

Process or People



Their Relative Effect on Project Success

Goal



The influence of people and processes
Understanding and working with their effect

Case Study

A fixed-price project had been running for two years by a seasoned project manager. It was red and an audit was requested.



Everyone was frustrated by slow progress

Only the project manager and his assistant could go to the Steering Committee meeting

Change request log had five change orders

Problems

The change management process was not being used—the project managers were handling the changes through trades

The project manager was out of touch with the team

The customer was missing deliverables and functional specification could not be written



Communication was hampered

The project manager had to be replaced

Why do Projects Fail?

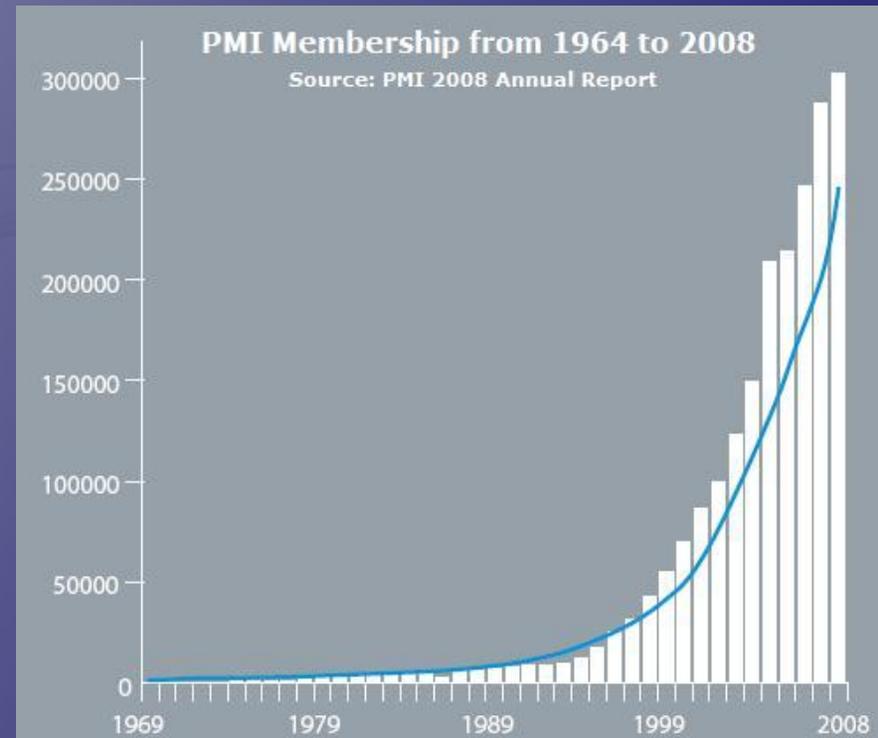
- Three broad categories for failures:
 - Teams
 - Process
 - Customer
- What do they have in most in common?

Problem Area	Type of Problem
Team	Communication Attitude/motivation Skill set Interrelationships Management support
Process	Change Management/Scope Issues Documentation Estimation/Scheduling Risk Management
Customer	Incomplete understanding of product (manifesting as scope issues) Lack of Project Management (manifesting as scope issues) Difficult, trying to get something outside of scope

Table 1: Major Failure Reasons

Is There Empirical Data?

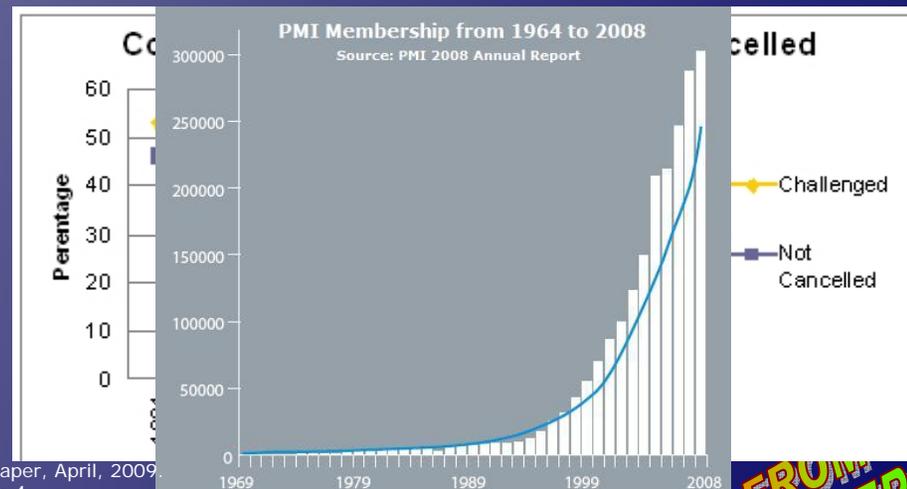
- There are no direct studies showing project process and success correlation
- PMI Membership has grown exponentially since 1964
- Has this had an effect on project success?



PMI 2008 Annual Report, http://www.pmi.org/PDF/PMI_AR08_FINAL_120.pdf, page 3

Is There Any Empirical Data?

- Looking at the trends
Success is climbing¹
- Failures are trending up, but Challenged are getting less.
- Better enterprise management?
 - Possibly
- Better definition (i.e. less complex)?
 - Can't find supporting data
- Better process?
 - Don't think so



¹ CHAOS Summary 2009 Report, The Standish Group International, Incorporated, White Paper, April, 2009.

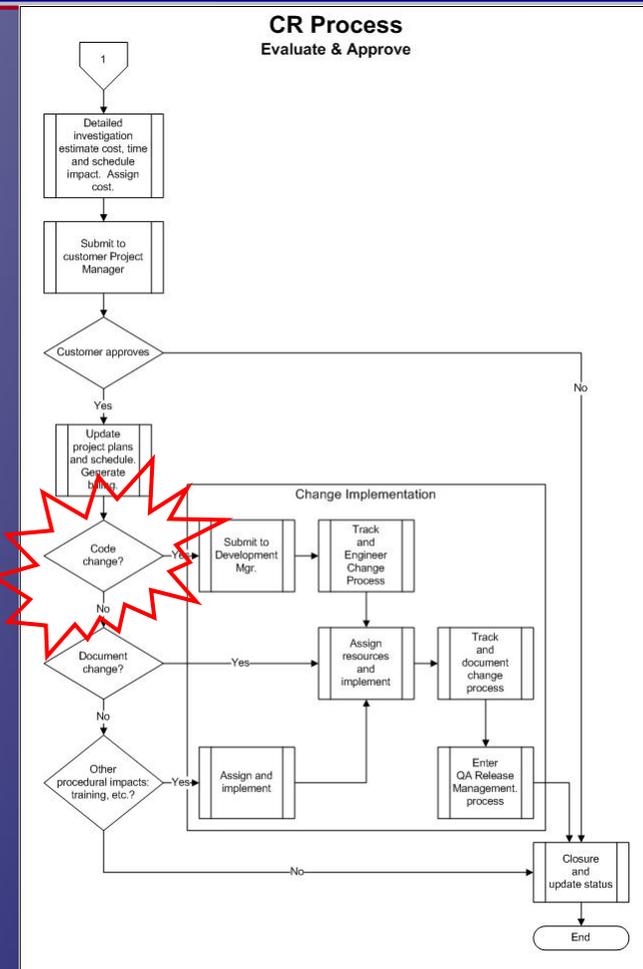
² Charts compiled from note 1 and *My Life is Failure*, Jim Johnson, The Standish Group Int., 2006, Page 4

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Process

- We can trust processes since they are predictable
- Processes provide a level of comfort
- We can identify issues and point at them



People

Processes are necessary,
however...

People choose to
follow processes
(or not)



People
communicate
with others
(or not)

People have the skills
(or not)

People follow
direction
(or not)

Examine One Process - Estimation

- What are the estimation processes?
- Averages, PERT, Delphi and others
- How do we do estimates?
 - Use external sources
 - Develop numbers that make us comfortable



Exercise

- How much time would you allot to get to the airport to pick up your neighbor?
- How about picking up your boss from out of town?
- What if it were the President?
- Why the difference?



How often do you want to be right?

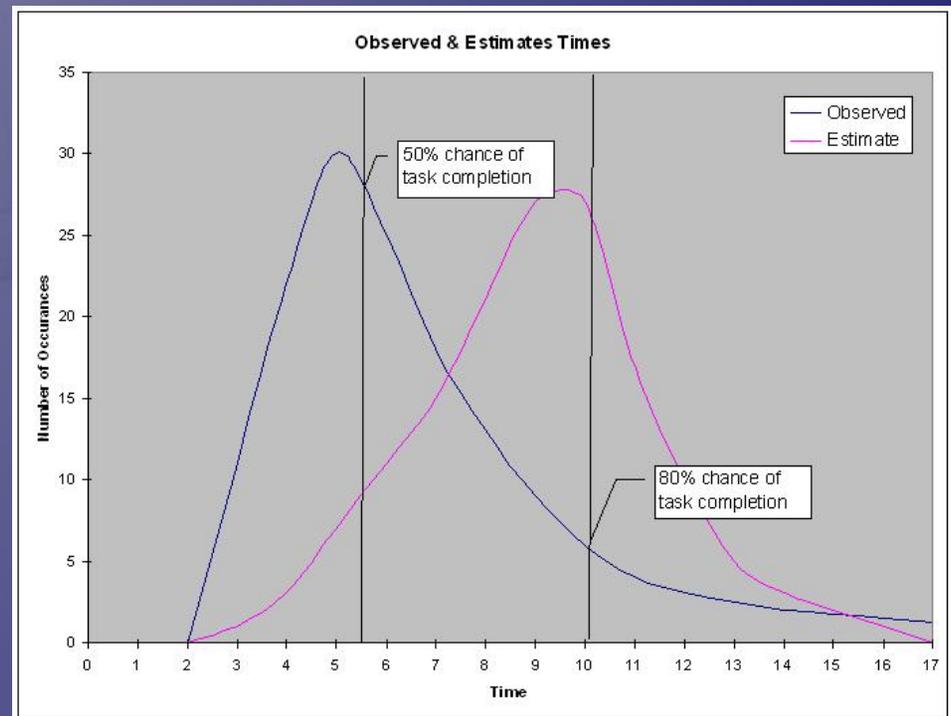
- Assume the recorded performance on a task is:
 1. 12 hours
 2. 7 hours
 3. 11 hours
- What would you estimate for a task duration?
- Does it make sense to estimate 10 hours?

Pop
Quiz!!!



Estimates

- We estimate about twice of what we actually need
- We pad estimates to account for special cause variation (variation we can address)
- Counter intuitively, remove pad, since it only promotes bad behavior:
 - Student Syndrome
 - Bosses requesting multi-tasking
- Two other effects to consider:
 - Human nature
 - How the estimate is treated



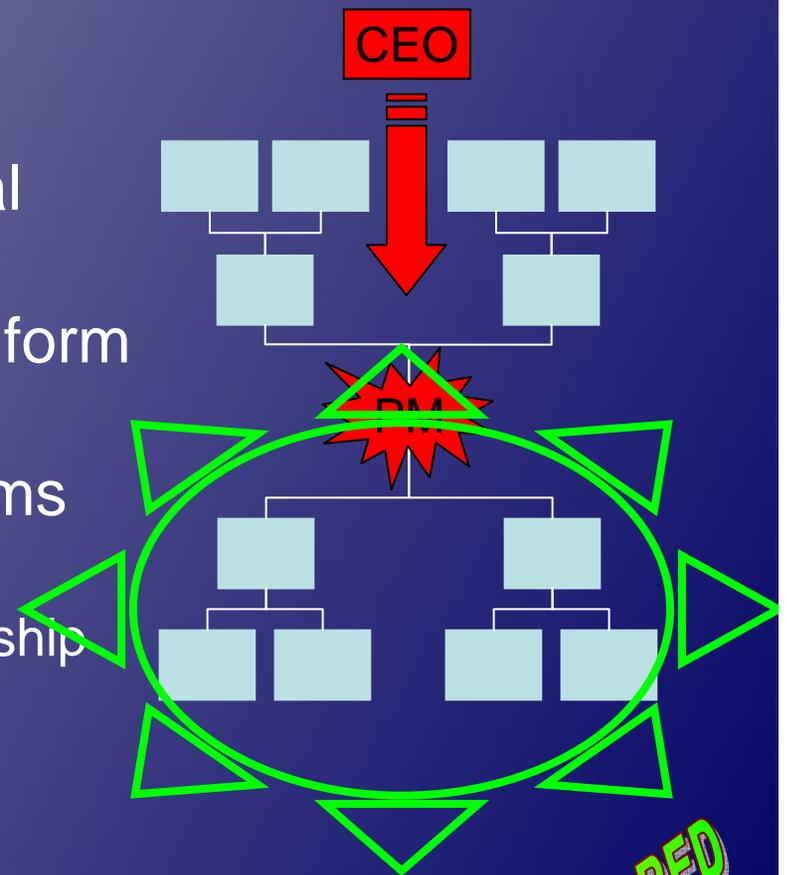
Process and Passion

- Creativity drives most people
- Are you passionate about developing project charters, risk determination, QA plans, and running test scripts?
- What tasks on a project makes you passionate?
- Process stifles creativity
 - For test scripts this is good
 - For innovation this is problematic



The Solution

- Leadership
- It starts at the top and flows down
- The project manager is the central point of making the project work.
- Without leadership, teams do not form and projects fail.
- With a poor project manager, teams still form out of desperation
 - Someone in the team takes a leadership role



Lessons Learned

The team knows what needs to be done



A strong team can surmount most problems

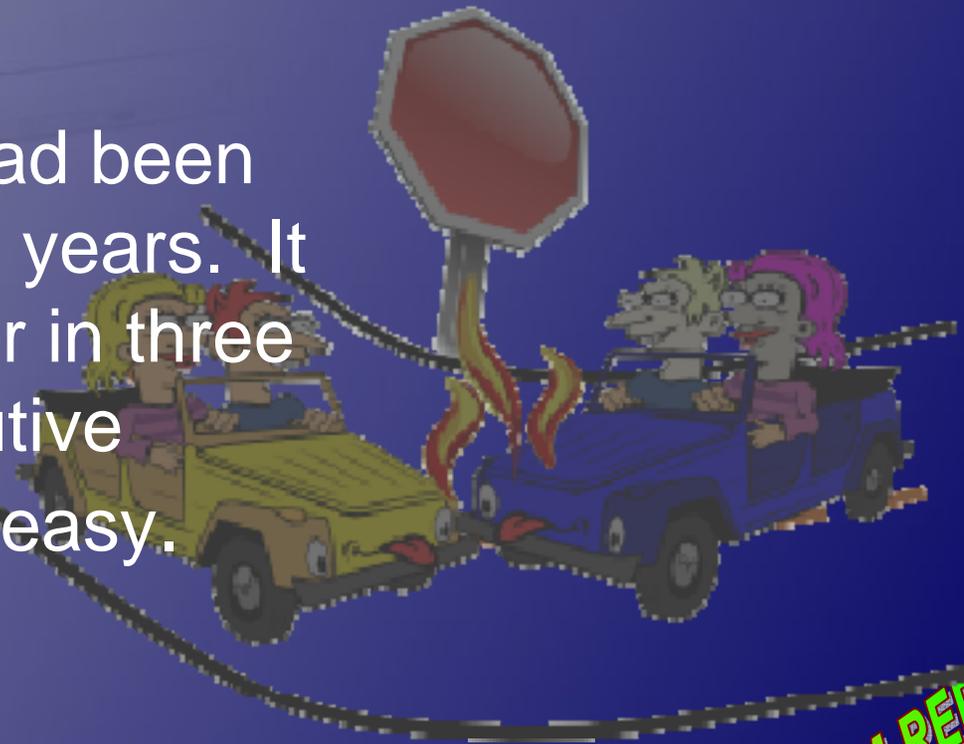
The leader must stay involved with the team

Objective data is your friend, providing the key out of any situation

Case Study

How bad can it get?

A fixed-price project had been running for almost three years. It was supposed to deliver in three months and executive management felt uneasy.



Problems

About twenty-five change requests, most (including the largest) zero dollar

Few people were on speaking terms with the solution architect

The system, as designed, would not work. It needed to be redesigned

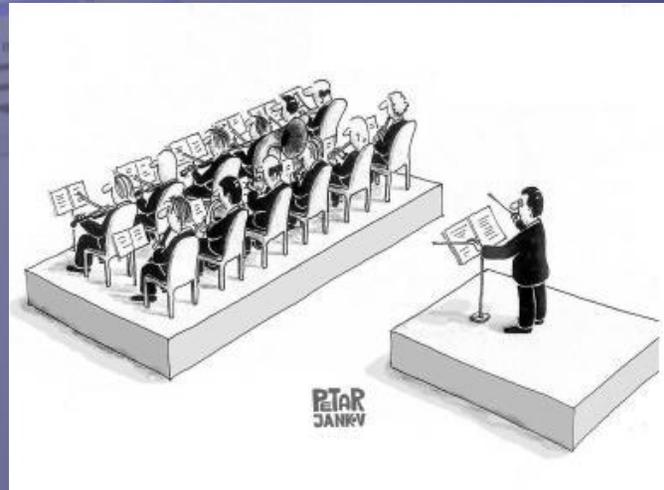


The technical team was divided and would not talk to one another

The program and project managers referred to the problems as “personality conflicts that were under control”

Root Cause

The managers would not discipline the team



The customer had no respect for or trust in the team

The team members had no respect for each other

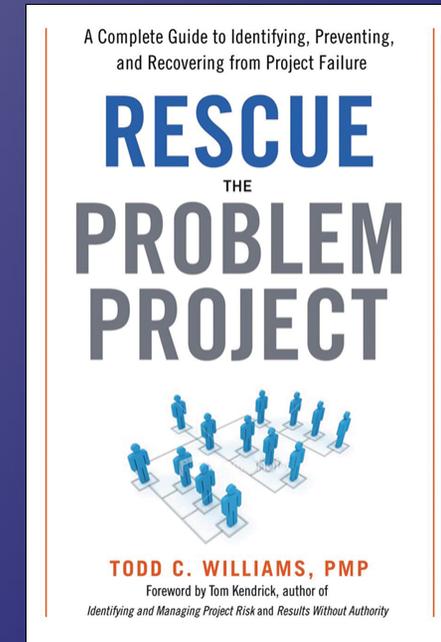
Over half the team was replaced, including all of the management

Summary

- Process makes our lives easier
- However, we also like challenge and creativity
- People like the feeling:
 - Worth
 - Innovation
 - Pleasing others
- Personal biases make our view of work different based on external factors

Thank You!

Questions?



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