputation for delivering results - great!
- Are nominated by their Line Manager as the individual they can most readily release – not always so great!
- Have the specialist knowledge or skills required
- Are ready for a career move or development

Even if you are not involved in formally selecting your team, it is still valuable for you to review the type of team you have ended up with and the gaps that may need to be addressed and monitored.

7.2 Identifying The Expertise and Experience Required

7.2.1 Think of the team's purpose and goals

The project goal and scope will help identify where Team Members need to come from, as these identify the areas of the Business affected by the project's outputs and the expertise required to deliver the results.

7.2.2 Think beyond the first few tasks

Take care to think beyond the people needed to achieve the first tasks on your list, not forgetting those who may need to be involved later on. Significant issues can arise if additional Team Members are identified and brought in too late for them to contribute to the solutions, decisions and plans. This can leave the team struggling with sub-optimal solutions, and the newcomers lacking ownership and commitment to team goals and decisions.

7.2.3 No constraints

Do not confine your thinking to employees. What about Suppliers, Consultants, Customers, Consumers and Agencies? Could they, as members of the team, help bring about the desired results quicker and more effectively?

7.2.4 Local, European or Global

Think through the broader implications and opportunities inherent in this project. Is the plan to pilot the output locally and then deploy it to other Business units, countries and cultures? If yes, work out who else needs to be involved now, to ensure that the solutions generated are capable of being transported across other parts of the Business, and will meet with acceptance. It may be too late, or too costly, to respond to legitimate concerns or improvement ideas when the locally based work is completed.

7.2.5 Non hierarchical

If the people with the required skills and knowledge are very senior in the Business and/or more senior than you, still pursue them as potential Associate or Core Members. Seniority does not make people immune to flattery, and being seen to have something of value to a team is a great message to receive. Even if the person cannot join the team, you may have won their commitment and interest as a Stakeholder.

7.2.6 Check completeness

To be sure you have a complete list of potential Team Members, discuss your thoughts with your Sponsor and other experienced Project and Team Leaders in the Business.

7.3 Selection Criteria

There are two levels of assessment. The first is focused on getting people with the required skills and qualities. The second and parallel consideration is making sure that you get the best team mix possible. Getting the first assessment right does not automatically result in a team capable of high performance.

- Has the skills and expertise relevant to the challenge
- Has the time to give to the team, is not already stretched across too many teams
- Possesses the behaviors and attitudes required to fulfil the High Performance Team Member role

Also look out for:

Enthusiasm for the project goal: A willing volunteer with lesser skills can be more valuable than a skilled employee who is not motivated by the goal

Change orientated: Can cope with the ambiguity and risk associated with change

Results orientated: Able to work towards outcomes, and is motivated to complete what is started

Planning and organizing skills: Able to schedule their time and handle multiple activities. This is even more critical if the individual's contribution to the team is in addition to their normal work priorities and other teams

Team Oriented: Able to and enjoys working collaboratively, putting high value on being part of a Team, and developing commitment to Team goals

Trust: Can earn the trust of the Team, Customers and Stakeholders

Diversity: Will bring a different attitude, perspective and experience to this team. Choosing a team full of similar people is unlikely to promote creativity, constructive conflict or generation of alternative ideas.

7.4 Advertising The Project

For some teams it may be beneficial to post the project goal and details, confidentiality permitting, and an advertisement up on notice boards or through the Business Intranet to ascertain interest. It is unlikely that you will know every employee's background and expertise; advertising the project is one way of finding out.

7.5 Selection Activities

If you are able to select your Team Members then an interview or a discussion on the project purpose, goals and scope should suffice. Ideally send candidates information about the project before you meet, so that you can enter into genuine debate, and ask for their thoughts and ideas.

Explain how you would like the team to work together and talk them through the role of a Team Member. Ask them about their previous team experience and how comfortable they are with the idea of taking on this role. Ask how different this team role will be from their previous team roles.

7.6 Confirming Membership On The Team

The process of bringing people on to the team remains vital, even if people have no choice about joining teams and Project Leaders have to accept whoever they are given. Where formal choice is not an option it is arguable that more, not less, attention should be paid to this process, to diminish potential resentment and raise commitment. Remember you are not the only one assessing. The candidates will be evaluating you from the moment you meet. Their subsequent thoughts and feelings about the project, project team and Leader will grow from this experience. Most high potential and highly committed employees are already overstretched on what they have agreed to deliver. You need to grab their attention, so what about doing the following:

7.6.1 The human touch

These actions will signal that they are becoming part of something important and that the skills, experience and knowledge they possess are recognized, valued and wanted!

- Personally invite people on to the team. In this discussion confirm the team's purpose, contribution to the Business, and where their contribution is most sought in its delivery
- Discuss the Associate and Core role and clarify where you anticipate their level of involvement to be and why
- Circulate a Team Contact Sheet detailing who else is on the team and their contact points and even a photograph, paragraph about each person, if it is a team that will rarely meet or not meet for an extended period
- Ask them if they have any questions or concerns which you could assist with. show personal interest in them because that is what you need back
- Be as explicit as possible about their likely time commitment to the project and when this would be required. Check how this fits with their other work commitments, holidays. It is better to know from the start what time and attention can and will be given, than finding this out once they are installed on the team and work is being allocated.

8 Contracting With Team Members' Line Managers

Some of your Team Members may report to another Manager. As a result you may not have legitimate first call on their time or be responsible for formally appraising and rewarding them. As such it is critical that you obtain line management permission and support. It is also important that you understand the needs and concerns of each Line Manager so that you do not unintentionally sour the relationship. This contract discussion is focused on establishing agreements and ground rules for how the person's participation on this team will be managed. It is really worth capturing the key points from this discussion for ongoing reference.

8.1.1 What does it involve?

A structured meeting with each Line Manager, before their person is active on the team. This meeting needs to result in both of you being:

- Clear on the level and nature of involvement the person will have on the team.
- Clear on the "rules" surrounding any changes made to this arrangement.
- In agreement on what would be seen as an unacceptable use, by you, of the person. For example "never call a meeting at month end as it is vital they sort the accounts then".
- Respectful of each other's requirements. For example you express respect for their authority and first call on the person, and appreciation for their support.
- In agreement on the basic logistics, which can appear trivial at this stage, but can result in serious issues arising if clarity is not achieved upfront and assumptions remain untested. For example:
- *If your project work requires the person to stay in hotels or travel, who picks up the bill?*
- *If the Team Member spends a significant amount of their time on the team, does the project budget need to contribute to any year end bonuses, or in fact pay for a percentage of their salary and benefits?*
- *If the Line Manager needs to take on temporary workers to cover for the absent Team Member, who pays for this?*
- Clear on the responsibility of the Line Manager to the project. For example, the Line Manager cannot unilaterally withdraw the person from team meetings without discussion, agreement and notice.
- Clear on your respective contributions to the person's appraisal.
- Clear on how you will work together to ensure that the person's well being is not harmed by juggling multiple tasks. For example, by reviewing and anticipating workload peaks and troughs to avoid competing for their time and attention.
- Clear on the process for resolving conflicts. For example, if both of you need the person at the same time, what will you do, and what criteria will be applied to help resolve this?
- Clear on the person's authority to represent the function and make decisions, without reference back to the function/Line Manager. This area needs ongoing attention and checking.

Whether you have the authority to dictate the terms or are fully dependent on a Line Manager's generosity, a clear and agreed set of principles is strongly recommended. Many Team Members report that being pulled between a Project Leader and a Line Manager is personally stressful, impacts motivation and can result in poor performance. Remember your Sponsor should be able to assist you here.

This discussion and hopefully an emerging set of groundrules between you and the line Manager will give a good start to a relationship, but that is all it is, a good start. Having these groundrules is no guarantee that the relationship will work well unless ongoing effort and attention is given to it. And if the Line Manager changes then restart the process of building the new incumbents understanding and commitment. Do not expect the new Line Manager to pick up where their predecessor left off. Likewise if a new Team Member joins do not attempt short cuts and miss out this practice, even if the team is doing well and you have had no issue with any Line Managers, so far!

If you have a good set of groundrules in place regarding one of your Team Members do not assume this same agreement or relationship will extend to another, even if you are dealing with the same Line Manager. It may be that the next Team Member is valued differently by the Line

Manager, has a critical task they need to return to, or can be released more readily. Never assume.

9 Contracting With Team Members

Through joint discussion and agreement, the Project Leader and Team Member create a contract which makes transparent the expectations and commitments between them. Some aspects of this contract may be replicated in the TeamWorking Charter, detailed later on in this chapter, and parts of this contract may remain confidential and/or specific to the relationship between you and a Team Member.

9.1.1 What does it involve?

- Explain the value and purpose of contracting.
- Ask the Team Member to prepare two lists: what they expect from the Team and you as Leader, and what they are prepared/able to give. This could be in terms of time, travel away from home, approaches to feedback etc.
- Prepare your own lists, outlining what you expect from them and what support you are prepared to give them.
- Share your lists, starting with theirs. Check that you understand each item. Question and clarify until you feel comfortable that you understand their underlying interests and needs, and invite them to question and comment on your lists.
- Be honest if a requirement or expectation cannot be met. Explain why, and see if alternatives can be found. This will be easier if you understand what the person's underlying interests are as well as what their stated position is.
- Make clear notes of unresolved issues and jointly agree how to progress to resolution.
- Keep notes so that the Contract can be written up and regularly reviewed.
- If the person reports to another Leader, it is essential that this Leader is comfortable with, and committed to, these arrangements.
-

9.1.2 Some benefits

These discussions establish a good base for the relationship, signaling that you are interested in them, not just achievement of the task. What a refreshing introduction to a team! These discussions can also surface issues and concerns which may otherwise have remained hidden and festered, with no opportunity for resolution or explanation. It also surfaces assumptions and expectations, thus reducing the chances of nasty surprises emerging, for the Team Member, their Line Manager and for you, when it is too late or too disruptive to attend to without impacting the project.

This type of discussion also makes it more difficult for the Team Member or their Line Manager to pull out of the team or withdraw support and involvement compared to the situation when Team Members feel dumped onto a project and Line Managers feel they had no say and thus see it as fair game to disrupt and undermine at will! This discussion, particularly when it is written up, is a strong reference point if the subsequent behavior does not live up to the understandings reached.

9.1.3 Watch out for

Setting an expectation that the Team Member can get whatever they ask for. The false expectation that this contract cannot be altered if circumstances change, or can be unilaterally ignored when it suits either party A desire to take shortcuts with this. The real benefits are derived when face-to-face meetings take place with good preparation and a genuine intent for open dialogue

9.2 The Journey To High Performance Teamwork

9.2.1 Getting Started

In this section I have selected some invaluable early activities to try out with your team. Some are one off actions and others can be very powerful when built into the ongoing life of the team.

9.2.2 Do We Need To Be A Team?

People need a compelling reason to work as a team – otherwise, forget the task, just getting them to turn up for meetings will be challenge enough. So one of the first questions that needs to be asked of the team is, exactly why do we need to work as a team? It's having this compelling reason that helps shift Team Members from the often half-hearted, bystander level of participation to enthusiastic commitment.

This answer needs to be one that is a positive and persistent force for teamworking and compelling enough to keep them working together as opposed to disbanding when the going gets tough or individuals disagree with the direction and decisions being made. If you cannot find a compelling reason then maybe your project is one that can be delivered through a group structure and thus don't waste time and energy trying to become a team. However it would be a rare project that didn't need a team to make it happen.

9.2.3 Why Am I Here?

This practice invites all Team Members to think very broadly about the skills and qualities they bring to the Team. Any mismatch in expectations between what someone believes they can offer a team and what the team believes is being offered can then be managed.

9.2.4 What does it involve?

- Explain that achieving high performance relies on the team having access to all the relevant skills and attributes residing in each person, not just the obvious functional skills. Compare the High Performance Team with that of a group stranded on an island. It would be in everyone's best interest to discover who could do what, and for everyone to offer up every skill, experience, attribute and knowledge that could possibly help the team survive and get rescued.
- Ask them to divide the paper into two columns and replicate the drawing below.
- Ask everyone to detail in column one why they believe they are on the team and what they expect to be able to offer across the whole project. Ask for their points to be specific, for example:
    - Expertise in programming
    - Experience in multinational change projects
    - Excellent contacts with key Stakeholders
    - Good sense of humor that can lift us when we are down
    - A completer finisher
    - An eye for detail
    - Love and good at numbers
    - Can speak three languages
- Column one should then be covered up (make sure the person's name remains visible). This stops people from merely repeating what is present in column one or changing their own comments in the light of what the person has said about themselves.
- The charts can then be displayed on walls or on a floor. Team Members then wander between the charts and add their comments to column two of each person's chart. If someone does not know why the person is there ask them to state this on the chart.

- In turn each person (including the Leader) provides feedback on the comments placed on their own chart and through discussion with the team clarifies which expectations can or cannot be met.

9.2.5 Why Are We Here Tool

1. Why Am I Here	2. Why Are You Here (Write your name here)

9.2.6 When to apply this practice

Ideally prior to the allocation of the work so that optimum decisions can be taken.

9.2.7 Benefits

- Helps people get to know each other better
- Reinforces the need for full commitment by looking at what the total person can contribute
- Surfaces incorrect assumptions about each other's contribution to the team
- Provides invaluable information for work allocation

9.2.8 Watch out for

People being too modest about what they can bring to the team and others too nice about what other people can/are contributing. Review the charts as they are being created and provide feedback if this is occurring. Make sure your own chart promotes the right level of discussion.

9.3 Getting To Know You

This practice helps to foster greater understanding of each other through self disclosure and as such promotes more openness, trust, and awareness of how someone will perform and react in certain situations. Many teams we have introduced this to report that they have a getting to know you session at each team meeting until every one has partnered with everyone else on the team. It is not unusual to find that people on the same team can know virtually nothing about each other and on one occasion we where called upon to start working with a project team in crisis to find that many of them didn't even know each others names.

9.3.1 What does it involve?

- Explain the purpose and content of this practice.
- Ask people, including the Leader to form pairs, ideally with someone they believe they know the least about.
- Recommend that they find themselves a private corner of the room.

- Issue the list of questions detailed below. It is recommended that people take turns initiating the questions, and select from this list, and make up additional questions, as opposed to working through all sixteen questions.
- The exercise can then be repeated with different pairs. If you know that certain individuals are not getting on well encourage them to pair up for this practice.
- Hold a team debriefing, not to share the answers, but to share how people felt about the practice and any insights they would like to share.
- Ask the team how surprised they were by the answers given. Had they formed views about someone that were wildly wrong?

9.3.2 Some getting to know you questions

- What do you enjoy most about your current job?
- What are you good at?
- What task would you dread taking on and why?
- What sort of people do you enjoy being with the most?
- What situations do you find the most difficult to deal with?
- What do you do when someone gets angry with you?
- What do you expect to experience more, success or failure?
- How do you overcome disappointments?
- How would you like to be remembered in general/by this team?
- What makes you mad?
- What first impression do you think you give?
- If you could change one thing about you what would it be?
- What would you fight hard for, and why?
- How can we get off to a good start?
- What would you like to be different in two years time?
- How do you react when you know you are wrong/receiving feedback/being praised?

9.3.3 Benefits

- The intimacy of a partnership discussion can encourage the exchange to reach a deeper level than in the larger team
- Accelerates getting to know each other
- Helps people see their colleagues as people with all the complexity, hopes and dreams as opposed to the one dimensional view we can hold of others, especially if we have decided we do not like them!
- Helps reduce developing tensions between people on the team by simply having a shared task and time together
- Helps to break down any subgroups that are forming or that pre-existed within the team

9.4 Team Reviews

How effectively are we working together is a constant question for any team intent on high performance and cannot start earlier enough in the life of the team. Regular and frequent reviews are the key to maintaining momentum towards high performance. Without these reviews, of both task achievement and team processes, ideas for improvement may never be shared with the team. It is a matter of concern how often people express dissatisfaction with a team's progress, or make suggestions in private, which are never offered to the team. Teams' intent on high performance need free access to all these ideas, and to be alerted when people are dissatisfied

or concerned. These reviews provide the opportunity for just that, by ensuring that different views about team performance are collectively shared.

9.4.1 Team Review - Option One

9.4.1.1 What does it involve?

One way is to institutionalize the following team review procedure at the end of each team meeting:

- Ask the team to share what they thought went well at the meeting, or during a specified period of time; capture the thoughts on a flip chart.
- Ask the team to share what they think is not going so well and needs to be attended to; capture the thoughts on a flip chart.
- Agree as a team what will be done differently next time by all present to build on the positives and overcome concerns.
- Once you have conducted team reviews a couple of times, invite other members of the team to facilitate the review sessions.
- Bring previous team reviews to the meetings to see whether the team is progressing.
- Encourage the use of meeting reviews where you are not present, by asking to see their review evaluation.

9.4.1.2 Benefits

- Encourages observation
- Provides an opportunity to practice feedback
- Gives the team a good chance of making meetings work
- Reinforces the fact that it is the team's responsibility, not just the Leader's, to ensure meeting effectiveness

9.4.2 Team Review - Option Two

Some variations on Option One.

9.4.2.1 Review questions to ask

- What are the highlights for this team to date/during this meeting?
- What has been the lowest point, in the life of the team/during this meeting?
- What does each person recommend we pay particular attention to as we go forward?
- What is each person's best moment, so far, as a Team Member? (Encourage real moments to be expressed. This provides an opportunity for people to express their appreciation of their colleagues and continue to build trust as special moments are revealed)

9.4.3 Team Review - Option Three

9.4.3.1 Holding up the mirror

If more dramatic action is required, seek permission to either video or record parts or all of a team meeting. The team can then review the tapes, assessing their effectiveness and determining what actions are needed. This can be a very potent form of feedback to the team. If you do this, agree upfront how the tape will be used. Resist individuals

asking to take the tape away to look at in private unless they are very clear that it is for their eyes-only.

9.4.4 Team Review - Option Four

9.4.4.1 Team Meeting Evaluation

The evaluation form overleaf provides a structured and more detailed way of extracting feedback about the effectiveness of the team meeting, which can then stimulate discussion and track progress over time on each item.

9.5 Team Meeting Evaluation Form

Team Title:	
Project Leader:	
Sponsor:	Review Date:
Team Members:	Reviewer:

Tick the frequency which best describes each item.

Rate Your Meeting From Never To Always	Never	Seldom	Mostly	Always
I had the chance to speak	☐	☐	☐	☐
No-one dominated the proceedings	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt that the Team listened to my contributions	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt comfortable and relaxed	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt able to contribute to how the meeting was structured and proceeded	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt everyone was involved and committed at this meeting	☐	☐	☐	☐
Care was taken to ensure that everyone achieved clarity on the information and issues, and understood the implications of the decisions taken	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had fun	☐	☐	☐	☐
People were given appropriate feedback when they distracted the meeting or broke the ground rules	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Leader did not dominate	☐	☐	☐	☐
We had a good process to follow and used the meeting tools well	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt it was a worthwhile use of my time	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt it was a worthwhile use of team time	☐	☐	☐	☐
Discussion was closed when a clear resolution was reached	☐	☐	☐	☐
Decisions were not postponed because they were too difficult	☐	☐	☐	☐
Issues, errors and problems did not result in blame and shame	☐	☐	☐	☐
We talked about the future and learnt from the past	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know exactly what is expected from me, as a result of commitments made, and decisions taken at this meeting	☐	☐	☐	☐

I See The Key Strengths Of Our Meetings As Being:

I Would Like To See Changes And Improvements In The Following Areas:

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication "High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide". Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts.

9.5.1 Team Review - Option Five

9.5.1.1 The motivator check

Don't be afraid to ask the team how motivated they feel as the project progresses, and to identify factors contributing to their highs and lows. This will give you and the team an opportunity to take appropriate action and better understand the impact of certain actions and situations. Try this simple "Motivator" check. A Motivator check is a quick and simple way of obtaining everyone's current levels of motivation without getting into a long debate.

Ask Team Members to provide you with a score from 1 to 5.
1 – "I feel very motivated and committed" to
5 – "I am switched off and uninterested"

You can leave it as one overall score per person, or a set of scores against a number of factors such as:
- Motivation to achieve the goal
- Motivation to work with this team
- Motivation for the role I have on the team
- Motivation regarding our progress
- Motivation regarding our chosen approach

To avoid putting people on the spot the scores can be generated anonymously, with people writing their scores on cards which are collected in and positioned on a chart.

Some of your best debates and shifts in how you operate can result from people expressing how they really feel about the project and team. Use this motivator check as a

lead into some serious debate about the current status and desired or essential improvements.

9.6 Empowering The Team

For many individuals and teams it is less a question of whether they have the skills or knowledge, than whether they feel confident enough to apply them and whether they will be appreciated or criticized for doing so. If the team does not feel or believe it is empowered to act, then the chances are that their talents will remain untapped.

9.6.1 Empowerment involves:

- *Providing the Team with communication and information on all aspects of the project and its connection with the wider Business.*
- You cannot expect them to be accountable and contribute to decisions unless they are informed.
- *Constantly providing opportunities for them to learn and develop.*
- This could be technical training, learning new skills and/or interpersonal team training.
- *Having decision–making power.*
- An agreed decision-making process is a good place to start and then ease the team into making decisions over a period of time.
- *Being held accountable for the results.*
- Empowerment has to be for real, there is little point in you empowering them if the minute performance issues arise or commitments are not met, it is you as Leader, and not the team who is held accountable by the Business. So help position the team as an accountable unit with your Sponsor and the Business.
- Ideally this team would have no prescribed limit on what it could do. The only real limitation is the pace and nature of their developing skills and confidence.

Here are some tips for getting started with empowerment.

- Share the definition of empowerment. Unless the team operates with a common understanding on what it means to be empowered, it will be difficult to get there!
- Review any perceived barriers to empowerment and facilitate a brainstorming session to add to this list until all the barriers have been captured
- Ask the team to rank order the barriers in terms of how far they believe the barrier exists for this team
- Ask the team to identify up to 20 actions, which could overcome the top five barriers and reach consensus on which ones to implement
- Assess how ready the team is to take on the increased responsibility and then start gradually and build from there. Asking the team to make significant decisions on day two may do more damage than good and appear to the team to be an abdication of your leadership role rather than a positive attempt to build the team
- Disclose how you personally feel about empowering the team and the personal issues you may need to deal with. You may want to ask for their support and feedback
- Invite Team Members to disclose what they see as the potential costs and benefits of working in an empowered team. This will provide valuable information on how to assist each person to step up to the increased responsibility
- Be clear with the team that you would like their feedback if they feel you are either delegating too much too soon, or being more directive than is helpful or necessary. You will then need to assess how far you will respond to this feedback

9.7 Creating A Team-Working Charter

Another great agenda item for one of the early team meetings. This TeamWorking Charter provides a behavioral reference point for how the team will operate, and is in addition to the document which details exactly what the project is about and will deliver to the business. It encourages Team Members to confirm their responsibilities to the total success of the team and achieve greater clarity on exactly what it means to belong to the team.

9.7.1 What does it involve?

The complete Team creates their TeamWorking Charter through discussion. To speed the process up, different sections could be drafted by subgroups and brought to the full team for review. Once created this becomes a living document to be referred to and updated throughout the life of the team.

9.7.2 When to apply this practice

When the team is clear on their goals and each person's role on the team

9.7.2.1 Benefits

- The formalization of commitments, and the opportunity to commit with a signature, can give greater visibility and importance to the Team role
- Guides behavior
- Gives everyone greater license to comment when people digress
- Prompts a practical debate on the tasks necessary to work effectively as a team. A debate which often gets neglected, with the focus being exclusively on the "technical tasks" required to achieve the goals

9.7.2.2 Watch out for

People feeling coerced into agreeing to commitments they would rather not have. So give people time to get there at their own pace and be vigilant about a few dominant or more flamboyant members dictating the agenda for the rest. Some people may view signing the form as bureaucratic or a lack of trust in them. To deal with this either make signing optional, or see what the team thinks before asking for any signatures.

9.8 TeamWorking Charter Form

Team Title:	Team Started:
Sponsor:	Report Created:
Project Leader:	Version:
Team Members:	

Our Purpose: Vision, Mission And Goals

Our Core Values

Team Ground Rules

Tasks – Key Tasks To Enable The Team To Function

Team/Individual Boundaries

Meetings/Contacts

Commitments
As a Team we commit to: As a Sponsor I will: As a Project Leader I will: As a Team Member I will:

Our Rights

Measure Of Team Success

Signed		
Name	Signature	Date

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication “High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide”. Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts

10 The Team Performance Chart

10.1 Engaging

The elements of the engaging stage create the foundation on which high performance teams can be built. These elements are:
Purpose The fundamental reason behind creating the team and committing valuable business resources to support it achieving its goals
Commitment A conscious decision taken individually and collectively by the team to dedicate time and energy to achieve the purpose and goals set by the Business
Trust An acceptance by all those involved in meeting the team goals that fostering a level of reliance on the characteristics and integrity of the others is essential to the success of the team

10.2 Enabling

The enabling stage provides the core requirements for how the team will operate and how individuals will contribute to that operation. These core requirements are:
Capability The skill knowledge and capacity of the individuals, stakeholders and team to perform the required tasks to the agreed timescale to ensure the goal is achieved
Accountability The acceptance by all parties of the responsibilities of individuals, stakeholders and the team in the achievement of the team's goals
Principles The agreed "rules" processes and norms which help shape and govern how the team works together to achieve its goals. These principles provide the glue, which keeps the team "together" providing the necessary clarity, and structure from which greater creativity efficiency and risk taking can emerge.

10.3 Energising

The elements of energizing provide the team with the fuel to overcome obstacles and create innovative solutions on the route to success. These elements are:
Creativity The fostering of a team culture and environment which stimulates the creation, capture and implementation of innovative ideas
Responsiveness The capacity of individuals and the team to react positively and effectively to unforeseen obstacles or changes
Recognition The continuous appreciation of individual and group efforts which contribute to the building of the team or the achievement of the goal

The journey we offer our clients is structured and repeatable with a practical focus on accomplishing what we call the **Nine Essential Elements** to high performance. These nine elements are categorized into three distinct states, which the team has to manage and within each state the essential elements, which would need to be accomplished, and then sustained, for high performance to be possible. The elements are presented in the order that one might follow when starting a team from scratch. However this is only sequential in start up, thereafter the team will need to keep monitoring and building on all the essential elements to ensure they remain on track for delivering results.

Although at different points in the teams' life one or more of these elements will need to be prioritized for attention the tough part is that every element needs ongoing management. for the remainder of this chapter I have selected a couple of tips from our body of work relevant to the essential elements purpose, commitment and trust.

10.4 Essential Element Purpose

Purpose is an essential element because lacking purpose hurts performance, who wants to work on a task that has no clear point to it? High Performing Teams are purpose centered. The purpose is understood, committed to and used to guide actions and decisions. The team has a shared conviction that the work they are going to do is important and desired by the Business. This team also has explicit goals to reach for, which are achievable but challenging and inspire. Until clear goals are established and the purpose and fit with the Business understood, the team's energies will dissipate over many tangential and often conflicting activities.

Purpose Tip – never assume that because the goal is written down that everyone on the team shares the same understanding, especially if you have a cross cultural, virtual team.

Ask everyone to separately write down what they believe the goal of the project is and any priorities that currently exist – with no conferring. It is amazing how the bravado of, "of course we know our goals", dissolves into anxious silence. Then ask them to place their notes onto a shared table/wall for everyone to gather round, review and get aligned. 70% of the teams we have done this with have at best surfaced misunderstandings and at worst total conflict in the goals they assumed they were there to achieve! This same exercise can also be done with your project sponsor and the wider business in case anyone outside the team is carrying around any incorrect assumptions and beliefs about your goals.

Purpose Tip - ask everyone to describe in their own words what will the new state look, feel, and be like when your project goals have been accomplished. This will not only draw them into the future they are there to create but will surface any misunderstandings.

Purpose Tip - at the start of every meeting and on your communications repeat the project goal. That is why you exist so keep this upper most in everyone's minds.

Purpose Tip - when making decisions or when issues need resolving ensure that your goals act to keep the discussions within the scope of the project. Challenge decisions, and any changes to the project with questions like "what impact will this have on our ability to accomplish our goals?" "is this decision compatible with our goals?"

10.5 Purpose - Evidence Of Success

- Team effort is focused

- Assumptions about the teams work are shared and aligned
- The team is eager to experience achievement of their goal(s)
- The team spontaneously sells and defends their goal(s) to others
- Every team member describes their overall purpose goals and priorities in the same way
- The team can readily identify when requests are outside the scope of their work or when they are going off track
- The team share a vision of the future impact and affect on the business once their goal(s) are achieved
- The team knows who wants and will use or benefit from their work
- The team discusses their work in the context of the wider Business

10.6 Essential Element - Commitment

Commitment is a conscious decision, strengthened by emotion and belief, to do or achieve something. Commitment brings with it the necessary energy, courage and conviction to make things happen and overcome obstacles. It is not something, which can be ordered on command but will take time to build. If this essential element is well managed the person will have made a positive decision to belong and be curious about how the team will work out. Teams without commitment will dissolve when the going gets tough or sacrifices need to be made.

Commitment Tip - self-interest the "what's in it for me" is a powerful motivator, and it will do a lot to bind individuals to the team and its goals. Having a personal investment in what you're doing is often given a negative slant, or seen as a hidden agenda. So make it **okay** for your team to share their **personal** goals. Help each of your Team Members make a real connection between their personal goals and aspirations and going after the team goal. Then where possible you as leader and the team should be alert to opportunities to help each person accomplish their personal goals alongside accomplishment of the team goals. And even if none are first found, or ever found, the very fact that their personal aspiration and goals have been seen as important will go some way to engaging them with the team.

Commitment Tip – make commitment a tangible and measurable accomplishment. Place commitment on a team meeting as a topic for review. Then ask the team what they believe commitment looks like when it's alive and kicking. Seek specific examples of how far commitment has been demonstrated on the team and examples where lack of commitment has been experienced. This facilitated discussion alone has been reported by teams to have raised their collective conscience about commitment and the impact on others when it is felt to be present and lacking.

Commitment Tip – it will be harder to achieve Team Member commitment to the project if they do not feel that you are committed to them and they are simply a means to a task getting done. Reflect on what actions you have taken which would be experienced by a Team Member as evidence of your commitment to them as a person. Here are some actions that could have the desired impact.

- Treat their needs and concerns as equally important with yours
- Ask for their opinion then listen
- Seek their approval before committing their time and effort
- Apologize if you do something which hurts them
- Acquaint their Line Manager or the Senior Team with their talents and contribution to the team
- Create opportunities for them to shine and be seen

- Stand up for them if someone tries to put them down
- Make the time to help them through challenging tasks
- Pick up the phone to see how they are; don't wait for the convenience of a meeting
- Remember what is important to them (kids' school play, anniversary etc)
- Assume their intentions are right and that they want to do excellent work

This may sound like a wish list, but if you make the effort to do just some of these things, what a difference it could make.

Commitment Tip – One simple but powerful practice we introduce teams to is the team commitment sheet. We recommend that the full blown traditional meeting minutes are annihilated; they consume time, are an excuse for inaction post meetings, are often challenged as incorrect or never read and often experienced as lifeless and turgid! The team commitment sheet involves everyone having a blank sheet in front of them and taking accountability for recording the commitments they make to the team as they are being made. At intervals through the meeting and at the end a regular agenda item called "Our Commitments" is staged where everyone reads out their captured commitments to the team. This has several benefits. First clarity can be achieved on the task before any investment goes into its achievement. Second what may have seemed like a great idea at the start of the meeting may no longer be one towards the end so this process helps sift out the non relevant commitments or modify them. Third, as people walk out the room they can take action. And fourth, if you deliberately and repeatedly use the word commitment it is so much harder psychologically to break a commitment to a team than to fail to deliver against an agenda item. This also adds the pace and collective ownership that needs to run through everything the team does.

10.7 Team Commitment Sheet Form

Team Title:	Report Date:
Project Leader:	
Team Member:	

Activity I Have Committed To Undertake	I Will Deliver (Specify Quality)	Dependencies / Links To Other Team Activities	Completion Required By

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication "High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide"
Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts

10.8 Commitment - Evidence Of Success

- The team dedicates the time required to achieve the goal
- Tough decisions are taken and publicly supported
- Energy remains high and focused on results
- There is constant striving for better solutions, ideas, ways of working
- Issues and poor quality work are not permitted
- Strong emotions are felt and expressed when things go well or problems arise

10.9 Essential Element - Trust

Like many of the essential elements suggested in our approach, trust cannot simply be confined to a particular stage it's not that easy or convenient. Real trust takes time to establish, can involve a certain degree of risk taking and needs to be built throughout the life cycle of a team. But the seeds of trust have to be planted early if Team Members are to be engaged with, and motivated by, the purpose of the team.

Trust Tip - suggest that like commitment this apparently intangible/soft side of life is brought right into the heart of the team, that you signal its value and place in enabling both team performance and individual pleasure. Start with getting the team to explore what trust means to them and then get into some details about what behaviours in others would build their trust in that person and what behaviours would damage it. The outputs of this discussion can be surprising, particularly if you have different cultures and age ranges on the team. Capture the discussion points and return to it at regular intervals throughout the life of the team.

10.9.1.1 Trust Tip – This Thing Called Trust

Here is a structure for having a more in-depth discussion on trust. The aim here is to create a common sense of the value of trust and how a team can develop it. It is not to get the team to trust each other. It will take more than one session to achieve this.

10.9.1.2 What does it involve?

Explain why trust is critical to a team's ability to perform, or better still ask the team to discuss the value of trust to their performance and the potential impact on the team if trust is built and not built.
Use these notes to help you.

10.9.1.3 With trust the team is more likely to be:

- Open and free with data exchange, discussing issues and concerns – leading to better solutions/insights
- Made aware of people's concerns and ideas, leading to greater variety and richness of input
- Able to admit and alert each other to mistakes and errors
- A unit that people enjoy and want to belong to
- Able to get on with their work without feeling the need to check up on others or get involved when it is not required

- More tolerant of each other as they assume good intent, not bad
- Given more authority
- Given more complex and confidential work to do

10.9.1.4 Without trust:

- As much is unsaid in the team as said
- Knowledge is hoarded
- Full commitment is not easy to achieve
- False data is exchanged
- It is difficult to diagnose problems and issues
- Negative assumptions are made about others' motives and intent which could result in more issues
- Issues are not surfaced for resolution
- Little delegation
- Low morale
- Caution
- Creativity is stifled
- Energy and attention placed more on checks and monitoring than developing and creating

Ask people to discuss what trust means to them and to share their past experiences of trust on teams. This alone could sensitize and influence people's future behavior. If the debate dries up quickly, or is slow to start, ask the team to each complete the following sentences, which are then shared:

- Trust grows when…
- Trust is destroyed when….

10.9.1.5 Real Examples

Ask the Team for examples of things that have already happened on this team that reduced trust or raised it. Point out that unless a person is made aware of the effect of their actions, they are being denied an opportunity to explain, rectify and rebuild the relationship. If people are reluctant to provide examples, draw the team's attention to this fact and explore with them the trust practices that they would like to build on.

10.9.1.6 When to apply this practice

The general discussion on trust needs to happen early on in the team's formation. The specific debate about demonstrated trust behaviors can take place once the team has some history or if trust is being undermined.

10.9.1.7 Benefits

Having these trust focused conversations help to sensitize people to the value and benefits of building trust before the opportunity to damage it arises.

10.9.1.8 Trust Tip - The Trust Gauge

This practice helps to measure how much trust exists and how much still needs to be developed.

What does it involve?

- Team Members complete the Trust Gauge on their own, see below.
- Place the questions on a flip chart and have people come up and mark their responses. Make sure that anonymity is protected in this process if it is important for this Team. The questions can be placed vertically with three columns (a, b, c) across the chart to capture the frequency with which each response option was selected.
- Start the debate by asking what would it take for people to respond “a” as opposed to “b” or “c”? And what is keeping people at the response level b or c?
- Pair people up and ask them to explore with each other the actions required to help them shift their responses to “a”. Some of these actions may need to come from the speaker and some from the partner. Ask people to capture any specific actions that they agree to undertake to help the partner shift their responses to “a”. Move partners until everyone has had a one-to-one discussion with every member.
- Facilitate a team briefing to see how people feel and what insights or shift in perception have occurred through the discussions. Ask people whether their responses on the Trust Gauge would be any different if they were to redo one now? Ask, if all the actions just committed to were implemented, what would happen to the Trust Gauge results?

10.9.1.9 When to apply this practice

If applied at the start of the team it provides a useful baseline measure of the levels of trust present. Some Team Members, who have worked with each other before, may have very good or possibly very poor trust between them. Worth knowing what you are starting out with and thus you can gauge if the team is going in the right direction?

If you take over the Leadership role of an established team this Trust Gauge provides insight into their progress and effectiveness so far in establishing trust. Also useful as a regular check on the trust which is developing and if you sense that trust may be being eroded.

10.9.1.10 Benefits

- Provides focus for a discussion on trust
- Signals your concern that trust is vital
- Signals your openness to receive feedback
- Reinforces the interdependencies between members
- An opportunity for the Team to gain insight into each other’s concerns and perceptions
- An opportunity to give and receive feedback

10.9.1.11 Watch out for

Demanding that people disclose how they answered the questions. Let the debate bring this out but keep the questionnaire process anonymous. Making people feel under pressure to provide the answers they think you want. This will negate any benefits and in fact erode trust. So stress that positive responses, if they are not genuine, are worse than no response at all.

10.10The Trust Gauge

Team Title:	Team Member:
Sponsor:	Report Created:
Leader:	Version:

Question:	A	B	C	Choice Here
1. When I make a mistake, I:	Alert the Team as soon as possible so we can sort it out	Try and sort it first and if that doesn't work then let the Team know	Hope it will not be discovered and work out how to respond if it is	
2. When it comes to my ability to undertake the work:	If I am unsure of the tasks I am working on I would let the Team know and seek their help	I would look for help from someone outside the Team so as to give the impression to this Team that I can cope	I would struggle with the task and hope my performance was acceptable and not paid too much attention to by the Team	
3. Asserting my needs:	I have no problem asserting my needs on this Team	I may informally let some Team Members know what I want but would not formally state my needs	I keep my needs to myself	
4. When it comes to receiving feedback:	I actively look for it	I may ask Team Members what they think but I would not formalise this request	I would feel uncomfortable asking for any feedback	
5. When it comes to giving feedback to my Team colleagues I would:	Both compliment and provide constructive criticism	Restrict my feedback to compliments	Give none and if directly asked keep my statements very neutral	
6. When it comes to me being on this Team:	I feel I can be and say the way I really feel. My best friends would not see me behaving any differently on this Team	I feel comfortable being me some of the time but the Team hasn't seen the real me yet	I think I behave differently when I am on this Team to when I am outside work and with other work colleagues	

Question:	A	B	C	Choice Here
7. When it comes to expressing what I really think:	I feel comfortable expressing what I really think, irrespective of who on the Team holds a different view	I think carefully before saying anything which seems to go against the general Team thinking	I tend to keep thoughts to myself that could be seen as negative or different	
8. When it comes to how I feel:	I express my emotions without concern for how I might be perceived	I express my feelings to some Members but not to the Team as a whole	I tend to keep my feelings to myself	

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication "High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide" Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts

10.11Trust - Evidence Of Success

- Appreciation of experience, skills and knowledge of all Team Members
- Open sharing of hopes and fears amongst the team
- Mistakes and errors are admitted
- Absence of policing and controls
- People belief that people will do what they say they will do
- Establishing and accepting a collective responsibility
- Recognizing and valuing differences within the team
- Open sharing of each others personal agendas and aspirations

10.12Measuring Progress and Accomplishment

A web based Team Effectiveness Diagnostic enables accomplishment against each of these nine essential elements to be tangible and measurable. Typically the teams we work with complete this diagnostic prior to starting on the journey and then at frequent intervals along the way. However you chose to measure team effectiveness and its correlation with project performance the important thing is that it is measured and made tangible, otherwise you run the risk that attention and effort directed towards team effectiveness is treated as a nice "pink and fluffy thing to do" once the tasks are done!

10.13Managing Changes To The Team

Planned changes to Team Membership are most likely to happen at the point the project moves from the Development Phases into the Implementation Phases. If you have been successful in creating the initial team, this can make it initially more difficult for a new member to join unless the team is sensitive to how they welcome a newcomer on board. Employees who have experienced joining a team that has developed into a real team have reported feelings of feeling more of an outsider than when joining a looser group. This situation cannot be tolerated and means the project is less likely to get the best input from this Team Member and the new team composition will lose the strength it has developed.

As well as planned changes, Team Members may also leave your project as a result of resigning from the Business, moving jobs, or deciding that they cannot afford the time required. You may also have requested the departure of Team Members based on performance. Changes in

Membership need to be carefully managed, as they can be very disruptive and de-motivate those left behind.

10.13.1 Departing Team Members

It is important that the following is achieved:

- The team understands the impact and implications of the Team Member's departure on the project
- Decisions are made on what to do with the departed Team Member's project responsibilities and outstanding work
- The team is informed what actions will be taken, if any, to replace the person

It is important for your credibility, and ongoing Team Member loyalty, that you refrain from making negative comments about the departed person. Thank the person for the effort and time they put into the project. They may be with you on another project, and/or may be a Stakeholder for this one.

10.14Speedy Integration Of New Team Members

Here are some tips for accelerating their integration into the team.

- Provide the new Team Member with all key project documents – A Starter Kit
- Explain any project jargon and in-jokes upfront
- Create an early chance for a shared experience with the new Team Member – meal, site visit etc
- Provide the origin and background to the project
- Explain how the project has progressed so far – disclosing your highs and lows
- Share successes, concerns, risks, issues and opportunities
- Revisit or share the TeamWorking Charter
- Update the Team Contact Sheet and all distribution lists (often new Team Members remain isolated because no one added their name to the list!)

10.15Some Common Team Issues

10.15.1 What Else Is Changing

When a team's performance is deteriorating, have a look inside and outside the team to see what is happening which could be diverting attention, or lowering the apparent priority and importance of this project to the team. Additional workload, significant changes happening elsewhere, increased job insecurity or tragic worldwide events can all have an enormous influence on the effort and time brought to the project. What about asking the team if anything has changed for them since the project started? If it has, ask them to explore as a team how they can best move forward.

10.15.2 Disagreement And Conflict

However effective your project team is, disagreement and conflict within the team and between the team and their Customers/Stakeholders will occur. Remember, people "fight" when they care. Try not to take it personally, but see conflict in your project as a natural part of the whole process. A very comfortable, cosy project team may not have the spark required to pull off a great solution, or the aim may become more about the team feeling good than the goal they are there to deliver. Why not put "conflict" on the meeting agenda? Discuss it openly, its benefits and downsides, and what approach the team would like to take if and when conflicts emerge. Let them know that you value conflict and do not want it all to be suppressed!

10.15.2.1 Potential Sources Of Conflict

Project priority: Different views about the sequence of activities and plans
The best way: Different opinions on how to accomplish the project and what the final product should look like! Tensions can get particularly high at the point of going public, especially if things don't go quite to plan
Work allocation: Who does what, who takes on administration support (i.e. arranging Meetings, writing Progress Reports). People feeling they are taking on more work than others
Personality clashes: Style, values, power struggle
Conflict: Between project work and other work commitments
Unfair recognition: When people feel their contribution is not being fairly acknowledged or recognized

10.15.3 Team Members Don't Get On

If the personal issues between team members are disrupting the project, it has to be resolved. Failure to resolve it could result in a far greater issue for the whole team and thus project. Try one or more of the following, and keep trying as long as the impact is disruptive to the project.

- Role-model positive behaviors
- Do not take sides
- Promote the value of different views and approaches
- Speak privately to the people involved and explain the impact of their behavior and what the consequences will be if the behavior continues
- Facilitate a meeting between the Team Members directly engaged in the conflict to define and better understand the issues and guide them to generate ways of resolving them
- Seek their commitment to be positive and work to overcome/manage the issues between them

- Try to get the Team Members to work on a task together, present together and/or travel together. This can have amazing results (or be disastrous!)
- Go back to the TeamWorking Charter, reinforce it or modify it to reflect the emerging needs
- Raise it as an issue to be openly discussed and resolved with the project team as it impacts everyone and the project
- Involve your Sponsor and their Line Managers in your efforts to resolve the situation.

In extreme situations and if all your efforts have failed, ask one of the Team Members to leave the project. Achieving the project goal is of a higher priority.

10.15.4 Team Member Keeps Missing Meetings

A common enough situation, which can result in:

- Significant productivity problems
- Decisions being taken without the insight and perspective of the missing person
- Absentee Team Members feeling less committed to decisions and direction taken in their absence
- Present Team Members feeling that the meeting is a waste of time
- Making it okay to miss meetings
- The whole team suffering from reduced energy and commitment and questioning how important the project really is

10.15.4.1 Possible causes

- Team Member's Line Manager does not support their involvement on the project and/or is pulling them off the meetings
- Conflict between the missing Team Member and the Team
- Overworked Team Member
- The person does not believe in the value of the project
- The person does not see it as an issue and always intends to catch up
- The person may value the project but believes the meetings are a waste of time for the team/themselves
- The person does not feel comfortable in their role or feels they are of no value

10.15.4.2 Possible actions

- If you are not doing this already get the team to bring their diaries to the next session and create a meeting schedule as opposed to ad-hoc or last minute attempts to pull the team together. Clarify the agreed schedule offers no clashes with other commitments and request these few appointments are protected fiercely as it is one of the few opportunities for the whole team to work on the project
- Put even more effort in to make the meetings relevant, interactive, lively and fun
- Build in roles for the Team Members in preparing for and managing the meeting – a team effort rather than they turn up get bored and you sweat it out!
- Ring Team Members a few days before the meeting and say something like – look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas on ……. Specify some form of valuable contribution that you are looking from them to make
- Raise meeting attendance as a team issue to be resolved, and ask the team to work out what actions they would like to take to stop absenteeism

- Create a consequence each time someone does not attend. Personally contact them to ask them why they did not attend or do not plan to attend, and explain the impact on the team and project
- Revisit project purpose and goals, each person's unique role, and the importance of teamworking
- Contact the person's Line Manager to ask for their support, why they think the person is not making meetings and to ask for their future commitment to help improve the situation
- Implement Contracting with Line Managers, if not already done, or hold a contract review session with relevant Line Managers
- Implement contracting with Team Members, if not already done, or hold a contract review session
- Build meeting attendance into the TeamWorking Charter if it is not already there
- Always review meetings and ask the team to complete the Meeting Evaluation Form so that the meeting experience can be improved
- Get some personal support and development on how to manage meetings and facilitate conversations. It is a real skill that can make the difference between energized effective teams and the rest

10.15.5 The Overly Dependent Team

In many cultures, employees are accustomed to being formerly led and told what to do. They have little experience of being truly empowered to act in the manner detailed here, and may have no experience of working in a High Performing Team. So, however many times you talk about the High Performing Team role and invite them to make collective decisions and influence direction, they may simply not believe this is for real. So if this is your context be prepared to pace the introduction of these roles, tips and tools and go a lot slower then you may want to. In other words be pragmatic.

10.15.5.1 Possible actions

- When the team ask for direction or a decision, do not automatically oblige, but ask the team to generate options, provide alternatives and assess implications
- Make visible to the team the influence they are having
- Do not present yourself as the all knowing, powerful leader. Be open about your strengths and gaps and when you are relying on their expertise and insights
- When delegating work, delegate whole tasks that the person/sub-group can own and make some decisions about
- Constantly review team effectiveness making it very visible to the team how they are progressing as a team

10.16Virtual Teamworking

Virtual team-working is increasingly part of working life. This section overviews the challenges and differences with practical advice on how to ensure that the technology you depend upon to interact through works for you.

10.16.1 Defined

Virtual teams are real teams who accomplish goals whilst working across distance, time zones and/or organizational boundaries. As a result they rarely, sometimes never, have an opportunity for face-to-face communication and rely heavily on technology to facilitate communication and connection between them.

10.17Virtual Team Challenges

Managing and working in a Virtual Team demands greater attention to detail and efficient systems. It also requires a high degree of trust and a focus on agreed outputs rather than inputs.

10.17.1 This Team has to:

- Rely more heavily on electronic communication technologies for the majority of its interactions.
- Find a common language that is freely understood by all
- Create an identity and a shared vocabulary that transcends any cultural differences brought to the team
- Work hard to prevent external issues such as politics, sporting competitions and wars between the cultures and countries represented on the team being brought into the team forum
- Work hard to remain non judgmental about different values and behaviors
- Rely on trust with less obvious opportunity to build it

10.17.2 The Leader has to:

- Keep creating opportunity for the team to act and feel accountable for team success. It would be very easy for a Leader in this scenario to assume the full burden of accountability and work on a one-to-one basis with each Team Member.
- Make sure everyone speaks to everyone else, knows they exist and have full contact details, time zone differences. Many Virtual Teams comment that they have rarely if never spoken to some Team Members and do not know exactly who else is on the team – whoops!
- Ensure that the role, talents and contribution of each Team Member is visible to the whole team so people know who to contact if they need support in a particular area
- Spend more time, not less, communicating and networking
- Develop in the team an understanding of and insight into cultural differences
- Take the time required to set the team up, which can be longer than for non virtual teams. Resist the typical request to just get on with the task or give into the crazy stance that “it is too expensive to bring people together for a start up session” Prepare a business case for why it is even more critical to invest in a face to face team start up and how this will pay back in the ability and willingness of the team to pull together to make the project happen
- For global/regional teams get yourself informed about important calendar events, different holidays, work practices and time differences. Not knowing may result in a

few blunders on your part and damage your credibility as an International Leader. An English Project Leader who unknowingly committed some American members of the team to some project tasks over Thanksgiving found it hard to recover.

- Successful Virtual Teams
- Spend more time in start up, getting people to connect with each other while they can, before their main connection is through machine
- Spend more time before they start work on trust building, because they will not benefit from the progressive trust building that can emerge as people work together. In fact the lack of visibility and opportunity to see each other in action can erode trust unless a firm foundation has been laid
- Spend more time on team principles - how the team is going to work together - because it is this structure and shared approach which will be the glue holding the team together and overcoming the possible practical difficulties presented by time zones, language and culture
- Spend more time upfront establishing links and networking with the Stakeholders in each Country. Ironically the virtual teams we work with often spend more time together in the early stages than teams who feel they can meet whenever the need arises and thus make themselves vulnerable to a poorer start than their virtual counterparts
- Place more emphasis on formal and frequent reporting to maintain the sense of team and keep the attention and interest of the team
- Spend more time “selling” the project goals to the team
- Use first names more in conversation
- Make more effort to find things in common with each other and create shared experiences
- Place greater emphasis on the objectives and outputs than on the day-today progress of doing the work
- Make the most of every second when the team does meet. Meeting effectiveness through technology is a vital skill for virtual teams
- Spend more time clarifying, summarizing and questioning than teams who meet up on a frequent basis
- Create more written records of decisions, issues and progress

10.18Are You Suited To Virtual Teamworking?

Not everyone is suited to this way of working, and so this question needs to be posed as part of the selection process and when the new team starts work. If you have a team full of people experienced and comfortable to work in a virtual way, then great! - get on with it. However, if there are people on the team who have never worked in a virtual setting, or whose preferences do not extend to this mode, you will need to attend to this.

Describe the unique challenges and differences between virtual working and working in teams that can meet up regularly. Create a realistic scenario as is possible. Then ask Team Members to generate both the pros and cons for them of working in a virtual way. If people have done it before, ask them to share their perspective on the ups and downs. Use this information wisely to determine how you will approach the leadership of this team and the best approaches to take with each Team Member. Agree a regular process for reviewing how effectively the team is dealing with the virtual challenge.

10.19Getting The Best Out of Audio And Video Conferences

This section is applicable to all teams, however the increased dependence by the virtual team on meeting through technology makes it vital that these technologies are used effectively. Use these notes to support their introduction and use.

10.19.1 Common problems

Audio conferences

- Treating the phone call with the same level of preparation as one to one calls with no organized objectives or guidelines for managing the call
- Long pauses
- Two people speaking together
- Not knowing who is speaking
- Lack of sensible feedback gained from face-to-face interaction
- Losing people, literally out of the conference and motivationally, without knowing it and not being able to take action to keep them with the team

Video conferences

- The same problems as above, plus
- Embarrassment at being seen on video
- Poor picture and sound quality
- Gaps between speaking and hearing what has been said which can make the communications stilted and feel unnatural
- Not being able to see everyone in the room or the materials being displayed

10.19.2 Meeting groundrules

When generating meeting ground rules make sure these rules are applicable to the audio and videoconference, or better still create specific ground rules for each of these communication situations.

10.19.3 Practice makes perfect

Businesses often have an amazing belief that individuals and teams can take up a new skill with no training, no preparation and no review, and still perform to high standards and tight deadlines. Try telling an athletic team that you want them to go for gold, but they don't really need this practice lark and I am sure we will bring it off when we meet on the track. Great performance is about wanting it so much that your actions guarantee that you can give of your best, however many times you have to practice, get feedback and practice again.

This simple practice session will give the team the best chance of optimizing their ability to effectively communicate through technology. The shared learning process of working out how to use the technology to best effect will in itself help build the team and help remove the embarrassment and awkwardness which so often handicaps the use of video and conference calls. And if never mastered can leave the virtual team with no positive mechanism to share ideas and exchange views as a team.

10.19.3.1 Video practice session

Use a topic, does not have to be business related, that encourages equal participation and people will have some fun discussing, for example “how can get to know each other better?”

- Prepare an agenda and circulate to the team with the time and location for the practice
- Agree or confirm the ground rules
- Run the video conference for ten minutes
- Then ask everyone to reflect on what worked for them and what did not and what personal changes they feel they need to make to be a more effective contributor
- Invite everyone by name to share their reflections
- Then as a team agree what worked and what improvements to make
- Then try it again and repeat the review process until the team feels it has achieved a shared way of working and is ready to do it for real
- It may help to tape the conversation for a few minutes and play this back as part of the review session

10.19.4 Audio practice session

Ideally do this when the team meet at start up! Get them to place their chairs in a circle facing away from each other so everyone can hear everyone else but see no one. Then repeat the process above. Facing each other to conclude what improvements are required.

10.19.5 Tips when managing a video and audio conferences

Many of the same principles used when running face-to-face meetings also apply here.

- Agendas are even more important - circulate before the event
- Clarify the documents that must be brought into the meeting
- No distractions – vibrating phones, Blackberries, gadgets, computers – even newspapers have made there way into some video conferences – to be read in-between relevant parts of the agenda!
- If you have guests invited to participate in the meeting for a particular session, schedule them at the end or beginning of the meeting as you do not want the awkwardness of them joining in when you are not ready
- Do not formally start until everyone has joined the call or are seated in the video conference rooms
- Make sure everyone introduces themselves before the call starts to ensure that everyone is there
- Provide time for the getting of drinks, removing jackets etc by commencing with introductory how is everyone
- Check everyone has the agenda in front of them and the essential documents
- Build in and encourage jokes and light hearted banter
- When inviting comment from someone always use their name to signal this
- Create a method whereby people can signal when they want to speak next
- Try and keep the conversation moving between the various sites involved, as long conversations between Team Members on the same site can quickly result in disengagement of people at the other sites

- Try and keep the conversations concise and challenging. Conversations need to be more than just a fact exchange, which can be done by other means, but a real conversation where people's views are heard, challenged, decisions are made, issues better understood, concerns expressed, opportunities scoped, problems solved.
- Summarize regularly, asking different Team Members to undertake this task, a great way of keeping people alert. Maybe a prize for the best summary.
- At the end ask everyone to share the actions they have taken away and commit to delivering
- Make a definite end to the call. Thank people, confirm the next call, and invite final words from everyone. This helps prevent the meeting from collapsing into insignificance with people drifting away and wondering how to say it is over without the formality of the handshake or kiss
- Regularly ask people if their attention remains with this call or whether
- they have stopped listening. Ask for their feedback by name and suggestions for how the call can be made more effective
- Keep a list of all participants in front of you, it can be easy to overlook the quieter ones and never invite them in
- Keep the total call time very short
- Take notes on key points made by each participant, and reference their comments in the call. This demonstrates that you are valuing and listening to their contributions which will hopefully increase their subsequent involvement

10.20Conclusion And Closure

This final section attends to how teams are reviewed, closed down and people reintegrated back into a department or onto another team. This is an easy part to neglect, with disastrous consequences for task completion and Team Member confidence in the benefits of belonging to teams.

10.21The Bubble Has Burst

At the end of anything, whether it is a project, the last exam, or clearing up after an event, the effort, commitment and attention to detail can quickly evaporate. People either focus on the next challenge, incorrectly assess that the work is all done, or are simply tired. As leader your role is to:

- Maintain cohesiveness and commitment to the end
- Make sure people are professionally reintegrated into other positions
- Make sure that the full benefits from the project can be realized on completion or post project closure
- Achieve approval by the Sponsor, Customer and Stakeholders that the work is all done and to their satisfaction
- Communicate formal closure to the Business
- What has been learnt is captured for the future
- Make sure someone is accountable in the Business for ongoing issues, maintenance and improvements

10.22What Next?

It is difficult to retain someone's commitment to a project if they are concerned with the question, "what next?" And if your thinking surely I cannot be expected to manage this aspect as well, first who else will and second Leadership is about other people and if you cannot be bothered to care

when the task draws to a close then your hard work in growing a reputation as a Leader is likely to dissolve rather rapidly.

10.22.1 Team Member full time on project

Encourage the team to discuss openly what they plan to do to secure a suitable next placement. This discussion may help those on the team who have not yet faced up to the inevitable disbanding of the team. Meet with each Team Member to discuss their future interests and aspirations – well before the anticipated end date for the project. Clarify if they would be interested in returning to the function they came from or would rather continue working full time on project teams. If the employee came to you from a functional role, encourage them to speak to their last Line Manager.

Clarify with your Sponsor, Business Leaders, Human Resources, any plans and opportunities and when the employee will be available to participate.

Take an active interest in their search for another placement and be practical by accommodating their need to take time off, to prepare and attend interviews, and meet with other leaders and teams.Where possible be flexible about their departure date from the team and creative in how the team could undertake their work, if they need to depart earlier than originally planned. Get a clear statement from the Business on what would happen if they did not secure another position before completion of the project.

10.22.2 Team Member part time on a project

These Team Members retained their functional role, or are working on multiple projects, whilst contributing some of their “spare” time to your project. In this situation it can help to:

- Confirm with their Line Manager when their time on the project will end
- Make the Line Manager aware of their contribution and performance, and provide copies of any reviews conducted
- Encourage the Team Member to clarify their objectives and goals when they return full time to the function, if this is the case, and be honest about any concerns or aspirations they may have

Some employees may find it hard to make the transition from an effective team with a tough challenge, back to a full time day-to-day functional role. Help them prepare them for this transition, first by recognizing that it may be hard. Then encourage them to think about how they can apply what they have learnt on the team to their functional role, and how they can improve their contribution to the functional team.

10.23Team Reviews

Reviews are a vital part of any ending, where the Team and Business can:

- Formalize completion of a key piece of work
- Reinforce what has been learnt and what will be taken into other Teams
- Allow other Teams to learn from the mistakes and successes endured and enjoyed
- Recognize Team and Individual achievements
- Provide the Business with insights into what is working well and areas where they need to assist Teams better
- Provide direction and feedback for the future

The following reviews are included in this section:

Team Member Review – focused upon the contribution and performance of the Team Member to the task and team effectiveness
Peer Review – focused upon the contribution and performance of a Team Member from the perspective of their colleagues. Stakeholder reporting can also be included here. Each Team Member would receive one report from each colleague.
Team Effectiveness Review – focused upon the overall performance of the Team in terms of team effectiveness and task accomplishment

These reviews are options in addition to the project review forms, out of scope of this chapter, that are vital on completion and for many projects also post closure when the real benefits are expected to be realized.

10.24Team Member Review

Reviews and feedback are a great source of recognition. And yes it can be very time consuming and sometimes difficult, but think about the opportunity you have to demonstrate your commitment not just to the task but to the people whom you were reliant upon to deliver it. This review can then be presented to their Line Manager for inclusion during formal appraisal and salary reviews and placed on file for future reference.

As the Leader you will probably write these reports. Gather data from the team, Sponsor and Stakeholders to create as full a picture as possible of how they have performed, interacted with others and developed. If Peer Reviews are scheduled to happen, you can save peer comments for this.

As a minimum standard it is recommended that a Team Member Review is conducted for all Team Members who have spent at least 20% of their working time on the Team, for a period of three months or more.

Introduce this review as an opportunity for two-way feedback. Ask the person to reflect on what feedback they feel you would benefit from. It is important that the written review is given to their Line Manager, if it is someone other than you, so be explicit that this is the process following the review session. This session may also be your chance to thank the person and say goodbye.

The review may take place:

- During the life of the team, in response to set timings such as the annual performance review
- On completion of the team's work
- If the person departs from the team before the work is accomplished

10.25Team Member Review Form

Team Title: Sponsor:	Team Role: (eg. Core Team Member, Accountant for Finance)
Project Leader:	Time Spent On Team: (eg. 20% dedicated)
	Period On Team: (eg. one year)
	Review Date:

Role And Responsibility On The Team

Contribution To Task Success

Contribution To Team Effectiveness

Suggested Areas For Development

Team Member Comments

Signature
Signed (Project Leader) Signed (Team Member) Signed (Sponsor)

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication “High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide”. Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts

10.26Peer Review

In addition to the traditional review described above this review is based entirely on peer feedback. If you choose to use peer reviews it is best to introduce this practice to the team, either from the beginning, or when the team has gone beyond the formalities of first introductions.

Distribute copies of the Peer Review Form so that everyone knows the dimensions against which they are being peer assessed and are assessing. Involve the team in customizing this form if it does not reflect their agreed values and principles. Explain the benefit of peer reviews

- Peers can see how someone works technically and as a team player
- Peers have most to gain or lose by providing fair, accurate feedback
- Peer pressure is a powerful motivator and may do more for shaping people into effective participants than most other practices
- It is an opportunity for personal development that is rarely provided and if these insights are taken on board can help them increase their effectiveness as a team player as they move from team to team

Establish ground rules for their completion so that people do not collude with each other to focus on strengths only!

10.26.1 When to apply this practice

These reports can be completed and issued to every Member:

- At the close of the team
- When someone departs the team or
- At regular intervals throughout the team's life (for example, every six months)

10.26.2 Watch out for

- This practice creating tension and concern
- People reacting to feedback received when writing their Peer Reviews. It is vital that reviews are simultaneously exchanged to avoid this
- The Team ending on a low as Team Members feel hurt or surprised about the content of their reports
- People using this practice to get even with colleagues they ended up disliking

It is important that reviews and feedback feature as a regular activity, otherwise this practice could be too great a shock.

10.27Peer Review Form

Team Title:		Team Member (being reviewed)	
Sponsor:		Reviewer:	
Project Leader:		Review Date:	

Contribution To Team Effectiveness

Contribution To Task Success

Personal Contribution

Strengths And Qualities

Signature
Signed (Reviewer) Signed (Team Member)

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication “High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide”. Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts

10.28Team Effectiveness Review

When the project has been completed and/or the team is closing down, a final and formal review of the overall effectiveness of the team is strongly recommended.

10.28.1 What does it involve?

Collect and record feedback - Capture data from Team Members, Customers, Stakeholders and the Sponsor. Look for:

- Examples of things that worked well, and why
- And things that did not work well, and why
- Any key turning points for the team. These could be factors which lifted team performance, or led to its deterioration
- Feedback across the life of the team not just the last few weeks
- Their thoughts on what they would do differently next time, or the same, and why?
- What tools, documents, approaches were found useful, or a hindrance, and why?
- Revisit the interim reviews conducted to see trends and shifts in performance

10.28.2 When to review?

The ideal is to collect the review data during the final weeks of the team's life or upon accomplishment of the goal. This should mean that the team is still accessible to you, and a part of your working life. Then complete the Team Review form. If this review is not produced within days of completion, the chances of ever getting a review completed have been shown to rapidly deteriorate.

10.28.3 A team effort

Involve the team in reviewing the first draft, which is probably better written by a subgroup or yourself. Then amend the draft, based on the feedback received by the team.

10.29Team Effectiveness Review Form

Team Title:	
Sponsor:	Strategic Links:
Project Leader:	Locations Involved:
Team Members:	Degree of Change:
	Team Started:
	Report Created:
	Version:

Task Achievement
Have the goals been delivered?
How are the final outputs tracking against the measures of success?
How satisfied are the Stakeholders with how the Team handled the work and the quality of the outputs?
Completion to the agreed delivery dates?
Spend against budget?

Team Effectiveness
Did this team achieve high performance?

Business Support
What support from the Business (resources, trust, clarity, support) helped this Team to perform?
What did this Business do which impeded Team effectiveness and progress?

Key Learnings And Insights Achieved
What would you take forward to future Teams, and what would you recommend to the Business/other teams as a result of your experience on this Team?

Consolidation
Identify accountability for sustaining benefits and momentum relating to the Team's final outputs or changes

Consolidation
What has happened to ensure that the Business fully benefits from the Team's work?

Recommendations For The Future
How could this work be further built on and developed?
What opportunity does this work open up for other areas of the Business?
Further Reviews Planned ☐ Yes ☐ No
Post Completion Review Signed Date

Sponsor Review
Signed Date

Extract from Lindsay McKenna Limited publication "High Performance Teamwork: A Practitioners Guide". Available as an electronic template as part of workshop handouts

10.30Celebration

Formal reviews are one way to mark the end of a team's life, project completion or challenge, but it is also good to celebrate, with the same level of enthusiasm that was dedicated to the task! This not only allows goodbyes between all Members, it gives an opportunity to end on a high and smooth any bad feelings that may have hung around with a more formal ending. You do not need lots of cash, just the intent to celebrate. If the team is dispersed try and schedule this celebration with the last business meeting, as funds may not be released if the sole purpose is to celebrate.

10.31Conclusion

Tools and techniques do not solve problems or create opportunities, people do. I hope this approach to teamworking and selection of practices will help you to gauge and radically improve the effectiveness of the project or permanent teams you are leading.

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11 CREATING AND MANAGING REQUIREMENTS

When I was asked to prepare this piece on creating and managing requirements, my initial thought was to detail the multitude of ways in which requirements can be captured. The "techniques". I could cover Unified Modeling Language (UML) and Use Cases; Data Flow Diagrams (DFDs); Functional Decomposition; Entity Relationship Diagrams. All these "techniques" are well documented elsewhere. What seems to be missing is an appreciation of the difficulties involved in a real life situation. What happens when a Business Analyst comes to a project and tries to put some requirements together? What does a Business Analyst need to know before they become experts in the "techniques"?

It seems to me that the "technique" you use will be decided by either your own personal preference, or a dictate from the organization. If all requirements in the organization are captured as Use Cases, then Use Cases it shall be. The bit that is missing in most literature revolves around:

- What usually goes wrong and how to address it
- The language of requirements. How to translate "business speak" into "IT speak"
- The foundation of all the documentation techniques. What are you capturing in the most fundamental terms
- What are the most effective techniques to get to the answers as quickly as possible

It is around these softer skills rather than the hard techniques that the document is written. In one organization I was asked to list different techniques for identifying requirements. After some research I came up with a list of 35 recognized techniques. Each was well documented and most were the subject of books, or at least chapters in books. Some were in vogue and some were considered out of date. Each had good and bad points. The problem was that even if you knew each of the techniques inside out, it would not make you a good Business Analyst. A good Business Analyst has another set of skills relating to things like:

- Being able to keep focus on the ultimate goal
- Able to draw out information from people
- Ability to get support from users
- Can facilitate a group and lead them to a result
- Able to extract complex decisions and concepts from the business
- Push people to consider new and better ways
- Negotiate compromises

It is these topics that form the bulk of this paper.

11.1 Requirements Overview

Creating and managing requirements is a complex business. It requires both an ability to see the big picture, and an eye for the minute detail. It requires skills in negotiation and communication. It requires input from people who may not have the time or inclination to contribute. It involves translation of "business speak" to "IT speak". It will almost always result in delivery of a solution that "could have been better". In many ways, to gather the requirements is a thankless task. On the other hand the gathering of requirements can be a creative exercise where the person facilitating the exercise can draw out solutions to entrenched problems, and make life easier for the users.

Unfortunately the majority of projects fail to deliver the envisaged result. The optimism in the early days to deliver a “silver bullet” to the organization is never realized. As reality kicks in, people find the simplistic answer to their problem is impossible to build. It is through the requirements that the complexity becomes evident. Understanding the changing nature and perception of requirements is as important to the person gathering the requirements as are the requirements themselves. It is useful to look at what goes wrong, and why it goes wrong, before talking about the actual requirements gathering.

11.2 Research Results on Requirements

Research on projects regularly throws up requirements as a major point of failure. For example Standish, a US project research organization in 2003 suggests that only 34 percent of the projects evaluated in Standish's research succeeded. Of the projects tracked in the 2003 report, 15 percent were classified as failures, and a disturbing majority (51 percent) fell into a category that Standish calls "challenged". “Challenged” meaning that they were:

- Over budget
- Took longer than promised
- Lacked some critical capabilities

In other words two-thirds of all projects fall short, to varying degrees, of fully satisfying their requirements.

11.3 Reasons

It would be nice if there were a simple answer but like most things in life, the problems with simple answers were solved years ago. Here are some of the more common problems.

11.3.1 Lack of User Input

A regular complaint from IT people is that they cannot get access to business people who can give them guidance as to the requirements. If they do get access to business users, very often they are not the most knowledgeable. The reason is fairly obvious. The most experienced business users are usually the busiest. They have a daily routine that demands 110% of their time. There is nothing left to spend on a new project. Everyone knows that the most experienced people should work on a project but nobody has the answer as to how these people can be released from their day to day job.

I was asked by a CIO to help him stop the gathering momentum in his organization to implement an ERP system. He correctly believed the organization did not have the commitment to take such an initiative on board. It would fail when the demands of an ERP implementation started to clash with day-to-day work.

I suggested a different tack to opposing the implementation. We prepared a presentation to the senior management team as to how we would implement the system. We even identified resources by name that would work on the project and how they would be replaced in their day-to-day role. The replacements involved transferring staff around the country, recruiting additional resources and taking on consultants for a year or so to fill other roles. As expected there was a general reluctance to allocate the nominated people to the project. Our response was “Who else has the necessary knowledge to design the system you will have to live with for the next decade?” We had comprehensive backup material in terms of requirements for each role in the project. In the end, the management team could neither:

- Challenge the requirements for each role

- Agree to allocate the nominated resources
- Agree to fund the interim replacement role

Over a period of several meetings, they became cognizant of the real cost of implementing an ERP system and decided the organization was not prepared to commit that level of effort. We may have stopped them moving to an ERP platform, but we more likely stopped them wasting considerable time and resources and having a failed project.

11.4 Lack of Understanding of the Subject

Another, sometimes false assumption is that the users know what they want. In many cases they do, but in other cases, the new system is beyond their experience. One such example was in an organization where the warehouse did not have a PC on the floor, there were no barcodes in the warehouse, all delivery dockets were printed out overnight and couriered to the warehouse, and most staff had been working that way for at least a decade. The most sophisticated part of their business was a code using different color highlighters on the delivery dockets. Certain colors meant certain trucks and certain times of the day.

The proposed implementation of SAP plus bar coding of stock was going to move the organization forward 20 years. When asked about requirements, most just wanted to either leave the process as it was, or print colors on the delivery dockets. It required outside expertise to design warehouse processes more in line with the times.

It is important to realize that many people if asked about requirements will base the requirements on “the way we do it now”. They will not necessarily think about a better way to do things. There will always be exceptions, and these people should be treasured on the project team. Always remember part of building requirements is to look for better ways to do things.

11.4.1 Conceptualizing the Final Product

If we are to build a house, we can form a reasonably clear idea of what it will look like when it is finished. A computer system is not so easy to visualize. It is like trying to imagine where the nails will be in the house. It is only when you get down to the detail that the complexity becomes evident.

A screen to add names and addresses is easy to imagine. That is until you start looking at questions such as:

- Are duplicate names allowed?
- If there is a duplicate name, how do you decide to accept or reject it?
- What is the longest name you need to cater for?
- Do you want to validate the suburb against a list of zip/postcodes?
- What fields are mandatory?
- Do you want a salutation or not?
- Do you want a drop down list for salutation? If so what are the allowable salutations?

The list goes on and on but as each question is answered, it potentially adds complexity and time to the project. Some questions in fact raise even more questions as illustrated by the last bullet point above. It takes considerable time to resolve all the questions, and typically people don’t want to wait to find out how long the project will take. Usually they decide on the time and cost for the project up front. When they eventually work out the questions that will determine the requirements, the project is bigger than what they

expect. The whole project is impossible to conceptualize completely in the early days. There are too many unanswered questions. In fact there are too many *unknown* questions.

11.4.2 Where to Stop?

Putting a boundary around the project is another issue. It is always difficult to separate the "Must have" from the "Nice to Have". There is often a large grey area in the middle that some people assume is in, and others assume is out. Often this is buried in the detail and relates to the questions in the point above. Only when the questions are asked do the requirements become evident.

I was asked to review a project for a stock broking firm that had been considered a disaster by most people involved. Looking at the initial scope, there was one item, which said "Customer access features as determined by the Marketing Department". The Project Manager took this to mean the customer could log into the system and view their holding. The Marketing Department saw it as carte-blanche to develop new facilities such as stock trades, price graphing for each stock, portfolio consolidation and a range of other interactive features. Whilst there was a problem with the original scope boundaries, the other problem was how many features should be included. The list could go on forever.

We have covered some of the problems with requirements. The problems are the background against which the gathering exercise is undertaken. They are the 'Usual Suspects' when things go wrong. These issues are the things a Business Analyst has to address during a project to ensure the same old problems do not crop up in his or her project.

11.5 Understanding Requirements

A good starting point for this topic is to talk about what we mean by requirements, and how the word may mean different things to different people.

- To the end user of the system, it means a tool that will make their job easier
- To the IT department it means a bunch of code and infrastructure
- To the Business Analyst, it is a collection of documents

To take a step further back, requirements are gathered to build a new system. So what is a new system?

11.5.1 Definition

One of the best definitions I have come across for a new IT system is that a new system is an outcome that meets the business needs at the time of implementation. Let's take that in parts.

11.5.2 Outcome

"An outcome" implies something changes in the organization. An outcome is the way in which the organization operates. For example, ability to process extensions to credit terms is an outcome. Carrying out an inventory using barcodes is an outcome.
An outcome also has two dimensions for the users. One is an existing outcome from a particular user point of view, and the other a new outcome. If you can already extend credit terms, you are delivering a change to the existing outcome, which may be invisible to the particular users. On the other hand, if you cannot extend terms, it is a new outcome.

If it is the same outcome as you currently have, then the delivery may be producing a different outcome to another user. For example, if the current credit terms are managed on an old Pick based system, and you are moving to a new .NET based system, the outcome is different to the development and support teams. *The key point is that there is an outcome that will result in someone doing something differently*.

11.5.3 Business Needs

"Meets the business needs" implies there is a business need driving the project. The business need may in fact be an IT need. For example changing technology in the example above may do nothing for the business user in terms of their day-to-day role. It may however make IT easier to manage. The business need comes about because hopefully, there is a reduction in support costs that can be reflected in the profitability of the organization. The business need being fulfilled is to reduce operating expenses.
Once again, to focus on the key point, there should be a business need.

11.5.4 Time of Implementation

The third component is one that causes most angst in projects. "At the time of implementation". The world does not stand still, and the longer between the definition of requirements and delivery, the more chance the goalposts will have moved. Many projects have delivered what was specified and failed from the point of view of users. Imagine specifying a new TV with little understanding of what was available in the market. If you took delivery of a TV that met your spec, and then went on a lengthy visit to your local electrical store, you may want to go back and rewrite your specification.

11.5.5 Put it all together

So conceptually, requirements are aiming to cause a change in some area of the business based on a perceived need or problem. They are developed in an environment that is constantly changing and so it should be expected that they might change right up to the last minute if they are to meet the needs at the time of delivery.

11.6 Requirements Lifecycle

It is also important to understand where requirements start and finish. For example, if we build a new credit extension system, the finished system is no longer a requirement. The requirement has been fulfilled. It may seem that the last use of the requirements document was as the guide the programmer used to build the code. Unfortunately, the answer is not that simple. The requirements are used for two other key purposes.

11.6.1 Testing

The requirements are what you use to test that the code and infrastructure work in the way they were intended. For example if the requirements were that credit terms could not be extended beyond 180 days then the testing would be required to test that situation. This brings us to another area that will be discussed later in the article. Traceability. Requirements need to be traced from the initial requirement through to the testing. Preferably this is in some organized numeric way.
Another aspect of testing is being able to identify changed requirements. Say for example, the requirement was initially for 90 days and it changed to 180 days. The tester needs to be able to identify if the final requirement was 90 or 180.

11.6.2 System Documentation

I spent considerable time with one organization helping them produce system documentation when a number of long-term employees left the organization. There was a real fear that their 20-year-old system would be almost unsupportable if one or two other people were to leave. The requirements should be the basis for a support programmer to understand what the system is about. Imagine writing requirements 20 years after the system went live!

11.6.3 Starting Point

The requirements start out at a very high level in the definition of the scope of the project. It will probably not be down to the detail of "extending credit terms". More likely it is something like "managing credit criteria". Scope will form the next part of our white paper. The danger is obvious. A fuzzy, high-level definition of scope leaves many doors open in terms of detail. For example, does "credit criteria" include being able to check payment history for the last ten years for each customer? This is one of the reasons projects blow out in time and cost. The Project Manager prepares a plan without considering payment history, and then finds he has to include it. Add another X man months.

11.7 Summary

We have proposed a working definition for a new system: "An outcome that meets the business needs at the time of implementation" The requirements are the specification for the definition above. We have also looked at where they start and stop and how requirements do not stop when the project is finished. They should be continually updated as the system is changed to operate in a different way. We have also looked at the dangers inherent in defining scope. Getting the balance right between the detail of the scope, and the pressure to come up with a time and cost is always an issue with projects.

11.8 Defining the Scope of a Project or Program

11.8.1 Scope v Time & Cost

When people talk about scope, they immediately think time and cost. Time and cost are outputs of scope. Determining scope is a different exercise. In the context of this white paper, when we talk about defining the scope, we are talking about developing a common understanding as to what is included in, or excluded from, a project. We are not talking about deciding how long it will take, or how much it will cost. That comes after the scope is defined.

If we were looking for a car, we would first define the scope. For example we want a 4 cylinder front wheel drive with seating for 2 adults and 2 children, and less than 2 years old. Maybe you also want it to be a red convertible. Having defined the scope, you can calculate cost and time. How much you will have to spend and how long you will take to buy it. If you get the scope wrong, the time and cost will be wrong.

11.8.2 Why is Scope important?

Anyone who has ever done a project will have tales of how scope changes caused grief. Scope is bound to change, and this is to be expected. As the detail becomes clearer, more complications creep in. These are not foreseeable at the start and hopefully we build in a contingency for what we cannot see. The scope changes that usually cause problems are those where the perception of what was in and out of scope was different between various parties. The Project Manager assumed there would only be four or five reports, and the business assumed ten to twenty. Nobody felt it was worth talking about because they assumed the other person thought the same way they did.

11.8.3 How scope is usually defined

Scope definitions often account for a paragraph or two in a Business Case or Project Charter. Often, they are qualitative and/or focus on general statements. "We will improve service by providing an information system to respond to customer inquiries." Is it a real time system? Is it all screen-based? What reports can be produced? Where does the information come from? What manipulation is required for the data? Is all the data compatible? Do you want to generate standard letters? How many letters? How customizable are the letters? Do you want to store the questions? Do you want to store the answers? Etc. etc. etc.

11.8.4 Define the Outcome

We will cover several different ways to successfully define scope. All should start with an agreement on the outcome. The outcome is the change that will occur when the project is complete. Examples are:

- We will be able to answer customer queries regarding statements over the phone.
- All licensing details will be accessible on-line and we will be able to identify when they are due.

11.8.5 Assumptions

In order to define the scope, there will be assumptions that need to be made. There is no point in waiting until everything is clear to define scope. By that time, the project will probably be finished. Each of these assumptions should be documented and followed up at a later date to validate the scope. If the assumption is false, it may have an impact on the scope.

11.8.6 Which way to define Scope?

There are numerous ways to define. Ideally several ways should be used. Each looks at the situation from a different perspective and will elicit different information. We look at three main ways in this paper. They are:

- Define Deliverables
- Define Functionality and Data
- Define Technical Structure

11.8.7 Define Deliverables

One method to focus people on the scope is to define the internal and external deliverables. External deliverables are things the project delivers to the users e.g. screens and reports. Users typically think of a system in these terms. It also includes any

hardware or software required by the users or the project team. Internal deliverables are things the project generates internally e.g. Project Charter, Business Requirement Specification etc.

It is likely that the users will not be absolutely clear on all the deliverables. In this situation you can make generic assumptions. For example, you might not know exactly what reports are required but you allow for 12 unspecified reports. Once the external deliverables are defined, the Project Manager can define the internal deliverables.

11.8.7.1.1.1 Example External Deliverables:

Name	Description
License Detail Screen.	Screen to enter and view license details
Company Summary Screen	Screen to view all licenses issued by a particular company. Facility to drill down to License Detail Screen.
License Due Report	Report listing all licenses due in the next period. Facility to select a period eg 1 week, 4 weeks, quarter
5 Reports	Allow for 5 unspecified reports
Server	Server to run the application
Etc.	

11.8.7.1.1.2 Example Internal Deliverables

Name	Description
Project Charter	Document identifying how the project will be managed
Business Requirement Specification	Document identifying the requirements for the project
Weekly Reports	Status reports to be issued weekly
Prototypes x 3	Three prototypes will be allowed for in the development.
Etc.	

11.9 Define the Functionality

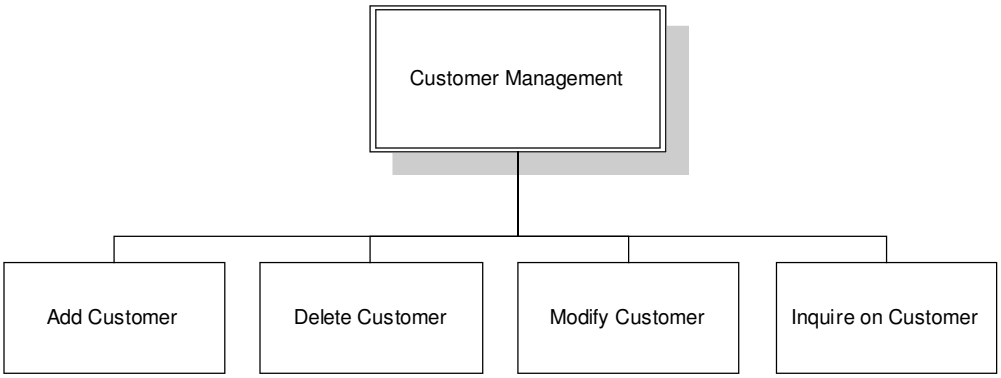
Another technique is to define the functionality. This should not be either a long or detailed process. Typically, depending on project size, the exercise can be completed in a one hour to half-day workshop. A good technique is to use a functional decomposition. If using a spreadsheet and a projector, a scribe can create the scope as it is discussed. Remember to start all functionality with a verb.

It is useful to do the functional decomposition in conjunction with a data definition. If this is not possible, once the scope is discussed, it will become reasonably clear what data is required. The Project Manager can determine if there are any situations that need to be clarified with the users, and finalize the scope definition. If for example, in defining the functionality it becomes evident that considerable information will need to be transferred from a legacy system, which is known to be inaccurate, data cleansing can be factored into the scope. The following example depicts Functional Decomposition:

1.0 Capture License details
- 1.1 Set up companies
- 1.2 Set up products
- 1.3 Create licenses
- 1.4 Modify licenses
- 1.5 Delete licenses

2.0 Generate payments

2.1 Create payment report
2.2 Authorise payments
2.3 Notify accounts
Etc.
It can also be defined as a diagram:



11.10Defining the Data

This approach is similar to functionality, and should be used in conjunction with functionality. The process is likely to capture what users expect to see in a system. The intention is not to make the business users, data modelers. The intention is to get the business users to verbalize their requirements for information in a structured manner. Ask the users what are the people, places and thing they want to keep track of. In this case, the focus is on nouns.

This approach will not capture data that may be required to technically make the system work. For example, it will not capture things like transaction log files, archive files, SQL script files etc. Post workshop, the Project Manager will need to sit with a data modeler to sort out what else is required. The hardest part is to stop doing a data model. Keep the focus on where the data is to come from, and identify what is new, where the interfaces are likely to be, is existing data suitable, is the data currently captured etc.

11.10.1.1.1.1 Data Definition Example

Name	Description
Companies	Details of the company including address, overseas offices, and up to ten contacts
Licenses	Licenses for all software and hardware used in the organisation. Include contracts, correspondence, quotes and any other related documents. Does not include manuals
Renewal dates	Dates the license is due for renewal and the cost of the renewal.
Etc.	

11.11Technical Structure Definition

This technique can be useful in defining scope where the project is focused on infrastructure. It can also be useful in a situation where an existing system is being modified. The output can be either a table, or a diagram. A table might just list the components to be modified and the modification. The structure diagram might identify the whole system and highlight which

components are being modified and how they are being modified. It may also be appropriate to indicate the purpose of each component, however it will probably be vague at this stage of development.

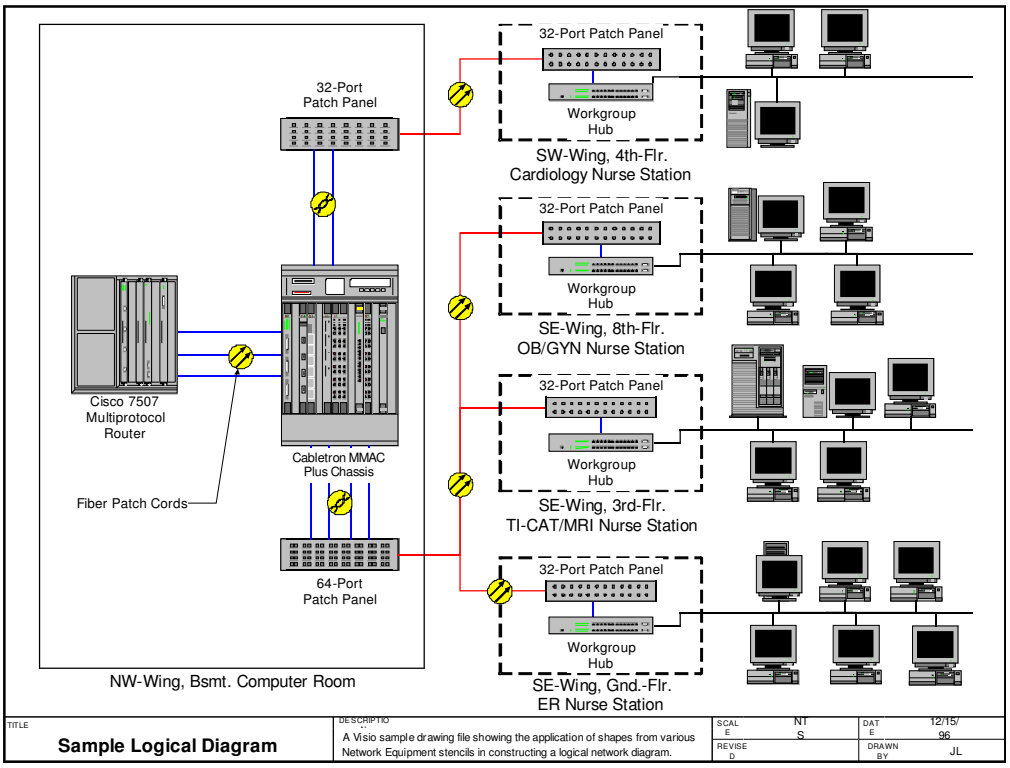
Example:

The 'outputs HTML' module takes information retrieved from the database and inserts it into an .asp document for output to the server. It also updates a transaction log with the database information and time of the output. If an error occurs in retrieving data from the database, an error log is updated and an error page sent to the server.

Example Technical Structure Table

Component	Description
Subsystem1	Handles all customer processing and interfaces to CMS (Customer Management System).
Subsystem2	Carries out inquiries on billing systems (2) and combines data into common format. Sorts data by date of payment.
Etc.	

Example Technical Structure Diagram



11.12Other Considerations

In documenting the scope of the project, also consider describing the project boundaries, identifying the major business events, locations, divisions, functions and processes affected by the project, as well as the groups of people impacted both inside and outside the company.
Consider also:

- Business processes that will be affected;
- Business areas/units that will be affected;
- Business locations that will be affected;
- Business data that will be changed;
- Business applications that will be changed;
- Technologies that will be changed

All of these may have an impact on the project. For example if numerous locations are to be effected, there may be issues of bandwidth, switching hardware, travel and training, remote support etc.

11.13Other Work

The following is a list of work that may need to be specifically included or excluded. Make sure it is clear if this is to be included, and that it is documented. When we come to planning, it should be clear what needs to be catered for in the plan:

- Preparation of training material
- Delivery of training
- Business Process documentation
- Business Process Re-engineering
- Rework
- Project management and administration
- Vendor management
- Security
- Disaster recovery plans
- Business continuity plans
- Provision and setup of equipment
- Software
- Communication
- Support after go-live
- Recruitment of permanent or contract staff
- Staff performance management and evaluation
- Hardware upgrade or purchase
- Hardware installation
- Data preparation for transfer
- System documentation

11.14Summary

Defining the scope is a neglected area in most projects. It is however the foundation on which the schedule, budget and resource plans are built. It is the starting point of your requirements definition. Get it wrong, and everything else will be wrong. If the scope definition does not run to a few pages, it is probably too short. Take the time to workshop the scope with users. Make sure there is a shared understanding. Force the business to think through the project. Use a number of techniques to cross check. Finally, unless you get the scope right, the project will never be under control and scope creep will likely cause the project to be considered a failure.

11.15Scope Variations

If we go back to our original definition, we talked about "meeting user needs at the time of implementation". User needs will change, and changes need to be considered. That is not to say every change must be incorporated. It means after consideration, some changes will be included and some rejected. Another aspect is the evolution of projects. It is not until well into the requirements gathering that a particular scope variation may be discovered. Take the following example. A payment processing system was purchased for a particular organization, which seemed to meet all their requirements.

I was managing the implementation. It was only when we started testing that we discovered the main cheque receipting function was too slow to input data. Response times to populate customer information fields were not able to be accessed in real time without the operators waiting four or five seconds. They had been used to inputting each transaction in that time. We had to build a high speed front end processing screen or the system would be considered a step backward. The only way we were able to find the need was to actually configure and install the application load the data and try it out. It was not foreseeable earlier in the project. Scope variations will always happen. The reasons vary:

- The work was not evident earlier in the project
- Someone had a good idea that they want included
- The situation has changed
- There was a difference in understanding between various people when the scope was set for the project. Some thought a particular part was in, and some thought it was out

11.16Having a Process

Organizations put together disaster recovery plans or contingency plans. The reason is that when a problem occurs there are two things you have to do:

- Work out a process to address the problem
- Address the problem

If you can put in place a process to address the problem, it makes it easier to address the problem. One food manufacturing organization I worked for in the 80s had a very bright guy who was to take over a key role in six months time. They didn't have a role for him in the next six months so asked him to draw up a product withdrawal plan if they ever needed to pull a product off the shelves of the tens of thousands of retailers who sold their products. At the time (the 80s) this was not something that had happened in the past. It was quite a novel exercise.
For six months he worked up a plan, which ended up consuming several reams of paper. At the end of the time, he did a few presentations and it sat on a shelf. About a year later the inevitable happened and overnight they were faced with a possible food contamination issue. The author was suddenly the most in demand person in the company. The photocopiers started rolling and

his plan was distributed to all and sundry within the hour. Here are a few things to consider, and how they were covered in the plan.

Issue	Plan
What do you do with all the stock when you get it back	Arrangements in place with organisations involved in selling warehouse space to have a monthly updated list of available space. Contingency leases signed with a number of warehouses that could be activated within 12 hours
How do you transport it to a central point	Freight contracts in place with railroads
What do you refund to retailers (retail price? wholesale price?)	A credit system in place where individual situations could be assessed at a later point

The point of the example is to illustrate how things happen with a lot less stress if there is a process in place. The plan was put together without a specific product in mind, or without knowing exactly how much stock needed to be recovered. The actual situation was slotted into a plan. Incidentally, it was always suspected by the conspiracy theorists that the writer triggered the withdrawal himself to show off his contingency plan.

11.17Scope Variation Process

Every project should have a scope variation process. The process should be agreed before the project starts, and define what variations can be approved by which people or committees. It should also cover the information that needs to be available to make that decision.

11.17.1 Submission

The submission should include at a minimum:

- A description of the variation
- The impact of not incorporating the variation
- The benefits
- The cost in terms of time (both actual time and finish date of the project), dollars and resources
- Any options surrounding the variation
- Any risks

11.17.2 Approval Levels

The process should also be agreed as to what level of approval various parties may have. The approval levels usually relate to a certain impact in time and cost. For example, if the change is less than 5 days and less than $10k it can be approved by the Project Manager. Another dimension should be added. The dimension is the cumulative impact of changes. For example, in addition to the criteria above, it may be appropriate to add that during the project, the Project Manager can only approve up to 25 days variation.

11.18Saying "No"

It is hard for some Project Managers to say "No" to a change. They want to please their customer, and the user thinks it is only a little change they are asking for. Unfortunately an ad hoc little change often turns into a major revision. It is better to have the process in place so the Project Manager only has to that they are unable to say "Yes" until they go through the formal process. Call it project governance. Similarly developers can ask users to go through the proper channels when they are asked to make changes.

11.19Cumulative Impact

One comment I remember for years ago was that if you want to know if the Project Manager is a true professional, ask him or her, what the cumulative impact of scope variations is in their project. If the answer is a clear "13 days and $20k" the Project Manager is on top of their project, and you can have confidence that the project is not slipping out of control. On the other hand if the answer is "I don't know" then you are in trouble.

It is important to keep a running log of approved changes. At some time, if the original schedule or budget starts to slip, everyone will forget the approved changes. Blame will be aimed at the Project Manager. It is important that the Project Manager is able to point out how the baseline changed over time, and who approved those changes.

11.20Summary

Managing variations is as important as setting scope. Variations will happen and the only way to successfully manage them is to not allow them to sneak up on you. A process must be in place, and each variation evaluated as closely as the initial scope and business case.

11.21What are Requirements?

We have already defined our new system and talked about the big picture in terms of outcomes. But what are requirements at the detail level. The big picture is what we want the system to do. Perhaps we want to manage our stock. The detailed requirements are how we want to achieve that end. The ways in which we receive stock, and store stock, and allocate stock to branches etc. This section covers the detailed area.

11.22Types of Requirements

There are two basic types of requirements:

- Functional Requirements
- Non functional Requirements

In my experience, users tend to focus too much on the functional, and not enough on the non functional. The non functional are seen as being too technical to worry about. Non functional requirements do have more of a technical flavour. It is not to say they are any less important. The system can fail equally from poor response times, inadequate printers and excessive downtime as it can from functions that don't deliver the expected results.

An example is appropriate. An invoicing system for a national wholesaler was thoroughly specified at the functional level. In particular the invoices contained considerable information that was not currently available and they were far more attractive due to the input of the marketing department. Unfortunately scant regard was paid to non functional requirements.

When the system first went live, invoices were taking up to a minute to print. All the graphics and information on the new invoices was slowing down the wide area network to a point where the invoices were banking up on the antiquated printers. There were no requirements for print time, volumes of invoices being printed at any point in time, or quality of print. The result was that the print network failed.
Everyone pointed the finger at the IT area for not providing the network and equipment to handle the volume of printing. IT blamed they blamed the requirements. Without playing judge and jury on the case, the problem was much less likely to have happened if the non-functional specifications had been more thorough.

12 Gathering Functional Requirements

If the new application is to be a transaction based system, then the ideal way to start is to undertake a business process modeling exercise and determine the most efficient business processes, and how an IT system could support those processes. The reality of most organizations is that this approach is rarely used. Another issue is that if a package is purchased, the business processes are largely driven by the package. There is little value in determining the most effective process if it cannot be implemented. For this reason, most requirements are gathered in one, or both, of two ways.

- The first is by a Business Analyst interviewing a number of people and translating their comments into a lengthy business requirements specification (BRS).
- The second is through a series of workshops with users.

There are a number of techniques that can be used, but we have not attempted to cover all of the ones available. Our focus is on providing a basic understanding of the communication issues involved in getting a user to verbalize their requirements in a coherent and logical manner.

12.1 Common Approach by Business Analysts

Many Business Analysts start a conversation with users regarding functional requirement by asking what they do. The conversation tends to drift in no particular direction until a thread is sighted, then the BA follows that thread to the end. The next thread is fleshed out and a similar process followed. Hopefully, by taking enough random walks around the person's job, sufficient information will be collected to come up with a requirement.

12.2 How do Users see functionality?

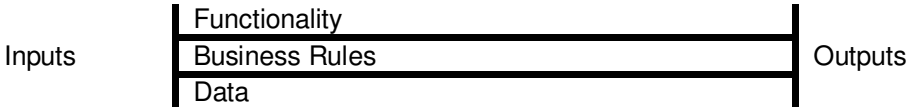
To be successful in gathering requirements, you need to understand how users view functionality. It is almost certainly not in the way that IT wants to view it. At the most basic level, it is screens and reports. At another level it is:

- What we want the system to keep track of
- What we want the system to do
- The rules that decide how the system operates
- I start when someone gives me something; it is processed; it comes out as something else which I give to someone

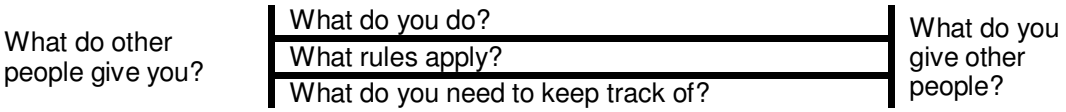
12.3 A Structured Approach to Gathering Requirements

After considerable research and trial Project Perfect has developed a way for Business Analysts to guide users through the process in terms they understand. The following structure is called "Method H". The reason is that the information falls into a model that is basically an "H" shape.

We have found that it provides a framework for people to provide us with requirements. Once collected, if required, they can be manipulated into a more traditional format such as a use case or Data Flow Diagram.



In talking to business people, the model would look more like this:



12.3.1 Inputs & Outputs

By defining the inputs and outputs, the scope can be further refined. Obviously this should have happened at project inception but by defining what comes into the area, and what is produced, it helps define scope at a lower level of detail. It is likely that the questioning will go in loops. For example, an input may be an order. The order is checked to ensure it is an existing customer and sent off somewhere else for credit checking. It comes back as an authorized invoice, so it is input twice – first as a received invoice, and second as an authorized invoice. There is an output of an invoice sent for credit checking. Try to differentiate how it is different.

12.3.2 Functionality

Functionality will be at different levels of granularity. One piece of functionality may be to check it is an existing customer. Another may be to check if the customer is part of a group (which is a lower level than checking the customer). Another may be to check customer details, which covers both above. At the interview, it is better to keep focused on *getting* information rather than *sorting* information.

12.3.3 Data

The question "What are the people, places and things you want to keep track of?" is invaluable for a BA. The vast majority of users don't think in terms of databases. Nor should they. They just keep track of things. Data comes up all through a discussion. When it does, drop it in this box.

12.3.4 Business Rules

As rules emerge, they should be dropped into the business rules box. Like data, they are woven through everything the BA is told.

12.3.5 Using "Method H"

Start by explaining to the user that you are going to record information into the "Model H". Explain the type of information that will go into each box. I suggest using the second diagram without the more technical terms of functionality and data. It will depend on the sophistication of the user.

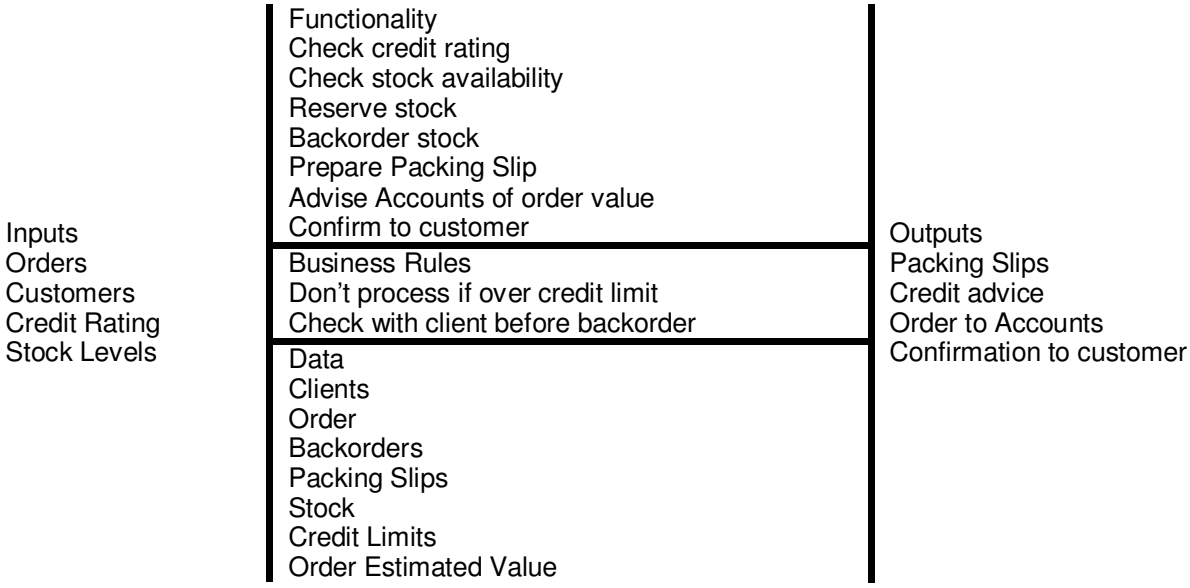
A useful tool is a whiteboard where information can be jotted down, however if the area is extensive, you will quickly run out of space. Another method is to use sheets of paper stuck to the wall where if one sheet fills up, another can be added. The first area to discuss is the inputs and outputs. I suggest the following approach. "Consider yourself as an integral part of this organisations process. You add value to a part of what the organisation does. To do this you receive things, do work on them, and pass them on. For example, if you were a customer service

telephone operator, you would receive a call from a customer who had a question, resolve their issue, and give them advice.

What are the things you receive? Think in terms of phone calls, memos, forms, emails, visits etc." The discussion will start on inputs and outputs but quickly expand to functionality. As data and business rules emerge, they can be noted.
This dialogue starts with an order being identified as an input. The user quickly moves onto what they do with the order. "So you receive an order and check available stock (functionality)? Do you always advise the client of 'out of stocks' and put on back order (business rule)?" Also identified is data in terms of customers, orders and stock. It is almost inevitable that someone will want to reorganize functionality. Resist the temptation and tell the user you will come back later with functionality sorted in more detail. Remember to focus on *gathering*, not *sorting*.

12.3.6 Example

The following is a very simple order processing area but will give enough information to show how "Method H" works.



12.4 Summary

In my experience, a workshop with users using a structured methodology is the best way to elicit requirements. There are many methodologies including functional decomposition, DFD, Workflows, Use Cases etc that can be used. A workshop however is not always feasible. "Method H" can provide a useful framework for gathering requirements – particularly if you are doing a one on one interview.

The key to any technique used to gather requirements is to speak the language of the User. If the user is confused by terms like "Actor", "Entity", "Message" etc. they will be lost in telling you what they need. If your organisation insists on using a particular technique such as UML, make sure your users receive training before you start extracting requirements.

13 Documenting Functional Requirements

How the functional requirements document actually looks will depend on the organization however we have listed below typical sections.

13.1 Business Processes

The business processes are what the users expect the system to do. Broadly speaking the functionality covers:

- Capturing information
- Retrieving information
- Processing or manipulating information

Business Processes do not include what we want to keep track of. What we want to keep track of is the data. Business Processes cover what we *do* with the data. In defining the business process, always begin with a verb. For example, customers are not business processes. "Create customers" or "Retrieve customer details" is a business process.

Business processes cover all the activities that need to be undertaken within the scope of the project. In order to give a complete picture they should include both manual activities and IT activities. In fact, a decision as to what is automated (becomes part of the IT application) and what is manual may not be made until a later iteration.

For example, it may be necessary to fax the client. During the first iteration, it may not be clear if this is to be done manually, or whether the system will generate a fax and send it automatically. For a mixed application, which has web components and other components such as mainframe or client server you will need to differentiate what is expected from each component. There may be requirements of the web interface (e.g. request a new cheque book), and of the other component (e.g. produce a print request for a new cheque book).

13.1.1 Approach

The first step is to define the system in narrative fashion in order to set the context. It may also be appropriate to do a context diagram. Next define the individual Business Processes

Start by defining the various Business Processes at a high level. Typically, for a medium size system, there will be somewhere between 5 and 20 processes. At each iteration, more detail is added. Whilst the first iteration is narrative, the second and third iteration expand the information as indented numbered points. The third iteration adds a priority to identify the importance of particular components to the project.

13.1.2 Levels of detail

The business processes can evolve and be documented using a top down approach:

System Overview

In less than half a page describe the system.

Context Diagram

It may be useful at this point to include an external and internal context diagram.

- An external context diagram shows where the proposed system fits in context to other functions.

- An internal diagram shows the components or processes within the proposed system. A data flow diagram is a useful format for an internal diagram.

Key Processes

The processes can be developed in an iterative manner.

- In the first pass a narrative is created to describe the key processes. No attempt is made to break the narrative down into smaller components.
- In the second pass the functionality is defined to two or three levels. It may be appropriate to do this using a spreadsheet which can be attached as an appendix.
- In the third pass the functionality is expanded to the smallest unit that makes sense at the business level. For example "Enter customer details" makes sense. "Enter Customer First Name' is too low a level of granularity. The priority is also added as "Mandatory", "Desirable" or "Optional".

Note: If a different method of presenting requirements is used (e.g. Use cases), expand to the same level of detail as in the examples above.

13.1.3 Business Process Modeling

Another option, and probably the ideal for a transaction based system, is to undertake a business process modeling exercise. This can be a high level model at level 1 and a full business process model at level 3. Preparation of this model requires the involvement of someone with business process modeling skills, and the use of a suitable tool. It is particularly useful in a heavily transaction based area where it can also be used for other aspects e.g. business process design and training purposes. If a business process model has been completed, it should be included as an appendix.

13.1.4 Listing Functionality (Functional Decomposition)

The next step is to document the functionality. Having mapped the internal and external processes in diagrammatic form to provide a dynamic view of the system, the functional decomposition provides a static view of functionality. In other words they provide the developers with an inventory of what is to be built, without necessarily telling them how the various components will interact. The diagrams already created provide the information on interaction. It is also useful at this stage to get an understanding of what is mandatory, optional or desirable.

Number	Description	Priority
1.0	Create an Account	Mandatory
1.1	Create account over the counter	Mandatory
1.1.1	Create a customer	Mandatory
1.1.1.1	Enter customer name & address	Mandatory
1.1.1.2	Enter customer next of kin	Desirable
1.1.1.3	Enter customer Work History	Optional
1.1.1.3.1	Verify length of service	Optional
1.1.1.3.2	Verify current salary	Desirable
1.1.1.3.4	Verify past 3 year salary	Optional
1.1.1.4	Print customer details	Mandatory
	Etc.	

13.2 Business Rules

Business Rules are rules that determine how the system will function. This should include any legislative requirements. For example a business rule may be that an account cannot be opened until the account holder has provided 100 points of proof of identification. Another may be that an account balance cannot fall below a certain level.

Business rules tend to become evident all through the project. They are particularly evident when business processes are being defined. In other cases they can be drivers of the project e.g. legislation. They are captured in an ad hoc manner in the early stages, but more formally as the project progresses.

13.2.1 Example

The following is an example of how business rules may be documented. You will note that the rules refer back to a particular process.

Rule	Process Number	Relates to Business Process	Comments
Clients cannot open a new account if they already have a type abc account	1.0	Create new account	See document … for details of the rationale.
Clients cannot have a cheque drawing facility unless their initial deposit is over a certain level	7.3	Create cheque facility	The level depends on a number of factors. The exact rules are in document …

13.3 Reporting Requirements

Reports are a particular view of the information in the system is some filtered form. They are typically paper based reports however may also be reports to screen, or for the creation of web based reporting.

Reporting does not cover enquiries on the system. For example calling up a client's address is not a report. Enquiries should be covered in business processes.

There are two types of information we list.

- The first is the general criteria for reports such as paper size and if reports can be printed to screen or only to paper. For web based applications, it might also cover the format of reports (e.g. PDF files or direct print of the html screen)
- The second is the individual report information.

13.3.1 Example Report Criteria

Reporting criteria are listed below

- Reports will be available to print at each branch and bank
- Can be printed to screen or paper
- Can be stored electronically by a bank or branch
- Some selection criteria before printing (e.g. period, branch, state)
- All printed to A4 size paper
- Etc.

13.3.2 Example Report Specification

Name	New Customers in the last week – all Branches (detailed)
Description	Showing details of all new accounts opened in the last week. Would show the name and amount deposited.

Criteria	Details
Fields	Branch Customer Number Customer Name If new Customer (Y/N) Amount deposited Regular payments in (Y/N) Amount of Regular Payment
Sort order	By Branch By Date By Account No.
Subtotals	Amount Deposited by Branch by day Amount Deposited by Branch by period Number of new customers by Branch by period
Totals	As above for all branches
Distribution	Copy to the following: CEO Product Manager GM New Accounts Etc.
General	Should be able to select the sort order on screen when selecting the report.

13.4 Data Definitions

Data can be described as the people, places or things we want to keep track of. This section covers the data elements that shall be captured and stored by, and/or accessed by and/or processed by the information system(s). Some will probably already exist in other systems (e.g. Customers) however we need to identify all the data required. One key thing to remember is that Data is always defined as a noun. Business Process is a verb.

- A “Customer” is data.
- “Update customer details” is a Business Process.

This section is focused on the actual data to be captured or used by the system. There are other sections of data information that also need to be covered in the requirements. They are detailed in the next section.If the project is focused on selection of a package, it should be considered what level of data definition is required. For example, it may be inappropriate to define the field lengths when you are looking at a purchase.

13.4.1 Example Data Definition

Entity	Attribute	Description	Data Type	Lng	Example Value	Vol.	Comments
Client Personal Details		Details of the client				5000 cur 500 new pa	
	File Number		Num	6	123456, 123457		The file number in the customer system
	State		ASCII	2	NSW, Vic		Use standard format for states
	Surname		ASCII	30	Smith, Jones		
	Grouping	Grouping by branch and department	ASCII	2	AA, BB, CC		
	Finalisation Date		Date				
	Action Officer	Initials of the person	ASCII	2	IG, NT		
	Number of Accounts		Num	2	12, 45, 87		
	Rate		Num	1	A7, f5		
	New Payment Record		Y/N				
	Comments		Memo				

13.5 General Data Requirements

The general data requirements are those factors that may have an impact on the size, accessibility, archiving, or general handling of data. Some of these may overlap with non functional requirements.

13.5.1 Example Data Requirements

Area	Requirement
Number of items	It is expected we will create 100,000 new accounts in the first year. Growth for the following 3 years is projected at 10%. Transactions anticipated are 12 per account per year. These are 9 deposits and 3 withdrawals
Archiving	We will need to have data available for at least 2 years after an account closes.
Data Warehousing	Information will need to be integrated with other account information in our data warehouse for consolidated reporting. Currency should be at least weekly

13.6 Screens

Within this section, screen designs should be included. They can be mockups, or even hand drawn examples of what the screens should look like. The designs can be prepared as either

hand drawn prototype of the screen, or by using something like Microsoft Access or Paintshop Pro to create the pictures. This step is optional in that the screen design is unlikely to have a big impact on the application. Also, if a prototyping approach is being used, the design will evolve through later phases.

If it is a web based application, it may be appropriate to involve a designer. If a designer is not being employed, give a visual example of the layout that is expected. If it is similar to existing web pages, identify which pages.

13.6.1.1 Data Conversion/Migration

Data conversion/migration refers to the activities associated with moving existing data to a new system. This may include cleaning up the data, and/or changing the data (e.g. splitting existing telephone numbers to show area code as a separate field). In this section, we cover any issues regarding migration as well as specifying at a mid level what is required.

13.6.2 Example Data Conversion

Data	Source	Accuracy	Compatibility
Customers	Xyz System	We have checked accuracy and established: Name – 98% Address – 92% Telephone – 85% We do not intend doing any special rectification	Telephone is currently held in a text field. There are numerous entries including words "fax", "mobile" etc. We can rectify some of that programmatically however some will need to be changed manually.

13.7 Non Functional Requirements

Non-functional requirements are used to specify the design of the system and the environment in which it will operate. In other words, if real time updating of data is a requirement, then the system will be designed in a different way to one that updates overnight. If it needs to run over the Internet, it will need different design and hardware to one designed to run over a LAN.

Much of the information will require technical input. In fact, most should be the result of questions and options put forward by technical specialists. To take one area – security – it is not reasonable to expect users to specify security requirements. On the other hand, they do need a say in how secure the system should be. The following are the key areas of non-functional requirements. Each area has a number of parameters that typically need to be included.

13.7.1 User Profile

Location of Users	Insert requirements for location of users such as external organisations (over the Internet or Intranet), Head Office, Retail Branches, etc.
Types of Users	Insert requirements for types of users such as retail clients, corporate clients, internal end-users, service centres, etc.
Number	Identify both the total number of users and the maximum number of users at any point in time (concurrent users).
Access Times	When will each group of users want access to the system?

Patterns	Are there any usage patterns? For example, when are the peaks? Peaks may be by hour, or it may be a day of the week.

13.7.2 Look & Feel Requirements

User Interface	Insert requirements for the user interface such as screen presentation standards or other output standards. If it is a web based application cover such issues as: • Browsers to be supported (e.g. Internet Explorer 5.0 or later) • Screen resolution (e.g. 600 x 800)
Usability requirements	Insert requirements for the useability such as compliance to useability standards and online help. If the development is web based, identify any special features such as the ability of sight impaired users to view the site, search facility, contents page, remember logon, etc.
Response Time	Insert requirements for response times for critical business functions. If it is a web based application, set load times for web pages.
Precision Requirements	Insert requirements for precision such as specifications or standards for displaying numbers. Include specific reference to tolerances where not covered under other requirements.
Reliability & Availability	Insert requirements for reliability and availability such as the time that the information system(s) must be available or the percentage of time that the system must be available during a defined period.
Capacity Requirements	Insert requirements for capacity such as the number of concurrent transactions to be processed or the number of transactions to be processed per business interval, data storage, web hits etc. The number of users has already been specified in an earlier section so number of users, and concurrent users are not required.

13.7.3 Operational Requirements

Expected Physical Environment	Insert requirements for the physical environment such as the physical locations where the information system(s) shall be utilised (e.g. Branch, processing centres in each State, mobile users etc.).
Expected Technological Environment	Insert requirements for the expected technology environment such as the platforms that the information system shall be accessed (e.g. Branch platform). This may dictate the deployment requirements such as thin client browser based or installed fat client.
Interface Requirements	Insert requirements for the expected interfaces. Which existing information systems are to be interfaced to (if known) or what and how external data elements need to be accessed. Please note that this may be covered to some extent in the functional requirements.
Maintenance & Portability	Insert requirements for the maintenance and portability such as which business functions, business rules or data elements can be added, removed or modified by the business users (with appropriate access) or which business functions, business rules or data elements should be portable or reusable for supporting related business process in the future. For web based applications, identify what can be updated by business users or site administrators.
Ongoing system maintenance	Identify any requirements regarding ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the system.

13.7.4 Security

System Access / Confidentiality	Insert requirements for levels of system access and what information can be viewed, added, removed or modified by each level of access.

File Integrity	Relating to system access/confidentiality, insert requirements for users of the same access level to be able to add, remove or modified simultaneously or at different instances.
Audit	Insert requirements for logging of individual events/transactions performed by the information system(s) for the purposes of auditing and frequency of reporting.
Fraud Detection	Insert requirements that will assist in the prevention and detection of fraud (get Group Security and Investigation buy-in).
Business Continuity Plan	Insert requirements to support the Business Continuity Plan. The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) describes how the business shall operate their business processes when major disruptions occur.
Disaster Recovery Plan	Insert requirements to support the Disaster Recovery Plan. The Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) describes how the primary computer centre shall move to a backup site, when the primary computer centre has been lost.
Archiving	Insert requirements for archiving of data elements that are stored by the information(s), keeping in mind any legislative or regulatory stipulations.

13.8 Traceability of Requirements

If a draft report was issued and subject to a number of changes, the author would automatically give it a version number. With requirements, which are also subject to change, the version is often not applied. There may have been the requirements document in January, and one in February, but what exactly has changed? Does the final requirements document represent what is built?

13.9 Traceability Definition

Requirements traceability is defined as the ability to describe and follow the life of a requirement, in both a forward and backward direction (i.e., from its origins, through its development and specification, to its subsequent deployment and use, and through periods of ongoing refinement and iteration in any of these phases) [Gotel, Orlena. *Contribution Structures for Requirements Traceability.* London, England: Imperial College, Department of Computing, 1995.]. It can be achieved by using one or more of the following techniques:

- ***Cross referencing.*** This involves embedding phrases like "see section x" throughout the project documentation (e.g., tagging, numbering, or indexing of requirements, and specialized tables or matrices that track the cross references).
- ***Specialized templates and integration or transformation documents.*** These are used to store links between documents created in different phases of development.
- ***Restructuring.*** The documentation is restructured in terms of an underlying network or graph to keep track of requirements changes (e.g., assumption-based truth maintenance networks, chaining mechanisms, constraint networks, and propagation) [Gotel 95].

13.10An Example of Traceability Problems

One of our clients had a project that dragged on for a few years. It was stopped and started a few times. After two years, much had been built but requirements were patchy. Some had been changed before development began, some had been added or deleted, and some had changed during development. The system was based on some complex legislation, which had gone through a change during that period. When it was decided to finish the development, nobody knew the complex business rules embedded in the software. Nobody knew if it actually met the requirements of the current legislation. Nobody knew if business rules were applied consistently to all situations. For example, if benefits were only available to people in a certain age range, and the age range legislation had changed during the last year, did the application ensure everyone must be in the new range?

The problem was exasperated by the fact that nobody knew where the rules were applied in the code. The only way to find out was to review the relevant parts of the code line by line. In the end, a team of developers examined every line of code, and sought out business rules. The code was rewritten in many places to remove hard coding of rules. The cost was substantial and there was a delay to the project.

13.11Reasons for Traceability

There are a number of reasons for making requirements traceable. They are:

13.11.1 Evolving Requirements

If requirements change, it is important to identify when and why they changed. Will someone remember in 12 months time why we decided to raise the maximum credit days from 90 to 120? Will they have it changed back to 90 days only to find payment cannot be made on a contract that was set at 120 days?

13.11.2 Testing

Unless there is traceability, how will the testers know what to test? The test plan should be a mirror of the requirements. If the requirements say 120 days credit then the testing needs to test 120 days. As the test plan is developed during the building of the application, the testers need to know when things change. They will need to adjust their test plan. If there is a late change to 180 days, unless it can be identified, the testers may well miss it.

13.11.3 System Documentation

Every developer has had to carry out maintenance on a system that had documentation that was out of date. If maintenance needs to be carried out on the credit days section, and the tester is looking to find out how many days, then out of date requirements can lead to an error. The requirements need to become system documentation and be kept up to date. Changes need to be tracked.

I had to sort out a pension payment system in a major international bank. They had a parameter driven system to calculate pension payments based on complex actuarial tables. There was a development environment, a test environment and a production environment. Each had their own sets of reference tables, and each set was different. The first thought was to go back to the system documentation but this had never been kept up to date. We had no idea which actuarial data was current. In the end, we had to have the actuaries re-create all the data and then load it into all three environments. Probably for reasons associated with self-preservation, management was not keen to know how many pensions had been paid incorrectly.

13.11.4 Setting up Traceability

There are many tools available to manage traceability. The Rational Suite of products is a good example. For less complex systems, some basic documentation will suffice. For example, in Word, the use of hidden text in a document is useful. You use Format, Font, and Hidden. You can convert the original information to hidden, and add a note. Be sure to enter the date of the change.

Another technique if Excel is being used is to hide the old row or column and add a note to the cell with reasons for the change. If Access is used, a relatively simple database can be developed that holds prior versions of requirements.

13.12Traceability Matrix

A simple matrix might look like this:

ID	User Requirements	System Reference
UF1	Add new customers	S1, S2
UBR4	Cannot add a user if they already exist	S1, S55
UD5	User surname is mandatory	S1
Etc		

In this example, there are a number of Ids:

- UF is “User Functionality”
- UBR is User “Business Rule”
- UD is “User Data”

The actual IDs will be determined by the technique used to document the requirements. For example you may refer to Use Cases by number. The system reference will be determined by how the system is structured. If the requirement is used in more than one place, it should be noted. In this way, the testers know which parts of the system to test for particular transactions, and if a change is made, it needs to be made in both places – e.g. ability to add a user if they already exist.

13.13Summary

Whilst it is ideal to have a tool to manage requirements, not having a tool is not a reason for not tracing requirements. A simple manual system is easily created to make sure you know what is being specified. Traceability is important for a number of reasons. These include:

- Knowing what is a current requirement
- Knowing why a requirement was changed
- Documentation to form the basis of testing
- Understanding where requirements have been built into the system
- Forming the basis for ongoing system documentation

13.14Conclusion

Gathering and managing requirements is a process that starts with the scope of the project, and should continue until the system is decommissioned. It involves ongoing documentation that begins as very business-oriented words and is progressively structured into a more technical document. There are two key areas that usually cause problems.

- The first is to actually gather the requirements from users who do not see requirements as a highly structured technical document. They see requirements as what how they want to apply the system to their own job. “I will tell you how I want to do my job, and you can build a system to help me.” It is not about entities and actors. It is not about middleware and messaging. It is not about servers and scripting. It is about things I get, and things I pass on. It is about the actions I carry out and what I want to keep track of. It is about the reports I want to see.
- The second problem area is managing requirements. Managing the scope through the requirements from the user into a specification for the system; through the test document; finally into a system document.

A Business Analyst has to be an interpreter. They have to be able to speak both languages. They have to be an interrogator. They have to extract minute details from the users. They have to be an inventor. They have to help the business decide what happens in certain situations. It is little wonder that requirements are a factor when projects fail to deliver. The gathering and management of requirements is a complex task. Given the gap in understanding between what users think they need to supply, and what a developer needs to build a system, missing or incorrect requirements is always going to be one of the major risks in projects.

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Start
Finish
Duration
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1d
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