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The Project Academy Series

Executive Sponsorship – How to be Great Sponsor



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Objectives for Today

1. What does it mean to be an Executive Project Sponsor?
 - Why are Projects so Hard
 - What should I do as a Executive Sponsor
2. As an Executive Sponsor, how can I tell if a project is in trouble?
 - Cathy's Top Five Lists for Executive Sponsors



Objectives for Today

3. What kind of questions can I ask of Project Directors/Managers to recognize the warning signs?
 - Cathy's Top Five Lists for Executive Sponsors

4. I'm new to State Government – and now I'm an Executive Project Sponsor on a large project – now what?
 - Project Phases
 - Your role at the Project Steering Committee



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State of Project Management

- Successful Projects
 - 40%
- Challenged Projects
 - 30%
- Failed Projects
 - 30%



State of Project Management

- Most things eventually get done, but:
 - Not in the right sequence
 - Not by the right people
 - Not in the right detail
 - Not by the right time
 - Not at the right cost

- Results: High Challenge/Failure rate on projects
Lots of stress for those involved



Why are Projects So Hard?

- Solving a problem that you've had for years
 - New work vs. something you've done before
 - Reengineering of Business Processes

- New teams working together
 - Vendor & State; State IT & State Business
 - New roles for many people

- Timeboxed
 - Many parallel activities
 - Business needs change over time



Cal Tech Tool: Project Complexity/Risk

Low Complexity	Business Attribute	High Complexity
Static	Business Rules	Changing
Static	Current Business Systems	Changing
Known and Followed	Decision Making Progress	Not Known
Low	Financial Risk to the State	High
Local	Geography	State-Wide
Clear & Stable	High Level Requirements	Vague
Few & Routine	Interactions with Other Departments & Entities	High



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Cal Tech Tool: Project Complexity/Risk

Low Complexity	Business Attribute	High Complexity
None	Impact to Business Process	High
Local	Communications	Statewide
Established	Delivery Mechanisms	New
Local	Geography	Statewide



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Cal Tech Tool: Project Complexity/Risk

Low Complexity	Business Attribute	High Complexity
Proven	Hardware	New
Stand Alone	Level of Integration	Tightly Integrated
Proven/Stable	Network	New
9 to 5 Mon to Friday	Operations	24 Hrs, 7 days
Light	Security	Tight



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What should I do as a Executive Sponsor?

Obvious Answer:

Act as Executive Sponsor

To do this you need to be clear about what is your role and what is the project manager's role.



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Role of Project Manager

- The **Project Manager** is the person responsible for ensuring that the Project Team completes the project.



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Role of Executive Sponsor

- The **Executive Sponsor** is the manager with demonstrable interest in the outcome of the project.
- Sponsor should be the highest-ranking manager possible, in proportion to the project size and scope.



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Role of Project Manager

- Project Manager develops the Project Plan with the team and manages the team's performance of project tasks
- To secure acceptance and approval of deliverables
- Responsible for communication, including status reporting, risk management, escalation of issues that cannot be resolved in the team
- Making sure the project is delivered in budget, on schedule, and within scope



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Role of Executive Sponsor

- The Sponsor acts as a vocal and visible champion, legitimizes the project's goals and objectives, keeps abreast of major project activities, and is the ultimate decision-maker for the project
- The Sponsor provides support for the Project Manager; assists with major issues, problems, and policy conflicts; removes obstacles; is active in planning the scope; approves scope changes; signs off on major deliverables; and signs off on approvals to proceed to each succeeding project phase



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Role of Executive Sponsor & Project Manager

Exercise

Executive Sponsor = New Homeowner

Project Manager = Contractor





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Attributes of Project Manager

- Planner
- Articulate
- Accountable
- Accessible
- Outcome Oriented
- Influential
- Calm
- Process Oriented
- Engaged
- Good Communicator
- Thick Skin
- Negotiation Skills
- Great Listener
- Risk Aware
- Compromises
- Forward Thinking/Vision
- Organized



Attributes of Executive Sponsor

- Engaged
- Collaborative
- Inquisitive
- Decisive
- Passionate
- Accessible
- Outcome Oriented
- Influential
- Calm
- Vision
- Trusts staff
- Good judgment
- Integrity
- Politically aware
- Good listener



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Poor Project Manager

- Project Manager does not work well with business team
- Waits until issues are “on fire” before bringing them to the Executive Sponsor
- Every issue is “on fire” and becomes known as “Chicken Little”
- Project Manager does not know the status of key milestones



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Poor Executive Sponsor

- Does not attend Project Steering Committee meetings
- Delays or will not make decisions on scope and policy conflicts
- Critical of project team and deliverables with others



Top Five Signs a Project Is In Trouble

1. Client/vendor relationship is deteriorating
2. Schedule delays push one or more major milestones
3. High turnover of key staff and/or high volume of staff vacancies
4. IV&V findings and project issues/risks remain open for extended periods
5. Significant data quality issues surface when new functionality is implemented



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Top Five Areas to Watch For

1. Workload impacts on the department and the effect on critical processing timeframes
2. Data quality (either newly captured or converted) and the impact on new and legacy systems
3. External interfaces (batch or online) especially with other organizations
4. Thoroughness of implementation planning (ramp up plans) and contingency planning (roll back plans)
5. Production – speed, accuracy, and workarounds



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Top Five “To Dos” for Executive Sponsors

1. Create an environment where candid and honest dialog is the norm - encourage “bad news” early
2. Be strategic - you’ll have the solution for 15+ years
3. Drive change and challenge the status quo
4. Make timely decisions and remove barriers for the project team
5. Ask Project Managers what you can do to help



Top Five Things to Know When Working With Vendors

1. Everyone has a boss - always know the team's management chain (names/phone numbers) all the way up to the CEO
2. Know what motivates your vendor – (e.g. good reference, lasting client relationships, new revenue, getting paid timely)
3. Know quarter & fiscal year end dates - actions by these dates can be used as leverage points
4. Communicate clearly and often - be consistent about your top risks, pain points and expectations
5. Know your contracts – your responsibilities & the vendors

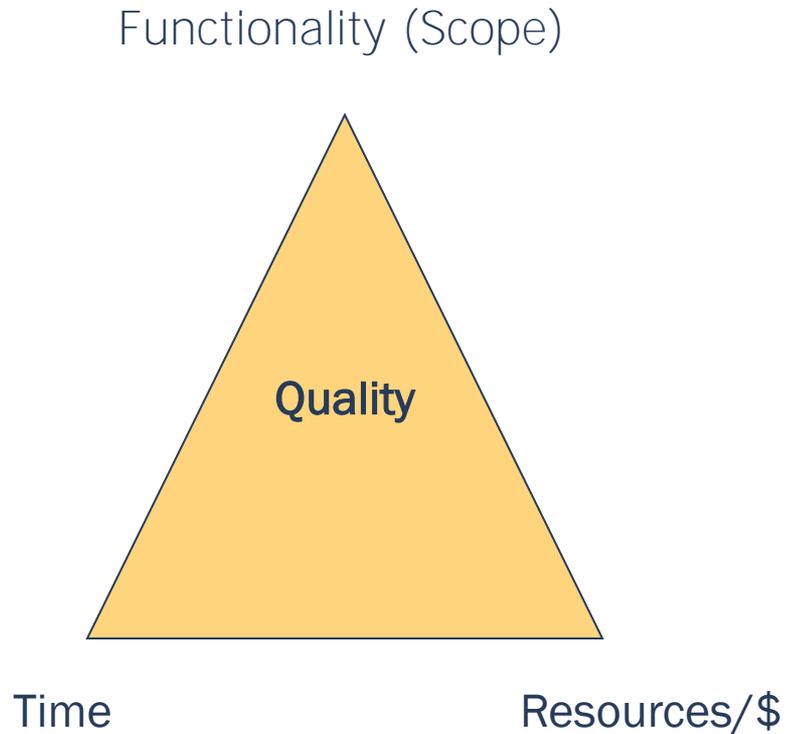


Top Five Things Experienced Executive Sponsors Know

1. Everyone wants to report the project is “green”
2. The following words mean your team is behind:
 - effort words vs result words
 - ‘they’ vs ‘we’
3. Ask for trends - history tends to repeat itself
4. Surprises are on the way – count on it and be prepared to make course corrections
5. Tradeoffs are an unavoidable component of the Project (aka Project Management Matrix)

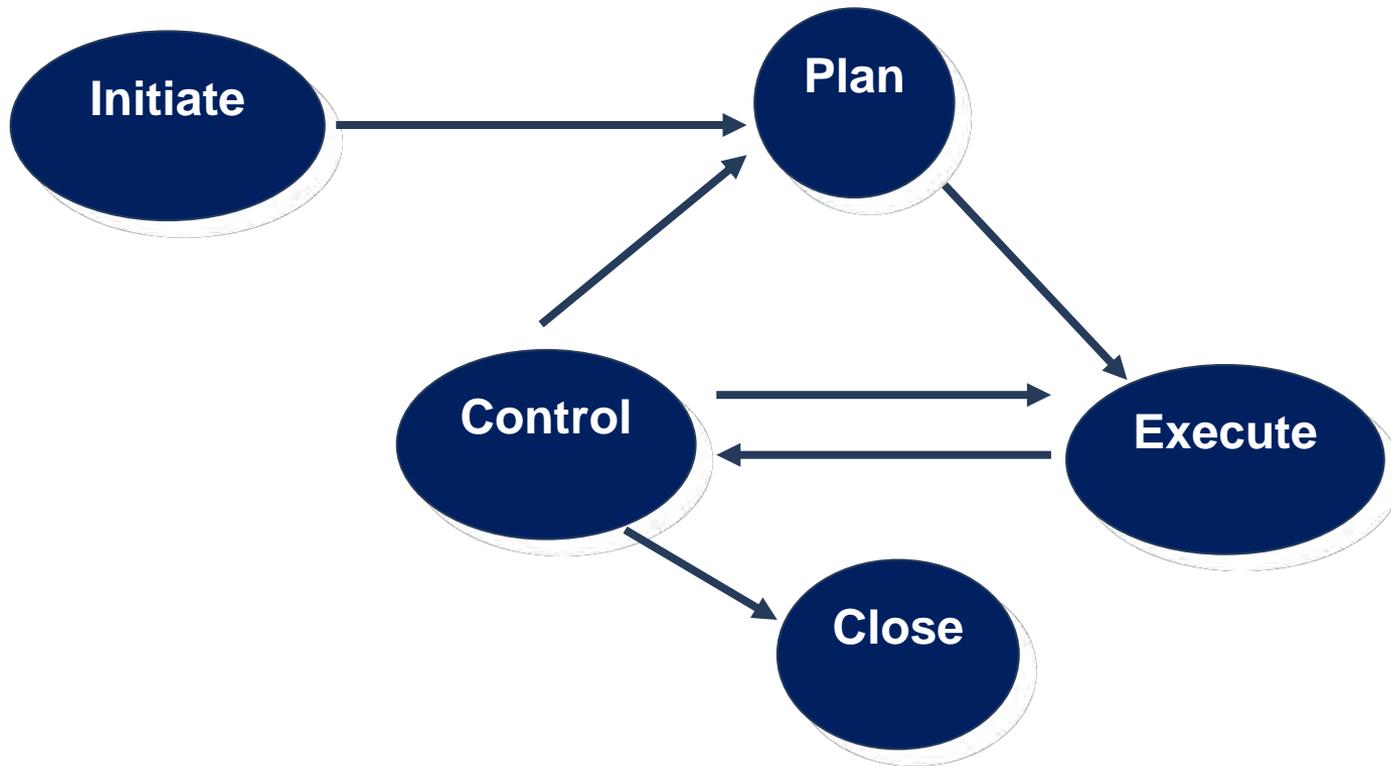


Project Management Matrix





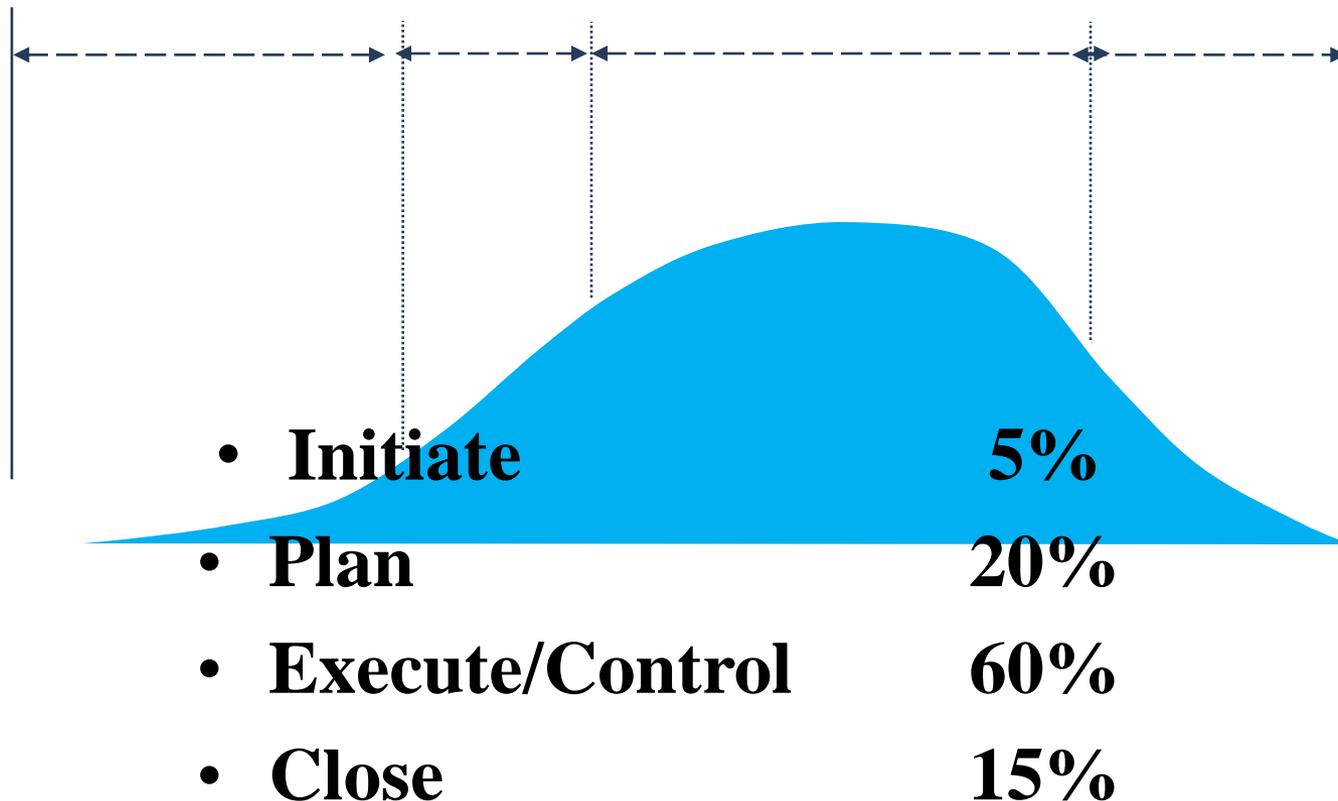
Project Management Phases





Project Management Phases

Phases and Resources Usage



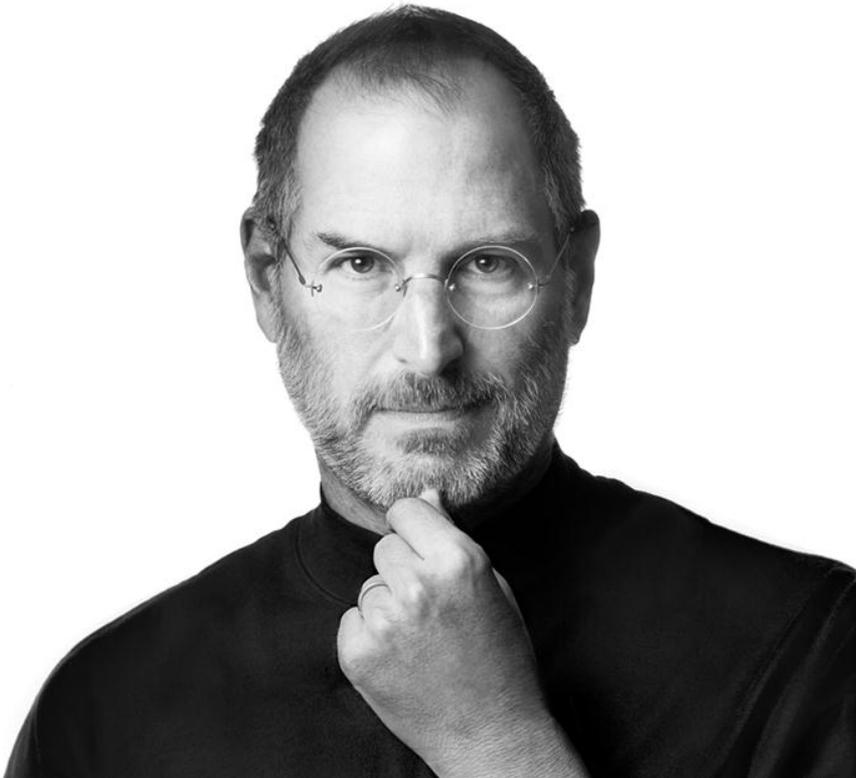


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Initiate

Innovation is not about saying yes to everything. It's about saying no to all but the most crucial features.

-Steve Jobs





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Initiate





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Initiate

Tip 1: Create clear vision & objectives

Tip 2: Try to have common objectives where ever possible

- Vendor payment based upon business outcomes
- Penalty relief
- Additional revenue for State

Tip 3: IT/Business/Vendor “Marriage”



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Plan



If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six hours sharpening my ax.

–Abe Lincoln



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Plan



Without planning, everything is left to chance.



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Plan

Define Murphy's Law:

Define Parkinson's Law:

Murphy's Law + Parkinson's Law =



Plan

Tip 1: Don't have LARGE projects, break it up

- Prototype
- Phases, Waves
- Crawl, Walk. Run

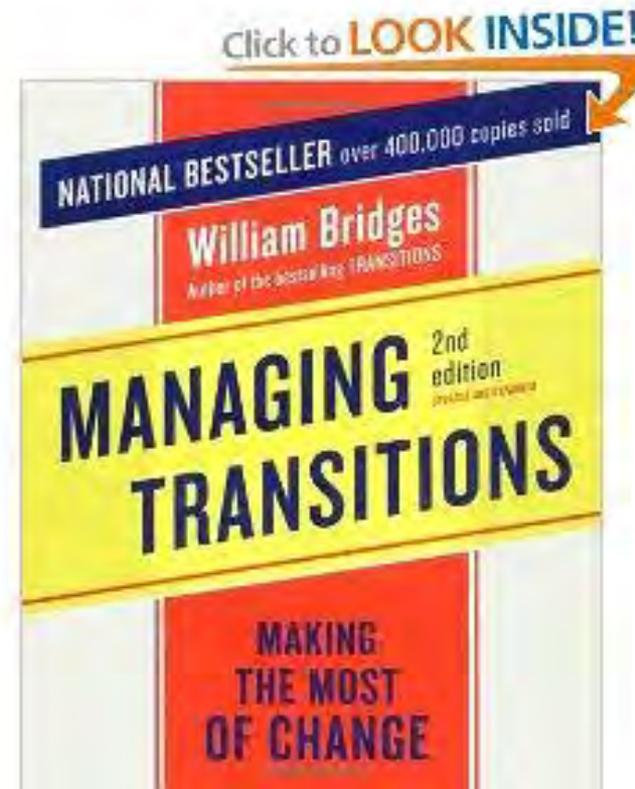
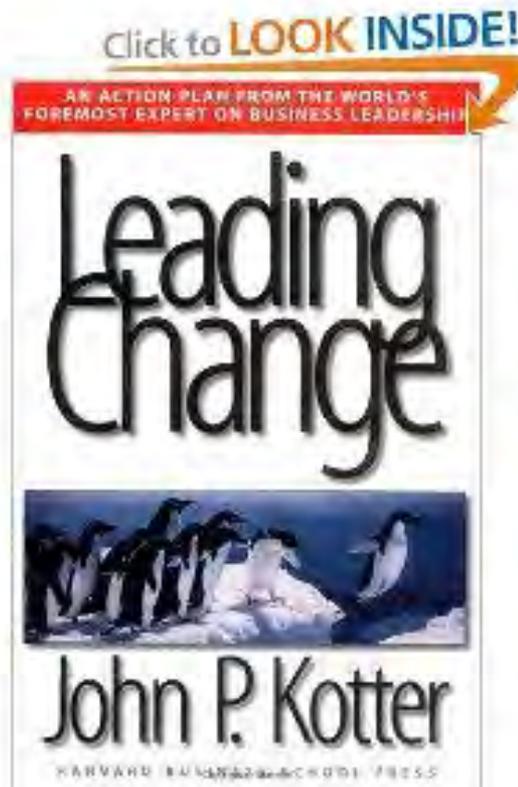
Tip 2: Have a realistic schedule

Tip 3: Change is hard for people & activities are usually not fully funded



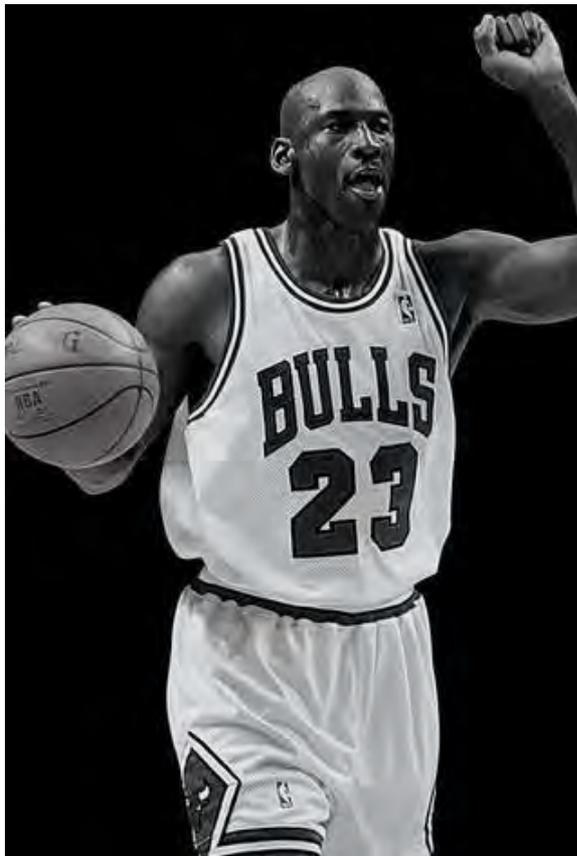
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Plan





Execute



Talent wins games,
but teamwork and
intelligence wins
championships.

-Michael Jordan



How the customer explained it



How the Project Leader understood it



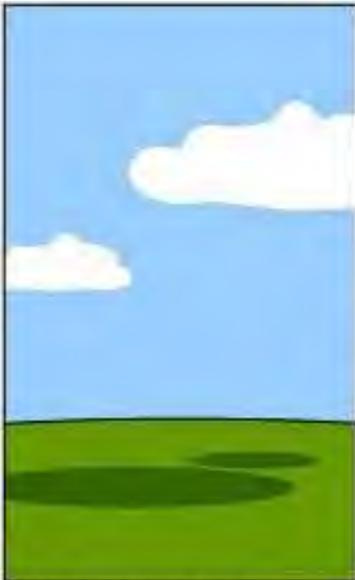
How the Analyst designed it



How the Programmer wrote it



How the Business Consultant described it



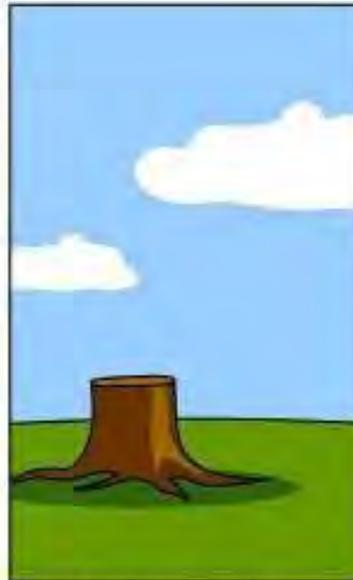
How the project was documented



What operations installed



How the customer was billed



How it was supported



What the customer really needed



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Execute

Tip 1: Requirements sign off is one of the most important decisions you make

Tip 2: Risk Management is an every day activity

“Risk in itself is not bad; risk is essential to progress, and failure is often a part of learning. But we must learn to **balance the possible negative consequences** of risk.”

- Van Scoy, 1992



Execute

Tip 3: Communication is difficult

- Communication channels = $[n (n-1)]/2$
n = number of members on the team
 - 2 people = 1 channel
 - 5 people = 10 channels
 - 20 people = 190 channels
 - 100 people = 4950 channels
 - 400 people = 78,000 channels
- Communication: 10% words, 30% visual, 60% body language



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Execute

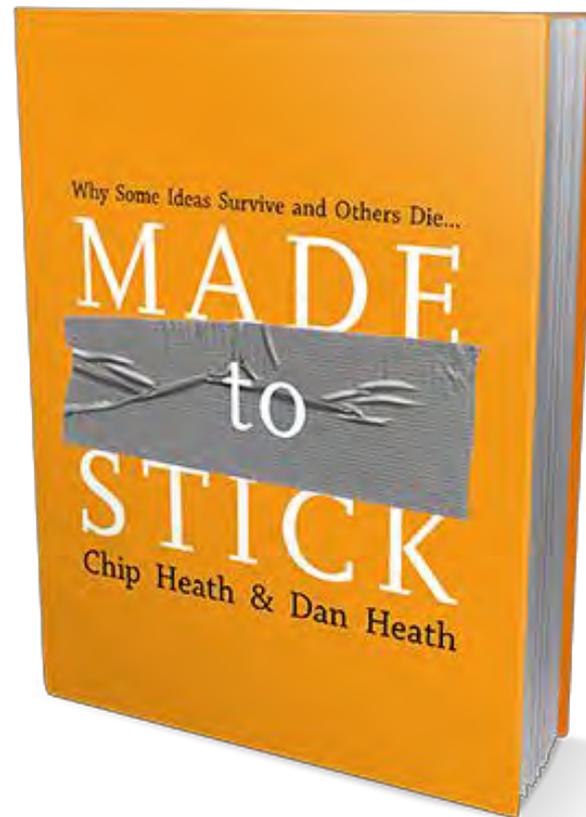
Communication – Vocabulary





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Execute





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Execute

Tip 4: Value good process. Without a process, work activity is adhoc and not repeatable.

Tip 5: Use lessons learned! Or you will have lessons “relearned”



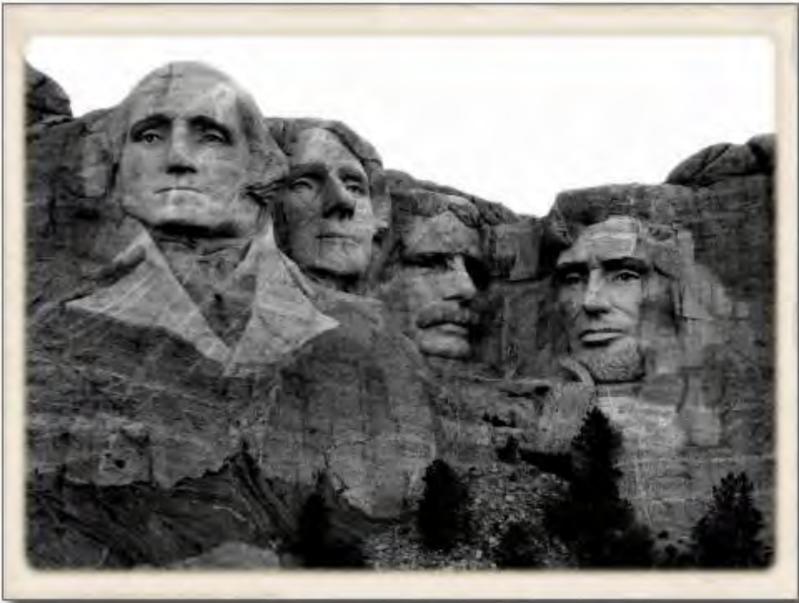
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Control

And we'd like one
final change...

We'd like Ronald
Reagan instead of
Teddy Roosevelt.

- Project Client!





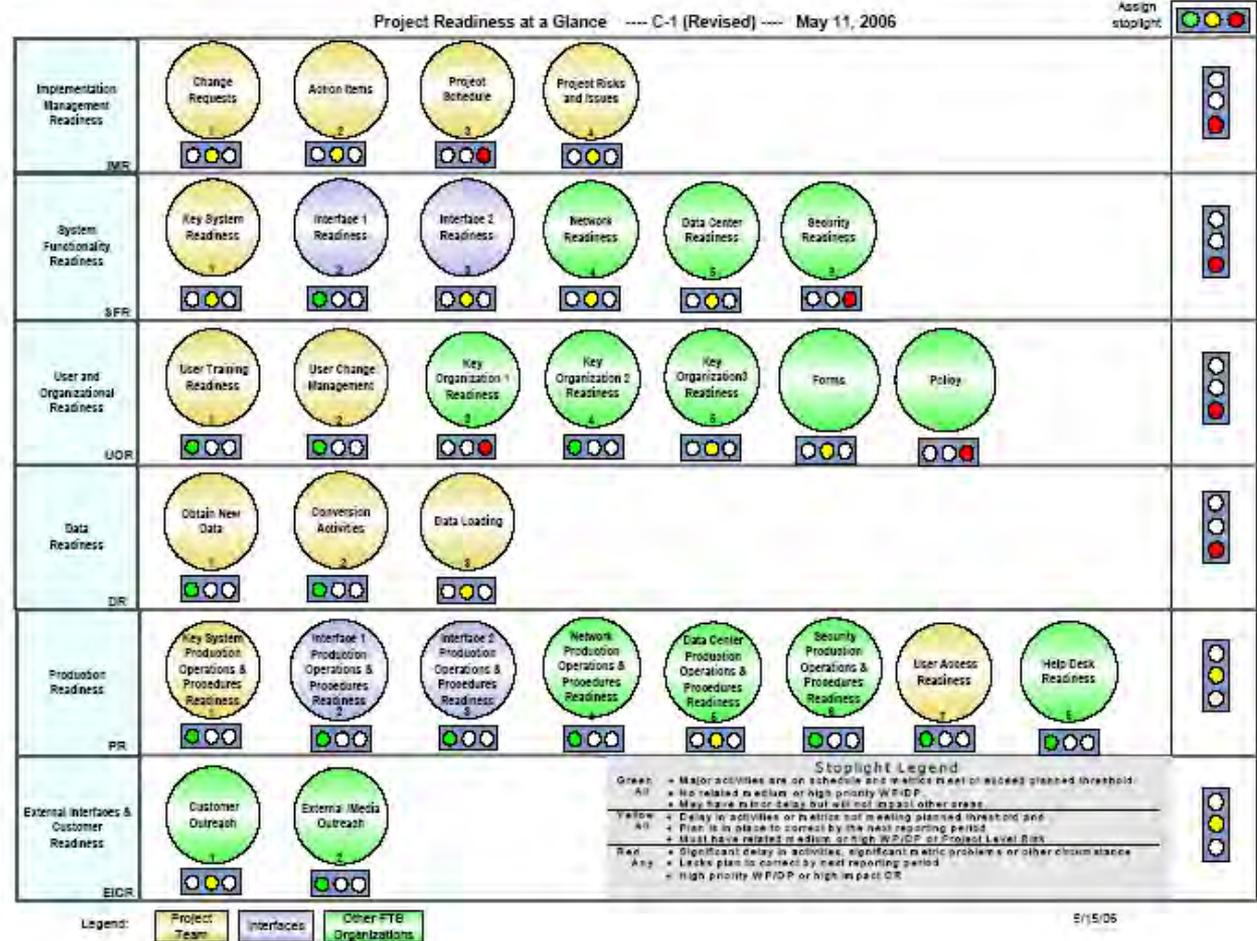
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Control

Tip 1: Scope must be controlled if you ever want to finish!



Control





Close

Tip 1: Celebrate accomplishments along the way

- Hot dog lunch celebrations
- Cake & Punch
- Met goal—entire team took week off on vacation!
- Hat day, Yellow day
- Picnic—for staff and family
- Peer Celebrations—Certificate “you rock”, “thanks for making a difference” notes, e-cards
- Candy bars for all- “Crunch bars”



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Close

I'd rather regret
the things I have
done than the
things I have not.

-Lucille Ball





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Steering Committee

- The **Steering Committee** generally includes management representatives from the key organizations involved in the project oversight and control, and any other key stakeholder groups that have special interest in the outcome of the project.

The Executive Sponsor is a member of the Steering Committee.



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Steering Committee - Roles

- The Steering committee acts individually and collectively as a vocal and visible project champion throughout their organization.
- Helps to resolve issues and policy decisions, approve scope changes, provides direction and guidance to the project.
- Fill other roles as defined by the project.



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Key Take Aways

- Be involved throughout the entire project in “your role”
- Ensure tough decisions get made in a timely manner
- Work to ensure a healthy relationship is present with IT, vendor, oversight groups, and business community



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Your Key Take Aways

- _____
- _____
- _____



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Questions

