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Why your next technology project will fail.

Okay, am not wishing you ill luck, but it is a known fact that a significant percentage of IT projects fail. According to Meta Group 72% percent of all IT projects are late, over budget, lack functionality or never delivered as planned. What is a failed project then?. A project that is not delivered on time, over budget and does not meet the operational or strategic mission of the organization. On a positive note, this article is meant to draw your attention to the potential land mines when engaging in a project.

Projects fail at both micro and macro levels. Macro level issues are systemic within an enterprise due to their origin and frequency. However micro level issues are specific and unique to a particular project. The following issues are common causes of failure at the macro level.

Poor Project Monitoring and Control

Project monitoring and control is a mechanism used to track all activities of the project against the project plan. It provides an understanding of the project progress. If the project plan is off track actions need to be taken to get the project on the right path. Monitoring project progress against the schedule and measuring actual completion of activities and milestones.

Missing or Incomplete Project Plan

A project plan is formal document that is used to manage and control the project. Without this plan you would be unable to track milestones and ensure completion of work phases in the project. Dependencies between tasks would be unknown; such as predecessor successor relationships. Requirements, Scope and resources would be unmanageable.

Lack of Requirements Development

This is the elicitation, analysis, validation and communication of stakeholder needs and expectations. It involves the need of the stakeholder (Customer, Users and testers) the needs of stakeholders are transformed into a formal set of requirements. When requirements don't exist you risk project failure, loss of financial resources and possibly increased cost.

Poor Requirement Management

It is not enough to gather requirements; they have to be managed through the life of the project. There are a couple of tasks or activities that can prevent failure due to lack of requirements management. Ensure that agreed requirements are met and can support the project. Document and rationalize all requirement changes and maintain tractability between requirements and final the product.

No Risk Management

Risk management is the process of identifying and mitigating issues that can cause failure in the life of a project. It is a continuous process carried out throughout the life of the project. The following 3 phases define how to manage risk. Establish risk a management strategy, identify and analyze risks and mitigate risk.

No Supplier Agreement (Consultants)

This area addresses the need to manage products and services delivered or acquired within the life span of the project. The supplier can be external or internal within an organization. A formal agreement should exist between the customer and the supplier. The agreement should be legally binding and include statement of work, terms of condition, list of deliverables and schedule, and acceptance criteria.

Focusing on these issues can easily prevent a project from failing. The issues are not restricted to a particular type or industry and can be applied easily when assessing the state of or health of a project.

Sincerely,