BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE...
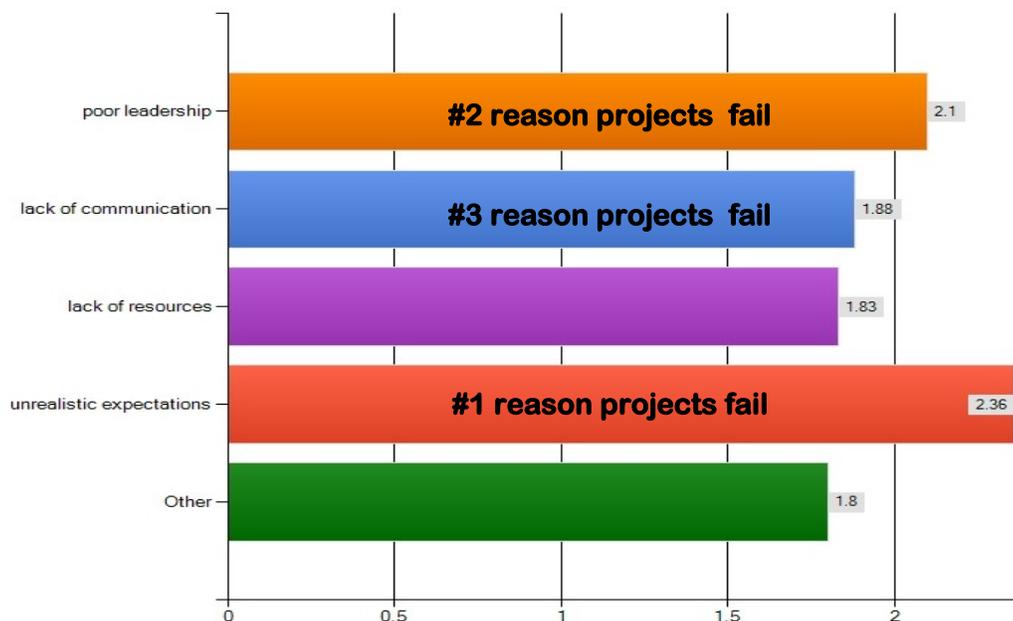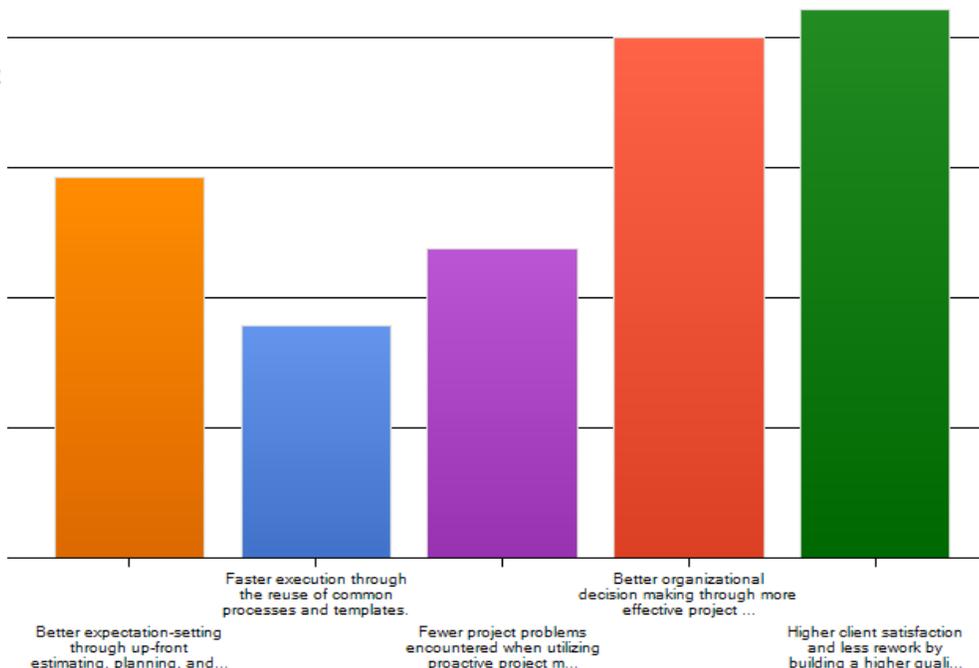
WE ASKED...

Project Management—Not for the Faint of Heart **survey results**! THANK YOU for your participation— we've captured the results from questions in the charts below—see how everyone responded!

Showing the value of project management is difficult because the concept is broad. To work around this, you need to look at the various aspects of project management and show the value associated with each component. The value proposition for project management goes something like this: Implementing a common set of project management processes takes effort and resources. However, the value of project management to the organization is much greater, how would you prioritize the items below, in order of importance of the project value (1- being most important … 5 being least important):

Better expectation-setting through up-front estimating, planning, and...

Faster execution through the reuse of common processes and templates.

Fewer project problems encountered when utilizing proactive project m...

Better organizational decision making through more effective project ...

Higher client satisfaction and less rework by building a higher quali...

poor leadership	#2 reason projects fail — 2.1
lack of communication	#3 reason projects fail — 1.88
lack of resources	1.83
unrealistic expectations	#1 reason projects fail — 2.36
Other	1.8

All project managers experience the common themes of project failure. Problems in project management span all types of projects and industries. Project success is not easy and with issues such as poor leadership, lack of communication, lack of resources and unrealistic demands, it's easy to see why projects can fail. Recognizing the problems of project management early instead of deep in the trenches will help to resolve issues and lead to successful outcomes. What are the top three reasons for project failure within your organization (1 - #1 reason projects fail ...... 2 - #2 reason projects fail .... 3 - #3 reason projects fail)?

November Survey Topic: Business Technology
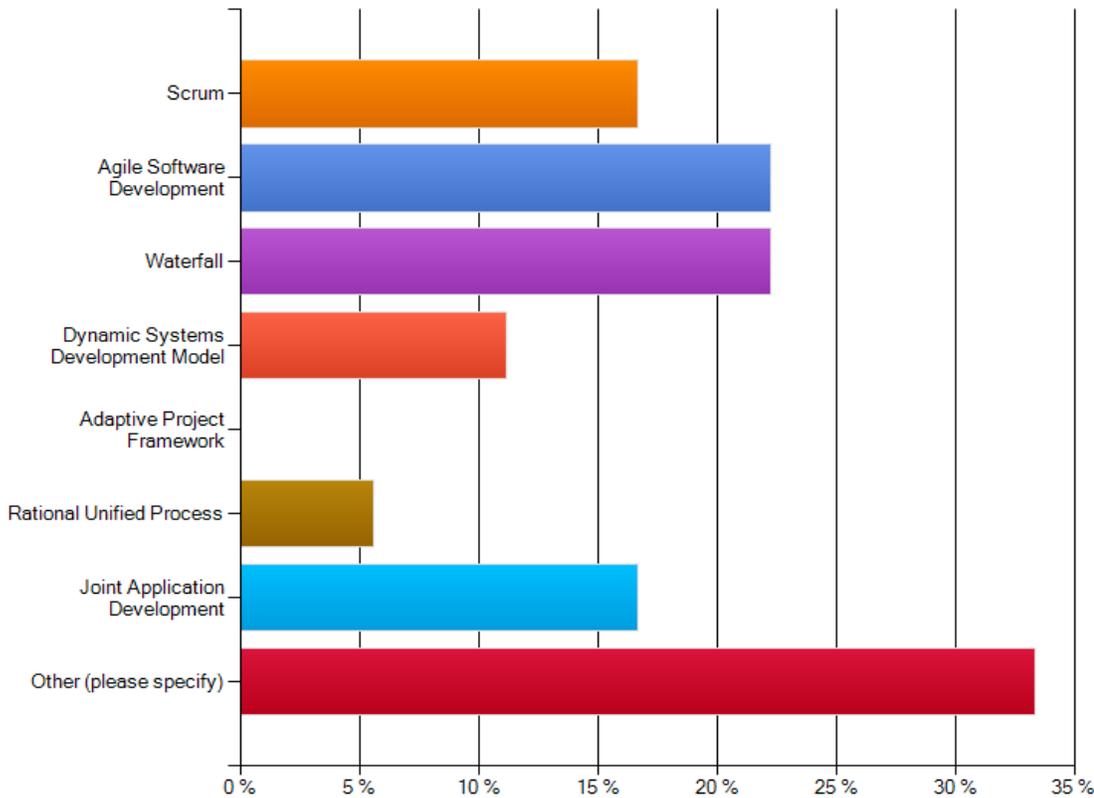We want to hear from YOU!!!
Take the survey on our Facebook page!
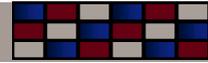
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The reality is that the project management methodologies available to a project manager are often decided on long before a project starts. In many cases the decision is based on nothing more than "this is what we've always done". At other times, the decision is based on an enterprise-wide initiative to adopt a particular process. What process does your company use?

Can project managers actually become senior executives? If not, what can be done to allow them to climb the ladder? What are the odds? How can a project manager better design his or her career development to take advantage of these opportunities?
(Editor's note: selected comments included below)
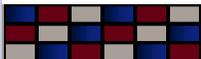
YES 100%

Yes, project managers can become senior executives. In my company, project managers tend to become program managers next. In this role, they are responsible for the overall success of multiple projects including successfully managing the budget. This experience makes them uniquely qualified for higher level roles in the company.

With the proper leadership training & experience with multiple & varied projects, I believe that project managers can make effective executives

Depending on the organization, if a Project Manager actually completes a project successfully, they will have done what no one has done before. They'll either become a senior executive or be driven from the company being seen as a threat to others.

PMs possess a unique view of an organization and its operations. They touch every part of an organization and understand its inner workings very well. To increase upward mobility, PMs much engage their social skills and work hard on outward facing activities, such as through working more directly with customers on business proposals. The best way to determine what skills you need to move up, analyze what skills your current executives have and develop (and demonstrate) these skills. Validation is the key to acceptance. Once an executive validates your abilities, you're in.

Based on Your Experience...

WE ASKED...

It doesn't matter how talented you are, if you can't manage your projects, then you will struggle to achieve success. Here are seven project management problems that designers and developers often face. Tell your story, select one in which you've successfully dealt with and share your avoidance, mitigation and/or success story (150 words or less): 1. Your Client Gives You Vague, Ever-changing Requirements 2. Your Client is Slow with Communication 3. The Project Doesn't Start On Time 4. You Try to Manage Every Project the Same Way 5. The Client Doesn't Like What You Created 6. Your Sponsor Doesn't Seem to Care About Your Project 7. Too Much Time is Spent Solving Problems After Projects Are"Live".

Lloyd Sloat

Managing Member
LDO Consultants
International LLC

When my client gives me vague, ever-changing requirements the time to catch this is before contract signing. I have specified specific hours for each area I think I would have trouble in, then added specific labor times and rates for additional hours. I have also added in the contract specific methods to be used during the hours used. Every change order is an addendum to the contract. Even then you will sometimes lose money because you bid on a job you should have passed on.

Charles Boyer
Certified Coach, C-Star Coaching

4. Each project is different and has its own set of problems. A cookie-cutter approach just won't work. Look for similarities, but be aware of the differences.

Dr Clint Meneely

Retired!

1) I "controlled the client" by carefully parsing the contract requirements and requiring every change to be put on a "to do next" list, unless it was a minor change that wouldn't affect the project schedule significantly. This way I had documentation of any requirements creep and I was able to justify additional charges and schedule changes as the project progressed. Often the client was surprised at the length of the list and was agreeable about renegotiating the contract.

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Geoffrey E Warnock
PMP, Safety/Training Coordinator

6. The two sponsors decided to 'co-sponsor' my project. All this really meant is that neither were interested enough to help me (PM) with challenges with other department heads (Weak-Matrix Organization) or to assist me with addressing removal of key personnel resources. I thought I was going into a project with two sponsors that really wanted the project completed for their use, when in fact, they didn't want to fight for the project to maintain resource levels in order to complete the project because they didn't want to 'buck the system'. The project failed to be completed and the finger-pointing started with me. I stopped it with me. The team (what was left of it) was discouraged and saw the huge benefit the application had for our organization and actually tried to reinitiate the project via other department heads, to no avail. I learned a LOT about PM, organizational politics, team leadership, and the value of project 'buy-in' that is documented.

Harry Shade

COO, Innovision Global
Trainer, Facilitator, Coach, Speaker

3. The project does not start on time: I once was asked to create a training program for a new software system for a government agency. Since government agencies are notorious for delaying the start time of projects, the first thing I did was identify the challenges that could delay the project and communicated that with the senior leadership of the organization. Along with that, I provided them with three different scenarios in which we could reasonably expect to begin and end the project based upon those challenges, thus providing them with the information up front. This allowed them to be comfortable with our projections because they were based upon actual data and got them to buy in to the timeline. As it turned out, we met the scenario that was not the best case but was also not the worse case but because we had buy in on the worse case, they were happy with the results. We also did not communicate the exact date for roll out of the training to the entire staff until we were confident that we would make date so there was neither expectations set that were not met and/or confusion by having to communicate different start dates.

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LK Kandpal

Principal-cum-Director
www.freedomteam.in

Client Gives Vague, Ever-changing Requirements. This is a common occurrence, I think. We must understand that clients are our gods. We are there for the clients. The organisation cannot run without clients. Hence, we must not get piqued by the vague and capricious demands of the clients. If we start reacting to their whimsicalities, we cannot do business. The moot question is how to satisfy such customers. The most successful mantra is 'patience'. Just listen to them patiently. Thank the customer for bringing it to your notice. Assure him/her to take appropriate action. Make a note of what their actual grievance is. Find out what went wrong with our product and service. Lastly, rectify the defect or deficiency. The client will be more than happy for giving him/her a patient hearing and for being so courteous.

Dr Milton Mattox

#3. My project doesn't start on time.... This is normally the underlying cause of project failures in my experience. Some projects start late (i.e. very late); however, the end date stays the same. This compresses the time project teams have to deliver quality output. We've dealt with this by insisting upfront that the scope of the project be reduced to match the time left to successfully deliver. The project managers and I do not waver on this point and it has helped us be more successful than not when projects start late.

VP, Information Technology
Cigna Voluntary

November Survey Topic: Business Technology
We want to hear from YOU!!!
Take the survey on our Facebook page!