

Blended Project Management (PM) -- where 2 + 2 = 5

Technical Side PM + Human Side PM = on time, on budget, To Spec

The project management discipline has evolved to a level where it is commonly perceived as a strategic competency (1). Its current state includes a professional designation (i.e., PMP), worldwide organizational support structures (e.g., PMI), several consensus frameworks of best practices (e.g., PMBOK), stellar technological tools (e.g., Primavera® IT Operations Management), significant research/academic efforts, and an estimated annual investment of \$712,000 per company implementing project management improvement initiatives. (2)

Yet, despite this impressive attribute list, large scale project implementation efforts continue to sub optimize. An estimated 70% fail to deliver either the expected requirements, or do not meet schedule, and/or stay within budget. (3) As author David Schmaltz observed “Many more projects fail to satisfy their sponsor’s expectation than ever satisfy them.” (4)

This is not to suggest that PM does not work. On the contrary one can only imagine what the implementation track record would be without it. But it does beg the question, “why do projects, despite disciplined project management efforts, fall short?” One predictable answer is scope related. Many PM efforts are narrowly scoped in that they are technically oriented and project centric. The focus is on the traditional phases of project management: initiation (e.g., creating a charter), planning (e.g., assessing risk), design and development (e.g., writing software), executing (e.g., tracking progress), and closing out (e.g., lessons learned). These phases (and the examples) are, of course, essential. But they are often developed in isolation. Isolated technical planning does not incorporate the actual climate for implementation, its history, nor the politics and emotion of change. Consequently, what receives far less attention is the human side of change—i.e., resistance, cultural fit, leadership alignment, motivation, communication, and the impacts of the overall organizational climate.

It is our contention that both the technical side and human side of implementation must be managed jointly and concurrently to achieve real project success (i.e. on time, on budget, meeting stated objectives). (5) Only when these two variables are purposefully blended is the probability of success the highest (see Diagram 1).

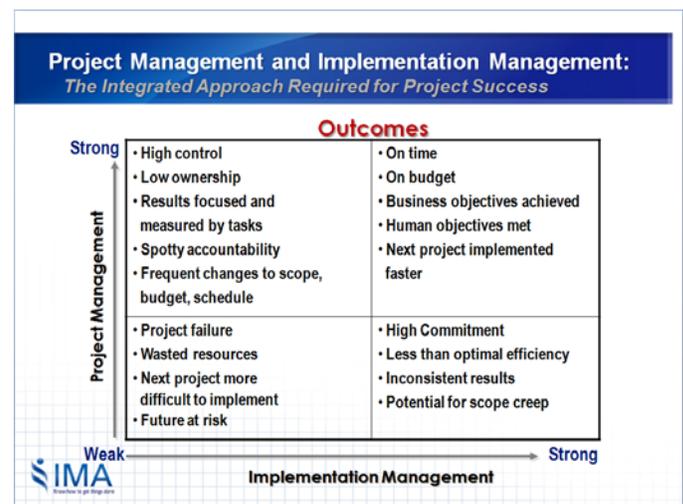


Diagram 1

A technically biased approach has a number of underlying assumptions.

1. **Projects can be managed in isolation**—“we have no internal competition for finite organizational resources, sponsors time/attention, or the hearts/minds of our stakeholder.”
2. **Projects are implemented in a linear world**— “there are never unintended consequences, everything always goes as planned in our company.”
3. **Logic rules**—“our employees always act rationally, once a directive is issued it cascades unimpeded through the chain of command.”

Blended Project Management (PM) -- where 2 + 2 = 5 Technical Side PM + Human Side PM = on time, on budget, To Spec

Your reaction to these statements is likely to be, “I don’t hold those assumptions.” However, if you are not **purposefully** incorporating strategies and tactics to (a) manage resistance at all levels of the organization, (b) to assure cultural fit, and (c) to align employee behavior with changes to new business/work processes -- then you hold them by default.

In a world where resource scarcity is an ongoing reality, we cannot afford to create separate technical project plans and human-side project plans that we loosely bolt together as an afterthought or struggle to deploy in parallel (see *Diagram 2*).

Integration Options

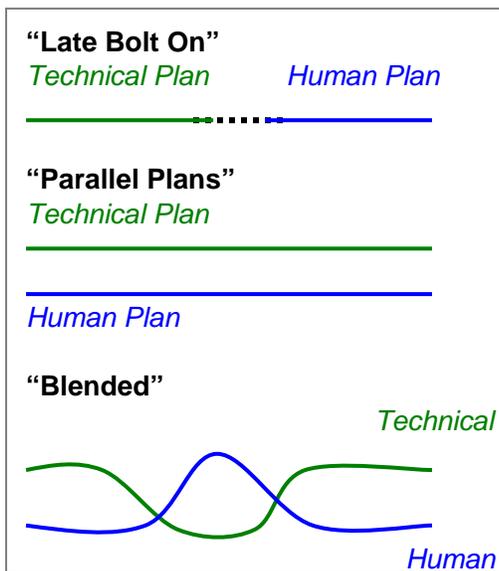


Diagram 2

It is self evident that blended project plans are both a market imperative and a real source of competitive advantage. Moreover, the blended approach provides the greatest probability that project ROI targets will be realized.

MIT’s Peter Senge, observed that “the structures of which we are unaware hold us prisoner.” (6) The structure of technical project management is widely accepted, fully understood, well documented and widely practiced. What is not as mature is the understanding or the consistent application, by many project management professionals, of the key principles of how people and organizations actually change. This -- less understood change structure, the human side -- is the culprit that takes our projects prisoner and hastens them toward sub optimization.

Decreasing the risk of implementation failure is essential. Implementation Management Associates, Inc. (IMA) has developed a structured process, that when blended with disciplined project management, does exactly that. The approach is called

Accelerating Implementation Methodology (AIM).

It is tactical, repeatable, practical, and based on common sense. It includes a set of data-driven tools that allow you to measure the particular strengths and weaknesses **that will be** encountered when project initiatives are implemented. Secondly, it provides a template to develop the strategies and tactics to mitigate implementation barriers and leverage the strengths (see *Diagram 3*).



Diagram 3



Blended Project Management (PM) -- where 2 + 2 = 5

Technical Side PM + Human Side PM = on time, on budget, To Spec

Just a few examples of key issues that would be considered when applying the **AIM** Implementation Architecture and its tools are:

- **Define the Change** -- who are the key stakeholders, how are they impacted, and what critical behaviors, expectations, perceptions, and/or skills must be adopted to support project implementation?
- **Assess the Climate**--is the level of aggregate implementation activity exceeding the organization's threshold for change?
- **Generate Sponsorship**--deploying a purposeful approach to gaining and sustaining widespread and aligned leadership commitment across affected chains of command.
- **Surfacing/Managing Resistance**-- developing a strategy to effectively manage the inevitable resistance to change at all levels of the organization.
- **Create Cultural Fit**--are there "unwritten rules" that stand in direct opposition to your implementation goals?
- **Build a Communication Plan**--targeted communication that speaks directly to the particular frames of reference attendant to each impacted area, thus enabling employees to answer the "What's in it for me?", "What's going to happen to me?", type questions more quickly.

Each step in the planning architecture addresses a likely implementation barrier. Assessment tools to collect data, as to the sources of the barriers, accompany the steps. Further, the steps can be "unbundled" for high leverage execution and speed.

Because the methodology is principle driven and not a check list it can be blended, realistically and logically, with the various stages of the technical plan as specific outputs.

Larry Bossidy, former Chairman and CEO, Honeywell International, observed "that organizations don't execute unless the right people, individually and collectively, focus on the right details at the right time." (7) He's alluding to the undeniable fact that technical PM and human side PM consistently intersect over the life of a project. The question is "are you prepared to manage the intersections?" Bottom-line ... if you control the points of contact you achieve synergy ... but, if you don't, it's a car wreck waiting to happen.

Sources:

1. PMI Homepage
2. "Stakeholders, the Road Ahead." PM Network: May 2003, pg. 8.
3. Beer, M. & Eisenstat, R.A., "Developing Organizations Capable of Implementing Strategy and Learning." Human Relations, 49, 597-619.
4. Schmalz, David A. *The Blind Men and the Elephant*, BK: S.F., 2003, p. 3.
5. IMA White Paper, "**Accelerating Implementation Methodology**: Common Sense, Uncommon Success."
6. Senge, Peter. *The Fifth Discipline*. Doubleday: N.Y., 1990.
7. Bossidy, Larry & Charan, Ram. *Execution, the Discipline of Getting Things Done*. Crown Business: N.Y., 2002, p. 33.

Additional IMA Information Sources:

- *IMA Corporate Brochure*
- *Enterprisewide White Paper*
- *Six Sigma ROI White Paper*
- *The Real Deal is After the Deal: IMA's Mergers & Acquisitions Survival Kit*
- *The Soft Stuff is Really the Hard Stuff: IMA's ERP Survival*

