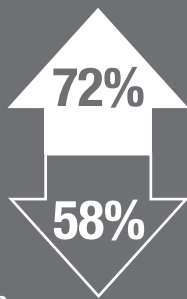


SOLUTION BRIEF

The Fallacy of Project Management

A survey from the Project Management Institute found that projects are successful 72% of the time when talent management and organizational strategy are aligned.

That figure drops to 58% when those conditions are not met, according to a PMI guest report published by The Business Journals.



The Great Project Management Myth

There is a fallacy in the project management sector that an initiative's success or failure boils down to processes. However, PRINCE2 and other contemporary process management frameworks are only tools in a project manager's toolkit. **The reality is that process must be aligned with talent, culture and creativity to put projects in the best position for success.**

Understanding the Limitations of Processes

Projects can fail for numerous reasons. They can go over budget, take too long to complete, neglect to meet the core needs of the end users or simply end up not working well when the finished product is deployed. Identifying the cause of project failure hinges on looking beyond the surface and identifying the underlying factors that contribute to problems.

Poor process and personnel management can play a key role in any of these causes for failure. After all, project managers must keep numerous users engaged on a project

and working in tandem with one another. Poor process frameworks can cause inefficiency and lead to workers disengaging as procedural roadblocks get in their way.

The findings of the PMI study indicate that **project failure often stems from cultural issues, not processes problems, and the reason is simple - new technologies, tools and process frameworks have emerged to give companies a rare combination of procedural stability and agility.**

Looking Beyond Processes

A recent Business Reporter article explained that focusing too heavily on the process of completing a project often distracts organizations from the underlying issues that dictate success. Such tools as PRINCE2 provide a robust procedural framework for project management, but a rigid and well-designed project schedule doesn't guarantee success.

The news source explained that companies can get so caught up in building out their processes for projects that they neglect the human and business sides of the initiative. The reality is that every business is unique and, because of that, each project will have its own feel. Simply plugging a rigid process framework into place isn't going to get the job done. **Analyzing the dynamics of your workforce, culture, talent pool and end users is necessary as you design a project and build out your processes.**

The right tools are incredibly important in setting a project on the path to success, and this includes having a good process framework in place. However, failing to take human considerations into account will quickly set you on the path to failure.

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Identifying Failure Quickly

According to Business Reporter, a heavy emphasis on process can cause project managers to neglect early signs of trouble with a project. Essentially, you can get so focused on establishing a path for a project to follow that you don't take time to notice when users are running into problems until it's too late. Adaptability, creativity and common sense must be taken into account to ensure project success.

This assertion points back to the Project Management Institute study. Projects are significantly more successful when companies align their talent and organizational strategy with project goals. These ideological considerations underpin any project, and project managers must become so comfortable with the process of building a good initiative that they can put their energy into reinforcing cultural principles.

Failure Isn't Always What It Seems

Project managers face a fairly straightforward goal - oversee an effort to make sure it ends up delivering value to the business. This is often equated to making sure projects don't fail. A recent report from Fortune offered a counterpoint. Failure isn't often bad. Sometimes it is simply the result of creativity and ambition. Not every good idea will lead to a successful project, and creating a culture where new ideas are encouraged can create meaningful innovation on a consistent basis, even if some projects do end up failing.

Being able to distinguish between projects that focus on innovation vs. those that are needed to keep the business running profitably is key.

The key here is to differentiate between projects that fail completely and those that still create value for the business. This, again, is where culture, talent management and organizational strategies come into play. Being able to distinguish between projects that focus on innovation vs. those that are needed to keep the business running profitably is key, and the strategies you use to manage those initiatives should change.

Moving Past Project Management Fallacies

Developing the soft skills needed to handle each project as a unique entity and aligning processes with business needs begins with complete mastery of the formal skills that go into project management. You can't run until you learn to walk, after all. Continued training and professional development can keep project managers on the cutting edge when it comes to using process tools to streamline project design, giving them the foundation they need to put more time into the talent management, culture creation and organizational alignment components of an initiative.

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