ARCHITECTING PROJECT MANAGEMENT
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Technology for Effectiveness of Project Management

Leverage of Technology

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ABSTRACT

Most agile organizations are always in search for evolving their processes and use tools that help its organization, employees respond to customers speedily with Products and Services that meet customers' needs. By being close to customers they are able to adapt products and service that are valuable to them. Increased globalization has made the need to be close to customers extremely important and urgent.

Project Managers have great deal of responsibility to balance the importance of understanding the needs of customers and be nimble in delivering the needs within time. In modern world, project management without technology may be primitive and increase risks to the project. There are more unknowns and handling standard resourcing challenges, scheduling conflicts, time constraints is perhaps not good enough. Handling customer changing needs and tastes, responding quickly to priority and meeting all requests does impose the need to possess new skills.

Technology provides simple tools and techniques that provide Project Managers the additional skill and to build effectiveness in project execution. In this paper we examine some scenarios and try to understand the various influences of Technology on project managers and their projects.

Technology is an enabler, however over use of Technology can bring negative impact to projects. This paper will share some "How to" use Technology solutions for effectiveness in project management. We will also examine some scenarios "How not to" use Technology. We will conclude the session with "lessons learned" and "some best practices" for gainful use of Technology for effectiveness of project management.

INTRODUCTION

Managers hope they'll never have to deal with project failure where all the nine elements are well covered, but the fact is that it does happen, no matter what size the project is, big or small. In a recent real project case study, according to the Project Manager, project success is directly related to the level of use of information. She also adds that Technology is a key driver for information sharing. Project GTM, is a small sized project wherein Roma, the project manager started out well. This project is quite a simple scope, i.e. to turn a set of 200 product inquiries into business opportunities. She had identified all the elements for this project and set out her activities with the 1st set of inquiries. To ensure she stayed on track with the project goal, she developed small spreadsheet tool to support her tracking all the activities. but very soon it began exploding as each activity had multiple status and sub statuses. Over a period of time the process of tracking each activity grew itself into a huge challenge and since spreadsheet tools are not intuitive to guide, she slipped tracking activities, sub activities, parallel activities etc and the whole project management process seemed to be falling through. She then started showing an inaccurate results in business meetings where executive sponsors were involved to discuss the key decisions. What started as a small project, just got out of control and led to collapse, simply due to the inability to effective tracking and monitoring? Adopting adhoc and inconsistent tracking project activities is nearly the cause of failure of her project work.

After being found in the middle of a huge project execution mess, Roma then decided to implement simple project management software. This software helped Roma provide project insight, aligning skills & resources to

collaborate with people more efficiently, consumers had data access through mobile and overall gave a sense of being in control of activities, driving activities to execution completion. Roma also had new found joy of reporting to Executive sponsors with more accurate updates and expedited financial information. The new tool helped her in creating an environment for sharing information and having the right people do the tasks at the right time. The productivity of people and other resources seemed to grow when technology was applied to the process. Being a simple project and then getting into an execution mess to finally achieving the project goals clearly showed the differentiator today is technology. Technology supports single source of truth and as information is shared between all project users from one source, the transparency and timeliness of data and information makes itself a key driver to success. Roma is extremely happy about having taken the right decision of putting the project on project management software which has made a huge difference to her project management.

This paper looks at what tends to drive information in a project environment and how information determines the success or failure of project (s). 65% surveyed indicated a demand for expedited financial information delivery and both internal and external stakeholders require faster and more robust insight into financial data (source: Aberdeen group, 2014). Creating an environment for sharing information is one of the top two priorities for CFOs (source: FEI, the CFO's Technology Imperatives, 2014). In other words, executives believe their modern project leaders are project driven and technology powered making them valuable strategic business partners to the entire organization. By project driven, modern project managers constantly engage with their customer and their customer needs, aligning and re-aligning project activities to customer needs.

DETAILS OF THE PAPER

BEING CLOSE TO CUSTOMER

The key to success is to understand the customer needs precisely. Forbes research points inefficient execution as one of the top most reasons for failure (41%). It also points strong execution as one of the top reasons for success (47%). Both Services based projects and Product development projects involve significant amount of time in design coordination, project collaboration, development coordination, phase end gate management, content management and superior analytics based reporting. To pay attention to details is being close to the customer. However simple and ordinary tools such as spreadsheets or documents obviously do not help capture details that have to be tracked and processed till the activity is completed.
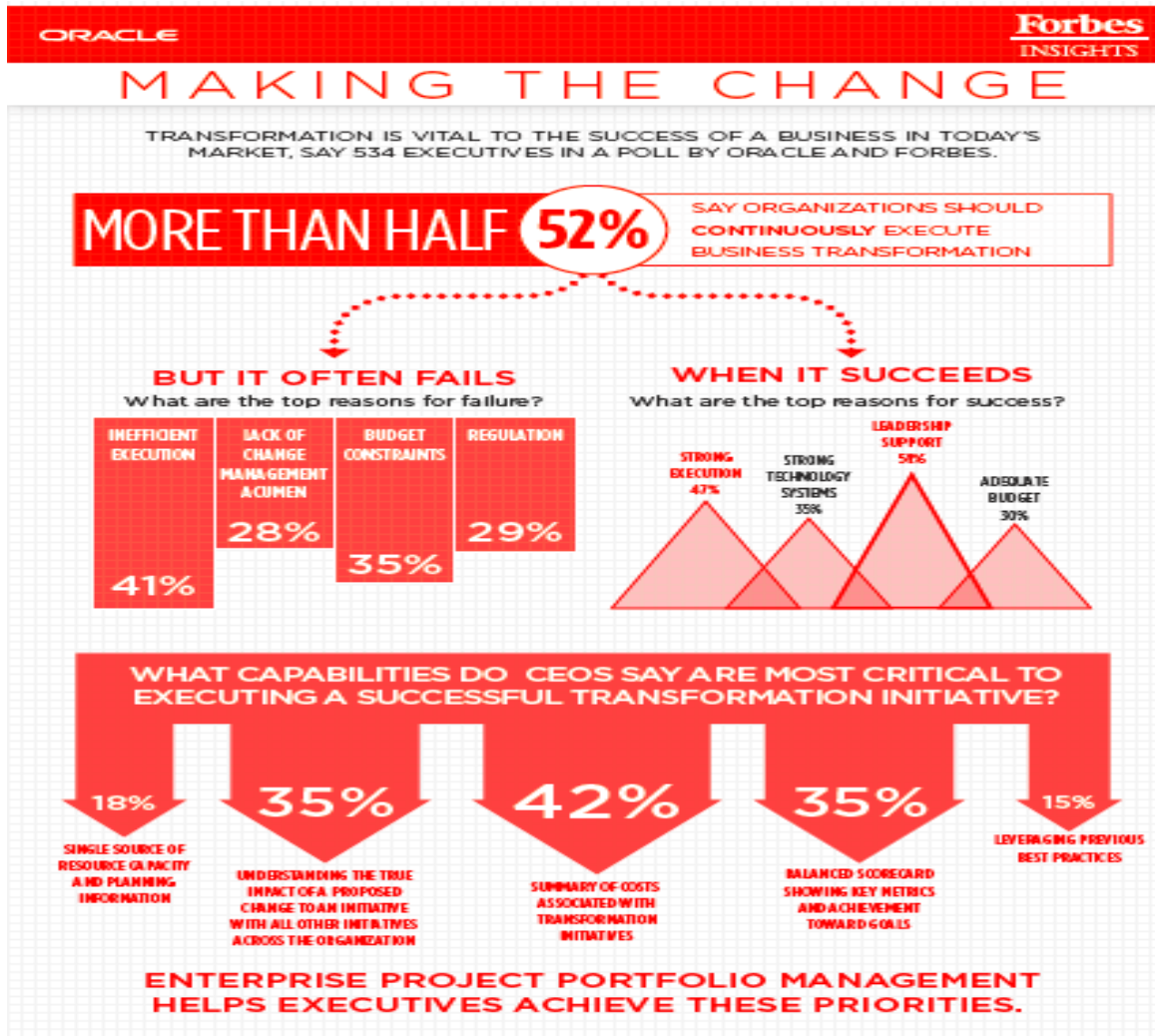
Most project managers use modern project management techniques through insight driven enterprise project management software. Such new Project management software / tools provide planners and executioners a common platform for collaborative management using configurable business workflows to capture and record documentation required during project execution.

Enterprise project management tools provide comprehensive information on projects, from executive summaries to detailed plans. Individuals across all levels of the company can view, analyze, record, and communicate reliable information and help make timely informed decisions that support enterprise vision. This helps project managers:

☐ make strategic business decisions;

☐ control details that is necessary to finish project;

☐ understand current resource demands, set priorities, and evaluate long-term staffing requirements;

☐ use skilled resources effectively and productively;

☐ reorganize project to fit shifting priorities without sacrificing quality.

☐ manage project to on-time and on-budget completion.

"Enterprise project portfolio management solutions help track multiple tasks. Without the processes that help you manage and execute that strategy, it's all just ideas that go nowhere" —Mike Riccio, Chief Financial Officer, Panasonic

Every activity with a specific purpose or goal is a project. Oracle and Forbes conducted a survey across 534 executives about why business transformation is vital to the success of business in today's market. The extract below provides the results of the survey.
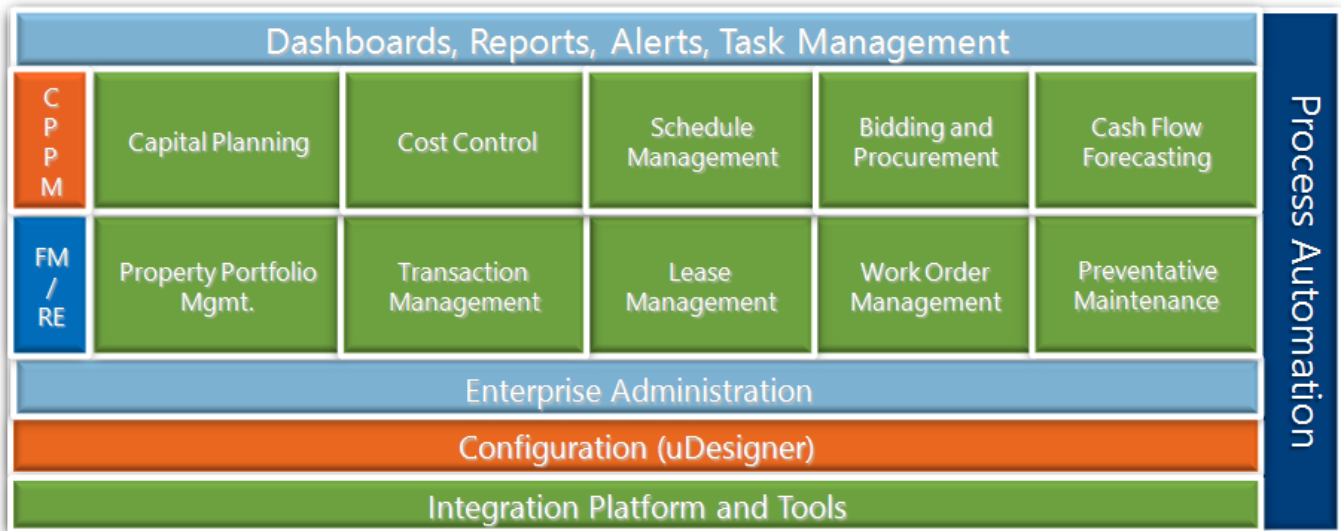
CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES OF ENTERPRISE PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Installing an EPM software is key to being able to serve the needs of a project manager. However such software must be evaluated for certain critical attributes as below.

- Define user accounts, preferences, views, and settings using high-level administration
- Construct enterprise data for global settings such as calendars and codes.
- Extensive project, portfolio, and resource management through the full support of activities, work breakdown structure, planning and scheduling, costs, role and resource administration and assignment, teams, portfolio analysis, capacity planning, Return on Investment (ROI), and dashboards for personalized content and measuring performance.
- Document management to conduct document reviews with key stakeholders and meet regulatory compliance.
- Business Process Management that depicts your project's workflow from initiation to completion.
- Generate and view reports manually or through automated e-mail updates to specific users.
- Industry-standard planning and scheduling functionality that uses enterprise and project specific data.
- Time reporting using Progress Reporter functionality
- Constant communication between online and offline systems, mobile devices
- Integrative solutions to improve productivity and work flow in the organization

Sample EPM product solution coverage

HOW AN ENTERPRISE PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE MAKES DIFFERENCE

An Enterprise Project Management software with following key features and Key benefits makes the life of project managers simple and easy.

KEY FEATURES
- Top-down and bottom-up visibility for planners and project managers
- Powerful cash flow capabilities across the portfolio lifecycle
- Multiple scenarios and data linked to projects during execution
- Budget, commitment, spend, variance and forecast management
- Cash flow curve generation for projects, contracts, line items and cost codes
- Summary cash flow forecasts
- Contract management and Change controls
- Mobile Application for task management
- Two way integration with Primavera P6 Enterprise Project Portfolio Management
- Support for transaction currencies, Project currencies and future Exchange rate estimates
- Configurable and out – of – the – box business workflows
- Templates for rapid setup and deployment
- Advanced document management
- Integration with Oracle's AutoVue for redline and mark up
- Document traceability, alerts, and reports for control and compliance
- Detailed audit log

KEY BENEFITS
- Prioritize investments to maximize return
- Ensure efficient use of available capital funds
- Configure and automate business processes to match corporate workflow needs
- Enforce business rules for budgeting commits, funding and for compliance and routing of documents
- Manage a single project, an entire portfolio or next year's plans
- Gain immediate visibility into problem areas
- Plan ahead for each contract, line item or cost code
- Gain visibility into balances disposition, and status of each funding source
- Reduce management time for securing funding and grants
- Fulfill governance and regulatory reporting and auditing requirements
- Utilize granular permissions control and detailed audit log

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METHODOLOGY / PROCESS FOLLOWED

The methodology and process followed for this paper is to dry run pilot project without the application of the EPM software, extract results from the operation and subsequently with use of the EPM software, extract results and showcase the adoption benefits with a real case study (to be completed).

KEY CHALLENGES IN ADOPTION OF EPM SOFTWARE

The fundamental challenge to adoption of any EPM software is its awareness, procurement decisions and implementation.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR

The critical success factor for improving the awareness of benefits of EPM software in real life is by sharing Customer success stories, product demonstrations and increasing the communication about these tools.

QUANTIFIED BENEFITS TO BUSINESS

These quantified benefits to business are several fold -

a) An EPM software provided single source of truth. Enhancing visibility. Transparency and accountability – auditable and traceable
b) Individuals work on silo of information but with EPM software anyone can access information quicker, timely, get things answered, frequency of information, for decision that's collaboration
c) Enterprises system – all information roll up from lowest level right up to top level is available to all – real time and real data, accurate to precise
d) Power to stack information across the board, across division, regions and also setup access control
e) Good snapshot of our project liability and risks – red flags, dashboard, filtering data
f) Share information to People who are making decisions and people at lower down project site
g) EPM tool is more than Scheduling software. Can use the tool to visualize information
h) Reports take hours and hours, but with EPM software it is real time and mobile access.
i) Several teams working together as on team. Getting IT in real time Collaboration – all the parties that are necessary part of the process are involved
j) Information from the EPM software is available two ways–smart phone and web browsers
k) Both Offline and online capability – remote site where internet is not perfect, data is available on mobile / hand held devices and can be synched up later.
l) EPM software provides status information, i.e. start / finish, and also have the ability to upload pictures,
m) Pulling information into data marts. And data / information are 24 hours a day, 7 times a week brings greater transparency.
n) Saves redundant work, helps more competitive and gaining efficiency
o) Sharing information is the essence – many folks can enter, can share information, collaborate
p) Impact to business is such positive ways
q) Managing limited resources

LESSONS LEARNT

Before, we thought of one project at a time. Now, we think of thousands of projects at one time. In less than few minutes, we get updates at regular intervals. Truly data has become information and analytics helped make

important decisions, quickly, timely and to get close to our customer, thereby helping improve customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

All project managers have the ability and potential to improve customer satisfaction and customer experience. Traditional means or methods have limited ability to build momentum in collaboration between people and process. A right enterprise project management software tool helps all parties using one system. Everyone talks the same language with data at the detailed level or summarized into key information and allows owners to understand the benefits, risks and cost of every actions that can make the overall effectiveness of the organization process is more aligned to the customer's need. Change is always hard to achieve, but to see a larger value working together within one system, creates a process where working in aggregate is more important than working in parts. It is eye opening when individuals gain control over things in this one EPM software, they could update parts of their schedule in the overall project and now they could review real time their own data. When they see the process is transparent. It keeps us accountable and benefits our customers.

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