

Effective Planning and Tracking for Small Projects

Rita Hadden
Datatel Inc.
703-802-2927

What is a Small Project?

- **2-6 months duration**
- **2-6 FTEs**
- **Any type of project**
- **Size, complexity, and risk vary**

Appropriate SCALING is the KEY!



Degree of formality and documentation should fit the project.

Why Projects Fail

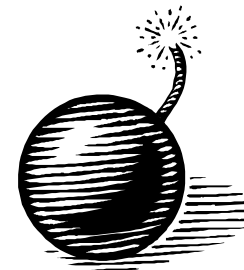
What we mean by “failure”

- **Users’ minimum requirements not met**
- **Implemented too late**
- **Percent of defects post release excessive**
- **Budget exceeded by unacceptable amount**

Preventable Reasons for Project Failure

A project manager is only responsible for *preventable* reasons for project failure:

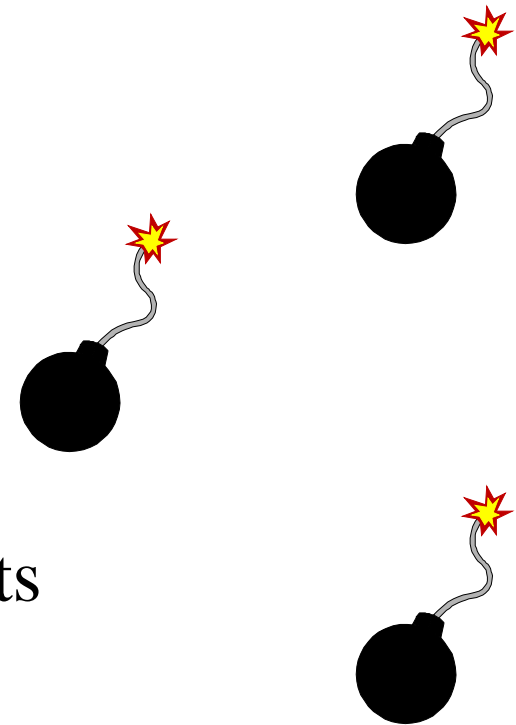
- Unrealistic goals
- Ambiguous requirements or specifications
- Poor estimates
- Poor communication
- Scope creep



Continued Next Slide

Preventable Reasons for Project Failure (2)

- Poor issues, risks, and dependencies management
- Unclear roles and responsibilities
- Poor quality management
- No plans
- No focus or shifting resources
- No accountability for commitments



Effective Project Management

EFFECTIVE –

Project team management

Stakeholder management

End-user and Customer management

Process management

How to Manage Project Team Effectively

★★★ Coach team in software best practices

★★ Recognize extraordinary efforts

- Provide performance feedback promptly
- Conduct effective meetings
- Control conflict



Continued Next Slide

How to Manage Project Team Effectively (2)

- Maintain support for team direction and decisions
- Respect team members
- Express commitment to the project
- Encourage personal responsibility and growth
- Listen to the team



How to Manage Stakeholders Effectively

★★★ Provide status reports

★★ Present solutions to problems

➤ Provide facts promptly

➤ Generate confidence in the project

How to Manage End-users and Customers Effectively

★★★ Get user/customer involved early and often

★★ Recognize and respond to user/customer concerns

➤ Involve other experts if appropriate

➤ Promote project to the user/customer

Effective Project Planning

★★★ Set project scope with testable requirements

★★ Define issues, risks, external dependencies

- Set SMART business objectives

- State specific assumptions and constraints

- Add supporting strategies

Continued Next Slide

Effective Project Planning (2)

- Build appropriate work breakdown structure
- Estimate product size and work effort
- Set key deliverables, milestones, and schedule
- Document roles and responsibilities
- Get buy-in

Supporting Project Strategies

- Communication
- Requirements Management
- Configuration Management
- Quality Management
- Test
- Conversion
- Documentation
- Training
- Beta
- Installation
- Others

Effective Tracking

★★★ Track progress weekly by key deliverables

★★ Take early corrective actions

- Make requirements drive the project
- Control scope and manage requirement changes
- Conduct peer reviews
- Manage issues, risks, and dependencies to closure
- Review and revise your estimates
- Share your lessons learned

Key Project Management Tools

- Project Plan
- Project Schedule
- Issues, Risk, External Dependencies Log
- Weekly Status Report
- Change Requests Log
- Defect Database
- Escalation Procedure
- Project Metrics

Project Managers' Daily Quiz

Ask yourself daily:

- What can I do *today* that will keep my project on track two weeks from now?
- What obstacles stand in the way of *improving* the product?
- Am I doing all I can to effectively manage my project team? my stakeholders? my end-users and customers? my processes?



- **For questions & comments**

Contact

Rita Hadden

Datatel Inc.

703-802-2927

rch@datatel.com