

5 TIPS TO MAKING SURE THAT PROJECTS WORK FOR THE BUSINESS AND NOT VICE-VERSA

By Andrew MacNeil (Valeocon), Director

In our rapidly changing world, executing projects well is an important success (or even survival) factor. Unfortunately, for many organisations "Project" has become a dirty word – associated with bureaucracy, cost-overruns, delays and disruption. It does not need to be that way. Here are a few tips ...

1. Treat Project Leadership/Management seriously

Many believe that "anyone can manage a project". This isn't the case, Project Leadership is a profession like many others in the company, and requires distinct skills and experience. Avoid the temptation to use projects as a "development opportunity" for high-flyers. Appoint people with the right skills – and even more importantly experience – to lead the projects.

2. First, catch the Sponsor

Every article on projects emphasizes the need for Sponsorship, few really explain why it is so important. The Sponsor is there to give ownership to what the project creates, and the authority to create it. Without this, the project is very likely to fail. If there cannot be proper Sponsorship, save the company time and money and cancel the project.

3. Give the project the team it deserves

If the project has an attractive business case, then don't throw the money away by short-changing on the team. Make sure that projects have the resource – with the skills and experience – that is needed to do the job properly.

4. Free up the budget

Even projects with competent leaders and excellent teams fail because of budget problems. Believe in the business case – every business case with an acceptable payback has an often-overlooked hidden treasure: a project that pays back is actually free! Spend the money, you will get it back, and then get even more back afterwards. Skimp on the budget and the project fails – the money is lost.

5. Don't make it harder than it need be

The Project Management Institute (PMI) is held by many to set "the standard" for how projects are run, and many companies believe that PMI qualified people (PMP's) are needed to run projects. However the PMI approach can become frustratingly cumbersome. Look on it like a university degree – invaluable to learn, but then needs to be used pragmatically. There are simpler ways of running projects successfully – for example the Valeocon 6-Gene Project™ approach.

Conclusion

Projects are how we “do things we haven’t done before” and a vital way of helping companies to change to meet the future. Often seen as unwelcome, instead they can be a way of helping secure the future of the company, and can be executed in an effective and pragmatic way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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