BEST PRACTICE — NOT THE — PRACTICE

IT Service Management

FROM HELL!

A GUIDE TO WORST PRACTICES

Project managing ITSM from hell

(implement ITIL that works!!)

Brian Johnson
Paul Wilkinson

Van Haren
PUBLISHING

Sejanus was a liar but so fine a general of lies that he knew how to marshal them into an alert and disciplined formation which would come off best in any skirmish with suspicions or any general engagement with the truth.

Robert Graves
from 'I, Claudius'

Thanks.......

In keeping with latest publishing traditions to thank everyone connected with a book, Brian and Paul wish to thank those featured in the following short list:

Rudolf, Comet, Cupid, Vixen, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Donner and Blitzen, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, Silver and Scout, Happy, Dopey, Sneezy, Grumpy, Sleepy, Smelly, Fatty, Snotty, Wally, Bashful and Doc, Alex, Pippa, Sue, Jacqueline, Claudia, Kate and Naomi, Hugh Hefner, Earthworm Jim and Peter the puppy, Queen pulsating, bloated, festering, sweaty, malformed, pus-filled Slug-for-a-Butt, Psycrow, Evil the Cat, Professor Monkey for a Head, the Justice League of America, Eric and Erica, Mick McCarthy, Vic Halom, Peter Reid, Ian Porterfield, John Stewart, mam and dad, Paul's mum (they're posh in his house) and dad, Dillon, the Men from UNCLE, Eric and Ernie, Mark van Onna, Bob the Killer Goldfish, Robert van Oirschot, Paddington, Michael Foot, Tony Benn, Theresa Hyphenated-Surname, Bob Stokoe, Colin, all Scottish Goalkeepers, James Stewart, Dalglish, Basil d'Oliveira, Frasier, Daphne, Niles, Martin, the gorgeous Ros and (especially) Maris, Sandra, Liz, Annelise, Geoff Boycott, Willie Donachie, Super Dave, Ivor Cutler, Roy Harper, Priscilla Queen of the Desert, George of the Jungle, Lassie, Rin Tin Tin, Tin-Tin, Tex Avery, Tom and Jerry, Champion the Wonder Horse, Skippy the Bush Kangaroo, Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick, Titch, Ginger, Posh, Scary, Sporty and Baby, John, Paul, George and Ringo, Johnny Ringo, the Ringo Kid, Wyatt Earp, Pans People, Legs and Co., John Carpenter, Johnny Rotten, Joe Strummer, Neil Young, Richard Thompson, Tom Waits, Ry Cooder, Mick, Keith, Charlie, Brian, Mick (the other one), Ronnie and Bill, Fred, Barney, Betty and Wilma, lots of names to make you think we are intellectuals such as Camus, Kierkegaard, Mies van der Rohe, Sartre and Eddie Murphy, Stacy and Leslie, Irene, Enid Blyton, Capt. W.E. Johns, , APM, PUG, GUP, GUPPY, PUPPY, SPAM and SMUG, SMERSH, THRUSH, BUSH and MUSH little doggies, Hush Puppies, Slush Puppies, Posh Slushies, Aspirin, Penicillin, Oxytocin, Wednesdays, Marilyn Monroe, Monica Lewinsky (no jokes, they'd just leave a bad taste in the mouth), Hans Ringnalda, Wellington, Boot, Marlon and Maisie, Wellington (the other one), Winston Churchill, Avon, Cally, Jenna, Blake (even if he was a bit wet), Gan, Vila, Zen, Orac, Servalan (phwoar) Einstein, Eisenstein, Frankenstein and Stein remover and last but not least, Kylie Minogue.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Foreword

'We are all in the gutter, but some of us are so hammered we can see the stars.'

I wrote that (it is a work in progress, I have to say) to illustrate the wit and ready repartee that epitomises the apocalyptic approach to ITSM redolent in this work. I tried Sado-Masochism when I was a bit younger and more supple, which is of course............what? not sado..? really?, oh, sorry.

Start again. IT Service Management?? Of course it is. And project management?. OK.

This piece of work claims to be politically incorrect, sexist and IT-centric. And it achieves all three. I recommend this book to you unreservedly if you wish to provide the worst possible services to your customers. Which is of course NOT the reason that Brian and Paul wrote this warped vision of project management and ITSM. Be aware, that most of the items raised as comic issues make uncomfortable reading, because we can all identify someone who really believes in them!

I know them well enough to believe that they really ARE being ironic. Of course, I know Paul very well but best not to mention that before the trial.

Oscar Wilde
Reading Gaol

Token woman

Token Frenchman

Token Chinese philospher

The cast of characters

The Business executive
Aim: to find a method that helps projects to finish on time and within budget.
Hobby: trying to finish the Financial Times crossword within 5 minutes.

The Senior user
Aim: to discover a project deliverable that remotely resembles what was initially requested.
Hobby: trying to finish the FT crossword.

The Senior supplier
Aim: to be able to understand what exactly projects were promising to deliver.
Hobby: trying to understand FT crossword clues.

The project manager
Aim: Trying to create a permanent project that takes over the whole organisation.
Hobby: writing the FT crossword.

The project resource
Aim: not to be dumped upon from a great height when projects go wrong.
Hobby: trying to start The Sun crosswords.

IT Director

Aim: to build a user free IT empire and eventually outsource the whole of the business.

Hobby: talking about himself and praising his own achievements.

IT Professional

Aim: to be able to walk on water.

Hobby: sliding under doors and making customers and users feel totally inadequate.

Customer

Aim: to be able to make sense of the IT reports.

Hobby: asking the IT organisation bloody silly questions and being boring.

Help Desk operator

Aim: to retire at 25.

Hobby: biting the heads off users.

User

Aim: to be able to use IT effectively (no, stop laughing... he means it!).

Hobby: ...who cares.

You will notice that the cast of characters is miniscule in comparison to the millions of people and roles recommended by project management experts or IT organisational consultants. Our method is based on maximum involvement of the minimum number of people necessary for you to have an easy life. Of course, if you want to hedge your bets by employing boatloads of people, in order to more easily pass the buck or point the dirty digit of blame, you should consult a method such as PRINCE 2.

1

Highlights and heroes
in the history
of
project management

"I went shopping for some camouflage trousers, but I couldn't find any"

Osama Bin Laden

1.1 Project management - What is it?

Why have we included a number of chapters on project management within this IT publication?. Figures reveal that more than 70% of IT projects are over time or budget or fail to deliver anything even resembling the expected results, something we in IT are proud of and intend to maintain. This makes the business even more dependent upon us in IT for fixing the mess delivered by IT projects, which in turn keeps us in work. As I said this is an achievement we intend to maintain and the first six chapters in this book help you to achieve this major goal.

Also IT Infrastructure Library best practice recommends using a method to manage IT projects (or process implementation projects, or pretty much anything with a pulse. Or without a pulse. In fact, anything.) and recommends PRINCE2 so that even more money goes to the office of administrative affairs to be wasted by Sir Humphrey and his mob of procurement Nazi's. Or as this is more often described, used to fund the development of best practices.

To get back to the question however, philosophers as diverse as Descartes, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Cantona, Camus and, er, other people, were asked to debate the question 'What is project management?'. Needless to say this caused them to wobble a lot. To avoid having to answer such a mind bogglingly tricky question, they resorted to hiding themselves behind the cloak of Epistemology - the theory of knowledge, or what is knowable. Bishop Berkeley an English philosopher, declared 'for an object to exist (a project) it must be perceived.' If it were not perceived it would not exist...as a project cannot be perceived it cannot exist. Therefore the concept of 'project management' is meaningless.'

They all looked mighty smug after that. Berkeley asked the famous French philosopher Rene Descartes for support. He thought long and hard about it and then said 'I want a SPAM sandwich'.

As philosophers, they then invented Spam, that, until that time had not even been an existentialist concept.

They had to come up with something else however, and finally, they agreed on the following:
- An invisible organisational parasite that eats resources and money......
- An opportunity for lonely people to call meetings.
- A bureaucratic monster that vomits forth vast quantities of paper...
- An excuse for not doing something that the line

organisation should be doing… (by forging incomprehensible decision making algorithms and project organisational structures that go around in circles before finally disappearing up their own spiral staircase)…

- An excuse to appoint a project manager who can take the blame when the project fails to achieve what everybody knew was impossible in the first place…
- An opportunity for IT organisations to make themselves indispensable by first messing things up and then having the task of cleaning it up again.
- An oxymoron.

Of course, being philosophers, they were all talking out of their hindquarters. And soon they started arguing that all generalisations were false. As that statement included itself so to speak, it sent the assembled company into a series of gibbering arguments and some years elapsed before Cantona could again make a sensible philosophical point.

There are as many types of project as there are definitions. Each type has easily identifiable characteristics.

Project type	Characteristics
dinosaur:	Huge and lumbering. Impossible to control. It usually becomes obsolete before realising its purpose. Reasons for destruction are never clear.
hit & run:	A short, seemingly purposeless exercise that is over before anybody even realised it had begun (many women recognise this particular characteristic, for reasons that the authors have found difficult to identify (or admit to)) and before the project plan had been agreed.
damp squib:	A project that fizzles out after the first project board meeting because the project board is bored. Or fail to turn up.
black hole:	A project that seems to consume vast sums of money and boatloads of resource and nothing ever emerges from its clutches.
gridlock:	A project that never goes anywhere because it is always tied down in meetings (Inertia)and decision moments to decide if another decision moment needs to be created. Hence the study of 'Moments of Inertia', in itself indescribably boring no matter what the opinion of my old physics teacher.
	A decision moment should definitely not be confused with a Minute. Minutes, especially from Project Board Meetings, have been known

to take hours - come to think of it, decision moments have been known to take days, sometimes days take months, then after a while, those memories of your youth intervene and you recall talking to that special girl for the first time and the way she said 'Get lost you spotty little creep' and - er, are you sure you wouldn't prefer to study philosophy?

NB a 'gridlock' is often accompanied by detailed status reports that identify the status of all status reports.

virus	begins as a single project and develops into a full grown programme that devours the whole organisation.
barge pole	A project that smells like a dead fish.
sure thing	Perceived as being absolutely infallible, see also - black hole, gridlock, virus and hot brick
the banker	(also known as the career builder) That once only, usually minuscule, project that you bring in on time (well almost) which allows you to continue forever as a project manager. It's called the banker because it is your 'ace in the hole' whenever you're asked to name one, just one, successful project that you've managed. It also sounds similar to your nickname.
hot brick	A project that is a hot issue in the organisation and for which success is critical. Failing to secure project success is a 'career limiting move'; wise project managers throw this sort of project from one to another like a hot brick.

And yet the project plan has still been authorised.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
'ULTIMATE PROJECT'
• unknown finish date
• unknown resources
• unknown deliverables

1.2 Why do it??

Think about being wholly responsible and accountable for:
- The management of cost,
- deployment of resources out of number,
- communications,
- knowledge creation, assimilation and distribution.

All of these and more can be yours. Or you could try project management. With project management, you get all of the benefits of being in charge, allied to the important knowledge that you can make someone else responsible for all of the problems.

So, consider the following:
- If you use the guidance in this book correctly you could create for yourself a huge, 'permanent' project structure in which you are the supreme ruler and wielder of organisational power as your project consumes the whole organisation...
- You can put people in extremely uncomfortable positions forcing them to make decisions they really don't want to make and then watch them squirm.
- You can take a hike before the finger of blame extends its dirty digit.
- You can avoid having to commit yourself to anything even vaguely resembling a deliverable.
- You can insist the business has a role in the project and when things go horribly wrong you can blame the business, because you know they won't turn up for the project meetings anyway.

The PRINCE 2 method is important to this book; we will tell you how it was developed and how to ignore all of the rubbish it spouts in favour of the one or two good ideas it houses to help you find easy street. Project management is not idiot proof. No method can achieve this target. And anyway, if project management became idiot proof, a better class of idiot would soon arise.

The central principle of project management is to do nothing whilst becoming indispensable, like politicians. Or actors. Or TV football pundits. Or the European Parliament. And to spend lots of money, and (occasionally, but this is not the reason for being a project manager, it is merely to keep up appearances), to deliver a successful project.

Using the European Parliament as an example, you can see that power, lack of responsibility and a huge budget spent on, well , just about anything, has never been held up as a reason for them actually achieving anything. Quite the opposite. It is a well-known fact that the EU spent six billion ECU educating French Farmers to speak English to imported sheep. The fact that imported sheep from the UK were then found to be Welsh speaking (well, that's what the French thought when the Farmers found that the sheep appeared to find English incomprehensible) enraged the Farmers who promptly set fire to the Bastille in protest and arranged for wheel barrows to run on the tracks of the Paris Metro to really screw up public transport and, well, be French about things.

The disruption and the rebuilding of the Bastille cost another 14 billion ECU. Damage to the reputation of the French Farmers was estimated as nearly 30 centimes. And the EU had to create numerous sub committee's of MEPs to travel the world to assess the capabilities of sheep to understand French. Which didn't half cost a packet.

What has this got to do with being a project manager? The fact that even failure can be richly rewarded with new projects to manage so long as the failure is massive, costly and embarrassing. And not your fault (or rather, that you can find a suitable scapegoat).

Convinced? Then read on.

The difference between a project and a story is that a story has a beginning, a middle and an END!

1.3 Where it all began

Some 50 years ago, the then head of CCTA, asked his management board 'Why does nothing ever get delivered when I want it??'. The question was passed to a new recruit, Hugh Jeegoh, (family motto; if you don't know what you're doing, do it neatly) who had a brainwave. They would ask the new computer (of course this theme was used some years later by the famous Douglas Adams, without credit to the young Jeegoh). Thousands of operators prepared punch cards (this was an old computer) and some 20 years later came the reply 'I'm still thinking'. This reply was not a complete waste of time since it has been used ever since by every project manager involved in mechanisation projects. Five years later, the computer came up with *'Come back in another five years'*, also used by project managers everywhere.

How they all laughed.

There you are gentlemen, the first successful project result … The Wheel!
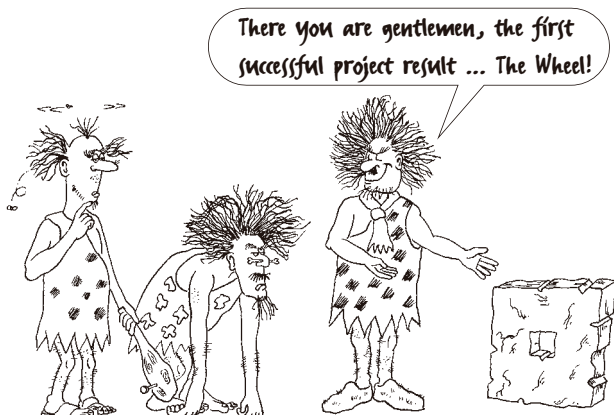
Finally, twenty years ago the computer issued invitations to a gathering at CCTA where 'the answer' would be given.

The answer was 'Because projects don't finish on time'. Hugh was assigned a project, to define a method to enable projects to finish on time. This was the infamous PROMPT method (named so that projects was created would now finish promptly.) It was a dismal failure. Undeterred, the PROMPT project was transmogrified into the PRINCE project. This too was a complete fiasco. To disguise the less than glorious origins of their current method therefore, CCTA decided to start again with a completely different name, PRINCE 2; that would fool them.

Then a method was added as an afterthought. Not much of a method, but enough to confuse anyone who thought that a project could be managed by government.

The method has nothing to do with real project management, which is the subject of part of this book.

1.4   Great moments in the history of project management

Many great moments are the province of the space industry. Man and technology focused on achieving seemingly insurmountable project tasks. Enormous projects, with seemingly inexhaustible supplies of money

NASA The Apollo project.
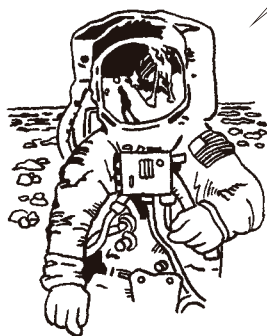
That's one small step for man... one pile of rocks for mankind.

A multi billion dollar project spanning two decades, all in an effort to capture a few pounds of rocks. However to be fair, there were spin off benefits: Alan Shepherd got to practice his golf swing in zero gravity, further advancing mankind's understanding of how to avoid a slice in weightless conditions, and my mam got to buy a non stick frying pan.

ESA Ariane 2 project.

The customers thought they were having their multi million dollar satellites launched in to orbit, whereas ESA were planning to go into direct competition with the Chinese in producing the worlds most expensive and spectacular fireworks display. The project was directly responsible for the production

of the following joke, extracted from the stand-up act of the great Chinese Communist comedian, Ho Bludi Ho:

The Chinese were asked *'What do you put in your fireworks?'* they said *'Gunpowder'*; the French were asked 'What do you put in your fireworks?'", they replied *'Satellites'*.

It seems to lose a little in the translation from Cantonese.

Other great moments include:

- The seven wonders of the world (the contractors were asked to create seven wonders, but the project manager knowing the limits of travel agents BC, built only the pyramids and printed some really natty brochures for the other six wonders, and of course went over budget).
- The leaning tower of Pisa. This wasn't actually due to the incompetence of the architect but was in fact the fault of the project manager. He was asked to build a Learning Tower for Pisa.

No... no... I said a LEARNING tower for Pisa!

- the Channel Tunnel (it is not widely known that 37 tunnels were excavated by the French and 43 by the English contractors before they were fortunate enough to find a pair that met in the middle without too great a kink in the tracks. Why else do you think the budget was exceeded by such a large amount?

In keeping with the traditions of good project management, the superfluous tunnels will be developed as nuclear waste dumps - in fact this will be the only part of the entire project that is likely to show an immediate return on investment).

This section cannot end without further reference to the CCTA project to create PRINCE 2: it was delivered late.

1.5   Heroes of project management

Before we start, let us consider the myriad attributes needed by a project manager.

They should be male (of course), unless a scapegoat is needed when a female should be recruited. A pulse in the candidate is generally considered mandatory, as is an ego the size of Birmingham. Ideally, shiftless and lazy, the best candidates also lie as smoothly as an American President.

Briefly, we would like to mention some real heroes of project management.

Jules Rimet; the man credited with creating the world cup: old Jules did not realise his project manager was actually a football hooligan who wanted regular punch-ups with neighbouring foreign hooligans. The project team organised a tournament with the help of Jules that is so successful, that every four years people organise the opportunity to fight on their behalf and even better, countries compete to find the hooligans an exciting new location!

Wellington is an English national hero because of his project to beat the French (his slogan, "anywhere, anytime, anyplace", being later adopted by a famous drinks manufacturer).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, all Scottish goalkeepers are heroes to the English because of the SGBP (Scottish Goalkeeper Breeding Project). Managed by an Englishman who will have to remain anonymous, the most successful project in the history of the English FA is the project to ensure that all goalkeepers who play for Scotland are bred to be hopeless. Mind you their BEFWB (Breeding English Footballers With Brains) project clearly has a long way to go. The gene pool in use could use a little chlorine.

1.6   The frog that turned out to be a frog despite all the kissing

This the project that will not go away. The project that despite all efforts keeps on going, consumes money, changes direction faster than New Labour and is under the microscope because it is in the public eye, requiring media manipulation on an epic scale to focus blame on suitable scapegoats.

In other words, The Millennium dome. History, as they say, beckoned.

2

Risk
Management

**If ants are such hard workers, how come they find
time to go to all the picnics?**
Marie Dressler

"No american soldier will ever set foot in Baghdad"

Saddam Hussein

2.1 Risk management - What it is

What is Risk management? It is the business of managing risks, what the hell do you think it is?

Well, now that the technical discussion is over, what are project risks? Examples include:

- a project sponsor that nit-picks and insists upon concrete, clearly defined results,
- sponsors who take an interest in the project,
- well-trained team members,
- appointing a project board,
- some idiot insisting that go/no go decisions are necessary,
- clearly defined business cases with specific objectives,
- sponsors who insist upon meaningful status reports with accurate resource and financial figures and will definitely not accept a load of very colourful graphs and pie charts.

2.2 PRAM, PRAT, CRAMM and CRIB

There are varied methods for managing risk.

PRAM Sponsored by an organisation we have no intention of publicising and anyway it is named after a baby's carriage so it can't be any good, ask any mother, they all use push chairs nowadays.

PRAT This is more like it, Project Risk Assessment Technology; buy this expensive software from us and you can ignore all of the rubbish about using techniques to manage risk (PRAT has now been adopted as the official term of endearment for the Project Quality Control Manager).

CRAMM The CCTA Risk Assessment Marmalade Method or whatever, we don't know, go and ask them. It'll be no use. And anyway its now owned by the spooks at MI5 or 6 or whatever and they probably won't tell you what it is unless you have forms E123 and E567 and

FU2 signed in triplicate and you agree that your kids
can be held hostage if you even smell like you told
anyone that you've seen the stuff, so its not worth it
is it?

The best method is the tried and trusted method shown
below.

Using big
arrows to
make a risk
look very,
very small.
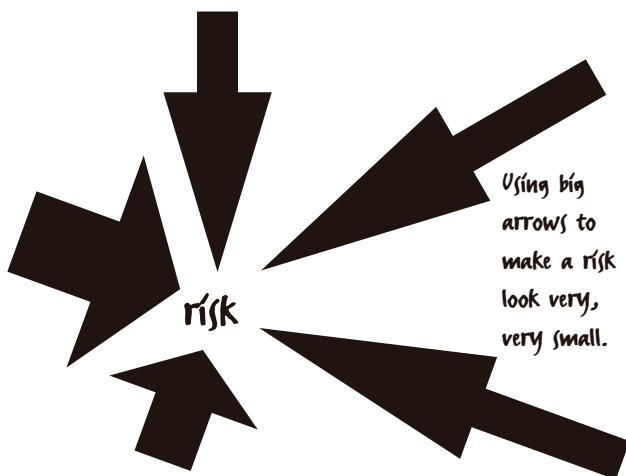
Managing risks with very big arrows diagram

As you can see, this technique involves drawing very big,
angry looking arrows around the risk. It must work, otherwise it
wouldn't appear in so many books.

2.3   Critical path analysis

Also known as analysis of the path that is critical. It is
explained fully in the diagram below.
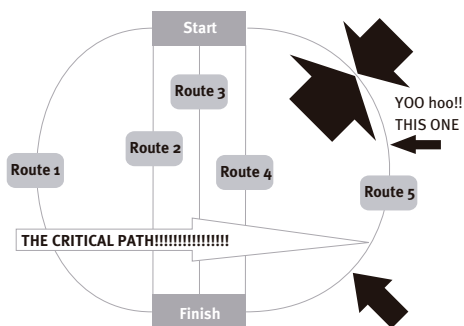
If politicians understood a little about critical path
analysis, they may have chosen to provide a cheap reliable
means of public transport, (rather like the one that existed
before trams were axed and railway stations closed, and huge
pots of money were put into out of town development and
equally huge pots of money were withdrawn from subsidising

rural transport services), before defining a transport policy to cut reliance on the private car. But that's the beauty of having inept management; more projects and more money to spend.