



Answering the 6 questions to successfully manage any Hybrid Project

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Project management is nothing more than organized common sense. It should be based on 3 factors:

- *The physical and behavioral characteristics of the project*
- *The organizational environment in which the project will be executed*
- *The dynamic supply and demand markets for the deliverables*

Successful hybrid project management is a process that offers positive answers to these six questions:

1. *What business situation is being addressed by this project?*
2. *What does the business need to do?*
3. *What are you proposing to do?*
4. *How will you do it?*
5. *How will you know you did it?*
6. *How well did you do?*

Regardless of how you choose to define your project management process it will always reduce to the six-question litmus test. So, if you or your enterprise are designing a project management process, check its validity by using it to answer these six questions. In my mind this is a simple and intuitive definition of project management and it is couched in terms that make sense to the business person or to someone new to project management. If you can provide positive answers to these six questions, you will have managed a successful project. So, being an effective project manager should be seen as a flexible and creative pursuit!

You're not in Kansas anymore! Once you might have expected (and sometimes got) a recipe for managing any project you might be assigned. If that is the case in your organization, be suspect—please. You now have to think your way through to the way you will manage a project. Effective project managers have to think rather than routinely react. The discipline of project management has morphed to a new state and, as this book is being written, that state has not yet reached a steady state. In fact, the practice of effective project management may never reach a steady state. The business world is in a constant state of flux and change and it will always be that way. That continues to influence how you need to approach managing projects. And your approach to a given project is going to be in a constant state of flux and change. What does this mean to the struggling project manager? Take courage: it's not as grim as it may seem.

Let's quickly look at how to answer each of these questions.

What Business Situation Is Being Addressed by This Project?

The business situation is either a problem that needs a solution or an untapped opportunity. If it is a problem, the solution may be clearly defined and the delivery of that solution will be rather straightforward. If the solution is not completely known, then the project management approach must iteratively embrace the learning and discovery of that solution. Obviously, these will be higher-risk projects than the first case simply because the deliverables are not clearly defined and may not be discovered despite the best collaborative efforts of the client and the project team.

What Does the Business Need to Do?

The obvious answer is to solve the problem or take advantage of the untapped business opportunity. That's all well and good but given the business circumstances under which the project will be undertaken, it may not be possible or even advisable. Even if the solution is clearly known, you might not have the skilled resources to successfully execute the project, and if you do have the resources, they may not be available when you need them. For maximum business value to be delivered, senior management must consider the entire portfolio of projects and assign/reassign resources based on the changing priorities of the projects in its portfolio. That is a challenge to be addressed but it is out of scope for this book.

When the solution is not known or only partially known, you might not be successful in finding the complete solution or even an acceptable solution. These are high risk projects with uncertain outcomes. In any case, you need to document what needs to be done. You'll do this through a statement of solution requirements.

If the solution is known, that document will be easy to develop. If that solution is unknown or only partially known, what you need to do will emerge over time rather than being developed at the outset.

What Are You Proposing to Do?

The answer to this question will be framed in your goal and objective statements. Maybe you and others will propose partial solutions to the problem or ways to take advantage of the untapped opportunity. In any case, your goal and objective statements given as part of a *Project Overview Statement* (POS).

How Will You Do It?

The answer to this question goes to the heart of the HPMgt Framework. It will be an adaptive, flexible and very creative management approach. It might be a variation of an off the shelf model like Scrum or PRINCE2 or a completely unique approach using adaptations of the tools, templates and processes in the vetted enterprise toolkit. The viability will be totally dependent on the skills and competencies of the HPMgr and the team. That approach might be fully documented at the outset or only developed iteratively, but it will be developed.

Meaningful client engagement is critical especially as the complexity and uncertainty of the project intensifies. The client is the person or persons most familiar with the product or process of the project.

How Will You Know You Did It?

Your solution will deliver some business value to the organization. The expected business value will have been used as the basis for approving your doing the project in the first place. That success criterion may be expressed in the form of *Increased Revenue* (IR) or *Avoid Costs* (AC) or *Improved Services* (IS). IRACIS is the acronym that represents these three areas of business value. Whatever form that success criterion takes, it must be expressed in quantitative terms so that there is no argument as to whether or not you achieved the expected business results. As part of the post-implementation audit (see Chapter 10: How to Close a TPM Project), you will compare the actual business value realized to the expected business value stated in the POS.

How Well Did You Do?

The answer to this question can be determined by the answers to the following four questions:

- **How well did your deliverables meet the stated success criteria?** The project was sold to management based on the incremental business value that would be returned to the organization if the project were successful. Did the project deliver those results and to what extent? Sometimes the answer will not be known for some time.
- **How well did the project team perform?** The project team was following some project management life cycle (PMLC) model. There should be some assessment of how well they followed that model.
- **How well did the project management approach work for this project?** In addition to doing things right the team needed to do the right thing. Given that several approaches could have been used, the team should have used the best-fit model.
- **What lessons were learned that can be applied to future projects?** This question is answered through the post-implementation audit. This is easier said than done. The pressures of newly approved projects have a higher priority than projects already completed.

The answers to the original six questions discussed in the preceding sections reduce project management to nothing more than organized common sense. In my world to be "organized" means that the process(es) used are continuously adapted to meet the changing needs of the project. To be "common sense" means the management process did not require that non-value-added work be done. If it weren't organized common sense, you need to question why you are doing it at all. So, a good test of whether or not your project management approach makes sense lies in how you answered the preceding six questions.

With all of that as background our working definition of project management can be succinctly stated as follows:

DEFINITION: Project Management

Project Management is an organized common-sense approach that utilizes the appropriate client involvement in order to meet sponsor needs and deliver the expected incremental business value.

This definition is a marked change from any you may have seen before. First, it is the only definition that I have seen in print that explicitly refers to business value. Business value is the responsibility of the client through their requirements statements. The project manager is responsible for meeting those requirements. Meeting requirements is the cause and incremental business value is the effect.

Second, and equally important in the definition through the common-sense term is the implication that effective project management is not a "one size fits all" approach. Because it is a "common-sense approach" it must adapt to the changing project conditions. You will learn the rules of the engagement for effectively managing projects. The definition of the PMLC models given in the section "Introducing Project Management Life Cycles" is the beginning of your journey to become an effective complex project manager. You will become a leader who at the same time is creative, adaptive, flexible and courageous. In effect I will define the contents of the pantry from which you will build the recipes you will need for managing your projects. It will be up to you to be the chef.

Third, it is essential that you clearly understand requirements. Requirements and their documentation will establish the project characteristics and be your guide to choosing and adapting the project-management approach you will be using. I am going to take a rather unconventional approach based on my own definition of requirements. But my approach has successfully passed the test of time.